

An Archaeological History of Qumran:
With an Explanation of Archaeological Techniques

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Introduction

Khirbet Qumran is an archaeological site located on a plateau in Qumran National Park near the Dead Sea in Israel. Although it is a site rich in archaeological history and has been visited by tourists since the early nineteenth century, it only recently became a household name in the mid-twentieth century with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves surrounding the plateau. While the Dead Sea Scrolls are generally the area of focus for most scholars, much archaeology has been done in Qumran focusing on the community and its ruins as well. This thesis focuses on the archaeology of Qumran, examining the buildings and material remains as opposed to the Dead Sea Scrolls, which is generally the more popular area of scholarship. There is also a chapter detailing the history of archaeology as a whole in order to familiarize the reader with the archaeological process. Qumran's archaeology is topic of some controversy among scholars, as some think that it was not inhabited by the communal Essenes, as generally believed, but another different Jewish sect. Others think it was a Herodian or Roman country villa or fortress. Some of the most well known scholars that have worked on the Qumran plateau disagree about who lived there and what purpose the buildings served, though most can agree that it was some kind of Jewish sectarian community.

Using field notes, published and unpublished, the works of ancient scholars, and many other sources, it is clear to see that the Qumran plateau was once inhabited by a Jewish sectarian settlement, possibly the Essenes. Many archaeological discoveries on the plateau confirm this. Hopefully in the future, DNA analysis will also further confirm the connection between the community that lived on the plateau, and the Dead Sea Scrolls found in the surrounding caves.

The first chapter of the thesis discusses different archaeological techniques that have been and, in some cases, are still used by archaeologists. This analysis goes back to the nineteenth

century with Heinrich Schliemann, and the techniques he developed and used. It focuses on how archaeology has changed, how these changes in technique effect how a site is interpreted, and the accuracy of modern methods. Schliemann, and other archaeologists of the nineteenth century, used a technique similar to tunneling called the trench method, which destroyed much of the archaeological remains.¹ The main focus of this section will be the Wheeler-Kenyan archaeological method, which was perfected by Dame Kathleen Kenyon in her excavation of Jericho. Her careful stratigraphy-centric method has been incorporated into almost every modern archaeological excavation. In this method the soil is taken down layer by layer (about 10 cm per layer) until one comes into contact with an anomaly or an artifact.² Then those artifacts are carefully cataloged and removed so that archaeologists can then dig further to the next layer. While this method also destroys the layers as they go down, all of the information from those layers is preserved for analysis.

This chapter also focuses on how archaeology has incorporated technology in modern times, such as radio-carbon dating. While some have questioned how reliable this method is, it still has proved invaluable to archaeologists.³ Another more modern archaeological method is Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), in which a device is drug over the ground in a grid pattern in order to send pulses through the earth, allowing archaeologists to develop a picture of the subsurface. It was originally popular with marine archaeologist to map the ocean floor before having to dive down with a crew. However, it is now possible to use this technology on *terra*

¹ Heinrich Schliemann, *Troy and Its Remains: A Narrative of Researches and Discoveries Made on the Site of Ilium, and the Trojan Plain* (New York: B. Blom, 1968).

² William G. Dever and H. Darrell Lance, eds., *A Manual of Field Excavation: Handbook for Field Archaeologists* (New York: Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, 1978), 5.

³ Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology Essentials: Theories, Methods, and Practice* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2007), 125.

archaeology as well. This technique increases the accuracy of digs helping to determine the dig location, and sometimes even the density of the substance that is buried.⁴

While focusing on the recent history of archaeology at Qumran, this work delves into some early explorations and minor excavations of the Qumran plateau that took place in the nineteenth century before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It continues into modern archaeological efforts, ending with Dr. J. Randall Price and Dr. Oren Gutfeld's current project with Operation Scroll, the last season of which concluded in January of 2017.⁵ It is impossible to discuss every archaeologist who has excavated in Qumran without having a much lengthier work; therefore, the excavations of Roland de Vaux and Randall Price will be the centers of focus as they have excavated most extensively on the plateau. Chapters two and three attempt to give an overall picture of these digs and determine what was discovered in their excavations.

The final chapter addresses those who lived in the Qumran community, and how the archaeological discoveries provide evidence that this community was a Jewish sectarian settlement, possibly Essene. This chapter also discusses some of their practices. The excavation of human remains in Qumran's cemeteries is important to this chapter as the discovery of women and children at the site has changed some scholar's interpretations.⁶ Also, alternate theories of the Qumran community are discussed, as some claim that Qumran was a manor house destroyed by the Romans during the Great Revolt.⁷

⁴ Ibid., 87.

⁵ "A National Plan to Excavate the Judean Desert Caves and Save the Scrolls from Being Robbed," Israel Antiquities Authority, accessed April 2, 2017, http://www.antiquities.org.il/Article_eng.aspx?sec_id=25&subj_id=240&id=4200.

⁶ Brian Schultz, "The Qumran Cemetery: 150 Years of Research," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 13, no. 2 (2006): 194-228.

⁷ Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Early Roman Manor Houses in Judea and the Site of Khirbet Qumran," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 57, no.3 (July 1998): 161.

The intent of this thesis is to survey of the history of the archaeology of Qumran, including the largely unpublished discoveries made on the plateau.⁸ While there is some discussion of the scrolls, this is not the main focus as this thesis covers more of the history of the archaeology at the site. It is not meant to be a complete history, but simply to add to the scholarship already published on Qumran.

One work that is vital for any scholar studying the Dead Sea Scrolls or the history of Qumran is *The Dead Sea Scrolls, A Full History Volume I* by Weston W. Fields.⁹ This book is a detailed history of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls from the years 1947 to 1960 in chronological order. It is so precise that it includes individual days and months when events occurred pertinent to the scrolls and their discovery. Fields is extremely thorough in his research and provides pictures of the people involved. He relies heavily on primary sources. For those interested in a history of Qumran, focusing on the Dead Sea Scrolls, his work is the essential starting point.

Fields went to great pains to personally interview everyone involved in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, or the archaeology in Qumran when he was compiling his research. There are only a few scholars or persons of importance that he missed because they passed away before he could interview them. He includes excerpts of these interviews, as well as personal notes and letters of the archaeologists and scholars involved in the discovery of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The endnotes are critical for anyone researching Qumran as they include many personal sources that are either inaccessible, or are now lost to time.

⁸ Weston W. Fields, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History* (Boston: Brill, 2009). The second volume of this work is due to be published later in 2017.

⁹ Ibid.

Archaeology Essentials, Theories, Methods, and Practice by Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn is another excellent book. It discusses different modern archaeological methods that are used during digs, as well as how to interpret what is found at different archaeological sites.¹⁰ This book gives a general overview on the subject in the introduction, while later going into detail as it takes the reader through the thought process necessary to determine different questions that must be answered when conducting an archaeological excavation.

This book is extremely helpful for trying to understand the work of archaeology, as it is an excellent reference work for the more technical aspects of the modern archaeological methods used when excavating Qumran. This work also includes excellent descriptions of radiocarbon dating, thermoluminescence, and GPR, as these technological advancements of the last century have aided in improving the accuracy of the modern archaeological method.

The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls by Jodi Magness is another excellent source for studying the archaeological history of Qumran.¹¹ In her opening chapter she addresses many of the problems that archaeology at Qumran has presented. For example, although leading archaeologists have interpreted the remains found in Qumran to be a Jewish sectarian community responsible for the Dead Sea Scrolls, others have interpreted it to be a country villa, a fort, a manor house, or a commercial enterprise.¹² She also discusses different archaeological excavation and dating methods, but is not as detailed in her explanation as Renfrew's book.

Throughout her book Magness constantly challenges de Vaux's opinions and analysis of the Qumran community. She differs with him on so many points that she created a chart about

¹⁰ Renfrew, *Archaeology Essentials*.

¹¹ Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002).

¹² *Ibid.*, 2.

where they disagree with the timeline alone.¹³ As she participated in a dig in 1995 on the Roman siege works at Masada, Magness is very familiar with the time period.¹⁴ While her analysis is controversial, she is still considered one of the leading experts in the field.¹⁵ She also discusses the different occupation levels of Qumran, and some of the early European and American explorers who traveled to Qumran in the nineteenth century.

Much effort was put into this thesis using as many primary sources as possible. Though language and time were sometimes a challenge, especially when working with de Vaux as his work is in French, other secondary sources who quote his manuscripts have been translated into English. Another complication is that Price has yet to publish his findings from his time on the plateau. Thankfully, one of de Vaux's publications on his work at Khirbet-Qumran has been translated into English and Price made his unpublished works on his excavations on the Qumran plateau available to me for the purpose of this thesis. These were both excellent sources as they both contain information on the excavations of the plateau that has rarely been accessed.

While these sources are invaluable, another unique feature of this thesis is that I participated in the excavation of Dead Sea Scroll Cave 12 in 2016 and 2017. My firsthand involvement in the archaeological dig offers unique and previously undiscussed insights into the study of Qumran. Much of the information in chapter three regarding Operation Scroll and events surrounding the excavation, come from my personal experiences and help shape my assessments of the current state of archaeology at Qumran, as well as who probably lived there.

¹³ Ibid., 68.

¹⁴ Ibid., back cover.

¹⁵ Despite her expertise, Magness has never excavated Qumran for herself. Therefore her views are limited by the data and interpretations made available to her by others.

My interpretations, as well as those of other scholars as to the identity of those who inhabited Qumran, rely heavily on Flavius Josephus's *The Jewish War*.¹⁶ His work describes the practices of the first-century Essenes. The book offers an excellent comparison between the Essenes, and the archaeological remains of the Qumran plateau. He is not the only source on the practices of the ancient Essenes, but as he studied with them for a short time in his youth he is the most descriptive.¹⁷ Other ancient sources that describe the Essenes were Pliny the Elder and Philo of Alexandria.

Though this thesis is not a complete history on the archaeology of Qumran, it advances the historiography by incorporating studies of recent excavations using previously inaccessible sources. Some examples of this would be the unpublished works from Price's excavations on the plateau, and my experience excavating Cave 12, which adds significantly to the historiography since the official publication of archaeological field notes can sometimes take decades. The use of many of the ancient sources on the Essenes not only adds clarity to the lifestyle of those who possibly lived at Qumran, but also counters those who claim that the plateau was not a Jewish, sectarian settlement.

¹⁶ Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1970).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

Chapter 1

A Brief History of Archaeological Methods and Techniques

When studying archaeology, it is important to understand what methodologies and techniques have been used in the past, and are currently being used by modern archaeologists to grasp a complete understanding of the historical information that is presented. Field archaeology is a discipline that has been developing for over 250 years.¹⁸ As some methods are more efficient and accurate than others, understanding which archaeological method was used on a dig can help determine the accuracy of the archaeologist's conclusions. These techniques have changed much over time as new ways of unearthing artifacts, with less damage to archaeological data, have been developed.

When archaeology first became an area of interest, it was essentially what would be referred to today as treasure hunting, and was not used to gain historical knowledge, but acquire valuables and spread curses to one's enemies. The Egyptians often collected relics from times they considered ancient and valued them.¹⁹ In medieval period the residents of Siena unearthed a statue of Venus made by the ancient Greek, Lysippus. A great feast was held in its honor before it was smashed to pieces and the slivers were buried in the fields of the Florentines, their eternal enemies, in order to bring them bad luck.²⁰ Many monarchs in Medieval Europe would carefully collect valuable, ancient pottery, idols, bones from prehistoric animals, and exotic corals, which were often kept in strong rooms or safes. One excellent example of such a collection was in a town near Innsbruck in Upper Austria and dates back to the sixteenth century.²¹ This unique

¹⁸ Joseph M. Holden and Norman Geisler, *The Popular Handbook of Archaeology and the Bible: Discoveries that Confirm the Reliability of Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 179.

¹⁹ John Romer, *The History of Archaeology: Great Excavations of the World* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2001), 66.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

treasure chamber was designed to hold the eclectic collection of the Duke of Tyrol during the Renaissance, and held both rare and various artifacts, such as assorted busts of Roman Emperors and bronzes from Benin.²² The possessor of the artifacts, accumulated through smuggling or trade, did not value them for their historical importance, but for the power and prestige that they gave. The literate Europeans of later centuries revered archaeological remains of ancient architecture. Rome, in particular, was venerated with its standing ruins and what they represented for Christendom.²³ However, excavation was not something that was considered at this time, and these historic sites were often only interpreted in context of the Bible or some other ancient manuscript.

Towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, tumultuous wars on the European continent created a shift in the interpretation and importance of ancient artifacts, statuary, and architecture. In 1789, while vying for control of the Mediterranean, Napoleon and his French army invaded Egypt. They fought several battle against the Mamelukes, who had ruled Egypt cruelly since the Medieval era.²⁴ However, the decisive battle was The Battle of the Pyramids, though ten miles away from the Great Pyramids, in a fields of Embabba, just outside of Cairo.²⁵ At this battle Napoleon's forces overwhelmed the Mamelukes, and upon their entrance into Cairo, the French forces set aside three of the grandest houses for the "Scientific and Artistic Commission."²⁶ *Institut d'Egypte* was then created where French scholars were able to study and examine every aspect of Egypt that could be considered beneficial in any way to Napoleon's Empire. While their focus was not on history but on many

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 67.

²⁴ Ibid., 76-77

²⁵ Bob Brier, "Napoleon in Egypt: The General's Search for Glory Led to the Birth of Egyptology," *Archaeology* 52, no. 3 (May/June 1999), 47.

²⁶ Ibid., 47-48.

other branches of science and art, it is impossible to study these things in Egypt without including the ancient artistic structures and buildings.²⁷ Thus a branch of archaeology, Egyptology, was born and Egyptian archaeology was initiated.²⁸ While this did not include anything that could be considered excavation, a valiant attempt was made by these scholars to record the architectural and statuary remains of Egypt in a methodical and measured manner.²⁹

In the mid-nineteenth century archaeology became something more similar to what one might be familiar with today. Instead of simply measuring and recording structures that were already visible above ground, digging tunnels and trenches through archaeological mounds (also known as tells in Israel) became the common practice. Unfortunately, this resulted in the damage and disposal of untold amounts of archaeological data. The cataloging of information was also sporadic and inconsistent. As time went on, the destructive nature of this method was realized, and slowly a careful and precise methodology was developed. In modern times technology has also been added into this methodology to increase accuracy and to cut down on the length of time spent on a dig. Despite all of this development, the techniques archaeologists can differ due to their preferences and what best suits the environment in which they work. Archaeology, though it is a science, is not the most exacting or precise branch. While every artifact must be cataloged and have its measurements, color, material, form, technique, and maybe chemical composition recorded, each archaeologist must take notes that best suit their needs, adding great diversity to an imprecise science.³⁰

In the early development of what is now the historical-science of archaeology, it more closely resembled treasure-hunting and chasing epic myths instead of the fairly precise

²⁷ Romer, *The History of Archaeology*, 79.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

³⁰ Sir Leonard Woolley, *Digging Up the Past* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961), 6.

methodology it has become.³¹ The German archaeologist, Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890), who is famous for his excavations in modern-day Turkey and Greece, is an excellent example of this mythological treasure-hunting. Schliemann, inspired by the Homer's epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* which he read as a youth, used these stories as a guide to find the lost city of Troy (or Ilium) at his own expense and for his personal pleasure, not to make a profit.³² After a few digs that failed early on at other sites, his archaeological partner, Frank Calvert, led him to Hiserlick, in modern Turkey. The excavation proceeded in 1870.³³

Since there were no visible structures or monuments at the Hiserlick, as there had been at previously excavated archaeological sites (like Nimrud, an Assyrian palace³⁴), Schliemann decided to attempt his own tunneling and trenching method.³⁵ Instead of digging indiscriminately, Schliemann planned to cut into the archaeological mound transversely in an attempt to lay open the various strata simultaneously.³⁶ Large trenches were cut into the strata, reaching nearly the entire depth of the archaeological mound. The main goal of this method was to uncover as much archaeological information as possible, in order to contribute to the knowledge of the site, and confirm that this was the Troy of Homer's *Iliad* by uncovering the remains of a temple that Schliemann thought to be resting on the "native soil" (meaning the bottom layer of the mound.)³⁷

³¹ Holden, *The Popular Handbook*, 179.

³² Schliemann, *Troy and Its Remains*, v., and *Ibid.*, 14.

³³ Susan Heuck Allen, *Finding the Walls of Troy: Frank Calvert and Heinrich Schliemann at Hisarlik* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 7-8.

³⁴ Tim Murray, *Milestones in Archaeology: A Chronological Encyclopedia* (Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 194-195. Nimrud was excavated by the Englishman Austen Henry Layard beginning in 1845 and ending around 1850. While digging tunnels and trenches was still the archaeological method used, there were architectural remains visible on top of the archaeological mound before excavation began, unlike Hiserlick. Nimrud was the second capital of the Assyrian Empire, after Nineveh.

³⁵ Schliemann, *Troy and Its Remains*, vii.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, v and 61.

From this perspective, the dig was partially a success. Schliemann and his company unearthed over 100,000 objects from various archaeological strata.³⁸ Also, Schliemann and his dig partner, Frank Calvert, identified several geographical features of the site that correlate with Homer's Illiad. For example, how there are springs near the base that run hot and cold, as described by Homer.³⁹ However, even though they removed a great diversity of artifacts from the mound, they were not always cataloged with accuracy.⁴⁰ The depth at which they were found, which is imperative in order to determine what time period they came from and their age, was not always cataloged.⁴¹ Removing an artifact from its context, and improperly documenting where it was found gives an incomplete recreation and understanding of the excavation and civilization for those who are not at the site while the dig is in progress.

Also, when digging these trenches into Hiserlick, Schliemann and his crew carried away baskets and carts full of what they called "rubbish."⁴² In modern archaeological methods this rubbish would be carefully sifted through, looking for any miniscule artifact or fragment that could have escaped notice, but still could add to the understanding of the site. Schliemann, on the other hand, dumped this archaeologically rich soil "a long way off" in order to get it out of his way.⁴³ Another oversight occurred while digging the initial trench when they unearthed a building "which appear[ed] to belong to the first century after Christ... about 59 feet in length, and 43 feet in breadth."⁴⁴ However, 100 years after Christ (approximately 200 A.D.) was much

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Susan Heuck Allen, *Finding the Walls of Troy: Frank Calvert and Heinrich Schliemann at Hisarlik* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 72.

⁴⁰ Mark Rose, "What did Schliemann Find- and Where, When, and How Did He Find It?," *Archaeology* 46, no. 6 (November/December 1993), 33.

⁴¹ Schliemann, *Troy and Its Remains*, vi.

⁴² Ibid., 60.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 61.

too late for the happenings of the Trojan War, which would have approximately been the same time as the Mycenaean civilization; therefore, Schliemann had the entirety of the building, foundation included, removed, as “they were of no use and would only have been in the way.”⁴⁵ In this way Schliemann destroyed layer after layer without much documentation, because he deemed them “unimportant” in his quest for Troy.⁴⁶

Archaeology will always be destructive. Every time an archaeologist uncovers a building, or excavates down to the next line of strata, the traces made by ash, fallen brickwork, or the scattering of pottery remnants are gone and can never be replaced. Any evidence in the soil, or in the placement of a building or artifact that was not recorded is gone forever, along with all historical data it could have contained. This is less of a travesty if archaeologists properly record and preserve for posterity the recovered objects.⁴⁷ However, Swedish archaeologists, among others, soon found Schliemann’s methodology to be inefficient and inaccurate, as they began to develop careful excavation and classification techniques.⁴⁸

Despite the problems with his method, Schliemann did a good job of attempting to get a sketch or photograph of each object which his crew removed from the mound which he valued of importance.⁴⁹ He then organized the photographs and drawings by type and pattern into his book, *Troy and its Remains, A Narrative of Researches and Discoveries Made on the Site of Ilium, and in the Trojan Plain*. For the time in which they were created, the pictures and drawings are in

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 62.

⁴⁷ Woolley, *Digging Up the Past*, 40.

⁴⁸ Murray, *Milestones in Archaeology*, 215. The Swedes were forced to develop this archaeological method, instead of another European nation, because their archaeological remains did not consist of monumental Roman and Medieval architecture.

⁴⁹ Schliemann, *Troy and Its Remains*, vii, and David A. Traill, “Schliemann’s Mendacity: A Question of Methodology,” *Anatolian Studies* 36 (1986), 91-92.

crisp detail, and evenly distributed throughout the book, therefore, despite his primitive techniques, Schliemann still made some beautiful discoveries.

Though Schliemann's work was destructive and caused a substantial loss of information, the fame of his excavations and volume of artifacts that he found often inspired the work of future archaeologists whose methodology was a bit more progressive. One such archaeologist was the Englishman, Sir Leonard Woolley (1880-1960).⁵⁰ According to Woolley, the aim of field archaeology is to "discover and illustrate the course of human history."⁵¹ At this time archaeologists no longer funded by themselves or private investors for personal gain. Instead museums, universities, and institutions who were looking for artifacts to fill their shelves or prestige to add to their name sponsored digs.⁵² The method and purpose of raising funds for an excavation was not the only thing that changed between Schliemann and Woolley.

At the beginning of Woolley's career as a field archaeologist his methodology was still rather informal in comparison with his practices later on in his career.⁵³ As a young man he worked on archeological digs in England without ever having studied the subject. His only experience was handling antiquities in a museum for a few months.⁵⁴ However, he quickly learned the importance of planning and surveying a dig site, and laying out a grid in order to get the most useful and accurate results.⁵⁵ There was now a more interpretive element, which involved the elements of observing and recording, in order to acquire as much knowledge as possible about the site.⁵⁶ Archaeologists at this time, especially Woolley, began to appreciate

⁵⁰ Sir Leonard Woolley, *Spadework* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1953), 11.

⁵¹ Woolley, *Digging Up the Past*, 38.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 39.

⁵³ Woolley, *Spadework*, 15-16.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Woolley, *Digging Up the Past*, 18.

archaeological context. Woolley says, “[a great] extent [of] the historical value of an object depends on our knowledge of the conditions in which it was found.”⁵⁷ When artifacts are removed from their context and sold, there is nothing but the item itself to judge country of origin and age. While this does not damage the item itself, it destroys all historical value.⁵⁸

Towards the end of Woolley’s career, archaeology had become an established science.⁵⁹ Field archaeology became “the application of scientific method to the excavation of ancient objects... and [was] based on the theory that the historical value of an object depends not so much on the nature of the object itself as on its associations.”⁶⁰ Instead of the emphasis being on the digging, archaeology became more about elaborate note-taking and delicate fine-motor skills.⁶¹ Digging is still a large part of the process, but this is begun by local, unskilled laborers that are hired from the area. Then, the skilled staff with archaeological experience (in Woolley’s case, generally brought with him from England) removed artifacts. On small scale digs at this time, archaeologists would often get into the dirt and dig with their men. However, this did not often happen as most excavations in the Middle East became much more elaborate, and were on a grander scale in order to make them more cost effective.⁶² The head archaeologist, like Woolley, would then take a more hands-off approach, directing the foreman and supervising, while meticulously cataloging each fragment and artifact that was discovered, only digging when a particularly fragile artifact demanded attention.⁶³

⁵⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 18.

⁶¹ Ibid., 42.

⁶² Ibid., 42-44.

⁶³ Ibid., 42-48.

Near Woolley's retirement in the 1960s, several technological advances were applied to the practice of field archaeology. One of these technologies, aerial photography, allows archaeologists to easily map the overall structure of the site.⁶⁴ Before this time dig sites would have to be mapped and diagramed by hand. Aerial photography allows these maps to be made more quickly and easily than in the past. They also give a more complete view of the site, and allow the archaeologist to see features that normally would not be discernable from the ground. Another new development was the use of dendrochronology (also known as tree ring dating) to date wooden objects or structures.⁶⁵ While this scientific process can be used to determine the age of a tree using its tree rings, in the field of archaeology it is used to determine when the timber was felled, transported, processed, or used for the construction of wooden artifacts.⁶⁶ It is also a component of radiocarbon dating.

Radiocarbon dating, which is also known as C-14 dating, is another practice that was integrated into archaeology at this time.⁶⁷ It is called C-14 dating because this type of test measures the amount of Carbon found in an object that has a molar mass of fourteen. C-14 is a slightly radioactive isotope that is a part of all organic matter and decays incrementally over time.⁶⁸ Samples of organic materials are collected and taken to a lab, where the remaining amount of C-14 isotopes are measured. This allows the archaeologist to determine a more precise date for organic materials, no matter the climate.⁶⁹ Before radiocarbon dating, dates were

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Henri D. Grissino-Mayer, "Principles of Dendrochronology," *The Science of Tree Rings*, last updated November 2016, accessed on December 11, 2016, <http://web.utk.edu/~grissino/principles.htm>.

⁶⁷ Woolley, *Digging Up the Past*, 5.

⁶⁸ Mallory Warner, "Carbon-14 is 75+0 Years Old," *Smithsonian*, last updated February 27, 2015, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/carbon-14>.

⁶⁹ Renfrew, *Archaeology Essentials*, 125.

relative, and determined by layers and pottery.⁷⁰ While C-14 dating can still be a bit subjective and does not always work, especially if the sample has been contaminated, it still greatly impacted the field of archaeology.⁷¹

The ability to test for thermoluminescence is another technological advance in the field of archaeology from the mid-20th Century. This is a dating method that can be used to determine the age of buried objects that were heated in the past, like cooking pots. However, this dating method has not received as much attention as radiocarbon dating, because the conditions must be very precise in order for thermoluminescence to be present. The pottery shards, or other geological remains, must have been buried for at least two-thirds of their burial time at a depth of at least thirty centimeters.⁷² Each sample taken must have at least six shards, and these pieces can be no smaller than twenty-five by twenty-five by five millimeters.⁷³ These samples cannot be exposed to any moisture or radiation, including ultra-violet radiation from sunlight, before they are tested.⁷⁴ Samples of the surrounding soils and materials must also be taken.⁷⁵ As this dating method requires very particular conditions it is not used much, and radiocarbon dating has received the most attention. These technological developments cannot be performed while working in the field on an excavation, but samples must be sent to a lab for experimentation and analysis. It shows a transition from archaeology being all field work and analysis, to some time spent in the science lab as well. The methods mentioned above are all fine examples of how archaeological methods change and improve with the assistance of developing technology.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 124.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Dever and Lance, eds., *A Manual of Field Excavation*, 20.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Just because there were technological advances that assisted archaeology around the middle of the twentieth century does not mean that more traditional dating methods were not still used on an excavation. One of the most popular dating methods that is still in use today, and probably the most cost effective as it does not required experimentation in a lab, is ceramic typology.⁷⁶ This is the daily analysis of pottery from each layer of excavation. All pottery is washed and dried, and then immediately reviewed and dated.⁷⁷ Each layer is then dated by the latest pottery it contains. The use of ceramic typology is a useful check for those digging using stratigraphy, but only if the period and origin of the pottery being excavated can be exactly determined; therefore, great care must be taken when processing the pottery, so that it does not get mixed with something from another layer.⁷⁸

Generally, the procedure is to take the pottery from each operation (or square) and place it in a bucket which is tagged for that particular operation.⁷⁹ Archaeologists never place pottery from other operations in that bucket. Loose shards are not collected elsewhere to be deposited into the bucket later. They all go directly into the bucket. If a loose shard falls from the edge of a trench or balk and into the area being excavated it is thrown away.⁸⁰ This is because any pottery or shards that end up in a layer where they did not originate, contaminate that layer and risk misdating the strata, which can throw off the timeline for the whole site. However, when done properly, this technique has been found to be quite useful even to modern archaeologists, and can keep dig expenses lower than other dating methods, that often require lab fees.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

During the later years of Woolley's career, and after his death, methodologies continued to develop. It was during this time that Dame Kathleen Kenyon refined what is now known as, the Wheeler-Kenyon method, at her excavation at Tell es Sultan (also known as Old Testament Jericho) in the 1950s.⁸¹ Her many discoveries at Jericho made her famous. She also had many digs all over the Holy Land. However, it was her meticulous archaeological methods that gave her lasting recognition as one of Great Britain's foremost field archaeologists.⁸² The archaeological method she developed actually began with the earlier work of Sir Mortimer Wheeler, but Kenyon is the one who became famous because of her development of this methodology. She acquired more attention from the archaeological method that bears her name than from any dig to which she ever contributed.⁸³

While he is not the archaeologist who made it famous, Sir Mortimer Wheeler initially began the development of the Kenyon-Wheeler method. Much like Woolley, he initially began his archaeological work in England around the turn of the twentieth century, before working on digs in various English colonies, such as Sudan and India. He believed that field archaeology was a science, therefore, he approached a dig with scientific inquiry and imposed this view on all working with him. He saw this as imperative for the progression of field archaeology.⁸⁴ He expected his crew to have discipline and patience, as his method was meticulous and required much technical precision in recording and much forward planning.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Philip J. King, *American Archaeology in the Mideast: A History of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Winona Lake, IN: The American School of Oriental Research, 1983), 125.

⁸² Miriam C. Davis, *Dame Kathleen Kenyon: Digging Up the Holy Land* (London: Left Coast Press, 2010), 12.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Sudeshna Guha, "Imposing the Habit of Science: Sir Mortimer Wheeler and Indian Archaeology," *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* 13, no. 1 (May 2003): 4.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

One large component of Wheeler's excavations that differentiated them from earlier digs was his use of "the geological principles of stratigraphy [and how they] held meaning in the production of archaeological knowledge."⁸⁶ This archaeological method requires the careful removal of dirt one layer at a time. It also pays close attention to each soil layer and its relationship to the surrounding soil layers, and features within the grid that differentiate from surrounding materials.⁸⁷ It is important to use vertical balks (places in the soil where one can see the stratigraphy) to tell where one is going, and where one has already been in the soil.⁸⁸ While it sounds fairly simple, this method can be complicated, especially when the archaeological mound being excavated is ancient and has many layers.⁸⁹ It is important that the site first be surveyed and marked off in grid units small enough for a slow and controlled excavation.⁹⁰ While this method still destroys layers of archaeological data, Wheeler's meticulous recording techniques and carefully documentation of each artifact meant that the historical data was not lost as each layer was removed. While archaeological sites will never be the same after a dig, the information that they contained can be preserved for future generations. Although his conclusions about his findings were not always correct, his excellent record keeping and methods allowed Wheeler to lay the ground work for future archaeologists.

Kenyon became familiar with Wheeler's slow, but precise, methods while she was studying under him in England and working on several of his digs. While she is not the only one of Wheeler's students to qualify as a professional archaeologists, she is probably the most

⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁷ Davis, *Dame Kathleen Kenyon*, 47. Some examples of these differentiating materials would be a layer of ash, a change in substance, or even a darkening of the soil.

⁸⁸ Dever, *A Manual of Field Excavation*, 4.

⁸⁹ Guha, "Imposing the Habit of Science," 3.

⁹⁰ Dever, *A Manual of Field Excavation*, 4.

famous of his students.⁹¹ She had a special aptitude for stratigraphy, earning the nickname “Mistress of Stratigraphy” while in school.⁹² She was the first person to use this archaeological method in Israel.⁹³ Before this point, the primitiveness of previous archaeological field techniques and excavations in the Holy Land did not yield much in the way of results.⁹⁴ Tell Jericho, the city for which she is known for excavating, had previously been excavated by Charles Warren, who completely missed the significance of what he found when he dug a large trench through the archaeological mound, in the style of Heinrich Schliemann.⁹⁵ This made it difficult to separate the different layers of occupation debris, and did not yield great results. He did not think any further excavation of Jericho would yield anything of historical significance.

Kenyon proved him wrong by using Wheeler’s debris analysis techniques and stratigraphy. She laid out a grid and started digging in squares that were (usually) five by five meters, leaving large baulks between the squares in order to make the stratigraphy more visible.⁹⁶ What made Kenyon’s dig in Jericho different from Wheeler’s previous methodology is she could not adhere to his rigid grid system of extended squares because the topography did not allow for it.⁹⁷ Instead, she made the methodology much more flexible by adapting the squares to what the circumstances required.⁹⁸ Using this adaptive version of Wheeler’s technique Kenyon proved Warren wrong, as it produced structures, pottery, and objects from many different layers of Tell Jericho.

⁹¹ Guha, “Imposing the Habit of Science,” 3.

⁹² Davis, *Dame Kathleen Kenyon*, 47.

⁹³ Dever, *A Manual of Field Excavation*, 4.

⁹⁴ Davis, *Dame Kathleen Kenyon*, 55.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Most modern archaeological methods are some variation of the Kenyon-Wheeler method, allowing for small discrepancies and preferences that differ depending on the archaeologist. However, archaeologists have now added modern technology to this method in order to cut down on dig time and increase productivity. Also, some of the limits of previous technological advances have been discovered. Dendrochronology and radiocarbon dating have found their limits. Advances have been made in these fields. Scientists now use smaller samples of organic material than ever before, which means grains, seeds, and small precious objects can be dated.⁹⁹ However, there is now a certain amount of error now associated with radiocarbon dating.¹⁰⁰

Generally, this inaccuracy is due to contamination. This can happen before the sample is taken if the site is waterlogged, but this is unlikely and can usually be handled in the laboratory.¹⁰¹ Contamination can also happen during or after a sample is taken. Any organic material that comes into contact with a sample can contaminate it. Sometimes organic materials, such as roots, are difficult to avoid, but this can also be corrected in the lab.¹⁰² Date of context can also be a problem with radiocarbon dating. Too often it is assumed that the date given from a radiocarbon sample is straightforward, and the test results are the date of burial. However, if one is testing the charcoal from a building in a burn layer, radiocarbon dating is not the best method. This is because it will be testing the age of the wood when it was harvested and put into use, which could be hundreds of years before it was burned.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Renfrew, *Archaeology Essentials*, 124.

¹⁰⁰ David A. Dewitt, *Unraveling the Origins Controversy* (Lynchburg, VA: Creation Curriculum, 2007), 133.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., 124-125.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 125.

One of the most common reasons for errors in radiocarbon dating is because of a misunderstanding in the context of deposition.¹⁰⁴ This happens with the archaeologist, or excavator taking the sample, does not understand how the organic material in question came to be at the site. The excavator must have some understanding of how the organic material found its way to the position in which it was found, and how it came to be buried. Without this information exact interpretation of the radiocarbon dating is impossible.¹⁰⁵

Despite its long-term use in the field of archaeology, there are some who still question the accuracy of radiocarbon dating, even when the sample has not been contaminated. Radiocarbon dating only works if the decay rate (or half-life) of C-14 is known and constant.¹⁰⁶ RATE (which stands for Radioisotopes and the Age of The Earth) scientists believe that they might have evidence that the decay rates of radioisotopes was much faster in the past than it is now.¹⁰⁷ This would mean that using half-life to determine the length of time that has passed is much too slow. It also means that the actual measurements of the amount C-14 is correct, but the inferred time that has passed is not.¹⁰⁸ All of this would culminate in the sample of organic material appearing to be much older than it actually is. Other scientists counter this argument and claim that the amount of carbon in the atmosphere has varied over time, not the decay rate, and different environmental factors could contribute.¹⁰⁹ For example, there is something called a “marine reservoir” effect. Carbon from the sea ages differently and could be read as older than it actually

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 133.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 134. RATE is a team of physical scientists assembled to conduct research on radiometric dating methods.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Jim Grant, Sam Gorin, and Neil Fleming, *The Archaeology Coursebook: An Introduction to Themes, Sites, Methods, and Skills* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 102-103.

is. This means that test results from Radiocarbon dating where the results were based off of populations that ate a lot of marine life might be inaccurate.¹¹⁰

Even Willard Libby, winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1960 who essentially invented radiocarbon dating, claimed that the half-life of the carbon-14 isotope lasted thousands rather than millions of years. He also claimed that C-14 “was continuously formed in the atmosphere by cosmic radiation... [and] freshly formed isotopes were added to the carbon contained in all living plants and animals until their death.”¹¹¹ Libby estimated that because of the decay rate, radiocarbon dating is only accurate on material approximately 5,000 years old or younger.¹¹² While it is still common practice to have bones and food remains tested with radiocarbon dating, archaeologists are finding it to be untrustworthy due to the fairly large margins for error mentioned above, especially when it comes to items crafted out of wood. Instead of being seen as a definitive date, the test results for Radiocarbon dating are now seen as approximate by some archaeologists.

Radar is something else that has recently been added to an archeologist’s bag of tools, specifically SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar).¹¹³ This is a process in which multiple radar images “are processed to yield extremely detailed high-resolution results which can provide data for maps, databases, land-use studies” and other things of that nature.¹¹⁴ This technology has replaced aerial photography for many archaeologists, especially those excavating in difficult climates and conditions, because it yields results whether in the day or the night, and regardless

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 103.

¹¹¹ Justin Wintle, ed., *New Makers of Modern Culture: Volume 2*, s.v. “Libby, Willard Frank,” (New York: Routledge, 2007), 908-909.

¹¹² Willard F. Libby, *Radiocarbon Dating* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), 10, 34-35.

¹¹³ Renfrew, *Archaeology Essentials*, 76.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

of weather.¹¹⁵ It can also save a great deal of time because when combined with multispectral data from satellites, archaeologists can use it to make an inventory of archaeological sites in the area. This is a better alternative to a surface survey, which can be slow and can destroy historical data.¹¹⁶

LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) has also become increasingly useful to archaeologists in the past few years. This is “a new laser scanning technique which can accurately map whole landscapes, even beneath tree cover.”¹¹⁷ Using GPS to get an exact position, an aircraft carries a laser scanner that rapidly pulses a series of beams to the ground. Through measuring the time that it takes for these beams to return to the aircraft, an accurate picture of the ground can be created in the form of a digital elevation model (or digital surface model.)¹¹⁸ Recently, this technology was used to find more ruins in the international Greater Angkor Project in Cambodia. Because the site is located in dense jungle and surrounded by land mines, the area was previously extremely difficult to map. However, because of LIDAR, archaeologists discovered that this 1000 year old temple complex may cover up to 11,500 square miles, and was most likely a large, ancient city, not just a temple.¹¹⁹ It also helped archaeologists discover ancient canals surrounding the city, that were most likely used for irrigating rice fields, feeding pools and moats, and probably to transport the large stones that were used to build this massive complex.¹²⁰

While archaeologists use the aforementioned technologies in mapping sites, there are also technologies that help probe the soil of excavation sites as well. The older and more traditional

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 78.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 77-78.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

methods of probing involves shoving a metal rod with a handle into the ground to see where it strikes solids or hollows and to attempt to collect small core samples.¹²¹ Unfortunately, when using this method one runs the risk of damaging a fragile artifact or a feature of the site, and it can cause much disturbance. Thankfully, there are a few methods for the modern archaeologist that are more advanced and pose less of a risk to the site.¹²² One of these methods is ground penetrating (or probing) radar (GPR). It sends short radio pulses through the soil and echoes back changes in the soil and different sediment conditions, such as graves, filled ditches, and walls that could be present in the strata. What makes this method really useful to archaeologists is that it can also determine the depth at which these changes occur.¹²³ This means that archaeologists can learn a great deal about a site without disturbing it at all, and ensure the safety of all of the data within. It also saves dig time that would have been spent looking for subterranean structures or anomalies, which cuts down on expenses. As the technology has developed and computers have become more commonplace, archaeologists who use GPR can create three-dimensional datasets called “time-slices” or “slice-maps.”¹²⁴ These datasets can be “sliced” multiple times horizontally at specific depths to reveal the general shape and location of buried features that may have archaeological significance.¹²⁵

One example where GPR was recently benefited archaeologists involved was at the Forum Novum, which is an ancient Roman marketplace located approximately sixty miles north of Rome.¹²⁶ British archaeologist from the University of Birmingham and the British School of

¹²¹ Ibid., 86.

¹²² Ibid., 86-87; and Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, eds., *Archaeology: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 294.

¹²³ Renfrew, *Archaeology Essentials*, 87.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 88.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 89.

Archaeology in Rome needed a more complete picture of an unexcavated area. Aerial photography and other techniques proved futile. However, a series of GPR slices revealed “a whole series of walls, individual rooms, doorways, courtyards,” essentially the architecture of the entire site.¹²⁷ Not only did this allow these archaeologists to concentrate their future excavations on a representative sample of the structures, it also saved the time and money it would have taken to excavate the entire area.

The historical science of field archaeology has come a long way in the last 150 years. As archaeologists became more knowledgeable about what to expect in an archaeological mound, they adjusted their methods in order to be able to extract as much historical data as they could. Older archaeological methods of digging trenches through mounds destroyed a lot of historical information for many sites, including Jericho and Hiserlick, but as time progressed methodologies became more efficient and precise. Woolley, Wheeler, and Kenyon all realized the importance of stratigraphy and careful documentation in order to get the best understanding of the historical context. Technological advances also greatly assisted archeologists in understanding the scale of the site on which they were working as well as its composition. Different methods of dating archaeological sites have also arisen thanks to technology, but the precision of some of these methods is still debated. While each archaeologist tailors their methods to their site and their own personal preferences, it is certain that over time these methods have become more precise and less destructive than ever before.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 2

An Early History of Archaeology at Khirbet-Qumran

The 150-year history of archaeology at Khirbet-Qumran is in many ways parallel to the history of archaeology elsewhere, especially when it comes to the plateau. Various archaeological techniques and methods have been used in their progression at the site, much like many other sites in Israel. However, what makes this archaeological site unique is the Dead Sea Scrolls that were found in caves that surround the area, starting in the mid-twentieth century. Despite the ruins that are present on the Qumran plateau, it is doubtful that the site would be as popular as it is today without the archaeologically rich caves surrounding the area. Even before it was first excavated, Khirbet-Qumran was a popular destination for the more adventurous American and European tourists. At the time it was not as easily accessible as it is today, nor was it as safe, with warring Bedouin sheiks competing for valuable grazing land. Even in more modern times it has been considered a tumultuous area as Israel and Jordan had ongoing border disputes.¹²⁸ Since Jordan and Israel are now on much more cordial terms with the peace treaty of 1996, the archaeological community has been able to take full advantage of this archaeologically rich area, without the looming threat of war or violence.

Before excavations of Qumran began in the 1840s, some American and European tourists enjoyed visiting the site for scholarly and recreational purposes, but not necessarily archaeology.¹²⁹ They came for historic and scientific research, to observe and document the topography, and sometimes just for the adventure associated with the arduous terrain and the

¹²⁸ David Schenker, "Twenty Years of Israeli-Jordanian Peace: A Brief Assessment," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, October 23, 2014, accessed February 25, 2017, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/twenty-years-of-israeli-jordanian-peace-a-brief-assessment>.

¹²⁹ Joan E. Taylor, "Khirbet Qumran in the Nineteenth Century and the Name of the Site," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 134, no. 2 (July, 2002): 144.

tumultuous tribesmen. At this time, various Bedouin tribes used the Qumran area for seasonal grazing and crop farming, but the various tribes were often at war with one another.¹³⁰ One tribe around this time, called the Ta'amireh (which is a significant tribe for later discoveries at Qumran), was led by the sheik Abu Dahuk. They were at war with the Ottoman Empire, who controlled Qumran at the time, over some issues with tax payments, and therefore were wary of attacks from Turkish soldiers or other tribes. Even when things were going smoothly between the Bedouins and the Ottomans, Qumran was still not a safe place. The terrain is steep and rocky, making transportation difficult and sometimes deadly. Many tourists and early explorers succumbed to these harsh physical conditions, and did not survive their trip to the Dead Sea.¹³¹

Despite the dangerous conditions, Khirbet-Qumran was still a fairly popular location for nineteenth century explorers and archaeologists, and much of what is known about the site pre-excavation is from their records.¹³² Starting in May of 1838, Biblical scholar Edward Robinson mentions that on his way to Jordan he saw some archaeological ruins. He wrote "Near the fountain are the foundations of a small square tower and of other small buildings; whether ancient or not we could not tell."¹³³ The way Robinson worded his notes sounds like he was describing the ruins of Ain Feshkha; however, according to a later archaeologist, Roland de Vaux, those ruins were very hard to distinguish at the time of Robinson's visit as they were mostly buried under the desert sands. The only other site in that area with a square tower would have been the remains on the Qumran plateau, which were much more exposed.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid. Thanks to technological advancements, such as running water and air conditioning, as well as relative peace with Jordan and the Bedouins, the trip to Khirbet-Qumran is much safer than it was 150 years ago. However, away from the buildings and marked paths it is still a very treacherous place and readers are advised to be aware of their surroundings and drink plenty of water when visiting.

¹³² Ibid., 148.

¹³³ Quoted in Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

It is hard to define exactly when excavations began at Khirbet-Qumran, because many of the explorers who came were also considered archaeologists of their day, though their techniques were primitive and their documentation substandard. Despite their reputations for archaeology, many of them did not attempt to excavate anything at the site. One example of this is the Flemish archaeologist Louis-Félicien Caignart de Saulcy, who arrived at Khirbet-Qumran in 1851 looking for the lost “cities of the plain” mentioned in the nineteenth chapter of Genesis, better known as Sodom and Gomorrah.¹³⁵ From his description and the location in which he was traveling, it is evident that he was describing Qumran, although he believed that it was the ancient city of Gomorrah.¹³⁶ While he did not excavate while in Qumran, he toured the site and took extensive notes of the ruinous structures and the area. These notes have proved invaluable for the excavations that took place later in the twentieth century. Another French archaeologist, Emmanuel Guillaume-Rey, visited Qumran around the same time in 1858.¹³⁷ He too did not excavate the site, but his notes also assisted future generations in doing so.

While many archaeologists visited Khirbet-Qumran in the nineteenth century, the first man to actually excavate on the plateau was Henry Poole in 1855.¹³⁸ His excavation was very limited in a modern sense of the word. It was more of a general survey done by a curious explorer, instead of a carefully planned and executed archaeological dig. In his notes, Poole

¹³⁵ Ibid., 145 and 148. See Genesis 19: 23-25.

¹³⁶ Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 22.

¹³⁷ Taylor, “Khirbet Qumran in the Nineteenth Century,” 145 and 148.

¹³⁸ Henry Poole, “Report of a Journey in Palestine,” *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 26, (1856): 69; and Schultz, “The Qumran Cemetery,” 195. In Poole’s notes some scholars brought attention to the fact that Poole spells Qumran, the modern English spelling, Ghomran or Oumran. However, this is not a separate site, like a few contrary scholars have argued, but is Poole’s transliteration of the Arabic pronunciation as he had nothing else on which to base his spelling. The English spelling was later standardized into Qumran, but when traveling in Israel the conflicting spellings can still be noticed in some publications and on some road signs.

described a tomb which he surveyed, but it does not fit the description of anything that was later excavated or currently known as part of Qumran's cemetery. It did not provide any skeletal remains.¹³⁹ He wrote, "there were a number of graves. One of them I had opened and was 6 ft. long by 3 ft. wide, and 4 ft. 10 in. deep: it was built up on all four sides with rough stones and square corners; there were no osseous remains traceable."¹⁴⁰ Poole's description sounds like the type of tombs that were used in Jerusalem around the first century, where bodies were only deposited for a few years after burial. Later, the bones would be removed and placed into ossuaries, also known as "bone boxes," and buried. While it was a very modest dig, this was technically the first archaeological excavation that took place at Khirbet-Qumran. Unfortunately, due to the nature of Poole's notes, the precise location of this tomb is still unknown.

Charles Simon Clermont-Ganneau conducted another dig that took place on the plateau in 1874. He had much archaeological experience elsewhere in Palestine before coming to Khirbet-Qumran and was considered one of the best archaeologists working in the country by the late nineteenth century.¹⁴¹ However, much like Poole, he only excavated one tomb during his time on the plateau.¹⁴² In his writings about his survey of the cemetery, Clermont-Ganneau made an important assertion that the site could not be Muslim, even though the area was controlled by an Islamic government of the Ottomans at the time, and had been for several hundred years.¹⁴³ This is because all of the graves in the cemetery (Clermont-Ganneau guessed there to be about 1,000 people buried there) were all oriented north/south instead of east/west, which is the normal practice for Muslims, as they orient their graves towards Mecca.¹⁴⁴ While this does give a better

¹³⁹ Schultz, "The Qumran Cemetery," 195.

¹⁴⁰ Poole, "Report of a Journey in Palestine," 68.

¹⁴¹ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 23.

¹⁴² Schultz, "The Qumran Cemetery," 195.

¹⁴³ Quoted in Schultz, "The Qumran Cemetery," 195.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

picture of the people who once inhabited the plateau, Clermont-Ganneau did not discover much material culture.¹⁴⁵ Much like the tomb from Poole's dig, he never mentioned the precise location of the tomb he excavated.¹⁴⁶ Because of the lack of grave goods or any other type of archaeological material Clermont-Ganneau described the site as insignificant ruins, "consisting of some dilapidated walls of low stones and a small *birkeh* [pool] with steps leading to it... If there ever existed there a town properly so called, it must have been a very small one."¹⁴⁷ Little did he know that those remains would later be associated with one of the greatest archaeological finds of the twentieth century, the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Although a few other archaeologists and explorers visited the site in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their findings revealed nothing new about Khirbet-Qumran, until a German explorer, named Gustaf Dalman, visited the site in February 1914.¹⁴⁸ Dalman was technically a theologian, but he served as the first director of the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in Jerusalem.¹⁴⁹ He took extensive notes of the site, mostly citing heaps of stones. However, what makes Dalman's notes unique is his mention of a water channel (aqueduct) running from Wadi Qumran to the site.¹⁵⁰ It was because of this aqueduct that Dalman assumed that Qumran was a Roman fortress. His writings led many others, including archaeologists like

¹⁴⁵ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 23.

¹⁴⁶ Schultz, "The Qumran Cemetery," 195. In later digs three different cemeteries were identified on the plateau, which further complicates identifying the location of Poole and Ganneau's tombs as it is unknown which cemetery they were referencing.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 23.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* A wadi is a place where the water runs down from the mountains east of Jerusalem when it rains, creating a kind of wash-out. As Khirbet-Qumran is in the desert, this water channel was probably vital for the community.

Michael Avi-Yonah, to also believe that this was a military fort, either from the Roman Period or from the Crusades.¹⁵¹

Due to the unfruitful efforts of the first minor excavations, the inhospitable environment, and political unrest, the ruins of Khirbet-Qumran remained mostly buried for almost one hundred years after archaeologists first visited the site. It was only in 1947, after scrolls were found in some of the caves that surround the area, that biblical scholars and the archaeological community renewed their interest in the Qumran area.¹⁵² The first Dead Sea Scrolls were accidentally discovered during the late 1930s or early 1940s when a Bedouin shepherd, Muhammed edh-Dhib was looking for his goat and wandered far from his companions.¹⁵³ He came across a cave situated to the north-west of the Dead Sea, and thinking his goat had been scared inside, threw some stones into the opening of the cave. Instead of hearing his goat like he expected, he heard the the noise of breaking pottery. In an interview with Dr. Randall Price, a modern expert in the history of the Dead Sea Scrolls, edh-Dhib claims that when he lowered himself into the cave he saw forty-seven jars. Investigating the jars with matches and candles he had in his pocket, he found mostly debris, which was the remains of scrolls that had been destroyed by insects.¹⁵⁴ He was joined later that day by five other shepherds, and together they went through the jars.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Schultz, "The Qumran Cemetery," 195.

¹⁵³ Randall Price, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 37. I purposely keep the exact date here vague, because conflicting dates have been given by the Bedouins. They are not necessarily lying, but keep track of time differently than we do. They keep time like the ancients, and associate time in connection with other events. So when interviewed about the exact date, Muhammed edh-Dhib said that he found Cave 1 "before Harding came to the country and before I was married." This puts the time of the discovery of Cave 1 in either 1935 or 1936. However, other sources might interpret this differently.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 35. Muhammaed edh-Dhib, whose formal name was Muhammad Ahmed edh-Hamed, changed his name to Abu-Dahoud (which means David's father), as is customary with Bedouins on the birth of their first son. This name change did not take place until the 1960s, well after the discovery of the scrolls, but he is referred to by both names in different sources.

According to edh-Dhib, “only one jar contained intact Scrolls, and all five of them were somehow stuffed into the jar. There was in another jar one Scroll that was so brittle it broke into pieces [as it was picked up].”¹⁵⁵ Unfortunately, the shepherds tossed the pieces outside of the cave.¹⁵⁶ All of the surviving scrolls were made of leather, and some were wrapped in linen cloth.¹⁵⁷ At the time, edh-Dhib did not think that he had found treasure, or anything of value. However, he still took the scrolls home with him, hoping to find some use for them.¹⁵⁸

Initially, edh-Dhib thought of making the scrolls into sandal straps. Thankfully, he held them in his tent in a bag, where they remained for more than two years.¹⁵⁹ Since it appeared to him that no one was interested in purchasing the “old leather scrolls,” the children of his tribe “played with one like a toy until it broke into pieces.”¹⁶⁰ These pieces then either blew away with the wind or were discarded.¹⁶¹ After this time, he gave the remaining scrolls to his uncle. These scrolls exchanged hands many times until they made their way to two antiquities dealers in Bethlehem. One was Feidi Salahi, who received the scrolls only after another transaction went sour. The other, who is probably the more famous of the two due to his still existing antiquities shop and its association with the Dead Sea Scrolls, was Jalil Iskander Shahin Kando.¹⁶²

According to edh-Dhib, Kando only paid sixteen Jordanian pounds for the first four of the

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 26. The seven scrolls found in this cave are probably some of the most widely recognizable today. These scrolls are: one complete and one partial copy of the book of Isaiah, the Community Rule (also known as the Manual of Discipline), the Peshar (Commentary on) Habakkuk, the War Scroll, the Thanksgiving Hymns or Hymn Scroll (Hebrew *Hodayot*), and the Genesis Apocryphon.

¹⁵⁸ Price, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 30.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 35.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid., 36.

scrolls.¹⁶³ While it might seem like a paltry sum, when word got back to edh-Dhib's tribe, the Ta'amireh that the scrolls had sold for a price, it motivated the whole tribe to search for more.¹⁶⁴ The main occupation of many of the tribesmen for the next twenty years was scouring the mountains and caves surrounding Cave 1 (which is the moniker given to the original cave in which edh-Dhib found scrolls) for other scrolls. Because of their efforts, Bedouins discovered more of the Dead Sea Scrolls than any professional archaeologists.¹⁶⁵

The scrolls were originally sold to Kando not only because he was an antiquities dealer, but because he was a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem, and the scrolls were originally thought to written in Syriac.¹⁶⁶ He was then put in touch with Athanasius Yeshua Samuel, who was a metropolitan¹⁶⁷ of that church and purchased one lot of four scrolls for twenty-four British pounds.¹⁶⁸ These four scrolls were the larger Isaiah scroll, the Community Rule, the Peshier Habakkuk, and the Genesis Apocryphon. According to Weston Fields, who is a modern expert on the history of the Dead Sea Scrolls, "Samuel thought [the scrolls] must be important, for no one had lived in that area, he thought, since "early Christian times," so the "scrolls might go back to those times."¹⁶⁹ He had some background knowledge and experience in recognizing and evaluating manuscripts, as he spent much time in Syrian Christian

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. This is also the tribe previously mentioned that provided guides for the early American and European explorers of Qumran. They are very familiar with the area, and it is difficult to find a cave in the area of which they are unaware.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 26.

¹⁶⁷ The title of metropolitan is used in various orthodox churches and is a diocesan bishop or archbishop of a metropolis or metropolitan area.

¹⁶⁸ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 26.

¹⁶⁹ Fields, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 28.

monasteries, specifically the Monastery of St. Malky, where many ancient manuscripts were hidden during World War I.¹⁷⁰

Kando sold the three remaining scrolls to Eleazar Lippa Sukenik, who was a biblical scholar and archaeologist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Sukenik was very anxious to acquire them as he was one of the first scholars to realize that they were authentic and dated them to the time of Jesus.¹⁷¹ According to Jodi Magness, who is a leading expert on the history of Qumran and its archaeology, “[Sukenik] was the first to suggest a connection with the Essenes mentioned in ancient sources.”¹⁷² He went to Bethlehem to collect the scrolls on November 17, 1947, which was very dangerous as this was the same day that the United Nations passed the resolution allowing the creation of the State of Israel.¹⁷³ However, for Sukenik, the risk seemed worth the scholarly reward.

Samuel took these scrolls to the American School of Oriental Research (now the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research), where researchers and faculty asked permission to publish them. John Trevor, a fellow at the School who was filling in as director, then took the first photographs of the four scrolls, all of which were published by the school by 1956.¹⁷⁴ Samuel, still unaware of exactly what he had, eventually moved to the United States where he tried to sell the scrolls by advertising them in the *Wall Street Journal* on June 1, 1954.¹⁷⁵ This advertisement was brought to the attention of Yigael Yadin, the son of Sukenik, who happened to be in the United States at the time. Though Samuel would not sell to him directly, Yadin

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 26.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid; and Fields, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 40-50. See also, Eran Kaplan and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948: A Documentary History* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011).

¹⁷⁴ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 26.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 27.

eventually purchased the scrolls for the then young State of Israel for \$250,000.¹⁷⁶ They can now be seen on the grounds of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in a special building called the Shrine of the Book.¹⁷⁷

Meanwhile, the Bedouins discovering more archaeologically rich scroll caves goaded the Palestine Archaeological Museum, the American School of Oriental Research at Jerusalem, and the École Archéologique Française to lead a systematic search of the rocky cliffs above Qumran in 1952 in order to be able to find scrolls in situ.¹⁷⁸ Shortly afterwards, but still in the same year, the Bedouins opened up a new cave and found a marl terrace, which encouraged the archaeologists from the institutions previously mentioned to return to Qumran.¹⁷⁹ During this time, in the 1950s, Scroll Caves 2 through 4 were discovered. While all of these caves contained manuscripts pertinent to the Qumran community, or of biblical importance, Cave 4 contained the largest quantity of material and is the cave that most tourists associate with the site.¹⁸⁰ Inside this cave were fragments constituting over 500 scrolls and it was the first manipulated cave to be discovered.¹⁸¹ Unfortunately, since the scrolls were stored on shelves or lying on the floor rather than in jars, most of them had greatly deteriorated and only survived in fragments.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. As Samuel originally paid only twenty-four British pounds for the scrolls (only \$100 American at the time), it is safe to say that he made a considerable return on his investment. Also, Yadin used a middle man, named “Mr. Green,” who was really the Hebrew scholar, Harry Orlinsky.

¹⁷⁷ “Shrine of the Book,” The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, last updated 2014, accessed February 25, 2017, http://www.english.imjnet.org.il/page_899.

¹⁷⁸ Roland de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), viii. In situ means that the artifact is situated in its original, natural place, where it was left by those who originally used it. When an artifact is taken out of situ, it is taken out of its historical context, and therefore is much harder to identify and date, if not impossible.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 29.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

After the initial discovery of the scrolls, there was a considerable delay before scholars were able to access the caves from which they came. This was because after the end of the British Mandate and the creation of the state of Israel, war erupted, making it impossible for scholars to travel to the area.¹⁸³ Finally, De Vaux, of École Biblique, and G. Lankester Harding, who was the chief inspector of antiquities in Jordan, began conducting an excavation of Cave 1 in February and March of 1949.¹⁸⁴ They found pottery, pieces of linen cloth, manuscript fragments, and other artifacts, some of which matched the scrolls that the Bedouins had removed from the cave, confirming that this was Cave 1.¹⁸⁵ It was their work on this cave that qualified them to be the directors of the excavations taking place on the plateau. They then did a survey of Qumran and excavated two graves in the cemetery. However, at this time they found nothing to connect the caves to the settlement, and agreed with Dalman's earlier assessment that the site was a Roman fort from the third or fourth century A.D.¹⁸⁶

It was only due to growing interest in the scrolls that Harding and de Vaux returned to the plateau in November of 1951 to conduct what was initially supposed to be a short excavation in order to determine "whether or not there was any direct connection with the Dead Sea Scrolls [and the caves]."¹⁸⁷ While it was very limited as far as scale because they were not expecting to find anything promising, when they excavated a few of the main buildings, they made some important observations that effected the way scholars began to look at the site. One of the first things that they noted was the poor quality of the construction for the time, with walls made of unhewn field stones or rubble and mud plaster.¹⁸⁸ They then claimed, "this is no way resembles

¹⁸³ See Leslie Stein, *The Making of Modern Israel, 1948-1967* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Fields, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 128.

¹⁸⁸ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 27. This is part of the layer later known as Period Ib.

that of a Roman fort which we first took it to be.”¹⁸⁹ Another notable discovery they made during this digging season was “sunk into the floor of one of the rooms was a jar identical with most of those found in the Scroll cave [Cave 1]... We thus, even in the small area so far excavated have a connection with the scrolls.”¹⁹⁰ This observation prompted further excavation of the plateau, which de Vaux, and sometimes Harding, undertook for almost a decade. The excavations continued for over four digging campaigns, eventually laying bare the remains at Qumran and the spring of Ain Feshkha by 1958.¹⁹¹

By modern standards, it was a remarkably quick excavation, especially since it was technically two sites that were excavated in their entirety. However, the stratigraphically centric excavation methods that were being developed and refined at this time ensured that de Vaux’s findings were fairly precise and accurate. Unfortunately, it has been approximately sixty years since the cessation of their excavation, and yet de Vaux’s findings still remain unpublished.¹⁹² Therefore, many of the specifics of his dig are frequently up for debate, as peers attempt to review his findings from his other publications and not official dig reports. De Vaux’s findings and their interpretation are still hotly debated amongst the archaeological community.

¹⁸⁹ Quoted in Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Ibid., 27-28; and Torleif Elgvin, Kipp Davis, and Michael Langlois, eds., *Gleanings from the Caves: Dead Sea Scrolls and Artefacts from the Schøyen Collection* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 361-372.

¹⁹¹ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls.*, viii and 58. Ain Feshkha is another ancient site near Qumran that was also excavated at this time. The reason for also uncovering Ain Feshkha was because of its close proximity to Qumran. The two sites were suspected to be related. However, very little was found at Ain Feshkha. There were some artifacts near the surface that date from a time similar to the later periods of Qumran’s habitation, but those are few and were likely left by traveling Qumran residents. The artifacts that had contact with the ancient floor indicate that the site was early Israelite.

¹⁹² Philip R. Davies, “Commentary: How Not to Do Archaeology: The Story of Qumran,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 51, no. 4 (December 1988), 204. De Vaux has a good reason for not publishing his findings. He passed away not long after his excavations at Qumran ceased.

Due to the period in which he excavated de Vaux used a method similar to the Kenyon-Wheeler method in his excavation of Qumran. He references stratigraphy, *loci*, and balks all throughout his *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, which is the only primary source on his excavation in English.¹⁹³ These terms indicate that his method was organized, and took the site down layer by layer. When looking at his mapping of the site it is still quite clear where things were found, and in what specific layers.¹⁹⁴

According to de Vaux, “The first human settlement at Khirbet Qumran goes back to the Iron Age.”¹⁹⁵ The lower levels of some of the foundations are embedded in a layer of ash that contained numerous pottery sherds from Iron Age II.¹⁹⁶ An important characteristic of these *loci*¹⁹⁷ in this layer is the fact that they contained Israelite pottery only. One noteworthy piece of pottery was a jar-handle upon which was stamped the word *lammek* (meaning ‘to the king’) in palaeo-Hebrew characters.¹⁹⁸ De Vaux claims that through the locations of pottery remains, and the alignment of some of the foundational walls (which sometimes were reused for later walls), he was able to “reconstruct a coherent plan” of some of the features of the Israelite structures.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ This is only a translation, as all of the originals are in French.

¹⁹⁴ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Plate XXXIX.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1. This was actually the last level excavated, but in order to get a better chronological understanding of the site I decided to start with the earliest period of occupation, until the community’s destruction, instead of the reverse.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Loci* (or locus when plural) in archaeology refers to the smallest definable unit of stratigraphy. When a site is excavated it is broken up into smaller pieces, or grids, depending on the shape and method of the archaeologist. Each piece or square on the grid is given a locus number. The pottery that is found within the designated area is assigned that number so that in the future it is easy to remember where pieces were found. Each locus number on the site is unique. If there is a soil change in the designated area, or some other differing factor, then the locus number changes again.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2; and Megan Bishop Moore and Brad E. Kelle, *Biblical History and Israel’s Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmann Publishing Company, 2011), 156. Most of the jars with *lammek* stamped on them were found in northern Jerusalem, which makes sense as the stamp indicates that the contents of the jar are for the king. However, they have been found all over the parts of Israel that were the kingdom of Judah. Scholars think that these vessels are evidence of a royal supply chain established by King Hezekiah of Judah in the late eighth century.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

He claims that the evidence shows a rectangular building that consisted of a large courtyard, and a row of rooms running along its eastern wall with one that projected outwards on the north-east corner. This level also has a large, round cistern with a water collection system. It is the deepest cistern at Qumran, as well as the only one that is round.²⁰⁰ Though no sherds were found in the cistern, it is almost certain that it dates back to this period because of its similarities with other cisterns from the time. The absence of sherds can be explained by it having been cleaned out and reused in later periods.²⁰¹

There were also other less identifiable features against the northern and southern walls.²⁰² According to de Vaux, this plan is comparative “to the plans of the Israelite strongholds which have been explored in the Plain of the Buqei‘a, on the plateau which dominates Qumran, as well as in the Negeb [Negev], at ‘Ain Qedeirat.”²⁰³ The fact that these ruins are from the Iron Age help to place the lowest ruins on the Qumran plateau during this time. Another way which these foundations can be identified as Iron Age is because the masonry is different than that of later periods, consisting of large, bulky blocks.²⁰⁴ However, the main way that the date of this settlement was established was from the pottery sherds. According to de Vaux, “Nothing here is earlier than the eighth century B.C., and the latest date which can be assigned to the settlement as a whole is at the end of the seventh century [B.C.]. This date is confirmed by the stamped inscription *lammeleck*, belonging to the final period of the monarchy, as well as by the ostrakon, for the lettering on this belongs to a period not much earlier than the Exile.”²⁰⁵ Since there were

²⁰⁰ Ibid. It was the only large, round cistern found at the time of de Vaux’s excavations. One was found in Price’s excavations on the southern end of the plateau.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 3.

²⁰² Ibid., 2.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 3.

²⁰⁵ Ibid; and Moore, *Biblical History and Israel’s Past*, 156. The Exile referenced here by de Vaux is from the Old Testament, when the southern kingdom of Judah was conquered by the

hundreds of years that the site lay abandoned until it was inhabited, and Israelite sherds from this layer are frequently found with ashes, it is safe to assume that this settlement suffered a violent, fiery destruction during the downfall of the Kingdom of Judah, mentioned in the Old Testament.²⁰⁶

De Vaux references the next layer that was unearthed as Period Ia. According to him, “Khirbet Qumran had been in ruins for a very long time period when a fresh group [of Hasomnean Jews] came to settle there.”²⁰⁷ This occupation is so separated from its predecessor that no connection can be established between the two. The beginnings of this level of occupation were small and modest, utilizing what remained of the previous Israelite buildings as a foundation for their own.²⁰⁸ However, they did expand the site by adding some buildings of their own. These occupants added a more efficient means of collecting water, and therefore added two rectangular cisterns while still utilizing the round cistern from the previous level of occupation.²⁰⁹ A few corners were enclosed in order to provide a few more covered buildings, and to the north of the containing wall for the cistern some rooms were added. This is also when two kilns are believed to have been built.²¹⁰ However, for the most part, it appears that the new settlers contented themselves with building off of, or reconstructing, remains from the previous period of occupation.

This layer is more difficult to date in comparison to the previous and following layers of occupation. Only a few pieces of sherds and pottery remained beneath the southern area of the

Babylonians, and most of the Jews were removed from their homeland and forced to live elsewhere in the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Also, ostracon is pottery that was found with writing on it.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. It is also during the Iron Age that the caves with marl entrances were constructed.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 4; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 49.

²⁰⁹ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 4.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

main building.²¹¹ The pottery found is indistinguishable from that of the next period of occupation (Period Ib), and there were no coins found in this settlement.²¹² According to de Vaux, “For this reason the chronology [of Period Ia] can be established only approximately by its relation to the better documented period which follows.”²¹³ Because of coins found in Period Ib, it is evident that it was definitely occupied under the rule of Alexander Jannaeus, who was the second king of Judea during the Hasmonean Period from 103 to 76 B.C. This means that Period Ia was most likely constructed during the reign of his father, John Hyrcanus, who ruled from 135 to 104 B.C., as this period of occupation was of short duration and immediately followed by the complex of buildings constructed in Period Ib.²¹⁴

Period Ib is the period of time in which Khirbet Qumran took its definitive form, and is the scale and shape to which the ruins have been reconstructed for visitors at the modern site.²¹⁵ The scope of buildings constructed at this time obliterated the remains of the ancient Israelite ruins from the Iron Age and are an enlargement of the building of Period Ia.²¹⁶ During this period Qumran residents constructed the tower, the ruins of which are mentioned by almost every early explorer and archaeologist who has visited the plateau.²¹⁷ There are three entrances to the complex from this time. One comes from the north and goes across the plain from an earlier shoreline of the Dead Sea, up to the plateau.²¹⁸ Another, smaller gate is on the north-west side of

²¹¹ Ibid., 5. In this sentence the difference between sherds and pottery is that sherds are pieces, and pottery means a whole piece. However, the terms can sometimes be used synonymously.

²¹² Ibid; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 49-50.

²¹³ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 5.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ “Qumran Park: Archaeology and History,” *Israel Nature and Parks Authority*, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.parks.org.il/sites/English/ParksAndReserves/qumran/Pages/default.aspx#arch>.

²¹⁶ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 5.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 5-6.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 5. This path goes from where the Dead Sea once was because the Sea is shrinking every year and has shrunk exponentially from the time of de Vaux.

the complex and its path proceeds along the foot of the cliff in one direction, or ascends to the plain of Buqei'a and on to Jerusalem. This path is probably ancient, and perhaps dates from the period of habitation from Old Testament times. It climbs up the rocky formation by a series of very tight turns to the north of Wadi Qumran.²¹⁹ The third entrance, is on the eastern side of the community, near one of the potter's kilns.²²⁰

The tower is a characteristic feature of Period Ib. At two stories tall, it was the highest building in the community and guarded the main point of entry into the settlement.²²¹ According to de Vaux, it was "massive."²²² He surmises that, "The various rooms of the lower story opened into each other but there was no door leading to the outside... they could only have served as store-rooms, and the way into them would have been down a spiral staircase."²²³ It is evident, even on the other floors, that this tower was made for defense. There was only one way into the tower, and no real windows. The tower was isolated, and separated from the rest of the buildings by open spaces.²²⁴ To the south of the foot of the tower there is a gateway that leads into a little court, which gives access to the rooms on the south-west section of the community. One of these rooms is important to the history of not only those who lived in Qumran, but the scrolls found in the surrounding caves.²²⁵ Archaeologists found a bench that ran along the walls. According to de Vaux, "[the room] has the appearance of being an assembly room."²²⁶ This is the room where it is believed that the different panels of the scrolls were assembled and sewn together.²²⁷

²¹⁹ Ibid., 6.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 51.

²²² De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 6.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid., 6-7.

²²⁵ Ibid., 7.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 43-44, 52. Period Ib is the time of scroll production and of bone deposits mentioned in the next chapter.

Another striking feature of the construction of Period Ib is the number and obvious importance of cisterns. Cisterns had been key features of earlier periods, which is not surprising because of Khirbet Qumran's location in a desert. However, water collection and preservation exponentially increased at this time.²²⁸ This makes sense, because the entire complex had greatly expanded at this time, meaning an increase in the number of people living at Qumran and an increase for the need of safe, clean water. In order to accommodate the influx in people, not only were new cisterns constructed, but this is when the aqueduct was built to catch winter rains coming into Wadi Qumran.²²⁹ The aqueduct and cisterns were part of a water collection and distribution system that is remarkably complex, using channels to feed various cisterns, ritual baths, basins, and purification systems.²³⁰

De Vaux determined that the Qumran community was centered around communal activities. He states, "this water system is only one element in a plan which is remarkable chiefly for its qualities of unification and organization. Khirbet Qumran is not a village or a group of houses; it is the establishment of a community. We must be still more precise: this establishment was not designed as a community residence but rather for the carrying on of certain communal activities."²³¹ For example, there are not many buildings that could have served as dwelling places, especially when compared with those that were designed for group activities to be pursued.²³² If de Vaux's interpretations of the site are assumed to be correct, it makes sense that there are many store-rooms, several workshops, and several assembly rooms. However, there is

²²⁸ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 8.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., 8-10; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 54-55.

²³¹ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 10.

²³² Ibid.

only one kitchen, a single large washing-place, and one stable, which are features that are to be expected in individual homes.²³³

One of these assembly rooms seems to have been a place of importance in the community. What makes it unique from the other assembly rooms on the site are the cupboards recessed into the walls and a small basin carved out near the door that was able to be filled from the outside.²³⁴ According to de Vaux, this gives the impressions that this room was “designed for closed sessions in which those taking part did not wish to be disturbed, and thus as a kind of council chamber.”²³⁵ Beside this was a larger room, which was equipped with a broad entrance, possibly to accommodate large numbers of people.²³⁶

However, according to de Vaux, “the most important feature of all” is the largest room in the whole ruins, that is oriented east and west (which is generally intentional and significant, as seen in the cemetery).²³⁷ De Vaux says, “it is clear that it was a meeting-place,” which was also probably used for daily meals as it is next to the kitchen.²³⁸ Towards the western side of the room there is a circular area that stands out because it is paved, where as the rest of the floor is plaster. De Vaux notes, “This seems to mark the place where the president of the assembly would have taken his stand.”²³⁹ Another interesting characteristic of this room is that the floor slopes gently from the west to the door, and rises slightly to the east. There is a conduit leading out of the main channel of water that opens into the room near the north-western door, which could easily be opened or closed. The way that the water could easily enter into the room, added

²³³ Ibid; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 53.

²³⁴ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 10.

²³⁵ Ibid., 10-11; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 51.

²³⁶ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 11.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 53.

with the slope of the floor, means that this room could be cleaned easily and routinely, with water flowing from the conduit to the lowest point through the south-western door.²⁴⁰ Between all of the ritual and purification pools, and a room that was routinely cleaned and purified, it is evident that this community put great stock in ritual cleanness.²⁴¹

Adjoining this area is another room which assists in the understanding of “the most important feature of all.”²⁴² Though it was destroyed in the earthquake that ended Period Ib, de Vaux found underneath the collapsed ceiling and debris a reserve of more than one thousand vessels.²⁴³ There were 709 bowls, arranged in piles of a dozen or so each, twenty-one small jars of two different types, thirty-eight dishes, eleven jugs, and seventy-five beakers. Other pieces of pottery were scattered all over the floor.²⁴⁴ Not only is this evidence of the massive earthquake that ended Period Ib, but it also indicates that the aforementioned room might have been some kind of dining room, since this is no where near a potter’s shop or kiln.²⁴⁵ Also, artifacts like oil lamps, large jars with lids, and pots that are found elsewhere at the site, were not here, so it could not have been a storage room for a potter’s workshop. However, all of the vessels necessary for meals are present. De Vaux surmises that, “This, then, was the crockery, stored near the assembly-room, because that room must also have been used as a dining room.”²⁴⁶

Some of the meals that took place in this dining room seem to have had some kind of religious significance for the community. This is because de Vaux and his team found, “In the free spaces between the buildings or round them the excavations have laid bare animal bones

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 55.

²⁴² De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 11.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 12.

²⁴⁵ There was an earthquake that went through the area in 31 BC.

²⁴⁶ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 12.

deposited between large sherds of pitchers or pots... or sometimes placed in jars left intact with their lids on.”²⁴⁷ Universally, these deposits have barely been covered with any dirt, and are found flush with the level of the ground. Some of them even seem to have been simply placed on the ground, with no signs of attempted burial according to de Vaux. Found in various places throughout the community, these deposits are at their most numerous in a group of about thirty, between a secondary building and a large decantation basin.²⁴⁸ Using the pottery in which they were discovered and a few coins that were recovered from their immediate vicinity, de Vaux determined that a majority of these bone deposits are from Period Ib, although there are some from the following time period, Period II, as well.²⁴⁹ De Vaux believes that these bones were the remnants of ceremonial religious meals, as most of the bones are clean, but some of them are charred, which means they have been roasted. Also, there are not enough deposits for these bones to account for every meal eaten by the community.²⁵⁰ The care with which these bones were set apart after the meat was consumed, along with their quantity, indicate a sacred purpose for these remains. De Vaux believes that it is possible for bones to be the remnants of sacrificed animals that were then eaten in a ceremonial meal, especially since the animals eaten were the same kind that were sacrificed by law in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.²⁵¹ Though found elsewhere on the plateau, these deposits are quite unusual.

The next period in the history of Qumran that was excavated by de Vaux and his team is known as Period II. There was only a short period of abandonment after the earthquake that

²⁴⁷ Ibid.; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 55.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 13. A decantation basin is a pool where the water was stilled in order to allow the silt and debris carried by the flood waters to settle, before the water entered into a pool or cistern for use. In other words, it is a place where the water was cleaned.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 14.

²⁵¹ Ibid. The bones were identified as being sheep, goats, lambs, kids, cows, and oxen.

severely damaged or destroyed parts of Period Ib, as the community was quickly cleared, repaired, and modified before being reoccupied.²⁵² Some believe that some of those who inhabited Khirbet Qumran would have stayed, and camped in the ruins while waiting for it to be repaired. However, de Vaux thinks this is unlikely as a damaged water system would have made living there temporarily impossible.²⁵³ While there were ten Herodian coins that were found that could date from a time when it was uninhabited, it is possible that these were left here at a later time, during Periods II or III as Herod's coins continued in circulation after his death.²⁵⁴ Other than repairs and clearing a few of the damaged rooms, there were only a few minor modifications made to the buildings from Period Ib.²⁵⁵

Period II is the last major period of occupation at Khirbet Qumran, though it was occupied at later times.²⁵⁶ However, because of this, it is easier to interpret the use of some of the rooms because more material remains have been found. One example of this is in the long room in which the benches were found from Period Ib. From the end of Period II the room had been filled with debris from the upper floor, which had the same floor plan, and had fallen in.²⁵⁷ The debris included fragments of structures made of mud-brick that were carefully smoothed over with plaster. De Vaux and his team collected them and took them to Jerusalem where, according to de Vaux, "they were painstakingly re-assembled."²⁵⁸ As it turns out, it was a table, fifteen feet (five meters) in length, forty centimeters in breadth, and only fifty centimeters tall. Before falling through the ceiling it had been parallel to the eastern wall and "had been used there in

²⁵² Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 56.

²⁵³ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 24.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 24 and 34.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁵⁷ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 56.

²⁵⁸ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 29.

association with a low bench fixed into the wall.”²⁵⁹ While to modern readers it seems to compose a dining room, it has already been clarified that those were located elsewhere in the complex. The discovery of two inkwells, one bronze and the other earthenware (one of which still contained some ink), that date from the Roman Period, clarify the purpose of the building. It was most likely a scriptorium.²⁶⁰

Many coins found in Period II help to assign this period with a more precise date. Ninety-one of the coins were of the Procurators, thirty-three of which were struck under Nero, and seventy-eight coins bearing the image of Agrippa I. The timeline of coins continues through the period of the First Jewish Revolt, although the coins are only from the first two or three years.²⁶¹ This, coupled with the evidence of a violent destruction for Period II, means that this period of occupation likely ended somewhere between A.D. 66 and 73 at the hands of Vespasian and the Tenth Roman Legion.²⁶² Because the coins only come from the first few years of the Jewish Revolt, the bronze Roman arrowheads found in the layer, and evidence of the roofs being burned, point to the destruction of the settlement during the war at the hands of the Romans in A.D. 69.²⁶³

The last layer of occupation uncovered by de Vaux and his team is Period III. Though most of the community remained in ruins, the Romans reconstructed and occupied Qumran for a

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 29-30.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 34-36.

²⁶² Ibid., 36; and Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 272-273, 468. While Josephus does not mention Qumran specifically, he makes several mentions of various sectarian groups, one of which inhabited a colony in the Judean desert. Many scholars consider this desert sect to be the community at Qumran. Though the 10th Roman Legion, under the command of Vespasian, destroyed the community, Josephus does not mention this as it was presumably too small for him to mention. However, he does mention going to the Dead Sea in A.D. 68 after the destruction of Jericho. This is most likely when Qumran's Period II was destroyed and correlates with the timeline left by the coins.

²⁶³ Ibid; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 62.

short period in order to monitor the Dead Sea, probably while waiting for Masada to fall in April of A.D. 73.²⁶⁴ The main buildings and large tower were reused by the Romans, and the walls extending east were doubled in thickness.²⁶⁵ The Romans replaced the well organized rooms of Period II with small rooms arranged in no particular order, and the destruction they wrought was made level with the ground throughout the site, in order to clear the ground for a military establishment.²⁶⁶ These were the only areas of the settlement that were inhabited at the time, and most of the artifacts and coins from this time were found in this area.²⁶⁷ These coins are also how it is known that Qumran was occupied by Roman soldiers, and the dates in which it was occupied. Of the coins found nine of Caesarea and four from Dora are from the reign of Nero and were minted in A.D. 67 or 68.²⁶⁸ These are coins which could only have been brought in by Roman soldiers, as this is what they would have received for their pay.²⁶⁹ The coins also help pinpoint a more accurate date for the Roman destruction of Qumran, which must have been A.D. 68 or later.²⁷⁰

The Romans implemented some major changes into the arrangements for the collection and keeping of water. After the destruction of Period II, major repairs would have been necessary to fix the complex water system.²⁷¹ Also, the water provided would have been out of proportion for the needs of the small Roman garrison; therefore, the soldiers used a few of the

²⁶⁴ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 41-42.

²⁶⁵ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 62.

²⁶⁶ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 42; and Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 468.

²⁶⁷ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 42.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.* This year is able to be pinpointed because of the dates on the coins found by de Vaux.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

cisterns to collect the debris they removed while creating their new living quarters, keeping only the large cistern to the south-east in use.²⁷²

For de Vaux, the most radical transformation was that “There are no longer any places of collective assembly, or any workshops, and the potter’s kiln now serves as a store for lime.”²⁷³ To meet the needs of the garrison, there was one bread oven set up at the foot of the tower.²⁷⁴ In contrast with the continuity between Periods Ib and II, Period III broke away from the pattern as community life no longer existed at Qumran.²⁷⁵ It was the quarters of a Roman military detachment.

It is unknown exactly when the Romans stopped their occupation of Khirbet Qumran, however numismatic evidence and the history of the surrounding area led de Vaux and Magness to believe that the Romans abandoned the site in A.D. 73 or 74.²⁷⁶ Aside from the previously mentioned coins, Period III contained one undated coin from Antioch, during the reign of Nero, therefore before A.D. 68, one coin with the names of Claudia, Nero’s daughter and Poppaea his wife, which belong to A.D. 65 at the earliest, one silver coin from Antioch from the reign of Vespasian and Titus, which is from A.D. 69 or 70, two coins from Ashkelon minted in A.D. 72 or 73, and four undated coins with the *Judean Capta* ascribed to Titus.²⁷⁷ The latest coin found in this layer is of Agrippa II minted in the year A.D. 87, but since it was found outside of a building it is doubtful that it is from Period III; however, since it was found in this layer, the possibility that Qumran was occupied until this time cannot be ruled out. This possibility is unlikely as there

²⁷² Ibid; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 62.

²⁷³ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 43.

²⁷⁴ Ibid; and Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 62.

²⁷⁵ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 43.

²⁷⁶ Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 63.

²⁷⁷ De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 44.

are no coins from the long stretch of time between A.D. 73 until 87. Also, since Masada fell in A.D. 73, there was no longer a need for a Roman garrison after this date.²⁷⁸

While de Vaux uncovered evidence of life from the time of the Second Jewish Revolt in A.D. 132 to 135, no actual building work can be attributed to this time and little was found.²⁷⁹ The coins from this layer come either for the Second Revolt, or the Imperial reigns of Vespasian, and Trajan. Most belong to the Second Year of the Revolt, while the rest of the coins are undated but seem to be from only a few years later because of the Romans depicted.²⁸⁰ Judging from the lack of fortification, the types of coins found, the time period in which this occupation took place, and the short period of time that it was inhabited, it may be assumed that those who lived here were some of the insurgents who were being hunted down by the Roman legions and attempted to find refuge in the Judean dessert.²⁸¹ This is the final layer of any occupation at Khirbet Qumran. There were a few coins found by de Vaux and his team on the surface, the date of which extend from the third century A.D. to the Turkish period, but this can be explained by passing travelers dropping the occasional coin.²⁸² This is the extent of de Vaux's excavation.

While de Vaux and his team uncovered and accomplished a lot at Khirbet Qumran and in some of the surrounding caves, there was still much left on the plateau to be discovered. However, as the modern state of Israel was in its infancy and war with neighboring countries was often looming, further excavations could not take place until the 1990s with Yitzhak Magan and

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 44.

²⁷⁹ This revolt is also known as the Bar Kohkba Revolt and took place under the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian after he erected a temple to Jupiter on the site of the Jewish Temple that was destroyed in the First Revolt. After the Second Revolt, Hadrian renamed Jerusalem, *Aelia Capitolia*, and Judea, *Palestina*.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 45.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran*, 63.

Yurall Peleg. As they discovered no artifacts differing from those found by de Vaux the next excavations discussed will be those of Dr. Randall Price.

Chapter 3

Qumran Excavations in the 21st Century

Dr. J. Randall Price began excavating at Khirbet Qumran in the summer of 2002 on the southern portion of the plateau. After de Vaux, he has conducted the most extensive archaeological dig on the plateau to date. His dig was longer than de Vaux's as well, digging for eight seasons instead of five.²⁸³ There were two Israeli archaeologists, Yitzhak Maagen and Yuval Peleg, and one foreign archaeologist, Professor James Strange, who excavated on the plateau between the digs of these two archaeologists; however, none of them uncovered as much or dug for as long as either de Vaux or Price. Of all of the archaeologists mentioned in this work, Price has incorporated the most modern technology into his digs. Not only has he used balloons to take pictures, but his more recent excavation has employed drones equipped with cameras to take pictures at the end of an excavation. He has also used satellite scans, seismic surveys, and GPR before and during his excavations on the plateau. Price has also been a part of recent excavations for Operation Scroll, an initiative of the Civil Administration for Judea and Samaria, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), and the National Park Authority (NPA) to excavate the caves surrounding Qumran in order to find other possible Dead Sea Scrolls before local looters.²⁸⁴ These digs will be continuing for the foreseeable future, but as always with modern digs, funding and politics can sometimes impede progress.

²⁸³ These numbers are higher if Price's cave excavations and de Vaux's excavation of Ain Feshkha are included. Either way, Price has excavated for a longer period of time. In all, Price excavated for ten years on the plateau.

²⁸⁴ "A National Plan to Excavate the Judean Desert Caves and Save the Scrolls from Being Robbed," Israel Antiquities Authority, accessed April 2, 2017, http://www.antiquities.org.il/Article_eng.aspx?sec_id=25&subj_id=240&id=4200.

Price first became interested in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran when he was a graduate student in Semitic languages and archaeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1979.²⁸⁵ Though he had a professional interest in the Scrolls, his initial contact with them came not through archaeology, but because he needed a job since his wife was expecting their second child.²⁸⁶ With the help of a neighbor Price ended up working at the Shrine of the Book, Israel's Museum of the Dead Sea Scrolls, renting self-guided audio tours and selling slide sets about the Scrolls.²⁸⁷ He spent many days and nights working in the museum becoming familiar with their history, and meeting the many scholars and archaeologists involved in the history and deciphering of the Scrolls.²⁸⁸

In 1989 Price was again involved in graduate studies when the scrolls came back into public prominence due to controversy over the forty year delay in the publication of the contents of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the summer of the following year he attended the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology in Jerusalem.²⁸⁹ As there was a session on the Dead Sea Scrolls, according to Price "most of the known universe of Scroll scholarship was present."²⁹⁰ Many of his former professors at the Hebrew University were now part of an Israeli contingent of scholars translating the Scrolls, one of whom encouraged those present to add to the research already done on the Scrolls, and to go back to the original texts of the Bible and study the primary sources.²⁹¹ It was this admonishment that encouraged Price to work more closely with the scrolls themselves, and write several books about their validity, content, and

²⁸⁵ Price, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 12.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 12-13; and Hershel Shanks, "Absorbing Archaeology at the Jerusalem Congress," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 16, no. 6 (November/December 1990).

history.²⁹² Eventually, though not until 2002, he was also inspired to excavate on the Qumran Plateau.

During his first dig season at Khirbet-Qumran in the summer of 2002, Price's excavation was small. Only two squares were opened at this time.²⁹³ One was referred to as the Western Square, and another was called the Eastern Square.²⁹⁴ The Western square is directly in line with Cave 4, which is on the opposite, facing plateau.²⁹⁵ This location was chosen because the 1996 probe revealed an anomaly at this location. The excavation's purpose was to "locate and identify subsurface anomalies previously discerned on the seismic survey at a depth of 16 [meters]."²⁹⁶ The depth where the anomaly was discovered is also the approximate elevation of the entrance to Cave 4 across the plateau.²⁹⁷ A drop in pressure also indicated that there was "a subsurface paleo-chamber."²⁹⁸ These initial surveys made it an encouraging place to excavate, as these readings indicated that something similar to Cave 4 might have existed in ancient times.

Price and his team initially excavated this square to a depth of 1.5 meters. In that space they located sparse potsherds and a jar handle in the topsoil, a shaped stone (probably a grinding stone) found in some pebble fill below the topsoil, some isolated bitumen deposits, and several

²⁹² Price, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 13. In March of 1996 Price was invited to participate in a drilling survey on the plateau, referenced later, directed by Professor Strange, which led to an excavation that summer. Though he was not able to participate in the excavation (which only lasted a few days), he was invited by Strange to conduct the follow-up excavation. It took six years for Price to obtain the license and permit to do so.

²⁹³ This was in order to complete an excavation that was begun by Dr. Jim Strange of the University of Central Florida, who originally found the anomalies in the soil in 1996. When he was unable to complete the dig, Dr. Price was asked to step in his place because of his qualifications and experience.

²⁹⁴ Randall Price, "Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006," Unpublished manuscript in author's possession, 1.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. This basically means that the probe noticed a difference from the sediment here, compared to the surrounding areas. This means that either something manmade was buried here, or it is just an anomaly in the soil.

bone deposits in a sandy layer below the pebble fill.²⁹⁹ No material remains were found after this depth, but the team continued to record geophysical features to a depth of 17 meters.³⁰⁰ Since no subsurface paleo-chamber was found, concentrated lines of natural stones found in layers above and below the targeted levels were determined to be the source of the seismic anomalies.³⁰¹ Price proposes, “that the drop in pressure during the probe resulted from air in the surface pumps that became trapped in a sandy layer at the target depths.”³⁰² While this square did not reveal much about the historical context of the site, it was helpful for future seismic surveys of the Qumran area and how they should be read in reference to subsurface anomalies.

The Eastern Square of Price’s 2002 excavation of the plateau yielded much more interesting archaeological information. Located at a slightly lower elevation than the other square, it had been explored with GPR in the 1990 by the Tel-Aviv University Department of Geophysics, revealing small anomalies. Then Price’s team excavated it to a depth of 1.2 meters, and discovered a beaten-earth floor.³⁰³ In a sand layer that was on top of the beaten-earth floor they found, *in situ*, two storage jars approximately two meters apart.³⁰⁴ One was chalk colored, containing pebbles and wadi stones as well as the rim and handles of another storage jar, though its own rim and handles were missing.³⁰⁵ The second storage jar was a reddish color, with thin walls and no rim, and was filled with the surrounding sand layer. The desiccated condition of this

²⁹⁹ Ibid. Bitumen is a dark, viscous, organic liquid, similar to asphalt. However, it burns like a fossil fuel, which was probably its use at Qumran. For more information on bitumen, see Dwijen Banerjee, *Oil Sands, Heavy Oil, & Bitumen: From Recovery to Refinery* (Tulsa: PennWell Corporation, 2012).

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid. A probe was inserted beneath this layer, but there were no anomalies that gave the appearance of material remains. All formations under the floor were naturally occurring, geological formations.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 1-2.

jar prevented it from being removed from the square.³⁰⁶ A *tabun* oven was also found in the north-eastern corner of the square, constructed of fieldstones and containing ash deposits, a piece of worked stone, and a small bird bone.³⁰⁷ From the way it was situated, it is evident that this *tabun* was associated with intense heat, and was used as a part of a cooking installation.³⁰⁸ The discovery of a grinding stone and the base of a small bowl in the general area solidified this assumption.³⁰⁹ Although not conclusive, it appears that Price and his team had uncovered a small kitchen.³¹⁰

In this square there were also four large cooking pots, filled with ash and sheep bone fragments, several centimeters below the topsoil.³¹¹ Their location so close to the surface indicates that these pots and bones were intentionally buried at a date later than the *tabun*, and is reminiscent of de Vaux's excavations, which yielded many similar vessels filled with bones and ash.³¹² Analysis of the pottery from this square, particularly these cooking pots, when compared with de Vaux' finds, indicates that these were from Period II, and are consistent with his findings.³¹³ This also indicated to Price that "ritual bone burials occurred on this area of the

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 2. It is likely that this jar was originally placed in the ground with its opening just above ground level. This helped keep its contents, such as water or wine, cool.

³⁰⁷ A *tabun* is a clay oven that sometimes has a cone-like shape. It can be used for other things, but was mostly used for baking bread. For more info, see Rainer Albertz, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012).

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Randall Price, "New Discoveries at Qumran: A Special Report," *World of the Bible Ministries Newsletter* 6, no. 3 (Fall/Winter 2004), 1.

³¹¹ Price, "Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006," 2.

³¹² Ibid. These are the jars in Chapter 2 that are thought to have some sort of ritualistic significance within the Qumran community.

³¹³ Ibid. The analysis mentioned here does not necessarily require lab analysis. While some of the material that the pots are made of might be analyzed, the main way this pottery analysis is done is by comparing the style, shape, and composition of these pots with those found by de Vaux. For more information, see Marcello Fidanzio, ed., *The Caves of Qumran: Proceedings of the International Conference Lugano, 2014* (Boston: Brill, 2017).

plateau and need to be investigated as to their concentrations and extent on the plateau.”³¹⁴ In other words, Price and his team found enough archaeological remains that they were convinced of the necessity to come back at a later season and further excavate the southern area of the Qumran plateau.

Price and his team returned to Khirbet Qumran in the summer of 2004 and continued to excavate on the southern area of the plateau. Every year the members of Price’s team differ, depending on how many volunteers are available and how much digging needs to be done. During the 2004 season he had fourteen volunteers.³¹⁵ The GPR surveys conducted in 1990 by the Tel-Aviv University Department of Geophysics were used in this excavation as well, however, they were also supplemented with another GPR survey conducted by the Geophysical Institute of Israel in 2002.³¹⁶ There were six squares excavated during this digging season, some of which were left untouched or were opened solely for the propose of further calibrating radar data. However, several of these squares had relatively rich archaeological yields, including the first coins found in one of Price’s excavations at Qumran.

In line with the Eastern Square from the previous dig season, two new squares were excavated. In these squares, labeled 2 and 3, there was a layer of habitation discovered sixty centimeters below the topsoil. Price dates this surface to the sometime during the first-century B.C./A.D., because there were three coins found: Alexander Jannaeus, Pontius Pilate, and a lepta.³¹⁷ This would have been during the early Roman occupation of Qumran or de Vaux’s

³¹⁴ Ibid., 3.

³¹⁵ Price, “New Discoveries at Qumran,” 1.

³¹⁶ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 3.

³¹⁷ Ibid. These were all popular coins during mid-first century Judea. For more information, see David Hendin and Herbert Kreindler, *Guide to Biblical Coins* (St. Louis: Amphorae Publishing Group, 2010).

Period III.³¹⁸ Just two centimeters below this layer in square 2 was the top of a bowl lid of an ovoid store jar. Upon further excavation, it was discovered that the whole ovoid store jar was intact and still sealed.³¹⁹ Using the ceramic typology dating method, this jar was dated to the first-century B.C. Its contents were then removed for analysis by Jan Gunneweg of the Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology.³²⁰ The jar, titled Jar 25, was found to have held fermented grape wine. Another similar jar was found on the same level, however, it was toppled over due to tectonic activity.³²¹ Due to the pottery that was found in this layer can be equated with Period Ia from de Vaux's excavation. Also, these jars were the same type in which some scrolls have been found in the surrounding area.³²²

There was a layer of clay under the jars that differed from the grayish sediment in which the jars were found. The removal of this clay revealed an uneven surface which was "punctuated by gaps cut into the clay layer and filled with dune sand."³²³ Removal of the balk between square 2 and square 1 revealed a large, shaped limestone covered in worm-burrows set in a depression.³²⁴ Next to this, and underneath the previously mentioned *tabun* that was excavated in 2002, were the remains of a fallen construction of mud and straw.³²⁵ Price considers this to be the "remains of the outer structure of the *tabun* or of a small wall in association with the shaped-stone and depression."³²⁶ The dune sand filling the gaps in the clay surface was then removed to

³¹⁸ Price, "New Discoveries at Qumran," 3.

³¹⁹ Price, "Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006," 3. This sealed storage jar contained the evaporated remnants of wine. Those present said that when the jar was opened you could smell the presence of wine, though there was none left in the jar.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid. This tectonic activity might have been the earthquake that ended Period Ib.

³²² Price, "New Discoveries at Qumran," 1.

³²³ Price, "Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006," 3.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

reveal a repository, or storage complex approximately six feet (two meters) below.³²⁷ This complex consisted of “a large opening in the western side connected by a tunnel to an area in the east which contained a hole cut in the floor.”³²⁸ In this hole was a large body pottery shard, and an opening in the eastern wall.³²⁹ There was also a marl bench, which was later removed, that had uneven steps descending partially into the floor, which allowed access into the repository.³³⁰ In this repository the archaeological team found “two cut bone objects, a piece of slag glass, the rim of a burnished red-slip Iron Age crater, a jug rim, a jar handle and base, ash, and charred date pits.”³³¹ Due to what was found, this repository was clearly meant to hold storage jars.³³² However, some speculate that it could have possibly housed jars containing Dead Sea Scrolls.³³³

Square 3 produced what Price considers to be the most important discovery of the 2004 excavation.³³⁴ Eight or nine animal bone burials and deposits like the ones found by de Vaux and Price in his 2002 excavation of Qumran, were discovered.³³⁵ These bones were found with and without pottery fragments, unlike the other deposits.³³⁶ However, when pottery was present it served as a cover for the bones, much like with the deposits found by de Vaux.³³⁷ The bone deposits found in square 3 consisted of various types of animal bones, including birds, and the larger deposits even included the jawbones of some of the animals.³³⁸ All of the bones were

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid; and Price, “New Discoveries at Qumran,” 1.

³³¹ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 3.

³³² Price, “New Discoveries at Qumran,” 1.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid., 3.

³³⁵ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 4; and Price, “New Discoveries at Qumran,” 3.

³³⁶ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 4.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid.

collected so as to avoid contamination and DNA analysis is going to be conducted by the Weitzman Institute of Science.³³⁹ Price notes that, “[s]ince most of the Dead Sea Scrolls were made of parchment (sheep skin) and have had DNA analysis, our intention is to compare our bones with the scrolls to reveal genetic matches in sheep families and therefore, a connection between the site and the scrolls.”³⁴⁰ This is important because it would indisputably confirm that Qumran is the community responsible for the creation and preservation of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and that Qumran was not a Roman villa or rural plantation, and that not all of the scrolls came from Jerusalem.³⁴¹ In addition, since squares 2 and 3 were adjacent, it was now clear that the intact stone jar was part of the bone deposits.

Price and his team returned in July of 2005 for another season of excavation on the Qumran plateau. According to Price, this is the season that “marked a new turning point” in his excavations.³⁴² This is probably because this excavation was larger than any that he had conducted before on the plateau, with ten new squares opened during the season, and the extensive mapping of the site.³⁴³ In order to map the site his team used computer technology to create a composite of images that were taken using aerial photography.³⁴⁴ This puts Price’s excavation in context with the entire ancient community that de Vaux excavated in the 1950s, and will benefit scholars for generations.³⁴⁵

³³⁹ Price, “New Discoveries at Qumran,” 3.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid; and Hirschfeld, “Early Roman Manor Houses in Judea and the Site of Khirbet Qumran.” One who claims this is Yizhar Hirschfeld. Some of his claims will be explored later in chapter four.

³⁴² Randall Price, “Qumran Yields New Secrets: 2005 Dig Report,” *World of the Bible Ministries Newsletter* 7, no.2 (Winter 2005), 1.

³⁴³ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 4.

³⁴⁴ Price, “Qumran Yields New Secrets,” 1. As drones were not yet something accessible or practical for civilian use in 2005, these aerial photographs were taken by a camera suspended by a blimp.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

This excavation uncovered more of the animal bone deposits in various places throughout the site. They found in one square two bulls, two goats, and several sheep.³⁴⁶ The bull bones showed signs of butchering, some which were still in articulation, and each of the goat deposits contained a set of horns (those were detached from the skull and buried separately.)³⁴⁷ Almost all of the bone deposits found at Qumran were covered with pottery vessels of various sizes, which were broken, but archaeologically complete.³⁴⁸ The bone deposits were the most extensive in another area of the excavation, towards its southern extremity. Thirty-seven bone deposits were found in Hasmonian pottery, most of which was later restored.³⁴⁹ Some of the deposits seem to have been marked by travertine slabs that were purposefully shaped and set upright above the deposits.³⁵⁰ While the purpose of these is unknown, they were intentionally placed where they were found as travertine does not occur naturally at Qumran, but was imported from the Judean desert.³⁵¹ These deposits seem to have the same ritual significance as the other bone deposits on the plateau. However, they were found aligned north to south and exclusively on the eastern side of the plateau.³⁵² This might also imply ritual orientation towards the east and have some ritual significance with the community that lived at Qumran.³⁵³

³⁴⁶ Price, "Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006," 5.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., and Rob Kugler, "Making All Experience Religious: The Hegemony of Ritual at Qumran," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 33, no. 2 (2002): 137. The appearance of the butchering on the bull bones indicates that these animals were eaten and probably part of a ritual meal.

³⁴⁸ Price, "Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006," 5.

³⁴⁹ Ibid. The Hasmonian period was from 135 to 63 B.C. and was a period of Jewish rule that followed the victory of the Maccabees over the oppressive Selucid dynasty. The Hasmonian rulers failed to distinguish the difference between priestly and political offices, and because of this many Jewish sects arose that opposed their practices and sought to restore a purer religion. It is thought that the residents of Qumran were one such sect.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid., 5-6. This north to south alignment matches that of those buried in Qumran's cemeteries.

³⁵³ Ibid., 6.

These deposits were found to one side of the eastern wall that separated the Qumran community from its largest cemetery, with over 1,000 graves.³⁵⁴ This wall was also partially excavated, but the section of the wall where Price and his team were digging, the wall had collapsed before being buried.³⁵⁵ The reason for this collapse was a man-made circular pit that was underneath the wall and had been abandoned and filled during the time of the Hasmoneans.³⁵⁶ This compromised the structural integrity of the wall in antiquity, causing it to collapse. The fill of the circular pit was archaeologically rich. According to Price, “Uncovering this... pit... required careful skill on behalf of our team.”³⁵⁷ However, the original purpose of the pit still remains a mystery.³⁵⁸

In a layer above the pit and close to the wall, the team found a Hasmonean coin, most likely bearing the likeness of Alexander Jannaeus, and some pottery, which assisted in discerning the date it was filled. There was a Hasmonean period cooking pot lid and coin, and an iron nail found approximately 1.5 meters below the topsoil.³⁵⁹ The circular pit itself was also filled with Hasomnean era pottery sherds and sand brought up from the wadi, approximately 4.5 meters deep, which means that it was most likely filled during the Hasomnean period.³⁶⁰

During the summer of 2006, Price’s team returned to Qumran because all of the anomalies in the GPR data from 2002 had not yet been explained and all the squares from 2005 were not yet finished.³⁶¹ This dig season, over forty volunteers opened twelve squares, some of

³⁵⁴ Price, “Qumran Yields New Secrets,” 1.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid. This was approximately the first century B.C.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 4-5.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 5-6.

³⁶¹ Price, “Qumran Yields New Secrets,” 3.

which were left over from the 2005 dig.³⁶² During the 2006 excavation they continued to excavate more extensively near the partially collapsed eastern wall of the settlement from the 2005 excavation.³⁶³ However, this time they excavated all the way from the farthest southern end of the wall to where it collapsed, which was a distance of approximately fifty feet.³⁶⁴

There were many anomalies in the GPR data in this area, which was thought to be a heavy concentration of large boulders, some of which Price thinks to be shaped stones (meaning they are not naturally occurring.)³⁶⁵ One of these stones bears chisel markings, has semi-circular rounded sides, and has a chiseled socket hole on a flat surface.³⁶⁶ Price believes that this stone provides evidence for his theory that “some sort of wall or fence must have once separated these two areas [of the eastern and western sides of the plateau]... with [the stone’s] socketed hole holding one of the wooden posts.”³⁶⁷ Price provides some reasons why those in antiquity would have wanted to divide the plateau. He says, “The difference in elevation between the lower eastern side and the higher western side would seem to have required a dividing fence or wall if cultivation of crops was attempted in the area.”³⁶⁸ Since the metal tips of ploughs or picks were found during this excavation, there is evidence of agricultural activity to support this theory.³⁶⁹ Though the structures that were unearthed from this excavation were later reburied due to safety concerns from the park authorities, the shaped stone with the socket was removed from the

³⁶² Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 6; and Randall Price, “The Continuing Quest of Qumran: 2006 Dig Report,” *World of the Bible Ministries Newsletter* 8, no.6 (Fall/Winter 2006), 1.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 6.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Price, “The Continuing Quest of Qumran,” 3.

³⁶⁸ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006 6.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

ground and placed on the surface above the position of its discovery so that other scholars will be able to study it in context to the rest of the site.³⁷⁰

The most rare and extraordinary find of this season of excavation was an oil lamp found completely intact in a gravel layer, covering a layer of boulders.³⁷¹ This was the only intact oil lamp found in any of Price's excavations of Qumran, and there is only one other known lamp in this style in existence.³⁷² De Vaux found one in his excavations of Cave 1 as well and dated it to the first century B.C.³⁷³ This type of oil lamp is now known as a "Qumran-style" oil lamp, as this type of oil lamp has only been found on the Qumran plateau.³⁷⁴ In addition, Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) showed the lamp to have been produced at Qumran.³⁷⁵ According to Price, "the lamp showed no signs of use and may have been buried in relation to other pottery... and five bone deposits covered with pottery."³⁷⁶ According to the pottery surrounding the lamp, it is believed that it corresponds with de Vaux's date of the first century B.C., during the Hasmonean period.³⁷⁷

More of the previously mentioned bone deposits were found in this excavation. They are of similar construction and composition to the deposits found in previous excavations. The main difference being that some of the deposits that were found without pottery were surrounded within rings of stones.³⁷⁸ The reason for the stones is unclear, although they might have served as

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Neutron Activation Analysis is a nuclear process used for determining the concentrations of elements in a vast amount of materials. For archaeological purposes it is used to determine where an object came from based on the composition of the materials of which it is made.

³⁷⁶ Price, "Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006" 6.

³⁷⁷ Price, "The Continuing Quest of Qumran," 3.

³⁷⁸ Price, "Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006," 7.

a marker for the bone deposits. However, it is clear that there is a continuance of the ritual significance. These deposits were a continuation of ones found in an adjacent squares, and are thought to be in line with several similar deposits that were found in 2005.³⁷⁹

Several fire pits were found during this excavation on the western side of the plateau. Four had rings of stone or clay sides, which leads Price to believe that they would be better classified as ovens.³⁸⁰ However, all of them contained ash and charcoal, and four of them even contained bones (some of which were articulated) and small amounts of pottery.³⁸¹ According to Price, “While this would seem to be an exception to the predominance of bone and pottery deposits in the east, these remains do not exhibit the same traits as the characteristic animal bone burials, which appear to have ritual significance, and as they exist only in relation to the fire pits must be interpreted as simply the leftovers of a normal meal.”³⁸² Price believes these fire pits date to the Herodian period, which is later than the Hasmonean period, because of the pottery found in these pits.³⁸³

At one point during the 2006 excavation, Price’s dig crossed that of de Vaux’s. Next to the stone wall that divides the southern part of the plateau between east and west, the work done by Price’s team traced the extent of de Vaux’s southern trench.³⁸⁴ However, Price went deeper than de Vaux and exposed a marl floor and uncovered bone and pottery deposits that were missed by de Vaux’s team.³⁸⁵ These deposits were found under the wall, meaning that the wall was of a later date than the bone deposits.³⁸⁶ It also means that the wall was probably not for

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Price, “The Continuing Quest of Qumran,” 3.

³⁸³ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 8.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 7.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

defensive purposes, as it would have had a deep foundation, but instead served probably as a fence.³⁸⁷

In December of 2006 a small team went back to excavate some GPR anomalies from 2002 on the western ridge on the extreme southwestern edge of the plateau.³⁸⁸ The layers that showed habitation elsewhere on the plateau, had a heavy concentration of field stones and boulders.³⁸⁹ However, according to Price, “very little, if any, potsherds were found in this stony accumulation.”³⁹⁰ The purpose of this boulder formation remains unknown, but as the stones appear to be worked by human hand it is assumed that they were not deposited to their current position by floodwaters.³⁹¹

Price returned to the Qumran plateau to continue excavations in December of 2008.³⁹² One of the main objectives of this excavation was to complete the work that was begun in the 2006 excavation, and to uncover more animal bone deposits, not only determine their extent, but also to acquire more samples for the Hebrew University’s Qumran Plateau DNA Project.³⁹³

Previous archaeologists who had excavated in an area adjacent to the squares in the 2008 excavations, claimed that the site was an Iron Age granary. Therefore, Price and his team made sure to take special care when excavating these squares, in order to be able to confirm or deny these claims.³⁹⁴ This slow and careful excavation of each layer of the stratigraphy, revealed “a significantly large deposit of pottery and animal bones from the late Hasmonean period/early

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Price, “The Continuing Quest of Qumran,” 4.

³⁸⁹ Price, “Excavation on the Qumran Plateau 2002-2006,” 7.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 7-8.

³⁹² Randall Price, “Excavation Report: Qumran Plateau 2008,” Unpublished manuscript in author’s possession, 1.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

Roman period.”³⁹⁵ Most of these deposits were in the same style as those previously found, but there were some with some unusual characteristics. Some of these bone deposits were discovered buried on planks of charred wood, or large pieces of plaster.³⁹⁶ Price states that these might have been from community buildings, and their presence indicates a careful means of burial which “could add further evidence that these deposits were not the result of a garbage dump.”³⁹⁷

This area dates to the Hasmonean and Roman eras as well because of the coins found in the area. There were two bronze coins and one large silver coin found, dating from either the Hasmonean or Herodian eras, offering further confirmation of the age of the material remains being excavated.³⁹⁸ There were also some charred date pits found that will be subjected to radiocarbon dating.³⁹⁹ When the test results are retrieved this will help confirm an approximate date for the layer.

As many bone deposits were found in this excavation, Price determined that it might be profitable to excavate outside of the eastern trench to see if the deposits continued under the wall to the other side.⁴⁰⁰ As deposits were found directly next to the wall and well under it in the 2006 excavation, Price and his team wanted to see if this pattern continued.⁴⁰¹ Also, there was an increasing amount of Herodian pottery found with the bone deposits instead of Hasmonean, and the team was curious to see if this pattern continued.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Price, “Excavation Report: Qumran Plateau 2008,” Unpublished manuscript in author’s possession, 1.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

Though they could not get a permit to return the following year, Price returned with a team of thirty volunteers to the plateau in 2010 to determine whether the bone deposits were located on both sides of the wall that divided the southern half of the plateau.⁴⁰³ However, when they arrived they were told that they were not allowed to dig this season. Therefore, they joined other digs and worked with their other Qumran finds that were in storage for the three week period in which they would have been excavating on the plateau.⁴⁰⁴ Two years later they were finally able to return for one final season in 2012.

The purpose of the excavation in 2012 was to determine whether the bone deposits that were found on the western side and underneath the wall separating the plateau continued onto the eastern side of the wall.⁴⁰⁵ They also wanted to fill in the gaps left by previous digs in this area of the plateau.⁴⁰⁶ When Dr. Jim Strange dug on the plateau in 1996 it was not well documented, and so the boundaries of his excavation were unclear. Price and his team discovered these boundaries and were able to ensure that there were not any sizable gaps on the plateau that remained unexcavated.⁴⁰⁷

The archaeologists found the same things on the eastern side of the wall, that they found on the western side of the wall.⁴⁰⁸ They discovered many more animal bone deposits continuing in the same pattern, and covered by pottery. Since they were present underneath and on both sides of the wall, Price has concluded that the bone deposits were probably placed there in Period Ib, and before the construction of the wall separating the plateau.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Personal interview with Dr. Randall Price, April 3, 2017. Shorthand notes in the author's possession.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

During this period of excavation, when digging around the collapsed section of the wall, the archaeologists discovered a layer of ash, probably from the time of the Roman destruction of the Qumran plateau in A.D. 68.⁴¹⁰ This assists in narrowing down the date that the wall was built because it would have to be after Period Ib, which is the era the bone deposits and pottery found underneath the wall were from, but before the Great Revolt and the temporary Roman occupation of the site.⁴¹¹ They were also successful in finding the excavation pit from Strange's dig and mapping it on the plateau.⁴¹² After this dig, they was determined that the excavation of the southern end of the Qumran plateau was complete.

Another survey was conducted in October 2012 with a geophysical team from Texas. Three days were spent using both GPR and seismic resistivity equipment to probe the southern end of the plateau. The team reported new anomalies and perhaps a collapsed cave as a result of this survey.⁴¹³ This is a possible area for exciting future excavations on the Qumran plateau.

Though Price conducted extensive excavations on the plateau, he has also been directly responsible for a current series of cave excavations for Operation Scroll.⁴¹⁴ The excavation on the most recent cave started in January of 2017.⁴¹⁵ The location selected for excavation was originally found by Price and Israeli archaeologist, Yacov Kalman, in 2010, when they were looking for different caves surrounding Qumran that had been previously surveyed by members of the IAA and showed signs of habitation during antiquity.⁴¹⁶ Israeli authorities had previously

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Randall Price, Unpublished notes in the author's possession, April 2017.

⁴¹⁴ Here I begin to speak from personal experience, I have known Dr. Price for many years, and was personally involved in and present for most of the excavation of this cave (later known as Cave 12).

⁴¹⁵ The exact dates for the permit are January 1 through December 31, 2017.

⁴¹⁶ Price and Gutfeld also worked together excavating Qumran's southern plateau. It was during the 2006 dig season that they explored this cave together.

surveyed in 1993 because they were afraid that the West Bank, Qumran included, was going to be given to the Palestinians. Those who surveyed it stayed for a one day, took some pottery samples, and designated it Cave 53.⁴¹⁷ They then tossed the dirt they had surveyed outside the mouth of the cave. The permit to excavate Cave 53 was received late in 2016.

To the untrained eye and at first glance, the cave looks indistinguishable from others throughout the Judean desert. However, upon closer inspection, there are two crude, man-made, limestone pillars towards the mouth of the cave in order to support the roof. This is a clear indication that at some point in antiquity this cave was at least temporarily inhabited. The first chamber of the cave is relatively small, barely tall enough for a man to stand upright, with a dirt floor and large rocks and boulders dispersed throughout. Towards the back of the chamber there was a small hole, leading into a tunnel that stretched approximately fifty feet.⁴¹⁸ The entrance of the tunnel is initially approximately two feet tall and wide, but becomes drastically smaller as one crawls further back into the Judean mountain range.⁴¹⁹ The floor of the tunnel was covered in dirt, small pieces of rock, animal bones, and fecal matter at an average depth of about two or three inches.⁴²⁰ Looking back out of the mouth of the cave there is a clear view of the Dead Sea and the ruins on the Qumran plateau.

⁴¹⁷ Lauren Young, "Archaeologists Might Have Found Another Dead Sea Scroll Cave: It Could Be Cave Number 12," *Smithsonian Magazine* (February 8, 2017), accessed March 7, 2017, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/archaeologists-might-have-found-another-dead-sea-scroll-cave-180962092/>.

⁴¹⁸ I speak in the past tense here because post excavation some of these features have changed and are no more.

⁴¹⁹ For most of the dig it was my job to explore and excavate this area, as I was the smallest and initially the only one who could fit.

⁴²⁰ These animal bones were most likely drug into the tunnel by hyenas that were in the area. The bones were found to be from many different animals: sheep, goats, and even camels. The fecal matter is most likely from goats, sheep, or other animals that wandered into the cave.

The first thing that Price, Gutfeld, and their team did was clear some of the larger boulders and sift through the fill that was removed by the archaeologists who surveyed the cave in 1993. This fill was fairly archaeologically rich. Some pieces of pottery from several different ages were found, as well as an obsidian blade. This was quite an encouraging find early on in the excavation, as obsidian is not naturally formed in the Judean desert, and therefore was brought in by those inhabiting the cave.⁴²¹

In the front chamber of the cave there were successive layers of woven sleeping mats and fire pits on top of one another. Price and Gutfeld surmise that this is because those who took up residence in the cave only did so temporarily. They would leave their sleeping mat in the cave (which may have been infested with ticks and other vermin) and burn it, in order to kill the bugs and other pests. Then when they returned, they would simply bring a new, clean sleeping mat. Under several layers of repeated sleeping mats and charcoal remains, there was a plaster floor. These sleeping mats date from around the Hasmonean and Herodian eras, and the plaster floor might date from the Hasmonean period or earlier.⁴²²

Underneath the plaster floor the team discovered the oldest remains ever found in a settlement around the Dead Sea. Some archaeologists and historians date these remains to around 10,000 B.C., but other historians might think it to be closer to six or eight thousand B.C.⁴²³ Either way, this lowest layer was dated to the pre-pottery Neolithic (PPNB) Neolithic period, because of the pottery and weaponry found. Artifacts found in this layer consisted of things like

⁴²¹ The closest place in antiquity where obsidian was naturally occurring was Anatolia (Turkey). For more information, see Renfrew, *Archaeology: The Key Concepts*, 33.

⁴²² Although no coins were found, the dating of these mats is from the pottery fragments that were occasionally discovered in the layer through sifting.

⁴²³ Depending on one's worldview, the Neolithic period can be interpreted into these two different time frames. The general timeline is still the same. The main different is that one timeline is a little more compressed. For more information, see Charles Gates, *Ancient Cities: The Archaeology of Urban Life in the Ancient Near East and Egypt, Greece and Rome* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

flint, stone arrowheads, and thick, Wadi Rabbah type of pottery sherds and cookware with signs of use.

In the back tunnel the top layer of gravel and bones were carefully extracted in order to avoid contamination.⁴²⁴ They will undergo DNA analysis at a later time. After the gravel, bone, and fecal matter was removed and sifted through, there was a sandy layer with intermittent boulders. Along the tunnel there were occasional niches. At first glance these niches appeared to be full of the same gravel mixture that was in the main section of the tunnel. However, as the tunnel was excavated and made accessible, these niches were excavated as well. In some of them, usually directly underneath the gravel, some large pieces of pottery were found.⁴²⁵ There were some index pieces among the fragments, like lips and bases, that indicate that these were storage jars. Although more research needs to be done, they appear to be a similar make and composition of the pottery that was made locally in Qumran. When the gravel and sand that was removed from the tunnel was sifted through, the team discovered a date pit and many olive pits. This could mean that these storage jars were used for food storage, but the food items could also have been brought in later by rats or other animals. Funds are currently being raised in order to conduct radiocarbon dating on the olive pits in order to get an approximate date for when they grew and arrived in the cave.

Two weeks into the excavation things seemed like they were wrapping up. The American team left as planned after two weeks with Price, and the Israelis thought they were going to excavate for a few more days with Gutfeld. However, a day after the Americans left Gutfeld sent an email to Price asking him to come back, because they had moved a large bolder from the front

⁴²⁴ I did this by wearing gloves and carefully removing the bones using only my tools. I was careful not to touch any of the bones with my skin. After I removed them, they were placed in a new cardboard box, catalogued, and bagged without being touched.

⁴²⁵ The era of this pottery is yet to be determined.

chamber of the cave. Underneath this bolder was a broken jar and a leather fragment, measuring seven centimeters by eleven centimeters. Although it does not currently appear to have anything written on it, the fragment is going through multi-spectral imaging in order to determine if the writing is simply worn or faded. Linen wrappings and leather strings that would have covered and tied the scrolls while they were in jars were also found. Price and a few Americans came back and the team continued to dig for two more weeks hoping to find more jars and scroll fragments. During this time, they found a total of seven broken jars, pieces of papyri, and leather scraps. They also found some iron pickaxe heads from the 1950s, like the ones the Bedouins use when looking for scrolls.⁴²⁶ According to Gutfeld, “Although at the end of the day no scroll was found... the findings indicate beyond any doubt that the cave contained scrolls that were stolen.”⁴²⁷ Because of the scroll fragment that was found, and since there is enough evidence that Dead Sea Scrolls were present in the cave at one time, it was reclassified from Cave 53 to Dead Sea Scroll Cave 12.⁴²⁸

Though he has not yet discovered an intact scroll, Price has still made a tremendous impact on the archaeological history of Qumran and is continuing his search for undiscovered scrolls in the caves surrounding the area. While excavating for ten years on the plateau he unveiled new aspects of the Qumran community, giving scholars a more complete picture of what life there was like. While doing so, he utilized modern technology, such as GPR and radiocarbon dating, in order to ensure that he got the most accurate results possible from his finds. Now working with Operation Scroll, Price begins a different aspect of excavation at Qumran, in order to save as many scrolls from the ravages of time and the Bedouins as possible.

⁴²⁶ Young, “Archaeologists Might Have Found Another Dead Sea Scroll Cave.”

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

His dedication to finding the truth, and extensive excavations, have given new insights into the community that lived in Khirbet Qumran and deposited the Dead Sea Scrolls in surrounding caves.

Chapter 4

The People of Qumran

Ever since European and American explorers first visited Qumran in the nineteenth century there has been much speculation about who lived on the plateau and later about who wrote the scrolls that were discovered in the surrounding caves. Because of ancient manuscripts like *The Jewish Wars* by Flavius Josephus, as well as some of the works by Philo of Alexandria and Pliny the Elder, some scholars believe the Jewish sect known as the Essenes inhabited the site. However, because of certain material remains, others experts believe the Qumran residents were their own separate, religious sect, though still retaining some of the essential elements of Judaism. There are even those who do not believe that the people who lived here were Jewish in any way, and that Qumran was a Roman villa or fortress. Despite the controversy surrounding those who lived on the Qumran plateau, because of the material remains, it is evident that those who lived there in antiquity were Jewish and involved in sectarian practices.

Flavius Josephus, a first century Jew, wrote *The Jewish Wars* to describe his life before and during the First Jewish Revolt. It offers much insight into the practices of the Essene sect during the first century A.D.⁴²⁹ During the early stages of the war, he was a military commander for the Jewish rebels, and after his capture was recognized by the Romans as being a considerable asset. Because of this, he was not executed and became an unwilling witness to the destruction wrought by the Romans throughout Judea as the rebels were destroyed and the revolt was crushed.⁴³⁰ Though the events discussed in his writings are generally political or military in nature, Josephus is specific in the names and people groups that he mentions. One group that recurs several times is that of the Essenes. He was familiar with this sect as he was trained for the

⁴²⁹ Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 9.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

priesthood from birth and was required to become an authority on all aspects of Jewish Law.⁴³¹ When he was about sixteen years old and as part of his training, he spent several months studying with various sects of Judaism, including the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, in order to decide which group to join.⁴³² Although he eventually decided on joining the Pharisees, his time spent studying Essene practice makes him one of the ancient experts on the sect.⁴³³

According to Josephus, the Essenes were one of the three larger schools of Jewish thought in first century Judea.⁴³⁴ Of the three sects, the Essenes were the most disciplined and severe, as “They eschew pleasure-seeking as a vice and regard temperance and mastery of the passions as virtue. Scorning wedlock, ... [they do not] wish to do away with marriage as a means of continuing the race, but they are afraid of the promiscuity of women and [are] convinced that none of the sex remains faithful to one man.”⁴³⁵ In this way, the the Essene sect greatly resembles Christianity’s monastic system. Regarding finances, “they [were] communists to perfection, and none of them will be found to be better off than the rest.”⁴³⁶ According to Josephus, it was “their rule... that novices admitted to the sect must surrender their property to the order, so that among them all neither humiliating poverty nor excessive wealth.”⁴³⁷ This means that all wealth belonged to the community as a whole, and there were no such things as individual possessions.

⁴³¹ Ibid., 10.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid., and Joan E. Taylor, *The Essenes, the Scrolls, and the Dead Sea* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013), 50-51.

⁴³⁴ Josephus, *The Jewish Wars*, 133.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

When discussing their appearance, Josephus states, “Oil they regard[ed] as polluting, and if a man is unintentionally smeared with it he scrubs himself clean; for they think it desirable to keep the skin dry and always to wear white... neither garments or shoes [were] changed till they [drop] to pieces or [were] worn out with age.”⁴³⁸ The scrubbing of their bodies and the whiteness of their garments shows that cleanliness was of the utmost importance to the Essenes, as it was a physical representation of the inward righteousness and purity in which they tried to live their lives. To further ensure their purity, they bathed together at least daily, sometimes more frequently.⁴³⁹

Philo of Alexandria, who was also very familiar with the Essenes, further explains what lengths these communities went through to remain ritually pure and clean. According to Philo, “[the Essenes] live in villages, avoiding all cities on account of the habitual lawlessness of those who inhabit them, well knowing that such a moral disease is contracted from associations with wicked men, just as a real disease might be from an impure atmosphere, and that this would stamp an incurable evil on their souls.”⁴⁴⁰ While he later claims that the sometimes live in cities as well, it is evident that the Essenes were committed to avoiding what they saw as sin and impurity.⁴⁴¹

Although the Essenes were Jewish, their religious practices differed in many ways from the Judaism that was practiced in Jerusalem in the first century A.D. Instead of going to the Temple that was in Jerusalem to pray and perform other religious rituals, they usually would

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 133-134.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 134.

⁴⁴⁰ Philo, *The Works of Philo, Complete and Unabridged*, C. D. Young, trans., (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 689.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 745.

practice their rites and rituals within their colonies.⁴⁴² They would pray before sunrise wherever they were, and “not utter a word on secular affairs” until those prayers were completed.⁴⁴³ These prayers were generally traditional in nature, but also placed more emphasis on the future coming of the Messiah, “as if beseeching Him to appear.”⁴⁴⁴ Then, after working until noon, they would all meet together wearing loincloths made of linen and wash themselves with cold water.⁴⁴⁵ According to Josephus, this was a purification ritual that was required before the noon meal. “They... go into the refectory in a state of ritual cleanliness as if it was a holy temple and sit down in silence.”⁴⁴⁶ Josephus’ description of this refectory, though minimal, is reminiscent of the special dining area found by de Vaux on the Qumran plateau from Period Ib, as mentioned in chapter 2.

When the Essenes dined, the food was brought out and laid before them. The priest would pray over it, but “to taste the food before this prayer [was] forbidden.”⁴⁴⁷ After the meal was over they would then say another prayer, during which they would “give thanks to God as the Giver of life.”⁴⁴⁸ The garments worn during these meals were considered sacred, and therefore were removed before they returned to work until the evening.⁴⁴⁹ Their religious practices also encouraged the importance of silence, sobriety, and restricted food and drink to

⁴⁴² Ibid., 689. They did not even offer animal sacrifices to God in the Temple in Jerusalem, which was a cornerstone of Jewish worship.

⁴⁴³ Josephus, *The Jewish Wars*, 134.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. This seems to contradict with Josephus’ earlier claim that the Essenes did not discard their clothes until they were falling apart. However, because garments were worn to sacred meals does not mean that they were discarded. It could mean that they were reserved for these meals and were not allowed to be worn elsewhere. Josephus’ statement might not be a contradiction, just devoid of explanation.

what they saw as simple sufficiency.⁴⁵⁰ They championed good faith, raising their voices only when justified, and were generally pacifists who worked at keeping their tempers under careful control.⁴⁵¹

The Essene sect was so strict that “they could take no action without orders from their supervisors... [except for] personal aid, and charity.”⁴⁵² However, even this called for some supervision within the community, as charitable gifts to ones own family required special permission and an official sanction from the leaders of the community.⁴⁵³ It is because of this strictness that, according to Josephus, “Every word they [spoke] was more binding than an oath.”⁴⁵⁴ Accordingly, swearing was considered worse than perjury to them, because they thought if a man could not be believed without swearing in God’s name, they thought him to already be guilty.⁴⁵⁵

Aside from the necessities of daily living and religious worship, scholarly work was of the utmost importance to the Essenes. According to Josephus, “They [were] wonderfully devoted to the work of ancient writers.”⁴⁵⁶ They read not only for religious purposes, but also for others forms of community betterment. Particularly, they were interested in learning all about medicinal roots and the properties of stones in order to cure diseases.⁴⁵⁷ This too, is strikingly similar to the priorities of those who once lived at Khirbet Qumran, as they are often credited

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., and James J. Bloom, *The Jewish Revolts Against Rome, A.D. 66-135: A Military Analysis* (Jefferson, NC: Mcfarland & Company, 2010), 81-82. There were some exceptions to this pacifism. Most notably John the Essene, who was the Jewish commander of the Western Region during the First Jewish Revolt.

⁴⁵² Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 134.

⁴⁵³ Ibid. Since the Essenes were celibate, family members mentioned here would be parents, siblings, and extended family, like aunts, uncles, and cousins, etc.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 134-135.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 135.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

with writing, accumulating, and hiding the Dead Sea Scrolls. Philo also claims that the Essenes were a very scholarly community. He wrote, “[the Essenes] are above all men devoted to the service of God... studying to preserve their own minds in a state of holiness and purity.”⁴⁵⁸

From what Josephus relates about the Essenes, and what is known about the Qumran community from previous chapters, it is evident that these two groups had many striking similarities. For example, much like the Essenes described above, those who lived in Qumran wore only white, linen garments.⁴⁵⁹ While there were some woolen linens that were thought to belong to the Qumran community found in a cave in a lower section of the Kidron valley, it was decided that this cave was far enough removed from the activities of ancient Qumran to be considered a separate settlement, and the other materials found in the cave did not match other contents of the Dead Sea Scroll caves.⁴⁶⁰ The Qumran community being associated with the Essenes for having garments made only of white linen holds true.

Another way in which the Qumran community is similar to the Essene sect is their emphasis on ritual purity. In the ruins on the Qumran plateau, de Vaux uncovered several bathing pools in the small community. It is thought that they were used for ritual baths because of the ridge that separates those descending into the pool from those outside of the pool. This was done so that those who were ritually clean and coming out of the pool would not accidentally be touched by those who were descending into the pool unclean. This large number of bathing pools would be required to accommodate all of people required to bathe multiple

⁴⁵⁸ Philo, *The Works of Philo*, 689.

⁴⁵⁹ Orit Shamir and Naama Sukenik, “Qumran Textiles and the Garments of Qumran’s Inhabitants,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 18, no. 2 (2011): 206.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

times daily in an Essene community. These pools are similar to those found near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and are called *miqva'ot*, or ritual bath.⁴⁶¹

The isolation of the Qumran community and its distinct separation from the religious activities of Jerusalem also indicates that they were possibly Essenes. According to Josephus, “[The Essenes] possess no one city but everywhere have large colonies.”⁴⁶² This sounds similar to the settlement at Qumran. It was not associated with any large cities and stood alone as its own self-sufficient colony. However, this is also where the comparison starts to degrade as no other community like Qumran has ever been found, and Josephus mentions above that the Essenes had colonies everywhere.

Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, many scholars have noticed the similarity between the community that the scrolls described and the Essenes mentioned by Josephus, as seen above. However, with the interpretation and publication of more Dead Sea Scrolls and more archaeological information uncovered in the cemetery, many are beginning to doubt whether the Qumran plateau was inhabited by Essenes. Instead, some have come to believe the inhabitants were a separate but similar sect. According to Jodi Magness and Kenneth Atkinson, “the archaeological remains at Khirbet Qumran do not match the lifestyle described in any of [the classical sources.]”⁴⁶³ This means that these scholars, who are experts on Qumran, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the archaeology of both, do not believe the religious sect that once lived there was Essene.

De Vaux found female remains in 1949 and the 1950s, when he excavated forty-three graves. Female remains were also found by S. Steckoll, who conducted some minor excavations

⁴⁶¹ Hirschfeld, “Early Roman Manor Houses in Judea and the Site of Khirbet Qumran,” 161.

⁴⁶² Josephus, *The Jewish Wars*, 133; and Philo, *The Works of Philo*, 689.

⁴⁶³ Kenneth Atkinson and Jodi Magness, “Josephus’s Essenes and the Qumran Community,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 317.

on the plateau in the 1960s and excavated ten graves.⁴⁶⁴ All of the grave were fairly similar, rectangular holes, about 1.2 to 2 meters deep, with a narrow niche at the bottom for the body.⁴⁶⁵ To seal the niche, baked bricks, flagstones, or rocks were placed on top of the body, and then the grave was filled with dirt. Then a mound of stones was placed on top of the grave as a marker and to protect the grave underneath.⁴⁶⁶ De Vaux believed the Qumran community to be all male because in what he deemed to be the orderly, carefully planned section of the cemetery, only men were buried.⁴⁶⁷ Women and children were only buried in graves of an “abnormal type and situated apart from the rows... [or] the extensions of the cemetery over the hillocks to the east.”⁴⁶⁸

One of the main arguments against the claims that Qumran was an Essene community is the discovery of the remains of females and children in the plateau’s cemeteries. This means one of three things. Either woman were allowed to join this religious sect, which is unlikely as Judaism generally separates the genders during religious ceremonies and rituals; families were present on the Qumran plateau, and these women were the wives, mothers, and daughters of the men involved in the sect; or women from outside of the community were buried at Qumran.⁴⁶⁹

Despite his discovery of females at Qumran, de Vaux continued to believe that the Jewish sect that lived on the plateau was Essene. According to him, “In the main cemetery, which was well laid out on the plateau of Qumran itself we excavated 31 tombs, and among these there is only one which is certainly that of a woman. It is in a position apart from the general alignment,

⁴⁶⁴ Joan E. Taylor, “The Cemeteries of Khirbet Qumran and Women’s Presence at the Site,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 6, no. 3 (November 1999): 285-286.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 286.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 286-287.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, For more information see, De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 57-58.

⁴⁶⁹ Taylor, “The Cemeteries of Khirbet Qumran and Women’s Presence at the Site,” 285.

and is of a different type from the rest... [the other female graves] are situated in the extensions to the main cemetery or in two secondary ones. This may indicate that the women were not members of the community, or at any rate not in the same sense as the men buried in the main cemetery.”⁴⁷⁰ De Vaux believes that this might mean this particular Essene colony was lax in its rules on celibacy, and marriage may have been allowed.⁴⁷¹ However, he does add the caveat “Clearly the women’s tombs do not strengthen the argument that the community was related to the Essenes, but they do not rule it out either.”⁴⁷²

Those in favor of the Essene argument contend that Josephus and the other ancient authors who wrote about the Jewish sect were mistaken in their belief that the Essenes of Qumran were celibate males.⁴⁷³ It is clear from Josephus’ writings mentioned previously that the Essenes were strictly celibate for many reasons and were a sect entirely comprised of males. However, challenging the status quo that Qumran was an Essene community has been difficult, as many scholars whose interests are in early Judaism are fighting previously conceived notions.⁴⁷⁴ Much progress has been made in interpreting who actually lived at Qumran, but in the beginning it was difficult as “contradictory evidence [was] dismissed... as inconsequential.”⁴⁷⁵ Many still believe that it was the Essenes who lived in the settlement at Qumran, like de Vaux.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Linda Bennett Elder, “The Woman Question and Female Ascetics Among Essenes,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 57, no. 4 (December 1994): 222.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. This is still a work in progress as when one asks most people who are familiar with Qumran and its history, “Who lived at Qumran?” They are most likely to reply with “The Essenes.”

Others believe that it was still a Jewish religious sect similar to, but separate from, the Essenes.⁴⁷⁶

While there is still much debate about which Jewish sect lived in Qumran, there are still those who believe that Qumran might have been a Roman or Herodian fortress or manor house, or a sort-of hostel for those visiting the Dead Sea area in antiquity.⁴⁷⁷ In his article, *Early Roman Manor Houses in Judea and the Site of Khirbet Qumran*, Yizhar Hirschfeld compares the architecture of Qumran “with settlements of a similar size, function, and date” in order to determine that it is not a unique site and also the original purpose of the ruins.⁴⁷⁸ He claims that “Recent discoveries of comparable sites from the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods in Judea may indicate that Qumran was part of a pattern of settlement characteristic of Judea from the first century B.C.E. through the first century C.E.”⁴⁷⁹ While he does not explicitly state it, it is clear from his writing that Hirschfeld does not think that the Qumran community was built by a Jewish sect.

Though Hirschfeld laid out the complete argument in the late 1990s, the Belgian team that is most well known for presenting the idea of Qumran being an agricultural settlement is Robert Donceel and Pauline Donceel-Voûte.⁴⁸⁰ They claim that de Vaux completely ignored some vital pieces of archaeological evidence while formulating his theories about Qumran, and

⁴⁷⁶ This is an argument to which the answer will probably never be known with any guarantee. The one exception would be if more writings were found explicitly stating the religious sect of those who lived in Qumran. Even then, there would probably still be those who speculate.

⁴⁷⁷ Hirschfeld, “Early Roman Manor Houses in Judea and the Site of Khirbet Qumran,” 161-162.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 162.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Jurgen Zangenberg and Jean-Baptiste Humbert, *Qumran: Site of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Archaeological Interpretations and Debates: Proceedings of the Conference Held at Brown University, November 17-19, 2002* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005), 2. Some sources claim that their work came before Hirschfeld’s. However, it would only be a few years’ difference as both events occurred almost simultaneously.

adopted the term *villa rustica* to describe the site.⁴⁸¹ Many of de Vaux's publications remain in French; therefore Donceel and his team have more of de Vaux's work readily available to them, including excavation notes.⁴⁸² However, their argument does not seem to differ much from Hirschfeld's, except for his claim that the sophisticated glass and stoneware found at Qumran does not fit with the sectarian model.⁴⁸³

The main argument presented by Hirschfeld and others who maintain that Qumran was a Roman settlement is that other manor houses from this time period feature a tower. According to Hirschfeld, "the tower was an essential element, since its height and thick walls offered its inhabitants security and, at the same time, gave pronounced architectural expression to the owner's command over his land."⁴⁸⁴ While Qumran does have a tower, and there was probably an element of security in its purpose, as seen in chapter 2 its main purpose was probably storage, judging from the archaeological remains.⁴⁸⁵

Another feature of Qumran's ruins that Hirschfeld believes could indicate that it was a traditional manor house is the complex water supply system. He believes this indicates that "the principal occupation of the owners was agricultural."⁴⁸⁶ While a complex irrigation system would be a necessity for a manor in an agricultural society, it would also be necessary for any large community attempting to survive in a desert environment; therefore, the complex water

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 203.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 245-246. The glass found at the site actually points to perfume production, which might have been a way for the community to generate revenue; therefore, the presence of glass does not eliminate the possibility of a Jewish, sectarian community living at Qumran.

⁴⁸⁴ Hirschfeld, "Early Roman Manor Houses in Judea and the Site of Khirbet Qumran," 164.

⁴⁸⁵ The tower mentioned here was constructed in Period 1b. While this two-story tower was defensive in nature, as there were no windows and only one way in or out of the building, de Vaux believes that the lower level was used for storage. See chapter 2 for more information.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

system neither proves nor disproves that Qumran was inhabited by farmers and not a Jewish religious sect.

A final feature that is common to all manor houses from the Herodian/Roman period in Judea is “evidence of destruction and neglect.”⁴⁸⁷ This destruction layer happened at approximately the same time for all of the manor houses, which was around seventy A.D., towards the end of the Great Revolt.⁴⁸⁸ Apparently, the Roman army saw these manor houses as a threat and systematically destroyed them.⁴⁸⁹ While Qumran does fit this criteria as well, it does not mean that it was a manor house, as the Roman’s were destroying nearly every settlement they came across during the Great Revolt.⁴⁹⁰ Therefore, this is not a feature that indicates that Qumran was a manor house, as it is something that is commonly seen in various structures and settlements throughout Judea.

Another argument that Hirschfeld makes for Qumran being a manor is its strategic location on an elevated plateau sixty meters above the Dead Sea.⁴⁹¹ This elevation would have made the community a great observation post, especially when combined with the tower, from which one can see the entire northern half of the Dead Sea and a few of the major roads in the area.⁴⁹² The location was also strategic because two ancient roads passed through Qumran and continued south towards the oasis at Ein Gedi, one of which also connects Qumran with ancient

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 164. Hirschfeld mentions several sites that match this description. For example, Horvat Elq, northeast of Caesarea, is the remains of a large agricultural complex surrounded by a wall, on the top of a hill, with a tower. Another is Qasr e-Leja, on the northwestern margin of Samaria.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 171.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

Jericho.⁴⁹³ The other road was the fastest route from Jerusalem to Qurman.⁴⁹⁴ These roads would have put Qumran in line with some important trade routes in the ancient world, as this was the optimal route through the desert because of the many springs that are along the road.⁴⁹⁵

Again, while Qumran does match the location requirements of a manor house, this does not mean that it was one. Anyone individual or group who wanted to remain connected with what was going in the ancient world, yet somewhat isolated, would have built a structure along this route. According to the ancient sources Josephus and Philo of Alexandria, they both estimate that the Essene sect “numbered over four thousand souls.”⁴⁹⁶ While there were several colonies of Essenes in Judea, it would make sense for the Essenes to have a large settlement at Qumran, where they could still live on the fringes of society while in a close proximity to trade routes and Jerusalem.

Pliny the Elder also claimed that there was a large community of Essenes by the western shore of the Dead Sea “below” En Gedi.⁴⁹⁷ While this could mean the Qumran site, it requires some explanation, as the location is not entirely clear in the text. Pliny mentions several sites and their general locations in respect to one another.⁴⁹⁸ He first mentions Jericho, then the Essenes by the Dead Sea, then En Gedi “below them.”⁴⁹⁹ This description is directionally north to south, however, the phrase used by Pliny could be used to mean two different things. The first could be that the Essenes literally lived in a place high above En Gedi, in its general vicinity.⁵⁰⁰ In this

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 171-172. The roads to Ein Gedi would have been important as it was, and still is, a source of fresh water in the desert.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 172-173.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 174.

⁴⁹⁶ Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (Cleveland: William Collins & World Publishing Co Inc., 1978), 125.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid. The exact words used here by Pliny are *infra hos Engada*.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

case Qumran would not work as the location of Pliny's Essenes as Qumran is twenty miles north of En Gedi.⁵⁰¹ However, Benjamin Mazar, the famous Israeli archaeologist, led a team in the early 1960s to explore the area of En Gedi thoroughly, and no ruins that remotely resembled Pliny's account were found.⁵⁰² On the other hand, if "below them" is translated as "south of them" or "further down," which fits in the context of Pliny's journey southward in his description, then Qumran fits perfectly.⁵⁰³ Qumran is located eight miles south of Jericho, and twenty miles south of Qumran is En Gedi.⁵⁰⁴ As there is no other archeological site in the area that fits Pliny's Essenes, this is a powerful argument in favor of the Essenes residing in Qumran in ancient times.

While there it is still much debate about what sect lived in Qumran during antiquity, it is evident that they were Jewish and had many similarities to the Essenes that were mentioned many times by Josephus, Philo, and Pliny. These similarities include style of dress and their emphasis on ritual purity. However, the discovery of women and children in the cemeteries of Qumran means that these were maybe not Essenes, but a similar Jewish sect. Although some like Hirschfeld might try to argue otherwise, it is also clear that Qumran was a deeply religious, Jewish community and not a Herodian manor house. The main arguments for it being a manor house are easily explained away, and are generally applicable to most sites that were present for the destruction wrought by the Romans in the Great Revolt. Furthermore, ancient manuscripts and sources, combined with archaeological evidence, provides little support for the *villa rustica*, and supports the theory that a Jewish sectarian community, possibly the Essenes mentioned by Pliny and Josephus, lived in Qumran until the First Jewish Revolt. Thanks to the work of many

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

archaeologists in the past century and a half, and the translation of ancient manuscripts, more is now known about this community than ever. Hopefully, future archaeological excavations on the plateau will help irrefutably end the ongoing debate about the Qumran community.

Conclusion

It is evident that Khirbet Qumran is an archaeological site of significance to all who realize the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Many amazing discoveries have been made on the Qumran plateau and the surrounding caves in the last one hundred years. Initially archaeology in general was rather primitive. However, using progressively more modern archaeological techniques, such as GPR and radiocarbon dating, archaeologists like Roland de Vaux and J. Randall Price have continued to uncover more material remains that show a more complete picture of what life was like on the Qumran plateau during the height of its occupation. These material remains point to a Jewish, sectarian settlement, possibly Essene, that devoted themselves to ritual purification and religious scholarly pursuits. The arguments of those who say otherwise are usually general, and could apply to a number of Jewish sites whose destruction dates to the time of the First Jewish Revolt. Hopefully with the assistance of DNA analysis it will soon be proven that the members of this community were also responsible for the production and preservation of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Looking into the future, as excavations continue on the plateau and the surrounding caves, the archaeological history of Qumran is not yet complete, and more exciting discoveries are anticipated.

From the first chapter, it is evident that archaeological techniques have greatly changed over the years. Through time, and with the help of technology, methods became much more detailed and precise. This is also true at Qumran, where early explorers excavated as they saw fit, and more precise methods of excavations did not come to the plateau until the 1950s with de Vaux's excavations. In the discoveries made by Price nearly fifty years later, it is also evident that the incorporation of technology, such as GPR, into the archaeological method, has decreased survey time and increased productivity.

These digs, along with others that have taken place on the Qumran plateau, uncovered not only Iron Age ruins, but the remains of a community that spanned from the time of the Hasmoneans until its destruction during the First Jewish Revolt. From these architectural remains, as well as the artifacts that were found, the human remains in the cemetery, and the archaeological remains from surrounding caves, it is evident that the community that lived at Qumran was a Jewish sectarian settlement, possibly Essene.

Others, like Yizhar Hirschfeld, argue that Qumran was not inhabited by members of a Jewish sect, but was a Herodian era mansion that was destroyed by the Romans during the First Jewish Revolt.⁵⁰⁵ He provides much evidence to support his theory, such as a layer of destruction dating to the Roman Period, a complex water system, and pieces of sophisticated glass and stoneware found on the plateau. However, while the complex water system and layer of destruction would be expected in a manor house, they also would be expected for any large settlement in the desert from the first century. The sophisticated glass and stoneware can be explained away with the possibility of the community having a perfumery.

The ancient sources such as Flavius Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, and Pliny the Elder, all support the possibility of Qumran being an Essene settlement. Josephus gives an account of their daily life and some of their religious requirements. Philo does this as well, and also estimates that this Jewish sect numbered at around 4,000 at the time he was writing.⁵⁰⁶ Pliny gives a fairly precise description of the location of large settlement of Essenes on the western bank of the Dead Sea, that matches the location of the Qumran plateau.⁵⁰⁷ All of these sources seem to indicate that those who lived in Qumran were members of the Essenes.

⁵⁰⁵ Hirschfeld, "Early Roman Manor Houses".

⁵⁰⁶ Philo, *The Works of Philo*, 689.

⁵⁰⁷ Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 127.

This thesis adds to a more complete history of the archaeology of Qumran. Though it does not discuss every excavation that has taken place on the plateau, access to Price's unpublished writings on his excavations and the opportunity to participate in the excavation of Cave 12, added much new information to the subject. Also, the emphasis on archaeological excavations that took place on the plateau, as opposed to the surrounding caves or the Dead Sea Scrolls, is a fairly unique aspect of this thesis.

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