An Old Latin manuscript agrees with the Samaritan Pentateuch in reading “Mount Gerizim” at Deut 27:4, which narrates Moses’ command to build an altar “on the day that you cross over the Jordan into the land.” The OL-SP reading is a variant contrasting with “Mount Ebal” in the traditional MT and the preserved LXX. Following the pedagogically instructive title by Professor Julio Trebolle Barrera, “From the Old Latin through the Old Greek to the Old Hebrew,” it may prove illuminating to test whether his insight will in this instance lead us from the OL through the OG to the OH.1

I. The Old Latin

The OL reading Garzin is attested in codex 100.2 Almost the entire LXX MS tradition, however, reads a form of ἐν δρέτι Γαμβάλ. To date only a single biblical Greek witness is known to attest “Mount Gerizim” for this verse: Papyrus Giessen (with fragments from Deuteronomy 24–29 dating from the fifth-sixth century)3 reads αφ

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2 John Wm. Wevers (ed.), Deuteronomium (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum III.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 287.

3 Wevers, Deuteronomium, 16; some Catenae also attest that τό σαμύ reads ἐν τῷ Γαριζήν. Emanuel Tov provides a new edition and discussion, incorporating new readings and reconstructions: “Pap. Giessen 13, 19, 22, 26: A Revision of the Septuagint?” in The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 459–75. His analysis “suggests that the Giessen papyri do not reflect the Σαμαρειτικόν” but rather “a revision, possibly of Samaritan origin, of the OG” (p. 459). Though he cautiously says, “possibly of Samaritan origin,” he eventually does not prefer that possibility but rather a revision of the OG (cf. pp. 73–74). See also Reinhard Pummer, “The Samareitikon Revisited,” in Alan D. Crown and
The writing of the pair of words without space for word division is usually considered the mark of a Samaritan author. But since nothing we know leads us to think the OL might be influenced by the SP, the question arises: Are this Greek papyrus reading and this OL reading witnesses to the SP specifically, or might they possibly be witnesses to a Hebrew reading circulating in the broader Jewish milieu?

In favor of an ancient, non-sectarian witness, Reinhard Pummer notes that

The Vetus Latina has twice the form *Argarzim*, i.e. in 2 Macc 5:23 and 6:2. It is well known that this translation has often preserved ancient variants, and it is most probable that this is the case also here. . . . Rather than assume that 2 Macc 5:23 and 6:2 go back to a Samaritan source or tradition, it can be argued that there existed Greek versions which transliterated and contracted as they did with other similar names.

In editing 4QpaleoExodm and further studies I have found a number of other putative “Samaritan” readings preserved in LXX MSS which strongly support Pummer’s argument on a broader scale: that Greek


Whereas Wevers presents the reading with a space between ϓ and γαρ[ι]ζυμ., Tov (“Pap. Giessen,” 472 n. 11) says that it “cannot be determined whether γαρ[ι]ζυμ. was written as one word, as in the Samaritan tradition.” But he correctly suggests that Αργαζηδων in Rev 16:16 “shows the wider use of this transliteration as do many additional transliterations of geographical terms in the LXX” (ibid.). His suggestion is confirmed by Reinhard Pummer (“ΑΡΓΑΠΙΖΙΝ: A Criterion for Samaritan Provenance?” *JSJ* 18 [1987]: 19–25), who perhaps understates, in light of his strong evidence, that “The results of these considerations are: In view of the recent age of Samaritan MSS, and the fact that there are instances where ר פ and the proper name following it were transliterated and contracted in Greek translations, LXX and others, without any conceivable sectarian basis for it, it is at least doubtful that the reading Αργαζηδων can at all times and in all writings where it is found be used as proof for Samaritan provenance or an underlying Samaritan tradition. It can only serve as one indicator among others. In itself it is insufficient to prove Samaritan provenance” (p. 25).


Pummer, “ΑΡΓΑΠΙΖΙΝ,” 23–24; see also Eugene Ulrich, “47. 4QJosh,” DJD 14:146. Tov agrees: “While the importance of the agreement of P[ap.] G[iessen] with the most important sectarian reading of SP should not be underestimated, it could also be an ancient not yet sectarian reading. The fact that the Vetus Latina, never suspected as Samaritan, preserves the same variant, points in the same direction, since this source has preserved many important ancient variants (p. 472); see also Tov, Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible (2d. ed.; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 94–95, n. 67.