Herodâ€™s tomb reported found

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

A long search for HerÂ-od the Greatâ€™s tomb has ended with the disÂ-covÂ-ery of reÂ-mains of his graÂ-ve, sarÂ-cophÂ-aÂ-gus and mauÂ-soÂ-leÂ-um, acÂ-cordÂ-ing to arÂ-chaeÂ-oÂ-loÂ-gists.Palestineâ€™s Roman-appointed rulÂ-er at the time of JeÂ-susâ€™ birth, HerÂ-od is said in the BiÂ-ble to have orÂ-dered a slaughÂ-ter of baÂ-bies in orÂ-der to be rid of the child. AlÂ-though the tale is unÂ-conÂ-firmed, hisÂ-torÂ-iÂ-cal sources porÂ-tray him as havÂ-ing beÂ-come bloodÂ-thirsty in these latÂ-er years of his reign, among othÂ-er things killÂ-ing three of his own chilÂ-dren.

But HerÂ-od, who ruled from 37 to 4 B.C., was alÂ-so reÂ-nowned for monÂ-uÂ-menÂ-tal buildÂ-ing proÂ-jects. These inÂ-cludÂ-ed the reÂ-conÂ-strucÂ-tion of the TemÂ-ple in JeÂ-ruÂ-saÂ-lem, the palÂ-ace at Masada and his greatÂ-est proÂ-jecÂ-tâ€”a comÂ-plex at HerÂ-odÂ-ium, south of JeÂ-ruÂ-saÂ-lem, said arÂ-chaeÂ-oÂ-loÂ-gist Ehud NetÂ-zer of the HeÂ-brew UniÂ-verÂ-siÂ-ty of JeÂ-ruÂ-saÂ-lem. The poÂ-diÂ-um, or base, of HeÂ-rod's tomb. (CourÂ-teÂ-sy HeÂ-brew UniÂ-verÂ-siÂ-ty of JeÂ-ruÂ-saÂ-lem)

The reÂ-mains were unÂ-earthed there, at Mount HerÂ-oÂ-diÂ-umâ€™s northÂ-eastÂ-ern slope, NetÂ-zer added.HerÂ-odium is the onÂ-ly site that carÂ-ries HerÂ-odâ€™s name and is where he chose to be burÂ-ied and to meÂ-moÂ-riÂ-alÂ-ize himÂ-self, said NetÂ-zer, who conÂ-ducted the reÂ-search with colÂ-leagues and with the parÂ-tiÂ-ciÂ-paÂ-tion of loÂ-cal Bedouins. The team reached the burÂ-iÂ-al site via a monÂ-uÂ-menÂ-tal stairÂ-way leadÂ-ing to the hillÂ-side and built, they said, for HerÂ-odâ€™s exÂ-travÂ-aÂ-gant fuÂ-nerÂ-al proÂ-cesÂ-sion. ExÂ-caÂ-vaÂ-tions on the slope of the mounÂ-tain, topped by a famed comÂ-plex of a palÂ-ace, a forÂ-tress and a monÂ-uÂ-ment, beÂ-gan last AuÂ-gust.The loÂ-caÂ-tion, the unique naÂ-ture of the findÂ-ings and the hisÂ-torÂ-iÂ-cal recÂ-ord leave no doubt that this was HerÂ-odâ€™s burÂ-iÂ-al site, NetÂ-zer said. But the mauÂ-soÂ-leÂ-um itÂ-self was alÂ-most toÂ-talÂ-ly disÂ-manÂ-tled in anÂ-cient times, leavÂ-ing onÂ-ly part of its sturÂ-dy poÂ-diÂ-um, or base.Among the ruÂ-ins were a group of decÂ-oÂ-ratÂ-ed urns used to store ashÂ-es and chunks of a large, decÂ-oÂ-ratÂ-ed sarÂ-cophÂ-aÂ-gus of redÂ-dish limeÂ-stone and beÂ-lieved to be HerÂ-odâ€™s own, the reÂ-searchÂ-ers said. NoÂ-taÂ-bly, this was broÂ-ken inÂ-to hunÂ-dreds of pieces, no doubt deÂ-libÂ-erÂ-ateÂ-ly, acÂ-cordÂ-ing to NetÂ-zer and colÂ-leagues.JewÂ-ish rebels apÂ-parÂ-entÂ-ly deÂ-stroyed the monÂ-uÂ-ment in the years 66-72 durÂ-ing the first JewÂ-ish reÂ-volt against the RoÂ-mans, NetÂ-zer said. That is when rebels took over the site, acÂ-cordÂ-ing to the conÂ-temÂ-poÂ-rary hisÂ-toÂ-riÂ-an JoÂ-seÂ-phus, who also led that upÂ-risÂ-ing. The rebels were known for their haÂ-tred of HerÂ-od and all he stood for, as what they saw as a pupÂ-pet rulÂ-er for the RoÂ-mans, though HerÂ-od saw himÂ-self as a Jew.JoÂ-seÂ-phus deÂ-scribed HerÂ-odâ€™s fuÂ-nerÂ-al as magÂ-nifÂ-iÂ-cent, writÂ-ing: â€œThe bier was of solÂ-id gold, studÂ-ded with preÂ-cious stones, and had a coÂ-vering of purÂ-ple, emÂ-broiÂ-dered with varÂ-iÂ-ous colÂ-ors; on this lay the body enÂ-velÂ-oped in purÂ-ple robe, a diÂ-aÂ-dem enÂ-cirÂ-cling the head and surÂ-mounted by a crown of gold, the scepÂ-ter beÂ-side his right hand.â€•

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