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## QUMRAN: ARCHAEOLOGY AND THEORIES OF IDENTIFICATION

Ann Putz

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*Research at Qumran has lead many archaeologists, religious figures, and other academics into disagreements about what the site really was during the time of the Romans in the Holy Land. Qumran was first excavated in the 1950's after scrolls were found in the caves surrounding the site. The site has some very unique features not found anywhere else in Israel or Jordan, leaving the researchers somewhat confused. Qumran has had several occupations and has also been rebuilt many times due to earthquakes. This only adds to the confusing in determining what the site of Qumran really was.*

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The story of Qumran is all but typical of most archaeological sites. Questions not only arise from the material itself but how the material was gathered and if it can be used legitimately or not to make a hypothesis. In this paper I will be addressing theories of what the site of Qumran is and mention methods of attaining the information only when necessary. There are too many arguments being made to cover everything. I will discuss the three overriding theories and the variation that has come from these theories. Some think Qumran was related to the Essenes and therefore to the Dead Sea Scrolls in some way. Others feel that this interpretation is mistaken and was mislead by the finding of the Scrolls. I have organized this paper by looking at individuals and the theories they have developed. I will then review the relationship between theories in an attempt to better understand the problems with identifying the occupation of Qumran. The question for archaeologists has become how to interpret Qumran if the Dead Sea Scrolls were never found. Would archaeologists be so inclined to link Qumran with the Essenes as quickly as they have? Also, should archaeologists use the texts found to help determine what the site was? Is it credible to use literary data (which is considered by some to be archaeological) in an archaeological examination of a site?

A brief discussion on where Qumran is located and who the Essenes were is in

order. First, Qumran is located about one-half mile from the shore of the Dead Sea in the Negev Desert (Danceel 1997; Shanks 1998). It rests up against limestone cliffs on a marl terrace that stretches flat to the sea about 13 miles southeast of Jerusalem. The site of Ein Gedi, a Roman-Byzantine village, is about 20 miles to the south.

The Essenes were a small group of Jews that separated themselves from mainstream Jewish life (Cansdale 1997). They were interested in returning to a religious life as described in the Torah and other texts. They were not interested in fighting the war with the Romans. It is thought that they lived in seclusion, were celibate, mostly men, and were extremely religious. In order to become member of this group a series of tests had to be performed and trial periods waited through. They were also thought to be living in a communal group.

Qumran was first excavated from 1950 – 1956 by Jordanian Department of Antiquities' Lankester Harding and the Jerusalem Ecole Biblique's Father Roland de Vaux (Danceel 1997; de Vaux 1973). The interest in excavating Qumran came only with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, found 3 years earlier. The scrolls were originally found by Bedouin about one-half mile north of the site of Qumran (Davies 1982, de Vaux 1973). Archaeologists and Biblical Scholars immediately began searching the area around Qumran for more scrolls and hit a

gold mine known as Cave 4 in the side of the terrace next to Qumran. Excavations began in an attempt to show a link between these scrolls and the site. Many assertions made about Qumran came not from the archaeology itself but from outside texts and historical contexts about the scrolls. The archaeological finds were then made to fit what was theorized about the scrolls and the links to the site.

If you look at the archaeology by itself without the context of the scrolls a slightly different picture appears. Archaeologically, there is evidence of linkage, but the links may not be as obvious as once thought. There is no hard evidence and many would like to believe that Qumran was the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were written. Nor is there hard archaeological evidence that those living at Qumran, if indeed there was a permanent occupation, were even Essene like once thought. There are numerous debates on when the site of Qumran was built, occupied, for what purpose it served and who lived or used the site.

Qumran remains to be one of the most puzzling sites in Israel and the Near East today. Part of the problem some will argue is the lack of published materials from the initial excavations by de Vaux. Even though many of his assumptions are now in question, the finds themselves can never be excavated again. Until they are published there will remain to be many unanswered questions and more questions will continue to arise without the early finding published. Not only is the lack of publication problematic, but where the actual material finds are located and many of the notes made by the late Father are possibly lost.

### **The People**

#### *Roland de Vaux*

The first excavations of Qumran were conducted by Father de Vaux and Harding. De Vaux finally published his findings in a book in 1973. Although there were a few articles published previously in the Ecole

journal publication, his theories have been expounded in his book. In this book he describes the occupation periods, the archaeology of the surrounding area and the ruins of Qumran with relation to the texts. I will not discuss the particulars of de Vaux's material findings but discuss his theories that he has made based on these findings.

First, de Vaux is convinced that the caves and the site are intimately connected based on pottery (de Vaux 1973). The same unique pottery found at the site is also found in the caves. The pottery seems to have been produced at the site of Qumran. It is a simple ware made from clay in the area. There seems to have been little importing or exporting of pottery and very few fine wares have been found. Also, the same coins used to date the site were also found in some of the caves showing that the site and the caves both begin and end at the same dates. The caves that were occupied and where the scrolls were found were all found within a mile of Qumran with the site at the center.

Qumran is surrounded by a wall with two entrances into the complex. There is also a tower at one corner. The wall and tower he believes were originally from an earlier occupation dating back to the seventh century BCE. This first occupation was a military installation. Centuries later when the new inhabitants came to Qumran, they built upon these old ruins using the old wall and tower. They reinforced it with new building material and were forced to do so again after an earthquake dating to 31 BCE. De Vaux addresses briefly the early theories that Qumran was military throughout its history. De Vaux says that this is not true during the first century BCE and later, that the wall and tower were not only relics of an earlier occupation, but the wall and tower were seen and had been adapted in other settlements that were not military.

De Vaux states that there is little evidence of living quarters at the site itself. However, although the caves show some evidence of habitation for the residence of Qumran, they could not have been the main housing for the members. It is obvious that many of the caves were hollowed out, man-

made for dwelling or storing. However, not all the caves where the scrolls were found could have been used for dwelling. Many of the caves where the scrolls were found were in the limestone rock on the other side of the merl terrace where Qumran is located. He suggested that the main population lived in tents and huts outside of the walled site.

The largest of the rooms found at the site has proven to be somewhat problematic. De Vaux has identified it as a meeting place as well as a cafeteria. His reasoning for the meeting place is that a circular area stands out of the floor as if a place where a leader of the group would stand. The reasoning for the cafeteria is that the floor is slanted in a way to be easily cleaned when water is brought into the room. Also, this seems to be where over one thousand dishes, jugs, and jars were stored at one end of the room. The types of pottery found here are all that would be needed for a meal and it is obvious that this was not a storage place since no lids or large jugs have been found in the room. Bones have also been found in conjunction with the room, which de Vaux associates with being the remains of a meal.

Another important room discovery is what he calls the *scriptorium*. In this room small tables were found with low benches attached. He was at first inclined to think of this as a dining room as well except for the fact that one was already found. He saw no need for two in this communal setting. The tables were at one time located on the second story and have fallen through to the first floor. De Vaux finds it highly unlikely that a cafeteria would have been located on the second floor. What has confirmed his idea that this room was a *scriptorium* are the two inkwells that were found. The problem is where the scrolls were stored. There is no archaeological evidence pointing to any specific room, but there is no evidence showing that there was no library either.

A third important discovery is an area separate from the ruins themselves. This is a fairly small building that has been divided into two areas. The hypothesis is that one area was for humans and the other for animals. In addition, mills and a press were

found for grinding grains and pressing fruits. Although it would have been impossible to farm next to the site, the plain behind Qumran was suitable for farming and pastoralism.

The water system at Qumran was not unlike any others in the area. There are two cisterns, one rectangular and one circular. An aqueduct was built in a nearby wadi and water was diverted into the aqueduct by a dam. The design allows for all the mikva'ot (ritual baths) and the cisterns to be filled with only one or two heavy rains. This engineering tactic for collecting water is found in all of the desert "fortresses" during this time period. Compared to other sites, Qumran's water capacity is the lowest in the desert including the cisterns and mikva'ot, only 1200 m<sup>3</sup>. Masada has 4000 m<sup>3</sup>. Qumran's water system is also smaller and not as good. Other sites have better aqueducts and bigger cisterns. What is peculiar about Qumran is the number of mikva'ot, at least seven. This large number is not seen in any other site of this size in Israel. The ritual baths are not cisterns because they are small open areas with steps leading into the pools, unlike cisterns which are a very large with a small opening. Mikva'ot have certain unique features. The last step is wider and deeper like those found in Jerusalem.

A cemetery was found just to the south of the main site. It is estimated that there are around 1200 graves. Twenty-six graves have been excavated. All were men except one. Another small cemetery has been found in conjunction with the larger cemetery. In this cemetery six graves were excavated. Of these four were women and one was a child. There were little grave goods buried with the bodies. Many of the bodies were also buried after the body had decayed leaving only bones. Several of the graves were piles of bone. Most of the graves were single graves although two that were excavated revealed two bodies. Few grave goods were found with the bodies. De Vaux however, makes the assumption that the graveyard is associated to Qumran and its inhabitants.

Based on evidence in the cemetery, the lack of living spaces, the amount of water and the evidence of some type of agriculture, de Vaux has estimated the population of Qumran to be somewhere between 250 and 300. He is also sure the site is a Jewish site and almost all other archaeologists have agreed. There are several reasons. Mikva'ot, or Jewish ritual baths, were found in a large quantity. Pottery sherds with inscriptions of Jewish names have also been found at the site. It is in the area of Judea during the time of the Second Temple (37 BCE – 70 CE) to which the site dates and is not far from Jerusalem. Stone vessels were found showing that these Jews kept purity laws stated by Pharisaic law. Stone is a natural material that does not change composition, unlike clay which does when fired. Few other sites showed this interest in keeping so many stone vessels.

At the same time de Vaux was making his theories of the caves being connected to the site, others argued that there was no connection between Qumran and the scrolls. He believed the scrolls were hidden there or were defective works that could not be used in the Torah but could not be destroyed either as they were still considered religious texts. Until recently this idea has been disregarded. New archaeology is now beginning to look at this possibility of the origins of the scrolls.

#### *Robert Donceel and Pauline Donceel-Voute*

The Donceels believe that Qumran was in fact a villa (Donceel 1997). They believe that de Vaux was too quick to assume that the scrolls and Qumran are related at all and they believe this is coincidence. They feel that there is sufficient evidence to say that there was a significant amount of agriculture to sustain a population. The Donceels also argue that the pottery was ornate and fine ware with radiant yet simple designs of vegetables, thus also showing evidence of a plantation. The Donceels also argue that Qumran lay on a trade route with an intricate system of roads to and from the Dead Sea and running north-south. They argue

Qumran was also a processing center for salt and bitumen from the Dead Sea and the population from Qumran traded this as well as yields from the extensive palm groves. I must report here that much of their theories have not been explained by them. Other archaeologists have since taken their theories and have tried to prove or disprove them.

There are other problems aside from their lack of explanation. The Donceels had never excavated the site nor any other site in Israel. It was not until they were hired by Ecole Biblique, the French Biblical and Archaeological School located in Jerusalem, in the mid-1980's to finish publishing de Vaux's notes after his death that they began studying archaeology in Israel. Many Biblical archaeologists have argued against them stating that they had no rights to be interpreting de Vaux's work when they knew nothing of archaeology in the area. Problems with the care and mistreatment of artifacts found at Qumran are still being resolved by Ecole Biblique stating that many of the artifacts are now missing from when they were illegally removed from Israel by the Donceels. The findings of de Vaux were never published by the Donceels but Ecole Biblique has now made de Vaux's notes available with English translation and no interpretation. The Donceels have published some reports on their interpretations but there has been no book release as promised. This has not deterred some archaeologists from embracing their work and attempting to prove the legitimacy of their theories.

#### *Norman Golb*

Golb argues that the site was a military fortress (Golb 1994). He argues that the only reason why the site of Qumran is now being attributed to the Essenes is the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Up until this point, Qumran had been thought of as being a military installation and was in no way linked to the Essenes. The original theories were made by surface analysis from expeditions travelling through the area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Golb has several reasons for thinking Qumran is a military fort. First, the ancient name of Qumran is Meẓad Ḥasidīm. Meẓad in Hebrew means fortress. The argument is not over whether or not it was a fort; it is a matter of what type of fort. Some archaeologists will say that it is a fort on the basis that there is a wall with a tower, which implies that they were aware of danger. It does not mean they were military.

The site of Qumran was destroyed under military attack. There is strong evidence of this by the iron arrowheads used by the Romans that have found around the wall. Also the site had been burned to the ground. This does not show a peace-loving community the Essenes were known to have but in fact one that was ready to defend itself. The Essenes were not in a position to defend themselves against the Romans and therefore the site could not have been Essene.

Golb also figures in how many people could have lived at Qumran based on water resources. His estimate is over 750 people based on what he calls a generous allowance of six liters per day per person. This figure is arrived by assuming that all the water was used for drinking and that there are no mikva'ot. He explains the steps that are characteristic of Mikva'ot as simply being steps down to gather water as the water level dropped in the dry months. This he says is typical of many cisterns in the area. This new figure for population would fit the profile of a military unit rather than the mere 300 people proposed by de Vaux and others.

Golb also points out the fact that Qumran was destroyed probably in 31 BCE by an earthquake, with which most archaeologists agree. He pays particular attention to the tower and how it was rebuilt and the timeliness of rebuilding after destruction. He explains that rebuilding the tower and refortifying it was of high priority based on the extensive work that was done to rebuild it. It has been pointed out by de Vaux that the Romans did occupy Qumran after the battle somewhere around 70 AD and remained there until at least 74 AD. It does not appear that the Romans made many

changes to the site except to clean up part of it for habitation. Golb argues that the Romans would not have stayed there if it was not already prepared as a military installation (Wise et al. 1994).

#### *Lena Cansdale*

Cansdale bases much of her theory on the ethnographical works of Josephus, Philo and Pliny the Elder. She uses their descriptions of who the Essenes were and where they lived. Based on her analysis and interpretation of these writings she has hypothesized that Qumran was not where the Essenes lived, that they inhabited the caves above Ein Gedi based on the "exact description" given by Pliny the Elder (Cansdale 1997). This same description is what has led most other archaeologists to believe that Qumran is the site for the Essenes. So what does she think Qumran was? She agrees with Golb that Qumran was some sort of military fort. She agrees with Golb's interpretation of the meaning of Meẓad as military fort and she also looks at the meaning of Ḥasidīm, pious, as well. She states that the meaning of this word changes through time and that the original meaning of pious was blameless person or honest religious men. At the time of the Qumran occupation, however, the meaning had changed to freedom fighters. Therefore, as Golb has stated along with other reasons, Qumran was in fact a military installation. However, she believes Qumran was more than that.

Cansdale also believes that it was a customs post and official way station along the major trading route like the other sites found in the area. She argues that it is not possible to live in the area without being connected. Map evidence shows roads leading to Qumran from both Ein Gedi and Jerusalem. They had to be part of a trading network to import items such as dates that were grown at Ein Gedi. She cites the finding of two ostraca (potsherds with writing) which mention the trading of figs and dates. She also notes that the Nabataeans were in almost complete control

of the Negev during this time and controlled the spice trade. Why wouldn't Qumran be part of this trade network for such an important commodity? The problem is that the King's Highway, the trade route from north to south runs on the east side of the Dead Sea and Qumran is located on the west. However, Ein Gedi is also located on the west and it is evident that Ein Gedi was part of the trade route. There is evidence of a road leading off the King's Highway into Ein Gedi across the Dead Sea and there is a small road leading up to Qumran from Ein Gedi. Based on this evidence Qumran was connected to the trade network and therefore part of the economic system. Cansdale argues that the inkwells found were not for writing the scrolls but for keeping taxation records from traders.

To strengthen her argument she looks at the existence of the site itself. She believes that it would not be possible for the Essenes to have built such a site. The water system alone would have taken great specialty knowledge, which she feels the Essenes didn't have. Cansdale agrees that the population of Qumran was somewhere around 300.

If this is the case she argues then there would not be enough water in the cisterns. Therefore, the mikva'ot were not that at all but other cisterns for water consumption. She also argues that if the site was only occupied by 50 people and if there were others coming in for ritual cleansing, there was still no need to have as many mikva'ot as have been identified.

Then there is the question of who owned the land. She feels that the Essenes would not have had the power or money to be able to control a large piece of land like this one, particularly in an area of high economic importance with the trade route. Therefore, she postulates that the land could only have been owned by the Jewish government itself. Cansdale, in conclusion, has theorized that Qumran is a hybrid. It was a trading center that must have been heavily fortified in order to keep trade running smoothly during the period of the Jewish

Revolt, the time period in which it was destroyed somewhere around 70 A.D.

### *Edward Cook*

Cook argues against the Donceels, Golb, Candsale, and, to an extent, de Vaux. Cook's theory is that Qumran is a ritual purification center for the Essenes (Cook 1996). He tries to unite the theories pulling evidence and references from each theory into the idea of the purification center. He focuses on three things: 1) the proximity to the caves where the scrolls were found, 2) the cemetery with almost 1200 graves, and 3) the water collection system and mikva'ot.

The cemetery points to there being a large population, between 150 and 300 at one time. The size of the water system also supports the idea of there being a large population. The problem is the environment cannot sustain that many people with food and the archaeological evidence shows that there were very few living quarters at Qumran. His response to the lack of living quarters is that the caves provided this or people lived in tents. If people were able to build such a lavish place like Qumran they could have built dormitories, but they didn't. Cave dwellings suggests that the population only to be about 50-70 people. Although farming and pastoralism were possible, it could not have sustained a large population. There is no evidence of farming in the immediate area of Qumran nor is there archaeological evidence like tools that would have been used for farming found. The large cemetery has baffled many archaeologists. With such a large cemetery surely a large population lived there.

Cook has answers to all of this. There was a need for ritual purification places for those who suffered different types of impurities, such as lepers and those with some sort of discharge, whether it be from infection or seminal, as suggested in a scroll found. Qumran was one of those ritual purification centers where people were sent temporarily to cleanse themselves. As for the large cemetery, the Essene sect was not allowed to bury their dead within the city of

Jerusalem and therefore needed someplace else. A small cemetery has been found outside the city wall of Jerusalem that has distinct graves like those found at Qumran (a shaft about 6 feet deep with a shelf at the bottom for the body). However, this was not large enough for all Essenes to be buried there. There must have been another site and Qumran may be that site.

In addition, Cook argues that aside from the cemetery and ritual center for the impure, it was a library. According to the laws of the Essenes, only animals that were slaughtered at the Temple could be used within the city of Jerusalem. It is not likely that all of the parchment used for their writings could have come from the temple and therefore could not have been kept inside the city. Qumran he argues could have been that place of storage for the scrolls. Archaeological evidence shows that much of Qumran was probably used for some type of storage.

This explanation would accommodate the idea that only a small population resided here permanently. Qumran was an outpost for Jerusalem Essenes but not the main location for daily life. As for the women and children that have been found in the cemetery, Cook argues that not all Essenes were celibate, only when in Jerusalem. Sex was an impure act meaning the Essenes needed a retreat to go to for purification after sexual relations. Qumran was the place. Those Essenes that lived in Jerusalem were celibate and many of them men, thus explaining the large number of men found in the cemetery. But other Essenes that did marry and were not living within the walls of Jerusalem also came to Qumran.

#### *Joseph Patrich*

Patrich is a supporter of the Donceels. Patrich agrees with this assessment that Qumran was a villa or farm of some sort (Shanks 1998). Architecturally, he thinks it matches with other farms in the area that date back to this time of the Hasmonean and Herodian periods. The single tower is found on other farms throughout the area.

Evidence in the valley behind Qumran shows that agriculture and pastoralism were possible. The finding of the mills and press also suggest that agriculture was occurring.

In the 1980's, Patrich began further investigation of the living quarters of Qumran (Patrich 1994). He was questioning the use of some of the rooms, thinking that they indeed could have been used as living quarters. Further investigation of the 57 caves around Qumran did yield signs of habitation in small numbers for short periods of time but not enough to sustain a community. If there were people living in tents outside like others have hypothesized there should be evidence of it. Nothing was found. He concluded that the community was living inside Qumran.

Patrich is quick to point out that Qumran was two stories in height. The problem is that there has been little explanation for what the second story was for. His hypothesis is that this is where the people lived. The second story could easily have held as many as 200 if needed or as little as 50, the population supported by Patrich.

#### *Philip Davies*

Davies also agrees with the Donceels. He argues that first, the literary data from the Scrolls has been overused (Davies 1989). The archaeologist cannot set out to try and prove what is written in the Scrolls or the Bible. The literature is to be used as a guide for comparison. Archaeology doesn't always fit with what is written and the archaeology is stronger evidence than what is written. He argues that although there is the Bible and the scrolls, not all of Jewish society was governed by these as so many older scholars and Biblical archaeologists like to think. New archaeology acknowledges this and focuses on the population, economy, and climate. By focusing on these aspects as well as others, there is a new picture of Qumran. Davies also argues that before theories about the site can be made a description of the site needs to be available. The only description that is published is what de Vaux and the



Donceels have published. This material however is not all of what was described and what can be described.

One example Davies uses is dating Qumran. There still is no concise date for when Qumran was founded. De Vaux has placed the site beginning somewhere around 130–135 BCE. Coins were found that date to 104 BCE, which is where many archaeologists date Qumran today. However, de Vaux based his date on what was written in a scroll which says the Community was founded during a time of the “Wicked Priest.” The major candidates for this priest that are close to the dates of the coins are around 135 BCE. Davies finds the date of 104 BCE more convincing based on the archaeological evidence. Davies, however, also uses the scrolls to back up the theory that Qumran was in fact an Essene community. Although it is evident that not all the rules of the Community as stated by the scrolls were followed, there is enough overlap seen at Qumran not seen anywhere else but in Jerusalem for this not to be Essene.

Another problem Davies sees with the interpretations made by de Vaux and many of the earlier archaeologists is they all interpreted Qumran as some sort of monastery. He questions whether this would have been the case if the archaeologists would have been Jewish. In this case they were all monks, Catholic priests that lived in monasteries. The idea that a monastery-type living situation was occurring before the fourth century just wasn’t seen, particularly in the area of question. So either this is the first ever monastery or this has been misinterpreted. Davies argues that archaeologically Qumran looks like an agricultural settlement with military overtones based on its location.

Qumran was not on the main road, the King’s Highway that ran north and south connecting Jericho and Ein Gedi (Davies, 1982). Geographically, about two miles south is a spring-fed oasis popular for bathing and as a watering hole for animals. About an hours walk in the cliffs is a valley that is also spring fed where crops can be

grown and vegetation grows to keep small stock. Although it only rains a few times during the rainy season, the rain comes in flash floods and the water system at Qumran can catch and hold enough water for the year. Based on this, Davies believes it is possible for the Qumran community to have been agricultural.

Like all other archaeologists, Davies agrees that without the findings of the scrolls the site of Qumran most likely would not have been excavated yet. Archaeologists determined the site was a Roman military outpost by means of a quick survey of the surface. It wasn’t until the scrolls were discovered though that there was enough interest to excavate. It quickly became clear that the caves where the scrolls were found and the site were connected in some way as the same pottery type was found which is unique to Qumran.

### *Jodi Magness*

Magness argues against the Donceels that Qumran was a country villa (Magness 1996). Magness compares Qumran with other villa in the area. Villas are divided into three main types: 1) the palace-fortresses of Herod the Great, 2) the private Jewish upper-class living in Jerusalem from the Herodian period, and 3) a private rural villa of the Herodian period found near Hebron.

First, the palaces of Herod were all built up on the ridge of mountains overlooking the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley. This was done for protection and the ability to see down in all directions. Qumran was not, but instead built down in the valley with little or no protection. Architecturally, Herod built several Roman style bathhouses all decorated with frescoes and mosaics. Qumran had none of these. Elaborate architectural elements like marble columns with Corinthian capitals, dentil motifs and egg-and-dart decorations are found at these Herodian fortresses. Qumran again has none of these architectural elements.

In Jerusalem the rich had slightly different villas. They were built very close

together being in the city but there was a center courtyard. They were decorated with frescoes and mosaics with stucco. There were elaborate bathing facilities and had other luxury goods including specific types of pottery. These types of pottery and baths were not found at Qumran. Of course Qumran was not urban so this may not be the best comparison. Therefore, Magness turns to the last possibility, the rural private villa.

The villa excavated near Hebron is the best comparison we have, she argues. Here, there is a fortified enclosure with a tower that sloped at the base. Rooms ran along the wall with a courtyard in the center. There is a bathhouse with mosaic floor with stucco walls and other décor that proved to be for the rich. Although Qumran does have the single tower and basic architecture of rooms around the outside with a center courtyard, there is no observable stylistic evidence of wealth. Qumran also has no bathhouse at all but does have the system to support one and the proven technology to build one if so desired. There are pools that were used for bathing, just not the elaborate Roman style found in villas. At villas the workshops are kept separate from the living quarters. At Qumran however, workshops are found throughout the entire site with not designated living area. Magness also argues the presence of the cemetery. At no villa has there been a cemetery associated with it.

The lack of décor is the strongest evidence she argues against a villa. The pottery type is also part of the lacking décor. It seems that most if not all of the pottery was manufactured in the kilns found at Qumran. This is not found at any of the other villa either. A specific type of terra sigillata made in the eastern Mediterranean during this time period is found throughout the area except at Qumran. Thus, Qumran was a separate entity not found anywhere else in Israel or Judea. It has its own unique qualities not duplicated anywhere.

Magness argues against Golb and others who theorize Qumran was a military outpost as well (Shanks, 1998). She argues that Qumran is different from other fortresses in

the Judean desert. It is not a fortress like the other sites, it is not built for the kings like the rest and it is not on a mountaintop like the others. Mountaintops were used for protection. Qumran was not in need or wanting protection. All other sites, king fortresses, are mentioned in surviving literature, Qumran is not. Architecture, pottery, layout, other small finds are not similar with other sites in the area. The only thing it has in common with other sites in the area is that it is Jewish like the others and it is from the same time period, Second Temple Roman. Other fortresses were Roman garrisons. There is no similarity what-so-ever with these posts.

### Discussion

Each of these archaeologists is selective in their theories and evidence for them. At the time, de Vaux's explanation of the scrolls being written at Qumran seemed reasonable. Based on the archaeological evidence that was uncovered, he was able to show that this was a possibility. However, new research methods and new paradigms have entered the archaeological world forcing this theory to be questioned.

Archaeologists argue about the geography of the Dead Sea and therefore whether Qumran was isolated or at a crossroads. They cannot agree on geological evidence and the dating of this evidence. Some say that Qumran was isolated, that the Dead Sea came all the way up to the cliffs and so Qumran was a dead end. Only those who were going to Qumran would be traveling in that direction. To go south, one would have to have traveled by boat. Others say that the Dead Sea was only slightly higher than what it is today. Therefore people would have used it as a stopping place when going south to Ein Gedi and north to Jericho. Yet a third possibility is that although the sea did not go all the way up to the cliffs, it was remote enough that passers by wouldn't stop often unless going to the site. There is much archaeological evidence of sites along the way between Ein Gedi and Qumran that

prove the Sea was not up to the cliffs and that water level was low like today.

The Donceels were given the first and greatest opportunity to create new theories. Unfortunately they lacked the skills and knowledge to make accurate judgements. This is seen by their interpretation of pottery. Archaeologists have all agreed that they misidentified the pottery found because they did not have the base knowledge of pottery found in Israel at this time. Archaeologists have come to agree that the pottery found at Qumran was specific to the site and it is unmistakable that the pottery holding the Dead Sea Scrolls is the same pottery. This does not prove that the scrolls were written at Qumran, only that there is some type of connection. Although they have lacked knowledge of Israel itself does not mean that we should discredit their theories. Others have been able to support their theory archaeologically to some degree or another.

As for de Vaux's scriptorium, almost all archaeologists now agree that this is not the case. The table and bench units that were found may not be tables at all. They are oddly shaped and in order to sit on them the person must be small, like a child. Even then, the table portion of the unit is too tall and the scribe would have had to write on his knees. Archaeologists can only speculate that these tables were used for storage. However, these tables are unique to the site and are still a great mystery. The inkwell finds, although unique in that two were found at the same site, also do not prove anything conclusively.

The theory that members of Qumran participated in agriculture is of some debate. De Vaux, the Danceels, Cansdale and Cook all share the theory that agriculture was possible at Qumran. To what extent agriculture was practiced is in debate. First, could Qumran have been self-sufficient? Probably not. If the occupants of Qumran were trading, to what extent were they trading? It is evident that roads lead to both Jerusalem and Ein Gedi. Trade was probably occurring in some fashion between these three communities. If the community

is Essene as suggested by de Vaux and Cook, then there was only enough trade for sustainability. It is possible that the Essenes would have had the resources to buy property and trade goods if members had to relinquish all holdings to the community. If Qumran was not Essene, as suggested by the Danceels and Cansdale, further research is needed to describe these trade routes.

Golb's theory seems to be most argued against aside from de Vaux's *scriptorium*. Although Cansdale agrees that there is a military aspect to the site, she does not agree that this was its sole purpose. Golb is the only one to figure such a high population for Qumran with the lack of evidence for housing. He is the only to completely disavow the idea that mikva'ot exist at the site, but Cansdale also questions the identity of the mikva'ot. Most archaeologists are in agreement that at least some of these water structures are mikva'ot.

Some of these theories are questionable because of the material used to form these theories, namely text. Cansdale relies heavily on outside sources to show that Qumran is not Essene. On the other hand, Cook uses the scroll texts to show that Essenes were in need of a specific type of place and Qumran fits this description. I find it ironic however, that Cook would rely so heavily on these texts when in his article (although written seven years later) he states that more attention needs to be paid to the archaeology and not the texts.

Archaeologically it is not possible at this time to say if the site was occupied by Essenes or not. The use of the texts is the only source available to draw conclusions on this issue. However, archaeologically we do know that the site was Jewish. We can be fairly certain that agriculture was at least a minimal activity in this community and trade of some kind also probably took place. The type of pottery found suggests that this was a fairly remote site. The presence of a large cemetery suggests that the site was well known and accessed by at least one group of people.

In conclusion, each of these speculative theories merits further study. Although

some may be more archaeological than others, they all have the basic understanding that without material remains there would be

no theory to make about Qumran. Each of these theories has an underlying truth that can be reconciled in one way or another.

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