

The Samaritan High Priest ‘Imrān ben Salāma and his Poem Against Mubārak al-Mufarraġī Who Became a Convert to Islam in 1841

Haseeb Shehadeh
University of Helsinki

Religion is the major theme of Samaritan Arabic poetry. Within this wide range of religion, the following topics can be included: supplication, preaches, panegyrics of the fathers, Moses, high-priests, pilgrimages, circumcision, feasts, mourning, appeal for aid, hymns, asceticism, elegies, repentance, paradise, consolation, holy sites, weddings¹. Needless to say, secular subjects such as love in general, nature, social, psychological and economic situations, and even wine songs are represented in the Samaritan Arabic poetry written in Middle Arabic.

The subject of the following twelve line poem is rare. It is a deviation from the Samaritan eligion which is, as we know, very rare among the members of the Samaritan community. The number of this religio-ethnic group today is over 700. The writer of the poem is the high-priest ‘Imrān ben Salāma ben Ghazāl al-Ḥiftāwī (1809-1875)². He became high-priest (הכהן) after the death of his father in 1856/7 until the year 1859³.

Among the Samaritans, there was a rumour concerning the high-priest ‘Imrān, that he left (or was compelled to leave) the office of the high-priesthood during his last fifteen years (1859—1874)⁴ because he married a woman divorced by a Samaritan who converted to Islam

See Haseeb Shehadeh, The Samaritan Arabic Liturgy. In: Vittorio Morabito, Alan D. Crown, Lucy Davey (eds.), Samaritan¹ Researches Volume V. Proceedings of the Congress of the SES (Milan July 8-12 1996) and of the Special Section of the ICANAS Congress (Budapest July 7-11 1997). Sydney 2000, pp. 247-284

About this high-priest see Ze’ev ben Ḥayyim, The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic Amongst the² Reinhard Pummer, Samaritan Manuscripts in Toronto. In: Revue de l’Université; מנחם. Samaritans. Jerusalem Vol. I 1957, p d’Ottawa, 46 no. 3 (1976) pp. 345-363; Alan D. Crown, Reinhard Pummer, Abraham Tal (eds.), A Companion to the Samaritan Studies. Tübingen 1993, p. 13; A. B. Samaritan News 659-662, 1.5.1996, p. 3; Tapani Harviainen, Haseeb Shehadeh, How Did Abraham Firkovich Acquire the Great Collection of Samaritan Manuscripts in Nablus in 1864? *Studia Orientalia* 73 (Helsinki 1994) pp. 167—192; A. B. *The Samaritan News* 633—636 (13.4.1995), pp. 180—158 and Hebrew Summary, pp. 6, 8—1; Reinhard Pummer, Samaritan Marriage Contracts and Deeds of Divorce, Vol. I, Wiesbaden 1993, pp. 144-146; يعقوب بن عزي الكاهن، كتاب السامريين تاريخهم وعاداتهم الخ. (نابلس، ١٩٦٠، ص. ٦٦-٦٨ (مخطوط).

See Edward Robertson, Catalogue of the Samaritan Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library Manchester. Vol. I,³ Manchester 1938, col. 233 note 1. Since 1624 after Ṣadaqa ben Ghazāl (1624-1626) high-priests stem from Ithamar, Levites, and no longer from Aaron. See *ibid.* col. 227 note 2, Benyamim Tsedaka, Summary of the History of the Israelite-Samaritans. Holon, Israel 2001 (!) p. 82. Benyamim mentions at the same page that ‘Imrān functioned unofficially as high-priest since 1826

⁴ يعقوب بن عزي الكاهن، كتاب السامريين (تاريخهم وعاداتهم الخ.) نابلس، ١٩٦٠، ص. ٩٦ مخطوط.

or because that woman was a widow⁵. Nothing is known about that Samaritan man who belonged to the Mufarraḡi (Marḡivi) family. The name of the woman was Lea⁶ (Leqa).

‘Imrān’s son (d. 1909) describes his father as ‘فريد عصره وزمانه’, ‘unique in his time’⁷. Other epithets to be found are ‘العم المكرم المفخم هكهن عمران’, ‘the honoured and venerated uncle the priest ‘Imrān’, ‘المكرم الفريز’, ‘honoured and distinguished’⁸.

Therefore, and on the basis of the following poem, one may have doubts about the correctness of the above-mentioned rumour. Furthermore, a Samaritan written source ascribes the renunciation of the high-priesthood by ‘Imrān in favour of his brother’s young son Jacob b. Aharon the Levite (1838—1916) in 1859 to the hard situation of the tiny Samaritan community numbering 150 souls. A division of duties was established. ‘Imrān became responsible for the secular affairs of the Samaritans and he was a member of a court⁹ for sects and minorities, whereas Jacob, the young man, dealt with the religious issues as a high-priest¹⁰.

It is an open secret that priests are not allowed to marry divorced women, see Leviticus⁵ 21:7. For further discussion see the two chapters (nos. 19 and 20) on marriage and divorce in the work of al-Kāfi by Muḡaḡḡab al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Salāma al-‘Askar; Y. Shavit, Y. Goldstein, H. Be’er (eds.), *Personalities in Eretz-Israel. A Biographical Dictionary*. Tel Aviv 1983, p. 385. ((Hebrew

The name of ‘Imrān’s mother was Lāyiqā Surūr. شفيقة، فاتنة. Its Arabic equivalents are⁶ تاريخهم وعاداتهم الخ. نابلس ١٩٦١، ص. ٧٦ (مخطوط). يعقوب بن عزي الكاهن، كتاب السامريين

,See A. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*. Vol. I, Oxford 1909, pp. 203, 210, 211⁷

Ibid, pp. 148 line 1, 283 line 1, 362 line 12, al-fariīz in the sense of ‘distinguidhed’ is not⁸ attested in Arabic lexicons. The adjective ‘al-ḡaḡīr’ ‘the inconsiderable, despised, miserable’ is common in Samaritan literature when writers or scribes mention their names at the end of a work. See ibid. pp. 716 line 3, 765 line 16. This adjective is similar to the equivalent English ‘humble’ used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The adjectives ‘the smallest first are used by ‘Imrān about himself, (العبد الازغر الاول الاحقر) ‘slave and the most humble see Firkovich Sam XIII 23, p. 2b in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg

See Ya’qūb b. ‘Uzzi, *kitāb al-Sāmiriyyīn*...Nablus 1960, p. 66 (handwritten) ‘He held⁹ a respected position in the Turkish government similar to a member in magistrate’s court in our time (وقد تولى منصباً محترماً في الحكومة التركية يشبه عضو البدايه في زماننا). Ben ‘Uzzi (1899—1987) was the grandson of Jacob ben Aharon.

See the handwritten book by Jacob ben Shafīq ben Jacob (ben ‘Uzzi), *Waḡiyyatī wa-tārīkh ḡayātī*. Nablus 1974, p. 43—44¹⁰ عمران، أسندها اليه بحياته لما أنس به من فطنة وذكاء ولانه هو ايضاً (اي الكاهن عمران) كان مُنصرفاً الى ادارة شؤون الطائفة، التي كانت يومئذ تعجها الفوضىة ويثقل كاهلها الفقر وتنو تحت طائل الاضطهاد. فضلاً عن كونه كان عضواً في محكمة الطوائف

In addition to that, the high-priest ʿImrān functioned as an informant and teacher for J. H. Petermann¹¹ in reciting the Samaritan Pentateuch, had connections with the British consul in Jerusalem, James Finn (1846—1862), and the ambassador in Istanbul and played a central role in the acquisition of the Samaritan manuscripts in the *dasht* (*geniza*) of Nablus in 1864 by the Karaite leader Abraham Firkovich (1787—1874)¹². Last, but not least, he was a prolific writer of hymns and poems in Samaritan Aramaic and Arabic as well as a copyist and witness for marriage contracts¹³. He wrote poems in Arabic when he was nineteen years old as demonstrated in a manuscript written and copied by him in 1828 shows¹⁴. Among the works by ʿImrān there are a commentary of two parts on the book of Exodus and a treatise on inheritance¹⁵. The attempt of Mills to teach ʿImrān the English language was not successful¹⁶.

The difficult situation of the family of the priest ʿImrān, as we shall see later, should be taken into consideration with regard to their being led to resign from the high-priesthood. His father, Shalma b. Ṭabia (1782—1857), also stepped down from the high-priesthood. Shalma described his community as ʿširdimaʿ, a fragmented group¹⁷. It is noteworthy that ʿImrān’s successor in the high-priesthood, his nephew, Jacob ben Aaron, faced in 1878 an

والاقلبيات ليمثل طائفته ويدافع عن حقوقها..

See Moses Gaster, *Massoretisches in Samaritanischen*. In: Nöldeke Festschrift, 1906, pp. 514, 519; H. Petermann, *Versuch einer hebräischen Formenlehre nach der Aussprache der heutigen Samaritaner...* Leipzig 1868, p. 3 11

See the article by Harviainen and Shehadeh mentioned in note no. 3, pp. 170 seq. In those days Samaritans had good relations with the Karaites in Jerusalem, see A. B. Samaritan *News* 258—259, 28.4.1980, p. 38 12

See A. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*. Vol. II, Oxford 1909, index of authors p. xcvi, Edward Roberson, *Catalogue of the Samaritan Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library Manchester*. Vol. I, Manchester 1938, Index of names of Samaritans, col. 405, Vol. II, 1962, col. 298. See the following manuscripts of marriage contracts in the Firkovich collection housed in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg: Sam X, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 90, 91. These manuscripts date back to the twenties until the fifties of the nineteenth century. Compare also Ms Sassoon 716 found today in JRUL as Sam 377 and Firkovich Sam in the Jewish National and University Library in 21 (א"ב) IX 268, MS Shechem High Priest Jerusalem. See Reinhard Pummer, *Samaritan Marriage Contracts and Deeds of Divorce*, Vols. I-II, Wiesbaden 1993, 1997 13

.Firkovich Ms Sam XIII 23 in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg 14

Number three and number 53 in a hand-written list of Samaritan Arabic books at the disposal of the priest ʿAbd al-Muʿin Ṣadaqa. A copy of this list was given to me by its writer ʿAbd al-Muʿin Ṣadaqa in 13 March 1975 and I thank him for it 15

John Mills, *Three Months Residence at Nablus and an Account of Modern Samaritans*. London 1868; p. 186 16

See *Kitab Al-Tasabich (The Book of Commendations) the Best Wishes, Commendations and Supplications to God*. Written by Samaritan Writers between 10th—20th Centuries A.- D. Be Copied in Old Hebrew and From Arabic, Transliterated into Old Hebrew Letters. Edited and Published by Ratson Tsedaqa Hassafarey. Holon, Israel 1970, p. 145 17

attempt to dismiss him of his office. A procès-verbal (maḍbaṭa) was admitted to the government. The appeal was supported by a great number in the Samaritan community including two priests who were his cousins. This position of the cousins was not in accordance with the testament of their father ‘Imrān discussed below. The claim that Jacob the high-priest was ‘evil doer’ (mufsid) and should be punished was turned down because ‘the respected ones’ (al-mu‘tabarīn), in the community were on the side of Jacob. The antagonists intended to ‘seize the findings of the synagogue’ (ḍabṭ mawḡūdāt al-kanīsa)¹⁸. Another example of a Samaritan person who converted to Islam in the first half of the nineteenth century in 1841 is reported by Jacob Joseph Ṣadaqa al-Shalabī born in 1829. A woman called Ḡalīla¹⁹ (Yokheved) Ishāq al-Asmar al-Danaf ī, the widow of Shalabī ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ben Ṣadaqa married a Muslim lover. Her fourteen year old son Isaac was forced to embrace Islam and was given the name As‘ad while his sister Zaḡlūla died as a result of torture²⁰.

Samaritans today still tell of Mubārak’s being present at the horrible incident in which this woman and her two children were forced to embrace Islam. What he saw and heard led him immediately to declare that he accepts Islam. Though he continued to celebrate Samaritan feasts with his family he became excommunicated by the family of the priests and the other families which strongly condemned the event in order to deter others from following him²¹. Mubārak was put upon a horse and passed through the city of Nablus in a procession of triumph²². The subject of Samaritan conversion into Islam during the last few centuries need a separate investigation. Generalizations without evidence such as “Up until 1859...many Samaritans were killed and others were forcefully converted to Islam²³” do not contribute much to our knowledge and understanding.

It was during these days, when the ‘Ulamā’ declared the Samaritans not to be ‘Ahl al-Kitāb’ (People of the Book) that the Samaritan community underwent hardship. It was claimed that the Samaritan community did not possess any book of the following five holy books: the Torah, the New Testament, Psalms (Zabūr), the Prophets and the Qur‘ān. The help to counteract this sensitive and dangerous accusation came from Jerusalem. Its Sefardi Chief Rabbi Ḥayyim Avraham Gagin (1842-1848) known as Ḥakham Bāshī acknowledged in a document that the Samaritans are a branch of the children of Israel and they do believe in the

See page 237, the last page in manuscript No. 7087 in Yad Ben Zvi Library in Jerusalem 18

. See Isaac Ben Zvi, The Book of the Samaritans. Tel Aviv 1970, pp. 50-51 19

. See Isaac Ben Zvi, The Book of the Samaritans. Tel Aviv 1970, p. 51 20

I learned this from my friend Binyamim Tsedaka in a letter dated October 15, 2000. 21
 . Compare what Jacob El-Shelabī say in the previous note

. See Isaac Ben Zvi, The Book of the Samaritans. Tel Aviv 1970, p. 51 22

See Reinhard Pummer, Samaritan Marriage Contracts and Deeds of Divorce, Vol. I, 23
 . Wiesbaden 1993, p. 4

five books of Moses, the Pentateuch²⁴.

The governor of the Nablus district in the period in question was Maḥmūd ‘Abd al-Hādī the Qaysī and clashes between Qaysī and Yamanī factions were inflamed²⁵. The British consul in Jerusalem, James Finn, also extended some help to the Samaritans²⁶. Minorities in Nablus were distinguished from the Muslim majority by the colour of their headcloths. Christians, numbering in the last quarter of the nineteenth century five hundred, used the blue colour, the two hundred Jews used the yellow colour and the Samaritans, about one hundred fifty, had the red colour²⁷. For two decades until 1849 the Samaritans were prohibited to celebrate their Passover (Feast of Qurban) on Mount Gerizim.

The poem in question is a sort of condemnation of the act of Mubārak²⁸ (Mbārak, in spoken Arabic) Ibrāhīm Mufarraġ (Barukh Abraham Marḥiv) namely, leaving the Samaritan religion and embracing Islam. His new name became Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Misilmānī and it is claimed that the contemporary al-Misilmānī family in Nablus stem from him²⁹. But it should also be noted that the Arabic family name is known in Nablus since at least 1819, that is to

Y. Elazar, *Nasi in Israel*, “the First ones in Zion”. Jerusalem 1977, p. 33 (Hebrew); E. T. Rogers, *Notices of the Modern Samaritans, Illustrated by the Incidents in the Life of Jacob .esh-Shelaby*. London 1855, p. 30 24

see Iḥsān Nimr, *History of Mount Nablus and the Balqā’*. 4 Vols. Nablus 1975, Vol. I, pp. 168, 269, 274-275; Moritz Busch, *Eine Wallfahrt nach Jerusalem*. Leipzig 1861, p. 139-146, Nathan Schur, *History of the Samaritans*. Frankfurt am Main. Bern. New York. Paris 1989, pp. 139-147, W. G. Browne, *Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria*. London 1806, p. .47; Muṣṭafa al-Dabbāġ, *Bilādunā Filistīn*. Vols. 1-2 Beirut 1965 25

On this period see James Finn, *Stirring Times*. London 1878, Jerusalem 1980; Charles Warren, *Underground Jerusalem: An Account of some of the Principal Difficulties Encountered in its Exploration and the Results Obtained with a Narrative of an Expedition through the Jordan Valley and a Visit to the Samaritans*. London 1876, pp. 206—235; John Mills, *Three Months Residence at Nablus and an Account of Modern Samaritans*. London 1868; Mary Eliza Rogers, *Domestic Life in Palestine*. London 1863; E. T. Rogers, *Notices of the Modern Samaritans Illustrated by the Incidents in the Life of Jacob .esh-Shelaby*. London .1855, A. B. *Samaritan News* 258—259, 28.4.1980, pp. 34—41 26

Charles Warren, *Underground Jerusalem*, pp. 207—208. Compare the twenty-fifth .‘tale of the ‘Thousand and One Nights’ 27

see راطب مكمين، متمكن، معظم، محمود، Other Arabic equivalents to Barukh are Firkovich MS. Sam. III 2 page 46_a. This manuscript housed in the National Library of Russia .in St. Petersburg was copied in 1331 A.D. as mentioned in page 4_a 28

A. B. *Samaritan News* 722—724, 9.10.1998, p. 80, Ya‘qūb b. ‘Uzzi, *kitāb al-āl al-Misilmānī*] and it was a family that]” (Sāmiriyyīn...Nablus 1960, p. 38 (handwritten تقریباً ويزيد عدد افرادها الآن عن المئة ، وهي ايضاً عائله اسلمت من قبل مئة سنة embraced Islam about one hundred years ago and the number of its memebers todat exceeds .“one hundred 29

say, more than two generations before the conversion of Barukh³⁰. The late high-priest Jacob ben ‘Uzzi (1899-1987) related that the name of the father of the Misilmānī family was Mubārak Mufarraḡ. His family, the Marḥivi, comes in the second or third place with regard to number after āl Alīf. After the division of Palestine (1947) the majority of its members moved to live in Jaffa and later in Ḥolon. The rest of Marḥiv family live in Nablus and most of its members are workers and craftsmen. The number of the descendants of Mubārak (Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Misilmānī) surpasses much the number of Marḥivi family³¹.

This short poem is preserved, as far as we know, in two manuscripts. The first manuscript has no title and it was copied by the priest ‘Abd al-Mu‘īn Ṣadaqa in Nablus. This priest, as mentioned before, is the great-grandson of ‘Imrān the high-priest, the author of this poem³². The poem is on page 80. This manuscript including 109 pages numbered by Samaritan characters consists of the following sections:

A) Fragment from Memar Marqe, pp. 1–16 in Samaritan script and marginal remarks are added such as Arabic translations of Samaritan Aramaic words such as: **אנחה = فائده** (benefit); **ארעה באירה = أرض بائره** (uncultivated land); **תבהת = تخجل** (to be shy, ashamed); **לא צבה = لا يريد** (does not want); **רביתניה = أطفالهم** (their children); **טליותה =** **كلتها = كتية = بارده** (cold, f. s.)³³. At the end of this section the following colophon is given:

זה מה מצאתי אתו בספר שלח אתו לי חבר מן בריטאניא והוא יאמר הן זאת המוספות
מצא אתם בספרי מימר מרקה אשר נמצאו שם והם לא ימצאו במימר מרקה אשר בידנו
על כן בדלתי אתם לשפת הקדש עד מן ידרש יקרא אתם יוכל למבדילותם ואני העני הדל
אלעזר בר צדקה כהנה בשכם 2/21/4691. אאל ישועתא

Translation: That is what I found in a book sent to me by a friend from Britain. He says that these additions he has found in copies (books) of Memar Marqe kept there [Britain] and they are not included in Memar Marqe which is available to us. Therefore I changed them into the holy language so that every one who likes to read them can distinguish between them. I am the poor and humble El‘azar ben Tsedaka the priest in Nablus, 20th of December 1964 A.D.³⁴.

B) Bilingual glossary, Samaritan Aramaic from Memar Marqe and Hebrew (עברי/תרגום)

sa al-Misilmānī, See Firkovich Ms Sam XIV 33, p. 3b, in the National Library of P³⁰
.Russia in St. Petersburg

(See Ya‘qūb b. ‘Uzzi, kitāb al-Sa:miriyyīn...Nablus 1960, p. 39 (handwritten ³¹

Sincere thanks are due to my friends the priest and Yefet ben Ratson Tsedaka who ³²
.sent me a copy of the manuscript

.Pages 5, 6, 7, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 repectively ³³

This manifestation of Neo-Samaritan Hebrew reminds us of mediaeval Hebrew under ³⁴
in the first two phrases, asyndetic clause, **ש** the impact of Middle Arabic, the absence of
Britain is written as in Arabic, plural feminine which does not refer to human beings is
in order, so **حتى** has the meaning of **עד**. etc (זאת המוספות) regarded as feminine singular
that. The two words after the year are not ordinary, especially the last one. These two words
.the followers of Ishmael. **ال اسماعيل** are analogous to the common Samaritan colophon

arranged according to alphabetical order, pp. 17–25. These nine pages, divided as a rule, into two columns (sometimes a third column is added at the beginning in which the root of the word is indicated) consist of approximately two hundred words. As a title for this section it is stated that these words used in Memar Marqe appear in more than one form³⁵. A few examples are in order: אויב = דובב (enemy); דרש = בעי (to ask for); לב, לבב, קנום = לב, לבב, לבב (heart, soul); עבר = געז (to pass); אצטלב = אשתנק (to be tormented); שריו = בראשית (at the beginning); שלח = שגר (to send). At the end of this section there is a colophon saying that the same priest copied it on the 24th of December 1963³⁶, almost one year before writing the first section.

C) Collection of prayers, hymns, *bit durran* (string of pearls) and songs of praise by various priests, elders and poets taken from the book of Dr. Cowley³⁷ and other source at the disposal of the scribe in Nablus dating back to the year 1708. The authors of this religious material are ‘Āmrām Dāre (‘Imrān al-Zamān), Ab Gillūgā b. Qala, the elder Ṭabīa b. Darta, the high-priest Ṭabīa b. Tsedaka, Shalma b. Ab Zahuta b. Yosef ha-Maṭri., the elder Ḥizqīa b. ‘Ābed El, Abraham b. Yūsef haq-Qābbāši, Ṭabīa b. Isaac, ‘Āmrām b. Shalmā b. Ṭabīa, Abraham Jacob al-Danfī known as al-‘Ayye, Ṭabīa b. ab Zahūta, Abisha. In addition one finds poems in the Arabic language and script as well as two testaments in Arabic by the high-priests ‘Imrān and his grandson Tsedaka b. Isaac Tsedaka (1894–1971), the father of the scribe El‘azar Tsedaka (‘Abd al-Mu‘īn Ṣadaqa). This third section of the manuscript under discussion is the largest one. It begins on page 27 and ends at the the end, on page 109. The date of copying this part is the 26th of November 1986.

Marginal notes and explanations in Arabic can also be found in this section. On the top of page 70 the reader finds the two words יצר אסרת and their Arabic translation is added above them عقد نيه (setting of intention). In the light of the material given in this third section, namely the poems, it is safe to say that ‘Imrān experienced poverty, deaths of members of his family, desparation and failure in his first marriage at least. Some sources speak about a third marriage³⁸. Besides, the general conditions of the Samaritan community in Nablus were not encouraging. ‘Imrān’s father, Salāma, was very poor and tried to earn

35 מלים מן מימר מרקה אדינן מרי עליו רצון מרו וזאת המלים המצאו על מותר מן צורה אחדה. The last words are a kind of calque from the Arabic language على أكثر من .

36 זה מה מצאתי מן זאת המלים ואני עבדה אלעזר בר צדקה כהנה בשכם מול הרגרי. אודה את יהוה 42/21/3691.

37 A. E. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy.*, 2 Vols. Oxford 1909

38 See T. H. Gaster, *Samaritan Manuscripts*. In: *Journal of Jewish Bibliography* 2 (1940) p. 128, Mills wrote about the second and third wives “Both wives were living together with their husband on the best of terms”, see John Mills, *Three Months Residence at Nablus and an Account of Modern Samaritans*. London 1868, p. 184. Some Samaritans such as Salāma ben Ya’qūb ben Murḡān al-Danaf ī from the eighteenth century married seven times. On the other hand the New Testament states that the Samaritan woman married five times and she had an illegal sixth, see John 4:18

livelihood as a tailor³⁹. He describes himself in one of his supplications as ‘humble, poor, unfortunate, in need, weak’⁴⁰. Samaritan oral tradition speaks about a close friendship between Salāma and Ḥusain ‘Abd al-Hādī, the governor of Gaza. The later used to help the high-priest financially.⁴¹ A written evidence by ‘Imrān himself from the year 1826 speaks about very high prices in Nablus. The price of an ounce of meat was thirty silver and the price of a saa of corn reached eleven Qurūsh (piasters)⁴².

A virgin girl who did not like ‘Imrān became his first wife in 1826 when he was seventeen years old⁴³. All the children that she gave birth to (some say thirteen, others five) have died⁴⁴. Then ‘Imrān married for the third time Lā’iqa bint As‘ad (1820-1910) whom he

³⁹ يعقوب بن عزي الكاهن، كتاب السامريين تاريخهم وعاداتهم الخ. نابلس ٦٩١، ص. ٢٨١-٤٨١ (مخطوط). A story about this priest and the tailors of Nablus was translated into English by the present writer and published in *A. B. The Samaritan News*, 785-788, 6.4. 2001, pp. 185-175

⁴⁰ See A. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*. Vol. I, Oxford 1909, pp. 217 line 2 and lines 14, 18; p. 218 line 17 and see p. 743 ועני ומסכין וצריך ונשיש

⁴¹ يعقوب بن عزي الكاهن، كتاب السامريين تاريخهم وعاداتهم الخ. نابلس ٦٩١، ص. ٧٨١-٦٩١ (مخطوط).

⁴² See MS Firkovich Sam III 19, p. 23a in the margin, in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg (وكانت ذلك السنه غلا شديد عظيم...وفيه اللحم ٣. فضه وصاع القمح لحق احده عشر قرش). Compare Ms Firkovich Sam XIII 18 of the same year, saa of corn six, a rotl of meat eighty four, rotl of rice fourty four, rotl of oil seventy two

⁴³ She is most likely Ḥānunjah bint Ya‘qūb bint Ṣadaqa al-Danfī as indicated in the Ketubbah (marriage contract) in Firkovich Sam X 21 and 84 in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg, והיא בעת ההיא נערה בתולה, 4900 Egyptian units is used since the seventeenth (قطع مصريات) “of currency. The term Egyptian pieces century as shown in Firkovich Sam XIV 1. Other sorts of money such as maṣārī, maḥmūdī, ‘ādī, qirāta, niṣf akkl, bishlī are mentioned in Firkovich Sam XIV 35. Cf. *A. B. Samaritan News*, 544-545, 7.10.1991, pp. 55-76, L.H. Vilösker, *Samaritänskie dokumenty gosdarstvenoj publixnoj biblioteki imeni M. E. Saltykova-Wedrina*. Katalog. Sankt-Peterburg 1992. Reinhard Pummer *Samaritan Marriage Contracts...vol. I*, p. 35, who says that ‘Imrān !was 24+ years

⁴⁴ See the marginal note by El‘azar Ṣadaqa in the manuscript of Nablus page 77 and compare, J. H. Petermann, *Versuch einer hebräischen Formenlehre nach der Aussprache der heutigen Samaritaner nebst einer darnach gebildeten Transcription der Genesis*. In: *Abhandlungen f. d. Kunde des Morgenlandes*, v, no. I. Leipzig 1868, p. 3. On the basis of a letter by the priest El‘azar Ṣadaqa sent to me on 8 November 2000 the following information is indicated. The high priest was called “‘Umrān al-Zamān” due to his efforts to take care of the Samaritan community in all aspects of life. His first wife was Laṭīfa who gave birth to thirteen children who all died except one daughter called Warda. His second wife was Lā’iqa

loved and she gave birth to four children, three boys, El‘azar, Salāma and Isaac, and a daughter called Zahra⁴⁵. It seems that the daughter Badriyya was born from the other wife of ‘Imrān. The great-grandson of ‘Imrān, the priest ‘Abd al-Mu‘īn Ṣadaqa (El‘azar Tsedaka, born in 2.2. 1927) calls her “Our lady the late Lā’iqa may God sanctify her secret” and gives the venerated epithet “‘Imrān al-zamān” to her husband⁴⁶. El‘azar the son, as well as ‘Imrān’s two younger brothers, Isaac and Aaron, died while ‘Imrān was alive

].:See page 77

אבי עני בלא כסף צריך בכפני
 ורב מאד לקחו לי בתולה לא תרציני
 בא לי ממנה בנים וכלם מתו לפני
 עד לקחתי אחרת היתה כרחצוני
 נשאר לי ממנה בנים והנם שני

:An elegy on his son El‘azar is to be found on pages 81 – 82 beginning with

زاد بلبالي وقل الاضطبار ودموعي فوق وجناتي غزار
 على فراق مهجة كبدي والروح حرق فؤادي آه اين العزار

[(See Ya‘qūb b. ‘Uzzi, kitāb al-Sāmiriyyīn...Nablus 1960, pp. 66-67 (handwritten

His son Isaac visited London in 1903 and sold some Samaritan manuscripts to the Jewish Rabbi Moses Gaster (1856-1939) and to the British Library⁴⁷. Wardah (Ṣiṣ) was thirteen years old in 1855 when she married Ṣāliḥ ben al-Shaikh Ibrāhīm āl Ṣāliḥ al-Murḡān

who gave birth to Issac, Salāma and a daughter named Badrī. He left the office of high priesthood because he was fat. Mubārak was named “al-ma‘kūs”. This information is based on oral tradition

Zahra ‘Imrān Salāma got married in 1865, see MS. BL Or 12375d. This marriage is⁴⁵ mentioned only in Kahle’s list where there is a mention of six Samaritans who married three times, See Paul Kahle, Die Samaritaner im Jahre 1909 (A.H. 1327). Palästina-jahrbuch 26 (1930) pp. 89-103

The full name of the priest is ‘Abd al-Mu‘īn Ṣadaqa Iṣḥāq ‘Imrān Salāma Ghazāl⁴⁶ in the manuscript “سیدتنا المرحومه لائقه قدس الله سرها” Iṣḥāq Ibrāhīm Ṣadaqa discussed below, page 77 in the margin and see page 83 in the margin and page 98 at the top. See also the handwritten book mentioned in note no. 60, pp. 15, 112

See Moses Gaster, Massoretisches in Samaritanischen. In: Nöldeke Festschrift, 1906,⁴⁷ p. 513

ben Salāma al-Danafī, the maternal uncle of her father⁴⁸. Educated elders of the Samaritan community either passed away or were ineffective and the ignorant ones and the bankers (Ṣarrāfūn) were the leaders and had the upper hand on the community⁴⁹. Evil intentions and idle talk prevailed. People were engaged with their carnal appetites. ‘Imrān the high-priest in person was hit and kicked by a soldier in a public place in Nablus and the new ruler was present⁵⁰.

In view of the facts stated above, it is no wonder to find that ‘Imrān became fed up with such a life (عايف حياتي) and has expressed his deep sadness and mourning in several lines as shortly we shall see. He wished on several occasions to depart this earthly life and to be buried beside his father in a very deep grave⁵¹.

In his relatively short testament the following information is available. ‘Imrān does not want shouting, noise and increase in mourning on his death. He asked his family to take care in washing⁵² his corpse and covering it with winding sheet. The coffin should be taller than him and made of the best wood. The washing bench (dakka) should be new. After his funeral both should be kept for the use of other Samaritans in the future. Reading from the Torah follows putting the dead body in the coffin. He asks his children Isaac (d.1932) and Salāma (d. 1909) and his wife (her name is not indicated) to continue their life as before. The key of a sort of an attic (siddi/e) should be kept with Isaac only and not even with his mother. ‘Imrān had a shop shared by Jacob the son of his brother and with Ya‘qūb al-Mūsa. The father ‘Imrān says to his son Isaac: consult your cousin Jacob, Ishāq Luṭfī and others in the Samaritan community who like you especially Murḡān the husband of your sister. The big house goes to Isaac and the small one to Salāma. The rest of the building (dār) will be divided into three thirds (apparently, Isaac, Salāma and their mother). The father urges his son Isaac to read, learn and preserve his faith during all his life. With regard to Isaac’s marriage the father advises him to follow the choice of his mother. ‘Imrān urges his son Isaac to marry if possible the daughter of his sister Zahra the wife of Ishāq Luṭfī. Such a marriage would be realized if Ishāq Luṭfī agrees to give his daughter to Isaac instead of Isaac’s fiancée al-sinyūra

See Robertson, Catalogue Vol. I, col. 333. Mills writes “The males are marriageable ⁴⁸ at fourteen, and the females at ten, and in some cases as early as eight years of age” see John Mills, Three Months Residence at Nablus and an Account of Modern Samaritans. London .1868, p. 194

Such as Jacob al-Shelabī who was illiterate but was one of the Samaritan leaders and ⁴⁹ tourists’s guide who lived mainly on tips (baqšiš, baḡšiš) from them, see Agnes Smith, The Travels of Three Ladies (Eastren Pilgrims). London 1870, pp. 291-299; Charles Warren, .Underground Jerusalem. London 1876, p. 226

See A. B. Samaritan News 258—259, 28-4-1980, p. 40. At the same day the priest ⁵⁰ .wrote a letter to James Finn the British consul in Jerusalem

.See pages 75 line 2, 98 line 12, 92 line 13 ⁵¹

other terms to be found in Samaritan Arabic literature are غسل. The term used here is ⁵² تغسيل، مغسل, see A. E. Cowley, The Samaritan Liturgy., Vol. II, pp. 852, 853, 854, 855, 858, 866

(!) to the son of his wife⁵³. On the basis of a letter written by ‘Imrān in 1858 to al-Khawāḡa ‘Ōda it is clear that the priest had a share in an oil press and quarrels with regard to business⁵⁴. The priest used to visit Jerusalem for commercial reasons and stayed overnight at Karaite homes. Petermann mentions that one day ‘Imrān told him that the place of hell is in fact Jerusalem⁵⁵.

Charles Warren wrote about ‘Imrān whom he knew personally “a delightful old gentleman, the only one of the Samaritans I had any sympathy with...told me his melancholy state...he felt he was gradually dying day by day, and talked of being fed on poisonous food; poor old man, whatever was the cause, it was evident he was sinking slowly, and that his energies were going; probably his house in Nâblus was filled with impure air from the bad arrangements within, or perhaps it was constitutional alone seemed to guard the treasures of the Samaritans...and prescribed charcoal for his disorder, which appeared to be a kind of dysentery ...⁵⁶”

A few lines by ‘Imrān are in order:

فارقت الاحباب واضحيت حزين
 عمران اسمي وكل زمني خراب
 My name is ‘Imrān (in written Arabic ‘Umrān = prosperity, flourishing) and all my life is
 destruction, I parted from the beloved ones and became grieved⁵⁷.

وكيف التذ بطعام منسجم بمرار
 بعد فقد الاحباب كيف ناري تنام
 على الايمان وشريعة الخمس اسفار
 عمران يقول يا رب انعم بالوفاه
 After the loss of the beloved ones how my passion (fire) will sleep (die down) and how can I
 enjoy food mixed with bitterness

‘Imrān says “O Lord bestow upon me death while having faith in the five books (Torah)”⁵⁸.

مشتغلين لاتمام شهوة نفوسهم
 وفي حب النساء ضاعت الرجال
 They are busy in satisfying the lust of their souls and in the love of women men were lost⁵⁹.

The second manuscript, by the high-priest ‘Imrān ben Salāma ben Ghazāl al-Ḥiftāwī, which includes the poem on Mubārak Ibrāhīm Mufarraḡ who left the Samaritan religion in 1841 is kept in Berlin. It is Ms. Or. Quart. 1095 in the Staatsbibliothek and consists of 229 folios of prayers for the Sabbaths of Pentecost, Yom Maqrata (reading day of the Torah in remembrance of revelation on Mt. Sinai) and the feast of harvest. This manuscript was copied in 1845 by Shelaḡ b. Abraham b. Shelaḡ b. Ab Sakuwwa ha-Danfi. The poem in question is added at the end of the manuscript in 227b. A description of this manuscript as well as a publication of the poem accompanied by a Hebrew translation, were published in the

⁵³ .See pages 92-93

⁵⁴ .See Firkovich Ms Sam XIV 25, in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg

⁵⁵ .J. H. Petermann, Reisen im Orient. Leipzig 1860, p. 279

⁵⁶ .Charles Warren, Underground Jerusalem. London 1876, pp. 225—226

⁵⁷ .See page 75 line 5

⁵⁸ .Page 82 lines 8 and 11

⁵⁹ .Page 98 line 8

periodical A. B. Samaritan News in 1998⁶⁰. It is to be noted that the poem in this manuscript appears in Samaritan letters while in the Nablus manuscript, the script is Arabic.

Moreover, there are several differences between the texts of the poem in these two manuscripts⁶¹. It should be stated that the Hebrew translation is not always accurate. The poem on Mubārak / al-Musilmānī was written in 1262 Hiġra, 1846 A. D. five years after his conversion⁶². It is known to us that this Mubārak was in 1840 one of the scribes of Manuscript No. 7023 in Yad Ben-Zvi Library in Jerusalem. A year later Mubārak / al-Musilmānī copied a prayer found in Ms. Or. Quart. 538 in Berlin on the 28th of Raġab 1257 Hiġra, 9 September 1841 A.D. The high-priest ʿImrān, who condemned the conversion of Mubārak in the following poem, wrote these words in the same place “ها خرج كاتبها وله” which means “Its scribe having burns has left the religion of the God-fearing Moses for the religion of Muḥammad the atheist (zendik)⁶³. One more piece of information about Mubārak is that he was one of the three scribes of Ms No. 7023 in Yad Ben-Zvi Library in Jerusalem. Mubārak accomplished his part in 1840, his brother Saʿd in 1857 and Ṣāliḥ ben Ibrāhīm ben Ṣāliḥ ben Murġān al-Danfī in 1849.

قاله رحمه الله عندما خرج مبارك ابراهيم
مفرج عن הדת⁶⁴ لعنه الله لعنة
ابدياً الى يوم الدين
اللهم امين

يا حيف اين كان عقلك يا مبارك	لا شك انه كان مع الشيطان مشارك ⁶⁵
ما بقيت اظن فيك كذا يا مغفل	بل كان يسدد عقلي ويغريني فشارك ⁶⁶
طمس على عقلك كيد الشيطان ولا	بقي لك قبول ولو كثرت اندارك ⁶⁷

.A. B. Samaritan News 722—724, 9.10.1998, pp. 79-81 ⁶⁰

I did not examine the Berlin manuscript and here I depend on the version published ⁶¹
in A. B

.A. B. Samaritan News 722—724, 9.10.1998, p. 80 ⁶²

.A. B. Samaritan News 722—724, 9.10.1998, p. 84 ⁶³

.Originally in Samaritan script. The title is missing in the Berlin manuscript ⁶⁴

Berlin manuscript reads: مبارك، انا، شيطان instead of مبارك، انه، الشيطان ⁶⁵
.respectively

Berlin manuscript reads: بانك، ويعزن instead of كذا يا، ويغريني ⁶⁶
.respectively

Berlin manuscript reads: اكثرت، اندارك instead of كثرت، اندارك ⁶⁷
.respectively

يا ليت ذهب من الدنيا متوفياً
تاملنا فيك تكون اهلاً للصلاح
انوارك
يا تُرى طمع دنياك الذي دهاك
كيف كان حتى ضيعت الآخره سواء
جنان النعيم صار عليك حرام
اسفارك^{٧٠}
من سيدنا الرسول ما بقي لك قبول
تدارك
اسفي والله عليك بما وقعت فيه
عارك^{٧١}
لو كنت توفيت كنا نتامل الاجتماع
وبعد هذا الحال الامل فيك محال

خير لك يا معكوس من معيارك^{٦٨}
خاب الامل واطلمت جميع
أو طالع مولدك كان غير مبارك
وما بقي غداً انطفاءً لنارك^{٦٩}
كيف لا وانت خائن خمس
هو خصيمك يا مسكين ان كنت
وما في اليد حيله على دفع
يشفع الكليم وتكون الجنه دارك^{٧٢}
وبعد كل ذا الضلال ما بقيت مبارك^{٧٣}

מן עזב דת משה
לית לו שם מושיע
יגוז לגו אשה
ולא הוה כל טוב עמה⁷⁴

Translation:

- 68 Berlin manuscript reads: متوفا، حير instead of متوفياً، خير respectively.
- 69 Berlin manuscript reads: الخرى، سوى، عاد يمكن، ان تنطفي، نارك instead of الآخره، سواء، بقي، انطفاءً، لنارك respectively.
- 70 Berlin manuscript reads: لو، انت، حابي، لخمس instead of لا، وانت، خائن، خمس respectively.
- 71 Berlin manuscript reads: هوا instead of هو and والله is missing and به، يه، respectively. ما instead of بما، فيه، وما respectively.
- 72 Berlin manuscript reads: الاجتماع، الرسول instead of الاجتماع، الكليم respectively.
- 73 Berlin manuscript reads: هذه، بعد instead of هذا، وبعد respectively.
- 74 These four lines are missing in the Nablus manuscript and appear in Samaritan characters in the Berlin manuscript

He Said it⁷⁵ when Mubārak Ibrāhīm Mufarraġ Left the Religion
 May God curse him⁷⁶ forever until the Day of Judgement, O God Amen
 What a pity, where was your mind O Mubārak? No doubt it was cooperating with the devil
 I did not think you would do that O fool, but my mind was directing and tempting your vain
 boasting
 The devil's deception dominated⁷⁷ your thinking and you are not accepted⁷⁸ anymore, even
 your vows⁷⁹ were numerous
 If only you had passed away from this world it would be better for you, O overturned because
 of your shame⁸⁰!
 We hoped that you will be worthy of righteousness, disappointment came and all your lights
 grew gloomy
 I wonder, did the greediness of this world befall upon you or was the star of destiny of your
 birthday unblessed?
 What happened so that you have lost the hereafter altogether⁸¹ and the future⁸² of your fire
 (hell) will not extinguish
 Paradise became forbidden to you, why should not be so since you are disloyal to your
 Torah⁸³?

The pronoun is in the third person masculine singular though the feminine would be 75
 expected because it refers to 'poem' which is feminine in Arabic, spoken and written alike.
 Yet it seems possible to explain this masculine pronoun as referring to words which are
 .“masculine such as “šīr, kalām” meaning “poetry, speech

Literally, may God curse him a curse forever. In ordinary structure in written Arabic 76
 . لعنه الله لعنة أبدية or لعنه الله إلى الأبد one finds either

is طمس (to efface, erase, wipe out) with the preposition) طمس The usage of the verb 77
 meaningless. Therefore I translated “dominated”, taking into consideration that the required
 . طغى verb in this connection is

Accepted by the Samaritan community. The reader has to bear in mind that this 78
 .statement is declared by the high-priest, the highest religious authority

First of all the phoneme dāl which is used in cities instead of the phoneme dāl in 79
 literary Arabic as well as in fellaḥite dialects, for instance. Secondly, the standard plural form
 of the singular”naḍr” is “nuḍūr”. The form “andār” is not known in Arabic and it was chosen
 .because of the needed ryhme -ārik

shame, disgrace) is used also on page 98 line 8 in the) عار in the sense of معيار 80
 .Nablus manuscript

Either in the meaning of the colloquial “sawa” or the written expression “sawā’an bi- 81
 .“sawā

The literal translation is “tomorrow” and, in fact, the additional sense of “bukra” in 82
 .Palestinian Arabic was attached to the equivalent literary word

“Literally “your five books 83

You are no longer accepted⁸⁴ (or to be forgiven) by our lord the messenger (Moses), he is your antagonist⁸⁵, O miserable if you can realize⁸⁶
 My grief on you, by God, for what has occurred to you and nothing can be done in order to drive away your disgrace
 Had you died we could have hoped to meet, Moses⁸⁷ would have interceded and paradise would be your abode
 After this state you are hopeless⁸⁸ and after all this delusion you are not Barukh (his Hebrew name which means ‘blessed’) anymore
 He who left the religion of Moses
 Has no salvation
 He will step into fire
 Even though everything he did was good

To conclude, an attempt was made to deal with what was at our disposal concerning the life and works of the high-priest ‘Imrān ben Salāma ben Ghazāl al-Ḥiftāwī (1809-1875). The main idea of the poem discussed is that Samaritans who convert their religion (in this case to Islam) have no chance of going to paradise. In another short poem it is obvious that Samaritans will enter the ‘abode’ viz ‘the paradise’ either through their good deeds which please God or through repentance for the slips they committed

:See the Nablus manuscript page 98]

الموت باب وكل الناس داخله	يا ليت شعري بعد الباب ما الدار
الدار جنبه عدن ان عملت بما	يرضي الاله وان خالفت فالنار
هما محلان ما للمرء غيرهما	فاختر لنفسك اي الدار تختار
ما للعباد سوى الفردوس ان عملوا	وان هفوا هفوةً فالرب غفار

.Death is a door and all people will enter it, I wish I knew what is the abode next to the door

The abode is the Garden of Eden if you worked to please God and if you disobeyed then fire ((hell

!They are the two places that a human being has, so chose for yourself one of them

Human beings have nothing but paradise if they acted [well] and if they made a slip God is

Compare A. E. Cowley, The Samaritan Liturgy., Vol. II, pp. 463 line 8, 765 line 8 84
 .below

. The ordinary form is 85

.The third verbal form is used instead of the fourth because of rhyme 86

which is an epithet of الله كليم Originally “speaker” and the meaning is obvious 87
 .Moses

.“Literally “hope in you is absurd 88

.much-forgiving

Similar opinion with regard to repentance is expressed by 'Imrān in the handwritten book "Kitāb sabīl al-lahfān li-ma'rifat al-'īmān by El'azar ben Ṣadaqa ben 'Amram, Nablus 1979, p.

[.2. I thank the priest El'azar and Yefet ben Ratson Tsedaka for the copy of this work

. This denomination of research, articles devoted to single scholars are important desiderata in Samaritan studies and their significance go beyond the "Who is Who" series.

A. B. The Samaritan News 779-782, 15.2.2001, pp. 155-144.