in this area that the “Ivory House” that Ahab built for Jezebel (1 Kings 22:39) stood. Northeast and below the acropolis a number of Iron Age tombs were found and their location probably delimits the area of the city in that direction. In essence only the acropolis was excavated down to the Iron Age, but it is presumed by the excavators (the Joint) that the city extended down over the northern and southern slopes of the hill. During the reign of the last king of the northern kingdom, Hosea (11 Kings 10), the Assyrians invaded in 722/721 B.C.E. (initially under Shalmaneser V and finally under Sargon II), when they established complete control over the capital city and the remainder of the northern kingdom. The fragment of a stela with an Assyrian inscription attributed to Sargon II was found on the eastern slope of the acropolis testifying to their presence. In addition, according to inscriptions from Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad, the inhabitants of Samaria were deported to Assyria. The remains of a wall relief in Room 5 of Sargon’s palace are thought to depict Samaria and its defeated defenders. New inhabitants were brought in (from Arabia and the Syro-Mesopotamian area, 11 Kings 17:24) and, together with the remnant not deported, they formed a new Samaritan population. The city together with the neighboring highland area became known as Samerina and was ruled by an Assyrian governor. There are only meager remains from the succeeding Babylonian period and it was only in the Persian period, in the mid-fifth century, that the city reemerged in importance. The tensions between the ruling family of Sanballat and Jerusalem under the governorship of Nehemiah are documented in the Bible (Ezra 4:10, Neh. 2:1–8). Samaria became a Hellenistic town in 332 B.C.E. and thousands of Macedonian soldiers were settled there following a revolt by the Samaritans. Three 13-m.-diameter round towers dating to that period have been excavated (the first two by Harvard, which attributed them to the Israelite period) and a later, massive, fortification wall with square towers. These fortifications were breached during the destruction of the city by John Hyrcanus in 108 B.C.E. Traces of the destruction wrought by *Hyrcaenus were found by the excavators, but the city was apparently resettled under *Yannai. In 63 B.C.E. Samaria was annexed to the Roman province of Syria. In 30 B.C.E. the emperor Augustus awarded the city to *Herod, who renamed it Sebaste in honor of Augustus (Gr. Sebastos = Augustus). The outstanding remains from this period are: the Augusteum, consisting of a temple and a large forecourt built over the Omride palace at the summit of the acropolis; a city gate and an east-west colonnaded street; a theater on the northeast slope of the acropolis; a Temple to Kore on a terrace north of the acropolis; and a stadium to the northeast in the valley below. East of the acropolis and in an area that today links the ancient city with the modern village of Sebaste lies the forum, flanked on the west by a partially excavated basilica. Water for Roman Sebaste was provided by an underground aqueduct that led into the area of the forum from springs in the east. The city was encompassed by a city wall 2 1⁄2 mi. (4 km.) long, with imposing towers that linked the gateways in the west and north. A number of mausoleums with ornate sarcophagi were excavated in the area of the modern village and adjoining fields.

The city was rebuilt without any major changes in the second century C.E. by Septimius Severus, when the city was established as a colony. Samaria has been associated with the burial place of John the Baptist and his tomb, reached by a steep flight of steps, is situated beneath the Crusader cathedral in the village. A small basilica church, first founded in the fifth century, was excavated on the southern slope of the acropolis. The church is traditionally the place of the invention of the head of John the Baptist. A monastery was added to it at a later date. In the 12th century C.E. a Latin cathedral dedicated to John the Baptist and marking the spot of his tomb, was built east of the Roman forum and combined elements of the Roman period city wall. It later became the Sebaste village mosque.


[Norma Franklin (2nd ed.)]

**SAMARITANS.** This article is arranged according to the following outline:

**HISTORY**

- Samaritan Origins
- The Samaritans in the Time of Nehemiah
- The Samaritans in the Second Temple Period
- Samaritans in the Graeco-Roman Diaspora
- Excavations on Mt. Gerizim
- Late Roman to Crusader Period
- Later History

**STATISTICS**

**RELIGION AND CUSTOMS**

- Holidays and Festivals
  - THE SABBATH
  - THE FESTIVALS
- Religious Ceremonies
  - CIRCUMCISION
  - THE LAWS OF RITUAL IMPURITY AND PURITY
  - COMPLETION OF THE TORAH
Israel, the center of literary activity was Judean, starting with the work of the Yahwists and ending with the editorial work of the Judean diaspora (Pummer 1968: 93).

**Samaritan Origins**

There are a number of theories about the origins of the Samaritans, all of which have in common a tradition that originally the cult of YHWH was widespread through the land of Israel. Even so, the origins and early history of the Samaritans are quite problematic because the sources are far removed from the events and because the non-Samaritan sources tend to be hostile.

One tradition is that the Samaritans originated with the northern tribes of Israel because only a small proportion of these tribes was deported during the Assyrian conquests of the late eighth century B.C.E. and that those who remained on the land formed what later became the Samaritans (Mor 1989, 1).

Another Samaritan tradition claims Samaritan origins lie in the pre-exilic period, at the very beginnings of Israelite history, and that the split between Samaritanism and Judaism only arose when the heretical priest Eli stole the Ark of the Covenant and established a rival cult.

Until that time, the Ark of the Covenant had been kept at the sanctuary of YHWH on Mt. Gerizim. According to this tradition, the priest Eli was prevented from rising to the high priesthood because he was of the family of Itamar, not the high priestly family of Eleazar. Nevertheless, he took the Ark of the Covenant from Mt. Gerizim to Shiloh and established a rival cult there. As a result of this, two centers of the priesthood arose. One center was on Mt. Gerizim, at whose head stood the legitimate high priest, Uzzi (a descendant of Phineas and of the family Eleazar). The second (heretical) priesthood was at Shiloh, and the priest Eli, a descendant of Itamar, was at its head.

Thus, according to Samaritan tradition, Samaritanism is a perpetuation of the true Israelite faith, and Judaism only the continuation of Eli’s heresy. This is the case, the Samaritan tradition claims, all the way through Samuel, Saul, David, and the Judean monarchy, with the rival cult of Eli eventually shifting from Shiloh to Jerusalem and continuing up to this day.

A non-Samaritan tradition from the same period claims that the Samaritans originated in the Assyrian post-conquest settlement of populations from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim in northern Israel (11 Kings 17:24–41), and that they were forced to worship the god of Israel by the native peoples. These immigrant groups brought with them the idols of their native cities, whom they continued to worship in conjunction with the deity of their new home. (11 Kings 17:24–41; Ezra 4:2, 10; Mor 1989, 1): “Even while these people were worshipping the Lord, they were serving their idols. To this day their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did” (11 Kings 17:41).

Another non-Samaritan tradition is that the Assyrian conquest of Israel was far from total, that significant num-
bers of Israelites remained on the land, and that the Assyrians settled a separate group of exiles in what used to be the Israelite northern kingdom. These populations eventually intermingled, in time becoming a discrete group of people who later came to be referred to as Cutheans and Samaritans (Jos., Ant. 9:288–391; Mor 1989, 1).

But, unfortunately, even Samaritan historical traditions are not in agreement on either the time or the circumstances of their return. The Samaritan text Chronicle Adler relates the story of two returns, one under the high priest Seraiah in the early seventh century B.C.E. and another under the high priest Abdiel in the late sixth century B.C.E.!

**Samaritans in the Time of Nehemiah**

The first direct references we have to the Samaritans come from the book of Nehemiah. In 4:45 B.C.E., when the person we know as the biblical Nehemiah was appointed by the Persian king Artaxerxes I (464–424 B.C.E.) to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem and later (during a second “tour of duty”) to be the governor of the province of Yehud. During some intercine rivalry surrounding the building of a wall around Jerusalem, Nehemiah named his enemies as Tobiah (the “Ammonite servant”), Geshem (the “Arab”), and “Sanballat (the “Horonite”). Tobiah was a member of an established Jewish family (see “Tobidiad”) from Transjordan (Neh. 2:10; 2:19; 4:7; 6:1). Geshem led the Arab tribes in the southern part of Judea. Sanballat the Horonite was a Samaritan who was coincidentally the Persian-appointed governor of Samaria, and therefore a direct rival of Nehemiah and a person with whom Nehemiah refused to have any contact (Mor 1989, 2–3).

Sanballat, as the Persian-appointed governor of Samaria, may indeed have been in direct competition with Nehemiah, since Jerusalem was to be refortified, whilst Samaria, a provincial center, was not. Urban wall systems of the mid-fifth century are found only at Lachish and Tel en-Nasbeh and at Jerusalem during the time of Nehemiah (Hoglund 1992, 211).

Another reason for Nehemiah’s rejection of the Samaritan contingent may have been that Judah had previously been part of the province of Samaria and that the Persian province of Yehud only came into being with the arrival of Nehemiah. This might explain why Sanballat wanted to be involved in the building project. If Samaria had controlled Judah up to this point (and there is a hint of this in the earlier attempts to stop the building program of Ezra), then the hostility towards Nehemiah may have been real. In the same vein, Nehemiah may have felt threatened by Sanballat, feeling that he might be trying to promote integration of Yehud back into the province of Samaria. In either case, there is no proof; only supposition and guesswork.

Nehemiah’s program of wall-building can also be seen as an indicator of a reversal in the Persian attitude towards Jerusalem by reference to an earlier and failed attempt to rebuild the fortifications (Ezra 4:7–23). During that earlier attempt, officials in Samaria reported it to the Persian court, and Artaxerxes I ordered that the work be stopped. Samarian officials used imperial military forces to make sure his order was enforced. This lends some support to the idea expressed above that Judea might once have been part of the province of Samaria, hence the rivalry between Sanballat and Nehemiah, both Persian officials.

One of Sanballat’s daughters married a son of the Jerusalem high priest Joiadah (Neh. 13:28; Jos. Ant. 11:306–12). Since Nehemiah believed in the “purity” ideology of the returnees, his reaction was to expel the couple from Jerusalem (Mor 1989, 4; Smith-Christopher 1994, 259).

**The Samaritans in the Second Temple Period**

Until the arrival of Alexander the Great in the near east in 332 B.C.E., there is little information about the Samaritans. Then, at least according to Josephus, they once more come into view in Judea, where Manasseh, the brother of the high priest Jaddus, married Nikaso, a daughter of Sanballat III (a descendant of the Sanballat of the time of Nehemiah) (Jos., Ant 11:302–3; Mor 1989, 4). Josephus reports that this Sanballat, like his ancestor a governor of Samaria, hoped that through the marriage of his daughter to the high priest’s brother he could establish ties with the Jewish community in Jerusalem. However, Manasseh was offered two choices by the Jerusalem hierarchy: to stay in Jerusalem and divorce his wife, or to leave the city and take his Samaritan wife with him. Manasseh chose the second option, whereupon his father-in-law promised to build a temple on Mt. Gerizim where Manasseh would be high priest and that, in addition, he would take over civic leadership of Samaria on the death of his father-in-law. According to Josephus, many priests left Jerusalem and followed Manasseh to Samaria (Ant. 11:306–12; Mor 1989, 5).

Sanballat III sent 8,000 soldiers to support Alexander’s campaigns and also convinced him that it would be to his advantage to allow the Samaritans to build a temple on Mt. Gerizim, where his son-in-law would be high priest. During this period when the Macedonians were consolidating their hold on the region and the Persians were not yet fully vanquished, the Samaritans quickly built their temple (it took less than nine months). The founding of a temple was not unusual; however, this temple was not far from its Jerusalem rival, and from the establishment of this temple the Samaritans and the Jews grew further apart, and it is from this period onwards that much of the anti-Samaritan polemic in the Hebrew Bible and extra-biblical texts (such as Josephus) originates.

The temple was completed around 332 B.C.E., at the time that Alexander finally took control of Gaza (Mor 1989, 7), and was also contemporary with the establishment of a Macedonian colony in the city of Samaria and the rebuilding and resettling of Shechem (Purvis 1968, 105).

However, Sanballat III died just two months into Alexander’s siege of Gaza (Jos., Ant. 11:325) and, according to the historian Qiantus Curtius, after the siege of Gaza Alexander left a Greek official named Andromachus in charge of the region. Despite Sanballat III’s promise to his son-in-law, and for the first time since the Persian conquest, a Samaritan was not
in charge of Samaria (Mor 1989, 9). The Samaritan leadership reacted strongly to this, rebelled against the Macedonians, captured and burned Andromachus alive, and then fled from Shechem to a cave in the Wadi Dalieh just north of Jericho (Cross 1985, 7–17). The Macedonians retaliated immediately, with Alexander himself said to have left Jerusalem to punish the Samaritans. All of the rebels were killed, all Samaritans were banished from Samaria, and the city of Samaria was settled with Macedonian veterans (Mor 1989, 10).

According to Josephus (Jos., Apion, 2:43), following the post-rebellion massacre, administrative control of the district of Samaria was given to the Jews because of their loyalty to Alexander. The Samaritans who survived the Macedonian massacre, and who had heretofore exercised control and political authority and cultural leadership in Samaria, were now wholly disenfranchised and they could not turn to Jerusalem for help.

From the death of Alexander the Great, nothing much is known about the Samaritans until the rise of the Seleucid empire in around 200 B.C.E. From Josephus (Ant. 1:25–10) we know that a number of Samaritans and Jews settled in Egypt and that relations between them were very strained, with each side demanding that sacrifices be directed to their respective sanctuaries. Any grace or favor to one side was seen as detrimental to the other, and so a tit-for-tat hostility developed.

In Palestine, the first report of open hostility between Shechemites and Jews in Jerusalem is dated to the time of Ptolemy V (Epiphanes) and Antiochus III in around 200 B.C.E. (Jos., Ant. 1:154–56). According to Josephus, the Jews were being harassed by Samaritans through raids on Jewish land and the capture and sale of Jews into slavery, and the Samaritans found themselves under pressure from Antiochus III, because they had allied themselves with pro-Ptolemaic policy, thinking that they would prevail against the Syrians. This was nothing new. This loyalty dated back to the Persian period when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite had allied against Nehemiah, the governor of the province of Judaea.

In 168 B.C.E. the two groups grew still further apart when the Seleucid king (Antiochus IV Epiphanes) ordered the Jews and the Samaritans to rededicate their temples to Zeus. In Judea, ”Judah Maccabee organized a rebellion which culminated in the ousting of Zeus from the temple and its subsequent repurification. During this period, both Samaritans and Jews were subject to the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.E.), as is seen in II Maccabees (5:23; 6:5), even though Samaria did not rebel against Antiochus IV.

What had been a religious division now became a political conflict as well. Judea, having fought for its freedom from Seleucid rule, became an independent state, ruled by a line of high priests derived from the Hasmonean dynasty. One of them was John ”Hyrcanus (134–104 B.C.E.), whose political program included the expansion of the state along with a campaign of propaganda to advertise itself and, as part of this campaign, Hyrcanus utilized a policy of forced conversion to Judaism. While Antiochus VII (Sidetes) was in the east, John Hyrcanus invaded northern Palestine and Syria.

Among the places he captured were Shechem and Mt. Gerizim. Later in his reign, Hyrcanus laid siege to Samaria and after a year’s campaign took it (Jos., Wars 1:64ff; Ant. 13:275ff.). The bustling, cosmopolitan, and mainly non-Israelite city of Samaria was utterly destroyed by Hyrcanus (Isser 1999, 571), and in around 128 B.C.E., the sanctuary and temple on Mt. Gerizim were destroyed (Jos., Wars 1:62ff.; Ant. 13:254ff.).

While the Jewish priesthood ceased to function after 70 C.E., the Samaritans continued to have an active priesthood with a high priest even after the temple on Mt. Gerizim was destroyed (Pummer 1998, 26–27), and whereas the inevitable dispersal of the Samaritans had not yet happened, the process was underway, not least because the Samaritans were now under the economic and political control of Jerusalem. However, a core group of Samaritans stayed near Mt. Gerizim in the town of Sychar (which may have replaced Shechem as the center of Samaritan religious authority).

There are very few sources other than Josephus to help outline the history of the Samaritans in the early Roman period, and those that do exist are often very hostile to their subject. Josephus, for instance, did not even consider the Samaritans to be Jews (Ant. 1:341).

Pompey’s conquest of Palestine in 63 B.C.E. ended Jewish domination of Samaria (Jos., Wars 1:166). The cities that had been captured by the Hasmoneans were restored to their previous inhabitants. Samaria and other regions were joined to the Roman province of Syria and protected by two full Roman legions. Because so many of the people of Samaria had been killed or were too scattered to bring back together, the Romans repopulated the newly built town of Samaria with new colonists (Jos., Wars 1:169ff.; Ant. 1:40ff.; Isser 1999, 572).

The proconsul of Syria, Aulus Gabinius (57–54 B.C.E.) had to quell an uprising by another Hasmonean, Alexander, son of Aristobulus, during which Roman soldiers sought refuge and came under siege on Mt. Gerizim. (Jos., Wars 1:175ff.; Ant. 1:100). In 43 B.C.E., with Roman backing, ”Herod the Great restored order in Samaria (Jos., Wars 1:229; Ant. 1:284; Isser 1999, 572). At the end of the Roman civil war, Herod declared his loyalty to Octavian, who confirmed him as the Jewish king and conferred on him new territories (Jos., Wars 1:396ff.; Ant. 1:217); among these new territories was Samaria. Herod rebuilt and extended the city of Samaria and added a further 6,000 colonists to its population. He renamed the city Sebaste in honor of Octavian (Jos., Wars 1:403; Ant. 1:295ff.; Isser 1999, 573).

There are numerous reports of acts of hostility against the Jews by Samaritans. How true these are is unknown, but there does seem to be a prevailing tradition of antagonism between the groups. As an example of the sort of thing reported, Josephus records that during the procuratorship of Coponius (6–9 C.E.) it had been the practice to keep the gates of the Jerusalem temple open after midnight at Passover. On one such occasion, a number of Samaritans are said to have
secretly entered and scattered human bones throughout the grounds, rendering them unclean (Ant. 18:29ff.).

There is another account in Josephus (Ant. 18:85–89) about a massacre of Samaritans during the Procuratorship of Pilate (26–36 C.E.). Josephus reports that a man whom he describes as a rabble-rouser promised to show the Samaritans the sacred vessels of the mishkan (the ancient tabernacle) which, according to Samaritan tradition, Moses had buried in a secret place on Mt. Gerizim. This discovery would signal the Age of Divine Favor (the fulfillment of Samaritan eschatological belief involving Moses, the mishkan and a person (the “rabble-rouser”) who was a sort of messianic figure – the “restorer”). A large group gathered in a nearby village with the intention of climbing Mt. Gerizim, but Pilate interpreted this as the prelude to revolt and so the gathered Samaritans were intercepted by Roman troops and killed or captured. The leaders were executed at Pilate’s orders. This was too much for the Samaritan council, who complained to Vitellius, the governor of Syria, who accepted their accusations against Pilate and sent Marcellus to take over in Judea and ordered Pilate to return to Rome for trial before the emperor Tiberius. This Pilate did, but Tiberius had died, and we know nothing further about this episode (Grabbe 1994, 424; Isser 1999, 576).

An even more serious event occurred during the Procuratorship of Cumanus (48–52 C.E.) at a village named Gema (between Samaria and the Plain of Esdraelon to the north). Josephus reports that some Samaritans attacked a group of Galileans who were on their way to Jerusalem for a festival and killed either many or one (War 2:12:3, 232; Ant. 20, 6:1, 118; Tacitus, Annals xii, 5, 4). When the Jews appealed to Cumanus he did nothing (allegedly because he had been bribed by the Samaritans). A mob of Jews took matters into their own hands and attacked some Samaritan villages. Cumanus then intervened, and both Jews and Samaritans appealed to the Syrian governor, Quadratus. After a preliminary investigation, Quadratus sent Cumanus, the military tribune Celer, some of the Samaritan notables, the high priests Jonathan and Ananias, and other Jewish leaders to Rome for trial before Claudius. Agrippa II petitioned Claudius on behalf of the Jews and was dedicated by the “Israelites who offer to Holy Argarizein. “ The term Argarizein is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew Har Gerizim, that is, Mt. Gerizim, and these two inscriptions certainly provide evidence of a hitherto unknown community of Samaritans on the island (Matassa 2006; White 1987, 141–42).

The first inscription reads “The Israelites on Delos who make first-fruits offerings to Holy Argarizim crown with a golden crown Sarapion son of Jason of Knossos for his benefactions on their behalf,” and has been dated to between 150 and 50 B.C.E. (Bruneau 1982, 469–74; Matassa 2006). It is not clear whether the honoree is himself a Samaritan, Jew, pagan, resident of or visitor to Delos. It does, however, identify the dedicators as “the Israelites on Delos,” and there seems little doubt that this refers to a Samaritan community of some sort on this tiny island.

The second inscription reads, “[The] Israelites who make first-fruits offerings to Holy Argarizim honor Menippos, son of Artemidoros of Heraclea, himself as well as his descendants to have established and dedicated its expenses, for an offering/prayer [to God], [ - - - - - ]” and is dated to around 250–175 B.C.E. (Bruneau 1982, 469–74; Matassa 2006).

The inscriptions show that the dedicators (on Delos or elsewhere) were connected to Mt. Gerizim, and it could be that offerings were sent to Mt. Gerizim while the Samaritan temple still stood there or that offerings continued to be made and sent to Samaria after the destruction of the temple. Or, in-

Samaritans in the Graeco-Roman Diaspora
In the Diaspora, when Jews and Samaritans lived in the same communities, they would have had to explain their allegiances to the authorities from whom they requested privileges, and Josephus records difficulties between Jews and Samaritans in Egypt (Ant. 12:10, 74–79). Thus, while Jerusalem exerted its influence on Diaspora Jews, so Gerizim influenced the Diaspora Samaritans (Purvis 1968, 110).

In 1979, two inscriptions were found near the stadium on “Delos by Philippe Fraisse of the Ecole française d’Athènes. Both were found in an unexcavated area just beneath current ground level near the shoreline of the east of the island. Both are dedicated by the “Israelites who offer to Holy Argarizein.” The term Argarizein is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew Har Gerizim, that is, Mt. Gerizim, and these two inscriptions certainly provide evidence of a hitherto unknown community of Samaritans on the island (Matassa 2006; White 1987, 141–42).

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deed, it could be that the offerings were made on Delos, perhaps in the form of votives, and were dedicated by Samaritan visitors to the island, Samaritan residents of the island, or even friends or business partners of Samaritans elsewhere on their behalf — as the two inscriptions are the only evidence of Samaritans on the island, it is impossible to know. There is certainly no evidence of a synagogue (either Jewish or Samaritan) on the island, but the inscriptions do at least indicate there was a permanent colony of Samaritans on Delos in the Second Temple period (Matassa 2006).

Excavations on Mt. Gerizim

Yitzhak Magen’s excavations on Mt. Gerizim uncovered some 480 marble inscriptions and around 13,000 coins. About 90% of the inscriptions were written in ancient Aramaic script, and the remainder in either Hebrew or Greek. The inscriptions were votive offerings brought to the sanctuary and dedicated there. According to Magen, those inscriptions indicate that the sanctuary was there as early as the end of the sixth century B.C.E. (Magen, Tsafania and Misgav 2000(c), 125–32).

The excavations on the top of Mt. Gerizim began in 1983, but only as late as 1998 did the profile of the temple begin to emerge. The temple was found under the remains of a fifth-century Byzantine church (the Church of Mary the Theodokos built by the Emperor Zeno in 484 C.E.). The excavation team uncovered six-foot-thick walls, gates, and altars, and it is thought that the totality of this find could provide the first real indication of what the Jewish temple, destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E., might have looked like (Magen 2000(a), 74–118; Magen 2000(b), 133).

The Mt. Gerizim excavations show that the temple was surrounded by residential quarters, such as those in Jerusalem. Some 15,000 people lived in a city spread out over 100 acres, which the excavators have taken to indicate that Josephus was correct in saying that the Mt. Gerizim temple was a replica of the temple in Jerusalem. While the exact dimensions of the Jerusalem temple are not known, the foundation of the temple on Mount Gerizim appears to be about 400 × 560 feet (Magen 2000(a), 74–118; Magen 2000(b), 133).

[Lidia Domenica Matassa (2nd ed.)]

Late Roman to Crusader Period

After brief reports of the building of Tiberias and Caesarea in the reigns of Tiberius and Vespasian, the Samaritan Chronicle 11 narrates the events of Hadrian’s time. Both Jews and Samaritans suffered under this emperor (117–38), according to one part of the chronicles, but a later addition tells of the success of the Samaritans in gaining Hadrian’s favor by helping him to overcome the defenders of Jerusalem during his siege of the city. This version states that Hadrian was allowed to build a place of worship on Mt. Gerizim and that all Jews living in the area were forcibly removed. Samaritan guards were placed at the emperor’s beit kinshah, as it was called (see Montgomery, 91, for further details from other sources), but while Hadrian was away in Rome his priests defiled the beit kinshah by burning corpses there. The defilement, in Samari- tan eyes, resulted in a gathering of people destroying the building and then purifying the place ritually. The outcome was that Hadrian sent an army which attacked and killed many of the Samaritans. At last one clever Samaritan managed to put the blame on the Jews and managed to persuade Hadrian of the Samaritans’ innocence, so that the emperor attacked the Jews instead. Throughout the chronicles, statements are made about the loss of Samaritan literature during times of persecution. The worst of these periods seems to have been during the rule of Hadrian (and later of Commodus and Severus), when most of the literature kept in Shechem was destroyed. The high priest lists, however, were probably preserved.

Both Samaritan and Jewish sources tell of the friendship of Antoninus Pius (138–61) for their respective peoples. For the Samaritans, the worst of all persecutions was that of Commodus (180–92). They were forbidden to read the Torah or teach it to their children, synagogues were closed, and many Samaritans suffered crucifixion for minor offenses. The reason for Commodus’ persecutions given in Abu-al-Fath and Chronicle 11 was a dispute between Alexander of Aphrodisias and a Samaritan called Levi. A philosophical discussion, which was the starting point, led to the anger of the emperor and severe repression of Levi’s compatriots, with the consequent destruction of their written documents and scrolls (some of which were hidden and saved). Claudius Gelenus (who died c. 200) is brought into the story, and it is claimed that he persuaded Commodus to force the Samaritans to eat the meat of pigs. Subsequent trials compelled many Samaritans to flee to other regions. At the end of Commodus’ reign, 300,000 Samaritans were reported living in the Shechem area.

Nothing is reported of Septimius Severus (193–211), but Alexander Severus (222–35) is reported to have persecuted the Samaritans almost as severely as had Commodus. He enforced the worship of Roman gods, thus bringing about a series of rebellions against his rule, which he put down mercilessly. His reign was also a time of famine and pestilence. Since the Samaritans’ great hero Baba Rabbah is recorded as having lived during Alexander Severus’ rule, it may be assumed that there is some confusion in the account (see Montgomery, 96, for an alternative view). Severus’ successors are correctly stated to have been Gordianus (238–44), Philip (244–49), and Decius (249–51). This period seems to have been a difficult one for Samaria on the whole, but little more is heard from Samaritan sources until the advent of Muhammad. From the evidence of external sources, it is confirmed that Samaria suffered from the many political and military maneuverings of the era. The next source of trouble and change for Samaria was the Christianization of the empire. The edict of Constantius, which prohibited the marriage of Christian women to Jews (Montgomery, 100), led to social intolerance throughout Palestine. Circumcision, prohibited by Hadrian, seems to have been prohibited again in the time of Bishop Germanus, whose jurisdiction included Nablus.

The story of Baba Rabbah may properly be related to the period of Bishop Germanus. The chief importance of this Sa-
maritan hero was that he revived the Samarian hopes of freedom. He organized Samaria into districts, built synagogues, encouraged literature, and raised a standing army. The Baba Rabbah story, despite some legendary accretions, is not as absurd as Montgomery claims (103), for a great change in Samaritanism undoubtedly took place at about this time (witness the work of *Markah and his family, who gave new shape to religious thinking and gave Samaritan religion a firm base).

During a long period of gradual Christianization in Palestine, the Samaritans fared badly; there were continual attacks by Samaritans on Christians and Christians on Jews and Samaritans, and the holy places of Israel were taken over by the Christians. Under certain rulers, a measure of protection was accorded to both Jews and Samaritans, but the long reign of Theodosius II (408–50) brought in its wake many deprivations, and both Jews and Samaritans became in effect second-class citizens with minimal rights. It was not until the latter part of the fifth century that the full fury of the new order was felt in Samaria, for under Zeno (474–91) Jews and Samaritans suffered terrible massacres, and the Samaritan chronicles tell of many incidents during this period which resulted in increasing repression. For the period of Anastasius (491–518) and Justinian I (527–65), the chronicles have little information, but external sources (see Montgomery, 113ff.) reveal further devastations of the dwindling Samaritan community. Many small-scale uprisings had taken place almost annually throughout the Christian period, but the greatest seems to have occurred soon after Justinian I became emperor. This was in the year 529, and there are many sources of information about it (Montgomery, 114–6). It is clear that thousands of Samaritans died in the fighting and that they tried to establish their own state. Jews and Samaritans seem to have been treated alike by the Christian victors; sources speak of 50,000 Jewish and Samaritan soldiers being offered by the Samaritans to the Persian king if he would take over Palestine. This attempt, which was foiled, was symptomatic of the state of affairs in Samaria. The people of Samaria became increasingly desperate, and things were to become even worse as more repressive laws were promulgated by Justinian, for a rising number of Samaritans relinquished their faith and embraced Christianity, thus further reducing the number adhering to the ancient faith. Indeed the Samaritans, as a recognizable religious group, had all but been outlawed by Christianity. They lived in territory sacred to the Christians; they were regarded, with the Jews, as eternal enemies of the new faith; and even when they converted, they were not accorded the full rights of other Christians.

According to the chronicles, many Samaritans fled eastward after 634, when the Muslims were victorious at Yarmuk. Throughout the account of Samaritan history, from earliest times, there were frequent emigrations eastward, and contact between the émigrés and *Nablus seems to have been lost frequently until the 13th century, when migrations back to Nablus began. The story of life under the caliphs is one of revolt and suppression. Little information on the basic cause of the troubles is available because Muslim and Samaritan historians hardly refer to the Samaritans in historical terms. During the early part of the reign of Hárun al-Rashid (d. 809), plague and famine blighted Samaria, but after these calamities the Samaritans enjoyed peace in his time. The reign of Māmūn (813–33) was a period of respite, on the whole, but the reign of his successor, Mu’tasim (833–42), brought considerable calamity to Samaria when certain Muslim fanatics demolished many synagogues and all but destroyed Nablus.

As time went on, religious bitterness increased and the Muslims imposed prohibitions on religious practices, especially pilgrimages to Mt. Gerizim. During the tenth century, however, matters improved under the Fatimid caliphs. Samaritan, Islamic, or Christian sources tell little about the period of the Crusades. The Samaritan capital was the center of political intrigue and ecclesiastical debate during the early part of the 12th century. In 1137 Nablus seems to have undergone the catastrophe of further devastation and decimation of its inhabitants when the Saracens attacked it. Thereafter, until 1244, Muslims assumed rule of the Samaritan capital.

[John Macdonald]

Later History
The final destruction of crusader rule in Palestine by the Mamluks (1291), who established their own hegemony over the country, did not bring about an improvement in the situation of the Samaritans. Instead of the Christian rule that unceasingly pressured the thousands of Samaritans who remained true to their ways came the rule of the Mamluks, who were even more cruel and fanatic about their religion: and in place of forced conversion to Christianity came the conversion out of fear of entire Samaritan families. At the very beginning of their rule, the Mamluks plundered the Samaritan religious center in Shechem (Nablus) and turned it into a mosque, in addition to destroying all the other buildings there.

Muslim pressure created substantial opposition on the part of the Samaritans. It was expressed in the figure of the high priest, Phinehas b. Yūsuf (1308–63), who, together with his sons and other members of the family of high priests, established a religious movement among the Samaritans to reinforce their faith and stand up against the pressure to convert to Islam. In addition to their foremost center in Shechem, the Samaritans also had an important center in Damascus from the 11th century. In the course of the 14th century the two centers achieved the height of their social and religious development, and the contact between them, which sometimes reached the dimension of competition, brought about the strengthening and crystallization of the Samaritan life by the renewed writing of books on religious law, history, and the order of rituals. By the beginning of the Ottoman conquest, however, this movement was no longer intact.

During the same period the Samaritans had centers of secondary importance in Cairo and Gaza. Both these centers, as well as the one in Damascus, observed annual pilgrimages to Mt. Gerizim and the community centered in Shechem. The
family of the high priests in Shechem functioned as the supreme institution for all the Samaritan centers. The center in Cairo was influential in the Mamluk court. Its wealth aided the Mamluk authorities in their conquests, but was also a burden to the Samaritans themselves. Of the three sects in Egypt at the end of the 15th century – the Jews, the Karaites, and the Samaritans – the last were forced to pay half the royal taxes that were imposed on the three sects as a whole. The center in Damascus reached the height of its development in the 13th and 14th centuries, and a family of high priests, which was subordinate to that in Shechem and was a scion of Aaron's descendants, was even established there. The community produced important writers, poets, commentators, and grammarians, as well as physicians, some of whom became viziers in Mamluk courts.

With the beginning of the Ottoman conquest, the persecutions suffered by the Samaritans at the hands of their Muslim neighbors and local governors grew in strength and frequency. The beginning of the collapse of the Samaritan center in Damascus is recorded by Samaritan historians as taking place in the middle of the 16th century, with the transfer of the Damascus family of high priests, together with important members of the Damascus community, to Shechem to strengthen the community there. In 1623 the remaining Samaritans in Damascus were massacred, and their spiritual centers were transferred to Muslim hands.

The Samaritans in Egypt were, likewise, plagued by persecutions. The community there, which had been in existence since the age of Alexander the Great, reached the height of its development and wealth at the end of the 16th century, when their affairs with the Mamluks were under the control of the Jewish nagid. The Samaritans nonetheless frequently incited the Mamluks against the Jews. With the penetration of Ottoman rule into Egypt, the Samaritans were accused of supporting the Mamluks, and many of them were imprisoned and converted to Islam. The small Samaritan community remained in existence until the beginning of the 18th century, when the surviving members joined the community in Shechem and Samaritan settlement in Egypt came to an end.

The most important event relating to the decrease in the size of the Samaritan community was the disappearance of the line of high priests descending from Aaron. The last high priest of this line, Shalmiah b. Phinehas (1613–24), did not father any sons, and with his death the priesthood passed to the family of levites, the sons of Uzziel b. Kehat, which has not fathered any sons, and with his death the priesthood passed to the family of the high priests in Shechem. The last offspring of the family, Tabia b. Isaac (1751–86).

At the beginning of the 19th century the Samaritans lived in a certain degree of comfort in Shechem, but once again the Muslims interfered and prevented them from ascending to the top of Mt. Gerizim for the Passover sacrifice. This prohibition was in effect until 1820, when the Samaritans were again allowed to go up the mountain due to the intervention of the British consulate with the Turks. During the same period, however, the community in Gaza came to an end as the result of its expulsion by the Muslims.

By the third decade of the 19th century, only the small community of Samaritans in Shechem remained. This community was also on the verge of extinction in 1842. The Arabs of Shechem, incited by their religious teachers, cruelly persecuted the Samaritans and threatened to murder the entire community, claiming that the Samaritans were atheists because the script in which the Samaritan Pentateuch was written was not recognized by the Muslims. After the Samaritans turned to the Jewish community in Jerusalem, they received an authorization from the chief rabbi, Abraham Ḥayyim, that “the Samaritan people is a branch of the Jewish people that confesses to the truth of the Torah.” In the same year the Samaritans were again forbidden to sacrifice on the top of Mt. Gerizim, and the prohibition lasted until 1849, when it was again rescinded through the influence of the British consulate.

It can be seen with certainty that the replenishment of the Samaritan community in Shechem by the survivors of other Samaritan centers was the factor that allowed the Samaritans to survive the 400 years of Ottoman rule. The surviving community was led by the high priest Jacob b. Aaron (Hārūn; 1874–1916), who reinforced the religious framework of Samaritan life in the hope of reviving the Samaritans, although scholars and writers of the end of the 19th century had begun to envision certain annihilation for the Samaritans. All the community’s lands, riches, and property were taken from it, and the Samaritans remained in a dark ghetto, as it were, on the northern slope of Mt. Gerizim. Their situation deteriorated, both from a personal and economic point of view. The state of their industry and finances was expressed by the fact that most of the Samaritans engaged in copying documents for scholars and tourists who visited Shechem at the beginning of the 20th century. These books were sold for pennies, as it were, and the profit, in many cases, saved the Samaritans from starvation. The number of men was greater than the number of women, at a ratio of about two to one.

The Turkish administration tended to deal with the Samaritans harshly, and the latter were subject to the whims of the Arab families in Shechem, who competed for the local position of leadership at the office of the Turkish pasha in Acre. The Samaritans were often punished on accusations that they had cooperated with the party that lost the competition

ENCYCLOPAEDIA JUDAICA, Second Edition, Volume 17

725
SAMARITANS

for the ruling position. A number of Samaritan youth were even forced to join the Turkish army. The plague that broke out in Shechem at the time of the withdrawal of the Turkish army left the community with the smallest population in its history, 146 souls.

With the beginning of the British Mandatory administration in Palestine, the situation of the Samaritans improved. The family of Tsedaka from Shechem had moved to Jaffa and become acquainted with Izhaq *Ben-Zvi already in 1907. Throughout his career in Palestine and the State of Israel, Ben-Zvi devoted attention to improving the situation of the Samaritans, from every possible point of view. He convinced the Samaritans, for lack of a viable choice, to cancel their prohibition against marrying women from outside the community, and as a result a number of Samaritans have done so over the decades (beginning in 1923). Ben-Zvi also established friendship leagues between Samaritans and Jews that helped the Samaritans culturally and economically (e.g., a school for Jewish studies was established in Shechem with their aid). He used his position and personal influence to contact important and influential institutions (e.g., the *American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) and procure aid for the Samaritans.

The Samaritan population doubled within a span of 30 years. With the establishment of the State of Israel (1948), the Samaritan community split into two centers: the first was in Shechem, under the government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; the second was in Israel, under the leadership of Japheth b. Abraham Tsedaka. As a result of Tsedaka’s activities and Ben-Zvi’s influence, in 1949 the Samaritans were recognized as citizens under the Law of Return, a fact that contributed to the reunification of Samaritan families from Shechem and the growth of the Samaritan community scattered throughout Israel. In 1953 the Samaritans were allowed, for the first time, to cross the border to celebrate Passover with their brethren on Mt. Gerizim, and this privilege, attained through an agreement by the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission, remained in effect until the Six-Day War (1967), when Shechem came under Israeli rule. In the same year the obligation of Samaritans in Israel to serve in the Israel Defense Forces was officially recognized, although Samaritans had been serving in the IDF since its establishment. In 1954 all the Samaritans scattered throughout the State of Israel relocated in permanent living quarters in Holon, and a unified Samaritan center was created in Israel. In 1963 President Ben-Zvi dedicated the first Samaritan synagogue in Israel.

The center in Shechem continued to exist in complete isolation under Jordanian rule. During the 19 years of Jordanian administration of the area, the Samaritans enjoyed the toleration and even support of the government. On the other hand, this sympathetic attitude also led to blind hatred of the Samaritans on the part of the Muslim inhabitants of Shechem, and every Arab demonstration in Shechem against Hashemite rule found its way into the small Samaritan quarter. Under the leadership of the high priests Abisha b. Phinehas (1941–60) and Amram b. Isaac (1960–1980), however, the Samaritans were able to find a middle road between these two forces. The Six-Day War ended the isolation of the two branches of the Samaritan community.

By 1977 the Samaritan population of Israel, including both Shechem and Holon, had risen to 500, a level that was maintained into the 21st century. A study undertaken by the Samaritan journal A.B. in 1977 revealed that the community had been transformed from an aging and dwindling one, numbering only 150 at the end of the 1920s, to the youngest community in the world, 21% being within the age group 1–10 and the same percentage in the age group 11–20; the disproportion between the ratio of females to males is, however, 5:3. The average number of marriages per year increased from 1.23 between 1910 and 1948 to 4.53 during 1967–1974. The attempts of the four clans of the Samaritans, Kohen, Tsedaka, Danfi and Marchiv, to keep their females within their clans was causing genetic problems arising from interbreeding. A study undertaken by an anthropologist, Dr. Joseph Ginat, in 1975 revealed that 58% of the 128 marriages contracted between 1910 and 1974 were within the same clan, and in the same year Dr. Bat-Sheva Bonne, the head of the faculty of genetics of Tel Aviv University, pointed to the frequency of color blindness and to the considerable number who are in need of genetic guidance before marriage in order to avoid the birth of physically handicapped children. The percentage of marriages with Jewesses had increased to 5%.

Statistics
An inscription from the period of Sargon II describing the destruction of Samaria tells that 27,290 Samaritans were exiled (721 B.C.E.). It is clear, however, that this number is only a minority of the inhabitants of the northern Kingdom of Israel, which, in the days of Menahem b. Gadi (743 B.C.E.), numbered 60,000 landowners who each paid 50 shekels tax to Tiglath-Pileser III (11 Kings 15:19–20). It can therefore be assumed that the Israelite majority, which included an alien minority that was brought by the Assyrian kings, numbered more than 100,000 people at the beginning of the seventh century B.C.E. This community developed and spread into the Assyrian provinces in the center of the country. It is possible to learn of the large number of Samaritans during the period from the expansion of their settlement from Samaria into Gaza and Egypt in the south, and Beth-Shean, Acre, and Sidon in the north.

Clearer figures are known for the first centuries of the Common Era. In the three uprisings against the Byzantines (484, 529, and 579), the Samaritans lost tens of thousands of soldiers. In the largest uprising (in 529), which was a reaction to the Justinian persecutions, the Samaritans lost 100,000 soldiers, according to Procopius, or 20,000, according to the version of Malalas. Theophanes and Malalas related that the Samaritans sent emissaries to the king of Persia suggesting that he conquer the country from the Byzantines and agreeing to place 50,000 Samaritans and Jews at his disposal for this purpose. These sources imply that there were hundreds
of thousands of Samaritans in the country. The decisive decrease in this number was a result of the frequent uprisings against the Byzantines.

The massacre of Samaritans continued even after the collapse of Byzantine rule. Tens of thousands were massacred or taken captive at the time of the Arab conquest, which led to the flight of the Samaritans eastward. In 1163, "Benjamin of Tudela found some 1,000 Samaritans outside of Shechem. It is therefore possible to surmise that the total Samaritan population of the country was about 2,000. The Arab writers a-Biruni (1048), Idrisi (1173), Yaqut al-Hamawi (1125), al-Dimashqi (1300), and others relate that there was a large number of Samaritans in Shechem, and some of them estimated the population at more than 1,000.

In 1480 Meshullam of Volterra found 50 Samaritan clans in Egypt and 700 other Samaritans outside Shechem. According to the testimony of all the above-mentioned writers, and if one takes into account that the census was restricted to adults only, it can be assumed that in Palestine alone there were 5,000–6,000 Samaritans before the beginning of Mamluk rule, and 2,000–2,500 remained by the beginning of Ottoman rule.

The Defters (land records of Palestine kept in Constantinople which were published by Bernard Lewis) determined that in 1525–26 there were 25 Samaritan families in Gaza; in 1533 there were 15 families in Gaza and 29 in Shechem; and in 1548 there were 18 families in Gaza and 34 in Shechem. The high priest Shalma b. Tabia notes in his letter to Europe in 1820 that "we number less than 500 souls," and even then he was exaggerating the size of the Samaritan population, which stood at less than 200 people, as Shechem was the only center that remained. According to a letter of the British consul James Finn in 1861, there were 35 tax-paying Samaritans in Shechem, a fact which raises the number of Samaritans to over 150. The traveler M.E. Rogers related, on the basis of testimony from the high priest Amram b. Shalma, that in 1855–59 there were 196 Samaritans in Shechem. According to the census of the British consulate, there were 160 Samaritans in 1881; 196 in 1902; and 162 in 1904. M. Gaster counted 103 in 1905, and P. Kahle 173 in 1909.

With the end of Ottoman rule, a total of 146 Samaritans remained in Shechem, but suddenly their numbers began to grow. One of the causes for this was marriages to Jewish women, so that in 1934 the community numbered 206 (according to the testimony of the high priest published in that year). In 1948 there were 58 Samaritans in the State of Israel and 250 in Shechem. As a result of the unification of families (from Shechem to Holon), in 1954 there were 87 in the State of Israel and 200 in Shechem; in 1963 there were 350 Samaritans in all, and in 1970 there were 430. In 2005 the two communities numbered around 500.

[Benyamim Tsdaka]

Religion and Customs
The sources of knowledge of the Samaritan religion are the Samaritan Pentateuch and Targum, Memar Markah, the liturgy, and various expositions of law and commentaries on the books of the Pentateuch (see Language and Literature). Aside from the Pentateuch, the sources span a period of about 1,400 years. In terms of religious development these may be divided into three broad periods: (1) from the completion of the Pentateuch (date uncertain) to the Roman period, the period of formulation; (2) the third to fourth centuries C.E., the period of consolidation; (3) the 13th–14th centuries, the period of expansion. Religious writing in other centuries, though important in several respects, did not radically change the general nature of Samaritan religion.

It is likely that the Samaritan creed in its earliest form was a simple statement of belief in God and in the Pentateuch. Belief in Moses as the sole prophet of God, so prominent a feature of Samaritanism, probably developed long before the Roman conquest of Palestine, and almost certainly belief in Mt. Gerizim as the one true sanctuary chosen by Israel’s God was well established before Alexander the Great (witness the large sacred area on Mt. Gerizim dated to his time). Belief in the resurrection, which is stated in many of the religious writings, certainly was in existence before the fourth century C.E., as it is to be found, but in a less developed form, in Memar Markah. As basis for this belief the Samaritan exegetes of all periods provide the “proof-text,” Gen. 3:19 (see below), but it seems certain that such “proof-texts” were pegs on which to hang beliefs that came into Samaritan religion at a later time. Belief in the taheb, i.e., restorer (or according to some “returner”), as one who would restore all things prior to the last day, the cataclysm, the judgment, and finally paradise, is undoubtedly the latest of the credal tenets. This tenet probably took hold in Samaritan soil during the time of religious ferment in Palestine around the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

The doctrine of God is clear, simple, and mainly bibli- cal. The absolute oneness of God is expressed on every hand. He is wholly “other” in substance and essence, present in all things, all-powerful, without peer, and beyond attribution. His purposes for mankind, especially Israel, were once and for all communicated to the world through Moses. The six beliefs can only be understood in terms of Moses. He was God’s “Man,” “the son of His house (= world),” almost His vice regent on earth; he it was who “wrote” the five books of the Pentateuch; it was he who authorized Mt. Gerizim as “the place which God chose” (not “will choose” as in Deut. 12:5 in the MT). There is some uncertainty about how Moses came to be associated with the taheb. It is in the didactic hymns of the 13th–14th-century part of the liturgy (many of which are to be found in manuscripts in various libraries, but see the long festival hymns in Cowley, The Samaritan Liturgy, vol. 2) that Moses is associated with the resurrection and judgment and with the restorer. Samaritan religious development did not quite formalize this association in the way that the other tenets were formalized, but in general it may be said that Samaritanism attributes to Moses every word and action, both for this world and beyond, which relates to the divine will for mankind.
The problem of belief in the resurrection in sectarian Samaritanism is fraught with difficulties. "Dositheanism may or may not have been one large sect. It may have comprised two or more sects stemming from an initial "heresy." Whether or not Dositheanism as a whole, or originally, believed in the resurrection as distinct from the priestly authority, there is no lack of evidence in the mainstream of Samaritan religious writing for such a belief. It is hardly likely that all such literature is "heretical."

The best view of essential Samaritan religion may be gained from a study of what the religious literature claims about Moses in relation to God and Israel. "Lord of all worlds," "the word of living truth," Moses is preeminent in all things; as the word in creation, the light shining on and in men, men's intercessor before God, lawgiver, teacher, priest, savior. All these and many other attributes, which are commonplace from the Memar Markah onward, indicate how far Samaritanism is "Mosaism." Almost a christological position is reached when Markah writes: "He who believes in him [= Moses] believes in his Lord" (Memar Markah, 47). Gnostic elements are prominent in the religious literature. These are elements found in common with the early Jewish and Christian literatures, but their influence on Samaritanism is often terminology rather than doctrinal. However, the emphasis on Moses as the word and the light seems to be best explained by reference to Gnosticism.

A typical Samaritan feature is the prominence of their priesthood in the life of the community. The priests are the interpreters of the law and the keepers of the secret of the calendar, upon which the true observation of their festivals depends. The famous "Baba Rabbah was the firstborn of a high priest.

Since the Samaritans possessed only the Pentateuch as against the threefold Bible of Judaism and had no codified second law corresponding to the Mishnah, the outlines of their beliefs were easier to delineate. Moses was "the prophet" to the Samaritans, and Joshua alone of all the other biblical prophets is held in high esteem, even called king, because he is mentioned in the Pentateuch as the servant of Moses, who was initiated by him to fill his place. This last remark gives the clue to the development of Samaritan doctrine, namely that no concept which had no warrant in the Pentateuch could be regarded as valid. So the resurrection doctrine is bound up with the Samaritan text of Gen. 3:19, "to your dust you shall return." There are many instances of Samaritan and masoretic textual disagreements, mostly insignificant, but a few are of the significance of the example just quoted, where a doctrine is at stake. The Ten Commandments of the masoretic Bible are regarded as nine by the Samaritans, who have a tenth of their own (of considerable length) stipulating the prime sanctity of Mt. Gerizim.

Some of the differentiae of Samaritan and Judaic religion are explained in this way. Other doctrines developed during certain eras, such as the belief in the judgment day. Belief in a day of vengeance and recompense, as it is called, could well have sprung from or given rise to Deuteronomy 32:35, where the Samaritan text reads "on the day of" against the masoretic text's "mine," a difference of two Hebrew letters.

Most of the beliefs about paradise are set in Islamic-type terms, and no doubt many details of the pictures of "the garden" were supplied during the long Islamic period, but as early as the Memar Markah there is sufficient evidence of such beliefs. The parallelism with early Jewish and Christian teachings on the subject is often striking, but not surprising if one takes into account the influence of Gnosticism on them.

There is no sign in Samaritan writings of the religious malpractices of which the Samaritan syncretists were condemned in 11 Kings 17:29ff.; indeed, the religion which emerges from the sources is remarkably pure and free from pagan influences. There is no indication anywhere of dove worship (R. Nahman ben Isaac, Hul. 6a) or the adoration of a "god" called Ashima (Ibn Ezra, introduction, Commentary on Esther). This last accusation was based on a misunderstanding, as Ibn Ezra was not cognizant of the Samaritan usage to evade pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton by applying a surname "Shema" or "Ashema" instead (like ha-Shem in Jewish religious practice).

On the practical side of religion, the Samaritans have developed their code of religious practice by direct interpretation of biblical laws. A halakkah came into being, though not in the same way as in Judaism. It often differs from the rabbinical halakkah by its stricter adherence to the letter of the law, as in the laws of Sabbath and festivals or marriage between close relatives. In other cases it is based on different interpretation, as in the law concerning the levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5–10) or fixing the date of Pentecost, etc. There was no systematic codification of the law, and the few extant Samaritan halakhic compendia are arranged very loosely. Jewish, Karaite and Rabbanite, influence on their legal literature is evident in Kitāb al-Mīrāth ("Book of Inheritance"), probably belonging to the 12th century C.E., and in the classification of the 613 commandments of the Pentateuch. Mention of the number 613 is found even earlier in Kitāb al-Kāfî (1042 C.E.), but a systematic enumeration and classification is found first in a liturgical poem by Aaron b. Manir of the 13th–14th century. His system shows striking dependence upon that of Maimonides. These influences are not surprising, as large Samaritan communities in Damascus and Cairo lived close to Jews, Rabbanites and Karaites.

Continuation of the festivals prescribed in the Torah was contingent on the political circumstances of the times, but throughout the vicissitudes of all these, the celebration of the Passover according to the strict regulations of the Torah was and is continued, whenever possible on Mt. Gerizim itself. Two other festivals, Pentecost and Tabernacles, were like Passover, regarded as pilgrimages, according to the Pentateuch (Ex. 23:17; 34:24; Lev. 23; Deut. 16), and to this day these pilgrimages are carried out as such (see M. Gaster, The Samaritans, pp. 168, 178 for details).
Holidays and Festivals

The Sabbath. The seventh day of the week serves as the basic rite for all Samaritan holidays and festivals. On the Sabbath the Samaritans hold four prayers. The first, which is held on the Sabbath eve, lasts for about an hour until the setting of the sun. The second is the Sabbath morning service, which begins, on regular Sabbaths, between three and four o’clock. The third is the afternoon prayer, which is held only on regular Sabbaths and those that fall during the counting of the Omer; it begins at noon and continues for about two hours. The fourth prayer is held at the end of the Sabbath and continues for about half an hour until the setting of the sun.

On Sabbaths and holidays the Samaritans dress in special clothing consisting of a long-sleeved, striped robe. During the prayers a long-sleeved white tallit made out of simple cloth is worn over the robe. The Samaritan synagogue is always oriented toward Mt. Gerizim. The worshipers stand on rugs spread out on the floor, and before one enters the synagogue he must remove his shoes. In addition, the worshipers must have a head covering while praying. The portion of the week is read at home by the head of the family, after the service, from siddurim.

The Samaritans do not light fires on the Sabbath or travel. They eat hot meals prepared beforehand only on the Sabbath eve, when they also kindle the lights that will remain on throughout the Sabbath; neither do they leave the vicinity of their community. The priests wear white miters on the Sabbath, to distinguish them from the red ones worn during the week. They also lead the services and religious rites and open the reading of the weekly portion.

The Festivals. The Samaritans celebrate seven mo‘adim, four of which are called mo‘adim and three haqgim. The haqgim are the pilgrimages ordered in the Torah, e.g., Ex. 23:14–19. This special designation seems to have arisen under the influence of the Arabic haqj, which means “pilgrimage.” The first mo‘ed is Passover, which falls on the 15th day of the first month. On the eve of the festival, the Samaritans carry out the ceremony of the sacrifice on Mt. Gerizim. The second mo‘ed is the Festival of the Seventh Month, which is celebrated on the first day of the seventh month and is parallel to the Jewish holiday of Rosh Ha-Shanah, except that it is celebrated for one day only. The third mo‘ed is the Day of Atonement, which is celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month from evening to evening. The fourth mo‘ed is Shemini Azeret, which is celebrated on the 22nd day of the seventh month.

The first haq is Hag ha-Mazzot (“Feast of Unleavened Bread”), which is celebrated on the 21st day of the first month. The Samaritans make a pilgrimage to the top of Mt. Gerizim for the first time (in their cycle of haggim). The second haq is the Festival of the Pentecost, which takes place on the day after the seventh Sabbath counted from the first Sabbath following Passover. As a result, it is traditional to celebrate this holiday on a Sunday. At this time the Samaritans make a pilgrimage for the second time. The third haq is Sukkot, which takes place on the 15th day of the seventh month, and the Samaritans make their third pilgrimage of the annual cycle. The Samaritans do not celebrate Purim or Hanukkah, because these holidays are not mentioned in the Pentateuch and were declared after the split between the Samaritans and the Jews. On the other hand, they celebrate the Independence Day of the State of Israel.

It should be noted that the Jews and the Samaritans rarely celebrate their holidays and festivals on the same days, as the determination of the beginning of the month and the intercalation of the years are made according to different calendar systems. Therefore, the differences of time between the Jewish and Samaritan holidays sometimes reach an entire month.

Passover. Passover is the time when the Samaritans celebrate the sacrifice of the paschal lamb on Mt. Gerizim. The ceremony is held 800 meters from the summit of the mountain, near the Samaritan center of 70 homes. At twilight on the 14th day of the first month all the members of the community gather at the site of the altar in two groups: the first carries out the sacrifice and the second, composed of community dignitaries and priests, participate in prayer. The high priest climbs upon a large stone and gives the signal to prepare to slaughter the sheep, while reading the story of the Exodus from Egypt (beginning with Exodus 12). The Samaritans have brought to the spot a number of sheep, corresponding to the number of families in the community, and, following the order of the high priest, the sheep are slaughtered as the congregation raises its voice in prayer. Immediately after the kashrut of the slaughter has been checked, the wool of the sheep is plucked with the aid of boiling water from two barrels placed upon the altar. Afterward, the sheep are hung from hooks and their intestines are cleaned and burned on the altar (together with those parts which are forbidden as food, according to the Samaritan Pentateuch).

At the end of cleaning and rinsing, the sheep are salted and laid aside for two hours, until the blood is absorbed by the salt. At about eight o’clock in the evening the sheep are carried on spits and placed into ovens for more than six hours. These ovens are dug into the earth and are sealed by means of shrubs and wet earth. At midnight the Samaritans return with bowls, open the ovens, remove the sheep, and divide the meat into the bowls. Each family takes its portion home, where it quickly eats the sacrifice together with ma‘zot and bitter herbs; any remains are returned to the altar and burned. Throughout the entire ceremony, the Samaritans continually sing, pray, and retell the story of the Exodus.

Festival of Pentecost (Shavuot). On this festival, as on Hag ha-Mazzot, the Samaritans make a pilgrimage to Mt. Gerizim. The holiday is celebrated on the 50th day of sefirat ha-Omer, which is on a Sunday. The Samaritans divide the period of the sefirah into seven weeks, and on each of the Sabbaths
during the period they devote the service to one of the seven stations the Children of Israel passed on their Exodus from Egypt until they arrived at Mt. Sinai: the (Red) Sea (Exodus 14:26–15:21); the second Sabbath is called Shabbat Marah (Exodus 15:22–26); the third Sabbath is called Shabbat Elim (Exodus 15:27–16:3); the fourth Sabbath is Shabbat ha-Man (Ex. 16:4–16); the fifth is Shabbat ha-Zur ba-Horev (Ex. 17:1–7); and the seventh Shabbat Amalek (Ex. 17:8–17).

On the fourth day after the sixth Sabbath of sefirat ha-Omer, the Samaritans celebrate the day of standing at Mt. Sinai. According to their tradition, the Pentateuch was given to the Children of Israel from above Mt. Sinai on this day. They pray and read from the Pentateuch from the middle of the night until the following evening. The seventh Sabbath during sefirat ha-Omer, the 49th day of the period, is called the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19:10–21:14).

The pilgrimage on the Festival of Pentecost begins early in the morning, and during the procession all the places holy to the Samaritans that are situated on the peak are visited: Givat Olam, on which Moses' tabernacle stood; Isaac's altar, the spot where Abraham bound his son; and the site of the 12 rocks that Joshua placed before erecting Moses' tabernacle, according to Samaritan tradition.

The Festival of the Seventh Month. The Samaritan calendar begins with this festival each year, and it is the beginning of the Days of Awe for the Samaritans. The festival is celebrated one day only, the first day of the seventh month. At the close of this day begin the prayers of the Ten Days of Repentance each evening and each morning until the Day of Atonement.

Day of Atonement. This holiday begins during the late afternoon and the fast continues for 25–26 hours of prayer and continuous reading of the Pentateuch and piyyutim. Every member of the community over the age of one year must fast.

Sukkot and Shemini Azeret. On the eve of Sukkot, the Samaritans place palm branches on the net roof of the sukkah, put interwoven twigs on the palm branches, hang citrus fruit on string from the net roof of the sukkah, and hang willow branches from the roof, which is supported by four poles. The sukkah is erected inside the house. The Arab riots that plagued the Samaritans during various periods forced them to build their sukkot in their houses, and over hundreds of years this has become a tradition. The eve of Sukkot is devoted to building the sukkah, and on the morning of the holiday the Samaritans make the third pilgrimage to the top of Mt. Gerizim.

The periods are of hol ha-mo’ed Sukkot and also of Passover are devoted to special prayers each morning and evening. The Samaritans sit in the sukkah but do not sleep there.

Shemini Azeret begins on the 22nd day of the seventh month and is also called Simhat Torah. After prayers, which begin shortly after midnight and continue for more than ten hours, like the prayers of all holidays and festivals, the priest carries the Torah around the synagogue for one round, while the worshipers clap hands.

Religious Ceremonies

CIRCUMCISION. The Samaritans are obligated to circumcise their sons at the age of eight days, for any male who is not circumcised eight days after birth is not considered an “Israel Samaritan” (Genesis 17:14). Because of the limited number of Samaritans who can perform the circumcision ceremony, this act has been handed over to non-Samaritans. The high priest officiates at the circumcision ceremony, which must take place immediately after morning prayers, at dawn. At the end of the ceremony, the high priest gives his blessing by reciting a poem on the subject ascribed to Markah (fourth century). The father of the infant then honors his guests and pays the high priest.

The Laws of Ritual Impurity and Purity. These laws are completely binding within the Samaritan community. During her menstrual period, for seven days, the woman is obliged to remain separated from her family, who must wait upon her and supply all her needs. She is forbidden to touch any household vessels, and anything upon which she sits must be rinsed with water. On the seventh day she bathes in water and becomes clean at sundown. A man who has had a nocturnal emission must wash his body in water and is unclean until nightfall. He sits during prayers in a special place outside the worshippers’ hall, is forbidden to raise his voice, and is forbidden to touch holy articles until evening comes. A woman giving birth to a son is unclean for 40 days, and if the child is a daughter she is unclean for 80 days, after which she purifies herself (Lev. 12 and 15). The redemption of the circumcised first-born son takes place only after the mother is cleansed of impurity of her childbirth. The high priest collects the redemption money.

Completion of the Torah. The completion of the Torah sets the official seal upon the beginning of the Samaritan’s way of life in his tradition. In content it is reminiscent of the Jewish “bar mitzvah ceremony, but the difference is fundamental. The Jewish bar mitzvah takes place at the age of 13, while the Samaritan’s bar mitzvah is dependent upon his education and ability. Only after he has learned the whole Pentateuch can the ceremony of completing the Pentateuch be arranged for a boy by his father. At the age of four or five, the father takes his son or daughter to the hakham (scholar) of the community, or to one of the priests, to have them taught Samaritan traditions and the principles of their faith. In an emergency, the father himself teaches his children. The child reads the Pentateuch in the ancient Hebrew script and in the special Samaritan pronunciation, as transmitted from generation to generation, and also learns writing. Able children complete the reading of the Pentateuch at the age of six, but some take as long as until the age of ten. On completing the reading, the child learns the blessing of Moses (Deut. 33–34) by heart. The father gathers all the Samaritans to the place of the rejoicing and the high priest
gives the signal. The child, standing in the center upon a high chair, clothed in his best outfit, recites the blessing of Moses, following it by a speech (by heart) prepared for him by his teacher. He then descends from the chair, kisses the hands of the priests and other dignitaries, and receives gifts from them. He is now regarded as one of the quorum needed for community prayers. On the following Sabbath after the prayers he reads a portion of the Pentateuch immediately after the high priest. The Samaritans are then invited to a feast prepared by the parents of the child. The ceremony takes place to the accompaniment of liturgical hymns and poems written by Samaritan *paytanim* of all eras.

**Kiddushin.** The proposal is the first of three stages in Samaritan marriage: *kiddushin, erusin, nissu’im*. They express the status of the girl in family life. When a Samaritan girl is certain of her choice, she urges him to request his parents to ask her parents for her hand. Occasionally, when a young man is in love he may request his parents to approach the girl’s parents even without telling her of it. On being asked, the girl’s parents reply: “We will call the damsel and inquire at her mouth” (Gen. 24:57). The girl’s wish is now tested. If she desires the man, though her parents are opposed, she may reply affirmatively. She then appoints a guardian to perform the *erusin* (betrothal) ceremony on her behalf. The *kiddushin* ceremony takes place in the girl’s home, and even a minor priest can sustain the bond and bless it by “recital of the Shema” and similar verses from the Pentateuch. The breaking of the *kiddushin* does not require divorce. Whenever conditions do not permit the continuation of the attachment, the man informs the girl’s parents of it in writing or by word of mouth, and he is not liable for damages.

**Erusin.** The betrothal usually takes place a short time after the *kiddushin*. Release from *erusin* requires a divorce. The girl is herself not present, but her representative, her father or her uncle, or, in the event of her father not consenting to the betrothal, the guardian, sits opposite the young man. They clasp right hands together as a sign of the bond. The high priest sitting opposite, places his right hand upon their clasped hands and pronounces the *erusin* blessings over the bond. The high priest then receives a tied handkerchief containing six silver shekels from the young man and hands them to the girl’s representative as a symbol of the dowry. When the priest finishes reading, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helpmeet for him” (Gen. 2:18–25), the fiancé kisses the hand of the priest and of the notables. The fiancé and his fiancée are now regarded as husband and wife.

**Nissu’im.** Marriage is the final stage, the formal act whose purpose is to complete the betrothal. Rejoicing on these occasions is greater than at any joyous Samaritan ceremony. The bridegroom’s family proclaims a week of rejoicing to begin the Sabbath before the wedding. This is called the *Shabbat ha-Petihah* (“the Opening Sabbath” of the rejoicing). On this Sabbath the weekly portion of the law is read in the house of the groom’s father. When the afternoon service is completed, the groom’s relatives walk in procession from house to house and invite the guests to take part in the week of rejoicing. On the termination of the Sabbath, the men have a great feast in the house of the groom’s father and sing wedding songs. The father of the groom bestows gifts upon the honored guests. On Sunday evening the women arrange their feast in the house of the bride’s mother and they, too, indulge in much singing and music. On Monday evening one of the groom’s relatives invites the men to a feast prepared in his house, and they again indulge in hymn singing and praises. In the center of the party sit the men, who sing, verse by verse, the account of Rebekah’s marriage to Isaac (Gen. 24), each man taking a turn, with the bridegroom completing the reading. The evening of the third day is called “the red night,” the night of the rejoicing of the bride. She is clothed in red garments symbolizing the purity of her virginity. The women prepare a splendid feast for her, the high point of which is the dance of the bridegroom’s mother holding a parcel decorated with flowers containing the garments of the groom. The wedding takes place on the fourth day when the luminaries, symbolized by the bridegroom and bride, were created. During the day the bridegroom takes a piece of parchment to one of the scholars among the priests and asks him to write the marriage contract (*ketubbah*). He also rewards him for his trouble. In the evening the men assemble in the house of the groom, where they partake of the marriage feast. Afterward the groom’s father invites the high priest to the place of rejoicing where the marriage is to take place. The high priest, the bridegroom, and the guests await the coming of the bride. She is accompanied by her relatives, who sing the Song of the Red Sea (the song of the prophetess Miriam) to the music of tambourines and with dancing. On the bride’s arrival the priests break out in poetic song and marriage psalms. When the singing is finished, the groom rises, hands the marriage contract to the high priest, and kisses his right hand. The priest reads it slowly, and then details the virtues and rank of the families of the bridegroom and bride and the conditions upon which their marriage is taking place. When the reading ends the contract is handed to the bride’s representative, her father, uncle, or guardian, for safekeeping. The groom kisses the hands of the high priest, gives him his feec and receives a wedding gift from him. The groom then turns to the bride, lifts the veil from her head, kisses her, and places a ring upon the finger of her right or left hand (a new custom). Sometimes they strengthen the bond by both drinking wine from the same cup (there is no canopy or breaking of a glass). During the following Sabbath prayers, songs signifying the joy of marriage are added. These are sung by the priest except when the groom is of a priestly family, in which case a lay Samaritan sings them. The groom reads the weekly portion of the law. The meal that takes place after the reading of the portion concludes the week of marriage.

**Intermarriage.** Samaritan *halakhah* permits intermarriage with the Jewish community on authorization by the
high priest, after he is convinced that the convert will be fit to bear the brunt of observing Samaritan tradition. The attitude of the Samaritans toward Jews is expressed as: the Jews are children of the Jewish people who have deviated from the right path but will return to it “on the day of vengeance and recompense.” A Samaritan may marry a Jewess only if she declares herself ready to observe Samaritan tradition. In such cases the Jewess lives in the bridegroom’s house for at least six months and learns the customs of the community. The high priest tests her knowledge of what is required of her and only then gives his authorization. A Samaritan girl can be married to a Jew only if he declares his willingness to become a Samaritan.

Such marriages, which Samaritans regard as a sign of a renewed tie between the two sectors of Israel – the Samaritan and the Jewish – are recognized by the Ministry of the Interior, and the marriage certificates are official forms of the ministry, which recognizes the high priest’s right to register the marriage. Up to 1970 six such cases had occurred, and in each case Samaritan men married Jewesses. The first case took place in 1923 and the last in 1969, despite the opposition in all cases of the Jewish chief rabbinate, which is not recognized by the Samaritan high priesthood.

**Divorce.** Divorce is very rare in the Samaritan community. In the 20th century, up to 1970, only three cases had taken place, the last being in 1962. Divorce releases from betrothal or marriage. Three causes are recognized by Samaritan halakhah:

1. abominable practices committed by either party, or by both together;
2. quarreling that makes the life of either party unbearable;
3. immorality, i.e., rumors or proofs that either party maintains extramarital relations.

In each case the cause must be confirmed by two or three witnesses. The high priest imposes upon the applicants a period for appeasement of at least a year, and when all efforts have failed, the man and woman go to the house of the high priest together with a limited number of their relatives. The high priest reads the bill of divorce in the hearing of the couple, tears the marriage contract, and removes the rings from their fingers. The divorced woman may not remarry her husband if either she or he marries another after the divorce. The guilty party must pay damages, as fixed by the high priest.

**Mourning.** Samaritans bury their dead in their cemetery on Mount Gerizim. They place the corpse in a coffin with its head pointing in the direction opposite to the peak of Mt. Gerizim in order that his face should be toward the mountain. After the death, they read the Pentateuch all night long. On next morning they wash the corpse. Anyone touching it becomes unclean and is obliged to bathe. They place the body in the coffin and carry it to the cemetery. The high priest eulogizes the person but does not make himself ritually unclean by touching the body (Lev. 21:10–15). When the party returns from the burial, a family unrelated to the dead invites those who were at the funeral to a meal of comfort. Samaritans mourn their dead seven days, as did Joseph his father. They do not stay indoors seven days as do Jews, but satisfy themselves by visiting the grave and delivering memorial addresses every morning and evening. On the seventh day the mourning is over. At the end of 30 days the relatives of the dead invite the Samaritans to a memorial meal, and this officially concludes the mourning ceremonies. They display no external signs of mourning for the dead (Deut. 14:1); they tear no garment nor do they place earth upon the head. On the Sabbath the whole of the Pentateuch is read in the home of the relatives of the dead. This is repeated daily in order to purify the soul of the deceased. For a year after the death, no festivity takes place in the house of the deceased. At the recital of the piyyutim of the festivals, special stanzas are said in his memory. On each festival, when the prayers are finished, the high priest recites “Kaddish for the exaltation of souls of all “the community of Israel who prostrate themselves before the holiest of mountains, Mt. Gerizim.”

[Benyamim Tsedaka]

**Samaritan Chronology**

No extant Samaritan work explains the Samaritan chronology, and the facts relating to this topic must therefore be gleaned from their writings.

**The Samaritan Calendar**

Based on a lunisolar system, the Samaritan calendar year (lunar year) has 354 days, divided into 12 months of 29 or 30 days each. The first day of the month is fixed by the conjunction (zimmut or kibhuz) of the moon with the sun (not by the appearance of the new moon). If the conjunction occurs at night or in the morning, not later than six hours before noon, that day is considered the first of the new month, which has 30 days; if it occurs later, the first of the new month is counted from the following and the month has 29 days. The civil year and the counting of the shemittot begin in the seventh month, Tishri; the religious year begins in Nisan (in their present-day calendars and in their astronomical tables the Samaritans count the shemittot from Nisan). In accordance with the Pentateuch, the months had no special names, but were counted as the first, the second, etc., starting with the month of Aviv (Ex. 12:2; Deut 16:1). This system is still practiced. In their historical and halakhic writings, however, one also encounters the later, non-pentateuochal names of Nisan, etc.

In the Pentateuch, Nisan is called “the month of Aviv” (Deut. 16:1), which is explained as the “month of ears of corn,” when the barleycorn begins to ripen. This description means that Nisan must always occur in the same season, which is impossible in a strict lunar year. Therefore, the Samaritans (like the Jews) had to bind their lunar year to a solar year and thus arrived at a lunisolar year. This solar year is a mixture of the Persian and the older Julian (or Syrian) year, as evident from the Samaritans’ astronomical tables. It has 365.25 days. In order to keep the lunar months in the solar seasons, it was
necessary to intercalate one month in each second or third year, seven times in the 19-year moon cycle. In contradistinction to the Jewish calendar, the Samaritan leap years are not bound to a fixed year in this cycle but are decided upon according to need. The intercalated month comes before Nisan. The Samaritan rule for intercalating is as follows: they calculate whether the conjunction of the first month will occur before or after the 12th of Adar (one of the Syrian solar months; March of the Julian calendar). In the latter case, the day of the conjunction is fixed as the first of Nisan; if it occurred on or before the 12th of Adar, the month is intercalated and the new year is a leap year.

The religious duty of intercalation is alluded to in the poems of the fourth-century Samaritan writers Amram Darah, and Markah: “…He [God] gave them feasts that do not shift and bound their names to the [celestial] lights” (Darah, Song 16, Ben-Hayyim, III. 2 p. 74). According to Samaritan tradition, the calendar was always based on calculation, not on observation of the new moon. This system, much venerated by them, is called Heshbon Kishiṭah (True Reckoning) or Mahshav Ayayamim (Reckoning of the Days). The oldest description of it is found in the *Abyi al-Hasan of Tyre’s compendium of law, al-Ṭabbakh (11th century), in which he explains why the Samaritan rite of fixing the first of each month according to the conjunction is the only way of arriving at the true beginning of the new month, as the conjunction signifies a real new occurrence each month, whereas the new moon differs only in degree from its later phases during the month.

A detailed account is given in the Tolidah (earliest part, 12th century). The origin of this “True Reckoning” is there attributed to Adam, who received the system from God through the angels and from whom it was passed on to Shem, Eber, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and finally Moses, who fixed the month of Nisan as the first month of spring and who taught the system to Phinehas, Aaron’s grandson. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, Phinehas applied this reckoning to the latitude of Mt. Gerizim. This passage explaining the principles of his system is written in Aramaic, showing that it was composed when this language was still used by Samaritan scholars, i.e., around the tenth century. The fixation of this date for the existence of the Samaritan calendar, more or less in its present form, can be corroborated by the external evidence of the tenth-century Karaite scholar Kirksišă, who polemized vehemently against the Samaritan system of fixing the first of the month by conjunction and reckoning, instead of by observation of the new moon. From Phinehas onward, the duty and privilege of fixing the calendar remained a heritage of the family of high priests. To this day, they issue the calendar twice a year (in the months of Av and Shevat). It is binding on the entire community, and each of its male members is obliged to buy a copy. The principles underlying its calculation are a secret of the family.

At the end of the 16th century, when European scholars came in contact with the Samaritans, they were interested in learning the secret of the calendar, but their questions remained unanswered. Finally, in 1831, S. de Sacy was able to obtain astronomical tables from Nabiš and published a specimen, and in 1896 M. Heidenheim followed suit; however, neither could explain the use of the table to compute the calendar. That was accomplished in 1939 by E. Robertson (in *BIRI*), whose work was supplemented by A.A. Akavyah in 1950 (in *Meliliha*), who translated Robertson’s paper into Hebrew, annotating it, and adding a short article of his own. Thanks to the efforts of all these scholars, it has become possible to understand a great deal about the calculation of the Samaritan calendar. About 600 tables were composed by Murjān al-Danfi and his two sons, Muslim and Abdallah. They were calculated for 200 Muslim years (1101–1300 A.H. = 1689–1883 C.E.) and their copying was finished in 1712.

The specimen published by Robertson comprises the tables relating to 1101 A.H. They bear the caption: “The year 6128 [after Creation], 3328 [after the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan], the 21st in the [solar] cycle of 28 [years] and the 9th in the [lunar] cycle of 19 [years], excerpt for the Hebrew [= Samaritan] solar year 1058 according to the era of Jezdegerd.” The inscription implies that the calculations are based on a solar year, which is counted according to the era of Jezdegerd, the last Persian king of the Sassanian dynasty, who lost his empire to the Arabs. The era, named after him, begins in 632 C.E., the year he ascended the throne. The Persian solar year differs from the older Julian one and was used by the Arabian scholars for their astronomical calculations, which reached greatest perfection in the eighth–ninth centuries. Together with the Arabic astronomical tables, the Samaritans adopted the counting of the solar years according to this era. They did not take over its exact system, however, but kept to the solar year of the older Julian calendar, which they probably learned (like the Jews) from the Byzantines. This last fact allows the inference to be made that the Samaritan system of calculating the calendar was developed during the time of Byzantine rule and revised later by the advanced system of their Arab overlords.

An interesting feature in the tables is the designation of the Samaritan lunar months by their Muslim names, in addition to their old names, the first, second, etc; the two designations are still applied in their present-day calendar. However, as the Muslim year, being strictly lunar, revolves through all the seasons, there are permanent changes in the coincidence of the Muslim with the original Samaritan names.

**Historical Chronology**

In the Pentateuch, which is also regarded by the Samaritans as a historical book for Samaritans, no fixed date era is given as the starting point from which years are counted successively; instead, the time of a certain event is given in relation to one preceding or following it. Nonetheless, several eras are mentioned in the Samaritan chronicles and datings of their manuscripts. The main era, to which all the others are related, after the Creation of the World or from Adam, is based on the lifespan of each of the Patriarchs in the Pentateuch, from...
Adam to the death of Moses, i.e., until the entry of the Israelites into Canaan. According to the Samaritan Pentateuch, this era extended for 2,794 years. The continuation of this calculation is founded on the lists of Samaritan high priests in their chronicles, especially the Salsalah and Tolidah (see below, Samaritan Language and Literature), and several other eras are mentioned. The Table: Beginning of Eras in Six Samaritan Chronicles, shows the beginning of some of the more important eras in six Samaritan chronicles.

The date of the entry into Canaan is identical in all six chronicles, except for a slight deviation of two years in the oldest, the Asatir. This conformity is a result of computations based upon figures mentioned in the Samaritan Pentateuch. From then on, one must rely on the other five chronicles – one begun in the 12th century c.e., two from the 15th century, and two from the beginning of the 20th century. The date of the beginning of the divine disfavor is alike in all of them; it is reached by adding 260 years, the reign of six high priests, to the date of the entry into Canaan. The disappearance of the holy Tabernacle, which was the beginning of the divine disfavor, occurred one year before the death of Uzzi, the sixth high priest, when Eli b. Jafni usurped the functions of the high priest. The Tolidah and the chronicle from 1908 (edited partly by J. Mac-Donald) postpone this event to the year of Uzzi’s death. There are wide discrepancies in dates given for the start of three of the last eras. One of the reasons for the differences is omissions or additions in the lists on which they are based.

Some scholars surmise that all the numbers in the Samaritan chronicles are founded on the theological concept that the world, in its present state, was meant to exist for 6,000 years – 3,000 years of divine favor (Rahutah) followed by 3,000 years of divine disfavor (Fanutah), after which the Messiah (Taheb) would appear, and return the holy Tabernacle and bring redemption and peace to all the world. The date 3054 after Creation fits approximately into that theory as marking the end of the period of the divine favor. From then to the appearance of Alexander the Great, about 1,000 years elapsed, i.e., one third of the period of divine disfavor. The date 4600 A.C. for *Baba Rabbah places the salvation he brought his people in the middle of this period of hardship and distress. Another 500 years from then to the rise of Muhammad fix the end of the divine disfavor and the advent of the Taheb at around 1,000 years after Muhammad.

Like their Muslim surroundings, the Samaritans began to reckon their dates according to the Muslim era, which they denoted as according to the Kingdom of Ismā’īl, Ismā’īliyya (= of Ismā’īl) or Hijriyya (= of the Flight). The use of this era became dominant and even more widespread than the appellation “after the Creation,” which kept its place in the chronicles but served to a lesser degree for dating documents. All dated Samaritan inscriptions mentioned in Sefer ha-Shmononim are dated by the Muslim era only. Even in the Samaritan calendar, issued twice a year by the high priest, the dating is by the Muhammadan year, sometimes synchronized to other systems, in addition to the counting of the years of shemittah, probably the oldest Samaritan way of dating events by starting from a fixed point.

In the Pentateuch (Lev. 25:8ff.) the Children of Israel are ordered to count Sabbatical (shemittah) Years (every seventh year) and Jubilees (every 50th year) after their entry into Canaan. The Samaritan tradition understood this to mean that the first year of their entry into Canaan was a Sabbatical Year, as it was the seventh year after their arrival in Transjordan. The second redactor of the Tolidah states that he finished his work in the year 747 A.C., which was the fourth year of the fifth Sabbatical in the 61st Jubilee since the entry of the Israelites into Canaan, the 5778th year A.H. and the 714th of Jezdegerd. Synchronization of several eras was widespread in Muslim writings, its aim being to exclude dating errors by later copyists, after that the writer of the Tolidah proceeds to outline the Samaritan system of counting the Jubilees. The first is counted 50 years, after which 49 are added for each following till the end of the fifth (= 246 years). This total is doubled to get the 10th Jubilee (= 492 years). He proceeds in this fashion to the 40th Jubilee (= 1968 years). After that he skips to the 55th (= 2706 years). From then on he adds only one or two at a time until he comes to the 65th Jubilee (= 3196 years), which is more than

### Beginning of Eras in Six Samaritan Chronicles

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<td>Beginning of Divine Disfavor; First Schism between Samaritans and Jews</td>
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<td>Alexander the Great, Era of Contracts</td>
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<td>Birth of Jesus</td>
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<td>3930</td>
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<td>Baba Rabbah</td>
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<td>4350</td>
<td>c. 4321</td>
<td>4292</td>
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<td>Advent of Muhammad, Era of the Flight</td>
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<td>4600</td>
<td>c. 4600</td>
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<td>4893</td>
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* All the years in this table are counted After Creation of the World (A.C.).
four Jubilees after the time of the composition of that part of the Tolidah and ten years short of the year 6000 A.C., the time of the expected advent of the Taheb.

The antiquity of the system of counting according to Jubilees is borne out by the apocryphal Book of Jubilees (second century B.C.E.). It seems to have been used by the Samaritans throughout the ages, alongside younger and more convenient systems. Today they count only the Sabbatical Years, dispensing with the Jubilees. It remains, however, undecided whether this system or the Era of the Contracts was the oldest used by them. It is not known when the Samaritans started to count by their main era, i.e., after Creation, as their oldest extant manuscripts are from the 12th century. As example for its use at that time serves the colophon of one fragmentary manuscript of the Pentateuch: “[Written by]… son of Abraham son of Joseph Zarfataah in the year 5579 A.C., which is the year 544 A.H.” Dating by this system was common throughout the Byzantine Empire, in Christian and Jewish circles alike, for documents, tombstones, and manuscripts from the seventh century C.E., and the same probably applies to the Samaritans. The system is first known from fragments of a “Book of Kings,” whose author was Demetrius (third century B.C.E.), a Hellenic Jew from Alexandria. Byzantine sources from the seventh century cite fragments of Christian, Syrian, and Alexandrian chronologers from the third and fifth centuries C.E. who built their systems on the era “After the Creation of the World.” In Jewish sources, the system is first mentioned in the fifth century C.E. (Av. Zar. 9b). The length of this era differs in Jewish, Samaritan, and Christian tradition, being the longest in the Christian (3,492 or 5,501 years until the beginning of the Common Era) and the shortest in the Jewish (3,761 years), the Samaritans occupying a position in between.

The colophon of the Samaritan chronicle completed in 1900 C.E. (ed. by Adler-Seligsohn) includes the era after Creation (6,179 years), that from the Entry into Canaan (3,385 years), the Common Era (1,900 years), the Muslim era (1,137 years), and mention of the Era of Diocletian (1,616 years). The latter, also called Era of the Martyrs, was inaugurated in Alexandria in 284 C.E., the year Diocletian ascended the throne. Its importance lay in the introduction of the 19-year moon cycle, which enabled the Christian Church Fathers to calculate more exactly than by their former 8-year cycle the date of Easter, which must fall on a Sunday after the first full moon in the month of spring. The 19-year moon cycle is used by the Samaritans to the present, although it is not known when they began to employ it or when they first dated by the Diocletian era.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Language

Throughout their history the Samaritans have used four languages: Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Arabic. Apart from the Pentateuch (see Samaritan *Pentateuch), Hebrew was retained as the language of liturgy, revived from the 14th century on. This later Hebrew was mixed with Aramaic words and grammatical forms and developed under the influence of the Samaritan Arabic vernacular. Likewise, Hebrew translations of Aramaic and Arabic works done by 19th- and 20th-century writers for European scholars, notably Moses Gaster, show clear Arabic influence in words, grammar, and syntax. A peculiarity of post-biblical Hebrew is the confusion of the gutturals.

Only scanty literary fragments have survived from the Hellenistic era and they testify to the use of the Greek language among the Samaritans. They are all excerpts from Alexander Polyhistor, a Roman historian (c. 80–40 B.C.E.), which were transmitted by Eusebius in his Praeparatio Evangelica (third to fourth century C.E.; for further information see Montgomery, op. cit., pp. 283–6). Fragments of a Greek translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch have been found in Egypt. Origen refers in his Hexapla to a “Samareitikon,” which is understood by most scholars to mean a Greek translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch. In 1953 a Greek archaeologist found a Samaritan synagogue inscription in Greek in Thessalonika which might belong to the fourth century C.E. (Kippenberg, p. 148). Samaritan Aramaic, a dialect of Western Aramaic, has been preserved in compositions dating from the early Roman period to the 11th century C.E. (see *Aramaic). Arabic has been used by the Samaritans as a spoken language for many centuries. It is not known exactly when Aramaic fell into disuse, but it seems to have died out as a written language in about the 11th century, and most of the non-Hebrew writings from that time on are in Middle Arabic.

Many manuscripts in Western libraries and in the Samaritan community set out a text in three parallel columns: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. These include the Pentateuch, Memar Markah, and some later exegetical works. There is also a glossary to the Pentateuch called Ha-Meliz, meaning “dictionary,” which sets out in parallel columns the Aramaic and Arabic equivalents of the Hebrew words of the Pentateuch. It was edited for the first time by Z. Ben-Ḥayyim (1, 11 no. x1). Ben-Ḥayyim showed that it was composed in two stages, the first part being the Hebrew-Aramaic from the 10th to the 11th centuries. Later, when Aramaic began to fall into disuse, another author added the Arabic column, very often translating not the Hebrew word but its Aramaic translation, which he no longer understood properly. This part was added to between the second half of the 11th to the 14th century. The only extant manuscript was copied in 1476. This glossary is today the most important source for knowledge of Samaritan Aramaic.

Literature

Extant Samaritan literature is relatively rare. The earliest work is the Pentateuch, which is the center of Samaritan life. To this day, the Samaritans jealously guard their most precious scroll, known as the Abisha Scroll, which they believe to be the actual copy of the Pentateuch made by Abisha, grandson of Eleazar, in the 13th year of the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan. All scholars agree that it belongs to a later period, but there is no agreement as to the exact time, and opinions vary between
the first (M. Gaster) and the 14th century C.E. (P. Kahle). Perez Castro reached the conclusion that the scroll consists of one older part, which belongs to the 12th or 13th century C.E., and of more recent additions from the 14th century. *Abu al-Fath ends his account on Sefer Avisha with the encouraging message that after having been lost it had reappeared in his days, "this being a sign of the approaching return of the Divine Favor" (p. 35). Next in order comes the Targum written in the Aramaic type similar to that of the Deftor and Memar Markah (see *Markah). It is a fairly literal translation, but manuscripts exist with interpretative additions. The presence of a number of Greek words suggests a date between the first and fourth centuries C.E., as Greek was probably still in use as a literary medium alongside Aramaic during the early part of that period in Samaria. Apart from some fragments, the oldest manuscript is the Barberini Triglot of 1226 C.E.

The Deftor (Gr. dipthēta, book) constitutes the oldest part of the liturgy and was probably composed in the fourth century C.E. (for the text, see A.E. Cowley, 1, pp. 1–92; Z. Ben-Hayyim, 111, 2, pp. 41–274). Additions were made in later times in Aramaic and Hebrew. This part of the liturgy contains some early hymns (e.g., The Hymn of the Angels, The Hymn of Joshua), and these, together with the hymns of Amram Darah, Markah, and Nanah, the son of Markah, may be described as the basic prayer book of the Samaritan community. The Memar Markah is of prime importance for the study of Samaritan Aramaic and for the history of Samaritan concepts.

LITURGISTS. Liturgists of a later period who still wrote in Aramaic were Tāviya ben Darṭa of the 10th–11th century C.E., Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ṣūrī of the 11th century, al-Dusṭān before the 13th century, and Av Gillugah of the 12th century. Aaron b. Manir of Damascus from the 13th to 14th centuries, and Mattanah Hamāzrī from the Samaritan community in Egypt, wrote in Hebrew, like the high priest of Shechem, Phinehas b. Yūsuf, the reviver of the Samaritan piyyut in Hebrew (1308–1367 C.E.), and his sons Eleazar and Avisha. Phinehas himself and his son Eleazar occasionally still used Aramaic in attempting to write "verses of Markah," i.e., to imitate the style of "the Samaritan Poet." Avisha, who received the epithet bāṭil ha-mēmar (i.e., "the writer") and, after Markah, perhaps the most famous and beloved liturgist in the Samaritan community, wrote in the Samaritan Hebrew that began to emerge by then and consisted of a mixture of classical Hebrew and Aramaic forms and words. He was a very prolific writer and his poems were included to a large extent in the Samaritan liturgy. Another famous liturgist was the scholar Ibrāhim b. Yaqūb al-Ayyā of the 18th century. In the 19th century the outstanding Samaritan scholar Phinehas b. Isaac (d. 1898), who was surnamed Fād Zavneh ("unique in his time"), composed liturgical poems of great beauty.

CHRONICLES. A number of chronicles are extant.

(1) The earliest is the Asōṭir (see *al-Asāṭir), a midrashic work written in late Aramaic and probably composed in the tenth or 11th century C.E.

(2) Al-Tolidah ("genealogy"), written in Hebrew, except for one Aramaic section dealing with the meridian of Mt. Gerizim, contains mainly genealogical lists from Adam to the entry into Canaan, and from then on lists of the high priestly and other important Samaritan families, interspersed at places by short historical accounts. The chronicle begins with a description of the Samaritan system in fixing their calendar, counting the Jubilees, etc. (see Historical Chronology). This work was composed by Jacob b. Ishmael, himself of high priestly origin, in 1346 C.E. He testifies that he copies the main part from an earlier work written by his ancestor Eleazar b. Amram in 1149 C.E. From then on it was added to by each generation.

(3) The Samaritan Book of Joshua (in Arabic) recounts the history of the Samaritan people from the initiation of Joshua by Moses to the days of Baba Rabbah. It contains much legendary material, and the place of origin and name of its author are not mentioned. In the opening sentences the writer states that he translated his work from a Hebrew source, which has not yet been discovered. The Hebrew Book of Joshua, which M. Gaster claimed to have found, is actually only one part of another Samaritan chronicle, a late compilation composed in about 1900 by Jacob b. Hārūn, as shown by P. Kahle, D. Yellin, and S. Yahuda. An Arabic Book of Joshua is enumerated by Abu al-Fath as one of the sources which he used for the composition of his Annals. The oldest manuscript (in the Leiden Library) consists of two parts: the first from 1362 C.E. (chs. 1–46); the second from 1513. The manuscript was sold to J. Scaliger in 1584 by the Samaritan community in Cairo (Juynboll, p. 340).

(4) The Annals (Kitāb al-Taʾrikh) by Abu al-Fath were composed in Arabic in 1355 C.E.

(5) Shalshahal ("chain") is a genealogy of high priests ascribed to Eleazar b. Phinehas of the 14th century C.E. and added to by Jacob b. Hārūn (19th–20th century C.E.).

(6) The New Chronicle or Chronicle Adler (one of the editors) was written in Samaritan Hebrew by Av-Sakhva b. Asad ha-Danī. It relates from Adam to 1900 C.E., the year of its composition, uses the earlier chronicles, and shows acquaintance with historical books of the Bible.

(7) Another New Chronicle in Samaritan Hebrew was written by Tāviya b. Phinehas in 1908 (see review to MacDonald’s edition of Chronicle 11 by Z. Ben-Hayyim in Lebshonenu, 30 (1971), 293–302). M. Gaster refers to this chronicle in The Samaritans (p. 157), saying that it was first ascribed to Tāviya and then to Phinehas. The writer used the earlier Samaritan chronicles, mainly the Annals of Abu al-Fath and great parts of the historical books of the Bible. The chronicle ends with the narration of the events in the writer’s own time.

HALAKHIC LITERATURE. Several halakhic works have survived, all in Middle Arabic: (1) Al-Kāfī ("the [all] sufficient") composed by Yūsuf al-ʿAskari in 1042 C.E.

(2) Kitāb al-Tabbākh of the same period by *Abu al-Ḥasan of Tyre. Abu al-Ḥasan is also said to be the translator of the
Samaritan Pentateuch into Arabic. His translation, however, fell into disuse, because of the many interpolations, which had crept into it from the Rabbannite Arabic translation of Saadiah. It was revised in the 13th century by the Samaritan scholar Abū Saʿīd (b. H. 1, pp. xxxiv, xxxv).

(3) Masāʾil al-Khilāf (the differences between the Samaritan and Jewish communities, Rabbannite and Karaites alike) of the 12th century by Munajja b. Sadaqa, the physician of Damascus. He is also said to be the author of a treatise on forbidden degrees of marriage, Sefer ha-Eravah; others ascribe this treatise to a certain Baraka of Shechem from the 14th century. The John Rylands Library contains a bilingual manuscript in Arabic and modern Samaritan Hebrew, translated and copied in 1930 by Avisha b. Phinehas from an old Arabic manuscript owned by his father (no. 250). Munajja polemicized against the Jewish scholar Saadiah and the Karaites al-Kirkišānī.

(4) Kitāb al-Mīrāth or Sefer ha-Yerushot (“The Book of Inheritance”) is ascribed to Ibrāhīm b. ʿIṣḥāq b. Mārūth, surnamed “The Sun of the Learned” (Shams al-Hukamā) physician to Ṣāliḥ al-Dīn, who lived in Damascus (or Baalbek?) in the 12th century.

(5) Kitāb al-Faraʾīd (“Book of Laws”), composed by Abu al-Faraj Nafis al-Dīn al-Kathār of the 13th or 14th century, is an important halakhic work. In this compendium of religious usage, the author mentions 613 commandments divided into 365 prohibitions (like the days of the year) and 248 orders (like the parts of the human body). The 613 commandments are referred to earlier in Kitāb al-Kāfī, but without such division or enumeration.

(6) Shirat ha-Mitzvot, a long poem by the 13th–14th-century liturgical poet Aaron b. Manir of Damascus, enumerates the 613 commandments in accordance with the above-mentioned division. His system shows striking resemblance to that of Maimonides.

(7) The Hillūk or Khilāf al-Irshād (“Differences in Teaching”), a late Samaritan halakhic work, is ascribed by the sons of Phinehas b. Isaac ha-Kohen and of Jacob b. Hārūn to their fathers, respectively. It is divided into ten chapters and contains differences between Jews and Samaritans, based on readings in the Pentateuch. It ends with a section on death, divine punishment, and resurrection. The first chapter contains a brief sketch on Samaritan history, and Samaritan communities such as Aleppo, Damascus, Cairo, and Gaza are mentioned as places where Samaritans continue to live, although these communities disappeared long ago. This shows that the book was compiled from old materials.

None of these works presents a systematic codification of Samaritan oral law; the nearest to attain this aim is Kitāb al-Faraʾīd. All contain polemics against Karaites and Rabbannite Jews, and even against certain Muslim philosophical teachings and Christian beliefs (e.g., in Kitāb al-Tabbākh). Vast sections are commentaries to passages of the Pentateuch.

PENTATEUCH COMMENTARIES. Like the halakhic writings, the Samaritan commentaries to the Pentateuch, still extant, are all from the Arabic period and are written in Middle Arabic. Apart from lexicographical and grammatical material contained in them, they show familiarity with medieval philosophy, astrology, astronomy, and even medicine, as famous Samaritan physicians were among the commentators. The influence of Karaites or Rabbannite writings is discernible in some commentaries.

(1) A commentary on Genesis 1–28:10 by an unknown author (composed in 1053 C.E.), a specimen of which has been published by Neubauer, is of Karaites provenance. It was adapted to the Samaritan pentateuchal text in an external and very perfunctory manner prior to the year 1348, when the single extant manuscript was copied (Loevenstamm, Perush Karai’ al ha-Torah bi-Levush Shomroni).

(2) Sadaqa b. Munajja al-Hakimi (d. 1223 in Haran), physician to Malik al-Ashraf, composed a philosophical treatise Kitāb al-Tawhīd (“Book of [God’s] Oneness”), in which he adduces proofs for the absolute oneness of God from verses of the Pentateuch. A commentary to Genesis is ascribed to him (M. Steinschneider, A.II, 331).

(3) Abu al-Faraj Nafis al-Dīn (author of Kitāb al-Faraʾīd) wrote a commentary on Leviticus 26 called Sharḥ (“interpretation”) “im be-Hukkotai.” In it he cites from a lost Aramaic commentary of al-Dustān, well known as a liturgical poet in the Aramaic language.

(4) Several treatises are ascribed to Ghazzāl or Tabīḥ b. al-Doweik of the 13th–14th century: (a) the Story of Balaam, (b) the Affirmation of the Second Kingdom (Rylands’ Catalogue, p. 110, Cod. v111), and (c) an unfinished commentary to Exodus.

(5) Ibrāhīm al-Kabāsī, noted scholar and liturgist of Damascus (16th century), wrote a book Sair al-Qalb (“Conducts of the Heart”), wherein he expounds the need to conduct a life in accordance with divine teachings. He, too, enumerates 613 commandments. His system, like that of Aaron b. Manir, shows striking resemblance to that of Maimonides. His second book, a commentary to Deuteronomy 32:3, 4 called “Sharḥ Efshem” or “al-Fāṭiha,” deals with the power of the divine name. Deuteronomy 32:3, 4, like the first Sura of the Koran, became the basic verses in the Samaritan prayers. This book is of special interest as it shows influence of esoteric teachings.

(6) An important midrashic work from 1337 C.E., Molad Moshe, a panegyric to Moses, was composed in Arabic by Yishmael Haramhi (Isma’il al-Rumyhi) of Damascus, a disciple of Ibrāhīm al-Kabāsī, who honored him by writing the introduction to his pupil’s work (edited by S.J. Miller, New York, 1949, together with a Samaritan Hebrew version by Phinehas b. Isaac ha-Kohen).

(7) The most comprehensive commentary to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers was composed in the 18th century. Begun by Meshalma or Muslim b. Murjān, of the Danafī family, renowned for its scholars and scribes, it was continued and partly rewritten by his nephew and disciple Ibrāhīm b. Yaʿqūb al-ʿAyya from Genesis 46:28 to the end. Ibrāhīm al-ʿAyya, commentator, liturgist, grammarian, chro-
nologer, and scribe, was one of the most famous Samaritan scholars. He took part in the correspondence between Samaritans and European scholars. Parts of his commentary have been edited as doctoral dissertations.

(8) At about the same time (1753/54), Ghazzāl ibn Abu al-Sarūr al-Ghāzī composed an aggadic commentary called Kāshīf al-Ghayāhib or Megalleh Temirin ("Revealer of Hidden Things").

GRAMMATICAL WORKS. Although the Samaritan Pentateuch is not bound by a masorah, like that of the Jews, there is a fixed pronunciation of the Torah, which is transmitted very carefully by oral teaching from generation to generation. An extant work from the end of the 10th–11th century by the poet Taviya ibn Dartah called "A Canon on the Rules of Reading" deals with the accents used in reading the text of the Pentateuch. The treatise was composed in Arabic, but the Aramaic names of the accents and the Aramaic verse at its close testify to the antiquity of the sources from which it was gleaned. Dealing with the same topic is the "Treatise Concerning the Reading" by Ibrāhīm al-ʿĀyya, who wrote several other grammatical treatises, one about the vowel signs, another concerning the articulation of the 22 letters of the Hebrew-Samaritan alphabet, and a third on "Words Similar in Pronunciation." The works of Ibn Dartah and of al-ʿĀyya were edited for the first time by Z. Ben-Hayyim in Ibrīt ve-Aramit Nosah Shomron (1, 11), together with other Samaritan grammatical and lexicographical writings. Here it may suffice to refer to the earliest Samaritan grammar (Sekt. 1), Kītāb al Tawṭīʿī ("Book of Introduction") by the physician Abu Ishaq b. Ibrāhīm b. Faraj. b. Mārūth of Damascus (or Baalbek) from the 12th century (supposed composer of Kītāb al-Mīrāth). Abu Ishaq does not mention any predecessor, and his work is in accordance with that of Jewish and Arabic grammarians of his time. Like them he accepts the assumption of the three-radical stem of the word (in contradistinction to that adduced in the commentary of the unknown author from 1053 and in the dictionary "Ha-Melīz"). On this basis, he succeeds in creating his own grammatical system of the Hebrew language according to the pronunciation typical of the Samaritan community. His treatise shows that, from his time until today, only a few minor changes occurred in this pronunciation. His work, however, seems not to have been very popular in the Samaritan community, as shown by the single extant manuscript and by a later abridgment called Mukhtasaṣ al-Tawṭīʿī a by Eleazar b. Phinehas b. Joseph, high priest of the Samaritan community from 1363 to 1387. This work seems to have enjoyed great popularity, as shown by the many extant manuscripts and the number of different names given to it (Ben-Hayyim 1, Sect. 111).

Some minor grammatical treatises were written by Phinehas b. Isaac Ha-kohen (d. 1898): on the ḫigl perfect and imperfect of hollow verbs (Ben-Hayyim 1, Sect. vi, a.b.g.). Phinehas stood in high esteem as scholar and liturgist and, in addition to "Fard Zavnēh" ("Unique of his Time"), was surnamed Ḥashov Ḥeshbān Kishṭah ("Reckoner of the True Reckoning") because of his proficiency in Samaritan chronology and fixing of the calendar. He is said to have encouraged Av-Sakhva to compile his chronicle (i.e., the New Chronicle), as the high priest Phinehas b. Yūsuf of the 14th century asked Abu al-Fath to compose his Annals (8.11. 1 pp. xlvi, xlvii). Another modern chronicle is ascribed to him. Like many contemporaries, among them the high priest Jacob b. Hārūn, he translated Samaritan manuscripts from Arabic into Samaritan Hebrew.

Samaritan literature, only part of which has been dealt with here, is wholly centered around the Pentateuch and the religious life of the community. The liturgical, halakhic, midrashic, grammatical, lexicographical, philosophical, and chronological literature all developed with the same aim: to guide the community to understand the very meaning and intention of the divine book and to teach them to fulfill its commandments. Even the historical literature fits into this system, as it sets out to show that man's welfare depends on his obedience to the laws of "The Book."

[Ayala Loewenstamm]

IN ISLAM

In the Koran, al-Sāmirī is a strange figure. He incited the people of Israel to make the Golden Calf and Aaron's warnings were of no avail. Al-Sāmirī succeeded by using sorcery and was punished by having to proclaim forever: "lā misāsū ("touch me not!"); Sura 20:85–97). The name al-Sāmirī is difficult to explain and usually is interpreted as an allusion to the Samaritans, who according to Muhammad bore some of the responsibility for calf worship in Samaria. Speyer, however, believes that it alludes to the act of Zimri b. Salū, who was killed by Phinehas for his misconduct with a Midianite woman (Num. 25:1–15). This assumption appears to be forced and the tale of the Sāmirī remains a mystery.

[Haim Zew Hirschberg]

MUSICAL TRADITION

The musical tradition of the Samaritans, which is closely linked to their linguistic tradition, is completely devoid of instrumental music; in fact, the Samaritans do not even sound the shofar. Moreover, the Samaritans have no formal theoretical system of tones, meter, or rhythm. The two main styles of the Samaritan melos are the kal ("light") and the kaved ("heavy") style. The kal style is mainly syllabic. Its rhythm is linked to that of the text and its range is extremely limited. The center tone generally serves as the axis of the melody, with seconds on either side, and only occasional extensions to a third, fourth, and fifth. The kaved style is basically nonsyllabic and rich in embellishments. The melodic axis in this style consists of the center tone with the embellishments adjacent to it, but at times the melody projects over larger intervals such as the fifth, sixth, seventh, or even the octave, and then returns to its center. The manner of rendering Samaritan songs is chiefly characterized, in almost every melodic texture and prominently so in the kaved style, by strong vibrato, by glissando to the degree that it is difficult to fix the duration of the tone,
and especially by the za‘ak – the sforzato ejaculation, which is extremely loud and often precedes or succeeds the vibrato or appears on either side of the glissando.

In the vibrating kaved style, the pronunciation of the text is often extended by filler-syllables, which stretch and support the melodic line. A word such as ‘at may be transformed in the kaved cantillation to ‘a-ta-wa-nu-wa. An intermediate style called haẓi kaved (“half-heavy”) is also recognized. The Samaritan Bible cantillation is not based upon a system of *masoretic accents. The present usage is regulated by just four cadential formulas: the half-rakza and rakza which mark the hemistichs; the waqfa at the end of the verse; and the nāhwa, placed at the end of the qisṭa does the melodic impetus quicken and the melodic curve becomes more pronounced. There are distinct melodic schemes for cantillation on various occasions – for certain Sabbaths and feasts, readings by the priests, private study, etc. An old and obscure tradition utilizes a different system: the ten sidrei mikreta (pronounced sedari maqata), i.e., “rules” or “principles of reading,” effected by signs placed after words or phrases. The signs seem to have had a combined exegetical-syntactical-musical function similar, in principle, to the Jewish accentual system and its cognates in the Near East (especially the Syriac). The signs and their Aramaic names are as follows (pronunciation bracketed):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{‘enged or ‘neged).} & \quad \text{דוע} \\
\text{‘aṣaq or ‘aṣfa):} & \quad \text{מסקן} \\
\text{’anā‘u) & \quad \text{נוהי} \\
\text{er’kānu) / アヌ & \quad \text{اعتقال} \\
\text{siy’yāla} & < \text{שֵׂכָלִי} \\
\text{za’eiqā} & \quad \text{אָעָלִי} \\
\text{et’ma’u) & < \text{들에게} \\
\text{bā‘i) & = \text{לג} \\
\text{tārū}) & : \quad \text{לד} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The signs are no longer used either in the Samaritan scrolls of the Law or the prayer books, and their precise meaning and application were apparently lost many centuries ago.

The most interesting rendition of the piyyutim is the antiphonal performance which the Samaritans call “lower and upper” or “right and left.” The congregation divides itself into two groups on either side of the parokhet, and simultaneously recite different parts of the hymn, each with its own melody. A polyphony, which is extremely dissonant to the Western ear, is thus created, although the Samaritans execute it most naturally and each member of the congregation is habituated to his “half” of the performance.

The Samaritans do not seem to possess any truly secular songs. However, on special occasions, such as weddings and circumcisions, they sing piyyutim in an easy and metrical “light” style.

On the periphery of the Samaritan tradition there are light songs, usually Arabic ditties with overtly secular themes, bearing the imprint of the Arab melos and poetical form. But for the Samaritans, a song such as Sir bīnā sīhrā nadīmi is an allegorical song and not one merely of love and desire.

These elements, however, have become an integral part of the musical tradition of the Samaritan community. Some manuscripts of religious poems have headings which indicate, in Arabic, the melody or style in which the poems are to be sung.

A feature often apparent in all genres of Samaritan singing-songs, hymns, and prayers is the phenomenon designated by the musicological-historical term parallel organum: the rendition of one melody by a group of singers, adults and/or children, in which each individual or subgroup proceeds on an independent tonal level, thus creating a polyphony of strictly parallel strands. The procedure is entirely unconscious and spontaneous, and the Samaritans themselves do not have a term for it (a very similar usage is also found among the Yemenite Jews and in a few other cultures in various parts of the world).

The characteristics of Samaritan song (which has only begun to be subjected to a thorough musicological analysis) give it a peculiarity which is apparent at first hearing. All the elements – vibrato, glissando, za‘aq, the melodic curve itself, “right and left,” and organum – combine to make a strongly original style, which has no parallel either in the musical traditions of the Jewish communities or those of any present Near Eastern culture. Samaritan music evinces the survival of archaic elements whose import has yet to be explored.

[Slomo Hofman]

SAMARKAND


SAMARKAND, capital of Samarkand district, Uzbekistan. Jews are mentioned there from hearsay for the first time by *Benjamin of Tudela (12th century) as a large community. It