THE SAMARITANS IN THE BYZANTINE ORBIT

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The surprisingly large number of historians and chroniclers of Byzantium who make reference to the Samaritans of Palestine have drawn our attention to this people and its miserable lot under Byzantine rule in the Holy Land until the Moslem invasion, early in the 7th century. This people, numerous, vigorous, and showing the same intellectual sap which resulted in a rich literary flowering among their brethren, the Jews, in this same Byzantine era, emerged into the Islamic dawn in the Holy Land, diminished and depleted both in the numerical and in the intellectual senses. It is true that they were able to respond to Islam with a modest flowering of their literature, but they failed to fill the intellectual

1 The initial studies of these materials on the Samaritans in the Byzantine age were those of M. Avi-Yonah, "The Samaritan Revolts Against the Byzantine Empire" (Hebrew), Eretz Israel, IV (1956), 127-132 (hereafter SRABE), English Summary, and "The Samaritans in Romano-Byzantine Times" (Hebrew), Eretz Shomron (ed. J. Abibam), Jerusalem, 1973, pp. 34-47 (hereafter SRBT). Others have dealt with the material briefly, e.g. E. Joshua Starr, The Jews in the Byzantine Empire, 641-1204, reprint of 1939 edn., New York, 1970, or have followed very closely in Avi-Yonah's footsteps, e.g. A. Zertal, "Relationships Between the Samaritans and the Jews in the Byzantine Period" (Hebrew), A.B., Samaritan News 249-250 (1979), pp. 49-52 (hereafter SJBP). The present writer acknowledges Avi-Yonah's pioneering work, but differs from him in interpreting the critical evidence. Especially, this study makes extensive use of recently re-edited Samaritan sources, which are attributed to an earlier period than is usual, thus showing events in a rather different light than seen by Avi-Yonah.

2 This subject has not been explored in any extensive way, though there are numerous studies of parts of their literary and religious life. Our problem today is that the genuine literary remains of the Samaritans from this period are few indeed. We know of the Samaritan Gnostics who were able to offer alternatives to Pauline Christianity. There are a number of non-Greek philosophers and writers who are suspected of being Samaritan — Pseudo Eupolemos, Theodotus, Alexander Polyhistor, Malchos Kleodemos, Ezekiel, and of course there is the documented flowering under Marqa and Amram Darra, which, it is argued below, belongs to the third, rather than to the fourth, century A.D. J.A. Montgomery, The Samaritans, Philadelphia, 1907 (hereafter TS), (or reprints) has some preliminary thoughts on the subject, but these need amplification in the light of nearly a century of research.

3 For the writings of the Islamic period and for an analysis of Samaritan
lacuna left by their three-and-a-half century tussle with Byzan-
tium. As a result, their religion, even today, lacks the speculative
structures with which to make well-considered accomodations
with changing life-styles and circumstances4.

Before we consider the details of what happened in the cen-
turies of the transfer of rule in the Holy Land from Rome and
Ravenna to Byzantium and then to Islam, that transformed this
flourishing people into a remnant, we must note, if somewhat
briefly, who they were. In this vexed question itself lie several
important seeds of their near-destruction, namely, the identity
attached to them by their enemies, their relationships with the
Jews, and their preparedness to do battle with superior military
forces.

The Old Testament, in what is generally considered to be a not
unbiased account (II Kings, 17)5, indicates that the Samaritans
were aliens, brought into Canaan by Shalmaneser V and Sargon
II, Kings of Assyria, in the 8th century B.C. to fill the void left by
a wholesale deportation of the Israelites. The evidence allows for
there to be some element of truth in the tale, but it is evidently not
the whole truth, for there was but a partial displacement and
resettlement of the Israelite indigenes6. The archaeological record,
not to mention the sacred writ itself, indicates that the acultur-
ation of the newcomers to the local, continuing mores, was rapid.
Thus, the Samaritan claim that they represent a continuing
Israelite tradition and that they are Israelites, has some justice.

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4 For an analysis of Samaritan halachah and its governing principles, cf. I.R.
in the series Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity.)
5 There are many studies of Samaritan origins. A convenient recent account is
that of R.J. Coggins, Samaritans and Jews. The Origins of the Samaritans
Reconsidered, Oxford, 1975. The Biblical material is adequately handled in this
survey.
6 Cf. B. Oded, Mass Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire (Weisbaden,
examination of the evidence", First International Symposium on Palestine
Antiquities, Beirut, 1981, is not even prepared to go as far as the cautious
statement made here.
The various names attached to the Samaritans underscore both their claim and the polemical attitude of others to them. The Jews called them Cutheans or Kuttim, i.e., foreigners from Cutha, resettled in the 8th century B.C. The Old Testament calls them Samarians, a name still utilised by Josephus. However, there is no doubt that the name had begun to have polemical overtones, for some Greek writers use the form Σαμάριτης, Samarites, instead of Σαμαριτας, Samarian. The Samaritans themselves understood the equivalent word, Shomerim, not to refer to Samaria at all but to their self-appointed role as true guardians/ Shomerim of the Law of Moses. This meaning, too, was known to Jerome in the 4th century A.D. It was their claim to be Israelites rather than Jews that was a key factor in their undoing. Despite their claim to be Israelites, they were perfectly willing to denounce any relationship with the Jews when it suited them. In such a manner they distanced themselves from the Jews during the Maccabean wars, as a result paying a penalty in the destruction of their temple by John Hyrcanus. However, despite friction between the Samaritans and the Jews there was more that united them than divided them. They spoke the same language, and had similar life styles, based on the commandments and moral values of the Pentateuch. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. the Jews and Samaritans formed the majority of the population of the Holy Land and the Samaritans tended to participate in the political struggles of the Jews with the governing powers.

7 The pejorative nature of this name is to be most clearly seen in the tractate Cuthim of the Babylonian Talmud. The town of Cutha was identifiable by its name Kuta under the Abbasid Caliphate.
8 II Kings, 17:29. In this verse there can be no doubt that the resettled immigrants were equated with the "former" inhabitants of the northern kingdom, the Samarians.
9 Shomraye, also the term used by Bar Hebraeus. Whether he used the name in the Samaritan sense or as the equivalent of Samaritan is not clear.
10 AJ, xii. 257-60. They claimed to be Sidonians rather than Israelites in a letter to Antiochus Epiphanes.
11 The closeness of the parallels is apparent if one examines the Samaritan calendar in detail, in its relationship to Jewish and sectarian calendars (e.g. cf. J. van Goudoever, Biblical Calendars, Leiden, 1961) and if one considers the references to the Samaritans in Rabbinic literature (e.g. in Y. Herskovits, "The Samaritans in Tannaitic Literature" (Hebrew), Yavneh, ii (1940), 71-105.
12 Cf., Shmuel Safrai, "The Era of the Mishnah and Talmud (70-640)" in
In the second century, when the Samaritans joined the Jews in the great revolt, circumcision was interdicted and both, alike, suffered\textsuperscript{13}. However, when the ban was eventually lifted, it is uncertain whether it was lifted for the Jews alone or whether the Samaritans were regarded as gentiles and thus continued to circumcise their children at great risk. Antoninus' rescript in which he exempted the Jews from Hadrian's ban on circumcision imposed penalties on anyone who performed the operation on a non-Jew\textsuperscript{14}. However, the Samaritan chronicles, which had an ambiguous but fundamentally hostile attitude to Hadrian, speak of Antoninus as "a man beloved of the Samaritans, who observed the Hebrew Torah and Targummim and lived in conformity with them". This assessment of Antoninus would incline us to the belief that the Samaritans were recognised by him as a variety of the Jews and were exempted from the ban, like the Jews\textsuperscript{15}. However, this view sits uncomfortably with the words of Origen (\textit{Contra Celsum}, xi:13): "They [the Samaritans] are put to death on account of circumcision as Sicarii, on the ground that they are doing what is allowed to Jews alone". We must assume that Origen, writing late in the second century or early in the third century, was reflecting events under Commodus (180-193 A.D.), who is said to have treated the Samaritans with especial cruelty\textsuperscript{16}.

Whatever the case, the Jews seem to have accepted the Samaritans as brethren, albeit with some reserve, until the late third century. Their food appears to have been regarded as trustworthy in meeting Jewish halachic requirements and their rituals were regarded as meeting halachic standards, at least where

\textsuperscript{13} A detailed discussion of the Hadrianic persecution and the place of circumcision in that persecution is to be found in E. Mary Smallwood, \textit{The Jews Under Roman Rule. From Pompey to Diocletian} (Leiden, 1981), pp. 463-66.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 467-72.

\textsuperscript{15} Cf., P. Stenhouse, \textit{The Kitab al Tarikh of Abu'l Fath}, Sydney, Ph.D., 1980 (hereafter \textit{KTAF}). There is a fourth volume, a companion to the thesis, which presents a translation of the Chronicle. The relevant section (pp. 127-8) of Abu'l Fath, falls on pp. 161-2 of the companion volume. Safrai (op. cit., p. 335) takes the view that the Samaritans were never exempted from the Hadrianic ban.

\textsuperscript{16} Cf., \textit{KTAF}, pp. 165-8. The description of Commodus' persecution is detailed and vivid, yet Smallwood (op. cit.) does not recognise Commodus was actually in Palestine (but see p. 552). The Procurator in Palestine in Commodus' reign is noted as C. Pescennius Niger (p. 556).
those standards depended directly upon the sacred scriptures and
not upon subsequent oral amplification and definition.\(^{17}\)

The Palestinian Talmud allows us to date, with some precision,
the point at which the Jews began to change their attitude towards
the Samaritans, from a situation in which they accepted their food
to one in which they eschewed their halachic rituals. It is probably
from this same point that the ruling power began to transform
what was largely a negative attitude towards the Samaritans into
one of active intolerance, though the evolution was slow and not
without its regressions. Ultimately the Samaritans were treated
with considerably more harshness than were their Jewish
confrères.

In the Palestinian Targum (*Avodah Zarah*, 5,3-4)\(^{18}\), we are
presented with the text of a discussion about the Samaritans which
shows us that the *Amoraim*, the Rabbinical fathers, would eat
Samaritan food until the late third century. Abbahu, an *Amora* of
Caesaria\(^{19}\), observed that the Samaritans of his youth could be
relied upon, but not those of his day\(^{20}\), for Diocletian had issued a
decree that “every nation must offer a libation except for the
Jews”. The Samaritans had made a libation, apparently of their
own volition, thereby dissociating themselves from the Jews and
rendering their wine suspect on the grounds that it could have
been offered to idols. Abbahu’s opinion is seen to have been
supported by other *Amoraim* in a way that shows that rejection of
the Samaritans, even after their spiritual surrender to Diocletian,
was not immediate. A fourth century *Amora*, Jacob bar Aha\(^{21}\),
speaks of the Samaritans of Caesaria in terms that clearly indicate

\(^{17}\) Cf. Talmud Yerushalmi, *Avodah Zarah*, 5:4. The discussion of the
Samaritan immersion pools (*Mikvaot*) makes it clear that the water is of
acceptable purity, on the basis of Leviticus 11:36, but that the volume of water
(determined by oral tradition) cannot be relied upon. Some interesting but long-
unnoticed comments about the Samaritan habit of immersing themselves are to
be found in Joseph Thomas, *Le Mouvement Baptiste en Palestine et Syrie*
(Gembloux, 1935), ch. 1.

\(^{18}\) A convenient translation is that of Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud of the Land

\(^{19}\) For the date of Abbahu cf. Alfred J. Kolatch, *Who’s Who in the Talmud*,

\(^{20}\) “Samaritans in Caesaria”, asked R. Abbahu, “Your fathers would make
ample use of things that we have prepared. Now why do you not make use of
things that we have prepared?” He said to him, “Your fathers did not ruin
themselves but you have ruined yourself through your deeds”.

\(^{21}\) For this date see Kolatch, op. cit., p. 229.
that they cannot be accepted as Israelites\textsuperscript{22}, yet the discussion
which follows betrayed that this ruling was not universally or
consistently accepted by the Amoraim\textsuperscript{23}.

The ambiguity of the Rabbinic attitude to the Samaritans is
concordant with the ambiguity shown to them by the later Roman
emperors and Byzantine monarchs from Diocletian onwards,
including Constantine, Theodosius, Honorius, Arcadius, Leo,
Zenon, Justin, Justinian and Heraclius. It may well be true that
the Byzantine rulers were anxious to keep Judaism alive albeit
in a subordinate and humbled condition, as its continued
existence was a testimony to the truth of Christianity, and
Samaritanism was not seen in the same light, but this cannot be
the only factor in the Byzantine differentiation between Judaism
and Samaritanism\textsuperscript{24}. It is evident that there is an ambiguity in the
attitude of the Byzantines to the Samaritans. On the one hand the
Samaritans, because of their recorded words and known actions,
were not always deemed to be Jews and it was apparent that there
was a new ambivalence developing in the Jewish attitude to them.
Yet, on the other hand, the edicts directed at the Samaritans were
frequently couched in terms which directly associated them with
the Jews and appeared to recognise them as a variety of Judaism.
For example, Valentinian III repeated a law relating to Jews and
Samaritans holding office, but added the following which clearly
shows the equation of Samaritans with Jews:

\begin{quote}
If the son of a daughter or grandchild, singly or together, of a Jew or a
Samaritan, shall, on better thoughts, leave the shadow of his own
superstition for the light of the Christian religions, it shall not be lawful
for his parents or grandparents to disinherit him or pass him over in their
will or to leave him less than he would have received if they had died
intestate ...
\end{quote}

\textit{(C.T. 16.8.22 of 426 A.D.)}\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{22} "R. Jacob bar Aha in the name of R. Hamnah: "As to the Samaritans of
Caesaria, it is permitted to lend them money at interest [for they are not regarded
as Israelites at all]"."  

\textsuperscript{23} "R. José raised the question, "On that basis, then, one should not scruple
about the dough-offering being separated from bread prepared by them [since
this will be deemed no different from bread prepared by gentiles, which is not
subject to the requirement of separating dough-offering for a priest] and yet we
see that rabbis do not scruple about separating dough-offering from dough
prepared by Samaritans"."  

\textsuperscript{24} Cf. \textit{SRABE}, p. 128.  

\textsuperscript{25} Cf. James Parkes, \textit{The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue} (paper-
The fact that this equation still appears in the fifth and sixth centuries, long after the lines of division between Samaritan and Jew had hardened, is remarkable. One cannot prove the point, but it is likely that the Byzantine rulers of the Holy Land were influenced not only by the ambivalence of the situation that they inherited but that their perceptions of the situation were somewhat superficial, perhaps influenced by Jew and Samaritan making common political cause against their enemy, the Christian. The teachings of Eusebius of Caesaria (who had a special relationship with Constantine I) would indicate something of this sort for, despite his obvious close knowledge of Samaritans and Jews in Caesaria, he saw them both, simply, as uncircumcised and therefore as antagonists.¹⁶

Despite the ambivalence betrayed by the address of the discriminatory edicts there is no doubt that the Samaritans were usually treated with considerably more harshness than were the Jews, for they felt the full rigour of the laws when the lot of the Jews was ameliorated somewhat. The reason for this harsh treatment is probably that the Church felt far more threatened by the Samaritans than by the Jews — not so much for physical reasons, though these counted, as will be shown below — but for religious reasons. Simply, the Gnostic threat was perceived to be of Samaritan origin and the attitude to the Samaritans harshens in direct relationship to the perceived threat from Gnosticism.²⁷

We note, for example in Justinian's rescript of Justin's edict on heretics (1.5.12 of 527 A.D.) no great stress is laid on the Samaritans as being anything other than a form of Jew:

But we also order persons who are heretics and (still more before these) pagans or Jews or Samaritans and persons like these ...²⁸

and they face similar disabilities, including exclusion from all office of dignity in the state, as well as from any magistracy or military post. Alike, Samaritan and Jew are prohibited from practising the professions of law and teaching. A law of 527 on

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²⁷ Justinian's concern with Gnosticism can be gauged from the unusual theological language of his mandate C.I.1.3.55 of 534, where he speaks of the Demiurge. Cf. P. R. Coleman-Norton, Roman State and Christian Church (3 vols., London, 1966), iii. 11.1164 and note 6 (hereafter RSCC).
²⁸ RSCC, no 567, vol. 3. For a discussion of this important law see A.H. Vasiliev, Justin the First (H.U.P., 1950), pp. 244-6.
orthodox children as heirs of heretical parents (C.I. 1.5.13) likewise concludes: "The same provisions also concerning Jews and Samaritans"\textsuperscript{29}. However, within two or three years, as the religious status of heretics was closely investigated\textsuperscript{30}, a connection begins to be made in the legislation between Manichaeism and Samaritanism. It was probably the Gnostic associations of heterodox Samaritanism which moved the Samaritans into the Manichaean orbit in the Byzantine mind\textsuperscript{31} and henceforth the Samaritans suffer the rigours of the law and the special disabilities reserved for the varieties of Gnostics. Particularly telling are the rescripts of 1.5.12 = 1.5.18 in 529 A.D. and 1.5.21 of 531 A.D.:

... especially in the case of the unholy Manichaeans, of whom the Borborians are a part ... and the things which we have already legislated concerning Samaritans we ordain should prevail in the case of Montanists and Tascodrogitans and Ophitans, that is, so that they neither should dare to have any synagogue ... \textsuperscript{32}.

(1.5.18)

In the mandate of 531 we note that not only are the Samaritans more closely associated with and treated like the Manichaeans as a "pagan superstition" but that a clear differentiation between their treatment and that accorded to the Jews is to be seen:

... we ordain that against the orthodox litigants to no heretic or also to persons who cherish the Jewish superstition should be mutual participation in testimonies, whether the one or other party is orthodox. ... Among themselves, however, to heretics or Jews ... we grant an intermingled compact ... these of course having been excepted ... Manichaean madness (of which it is very manifest that Borborians are also a part) or pagan superstition engages no less Samaritans and whoso are not unlike those, that is, Montanists and Tascodrogitans and Ophitans, to whom every legal action has been forbidden in view of their guilt ...

(1.5.21)

\textsuperscript{29} RSCC, no 570. 
\textsuperscript{30} Cf. Vasiliev, op. cit., p. 246. 
\textsuperscript{32} RSCC, no 575, pp. 1008-10.
We may well suspect that the “pagan superstition” was that of one of the many varieties of Samaritanism, if not simply Simonian Gnosticism, which troubled the Samaritans themselves, according to their Chronicles, and because of this heterodoxy, and the association of Gnosticism with Manichaeism as perceived heresies of the Church, whatever their real origins, the vigorous persecution of the Samaritans followed. That the quality of that persecution differed from the disabilities applied to the Jews is seen not only in the mandate quoted but from Justinian’s law on disabilities for Samaritans (C.I 1.5.17), which determined that Samaritan synagogues were to be destroyed and none built to replace them (in contrast, the Jews could keep their synagogues as long as they did not build new ones, or decorate their old ones), but also in that they were not able to have Samaritan heirs whether by testament or intestacy, nor could they give their goods away to other Samaritans.

Despite the attention paid to the Samaritans in the chronicles of the period we are not as well informed about them in the Byzantine empire as we would wish. There is an inverse proportion in the amount of information available in the sources which never allows us to see the Samaritan sources at their fullest when the non-Samaritan sources focus on the Samaritans. The former are at their most complete for periods when the Samaritans had peace or were at the peak of their power and the latter are of interest only when the Samaritans were in revolt — the very time for which the Samaritan chronicles are scant. Thus, our information is most detailed for the third century, the last century of rule from Rome, when the uncertain grasp of Rome on Palestine saw the Samaritans rise to the summit of their power under their hero Baba Rabba (see below for further discussion of this date). The data is reasonably full for the fourth century, the century in which Palestine became the Holy Land, and the Samaritans and Christians began to struggle for control of the holy places in Palestine Prima, and is at its most deficient for the sixth century, the century which saw the decline of the Samaritans begin, in the aftermath of the revolt against Zeno, and accelerate with the

34 On Manichaeism as a perceived heresy of the Church, cf. RSCC, glossary, p. 1225, and no 156, note 1.
35 RSCC, iii. 1007-8.
application of discriminatory legislation, forced baptisms and the
two rebellions against Justinian, to be followed by further forced
baptisms in Byzantium and North Africa during the reign of
Heraclius. Fortunately, there is reasonable harmony between
the internal Samaritan sources and the Greek, Syriac, Arabic and
Latin chronicles, and there is a record that is almost complete of
the legislation against the Samaritans, for after the initial pro-
mulgation there was a tendency for it to be repeated in the
rescripts of succeeding rulers. This harmony allows us to piece
together, at least, the general picture of the Samaritans under the
Byzantine rulers, though the details are often lacking.

The most important of the third century sources is that part of
the Chronicle of Abu'l Fath which deals with the affairs of the
Samaritan hero, Baba Rabba. It is the common opinion of
Samaritan scholars that Baba Rabba lived in the fourth century
A.D., on which basis the flowering of Samaritan literature and
liturgy which took place under his aegis is said to have been in the
late fourth century A.D. This judgement, which is manifestly and
demonstrably in error, is made on the basis of the 'evidence' first
collected by Montgomery who offered the opinion, now
scholarly orthodoxy, that "Despite the arrangement of the
Samaritan Chronicles which assign Baba Rabba to the IIIrd
century ... all the sure data refer his life to the middle [I] of the
IVth century: probably he flourished under the eastern co-
emperor, Constantius".

In effect the sole "sure evidence" adduced by Montgomery is
the doubtful identification of the Germanus of the chronicle who

36 Cf. R. Devreese, "La fin inédite d'une lettre de Sainte Maxime: un
Baptême forcé de Juifs et de Samaritains à Carthage en 632", Revue des Sciences
Religieuses, xvii (1937), 25-35.
37 The harmony is only apparent for the events in outline. It is not possible to
decide with certainty whether the events of the revolts against Zeno are being
transferred to those of the revolts against Justinian. The account in Malalas of
the third revolt is particularly difficult.
38 KTAF, iv. 161-208. We ignore, in this discussion, the late chronicle
published by J. Cohen, A Samaritan Chronicle. A Source Critical Analysis of the
Life and Times of the Great Samaritan Reformer, Baba Rabba, Leiden, 1981. This
chronicle is a late and secondary work which has lost its Greek and Aramaic
words (unlike the Abu'l Fath chronicle) in favour of Arabic and bowdlerised
Hebrew. (See my comments, in review, in JQR, 1985).
40 Ibid., p. 102.
helped the high priest of the Samaritans circumcise his son in circumvention of the law against circumcision, with the Germanus who was the first bishop of Neapolis. In the first instance the identification depends in part upon the equation of the names Tahus = Constantius; even by Samaritan standards the equation is remote. It is more likely that Tahus = Claudius Tacitus, the consul for six months in 275, who would be the nominal ruler of the country, though his agent in Palestine was Probus. While it is probable that the later pre-Christian Palestinian rulers maintained Commodus’ interdiction of circumcision, there is no evidence that Constantine in any way interdicted circumcision except in the case of the circumcision of a Christian slave, and it was not until the reign of Constantine that circumcision of slaves brought a penalty on the circumciser. Circumcision itself was still allowed. Secondly, the name Germanus was so common a name in the period and in the country that the identification with any specific individual would be hazardous. Most important, however, is the error made by Montgomery which would negate entirely the value of an identification of Germanus as the Bishop of Neapolis even if it were correct. Montgomery stated that the high priest Nathaniel had a son Baba who was circumcised with the aid of Germanus. But the Chronicle, in a chapter headed “Germanus, the Byzantine official and the circumcision of the son of Aqbun”, states that the high priest was Aqbun and his son, therefore, would have been either his successor Eleazar or a younger child of name unknown. Since Eleazar was Baba’s nephew we are dealing with events which either took place after Baba’s death (as the chronicle states) or late in his life. Certainly these events would place Baba in the third century A.D., and Aqbun is probably Aqbun V who lived c.249-275 A.D.

If, like Montgomery and his imitators, one assumes that the career of Baba Rabba falls within the fourth century A.D., then the events described in the Chronicles appear to be out of

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44 KTAF, iv, note 953.
chronological sequence and have to be rearranged and reshuffled to make sense of the material. For example, what is represented in the Chronicle (fol. 148)\textsuperscript{45} as an invasion of frontier tribes is assumed to be the Persian incursion of the mid-fourth century, c.353 A.D., whereas in the Chronicles it falls into place immediately following the events of the reign of Alexander Severus. Yet, on the assumption that Baba Rabba's career was in the third century A.D., we would look, naturally, at the events of the interregnum in Palestine from 235-238 A.D.\textsuperscript{46}, when the country was threatened by border tribes and the Chronicle would then lead naturally to the events in the reign of Gordianus who fought the Persians in 243\textsuperscript{47}.

We must also note that in the historical material attached to Baba's name\textsuperscript{48}, at least in the first section, the principal city of the Orient is Byzantium though it is not always the seat of power. Only in the legendary material, which seems to be a reworking of Procopius's account of Arsenius\textsuperscript{49}, does the name become Constantinople and the city the principal seat of power. Thus, there is a certain inner consistency. Baba Rabba's career seems to have come to an end in the era of Philip the Arabian\textsuperscript{50}, which would be consistent with Baba's great reforms and the heyday of Samaritanism being before the reign of Constantine I. Finally, in accord with the foregoing, we note that the pilgrim whose works are recorded as the Peregrinations of St. Paula, written in 333\textsuperscript{51}, speaks of the Dosithean schism as a matter of history in her day. Since the Dosithean schism took place in the generation after Baba Rabba, this would appear to be confirmation that

\textsuperscript{45} KTAF, iv. 189.

\textsuperscript{46} HDP, ii. 192. "Rien en Palestine ne manifeste le nom d'un gouverneur pour cette période ... ".


\textsuperscript{48} Abu'l Fath appears to have had doubts — rightly it appears — about the additional material he included about the life of Baba Rabba. He says of the material: "I have decided to include it in this chronicle in case someone not coming across it (herein) should think that I was not aware of it ... " (KTAF, iv. 193). It is this section of the material that is difficult to relate to historical events and which has legendary overtones.

\textsuperscript{49} Cf. Procopius, Anecdota, xi. 27:6-7.

\textsuperscript{50} KTAF, iv. 202-5.

this Samaritan charismatic figure worked in the era before Constantine and most probably in the middle of the third century B.C.

The account of the reforms of Baba Rabba supports the observations of Avi Yonah that, before the Christianisation of the empire, the Samaritans were a prosperous and numerous people. Their diaspora was probably larger than allowed by Avi Yonah, since we find traces of the Samaritans in Greece (at Thessalonica where they had a synagogue), in Egypt at Carthage, Byzantium, Sicily, Rome, where they also had a synagogue, Arabia, and, ultimately, in Armenia, where some were transported in the sixth century. At Carthage and at Byzantium our evidence speaks of the Samaritans suffering forcible baptism, but in Sicily they suffered no worse disabilities than the Jews, at least until after the days of Gregory the Great. In Egypt, Syria and Arabia they appear to have been able to follow their own traditions with some comfort.

The argument put forward by Avi Yonah, and retransmitted by Zertal and others, was that the Samaritan diaspora was necessarily restricted because Samaritanism was centred on their sacred mountain, Gerizim, above Shechem-Neapolis. The priests, allegedly, were unable to move away from its shadow, and

52 SRABE, p. 127.
56 See note 36.
57 Procopius, Anecdota, xi. 27.
58 See the letters of Gregory the Great, "Letter to Leo of Catena regarding a Samaritan who has bought pagan slaves" and "Letter to Bishop of Syracuse regarding Felix, given in slavery to a Samaritan".
59 See the discussion of the Rome synagogue of the Samaritans in CCS, p. 208.
61 See note 36.
62 See note 1 for details.
worship was either in the direction of the mountain or upon it. Three times per year pilgrimages were made to the mountain for the three great festivals of Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles until the Byzantine emperors forbade the practice. Yet the centrality of Gerizim may well have been exaggerated in recent discussions. In truth it was the sacred place and the holy mountain. But, despite claims by Avi Yonah and Zerta that the Samaritans had a temple or sanctuary still standing until 484 A.D., when Zenon proscribed worship there and built a church atop the mountain, there is no evidence that they still had such a temple. The view that the Samaritan sanctuary still stood seems to depend on the depiction of Gerizim on coins of the period. Coins minted at Neapolis show the temple of Zeus Hypistos on the lower peak of the mountain and some sort of altar on the higher peak, or perhaps the ruins of the Samaritan temple. There is no further reference in the Samaritan chronicles to the temple, except one note in Abu'l Fath which speaks of the temple when, evidently

63 SRABE, p. 219.
64 SJBP, p. 50.
65 Avi-Yonah, SRABE, makes this quite clear.
66 For a reasonably detailed discussion of these coins see A.B. Cook, Zeus, ii (Cambridge, 1925), Appendix B, pp. 887-8. Abel (HDP, ii. 198-9) notes that in the third century the coins of Neapolis change, so that the mountain is either reduced to minuscule proportions or disappears altogether, to be replaced by Serapis with sceptre. The structure is unlikely to be the ruins of the Samaritan temple, since this was likely to have been built on the lower peak where the temple of Zeus was built over it. A series of coins of Neapolis, described in detail (cf. D.K. Baramki, The Coin Collection of The American University of Beirut Museum (AUB, 1974), pp. 19-29), gives the impression only that this is an altar, though close study of the coins suggests rather a tower than an altar. Whatever the case, the Samaritan chronicles give no clue to its nature. However, the coins of Elagabalus from Neapolis leave one with the impression that the altar was of his building. See HDP, ii. 171, and Baramki, op. cit., plate III, n° 12. Is the central pillar the same as that shown on the higher peak of Gerizim?
67 The reference is to Zeno's building a church on the site of the temple. The text reads, "He [Zeno] did not stop until he had taken the Temple and all around about it — the water pool and the cistern of water to the north. He added buildings to the Temple [= El Heiqal] and surroundings; and to the cistern of water [he added] buildings similar to the Temple. He built a church inside the Temple and on the church he constructed a very high tower which he painted white and from which lamps were hung to glow in the night to let those in Constantinople and Rome see" (Stenhouse's translation) KTAF, iv. 240-41. The tower could scarcely have been seen if it were inside the Temple. Clearly, the temple site is intended.
and unequivocally, meaning the site of the temple. All other references are to synagogues and not to temple. In fact, it is clear from the various versions of the screeching bird that the Samaritans did not normally venture to the summit of the mountain. From the third century on, when Baba seems to have curbed the power of the priesthood, apparently re-instituting the Samaritan council that had existed in Josephus' day, there seems to have been no reason why the diaspora should not have spread and grown in numbers. The priests at this time seem to have been officiating away from Gerizim. We hear in the Samaritan chronicles of their priests at Scythopolis — perhaps they served in the synagogues (but see below). The very building of synagogues at Neapolis and elsewhere — several are attributed to Baba Rabba and there are numerous archaeological remains of synagogues — would be an indication, as Safrai has argued, of the decentralisation of Samaritan worship from Neapolis and Mt. Gerizim to the synagogue and the diaspora. The synagogue, then, was an alternative to worship on the mountain.

It was the Samaritan council which enabled the Samaritan diaspora to expand. The chronicles make it clear that their function was not only to dispense justice and advise the people in the portion of Palestine Prima to which each counsellor was allotted, but to guide the people in the interpreting of the halachah and in teaching them the law. We are told that Baba sought out the members of the council who had survived the preceding troubled years and that he set about reconstituting the council.

68 KTAF, iv 193-8.
69 Ibid., p. 179, "Baba designated as Hukama only learned and respected men — be they priests or Israelites: uneducated priests he neither honoured with the title Hakim nor with the title of High Priest".
71 KTAF, liv. 179. "It was they and their descendants after them who used to nominate the priests, because when Baba entered Beisan [= Scythopolis] the priests did not go out to meet him, nor did they show him the respect which was his due. Only when he had reached the city did they come out to meet him, as was customary with them. So he dismissed them from their office because they had not met him outside the city".
73 KTAF, iv. «77.
The tradition is somewhat mixed. On the one hand, Abu'l Fath's text states that there were seven counsellors — *Hukama* — of whom three were priests and four laymen. These seven were both peripatetic instructors and notaries public to the Samaritan community[^74], each having a district to supervise. On the other hand, in Chronicle Adler and parallel chronicles[^75] the number of counsellors appears to be twelve, giving the impression that Baba's division was an ideal, rather than a real, one[^76]. It would seem, however, that the tradition of an ideal division is secondary, depending on an expansion of an observation of Abu'l Fath, contrasting the situation which had pertained before the council was set up with that which pertained in his day[^77].

The expansion of the diaspora in Baba's day, which followed the revival of the council, was marked by the building of a number of synagogues in those parts of Palestine Prima in which there were strong concentrations of Samaritans but no synagogue, and in Scythopolis/Beth Shean, in Palestine Secunda, where there had been a group of priests officating, in some capacity not yet understood (see above). That the expansion was secondary to the renewal of the council is made certain by the description of the type of synagogue built by Baba, which had "a place ... in the southern part ... so that anyone with a personal problem could ask the *Hukama* about it and be given a sound answer"[^78].

The eventual contraction of the Samaritan diaspora cannot, therefore, have been a corollary of the ongoing centrality of Mt. Gerizim in Samaritan life. It seems instead to have been a reflex of the loss of the council which loss, once again, restored to the priesthood their pre-eminence in the religious life of the people, a role which was to be theirs henceforth. Their position made them, not the council, the arbiters of how the halachah was to be applied

[^74]: Ibid., p. 181, note 798.
[^77]: *KTAF*, iv. 181.
[^78]: Ibid., p. 183, and see Safrai, op. cit., p. 104. Safrai's opinions about the orientation of Samaritan synagogues need to be restated in the light of the evidence in Abu'l Fath.
to contemporary circumstances, and since their natural home was near the sacred mountain that mountain resumed a position it had lost in Baba's time.

The end of the council seems to have been one of the consequences of the revolt against Zeno, for the Ḥukama were executed by Zeno⁷⁹ and we hear of no successors in their official positions. Thereafter, the Samaritans were not vouchsafed any opportunity to develop a theoretical (oral law) basis for their ritual practices. The events of history which buffeted them shaped their halachah rather than any school of exegetes, and intellectuals reinterpreting the sacred writ in the light of contemporary circumstances. Pressure in the diaspora to convert to Christianity, a thinly spread diaspora and no local authority able to apply canons of interpretation to the scriptures to provide guidance for everyday living, robbed the Samaritans of their chance to stand firm in their faith. They were vulnerable to local pressures and their diaspora in Greece, Rome and Carthage disappear by the end of the Byzantine period.

Despite the small scale of the Samaritan diaspora, even at its heyday, there is every indication that Samaritan settlement in Palestine itself was widespread. Following on the heels of Herod's marriage to a Samaritan woman, Malthace⁸⁰, his offspring from this marriage in turn ruled what was to become the Samaritan heartland and they expanded their habitation from the coast to the Jordan and beyond, creating a pale of settlement that drove a wedge between Jewish Galilee and Judea. This settlement was concentrated in the region which became Palestine Prima in the reorganisation of the country which began with Diocletian and was sustained by the Byzantine rulers⁸¹. Palestine Prima included the main Samaritan cities, Neapolis and Sebaste and their hinterland townships, but so many of the other towns of the division included substantial Samaritan communities that we must suggest that the division itself assisted the Samaritan expansion in Palestine. At the beginning of the Byzantine era the Samaritans comprised about one-third of the population of Caesarea⁸² and were

⁷⁹ KTAF, iv. 238.
⁸¹ Cf. F. M. Abel, Géographie de la Palestine (Paris, 1938 (= GDP)), ii. 171-4.
⁸² Cf. Lee I. Levine, Caesarea under Roman Rule (Leiden, 1975), ch. 6, "The Samaritan Community".
well represented in Gaza, Antipatris, Ascalon, Nicopolis/Emmaus, and the whole of the coastal strip from Castra Samaritanorum southwards. Pierre the Iberian tells us that in the days of Eudoxia, Yamnia was almost entirely Samaritan. Thus the division into Palestine Prima and Secunda virtually unified the Samaritans into a region whose geographical characteristics lent itself to dense settlement in small farming villages across the Sharon, Shephelah and into the hill country of Samaria.

Yet, the Samaritan settlement did not stop at Palestine Prima. Scythopolis/Beth Shean in Palestine Secunda had an important Samaritan population that was to play a role in the revolts which brought the Samaritans to their knees. There were also Samaritans in Sepphoris and they had spilled over to the Decapolis for a Samaritan synagogue has been excavated at Nebo-Siyagha.

We have no fixed data about the size of the Samaritan population, but Avi-Yonah has attempted an estimate of the number of Samaritans in Palestine proper on the basis of the statistics given in the sources about the number of dead and captives in the major rebellions against Byzantium. To achieve his result of about 160,000 dead and captive, he assesses the conflicting sources with some care. However, in his calculations he ignored the 50,000 refugees alleged to have been taken by Cabades from Persia, where they had taken refuge, to his mines in Armenia. If other areas may be relied upon as setting precedents, other Samaritans would have done what they appear to have regularly done in circumstances where the Samaritan heartland was under siege and fled into Transjordan and Arabia. The

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87 *SRABE*, p. 130.
88 Edouard de Muralt, *Essai de Chronographie Byzantine* (Paris, 1963), p. 151, claims to have found a reference in Procopius (1:16) and Malalas 455.7 to this deportation. The Procopius reference cannot be verified. See below for the Malalas text.
89 Cf. J. Finkel, “Jewish, Christian and Samaritan Influences on Arabia”,

numbers fleeing might have been quite considerable, perhaps as many as 50,000 refugees reported to have gone to Persia. In this case, we should, perhaps, add 100,000 souls to Avi-Yonah's calculations. If this represented one half of the Samaritan population, lost in battle, the Samaritans would have numbered some half-million persons rather than the 300,000 suggested by Avi-Yonah, in the Samaria region alone. The fact that the Samaritans were able to campaign actively on behalf of the Moslem invaders in 633 (see below), suggests that, while they suffered very heavy losses indeed under Byzantine rule, there were still many of them in the country, perhaps half of their original number. The majority of these would have been small farmers.

The comparatively peaceful condition of Palestine in the third century saw the Samaritans and their settlements expanding. Though the Samaritan chronicles report that they were persecuted by Alexander Severus, it is likely that the persecutions were partially the reaction of the Romans to the Samaritan bandits, of whom there appear to have been many (according to both Samaritan and non-Samaritan sources), and partly the rapacious acts of Roman officials adapting to the new administrative situation in which each province was responsible for its own defence and support of the troops. The local inhabitants were


90 *HDP*, ii. 163-256.

91 *KTAF*, iv. 135. Abel, *HDP*, ii. 182, entirely discounts the Samaritan view of Alexander Severus. Abel's approach is largely substantiated by other sources which tend to view Alexander Severus as the most tolerant ruler of Palestine in his day. See Boulos, op. cit., iii. 146.

92 Avi-Yonah (*SRABE*, pp. 131-2) discusses the Samaritan banditry. Procopius regularly spoke of Samaritans as brigands but one cannot know whether this was merely a pejorative approach to the Samaritans or a technical description. The Samaritan reputation for brigandage survived until the 18th century. There are numerous references in Pilgrim accounts to Samaritan brigandage as the reason why travellers preferred to avoid the Samaria district. Samaritan sources speak of their sectaries as brigands; again, this may be a pejorative approach.

93 That the changes in defence arrangements had begun in the third century as a result of the weakness of the central power is indicated by M. Avi-Yonah, ed., *A History of the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 170-1, and Ben Zion Dinur, "From Bar Kochba's Revolt to the Turkish Conquest", in D. Ben-Gurion, ed., *The Jews in Their Land* (London, 1960), p. 181. However, the
obliged to feed and lodge the troops and underwrite the extravagances of local officials by raising additional taxes.

The change in defence arrangements was one factor which both provoked the Samaritans and encouraged them to take up arms. The size of the Samaritan armies as recorded in the chronicles should not surprise us. Because the Samaritans were not considered to be Jews they were not exempted from military service until this obligation was removed by Justinian in the wake of their repeated revolts. Thus, until Justinian’s rule, the Samaritans had trained men able to do battle. The Samaritan chronicles indicated that they had picked troops well seasoned in battle, who were skilled with the sword, the lance and bows and arrows. We are given the detail that they were numerous but short of rations and they were supplied by the local populace who withheld the tribute and stores they would normally have supplied to the regular troops, to provision their own army. That the Samaritans had a substantial and trained army living on home ground, able to take the field whenever they deemed it to be necessary, should not be taken to be an exaggeration of the Samaritan chronicler. There are references in the Byzantine chronicles to Samaritan troops fighting alongside the Romans at Chalcedone, where they earned a reputation for ferocity; there are references in Theophanes, Bar-Hebraeus and Michael the Syrian to Samaritan troops in the army of Sergius, the Patricius of Gaza, in 633, and in Moschus, to the martial abilities of the Samaritan bandits. It is likely that for most of the latter part of the third century and into the early years of the fourth century A.D. there was no Roman garrison in any part of the Samaritan heartland, leaving the Samaritans with a clear field to develop their own defences, train their army and deal with marauders who crossed

thoroughgoing reorganisation of the defence system was undertaken by Diocletian. See Denis van Berchem, L’Armée de Dioclétien et la Réforme Constantinienne, Paris, 1952, for a description of Diocletian’s reorganisation.


KTAF, iv. 187.

Ibid., p. 188.

Cf. Juster, loc. cit., p. 278, n. 3, for some of these references. Avi-Yonah (SRABE, p. 130) also describes the accepted reputation of the Samaritans for ferocity.
the Jordan. Since most of the Roman troops were concentrated either in the Jordan Valley, or near the Red Sea or at Jerusalem, this period would have seen Samaritan militia in regular training and Samaritan military power at a peak never to be attained again.

It is unfortunate that the geography of the Samaritan home territory made it nearly indefensible — especially their major city of Neapolis. This sat astride a road network that gave easy access to the capital, which was split between two valleys, thus rendering the city easily conquered with minimum effort. The vulnerability of Neapolis in the face of a persistent attack meant that in an age of empires, where a ruler could mount a considerable, if delayed, attack in response to a serious rebellion, the city must fall. In every historic instance known to us, therefore, the Samaritans lost the advantages gained from their logistic situation and from the fact that they could always win the initial advantage in the event that there were no local garrisons; authority to act had to come from a distant capital.

A preview of what was to come appears to have been an episode in 235-237, recorded only in Abu’l Fath’s chronicle. In these years the Samaritans sent Roman officials packing and then put into the field a force of 10,000 men against an Ishmaelite plundering expedition from the east. By their own account the Samaritans appear to have held the fords of the Jordan, and relieved the invading force of its booty of sheep, cows, camels and

99 Se Van Berchem, op. cit., pp. 24-5, “Duchés de Palestine et D’Arabe”. The Roman troops were apparently in (1) 5 detachments at unspecified interior forts — we have no evidence that Neapolis was one of these, in fact the chronicles would testify to the contrary; (2) 4 detachments at the southern end of the Red Sea; (3) 1 legion, the X Fretensis, at Jerusalem; (4) 17 cohorts in the Jordan Valley, mostly in the fertile parts of the Wadi Arabad the Ghor.

100 The importance of this point was noted by Avi-Yonah (SRABE, p. 31), who argued that the Samaritans tended to repeat their defensive tactics when rebelling, having learned from experience the strategic problems posed by the geographical location and situation of their city. However, the similarities noted by Avi-Yonah in Samaritan reactions to events may be a reflection of the problem of duplication by the chroniclers, who seem to confuse the course of the revolt against Zeno with the two rebellions in Justinian’s day. For a fuller analysis of the geographical background to the vulnerability of Neapolis see Y. Karmon, “The Samaria Mountains — Physiographic Structure and Road Network” in Eretz Shomron, op. cit., pp. 114-20 (Hebrew) and English summary, p. xviii.

donkeys. Thereafter, the Samaritans maintained a standing army of 3,000 troops around Neapolis until 244. For the remainder of the third century the Samaritans seemed to have been untouched by the conflicts around them. One has the impression from their chronicles that they were untouched by the worst features of Diocletian's military reorganisation which "left unprotected those towns which were exposed to the Barbarian incursions but inflicted the plague of military occupation on the peaceful towns". It was in this period that their great religious reformers worked, their liturgy began to take its shape and they developed their massoretic tradition relating to the copying of the sacred text. Quite possibly they had a substantial impact on the literary structures of the empire. One notes the likelihood that the scribe of Codex Alexandrinus had a copy of the Samaritan pentateuch before him and that a fragment of a Byzantine tax edict from Beersheba of 5th century provenance has a format developed in Samaritan writings. We find in this period the beginnings of the great Samaritan philosophical writings, especially the Memar Marqa, which were to leave shadows up till the fifth century in the person of Marinus, the neo-platonist Samaritan philosopher. In this same period of

102 Ibid., p. 190. The date is that of the accession of Philip the Arabian.

103 Zosimus, quoted by Van Berchem, op. cit., p. 115.

104 Cf. A.E. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy* (2 vols., Oxford, 1909), ii, introduction, the history of the Samaritan Liturgy. Amram Darrah, the author of the Duran, the core of the Defter, the father of Marqah, was a protege of Baba. He cannot, then, have lived in the fourth century as so often supposed.


106 Ibid., for the evidence and proof. Several of the Greek manuscripts written for use in Constantinople came from Caesaria at a time when, as noted herein, about one-third of the population was Samaritan. It would be a matter of surprise if the Samaritan Pentateuch had left no influence on the scribes of Caesaria. See K. Lake, *The Text of the New Testament*, London, 1911, for a brief introduction to the Caesaria connection with manuscripts of the Pentateuch.

107 The date is considered in my "Studies in Samaritan Manuscripts, III" (see note 105 above).


relative peace, the Samaritans of the diaspora seem to have managed to rise in the civil service.

Our information about the Samaritans in the civil service of the later Roman empire and the period of Byzantine rule indicates that they had become reasonably well entrenched there before the Christianisation of the empire, perhaps because the civil service put them in positions where they could protect their fellows (see below). Even that event, though it made their lot more difficult, failed to dislodge them, if we may judge from the numerous rescripts of discriminatory legislation against them. It is this discriminatory legislation, the series of bans directed at Jews and Samaritans rising in the public service, which is among our best evidence for the range of public offices that the Samaritans filled, though, admittedly, it is negative evidence. So, for example, the disability laws of Theodosius II and Valentinian III, in 438, testify:

> We ordain by this law that no Jew or Samaritan shall enter upon honours and dignities — to none should be available the administration of a civil service and he should not perform even a defender's duty. Indeed we believe it a sin ... that they, protected by the authority of an acquired dignity, should have the power of judging or of pronouncing ... against Christians and very often the bishops themselves ...

(LNT 3, 438 A.D.)

The interpretations of this law in Justinian's day specifically excludes the Samaritans from service as prison warders, a reasonable indication that they had in fact been serving in this capacity. Nevertheless, there are several indications that at all ranks and levels and in all periods the discriminatory legislation tended to be tempered by the needs of the state. So, for example, Theodosius I forbade the prefect of Egypt to impose special duties on the Jews and Samaritans in connection with the duties of navicularii whose role was to supply grain to the cities (CT.18.2.390).

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111 RSCC, 429. Theodosius seems to have found the situation little changed from the days of his predecessor and Emperor of the West, Honorius (395-423), who had to legislate against "Jews and Samaritans who are deluding themselves with the privileges of imperial executive offices", who were to be deprived of their military rank (CT. 16.8.16).

112 Cf. CCS, p. 189, and Juster, op. cit., p. 264.
Our direct evidence confirms this conclusion. This evidence, from Procopius, about Arsenius and Faustinus\textsuperscript{113}, and from Abu'l Fath, about Levi, the nephew of Baba Rabba\textsuperscript{114}, indicates that, on occasion, the Samaritans were able to obtain preferment and rise even to the rank of senator, and retain this rank with royal connivance\textsuperscript{115}. It is clear from Procopius that the Samaritans often converted to Christianity with the intention of obtaining preferment and that their conversions should not be regarded as sincere, but rather, "the Samaritans, regarding it as a foolish thing to undergo any suffering in defence of a senseless dogma, adopted the name Christians in place of that which they bore"\textsuperscript{116}.

Faustinus is said to have become the governor of Palestine in Justinian's day, though it may well be that Faustinus was not known to have been of Samaritan birth at the time of his elevation to the senatorial dignity\textsuperscript{117}. Nevertheless, his birth was found out, but he overcame this defect and all the edicts against Samaritans and heretics holding office by the payment of a bribe to Justinian\textsuperscript{118}, and was reappointed governor of Palestine where he was able to act as a protector of the Samaritans.

Arsenius, who, like Faustinus, rose to the rank of senator, apparently was elevated to this dignity for services to the queen, though his nominal conversion to Christianity may have followed, rather than preceded, his promotion\textsuperscript{119}. His career, as described by Procopius, suggests that he continued to practice Samaritanism after his conversion. His father and brother, who lived in Scythopolis Beth Shean, openly professed Samaritanism.

If Abu'l Fath's account of Levi, the nephew of Baba Rabba, be not an arrogation and modification of Procopius's account of Arsenius, we find in the Samaritan sources confirmation that they deliberately sought to convert members of their family so as to

\textsuperscript{113} Anecdota, 27:6-7, 26.
\textsuperscript{114} KTAF, iv. 193-201.
\textsuperscript{115} Anecdota, loc. cit. Cf. also Juster, op. cit., ii. 247-8.
\textsuperscript{116} Anecdota, loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., "He [Faustinus] had espoused the name of Christian".
\textsuperscript{118} Unless this "bribe" was the 30 lbs. of gold that was to be paid by any Jew (and Samaritan?) who attained a civil service rank, misreported by Procopius for his own reasons.
\textsuperscript{119} Anecdota, 27:6-7, "... in order not to lose his power he had seen fit to adopt the name Christian".
place them in positions of influence where they could protect the parent group. Baba's nephew, Levi, is said to have become a bishop who visited Neapolis, where he was able to help in murdering his fellow-churchmen and destroying the Byzantine churches. Since the first churches were not built at Neapolis until at least thirty years after Baba's death (see below), we may assume that Abu'l Fath's reluctance to quote the story is justified by its poor chronology. However, the events recounted may well have happened, though some years after Baba's death, in the first rebellion against Byzantine rule (see below).

Though we know of no other Samaritan senators or well-placed ecclesiastics, we must not consider the above as exceptions. The fact is that restrictive legislation was re-enacted in the Samaritan diaspora long after the Holy Land fell to Islam: we may assume, then, that there were other crypto-Samaritans in public service who protected their fellows, though we have no direct knowledge of them.

The Christianisation of the empire was the turning point for the Samaritans in the centuries of their existence. To that time they had begun to expand in number and develop their culture. The half-century before Constantine was almost a halcyon period for them and their reaction to the pressures put on them by a Christian Byzantium reflected the strength which they had developed.

It is probably true, as Procopius has it, that in the large Greco-Roman cities such as Scythopolis and Caesarea the Samaritans were quick to convert to Christianity, or at least to adopt the style of Christians and Christianity if not the spirit. It is certain that in their home territory this was not the case. Even where they pretended Christianity it was evident to others that there was a lack of sincerity in their outward professions, and as late as the fifth century Justinian II was obliged to prescribe a two-year catechumenate for Samaritans. Before this they were permitted to be present at the services of the Church up to the moment of the "missa catechumenorum", though their presence was not always

120 KTAF, iv. 199.
121 Ibid., p. 193.
123 Ibid., p. 86.
welcomed. The Synod of Jerusalem complained of "Jewish serpents and Samaritan imbeciles listening to sermons in Church like wolves surrounding the flock of Christ".\footnote{Quoted from CCS, p. 173. See also Migne, \emph{PL}, xxii. 769.}

In the home territory around Neapolis there was probably a high degree of toleration towards the Church in the early fourth century before Constantine's conversion. Early in the fourth century there was a baptistry at the site, identified by the Church as that of Jacob's Well, at Neapolis\footnote{Cf. "Itinerarium A Burdigala Hierusalem Usque", \emph{Revue de l'Orient Latin}, 1879, p. 2, "quas plantavit Iacob, & balneus, qui de eo puteo Cavatur".}, where the bishop of Neapolis was active in making converts, according to the Bordeaux pilgrim\footnote{The connection between the balneus, "baptistry" of the Bordeaux pilgrim and the bishop of Neapolis, Germaine or Germanus, depends on our knowledge that Germaine was present at the Councils of Neo Caesaria in 314 and at Nicea in 325. Cf. H. Marrou, ed., \emph{Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie} (Paris, 1950), vol. 15, "Samaritaine". See also Fedalto, op. cit., for the dates of Germanus, who also seems to have been the bishop for Samaria until an independent bishopric was established there.}. So far as we are aware there was no conflict because of this first ecclesiastical encroachment into Samaritan territory. When one correlates the Samaritan chronicles with the pilgrim accounts, it appears that the Samaritans at this time associated the sacred site of Jacob's Well with a field to the southwest of Neapolis rather remote from the place identified as the well. In the reign of Julian the Apostate they built a substantial synagogue on this site, which they called the \emph{Helqat Hasadeh} (or "parcel of a field")\footnote{Cf. F-M. Abel, "Le Puits de Jacob et l'église S. Sauveur", \emph{Revue Biblique}, xlii (1933), 384-402.}. Since the Christianisation was sporadic and slow — a period of at least ten years was to elapse between the appointment of Germanus, bishop of Neapolis, and Marinus, bishop of Sebaste\footnote{Cf. Fedalto, op. cit., p. 7.} — and since the Samaritan chronicles speak exclusively, for this period, of inner dissension in the Samaritan community with no indication of external stresses, we may conclude that no initial threat was perceived in the young Christian movement greater than that of the heterodox tendencies of their own baptising sects.

Samaritan perceptions of Christianity and the threat it posed must have changed, sharp, with the advent of Constantine I and his conversion to Christianity. The Christianisation of the empire...
brought significant changes to the status of the Jews and Samaritans and considerable disquiet and discontent. It was Constantine who began to translate Christian prejudices against Jews and Samaritans into legal disabilities\textsuperscript{129}. More important, we find several edicts of Constantine encouraging the building or restoration of churches\textsuperscript{130}, and it becomes clear that his perception of Palestine was that of a Holy Land, in which building of churches at sites sacred to the Christians — hence, often to the Jews and sometimes the Samaritans — was to be encouraged\textsuperscript{131}. This policy was actively pursued and intensified by his successor, Constantius II, who took a much sharper line against non-Christians. Constantius gave a converted Jew, Josephus of Tiberias, a mandate to build churches in places where none had hitherto been built, because they were exclusively Jewish settlements. Jewish relationships with the government were already strained because of the marauding activities of soldiers gathered to attack the Persians. A rebellion broke out\textsuperscript{132} and, in the ensuing fighting which encompassed Sepphoris and Lydda, both towns with Samaritan populations\textsuperscript{133}, many Samaritans were killed as well as Jews.

Whether the Samaritans were actually involved with the Jews in the rebellion is not clear. Both Zertal\textsuperscript{134} and Ben Zvi\textsuperscript{135} assert that the Samaritans were involved; however, their view seems to rest solely on the assumption that Abu'l Fath's account of Baba Rabba places the Samaritan hero in the fourth century A.D. Although Baba Rabba's name came to be associated with these events by the Samaritan chroniclers, we may dismiss the chrono-

\textsuperscript{129} Cf. Barnes, op. cit., p. 252.

\textsuperscript{130} Cf. RSCC, i. 103, n° 45 (Eusebius VC, 2.46), p. 153, n° 54 (Eusebius VC, 3.30-2) (326), p. 159, n° 59 (CSEL 26.213.6) (330).


\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 172.

\textsuperscript{133} Cf. A. Büchler, \textit{The Political and the Social Leaders of the Jewish Community of Sepphoris in the Second and Third Centuries} (Oxford, 1909), pp. 35,42. See also Ben Zvi, op. cit., pp. 92-4.

\textsuperscript{134} Op. cit., p. 50. Zertal lists this as the first revolt of the Samaritans against Byzantium. See also, S.S. Miller, \textit{Studies in the History and traditions of Sepphoris} (Leiden, 1984), p. 3.

logical argument for the reasons noted above. The evidence is both ambiguous and tenuous but it inclines us to believe that, at best, the Samaritans were passively involved, caught up by events, and suffering as a result of subsequent events. In the first place, we note that there seems to be a lacuna of more than one hundred and fifty years in the line of bishops at Neapolis and a lacuna of perhaps fifty-six years at Sebastae, from 325 to 381 A.D., though the evidence is conflicting. There may be an indication here that the city of Neapolis, with its concentration of Samaritans, was not easily Christianised. Even so, the lacuna in the episcopal line might be more a reflection of the anti-Christian campaign of Julian the Apostate which took him to Sebastae, Neapolis and Jerusalem, than the result of any Samaritan revolt against Constantius. Moreover, we note that the baptistry at Jacob’s Well was incorporated into a church building by 335 A.D. when St. Paula traversed Neapolis, scarcely to be viewed as the outcome of Samaritan antithesis to the Christians in their region. The Samaritan chronicle, in speaking of Ursicinus who put down the Jewish revolt in 352 A.D. implies that the Samaritans were as much victims of the revolt as the Christians and suggests that the Jews destroyed some of the field crops of the Samaritans who were forced to take retaliatory action. All in all, the evidence, such as it is, inclines us to be sceptical of claims that the Samaritans took up arms against Constantius.

Likewise, there is no secure evidence that the Samaritans took advantage of Julian the Apostate’s anti-Christian activities to

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136 In addition to evidence cited we must note that Abu'l Fath speaks of Baba’s successes, whereas the rebellion was put down by Constantius, and Samaritan towns captured. Moreover, the unnamed royal leader of the enemies of the Samaritans was also an opponent of Alexander (who we deem to be Alexander Severus). The evidence simply is in contrast with this interpretation.

137 Cf. Fedalto, op. cit. We are assuming that Marinus did not officiate for the 56 years between his known date and the known date of his successor, Saturninus. Note that Fedalto’s reconstruction of the episcopal list does not coincide with that in Abel, HDP, pp. 306-309.

138 HDP, pp. 280-284.

139 The travels of St. Paula are recorded in a letter of Jerome edited and published in various places. The most convenient recent English version (though the translation cannot be relied upon too closely) is that of John Wilkinson, Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades, Warminster, 1977. The text is to be found in the Osnabrück 1966 reprint of Itinera Hierosolymitana, et Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae, Société de L’Orient Latin (Itinera Latina), pp. 27-40.

140 KTAF, iv. 192.
dispossess them of the baptistry at Jacob's Well\(^{141}\). Instead, they appear to have invested their efforts, both physical and fiscal, in building a synagogue which was so large that its construction took them through the three years of Julian's reign into that of Valens in 364\(^{142}\). However, we note the comment of Michael the Syrian that, in the year that Julian died, "a great anger went forth before the Lord and destroyed twenty one towns of pagans, Jews and Samaritans in the south who had taken part in the sin of Julian the Hypocrite"\(^{143}\). This interpretation of the earthquake of 363 A.D. may betoken a more active Samaritan role in the anti-Christian programme of Julian than the evidence otherwise allows.

The Samaritan chronicle gives the impression that the early years of the reign of Arcadius (395-408 A.D.) were years of relative peace and ease for them, in which they continued to embellish their new synagogue building, adding a valuable set of doors which, apparently, had been looted from Jerusalem\(^{144}\). The chronicle relates that the Emperor was constrained to accept the Samaritans' appropriation of the doors after receiving a bribe of 1500 kilograms of gold. The account is probably not to be accepted at face value — there are doubtless polemical overtones in the claim that the synagogue doors came from the destroyed Jerusalem temple. Yet, the wording of the chronicle conveys an impression that is probably quite close to the realities of the time, namely that the toleration of the Byzantine emperors for the Samaritans, at least until 400 A.D., was not matched by many in the royal entourage and by the Christians of Palestine, who are reported as having informed on the Samaritans. The internal Samaritan evidence would seem to be in accord with the mandate of Theodosius I, Arcadius and Honorius, of 393 A.D.

\(^{141}\) For a discussion of this question see F-M. Abel, "Le Puits de Jacob et l'église S. Sauveur", \(RB\), lii (1933), 382-402, + 2 figs., and L. Vincent, "Puits de Jacob ou de la Samaritaine", \(RB\), lxv (1958), 547-67.

\(^{142}\) Abel, op. cit., p. 393, suggests that the building of the synagogue by Eleazar and Aqbun began in 362 A.D. Valeus is named Balsamus in KTAF (see iv. 232 and note 1093). The identification by Stenhouse would appear to be correct.

\(^{143}\) Cf. Ben-Sasson, op. cit., p. 354, for a discussion of this passage.

\(^{144}\) KTAF, iv. 233-5. ArcADIUS is probably the Saqfatus of the Chronicle, also found in variant spellings as Asqfatus, Afqatus (KTAF, iii). This identification seems to be verified by the chronology of the looting of Joseph's tomb in 415 A.D. Some events may have been protracted in the Chronicle because of the duplication of the sequence of High Priests, Eliezer, Aqbun, Eliezer, Aqbun.
which forbade acts of Christian anti-Semitism, indicating in the very need for the mandate that whilst there was no official persecution of the Samaritans and Jews there were clashes among the populace. Again, this would be consonant with the testimony of the monk-brigand, Barsauma (who visited Palestine late in the 4th century), that though there were relatively few Christians in the country at that time there were clashes between the Jews, Samaritans and Christians. Barsauma claimed that it was the Christians who were being persecuted.

There is ample evidence that in the last two decades of the 4th century A.D. the seeds of conflict between the Samaritans and Byzantines began to germinate with some rapidity. The church began to entrench itself in the Holy Land: bishops were appointed to bishoprics in places that were predominantly Samaritan in population across Palestine Prima and Secunda and many of the sacred sites were colonised by monastic groups who were the hated spearhead of Christian intolerance. The tone of imperial legislation became increasingly menacing as the century came to a close. Only the bitter internecine conflicts of the church staved off violence between the Samaritans and the church. It is probably no coincidence that between the Synod of Jerusalem in 415 and the Council of Lydda at the end of the same year, excavations by a Byzantine expedition for the bones of Joseph at Sichem brought a foretaste of the major revolt that was to flare in the middle of the century.

The affair of Joseph's bones is recorded both in Samaritan sources and in the Christian chronicles. Theodosius II, installed in office but seven years, charged a special commission with the task of recovering the sacred remains of the Old Testament patriarchs and they began to excavate at the site of the tomb of Joseph. An empty coffin was found, but beneath it was an intact sepulchre of marble. It was felt that here were the bones of Joseph and the

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145 RSCC, ii. 452, no 244.
146 See the discussion in CCS, p. 233, and F. Nau, "Life of Barsauma", Revue de L'Orient Crétien, 1913.
147 Vide Fedalto, op. cit., His lists present a thorough and detailed overview of the episcopalian expansion in Palestine. A first-hand account of the situation is to be found in the mutilated onomasticon of Egeria. Cf. J. Wilkinson, Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land (Warminster, 1981) for the only full translation. See also J. Stevenson, ed., Creeds, Councils and Controversies (London, 1960), p. 252, for testimony on the behaviour of and attitudes towards monks.
sarcophagus was sent to Byzantium. The Samaritans were outraged. As can be seen from the *Memar Marqa*, veneration of the elders and the concept of the merit of the fathers was an important element in the Samaritan theology of religious causation (hence, of free will), as was the special role of Joseph, as early as can be traced in a detailed theological exposition, namely the late 3rd century A.D. The attempt to seize and plunder their sacred site struck both at their national pride and religion.

The Samaritan account of this affair states that the Samaritans were forced by the Byzantine officials to do the digging for this, but that divine intervention prevented the commission from making any progress. Conflict erupted when the government officials erected a building (church?) over the site, which the Samaritans promptly demolished. The Samaritans killed a number of the Byzantines who retaliated by seizing and hanging the High Priest and the Samaritan Council. The Samaritans then bribed the Byzantine officials with an unspecified sum and they left the site. However, it may well have been this episode that intensified the anti-Samaritan legislation of Theodosius, who, according to the Samaritan sources, had left a garrison in Neapolis and banned prayer towards the sacred mountain.

A renewed attempt to excavate for the sacred relics of the Old Testament patriarchs touched off another but almost unrecorded episode in 450-451 A.D. On this occasion the search was made at Awerta for the bones of Eleazar, Ithamar and Pinhas, the Aaronite priests after whom the Samaritans had named many of their own High Priests. Awerta itself has long been a Samaritan sacred site.

148 Cf. "Tractatus de Inventione Sanctorum Patriarchus, I, 4-8", *Recueil des historiens occidentaux des Croisades*, v. 305. The account there would seem to have been abstracted from the *Chronicon Paschale*. See also Muralt, op. cit., p. 27: "Les reliques de Joseph ... sont apportées de Chalcédonie par la Scala ... et de tout le Sénat".


150 *KTAF*, iv. 235.

151 This interpretation differs from that of Stenhouse (*KTAF*, iv. 238, notes 1126 and 1127), who argues that the Byzantine officials murdered the Samaritans and then hanged the High Priest and Council.

152 Cf. *HDP*, p. 323.
The episode is virtually unnoticed in non-Samaritan sources, which are concerned at this period with the internecine struggles of the church, which also erupted into violence, engulfing Neapolis at the same time. It is clear from both internal and external sources that the two discrete causes of hostility became unified in the struggle, linking, in an improbable liaison, Samaritan and Christian, against Christian.

The Samaritans speak of the struggle simply in terms of the people of Caesaria and "others" supporting their resistance to the tomb-robbers, who, apparently, had "an immense army". According to their account they were represented in battle by a champion who defeated the champion of the opponents in single combat, thereby winning the day.

The reality seems to have been that the Samaritans, provoked to the point of violence by the renewed round of excavations, found themselves caught up in the Monophysite or Eutychian struggle in which Theodosius, a Monophysite monk, was elected bishop of Jerusalem in opposition to Juvenal, the bishop of that city. Theodosius, abetted and aided by the dowager Empress Eudocia, then resident in Jerusalem, and the spiritual leader of the insurgents, Peter the Iberian, a monk and bishop of Mayouma, the port for Gaza, murdered Severian, the bishop of Scythopolis, with several of his priests for speaking up against the violent monk in 452 A.D., after the Council of Chalcedone. They then rampaged through the countryside pillaging and burning, apparently including Neapolis in their ambit.

According to St. Euthymius the Samaritans chose the opportunity to fall on both parties, destroying churches and monasteries, burning and pillaging so that "Palestine was desolated as if by a barbarian invasion". Yet the destruction cannot have been so great nor the violence so intense, for when the insurrection was finally put down the monks were living in Neapolis itself.


154 Outlines of the main events are given in several encyclopaedia articles, e.g. Hastings, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics or the Catholic Encyclopaedia article, "Eutychianism" and "Jerusalem". The details need to be reconstructed from the chronicles, and, surprisingly, nowhere seem to have been expressed with the thoroughness the subject deserves.


There may well have been a stand-off situation between the rebel Eutychians and the Samaritans, as reported in the Samaritan chronicle. Such an interpretation would be supported by the initial reaction of Marcian, which was to attempt to control the outburst by decree. A rescript of Marcian on the lawlessness of Palestinian monks, in 453 A.D. \((M.7.487-96)\), gives the impression that Theodosius had attempted to blame all the damage and destruction to the countryside and townlets upon the Samaritans. Marcian, accepting that investigation had shown the Samaritans had faults and had indeed committed "terrible and lawless deeds against the most holy churches", indicated that Theodosius was as much to blame. Zechariah of Mitylene appears to vindicate the account that they had Christian support \(^{157}\) by stating that when Juvenal returned to Palestine with troops supplied by Marcian and led by the Dux, Dorotheus \(^{158}\), the Neapolitan monks refused to recognise his ecclesiastical authority. Upon this, the Samaritans were ordered to join the Byzantine troops to help in the re-establishment of government authority. This, apparently, they did, with bloodthirsty zeal \(^{159}\).

The events of 453 A.D. were both a precursor of and a preparation for the great revolt of 484 A.D. The causes of that revolt are not at all clear. Samaritan sources are of no help since they state that the oppression which they suffered at the hands of Zeno began with his appearance at the head of his troops at Neapolis \(^{160}\). All the evidence points to this oppression being a consequence of the rebellion and there is considerable doubt whether Zeno appeared in person at all, since he seems to have been loath to campaign actively \(^{161}\). Procopius' account of the rebellion \(^{162}\) is, likewise, no help in determining causes, for he makes the whole affair sound like the War of Jenkins' Ear.

\(^{157}\) Ibid.

\(^{158}\) As governor of Palestine Prima, Dorotheus might well have been resident at times in Caesaria, as implied by the Samaritans, particularly since he had been barred from Jerusalem by Theodosius.

\(^{159}\) Zachariah of Mytilene records of a blind Samaritan the words, "Since mine eyes cannot see the blood of the slaughter of these Christians so that I may delight myself in it: bring me near and I shall feel it" (Book III, cap. 6).

\(^{160}\) *KTAF*, iv. 239-40.


\(^{162}\) Buildings, V: vii.
However, a number of factors may be perceived as possible stimulii which moved the Samaritans to take the drastic step of proclaiming their own man as emperor. Among these, in general, we must suggest that there were their own perceptions that current circumstances gave them a fair chance of success in raising the standard of independence and that their own personal circumstances must have been such as to provoke them, though of these we can say less.

There is no doubt that many observers must have felt in the years 483-484 A.D. that the Eastern Empire, of which they were part, was on the point of disintegration. Zeno had already lost the throne once, yet the danger of assembling underpaid and disaffected troops was such that Zeno was apparently unwilling to gather troops for a campaign, preferring to risk the rumblings on the frontiers than a rebellion in the military camp. Though our evidence for Palestine is limited, the Samaritans were no doubt well enough aware of the revolt of Illus, the Isaurian, one of Zeno's own countrymen. Zeno's own brother, Longinus, was held as a hostage in an Isaurian prison (until 488) and the failure to obtain his release may well have been seen by the subject-peoples of the empire as a sign of weakness, perhaps even of decadence. Early in 484, some 334 Catholic bishops were killed by the Huns - the news had probably reached Palestine by mid-year when the revolt began, reinforcing perceptions of weakness and ineptitude, which must have been further strengthened by the schism from Rome in the same year. The independence of the eastern Church in the train of the Monophysite schism was, at the time, understood to be a manifestation of ecclesiastical discord which also marked Zeno's failure to achieve political unity. Doubtless, the Samaritans were not alone in their view of Zeno's vulnerability. Some observers note what they see to be a groundswell of nationalism throughout the Orient, affecting all the peoples of this part of the empire. Stein has argued that the national

163 Avi-Yonah argued that Samaritan rebellions tended to coincide with periods of Persian threats to the empire. We may discount any such factor at this time as the Persians were themselves being threatened by the Armenians. Cf. Boulos, op. cit., pp. 294-6.

164 Kaegi, op. cit., p. 28.

165 Cf. RCCS, p. 924, HE 3-14 of 482.

166 Cf. Boulos, op. cit., p. 293.

revival was triggered by the war with Illus and regards the Samaritan revolt as the first manifestation of the general movement. Abel suggested that the immediate cause of the revolt was that, once again, the public authorities in Neapolis were making tentative moves to exhume the sacred relics of the Samaritan (and Old Testament) Patriarchs for removal to Constantinople, but the evidence for this statement appears to be lacking.

Whatever the causes, the events themselves are tolerably well documented. The revolt flared at Gerizim, the ‘Blessed Mountain’, where five churches built on sites sacred to the Samaritans were put to the torch. The Samaritans then fell upon the main church (of St. Stephen) at Neapolis where the bishop, Terebinthus, was standing at the altar celebrating the Pentecost (Whitsun) festival. After mocking the congregation and the sacred rituals, the bishop’s fingers were slashed off. The mob then moved to attack Caesaria, where the Samaritans proclaimed Justasus or Justus, apparently a local Samaritan bandit, as leader. The Church of St. Procopius was burned, and many Christians were murdered. Apparently Caesaria was held long enough for Justus to organise a games victory celebration in the circus. There is some doubt as to the aftermath of the rebellion. According to some sources the Samaritans were beaten in battle by Ascepiadus, the dux Palaestinae, i.e. the Duke of the three Palestines, at the head of a body of troops, the Arcadiani, normally stationed in Caesaria. Justus was decapitated and his head sent to Zeno. According to

168 HDP, p. 350. Abel attributes his evidence for this statement to Montgomery, but Montgomery has not only misread the source Chronicle, Abu’l Fath, but has attributed the events of 415 to a later time (p. 111). Abel’s acceptance of Montgomery’s misdating is somewhat surprising in view of his own marshalling of the evidence for the events in 415. One can only suspect that Abel, like the present writer, was at a loss to find an immediate trigger for the Samaritan revolt. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, one cannot help but wonder whether, once again, the Samaritans have preserved an accurate account with events depending on a campaign of Zeno’s that has gone unnoticed in all other sources.


170 See the summary of Malalas, Cyril of Scythopolis, Vie de St. Sabas, in de Muralt, op. cit., p. 102. See also, Bar Hebraeus, op. cit., p. 70 where the same outline of events is sketched.

171 Cf. Stein, op. cit., note 1, for detailed discussion of the troops who put down the rebellion.
Procopius\textsuperscript{172} Terebinthus took himself off to Byzantium and displayed his mutilated hand to Zeno, begging him to take revenge. Here, Procopius and Bar Hebraeus are apparently in accord with the Samaritan sources that Zeno himself campaigned in Palestine, to tighten his grip on the Samaritans\textsuperscript{173}.

The Samaritan Chronicle describes the consequences of their failure in some detail\textsuperscript{174}. According to this account, Zeno came to Neapolis twice, not long before he died, i.e. c.489 A.D.\textsuperscript{175}. The first stage of their punishment was forcible conversion or death by burning, fire torture, or being squeezed to death. Seventy of the Hukāma and the priests were executed, apparently at a public market where there were several colonnades\textsuperscript{176}. The synagogue built by Aqbun was confiscated and converted to a convent\textsuperscript{177}. The synagogue built by Baba was confiscated. A church was built on the site of the former temple of which there still appeared to be relics in existence in Zeno’s day, to wit a cistern and its aqueducts\textsuperscript{178}. The church was dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Samaritan access to the mountain was forbidden and some sort of tower was built atop the mountain with lamps that could be seen at night. Since, according to Procopius, the garrison on the mountain was but ten men strong, we may expect that some signal device was installed so that the troops stationed in the town below could be alerted to troubles\textsuperscript{179}. The countryside was pillaged and the female Samaritans raped.

\textsuperscript{172} Loc. cit.

\textsuperscript{173} The data about Zeno’s reign are so uncertain that the sources differ on the length of his reign, the cause of his death, etc. See Stein, op. cit., p. 76, note 3.

\textsuperscript{174} KTAF, iv. 239-42.

\textsuperscript{175} There is some suggestion that Zeno campaigned in Egypt in 489 (see de Muralt, op. cit., p. 105). In such a case he would have had to traverse Palestinian soil twice, as the Samaritans claim.

\textsuperscript{176} The columns, unless they are those of the temple on the lower peaks, are the ones to be seen at the extreme left of the Madeba representation of Neapolis.

\textsuperscript{177} The Chronicle is not clear on this point. Stenhouse (KTAF, iv. 240) translates the text as “... the synagogue which Aqbun had built and put a throne in it, and made in front of it a place of sacrilege ...” i.e. el tahtakat, immorality. Montgomery (op. cit., p. 112) is almost certainly correct in perceiving that there is a pun on qadosh and qedesh at the basis of this text and that convent is the intended meaning.

\textsuperscript{178} Samaritan tradition here coincides with Procopius’ view, Buildings V, vii. 8. No doubt Montgomery’s interpretation that it was the temple itself that was seized is the source of the mistaken observations, discussed above, repeated by Zertal and Avi-Yonah.

\textsuperscript{179} The Samaritans suggest that the lamp was intended to be seen in Rome.
Despite these measures Procopius records another abortive rebellion during the days of Zeno's successor, Anastasius (491-518 A.D.), during which a group of Samaritans, led by an unnamed woman, scaled the sacred mountain. They fell upon the guards established by Zeno, taking them by surprise, and slew them. Thereupon they sought to induce the inhabitants of Neapolis to rise against the government. Apparently the rebels were unable to arouse popular support and the revolt was put down by Procopius of Edessa, the garrison commander at Neapolis. No trace of this event is to be found in the Samaritan Chronicle.

The two rebellions which flared in the reign of Justinian were the principal events reducing the Samaritans, both numerically and spiritually, to shadows of their former selves. The revolt of 529 was apparently provoked by Justinian's adoption in that year of his uncle Justin's anti-Samaritan legislation, especially the rescript of *De Haereticis et Manichaeis et Samaritis*, promulgated first in 527 A.D. Avi-Yonah, on the basis of Malalas, has suggested that the revolt was touched off not only by the restrictive anti-Samaritan legislation but by the Persian advance to the gates of Constantinople in 529. In 530 the Samaritans do seem to have made direct contact with the Persians, but this was fully a year after the rebellion and apparently a consequence rather than a cause thereof. The revolt, which was marked by the butchery of Christians, the burnings of churches and the pillaging and ravaging of the countryside, is described in some detail by John Malalas, who gives the impression that the rebellion began accidentally, as a riot:

and Constantinople. That it was a signal station seems to be clear from the importance attached to its capture in the renewed insurgency during Anastasius' reign.

181 See A.A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First, An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great* (H.U.P., 1950), pp. 244, 247, for a discussion of the edict and its effect. (CI 1.5.12, RCCS, iii. 995, n° 567, and CI 1.5.18, RCCS, iii. 1008, n° 575).
182 SRABE, p. 46.
183 Hermes, vi, 376. See below, note 191. See also de Muralt, op. cit., p. 151, Novembre 530, n. 4 and 5. Muralt's source in Procopius cannot be identified.
184 The translation of this episode is given in full in view of its general inaccessibility. I am indebted to Michael and Elizabeth Jeffreys for the text of the translation which is part of their new edition of Malalas, to be published shortly
In the month of June ... a riot broke out among the local peoples when the Samaritans fought with the Christians and Jews, and many parts of Scythopolis were set on fire by the Samaritans. On hearing of this the emperor was angry with the governor, Bassus, and so be he relieved him of his office and had him beheaded in that district. When the Samaritans learned of the emperor's anger against them, they rebelled and crowned a bandit chief, a man named Julian, and they burnt estates and churches and killed many Christians. On entering Neapolis Julian watched chariot races with a large number of Samaritans, and the first event was won by a certain Nikeas, a Christian charioteer. There were other charioteers at Neapolis, both Samaritans and Jews, the charioteers whom Nikeas defeated. When he approached the rebel to be honoured as was his due, he asked him what his religion was. When he learned that he was a Christian he took the fact that the first victory had gone to a Samaritan as an ill omen against himself, which in fact it proved to be, so he immediately sent and had the charioteer beheaded in the hippodrome. He also ill-treated the bishops of the city. When the governors of Palestine and the dux, Theodoros the Snub-Nosed, learnt of this they immediately reported the daring rebellion to the emperor, Justinian. The dux set out against Julian, with a large force, taking with him the Pylarch of Palestine. On learning of this, Julian, the Samaritan rebel, fled from Neapolis. The dux pursued him with his force, and they joined battle. The dux cut down a large number of the Samaritans and captured the Samaritan, Julian, himself, whom God had delivered into his hands. He beheaded Julian and sent his head, with the diadem, to the emperor Justinian. When the emperor learned about the rebellion of the Samaritans and the ill-fated Julian, the information from the governors arrived at Constantinople at the same time as the rebel leader's head. 20,000 of the Samaritans fell in the battle. Some of them fled to the

in the Sydney Byzantine series. A reasonably exhaustive treatment of the events of 529-530 is to be found in Sabine Winkler, "Die Samariter in den Jahren 529 539", Klio, xliii (1965), 435-57.

185 The secondary version of Malalas in speaking of a riot adds the following (Jeffreys' translation): "The Samaritans attacked the Christians there and massacred many of them in this way. There was a custom which was common in the land of Palestine and in the whole of the east that on the Sabbath, after the reading of the Gospel, the children of the Christians would leave the church and go and play near the synagogues of the Samaritans and throw stones at their houses. It was the custom of the Samaritans on this day to withdraw and keep to themselves. On that occasion they could not bear to give way to the Christians and so when the children came out after the holy Gospel and went to the Samaritan synagogues and started throwing stones, the Samaritans came out after the children with swords and killed many of them. Many children fled to the holy altar of St. Basil which is there and some of the Samaritans pursued and slew them under the altar".
mountain known as Arparizin [= Mt. Garizim] and others to Trachon, to what is known as the iron mountain. The Saracen Phylarch of the Romans took 20,000 boys and girls as booty from the Samaritans; he took these as prisoners and sold them in Persian and Indian territory.

The Samaritan Chronicle\(^{186}\) seems to support the account of John of Nikiu that the leader of the rebellion considered himself to be a messianic figure\(^{187}\). In the aftermath of the revolt, Justinian relentlessly hounded the Samaritans across the Samarian hills, executing whatever leading citizens he could lay hands on, razing synagogues which had survived the battles beyond any hope of repair. The citizens of Scythopolis seem to have taken personal revenge on the Samaritans and Justinian either was unable or unwilling to stop them. Even the father of Arsenius, Sylvanus, still influential at court in Constantinople, was burned to death in the market place at Scythopolis\(^{188}\).

Procopius records\(^{189}\) that Justinian consolidated his hold on Neapolis and Gerizim with new building projects. The enclosure around the temple site on the mountain was reinforced with an impregnable wall to discourage the sort of act that had taken place in Anastasius' day as well as, presumably, during this rebellion. Five new churches were built to replace those which had been destroyed by the Samaritans.

Apart from the 100,000 (or 20,000) dead and those who were turned over to Abu Kharab and his Arab irregulars who had joined the imperial forces, many Samaritans were forcibly converted. Their lack of sincerity after their conversion was notorious and the opinion was offered\(^{190}\):

\(^{186}\) KTAF, iv. 228-9. The event is described as "the seventh sect", but the account has overtones of the events in the reign of Justinian. Bustunus probably should be seen as Justinian, and 'Auliya\'n as Julian.


\(^{188}\) HDP. p. 357; Procopius, Anecdota, xxvii-6-14. Although Montgomery (op. cit.) presents a detailed study of this rebellion, he fails to understand that Arsenius was a Samaritan. Cf. p. 116.

\(^{189}\) Buildings, V, vii, 16-17.

\(^{190}\) Jeffreys' translation of the material parallel to 447.21 in the Chronicon Paschale.
To this day they play a double game: at moments when their governors are harsh they wear a false mask and, treacherously and maliciously they proclaim themselves Christians. While their governors are slack and avaricious, the Samaritans act as haters of Christians — as if they know nothing of Christianity — persuading their governors by bribery to favour the Samaritans.

Malalas records that 50,000 Samaritans had fled and gone over to Koades (Cabades), the Persian emperor, offering to turn over to him their own territory and the Palestine holy places. It is not possible to separate the fourth and final rebellion of the Samaritans, that of 556 A.D., from that of the previous revolt twenty-six years earlier, for the second is a reaction to the repressive events which followed on the heels of the first. Throughout the period Justinian tightened repressive legislation against the Samaritans, until they were virtual outlaws and even his own followers protested against the severity of the legislation.

According to Cyril of Scythopolis, the aged patriarch of Scythopolis, the revered, 92-year-old Sabas, travelled to Constantinople and described to Justinian the atrocities committed by the Samaritans during the course of the revolt. As a result of this personal intervention, more of the Samaritans, who had so far escaped any punishment, were executed and the anti-Samaritan legislation was tightened, though it was probably not applied in its

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191 Jeffreys' translation of 455-456, Malalas (which is supported by a parallel account in Theophanes) reads: "Rufinius was sent once more by the Romans, when a second response was despatched to Persian territory: he found that the Persian emperor had withdrawn from the peace agreement they had made between them. For, news had come that the Samaritans in Roman territory ... had fled and gone over to Koades, the Persian emperor, from their own territory of Palestine, and had promised to fight for him. They numbered 50,000. They promised to hand over to the Persian emperor their own land, all Palestine and the holy places, a city which possessed donations from various emperors, both a large sum of gold and an untold quantity of precious stones ... The Romans learned of the Samaritan betrayal when certain of their men of substance were captured on their return from Persian territory and were recognised after their journey to Koades, the emperor of the Persians ... there were five Samaritans who were recognised. On being captured these were taken before the Magister militum per Orientem, and were examined in his presence".


193 Arsenius tried to argue against Sabas, but failed to influence Justinian, despite the support of the empress, Theodora.
full severity\textsuperscript{194}, and was mitigated in 551 at the plea of Sergius, the bishop of Caesaria\textsuperscript{195}. Even so, the Samaritans were being stripped of their property and possessions as part of the design to coerce them to convert to Christianity\textsuperscript{196}. Like most people in the Holy Land the Samaritans must have suffered very badly in the great outbreak of plague in 544 A.D., which killed many just before the harvest, particularly since there was already a labour shortage in the aftermath of the rebellion. Zechariah of Mytilene noted that the fields were full of crops which could not be reaped and the vine crops were left to wither\textsuperscript{197}. The plague reappeared in the year of the rebellion\textsuperscript{198}. The actual trigger for the revolt may well have been the renewal of war between Byzantium and Persia in 556, when the armistice, which had begun in 551, came to an end.

On this occasion the Samaritans and Jews made common cause, beginning their rebellion in Caesaria in early July. They fell on the Christians of the city, killing many of them, after which they attacked and plundered the churches.

When [says Malalas] the governor of the city went out to help the Christians, the Samaritans attacked and killed him in the praetorium and looted all his possessions. The wife of the [city] governor, Stephanos, went to Constantinople and approached the emperor. On hearing what had been done by the Samaritans, he was incensed and ordered Amantios, the governor of the east at that time, to investigate the events including the murder of Stephanos. After receiving imperial messages and going off to Caesaria, Amantios searched for, and found, those who had committed the murders. He hanged some, beheaded others or cut off their right hands and confiscated others' property\textsuperscript{199}.

The rebellion appears to have spread as far south as Bethlehem, where the Church of the Nativity was burned. The sources declare that either 100,000 or 120,000 Samaritans were butchered in

\textsuperscript{194} Cf. Stein, op. cit., p. 373.
\textsuperscript{196} Cf. Justinian, \textit{Novellae} 144.
\textsuperscript{197} Budge, op. cit., p. 75.
\textsuperscript{198} Malalas, 488. The deaths by plague occurred in December, some six months after the rebellion had begun.
\textsuperscript{199} Jeffreys' translation of 447-8. John of Nikiu claims that the rebellion was put down by Photion (xciv. 16).
putting down the rebellion\textsuperscript{200}, many were tortured and others driven into exile\textsuperscript{201}.

After this the sources have little to say about the Samaritans, and the Samaritan Chronicles are deficient until the advent of Islam, indicating by their silence the massive depopulation and destruction that had resulted from the revolt.

Though the Samaritans suffered severely in the series of revolts, their ordeal at the hands of Byzantium was not yet over. In 572 A.D. Justin II repeated the legislation of 529 (\textit{Novellae} 144.1) and according to John of Nikiu, Maurice, the emperor from 582-602, used force to convert the Samaritans and Jews to Christianity. The effort was apparently futile, for John reports, like others before him, that these forcible converts "proved false Christians" (XCIX,2), and long after the rule of the Byzantine emperors in the Holy Land had been replaced by that of Islam we find Byzantine rulers repeating anti-Samaritan legislation for the diaspora\textsuperscript{202}.

The final events in the Samaritan relationships with Byzantium in the last years of Byzantine rule in the Holy Land probably played their part in facilitating the Moslem invasion. Though Heraclius followed the example of his predecessors in attempting the forcible baptism and conversion of the Samaritans\textsuperscript{203}, the Samaritans may not have been unanimous in opposing him. Michael the Syrian notes that when Abu Bekr invaded Palestine in 633 at the head of the Arab armies, Sergius, Patricius of Gaza, who stood against him, had Samaritans in his contingent of troops.

The Arab Chronicles record that when the Arab armies ravaged Palestine in 634 A.D. 4,000 (or 40,000) Samaritans, Jews and Christians were slain. Yet there is no doubt that the Samaritans were exempted by the conquerors from land tax and had only to pay a capitation tax, and their property was protected after the conquest; it seems that this was their reward for assisting the invasion force. The sequence of Arab conquests indicates that those towns which had substantial populations fell first to the invaders. Thus, the Samaritans either served as spies for the

\textsuperscript{200} For details of the sources see Stein, op. cit., p. 374, n° 2.

\textsuperscript{201} John of Nikiu, xciv. 17.

\textsuperscript{202} Leo the Isaurian (716-740), for example, repeated legislation seeking to destroy Samaritan synagogues.

Moslems or were a fifth column, undermining the defence of the country after suffering three centuries of Byzantine rule which left them a spent force, never again to reach the numerical or intellectual strength with which they entered the Byzantine period.