

Technical and analytical part

CHAPTER [XXXX] TEXTILE TRACES ON POTTERY AND ON METAL

I. The monetary treasure of 'Aïn Feshka and its textile (AF 143 to 160) Mireille Bélis

Until proof to the contrary, no textile remains were found during the excavations at 'Aïn Feshka; the khirbeh gave up only a very small quantity. Of course, this does not mean that there were none left at the moment when the site was abandoned, but during the course of time nature did her work and destroyed them completely.

The contrast is striking with the richness of the textile finds in the caves, those in the cliffs as well as those that overlook the Wadi Qumrân.¹ Nevertheless, a monetary treasure conserved some remains of the textile meant to protect the 18 coins concealed in a locus of the body of the building.

Instead of an impression, it is better to speak of the remains of linen deposited on the surface of the three coins forming the top of the piles.

The discovery in its state

The monetary treasure (AF 143 to 160) was uncovered on 13 February 1958. It comprised 18 bronze pieces, divided into three piles of unequal height. The excavators took three photographs of the find, two *in situ* (14.157 Ebaf and 12.925 Ebaf), at different distances from the object. On each and every one, one can make out the upper side of the treasure, laid out in trefoil on the levelling of a wall; one can, however, not make out with the desired clarity the textile remains that nonetheless stick to the underside; these are only slightly darker zones, for the photographs are in black and white.

Each piece measures at most 3 real centimetres in diameter; the scale is 1:3 on photograph 14.157, and approximately 1:6 on photograph 12.925.

Before separating the coins in order to study them, a third and last photograph was taken, on the scale of 1,1:1. There is therefore no other evidence of the textile present on the three visible pieces, as cleaning made them disappear.

{photograph 14.158 Ebaf = [pl. XXXX]}²

The analysis presented could not have recourse to other sources than the photographs, and the imprecisions or the uncertainties that remain therein are the results of the following limits: the photograph retains indecipherable zones, despite the treatment of the image by computer.

But above all, the only photograph reproduced here deprives us of all means of knowing what was visible at the other end of the piles. Common sense suggests that the photographer chose the side where the most visible traces remained.

Is it the same side as on the other two shots? This modest question has to be addressed, to the extent that the comparison between the three photographs leaves room for doubt, and that in theory textile is preserved even better the narrower the contact between it and the metal that it envelops:

“The surrounding terrain is an important preserving agent, because the fibres of animal origin (sheepswool or other fur) is preserved in an acid milieu, whereas a basic type terrain favours the preservation of vegetable fibres (linen, hemp ...).

(...) Another eventual factor in the preservation of the fibres is the close presence of a metal element; the corrosion products of the latter may intervene as protection against the bacteria and thus preserve the threads; in other cases the metal oxides have replaced them completely. It is therefore a phenomenon of mineralisation, to the extent that the textile threads are fossilised by the presence of the metal.”³

Preservation of the textiles on the shore of the Dead Sea

Nonetheless, the nature of the climate and the composition of the soils should have favoured the preservation of linen or hemp textiles.

Even the sources that feed the Dead Sea contain salts in unusual quantities: G.A. Smith gives this fine description of the shores:

“The streams which feed the Dead Sea are unusually saline; they flow through nitrous soil, and are fed by sulphured springs. (...)

Along the shores are deposits of sulphur and petroleum springs. The surrounding strata are rich in bituminous matter, and after earthquakes, lumps of bitumen are found floating on the water so as to justify its ancient name of *Asphaltitis*.”⁴

“(...) If the coast is flat, you have salt-pans, or a briny swamp; if terraced, there is a yellow, scarfy, stretch of soil, with few thorn-bushes and succulent weeds. Ancient beaches are visible round it, steep banks from five to fifty feet of stained and greasy marl, very friable, with heaps of rubbish at their feet, and crowned by nothing but their own bare, crumbling brows.”⁵

I am indebted to Professor Arieh Shimron for having explained this aspect of the question to me:⁶ the soils adjoining the Dead Sea – like 'Ain Feshka – are saturated with salts. In other words, the chances are, without having to take recourse to analysing samples taken on site, that the soil of the oasis is alkaline (basic terrain). The slightly acid nature of the terrain could well explain the absence of remains of textiles of animal origin. On the other hand, the caves offer less hostile preservation conditions than the sites closer to the Dead Sea.

The earth of 'Ain Feshka, nevertheless, does not have the nearly ideal siccidity of the sands that preserved the Egyptian textiles. The streaming of rainwater undeniably played a role in the destruction of an organic material like cloth. Precipitations are rare, violent and last only a short time. In one of his three reports on the excavation (quoted above), de Vaux evokes the humidity of the oasis as the first of the appropriate agents to explain the oxidation of the coins and the disappearance of their wrapping.

The treasure, its parallels and the circumstances of its discovery

Impressions or traces of textile on ceramic and on coins are not a rarity.⁷ For the sake of clarity, the terminology has to distinguish between “impression”, left hollowed out by a cloth of which nothing remains, as by a seal in a soft surface, and the “vestige” of a textile, which mineralised or fossilised on the surface of the object, and which can be distinguished in relief.⁸

The heap of coins of 'Ain Feshka count amongst the most degraded remains.

Description of the lot

The whole allows one to see areas in relief that correspond to the rounding of the weft that leaps over the warp. These are only the mineralised remains of a fabric, probably *S-spun* linen, woven in plain weave. The mediocrity of the shot prevents one from counting exactly the threads per centimeter, which seems to vary from one zone to the next, without exceeding 6/8 warps × 7 wefts.⁹ Some threads (coin A) have kept their original orientation and have remained quite perpendicular to each other. On C, on the contrary, the linen has been distended and deformed on the bias, which gives it the appearance of a different cloth, where the weft predominates (*warp-faced effect*). Coin B retains very few vestiges; it is possible that during the discovery of the treasure, brushing made the impression crumble to dust. Overall, the wefts are larger than the warps, which are very fine.

The cloth was used as a kind of small awning or a sturdy and thick sack, conforming to its destination: containing some objects.

For lack of a shot of the same lot turned over, it would be extremely dangerous to risk the slightest hypothesis on the way the textile appeared and, therefore, on what was the container of the coins: a sown pouch, a belt, a bag, or a simple piece of cloth eventually closed by means of a string. The linen does not seem to retain traces of sewing, at least on that which remains of it.

The context of the find only casts limited light on the treasure and its presence inside the building.

The excavation

After the site was located and a survey conducted in 1956, the excavation could not start before 25 January 1958 with the appropriate means; in fact, Paris and Amman having broken off their diplomatic relations, the mission encountered considerable difficulties to procure, in Jordanian currency, the funds necessary for its financing.¹⁰ Moreover, the mission was cut short by the start of Ramadan, but it benefited from an abundant workforce: 50 labourers and two foremen lent by the Palestinian Museum. The excavation was officially patronised by the Antiquities Service (of Jordan), represented by its deputy director, Awni Dajani. The French were in charge of the effective conduct of the work and the expenses committed. Fr Rousée executed all the plans and took part in overseeing the site; Father Bonnard realized the drawings of the objects and Abbé Darrieutort, the catalogue.

But the excavation fulfilled its objectives and took place without incidents.¹¹

The discovery of the monetary treasure

R. de Vaux was several times led to describe the circumstances of the find.¹² Sometimes he remains very evasive, sometimes he gives all the details. Each text deserves to be quoted here:

“locus 15. 13-2-1958.

The wall is just to the East of the door that opens on locus 8. The new wall to the West is destroyed fairly low. On the levelled summit of the wall is discovered a treasure of 18 coins of Agrippa II, concealed in a sack. The impression of the cloth imprinted itself [sic] on the layer of oxidation. This wall with 2 facings is made of good ashlar.”¹³

“locus 16. 13-2-1958.

... the eastern sector of locus 16 stretches towards the East on the edge of the levelling where the treasure was garnered. Several coins are found at the same depth. It seems that there is a floor of beaten earth on the level of the threshold of the door towards locus 8. This door appears to be secondary. On the threshold lay a coin from the Second Revolt.”

... “4-3-1958.

While demolishing the party-wall of loc. 15-16 on the levelling of which the treasure was found, another coin of the same type, which had escaped us, was found.”¹⁴

Neither the draft for the *Annual* of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan nor the mission report – furnished with a text of one and a half pages on the “Excavations on the shores of the Dead Sea” addressed to Mr Schaeffer, Director General of the Excavations Commission – accords a place to the discovery of the treasure. In May 1958, the date of the drafting of the “Report”, R. de Vaux is mainly interested in the workshops uncovered in the north-east of the site, because he interprets them as the tannery where the skins were prepared that were destined for the “*scriptorium*” (locus 30) of Khirnet Qumrân.

But quite rapidly, perhaps because the results of the analysis of the samples did not go in the desired direction, de Vaux came back to a larger approach to the site and tried to elucidate the difficulties that his chronology raised: the monetary treasure forms part of the archaeological data of prime importance, especially once the coins were cleaned: apart from the coins of Agrippa II,

“the excavation delivered 134 coins in total, including those that came out of the survey of 1956. They suffered even more than the ceramics: 56 of them could not be deciphered and, as to the 87 others, the determination is sometimes uncertain. Those that come from Period II are divided chronologically”¹⁵ from Archelaus, 4 BC–6 AD to Year II of the First Revolt, 67–68 AD.

R. de Vaux concluded from this that “the buildings of Feshka (...) are contemporary to those of Kh. Qumrân in Period II; they were occupied between exactly the same chronological limits and one has to acknowledge that these neighbouring installations belonged to the same human community”.¹⁶

In Period III, Feshka was to have known a destruction “which was perhaps not as severe as at Kh. Qumrân (...) during the Jewish War, and exactly in 68 AD, as at Kh. Qumrân.

It is known that the Romans, after taking Kh. Qumrân, established a police post on the ruins [*Revue Biblique*, LXI, 1954, pp. 232–233; LXIII, 1956, p.567]. There are serious indications that a detachment was also installed at Feshka. As at Qumrân, it only occupied a part of the ruins (...). That leaves the coins.

A coin of Antioch under Domitian was picked up on the threshold of the new door opened above loc. 21. At the top of the retaining wall built to the East of loc. 21 lay a lot of 18 bronze coins, joined together by the oxidation and the crust of oxide preserved the impression of the sack in which they were concealed (pl. XII c). This lot comprises 17 coins of Agrippa II between 78 and 95 AD and a corroded bronze bearing two unidentified countermarks. These coins correspond to those of Period III at Qumrân, which started in 67–68 AD and continued to a coin of Agrippa II. The two posts of Feshka and of Qumrân must have been abolished at the same time at the end of the 1st century.

IV The Second Revolt

The parallelism between Qumrân and Feshka continues further and one has the evidence that the ruins of Feshka were, like those of Qumrân, used by the rebels of the Second Jewish War in 132–135 AD. Three of their bronze coins were in fact found above loc. 21, the part of the building which had already sheltered the Roman soldiers. We asked ourselves if some of the works attributed before to the occupants of Period III were not the work of the Jewish rebels. It rather seems that, as at Qumrân, they only hid or camped in the Roman post and that one cannot attribute any objects to them besides these three coins.

Only one coin is of a later period. It slid between the stones of the wall on which the pieces of Agrippa II were found. It is very worn, but it is almost certainly a coin of Aelia Capitolina under Antoninus (from 138 AD). As there is no other trace of an occupation after the Second Revolt, it is probable that this piece was lost by a passerby.”¹⁷

The article is signed and dated “Advent 1958”. Thus, between the end of 1958 and the drafting of the text written for the Schweich Lectures delivered in 1959, published without being touched up in June 1971,¹⁸ the analysis changed. This brief time lapse is enough for R. de Vaux to revise his interpretation of the last period: the paragraphs dedicated to the history of the site in the 2nd century therefore take up a clearly more important place. The description of the three coins of Bar-Kokhba found in locus 21 echo, in English, the text of the *Revue Biblique* 1959, p. 253: the coin of Aelia Capitolina “from the reign of Antoninus Pius, A.D. 138–161, had slid down between the stones of the wall on the top of which the coins of Agrippa II were found.

It is an isolated example which must have been lost by a passer-by.”¹⁹

But R. de Vaux no longer interprets Period III of the site in the same way; the archaeological data obliged him to come back to the symmetry between Khirbet Qumrân and Feshka:

“It is more difficult to determine the course of events during Period III at Feshka. As we have seen, at Khirbet Qumran an outpost of Roman soldiers seems to have been installed in the ruins, remaining there for some years. Then, after it had been abandoned for some sixty years, the insurgents of the Second Revolt took refuge there. It might be tempting to look for a parallel development at Feshka, and in fact there is one further point of convergence between the history of the two sites: the presence of three coins in the ruins of Feshkha²⁰ shows that they too were put to use during the Second Revolt. Yet whereas at Khirbet Qumran a well defined group of coins was found ranging in date from A.D. 67/68 to A.D. 72/73, and only a single isolated coin of Agrippa II, at Feshkha there is a hoard of 17 coins of Agrippa II, as well as one coin of Domitian and one stray coin of Antoninus Pius. Thus there are discrepancies in the numismatic evidence and it appears that Feshkha remained abandoned for some little time after the destruction of Period II.

It is unlikely that the presence of the coin of Domitian and the small hoard of coins Agrippa II can be explained by supposing that after A.D. 73 the military post at Khirbet Qumran was transferred to Feshkha, and it is more reasonable to accept that Roman soldiers were never stationed at Feshkha.²¹

The coins of Domitian and Agrippa II may perhaps indicate that Feshkha was occupied to some small extent by an independent group at the end of the first century A.D., but we cannot altogether exclude the possibility that the coins were brought there by the rebels of A.D. 132-5, who left some of their coins behind.”²²

On the first hypothesis these unknown occupiers of the reign of Agrippa II would have been responsible for the extremely cursory modifications introduced to the north of the ruined building.

On the second hypothesis these poorly constructed works should be attributed to the Jewish rebels. This is a secondary question, and the significant point is that the two main periods of Feshkha, Periods II and II are parallel to two important periods in the life of the community at Khirbet Qumran, and also that throughout the whole of this time the two sites were connected.”²³

CONCLUSION

What should be retained of the indications assembled here? The wall separating loci 15 and 16 belongs to the last period of occupation that 'Ain Feshka knew; the treasure supplies the latest date before which it was assembled: 95 of the present age at the earliest.²⁴ The coin of Domitian covers the same period: the emperor reigned until 96.

Certainly the coin struck under Antoninus Pius constitutes a special case. If de Vaux ends up seeing it as “an isolated example”, a coin lost by a passerby, he was not so definite at the time it was found: the site notes described it “similar to those of the hoard”. In the *Revue Biblique* of 1959, “it had slid down between the stones of the wall on the top of which the coins of Agrippa II were found”.

The facts are clear: all the coins having been found on the same level and in the same part of the site, including the coins of the Second Jewish Revolt, de Vaux supposed that the locus had already been redone (“later than the reconstruction of Period III”) when they were abandoned. By whom? Either by an independent community that came back to instal themselves at Feshka, or by the rebels of the Second Revolt. Whosoever made some rough alterations to the buildings they occupied.

But what happened for the group of residents, who had taken care to fasten 18 coins in a linen cloth, to leave them in place, on the levelling of the wall that they had partially demolished? Nothing in fact indicates that the treasure was ever hidden. The whole has absolutely nothing in common with the “treasures” found at Qumrân, placed in a piece of pottery under a wall – and not on top. The dimension of the lot remains modest: it fits into a circle of about 6 cm in diameter. These are bronze coins, not silver like the treasure of 561 tetradrachme of silver hidden in three intact pots under the threshold of locus 21, in the khirbeh, to the astonishment of R. de Vaux.²⁵

Everything leads one to think that the cloth was placed on the top of the wall, with the coins that were in a pile there because the form of the holder lent itself to it. The “treasure” was not hidden from view but it was not stolen or even opened. If the residents of Feshka occupied precisely loci 15 and 16, which were scarcely separated by the wall, it would necessarily have to be they who deposited the little treasure in the very place where it was discovered. It could only be after 135, in other words under the reign of Antoninus: otherwise, the passerby who lost his coin between 138 and 161 would have seen the sack. Can one imagine that between 135 and the chance passage of a visitor three to twenty-six years later the wall could already have been covered with earth, and that its “treasure” became invisible under a fill of “gravel and sterile earth”?²⁶

It seems more probable that the 18 coins were not hidden, but forgotten or rather left at the very end of “Period III”. The cloth was a sack or a piece of cloth serving as a purse. On leaving the site, the last occupants did not recover their modest asset – or rather could not do so.

Documentation
Texts of R. de Vaux relating to
the Excavations of Feshka

1. Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan (draft)

Text typed by the author, bearing as heading the autograph mention: "for the Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan".

Conserved in the Archives of 'Aïn Feshka, at E.B.A.F. Copied by M.H. Thuillier on
24/07/2001

Excavations at 'Aïn Feshka

During the last excavation campaign at Khirbet Qumrân in 1956, the remains of a buried building had been recognised near the spring of 'Aïn Feshka, 3 km south of Khirbet Qumrân. A survey had revealed that this building contained the same pottery and the same coins as Khirbet Qumrân and that the two installations were contemporary and had to belong to the same community. It was necessary to excavate this building, but, as nothing on the surface indicated the limits of this building and it could be big, it was decided to dedicate a special work season to this excavation.

This campaign took place from 25 January to 25 March 1958. As with the excavations of Khirbet Qumrân, it was a joint expedition of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem and of the Palestine Archaeological Museum. The works that occupied 50 labourers made it possible to uncover the whole of a very interesting installation. It consisted of a rather big building situated some 100 metres north of the spring flanked by two enclosures, one to the south-west the other to the north, each containing some constructions. The study of the architecture, the pottery and the coins made it possible to distinguish several periods, that have, apart from the last, their equivalent at Khirbet Qumrân. Period II is better preserved and the most intelligible and the description should start with that.

Period II

1) The building

The building had two doors towards the East. One went through into a courtyard surrounded by rooms. A big long chamber occupying the whole north side and divided by low walls had to be a storeroom; two rooms along the south wall could have had the same purpose. The two rooms to the West, better constructed, must have served as lodging or for administration. From the corner of the courtyard, a staircase went up to the balcony and to a floor built over the two chambers to the West.

The ceramics are identical to those of Period II of Khirbet Qumrân and the coins range from Herod Archelaus (4 BC to 6 AD) to the second year of the First Jewish War (67/68 AD). This building is therefore the exact contemporary of Period II of Khirbet Qumrân, which is dated from the reign of Herod Archelaus to the year 68 AD.

1) The South enclosure

From the south-west corner of the building, a low wall delimits a square enclosure of 40 m on each side, which must have also extended to the South of the building, where the enclosure wall is not preserved.

This enclosure was empty of constructions except against its northern wall. There was a kind of hangar supported by pillars and carefully paved. It ends near the building by a small square room with a door towards the East. This hangar seems to have been destined to dry a product or to keep it dry. Several hypotheses can be formulated on its use. It is possible that it served to dry dates, or more exactly to ripen dates, which are picked before they are quite ripe. Mr Mansur Nashashibi, Director of Agriculture in Jerusalem, saw the installation and his estimate was that this hypothesis is probable. The date palm is in fact the only large profit cultivation that is possible in this region where the terrain is salty and where numerous small rather briny sources spring up. There is other evidence that the palm tree was cultivated in the Qumrân region in antiquity: some trunks of palm trees, some palms, some dates were found in the ruins of Qumrân and in the neighbouring caves. Besides this hangar, the rest of the enclosure could serve to pen the flocks, near the springs.

2) The North enclosure

North of the building a wall delimits a large courtyard. Half of this is taken up by a system of basins. From one distribution vat, two small narrow canals go out. One of these first supplies a rectangular and shallow basin, of which the plastered floor is covered with a lime deposit; in the bottom of the basin opens a pipe that led the water into a constructed and plastered ditch situated on the outside. Another branch of the same canal turns around the basin and empties its water into a second, larger, ditch dug next to the first. These two ditches are surrounded by a paved space to which one descends by small steps. A second canal starts from the distribution vat and ends directly in another rectangular basin, situated at the eastern end of the whole installation. This basin is bigger and deeper than the first. Between the basins stretches a carefully paved platform. Several large stones vaguely cut in cylindrical forms have to be brought into relationship with the basins.

All of this is certainly not a water supply system for the consumers of the neighbouring building and the basins are not cisterns. It is a very elaborate installation, in which industrial work was done; a certain material underwent several successive treatments in these basins and these ditches.

The most likely explanation is that it was a workshop for preparing leather. In the vat where the water first arrived and from where the canals depart, the skins were washed.; in the first basin, where a lime deposit remains, the skins were soaked in lime water, the preliminary operation to removing the hair and the remains of flesh. This removal is today performed by scraping the skins on big tree trunks, it could have been done on the cylindrical stones found near the basins. The paved platform would have served for hanging them up, drying them, making the skins supple. The last basin and one of the ditches would have contained the tanning baths. To verify this hypothesis, some samples were taken in the canals and the basins and were submitted to the Ministry for the National Economy in Amman and to the Department of Leather Industries at the University of Leeds in England. We thank these two organisations for the very keen interest they showed in this question and for the help

they gave us. The analyses did not reveal any trace of vegetable tannin, but this is not decisive for, in these ditches that were invaded a long time ago by water and by sediments, every trace of vegetable tannin could have disappeared and, moreover, antiquity used other products than vegetable tannin for preparing leather. In any case, two specialists who visited the ruins of Feshka, Dr Halilovic, United Nations expert in the service of the Jordanian government and Mr Hisham M Pharaon, Ministry of National Economy expert, clearly expressed the opinion that these basins and these canals were well explained if the installation was a tannery.

Nevertheless, one interpretation has to be discarded, which could have been suggested by the certain connection that exists between 'Aïn Feshka and Khirbet Qumrân on the one hand and between Khirbet Qumrân on the other hand and the manuscripts that were discovered in the neighbouring caves. Even if the hypothesis proposed here is correct, this does not signify that this workshop was the one that prepared the parchments that served to write the manuscripts of Qumrân. In fact, apart from the initial operations of washing and hair removing, writing leather was not tanned and it underwent a special preparation. What is more, this workshop is too big to have served only the needs of the *scriptorium* of Qumrân. It would be a workshop for the preparation of leathers for all purposes and the community in this way satisfied its needs and profited from the flocks they raised.

Another problem is to know where the water necessary for this industry came from. It arrived at the distribution vat by a canal of which the passage through the north wall of the courtyard is well preserved. But this canal is on a level much higher than the presently existing springs. In fact, this water was not brought by an aqueduct, of which no trace remains, and it was not only seepage water. It remains to be acknowledged that in those ancient times a source sprang up higher than the present-day springs. The configuration of the terrain suggests that its exit point was close to the North-West of the building. This has another interesting consequence: the salinity of the terrain being less at that level, the spring was less brackish than the springs of today and the conditions of living and culture in this place were favoured by it. Two geologists who examined the site are of the opinion that this explanation is probable.

Period I

The state described up till now is not the first state of the installation. The study of the constructions, of the ceramics and the coins indicate that there was a previous period. The plan of the building was already that which has been described but there was no staircase to climb up to the terraces and no rooms on the first floor. The South enclosure was limited to the South of the building and did not stretch towards the West, the hangar did not exist. There was no courtyard to the North and consequently, no industrial installation. At this time, the source that sprang up North-West of the building flowed away and very directly towards the South and one can still see the passage of the stream that it formed under the North wall of the enclosure of Period II, South-West of the building.

The pottery that can be attached to this period is not abundant and very broken but it is identical to that of Period Ib of Khirbet Qumrân. The coins are few, oxidised but there are some probable Hasmonean coins, one coin certainly of Antigone Mattathias

(40–37 BC) and one coin from the third year of Herod the Great (34 BC). This Period I is therefore contemporary with Period Ib of Khirbet Qumrân, which goes from about 100 BC to 31 BC. In this year 31, the buildings of Qumrân were damaged by an earthquake and the community abandoned the site. There is no trace of the earthquake at Feshka, which is adequately explained by the different nature of the terrain. But the building that was an annex of those of Qumrân was abandoned at the same time as the principal site: there is the same void in the suite of coins, and when the community came back some thirty years later it cleaned up the building that had remained unoccupied; a part of the pottery from Period I was found discarded with other débris outside the building.

Period III

It has been said that Period II ended, like Period II of Qumrân, in 68 AD. The buildings of Qumrân were destroyed by the Roman army during the Jewish War. There are similarly traces of destruction and a fire at Feshka at the end of Period II. At Qumrân the Romans subsequently left a police post which remained until the end of the 1st century AD. At Feshka too there are indications of an occupation at this time: only the north part of the building was used, some rooms were established above the ruins and a new door was opened. In these rooms were found some coins of the end of the 1st century, in particular a lot of 18 coins of Agrippa II. An interesting confirmation is furnished by a limestone weight that bears the inscription **LEB** and which can only come from the Roman military administration.

The Second Revolt

It is known that Qumrân served as a refuge or a resistance point for the Jewish insurgents during the Second Revolt under Hadrian, in 132–135 of our era. They also hid or were retrenched in the ruins of Feshka, for several of their coins were found there, but one cannot speak of a real occupation at this time.

The Byzantine hermitage

Up to this point the history of Feshka is modelled exactly on that of Qumrân, but it has an additional chapter. In the Byzantine period, in the Vth to VIth centuries AD, the small room situated at the end of the hangar in the southern enclosure was rebuilt and inhabited. A literary testimony sheds light on this discovery. The Byzantine writer Jean Moschos recounts that the monks of Mardes possessed, 6 miles from their monastery, a garden very close to the sea; they had a donkey who was trained to go on his own to fetch the vegetables: he would knock his head against the door of the gardener, the latter would load him and he climbed back to Mardes. And Mardes is the present Khirbet Mird in the Buqe'a and a road of 9 km – which equals 6 miles – leads from there to 'Aïn Feshka: the small room that came to light was the dwelling of the Byzantine gardener.

The character of the building and of the installations that were discovered at Feshka leave no doubt: it is a dependence of Khirbet Qumrân, inhabited by the people who managed the agricultural exploitation of the community, those who tended the palm grove and the flocks and who made a certain industrial profit from their cultivation and breeding. This establishment has the same history as the principal centre of the community at Qumrân. Its discovery helps to better understand how this group of men lived and how they strove, as far as possible, to meet their own needs.

The dig seems to have brought to light everything, near ‘Ain Feshka, that has any archaeological interest; it remains possible that small installations remain, completely hidden under the recent alluvions, between Feshka and Qumrân but it is impossible to find their location and they would probably not add anything essential to that which is already known. One can say with confidence that, in this region, there was no other important installation and the archaeology seems to have furnished everything it could to replace in their surroundings the community that left us the famous Dead Sea manuscripts.

R. de Vaux, O.P.

2. Site notes

13-2-1958 Site notes [Chambon Humbert]:

loc. 15

13-2-58: “A wall appears that delimits the locus towards the west, separation from the new locus 16. This wall is just to the east of the door that opens onto loc. 8. The new wall to the west is destroyed quite low. On the levelled summit of the wall is discovered a hoard of eighteen coins of Agrippa II, wrapped in a sack: the imprint of the cloth is embedded in the layer of oxidation. This wall has two facings, is made of good ashlar. Its base is still uncertain.

loc. 16

13-2-58: Locus 16 occupies the north of the building to the east of locus 5. There is as yet no apparent interior division. Theoretically a distinction is made in the locus between two sectors, east and west.

The eastern sector of locus 16 stretches towards the east on the edge of the levelling of the wall, where the hoard was found. Several other coins are found at the same depth. It seems that there is a floor of beaten earth on the level of the threshold of the door towards locus 8. This door seems secondary, at least one of the stones of its jamb on the west side is reused.

On the threshold lay a coin from the Second Revolt. This secondary character is related to the gradient from locus 8. (...)

4-3-58: While demolishing the party wall between loci 15 and 16 on the levelling of which the hoard was found, another coin of the same type which had escaped us was recovered.

Coins found: AF 135 and 136: Æ, Agrippa I; AF 137 (east sup.): Æ, Second Revolt (?); 138 (east, on the threshold between 16 and 8); Æ, Antioch under

Domitian; 140 and 141: Æ, Second Revolt; 142 (west): Æ, Procurators under Tiberius (?); 226 (demolition of the eastern wall): Æ, Aelia Capitolina under the Antoninuses.²⁷

3. Letter dated 11 May 1958 to the Secretary General of the Commission of
Excavations
Directorate General of Cultural Affairs
REPORT on the Works of the Dead Sea Mission

The excavation took place in a difficult context: breaking off of diplomatic relations between France and Jordan, evoked in the letter, but without repercussions for the granting of archaeological concessions. On the other hand, the Consulate did not dispose of sufficient Jordanian currency to pay the mission before December 57.

“The campaign lasted from 25 January to 21 March. It was slightly shortened at the beginning by the slowness of the administrative formalities, at the end by the beginning of Ramadan. Nonetheless, the activity of our 50 labourers and the efficient management of our foremen [“lent by the Palestine Museum”] allowed us to realise in this reduced time the programme that we had determined for ourselves.

Scientific report

1) The building: Near the spring of 'Aïn Feshka, we discovered a rather large building, that had 2 entrances from the eastern side. It comprised an interior courtyard surrounded by rooms. The two big rooms at the end must have served as lodging. A long room, running the whole length of the building and divided by some low walls, was probably a storeroom. A staircase gave access to the terraces and probably to a floor raised on the back of the building.

Relatively few objects were found. The pottery is very fragmentary and the coins, quite numerous, are very oxidised. The damp and salty earth which was deposited in the ruins is responsible for this damage.” [...]

R. de Vaux concluded that 'Aïn Feshka was built towards the end of the 2nd century BCE, and that its abandonment corresponds with that of Qumrân.

¹ I once again voice the reservation that the origin of the cloth arbitrarily named “SPI” has not been established.

The abundance of the material leads one to think that it was collected in a site susceptible to containing so many remains, which excludes the caves that are too narrow, for example. One cannot exclude the possibility, however faint, that “SPI” corresponds to the khirbeh or to ’Aïn Feshka. See the discussion (Chapter 0000 “The cloths of “SPI”).

² Qumrân Album IV, folio 587, EbaF.

³ For the preservation of textiles according to their burial conditions, see in ROCHE-BERNARD, Geneviève & FERDRIÈRE, Alain, *Costumes et textiles en Gaule Romaine*, Paris, 1993, “Découvertes de textiles”, p. 152.

⁴ SMITH, George Adam, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* [1931], reprinted Jerusalem, 1974, p. 321.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁶ Interview with A. Shimron, July 2001, Jerusalem.

⁷ In SOREK, Chagit, and AYALON, Etan, “Colors from Nature, Natural Colors in Ancient Times”, see “The Colors and Dyes on Ancient Textiles in Israel”, ZVI C. KOREN (Kornblum), p. 15, Eretz Museum, Tel Aviv, 1993: “The earliest definite evidence of textile weaving dates from about 7000 BCE at Jarmo in northern Iraq and consists of clear weaving impressions formed on clay fragments that were in contact with these textiles”.

⁸ Other impressions and reliefs:

1) John W. Hayes, “Some Etruscan Textile Remains in the Royal Ontario Museum”, pp. 144–148, (imprint on an *oinochoé*, of unknown provenance, linen, R.O.M. acc. no. 919.5.94; R.O.M. acc. no. 920 × 100.4 (2nd/1st BCE) with silk in weft), in GERVERS, Veronika, *Studies in Textile History*, R.O.M., Toronto, 1977.

2) BÉLIS, Mireille: “Prints of linen on fragments from Lachish” in ch. 23, “The Pottery and Finds from the Level VI Temple”, volume to appear, Excavations of Lachish, under the direction of D. USSISHKIN.

3) See, *infra*, [p. 0000], KhQ. 3579, impression of textile and of a small cord on the neck of the jar (without indication of locus = A002 of our catalogue).

4) ‘Atiqot XXV, 1994, Carmela SHIMONY and Orit SHAMIR, “Gesher Haziv – Textile Remains on Coins, pp. 97–98.

⁹ Measurement taken on Coin C.

¹⁰ The provisional budget for August 1957 went up to 1560 dinars. But “the credit meant for the site of Aïn Feshka could not be paid because the French Consulate General in Jerusalem, authorised to make this payment, did not have the necessary Jordanian currency before the end of December 1957. The credit that was supposed to be used for Tell el-Fâr’ah in 1958 was therefore transferred to the site of Aïn Feshka”.

¹¹ With the exception that the funds were only available at the end of the campaign.

¹² 1 *Revue Biblique* 66, 1959, pp. 225–255.

2 Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls, *The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy* 1959, London, 1973 (posthumous), pp. 60–83.

3 “Draft” for the *Annual*, Department of Antiquities of Jordan (undated).

4 *Report* of the French Mission to the Directorate General of Cultural Affairs (11 May 1958, letter to the Director General of the Excavations Commission).

5 Finally, the synthesis of the “Site Notes”, published by J.B. HUMBERT and Alain CHAMBON, Fribourg, 1994, NTOA, *Séries Archaeologica* 1, “Fouilles de Khirbet Qumrân et de Aïn Feshka I, pp. 220–264 et pp. 353–368 (notes de chantier)”.

¹³ The text, revised for the publication, figures in 5, p. 357. The manuscript notes, dated 13-2-1958, are slightly different: “the western wall is destroyed fairly low. On its levelling, a treasure of 18 coins (Second Revolt?). It is a good wall of ashlar with two facings.” Once again, it is not about the impression, but the fossilised deposit of the textile.

¹⁴ Cf. *op. cit.* note 12, 5, p. 358. In the manuscript “notes”: “a large coin, similar to those of the treasure found on the levelling of this wall (no 143–160)”.

¹⁵ *Revue Biblique*, 1959, pp. 245–246, “IV. Les monnaies”.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, III. Période III, IV. La Seconde Révolte, pp. 250–253.

¹⁸ De Vaux retouched only Chapter III, “The Ruins and the Texts”; for the rest, “The author has not undertaken any further exploration in the Qumran region, and he does not find it necessary to modify in any essential point the conclusions which he then put forward.”, Preface to the Revised English Version, *The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy* 1959, “Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls”, London, 1973, p. XII.

¹⁹ De Vaux, *op. cit.* p. 67.

²⁰ All the coins of the Second Revolt came from the same locus, loc. 16: AF 137, AF 140 and AF 141. The excavations of Qumrân gave up 13 in total.

²¹ Own underlining.

²² De Vaux, *op. cit.*, p. 71. In note 2, same page, de Vaux specifies: “There is no difference between the level at which the coins of Domitian and Agrippa II were found and that from which the coins of the Second Revolt derive. In any case the positions in which they were found (cf. p. 67) indicate that they were lost at some point later than the reconstruction of Period III. This excludes the possibility that they were left through forgetfulness by passers-by in the ruins of Period II.”

²³ De Vaux, *ibid.*, p. 71.

²⁴ It is known that coins can remain in use for a long time after they have been struck. Some coins of Queen Victoria, who died in 1901, were still in circulation on the eve of the Second World War. The hoard grouped together coins that range between 78 and 95 of our age.

²⁵ “21-3-1955: To the right of the door, on entering, while digging under the upper floor, we find two small pots filled with silver coins from Tyre. The one contains 223 coins and the other 185!

22-3-1955: A third hoard is acquired against the north wall, in a juglet of which the neck is too narrow to let the coins pass. (...) at least 151 coins of the same type are counted.”

²⁶ De Vaux, “site notes” for locus 15, dated 12-2-1958, in CHAMBON-HUMBERT, 1994, p. 357.

²⁷ CHAMBON, Alain and HUMBERT, Jean-Baptiste, pp. 357–358.