

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE QUMRAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF ROLAND DE VAUX'S RESEARCH

Abstract

The almost 900 manuscripts found in the grottos near Khirbet Qumran on the shore of " the Dead Sea between 1947 and 1956 were a sensation among theology, archaeology and other various Sciences scholars. Probably no other archaeological find has stirred this much controversy emotions and interest as this one; it quickly mobilized the archaeologists who started digging the site in 1951, resuming their work in 1953-1956. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community are the two points on which the Biblical Archaeology and modern researches focus. For this reason, I saw it fit to call the readers' attention some pieces of Information on the results of the excavations which were carried out under the direct supervision of the theologian Roland de Vaux.



ADRIANA ROTAR

Faculty of Orthodox Theology
"Babeş-Bolyai" University
in Cluj-Napoca

adita_rotar@yahoo.com

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Introduction

In the context of present political and social turmoil, even though everyone has heard about the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is very difficult to tell myth from fact. From 1947 to 1956 an approximate 900 manuscripts were found in the grottos near Khirbet Qumran (the old name remains unknown), on the Dead Sea shore. No other archaeological find has ever risen so many controversies, nor has it stirred the amount of emotions and interest as this discovery, which had quickly mobilized the archaeologists; they started digging the site in 1951, and continued digging throughout 1953-1956. Biblical archaeology and current research are focused on the Dead Sea scrolls and the Qumran community.

The first digging season was lead by G. Lankester Harding from the Antiquities

Department of Jordania and by Father Roland de Vaux from the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem. The following seasons have been conducted under the supervision of de Vaux, who later coordinated the diggings of the nearby village of Ein Feshkha in 1958. Although de Vaux published several preliminary reports and presented the general synthetic situation of the Qumran archaeology, he has never given a final report of the diggings prior to his death in 1971. All the information on the objects found in the cave were published along with the parchments in “The Discoveries of the Judaic Desert”. In 1994 the first volume of the final reports on de Vaux’s diggings at Qumran and Ein Feshkha was published by Jean-Baptiste Humbert and Alain Chambon; it is mostly composed of a photo-album accompanied by de Vaux’s field notes. The next volumes will be dedicated to pottery, stone-work, glass, metal, bones and other objects, coins and archaeology (stratigraphy, chronology, and architecture) (de Vaux, 1953: 83-106).

Jourdain-Marie Rousee, former librarian of the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem, remembers with admiration the figure and the dedicated work of Father de Vaux. P. R. de Vaux had never intended to become an archaeologist. He had come to Jerusalem to study biblical theology: he told everyone how in his first year at the Biblical School he used to start a day’s work by reading a page from the Leonine edition of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

During the war e worked on a commentary of the Book of Kings for the “Biblical Studies” collection. Only after the war was he contacted by the cultural Services of the ministry for Foreign Affairs soliciting the Biblical School to open a digging site in the Palestinian area occupied by Jordania. R. de Vaux accepted the proposition and thusly became an archaeologist.

Nevertheless, R. de Vaux possessed several qualities recommending him for this kind of work: the first was his love for observing nature. R. de Vaux dug only in places where he could enjoy an excellent landscape; this reflection belongs to an English scholar who worked with Miss Kenyon at Jericho. As she characterizes de Vaux’s choice, he chose to live where people had lived before and to adapt to their style of living; he traced them, tried finding them, reencountering them and finally, somehow joining them. He seemed to have been thinking exclusively about them. Father de Vaux always arranged his camp with the Vision of a landscape artist, setting it so that it would face a magnificent view: the sun, the winds, the rain, everything was anticipated and tamed. And so, day to day life became luxurious at low costs, in a previously desert place, as

vegetation at Qumran was usually scarce but could give birth to an unforgettable vivid see of plants in spring.

Father de Vaux's knowledge of animal life was considerable. He used to tell that in his infancy he had been called to the Louvre to identify insects that had been preserved in ancient Egyptian artefacts or art works. At that time, he was a member of an entomological society and leapt with joy every time he saw an unusual insect, explaining to everyone around him everything that was particular to that minuscule creature. Those that were with him during the digging campaigns remember the long legged spider which used to sit on the bottle of wine for the religious service. Roland de Vaux would greet it when he entered the tent and stroke its feet. One year they have had problems with some scorpions which had multiplied in a hay stack and appeared without warning. Father de Vaux remained calm, even though he had found a dead scorpion one morning, crushed right under the sheets of the bed on top of which where he had slept the other night, because of the heat. Luckily enough, as a scorpion's sting is quite painful.

Roland de Vaux's love for nature should explain how a man whose vocation was the Bible study has been able to dedicate himself to archaeology and to fearlessly undertake this mission. Those who have been with him on digging sites have bore testimony of the working days. Father de Vaux always worked with a team of Arabic workers. At Qumran, half of them came from Jerusalem, while the other half were Ta'ameres Bedouins, live-stock breeders from the Judean desert east of Bethlehem. Work always began before sunrise, and the workers had three types of tasks: some of them dug with a spade, others used a mattock to collect the dirt and put it in baskets made out of old tires, and last but not least, the carriers took these baskets to the carts that evacuated the dirt as far away from the excavated ruins as possible.

Usually, there were two sites, with Arabic team chiefs in charge. They were employees of the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, and the always present R. de Vaux used to see both of them and organize the work needed to be done. He communicated with the workers in a quite personal Arabic language, one that the team chief had to clarify and complete when necessary. Roland de Vaux knew classical Arabic from his studies with Marmardji, but had very little practice in speaking the Palestinian dialect. He used to say he had added yet another dialect to the existing ones, as Arabic has the tendency to multiply them. Nevertheless, de Vaux never hesitated and always made his thoughts understood.

There was a breakfast break at 8 or 9 o'clock, and a one-hour lunch break at noon; after that they would complete the 8 hours-work day according to the hour of the sunrise. When it was finished there came the tea time, and the moment when de Vaux gave aspirin pills to the limping. He was assisted by an auxiliary team, some of whose members were students of the Biblical School while others were specialized archaeologists. In the hours preceding tea time they had to complete various tasks: some were recomposing and pasting together pottery, others drew them, and others took the responsibility of an annex digging site requiring special attention. The topographer drew the mapping of the ruins excavated the previous days.

The actual group work began after tea time. First there was the examining of the pottery uncovered the day before that had been washed earlier during the day. Then, all those willing could accompany de Vaux in a complete tour of the site. When the diggings had begun he used to note every day what had been done in each sector of the site, and to type what he had written, filing his notes separately.

After some time, his collaborators began taking notes as he dictated, one by one at first, but then all together, as they walked through the site and wrote down the results of a day's work. They discussed the points where they hadn't reached an agreement on and everything was decided openly and democratically. Everyone thought that this way of organizing things ensured the quality of the research done by and with de Vaux: no solution was adopted without everyone agreeing on it. Other methods of recording the archaeological digs were in use, many of which seemed to be methodically and scientifically superior.

However, many of those who have worked with de Vaux said that his team discussions which took place right when the archaeological remains were being uncovered are unparalleled. More people should be involved in the process of debate and assessment, making the recordings more reliable and ensuring the fidelity and the certainty of the data. Roland de Vaux was a master of debate and research and his notes on the digging sites are truly a collective work, as each person had a say in the discussions and no one's opinion was neglected.

The work day was over at sunset, a marvelous moment at the Dead Sea side. When they finished dinning they would sit facing the other shore. For R. de Vaux the best scientific research instrument was a row of armchairs set in front of the blooming nature: there all experiences can be shared, all problems considered, and sometimes Solutions naturally rise in all their complexity.

Father de Vaux practiced the archaeology of his time, which many would deem primitive. Fie was aware of this but could do nothing about it. Fie often said he was digging too soon; the Palestinian archaeology was barely taking flight, only a few pioneers had exercised on Biblical sites: Megiddo, Ai, Jerusalem, Lakish, Beit Mirsim, and other places in search of the biblical history. They had gradually discovered the analysis methods meant to bring back to life the past times of these places. But after the war, when Roland de Vaux enters the field of archaeology, the echoes of the new techniques reach Palestine. Roland de Vaux was well informed and tried to keep up with the new discoveries. But because there was not much time and financial means he couldn't have stopped and waited for the new techniques to spread; his door was always open for the technicians passing by and he was often a keen listener of what they had to say.

Roland de Vaux also practiced archaeology with amateurs one may even say "literati" who did not seem to be the best suited for this kind of work. However, at least one patented archaeologist was present at all times, and the experience he had acquired elsewhere was always valuable. We should mention here the important part played by L Harding, the head of the Antiquities Department of Jordania. He was a professional archaeologist: he remained at Qumran from Friday till Monday every 15 days and carried out rigorous Controls of the work that had been done. Roland de Vaux practiced a humanistic archaeology while confidently seeing how a scientific archaeology took shape.

Even when dressed for the country side, Roland de Vaux remained a monk: whenever he came to Jerusalem he wore his cassock, he strictly observed the daily ritual of his monastic order, he woke up early in the morning to perform the Liturgy, for which he prepared the liturgical altar and attire every evening. He kept all the necessary objects in two green metal suitcases. The Dominican service was too long to recite every day, so as a privilege granted at his request by the Pope, he was allowed to replace it with praying on one rosary. He usually prayed like this while walking before he went to bed, and he held this liturgical discipline dear, being so far away from his convent.

There was yet another aspect of de Vaux's religious life which profoundly astonished those who worked with him. They lived among Muslims at Qumran; Father de Vaux shared a close friendship with Ibrahim, one of the team leaders, a native of Gaza. He himself was very fervent in his religious practices, but his fact not only didn't harm their friendship, but made it even stronger. Their conviction expressed by one or the other

was the following: “We are both faithful of the same true religion, but in France it is expressed as you express it, whereas in the East, as I do. In fact, God is one and the same for all, but we each talk to Him in our own language and through our own religious practices.” (Rousee 2000, 39-45)

This combination of passionate religious practice and lack of proselytism is an ideal. Whether it was an attitude meant to bring peace or a profound conviction, we have yet to know, but it is certain it guaranteed peace there where conflicts often arose. When, in 1994, a book with photographs from the digging sites of Qumran and Ein Feshkha was published, it was received rather well. However, some were surprised to see that instead of commentaries, the photos were accompanied by a synthesis of R. de Vaux’s notes. This raw presentation of this document did stir reflection. Robert Doncel performed an exegesis of the notebooks which he will one day hopefully publish or at least make public. Archaeology is not accustomed to publishing documents’ drafts of an archaeological site. De Vaux and his collaborators have gathered disparate materials in order to build the “Qumran file” in the convincing form we have, to some extent, today.

Naturally, we have here the opportunity to better understand the method of the explorer and to follow his path of thinking. Someone once said we shouldn’t feel any indignation for the fact that R. de Vaux hadn’t been able to assume the final report of the works he leads, because the only reason why he hadn’t been able to finish this project, so dear to him was his unexpected death. Before he died he presented the essence of his results: he joined all his commentaries on Qumran, which are enough to give us a clear idea of the report as he had understood, conceived and documented it. The process of structuring the final report can be traced in his articles and reviews from the *Biblical Review*, and in the two editions of the “Schweich Lectures”.

The issue of a summary of the archaeological diggings with the numerically ordered findings may have seemed quite uninspired. If Roland de Vaux had corroborated all the data satisfactorily, of what interest could returning to the past be? Reflecting on findings as a whole requires all the digging to be finished. As the works progressed with every campaign and with every new piece of information, a sound knowledge of all the architectural and stratigraphical data was needed. The document was prepared and it announced a synthesis which may later be called to form the definitive archaeological report - this document, this “synthesis” is therefore half way from the digging notebook and the “Schweich Lectures”, and it borders the accounts given the *Biblical Review*.

At the time when Roland de Vaux was writing his London conferences, he had

already published a report after each campaign, and the general lines of his global interpretation were in place. Consequently, his interpretation wouldn't vary in time, but rather refine an argumentation making it more and more convincing. The document does not reconstruct anything; it does on the other hand tend to return to the analysis. R. de Vaux assembles his text by extracting all his site notes and re-categorizing them according to the loci and the day to day advancement of the works. This could be a synthesis only to the extent it would regroup non-cohesive pieces of information.

We should return to how the handwritten notes were taken. R. de Vaux was always present on the site, supervising the work in progress in one locus that raised problems. He noted his observations daily with a fine, tense, almost illegible handwriting. He wrote only for himself, and he did so mathematically, without the use of images when he described the works taking place in a certain locus, a space defined as a living or circulation unit. One could wonder whether R. de Vaux actually wrote his observations after the date of record, as leading an archaeological site left no time to spare. With only a few exceptions, all the entries are his, which leads us to believe he had complete control of the site and therefore, he noted down his observations during the breaks or after work.

The notebooks are intact, without any scratches, showing that Roland de Vaux didn't write on site; his fast and fluent handwriting is never affected by the inevitable clumsiness of a man writing in the open air. His remarks were written inside a tent, probably sitting down. Those who have taken part at the digging campaigns are those to say how R. de Vaux led his site. We know he was surrounded by an excellent team and that the different tasks concerning the exploration, topography and mapping, photographs, recordings, drawing of the objects were done on site, even though they may have been later on completed, perfected, and given the final form. The folders that had been compiled later allowed checking. It is possible that R. de Vaux, who had described the site locus by locus, to have had a plan to look at while writing his notes. We can tend in his accounts interrogative phrases, but never anything resembling an investigation.

Sometimes his notes end with the phrase "finished work", meaning the result had been positive: they had touched the base soil and the basin had been emptied. Nonetheless, other passages testify to his doubts: "to check". His notes account for a succession of soils, a modification in the building, they allow the construction of an argumentation; they aim at being pieces of a strictly archaeological demonstration. The analysis is barely articulated; the understanding of the terrain is constantly active during the works and

it is elaborated on site. An unsuccessful investigation is useless because research needs clear ideas; the various elements of a stratigraphy will not be organized in a laboratory.

In his notes, Roland de Vaux described the relation between the various layers and the way they connected with the available built elements just like an archaeologist should. In the “notes’ synthesis” he firstly aimed at being strictly objective, resisting the temptation of interpretation and forbidding any historical reference. It is obvious that he was more interested in certain loci (77, 89, 30 etc.) than in others; in these cases, he was more drawn towards commentary and the interpretation emerged whatever the circumstances. We would be inclined to believe that the document hasn’t been compiled by only one person: pages have been added. The reflection which retained Roland de Vaux, who hesitated and kept reassessing his notes, should have reached a coherent and verified systematization of Periods I and II. This task was far from easy and in certain cases the arguments were missing.

When R. de Vaux set his interpretation of a site within a chronological frame, was compelled to assume a stratigraphical presentation. The settlement had been almost completely dug out and the architect stood in front of a far more complex architectural ensemble than predicted: the surroundings had been explored and the water adduction found. The filling from the loci didn’t always give the same sequence. From the very beginning of the works it had been obvious that the settlement comprised several occupation levels which wouldn’t generate any chronological debates. In certain loci two or three occupations were superposed, separated by collapse masses or mounds. Layers of ashes revealed in some parts have allowed archaeologists to consider the theme of the “destruction by fire”, recurrent in the Palestinian archaeology. Then they found the traces of an earthquake and then those of abandonment.

These observations required a historical framework, a reference system which would constitute the chronological structure. R. de Vaux was well aware that pottery making and especially the coins, regardless of the place of discovery, indicated an occupation that extended over two centuries. He tried to systematize the architectural evolution of the settlement, but the plan of Period I lacks coherence, as the stages which mark the Progressive arrangement of the space correspond poorly to connection points proposed.

Why is that? Let us not forget that Roland de Vaux has alternated the Qumran campaigns (1951, 1952, 1953, 1956, 1958) with those lead at Tell el – Far’ah (1947, 1948, 1951, 1951, 1954, 1955, 1958, 1960, 1961). After the second world war, in this settlement of Samaria, in the context of the traditional Palestinian archaeology, there was a concern

to articulate extensive exploration based on an argument found in the historical books, with the help of a popular method in that time, namely one that consisted of juggling a formula which endured to this day: the three levels stereotype, defense wall and two layers of destruction. The intention was not to reduce Albright's Vision to a scheme and to assimilate de Vaux's knowledge to the so called biblical archaeology small talk. At Tell el – Far'ah de Vaux assessed the cross sections of three millennia and inventoried ceramic classes that had already been well documented for the Bronze Age.

From Far'ah he went to Qumran and almost constantly commutes between two settlements. At Qumran he does not find the ample layers' sequence associated to a succession of architectural phases. It would be interesting to compare the Far'ah and the Qumran notebooks. A quick look shows that the notes from the former site are longer contain more details; de Vaux is concerned and even alarmed by the sequences, and often uses the "locus/ sub-locus" expression, because obviously, the complexity of the Teii stratigraphy required it. In the middle of the "kirbeh", the collapse mass of the constructions was thicker because a tower had caved in and a nucleus had subsided, namely the main building which had probably been one story high. Consequently, the digging had crossed several collapse masses, and then two or three traces of successive occupations.

Roland de Vaux was puzzled by the absence of the levels; the spatial connections between the various deposits and layers were isolated by what was left from the walls, a juxtaposition of more or less autonomous cassettes. Therefore, the reconstruction of the levels by associating and combining the constitutive elements of the terrain was often done at random. The method suited for Far'ah did not work at Qumran. In order to cope with these difficulties R. de Vaux felt he needed to assert his notes and to carefully compare the layers' succession in every locus. This is how the site notes' synthesis was borne. As far as we know there is no equivalent of this synthesis for the Far'ah site. This was also a way to return to the various discoveries, to return to the period preceding his present interpretation, to verify the occupations' succession and to establish the non-synchronisms. He tried to do have the ceramic criterion as a guide in his interpretation of the deposits, analyzing the eventual evolution of certain types.

This was a difficult task because he was a pioneer of the Dead Sea basin archaeology for the Roman era and because the comparative material was missing at that time. Considering all these difficulties his attempt to create a global interpretation had an even greater merit. In order to present the occupational phases at Qumran, the explorer

had renounced the level based distinction and adopted the more daring and supple formula of the periods, overcoming the stratigraphical restraints. The “notes’ synthesis” document is very useful, because besides the lapidary descriptions, it allows us to see how the settlement had been perceived during the excavations and the research, and it also gives us an image of the explorer’s thoughts, which is an unexpected testimony (Humperfs 2000, 47-54).

It is very important to make mention of the rigorousness with which de Vaux studied every aspect uncovered each day by the archaeological diggings, establishing a chronology we will briefly present. De Vaux has divided the sectarian occupation at Qumran into three phases, calling them Period Ia, Period Ib, and Period II. A late colonization from the Iron Age had proceeded these periods, which were followed by a short phase of the Roman occupation, which de Vaux refers to as Period III. The Periods were identified according to the stratigraphical and architectural evidences. De Vaux has dated Period Ia approximately around the third quarter of the 2nd. century B.C.; Period Ib from the last quarter of the 2nd century B.C until 31 B.C. and Period II from 4-1 B.C. until 68 A.D. The following section will be dedicated to a brief description of the remains belonging to each of these phases (de Vaux 1954: 206-306).

The Iron Age

The Qumran settlement has been firstly inhabited during the late period of the Iron Age (8th to 7th century B.C.). De Vaux observed that the foundations of some walls found at lower levels than the others were trapped in a layer of ash which contained many vestiges of the late Iron Age. Other objects uncovered in this phase included a title with the paleo-Judaic inscription reading “lamelekh” (=of the king). De Vaux reconstructed the Iron Age settlement as being formed by a construction with a long row of rooms along the eastern side of a courtyard. An enclosure on the western side of the courtyard contained a large circular reservoir (110 I), which was probably supplied by the surface waters. De Vaux observed this structure’s similarity to an Israelite fortress from Bugea and Negev, and dated its destruction around the time of the collapse of the kingdom of Judah.

Period IA

The Qumran settlement had been abandoned for a few hundred years, and then it was again occupied by a new population which de Vaux identified as being sectarian.

According to de Vaux the initial phase of this colonization was rather modest and brief. The ruined parts of the Iron Age structure have been repaired and re-occupied. The circular Iron Age reservoir has also been cleaned, a new channel has been built to supply it and two other rectangular reservoirs (117-118 I) have been dug in its proximity.

De Vaux attributed two pottery hearths to this phase, which were set one beside the other in the Southern corner of the building. They were surmounted by steps leading up to the reservoir (66 I) built in the next occupation period. De Vaux was faced with the difficult task of having to date Period Ia, because not even a single coin was found, and the few pottery pieces they retrieved were identical to those of the following phase, Period Ib. Since Period Ia remained very poor and he dated the beginning of Period Ib in relation to the life of John Hyrcanus (103-76 B.C.) de Vaux set Period Ia in the third quarter of the 2nd century B.C.

Period IB

According to de Vaux, the sectarian colonization of Qumran completed its final shape during the reign of John Hyrcanus or that of Alexander Jannaeus. The main entrance of the settlement is based on a square tower, two stories high, in the centre of the northern side (9-11 I). At the heart of this settlement there was an Iron Age building comprised of chambers (some of which were two stories high) grouped around a central courtyard. A generous chamber was identified by de Vaux as having been the dining room and the gathering hall (77 I); there was yet another adjacent storeroom (86, 89 I) which had been erected during this period towards the south side of the original centre. Another group of chambers had been added to the west wing, around the old circular reservoir, still in use. The water system had quickly developed through the building of new reservoirs and pools; some of them were apparently used as ritual baths (*migua'ot*). The particular thing about this settlement is the seemingly absent private chambers; in exchange many of the chambers seem to have been used as workshops (including a pottery workshop, 64 I and 84 I, in the eastern side) or for collective purposes (the gathering hall/ dining room, 77 I).

Not everyone agreed on the exact location of the community: some of the taller chambers comprising of more than one stories may have been used for housing, but many of the inhabitants seemed to have lived in huts and tents around the site (Broshi 1992, 103-15). The presence of domestic pottery, burned pots and oil lamps suggest that some of the caves in the area were also inhabited. In the open spaces from

between and around the buildings the archaeologists have found sheep, goat and cattle bones carefully deposited under shards or within pots. De Vaux interpreted them as the remains of a ritual meal. Others suggested they were sacrifices, despite the fact that there are no identifiable remains of altars at Qumran, nor do the Dead Sea Scrolls refer to the members of the sect as offering animal sacrifices outside the Temple of Jerusalem (de Vaux 1973, 13-6).

According to de Vaux's opinions, the end of Period Ib was marked by an earthquake and a fire. The evidence of the destruction caused by the earthquake, visible along the entire settlement is probably the clearest in the case of a water reservoir (49 I), the steps and floor of which were separated and the eastern half collapsed. Flavius Josephus' testimony (*The Jewish War*, approximately 370-380; *Antiquities* 15-121-147) didn't allow de Vaux to pinpoint the date of this earthquake around 31 B.C.; adding to this destruction there is the evidence of a fire.

De Vaux reached the conclusion that the earthquake and the fire took place simultaneously because it is the easiest solution but he was ready to admit that there was no evidence to confirm it. R. de Vaux used the numismatic evidence to support his interpretation: all 10 coins identified at Qumran with Herod the Great's effigy came from mixed levels, some of them associated with later coins. He noted that the Herodian coins were not dated. He later quoted a recent study which stated that these coins belonged to the period following the year 30 B.C. Yaakov Mesharar suggested that the undated bronze coins of Herod were minted after 37 B.C (Magness 1995, 58-65).

Period II

According to de Vaux the buildings damaged by the fire and/or the earthquake haven't been immediately repaired. The sewage system was no longer tended to, the settlement was flooded and the mud accumulated, reaching 75cm in depth. The sediment has covered the ash layer left by the fire, indicating that the time of the abandonment followed the fire (and that the two were probably related). After the abandonment, the settlement was once again occupied by the same community which had previously left it, a fact confirmed by the keeping of the general plan, as well as by the same use given to the buildings as before. Most of the chambers have been cleaned, some debris thrown on the slopes of a hill on the northern side of the village. Some of the damaged structures have been reinforced while others were left there and abandoned. For instance, the tower has been reinforced by adding a slope stone, a sort declivity of towards the exterior, but

the over 1000 pots' deposit (86 I, 89 I) fallen and broken during the earthquake has been left on the chamber floor and buried. The reservoir was abandoned, as its steps were no longer useful due to the earthquake.

In order to date the beginning of Period II de Vaux resorted once more to the numismatic artefacts. Since only 10 identifiable coins of Herod the Great had been found, all from mixed contexts, he attributed them to the Period II. He concluded that these coins still circled after the death of Herod and set the beginning of this period to the reign of Herod's successor, Herod Archelaus. His reasons were the following: first of all, 16 coins with Archelaus' effigy had been retrieved proving that the numismatic sequence of Period II was uninterrupted until the First Rebellion. Secondly, one of the Archelaus coins had been found in one of the deposits filling a building which got excavated. The fact that the other coins' from this deposit all date from the Period Ib and do not include other coins from the time of Herod the Great, suggests that the settlement had been re-occupied during the reign of Archelaus.

Finally, there was the evidence brought by a 561 silver coins' treasure from 120 I, which was preserved in three pots. Most of them are Tyrian tetradrachms dating from after 126 B.C., the most recent of them dating back to 9-8 B.C. (as well as some other forgery pieces from the same year). As de Vaux noted, this proves that the "terminus post quem" for burying the treasure is 9-8 B.C. based on Sering's observation that there is a relative lacuna in the origin of the Tyrian tetradrachms from 9-8 B.C. to 1 B.C. -1 A.D. (a lacuna which was dismissed from the start), de Vaux dated the beginning of Period II to somewhere around 4 and 1 B.C., namely right at the beginning of Herod Archelaus' reign. Therefore, the presence of the Herod Archelaus coins has offered de Vaux the "terminus post quem", 4 B.C., while the absence of a dated 1 B.C. Tyrian tetradrachm has suggested a "terminus ante quem" for the beginning of this Period.

Leaving aside the reinforcement or the abandonment of the structures mentioned above, de Vaux observed that certain small modifications had been done to the chambers and the sewage system when the settlement was reoccupied during the second Period. However, the pottery workshops were preserved (64 I, 841), as well as the tradition to deposit animal bones under pottery shards outside the buildings. One of the most controversial installations from this occupation phase comes from a chamber in the central part of the settlement (30 I). The debris from the second floor produced the remains of benches and tables build out of mud and bricks, a platform with two tea-cup shaped hollow spaces and two ink bottle. De Vaux saw this chamber as having been

the “scriptorium”, but his opinion was challenged because there is no evidence that the scribes from this period sat on a bench while writing. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis, of it having been a “triclinium” is even less satisfactory, as the benches were far too rough for someone to recline on (de Vaux 1973, 29-33).

A cemetery containing approximately 1100 tombs was localized 50m from the eastern side of the settlement. The tombs arranged in elegant rows along the higher part of the plateau are marked with stones set in an inclined position at the surface. All but one is oriented on a north-south line. Other tombs found on the outskirts of the cemetery or on the low hills in the east do not have the same regular alignment and orientation. The bodies were laid in a niche in the lower part of a rectangular cavity, carved in the plateau's surface. Out of the 26 tombs discovered by de Vaux, those from the central part contained the bones of adult males, while those on the exterior, the bones of women and children (de Vaux 1973, 45-50). The second Period colonization had suffered a violent destruction with the fire de Vaux had attributed to the Roman armies during the First Judaic Rebellion. He made use of the numismatic proofs and of Josephus' statements in order to establish the date of 68 A.D. This destruction had brought the sectarian colonization of Qumran to its end.

Period III

Following the destruction of 68 A.D. the settlement seems to have been occupied by a small Roman garrison. No fewer than five soldiers have cleared the debris from some parts of the village. Proofs of activities or small scale occupation of the site during the Rebellion of Bar Kokhba (132-135 A.D.) have been uncovered. As a conclusion to those presented so far, we could say that publishing the materials resulted from de Vaux's research and digging campaigns has been a substantial progress in the Dead Sea Scrolls' research; however certain statements remain speculative until all the materials and the results of the research carried out on the archaeological sites will be published. For now, the mystery and the darkness of the Qumran caves have not yet been cast away and the scholars are left with the task of continuing their research.

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