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Biblical Researches in Palestine,
Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea.
A Journal of the Travels in the Year 1838
By E. Robinson and E. Smith

Drawn Up From the Original Diaries, With Historical Illustrations,
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(p. 94)

Instead of keeping along at the foot of the mountain quite to the entrance of the valley of Nabulus, the road ascends and winds around the N. E. corner of Mount Gerizim. We turned this point at 1 o'clock, and entered the narrow valley running up N. W. between Mounts Gerizim and Ebal; thus leaving behind us the plain, which extends still further north. Below us, on the right, and just on the edge of the plain, are the ruins of a little hamlet called Belat; nearer at (p. 95) hand, and about in the middle of the mouth of the narrow valley, stands a small white building, a Wely, called Joseph's tomb; while still nearer to the foot of Gerizim is the ancient well, known as that of Jacob. Directly opposite to the mouth of the valley, among the eastern hills, a beautiful smaller plain runs up eastward from the larger one; and on the low hills near its entrance on the North, are seen the three villages of 'Azmut, Deir el-Hatab, and Salim.

After turning the point of the mountain, our path descended very little; yet so great is here the ascent of the narrow valley, that in a quarter of an hour we came out upon its bottom, near a fine copious fountain in its middle, furnished with a reservoir. Below the fountain, towards the East, a tract of ground of three or four acres had recently been enclosed as a garden; but as yet it contained no trees. Above this point, we soon came to the olive-groves, where the ascent is less rapid, and the soil hard and stony. On the left, before reaching the city, at the foot of Gerizim, is a small tomb of a Muslim saint, called 'Amiid; but of recent construction, as we were informed, and containing nothing of antiquity. At 1 ½ o'clock we were opposite the eastern end of the long narrow town, which we did not now enter. Keeping the road along its northern side, we passed some high mounds, apparently of rubbish; where, all at once, the ground sinks down to a valley running towards the West, with a soil of rich black vegetable mould. Here a scene of luxuriant and almost unparalleled verdure burst upon our view. The whole valley was filled with gardens of vegetables and orchards of all kinds of fruits, watered by several fountains, which burst forth in various parts and flow westwards in refreshing streams. It came upon us suddenly like a scene of fairy

enchantment. We saw nothing to compare with it in all Palestine. Here, (p. 96) beneath the shade of an immense mulberry-tree, by the side of a purling rill, we pitched our tent for the remainder of the day and night.

The city of Nabalus¹ is long and narrow, stretching close along the N. E. base of Mount Gerizim in this small deep valley, half an hour distant from the great eastern plain. The streets are narrow; the houses high and in general well built, all of stone, with domes upon the roofs as at Jerusalem. The valley itself, from the foot of Gerizim to that of Ebal, is here not more than some five hundred yards wide, extending from S. E. to N. W. The city lies directly upon a water-summit in this valley; the waters on the eastern part, as we have seen, flowing off East into the plain and so to the Jordan; while the fine fountains on the western side send off a pretty brook down the valley N. W. towards the Mediterranean. This somewhat remarkable circumstance, so far as I can find, has hitherto been noted by no traveller.

Mounts Gerizim and Ebal rise in steep rocky precipices immediately from the valley on each side, apparently some eight hundred feet in height.² The sides of both these mountains, as here seen, were to our eyes equally naked and sterile; although some travellers have chosen to describe Gerizim as fertile, and confine the sterility to Ebal.³ The only exception in favour of the former, so far as we could perceive (p. 97) is a small ravine coming down opposite the west end of the town, which indeed is full of fountains and trees; in other respects both mountains, as here seen, are desolate, except that a few olive-trees are scattered upon them. The side of the northern mountain, Ebal, along the foot, is full of ancient excavated sepulchres. The southern mountain is now called by the inhabitants Jebel et-Tur,⁴ though the name Gerizim is known at least to the Samaritans. The modern appellation of Ebal we did not learn.

One of our first objects at Nabalus was to visit the Samaritans, that singular and feeble remnant of an ancient people, which to this day has survived the storms of ages and of adverse influences, upon their native soil. Some men formerly from Beirut soon came around us; and an old Christian of the Greek rite, undertook to conduct us to the Samaritans, to the summit of Mount Gerizim, and to Jacob's well. We repaired to the city, passing among luxuriant groves of fig and other fruit-trees, and entering by a gate at the western end. The quarter occupied by the Samaritans is in the S. W. part of the city, rising somewhat upon the acclivity of Gerizim. It is well built, and the houses seemed solid and comfortable. On coming to the synagogue we found it closed. Several of the Samaritans came to us; but as the priest was not at hand to open the door, we could not now visit the synagogue. They offered us a guide, however, to the top of Mount Gerizim; and we determined to go thither immediately, and see the priest on our return. We set off therefore at 4 o'clock on foot, attended by one of the younger Samaritans, an honest simpleminded man. Our old Christian we were willing to dismiss till we came back; having discovered mean (p. 98) time, that his plan had been to take a Samaritan guide himself, besides demanding one of our mules to ride. We struck up the ravine above mentioned, which comes down from the S. W. and is full of fruit-trees and

¹ We follow in this name the orthography of Abulfeda, which is probably the most correct. According to the vulgar pronunciation of the present day, it would be written Nabliis. Abulf. Tab. Syr. p. 85.

² According to Schubert's barometrical observations, the town of Nabalus is 1751 Par. feet above the sea, and the summit of Gerizim about 2500 feet, or about the same as the Mount of Olives. This gives 750 feet for the height of the mountain above the town. Reise III. p. 146.

³ Cotovicus p. 338. O. von Richter Wallfahrten p. 56. This story goes back to the time of Benj. of Tudela; who says correctly, that there are fountains and fruit-trees on Gerizim, that is, in the ravine described in the text; but this is not true of the mountain in general, which is as barren as Ebal. Voyages par Barat. p. 84.

⁴ So too Yakftt in Schult. Ind. in Vit. Salad, art. *Tourum*.

verdure. Just out of the city is a fine fountain, called 'Asal; and still further up, an aqueduct and mill.

Above the ravine the ascent of the mountain is steep; yet not so but that one might ride up without difficulty. When about two thirds of the way up, we heard a woman calling after us, who proved to be the mother of our Samaritan guide. He was her only son, and had come away, it seems, without her knowledge; and she was now in the utmost terror at finding that he had gone off as a guide to Franks, to show them the holy mountain. She had immediately followed us, and was now crying after us with all the strength of her lungs, forbidding him to proceed, lest some evil should befall him. The young man went back to meet her, and tried to pacify her; but in vain; she insisted upon his returning home. This he was not inclined to do; although he said he could not disobey his mother, and so transgress the law of Moses. This touching trait gave us a favourable idea of the morality of the Samaritans. After reasoning with her a long time without effect, he finally persuaded her to go with us. So she followed us up; at first full of wrath, and keeping at a distance from us; yet at last she became quite reconciled and communicative.

Twenty minutes of ascent from the city in the direction S. W. led us to the top of Gerizim; which proved to be a tract of high table-land stretching off far towards the W. and S. W. Twenty minutes more towards the S. E. along a regular path upon the tableland, brought us to the Wely we had seen before, standing on a small eminence on the eastern brow of (p. 99) the mountain, perhaps the highest point; and overlooking the plain on the East, and indeed, all the country around, including Jebel esh-Sheikh or Hermon in the distance. Here is the holy place of the Samaritans, whither they still come up four times a year to worship. The spot where they sacrifice the passover, seven lambs among them all, was pointed out to us, just below the highest point and before coming to the last slight acclivity. It is marked by two parallel rows of rough stones laid upon the ground; and a small round pit, roughly stoned up, in which the flesh is roasted.

On ascending the rise of ground beyond this spot, the first object which presents itself, are the ruins of an immense structure of hewn stones, bearing every appearance of having once been a large and strong fortress. It consisted of two adjacent parts, each measuring about two hundred and fifty feet from E. to W. and two hundred feet from N. to S. giving a length in all of about four hundred feet in the latter direction. The stones are the common limestone of the region, tolerably large, and bevelled at the edges, though rough in the middle. The walls in some places are nine feet thick. At the four corners of the southern division were square towers, and one in the middle of the eastern side. In the northern part is now the Muslim Wely, and also a cemetery. The stranger at first is very naturally struck with the idea, that these must be the remains of the ancient temple of the Samaritans upon Mount Gerizim; but the Samaritans of the present day attach no sanctity whatever to these ruins, and simply call them el-Kul'ah, 'the Castle.' We shall hereafter see, that they are probably the remains of a fortress erected by Justinian.

Just under the walls of the castle, on the west side, are a few flat stones, of which it is difficult to say (p. 100) whether they were laid there by nature or by man. Under these, the guide said, are the twelve stones brought out of Jordan by the Israelites;⁵ and there they will remain, until el-Muhdy (the Guide) shall appear. This, he said, and not Messiah, is the name they give to the expected Saviour. He could not tell when he would appear; but there were already some tokens of his coming.

Soon after we passed the castle, towards the South, the guide took off his shoes, saying it was unlawful for his people to tread with shoes upon this ground, it being holy. After a few steps we

⁵ Benjamin of Tudela relates, that the altar of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim, was built of these twelve stones. Voyages par Baratier Tom. I. p. 82.

came to a large naked surface of rock, even with the ground and occupying a considerable area, inclining somewhat towards a cistern in the western part. This he said was their holiest spot, the place where the tabernacle of the Lord with the ark of the covenant had been pitched. He seemed to have no tradition of any temple here; and although we inquired repeatedly, we could not perceive that he had ever heard of any. Around this rock are slight traces of former walls, perhaps of the ancient temple. We measured them, so far as they could be distinguished, fifty-eight feet from N. to S. and forty-five feet from E. to W. but we were afterwards not sure whether this latter ought not to be doubled. This spot is the Kibleh of the Samaritans. On whatever side of it they may be, according to our guide, they always turn their faces towards it in prayer; but when upon the spot itself, it is lawful for them to pray in any direction.

Near by the same place, he pointed out the spot where they believe Abraham was commanded to offer up Isaac. On being asked, if there were Samaritans (**p. 101**) in any other part, he said there were others living beyond the river Sabt, which could be crossed only on a Saturday; but as the Samaritans do not travel on that day, nothing more was known about them.

Further South, and indeed all around upon this eminence, are extensive foundations, apparently of dwellings, as if the ruins of a former city. There are also many cisterns; but all were now dry.

This point commanded a wide view of the country, and especially of the great plain below, through which we had travelled on approaching Nabalus. The region round about, bore an aspect different from that around Jerusalem; as we had already had occasion to remark upon our journey. Indeed, from Sinjil northwards, we had noticed, that (the mountains in general were less lofty and steep, and also less naked; while the vallies spread themselves out into fertile plains or basins, stretching mostly from E. to W. but also sometimes from N. to S. This plain of Nabalus is the largest of all upon the high tract between the western plain and the Jordan valley; and these mountains are the highest in this region. The length of the plain from S. S. W. to N. N. E. is not far from four hours; its breadth is somewhat variable in consequence of the irregularity of the hills along the eastern border; but may be taken on an average at from one half to three quarters of an hour. The southern part, as we have seen, which is apparently less fertile, is drained by a Wady running westwards to the Mediterranean. But from a point somewhere south of the valley of Nabalus, the land begins to incline towards the North, and the waters are carried off at the N. E. corner towards the Jordan, not improbably by some branch of the large Wady el-Fari'a.—Across the valley of Nabalus, we could see the summit of Mount Ebal spreading out into table-land, not unlike that of Gerizim.

(p. 102) But the feature in the prospect which struck us most, was the smaller plain already alluded to, which runs up E. S. E. from the eastern side of the Mukhna, overagainst the valley of Nabalus. It is properly separated from the Mukhna by a low ridge of rocky hills, through which runs an open Wady connecting the two plains, and draining off the waters of the smaller one westwards, where they then flow northwards and so to the Jordan. On the hills along the north side of this Wady, are seen the three villages of 'Azmut, Deir el-Hatab, and Salim; the latter lying furthest East. This may not improbably be the Shalim, a city of Shechem, to which Jacob came on his return from Padan-aram.⁶ The plain beyond extends eastwards for an hour or more, bearing the same characteristics of fertility and beauty as the Mukhna itself. On its further side, on the low

⁶ Gen. xxxiii. 18. The existence of this ancient name of a village so near to Nabalus or Shechem, shows at least that it is not necessary to suppose the name Shalim (Salem) to be applied in this passage to Shechem itself; as is done by Eusebius and Jerome and others after them. Onomast. art. *Salent* and *Sicliem*. Equally unnecessary is the other mode of interpretation, which regards it as an adjective, in the meaning *safe, prosperous*. See generally, Reland's Dissertat. Miscell. I. 3. p. 143.

hills, was seen a village called Beit Dejan;⁷ and beyond the S. E. part, appeared the high peak of a mountain looking towards the Jordan, along the foot of which passes a road leading from Nabulus through this plain to the Jordan. I know not whether this mountain may possibly be the Kurn Surtubeh, which we had so often seen from the neighbourhood of Jericho.⁸ On the nearest part of the southern side of the plain, lay another village called Beit Furik, about two hours from Nabulus. The ruined village Kefr Beita lies twenty minutes further West.⁹

(p. 103) In the same region (S. E.) I find in our lists the name of 'Akrabeh as a village still existing; it follows immediately five of the villages just enumerated, and those of Beita, Haudela, 'Awerta, and Raujib, which are situated along the eastern side of the large plain. It would seem therefore to stand somewhere south of the five former, and east of the four latter. We however did not see it, nor was it here mentioned nor pointed out to us by any one. Wherever it may be situated, it is doubtless the ancient Acrabi of Eusebius and Jerome; which they described as a large village nine Roman miles (three hours) east of Neapolis on the way to the Jordan and Jericho.¹⁰ It was a place of importance; and gave name to the toparchy Acrabatene, adjacent to that of Gophna. As such it is several times spoken of by Josephus;¹¹ but seems to be nowhere mentioned after the time of Jerome until the present century.¹²—At about twelve Roman miles from Neapolis, in the same quarter, the Onomasticon places a village called Edumia; and in our lists of that region I find the name Daumeh, which probably marks the same site.¹³

(p. 104) We returned down the mountain by the same route; occupying twenty minutes to the brow of the descent, and twenty minutes thence to the city. We now found the Samaritan priest and several of his people waiting for us, in the little court before their synagogue and school-room. The priest seemed about sixty years old, with a shrewd intelligent expression of countenance, and a manner which would command influence anywhere.¹⁴ His son, now sub-priest, perhaps thirty-five years of age, seemed in all respects to be of a more ordinary character. The priest wore an external robe of red silk, with a white turban; the others had mostly red turbans. In other particulars their dress was similar to the usual costume of the country. Their common language of intercourse, among themselves and with others, is the Arabic. They were very civil and polite; answered readily all our inquiries respecting themselves, their customs, and their faith; and asked many questions, especially the priest, respecting America, and particularly whether there were any Samaritans in that country. We did not understand them as believing, that other colonies of

⁷ This implies another ancient Beth Dagon, of which we have no account. Comp. above, p. 30, Note 2

⁸ See Vol. II. p. 257.

⁹ Irby and Mangles p. 328.—From Mount Gerizim we took the following bearings: Nabulus, the west end just visible, N. by W. Mount Hermon N. 30° E. 'Azmut N. 55° E. Deir el-Hatab N. 70° E. Salim N. 80° E. Beit Deian S. 80° E. Raujib S. 50° E. 'Awerta S. 15° E.

¹⁰ Onomast art. *Aorabi, yAx%af fiih.*

¹¹ Jos. B. J. III. 3. 5. IV. 9. 9. etc. R eland Pal. p. 176, 191, 543.

¹² O. von Richter in passing on the same road as ourselves to Nabulus, says the village Akrabi lay on his right; but he does not specify whereabouts; Wallfahrten p. 55. It is possible that he saw it; but more probable that he only heard the name. Scholz also has the name; p. 267.—Irby and Mangles, on their route from es-Salt to Nabulus, heard of a village "Agrarba" some time before they reached Beit Furik, but did not see it. There can be little doubt that this was 'Akrabeh; which of course could not well be visible from the Jerusalem road. Travels p. 327

¹³ Onomast. art. *Edomia.*—The village "Askar" mentioned by Scholz (p. 267) as half an hour from Nabulus, we did not hear of. Berggren applies the name 'Ain el-Aekar to what he calls Jacob's well, apparently meaning the fountain within the mouth of the valley of Nabulus; and calls also the great plain "Sahil el-Askar." Reisen II. p. 267. Quaresmius says the natives in his day called the well "Istar" II. P. 808. We heard nothing of any of these names; nor do I find them in our lists.

¹⁴ Our notes do not contain the name of the priest; but he is probably the name Selameh, who wrote to De Sacy and others in 1808, 1820, and 1826. See Notices et Extr. Des MSS. Etc. Tom. XII. Pp. 15, 17, 234.

Samaritans actually exist there or elsewhere; but they seemed to have the idea that such a thing was possible, and were anxious to learn the true state of the case.

The priest said, they have many books of prayers, commentaries, and the like, in their ancient language and character; which character they call el-'Ebry (the Hebrew), in distinction from that used by the Jews, which they call el-Kashury. They have a copy (p. 105) of the first volume of Walton's Polyglott; and in the course of conversation, the priest acknowledged to us the correctness of the Samaritan Pentateuch contained in it. They complained, as usual, of the Jewish corruptions of the text; and dwelt upon the superior purity, both of their text and of their observance of the law. After considerable conversation, the priest at length rose and opened the door of their *Keniseh*, (the Arabic word for both church and synagogue,) and we all entered, taking off our shoes. It is a small plain arched room, with a recess on the left hand at entering, where their manuscripts are kept, before which a curtain is suspended. We noticed no figure of a dove or of other objects. We inquired after the noted manuscript, which they professed was now 3460 years old; referring it to Abishua the son of Phinehas.¹⁵ The priest brought out a manuscript from the recess, rolled on two rods in the usual Jewish form; but it turned out to be written in a modern hand and on new parchment. When this was pointed out, the old man laughed, and produced another, which he and the rest all said was the true one. It was certainly very much worn, and somewhat tattered with use and much kissing, and here and there patched with shreds of parchment; but the handwriting appeared to me very similar to the former, and the vellum seemed in like manner not ancient. Of course we were not permitted to handle or touch it; and whatever may be its real age, it is very probably the manuscript which has usually been shown to former travellers and excited their wonder. They professed to have about a hundred manuscripts; and the priest said, that he employs himself in writing out copies of the law. (p. 106) When asked if they would sell a copy, the answer was: Yes, for fifty thousand Piastres.

The Samaritans are now reduced to a very small community; there being only thirty men who pay taxes, and few, if any, who are exempt; so that their whole number cannot be reckoned at over one hundred and fifty souls. One of them is in affluent circumstances; and having been for a long time chief secretary of the Mutesellim of Nabulus, became one of the most important and powerful men of the province. He had recently been superseded in his influence with the governor by a Copt; and now held only the second place. He was called el-'Abd es-Samary. The rest of the Samaritans are not remarkable either for their wealth or poverty. The physiognomy of those we saw was not Jewish; nor indeed did we remark in it any peculiar character, as distinguished from that of other natives of the country. They keep the Saturday as their Sabbath with great strictness, allowing no labour nor trading, not even cooking nor lighting a fire, but resting from their employments the whole day. On Friday evening they pray in their houses; and on Saturday have public prayers in their synagogue at morning, noon, and evening. They meet also in the synagogue on the great festivals, and on the new moons; but not every day. The law is read in public, not every Sabbath-day, but only upon the same festivals.

Four times a year they go up to Mount Gerizim (Jebel et-Tur) in solemn procession to worship; and then they begin reading the law as they set off, and finish it above. These seasons are: The feast of the Passover, when they pitch their tents upon the mountain all night, and sacrifice seven lambs at sunset; the day of Pentecost; the feast of Tabernacles, when they sojourn here in booths

¹⁵ Chron.vi.3,4. This manuscript is often mentioned in their letters; e. g. De Sacy Corresp. p. 125, and Note.

built of branches of the (p. 107) arbutus; and lastly, the great day of Atonement in autumn.¹⁶ They still maintain their ancient hatred against the Jews; accuse them of departing from the law in not sacrificing the passover, and in various other points, as well as of corrupting the ancient text; and scrupulously avoid all connection with them. If of old " the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans,"¹⁷ the latter at the present day reciprocate the feeling; and neither eat nor drink, nor marry, nor associate with the Jews; but only trade with them.

We inquired of the Samaritans respecting Jacob's well. They said they acknowledged the tradition, and regarded it as having belonged to the patriarch. It lies at the mouth of the valley, near the south side; and is the same which the Christians sometimes call Bir es-Samiriyeh, 'Well of the Samaritan woman.' They acknowledge also the tomb near by as the place of Joseph's burial; though the present building is only a Muhammedan Wely.¹⁸

Late as it was, we took a Christian guide, our first old man not having again made his appearance, and set off for Jacob's well. We now passed down on the (p. 108) North of the fountain in the valley and the enclosed gardens below; so that we came to the opening of the valley on the north side, at the ruins of the little hamlet called Belat. Our guide had professed to know all about the well; but when we had got thus far, he could not tell where it was. We met, however, a Muhammedan, who also acknowledged the tradition respecting Jacob's well and Joseph's tomb. He led us by the latter, which stands in the middle of the mouth of the valley; and then to the well, situated a little south of the tomb and just at the base of Gerizim, below the road by which we had passed along this morning. We were thirty-five minutes in coming to it from the city. The well bears evident marks of antiquity, but was now dry and deserted; it was said usually to contain living water, and not merely to be filled by the rains. A large stone was laid loosely over, or rather in, its mouth; and as the hour was now late and the twilight nearly gone, we made no attempt to remove the stone and examine the vaulted entrance below. We had also no line with us at the moment, to measure the well; but by dropping in stones, we could perceive that it was *deep*¹⁹ Adjacent to the well are the ruins of an ancient church, forming mounds of rubbish; among which we remarked three granite columns.

What we thus could not do, had however been done long before by Maundrell, and recently by our missionary friends from Beirut. Maundrell describes the well as covered by "an old stone vault," into which he descended by a narrow hole in the roof, and there found the proper mouth of the well with a broad flat stone upon it. He removed the stone and measured the well. "It is dug in a firm rock, and contains about three yards in diameter, and thirty-five in depth; (p. 109) five we

¹⁶ Lev. xvi. 29, seq. xxiii. 27, seq.—For many years at the close of the last century and the beginning of the present, the Samaritans were unable to perform their devotions on Mount Gerizim, on account of the exactions and oppressions of the government and Sheikhs. Writing to France in 1810, they say that for 25 years they ceased to offer sacrifices on the mountain, and performed their rites only in town. Yet from their letter in 1820, it would appear, that they had already been able to resume their pilgrimages to the summit of Gerizim. De Sacy Corresp. Des Samar. Pp. 126, 157, 158.

¹⁷ John iv. 9.

¹⁸ We heard nothing of the tombs of Eleazar, Ithamar, Phinehas, and others, which the Samaritans have formerly professed to show at Nabulus. See De Sacy Corresp. des Samar. pp. 181, 210, - etc.—In the address of Stephen, - Acts vii. 16, the twelve sons of Jacob are spoken of as buried at Shechem; and historical notices of a Jewish tradition to the same effect, are found in the Rabbins and in Jerome; see Lightfoot Hor. Heb. In Act. Vii. 16. Wetstein Nov. Test. In Act. L. c. Heiron. Ep. 86, Epitaph. Paulae, p. 677, "atque inde (Sichem) deivertens vidit duodecim Patriarcharum sepulchral." Yet a different is also preserved by Josephus, which makes them to have been buried at Hebron; Antiq. II 8. 2.

¹⁹ John iv. 11.

found full of water."²⁰ It was near the end of March when Maundrell thus found fifteen feet of water in the well. Our friends had visited it on their way from Jerusalem early in May, and both Mr. Hebard and Mr. Homes had descended into the vaulted chamber. The latter also measured the depth, which he found to be about one hundred and five feet. Their account corresponds entirely with that of Maundrell; except that the well was now dry.²¹ According to Bonifacius about 1555, there was then an altar in this vault, on which mass was celebrated once a year; but Quaresmius in the next century remarks, that this practice had been already discontinued many years by the Latins; although the altar still existed in the vault, where the Greeks sometimes yet read mass.²²

This tradition respecting both Jacob's well and Joseph's tomb, in which by a singular coincidence Jews²³ and Samaritans, Christians and Muhammedans, all agree, goes back at least to the time of Eusebius in the early part of the fourth century. That writer indeed speaks only of the sepulcher; but the Bourdeaux pilgrim in A.D. 333, mentions also the well; and neither of those writers has any allusion to a church.²⁴ But Jerome in his letter on paula, which is referred to A.D. 404, makes her visit the church erected at the side of Mount Gerizim around the well of Jacob, where our Lord met the Samaritan woman.²⁵ The church would seem therefore to have been built during the fourth century; through not by Helena, as (p. 110) is reported in modern times. It was visited and is mentioned, as around the well, by Antonius Martyr near the close of the sixth century; by Arculfus a century later, who describes it as built in the form of a cross; and again by St. Willibald in the eighth century.²⁶ Yet Saewulf about A.D. 1103, and Phocas in 1185, who speak of the well, make no mention of the church; whence we may conclude that the latter had been destroyed before the period of the crusades.²⁷ Brocardus speaks of ruins around the well, blocks of marble and columns, which he held to be the ruins of a town, the ancient Thebez; they were probably those of the church, to which he makes no allusion.²⁸ Other travelers, both of that age and later, speak of the church only as destroyed, and the well as already deserted.²⁹

Before the days of Eusebius, there seems to be no

(p. 113)

.....

It was half past 8 o'clock when we returned to our tent; wearied indeed in body, but refreshed in spirit, as we read anew, and in the midst of the very scenes, the account of our Saviour's visit and sublime teaching.

In our interview with the Samaritans, we had forgotten to inquire respecting the general statistics of Nabulus; and we had no other acquaintance on whose information we could depend. The only Christians here are Greeks, numbering 120 taxable men, or about 500 souls. There is a Greek bishop of Nabulus; but he resides in the convent at Jerusalem.³⁰ The Samaritans count some 150

²⁰ Maundrell, March 24.

²¹ A year later, in April 1839, my friend the Rev. S. Calhoun found water in the well, ten or twelve feet deep.

²² "Tantum in ore putei remanet altare;" Bonifacius, quoted by Quaresmius, II. P. 801, col. a. b.

²³ Benj. De Tud. *Vogages par Barat*. P. 82. Lightfoot *Hor. Heb.* In Act. Vii. 16.

²⁴ *Onomast. Art. Sichem*. Itiner. Hieros. Ed. Wess. P. 587, seq.

²⁵ Hieron. Ep. 86, Epit. Paulae, p. 676. ed. Mart. "Etextlatere montis Garizim extractam circum puteum, Jacob intravit Ecclesiam," etc.

²⁶ Anton. Mart. Itin. 6. Adamnanus lib. II. 21. St. Willib. See these writers cited in full, *Reland Palaest.* P. 1007, seq.

²⁷ Saewulf *Peregrinat.* P. 269. Phocas de *Locis Sanct.* 13. *Reland l. c.*

²⁸ Brocardus c. VII. P. 177. *Comp. Marin Sanut.* P. 248, who also mentions the tomb of Joseph.

²⁹ So Will. De Baldensel in *Basnage Thesaur.* IV. P. 353. Sir J. Maundeville p. 105. Lon. 1839. Rud. De Suchem in *Reisch.* P. 850. *Cotovic.* P. 337. Quaresmius p. 801. etc. etc.

³⁰ See Vol. II. P. 90.

souls, as we have seen; and there were said to be about as many Jews. From various data, we were led to estimate the whole population at about 8000 souls; all Muhammedans, with the exceptions above specified. The present governor of the province of Nabalus was a son of Husein, the former Mudir of 'Akka.³¹

It would be useless to spend time here, in showing that the Nabalus of the present day is the Neapolis of the Roman age; or that the latter appellation took the place of the more ancient name Shechem. It is one of the very few foreign names imposed by the Romans in Palestine, which have survived to the present day. The historical testimonies to the general identity of Neapolis and Sichem are hardly less definite and numerous, than in the case of Aelia and Jeru- (p. 114) salera;³² while the situation of Nabalus in the mountains of Ephraim and beneath Mount Gerizim, of which tradition has never lost sight, corresponds entirely to the ancient accounts of the position of Shechem.

Shechem was a very ancient place; though we do not find it mentioned as a city, until the time of Jacob. Abraham indeed first came, in the land of Canaan, "unto the place of Shechem, unto the oaks of Moreh;"³³ and Jacob on his return from Padan-Aram came to Shalim, a city of Shechem, "and pitched his tent before" (east of) the latter city. This corresponds to the present village of Salim, which lies east of Nabalus across the great plain. In this plain the patriarch encamped, and purchased the "parcel of ground," still marked by his well and the traditional tomb of Joseph.³⁴ It was here that Dinah was defiled by Shechem the son of Hamor, prince of the country; and the city Shechem with its gates is spoken of, named probably after that prince. It would seem not then to have been large; inasmuch as the two sons of Jacob were able to overcome and to slay all the males.³⁵ Jacob's field, as we have seen, was a permanent possession; and the patriarch, even when residing at Hebron, sent his flocks to pasture in this neighbourhood. It was on a visit to them in this region, that Joseph was sold by his brethren.³⁶

On the return of the Israelites from Egypt, after they had passed over Jordan, they were directed to set up great stones and build an altar on Mount Ebal; (p. 115) and to station six of the tribes upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people, and six upon Mount Ebal to curse.³⁷ Between these two mountains, according to Josephus, lay Shechem, having Ebal on the North and Gerizim on the South.³⁸ In the division of the land, Shechem fell to the lot of Ephraim, but was assigned to the Levites and made a city of refuge.³⁹ Here Joshua met the assembled people for the last time.⁴⁰ In the days of the Judges, Abimelech treacherously got possession of the city, which gave occasion for the beautiful parable of Jotham, delivered from Mount Gerizim; in the end the people proved

³¹ There are said to be leprous persons at nabalus, as well as at Jeruselem; but we did not here meet with them. Paxton's Letters XV. P. 173. Lond.

³² Josephus has usually Sichem; but also once Neapolis, B. J. IV. 8.1. Epiphanius adv. Haer, lib. III. P. 1055, #\$\$%^* ib. p. 1068, Hieron. Ep. 86. Epitaph. Paulae, p. 676, "Transivit Sichem,- quae sunc Neapolis appellatur," etc. See also other aurtherities, Reland Pal. P. 1004, seq.

³³ Gen. xii. 6.

³⁴ Gen xxiii. 18, 19, See above p. 102, Note 1 p. 112.

³⁵ Gen. xxxiv. 1, 2, 20, 24, 25.

³⁶ Gen. xxvii, 12-14.

³⁷ Deut. xxvii. 1-13. The altar in verse 4, according to the present Hebrew text, was to be on Ebal. The Samaritan text reads here Gerizim; and this is the main point, in which they charge the Jews with corrupting the text.

³⁸ Joseph. Ant. IV. 8.44. Comp. Judg. ix.7.

³⁹ Josh. xx. 7. xxi. 20, 21.

⁴⁰ Josh. xxiv. 1, 25.

treacherous to the usurper, and the city was destroyed by him.⁴¹ At Shechem all Israel came together to make Rehoboam king; here the ten tribes rebelled; and the city became for a time the royal residence of Jeroboam.⁴² We hear nothing more of it before the exile; during which it seems still to have been inhabited.⁴³

After the exile, Shechem is mainly known as the chief seat of the people who thenceforth bore the name of Samaritans. Of the origin of this people we have no ancient account, except in the Scriptures and in Josephus. It appears that after the carrying away captive of the Israelites from Mount Ephraim and the region of Samaria by the Assyrian Shalmaneser, the same monarch brought men from Babylon, and from other eastern countries, "and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria and dwelt in the cities thereof."⁴⁴

(p. 116) Visited and disturbed by lions, this people applied to the king of Assyria for one of the Israelitish priests, to "teach them the manner of the God of the land;" and one was sent accordingly, and took up his abode at Bethel, the former scene of Jeroboam's idolatry. So "they feared the Lord, and served their own gods," each his own national idols; "and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places." This continued to be the case down to the time when the scriptural account was written; and it was this people, according to Josephus, who were called in Hebrew Cutheans, and in the Greek language Samaritans.⁴⁵

According to these accounts, it appears that the Samaritans were originally foreigners, having nothing in common with the Jews; and not a mixed race, as is commonly assumed, except so far as a few straggling Israelites may not improbably have remained in their homes.⁴⁶ The introduction of the Pentateuch among them is sufficiently accounted for, by the return of the Israelitish priest to Bethel, and the partial renewal of the Israelitish worship. When the Jews returned under Zerubbabel from their exile, and began to rebuild Jerusalem and their temple, the Samaritans also desired to aid them in the work: "Let us build with you; for we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon."⁴⁷ It was the refusal of the Jews to admit them to this privilege, that gave rise to the subsequent hatred between the two races; and from that moment the Samaritans did all they could, to hinder the rebuilding both of the temple and the city.⁴⁸

(p. 117) It was the same refusal, probably, and subsequent acts of mutual hatred, that stimulated the Samaritans to erect a temple of their own upon Mount Gerizim. The immediate occasion appears to have been the circumstance related by Nehemiah, that a son of Joiada the high-priest had become son-in-law to Sanballat, and had on this account been expelled from Jerusalem.⁴⁹ According to Josephus, this person was Manasseh, a brother of the high-priest Jaddus, and was expelled as having married the daughter of Sanballat the Persian governor of Samaria under Darius Codomanus and Alexander the Great, about 330 B. C. some eighty years later than the time of

⁴¹ Judg. ix. 1-49.

⁴² 1 Kings xii. 1, 12-16, 25.

⁴³ Jer. Xli. 5.

⁴⁴ 2 Kingsd xvii. 3,6,24. Joseph. Antiq. IX. 14. 1, 3. X. 9.7.-The Samaritans themselves afterwards refer their transportation into the land to Esar-haddon, Ezra iv. 2. This may have been a later emigration.

⁴⁵ 2 Kings xviii. 25-34, 41. Joseph. Ant. l.c.

⁴⁶ The common view is perhaps most strongly stated by De Sacy, Corresp. Des. Samaritans, p. 3, in Notices et Extr. Des MSS. De la Biblioth. Du Roi, Tom. XII. For the opposite view, see Hengstenberg Authentie des Pentat. I. p. 1, seq.

⁴⁷ Ezra iv. 2.

⁴⁸ Ezra c. 4. Nehem. C. iv, vi. Joseph. Ant. XI. 4, 9..

⁴⁹ Neh. xiii. 28.

Nehemiah.⁵⁰ The same writer relates, that Manasseh withdrew to the Samaritans; and that Sanballat his father-in-law, having joined Alexander the Great before Tyre, obtained from that monarch permission to erect a temple on Mount Gerizim, in which he constituted Manasseh high-priest.⁵¹ Sichem, at the foot of Gerizim, now became the metropolis of the Samaritans, and was inhabited by apostate Jews; and according to Josephus, if a Jew at Jerusalem was called to an account for eating unclean food, or for breaking the Sabbath, or for any similar crime, he fled to the Sichemites, declaring himself to be unjustly accused.⁵²

The mutual hatred continued to increase, each party contending for the sanctity of their own temple;⁵³ though the Jewish historian, with apparent justice, accuses the Samaritans of professing to be Jews and descended from Joseph, when this might tend to their advantage; or of disclaiming all kindred and connection with them, when this would better serve their turn.⁵⁴ Broils sometimes ensued;⁵⁵ and at length the temple on Gerizim was destroyed by John Hyrcanus, about 129 B. C. after having stood, according to Josephus, about two hundred years.⁵⁶ The broils continued, and the hatred increased. Under the procurator Coponius, who followed Archelaus, a Samaritan entered Jerusalem secretly and polluted the whole temple, by scattering in it human bones.⁵⁷ The name Samaritan had now become among the Jews a by-word and term of reproach; and all intercourse with them was avoided. Of this we find various traces in the New Testament. Jesus himself was called a Samaritan in scorn; and the seventy disciples, when first sent out, were not to go to the cities of the Samaritans, since they did not belong to the house of Israel.⁵⁸ They still clung to their worship on Mount Gerizim; and lived in expectation of a Messiah.⁵⁹ In consequence of this hatred, and in allusion to this idolatry, the town of Sichem probably received among the Jewish common people the by-name Sychar, which we find in the Gospel of St. John; while Stephen, in addressing the more courtly Sanhedrim, employs the ancient name.⁶⁰ Yet many of the Samaritans believed (p. 119) on Christ in Sichem itself; and afterwards, churches were gathered in their towns and villages by the apostles.⁶¹

⁵⁰ Joseph. Antiq. XI/ 7. 2. This would seem most probably to be a chronological error on the part of Josephus; since it is hardly supposable, that the very same fact, with the like circumstances, should occur at two different times to different persons bearing the same names. Hence too the building of the temple on Gerizim, is probably to be placed earlier than the time of Alexander.

⁵¹ Joseph. Ant. XI. 8.2,4.

⁵² Ibid. XI. 8.6, Σαμα.....[Greek not shown here is original book] Ib. 8.7.- Comp. Jahn Bibl. Archaeol. Th. II. Bd. II. P. 303.

⁵³ Jos. Ant. XII. 1.1. XIII. 3.4.

⁵⁴ Jos. Ant. IX. 14. 3. Thus towards Alexander they professed to be Hebrews, ib. XI.8.6. With Antiochus they claimed to be Medes and Persians, and asked permission to dedicate their temple to Jupiter Hellenius; ib. XII. 5.5. Comp. 2 Macc. Vi.2.

⁵⁵ Jos. Ant. XII. 4.1. XIII.3. 4. ib. 10.2. XIV. 6.2.

⁵⁶ Ibid. XIII. 9.1. B.J. I. 2.6.

⁵⁷ Jos. Ant. XVIII. 2.2. Comp. XX. 6.1.

⁵⁸ John viii. 48. iv. 9, 27. Matt. X.5. Luke xvii. 16, 18. See also Sirac. 1. 25, 26,[Greek not shown here is original book] Testam. XII. Patriarch. P. 564.

⁵⁹ John iv. 20, 25.

⁶⁰ John iv. 5. Acts vii. 16.- This name Sychar (Συγαό) might come from Heb. שקר *falsehood*, spoken of idols, Hab. ii. 18; or also from שכור drunkard, in allusion to Isa. xxviii. 1, 7. Comp. Sirac. 1. 26. Test. XII. Patr. P. 564,

.....[Greek not shown here is original book] The Jews were fond of as such slight like-sounding perversions of the proper names; so the change between זבוב *Beelzebub*, 2 Kings i. 2,3, and Βεελζεβούλ *Beelzebul*, applied in the N.T. to Satan, Matt. X.25, etc. So too Bethaven for Bethel, Hos. iv. 15. c. 8; comp. Amos v. 5. See Reland Sisert. Miscell. I. p. 140, seq. Hengstenb. Auth. Des Pentat. I. p. 25, seq.

⁶¹ John iv. 39-42. Act. Viii. 5-25. ix. 31.

Not long after the times of the New Testament, the city of Sichem received the new name of Neapolis, which remains to the present day in the Arabic form Nabulus. This took place apparently under Vespasian: for the coins of the city, of which there are many from Titus to Volusianus, bear the inscription "Flavia Neapolis;" the former epithet being adopted in honour of Flavius Vespasian, probably in consequence of some benefit conferred by him.⁶² The name Neapolis is already mentioned by Josephus, and also by Pliny, who died A. D. 79; and both these writers affirm, that the place was before called Mabortha or Mamortha by its inhabitants; a circumstance of which there seems to be no further historical trace, and no very satisfactory solution.⁶³

There is also a question, whether Neapolis occupied, or now occupies, precisely the same spot as Sichem; though the fact of their general identity does not appear (p. 120) to be doubtful.⁶⁴ The difficulty has apparently arisen, from what seems to have been a mere hypothesis current in the days of Eusebius, when the rage for pilgrimages and the finding out of scriptural places was just beginning. At that time Sychar and Sichem were regarded as two distinct places, and both of them different from Neapolis. Eusebius says expressly, that Sychar lay before (east of) Neapolis by the field of Joseph with Jacob's well; while Sichem was pointed out as a deserted place in the suburbs of Neapolis, where was also Joseph's tomb.⁶⁵ The Bourdeaux pilgrim in the same age (A. D. 333) is more specific. According to him, by Neapolis at the foot of Mount Gerizim, lay the place called Sichem, where was the monument of Joseph; and at one Roman mile further was Sychar, whence the Samaritan woman came to draw water at Jacob's well.⁶⁶

It is hardly necessary to remark upon the confusion and inconsistency of all this, and how strongly it savours of the spirit of the age. Nor did this hypothesis continue long. Jerome, who had more of critical acumen than most of his contemporaries; and who in his version of the Onomasticon, had contented himself with simply translating Eusebius' account of a distinct Sychar and Sichem; comes out boldly in other places, and pronounces Sychar to be merely an erroneous reading for Sichem, which latter he declares to be identical with Neapolis.⁶⁷ From that time onwards, (p. 121) this identity does not appear to have been again drawn in question. Yet in all probability, the ancient city was much larger than the Neapolis of Eusebius; and there is nothing incredible in the idea, that a portion of its ruins may still have been seen on the East of the latter place, stretching down for some distance towards Jacob's well, or even near to it. Jerusalem itself extended anciently much further North and South, than at the present day. That such ruins should now have disappeared around Nabulus, is not surprising; the stones would very naturally be used in the structures of the modern city.⁶⁸

Indeed, if we may credit the accounts of Josephus, the Neapolis of his day appears to have had a population far greater than that of the present city; and the people continued long to be known

⁶² For this custom of cities adopting the names of their benefactor on coins, see above, Vol. II. Pp. 408, 409. Note 3.- For the coins of Neapolis, see Eckhel Doctr. Nummor. III. P. 433, seq. Mionnet Medailles Antiques, Tom. V. p. 499. Suppl. VIII. p. 344, seq.

⁶³ Jos. B.J. IV. 8.1,[Greek not shown here is original book]. Plin. H. N. V. 13, "Neapolis, quae ante Mamortha dicebatur." Harduin professes to give a coin of Marcus Aurelius with the reading: NEA. MHTPO-IIOA. MOPΘIA, to which he prefixes ΦA.) which last word MOPΘIA Cellarius and Reland take for the name Mamortha, and attempt to explain it. But I find no such inscription among all the 3 coins in Eckhel and Mionnet; and there certainly is no sufficient ground to make out of it *Flavia Neapolis*, which was not a metropolis. See Harduin Nummor. Antiq. Populorum et urbium Illustr. P. 341. Cellarius Collectanea Hist. Samar. P. 10. Reland Dissert. Miscell. I. p. 137, seq.

⁶⁴ See p. 114, Note 1.

⁶⁵ Onomast. arts. *Sichar*, *Sichem*. See also arts. *Luza*, *Terebinthus*. Reland Palaest. p. 1004.

⁶⁶ Itin. Hierosol. ed. Wessel

⁶⁷ [please find original book [here](#) for original foot notes, This editor is having trouble finding the time to finish]

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chiefly by the name of Samaritans. So early as the time of Pilate, we read of a tumult and sedition excited among them by an adventurer, who persuaded the common people to follow him to the summit of Mount Gerizim, where he proposed to show them the golden vessels which Moses in ancient times had buried there. But Pilate ordered troops to attack this multitude; and having dispersed them, caused many of the leaders to be put to death. The Samaritans complained of him before Vitellius, then proconsul of Syria; and this was the occasion of Pilate's being deposed and sent to Rome.⁶⁹ In general, the Samaritans would seem to have been no less hostile to the Romans, than were (p. 122) the Jews themselves. While Vespasian was engaged in subduing various portions of the country, a great multitude of the Samaritans collected and posted themselves upon Mount Gerizim. Vespasian anticipating their movements, sent against them Cerealis with a body of troops; who ultimately surrounded them, and having in vain proposed terms of submission, attacked them and slew to the number of eleven thousand six hundred persons.⁷⁰ Whether the city itself was destroyed or rebuilt by Vespasian, we are not informed.

The Samaritan worship would appear to have long continued predominant at Neapolis; for upon the coins of the subsequent centuries, we find Mount Gerizim with its temple depicted as the symbol of the city. There is indeed no historical testimony, that the former temple was ever rebuilt; yet there was doubtless an altar, or some kind of structure, where their worship was held. The Samaritans are not mentioned in connection with the Jewish war and catastrophe under Adrian; but under Septimius Severus, about A. D. 200, they appear to have made common cause with the Jews against that emperor; and Neapolis was deprived by him of its rights as a city.⁷¹ In that and the following centuries, the Samaritans were spread extensively not only in Egypt and the East, but also in the West as far as to Rome itself; where they had a synagogue in the time of Theodoric, after A. D. 493.⁷² (p. 123) Their occupation appears to have been chiefly that of merchants and money-changers, much like the Jews.⁷³

There had already been converts to the Christian faith in Neapolis under our Saviour; and in all probability a church had been gathered here, during the ministry of the apostles.⁷⁴ The celebrated Justin Martyr, who suffered at Rome about A. D. 163, was a native of this city.⁷⁵ It also became early the seat of a Christian bishop. The name of Germanus, bishop of Neapolis, appears among the subscriptions to the councils of Ancyra and Neocaesarea A. D. 314, and to that of Nicea A. D. 325; while the names of four others are also preserved, the last of whom, John, was a signer at the synod of Jerusalem A. D. 536.⁷⁶ The general condition of the city in the fourth and fifth centuries, as reported by Eusebius, the Bourdeaux pilgrim, and Jerome, we have already seen.⁷⁷ Nearly a century later, the hatred of the Samaritans broke out against the Christians, and gave rise anew to scenes of tumult and slaughter.

The historian Procopius relates, that under the reign of Zeno (after A. D. 474) a tumult arose at Neapolis, in which the Samaritans rushed in great numbers into the church, where the Christians were celebrating the festival of Pentecost, killed many, maimed the bishop Terebinthus by cutting off his fingers, and committed other horrible atrocities. The bishop re- (p. 124) paired himself to

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Constantinople, and made complaint to the emperor; who immediately took measures to punish the guilty. The Samaritans were driven from Mount Gerizim, which was made over to the Christians; and Zeno erected there a church in honour of the virgin, which he surrounded by what in appearance was a wall, though in reality only a fence; stationing a strong garrison below in the city, but only a small guard at the church above.

The Samaritans smothered their indignation for a time;⁷⁸ but it broke out again under Anastasius and Justinian. During the reign of the former, a band of this people, under the guidance of a woman, ascended Mount Gerizim from a different side, seized upon the church, and slew the guard; but the troops in the city were able to prevent their being supported by the inhabitants, and the ringleaders were seized and punished. In respect to the troubles under Justinian, Procopius only remarks, that this emperor erected outside of the former wall or fence around the church on Mount Gerizim, a second wall, which, while it left the appearance of the work unchanged, rendered it wholly impregnable. This was probably the fortress, the ruins of which are still seen upon the mountain, bearing every mark of a Roman origin. The emperor also caused the five Christian churches, destroyed by the Samaritans in the city itself, to be rebuilt.⁷⁹

The Samaritan insurrection under Justinian, is more fully described by Cyrill of Scythopolis in his Life of St. Sabas. According to him, the whole race of the Samaritans in Palestine rose upon the Christians, in May, A. D. 529, the third year of Justinian's reign. They perpetrated many atrocities, plundering and burning churches, torturing Christians to death, and setting on fire whole villages, especially in the vicinity of Neapolis, their head-quarters. Here they put the bishop Ammonas to death, and set up a leader of their own, Julian, whom they crowned as king. The emperor immediately sent troops against them; a battle took place; and Julian with an immense number of the Samaritans was slain. The holy Sabas now repaired to Constantinople in the name of the Christians of Palestine, to ask for a remission of tribute on account of the devastations of the Samaritans, and protection against their future machinations. The emperor granted all his requests; remitted the tribute; ordered the churches to be rebuilt; and by an edict took away from the Samaritans all their synagogues, and declared them incapable of holding any public employment, or of acquiring property by inheritance or by gift among themselves.⁸⁰ This testimony is borne out also by the laws of Justinian.⁸¹ The same general account is likewise given by Theophanes and Euty chius; from the former of whom it appears, that many of the Samaritans fled to Chosroes king of Persia, who was induced by their persuasion not to make peace with Justinian.³ Many also became Christians.⁴ From that time onwards, the existence of the Samaritans is rarely mentioned in history.

(p. 126) On the invasion of the Muhammedans, and while the siege of Jerusalem was going on, Neapolis, Sehaste, and other smaller towns, were brought under the power of the conquerors.⁸² From that time until the crusades, we hear nothing further of Neapolis; except the slight notices of the few pilgrims, who mention only Jacob's well and Mount Gerizim.⁸³ Immediately after the capture of Jerusalem by the crusaders, some of the chiefs from the mountains of Samaria around Neapolis came to the Christian camp, bringing presents, and inviting the Franks to take possession of those towns; which was done by Tancred without resistance.⁸⁴ In A. D. 1113 Neapolis was laid

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waste during a temporary incursion of the Saracens.⁸⁵ Under king Baldwin II. in A. D. 1120, an assembly of prelates and nobles was held at Neapolis to consult upon the state of the country, then visited with the judgments of God for the sins of the people, and suffering not only from the assaults of the common enemy, but also from frequent earthquakes, and from the plague of locusts and mice during four successive years. The conclusions of this assembly were directed against the enormous lewdness and other vices prevalent among the crusaders; and copies of them were everywhere deposited in the churches.⁸⁶

Neapolis was not itself made a Latin bishopric, but belonged probably to that of Samaria; and the property of it was assigned to the abbot and canons of (p. 127) the church of the Holy Sepulchre.⁸⁷ The city did not escape the calamities of those days. In A. D. 1184 it was plundered by Saladin after his repulse from Kerak.⁸⁸ It remained however in the hands of the Christians; for two years later, A. D. 1186, Count Raymond and the priests and barons who opposed the usurpation of Sibylla and her husband Guy of Lusignan, made it their rendezvous.⁸⁹ Immediately after the fatal battle of Hattin in 1187, Neapolis was laid waste, and the holy places around it polluted, with many atrocities, by a portion of the troops of Saladin.⁹⁰ In A. D. 1242 it appears again to have fallen into the hands of the Christians; but two years later was captured by Abu 'Aly, the colleague of Bibars.⁹¹ Since that time it has remained in the hands of the Muhammedans, apparently without great change; and is mentioned by all travellers who have passed by the direct route, between Jerusalem and Nazareth or 'Akka.

It is singular that the Christian historians of the crusades, appear to make no allusion whatever to the existence of the Samaritans at Nabulus; they probably regarded them as Jews, of whom in like manner they make little mention. The Jewish traveller Benjamin of Tudela, in the last half of the twelfth century, was the first to bring them again into notice. He speaks at Nabulus of the Cutheans, who amounted to about one hundred persons, and were called Samaritans; they professed to be of the tribe of Ephraim, and had priests descended from the family of Aaron. He describes them much as they are at the present day; they had their synagogue, and sacrificed on Mount (p. 128) Gerizim on the day of the Passover and other festivals.⁹² Arabian writers of the same period speak also of the Samaritans, whom they confound with the Jews.⁹³

The first Christian travellers who appear to have noticed this people, are William of Baldensel in A. D. 1336, and Sir John Maundeville about the same time; the former describes the Samaritans as a singular sect, differing alike from Christians, Jews, Saracens, and Pagans; and distinguished from all by their red turbans, as at the present day.⁹⁴ The pilgrims of the following centuries appear seldom to have taken this route; and I find no further mention of the Samaritans until Cotovicus in A. D. 1598, who speaks of them as a sect of the Jews, but without affording any particulars concerning them.⁹⁵ Delia Valle, in the early part of the next (seventeenth) century, was the first to

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⁹³ So the Arabian geographer Yakut about A.D. 1200; see Schultens Ind. Geogr. In Vit. Salad. Art. *Neapolis*. Abulfeda Tab. Syr. P. 85. Mejr ed-Din in Fundgr. Des Or. II. P. 139.

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give some account of them; Maundrell in A. D. 1697 visited and describes them; and Morison also slightly mentions them in the following year.⁹⁶ During the eighteenth century, they appear to have been noticed by very few if any travellers; indeed almost no Frank passed on this route. Within the present century they have again been brought more into notice; although few travellers have taken the pains to visit them.⁹⁷

(p. 129) A greater interest however has been excited in behalf of the Samaritans, and more information acquired respecting them, in consequence of their correspondence with several learned Europeans, and the publication of their copies of the Pentateuch. The existence of the Pentateuch among them, appears to have been early known to scholars; and Julius Scaliger, in the sixteenth century, was the first, according to De Sacy, to point out the importance of obtaining copies of it in Europe.⁹⁸ This wish was first fulfilled by the traveller Delia Valle in A. D. 1616. When at Constantinople on his way to the East, he was commissioned by De Sancy, then French ambassador in that city, to purchase Samaritan manuscripts; and after attempting it in vain at Cairo, Gaza, and Nabulus, he was able to procure at Damascus two copies of the Pentateuch. One, on parchment, exhibiting the Hebrew text in Samaritan characters, he transmitted to the ambassador; the other, on paper, containing the Samaritan version, he retained for himself.⁹⁹ The former was sent by De Sancy to the library of the Oratoire in Paris, and was published by J. Morin in the Paris Polyglott; the latter was loaned by Delia Valle to the same editor, and appeared also in the same work.¹⁰⁰ Both were afterwards reprinted with slight corrections in the London Polyglott. The munificence of Archbishop Usher was able to procure, not long after, no fewer than six additional manuscripts of the Hebrew- (p. 130) Samaritan Pentateuch; another was sent to England by Robert Huntington about A. D. 1672; and the number continued to increase, so that Kennicott was able to collate, for his great work, not less than sixteen manuscripts more or less complete. Of these, six are in the Bodleian Library, and one in the British Museum.¹⁰¹—The Samaritan-Arabic version of Abu Sa'id has never yet been fully printed; but lies in seven manuscripts in the libraries of Rome, Oxford, Paris and Leyden.¹⁰² The general merits of all these copies of the Pentateuch, have been investigated by able scholars.¹⁰³

Long before the wish of the elder Scaliger had thus been fulfilled, in the acquisition and publication of the Samaritan Pentateuch, his son Joseph Scaliger had attempted to open a direct correspondence with that people themselves; and had written to their communities in Nabulus and Cairo. Answers were sent from both these places; but although dated in the year 998 of the Hejra, A. D. 1589, they never reached Scaliger, who died A. D. 1609. After passing through several hands, they came into the possession of J. Morin, who made a Latin translation of them, which was published after his death.¹⁰⁴ The originals are in (p. 131) the Royal Library at Paris; and the text, with a more accurate version, has been published by De Sacy.¹⁰⁵

In A. D. 1671, Robert Huntington, who was then chaplain of the English Factory at Aleppo, and died in 1701 as bishop of Raphoe in Ireland, visited the Samaritans at Nabulus on his way to

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Jerusalem. They appear to have received from him, through some misapprehension, the impression, that there were Samaritans in England; and he proposed to them to write to their brethren in that country, giving a summary of their doctrines and rites, and to transmit at the same time a copy of their law. A manuscript of the Pentateuch was accordingly put into his hands, and a letter sent after him to Jerusalem; both of which he forwarded to England. The letter was answered by Thomas Marshall, Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford; and the correspondence thus commenced, continued until A. D. 1688, chiefly through Huntington at Aleppo. This correspondence, extending to six letters from the Samaritans, so far as it has been preserved in passing piecemeal through various hands, has been first fully published by De Sacy.¹⁰⁶

In the mean time, another correspondence had been commenced with the Samaritans of Nabulus, by the celebrated Ludolf. Taking advantage of the return of a Jewish agent to Palestine in A. D. 1684, he sent by him a letter, written in Hebrew with Samaritan characters; and received from the Samaritans two letters in reply, in the same language and character, dated in 1685. These were soon published by Cellarius.¹⁰⁷ Ludolf wrote again, and received another letter (p. 132) in 1691, which was not published until long afterwards.¹⁰⁸

For more than a century, these various letters continued to be the only source accessible to the scholars of Europe, from which a knowledge of the tenets and ceremonies of the Samaritans could be derived. In A. D. 1807, the French bishop and senator Gregoire again took up the subject; and, by his influence, instructions were sent to the French consuls in the Levant, to make inquiries respecting the Samaritans. The consul at Aleppo opened a communication with those at Nabulus, and received from them a letter in 1808, which was forwarded to Europe, written in Arabic by the priest Selameh, son of Tobias, probably the same person whom we saw. This letter came into the hands of De Sacy, who answered for Gregoire; and received in 1811 a reply in Hebrew, written with Samaritan characters. Another letter arrived for De Sacy in 1820, and also one addressed to a supposed Samaritan community in Paris; for which likewise a second letter came in 1826. These five letters have been published by this learned orientalist, in the collection so often referred to.¹⁰⁹

The published literature of the Samaritans, therefore, consists of the various copies of the Pentateuch in whole or in part; and of this series of their letters at four different periods, stretching through an interval of nearly two and a half centuries.¹¹⁰ In addition to this, Gesenius discovered, in a Samaritan manuscript in (p. 133) England, a curious collection of hymns, chiefly of a doctrinal nature, which he has published with a commentary.¹¹¹ They possess also manuscripts of a work professing to be the book of Joshua, often mentioned in their letters. It has never yet been printed; but a manuscript of an Arabic version, written in the Samaritan character, was procured by Joseph Scaliger for the library of the university of Leyden. The work is a sort of chronicle extending from Moses to the time of Alexander Severus; and, in the period parallel to the book of Joshua, has a strong affinity with that book.¹¹² Accounts of their tenets and rites have been often drawn up from these various sources, to which I can here only refer.¹¹³

From the earliest letters of the Samaritans and from the accounts of Delia Valle, it appears, that, two centuries ago, they had small communities in Cairo, Gaza, Nabulus, and Damascus. The three

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former are mentioned repeatedly in their letters; the latter we know only from Delia Valle, who purchased at Damascus his copies of the Pentateuch. They seem to have been only a few families, in the gardens outside of the city; perhaps a temporary establishment; and we hear no more of them.¹¹⁴ Those of Nabulus and Gaza appear to have stood in close connection; and one of the letters to England was written from the latter place.⁵ In their first answer to the inquiries of (p. 134) Gregoire (A. D. 1808), they say that for more than a century there had been no Samaritans in Egypt; and that they then existed only at Nabulus and Yafa.¹¹⁵ There may have been an agent of the community, or perhaps a family or two then at Yafa; but at the time of our visit, neither they nor any one else spoke of any Samaritans except at Nabulus; our Samaritan guide certainly knew of no other.¹¹⁶ It appears to be the last isolated remnant of a remarkable people, clinging now for more than two thousand years around this central spot of their religion and history, and lingering slowly to decay; after having survived the many revolutions and convulsions, which in that long interval have swept over this unhappy land; a reed continually shaken with the wind, but bowing before the storm.

The modern history of Nabulus and the surrounding region, is one of wars and rebellion. These districts were formerly regarded as among the most dangerous in Palestine; and for this reason, during the whole of the eighteenth century, the great body of travellers avoided this route, and passed between Jerusalem and Nazareth by way of Yafa and 'Akka. The country around Nabulus belonged first to the Pashalik of Damascus, and then nominally to that of 'Akka; but (p. 135) the inhabitants were governed by their own chiefs, who were invested by the Pasha. They were known as a restless people, continually in dispute with each other; frequently in insurrection against the government; and ever ready to plunder the traveller, who might venture among them without proper protection. Even the notorious Jezzar of 'Akka never succeeded in completely subduing them; and Junot with a body of fifteen hundred French soldiers was defeated by them. Such is the account of Burckhardt;¹¹⁷ and when too Dr. Clarke travelled from Nazareth to Jerusalem in 1801, he had a military escort, and found the country full of rebels.² Indeed, just before the Egyptian conquest, the fortress of Saniir, often the strong-hold of rebels, had been destroyed by Abdallah, Pasha of 'Akka, after a siege of several months.

Times have changed under the Egyptian government; which has taken the administration into its own hands, and crushed the power of the popular chiefs. This district is now quiet and safe, like the rest of the land. Yet this state of things was not brought about without a struggle. In A. D. 1834, on occasion of a levy, the people of the district of Nabulus, like those of Jerusalem and Hebron, rose in rebellion against the Egyptians. The insurrection was so important, that Ibrahim Pasha himself took command of the troops sent to quell it; and encountering a body of the insurgent peasants at Zeita, a village in the northwest part of the province of Nabulus, put them to flight, after killing ninety men. Another large body had posted themselves at Deir, a village on a steep hill not far from Zeita; they were in like manner defeated by storming the hill; and fled, leaving three hundred slain. Ibrahim now repaired with his troops to Nabulus, and (p. 136) the whole district submitted without further resistance. Yet the war continued for a still longer time in the region of Hebron.¹¹⁸

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Friday, June 15th. We rose early, awakened by the songs of nightingales and other birds, of which the gardens around us were full. We had engaged a guide as far as to Nazareth, a Christian formerly from Beirut, who had often travelled through the country, and professed to know all about it. Our plan for today was to visit Sebastieh, and then reach Jenin.

It was 7 o'clock before we set off, proceeding down the valley at first W. N. W. and then generally N. W. on the way to Sebastieh. The direct road for Jenin ascends the northern hill at once from Nabulus, and keeping along on high ground, leaves Sebastieh at some distance on the left. After fifteen minutes there was on our road a fine large fountain by the path; and near by we met a string of camels loaded with salt from el-'Arish, where it is gathered on the flats along the sea. The whole valley of Nabulus is full of fountains, irrigating it most abundantly; and for that very reason not flowing off in any large stream. The valley is rich, fertile, and beautifully green, as might be expected from this bountiful supply of water. The sides of the valley too, the continuation of Gerizim and Ebal, are studded with villages, some of them large; and these again are surrounded with extensive tilled fields and olive-groves; so that the whole valley presents a more beautiful and inviting landscape of green hills and dales, than perhaps any other part of Palestine. It is the deep verdure arising from the (p. 137) abundance of water, which gives it this peculiar charm; in the midst of a land where no rain falls in summer, and where of course the face of nature, in the season of heat and drought, assumes a brown and dreary aspect.

As we descended along the valley, we were opposite to Rafidia at 7" 20', a large village on the side of the southern mountain, inhabited entirely by Christians; and said to contain one hundred and fifteen taxable men, or nearly five hundred inhabitants. At the same time, looking down the valley, we could see Beit Lid at a distance upon the mountains, beyond where the valley turns more northwards, bearing N. 65° W. At a quarter before eight, the village Zawata was on the hill-side at our right; while the top of the mountain on the left was crowned by a ruined castle, called Juneid. Ten minutes further on, Beit Uzin was on the same side; and at 8 o'clock Beit Iba, also on the left hand slope. For some time a fine little brook had been conducted along our path, somewhat above the bottom of the valley; and at this point (8 o'clock) it was turned into a mill-race or aqueduct with twelve unequal pointed arches, leading off for some distance across the valley to an ordinary Arab mill.¹¹⁹ Here our road left the valley, and turned up the hill N. by W. Ten minutes brought us to the top of the first ascent, where two other villages came in sight, Keism and Till Kerani; both at some distance on the opposite mountains.¹²⁰

Our way continued gradually ascending, and crossed a higher tract of uneven ground, which de- (p. 138) clined towards the West; where the valley of Nabulus bends to the N. N. W. and passes off on the left of Sebastieh. Several other villages were now within view on the hills west of the valley; while below us, about half an hour distant, on this side of the Wady, lay the village Deir Sheraf. A fountain was on our way at 8 1/2 o'clock; and ten minutes beyond, we reached a higher point, where we looked down upon Sebastieh and its broad noble basin, into which the valley, coming from Nabulus, may be said to spread out. We could perceive the bed of the Wady as it passes along N. N. W. in the western part of the basin; until beyond the village of Kefr el-Lebad in the N. W. by W. it again bends off more westwards, and descends towards the Mediterranean.

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(p. 268) 'They continued to occupy this district in great numbers; and Epiphanius, himself a native of Palestine, relates in the fourth century, that especially Tiberias, Sepphoris, Nazareth, and

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Capernaum, had long been inhabited exclusively by Jews; and none of any other nation, neither heathen, nor Samaritan, nor Christian, was permitted to dwell among them¹²¹.....

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

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The book with footnotes can be found [here](#)

¹²¹ Epiphan. Adv. Haeres. I. ii. Opp. T. I. p. 136. Paris 1622. Reland Palaest. P. 1038, seq.