

QUMRAN ARCHAEOLOGY SKELETONS WITH MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDERS AND OTHER GRAVE ERRORS

Sommaire

Depuis la découverte des manuscrits de la mer Morte en 1947 et les fouilles de R. de Vaux (1949-56), la petite communauté essénienne continue d'attirer l'attention du grand public. L'importance du site a aussi attiré de multiples abus scientifiques, des procès et des prétentions non prouvées de la part de savants comme de non-spécialistes depuis les années 1960. Les fouilles récentes (2000-02) qui continuent de faire les gros titres avec la prétention d'avoir découvert Jean le frère de Jésus, Jean-Baptiste, le Maître de Justice et des cercueils en zinc sont des exemples de ce manque d'intégrité scientifique qui empoisonnent l'archéologie de Qumrân.

Summary

Following the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, and the excavations of R. De Vaux (1949-56) Qumran continues to attract wide public attention. As a result of the site's prominence, it has also fostered widespread scientific abuse, lawsuits and unverified claims by scholars and non-scholars alike since the 1960's. The recent excavations (2000-2002), which continue to make headlines with claims of discovering James the Brother of Jesus, John the Baptist, Teacher of Righteousness, The Overseer and a zinc coffin, are examples of the lack of scientific integrity which continues to plague the archaeology of Qumran.

In 1988 P. Davies published an article quoted by many entitled, "How Not To Do Archaeology, The Story of Qumran." (1) Today, in light of recent excavations, the title seems almost prophetic. Unfortuna-

(1) P.R. Davies, "How Not To Do Archaeology, The Story of Qumran," *BA* 51 (1988) 203-07.

tely in the ensuing years, the message seems to have been lost on many of those involved in research on the archaeology of Qumran. (2) The following is an attempt to review some of these flagrant violations of science and distortions of the scientific method, which continue to plague Qumran studies. (3)

MAPPING

The latest attempt to map the cemetery by Eshel *et al.*, (4) in which they claim to have found 124 tombs, previously unknown, by ground penetrating radar, is in my opinion incorrect and overestimates the actual number of tombs in the cemetery. GPR, as they correctly state in footnote 23 “identifies anomalies in the subsurface and the possible presence of graves, though we assume that all such anomalies are indeed graves, especially within the boundaries of the cemetery, it remains technically possible that some may not be.” While those located within the boundaries of the cemetery probably exist due to patterning and the Bedouin reuse of grave stones, thirty five percent of these anomalies which appear on the map as “graves located using GPR” lie to the west of the main cemetery excavated by De Vaux in the 1950’s. However, there is no archaeological evidence of excavated graves, looted graves or graves which can be seen on the surface in this area. In addition, according to normative Judaism, cemeteries must be at least 50 cubits from the nearest city. (*Baba Bathra* 2:9) If graves are indeed located there, the rationale behind the accepted consensus that the site is sectarian is in question. As none of these anomalies have been investigated they will remain but anomalies; publishing them on the map along with the stone marked graves is speculative, unwarranted and unjustified, sowing unnecessary confusion where there should be none.

(2) Due to its association with the Dead Sea Scrolls, Qumran has over the years attracted a wide number of marginal individuals among them people claiming to be the prototype for the Indiana Jones character (which was found not to be true). One unifying factor found among fringe types has been their tendency to exploit the site via the media for their own personal interests. Under the Israel Law of Antiquities (1978) they are not granted licenses to excavate. However, they have always found individuals within the academic community who are willing to secure them this license and provide them funding in exchange for their own excavations Unfortunately prominent individuals in museums and universities have succumbed to this temptation in order to secure funds to carry out their research, often in conflict with those for whom they secure the licenses.

(3) R. De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press) 1973.

(4) H. Eshel, M. Broshi, R. Freund, B. Schultz, “New Data on the Cemetery East of Khirbet Qumran,” *DSD* 9 (2002) 135-163.

In the same volume of *DSD* (5) both Sheridan (Rosenberg map) and Eshel (Reeder map) publish cemetery maps and data which do not always coincide and at times are in direct conflict with the visual evidence. Let us consider, for example, the tombs west of the locus where the alleged zinc 'coffin' was found. The Rosenberg/Meyers map (tombs 977, 978) and the nearly identical Reeder map show that the tomb with the 'zinc coffin' in the central eastern extension has additional tombs to the immediate west. Rosenberg records these as being three, east-west tombs whereas in the plan published by Eshel, Broshi, Freund, and Schultz these same tombs are recorded not as three, but as two tombs orientated north-south. These discrepancies are troublesome for those interested in understanding the cemetery, particularly as most of the east-west tombs are Bedouin burials totally unrelated to the Essene community. (6) Tombs which were excavated earlier by De Vaux, appearing on the Rosenberg map, particularly in the southern region of the cemetery differ with those recorded by Reeder both in number as well as orientation of the tombs. Close cooperation between these two teams, mapping the same cemetery, published in the same volume, was obviously lacking.

THE PLACE OF MOURNING, MAUSOLEUM, OR ...

In the article by Eshel *et al.*, the excavators designate the "square building at the eastern edge of the middle finger of the cemetery" as a "mourning enclosure." This interpretation is highly problematic as well as unlikely on the basis of anthropological and archaeological evidence. Originally, this had been interpreted by the authors as a mausoleum (7) and then on the basis of the human remains found there in 2001 and 2002 published as a place for mourning. The skeletal remains recovered in 2001 were immediately announced to the press by one of the co-directors as being those of James the Brother of Jesus, which the following day became Bedouin women and now are published as being the partial remains of two women from the Roman period in a context of secondary burial. (8) The anthropological and archaeological evidence in my opinion argues differently. The hill on which this structure appears is not artificially constructed but is a natural formation with very steep sides to the north, south and east. The only safe access to this "enclo-

(5) S. Sheridan, "Scholars, Soldiers, Craftsmen, Elites? Analysis of French Collection of Human Remains from Qumran." *DSD* 9 (2002) 199-248.

(6) J. Zias, "The Cemeteries of Qumran and Celibacy: Confusion laid to rest?" *DSD* 7 (2000) 220-253.

(7) "Zinc in the News," 26 July 2001, by Steve Weizman, Associated Press.

(8) Y. Nagar, "Appendix C: Study of Burial 1000," *DSD* 9 (2002) 165.



Fig. 1. — “Mourning inclosure.” View from the north-west. Note the steep descent to the left and the lack of an eastern wall in the background. Photo Joe Zias.

sure” is via the cemetery which automatically makes it off limits for Halachic reasons to Kohanim who are forbidden to touch a corpse or to come within 4 cubits of a grave (*Lev* 21:1-4). Secondly, the authors state that the floor of the building and mourning benches may have removed by De Vaux in the 1950’s. (9) This is difficult to accept as De Vaux himself examined this locus and no evidence of a floor or mourning benches appear in his records. Furthermore, what the excavators believe was a possible entrance due to a gap in the northern wall is implausible in that it leads down a slope, which, due to its precipitous angle makes access nearly impossible. (10) (Photo 1)

Recently one of the directors now reports that the structure has reverted to being a mausoleum with its entrance on the east. (11) The only problem with this is that on their ground plan of the structure and in the photograph, there is no wall on the east, nor is there a wall on the south.

(9) Eshel *et al.*, “New Data on the Cemetery East of Khirbet Qumran,” 153.

(10) Eshel *et al.*, “New Data on the Cemetery East of Khirbet Qumran,” 148.

(11) R.A. Freund, “The Bones of Qumran: An Apology—and a Charge of Libel,” *BAR* March/April 29/2 (2003) 62-63.

Anthropological evidence from 2002, in which the undisturbed skeleton of an adult male (T 1000) was unearthed in situ in the “mourning enclosure,” makes it highly unlikely for Halachic reasons that members of the sect would have deliberately chosen a location situated directly above a grave for mourning as claimed by Eshel. Carbon 14 dating based on the dentition provided a date from the Roman period despite earlier reports in the press by one of the Qumran co-directors that it was another Bedouin burial. (12) This dating was consistent with the ceramic evidence based upon a late Second Temple period cooking pot buried with the individual. The orientation of the burial with the head in the east is somewhat anomalous though identical to tomb 4 excavated by De Vaux in 1951 in the western cemetery. Press reports by staff members attempting to link this individual and earlier skeletal remains with John the Baptist, the Teacher of Righteousness, James the brother of Jesus, and Bedouin, appear to have been designed to attract media attention and additional funding rather than having any creditable scientific basis. (13) To further complicate matters, Broshi and Eshel dropping their earlier claim that the skeleton was a Bedouin male now regard the skeleton as being the *mevaqqer* or overseer of the community. (14) Perhaps an explanation for all these multiple personalities assigned to a single male skeleton and a handful of remains of dubious provenience can be found in an admonition directed specifically towards Qumran scholars by Lim. In an article of the same *DSD* volume Lim writes: “in recent years ... research has sometimes been forgotten or ignored as scholars compete with each other, fueled by *media interests*, to be the first one to have made such a ‘discovery.’” (15)

The explanation of this two walled “mourning enclosure” in my opinion lies in the practice observed in later Jewish cemeteries where certain marginal individuals are buried in a section of the cemetery separated by a stone wall/ fence (*geder*). The fact that this individual is buried in an anomalous fashion, though in a manner in accordance with other Essene burials, suggests that this individual was connected to the community but his status within the group was somewhat marginal. One likely explanation for this is found in the Biblical injunctions to treat the *ger* charitably and allow his participation in religious ceremonies (*Deut* 10:19, *Num* 9:14) and again in the Damascus Document (*CD* vi 21 and

(12) Freund, “The Bones of Qumran: An Apology—and a Charge of Libel,” 62.

(13) M. Rees, D. Van Biema, “Digging for the Baptist,” *Time Magazine*, Aug 12th (2002).

(14) Freund, “The Bones of Qumran: An Apology—and a Charge of Libel,” 63.

(15) T.H. Lim, “Intellectual Property and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *DSD* 9 (2002) 198 (my emphasis).

xiv 4-6) (16) which was an important document for the Essene community. Alternatively, as Lubbe suggests in his semantic analysis, the *ger* may in this context refer to individuals who were still serving their probationary period, prior to their full acceptance within the community. Therefore, although they are buried within the cemetery the anomalous burial outside the wall reflects their somewhat peripheral position in regard to the community. A second possibility is that individuals who were slaves when the owner joined the community would automatically be subject to the sectarians' law that one's personal possessions become the property of the community when one becomes a full member. Thus while having certain privileges within the community the slave was not a full-fledged member of the sect and would not participate in its future bliss, nor gain entry to the future temple. (17) This in my opinion could explain the two anomalous east-west male burials (T 1000, T 4) as well as the lone female (T-9) excavated by De Vaux in 1951 on the northern extension of the cemetery. De Vaux in fact mentioned this anomaly in his Schweich Lectures in which he stated: "only the rectangular grave, which is abnormal in type and situated apart from the rows, contained a female skeleton." (18)

THE ZINC COFFIN

According to the report by Eshel *et al.*, the remains of a zinc coffin were discovered in a tomb in the eastern part of the cemetery. (19) Fragments of this alleged zinc coffin were published earlier in *Biblical Archaeological Review* under the sensational title "Religious Jews: Save the Bones of Your Ancestors" (20) as lead and used to draw attention to justify the need to excavate the cemetery and obtain subsequent funding, as it was presumed that the cemetery was being in danger of being looted. Had the authors examined published aerial photographs of the site taken by the Jordanian air force in 1954 (Photo 2) and later by the Israeli air force in 1969, (Photo 3) which are available to the public and which should have constituted the basis for any mapping process, (21) they

(16) J. Lubbe, "The Exclusion of the *Ger* from the Future Temple," in Z.J. Kapera (ed.) *Papers on the Dead Sea Scrolls offered in Memory of Hans Burgmann* (The Enigma Press, Krakow 1996), 175-182.

(17) Lubbe, "The Exclusion of the *Ger* from the Future Temple," 182.

(18) R. De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 47.

(19) Eshel *et al.*, "New Data on the Cemetery East of Khirbet Qumran," 143.

(20) H. Shanks "Religious Jews: Save the Bones of your Ancestors!" *BAR* 27/2 Mar/Apr (2001) 19.

(21) The Jordanian Royal Air Force aerial photograph taken 28/3/1954 (PAM 42032) constitutes the cover of the recent monograph by the Donceels on Qumran (*The Khirbet Qumran Cemeteries. A synthesis of the archaeological data.* [The Enigma Press, Crackow, 2002]). The photo by the Israeli Air Force was taken on 1/8/69. I thank



Fig. 2. — Aerial photograph taken 28/3/1954 showing the eastern section of the main cemetery. Note that the tombs have not been excavated.
Photo courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.



Fig. 3. — Aerial photo taken 1/8/69 showing two empty tombs, in the same eastern section where the zinc coffin was recovered in 2001. Photo courtesy of the Israel Mapping Center.

would have seen that the tomb in question (978 on their map) had been excavated either by De Vaux (tomb 11) in 1951 or, more probably, by S. Steckoll (Q.8) in 1967, along with the tomb 977 to the south. (22) In

the Israel Mapping Center and the Israel Antiquities Authority for permission to publish this photograph.

(22) De Vaux opened up tomb 11 in the central extension in 1951. Unfortunately the resolution on the Jordanian map and the height from which it was taken does not permit one to state unequivocally where it's exact location was, however based on other maps I would have to agree with Donceel that these two tombs lying adjacent to one another were those excavated by Steckoll.

fact, both of the “recently looted” tombs had lain open for at least 33 years, if not more. (23) The authors then state that these two tombs were “excavated illegally” (24) implying that they were opened by grave robbers, whereas in fact both De Vaux and S. Steckoll had secured governmental permission decades earlier from the Jordanian Department Antiquities to carry out these excavations in the cemetery.

In the summer of 2000 I was presented with a fragment of the metal which the excavators believed to be part of a lead sarcophagus, and I immediately told the excavators that due to its thickness (1 mm) it could not under any circumstances support the weight of an individual and thus was definitely not a coffin. The following season (2001) I was asked by the directors to examine the empty burial where the zinc was reportedly found after it had been removed by staff members. At the northern end of the locus in the balk were a few cranial fragments, which appeared to have been left by earlier excavators; nothing more was evident. One additional problem concerning their finding is that the zinc lay at a maximum depth of 1.20 meters, (25) whereas none of the north-south tombs excavated by De Vaux is less than 1.5 meters in depth.

According to information provided to one reporter, the burial contained the sheeting from what was now believed to be a wooden coffin, apparently from some important personage. (26) Broshi, characterizing the coffin’s occupant remarked that “the only thing we can be sure of is that he was a very affluent man.” (27) Had this interpretation been credible there should have been traces of wood along with skeletal evidence of the “affluent man” left behind by the looters, neither of which was found in the locus or in the back dirt surrounding the tomb. The excavators claimed that the looters took “the most valuable item in the tomb, the lid of the coffin, which could have included clues about the occupant.” (28) This is a bit hard to believe: did the looters remove the “affluent man” and the wooden coffin as well but leave the metal sheeting behind? Following the report in *DSD*, in which the zinc coffin became a wood coffin covered with zinc, it reverted back to a zinc coffin in the *BAR* article which appeared sometime later. (29) The zinc

(23) S. Steckoll, “Excavation Report on the Qumran Cemetery,” *RevQ* 23 (1968) 323-52. Donceel, see Fig 12, plan of the cemetery.

(24) Eshel *et al.*, “New Data on the Cemetery East of Khirbet Qumran,” 144.

(25) Eshel *et al.*, “New Data on the Cemetery East of Khirbet Qumran,” 144.

(26) “Dead Sea Scrolls: A Never-ending saga,” *Ha’Aretz* (Dalia Shehori) July 12, 2002. p. B 7.

(27) Shehori., p. B 7.

(28) Shehori., p. B 7.

(29) Cf. M. Broshi and H. Eshel, “Whose Bones?,” *BAR* Jan/Feb. 29/1 (2003) 26-33, 71.

report which appears in the appendix shows that the zinc is almost pure zinc, (30) which immediately should have made it clear to the researchers that since pure zinc is a relatively recent phenomenon the “coffin” must be of recent origin. (31) Furthermore, attempting to bolster their argument they write (footnote number 38), “the corrosion of these zinc fragments is consistent with that of other zinc finds from the Roman period.” This would sound impressive to the layperson except that the article then states that the three zinc objects cited for comparison are from the Hellenistic period several hundred years earlier. (32) In the same footnote, (38) the authors state “the tests showed that the zinc contained traces of lead and iron, (quoting Robert Feather), which excludes a modern form of processing zinc and points to the coffin’s antiquity.” Such reporting, particularly when the zinc analysis appearing in the appendix, shows *no* lead or iron, calls into question the purpose of this entire archaeological undertaking. (33)

On the basis of the archaeological/anthropological and photographic evidence, it should have been clear to all the authors, particularly the two teams mapping the cemetery, that the tomb had been opened since 1967 and not looted recently as the editors of *BAR* and the excavators reported. In short, the evidence strongly suggests that the so-called zinc coffin had to have been placed in the empty tomb by someone post 1966-67, the date when it was excavated by Steckoll. Thus, its provenance is in question. Who planted the object there and why, are matters for conjecture. Had the source of this information come from the tabloids one could readily dismiss it, however when it appears in scientific journals written by the directors themselves, one can’t but help wonder to what depths the whole excavation process in Qumran has fallen.

SKELETAL MATERIAL

The reporting on the human skeletal remains excavated in 2001 and 2002 again raises questions regarding provenience of the material and

(30) Cf. E. Izraeli, “Appendix B: Test Results from the Metal Coffin,” *DSD* 9 (2002) 164.

(31) A.W. Cramb, *A Short History of Metals*. The Chinese knew zinc as a metal, as opposed to zinc as a pigment, in the 14th century, however according to Professor Cramb it was not imported to the west until 1738 after which it became common. <http://neon.mems.cmu.edu/cramb/Processing/history.html>.

(32) Eshel *et al.*, “New Data on the Cemetery East of Khirbet Qumran,” 144, 146.

(33) Robert Feather, who refers to himself as a metallurgist turned journalist, is the author of *The Copper Scroll Decoded* (HarperCollins, 2000) and claims to have located treasures mentioned in the *Copper Scroll*. He also states in an interview given to HarperCollins (the publishers of his book) that the Bedouin skeletons buried east-west facing Mecca are actually from thousands of years earlier and are gazing at the pyramids of Egypt. See: <http://www.HarperCollins.com.au>.

data manipulation. For example, one published photograph (Plate VI, page 151) from Eshel's 2002 excavation report shows the proximal end of one tibia sticking out of the sand, partially uncovered. Lying next to it are two bones, which appear to be from the forearm. The reason that the human remains were not cleared for photography nor mentioned in the anthropological report, and the relationship between the forearm and the lower leg, is a mystery. Furthermore, the skeletal remains recovered in 2001 were published as burial number 1000 whereas the skeletal remains uncovered from the same locus in 2002 are now published as T 1000 further adding to the confusion.

What is most disconcerting in the *DSD* article and newspaper reports is that the authors cite a C-14 date of 2079 BP for the bone pile (sic) stating that the remains are from the Second Temple period. (34) However, what is telling and equally important *but* omitted by the authors are two additional C-14 dates by the same Arizona laboratory from the same locus showing dates of 7000 and 5000 BP, thousands of years before the Second Temple period. They neglect to explain this somewhat glaring contradiction of skeletal material from 7000 BP and 5000 BP, appearing in concert with material C-14 dated to 2079 BP. Instead they report that the Bedouin later reused the cemetery and inadvertently dug into "Second Temple burials" which they have now reburied in the "mourning enclosure" some 20 centimeters below the surface. In a long article published in *Ha'Aretz* (35) one of the directors is quoted as saying that "the Bedouin took these ladies bones and threw them out" of their original graves, "because we did not find them deep underground. They pulled them out apparently in order to bury their own dead in their place." Hard to give credence to their belief, that a small deposit of human remains found together spanning 5 millennia (7000-2000 BP), would be excavated by the Bedouin and reburied in the same cemetery which began ca. 2100 years ago. Did the Bedouin excavate three Qumran burials, two of which are prehistoric and protohistoric, from 7000, 5000 and 2000 BP, in order to reuse the tombs for their shallow burials some less than a one half meter in depth? By deliberately omitting two of the three C-14 dates, their explanation of Bedouin reburial may sound convincing to the media and layperson, however, since there is no archaeological/anthropological evidence of prehistoric or protohistoric material appearing in the cemetery or the site, it is obvious that someone has recently and deliberately collected skeletal remains elsewhere and placed this material 20 centimeters below the surface. What they did succeed in doing was to bring "headline-grabbing" attention to the find,

(34) Eshel *et al.*, "New Data on the Cemetery East of Khirbet Qumran," 151, n. 58.

(35) Shehori, Section B, p. 7.

one of the co-directors immediately claiming that it was the remains of James, the Brother of Jesus, only to be contradicted by another co-director later on the same day who said that it was a Bedouin male. It has now been published that these are the remains of two women from 2079 BP. The C-14 data from the Arizona lab clearly showed that at least three individuals from three widely differing periods appear in this assemblage. Locating skeletal material from these three periods is not difficult for anyone, as many caves (Wadi Maquk) and sites (Jericho) in the region have skeletal material from these periods.

FEDERAL GRANTS AND PRIVATE DONATIONS

Paradoxically, the funding process itself, which supports research, often fosters an attitude of misconduct in delaying the solution by pressuring faculty members to bring in large research grants. Up to 20 % of these research grants are then automatically siphoned off to support the institutions themselves. This in effect can generate a vicious cycle of artificially creating problems and confounding the issue where no problem exists, in order to apply for additional funding. For the university it is a "win-win" situation as well as for those attempting to climb higher in the academic "food chain" for tenure as in some institutions advancement is based, not only on "publish or perish" but on one's ability to draw in large federal grants. Perhaps, this is best illustrated by the issue of celibacy within the Essene community in Qumran about which much has been written. (36) Sheridan's recent article (37) in the same issue which she terms the French Collection, housed in the Ecole Biblique and Paris is, despite its length, largely irrelevant as it sidesteps this contentious issue of Bedouin women and children buried in the Qumran cemetery. Aside from one anomalous woman from the northern cemetery

(36) L. Elder, "The Woman Question and Female Ascetics Among Essenes," *BA* 57 (1994) 220-234; Z.J. Kapera, "Some Remarks on the Qumran Cemetery," in M.O. Wise, N. Golb, J.J. Collins, and D. Pardee (eds.), *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects* (Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 722; New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 97-113; E. Schuller, "Evidence for Women in the Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Methods of Investigation*, 252-65; É. Puech, "The Necropolises of Khirbet Qumran and Ain el-Ghuweir and the Essene Belief in Afterlife," *BASOR* 312 (1998) 21-36; J. Taylor, "The Cemeteries of Khirbet Qumran and Women's Presence at the Site," *DSD* 6 (1999) 285-323.

(37) Sheridan, "Scholars, Soldiers, Craftsmen, Elites?" 199-248. One of the important points brought up in her article is a chart showing how little skeletal material is available for study as the majority of the material was probably reburied in Qumran by the excavators. The paucity of material severely curtails any meaningful research on the collection, while it supports the original findings by De Vaux *et al.*

excavated by De Vaux and housed in the Ecole Biblique, all the controversial skeletal material of women and children now resides in Germany. Here the solution to the debate lies. Therefore, one can reasonably ask, if Sheridan managed to examine in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris 5 male crania (38) and a few fragmentary post cranial remains why did she not continue on to nearby Munich to study the easily available women and children in the German collection, where the real problem lay? Her failure to see this collection, or if she did its omission from her lengthy article, raises suspicions that funding may be the issue here for the delay. This is unfortunate as a new generation of students has become interested in the questions of the cemetery and I fear much valuable time and effort will again be wasted over something that is readily solvable. We anthropologists and archaeologists who have devoted considerable time and effort to the study of the cemetery issue have an obligation to the next generation and to our colleagues to solve these outstanding issues and not prolong them due to the lure of another research grant, nor to add to the clutter within the professional journals. (39)

CONCLUSION

While reading the reports one is confronted with certain methodological and stratigraphic issues defying all reason and logic. For example, significant data are deliberately excluded, particularly the C-14 dates for the handful of intermingled skeletal remains in the "mourning enclosure" dated to the Neolithic (7000 BP), Chalcolithic (5000 BP) and Second Temple period (2000 BP), discovered *above* a burial in situ from 2000 BP. Had this been published it certainly would have raised serious questions as to how this skeletal material entered the site. So as not to raise any questions, the data is conveniently and deliberately omitted from all reports.

(38) This material is housed in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris and registered under the following accession numbers 23 834 - 23 839. My thanks to MS. Dominique Grimaud-Herv and Philippe Menecier for providing me with this information.

(39) Since the cemetery has become such a high profile issue over the last few years, there have been many attempts to deal with the issue of women and children found there. This has resulted in a veritable cottage industry in which individuals, including students with no experience whatsoever in physical anthropology, publish more and more articles. This fills journals with material that is deleterious to, and embarrassing for, Qumran studies. The fact that there have been several serious attempts by reputable scholars, none of which had any anthropological training, to solve the cemetery issue all having failed should in and of itself serve as a warning. Anthropology is a specialized field of study and without this necessary background these attempts to understand the cemetery by non-specialists will again prove fruitless.

Zinc plating, 1 mm in thickness, "found" in a tomb which had been excavated 34 years earlier raises serious questions about its probable recent manufacture and provenience, particularly as it could obviously not hold the weight of a body. Calling this plating the coffin of an important figure, even though no skeletal remains were reportedly found, is a bit disingenuous, especially when a qualified metallurgist who deals with ancient metals had not examined it. Had the authors taken the time to read studies on the history of metallurgy, they would have seen that what they describe as pure zinc actually comes from a very late technological process. Furthermore, both teams independently mapping the cemetery published two maps showing the tomb in question had been excavated earlier and thus was emptied by the time of their "finding" yet they never question the improbability of finding the coffin "of a rich man" interred in the empty tomb? Was he buried there post 1966-67 by the Jordanians or by the Israelis? This and many other issues raise disturbing questions concerning methodology, funding, and scientific integrity as well cooperation amongst the directors and co-directors. Interestingly enough, one of the co-directors of the excavation (a non-archaeologist) who discovered the zinc plating is employed by an international organization searching for zinc deposits around the world. (40)

The excavators have presented a biased and distorted picture in the journals and press, raising questions about funding, institutional support, media coverage and the scientific value of the entire Qumran excavations. Perhaps the time has come for us in the profession to present before our peers all the raw data, including all C-14 dates, ceramics and other relevant scientific information and to remove any suspicion of manipulating the data for personal gain. By doing so there would be less academic misconduct within the profession and those unwilling to produce such data, would in and of themselves cause suspicion of maintaining a silence that deliberately obscures the truth. In the US, due to growing scientific misconduct in the medical sciences, the US Dept. of Health and Human Services set up a special department called the 'Office of Research Integrity' to deal with such issues. Perhaps the time has come for a parallel institution in the world of biblical archaeology to

(40) See <http://meg.calgary.ab.ca/2002MEGprogramapril12.pdf>, combining Remote Sensing Technologies to explore for lead and zinc. Authorities had officially warned the excavation directors in the past that the use of metal detectors was forbidden in the site and that any use of this necessitated a special permit. (Per. comm. Yoav Tsionit) Evidently, they ignored this warning. As to whether or not metal detectors were responsible for finding this zinc plating is unknown as no specific mention appears in the article as to how it was found.

act as a counterweight to prevent further abuse within the discipline before it becomes endemic.

John the Baptist complete with a skull, James the Brother of Jesus, The Teacher of Righteousness, Bedouin women, Bedouin men, Overseers, airport searches (41) — all of that which was being bandied about and appearing in the media depending on which co-director was speaking to the press, and which skeleton, begs the question, is this archaeology? The answer is perhaps best summed up by a perceptive reporter from the BBC, who after visiting the site and speaking to the directors wrote “these days, it is hard to distinguish the smell of sulfur from the rotten stench of claims, counterclaims and accusations emanating from the nearby site of Qumran.” (42) Entertaining, headline-grabbing, media manipulation, perhaps so, but scientifically questionable, deliberately misleading, irresponsible and lacking any credibility. Reading the report and the numerous articles in the media raises serious questions of scientific impropriety, data manipulation and misconduct by many, though not all, of those involved in funding, promoting and the excavation process itself.

Those Essenes who lived, struggled and died in Qumran some 2000 years ago as well as the world of Qumran studies certainly deserve something better than what has appeared in these excavation reports and the mass media. Miguel De Unamuno, the Spanish philosopher wrote that “Science is a cemetery of dead ideas.” (43) It is hoped that this current research on Qumran, particularly the cemetery, falls into this category. Will it change, based on past and present experience — probably not! In fact, immediately following the excavation of Eshel, Broshi and Freund, a new excavation took place in the summer of 2002 at Qumran. Some interesting finds were presented to the public by the excavators on their excavation web site following the end of the season. (<http://worldofthebible.com/antiquities1.htm>) On the last page, the co-director of excavations, a Biblical scholar, promotes the sale of antiquities from a

(41) According to Freund there were accusations leveled against him by the co-directors that he was smuggling skeletal material out of the country and police were called in and he and his staff were subject to intensive searches by the Israel customs police. Nothing was found which prompted one of the co-directors to claim that Federal Express sent out the skeletal material. Somewhat ironically, people who earlier had submitted skeletal material for C-14 dating in the US made the accusations. See the short article by R. Freund, “The Bones of Qumran. An Apology—and a Charge of Libel,” 62.

(42) Ari Goldberg. BBC News World Edition 27 August 2002. Unlike many other journalists taken in by the lure of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Goldberg quickly sized up the situation and portrayed the reality of the excavations.

(43) M. de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life* (1913).

Jerusalem dealer, something which is anathema in the world of archaeology. So much for the world of Qumran archaeology, where, like the world of consulting "if you are not part of the consensus, there's good money and fame to be made in creating more problems and more confusion." (44)

Joe ZIAS.

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