

AN UNPUBLISHED FRAGMENT OF A SAMARITAN TORAH SCROLL

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Until December 1978 the Palestine Exploration Fund owned an unpublished fragment of a Samaritan Torah scroll. In that month the scroll was sold at auction via Sotheby's, the purchaser being Maggs, the antiquarian dealers.¹ The description of the scroll fragment which appeared in the Sotheby catalogue is given verbatim below. (The description was also reprinted in the Samaritan newspaper, *Aleph Bet*, no. 224, of 1/12/78, p. 20).

'62 THE BOOKS OF LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS, written in SAMARITAN HEBREW SCRIPT, comprising the last four chapters of Leviticus and the first two chapters of Numbers, ON A VELLUM SCROLL, two membranes sewn with gut (as in Hebrew scrolls), five columns, 77.8 and 64.5 lines to a column [cf. the Jewish tradition which demands between 42 and 60 lines], a few small holes just affecting the text, some stains, last column browned, some edges rather frayed, some repairs on verso

(425mm by 1000mm) [Eleventh or early twelfth century]

* * AN EXTREMELY EARLY FRAGMENT OF THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH. A. E. Harkavy in his Appendix to Nutt's edition of the *Fragments of a Samaritan Targum*, London, 1874, described a fragment in the Academy of Science in Leningrad; he said that no other fragments had 'hitherto been discovered in any European library, all the existing ones being in the shape of books; the reason of this appears to be that the Samaritans hold such rolls as especially sacred, from their being intended for use in the synagogues, and so will part with them for no sum, however large, to those of another faith'. M. Gaster, describing another fragment

¹Letter of 19 Nov. 1980 from Miss Gillian Webster of the Palestine Exploration Fund. According to a letter of 8 June 1981 from H. Clifford Maggs, the fragment is still in the possession of Maggs Bros., and they had accepted a date of twelfth-thirteenth century AD. There is still an error of three to four centuries.

(Deuteronomy to the end of the Pentateuch, i.e. roughly the length of the present manuscript), wrote 'Up to a short time ago not a single copy of the Hebrew Samaritan text of the Pentateuch in scroll form was known outside the Samaritan community in Nablus' (*Hebrew Illuminated Bibles of the IXth and Xth Centuries, and a Samaritan Scroll of the Law of the XIth Century*, London, 1901, p. 3).

The present manuscript contains many variants from the readings of the Hebrew text. It seems to belong to the eleventh century (though it is difficult to be certain as the oldest dated Samaritan scroll is 1166) and it appears to be more primitive and earlier than the Gaster text and the oldest fragment in the British Library (OR.2686) which comprises Numbers 16-26 (cf. G. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London, 1893, p. 93) and is ascribed to the twelfth or thirteenth century.'

For some years this fragment was on display in the Department of Semitic Languages and Literature at the University of Leeds, where the author was able to examine it closely.¹ The script of the fragment was recorded and it proved to be identical with two specimens in the author's study of Samaritan majuscule palaeography.² However, the publication of that study coincided with the publication of the Sotheby catalogue, making it impossible for the unknown author of the Sotheby entry to refer to it and correct his error of at least five hundred years in dating the fragment. There is no doubt at all that the fragment described in the catalogue was written early in the sixteenth century and not the eleventh century (see below). Errors of this order in dating Samaritan manuscripts are not at all uncommon, but recent advances in Samaritan palaeography and codicology should help to reduce their number.³

¹I am most grateful to Dr B. S. J. Isserlin, Head of the Department of Semitic Languages at the University of Leeds, for allowing me access to this fragment, and, also, for his kindness in providing me with photographs. I also thank the Palestine Exploration Fund for permission to study the fragment.

²'Samaritan Majuscule Palaeography; Eleventh to Twentieth Century' (= S.M.P.) *B.J.R.L.*, lx (1977-8) and lxi (1978-9) (reprinted as a monograph). See scripts nos. 15 and 16.

³See my 'Problems in Epigraphy and Palaeography; the Nature of the

The author of the entry in the catalogue rightly points to the value of the fragment for further study.

No information about the provenance of the scroll is available and, since it was not included in the discussion by Cowley¹ of the manuscripts in the possession of the Fund in 1904, we may suppose that it was acquired by the Palestine Exploration Fund at some later date.²

This scroll fragment is especially valuable in that we are in a position to say something about its date and authorship. There are not many scrolls—as distinct from codices—of the Samaritan Pentateuch which are accessible to scholars for study. The majority of such texts are fragmentary, and, in the main, are without date or without an indication of their authorship or provenance.³ A scroll, or even a portion thereof, which we can date, makes a most welcome addition to the slender stock of resources on which we rely for our knowledge of Samaritan Torah scroll writing. The scribal characteristics of the scroll may differ from those of the codex, as in the Jewish tradition,⁴ where form as well as content is of some importance. We are not yet well

Evidence in Samaritan Sources', *B.J.R.L.*, lxii (1979–80), 37–60 and my 'Samaritan Minuscule Palaeography', *ibid.* lxiii (1980–81), 330–68.

¹A. E. Cowley, 'A Description of Four Samaritan Manuscripts Belonging to the Palestine Exploration Fund', *P.E.F.Q.S.*, 1904, pp. 67–8.

²In the last quarter of the nineteenth century numerous fragments of Samaritan Torah scrolls were acquired by European libraries. Many went to Leningrad and some went to England. The majority of these fragments came out of what we can only describe as *Genizot*, in Nablus. We may assume that this manuscript was acquired from the same source by one of the scholars whose work was supported by the Fund. Cf. M. Gaster, 'A Samaritan Scroll of the Hebrew Pentateuch', *P.S.B.A.*, xxii (1900), 240–69. Gaster makes some pertinent comments about the source of these scroll fragments.

³A. von Gall, *Der Hebraische Pentateuch Der Samaritaner* (Giessen, 1918) (=H.P.S.) seems to have had access to thirty-four fragments and one scroll, of which five had scribes' names and/or dates. The complete scroll was the Abisha scroll which, as we have shown elsewhere, was a late manuscript put together from a number of fragments in the fourteenth century. Cf. my 'The Abisha Scroll of the Samaritans', *B.J.R.L.*, lviii (1975–6), 36–65. A dated scroll of AD1166 was in the Sassoon collection, i., MS 735 (now MS. Ola-114-B.205. Spiro).

⁴Gaster (*op. cit.*) drew many parallels between the form of the Samaritan Torah scroll and that of the Jewish Torah scroll. He suggested that the form was exceptionally important. Despite some of his hasty conclusions, he was probably correct in the overall argument.

informed about the details of form in Samaritan scrolls, so for the moment we must be content to present evidence from this source and hope that the day will come when there is sufficient data to draw upon for a comparative study from a wide range of examples. However, wherever some little comparative data has been available to us, its implications for our fragment have been noted. A collation of the variant readings in the fragment is also presented.

General Description

The surviving portion of the scroll consists of two sheets of browning and dry parchment, containing five columns of writing. The two sheets are joined by a row of stitching between the third and the fourth columns of writing. At the left-hand side of the second sheet, a row of stitches which is still attached shows that this second sheet is complete. Likewise the sharp, pricked edge on the right-hand side of the first sheet indicates that this one is also complete. We can, therefore, infer that the scroll was made up from sheets of differing lengths.¹ The right-hand sheet, with its three columns of script, is 61 cm wide and the left-hand sheet, with its two columns of script, is 41.25 cm wide. The total height of the scroll is 44.45 cm. The extent of the shrinkage of the leather is unknown, but it is likely to have shrunk to some small extent in view of the known shrinkage characteristic of the material.² Von Gall³ gave the following as the consecutive heights of the scrolls which he published: 43 cm, 43.5 cm, 44 cm, 42.5 cm, 40.75 cm, 42 + cm, 37.5 cm, \pm 42 cm. There would, thus, seem to have been a favoured height for the parchment skins on which scrolls were written. We do not know whether that favoured height was merely an average, whether it derived from the size of available parchment sheets, or whether there was a living tradition among scribes that a sheet had to conform to a standard. The Palestine

¹This seems to have been a not uncommon characteristic of Samaritan scrolls. Cf. *H.P.S.*, μ where the four sheets have 15 columns arranged either three columns or four columns of text per sheet.

²D. Burton, J. B. Poole and R. Reed, 'A New Approach to the Dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls', *Nature*, vol. 184, no. 4655, (15 August 1959), pp. 533-4.

³*H.P.S.*, pp. xlvii-xlviii.

Exploration Fund fragment approximates to the average of 41 cm.¹

The writing in each column slopes slightly from right to left: the upper margin between the text and the edge of the sheet, therefore, varies between 2.2 cm and 3 cm, an average being 2.5 cm. The lower margin varies between 2.5 cm and 3.5 cm. Two of the columns have only half a line of text for their last lines. The average width of the lower margin is about 3.2 cm so that the lower margin is wider than the upper. This variation in width coincides with the Jewish tradition and with the tradition in vogue amongst the Essenes as reflected in the Dead Sea scrolls. However, since we have no information about upper and lower margin widths from other Samaritan scrolls we cannot say whether this fragment is exceptional or whether it conforms to a norm that might be of some antiquity if it is not in imitation of the Jewish scribal tradition.

The width between the columns is 2.4 cm except between those columns of text where the sheets are joined. Here the width is 3.8 cm, being 2.4 cm to the row of stitches and 1.4 cm from the stitches to the next letter. Each column is 18 cm wide. This shows some care in measurement, for the data available from other scrolls indicated that within a single scroll the column width could vary. Despite this observation there seems to be some grouping in other data available which points to the possibility that there may have been a standard or standard widths, the traditions of which are not preserved. One of these standards may have been 13 cm like the standard column width in contemporary Jewish scrolls. The following column widths are drawn from Von Gall.² They are grouped per scroll fragment: 13, 14.5 cm; 12.5, 13.5, 14.5 cm; 13.25, 21.5, 22.5 cm; 13.25 cm; 12.5, 13.5, 20, 25 cm; 17.5, 18.5 cm; 15.5, 16, 16.5, 17, 17.5 cm; 13.5 cm; 13.5 cm.

From all the foregoing data we can calculate that the approximate length of the original scroll was close to twenty

¹Modern Samaritan Torah scrolls seem to be quite different in size. A scroll owned by the University of Sydney is only 35 cm high. Z. Shunnar, *Katalog Samaritanischer Handschriften*, I (Berlin, 1974), lists only one scroll of 40 cm = no. 13 (c.1931) and no. 27B of 50 cm (dated 1959).

²*H.P.S.*, loc. cit.

metres and that each book of the Pentateuch had approximately the following number of columns: Genesis 25, Exodus 20, Leviticus 14, Numbers 21, Deuteronomy 16, i.e. a total of ninety-eight columns,¹ including the first and last blank columns. There is no uniform number of lines per column. Reading from the right of the fragment, we find 81, 86, 82, 76, 77 lines per column. For comparative purposes we present the following data drawn from Von Gall;² 95; 80–90; 65; 70; 87–91; 44; 84; 82–96; 71; 73; 140; 100, lines per column. We may also note that the number of lines per column in the Abisha scroll averages at 72 per fist B, 64 for fist C, and 56 for fist A.³ These figures make us doubt the correctness of Gaster's⁴ view that the Samaritan scribal tradition was parallel to the Jewish tradition and that the number of lines per column in the Torah scroll never 'overstepped' the maximum permitted in Jewish scrolls, ostensibly sixty.⁵ On the other hand, we are able to support Gaster's opinion⁶ that the distance between lines is equal to the size of the letters. The average space between the letters is 2 mm. The letters themselves average 2 mm in height. Thus, the distance between the scored lines from which the letters are suspended is 4 mm. There are between thirty-eight and forty characters per line.

Each column is ruled and scored so that lines of writing may be suspended from the scoring. There are also vertical scorings, two

¹Our calculations are based on the average of the number of verses which appear in the fragment. The columns have an average of sixty verses each (i.e., 46, 65, 59, 66 and 55). The number of verses in each book is divided by the average to give the number of columns per book. The verses per book are as given in A. and R. Sadaqa, *Jewish and Samaritan Version of the Pentateuch*, 5 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1963–5). So, Genesis 1534 verses, would need 25.5 columns; Exodus, 1209 verses,—20.15 columns; Numbers, 1288 verses,—21.4 columns; Deuteronomy, 955 verses,—16 columns. The total number of columns is 97.35=98 columns. When this sum is multiplied by the column width, i.e. 18 cm, and the width of the margins of 2.4 cm is added to each, we find that the length must have been at least 2000 cm. By comparison, the Abisha scroll has 122 columns arranged thus: Gen.—37, Exod.—24, Lev.—13, Num.—27, Deut.—21. Cf. F. Perez Castro, *Sefer Abisha* (Madrid, 1959), p. xxvi.

²*H.P.S.*, pp. xlvi–xlvi.

³These data are drawn from the lists presented in Castro, *op. cit.*

⁴*Op. cit.* p. 249.

⁵But see *T.B. Sopherim*, 2:6, which suggests that there may be up to 98 lines per column with ideal numbers of 42, 60 and 72.

⁶*Op. cit.* p. 248.

at the beginning and end of each line between which the first and the last letters on each line are written, therefore, in columnar form, and are a little detached from the word following or preceding. The tops of columns one, four and five are much blacker and more worn than the rest of the manuscript. In some instances the ink has interacted with the skin so that complete letters start out of their beds rather like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that have not been pushed home.

Authorship

The present writer is fortunate in that he was able to recognize the handwriting of the fragment from two specimens of writing in his possession.¹ It is the fist of the scribe of MS BL Oriental 10271,² a Pentateuch codex; of MS BL Add. 19011, a Hebrew and Arabic Pentateuch codex; of the scribe of MS Keble 83³ a portion of a Pentateuch codex; and of Bodley Marsh 15. MS Keble 83 preserves the text of Leviticus 21:10—Numbers 9:12, coincidentally, overlapping with the text of the Palestine Exploration Fund scroll fragment, which begins with Leviticus 23:10 and closes with Numbers 3:13. These four manuscripts, and the *tashqil* of a fifth manuscript in Nablus,⁴ enable us to describe the scribe. MS BL Oriental 10271 was written in the same year as MS BL Add. 19011 and here the copyist tells us that he is Haṣṣebhi b. Joseph b. Abraham who wrote his eighth Pentateuch in 915 AH (= 1509) as a commission for the Egyptian market.⁵ His tenth codex was written

¹The writer collected specimens of scripts for a study of Samaritan majuscule palaeography. This script is identical to those numbered 15 and 16 in the sequence presented in that study.

²The same manuscript is described in *H.P.S.*, pp. xxxvi—xxxvii. It was formerly the property of Moses Gaster.

³A full description of this unpublished manuscript is to be found in my article 'Samaritan Majuscule Palaeography', and in M. Parkes, *The Medieval MSS of Keble College*, Scolar Press, 1979.

⁴Described by I. Ben-Zvi, *Sepher Hashomronim*, (=S.H.) (2nd edn) (Jerusalem, 1970), p. 291.

⁵Von Gall, *H.P.S.*, p. xxxvii, n. 1, correctly identifies Haṣṣebhi with Tabiah b. Joseph b. Abraham, who was writing in Nablus almost contemporaneously. Samaritan scribes usually had interchangeable Aramaic, Arabic and Hebrew names.

in 917 AH (= AD 1511), also for the Egyptian market,¹ therefore MS BL Add. 19011, which falls in date between his eighth and tenth pentateuchs, must, naturally have been his ninth pentateuch, though the *tashqil* does not explicitly state this detail.² His thirteenth pentateuch, MS Keble 83, was written in 925 AH (= AD 1519).³ We can see that his rate of production varied from one per year to three manuscripts in eight years.

At such rates of writing the earliest date we could reasonably propose for the Palestine Exploration Fund fragment (providing that it were number one in his manuscript series) would be nine years before AD 1509, i.e. c. AD 1500. For reasons which will become clear, we know that Haşşebhi was dead at the very latest by 1033 AH. He may also have lived to a ripe old age, perhaps up to 990 AH (see below). In this circumstance it would be rash to be categorical about the date of the Palestine Exploration Fund fragment within the period 900–1000 AH, but on an impressionistic basis we may place it between his tenth and thirteenth codexes, c.AD 1511–19. As will be shown below, the scribe was not only copying but also imitating his source manuscript, whereas skilled Samaritan scribes tended to copy but not imitate their source manuscripts, so that each copy was different.⁴ We would appear, then, to be looking at a work stemming from a skilled scribe who had not yet written enough to be thoroughly inventive (see below for further data on this point). The scribe himself was a man who is worth more detailed study than

¹The *tashqil* reads: 'I am Haşşebhi b. Joseph b. Abraham, the priest and custodian of the place, who wrote this sacred Torah of Moses in the name of . . . Abraham . . . b. 'Abd Yahweh . . . b. . . . Meribha of the Munis family in 917 A.H. It makes the tenth I have written, praise be God.' For the full text see *S.H.*, p. 291.

²The *tashqil* of MS BL Add. 19011 reads, 'I, Haşşebhi b. Joseph b. Abraham, priest of the place, wrote this holy Law for the supporter and pillar of the community, Şadaqah b. . . . Abraham b. . . . Joseph of the Egyptian Diaspora, in the year 915 A.H. praise be God.'

³The *tashqil* reads: '. . . b. Joseph b. Abraham the priest of the place wrote this Sacred Law in the name of the high priest, Pinḥas, the son of the high priest Eleazar, the son of the high priest Abisha, God's blessing be upon them; in the year 925 A.H. This makes thirteen Torah's praise be the Lord.'

⁴It is proposed to prove this point in a subsequent study with reference to the various manuscripts of the scribe of Rylands Sam. MS I, Abi Berakhatah. All his surviving Pentateuchs differ in layout.

is possible at this time, since our sources are deficient and their chronology has yet to be tested in an analytical index which compares scribal data against their alleged chronologies. However, it is clear that his literary output stems from the historical situation in which he found himself.

Haṣṣebhi variously describes himself in the *tashqils* of his manuscripts¹ as 'a priest', 'the priest of the place', 'the custodian of the sacred place' and 'the priest, the Levite in Shechem'. Whilst the term 'custodian of the sacred writings' appears to be a term sometimes applicable to Levitical priests the designation,² 'the priest of the place' was restricted to the true priestly line, at least, according to the various chronicles, and scholia, until the accession to the priestly office of Ṣadaqah, son of Haṣṣebhi, the scribe of this fragment, as the first of the Levitical priests. However, Hebrew University Sam. MS 805, f. 219 leaves the impression that Ṣadaqah was preceded in office by his father, Haṣṣebhi, though none of the chronicles otherwise hints at this.

Allowing for the fact that some of the manuscripts of the chain of high priests confuse dates of accession and dates of death, the Tolidah³ states that Ṣadaqah assumed sacerdotal office in 1033 AH and died in 1060 AH. If we may presume that, like his Levitical descendents of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, he was fairly long-lived, even up to the age of ninety and beyond, then he must have been born no later than 970 AH, which would suggest that his father was then at least seventy years old. In any event, the father, Haṣṣebhi must have been dead when his son assumed sacerdotal office. Haṣṣebhi would then have been 130 years old!

One alternative to postulating such long lives for both Haṣṣebhi and his son is to assume that there is a missing link in the chain of descent, but the genealogy of the Levitical family, as presented in

¹For the *tashqil* of MS BL Add. 10271 see *H.P.S.*, p. xxxvii.

²Cf. *J.N.U.L.*, MS 805, f. 218. The use of the term here may be retrospective, i.e. written after the Levitical line was established in sacerdotal office.

³In this study the term Tolidah includes Girton College MS 10, ff. 671–801; J. Bowman, *The Transcript of the Original Text of the Samaritan Chronicle, Tolidah*, Leeds, 1954 (=OTT); MS 307 Freie Universität, Berlin; MS Bodley Samaritan e 16; M. Gaster, 'Chain of the Samaritan High Priests', in *Studies and Texts* (London, 1928) (reprinted 1971) and Ad. Neubauer, 'Chronique Samaritaine', *JA*, 1869, pp. 385–470.

Cowley,¹ is too well attested for the period in question for this hypothesis to stand. A second alternative which needs thorough investigation, but which could account for the variety in the Tolidah manuscripts for this period, is that the priestly chain has duplicated two names, counting the priests in Damascus in the Nablus chain. It is likely that Eleazar the nineteenth (=no. 134 in the priestly series) and Pinḥas the eighth (=no. 135) may have been counted twice. It must be observed that the *tashqil* of MS Keble 83 supports the chronology up to c.956 AH and we must suppose that, if an error through a double reckoning has occurred, it occurred after that time. We may suggest, then, that the priestly chronology should be shortened by the subtraction of the reigns attributed to Eleazar and Pinḥas (i.e. nos. 134, 135 in the priestly series); that is, a shortening of sixty-seven years. This would mean that Haṣṣebhi was dead by 966 AH. In this case the possible dates for the Palestine Exploration Fund fragment would have absolute limits of AD 1500–59.

In any event we must consider Haṣṣebhi's possible role in the early sixteenth century, which saw so many manuscripts flow from his pen.

The high priest, Pinḥas b. Eleazar b. Abisha, to whom Haṣṣebhi dedicated his thirteenth codex, succeeded to the sacerdotal office at a very troubled time. What took place in his pontificate is uncertain, for the versions of events differ from one another.² One version is that Palestine was ravished by a plague in the year 916 AH (AD 1510) and the high priest Eleazar died in the plague and his property was expropriated by the governor of Shechem.³ We are not told that his son Pinḥas assumed office, but almost all the sources agree that he was in Damascus for fifteen years, that he returned to Shechem in 945 AH and died in 956 AH.⁴ We may calculate from this data that he went to Damascus c.930 AH some eight years after the Ottoman Conquest of Palestine in 922 AH (AD 1515). Ben Zvi⁵ argues that Pinḥas fled to Damascus in 915 AH

¹A. E. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy* (Oxford, 1909) ii. p. xlvi.

²There are three separate endings for the original edition of the Tolidah at this period. Cf. OTT, p. 34.

³However, MS JTS 3473, f. 595 and MS Berlin Sam. 963, f. 56b indicate that Eleazar died in Gaza in 915 AH on Wednesday, the nineteenth day of Safr.

⁴Cf. Tolidah.

⁵SH, p. 224.

to save his life. He associated this flight with the Turkish invasion which, however, as noted, took place in 922 AH.

Haşşebhi's comments about himself in the various *tashqils* indicate a timetable that is slightly more consonant with the account in Samaritan Chronicles, if not entirely in accord with them. We see from the *tashqil* of 917 AH that Haşşebhi regarded himself as custodian of the sacred place.

We must suggest that the High Priest Pinḥas was installed, after the death of his father, in the preceding year 916 AH or in 915 AH,¹ and at the threat of the seizure or at the actual seizure of his father's goods, he fled to Damascus to secure whatever he could from the hands of the rapacious Mameluke governor. He may well have taken some of the sacred scrolls for protection, or some of the Bible codexes. Haşşebhi seems to have been installed as religious custodian, and eventually, as the exile of his master was prolonged, he became the officiating priest. It is clear from MS Keble 83 that Haşşebhi regarded Pinḥas as the legitimate High Priest, however JTS Chronicle MS 3473, f. 600,² speaks of a controversy over the ashes of the Red Heifer c.949 AH and says, 'There was a man called Joseph ibn Ghazal, High Priest of the house of Levi. ...' This could be none other than Ghazal ibn Joseph, i.e. Haşşebhi b. Joseph b. Abraham, our scribe. We must suppose that Haşşebhi wrote so many scrolls and codexes to make up for those lost either by the transfer to Damascus and Egypt, during these troubled years, or which were plundered by the Ottomans.

Whilst there is yet much clarification needed, there is sufficient data available here to indicate the need for a close scrutiny of the dating of the origin of the Levitical priesthood. We must now return to our detailed study of the scroll fragment.

Massoretic Form and Punctuation

Margoliouth³ suggested that the term 'massoretic entries' could be an apt description of the notes at the end of each book

¹Pinḥas' accession is expressly noted in the JTS Chronicle, MS 3473.

²I am indebted to Father Paul Stenhouse for drawing my attention to this passage. See also his *Kitāab al Tarikh of Abu'l Fath* (Sydney PhD, 1981).

³G. Margoliouth, 'An Early Copy of the Samaritan Hebrew Pentateuch', *J.Q.R.*, 1903, pp. 632-9.

of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Gaster¹ extended the term to apply it to Samaritan punctuation and accentuation and to their traditions relating to open and closed section in the Law (the *Petuḥot* and *Setumot*). This work has been followed and amplified by numerous scholars, but especially by Z. Ben Hayyim.²

In this study we take the term *massorah* to mean the traditions which relate to all those aspects of the written transmission of the Biblical text and the preservation of fixed methods of setting out the pages of the Holy writ. We begin our discussion of the Samaritan massoretic tradition as found in this manuscript with reference to the work of Robertson³ and Talmon.⁴

Although the last letter of each line is set in a ruled column of its own, it is not easy to make a judgement as to whether we should regard this as a 'one letter' or a 'mixed style' manuscript.⁵ There may be some light to be shed on the development of this feature from careful examination of this manuscript which justifies the conclusion reached elsewhere⁶ that this feature should not be used as a chronological determinant. The text, *for the most part*, is written as a dense mass, so that the whole body abuts on to the final ruled columns which hold the last letters of each line, without any break on each line between the letter in the column and what precedes. However, there are some places where the last letter is clearly detached from the preceding word, or, rather, we should observe that the preceding word is retracted. In other places two letters seem to be detached. The latter is the more accurate statement since there are places where the scribe appears to have written the last letter of the line first before writing the word which should precede it.⁷ It is quite apparent from this fragment that

¹M. Gaster, 'Massoretisches im Samaritanischen', reprinted in *Studies and Texts*, i (London, 1925), 614–37 (from *Orientalischen Studien Theodore Nöldeke*, 1906).

²Z. Ben Hayyim, *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic amongst the Samaritans*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1957).

³E. Robertson, *Catalogue of the Samaritan Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library Manchester*, i (MUP, 1938) (= C.J.R.L.), pp. xxiv–xxv.

⁴S. Talmon, 'Some Unrecorded Fragments of the Hebrew Pentateuch in the Samaritan Version', *Textus*, xiii (1963), 60–77.

⁵*U.F.H.P.*, p. 63.

⁶*Cf. S.M.P.*, pp. 4–5.

⁷See column 2, lines 5 and 6 from the bottom.

what governed the 'one letter' or 'two letter' or 'mixed' layout, was not merely the eye of a scribal stylist but rather the need for space on the page or column. The columns are most carefully written to a pattern, and the similarity with some better-written Jewish Torah scrolls (the B'yah Shemow scrolls)¹ is apparent. The scribe was intent on ensuring that each column ended in a particular way. Why he did this, is uncertain. We may suggest either that he wanted each column to end with a sense pause, or that he wanted the next column to begin with a particular passage, for reasons which we do not know, or that he wanted a weekly lection to begin at the top of a column, or that he wanted the end of the book of Leviticus to fall one third of the way down a column—or a combination of all these facts, as we will consider subsequently. In seeking the answer we must note the following.

Column one of the fragment is spaced quite regularly all its length, with the last letter distinct from the preceding word, and the whole column is written consistently as a 'one letter' column of script. The scribe was able to space each word on each line so that he never ended the line too far from the last letter in each column. If necessary, he left a space between the last word and the preceding word to avoid too large a gap between the last letter and the rest of the word.

In the next column the scribe has spaced his writing carefully at the top, but has crammed the text closely at the bottom of the column. Clearly he was intent on finishing the page so that the following column could begin with *בַּחֲקֵי* i.e. (Lev. 26:3). As a result, many of the lines are written close up to the margin, and in the other lines the scribe had no apparent room for manoeuvre. There were places where he started to write the last word on the line close to the preceding word and then realized that the gap between the word and the ruled end column was going to be too large. He then detached a second letter, turning that line into a 'two letter' line. In this text the principle applies that the more closely written the line the greater the likelihood of its being a 'two letter' line. This whole process is underlined by the fifth of the

¹Cf. Hagahoth Maimoniyoth 9, to *H.S.T.*, 7:9. Edn 'Jerusalem', 1972, vol. I, p. 84.

columns where the scribe had ample room and was consistent in his 'one letter' approach.¹

It is quite clear from these details that while the 'one letter' manuscript is primary,² a 'one letter' appearance or a 'two letter' appearance may not be the basis of chronological discussion unless account is taken of the tradition of copying which governed the scribe's work.

The Tetragrammaton occurs six times at the end of lines and is not retracted, not even when it occurs at the end of a paragraph or a column and there is ample room for its retraction.³ In column one, thirteen lines from the end of the column (Lev. 24:6) the Tetragrammaton is split,⁴ the last letter being 5 mm from its preceding vav.

Each column ends on a sense-pause⁵ and these are followed by paragraph finials which are used throughout the fragment. These pauses are (1) Leviticus 24:12, a *Petuḥah* in the Jewish tradition of Torah writing. The line is written to the margin of the column. (2) Leviticus 26:2, also a *Petuḥah* in the Jewish tradition and written from margin to margin. (3) Leviticus 27:13, not marked as a section in the Jewish tradition⁶ but clearly marked as a *Qiṣṣah* in the Samaritan Pentateuch. It is written from the middle of the line to the margin. (4) Numbers 1:35, a *Petuḥah* in the Jewish tradition, written from margin to margin. (5) Numbers 3:13, a *Petuḥah* in some Jewish traditions and a *Setumah* in others written from the centre of the line to the margin.

Whilst Talmon is assuredly correct in drawing attention to the fact that pages or columns of manuscripts may be organized to allow them to end in sense pauses, this would appear to be only

¹The two other manuscripts written by this scribe which I have seen, MS Keble 83 and MS BM Or. 10271, are 'one letter' manuscripts with some mixing.

²*U.F.H.P.*, p. 63, describes the lack of chronological consistency in the appearance of the one, two, and mixed letter traditions.

³Although Robinson, *C.I.R.L.*, i. p. xx, describes the retraction of the tetragrammaton, he does not note that the Divine name may be treated differently when it falls at the end of a line than when it falls at the end of a paragraph. In some manuscripts it is retracted only at the end of a paragraph.

⁴So, too, in the scribe's MS BM Or. 10271, but in his Keble 83, the Tetragrammaton is neither retracted nor split.

⁵On this cf. *U.F.H.P.*, p. 63.

⁶In the Kittel (3rd edn), a space equivalent to a *Setumah* is left.

one factor in the arrangement of columns in this fragment. This can be proved from columns one and five. In column one, one hundred and one words have been spread to cover seventeen lines of text from a point in the column exactly equivalent to where, in column two, the scribe began to 'squeeze' the text. In this (second) column the second last paragraph has one hundred and one words in just nine lines of text. If the scribe had been intent only on finishing the page with a sense pause, he could have spread the one hundred and one words to cover seventeen or eighteen lines, as he had done in column one, instead of squeezing them into half the space. Concern for sense pauses only was not the motive for the layout of this page. What, then, was the motive? Was he intent on ensuring that the third column began with Leviticus 26:3, which marks the beginning of lection 29, in the annual cycle of Sabbath readings in the Samaritan rite?¹ If this were the case why not take the trouble to ensure that lection 28, which begins with Leviticus 23:3, began at the head of the column? (Since the first column of the fragment begins with Leviticus 23:9, lection 28 must have fallen close to the end of the preceding column.) Quite obviously concern for the placing of these lections was not the prime reason for the layout of the columns. We must look for some other factor. We can see that at least three of the columns of the scroll began with a verse marking one of the Palestinian triennial cycle (really three and a half years) of readings. Thus, column 1 began with Leviticus 23:9, which Mann described as lection 95.² Column 3 begins with Leviticus 26:3, which was lection 99, and column 6, no longer extant, began with Numbers 3:14, which is listed as lection 103b. Does the fragment preserve an old Palestinian tradition of lections so that every column or every second or this column began with a lection? Was this common in Samaritan scrolls of this era? A good deal of further research will be needed before any sort of detailed answer can be given.³

¹Cf. A. E. Cowley, 'The Samaritan Liturgy and the Reading of the Law', *J.Q.R.*, 1894, p. 138.

²Cf. J. Mann and Isaiah Sonne, *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue*, ii (Ohio, 1966), 149 ff.

³In the published plates of the Abisha Scroll (Cf. F. Perez Castro, *Sefer Abisha* (Madrid, 1959)) several plates show the same careful layout on the page so that

Each column is split into *Qiṣṣim*.¹ A note at the end of Leviticus in column 4 reads: 'Third book, 135 *Qiṣṣim*', which is the same figure as in the scribe's other manuscripts. This figure also represents the majority tradition of the varying number of *Qiṣṣim* of Leviticus in the Samaritan tradition.² Von Gall notes that the *Qiṣṣah* compares with the divisions of the *Petuḥot* and *Setumot*³ in the Jewish Massoretic tradition. One can suggest that, although the Samaritans lost the tradition of differentiation in name and called all the paragraphs by the same term, viz. *Qiṣṣah Qiṣṣim Qiṣṣin*, they have retained difference in form, in some manuscripts. This difference corresponds with the *Petuḥot* and *Setumot*.

In this manuscript a *Qiṣṣah* which corresponds with a *Petuhah* has a complete blank line between the close of the paragraph and the next paragraph. A *Qiṣṣah* which corresponds with a *Setumah* ends with a half line which runs from the centre of the column to the left margin.⁴ The following table shows the relationship between the *Petuhot*, *Setumot* and *Qiṣṣim*.

It can be seen from the foregoing that there is substantial agreement between the Samaritan Massoretic tradition and the Jewish Massoretic tradition.

We must also note in the manuscript traces of the sort of arrangement on the page that was called by Robertson⁵ the columnar arrangement. In this process, similar phrases, words or

the next column begins with a particular passage. Thus, we find columns 15, 16, 18 and 22 are carefully laid out. The last example is clearly for the sake of placement of Deut. 32 in the following column. The other examples are not, apparently, for the sake of beginning a column with the Samaritan weekly lectures. Some other factor is involved. Is it the triennial cycle?

¹Cf. *H.P.S.*, p. lxiii.

²The tradition ranges from 130–6 *Qiṣṣim*. It may be suggested that the variation in the tradition developed from the custom of closing pages with sense pauses which, at times, became confused with *Qiṣṣim*. For example cf. Lev. 26:23.

³*H.P.S.*, p. lxiii.

⁴No such tradition is to be found in the older portions of the Abisha Scroll. The correcting fists seem to be aware of two differing traditions, but neither of the correctors may have been a professional scribe. The plate of MS Sassoon 735 published in various texts, including Plate 12 in M. Gaster, *The Samaritans* (Schweich Lecture for 1923) (London, 1925), shows the same feature as our fragment.

⁵*C.J.R.L.*, i. p. xxi.

even single letters, are written directly beneath each other on successive lines. The device is widespread, achieving a certain degree of standardization in the manuscripts. Its purpose seems to have been to allow a rapid check on the accuracy of a given passage. In this manuscript a clear example is found between Numbers 1:6–1:10, where a word, בך, is columnized six times in five lines, the letter ל, is columnized six times.

Punctuation and Additional Matter

The single dot word-divider is always used except at the end of lines. The colon, with a following horizontal stroke, is used to mark the qīṣṣah, but the horizontal stroke has a slight wedging to its right side. An internal sentence divider is used in the form of a colon, which appears as two short slanted strokes rather than two dots. No other internal punctuation is used in the fragment.

At the end of Leviticus the last line is followed by seven clusters of symbols, each cluster comprising afsaq–ba’u, afsaq–ba’u. After the words, ‘Third book ...’ there are two lines of decoration in the form of elongated tavv. Beneath these two lines the following passage is found

אהן ספרה הכתב בהרגריזים במזבח אברהם: ומצבת
יעקב ושכם מודאה לאלה:

Viz. ‘This book was written on Mt Gerizim at the altar of Abraham¹ and the tomb of Jacob and Shechem,² praise be to Allah.’ An English hand adds the word ‘Nablus’ in the right hand margin of the column at the beginning of Numbers.

Collation

The chief characteristic of the variants in this fragment is their *plene* spelling of words, in contrast to the defective spelling which Von Gall adopted in his edition.³ Our evidence would seem to support Talmon’s observations that Von Gall may have misjudged the text and there are reasons to suggest that there is a tradition of the *plene* spelling amongst the Samaritans, though whether age

¹Cf. M. Gaster, *The Samaritans*, Appendix VI. The point marked 3 would appear to be the same place known as the ‘Altar of Abraham’.

²Ibid. The point marked 6.

³See the comments in *U.F.H.P.*, p. 72, on the spelling adopted by Von Gall.

of provenance, or both, are factors, is uncertain at this stage of the investigation.

The variant forms are presented below with additional comments. Forms which are unique and which may have arisen as a result of scribal error are marked only with the massoretic notation for a *hapax legomenon*, viz, ל.

		Half Line FRAGMENT	Full Line	M. T. Snaith Bible Soc. Edn.	Jacob BenHayyim Rabbinic Bible Venice 1529	M. T. Kittel 3rd Edn	Lenin- grad MS B19A	Stutt- gart- ensia	Codex Hilleli
Lev.	23:15	/	/	S(etumah)	S	S	S	S	S
	23:23		/	P(etuḥah)	—	S	S	S	P
	23:26	/		S	S	S	S	S	S
	23:33		/	P	P	P	P	P	P
	23:39		/	—	—	Para- graph end	—	Break	—
	24:1	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	24:5	—	—	P	P	P	P	P	P
	24:10	/		S	S	S	S	S	S
	24:13		/	P	P	P	P	P	P
	25:1		/	P	P	P	P	P	P
	25:8		/	S	S	S	?	S	S
	25:14		/	—	Break	Seder marked	—	25:13 Seder	—
	25:20	/		—	—	—	—	—	—
	25:25	/		S	S	S	S	S	S
	25:29	/		S	S	—	—	—	S
	25:35		/	S	S	S	S	S	S
	25:39	/		S	S	S	S	S	S
	25:47	/		S	S	S	S	S	S
	26:3		/	P	P	S	S	S	P
	26:14		/	P	P	P	P	P	P
	26:18		/	—	—	S	S	S	—
	26:23	?		—	—	—	—	—	—
	26:27	/		S	S	S	S	S	S
	26:36		/	—	Break	—	—	—	—
	26:39		/	—	—	—	—	—	—
	26:42	/		—	—	—	—	—	—
	27:1	/		P	P	P	P		P
	27:9	/		S	S	S		S	S
	27:11	/		—	—	—	—	—	—

		Jacob BenHayyim							
		Half Line	Full Line	M. T. Snaith Bible Soc. Edn.	Rabbinic Bible Venice 1529	M. T. Kittel 3rd Edn	Lenin-grad MS B19A	Stutt-gart-ensia	Codex Hilleli
	27:14	/	—		Space	Blank space	?	Space	—
	27:16		/	—	—	"	?	"	—
	27:22		/	—	Space	"	?	S	—
	27:26	/	—	—	—	S	?	S	—
	27:28	/	—	—	—	—	?	—	—
Lev.	27:30		/	—	—	Blank space	?	Space	—
	27:32		/	—	—	—	—	—	—
	27:34	/	—	—	—	—	—	Space	—
Num.	1:20		/	S	S	S	?	P	S
	1:22		/	P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:24	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:26	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:28	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:30	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:32	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:34	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:36		/	P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:38	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:40	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:42	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:44	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	1:48		/	P	P	P	P	P	P
	2:1	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	2:10	/		S	S	S	S	S	S
	2:17	—	—	S	S	S	S	S	S
	2:18		/	S	S	S	S	S	S
	2:25		/	S	S	S	S	S	S
	2:32		/	P	P	P	P	P	P
	3:1		/	P	P	Blank space			P
	3:5	/		P	P	P	P	P	P
	3:11		/	P	P	P	P	P	P
	3:14	/		P	P	S	P	S	P

? This part of the text is not in the printed (Makor) facsimile.

	Reading in the Fragment	Von Gall	Comments
Lev. 23:13	ונסכיו	ונסכו	7 MSS and Vulgate ¹
23:15	הביאכם	הבאכם	16 MSS
23:16	השביעית	השבעית	16 MSS
23:17	ממשבותיכם	ממושבת יכם	Many MSS
25:6	ולאמת יך ולשכריך	ולאמהתיך ולשכיריו	13 MSS ² ל
25:9	הכפורים	הכפרים	8 MSS
25:10	יושביה	ישביה	13 MSS
	יהיה	תהיה	ל
25:11	ספיחיה	ספחיה	9 MSS
25:13	תשובו	תשבו	14 MSS
25:18	חקותי	חקתי	15 MSS
25:20	תבואתינו	תבואתנו	11 MSS
25:46	תעבדו	תעבדו	13 MSS
25:50	המכר	המכרו	ל
26:5	בצר	בציר	7 MSS
	ובצר	ובציר	3 MSS
26:15	בחקותי	בחקתי	16 MSS
26:21	תבוא	תאכו	6 MSS
26:27	קרי	בקרי	11 MSS
26:30	גלוליכם	גלליכם	12 MSS
26:31	ניחוחיכם	ניחחכם	9 MSS
26:32	היושבים	הישבים	7 MSS ³
26:33	- ארצכם	+ ארצכם	ל
26:39	אבותם	אבתם	15 MSS
26:40	ibid.		15 MSS
26:40	קרי	בקרי	17 MSS
26:44	לכלותם	לכלתם	17 MSS
27:14	מן יקום	כן יקום	ל
27:22	יקדיש + איש ל,	יקד(ני)ש ליהו	1 Syriac MS (See Walton) ⁴

¹The Samaritans had two traditions, one of which may have been ancient (vide the Vulgate) that since the נסך was doubled the מנחה was also doubled.

²Was this derived from the Samaritan pronunciation of this word or merely the result of the retention of the final letter of the absolute form of the noun?

³The text omits ארצכם but the vav prefixed to ועריכם after the omission shows that there was an error rather than a deliberate variation of the text.

⁴Is this a dittograph from 27:26 or is there a genuine tradition here? One Syriac manuscript presents this reading.

Num.	1:2	למשפחותם	למשפחתם	8 MSS
	1:2	אבותם	אבתם	15 MSS
	1:11	גדעוני	גדעני	11 MSS
	1:16	אבותם	אבתם	16 MSS
	1:18	ibid.		16 MSS
	1:20	ibid.		16 MSS
	1:22	ibid.		16 MSS
	1:24	ibid.		16 MSS
	1:26	ibid.		16 MSS
	1:28	ibid.		16 MSS
	1:30	ibid.		16 MSS
	1:32	ibid.		16 MSS
	1:34	ibid.		16 MSS
	1:36	ibid.		16 MSS
	2:2	ibid.		15 MSS
	2:12	צורשדי	צורישדי	ל
	2:24	ושלישים	ושלשים	15 MSS
	2:32	אבותם	אבתם	15 MSS
	2:34	למשפחותיו	למשפחתיו	13 MSS
	2:34	אבותיו	אבתיו	5 MSS
	3:4	בהקריבם	בהקרבם	17 MSS