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**THE JOURNAL OF SACRED LITERATURE**

Edited by John Kitto, D.D., F.S.A.

Volume II.

London: C. Cox, 12, King William Street, Strand.  
Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh; and J. Robertson,  
Grafton Street, Dublin  
1848

Page 324- [Oct.

**ON THE SUPPOSED SAMARITAN TEXT OF  
THE SEPTUAGINT.**

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THE question which has been raised, Whether the translation of the Pentateuch by the Seventy was made from MSS. in the Samaritan character, and belonging, in general, to the Samaritan recension, or from our present Hebrew text? is one which it is very difficult to answer precisely either way. The more prevalent modern opinion is in favour of the hypothesis that the translation was made from MSS. of the Samaritan recension.<sup>a</sup>

The evidence upon which this opinion rests is partly external and partly internal. Jerome, in his *Prologue to the Books of Kings*, thinking it necessary to prove that there are but twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet, observes<sup>b</sup> that the Samaritans have the same number, whose letters, he goes on to say, are indeed the original Hebrew character, the figures, but not the number, of which were changed by Ezra. And 'even still,' he adds, 'we find the name of God, the Tetragrammaton, in some *Greek* MSS. expressed in the ancient letters.' The context, and his use elsewhere of the term *antiquae litterae* in this sense, seem to place it beyond all doubt, though not unfortunately beyond all question (for what will not the impudence of such men as Tychsen<sup>c</sup> call in question?) that Jerome

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<sup>a</sup> Postellus (in his *Tabula duodecim Linguarum*) appears to have been the first to hold this opinion. The resemblance between the Septuagint and Samaritan readings was also observed by De Dieu (*Comment*, on Matt. xix. 5) who had intended to publish notes upon the Samaritan Pentateuch; and by Selden (*Mare Clausum*, p. 37). The whole question was very carefully examined by Hottinger (*Thes. Philol.* 1. 1.e. 3. sect. 3, quaest. 4.) who inclines, though with much hesitation, to Postellus's theory. It was maintained with considerable acuteness by Whiston (*Essay towards restoring the true text of the O.T.*, p. 48, and *Appendix*); but most successfully by Hassencamp (in his *Entdeckte wahre Ursprung der alten Bibel-Uebersetzungen*, Minden, 1775, 8vo.; and *Dissertatio Hist. Crit. de Pent. LXX. Interpretum Graeco non ex Hebraeo sed Samaritano textu converso*, Marp. 1765, 4to.)

<sup>b</sup> Samaritani etiam Pentateuchum Moysi totidem literis scriptitant, figuris tantum et apicibus discrepantes; certumque est Esdram Scribam, legis doctorem, post captam Jerosolymam et instaurationem templi sub Zorobabel, alias litens reperisse quibus nunc utimur: quum ad illud usque tempus iidem Samaritanorum et Hebrseorum characteres fuerint... Et nomen Dei Tetragrammaton, in quibusdam Graecis voluminibus usque hodie antiquis expressum literis invenimus.

<sup>c</sup> Tentamen de codd. V. T. p 159, note.

is here speaking of the Samaritan (p. 325) characters, and hence it is argued that the MSS. from which this version was taken must have been in that character: for we can hardly, it is said, ascribe this peculiarity to later transcribers, who were either too ignorant of the original languages to attempt it, or, if not, would certainly have introduced the square character rather than the Samaritan: as indeed it is not improbable that some of them did. For the same Jerome elsewhere<sup>d</sup> tells us that 'the Tetragrammaton is written with these letters יהוה', which, through a confusion of them with the Greek characters, some, when they found them in Greek MSS., were accustomed to read πππ'. It has been indeed suggested that the mistake here spoken of arose not from the square letters in יהוה, but from the contracted way of expressing the ineffable name by two jods, which was certainly used by the later Jews, and which it is supposed may have been used by the old Samaritans.<sup>e</sup> If we were at liberty to assume the existence of such a practice, it would indeed account very well for the thing to be accounted for, since two Samaritan jods, **ממ**, are as like *mwti* as could be wished. But I do not think that we have any right to make such an assumption, especially when Jerome distinctly speaks of the four letters of the name יהוה. Nor does this circumstance necessarily establish the evidence (such as it is), which Jerome's other statement affords of the Septuagint being originally derived from MSS. in the Samaritan character: since, as I have said, nothing would be more natural than that the transcribers should occasionally have exchanged the less known and more awkward for the more familiar and facile characters. There is a passage, however, in a fragment of Origen's, published by Montfaucon in his *Hexapla*,<sup>f</sup> which—if understood in the sense which was put upon it by Montfaucon himself and Kennicott after him—would greatly detract from the weight of this evidence. Those learned men understood Origen to mean that in the more accurate *Hebrew* MSS. the tetragrammaton was expressed in the Samaritan letters. If this were so, the expression of this name in those letters would prove nothing as to the general text of the MSS. from which the Septuagint version was made. But for my part, I think that Origen speaks of the same thing as Jerome, and means Greek, (p. 326) not Hebrew, MSS. Yet still I am not so perfectly satisfied as most modern critics seem to be, that this practice *must* have originated with the translators themselves. It might be, perhaps, not unreasonably contended that it was introduced by the superstition of Jewish and Samaritan transcribers, who, following their several prejudices, made use, each party, of their own peculiar letters to express the Divine name. For I do not know why it should be assumed that all the scribes were too ignorant to spell that word in the original, or that none of them could have been Samaritans.<sup>g</sup>

ii. Another argument much insisted upon by the supporters of this opinion is derived from those peculiar mistranslations in the Septuagint which seem to presuppose a confusion of letters which resemble each other in the Samaritan, but not in the present

<sup>d</sup> Epist. 136 ad Marcellum, opp. T. 2. p. 704. *ed. Bened.* 'Nomen τετραγράμματος, quod ἀνεκφώνητον id est ineffabile putaverunt; quod his literis scribitur יהוה; quod quidem non intelligentes, propter elementorum similitudinem, cum in *Græcis libris reperirent*, Πίπι (πππ) legere consueverunt.'

<sup>e</sup> *Nouveau Traite de Diplomatique*, P. ii. s. 2. c. 6. pp. 599, 600.

<sup>f</sup> In *Anecdotis e cod. Reg.* 1818. τὸ ἀνεκφώνητον τετραγράμματος.... ἐν τοῖς ἀκριβέσι τῶν ἀντιγράφων Ἑβραϊκοῖς ἀρχαίοις γράμασι γέγραπται, ἀλλ' οὐχ φασι γὰρ τὸν Ἑσδραν ἐτέροις χρήσασθαι μετὰ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν. Cf. Montfaucon *Palaeogr. Graec.* p. 120, and Kennicott, cited by Tychsen, *Teutamen.* p. 161.

<sup>g</sup> The Samaritans were numerous not only in Syria, but in Egypt also. *Joseph. Antiq.* xi. 8; xii. 1; xiii. 3.

Hebrew alphabet. This has been strongly urged by Hassencamp, from whom Eichhorn selects the following instances as some of the most striking.

1. **ⲛ** (ס) is supposed to have been confounded with **Ⲍ** (ת), Gen. xlvi. 16, where for אצבן the 70 have Θασβαν .

But the use of the present **Ⲍ** for ת in the Samaritan alphabet is of modern date; and we know from the express testimonies of Origen and Jerome, as well as from the old coins of the Maccabees, that the Thau in the time of the Seventy was written in the figure of a cross +.

2. **Ⲅ** (ד) confounded with **Ⲛ** (ל) Gen. xxxvi. 36, שמלה, LXX., SstAtafcz. Numb. iii. 24, לאל, LXX., **Ⲙⲁⲛⲗ**.

But here, not to mention that the Samaritan are hardly more alike than the Hebrew letters, the mistake is most likely to be in the Greek—the uncial Δ and Λ being, as all critics know, perpetually confounded in Greek MSS.<sup>h</sup>

3. **ⲙ** (י) with **Ⲛ** (צ). Deut. xxxii. 26, אפאיהם; LXX., δια-σπερώ αὐτους, reading it as two words, אפץ הם.

But here the mistake may have been of the square אֵי for צ—a mistake often made in MSS. So, in another instance, החירת for ההצרת, the mistake may have occurred in the Hebrew MS. by the transcriber's first confusing the יר with צ, and, after he had copied it so, recognizing the ר.

4. **Ⲛ** (כ) with **ⲙ** (מ). Deut. xxxiii. 14, מגד; LXX., χαθὸ ὄρχυ. כמגד.

But it is very doubtful what the LXX. read here; and, at any rate, the square כ and מ are sufficiently alike to account for the confusion.

(p. 327)

5. **Ⲛ** (נ) with **Ⲣ** (פ). Gen. iv. 7, לפתח; LXX., διελης, חתח; cf. Lev. i. 17; v. 8. This seems a reasonably fair instance.

6. **Ⲛ** (ע) with **Ⲣ** (ק). Gen. xiv. 2, בלע; LXX., Βαλαχ; xxiii. 2, WW; LXX., Αρβοχ.

But here the square characters may have been confounded; not to mention that we know too little of the old pronunciation of ע to be very positive about it.

7. **Ⲛ** (ר) with **Ⲣ** (ק). Lev. v. 2, שרץ; LXX., βδελύγμα ρκψ. But the words seem like enough in the square letter also to account for the confusion, though I think this, on the whole, rather a good instance.

However, this general answer may certainly be given to these and similar instances—that, even assuming them all good, they may be accounted for by supposing that the mistakes which they imply existed in the Hebrew MS. from which the Septuagint was made, and which must have been taken either directly or indirectly from one in the Samaritan character.

iii. Another argument is derived from the probable circumstances of this version. The Jews who settled in Egypt probably carried copies of the Law with them; which, having been made before the return from Babylon, would not exhibit the traces of Babylonian influence, nor in general the peculiar marks of what is called the Esdrine recension. Indeed, the fabulous Aristeas relates that Eleazar sent not only interpreters, but a Hebrew

<sup>h</sup> b Thus, in the Book of Judges, Dalilah's name is written Δαλιδά; and 1 Sam. i. 5, the Alexandrian MS. has 'Hδεί for 'Hλεί.

copy of the Law, to king Ptolemy: but none of the more respectable authorities appear to go so far. Yet this seems to be the current opinion amongst the Jewish Rabbins, which Azarias has endeavoured to reconcile with the hypothesis of a Samaritan text. 'In the time of the second temple,' says he,<sup>i</sup> 'the Jews had two MSS. of the Pentateuch; one in Assyrian letters (i. e. the square) and the holy tongue, agreeing with the correct books which we have now. And this is that which Ezra the scribe arranged and corrected, perceiving that the copies had been corrupted and disordered, partly through the faulty negligence of our Fathers under (p. 328) the First Temple .... and partly, by reason of the injuries which they sustained in the Babylonian Captivity. This correct book which he wrote out, he gave to the priests and ministers of the Sanhedrim, who explained and administered the Law, to teach ua. But the other book of the Pentateuch, here and there slightly differing from this, was commonly used by the people, and was written in *Hebrew* (Sam.) letters, which were left to the unlearned. It was translated too into the Aramaean or Chaldee tongue, which was then their common language,.... and the 70 elders who were called in by King Ptolemy thought proper to translate the Law from that copy.'

The truth is, that we know too little of the history of the substitution of the modern for the ancient Hebrew character, to be positively certain that, even if the MS. which the Greek translators used were sent from the archives of Jerusalem, it could not have been written in the Samaritan letters. Those letters were certainly used by the Maccabees upon their coins, and we have little better than very suspicious Rabbinical testimony to assure us that they were not used in the sacred books also. Arguing upon the mere probabilities of the case, one would be apt to come to an opposite conclusion to that of R. Azarias: for it would seem likely that the Samaritan letter was retained in the sacerdotal copies longer than in the popular ones, since the change was most probably made in consequence of the people's greater familiarity with the square character which they had been used to in Babylon.

iv. But far the most important argument upon this side of the question is derived from the frequent agreement of the Septuagint with the peculiar readings of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Hassencamp has urged this point strongly, and I do not deny that there is great real weight in the evidence which he has adduced; but, at the same time, I must not conceal my conviction that its weight has been sometimes estimated too highly. A correct judgment of its value can only be formed by a fair estimate of the whole phenomena; and those who look only on the points of agreement between the Greek and Hebrew on one side, or the Greek and Samaritan on the other, will form a very imperfect notion of the true state of the case. I have examined this matter myself with some care, and I think it must be allowed that in several minute particularities—such as, for instance, the insertion

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<sup>i</sup> Tempore templi II. fuerunt Judaeis bini Pent. MSS.—unns literis Assyrianis et lingua sancta, secundum libros rectos qui sunt apud nos; hicque est quem disposuit et correxerit Esdras scriba, videns quod corrupta vel confusa fuerint exemplaria, partim culpa et negligentia patrum nostrorum templi I., de quibus dictum est, *et oblitus es Legis Dei tui*, partim ob scissuras quae in illas irrepserunt in captivitate Babylonica. Huncque librum rectum, quem ille scripsit, dedit sacerdotibus et viris Synedrui pertractantibus Legem ut nos perdocerent Alter vero Pent, liber paullulum hic vel illic diversus, qui spargebatur in plebe, et scriptus erat literis Hebraicis, seu transfluvialibus, quae relicta sunt idiotis, translatus autem lingua Aramaea vel Chaldaea, quae erat tunc sermo eorum communis. LXX seniores qui vocati fuerunt ad Ptolemaeum existimarunt bonum, et consultum ipsis visum fuit, ut transferrent Legem ex illo exemplari.—*Imre Binah*, cap. v. fol. 38.

or omission of the copula<sup>k</sup>—the text which the LXX. used agreed (p. 329) more more with that upon which the Samaritan recension is based than with our present Masoretic recension. Probably the agreement would be closer if it were not for the tampering of transcribers, who used the Hebrew text, or Aquila's version of it, as a kind of standard to determine the value of various readings in the MSS. of the Septuagint. But in the more important cases, it appears to me most probable that the agreement between the Septuagint and Samaritan is the result (not of the former being copied from the latter, but) of the operation of similar false principles of criticism—principles adopted equally by the framers of the Samaritan text, and by the makers or moulders of the Septuagint translation.

That these principles, though often applied with similar results, were independently applied by the Alexandrian and Samaritan *Διασκευασται*, will appear, I think, upon an impartial examination.

Gen. i. 6. The Alexandrian Critic, perceiving a want of concinnity in his text, in order that the accomplishment of the Divine command might be related immediately after it was said to be issued, transposed the clause *καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως* from v. 7 to the end of this verse. This did not strike the Samaritan, and therefore he let the text stand as he found it. For the same reason the Greek added *καὶ ἴδεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι καλόν* at v. 8, and the clause *καὶ συνήχθη κ. τ. λ.* in v. 9, which are precisely of the same character as several of the Samaritan's emendations in other places, but which did not happen to occur to him here. But in Gen. ii. 2 the difficulty of the Hebrew lection was too manifest not to strike both, and the remedy of reading the sixth day instead of the seventh too easy not to be adopted by both. In the same way Gen. iv. 8, they have both filled up the apparent gap in the same manner, and, as I think, from the same source—the apocryphal traditions of the Jews. This seems plainly intimated in the Greek Scholia<sup>m</sup> upon the place, which I have transcribed in the margin. The clause is found also in some Hebrew MSS., and, with further embellishments, in the Targums of Jerusalem, and the Pseudo-Jonathan. In Gen. v. 3—28 the Alexandrian and the Samaritan follow each a method of his own. The common object of both seems to have been to produce a greater uniformity than they (p. 330) found in the Hebrew text; but they went to work independently, and chanced upon different ways of effecting their object.<sup>n</sup> The Samaritan proceeds by subtraction, the Greek by addition, as will appear by the following scheme:—

<sup>k</sup> Hassencamp observes that there are more than 300 places in the book of Genesis alone in which the Septuagint agrees with the Samaritan against the Hebrew in adding or omitting the van. This is true; but there are also many places in which it disagrees with the Samaritan,

<sup>m</sup> The first is from Origen—*ἐν τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ τὸ λεχθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ Καὶν πρὸς τὸν Ἄβελ οὐ γέγραπται· καὶ οἱ περὶ Ἀκύλαν εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐν τῷ Ἀποκρύφῳ φαίνονται οἱ Ἑβραῖοι κείσθαι τοῦτο.* This is substantially the same as the note in Dr. Holmes's Moscow MS. 127:—*ταῦτα ἐκ τοῦ ἀποκρύφου δόκει ὑπὸ τῶν ὀ εἰληφθαι· ἔχειν [l. ἔχει] δὲ αὐτὰ καὶ τὸ Σαμαρειτικόν· ἐν γὰρ τῷ Ἑβραϊκῷ οὐ γέγραπται, οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς περὶ τὸν Ἀκύλαν.* So another Scholium which Morinus mutilated and falsely ascribed to Cyrill. I give it as restored by Hottinger:—*παρ' οὐδενὶ τῶν λοιπῶν κείται τὰ βήματα τοῦ Καὶν πρὸς τὸν Ἄβελ, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ παρ' Ἑβραίοις, ἀλλ' ἐν Ἀποκρύφῳ φασι. παρὰ δὲ τοῖς ὀ κείται, ἔχει δὲ αὐτὰ καὶ τὸ Σαμαρειτικόν.* Cf. Fabricius Cod. Pseudep. i. p. 104.

<sup>n</sup> The ingenious conjecture of George Syncellus, who is inclined to suspect the integrity of the Hebrew text, is worth preserving:—*κινουμαι μήποτε Ιουδαίων ἔργον ἦν τοῦτο τολμησάντων συστειλαὶ καὶ ἐπιταχύναι τοὺς πρὸ τῆς παιδοποιίας χρόνους ἐπιτροπῇ ΤΑΧΥΓΑΜΙΑΣ.* Chron. p. 84. Paris. 1652.

**YEARS BEFORE THE BIRTH OF A SON.**

	Heb.	Sam.	LXX.
Adam . . .	130	130	230
Seth . . .	105	105	205
Enos . . .	90	90	190
Cainan . . .	70	70	170
Mahaleel . . .	65	65	165
Jared . . .	162	62	162
Enoch . . .	65	65	165
Methusela . . .	187	67	167
Lamech . . .	182	53	188

The Samaritan's is certainly the more ingenious plan of the two; and I have no doubt that if the Greek had seen it, he would have preferred it to his own.

It will be worth while to compare with this the other patriarchal genealogy in Gen. xi. 10—26. Here the same false criticism is applied with greater uniformity of effects; yet there are also sufficient differences to show the independence of the two applications of it. The Samaritan has shaped this genealogy into a perfect conformity with that in chap. v. by adding at each link the total sum of the years of each patriarch's life, and the notice of his death. The Greek is satisfied with interpolating only the latter, in the clause **καὶ ἀπέθανε.** The object of both is to gain a longer extent of time than the Hebrew text allowed, in order to make room for the events of profane chronology; and this they both seek to compass by adding 100 years to the true numbers. But in this process the Samaritan stops short at Nahor—the Alexandrian not till Tera. The Greek text also exhibits a second Cainan by whom it gains a full 130 years, whom the Samaritan knows as little as the Hebrew.

Again, Gen. 7, the Alexandrian, being struck as it would seem by the curious interchanges of the names יהוה and אלהים throughout the narrative, has endeavoured to compound matters by generally reading **Κύριος ὁ Θεός.** The Samaritan is satisfied with correcting a remarkable irregularity in ver. 9, by reading יהוה for אלהים, which the other had suffered to escape his notice. At ver. 2 they both agree in the obvious correction **δύο, δύο**; but in the next verse the (p. 331) Samaritan is satisfied with adding the limitation which seemed to be required by the preceding verse of *clean* animals, while the Greek not only coincides in this, but adds the further safeguard of the clause **καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν πετεινῶν τῶν μὴ καθαρῶν δύο δύο, ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ.**

Elsewhere, however, the Samaritan's critical sagacity is more wakeful than the Greek's (Gen. x. 19). He changes the text entirely, giving the more extensive limits as assigned in Deuteronomy, 'from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, and to the western sea.' But the Greek is satisfied with the Hebrew. Again, in xii. 16, the Samaritan's delicacy is hurt at the odd arrangement, 'he-asses and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels,' which he alters to 'men-servants, and maid-servants, and he-asses,' &c, but the Greek lets it stand.

But xx. 2, the Alexandrian has thought it necessary to insert from xxvi. 7, the explanatory clause **ἐφοβήθη γὰρ εἰπεῖν ὅτι γυνή μου ἐστὶ, μήποτε ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτὸν οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως δι' αὐτήν,** which the Samaritan omits: and xlvi. 20 he has filled up the genealogy of Manasseh (from 1 Chron. vii. 14, 20, 21), which the Samaritan leaves as he found it.

In dealing with the book of Exodus both editors allow themselves considerable liberties. But the Greek is, on the whole, by much the more modest of the two. He scarcely ever recognizes the bold transpositions and supplements which we have elsewhere noticed in the Samaritan, but, on the other hand, in the last four chapters of the book he has re-cast and abridged the narrative in a way peculiar to himself. He observes a more regular order of classification than the Hebrew, giving an account first of the priestly vestments, then an inventory of the furniture of the tabernacle, and lastly, a specification of the whole expense— everywhere clearing away superfluous redundancies, and bringing all into a clear and compendious abstract of the original.

It is worth while noticing some minor marks of independent criticism in this book.

In the famous passage Exod. xii. 40, the Greek and the Samaritan both perceive the chronological difficulty, and both endeavour to rectify it in the same way; but the Greek's attempt is the more timid and imperfect of the two. He reads, Ἡ δὲ κατοίκησις τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἣν κατώκησαν ἐν γῆ Αἰγύπτῳ [καὶ ἐν γῆ Χαναάν] ἔτη τετρακόσια τριάκοντα. The Samaritan's is bolder and more complete,

וּמוֹשֵׁב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל [וְאֲבוֹתָם] אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ [בְּחַרְץ כְּנָעַן וּבְחַרְץ] מִצְרַיִם וְיַי This reaches the desired point effectually, and is so necessary (p. 332) for perfecting the criticism of the Greek text that, as appears from the Alexandrian MS., some scholiast or transcriber afterwards took the hint, and remoulded the reading of the Septuagint thus, ἣν κατώκησαν ἐν γῆ

Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐν γῆ Χαναάν, αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν. Yet even here, the marks of independence are distinct enough. For, in the Samaritan we have וְאֲבוֹתָם placed regularly after יִשְׂרָאֵל, while in the Greek it is introduced as a kind of afterthought out of its natural position; in the Samaritan, the order is—the land of Canaan and the land of Egypt—in the Greek, the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan. Is it possible, then, that the Alexandrian translator could have had the Samaritan text before him? Is it not rather evident that they both had a text before them substantially agreeing with the present Hebrew, which both endeavoured to correct upon the same principles, but with different degrees of success?

In Exod. xxiii. 19, the Samaritan introduces an odd interpolation, of which the Greek presents no trace; but at verse 22, the Greek inserts a long period equally unknown to the Samaritan; and so in many other instances throughout the Pentateuch.

### 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