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The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Several Nations of the Known World
Represented in above an Hundred Copper-Plates,
Designed by the Famous Picart

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(p. 8)... We are assured that the *Samaritans* do not converse with their wives during the sabbath; and the Mahometans are likewise rigid observers of every thing that tends to purity of body j for they not only abstain from women at the time of their devotions, but they even have divers kinds of *ablutions*, which they use more or less according to the degree of their defilements.....

(p. 32) As to the supplement concerning the modern *Karaites* and *Samaritans* hereto added, as these two sects are little known in *Europe*, I was obliged to mention them, that our Author might not appear in any manner defective. The Rabbinist *Jews*, that is, such as follow the doctrine and traditions of the Talmud, charge them with many errors, either out of malice or ignorance; in order therefore to discover the truth of this, I have been, obliged to have recourse to the *Karaites* and *Samaritans* themselves. The *Karaites* whom I have produced is one of the greatest learning and reputation of his sect His treatise, now preserved in manuscript in the library of the Fathers of the Oratory at *Paris*, was brought over from *Constantinople*, with a considerable number of other *Jewish* books, by M. *de Sancy*, on his return from his embassy. As to the *Samaritans*, I have taken what relates to them from two letters, which the synagogues of ¹*Sichem* and *Egypt* wrote to *Joseph Scaliger*, concerning their ceremonies and customs. I was not able to come at the Original, but only a Translation made by As. *Morin*, one of the Fathers of the Oratory, at the request of As. *de Peyrese*, which I found written in his own hand, as I was turning over the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, a manuscript now in the same library.

(p. 89)
AN HISTORICAL DISSERTATION
CONCERNING THE CEREMONIES and CUSTOMS
Which are at this time observed amongst the *JEWS*.
PART V.
CHAP. I.

Of the Heretical Jews: with a Supplement concerning the Caraites and Samaritans.

I. Do not intend to speak of the different heresies, which broke out a little before the destruction of the second temple: my design in this work being only to treat of those things which are in use at present. Of all the heresies which prevailed at that time, there is only one

¹ Napolouse

that has² been transmitted to our days. Those who follow it, are accounted hereticks by the *Jews*, though they observe the law of *Moses*, and are called *Caraim*, a noun derived from *Micra*, signifying, *the -pure text of the Bible*; because they adhere to the Pentateuch only,³ and observe it In its literal sense, rejecting all the interpretation, paraphrases, and constitutions of the Rabbi's.

(p. 90)

II. As they will not recede from the letter of the Scripture, they must: certainly be reformed *Sadducees*; the difference is that the old *Sadducees* denied the immortality of the soul, and consequently paradise, hell, purgatory, the resurrection of the dead, and some other things. But the present *Caraim*, lest they should render themselves odious to all religions which admit of these truths, have submitted to, and even received some of the ancient traditions, in order to make themselves more agreeable to the *Jews*, under whose name they go. Yet I do not question, but that they take their rise from the *Sadducees*, and that they were true *Sadducee*⁴, before they had adopted this new belief of theirs.

III. There are some of them at *Constantinople*, *Cairo*, and other parts of the *Levant*, and even in *Moscovy*, where they live after their own way, having their synagogues, and observing their own ceremonies and customs: stiling themselves *Jews*, and insisting that they are the only true observers of the *Mosaic* law.

IV. They call the *Jews* that are not of their opinion *Rabbanim*, or *followers of the Rabbis*. But these last hate the *Caraim* mortally, and will neither make alliances nor converse with them. They call them *Manzerim*, or *bastards*, because they keep none of the constitutions of the Rabbi's concerning marriages, divorces, or purifications of women. Nay, their hatred is such, that if a *Caraites* had a mind to turn *Rabbinist*, the other *Jews* would not admit him.

SUPPLEMENT.

Concerning the Caraites.

I. IT would be a hard task to determine exactly the time when *Cardism* began. Father *Morin*, who has treated of this question, refers the origin of this sect to the eighth century, presently after the publication of the *Talmud*; and is of opinion, that this large work was published much later than most of the *Jews* believe, for in reality *Cardism* took its rise from the publication of the *Talmud*: for it does not appear, that the word *Cardite* was odious before that time, tho' it has been since. On the contrary, they called *Carat*, a man who had a consummate knowledge of the Scriptures. So that the origin of this sect came from the learned *Jews* of that time, who opposed a thousand idle conceits, which were published under the pompous name of traditions of *Moses*; tho' the greatest part of them had no other foundation, than the ambition of some of their doctors, who would have passed their private decisions upon the people, as so many oracles pronounced on mount *Sinai*. And as those *Jews*, who would not admit these vain traditions, made use of the Scripture for the refuting of them, which they call *Micra*, they received from thence the name of *Car dim*, as we have seen in our days some Protestants, who called themselves *Evangelists*, because they admitted of no other authority than that of the Gospel, and rejected all traditions.

II. But those *Jews* who declared themselves for the *Talmud*, called the others *Samaritans* and *Sadducees*; not because they were really such, but because they imitated them as to such traditions, as they would not admit: notwithstanding there have been *Jews* since that time, who have thought that a *Caraites* was really a *Samaritan* and a *Sadducee*. They were the more

² The author has forgot the *Samaritans* of our days. See the Supplement.

³ This is not true, as you will see lower, and especially in the Supplement, wherein I have corrected several things against the common opinion concerning the *Caraites Jews*.

⁴ This is not true. See the Supplement.

confirmed in this error, because they seldom applied themselves to (p. 91) history or chronology. The author of this work, who knew that the present *Caraites* were not of the same belief with the *Samaritans*, to reconcile this contradiction, has imagined a new sect of *Caraites*; as if the ancient sect had only been *Samaritans* and *Sadducees*, and the modern had changed opinion, or at least, that they were grown more moderate. But this notion of our Rabbi is founded only upon his ignorance of the *Jews* and the arguments which he brings in support of it, are not sufficient to maintain his opinion.

III. The critics of our days, who have ventured to treat of the *Caraites* upon the authority of the *Jewish* Writings, have been greatly mistaken because *the Rabbinites*, who are their enemies, have falsely charged them in all respects. Father *Mann's* proceeding has been very different, he having made use of a commentary upon the Pentateuch written by a *Caraites* author. As I have the same manuscript in my possession I here purpose to shew wherein *Caraitism* expressly consists, and what is the difference between the *Caraites* and *Rabbinites*. I shall begin with their opinion concerning the text of the Bible, because our author herein confounds them with the *Samaritans*, who admit the Pentateuch only; and there are still several learned men in our days, who think, that the *Caraites* differ much from the other *Jews* as to the text of the Bible: I cannot think where a certain Doctor of the *Sorbonne*, and Regius Professor of the *Hebrew* tongue, found what he has lately written upon this subject, concerning the *Caraites*. He explains the word *Caraim* or *Caraites* in these words: *'That is to say, those who admit of consonants only, and no points in their Bibles» because they think the points have no other authority than tradition.* A little after this he adds, *that the Caraites have by degrees got the better among the Jews, especially among the Talmudists and allegorical writers: and that by degrees the notion has obtained that those books of the law which have no points in them, were profane.* There is hardly one word of truth in the whole discourse of this learned Professor, as we shall see by the sequel.

IV. The author of that *Caraites* commentary before mentioned, calls *Aaron* son of *Joseph*, and lived about the end of the thirteenth century. He admits of all the books of the Scripture contained in the canon of the *Jews*, and allows them to be *twenty four* in number, as the other *Jews* do. In order to distinguish them from human traditions, he sometimes calls them *Prophecies*, thinking it inconsistent with the dignity of God, to rank his word and the writings of men in the same class; and herein blames the *Rabbinites*, who set the same value upon the fables of the *Talmud*, and the conceits of their ancestors, as they do upon the sacred books of the Scripture, and put them upon the same footing. He also shews that the *Caraites* do not reject all sorts of traditions, but those only that are false and ridiculous, some of which he mentions in the beginning of his work, where he makes very merry with them. He tells us what a strange explanation these doctors give of the serpent mentioned in the beginning of *Genesis*. For the *Rabbinites* and the *Cabalists* say, *that he was as big as a camel, that Samael⁵ sat upon him; nay, that God himself got up upon him, and sported upon his back.* He in the same place relates some other allegorical and *Cabalistical* interpretations of these very doctors, which he refutes, and adds the following words: *In these and other explanations of this kind, they rely only upon the authority of their fathers.* Then breaking out against those who abuse the word of God after that manner: *Cursed be the man, faith he, who is so impudent as to behave in this manner.*

V. In order to shew, that they believe such traditions as are rational and well-grounded, he distinguishes the traditions that are certain and constant, from those which are false and dubious. And it appears, that his rules, for the authority of traditions, are the same as those which the judicious *Vincentius Lirinensis* has given us: so that he professes not only to

⁵ The Devil.

receive the Scripture, but also to adhere to reason and tradition, so far as it has (p. 92) been certain and constant, but not to that of late or fresh invention. He submits to the doctrine of the ancients, where it has suffered no variations, and where it agrees with authentic writings, approved by all the *Jews*. Upon this principle they acknowledge all the books of the Bible, as well as the *Rabbinists*, and what is more extraordinary, they receive them as they are now pointed: for they have no other copy but that of the *Major a*. And if they sometimes read in a different manner, they do it only as critics, in imitation of the Rabbi's *Juda, Jona, Abenesra, Kimchi, Abenmelec* and other *Rabbinist* grammarians.

VI. Our *Caraites*, who is very exact in his enquiries into the literal sense of the text' often quotes the various readings in order to pick out the best. And herein he imitates the *Rabbinists*, who do the same. He is attentive to the smallest things in grammar, to make his literal sense good. It would be needless here to produce any instances thereof; because he uses this method throughout the whole work.

VII. Neither shall I endeavour to refute the opinion of those, who believe that the *Caraites* have copies of the Bible, different from the Vulgar. For it is sufficient to observe (as I have done) that they admit, not only the four and twenty books of the Scripture, as all other *Jews* do, but that they also make use of the *Hebrew* copies, just as they now stand with the points of the *Massorets*.

VIII. As for their divinity, it is in no circumstance different from that of the other *Jews*, excepting only, that it is more pure and free from superstition. For they give no credit to the *Cabalistic* explanations, or allegories, which indeed are without foundation. Besides, our *Caraites* plainly shews his belief concerning the nature of the soul, and a future life, in his explanation of these words of *Genesis*, *Let us make man in our own image. The spirit of man, says he, takes its rise and origin from things above, and his body from those here below. For his soul, adds he, is of the nature of that of Angels.* And presently after: *The world to come was made for the soul of man.* This opinion is directly contrary to that of the *Sadducees*, and evidently shews, that all the errors imputed to the *Caraites*, are mere calumnies.

IX. As for the ceremonies and customs of the *Caraites*, a man might compose a long treatise upon them: but I hope it may suffice to say in general, that the *Caraites* reject all the constitutions of the *Misna* and *Talmud*, which are not conformable to the Scripture, or may be drawn as a necessary and manifest consequence of it. I shall only produce three instances of this. The first is concerning the commandment of *Mezouzot*, or parchments, which the *Jews* fasten to all the doors they pass through. The second, concerning the *Tephilim*, or *Phylacteries*, which are mentioned even in the New Testament.* The third is, the prohibition of eating milk with flesh. Though the two first seem to be very express and positive in *Deuteronomy*, where you have these words;⁶ *Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou, shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates:* our *Caraites*, notwithstanding, insists, that this is a figurative way of speaking; and that when God orders the *Jews* to write them upon the posts, his design was, that both at coming in, and going out, they should be always present in the mind. By these means the *Caraites* are discharged from the performance of an infinite number of ceremonies, or rather superstitions, which the *Rabbinist Jews* have invented concerning the *Mezouzot* and *Tephilim*. Hence is it also, that the *Caraites* turn the *Rabbinist Jews* into ridicule, when they see them saying their prayers, with these *Tephilim* on their forehead, as we have described them in the xi. chapter of the first part of this work; nay, they even call them *asses with bridles*. St. *Jerom* has not treated these *Tephilim* with the same freedom; for, in his exposition on the words (p. 93) of the Gospel, wherein the *Phylacteries*

⁶ Deut. vi. and xi.

are mentioned, he says: *The Pharisees by a wrong interpretation of this passage wrote the Decalogue of Moses on parchment, which they rolled up And tied on their foreheads; and made a fort of crown round the head of them, that they might have them constantly before their eyes.*

X. The third example is taken from this negative commandment not to eat flesh at the same meal they eat any compound of milk, founded on this passage of *Exodus*-, *Thou shalt not seeth kid in his mothers milk.* But our *Car'ite* gives no manner of credit to those traditions which give this passage a sense so distant from the literal sense of it; and he is of opinion, that this place is to be explained by that, where it is said of a bird's nest: *Thou shalt not take the mother with the young ones.* And when the *Rabbinist* sees are hard put to it upon this subject, as I have been myself, they answer, *Ameru Hachamenu: This is the decision of our masters or wifemen,* for they believe, that the explanation of their fathers is not at all inferior to the very text of the Bible; and that God himself delivered that interpretation to *Moses* on mount *Sinai.*

XI. I shall not detain my reader with any other institutions which are numberless, because the greatest part of them are no more than expositions of the *Rabbinists*, which the *Car'ites* do not admit. They do not read the text of the Bible with the same view as the *Rabbi's*, who on the least occasion are pleased with inventing new decisions. The *Caraites* read the Scripture in a rational manner, and explain it from itself, that is, what follows by what goes before. In short, they reject all such things as have not Scripture, reason, and an established tradition for their foundation.

XII. Yet, as the *Car'ites* submit to good sense and reason, they readily agree with the *Rabbinists* in some points of discipline, tho' they see well enough that the Scripture ordains otherwise. For example, they follow their calendar and the computations of *Rabbi Hillel*; because, as they must have some settled method therein, they prefer this to the rest: just as some Protestants make use of the reformed calendar, though they do not approve of it in all points.

XIII. They not only conform to the *Rabbinists* in their manner of circumcising, but even make use of them sometimes for the circumcising of their own children. Nevertheless, circumcision is ordained in Scripture, tho' the manner of circumcising be not particularized; for instance, the *Jews* and *Turks*, who both circumcise their children, differ in their manner of performing it. The *Turks* after they have cut off the skin never meddle with it after, but the *sews* with their thumb nails tear the edges of the (kin remaining after circumcision in several places; and I believe this is the reason why circumcised *sews* heal sooner than *Turks*.

XIV. The *Car'ites* make use also of the *Taled*, which our author has mentioned in the first part of his book. Yet their *Taled* is somewhat different from that of the *Rabbinists*: for it is cut in a particular manner, and the strings hanging like tufts, are also different.

XV. I (shall only add to what I have said of the *Caraites*, that our *Caraites* never writes the name of *Jehovah*, or the *Tetragrammaton*, with these common letters, jod, he, vau, he, but with these three only, jod, vau, jod. This makes me believe, that the ancient *Caraites* did not read *Jehovah*, as we have it in our modern copies, but *Jave*, which manner of reading *Theodores* attributes to the *Samaritans*. Unless these three letters may be termed an abridgment of the name of *Jehovah*, as we see other *Jews* often write it with two or three jods.

(p. 94) XVI. As to our author's assertion, that the *Rabbinists* hate the *Caraites* so far even as to call them bastards, and to refuse making alliances with them, or admit them when they have a mind to turn *Rabbinists*, it is an argument of the great veneration which the *Rabbinists* have for the traditions of their fathers. Yet I have heard that in the East, when a *Caraites* is

willing to turn *Rabbinist*, and to have children that may be accounted *Rabbinists*, they make him marry a slave, and the children proceeding from such marriage are not looked upon as *manzerim*, or bastards, but as *Rabbinist Jews*.

J SUPPLEMENT.

Concerning the Samaritans.

I. WE have some reason to be surprised that the author of this treatise says no\ thing of the *Samaritans*; since he promised to speak of all such Hereticks as are at this time among the *Jews*. It is indeed very long since this breach began between them; but as it has been irreparable and still continues, he might have said something of them. I will not here mention the origin of the *Samaritans*; for it is particularly set forth in the Bible; and there is no doubt but such as bear that name in several parts of the world, are of the same sect. My design is only to speak of these last, whose memory has been revived in our days, upon account of their Pentateuch, which has been printed in the famous Bibles of As. *le Jai*, and the *English Polyglot*.

II. The modern *Samaritans* live at *Gaza*,⁷ *Sichem*, *Damascus*, *Cairo*, and other parts of the East, where they have priests, descended, as they say, from *Aaron*. Their temple, or rather chapel, stands on mount *Garizim*, where they offer their sacrifices. *Joseph Scaliger*, who was informed of it, writ letters to the *Samaritans* in *Egypt*, and to the high priest of the whole sect, who lives at *Sichem*. They answered all the difficulties which he had proposed to them in his letters; these answers were dated in the 998 year of *Mahomet's Hegira*, which answers to our 1590. but never came to *Scaliger's* hands.

III. In the first of these letters, which is written in the name of the assembly of *Israel* in *Egypt*, they declare that they every year celebrate the Passover the 14. of the first month, upon mount *Garizim*, and that their then high priest was called *Eleazer*, the son of *Phineas*, the son *Aaron*. They then proceed to the solution of those difficulties which were proposed by him, but as these difficulties are more clearly explained in the answer written in the name of the high priest *Eleazer*, and of the synagogue at *Sichem*, directed to the said *Scaliger*, I shall only mention this last, which will sufficiently shew what the *Samaritans* are. The contents whereof are as follow.

1. The *Samaritans* keep the Sabbath according to the strictness prescribed in *Exodus*: for not one of them stirs from the place where he happens to be that day, except to the synagogue, where they read the law, and sing praises unto God. They do not go to bed to their wives that night, neither do they, or any for them, kindle any fire during that time-, whereas the *Jews* violate the Sabbath as to these points: for they go out of town, light their fire, and converse with their wives, nor do they wash after they have been with them.

2. They look upon the Passover as their principal feast, which with them begins at sunset, by the sacrifice prescribed in *Exodus* for that purpose. But they offer no sacrifices, (p.95) but upon mount *Garizim*, where they read the law, and pray to God; after which the high priest blesses the whole congregation.

3. They also keep the feast of the harvest for seven days; but do not agree with the *Jews* as to the day when it is to begin: for the *Jews* reckon from the next day after the solemnity of the Passover, whereas the *Samaritans* reckon their fifty days from the next day after the Sabbath, which falls in the week of the festival of unleavened bread; and the feast of the harvest begins the next day after the seventh Sabbath following.

7 Naplouse.

4. They keep the feast of expiation on the tenth of the seventh month, in which they spend the whole twenty four hours in praying, and singing, without eating any thing. For, excepting such children as are at the feast, every body besides fasts; but the *Jews* except those that are under seven years of age.

5. On the 15. of the same month they keep the feast of tabernacles on the same mount *Garizim*.

6. They never defer the circumcision longer than eight days, as it is ordered in *Genesis* whereas the *Jews* sometimes put it off to a longer time.

7. They are obliged to wash themselves in the morning, after having conversed with their wives, or having fallen into any accidental pollution in the night-time; and all such vessels as can be polluted, become so by their touching them before they are washed.

8. They take away the fat of the sacrifices, and give the priest the shoulders, jaws and belly.

9. They do not marry their own nieces as the *Jews* do, and have but one wife; whereas, it is lawful for the others to have several.

10. They believe in God, in *Moses*, and in mount *Garizim*. And whereas the *Jews* (say they) put their trust in others, we do nothing but what is expressly commanded by God in the law; who therein made use of the ministry of *Moses*. The *Jews* have abandoned what God has prescribed in the law, to run after the inventions of their fathers and doctors.

11. This is the substance of the answer* made by order of the high priest *Eleazer*, and written by his secretary *Abzebuta*, the son of *Joseph Harmacus*, an inhabitant of *Gaza*. It is also observed, that this high priest had a son called *Phineas*, who exercised the same function in presence of his father; that they constantly live in that holy place in the presence of God, and that those who have any difficulties to resolve, come to them from all parts; so that they determine things according to the laws of justice and truth.

12. From *Aaron*, down to themselves, they reckon 112 high priests, a list of whose names they keep; and insist, that the *Jews* have no priests of the family of *Phineas* and that they lie when they call the *Samaritans*, *Cutheans*; that they are descended from the tribe of *Joseph the Just*, by *Ephraim*; that their *Samaritan*, characters are those which God made use of when he wrote the law, and that he communicated them to *Moses*. To this the answer of the synagogue in *Egypt* adds, that the characters of the modern *Jews*, in their law, *is a way of writing invented by Esdras, and accursed for ever*.

IV. Several reflections might be made upon these two letters, but I leave them to the reader. I shall only observe, that the *Samaritans* are not infected with the errors of the *Sadducees*, and that in this respect the *Jews* bely them. What gave occasion to this calumny is, that the *Samaritans* will not receive the vain traditions of the *Jews*, as I have already said, in speaking of the *Caraites*: and for this reason the *Jews* confound the *Samaritans* with the *Sadducees* and *Caraites*. For my part, I am of opinion, that we cannot now learn the purity of the *Jewish* law better than from these *Samaritans* of *Sichem*, who still continue to offer sacrifices according to the old institution on mount *Garizim*, as Father *Morin*, and *M. Peyresc* have observed. It would be well worth our curiosity to see the place where they sacrifice, and to observe its form, structure, order and proportion, and especially the dimensions and measures, both of the altar, and of the vessels (p. 96) which they make use of in their sacrifices: so would it also to see their high priest dressed in his sacerdotal robes, especially on Easter day, when he is attended by all his inferior ministers. I wonder how it comes to pass that none of our travellers have had this curiosity.

V. Part of what I have said of the *Samaritans*, is confirmed by *Benjamin the Jew* in his travels. This Rabbi, who lived in the twelfth century, says, that in his time there were but a hundred *Samaritans* in the synagogue of *Sichem*, and two hundred in that of *Egypt*; about

three hundred in the synagogue of *Ascalon*, and between three and four hundred in that of *Damascus*. He observes also, that they have priests of the family of *Aaron*, whom they call *Aaronites*, and who never marry unless it be with women of their own family, to keep the sacerdotal race pure and unmixed with others; that these priests offer sacrifices on mount *Garizim*, where they have a stone altar, which the *Israelites* erected after their passage over *Jordan*. He farther adds, that these *Samaritans* are of the tribe of *Ephraim*, and that they are still in possession of *Joseph* the son of *Jacob's* burying place; whom they stile their father. In short, he says, that the *Samaritans* are very cautious of polluting themselves by touching a dead body, or any place where they are buried that they change their clothes when they are going to the synagogue, and wash before they put them on.

VI. It is no new thing for the *Samaritans* to stile themselves the descendants of the 'tribe of *Ephraim*, and the true sons of *Jacob*, and to make it their boast, as may be observed, from these words of the woman of *Samaria* to our Lord: *Art thou greater than our father Jacob?* As to their sepulchres, besides what *Benjamin* fays of the burial place of *Joseph*, the *Samaritans* likewise shew those of their prophets lying round their temple; amongst others they have those of *Eleazer*, and *Ithamar* the son of *Aaron*, and even that of his grandson *Phineas*. They pretend also to have the tombs of *Joshuab* and *Caleb*, and of two other men, whom they call *Abinon* and *Joseph*, this last the son of *Carath* or *Parath*. They likewise preserve an inscription in their temple written, as they say, by the hand of *Phineas* the son of *Eleazer*, grandson of *Aaron*, in the 15 year from the going up of the *Israelites* into the Land of Promise.

VII. AS those calumnies, by the *Jews* usually charged upon the *Samaritans*, are contradictory in themselves, I shall not here detain my reader with a refutation of them: for they accuse them not only of *Sadduceism*, but also of idolatry, and of worshiping the image of a dove in their temple. They are no less unjust when they charge the *Samaritan* alphabet with wanting these three letters, he, heth, and gnain; and that likewise in the beginning of *Genesis*, the *Samaritans*, instead of these words, *God created*, have written, *Asima created*, but my own eyes can witness that in this also they are wronged; for we have at present an *Hebrew* Pentateuch in the *Samaritan* character, wherein those three letters are to be met with, so that they have those letters, and also the word *Elohim God*, as well as the *Jews*.

VIII. It must be owned that the *Samaritans* look upon the Pentateuch of *Moses*, as the only authentic books of the whole Bible. They indeed have among them the history of *Joshua*, and some few of the other histories of the Old Testament, but they are different from ours: neither do they give any credit to them as divine books, and the rather as the *Jewish* canon, ascertaining the number of the books of the Bible, is of a much later date than, their schism, as well as the greatest part of those very books; which in their opinion were composed in favour of the posterity of *David*, and to establish it on the throne. For this reason they speak of *Esdras* as of an impostor, who (according to them) laid aside the genuine primitive *Hebrew* letters for those others, which the *Jews* still make use of in the (p. 97) writing of the Bible. And indeed St. *Jerom*, and the most celebrated critics of our days, are persuaded that the *Samaritan* letters were the first *Hebrew* characters, and that *Esdras*, after the return from the captivity, made use of the *Chaldee* letters, in which our Bibles are now written. He fell into this expedient, perhaps the better to distinguish the *Jews* from the *Samaritans*, to the end that there might be nothing common between them. It is likewise possible, that the people had used themselves to that way of writing during their captivity, having learnt the *Chaldean* language; my argument for this conjecture is, that in order to understand the *Hebrew* text, they, at that time, were forced to make a *Chaldee* paraphrase of it.

IX. The only difference betwixt the *Samaritan* and the *Jewish* Pentateuchs is in the letters. *The Samaritans*, fays St. *Jerom*, have the Pentateuch of Moses written in as many letters as the Jews; they differ only in their characters and points. Instead of this word *point*, we read *apex* in St. *Jerom*'s *Latin*, which is a small sine stroke, with which the *Jews* adorn the top of some of their letters, placing it over them in the form of a crown. These they use in the books read in the synagogues, and in their *Mezouzot*. Probably our Saviour meant those small strokes, when he said: *Iota unum*,⁸ *aut unius apex non peribit a lege*. For the modern points, now in use, were not then used.

X. In short, when, I say with St. *Jerom*, that the *Samaritan* Pentateuch differs from that of the *Jews*, in its characters only, I do not mean in a strict sense, but they are to be considered as two copies taken from the fame original, which each nation has transcribed into its own characters: tho' indeed it was-impossible but, in process of time, some difference must happen in the various readings. St. *Jerom* points out some of them, as others had done before him. And it is by remarking all these circumstances that the disputes which have been, and still continue to be upon this head, are to be reconciled. For were the *Greeks*, who acknowledge the Pope, to take a fancy to write the *Latin* Vulgate in *Greek*, characters, and constantly have the fame in common use, I doubt not but, in length of time, there would be some variation between those two copies.

XI. The *Samaritans* have the Pentateuch not only in *Samaritan* characters, but likewise two translations of it, one in *Arabic*, and the other in *Syriac* or *Chaldee*, which is what they call the *Samaritan* version, as if it were a peculiar language, tho' it is only a kind of *Syriac* or *Chaldee*, somewhat different from the common *Syriac*. Those two versions are also written in *Samaritan* characters, and placed with the text in three columns. *M. De Peyresc* had a copy of these Tritapla, tho' a little imperfect. The *Hebrew-Samaritan* Pentateuch, and *Samaritan* version are printed in *M. Le Jays* Bible, and in the *English* Polyglot, the characters of which were taken from that copy preserved in the library of the fathers of the oratory at *Paris* near the *Louvre*. Yet these printed copies have not that grandeur and majesty which the manuscript has. There are several of these *Samaritan* copies still to be found in private libraries. But no body ever made so curious a collection of them as *M. De Peyresc*. For besides these Tritapla, he had several fragments of the works of particular men written in a language pretty different from the common *Syriac*, which may be called *Samaritan*. In short, if we may believe *Postel*, the *Samaritans* have grammars too of their language.

XII. As the *Samaritans* write the text of the Pentateuch without points or vowels, we cannot know whether their way of reading agrees with that of the *Jews*, which is now fixed by the *Massoreths*. It would nevertheless be very curious to hear a *Samaritan* read the Pentateuch, that we- might see whether it was perfectly agreeable to the *Jewish* way of reading, which we follow in all regards, because we have no other. It is to be hoped, (p. 98) that some traveller, skilful in the *Hebrew* tongue, will one day or other satisfy our curiosity in this particular. Nay, the whole church might reap great advantages from it. I do not think the mention of the *Greek* version of the *Samaritan* Pentateuch necessary here, because every one that is the least acquainted with the *Greek* fathers, must know wherein it consists. However, we are not to confound the generality of the *Samaritans* with a particular sect of them, whose leader's name is *Dostheus*, or *Dousis*, as the *Arabians* call him. This *Dousis* (according to what we are informed by a *Samaritan*, who has given us the history of his own nation) in several places altered the text of the Pentateuch; for which he was reproved by the high priest. He notwithstanding had some disciples, who made use of his corrupted Pentateuch, as may be

⁸ In his *Bibliotheca*.

seen more at length in the notes of *Abraham Echellensis* upon the book of *Hebedjesu*.⁹ *Photius* too, mentions a certain *Dositheus* or *Dosten*, a famous falsifier of the sacred writings, who was a *Samaritan*, and lived at the time of *Simon Magus*. This man was head of that sect among the *Samaritans* called *Dosthenians*.

One of the most learned men of our age imagines that our *Hebrew-Samaritan* Pentateuchs claim this *Dositheus* as their author. But his opinion has not the least foundation, for the *Hebrew-Samaritan* Pentateuch, which hath been lately printed, is the same with that read in all the synagogues of the *Samaritans*. Indeed I am not ignorant that some men of great learning, especially in what relates to the eastern nations, are surprised to hear it advanced, that the modern *Samaritans* have a place on mount *Garizim* for offering of sacrifices; because, they say, that *Pietro della Valle*, who had been in person among the *Samaritans* of those parts, does not say a word of it in his travels: and that their extreme poverty too, which they have been long reduced to, would not allow them to carry on their sacrifices. But waving the necessity of inquiring into what *Pietro della Valle* has written concerning the *Samaritans*, or whether the *French* translation of his travels be conformable to the *Italian*, or even whether he was at the pains of an exact information, in what related to them whilst he was upon the spot, all arguments against facts which may be easily cleared are urged in vain. But this is certain, that in *Scaliger's* time the *Samaritans* at *Naplouse* had priests, since they desired him, in their letter to him, to send them some fine linen for the vestments of their high priest: and several memoirs too, concerning the sacrifices of the *Samaritans*, were found amongst *M. De Peyrescs* loose papers, who had received his informations from travellers, whom he had desired to visit the *Samaritans*, in order to buy some of their books. The same *Samaritans* of *Naplouse* have lately written to some doctors in *England*, whom they call their dear *Samaritan* brethren of *England*. In their letters they assert that they have a high priest, whom they pretend to be of the race of *Phineas*, and that their priests are of the race of *Levi*. And in their last letter, written in the year 1676, they acquaint them with the death of their high priest, and at the same time desire them to assist them in their misery, and to send their offerings to the holy mount *Garizim*, to supply them with vestments for their priests. And lastly, to send their gifts and alms to the sepulchres of their fathers. Father *Morin*, who had also made inquiries into the *Samaritans*, has assured us, that they still offer up sacrifices on mount *Garizim*, and that the jurisdiction of their high priest, who resides at *Naplouse*, extends over all the *Samaritans*, to whom he every year, by his circular letters, notifies the Passover and the other solemn festivals.

(p. 178) VII Sects of the Jews

THERE are two sects which the *Jews* look upon as schismatics, heretics, and excommunicated, The *Samaritans*, and *Cara'ites*.

SAMARITANS.

We shall make the following addition to what *F. Simon* has said of them in the preceding Dissertations.

If we may give any credit to the relation¹⁰ of a *Samaritan* of *Naplouse*, the ancient *Sichem*, " The *Samaritans* there consist of five or six families, who have perpetuated themselves in it,

⁹ *Usserius Armach.*

¹⁰ *Travels to mount Sinai and Jerusalem by Morison*, printed in 1704.

and notwithstanding the miseries and revolutions they have undergone, have still the satisfaction of seeing the religion they profess never wholly stifled "at *Naplouse*. The *Samaritan* added, that he was in hopes that as long as mount *Garizim* stood, God would have adorers upon it; that indeed, by a just vengeance on the "sins of his people, he had permitted the destruction of the temple there, to which their "forefathers went up to sacrifice to the true God; but that the followers of his religion "had never yet been deprived the pleasure of often visiting that mountain, there to send up "their prayers and wishes for the re-establishment of this holy temple, and to offer to God "at least a heart inviolably fixed in a religion, which he took to be the most ancient, "as well as the most holy religion in the world." The author of the relation whence these words are taken, travelled in 1697, and 1698, and if the testimony of the *Samaritan* be true, it may be concluded, there is neither temple nor sacrifice on mount *Garizim*. However, we doubt whether it be exact.

1. The *Samaritans* curse *Mahomet*, which curse is at the end of a chronicle they call the book of *Joshua*, but *Mahomet's* name is written in *Samaritan*, that the *Turks* may have no knowledge of a curse so offensive to their religion.

2. They mortally hate the other *Jews*, which is returned upon them.

3. The name of¹¹ *Jehovah* we know is not to be pronounced by a *Jew*. Neither is it by the *Samaritans*, who use the word *Sema* instead of it.

4. They have a confused idea of the Messiah, but we are informed they make honourable mention of him, without running into abuses against the Christians.

(p. 179) 5. In their computation of years, they follow the *Mahometan Hegyra*.

6. They deny the existence of angels, and explain such passages as mention them by the word *Command* or *Virtue*, a *God sent an angel*: that is a *Command*. *The angel of God did such a thing*, that is *God's Virtue wrought*, &c. Yet some of the learned insist that the *Samaritans* really believe the existence of them.

7. The High Priest is judge of the people, and all things are decided by his opinion, and at this tribunal. Their High Priests too pretend to be descended from *Aaron*.

8. They are more rigid observers of the Sabbath than the *Jews*.

9. They prostrate themselves on the earth in their adorations to God on mount *Garizim*, which they call *The House of God*.

10. They sacrifice their Paschal Lamb on mount *Garizim* only, and it is dressed with bitter herbs, and eaten with leavened bread.

11. Their 7. month begins with the feast of *Trumpets*, and ten days after follows that of expiation. Their fast is more strict than the *Jewish*.

12. Their feast of *Tabernacles* is on the 15. of the same month, when they set up tents, and divert themselves for seven days, and on the eighth and last of the festival, a hymn is sung to the praise of God.

13. They carefully examine whether the conjunction of the sun and moon be at night, or in the day before noon; and if it falls out before six a clock, that day is the first of the month; but if at six, or a little after, the month does not begin till the next day. If the conjunction be lunar, the month is but of 29. days, and 30. if it be solar. If the new moon falls on the 11. of the month *Adar*, a month is intercalated, and they reckon 13. to that year, and the month immediately following is the first of it. But if the month begins on 12. of *Adar*, or some few days after, it is. the first month of the year, which then consists of 12. months only.

¹¹ Formerly that Jew, who should pronounce the word *Jehovah*, ran the risque of his life, nor did the High Priest himself pronounce it but once a year in the temple at *Jerusalem*.

14. On the third and fourth day they pour what they call the water of separation on every thing that has been defiled by the touch of women; and this they do for seven days on a woman, who has any fluxion. She who has lain in of a son separates for 40. days, and 80. of a daughter.

15. They believe a general judgment, which is to be a day of vengeance to the wicked, and of peace and reward to the good.

Most of these remarks are taken from some letters written by the *Samaritans* about the year 1690.

CARAITES.

THERE are *Caraites* in the East, and in *Poland* and *Lithuania* too, whom the rest of the *Jews* often purposely confound with the *Sadducees* and endeavour to make them odious under the name of e *Cutheans* or *Samaritans*, *Epicureans*, Ice. These *Caraites* Site much less superstitious than other *Jews*.

(p. 218) XI. The day of *Mount Garizim*. The Rabbi's say, that the *Samaritans* sent ambassadors to *Alexander* upon his arrival in *Judea*, to ask leave to destroy the temple of *Jerusalem*; and the better to attain their end at first obtained that of purchasing part of mount *Moriah*. But *Simeon the Just*, High Priest, going out to meet that Prince, the majestic air of the High Priest astonished *Alexander the Great*, who asked the subject of their deputation.. *Simeon* answered, that it was to hinder the *Samaritans* from destroying their temple. *They are in your hands to do with them as you shall think fit*, said *Alexander*; and in an instant the *Jews* seized upon the *Samaritan* deputies, bored their heels, tied them to horses tails, and dragged them over briars and stones as far as mount *Garizim* which they (p. 219) plowed up, and sowed with tares as the *Samaritans* intended to do by mount *Moriah*: and this day is appointed a festival in memory of that triumph.

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

The real author/s is not mentioned just that the work was translated from the French original work. With a little search it appears that the French book was written by **Jean Frédéric Bernard**. The original work was [Cérémonies et Coutumes Religieuses de tous les Peuples du Monde. Représentées par des Figures dessinées de la main de Bernard Picart : Avec une Explication Historique, & quelques Dissertations curieuses.](#) Amsterdam, Chez J. F. Bernard, 1723-, 1737 in 7 vols.

Bernard Picart (June 11, 1673 – May 8, 1733), was a French engraver, son of Etienne Picart, also an engraver. He was born in Paris and died in Amsterdam.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Picart

M. Peyresc or *Mais Peyrefc* not much known. There is a reference on page 249 note 2. *Peyrefc*. Inter Antiquit. Eccl. Orient, Ep. 36. p. 182 at [source](#) (Nouveaux éclaircissemens sur l'origine et le Pentateuque des Samaritains ... By **Maurice Poncet**)