



The Samaritan Update

“Mount Gerizim,
All the Days of Our Lives”



January/ February 2015

Vol. XIV - No 3

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Future Events

It has been 3653 years since the entrance into the Holy Land
This counting began on the Sixth Month of the Year of Creation
(Samaritan's typical calendar)

*[Calculated at Kariat Luza, Mount Gerizim by:
Priest Yakkiir ['Aziz] b. High Priest Jacob b. 'Azzi]*

1st day of the 11th Month 3653- January 20 2015

1st day of the 12th Month 3653- February 18, 2015

1st day of the 13th Month 3653- March 19, 2015

1st day of the 1st Month 3654 – April 18, 2015

Passover Sacrifice Saturday evening- May 2, 2015

Conclusion of the Festival of Unleavened Bread- May 9, 2015

Shavuot- June 28 2015

Festival of the First Day of 7th Month 3654- Oct. 13, 2015

Day of Atonement- Oct. 22, 2015

Festival of Succot- Oct. 27, 2015

Festival of the 8th day of Succot 3654- Nov. 3, 2015

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## Books, Manuscripts, Rabbinical Letters

### [Kedem Public Auction House Ltd](#)

Auction: March 11, 2015, Jerusalem, Israel

### [Lot 444- Deleil Alaseil Alei Almaseil- Samaritan manuscript \(in Arabic\) – Nablus, 1886](#)

Starting bid \$1,500.00

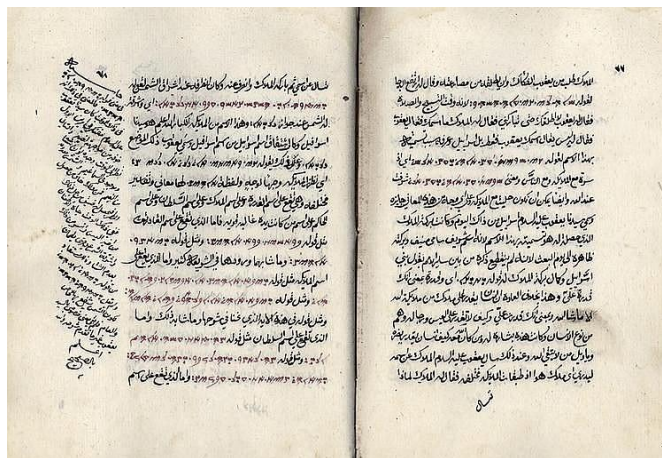
**Description:** Samaritan manuscript, Deleil Alaseil Alei Almaseil (section II): homiletic commentary in Arabic on Sefer Bereshit. [Nablus, 1886].

Thick volume, within decorative leather binding. Arabic writing with excerpts (majority in red) in Samaritan writing.

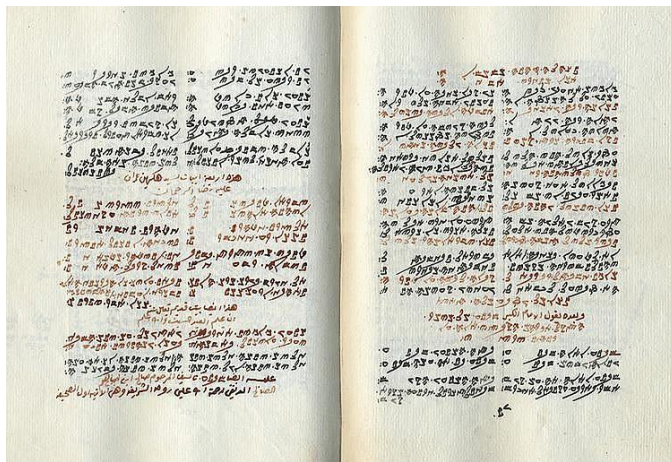
The commentary is on Sefer Bereshit,

Parshiot Vayetzeh till Vayechi. The composition was started by Shlomo son of Marjion Haddanafi, and completed by his brother's son Ibrahim (Avraham) Haddanafi who is known by the nickname Elaya (lived in 18th century).

Lengthy colophon (in Arabic), according to which the manuscript was copied in Nablus by Slama



son of deceased Amran (Amram High Priest - 1855-1874) son of Slama (Shlomo High Priest 1798-1855) son of Gezal (Tuvia High Priest 1751-1787), and completed on December 3, 1886. Detailed description enclosed.  
[540] pages. 22cm. Good condition, quality paper, few stains, marks of dampness on several leaves. Original binding, wear and stains.



**Lot 445: Samaritan manuscript- Prayers and Piyutim- Nablus 1898**  
Starting bid- \$600.00

**Description:** Samaritan manuscript, prayers and piyutim for Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and the ten days of Selichot. [Nablus], 1898.

Samaritan and Arabic writing. The titles of piyutim in red ink.

Colophon upon the conclusion of the book in 1898. The copier: Tahor ben Ya'akov ben Avraham HaSitra Haddanafi.

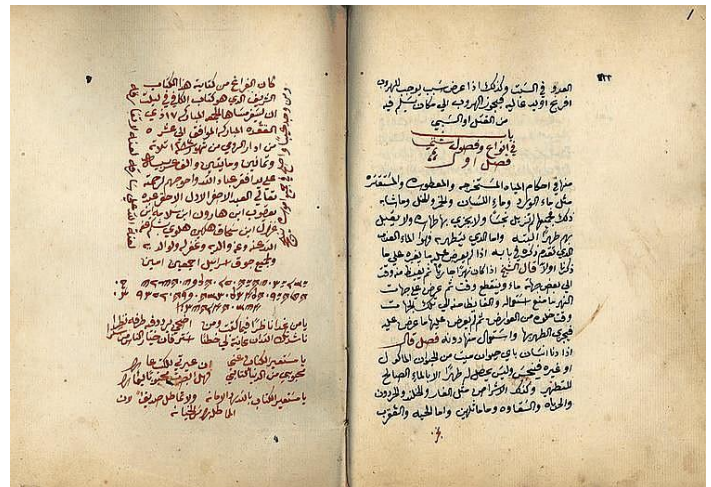
[119] leaves. High-quality paper. Very good

condition. Most of the leaves are clean, few stains. Contemporary binding, damages.

**Lot 446: Kitab Al-Kafi- Samaritan manuscript (in Arabic) – Nablus, 1865**  
Starting bid- \$2,000.00

**Description:** Samaritan manuscript, Kitab Al-Kafi, by Yosef ben Shlomo Al-askari. Nablus, 1865. Arabic (in Arabic letters). Titles and quotes in red ink. Copier: Ya'akov ben Aharon ben Shlomo HaCohen HaLevi.

[113] leaves. 22 cm. High-quality paper, good condition. Stains. Contemporary leather binding, minor damages and wear.



**Congratulations on the anniversary of 35 years (this January) to A.B. - Institute of Samaritan Studies.**

The brothers, editors and founders are **Benyamim Tsedaka** and **Yefet b. Ratson Tsedaka**. They have given so much information to the world from their papers and wonderful insight to the Samaritan-Israelite life, past and present. Thank you!

THE FRONT COVER OF "A.B. - THE SAMARITAN NEWS"  
ISSUE NUMBER 1178-1179 - 15.2.2015

Headlines:

The recent check of the state of the Tomb of Elazar b. Aaron, the first High Priest of the People of Israel, in the Land of Israel, in 'Awwarteh Village is reported that the holy site in good condition, except one

political inscription in one of the visitor's rooms.

In February 18, Wednesday Evening, the renewing of the Samaritan Synagogue in Nablus will be celebrated in a special prayer of the first day of the 12th month of the Hebrew Year, called "The Head of the Plagues" in Egypt, with the participation of Israelite Samaritans from Mount Gerizim and Holon Neighborhoods.



In the picture: The Elazar Tomb in 'Awwarteh, in good condition

To subscribe to the A.B. - THE SAMARITAN NEWS- Please write to "A.B. - The Samaritan News", P.O. Box 1029, Holon 5811001.

Also see: <http://www.tapuz.co.il/blog/net/ViewEntry.aspx?EntryId=5052431&skip=1>

A.B. - THE SAMARITAN NEWS [post](#)



On Wednesday evening of February 18, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month according to the Samaritan reckoning of their calendar, a special prayer called "The Head of the Plagues" in Egypt, for the renovating of the Samaritan Synagogue in Nablus was celebrated with the participation of Israelite Samaritans from Mount Gerizim and Holon Neighborhood.

(Black and white photo of the Samaritan synagogue in 1967-69 from the [Harvard Library collection](#). Color photo of the renovated interior of the city of Nablus Synagogue by Yacop Yossef Cohen, Feb. 17, 2015)



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Samaritans pray at their Nablus Synagogue for the first time in 26 years.

Photos of the Nablus Synagogue Prayer Feb. 18, 2015 by [Amit Marhiv](#).





(Below) Photo of the Nablus Synagogue Prayer Feb. 18, 2015 by [Roba Altef](#)



Prayer in the synagogue of Nablus By Benyamim Tsedaka



Historical prayer in the renovated Israelite Samaritan synagogue in Nablus, first time since 1998

In the restored Israelite Samaritan synagogue in Nablus, due to the contributions from the community and the community committee on Mount Gerizim, inaugurated on Wednesday evening, the first day of the twelfth month of the Hebrew year, called The Head of Wonders, February 18, 2015, with the presence of many Israelite Samaritans, most of them from Kiriath Luza, Mount Gerizim.



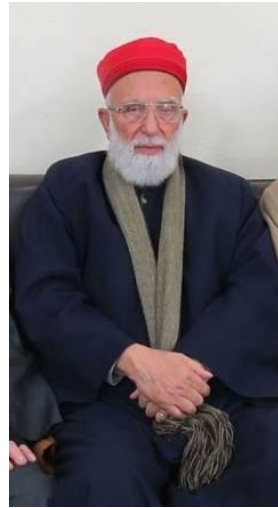
All members of Kiriath Luza community and individuals from the community in Holon have participated in prayer, as expected, including women from the community who stood in the corridor leading to the synagogue. Hundreds of worshipers waited for the coming of the High Priest Abdel ben High Priest Asher [80]. He was accompanied by senior priests, his deputy Itamar Ben-Avraham [79]

Hezekiah ben High Priest Abisha [79], community elders and dignitaries. The prayer was directed successfully by the young priest Cantor, one of the two main cantors, Matzlih b. Brit b. Tabia [58].

Already at 4 pm the worshipers gathered on the 30 stairs of the synagogue, expressed their good impression of the New Gate, windows renewed, re-painted walls, beautiful tiling and the beautiful carpets that covered the floor of the hall and the prayer altar amended with the Ark and beautiful vile.

Everyone came for the prayer of the month of miracles, which opened the quorum of the eleven plagues the Almighty made on Egypt every Saturday until Passover. The voices of the worshipers joined in cheers along with the beautifully dressed women from the hallway. Everyone felt that they were making history.

When the High Priest 'Abed-el had reached the synagogue, the enthusiasm of the worshipers was at its height. The highest peak of enthusiasm was when the cantor Priest Matzlih raised the Torah, in the synagogue in Nablus in front of the thrilled worshipers for the first time since 1998, when the synagogue was abandoned, followed by the move of the Samaritans in Nablus to the new Kiriat Luza neighbourhood on Mount Gerizim.



Handwritten Samaritan text in black ink, likely a religious or historical note, with some numbers at the bottom.



After the end of the prayer, a convoy of honking cars left the synagogue in Nablus, with a lot of joy to Kiryat Luza. The Israelite Samaritans rushed to return to their homes, to do everything possible to heat their homes ahead of the snow storm awaiting them starting on Thursday night.

The Samaritan synagogue of Nablus, since none of the Samaritans living there any more will be another visitor center for a permanent exhibition and in festive

moments will serve as a synagogue for prayers. The renovated synagogue originally established in 194 and opened to the public in 1948.

Benyamim Tsedaka

Pictures:

- The Cantor Priest Matzlih waves with the Torah scroll case before the excited worshipers
- The Altar of the Prayer with the vail and the Holy Ark behind it.
- An invitation to the prayer by the High nPriest 'Abedel
- The High Priest climbs the stairs to the Sinagogue

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### Snow on Mount Gerizim

Phtoto by Tomer Altef Feb. 20, 2015



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American Consul General Michael Ratney Visits Mount Gerizim

Recently, the American Consul General of Jerusalem, **Michael Ratney** (second from right) visited Mount Gerizim. He met with the Samaritan High Priest **Aabed-El b. Asher** (second from left) and received a tour at the Samaritan Museum with **Yefet (Husney) Kohen** (right). To the left is Samaritan **Ishaq Samri**. Photo and short story of the visit was posted on Feb. 11, 2015 on the [Facebook page of the Samaritan Museum](#).

American Consul General visit of the Samaritan Community

American Consul Michael Ratney and his deputy Dorothy Shay along with a group of members of US consulate in Jerusalem, visited the high priest of the Samaritans" Abdullah Wasif" at his house on Mount Gerizim.

After that , they visited the Samaritan library where they met priest Huseny "the manager of Samaritan Library and museum" and Mr. Isaac Aldunfe "the secretary of the sect" and after Samaritan Museum according to the consul

taking a tour in the library they went to visit the behest , their visit lasted approximately thirty minutes where they expressed their interest in the museum and its contents Specifically" the wandering of the Israelites' map " they asked many questions about the Samaritan history and took a lot of pictures .

At the end of the visit priest Husney gave the counsel his book the Israeli lost in Sinai desert as a gift where the counsel expressed his hopes that this book would be translated into English so he can read and absorb its contents. The consul wrote a note in the visitors' book saying, "Thanks to my friends in the Samaritan community for a wonderful visit and an amazing journey into history." [Facebook Page of priest Husney](#). Feb. 12, 2015

Also visiting: Photo right: **Dr. Zeiad abo Dabos** Palestinians ambassador in China with **Liu Liwei**, chief correspondent at XINHUA News Agency in a special visit to [Samaritans Museum](#) March 1, 2015.



Harvard Library Collection

The Harvard Library collection is a great source for Samaritan scholars. [Search the library](#) with the key word, 'Samaritan and/or Samaritans.'

(Photo left, [Samaritan high priest Amram](#), 1924)

Also see the [Samaritans praying in 1913](#), [Samaritan Passover 1934](#), [Samaritan Passover 1942](#), [Samaritan Passover 1947](#), [Samaritan Passover 1968](#) and [Samaritan Passover of 1975](#), [Passover photos 1980-85](#). There is also the 1967 Succoth photos on 2 pages ([page 1](#) and [page 2](#)). Also see [Samaritans and Scroll 1969](#) and [As'ad Hadanfi](#). There is also a Samaritan inscription of the [Samaritan Ten Commandments](#) in the Israel Museum.



PEF 150th Anniversary Celebrations

In Association with the British Museum Department of Middle East and with support of the Wellcome Trust and Maney Publishing.

The PEF (The Palestine Exploration Fund) will be 150 years old in 2015! This means 150 years of pioneering exploration and research, landmark publications, and popular lectures. It also means numerous articles published in our journal PEQ, and research projects which have been supported through our grants. To celebrate this achievement, we are hosting an expanded free lecture series throughout the year, starting on January 15th, and a one-day conference on July 3rd at the British Museum, with a special edition of PEQ on the proceedings to follow.

To find out more about our Anniversary lectures and conference, go to 'Forthcoming Lectures' which can be found under the 'Lectures and activities' item on the menu bar, and follow the links to specific events.

LECTURE & EVENTS NOTICE

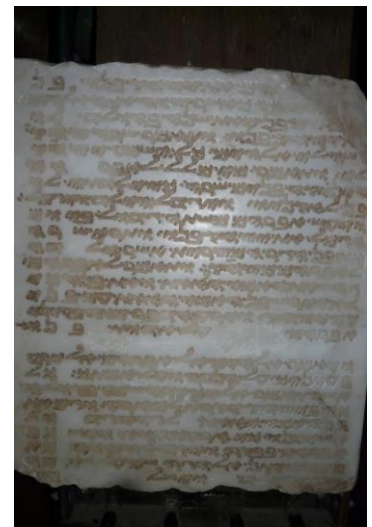
PEF lectures are held at 4pm at the BP Lecture Theatre, CLore Education Centre, The British Museum unless otherwise specified. All our lectures and events are free but must be pre-booked in advance. To book your free ticket for future events, please contact the British Museum Box office on: +44 (0)20 7323 8181 or online at www.britishmuseum.org

Needed: Investigation into a Samaritan Inscription

Recently, the Editor of the Samaritan Update received an email from the UK for the request of finding out more information of his purchase of a Samaritan inscription. After sending out a few email requests to a couple scholars, the request was unsuccessful, they were either too busy or the email went unanswered. Now, we are asking for help to learn more about this inscription.

What we do know at this time:

1. The provenance is short, the current owner purchased it from his Arabic friend in the UK. The previous owner cannot say where she obtained it or when.
2. The inscription is Samaritan Hebrew of Genesis, chapter 21, verses 4-14.
3. It is roughly 24" x 24" and over an inch thick, and appears to be marble.



It is rare to see a Samaritan inscription with these verses of Genesis.

If you know someone interested in looking at this inscription, please contact the [Editor](#) of The Samaritan Update.

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### **The Inscriptions of Israel/Palestine Project**

The Inscriptions of Israel/Palestine project seeks to collect and make accessible over the Web all of the previously published inscriptions (and their English translations) of Israel/Palestine from the Persian period through the Islamic conquest (ca. 500 BCE - 640 CE). There are about 15,000 of these inscriptions, written primarily in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin, by Jews, Christians, Greeks, and Romans. They range from imperial declarations on monumental architecture to notices of donations in synagogues to humble names scratched on ossuaries, and include everything in between.

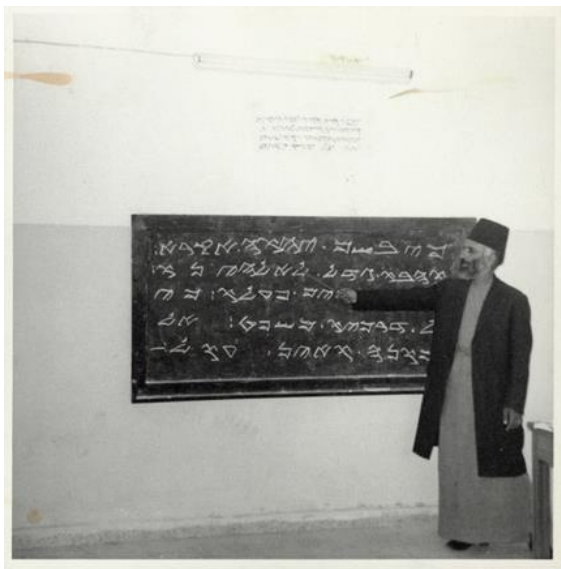
There are approximately 1,500 inscriptions currently in the database, with more added regularly. These inscriptions can be accessed via the "Search" Button on the left.

Inscriptions of Israel/Palestine is an ongoing project at Brown University. It has been generously supported by the Center of Digital Scholarship and the Office of the Vice President of Research at Brown University.

See more at: <http://cds.library.brown.edu/projects/Inscriptions/index.shtml>

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Some Interesting Records



Above left: [Samaritan school built with JDC funds](#). Teacher writes a lesson with ancient Hebrew script. 1966

Right: Charles H Jordan, left, with Samaritan High Priest Amram Issac. Feb. 1963 [photo location](#)

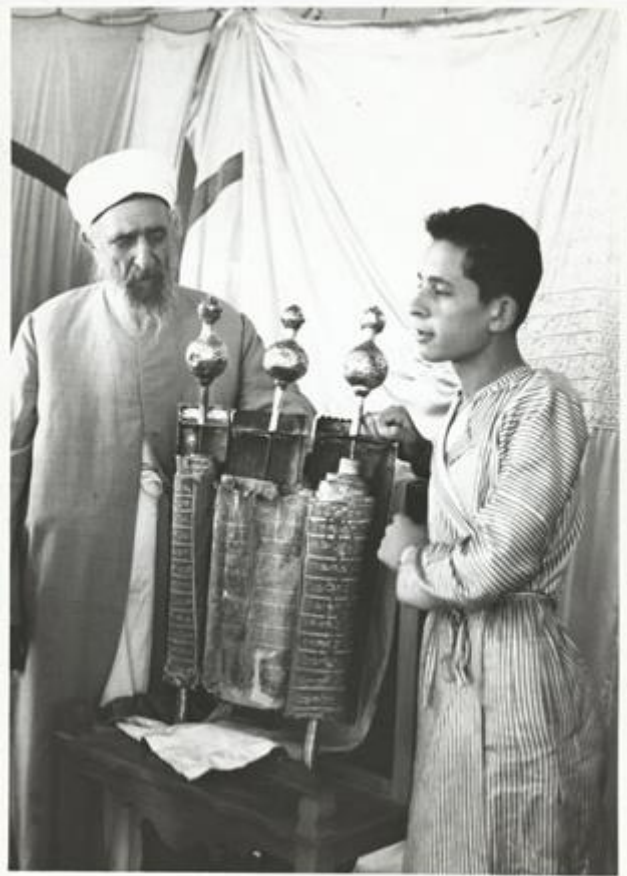
The following is from the archives of the [American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee](#) [Item 1016153](#) see [PDF](#) of pages of Jan 20, 1969
If you search the website you will find records of the Samaritan school that was supported by the **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee**. With the Committee's help many Samaritans were able to expand their education and grow into an educated community as they are today.

Thank you JDC!

Please visit their website: <http://www.jdc.org/>



Below: 1960 photos [left](#) and [right](#) references.



Brothers **Tsedaka ben Yitzhaq Cohen** [1894-1971] - The political leader of the Samaritans in Nablus [1930-1970] with **Amram Itzhak Cohen** (right). 1960s photograph [reference](#)

Be sure to visit the [website](#) of **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee**

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**Call for papers (Society of Biblical Literature)**  
[2015 Annual meeting](#)- Atlanta, GA. Meeting 11-21-24, 2015  
Call for papers opens 12/17/2014 to 3/5/2015

ARAMAIC STUDIES



Submit papers to Tawny L. Holm and Ute Possekel

Description: The Aramaic studies section is intended to provide a forum for scholars interested in various aspects of Aramaic language. Previous paper topics have included aspects of the Targumim, Qumran Aramaic, Peshitta, **Samaritan papyri**, and Elephantine Aramaic.

Call for papers: The Aramaic Studies Section anticipates at least three sessions this year. For one or more open sessions, we invite papers on any aspect of Aramaic language, texts, and culture. We especially welcome papers on the Targumim, Qumran Aramaic texts, Peshitta and Syriac biblical versions, Samaritan papyri, Elephantine Aramaic, and Aramaic magical texts. For a joint session with the Syriac Literature and Interpretations of Sacred Texts Section, we welcome contributions on Syriac and its relation to other dialects of Aramaic, on biblical commentary, and on the interface of Christian and Jewish exegesis. Finally, in a joint session with the Qumran Section to honor the work of Moshe Bernstein, invited speakers will present papers on Aramaic language and literature in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

#### BIBLIA ARABICA: THE BIBLE IN ARABIC AMONG JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND MUSLIMS

Submit papers to Athalya Brenner-Idan and Meira Polliack

Description: Jews, Christians, and Samaritans living under Muslim rule translated their sacred scriptures into Arabic. Interest in this vast treasure of texts has grown, and their contribution to the history of interpretation and religious history is considerable. This consultation will discuss these translations, as well as how they were influenced by the Qur'an and used in inter-religious conversations.

Call for papers: The "Biblia Arabica" Consultation invites paper proposals for a joint session with the "The Qur'an and the Biblical Tradition (IQSA)" Unit, on the topic: "The Bible is at the same time everywhere and nowhere in the Arabic Qur'an" (Sidney H. Griffith): Case Studies and Reflections. This session aims at studying the elaboration and treatment of specific biblical themes in the Qur'an and by its interpreters. Case studies may be on divine revelation, attitudes to class, violence and destruction, attitudes to women, prophets and prophecy, space and time, but do not have to be limited to these. Proposals will reflect explicitly on the theme as articulated by Sidney Griffith, and consider processes of canon formations and renewal on the basis of earlier canons. (Our second session will be an invited Panel).

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Remnants of the Roman Jupiter Temple 1967

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/69061470@N05/7601797112>

Samaritan Passover from 1969 Photo

<http://digicol.lib.depaul.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/gic/id/3713/rec/3>

Area of the

Snow on Mount Gerizim

Also see <http://journal-tv.net/archives/16210>

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#### Links

#### The Ancient Samaritans of Mount Gerizim

By Andrea DiCenzo <http://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/node/24207>



## Has Science vindicated those nasty Samaritans? Looks Like it!

By Peter Enns <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/peterenns/2015/02/has-science-vindicated-those-nasty-samaritans-looks-like-it/>

## Three songs after dawn on the Holy Mountain

<http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=192681> Arabic

## Einat Klien personal photo exhibition "Samaritans Night"

<http://en.lookatisrael.com/einat-klein-personal-photo-exhibition/>

## Kindergarten Class in the Samaritan Village

<http://projecthope.ps/volunteer-blogs/kindergarten-class-in-the-samaritan-village/>

## The Ancient Samaritans of Mount Gerizim by Andrea DiCenzo

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/ancient-samaritans-mount-gerisim-1844065721>

## Titel: Griechische Übersetzung des samaritanischen Pentateuchs

[http://papyri-giessen.dl.uni-leipzig.de/receive/GiePapyri\\_schrift\\_00025210?XSL.Style=print](http://papyri-giessen.dl.uni-leipzig.de/receive/GiePapyri_schrift_00025210?XSL.Style=print)

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From Wikimedia Commons

Daniel Ventura downloaded [this image](#) of the Samaritan Ten Commandments in October 2014 to Wikimedia Commons. There are a number of image sizes that are free to download. There is no information posted but it appears to have been taken from inside the Samaritan Museum on Mount Gerizim.

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## From the Editor



version of the Ten Commandments shown in the inscription.



Lately, I have been reading articles on Samaritan inscriptions. The article by Bowman and Talmon, 'Samaritan Decalogue Inscriptions,' make mention of the Leeds Decalogue, wherein the article it is said that 'a donor had received this inscription from the Samaritan High Priest in Nablus.' The writers reference an article in the [Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology](#) on the gift of the inscription by the late Sheik of the Samaritans. But it appears Bowman and Talmon was wrote. The Leeds City Museum says that the gift was from Sheik Yakob esh Shellaby (See museum [web page](#)) and not the Samaritan High Priest. Apparently, Bowman showed a photo of the inscription to then High Priest **Abisha ben Phinhas ben Yitzhaq ben Shalma** (1943–1961), who denounced it as a fake (Samaritan Decalogue Inscriptions, page 216) most likely because of the abbreviated



The 2002 article, '[The Jacob Kaplan and haya Ritter-Kaplan Legacy](#)' by Rachel Bar-Nathan explains how Jacob Kaplan's legacy is accessible to scholars. Rachel explains a great opportunity, "Scholars are invited to study the excavation and survey files, and to publish them." There could still be something exciting to be found.

I recently reread the writings of the high priest **Amram b. Isaac**, [Mount Gerizim, the One True Sanctuary](#). He gave me once again things to think about. I really liked the line on page 25. 'When the two mountains are named, Gerizim is always mentioned first.' Just as Adam and Eve, Moses and Aaron, Shem and Ham, Abraham and Isaac, Joseph and Benyamim, Ephraim and Manasseh. Like the Blessings and the Curses, the Blesses are the most important!

### Passover Article

With the Passover coming up it seems proper that the readers have a new article to read. The reference below was written by **H. Eliassof**, "Three Jewish Sects; I. The Samaritans." *The Sentinel* [vol. 025 no. 02](#), 1917, pp 6, 21-22; [vol. 025 no. 05](#), 1917; [vol. 25 no. 06](#), 1917 pp. 6, 18; [vol. 025 no. 07](#), 1917 pp 7, 15.

The writer also makes a reference to an article in a Hebrew magazine named *Hatoren* (written in Hebrew). This article was called 'Upon the Mount of Blessing.' It must have been published in 1916 or Jan. 1917 but I cannot locate it. Eliassof appears to also have been a friend of Samaritan Abraham ben Marhiv-Hazippori who lived in Jaffa at the time.

I was also trying to locate another Samaritan related archive in the *Chicago Daily News* 1922, but have found no success.

If you are interesting in Shechem, and are able to read Greek, here is an article by **Spyridon Lontoa**, [Η ΣΥΧΕΜ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΠΟΧΗ ΤΩΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΩΝ](#) (master) - THE BIBLICAL CITY OF SHECHEM AT THE PERIOD OF PATRIARCHS (in Greek) [2010]

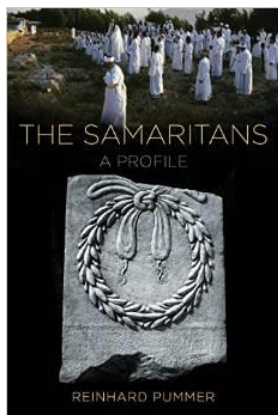
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In 404 C.E. in Rome, Jews and Samaritans were declared unfit for military service, so says the [Encyclopedia of Jewish Knowledge](#) edited by Jacob de Haas, New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1944, page 465.

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### Future Publications

[The Samaritans: A Profile](#). By **Reinhard Pummer**,  
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (English) Paperback – October 9, 2015



Most people associate the term "Samaritan" exclusively with the New Testament stories about the Good Samaritan and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. Very few are aware that a small community of about 750 Samaritans still lives today in Palestine and Israel; they view themselves as the true Israelites, having resided in their birthplace for thousands of years and preserving unchanged the revelation given to Moses in the Torah.

**Reinhard Pummer**, one of the world's foremost experts on Samaritanism, offers in this book a comprehensive introduction to the people identified as Samaritans in both biblical and non-biblical sources. Besides analyzing the literary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources, he examines the Samaritans' history, their geographical distribution, their version of the Pentateuch, their rituals and customs, and their situation today.

[The Samaritans: History, Texts, and Traditions \(Studia Samaritana\)](#)By **Stefan Schorch****Walter de Gruyter**: Hardcover; 330 pages - publication date: Nov. 15, 2015

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Old News[The Richmond Dispatch](#)- Sunday, December 13, 1885 [page 2]**LIGHT ON THE BIBLE.**

INVESTIGATION IN SAMARIA.- A Chronicle Which Goes Back to the Beginning and Starts With Adam. A foreign correspondent of the New York Sun writes to that paper the following articles, which will interest all Bible students

The chief interest connected with Nablous lies in the fact that it is the residence of the remnant of those Samaritans who were colonized here by Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, when he carried away the children of Israel captive. From the biblical record (2d Kings, 17th chapter,) it would appear that the new settlers were drawn from mixed nationalities and various cities within his dominions. Some came from Hamath, a town between Damascus and Aleppo, and others from Cutnah – probably the Kuths of Arabian geographers, a town and district between the Tigris and Euphrates- some from Ava, which has been identified with the modern Hit, and some from Sepharvaim, once the famous city of Sippara, both cities on the Euphrates, in lower Mesopotamia.

We are also told that the new colonists petitioned the King of Assyria to be taught the religion of the Jews, and that he sent them a Jewish priest to teach it to them, and that they added it on, after a curious fashion, to the various forms of idolatry which they had imported from their different localities, and hence established a mongrel sort of worship which became afterward purified, but which, nevertheless, rendered them obnoxious to the Jews of Judea; all the more so because they intermarried with the remnants of the tribes of Israel which had escaped the captivity, thus forming a race as mongrel as their religion. It is about 2,600 years since this event took place, but this ancient worship of the Samaritans exists to this day; so also does the bitter antagonism which they and the Jews mutually entertain for each other.

This is the oldest national feud probably in existence, but as fresh as if it only originated yesterday. Like the Jews, the Samaritans have managed to survive all the vicissitudes of fate, but with the difference that a small remnant has clung through them all to the locality in which they were originally established, though they have dwindled in numbers to one hundred and sixty souls. As an ethnological traction of antiquity, they are perhaps the most interesting group of people extant. The first one I ever made acquaintance with was a young man who called upon me in a mysterious manner one day in Haifa. He handed me a document in Arabic, in which, after stating that for certain reasons, which he implied were by no means discreditable to him, he was an outcast from his own people, he implored charity and requested me "to cast upon him a regard of compassion and benevolence." The document further said:

"All that I have inherited from my parents and ancestors is a manuscript written in ancient Hebrew, nine hundred years old, containing two chapters of the Bible, including the commands, which I beg to offer you, in the hope that you will recompense me in return by a sum which will relieve me of my distress."

He signed him-elf "Shellabi, the son of Jacob, the Samaritan." Now, I knew that Jacobes Shellabi was the spiritual head of the sect, for he had been in London under the title of "The Prince of the Samaritans." and the romance which attended his style and dignity had, it was reported, even captivated a fair English woman, who was willing to become a Samaritan for his sake. Fortunately for her, "the Prince" was already married, a fact which, I believe, he only divulged on his return to his native land.

Anyhow, here was the son of a prince in distress, and here was an extremely ancient and curious manuscript for sale. The youth looked such a scamp, however, that he did not enlist my sympathies. I suspected that he had lost his money by gambling, which proved afterwards to be the case: so when he said he considered the manuscript worth \$10 I offered him \$1, on which he retired indignantly. A few days later, however, he reappeared, took his dollar thankfully, and I retain possession of the manuscript. It is on coarse parchment of a yellowish-brown color, two feet six inches long, and fifteen inches wide. It was evidently originally longer, but has been torn off. One edge has been subjected to the action of tire. The writing is in transverse columns, each column thirteen inches long by five wide, and containing from sixty to seventy lines. The characters are of the old Samaritan type, small, rude, and irregular, differing in many important respects from the ancient Hebrew, and illegible to a good modern Hebrew scholar to whom I have shown it. I have no doubt, however, that it could be deciphered by an expert in such matters, who would also be able to establish from the formation of the characters its antiquity.

This incident excited my interest in the Samaritan question, and when I was at Nablous I visited the

synagogue, examined the ancient Torah, or book of the law, and have since looked into the subject generally. The ancient synagogue was appropriated by the Moslems some centuries ago. The modern building is a small, unpretentious, oblong structure. The walls are rough and whitewashed, and the roof is vaulted with two little domes in the centre. The mizpah, or altar, is about five feet square, covered with a veil of yellow silk. Within are receptacles for the sacred books. Of these the most valuable are never shown to strangers. One or two persons have, however, seen the most ancient, which the Samaritans claim to have been written by Abishua, the son of Phinehas, thirty-five hundred years ago. It is only seen by the congregation once a year, when elevated above the priest's head on day of Atonement.

The Torah was rolled around a cylinder of wood similar to those used in ordinary Jewish synagogues, and I was gratified to observe that it exactly resembled the fragment in my possession. It was evidently very ancient. The priest who showed me the synagogue was a remarkably handsome-dignified-looking man about forty year old, I asked him whether he was the chief priest. He said he was, and that Jacob Shellabi no longer had any position among them. I then said I had obtained a piece of manuscript from his son, to which he made no reply, but at once changed the subject. I suspected the youth was a *mauvais sujet*, who committed an act of sacrilegious theft before leaving the paternal mansion, and who did not therefore, deserve more than he got.

Now, with regard to the sacred books which I did not see: They are in some respects in the highest degree interesting, as throwing light upon the Biblical record. In the first place, from what is known of the most ancient version, claimed to be by Abishua, Gesenius, and other great scholars have given it as their opinion that if it could be collated it would be found in many cases to preserve the sense, which has been lost in the Jewish version. This opinion is founded upon the results of such collation as has been possible with Samaritan texts which have fallen into the hands of scholars.

Besides the most ancient roll there are three other books known to be in the possession of the Samaritans. These are the Samaritan Book of Joshua, the Samaritan Chronicles, and the so-called "Fire-tried Manuscript." The Samaritan Book of Joshua probably dates from the thirteenth century. It was published at Leyden about forty years ago from an Arabic manuscript in Samaritan character, and is thought to have been compiled from an early Samaritan and three later Arabic chronicles. It is invested with a peculiar interest from the fact that it helps to supply a remarkable lacuna in the Biblical record, which does not appear to have received the attention it deserves from Biblical students. It is, in fact, evident that a large portion of the present book of Joshua is missing. The book purports to be an account of the conquest of Canaan and its allotment among the twelve tribes. Under these circumstances it is most remarkable that we have no account of the conquest of Samaria, though the campaigns in the South, including the siege and taking of seven cities, and the invasion of Galilee, and the defeat of the league of six Kings of northern Palestine, are fully described. Then we have no list of royal Samaritan cities, though all of them in the other parts of the country are carefully enumerated. We have no description of the boundaries of the two tribes to which Samaria was allotted, nor any list of the cities awarded to them. Some of the Levitical towns mentioned in Chronicles as belonging to Samaria are not to be found in Joshua. It will be found also that, taken as a whole, there are only about forty Samaritan places noted out of some 400 or 500 places in western Palestine.

The Jewish hatred of the Samaritans rose in the early Christian period to so great a pitch that the Mishnic doctors avoided even mentioning the name of Samaria. Thus in the Talmud altogether only some half dozen Samaritan towns are noticed. In describing Palestine the Mishna divides it into Judea, Galilee, and Peraes, leaving out all mention of Samaria. It is just possible that long before this an omission may have been purposely made by the early transcribers of the Biblical book of Joshua in regard to Samaria. At all events, the meagre record which it contains is richly supplemented by the Samaritan book of Joshua, which brings down the history of Israel from the date of the conquest to the time of Samuel, whose predecessor, Eli, was, from a Samaritan point of view, the earliest schismatic, and the founder of a new and heretical temple at Shiloh in opposition to that built by Joshua on Mount Gerizim. The divine glory rested on Gerizim for two hundred sixty years, or during the reign of nine successors of Joshua, the schism between the children of Judah and the orthodox, as the Samaritans call themselves, dating from the time of Sin, after the death of Samson.

The book opens much in accordance with the biblical narrative, but no less than four chapters are devoted to the history of Balaam and his death, being an enlargement of one biblical verse. The conquest of Schechem by Joshua contains an account of the miraculous discomfiture of the enemy, and of a letter sent by him announcing it to Eleazar the priest, fastened to the wing of a dove. It contains also the account of a new league against the children of Israel under a king called Saubac, in conjunction with the Kings of five other towns, which can all now be identified. A thrilling narrative of the battle which takes place between Joshua and these Kings at El Sejjun, on the ancient Megiddo (Armageddon), is also given. With this episode the history of the war ends. The chief value of the book lies, however, in the light it throws upon

the ancient geography of Samaria. Out of a total of thirty-one places mentioned in it, thirteen are within the confines of Samaria, and most of these are not to be found in the Bible.

The Samaritan chronicle goes back to the beginning, and gives the astronomical reckoning from Adam. Some of its topographical details are of much value. Thus it contains a list of twenty-two towns where the High Priest who succeeded Tobiah resided, all being apparently in Samaria as far as they can be identified. It is known that in the second and third centuries the Samaritans were in a flourishing condition, and had colonies in Egypt, and even a synagogue in Rome. The chronicle gives their possessions in Palestine as allotted by the High Priest Baba the Great, about 160 years after the destruction of Jerusalem. This description is interesting, as it seems to include all Palestine, with the exception of Judea proper, to the mountains of which the Jews are by this description confined.

At a later period the chronicle gives a list of those towns which were inhabited by the Samaritans after the Hegira. This is a period when very little is known of this nation. The places mentioned extend nearly over the whole of Palestine outside of Judea, and colonies are also mentioned in Damascus, Cairo, and Baalbek. There is a ruin about five miles from Haifa called Keir Samir, or the town of the Samaritans, which I occasionally visit to grub for inscriptions, which was one of their colonies. Those at Gerar and Gaza lasted till the present century, but none are to be found now outside of Nablous. It is only to be expected that the chronicle should centre all the holy places of the Samaritans at Shechem or Nablous. The fifth article of the Samaritan creed was the assertion that Gerizim was the chosen abode of God upon earth. Here Adam and Seth raised altars; here Melchisedec, servant of the Most High God, was met by Abraham- for Gerizim the Samaritans hold to the present day is the highest mountain in the world, the only one not covered by the flood. Here Abraham offered up Isaac, the very spot being shown on the eastern brow of the mountain; and, indeed, as Dean Stanley has argued, it is as likely to be here as at Jerusalem, as Josephus and the Talmudists affirm. Gerizim was also the site of Jacob's vision, and, finally, it was on Gerizim and not Ebal, just opposite, as stated in the Bible, that, according to the Samaritans, Joshua erected, first an altar, afterward the tabernacle, and lastly a temple.

The fourth and last of the known ancient sacred books of the Samaritans is the fire-tried manuscript. It consists of 217 leaves, containing the law from the 29th verse of the first chapter of Genesis to the blessing of Moses in Deuteronomy. It is much worn: the letters are not so small as those of Abishua's Roll, nor as large as those of the later Roll. The hand is steady and uniform, and the character of the letters indicates that it is of very ancient date. A note at the end of the book of Numbers connects the manuscript with a story in the Samaritan book of Joshua. It runs:

"It came out from the fire by the power of the Lord to the hand of the King of Babel in the presence of Zerubbabel, the Jew, and was not burnt. Thanks be to the Lord for the law of Moses."

[The Washington Times](#), Sunday, November 27, 1904 [page 2]

Samaritan Pentateuch Has Been Translated

The Rev. William E. Barton of Chicago, in a recent Sunday school talk, made public for the first time the result of his long labors in the complete translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch, or five books of Moses. In this manuscript, which is the Bible of the Samaritans, was discovered a passage in which God commands Moses to build an altar on Mount Gerizim.

During 2,300 years the original Pentateuch from which Dr. Barton's copy was made has been carefully guarded by the high priests of the Samaritans, and so jealous has been their care of the valuable manuscript that it has been exposed to public view but once in every year.

For hundreds of years the priests believed that it would be a profanation of the relic to allow even a copy of it to pass into the hands of those of a different faith, and in all the world, it is said, there are only twenty copies extant, five of which are owned in the United States.

Two copies are owned by Dr. Barton, the Lenox Library of New York has one, the Drew Theological Seminary another, and the fifth is the property of the Rev. Dr. Watson in New York. The oldest copy owned by Dr. Barton was obtained by him two years ago from a son of High Priest Jacob Aaron, at Nablous, Palestine, and was in actual use in the synagogue when he bought it.

Translation of Passage

The passage which is found in the Samaritan Pentateuch and in no other, reads, according to the translation of Dr. Barton, as follows:

"And it shall come to pass, when Jehovah, thy God shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster. And it shall be when ye Passover the Jordan that ye shall set up these stones (which) I command you this day, in Mount Gizim. And thou shalt not lift upon the iron. With perfect stones shall thou build the altar of Jehovah thy God. And thou shalt sacrifice peace offerings and thou shalt eat there and rejoice before Jehovah thy God.

This mountain in on the other side of Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the Oak of Moreh, beside Schechem.”

Relates to Disputed Question.

“In the time of Christ it was a disputed question as to whether Moses had been commanded to worship on Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem,” said Dr. Barton. “When Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman at the well, and she asked him whether men should worship on that mountain or in Jerusalem, she put a question that is still in dispute.

“Two years ago, when I was in Palestine, visiting the high priest of the Samaritans, Jacob Aaron, his son, called me aside one day and inquired whether I would like to have a copy of the original manuscript of the five books of Moses. The one which he offered me was on hand made of paper, written by the high priest himself, and I purchased it, together with the metal case in which it was kept. I could not read it at the time, it being written in the xxxxx [ancient?] Samaritan language and after I had brought it home I found I had inadvertently placed it upside down in the case, so that it was a long time before I got started right in my translation.

Characters Are Ancient Hebrew

“The characters are those of the ancient Hebrew, similar to those appearing on the Moabac stones, and after a little practice the Jewish scholar finds but little difficulty in translating them. The eleventh commandment is found immediately adjoining the Ten Commandments in the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the original, which is guarded night and day, and is shown only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, is said to be the oldest manuscript of any portion of the Bible in existence.

“The copy which I obtained from Jacob Aaron is 106 feet long, and is seventeen inches wide. The text is contained in columns sixteen inches long and five inches wide. These adjoin each other and extend from one end of the roll to the other.

“Being desirous of obtaining, if possible, a copy on leather, I opened negotiations with Jacob Aaron by letter, but he wrote me that his people no longer have the sacrificial leather. He would use no other.

Samaritans Seceded From Jews.

“About 432 years before the coming of Christ, the Jews seceded from the Samaritans and established their new religion at Schechem, where the body of Joseph is buried. They took with them the five books of Moses, and they acknowledge no other Bible, although they have a book of Joshua, of which I have a copy in Arabic, but they do not consxxxxxxx of xxxxxx holy writ.

“The Samaritan Pentateuch, therefore, is of great importance in proving the correctness of the Hebraic text, and is remarkable that the Hebrew scribes who have been copying their own copies for 2,300 years, have retained a text so nearly like the original.

Samaritan Views are Changing.

“For many centuries the Samaritans have looked upon Christians as a profane people. A great change has come over them, however, in the last few years, and my correspondence with the High Priest Jacob Aaron is interesting. Through my efforts and those of E.K. Warren, of Three Oaks, Mich., he was induced to attend the Sunday school convention recently held in Jerusalem, and delivered a short address, which was translated for his hearers by a converted Jew.”

Up to a few years ago no price that could be offered would induce the Samaritan priest to part with a copy of their Pentateuch, and it took three centuries for the libraries of Europe to collect seventeen copies. Americans repeatedly have tried, without success, to obtain copies. Since Dr. Barton's visit to Palestine two years ago he has come into possession not only of the two copies of the Pentateuch, but other Samaritan works besides, until he now owns what is said to be the best collection of Samaritan literature extant outside of Palestine.

[Omaha Daily Bee](#), April 23, 1905, supplement, [page 34]

The Only Spot on Earth Where the Sacrifice of the Pascal Lamb is Still Offered

An intensely interesting sacrificial ceremony is held yearly on a lofty mount in Palestine, presenting a curious combination of Jewish ritual and Arab festivity. But it is not often the privilege of an outsider to witness this unique celebration of the feast of the Passover.

There is but one spot on earth where the sacrifice of the Pascal lamb is still offered, but the site is not Jerusalem, as one might suppose, nor are the worshippers the descendants of the ancient “chosen people,” the Jews.

The site made interesting by the observation of this ancient rite is Mount Gherizim, in Shechem, in the north of Palestine, and the people who perform it are the Samaritans. They are a small community, numbering 120 families, living in clannish solitude in their picturesque home, Nablous.

This quaint village of white stone, flat roofed houses is built over the site of the ancient Samaria, founded by Omri, king of Israel, at the time of the separation between Judah and Israel. As the dwellers have never migrated from this spot, they are a peculiarity of this section of northern Palestine, living entirely to themselves, and never intermarrying with those of other creeds. Their origin has been a subject of controversy, some people believing them to be descendants of the Israelites who returned after the Assyrian captivity; others claiming that they are merely of Assyrian stock who settled there and accepted the Jewish form of ritual.

Whatever may be their real origin, the fact remains that the Jews have always hated them, as seen in the story of the woman of Samaria. The little sect has clung tenaciously to its religion ever since it was adopted, and unfailingly observes all the feasts and fasts of the Jewish religion, following most minutely every Mosaic injunction. But the Samaritans reject all Talmudic and Rabbinic interpretations and additions. This is one of the principal sources of animosity between them and the Jews. The head of their religion is the high priest, Isaac ben Amram, who claims direct descent from the ancient Levites, by whom such services in the Jewish ritual have been performed.



There is a quaint old synagogue on the hill where their sacred literature is hidden from the curious eye of the traveler. These parchment rolls of the Pentateuch, which are written by hand in ancient Hebrew, are said to date from the captivity, and are, therefore, considered too precious to be handled by strangers, so to satisfy the curiosity of tourists some reproductions are shown to visitors on receipt of a fee. Tourists are also privileged to buy a photograph of the interesting old high priest and of the rolls, vestments, and other accessories to the Samaritan worship.

The celebration of the Passover is the most peculiar of all their ceremonies. This sacrificial rite is most impressive and interesting, being celebrated at night under a moonlight sky, and exhibiting a strange combination of Jewish devoutness and pagan fanaticism. It appeals to the spectator, first, because it is a relic of the old Jewish ritual now nowhere observed by the Jews themselves, for, with the destruction of the temple by Titus, all vestige of sacrifices disappeared, offerings not being lawful anywhere but in the temple at Jerusalem.

At each recurring eve of the Passover, which corresponds nearly to our Easter, and which commemorates the hasty meal eaten by the Israelites on the eve of their departure from Egypt, the Samaritans gather on the summit of Mount Gherizim, overlooking their village. Here the sacrificial element, and the rabbis have introduced so many variations that the service is no longer the same as when it was first instituted.

Sacred panorama Seen from Mount.

There is a primitive simplicity about this ancient ceremony in Gherizim which recalls vividly the events of the first celebration in Egypt. The solemnity and stillness of the hour awe the spectator, the service being held between sunset and midnight. At early dawn the worshippers can still be seen kneeling within and around their tents, clad in white garments, leaning on their staffs.

There is a peculiar charm about the site chosen for the service. This historic mountain, rising gloomily, and grandly in the midst of such a landscape, a rocky, bare mountain, towering above the fertile valleys, and crowned by a little white stone "waly" – the tomb of a saint- which marks the site of the ancient Samaritan temple. All around rise other hills made memorable by sacred lore- Hermon, Labor, and Gilboa. Against the distant horizon the Mediterranean can be seen like a bright silver thread stretching all the way from Carmel to Gaza, and down in the intervening plains dotted here and there are mud hut villages. At the foot of the mountain lies the vale of Shechem, where Jacob pastured his flocks.

This height in Samaria certainly offers the most wonderful panorama in all western Palestine, and forms an appropriate site, entranced by sacred associations, on which to celebrate this ancient rite.

Preparations for Ancient Rite

These thoughts filled our minds as we ascended the mount one bright afternoon in anticipation of the service which it was our privilege to witness. Toward the close of the day we saw that preparations were being made for the evening sacrifice. Two fires were lighted at a little distance from the ruins of the ancient temple, not far from some tents which had been pitched for the worshippers. Each family had a separate tent. One of the fires was in a trench within a walled inclosure, where the sacrifices were to be offered. This was for the heating of water in immense caldrons, to scald the slaughtered lambs. The other fire, outside the inclosure,

was lighted within a pit, some seven to eight feet deep, like a well, walled with stones, to serve as an oven for roasting the lambs for the evening meals after the ceremony.

Half an hour before the setting of the sun the high priest appeared, attired in a pearl colored silk surplice, wearing a white turban. He knelt solemnly on a scarlet rug before a primitive stone lectern facing the east, where stood the ancient temple of old. Behind him knelt two other priests and their children.

A semicircle of rents formed an effective background, and in these the congregation worshiped, facing east. At least on end of the semicircle were men dressed in pure white. These were the "sacrificers," awaiting the summons to bring forward the victims. The high priest prayed aloud, beseeching God to accept the sacrifice offered according to his command to Moses. As at the Jewish celebration, the congregation recited the story of the deliverance from Egypt and of the first Passover supper in a mournful intonation. Whenever the name of Jehovah was pronounced the people prostrated themselves in oriental fashion.

Part of the service was carried on in perfect silence, while all stood and prayed, covering their faces with their hands, and at intervals stretching out their upturned hands, "to catch the blessing as it descended from heaven." The service continued thus till sunset. Meantime every detail of preparation for the sacrifice had been attended to. The lambs had been carefully examined by an appointed assistant of the high priest, for they must be perfect and "without blemish." Bitter herbs were prepared and laid on a straw matting beside the cakes of unleavened bread.

As the sun's rays shed a rosy hue on the temple's site, crowning the white stone tower with a glorious wealth of color, we knew that the hour of the sacrifice was fast approaching. Ben Amram rose solemnly on to the stone bench. He stood looking westward, watching the sun slowly disappearing below the blue waters of the Mediterranean beyond the plain of Sharon. The story of the Passover was still echoing around us, for the people continued murmuring the Hebrew poem.

The attendants brought forward the lambs near to the caldron fire and held them there. Not a sound of bleating was heard. The attendants flashed their knives. The intonation grew louder and louder.

As the sun slowly sank the interest of the worshipers increased, and at last, as it had disappeared, the high priest exclaimed loudly: "And the whole assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel shall kill it at even." This was the signal for the sacrifice to take place, for all the lambs must be slain at once.

Then followed a strange scene, breaking into the solemn stillness of a moment before. A struggle took place for the privilege of killing the lambs. The high priest hastened to the site of slaughter and, hurriedly disrobing himself of his silken gown, quickly and skillfully killed four of the seven lambs by a single stroke. The blood was saved in basins, and every member of the congregation dipped his finger in the blood and made a sign on his forehead with it. The doors of the tents were sprinkled with blood in memory of the angel passing over the homes marked by blood in Egypt.

A sound arose from within the tents. The children, who had listened, began to wail at the weird sight.

With this act of sprinkling the ceremony ended, the sacrifice had been offered, and the new year entered upon. The people congratulated each other joyfully, and respectfully kissed the hand of the high priest.

Scene Changes to Rejoicing.

The scene changed suddenly from one of worship and stillness to one of loud rejoicing and bustle, for the men within the tents arose and hastily gathered at the chosen spot for the feast. The high priest and his attendants now appeared in pure white linen, girdled and carrying staffs, appeared like Israelites on that memorable night in Egypt. They stood solemnly before the fire where the lambs were hidden, and there, by the still flickering red light of the sacrificial fire, they prayed. Then, taking off the covering of this primitive oven, they lifted out the stakes with the roasted lambs.

Within the dark pit the fire had died out. Baskets were ready at hand to receive the flesh as it was torn off the lambs. This was done hastily but carefully, for every piece of meat or bone falling into the fire had to be lifted out again by men who were lowered down into the hot oven for that purpose. A trench had been prepared for these baskets of food, where they were laid in a line between the rows of hungry people.

It was a strange scene. These girded pilgrims, as if ready for a journey, squatting in Arab fashion on the ground on the summit of the great mount, surrounded by other dark mountain tops frowning around on all sides, and casting heavy shadows on the otherwise bright landscape, illuminated by the brilliant light of an eastern moon. It was a truly oriental night in all its beauty, and a truly oriental scene. These people, seemed to our imagination, to be the Israelites of whom they had been singing, and this the first Passover supper. But there was no fear; all was peace and joy.

Women Barred from Feast.

Unlike the celebration among the Jews, where families are all united at this supper, here the women remained in their tents, true to oriental custom. There they received their portion of the feast, to which Gentile visitors, of course, were not invited. According to the biblical injunction, nothing was left. All remnants were gathered and burned ceremoniously.

Having partaken of the feast, the worshippers did not retire to their tents, but remained out on the mount all night praying. Only at dawn of the day did they withdraw to rest. During the eight days following the Samaritans encamped on this hill as a temporary home.

[Omaha Daily Bee](#), January 1, 1911, [page 2].

An Interview with the High Priest of Samaritans of 1910
(Copyright, 1910, by Frank O. Carpenter.)

Nablous, Palestine- I have just had an interview with a lineal descendant of Aaron, the brother of Moses. I refer to Jacob, the high priest of the Samaritans. He belongs to the tribe of Levi, who in ancient times were at the head of the priesthood, and claims to have a genealogical tree which reaches from then until now. His family has lived here for more than 3,000 years, and high priest has succeeded high priest until this man took the position at the age of 15, his childless uncle, the high priest, having died. That was sixty-two years ago, and Jacob has been high priest ever since. He is now almost 80, and he looks, I imagine, as Aaron or Moses may have looked in the latter part of their lives. Over six feet in height, he has the face and form of a prophet. His long beard fall down upon his chest and his scholarly face is refined and spiritual-looking.

The Oldest of Bible Manuscripts.

I met Jacob here at Nablous, on the site of old Shechem, within a stone's throw of the well where Christ talked with the Samaritan woman. It is not far from a farm which Abraham owned, and about on the spot where Joshua gathered the tribes of Israel together and read them the law of Moses. Our conversation took place in the heart of the city in the synagogue of the Samaritans. I had to go through vaulted passageways and cavelike streets to reach it. I had an Interpreter with me, and as we talked together the high priest showed me the original parchments of the five books of Moses as they were written by Abou, the son of Ben Hassan, the son of Eleazar, who, you remember, was one of the two sons of Aaron by Elisheba, his wife. The high priest tells me that these five manuscripts were written only twelve years after the Israelites came into the Holy Land, and that they are now 3,575 years old. They are the oldest Bible manuscripts in existence. They are written in the Hebrew of the times of Moses, upon long sheets of parchment about two feet in width. The scrolls are rolled upon three rods, each, tipped with a silver knob as big as a teacup, and they are so arranged that they can be rolled and unrolled as they are read. The ink is still plain and the letters distinct, although the parchment is yellow with age. The manuscript is treasured by the Samaritans, being kept in a brass case inlaid with gold. It is said to have been dug up about 800 years ago, and it has formed a subject of controversy among oriental scholars. The Samaritans believe that it was written by the grandson of Aaron, as the high priest here claims, but the Jews reject it as false, denouncing the Samaritans as pagan outcasts from the children of Israel.

The Samaritans of 1910.

I was surprised to find that there were any Samaritans living. I supposed that they had been swallowed up by the Mohammedans and other Syrians who have absorbed everything in Palestine excepting the Jews. I find, however, that there are about 200 in Nablous, and that they practice the same religion as they had when Christ came. They annually celebrate the feasts of the Passover and Pentecost on Mount Gerizim. These feasts are different from those of the latter-day Jews. At the time of Christ the Feast of the Passover was eaten reclining and as though at the end of a journey rather than at the beginning.

The Samaritans eat their Passover with their shoes bound upon their feet and staves in their hands as though ready to start out on their wanderings in the wilderness. They do this on the top of the mountain, camping in tents. They smear the blood of the sacrifice upon the tents to commemorate the passage of the angel of death over the houses of Israel. They dress in white garments and they kill the animals which are burnt according to the methods which were in use when Aaron lived. The sacrifice consists of buck lambs, each of which is carefully examined that it may be without wound or blemish. At a given signal the throats of the lambs are cut, and, at the same time some of the blood is caught in a tincup and smeared over the tent. As the blood flows the people shout out the words, "There is but one God," and they shout this



sentence again and again. At the same time there is a service, beginning with a hymn praising Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and followed by a prayer of thanksgiving.

The meat for the sacrifice is cooked over a fire in the earth. As soon as the animals are killed they are scalded and the wool is pulled off. The entrails are removed and salted; then a pole is thrust through each lamb and it is laid on the hot coals of a fire made in a trench. The meat is then covered with brush and earth. The people continue to pray as it cooks and keep on praying until the sunset approaches. At ten minutes after sunset they begin to eat the meat, throwing the bones into the fire without breaking them.

At Jacob's Well.

In my talk with the high priest he contended that the Samaritans were the only true Israelites, and spoke of the prophet Samuel as sorcerer. He paid his respects to the Jews in no measured tones. He gave me a little book he had written concerning the religion of the Samaritans, and at the close was by no means averse to a present of silver, for which he thanked me in a dignified way. After I returned to my camp, which is on the outside of Nablous, some of his followers brought me his photograph and a model of the five books of Moses, which they offered to sell for a song. The Samaritans are exceedingly poor and are despised by both Moslems and Jews.

It was at Jacob's well, not far from Nablous, that Christ met the Samaritan woman and told her of the.....

'A Modern Samaritan' in [County Observer and Monmouthshire Central Advertiser](#), November 15, 1902 [page 2]

The 'Jewish Chronicle' states that for the first time since the establishment of the sect of Samaritans in Palestine has a High Priest ventured on a journey out of the Holy Land. Ishak ben Amram ben Shalma hakohen is the man who for the last few weeks has been travelling in Europe. He has been in London since the beginning of the past week, and is a constant visitor at the house of the Haham, Dr. Gaster, to whom he had been recommended both by people in the East and by scholars in Paris as being the only learned Jew familiar with the language and the traditions of the Samaritans. A tall and imposing figure, the High Priest is a remarkable personality. Clad in his Oriental garb and with his red turban- for according to Mahomedan law the Samaritans are not allowed to wear the turban of the Ishmaelites, he finds his way easily about London, although he does not know a word of English.

'The Samaritans' in [Brecon County Times](#), [Neath Gazette](#) and [General Advertiser](#), Feb. 2, 1867 [page 6]
Mr. George Williams writes from King's College, Cambridge, on behalf of "the smallest nationality in the world." This, it appears, is the Samaritan community, consisting of only 150 souls, who seem to be no better treated by their Mussulman rulers than they were by their Jewish neighbours of old. They have experienced a literal fulfilment of the proverb that "He that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction." They had heightened the street-door of their synagogue at Nablous from four feet to about five feet six inches; they had also renewed some part of the pavement of the synagogue itself which had become decayed. These repairs were declared illegal by the Turkish official, who, accompanied by a mob of 200 or 300 fanatics, went himself to the synagogue, where he directed and superintended the demolition of the new work, which was so well executed by the mob that they left the building a complete wreck, and its owners are not allowed to repair it. They are thus deprived of any place in which to worship, and Mr. Williams brings the case forward in the hope that it may lead to something being done on their behalf, through good offices of the British Government with the Porte.

"The Samaritans in 1860" in [Monmouthshire Merlin](#), Sept. 19, 1868, [page 3]

A Mr. Graham, who witnessed the observance of the Passover by the Samaritans, gave a description of it to Mrs. Harvey, of Ickwell Bury, whose travelling party he joined, and who, in her "Cruise of the Claymore, with a visit to Damascus and Lebanon," says of it:- "This ancient race will probably ere long have ceased to exist, as it has long been gradually but surely diminishing. At the present time the whole tribe consists of not more than 150 persons; and as their laws forbid them to marry except among their own people, there are now 12 young men who cannot find wives. They dwell at Shechem, and every Easter go up with their tents to Mount Gerizim, where they keep the Passover, with precisely the same ceremonies which accompanied its celebration 2,000 years ago. Like the Jews, they slay the paschal lamb, and with loins girded and staff in hand they eat it with bitter herbs. Unlike the modern Jews (with whom they have no dealings whatever) they have their high priest, and this office has ever descended in the same family. The present venerable old man will be succeeded by his nephew, who is now a rabbi. Besides these two officiating priests there are six slayers, whose duty it is to kill the sacrificial lambs. Not only is the Passover celebrated as of old, but every rite mentioned in the Bible is adhered to with the greatest exactitude and minuteness."



Schuman, Edward

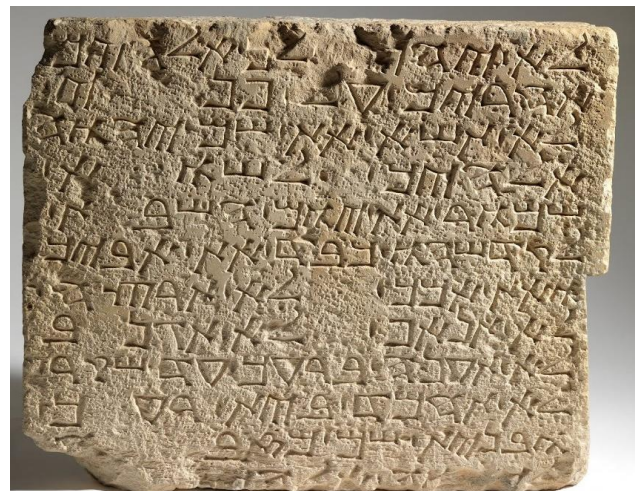
"The Samaritans" [The Shekel](#), Vol. XXVI No.4 July-August 1993 pp. 3-6

There is also an article by David Hendin, "The Samaritan Coins" in [The Shekel](#), Vol. 33, No. 2, March-April 2000, p. 32-35

The Shekel magazine is a publication of the American Israel Numismatic Association. See <http://www.theshekel.org/shekel.html>

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### Links for Inscriptions



**Samaritan mezuzah** (right) bearing an inscription with parts of the Commandments 4<sup>th</sup> C.E.

Located at the [Israel Museum](#) Jerusalem  
See this amazing image for close up examination.



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Samaritan mezuzah bearing excerpts from the Ten Commandments, Kefar Bilu, 6th-7th century C.E., stone. Museum of Israel, Jerusalem. (Photo left by [Mick Thompson](#) 23.12.2012)

Inscription: In the beginning God created; I the Lord am your God; You shall have no other gods; You shall not make for yourself; You shall not take in vain; You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear; You shall not covet.

The Eleven Commandments in **BAR** 30:06, Nov/Dec 2004

In 1943 Israeli archaeologist Jacob Kaplan learned of a marble plaque with writing on it that was embedded in the ground in an Arab courtyard before the threshold to one of the rooms. The owner told Kaplan that the 22-by-24-inch plaque had been found by his father in Yavneh (on the outskirts of Tel Aviv) during the excavations in 1913 for the construction of the Palestine-Egypt railway.

Easily discernible on the plaque were engraved letters that Kaplan quickly recognized as Samaritan writing.¹ The Samaritans broke off from the Jews hundreds of years before the Common Era, and they have preserved one of the earliest versions of the Pentateuch, which is their sole holy book. The Samaritan Pentateuch, as it is known, differs only in minor details from the version preserved by Jews. In two respects, however, the differences are significant. Where, in repeated passages, the rabbinic Pentateuch speaks of “the place that God will choose,” namely Jerusalem, the Samaritan Pentateuch speaks of “the place that God has chosen,” namely the Samaritan mountain of Mt. Gerizim, in the West Bank. That is God’s holy mountain, the Samaritans believe, and where they built their temple (see [Deuteronomy 11:26–29](#); [Joshua 8:30, 33](#)). The other significant difference is that the Samaritan Pentateuch contains an additional commandment—an 11th commandment—namely, to worship on Mt. Gerizim.



See: <http://members.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=30&Issue=6&ArticleID=14>

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Visit the the Israel Museum, Jerusalem Website <http://www.english.imjnet.org.il/home>

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The Samaritan Inscription from Thessaloniki



On page 2 of the Sept./Oct issue of the Samaritan Update, we displayed a photo of the Samaritan Inscription of Thessaloniki (<http://shomron0.tripod.com/2014/septoct.pdf>).

Recently an other noticed newer photo of this same inscription is displayed on the website of [Harvard University Library](#). It is titled ‘Stele with Samaritan Inscription’.

By the appearance of the background of the photo, the inscription appears to be in a collection today.

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**A MENORAH DECORATION FROM HAJJA IN SAMARIA****Yuval Peleg**

During an archaeological survey conducted in 1992 in the village Hajja, a stone with a menorah decoration was found. The stone is in a secondary use in a house built in the ancient village center. The seven branch menorah is decorated with two flowers starting from the menorah base. The fact that these flowers are broken shows that this stone was originally a lintel situated in a private house or a synagogue.

The symbol of the menorah has been found in different sites and artifacts related to the Samaritans: stones with menorah decorations in the villages of Zibad and 'Abush; on a grinding stone found next to the Samaritan synagogue at Zur-Nathan, Samaritan oil lamps and on Samaritan synagogues mosaic pavements found in Sha'alabim, Beit Shean and el-Khirbeh.

The village Hajja is known from the historical sources as a Samaritan settlement and as the birthplace of 4th century CE Samaritan leader Baba Rabba who built a synagogue there.

The menorah from Hajja, adds new information regarding our knowledge about Samaritan settlements in Samaria during the Roman-Byzantine period. Once again, we can see the connection between the Jews and the Samaritans, both using the menorah as a symbol.

See [JUDEA AND SAMARIA RESEARCH STUDIES](#) Vol. 20, Ariel 2011

**Search Results for Middle East Research Journals**

14 results found at Digital Library for International Research

[http://www.dliir.org/archive/orc-exhibit/items/browse/collection/4?search=samaritan&submit\\_search=Search](http://www.dliir.org/archive/orc-exhibit/items/browse/collection/4?search=samaritan&submit_search=Search)

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http://ids.lib.harvard.edu/ids/img/image_size_small.gif

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**Books for sale**

[Contact the Editor](#) if you are interested in these books.

1) J. Rosenberg, *Lehrbuch der samaritanischen Sprache und Literatur*. A. Hartleben's Verlag. Wien, Pest. Leipzig, 1901, 182 pp. **\$24.00**

2) Jul. Henr. Petermann, *Brevis Linguae Samaritanae. Grammatica, Litteratura, Chrestomathia vum Glossario*. Carlsruhe et Lipsiae, 1873, 85 pp. **\$35.00**

3) Carl Brockelmann, *Kurzgefasste Vergleichende Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*. Berlin, 1908, 308 pp. **\$50.00**

4) Hermann L. Strack, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*.... München 1911, 60 pp. **\$40.00**

5) G. R. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B. C.* Oxford, 1965, 110 pp. **\$40.00**

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Abstract

Building on recent suggestions, I argue that the final composition of the Pentateuch in the Persian period was the result of common enterprise or compromise between the province of Samaria and Jerusalem. This is based on an examination of the historical circumstances as well as on the contents and text of the Pentateuch. Contrary to the picture painted in Ezra-Nehemiah, there were good relationships and contacts between the upper classes of the two provinces throughout the period, and it is probable that the priestly staff of the temple of Argarizim, which recent evidence shows was established in the mid fifth century, was closely related to that of Jerusalem. The identities of both holy places are hinted at in the text. The likely original text of Deut 27:2-8 ordains sacrifice to be made and the Torah to be inscribed on Mount Gerizim (v. 4), not on Mount Ebal as in the MT. This either suggested the establishment of the sanctuary there (Kartveit), or was suggested by it (Nihan). On the other hand, Gen 14:18 refers to Jerusalem under the name of Salem. The Torah contains material of northern origin, and some of it, especially the story of Joseph, originated relatively late. The Tabernacle and ritual texts in P do not, as often thought, represent the Jerusalem temple, but an ideal sanctuary, and they are available to reform the practice of both temples. The MT, like the Samaritan Pentateuch, contains revisions away from the common inheritance.

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[САМАРИТАНСКАЯ ХРОНИКА АБУ-Л-ФАТХА ИЗ СОБРАНИЯ РОССИЙСКОЙ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ БИБЛИОТЕКИ, ВВЕДЕНИЕ, ПЕРЕВОД, И КОММЕНТАРИИ](#), МОСКВА — 1995

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The Recent Deuteronomization of the Samaritan Passover Sacrifice / Gemeindeopfer oder Priesteropfer? Die späte Deuteronomisierung des samaritanischen Passaopfers [2008]

Abstract: The Samaritan Passover Sacrifice, still celebrated every year on Mount Gerizim, has been a central element of Samaritan identity. Both Samaritan documents since at least the 11th century CE, and descriptions from Western travellers, starting mainly from the mid 19th century CE, attest that the rituals, the liturgy and the concepts connected with that sacrifice were stable to a high degree. It can be shown, however, that the Samaritan Passover sacrifice also underwent some changes, both ritually and conceptually. The study focusses on one of the elements which underwent changes, namely the underlying concept of the Samaritan Passover sacrifice as a Priestly offering, or as an offering to be carried out by the whole community. The problem arises because according to the narrative framework of the Torah, Passover is of pre-Sinaitic origin, preceding priesthood and the sacrificial laws of the tabernacle. A comparison between accounts from the 2nd half of the 19th century, early 20th century descriptions and the contemporary practice suggests that the understanding of the Passover sacrifice within the Samaritan community underwent drastic changes in the early 20th century. While according to the older concept Passover was conceived as a general sacrifice, to be carried out by every member of the Samaritan-Israelite people, it was re-interpreted in Samaritan Halakha as a Priestly offering since the early 20th century, and this is still the praxis in these days.

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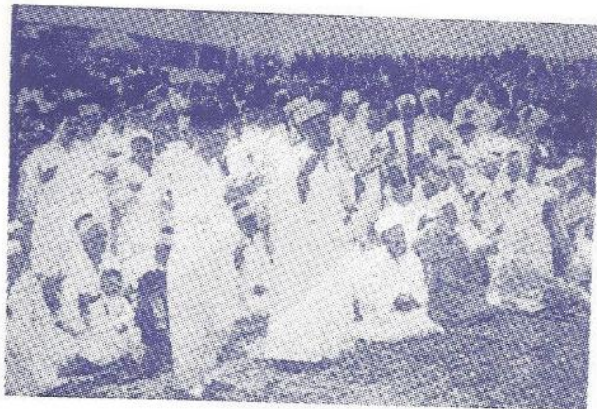
Witteberga: Henckell, 1677.

Willemer, Johann Helwig; Johannes Adamus Annackerus

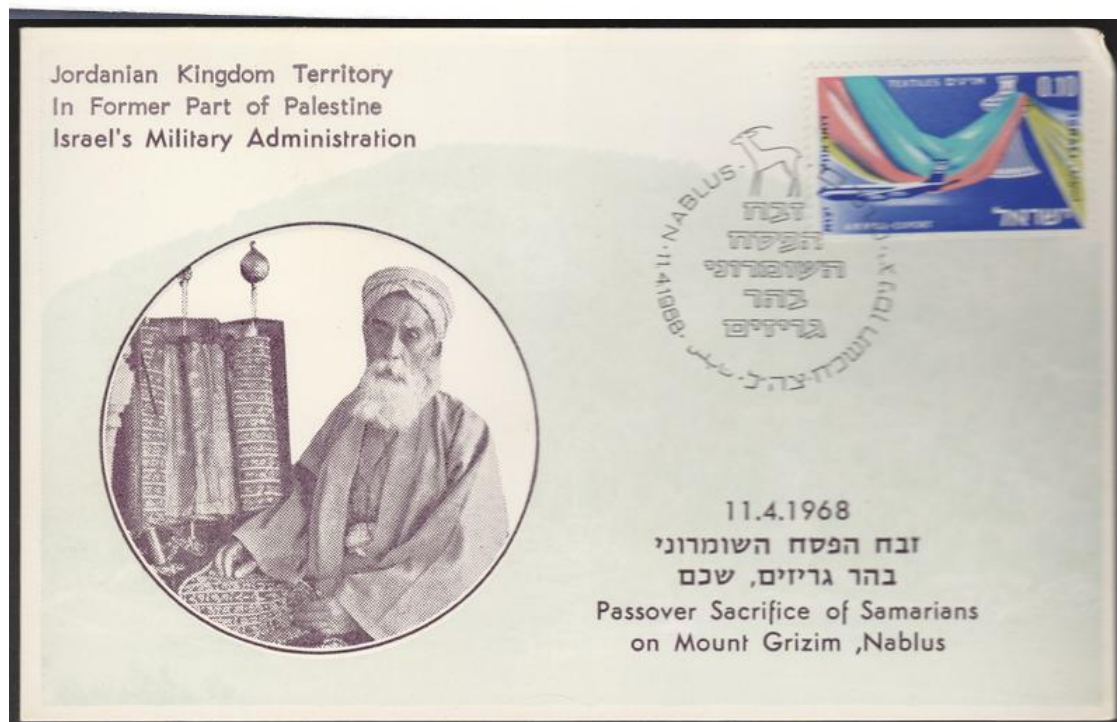
Ad Genes. I. 26.27.28 Samaritanum textum cum authentico, imaginem Dei recensente. [Disp. 1.]. Wittebergae: Henckel, 1678.

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**Samaritan Passover Envelopes 1968- 1974, and a special 1992 Envelope**



*Samaritan Passover sacrificial rite  
on Mount Gerizim 11.4.1968*



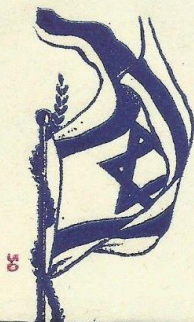


11. 4. 1968 HAR HAGRISIM  
Samaritan Passover sacrificial rite  
on Mount Gerizim 11. 4. 1968



נאויינו הן שלום קבע וידידות בין עמי תבל.  
آمالنا هم سلام دائم وصداقة  
بين جميع شعوب العالم  
We strive for peace and amity with the  
peoples of the world.  
Nous desirons la paix et l'amitié avec  
tous les peuples.  
Wir wünschen Freundschaft und Frieden  
mit allen Völkern der Welt.

30. 4. 1969 HAR HAGRISIM  
Samaritan Passover sacrificial rite  
on Mount Gerizim 30. 4. 1969



נאויינו הן שלום קבע וידידות בין עמי תבל.  
آمالنا هم سلام دائم وصداقة  
بين جميع شعوب العالم  
We strive for peace and amity with the  
peoples of the world.  
Nous desirons la paix et l'amitié avec  
tous les peuples.  
Wir wünschen Freundschaft und Frieden  
mit allen Völkern der Welt.



9. 4. 1971 MOUNT GERIZIM  
Samaritan Passover sacrificial rite  
on Mount Gerizim 9. 4. 1971



נאויינו הן שלום קבע וידידות בין עמי תבל.  
آمالنا هم سلام دائم وصداقة  
بين جميع شعوب العالم  
We strive for peace and amity with the  
peoples of the world.  
Nous desirons la paix et l'amitié avec  
tous les peuples.  
Wir wünschen Freundschaft und Frieden  
mit allen Völkern der Welt.



27. 4. 1972 MOUNT GERIZIM

Samaritan Passover sacrificial rite  
on Mount Gerizim 27. 4. 1972



נאויינו הן שלום קבע וידידות בין עמי תבל.  
آمالنا هم سلام دائم وصداقة  
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Wir wünschen Freundschaft und Frieden  
mit allen Völkern der Welt.







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