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Original Letters of Eminent Literary Men:
of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries:
with Notes, and Illustrations

By **Sir Henry Ellis**
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(p. 132)

Archbishop Usher to Sir Robert Cotton. Describes the Manuscript of the Samaritan Pentateuch which he had recently procured.

[MS. Cotton. Julius C. in. fol. 158 b. *Orig.*]

Worthy Sir,

My weakness is such, that I am thereby disabled, as to write any letter myself, so to dictate very few. And therefore, as here-tofore I was bold to include you in a Letter to my Lo. of Landaff, so at this tyme I take the like boldness to include my Lo. in your letter. This Bearer is not a stranger unto me; for I have been something acquainted with him in Ireland: but for my turne he is altogether unfit, having never read (for ought I can learne) a manuscript in his life. For Scollers to retayne for me I have as many as any Archbishop in England already; the turne that I would have presently served is the getting of one that hath already been tryed in transcribing of manuscripts, and will sitt close to worke. For when God hath restored me to my health, I know not how short a tyme I have to stay in the Country. Touching the Samaritan Pentateuch, the cotype which I have is (as I guesse) about three hundred yeares old: but the worke it self commeth very short of the tyme of Esras and Malachi. I have compared the testimonyes cited out of it by the ancient Fathers, Eusebius, Jerome, Cyrill, and others; and find them precisely to agree with my booke, which makes me highly to esteeme of it. I have perused the fragment of the Chronicle which you had from Mr. Camden; thought to be a peece of Simeon Dunelmensis, but find it to be nothing els but a peece of Roger Hoveden, and to be cleane without the compass of the tyme which Bale and others assigne unto Simeon's history. I pray remember my hearty affeccion unto my Lord of Landaff and Mr. Secretary Mourton, and still account of me as

Yor true and faithfull friend,

Much Hadham, JA. ARMACHANUS.

2 Maij 1625.

(p. 133)

Archbishop Usher to Sir Robert Cotton. Acknowledges to have received various Manuscripts from Sir Robert upon loan. Erpenius's Library on sale: with his Matrices of the Oriental Languages.

[MS. Cotton. Jul. C. III. fol. 159 b. *Orig.*]

Worthye Sir,

I have received from you the Historie of the Bishops of Durham together with fowre ancient cotypes of the Psalmes; whereof, that which hath the Saxon interlineary translation inserted, is the old Roman Psalterium: the other three are the same with that which is called Gallicum Psalterium. But I have not received that which I stood most in need of; to wit, the Psalter in 8, which is distinguished with obeliskes, and asteriskes. I pray you therefore send it unto me by my servant, this bearer; as also the Life of Wilfrid written in prose by a nameless Author that lived about the time of Bede. The other written in verse by Fridegodus, I received from Mr. Burnett: together with Willielmus Malmesburiens. de Vitis Pontificum Angl. et S. Aldhelmi. Before you leave London I pray you do your best to get Master Crashawes MS. Psalter into your hands: and send it to Mr. Burnett to be conveyed unto me. I doubt not, but before this time you have dealt with Sir Peter Vanlore for obtaining Erpenius his Hebrew, Syriack, Arabick, and Persian books, and the Matrices of the Letters of the Orientall languages. If he interpose himselfe seri- (p. 134) ously herein, it is not to be doubted but he will prevayle before any other. But what he doth he must doe very speedilye: because the Jesuites of Antwerpe are already dealing

for the Orientall presse, and others for the Arabick and Syriack, Hebrew, and Persian books." It were good you tooke some order, before you went, how Sr Peter may signyfe unto you when you are in the countrye, what is done in this businesse. If he send to Mr. Burnett at any time (who dwelleth at the signe of the three Swannes in Lombard-streete) he will finde some meanes or other to communicate what he pleaseth unto me. I thank you very hartlye for the care which you have taken in causing my Samaritan Bible to be so fairly bound. I have given order to Mr. Burnett to content the workeman for his paynes. And so with remembrance of my best affections unto your selfe, and the kinde Ladye your wife, I committ bothe of you to Gods blessed protection, and reste

Your own most assured,

JA. ARMACHANUS.

Much-Haddam

Juli 12, 1625.

(p. 138) XLVI.

Archbishop Usher to Sir Robert Cotton. Promises to present him with his Samaritan Pentateuch.

[MS. Cotton. Julius C. in. fol. 185 b. *Orig.*]

Deare Sir,

I know not who should beginne first, you to accuse me or I to challenge you, for the neglect of writing one to another, this long space of time. The best way, I thinke, for both of us, were to be sayde by the Poet: *Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*

Although I must ingenuously confesse against my selfe that the fault lyeth farre more on my side: who have added to my silence the delaying of your Bookes from a farre longer time then good maners would well permitt. For which fault yet I hope to make some kinde of expiation; by sendinge you shortlye, together with your own, my antient Copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch, which I have long since destinated unto that Librarye of yours to which I have ben beholden for so many good things no where else to be found. I shall (God willing) ere long finish my collation of it with the Hebrew text: and then hang it up *ut votivam Tabulam* at that *Sacrarium* of yours.

I meant to have written unto you by Mr. James Ware, one of his Majestyes Auditours here; an industrious searcher of the Antiquities of this Countrye, whom I doubt not but you will adde encouragement unto, to go on in the prosecution of that generous studye. But he having departed from hence before I could write: I now send unto you by this noble knight, who is eldest son to the Lord Viscount Neuterville here, and hath married the daughter of your Lord Treasurer there. He is desirous by this meanes to be made knowne unto you: and I know he will be somewhat (p. 139) the better welcome because he commeth from him who evermore resteth

Tutus tuus

Drogheda,

JA. ARMACHANUS.

March 22 1628.

I pray you forgett not my heartiest salutations to my good Lady, and your worthy sonne.

The promise made in this Letter was performed in the following year. Sir Robert Cotton died in 1631. This Manuscript is now in the Cottonian Library, marked Claudius B. vii : and is written upon two hundred and fifty-four leaves of vellum, all by one hand. On a blank leaf at the beginning is the following Inscription in Archbishop Usher's handwriting,

" PENTATEUCHVM SAMARATINVM

" a decem Tribnum reliquiis post regni Israelitici excidium primo acceptum;

" a Dositheo Samaritarum Pseudo propheta, temporibus Apostolorum, postea interpolatum; ab ecclesiasticis scriptoribus (Eusebio, Diodoro, Hieronymo, Cyrillo, Procopio, Anespero, Georgio Cbronographo,) identidem citatum; utque a Cutheis hodiernis demuni redemptum;

" BIBLIOTHEC.K COTTONIANAE

" (quae amicissimi Domini summ.i humanitate semper mihi patuit.)

L. M. D.

JACOBVS USSKRIVS *Armachanus*,

Hibernis e Primas."

Below,

" Ex Librarii notatione ad calcem Geneseos colligimus, Exemplar hoc sexcentis siclis argenteis (h. e. libris Anglicanis 75) emptum fuisse, mense Rabie anni 792, regni Ismaelis, circa Martium, viz. mensem anni senestrse Christianse 1390.

JA. ARMACHAN."

Dr. Kennicott, in his Dissertation at the end of the second Volume of his " Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum," fol. Oxf. 1780, p. 76, notices no fewer than six Exemplars of the Samaritan Pentateuch, which were obtained by Archbishop Usher from the East between the years 1620 and 1630. Three of these were purchased by the Curators of the Bodleian Library from the Archbishop's heirs; the fourth, which was given to Archbishop Laud, went by donation from that prelate to the same Library; the fifth, in (p. 140) Archbishop Usher's estimation the most precious Manuscript, was given to Sir Robert Cotton; the sixth was lent by Usher to Ludovicus de Dieu, professor of the Oriental Languages at Leyden, and what became of it is unknown.

Doctors Kennicott and Blayney give the date of 1362 to what is now the Cottonian Pentateuch.

The following Extracts from the Letters of Mr. Thomas Davies, chaplain to the Merchants at Aleppo, who was employed to collect biblical Manuscripts in Palestine by Archbishop Usher, explain how this, among other Manuscripts, was obtained.

" Right reverend,

" May it please your Lordship to take notice, that your Letter of the 24th of January in London, came to my hands the 14th July, unto which I have given due perusal; and perceiving your Lordship's pleasure thereby, omitted no opportunity, neither any time, but the very day that I received it, began to lay out for those Books you writ for. The five books of Moses in the Samaritan character, I have found by a meer accident, with the rest of the Old Testament joined with them; but the mischief is, there wants two or three leaves of the beginning of Genesis, and as many in the Psalms, which notwithstanding I purpose to send by this ship, lest I meet not with another; yet I have sent to Damascus, and if not there to be had, to Mount Gerazim, so that in time I hope to procure another, which shall contain the five Books of Moses perfectly. I sent a Messenger on purpose to Mount Libanus and Tripoly, for the Old Testament in the Syriack Tongue, but he returned without it, and brought word that there I might have one after two months, but could not have it time enough to send by this ship. The reason why they sent it not, was, that they wanted parchment to copy one of the Books, and so not being perfect, did not send it; which by the next ship, if your Lordship please, God willing, I will send you. But I pray understand, that by the Syriack tongue they mean here the Chaldean; and every man tells me it is all one, the Syrians and Chaldeans being one and the same people; but questionless the same language. Therefore if your Lordship mean and desire to have the Old Testament in Chaldean, I beseech you to write by the first over land, that I may provide it by the next ship. Also I beseech you to take knowledge that I dare not promise you to send it according to the Hebrew; for neither myself, nor any other man here, can determine it; only I must be forced to take his word that sells it me, who is a minister of the sect of the Marranites, and by birth a Chaldean, but no scholar, neither is there any to be found in these parts; but if your Lordship will have me send it at adventures, though it cost dear (as it will cost £ I o) I will do my best endeavor to send it by the first conveyance, but shall do nothing herein until such time I have further order from your Lordship; to effect business of this nature in these parts requires time, travel being very tedious in these Countries.

" Aleppo, Aug. 29.

1624."

" May it please your Grace; upon the 8th of July past I received your Letter, bearing date the 12th of March from Much-Haddam, and the 5th of the last Month the copy thereof by way of Leghorn, whereby I perceive that my Letter of the 29th of (p. 141) September, 1629, together with the Five Books of Moyses in the Samaritan character, came in safety to your hands, being very glad it proves so acceptable to your Lordship; however find myself to have been abused by a Jew, who pretends to have knowledge in that Tongue, affirming to me that it contained all the Old Testament. How they read those Books I have enquired (having no better means) of him, who I perceive knows no more (if so much) than their Alphabet, and to hear him read the first two Verses of Genesis I could not, because another of those books is not here to be had. The Name of God, Jehovah, is pronounced by them, as saith he, *YehueA*. And the fifth, eighth, and sixteenth of these Letters of their Alphabet are pronounced *hei*, *chei*, *ei*, the *ch* of the eight Letters must be pronounced, *chei*."

He continues, " I sent to Damascus to see if I could procure the Grammar, Chronicles, and Calendar which your Lordship desires, but could not obtain any of them, there being but one poor man of the Samaritan race left in Damascus, who is not able to satisfy me in any thing you desire; only he said there were certain books in their language pawned to a great Spahee of that City, but what they contained the poor fellow knew not. The Spahee would not part with them under 200 dollars, which is £60 sterling; so I durst not venture upon them, being ignorant of their worth: yet I will not cease labouring as occasion shall serve to give satisfaction to your

Grace in what you require touching the Samaritans, and I hope to prevail in some things, unless the troubles in and about Jerusalem do hinder the free passage of Caravans this ensuing Spring."

"Aleppo, the 16th
of January 1625."

In another Letter, dated Aleppo, Novemb. 14, 1626, (English Account,) Davies says, " The Patriarch's name that sold me the Books of Moses, is Jesu Jab; which in the Chaldee tongue is as much as to say, *Jesus give me*. And whereas I writ he was a Jacobite, I pray take notice that he is a Nestorian, and hath his residence in Emite and Zert, and continually comes to this town to visit them that are of that heresy. His promise to me he hath not kept, neither could I ever hear from him since he sent that Book now in your Lordship's possession; yet I caused divers Letters to be writ to him, and at this present have given order to write to him again: but, as I often writ to your Grace, those Books are rare, especially in the Chaldee tongue and character; the greatest part of the Chaldee books are written in the Arab character, which I think you would not have, nor esteem. As for the remainder of the Old Testament in the Chaldee, I have sent a man to Mount Libanus to take a copy thereof, intending to send you the whole Old Testament in one volume; notwithstanding I know you have the Books of Moses and the Psalms ; those you have are old Copies, and this will be a new Transcript; presuming your Lordship will not think much of the charge, which if I had excepted, would have been very little less than now it will be. And as for the Samaritan Books in the hands of the Damasceen Spahee, I will use my best diligence to find him out again, and redeem them at as easy a rate as I can."

" Aleppo, July 1625. I have used my best industry to procure those other Books (p. 142) that you would have bought, but hitherto have not been so happy as to light upon any of them, such Books being very rare, and valued as jewels, tho' the possessors are able to make little use of them. Amongst all the Chaldeans that lay in Mount Libanus, Tiipoly, Sidon, and Jerusalem, there is but only one old Copy of the Old Testament in their language extant, and that in the custody of the Patriarch of the sect of the Maronites, who hath his residence in Mount Libanus, which he may not part with on any terms; only there is liberty given to take Copies thereof, which of a long time hath been promised me, and indeed I made full account to have been possessed of one ere this time, having agreed for it; but I was deluded, which troubled me not a little, so in fine resolved to send a man on purpose to Libanus to take a Copy thereof, who is gone, and I hope in four or five months will finish it; and, by the assistance of the Almighty, I trust to be able to send it by our next ships.

"The last Letter I received from your Lordship bears date the 21st of February, and came to my hands the 18th of July, where I perceive you would have the New Testament in the AETHiopian language and character, wherein my best endeavours have not wanted, for which purpose I have sent to Damascus, where a few of the Abissines do inhabit, yet have had no answer thence; and in case do not prevail here, I purpose to send to Jerusalem, where divers of them do attend upon the Sepulcher of our Lord, whence I hope to be furnished, and in due time to send it with the Old Testament in the Syriack Tongue, by the next ships. Thus much I beseech your Lordship to be assured of, that I will omit no time, nor neglect any means for effecting what you have or shall command me." Parr's Life of Usher, Letters, pp. 311, 323, 326.

In 1773 Dr. Kennicott was allowed to borrow this Samaritan Pentateuch from the British Museum upon a Bond of ,£500.

(p. 240)

Dr. Thomas Smith to Mr. Wanley. On a Manuscript which Wanley had presented to the Cottonian Library. A Date found in one of Archbishop Usher's Samaritan Pentateuchs at Oxford. Mr. Pepys dangerously ill. [Harl. MS. 3782. art. 47. Orig.]

Sir,

On Wensday last Mr. Elstob of your College brought mee your letter, and a Mauscript booke, which you present to the Cottonian Library. For the former of which I give you my thanks; but for the latter I must leave it to Sir J. Cotton, when hee shall come to London. Altho' his Library, as you know, was designed chiefly to be a repository of Saxon monuments, and other antiquities relating to our English History, yet such a translation of several pieces of devotion, out of French and Latine, into English, done above three hundred yeares since, and it may bee, not very long after the death of that extraordinarily strict and devout man Richardus de Hampole, deserves very justly a place there j and I did in the morning put it in the Library accordingly, there to remaine, I hope, for ever. What satisfaction your friend received by looking into some of the most curious and venerable

pieces of Antiquity, you will hear from his own mouth, when hee returns to Oxon; for I perceive that hee has a good relish of such things.

I thanke you also for the Note which you very happily found at the end of one of the Samaritan Pentateuchs in the Bodleyan Library, which shewes so clearly the exact yeare when that in the Cottonian Library was written, and that out of the book itselfe, which makes mee wonder how Archbishop Usher, who was so industrious and accurate, and who had procured it out of the East, and Mr. Selden, who had the use of it, and mentions it in his preface to the Marmora Arundeliana, should overlooke that chro- (p. 241) nologicall remarke: which I will carefully examine, tho' I doubt not in the least of the truth of the observation. I wish that I knew who the person was that made it; perchance hee might be knowne by his handwriting. But whether so or otherwise, it is not materiall.

My very worthy and excellent friend Mr. Pepys has beene very ill of late, and was brought so low, that wee were afraid wee should have lost him: but now, God be praised, the danger is over: and hee by advice of Physicians and friends is gone into the Country, but not farr from London, for full and perfect recovery of his health: which I dare say, you and indeed all others who know what a brave publick-spirited a gentleman hee is, wish, as well as I.

I am glad to heare, that your drudgery of making an Index to the Catalogues of Manuscripts is at last happily over, so that wee hope that great worke, which has hung so long in the presse, will speedily bee published.

I am,

Sir,

Your very affectionate friend and humble servant,

THO. SMITH.

London, 15 May, 1697

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

This short 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

<http://books.google.com/books?ei=75-cT-akNImu9ASK5pGRDw&dq=Cottonian+Library+Usher+samaritan+manuscript&jtp=132&id=mh0IAAAIAAJ&ots=VPI4R8t3GG#v=onepage&q=Cottonian%20Library%20Usher%20samaritan%20manuscript&f=false>

Letters also found in The Whole Works, Volume 15

By James Ussher, Charles R. Elrington, Dublin 1864

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