

HERODIUM

Final Reports of the 1972–2010 Excavations
Directed by Ehud Netzer

Volume I **Herod's Tomb Precinct**

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Color Plates

CHAPTER 11
THE METAL ARTIFACTS
FROM THE AREA OF THE MAUSOLEUM

Ravit Nenner-Soriano

Presented in this report are 26 items selected from a large group of metal artifacts found during the excavations of the area of Herod's tomb precinct at Herodium, including an assemblage of military items such as arrowheads, *caliga* hobnails, and a fibula (for a discussion of this assemblage, see Chapter 12).

All the items under discussion here date from the Early Roman period (from the first century BCE up to the first century CE), i.e., from the establishment of Herodium by King Herod up to the First Jewish Revolt, and in some cases even up to the Bar-Kokhba Revolt (first third of the second century CE). A large group of the artifacts came from a refuse dump — exposed between the ruins of the mausoleum and those of the late stairway — created at the end of the First Jewish Revolt by the Roman army who took control of the Mountain Palace-Fortress and apparently cleaned up 'garbage' left there by the earlier occupants (for a discussion, see Chapter 3).

The artifacts from this area were fragile and poorly preserved. They are presented here in typological groups and the most intact example of each type was chosen for publication. They include: pins (nos. 1–3), two plates (nos. 4–5), one finger ring (no. 6), three rings (nos. 7–9), two tacks (nos. 10–11), and a collection of unique items (nos. 12–15). Finally, there is a group of thin, copper-alloy plates variously bent (nos. 16–20), a group of iron nails (representing the most common find in the area; nos. 21–23), and hooks (nos. 24–26). The scantiness of personal, everyday items in this assemblage is significant.

The corpus includes almost all the artifacts made of copper alloy found in this area (19 objects), one silver item (no. 13), and seven iron objects out of a large group of iron fragments. In addition, a large group of lead items was found, including one very large sheet and a group of smaller, undefined fragments (Ill. 11.1). They can be dated to the period between the erection of the tomb and the Bar-Kokhba Revolt. It is worthy of note that lead was used around the iron clamps in the construction of the mausoleum (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of the clamps inserted in the *tholos*' architrave blocks). Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the lead items under discussion were the raw material for this manufacture.



Ill. 11.1. Large lead sheet and a group of smaller, undefined fragments found during the excavations in the tomb area at Herodium.

CATALOGUE

PERSONAL ITEMS (nos. 1–9)

This category includes nine items for personal, everyday use, including cosmetic tools (two pins and a fragment of a rod's top), two plates that were probably used as mirrors, and four rings. An additional finger ring was found together with a gemstone in the aforementioned refuse dump (Stage 4), and is described separately in Chapter 15.

Pins and rod (nos. 1–3)

Two pins and one rod head were found in the area under discussion. They are simple items and only one of them (no. 1) has a small spiral decoration. These three items date to the First Jewish Revolt or later. Pins of this type were commonly used for cosmetic purposes, but in some cases they served for medical use (for further discussion, see Bliquez 1994: 46). In most cases, only the context can determine this distinction. Pins of this type were found at Masada (Krause 2005: Pl. 1: 7–8) and are dated to the first century CE.

1. L.A2582–5138 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 1)

Copper-alloy pin; almost complete; length: 10.6 cm, thickness: 0.2 cm.

A straight and simple pin with a round cross section, pointed at one end and thickening toward the other (thickness: 0.4 cm). A simple spiral decoration is located in the middle and on the pointed end of the pin.

2. L.A2588–5187 (Phase 4a–Stage 6) (Pl. 11.I: 2)

Copper-alloy pin; fragment; length: 9.5 cm, thickness: 0.4 cm.

A straight and simple pin with a round cross section. It lacks the pointed end and thickens toward the other end (thickness: 0.6 cm). A copper-alloy wire is present in the core of the pin.

3. L.A2590–5175/2 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 3)

Copper-alloy rod head; fragment; diam. of the head: 0.8 cm; thickness of the rod: 0.3 cm.

A ball head tops a rod fragment with a rounded

cross section that is bent almost at 90°. It was found together with a ring (no. 9).

Plates (nos. 4–5)

Two plates were found in the area under discussion. One (no. 4) is dated to Herod's reign, and the other (no. 5) to the First Jewish Revolt or later. These plates probably served as mirrors.

4. L.A12246–10482 (Stage 2) (Pl. 11.I: 4)

Copper-alloy plate; almost complete; diam.: 4.9 cm; thickness: 0.2 cm.

A flat plate smoothed on one side, with diagonally cut and toothed edges.

5. L.A2891–6497 (Stage 4) (Pl. 11.I: 5)

Copper-alloy plate; fragment; diam.: 16.2 cm; thickness: 0.3 cm.

A flat and simple plate with diagonally cut edge.

Similar mirrors were found at sites dated to the first–second centuries CE, such as in the Cave of Letters (Yadin 1963: 125, Fig. 48, Pl. 38) and at Jericho (Nenner-Soriano 2013: Pl. 11.2: 25).

Finger ring (no. 6) and rings (nos. 7–9)

One finger ring and three rings were found in the area under discussion. Almost all came from the refuse dump dated to the First Jewish Revolt or later, apart from no. 7 which can be dated to Herod's reign. The finger ring (no. 6) is simple with a bezel. The other three rings (nos. 7–9) are also simple and might have been used as hinges or as parts of small boxes.

6. L.A12263–10730 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 6)

Iron finger ring; almost complete; diam.: 1.8 cm, thickness: 0.2 cm.

A small ring with an almost round bezel (1×1.1 cm, thickness: 0.6 cm). An identical finger ring was found in the refuse dump (L.A2655), and is discussed in Chapter 15.

This type of finger ring is common in sites dated to the Second Temple period. For example, a group of them was found in Area E in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem, dating to the second half of the first

century BCE (Gutfeld and Nenner-Soriano 2006: Pl. 12.1: M14–M18).

7. L.A12246–10483/1 (Stage 2) (Pl. 11.I: 7)

Iron ring; fragment; diam.: 2.1 cm, thickness: 0.7 cm.

A ring with an elliptic cross section. It could have been the hoop part of a finger ring, similar to no. 6, above.

8. L.A2651–5348 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 8)

Copper-alloy ring; complete; diam.: 2.1 cm, thickness: 0.3 cm.

A ring with a round cross section and ridges on the band. This type of ring was found as part of small boxes (Edelshtein 2002: Fig. 25.9). A group of ridged rings from the first century CE was revealed in the Burnt House in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem (Nenner-Soriano 2010: Pl. 8.2: 28–32).

9. L.A2590–5175/1 (Phase 4b–Stage 5) (Pl. 11.I: 9)

Copper-alloy ring; complete; diam.: 1.6 cm, thickness: 0.3×0.1 cm.

A simple ring with a rectangular cross section. It was found together with a rod head (no. 3).

TACKS (nos. 10–11)

Two of the three tacks that were found in the area under discussion are presented here. One (no. 11) came from the refuse dump and dates to the First Jewish Revolt or later, and the other (no. 10) was dated between the two revolts (up to the beginning of the second century CE), while the third one (similar to no. 10; not included in the plate) was found in L.A2922, dated to the First Jewish Revolt. All of them have a hollow dome head and a shank with a square cross section. A similar tack was found in Area E of the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem (Gutfeld and Nenner-Soriano 2006: Pl. 12.1: M6) and dates to the first century BCE.

10. L.A2644–5356 (Stages 4–5) (Pl. 11.I: 10)

Copper-alloy tack; complete; diam.: 1.5 cm; height: 2.9 cm; thickness of the shank: 0.2 cm.

11. L.A2651–5378 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 11)

Copper-alloy tack; fragment; diam.: 2.1 cm; thickness of the shank: 0.2 cm.

VARIA (nos. 12–15)

12. L.A2758–6139 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 12)

Copper-alloy disk; complete; diam.: 2.3 cm, thickness: 0.1 cm.

A round disk with a raised center (height: 0.4 cm) and a hole in the middle (diam.: 0.5 cm). It was found in the refuse dump dated to the First Jewish Revolt of later.

13. L.A2650–12585 (Stage 4) (Pl. 11.I: 13)

Silver ball; complete; diam.: 0.6 cm, weight: 0.84 gm.

A solid ball that probably served as part of a rattle. It can be dated to the First Jewish Revolt or later.

14. L.A2544–5069 (Stages 2–4) (Pl. 11.I: 14)

Copper-alloy inlay; fragment; thickness: 0.5 cm.

An inlay with a rectangular cross section. On the upper part there is a central spine (width: 0.7 cm) with a decorative 'wing' on one side (the other side is missing). The bottom part is smoothed very carefully. This fragment was probably part of a decoration for a piece of furniture or a container, the pierced hole on one side being intended for the insertion of a connecting tack. It can be dated from Herod's reign up to the First Jewish Revolt.

15. L.A2752–6155 (Stages 2–6) (Pl. 11.I: 15)

Copper-alloy frame; fragment; width: 1 cm; thickness: 0.2 cm.

A frame with a U- or gutter-shaped cross section. It could have been part of a piece of furniture or a container frame. It is dated to Herod's reign or later. A group of similar frame fragments from the first century CE was found in the Burnt House in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem (Nenner-Soriano 2010: Pl. 8.1: 11–12).

Thin bent plates (nos. 16–20)

Five examples of bent plates are presented here. They are all very thin copper-alloy plates; no. 16

consists of four plates joined together by tacks, no. 17 is bent in half, and nos. 18–20 are rolled into a cone. The last-mentioned three can be identified as conical ferrules, the purpose of which was probably to protect the end of wooden sticks. In a military context they usually protected the butts of spears, but the fact that they have also been found at civilian sites confirms that this was not their sole use (Manning 1985: 140–141, Pl. 66: 557–583). Remains of organic material were found inside one of the rolled plates (no. 19). The purpose of the rest of the plates is not clear. They might have been used as decorative inlays. Almost all of them came from the refuse dump and can be dated to the First Jewish Revolt or later. Only one (no. 17) was found elsewhere, but can be dated to the same period.

16. L.A2584–5148 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 16)
Copper-alloy plates; fragments; width: 2.1 cm; thickness: 0.2 cm.

Four rectangular or square plates of different sizes, joined to one another by tacks (length: 0.3 cm; diam. of the heads: 0.8 cm). The connected plates form a round shape. This item could have been used as an inlay for a box or a piece of furniture. It was found in the refuse dump and can be dated to the First Jewish Revolt or later.

17. L.A2800–6270 (Stage 4) (Pl. 11.I: 17)
Copper-alloy plate; fragment; width: 1.5 cm; thickness: 0.05 cm.

A very thin plate bent in half and broken on both sides. It features a hole in one corner. This is one of a few items with the same shape, found in this area. It is dated to the First Jewish Revolt or later.

18. L.A2828–6343 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 18)
Copper-alloy conical ferrules; almost complete; length: 3.4 cm; diam.: 1.5×0.8 cm.

Three very thin plates (thickness: 0.05 cm) rolled one inside the other into a cone. On the outermost plate, there are three dots in a vertical line projecting from it.

19. L.A2655–5398 (Stage 4) (Pl. 11.I: 19)
Copper-alloy conical ferrule; almost complete; length: 5.3 cm; diam.: 1–0.5 cm.

A single plate (thickness: 0.1 cm) rolled into a

cone. Organic material was found inside the cone (perhaps the remains of a wooden stick).

20. L.A2651–5379 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 20)
Copper-alloy conical ferrule (?); almost complete; length: 5.9 cm; width: 2.1 cm; thickness: 0.1 cm.

A thin plate bent on one side into a point, and broken on the other side.

Nails (nos. 21–23)

Three iron nails (the most complete ones) from a large group of nail fragments are presented here. They are the most common metal find in this area. Most of them were found in the refuse dump, and thus originated from the Mountain Palace-Fortress. Almost all have a round, flat head and a straight shank with a square cross section, while some feature a hollow, dome head. Nails of this type are usually associated with carpentry work such as ceilings, shelving, and furniture. A large group of iron nails was found along the walls of the rooms of the Burnt House in Area B in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem (Nenner-Soriano 2010: 254–255, Pl. 8.3: M52–53, Photo 8.5).

21. L.A2762–6154/1 (Stages 4–5) (Pl. 11.I: 21)
Iron nail; almost complete; length: 10.2 cm.

A nail with a straight shank square in cross section (thickness: 0.7 cm); the head is small, round and flat (diam.: 2 cm, thickness: 0.7 cm).

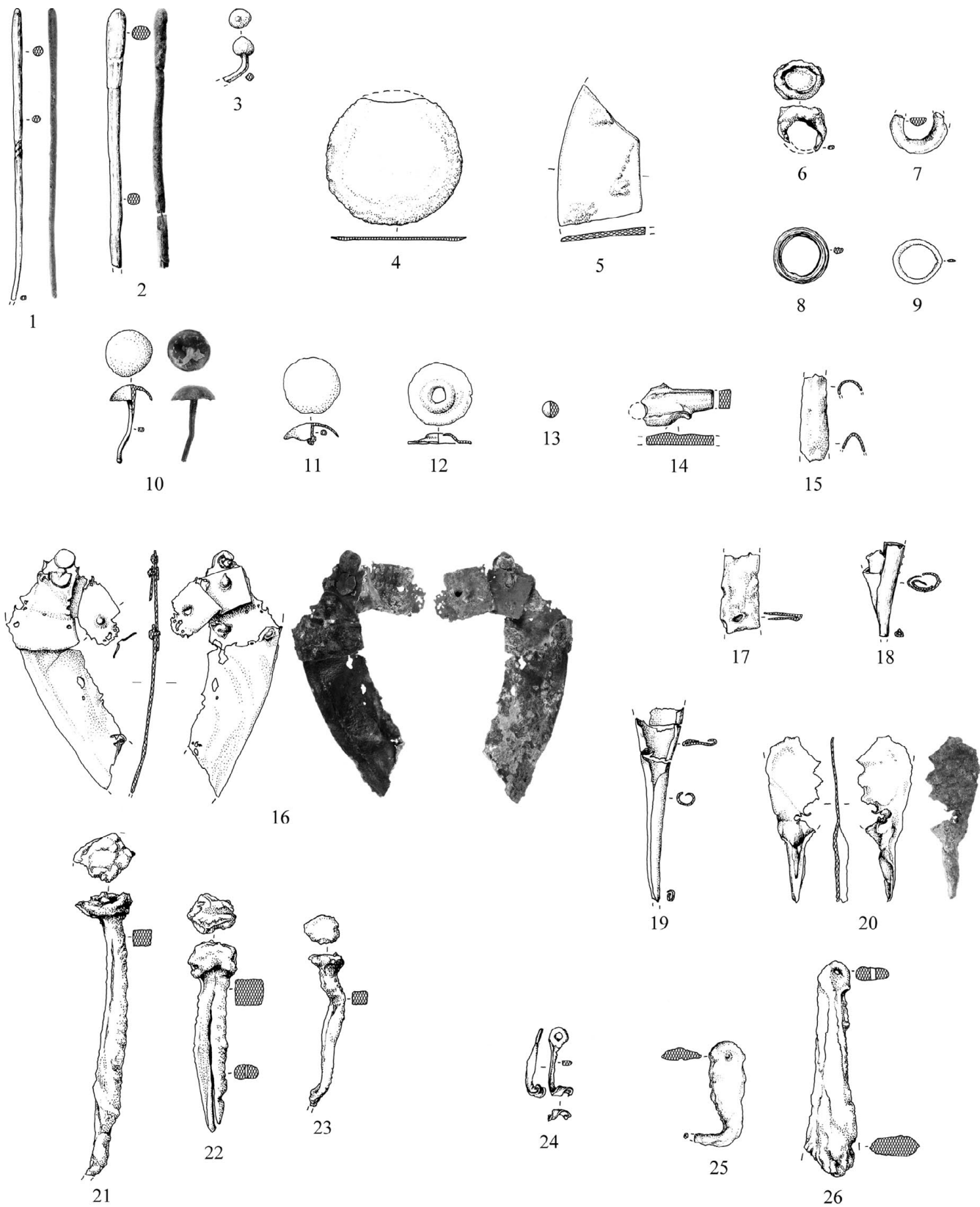
22. L.A2604–5273 (Phase 4a) (Pl. 11.I: 22)
Iron nail; complete; length: 7 cm.

A nail with a straight shank square in cross section (thickness: 1.1 cm); the head is round and flat (diam.: 1.8 cm, thickness: 1 cm). The shank is split in half as a result of corrosion.

23. L.A2746–6103 (Stages 2–5) (Pl. 11.I: 23)
Iron nail; complete; length: 5.6 cm.

A nail with a slightly twisted shank square in cross section (thickness: 0.7 cm); the head is round and flat (diam.: 1.2 cm, thickness: 0.5 cm).

HERODIUM I: HEROD'S TOMB PRECINCT



0 2cm.

Pl. 11.I. Selection of metal artifacts found during the excavations in the tomb area at Herodium.

HINGE AND HOOK (nos. 24–26)

24. L.A2806–6279 (Stages 4–6) (Pl. 11.I: 24)

Copper-alloy hinge; complete; length: 2.6 cm; thickness: 0.4×0.2 cm.

A hinge with a rectangular cross section, made of a single piece of metal. The top is flat and round with a central hole (diam.: 0.2 cm) for a nail. The other side has a 90° bend and is curly at the end.

25. L.A2651–5377/1 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 25)

Iron hook; complete; length: 3.9 cm; width: 1.5 cm; thickness: 0.6 cm.

A hook with a round cross section (thickness: 1.5

cm). One end widens and has a hole for a nail, while the other end has a 90° bend.

Parallels from the first century BCE and the first century CE were found in Area E in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem (Gutfeld and Nenner-Soriano 2006: Pl. 12.3: M35), and in the Burnt House in Area B (Nenner-Soriano 2010: Pl. 8.3: 49).

26. L.A12263–10729 (Phase 4b) (Pl. 11.I: 26)

Iron item; fragment; length: 7.9 cm; width: 1.2 cm.

An undefined item with a rectangular cross section (thickness: 0.9 cm). One end is rounded with a hole in the middle (diam.: 0.2 cm), while the other end is wider and broken. This item could have been a hook or the handle of some tool.

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