

# The Caves of Qumran

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*Edited by*

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# Introduction

Marcello Fidanzio

This volume presents the proceedings of an international conference dedicated to the caves of Qumran, organized by the Istituto di cultura e archeologia delle terre bibliche (ISCAB) of the Facoltà di teologia di Lugano in collaboration with the École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem (EBAF). The conference was held in Lugano on 20–21 February 2014 and was attended by a group of thirty-five Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran scholars, representing two generations of Qumran research, together with thirty PhD students.

The theme of the conference was based on a simple premise: the scrolls were found in caves. Therefore the caves need to be examined in order to better understand the complex reality that we call Qumran. With the exception of 11Q, the caves investigated by Roland de Vaux constitute the only part of the archaeological work that he carried out at Qumran for which he produced a final report in the DJD series. Here de Vaux published not only the findings on the so-called manuscript caves, but also on the entire series of holes, caves and crevices where significant archaeological material was unearthed. After de Vaux's work, exploration of the cave has continued until recently, not only in the vicinity of Qumran but also throughout the entire western region of the Dead Sea, providing new useful textual and archaeological data (for the history of the explorations and excavations, with methodological observations see the papers by Joan E. Taylor and Jürgen K. Zangenberg).

The attention of scholars has largely been focused on the manuscripts, while archaeological research has concentrated above all on the settlement. Thus the caves have generally been left in the background. The aim of this conference was to place the caves at the forefront of the research. Indeed, various participants have highlighted the novelty of the subject, and the present publication is intended as a step forward on a path that still has a long way to go, both in terms of documentation and in interpretation.

We need to address the ambiguity for the commonly used designation “Qumran caves” as it denotes both a geographical situation and a conceptual one (i.e. the relationship with the settlement), which do not necessarily coincide (see the observations in the paper by Dennis Mizzi). This is just one small indication of the amount of work that is still required, even in as far as the definition of the phenomena.

There are two main problems that we face in the study of the Qumran caves. First, that the majority of them have been disturbed by natural and/or cultural post-depositional processes. Secondly, that for the majority of the caves, we only have cursory documentation that does not allow the stratigraphy to be reconstructed. These strongly limits the possibilities of reassembling the context (see the paper by Zangenberg). Nevertheless, the findings from the caves (and the caves themselves) are available for typological studies and distributional analysis.

With this in mind and on the basis of their specific area of expertise, each of the speakers at the conference was asked to:

- conduct a comparison between the various caves of Qumran, in order to verify their commonalities and assess their peculiarities;
- compare the manuscripts and other archaeological materials found in the Qumran caves with the other finds in the Dead Sea region, in order to pinpoint continuity or discontinuity between the Qumran caves and their regional context.

What can we say in terms of chronology, function, or sociology? Can we highlight differences between the Qumran caves? Can we argue that what we comprehensively call Qumran shows singular features in relation to their regional context?

This renewed attention given to the caves is not related to a preconceived stand on the major themes that, for decades, have animated the debate on the origin of the scrolls and their relationship with the settlement. Instead, the aim was to gain a more detailed understanding of the caves themselves and reconsider them in their broader historical and geographical context, in the light of the data we currently possess.

This volume is divided into five parts, in accordance with the sessions of the conference. The first part focuses on the topography. Joan E. Taylor (King's College London), *The Qumran Caves in their Regional Context: A Chronological Review with a Focus on Bar Kokhba Assemblages*, gives an overview of the archaeological investigations that were carried out in the caves across region of the north-western Dead Sea, from En Gedi to Jericho. Taylor places an emphasis on the chronology of

the discoveries as well as on the typologies of the cave repertoires. The Bar Kokhba remains, which were first discovered in the caves of Wadi Murabba'at and further to the south, are present throughout the region, including the Qumran area. According to the author, after the Iron Age II there was a widespread phenomenon of temporary occupation of caves only at the time of the Second Revolt. By contrast, during the First Revolt, the phenomenon was that of a reoccupation of some Iron Age II settlements along the route connecting Jericho to En Gedi. A comparative analysis of the material remains reveals the highly distinctive nature of the caves in the vicinity of Qumran. Furthermore, the state of preservation of the manuscripts found in Murabba'at and the repeated use of the same caves over successive periods can be usefully compared with the discoveries in the Qumran caves.

Jean-Baptiste Humbert (École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem), *Cacher et se cacher à Qumrân: Grottes et refuges. Morphologie, fonctions, anthropologie*, considers that the isolation of the region of the Dead Sea, which was only sparsely populated and with only seasonal stays related to the limited farming opportunities, would have offered the right conditions to “hide (something) and hide oneself.” Humbert analyses the natural caves in the rocky cliff and the artificial caves excavated in the marl separately. He suggests that the use of the term “*grottes*” (caves) is inappropriate for natural cavities formed by tectonic movements. With a few exceptions, the natural caves in the vicinity of Qumran are too narrow and too low to have been inhabited. Instead, they may have been used as hiding places to conceal precious belongings. As regards the artificial caves, the author draws attention to the fact that erosion is the cause of important modifications. He suggests that different caves were connected, envisaging networks of caves linked with narrow corridors, similar to the hiding complexes present mainly in the Shephelah, but also in the region of the Dead Sea. The artificial caves were not suitable as hiding places nor as dwellings in the strictest sense, but rather the manuscripts were abandoned there when danger was imminent. Humbert's text is accompanied by a note by Gérard Massonnet on the geology of the artificial caves.

The second part focuses attention on the manuscripts. Florentino García Martínez (KU Leuven), *The Contents of the Manuscripts from the Caves of Qumran*, opens his contribution with a useful review of the recent studies on the caves. He points out that the traditional opinion (i.e. that a single collection of manuscripts was hidden in the caves for safekeeping from the Romans) is now disputed by various hypotheses such as: storehouse for scrolls, burial

deposits or *genizot* for manuscripts, multiple collections formed by different groups or by a single group, multiple deposits at different times all belonging to a single collection. The author then examines the contents of the manuscripts found in the individual caves. He highlights the commonalities, in particular between the manuscripts found in caves 1Q, 4Q and 11Q and more widely with those found in the other caves around Qumran. He does not fail to observe the peculiarities of the different caves. Nevertheless, the profile of each cave does not differ significantly from that of the overall corpus of manuscripts. The results of the analysis have steered the author in the direction of the traditional opinion. Based on their contents he believes that the corpus of the manuscripts is a collection of Jewish religious literature representing a particular stream of Judaism in the Second Temple period.

Charlotte Hempel (University of Birmingham), *The Profile and Character of Qumran Cave 4Q: The Community Rule Manuscripts as a Test Case*, emphasizes that the texts from cave 4Q represent a learned and eclectic medley of materials and data that were, in all probability, reserved for the highest tiers of the community members. She outlines the distinctive features of cave 4Q: the presence of texts in cryptic script, the presence of technical calendrical materials, the prominence of the Maskil, the largest number of works in multiple copies, and the “workaday quality” of a number of texts in contrast with the evidence of refinement found in Cave 1Q. She focuses on the Serek tradition and highlights that the complex evidence of the S manuscripts from cave 4Q is compatible with several features that more widely span across the nature of cave 4Q. Furthermore, 4QS<sup>e</sup> (259) emerges as the most learned and “avant-garde” exemplar of the Community Rule. In several respects, 4QS<sup>e</sup> seems to be particularly representative of the distinctive aspects of the character of Cave 4Q.

Emanuel Tov (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), *Scribal Characteristics of the Qumran Scrolls*, highlights the special scribal characteristics of the Qumran corpus as opposed to those found in other Judean Desert sites and those dating from other periods, namely: the occurrence of texts written in cryptic and Paleo-Hebrew scripts, the abundance of leather texts, the frequency of scribal signs, and the special writing given to divine names. The scribal signs and the special writing of divine names are found in specific texts written according to the Qumran scribal practice. The texts written in cryptic script could have been written by the same scribes as those who wrote other Qumran scrolls. Conversely, it is possible that the biblical texts written in Paleo-Hebrew script came from Sadducean circles. The prevalence of texts written on

leather is due to the special nature of the Qumran collection, which is almost exclusively literary. According to the author, although the texts found at Qumran were not all written by the Qumran community, their nature reflects the features and preferences of that community. As regards the individual Qumran caves, Tov observes that, with the exception caves 6Q and 7Q, these are not homogeneous in scribal practices. He suggests that cave 11Q contains more sectarian texts than the other caves. Lastly he finds acceptable the theory of Stökl Ben Ezra, who distinguishes between “old caves” and “young caves.”

Emile Puech (CNRS Paris and EBAF Jerusalem), *La paléographie des manuscrits de la mer Morte*, presents the contribution of the paleography for the study of the Scrolls. The analysis of the *ductus* offers a relative chronology for the manuscripts. The author describes different phases in the evolution of the shapes of the letters and remarks that the majority of the manuscripts from Qumran date to the Hasmonean and Herodian periods, while none relate to the post-Herodian period (70–135 CE). He also attests to the value of palaeography in the decipherment of fragments when identifying partially conserved letters and damaged texts. Lastly, the author supports the analysis of Ada Yardeni, who attributed an important quantity of the Qumran manuscripts to a single scribe: 57 + 37, an equivalent to 10% of the entire Qumran corpus. These manuscripts belong to different literary genres and were written mostly on leather, but also on papyrus, dating from the end of the first century BCE until slightly later. These were found in various caves: 1Q, 2Q, 3Q, 4Q, 6Q, (8Q), 11Q. Puech highlights Yardeni's analysis in support of the unity of the collection and of one-time deposition.

The third part focuses on the other material finds from the Qumran caves. Jolanta Młynarczyk (Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw), *Terracotta Oil Lamps (Roland de Vaux's Excavations of the Caves)*, presents a study of the typology, place of production and chronology of the oil lamps dating to the Greco-Roman period, which were found in the caves. With one exception, the oil lamps from the caves always have analogous types in the settlement. In particular, two of the lamps found in cave 1Q belong to the type of so-called “Qumran lamp family” that Młynarczyk considers to be specific to Qumran. Examining the assemblage of oil lamps she concludes that, regardless of their actual manufacturing place, nearly all of them must have come to the caves by way of the settlement of Qumran. As to the chronology, the three oil lamps found in cave 1Q date to different periods, which suggest that the place was visited more than once, probably at an interval of several decades. Four oil

lamps found in cave P13=X35 characterize the use of that cave as a place of habitation, most probably a Jewish hide-out at the time of the First Revolt. Lastly, she highlights the presence of two oil lamps, which are identical in type and dating, and which were probably deposited during the Second Revolt and testify to the presence of different actors. The first lamp was found at the entrance to cave 4Q and was most likely left by a Roman soldier, searching the caves; the second was found in cave P24 with the disc broken, a sign of Judaic use.

Mireille Bélis (chercheur associé École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem), *The Unpublished Textiles from the Caves of Qumran*, gives a preliminary report on the textiles stored at the Citadel Museum in Amman and some of those kept in the Rockefeller Museum. The textiles now number over 300 fragments. They consist of a homogeneous corpus of linen textiles, scroll wrappers or jar covers. Some show blue lines in stripes or in welt yarn. An exception is represented by two fragments found in cave 8Q, which the author considers to have been dyed in purple or violet purple. In her opinion, these can be linked to a short-term stay of a single visitor to the cave. Bélis highlights the connection between the presence of jars and textiles in the caves and that of the manuscripts. She considers the possibility that the “empty” or “minor” caves were originally scroll caves which were later “emptied.” However, to develop this argument, it is necessary to ascertain the origin of many textiles found in Amman. As regards the deposition, according to the author the presence of the textiles supports a “slow-hiding scenario.” On the contrary, the absence of textiles or jars in other caves (or at least not present in sufficient quantities) suggest an alternative situation, such as a rapid response to a situation of emergency.

With the term “miscellaneous artefacts” Dennis Mizzi (University of Malta), *Miscellaneous Artefacts from the Qumran Caves: An Exploration of their Significance*, refers to artefacts other than pottery and textiles. He offers for the first time an analysis of these objects. The miscellaneous artefacts give an unambiguous domestic dimension to a cultural assemblage. In the caves in the vicinity of Qumran, with very few exceptions, their presence is very limited in terms of both quantity and variety, unlike in other caves and subterranean complexes of Judea and the Judean Desert. This observation contrasts with the interpretation of the caves as permanent or continuous dwelling places, even though it does not necessarily provide us with conclusive answers. The author also notes that the caves around Qumran differ from the others in the region on account of their direct relationship to a settlement.



In view of this and within the framework of the Essene-sectarian hypothesis, it is not implausible that some of them were used as long-term dwelling places. Some natural caves differ from the others in terms of the quantity or variety of the miscellaneous artefacts found there, or by the presence of certain distinctive objects indicative of a domestic setting or a different material culture. These are interpreted by the author as probably non-Qumranite, which thereby highlights the difference between “Qumran caves” intended as a geographical designation or as a conceptual category relating the caves to the Qumran settlement. The caves present different histories not only along a diachronic continuum but also along a synchronic one.

Yonatan Adler (Ariel University), *The Distribution of Tefillin Finds among the Judean Desert Caves*, studies the characteristics and the distribution of the tefillin (phylacteries) that were found in the caves. The presence of these ritual objects in the scroll caves (1Q, 4Q, 5Q, 8Q, [11Q?]) contributes to the understanding of the nature of the textual deposit and the function of the caves. The author examines the main theories regarding the caves around Qumran in the light of the presence of tefillin and also comparing them with the finds in other Judean Desert caves. Moreover, a detailed analysis of the artefacts leads Adler to identify typological differences, both among the leather cases and among the tefillin slips. When examining the distribution of the various types of tefillin, he observes a plurality of practices at Qumran, whereas in the “Bar Kokhba caves,” the situation appears uniform. This may be interpreted as a diachronic development of the halakhic practice or as a testimony of contemporaneous differing practices used by different groups during the Second Temple period. Various types of Tefillin may even have been used within the same community of Qumran, where a pluralistic approach towards texts is also been detected.

The fourth part focuses on the chronology and function of the caves, their relationship with the settlement and the regional context. The paper of Mladen Popović (Qumran Institute, University of Groningen), *When and Why Were Caves Near Qumran and in the Judean Desert Used?*, deals with the chronology of the caves, the purpose for their use, and the connections and networks through which people ended up in the caves. Popović presents some evidence relating to the deposit of manuscripts in other caves in the Judean Desert and the Dead Sea region, which he compares with the finds in the caves around Qumran. The function of the caves of Qumran differs from that of other caves in the Judean Desert that bear traces of the presence of refugees. The caves around Qumran could have been used as a hiding-place for the manuscripts. The

author does not interpret this difference in terms of isolation; on the contrary, studying examples of connections at regional level, he suggests the possibility that the manuscripts could have been sent to Qumran from elsewhere in Judea for safekeeping. This would be due to a combination of factors, through which Popović highlights the special character of the settlement.

Jodi Magness (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), *The Connection between the Site of Qumran and the Scroll Cave in Light of the Ceramic Evidence*, updates the discussion on the pottery in the light of recent excavations and studies. Yitzhak Magen and Yuval Peleg have identified Qumran as a pottery production centre. In contrast, Magness demonstrates the inconsistency of this proposal and explains that local production must have been limited and related to the needs of its inhabitants. As regards the morphology of the cylindrical jars, this remains a clear indicator of the relationship between the caves and the settlement. The largest part of Magness’ paper is dedicated to the Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis and Petrographic Analysis that have been applied to the Qumran pottery by different research teams. Analyses have identified different groups of pottery according to the clay and the researchers have indicated the source of the clay of each group. Further interpretation of these observations supports the idea that some of the Qumran pottery, including some of the Scroll Jars, came from elsewhere. A comparison between the analyses demonstrates contradictions, sometimes in the raw data, but especially in the interpretation of the clay sources. Magness explains that there is no need to assume that the pottery was produced anywhere else other than Qumran. The results of the different analyses within each of the groups testify to a connection between the pottery from different scroll caves as well as the caves and the Qumran settlement. The chemical composition of the pottery offers an additional argument by which to establish the link between caves and settlement.

Jürgen K. Zangenberg (Universiteit Leiden), *The Functions of the Caves and the Settlement of Qumran: Reflections on a New Chapter of Qumran Research*, believes that putting the caves at the forefront of research—where investigations start from the caves and not from the settlement—allows new avenues to be explored. Zangenberg’s intention is to reflect on the proper criteria by which to approach the subject. He reviews the history of the explorations of the caves, describing the methods used and the results obtained. He also describes the technical limits facing this research and consequently advises caution when approaching interpretative hypotheses. The author analyses the regional context searching for connections



rather than highlighting the (supposed) isolation and uniqueness of Qumran. He refers the contributions that illustrate the accessibility of the site and the analyses that consider the Qumran pottery as non-exclusive. According to Zangenberg, the site and the caves, with their facilities, attracted different groups, in addition to the inhabitants of the settlement. He sees the deposition of the manuscripts within this framework, in the context of the First Jewish Revolt.

The fifth part presents a series of short papers. Sidnie White Crawford (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), *The Inscriptional Evidence from Qumran and its Relationship to the Cave 4 Documents*, examines the inscriptions found in the settlement and the caves. This includes the languages of the inscriptions, the find sites, the dates of the inscription, the results of the INAA on the clays of the ostraca and the genres of the inscriptions. She then investigates the connections between the inscriptions and the scroll collection from cave 4Q: the presence of scribal exercises, the documentary texts and accounts, and the onomasticon. According to the author the fact that small worthless exercises were found in cave 4Q indicate that they are part of the material from the settlement that was thrust helter-skelter into the cave in anticipation of the Roman attack. In general White Crawford makes the claim that there are modest written connections between the settlement and the caves.

The coins found in Qumran (both the hoards found in Loc. 120, and the single finds) and the documentation on them (in particular the archives of Henri Seyrig and Augustus Spijkerman), which were believed to be partly lost or were unknown, are now available again for study. Bruno Callegher (Università degli Studi di Trieste), *The coins of Khirbet Qumran from the digs of Roland de Vaux: returning to Henri Seyrig and Augustus Spijkerman*, traces the history of this particular area of research, he emphasize the valuable contributions of its early protagonists and clarifies the shortcomings and obscure chapters of subsequent research. In the final part he makes a numismatic comparison between Khirbet Qumran and the caves. While the former shows signs of a thoroughly monetized economy at all levels, with an extensive and prolonged use of both silver and divisional currency, no coins have actually been found in the caves. Consequently, the author believes that the caves did not have a residential, and therefore functional use, unlike the khirbeh.

Gregory L. Doudna, *Dating the Scroll Deposits of the Qumran Caves: a Question of Evidence*, presents a series of arguments against the traditional dating of the scroll deposits to the time of the First Revolt. The author has long argued the necessity to antedate the entire deposit of

the scrolls to the end of the first century BCE. In his view, the assumption of the First Revolt as the endpoint for the deposits, is neither plausible nor supported by evidence. He analyses the historical allusions contained in the manuscripts, the reasons for the dating of the deposit to the First Revolt, the dating of the pottery, the premises for the exact dating of the palaeographic script charts, the plurality of the biblical texts. He concludes that the scrolls in the caves of Qumran in their entirety could occupy their rightful place as the remains of a lost textual world that existed prior the first century CE.

Mariusz Burdajewicz (Institute of the Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Science) *A History of the "Qumran Caves" in the Iron Age in the Light of the Pottery Evidence*, maps the finds of the Iron Age II–III pottery in the caves around Qumran and in the other caves in the cliffs running along the littoral of the Dead Sea. He introduces the different pottery types, giving their place of origin, description, dating and parallels found at other sites. Then, on the basis of the pottery evidence, he presents some observations concerning the use of the caves during the Iron Age II–III. As for their function, he suggests that most of the caves probably served as temporary shelter, used in the event of a threat or as hiding-places for all manner of "outlaws." As regards the artificial caves in the marl terrace, he considers it plausible that these caves were hewn out and used as dwelling places by the first settlers in the Iron Age II. Lastly, taking into consideration the Iron Age pattern of cave-occupation in the cliffs along the littoral of the Dead Sea, he observes that a marked cluster of caves exists in close proximity to Khirbet Qumran, which is not the case in the vicinity of the other large settlement at En Gedi.

The volume ends with the inventory of the materials excavated from the caves, prepared by the team led by Roland de Vaux. This is being published for the first time and is preceded by a comprehensive introduction prepared by Marcello Fidanio (ISCAB, Facoltà di teologia di Lugano) and Jean-Baptiste Humbert (EBAF), *Finds from the Qumran Caves: Roland de Vaux's Inventory of the Excavations (1949–1956)*.<sup>1</sup>

Taken all together, one can notice the convergence of different contributions on some specific aspects, thereby inviting future studies to test these observations and to

<sup>1</sup> Two other papers were presented at the conference but are not published in this volume. Orit Shamir and Naama Sukenik, *The Differences in the Textiles from the Qumran Caves Compared to Those Found in the Other Judea Caves*; Stephen J. Pfann, *The Ancient Library or Libraries of Qumran? The source and character of the manuscript caches in the Judean Wilderness*.

expand upon them. Numerous caves in the vicinity of Qumran were involved, during the late Second Temple period, in a specific phenomenon that has no parallels in the regional context. Analysing the contents of the individual caves, one notices that many elements point to a unitary phenomenon. Nonetheless differences are attested between various caves, primarily between natural and artificial caves but also between individual caves. The variety increases when all the caves' finds, from the different periods, are considered. The traditional view that sees a connection between the caves and the settlement is confirmed on various levels. In turn, some papers highlight the connectivity of the caves and the khirbeh with the regional context.

The organization of this international conference and the publication of its proceedings have been possible thanks to the generous help of various individuals and institutions. It gives me great pleasure to thank the Istituto di cultura e archeologia delle terre bibliche of the Facoltà di teologia di Lugano and in particular its president, Giorgio Paximadi, who supported the project, gave me valuable advice and allowed me to spend the necessary time in Jerusalem to work on it. The École biblique et

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