

with the true temple in heaven (11:1-2, 19). When, at the end, a new Jerusalem is built on earth, it pointedly does not contain a temple (21:22).

Jewish priests were still respected in the NT—they are not criticized when consulted concerning Scripture and rites (Matt. 2:4; 8:4 par.) or performing temple rites (Luke 1:9), and the office of high priest is regarded with respect (Acts 23:5). However, almost all of the many references to “high priest” are negative, in both the singular (referring to the current holder of the office) and the plural (usually translated “chief priests” and referring to a class of ruling priests, not merely to former holders of the post of high priest).

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Jews and Samaritans

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Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans,” explains the author of John’s Gospel (4:9). This statement is consistent with other sources that speak about strained Jewish-Samaritan relations in antiquity. Yet the exact nature and the cause of the separation between these two groups are far from clear. The evidence from Jewish and Samaritan literature is frequently biased, unreliable, or both. According to the Jewish sources, which are generally hostile to Samaritans, the latter were semipagans who rejected the Jerusalem temple and regarded Mount Gerizim as the exclusive legitimate place of worship. According to the Samaritan sources, most of which come from Byzantine and medieval times, Samaritans were true Israelites who stood in unbroken continuity with the religion of ancient Israel. The self-designations of the Samaritans, who have survived until today as a tiny community of approximately seven hundred people living in Holon and on Mount Gerizim, include terms such as “guardians of the Torah,” “guardians of the land of Israel,” and “Israelite Samaritans.” Should, then, the Samaritans be regarded as a Jewish sect, especially in view of Judaism’s variegated character before AD 70, or as an independent form of Yahwism? The matter is further complicated by numerous similarities in the beliefs, practices, and sacred texts of both groups, which suggest close relations over a long period of time. If so, when exactly did the final parting of the ways between the Jews and the Samaritans take place?

Historical reconstructions of Jewish-Samaritan relations have unfortunately suffered from ambiguous and inconsistent terminology. Until about forty years

ago, most scholars made no distinction between the inhabitants of the political district of Samaria and the Samaritan religious community. Since then, it has been customary to apply the term "Samaritans" only to the Yahweh-worshippers whose religious center was Mount Gerizim and the term "Samaritians" to other inhabitants of Samaria.

Literary and Archaeological Evidence

According to 2 Kings 17, after the Assyrians deported most of the citizens of the northern kingdom, they populated the towns of Samaria with pagan immigrants. When some of the new settlers were killed by lions because of their ignorance of "the law of the god of the land" (vv. 26–27), the Assyrian king sent one of the exiled northern priests to teach them how to worship the God of Israel. Consequently, the inhabitants of Samaria accepted Yahwism but also continued with their former religious practices. The account concludes with a condescending statement: "To this day their children and their children's children continue to do as their ancestors did" (v. 41).

The polemical character of this report significantly reduces its historical reliability. Scholars generally recognize that the numbers of Israelites who were taken into exile and of the foreign immigrants who were settled in Samaria were relatively small. Moreover, although 2 Kings 17:29 contains the term *šōmronīm*, which does not occur anywhere else in the HB, the original account most likely referred to the Samaritans—that is, the syncretistic population of Samaria. The pagan origin of the inhabitants of Samaria is also presumed in the Ezra–Nehemiah cycle about the adversaries of the Jewish returnees from the Babylonian captivity who opposed the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple and the reconstruction of the city walls (cf. Ezra 4:1–16; Neh. 4:1–8). Yet none of the biblical writings mention a rival cult associated with Shechem and Mount Gerizim. Moreover, both references to Mount Gerizim in the MT of Deuteronomy (11:29; 27:12) present it in a positive light.

One of the earliest references to the Samaritans appears in Sir. 50:25–26, an early second-century BC text that describes them as "the foolish people that live in Shechem" (v. 26). The condescending tenor of the passage is unmistakable, but it is unclear whether the author refers to the Samaritans as a distinct ethnic group comparable to other pagan nations or merely as an objectionable religious community. What can be said with more certainty is that by the second century BC, the Samaritans were identified through their association with Shechem and perceived as "foolish." This association is supported by Josephus's comment that Shechem was located on Mount Gerizim and served as the Samaritans' capital (Ant. 11.340). The reasons for such a derogatory assessment are not provided, however, and there is no mention of the Gerizim temple.

Second Maccabees, usually dated to the last quarter of the second century BC, contains two passing references to the Samaritans. In 2 Macc. 5:22–23, the

group associated with Mount Gerizim is included in the Jewish people. According to 2 Macc. 6:1–2, Antiochus IV Epiphanes renamed the Jerusalem temple as "the temple of Olympian Zeus" and the Gerizim temple as "the temple of Zeus-the-Friend-of-Strangers." Neither passage displays an explicit hostility toward the Samaritans.

In 1979 two inscriptions, dated respectively from the third to second and from the second to first centuries BC, were discovered on the island of Delos. The dedicators of these inscriptions call themselves "the Israelites in Delos who make offerings to hallowed *Argarizein*" (see Pummer, *Samaritans*, 16). Since these people presume the sacredness of Mount Gerizim, most scholars identify them as Samaritans. They clearly perceive themselves as Israelites. Since, however, the context of these inscriptions is unknown, nothing else can be said about this community.

The NT contains several passages that provide some information about Jewish-Samaritan relationships in the first century AD. In Matt. 10:5–6, Jesus instructs his disciples not to enter any town of the Samaritans but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Regardless of whose view is reflected in this text, that of the historical Jesus or of the Matthean church, it clearly presumes that Samaritans are not Israelites. According to Luke 9:51–53, the residents of one Samaritan village refused to show hospitality to Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem. In the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), however, a Samaritan who shows mercy to an injured Jew becomes a model of neighborly love. Similarly, Luke 17:11–19 singles out a Samaritan among the ten lepers who have been healed by Jesus as the only one who has shown gratitude. The last two passages, like the account of the Samaritan mission in Acts 8:4–25, not only betray a sympathetic view of the Samaritans but also portray them as devoted observers of the Torah. The most instructive NT passage about Jewish-Samaritan relations in antiquity is the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4:4–42, which mentions a disagreement between the Jews and the Samaritans with regard to the proper place of worship and the Samaritan expectation of a messianic figure. Nevertheless, like other NT references, this text does not offer any specific information about the appearance of the Samaritans as a distinct religious community.

In contrast to these sporadic references to the Samaritans, the writings of Josephus contain several lengthy passages that discuss their origin and relationship to the Jews. The following survey includes only some of the most significant passages in Josephus (more fully, see Pummer, *Samaritans*, 67–285). This does not mean that Josephus had firsthand knowledge of Samaritans. He never describes their beliefs and customs and shows no familiarity with the Samaritan Pentateuch. He was also apparently unaware of the existence of the Dositheans, a Samaritan sect that regarded a certain Dositheus as the prophet like Moses, foretold in Deut. 18:15–18 (Isser, *Dositheans*, 163–64). Most of Josephus's accounts are derived from Scripture and other literary (or oral) sources, which he utilizes for his own purposes (Pummer, *Samaritans*, 66). In *Jewish Antiquities*, where Josephus mentions

the Samaritans most frequently, he regularly presents them as a foil for the Jews in order to commend the latter to his Roman audience. Josephus's more neutral portrayal of the Samaritans in *Jewish War* better reflects the actual relationship between Jews and Samaritans in the first century AD, which was not as antagonistic as it is sometimes assumed (see Pummer, *Samaritans*, 282).

In *Ant.* 9.288–91 and 10.183–85, Josephus offers his interpretation of 2 Kings 17:24–41. He firmly links this biblical passage to the Samaritans of his day by emphasizing the ethnic discontinuity between the northern Israelites and the new inhabitants of Samaria. The latter are, he says, called Cutheans in Hebrew (after their Persian and Median countries of origin) and Samaritans in Greek (after their new settlement in Samaria; see *Ant.* 9.290; 10.184). Josephus regularly emphasizes the foreign origin of the Samaritans (cf. *J.W.* 1.63; *Ant.* 11.302; 13.255–56). In all of these instances, he uses the terms "Samaritans" and "Cutheans" as synonyms, regardless of whether his sources made such an identification or not.

At the same time, however, Josephus underscores the religious sincerity of these new converts to Yahwism and presents them as genuine proselytes. Yet he also adds that the Samaritans are opportunists in their dealings with the Jews. When the Jews prosper, the Samaritans behave as though they are their relatives, but when the Jews are in difficulties, the Samaritans deny any association with them (*Ant.* 9.291; for similar accusations of opportunism, see *Ant.* 11.341; 12.257).

Josephus is the only ancient author that provides an account of the building of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim (*Ant.* 11.302–47). He reports that during the campaign of Alexander the Great against the Persian king Darius, Manasseh, the brother of the high priest Jaddua, married a daughter of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria who was of Cuthean origin. The elders of Jerusalem, however, coerced Jaddua to ask Manasseh to divorce his non-Jewish wife or resign from his sacerdotal duties. When Sanballat learned that Manasseh would rather dissolve his marriage than relinquish his priestly privileges, he promised to build him a temple on Mount Gerizim like the one in Jerusalem if he remained married to his daughter. Sanballat was able to fulfill this promise with the help of Alexander the Great, to whom he pledged unreserved allegiance. In the meantime, however, Jaddua also secured Alexander's goodwill by predicting the latter's victory over the Persians. When the Samaritans heard that Alexander had sacrificed to Israel's God in the Jerusalem temple, they opportunistically declared that they too were Jews and invited Alexander to bestow a similar honor on their temple on Mount Gerizim. He promised to do so on his return but was prevented by his premature death. Josephus closes his report by remarking that the religious community at Shechem welcomed those Jews who claimed to have been unjustly accused by the citizens of Jerusalem of eating unclean food, breaking the Sabbath commandment, or other similar transgressions.

Josephus's narrative about Jaddua, Manasseh, and Sanballat resembles a similar account in Neh. 13:28–29, which mentions one of the sons of Jehoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, who was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite. Whether

Josephus's account expands Neh. 13:28 or represents an independent account, it is clear that he presents the Samaritan temple and its priesthood in a negative light: the Gerizim temple was built with the help of a foreign king, and its first high priest was a Jewish renegade married to a foreign woman. This narrative also offers an alternative interpretation of the origin of the Samaritans. Unlike those passages that portray them as descendants of the Medes and Persians, they are presented here, for the most part, as apostate Jews. Such diverse accounts most likely reflect the ambiguous attitude toward the Samaritans that Josephus shared with his Jewish contemporaries.

Josephus's other reports about the Samaritans in the pre-Roman period include accounts of their cowardly compliance with the decrees of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (*Ant.* 12.257–64), of quarrels between Jews and Samaritans in Egypt about whether the temple in Jerusalem or the one on Mount Gerizim had been built according to the Mosaic law (*Ant.* 12.7–10; 13.74–79), and of the capture of Shechem and the destruction of the Gerizim temple by John Hyrcanus I (*J.W.* 1.62–63; *Ant.* 13.254–56). His accounts about the Samaritans in the Roman period include the stories of a group of Samaritans who scattered human bones in the temple area (*Ant.* 18.29–30), of a Samaritan prophet during Pilate's procuratorship who misled a band of followers by promising to show them the sacred vessels buried at Mount Gerizim (*Ant.* 18.85–87), of a violent incident between the Samaritans and the Galileans during Cumanus's procuratorship (*J.W.* 2.232–46; *Ant.* 20.118–36), and of a Roman massacre of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim (*J.W.* 3.307–15).

Two major groups of post-Josephan literary sources about the Samaritans are the rabbinic texts¹ and the Samaritan chronicles.² For the rabbis, the Samaritans were both Jews and non-Jews (cf. *t. Ter.* 4.14; *y. Demai* 25d; *y. Git.* 43c; *m. Ber.* 7.1; *y. Ber.* 11b; *y. Ketub.* 27a; *b. Qidd.* 75b; *b. Sanh.* 85b; *b. Nid.* 56b). The Samaritan chronicles, in contrast, offer insights into the Samaritan self-understanding, which could provide a needed counterbalance to the antagonistic presentation of the Samaritans in the Jewish sources. They trace the origin of the Samaritans back to the eleventh century BC, when the wicked priest Eli allegedly moved Israel's cultic center from Shechem to Shiloh. The Samaritans were those Israelites who stayed in Shechem and remained faithful to the worship of the God of Israel, thus avoiding the paganism of the northern kings and the heresy of the Judeans.³ Most scholars, however, are hesitant to use these documents for historical reconstructions because they embody many late traditions that cannot be substantiated.

1. See Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Samaritans in Tannaic Halakhah," *JQR* 75 (1984–85): 323–50; Sacha Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings* (AGJU 23; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 99–105.

2. Paul Stenhouse, "Samaritan Chronicles," in *The Samaritans* (ed. Alan D. Crown; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 218–65.

3. John Macdonald, *The Samaritan Chronicle No. II (or: Sepher Ha-Yamim): From Joshua to Nebuchadnezzar* (BZAW 107; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969), 111–23, 157–59.

Archaeological excavations at Mount Gerizim, which began in the 1980s, led to a discovery of the remains of the sacred precinct surrounded by a large city. According to the excavator, Yitzhak Magen, the Gerizim temple was originally built in the mid-fifth century BC (Persian period) and was later enlarged in the second century BC (Hellenistic period).⁴ Magen believes that this evidence invalidates Josephus's dating of the building of the Samaritan temple in the time of Alexander the Great; Josephus apparently confused the erection of the city around the sacred area in the late fourth century BC with the building of the temple itself.

The Origin of the Samaritans

It is not easy to reconstruct the origin of the Samaritans on the basis of the evidence surveyed above, which is frequently ambiguous and inconsistent. Many scholars still give more weight to Jewish perspectives on Samaritan origin,⁵ but there is a growing interest in the Samaritans' own claims.⁶ One way of integrating both viewpoints is to regard the Samaritans as a Jewish sect that had its roots in northern Yahwism.⁷ For lack of a better term, many scholars still use the designation "sect," despite its anachronistic insinuation of a normative Judaism, because it conveys the idea that the Jews and the Samaritans were two intrinsically related groups that shared many similarities, such as strict monotheism, Sabbath observance, circumcision, synagogue worship, and celebration of the festivals prescribed in the Pentateuch. The unique feature of the Samaritan religious community, which differentiated them from all other Jewish groups, was the Gerizim temple. There were other religious communities, such as the Qumran covenanters and the early Christians, who were critical of the Jerusalem temple, but they did not build alternative temples for themselves. Also, two other Jewish temples—Elephantine and Leontopolis—were built outside Palestine. There is no doubt that the building of the Gerizim temple on the Palestinian soil, regardless of when it actually took place, was met with disapproval by the Jews. What is less clear, however, is whether this affair also led to a definitive rift between the two groups. The available evidence points not only to periods of hostility but also to periods of intense

4. Yitzhak Magen, "The Dating of the First Phase of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in Light of the Archaeological Evidence," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.* (ed. Oded Lipschits et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 157–211; idem, *A Temple City* (vol. 2 of *Mount Gerizim Excavations*; JSPub 8; Jerusalem: Staff Officer of Archaeology—Civil Administration for Judea and Samaria; Israel Antiquities Authority, 2008).

5. See James Alan Montgomery, *The Samaritans, the Earliest Jewish Sect: Their History, Theology and Literature* (Philadelphia: Winston, 1907).

6. For recent trends in Samaritan scholarship, see Ingrid Hjelim, "What Do Samaritans and Jews Have in Common? Recent Trends in Samaritan Studies," *CBR* 3 (2004): 9–59.

7. Reinhard Pummer, "Samaritanism—a Jewish Sect or an Independent Form of Yahwism?" in *Samaritans: Past and Present; Current Studies* (ed. Menachem Mor and Friedrich V. Reiterer in collaboration with Waltraud Winkler; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 16–17.

communication by means of trade, travel, migration, and scribal interactions. This suggests that the separation was not a sudden occurrence but a gradual process.

The dominant view in scholarship is still a so-called two-episode paradigm (Hjelim, *Samaritans*, 30). It presumes that there was an initial split between the Jews and the Samaritans, usually associated with the erection of the Gerizim temple (either in Persian or Hellenistic times), followed by a final schism in the second to the first century BC (Hasmonean time). An alternative view is that Samaritanism developed from Judaism's formative period, beginning with the third century BC, as one among several Jewish factions that had disagreements about cult, beliefs, and society, until it finally split from rabbinic Judaism in the present era (Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews*, 163). Regardless of whether one considers the destruction of the Samaritan temple by John Hyrcanus I in 128 BC to be the decisive event that caused the definitive breach between Jews and Samaritans, there is no doubt that it significantly contributed to their eventual separation. From that time onward the Samaritans sought to legitimate their independent existence by establishing their own identity as the true Israel over against the Jewish community. They firmly rejected all claims to the primacy of Jerusalem, which might have intensified in the Hasmonean period. Mount Gerizim, even without the actual temple on it, continued to be regarded as the only legitimate place of worship. One of the most significant means of validating Samaritan religious claims was the adaptation of certain passages from the Pentateuch to create a sectarian version known as the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The Samaritan Pentateuch

Since the Samaritans could not find support for their beliefs and practices in the prophetic and other writings that emphasize the centrality of Jerusalem, they accepted only the Pentateuch as Scripture. The Samaritan Pentateuch is, apart from several variations in wording and slightly different orthography, identical to the Jewish Torah. Since, however, the Torah as a unified work is a postexilic Jewish product, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and thus the emergence of the Samaritans as a distinct religious group, could not have predated the fifth century BC. The discovery of the pre-Samaritan harmonizing versions of the Pentateuch among the biblical fragments from Qumran has significantly contributed to our understanding of the history of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The most complete forms of this textual type are found in the texts of Exodus (4QpaleoExod^m) and Numbers (4QNum^b). These texts are called "harmonizing" because they introduce textual blocks, typically from Deut. 1–9, into the parallel passages in Exodus and Numbers and thus "harmonize" both versions of the same event. Qumran documents demonstrate that the harmonizing texts of the Pentateuch, none of which reflect a specifically Samaritan ideology, were in circulation in Palestine in the last two centuries BC (Purvis, *Samaritan Pentateuch*, 69–87). One of these harmonizing texts was later

adapted by the Samaritans to emphasize the sacredness and centrality of Mount Gerizim. Harmonizing versions of the Pentateuch were probably chosen either because of their widespread use or because of their tendency to resolve scriptural inconsistencies through harmonization.

Samaritan sectarian adaptations of the Pentateuch are usually dated from the second to the first century BC. The Samaritans, however, did not suddenly decide to accept the Pentateuch of the Jews in the south. Rather, as Reinhard Pummer argues, "When the Samaritan 'sectarian' changes were made, they were made in texts that had circulated among Yahwistic Samaritans long before the breach in the 2nd/1st century B.C."⁸ Moreover, the Samaritan scribes modified the received text with the help of the same exegetical techniques that were used by other Jewish scribes at the time. The main characteristic of this exegetical tradition is scribal freedom to manipulate the received text to make it more compatible with existing beliefs and practices.

The first group of changes in the Samaritan Pentateuch involves the replacement of all allusions to Jerusalem as the central place of worship with references to Mount Gerizim (*hargirizim*, usually spelled as one word). Moreover, the Samaritan Decalogue includes a new commandment about the building of the altar on Mount Gerizim, which is created through the addition of Deut. 11:29a; 27:2b–3a, 4a, 5–7; and 11:30 after Exod. 20:17 in the Exodus version of the Decalogue and after Deut. 5:18 in the Deuteronomy version of the Decalogue. The total number of the commandments is still ten, because the first commandment is considered to be an introduction to the Decalogue. The Exodus version of the Decalogue has two additional expansions that are not motivated by sectarian interests but reflect the expansionistic, harmonizing tendencies typical for the pre-Samaritan textual type: (1) Deut. 5:24–27 is added after Exod. 20:18, and (2) Deut. 5:28b–29; 18:18–22; and 5:30–31 are added after Exod. 20:21. Another unique feature of the Samaritan Pentateuch is the reading of "Gerizim" in Deut. 27:4 for "Ebal" in the MT, which is also used in the construction of the tenth commandment of the Samaritan Decalogue. Yet whether this textual variant represents a sectarian adaptation is less certain. In this case, the Samaritan Pentateuch may have preserved the older version of the text.

The second group of changes involves a consistent replacement of the formula "the place that the LORD your God will choose," which appears twenty-one times in Deuteronomy (12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14:23, 24, 25; 15:20; 16:2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16; 17:8, 10; 18:6; 26:2; 31:11), with the formula "the place that the LORD your God has chosen." In this way, the Deuteronomistic predictions about the future election of Jerusalem—from the standpoint of the wandering Israelite tribes—are turned into declarations that God had already chosen Shechem/Gerizim.

8. Reinhard Pummer, "The Samaritans and Their Pentateuch," in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 237–69 (264).

The Samaritan Pentateuch thus provides scriptural proof for the Samaritan claim that it was they, and not the Jews, who worshiped God in accordance with the most ancient Israelite traditions. It validates the sanctity of Mount Gerizim by confirming that God chose this mountain as the exclusive place of worship, beginning with Abraham, who built the first altar at Shechem (Gen. 12:6–7).

Conclusion

The view of the Samaritans as the syncretistic semipagan neighbors of the Jews cannot be justified, because it is based on the uncritical acceptance of antagonistic presentations of the Samaritans in Jewish sources, especially in the writings of Josephus. The main difference between the Jews and the Samaritans was not their ethnicity or religiosity but the location of their cultic center. The erection of the Gerizim temple and its eventual destruction by John Hyrcanus I significantly contributed to the gradual partition and the eventual separation of these two groups. The production of the Samaritan Pentateuch, which in light of the Qumran pre-Samaritan harmonizing texts could not have taken place before the second century BC, was an important step in this process and allowed the Samaritans to legitimate their independent existence vis-à-vis Jerusalem-oriented Judaism. In this sense, perhaps, we can talk about the Samaritans as a Jewish sect, or as a variety of Judaism. This, however, does not mean that the former "broke away" from an "Orthodox" version of Judaism. Rather, Samaritanism was but one among many expressions of Yahwism that developed around the turn of the era.

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18

Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes

MICHELLE LEE-BARNEWALL

The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes represent perhaps the three most important Jewish movements for understanding the background of the NT. We see Jesus and the early church frequently facing opposition from the Pharisees and the Sadducees over the law. The Essenes were also a prominent Jewish sect at that time, and scholars have speculated on their influence on the teachings on the NT, although they are not mentioned directly in the NT.

The three groups appear to have emerged, or at least been most active, during the Hasmonean era. Josephus mentions these three "philosophies" as being prominent during the reigns of the Hasmonean Jonathan (152–142 BC; *Ant.* 13.171–73) and of Archelaus (4 BC–AD 6; *J.W.* 2.119). Some have argued that they had earlier roots, from as early as the third century BC or even the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. The return from exile and the Hellenization program initiated by Alexander the Great led to an increased concern over who was a "true Jew" and how to follow the law. These groups, in their various stages of formation, represented different responses to these issues.

The task of reconstructing the teachings and historical situation of the groups faces several challenges. For example, the theory that the Qumran documents are from an Essene group has come under question. There is the difficulty of assessing the various tendencies or prejudices of the available sources and what impact these biases might have had, especially regarding their accuracy. Josephus has been seen as being biased toward the Pharisees, since he claims to have once been