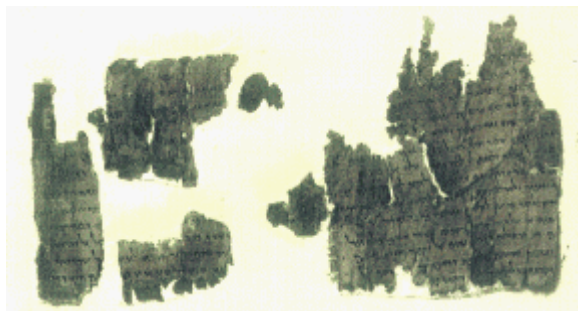


Damascus Document

Brit Damesek



4Q271 (Df)

Parchment

Copied late first century B.C.E.

Height 10.9 cm (4 1/4 in.), length 9.3 cm (3 5/8 in.)

Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority (1)

The Damascus Document is a collection of rules and instructions reflecting the practices of a sectarian community. It includes two elements. The first is an admonition that implores the congregation to remain faithful to the covenant of those who retreated from Judea to the "Land of Damascus." The second lists statutes dealing with vows and oaths, the tribunal, witnesses and judges, purification of water, Sabbath laws, and ritual cleanliness. The right-hand margin is incomplete. The left-hand margin was sewn to another piece of parchment, as evidenced by the remaining stitches.

In 1896, noted Talmud scholar and educator Solomon Schechter discovered sectarian compositions which later were found to be medieval versions of the Damascus Document. Schechter's find in a synagogue storeroom near Cairo, almost fifty years before the Qumran discoveries, may be regarded as the true starting point of modern scroll research.

References

- Baumgarten, J. "The Laws of the Damascus Document in Current Research." In *The Damascus Document Reconsidered*. Edited by M. Broshi. Jerusalem, 1992. *Written by Baltimore Hebrew University scholar Joseph Baumgarten, this 1992 imprint includes an analysis of the Damascus Document and its relation to Jewish Law, or halakhah.*
- Rabin, C. *The Zadokite Documents*. Oxford, 1958.
- Schechter, S. *Fragments of a Zadokite Work: Documents of Jewish Sectaries*, vol. 1. Cambridge, England, 1910.

English Translation of Damascus Document (Brit Damesek)

4Q271 (Df)

1. ...with money...
2. ...[his means did not] suffice to [return it to him] and the year [for redemption approaches?]...
3. ...and may God release him? from his sins. Let not [] in one, for
4. it is an abomination....And concerning what he said (Lev. 25:14), ["When you sell
5. anything to or buy anything from] your neighbor, you shall not defraud one another," this is the expli[cation...
6. ...] everything that he knows that is found...
7. ...and he knows that he is wronging him, whether it concerns man or beast. And if
8. [a man gives his daughter to another ma]n, let him disclose all her blemishes to him, lest he bring upon himself the judgement
9. [of the curse which is said (Deut. 27:18)] (of the one) that "makes the blind to wander out of the way." Moreover, he should not give her to one unfit for her, for
10. [that is Kila'yim, (plowing with) o]x and ass and wearing wool and linen together. Let no man bring
11. [a woman into the holy] who has had sexual experience, whether she had such experience
12. [in the home] of her father or as a widow who had intercourse after she was widowed. And any woman
13. [upon whom] there is a bad name in her maidenhood in her father's home, let no man take her, except
14. [upon examination] by reliable [women] who have clear knowledge, by command of the Supervisor over
15. [the Many. After]ward he may take her, and when he takes her he shall act in accordance with the law ...and he shall not tell...
16. [] L []

Transcription and translation by J. Baumgarten

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- Return the *Damascus Document* to [The Qumran Library](#).