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3 Sex and the City: Evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls

Jutta Jokiranta

The Dead Sea Scrolls (here: the Qumran texts), discovered in the 1940's and 1950's from the North-Western shore of the Dead Sea, witness to the importance of the city of Jerusalem and its temple in many ways. These scrolls include both texts composed by the Qumran movement¹ (active from the 2nd century BCE to the first century CE) and texts reflective of wider Judean religion in the Late Second Temple era.

The purpose of this article is to discuss a few passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls that reveal a very special concern for the city of Jerusalem: they forbid or restrict sexual relations in the city. The Qumran movement in general is seen to have been at odds with the Temple establishment in Jerusalem and to have separated itself from the unlawful practices of the Temple priests. Whether or not this led the movement members to completely ban the Temple and its sacrifices is debated.² In any case, textual sources imply that the movement members were based, travelled, and gathered in several locations (1QS 6:1b–8a; CD 6:11b–7:9a; 12:19, 22–23). The *yahad* (= the

¹ This designation is a scholarly label for the movement that was responsible for preserving and copying the scrolls and whose ideals and organizational rules are most explicitly prescribed in the rule literature, e.g., the Damascus Document (CD A,B and 4QD^{a-h}), the Community Rule (1QS, 4QS^{a-j}, 5QS), the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa), the Rule of Blessing (1QSB), the War Scroll (1QM, 4QM^{a-f}). However, the movement was not restricted to the location at Khirbet Qumran; “Qumran” refers here to the place of the manuscripts discovery, not to the place of settlement. See below fn 3.

² See, e.g., John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); Martin Goodman, “The Qumran Sectarians and the Temple in Jerusalem,” in Charlotte Hempel, ed, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Texts and Context* (STDJ 90; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 263–73; Jonathan Klawans, “Purity in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins, eds, *Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 377–402.

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movement's self-designation in a number of documents) that in previous scholarship was connected with the ruins of (Khirbet) Qumran cannot thus be identified only with one location in the desert. The Qumran movement can be compared to those Greco-Roman voluntary associations that, in distinction to many local associations, formed a network and organization that also had trans-local gatherings and interaction.³

Having sexual intercourse is related to questions of marriage and purity, so before turning to the rules on sex in the city, I will discuss these topics briefly.

Marriage

Many texts explicitly include rules about women: Damascus Document (D), Rule of the Congregation (1QSa), Miscellaneous Rules (4Q265).⁴ Married, family life was the norm according to these documents. Nowhere in the Qumran texts is celibacy ruled or demanded. Nevertheless, scholars have often assumed celibacy in part of the

³ I have argued for this in Jutta Jokiranta, *Social Identity and Sectarianism in the Qumran Movement* (STDJ 105; Leiden: Brill, 2013). See also Alison Schofield, *From Qumran to the Yaḥad: A New Paradigm of Textual Development for the Community Rule* (STDJ 77; Leiden: Brill, 2009); Yonder Moynihan Gillihan, *Civic Ideology, Organization, and Law in the Rule Scrolls: A Comparative Study of the Covenanters' Sect and Contemporary Voluntary Associations in Political Context* (STDJ 97; Leiden Brill, 2012).

⁴ See Cecilia Wassen, *Women in the Damascus Document* (Academica Biblica 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005); Sidnie White Crawford, "Mothers, Sisters, and Elders: Titles for Women in Second Temple Jewish and Early Christian Communities," in James R. Davila, ed, *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (STDJ 46; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 177–91; Eileen M. Schuller, "Women in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Research in the Past Decade and Future Directions," in Shani Tzoref, et al, eds, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture: Proceedings of the International Conference held at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (July 6-8, 2008)* (STDJ 93; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 571–88.

movement on the basis of Josephus, Philo, and Pliny and their witness on the Essenes,⁵ as well as on the basis of the Community Rule (1QS), which does not include any rules on women or children.⁶ This is not the place to go into details of these interpretations. I am of the opinion that the issue has to be studied first of all on the basis of the Qumran texts themselves; the classical sources present their own issues to be discussed (such as their audience, sources, Greco-Roman influence, misogynist attitudes) that characterize their presentation. A simple Essene identification itself is problematic, and even if it is held, it must be nuanced by contextualizing the authors' disdain for marriage within the Greco-Roman ideals of masculine self-control.⁷

I side with those scholars who have argued that at least the largest section of the movement probably was made up of families, even though there remains the possibility that some male members or some members for a certain time period were leading a celibate-like life. However, most reasons presented for the celibacy are not con-

⁵ Especially Josephus, *J.W.* 2.119–161; *Ant.* 18.18–22; Philo, *Good Person* 75–91; *Hypothetica* 11.14; Pliny, *Natural History* 5.73. Most extensive is Josephus' description of two kinds of sectarians, those celibate and those not.

⁶ However, women and children do not go unmentioned either: at least fruitful offspring is mentioned among the blessings in 1QS 4:7. Furthermore, Joseph Baumgarten has presented a theory of two kinds of sectarians, celibate and married, based on reading of CD 7. See Joseph M. Baumgarten, "Qumran-Essene Restraint on Marriage," in Lawrence H. Schiffman, ed, *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 13–24, but the contrast in the passage is rather between the camps and city (cities) than between married life and not. For the eschatological vision including families, see William Loader, "Eschatology and Sexuality in the So-Called Sectarian Documents from Qumran," in Shani Tzoref and Ian Young, eds, *Keter Shem Tov: Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls in Memory of Alan Crown* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013), 305–16.

⁷ For a brief outlook, see Jutta Jokiranta, "Essene Monastic Sect' 70 Years After: Social-Scientific Notes on Scrolls Labelling," *Henoch* 39 (2017): 56–71.

vincing. Recently, Paul Heger and Cecilia Wassen have revisited earlier theories of celibacy at length.⁸ Whereas Heger refutes celibacy altogether, Wassen remains more cautious. Yet she shows that even though the movement applied the temple metaphor to itself, understood itself as being in communion with the heavenly angels, and drew on analogies of Israel in the wilderness, none of these models requires the exclusion of women as such. Priests were normally married, and community-as-temple model concerned priests and non-priests alike. Furthermore, communion with heavenly worshippers included women and, although angels were depicted as male priests, not all members were male or priests; the exclusion from the angelic worship concerned the impure and the blemished, and in some cases sinners, but not specifically women. The wilderness community consisted of men, women, and children. Only the war camp excluded women and children but also had a restricted access for the disabled or blemished males (1QM 7:3–7); even here, the soldiers participating may have been married. Wassen states: “Taken on their own, the allusions to the temple, its priesthood, the wilderness camp, or the communion with angels in no way imply the exclusion of women from the community, nor a preferred state of celibacy.”⁹ In other words, celibacy did not emerge from concerns to be holy as in the temple or concerns for purity.

⁸ Paul Heger, *Women in the Bible, Qumran and Early Rabbinic Literature: Their Status and Roles* (STDJ 110; Leiden: Brill, 2014); Cecilia Wassen, “Do You Have to Be Pure in a Metaphorical Temple? Sanctuary Metaphors and Construction of Sacred Space in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Paul’s Letters,” in Carl S. Ehrlich, et al., eds, *Purity, Holiness, and Identity in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Memory of Susan Haber* (WUNT 305; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013) 55–86; idem, “Women, Worship, Wilderness, and War: Celibacy and the Constructions of Identity in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Joel Baden, et al., eds, *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy, Vol. 2* (JSJSup 175; Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1361–85.

⁹ Wassen, “Women, Worship, Wilderness, and War.”

Purity

Even if (most) adult members were married, they were certainly concerned with maintaining purity and deciphering how to be able to “distinguish between impure and pure and to make known (the difference) between holy and profane” (CD 6:17–18). Purity rules found in the Torah (Lev 11–15, Num 19) were discussed, interpreted, expanded, and intensified in many ways in the scrolls.¹⁰ Important to note, however, is that impurity was, according to the Torah, a normal, expected part of life. Most notably, the state of impurity resulted from menstruation, semen emission or contact with semen, bleeding after childbirth, other flux from genitals, skin disease, and contact with human corpse. These all demanded purification: in the simple cases, it meant purification in water (often washing body and clothes) and waiting until the evening, and in more complex cases, several washings during a lengthier period, purification sacrifices, priestly authorities checking the status (the skin disease) or sprinkling the water (corpse impurity), for example.¹¹ The Penta-teuchal rules, which are not always specific, needed interpretation and application. The purity rules were being developed and debated

¹⁰ Hannah K. Harrington, *The Purity Texts* (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 5; London: T&T Clark International, 2004); Ian C. Werrett, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 72; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007); Klawans, “Purity in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 377–402; Ian C. Werrett, “The Evolution of Purity at Qumran,” in Christian Frevel and Christophe Nihan, eds, *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism* (Dynamics in the History of Religion 3; Leiden Brill, 2013), 493–518.

¹¹ Interestingly, modern Orthodox Judaism keeps only few purity rules: Married women immerse themselves after menstruation and childbirth, in order to be able to have sex with their husbands. Without the presence of the temple and preparation of the red heifer ashes (Num 19), complete purification is not considered possible (personal communication with Dr. Yonatan Adler).

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in the late Second Temple era when the scrolls were written and possibly even new practices evolved,¹² but it has to be noted that purity and impurity distinctions are also deeply rooted in human biological emotions, as well as have many historical, social, and political functions.¹³

The relationship between impurity and sin (offences of moral laws) is complex, but as a rough rule, one could say that becoming or being impure was not regarded as sinful—but *not* to purify (or not to purify correctly) from impurities was.¹⁴ Debates on the correct purification and correct understanding of the sources of impurity were certainly ongoing during this time, as was the idea of graded purification (understanding that one could reach an initial state of purification after washing, before the completion of full purification time; e.g., 4Q274).

Both women and men thus, ideally, had to purify regularly. Avoiding women or marriage in order to avoid impurity did not really work, since men became impure also for other reasons than contact with menstruating women or having sex and ejaculating.¹⁵ Furthermore, purification was always possible and demanded only following prescribed rules.

¹² It is notable that stepped pools emerged only in the Hasmonean times, probably also for ritual purification purposes (immersion), though we do not know all the functions they may have had; see Stuart S. Miller, *At the Intersection of Texts and Material Finds: Stepped Pools, Stone Vessels, and Ritual Purity among the Jews of Roman Galilee* (Journal of Ancient Judaism 11; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

¹³ Thomas Kazen, *Emotions in Biblical Law: A Cognitive Science Approach* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 36; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011); Frevel Christian and Christophe Nihan, eds., *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism* (Dynamics in the History of Religion 3; Leiden Brill, 2013).

¹⁴ This is extensively discussed, e.g., by Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ Furthermore, women during this time may not have been menstruating very often: married women would have been either pregnant or nursing

Having sex was nevertheless intrinsically connected to purity laws and required purification: according to Lev 15:18, both the husband and the wife had to wash and wait until the evening. There is evidence of the application of this law in the Qumran texts (see below). The texts also contain certain rules that concern marital sex in the movement. Possibly the ideal in the Qumran movement was to have sex only for procreation; at least lying with one's pregnant wife and "fornication" with one's wife against the law was condemned (Damascus Document: 4Q270 2 ii 15–17; 7 i 12–13).¹⁶ Such rules did not make marriage undesirable or banned but show that purity concerns and moral sexual issues did influence the married couple according to the movement's own rules.

Next, I will turn to two texts in more detail that forbid or restrict sexual relations in the holy city: the Temple scroll, which most probably was not originally composed by the movement, and the Damascus Document, which too contains laws that may derive from wider concerns but which also contains rules for the movement.

Temple Scroll

The Temple Scroll (11QT^a) is a large well-preserved scroll from Qumran Cave 11 that dates back to the 2nd century BCE.¹⁷ The text is based on many Torah traditions: the scroll starts with covenant renewal, as in Exod 34, and proceeds to cover the building of the temple, its furnishing and equipment, sacrifices, priestly dues and tithes, ritual calendar, festival offerings, ritual purity, sanctity of the temple, laws of the king and the army, prophecy, foreign worship, witnesses, laws of war, marriage and sexual laws, including a selection of laws

most of their time before the menopause, see Wassen, "Women, Worship, Wilderness, and War," 1361–85.

¹⁶ Choosing one's wife also was a serious matter: 4Q267 7; 4Q269 9; 4Q270 5; 4Q271 3. For the list of concerns of sexual activities in the Damascus Document, see Werrett, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 97.

¹⁷ Lawrence H. Schiffman, *The Courtyards of the House of the Lord: Studies on the Temple Scroll* (STDJ 75; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 8–10.

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from Deuteronomy.¹⁸ The temple in the Temple Scroll is often characterized as its central focus, expected in the future, utopian: the sacred areas of three courtyards cover a huge area, much of the city of then contemporary Jerusalem.¹⁹

Temple Scroll columns 45–51 contain rules for purity. The holy city clearly has a special status: it is carefully distinguished from other cities, it shall be holy and clean, and the text demands that even all food brought to the city is carried in skins of sacrificial temple animals (11QT^a 47:3–14).²⁰

Outside the city were places for latrines, at the distance of 3000 cubits (11QT^a 46:13–16), likening the temple city to the war camp of Deut 23:9–14 where everything had to be pure and clean. Outside the temple city were also places for impure persons: those with skin

¹⁸ See further Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 258–60.

¹⁹ Schiffman, *Reclaiming*, 267, describes the measures: the inner court was to measure 280/294 cubits (cubit = half a meter), the middle court 480 cubits, and the outer court 1600 cubits. In addition, there was an empty space of 100 cubits wide around the three courtyards (11QT 46:9–12). Another document, 4QMMT, does not give any measurements but makes a distinction between the temple and the city; the temple corresponds to the biblical tent of meeting and Jerusalem corresponds with the biblical camp. It was permitted to slaughter animals only within the city (B29–31). Tova Ganzel argues that the Temple Scroll adopts its understanding of the sacred temple from Ezekiel. See Tova Ganzel, “The Reworking of Ezekiel’s Temple Vision in the Temple Scroll,” in Jutta Jokiranta and Molly Zahn, eds., *Law, Literature, and Society in Legal Texts from Qumran: Papers from the Ninth Meeting of the International Organisation for Qumran Studies, Leuven 2016* (STDJ); Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). She also remarks that neither Ezekiel nor the Temple Scroll names the city of the future ideal temple as Jerusalem.

²⁰ Translations are from Emanuel Tov, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Library: Texts and Images* (Partially based on *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, edited by Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, morphological analysis by Martin Abegg, Jr., produced by Noel B. Reynolds, associate producer Kristian Heal; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

disease, people with genital discharge, and men with seminal emission (11QT^a 46:16–47:1). According to Lawrence Schiffman, these rules meant that the entire residential area was located outside the temple city.²¹ Alternatively, all residents in the city lived a temple-based life, with all its purity regulations. These visions demand an explanation: how could a temple city function if persons working there (yet alone living there) would have needed to go outside every time they needed to relieve themselves?²² For many scholars, this is rather an indication of the ideal character of the perfected, expected temple. There were purity regulations also for other cities besides the temple city, which further characterize the ideal, structured nature of world in the Temple Scroll: according to 11QT^a 48:11–17, dead bodies could be buried only in places allocated for burials, and in *every* city, there had to be places (outside the city?) for people with skin disease, genital discharge, menstruation, or bleeding after childbirth:

11. *vacat* And you shall not do as the nations do: everywhere they
 12. bury their dead, even within their houses they bury. For you shall set apart
 13. places within your land (in) which you shall bury your dead; between four
 14. cities you shall allot a place to bury in them. And in every city you shall allot places for those afflicted
 15. with leprosy or with plague or with scab, who may not enter your cities and defile them, and also for those who have a discharge,
 16. and for women during their menstrual uncleanness and after giving birth, so that they may not defile in their midst
 17. with their menstrual uncleanness.
- (11QT^a 48:11–17)

²¹ Schiffman, *Reclaiming*, 268.

²² Other texts prescribe on the allowed walking distance outside the city during Sabbath: in 4Q265 7 i 3 and CD 11:5–7, this was 2000 cubits—thus shorter than the distance to the latrines of the Temple Scroll.

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Finally we come to the rule of our specific interest, found in the column 45, which is located in the scroll before the rules of making the boundary between the city and its outside and the rules for establishing outside places for impure people (column 46). According to 11QT^a 45:10–12, entering the “city of the temple”²³ during the three days of purification period is forbidden for anyone who has had seminal emission (esp. because of having sex):

7. *vacat* And if a ma[n] has a nocturnal emission, he shall not enter into
8. any part of the temple until [he will com]plete three days. And he shall wash his clothes and bathe
9. on the first day, and on the third day he shall wash his clothes and bathe, and when the sun is down,
10. he may come within the temple. And they shall not come into my temple in their *niddah*-like uncleanness and defile (it).
11. *vacat* And if a man lies with his wife and has an emission of semen, he shall not come into any part of the city
12. of the temple, where I will settle my name, for three days. *vacat* (11QT^a 45:7–12)

²³ Scholars debate whether this means entering the temple city altogether or the temple complex, see Werrett, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 115–17, 57. The text refers to “any part of the temple” so it would seem to refer to all courtyards as understood in the Temple Scroll. Another possibility is that the impure man could enter the city after washing himself but not the temple proper, before the complete purification. Lawrence H. Schiffman, *The Courtyards*, 53–65; *Qumran and Jerusalem: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and History of Judaism* (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010) 311–12, takes it to mean only the temple complex, not the residential area of the city, see esp. Chapter “Jerusalem in the Dead Sea Scrolls” (303–18). One of his arguments is identifying the expressions in 11QT 45:7–10 where the subject is entering the “temple” and 11QT 45:11–12 where it is entering the “city of the temple.”

In comparison to Lev 15:16–17, the Temple Scroll requires three days of purification instead of just one,²⁴ and two washings instead of one. As already noted, the next column includes rules about places outside the city for impure persons:

16. *vacat* And you shall make
 17. three places to the east of the city, separated one from another, into which shall
 18. come the lepers and the people who have a discharge and the men who have had a (nocturnal) emission.
- (11QT^a 46:16–18)

No rule about women is given, implying that these rules are all male-oriented. According to Hannah Harrington, Qumran texts excluded the menstruant “from society.”²⁵ Women would not have been allowed in the temple city at all. However, it could be assumed that a man and a woman after sex would have needed to purify in the same manner in order to enter the temple city, but no rules on this exist. Whether the couple could have had sex in the city is also not stated.²⁶

²⁴ This has been compared to the Sinai experience and three-day preparation for the encounter with God (Exod 19:15), Joseph M. Baumgarten, “The Qumran-Essene Restraints on Marriage,” in Lawrence H. Schiffman, ed, *Archaeology and history in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin* (JSPSup 8; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 13–24; Harrington, *Purity Texts*, 104.

²⁵ Harrington, *Purity Texts*, 101.

²⁶ The Temple Scroll includes another interesting law on the captive women in 11QT^a 63:10–15: this woman is not allowed to eat of the pure food and sacrifices until seven years has passed, see Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Laws Pertaining to Women in the *Temple Scroll*,” in Devorah Dimant and Uriel Rappaport, eds, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Yars of Research* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 210–28.

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Damascus Document

The Damascus Document (CD A,B and 4QD^{a-h}) is a large rule document that includes both the rationale for the movement's emergence and existence (Admonition CD 1–8; 19–20) and legal laws and halakhot (CD 9–16; plus additional rules preserved in 4QD mss). The laws deal with various issues: witnesses, oaths and vows, lost property, judges, purification, Sabbath, Gentiles, unclean animals, materials transmitting impurity, skin disease, relations with outsiders, tithes, suspicion of adultery, other purity rules. Largest portion of the laws discusses Sabbath rules.

Sabbath rules begin in CD 10:14 with the title “About the Sa[bb]ath, how to keep it properly.” These rules extend at least to CD 11:18a, possibly longer. Let us look at this section where the rule on sexual relations is also found:

10:14 About the Sa[bb]ath, how to keep it properly. *vac* A man may not work on the...

(lengthy passage on Sabbath rules)

11:17 ...No one should offer any sacrifice on the Sabbath

11:18 except the Sabbath whole-burnt-offering, for so it is written, ‘besides your Sabbaths’ (Lev 23:28). *vac* No one should send

11:19 a whole-burnt-offering, cereal offering, incense offering, or wood offering to the altar through anyone impure by any

11:20 of the impurities, thus allowing him to defile the altar; for it is written, ‘The sacrifice

11:21 of the wicked is disgusting; but the prayer of the righteous is like a wished-for gift’ (Prov 15:8). No one who enters the

11:22 house of worship shall enter in a state of impurity but with laundered garments. When the trumpets for assembly are

11:23 blown, let him go earlier or later so that they need not stop the whole service. The Sabbath

12:1 is holy. *vac* A man may not lay with a woman in the city of the Temple, defiling

12:2 the city of the Temple by their uncleanness. *vac* Every^{one} who is controlled by the spirits of Belial

12:3 and advises apostasy will receive the same verdict as the necromancer and the medium; but all such who go astray
12:4 to defile the Sabbath and the festivals shall not be put to death, for it is the responsibility of human beings
12:5 to keep him in custody. If he recovers from it, they must watch him for seven years and afterwards
12:6 he may enter the assembly.
(CD 11:17–12:6; cf. parallel in 4Q271 5 i)

The topic of sacrifice on the Sabbath (CD 11:17b–18a) turns into the topic of sending sacrifices through an impure person (11:18b–21a). The next topic is entering the temple in general (11:21b–23a; entering must take place in purity and not in the midst of the service). Yet, these rules are concluded by the statement “The Sabbath is holy” so that the whole section may be understood to cover mainly Sabbath rules; sacrifice and worship were especially important on the Sabbath.

But what about the following rule, the ban to have sex in the temple city, defiling it (CD 12:1–2a)? The following section after that (CD 12:2b–6) discusses the punishment of apostasy and of the defilement of the Sabbath and the festivals. The Sabbath is again a connecting link, although the *halakhot* are not necessarily connected to each other in any systematic way.

Often scholars read this rule in the Damascus Document in the similar way as the rule in the Temple Scroll: no sex was allowed in the temple city.²⁷ However, the rules are clearly of different sort and found in different contexts.

First, one may speculate that the rule in CD was about having sex in the city *on the Sabbath*, even though the Sabbath is not explicitly mentioned. There are hints towards this direction in one manuscript of the Damascus Document, 4Q270 (4QD^e) 2 i 18–19, “one who

²⁷ E.g., Harrington, *Purity Texts*, 103.

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ap]proaches his wife on the [Sabbath?] day.” However, “Sabbath” is a reconstruction and the context is fragmentary.²⁸

Secondly, the rule in CD is not addressed to a man who lies with *his* wife (אשתו) as in the Temple Scroll, but with *a woman* (אשה).²⁹ Perhaps the banned sexual relation was not at all considered legitimate and there is a moral judgment involved in the rule. The immoral uncleanness of *their* action defiles the city.

Thirdly, the preceding rules in CD discuss approaching the temple, and this may be important also for the rule about sex. The temple and its city had to be secured from impurities, also from semen emission, which demanded purification. A man who did not care about such rules, especially if he was approaching the temple for its worship, was in danger of defiling the temple and also the land (city).³⁰

Fourthly, it is suggested, as in the case of the Temple Scroll, that the expression “city of the sanctuary (Temple)” did not refer to the whole city but only to the Temple precincts.³¹ Thus the law would actually not ban sex in all the city but only in the Temple mount area.

Three first of these possibilities give reason to doubt that the rule is similar to the utopian Temple Scroll. I suggest that, instead, this rule by no means indicates that the Damascus Document would ban women from the temple city or exclude normal residents from the temple city, but rather reveals concern for the purity of the temple city, or for immoral actions that may be taking place in the city, and for the special status of the Sabbath.

²⁸ One suggested alternative is the “day of atonement,” Werrett, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 97.

²⁹ However, “a woman” is also the reading in Lev 15:18, but the sentence is differently structured.

³⁰ A similar suggestion by Chaim Rabin is discussed by Werrett, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 90–91, that the passage speaks of pilgrims to Jerusalem who may have been “inexperienced or unfamiliar” with temple rules.

³¹ Esp. Schiffman, *Courtyards*, 53–65 (cf. fn 23). I am not fully convinced of this suggestion.

Conclusion

Did the Qumran movement members have sex in the temple city? In general, the members of movement included both men and women, although many texts reveal a mainly male-centered character and masculine language. The Damascus Document is one of those rule texts of the movement that clearly is concerned also with women and families. Marital life seems to be the norm. Furthermore, the movement was very much interested in fulfilling the laws: both laws pertaining to moral issues and laws that have to do with purity and purification from ritual, everyday impurities.

In its concern for the laws, the Damascus Document contains a brief ban on a man having sex with a woman in the city of the sanctuary, “defiling the city of the Temple by their uncleanness.” Depending on where one puts the emphasis in the sentence and depending on the interpretation of how the rule fits its context, one can see the rule to be concerned with the contact with impurity in the temple area, with non-purification from impurity, with moral sin, or with the Sabbath. I see the Sabbath interpretation as a genuine possibility which has not been sufficiently considered. On the other hand, the (utopian?) Temple Scroll places men who have had semen emission—and also men who have had sex with their wives—outside the temple city (or according to some interpretations, the temple mount) for three days of purification.

What do we learn from these attitudes? Certainly Jerusalem in the eyes of these late Second temple scribal legislators was primarily defined by the presence of the temple and its activities, whether bad and corrupt, or purified and perfected (in the ideal world). Sexual relations demanded attention as did other issues with potential offences to purity or moral laws. Yet by no means does this mean that sex in itself was to be banned or men or women in their sexually active age to be excluded in the life of the Qumran movement. The utopian temple of the Temple Scroll was not specifically located in the geographical Jerusalem but in some future space. The Damascus

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Document sought to realize some of the structured order and presented special concerns, but to what extent the actual families of the Qumran movement and their daily life were affected by these rules remains unknown.