

THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH - A “MODERNIZED” VERSION?

When opening the modern editions of the Hebrew Bible, right from the beginning we encounter the presence of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The first word of Genesis, בְּרֵאשִׁית, is paralleled in the critical apparatus by a testimony taken from the Samaritan Pentateuch: *bārāšit*. Whether this piece of evidence was correctly understood by the editors or not, is a subject to be treated separately. The interesting issue is the very existence of a Hebrew text containing the same Pentateuch which dominates Jewish spiritual life, yet different in many respects. Not an ancient translation in Greek or Latin or even Syriac, which may represent a *Vorlage* varying from the text known to us since time immemorial, but a parallel Hebrew text originating in a distant past, with its own particularities. Moreover, it is a Hebrew Pentateuch with a visible non-Jewish orientation. Even the Qumran fragments of the Pentateuch do not claim such a non-Jewish origin.

The Samaritan Pentateuch was already known to the Church Fathers. Already Origen (2nd-3rd century CE) refers to it many times in his writings. In the 4th century CE Eusebius of Caesarea, Jerome, Procopius of Gaza and others discuss its ancient script and its readings. Somehow,

mentions to the Samaritan Pentateuch disappear from the medieval Christian literature after the 8th century George Syncellus' reference to its antiquity as compared with the Jewish version.¹

In late antiquity Jewish Rabbis, were aware of the Samaritan Pentateuch and opposed vehemently its particular readings. Such is the 2nd century R. Eleazar b. Simon, who accused the Samaritans of forgery:

נומיתי לסופרי כותיים. זייפתם תורתכם ולא הועלתם לעצמיכם כלום. שהכתבתם בתורתכם אצל אלוני מורה שכם. והלא ידוע שהוא שכם. אלא שאין אתם דורשים לגזרה שוה ואנו דורשין לגזירה שוה. נאמר כאן אלוני מורה ונאמר להלן אלוני מורה. מה אלוני מורה האמור להלן שכם אף אלוני מורה האמור כאן שכם

“I told the Kutean scribes: ‘You forged your Tora and gained nothing. You have written in your Tora *by the Oak of Moreh, Sichem* (Deut 11:30). Is it not known that (the Oak of Moreh) is Sichem? It is only because you don’t draw analogies, while we do draw analogies; It is written there (Gen 12:6) *the Oak of Moreh* (preceded by Sichem) and here (Deut 11:30) *the Oak of Moreh*, (therefore) both passages indicate Sichem”.²

In other words, R. Eleazar asserts that the Samaritans³ harmonized both passages adding the word **שכם** in Deut 11:30 in connection with the blessings to be recited after the conquest of Canaan.⁴ **בעבר הירדן אהרי דרך מבוא השמש בארץ הכנעני הישב בערבה מול הגלגל אצל אלון מורא מול שכם** on the other side of Jordan, looking west, in the land of the Canaanites living in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, by the Oak of Moreh, against Sichem”.⁵

The Samaritan Pentateuch was forgotten for more than seven centuries, when Guillaume Postell, an emissary at the French embassy in Istanbul met some Samaritans there who showed him a Pentateuch manuscript kept in their synagogue. At his return in France he told about it to Joseph Scalliger, who expressed to Achille de Harlay de Sancy, the French ambassador in Istanbul his desire to acquire a manuscript. De Harlay de Sancy appointed the Italian traveller Pietro della Valle to this mission, and the latter purchased one in Damascus for the ambassador, who finally donated it to the Oratory in Paris. Jean Morin was appointed to its publication within the Polyglot of Paris (1629-1645). Morin, who formerly published the text of the Septuagint (1628) and declared it superior to the Masoretic Text, now set forth the superiority of the Samaritan Pentateuch as compared to the Masoretic Text, being close to the Septuagint in many respects.⁶ Some decades later, the SP was re-published in the London Polyglot (1655-1657) under the supervision of Brian Walton.

At this point an argument regarding the value of SP erupted between catholic and protestant scholars. The protestants, under the slogan “sola scriptura”, aspired to find answers to questions of belief and religion in the holy scripture alone, without papal involvement. The catholic church found in the very existence of the SP support for its claim that the authority to interpret the holy scripture is reserved to the Pope alone, since scripture has many faces, and there is no self-evident source. As far as textual superiority is concerned, Morin’s assessments were harshly criticized by several contemporary scholars; the most popular being J.H. Hottinger.⁷

For many years the dispute has been reduced to silence by the work of Wilhelm Gesenius on the origin, nature and authority.⁸ In this brilliant study he pondered the peculiar readings of SP and divided them into 8 categories which led him to the conclusion that the SP is a popular version, adjusted to the beliefs of the community, as well as improved linguistically and stylistically. By that Gesenius meant the emphasis SP puts on the centrality of Mount Gerizim as the holy place on the one hand, and the removal of obsoleted or what was considered improper expressions on the other hand.

In his pioneering work Gesenius paved the way to the modern approach to the SP, which, in the final analysis, considers it a kind of re-written Bible. In fact, some common readings of SP with the Septuagint are, here and there, confirmed by the several biblical fragments uncovered

in the Qumran caves. On the other hand, readings in which the SP is aligned with the MT as against the Septuagint, do also occur among the fragments from the caves of Qumran. All these fragments are dated, at the latest, to the first century CE. This shows clearly that several versions co-existed within Judaism, whether Greek or Hebrew speaking communities, as well as within the Samaritan context. To the extent that many scholars assume the existence of a “proto-Samaritan” text, *i.e.*, a Jewish version different in some details from the MT, which generated the actual SP.

Partly following our predecessors, we may divide the particular readings of the SP into two main categories: a) Unintentional variants; b) Intentional variants

a) Unintentional variants

The first category consists of the adaptation of ancient, sometimes no longer permissible grammatical forms to the language standard of the times, when the SP was stabilized. Let us take as example the old Hebrew infinitive which in the MT merely puts some emphasis on the following verb, with no temporal or any other function in the phrase.

Gen 8:3 tells: וַיִּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַלֹּוֹךְ וְשׁוֹב.

What does *וְשׁוֹב* mean? The English translations struggle with the phrase with great courage. NRSV says: “the waters *gradually* receded from the earth”, meaning that the collocation functions as an adverbial which describes the way

the waters receded, the recession being already expressed by וַיִּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם. This is a very fortunate rendering of the spirit of the verse, but it departs from its structure. Luther tried to follow the word order of the original, but was forced to seek for something intelligible instead of the un-German wording, and translated as: “und das Gewässer verlief sich von der Erde immer mehr”.⁹ All because of the diametric opposition between the source language and the target language. Actually one cannot translate into English or German or any other language this peculiar kind of locutions. Hebrew itself, in late antiquity, no longer used such expressions. They are completely absent from the Jewish Hebrew rabbinic literature from the second temple onwards. As this is the very epoch when the SP was conceived, it was rather natural that they were substituted for finite verbs. Accordingly, the SP has: וַיִּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַלְכוּ וְשׁוֹב with a perfect instead the old fashioned “infinitivus absolutus”. The Samaritans could not change the text completely, like Luther and the other European translation. But they could substitute the unusual for the usual: the simple and regular perfect. And so they did in the following verse transforming the old infinitive into a perfect: וְהַמַּיִם הָיוּ הַלְכוּ וְהָסְרוּ, for the masoretic וַיִּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַלֹּוֹךְ וְשׁוֹב, which Luther translated as “Es nahm aber das Gewässer *immer mehr ab*”, and NRSV as “The waters *continued* to abate”.

A very eloquent example is Exodus 13:3 with the masoretic: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל- הָעָם זְכוֹר אֶת-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, for which NRSV has an imperative, dictated by the logic

of the verse: “Moses said to the people, ‘Remember this day’”, and so says Luther too: “Da sprach Mose zum Volk: Gedenket an diesen Tag”. The SP renders this form as imperative as well: ויאמר משה אל העם זכרו את היום הזה, albeit in the plural.

Perfect!

Or not so perfect? Because the SP did not eliminate ALL infinitives. In many cases the infinitive remains, with one important difference: Not the obsolete “absolute infinitive”, which does not exist any longer in contemporary literature, but the regular infinitive and, in many cases, simply as a noun. Such שָׁלַם which precedes the finite verb in sequences as יִשְׁלַם שָׁלַם is taken as a noun, as the Aramaic Targum understands it: שְׁלוּם יִשְׁלַם, “by a payment will he pay” (Exod 22:5). And so is אָמַן תְּחַבֵּל שְׁלֵמַת רֵעֶךָ. NRSV gave up any attempt to find a reasonable equivalent for the absolute infinitive, and simply skipped it: “If you take your neighbor’s cloak in pawn”, as if the text says: אָמַן תְּחַבֵּל שְׁלֵמַת רֵעֶךָ. Just like Luther: “Wenn du von deinem Nächsten ein Kleid zum Pfande nimmst”. But not KJV: “If thou *at all* take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge”, which in the modernized RSV becomes: “ever”. Note that the Vulgate paraphrases, placing the noun *pignus*, “pledge”, in the stead of the infinitive and *acceperis* as equivalent of the verb: *si pignus a proximo tuo acceperis vestimentum*. And this is how SP treats the sequel: אָמַן חָבַל תְּחַבֵּל אֶת שְׁמַלְת רֵעֶךָ, rendered in the Aramaic Targum by a noun as well: אָמַן מִשְׁכּוֹן תְּמַשְׁכוֹן יֵת תְּכַסִּית עִבְרָךְ, “if in pledge you pledge your neighbor’s cloak”.

Most interesting is Exod 15, the “Song of the Sea”, where the MT has a similar sequence: אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי־גָאָה גָאָה סוּס וְרֹכְבוֹ: אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי־גָאָה גָאָה: “I will sing to the LORD, for *he has triumphed gloriously*; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea”. Evidently, it is Moses who “sings to the Lord” and it is the Lord who cast horse and its rider into the sea. The SP has a different approach: אֲשִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כִּי גוֹי גָאָה סוּס וְרֹכְבוֹ רָמָה בַיָּם

The verse starts with the imperative אֲשִׁירוּ לַיהוָה: “Sing to the Lord”, instead of the masoretic outdated אֲשִׁירָה, an archaic form of אֲשִׁיר, “I will sing”. Further the SP reads “a powerful people cast horse and its rider into the sea”. The absolute infinitive גָאָה became גוֹי “people”. Arguably, it is the “powerful people” who functions as the object of the sentence: “Sing to the Lord, for a powerful people He hurled into the sea.

These examples show that SP is the product of a process of modernization, *i.e.*, of adaptation to the standards of the later times, when Mishnaic Hebrew and Western Aramaic dominated the land.

Why “unintentional”? Because these changes were only partly implemented. Only a part of the absolute infinitives (216 in the Torah) has been treated as nouns. The larger part was left unchanged. Apparently the scribes that produced their copies of the Pentateuch were only occasionally alert to the language differences between past and present.

b) Intentional variants

The SP is distinct from the MT by a multitude of redactional modifications, that grant to the text a much more consistent appearance.

For example SP is sensitive to gender accuracy. Sometimes the MT has an incongruence, such as *וַיְהִי כְּמִשְׁלֹשׁ חֳדָשִׁים*, “about three months later” (Gen 38:24). This is corrected by SP: *וַיְהִי כַמְשַׁלְשַׁת חֳדָשִׁים*, since the numeral *שֶׁשׁ* fits only feminine nouns, which is not the case with the masculine *חֳדָשִׁים*. And so is *וַיִּרְאֵה מְנַחָה כִּי טוֹב*, “and he saw that a resting place is good” (Gen 49:15), where *מְנַחָה* is feminine but *טוֹב* is masculine. SP rectifies to feminine the adjective: *וַיִּרְאֵה מְנוּחָה כִּי טוֹבָה*.

SP is sensitive to numbers too. When MT has a plural predicate with a singular subject: *וְדוֹר רְבִיעִי יָשׁוּבוּ הֵנָּה*, “and the fourth generation will return here” (Gen 15:16), SP renders the predicate in the singular: *וְדוֹר הַרְבִּיעִי יָשׁוּב הֵנָּה*. Note that MT is not mistaken. It simply considers *דוֹר* as a multitude of individuals, a collective noun in the professional language, whence the plural predicate. For MT it is just a matter of concept, while SP is more on the formal side. To be sure, in most cases *דוֹר* has singular partners in MT too. *e.g.*: *דוֹר יָבֵא*, *שְׁלִישִׁי יָבֵא*, a third generation shall enter” (Deut 23:9); *כָּל־הַדּוֹר הַעֲשֵׂה הָרַע*, “the entire generation that had done evil”.

The redactional intervention of SP is evident in cases in which the text, as presented by the MT looks logically unsound. In Gen

29:3 MT narrates an odd story: *וַנְּאֶסְפוּ־שָׂמָּה כָּל־הַעֲדָרִים וַגִּלְלוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר וְהִשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַצֹּאֵן וְהִשִּׁיבוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן עַל־פִּי הַבְּאֵר לְמַקְוָהּ*: “and all the flocks would gather there, and they would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back on the mouth of the well, in its place”. Apparently, we are told that “the flocks” are the formal subject of the action narrated: they gathered, and rolled the stone, and watered the sheep, and put the stone back. Obviously, to MT the verbs are impersonal, and so they are for the Septuagint, the Jewish Targumim and the Peshitta. Even KJV and Luther follow the impersonal understanding, as “the shepherds” are self evident as subject. After all, in the following verse Jacob speaks to them: *וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם יַעֲקֹב* וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵאֵינָן אַתֶּם וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִחָרָן אָנֹכֶנּוּ “Jacob said to them, ‘My brothers, where do you come from?’ They said, ‘We are from Haran.’” One couldn’t imagine a reasonable person speaking to animals, even submissive and responding. At any rate, SP does not leave leave to the reader the understanding of the unspecified self-evidence, and re-writes the verse: *וַנְּאֶסְפוּ שָׁם כָּל הַרְעִים וַגִּלְלוּ אֶת הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר וְהִשְׁקוּ אֶת הַצֹּאֵן וְהִשִּׁיבוּ אֶת הָאֶבֶן עַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר לְמַקְוָהּ*, “and all the shepherds would gather there, and they would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back on the mouth of the well, in its place”.

Last example of this kind. In Exod 20:14 the MT describes the angst that fell upon the people when they witnessed the revelation on Mount Sinai: *וְכָל־הָעָם רֹאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת־* *הַלְפִידִם וְאֶת קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר וְאֶת־הַהָרָה עֲשׂוּן וַיִּרְאֵה הָעָם וַיִּגְעֻוּ וַיַּעֲמְדוּ מֵרָחֵק*, which literally means: “and all

the people saw the thunders and lightnings, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, and the people was afraid and trembled and stood afar". Of all these frightening phenomena, the lightnings (לפידים) and the smoking mountain (ההר העשן) belong to the category perceived by the sense of vision. By nature, thunders (קולות) and sound of trumpets (קול השופר) are perceived by the sense of audition. Therefore, the verb ראים, when connected to קולות, produced a remarkable unease among Jewish Rabbis, who discussed the apparent anomaly in numerous occasions. Such is Mekhilta, tract. Jethro, ch. 9, where R. Aqiva tries to overcome the difficulty: רואין ושומעין הנראה רואין דבר של אש יוצא מפי ההורות ונחצב על הלוחות, "they saw and heard what is seeable; they saw a fiery thing issued from the mouth of the divinity to be carved on the tablets". The versions attributed to ראים a broader meaning including "perceived".¹⁰ Preferring to avoid ambiguity, the Samaritan Pentateuch substituted שמע ראים, replacing the plural with the singular, which is congruent with העם, the collective subject, but failed to reshape the plural ראים in the same direction: וכל העם שמע את הקולות ואת קול השופר וראים את הפלידים ואת ההר עשן.

The most intensive activity of Samaritan scribes is in the realm of harmonization. Contradictory MT readings are very often conciliated, uneven formulations are made equal. In Gen 3:16 ארבה עצבונך והרבה תלדי בנים, "I will make most severe your pangs in childbearing; In pain shall you bear children", becomes ארבה עצבונך in SP. In MT Gen

31:33 Zilpah and Bilhah are identified as אמהות, "maids", while in all other occasions they are simply שפחות, "female servants". The former is changed in SP to שפחות, in order to equalize their status. in Gen 15:10 MT mentions "הצפר" the bird among the slaughtered animals. SP puts the word in the plural הצפורים, because in the previous verse two kinds of birds were specified: תור וגוזל, "a turtledove and a young pigeon". In the Decalogue, as given in Deut 5:21, MT has: ולא תקמד אשת רעה ולא תתאנה בית רעה, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; you shall not covet your neighbor's house", which differs from the formula given in MT Exod 20:17: לא תקמד בית רעה. לא תתקמד אשת רעה. Though תתקמד and תתאנה are synonyms, the commandments still differ, as Deuteronomy puts the wife before the house, unlike Exodus, which gives prominence to the house. A matter of social preferences. SP equalizes Deut with Exod: לא תחמד בית רעה ולא תחמד אשת רעה.

These editorial changes are but *Kleinigkeiten* in comparison with the ideological-theological variants, that pertain to the principles of Samaritanism. An obvious example is the principle of preeminence of Mount Gerizim, as against the sacred place according to Judaism: Jerusalem. Accordingly, a large portion from Deuteronomy 27:2-7 and 11:30 is placed in Exodus just after the Decalogue (20:13), a central position in the Pentateuch. After all, this is the spot where God's revelation took place:

והיה כי יביאך יהוה אלהיך אל ארץ הכנעני אשר אתה בא שמה לרשתה והקמת לך אבנים גדולות

ושדת אתם בשיד וכתבת על האבנים את כל דברי התורה הזאת והיה בעברכם את הירדן תקימו את האבנים האלה אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום בהרגריזים ובנית שם מזבח ליהוה אלהיך מזבח אבנים לא תניף עליהם ברזל אבנים שלמות תבנה את מזבח יהוה אלהיך והעלית עליו עלות ליהוה אלהיך וזבחת שלמים ואכלת שם ושמתת לפני יהוה אלהיך. ההר ההוא בעבר הירדן אחרי דרך מבוא השמש בארץ הכנעני הישב בערבה מול הגלגל אצל אלון מורא מול שכם.

This passage is repeated in Deut 5:18, where Decalogue occurs a second time. It differs in some respect from the MT:

והיה ביום אשר תעברו את הירדן אל הַאֲרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ נָתַן לְךָ וְנִקְמַתְךָ לְךָ אֲבָנִים גְּדֹלוֹת וְשָׂדֶתְךָ אֹתָם בְּשִׂיד וְכִתְבֹת עָלֶיךָ אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת בְּעֵבְרָה לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר תִּבְאֵ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ נָתַן לְךָ אָרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדִבְשׁ פֶּאֶשֶׁר דָּבָר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְךָ וְהָיָה בְּעֵבְרָתְךָ אֶת־הַיִּרְדֵּן תְּקִימוּ אֶת־הָאֲבָנִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה אֹתְכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּהָר עֵיבָל וְשָׂדֶת אֹתָם בְּשִׂיד: וּבְנִיתָ שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ מִזְבֵּחַ אֲבָנִים לֹא־תִנְיָף עָלֵיָם בְּרִזָּל: אֲבָנִים שְׁלֹמוֹת תִּבְנֶה אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ וְהַעֲלִיתָ עָלָיו עֹלוֹת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ וְזָבַחְתָּ שְׁלָמִים וְאָכַלְתָּ שָׁם וְשָׂמַחְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ הַלֵּא־הִמָּה בְּעֵבֶר הַיִּרְדֵּן אַחֲרַי דָּרָה מִבּוֹא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ בְּאֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּעֵרְבָה מִוֶּל הַגִּלְגָּל אֶצֶל אֱלוֹנֵי מֶרֶה:

First, SP has, בהרגריזים, Mount Gerizim, where MT has עֵיבָל. Further, SP emphasizes: ההר ההוא, not the neutral, even meaningless הַלֵּא־הִמָּה. Finally, SP has an additional topographic indication related to אֶצֶל אֱלוֹנֵי מֶרֶה, “by the oak of Moreh”: מול שכם, opposite Shekhem. Against the Judaeen claim that the sacred place has not yet been chosen while Israel was wandering in the desert, SP asserts the

contrary. Therefore, where MT says (Deut 12:5, 11 etc.): כִּי אִם־אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה: אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִכָּל־שְׁבֵטֵיכֶם לָשׂוּם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שָׁם לְשֹׁכְנֵוּ אֲלֵהֶיכֶם, “But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes as his habitation to put his name there. You shall go there.” SP has: כִּי אִם אֵל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: מִכָּל שְׁבֵטֵיכֶם לָשׂוּם אֶת שְׁמוֹ שָׁם לְשֹׁכְנֵוּ תִדְרָשׁוּ וּבָאתֶם שָׁמָּה. The holy place has already been chosen. Obviously, it is not Jerusalem, which is not mentioned in the Torah, and was not conquered before David, centuries after Joshua’s conquest of Canaan.

That Shekhem, at the foot of Mount Gerizim is the holy place, is stated in many passages. An interesting one is Gen 48:22. Here MT has an uncertain reading: וְאֲנִי נָתַתִּי לְךָ שְׁכֶם אֶחָד עַל־אַחֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר לְקֻמְתִּי מִיַּד הָאֲמָרִי בְּחָרְבִי וּבְקִשְׁתִּי. It is syntactically difficult, as it displays an uncommon incongruence between a feminine noun שְׁכֶם and a masculine numeral אֶחָד as quantifier, when a feminine is expected.¹¹ Most versions rely on the meaning “shoulder” in 9:23 וַיִּקַּח שָׁם “Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders”.¹² Taking the word as a metaphor, they render it as “part”: Vulgate says *do tibi partem una extra fratres tuos* followed by the Syriac Peshitta: ܩܘܡܬܐ ܠܝ ܡܥܘܬܐ ܥܘܕ ܡܢ ܥܘܠܝܐ ܒܠ ܐܝܢܝܘܢܝܘܬܝܢ, and so Onqelos: וְאֶנָּה יְהִיבִית לְךָ חוֹלֶקֶת סָד נְתִיר עַל: אֶחָד. Luther translated as “ich habe dir zu geben ein Stück Land vor deinen Brüdern”, so did NRSV: “I now give to you one portion more than to your brothers”. The Septuagint, by contrast, refers directly to the city of Shekhem: ἐγὼ δὲ δίδωμί σοι

Σικίμα ἐξάριετον ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἀδελφούς σου. “Now I am giving you Sikima, as something special beyond your brothers”.¹³ Such interpretation is much encouraged by the following relative clause, where conquest is evoked, probably leaning on chapter 34, with Shechem as scene of the action. The Aramaic Pseudo-Jonatan takes the same position in its conflated rendering: ואנא יהבית לך אית קרתה דשכם חלק, “I have given to you the city of Shechem, one part over your brothers”.¹⁴ This connection with the city of Shechem is expected in SP. For the latter, Shechem, which lies on the slopes of the sacred Mount Gerizim, is a natural reading in this context. To make matters clear, some manuscripts of the Samaritan Aramaic Targum put the numeral in the feminine, whether אהדה or אחת, which corresponds to the actual pronunciation *’āt*. One late manuscript even makes matters explicit: ואנה יהבת לך נאבלס אוקרו על, אחיד, “I have given you Nablus, eminence over your brothers”. נאבלס is no other than (Flavia) Neapolis, the Roman name of Shechem, as preserved in Arabic: نابلس. Apparently, אוקרו, functions as adverbial, reflected in the Arabic version: *خُصُوصًا*, “in particular” (one may wonder whether this is not the idea expressed by אהדה as well).¹⁵

Noteworthy is וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב שְׁלֹם עִיר שְׁכֵם אֲשֶׁר וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב שְׁלֹם עִיר שְׁכֵם אֲשֶׁר, which KJV renders as: “Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan”, taking שְׁלֹם as a proper noun. By this, it follows the Septuagint εἰς Σαλημ, the Vulgate *in Salem*, and the Peshitta ܠܫܠܡ. Jewish

exegesis considers שְׁלֹם an adverb that describes the state of Jacob after his struggle with the hostile “man” narrated in the previous chapter (Gen 32:25-32). Onqelos and Cod. Neofiti 1 have שלים, “intact, perfect”, to which Pseudo Jonatan adds: בכל דליה, “in all his belongings”. In the same note, Luther days *mit Frieden*, which corresponds to ASV *in peace*. NRSV renders the word as *safely*.¹⁶ SP keeps the same trend, albeit with a different reason; שְׁלֹם may hint at Jerusalem,¹⁷ where Melchizedek reigned: וּמֶלְכִי־צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ שְׁלֹם, (Gen 14:18). SP made sure that such an understanding of the historic encounter between the two protagonists is avoided: שלום, “in peace”.¹⁸

I tried to outline the Samaritan orientation when crystallizing the text of the community’s Pentateuch. Like any other version, the Masoretic text included, it has its own redactional modifications.

ENDNOTES

1 A comprehensive collection of ancient texts referring to the SP, translated and commented is R. Pummer, *Early Christian Authors on Samaritans and Samaritanism*, Texts, Translations and Commentary, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2002). See also J. Zangenberg, *Samareia, Antike Quellen zur Geschichte und Kultur der Samaritaner in deutscher Übersetzung*, Tübingen und Basel: A. Franke Verlag, 1994.

2 Jerusalem Talmud, tract. Sota, ch. 7, §3.

3 Referring to the Samaritans, the Rabbis use the derogative term “Kuteans”, to associate them with the transferred population from remote areas to Samaria by the Assyrians (cf. 2 Kgs 17).

4 A popular sobriquet of Mount Gerizim in Samaritan sources is טורה בריכה, “the blessed mountain”.

5 Notably, SP has אלוך in Deut 11:30 for the masoretic אלוני, in perfect accord with Gen 12:6 where אילון occurs in both traditions.

6 Johannes Morinus, *Exercitationes ecclesiasticae in utrumque Samaritanorum Pentateuchum [...]*, Paris: Antonius Vitray, 1631.

7 *Exercitationes anti-moriniana de Pentateucho samaritano eiusque uidentia autentia [...]*. Zurich: Joh. Jacobus Bodmar, 1644. To be sure, the SP common readings with the Septuagint against the MT are infinitely less weighted than its common readings with the MT against the Septuagint.

8 *De Pentateuchi samaritani origine, indole et auctoritate, commentatio philologico-critica*. Halle, 1815)

9 So is the 1912 revision; the original 1543

edition says: “Und das Gewässer verlieff sich von der Erden jmer hin”.

10 Expressed as such by the Septuagint: ἐώρα (3rd pers, singular imperfect of ὀράω).

11 Cf. אַת־שָׁכֶם וְאֶת־מִגְרָשֵׁיהָ in 1 Chr 6:52, and וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ וַיִּבְנֵתֶיהָ in 1 Chr 7:28.

12 In this sense, שָׁכֶם is masculine indeed, as attested in Zeph. 3:9: כִּי־אֲזַיְתֶה אֶל־עַמִּים שְׂפֹפָה בָרַךְ בְּיָמָיו לְקַרְאֵי כָל־מִלְּךָ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה לְעַבְדּוֹ שָׁכֶם אֶחָד וְיָרָה לְקַרְאֵי כָל־מִלְּךָ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה לְעַבְדּוֹ שָׁכֶם אֶחָד, “At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord”.

13 Cf. John 4:5.

14 After Genesis Rabba, ch. 98 §5.

15 A comprehensive discussion of the Samaritan treatment of this case is A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von den innern Entwicklung des Judentums*, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Mada 1928, pp. 80-81.

16 Jubilees 30:1 combines both approaches: “(Jacob) went up to Salem to the east of Shechem in peace”.

17 In Ps 76:3 שלם occurs in parallel with צִיִן. However, the Septuagint translates as ἐν εἰρήνῃ, “in peace”.

18 See C. Westermann, *Genesis: A Commentary*. London: SPCK, 1986. vol. 2, p. 528.