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The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls,
by Jodi Magness. Grand Rapids: William B.
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Sidnie White Crawford

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***The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, by Jodi Magness. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002. xlv + 238 pp., 66 figures. Cloth. \$26.00.**

This volume by Jodi Magness is part of a series entitled *Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature*, edited by Peter W. Flint, Martin G. Abegg, Jr., and Florentino García Martínez. The purpose of the series is "to make the latest and best Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship accessible to scholars, students, and the thinking public" (p. i). Magness has designed her book with that general readership, not the specialist in the field, in mind. It contains no footnotes, very few quotations from the scholarly literature, and its bibliography is gathered and annotated at the end of each chapter. The opening chapter, "An Introduction to the Archaeology of Qumran," introduces the reader not only to the subject of Qumran archaeology, but contains a subsection titled "What is Archaeology, and What Excavation Methods Do Archaeologists Use?" In this subsection Magness introduces her readers to the methods of archaeology, e.g., numismatics, and explains why archaeologists use these methods when reconstructing the history of a particular site such as Qumran. Thus, while the specialist will find the present volume useful since it collects and synthesizes the latest research, its primary audience will be found in the undergraduate classroom, the library of the archaeology buff, and, most importantly, the shelves of Dead Sea Scroll specialists who are not archaeologists and need a clear and concise guide through the sometimes tortuous pathways of Qumran archaeology.

Throughout her book Magness operates under an assumption that will cause consternation among some archaeologists but with which this reviewer wholeheartedly agrees. She assumes that the texts associated with the site of Qumran are legitimate sources of data that may be used to help interpret the site. These texts include both the scrolls discovered in the 11 caves in the vicinity of Qumran and the ancient historical sources Josephus, Philo, and Pliny the Elder (p. 11). This is an especially controversial position in Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship, because it has been argued that the original excavator of Qumran, Father Roland de Vaux, allowed his knowledge of the scrolls (discovered prior to and during the excavations) to skew his interpretation of the site. However, as Magness points

out, there are good archaeological reasons for assuming a connection between the scrolls discovered in the caves and the site, the chief being that the same ceramic types were found in the caves and in the ruins (p. 43). Further, Magness argues, against those who point out that no scroll fragments were found at the site itself, that Qumran was destroyed by fire twice (in 9/8 B.C.E. and in C.E. 68), leaving behind almost no organic materials (p. 44). Finally, the scroll caves lie in close proximity to the site (p. 44). Therefore, Magness chooses to use the scrolls as part of her evidence for reconstructing the site. That this is a sound decision is proved throughout the book, for, while material in the scrolls casts some light on anomalies at the site, the archaeological data also illumines otherwise obscure passages in the scrolls.

For example, in Magness's discussion of communal meals, she notes that Josephus describes the Essenes as eating communal meals following a specific ritual, and both the Community Rule and the Rule of the Congregation outline rules of conduct for communal meals (pp. 113–16). The archaeological evidence, considered separately, indicates that the inhabitants at Qumran ate at least some of their meals in a large group, with special rituals and concerns for purity. This evidence includes the ceramic corpus, which includes a disproportionately large number of undecorated cups, plates, and bowls, in particular the store of over 1000 dishes, neatly stacked in L86, which was evidently destroyed in the earthquake of 31 B.C.E. The evidence also includes the deposits of animal bones found in certain locations around the site (Period 1B: L23, L65, L80, L92, L130, L135; Period II: L73, L80, L130, L132). These deposits are most likely the remains of ritual meals, after which the bones were carefully collected and deposited in a manner that may have been meant to recall the sacrificial ritual of the Temple (pp. 117–22). Thus Magness proves that the ritual practices and purity concerns described in the written sources illumine the archaeological evidence, and vice versa.

Magness covers the various topics of Qumran archaeology in chapters 3–9; chapter 10 covers the nearby settlements at Ein Feshkha and Ein el-Ghuweir. In her reconstruction of Qumran, Magness accepts the main outline of de Vaux's original reconstruction. She does, however, introduce changes and refinements to his reconstruction, particularly in the area of chronology. According to de Vaux's chronology, the site was inhabited briefly during the Iron Age, then abandoned until approximately 135 B.C.E., when it was settled by the Essenes (Period 1A). Period 1B began around 100 B.C.E., when the site was expanded. An earthquake and fire in 31 B.C.E. brought Period 1B to an end, and the site was abandoned. It was resettled by the same group ca. 4 B.C.E. (Period II) and was destroyed by the Romans in C.E. 68. A brief period of Roman occupation followed (Period III), and then the site was permanently abandoned. Magness argues that there is no evidence for a separate Period 1A; rather, occupation at the site began ca. 100 B.C.E. and continued without inter-

ruption through the earthquake in 31 B.C.E. until the site was destroyed by a violent conflagration in 9/8 B.C.E. She bases this revised chronology on the coin evidence and pottery types. After the destruction in 9/8 B.C.E., the site was briefly abandoned but rebuilt by 4–1 B.C.E. The site was then destroyed by the Romans in C.E. 68 (p. 68). Magness's chronology gives a better interpretation of the numismatic and destruction evidence and should become generally accepted.

Chapter 8, "Women and the Cemetery at Qumran," discusses an issue that has been the subject of much debate in the past decade: the presence or absence of women in the Qumran community. Magness is thus far the only professional archaeologist to examine the evidence in its entirety for the presence or absence of women at the site, and so it is worthwhile to repeat her conclusions in some detail. First she discusses the written sources. Philo, Josephus, and Pliny all describe the Essenes, in one way or another, as celibate males; Josephus also describes an order of married Essenes (pp. 163–66). However, most of the major texts of the Qumran scrolls take the presence of women in the community for which they are legislating for granted (e.g., the Damascus Document); the exception to this is the Community Rule, which does not mention women at all (pp. 166–67). Thus the written records are ambiguous concerning women in the Essene/Qumran community.

Magness then turns to the archaeological evidence, which falls into two main categories: the human remains from the cemetery and the finds from the settlement. After an exhaustive survey of the skeletal remains excavated in various parts of the cemetery, Magness reaches the following conclusions: out of a total of 43 excavated graves (a statistically small sample), only three skeletons can be identified as adult females from the Second Temple period. No children from the Second Temple period were exhumed. Magness concludes, "the evidence for the western sector of the cemetery suggests that women were present at Qumran but represented a disproportionately small part of the population" (p. 173).

Turning to the small finds, Magness reveals a startling discovery: there were almost no small objects exclusively associated with women found at Qumran. The meager evidence includes one spindle whorl and four beads (p. 178). This paucity compares with the abundant evidence for women at the contemporary sites of Masada and the Judean Desert caves (pp. 179–81). Magness therefore asserts that "the archaeological evidence attests to only minimal female presence at Qumran" (p. 182). Magness's definitive study of the available archaeological data must be taken into consideration in any future discussion of women and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The only substantial weakness of this fine work is one that bedevils all attempts at a synthetic study of Qumran archaeology: the lack of a final publication of de Vaux's excavations. Magness discusses this problem in her introduction and concludes by saying "most of the interpretations and conclusions presented in this book are tentative"

(p. 4). However, this reviewer feels that it is unlikely that the broad conclusions Magness reaches will be substantially changed by the final publication. Magness has produced an excellent volume on the archaeology of Qumran, one that deserves wide consideration and readership.

Sidnie White Crawford
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
scrawford1@unl.edu