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From Our Heritage

By **Benyamim Tsedaka**, 2012

The Language the Jewish-Samaritan polemic stressed that Ezra the writer has changed the language and the script. The historical facts are different.

The change of the script within it the Jews adopted the Aramaic script but the Samaritans adhered only the ancient Hebrew script happened in a much later period to the period of Ezra the writer [5Th century BCE]. The change completed in the first century CE when following the Jewish-Samaritan debate the Jews stopped to use the Ancient Hebrew script and moved moderately to use only the Aramaic script [That mistakenly called Assyrian script' because the Aramaic replaced then the Greek as an international language], but the Samaritans stopped completely to use the Aramaic script.

The fact that most of the inscriptions found on Mount Gerizim were written in Aramaic proves that Jews and Samaritans used both scripts daily.

Generally speaking the change of the script was a long process that was not depended on a decision of one personality but derived from the need of the two hostile communities - Jews via Samaritans to depart from one another.

Concerning the language, it is the same Hebrew language but no doubt the pronunciation of the Hebrew as well as the Aramaic in the mouth of the Samaritans is much earlier that the pronunciation of both languages in the mouth of the Jews.

Scholars such as Zeev b. Hayeem, the greatest scholar of our generations of the Hebrew and Aramaic Samaritan version claims that the reading of the Torah in the mouth of the Samaritans represents the pronunciation of the Hebrew in the last centuries BCE.

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Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

This reference is not located in *A Bibliography of the Samaritans, Third Edition, Revised, Expanded, and Annotated*, by Alan David Crown and Reinhard Pummer, ATLA Bibliography, No. 51, The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford. 2005

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