SAMARITAN MINUSCULE PALAEOGRAPHY

by ALAN CROWN, MA, PhD

Department of Semitic Studies,
University of Sydney

Samaritan texts are written in one or more of three scripts. They may be written in the Samaritan square or majuscule character, which is a developed form of the palaeo-Hebrew script. They may be written in Samaritan minuscule or cursive, which is a flowing and undecorated script. They may be written in the Arabic script, since a number of Samaritan works were composed in Arabic or were translated into that language. Sometimes the Samaritans use their majuscule or their minuscule scripts for the presentation of Arabic texts instead of the Arabic script itself. This is very common in bi-lingual texts where both the Samaritan Hebrew and the Arabic translation are written in a common character. The purpose of this study is to examine the development and palaeography of the minuscule script, an examination which, of necessity, makes reference to previous researches on Samaritan majuscule. The terms used by the Samaritans for their scripts have some interest for us as a starting point for this study since they may help to explain some of the problems which relate to the first appearance of minuscule. The Samaritans used to call their square script the " خط البلد" or the 'official script' this being the script known to European

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1 This study was made possible by the generosity of the Australian Research Grants Commission, which financed the field work for the manuscript studies, and by the University of Sydney, which gave me leave from teaching duties to undertake the field researches. I would like to thank Dr Frank Taylor, former Deputy Director and Principal Keeper at the John Rylands University Library, Miss G. A. Matheson, Keeper of Manuscripts there, and the Institute of Hebrew Microfilms at the Jewish National and Hebrew University Library, for their help, and for the facilities which were made available.

2 See the discussion of Samaritan majuscule script in my 'Samaritan Majuscule Palaeography, Eleventh–Twentieth Century', Bulletin, Ix, no. 2 (Spring 1978) and Ixi, no. 1 (Autumn 1978) (= SMP) This double article is reprinted as a monograph, 1978.

3 Cf. the note by A. E. Harkavy which appears in Appendix 1 to J. W. Nutt, A Sketch of Samaritan History, Dogma and Literature (published as an introduction to Fragments of a Samaritan Targum, Edited from a Bodleian MS.) (London, 1874), p. 157, n. 1. (= SSH).
scholars as 'majuscule'. The term minuscule is reserved by occi-
dental scholars for the cursive script rather than for the tiny
square characters of the octavo pentateuchs. Shape, not size,
determines the application of the terms majuscule and minuscule
in Samaritan palaeography.¹

MS Huntingdon 24, cited in note 3, describes minuscule script
as خ ر ش. Harkavy² considers the word Tarash to be used
in the Aramaic sense of 'unclear', 'erased'. However, this would
be an unlikely derivation since the cursive writing can by no
means be characterized as unclear or erased. The renovation
and restoration of faded, unclear or erased script in Samaritan
texts is always effected by replacing the last characters with
characters of a similar type, viz. square characters are replaced
by square characters. It is more likely that this loan word into
Arabic means, as it does in Persian, 'leaf', 'document' or 'book',³
suggesting that we are dealing with a document 'hand. The
distinction between the scripts implied by these terms is a distinc-
tion between their functions. The majuscule script is the ancient,
oficial script, used for the writing of Pentateuchs, religious works
and such official documents as Ketubot and prayer books. The
minuscule is an 'unofficial' script used for secular or ephemeral
documents which had no official, i.e. religious, status. Among
such items we must consider letters, private papers and, possibly,
such administrative documents as the calendar calculations

¹The situation is rather different from that pertaining in the study of Greek
palaeography. The terms majuscule and minuscule are so well embedded in
Samaritan palaeographical literature that they are retained in their commonly
accepted meaning.

²Cf. n. 3. See also Encyclopaedia of Islam (new ed.), art. 'khalif'—Tarassul;
correspondence hand, a plainer form of the script.

which were intended for the eyes of the priests only, as an aspect of their control of the religious life of the community.\textsuperscript{1} If minuscule was first reserved for such ephemeral works we can understand why we have so few examples of early minuscule from an era when we must assume it to have been in use. (See below for further discussion of this point.) The surviving Samaritan texts from the beginning of the second millennium of the post-Christian era are religious texts, principally copies of the Pentateuch, which have been preserved in use and then in libraries, or which have survived in Samaritan Genizot.\textsuperscript{2} By and large nothing else of comparable date has survived in manuscript except for calendar entries and perhaps some magical amulets or phylacteries. The latter are in majuscule except for isolated letters. (But see below the discussion on ‘legal’ majuscule.)

While MS Huntingdon 24 (Fig. 29) leaves us in little doubt as to what constitutes a minuscule script and how it differs from majuscule in the late seventeenth century, when the form was a well-developed type with a long history of its own, the matter is not so clear at the period when our evidence begins. The first dated appearance of what must be categorized as minuscule, in AD 1363,\textsuperscript{3} begs the question of what distinguishes minuscule from majuscule, for there are variations from majuscule in older manuscripts which I have called, elsewhere,\textsuperscript{4} ‘legal’ majuscule to distinguish it from the script of the texts proper. Are these earlier ‘legal’ majuscule scripts antecedents of minuscule or had minuscule a separate existence which we cannot, as yet, trace or date? If ‘legal’ majuscule is indeed the antecedent of Samaritan minuscule, then we have reasonably precise evidence of the period in which the latter script developed.

We are fortunate in having in MS Sassoon 728 a manuscript of

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. J. G. Fraser, ‘Documents from a Samaritan Geniza in Damascus’, \textit{PEQ}, 1971, pp. 85–92, especially p. 91 (\textit{=DSG}). Fraser points out that the priests provided a separate abstract from the calendar for the eyes of the community. Cf. also Sylvia Powels, \textit{Der Kalendar der Samaritaner anhand des Kitāb Ḥisāb as Sinin und anderer Handschriften Berlin/New York}, 1977 (\textit{ Studia Samaritana}, no. iii) (\textit{=DKS}), pp. 24–106.

\textsuperscript{2} Fraser, loc. cit. p. 92.

\textsuperscript{3} MS Sassoon 728.

\textsuperscript{4} SMP, p. 27.
early date which has calendar entries for the year 740 AH (AD 1363) in majuscule and what is reasonably judged to be minuscule written by the same scribe. We are, thus, in a position to compare the two scripts and establish what are the distinguishing characteristics which make it possible to categorize one of them as minuscule. We see immediately (Fig. 3) that, at this stage of development, the fundamental differences between the two devolve not only upon the shape of the letters but upon the ductus, i.e. the movement of the scribe's hand in shaping the letter. Thus we see the following series of developments in the script:

(a) Complex movements are simplified into one stroke. Where a scribe had formerly changed the direction of movement of his writing instrument, it now has only one continuous movement. This may result in the elongation of some part of the stroke as a 'tail'. Thus we see that, in our three samples of the cursive resh of MS Sassoon 728, one is formed in one long, looping movement which is cut short at the end, another is formed in a single stroke which does include an angled change of direction, but the stroke was made with greater speed than is normal for the majuscule resh so that a long tail is developed instead of a shorter, thick foot. Likewise, some of our samples of lamed lose their lower right serif.

(b) The entry or exit point into a letter shows the speed at which a scribe wrote by a projection into the direction of writing. This creates a form which is not paralleled in majuscule. Thus we see that of the two samples of minuscule 'ayin presented, one has an unusual projection to the right not otherwise found in this particular scribe's writing. So, too, one of our samples of bet indicates the scribe's point of entry with a cross projection.

(c) A movement may be exaggerated because of the speed of a scribe's hand movement so that an angle is replaced by a loop.

1Cf. David Solomon Sassoon, *Ohel David, Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan MSS in the Sassoon Library, London* (London, 1932), p. 601 (=OD). Although the catalogue entry describes the calendar as being in the 'square', i.e. majuscule, character, it is, in fact, written in both types of hand. However, there is insufficient text in minuscule to be able to assemble a complete alphabet.
One more obvious example is in one of our samples of tav, where the upper left fulcrum, normally a much reduced loop which has an angular appearance because of its condensed form,\(^1\) shows the fulcrum as an enlarged loop. Every movement of the scribe’s hand is apparent in the finished shape. Sade also has a single loop as the left side of the letter. The scribe has used a single flowing movement to form the left leg of sade and the left side, with a consequent reduction in the size of the left leg. Of our three samples of tet, the middle one is curved where normally angles would be found.

(d) A portion of a letter may be omitted as the scribe’s speed of writing allows him to jump a section of the letter. This appears to be the case with vav.

(e) The speed of writing encourages a reversal of some movements of the pen so that the new ductus leads to a different shape of the letter. When we compare the majuscule lamed with minuscule lamed, and likewise both forms of pe in MS Sassoon 728 (Fig. 3(a) and (b)), we see that, of our own four examples of minuscule lamed, three have simplified the lower stroke (see (a) above) and one has reversed the direction of the serif. Likewise, one of our forms of pe has transformed the lower curved stroke (which represents the serif of the manuscript majuscule or the stone-chiselled majuscule)\(^2\) into a small serif on top of the letter which has otherwise been drawn in one sweeping stroke of the stylus.

Clearly, the effect of all these changes in ductus has been to produce a flowing cursive script which is much lighter in appearance than majuscule. There are also some variations in the shape of the letters, but these will be treated later.

How do the changes in ductus compare with the style of ‘legal’ majuscule? The earliest sample of legal majuscule known to us is the example from MS Cambridge Add. 1846 of AD 1149\(^3\) and the sample printed here from MS Nablus 21, fo. 154 v (Fig.

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\(^1\) Cf. my ‘Problems in Epigraphy and Palaeography: The Nature of the Evidence in Samaritan Sources’ (= PEP), Bulletin, lxii, no. 1 (Autumn 1979), pp. 37 ff. for a discussion of this point.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) SMP, script 18.
A comparison of these two with MS Sassoon 728's true miniscule (Fig. 3(a)), shows that while 'legal' majuscules are heavier than minuscule, they display many of the same features of economy of movement which are characteristic of minuscule. 'Aleph is reduced to two strokes; in MS Cambridge Add. 1846 the scribe has made no attempt at all to represent the left fulcrum knot where the left foot and the transversal normally intercept. The head of bet in Nablus 21 (Fig. 1) is produced in one single looped curve which results in a narrow head and a tail which is longer in proportion to the size of the head than is common in the majuscule character. This tail replaces the thicker, shorter stroke of the majuscule. In the samples from MS Cambridge Add. 1846 the same tendency to round the head appears, but one of our two specimens shows a smaller head than the other. There is a suggestion here of the well-developed cursive bet. Dalet lacks the fine variation between the strokes of the letter found in the majuscule dalet and has a tendency to curves and rounding in all our samples instead of the angularity of the true majuscule form, as shown, for example, in the majuscule of MS Sassoon 728 (Fig. 3(b)).

Zayin in Fig. 1, especially, shows the economy of movement of the cursive form. Fulcrum knots, where the scribe's hand changes direction without removing the calamus point from the writing surface, have given way to cruder, simpler strokes made independently of each other. Tav (Fig. 1) betrays a slight entry mark for the pen, indicating speed. In the same sample the upper

1Although the author was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to visit the house of the High Priest in Nablus and to examine the manuscripts held there the examination, perforce, had to be brief, and notes were restricted to the condition and state of particular passages and entries. More extensive work has been based on the microfilms of the manuscripts made by, and housed in, the Jewish National Library Institute of Microfilms. The reference system, e.g. Nablus 21, is the system used by that library. Thus Nablus 21 is microfilm 31468 of a Pentateuch in the possession of the Samaritan High Priests. Unfortunately, the system used by the Jewish National Library does not allow any identification to be made with Shunnar's Catalogue of the manuscripts in Nablus. Cf. Z. Shunnar, Katalog Samaritanischer Handschriften I (West Berlin, 1974), p. 112 sq. (=KSH). My own notes made on the spot do not allow me to identify Nablus 21 in Shunnar's list. For additional details see below, the description of the script series.
stroke of yad is almost the classic cursive form in which each of
the three legs intercept the top transversal without crossing it.
In one of the specimens from MS Cambridge Add. 1846, the top
stroke changes direction and in the other it bends backwards as
if written hastily and without any finesse.

Kaph is simplified. In the script of Nablus 21 (Fig. 1), it is the top
of the letter which appears as one stroke with no change of
direction. In the script from MS Cambridge Add. 1846 it is the
base stroke which is one single stroke without a trace of the serif
normally found on the foot of the letter. In the script from Nablus
21 (Fig. 1) lamed has no serifs, though it is still angular; in the
Cambridge sample lamed tends to imitate the shape of the
majuscule lamed, but the ductus of the top stroke is simplified to
one sweep of the calamus. In Fig. 1 Quph has no spreading foot
beneath the vertical-oblique and its fulcrum is enlarged as the
scribe has used less care than usual in writing the majuscule forms.
The fulcrum of Quph in the script from MS Cambridge Add. 1846
is likewise enlarged. In this sample we are able to compare the
letter with the form found in the body of the manuscript\textsuperscript{1}
and this comparison enables us to see the scope of the enlargement.
Resh in the Cambridge sample has no serif to serve as the foot
and its angles are replaced by curves, though the Nablus sample
still indicates a serif. Shin in Fig. 1 is produced by a simple, double
movement of the calamus without any attempt at straightening
the base. In one specimen shown in Fig. 1 the scribe simply
removed his calamus before adding the left vertical stroke.

In both these samples of ‘legal’ majuscule we see the same
fundamental process of simplification at work that is found in the
minuscule script. Are they the ancestors of minuscule or do they
coexist with it? Several factors must be considered here. Firstly,
both scripts are of the same genre,\textsuperscript{2} since there is no evidence of
either of the entries from which these scripts were drawn being
written outside Nablus. We are, therefore, entitled to look for
development processes. Secondly we see that, while the ductus
of the letters in ‘legal’ majuscule represents the same type of
cursive development as minuscule, there is another factor in-

\textsuperscript{1} SMP, script 1A.
\textsuperscript{2} SMP, pp. 14 ff. for a discussion of this term in palaeographical research.
The evidence of the early minuscules for their relationship with the 'legal' majuscules is ambiguous. The ductus of both types represents the same cursive processes at work. The forms of minuscule, by and large, are written in imitation of majuscule and have not yet developed their own fixed characteristics which entitle us to say that we have a different script, and, even where our samples show that a shape appears which is later characteristic of minuscule, it may not be stable in its own time. Thus, in the script of MS Sassoon 977\(^1\) of AD 1327 (Fig. 2), which is a cursive script,—though whether we should class it as 'legal' majuscule or minuscule is uncertain—we see that bet, gimel, tet, yad, kaph, lamed, nun, 'ayin, pe and resh have the same shape that the minuscule script espouses in its riper form, or an earlier stage of that shape in the case of bet. Yet, of those letters, several forms

\(^1\)Cf. OD, p. 592. This manuscript, like all other Sassoon manuscripts, was available only in microfilm as the originals are no longer accessible. The Arabic text is interspersed with words in Hebrew script in a style which remains constant for centuries. In this type of mixed-script manuscript, the Hebrew entries are normally in minuscule, and the fact that we have here a cursive form would suggest that we are dealing with an antecedent of a constant tradition.
of bet appear (Fig. 2) including one (left hand specimen) that is close to the majuscule, several types of tet, three distinct types of yad one of which is a majuscule form and two forms of ‘ayin, one of which is majuscule. The script appears to be unstable. Mem is especially interesting. In the minuscule script three forms of mem appear. The later of these, e.g. in our specimen 45a = Rylands Samaritan MS 43, the minuscule mem is a reversal of the majuscule mem (shown in the same sample) in a cursive form. A cursive form which is not reversed is found in scripts up to the end of the fifteenth century AD. There is also a medial form in which the three-pronged crown of the letter does not join the spine at the right-hand side of the top stroke, but under the middle of the three prongs. That shape is the preliminary to the reversal form. Yet, in MS Sassoon 977 (Fig. 2) three forms of mem are found. One of these is a well-developed minuscule (left specimen): one is the medial form (middle specimen): one is an imitation of the majuscule. Likewise in MS Sassoon 728 (Figs. 3a and 3b) two forms of dalet appear, the left specimen apparently being an imitation of the majuscule form. Three forms of tet appear, the right specimen being close to the majuscule form. Four forms of mem appear, two apparently being well-developed minuscule shapes, one being a medial type, and the other an approximation to the majuscule. Three forms of samech appear, the right hand specimen being minuscule in type, the left hand, majuscule in type.

One can argue two opposite hypotheses. The first is that the instability of the forms in MS Sassoon 977 reflects the development of a cursive minuscule form from a cursive ‘legal’ majuscule in which the formal majuscule forms are still a basic source of imitation. In this case we can see a direct line of progress from majuscule to minuscule and we can give an approximate date for the appearance of the latter. On the contrary, one could argue that the instability results from an attempt by a scribe to write a majuscule script when he is accustomed to writing a cursive minuscule, and, therefore, that the minuscule script has a much longer history than our manuscripts allow us to see.

The evidence for the second hypothesis is that our oldest minuscule samples (i.e. MSS Sassoon 977 and 728) present some
well-developed forms that look as if they had been a long time in developing. Especially we may cite the long tail of mem in MS Sassoon 728 (Fig. 3a) and the kaph in the same figure, which is the classic form of this letter in minuscule before it reversed its direction. However, we must also note that the majuscule samples (Fig. 3b) of the same scribe's work in MS Sassoon 728 show that the simplified kaph and mem are not unique to minuscule, unless this was the scribe's customary style of writing. We should look for some other source than an unattested minuscule antecedent for the origin of this simplified kaph and mem. (See below on BL Or. 12375 (h)).

The evidence for the first hypothesis would appear to be stronger and it is this hypothesis which the writer prefers, though the matter can by no means be regarded as settled. We are fortunate in that we possess both a 'legal' majuscule and a minuscule sample of writing by the same Egyptian Samaritan scribe and these allow us to make some few judgements about the relationship between the scripts and the development of cursive without being constrained by the problem of genres. We also have a deed of sale of a manuscript written in full text majuscule, in which some words are written in minuscule which, by a happy quirk of fate, are from an Egyptian scribe of the same family, hence leaving us free to make comparisons, again without being concerned with changes of genre. In the first example (Figs. 8 and 9) we have the hand of Sadaqa ben Yusha who wrote deeds of sale in MS Nablus 10 (designated by us 10/1) (Fig. 10) and MS CW 24841 (designated by us CW 2484/1) (Fig. 9). Were it not for these two specimens we should have found it difficult to judge, because of the instability of many forms in MS CW 2484/1, whether this was a minuscule hand or a majuscule hand with lapses into cursive. The sample from MS CW 2484/1 must be of a minuscule script. We see this because it presents us with a contrasting dalet form to MS Nablus 10/1, a special form of vav which

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is the characteristic minuscule vav, a much simplified zayin form which has the cursive elements of the minuscule, a simplified het form, a carelessly written tet, a classic minuscule yad, two early minuscule kaph forms but two clear majuscule kaph forms, three mem forms one of which is a truer majuscule than the Nablus 'legal' form, a series of nun forms, three of which are closer to the true majuscule than the cursive nun of the 'legal' majuscule in Fig. 10 but there is also one nun form which is a well developed minuscule; there is also a series of forms for resh all of which are of cursive type and close to the minuscule. From this sample we see that Şadaqa ben Yusha wrote a form of minuscule that did not yet show all the unique forms of later minuscule and was only a little more advanced than 'legal' majuscule. The 'legal' majuscule appears to be taking its own separate line of departure by the time of CW 2848/1 and Nablus 10/1, i.e. the last quarter of the fifteenth century AD, but in the writer's opinion it is the parent of the minuscule. (One must admit, however, that the minuscule nun of CW 2484/1 appears to be very well developed and in the same tradition as nun in Rylands Sam MS 27 and MS Sassoon 403, though these are much younger.)

The conclusion that 'legal' majuscule is the source from which minuscule developed would appear to be verified by the script we designate as Nablus 10/3 (Fig. 8), i.e. the hand of Abraham b. Yusha b. Metuḥia, also of Egyptian provenance and apparently of the same scribal family as Şadaqa. ¹ We see both formal majuscule and minuscule equivalents of some of the few letters he writes in this form.² It is clear that his minuscule forms are quite close to the majuscule. However, we cannot be certain that he did not know of such specialized forms as the broken vav.

It is interesting to consider an undated manuscript, a phylactery (MS 1103 (E) now BL Or. 12375 (hl)), which Gaster published in

¹Cf. Nablus 10, fo. 144. Abraham b. Yusha is the grandson of Metuḥia and may have been Şadaqa's elder brother. Şadaqa was a witness to the sale of Bodley Or. 140 in 1492 (cf. f. 232*).

²Abraham's script is fairly large and he seems to have been short of space for the deed of sale on fo. 144, which is written in a large text majuscule. As well as reducing the size of his script, Abraham wrote some words in what are clearly minuscule forms.
the belief that it was written in the second or third century.\(^1\)

This manuscript has been redated by Shunnar\(^2\) to the Arab period, perhaps even to the twelfth century.\(^3\) This is not the place to argue its date, but there can be little doubt that it is much younger than Gaster claimed and that it was perhaps written within a century or so of the date implied by Shunnar.\(^4\) What we must note is that the script of the document is a ‘legal’ majuscule in which we see, clearly, the antecedent form of the minuscule mem and kaph that we noted in considering the script of MS Sassoon 728 (Fig. 3(b)). This clarifies the point of the relationship of majuscule and minuscule mem found in Figs. 3a and 3b. Clearly the mem in Fig. 3b is a ‘legal’ majuscule form.

All in all, the evidence, then, points towards ‘legal’ majuscule having been the prototype of minuscule before a divergence between, and a separation of, the two styles sometime in the late thirteenth century AD. By the fourteenth century AD minuscule seems to have developed its own traditions, though all our samples seem to suggest that they were in an unstable stage. The examples of the hand of Șadaqa ben Yusha (Figs. 9 and 10), cited above, would seem to point up the development of independent minuscule and ‘legal’ majuscule traditions, both being cursive forms of formal majuscule. Eventually ‘legal’ majuscule would have been replaced entirely as cursive minuscule became the common document hand.

We must now turn to some of the principles involved in establishing chronological lines of development for minuscule.

The principles of and methodology employed in establishing palaeographic lines of development and chronological sequences

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1 Cf. M. Gaster, ‘A Samaritan Phylactery of the Second or Third Century; A Palaeographic Study’, JRAS, 1918, pp. 63–83; reprinted in Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Medieval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha and Samaritan Archaeology (London 1925–81, vol. 1, the plate between pp. 480–1. The same plate was used as the cover illustration for KSH.


3 Ibid. p. 12.

4 The script is older than the ‘legal’ hand of MS Cambridge Add. 1846 (SMP, 18). The dalet is not yet reduced to the simple form of SMP, 18, there are no broken or simplified vavs. Bet is comparatively large-headed and round; ‘aleph is still complex. This manuscript would appear to belong to the early twelfth century or late eleventh century AD.
have been discussed elsewhere\(^1\) and we may not depart from those principles and working methods. However, we should note the difficulty of utilizing samples of texts of the same type,\(^2\) for, in our initial discussion of the term *Hat el Tārāsh*, we noted that it probably meant a ‘document’ hand. While we note that Hebrew insertions in Samaritan Arabic texts of the fourteenth century were in majuscule character, by the time that MS Huntington 350, Pt. 1 was written (1562),\(^3\) minuscule had replaced majuscule for this purpose. We may, then, face the difficulty that some types of text were written more carefully than others and that this could affect the nature of the script. However, since the documents available to us now in the Samaritan hand are basically religious documents rather than ‘laundry lists’, the problem is not uncontrollable.

All the samples used as chronological references are dated in agreement with another of the principles previously established,\(^4\) and, where possible, several specimens of the writing of one scribe are examined in order to establish an average. The working methods previously employed in the averaging process have been duplicated for the present study.

Experience in assessing majuscule scripts suggests that we must consider first the question of genres and their effect on minuscule palaeography. Are there apparently stable elements in minuscule writing habits spread over a wide range of time that relate to the scribal family or the scribal centre rather than to chronological development? A cursory examination of our samples indicates that genres may be important in minuscule palaeography, though not so important as they were in majuscule palaeography.

We note, for example, when comparing the minuscule of MS Sassoon 729 (Fig. 7) with the succeeding samples of minuscule, that almost a century elapses before we can detect the appearance of the same reversed *mem* that is found in MS Sassoon 729. That reversed *mem* appears in the Gazan script of Abraham b.

\(^1\)SMP. Procedures in averaging the scribal specimens followed in SMP are followed in this study.

\(^2\)Cf. SMP, p. 15 ff., for a full description of the genres in the majuscule script and for an examination of the problems posed by different scribal schools.


\(^4\)SMP, pp. 1–14.
Jacob and Joseph b. Matanah in MS Nablus 4 (Fig. 14)\(^1\) of AD 1512. In the script of Joseph b. Matanah we note an unusual form of *lam* with a ligatured left top to the letter which is not common in Samaritan manuscripts but which is also found in MSS Sassoon 829 and 729, in the Egyptian hands of Japhet ben Jacob and Joseph b. Abd Rahmana in a manuscript of AD 1534 (Figs. 16 and 17),\(^2\) in an Egyptian script of AD 1582 (Fig. 20),\(^3\) in MS Harley 5514\(^4\) of 1587 (Fig. 21), and in an Egyptian minuscule of 1590 in MS Paris XI (Fig. 22).\(^5\) Clearly there is a connection between these manuscripts which seems to be one of genre as well as one of chronology.

We have no direct information about the provenance of MS Sassoon 729, but the fact that it is a calendar indicates that its writer must have been a priest, and we can identify him with a fair degree of certainty (see below). MS Harley 5514 was one of a group of manuscripts which came from the Samaritan Geniza in Damascus.\(^6\) Whether it originated there or not is uncertain, but there are good reasons to believe that it was written there.\(^7\) Since it is a calendar and one of more than sixty calendars from the Geniza, it would appear that the priests of Damascus were copying their own calendars. Of the other scribes, one, Joseph b. Matanah, is described as the son of the priest of Gaza. MS Paris XI appears to have had a priestly source in Egypt.\(^8\) As

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\(^1\) Cf. MS Nablus 4, fo. 280*.

\(^2\) The manuscript a bilingual Torah with parallel Arabic and Hebrew texts, is the property of Sadaqa b. Abisha and has no Nablus number. A film of it in the Institute of Microfilms of the Hebrew University is numbered 31472.

\(^3\) Cf. n. 2 above.

\(^4\) This manuscript is a calendar for AD 1587/8 (995 AH) with a series of blank pages between the calendar entries which have been used as writing material for practice by scribes. Presumably they were in training. The calendar is in minuscule. In the practice scripts we see that even when *va\\(\)v is ostensibly majuscule, it now and again falls into two separate portions like minuscule *va\\(\)v, as if the scribe were more acquainted with minuscule.

\(^5\) The catalogue entry (H. Zotenberg, *Manuscrits Orientaux, Catalogues des Manuscrits Hébreux et Samaritains de la Bibliothèque Impériale* (Paris, 1860), entry XI) refers to letters between the High Priests at Nablus and Egypt and Scaliger. The texts appear to be from Gaza and Egypt rather than from Nablus and Egypt.

\(^6\) DSG, p. 89.

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) See n. 4 above and the discussion of the figures.
noted above, the script of Fig. 20, which is of Egyptian origin, clearly had a priestly writer. All the other samples of this hand were written by members of the Romah family, which was scattered in parts of the Samaritan Diaspora, especially Gaza, Egypt and Damascus, the source of our samples. Since there are several samples of the contemporary minuscule script from Damascus, and since they differ substantially from the genre confronting us, we must suspect that we do not have a local genre to deal with but a combination of a local genre and a priestly one—a particular school of priests which was teaching its students (some of whom were not priests) a standard form. We must suspect that the school was in Nablus and not in Gaza or Egypt, in view of what we can deduce from MS Sassoon 729 (see the discussion below).

Possible confirmation of this hypothesis may be found in the hand of Joseph, son of the Priest Abi Ozzi, son of Ithamar of Damascus, who was the scribe of the main deed of sale on f. 255v of MS Bodley Or. 139. This priest’s script is clearly of the same type as that found in MS Harley 5514, though the majuscule lamed in the former prevents us from being absolutely certain. Certainly the script was not directly associated with the Romah family, for the scribe of our sample 24, a Romahi, has an entirely different hand. The beginning of the genre must date to c.740 AH (AD 1362/63), since MS Sassoon 728, a calendar, shows the earliest trace of the ‘rolled’ lamed known to the author, whereas the mem has begun to develop a medial form but not a reversed form.

It is interesting to speculate on why the minuscule writing of Egypt and the rest of the Diaspora is so well-represented in minuscule material, and, as in the priestly genre isolated, displays such a reasonably developed state in the sixteenth century compared with the samples from Nablus. In the fifteenth century

1See the discussion of the figures.
3Ibid.
4Yusuf Yakub ibn Bahadur Rashid, Romahi, the scribe of MS Huntington 350, pt. II. Uri’s catalogue does not name the scribe, but cf. fo. 192.
Nablus minuscules are better developed. The contrary was true when Samaritan majuscule palaeography was being investigated. Samples of early Egyptian majuscule were relatively difficult to locate. One has the distinct impression that the scribes of Egypt were less conservative than the scribes of Nablus and Damascus and were prepared to use more freely the cursive variant of the Samaritan script that was developed, at first in Nablus.

If we are not being misled by a fortuitous lack of evidence which has caused a skewing of the distribution of the samples available, then we must consider the reasons why there was a more free approach to the script in the Samaritan Diaspora than in the Samaritan homeland.

An obvious candidate for influencing the movement of the script towards a cursive form would seem to be the Arabic language and its cursive script. The first Arabic literary replacement of Samaritan Aramaic and, perhaps, the replacement of Samaritan Aramaic in speech forms, seems to have taken place, according to recent researches, in the eleventh century AD, about the time of the critical movements in the ‘legal’ majuscule hand. Yet one would have expected the influence of the new interest in Arabic to have been felt equally in all the Samaritan centres, since all these were in part of the Arabic milieu. One must look for a factor that would make for a difference between the impact of Arabic in the Samaritan Diaspora and in the Samaritan homeland so that that impact was stronger in the Diaspora than in Nablus. Two factors would seem to have been involved. The first is an unprovable, but recognized, conservatism in the home centre of Samaritan life that seems to have affected the whole nature of Samaritan history in the Byzantine era.

1This would appear to be one of the conclusions in a doctoral thesis at the Hebrew University, ‘The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuchs: Prolegomena to a Critical Edition’, by Haseeb J. Shehadeh. As yet only a synopsis has been available for study. The relevant part of the synopsis states: ‘The author finds that the oldest Samaritan Arabic works known to us are, for example, the grammatical works of Tabia b. Dartha Hapaytan and the halakhic composition Alkāfi of Yusuf b. Salamah Al ‘Askārī, both from the first half of the eleventh century.’

2Cf. M. Avi Yonah, ‘The Samaritan Revolts Against the Byzantine Empire’ (Hebrew) in Eretz Israel, iv (1956), 127–82, for notes on the effect of the centrality of Nablus on the Samaritan psyche.
While the priests had developed their own styles of writing for non-sacred documents, the remainder of the Samaritans would have been less likely to be writing anything at all, and would scarcely have been permitted to copy the priestly styles.

The second factor is the size of the Samaritan group relative to the general population, which would have tended to push the Samaritans in the Diaspora into closer contact with each other and with the world immediately around them. There would be a greater tendency to levelling in the styles of writing in the Diaspora, so that what was a priestly genre in Nablus would spread beyond the priestly families in the Diaspora. Our demographic data is spread over a long period and is inadequate, but it does give us an impression of a steadily diminishing Diaspora, whereas the population of the homeland in and around Nablus was static, even if relatively small.¹

In Egypt in 1488² the Samaritans numbered only fifty, but they are said to have included many wealthy administrators;³ and this, naturally, would have brought them into close contact with the Arabic speaking population and rulers. Benjamin of Tudela did not note a Samaritan community in Egypt in the twelfth century, which is probably an indication of the small size of the community even then. By contrast he noted that there were four hundred Samaritans in Damascus during his stay there (c.1173)⁴ and they appear to have been relatively self-contained, in contrast to the situation in Egypt. Interestingly enough, both Benjamin and Obadiah of Bertinoro, in the passages cited, spoke of the Samaritans as if they were integral parts of the Jewish community. This contact between Jews and Samaritans is known from other


²Cf. the letter of Obadiah of Bertinoro from Jerusalem to his father in 1488, printed in A. Yaari, Letters from the Land of Israel (Heb. Igrot Eretz Yisrael) (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 119. See also Meshullam of Volterra, who supports this figure.

³Ibid. p. 21.

⁴Cf. E. N. Adler, The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela (1907), p. 30 (=p. 48 of Benjamin’s manuscript).
sources, and one might see here an additional factor making the Diaspora less conservative than the homeland.

In the homeland, Nablus, there were no Jews at all according to Benjamin, and this view is supported by numerous other travellers. Here the priests maintained the tradition in the face of hostile circumstances. It is probable that the innovation of writing in Samaritan minuscule was jealously preserved at first by the Nablus priesthood. However, its knowledge would have been spread as the priestly families migrated to Egypt and to Damascus and back at different periods in the half millennium between 1100 and 1600. Certainly the majority of our samples come from Nablus from the end of the sixteenth century and we need not be too much concerned with the effect of genres from this era onwards. These circumstances might explain the rapid flowering of minuscule in Egypt and Damascus from AD 1500 to 1600.

In establishing our own palaeographic sequences, in the hope of creating a useful reference resource for dating undated manuscripts in minuscule, we shall follow the procedures laid down in the study of majuscule and present the scripts in both plate and redrawn series. Likewise, the same techniques and methods of operation for drawing and assembling the scripts are followed in this study. As previously, microfilm was used when there was no alternative; otherwise the manuscript itself was examined.

The following is the series of scripts presented:

1. Script 1, Fig. 1

The hand of Jacob ben Manasseh, who wrote the second entry on f. 154" of MS Nablus 21. This manuscript, a Torah codex, is compiled of fragments, perhaps drawn from a Genizah or from worn-out codices. The pages of the main colophon are in different scripts and at least one of these pages has been added later. The ink of the deeds of sale on f. 154" has faded, but the first entry, dated to 575 AH, has been re-inked. The second entry,

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2 Ibid. p. 20 (= p. 32/33 of Benjamin's manuscript).
3 Cf. SMP, p. 34 and SH, p. 123.
4 SMP, p. 29.
in 'legal' majuscule, reads: 'This sacred Law was bought by Tabiah bar Meshullmah from 'Abi Saada b. 'Ab Hasda b. Z'arurah, for 25 gold mishkallim in the year 691 of the reign of Ishmael, may he be blessed. May it be read by children and grandchildren. The writer is Jacob ben Menasseh who witnesses the forestated.' Unfortunately there is no specimen of gimel in the entry.

2. Script 2, Fig. 2

The hand of Pinhas, a Nablusi, probably of the priestly family, in the light of his name, from MS Sassoon 977, dated to AD 1327. The Hebrew script is interspersed amongst the Arabic text since the Biblical proof texts cited in the manuscript are written in Hebrew. The difference between this hand and that, say, of MS Sassoon 728 underscores the suggestion that the priestly genre was first written by the priests of Nablus rather than by the priests of the Diaspora.

3. Script 3(a) and (b), Fig. 3(a) and (b)

The minuscule and majuscule hands of the same scribe (from MS Sassoon 728) enable us to compare the stage of development of the former and its relationship to the latter. The name of the writer is unknown, but he wrote the calendar for 740 AH (AD 1362/63), moving freely from one form of script to the other. We must assume that he wrote in the year of the calendar, since the priests copied and communicated their calendars twice per year. The writer must, therefore, have been a priest.

4. Script 4, Fig. 4 and 5

The script of the writer of the deed of sale at the end of Deuteronomy in MS Nablus 14, dated to 764 AH (AD 1364/5). The scribe's name is uncertain but he seems to be the writer of the Torah as such, for there is no scribe's name attached to the deed of sale and the witnesses do not name the writer of it. The opening words of the deed support the view that the writer is the scribe who wrote the whole Torah, viz.: 'This Holy Law was

1Cf. p. 333, n. 1 above.

2The entry in the Catalogue of the Institute of Microfilms of the Hebrew University Library gives the following information which is at variance with our findings:

MS Nablus 14. (film no.) 3 1461, 764 AH.
Torah, with Arabic translation, written in Egypt [my italics].
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig 14</th>
<th>Fig 13</th>
<th>Fig 12, 1/2</th>
<th>Fig 11</th>
<th>Fig 10</th>
<th>Fig 9</th>
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<td>Script 10</td>
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<td>Script 8</td>
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<td>1512 A.D.</td>
<td>1512 A.D.</td>
<td>1502 A.D.</td>
<td>1489 A.D.</td>
<td>1477 A.D.</td>
<td>1476 A.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS. Nablus 4</td>
<td>Gaza</td>
<td>BL MS. Add. 19956</td>
<td>MS. Nablus 10/2</td>
<td>MS. Nablus 10</td>
<td>MS. Nablus 10</td>
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<td>Abraham</td>
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<td>'Legal'</td>
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<td>b. Jacob</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
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<td>'Abd al-latif b. Yaqub</td>
<td>Majuscule</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Abraham</td>
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<td>MS. Paris XI</td>
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<td>Script 21</td>
<td>1587</td>
<td>MS. Harley 5514</td>
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<td>Fig 20</td>
<td>Script 20</td>
<td>1582</td>
<td>MS. Nablus 4</td>
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<td>Fig 19</td>
<td>Scripts 19(a) (b)</td>
<td>1552 A.D.</td>
<td>MS. Nablus 19</td>
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<td>Script 18</td>
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<td>MS. GW 2484</td>
<td>Gaza</td>
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<td>Script 15</td>
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<td>MS. Sassoon 403</td>
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<td>Fig 28</td>
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<td>Script 26</td>
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<td>1683 A.D.</td>
<td>1672 A.D.</td>
<td>1669 A.D.</td>
<td>1666 A.D.</td>
<td>1596 A.D.</td>
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<td>MS, Sassoon 36</td>
<td>MS, Paris 20</td>
<td>MS, Paris 21</td>
<td>MS, Sassoon 722</td>
<td>MS, Rylands Sam. 27</td>
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<td>Fig 36(b) Script 36(b)</td>
<td>Fig 36(a) Script 36(a)</td>
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<td>1751 MS Bodley e.15</td>
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Pigs 33-34
Script 34 Script 33
1749 A.D. 1740 A.D.
MS. Adler 1807
MS. Adler 1805

1749 A.D.
MS. Adler 1805

Solomon b. Jacob
b. Jacob

1749 A.D.
written by the faithful servant, the one who needs God’s mercy, ‘Abisha b. Pinhas b. Joseph b. ‘Ozzi b. Pinhas b. ‘Eliezer b. Nataniel, b. ‘Eliezer, the high priests in 964 of the rule of Ishmael . . . in the name of ‘Ab ‘Ozzi . . . and Jacob . . . and Joseph of the inhabitants of Jerar of the neighboring villages of Gaza . . . at this time.’

There is an undoubtedly close connection between the hand of the main body of the text (Fig. 5) and that of this deed of sale. It is only by comparison with the majuscule that we can verify the judgement that the script of the deed of sale (Fig. 4) is a ‘legal’ majuscule. If the identification of the scribe is correct, we have an indication of the conservatism of the Nablus scribes and priesthood.

5. Script 6, Fig. 6

A ‘legal’ majuscule of 766 AH (i.e. AD 1374) to which has been assigned the code Nablus 10/5. MS Nablus 10 is a Torah written in 595 AH by a prolific scribe, ‘Abu Berachatah.¹ The script is of a deed of sale on f. 203v, written by ‘Ab Nephusha, who describes himself as a priest and custodian of the holy place, probably in Egypt. Since the manuscript seems to have been transferred from Egypt to Nablus in AD 478,² we are confronted with an Egyptian ‘legal’ majuscule.

6. Script 7, Fig. 7

The script of a calendar for 840 AH (AD 1436–7), from MS Sassoon 729.³ The calendar has been folded so that the blank spaces between the calculations could be used as writing material. This space was filled with poetry in Arabic written by ‘Abisha b. Pinhas b. ‘Abisha b. Pinhas in the same year that the calendar was written, i.e. 1436. This ‘Abisha was the son of Pinhas, the high priest of Nablus,⁴ and we must assume that the calendar was written by the same Pinhas. In this case we can infer a good deal

¹This manuscript was ‘Abu Berachata’s tenth Torah, written in AD 1199. This confirms his estimated rate of writing such Torah Codices. Cf. SMP p. 32 and n. 2, p. 32. This manuscript is really only a fraction of the original and has substantial modern additions at the beginning and at the end.

²See the deed of sale on f. 104v.

³OD, pp. 601–2.

about the nature of the priestly genre, for Pinḥas was not in the
direct priestly lineage and had succeeded his uncle Eleazar at
the age of 10 years and 10 months.¹ We are told that such was
his state of unpreparedness for his priestly role that a tutor had to
be appointed to guide him, the tutor being ʿAbd Allah b. Salamah.²
However, we must assume that the new priest could write by the
time he was ten years old and that the work of his tutor was
limited to giving him advice about the exercise of his sacerdotal
functions. If this assumption is correct, the priestly genre of the
minuscule would have been written by all members of the priestly
family, not merely by the one holding sacred office. The script of
Fig. 7 was written in Pinḥas’ sixty first year, only six years before
he died, and represents a mature and well-developed minuscule.

7. Script 8, Fig. 8
   Cf. p. 339 n. 1 and p. 340 n. 1 above, and number 5 in this

8. Script 9, Fig. 9
   Cf. p. 337 n. 1, and number 5 in this sequence (1476 AD).

9. Script 10, Fig. 10
   Ibid.

10. Script 11, Fig. 11
    Cf. number 5 in this sequence. This script is from fo. 143v
        of MS Nablus 10. The script is badly faded and the name of
        the scribe illegible. The forms vary between ‘legal’ majuscule
        and minuscule.

11. Script 12, Fig. 12/1 and 2
    The script of ʿAbd al-latif ibn Yaqub ibn Ṣadāqaḥ ibn al Hakim
        Safi al-Samiri the Romahi, as found in BL MS Add. 19956³
        and MS Sassoon 36.⁴ Both manuscripts are written in Arabic
        with some Hebrew words which are in a mixture of majuscule
        and poorly developed minuscule. Fig. 12/1 shows only those
        letters which are

¹Ibid. The Berlin Tolidah does not give as much detail as Neubauer’s Chronicle.
²Ibid.
³Cf. S. Cureton and Charles Rieu, Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum qui in
⁴OD, p. 596.
significantly different from the majuscule forms. The samples are
drawn from the older pages of the manuscripts, not from the
later additions, which are by Murjan ha Danfi (Fig. 30).

12. Scripts 13 and 14, Figs. 13 and 14

The scripts of Abraham b. Jacob and Joseph b. Matanah b.
‘Ezer the priest, a resident of Gaza, from MS Nablus 4. The manu-
script is a Torah codex with translations in Arabic and Aramaic.
The two scripts are those of the scribe of the deed of sale on f.
280r, Joseph, and the witness Abraham. The deed of sale is a
fully-fledged minuscule and is one of the first substantial pieces
extant in that form. Unfortunately, Abraham’s entry does not
give us a complete alphabet. (1512 AD.)

13. Script 15, Fig. 15

The hand of Jacob b. ’Abd. ‘Allah b. Isaac an Egyptian who, in
1529, wrote the deed of sale on f. 307 of MS Sassoon 403, a
major Bible codex.¹

14. Script 16 and 17, Figs. 16 and 17

See p. 343 n. 1. The scripts of Joseph b. Abd Rahmana b. Abra-
ham a Romahi and Japhet b. Jacob b. Abraham b. Japhet of the
Munis family. Japhet was the scribe of the deed of sale on fo. 129v
and Joseph was the witness. The deed was written in 940 AH (AD
1534). Since the manuscript appears to have been in Gaza in
1612, when it was bought from a descendant of Japhet, according
to an entry on f. 170, scripts 16 and 17 are assumed to be Gazan.

15. Script 18, Fig. 18

The hand of Abraham b. Joseph b. Şedaqa b. Ithamar, the
priest (the Levite?), written in Egypt in 961 AH (AD 1555). The
script is from MS CW 2484, a Pentateuch, where Abraham
witnessed a deed of sale.² Unfortunately, we are not vouchsafed
a complete alphabet in the script.

16. Script 19, (a) and (b), Fig. 19

The minuscule hands of two witnesses to the deed of sale of
the Pentateuch MS Nablus 19. The deed of sale was written in

¹OD, p. 581.
²Cf. SMA, p. 29 for a transcript of the witness act.
958 AH. The witnesses, both Damascene Samaritans, were 19(a) Şadaqa b. Yaqub b. Isaq and 19(b) ‘Avi Hapetach b. ‘Abd ‘Allah b. Sa‘ad ‘Allah, the priest.

17. *Script 20, Fig. 20*
See entry 14. On f. 170v of this manuscript there is a deed of sale dated AD 1582 written in a very crude hand. It is written by, or at the dictation of, Şadaqa b. Joseph. It is clear from the signatures of the witnesses that the manuscript was transferred to Egypt. The witness describes himself as ‘... the priest and custodian of the sacred writings in Egypt.’

18. *Script 21, Fig. 21*
The minuscule script of MS Harley 5514. See p. 343 n. 4, for a discussion. The minuscule dates to 995 AH (AD 1587/8).

19. *Script 22, Fig. 22*
The script of an unnamed Egyptian priest from a letter to Scaliger. See p. 343 n. 5.

20. *Scripts 23 and 24, Figs. 23 and 24*
The minuscule and majuscule hands of the scribe of the second part of MS Huntington 350, dated AD 1596. The scribe, Yusuf Yaqub b. Bahadur Rashid the Romahi, interspersed his Arabic text of Abul Fath’s chronicle with Hebrew quotations, using the majuscule script for his first few pages. This script seems to have been difficult for him since his letters are ungainly and somewhat crude. He soon changed to writing his Hebrew entries in the minuscule with which he seems to have been much more at home.

21. *Script 25*

22. *Script 26, Fig. 26*
The hand of Murjan b. Ibrahim, the Danfi, of 1669, from an


2 Cf. E. Robertson, *Catalogue of the Samaritan Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library at Manchester*, vol. i (Manchester, 1938) and vol. ii (1962) (=CJRL, i or ii), CJRL i, 353–65. This manuscript was seen in microfilm only and the script was taken from the film.
entry on f. 4 of MS Sassoon 722. The entry has only a few letters of Murjan’s minuscule.¹

23. Script 27, Fig. 27

The hand of ‘Ab Sakhwa b. Abraham b. Ishmael, the Danfi, from MS Paris 21, a Succoth liturgy, dated 1672 AD. If this ‘Ab Sakhwa is the same scribe as Murjan (Fig. 26), as suggested by Cowley,² then we are faced with an unusual variation in his scribal habits within a three year period. Compare Fig. 31, which is the same scribe’s work nearly sixty-five years later, when he must have been an old man.

24. Script 28, Fig. 28

The hand of Modi b. Salamah b. Ishmael b. Selah the Safiri, from MS Paris 20, dated 1093 AH (AD 1683). Cowley is said to have used this manuscript, but his description is of something rather different.³ The manuscript has several quires which are not part of the original text and only the last section written by the writer of the colophon of 1683 has been used for the script sample.

25. Script 29

The entry and the alphabets from the end of MS Huntington 24, c. 1685. See p. 330 n. 3, and the full catalogue description of the manuscript.⁴ These scripts were written by the scribe of MS Rylands 27, Mufarrij b. Yaqub. See Script 25.

26. Script 30

The hand of Muslim ibn Murjan ibn Ibrahim ibn Ismai’l b. Śadaqah al Samiri, the Danfi, from MS Sassoon 36. Muslim supplied the missing leaves of his manuscript of Abu’l Fath’s Chronicle (1699 AD).⁵

27. Script 31, Fig. 31

See item 23, script 27. This is the script of ‘Ab Sakhwa in BL MS Or. 2689,⁶ a Passover liturgy dating to AD 1736. ‘Ab Sakhwa

¹OD, p. 601.
³Ibid. A typewritten checklist of Samaritan manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale would appear to support the author’s observations, since it reads ‘20 Recueil de prières et d’hymnes. Utilisé par Cowley. Écrit en 1093 H/1682.’
⁴BBCS, p. 4.
⁵OD, p. 596.
⁶Cf. SMBM, p. 94 and SL, ii, p. xiii.
must have been close to eighty when he wrote this manuscript. The script has the same basic forms as his older writings.

28. *Script 32* (a) (b) (c), *Fig. 32*

Three scripts from Adler MS 1805, a liturgy for the Sabbath day. The majuscule and the second minuscule hand, i.e. 32 (c) and (b), were written by Abraham b. Isaac the priest in Nablus in AD 1737. The first script is of the same era, the scribe having shared the writing of the manuscript with Abraham.

29. *Script 33, 34, Fig. 33, 34*

The hand of an unnamed scribe in MS Adler 1807. The manuscript, a liturgy for the Sabbath of Passover, is in two hands dated to 1152 AH (AD 1740) (Fig. 33) and 1163 AH (AD 1749) (Fig. 34).

30. *Script 35* (a) (b) (c), *Figs. 35* (a) (b) (c)

The minuscule scripts of two brothers written in the same year and the majuscule of one of them. Script 35 (a) is the minuscule of Ibrahim b. Yaqub the Danfi, who was the scribe of MS Sassoon 720, which is the *Molad Moshe*. Script 35 (b) is the script of Ibrahim's brother, Solomon, the scribe of BL Add. MS 19005, a liturgy for Passover. The majuscule is also Solomon's, presented here for purposes of comparison.

31. *Script 36* (a) (b) (c) (d), *Figs. 36* (a) (b) (c)

The scripts of Tabiah b. Isaac from MS Bodley e. 15, a Passover liturgy of 1168 AH (AD 1751), MS BL Add. 19006, a liturgy for Tabernacles of AD 1763, and the same scribe's later minuscule hand as found in MS Bodley Or. 656 (2532) with his majuscule. The three minuscule samples allow us to see the scribe's writing developing over a period of sixteen years and the majuscule permits us to see the steady diversion between majuscule and minuscule in this period.

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1 Ab Sakhwa's colophon on f. 88r informs us that this manuscript was written in the twelfth month of 1149 AH.


3 *SMBM*, p. 90 and *BL*, ii, p. xiii, for details of the manuscript.

4 *SMBM*, p. 90 and *SI*, ii, p. xiii.

32. *Script 37 (a) (b) (c), Figs. 37 (a) (b) (c)*

The script of Marḥiv b. Joshua the Marhivi seen over a period of seventeen years in MS BL Add. 19007, a Passover liturgy,¹ (AD 1770), BL Add. MS 19029, a liturgy for Passover and the new moon written between AD 1773 and 1783, and MS Petermann 2 of Berlin-Tübingen, a Torah which has an entry on f. 32 with Marḥiv’s name dated AD 1787.

33. *Script 38, Fig. 38*

The hand of Isaac b. Abraham the Danfi, of AD 1804, from BL MS Add. 25880, a liturgy for the Sabbath of the Feast of Tabernacles.²

34. *Script 39, Fig. 39*

The hand of Solomon b. Ghazal from MS BL Add. 19005;³ a Passover liturgy of AD 1813.

35. *Script 40(a) and (b), Fig. 40(a) and (b)*

The majuscule and minuscule hands of Amram b. Salamah the priest, of AD 183¹, in MS Sassoon 716.⁴

36. *Script 41, Fig. 41*

The hand of Shelah b. Abraham b. Shelah, who wrote a marginal comment in Rylands Sam. MS 1, f. 284, in AD 1852. The script must be classified as minuscule despite the obvious efforts by the scribe to write in majuscule.

37. *Script 42(a) and (b), Fig. 42(a) and (b)*

The hand of Jacob ben Aaron b. Salamah b. Tabiah b. Isaac b. Abraham the priest, in MS Adler 1806, a liturgy for Passover,⁵ and in MS Bodley e. 11, a liturgical manuscript for the first month. The scripts are only one year apart in time (AD 1858–9) but show

¹*SMBM*, p. 90 and *SL*, ii, p. xiii. ²*SMBM*, p. 92, and *SL*, ii, p. xiv. ³*l*, ii, p. xiii. Solomon b. Ghazal wrote pp. 1–5 and 75 of this manuscript, which, otherwise, comes from the pen of Solomon Hadanfi in AD 1749. ⁴*OD*, p. 591.

more variation between them than is found normally between the various products of the same scribe. See, for example, Figs. 37(a), (b) and (c).

38. **Script 43(a) and (b), Fig. 43(a) and (b)**
   
The hands of ‘Ab Sakhwa the Danfi as seen in a full copy of a Torah (Rylands Sam. MS 42) (Fig. 43(b)), AD 1887, and entry in an older manuscript, MS Nablus 2 (Fig. 43(a)).

39. **Script 44, Fig. 44**
   
The hand of Benjamin b. Jacob the Danfi in MS BL Or. 1449, a liturgy for Mo’ed Hashemini dated AD 1871.¹

40. **Script 45(a) and (b), Fig. 45(a) and (b)**
   
The minuscule hand of ‘Ab Hasda b. Jacob the priest, as seen in MS Girton College 4, a manuscript of Genesis dating to AD 1903, and his minuscule and majuscule as seen in Rylands Sam. MS 43 of the preceding year.

41. **Script 46, Fig. 46**
   
The hand of ‘Azzat b. Ismail b. Israel the Danfi, dated to AD 1911, as seen in MS Sassoon 386, a manuscript of the Kitab al Tabakh.

42. **Script 47, Fig. 47**
   
A test script, MS Bodley Or. 663.

43. **Script 48, Fig. 48**
   
A test script, MS Nablus 5, f. 254".

44. **Script 49, Fig. 49**
   
A test script, MS Sassoon 726.

Examining this series of references, we see that there is a steady and continuing development of minuscule, so that when faced with a new and unidentified script it is possible to make at least a reasonable assessment of its age. We must, of course, also take into account any other information available to us about a manuscript.²

As general principles we may begin with the following observation about the relationships between majuscule and minuscule:

(1) At the beginning of the period where we detect a separation between ‘legal’ majuscule and minuscule (Fig. 3(a) and (b), AD 1363; Figs. 9, 10, AD 1476–7), we see that there is a fairly close relationship between the letters of both scripts. At this stage no reversal of any of the letters of the minuscule has taken place except in the priestly genre, and every letter of the minuscule alphabet echoes its majuscule equivalent. Probably, as discussed previously, minuscule was directly derived from the classic majuscule form via ‘legal’ majuscule, and this accounts for their inter-relationships.

(2) The evidence of Fig. 7 would suggest that by the first quarter of the fourteenth century separation of the minuscule and majuscule hands was established, especially in the priestly genre, and some letters began to adopt their own independent forms; especially, the reversal of direction of kaph and mem must be noted. Vav, dalet, and, in particular, pê, are now minuscule in type.

(3) Figs. 23 and 24, supplemented by Fig. 29, allow us to see mature minuscule between the late sixteenth and the late seventeenth centuries AD. Some letters retain their similarity between the majuscule and minuscule versions. Of these we must cite ‘aleph, he, zayin, het, tet, yad, ayin, and tav, but the others have moved apart. Bet, dalet, vav, kaph, mem, nun, pe, quph and shin show the greatest independence, with the remaining letters being divergent forms of the majuscule.

(4) Figs. 35(a), (b) and (c) allow us to see the state of the relationship between majuscule and minuscule in the eighteenth century. It is apparent that the majuscule script has largely dropped out of use. Arabic and minuscule Hebrew have replaced it. Majuscule is stiff and awkward with a tendency to large letters, whereas minuscule has a tendency to flow in an elegant script.

(5) Figs. 41, 45(a) and (b) allow us to see that at the end of the nineteenth century the majuscule tradition had been so far lost that a new form of majuscule was being written that was in some ways derived from minuscule. In Figs. 41, 45(b) dalet is

1*SMP, pp. 40–1.*
reconstructed from the minuscule dalet. Qāf and shin are likewise echoes of the minuscule and, in any case, there is a gradual rapprochement between minuscule and majuscule forms.

Although no evidence has been presented for more recent years, we must recognize Samaritan attention to fine calligraphy and their tendencies to archaize scripts. The presentation of excerpts from older manuscripts in their newspaper Aleph-Bet\(^1\) has led to a renewal of interest in their own calligraphic styles and the situation in the future is bound to be considerably different from that of the past.

The general survey of the relationship between minuscule and majuscule palaeographic styles provides us with a rough and ready guide as a basis for the evaluation of given scripts. We may, however, be assisted by a detailed analysis of individual letters, some of which are very useful chronological indicators:

**Aleph.** One of the most stable letters, in which there is almost no variation between the majuscule and minuscule forms in the traceable history of the letter. It is only towards the end of the eighteenth century that a new form of this letter appears and then with only transitory existence. Scribes began to break the transversal of 'aleph, leaving the right leg detached as a single and separate stroke. See Figs. 37(a) and (b) and 42. By and large, the most satisfactory means of dating the 'aleph is in those cases where the scribe's imitation of the majuscule form includes the serif. This may well help to narrow down the chronological research area. See Fig. 45(b), where the scribe has duplicated the nineteenth century, characteristic\(^2\) right-turning serif on the left foot.

**Bet.** Quite a good chronological determinant within broad limits, for it soon develops an independent form of its own and retains it unattached to the majuscule. In its earlier minuscule forms bet echoes the majuscule except that the proportion of head to base changes, the head becoming smaller and the base lengthening (Fig. 3(a)). Our earlier samples show the head of bet as a

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\(^1\)I am indebted to the editor of Aleph Bet, Benjamin Tsedaka, for his observations in a private letter on my recent discussions of majuscule palaeography in SMP.

\(^2\)SMP, Figs. 25, 26.
trapezoid (Fig. 2), but it soon becomes more rounded, with the basal stroke of the head parallel to the line of flow of the writing. This parallel quality remains in evidence until the early part of the sixteenth century, when the basal stroke of the head intercepts the body at an angle (Fig. 15). From the same era the head of bet becomes smaller, until at times it appears as a solid head (Fig. 22, 25). In the idealized form in Fig. 29 the angle of the foot is lowered substantially and the head has a curved surface instead of an angular surface. The letter is very stable until the end of the eighteenth century (Fig. 36(b), (c), 37(a), (b) and (c)), when the head has the tendency to become a simple hook (Fig. 39). From the end of the nineteenth century the angle of the base tends to drop towards the vertical (Fig. 50(a)) but any form of bet from any era may be identified within this period.

Gimel. A fairly stable letter until the end of the sixteenth century and one that should be used only with caution for chronological reference. Part of the problem of gimel is that if an entry in minuscule is brief we may not be provided with a specimen of it. The principal development of an independent form of gimel took place in the sixteenth century, as far as our samples allow us to determine (Fig. 21). Until then gimel was written in imitation of majuscule, though the fulcrum knot on the shoulder of the letter was simplified to a simple hook. In Figs. 18 and 21 we see the form that gimel was to take in minuscule script from the middle of the sixteenth century until nearly the middle of the eighteenth, with a shape almost like the head of a tuning fork with prongs obliquely inclined to each other (Figs. 32(a), (b), (c), 36). From then to the current era, that same shape has been the norm, but there is a strongly visible trend to asymmetry resulting from a change in ductus. Whereas the scribe previously reversed the direction of his writing instrument on the fulcrum, moving his hand towards his body at the same time, the new ductus, which apparently relates to the majuscule form, involved the return movement back towards the direction of writing, so that the fulcrum is closer to the left of the letter than to the right. The result (Fig. 37(a)) is an asymmetrical shape.

Dalet. This letter developed a unique minuscule form by the time
our first full cursives are extant (Figs. 7, 9). This form to some extent was an analogue of the majuscule, since the single stroke either curved at the lower right to imitate the foot of dalet (Figs. 7, 9) or else was cut by a transversal to imitate the head of dalet (Fig. 9). The transversal is entirely lost in all our specimens between AD 1476 and AD 1852 and the latter example (Fig. 41) is a special case, since the scribe was imitating a majuscule form (cf. Fig. 45(b)). The form of dalet is remarkably stable until the early sixteenth century for, until that time, the single line with which it was written (Fig. 15) maintained a semblance of a majuscule dalet. From the early sixteenth century the relationship between the outline of majuscule dalet and the single dalet stroke is increasingly lost, as dalet becomes a convention of its own with an arrow-shaped top, a sweeping curve leading into a hooked wedge-tail. This is the form which Huntington 24 (Fig. 29) presents as an ideal. The form remains remarkably stable and the only additional indicator that may be considered is the comparative length of the straight and the hooked sides of the letter. There is a tendency in some of the specimens from the eighteenth century onwards (Figs. 31, 36 et al.) for the lower, hooked side to be a little shorter than the upper side. However, such cases as Fig. 40(a) suggest that one should not rely too much on this indicator except in a general sense.

Hê. It is remarkably stable, and as late as the late seventeenth century (Fig. 29) there is a clear suggestion that it be written as a parallel to the majuscule form. However, in Figs. 28 and 30 we see the beginning of a phenomenon which has an increasing tendency to become a standard form. The ductus of the letter changes so that its spine is written as one unit, and its legs are written independently, even though they may touch the spine.

Vav. Vav early developed its own unique form for minuscule in that the scribe simply removed his calamus from the parchment as the transversals cross each other in the middle of the letter (Fig. 3(a)). In Figs. 7 and 9 we see the development of this, so that only fragments of the cross strokes are to be seen. At first this type of vav appears to have been restricted to the priestly genre discussed above. But in the sixteenth century it came into
common usage as the normal form for the letter. Figs. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, show a new departure in its ductus and orthography. Instead of the broken letters being held to be indicative of the original majuscule shape, the letter has an entirely different ductus, the scribe starting his attack from the top right instead of the top left and finishing at the bottom left, with a break between. The change seems to have developed in the late sixteenth century and the form continued in vogue until the early nineteenth century, when the two portions of the letter seem to have been written without reference to any hypothetical connection between them, even of the reversed type. Vav from c.AD 1813 is written with the lower portion represented as a single dot or uniform stroke and the upper portion as a v-shaped wedge.

Zayin. As MS Huntington 24 (Fig. 29) indicates, this letter should be considered alongside its majuscule form as it has considerable stability.1

Het. By and large, this letter is also stable in the sense that it reflects a close relationship with majuscule forms and should be considered in conjunction with majuscule chronology.2 However, as Fig. 29 indicates, there is a strong tendency to reduce the base stroke to a simplified movement of the calamus to include (and start from) the right leg and conclude with a parallel hook in place of a fulcrum knot. In fact, not only does this simplification of that stroke occur, but it often occurs with the omission of one or other of the three legs of the letter from the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth (e.g. Fig. 39). Fig. 42(a) shows a new development which is repeated in Fig. 43(a) and there is nearly a replica in Fig. 46. Other scripts not presented in our sequences show that this is a feature of het from the late nineteenth century onwards. These features from the seventeenth century onwards are among our more valuable chronological indicators.

Tet. Like zayin, the letter is very stable in both comparative and relative senses. There is no distinction to be seen between the forms in MS Huntington 24 (Fig. 29). Internal triangulations3

1SMP, p. 47 for the study of majuscule.
2Ibid.
3SMP, p. 48.
reappear a little earlier in the minuscule form than in the majus-
cule, for we find it in Fig. 25, 27, 28 etc., i.e. from the sixteenth
century onwards. While the triangulation follows the majus-
cule pattern by diminishing in proportion to the rest of the letter, for
the next century and a half it becomes large from AD 1737
onwards (Fig. 31) and the top side of the triangle intercepts the
left arm of the letter.

Yad. Reference to MS Huntington 24 (Fig. 29) indicates that yad
should be used very cautiously, if at all, as a chronological
indicator, until the nineteenth century, when it ceases to
become an immediate analogue of the majuscule. Fig. 42(b)
shows us the process of simplification that affects yad at this era,
with the spine of the letter becoming a curved continuation of
both left and right arms. The development is ephemeral and not
consistent.

Kaph (and Mem). A most important letter for the earliest history
of minuscule. It should be considered in conjunction with
mem, which it resembles. Kaph and mem both developed inde-
pendent forms early in the development of minuscule script.
As noted previously, these earlier forms seem to be derived
directly from ‘legal’ majuscule. In our oldest specimen of minus-
cule script (Fig. 2) we see the classic ‘legal’ majuscule form of mem
on the left, and a form in which the base of mem joins the crown
under the middle prong. In the same script kaph is not so well
developed, being in cursive imitation of a majuscule form. In
Fig. 3(a) we see kaph as a form of the classic ‘legal’ majuscule
style in which the crown is simplified and the base changes its
angle from being parallel to the flow of writing to becoming a
tail oblique to the line of flow. Mem shows the classical and
medial styles, as in Fig. 2. Fig. 4 is especially interesting for we
have two ways of writing kaph shown to us. The letter is not
merely a crown and an oblique tail, but now one slashing stroke
moves from top right to the lower left, then changes direction,
and the second prong of the crown is represented by a short
projection from the one stroke. Clearly, the move towards a
reversal of direction is portrayed here, and we may well find that
it had taken place in other scripts of the same age, if ever they
come to light. In our three samples of mem in the same figure, one (on the right) is but an echo of the majuscule, the middle one shows centre linkage, and the left sample parallels kaph as though reversal is known elsewhere. Fig. 7 represents the priestly genre. In that genre we find that the reversal of kaph and mem are to be seen, mem being an elegant letter in which the support and base intercept the crown at the left, instead of at the right, side. The priestly genre continues to present mem and kaph in this form, whereas the other scribes wrote medial forms of mem and kaph until the end of the fifteenth century. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century these two letters remained tolerably stable, though the spine of the letter, now a transversal between two parallels, becomes longer throughout the seventeenth century. From early in the nineteenth century into the twentieth (Fig. 42(a)) the basal stroke of kaph and mem begins to be omitted or reduced in length. In this way three clearly marked types of these two letters are to be distinguished with a useful chronological spread.

Lamed. This letter may be used as a chronological referent only with considerable circumspection, since it has its own form in our earliest samples and replicas of that form occur at intervals throughout the centuries. However, there are certain broad observations which may be made, with the exception of the priestly genre, in which lamed displays a sweeping ligature-type top. Minuscule lamed in its first centuries maintains the proportions of majuscule lamed. The base is slightly shorter than the oblique top stroke and the two meet at an angle of about 45° (Fig. 1, 2). Occasionally in this earlier period the head and foot serifs are represented either by a thickening of the stroke or by an angling of one or other stroke (Figs. 3(a), 7). From the first quarter of the sixteenth century until the first quarter of the seventeenth (Figs. 15–25) lamed becomes destabilized and its shape and angle may vary considerably. From the seventeenth century to the first quarter of the eighteenth the proportions of the letter begin to change. The top stroke becomes longer and thinner and tends to be of a uniform thickness except where it connects with the basal stroke. This stroke becomes shorter and thicker. Whereas,
mutatis-mutandis, the shape of the letter in the earlier period was like an arrow head, in this second period it assumes the appearance of a reversed tick. Figs. 32(b), 33–5, show us a development which becomes steadily more pronounced as the angle between the stroke steadily increases, even becoming obtuse. At the same time the top stroke shortens.

Nun. In all our early specimens of nun (Figs. 1–11) the minuscule letter is an analogue of the majuscule, with the solitary exception of a specimen in Fig. 9 (left specimen). Even Fig. 7 presents an analogous form in that the lower portion is not shaped like a reversed arrow-head but has the semblance of a spine which, in the majuscule, formed a vertical to intercept two parallels. The exception in Fig. 9 must lead us to suspect that nun had developed a more advanced form in some scribal centres, but, as yet, that form is not available to us in any sample. From c.AD 1500 onwards the basal portion loses its analogous form and develops a reverse arrow-head shape. Both these forms indicate a ductus in which the scribe did not remove his pen from the surface, so that head stroke and base stroke were made in one movement. If the movement was too rapid, it produced forms like those found in Figs. 17 and 21. At the end of the sixteenth century AD (Fig. 23) we find forms which indicate that the scribe wrote the letter in two hand movements, and it is this factor, rather than a true orthographic variant, which should be noted until the late eighteenth century. Figs. 37(a), 39, suggest that scribal habits changed again and one movement was used to produce the letter, so that the basal portion was not detached from the head portion. In this latter period the basal portion loses its angularity as the scribe completed his hand movement with a curving stroke. Beyond these observations we dare not go, as this letter has the widest spread of forms of any letter in the aleph bet.

Samech. This letter should be considered for chronological purposes only when the minuscule form can be seen in conjunction with the majuscule, as the chronological factors which relate to the majuscule are identical with those relating to the minuscule.¹

¹ SMP, pp. 51–2.
'Ayin. As with samech, this letter is remarkably stable in its connection with the majuscule form and the two should be considered together.\footnote{SMP, p. 53.}

Pe. A very useful chronological indicator within a broad sweep of time.

Fig. 7 indicates that pe had developed a unique form in the minuscule of the priestly genre early in the process of separation from 'legal' majuscule. This form is quite clearly under the influence of the Arabic ٍل. Outside this genre pe retained its form with a curved base to represent the serif of formal majuscule until the late fifteenth century. From then onwards pe became an independent form shaped rather like a boomerang with asymmetrical arms. In the first decades of this form becoming commonly adopted, there is a tendency for the top stroke to maintain its direction parallel to the flow of writing (Figs. 15, 22) and both arms remain of equal thickness. However, both these circumstances change. The top begins to angle upwards and the lower stroke adopts an approximate parallelism to the direction of writing (Figs. 23, 25). The stability of this letter is remarkable until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the lower stroke becomes longer than the top one.

Šade. Minuscule šade provides us with a little more chronological information than majuscule šade with which it is connected, for there are periods when it adopts an independent form. However, older forms may be used at any time in the history of the minuscule and our chronological horizons must be broad and few.

The early minuscule forms of šade tend to parallel the majuscule, but we see from Fig. 7 that the scribe broke the left hand serif into a stroke which began in the fulcrum knot at the bottom of the left foot and was completed by an elongated loop with the stylus turning at the top of the serif. This form is found again in the priestly genre (Fig. 21). MS Huntington 24 (Fig. 29) suggests that the ideal minuscule form is not dissimilar, except that the stylus does not form an elongated loop but an angle downwards. From the late fifteenth until the mid-seventeenth centuries šade has considerable stability, appearing in the priestly genre or as an
analogue of the majuscule. However, in the era of MS Huntington 24 and afterwards (Figs. 28, 30, 31, 33, 34), we see that the ideal presented in MS Huntington 24 is now the norm, and it remains in use until the middle to the late eighteenth century. This form is not produced by continuous strokes of the pen, as in Fig. 7, but by removing the stylus from the writing surface (Fig. 30), and this provides some chronological data. In the late eighteenth century there is a tendency not only to simplify the lines of ʿade by making its top stroke horizontal, but the serif to the left tends to be a single straight line (Fig. 37(b), 37(a), 42(b)). Towards the end of the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth archaising forms appear.

Quph. A most useful chronological indicator, for the scribes took a long time to settle on an independent form of this letter. By and large, until the early sixteenth century it simply repeated the majuscule form. Even Fig. 7 has no separate form to present, though it does simplify its form in one of the examples presented. The first movement towards an independent shape is in Fig. 13, i.e., in the priestly genre, where the tradition of using minuscule must have been most advanced. However, it is not until the end of the sixteenth century that an independent form appears as fixed (Figs. 23, 25, 27) and Fig. 29 shows us the new form, which is made in one angular movement, the head being triangular in shape. In Figs. 30 and 32 we see a further development in quph when the triangular head is opened, when the first stroke does not intercept the transversal. This opening is present in most samples from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In Fig. 40(a) we see the further economising of movement as the scribes now write quph as two parallels separated by a transversal with a short stab of the pen to supply the equivalent of the triangle-closing stroke. The ductus is repeated (but not the orthography) in Fig. 41, but does not become the accepted practice.

Resh. A very stable letter which does not provide us with satisfactory criteria for discriminating between eras.

Shin. Whereas in studying the majuscule forms we were able to rely on the proportions of crown to base in this letter and the
thickness of the juncture between prongs and base, these are of less value to us in the study of the minuscule. The Samaritan scribes were influenced here by the script form of Arabic sin where the teeth of the letter are reduced to a straight line.

The priestly genre presents us with the first independent form of shin (Fig. 7) with a ligature from the right at the position from which the scribe began to write. Until the late fifteenth century other samples tend to show analogues of the majuscule. It is not until the end of the sixteenth century that this ligature becomes the standard form, as exemplified in Figs. 23 and 29. We are able to rely on the body thickness to some extent here to distinguish the shin of the seventeenth century from any earlier form with the ligature point. The crown prongs are not longer prongs but are mere lumps on a solid body (Figs. 28, 29). The same basic orthography continues into the late eighteenth century and beyond, but, on the whole, the body thickness is less and there is a tendency toward economy of movement (Fig. 36). The late nineteenth and twentieth centuries show us a shin of diminutive size in which the prongs of the crown are almost indistinguishable.

Tav. Compare ‘aleph, of which it is to some extent an analogue (Fig. 37(a)).

Three test samples are now provided to indicate attempts at dating on the basis of the data described above:

Fig. 47. MS Bodley Or. 663

Note the broken ‘aleph, the reduced head of bet, the symmetrical gimel with prongs inclined towards each other, the longer base of dalet, the small triangulation on tet, the longish body on kaph and mem with a foot, that nun is written as two strokes, sade has a simple down-turned serif, and that there is a thick-bodied shin. There are two sets of contrary indicators. One is the broken ‘aleph, the other is the majuscule quph, which does not recur after AD 1600 in any of our samples. However, the principle must be followed that the older form can always reappear, so that the broken ‘aleph must be given precedence. The text, then, belongs to the seventeenth century and most probably to the second half, between AD 1650 and 1700. The
manuscript changed hands in AD 1761 according to a deed of sale at the end.

Fig. 48. From MS Nablus 5, fo. 254

Note the large square-headed bet, symmetrically placed fulcrum on gimel, a transversal on dalet, the unbroken vav, the untriangulated tet, unreversed kaph and mem, the majuscule repetition of nun, the majuscule repetition of quph, the broad-headed resh, no ligature point for shin. The sample must be from before AD 1476, but probably after AD 1400, though it could be up to twenty-five years older than this.

Fig. 49. From MS Sassoon 726

Note the majuscule 'aleph, the large headed bet, the majuscule gimel, the majuscule and minuscule dalet, the majuscule he, the minuscule vav of the type in Fig. 7, the developed minuscule het, the untriangulated tet, the majuscule yad, the reversed kaph with small body, the rolled lamed, the reversed and medial mem, the single stroke nun, samech of the type of Fig. 10, developed pe not levelled, the majuscule sade, the majuscule quph, the large headed resh, shin formed in a double curve, the majuscule tav. The text belongs to the era between AD 1374 and AD 1450, probably close to the earlier date. This is probably one of our oldest minuscule scripts.

These test pieces would seem to indicate that the foregoing provides a reasonable series of criteria for dating undated Samaritan minuscule texts.

1SH, pp. 275–6 for a discussion of the manuscript. Our result would be in keeping with this discussion.

2OD, p. 593. The manuscript is here described as being fourteenth century, but with no evidence presented.