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The Samaritans in Josephus' Jewish "History"

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As a Jew, trained in Jewish thought and living for some months (Oct. 66- July 67) in Galilee, Josephus shows surprisingly little knowledge of Judaeo-Samaritan controversies over cult and temple in his accounts in *War*. The picture is not far from that given in 2 Maccabees, where Jews and Samaritans had fought together against the Seleucid oppression and suffered equally. In general, the terminology is neutral and the only occurrence of the term *ethnarch* in *War* 1.63 does not have the sectarian overtones that characterize the use of the term in *Antiquities*, where most of the material is to be found. Even important events, such as the destruction of the Samaritan temple on Gerizim, is not given any weight in the parallel account in *War*, whereas in *Ant.* 13.275-76 – in an expansion of *War* 1.64-65 – Josephus justifies John Hyrcanus' campaign against Samaria by adding that 'he hated the Samaritans (as scoundrels because of the injuries which, in obedience to the kings of Syria, they had done to the people Marisa, who were colonists and allies of the Jews' (*Ant.* 13.275-76). Parallel accounts in *Antiquities* to some of the accounts in *War* (e.g. *War.* 2.232-244 <> *Ant.* 20.118-136) display a tendency of concern that cannot be explained on the possibility that Josephus had more exact information at hand when he wrote *Antiquities* [1]. Text expansion and conscious use of terminology (esp. *Sidonians and Shechemites*; see below) reveal Josephus' seemingly apologetic interest in contrasting Jew and Samaritan in *Antiquities*. The question of sources is difficult, but only interesting if they can be compared and checked. Josephus did have access to Epaphroditus' huge library, and age had probably also supplied him with greater knowledge in general. However, Josephus' perspective, which is more interesting to detect than any possible source, is given its most adequate expression in *Apion* 1.1 when stated:

"In my history of our *Antiquities*, most excellent Epaphroditus, I have made sufficiently clear to any who may peruse that work the extreme antiquity of our Jewish race, the purity of the original stock, and the manner in which it established itself in the country which we occupy today. That history embraces a period of five thousand years and was written by me in Greek on the basis of our sacred books."

In this perspective, Josephus' treatment of the Samaritans is of midrashic character, employing available material in a conscious presentation that argues that the Samaritans are, at best, 'apostates of the Judaeo nation and at worst, nothing but heathens, whom he out of politeness calls *ethnarch* instead of the *ethnarch* (heathens) employed in some rabbinic writings. The emphasis on the Jewish race's 'extreme antiquity' and 'purity of the original stock' contrasts with his description of the Samaritans as latecomers and as impure, a mixture of five different peoples who had later intermarried with various peoples.

In *War*, Josephus as a historian presented his version of recent Jewish history. In *Antiquities*, serving both the role of a historian and a 'rabbi' [2], he composed his history on Jewish antiquity in order to demonstrate that legitimate Judaism belongs to Jerusalem. This message was forcefully given the Roman leaders, not only to defend the sovereignty of the Jewish temple, but also to demonstrate the loyalty of the Jewish leaders to the Romans. Every time such loyalty was questioned, they stood the test, as they had also done in the time of Persian and Greek leadership. After the loss of the Jewish temple in Roman times, the pivotal question makes it implicitly clear that Samaritanism and 'Judaisms' – especially the Jews of Heliopolis – were a threat to Josephus' presentation of Jerusalem-centered Judaism. The diaspora belonging to such groups were not fewer

Josephus' presentation of Jerusalem-centered Judaism. The diaspora belonging to such groups were not fewer than those of the Jewish diaspora[3]. Their theology could not be argued to be significantly different from that of the Jews, with the one exception that they offered their worship to Gerizim. As an historian, Josephus could not refuse to mention these communities and their temples. They were part of the historical discussion. However, he could compose his material in a way that would prove to the reader that these groups were dissidents from what he saw as true Judaism. He argues implicitly that during the Hellenistic period they had left their Jewish foundation and, with it, the laws of their ancestors. He argues that they practice a Judaism that was alien to that of Jerusalem, even though their faith had originally come from Jerusalem. Josephus' sectarian resembles parts of the Jewish tradition that had asserted Jerusalem's chronological and ideological priority over its competitors. The temple in Jerusalem he claims to be older than other competing temples. Although Jerusalem had not avoided being influenced by Hellenistic culture, few dissidents supported such a culture: one Manasseh and one Onias, and they – and here, Josephus' argument achieves wholeness and eloquent balance – were eventually transferred to the competing temples, which now are implicitly claimed to be both younger than that of Jerusalem and politically based on Greek and Ptolemaic authority.

The consequences of cult-centralization brought about by the loss of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, may well have enhanced discussions about the proper role of the Jewish temple. The question is raised by Josephus both before Alexander the Great and Ptolemy Philometor, securing the reader's conclusion that both Greek and the Egyptian world had been in agreement on this matter. Josephus' variant reading of 1 Macc. 10.38's 'no other authority than the high priest', which in *Ant.* 13.54 has become: 'it shall be in the power of the high priest to take care that no one Jew shall have any other temple for worship but only that at Jerusalem', could indicate that he had reason for what seems to be a deliberate change. The stress on the *one* temple, found also in *Apion* 2.193, might further indicate, that cult centralization was still questioned, at least by the non-Jewish world. To this we must add that the Samaritan woman's question to Jesus in John 4 could indicate that two worship centers could be doubted. The different weighting of this matter in Josephus' treatment of the temples on Gerizim and in Heliopolis in *War* and in *Antiquities*, together with Josephus' use of Heliopolis for settling Samaritan matters, is revealing[4].

In the following, two examples will illustrate how Josephus' treatment of the Samaritan problem concentrates around these questions of ethnicity and the proper temple.

Ant. 9.277-291

Josephus' portrait of the Samaritan takes its point of departure from 2 Kgs. 17.24-41 concerning the people removed from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath and Sepharvaim, who did not know how to worship the god of the land, and who, according to the Old testament, have no intention of giving up their own gods, but had introduced a syncretistic religion, using the temple(s)[5] made by the Samaritans (2 Kgs 17.29). When asked to decide which god they will worship, they did not choose to worship Yahweh alone – as did the Israelites in Josh. 24.21-24 -, but to fear Yahweh and serve their own gods. It is central in the Old Testament text that they did not know how to worship the god of the land (2 Kgs 17.26-27), and that to worship Yahweh is to keep his ordinances (17.36-38). It is not said that they betrayed Yahweh in a manner similar to the Israelites, causing their removal from the country (17.7-24). The situation is the opposite. The Israelites knew how to fear Yahweh, as is clearly said in this paragraph and reiterated in the midrash of the first commandment, presented in the closing paragraph (2 Kgs 17.34-41), but they failed to do so.

Josephus' account of this story in 2 Kings is interpolated in his Hezekiah narrative, using the pious acts of Hezekiah as a contrasting motif to the impious acts of the Israelites, who did not accept Hezekias' invitation to join the celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Jerusalem. They not only laughed at the kings message, as written in the biblical account of 2 Chronicles 30, but, in an elaboration of this narrative, they 'poured scorn upon them (the prophets) and finally seized them and killed them (*Ant.* 9.265). This stock motif, which frames Josephus' views on Samaritans, is reiterated several times in his presentation of what he purported to be historical events. It should not escape our notice that he made purposeful use of this motif in his

judgment of Manasseh's crime, that 'imitating the lawless deeds of the Israelites': he killed all the righteous men among the Hebrews, nor did he spare even the prophets, some of whom he slaughtered daily' (*Ant.* 10.37-38). In Josephus' account, we are first surprised to notice that he has given specific status to one group of the removed people, namely the Cuthaeans (*Ant.* 9.279), revealing the language of his own day, but conflicting with the biblical account, which neither speaks of Cuthaeans nor knows the term elsewhere[6]. Probably aware of this problem, Josephus, in accordance with the biblical narrative, mentions that the Cuthaeans originally were five tribes, who each worshipped their own god and came from the same Persian region and river valley called Cuthah (?????, *Ant.* 9.288). In Josephus' treatment, the biblical 'lions' have become 'a pestilence' and an oracle advises that worship of the Most High God (??? ????????? ?????) will bring deliverance (?????????). These are minor changes. More important is to notice that it was the bringing of 'their own gods' that brought the pestilence. The consequences of the oracle is thus changed, for surprisingly we read:

'after being instructed in the ordinances and religion of this God, [they] worshipped him with great zeal (?????????), and were at once freed of the pestilence (??????). These same rites have continued in use even to this day among those who are called Cuthaioi (?????????) Cuthim, in the Hebrew tongue, Samaritans (?????????) by the Greeks' (*Ant.* 9.290).

With a single artifice, namely the omission of the mention of religious syncretism, Josephus succeeded in combining the narrative of 2 Kings 17 with the Samaritan question and avoided attacking the practice of cult and religion (which would be a difficulty to defend). Questions of ethnicity and relation to the Israelite tribes become the central themes of Josephus' narrative. This is further emphasized in his introductory remark to that story: 'the ten tribes of Israel emigrated from Judea nine hundred and forty seven years after their forefathers went out of Egypt' (*Ant.* 9.280). Which is to be understood on the assumption that the ten tribes had never returned, thus again contrasting the fate of the Judaeans (tribe(s)), (*Ant.* 10.184-185). His closing remark serves the same purpose:

But they alter their attitude, according to circumstance and, when they see the Jews prospering, call them their kinsmen (?????????), on the ground that they are descended from Joseph and are related to them through their origin from him, but when they see the Jews in trouble, they say that they have nothing whatever in common with them nor do these have any claim of friendship or race, and they declare themselves to be aliens of another race (?????????), (*Ant.* 9.291).

This problem of ethnicity forms the central core of Josephus' struggle with the Judaeans-Samaritan relationship. It is repeated almost verbatim in *Ant.* 11.341 and 12.257, and, with the same meaning, in a variant form in 11.85, which means that in all stories dealing with the question of true Judaism, ethnicity is made the specific argument: *Ant.* 11.1-119 (the rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple in the Persian period); *Ant.* 11.297- 347 (the Alexander Legend) and *Ant.* 12.237-264 (the Antiochus the IV case)[7].

Ant. 11.297-347

Josephus' third story dealing with Judaeans – Samaritan conflicts is placed in the time of the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great. The story has the purpose of answering questions about the Samaritan temple's status in relation to Jerusalem's temple. Alexander is here used as the authoritative voice of the text. Connected with the story, is the question of who built the Samaritan temple. Thus, the focus of the narrative is not Alexander's victorious campaign or the change of the political situation. They only serve as a framework of the more important question is raised in front of Ptolemy IV Philometor, using the framework of a court hearing. Possible sources for Josephus' Alexander story are several, none of which can be taken as a basis for his narrative's content but only for its outline. The story bears a clear resemblance to Alexander's alleged visits to other important shrines[8].

The introduction to Josephus' 'account' describes the strife between the High priest Joannes and his brother

Jesus who, supported by the Persian general Bagoses, sought to obtain the office of the High Priesthood. This leads to a deadly quarrel between Joannes and Jesus in the temple with fatal consequences for Jesus. As a punishment, Bagoses imposes a tribute on the Jews of 50 drachmae per lamb, slaughtered for the daily offerings for seven years. After Joannes' death his son Jaddua becomes high priest, He has a brother, Manasseh, married to Sanballat's daughter Nikaso, who caused, what in Josephus' views must be understood as the definitive split between Jews and Samaritans.

Sanballat, 'who was sent by Darius, the last king of Persia, into Samaria'^[9], becomes a central figure in Josephus' story. Combining both the past and the future, he secures that, in spite of Manasseh's departure from Jerusalem followed by many of the priests and Levites, the Samaritans on Gerizim do not represent a new Jewish community, but are the former mentioned Cuthaeans from 2 Kings 17. This is done by describing Sanballat as 'a Cuthaeon by birth; of which stock were the Samaritans also'. Josephus thus makes certain, that he is not to be confused with any other Sanballat than the one mentioned in the book of Nehemiah. Echoing Ezra 4.15-16 and Esd. 2.22-24, he asserts that this person can be related to the 'adversaries' mentioned there:

'This man knew that the city of Jerusalem was a famous city, and that their kings had given a great deal of trouble to the Assyrians and the people of Coelesyria' (*Ant.* 11.303)

Manasseh became Sanballat's puppet, who first of all had the purpose of securing him allegiance with Jerusalem, and when this eventually failed, giving his daughter's children the dignity of the priesthood. The allegiance with Jerusalem certainly failed. The elders of Jerusalem did not consent to the marriage and since Manasseh would rather divorce his wife than the office of the High priesthood, Sanballat felt obliged to promise him

'that he would build a temple similar to that in Jerusalem on Mount Gerizim – this is the highest of the mountains near Samaria -, and undertook to do these things with the consent of King Darius' (*Ant.* 11.310-11).

The role of Sanballat's adversary is given to Jerusalem's high priest Jaddua. The presentation of him is as follows: When Alexander the Great went against Sidon and Tyre after he had defeated Darius, he asked for troops and supplies for his army from the Jewish high priest Jaddua to:

'give him the gifts which he had formerly sent as tribute to Darius, thus choosing the friendship of the Macedonians, for, he said, they would never regret this course. But the high priest replied to the bearers of the letter that he had given his oath to Darius not to take up arms against him and said that he would never violate this oath so long as Darius remained alive. When Alexander heard this, he roused to anger, and while deciding not to leave Tyre, which was on the point of being taken, threatened that when he had brought it to terms he would march against the high priest of the Jews and through him teach all men what people it was to whom they must keep their oaths' (*Ant.* 11.317-19).

At stake here is allegiance, loyalty and the question of 'to whom they must keep their oaths'. The situation certainly is dangerous. Sanballat, who 'was sent by Darius' had no problems in renouncing Darius and given his loyalty and the question of 'to whom they must keep their oaths'. The situation certainly is dangerous. Sanballat, who 'was sent by Darius' had no problems in renouncing Darius and giving his loyalty to Alexander. After he had given him his men, eight thousand subjects, for the siege of Tyre, he

'felt confident about his plan and addressed him on the subject, explaining that he had a son-in-law, Manasses, who was the brother of Jaddua, the high priest of the Jews and that there were many others of his countrymen (???????) with him who now wished to build a temple in the territory subject to him. It was also an advantage to be king, he said, that the power of the Jews should be divided in two, in order that the nation might not, in the event of revolution, be of one mind and stand together and so give trouble to the kings as it had formerly given to the Assyrian rulers. When therefore, Alexander gave his consent, Sanballat brought all his energy to bear and built the temple, and appointed Manasses high priest, considering this to be the greatest distinction which his daughter's descendants could have' (*Ant.* 11.322-24).

As can be seen from this, according to Josephus, Alexander had not caused any division of the power of the

Jews, nor did the high priest of Jerusalem or that matter the Levites and priests who followed Manasseh. They were not guarantees of the legitimate confession or priesthood, since the dignity of that had been bestowed on Manasseh's daughter's children. Josephus thus mentions his former statements that the Samaritans are the former Cuthaeans, even though the priests are from legitimate Jerusalem stock.

Let's now see how Jaddua solves his problems with Alexander. When Jaddua heard that Alexander was on his way,

'he was in an agony of fear, not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, whose king was angered by his former disobedience. He therefore ordered the people to make supplication, and offering sacrifices to God together with them, besought Him to shield the nation and deliver them from the dangers that were hanging over them' (*Ant.* 11.326).

Guided by God in a dream, he put on his high-priestly garments and with the people and the priests all dressed in white, they all went outside the city, leaving the gates open to meet Alexander, 'at a certain place called Saphein' (?????)[\[10\]](#). Alexander,

'when he saw the multitude in white garments, the priests at their head clothed in linen, and the high priest in a robe of hyacinth-blue and gold, wearing on his head the mitre with the golden plate on it which was inscribed the name of God, he approached alone and prostrated himself before that Name and first greeted the high priest' (*Ant.* 11.331).

Everyone was astonished, what had happened to Alexander?

'Parmenion[\[11\]](#) alone went up to him, and asked why indeed, when all men prostrated themselves before him, he had prostrated himself before the high priest of the Jews, whereupon he replied, "It was not before him that I prostrated myself but the God of whom he has the honour to be high priest" (*Ant.* 11.333).

There follows an explanation of how Alexander had seen the high priest in a dream, once in Macedonia, and that it was told him that by bringing his army under the divine conduct of 'that God' he should 'defeat Darius and destroy the power of the Persians'. This vision is further confirmed by Alexander's reading of the book of Daniel, which is shown to him in the temple:

'in which he had declared that one of the Greeks would destroy the empire of the Persians, he believed himself to be the one indicated' (*Ant.* 11.337)

Made happy by the good news, Alexander is ready to bestow upon the Jews whatever they might desire, so

'the high priest asked that they might observe their country's laws (???? ??????? ??????), and in the seventh year be exempt from tribute, he granted all this. Then they begged that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media also to have their own laws (???? ?????? ??????), and he gladly promised to do as they asked' (*Ant.* 11.338-39).

The danger is averted. The Jewish high priest has been able to 'surrender' to Alexander through Alexander's surrender to Jaddua's God, and this without renouncing Darius. The story is not finished yet. We now have the Samaritans and Jews sketched in contrasting polarity with each other. But the pivotal question yet remains and is still to be put: Will Alexander consider these two groups to be equal? Is the one temple as good as the other? Envy and ethnicity are key words in the same manner as they had been in Josephus' variant treatment of the building of Jerusalem's temple of the Persian period. The story therefore continues:

'And so having regulated these matters at Jerusalem, Alexander marched off against the neighbouring cities. But all those peoples to whom he came received him in a friendly spirit, whereupon the Samaritans (?????????), whose chief city at that time was Shechem (?????), which lay beside Mount Garizein, and inhabited by apostates from the Jewish nation, seeing that Alexander had so signally honoured the Jews, decided to profess themselves Jews. For such is the nature (??? ?????) of the Samaritans (?? ??????), as we

have already shown somewhere above. When the Jews are in difficulties they deny that they have kinship with them, thereby indeed admitting the truth, but whenever they see some splendid bit of good fortune come to them, they suddenly grasp at the connexion with them, saying, that they are related to them and tracing their line back to Ephraim and Manasseh, the descendants of Joseph' (*Ant.* 11.340-41).

Therefore, when he hardly out of Jerusalem, the Shechemites approach Alexander:

'bringing along the soldiers whom Sanballat had sent to him, and invited him to come to their city and honour the temple there as well. Thereupon he promised to grant this request another time when he should come back to them [from Egypt]' (*Ant.* 11.342).

Note that, in contrast to Alexander's entrance into Jerusalem, there is no prostration, no adoration, no willingness to go to the temple and no priestly garments. Here are soldiers and a king who has more important matters to deal with. The Shechemites, anxious not to lose the opportunity of having the king's favour, petitioned him to remit the tribute of the seventh year, the Jubilee year, because they did not sow therein. He asked them,

'who they were that made this request. And when they said that they were Hebrews (??????), but were called the Sidonians of Shechem (?? ?? ??????? ???????) he again asked them whether they were Jews (??????). Then, as they said that they were not, he replied, "But I have given these privileges to the Jews. However, when I return, and have more exact information from you, I shall do as I think best' (*Ant.* 11.343-44).

It is worth noticing that the question of following the laws of the forefathers, which was central to Jaddua, is totally missing here. Only the motif of the economic advantage of friendship with Alexander is used. Together with the denial of being Jews, the Samaritans are portrayed here as having left Judaism entirely. Central to Josephus' presentation is that Alexander never did return from Egypt to settle these matters. The Shechemites are left with their closing statement: 'they said they were not Jews', which does not escape the implication that their temple is not truly Jewish. This statement in fact coincides with Josephus' closing remark, that

'When Alexander died, his empire was partitioned among his successors (the Diadochi); as for the temple on Mount Garizein, it remained. And, whenever anyone was accused by the people of Jerusalem of eating unclean food or violating the Sabbath or committing any other such sin, he would flee to the Shechemites, saying that he had been unjustly expelled' (*Ant.* 11.346-347).

Josephus' argumentation here concentrates on the most central themes of Jewish self-understanding, discussed in a variety of texts from DSS's *Damascus Covenant*, *Community Rule* and *Jubilees* to Philo and the Gospels, all dealing with questions of Jewish halakhah. The questioning of circumcision, so central to Paul's writings, is absent in these texts, as it is in Josephus in general. By placing the Shechemites in this obvious Jewish context, Josephus' ambiguity about the Samaritans has been given its clearest expression.

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Excursus: Sidonians and Samaritans

The combination of these designations are found in two text corpora, *Ant.* 11.340-347 and 12.257-264, without a concomitant use of *Cuthaeans*: a designation reserved for stories built on biblical or biblical related material, and rhetorically employed in the *Antiquities*' temple destruction narrative (*Ant.* 13.255-56). In the above-mentioned text corpora, there is no doubt that Josephus successfully exploited the ethnic-religious connotation of the terms. Josephus not only called the Sidonians Samaritans, but also Shechemites, a designation the 'Sidonians' themselves did not employ, when they presented as saying that they live in Shechem. Moreover, Josephus also calls them Medes and Persians in *Ant.* 12.257[12].

Attempts at reading of the two texts corpora historically have proved unsuccessful. It has not been possible to decide who these Sidonians are or whether they, as in Josephus' accounts, were equivalent to Samaritans[13]. Knowledge of a Sidonian colony in Marissa in the second century BCE[14] has encouraged proposals of a similar colony in Shechem, one which did not belong to the Samaritans themselves but which made use of their temple[15]. Confirmation of this proposal certainly would be interesting. It would demand a further examination of who these Samaritans are who have the temple. They certainly could not be any of those groups presented in Josephus! Most probably, they would belong to the 'lost tribes of Israel', which Josephus has cast out for good) cf., *Ant.* 10.183, 11.133).

This problem, however, is not important here, since it is Josephus' metaphorical use of his 'sources' that interests us. Josephus' progressive narrowing down of the Samaritans as the population of first, the whole of the Northern kingdom in the time of Shalmanezzer and Ezra, to the mixed population of renegade Jews in the time of Alexander, to a 'Sidonian colony' and finally to 'those living around Mt. Gerizim' in Maccabean time, hardly reflects reality. Apart from being controversial in Josephus' own story about the quarrel in front of Ptolemy, it contradicts what we otherwise know of the Samaritan Diaspora of Josephus' own time.

Based on a reading of Homer, E.J. Bickerman considered, the designation to mean Phoenician, which in the geographical list of Gen. 10.15 is 'Canaanite', since Sidon is Canaan's firstborn and Shechem originally a Canaanite town (sic)[16]. This explanation fits Josephus' intentions in *Ant.* 11.340-341, which combines Sidonians, Shechemites and apostate Jews. It might also explain interpretations of Genesis 34 in Pseudepigraphic and Hellenistic literature. That the Samaritans themselves should have used the name 'Sidonian', and thus have distinguished themselves from the Jews of Jerusalem by asserting a relationship to Melchizedek) who allegedly should have 'belonged to the race of Sidon and Canaan'), is an interesting but unsupported idea put forward by Bickerman[17]. However, if such were the case, I think we might expect a more favourable presentation of Canaan than that of Genesis 9 in the Samaritan Pentateuch.

Sidonians in biblical tradition are identical with the worst of idol worship which caused the partition of the kingdom, resulting from Yahweh's punishment of Solomon's worship of 'Ashtorath the goddess of the Sidonians, Kemosh the god of Mo'ab and Milkom the god of the children of Ammon (1 Kgs 11.5, 33; 2 Kgs 23.13). In the center of this narrative cycle, thematically designed as 'he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and in the sins which he made Israel to sin, provoking the Lord the God of Israel to anger by their idols', is the narrative about Ahab the son of Omri, who sinned even more by marrying the daughter of the Sidonian king Etba'al and raising an altar for Ba'al in Samaria (1 Kgs 16.30-32). The reiteration of this theme in 1 Kgs 15:34; 16.2, 19, 26, 31; 22.53 and 2 Kgs 3.3; 10.29; 13.2, 11; 14.24; 15.9, 18, 24, 28 relates the narratives to each other and forwards the fate of the Northern kingdom. It is contrasted to the reforms of Josiah, which, in final reiteration of both Solomon's and Jeroboam's sins and the defilement of their cult places (2 Kgs 23.13-20), marks every place outside of the walls of Jerusalem as unclean. Reiterating the Passover of the time of Judges, Israel's and Judaea's royal pasts are made parenthetical. The intention of the reform is not only the purification of the people, but the unification in a pre-monarchic past's hope for a new beginning. The thematic elements of this cycle are the king's apostasy, erection of cult places for foreign gods (further aggravated by the king's marriage into the families of these foreign gods) the people's deceit when it preferred Jeroboam to Rehoboam and the partition of the kingdom. This is not brought to an end before the foreign gods are thrown out and their cult places destroyed, that there be only one temple and one ruler.

Josephus' thematic accord with this narration in his 'Sidonian' account in *Ant.* 11.297-347 is striking. Josephus' story similarly deals with the question of the people's deceit. Sanballat and his son-in-law did not hesitate to break their oath to Darius. They created a mixed race by marriage with foreign women. They made a cult place outside of Jerusalem attributed to a god without a name, who becomes a Greek god in Josephus' second 'Sidonian' account (the Antiochus the IV case). Finally, they caused a division of 'the strength of the Jews'.

It seems reasonable to ask whether Josephus had the biblical tradition in mind. Whether, purposely exploiting the most dominant metaphor of the narrative: the Sidonians, who in tradition had become synonymous with ever-hated 'Canaanites', he sought to place the Samaritans in a context of Gentiles. Such an assumption finds support in his concomitant use of 'Shechem'. In the biblical tradition Shechem not only bears the burden of guilt for the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah, and the resulting rejection in spite of their circumcision, but also the burden of the people's deceit in the time of Abimelech, which 'increased idolatry' (Judg. 8.33-9.57). Judges 9 is the only passage in the Hebrew Bible mentioning the 'Shechemites', expressed by ??? ??? in Judg. 9.2, 3, 6, 7, 18, 20, 23, 24, 26, 39 and ??? ??? in 9.57. The closing statement in 9.57 about the evil deeds of the Shechemites (??? ?????-??) may have had a forceful effect in Josephus' own time, comparable to what we find in a talmudic commentary on Test. Levi[18]. The narrative opens (Judg. 8.33) and ends (Judg. 10.6) with remarks about apostasy: that the people worshipped Baals (?????) and Ashtarot (?????), which, with the exception of this account, only appear together in Judg. 2.13, the beginning of the apostasy at the time of the Judges, and in 1 Sam. 7.4 and 12.10, the restoration during Samuel, where the removal of these gods brings peace. Apart from this, Ashtoret (?????) is only mentioned in the already mentioned cycle, namely 1 Kgs 11- 2 Kgs 23 and in the account of the death of Saul (1 Sam. 31.19). It seems correct to assume that Josephus consciously used the terms *Sidonians* and *Shechemites* in his discussion about the Samaritans. After the destruction of the temple, they are termed Samaritans (????????? / ?????????: cf. *Ant.* 13.275; 15.292; 17.20, 69, 319, 342; 18.30, 85-89, 167; 20.118-136). In none of these accounts do ethnicity and confession play an independent role. Most of these accounts are related to hostility and fraud.

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The details in the Alexander story have been dealt with extensively. Questions about Sanballat, Jaddua, Manasseh, Alexander's journeys, his troops in Samaria, Josephus' sources, etc., all are on what may have happened. They are, however, not the most important questions to ask. More important are to examine how an author composes and presents the different questions to ask. More important are to examine how an author composes and presents the different questions he wants he wants to answer, as well as to ask the purpose of his story. This story's main purpose and function is not to emphasize the story that Alexander had shown worship to Yahweh in Jerusalem, the same Alexander 'who himself was adored by all others'. One should not forget too quickly how, confronted with Vespasian, Josephus saved his life by 'prophesying' that Vespasian should become emperor and that his success was due to the providence of God (*War* 3.401). The Alexander story thus serves a very specific function in Josephus' *Antiquities*. He aims to demonstrate how the Jewish temple in Jerusalem is superior to all other temples and to show how Judaism, as it is understood by the Jews of Jerusalem, is the true religion for the whole of mankind. This is expressed in his description of Alexander, that 'when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God according to the high priest's direction' (*Ant.* 11.336). The implicit message to the Roman emperor of Josephus' own time should not be dismissed from the interpretation of the text. The paradigmatic theme of Jews being favoured by emperors, which is expressed in most of the texts dealing with the Persian and Ptolemaic period: 1 Esdras, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, *Letter of Aristeas*, *Documents of Antioch III*, etc., and which is given explicit reference in *Ant.* 12.115-128, forms the backbone of Josephus' writing on Alexander.

Summary

A close examination of Josephus' Samaritan stories exposes a striking lack of interest in Samaritans as such. As counterparts to his much more favourably presented Judaeans, they serve as literary counterpoint to his presentation of Jews who were faithful to foreign rulers, whenever their loyalty was challenged. When furthermore, Josephus' anti-Samaritanism can be shown to have increased / developed from his presentation of 'Samaritan-Judaeans' matters in *War* to his presentation of the same 'events' in *Antiquities*, it becomes clear that he is basically arguing for a support of pre-Judaeans interests. In comparable stories in both books, we find him much more consciously ascribing disaster, misbehavior, etc. to Samaritans in *Antiquities* than in *War*. Centered around questions of ethnicity and the proper temple, Josephus' various stories – related chronologically to

around questions of ethnicity and the proper temple; Josephus various stories – related etymologically to turning points in Jewish history – sought to establish the Jewish race's 'extreme antiquity' and 'purity of the stock' in contrast to his description of the Samaritans as latecomers and as impure, a mixture of five different peoples who had later intermarried with various peoples. From his education in biblical tradition, we can assume, that Josephus was well trained in making such a comparison. It is therefore no wonder, that he drew heavily on this tradition and especially the anti-Northern bias of the Deuteronomistic history.

[1] For a detailed analysis, see I. Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism: A Literary Analysis* (JSOTSupp. 303; CIS 7; Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

[2] E. Nodet, *Essai sur les origines du judaïsme: de Josue aux Pharisiens* (Paris: Cerf, 1992); rev. ET: *In Search of the Origins of Judaism: From Joshua to the Mishnah* (JSOTSup, 248; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) p. 75, speaks of a 'Pharisaic profile' in *Jewish Antiquities*.

[3] A.D. Crown, 'The Samaritan Diaspora', in Crown (ed), *The Samaritans* (Tingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1989) pp. 195-217 (201).

[4] I. Hjelm, 'Cult Centralization as a device of Cult Control?'. SJOT 13/2 (1999) pp. 298-309.

[5] MT: sing.; LXX. Luc., Syr., Vulg.: pl

[6] See my examination of Josephus' terminology in Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism*.

[7] For an examination of *Ant.* 11.1-119 and 12.237-264, as well as the rest of Josephus' material on Samaritans, see Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism*.

[8] R. Marcus, in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (LCL, 326; appendix C); L.L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (2 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) pp. 181f; 208. G.W. Ahlstrom, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Paleolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest* (JSOTSup, 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) pp. 895-96.

[9] Darius III Codomanus (338-331 BCE).

[10] The question, whether this is nowadays Mount Scopus, or it is Kephar Saba (some 20 miles N.E. of Jaffa) as rabbinic tradition has it, is unimportant for the examination here, since in Josephus' version the added aetiology clearly places it in Jerusalem; 'this name, translated into the Greek tongue, means "Lookout". For, as it happened, Jerusalem and the temple could be seen from there.'

[11] A Macedonian general, second in rank to Alexander, cf. LCL *ad loc.*

[12] Which is in itself interesting, compared to the Jews petition that Alexander 'permit the Jews in Babylon and Media also to have their own laws,' cf. *Ant.* 11.338. In the story, however, the Samaritans are said to claim that they are descendents of Joseph (*Ant.* 11.341) and Hebrews called Sidonians of Shechem (*Ant.* 11.343).

[13] R. Egger, *Josephus Flavius und die Samaritaner: Eine terminologische Untersuchung zur Identitätserklärung der Samaritaner* (NTOA, 4; Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986) pp. 266-281, probably offers the clearest example of the impossibility of such a reading and of the difficulties in establishing any authenticity for the document. Unaware of the *caveat* she implicitly brings into her interpretation of the document, she reached the following conclusion (p. 278): die Sidonier hatten von nun an nicht mehr oder nicht mehr ausschließlich JHWH verehrt: Der Gerizin-Tempel ist einige Jahrzehnte später (129/128) zerstört worden. Der Grund dieser Zerstörung durch Johannes Hyrcanus ist uE. Bei den Sidoniern bzw. Ihrer Herrschaft über diesen Tempel zu zuchen.'

[14] E. Schurer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (Leipzig: H.C. Hinrichs, 1885); trans. And ed. G. Vermes et al., *The History of the Jewish People in the age of Jesus Christ* [3 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973-87] vol II pp. 4-5. V.A. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Atheneum, 1975) p. 453 n 128: 'The large number of Edomite names confronts the scholar with the question whether the Sidonians at Marisa were really from the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon, or whether they were 'Cananites' in the broad sense of the term.'

[15] M. Delcor, 'Vom Sichern der hellenistische Epoche zum Sychar des Neuen Testaments' ZDPV 78 (1962) pp. 35-38; H.G. Kippenberg, *Garizim und Synagoge: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur samaritanischen Religion der aramaischen Periode* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1971) p. 79; R. Pummer, 'Genesis 34 in Jewish Writings of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods', HTR 75 (1982).

[16] E. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988). This hypothesis is put forward by A. Alt (1937-40), see Egger, *Josephus Flavius und die Samaritaner*, p. 266. Strabo, *Geographica*, 16 2 22. See further V.A. Tcherikover and A. Fuks (eds.) *Cornus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (3 vol. Cambridge

1972: 300, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1972), *Corpus Papyrologico-Egyptiologicum* (1972), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957-64), vol. I p. 120 n5: 'In Palestine the Phoenicians were known either as Sidonians or as Canaanites (?????); in LXX: ?????? is used sometimes for Canaan (e.g. Exod. 16:35), sometimes for Sidon (e.g. Isa. 23:2). Cf. for other numerous instances R. Abel, *La Géographie de Palestine* (2 vols.; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1933-38) vol. 1, p. 254-255: (Exod. 6:15, Josh. 5:1, Mk. 7:26): 'En effet, non seulement Homère, mais encore la Bible désigneront les Phéniciens sous le nom de Sidoniens pour marquer peut-être qu'ils n'étaient pas tout Canaan. Ne en des temps reculés, l'usage se maintient après même que Tyr et conquies l'hégémonie. Itoba'al, roi de Tyr, est appelé roi des Sidoniens; Astarte, divinité phénicienne à travailler le bois est attribuée aux Sidoniens.'; N.P. Lemche, *The Canaanites and their Land* (JSOTSupp., 110; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) p. 156: 'In Hos. 12.8 Canaan is on one hand an Ephraimite and Canaanite. It was therefore proposed above that Hosea in this place makes use of a foreign ethnic designation to disclose the true character of Ephraim, while at the same time imparting a sociological connotation to this ethnic term.'

[17] Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age*, p. 11: 'By styling themselves 'Sidonians', that is Canaanites, and therefore autochthonous, the descendants of the Assyrian settlers appropriated the ancient glory of Shechem and trumped both the Jews of Jerusalem, the older arrivals in Canaan, as well as the Greeks at Samaria, the more recent arrivals. The Shechemites now asserted, for instance, that Melchizedek, king of Salem (in the vicinity of Shechem) and priest of the most high God, who according to the Torah had blessed Abraham and received tithes from the Patriarch, was one of their people, since he belonged to 'the race of Sidon and Canaan'. Moreover, proclaiming that Melchizedek had officiated at Gerizim, they claimed for their temple an antiquity far surpassing that of Zion.'

[18] B. Sanh. 102, col.I: 'There was a time destined to be calamitous. At that time Tamar was nearly burned, and Judah's two sons died. The place was also productive of calamities; for in Shechem Dinah was disgraced, in Shechem Joseph was sold, and in Shechem also was the kingdom of David divided' (cf. P.I. Hershon, *The Pentateuch According to the Talmud: Genesis with a Talmudic Commentary* [London: S. Baxter & Sons, 1883] p. 420).