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1

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Bible Editions

Gary N. Knoppers

Evaluating New Editions of the Hebrew Scriptures 1–5

Adrian Schenker

The Edition Biblia Hebraica Quinta (BHQ) 6–16

Armin Lange

The *Biblia Qumranica* as a Synoptic Edition of the Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls 17–37

Michael Segal

The Hebrew University Bible Project 38–62

Ronald Hendel

The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Its Aims and a Response to Criticisms 63–99

Stefan Schorch

A Critical *editio maior* of the Samaritan Pentateuch: State of Research, Principles, and Problems 100–120



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Stefan Schorch

A Critical *editio maior* of the Samaritan Pentateuch: State of Research, Principles, and Problems

To understand fully the phenomenon of the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), the features it shares with the Masoretic text (MT) and with the Septuagint (LXX), as well as its peculiarities, two things should be kept in mind. On the one hand, the SP is part of the corpus of literary texts produced by the Samaritans in the course of their history, among them midrashim, chronicles, commentaries, compositions devoted to halakah, theology, Hebrew grammar, and several other subjects.¹ Indeed, the SP enjoys a special place among these other works due to its high esteem and its influence, both of which exceed any other Samaritan text. On the other hand, the Samaritan Torah has deep roots in the textual traditions of the Pentateuch common to the Jewish-Israelite people of the Second Temple period. Thus, the origins of the SP are not really “Samaritan,” neither in terms of literary history nor in terms of religious history, and all the more so, since we can speak about “Samaritans” only from the 2nd century B.C.E. onwards.² To summarize, the SP is not only foremost among all Samaritan literary texts, but it is also the most significant Hebrew witness to the textual history of the Pentateuch, aside from the MT.

In spite of this multi-faceted importance, there is, however, no critical edition of the SP available that meets the methodological requirements of modern textual criticism in general and the Samaritan textual tradition in particular. The chief aim of this article is to describe the project of a critical edition of the SP. To place this project in context, I will begin with an overview over the history of research into the SP (A). A short review of currently available editions will follow (B). In the last section of this essay, I will provide an overview of the new *editio maior* of the SP.

1 An overview of the literature of the Samaritans is provided by R. T. Anderson *et al.*, “Samaritan Literature,” in *The Samaritans* (ed. A.D. Crown; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 390–516.

2 See S. Schorch, “The Construction of Samari(t)an Identity from the Inside and from the Outside,” in *Between Cooperation and Hostility: Multiple Identities in Ancient Judaism and the Interaction with Foreign Powers* (Journal of Ancient Judaism Supp. 11; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 135–49, here 135–39.

A) The History of Research into the Samaritan Pentateuch

European scholars have been familiar with the SP only since 1616, when the traveler Pietro della Valle (1586–1652) acquired a manuscript in Damascus and brought it to Italy. For 300 years (until von Gall's edition in the early 20th century), this manuscript enjoyed an unparalleled status for SP research, because it was printed in the famous polyglot Bibles of the 17th century: the Paris Polyglot (1629–1645) and the London Polyglot (1655–1657).³ At that time, the controversies between Roman Catholics and Protestants about the holiness of the text of the Hebrew Bible generated particular scholarly interest in the SP. Thus, it is certainly not by chance that the Paris polyglotte was the work of a Catholic scholar, who was a convert from Calvinism: Jean Morin (1591–1659). The fact that the Samaritan community had preserved a Hebrew text of the Pentateuch different from the Masoretic version constituted a serious challenge to the Protestants in the era of Baroque and Protestant orthodoxy, because the Protestants claimed that the Hebrew text, by which they meant the MT (including vowel points and accents), was the one and only fundamental basis for Christian theology.⁴ Conversely, the textual differences visible in the Samaritan text seemed to be a strong argument in favor of the Catholic position that the Hebrew textual tradition was corrupt and unintelligible without the hermeneutical tools handed down within the traditions of the Roman church.

As already mentioned, the Samaritan text appearing in the Polyglot Bibles represented only one manuscript, which is considerably younger than a number of manuscripts of the SP known today. It should be kept in mind that 17th and 18th century research into the SP was heavily influenced by religious polemics. In spite of this problematic background, some of the results produced and popularized at that time still influence contemporary views. This is especially true with respect to the tally of allegedly 6,000 textual differences between the MT and SP, a number that continues to appear in many contemporary publications. This enumeration, which is based on a list composed by Edmund Castell (1606–1685) and printed in the supplement to the London polyglot in 1657,⁵ is largely irrelevant in light of modern textual research. Its textual

³ This manuscript, written in 1345/1346 in Damascus, is kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (MS Paris BN sam. 2); J.-P. Rothschild, *Catalogue des manuscrits samaritains* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Manuscrits, 1985), 36–39.

⁴ In greater detail, see Schorch, “The Construction of Samari(t)an Identity,” (see n. 2), 6–8.

⁵ E. Castell, “De animadversionum Samaritarum in totum Pentateuchum ab eo collectarum, Scopio atque usu,” in *Biblia sacra polyglotta: complectentia textus originales*,

basis, as described above, is insufficient. It adheres to no clear criteria of what constitutes a textual difference and it does not recognize the characteristics of the Samaritan scribal tradition, which are by no means identical with those of the MT. For example, a very prominent feature of the Samaritan text is that it has no normative spelling. That is, there neither exist clear rules for spelling nor did Samaritan scribes feel compelled to preserve the spelling they found in other manuscripts. Hence, most of the supposed variants involving spelling are irrelevant from the outset.

As with many other ground breaking developments in Hebrew and Semitic philology, the history of critical research into the SP began only with W. Gesenius (1786–1842), whose book “De Pentateuchi samaritani origine, indole et auctoritate commentatio philologico-critica” (= “Philological-critical commentary about the origin, character, and authority of the SP”), in 1815 published for the first time laid out categories, according to which the differences between the Jewish text and the Samaritan text could be qualified.⁶

- a) Readings adapted to the grammatical norm
- b) Interpretations or glosses introduced into the text
- c) Emendations based on conjecture
- d) Readings changed in accordance with parallels
- e) Major additions taken from parallels
- f) Emendations of contextual or historically difficult readings
- g) Words adapted to the Samaritan language
- h) Readings supporting the theology, hermeneutics, and cult of the Samaritans

Gesenius concluded that the Samaritan text is a secondary version of the Jewish text, which was simplified in terms of language, harmonized in

Hebraicum, cum Pentateucho Samaritano, Chaldaicum, Græcum, Vol. 6. (ed. B. Walton; London: Thomas Roycroft, 1657).

⁶ In the original Latin, the list is as follows: a) Lectiones, quae ad normam grammaticae exactae sunt; b) Interpretamenta sive glossae in textum receptae; c) Emendationes conjecturales; d) Lectiones e locis parallelis interpolata; e) Additamenta maiora e locis parallelis interpolata; f) Emendationes locorum difficultate quadam in rebus, et maxime quidem historico in genere, laborantium; g) Formae vocabulorum ad dialectum samaritanam attemperatae; h) Loca ad theologiam, hermeneuticam et cultum Samaritanorum domesticum conformata. See W. Gesenius, *De Pentateuchi Samaritani origine, indole et auctoritate commentatio philologico-critica* (Halle: Renger, 1815), 24–61. Cf. S. Schorch, “Die (sogenannten) anti-polytheistischen Korrekturen im samaritanischen Pentateuch,” *Mitteilungen und Beiträge der Forschungsstelle Judentum, Theologische Fakultät Leipzig* 15/16 (1999): 4–21, here: 4–6; A. Tal, “The First Samaritanologist: Wilhelm Gesenius,” in *Biblische Exegese und hebräische Lexikographie: Kontext und Wirkung des “Hebräischen Handwörterbuches” von Wilhelm Gesenius* (ed. S. Schorch and E.-J. Waschke; BZAW 427; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 139–151.

terms of style, and above all corrected to correspond with the ideological views of the Samaritan community. Basically, Gesenius' analysis that the SP is a secondary and inferior version of the Jewish text still shapes the scientific *opinio communis* about the SP to a considerable extent. For example, J. Margain's relatively recent article, "Samaritain (Pentateuque)," simply lists the categories introduced by Gesenius to describe the textual characteristics of the SP.⁷ However, some signs of a changing attitude can be detected, thanks above all to the Qumran finds. Thus, it seems safe today to conclude that the Samaritan text goes back to an older, pre-Samaritan text of the Pentateuch, to which a thin layer of textual changes was added, authored by Samaritans and serving the interest of Samaritan ideology.⁸ According to E. Tov,⁹ among the manuscripts of the Pentateuch found at Qumran, 11 % can be assigned as "pre-Samaritan," (over against 48 % "M-like texts") and their characteristic textual features can be grouped under the following categories:¹⁰

- α. Editorial Changes
- β. Small Harmonizing Alterations
- γ. Linguistic Corrections
- δ. Small Content Differences
- ε. Linguistic Differences

Accordingly, the so-called pre-Samaritan texts are characterized mainly by linguistic adaptation to the type of Hebrew used in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C.E., as well as by stylistic and literary harmonization. Moreover, E. Eshel and H. Eshel demonstrate that the way these harmonizations were carried out suggests that the textual basis of what is today known as the SP was created in the 2nd century B.C.E.¹¹

7 J. Margain, "Samaritain (Pentateuque)," *Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément IX* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1991), 763–768.

8 See E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (3rd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 74–93.

9 Tov, *Textual Criticism* (see n. 8), 108.

10 Tov, *Textual Criticism* (see n. 8), 79–87. That the sequence of editions of Tov's handbook (the first edition appeared in 1989 in Hebrew) exhibit significant differences between the earlier and the later versions of this list of criteria reflects the considerable progress made in the study of the SP during the last 20 years.

11 E. Eshel and H. Eshel, "Dating the Samaritan Pentateuch's Compilation in Light of the Qumran Biblical Scrolls," in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. S. Paul et al.; VTSup 94; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 215–240. Of course, the observation that the text that became the SP is heavily influenced by linguistic and literary usage dating to the 2nd century B.C.E. does not at all mean that the earlier followers of the sanctuary at Mount Gerizim were not aware of the Pentateuch and did not use it. On the contrary, it is much more feasible to hold that an earlier text of the Pentateuch, which had been in use in Samaria, underwent linguistic and editorial adaptations in the 2nd century B.C.E. On this issue, see S. Schorch, "Spoken Hebrew of the

As was already mentioned, beyond the pre-Samaritan basis of the SP, the SP is characterized by an additional thin layer of proper Samaritan additions and corrections. Since Gesenius' study (1815) until our time, the list of instances counted as Samaritan ideologisms has hardly undergone any modification, comprising, in particular, the following three well-known cases.¹²

– SP בחר instead of MT יבחר in the centralization formula (Deut 12:5, etc.).

– SP גריזים instead of MT עיבל as the place of the altar in Deut 27:4.

– The addition of a florilegium about Mount Gerizim after the Ten Commandments (after Exod 20:13 // Deut 5:18).

However, recent studies of these supposed “Samaritan ideologisms” suggest that reconsideration is in place. In light of these studies, it appears that neither בחר in the centralization formula nor Mount Gerizim as the place of the altar in Deut 27:4 can be regarded as a secondary textual correction carried out by scribes with a Samaritan or proto-Samaritan background. Rather, and on account of the available textual evidence, it is much more plausible to hold that in both cases the MT readings are the result of ideologically-motivated textual corrections, which were carried out most probably in the middle of the 2nd century B.C.E.¹³ This conclusion is based on different and independent textual witnesses.

First, in both cases, the reconstructed Old Greek translation is in accordance with the respective readings found in the Samaritan Pentateuch. In Deut 27:4, a codex of the Vetus Latina, written in the 6th century C.E. in France in or near Lyon contains “Mount Gerizim” instead of “Mount Ebal” as the place of the altar. Since there is no basis to believe that a Latin manuscript of the Vetus Latina from France was influenced by the Samaritan text of Deuteronomy, this reading should be attributed to the Greek *Vorlage* of the Vetus Latina, that is, the Old Greek translation of Deuteronomy, dating to the 3rd century B.C.E. The reason why this reading

Late Second Temple Period according to the Oral and the Written Samaritan Tradition,” in: *Conservatism and Innovation in the Hebrew Language of the Hellenistic Period: Proceedings of a Fourth International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira* (ed. J. Joosten and J.-S. Rey; STDJ 73; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 175–190, here: 185–86.

¹² E.g., see the 2nd edition of Tov's *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2001), whereas the 3rd edition (2012), quoted above, demonstrates an obvious change in the attitude towards the “loci classici” of Samaritan ideologisms, especially with regard to Deut 27:4, Tov, *Textual Criticism* (see n. 8), 88 n. 140.

¹³ See S. Schorch, “The Samaritan Version of Deuteronomy and the Origin of Deuteronomy,” in *Samaria, Samaritans, Samaritans: Studies on Bible, History and Linguistics* (ed. J. Zsengeller; Studia Samaritana 6; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 23–37, here: 28 and 31–32.

is not preserved in the manuscripts of the Septuagint seems entirely explicable with reference to a well known phenomenon: the Greek text found in Septuagint manuscripts underwent numerous alignments with and textual adaptations to the emerging Masoretic text, and the correction “Mount Ebal” found in LXX Deut 27:4 seems to be one of them. Thus, according to the original Old Greek translation of Deut 27:4, the altar seems to have been localized on “Mount Gerizim,” as in the Samaritan text, while the LXX reading “Mount Ebal” is most probably the result of a secondary alignment of the Greek text with the Masoretic text.¹⁴ Similar to the situation in Deut 27:4, it has been taken for granted in textual criticism that the Greek translation of Deuteronomy confirms the use of a verbal form in the future within the text of the centralization formula, on account of the observation that LXX ἐκλέξῃται “he may choose” parallels יבחר with the same meaning. However, there is clear evidence that the reading “he may choose” found in most manuscripts of the LXX is the result of secondary influence, whereas the uncorrected Old Greek translation contained the aorist ἐξελέξατο “he has chosen:” A. Schenker has shown that in twelve out of the 22 occurrences of the centralization formula the preterite is attested, either in Greek manuscripts that preserve the text of the Old Greek translation ἐξελέξατο, or in the Coptic and Latin translations of the Old Greek.¹⁵ The evidence clearly indicates that this was part of the original text.

Thus, in both cases the readings found today in the Samaritan Pentateuch (i. e., “Mount Gerizim” in Deut 27:4, and “he has chosen” in the centralization formula) were part of the original text, which was accepted among followers of both the Jerusalem Temple and the Mount Gerizim sanctuary. It became a “Samaritan” reading only at that moment, when an anti-Samaritan, pro-Jerusalem corrector changed “Mount Gerizim” to “Mount Ebal,” and “he has chosen” to “he may choose.” These two latter corrections, carried out for ideological reasons, became part of the Masoretic text.

Second, the reading “he has chosen” in the centralization formula receives additional support from 4QMMT¹⁶ (mid-2nd century B.C.E.),

14 See A. Schenker, “Textgeschichtliches zum Samaritanischen Pentateuch und Samaritikon,” in *Samaritans past and present: current studies* (ed. M. Mor and F. Reiterer; Studia Samaritana 5; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 105–121, here: 106–107.

15 See A. Schenker, “Le Seigneur choisira-t-il le lieu de son nom ou l’a-t-il choisi?: l’apport de la Bible grecque ancienne à l’histoire du texte samaritain et massorétique,” in *Scripture in transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo* (ed. A. Voitila; JSJSup 126; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 339–351

16 4Q394 f8 iv:9–11, see Schorch, “The Samaritan Version” (see n. 13), 34.

while the Temple scroll, which seems to come from the 2nd half of the 2nd century B.C.E., attests to the reading of the MT “he will chose.”¹⁷ These data indicate that the textual change from the older בַּחַר into the secondary יַבַּחַר was carried out in the mid-2nd century B.C.E. within the context of a hostile atmosphere towards the Samaritans among Judeans under the reign of John Hyrcanus (135–104 B.C.E.), which led to the destruction of the Gerizim sanctuary, probably in 111–110 B.C.E..¹⁸

Therefore, out of the standard list of so-called Samaritan ideologisms (see above), it is only the florilegium of verses selected from Deuteronomy (11:29; 27:2–6; 11:30) found in the SP after the Ten commandments, which can be regarded as a later addition, since it is clearly secondary from the perspective of the history of the text. The florilegium was inserted to reinforce (although not to create!) the reference to the altar on Mount Gerizim by immediately connecting it with the Ten commandments.

The above observations on the textual nature and historical context of the ideological differences between the Masoretic and the Samaritan text of the Pentateuch lead to the conclusion that it would be erroneous to understand the SP as a secondary version of a Jewish text of the Pentateuch, which was adapted to the views and idiosyncratic purposes of the Samaritan community. First, the SP goes back to a text of the Torah, which before the middle of the 2nd century B.C.E. was common to both followers of Jerusalem and Gerizim, that is, to proto-Jews and to proto-Samaritans alike. Second, this common text is not characterized by any significant ideological feature, which could possibly be used for its qualification as “Jewish” or “Samaritan” in origin or nature.

Third, the text-historical process that in the middle of the 2nd century B.C.E. led to the mutual estrangement of the Samaritan and the Jewish Pentateuchs was not restricted to what was to become the SP, but left clear traces in both the Masoretic and the Samaritan texts. Since both the Jewish Pentateuch and the SP underwent a process of focusing in terms of the ideology of their respective readers, the Samaritan text cannot be understood as a text with an “ideological” message as opposed a supposed “neutral” Jewish text.

¹⁷ 11Q19 52:9; 52:16; 56:5; 60:13–14, see Schorch, “The Samaritan Version” (see n. 13), 34.

¹⁸ Cf. S. Schorch, “The Origin of the Samaritan Community,” *Linguistic and Oriental Studies from Poznań* 7 (2005): 7–16, here: 10.

B) The Available Editions of the SP

Currently, the only text-critical edition of the SP is one prepared by A. Freiherr von Gall and published in 1914–1918.¹⁹ Besides the main text, it contains three apparatuses, which address (I) the consonantal framework, (II) the vowel signs, and (III) the punctuation. Apart from the difference regarding the fields they cover, there is a difference in method between apparatus I, on the one hand, and apparatuses II and III, on the other. While apparatus I records variants in comparison to the main text, apparatuses II and III are cumulative apparatuses, that is, they present the entire evidence of vowel signs and punctuation respectively as found in all the manuscripts used for this edition. The main text does not contain any signs for vowels or punctuation with one exemption, namely the *Qitza* sign, the Samaritan equivalent to the Masoretic *Parasha*.

Von Gall's edition certainly was a pioneering enterprise, one that has not been replaced by any more recent edition. Thus, providing variants from a relatively large number of manuscripts, it is still an indispensable reference tool. Nevertheless, it is completely outdated in terms of OT textual criticism, editorial philology, and Samaritan studies. Specifically, most of the manuscripts of the SP regarded today as the oldest and the most important are almost completely absent from von Gall's edition, as they were either unknown or unavailable to him.²⁰ The central problem of this edition consists of the eclectic main text, since von Gall fabricated the latter by rejecting and adopting readings on the basis of criteria²¹ from the

¹⁹ A.F. von Gall, *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1914–1918).

²⁰ Above all, von Gall did not know of the existence of the following manuscripts: Cambridge University Library Add. 1846 (12th century); Nablus Synagogue 6 (1204); Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751 (1225); Manchester John Rylands Library Sam 1 (1211) and 2 (1328). Moreover, although he was aware of the manuscripts London British Library Or 1443 (1355), London British Library Or 6461 (1339), and New York Public Library 1 (1232), he was not able to see and use them.

²¹ These criteria are detailed in von Gall's introduction to his edition (italicized comments in square brackets stem from the present author): "(1) Preference for the *scriptio defectiva* [*note, however, that the Samaritan scribal tradition amply uses plene-spellings, which often point to a reading different from the MT*]; (2) Meticulous observance of the rules of Hebrew grammar; (3) Preference for the older grammatical form over against the younger one [*in fact, von Gall refers in the latter two points to the grammar of Masoretic Hebrew, which is obviously different from Samaritan Hebrew*]; (4) The main text was created by regularly comparing it to the Septuagint and the Jewish text [*as a basis for adopting a given a reading as part of the Samaritan text or rejecting it, this criterion is certainly misleading, since both the LXX and the MT represent different literary, linguistic, and textual traditions*]," *Der hebräische Pentateuch* (see n. 19), lxxviii–lxxix.

Masoretic tradition rather than the Samaritan tradition. Indeed, since many of the adopted Masoretic readings contradicted Samaritan tradition, the result was a text in which most of the characteristic features of the SP are absent.²²

Several editions of SP texts have been published since von Gall's edition. None of them is, however, a critical edition, since each of them was from the outset restricted to certain manuscripts not covered by von Gall's edition. To begin with, in 1959, P. Castro published a transcription of the so-called *Sefer Abischa*.²³ Unfortunately, the original is heavily damaged and preserved only from Numbers 35 onwards. Yet this manuscript is among the most important manuscripts of the SP, not only because of its age, but also (and mainly) due to its high veneration within the Samaritan community.

Second, in 1976, G. Blanc published a transcription of MS Cambridge University Library Add. 1846,²⁴ which is dated tentatively²⁵ to the early 12th century and is therefore apparently one of the oldest known Samaritan manuscripts,²⁶ together with a text-critical apparatus recording the variants from 15 other manuscripts. However, since Blanc recorded only manuscripts not used in von Gall's edition, his work aimed not at replacing, but at supplementing its predecessor, perpetuating its methodological shortcomings. Moreover, only the first volume of Blanc's edition appeared, covering the book of Genesis.

Finally, one must mention A. Tal's transcription of MS 6 from the Samaritan synagogue in Nablus. The first edition of this text appeared in 1994²⁷ and received a broad reception, including a digitized version available as part of Accordance software.²⁸ In 2010, an improved second

22 For a similarly critical evaluation of von Gall's edition, see Tal, *Samaritan Literature*, in: Crown, *The Samaritans* (see n. 1), 435.

23 F. Pérez Castro, *Séfer Abiša: edición del fragmento antiguo* (Textos y estudios del Seminario Filológico Cardenal Cisneros 2; Madrid: CSIC, 1959).

24 L.F. Girón Blanc, *Pentateuco hebreo-samaritano: Genesis / ed. crítica sobre la base de manuscritos inéditos* (Textos y estudios del Seminario Filológico Cardenal Cisneros 15; Madrid: Instit. Arias Montano, 1976).

25 Since the colophon (called *Tashqil* in the Samaritan tradition, which embeds it in the body of the text) has not been preserved, there is no exact date for this manuscript. The tentative date has been determined on paleographical grounds.

26 A.D. Crown, *Samaritan Scribes and Manuscripts* (TSAJ 80; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 495.

27 A. Tal, *The Samaritan Pentateuch: Edited according to MS 6 (C) of the Shekhem Synagogue* (Texts and Studies in the Hebrew Language and Related Subjects 8; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, The Chaim Rosenberg School for Jewish Studies, 1994).

28 See E. Tov, "Electronic Resources Relevant to the Textual Criticism of Hebrew Scripture," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 8 (2003): <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/v08/Tov2003.html> (06/11/12).

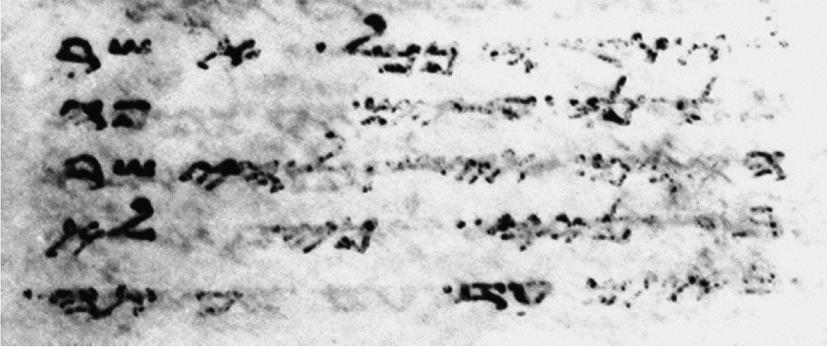


Figure 1: ms Nablus (Synagogue) 6, Deut 12:8–9a. In this passage, as in numerous others, the text is barely legible.

edition appeared in synopsis with the MT, published jointly with M. Florentin.²⁹ The scientific merits of the Tal(-Florentin)-text are very obvious. It makes the SP available in a textual version, which is not reconstructed (as with the main text in von Gall's edition), but which is actually preserved in one of the oldest surviving Samaritan manuscripts, dating from 1204 C.E. Yet the transcription printed in Tal(-Florentin)'s edition seems problematic in several respects. The printed version does not contain the punctuation signs found in the original manuscript, with the exception of the Samaritan *Qitza* (compare the edition of von Gall). As the Samaritan scribes, including those responsible for MS 6 from the Nablus Synagogue, made abundant use of several different punctuation signs and since the respective manuscript contains at least ten different types of vocalization signs, according to my survey of the original and the photographs, the transcription lacks a good part of the information found in the original, as well as in other medieval manuscripts.

Similar things may be said for the Samaritan vocalization and text-critical signs, although they are less common and less diverse than the punctuation signs. Nevertheless, the original manuscript contains at least three different types of such signs, but they are not recorded in the transcription. A further and perhaps more severe problem is that part of the respective manuscript (no. 6 from the Nablus Synagogue) is in a very poor state of preservation. Some passages are almost illegible and others are not preserved (see figure 1).

²⁹ A. Tal and M. Florentin, *The Pentateuch – The Samaritan Version and the Masoretic Version* (Tel Aviv: The Haim Rubin Tel Aviv University Press, 2010).

Finally, the manuscript contains not a few readings that obviously depart from the mainstream tradition of the SP, as attested in the large majority of medieval manuscripts. Indeed, some of its readings are unique. This holds true in the following readings: in Gen 22:2, the vast majority of Samaritan manuscripts reads **אל ארץ המורה**.³⁰ However, manuscript 6 from the Nablus synagogue contains the reading **המורה**, which seems unique and is not found in any other ancient manuscript recorded so far.³¹ A further case is Deut 11:29, where MS Nablus 6 reads **הר גריזים**, that is, with a word divider against the Samaritan tradition found in all other old manuscripts, which spell the expression as one word (**הרגריזים**). In sum, based on the observations presented above, MS Nablus Synagogue 6 does not seem to be the best representative of the Samaritan textual tradition. Additionally, in the absence of a critical apparatus for contextualizing each reading in the manuscript tradition as a whole and thus enabling the reader to identify a minority reading, this text may be misleading.

In spite of their limitations, these three editions were important steps toward achieving a critical edition of the Samaritan Torah, especially since they made available the readings of additional manuscripts. A further important step was made by Z. Ben-Hayyim with his publication of a transcription of the Samaritan reading of the Torah in its entirety. Appearing in 1977, the book made the traditional Samaritan vocalization of the Torah available for the first time.³² Ben-Hayyim's work demonstrated that the manuscript tradition of the Samaritan Torah cannot be seen as dissociated from the vocalization transmitted in the oral reading tradition: "The full range of its [sc. the SP's] linguistic structure comes to the surface when its phonetic formation is observed, expressed by the reading of the Torah [...]."³³ The same conclusion was reached from a comparative text-historical analysis of vocalization embedded in and transmitted by the Samaritan reading tradition.³⁴

Aside from the progress made in our knowledge of the Samaritan Hebrew tradition, a similarly impressive advance has been made since the

³⁰ Among the manuscripts recorded so far, only one single manuscript, namely MS Paris Bibliothèque Nationale 5, copied in 1480/81 and referred to in von Gall's edition, reads **המורה**.

³¹ Moreover, the spelling **המורה** found in this MS Nablus 6 contradicts the Samaritan reading tradition, which pronounces *ammūriyya*.

³² Z. Ben-Hayyim, *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic amongst the Samaritans*, Vol. 4: *The Words of the Pentateuch* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1977).

³³ Tal, Samaritan Literature, in: Crown, *The Samaritans* (see n. 1), 442.

³⁴ S. Schorch, *Die Vokale des Gesetzes: Die samaritanische Lesetradition als Textzeugin der Tora*, Vol. 1: *Das Buch Genesis* (BZAW 339; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004).

time of von Gall with regard to the Samaritan Aramaic and Samaritan Arabic versions of the Torah, both of which have been edited in editions of a very high standard. The Samaritan Targum was edited by Tal³⁵ and the Samaritan Arabic translation was prepared by H. Shehadeh.³⁶ Thanks to these two editions, we are now able to verify the understanding of many passages in the Samaritan tradition.

In this situation of desperate need for a critical edition of the SP, on the one hand, and a relatively favorable state of research, on the other, a project was begun in 2007, aimed at publishing a critical *editio maior*. The project, funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, is carried out by a team based at the University of Halle-Wittenberg under my direction, while parts of it, namely the edition of Exodus, will be realized in cooperation with a team from Hungary directed by J. Zsengellér (Reformed University Budapest, “Károli Gáspár”).

C) The Project of a Critical *editio maior* of the SP

The project aims at a diplomatic edition of the entire SP, focusing on the oldest available manuscripts, which date from the 12th to the 14th century c.e.³⁷ The number of manuscripts covered by the edition totals 29, four of which are extant for the entire text of the Torah.³⁸ In 17 of the manuscripts passages up to several pages are lacking,³⁹ in two manuscripts only parts of

35 A. Tal, *The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch: A Critical Edition* (3 vols.; Texts and Studies in the Hebrew language and Related Subjects IV–VI; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980–1983).

36 H. Shehadeh, *The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch: Edited from the Manuscripts with an Introductory Volume* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences, 1989–2002).

37 For a full list of the manuscripts covered by the edition, see nn. 38–42.

38 G¹ – MS Nablus, Synagogue, A (1336, see n. 47); L⁶ – MS London, British Library, Or. 6461 (1339, see n. 47); P² – MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Sam. 2 (1345); L⁸ – MS London, British Library, Cotton Claudius B. viii (1362).

39 C¹ – MS Cambridge, University Library, Add. 1846 (12th century); G⁶ – MS Nablus, Synagogue, 6 (1204); C³ – MS Cambridge, University Library, Add. 713 (beginning of 13th century); M¹ – Manchester, John-Rylands Library, Sam 1 (1211); J¹ – MS Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Sam. 2° 6 (1215); C⁴ – MS Cambridge, University Library, Add. 714 (1219); D¹ – MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, 751 (1225); R¹ – Rom, Barberini, Or. 1 (1226); Y¹ – New York, Public Library 1 (1232); P¹ – MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Sam. 1 (13th century?); L⁷ – MS London, British Library, Or. 7562 (c. 1300); M² – Manchester, John-Rylands Library, Sam 2 (1328); D² – MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, 752 (1339); Li – Ms. Leipzig, Völlers 1120 (c. 1345); L³ – MS London, British Library, Add. 1443 (c. 1350); Le – MS Leiden, University Library, Or. 6 (1350); L² – MS London, British Library, Add. 22369 (1360).

certain books are preserved,⁴⁰ and six manuscripts survive only in fragments, but are nevertheless important textual witnesses, due to their very early date.⁴¹ Generally speaking, the Hebrew manuscript tradition of the Samaritan Pentateuch is rather uniform, although it contains many more variant readings than the manuscript tradition of the Masoretic text.⁴² This is especially true with regard to spelling, in which even manuscripts written by one and the same scribe display internal variation. The general textual uniformity within the Samaritan manuscript tradition, together with a certain flexibility in spelling virtually exclude the possibility of reconstructing the stemmata for given manuscripts.

The main text of the edition is provided by MS Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751, copied in 1225.⁴³ The reasons for choosing this particular manuscript are as follows. First, MS Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751 is the oldest manuscript of the SP, which is preserved to almost its full extent, starting from Gen 1:1.⁴⁴ Only in the last chapters of Deuteronomy are seven folios lacking from the original manuscript. These have been restored by a later hand.⁴⁵ Within the edition, they will have to be supplemented by another old manuscript. Although a few SP manuscripts have been preserved that are older than Chester Beatty 751, all of them are in a much more fragmentary state of preservation. This is especially true for the manuscripts from the Firkowitsh collection in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg.⁴⁶ The oldest manuscripts of which all folios are

40 MS Istanbul, Topkapi Palace Museum Library, Islami 101 (12th century); MS Sassoon 735 (1167).

41 MSS Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Firk. Sam IIA 045 (1182); Firk. Sam IIA 046 (1194); Firk. Sam IIA 049 (1234); Firk. Sam IIA 057 (1176); Firk. Sam IIA 070 (1232); MS Cincinatti Hebrew Union College Sam. 61 (1145).

42 E.g., see the above remarks (p. 10–11) with regard to MS Nablus, Synagogue 6.

43 In R. Pummer's description of the manuscript, the year "1125" appears, but it is obviously a typographical error ("The Samaritan Manuscripts of the Chester Beatty Library," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 68 [1979]: 66–75, here: 67).

44 Since most of the Samaritan manuscripts are codices, many of them are damaged in the first chapters of Genesis (the first folios of the original codices) and in the last chapters of Deuteronomy (the last folios of the codices).

45 See Pummer, "The Samaritan Manuscripts" (see n. 37), 66.

46 See above, n. 41. The oldest dated manuscript known to me, MS. St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Firk. Sam. IIA 057, is dated by its *tashqil* (that is, a special Samaritan type of an embedded scribal colophon) to the year 1176. However, the preserved text starts only with Gen 19:35 and ends already in Deut 26:19. Moreover, only 63 pages have survived, approximately not more than a quarter of the manuscript's presumed original length, and all of the pages are heavily damaged. The situation is similar with respect to MSS St. Petersburg NLR Firk. Sam. IIA 045 (1182) and Sam. IIA 046 (1194). Another important old manuscript, which might conceivably be considered as the main text of a diplomatic edition of the whole SP, is Cambridge Add. 1846, the Genesis section of which formed the main text of Girón Blanc's edition (see above, n.

preserved date more than a century later than MS Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751.⁴⁷

Second, the comparison of MS Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751 with the other manuscripts used in the present edition (that is, the surviving manuscripts which were copied in the period from the 12th–14th century C.E.) demonstrates that Ms. Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751 is a very carefully written manuscript, which follows high scribal standards. The ruling of each of the pages is uniformly implemented and consistently adhered to by the writing, and the manuscript shows very few erasures and scribal corrections (which are quite common in many other Samaritan manuscripts).

Third, the manuscript is in an excellent state of preservation. None of the pages is damaged to the extent of illegibility, and even punctuation, vocalization⁴⁸ and text-critical signs, which in many manuscripts are very difficult to discern due to their relatively minor size and a less favorable state of preservation, can usually be read without any difficulty (see figure 2).⁴⁹

In sum, the choice of MS Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751 as the main text of a diplomatic edition of the SP is without real alternative, according to our current state of knowledge.

For practical reasons, the text of the SP and the variants will not be printed in Samaritan Hebrew script, but in Hebrew square script, as the latter is much more generally known. A problem, however, is that the Samaritan script besides the consonants contains a relatively large number of additional signs, that is, punctuation signs, vowel signs, and text-critical signs. Thus, a new font was created for the edition, by the Israeli font designer Nadav Ezra, comprising the consonants in Hebrew square script, on the one hand, and the additional signs of the Samaritan script in their

24). There are, however, severe problems with employing this manuscript as the main text of a diplomatic edition. First, the manuscript bears no date, and the date usually accepted (12th century, see above n. 25) is tentative and stands only on paleographic grounds. Second, the first and the last pages of the codex are missing, and the manuscript survives only from Gen 11:14 through Deut 33:1. However, even the surviving parts are often damaged, sometimes only fragmentarily preserved, and in many cases difficult to decipher.

47 The oldest of these fully preserved manuscripts, as far as I know, is a manuscript written by Pinhas b. Joseph b. Netan'el in 1336/37, kept in the Samaritan synagogue in Nablus (= MS Nablus, Synagogue A). Similarly old is MS London British Library Or. 6461, written in 1339/40.

48 Pummer's claim ("The Samaritan Manuscripts" [see n. 37], 67) that the manuscript does not contain vocalization signs is obviously incorrect.

49 By contrast, MS Nablus Synagogue 6, the text of which is the currently most widely used text of the SP, is barely legible in many passages (see figure 1).

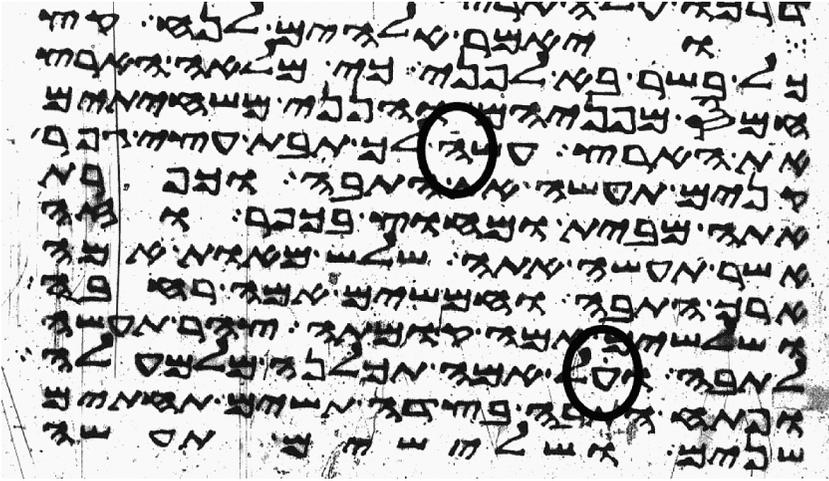


Figure 2: MS Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751. The picture shows the passage Gen 6:13–16 with text-critical signs in Gen 6:14 (לך חבת עצי נפר) and Gen 6:16 (ועל (אמה תכלנה)), which are legible without any difficulty.

original shape, slightly adapted graphically to fit the consonants of the square script, on the other (see figure 3).

The edition consists of the main text and of six apparatuses, not all of which appear on every page of the edition, depending on the manuscript evidence. The *main text* is provided according to MS Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751, recording the consonantal framework, paragraphing, punctuation, vowels, and the text-critical signs. The few corrections found in that manuscript, all of which seem to have been carried out by the scribe himself, are not indicated in the main text, but in apparatus II (see

Punctuation signs:

א • ב / ג " ד ׳ ה ״ ו ׳ ז ׳ ח ׳ ט ׳ י - ׳ כ - :
 ל ז מ • נ • ס • • ע : פ • ץ • ק • ר ז ש : ת ׳

Vowel signs and Text-critical signs:

אָ בֹּ גֹ דְ הֹ וָ זֵ הֵ טֵ לֵ כֵ לֵ מֵ נֵ סֵ עֵ פֵ צֵ קֵ רֵ שֵ תֵ אֵ

Figure 3: The Font "FbFrankRuehlShomroni"

below). Positioned directly below the main text on every page of the edition, *apparatus I* provides a list of the manuscripts which are extant for the respective passages, including an indication of exactly where the surviving passages of a given manuscript start (abbreviation: “inc.”) or end (“exp.”). For Genesis, 26 manuscripts will be included in the edition.

Apparatus II (abbreviation: “var. mss.”) lists the variants within the consonantal framework, including indications of corrections or additions by secondary or later hands, erasures, etc.⁵⁰ The importance of this apparatus lies especially in the fact that no canonized written form of the SP exists in the sense it does in the Masoretic tradition. While the latter is characterized by the meticulous attention of the copyist to every detail of the written surface, Samaritan scribes have been allowed much more freedom as long as they remain within the constraints of the orally transmitted reading tradition. “The Samaritan text [sc. of the Torah] differs from the Jewish text in the manner of its transmission. In general, the Jewish text is scrutinized and handed down with great accuracy in all of its signs. Every single case of plene or defective spelling is counted. The Samaritan text is different: The hundreds of manuscripts which we know of display many variations in spelling, since the Samaritan transmission is not so much focused on the biblical saying [Deut 31:19] כתבו לכם [‘write for yourselves’], but on בניהם שימו בפיהם ולמדו את בני ישראל [‘teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips’]. Therefore, although there are differences in spelling in the manuscripts [...], the reading is always the same.”⁵¹

Thus, the scribal transmission of the SP is much more diverse than that of the MT. Variants recorded in this apparatus often concern spelling, but some of them involve differences on level of words, too. For example,⁵² in Gen 18:2, the main text (= MS Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751) reads אנשיים. MS P² (= MS Paris Bibliothèque Nationale Sam. 2), however, reads אנשיים, the same as MSS L⁶ and Li (= MS London British Library Or. 6461 and MS Leipzig Universitätsbibliothek Vollers 1120). The latter two manuscripts, have, however, a small horizontal stroke above the space between ן and ש, that is, a text-critical sign, indicating that the copyist knew a tradition with an additional sign between the two letters. In the

50 However, the edition consistently disregards folios lost from the original, which have been restored by later Samaritan copyists, usually on paper and very carelessly.

51 Thus, Z. Ben Hayyim in his preface to the synoptic edition of the Samaritan and Masoretic version of the Torah, *Jewish version / Samaritan Version of the Pentateuch with Particular Stress on the Differences between Both Texts* (ed. A. Tsedaka and R. Tsedaka; Tel Aviv: 1961–1965). The original quotation is in Hebrew and the translation is mine.

52 The examples given in this passages refer to the sample pages of the edition provided together with this article.

case of MS L⁶, a later hand even added a ך above the space between the two consonants. Thus, the variant אַנוּשִׁים – אַנוּשִׁים is well attested in the Samaritan manuscript tradition, and it can be analyzed on the levels of either spelling or content. Samaritan Hebrew discerns with regard to אַנוּשִׁים between the vocalization *ēnāšəm*, “men,” and the vocalization *ēnūšəm*, “divine messengers, angels,” and the latter can be written naturally as plene אַנוּשִׁים.

Apparatus III (“var. int.”) lists and explains those cases, in which the ancient translations of the SP, that is, the Samaritan Targum and the Samaritan Arabic translation of the Pentateuch seem to attest a Hebrew *Vorlage* that was different from the Hebrew text as known from MS Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751. Each apparatus reference is given in the original version, that is, in Aramaic or Arabic, followed by the reconstruction of the supposed Hebrew *Vorlage* of this translation. For example, in Gen 18:19 the Hebrew text reads בניי “his sons,” but MS A of the Samaritan Targum reads ברה, which possibly goes back to Hebrew בני “his son.” In some cases, a reading recorded in this apparatus, that is, a variant reading emerging from the reconstructed Hebrew *Vorlage* of one of the Samaritan ancient translations, has a counterpart in the Samaritan Hebrew manuscript tradition, referred to in Apparatus II. In such cases, a cross reference directs the reader to the evidence recorded in the other apparatus.

Apparatus IV (“par. ext.”) provides parallels between the Hebrew Samaritan text and textual witnesses outside the Masoretic tradition, especially from the Septuagint and the Qumran manuscripts. These parallels are recorded in cases in which the MT differs from the SP. For example, in Gen 18:5, the MT reads אחר תעברי “after that you may pass on.” The Samaritan text has an additional “and,” reading ויאחר, and the presence of the copulative is supported by the Septuagint (καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο).

Apparatus V (“vocal.”) lists all instances of vowel and text-critical signs found in the manuscripts of the SP covered by our edition. This apparatus is thus not a comparative one. It does not provide variants, but is rather cumulative. That is, it records the entire evidence of vowel and text-critical signs found in the manuscripts covered by the apparatus, regardless of the reading evidence found in the main text (compare the similar use of a cumulative apparatus in von Gall’s edition). The reason for choosing a cumulative apparatus is that the use of vowel and text-critical signs within the Samaritan tradition is rather sparse and does not follow any systematic rules. Moreover, it even varies within one manuscript or between different

manuscripts of one and the same scribe,⁵³ since the use of vowel signs seems still to have been in its formative period at the time when the manuscripts employed by the edition were written. As already mentioned, the vowel and text-critical signs are printed in the graphic shape in which they appear in the manuscripts. A problem connected to this apparatus is that the use of vowel signs in the Samaritan tradition has never been the subject of comprehensive research. Therefore, the number of different signs, their graphic shape and development, and their exact function are not entirely clear. Moreover, the fact that Samaritan scribes made use of a text-critical sign,⁵⁴ indicating concurrent readings (unique to the Samaritan tradition), was not known at all before the present edition began and was one of the first insights gained from the data collected in the course of its preparation.

Apparatus VI (“punct.”) is devoted to punctuation and lists all variants gained from the manuscripts covered by the edition. The importance in recording this evidence lies especially in the field of paragraphing and syntax. As in the case of vowel signs, the graphic variety of punctuation is considerable, and no comprehensive research was devoted to those signs. In contrast with the use of vowel and text-critical signs, Samaritan scribes used punctuation quite abundantly which, together with the fact that there have been no consistent rules for using the punctuation signs, means that apparatus VI is (often by far) the largest of the apparatuses.

Aside from the main text and the apparatuses, a further feature of the new *editio maior* has to be mentioned. In the inner margins of the main text, information from the Samaritan reading is supplied in cases where the consonantal framework of the main text is ambiguous, that is, in cases where it can be read in different ways and the traditional Samaritan vocalization differs from that preserved in the MT. For example, in Gen 18:2 the consonants נַעֲבֹדִים are read *niṣṣābīm* (that is, as a *Niphāl* participle) in the MT, while the Samaritan reading tradition has *nēṣībəm*, that is, a *Qal* participle. To let the reader know that the Samaritans vocalize the consonants in a different way from the Masoretic vocalization, the Samaritan reading is given both in phonetic transcription (according to

53 Such a comparison is especially possible with regard to the manuscripts copied by the famous and prolific Samaritan scribe Abi Berakata (late 12th–early 13th century). The present edition covers four of his manuscripts, among them the Dublin manuscript which according to the *Tashqil* was the 50th Torah written by Abi Berakata and provides the main text of the present edition. The four manuscripts are the following: Manchester John Rylands Library Sam 1 (1211), Jerusalem National Library Sam. 2° 6 = Sassoon 402 (1215/16), Cambridge University Library Add. 714 (1219/20), Dublin Chester Beatty Library 751 (1225/26).

54 See above (*Apparatus II*) with respect to Gen 18:2 אַנְיִשִּׁים.

Ben-Hayyim's edition of the reading tradition⁵⁵) and in the Masoretic equivalent, that is, נִצְבִיִּים, the latter provided in order to make the Samaritan reading, with its different dialect of Hebrew, more easily comprehensible for readers used to Masoretic Hebrew.

For the preparation of our edition, we use "Classical Text Editor," a software program specifically designed for creating scientific editions. The project is already well advanced. Currently (as of November 2012), the edition of Genesis is at the stage of proof reading. It may be mentioned that Genesis is probably the most difficult of the five Pentateuchal books, especially due to the length of the text, the poor and often fragmentary state of preservation of most manuscripts, and the existence of many substantial differences between the main witnesses of the book, not a few of which imply parallels between the SP and Qumran manuscripts or between the SP and the LXX. The result is an assortment of complex information to be registered in Apparatus IV (see above). With respect to the edition of Exodus, the main text is ready and the apparatuses devoted to the Samaritan manuscript tradition, that is, Apparatuses II, V, and VI, already contain the variants of two additional manuscripts. The book of Leviticus is at an advanced stage, with Apparatuses II, V, and VI complete and the material for the other apparatuses already digitalized. Therefore, it does not seem unrealistic to hope that the first volume of our critical *editio maior* of the SP will be published in 2013.

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⁵⁵ See above, n. 32.

Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel

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