CHAPTER FIVE

MOSES AS KING AND PROPHET
IN SAMARITAN SOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Importance of the Samaritan sources

The figure of Moses dominates Samaritan religious literature to an extent scarcely equalled in any circle of Jewish tradition, with the possible exception of Philo. For this reason alone the Samaritan sources demand attention in the present investigation, but their significance is heightened by the fact that the Samaritan traditions, while springing from scriptural roots in large part common also to Judaism and shaped by many of the same environmental influences in Greco-Roman Palestine, yet developed in a distinct line little influenced, if at all, by the consolidation of "normative" Judaism. Furthermore, the eschatology of the Samaritans was certainly not Davidic,¹ a point of considerable importance in view of the absence of the Davidic traditions from the christology of the Fourth Gospel.

John Macdonald, who has attempted a systematic theology of Samaritanism, declares, "Any claim for Samaritan borrowing from Judaism is nonsense."² James A. Montgomery, nearly sixty years earlier, assumed the opposite position: "No intellectual independence is to be found in our sect; it was content to draw its teachings and stimulus from the Jews, even long after the rupture was final."³ Against the latter view, Macdonald's reaction is perhaps justified, but the Samaritans and Jews were hardly so isolated from each other as he assumes. Both Montgomery and, recently, John Bowman have shown from the references in the Talmud that in the

¹ This point is illustrated by Hegesippus' list of the "sects" among "the circumcision" who opposed "the tribe of Judah and the Messiah," as follows: Essenes, Galileans, Hemerobaptists, Masbothei, Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees" (apud Eusebius, HE, IV, xxii, 6, trans. Kirsopp Lake [Loeb], I, 377, emphasis mine).
age of the Tannaim "in those places where both sects were found there existed very intimate intercourse between them in many most important matters of life."\textsuperscript{1} Adalbert Merx,\textsuperscript{2} Moses Gaster,\textsuperscript{3} and John Bowman\textsuperscript{4} have all collected parallels, some of them quite striking, between Rabbinic and Samaritan \textit{haggadot}. Evidently the developing lines of Samaritan and Jewish traditions had more points of contact than the "common matrix" of Torah and pre-exilic traditions emphasized by Macdonald.\textsuperscript{5} For present purposes interest lies only in certain specific features of the Samaritan tradition about Moses and about the eschatological redeemer. Where these coincide with certain Jewish traditions, often in such a way that Jewish and Samaritan versions help to explain one another, there is no reason a priori to exclude historical interaction.

\textit{The situation in Samaritan studies}

Samaritan studies are still in their infancy, even on the basic levels of textual criticism and philology. A lexicon of Samaritan Aramaic is still wanting, and no comprehensive study of the dialect's grammar has been attempted since Petermann's brief and not very satisfactory work of 1873.\textsuperscript{6} For many years after European scholars first made contact with modern Samaritans research depended upon letters from the Samaritans and impressions gathered by visits to Samaritan villages.\textsuperscript{7} The collection and critical evaluation of manuscripts have proceeded slowly, and even today very much remains to be done. Macdonald's critical edition of the \textit{Memar Marqah},

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Der Messias oder Ta'eb der Samaritaner} (BZAW, XVII; 1909) [hereafter cited as \textit{Ta'eb}], 92 pp.
\item Macdonald, \textit{Theology}, p. 29.
\item Cf. Montgomery, pp. 1-12.
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