

The Samaritans in the Hasmonean Period

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The aim of this paper is to make a contribution to research on the sociology of the Second Temple period. The Samaritan community, with its cult on Mt. Gerizim, is one of the most important religious communities in Palestine besides the Jews, not least because it has continued to exist even to the present. To get at the sociology of the community is not a simple matter, and we must begin with the basics: What are the sources? What are the problems with extracting their data? What do they tell us about the history of the community? Only then can we ask sociological questions.

Unless otherwise qualified, the term "Samaritan(s)" will be used of the community whose religious center was the cult on Mt. Gerizim and which produced the community still in existence. How large and extensive that community was, and whether it embraced most of the population in the old region of Samaria, has yet to be determined. This paper makes no a priori assumptions about them.

1. The Sources and their Data

1.1. Books of Maccabees

There is nothing in 1 Maccabees which clearly bears on the question of the Samaritans. 2 Maccabees may have been written at a time when relations between Jews and Samaritans were deteriorating. Yet even if this was so, two passages give information not necessarily detrimental to the Samaritans:

“And he [Antiochus IV] left governors to afflict the people: at Jerusalem, Philip. . .; and at Gerizim, Andronicus; and besides these Menelaus, who lorded it over his fellow citizens worse than the others did.” [2 Macc 5:22-23, RSV]

The context and wording indicate that the Samaritans were put under the same restrictions, even religious persecution, which affected the Jews. Another passage supports and supplements this:

“Not long after this, the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Jews to forsake the laws of their fathers, . . . and also to pollute the temple in Jerusalem and call it the temple of Olympian Zeus, and to call the one in Gerizim the temple of Zeus the Friend of Strangers, as did the people who dwelt in that place.” [2 Macc 6:1-2, RSV]

What are the implications of this? Did the Samaritans accept the Hellenization of their cult? Some translations suggest that the Samaritans themselves requested that their temple be given a Greek name. The little information in the context does not require that conclusion, but the question will be considered further at 1.3 below.

1.2. Statements of Josephus

Josephus is clearly prejudiced against the Samaritans. When he mentions them, he often takes the opportunity to disparage the Samaritan community. Nevertheless, in some instances he may have had useful sources even if he has turned them to his own purposes. (One of these is the alleged letter from the Shechemites to Antiochus IV discussed below at 1.3.) In one of his more notorious statements, he claims (Ant. 9.14.3 &291, translation from LCL 6.153, 155; similarly, 11.8.6 &341):

“. . . they alter their attitude according to circumstance and, when they see the Jews prospering, call them their kinsmen, on the ground that they are descended from Joseph and are related to them through their origin from him, but, when they see the Jews in trouble, they say that they have nothing whatever in common with them nor do these have any claim of friendship or race, and they declare themselves to be aliens of another race.”

This may strike one initially as only another expression of prejudice. Undoubtedly, Josephus intended no less, but in fact the statement may describe a genuine state of affairs. Those who have had the experience of sectarian infighting know well that a group may emphasize or disavow resemblances to other groups, depending on the circumstances. It would hardly be surprising if the Samaritans did the same. Josephus relates another incident on the Samaritans in Ant. 12.4.1 &156, translation from LCL 7.81, 83:

“At this time the Samaritans [...] who were flourishing, did much mischief to the Jews by laying waste their land and carrying off slaves; and this happened in the high-priesthood of Onias.

The first question is when this took place. It is dated to the time of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204-180 BCE) and the high priest Onias, son of Simon the Just. This Simon the Just is often identified with Simon II who lived around 200 BCE and is mentioned in Ben Sira 50:1-24. That would date the event to the early 2nd century. Yet various other episodes in this context, mainly those relating to the Tobiads, are misdated and should be put earlier. Therefore, we cannot be confident that Josephus has correctly placed the incident.

Secondly, who were those doing the enslaving? Although Josephus is not consistent in his terminology, the term Samareis is often used generally for the inhabitants of the region of Samaria. We do not know if his source understood the raiders to be members of the community on Mt. Gerizim, and Josephus does not make this specific identification. They could have been inhabitants of Samaria who had nothing to do with

the Gerizim cult, but neither can we rule this possibility out. Therefore, the relevance of this event to the main question is uncertain.

1.3. Shechemite Letter to Antiochus IV

Josephus quotes a letter, allegedly written at the time of Antiochus IV, as follows (Ant. 12.5.5 &&258-61, quotation from

LCL 7.133-35):

“To King Antiochus Theos Epiphanes, a memorial from the Sidonians in Shechem. Our forefathers because of certain droughts in their country, and following a certain Ancient superstition, made it a custom to observe the day which is called the Sabbath by the Jews, and they erected a temple without a name on the mountain called Garizein, and there offered the appropriate sacrifices. Now you have dealt with the Jews as their wickedness deserves, but the king's officers, in the belief that we follow the same practices as they through kinship with them, are involving us in similar charges, whereas we are Sidonians by origin, as is evident from our state documents. We therefore petition you as Our benefactor and saviour to command Apollonius, the governor of the district, and Nicanor, the royal agent, not to molest us in any way by attaching to us the charges of which the Jews are guilty, since we are distinct from them both in race and in customs, and we ask that the temple without be known as that of Zeus Hellenios. For if this be done, we shall cease to be molested, and by applying ourselves to our work in security, we shall make your revenues greater.”

Antiochus' reply is given as follows (Ant. 12.5.5&262-64, quotation from LCL 7.135-37):

“King Antiochus to Nicanor. The Sidonians in Shechem have submitted a memorial which has been filed. Now since the men sent by them have represented to us sitting in council with our friends that they are in no way concerned in the complaints brought against the Jews, but choose to live in accordance with Greek customs, we acquit them of these charges, and permit their temple to be known as that of Zeus Hellenios, as they have petitioned.”

The first question is whether these two documents are authentic. Although the question was widely debated in the past, with eminent names on both sides of the argument, most writers have accepted authenticity since Bickerman's study. Both the alleged petition and its reply bear the characteristics expected of Seleucid documents from the period. Just as persuasive is the argument that no clear reason can be found as to why a Jewish forger would have written the documents in their present form. Also in the surrounding context, Josephus makes statements which are contradicted by the documents (e.g., origin of the Samaritans as colonists from the Medes and Persians). The one difficulty which Bickerman did not deal with is whether we might have original documents which have nevertheless been tampered with in some way. Such documents are likely to be found

elsewhere in Josephus and, despite Bickerman, it seems that this possibility cannot be ruled out here.

If authentic, this letter and the Seleucid response give an important message about the Samaritans, especially when read in the light of 2 Maccabees 6.1-2 (1.1 above). Should we conclude, as many have, that the Samaritans gave themselves over to allow their cult to be Hellenized? A closer inspection does not lead to this conclusion.

The actual religious practices of the Jews and Samaritans were very similar: the same Sabbath observance, the same food laws, much the same purity laws, the same requirement of circumcision. The primary distinction between them was the question of God's chosen place for his temple. To an outsider, especially, they must have looked indistinguishable. Antiochus' order suppressing Jewish worship must therefore have delivered the same blow to the Shechemites as to the Jews. The religion to which they adhered with equal fervor was about to be abolished. But they had done nothing to anger Antiochus or to attract this abolition; it was simply a side effect of the Jewish situation. Therefore, it would hardly be surprising if the community of Shechem attempted by diplomacy to have the decree lifted with regard to themselves. But in so doing, they do not deny keeping the Sabbath; instead, they emphasize an origin which might sound rational to a Greek and also appear on a different basis from that of the Jews. This does not suggest they are abandoning the Sabbath but rather are intending to continue observing it. As another means of defense, they could also put stress on an ethnic origin different from the Jews. Although the precise significance of the phrase, "Sidonians of Shechem," is still not clear, it had a useful function in attempting to distance the community from the Jews. None of this suggests an intent to change their cult. On the contrary, it would be a useful means of defending it.

1.4. Other Early Jewish Literature

Various scholars of the past and present have claimed to find anti-Samaritan polemic in a number of early Jewish writings. For the most part these do not stand up. Although Genesis 34, with its massacre of the inhabitants of Shechem by Jacob's sons, is treated by several documents, Jubilees and Judith are not clearly anti-Samaritan. The author of Testament of Levi 5-7 is plainly polemicizing against the Shechemites of his own time; however, the date and province of the Greek writing are disputed.

Similarly, Ben Sira 50:25-26 derides the "senseless folk that live at Shechem." There is some question, however, as to whether these verses were written by Ben Sira himself or were from another source, whether before his time or a later insertion. They do not fit well into the context. The sentiment expressed seems clear, but how early it arose is more problematic. Purvis has attempted to suggest a historical background for the statement, but the evidence offered is extremely scanty. Nevertheless, the statement in Ben Sira is likely to have originated no later than the 2nd century BCE since it is found in the Greek translation of Ben Sira's grandson about 132 BCE.

1.5. Samaritan Writings in Greek

Pseudo-Eupolemus is the name given to two fragments preserved among the Fragmentary Jewish Greek writers. One of these is preserved in the name of Eupolemus, the other as "anonymous"; the consensus of scholarship is that they are both by an anonymous Samaritan who wrote sometime during the 3rd or 2nd centuries BCE. Among the Fragmentary Writers is also Theodotus. He has also often been identified as a Samaritan, but the weight of evidence seems against it; he is more likely a Jewish writer.

Even with the small amount of preserved text, Pseudo-Eupolemus tells several things. He evidently had a good Greek education, showing that such opportunities were available for Samaritans as well as other Orientals. Pseudo-Eupolemus was quite happy to interpret biblical tradition in the light of Greek mythology. Sometimes this is called "syncretism" but inaccurately. Pseudo-Eupolemus gives no indication of diluting the Samaritan cult or other aspects of the religion with pagan elements; rather, the biblical tradition is only put in the Greek context, showing how the native tradition fits in with Greek legend and myth. Far from engaging in compromise Pseudo-Eupolemus is actually strengthening his people's tradition by showing that the Greeks have a memory of it, if perhaps only a dim and inaccurate one. He is using his Greek knowledge for apologetic purposes, with the aim not of diminishing his own tradition but of defending it.

Pseudo-Eupolemus is thus very much like contemporary Jewish writers in Greek. These, too, made use of Greek knowledge and literary techniques to extend, update, interpret, and defend their religious tradition. But to do so required a knowledge of Greek language, literature, and culture. This shows that such knowledge was available and that a Samaritan could gain a Greek education but also remain loyal to his native people.

1.6. Samaritan Chronicles

The relevant Samaritan Chronicles are Chronicle 2, the Tolidah (Chronicle 3), the Shalshalah (Chronicle 5), Abu'l-Fath (Chronicle 6), and the Adler Chronicle (Chronicle 7). The Chronicles are a mine field of problems. On the one hand, they claim to trace the Samaritan religion back to Moses and to give an account of their history independently (at least, in part) of the OT. On the other hand, all the Chronicles are late, some of them from the 19th or even 20th century in their present form. Study of them is not far advanced, and Samaritan specialists have reached no consensus on their inter-relationships.

Where the Chronicles relate Samaritan history to external events, there is often confusion. In addition, some of the events which Jewish literature recounts with reference to the Jews is claimed for the Samaritans by the Chronicles. For example, where Josephus and other Jewish sources have Alexander the Great doing obeisance to the Jewish high priest, the Chronicles (Adler; Tolidah; Abu 'l-Fath; Chronicle 2, apud Mac-donald) make him do it to the Samaritan high priest. For the Hasmonean period, the only event mentioned is the reign of "king John," evidently John Hyrcanus though possibly Alexander Janneus. According to their version, however, John destroys Samaria but not

Shechem. Eventually, he acknowledges its claim and attempts to go on a pilgrim to Gerizim! The source of this account is uncertain, though it seems remarkably close to that of Josephus; one could argue that it is his version with a deliberate twist.

Another account is more problematic. It concerns a king of the Jews named Simeon and his son `Arqiah (Abu 'l-Fath) or Hilqiyah (Adler). This sounds very much like Simon Maccabee and his son (John) Hyrcanus, but the episode is dated to the Persian period, and their reigns are followed by a captivity of the Jews. Simeon is said to have caused great hostility between the Jews and Samaritans because the Jews persecuted the Samaritans and forbade them to worship. Finally, the Samaritans called their diaspora brethren from Babylon and attacked Jerusalem, destroying it and the temple, though Simeon got away. King Darius heard of this and supported the Jews, whereupon many Samaritans emigrated while those left again had their religion proscribed. Under `Arqiah/Hilqiyah a quarrel arose between "the sons of Ithamar and the sons of Manasseh," appears to be an inner-Samaritan quarrel. After that "the nations" besieged Jerusalem and exiled the Jews, allowing the Samaritans to return with thanks and praise to God.

Can anything of historical value be gleaned from these accounts? This seems doubtful in the present state of knowledge. The most one can say is that Josephus' account of the destruction of the Gerizim temple has no memory in the Samaritan sources.

1.7. Samaritan Pentateuch

It is widely accepted that the Samaritan Pentateuch is a community (sectarian) recension of a previously existing non-sectarian text-type, sometimes referred to as the proto-Samaritan. If we accept this position, the question remains: When did this sectarian recension take place? Purvis has argued that it followed shortly after Hyrcanus' destruction of Samaria and Shechem in the late 2nd century. This suggestion is plausible, but is there actual evidence? Purvis argues primarily from the script and orthography which he claims indicate an origin in the Hasmonean period. None of his arguments seem to preclude a recension as much as two or three centuries after 100 BCE, however. Indeed, a recension before 100 BCE cannot be excluded, though it is not attested. Thus, the Samaritan scriptures do not provide us with any certain data on when or whether a major break occurred between the Jewish and Samaritan communities.

1.8. Archeology

Until recently it was thought that the general picture of Josephus had been confirmed archeologically. Excavations in the 1950s and 1960s had, it was believed, confirmed the building of the Samaritan temple at the end of the Persian or beginning of Greek period. More recent archeological work has now thrown the question up into the air. What was originally thought to be evidence of a Hellenistic structure (identified as a temple by some but otherwise by others) on Tell er-Ras is now found to have been misdated by intruded Hellenistic pottery from a fill. Whether there was a temple and when it was built cannot be said at present.

The destruction of Shechem by John Hyrcanus shortly before 200 BCE was also thought to be confirmed archeologically. So far, no new information seems to have been forthcoming. In the light of present data, though, the final destruction of the city could have come during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus rather than of John Hyrcanus.

2 Analysis of Data

As with so much Samaritan history, we have very little information. There is considerable danger of over interpreting the data that we do have, and it seems to me that this has often been done. The desire to know more is understandable, but we must recognize the fragility of many hypotheses. Indeed, in many cases they are little more than guesses.

The source which seems to give the most information is in many ways also our most problematic one: Josephus. In most passages, if perhaps not in all, he is openly prejudiced against the dwellers of Shechem. This does not mean that he does not give us historical data, but sorting it out of the negative polemic is not easy. Further, his terminology is not always consistent or clear. Sometimes he explicitly refers to the cult on Gerizim and its adherents, but at other times he may have had inhabitants of the entire region of Samaria in mind, and we cannot be sure that they necessarily had anything to do with the Gerizim cult and community. One has to proceed with a good deal of caution and skepticism.

For the origins of the Gerizim cult, Josephus gives two contradictory answers. First, he says that they were foreigners brought in from elsewhere in the ancient Near East (Mesopotamia, Media, Persia). Secondly, he claims they were made up of defected priests and Jews who left the Jerusalem cult for various nefarious reasons. Both claims have a polemical intent; neither is necessary. For my purposes, however, there is no need to settle the matter of origins of the cult, and I shall proceed on the basis that the cult was Yahwistic, with no more foreign elements than contemporary Judaism--indeed, that in most respects it was very similar to the worship in Jerusalem at the time.

The first and perhaps most difficult area to investigate is that of Jewish and Samaritan relations. The animosity between the Samaritan and Jewish communities has often been taken for granted, though there has been debate over when it began. Yet we do not have to assume a severe breach before the first century CE and perhaps not even then. The episode in which Samaritans scattered bones in the Jerusalem temple (Ant. 18.2.2&30), the attack on Jewish pilgrims from Galilee and the counter charge of Jewish attacks on Samaritan villages (War 2.12.3-6&232-44; Ant. 20.6.1-3 &118-36), and the statement in John 4:9 all suggest major barriers between Jews and Samaritans. The first example suggests individuals who were hostile to the Jerusalem temple; the second is less clear but could also show religious hostility; the third definitely has differences of worship in mind. But these all relate to the first century CE. Counter to this are many examples showing contact between Jews and individuals from the region of Samaria: Herod's relations (Ant. 14.15.3 &&408; 14.15.4 &413; 14.15.14 &467; 17.1.3 &&20;17.4.2 &69); joint delegation to complain against Archelaus (Ant.17.13.2 &342); loan to Agrippa from a Samaritan freedman (Ant.18.6.4 &167); Josephus' Samaritan friends

(Life 52 &269). All of these can be explained away, but they indicate the matter is not straightforward.

If the two religious communities had little to do with each other in the first century, this situation could have had its roots in earlier periods. The enmity between Nehemiah and Sanballat might have been a foreshadow, but the text shows that many Jews did not agree with Nehemiah (Neh 6:17-19; 13:4-7). The Tobiads, who were intermarried with the high priestly Oniad family, also seem to have had relations with and even relatives in Samaria, whether the city or the region (Ant. 12.4.3 &168). The Samaritan decision to protect their temple by disavowing the Jews may not have helped inter-community relations (1.3), but it need not have created a permanent breach. Hyrcanus' conquest of Samaria and Shechem could have strained relations seriously—and some scholars see this as the incident which closed the communities off from one another—but we cannot be sure of that. Hyrcanus also forcibly converted the Idumeans, and most of them remained Jewish in their religion according to the later references to them.

The archeology has yet to be clarified. The latest data still seem to bear up a destruction of the city in the time of Hyrcanus or Janneus (1.8). If the temple (assuming there was one) and cult were also destroyed at this time, it could have created great hostility. But destruction of the city does not require destruction of the cult. Against the interpretation that Shechem's conquest was the decisive point is the absence of polemic in Jewish literature until the first century. The only probable earlier example is Ben Sira (1.4). If the Samaritans were the ones to sever relations, Jewish writers as members of the dominant ethnic group may not have been interested in polemicizing against the Samaritans; that is, the Samaritans may not have been of sufficient interest to warrant attention. On the other hand, it is not necessary to assume a breach before the first century, and the literature would bear this out. The argument that the Samaritan Pentateuch shows redaction in the decades after the destruction of Shechem is based on too many uncertainties (1.7). Neither would such a redaction even require the assumption that the two communities had ceased to communicate.

The question of Hellenization has exercised a number of researchers on the Samaritans, often with unfortunate results. Part of the problem is that the situation in Jerusalem is misunderstood and then a false analogy imported to Shechem. The process of Hellenization was complex, but both the Jews and Samaritans were affected by it the same as other Near Eastern peoples. Therefore, it is hardly surprising to find works in Greek which seem to be by Samaritan authors (1.5). If the situation in Judea is anything to go by, there was likely a variety of attitudes toward Hellenistic culture within the Gerizim community. Those who propose a "Hellenistic" party among the Samaritans have plausibility on their side.

Where the misconception lies is assuming a dichotomy of a "Hellenistic" party on one side versus a "loyal, pious" group on the other. The authors of the Hellenistic reform in Jerusalem were also loyal, pious individuals--many of them priests--who did not attempt

to compromise the traditional temple cult. Similarly, there is no reason to think that any Hellenistic party in Samaria would have done so there. As has already been noted (1.3), the evidence available does not indicate that those who wrote to Antiochus IV were seeking a change to their traditional cult. Postulating that this letter was written by a "Hellenistic party" at Shechem is, therefore, irrelevant to the question.

3. Conclusions and Social Implications

Our investigation has turned up both positive and negative aspects of the question. We must first accept that there is a lot we do not know with regard to Samaritan history in the Hasmonean period. But sometimes even negative conclusions have their positive implications, so both sides of the question will be considered, both what we know and what we do not:

1. The origins of the community and cult are still uncertain. The origins according to interpretations of 2 Kings

17 (pagan foreigners brought in) and Josephus (dissident Jerusalem priests) are the product of considerable bias and cannot be taken at face value.

2. Likewise, the ethnic diversity of Samaria is unknown. One could no doubt argue that ethnic outsiders were brought in at various times, producing some ethnic mixing, but whether the older identity was preserved is unknown. But if so, there is little evidence that such mixing had a significant impact on the Samaritan religion. If there were pagan groups in the region of Samaria, this may have created antagonism between them and the Samaritan community, just as between the latter and the Jews. Also, if there were other groups, some of the references to "Samaritans" may have nothing to do with the Gerizim community.

3. We often do not know precisely who is being referred to when the sources speak of "Samaritans" and the like. Was it the community with worship centered on the Gerizim cult or was it some other group in the region of Samaria, perhaps with no connection to the Samaritan community of concern to us? The problem may even be more acute when no names are used, and we are left guessing from the context (cf. 1.5).

4. If or when major Samaritan/Jewish hostility arose is uncertain. At least until about 100 BCE there was communication between the Jewish and Samaritan communities. Exactly when friction developed between them is unknown, though some friction could go back to an early time, as early as the time of Nehemiah or even pre-exilic times. But the existence of strained relations does not preclude communication and even good relations between some parts of the community. Evidently, these were best between the upper classes, such as the Tobiad family.

5. The Samaritans were evidently as affected by Hellenization as the Jews. As argued elsewhere, the dichotomy of "Hellenized" versus "faithful" Jews is a false one. Similarly, the idea that the Samaritans were more "syncretistic" than the Jews is equally a

caricature. Hellenization was a cultural phenomenon of the entire ancient Near East. No people was immune to it, though different peoples and different individuals may have responded in different ways. One response was what has been called apologetic historiography, the interpretation of the native history in such a way that it would commend itself to Greek readers. A good example of this is the "Anonymous Samaritan" or Pseudo-Eupolemus who combines Samaritan tradition with material from Greek mythology.

6. The history of the Samaritan community seems similar to that of Jews but in miniature, since the Gerizim community was apparently smaller than that of the Jews. They had much the same basic customs, with the main difference being the appropriate place for God's temple. They both had a Diaspora population. They both suffered religious suppression or persecution, the Samaritans suffering also at the hands of the Jews and possibly vice versa.

One final point is really little more than speculation, but it has sociological implications:

7. There is some small evidence of intermarriage between the Jewish and Samaritan communities. What few data we have concern the upper classes: Joseph Tobiad who had friends in Samaria who loaned him money; Herod, who married a wife from there; perhaps even Josephus himself who admits to having friends in Samaria. Except for Herod, who may have married for diplomatic reasons, no explicit reference is made to relatives. Yet our sources may have been somewhat coy to admit actual intermarriage. If there was intermarriage, it illustrates a common sociological phenomenon in which the upper classes have a different standard from those at the bottom end of the scale.

NOTES:

1. 1 Macc 3:10 says that Apollonius "gathered the Gentiles and a large force from Samaria to fight against Israel." If Apollonius was governor of Samaria (so Josephus, Ant. 12.5.5 & 261; 12.7.1 & 287), he would have had a military force at his disposal, no doubt in part recruited locally. Since this need not imply that the Samaritans as a nation or community sided with Apollonius against the Jews, the incident has no clear bearing on our question.

2. The problem is the final phrase:------. Some take it to refer to the practice of the community, i.e., to be hospitable. Others interpret it to mean that the inhabitants requested that their temple be renamed. The former interpretation seems more likely. See R. Pummer, "Antisamaritanische Polemik in juedischen Schriften aus der inter-testamentarischen Zeit," BZ 26 (1982) 224-42, specifically 238-39; R. Doran, "2 Maccabees 6:2 and the Samaritan Question," HTR 76 (1983) 481-85.

3. This seems plain from many passages, despite R. Egger, *Josephus Flavius und die Samaritaner: Eine terminologische Untersuchung zur Identifizierung der Samaritaner* (NTOA 4; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986) esp. 310-13. She may well be right that there are passages where his approach is more neutral, but a quite a few simply cannot be explained away.

4. The activities of Joseph Tobiad could have taken place only during Ptolemaic rule over Palestine; therefore, their dating to the reign of Ptolemy V must be mistaken. Ptolemy III (246-221 BCE) is more likely the person intended, though Josephus may have misunderstood his source.

5. The main study on Josephus' terminology is Egger, *Josephus Flavius und die Samaritaner*; however, she argues for a theoretical consistency on Josephus' part which is not borne out by the data. See the review by R. Pummer in *JBL* 107 (1988) 768-72.

6. E. J. Bickerman, "Un document relatif à la persécution d'Antiochos IV Epiphane," *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (AGAJU 9; Leiden: Brill, 1980) 2.105-35 (originally published in *RHR* 115 [1937]). Studies which have more or less accepted Bickerman's conclusions include A. Schalit, "Die Denkschrift der Samaritaner an König Antiochos Epiphanes zu Beginn der großen Verfolgung der jüdischen Religion im Jahre 167 v. Chr. (Josephus, *AJ* XII, §§258-264)," *ASTI* 8 (1970-71) 131-83; Egger, *Josephus Flavius und die Samaritaner*, 280-81.

7. Bickerman, 129-31.

8. Also noted by R. J. Coggins (*Samaritans and Jews: The Origins of Samaritanism Reconsidered* [Growing Points in Theology; Oxford: Blackwell; Atlanta: John Knox, 1975] 98-99), G. Alon ("The Origin of the Samaritans in the Halakhic Tradition," *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World: Studies in Jewish History in the Times of the Second Temple and Talmud* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977] 354-73, specifically 369), and R. Pummer ("Antisamaritanische Polemik," 239 n. 94).

9. This is very probably the case with the alleged decree of Claudius in *Ant.* 19.5.2 & 280-85. Although much of the document could well be genuine, the final conclusion is contrary to that of a known decree of Claudius, published in V. A. Tcherikover, A. Fuks, and M. Stern, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (3 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1957-64) 2.36-55 (text #153).

10. Bickerman ("Document," 2.118-23) took the phrase as a synonym for "Phoenician" which, in turn, was only the Greek term for "Canaanite." Schalit ("Denkschrift," 149-56) seems to agree, though his position is not completely clear. But this view is based on assumptions about the origins of the Samaritans which no longer stand up. There is no reason to think that the Samaritans would have any more willingly identified themselves as Canaanites than the Jews. The term Sidonians is known for a group in the Hellenistic Edomite city of Marissa, and it has been proposed that there was a Sidonian colony at Shechem who wrote this letter: M. Delcor ("Vom Sichem der hellenistischen Epoche zum

Sychar des Neuen Testamentes," ZDPV 78 [1962] 34-48); followed by Pummer ("Genesis 34 in Jewish Writings of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods," HTR 76 [1982] 177-88, especially 184-86), Egger (Samaritaner, 266-80), and a number of others. This is unlikely. One can hardly expect a Phoenician colony to be Sabbath keepers, and the explanation that they had picked up some practices from the Samaritan community or were loosely associated with its cult is merely an attempt to explain away a difficulty. Pummer correctly notes (pp. 184-86) that nothing is said about circumcision, implying that it was being kept; if so, this says little for their being a Sidonian colony but much for the Samaritan community. The best explanation to me is that the Samaritan community itself wrote the letter and that, whatever the origin of the designation, it was trying to distance itself from the Jews.

11. Bickerman, "Document," 126-28, 131-35; K. Bringmann, *Hellenistische Reform und Religionsverfolgung in Judea* (AAWG, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 3te Folge, Nr. 132; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983) 142-43.

12. See especially the studies of R. Pummer, "The Book of Jubilees and the Samaritans," *Eglise et Theologie* 10 (1979) 147-78; "Antisamaritanische Polemik"; "Genesis 34 in Jewish Writings of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods."

13. The main debate about the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is whether these are Christian documents which make use of Jewish material or are Jewish writings with Christian intervention. Some Aramaic fragments of T. Levi are known from the Cairo Genizah and Qumran. One of the Genizah fragments (Cambridge T-S 16.94) seems to contain a version of the story in Genesis 34, though it does not correspond to the extant Greek text of T. Levi. See J.C. Greenfield and M. E. Stone, "Remarks on the Aramaic Testament of Levi from the Geniza," *RB* 86 (1979) 214-30. For discussion of recent scholarship, see E. Schurer, *The Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (revised G. Vermes, et al.; 3 vols. in 4; Edinburgh: T & T Clarke, 1973-87) 3.767-81; J. J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (New York: Crossroad, 1986) 154-62; "Testaments" in M. E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT 2/2; Assen: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 325-55.

14. NEB. Although the Hebrew and Greek texts differ slightly in these two verses, this phrase is essentially the same.

15. Cf. Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews*, 83-86; Pummer, "Antisamaritanische Polemik," 232 plus n. 45; Egger, *Samaritaner*, 85-93.

16. The only data he seems to offer are Ant. 12.4.1 & 156 and the scholia of the Megillat Taanit. The first is problematic because its dating is very uncertain, and it does not necessarily have anything to do with Shechem (see the discussion at 1.2 above). His use of the scholia of the Megillat Taanit is surprising since these are commonly acknowledged to be post-Talmudic in origin, not like the Megillat Taanit itself which is commonly dated to the 1st or 2nd century CE. (On this writing and the scholia, see H. L.

Strack and G. Stemberger: Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash [Minneapolis: Fortress; London: SCM, 1991] 39-40.) We can have no confidence that the scholia are likely to contain any reliable information for the 2nd or 3rd century BCE.

17. For an edition and translation, with a summary of scholarship up to the time of writing, see C. A. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors, Volume I: Historians* (TT 20, Pseudepigrapha Series 10; Atlanta: Scholars, 1983) 157-87. One should add to this Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 38-39. R. Doran ("Pseudo-Eupolemus" in J. H. Charlesworth [ed.], *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* [2 vols.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983-85] 2.873-82) suggests the first fragment is from Eupolemus himself.

18. See the summary of the arguments and earlier literature in Holladay, *Fragments*, 2.51-68. Add to it Pummer ("Antisamaritanische Polemik," 234-36). F. Fallon ("Theodotus" in OTP, 2.785-93) sees no clear evidence to decide the matter. D. Mendels (*The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature* [TSAJ 15; Tübingen: Mohr(Siebeck), 1987] 110-16, however, argues that Theodotus was Samaritan.

19. The section on the Hasmonean period has not been published. For a summary of the entire contents, see J. Macdonald, "Samaritans," EJ 14.728-32. From his description, the contents sound very similar to Abu 'l-Fath.

20. A. Neubauer, "Chronique samaritaine, suivie d'un appendice contenant de courtes notices sur quelques autres ouvrages samaritains," *Journal asiatique* 14 (1869) 385-470 (text and French translation); M. Heidenheim, "Die samaritan. Chronik des Hohenpriesters Elasar," *Vierteljahrsschrift fuer deutsch- und englisch-theologische Forschung und Kritik* 4 (1971) 347-89 (German translation only); J. Bowman, *Transcript of the Original Text of the Samaritan Chronicle Tolidah* (University of Leeds, 1954) (text only, using a different manuscript from Neubauer).

21. M. Gaster, "The Chain of Samaritan High Priests," *Studies and Texts* (London: Maggs, 1925-28) 1.483-502 (English translation), 3.131-8 (text).

22. English translation in P. Stenhouse, *The Kitab al-Tar-kh of Abu 'l-Fath*, Translated into English with Notes (Mandelbaum Studies in Judaica 1; Sydney University Press, 1985), though Stenhouse's own critical text of the Arabic original is still unpublished; partial translation in J. Bowman, *Samaritan Documents Relating to their History, Religion and Life* (Pittsburgh Original Texts and Translations 2; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1977) 114-213.

23. E. N. Adler and M. Seligsohn, "Une nouvelle chronique samaritaine," REJ 44 (1902) 188-222; 45 (1902) 70-98, 223-54; 46 (1903) 123-46.

24. It seems that each specialist prefers a different Chronicle as the most basic. Bowman thinks Tolidah is earliest. P. Stenhouse concentrates on Abu 'l-Fath ("Samaritan Chronicles," in A. D. Crown [ed.], *The Samaritans* [Tübingen: Mohr(Siebeck), 1989]

218-65). A. D. Crown ("New Light on the Inter-relationships of Samaritan Chronicles from Some Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library," BJRL 54 [1971-72] 282-313; 55 [1972-73] 86-111) argues that the basis of all the Chronicles is the Samaritan Book of Joshua (Chronicle 4) and a Sefer ha-Yamim (of which the Adler Chronicle and Chronicle 2 are late examples), with the former being incorporated into the latter at some point.

25. For a discussion of this event, its sources and historicity, see my article, "Josephus and the Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," JBL 106 (1987) 231-46.

26. The story is found in Abu 'l-Fath (Stenhouse, Tarikh, pp. 140-42; Bowman, Documents, pp. 134-35) and apparently also in Chronicle 2 (so Macdonald in his summary).

27. Bowman makes the surprising claim that both these events confirm the accounts of Josephus (see the notes to his translation). If the incident relating to "King John" is borrowed from Josephus, it has no independent value; if not, it specifically denies the destruction of Shechem by Hyrcanus. Similarly, the quarrel between the sons of Ithamar and the sons of Manasseh cannot be dated (is it the Persian period or the time of Hyrcanus?) nor does it make any allusion to the supposed defection of Manasseh, a son of the high priest, to Gerizim. On this last event and its historicity, see my "Josephus and the Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration."

28. For a summary of the current consensus with discussion of earlier studies, see E. Tov, "Proto-Samaritan Texts and the Samaritan Pentateuch," in Crown (ed.), *The Samaritans*, 397-407; *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 80-100.

29. J. D. Purvis, *The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Origin of the Samaritan Sect* (HSM 2; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968). At this point, I would like to acknowledge a debt to Professor Purvis. Many years ago he kindly loaned me a number of books and texts relating to Samaritan studies which were unavailable to me.

30. See, for example, the doubts expressed by Z. Ben-Hayyim in his review of Purvis in *Biblica* 52 (1971) 253-55: "Yet the question which is raised upon the reading of this interesting book is: can one really come to an important historical and social conclusion such as the time of the formation of the Samaritan sect according to the orthographic form and the script of its Holy Writ?"

31. Ant. 11.8.1-6 & 304-45. R. J. Bull, "er-Ras, Tell (Mount Gerizim)," *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (ed. E. Stern; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1978) 4.1015-22.

32. Unfortunately, the information is available only in preliminary form. See the summary in R. Pummer, "Samaritan Material Remains and Archaeology" in Crown (ed.), *The Samaritans*, 166-75. Not available to me were Y. Magen, "A Fortified City from the

Hellenistic Period on Mount Gerizim," *Qadmoniot* 19 (1986) 91-101; "Mount Gerizim--A Temple-City," *Qadmoniot* 23 (1991-92) 70-96.

33. Ant. 13.9.1 &&255-56. For a report on the excavations, see G. E. Wright, "The Samaritans at Shechem," *HTR* 55 (1962) 357-66; *Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City* (New York-Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1964) 170-84. For a complete bibliography of excavations to 1987, see E. K. Vogel, "Bibliography of Holy Land Sites: Part I," *HUCA* 42 (1971) 1-96; "Bibliography of Holy Land Sites: Part II," *HUCA* 52 (1981) 1-92; "Bibliography of Holy Land Sites: Part III, 1981-1987," *HUCA* 58 (1987) 1-63. Most studies focus on the pre-exilic period while the few which discuss the Hellenistic stata unfortunately do not clearly distinguish archeological data from interpretation.

34. I am not aware of significant arguments against the idea that the cult was ultimately descended from the Yahwistic worship of the northern kingdom, which would explain its similarity to Second Temple Judaism but would also recognize a certain independence. Cf. Coggins (*Jews and Samaritans*, 162-65) and the later view of Purvis ("The Samaritan Problem: A Case Study in Jewish Sectarianism in the Roman Era," in B. Halpern and J. D. Levenson [ed.], *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981] 323-50, specifically 337). Nevertheless, for present purposes it is not necessary to take a position on the question of origins.

35. The question, with supporting data, is discussed at length in ch. 3 of my book, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (2 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), including interaction with such classic works as M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) and V. A. Tcherkover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1959).

36. For a discussion, see ch. 5 of my book *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*. The Jewish cult and religion were, of course, eventually compromised and suppressed at the order of Antiochus IV, and some Jews seem to have had a hand in it. But there is no evidence that the authors of the Hellenistic reform, led by Jason, were involved. When opposition developed, it was not against Jason's Hellenistic reform (which had already been aborted by Menelaus) but against the alleged sale of temple vessels.

37. T. L. Thompson (*Early History of the Israelite People From the Written and Archaeological Sources* [Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East 4; Leiden-New York-Koln: Brill, 1992], especially 412-21) argues this. It seems to me that he exaggerates the amount of ethnic mixing since the deportation of peoples often involved a minority of the population. Also, where communities were deported, they frequently kept their identity in their new habitation, sometimes even for centuries.

38. Despite Egger's arguments, Josephus' does not use his terminology consistently, leaving us uncertain at least some of the time.

39. As already noted, Joseph Tobiad borrowed money from friends in Samaria to fund his initial venture into Ptolemaic politics (Ant. 12.4.3 & 168). This may well have been a continuation of contacts going back at least to the time of Nehemiah (Neh 4:7; 6:1). Cf. B. Mazar, "The Tobiads," *IEJ* 7 (1957) 137-45, 229-38 (revision of articles in *Tarbiz* 12 [1941] 109-23, and *EI* 4 [1956] 249-51).

40. On the concept, see especially G. E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (NovTSup 64; Leiden: Brill, 1992). This was a common phenomenon of nationalism among nations under Greek and then Roman rule; see D. Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (Anchor Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 35-54.

41. For a summary of information on this, see A. D. Crown, "The Samaritan Diaspora" in Crown (ed.), *The Samaritans*, 195-217. Much of the information on the early history of this Diaspora is, unfortunately, semi-legendary. According to Josephus, Samaritans were taken to Egypt and even held a dispute with Jews there (Ant. 12.1.1 & 7, 10; 13.3.4 & 74-79). The Samaritan Chronicles have a version of this dispute and also refer to a large Diaspora in Babylonia (1.6). Two inscriptions from Delos from the 3rd to 1st centuries BCE also seem to be a Samaritan product (see A. T. Kraabel, "New Evidence of the Samaritan Diaspora Has Been Found on Delos," *BA* 47 [1984] 44-47). The "Israelites in Delos" here use the Greek form *Argarizein* for Mt. Gerizim which often, though not always, is evidence of Samaritan ethnicity (see R. Pummer, "_____ : A Criterion for Samaritan Provenance?" *JSJ* 18 [1987] 18-25).

42. I wish to express my thanks to the British Academy for a travel grant which has helped toward the costs of presenting this paper.