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(p. 474) SAMARITANA.

I.

SAMARITAN DEALINGS WITH JEWS.

AMONG the Cairo Geniza fragments are a few of Samaritan origin. The texts, although they do not give much information, seem to be worth publishing, because so little that concerns the Samaritans has been found outside the communities at Shechem (Nablus) and Damascus.

Text A belongs to the Geniza collection in the Bodleian Library, and is bound up with MS. Heb. b. n (fol. 13). It is a letter, on paper, written on one side only and apparently addressed to some Jewish community or persons. Though there is no proof of this, it may be inferred with great probability from the following facts: the letter is found in the Geniza; it is written in *square* character, and is the only instance I have found of a Samaritan document so written; the writer calls himself by the Jewish term 'JITWn, which is never used by the Samaritans among themselves; he is evidently making an effort to write real Hebrew, not Samaritan Hebrew, and apologizes at the end for his mistakes.

The sender of the letter, who calls himself Joseph the Priest, probably wrote it with his own hand, as the writing is unskilful, being evidently the work of some one who was unfamiliar with it, and not that of a professional scribe.

As to the date: the large majority of dated Geniza fragments in the Bodleian collection are of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and after a careful study of these it is not difficult to distinguish undated fragments which are either earlier or later. I am disposed to assign this letter to the twelfth century, although, as it is the work of an amateur, one cannot insist on that date. The Chronicles (Abülfath, Et-taulideh, and the longer work (p. 475) published by E. N. Adler) mention only one priest named Joseph, who held office from 690 to 709 A. H. (=1291-1310 A. D.) at Shechem. The date would be possible, but there are several reasons against identifying the writer with the High Priest of Shechem. Text A is probably by the same person as Text B, and the writer of B calls himself Joseph ben Ishmael, whereas the High Priest was, according to the Chronicles, the son of 'Uzzi (not his predecessor). Secondly, there are some liturgical compositions by the High Priest Joseph which show a much greater command of Hebrew than this letter. Thirdly, it is unlikely that the High Priest of Shechem would write for help to Jews in Cairo, and

perhaps he would not have been in quite such a destitute condition as the writer of the letter. Fourthly, he would describe himself as "of Shechem," the priest there being the recognized head of the community. There can be little doubt that the writer was the local priest (שמע) of the congregation in Cairo, where Samaritans were still found by Obadiah of Bartinoro (1487 A.D.), and continued to exist even later. A certain Ithamar who was שמע במצרים appears in colophons about 900 A. H. (= 1495 A. D.). If this be so, Text A, and probably Text B, are the only writings I know emanating from the Samaritan colony in Egypt.

With regard to the contents of the letter: there does not seem to be much point in the long exordium, unless it is in answer to some inquiry. No doubt it is imitated from the Muhammadan lists of the attributes of God, but it is quite in the Samaritan manner. It might be paralleled, though not to the same extent, from the liturgy, and honorific titles are accumulated before the names of men in colophons of MSS. (See G. Margoliouth's description of a Pentateuch in *J. Q. R.*, XV, p. 636 &c.) The exordium is in Samaritan Aramaic. The rest in Samaritan Hebrew, but it is evident that the language is not really familiar to the writer, and that his native tongue is Arabic (see below).

I have ventured to give a translation of the whole, but (p. 476) I am by no means sure of having rightly understood all the terms in the introduction. Some of them may be intended to go together, and apart from any context their meaning is often indeterminate. Moreover, the paper is a good deal broken in some places, and illegible in others.

For Text B I have to thank Dr. Schechter, who showed it to me some years ago and allowed me to copy it. It belongs to the Geniza collection in the Cambridge University Library, is on vellum¹ apparently of the same date and probably by the same author. It seems to be part of a letter, asserting the writer's devotion to the Law, perhaps a preliminary endeavour to establish good relations before making the request to which Text A refers. The introduction is again long, and breaks off before we come to the point: then something is lost, probably two leaves, between fols. 1 and 2. The quotation from Lev. xxvi. 44 and 45, and the expression "in this captivity," corroborate the previous inference that the writer was in a foreign country (Egypt) and not in Shechem, the home of his tribe. I have not translated the Hebrew introduction, which is quite clear. For the translation of the Arabic part (which puzzled me) I am indebted to the kind help of Prof. D. S. Margoliouth.

Another probable trace of a Samaritan I found recently in cataloguing the Geniza fragments in the Bodleian Library. At the end of a Jewish contract in Arabic (MS. Heb. d. 66, fol. 8), not otherwise of special interest, one of the witnesses signs himself רנפחה אברהם, adding two strange-looking signs. These signatures are often, as one would expect, very badly written, and therefore the clumsy writing here would not be particularly noticeable but for the fact that רנפחה is a common family name among the Samaritans. It is probably an earlier form of the name הרנפי which is common later. The deed is dated 4866 A. M.= 1106 A.D. בסדינת אי כפתור דעל ימא רבא דנילוס מוחבה, and I cannot (p. 477) produce contemporary evidence of the name so early, but Samaritan colophons of that date are so rare that this is not surprising. Et-taulideh, however, mentions בני הדנפתאי about the seventh century. If the witness is a Samaritan we can explain the two strange letters following his name. One will be a badly formed Samaritan

¹ I am much indebted to Mr. I. Abrahams for kindly looking up the fragment and verifying some details on which my memory failed me.

פ (פ), the other a Hebrew ך or Samaritan ש. The expression ם[ימן] ם[וב] is not used by Samaritans, so that Abraham is here employing (wrongly) a Jewish formula.

There is also in the Bodleian collection of Geniza fragments a leaf of a Samaritan commentary on Exodus (ix. 5-13), bound up with MS. Heb. d. 64, fol. 84. It is written in the Arabic language and character, with the quotations from the text in Samaritan character. I do not print it here, because, apart from the fact of its presence in the Geniza, it has no special interest.

To sum up: we see from this evidence that the Samaritans in Egypt lived on friendly terms with the Jews in the twelfth century, so that a Samaritan priest could appeal for help to a Jewish congregation, and would take the trouble to write his letter in Hebrew characters. That the Samaritans, however, insisted on their claim to be regarded as genuine followers of the Law, seems to be indicated by the contents of both letters. Further, the signature to the document shows that they were considered by the Jews as ם[ימן] ם[וב], competent to give evidence, and therefore as more or less belonging to the same community. It would also appear from the fragment of commentary that the Jews took a certain interest in Samaritan teaching.

In the *Mittheilungen ... Erzherzog Rainer*, I, p. 38 and p. 41, Professors D. H. Müller and D. Kaufmann published a (very fragmentary) alphabetical hymn² and an Arabic letter, which they suggest may be of Samaritan origin.

Although the hymn certainly has points of resemblance to (p. 478) some Samaritan compositions, I have always hesitated to believe that either of the texts has such an origin chiefly on the ground of their being in square characters. That difficulty now disappears. As we have undoubted evidence of the use of square characters by Samaritans in the twelfth century, there is little reason for doubting its use (also in Egypt) some centuries earlier.

In the following texts doubtful letters are marked with an over-line thus, . Letters supplied by conjecture are bracketed. Dots show the approximate number of letters missing.

² This was republished, with variations, by Epstein in *Beiträge J. jüd. Alterthumskunde* (Wien, 1887), p. 116.

TEXT A.

אחיכם ואהבכם יוסף הכהן השמרוני¹ האביון והעני
בשם יי נעשה ונצליח: אלה השמות בלשון כשרים²
שלום עליכם אחי משם יי יחידאה יצובה ממנה קמאה [קד]מאה קניה
קרישה יכולה יהובה סעודה סקופה סוברת סלחה מוחיה ממיתה מחיה
מחסיה³ מאורכה מכתרה⁴ קריבה רחיקה נ[צו]חה מרבהה אשדכה אומנה
שמועה ידועה ענוה רבוקה מימנה יקידה משבחה מרממה ברכה ספקה
חיולה רבה תקיפה מסחנה עלאה עמיה דישה טבה עתיקה: חרתה
[ז]כאה שלמה צעורה קשימה רבארה דיאנה גלאה נמולה ניבורה גלינה
פשוורה . . . [מת]גלנה פתחה פשרה פעלה פרוה נטורה נאירה נגודה
עתירה עבודה מלכה . . . דכורה שראה מחסלה מיטבה [מ]ענה (?)⁵
סכיות[ה ר]חצונ[ה] גדולה כסיה קבל . . . יה קרשה מר אתרה⁶ נפלאה
נוראה סהרה קשמה מניחה⁷ חקר[ה] פרנסה [מ]חדרה⁸ מסטרה מזועה

¹ השמרוני, the Jewish form, is never used by the Samaritans. Their name for themselves is שמרים.

² כשרים is probably intended. It is more like כשרים, but that would be very unusual.

³ מחסיה from the root אחי-חכי "to heal."

⁴ מכתרה. I take this to have the meaning of the Arabic root كثر.

⁵ מענה is very doubtful. It may be מצוה, "commanding."

⁶ מר אתרה is an expression which I have not met elsewhere. It can hardly have anything to do with the Rabbinical מקום. Perhaps נלאה is to be taken with אררה.

⁷ מניחה is simply due to the Samaritan confusion of the gutturals. It is for מניעה, as the ϵ above the line shows.

⁸ חדרה seems to be confused by the Samaritans with יורה, and is used in the sense of "renew" or "create."

רתאה רחמנה: אל אלהי תרחות לכל הבשר אלהי ה[נסתרות והנגלות
 אלהי האותות והמופתים אלהי כל המעש[ים הנ]דלים אלהי ה[מלאכים
 הקד[ושים] הישר התמים הצדיק המשל הרחום [החנן] אלהי אלה
 השמות הנוראות והנפלאות יאזן וישמע ממני בכם כל ברכה וב... ה
 אמן כי הוא רחום וחנן יש[מע] צע[קות] הענוים ברוך הוא: יגמיל יי
 אתכם [מ] וחסד ואמת על הדברים אשר דברתם ביו[ם] השבת להזקן
 הגדול יי ישמר אתו: [וע]תה אחי לו היה הדבר אשר דברתם פניו
 ל[אב]ן אם לצור חלמיש אשר לא יש[נה] ולא ישיב דבר היה יכלם:¹
 ויבש מכם ועד אנה לא עשה אתי טוב ולא יע[שה]: כי אני ידעתי
 השמרונים² [כי אי]ן בהם תבונה: ואלה... רים³ אשר נראה א... אי
 עשו טוב לאלהים ואיך יעשו אתו כי ידרשו השמעה... ר בזה העולם
 העובר: ולו היו יחפצו¹ העומד היו יעשו¹ החסד את הדלים והענוים
 האביונים והגרים והכהנים אשר כמוני: ועתה אחי לא דרשתי ממנו
 לא זהב ולא כסף: אני איש חרש אעשה הארון והמטה והפתח והקורות:
 דרשתי ממנו יצוה שר החרשים בעבורי יקח אתי עמו אעשה כל יום
 בכסף אחיה נפשי בו ואשר אחרי: לא עשה לי ולא לדבריכם ולא לי:
 ועתה טוב לנו נשיב פנינו לי אלהינו מקור הטוב אשר לא יסכר ומעין
 החסד אשר לא יסתם כל טוב נמצא מנולי רחמיו וכל חסד ינחל נדבת
 תהומו אליו כל עינים תלאות ועליו כל נפשות נשאות ופניו כל כפים
 פרושות ומבלעדיו אין להחיות: כל עשותו מישור וכל מלאכתו חכמה
 וכל דרכיו משפט תעות לא בדרכיו עול אין במשפטו שחת אין בפעלו:
 אתו לעברה וממנו ליראה ובו למבטח כי הוא אדון אמת וכל בלעדיו
 הבל: מזה האל הנאמן נדרש ועליו נבטח ואתו נאתב כי הוא רחום
 חנן חמול לא יעזב אתנו מרחמיו: על זאת ובזאת יקים יי לכם ברכת
 משה עבדו: יי אלהי אבותיכם יסף עליכם ככם אלף פעמים ויברך אתכם
 כאשר דבר לכם אמן ואמן: הן הייתי חטאתי בהספר¹ שאו נא חטאתי
 בליל כתבתי אתו:

¹ *كان يخبجل*, an Arabic idiom, ודיה יכלם¹

² See note 1, p. 478.

³ The passage is too much broken for reconstruction. I give in the translation what seems to be the general meaning.

⁴ This may of course simply mean "I wrote it by night."

(P. 480)

TRANSLATION. .

Your brother and friend Joseph, the Samaritan priest, the poor and needy.

In the name of the Lord we act and prosper.

These are the names in the tongue of the pure.

Peace be upon you, brethren, in the name of the Lord, the one, the sure, the enduring, the ancient, the first, the possessor, the holy, the powerful, the giver, the supporter, the lofty, the comforter, who pardons, who gives life and death, who makes to live, who heals, long-suffering, giving increase, near and far off, triumphant, the deliverer, the

peaceful, who brings together, who hears and knows and answers, the helper faithful and excellent, praised and exalted, who blesses and supplies, mighty and great, the strong, the master most high, all-seeing, the head, the good, the ancient: the restorer pure and perfect, the maker, the true, the commander, the judge, revealing, rewarding, strong and glorified, the saviour, [glori]fied, the opener, interpreter (?), maker, redeemer, preserver, enlightening, guiding, rich, creator, king,..., remembering, who begins and ends, who does good, enduring, (our) desire and (our) great support, the hidden, who receives, . . . , holy, lord of the place (?), wonderful, terrible, the true witness, who attains and searches out, who nurtures, who restores, who strikes (?), who makes to tremble, the merciful, the pitiful. God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, God of things hidden and revealed, God of signs and wonders, God of all great deeds, God of the holy angels, upright, perfect, just, the ruler, merciful [and gracious], the God of these terrible and wonderful names give ear and hear all my blessing upon you. ... Amen. For he is merciful and gracious, and hears the crying of the poor: blessed be he! The Lord reward [you with goodness] and favour and truth for the words which you spoke on the Sabbath to the distinguished elder, the Lord preserve him. Now, my brethren, if the word which you spoke before him had been (spoken) to a stone or a flint which can neither answer nor speak a word back, it would have been ashamed and confounded before you, but up to the present he has not given me any help, nor will he. I know the Samaritans to be without intelligence, caring only for the things that are seen (?), and that they have not done good in the sight of God, and will not. For they seek only a reputation in this passing world, whereas if they took pleasure in what is lasting they would have shown kindness to the poor, the afflicted and needy, the strangers and priests, such as I am. Now, brethren, I did not ask him for either gold or silver. I am a carpenter. I can make boxes, bedsteads, doors, and beams. I asked (p. 481) him to speak to the head carpenter for me that he should take me with him to work every day for wages enough for me and my family to live upon. He has not done so either from the fear of the Lord, or because of what you said, or for my sake. And now it is right that we turn our faces to the Lord our God, the fountain of goodness which is not shut up, the well of mercy which is not stopped. All good is found in the streams of his loving-kindness, all favour does he give as the abundance of his deep. To him all eyes are lifted up, to him all hearts are raised, before him all hands are stretched out, and beside him is none that gives life. All his doings are uprightness, all his work is wisdom, and all his ways are judgement. There is no erring in his way, no injustice in his judgement, no corruption in his work. Him (ought we) to serve, him to fear and in him to trust, for he is the Lord of truth, and all beside him is vanity. To this our faithful God let us pray and in him let us trust and love him, for he is merciful, gracious, and forgiving, who will not leave us out of his loving-kindness. Wherefore the Lord bring to pass for you the blessing of Moses his servant: "The Lord God of your fathers," &c. [Deut. i. 11]. Amen and Amen. If I have made mistakes in my letter, forgive my mistakes in the night that I wrote it.

עבדו ובן אמתו יוסף בן ישמאל (80) הכהן אשר [ל]עם השמרונים
העני הדל והאביון:

בשם אלהי ישראל רחום וחנן fol. 1 b.

נודה לִי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי ישראל
האל הנאמן אשר לא ישכח בריתו אשר ברית עם האבות הצדיקים (80)
ועם נביאיו הנאמנים כאשר אמר נצר חסד לאלפים לאהבי ולשומרי
מצותי: ועוד כאשר אמר שמר הברית והחסד לאהביו ולשמרי מצותיו
לאלף דור: וברוך יי אלהינו אשר לא נשכח דבריו אשר דבר לנו:
ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארצות¹ אויביהם לא מאסתי ולא נעלתי לבלותם
להפיר בריתי אתם אני יי אלהיהם: חכרתי להם ברית ראשונים אשר
הוצאתי אתם מארץ מצרים לעיני הגוים להיזת להם לאלהים אני יי:
וחלילה² ליי אלהינו

¹ This is the reading of the Samaritan text in Lev. xxvi. 44, for the
Masoretic בָּאֲרָצוֹת.

² חלילה for הליה (praise) by a confusion of the gutturals, cf. p. 478, n. 7.

(p. 482)

fol. 2 a.

מצוע מעתקד בדלך אנה מתמסך¹ | מן אללה סבחאנה

ומנתא באלערוה אלוחקא²

וקד נעל אלעבד הרה

אלמנאנאה מתרנמה

ען בעץ מא ענדה מן פרט מחבתה

להא ומא יתואלאה³ פיהא לתערפה

והרא אלרי יפתרצה

אלעבד עלי נפסה

ללאסבאב אלמונבה להא עלי

כל מן תסמי באלעבראניה⁴ במא

נודה אלבארי עלי אלכאפה פי

תדה אלגלוה מן כף האריה וכף

החזיר⁵ מצאן מרעתו: ברוך יי

אלהינו אשר הטיב לבו ולב עבריו

בזאת התורה הקדושה ל . . .

ול [אבו]תינו ברוך יי ל ועד⁶

The Hebrew is simple, and need not be translated. The Arabic is as follows:—

He who believes therein is taking hold of the "firm handle" of God (blessed be he) and of it (the Law). I have made this address an expression of some of the extreme love that I feel towards it, and of the obligations that I undertake therein, that you may know thereof. This is what I undertake, owing to the causes which render it

1. The passage can be translated consecutively, as it happens, but it is much more probable that something (two leaves?) is lost between fol. 1 (which ends here) and fol. a. The missing fragment must have contained the "address" and the "obligations" mentioned below. The text certainly begins on fol. i a, and there is nothing in it, as it stands, to which these words can refer.
2. A Mohammedan expression applied to God.

3. This seems to suggest that he had given some account of Samaritan belief and practice, perhaps in answer to an inquiry.
4. The term עֲבֵי, &c., is not used of themselves except historically. It is no doubt chosen here in order to suggest kinship with the Jews.
5. The lion and the swine probably denote some local tyrant, and are not likely to furnish any clue as to date.
6. The last two lines are too much broken for reconstruction.

(p. 483) necessary for any one who calls himself a Hebrew, because of the fresh inflictions brought on the community by God in this captivity, through the lion and the swine on the sheep of his pasture. Blessed be the Lord our God, &c.

II

AN ALLEGED COPY OF THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH.

Some time in 1902 mention was made in the daily papers of a Samaritan Pentateuch of the eighth century which was for sale in Cairo. It was said to be dated and to present an important variant, or variants, from the ordinary text. It was offered to various possible purchasers, and among others the Bodleian Library was approached. Though the date seemed to me very unlikely I thought it best to inquire further, and through the kind offices of a friend I succeeded in obtaining photographs of two pages. It did not seem worth while at the time to write about the matter, but as the date has recently been quoted, with an evident disposition to believe in its genuineness, in an article in *Bibliotheca Sacra* to which I need not allude further, I may as well say a word about it here. The MS. is stated to be on parchment, and consists of 265 leaves, measuring 38 x 31 centimetres. The date is given, on one of the pages photographed, by means of the form of acrostic called Tashkil, peculiar to Samaritan MSS. of the Pentateuch. It appears (in Deut. vi. 15—vii. 1) as לממלכות יש [מעאל] שנת א ו מ ק, which has been taken to mean 116 (or 115) of the Hejra=734 (5) A.D. This, however, is quite impossible from the character of the writing, while the date is genuine enough, because it could not be forged on this system without detection. The real solution is that it is to be read as if it were Arabic سنة احدى وتسعمائة and the Samaritan letters are used as cyphers instead of words. It might have been written תתקסא, as in Hebrew, but I doubt if this would be as natural to a man who (p. 484) thought in Arabic and to whom the order of the numerals 1.1 was familiar. The date is therefore 901 A. H. = 1495 (6) A.D., which agrees perfectly with the character of the writing. The name of the scribe must occur in the same Tashkil, and he would doubtless turn out to be a perfectly well-known person, since many Pentateuchs exist which were copied about that time.

The alleged variant proves to be the well-known addition after Deut. v. 18, which is found in all Samaritan copies. There is thus no reason to suppose that the MS. possesses more than ordinary interest

A. COWLEY.

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

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