



Fig. 15: The author completes the excavations of the 15.5-meter-deep central Hasmonean cistern of Machaerus citadel (reused during the Herodian period), with its reconstructed 3D model. The architectural appearance of the previously unexcavated conical space, equipped with a headstone since Antiquity, is ending in a 4 x 4-meter-large square, like a sloping stack base.

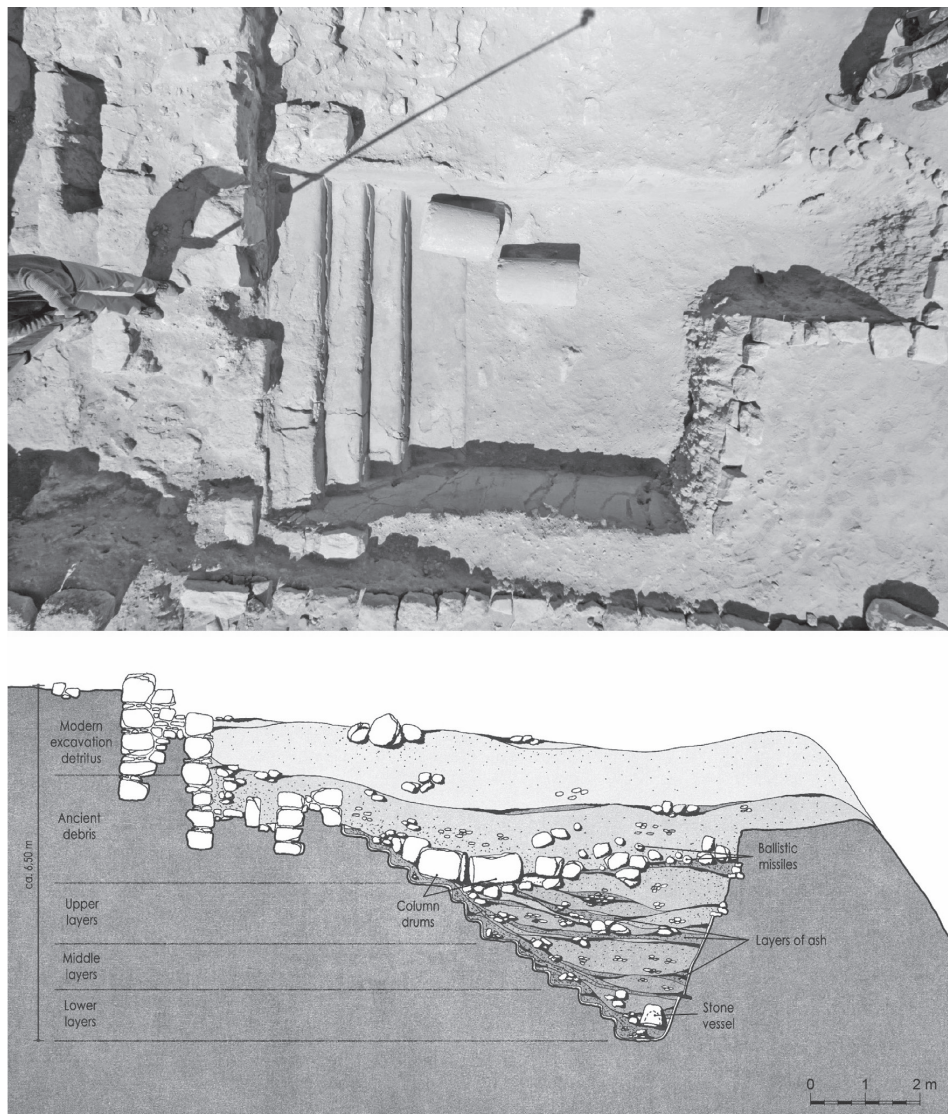


Fig. 16: Two steps of our detailed stratigraphical studies. On *the upper photograph* (taken from above), we can see the horizontal section-cut with the two *in situ* newly discovered column drums. *Below*, the 6.5-meter-deep detailed stratigraphical drawing of the longitudinal vertical section-cut in the monumental royal Herodian mikveh. A huge quantity of imported luxurious archaeological material belonging to the Herodian palace came to light from the bottom of this Jewish ritual bath, sealed by the well-datable, AD 36 destruction layer.



Fig. 17: The fully excavated and marvelously preserved monumental, twelve-step plastered pool was one of the three Jewish ritual baths (mikva'ot) of the Herodian royal palace of Machaerus, with close parallels of ancient Jewish ritual baths in Qumran and Hebron; view toward west.

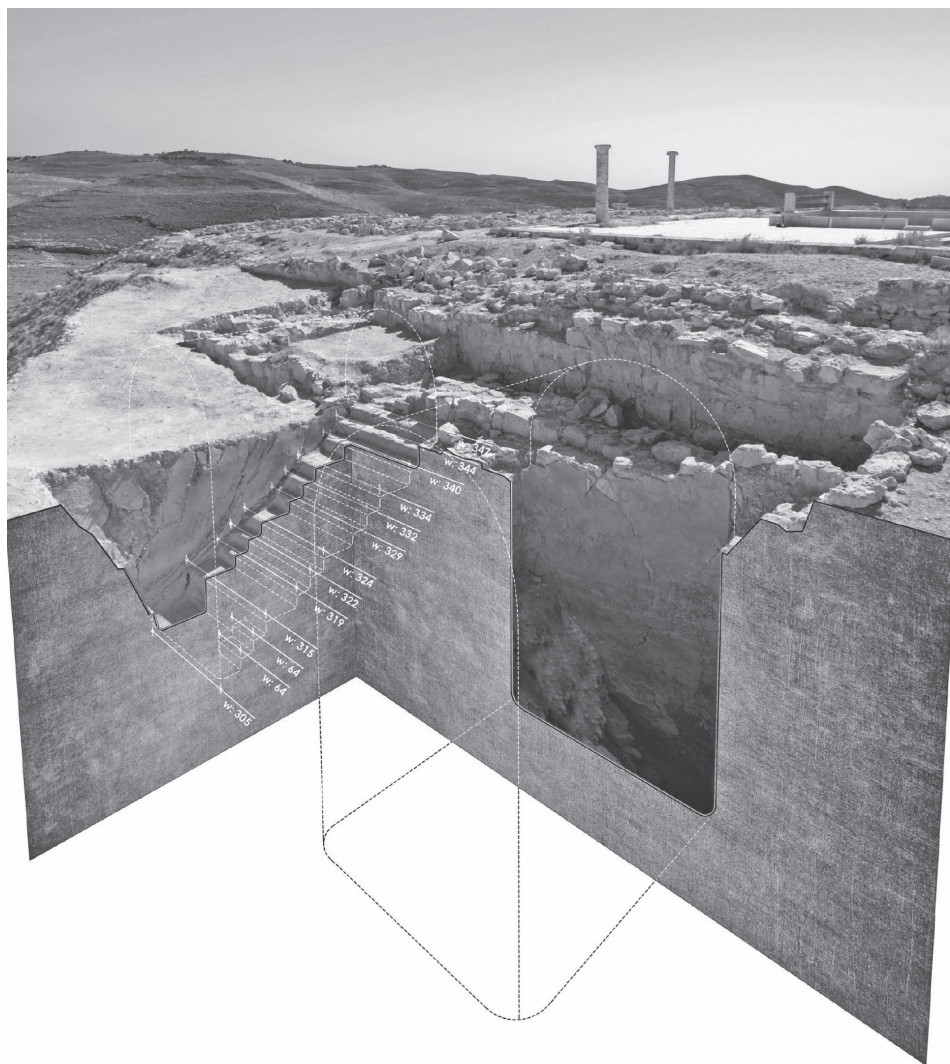


Fig. 18: This digital cutaway photograph schematically shows the architectural spaces of the tandem placed water pools with the plausible vaulted roofs above them. Calculating with an 80-centimeter-thick roof skin, the top of the half-cylinder roofs would be just below the floor level foundation of the Herodian royal courtyard.



Fig. 19: One of the archaeological storerooms in Mount Nebo Franciscan Monastery, during our 2017 evaluation process of the 1978–1981 Machaeriaca, including the he Herodian stucco works. *From right to left:* Father Amedeo Ricco OFM and Imre Balázs Arnóczki are working on the graphic documentation of the archaeological finds; Master István Őri-Kiss and Father Gianantonio Urbani are preparing the photo-documentation; the author is studying the fragments on the left.



Fig. 20: A unique Herodian floral decoration from the royal Ionic bathhouse of Machaerus. The forty-eight pieces of gypsum molding fragments had been discovered by the Franciscan archaeological excavations of Corbo in 1979, and were reconstructed by the research team of the Hungarian Academy of Arts in 2016–2017 (by Imre Balázs Arnóczy and Tamás Dobrosi), and restored by Maestro Franco Sciorilli in 2018 for the centennial birthday feast of the late Father Corbo.

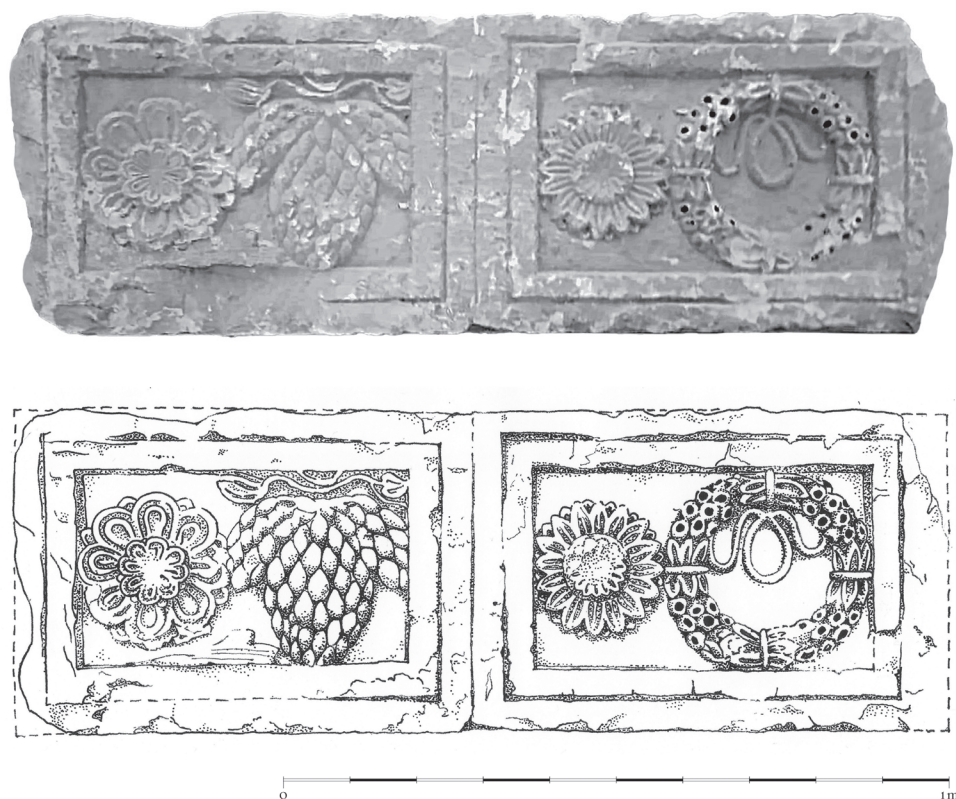


Fig. 21: On July 20, 2020, a beautiful Herodian limestone relief came to light on Mount Machaerus. It became a key in identifying the founder of the *Tomb of the Kings in Jerusalem* as King Herod the Great. The 138 × 52 cm relief is depicting two rectangular frames with Herodian symbols: two rosettes in the company of a grape cluster and a wreath, respectively. The tri-lobate bunch of grapes is an old Judean heraldic symbol, like a shield-form coat-of-arms of the Holy Land, that had been depicted later on the coins of Ethnarch Herod Archelaus and of Simon bar Kokhba as well. It is based on the Biblical story connected to Canaan and the spies of Moses, which says: “*They came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there they cut off a branch which had one bunch of grapes on it so heavy that it took two men to carry it on a pole between them. They also brought back some pomegranates and figs*” (Numbers 13:23). We may see the pomegranates on the accompanied royal wreath. The variety of Herodian rosettes are seemingly indefinite, as each of them have certain unique characteristics.

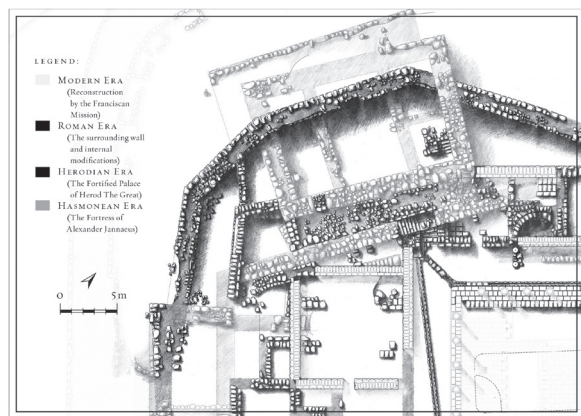


Fig. 22: After the 1993 Franciscan restoration project, the ruins of Machaerus reflect the same four building phases of monument construction in each historical period. This detail of the multicolored *upper* ground plan clearly indicates the relevant phases of building activities. On the *lower* illustration we may see the chronologically divided but mostly reused ancient built legacies in tricolor, without the modern interventions. The architectural layout of the archaeological ruins of the citadel, divided by the main corridor of the Herodian palace. One of the architectural spaces of the surviving place with intact, original roof, the vaulted mikveh, is marked in red. The map depicts the northern citadel-wing with the fourth tower, that was discovered during our 2016-2018 archaeological excavation seasons, and revealed the monumental



Herodian royal ritual bath (see *Figs. 16-18*), which is the largest mikveh ever discovered in Jordan.

Fig. 23: The apsidal ground wall of the Herodian throne niche in the royal courtyard, restored from original architectural elements by anastylosis technique, on the original foundations. In the area the original Herodian floor level is lost; probably a staircase led to the elevated throne seat (see *Fig. 29*). Below, Machaerus is shining as a real gem in the morning sunshine in 2014, with our new monument presentation, following the purification of the site; the authentic historical place is viewed from south (APAAME_20141013_RHB-0073).

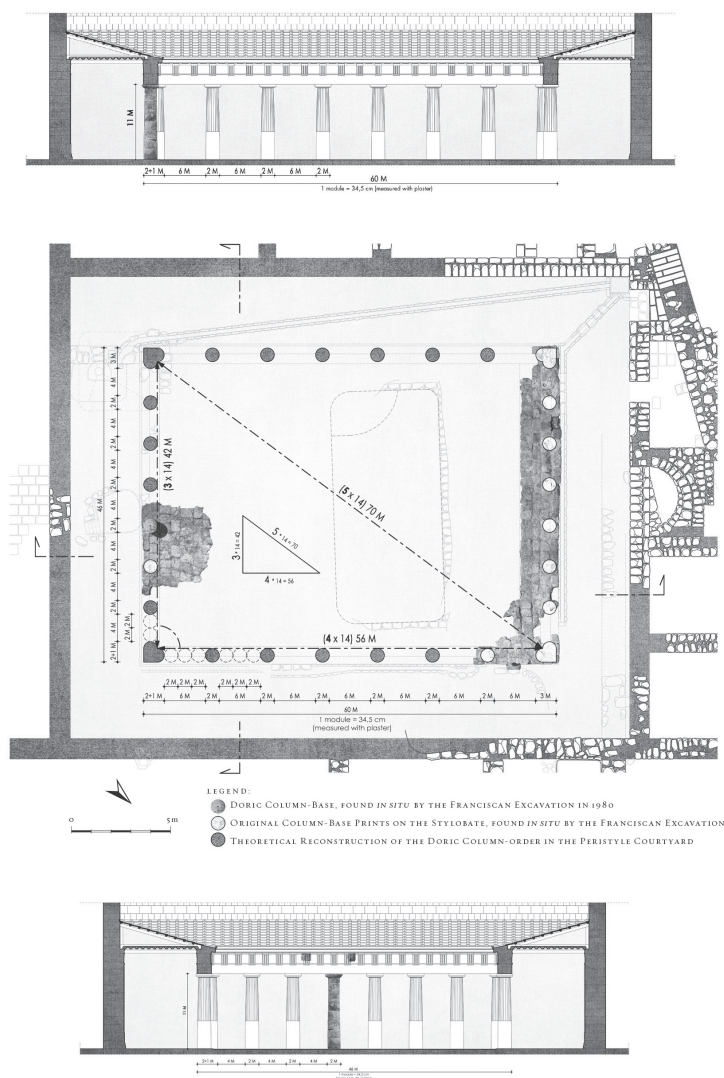
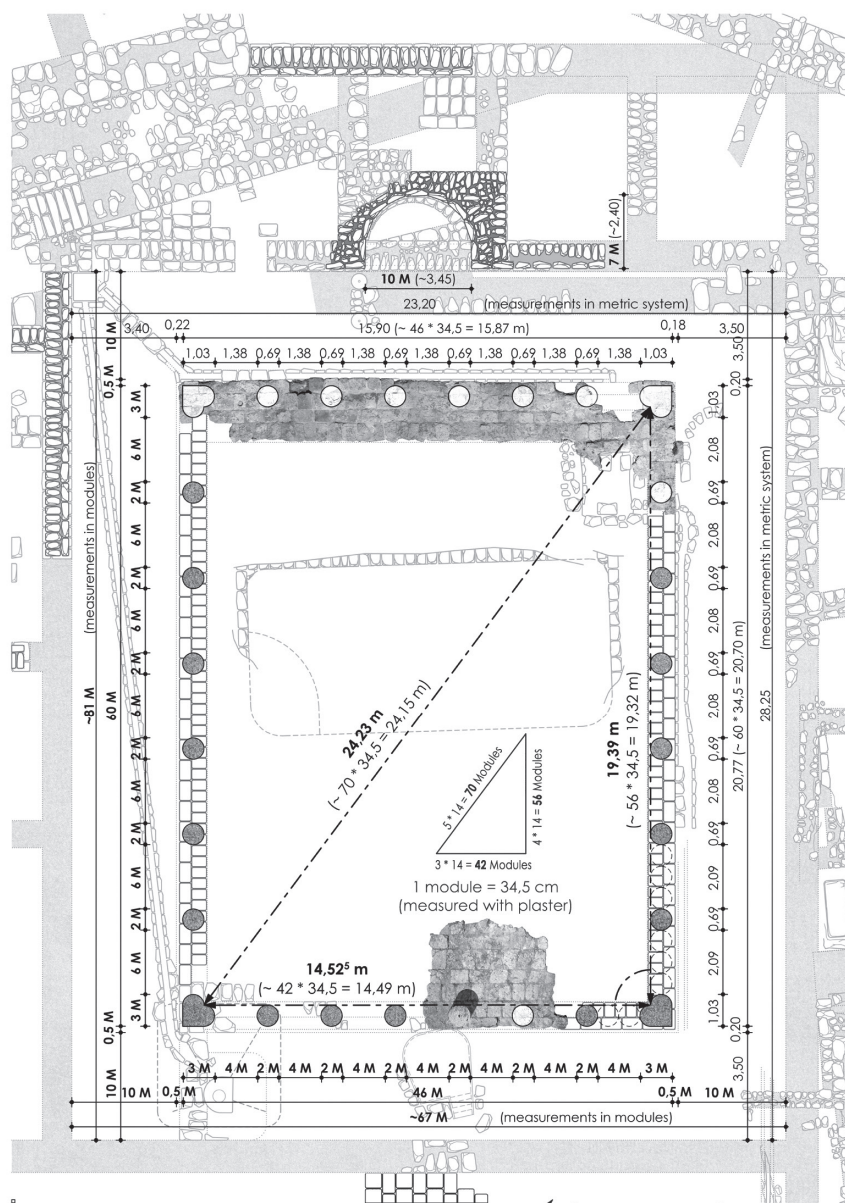


Fig. 24: The complete layout (*right*) of the royal Herodian lithostrotos (stone paved courtyard) on Mount Machaerus from the time of its foundation (around 30 BC) is characterized by the ancient architectural alignment system of the *pygme* module, or the Hellenistic lower-arm unit (34.5 cm). The archaeological ground plan of the reconstructed architectural space in the Herodian royal courtyard of Machaerus (*above*), together with the longitudinal (*top*) and cross (*below*) section drawings.



LEGEND:

-  DORIC COLUMN-BASE DRUM FOUND „IN SITU“ BY THE FRANCISCAN EXCAVATION
-  ORIGINAL COLUMN DRUM PRINTS ON THE STYLOBATE, FOUND BY THE FRANCISCAN EXCAVATION
-  THEORETICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE DORIC COLUMN-ORDER IN THE PERISTYLE COURTYARD

- RUINED, UNTOUCHED STRUCTURES FROM THE ANCIENT PERIODS
 REMAINING, RECONSTRUCTED WALL SEGMENTS BY THE FRANCISCAN EXCAVATION
 RECONSTRUCTED APSE BY THE HUNGARIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION



Fig. 25: The theoretical architectural reconstruction of the Herodian throne seat, superimposed on a photograph of the surviving and conserved ruins; cutaway view from north.