

found in the opposition, and so suffered the ill-treatment recorded. *Arqali* is the emperor Heraclius, who reconquered Syria in 622. With this fragment of information our knowledge of the Roman dominion over the Samaritans comes to an end.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE SAMARITANS UNDER ISLAM.

For this period of Samaritan history we have as native sources the *Chronicle Neubauer*, the supplements to *Abu'l Fath*, and the *Chronicle Adler*. The first-named chronicle contains for the most part genealogical material offering but few connections with general history and chronology. The supplements to *Abu'l Fath* bring the history down only as far as the Xth Century.<sup>1</sup> The *Chronicle Adler*, while containing a fairly good skeleton of imperial history, which it has borrowed from Arabic historians, gives, apart from the matter found in the earlier chronicles and certain details concerning some personalities, almost no independent historical information until the XVIIth Century. The references in the Muslim historians are very few, giving valuable notes on the Samaritan religion, but throwing almost no light on their secular history. For the one period when the western world might have left some record of this Palestinian sect, namely the age of the Crusades, we find that the Christian chronicles absolutely ignore the subject of our study. One or two references sum up the information to be derived from mediæval Judaism. With the re-discovery of the Samaritans by Scaliger at the

<sup>1</sup> See Vilmar, pp. v, lxxxv, and in general, below, Chapter XIV, § 11. A supplement common to Vilmar's codices A and C brings down the history, although in many cases with nothing more than the names of the caliphs, to Harun ar-Rashid, while A contains a list of the high-priests to 1853. A second supplement to C pursues the history to the end of the reign of the caliph Radhi, A. D. 940, but the text of this portion is so corrupt that the editor gives only a synopsis of its contents, p. lxxx et seq.

end of the XVIth Century, they emerge again into contemporary notice, and their Epistles and then the inquiries and actual visits of occidental scholars acquaint us more and more with their later history, until at last Petermann's famous sojourn amidst the declining sect in 1853 finally opened up a thorough acquaintance with them on the part of the western world. But in these last days we can hardly speak of a history in connection with that almost petrified fragment of ancient religion. In the following brief sketch I confine myself to the data concerning the Samaritans, without attempting a survey of the history of Palestine.

Abu'l Fath dramatically concludes his *Chronicle* with a story, belonging to a wide cycle of Muslim legend,<sup>2</sup> narrating how three astrologers, a Jew, a Christian, and a Samaritan — a certain Zohar Sarmasa — became sensible through their art of the passing of the world-empire into Mohammed's hands. They simultaneously visited him, and the Samaritan was able to show how his sacred books foretold the new prophet. The Jew and the Christian perverted to the new faith, but the Samaritan remained faithful, and Mohammed finally granted him a charter bestowing complete immunity in faith and possessions upon the Samaritans,<sup>3</sup> a legend which is immediately belied by the subsequent history. The Samaritans received for their obstinate rejection of Islam the same bitter persecutions that befell the Jews, and we can hardly doubt that the major part of the sect fell away under the iron hand and the attractive advantages of the new faith, so that the sect was gradually reduced to a few small fragments scattered over Syria and Egypt.

With the Muslim victory at Yarmuth, 634, the fate of Palestine was settled, and the Arabic historians include

<sup>2</sup> See Lidzbarski, *De prophetis quæ dicuntur legendis Arabicis*.

<sup>3</sup> *Abu'l Fath*, 172; *Chron. Neub.*, 443; *Chron. Adler*, 76.

Nablus among the places which soon thereafter fell to the conquerors.<sup>4</sup> Upon this conquest, so the *Chronicle Abu'l Fath* states, the people of the seaboard towns, Cæsarea, Arsuf, Maiumas (the port of Gaza), Joppa, Lydda, Ashkelon, and Gaza, deposited their goods with the highpriest and "fled to the east and never returned hither." This is evidently an authentic account of the flight of the wealthy Samaritans of the coast towns before the certain advance of the Muslims. Where the fugitives found refuge in the east we cannot surmise, but it is to be remembered that they would have had no hope of a welcome in the Byzantine empire which had so bitterly persecuted the sect. The same source also gives an account of the capture of Cæsarea, which fell at last in 640; the Samaritan community in that city must have sadly suffered from the vengeance of the conquerors.

No memories of the age of the Umayyad caliphs are preserved except that of the great earthquake in Marwan II.'s reign.<sup>5</sup> The bloody wars between this dynasty and the Abbasides are noted, and under Mansur (754-775), the second of the new dynasty, occurred the destruction by order of the local governor, Abd al-Wahhab Abu Shindi, of the tomb of Zeno upon Gerizim.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently an assault made by certain people upon the Christian convent in the same locality, involving the murder of the monks, brought upon the Samaritans the wrath of the governor, who put to death the head man of the Samaritans.<sup>7</sup> Under the next caliph Mahdi there was taken a census of the Samaritan community, a function which had been long omitted.<sup>8</sup> The *Chronicle Abu'l Fath* proceeds to give a long account of the various calamities which, in consequence of the civil

<sup>4</sup> Abu'l Fida, *Annales*, ed. Adler, i, 229.

<sup>5</sup> *Abu'l Fath*, 181; *Chron. Adler*, 84 (cf. editor's note).

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> *Abu'l Fath*, 181; *Chron. Adler*, 85.

<sup>8</sup> *Abu'l Fath*, 182.

war between Hadi and Harun ar-Rashid (786) afflicted the Samaritans, including a sample of an unnatural crime and a fearful dearth of provisions.<sup>9</sup> But at last God averted his wrath, all the natural disorders, regarded by the chronicler as due to his people's sin, were abated, these happy times coming in under the caliphate of Harun ar-Rashid.<sup>10</sup>

Our authority for the period following this caliph is, as noted above, the supplement peculiar to the codex C of *Abu'l Fath*, as epitomized by Vilmar.<sup>11</sup> The sum of the chronicle is as follows. The wrath of the Abbaside caliphs fell upon all who dissented from Islam, and the Samaritans were so cruelly affected that a great part of them went into exile, while others apostatized. In the war that followed Harun's death (809), between his sons, Palestinian rebels destroyed the Samaritan towns Zaita, Salem, and Arsuf, and variously oppressed the sect. After the death of Amin, the first of the brothers, a governor of Nablus was killed by the Muslims for showing favor to the Samaritans. The land was filled with corpses; a daughter of the highpriest committed fornication, but condemnation was not passed upon her. But at last with the restoration of the divine favor the Samaritans resumed their sacred rites upon Gerizim. Under the caliph Maamun (813-833), his famous general Abdallah ibn Tahir, the governor of Mesopotamia and Syria, brought quiet to the distressed land and gave the Samaritans a breathing space. With Abdallah's departure into Egypt the rebel Ibn Farasa cruelly attempted to force the Samaritans into Islam, and many submitted; at last the caliph suppressed the rebellion. Finally Maamun inaugurated the policy of destroying the castles through the land to prevent them from falling into the hands of rebels, and amongst them the fort constructed

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>11</sup> P. lxxx.

by Zeno on Gerizim. The caliph himself oppressed the land with heavy imposts which were cruelly exacted by his governor. In the reign of the succeeding caliph, Mutasim, heretical sects of Islam seized and destroyed Nablus, and burnt the synagogues of the Samaritans and Dositheans. The rebels were finally overwhelmed, but the Samaritans were brought to great straits under the heavy imposts, although none of the people yielded to apostasy. It is also recorded that two of the Samaritan chiefs rebuilt the synagogue which had been destroyed in the wars. At the end of the same caliphate a rebel, Abu Harb (who also captured Jerusalem), took Nablus and scattered the inhabitants, the chief priest being wounded and transported to Hebron where he died. The next caliph Wathik finally allayed the rebellion, and the Samaritans returned to their abodes. But both this monarch and his brother and successor Mutawakkil were so bitterly opposed to all dissenters, that the sufferings of the Samaritans in no wise decreased; under the second of these despots the sacred tomb of a former highpriest Nathanael was destroyed, the law regulating the color of the garments worn in the different religions was introduced, and the Samaritans were prohibited from exercising the offices of their religion.<sup>12</sup> After this Yusuf ibn Dasi, "sultan of Palestine," is recorded as allowing the Samaritans access to Gerizim but forbidding it to the Dositheans. But there followed storms of most frightful evils, and many abandoned their native religion.<sup>13</sup> The last caliph named is Radhi, 934-940, who was helpless to restrain the warring governors of Palestine; a rebel, Abu Tafach, cruelly oppressed the Samaritans. With Radhi's reign the real power passed into the hands of the "Amir of Amirs," or mayor-of-the-palace, and the Abbaside power

<sup>12</sup> This action is parallel to the destruction by the same monarch of the newly built Christian churches in Bagdad.

<sup>13</sup> The reference may be to the Carmathian revolt, which began in the last quarter of the IXth Century.

was at end. Such is the conclusion of the last supplement to Codex C of *Abu'l Fath*.

It is evident that some authentic notes have been preserved by this supplement. But it is an unprofitable story except for the almost unintermittent picture it gives of the misfortunes of the miserable sect, persecuted by both orthodox and heretical parties of Islam, and harried by the wars which swept over the debatable land of Palestine.

To take up such scanty data of the Samaritan chronicles as we possess after the failure of the supplements to *Abu'l Fath*, we find some references to the favor shown the Samaritans by the Fatimide caliphs of Egypt, Muizz and Aziz, the former of whom conquered Syria in 970, while the latter (975-996) is said to have shown distinguished honor to a Samaritan ha-Takwi b. Isaac, who was his governor of Palestine, with his seat at Sepphoris.<sup>14</sup> Under the next Fatimide caliph, that magnificent impostor Hakim (996-1020), without doubt the Samaritans suffered under the earlier drastic edicts which renewed the ancient laws against the Christians and Samaritans; but later, we may suppose, the sect enjoyed the liberal terms of the remission of his former severity against dissenters. Juynboll thinks that there are numerous traces of Samaritan polemic against the sect of the Druzes.<sup>15</sup> Shortly after this reign the *Chronicle Neubauer* (l. c.) mentions a certain Ab-Chasdiya, a Samaritan, who was an official "inquisitor of all Palestine," with headquarters first at Cæsarea and then at Acco.

For the age of the Crusades, when East and West came to know each other once more, we have most meagre information concerning the Samaritans. Almost all that the

<sup>14</sup> *Chron. Neub.*, 446; *Chron. Adler*, 92. Ha-Takwi's son also served the same monarch in a like capacity at Ramle, *Chron. Neub.*, 448; *Chron. Adler*, 93.

<sup>15</sup> Juynboll, *Lib. Jos.*, 117, with references to de Sacy's studies of the Druzes. *Chron. Neub.*, p. 447, mentions the same Hakim along with an obscure reference to the fate of a governor he sent to rule Palestine.

*Chronicle Adler* has to say (p. 94 ff) concerning the invasion of the Seljuk Turks and the holy wars which the Europeans waged for the recovery of Palestine, is drawn from foreign sources.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, the Crusaders, despite the fact that their armies went the length and breadth of the Holy Land and that for extensive terms of years their rule was established on its sacred soil, have left no record of the Samaritans. Nablus played an important part in the internal history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem; it was strongly fortified by the Franks, it became a sort of royal residence for the court, especially for the strong-minded women who troubled the Christian régime and found the oriental Naples a convenient locality for their factions.<sup>17</sup> In 1120 a great ecclesiastical council was held at Nablus with the hopeless purpose of reforming the Crusaders.<sup>18</sup> But still there is no mention of the Samaritans, who, if they were noticed at all by the haughty Crusaders, were doubtless reckoned a sect of the Jews. It remains therefore for us only to note the part Nablus played or rather suffered in those troublous times; the chronicle of calamities will contribute to the explanation of the diminution in population and wealth of its ancient sect.

The first reference to Samaria in the Christian chronicles is to the effect that chieftains from the mountains of that land came in to the conquerors of Jerusalem, which fell in

<sup>16</sup> In the Epistle of 1808 the Samaritans record a tradition that 600 years before the Franks carried off with them the Samaritans of Ashkelon and Cæsarea (*N. et E.* 75). Some historical truth may be contained in this notice. It was this tradition which animated the pathetic inquiries of the sect after their coreligionists in Europe. In *Abu'l Fath*, 132, there is reference to a synagogue built by Baba Rabba which lasted until the dominion of the Franks—"God curse them!"

<sup>17</sup> The index to Röhrich, *Geschichte d. Königreichs Jerusalem*, s. v. "Neapolis," exhibits the intimate relations of Nablus with the Crusading kingdom. King Baldwin built a *turris Neapolitana* (*op. cit.*, 120), and later there is mention of two citadels.

<sup>18</sup> *William of Tyre*, xii, 13; the acts are published by Mansi, *Concil.* xxi, 261. It is generally denied that Neapolis became an episcopal see; but see Bargès, *Les Samaritains*, 94.

1099, bringing presents and inviting the invaders to take possession of their territory, an offer which was immediately accepted, as its conquest was already planned.<sup>19</sup> We may incline to the supposition that among these adherents to the new order were hardy Samaritans who welcomed the overthrow of Islam, now that centuries had cast into oblivion the ancient hatred for the Christians. In 1113 Nablus was laid waste by the Saracens.<sup>20</sup> In 1137 Baza-wash, a governor of Damascus, surprised and murdered almost all the citizens of Nablus.<sup>21</sup> This event must be identified with one recorded in the Samaritan chronicles,<sup>22</sup> according to which in or before 1137 (as can be calculated from the terms of the highpriests) a certain Bazuga Zeidna (variants exist) took 500 Samaritans captive at Shechem and transported them to Damascus, whence they were redeemed by a generous Samaritan citizen of Acco, and so returned to Gaza.

The Samaritan town, with all its holy places and relics so sacred to the Christians, reverted to Muslim rule under Saladin. In 1184, after the latter's withdrawal from Kerak, it was taken and ravaged by him, with the exception of its two citadels.<sup>23</sup> After the fateful battle of Hattin in 1187, Nablus was again wasted by Saladin's troops.<sup>24</sup> It remained in Muslim hands during the brief triumph of Frederick II. in the Holy Land (1229).<sup>25</sup> In 1242 the

<sup>19</sup> William of Tyre, ix, 20; Wilken, *Geschichte d. Kreuzzüge*, ii, 36. According to Sybel, *Geschichte d. ersten Kreuzzuges*, 443, Nablus was one of the few cities which composed Godfrey's actual kingdom. William of Tyre is quoted by Robinson as describing Neapolis as "urbem opulentam."

<sup>20</sup> Foulcher, c. xli (in Guizot, *Collections des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*, xvii, 41); Wilken, *op. cit.* 374.

<sup>21</sup> William of Tyre, xiv, 27; Röhricht, *op. cit.* 205.

<sup>22</sup> *Chron. Neub.*, 448; *Chron. Adler*, 95.

<sup>23</sup> Baha ad-Din, *Saladini vita*, c. xxviii; Abu'l Fida, *ad an. H.*, 580. The Crusading chronicles seem to deny that the city was injured, Röhricht, *op. cit.* 409.

<sup>24</sup> Baha ad-Din, c. xxxiv; Abu'l Fida, *ad an. H.* 583.

<sup>25</sup> Röhricht, *op. cit.* 786.

city was taken by the Christians, who burnt the city and killed all Muslims who would not pervert to the faith of Christ.<sup>26</sup> In 1244 upon the frightful invasion of the Khwarezmians (Khwarizmians) the city was taken by the Egyptian allies of the invaders after the battle of Gaza.<sup>27</sup> With this event we may equate the notice of the Samaritan chronicles to the effect that in the pontificate of the priest who died in 1253, an insolent people came from the east, took the land of Canaan, killed a great number of people at Shechem, and carried off many men, women and children, along with the heir to the priesthood, to Damascus, where they were redeemed by their coreligionists in that city, although only a small number actually returned.<sup>28</sup> Or, disregarding the Samaritan dates, the invasion may be identified with that of Hulagu's Mongols in 1259, when Nablus fell into the hands of those hordes.<sup>29</sup>

We now come to the period of the triumph of the Egyptian Mamluks in Syria, which, beginning with the overthrow of the Mongol hordes at En-Jalut in 1260, reached its zenith in the destruction of the Christian power throughout Syria. Baibars, the fifth Mamluk Sultan (1260-1277), waged a relentless war of many campaigns against the Christians of the Holy Land, and destroyed their sacred places. Along with Nazareth and Tabor, Shechem also fell under his fanatical fury, and we learn of his deportation of the Christian citizens of the city to Damascus in 1261.<sup>30</sup> Under him and his successors the land was frightfully ravaged, brigands were rampant, and all social conditions were destroyed.<sup>31</sup> One after another the Christian strong-

<sup>26</sup> Wilken, *op. cit.* vi, 626; Röhricht, *op. cit.* 854 (on Makrizi's authority).

<sup>27</sup> Wilken, *op. cit.* vi, 646; Röhricht, *op. cit.* 866 (depending upon Makrizi); A. Müller, *Der Islam*, ii, 166ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Chron. Neub.* 451; *Chron. Adler*, 99.

<sup>29</sup> Röhricht, *op. cit.* 910; so Adler in his note.

<sup>30</sup> Röhricht, *op. cit.* 917.

<sup>31</sup> Wilken, *op. cit.* vii, 461, 464.

holds of Cæsarea, Arsuf, Ramle, Joppa, Antioch, fell to Baibars; his great successor, Kalaun, took Tripolis in 1289, and the crowning triumph was gained by the fall of Acco to Ashraf (Khalil) in 1291; this overwhelming calamity for the Christians was followed up by the immediate submission of Beirut, Tyre, Sidon, indeed of all the Christian citadels. We have here to realize that these sieges, followed by awful massacres, and as in the case of Cæsarea, even by the destruction of the cities, involved the wealthy Samaritan colonies settled in them. Probably the original communities were annihilated, subsequent times of peace bringing back for commercial purposes the small colonies which we later find in those places. Only Damascus and Egypt were left as places offering security from the frightful anarchy of the age. The *Chronicle Adler* has some brief notes (p. 99) upon the conquests of these monarchs, naming Baibars, and referring to a sultan of Egypt, who took Antioch, Tripolis, Beirut—who would therefore be a composition of Kalaun and Ashraf. Then the Muslims, the chronicler proceeds to relate, came to Nablus, expelled the Christians and destroyed their churches. Further they took away from the Samaritans their venerable "Synagogue of the Field," the present Chizn Yakub, and demolished all their other edifices, so that the sect was greatly afflicted. No more special information concerning the fortunes of Nablus are preserved for the period of the Mamluk dominion in Egypt (to 1516), except that for the age of Othman I. (circa 1300) we read (*Chron. Adler*, 100), of a governor ("caliph") Yarok at Shechem, who was killed by his enemies, whereupon the Samaritans recovered their confiscated synagogue; but the Muslims soon reasserted themselves, and turned the sacred place into a mosque.

Before proceeding to the modern history of the Samaritans, we may observe here the information concerning them given by the mediæval Arabic historians and geographers.

The bulk of the longer sections upon the subject is devoted to legendary history of the sect drawn mostly from Jewish sources, although Makrizi seems to have followed the Samaritan legends; but the Arabs add nothing to our knowledge of the early history. Their notes on the religion of the Samaritans are valuable for purposes of chronology, but do not otherwise substantially enlarge our information; this material, with special reference to the Dosithean sect, is treated elsewhere.<sup>32</sup> In many cases the information seems to have been borrowed with indifferent care, and at times the sect is even ignored in the description of Nablus.

Yakubi (writing in 891) says that Nablus contains Arabs, foreigners and Samaritans.<sup>33</sup> The distinguished historian Masudi, writing in 943, says in his *Meadows of Gold*<sup>34</sup> that "the Samaritans inhabit the districts of Palestine and the Jordan, such as the well-known city —,"<sup>35</sup> which is between Ramle and Tiberias, and other places, and finally the city of Nablus; but the most part of them live in the latter city. They have a mountain called Tur-berik;<sup>36</sup> the Samaritans pray upon this mountain," etc. Istakhri writes (951)<sup>37</sup> that Nablus is the city of the Samaritans and they possess no other cities on the face of the earth. The source of his information is made clear in the next sentence—"the people of Jerusalem say so."<sup>38</sup> Al-Biruni (d.

<sup>32</sup> See Chap. XIII, § 1.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted by Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, 511. This work gives, pp. 511-514, full quotations from the Arabic geographers who treat of Nablus.

<sup>34</sup> See de Sacy, *Chrestomathie arabe*, i, 342.

<sup>35</sup> De Sacy gives two readings, b'âra, and b'âry, and translates "comme Ara." Can Gaza be intended?

<sup>36</sup> The Samaritan name for Gerizim, now called Jebel et-Tur, "the Mount of the Hill."

<sup>37</sup> Le Strange, *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Ibn Chaukal (978) repeats Istakhri, and Mukaddasi, although, or perhaps, because he was Jerusalem-born, ignores the Samaritans in his mention of Nablus. Also Ibn Batuta omits mention of the Samaritans, although he visited Nablus in 1326.

1048) says<sup>39</sup> that most of the Samaritans are found in Nablus, and that most of their synagogues are there.

In the XIIth Century Shahrastani (d. 1153), in his treatment of the Samaritans in his *Book of the Religions*,<sup>40</sup> says that they are people who inhabit al-Mukaddasi (i. e. the name of Jerusalem, which the Samaritans apparently stole), and some cities of Egypt. Idrisi (1154) repeats Istakhri.<sup>41</sup> Ali of Herat (1173) says<sup>42</sup> that the Samaritans are very numerous at Nablus. Yakut, writing in 1225,<sup>43</sup> notes that Nablus is inhabited by the Samaritans, who live in this place alone, and go elsewhere only for the purpose of trade or advantage. He also observes that they call their town *al-Quds* (cf. Shahrastani, above). Dimashki (circa 1300) gives an interesting account<sup>44</sup> of Nablus, its beauty and commerce, and describing the sacrifices of the Samaritans he says that "there are the two mountains, Jabal Zaita [the Mount of Olives], to which the Samaritans make their pilgrimage." Further he adds, "In no other city are there as many Samaritans as there are here, for in all the other cities of Palestine together there are not of the Samaritans a thousand souls." This is interesting testimony, coming from a Damascene writer, at a time when we know the Damascus colony existed. Finally Makrizi adds to the notice that most of the Samaritans live in Nablus, the information that they are also found in large numbers in the towns of Syria.<sup>45</sup>

To these Arabic notices is to be added the information gained by a few mediæval Jewish travellers. The first of these is the famous Benjamin of Tudela who visited Pales-

<sup>39</sup> Quoted by Makrizi; see de Sacy *op. cit.* 305.

<sup>40</sup> Cureton's text, i, 170; Haarbrücker's translation, i, 257. Abu'l Fida adds nothing to what he draws from Shahrastani.

<sup>41</sup> Le Strange, *l. c.* But in another place he refers to a Samaritan colony in the Red Sea; see below, p. 151.

<sup>42</sup> Le Strange, *l. c.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> De Sacy, *op. cit.* i, 304.

tine in 1163. He found at Cæsarea 200 Kuthim; "these are the Jews of Shomron, who are called Samaritans."<sup>46</sup> At Nablus, "where there are no Jews," the Samaritans number about one thousand.<sup>47</sup> At New Ashkelon the same traveller found 300 of the sect, and in Damascus 400, who, he remarks, live in peace with the Karaites there, numbering 100, although the two sects do not intermarry.<sup>48</sup>

An account of the Samaritans in Egypt is given by a Jew, Meshullam b. Menahem, who made a journey to Jerusalem in 1480.<sup>49</sup> According to this traveller he found in Egypt, presumably at Cairo, along with 800 Jewish and 100 Karaite families, 50 Samaritan families ("heads of houses"). He gives a notice of their worship on Gerizim, quite at second-hand, of course, observing that they are idolaters, and set up a golden dove on their holy mount. In Egypt they possessed a synagogue. The whole Israelitish community, he adds, is under the full jurisdiction of a Jewish rabbi. A few years later Obadiah of Bertinoro also found fifty Samaritan families at Cairo, employed in financial business and as agents for the government, so that the community was a rich one.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> I cite from M. N. Adler, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, in *JQR*, Oct. 1904, 134f.

<sup>47</sup> Such is the reading adopted by the editor just mentioned upon overwhelming authority of the MSS. The reading that has passed into current use is "one hundred." But this latter figure is much too small, when compared with the information from other contemporary sources, and the new reading relieves a considerable difficulty. Benjamin proceeds to give a brief, accurate account of the Samaritan ritual and practices, and notes their loss of the three gutturals, He, Cheth, Ayin, on which he allegorizes. The same dialecticism is noticed by Isaac Helo in his *Itinerary of Jerusalem*, 1334 (see Carmoly, *Itinéraires de la Terre Sainte*, 252), and also by Makrizi.

<sup>48</sup> *JQR* Jan. 1905, 297, 299.

<sup>49</sup> The pertinent portion of the MS, which is at Florence, is published by Heidenheim, *DVJ* iii, 354.

<sup>50</sup> Neubauer, *Zwei Briefe Obadiah's*, in *Jahrb. f.d. Geschichte d. Juden*, iii (1863), 198, 229, (referred to by Nutt, *Sam. Targ.* 27). This civil combination of Jews and Samaritans has its parallel in Shechem, where Petermann found that the Samaritan highpriest was the responsible chief of the combined communities; *Reisen*, i, 226.

We thus see that the mediæval notices of the Samaritans throw very little light upon their actual condition. In Benjamin of Tudela's day there were about 1000 of the sect in the mother-city, and he enumerates 700 more in other South-Syrian cities. About 1300 Dimashki estimates that there are not more than 1000 Samaritans in Palestine outside of Nablus. Of the number of the community in Egypt for the earlier part of the period, we have no information. We do not know when the colony in Damascus was established, but from 1137 on we learn of violent deportations thither which doubtless swelled the local community, while the literary activity of the Damascene Diaspora from the XIIth Century on is abundant evidence that the Samaritans shared in the prosperity of the city which Nureddin and Saladin raised to an imperial metropolis, and whose glories lasted until the time of Timurlane; in this disaster the Samaritans must have been equally involved, although the colony survived the disaster. Further, in the opulent trading towns of the coast small but commercially influential communities existed, which probably avoided all public display of their religion; but they prospered in worldly affairs, that recompense which fortune so often renders to the small and despised sect. There is every reason to believe that during these troublous times, when Palestine was harried by the wars of the Crusades and by the many invasions which depopulated the land, the settlements of the Diaspora, and especially that at Damascus, fostered in every way the mother community, which otherwise would have perished. We find the direct line of the highpriestly family often living in Damascus. In one case, the heir to the pontificate came up from Damascus to assume his dignity (1205); in

Note may be made here of an early but only recently published Arabic work—that of Ibn Chazm of Spain (994-1064), who wrote *On Jewish Sects*, and treats of the Samaritans. But he gives no data of importance except that "the Samaritans may not go out of Palestine." See Poznanski, *JQR* xvi, 765.

another (1538), a large number of Samaritans returned from Damascus conducting to Nablus the highpriest and his son; and we even find the highpriest remaining in the Syrian capital (1584).<sup>51</sup>

To carry on our story into modern times we find that the Samaritan Chronicles contribute, outside of family annals, nothing to our knowledge of the history between the beginning of the XIVth Century and the XVIIth Century. But in 1623-4 occurred an ominous event in the ecclesiastical life of the sect. The direct succession from Aaron failed, and since that time priests of the tribe of Levi, of the house of Uzziel son of Kohath, have officiated at the sacred rites.<sup>52</sup> The correspondence with the Europeans, which began in 1590, reveals no political details of the sect, except their persecution by the "Ishmaelites" and their poverty, for which they persistently ask the alms of their coreligionists in Europe.

For the first notice of Ottoman rule over the Samaritans we learn of oppressions and confiscations of lands, especially of springs, occurring in the reign of Mohammed IV. (1648-1687).<sup>53</sup> In the following century, under Machmud I. (1730-1754), the Samaritans purchased from the Muslims a piece of ground on Gerizim for their sacred rites;<sup>54</sup> we may assume that this was one incident in the long history

<sup>51</sup> *Chron. Neub.* 451, 465, 454.

<sup>52</sup> The exact date is given by *Chron. Neub.* 465, as A. H. 1033. From the Epistles to Scaliger we know that the Aaronic line still existed in 1590. The failure of the succession is indirectly admitted in the Epistle of 1672 (de Sacy, *N. et E.* 179), and directly in the Epistle of 1675 (of which only a fragment is preserved), wherein it is prayed that the Europeans send them a priest of the race of Phineas (*N. et E.* 219). But this fact has been conveniently obliterated in the memory of the modern Samaritans; the Levitical priest who acknowledged his descent from Uzziel to de Sacy in 1820 (*N. et E.* 152), gave a full Aaronic pedigree for himself in his Arabic memorial to the French government in 1842 (Bargès, *Les Samaritains*, 73).

<sup>53</sup> *Chron. Adler*, 106.

<sup>54</sup> *Op. cit.* 108.

of the attempts of the sect to retain its holy ground and of their masters to keep them out of it or to make them pay for the privilege, which in a few years would be annulled, whereupon the struggle began again. In this case the purchase is said to have been made by a benevolent member of the community, and doubtless the persistence of the sect into modern times is directly due to the charm of gold, which the Samaritans, few as they were, knew how to amass. A local edict of 1772 enforced several restrictive and shameful regulations against the sect.<sup>55</sup>

It is pitiful to record the fact that the XIXth Century brought upon the Samaritans troubles, along with the threat of violent extinction, such as they had not experienced since the wars of the Crusaders and the Mamluks. We learn that for 25 years preceding 1810 the sect was restrained from its worship on the holy mount,<sup>56</sup> but it was able to renew its sacred functions by 1820.<sup>57</sup> For this period we have the graphic memoir of the Samaritan refugee, Jacob esh-Shelaby,<sup>58</sup> who records in detail the wretched plight of the Samaritans. Because of the notoriously violent character of the Muslim population of Nablus, it has been the custom of the Ottoman government to appoint as Mutesellim or governor only a native Arab, who is nominated from one of four rival families. In the bloody struggles which now took place among these factions the Samaritans were between the upper and nether millstone, and their sorry condition was aggravated by the Syrian wars of Mohammed Ali of Egypt, with or against whom the rival parties took sides. That remarkable man's son and general, Ibrahim, took Nablus by the sword in 1832, but found it impossible to repress the defiant Arabs. According to the *Chronicle Adler*, the Samaritans shared in the relief which Egyptian rule

<sup>55</sup> Mills, *Nablus*, 279.

<sup>56</sup> *N. et E.* 126.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 157, 161.

<sup>58</sup> In Rogers, *Notices of the Modern Samaritans*, 1855.



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brought to the inhabitants of Syria, a statement corroborated by Shelaby's notice that in 1832 the sect again renewed its pilgrimage to Gerizim. In 1841 a conspiracy was formed to murder all the Samaritans; their enemies were not appeased with the gift of the Samaritan wealth, and Shelaby gives credit to the chief rabbi of the Jewish community in Jerusalem for issuing a certificate that "the Samaritan people is a branch of the Children of Israel, who acknowledge the truth of the Tora." This generous testimonial satisfied the fanatical Muslims, because it showed that the Samaritans had a right to Islam's protection extended to the "Peoples of the Book."<sup>59</sup> The persecutions induced the community to address an appeal in 1842 to the French government, composed in a Hebrew and an Arabic document; but for purposes of state, Louis Philippe did not even publish the documents, and they were not brought to light until some years later.<sup>60</sup> According to Bargès, who visited Nablus in 1853, the Samaritans said they had been restrained from Gerizim for 80 years; this is of course an exaggeration, though it represented the truth for recent years. Petermann, who visited the Samaritans in the same year, did not receive any such information, and himself attended the Passover on Gerizim. In 1854 the British government was induced by an appeal of the Samaritans to make representations on their behalf to the Porte, and the bearer of this document, the Jacob above-mentioned, brought with him also an appeal to the British public, the result of which was the arousing of the interest of such men as the Earl of Shaftesbury and the collection of funds for the oppressed sect. Through the friendly notice of European governments, especially of England and its consuls at Jerusalem, the Samaritans have been preserved from the

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>60</sup> The documents were published in *Les annales de philosophie chrétienne*, 1853, and the Hebrew document by Bargès, *op. cit.* 64; cf. p. 37.

violent annihilation that threatened them. But the wealth they possessed is gone, and they have become a community of alms-seekers, forced to sell their sacred manuscripts for subsistence.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> For the bloody commotions which vexed Palestine in the last century, see Macalister and Masterman, *A History of the Doings of the Fellahin*, etc., *PEFQS* 1905, Oct. *et seq.* This work also frequently refers to Finn, *Stirring Times*, which throws much light upon the local troubles.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMARITANS.

#### § I. THE SAMARITANS AT HOME.<sup>1</sup>

In Chapter II. we observed that the land of Samaria as a geographical entity was identical with the Highlands of Ephraim. It is bounded on the north by the valley of Esdraelon, to which also belongs the plain of Dothan, with its deep inset into the hill-country. On the east is the Ghor, or valley of the Jordan, the plain of Beth-shean having been distinguished from the land of Ephraim politically as well as geographically from earliest times.<sup>2</sup> On the west the line of the lowlands marked the political boundary, the Phœnicians and Philistines being in possession of the coast, while Mount Carmel, though a spur of the Samaritan hill-country, was cut off politically by the highways which crossed it. Only on the south was there an uncertain border. There a long neck of highland connects Mount Ephraim with Mount Juda, cleft on either side by deep wadies, but withal presenting no one strategic line of boundary. G. A. Smith has graphically discussed this debatable frontier,<sup>3</sup> and points

<sup>1</sup> See Juynboll, *Hist. Sam.* 37; Neubauer, *La géographie du Talmud*, 1868, p. 168; Schürer, *GJV*, §§ 23, 24; E. Meyer, *Entstehung des Judenthums*, 1896, p. 105; Smith, *HG* cc. xii, xvii; Hölscher, *Palästina in der persischen und hellenistischen Zeit*, 1903; Conder, *Samaritan Topography*, *PEFQS* 1876, p. 182 (with extensive treatment of the geographical references in the *Book of Joshua* and the *Chronicle* Neubauer).

<sup>2</sup> See *1 Sam.* 31, 10. It received a Scythian colony in the VIIth Century, and later became a member of the Decapolis.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* c. xiii.