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# Herodias, Salomé, and John the Baptist's Beheading: A Case Study of the Topos of the Heretical Woman

## **Cover Page Footnote**

Jennifer Lassley Knight graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 2016 with a Master of Arts in history and two graduate minors in ancient Mediterranean studies and religion.

## **Herodias, Salomé, and John the Baptist's Beheading: A Case Study of the *Topos* of the Heretical Woman**

*“Neither at things, nor at people should one look. Only in mirrors should one look, for mirrors do but show us masks.”*

— Oscar Wilde, *Salomé*

Fade into the third decade of the Common Era, Palestine. Another political agitator in Judaea has been silenced, executed under the reign of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee.<sup>1</sup> This particular demagogue was bizarre to many, yet dangerously intriguing to others; an ascetic hermit who feasted on locusts and wild honey and wore clothes made from camel hair. Preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near,” he baptized many in the river Jordan and challenged the status quo of both Rome and the high priesthood of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> This man, John the Baptist, was a thorn in Antipas’s side, but one that was lodged especially deep. Rumors had circulated that he feared John to a certain degree, initially keeping him alive as a prisoner. While Antipas eventually ordered John’s execution, the mystery behind his hesitance remains.

The gospels allege that Antipas’s wife and stepdaughter, Herodias and Salomé,<sup>3</sup> respectively, influenced Antipas to overcome his reluctance to kill the prophesizing prisoner. John was said to have denounced Herodias’s marriage to Antipas as illegitimate, providing her with a possible motive for revenge. In a scheme with her daughter, Herodias achieved retribution against John, one of the few instances of women exercising significant power in the Bible. The circumstances under which Herodias and Salomé appear in the Christian Testament have consequently framed their portrait, which church tradition has preserved as an example of sinful, deviant, and heretical behavior. Like many women in the Bible, Herodias and Salomé have fallen

prey to androcentric symbolism of the heretical woman, a literary *topos* to justify male superiority.<sup>4</sup> The degree of influence that they had in the execution of John the Baptist, therefore, may have been deliberately constructed to convey the dangers of womanly influence and unorthodox behavior. It is more historically accurate to place a pragmatic, political responsibility on Antipas for John's execution. Despite this, his wife and stepdaughter have shouldered the blame for the first-century prophet's gruesome end. Why has the historicity been largely disregarded?

This paper will explore the possible answers to this question through an analysis of extrabiblical primary source literature alongside the gospel narratives of Mark, Matthew, and Luke. These primary sources include the writings of Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Josephus Flavius, Suetonius, and Bernard of Cluny. This paper will also incorporate the necessary secondary historical source material, with a special emphasis on the various perspectives from modern feminist scholars of the Bible and early Church history. Additionally, this research will briefly address this particular biblical narrative's contribution to the *femme fatale* complex in art and literature and its relative feminist interpretations. This methodology will reveal a constructive use of Herodias, Salomé, and their alleged role in John the Baptist's execution as a paradigm for understanding how the *topos* of the heretical woman developed throughout the different phases of this religious tradition, as well as within the context of Western patriarchal culture.

Although this story's role in Christian tradition has created obstacles for the historical study of Herodias and Salomé, it is still conceivable to extract a degree of underlying truth by analyzing the biblical patterns of feminine characterization and the corresponding postbiblical framework of heresy. The feminine noun *αἵρεσις* (*hairesis*) literally means "choice." The early church father Tertullian condemned those who make choices as evil; specifically those who

choose to ask questions regarding the nature of Christian tradition.<sup>5</sup> According to him, heretics find their confidence and inspiration from the devil, “to whom belong the wiles that distort the truth.”<sup>6</sup> Early church fathers used the term “heresy” to marginalize Christian groups who challenged their version of orthodoxy, with the Gnostics being their frequent target. This rhetoric, however, was not reserved for those who identified as Christian. Tertullian also classified Jews as heretics, a foundational mindset of early Christian antisemitism.

It is now possible for the heretic to learn, and the Jew as well, what he ought to know already, the reason for the Jews' errors: for from the Jew the heretic has accepted guidance in this discussion, the blind borrowing from the blind, and has fallen into the same ditch...Let the heretic now give up borrowing poison from the Jew—the asp, as they say, from the viper.<sup>7</sup>

New Testament scholar Bart D. Ehrman asserts, “Heresy represents a contamination of the original teachings of Christianity by ideas drawn from the outside, either from Jewish circles or from the teachings of pagan philosophers.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that the Herodians, who were both Jewish and heavily influenced by Graeco-Roman mores, would have been denounced in this way. Being female—in addition to all of this—led to even deeper modes of criticism.

Awareness of the historical context is essential for progressing towards a truthful analysis of Herodias and Salomé's role in John's beheading. The tumultuous political atmosphere of Judaea under Imperial Rome combined with the corrupting influence of the Herodian Dynasty left the majority of the public unsatisfied, to say the least. Like many powerful Roman families, the Herodians experienced their share of scandal and developed a generally negative reputation that is obvious throughout traditional Christian historiography. In addition to the notion of Jews as heretics, these misconceptions owe largely to the Massacre of the Innocents tale, Herod the Great's alleged attempt to eliminate the infant Jesus by means of killing every first-born boy in Judaea. This dramatically tragic story (found only in Matthew's gospel) is historically unsound.

The lack of literary, archaeological, and anthropological evidence for a systematic genocide during the Roman Imperial period—a time that was, on the whole, very well documented—gives little weight to the argument for historical authenticity.<sup>9</sup>

The mass infanticide as depicted in the Bible probably developed from Herod's decision to execute two of his own sons, which occurred around the same time as Jesus's birth.<sup>10</sup> Some scholars assume the author of Matthew constructed the story to convey the fulfillment of prophecies from the Hebrew Bible (such as passages in Hosea and Jeremiah), which would validate Jesus as the messiah.<sup>11</sup> This is one of many examples of the Christian Testament's use of history as a literary tactic. There are mountains of substantial historical source material for Herod's reign, yet the only mention of him in the Bible is from the Massacre of the Innocents narrative. From an historical point of view, it is undeniable that the Bible, while containing valuable perspectives, suffers from instances of aggrandizement and misconceptions that have made their way into postbiblical Christian literature. Supplementary research is necessary to help fill these gaps.

The Judeo-Roman historian Flavius Josephus constitutes the bulk of Jewish historical source material outside of the Christian Testament. Josephus used the writings of Herod's court historian, Nicolaus of Damascus, as his foundational source for the history of the Herodian Dynasty. While the accounts of Josephus are historically valuable, his biased perspective is at times problematic, especially regarding women. Israeli feminist historian Tal Ilan assesses that his writings "are replete with passages that place women precisely in a position to negatively influence political events through their intrigue, cunning, jealousy and capacity to bring shame through sexual misconduct." Ilan specifies further that these instances are concentrated in the texts that are devoted to the history of the Hasmonaean and Herodian dynasties, "a period for

which Josephus is principally dependent on Nicolaus of Damascus.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is very possible that a multi-layer bias towards royal Judaeen women was at play, comprising both Josephus and Nicolaus.

By taking the necessary historiographical precautions, one can consider both the biblical and extra-biblical source material for studying the Herodians and John the Baptist's execution. A central issue of this story concerns the marital history of Herodias and Antipas, which was one of John's most notable criticisms of the ruling family.<sup>13</sup> The Herodians engaged in complex, unconventional marital practices in general, but the marriage of Herodias and Antipas has been given particular attention in the Christian Testament.<sup>14</sup> While the initial polygamy of Herod left the dynasty's family tree a tangled web, the familial documentation from Josephus provides a degree of clarity.<sup>15</sup> In summary, Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus IV, making her Herod's granddaughter by way of his second wife, Mariamne the Hasmonaean. Most scholars agree that Herodias's first marriage was to Herod Philip I, her half-uncle and son of Herod's other wife, Mariamne II.<sup>16</sup> Salomé, then, was likely to have been Philip's daughter.

Meanwhile, Antipas—Herod's son via another wife known as Malthace the Samaritan—had been in a long-standing marriage with the daughter of Aretas IV, king of Nabataea. This politically charged alliance, possibly arranged by Augustus himself,<sup>17</sup> was crucial for the cultural development of the kingdom.<sup>18</sup> Josephus records that Antipas eventually fell in love with Herodias and persuaded her to leave his half-brother and marry him. She agreed, and Antipas arranged to oust his wife.<sup>19</sup> This lustful and impulsive decision would ruin his alliance with Nabataea, leading to border tensions and eventual warfare.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, Antipas and Herodias had violated sacred Levirate law, specifically in regard to sexual relations with a kinsman's wife.<sup>21</sup>

So far, it would appear that this marital transgression was primarily the fault of Antipas, yet Josephus seems to place a heavier liability on Herodias. He writes that “Herodias, taking it into her head to flout the way of our fathers, married Herod, her husband’s brother by the same father, who was tetrarch of Galilee; to do this she parted from a living husband.”<sup>22</sup> Contrastingly, Josephus uses the word *τολμῆ* (*tolma*) to describe Antipas’s proposal to Herodias, which translates to “bold,” “courageous,” or “daring.” This demonstrates suspicious gender dynamics of marital impropriety: Herodias leaving her husband was an imprudent mockery of ancestral tradition, whereas Antipas leaving his wife was a “bold” decision that resulted in a serious political headache. Thus, the *topos* of female function emerges in Josephus.

John the Baptist’s criticism of the marriage between Antipas and Herodias was the straw that broke the proverbial camel’s back. Fed up, Antipas had him arrested and imprisoned. The gospel of Mark describes the incident, and how Antipas became intrigued by his prisoner’s advice.

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.” And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him.<sup>23</sup>

Here, it is evident that the author of Mark assigned a sensitive guise to Antipas, while Herodias remained unmoved by John’s presence, fraught with resentment. The author of Matthew, on the other hand, portrays Antipas less sympathetically, writing, “Though Herod wanted to put [John] to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet.”<sup>24</sup> Here, Herodias’s vengefulness is less apparent. Luke’s gospel takes one step further and describes Antipas as an evildoer without any further detail of his relationship with John.<sup>25</sup> Only Mark and Matthew



provide accounts of the events that unfolded leading to John's beheading. At this point, the character of Salomé makes her infamous, albeit brief appearance.

Mark's account of Herod's birthday banquet opens with Salomé's controversial dance.

...She pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.<sup>26</sup>

Matthew's account is similar, but undermines the role of Herodias in the scheme.

...When Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." The king was grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he commanded it to be given; he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother.<sup>27</sup>

Biblical scholars and historians have taken notice to this shift of responsibility in Matthew. Ross Shephard Kraemer, for instance, suggests that this "awkward recasting" of "attributing Herod the desire to kill John but the actual instigation of the act to Herodias" indicates that the author of Matthew was aware of Herod's actual responsibility, but also had "a desire to correct the Gospel of Mark without altogether refuting it."<sup>28</sup>

Upon comparison of these two texts, both gospels agree that Herodias was behind the execution of John and used the convenient agency of her daughter's bewitchment. There is no indication that the mother and daughter planned the scheme in advance, however. At face value, the text implies that John's execution was spontaneous, which raises suspicion. Putting the issue of impulsiveness aside, it is historically questionable that one of the most powerful tetrarchs of

the Roman Empire would have justified such a serious decision by keeping his banquet guests entertained and his stepdaughter satisfied.

Furthermore, the story of Antipas's banquet is nowhere to be found in the works of Josephus, which postdate the composition of the gospels. Josephus blames Antipas entirely for the decision to execute John and even condemns him for putting to death "a good man [who] had exhorted the Jews to lead righteous lives [and] to practice justice towards their fellows and piety towards God..."<sup>29</sup> Herodias is absent here, which indicates that Josephus had no knowledge of her alleged involvement. Based on the pattern of his overall literary treatment of Herodian women (and Herodias specifically), it would make sense for him to jump at the chance to condemn her for her wrongdoing if he had access to the same reports as the authors of Mark and Matthew. The degree of Josephus's separation from the early Christian movement provides a sense of valuable objectivity, as he would have been impervious to their variety of bias.

While Christian sources tend to depict Herodias as the embodiment of evil, Josephus describes her as a stereotypical scheming woman who, while eager for power, remains loyal to her husband Antipas.<sup>30</sup> This comparison in literary trends demonstrates the contrast between religious symbolism and historicity. Considering this level of incompatibility, it is very possible that Herodias and Salomé had nothing to do with the execution of John the Baptist. Like the founder of their dynasty, Herod the Great, their general historical reputations provided the framework for Christian tradition to compose and maintain evil portraiture of them.

If one is not convinced thus far, there are other factors that contribute to the inauthenticity of Herodias and Salomé's involvement in John's death. Details regarding Salomé's age and participation in the dance, for instance, present another set of issues. The second century Christian writer Justin Martyr refers to Salomé as a *παῖς* (*pais*), which means "child."<sup>31</sup> The

gospels describe her as old enough to have danced impressively, but still a young girl no older than her early teens. The hereditary analysis Josephus provides is incompatible with Salomé's young age at the time of John's death.<sup>32</sup> Kraemer notes "some scholars have suggested that she could have been as old as nineteen, but such arguments have been formulated to resolve tensions between the Gospels and the few fixed chronological points in the historical Salomé's life."<sup>33</sup>

Considering these implications, it is not baseless to consider the possibility that the accounts in the gospels were fallaciously composed. Nonetheless, many early church fathers used them as fundamental source material for recounting history. In his conversation with Trypho the Jew, for example, Justin Martyr describes how Salomé's mother "instigated her to ask the head of John" after pleasing Antipas with her dancing.<sup>34</sup> This basic regurgitation of the biblical narrative in patristic texts reinforced the framework that eventually led to more elaborate constructions, often in the form of literary weaponry against female influence.

One of the most aggressive examples of this can be seen in the Benedictine monk Bernard of Cluny's lengthy poem, *De contemptu mundi* ('*On the Contempt for the World*'). Written in the twelfth century, this excerpt refers to the feminine function in John the Baptist's execution, along with other instances of biblical women:

All her acts, not only guilty, but good, you may condemn.  
 John the Baptist accused her crime and died by the sword.  
 Because of her Hippolytus also fell, Ammon fell,  
 Because of her Joseph is confined and your locks shorn, Samson,  
 Because of her Ruben, David, Solomon, Adam sink down.  
 She gives, acts, bears herself so that decency perishes—whence we perish.<sup>35</sup>

In his tirade, Bernard managed to construct a generalized personification of female evil based on the downfalls of men in the Bible. Early Church historian Virginia Burrus explains that this kind of heresiological source material was typically "written from the point of view of a self-identified orthodoxy" by men who used the *topos* of the heretical woman "as a vehicle for the

negative expression of their own orthodox male self-identity.”<sup>36</sup> This literary phenomenon, which is unmistakable in Bernard of Cluny’s *De Contemptu Mundi*, demonstrates how the *topos* of the heretical woman has shaped the portraiture of powerful women throughout biblical history.

The artistic and literary genre of the *Weibermacht*, or “Power of Women,” is a fundamental manifestation of this that appears in both classical and biblical subjects. This medieval and Renaissance-era depiction of feminine dominance over the typical heroic man presents what art historian Maryan Wynn Ainsworth describes as “an admonitory and often humorous inversion of the male-dominated sexual hierarchy.”<sup>37</sup> On a deeper level, art historian Susan L. Smith describes how the function of the *Weibermacht* was

...Deployed to lend its exemplary weight to every commonplace of early medieval misogyny: women are now presented not only as passive embodiments of lust, but as actively malicious, the enemies of men and determined to dominate them, seductive, deceitful, vicious through and through.<sup>38</sup>

Aside from Herodias and Salomé, other women from the Bible who are commonly depicted via the *Weibermacht* include Judith, Delilah, Jael, and Bathsheba.

As the portraiture of these women becomes clearer, more sociological facets concurrently emerge. While the heretical woman was meant to serve as an example of an undesirable persona, this *topos* was not restricted to the female gender. Men often used similar rhetoric to slander other men; the effeminate male is the product of compromised masculinity, and is therefore on par with the heretical female. Ancient historian Kate Cooper connects this concept to Roman rhetoric and the male obsession with reputation. The “public man” had to constantly justify his claim to honor while under the scrutiny of both the aristocratic elite and the larger domain of society. To avoid criticism and disparagement, he was expected to conquer paradoxical task of demonstrating his trustworthiness while also prudently identifying his weaknesses in body, mind,

or will. His standing, therefore, “was subject to the flux of ascendancy between his supporters and detractors, and to a corresponding fluctuation in deployment of narrative.”<sup>39</sup> Considering the likelihood that many of these men in powerful positions projected their own self-consciousness onto their feminine counterparts, one can see why the portraits of ancient women in religious, political, and social contexts were subject to such categorical scrutiny. They were the product of cultivated scapegoatism.

When this Roman rhetorical notion is applied to the power dynamic between Antipas and Herodias, the *topos* of assigning her the blame becomes clearer. Professor of theology Mary Rose D’Angelo points out that this is one of a few stories in the Bible that “deploy central women characters as foils for male characters.”<sup>40</sup> Again, this is also evident in extra-biblical texts. Josephus, for example, was writing in Rome, for a Roman audience, using the perspective of a man (Nicolaus of Damascus) who was particularly bitter towards the women of the Herod’s court. Thus, the story in the Bible is not the only text to blame for the historical misunderstanding of Herodias and Salomé.

Tal Ilan makes important mention that “many ancient histories, beginning with Herodotus, accord royal women a major role in influencing events through their counsel, intrigue, and sexual responsibility.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, the authors mentioned up to this point were not the only men who believed (and feared) that women were capable of domination through their cunning and craft. This has allowed for the stock persona of the *femme fatale* to manifest itself via the romanticization of these stories of women throughout history.

Indeed, the *femme fatale* complex of Herodias and Salomé has intrigued the world. Famously depicted in art and literature for centuries—Salomé as the naive seductress, her mother as the malevolent conniver—their characters have blurred the line between condemnation and

celebration of feminine power. The renowned playwright, Oscar Wilde, embellished the biblical narrative in his eccentric *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act* by developing a forbidden love affair between Johannes (John the Baptist) and princess Salomé. With Herodias as a secondary component to the story, Salomé exploits her lust and deviousness that lead up to the prisoner's beheading. Wilde's late-nineteenth century play not only popularized the study of women in the Bible, but also significantly changed the artistic world of the *femme fatale*. Although some modern perceptions of Herodias and Salomé's portraiture may channel elements of feminist power, the *topos* of the heretical woman has remained entrenched in their representation.

There have been efforts to "own" the negative imagery of women in the Bible as a way to reclaim femininity. Ironically, celebrating the *femme fatale* complex has resulted in an even deeper inherence of misogyny. Virginia Burrus elaborates, "in the process of glorifying the heretical woman, those of us who attempt to reconstruct the history of women in ancient Christianity have ironically embraced women's marginalization in so far as we have failed to break free from the inherently androcentric dichotomy of 'right-thinking male' and 'heretical female.'"<sup>42</sup> As demonstrated, this is not only an historical problem, but also one of sociology. French intellectual and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu assesses that both men and women are guilty of "[embodying] the historical structures of the masculine order in the form of unconscious schemes of perception and appreciation." Bourdieu concludes, arguably fatalistically, that even in the attempt to understand this ingrained androcentrism, society is unfortunately susceptible to tactics, methodologies, and modes of thought that are products of masculine domination itself.<sup>43</sup>

Unpacking the *topos* and symbolism of the heretical woman, both in biblical texts and postbiblical literature, yields a level of understanding for why Herodias and Salomé were given a role in John the Baptist's execution. A rhetorical deconstruction of Roman masculinity and the

purported “dangers” of men in positions of power succumbing to womanly influence reveals even more about their characterization in the gospels. It makes sense that these Herodian women could have been instruments in a deliberate construction to convey the dangers of female influence. Evidently, it also makes sense to place a pragmatic responsibility on Antipas for the decision to execute John. Despite all of this, the culpability of his wife and stepdaughter remains.

The consistent specious treatment of this story is certainly a product of the androcentric framework of the Christian Testament, but one should also question the degree to which the feminist misconception of “owning” the ideals of the heretical woman has also contributed to this phenomenon. After exploring the *femme fatale* complex of Herodias and Salomé in art and literature, one could argue that even seemingly innocuous feminist responses to these depictions have indirectly contributed to the overlooking of historical authenticity. This is an introspective sociological question that extends far beyond the narrative of Herodias, Salomé, and the *topos* of heresy. Nevertheless, the essence of this case study has demonstrated its capacity for analytical depth with regard to modern interpretations of gender.

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### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In the Bible, Herod Antipas is referred to as “King Herod” or “Herod.” It is important to distinguish between his father and brothers who were also named Herod. To avoid confusion, this paper will refer to Herod the Great as “Herod,” Herod Antipas as “Antipas,” Herod Philip I as “Philip,” etc.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 3:2.

<sup>3</sup> Her name is unclear in the Christian Testament, but Josephus reveals that she was known as Salomé.

<sup>4</sup> The classical Greek term τόπος (*topos*) refers to a standardized rhetorical method for constructing or treating an argument.

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* 6-7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 40; Elaine Pagels, *The Origin of Satan: How Christians Demonized Jews, Pagans, and Heretics* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 165.

<sup>7</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.7-8.

<sup>8</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6.

<sup>9</sup> Geza Vermes, *The True Herod* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 42; Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 297-8; Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), 165-230.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Richardson discusses this theory further. “It seems likely that Herod’s killing of his own children prompted the report of his murder of a larger group of children. It is for this New Testament account that Herod has been remembered in stained glass and sculpture, especially in the medieval period that so loved the drama of extreme actions. Of the execution of his own children, the more terrible act, there is hardly a trace.” See Richardson, 288.

<sup>11</sup> Brown, 204-5, 226-7.

<sup>12</sup> Tal Ilan, *Integrating Women into Second Temple History* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 97.

<sup>13</sup> See Deut. 25.5 on Levirate law.

<sup>14</sup> According to Geza Vermes, “The Herodians face us with truly amazing marital complexities.” See Vermes, 124.

<sup>15</sup> Historian Martin Goodman explains that polygamy was legal but rare in practice, and divorce or separation was not uncommon and could even have been initiated by women. But, “since Josephus protests against it as unlawful, it is not likely that this practice was widespread.” See Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt Against Rome A.D. 66-70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 70.

<sup>16</sup> For a thorough argument for this claim, see Harold Hoehner, *Herod Antipas* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 133-6.

<sup>17</sup> Suetonius writes that Augustus “followed a policy of linking together his royal allies by mutual ties of friendship or intermarriage, which he was never slow to propose” (*Life of Augustus*, 48).

<sup>18</sup> Richardson, 307.

<sup>19</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.109-110. It is unclear as to whether Herodias divorced her husband or simply deserted him.

<sup>20</sup> Menahem Stern notes, “Aretas regarded the matter as a personal insult, and considered it sufficient cause for a renewal of hostilities. Border incidents soon led to a major battle, in which the Nabataeans defeated the forces of Herod Antipas.” See Stern, “Herod Antipas and Philip” in Michael Avi-Yonah (ed.), *The World History of the Jewish People: The Herodian Period* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1975).

<sup>21</sup> See Leviticus 18:20. See also Leviticus 18:16; 20:21.

<sup>22</sup> *Ant.* 18.136-137.

<sup>23</sup> Mark 6:17-20.

<sup>24</sup> Matthew 14:5.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 3:19-20.

<sup>26</sup> Mark 6:22-28.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 14:1-11.

<sup>28</sup> Ross Shepard Kraemer, “Herodias 1” in Toni Craven, Ross Shepherd Kraemer and Carol Meyers (eds.), *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 93.

<sup>29</sup> *Ant.* 18.116-117.



<sup>30</sup> Kraemer, "Herodias 1," 93-94.

<sup>31</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 49.

<sup>32</sup> John's execution probably occurred between 27-33 C.E. Josephus's dating of Salomé's two marriages (the first to a certain Philip, the second to a cousin Aristobulus) are inconsistent with her age as a young girl on the night of John's death. For a more detailed summary of these dating issues, see Kraemer, "Salome 2" in *Women in Scripture*, 148-9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>34</sup> *Dial.* 49.

<sup>35</sup> Bernard of Cluny, *De Contemptu Mundi* II.

<sup>36</sup> Virginia Burrus, "The Heretical Woman as Symbol in Alexander, Athanasius, Epiphanius, and Jerome" in *Harvard Theological Review* 84, no. 3 (1991): 230.

<sup>37</sup> Maryan Wynn Ainsworth et. al, *German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350-1600* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 59.

<sup>38</sup> Susan L. Smith, *The Power of Women: A Topos in Medieval Art and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 31.

<sup>39</sup> Kate Cooper, "Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 152.

<sup>40</sup> Mary Rose D'Angelo, "(Re)presentations of Women in the Gospels" in Mary Rose D'Angelo and Ross Shepard Kraemer (eds.), *Women and Christian Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 143.

<sup>41</sup> *Ilan*, 125.

<sup>42</sup> Burrus, 231.

<sup>43</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 5.