We are fortunate that the scholia of Samaritan manuscripts often provide basic data as to how many manuscripts a scribe has written. If we have adequate extant examples of a scribe's production or basic information about the length of his life, we can gauge the rate of writing and the manuscript production of individuals and, in one case at least, use this detail to help clarify the identity of a scribe. We are also able to calculate the number and type of manuscripts coming on to the market in any given era, information which can have substantial implications for developments in the literary history of the Samaritans and even for demographic changes in the Samaritan Diaspora.

In collecting information about persons named in Samaritan manuscripts we may find that the same person appears in different scholia as scribe, witness to deeds of sale, owner or vendor, or perhaps as the restorer of pages lacking from an older manuscript. In such circumstances any statement which reveals how many manuscripts a scribe has written is valuable, for it helps us to assess his professional standing, his relationship to and with a scribal school or centre, and the weight which may be attached to his manuscripts in critical study. A scribe who has a prolific output is also worth recording photographically, for the chances are that his handwriting will be found in fragments which might otherwise defy identification.

In the course of the last three centuries Samaritan scribes have not contented themselves with recording the volume of their production, they have also given some details as to how

\(^1\) See below, the discussion of Ab Nesana 'Afif.

\(^2\) As part of his index of Samaritan scribes the writer is collecting dated samples of the fists of all scribes known and accessible. This should provide a tool for identifying a large portion of the unidentified fragments in western libraries.
long they have spent writing a particular manuscript or even how long it has taken to write portions of a given manuscript. This information is valuable and yet its very detail warns us to be cautious, for we soon find that there are a number of incalculables in assessing writing rate. The most obvious of these is the degree to which a scribe is experienced. The greater his experience the faster we expect him to work. However, our information cautions us that an experienced scribe may be infirm or so distracted by other considerations that his writing rate is slower than that of a novice. The nature of the writing surface, the ink used (whether it is ready made, as in modern manuscripts, or has to be mixed, as in the older manuscripts), whether the surface is individually ruled by pricking techniques, individually ruled with a mastara, or ruled per folded sheet or quire by pricking or mastara, all must needs affect the rate at which the scribe can work. To these we must add the nature of the text being copied, for it is recognised that there were specific canons of copying applied to Pentateuch texts which differed from the canons of copying liturgical texts, and this meant that Pentateuch texts tended to be copied more slowly than liturgical texts. We must also consider whether a script was majuscule or minuscule, for minuscule has a simple ductus in which there is little repetition of hand movements, whereas in majuscule the scribe might be forced to retrace his hand movements in certain letters. Majuscule was written more slowly than minuscule. Moreover, Samaritan scribes developed the habit of working on manuscripts in tandem with other scribes, and this factor, too, must have affected the speed with which a manuscript was finished, for one scribe could continue the work when another rested or attended to other matters. Finally, we should add that we are not always informed whether the scribe worked on his texts continuously or whether he left intervals between writing sections of a manuscript. All these factors indicate that our conclusions about writing rates must be regarded as no more than a general indication of the speed and output of scribes in any given period, unless we are fortunate enough to have detailed information.

All these points are emphasised in the comments made by scribes writing in Nablus during the last three centuries, for they are prone to comment in their scholia in some detail. For example, Tabiah b. Isaac b. Abraham, a prolific scribe of
Levitical stock, recorded that he copied Rylands Sam. MS. 116 (826) in one day, in the year 1160H / A.D. 1747. This manuscript has eight folios (some 512 lines of writing in all) and is in a large minuscule with some Arabic rubrics. The minuscule is difficult to tell from majuscule at first and one might have expected it to be slower in the writing than the scribe’s normal fist, yet the rate of writing of 512 lines per day is exceptionally high for a Samaritan scribe, as will be seen from the data which follow. However, the manuscript was a liturgy (the Burial Service) and is without changes in the colour of the ink, which would have allowed for some copying speed if not for the inordinate haste which led the scribe to crave the indulgence of the user for the scribal imperfections. Tabiah was relatively inexperienced in A.D. 1747, which makes his speed even more remarkable. His other manuscripts are all dated between this year and his death in either 1200H or 1223H, i.e. A.D. 1785 or A.D. 1808. Some three years after this early manuscript we find him writing at a much more sedate pace when he produced a 681-page Memar Marqah, now identified as MS.CW 26349. We do not know when he started the text, but he informed his readers on p. 129 that the first section to that point was finished on the 7th day of Rebiah IIInd in 1750. He started the third section, according to a note on p. 389, on the 11th of Gumada, 1750, thus having spent a little more than a month writing 260 pages. He finished that section on the 17th Gumada IIInd, 1750, taking a further thirty-five days for the 150 pages. His final colophon tells us that he completed the manuscript in 1752. He cannot, then, have worked on the manuscript continuously, for the first

3 Tabiah was also known as Ghazal b. Isaac b. Abraham b. Isaac b. Sadaqah b. Hatzebhi. His manuscripts include at least six Torah codices and numerous liturgical works to which he contributed as an author as well as a copyist.


5 A. E. Cowley, The Samaritan Liturgy (Oxford, 1909 (hereafter SL)) notes, in his genealogical table of the Levitical family, that Tabiah died in 1200 H. However, Rylands Sam. MS. 100 (845), which was largely written by Tabiah, dates to 1223 H. Whether the manuscript was dated by some other scribe after Tabiah’s death is not clear from the colophon on f. 39a.

portion was written at the rate of 159 lines per day, whereas
the last portion would have been written in twenty-three days
if he had maintained the same average writing speed of 159
lines per day (i.e. 26 ll. per page, 142 pp. = 3692 ll. + 159 = 23).

Writing speeds of 400 and more lines per day are attested
by several scribes, usually in liturgical manuscripts but not
always so. Murjan b. Ibrahim b. Ismail b. Ibrahaim, the prolific
eighteenth-century Danafite scribe, indicates to us that an expe-
rienced scribe could sustain this rate quite easily in a manuscript
that made few demands on conforming with Masoretic canons.
Murjan, whose elegant but simple and unadorned minuscule
script is first seen in a deed of sale to which he was a witness
in 16677, wrote a copy of the Burial Service, Rylands Sam. MS.
118 (1866), some seventy-two years later, when he must have
been well into his eighth decade, in a matter of eight days. The
manuscript is well written and has catchwords, but his expertise
as a scribe allowed him to complete the 49 folios at the rate
of 400 lines per day, a not inconsiderable speed in view of his age.
A colophon of Murjan to MS. CW 26343, a part of the Defter,
suggests that he and a fellow scribe worked in tandem on a
pair of manuscripts, finishing them together.

This rate of writing is also known in a Pentateuch manuscript,
though the manuscript is rather modern and in a plain script,
which might in some way account for the extraordinary speed
with which it was written. This is the Pentateuch in very small
format known as CW 2482 which was written by the Levitical
scribe Ab Hasda in 1912, when he was fifty-two years old and
exceptionally experienced8. Ab Hasda wrote this manuscript,
which has 489 pages of 36 lines (though only about 19 letters per
line, which is rather few), in thirty-nine days. His colophons
tell us that he completed the book of Genesis in nine days,
Exodus in eight days, Leviticus in five days, Numbers in six days,
and Deuteronomy in eleven days. He was writing about 451 lines
per day.

Another modern scribe, Ab Sakhwa b. Asad b. Ishmael,

7 Murjan was a witness to the sale of BL. Or. MS. 123756 in 1667.
8 The ages of most early twentieth-century scribes can be obtained from
the census data published at the end of CJRL II. Ab Hasda had a long cor-
respondence with Moses Gaster and in some of this he describes his own
work, which was voluminous. The correspondence is in the John Rylands
University Library.
writing in 1908 about Rylands Sam. MS. 155 (878), related that this 420-page manuscript was completed in thirty days; that is, at the rate of about 308 lines per day. Though this is somewhat slower than the examples cited above, we must remember that the manuscript had to be translated and that three scribes together worked at the writing and translation. The first served as translator, the second as amanuensis, and the third was the corrector. In view of the complexity of the task, and in the light of Ab Sakhwah’s words that he was trying to meet a deadline, we must regard 308 lines per day for this type of copying as a rather substantial rate of progress. Ab Sakhwah was an experienced scribe when he wrote this manuscript, being then fifty-six years old, and this experience shows in the finished quality of the work.

Rather slower than either of these scribes was the Levite, Amram b. Salamah, the scribe of Rylands Sam. MS. 90 (831) in A.D. 1870. Amram recorded that the manuscript took him forty days to write, which means that he was writing at the rate of about 209 lines per day. This is appreciably slower than the rate of writing of the other scribes cited, and the manuscript is not elegant. It shows signs of hasty writing, and even scribbling at the end. Amram was an experienced scribe when he wrote this manuscript, for he had been writing for at least thirty-nine years. He was not an old man; he can have been but fifty-nine or sixty years old, but he may have been physically infirm or otherwise ill and handicapped in his writing, for he died only four years later, in 1291 A.H. This slower speed is probably closer to what should be expected as the normal average rate of production for the majority of scribes.

The slowness of an inexperienced scribe, even though apparently diligent, is demonstrated in the writing of the liturgy MS. CW 2480, which was finished in 1890. Ragib’s total output known to the present writer stems from the years 1887-1902, suggesting

9 Cf. CJRL II, pp. 119/120.
10 See the catalogue description, p. 118.
11 Cf. SL II, p. xlv, genealogical tree.
12 The data relating to this manuscript are presented in SMA, p. 70.
13 Anderson, SMA, was unable to identify more of Ragib’s work. He was responsible for four manuscripts still in the house of the High Priest in Nablus. These are described in Z. Shunnar, Catalog Samaritanischer Handschriften I (Berlin, 1974 (hereafter CSH I)), pp. 132-133.
that in 1890 he was a novice. The manuscript was written with some care in different coloured inks and with some decoration. We see from a colophon on p. 216 that the first section was finished on 9th Rebiah IIInd 1889 and the next section, to p. 234, two month later on 4th Gumada IIInd. It was nearly eleven months later, 4th Rebiah 1st 1890, that the scribe completed to p. 346, but it took him only six more days to complete to p. 373. He thus seems to have been writing at speeds of 9-11 lines per day for the first part of the manuscript and 135 lines per day for the last six days. We must assume that, whatever his diligence, 135 lines was closer to his natural speed and he must have worked on the first part of the manuscript sporadically.

Jacob b. Aaron, the Levitical High Priest, demonstrates several facets of Samaritan scribal behaviour in his manuscripts. He also makes it possible to see how adverse circumstances could counterbalance a scribe’s expertise and reduce his productivity. Probably the manuscript the longest in the writing for which we have detailed records was a triglot Pentateuch written by him. This is now in the Chamberlain Warren collection. It was written over a fourteen year period, namely from A.D. 1881 to 1894. This, the scribe’s eighteenth Torah manuscript, was written at a time of great personal difficulty, when some of his children sickened and died and, as a result, he worked only intermittently on what was intended to be a master-work for his own, personal enjoyment. The colophons which tell of the scribe’s progress in writing the manuscript show us that, in fact, the greater part of it was written within a two-year span, the years A.D. 1893-1894. By contrast, this prolific scribe wrote his fifty-fifth Torah, also a triglot, in six months and five days in 1905, when he was sixty-four years old. Both triglots, i.e. CW 2481 and Rylands Sam. MS. 38 (814), are of a similar size. In calculating Jacob’s speed of writing we must take into account the fact that in a triglot each folio contains three written columns, which involves extra ruling and more careful arrangement than a single-language manuscript, though the total text body may not be much greater per page than in a normal Pentateuch. In this manuscript Jacob’s writing speed was equivalent to 158 lines per day, not an excessive speed for modern scribes, but for a complex Pentateuch, written.

14 CW 2481. Cf. SMA, pp. 31-38.
15 SMA, p. 31.
carefully (as is evident from the illustrations in the catalogue of the Rylands manuscripts) it is not slow.

From Hebrew University's Manuscript Samaritan 201, a large format triglot Pentateuch (44.5 cm. × 32.5 cm., text body 29.0 × 22.5 cm.), we can not only verify that Jacob's writing speed of 155 lines per day, as calculated above, was not far from his average, when writing carefully, but we can see speed variations inside the same manuscript. In the H.U. 201 MS. we see that Genesis and Deuteronomy were written more slowly than the rest of the MS. Presumably, we must take into account the extra ruling needed for the book of Genesis, and the time taken in preparing a loose box binding at the end, if indeed the colophon at the end was written when all scribal activity, including binding, ceased. Speed variation inside each manuscript was probably always a factor, though we are not able to see it so clearly as in this case.

Jacob b. Aaron wrote H. U. Sam. 201 in tandem with his son, Ab Hasda (on this see below), in 1321 A.H. The triglot has 49 lines to a page, about 35 letters to a line of writing (17 characters per 10 cm. of writing); in other words, twice as many characters per line as MS. CW 2482, which was written by Ab Hasda alone. In calculating writing speeds for this manuscript we are on more secure ground than with other MSS. for not only are we informed of the time spent on each book, including the date of finishing each, but we are told the total number of days spent, except for the Sabbath, and that the work was continuous. The 257 folios took 82 days to write, except for Sabbaths. Genesis, which was written in 23 days (for which we must allow three Sabbaths, i.e. 20 working days), filled 64 folios. Thus it was written at the rate of 156 lines, or 5,488 characters per day. This was a somewhat slower rate than the rest of the text, though it is very close to the average noted above.

Exodus, 56 folios, was completed in 17 days, of which two must have been Sabbaths; in other words, at an average speed of 182 lines per day or 6,402 characters per day. This must have been the normal rate of writing for this particular text, for we find Leviticus, 37 folios, was written in 11 days (one Sabbath), at a rate of 181 lines per day, or 6,345 characters per day, and Numbers, 54 folios, was written in 16 days (two Sabbaths);

16 Pl. 1, CJRL II.
that is, at the rate of 188.9 lines per day or 6,614 characters per day. Deuteronomy was written a little more slowly. Its 45 folios took 15 days (two Sabbaths) to write; that is 169/170 lines per day, or 5,936 characters per day.

Like many other Samaritan scribes Jacob was in the habit of working in tandem with others, sometimes acknowledging the practice and sometimes not. It is possible that a higher price could be asked of a customer by an accomplished and known scribe than by a novice, yet the novice might end up writing the manuscript. Sometimes, in these circumstances, we must assume that the father was training the son as a scribe, but on other occasions it seems that a priest or older scribe might lend his name to a manuscript either for prestige or for pecuniary reasons. An unacknowledged instance of a scribe working in tandem is to be seen in a manuscript of the Kitāb al Tarikh of Abu’l Fath in the Mayer Sulzberger collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary (MS. 3473). The manuscript has no colophon, but one of its two fists is that of Jacob ben Aaron and the other is that of his son, Ab Ḥasda. The scribes worked in such close collusion that it looks as though, when Jacob ben Aaron was tired or was called to his sacerdotal tasks, his pen was picked up by the son, who continued the copying. An example of this, in-sentence changeover, is to be found on f. 295, line 5.

An acknowledged example of the changing of scribes is that in Rylands Sam. MS. 322 (819), written in 1914, two years before Jacob’s death. The double colophon on ff. 80A and 80B indicate that the manuscript commission was accepted by Jacob, who handed over the actual copying to his brother Arieh (Leo)/Nimr, for execution. In his turn, Leo passed the manuscript to his children to copy and they appear to have had difficulty with the rather complex text of the Mēlītī, leaving Jacob with a problem of correction, which appears from his words to have been of considerable proportions.

A similar type of tandem writing which seems to run into a third type is that noted by Ab Ḥasda, son of Jacob ben Aaron, in one of the several colophons to MS. CW 10320 in 1914. He noted that he completed the manuscript on behalf of his

17 Cf. Jacob’s comments, CJRL II., pp. 243-244.
18 Cf. SMA, p. 48f.
uncle, Amram b. Isaac the priest, because the latter was too ill to complete it, and we may suspect that this was not an unusual circumstance. Yet, when one examines the series of colophons in this twenty-part Pentateuch, it becomes clear that it has been farmed out to various members of the Levitical family, presumably to meet a deadline.

Perhaps the most common type of tandem writing was that recorded in the Barberini triglot, a rather inelegant manuscript which was completed in A.D. 1482. The *tashqil* of the manuscript advises the reader that the writing, which must have been quite arduous, was shared by two scribes, Jacob b. Meshalmah b. Joseph, a Levitical priest of Damascus who had written part of the text from the beginning of Deuteronomy, chapter 7, to the end of the Pentateuch, and Ab Yetrana of the Kapit family, who had written the first part of the Pentateuch, but who appeared to have been no longer in Damascus when the manuscript was completed, according to the ambiguous words of the *tashqil*.20

The *tashqil* of B.L. Cotton MS. Claudius B. VIII, a rather elegant Pentateuch of the Damascus school, dated to A.D. 1362/3, records that three scribes shared the writing. We are informed that the section from Genesis 1:1 to Leviticus 23 was written by Ithamar b. Aaron b. Ithamar, the High Priest in Damascus at this time, and a second scribe whose name suggests that he was of the priestly family, namely Jacob b. Ab Ozzi, perhaps a nephew of the High Priest. A third scribe, who wrote from Leviticus 24:1 to the end of the Pentateuch, was Abraham b. Ab Neşşana b. Abi Sa'adah b. Ab Ḥasda, a scion of the Ikkara family from Gaza (= Gerar in the *tashqil*). From the fact that we cannot identify a single word in the script of the High Priest and that the writing of both scribes is clearly of the Damascus genre despite their differing origins21, it is not improbable that they were both trained by Ithamar, or someone else in the priestly school, and that the High Priest was lending his name to the

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19 The manuscript is described in A. F. Von Gall, *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner* (Giessen, 1918 (hereafter *HPS*)), pp. xiv-xvii = VG M.
20 The colophon says “Who was, at that time, in Damascus, but it is now finished, ...”
21 Cf. my *Samaritan Majuscule Palaeography*, reprinted from the *Bulletin*, lx (1977-78) and lxi (1978-79) (hereafter *SMP*).
manuscript to give it prestige. Perhaps his name increased the price paid by the man who commissioned it\(^\text{22}\).

When we are estimating writing speeds we must not only keep in mind the habit of scribes writing in tandem, we must also remember the custom of scribes adding their names to Pentateuchs and even claiming them as their own when they were merely correcting them or repairing and restoring older manuscripts in need of such attention before they could be put on the market. This habit is attested long before European scholars created a new source of demand for Samaritan manuscripts; it is apparent that from the seventeenth century onwards many old manuscripts which were in advanced states of decay were restored and put on the market\(^\text{23}\). Many of these probably came from \textit{Genizot} in Damascus and Nablus\(^\text{24}\). Unfortunately, this restoration not only included the making good of lost pages but sometimes involved the re-inking of faded words. Not only does this make palaeographical study of the manuscripts rather difficult, in several instances the new ink seems to have interacted with the older, or else was excessively acid, causing the parchment to be eaten through and leaving the manuscript in a most fragile state\(^\text{25}\).

Ben Zvi MS. 10\(^\text{26}\) (now in the library of the Bible et Terre

\(^{22}\) The prices paid for B.L. Cotton Claudius B.VIII are discussed in Part 1 of this series.

\(^{23}\) Good examples of these are Bodley Or. MSS. 139 and 140. It is interesting to see that a manuscript such as Bodley Marsh 15 acknowledges its original writer, Ghazal b. Joseph b. Ibrahim (1506), and its restorer, Marhib b. Jacob (1664), but the scribe who worked in tandem with Ghazal, and was responsible for ff. 227'-232', is unnamed. That he worked in tandem is clear since he took over from Ghazal without any hiatus in the writing.

\(^{24}\) The reconstruction of these manuscripts has been studied by J. Fraser, “Documents from a Samaritan Genizah in Damascus”, \textit{PEQ}, July-December 1971, pp. 85-92.

\(^{25}\) For example, B.L. Cotton MS. Claud. B VIII. The interaction of ink batches in this MS is marked by discolouration but has not yet become destructive. In B.L. Or. MS. 1445, a Pentateuch fragment, the effect of the letters “starting from their bed” seems to be spontaneous rather than due to interaction of ink batches. The ink is losing its gum bond and is leaving the parchment behind, intact. While re-inking has made many manuscripts fragile, the practice should eventually provide us with data for tracing dates in the change of the composition of the ink used by the Samaritans.

\(^{26}\) The Ben Zvi numbers refer to the serial numbers given to manuscripts in his descriptions in \textit{Sefer Hashomronim}, Jerusalem, 1970 revision (hereafter \textit{SH}).
Sainte Institute) has examples of the responses of two scribes to their task of restoration. The manuscript was originally written in A.D. 1231/2 and by the sixteenth century was obviously in need of restoration. This was undertaken in 1515 by Pinḥas b. Eleazar b. Abisha, the priest of Nablus, who seems to have spent most of his life in Damascus. Pinḥas seems to have had no compunction in claiming the manuscript as his own for the sake of the new owner. He might well have claimed the manuscript as one which he wrote, rather than restored, in establishing his numbered list of Pentateuchs. It might have been just this appropriation of another scribe's Pentateuch which engendered the sarcastic comments of the Levitical priest in Nablus, Ḥaṣṣebḥi b. Joseph, who was Pinḥas' rival for the spiritual leadership of the people. Pinḥas' fourth Torah manuscript seems to have been of someone else's penning.

On the other hand, we see that Ben Zvi MS. 10 again needed restoration in the sixteenth century and the task was undertaken by Abraham Qabaṣah in 1552. This sage made no greater claim than that he had made good the gaps in the text.

Unfortunately, there is always the danger of a numbered Pentateuch being a restoration rather than the original work of a scribe, though it is counted in the number of Pentateuchs he produced. This must complicate the calculation of writing speeds. Yet often enough it is the number of Pentateuchs written by a scribe which must guide us in estimating his speed and output, especially if he belonged to an older generation. It is only when a scribe was a member of a well-known scribal family or was so prolific that we have sufficient of his numbered manuscripts.

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27 The life of this priest is described in contradictory terms in the chronicles. The comments there have to be evaluated against the comments about him in the scholia to the manuscripts. It would seem that there was an attempt to depose him in favour of the Levitical priests, led by Tabiah/Ḥasṣebḥi b. Joseph. Pinḥas was probably deported to Damascus by the Ottoman Turks. According to a note in MS. 90 Φ II 5, Pinḥas was still in Damascus in A.D. 1527, but he was not regarded as the High Priest there, the Damascus High Priest being Joseph b. Harabban Abi Ozzi.

28 The details of the rivalry between Ḥasṣebḥi and Pinhas are given in Jewish Theological Seminary MS. 3473.

29 See the sarcastic comment of Ḥasṣebḥi at the end of Ben Zvi MS. 15 about Pinḥas' manuscripts. Apparently Pinḥas had the habit of counting restorations as manuscripts which he had written.
still extant to give us a good dated sample, that we are able to judge writing speeds.

One such scribe was Abraham b. Israel b. Ephraim b. Joseph, who described himself both as the nasi or nesi'a and as the King of Israel 30. He was the son of an active scribe, Israel b. Ephraim b. Joseph, who was also described as nesi beth Israel. A third member of the family who carried on the scribal tradition was Abraham’s son, Israel b. Abraham b. Israel b. Ephraim 31. The family of nesi’im continues to be known to us until the sixteenth century, although the cognomen seems to have lost any significance it may have had and had become a family surname. It has been suggested that the epithet nasi, which normally is an apppellative with the connotation of leadership in such a form as prince, president, or the like, was applied to this family as a family of scribes par excellence, but an alternative source of the epithet suggests itself in the appointment of Samaritan district governors by some Abbasid Caliphs 32.

Abraham b. Israel was born in A.D. 1171, a fact that we deduce from his claim that he was sixty years old in 1231 33 the year in which he wrote his 74th Pentateuch, a monoglot. His production rate must have been in excess of one complete codex per year over the span of his life to his sixtieth birthday. We can be a little more specific in respect of one period of his life. We know that he wrote his 46th Pentateuch, Nablus MS. 18, a bilingual codex, in A.D. 1216. A simple calculation shows that he wrote twenty-eight of his manuscripts in the fifteen years between 1216 (46th manuscript) and 1231 (74th manuscript). That is a rate of two Pentateuch manuscripts per year, or, if we may compare with the rate we established for modern scribes, about 88 lines per day. We can make this calculation from the size of NY MS. 11010 34.

While the speed of 88 lines per day seems to be very much slower than the rates achieved by modern scribes, we have to

30 Cf. the colophon to N.Y. MS. 11010.
31 See the discussion below.
32 The essence of this event is found in most of the Samaritan chronicles. A convenient account is in Rylands Sam. MS 257, ff. 131ff. As yet the matter has not been thoroughly discussed in Samaritan histories.
33 Cf. HPS Gothic F, colophon.
34 This manuscript is the one noted above, HPS Gothic F. It is described in detail in Hebraica, ix (1893), pp. 216-225; x, (1894), pp. 122-158.
take several factors into account. In the first place our information is so general that we can only approximate our results from completion dates. We have no data in the manuscripts which permits us to see the progress of the manuscripts, as we have with modern manuscripts and scribes. Though Abraham was a professional and prolific scribe and may have worked on his manuscripts continuously, we cannot be certain of this. Secondly, modern scribes had the benefit of a mastara\textsuperscript{35} for ruling their lines, so that half a quire could be ruled at one time.

\textsuperscript{35} On the use of the mastara in Nablus see M. Beit-Arié, Hebrew Codicology (Paris, 1976), pp. 78ff. The mastara seems to have been introduced in Nablus by the eighteenth century (on the basis of the regularity of lines in eighteenth-century MSS.). MS. O Nova 516 of Uppsala University, a nineteenth-century manuscript in the hand of Amram b. Ishāq, is a very useful guide to the way in which Samaritan scribes used the 16-line mastara. The manuscript is unbound and unsewn and tied into board covers, which enables us to see its structure in detail. The quire of 4 sheets was folded in two to make 8 folios or 16 pages. The top and bottom of the folded quire were brought towards each other and a small crease made across one part of the page at the 'spine', as shown. The page width is 18.3 cm. and the crease stretches 3.3 cm. from the spine into the page, or, when the leaf is opened, 3.3 cm. r. and v. from the spine. The page height is 24.6 cm. and the crease fell 12.3 from the top and bottom. Before each leaf was written, the verso side was laid on the mastara, so that lines 8-9 of the mastara fell across the crease, which now falls between the 8th-9th lines of scoring, hence, writing. The mastara was rubbed down and the lines appear incised on the verso and raised on the recto. Each folio was separately treated in the quire before writing, so that the lines are uniform in the quire. The
with considerable speed and accuracy. A scribe as experienced as Jacob b. Aaron was known to have written unruled manuscripts with some elegance; this lack of preliminary preparation of the surface must surely have speeded his rate of output. Older generation scribes did not use unruled surfaces. They wrote on parchment which was presumably more expensive, and they may have been unwilling to risk unnecessary erasure, which had to be made with a knife or scraper. Secondly, their ruling was done by pricking the margins and then scoring vertical-end margins, often double-column, to frame their writing, and they maintained upper and lower margins of a standard width. In general the standard of preparation of the writing surface was more exacting and time-consuming than the standards employed in the last three centuries. We must also remember that the formal, Classical, majuscule was more demanding in execution than either a modern majuscule or a minuscule. The modern majuscules are descended from the legal hand of the deeds of sale, which differed from the formal majuscule in reducing repetitive strokes to single strokes. Minuscule writing developed from a simplification of the majuscule script. Thus, the writing itself must have taken more time to execute than modern Samaritan script (See Fig. 2) We must also remember that

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*Fig. 2. The ductus of the main fist, B.N. Sam. MS. 3.*

*_mastara_ in use in the 19th century measured 7.7 cm. × 14.7 cm. and the side, vertical, margins project above and below the ruling by 0.6 cm. The mastara lines are 0.8 cm. apart.

monoglot manuscripts tended to impose certain restrictions on a scribe's freedom to vary from the original which he was copying. As the writer proposes to show later in this series of articles, there were firm canons of copying—a massorah, as it were—that were applied to monoglot Pentateuchs but not to the polyglots and triglots, and the observance of these canons must also have slowed the scribe's rate of production. A speed of 88 lines per day may not have been slow, but was a rather respectable day's output for a busy scribe.

Abraham's earlier rate of writing was probably somewhat slower. As a scion of a scribal family he may have begun his writing career at a comparatively tender age but, assuming that he wrote little or nothing for sale before he was ten years old, we would suggest that his first forty-six Pentateuchs were written between A.D. 1181 and A.D. 1216, a period of thirty-five years. This would indicate a rate of writing of something under two manuscripts per year, though still at a sustained and remarkable rate. These manuscripts are his numbered texts which, by their nature, are Pentateuchs, either codices or scrolls. Liturgies, calendars, amulets and the like are not numbered in Samaritan tradition, and if Abraham wrote any of these we have no record of them, nor do any survive in his fist to the best of the present writer's knowledge. We do not know if he was involved in any restorations; any manuscript restored by him would have stemmed from the 6th to the 8th centuries A.D. and none such has survived. We are also not informed as to whether he counted as a numbered Pentateuch the manuscript which we identify as MS. 4 Φ I 1, which he wrote in tandem with the priest Netanel b. Aaron of Jabneh.

Abraham's father, Israel b. Ephraim, seems to have been a prolific scribe, though his output was smaller than that of his son, and perhaps he wrote at a slower rate, though the data makes such a judgement risky. His seventh Torah was written in A.D. 1176 (MS. 57 Φ II 14,15) and his fourteenth Torah in A.D. 1182 (45 Φ II 14,15 4°). This implies a rate of writing of about one manuscript per year. Abraham's son, Israel, who continued the family scribal tradition at Jabneh wrote his fifth

37 Cf., E.A. Harkavy, *Catalog der hebräischen und samaritanischen Handschriften ... in St. Petersburg* (St. Petersburg, 1875 (hereafter, C.StP)), pp. 4-15.
38 The location of the family at Jabneh suggests that we might need to
Torah (BZ 10\textsuperscript{39}) in A.D. 1231, the year of his father's sixtieth birthday, as noted. We have no other details of his work, and either his output was rather limited or else he was a child of his father's old age to have written such a low-numbered manuscript in his father's sixtieth year.

All in all we see that this one scribal family produced some ninety-three Pentateuch manuscripts in about half a century; that is a sustained output of two manuscripts per year over the five decades. Since the majority of our examples of their work come from the Firkowitch collection, now in Leningrad, and since the Firkowitch manuscripts came, in the main, from a Genizah, we may assume that many of the fragments now in western libraries, and especially some of those from which the Ussher manuscripts were manufactured\textsuperscript{40}, came from the pens of the Jabneh scribes.

Another prolific scribe, and scion of a scribal family of the same era and related coastal diaspora, whose span of activity overlapped that of the family of nesi'im, was Abi Berachatah b. Ab Zehuta b. Ab Nephusha b. Abraham Zarephta (we know him also as Abu'l Barakhat b. Abu'el Sarur b. Abu'l Faraj.)\textsuperscript{41}

His earliest recorded Pentateuch manuscript, Nablus MS. 10\textsuperscript{42}, was his tenth Pentateuch and written in A.D. 1197. His last recorded manuscript, Chester Beatty MS. 751, his 50th Pentateuch, was written in A.D. 1225. Other dated manuscripts are Cambridge Add. Sam. MS. 714 (his 40th Torah, written in A.D. 1220), Sassoon MS. 402 (his 30th Torah, dated A.D. 1215/16), Rylands Sam. MS. 1, of A.D. 1211 (his 27th Torah), and Nablus MS. 1 of A.D. 1210 (his 25th Torah). Abi Berachatah's writing is so distinctive that, apart from these dated manuscripts, it is possible to identify several fragments as being undoubtedly

redefine the Samaritan Coastal genre of writing to include two subdivisions, namely the Jabneh style and the Zarepath style. The Gaza scribes seem to follow the Egyptian scribal traditions and not the coastal scribal tradition.

\textsuperscript{39} See note 26 above.

\textsuperscript{40} For the Ussher manuscripts and their present location see Fraser, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{41} The alternative name appears in the colophons in the parallel Arabic columns of the bilingual manuscripts. These parallel columns are our most useful source for determining the alternative names for the Samaritan scribes. These alternatives are collected in the author's Index of Samaritan Scribes.

\textsuperscript{42} The Nablus numbering follows that given to the microfilms in the film collection of the Jewish National and Hebrew University Library, Jerusalem. It does not take account of Shunnar's numbering, \textit{CSH I}.
from his pen. Among these are a fragment in the Barton collection, a bifolium in the box of fragments known to us as Bibliothèque Nationale Sam. MS. 22, a leaf in the Abbey of Beuron, most probably lost from Sassoon MS. 402, one leaf of Numbers 36 in Princeton MS. Garrett 5, and one leaf of Exodus in the Rylands. Unfortunately, these fragments do not help in calculating Abi Berachatah’s literary output, but other information about him enables us to draw some basic conclusions about his productivity and writing rates.

He wrote eleven Pentateuchs, his fortieth through his fiftieth, in the five years A.D. 120-1225, at least one of which (Cambridge Add. Sam. MS. 714) was a bilingual manuscript of some size. He was thus writing in excess of two Pentateuchs per year at this period. Between 1215 and 1220 he wrote ten Pentateuchs; that is, a rate of two per year (namely his 30th-39th manuscripts). However, in the four years between A.D. 1211 and A.D. 1215 he wrote only three Pentateuchs (his 27th, 28th, 29th), that is, less than one per year, and in the year 1210 he wrote his 25th and 26th Torahs. It took him the thirteen years between 1197 and 1210 to write the fifteen Pentateuchs numbered ten to twenty-four; that is, he was writing more than one per year. Clearly his most productive period, from these figures, is when he was an experienced scribe, and his slowest rate of writing was when he was still comparatively, though not relatively, inexperienced. In this case it is not unreasonable to assume that it took him ten years to write his first ten Pentateuchs, and perhaps even longer. We can reduce these broad writing rates to the lines-per-day-standard we have been applying to other scribes. Cambridge Add. Sam. MS. 714, which took something like six

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43 At the end of the unpublished A Brief Catalogue of the Samaritan Materials in the William E. Barton Collection by James Purvis, 1969, there appears the note: “18. Fragment of Genesis 26:20-22. The fragment was identified by Edward Robertson as being in the hand of ... Abu'l Barakhat ...”

44 I am indebted to M. Jean Pierre Rothschild for showing me this box, the contents of which were undergoing restoration, and for making available his detailed notes. In the brief time we were able to work over the contents we were able to attribute several of the fragments to their scribes. Two of the scribes represented therein, Haşşebhi b. Joseph and 'Asif b. Sadaqah, are discussed further in this study.


46 Cf. CJRL, ii. 35.
months to write on the basis of the evidence presented, was written at the rate of 126 lines per day (i.e. 305 ff. × 2 × 37/38 lines = 22569 ll. + 180 days = 125/126 lines per day). This is a faster rate than that achieved by Abraham nesi‘a, but we must remember that the manuscript concerned is bilingual, which is less intricate in writing than a monolingual codex. The simplicity may be balanced by the thirty-three characters across the two text columns, compared with the average of twenty-three letters per line of the single column of Rylands Sam. MS. 1.

The rate of writing in this latter manuscript cannot be reasonably assessed. If we apply figures based on the fact that the scribe wrote only one numbered Pentateuch in A.D. 1211, the rate appears to be 45 lines per day, a figure so low that it cannot be correct. It must be assumed that the scribe worked on other things during the year and finished the manuscript in a part of the year, or else that he worked on it sporadically.

Abi Berachatah’s last known manuscript again presents us with the deceiving figure of 95 lines per day, and his earliest known Pentateuch, his tenth, was written at the rate of about 36 lines per day. We are forced to the conclusion that the calculations for the more prolific period of Abi Berachatah’s life represent the scribe in reasonably continuous activity, whereas the calculations for the other periods are based on broad sweeps of time of up to a year in duration, and we have no means of knowing how much of his time was actually spent in copying. The most we can assume for this period of low output is that a trained scribe who exercised reasonable care could not write less than 36 lines of a Pentateuch per day.

There may be a way, however, of refining these data further, namely by comparing Cambridge Add. Sam. MS. 714 with his other manuscripts. Abi Berachatah was a careful scribe. We see that in MS. CB 751 the number of characters per line is a fairly constant twenty-one letters. In Rylands Sam. MS. 1 it is a reasonably consistent 23 letters per line. Each manuscript parallels the others in respect of the columnar writing of the ‘standard’ columnar passages47, and outside these passages columnar writing was kept to a minimum. By contrast, in

47 These arrangements are noted by Robertson in his introduction to CJRL, i. A description of their ‘standard’ placements and significance will appear as the third study in this series.
Cambridge Add. Sam. MS. 714, while the scribe was careful to maintain parity of placing between the Hebrew text and its translation, Abi Berachatah was far more free with the actual arrangement of the text in the columns. Columnar passages were not presented and there was no attempt to make the ends of the various books finish one third to one half way down the verso side of a page, which is one of the canons of copying which was applied to monolingual Pentateuchs by the better scribes, of whom Abi Berachatah was one. Thus, in spite of the intricacy of the structure of polyglot manuscripts, in which version had to be balanced against version to prevent the columns losing their relationship, they were probably written at a faster rate than the monolingual Pentateuchs. Against this, one has to estimate that the ruling of a polyglot manuscript necessitated four additional vertical lines, which must have taken a few minutes longer to draw than the ruling of a monolingual codex. In this case the 126 lines per day should probably be cut by a third to represent the speed of a scribe working on a monolingual manuscript and applying the Samaritan Masoretic canons. This would imply a working rate of 84 lines per day. On this basis it would seem that the 88 lines per day of Abraham b. Israel and the 95 lines per day of Abi Berachatah represent an honest day’s work for a good scribe.

It is of interest to speculate on the scribe’s age at various phases of his career. On the assumption that, in the earlier part of his scribal career, Abi Berachatah wrote one manuscript per year, he must have begun writing somewhere about A.D. 1187. Since he was born into a scribal family, he probably began writing when he was quite young but, almost certainly, not before the age of Bar Mitzvah which, for the Samaritans, is the age at which the child finishes reading the Pentateuch and, most commonly, the age of ten. It is very rare for a child to be Bar Mitzvah before the age of six. If we assume that Abi Berachatah began his scribal career by the time that he was fifteen, and if we assume that his fifteenth year was the year which we have estimated to be the date of his first Pentateuch, namely A.D. 1187, then be would have been born in 1172 or thereabouts. (This is a revision by eight years of the date of birth previously suggested on the basis of family connections).

48 SMP, p. 32.
Abi Berachatah was likely to have been no more than fifty-three years of age when he wrote his fiftieth Pentateuch. In other words, age for age, his output was parallel with that of Abraham Nesi’a and they can reasonably be compared.

We are now in a position to amplify data previously suggested for Abi Berachatah’s family. It is clear that the scribe of Cambridge Add. Sam MS. 713, his great-uncle Sa’ada, was the brother of Salamah b. Abraham b. Joseph, who was the scribe of Spiro MS. Katava Kadisha 01A114-13205. This would verify the date for the Cambridge manuscript suggested elsewhere, since Salamah was an active scribe in A.D. 1167 and the Cambridge manuscript must have been written within a decade of that date, before or after. Abi Berachatah’s son was called Meshalmah and his granddaughter Hakima. Meshalmah must have died somewhere between 1300 and 1325, for we find his daughter Hakima selling her inherited manuscripts in a period when Ithamar b. Aaron b. Ithamar (b. Aaron b. Avi Ozzi b. Pinhas, etc.) was priest in Damascus. These two names make it possible to suggest a family name for the Sarepathite scribes. Hitherto, Abi Berachatah has been identified only by first names in the male line of descent. His son, Meshalmah, is identified as a member of the Nun(ah) family, and we must infer that the Sarepathite scribes were all members of this famous Samaritan family.

Another well-known scribal family, the Munis, provides us with further data on the question of scribal writing speeds. This family is identified in the scholia to manuscripts between A.D. 1336 and 1586 principally in the Egyptian Diaspora. One of its members was the prolific scribe ‘Afif b. Sadaqah, who wrote in Egypt at the end of the fifteenth century A.D.

The exact number of manuscripts we can attribute to him depends upon whether we can accept the identification of ‘Afif with the scribe Ab Neṣṣana b. Sadaqa, who was writing concurrently with ‘Afif. The lineage of both scribes is the same:

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49 See SMP, p. 31 for a preliminary attempt at the family tree of Abi Berachatah. The data there is substantially verified by our new information.

50 This manuscript was previously known as Sassoon MS. 735.

51 SMP, pp. 31-32.

52 Cf. the colophons to Cambridge Add. Sam. MS. 1846 in HPS, p. lxxxivf. (= MS. Gothic Q).

53 Hakimah is mentioned in the same scholium as her father, Meshalmah.
'Afif's genealogy establishes him as 'Afif b. Sadaqa b. Jacob b. Sadaqa b. Ab Hasda b. Abd Yahweh of the Munis family; where the name Ab Ḥasda appears in the tashqils of parallel Arabic texts in the polyglot Pentateuchs, it appears in the form Abu'l Hassan. Ab Nessana's genealogy is identical, except that we never find the parallel form Abu'l Hassan for Ab Ḥasda and he describes himself as Ab Nessan, Ab Nessana and Ab Neshan according to his mood. Examination of the handwriting shows no practical difference between the two fists. If plates of the writing are compared we are left in no doubt that not only is the morphology the same but that also the ductus is the same. This point can be seen in published plates, let alone in later high-quality bromides. Consider for example the lamed visible in Fig. 9 in Anderson's catalogue (top line, four letters from the line end), and compare this with lamed, Fig. 10 (same catalogue, top line, six letters from the line end) and with lamed, Fig. 11 (same catalogue, top line, first letter, left hand column), with lamed, the end of Exodus, Ben Zvi MS. 21, Nablus film 31472/2 (first letter, second column, two lines from the end of Exodus). There can be no doubt that the hand movement which shaped all these letters traced the identical pattern, a pattern which is rather different from most scribal renderings of lamed with a separate hand stroke.

If we accept the evidence of the scripts, we are still faced with a dilemma in that there is a discrepancy in the numbering of the manuscripts and the interpretation of those numbers by scholars.

Anderson records the scribe's output, where known, as follows:

1468/9 Ab Nesa (Sassoon MS. 403/Ben Zvi MS. 28) 15th Pentateuch
1474 Ab Nishana (MS. CW 2484/Ben Zvi MS. 30) 18th Pentateuch

54 Cf. p. 90.
55 The author is uncomfortably aware of the dangers of trying to identify the ductus of letters from photographs. The case cited is one of the very few in which it seems possible to trace the hand-movement in a facsimile. Direct examination of the Chamberlain Warren MSS., at Michigan State University, supports the conclusion reached. The film cited represents a copy of the manuscript, which is the property of Zadok b. Abisha b. Piñas of Nablus.
56 Anderson's Ben Zvi numbers are those used by Ben Zvi in his series of articles, Miginz Shomron. The numbers differ from those in his book, SH, which we have been using.
It appears to the present writer that the numbering system used in Sassoon MS. 403 has been misunderstood. The number of Torah manuscripts written is given in its alphabetic numbering as hē yad, which has been misread as fifteenth, when the number should be read as hē yad, the tenth, the hē being the article not the number five. The Samaritan alphabetical numbering system rendered fifteen quite unambiguously as yad hē, ten and five, and this combination of letters was never avoided by older Samaritan scribes as it is avoided by Jewish scribes. This fact is made very clear by a study of the older Tolidah manuscripts, which regularly employ letters to represent numerals, and from a study of paginated Samaritan manuscripts up to this century. It is only this century that scribes have begun to copy the Jewish custom of combining the letters nine and six to make the equivalent of fifteen. We should, then, renumber the first entry in Anderson’s list as the tenth Pentateuch. We should also note as a matter of some importance that the date is given in the manuscript as 873 A.H. In fact, the fifteenth Torah is not noted in Anderson’s list and is the manuscript now known as Cambridge, Trinity HPS, p. xii. The same manuscript as Leningrad (St. Petersburg) MS. T 2. Nr. 15.

57 HPS, p. xii. The same manuscript as Leningrad (St. Petersburg) MS. T 2. Nr. 15.

58 In his series in SH this appears as BZ 21.

59 HPS, p. lxxxvii. The manuscript is R. 15.54 of Trinity College, Cambridge.

60 SMA, p. 15f. The manuscript has a parallel colophon in Arabic giving some alternative names for the scribe’s family, but these alternatives do not cast any light on the problem before us, since no other name is proposed for the scribe himself. Anderson’s publication of the colophon (SMA, p. 17) omits the alternative readings in the parallel column.

61 HPS, p. xii. See also J. Bloch, Die samaritanisch-arabische Pentateuch-übersetzung [sic], Berlin, 1901.

62 For example, see J. Bowman, Transcript of the Original Text of the Samaritan Chronicle Tolidah, Leeds, SD, the plate of the manuscript. If one examines the pagination of a relatively recent manuscript such as Rylands Sam. MS. 268 (864), one sees the continuity of the Samaritan numbering tradition using combinations not found in the Jewish tradition.

63 In the Holon publications the Samaritans seem to have dropped their own numbering system and to have adopted the Jewish system.
College, Sam. MS. R.15.55, which was written in 1469, i.e. 874 A.H. We should also note that Sassoon MS. 404 states that it is the twelfth Torah (shtheim esreh) and is not the twentieth. In this case, however, the date in the manuscript is an obstacle to the conclusions reached above, for it makes the scribe’s twelfth Torah to have been written subsequently to his fifteenth Torah, an unlikely sequence of writing. In view of the weight of the other evidence we are forced to the conclusion that the scribe erred in dating the manuscript and wrote 883 A.H., when he intended 873 A.H. Such a reading would place the twelfth Torah in its proper sequence. We should also note that, in addition to writing his own manuscripts, ‘Afif was able to find the time to restore the manuscript which we can identify as 37 Φ II 23,67⁶⁴, in 1474.

The output of ‘Afif should, therefore, be listed as follows, in the light of the above additional information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Manuscript Reference</th>
<th>Series</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1468/873 H</td>
<td>(Sassoon MS. 403)</td>
<td>10th Pentateuch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1468/873 H</td>
<td>(Sassoon MS. 404)</td>
<td>12th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1469/874 H</td>
<td>(Trinity College, Camb., MS. R.15.55)</td>
<td>15th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1474/878 H</td>
<td>(MS. CW 2484)</td>
<td>18th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1474/878 H</td>
<td>(37 Φ II 23, 67)⁹</td>
<td>Restoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1476/881 H</td>
<td>(15 T 2)ⁱ⁰ = Von Gall I</td>
<td>19th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1481/886 H</td>
<td>(Ben Zvi MS. 21)⁶⁴</td>
<td>28th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1482/887 H</td>
<td>(Trinity College, Camb., MS. R.15.54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1484/889 H</td>
<td>(MS. CW 2478a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1485/890 H</td>
<td>(Berlin Or. MS. 4° 534) = Von Gall Goth P</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We should also be aware of the following works or fragments of uncertain date which are attributed to ‘Afif or which are in his hand:

A.D. 1433, MS. Arābe 5 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale). While the date is given in an anonymous note on f. 93, there is also a deed of sale on the same folio which indicates that the text was written by Ab Neḥāna b. Sadaqah b. Jacob b. Sadaqa b. Ab Ḥasda of the Munis family. He sold the copy in A.D. 1468. The manuscript is not numbered in a series, but, since the deed of sale cited indicates that there was once a full colophon, now lost (in the words, “from the possession of its

⁶⁴ Cf., CStP, p. 108f.
scribe, named therein", it may well have been numbered at one time and was probably his first Torah. Certainly, the Hebrew headings to the gissin, which are in majuscule, are not readily recognisable as the mature script of the writer of the manuscripts discussed above.

MS. Fonds Samaritain 22, ff. 30-35, Bibliothèque Nationale. A mature sample of the scribe's work from the 1480s.

Rylands Sam. MS. 337 B (2013). Two columns of a Pentateuch scroll, undated, which appear to have been preserved as a cover for some valued document. (The author is indebted to Dr. Frank Taylor for his observation of the folding and stitching in the fragment, which indicate how it came to be preserved.) The script is indicative of the scribe at his most experienced (and careless) period of writing, with the developed characteristics seen in the last of the dated manuscripts. The end of Exodus, the right-hand column of the text, shows "Afif's typical unadorned and hurried book finial. One must assume that this scroll was written not long before his death and represents something after the 33rd Pentateuch, i.e. between A.D. 1485 and A.D. 1505. From B.L. Add. MS. 19956 we learn that "Afif's son was Ibrahim, who commissioned the writing of that manuscript in 1502, and we further learn that his father was then dead. From these statistics we can see an astonishing rate of writing. The scribe wrote at least three Pentateuchs in the year 873 H and at least three Pentateuchs in 874 H. He then slowed his rate of production to one or two Pentateuchs per year. His earlier writing cannot have been at the same rate in view of the date of Paris, MS. Arabe 6 of A.D. 1433. It is difficult to suggest a much earlier date than this for him to have begun writing. His great grandfather, Sadaqa b. Ab Hasda b. Abd Yahweh, wrote the Pentateuch 21 Φ Π 23, 24, 25, 26 4ο in A.D. 1408, unless that tashqil is defective and refers to his father, who appears to have been alive in A.D. 1468. He can barely have been born before 1420, which means that he probably died before his 80th birthday, having written at least thirty-three Pentateuchs. We are able to convert some of these details to the standard of line-per-day that we have been using in this study. Sassoon MS. 403 was written at the rate of about 127 lines per day. This is a more

65 Cf. Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium ... Museo Britannico, ii. 519.
elegant manuscript than most of 'Asif's Pentateuchs. As he became more experienced the scribe tended to be less careful in his writing techniques. In his 28th Pentateuch, for example, a bilingual text, we see that he makes no attempt at all to straighten the left margin of the second column. The same haste is very apparent in the writing of his thirty-first Torah; the published plates alone make this factor obvious. Even his eighteenth Torah, still fundamentally a well-written manuscript, shows lapses in the failure to retract the Tetragrammaton from the margin on some folios. However, Sassoon MS. 403 shows none of these faults; it has a tolerably regular count of 27 letters per line and shows signs of being a careful copy. The rate of writing achieved, then, is astonishing for it is some 30 per cent faster per day than the rates achieved by his most prolific predecessors, though they were more careful scribes. Sassoon MS. 404 shows an even faster rate of writing, namely 204 lines per day, but this should be seen in relation to the fact that the manuscript is bilingual and therefore would be written without the intense care with which the monolingual Pentateuchs were normally written. In 'Asif's case, as noted, no attempt was made to lay out the left-hand columns of bilingual manuscripts with any degree of care.

Although we have a considerable sum of information about other scribes and their manuscripts, we are seldom able to do more than describe their output rather than comment on their working rates. The priestly and Levitical scribes who wrote before the eighteenth century, when Torah writing was the principal scribal activity, seldom wrote many manuscripts each. For example, among the Levitical priests of Damascus we find Abraham b. Seth Aaron, who wrote something like one Pentateuch per year at the beginning of the sixteenth century, soon slowed down his rate of work. Though his contemporary in Nablus, the Levitical Priest Haṣṣebhi b. Joseph b. Abraham b. Haṣṣebhi (b. Abraham b. Berachah)\textsuperscript{66}, seems to have been more prolific in total\textsuperscript{67}, he wrote only thirteen Torahs between 1487, when he wrote his first, and 1519, when he wrote his thirteenth. Admittedly we can see that two of these manuscripts

\textsuperscript{66} The genealogy given in Cowley (SL, ii. p. xlvi) is wrong, and should be emended as shown.

\textsuperscript{67} Haṣṣebhi's production is described in my "An Unpublished Fragment of a Samaritan Torah Scroll", Bulletin, lxiv (1981-82), 386-406.
were written in the same year, i.e. B.L. Add. MS. 19011 and B.L. Or. MS. 10271. The first of these is a bilingual codex, either the seventh or the ninth Pentateuch written by the scribe, and the other is the scribe’s eighth Torah. The bilingual manuscript is written not inelegantly, but the scribe was either inexperienced with bilingual texts or was writing with such haste as to be unable to make the Hebrew text and the Arabic translation coincide. When we estimate the rate, we see that he was writing at the speed of 118 lines per day. In contrast, the scribe’s eighth Torah is written with considerably greater care and was produced at a rate of 90 lines per day. However, this rate of working does not seem to have been sustained for long and remained an exception among the Levitical Priests and the Aaronite Priests.

Now and again we are vouchsafed glimpses of other scribes and their writing habits. Thus we see a member of the Meṭer family, Ab Sakhwa b. Ab Elyon, still writing at the age of eighty, when he wrote part of Bodley Or. MS. 139. Unfortunately, we do not know how many manuscripts he copied in his lifetime.

In the late seventeenth century Samaritan scribes began to write fewer Pentateuchs and gave increasing attention to the liturgy. The liturgical manuscripts employed different scribal canons from Pentateuchs and were doubtless easier to copy, so that writing rates increased. Another factor that influenced the increasing speed of scribal copying was the use of the mastara in ruling and the habit of ruling several pages together without pricking, so that the time the scribe spent in preparation was reduced. However, the increasing use of coloured inks in writing may have counteracted gains in speed from changes in ruling techniques.

Unfortunately, liturgical manuscripts are not numbered by their writers in the same way that Pentateuch manuscripts are numbered. The only way to recover the statistics relating to scribal production is to survey the total output of one or two scribes in each scribal family concerned with the explosion in liturgical manuscripts, and this is a daunting, if not impossible, task. In the light of our present knowledge of manuscript location it is likely that the best that can be done is to describe a sub-

68 Some manuscripts of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century utilise four or five coloured inks, indicating that the scribes were concerned with the aesthetics of their manuscripts. This concern must have slowed them down considerably.
substantial part—hopefully as much as 45 per cent of the output of the more prolific scribes, but the vast majority of their production would be lost. Liturgical manuscripts were apparently not as highly thought of as Pentateuch manuscripts by the Samaritans themselves, and not a few nineteenth-century Samaritan bindings which are now in European libraries are composed of layers of older leaves, some in identifiable seventeenth-century minuscule fists.

A sample survey of members of the three scribal families most concerned in the explosion of liturgical works, the Danfi, Mufarrij and Levitical families, shows that three of the scribes who were contemporaries, Mufarrij b. Joshua b. Mufarrij, Salamah b. Jacob b. Murjan b. Ibrahim b. Ismail, and Tabiah b. Isaac b. Abraham b. Isaac, wrote between them at least seventy liturgical manuscripts, totalling more than 12,000 pages. We estimate this to be less than half of the production of these scribes, and with such inadequate data it would be foolhardy to attempt to estimate their production rate.

The foregoing data are summarised in the table below which makes a convenient reference for the rate of scribes working in the different eras, inks, materials and texts:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minuscule</th>
<th>Formal majuscule</th>
<th>Modern majuscule</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Torah, Monoglot</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>88, 90, 95, 127</td>
<td>118, 126, 204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyglot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgy, etc.</td>
<td>135, 159, 209, 308, 400, 512</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3. Table showing the number of lines per day written or scribes.

69 The writer has noted the collections of Samaritan manuscripts in the Ben Zvi Institute in Jerusalem and in a number of American libraries. These manuscripts are not yet catalogued and, doubtless, include works by eighteenth-century scribes. It will be some years yet before the description of holdings internationally is sufficiently advanced to allow for a reasonable estimate of modern production rates by Samaritan scribes.