

EXCAVATIONS IN JORDAN, 1951-1952

QUMRÂN CAVES

(L'École Archéologique Française de Jérusalem; American Schools of Oriental Research, Jerusalem; Palestine Archaeological Museum, directed by R. P. R. de Vaux and Dr. W. L. Reed.)

À LA suite de la découverte par les Bédouins d'une grotte qui est voisine de celle où les premiers 'Manuscrits de la Mer Morte' avaient été trouvés en 1947, et qui contenait des fragments manuscrits du même genre, on a exploré systématiquement la falaise rocheuse de la région de Qumrân, à partir de Ḥadjar el-'Asba' au nord jusqu'à Râs Feshkha au sud, sur une distance d'environ 8 km. Du 11 au 28 mars 1952, on a fait dans cette région 230 sondages, dont 40 ont révélé des grottes ou des trous de rocher avec de la poterie. Ces 40 sites ont été fouillés: 25 ont livré de la poterie identique à celle de la première grotte et du Khirbet Qumrân. Ces grottes appartiennent donc à la même installation humaine que le Khirbet, soit qu'elles aient servi d'habitations, soit qu'elles aient été utilisées comme magasins ou comme cachettes.

En plus de la grotte qui venait d'être partiellement pillée par les Bédouins et qui contenait un lot de fragments manuscrits, l'expédition a découvert une autre grotte où des manuscrits avaient été déposés. Malheureusement, la chute du plafond, les infiltrations d'eau et les ravages des animaux ont beaucoup endommagé ce dépôt, dont on n'a recueilli que quelques débris. Dans les fragments provenant de ces deux grottes, on identifie: le Lévitique en écriture phénicienne, deux manuscrits de l'Exode, Isaïe, Jérémie, les Psaumes, deux manuscrits de Ruth, tout cela en écriture carrée; il y a aussi des textes non bibliques en hébreu et en araméen. Mais la trouvaille la plus étonnante a été faite dans la dernière grotte: c'étaient trois plaques de cuivre, de 30 cm. sur 80 cm., primitivement rivetées bout à bout pour former une bande longue de 2 m. 40. L'une des plaques avait été détachée et roulée sur elle-même, les deux autres avaient été roulées ensemble. On avait ainsi obtenu, pour les cacher, deux rouleaux, dont la surface révèle que la bande était inscrite d'un long texte en caractères carrés, disposé en colonnes. Les lettres sont tracées profondément et font saillie sur l'envers. Pour lire ce texte, il faut attendre que les rouleaux puissent être dépliés; l'oxydation du métal rend cette opération très délicate et des experts étudient actuellement un traitement qu'on puisse appliquer à ces objets.

BETHANY

The excavations begun in Bethany in 1949 have been continued without interruption and are still in progress.

After the remains of the ancient church of St. Lazarus had been disentangled from the ruins of later habitations (see *Ann. of the Dep. of Ant. of Jordan*, I, 1951, p. 44), the area south of the church was cleared. There we discovered part of the mosaic pavement of a Byzantine chapel and south-west of it three intact rock-cut burial chambers

with eleven graves, in which there were numerous Byzantine rayed clay lamps, a few glass unguentaria and flasks, iron and bronze rings and a silver denarius of Gordian III (A.D. 238-244). Over these was built the 12th century abbey of the Benedictine nuns, of which four halls are still partially preserved.

About 80 metres west of this abbey remains of the ancient village of Bethany were discovered in an olive grove which occupies about an acre of land.

In the north-eastern sector of the grove the discovery of a jar handle with a Jerusalem stamp impression, fragments of a crater with a zigzag design impressed on its shoulder, an open lamp (and fragments of the same) with rounded bottom, a pointed bone instrument, etc., suggest that this was part of the area occupied by the exiles who returned from the Babylonian captivity during the Persian period, as is indicated by Nehemiah xi. 32.

The late Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine wares found in a nearby cistern indicate that this sector was occupied in those periods. An apparent lacuna has been filled in during the last days of October 1952 by the discovery of a cave with six rock-sunk graves containing round lamps characteristic of the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.

In the south-western sector of the field the foundations of a large building penetrated through the roofs of caves down to their floors, dividing them up into eight sections. The pottery from these caves and from a nearby cistern is predominantly of the 6th and 7th centuries, as a few coins associated with it confirm.

In the middle of the field an oven near a cistern contained pottery which an Arabic coin with the formula of faith seems to date to the early Arabic (Umayyad) period (7th to 8th centuries A.D.).

At several points in the field well baked glazed sherds and poorly baked painted pottery indicate that this site was still occupied in medieval times.

About a fourth of the field still remains to be cleared, and this is being done at present.

More details are given in *Liber Annuus Studii Biblici Franciscani*, I, 1951, pp. 191-226; II, 1952, pp. 119-162 (both these articles are in English); see also *La Settimana Santa A Gerusalemme*, Jerusalem, 1952, pp. 16-20 (Italian).

KHIRBET QUMRAN

During December 1951 a combined expedition of the Department of Antiquities, the École Biblique et Archéologique Française and the Palestine Archaeological Museum conducted a short period of excavation on this site. The object was to establish whether or no there was any direct connection with the Dead Sea Scrolls. The site had been roughly examined during the excavation of the Scrolls cave in 1949 and a few of the graves excavated, but it was felt that new work should be done there before any definite pronouncement as to its nature and date.

The site is on the north side of the Wady Qumran, on a prominence of the foothills which slope steeply down to the wady about 200 feet below, less steeply to the Dead Sea on the east, and are intersected by smaller wadies on the north. An aqueduct was constructed for a distance of about half a kilometre to the pools in the upper part of

Wady Qumran, and the water was stored in large cisterns on the site. The living-quarters consist of a main building, 37×30 metres, with outlying rooms on the north, south and west. We excavated three rooms in the south-west and two in the north-east of the main building and made a small sounding in the outlying buildings to the north-west. A great deal of pottery was recovered, and we were fortunate enough to find a number of coins, which give good evidence for the dating. These coins range from those of the Procurators under Augustus, about A.D., 10 to the first Jewish revolt, about A.D. 67. So far there is no evidence for anything later.

The main outer wall, when cleared of its encumbering debris, turns out to be constructed of large, undressed stones with mud plaster. The quality of the work is very poor, and in no way resembles that of a Roman fort which we first took it to be. Inner walls are of equally poor workmanship, being mostly of rubble and mud. During its short life the interior of the building underwent two or three changes and remodellings, as witnessed, for example, by a blocked-up doorway, and in one room at least the floor level was slightly raised. Almost on the present surface was a floor level and cross walls which seem to belong to a period of medieval Arab occupation. All the original buildings had been destroyed by a great fire, of which clear traces were found everywhere we excavated. Most of the pottery was found on the lower floor levels, which suggests that there was a somewhat hurried abandoning of the place. Some pots were still in position in a small cupboard in one wall.

Sunk into the floor of one of the rooms was a jar identical to most of those found in the scrolls cave: the jar was covered by a small flagstone but was empty. On the floor beside it was a coin of the Roman Procurators under Augustus, about A.D. 10. We thus, even in the small area so far excavated, have a direct connection with the Scrolls, and a correction for our original idea about the dating of the cave deposit, which we placed nearly a century too early, in the 1st century B.C. Remains of many cooking-pots and lamps similar to those found in the cave were also recovered, which were previously dated to the 2nd or 3rd centuries A.D., but there are no examples of the long-spouted lamps so characteristic of the late Hellenistic period, two of which were in the cave.

This is interesting confirmation of the accuracy of the date established by submitting some of the linen from the cave to the Carbon¹⁴ test, the estimated degree of accuracy of which is plus or minus 200 years. The date thus established for the linen was, that the flax on which it was made ceased to grow 1917 years ago, plus or minus 200 years—that is to say, from 167 B.C. to A.D. 237, with a central figure of A.D. 33 (the test was carried out in 1950).

A further selection of graves was examined, but nothing whatever was found with the burials except in one case where fragments of a jar were found immediately below the stones which are piled over each grave. Most of the graves are oriented north and south, though a few are east and west, and in general consist of an oval shaft between 1.30 metres and 2 metres deep with a loculus for the body usually on the east. The loculus is closed with either slabs of stone or mud bricks, and the body is extended, usually with the head to the south. Prof. H. V. Vallois, Director of the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, has made a preliminary examination of the bones, and reports that some of the

bodies are apparently those of women. This point is important if the site is to be equated with the settlement of the Essenes referred to by Pliny the Elder.

A fuller report on this work by Père de Vaux is appearing in the forthcoming number of the *Revue Biblique*.

WADY EL MARABAAT¹

During February and March 1952 a joint expedition of the same composition as that for Kh. Qumran excavated four large caves in the remote gorge of Marabaat, or Daraja (map ref. 1854.1107). There were four caves altogether, but only nos. I and II were really productive: these were each over 50 metres long, II having the additional complication of narrow underground passages beneath the fallen roofing blocks and between clefts in the rock. They were filled with a very fine, absolutely dry, powdery grey dust, which choked pressure lamps in about 10 minutes, and lighting presented a problem until the Arab Legion Air Force came to the rescue with the loan of a small electric lighting plant.

Both caves yielded large quantities of cloth, basketwork, ropes, etc., and II contained the greater quantity of leather and papyrus fragments inscribed in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. In the entrance to I a large cistern had been constructed, which suggests a long occupation of the place. None of the material was *in situ* with the exception of the lowest Chalcolithic level, having been disturbed many times, and sherds of most periods from Chalcolithic to early Arab were mixed indiscriminately together with the cloth and manuscripts. In the deepest tunnel of cave II it was possible to establish a stratification, the top layer containing 2nd century A.D., Iron Age and Chalcolithic sherds, the next Iron Age, Middle and Early Bronze and Chalcolithic, finally an undisturbed Chalcolithic level. From this level basket-work, wooden implements and cloth were extracted in perfect condition. A surprising find from the middle layer was a Hyksos scarab.

The documentary material is mostly of the 2nd century, with a few early Arab fragments, one written on a crude paper. One Greek document, apparently a marriage contract, is dated in the seventh year of Hadrian, A.D. 124; another is an agreement for a loan. Much of the material is written in a cursive hand, very difficult to read.

Amongst the Hebrew material are a few fragments of Biblical books, Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy, but most interesting are several fragmentary copies of what appears to be the proclamation of the second Jewish revolt, referring to 'the deliverance of Israel by the ministry of Simeon ben Kosibah, prince of Israel.' There are also letters from this same Simeon ben Kosibah, undoubtedly he who was later Simeon bar Kokhbah, to the local chief of the army, Yeshua ben Galgolah (see Pl. XIII). A number of coins of the second revolt confirm the dating. So it would seem that these caves were the local headquarters for one of the rebel armies who carried out a guerrilla warfare against the troops of Hadrian, and held out for five years before being defeated.

It has not yet been possible to completely examine the material, but there is no doubt that documents so closely dated to the 2nd century A.D. must have an important bearing on the dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

¹ See also *Revue Biblique*. April 1953, p. 245 ff.

DHĪBÂN

The American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem has been engaged in excavations at Dhībân, which is located 64 kilometres south of Amman. The large *tell* directly north of the modern village of Dhībân is identified with Dibôn, the capital of ancient Moab. The site has been the scene of two campaigns to date. The first one took place in two stages, a sounding made during November 1950, and an excavation on a larger scale during April and May 1951. A preliminary report of the results during the first campaign is published in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 125. The second campaign, which is the subject of the present report, was conducted during April and May 1952.

Excavations on the *tell* during the second campaign were carried on at the south-east corner of the mound in the area west and south of the remains of the large building on which stands a sheikh's tomb. This area has been known since the time of Duncan Mackenzie's visit in 1910 as the 'Gateway,' which opened towards a 'saddle' by which the mound is joined to the south *tell*, where some of the houses of modern Dhībân now stand.

A sounding in 1951 in this area uncovered traces of occupation which extended from medieval Arab times to Iron I. The second campaign resulted in the discovery of remains covering the same archaeological periods in this 'Gateway' area, although nothing comparable to the square tower or the great battered wall on the east side of the *tell* was found.

Near the surface of the *tell* the walls and floors of an Arab building were discovered, which are similar to the rooms that were excavated in this area in 1951 at the same level. Portions of at least eight rooms were cleared and were found to contain various articles which identified them as rooms of an early Arab house. In three of the rooms were discovered the lower courses of pilasters at opposite sides of the rooms and abutting against the north and south walls. The plasters apparently supported arches on which a stone roof rested. Column bases, capitals and building stones from earlier Byzantine, Roman and Nabataean structures were employed in the construction of these walls. The rooms were not perfectly rectangular and varied in size, but the average room occupied a floor space of about 25 square metres.

Within the rooms were found a number of Arab coins, an oven, a bin containing pottery, many glass and iron fragments, and the entrance to a cistern which contained nothing earlier than early Arab sherds. In the debris on the surface was found a stone block inscribed with a fragmentary Greek inscription; the stone had probably been re-used in the construction of one of the walls of the home. For the period of early Arab occupation the 'Gateway' appears to have been an entrance to this house. In some areas the walls of this period were found to rest on an excellent flagstone pavement that is probably to be attributed to the Byzantine period.

Directly beneath the flagstone pavement there was found a stratum containing pottery from the Roman-Nabataean period. A section of a wall built of rectangular stones containing the diagonal dressing which was typical of Nabataean masonry was cleared

for a distance of more than 4 metres. This wall was found to rest on native soil with no traces of earlier occupation at its base. Still standing to a height of more than 6 metres, the wall runs east-west in the area excavated. The dimensions give it the appearance of a city wall, although nothing corresponding to it was found on the east side of the *tell*, where the 1951 excavations uncovered at least five city walls. Also constructed on native soil and standing parallel to the Nabataean wall at a distance of approximately 30 centimetres were the remains of a later wall supported by a series of arches, two of which were discovered. It is possible that this later wall served as an aqueduct for transporting rainwater from the city of the Nabataean period to a reservoir in the valley directly east of the *tell*.

In the area at the western terminus of these walls was found a series of steps which led into the ancient city. On the steps were discovered fragments of typical Nabataean pottery, which make it appear that this was the location of an entrance to the city during Nabataean times. Among the finds from this stratum were a number of typical lamps, juglets and two bowls of the delicate, painted, egg-shell Nabataean ware which are well-known from Petra, Kkirbet et-Tannûr and other Nabataean sites.

In the strata below the Nabataean level located north and west of these walls were found other walls, all stone except one which was mud-brick. The lowest stratum, which rested on native soil, contained an oven, quantities of grain and sherds which are attributed to the period of Iron I. That the area was occupied also during Iron II was evidenced by the number of sherds from that period, although traces of a Moabite gateway, if one existed, were not detected with certainty because of the disturbance created by later construction.

The search for tombs resulted in the discovery of a Moabite necropolis about 200 metres east of the *tell* on the south side of the *wady* which runs east and west. The explorations in this area revealed one grave, one collapsed tomb which had evidently not been occupied, and another excellent tomb which had been occupied during the Moabite period. The latter tomb contained a baked-clay coffin, which was empty, and its fragmentary lid on the upper surface of which were the features of a human face done in crude relief. The condition of the tomb and the bones indicated that it had been robbed after the last burial had been made. The tomb contained many complete and broken lamps that are typical of Iron II, plus some sherds that show that it may also have been used at an earlier period. The juglets, bottles, a small clay wheel, bracelets, earrings and finger-rings, one scarab and other objects are important material for the study of Moabite culture at Dhîbân.

JERICHO 1952

From January to April 1952, a joint expedition of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem carried out excavations at Tell es Sultan the site of ancient Jericho. The excavations were directed by Miss K. M. Kenyon, Director of the British School, with Dr. A. D. Tushingham, of the American School, as Assistant Director.

The main objectives of the expedition were to investigate further the history of Jericho in the Bronze Age, to continue the examination of the very important Neolithic remains discovered by Professor Garstang, and to search for tombs.

Works on Bronze Age Jericho was concerned chiefly with the defences. The history of the walls of Jericho in the Early Bronze Age was found to be complex. The earliest wall of the period discovered, dating to about 3000 B.C., was found to have been destroyed by an earthquake. In all, there were at least seven successive walls during the Early Bronze Age, the last two being somewhat further down the slope than the preceding five. The latest was violently destroyed by fire by nomadic invaders, possibly Amorites, who brought the Early Bronze civilization to an end about 2100 B.C. The next succeeding defences belong to the Middle Bronze Age. Three lines belonging to this period were identified, all incorporating a new system of which the foot of the wall was protected by a long sloping glacis. In the area excavated, no walls belonging to the late Bronze Age, the period within which the attack under Joshua must fall, survived, and it is clear that much of the latest levels of the Tell has been destroyed.

The excavation of the Neolithic levels produced most interesting results. Houses belonging both to the early phase before the introduction of pottery and to the later period associated with Neolithic pottery were found in widely separated parts of the Tell, and it is apparent that the early settlement was a large one. The importance of the earliest phase, before the introduction of pottery, was further enhanced by the discovery of a very substantial wall, almost certainly a town wall, belonging to that period. This may well be the oldest town wall yet found.

Tombs belonging to the Early and Middle Bronze Ages were located to the north of the Tell, and rich finds for both these periods were made. The most interesting were some tombs, and one in particular, of the Middle Bronze Age, in which perishable materials were preserved to a most surprising degree. These included wooden vessels and furniture, basketry, textiles, fruit and meat offering. Work on the identification and preservation of the materials is still in progress, but it already clear that the finds will add greatly to our knowledge of the objects and materials in use in the second millenium B.C.

Excavations are being continued in 1953.