Representations Of Samaritans In Late Antique Jewish And Christian Texts

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Abstract
ABSTRACT

REPRESENTATIONS OF SAMARITANS IN LATE ANTIQUE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TEXTS

Matthew Chalmers

Dr. Annette Yoshiko Reed

Samaritans, like Jews and Christians, trace their identity to ancient Israel. Today, they are a minority in Israel-Palestine. In antiquity, however, they appear frequently in our sources from the late antique eastern Mediterranean, from scripture, to midrash, to Roman law, to heresiology, to rabbinic literature, and beyond. Therefore, one would expect to see Samaritans heavily represented in scholarship, both within Religious Studies and in cognate disciplines, which has over several decades developed a toolkit using attention to representations of identity and alterity to both reconstruct the past and interrogate our own categorization and classification of difference. Nevertheless, the group receives little attention, often reduced to their few biblical appearances and to debates about the moment at which the group divorced from Judaism. In this dissertation, I decouple Samaritans from Biblical Studies in my first chapter, arguing the racialized construction of the Samaritan in New Testament scholarship has compressed and delineated the intellectual architecture of scholars. I then expand discussion of Samaritan difference into a sample of sources from the fourth- through to sixth-century East, both within the Roman Empire (Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Cyprus, John Chrysostom, and Amphilochius of Iconium) and in Sasanian Babylonia (the Babylonian Talmud). I articulate how representations of Samaritans work in Jewish and Christian texts, providing a series of studies of how and in which ways ancient Samaritan others mattered in the late antique machinery generating religious identity. In the process, I model an approach to ancient religious identity and alterity more sensitive to the array of difference in our sources than existing scholarship. I thereby provide a case study of one way to decompress habits of scholarly selectivity towards our sources. By looking at the mismatch between the historical presence of Samaritans and their historiographical neglect, I make visible for critique the binary logic of ancient religious difference that still shapes the field in terms of adjacency to the difference between a polarity of Jewish and Christian identity. Samaritans thus serve as a catalyst for binary-resistant scholarly narratives of religious identity and classification, and a case-study for non-reductive approaches to underworked or minoritized groups.

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REPRESENTATIONS OF SAMARITANS IN LATE ANTIQUE JEWISH AND
CHRISTIAN TEXTS

Matthew Chalmers

A DISSERTATION

in

Religious Studies

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2019

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To Grandpa
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Acknowledgements are a strange inclusion in academic writing. They seem like a hangover, at least to me, from a time when the kinship or sociable network of the gentleman scholar meant dedicating a section, noblesse oblige, to those who were indispensable to the project – but at the same time, whose labor would never be counted as really significant. Fortunately, they no longer serve this purpose – and just as fortunately, this short section gives me an opportunity to thank the raft of colleagues, friends, and correspondents who acted as accomplices in finishing this project.

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Susan Gillingham, who oversaw my first years at Oxford, and with whom I have been delighted to keep contacts since, provided a strong example, which I am only coming to realize now, of scholarship done with humanity. This is not a small thing.

Second, a complaint: the academic market, at present, is a disaster, and will probably get worse before it gets better. I feel extraordinarily fortunate, therefore, to have found support rather than competition from my colleagues. Thanks must go to the inventors and conveners, in particular, of the Ancient Judaism Regional Seminar (or Regional Seminar in Ancient Judaism), a yearly meet for graduate students and early-career researchers in the north-east instrumental, for me, in finding my feet in Jewish Studies. Social media, likewise, has provided a network of exchange and encouragement often from academics who I have yet to meet in real life, and of shared intellectual project with Krista Dalton, Simcha Gross, Erin Walsh, and Daniel Picus in the continued flourishing of Ancient Jew Review. I also extend thanks to those friends and colleagues who read my work or with whom rigorous conference time was had; Todd Berzon, Jae Hee Han, Ryan Pilipow, Jane Sancinito, James Shackelford, M Tong are just those which I have scribbled down on a note besides me to remind me not to forget – there are many more, and more to come. A special thanks to Jillian Stinchcomb, who was my companion in first encountering rabbinics, reads more of my work than almost anyone else, and who remains, in spite of both these misadventures, a fierce friend.

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the University of London collegiate system. His intellectual compassion and kindness to
his students, especially international students, are two of the things I talk about most
often when reflecting on what type of professor it is important to become.
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Samaritans, like Jews and Christians, trace their identity to ancient Israel. Today, they are a minority in Israel-Palestine. In antiquity, however, they appear frequently in our sources from the late antique eastern Mediterranean, from scripture, to midrash, to Roman law, to heresiology, to rabbinic literature, and beyond. Therefore, one would expect to see Samaritans heavily represented in scholarship, both within Religious Studies and in cognate disciplines, which has over several decades developed a toolkit using attention to representations of identity and alterity to both reconstruct the past and interrogate our own categorization and classification of difference. Nevertheless, the group receives little attention, often reduced to their few biblical appearances and to debates about the moment at which the group divorced from Judaism. In this dissertation, I decouple Samaritans from Biblical Studies in my first chapter, arguing the racialized construction of the Samaritan in New Testament scholarship has compressed and delineated the intellectual architecture of scholars. I then expand discussion of Samaritan difference into a sample of sources from the fourth- through to sixth-century East, both within the Roman Empire (Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Cyprus, John Chrysostom, and Amphilochius of Iconium) and in Sasanian Babylonia (the Babylonian Talmud).
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INTRODUCTION: SAMARITANS IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP

Today, the Israelite Samaritans are a small ethno-religious minority in modern Israel-Palestine. In antiquity, however, they had a much more extensive Mediterranean-wide population from Egypt to Greece, small population clusters even in Italy and Sicily, and comprised a significant portion of the population of Roman then Islamic Palestine. Like Jews and Christians, they accept the Pentateuch as scripture, even if they reject claims that any other texts count as scripture, taking seriously the statement of Deut. 34:10 that since his death there has arisen “no prophet like Moses.” Like Jews, they are Torah-observant. Like Jews, Christians, and Muslims, Samaritans have traced their identity ever since antiquity to ancient Israel.

Writing between 374 and 377, the fourth-century bishop Epiphanius of Cyprus, likewise, embedded the group in the history of post-exilic Israel:

So, also at this time we have been discussing, the one threskeia of Israel having slipped away, and the scriptures according to law likewise to another genus – I mean to the Assyrian, of whom the Samaritans are descendants (ἐξ ὧν Σαμαρεῖται οἱ ἐγκάθετοι). And then opinions differed, and after that error began, and dissonance to sow seed from the one true piety into many falsely-made knowledges, just as it seemed to each person, to think themselves trained in letters, and to assert each to their own will.¹

For Epiphanius, the division of the threskeia, the cultic community, of Israel depends on the narrative presence of Samaritans. According to his argument, Israel

¹ Panarion 8.9.1-4; Holl 1.196.16-1.197.11; from standard Greek edition by Holl, now emended and reissued in Epiphanius I: Ancoratus and Panarion haer. 1-33 (GCS n.F. 10.1; edited by Karl Holl, Marc Bergermann, and Christian-Friedrich Collatz; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013); Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34-64 (GCS 31; edited by Karl Holl and Jürgen Dummer; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980); Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65-80; De Fide (GCS 37; edited by Karl Holl and Jürgen Dummer; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985).
had remained unified in its reception of the scriptures prior to their migration and assimilation. The Samaritans, in other words, made Jewish heresies possible.

*Genesis Rabbah*, a roughly contemporaneous fourth- or fifth century anthology of Palestinian midrashic interpretation on Genesis, the first book of the Pentateuch and a shared scripture between Christians, Jews, and Samaritans, recalls two parallel versions of this story, given here in its shorter form:

And R. Yishmael recalled that R. Yose went up to pray in Jerusalem. He passed by a place with a plane tree, and met a certain Samaritan (*shamrai*). He said, “For what reason are you going out?” The other replied, “To go up and pray in Jerusalem.” He said, “Why isn’t it good for you to pray at this blessed mountain [i.e. Gerizim] and not that ruined house?” He said, “I say to them, why do they imitate a dog which is anxious for rotting carrion—since they know that idols have been hidden beneath it—“and Jacob hid them” (Gen 35:4)—for this reason, they are anxious for it? Because of this they pray to uncleanness, and go up and chase Belial.\(^2\)

In this narrative, an encounter with a Samaritan (*shamrai*) sparks an exegetical contest. What does the Torah say about the mountain Gerizim, the mountain the Samaritan calls “blessed”? Samaritans claimed this mountain had always been the site of acceptable worship of the God of Israel over against Jerusalem, the latter of which only became a place of worship because of Jewish corruption of Israelite practice. The midrash signals an awareness of polarized Pentateuchal exegesis, and narrativizes the contested territory as exegetical combat between rabbi and Samaritan.

I work from a simple insight. The importance which Epiphanius attributes to Samaritans in his prehistory of heresy, and the normality of the encounter with Samaritans in *Genesis Rabbah*, are just two pieces in a much larger array of late antique Jewish and Christian representations of Samaritans. Samaritans, therefore,

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\(^2\) *Genesis Rabbah* 81:3.
appear in many of the same texts so fruitfully used to reconstruct and interrogate late antique Jewish and Christian identity. Nevertheless, even though Samaritans have received increasingly more attention from scholars in recent decades, Samaritan presence has not yet been leveraged to adjust scholarly narratives about late antique religion. How can these appearances translate into a more expansive scholarly account of late antique identity and affiliation? How can noticing the mismatch between Samaritan presence in our sources and Samaritan absence in scholarly narrative help realign scholarly selectivity? When, and why, do scholars compress complex taxonomies of ancient difference, and complex arrays of knowledge claims about scripture, holy practice, and the past of Israel, to speak to Jewishness and Christianness as prototypic – and polarized – terms?

To address this mismatch between ancient sources and lack of scholarly attention, I unite scholarship from Samaritan Studies, Early Christianity, New Testament Studies, and Jewish Studies around patristic and rabbinic texts. In the process, I recognize Samaritans in the engine-room of late antique identity production, decoupling them from the watchful gaze of Biblical Studies, and introducing them into more expansive interdisciplinary discussions about identity, difference, alterity, and representation. It is not only that Samaritans are “another contestant in the arena.”3 They contest the same Israelite identity and scriptural past as Jews and Christians (and later, Muslims). They are therefore an ideal limit to case to query the

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scope of our scholarly narratives about how Jewishness and Christianness developed in antiquity, especially when, as so often, our narratives exclude Samaritan by default.

In this introduction, I first track how scholars have often concentrated on the possibility that knowledge of Samaritans meant primarily special knowledge of the biblical past. For this reason, Samaritan Studies has engaged the group only in a relatively compressed way, linked to the study of the Bible. Second, I theorize how to expand discussions of Samaritans by drawing attention to the greatest concentration of sources for ancient Samaritans, in late antiquity. Such a discussion also helps renovate late antiquity accounts of religion and difference, since the methodological reforms driving the field leave less time and energy for scrutinizing the selection of unfamiliar topics for sustained study. Finally, I introduce and critique identity, a concept particularly important for the study of late antiquity, before ending with a chapter survey.

Ancient Samaritans and Samaritan Studies

In 1906, James A. Montgomery jumpstarted the modern Anglophone study of the Samaritans with his Samaritans. The academy at the time, however, was relatively unimpressed. “Are the Samaritans worth,” one reviewer wrote in the Expository Times, “a volume of 360 pages?” One hundred and ten years later, Reinhard Pummer, one of several Anglophone scholars who dedicated a career to reclaiming the Samaritans as a topic of scholarly study, begins his spiritual successor to Montgomery’s book by quoting the scathing Expository Times review juxtaposed with

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a more recent assertion that there has been “an explosion in recent years in the publication of Samaritan texts and secondary discussions based upon them.” As Pummer says, the field has seen a “change from the almost total neglect of anything that has to do with the Samaritans to a heightened interest in their history and religion.”

Nevertheless, Pummer’s assessment only tells part of the story. Steven Fine notices both the extent and low impact of growth in Samaritan studies scholarship: “the explosion in Samaritan studies…has quietly occurred in recent years, with discovery and publication of numerous Samaritan sites – village, synagogue, and burial synthetic studies and, most importantly for Sivan, R. Pummer’s Early Christian Authors on Samaritans and Samaritanism.” In the rest of this section, I present the story of this scholarship, suggesting that the limits dampening a broader recognition of Samaritan significance have resulted from a scholarly desire to reclaim Samaritans within the same master narrative that led to a fading of interest in the nineteenth century: Biblical Studies.

After something of a fin-de-siecle downturn, the dawn of the twentieth century saw two regional concentrations of the scholarly story of Samaritans, one Anglophone and one spanning Germany and Israel. Both groups explicitly aimed to counteract the neglect of Samaritans, to reclaim them for the study of the Israelite past. English-language scholarship on Samaritan Studies is a series of Anglophone rebirths tagged

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to the American James Montgomery in Philadelphia and the Romanian Sephardic chief rabbi Moses Gaster in London. The former published what became a handbook for Samaritan Studies for more than eighty years. The latter’s extensive Hebrew Bible scholarship included a lively interest in Samaritan texts, as well as a significant correspondence of over five hundred letters exchanged with contemporaneous Samaritans in Nablus. Simultaneously, the librarian and semiticist Arthur E. Cowley published, in collaboration with Alfred Neubauer, his still unsurpassed volumes collating Samaritan liturgy.

Building on this Anglophone expertise, a circle of scholars in Leeds, England particularly interested in examining the New Testament, most notably John Bowman and John MacDonald, produced a critical mass of Samaritan Studies scholarship. Such efforts were supported by the DSS discoveries, and a resurgence in interest in Samaritan witnesses to Hebrew Bible text. As mentioned above, readings previously seen as late Samaritan edits often appeared in the Qumran material, without any sign of their being attached to any “sectarian” version of the Pentateuch circulating

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8 See in particular his Schweich lectures of 1923, published as Moses Gaster, *The Samaritans: Their History, Doctrines, and Literature* (see above); also Ingrid Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism: A Literary Analysis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 22-30. An ongoing digitization project underway at the University of Manchester aims to catalogue and digitize this correspondence: [http://www.manchesterjewishstudies.org/moses-gaster-project/](http://www.manchesterjewishstudies.org/moses-gaster-project/).
separately. Hypotheses of Samaritan authorship even accompanied the publication of at least two texts from amongst the Qumran finds: Milik suggested a Samaritan origin for 1 Enoch, and both Milik and Kugler attribute *Aramaic Levi* to a Samaritan background.

From the 1980s, subsequently, a third wave of Anglophone Samaritan Studies significantly expanded the potential reach of the field. Spearheaded by Alan D. Crown, the *Société d'Études Samaritaines* was founded, with the explicit aim of producing a community to systematically further the study of the Samaritans in their own right. While not bursting onto the scholarly scene per se, the gains made by Samaritan Studies show no sign of abating. Here we come full circle to Di Segni’s observation about an “explosion” in the field, and the works which I mentioned in opening this chapter.

This English-language interest worked often in parallel, but increasingly in concert, with more continuous Hebrew- and German-language scholarship, built on a legacy from the nineteenth century. Notably, this interest translated to the Israeli academy, where the first president of the Israeli secular nation-state Yitzhak Ben-Zvi also enthusiastically pursued regional history, particularly the history of the

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14 There is no better illustration of this than the fact that the most extensive grammars of Samaritan Hebrew and Aramaic outside of modern Hebrew are both German, by Rudolf Macuch: *Grammatik des Samaritanischen Hebräisch* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969); *Grammatik des Samaritanischen Aramäisch* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1982).
Samaritans.\textsuperscript{15} The most important linguistic work on Samaritan Hebrew and Aramaic continues to be Israeli, especially due to the field-defining work of Ze’ev Ben-Hayyim and Abraham Tal, and the activity of the Samaritan scholar and activist Benyamim Tsedaka.\textsuperscript{16} Similarly, critical editions emerging only now with English translations follow in the footsteps of pathfinding editions by Israeli scholars.\textsuperscript{17} Moreover, extensive excavations since the 1960s have produced a mass of epigraphic and archaeological evidence with which to write new histories of Samaritan antiquity.\textsuperscript{18} This ranges from the Wadi Deliyah discoveries of Samarian populations fleeing Alexander the Great, to Yitzhaq Magen’s extensive excavations at Shechem and Gerizim, to the late antique estate at Raqat.\textsuperscript{19} Especially important, a number of Samaritan synagogues have been excavated within modern-day Israel which were

\textsuperscript{15} See his \textit{Book of the Samaritans}, rev. ed. by Shemaryahu Talmon (Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi, 1970).
\textsuperscript{18} For a summary, see Pummer, \textit{Samaritans}, 74-118.
unknown prior, and significantly augment our scant literary references to late antique Samaritan sites of worship.\textsuperscript{20}

Most of this scholarship reiterates the archaeological and philological emphases of Biblical Studies, wedded to a view of the Samaritans as a distinct (and thus helpfully comparable) ethnic and religious group with a distinct and ancient Pentateuch, who appear in the New Testament, and are thus important for the study of the Bible. Important bibliography is scattered throughout various disciplines, especially where it departs from this philological and Bible-inflected core to treat anthropology, halakha, art, archaeology, or inscriptions.\textsuperscript{21}

One recently published volume in De Gruyter’s \textit{Studia Samaritana} series encapsulates, in a nutshell, both the scope and limits of this research.\textsuperscript{22} One of its contributors, Konrad Schmid, explicitly laments the attachment of Biblical Studies writ large to “sub-Deuteronomism” and “sub-Chronicism,” the separation anxieties scholars fear in moving away from an account of the Israelite past that contradicts the broad arc of the historical books of the Hebrew Bible.\textsuperscript{23} Nevertheless, this does not

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\textsuperscript{22} Magnar Kartveit and Gary N. Knoppers (eds.), \textit{The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans} (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018).

}
mean a retreat from biblical frameworks. All the articles manage their material in the style typical of traditional Biblical Studies: using philological, archaeological, and chronographical tools to order facts related to Samaritans, then tagged to biblical texts. On this approach to understand Samaritans becomes to understand biblical texts accurately, philologically, and as they were in their ancient context.

This is not an unreasonable approach, but it comes with risks attached. A close connection to the study of the Bible serves to compress the set of questions usually asked of ancient Samaritans, and the topics and concepts to which appearances of Samaritans are usually permitted to speak. Even scholarship which ekes out a space for Samaritans tends to index Samaritan significance to Jewish and Christian scripture. Knowledge of Samaritans has seemed most desirable when deemed significant enough for renovating accurate knowledge of the biblical past – the desire for accurate knowledge a tell-tale sign of how far the epistemological mode of Samaritan Studies remains within, or attached to, the prevailing style of the historical-critical study of the Bible.

Similarly, the Samaritans remain tied to their appearances in the New Testament. Much scholarly interest in the group hinged on the possibility that by expanding knowledge of Samaritans it might be possible to uncover an alternative or obscured history of the time of Jesus, whether that history took the form of a Samaritan Jesus, Jesus’ Samaritan followers, or the New Testament’s Samaritan sources, or, most often, the Samaritans portrayed as a case study in which Jewish difference-making, and thus rejection of Christianity, could be figured. Samaritans, when they have
appeared in scholarship, have appeared for specific reasons and with particular results, partly because they have remained the preserve of scholars of biblical texts.

Samaritans and the Study of Late Antiquity: Beyond Method

I suggest decoupling the study of Samaritans from Biblical Studies by bringing Samaritans instead into ongoing discussions in the cluster of disciplines associated with the study of religion in late antiquity (c.200-800CE).24 By rehousing the study of Samaritans in ongoing interdisciplinary conversations in a broader field, I aim to free Samaritan significance from the reduction to “the biblical,” and help redirect attention to quite how pervasive the ancient appearances of Samaritans are.

At the time Montgomery was publishing Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect, the concept of late antiquity was largely debated in German. Sometimes, Spätantike acted as a characteristic, in a debate over whether artistic and aesthetic sense was authocthonous or inherited. In the (race-science inflected) debates between the Josef Strzygowsksi and the Alois Riegl, both focused on the question of Roman versus Islamic art.25 Was Roman art derivative, an old decrepit style contrasted with the youthful national spirit of the East? Or did it have its own durability? At other times, Spätantike was linked to the Christianization of Rome, as in Jakob Burckhardt’s Die

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Zeit Constantins des Großen (1853). Narratives about a period of “late ancient” political shift caused by the reconfiguration of the relationship between state and church, with the Roman Empire as case in point, energized Enlightenment discussions. Garth Fowden tracks the period even to the Renaissance, as exemplified by Valla’s famous debunking of the Donatio of Constantine, and the effect of the Protestant Reformation in drawing attention to ecclesiastical history and thus archaeology in the period.

In more recent scholarship, however, Peter Brown’s World of Late Antiquity marked a turn of the tide. Explicitly an intervention into histories of the later Roman Empire which emphasized the unimportance of anything after the third century (in the shadow of Mikhail Rostovtzeff), and/or relied on historical narrative of change as catastrophe generated by emphasis on politic and economic continuity as the marker of a society’s durable identity (in the spiritual tradition of Edward Gibbon.) In its place, Brown expanded geographical borders, decentred a politics-driven model of historical narrative, opened spaces for “non-classical” religion to nevertheless

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28 Fowden, Before and After Muhammad, 20-21.
29 Peter Brown, The World of Late Antiquity, from Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971); see also reflections and essays in the forum “World of Late Antiquity Revisited,” Symbolae Osloenses 72 (1997): 5-90.
participate in thoroughly “Roman” social structures, and stressed the particularity of Mediterranean rhythms of long-duration change.\textsuperscript{31}

The first compelling reason to bring Samaritans into late antiquity is that most of our oldest evidence for ancient Samaritans belongs to sources in this period, thus beyond the purview of Biblical Studies. In the late antique eastern Mediterranean, despite intensive Christianization—or perhaps, as Andrew Jacobs recognizes in the case of representations of Jews, because of it—Samaritans appear with increased visibility in Christian sources; letters, imperial \textit{novellae}, histories, chronicles, hagiographies, heresiology. In addition, they feature prominently in rabbinic literature, from Mishnah to midrash and Talmud. From this period, also, come our first definitively Samaritan-authored literature: synagogal poetry or \textit{piyyut}, the Samaritan liturgy, as well as earlier sections from the great Samaritan midrash \textit{Tibât Mârqe}.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31} In line with increasing emphasis by historians of the Mediterranean on the sustained structuring of Mediterranean societies by the sea itself and its surrounding environments: see Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, \textit{The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History} (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2000); Chris Wickham, \textit{Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), both following the influential work by the Annales School historian Fernand Braudel.

\textsuperscript{32} For a good overview with close attention to the manuscript situation—peculiarly important for Samaritan material—see Alan D. Crown, \textit{Samaritan Scribes and Manuscripts} (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 1-39. The most accessible overview of Samaritan literature pertinent to the Roman Empire is Ingrid Hjelm, “Samaritans” in the ongoing online publication of \textit{The Oxford Handbook of the Literatures of the Roman Empire}, ed. Daniel L. Selden and Phiroze Vasunia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.)
Moreover, much of this late material is readily available. We have to date three separate handbooks of collected sources sampling and translating legal, rabbinic, and patristics material; one in German, one in Italian, and one in English. An ongoing series from De Gruyter continues to publish important translations and conference proceedings in its Studia Judaica/Studia Samaritana series. Key works of later Arabic Samaritan historiography, specifically the chronicle of Abu l’Fatḥ and his Continuatio, have both been published in translation, although the former (as well as the accompanying version of the Arabic text) remains for now out of print.

Growing specialist access to this underworked Samaritan material has increasingly drawn scholarly attention. As Leah Di Segni wrote more than ten years ago:

“Students of late antiquity, who until recently viewed the history or the theological strife of the period as a confrontation of pagans, Jews, and Christians (or at most of pagans, Jews, Christians and “heretics”), now identify another contestant in the arena, one whose character, social

33 Andrew S. Jacobs, Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire (Stanford University Press, 2004) 193-199. These range from a letter of Palestinian bishops to Jerome complaining about Samaritan stupidity (c.399) to sixth-century imperial Novellae negotiating Samaritan unrest and revolt (Nov. 44, 529CE; Nov. 129, 551CE; Nov. 144, 572CE), to clear support for the group by the metropolitan bishop of Caesarea, Sergius (Nov. 129, 551CE) to powerful aristocratic representation at Constantinople especially linked to the family of Arsenius at Beth Shean (Procopius of Caesarea, Secret History 12-13), to accounts of bloody Samaritan revolt (Procopius, Secret History 11.29-30; Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Sabae 70 and 73; Malalas, Chron. 50.18).


status, motivations, and general Weltanschauung, are far from well known.”

Since Di Segni’s review, interest in Samaritans has continued to redress that lack of knowledge. In 2009, the Museum of the Good Samaritan opened on the route between Jericho and Jerusalem. Steven Fine curated an exhibit at the now sadly deceased Museum of Bible Art (MOBIA). An upcoming exhibition at Yeshiva University in 2020 is planned to coincide with a documentary film in collaboration with the New Fund for Cinema and Television. Scholarship has largely kept pace. Recently, for example, Hagith Sivan’s monograph on late antique Palestine incorporated Samaritans as a major character in the history of the region. Building on excavations, Rina Talgam gives an overview of mosaics in collective context. Laura Lieber has written expansively and ambitiously on Samaritan liturgical poetry, as well as midrash. Yair Furstenburg has incorporated Samaritans into discussions

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38 For the Biblical Archaeology Society press release: https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/exhibits-events/museum-of-the-good-samaritan-opens-in-israel/. Note that the present-day Samaritan community have mixed feelings about the museum, arguing it both Christianized the Samaritan past in a way that erased Christian persecution of Samaritans and misunderstands the Good Samaritan parable, with Binyamin Tsedaka following both Yitzhak Magen and Shemaryahu Talmon (and before them, Lukan scholarship in Enslin and Hálevy, see my forthcoming article “The Good Samaritan Israelite”): https://www.israelite-samaritans.com/history/good-samaritan-museum/.


41 Hagith Sivan, Palestine in Late Antiquity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).


of the early self-definition of the rabbinic movement, as has Moshe Lavee.\textsuperscript{44} Stefan Schorsch has spearheaded a new critical edition of the Samaritan Pentateuch, as well as doing extensive work on a wide range of Samaritan literature and history of scholarship.\textsuperscript{45} Even this work, notably, draws heavily on the Arabic translation of the Pentateuch used by Samaritans, adapted from the translation of Saadiya Gaon.

The second benefit of a focus on Samaritans in late antiquity is that the study of late antiquity has over several decades developed a flexible toolkit for dealing with representations, identity, and difference. Rather than the archaeological and philological emphases of Biblical Studies, the scholarly toolkit provided suits a discussion of representation of Samaritans.

Much of this conceptual apparatus emerged from post-war renovation of the Euro-American study of Judaism. Since at least the time of the scholars of the Wissenschaft des Judentums, perhaps epitomized by the publication of Abraham Geiger’s Ursprung in 1857, it had become increasingly clear that the ancient relationship between Judaism and Christianity was important terrain on which to contest and construct both Jewish and Christian identities. From its inception, this realization battled with theological supersessionism. Protestant scholars often emphasized what Wilhelm Bousset called “Late Judaism” (Spätjudentum), a Judaism


polemically perceived as spiritually moribund and thus superseded by true religion—Christianity. As Susannah Heschel writes:

“Judaism as a religion is a modern invention, developed in mimicry of Christianity; pre-modern Jewish texts speak instead of Torah and *mitzvot*. ‘Judaism’ was similarly invented by nineteenth-century Protestant theological discourse as a religion of legalism, literalism, and an absence of morality, and was made to function discursively as the abject of the Christian West…as a result, the Judaism that the Jews constructed during the modern period was forced to enter the intellectual world that had created those stereotypes in order to attempt a liberation from Christian hegemony. Out of political necessity, the Jews also had to create their own version of ‘Christianity.’ These projects became the dominant concern of German-Jewish thought, starting in the nineteenth century.”

Contesting the categorical relationship of Jewish to Christian religion gained particular urgency in the later nineteenth century as research in the history of religion, and specifically “Judaism,” coincided with Protestant imperialism and race science. We see this particularly in the form of theologians later supportive of and supported by the Nazis. Susannah Heschel again notes, “Christian scholarly investigation of Jewish history established a radical dichotomy between Christianity and Judaism, which was required to maintain Christian theological order. Presenting the historical relationships between the two religions was simultaneously a construction of

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48 For example, Gerhard Kittel, *Die Problem des palästinischen Spätjudentums und das Urchristentum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926).
contemporary social relations and of relations of power within the realm of scholarship.” ⁴⁹

In the work of Adolf von Harnack, foundational for the study of early Christianity, this developmental view of tired, sterile Judaism replaced by true Christian religion, gained global currency. ⁵⁰ Against this dismissal of ancient Judaism as Spätjudentums, Anglophone theologians occasionally took up the mantle of their German Jewish colleagues. George Foot Moore, a historian of religion, Asianist, and Presbyterian minister, anticipated Heschel’s point, noting that the frozen Jewish “legalism” emphasized by his contemporaries in addressing “primitive Christianity” was the result not of “a fresh and more thorough study of Judaism…but a new apologetic motive, consequent on a different apprehension of Christianity on the part of the New Testament theologians who now took up the task.” ⁵¹ James Parkes, likewise, highlighted the long history of Christian anti-Judaism as a way to make visible how far what scholars took as obvious about the Jewish past was the result of pro-Christian prejudice. ⁵²

By and large, however, as John Gager points out, only in the wake of the Holocaust did it become obvious that Christian scholarship on Jewish antiquity could

⁴⁹ Heschel, “Revolt of the Colonized,” 85.
not return to business as usual. This discomfort was particularly appropriate given the cooperation of German Christian scholars with the erasure of Jewishness from their accounts of Christian origins, the declaration that Jesus was Aryan, and with the Nazi Final Solution. In this context, Marcel Simon’s post-war *Verus Israel*, provided a turning point. Simon influentially argued that early Christian anti-Judaism should be understood not as Christian supersession of a dying faith, but in terms of conflict between upstart Christians and resurgent Jews. As Simon writes:

“If Judaism had withdrawn into itself, then it no longer really confronted the Church but restricted itself to a conflict in the realm of a theory, to a bookish sterile controversy around the sacred texts. If it was still a proselytizing movement, then it was a real and dangerous foe.”

While Simon absolutely rejected Bousset and von Harnack’s notion of sterile Judaism, he did retain various stereotypes regarding the content of Judaism in the time of the early followers of Jesus. For example, he does reduce a core of Jewish identity to legal observance critiqued by, in turn, John Gager and E.P. Sanders. Nevertheless, *Verus Israel* disrupted scholarly approaches to Jewish/Christian relations in antiquity, rendering visible for sharp critique, in a post-Shoah context, the way “Judaism” had functioned for scholars, characterized not by careful study of

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Jewishness in its historical context, but with reference to a representation of “Judaism” as a reified test-subject, tacitly compared to Christianity as its prototypic term. Of all the methodological shifts that emerged as scholars of Judaism and Early Christianity wrestled with Christian anti-Jewishness, this became particularly relevant when discussing identity and difference. In revisiting their approaches to Judaism, scholars, therefore, began to pay very close attention to the mechanics of representation.

The work of Judith Lieu marks a maturation of this discussion. As she pointed out, it had become “truism” to see early Christianity defining against Judaism and “paganism,” but analysis of the interplay as discursively complex remained a desideratum. Lieu’s *Image and Reality* signals the gaining ground in the Anglophone academy of a discursive turn inspired by poststructuralist thought and taken also in France by, for example, Alain Le Boulluec and Herve Inglebert. The ‘parting’ model, Lieu she argued, reflected an approach that would have been recognized by none of its ancient participants—and often did more service, as Geiger, Foot Moore, and Heschel each stated in their own way, for modern theological

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needs. Much of the fruit of interventions like that of Lieu was collected in Adam Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed’s *The Ways that Never Parted*, which has served as a staging post for further research.

This turn to rhetoric and representation in the construction of identity and self-conscious critique of inherited theological categories has re-equipped the study of ancient Judaism and Christianity. Rather than understanding the two developmentally, in line with theological assumptions about Christianity superseding Judaism, they came to be understood in an extended, dialectic, ongoing relationship. Even when many scholars of New Testament Studies insist on an early “Parting,” and the corresponding assumptions about Judaism and Christianity as distinct conceptual

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63 The phrase “ways that never parted” has become such a staple of the discussion that volumes pun on it to make a point; see Lori Baron, Jill Hicks-Keeton, and Matthew Thiessen (eds.), *The Ways that Often Parted: Essays in Honor of Joel Marcus* (Atlanta: SBL Press, forthcoming 2018).

entities at an early stage, attention to representation has become an assumed desideratum in any attempt to talk Jewish/Christian difference.\textsuperscript{65}

Rhetorical performance and its complex relationship with regulating “real” difference has provided fertile ground on which scholars including (but not limited to) Robert Wilken, Averil Cameron, Peter Brown, Thomas Sizgorich, and Christine Shepardson, and Dayna Kalleres developed an approach to identity formation in late antiquity that does not rely straightforwardly on any one narrative explanation for Christianity’s importance in the fourth-century Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{66} Instead, they investigated how late antique individuals constructed Christianity—and were constructed as Christians—through centuries of interaction with real, imagined,

\textsuperscript{65} Lieu’s work was partially galvanized by conversation in British New Testament Studies at the time, a conversation which paid less attention to rhetoric and more to excavating the real boundaries of groups behind texts, especially drawing on social-scientific models: James D.G. Dunn, \textit{The Parting of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity} (London: SCM Press, 1991); James D.G. Dunn, ed., \textit{Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways AD 70 to 135} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992); Richard Bauckham, “The Parting of the Ways: What Happened and Why,” \textit{Studia Theologica} 47.2 (1993): 135-151. Dunn has recently returned to his earlier works, providing an instructive example of how New Testament Studies has tended to decouple from the opportunities offered by other disciplines in this regard. See recently a number of excellent essays amongst those in the frequently polemical (with the editors aiming at “what really happened” (6)) Peter J. Tomson and Joshua J. Schwartz, eds. \textit{Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write their History} (Leiden: Brill, 2014). See also as an example Marius Heemstra’s attempt to present numismatic evidence on the assumption that it can attest accelerated categorical difference of Jews and Christians in the eyes of Rome: \textit{The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways} (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

rhetorical, and demonic others.\textsuperscript{67} This approach resonates with what Gayatri Spivak has called “sustained and developing work on the \textit{mechanics} of the constitution of the Other.”\textsuperscript{68} Attention to the techniques governing interactions between people, groups, and ideas (ancient and modern) contribute to a more robust account of the reasons why those interactions look to us the way that they do. Attention to these mechanics of difference and identity, I argue, also work well employed beyond Jews and Christians to consider representations of Samaritans. I rely heavily on the realization that rhetoric and representation feed one another, and on a model of scholarship that takes as fractal impressions of their worlds, rather than as either mirror or window.

The third reason Samaritans are a good fit for late antiquity is that by bringing Samaritans in the late antique picture we also help solve a puzzle in the study of the period. Despite the extensive specialist work surveyed above, and the pervasiveness of Samaritan presence in antiquity, a search for Samaritans finds them conspicuously absent from most scholarship on religion in late antiquity. This tells us that the absence of Samaritans from much of our scholarly exploration of late antiquity persists despite the wide availability of sources and specialized study.

It is not due to a lack of material for engaging late antique Samaritans, but of the habit governing the selectivity of scholars. This scholarly habit, as I present it, involves two interwoven processes. The first of these is the inheritance of theological

\textsuperscript{67} A point made with particularly helpful acuteness for the first century and a half of “Christianity” by Kotrosits, \textit{Rethinking Early Christian Identity: Affect, Violence, and Belonging} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

and ideological classification from the nineteenth century, according to which Samaritans became a defective racialized offshoot from pre-Christian Judaism. This development was tied to orientalist minoritization of the group, the increasingly exhaustive and anti-Semitic theological scholarship aimed at the Jewishness of Christian origins, and the simultaneous reduction of “Samaritan” to an exegetical trope (in New Testament Studies) or text critical explanans (in the study of Pentateuch). The second process, inhibiting the reformation of these inherited classificatory effects, is how method-based adjustments within scholarly fields shift modes of study while diverting attention away from reconsidering which topics or groups are selected for study.

Similarly, the emphasis on methodological reform in the study of late antiquity has already reshaped how to think about the period. It has, however, often simultaneously exerted a narrowing effect on the texts and sources used by scholars such that much of the above work on Samaritans has remained undigested, or else limited to its own specialist subdiscipline. The adjustment of methodological approach, or reevaluation of traditional historiography, leaves little space for the consideration of completely new questions. Attention to Samaritans provides an opportunity to look again, and to expand scholarly horizons. Introducing Samaritans explicitly into ongoing conversations about identity, difference, and contesting Israel help depolarize discussions of religion in late antiquity that may not always consider how they might rely on an inherited (theological) binary of Jewish versus Christian.
Identity Matters: Problems with Identity in Studying Late Antique Religion

On the one hand, therefore, the focus of various fields dealing with late antiquity – Jewish Studies, Patristics, Rabbinics – has resulted in a renewed attention to representation, identity, and difference. It has produced good work, but it has often paid less attention to the selectivity according to which topics garner mention or neglect. Thus, it has not arrested a relative minoritization of Samaritans well underway by the turn of the twentieth century. On the other hand, within Samaritan Studies, scholars have relied on well-established scholarly methods of philology, archaeology, and close reading to successfully reconstruct and reclaim much of Samaritan history for the attention of scholars. They have not, however, often drawn on more robustly theorized methodological shifts present in cognate disciplines beyond Biblical Studies. Rehousing Samaritans in late antiquity is an opportunity to combine the work done in making the archive of ancient Samaritans available with a sophisticated toolkit that examines the construction of religious identity and difference while also reflecting critically on the stakes of scholarly practice.

In the final part of my introduction, I scrutinize a concept this dissertation both relies on and remodels, a concept particularly influential in approaches to “religion” in late antiquity: identity. A complex concept, with a variety of fluid and fuzzy meanings, scholars increasingly argue that the effective use of “identity” has run its course.69 As Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper argued:

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“...the social sciences and humanities have surrendered to the world “identity”; that this has both intellectual and political costs; and that we can do better. “Identity,” we argue, tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity). We take stock of the conceptual and theoretical work “identity” is supposed to do and suggest that this work might be done better by other terms, less ambiguous, and unencumbered by the reifying connotations of ‘identity.’”70

Brubaker and Cooper understand “identity” as a tool, problematic because it has been forced to do double duty. On the one hand, as a category of “social and political practice,” and on the other, as a category of “social and political analysis.”71 Some scholars of late antique Christianity have used these observations to argue for avoiding “identity” used as an analytic. Todd Berzon, for example, comments that scholars have focused on early Christian use of ethnic reasoning and rhetorical strategies. To their questions about how such strategies were used, he writes:

“...the answer these scholars provide, however, is almost uniformly the same: ethnic discourse was part of, even a critical part of, an adaptable and functional Christian identity; that is, how Christians described themselves as a community or group defined by notions of descent, history, custom and belief. And while this claim is, to some degree, unassailable—it is clear that Christians thought about themselves through the terms genos, ethnos, natio, and so on—there is more to ethnic reasoning than the forging of identity or even identities. Ethnicity encapsulates more than the distinction between self and other or even the idea of the self as other.”72

The flattening critiqued by Berzon is precisely that which Brubaker and Cooper warned against: “Conceptualizing all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, all self-understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of “identity” saddles us with a

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71 Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity’,” 4.
blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary.” Instead, Berzon argues, scholars should look “beyond the framework of identity” to the larger strategies in accordance with which early Christians ordered their world, and their knowledge about it.

In pointing to the importance of framing knowledge claims, Berzon is right. Nevertheless, we can move beyond the perceived failure of “identity” as an analytic tool in at least two ways besides retiring the term. One option is to use frustration at its flattening affect, and its tendency to manufacture a monoculture of academic attention, to motivate conceptual refinement. Can we incorporate processes producing identity, regimes of identity, into our array of strategic frames for analysis? For example, Éric Rebillard gives an account of “identity” in a broader externalist sense very unlike those scholars critiqued by Berzon; those who telescope questions of rhetorical strategy into an artificially narrowed “Christian identity” indexed by “how Christians described themselves”. Instead, Rebillard draws on further developments of the concept in sociological terms, including Bernard Lahire’s model of the “plural actor.”

The second option: to turn the failure of “identity” into an analytic tool to better conceptualize the project of the scholar. “Identity” does not work as an analytic tool. Fine. The critique of identity for its analytic emptiness (or excess) rightly rejects a

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73 Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity’,” 2.
74 Berzon, “New Approaches,” 221.
kind of total personality identity, in line with psychological models of individuation since the 1960s, and the conceptual transposition of that type of identity into a group-making and world-building characteristic. We should not, however, assume Brubaker and Cooper’s critique of identity as a sociological tool is decisive. We can push a little harder on their choice of critique. Why is it bad to have a flat, undifferentiated vocabulary? For Brubaker and Cooper, such a vocabulary cannot adequately analyze a set of sociological data. An undifferentiated vocabulary takes complex data and makes it simple. The end goal of their research is a vocabulary that adequately classifies and explains human behavior in societies. What if, however, classification and explanation of data represents only one way of claiming and communicating knowledge about the sorts of things that people do? When doing historical, rather than sociological, research, this point becomes particularly pertinent. Classification and explanation of historical data hews close to a straightforward positivism. It is only one way of doing knowledge with historical archives. In this light, the analytic uselessness of “identity” for classifying and explaining data expresses not the problem of the term so much as the inadequacy of a straightforward explanation- or classification-based metric for valuing successful or unsuccessful historiography.

Moreover, when we conceive scholarship projects as tool-based, as “use” we have already masked our selectivity. If we think on late antique religious affiliation as subject to tools, with “identity” as an inadequate one, we have masked the selectivity that drives us to want to be the sorts of investigators who uncover things like

“identity” (but not identity) in our texts. The emphasis on use decentres a reflexive turn; the consistent search for better and better tools overlooks the quiet sneaking back into play of an invisible, epistemically reliable expert subject. As Tomoko Masuzawa points out, this expert voice, an unchallenged subject, often ends up formulating the past in the shape of their own consciousness. 77 By making visible the limits of the term “identity” we illuminate the analytic architecture reliant on having a term like “identity.” We enable attention to the features of our field that affect us; that nudge us towards using or discarding “identity” and justifying our use or discarding of “identity” with justifications reliant on concepts such as “use.”

Either way of repurposing “identity” bears fruit. Rogers Brubaker himself took the first of these two paths. his own largely externalist account of identities as ordering constructs seems to have found a way of dealing with identity claims that did not force his data into a one-size-fits-all unified field theory of selves with some irreducible properties. His article “Beyond Identity,” he clarifies, targeted not talk of “identity,” but the way in which “talk of identity” often let “substantivist” claims, which emphasize essential properties, pass as constructivist. When the constructivist core of identity talk is worn openly, talking identity holds fewer risks – and debating identity fewer fears. Brubaker himself uses “identity” to think with, and without anxiety, as in his most recent book. 78 Not because it is unproblematic, but because it is impossible to get away from the fact that in his understanding we, contemporary

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humans, continually function vis-à-vis identity categories, their limits, and their force. Brubaker, along with Cooper, noted in “Beyond Identity” that identity “is both a category of practice and a category of analysis.”\(^79\) Ultimately, Brubaker retains identity-talk precisely because of the observable power in the practice of identity claims and categories.\(^80\) The very lack of clarity of identity as a category of analysis makes it so useful as a category of practice – and thus so important as a site for academic attention.

The second emphasis on a doubled approach to “identity” – continued relevance and analytic critique – resembles more the perceptive argument by Susan Fraiman about alternate genealogies of the term “identity” available to animal studies, especially vis-à-vis gender studies. She writes, in sharp critique of those who try to categorically rule out the incorporation of gender, race, and sexuality into discussions of posthumanism—because of their fuzziness—that identity can be thought of both “as the rhetorical basis for demanding “rights,” as a discursive category that is necessarily both intersectional and situational, or as a regime to be demystified and disavowed.”\(^81\) Thus, identity matters because it is a discursive category that continues to be situationally relevant, and because it functions as a discursive regime limiting thought, and action, even veiling its own operations.

I therefore follow Brubaker, Fraiman, and others. The sticky, clumsy failure of identity to grant us precision is exactly its benefit. We get a term which wears its

\(^{79}\) Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity’,,” 5.

\(^{80}\) Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015); on the power of “identity claims,” see 74-81; for “categorical identity” see 44-45.

analytic failures visibly on its sleeves—in a way which other terms, equally reliant on theorization but not so visibly flawed, tend to sublate or mask. Correspondingly, scholars who object to “identity,” by doing so, show cleanly and immediately with which types of priorities and epistemological assumptions they work. This dissertation aims to both understand late antique regimes of identity better, by attention to their shape, form, categories, and content and to mark, render visible, and adjust where necessary, scholarly patterns of selectivity in approaching the history of Jewish and Christian identity using Samaritans as a foil.

Structure of Dissertation

Scholars sometimes lose sight of our tacit comparative acts of selection. We discuss how the Jewish “other” relates to the Christian, and how the Christian “other” cannibalized the Jewish. We discuss the array of rhetorical techniques that made this possible. We critique “identity” because it lacks analytic clarity. But even while we try to dismantle and look beyond an intellectual architecture inherited from the nineteenth century by instead paying attention to how Jewish otherness was constructed, and shuffle our theoretical lexicon, we often habitually narrow our gaze to only two terms: Jewish, and Christian.

Samaritans are pervasive in our sources as well. They lay claim to the same Israelite lineage even though they tend to slide out of our discussions. There is therefore a mismatch between our sources and our analyses, and our expertise in
examining Jewish/Christian construction of identity and otherness can mask it precisely because of its methodological acuity. I suggest attention to Samaritans, a group contesting “Israel” along with Jews and Christians, makes visible the power of selectivity in shaping scholarly narratives. By attention to the group, we see much more clearly the mismatch between ancient variety in an array of others, and relative scholarly binarism. Attention to Samaritans may point the way to a method according to which exploring the array of others involved in generating late antique religious identity without Christian or Jewish as a central prototypic term – even while also granting insights into the history and character of Jewish and Christian identities.

In this dissertation, I examine several textual case studies, using Samaritans as an organizational first principle to reorder our late antique archive, and to combine method-based adjustments from Jewish Studies and the study of early Christianity into contact with a shift of emphasis onto a minority group often passed over in silence. This rehousing, also, makes visible for critique some of the scholarly habits engaged in this introduction that continue to shape the study of ancient religious identity: a tendency to retain theological prioritization of “religious” identities, specifically Jewish and Christian identities, in making narratives of religious difference, and a tendency for critique of scholarship to focus on method rather than the organization of the archive. Attention to Samaritans couples methodological shifts from late antiquity with archival reorganization and narrative shift, to produce binary resistant narratives of Jewish and Christian history, and to adjust how to approach religious identity and self-fashioning in antiquity.
Chapter 1 engages Samaritans in the New Testament, addressing the particular reasons and results limiting scholarly engagement with Samaritans when it comes attached to the study of the New Testament. I argue that within this scholarly field Samaritans most usually receive attention as an ethnic anti-Jew, a proxy for scholarly concerns about Jewishness or about the pre-history of (Gentile) Christian followers. I argue that the scholarly lexicon commonly employed for Samaritans, especially the language of Samaritans as a “despised” ethnic or religious group, relies on an intellectual architecture built on supersessionist theories of Christian distinctiveness. By making this intellectual architecture visible, I pivot away from the confines of the study of the Bible to make a meta-critical intervention that instead connects the New Testament Samaritans more closely with ongoing discussion about ancient Jewish identity.

Chapter 2 explores the variety of representations of Samaritans in our late ancient archive, focusing on the technologizing of Samaritans employed by three fourth-century Christian writers: Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, and Amphilochius of Iconium. Samaritans appear in a wide variety of roles used to make Christian difference, from biblical fossil to heresiological cipher, to real religious threat. I suggest, therefore, decompressing alterity in our archive beyond single combat between Christianity and any single “other.” Instead, the process of making Christian identity is a kaleidoscopic process, dealing at different times with different members of an array of different groups, and with taxonomies of difference that reflect this.

Chapter 3 identifies how attention to Samaritans leads us to rethink the mechanics of the heresiological thinking of Christian Empire. In the engagements of Epiphanius
of Cyprus, arch heresy-hunter, with the Samaritans we see, remarkably, how someone at the heart of late ancient Christian empire examines religious difference without centering Christianness. By an expansive, totalizing worldview he decouples knowledge claims about Samaritans from the formation of “Christianness.” By standing at a universally expansive, imperialized centre of religious knowledge, Epiphanius provincializes himself.

In Chapter 4, I turn to the Babylonian Talmud. While some halakhic decisions separate Samaritans as a group from rabbinic “Israel,” the Samaritan claim to Israelite identity never stops serving as a source for rabbinic concern and creativity. Rabbinic classification of Samaritans retains their non-generic difference, unlike the treatment of groups such as minim or goyim. In the Babylonian Talmud, the Samaritans function, therefore, as an excess and a limit-case for rabbinic identity. They suggest a broadened model of rabbinic difference as self-consciously part of a sustained constellation of identities, including Samaritans, contesting continuity with the Israelite past.

All primary text translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.
CHAPTER 1: SAMARITANS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

A man goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Set upon by a group unhappily familiar in the experience of provincials under the Roman Empire, those understood by the Roman authorities at the time as *latrones* (robbers, bandits) and in the Greek *lingua franca* of Palestine in which Luke writes called *lēstēs*, he is left half-dead. Two people who could have helped, a priest and a Levite, stumble on the man but both pass him by. A Samaritan, belonging to a religious and ethnic group separated from Jews by mutual hatred, stops to help. The story ends. A teacher of the law prompted the story by asking Jesus to explain the identity of the “neighbour” whom it was important to love to receive eternal life. Jesus challenges him to judge who behaved like a neighbour in his narrative. The teacher cannot even bring himself to say, “the Samaritan,” a member of a despised race. Instead, he answers that the neighbour to the man was “the one who showed mercy to him”. Jesus tells him to go and do likewise.

This story, found in Luke 10:25-37 (with the parable at 10:30-36), has a fair claim to be one of the most culturally pervasive stories found in the New Testament. A broad range of behaviours find themselves tagged as “Good Samaritan”. For example, as an icon of healing the Good Samaritan finds himself embedded in the image repertoire of European and American medicine, charity, and civic responsibility. Take a walk through downtown Philadelphia, and stumble on Pennsylvania Hospital, founded in 1751 by Thomas Bond and Benjamin Franklin as the first purpose-built hospital in the United States. It took as its hospital seal the Samaritan depositing the wounded man with the innkeeper, appending a paraphrase of

Likewise, in American and international law, so-called “Good Samaritan statutes” “protect persons who respond to an emergency from civil liability.”¹ Every US state has its own Good Samaritan statutes, beginning with California in 1959, and initially to protect medical professionals who attempt outside the workplace to help strangers from litigation in the case of mishap.² Within the last twenty years applications have varied from protection for those who help in situations where no obvious obligation exists to somewhat more aggressive modulations as a press tag for gun-armed civilians who intervene in crimes underway.³ Increasingly, Good-Samaritan statutes have become the target for reevaluation in the case of internet libel and the possibility

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² Thomas, “Good Samaritan Law,” 151.
³ See for example, two examples: *Washington Post* (Nov 16, 2016): “A ‘Good Samaritan’ saw a deputy being attacked by a Florida man so he fatally shot the assailant”; *Washington Post* (Dec 1, 2016): “You’re helping her? I’m going to kill you’: Good Samaritan shot while aiding a dying woman.”
that an individual could observe a crime ongoing and livestreamed online. The list of Samaritan cultural appearances could be multiplied indefinitely.

As a result, our frames of reference governing knowledge of Samaritans tend to belong to knowledge pieced together from general exposure, the odd news report, mentions in literature, and so on, at least outside the modern state of Israel, where Samaritans remain a minority religious population. This knowledge also typically connects use as an ethical shorthand with a long history of scholarly interest in Samaritans and the New Testament. How and why, then, do generations of scholars tackle the representations of Samaritans in the Gospels and Acts?

This chapter has three main sections. In the first section, after a brief overview of the appearances of Samaritans and Samaria in the New Testament, I argue that when Samaritans receive attention from scholars they most often served as a proxy for scholarly concerns about Jewishness, the pre-history of [Gentile] Christ-followers, or both. In the second section I notice that scholars continue to refer to the group as a “despised” ethnic and/or religious other, rejected both by Jews and [Gentile] followers of Christ. This approach reinforces a Jewish versus [Gentile] Christ-follower binary, departing from both the heterogeneity of the New Testament texts and the complexity of Samaritan presence in their historical context. By attention to the genealogy of New Testament scholarship, I also make a meta-critical intervention,


\[5\] For an overview of their legal status with respect to the Law of Return and as a religious minority Michael Corinaldi, “The Personal Status of the Samaritans in Israel,” in SR V: 2.85-2.96.
explaining how the scholarly lexicon relies on an intellectual architecture built on
Protestant reference scholarship and supersessionist theories of Jewish hostility and
Christian eventualism. In the third section, I use these observations to engage, at a
more conceptual level, some challenges and possibilities of New Testament
scholarship on Samaritans. I pivot away from the study of the Bible alone to broader
interdisciplinary questions, especially from Jewish Studies, of how, when, and why
Jewish difference is represented the way that it is, facilitating the incorporation of the
New Testament Samaritans into an expanded discussion of ancient difference.6

Samaritans, Samaria, and the New Testament Texts

In 1913, an otherwise little-known German writer, Heinrich Hammer, argued that
Jesus was not, in fact, Jewish but rather a Samaritan; the same Samaritan whose
disastrous attempt at messianic leadership and subsequent execution Josephus narrates
in *Jewish Antiquities* 18.85-89.7 Few scholars have paid Hammer’s argument very

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6 “Ethnic Judaism” here contrasts, for much of the field, with “trans-ethnic” or “non-ethnic
439-60.

7 Heinrich Hammer, *Traktat vom Samaritanermessias: Studien zur Frage der Existenz und
Abstammung Jesu* (Bonn: Carl Georgi, 1913), 6-9. For translation and commentary on Josephus, see
the ongoing Brill Josephus project overseen by Steve Mason, which uses the Niese text (*Flavii Iosephi
Opera*, ed. Benedikt Niese, 7 vol. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1885-95)) with some emendation: *Flavius
Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, ed. Steve Mason (Leiden: Brill, 1999-). *AJ* takes up the first
four volumes of Niese’s edition. See also *Flavius Josèphe, Les Antiquités Juives*, ed. and trans.
much attention, and those who have display it mostly as a museum piece.⁸ Even at the
time, a contemporary reviewer dismissed the claim, stating “Hammer’s reconstruction
is too purely hypothetical to have any scientific value”.⁹ A mid-twentieth century
effort by Jean Ory to establish the Samaritan status of John the Baptist also fell by the
wayside.¹⁰ Nevertheless, that a case could even be made for identifying Jesus or John
the Baptist as a Samaritan based largely on passages from the New Testament
suggests that to understand the New Testament would involve engaging the
appearances of Samaritans in the Gospels and Acts. Here, I give a brief overview of
the appearance of Samaritans in the New Testament, before engaging scholarship on
the group.

⁸ As in, for example, Robert T. Anderson and Terry Giles, The Samaritan Pentateuch: An
Introduction to its Origin, History, and Significance for Biblical Studies (Atlanta: Society of Biblical
Literature, 2012), 2; also Reinhard Pummer, The Samaritans in Flavius Josephus (Tübingen: Mohr
Siebeck, 2009), 236 n.130. Purvis notes Hammer was, however, cited by Paul Kahle.
“Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Pentateuchtextes,” TSK 88 (1915): 399-439, see James D. Purvis,
Samaritans or Samaria appear in the New Testament in Matthew, Luke-Acts, and John. Of these, only John narrates a meeting with a Samaritan character with whom Jesus holds an extended conversation, the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42). John Meier asserted that this passage is “the most explicit and well-informed passage about Samaritans in the New Testament.” This encounter also contains the statement, extremely influential in later centuries, that “Jews and Samaritans hold nothing in common” (οὐ γὰρ συγχρόνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρίταις; John 4:9b). This gospel also places “Samaritan” as a term of abuse in the mouths of “the Ioudaioi who had put

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14 Note that this verse does not appear in the original main text of Codex Sinaiticus or Codex Bezae, a handful of the earliest Old Latin MSS, and in Coptic examples from the Fayyum, Egypt. Nevertheless, it does appear in use of John 4 by Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine, amongst others.
their trust in him [Jesus] (τοῦς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους)” but whose loyalty he denied (John 8:31-59).\(^\text{15}\)

In Matthew, Samaritans appear only once. When Jesus sends out the disciples on their first commissioned journey, he tells them not to go out “via the way of the nations or into the polis of the Samaritans” (Εἰς ὅδὸν ἑδνὸν μὴ ἀπέλθητε, καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθητε, Matt 10:5).\(^\text{16}\)

Luke contains three Samaritan episodes.\(^\text{17}\) In the first, and the shortest, likely echoing the fiery conflict between Elijah and Israel in 2 Kings 1, James and John ask if they should call down fire from heaven when Jesus is turned away from a


\(^{16}\) Morton S. Enslin, “Luke and the Samaritans,” HTR 36:4 (1943): 277-297 at 278-79; Matthew’s Jesus also avoids Gentile territory where Mark’s Jesus enters it. The tradition in Mark 7:24-30 + 31 that Jesus went into Tyre and through Sidon appears in Matthew as Jesus travelling between Tyre and Sidon (εἰς τά μέρη, Matt. 15:21-28 + 29). The woman (Canaanite in Matthew, Syro-Phoenician in Mark) explicitly comes out of her territory (ἀπὸ τῶν ὄριων ἐκζώνον) to meet Jesus, rather than him entering, it as in Mark.

\(^{17}\) Enslin argues forcefully that each of the three episodes in Luke shows tell-tale marks of (1) Lukan characteristics and (2) compilation from previous sources to fit an alternative purpose, especially from Markan material. Regardless of one’s position on Lukan arrangement of material, Enslin perceptively draws out (1) Lukan attachment to the Israelite past as providing material with which to frame and mark the significance of the key contours of the life of Jesus and (2) the complex composite universalism of Lukan conceptions of messianism in gospel material. I lean on Enslin for the simple reason that his article is often taken as fons et origo of the discussion of Samaritans in Luke.
Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-56). In the second, arguably best-known, Jesus responds to the questions of a teacher of the law about the applicable scope of the injunctive to love God and one’s neighbour (Deut 6) by telling a story about a Samaritan stopping to help a man attacked by bandits on the Jerusalem-Jericho road after a priest and a Levite passed by without helping (Luke 10:25-37). In the third, Jesus heals ten lepers, telling them to go and present themselves before the priests. Only one of the ten, a Samaritan who Jesus himself calls “this foreigner” (ὁ ἀλλογενής οὗτος; Luke 17:19), one from another genos (ἀλλογενής), returns to Christ before visiting the priests, having already correctly come to knowledge of his new

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18 Enslin summarizes in a footnote (282 n.18) the argument for this link: (1) the verbal agreement between 2 Kings 1:10-12 [LXX/OG] and Luke 9:54 and (2) the presence in a significant proportion of early manuscripts (including Codex Alexandrinus) of the complement ὡς Ἑλίας ἐποίησε. Despite their initially unfriendly reception, Enslin goes on to suggest that the journey of the disciples and Jesus to the city of the Samaritans serves as a “deliberate and conscious answer to Matthew 10:5” (“Luke and the Samaritans,” 282). The claim to such an intertext raises the specter of the four-source hypothesis, according to which Matthew and Luke used Q, Mark, and unique M and L sources for their specific material; for an accessible overview and collation, see Brice C. Jones, Matthean and Lukan Special Material: A Brief Introduction with Texts in Greek and English (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2011). Enslin’s argument would, obviously, suggest something like the Farrer-Goulder hypothesis, according to which Mark, written first, is used by Matthew, and then both are used by Luke. Although tangential to my argument in this chapter, it is worth noticing that the Samaritans in the Gospel of Luke and Matthew belong, respectively to what advocates of the four-source hypothesis would label L- and M-material. For Luke, also, the Samaritans appear in the so-called “Travel Narrative” section (9:51-19:44), containing a critical concentration of added stories (Jones, Special Material, 10).

19 See Enslin, “Luke and the Samaritans,” 284-292, who argues the parable is a Lukan invention on the basis of (1) agreeing with Halevy’s observation that the triad of priest-Levite-Israelite makes more sense than priest-Levite-Samaritan, but ascribing the difference not to early Christian misunderstanding of the story (introducing a Jew-Samaritan contrast rather than a priest-layperson) but to Lukan back-construction of the scope of messianic ministry based on the contemporaneous situation of the followers of Jesus (2) the clunky nature of the framing segment in Luke 10:25-28 and (3) numerous strange, quintessentially “Lukan” features.


Alongside these direct mentions of Samaritan persons, Samaria appears as a setting throughout the first half of the book of Acts (Acts 1:8; Acts 8:4-25; Acts 9:31; Acts 15:3) and in John (John 4). Most of the references to Samaria act as markers of place rather than sectarian difference. This name, and the name of the Hellenistic province *Samaritis* bundled with it, comes pre-packaged in descriptions of the area, as we see in

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23 *CIJ* 2.1400=OGIS II.598; *SEG* 8.169. Josephus, paraphrasing this inscription (or one like it), omits the death threat. His alternative reading of ἄλλοφυλοι (“one of another tribe”) carries a similar sense to ἄλλογενής (μηδενὶ ἐξεῖναι ἄλλοφύλῳ εἰς τὸν περίβολον εἰσίναι τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὸν ἀπηγορευμένον τοῖς Ιουδαίοις, εἰ μὴ ᾧς ἁγισθέσιν ἔστιν ἔθμον κατὰ τὸν πάτριον νόμον (Ant. 12:142; *War* 5:194). *Ant.* 15:417 uses ἄλλοσθενή in the same context. See Stephen R. Llewelyn and Dionysia van Beek, “Reading the Temple Warning as a Greek Visitor,” *JSJ* 42 (2011): 1–22.

24 For an overview (though not without its problems) of the passages and issues surrounding Acts 8, see most recently V.J. Samkutty, *The Samaritan Mission in Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).
geographical references by Strabo and Pliny the Elder (Gk. Σαμάρεια; Lat. Samaria). They most commonly appear in Luke-Acts, as part of a two-stage worldview. The Lukan Jesus reconfigures Israel with reference to three parts, Samaria, Judah, and Galilee. Then, the Israelite community broadens to include even those who are definitively not Ioudaioi. In John, Jesus and his disciples take the road to Galilee that led through Samaria, one of two common thoroughfares for those travelling to and from Jerusalem. Scholars have intermittently detected Samaritan echoes behind the speech of Stephen in Acts 6-7. Finally Acts 8:4-25 narrates the first apostolic missionizing journey, taken by Philip to Samaria.

Scholarly approaches to the New Testament Samaritans

Particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, interest in the Samaritans on the part of scholars of the New Testament surged. In contrast, writing in 2016, Reinhard Pummer notes that the present communis opinio sees attention to the multiple appearances of

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25 Strabo, Geogr. 16.2.34-46; Pliny, Naturalis Historia 5.66-73. For an overview from the position of a Samaritan Studies scholar of the tangled scholarly attempts to provide a taxonomy to distinguish Samarian/Samaritan, and a comparison with the similarly complex Jew/Judean see Pummer, Flavius Josephus, 4-7.


Samaritans and Samaria in the New Testament as something of a scholarly dead-end.

As he writes:

“As a perusal of recent publications in the fields of Samaritan and New Testament studies shows, in both areas scholars have come to the conclusion that the issue of Samaritan influence on New Testament writings (or vice versa) is not a fruitful avenue of research to pursue, and despite some renewed attempts to prove Samaritan influence on the New Testament, the voices advocating such influences have mostly fallen silent about hypotheses of this kind.”

If Pummer is correct, however, what do we do with the generations of New Testament scholarship that did ask questions of Samaritan influence? As I show in this section, the situation turns out to be more complicated than Pummer suggests. It was not simply that scholars abandoned their hypotheses of Samaritan influence because they recognized a lack of evidence. Instead, scholars had tended to focus on Samaritans only when they acted as a usable proxy to work through some important feature of the development of Christian religion or the circumscription of [Gentile] Christ-following communities. Consequently, when the functionality of Samaritans as proxy decreased, either due to a perceived lack of evidence or a shift in methodological assumptions, Samaritans likewise saw less attention.

**Samaritans in the Gospel of John**

For those studying the Gospel of John, interest in a possible Samaritan sub-group amongst the earliest followers of Christ was driven by a desire to explain perceived Jewish hatred for Johannine Christians, as well as explicate disaffection for the
Temple amongst (Jewish) Christ-followers. When this interpretation of the history of early Christ-followers fell out of favour, the importance of the Samaritans as a window into or explanation of the trials of that specific group also faded.  

Within Johannine studies, John L. Martyn commonly receives credit for sparking a still unresolved discussion in Anglophone scholarship during the 1960s-70s about how to best read the Gospel, and paved the way for Samaritan involvement. He argued that redaction-critical approaches opened a window through which the first-century Johannine community could be viewed, and the various interest groups within that community identified by their response to Jewish threat and ejection from synagogues. This response to threat is marked particularly by sharp polemic against the Ioudaioi in passages such as John 12:42, in which many do not confess their belief in Christ for fear that the Pharisees will drive them out. The Samaritans enter this theorization due to their maintenance of specific types of Moses traditions. Thus, Wayne Meeks posited a similarity between Johannine Moses-tradition and those of Samaritans, and argued that the Johannine community had drawn members from a Jewish community “whose piety accorded very great importance to Moses and the Sinai theophany,” as well as “Samaritan circles which held very similar beliefs.”

Oscar Cullman, similarly, suggested the Johannine community was best understood

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30 See also Bourgel, “Modus Vivendi,” 1-3. Bourgel does not track through Martyn, but does identify the same trend.


with reference to “heterodox Judaism and kindred phenomena”—including Samaritans. 33

Around the same time, Hans Kippenberg’s influential study of Samaritan worship and practice similarly stimulated interest in attempted reconstructions of a Johannine Samaritan-Christianity. 34 Kippenberg introduced what had been something of a fringe interest—at least for non-Israeli scholars—into the mainstream of New Testament studies. 35 Following Kippenberg, Raymond Brown, in his Community of the Beloved Disciple, argued that a Samaritan connection underpinned the intense conflict with Ioudaioi in the Gospel. 36 In this way, Brown provided the capstone to a conversation underway in Anglophone scholarship for decades. 37 Building on Martyn in reading the specific nature of the Johannine community from the source text, Brown suggested that John 4:4-42 might represent the conversion of a large group of Samaritans by Jesus himself. He also suggested that this suppressed backstory could represent a second stage in the growth of the Johannine community; one which involved a mixed group of anti-Temple Jews and Samaritan converts. These


35 On this, see further discussion in chapter 4 below.


Samaritan connections contributed to increased hostility towards the followers of Jesus on the part of Temple-dedicated Jews.38

Interest in Johannine Samaritans largely died down in the 1980s, however.39 From the 1970s onwards, sparked by Ellis Rivkin and borne to full term by the work of Jacob Neusner, as well as Peter Schäfer, histories of ancient Judaism were dramatically reconfigured.40 Those scholars who had linked the gospel to specific Samaritan connections had relied on late sources, and thus met with the sort of skepticism expressed by Lindars: “all these studies,” he wrote, “are highly speculative.”41 Lindars’ skepticism was borne out. As Hartwig Thyen notes, most

38 Brown, Community, 35-41.
scholars do not think a Samaritan background to the Gospel of John is credible.\textsuperscript{42} Straightforwardly, the similarities are more adequately explained “on the basis of a shared scripture.”\textsuperscript{43}

Scholars consequently shifted attention away from the internal ethnic or religious composition of the group towards issues onto which social scientific or rhetorically-focused methods could more efficiently shed light; the boundaries of the community and its strategies for differentiating itself from others (especially, in the case of the Johannine community, from the \textit{ioudailoi}).\textsuperscript{44} Scholars did not lose sight of Martyn’s understanding of the gospel as the product of multiple stages of editing. But their excavation of those stages increasingly focused on internal literary and rhetorical characteristics, rather than the concerns of external, identifiable communities.\textsuperscript{45}

This dip in interest concurrent with a scholarly shift away from straightforward emergence of Christ-following groups from a Jewish backcloth suggests that what attracted scholars to Samaritans was the historical possibility that they offered an


\textsuperscript{43} Pamment, “Convincing Evidence,” 230.


approach from the margins to the breakage between Jewish and Christian identity. What had drawn Martyn, Meeks, Cullman, and others to Samaritans in John was the possibility that thinking with Samaritans might help explain the otherwise messy process by which Temple-observant Jews became Temple-rejecting Christians. With the clarity of this binary undermined, and the connection of the Johannine literature to a clearly-bounded community complicated, Samaritans dropped off the radar.⁴⁶

_Samaritans in the Gospel of Matthew_

For scholarship engaging the Gospel of Matthew, the Samaritans function as a device by which to assess the stance of the gospel-writer on gentile conversion by clarifying the difference between Jewish and Gentile Christ-followers. Matthew 10:5-6 has been much debated, with much discussion of the possible source of this saying and its relationship to Matt 15:42, whether rooted in Q, Matthean traditions, or elsewhere, as well as the apparent contradiction with Matt 28:16-20, in which we find the commission to make disciples of all nations.⁴⁷ Despite this attention, “the city of the Samaritans” remains undertheorized. For example, Senior’s widely-used _What are they saying about Matthew_ does not mention Samaritans once.⁴⁸ Another example:

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⁴⁶With some recent revival of interest; see Bourgel, “Modus vivendi,” 3: “the tradition behind John 4:4-42 originated not long after the destruction of the Second Temple (70CE), within a community comprising both Jewish and Samaritan members and was aimed at defining a modus vivendi between two elements of this mixed congregation…John 4:4-42 appears to be part of the intense discussion about the status of the Samaritans and their degree of kinship with the Jews…”


⁴⁸Donald Senior, _What are They Saying about Matthew?_ (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1996).
John Riches frames his analysis of Matthew’s views on mission with Matt 10:5-6 and Matt 28:16-20 – but the “city of the Samaritans” slips out of his citation.49

Sometimes, Samaritans are engaged to extract a historical element of early Christian difference. For example, in his classic analysis, Streeter used the passage to try and situate the social setting of the Gospel, arguing that since Caesarea Maritima had a large Samaritan population it was unlikely this gospel was written there. Sim reads the passage similarly.50 Overman notes the evidence for Samaritans in first-century Palestine, largely from Josephus, the possible identification of the city with Sebaste, and that there may have been some political reason for avoiding the city.51 In these accounts, the mention of Samaritans is taken as evidence that Samaritans had nothing to do with the community of the gospel.

Scholars have more commonly read Matthew 10:5, however, as window opening onto Matthew’s view of the relationship between Israel and the gentiles, often parsed in theological terms as the relationship between Christians and Jews.52 Davies and Alison assume the short passage combines “Matthew’s rabbinic point of view,” where “rabbinic” means a hybrid of Josephus, Mishnah, and Talmud, with a view of “Christian mission,” and a Jew-Samaritan-Gentile expansion extrapolated from

Acts. Bird also makes a connection with Gentile mission, noting the apparent contrast with the inclusion of Gentiles in Matt 28. He suggests that this passage affirmed to Jewish Christians that God remained faithful to Israel, and to Gentile Christians that Jesus was the true Messiah of Israel. It thus authenticates the enfranchisement of both groups. France considers the detail of the city irrelevant, and comments that this passage represents the priority of the mission to Israel first—and a gentile mission later. Willitts pairs the verse with Matt 15:24, seeing both as representing Matthew’s Shepherd-Messianic conception of a future renewed Israel. In turn, he argues the referent of the phrase usually translated as the “city of the Samaritans” is relatively clear—and passes over it in silence.

This scholarship overwhelmingly focuses on the “house of Israel” and the relation of this term to either Matthew’s community or conceptions of early Christian mission. The Samaritans of this passage are, by and large, either passed over in silence or absorbed (again, silently) into the category of “the Gentiles.” “Samaritan” functions as an object with which to signals Jewish-Gentile relations, and/or raises the question of the universality of the Christian message—often in explicitly theological form. The Samaritans themselves are overshadowed to the point of disappearance.

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54 Bird, *Gentile Mission*, 55. Note also that, as Davies and Allison point out, the Gospel of Matthew (unlike the other three canonical gospels) gives the impression that Jesus never enters Samaritan territory (*Matthew 8-18*, 165).
From those shadows emerge well-defined forms of “Jews” and “Christians,” or else a prefiguration of the need for—and later success of—Christian mission.

Samaritans in Acts of the Apostles

In the study of Acts, what John Gager has called the “master-narrative” of Lukan literature holds fast. Samaritans receive attention from scholars when it is relevant to historical-critical excavation of a Christian community as it emerged, supposedly, from tension between Greek and Jewish believers. Acts comes encoded with the genetic data of identity conflict between Jews and Christians. Although responding to many of the same methodological twists and turns as scholarship on Matthew and John, the dominance of a historical Church/Christian/Hellenism vs. Israel/Judaism binary read out of Acts has compressed the relevance of Samaritans to their relevance to the narration of Christian beginnings. A survey of the relevant evidence confirms that Samaritans, again, act as a proxy.

Stephen’s speech in Acts 6-7 illuminates how attention to possible Samaritan content is shaped by a search for the mechanics of “Christian” extraction from “Jewish” norms. Stephen, one of the seven assigned by the apostles to distribute welfare to the grumbling Hellenists (Acts 6:1-4), is brought before the Sanhedrin

57 For the durability of this model, see Craig C. Hill, Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Early Church (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992); Larry Hurtado, Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 206-214. For comments and critique, Penner, In Praise, 40-42—though Penner too understands the project of the study of Acts to be (1) crucially important and (2) basically historical (Penner, “Method in the Madness”, 244).

accused of blasphemous words against Moses and God (Acts 6:11-12). His accusers then claim that:

Ὁ ἀνθρώπος οὗτος οὐ παύεται λαλῶν ρήματα κατὰ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἁγίου [τούτου] καὶ τοῦ νόμου· ἀκηκόαμεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος οὗτος καταλύσει τὸν τόπον τοῦτον καὶ ἀλλάξει τὰ ἔθη ἃ παρέδωκεν ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς.

“This man has not stopped spouting words against the holy place and the Law. For we have heard him saying that Jesus the Nazarene—yes, him!—will destroy this place and will mutate the customs handed down to us by Moses.” (Acts 6:13b-14)

In response to a simple question of verification from the high priest (Acts 7:1), Stephen plunges into an extended recapitulation of God’s past relationship with his people, beginning with Abraham (Acts 7:2-53). He aims to demonstrate firstly that the significance of “this place,” i.e. the Jerusalem Temple, is limited and secondly that the traditions handed down from Moses point to Jesus as the fulfilment of Deut 18:15; he is the prophet like Moses.59 With his listeners already fuming at a speech which tries to wrestle Israel’s history, as well as Moses and Abraham, away from the Temple and towards Jesus as embodying the Deuteronomic future, Stephen picks an unfortunate moment for an apocalyptic vision which Luke helpfully tells us displays Jesus standing at the right hand of the father. When he declares this visionary experience, the Sanhedrin fall on him, drag him from the city, and stone him.

This confrontation, and the question of Stephen’s social and religious affiliation, encouraged Ferdinand Christian Baur’s division of the speeches in Acts into those which understood Christianity as reconcilable to the Jews (Peter) and those which doubted the possibility (Stephen), an argument he first formulated publicly in an 1829

59 Peter also draws on this verse in Acts 3:22 for his speech in the portico of Solomon.
lecture given at Tübingen, _De orationis habita a Stephano Acta Cap.VII consilio_.

The narrative of Acts, according to this historical interpretation, attempted to gloss over tensions in early Christian communities between Hebrews and the crucial group whose inclusion would define Christian difference, the Hellenizers.

Scholars have occasionally wondered whether Stephen’s opposition to the Jerusalem temple hierarchy could be better explained by affiliation with the Samaritans, or at least whether the text transmitted Samaritan traditions hostile to worship in Jerusalem. Scharlemann argued, on the basis of historically strained relationships between Jews and Samaritans, that Stephen could not be a Samaritan and hold his conversation with the high priest and representatives of the Jerusalem temple hierarchy. He did, however, notice what he perceived as a series of Samaritan echoes in the speech of Acts 7:2-53. On the basis of what were interpreted

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60 Both points made clear by Carys Moseley, _Nations and Nationalism in the Theology of Karl Barth_ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 194-195. For a precise account of F.C. Baur’s developing thoughts between 1829 and 1843, see Penner, _In Praise_, especially 9-10.


as agreements between Stephen’s speech and the Samaritan Pentateuch, both Scobie and Spiro argued the opposite, picking up on earlier arguments made by Cullmann: that early Christianity maintained a significant Samaritan sub-group.⁶⁴ Scobie asserted particularly strongly that the speech “represents a fiercely Samaritan viewpoint”.⁶⁵ Spiro argued that that the “Hebrews” in Acts 6:1 should be understood as Samaritan rivals to Hellenistic Pauline Christianity, and argued that Acts 7:2-50 both depended on the Samaritan Pentateuch and reflects a Samaritan view of the Israelite past.⁶⁶

These arguments never really got off the ground. As Lowy pointed out, such arguments rely on backdating later distinctive Samaritan traditions as if they held true in the first-century and can be compared with the content of Stephen’s speech.⁶⁷ Taylor carefully demolishes them point by point.⁶⁸ As Pummer sums up, most contemporary scholars prefer other explanations for Acts 6-7 than reference to some group of historically distinct Samaritans, especially given how little we know about

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⁶⁶ Spiro, “Stephen’s Samaritan Background,” 294.


Samaritan “religion” at the time. Pummer himself never saw any reason to consider Acts 6-7 as connected to the existence of Christianity amongst the Samaritans at all.

The Samaritan mission of Acts 8:4-25 has received much less attention: Samkutty could write, in the only monograph-length treatment of the section, that no single work addressed the section as a whole. Whilst scholars have habitually referred to Simon Magus as Samaritan, Acts does not connect him directly to “Samaritan” concepts. Furthermore, the religious views of the group are not mentioned by the text, although they are represented as separate from the community focused on the Jerusalem Temple.

In fact, aside from a discussion of the Samaritans in the Second Temple period, Samkutty himself uses them as a means to an end; a case study of legitimization strategies within Acts. Like other scholars, he views Acts 8:4-25 as important partly because it shows the success of an early mission, generically conceived—pointing forwards into the mission to the gentiles. By defending the status of the Samaritans

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71 Samkutty, Samaritan Mission, 18.


73 Böhm, Samarien und die Samaritai, 279-308.

74 Samkutty, Samaritan Mission, 57-97.

75 Pummer, Samaritans, 41.
as part of Israel, these references “function as apologetic for Luke’s church, especially for the Samaritan Christians whose legitimacy and origin the Jews and the Jewish Christians could possibly have questioned.” Such a legitimization device, Samkutty argues, will end up producing insights into how Acts treats other marginal groups—the poor, children, women—and thus function as a window into internal dynamics of early Christian factions.\textsuperscript{76}

Samkutty’s turn to other marginal groups enables a realization that the philological and textual refutations by Lowy, Taylor, and Pummer masks. Amidst the back-and-forth of scholarly specifics, the Samaritan possibilities of Acts have also tended only to serve as a proxy for the narrative of the emergence of a (Gentile) Christ-following church over against a Jewish past. Samaritans are significant insofar as they enable a broader reconstruction of the internal dynamics of primitive Christianity imagined through Samaritans – or a characterization, in the form of Stephen, of what difference from a stereotyped Temple-focused Judaism looked like.

Such a developmental account leaves little room for third parties, even in more robustly theorized work. Shelly Matthews, for example, resists reading clear communal boundaries between “Jews” and “Christians” in Acts, but nevertheless perceives it as squeezing the audience into a mode in which “two distinct groups” are thinkable; “the Jews,” and those individual Jews (Stephen, Apollos, Peter, and Paul) who prove Jesus is Christ.”\textsuperscript{77} Maia Kotrosits compellingly dismantles binarizing approaches to these sources (and others) in favour of “darker ecologies of violence”

\textsuperscript{76} Samkutty, *Samaritan Mission*, 224-7.
but in the course of queering Acts the terms “Jew,” “Judaism,” “Christian” slip through the cracks into her main argument. The thesis that Samaritans were included amongst the early followers of Jesus remains entertained by some, but as background to a polarized binary between those who would not follow Jesus (usually “Jews” or “Hebrews,” sometimes “non-Christian Jews”) and those who would (“Christians,” “Hellenists,” “believers in Jesus,” or “Jesus followers”).

The Samaritans in the Gospel of Luke

Turning finally to the three passages in the Gospel of Luke, both Böhm and Elizabeth Dowling have noticed the particular interest of the text in the Samaritans. These passages illustrate how varied interpretation of the Samaritans has been—and how far modern New Testament scholarship has often focused, distinct from the history of interpretation, on questions of literary form and historical context that subordinate Samaritan difference to a proxy for theological categories of faithful and unfaithful believers.

Luke 9:52-3 has commonly found comparison with other sources reporting clashes between Galilean travelers, especially pilgrims, and Samaritans—not surprising given similar attestation in Josephus (Ant. 20 and War 2) and Pliny (Hist. XII.54). A relatively small bibliography has focused on form critical questions and

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78 Maia Kotrosits, Rethinking Early Christian Identity: Affect, Violence, and Belonging (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 85-115. To give Kotrosits her due, she could argue, with justification, that the inability to remove oneself from the grasp of these sedimented terms when writing about Acts forms part of her argument about history as affect.

possible interactions with Matt 10:5, as well as precedent in the echoes of Elijah and the men sent by Ahab, especially in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.\(^{80}\) Luke 17:11-19, the story of the Ten suffering from “leprosy”, has received, like Luke 9:52-3, somewhat less attention than the Good Samaritan. The attention it has received has concentrated in form critical terms, with some additional speculation as to how the behaviour of the Samaritan explicitly identified as ἄλλογενής illustrates the scope of Jesus’ Messianic mission.

The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37, because of its familiarity and the concentrated scholarly attention it has received, serves as the most useful barometer for investment by scholars in Samaritans for specific interpretive and theological purposes. This parable, somewhat ironically, is first and foremost an excellent example of the transformation of textual meaning over time. The story was primarily treated in late antiquity as allegorical.\(^{81}\) Origen’s exposition includes many of the key features:

\[ \text{Ἀνάγεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν Ἀδάμ· ἢ ὁ Ἱερουσαλήμ εἰς τὸν παράδεισον· ἢ ὁ Ἰεριχώ εἰς τὸν κόσμον· οἱ δὲ λεήσται εἰς τὰς ἀντικειμένας ἐνεργείας· ὁ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν νόμον· ὁ λευτήρς εἰς τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον· ὁ Σαμαρείτης εἰς Χριστὸν τὸν ἑκ Μαρίας σάρκα φορέσαντα· τὰ τραύματα εἰς τὴν παρακοήν· τὸ κτήνος εἰς τὸ σῶμα Χριστοῦ· τὸ πανδοχεῖον εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν· τὰ δύο δηνάρια εἰς τὴν περὶ πατρός καὶ υἱοῦ γνώσιν· ὁ πανδοχεὺς εἰς τοὺς τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐπιστατούντας ἀγγέλους· ἢ ἐπάνοδος τοῦ Σαμαρέως ἢ δευτέρα Χριστοῦ ἐπιφάνεια. \]

The man refers to Adam; Jerusalem to paradise; Jericho to the world; the bandits to the opposing powers (energeiai); the priest to the Law; the Levite to the prophetic word; the Samaritan to Christ, bearing flesh by Mary; the wounds to unwillingness to hear; the beast to the body of

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\(^{80}\) Bovon, \textit{Lake 2}, 6-9.

Christ; the inn to the church; the two denarii to knowledge concerning father and son; the innkeeper to those angels standing watch over the church; the return of the Samaritan is the second manifestation of Christ (Hom. Luc. 34.190-191)\textsuperscript{82}

After translation into Latin by Jerome in 391/2, the interpretation took on the form in Ambrose and Augustine familiar to the Middle Ages, throughout which the Samaritan represented Christ.\textsuperscript{83} Beginning with Calvinist Reformers, however, as Hans Klemm has examined in detail, the historical core of the narrative came to dominate readings.\textsuperscript{84} The Calvinist marginal gloss of Luke 10 in the 1560 Geneva Bible reads of the Samaritans, simply, “That nacion was odious to the Iewes.”\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{82} Greek and Latin in Origenes Werke, vol.9, ed. M. Rauer (GCS 49 [35]; Berlin: Akademia Verlag, 1959); see also with French translation In Lucam homiliae XXXIX (latine Hieronymo interprete), ed. François Fournier, Pierre Perichon, and Henri Crouzel (SC 87; Paris: Cerf, 1998 [1962]. At this point, Roukema uses Jerome’s Latin translation of Origen’s homily, as demonstrated by the English translation he provides (“Good Samaritan,” 62.) As a result, he misses the opportunity to comment on a number of features in the Greek absent from the Latin, as well as claiming (with the Latin but against the Greek) that the innkeeper does not represent angels. He also undercuts the chance to corroborate the material he discusses in the Commentary on John (“Good Samaritan,” 64-65) with the Homily. Both motifs he mentions, the innkeeper as angel and denarii representing gnosia, appear in the Greek text of the Homily, but not in Jerome’s Latin. Note also that the line in Jerome’s translation that assigns the tradition to a presbyter (Aiebat quidam de presbyteris volens parabola interpretari…) is absent from the critical Greek text.

\textsuperscript{83} See for instance Augustine, Quaest. ev. 2.19: Samaritanus custos interpretator, et ideo ipse dominus significatur hoc nomine… (“Samaritan is interpreted as custos, guard; and thus this name signifies the Lord [Jesus]…” See for this and an extensive list of references, Roland Teske, “The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37) in Augustine’s Exegesis,” in Augustine: Biblical Exegete, ed. Frederick van Fleteren and Joseph C. Schnaubelt (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 347-70.


\textsuperscript{85} The gloss, along with the Bible, was in English, the Geneva Calvinist community having taken refuge or been exiled from Scotland during the reign of Queen Mary (1542-1567). See Dan G. Danner, “The Contribution of the Geneva Bible of 1560 to the English Protestant Tradition,” The Sixteenth Century Journal 12:3 (1981): 5-18.
Calvin did not invent *historia*. Placing passages in some meaningful relationship with the past was not a sixteenth-century invention. Nevertheless, he represents a particularly visible, and particularly influential example of what became a much wider trend in interpreting this passage. He emphasized, as he stated in the 1539 preface to his *Commentary on Romans*, “lucid brevity” (*perspicua brevitate*) as the means by which an interpreter opened up “the mind of the writer” (*mentem scriptoris*). Thus, as part of a theological campaign against Roman Catholic and Protestant allegory—including that of Martin Luther—he argued that the parable simply and plainly narrates extreme compassion grounded in historical ethnic conflict. It also indicted the religious authorities of that specific historical moment—Jews and priests who should have known better—by representing a Samaritan helping a Jew even when “It is well known what deadly hatred the Jews bore to the Samaritans.”

Presenting Calvin’s theological claim about the obvious of Jewish hatred for Samaritans helps highlight how the same claim finds itself reflected in modern parable scholarship as well. Jülicher, Dodd, and other pioneers disagreed over how to

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86 *Historia* was no monolithic construct, but solicited a wide variety of writing modes and taxonomies of approach throughout the medieval period. See Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400-1500* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011). After all, as Kempshall convincingly argues, the historiographical emphases emerging in the Italian works of Machiavelli and Guicciardini had distinctive features—but their rhetorical approach and detailed use of classical models hardly sprung *de novo* from holes in the ground (*Rhetoric, 479-535*).


88 Calvin, *Commentarius in Harmoniam Evangelicam* 3:62. First printed in Geneva in 1555, the *Commentarius* was translated into English in 1610. A robust, now freely available, translation by William Pringle was printed for the Calvin Translation Society (Edinburgh, 1845).
classify the parable, as well as whether it was a single unit or edited text. Nevertheless, the position of the contributors to *Semeia* dedicated to parables (1970) work with a *communis opinio* assuming, like Calvin, that the fundamental meaning of the parable emerges from the relationship between Jews and Samaritans in first-century Palestine. Fitzmyer exemplifies the shape of the field’s interests when he strongly rejects importing “anachronistic” concerns (allegorical readings, and their subsets—including anti-Semitism), and spends as much time reconstructing a possible Aramaic original of the “Our Father” prayer in Luke 11:1-4 as he does considering the two-thousand year history of interpretation of the Good Samaritan parable. Bovon, taking a somewhat more measured approach to the relevance of interpretive history, nevertheless concludes that contemporary New Testament scholars sit on the near side of a “triumph of the historical-critical method” and “the end of Christological allegorization of the Samaritan.”

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In other words, in the course of its interpretive trajectory the Good Samaritan became fixed in realist history and charged with realized ethnoreligious hatred. The “Samaritan” thereby became a token, one’s reaction to which either marked you as respectable (if interpreted “historically”) or else credulous (if interpreted “theologically”). By this sleight of hand, the Samaritan hated by Jews became cemented as a fact of history rather than an anti-Catholic interpretation. Similarly, the parameters for acceptable scholarly reading fell into line with this historical “fact.” Acceptable theological readings required taking as basic that first-century Jews approached religious alterity through a racialized lens.

Hans Dieter Betz’s 1971 article on Luke 17 still neatly captures how effective categorization of literary structure, and the production of scholarship focused on the New Testament, is often coterminal with the delimitation of the terms on which these texts and their contents should be read:

“Two obvious problems with the present state of scholarship concerning the pericope commonly named “The Cleansing of the Ten Lepers” (Luke 17:11-19) indicate the need for a fresh investigation of it. There is uncertainty at the very outset as the commentators disagree on whether the pericope should be entitled “The Cleansing of the Ten Lepers,” or “The Grateful Samaritan,” or both “The Cleansing of the Ten Lepers and the Grateful Samaritan.” Furthermore, the passage has resisted all attempts at classification within the classical categories of form-criticism as developed by Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann. This paper will attempt a literary analysis of the passage. Its purpose is to locate and define the factors and motifs which guided its composition in order thereby to determine its significance for the theology of primitive Christianity.”

When combining this confluence between historical-critical method and attachment to “primitive Christianity” as a desired epistemic object, the scholarly detachment from New Testament Samaritans noted by Pummer is not just a story of the lack of evidence. It is also a story that in its twists and turns reveals how scholarly interest in Samaritans was tied to on how well they served as a proxy for specific ongoing arguments about Christian origins and Jewish difference. Historical Samaritans, rather than a participant in the social world and epistemic production of the New Testament, are most often compressed into a theological or methodological addendum to other, often theological, concerns.

Samaritans as “Despised”: Purity and Half-Breeds in New Testament Studies

Perhaps the strongest evidence for the compression of Samaritans into a theological token within New Testament Studies is how the vocabulary for referring to Samaritans is both disproportionately stable and sharply polarized. Scholars frequently refer offhand to New Testament Samaritans as a “despised” group, or as “outsiders” by default. In the second section of this chapter, I engage how New Testament scholarship consistently characterizes Samaritans as a separate ethnic, racial, or religious group embroiled in active hostility with their contemporary Jews.

Luke 10:25-37, again, provides the most useful barometer since it has attracted the most scholarship. A survey of commentaries reveals the extent of the habitual
classification of Samaritans as absolute other. Morris argues the Samaritan’s appearance was in a first-century context a “devastating” twist, given the “traditional bitterness” between Jews and Samaritans. Perrin argues that the Jews brought back from Babylonian exile “a rather new understanding of their faith and a passionate desire for racial purity.” Thus, “the Jews of Jesus’ day despised the Samaritans on both racial and religious grounds.” Goulder asserts that Samaritans have Luke’s sympathy as one of his set of “heroes from the despised classes.” Johnson notes the “rivalry” between Jews and Samaritans, but cannot avoid slipping into talking about the moral exemplar provided by the “despised Samaritan.” Bock writes that “Jesus’ choice of a Samaritan is significant, since Jews disliked Samaritans…There is an ethnic point, then, in the racial choice of this character.” Bovon stresses the position of Samaritans at the edge of the community for the content of the parable, identifying the choice of a Samaritan as “someone who was marginalized and disdained, a negative silhouette of contemporary Jewish society.”

94 John 8:48 would seem to be an obvious site for debates over Jewish-Samaritan relations. When talking of a background of Jewish/Samaritan hostility, however, the Good Samaritan parable receives much more scholarly attention as a potential window into first-century realities. The (clearly rhetorical) content of John 8:48 seems to deter social historical engagement – despite presence in the main narrative – in a way that the (probably rhetorical) Luke 10:25-37 does not – despite its parable setting. This likely reflect a tendency to read Luke-Acts historically while reading John as an exercise in source use or communal interpretation.

signals his attention to “socio-historical context,” in accordance to which he then explains the “shocking” Samaritan’s appearance by reference to the Samaritan’s status as a “socio-religious outcast.”[102] The *Jewish Annotated New Testament* interprets similarly, stating the “parable shocks by making the third person not the expected Israelite but the unexpected Samaritan, the enemy of the Jews.”[103]

Research articles exhibit the same trend. Dominic Crossan asserts that the binary “good/Samaritan” would have been incomprehensible to a first-century Jewish mind—because of the historical facticity of first-century Jew-Samaritan hostility.[104] Maccini, experimenting by drawing on medieval Samaritan chronicles and halakha for context, nevertheless begins from the assumption that the references to Samaritans in John and Luke ought to be understood with reference to a well-established hatred between two groups.[105] Bauckham asserts that when a Samaritan enters the parable in Luke 10 “a Jewish audience could not fail to think of the issue of the Temple which divided Jews from Samaritans.”[106] Esler, considering the use of social scientific models to analyse possible group conflict in Luke, nevertheless assumes the Second Temple Jewish evidence reflects a “standard Judean animosity to the Samaritan

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outgroup,” a relationship characterized by significant and centuries-old bad feeling. Dunn writes that “It is sufficiently clear...that there was a sharp breach between Samaria and the Judeans/Jews generally.” Meier mentions the fluidity of relationships between communities as part of modelling the Jewish and Samaritan communities, but slips back into the familiar pattern, arguing dramatically that we find “multiple attestations in Lucan and Johannine traditions that Jesus stood over against the typical views of the day in that he held a benign view of Samaritans.” Samkutty assumes that popular Jewish sentiment was anti-Samaritan. Longenecker, rehabilitating the character of the innkeeper in analysis of the passage, casually refers to the Samaritan as a “despised half-breed”.

Such comments occur in commentaries and articles on the other New Testament passages as well. For example, Overman’s comments on Matthew 10:5 rely on the historical detail that “Samaritans had been a despised people or ethnos in the eyes of most Jews for a long time by the writing of Matthew’s Gospel.” France remarks that in excluding Samaritans, Matthew reflects “a more traditionally Jewish outlook”

110 Samkutty, Samaritan Mission, 4. This case is particularly interesting since Samkutty does gesture to rabbinic material on Samaritans and some scholarship by scholars of Samaritan Studies; he, for example, adduces Coggins on Samaritan-Jewish difference as process not event (Samaritan Mission, 85). Nevertheless, his analysis of the New Testament texts still rely on a detemporalized general Jew-Samaritan separation.
112 Overman, Church and Community, 152.
than Luke. Bourgel concludes that to see Samaritans as “full-fledged Israelites and legally pure” was for the writer of John an “unparalleled” and perhaps even “radical” position.

The New Testament texts, although often concerned with boundaries of affiliation or community, do not present anything like such a clear-cut single image. To begin with Luke, the Samaritans in Luke 9:52-53 react to Jesus in hostile fashion, but he and his disciples nevertheless sought lodging with the Samaritans, then moved onto another village without major incident—a practice of travelling Ioudaioi attested also in John 4. In Luke 17:11-19, the Samaritan leper keeps the company of the other nine. When Jesus tells them to go to a priest, the text gives no hint that readers should expect the Samaritan to be troubled by this, or to go a different priest than his (presumably) Jewish companions.

Similarly, the ambiguity of the crucial Greek συγχρόνται (commonly translated “they have in common”) in John 4:9b (οὐ γὰρ συγχρόνται Ἰουδαῖο Σαμαρίταις) has given scholars pause for thought at least since Daube’s concise article in 1950. As early as the third century, Origen noticed that this verse, if read as describing a lack of any type of contact or encounter, requires massaging. Jesus, explicitly noted to be a ioudaios by the text of John, approaches the very same Samaritan woman who makes the statement that “Jews have nothing in common with Samaritans,” and initiates

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113 France, Matthew, 178. France also asserts that Matthew had omitted Samaritans from Matt. 4:25. Although Matthew’s approach is marked by some hostility—as noted above, his Jesus does not enter Samaritan territory—there is little grounding in the sources to posit an editorial intervention for Matt. 4:25, since the parallel passage in Luke 6:17-19 also has no Samaritans.

114 Bourgel, “Modus vivendi,” 27.

conversation with her.\textsuperscript{116} Perhaps, he wryly suggests, she may not have told the whole truth.\textsuperscript{117}

John 8:48 manifests a similar ambivalence. That the \textit{Ioudaioi} call Jesus “a Samaritan” does reflect a hostile act—clear from its bundling with the accusation that he is possessed by a demon—but not one that clearly defines or necessarily reflects the dividing line between \textit{Ioudaioi} and Samaritans as well-defined groups, especially since those \textit{Ioudaioi} who make the accusation had already committed once to following Jesus and his teachings (John 8:31). The meaning of Matthew 10:5 remains thoroughly unclear. Although these examples do communicate some degree of tension, to infer a categorical hostility between any Samaritan and any \textit{Ioudaioi} would be to extrapolate individual passages to exhaustively characterize the relationship between two separate groups.

In these passages, admittedly, Samaritans and \textit{Ioudaioi} are not interchangeable identity markers. They do mark groups at least imagined as in some way distinct.\textsuperscript{118} New Testament Samaritans act as ancillary characters natural to setting, fraught with meaning. But they do not clearly signify any absolute inclusion or exclusion. Nor do they even support the use of “inclusion” or “exclusion” as the only correct terms in which to consider Jew-Samaritan relations.

\textsuperscript{116} Origen, \textit{Comm. In Joh} 13.9.53-54 (Pummer, no.24).
\textsuperscript{117} This reading appears particularly plausible to Origen given Jesus praises her for speaking “appropriately” (in this context, for telling the truth) only a little further in their conversation (\textit{λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Καλὰς εἶπες}, John 4:17). This makes more sense if something about her character renders her truth-telling notable.
Positing a more polyvalent set of interpretations of New Testament Samaritans also fits better with arguments from Samaritan Studies, scholars of which have argued for over a century that Jewish-Samaritan hostility lacks basic grounding in ancient sources. First to write in English was James Montgomery, whose work on the Samaritans is the first cited work in Arndt, Bauer, and Gingrich’s lexicon entry and a core bibliographic staple for much of the twentieth century. He characterizes the Samaritan in the New Testament as “an Israelite, but one whose religion is in the condition of ignorance and whose institutions are irregular.” Montgomery specifically cautions against overreading this relationship between two Israelite groups as overtly hostile.\textsuperscript{119} More recently, Böhm also argues that the assumption of irreparably distinct or exclusive Samaritan and Jewish communities in the first-century is an overstatement.\textsuperscript{120}

Similarly, Richard Coggins stated that “Scholars have rightly become more cautious than was formerly the case in speaking of a ‘Samaritan schism,’ as if that were an event which happened at some specific date.”\textsuperscript{121} Rather, according to Coggins, the process of consolidated Samaritan identity unfolded throughout the first centuries CE in complex interaction both on the part of various groups within what would become “Samaritanism” conceived as a religious group and with the broader

\textsuperscript{120} Böhm, \textit{Samarien und die Samaritai bei Lukas}, 239-260.
regional religious context. Reinhard Pummer thus expresses a *communis opinio* in arguing for caution: “There are signs of animosity between Jews and Samaritans during the last centuries B.C.E. and the first century C.E.…The animosity between the two groups, however, should not be overdrawn.” Seth Schwartz concludes correctly but somewhat more pointedly that “from c.200 BCE until the middle of the 1st century CE, there is, apart from one questionable text, no evidence for hostility between Judaeans and Samaritans.”

Scholars working on the Pentateuch and the Persian period have reached similar conclusions. The aggressively sectarian edits of the Samaritan Pentateuch probably belonged to a late stage redaction of the Samaritan Pentateuch—itself a relatively late work. A variety of alternative theories have emerged to characterize the relationship of the Israelite north and south in Persian-period Judah. Very few of these include a clean division between ethnic Samaritans and ethnic Judaeans. Texts traditionally taken as anti-Samaritan, such as Chronicles, turned out to also support the opposite conclusion with equal or greater plausibility; that relatively late in the

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124 Seth Schwartz, “John Hyrcanus I’s Destruction of the Gerizim Temple and Judaean-Samaritan Relations,” *Jewish History* 7.1 (1993): 9-25, at 12. The single exception to which Schwartz points is the “Prayer of Joseph” from Qumran (=4Q371-372), although the anti-Samaritan content and the date of the text remain, as Schwartz says, unclear (22 n.18, 19).

Persian Period, a Judaean redactor invested serious time and effort in a conciliatory position towards those in the north. Indeed, surveying these arguments, Gary Knoppers concluded more than a decade ago that “the anti-Samaritan theory has been dealt a series of serious blows.”

All this is to say that somehow a non-native polemical, often racialized representation of Samaritan significance, and its attendant conceptual vocabulary, has become habitual in New Testament Studies in tension even with the standard for evidence that usually holds sway within the field: the close reading of texts in historical context. The Samaritan has become an absolute other, even for scholars like Esler who pursue more sophisticated ways of modeling collective difference. In the rest of this chapter, I explore how this happened.

Intellectual Architecture and the Samaritans as “despised”

The answer, at least in part, lies in the functional structures of scholarly research habit. In Pierre Bourdieu’s ethnography of the French academy, he argues that “a number of the criteria used by scientific construction as instruments of knowledge and analysis, even those most neutral and ‘natural’ in appearance, like age, also function in the reality of practices as principles of division and hierarchization (we have only to think of the classificatory and often polemical uses of oppositions – old/young, young/old, male/female, central/periphery, and so on).”

palaeo/neo, former/recent, etc.) and thereby also become an object of conflict.” So too, with New Testament scholarship.

Nor is this classification a challenge at the level of concept alone. It takes place in the material texts which provide scholars with their basic reference equipment. As Hayim Lapin notices, the research questions of the study of antiquity may no longer rely explicitly on nineteenth-century synthetic works. Nevertheless:

A number of characteristically encyclopedic works (generally from the late-nineteenth century) continue to be used as handbooks and, more interestingly still, have served for a model or frame for more recent revisions. Examples include H.L. Strack’s *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* and E. Schürer’s *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*. The massive German-language encyclopedia of antiquity known colloquially as “Pauly-Wissowa” (1894-1963) is the expansion of an earlier publication by A.F. von Pauly (1837-1852), and was the basis for both *Der kleine Pauly* (1964-1975) and *Der neue Pauly* (1996—). The standard dictionaries and grammars of ancient languages are the product of the development of nineteenth-century philology.

In short, “so much of current work on ancient history relies on paradigms and tools now well over a century old,” a case particularly pronounced with respect to Jewish antiquity. As Anders Runesson puts it, scholarly terms and concepts—such as, in our case, the dictionary definition of a “Samaritan”—even whilst allowing for a variety of views:

…construct the “space” within which we focus on specific issues and topics in our conversation. Terminological edifices are built slowly over time and are not easily torn down. Yet, as has been pointed out by researchers before, now-unsustainable scholarly (and non-scholarly)

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ideas and consensuses from previous eras influence current discourses because many of us still occupy the space created by the terminological walls, arches, and vaulted ceilings they have left behind. It is high time for us to re-consider and discuss not only the conclusions we draw, but the “architecture” within which we think them.\textsuperscript{131}

Moreover, theological concerns also continue to shape the academic architecture with respect to which the study of the Bible takes place. David Lambert recently drew attention to how little the field of Biblical Studies in particular has internalized criticisms made by James Barr in his \textit{The Semantics of Biblical Language} about the importation of theological conclusions into academic analysis.\textsuperscript{132} He points to multiple cases in which standard philological definitions of יד ("know"), לב ("heart"), and ניתן ("love"), found in reference works, the end-result of a process of extrapolation, often theologically motivated and “exceptionalist” when it comes to early Christianity, become stable enough to reapply and reverse etymology, inserting their content back into a historical source as if it were there all along.\textsuperscript{133} This is especially true of scholarship on ancient Mediterranean religion which, David Frankfurter rightly notes, “continues to be inhibited by its dependence on theological categories.”\textsuperscript{134}

The striking regularity with which Samaritans find themselves dubbed a “despised” ethnic other exemplifies a similar act of scholarly stabilization and feedback based on shared research equipment and durable theological


\textsuperscript{133} Lambert, “Refreshing Philology,” 334.

commitments. At first, it seems odd that such a sharply polarized term, found nowhere in the New Testament passages should find such consistent, descriptive usage. Combing through the core set of reference works used by New Testament scholars, however, one finds explanations in three.

The first, Arndt, Bauer, and Gingrich’s *Greek-English Lexicon*, a central resource for New Testament scholars working in Greek, reads under Σαμαρίτης:


The prominence of Arndt, Bauer, and Gingrich as a reference work further helps explicate the choice to describe the Samaritans as “despised” so strangely consistent through scholarship for the last fifty years. John 8:48 does not necessarily rely on ethnic prejudice for its meaning—since after all those so calling Jesus had previously been his followers—though it seems likely that “Samaritan” functions as an exclusionary term. It reflects, furthermore, an iteration on early modern reference works, which attested (and in their time abetted) the tagging of Samaritans as primarily a historical-critical entity. As early as 1661, the *Complete Christian Dictionary* published in London, and the work of a clergyman Thomas Wilson (continued by John Bagwell), happily bundled together the passages from the New

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135 Such metaphors for figuring meaning reflect the broad applicability of theoretical approaches to *knowledge-ordering as knowledge creation*, as in for example Michel Foucault’s well-known *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (translated A.M. Sheridan Smith; New York: Pantheon Books, 1972 [Fr. 1971]).

136 The other authoritative Greek resource, Liddell and Scott (very much a classicists’ weapon of choice—and when used for New Testament texts usually the equivalent of bringing a gun to a knife fight), in this case somewhat unhelpfully gives simply the direct transliteration “a Samaritan,” with references to the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of John.
Testament with Josephus to characterize Samaritans as a people comprised of strangers, with religious practice that mixed worship of God and “Heathenish Rites”. For Jesus to be called a Samaritan in John 8:48, they asserted, was a reproach by means of an “odious name”, as also “all cruell men we call Turks; and covetous [we call] Jews” (p.552). The Christian Hebraist John Lightfoot’s famous Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae (1658-78), the six volumes of which were used for the next two centuries to provide modular context for scriptural exegesis, supported this context of Jew-Samaritan hostility by simply appending John 4:9b: “Jews and Christians hold nothing in common.”

Diving further into the reference library reveals a second key culprit. The multi-volume Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT), has a storied and troubled past, given the unambiguous endorsement of Nazi anti-Semitism by the editor of volumes 1-4 (published in German, 1932-1938, 1942), Gerhard Kittel, but extensively used for its still unrivalled breadth.137 The entry for Samaritans belongs to the seventh volume, which along with volumes 4-10 was published after the trial of Kittel at Nuremberg, his imprisonment, and consequently the handing of the project to its new master Gerhard Friedrich. The TDNT entry, while not replicating the Fourth Gospel published in Nazi Germany which conspicuously omitted verses such as John 4:22 (“salvation is from the Jews”), nevertheless reproduces much of the conceptual framework of 1930s biblical scholarship which saw racialized terminology of

difference as largely unproblematic.\textsuperscript{138} Susannah Heschel has written at length on the lack of clean break between Nazi-complicit New Testament scholarship before 1945 and German New Testament scholarship after the end of the Second World War.

Given that the dictionary retained roughly a third of the contributors who had also written for it during the Kittel years, this should come as little surprise.\textsuperscript{139} One of these contributors, Joachim Jeremias, wrote the entry for Samaritans.\textsuperscript{140} In this article, Jeremias repeatedly replays hostile ancient reports, almost all taken from Josephus, that viewed Samaritans as in some way ethnically mixed, and translates them into modern race scientific terms. The \textit{TDNT} understands Jewish and Samaritan religion separating in the Persian period, a brief period of rapprochement under the leadership of R. Akiba (d. 135CE according, again, to the approach of the \textit{TDNT}), and Samaritans were regarded as unambiguously as Gentiles from around 300CE onwards.\textsuperscript{141} The Samaritans appear as a hated and hateful people, embarked on a mission of “national animosity”, and in perhaps the most sinister echoes of Kittel, Jeremias writes of the “mixed population in Samaria,” of the “members of this despised and hated mongrel people,” and of Samaritan mission as an “introduction of half-castes into the saved community.”\textsuperscript{142} The Gospels reflect a common background of “fierce hatred between the two peoples”; each mention of Samaritans in a New Testament text attests some facet of this historical backcloth. In fact, the \textit{TDNT}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{138} On the Nazified fourth gospel, see Susannah Heschel, \textit{The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), esp. 106-113; also for some contemporary news articles commenting on the editions Azar, \textit{Exegeting the Jews}, 1 n.1.
\item \textsuperscript{139} Heschel, \textit{Aryan Jesus}, 174-175.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Joachim Jeremias, “Σαμάρεια, Σαμαρίτης, Σαμαριτης,” in Kittel and Friedrich, \textit{TDNT}, 7:88-94.
\item \textsuperscript{141} Jeremias, “Σαμάρεια,” 90.
\item \textsuperscript{142} Jeremias, “Σαμάρεια,” 92-4.
\end{itemize}
asserts that “only against the background of this reciprocal implacable hatred can one understand the NT account of the attitude of Jesus and the primitive community to the Gentiles.”

This TDNT entry is a microcosm of Jeremias’ work in Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, still widely used as a reference work, which has a whole section, around a third of the book, dedicated to assessing “The Maintenance of Racial Purity” in the time of Jesus. The Samaritans appear at the end, a “mixed Judaeo-Gentile race” sitting at “the lowest degree of the scale” in Jeremias’ construction of a first-century Jewish racialized cosmos. Despite conceding the difficulty of uncovering strong evidence one way or the other he nevertheless manages to conclude that “the atmosphere was continually charged with hatred” on the part of Jews towards this “Judaeo-Gentile race.” In this work, Jeremias coined the term translated into English as “despised half-breeds,” which seems to have struck New Testament scholarship as rhetorically attractive. Jeremias also drew the ire of E.P. Sanders for reproducing the anti-Jewish arguments of Grundmann in a 1966 book on the historical Jesus. The sharp exchange in JBL involves something of a confusion of targets. Meyer defends Jeremias’ person against what he perceives as cutting ad hominem attack by Sanders;

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143 Jeremias, “Σαμάρεια,” 92.
145 Jeremias, Jerusalem, 352-353.
Sanders defends his own persona as a good reader of secondary scholarship, and thus his initial assessment of Jeremias’ work. I make no judgement as to Jeremias’ personal character or otherwise. I simply note that his replication of racialized terms of difference in both his 1966 work and his *TDNT* entry on the Samaritans fit larger patterns within NT scholarship, the scale and frequency of which makes questions of personal fault less relevant than assessments of academic habituation. Such language does not make him, or those who write with his phrases or arguments, a Nazi sympathizer. Rather it marks the naturalization of both racialized and anti-Jewish terms of difference in the conceptual matrix left to the twenty-first century by its imperial, political, and religious pasts.

To the *TDNT* and Ardnt, Bauer, and Gingrich we can add a third, interesting for its direct involvement with the paper trail past of the “despised” Samaritans and the act of selectivity its usage highlights: Strack and Billerbeck’s *Kommentar zum neuen Testament* (abbr. Str-B).\(^{147}\) In this *Kommentar*, the editors published extensive rabbinic extracts, decontextualized, translated into German, and appended as word-study based commentary (sometimes called “parallels”) to the canonical New Testament. The Samaritans come wedded to Matt 10:5 (“Do not go into the city of the Samaritans”), to which Strack and Billerbeck attached those rabbinic passages which mention *kutim*, the pejorative term for Samaritans used by Josephus and the rabbis, and inserted them in a long continuous text block.\(^{148}\)


\(^{148}\) On this, see chapter 4 below.
This arrangement serves a triple purpose. Firstly, the *Kommentar* presents its excerpts in an overwhelming mass, giving an impression of complete coverage but absent clear citation (usually) of the Hebrew or Aramaic text. This enables it to serve more easily an audience of New Testament scholars, who may well know some Hebrew but who likely have spent less time reading rabbinic texts than they have grappling with academic German, whilst still retaining an impression of authority. Second, any and all rabbinic treatments of *kutim*, stretching across several centuries, appear safely subjugated as background explanation for “the city of the Samaritans” taken from Matt 10:5. This facilitates use, whilst clearly demarcating an order of significance in which the meaning of the New Testament and its exposition represents a shared intellectual goal between *Kommentar* and readers. Third, the passages form a tacit chronological narrative of Jewish-Samaritan alienation which progresses smoothly and continuously until a “final break” (*der völlige Bruch*) around 300CE, according to a historicizing reading of R. Abbahu of Caesarea’s ruling against previous rabbinic statement and practice that Samaritan wine, offered to the emperor, counts as if wine of the Gentiles. To make sure the point is clear, this statement of a total break appears in larger, bold font.  

It is perhaps the interaction of the *TDNT* with this supersessionist source that starkly highlights the effortful selectivity that ensures the persuasive maintenance of traditional position with respect to Jew-Samaritan hostility. In his *TDNT* entry, and his 1966 book, Jeremias cites “Str-B I.552f.” for the key moment of Samaritan-Jewish “schism.” This is only the last eight pages of the relevant excerpts in the *Kommentar*.

149 Str-B, I.552.
Jeremias’ referencing indicates his concentration on the moment of breakage, drawing particular attention in his historical overview of the relationship on the section from the Kommentar which remarks on the “final break” between the synagogue and the Samaritans and following. He does cite other sections from the Kommentar, but only as verification for the Samaritan observance of various Torah laws. Without explanation or argument, he argues that the milder Mishnaic comments simply cannot be applied to an earlier period.

By focusing on absolute difference, the first-century relationship of all Samaritans to all Jews becomes simplified into one straight line running from Josephus to an inevitable telos in the early fourth-century “schism”. Via these historical gymnastics, Jeremias thereby permits himself to maintain his reading of “despised Samaritans” to construct what he understands as a stable theological position: the Samaritans as symbolic of the broadening of ethnic “Israel” to also encompass the (trans-ethnic) Gentiles. The use of the Kommentar for the TDNT entry on Samaritans exemplifies how, as Susannah Heschel diagnoses:

The denigration of Judaism remained an essential and static element of New Testament scholarship well into the twentieth century, even after critical editions of rabbinic texts and compilations of primary sources related to Second Temple Judaism had been published.

In addition to the TDNT, the influence of Billerbeck and Strack on the academic commentary industry is substantial. As Finkel put it, major commentaries on the

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150 Jeremias, Jerusalem, 352.
151 Jeremias, “Σαμάρεια,” 93.
Gospel of Matthew up into the 1980s relied on a “definite split” between Jews and Christians prior to the proposed date of the Yavneh council (ca. 85CE), but “their understanding of rabbinic material, aside from the uncritical use of Strack and Billerbeck’s *Kommentar*, rests solely on secondary Jewish literature.”\(^{153}\) In fact, as E.P. Sanders argued, the volume has frequently been used in place of the consultation of primary sources, and on the one hand “lends the air of scientific proof” whilst on the other creating a legalistic Judaism antithetical to Christianity.\(^{154}\) Commentaries on John 4 are another particularly striking example of the same reliance. Rudolf Bultmann relies heavily on rabbinic excerpts to contextualize Samaritans vis-à-vis rabbinic Jews, the latter conceived as a largely static mass.\(^{155}\) Another example: from Schnackenburg to von Wahlde, New Testament scholars grew to accept a curious argument that all Samaritan women—at the time of Jesus—could be classified as generically unclean solely on reading a short section from *m. Niddah* 4:1 as if it could be dated to 65/66CE. That dating relied largely it seems on Daube, who in 1950 stated

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As Andreas Lehnardt noticed, even an important work within Samaritan Studies such as Kippenberg’s \textit{Garizim und Synagoge} relied on Billerbeck and Strack for its understanding of Samaritans.\footnote{See Andreas Lehnardt, “Massekhet Kutim and the Resurrection of the Dead,” in Mor and Reiterer (eds.), \textit{Samaritans}, 175-92, at 177 n.13. For Kippenberg’s explicit reliance on Billerbeck and Strack (plus Jeremias), see \textit{Garizim}, 137-39 and example below.}\footnote{Kippenberg, \textit{Garizim}, 141-42.} For example, when Kippenberg argues that rabbinic and Christian texts sometimes attested a Samaritan belief in resurrection, he gives \textit{Sanhedrin} 90b as a proof text thus:

\begin{quote}
Der Patriarch der Samaritaner fragte den R. Meïr (um 150) u. sprach: Ich weiss, dass die Entschlafenen wieder aufstehen warden.
\end{quote}

At first glance, this is a remarkable encounter. The Samaritan patriarch himself spars with R. Meir, not about the truth of a bodily resurrection, but about whether the resurrected body will be naked or clothed. Furthermore, the passage goes on to cite Ps 72:16 as its proof text—a text well beyond the remit of traditional understanding of the Samaritans as accepting only the Pentateuch as scripture. But Kippenberg has slipped up. As Isser notes, the Aramaic does not read “der Patriarch der Samaritaner”
but “Queen Cleopatra.” Kippenberg cites only from Billerbeck and Strack, who accepted an implausible textual emendation by W. Bacher that altered קְלֵפֵרָא מַלְכְּתָא to פֶּטֶרְיאָ דַּכְוָאי. I began this section by asking how a vocabulary referring to Samaritans as despised anti-Jews could be maintained in the face of the lack of textual or historical basis for the categorization, within a field that usually prioritizes such epistemic foundations. Intellectual architecture provides an answer. A stable scholarly view of Samaritan identity as schismatic, ethnic, and anti-Jewish grew out of a determinedly supersessionist approach to rabbinic sources and Second Temple Judaism. Terms such as “despised” became cemented in the reference works functioning, sometimes even autonomously from their ancient sources, as the first port of call for scholars classifying and analyzing different individuals and groups in New Testament texts.

Moving Beyond “Despised” Samaritans and Renovating “Jewishness”

In this third and final section of the chapter, I use the above observations – how a lexicon of “despised” Samaritans became embedded within New Testament scholarship – to engage at a more conceptual level some challenges and possibilities.


160 Kippenberg, *Garizim*, 141, citing Billerbeck and Strack, *Kommentar*, I.552. See W. Bacher, who in theory fixes rabbinic biographical chronology by the insertion, arguing (1) R. Meir could not talk to Cleopatra and (2) elsewhere, R. Meir does have this same discussion with Samaritans. See W. Bacher, “Rabbi Meier and ‘Cleopatra’,” *JQR* 2 (1890): 188. Nevertheless, the emendation makes little textual sense, and rabbinic chronology is not so inflexible as to synchronize its characters in accurate ways; see Lynn Kaye, *Time in the Babylonian Talmud: Natural and Imagined Times in Jewish Law and Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). As Kaye points out, “In the legal, narrative, or exegetical contexts of the Bavli, time describes what sits between and binds conceptual or legal items together” (*Time in the Babylonian Talmud*, 3).
of New Testament scholarship on Samaritans. On the one hand, illuminating the intellectual architecture above demonstrates how far New Testament Studies still renders Samaritans in ways that concretize Jewish difference, with a Christian or proto-Christian rival identity often lurking in the background. On the other hand, rather than surveying scholarly approaches only to declare them moot, asking why New Testament scholars have understood Samaritans as they have can help renovate how to think through Jewishness and the New Testament more broadly. This is a different angle, also, to the historical corrective issued by Samaritan Studies, which works within the factive frame of the New Testament scholarly world but amends the facts. New Testament scholarship can, as Ward Blanton argued, do much more than simply avoid an “error of representational measurement.”¹⁶¹ It can take up what it knows, reconfigure it, and thereby format alternative ways of knowing about topics, subjects, and concepts otherwise taken for granted.

The entrenchment of Samaritan difference as “despised” visibly limits the scope of scholarship in at least two ways, and thus provides at least two opportunities to adjust course. First, scholars end up modelling Jewish and Samaritan identity with reference to a definitive separation – a separation strong enough to evoke hatred – between two groups after a specific point in time, modeling Jewishness and Samaritanness akin to the more criticized model of the “parting of the ways” between

¹⁶¹ Blanton, Displacing Christian Origins, 11.
Judaism and Christianity. Second, the form of the “despised” Samaritan reinscribes a supersessionist model of theological difference according to which distinction from Jewishness is regulated by the degree that a group finds themselves rejected by Jews. As Cynthia Baker points out when engaging the occurrence of such a rhetoric in early Christian usage, such a perspective also defines being a “Jew” as having both a chosen identity – defined by acts of deliberate renunciation – and an ethnicized identity that was theologically determined for failure.

With respect to the first point, reading hard, fast lines between New Testament “Jew” and “Samaritan” highlights to a problematic shrinking of scholarly chronological range, and thus a defective, tacit, periodization at play. If it can be taken for granted, as an artefact of historical context, that Jews and Samaritans were irretrievably hostile during the life of Jesus—or, at the latest, during the earliest generations of those who accepted Jesus as Messianic fulfilment—then the pursuit of questions of Jewish/Samaritan relations for much after this fact becomes disincentivized. Periods, as Kathleen Davis argues for the “medieval” and the

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162 As Peter Schäfer writes, “We have all learned by now that the old model of the ‘parting of the ways’ of Judaism and Christianity needs to be abandoned in favor of a much more differentiated and sophisticated model, taking into consideration a long process of mutual demarcation and absorption”; see *The Jewish Jesus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 84.

163 Such a model underpins the British discussion of the ‘parting of the ways,’ which, as James D.G. Dunn wrote, hinged on “how and when these Christological claims made the breach inevitable”—in other words, when did Christians claim something that made it impossible for Jews to accept them. See Dunn, *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999 [1992]), 368.


165 For a useful recent reflection on the effects and challenges of periodization, with a special focus on Late Antiquity and Islam, see Fred M. Donner, “Periodization as a Tool of the Historian with Special Reference to Islamic History,” *Der Islam* 9:1 (2014): 20-36.
“modern,” respond to politics. Talk of Jew-Samaritan rupture or schism prior to the composition of the New Testament dictates that Samaritan Jewish interactions can have, for chronological reasons, relatively little significance after the time of the New Testament.

This limitation is shifted, not defused, by the position of Jeremias, following Billerbeck and Strack, and recently revived by Heemstra, Cohen, Schiffman, and others, that the first-century context marked a low point in relations, the second-century evidence suggests a temporary recovery, and the later third-century an absolute break. Such acts of periodization still emphasize the uniqueness of the first century, but stress its difference from the centuries following rather than preceding.

Either of these acts of temporal truncation go some way to explaining the curious appearances and disappearances of Samaritans in scholarship more generally. As Leah Di Segni has noticed with respect to archaeology of Palestine, Samaritans are able to function as something like a “ghost people”:

On the one hand, sources—and first of all the Samaritan sources themselves—seem to me not to be doing justice to Samaritan history and realities. On the other hand, archaeological news, including new discoveries and reconsideration of long-known material data, tend to use the Samaritan entity as a solution for old problems rather than setting it up as a historical-archaeological question to be explored, on a par with other ethnic groups in Palestine. Accordingly, archaeologists as well as historians occasionally evoke the Samaritan ghost in the most unexpected places and circumstances. The opposite also happens: that

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is, the option of a Samaritan presence is ignored in sites where it should be surmised, as it were, by geographical right.\textsuperscript{168}

Here too, the Samaritans have become conceptualized as a revenant of a biblical time already past, distinct from Jews in accordance with some previous identity-forming event. As a result, they play peculiarly flexible and undisciplined explanatory roles—often, therefore, producing at best loose analysis and at worst confusion.

Instead New Testament Studies could benefit by modelling Jewish/Samaritan difference as a site of continued exchange rather than constituted by a time at which there was rupture. At least one consequence is the possibility to connect passages relaying concern about Israelite identity to a broader set of debates, such as the relationship between Levites and the tribes in history and memory, or the reconfiguration of inter-Israelite belonging by the rabbis. What looks like anti-Jewish or, in this case, anti-Samaritan rhetoric instead has, as Annette Yoshiko Reed has put it, an “inner-Jewish orientation.”\textsuperscript{169}

Also, such an approach helps short-circuit Christian eventualism. This is the elephant in the room in much of New Testament Studies, according to which the point of discussing the New Testament academically at all is, as Blanton argues, to demonstrate that the tools of the New Testament scholar (specifically) are best suited to encompass the material.\textsuperscript{170} One of the tools of such a scholar is the trope of rupture, used with (at least) the effect of leaving the New Testament open to theological


\textsuperscript{170} Blanton, Displacing, 5-12.
history, to interpretation in line with the Christian religion that came next, so that the scholar can prove the worth of their method to even those who affiliate with the Christianity theologically embedded in the text.

To define groups – here Samaritans and Jews – as bounded by breakage implies essence, essence implies the possibility of absolute change, and absolute change, in the interpretive approach to Israel, encodes Christian theology. Understanding Samaritans and Jews instead as parts of a contested, but gradated constellation of “Israel,” on which also (Gentile) Christ-followers can be situated reworks an account of first century changes in the configuration of communities laying claim to Israel without making Christianity the telos for any framework within which those changes make sense.

The second limit, the specter of an ethnic Judaism reflected in Jewish hatred towards Samaritans, reimposes an artificially limited definition of Jewish difference in a form convenient for supersession by an imagined universalist Christianity. The main purpose of such Samaritans is often to act as radical anti-Jews, enabling the extraction from the New Testament of a perceived latent Christianity. Jewishness ends up defined, in the process, by a pre-Jesus event – schism with Samaritans. Thus, Jewish identity is, in the time of Jesus, already presented as particularistic.

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171 Mason and Esler both argue that this is explicitly not what their work claims, and with justification (“Grounds for a Distinction,” 494-95.) Nevertheless, the recurrence of the assumption of Jewish particularity is distributed widely in the field, and this becomes clear specifically when we consider the function of the Samaritans.

The straightforward acceptance that “Samaritan” entails “despised” accepts, at least in practice, difference between Jews and others in antiquity encapsulated by one specific attitude: sharp and reckless Jewish racial hate. This characterization of Jews has served very specific purposes at certain times in the history of Christian exegesis. During the Protestant Reformation, for example, interpreting first-century Samaritans as distanced from Jews by Jewish hatred modelled religious difference as distance from official institutions translatable as an attitude. This permitted Calvin, for example, to more effectively reorient readings of the Parable of the Good Samaritan to present himself as a better exegete than his rivals and retain the manufactured opposition between of official/Jew/hater vs. merciful/Samaritan/hated.

In New Testament scholarship, linked in a straight line to the anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic crucible of nineteenth-century Europe (especially Germany), this linguistic habit serves a subtler purpose but one which can produce equally aggressive theological results. The \textit{TNDT}, as discussed above, provides a key case in point. By characterizing difference from Jews in terms of Jewish hatred, the “despised” Samaritans both foreshadow and justify the replacement of a parochial Judaism, badly adjusted to its world, by universal Christianity.\textsuperscript{173} Samaritans foreshadow the (posited, inevitable) Jewish rejection of Gentiles by going through it themselves. Joachim Jeremias says it explicitly: the only way to understand Jewish relationships with

\textsuperscript{173} Jonathan Z. Smith argued decades ago that study of early Christianity and Judaism often detrimentally orders an approach to ancient material on the assumption that something remarkable \textit{must} have happened in the form of Christianity; see \textit{Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). New Testament scholarship has struggled to respond effectively, when it has tried to respond at all.
Gentiles in antiquity is to understand the portrayal of Samaritans in the Gospels. In their narrative function as victims of hate, a historical claim made via Josephus, John 8:48, and judicial use of select rabbinic passages, they illumine the sharp oppositional intention of Jesus’ contemporary Jews. Therefore, even while appearing to act as a historical causal context rooted in the available sources, the “despised” Samaritans function as a theological cipher. In this way, a theological explanation emerges, demonstrating it to be necessary that Christ’s Messianic mission expand beyond Israel to the Gentiles.

This is not to say that every scholar who uses such language of Samaritans deliberately slips from historical grounds onto the thin ice of supersessionist theology. Nevertheless, careless use of the term “despised” retains a significant conceptual threat in obscuring the point of slippage between the analytic and the polemical. The consistent casual usage which it sees implies that one key case of difference from Jews can be exhaustively explained by reference to Jewish hatred, in the face of consistent evidence that this was never the case.

This becomes even more important when the work of previous generations of scholars examining first-century Palestine has so often rubbed shoulders with Christian supersessionism, anti-Semitism, and categorization of “religion” which takes Christianity as a prototypic term the heights of which Judaism failed to reach.

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175 I owe this opposition to Nancy Klancher, “A Genealogy for Reception History,” BI 21:1 (2013): 99-129. Klancher writes [on key shifts in history of interpretation and reception history]: “These early shifts in foci represent bedrock moments when rhetorical context began to be understood as social and ideological function” (“Genealogy,” 106). In this case, the context/function transformation takes place not diachronically, but in the movement of a single argument.
After all, talk of Jews as despising non-Jews awkwardly intersects the arguments made by Nazi scholars such as Gerhard Kittel when they characterized Judaism as a jealous antagonist to Christianity, morally and spiritually degenerate and thus prone to racial and religious hatred.\(^{177}\)

Against all this, as Horrell suggests, alternative, expansive theories of difference-making are widely available.\(^{178}\) As theorists of social difference have argued, often building on F. Barth’s formative 1969 publication, boundaries between communities encourage interaction and exchange as much as they separate; “categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact, and information.”\(^{179}\) The performance of categorical difference generally relies as much on contact as distance. Texts taking form between communities exhibit not only differentiation, but the participation of both communities in a mutual process of self-definition, during which each group remains indispensable to the definitional process of the other. As Brubaker more recently argued, moreover, groupness itself should fall under suspicion as “a key part of what we want to explain, not what we want to explain things with”.\(^{180}\) Drawing lines around groups is an act of *invoking*, which thus seeks to *evoke*; thus the categories of “Jew” and “Samaritan” are likewise categories which are for *doing*.\(^{181}\) Definition is more complicated than difference; the persistence of

\(^{177}\) On Kittel in context, see Heschel, *Aryan Jesus*, 184-189.


different identity labels, like *Ioudaios* and Samaritan, does not in any simple way entail the existence of different groups of *Ioudaioi* and Samaritans.

The Samaritans offer an opportunity (and catalyst) to shift emphasis away from “despised” Samaritans and Jewish “hatred” to instead reconnect New Testament Studies with work ongoing in Jewish Studies that emphasizes the continual construction of Jewish identities. Shaye D. Cohen’s work on the Second Temple Period, as well as his studies of Jewishness more broadly, set the tone for two decades of work on the construction of multiplex identities in antiquity, so far still engaged absent from the bibliographies of New Testament Studies.¹⁸² Beth Berkowitz’s recent monograph is a particularly illuminating example. Berkowitz sidesteps a developmental model of one Jewish identity by tracing, instead, a single verse from scripture, Leviticus 18:3, as it shapes attachments to Jewishness and minority identity ancient Israelites, Philo, Clement of Alexandria, classical midrash, Tosafist commentators, right through to Ovadiah Yosef and Moshe Feinstein.¹⁸³

As I survey further in Chapter 4, if both “gentile” and “Israel” remain terms in transformation throughout the period and beyond, the taxonomy of difference between Jews and others assumed to hold in the case of the Samaritans is simply impossible to maintain – and as Berkowitz models, does not make particularly

¹⁸² See especially Shaye D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Like Berkowitz’s volume (below), Cohen also sees Jewishness not as a fixed product of some antique moment (although he does, influentially, argue that it became a religious identity during the Second Temple period), but as a continually reshaped characteristic. In line with this, his book, commonly cited for its comments on ancient Jewishness, tracks opinions on circumcision, conversion, and matrilineal belonging through to the Middle Ages.

expansive use of the potential of our texts. Instead, a model of arrays of ancient difference can take center-stage, able to sustain expansive diachronic discussion of difference that intersect and scrutinize, rather than reifying, identities like “Roman,” “Greek,” “Samaritan,” “Judean,” “Israelite,” “Gentile” using the intellectual resources from a different field – and reconsidering what they mean for scholars as well as in their ancient context.

By destabilizing the naturalized association between “Samaritan” and “despised” we make visible, again, the continued risk that conceptualization within New Testament Studies of religious groups happens in theological rather than historical terms. In place of that conceptualization, we make it easier to avoid introducing Jews only in the form of Jewish hatred. We also reopen questions of a range of possible differences between those who claimed an identity rooted in the biblical past, in line with ongoing work in Jewish Studies. Rather than interpreting the Samaritans, on the basis of entrenched readings of the New Testament, as merely a part of the story before the important origin of Christianity or rabbinic Judaism, we can integrate the Samaritans, in line with Samaritan Studies, into flourishing work on the continually negotiated boundaries of Jewishness. This alternative model of identity has significantly more flexibility, greater chronological extent, and more interdisciplinary opportunities; when a Samaritan appears in a text, the significance of their appearance opens questions rather than closing options.
The New Testament Samaritans and Beyond

By arguing for a renovated approach to Jewish and Samaritan difference, I am not scolding New Testament scholars for that historical work that they have diligently done. Rather, I hope to render visible disciplinary habits that have shaped, and limited, the social logic by which scholars within their field approach Samaritans—and thereby, the range of identities—in their source texts.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, above, I concerned myself primarily with how and why New Testament scholars have engaged Samaritans—and how rethinking that engagement might unleash something more of the potential of New Testament texts.

I began by surveying the handful of references in the New Testament to Samaritans. As Klemm, Bovon, and others have pointed out, the variety of exegetical paths then taken with respect to the Samaritan passages is remarkably heterogeneous.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, scholars examining the New Testament have frequently compressed Samaritans into a target for categorical Jewish hatred for all non-Jews. Jews, therefore, find themselves represented, offhand and by default, as present to New Testament Samaritans only via their own hatred for religious others. This maintains a path to the theological claim that ancient Jews failed to effectively manage their relationships with their surrounding world (present in the doubled figure of the Samaritan/Gentile), and that this failure resulted necessarily in religious change to the form of (successful) Christianity as true to the promise of Israel.

¹⁸⁴ On such a motivation with respect to older and more recent histories of biblical interpretation, see Klancher, “Genealogy,” 128-9. See for more on “social logic” Gabrielle Spiegel, “History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages,” Speculum 65 (1990); 59-86, esp.77-78.
¹⁸⁵ Klemm, Die Gleichnis, 9-10.
Thus, Samaritans have ended up side-lined except as a group through which to figure Christian and Jewish difference; by which, as Derrida put it (albeit with respect to communists), the groups are “there without being there.”\textsuperscript{186} Samaritans have frequently been significant only insofar as their characters in relationship to Jesus and the Jews mirror and helps to explain eventual difference between Jews and (Gentile) followers of Christ. Much more reflexive caution, it seems, is required when examining the judgements of previous scholarship—including received judgements on what characteristics separate a group from categorization as Jews, especially in the time of Jesus.

Not taking Jewish-Samaritan hostility for granted, re-examining the ancient sources, and carefully examining the intellectual architecture of modern scholarship, the possibilities implicit in our archive reopen in line with a shift in emphasis towards active, continuing lives of texts. Suspending an obvious recourse to Samaritans as a “despised” people, allows our sources to breath more freely regarding them. By undermining a writing habit that tacitly limits alternative readings, the Samaritan passages in the New Testament can be relocated alongside the texts of their exegetes, into the set of documents stretching through antiquity engaged in the generation of Christian identity with respect to proximate others—with some of those others, newly noticeable, being Samaritans. For example, the late antique negotiations between rabbinic Jews and Samaritans become not an irrelevant curiosity, the aftermath of one specific parting already attested in first-century Palestine, or, as in the \textit{Kommentar}, a

false reconciliation, but part of the ongoing interface between claimants to biblical identity into which the New Testament passages also fit. Augustine’s interpretation of the Good Samaritan becomes not a detour from historical meaning, replicated throughout the Middle Ages, but an extrapolation and expansion of non-obvious multiplicity that characterizes texts shot through by historical time.

This way, New Testament texts become working pieces of a much larger set of sources. If the New Testament, with its Samaritans somewhat familiar to us, folds back on itself to uncover such an unsettled topography of identity and difference, how much more possibility might lie in reconsidering antique Samaritans in sources where they appear much more than in the New Testament, but in which they have been equally, if not more, overlooked by scholars? How might we be able to interrupt the conversation ongoing about the production of identities in late antiquity, and point in possible new or variant directions? As I identify in the next chapter, late antiquity provides a larger Mediterranean context in which Samaritans can be decried, evoked, or lauded—in short, a moment in which Samaritans find their way onto, into, and around multiple agendas. The question this chapter opened the way to ask, pivoting away from the Samaritan as the preserve of New Testament Studies, is this: where, why, when, and to whom do Samaritans matter?
CHAPTER 2: THE SAMARITANS BETWEEN THREE FOURTH-CENTURY BISHOPS

Between the autumn of 386 and the autumn of 387, John Chrysostom, skilled rhetorician and newly minted Antiochene presbyter, preached a series of homilies known from the manuscript tradition as well as to scholars by the shorthand *Adversus Iudaeos*. One of his most common strategies was what his contemporary Libanius, the Antiochene teacher and rhetorician, calls in his rhetorical handbook *psogos*, namely, invective—an all-out attack on Jewish credibility, sociability, and religious devotion. Chrysostom recommended that his hearers replicate that invective when they staged interventions for Christians suspected of fraternizing with Jews. Multiple times, Chrysostom guides his hearers through an imagined confrontation like this one from the eighth *Adv. Jud.* homily:

καὶ εἶπὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν, ἔτερωθεν ποιησάμενος τὴν ἀρχὴν, ὡστε ἀνύσωπον γενέσθαι τὴν διόρθωσιν.

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2 Robert L. Wilken in *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1983), describes this as “the use of half-truths, innuendo, guilt by association, abusive and incendiary language, lascivious comparisons, and in all, excess and exaggeration”—simply put, to twist material in order to condemn most effectively (112-116.) For many examples see *Progymnasmata: Argumenta orationum Demonstratarum*, vol.8 in *Libanii opera*, ed. Richard Förster and Gregory E. Richsteig (Teubner, 1915); also his Or. 30.8 (F.III.91-92). The *Progymnasmata* has been translated by Craig A. Gibson, *Libanius’s Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008); see p.xx-yy for *psogos*/invective. Other examples include Gregory of Nazianzus’ characterization of Julian in *Or.* 17, or, for that matter, Amphilochius’ rhetorical strategy against his Lycaonian targets considered below.
Ἐπαινεῖς, εἰπέ μοι, τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, ὅτι τὸν Χριστὸν ἐσταύρωσαν, καὶ βλασφημοῦσιν εἰς αὐτὸν νῦν, καὶ παράνομον αὐτὸν καλοῦσι;

Πάντως οὐκ ἀνέξεται, ἓν ἢ Χριστιανὸς, κἂν μυριάκις ιουδαϊκή, οὐκ ἀνέξεται εἰπεῖν ὅτι Ἐπαινοῦ ἀλλ' ἐμφράζει τὴν ἀκοὴν καὶ ἐρεὶ πρὸς ςέ, Μή γένοιτο, εὐφήμει, ἀνθρωπε.

Εἶτα ὅταν αὐτοῦ λάβῃς τὴν συγκατάθεσιν, πάλιν ἐπανάλαβε, καὶ εἰπέ· Πῶς οὖν αὐτοῖς κοινωνεῖς, εἰπέ μοι; πῶς μετέχεις τῆς ἕορτῆς, πῶς μετ' ἑκατὸν νιστείες;

Εἶτα κατηγόρησον αὐτῶν τῆς ἄγνωμοσύνης· εἰπεὶ τὴν παρανομίαν ἀπασαν ἢν ἐν ταῖς ἐμπροσθεν ἡμέραις διῆλθον πρὸς τὴν ὑμετέραν ἁγάπην, τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ τόπου, τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ καρποῦ, τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ, τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς προφήτης τῶν προφητῶν ἐλεγχομένης· δεῖξον πῶς εἰκὴ καὶ μάτην ἀπαντα πράττουσι, καὶ οὐδέποτε ἐπὶ τὴν προτερὰν ἐπανήξουσι πολιτείαν, καὶ ὅτι οὐ θέμις αὐτοῖς ἐξω τῶν ἱεροσολύμων οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον ἐπιτελεῖν.

Καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἀνάμνησον τῆς γεέννης, τοῦ φοβεροῦ βήματος τοῦ Κυρίου […]

And say to him—beginning from some other topic, so that the correction goes unsuspected:

“Tell me—do you praise the Jews because they crucified Christ, and blaspheme against him even now, and call him a lawbreaker?” He will not stand for it in any way if he is a Christian, and even though he might Judaize ten thousand times he will not dare to say “I praise [it]”. Rather, he will stop listening and say to you: “May it not be—keep reverent silence, man.”

Then whenever you have gained his approval, take up the point again and say:

“So—tell me—how do you have koinonia with them? How do you partake of their feasts, how do you fast for those?”

Then accuse them [the Jews] of having no feelings. Speak out about all the transgressive acts which I went through during the last few days in front of your meeting (πρὸς τὴν ὑμετέραν ἁγάπην): transgression of place, of time, of the temple—transgressions already rebuked by the prophets! Prove how everything they do is in vain, fruitless—and that they will never return to their former politeia, and that [in any case] it is not customary for them to fulfil this outside of Jerusalem any more.
And remind them of Gehenna, of the terrifying tribunal of the Lord…(Adv. Jud. 8:5.3-5; PG 48:934:50-935:7)

Here we encounter the tightly-wound polemical torsion often characteristic of Chrysostom’s sermons—and furthermore, in a form which encouraged at its own replication by Chrysostom’s congregation. I begin this chapter with a lengthy quotation that does not directly involve Samaritans in order to make a two-pronged observation on scholarly engagement with late antique identity and difference. First, scholarship over the last few decades has dealt adroitly with the ways in which rhetorical performances using religious others, such as the Ioudaioi, manufactured Christian identities. Second, the same intensive scrutiny has not been paid to scholarly selectivity vis-à-vis which late antique others receive attention. Some

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“others” have caught scholars’ attention – heretical Christians, Jews, pagans – while other “others” have not – Manichaeans, Mandaeans, Samaritans. As a result, scholarly approaches to late antique identity often limit themselves to exploring and theorizing identities that compared to the possibilities in their sources form an artificially narrowed set.

In the previous chapter, I argued that scholars consistently reduced the Samaritans to an anti-Jewish ethnic other, squashing the group into a device to smooth accounts of the boundaries of Judaism and the eventual (inevitable) breakaway of Christians. In this chapter, I also aim to counterbalance the artificially reductive effects of scholarly selection using corrective attention to Samaritans. Samaritans are well-attested, active participants in the religious, social, and legal landscape of the later Roman Mediterranean, as well as claimants to the heritage of biblical Israel just like Jews, Christians, pagans, and Muslims. Equally useful, when aiming to produce an expansive habit of scholarly selectivity, their appearances are transient. On the one hand, they really bother some Christians. On the other, they only sometimes cause obsession or hostility. Unlike “Jews,” “pagans” or “heretics,” they do not become a stable polemical trope continually recurring in the Christian literature of the Middle Ages.

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5 Many of the relevant sources, with translations (albeit variable in quality), are gathered in Reinhard Pummer, Early Christian Authors on Samaritans and Samaritanism. Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 92 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

Samaritans are therefore less sedimented in the theological imagination and legacy bound with the affect of much of our material. Hence they resist becoming another example of our current approach to late antique representation. They do not quite fit with prevailing categories and norms. Therefore, an approach that deals effectively with the temporally specific and striking importance of Samaritans can also catalyze ways of approaching our late antique sources with expansive habits of thought that resist compressing the representations of identity and difference in our late antique sources.

This chapter thus examines the repertoire of phrases, images, and explanations by which three elite fourth-century Christians—John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Amphilochius of Iconium—represented the group. In talking of “repertoire,” I draw on terminology used by Justin McDaniel, a scholar of modern Buddhism. Repertoire denotes the words, explanations, images and expressions used to construct meaning, on the one hand. Technologies refers to practices used to solve problems, on the other. Specifically, I talk in term of “technologizing,” the process by which a group becomes a discursive tool for use. By means of the representation of Samaritans in their repertoire, each Christian writer technologizes the group for specific ends.

Each of these ecclesiastical writers pays more obvious attention to Samaritans than many of their Christian contemporaries, and each does so in a way that illuminates a non-Jewish group who both claimed the ancient biblical past of Israel and caused trouble for

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the Christianizing present. Cyril of Jerusalem represents Samaritans as a real religious threat to warn potential baptizands away from straying. John Chrysostom narrates them as biblical fossils, whose piety can shame his own contemporary philo-Jewish Christians, and in order to paint religious complacency as false genealogy. Amphiloctus technologizes the group into an analogical condemnation of deviant church members; as Samaritan (deviant) to Jewish (people of God), so his false ascetic opponents to his own observant congregations.

Cyril of Jerusalem: Samaritan Threat

Numerous post-Constantinian preachers engaged Samaritans as a technique to regulate acceptable Christian practice. Cyril of Jerusalem presents the most vivid example, in the repeated mentions of Samaritans in his *Catechetical Orations*.\(^8\) Biographically, Cyril dips in and out of view.\(^9\) An Armenian *Vita* exists, but late, untranslated, and without critical edition; our accounts in the church historians of the fifth and sixth centuries primarily concern themselves with his acts as bishop. Cyril was exiled and reinstated several times; for example, he was one of the exiled bishops reinstated at the accession of the emperor Julian (361CE), and at the time Epiphanius

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was writing his *Panarion* (c.374-376CE), Hilarion was bishop and accused by Epiphanius of collaborating with Arians.  

Of his surviving works, the *Catechetical Orations* are the most extensive. This set of eighteen homilies were translated soon after their composition into Coptic and Latin. Jerome knew them, and their influence on subsequent Christian writers including Gelasius of Caesarea, Niceta of Remesiana, Ambrose, Augustine, and especially Rufinus in his *Expositio Symboli Apostolorum* is well documented. Cyril probably addressed these to catechumens early in his episcopal career, most likely in 350/351CE. Cyril’s militant rhetoric constructs a battle for control of Jerusalem, by demarcating political and imperial threats as part of a demonic landscape (Bishop Acacius of Caesarea, Cyril’s rival; Emperor Julian’s plans to rebuild the temple). In such a vividly focused “overarching eschatology,” Cyril tugs the Christians he addresses in an imagined state where they stand on “the edge of interreligious violence.”

An embattled Jerusalem makes conceptual sense given the inauspicious beginning to Cyril’s own episcopacy and the political circumstances of the Jerusalem see in a tug of war with Caesarea Maritima after a period of significant forced

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12 Drijvers, *Cyril*, 35; 56-7; Kalleres, *City of Demons*, 149-50. Drijvers also discusses the possibility that the *Lectures* were edited later, catalyzed by Julian’s attempt to rebuild the Jewish Temple; he admits the plausibility of a collection later in the century (*Cyril*, 53) but prefers the earlier date.  
14 Kalleres, *City of Demons*, 172-73.
obscurity ended with the patronage of the Christian emperors. Cyril, as Bitton-Ashkelony puts it, was in his time, “the most prominent figure giving weight to and promoting the holy places of Jerusalem as a means to strengthen Christian’s faith—in what might be termed the ‘theology of landscape’.” But if Rufinus is to be believed, Cyril accepted a bribe to renounce his ordination under Maximus from a group of Arian bishops, including his later rival Acacius of Caesarea. Cyril, Rufinus writes, was prone to sometimes wavering in doctrine (suscepto aliquando in fide), and frequently changing his allegiance (saepius in communione variabat). Sozomen and Theodoret both represented him as aspiring to first place in Palestine, due to the apostolic past of Jerusalem.

Cyril conceives this violence taking place in a Jerusalem with vertically-stacked cosmic significance; a site for the contestation against demonic forces and earthly power outlined against and threaded with significance due to relationship to the biblical/apostolic past and onrushing eschatological future. Matters came to a head in Jerusalem. After all, it had been from Jerusalem, Cyril argued, that the apostles issued a letter freeing “the whole world” from the Jewish practices and customs

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15 Walker, **Holy City, Holy Places**, 3-22.
20 For the concept of “stacking” as a metaphor for the layering of associations with a given site and an abundance of examples, see its use in envisaging ancient ways of viewing the topography of Palestine as holy in Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, *Literary Territories: Cartographical Thinking in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 32-41.
established by Moses. Kalleres has persuasively framed Cyril’s engagement with Jerusalem in terms of cultivating Christian perceptive power: “If one can ritually engage the correct biblical texts at the proper time and place within the Holy City and under the right bodily conditions, space and time fracture just enough to allow a sensory glimpse into biblical realities.” Jerusalem thus occupied a position of significant ambivalence. It was elevated by Canon 7 of Nicaea, which apportioned its bishop the same degree of importance as those of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch due to “custom…and ancient tradition” (συνήθεια…καὶ παράδοσις.) But it remained subordinated to the metropolitan bishop of Palestine, in Caesarea. Furthermore, there were those who saw the city’s importance lying in the biblical past. For Eusebius of Caesarea in the new dispensation it was one corner of a world illumined by the possibility of universal church. For Gregory of Nyssa, seeing the holy places “was of no importance for the Christian faith”—instead, devotion to the cult of the martyrs in his own region, Cappadocia, mattered most.

In all this excitement centred on Jerusalem as conceptualized at the heart of a Christianizing Palestine (or not), scholars have tended to move quickly over Cyril’s Samaritan passages. Michel-Yves Perrin writes, “Cyril seeks to define the limits and bounds of the ‘Righteous Faith’ by emphasizing what stands outside it. These outsiders are categorised under the classical trilogy of Jews, pagans, and heretics, to

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21 Catech. 16.9; 17.22, 29.
22 Kalleres, City of Demons, 153.
23 Drijvers, Cyril, 36.
24 Walker, Holy City, Holy Places, 57-70 (for pre-325); 98-116 (post-325.)
which are added here, on account of the local context, the Samaritans.”

But Perrin says nothing more of the group. Jan Drijvers also notices the importance of Cyril’s polemics against Jews, Gnostics, Manichaeans, and pagans. Nevertheless, he too skims reasonably quickly over Cyril’s anti-Samaritan rhetoric. Although he notes that Samaritans are mentioned, he remains content to express puzzlement that, since we know Samaritans inhabited the vicinity, Cyril did not more actively polemicize against them:

“Since in his Procatechesis Cyril mentions the Samaritans as one of the religious movements, together with pagans, Jews, and heretics, against which the baptismal candidates are taking up arms, one would expect an exposition on them. However, Cyril hardly devotes a word to the Samaritans. This is all the more surprising since in Cyril’s time Samaritan communities were located not far from Jerusalem. The only time that he speaks about them in more detail is in his last lecture in which he condemns the Samaritans for not believing in the resurrection of the dead. By referring to the Law – the Samaritans only accepted the Pentateuch – Cyril tried to make clear to his audience how silly and senseless the Samaritan ideas were: When the world was created by God out of nothing, would it then be impossible to raise the dead again? Cyril furthermore considers the Samaritans to be unbelievers for not accepting the prophets.”

For Drijvers, the significance of references to a group is ultimately governed by how they relate to the actual presence of that group. If a group is historically attested elsewhere but barely mentioned by the text, the logic goes, Cyril cannot have thought

26 Michel-Yves Perrin, “The Limits of the Heresiological Ethos in Late Antiquity,” in Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity, ed. David M. Gwynn and Susanna Bangert (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 201-228, at 203. Nor was only Jerusalem such a mixed city-scape; Hagith Sivan likewise notices the evidence for late antique Scythopolis as “a hybrid population of Christians, Samaritans, Jews, and pagans” (Sivan, Palestine, 158).

27 Drijvers, Cyril, 56. The omission of Samaritans until the chapter focused on social history (ch.4) is particularly interesting given the group appears in the passage Drijvers indicates summarizes the groups Cyril’s candidates should avoid (Catech. 4.37).

28 Drijvers, Cyril, 110. His dismissal of Samaritans is somewhat hasty. There is more evidence for the fourth century than just a handful of synagogues. But he is correct that Cyril mentions the Samaritans only a little.
them all that important. As a result, the Samaritans drop out of his examination—even when Drijvers surveys passages in which they do appear.²⁹

Drijvers is correct that the Samaritans do not seem to matter as much as the Hellenes or the Ioudaioi—thus rendering them less important for his stated purpose of retrieving social-historical information. Perrin plausibly notes that they appear due to “local context.” But infrequent mention does not mean conceptual insignificance for the scholar of the period.³⁰ There is more to the handful of mentions of Samaritans than meets the eye, especially when we not only examine how frequently they occur, or expect them to provide a window into the religious landscape of Palestine, but when we pay attention to the discursive role they play in Cyril’s repertoire of difference.

It is as significant, in its own way, when a religious other becomes part of a discursive backdrop as when it serves as a foregrounded opponent; in fact, especially so when that religious other might be expected to receive more direct attention—but doesn’t.³¹ Cyril’s Samaritans provide a contrastive example all the more intriguing for the intermittence of their appearance. Cyril tackles the Samaritans head-on as one of a set of threats to the piety of his catechumens. He writes:

Παράμενε ταῖς κατηχήσεσιν· εἰ καὶ πολλὰ παρατείνομεν λέγοντες, μὴποτε ἡ διάνοια σου ἐκλυθῇ· ὅπλα γὰρ λαμβάνεις κατὰ ἀντικειμένης

²⁹ For example, Cyril 56 n.114: the list of groups Cyril warns his candidates away from includes the Samaritans, but they slide out of Drijvers’ analysis.
³⁰ Drijvers, Cyril, 97: “Can we learn anything from these lectures about the religious landscape of Palestine and bordering regions in Cyril’s time? Can we learn anything about Cyril’s audience? What kind of people were his baptismal candidates?”
“Pay attention to the catechesis. Even if we end up talking over time, do not let your concentration lapse. You are taking up arms against an opposing force. You are taking up arms against heresies: against Jews, and Samaritans, and Pagans. You have many enemies: take plenty of ammunition; you have targets in plenty. You need to learn how to shoot down the Greek, how to struggle against heretic: against Jew and Samaritan. Your weapons are ready—and the sword of the spirit the best prepared of all. But it is necessary for your right hand to also strike with good intent, so that you might fight the fight of the Lord, so that you might conquer the opposing forces, so that you might be unconquerable against every heretical manoeuvre.”

Andrew Jacobs argues that the catechetical lectures aim to “construct a totalizing form of Christian knowledge.” Dayna Kalleres analyses in much more depth how this totalizing knowledge shapes a Jerusalem resistant to demonic forces. Both scholars concentrate on how the Lectures interact with Jews, pagans, and demons. But Cyril also takes specific aim at the Samaritans. In an apparent terminological innovation, Cyril also attempts to reify Samaritan religion alongside Jewish religion in opposition to Christianity:

“Do not stray into the assemblies of the spectacles of the Pagans; never use amulets in a time of sickness; turn away always from the flowing
filth of taverns. And do not fall into *samareitismos* or *ioudaismos*; for Jesus Christ has cleansed you.”

Shaye Cohen, Steve Mason, Judith Lieu, Daniel Boyarin, Steve Mason, Cynthia Baker, and others have examined in detail the functions of *ioudaismos* and *christianismos* in Christian writings. Mason, for instance, argues that by the time of Eusebius *ioudaismos*, used predominantly by Christians, had come to conjure into being an abstract theological Judaism against which to project Christian religious claims of supersession, rather than an initial ethnic and geographic sense. It may have begun as a Hellenistic Jewish term of self-identification, appearing in 2 Macc 9:17 as part of the reconfiguration of Jewish identity in the Second Temple Period (see also 2:21, 8:1, 14:38; 4 Macc 4:26,) but when paired with *christianismos* the term served rather as a foil. As Boyarin writes, *ioudaismos* became an interpellated

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35 *Catech.* 4.37.10-14; FOTC 61, 137-8.

36 For an overview of the core discussions—and a prescient prediction of directions of research that did, in fact, follow, especially in terms of asymmetry and narrow explanation—see Megan Hale Williams, “No More Clever Titles: Observations on Some Recent Studies of Jewish-Christian Relations in the Roman World,” *JQR* 99.1 (2009): 37-55. This issue of *JQR*, edited by Natalie Dohrmann, serves as a staging post for understanding research before, and since—as well as pointing to some possibilities for paths of research that have, as of yet, not been taken.


system of now-defunct Jewishness. Against its subjected features, Christians could position their own, freshly historicized, path of departure.\textsuperscript{39} And as Cynthia Baker has traced, the freezing of Judaism as always already superseded set the tone for later centuries, whereby it would be Christians who interpellated “Jewish” opponents, and who framed the charge so as to present Jewish religion (\textit{ioudaismos}), in contrast with, and exclusive from true Christian religion (\textit{christianismos}): “Jew came to signify an adherent of what Christian theology constructed as a system of belief and practice...Judaism as a ‘religion of the Jews’ is one that is superseded and defunct at the very moment that it is crystallized.”\textsuperscript{40} We see something similar in the shift between the earlier Middle Recension of Ignatius’ \textit{Magnesians}, in which \textit{christianismos} functions as a work, an instrument, and the Later Recension, in which \textit{christianismos} excludes \textit{ioudaismos} wherever it appears.\textsuperscript{41}

So what is the significance of Cyril’s attempt to similarly isolate \textit{samareitismos}? It matters to him, when equipping soon-to-be-baptized Christians, to represent and


\textsuperscript{40} Baker, \textit{Jew}, 38. See also Baker’s recognition that “Jew” has frequently served to designate an Other, rather than being a chosen name: “For much of the past two thousand years, those whom historians and theologians term Jews have often not referred to themselves as Jews” but by alternatives such as \textit{yisrael} or affiliation of birthplace (49). On problems with the term “religion” in the ancient world, see Brent Nongbri, “Dislodging ‘Embedded’ Religion: A Brief Note on a Scholarly Trope,” \textit{Numen} 55 (2008): 440-60 and at more length \textit{Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), although with important clarifications and critique in David Frankfurter, “\textit{Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept} by Brent Nongbri (review),” \textit{JECS} 23:4 (2015): 632-34, and Annette Yoshiko Reed, “After ‘Origins,’ Beyond ‘Identity,’ and Before ‘Religion(s).’” See also Daniel Boyarin and Carlin A. Barton, \textit{Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), similarly paired with useful critique by Anders Klostergaard Petersen in \textit{Bryn Mawr Classical Review} (http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2017/2017-06-14.html).\textsuperscript{41}

tackle a Samaritan threat in Christian ideological terms. Cyril attempted to present Samaritaness in the frozen, essentialized terms present also in the term *ioudaïsmos*, against which Christians could oppose their living, baptismal piety. It also mattered to him, when preparing for their entry into the full liturgical life of the Jerusalem church, that his catechumens envisage the type of strategy able to produce intellectual victory for a Christian against a Samaritan interlocutor. As for us, Cyril’s recourse to Samaritan religious deviance in opposing a stable *samaritanism* to Christianity serves as an important expansion of our accounts of religious conflict in the period. Judaism, Hellenism, and Samaritanism all appeared threatening enough at least to Cyril to reify as abstract systems embodying the threat of apostasy, an observation which suggests we adapt our images of the period to factor in Samaritan involvement. To invoke Samaritanism, to draw on the wordplay of Rogers Brubaker, was to evoke it, using the category to “stir, summon, justify, mobilize, kindle, and energize.”

We will see this reified religious “Samaritanism” appear again in the heresiological writing of Cyril’s younger contemporary, Epiphanius of Cyprus. Epiphanius attempts to undermine heresiological opponents, to categorize them in an eighty-sect natural handbook of poisonous topics, and to locate them in an ethnic and geographical fractal of deviance. He also, moreover, conceptualizes a time-scape in which the truth of the church moves inevitably from one period to another, from the true church of Adam to the true church of Christ, and leaves heresies behind in the dust of the past—bound inflexibly to ethnos, place, and time. In accordance with his

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43 For more, see chapter 3 below.
strategy of dealing with heresy by classification, Epiphanius reifies “Samaritanism” (samareitismos) to insert it, firmly, as a well-bounded unit, into his schematic of deviance in several key lists.\textsuperscript{44} In both Epiphanius and Cyril, therefore, what appears a quirk of grammar enacts conceptual totalizing—and in both cases, of Samaritan religion in the way that scholars of ancient Judaism have noticed characteristic of Christian representations of Jewish religion. Both count as fourth-century examples of “ethnopolitical entrepreneurs,” who “may live ‘off’ as well as ‘for’ ethnicity.”\textsuperscript{45} Thus they, as Bourdieu says, “contribute to producing what they apparently describe or designate.”\textsuperscript{46}

The appearance of this terminology in Epiphanius also renders it unsurprising that Samaritans also fit into Cyril’s taxonomy for the heresiological opponents of properly placed faith.

Μέγα τοίνυν τῆς ἁγίας καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας παράγγελμα καὶ δίδαγμα πίστες περὶ νεκρῶν ἀναστάσεως, μέγα καὶ ἀναγκαίωτατον, ὑπὸ πολλῶν μὲν ἀντιλεγόμενον, ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς ἁλθείας πιστοποιούμενον. ἀντιλέγουσιν Ἑλληνες, ἀπιστοῦσι Σαμαρεῖται, διασύρουσιν αἱρετικοὶ. πολυειδῆς ἡ ἀντίρρησις, ἀλλὰ μονοειδῆς ἡ ἁλθεία.

Faith concerning a resurrection of the dead is a central precept and teaching of the holy catholic church. It is central and most essential; spoken against by many, but firmly established by the truth. Greeks speak against it, Samaritans disbelieve it, heretics tear at it. The denial is pluriform, the truth is uniform.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{44} Ancoratus 12:8.8; Pan. 1:157.3-4; 1:159.21-22; 3:495.5-18. Via the Anacephalaioses, an epitome of Epiphanius’ Panarion, the term also finds its way into John of Damascus’ much later De Haeresibus: De haeresibus 9:1-10 = Ps.-Epiphanius, Anacephalaioses 1:166.9-19 = Pummer no.162.

\textsuperscript{45} Brubaker, “Ethnicity without Groups,” 166.


\textsuperscript{47} Cyril, Catech. 18.1.15-20; see also FOTC 64, 120.
Most of the references to Samaritans cluster in this final address, on the topic of the resurrection of the dead. Cyril provides the soon-to-be-baptized Christian with arguments against the unbelievers (τοῖς ἀπίστοις), Hellenes and Samaritans. Like other Christian heresiologists, he lambasts Samaritans for disbelief in the resurrection of the dead; one of a set of those who oppose a central teaching of the church as katholikos—like other heresiologists but unlike Epiphanius, he seems unaware of the tradition that at least one group of Samaritans, the Dositheans, accepted bodily resurrection. Samaritans here serve as one part of a doctrinal Scylla and Charybdis, the other being the Greeks, whose mistake understanding positions them against a central, essential tenet of the church and thus, he argues, against the uniformity of the truth.

The argument in this closing address is relatively simple. First, Cyril presents his catechumens with the dilemma he imagines posed by the Samaritans and Greeks. If a body is to be reassembled after death, how will its many pieces be brought back together after destruction by fire and weather, consumption by animals, and the scattering of the person’s remains over vast geographical distances? Then, he rebuts it. The only reason anyone could think this argument refutes resurrection would be if they thought God was impotent. Thus, Cyril retools a conceptual objection about parts into a theological accusation—if anyone makes this objection, they attack the power of God. Another argument harnesses the same slide into the theological; if anyone argues against the resurrection of the dead, they deny judgement after death, and thus they deny the justice of God.
Second, he argues that those who deny resurrection of the dead nevertheless act as if the dead still matter, and are refuted by the way in which the seasons change and plants grow. In both of these cases, he imagines, his opponent sees nothing unnatural. So, why would that opponent argue that a powerful God had no means to bring about comparable changes vis-à-vis the beings for whose benefit plants were created? Third, he attacks the Greeks. Fourth, the Samaritans. Finally, he turns to proofs of the resurrection, the recitation of the creed, and the final exhortation to baptism suited to this, the final catechetical address before the main event.

It is worth briefly dwelling on the precise form of the arguments against Samaritans. Like the Alexandrian Origen before him, Cyril strategizes which arguments are most likely to be effective against this particular group. He explains to the catechumens that usual strategies of quoting prophets prefiguring Christ would not work because Samaritans accept only the Torah:

Μετάβηθι μοι λοιπὸν ἐπὶ Σαμαρείτας, οἳ νόμον δεχόμενοι μόνον προφήτας οὐκέτι καταδέχονται, οἵς ἀργὸν ὡς ἔοικε τὸ παρὸν ἀνάγνωσμα τοῦ Ἰεζεκιήλ: προφήτας γὰρ, ὡς ἔφη, οὐ δέχονται. πόθεν οὖν πείσωμεν καὶ Σαμαρείτας;

“Turn with me now to the Samaritans who, receiving only the Law, no longer accept the prophets; to them the passage just read from Ezechiel (Ezekiel 37:1, with which the address begins) seems of no weight. For the prophets, as we said, they do not receive. How can we also convince the Samaritans?”

Cyril’s address contains three basic arguments. First, from the statement in God’s mouth in Exodus 3:6, which retains the present tense, he argues God’s words imply that the patriarchs remained alive. How could God, speaking truth, say he is God of

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48 See Origen, C.Cels 1.49 = Pummer no.10; Hom. In Num. 25.1 on Numbers 32:2 = Pummer no 15.
49 Catech. 18.11 = Pummer no.56.
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob if they were dead and gone? Second, he responds to the counterargument that perhaps the souls survived but without bodies, using the example of transformation of material in the Torah to prove God’s power. Technically, of course, this has nothing to do with the more complex possibility of souls outlasting bodies—but Cyril framed the objection in terms of bodies not being able to rise, and thus noting the power of God is a useful response. Third and final, Cyril emphasizes the creative power of God; the creative ability of God when first creating humans from “the dust of the ground” serves to validate his capacity for raising the bodies of the dead.

These arguments share striking similarities. Each defends the power of God as if the only concept at stake was the possibility that God was not able to resurrect the dead. Each uses proof texts drawn from the Pentateuch only; examples taken from Genesis and from the Exodus narrative. Cyril is of course preaching to the choir. Whether such arguments ever saw use against Samaritans is unknown—and whether they would have proved effective is doubtful. The main point is this: Cyril shapes the biblical arguments in defence of the resurrection of the dead in accordance with his awareness—and that of his catechumens—that Samaritans only accept the Pentateuch. Whether imagining conflict or not, or whether serving simply to equip his catechumens with a theoretically appropriate salve for doubt, Samaritan scriptural norms provided the basic frame for these arguments: they had to rely on the

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50 Catech. 18.11.  
51 Catech. 18.12.  
52 Catech. 18.13.
Pentateuch only, comparable to how Christian polemics against Jewish interpretation often focused on the Hebrew Bible.

In some ways, Cyril’s Samaritan repertoire is straightforward. The Samaritans present an imminent, present threat, to be countered and avoided when it—intermittently—arises. In dealing with this, Cyril technologizes Samaritans into a real religious other; Cyril attempts to fix Samaritan opposition using the -ismo form in the same way that he attempts to fix—here following a more widespread trend—Jewish opposition.

There remains the question of the intermittent appearance of Samaritans. If Samaritans were so much a threat, why would they not appear more? Possibly, Samaritans tended to make few appearances in Jerusalem; possibly, the border of affiliation between Samaritans and Christians was relatively impermeable. Answer? Perhaps both of these. But at least one more: as scholars have noticed in a variety of late antique contexts stretching across centuries, it is important to notice the resurgence of the memory of Israel.

Peter Brown notices that late antique society could increasingly be presented, by elites increasingly immersed in such concepts, “in terms of the archaic, precivic world” of the Hebrew Bible: “the absorption of the Bible by Christians brought the social imagination of an ancient Near East, that knew nothing of the classical city, into the fifth-century present.”53 Martha Himmelfarb, in a different context, has noticed the same thing; she argues that Sefer Zerubavel, one of the most distinctive pieces of Jewish “apocalyptic” literature dealing with early Islam and the collapse of

53 Brown, Power and Persuasion, 153.
Byzantine control of Palestine, reflects less the genre apocalypse and more a resurgent Hebrew Bible prophetic tradition, especially drawing on the visionary mayhem of the Book of Ezekiel. Sizgorich puts it particularly well: the holy texts of Christians “were only comprehensible as the continuation of a much older prophetic metanarrative”.55

Perhaps Cyril exhibits the same fraught resurgence of the Jerusalem—and the people of God—of the biblical past; a true Jerusalem.56 Sivan has noticed that “Mediating a discourse of signifiers, Cyril depicted Jerusalem as a genealogy of the cross and not of Constantine. His lectures projected a biblical Jerusalem that has been sublimated into a series of slow-moving spectacles and festivals which in turn marked the space of the city.”57 Cyril considered that, as Kalleres emphasizes, through baptism he made available “ritual agency and power to see the true Holy City of Jerusalem hidden behind Aelia’s demonic illusions.”58 Cyril himself not only evokes the life, death, and tomb of Jesus, but determinedly transposes the identity of biblical Israel onto his catechumens, opening the sixth address by quoting from Is 45:16-17:

ἐγκαίνιζεσθε πρὸς με νήσοι. Ἰσραὴλ σώζεται υπὸ Κυρίου σωτηρίαν οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσονται, οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ ἐντραπῶσιν ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος, καὶ τὰ ἔξης.

55 Sizgorich, Violence and Belief, 27.
56 See Sivan, Palestine, 204; on the complex dynamics of this process especially Jacobs, Remains, 139-199. Nor is this resurgence limited to the biblical past: the Second Temple Period and its texts also play a major role in the imaginary of late antiquity; see the papers in Menahem Kister, Hillel I. Newman, Michael Segal, and Ruth A. Clements (eds.), Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
57 Sivan, Palestine, 200-1.
58 Kalleres, City of Demons, 117.
Become new to me, islands! Israel is saved by the Lord; a salvation forever. They will not be put to shame; they will not be made shameful for this age, and nor the ones following.\textsuperscript{59}

On this account, Samaritans can slip in and out of view because of how robust Cyril’s inhabitation of a conceit of true Israel becomes, and how saturated his baptismal homilies are with the scriptures of an Israel presented within the terms of the Hebrew Bible—in which Samaritans feature at most a handful of times.\textsuperscript{60} This observation dovetails well with Kalleres’ observation that “Cyril has much in common with the authors of 4 Ezra (2 Esdras) and 2 Baruch and even the Bordeaux Pilgrim. Lurking beneath the apparent reality of chaos, destruction, and ambiguity in the demonically tainted Aelia are a true image and history of Jerusalem that demands the eyes of souls of those religiously trained to release them.”\textsuperscript{61} As Glenn Bowman has discussed, Cyril’s world is shaded in apocalyptic hues.\textsuperscript{62} Thus, it makes sense that Cyril forges an image of the holy land that hews close to the biblical. Contrary to Drijvers’ assessment, therefore, given their sparse appearances in the Hebrew Bible, the Samaritans appear more often in Cyril’s homilies than we might expect, as a contemporaneous piece woven into the biblical cloth of the beating heart of Christianity—Jerusalem—that he prepares to wrap around his newly baptized catechumen.

\textsuperscript{59} Catech. 6.1.

\textsuperscript{60} Pummer, \textit{The Samaritans: A Profile} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 26-35; see Kalleres, \textit{City of Demons}, 158 on Cyril aiming to help the baptizand “dissolve the temporal distinctions of past, present, and future.”

\textsuperscript{61} Kalleres, \textit{City of Demons}, 170.

It may also be the case that whilst Samaritans are a real religious threat, their threat is minor compared to the group Cyril portrays as most dangerous in heresiological terms—the Manichaeans. On top of blasphemy, mania, Persian slave origins, lies, murder, the shame of imprisonment, Cyril implicates the Manichaeans of sexual impurity. Their baptism and false Eucharist involve ingesting ejaculate and menstrual blood:

Μεγάλα μὲν κακά καὶ ταῦτα, ἄλλ᾽ ἐτί μικρά πρὸς τά ἄλλα. Οὐ τολμῶ ἐπὶ ἄνδρῳ καὶ γυναικῶν τὸ λουτρόν αὐτῶν διηγησάσθαι. Οὐ τολμῶ εἰπεῖν, τίνι ἐμβάπτωσε τὴν ἱσχαία, διδόσα τοῖς ἀθλίοις. Διὰ συσπήμον δὲ μόνον δηλούσθω. Ἄνδρες γάρ τὰ ἐν τοῖς ἐνυπνιασμοῖς ἐνθυμεῖσθωσαν, καὶ γυναῖκες τὰ ἐν ἀφέδροις. Μιαίνομεν ἄληθος καὶ τὸ στόμα, ταῦτα λέγοντες. Μὴ Ἐλληνες τούτων μυσαρώτεροι; μὴ Σαμαρεῖται τούτων ἀθεώτεροι; μὴ ᾽Ιουδαῖοι τούτων ἀσεβέστεροι; μὴ οἱ πορνεύοντες τούτων ἀκαθαρτότεροι;

And these things are sizeable evils, but minutiae compared to others. I do not dare to describe their baptism—in sight of men and women! I do not dare to say in what they dip the fig they give to the wretched participants. Let it be explained only through hints. Let men muse on what comes along with wet dreams; a woman on the things during that time of the month. Really, we defile even our mouth talking about such things. Surely even Greeks aren’t fouler than them? Surely even Samaritans aren’t more atheistic? Surely even Jews aren’t more impious? Surely even fornicators aren’t more impure?

The Manichaeans find themselves set apart, caught in the heresiologist’s flashlight at the end of this succession of heretics. Their example, at least to Cyril,
requires an extremely urgent warning.\textsuperscript{66} The Samaritans, in contrast, are part of the religious landscape of Jerusalem in a different sense, like Jews and pagans. Unlike the Manichaeans, they do not parody the church. They do not contest its rites, liturgy, and teachings with what Cyril perceives as abominable alternatives. Unlike the actors of the recent Constantinian past, they made no marks on the liturgical and architectural cityspace.\textsuperscript{67} Unlike the Jews, their past did not directly challenge some fourth-century Christian claims to Jerusalem as a now-Christian holy space.\textsuperscript{68} They formed part of the problem of a contested Jerusalem in a securely domesticated way, such that their objections to the resurrection of the dead can form a type of role play. And talking Samaritan, unlike talking Manichaean, does not leave the mouth dirty.

With these provisos in mind, Cyril technologizes his Samaritans as an opaque opponent, different from the \textit{photizomenoi} and invested, like \textit{Ioudaioi} and \textit{Hellenes}—but distinct from both—in practices which baptized Christians should at all costs avoid. Those Christians gear up, in part, to take on Samaritan opponents. John Chrysostom, as we will see next, works differently. He will make of the Samaritans a vessel for Christian moralizing.

\textbf{John Chrysostom: Biblical Fossils}

Of all the reasons John Chrysostom might catch a reader’s eye, the foremost should perhaps be that one of his homiletic performances solicited an article which included

\textsuperscript{66} Drijvers, \textit{Cyril}, 56 n.114; also 107-8.
\textsuperscript{67} Kalleres, \textit{City of Demons}, 140-42.
in its title the phrase “sex aquarium.”69 This captures, in one fell swoop, much of the fascination of scholars with the rhetorician, whose corpus preserves ferocious polemic, striking eloquence, often uncompromising moral demands, and every device (eroticized and otherwise) of late antique speechcraft embedded in a hyper-literate late Greco-Roman milieu which often functioned, as Christopher Kelly puts it, in “kaleidoscopic patterns of support and subversion.”70 Chrysostom generated a remarkable literary legacy, with over five thousand surviving manuscripts containing Greek works attributed to Chrysostom.71 Wendy Mayer cautions us, admittedly, that the so-called Pseudo-Chrysostomica are also extensive; as with other prolific celebrity writers (Augustine, Epiphanius, John of Damascus, and so on), many of those attributions emerge from a desire to attach a work of unknown or doubtful provenance but perceived important content to a named and known celebrity authorial origin point.72 Nevertheless, a huge corpus remains of around one thousand probably authentic works; thirteen treatises, two hundred and thirty-nine letters, and more than eight hundred homilies and commentaries on scripture.73

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70 Christopher Kelly, Ruling the Later Roman Empire (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004)
John’s career epitomizes the possibilities and challenges of the later fourth-century Roman empire for Greco-Roman elites, going from reasonably wealthy family, to entry-level ordained clergy, to ascetic, to presbyter, to bishop of the imperial city, to controversial exile. Over recent decades, scholars have found Chrysostom particularly interesting for his homilies. These offer a tempting resource for the reconstruction of Antiochene existence, the challenges faced an urban presbyter with ascetic inclinations and the continued tensions—religious, ethnic, and wealth-based—typical of the later fourth century, and of how Chrysostom went about trying to persuade his congregations to live as he thought proper Christians ought. As Blake Leyerle argues, Chrysostom’s elaborate acts of rhetorical display furthermore permit a window into his own self-understanding: in a combination of pedagogy and power, his writings represent how he strove after control of his congregation by making deviance visible in the form of “dramatic types.”

Not only have these orations enabled vivid insight into the way in which Christians technologized representations of Jews as a cipher for their own religious anxieties, but they have helped develop a historical understanding of the vibrant continuity of Judaism into late antiquity (thus correcting nineteenth-century notions of Judaism as a religion whose vital force was spent by the time Christianity emerged.


75 Although the complexity of mining these texts for historical information is widely acknowledged and steps taken to limit risk, see for example Dorothea R. French, “Rhetoric and the Rebellion of A.D. 387 an Antioch,“ *ZAG* 47:4 (1998): 468-84.

from its tired husk). Ever since Robert L. Wilken’s programmatic 1983 volume scholars of religious difference have paid particular attention to the *Adversus Iudaeos* homilies, orations given in the consecutive autumns of 386 and 387CE in Antioch when John was a presbyter, synchronized with Jewish celebration of Rosh Hashanah (New Year). Sizgorich argues, building on Wilken and others, that training and tilting against “the Jews” (both real and rhetorical) formed Christian selves the desires and bodily reactions of which were curated by frequently practiced *pistis* and the associated, repeated, participation in liturgy and day-to-day Christian performance.

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78 I follow Wendy Pradels, Rudolf Brändle, and Martin Heimgartner, “The Sequence and Dating of the Series of John Chrysostom’s Eight Discourses *Adversus Iudaeos*,” *ZAC* 6 (2002): 90-116. Discourse 3, as Pradels et al. note, is found only in a few manuscripts, and was added into the series by Bernard de Montfaucon (91). Scholars generally date the other seven discourses to the years 386-7, though they disagree on the order. Modifying an older consensus (386: Discourse 1-2; 387: Discourses 4-8), Pradels et al. convincingly argue from a newly discovered portion of Discourse 2 that “Discourse 1 was preached as an isolated sermon in the fall of 386, and that Discourse 2 was delivered the following year, as part of a series of six discourses (Discourse 4, 2, 5-8) (“Sequence and Dating,” 92).

By performing this Christianity, they not only disciplined their own bodies, but continuously represented them in ways which influenced others for the better.  

Throughout what survives of his massive rhetorical corpus, Chrysostom wheedles and cajoles, and shows himself consistently capable of ferocious polemic. As Sizgorich also argues, part of his repertoire is a militant image of Christians embattled even in their quotidian affairs. The Christians must armour up against a potentially fatal combination, as Jessica Wright has argued, of psychotherapeutic weakness and demonic activity. Elsewhere, Chrysostom emphasizes how the baptism of the Christian arrays them for battle:

Λοιπὸν γὰρ μάχη καὶ ἀντίστασις ἐξ ἐκείνου πρὸς αὐτὸν γίνεται καὶ διὰ τούτο καθάρσις ἥλιον τινας Χριστοῦ οὕτω διὰ τῆς ἀλοιφῆς εἰς τὸ στάδιον τὸ πνευματικὸν εἰσάγει.

“So starting now, battle and opposition from that one [the Devil] against him begins, and it is for this reason, just like some athlete of Christ, in this way he enters through this anointing into the spiritual stadium (Catech. illum. 2:2-3.9-12)"
When closing his *Adv. Jud. 7*, probably written for performance in the run-up to Easter 387, this combat repertoire again comes to the fore with altogether more human opponents in mind. “Here,” Chrysostom says, “We are fighting not only against Jews but against the pagans and many heretics” (*Adv. Jud. 7:3.3*). The Christian takes on a martial aspect, with Jews imagined here as the first opponent but with mobilization against them also enabling effective combat against the errors bundled and evoked into fixed antagonistic groups by the names *hellenes* and *hairetikoi*. Sometimes, Christians should simply adapt their message to the unbelievers, with accommodation and love (*In epist. I Cor. 33* [PG 61:284]). But the message of acceptable violence crops up over and over again throughout Chrysostom’s preaching. In one homily he advises, “Even if you must impose restraint, even if you must use force, even if you must treat them ill and obstinately, do everything to save them from the devil’s snare.” (*Adv. Jud 1:4.5* [PG 48:849]).

And in *Ad populum Antiochenum de statuis* 1:12 (PG 49:32), he exhorts his congregation to “Bring the blasphemers of the city to their senses for me... If you hear anyone in the street or in the middle of the forum blaspheming God, go up to him, rebuke him, and if it is necessary to inflict blows, do not refuse to do so. Strike him on the face.”

Cures are weaponized, and weapons are medicalized: “These

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85 The occasion of these homilies, twenty-two in number, was the so-called “Riot of the Statues” in spring 387, after Theodosius I issued a new tax. Statues of the royal family were pulled down, and Theodosius threatened retribution. In this tense atmosphere, Chrysostom delivered these Lenten sermons. See for chronology, details, and order of the homilies, see Frans van de Paverd, *St. John Chrysostom, The Homilies on the Statues: An Introduction* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 239; Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1991); for the riots themselves, in addition to van de Paverd, *Statues*, 15-159, see Robert Browning, “The Riot of A.D. 387 in Antioch: The Role of the Theatrical Claques in the Later Empire,” *JRS* 42 (1952): 13-20; French, “Rhetoric and the Rebellion”; Kelly, *Ruling*, 241-4; Susann Sitzler, “Angst and Identity in Antioch following the Riot of Statues,” in
weapons do not inflict wounds; rather they cure those who are sick.”

They exhibit a John fully committed not only to persuading Christians to live well, but persuading Christians to persuade others not present at his services to follow suit: “You must be teachers and lead the way. Friends should take their neighbors in hand and instruct and lead them, and household slaves should do the same for fellow slaves, and youths for their peers.”

Despite occupying much of Chrysostom’s thought, the Ioudaioi are by no means the only group Chrysostom repeatedly invokes as opponents. The Christian finds himself or herself besiegéd by deviant and dangerous groups. The Samaritans appear, true enough, as only one of these—less often than Ioudaioi, Arians, or pagans. Nevertheless, they do appear. And paying attention to them equips us with a particularly clear microcosm of the sorts of thinking Chrysostom prioritizes in communication with his congregations, especially as he technologizes the Samaritans as part of an Israelite past to position his Christians in a fraught ethical present. In Chrysostom’s surviving works, two appearances of the Samaritans—in his *Homilies in John* 31-35 on the Samaritan woman and the Good Samaritan in *Adv. Jud.* 8—
illuminate much of this approach. Chrysostom’s representation of the Samaritans becomes an exegetical technology of community discipline.

The eighty-eight *Homilies in John* were probably delivered in Antioch in 390/1. In these homilies, Chrysostom covers a lot of ground. He returns, however, to certain topics repeatedly. He particularly rails against complacency in Christian practice, especially when contrasted with dedication to wealth or civic business; against the accumulation of wealth in place of virtuous works; and against arrogance and envy and greed. As a preacher, he dresses all this in a sharp concern, often rendered explicit, that his congregation internalize his teaching into their behaviour. Moreover, he regularly encourages them to learn to effectively remember and transmit the teachings which he delivers to them, making use of mnemonic repetition, recitation, and daily practice—leading to noticeable increased recognition through the *Homilies* that his continued harangues against the desire for wealth and success are becoming increasingly burdensome to his congregation.

Perhaps the clearest recapitulation of his concerns comes in *Hom. Jo. 58* in which he attacks those who are cleverer than rhetoricians or sophists when it comes to public sport—to chariot racing, in particular—but who have made no effort to learn basic

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89 Pummer, *Early Christian Texts*, does not include exegesis, but focuses on those texts which most clearly allow for historical reconstruction (1-2).

90 For text, see *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, ed. Bernard de Montfaucon. Patrologia Graeca 59 (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866): 23-482. For basic dating position, Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 4 vol. (Westminster: Newman Press, 1950), 3:439. We have better evidence for the time of day at which they were preached (see Hom. 31 and reference to the early morning) than precise date. For a fundamental, and extensive, discussion of the difficulties on dating his sermons Wendy Mayer, *The Homilies of St. John: Provenance, Reshaping the Foundations* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 2005). Mayer also provides extensive discussion of possible dates, including tables summarizing the results of her survey (*Homilies*, 259-270, entry for PG 4425 at 267). Earlier scholars (Tillemon and Montfaucon) argued for an early date (394, and 391-394/5, respectively), but scholars since Rauschen have argued for a date c.391 (Rauschen, Bonsdorff, Baur, and Quasten).
facts about scripture, and who fail to re-read even the deliberately short sections selected for liturgical use:

Δάκνει τὰ ρήματα; Τούτο κάγω βούλομαι, ἀνασχέσθαι ὑμᾶς τῆς διὰ τῶν ρημάτων ἀληθίδονος, ἵνα τῆς διὰ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀσχημοσύνης ἀπαλλαγῆτε. (321) Καὶ γὰρ εἰσὶ τινες, οἱ πολλοὶ ψυχρότεροι τούτων ὄντες, οἱ οὓδε αἰσχύνονται ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ μακρὸν εἰροῦν ὑπὲρ τοῦ πράγματος λόγον. Κάν μὲν ἐρωτήσης, τίς ἐστιν ὁ Ἁμώς, ἢ ὁ Ἀβδίας, ἢ ποῖος τῶν προφητῶν ὁ ἀριθμὸς, ἢ τῶν ἀποστόλων, οὓδε χάναι δύνανται. Υπὲρ δὲ ἱππων καὶ ἕνων, σοφιστῶν καὶ ῥητόρων δεινότερον ἀπολογίαν συντιθέασι καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἄπαντα λέγουσι. Καὶ τί τὸ βλάβος; καὶ τίς ἡ ζημία;

Do my words sting? I really want this; for you to be spared from pain through these words, so that you may be released from disgrace through these behaviours. For there are even some, those who are even much more indifferent than they are—are those who are not ashamed by what I am saying, but who will hold forth at length about this behavior. And should one inquire “Who is Amos? Or Abdias? Or what is the number of the prophets? Of the apostles?”—they can’t even gawp. But on the topic of horses and charioteers, they put together an apologia more cleverly than sophists and rhetors! And after even all these things they say: “Oh, what is the harm?” or “What is the loss?” (Hom. Jo. 58; PG 59:320:61-321:9)

With these concerns for shaping Christian behavior and thought in mind, Hom. Jo. 31-35 articulate the formation of Christian selves through close interpretation of Jesus’ meeting with the Samaritan woman at a well near Shechem in John 4:4-42. In Chrysostom’s mouth, the Samaritan woman serves as exemplar of moral behaviour, in line with his understanding that, as he says elsewhere, the scriptures acted as the concrete embodiment of examples for good living: “The grace of the Holy Spirit left us in written form through the Holy Scriptures the lives and mode of living of all the

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91 I work from the Greek of Hom. Jo.: note that the late antique Syriac translation, completed just decades after John’s death, offers a substantial resource to augment study of the Hom. Jo. Unfortunately, even the best MS (British Library Add. 14561) entirely lacks homilies 30-34—those homilies which deal with the relevant part of the meeting with the Samaritan woman. Homily 35 survives in partial form in the Syriac, and I have made reference to it when appropriate. See Jeff W. Childers, The Syriac Version of John Chrysostom’s Commentary on John I. Mêmrê 1-43. CSCO 651 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), xxviii-xxix.
saints.” Careful reading of scripture even has the power, Chrysostom quips, to make you “like Paul’s wife.” Using the scripture as a window into an idealized scenario for ethical improvement, therefore, Chrysostom presents the Samaritan woman as patient, careful, respectful—beyond reproach. This is the case even in spite of Christ’s somewhat antagonistic approach to her:

Καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἀρχῇ φησι· Πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὁν αἴτεις παρ’ ἐμοῦ πιεῖν; Καὶ οὐκ ἐπεν, ἀπε πρὸς ἄλλους, καὶ ἐχθρὸν διαλεγομένη· Μὴ μοι γένοιτο σοι μεταδοῦναι ἄνθρωπον πολεμίῳ καὶ τοῦ ἐθνοῦς ἡμῶν ἡλλοτριωμένῳ. Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα πάλιν ἀκούσας μεγάλα λέγοντος, ἐφ᾽ ὃ μᾶλλον δάκνωνται οἱ ἐχθροί, οὐ κατεγέλασεν, οὐδὲ διέσυρεν·

And at first she said: “How is it that you, who are a Jew, ask me for a drink?” And she did not say, as if speaking to a foreigner and an enemy: “It is not for me to share with a man who is hostile and foreign to our people.” And afterward, again, having heard him speaking all high and mighty, in such a way that enemies are chewed out, she did not mock or disparage.

Chrysostom deploys three striking exclusionary terms—“enemy” and two variants of “foreigner”—that the woman could have used. Despite provocation in the form of Jesus speaking down to her, positioning himself as a rhetorical opponent against her in his choice of style, she did not respond by rising to the bait. In fact, Chrysostom encourages his hearers to replicate her virtuous response to opposition:

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92 Chrysostom, Homilies in Genesis 11 (PG 53:95). See for more discussion Margaret Mitchell, “The Archetypal Image: John Chrysostom’s Portraits of Paul,” JR 75 (1995): 15-43. Frances Young argues, “just as paideia in the schools was based on exegesis of texts and their appropriation by critical mimesis of style or ethics, so Christian paideia took place through reading texts and discerning their appropriate application,” Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 241. Whilst this overemphasizes the textual at the cost of embodied repetition and discipline, Young does provide an important contextual point for understanding how imitation functioned as a mechanic for replicating admirable behaviour. See also Rylaarsdam, Divine Pedagogy, 196-201.


94 As Craig Farmer notes, Chrysostom’s character sketch of the Samaritan woman (along with that of Augustine) was a major source for medieval commentaries, including the western Latin Glossa Ordinarium; “Changing Images of the Samaritan Woman in Early Reformed Commentaries in John,” Church History 65.3 (1996): 365-75, at 365-70.

95 Hom. Jo. 31 (PG 59:181.43-50); see FOTC 308-9.
“Let us imitate, therefore, the Samaritan woman” (Μη σώμεθα τοιν τήν Σαμαρείτιν)—a call to imitate made twice for her, but made twice for no other character in *Hom. Jo*.

His appeal to the woman’s concrete performance of virtues to be imitated is sharpened by a series of comparison; the rhetorical form catalogued as *sunkrisis*, targeting the urban context of his hearers. Sometimes he draws comparisons with the Johannine *Ioudaioi*.

"You see the impartial decision of the woman, decided based on deeds both for the patriarch (Jacob) and Christ? It was not this way for the Jews, however. No—even having seen him driving out demons, not only did they not say he was greater than the patriarch, but they called him demon-possessed. But the woman was not like this, but made her decision based on what Christ wanted, from the proof of works."

The *Ioudaioi* receive short shrift throughout *Hom. Jo.*, and this passage is no exception. That John presents a hostile set of *Ioudaioi* opposed to the messianism of Christ is widely acknowledged, as is the contribution the reception of these verses

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96 *Hom. Jo.* 31 (PG 59:182.30-1); see FOTC 310. Chrysostom uses μη σώμεθα only seven times in the *Homilies*, twice of the Samaritan woman (PG 59.182.30-1; 59.196.35), once of the wise virgins (PG 59:142.69), once of the evangelist himself (PG 59:191.48-49), once of Philip and Andrew (PG 59:241.38-39), once of the obedience of Christ to the Father (PG 59:332.20-21), and once negatively in avoiding the “lust for silver” of Judas (μή ποτε τὸν Ἰούδαν μη σώμεθα διὰ τῆς ψιλαργυρίας; PG 59:268.36).


98 *Hom. Jo.* 32 (PG 59:183.59-184.10); see FOTC 313.
made to Christian anti-Judaism. Elsewhere, the *Ioudaioi* appear named in these homilies to accuse them of mania, physical greed, betrayers of kin, neglecting the prophets, susceptible to a particular “Jewish weakness”, inexcusable, disobedient, rejecting Christ, dispersed due to sin but not even realizing it, only acknowledging the physical book, boasting in their Israelite heritage they do not aim for exemplary practice, full of envy. But here in particular, the Samaritan woman contrasts with their prejudicial reaction to Christ’s exorcism in the terms of civic juridical procedure, as metaphorical as the passage surely is. The woman, impartial (ἀδέκαστος), casts her stone (ψῆφος) to mark her decision in concrete, decisively civic terms—Chrysostom uses the name for the small stone used for counting, accounting, or voting. She models both good moral action and robust social sense.

Another comparison is with Nicodemus, who makes repeated appearances throughout the Gospel text, but whose relationship to knowledge of Christ as saviour is ambivalent at best:

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\text{Καὶ ἐπίστευσεν εὐθέως ἡ γυνὴ, πολὺ τοῦ Νικόδημου συνετώτερα φανέρα: οὗ συνετώτέρα δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνδρειότερα. Ἐκείνος μὲν γὰρ μυρίων τοιούτων ἀκούων, οὔτε ἄλλον τινὰ ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἐκάλεσεν,}
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100 When Azar deals with Chrysostom’s *Ioudaioi*, he understands them as displaying in particular (1) worldliness, (2) vainglory and (3) anger or envy (120); see Michael G. Azar, *Exegeting the Jews: The Early Reception of the Johannine “Jews”* (Leiden: Brill, 2016.) Aside from the necessity of subdividing the third point, this is helpful. It does, however, fail to fully encapsulate of the use Chrysostom makes of Israelite history, including redeployed narratives by prophet haranguing the Israelites. For Chrysostom, the *Ioudaioi* are not simply a group embodying these three vices; their instantiation of these vices is intensified by their psychological failures (mania) and their religious and ethnic failures as a people.
οὔτε αὐτὸς ἐπαρθησιάσατο· αὕτη δὲ ἀποστολικὰ ἐπιδείκνυται πράγματα, πάντας εὐαγγελιζομένη καὶ καλούσα πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ πόλιν ὅλως ἔλκουσα ἔξω πρὸς αὐτὸν.

And the woman believed immediately, appearing much cleverer than Nicodemus—but not only cleverer, but also more courageous. For he heard many such things like this, but did not summon anyone else on account of it, nor even himself spoke out boldly. But she made a display of apostolic deeds, evangelizing everyone and calling them to Jesus, even dragging the whole city out to him.\(^{101}\)

Here, the concern for civic political consequences, in particular, marks the Samaritan woman as admirable. Nicodemus, in contrast, failed both himself and anyone else he might have brought to knowledge of Christ. His courage, tagged as “manliness”—with andreia being, as Karen Bassi points out, a civic virtue in Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy—fails him.\(^{102}\) He is unable to express himself with the virtue of bold speech for the benefit of those who live with him.\(^{103}\) Elsewhere, also, Nicodemus fails the test due to his desire, Chrysostom says, to retain face in front of his Jewish peers—particularly ironic given Chrysostom’s portrayal of his failure as a fellow citizen.\(^{104}\) In this way, Nicodemus acts as a complicated character made to bear the failures of the Ioudaioi, the heretics, and those who fail to overcome their doubts even when given ample opportunity—in an urban context which Chrysostom can frequently compare to his own.

\(^{101}\) *Hom. Jo.* 32 (PG 59:184.38-45); see FOC 314.


\(^{104}\) In *Hom. Jo.* 28, his fear of how he might appear to the Jewish leadership is cast as kenodoxia—the same failing as those in Chrysostom’s audience who fail to act Christian because of a desire to perform in a way that gains cultural and social prestige. As Azar writes: “As Nicodemus, and other Jews, failed to acknowledge Christ on account of their fellow Jews, with whom they had constant association, so also Chrysostom’s audience fails to acknowledge Christ on account of their reputation among their pagan contemporaries.” (*Exegeting the Jews,* 128).
Unsurprisingly, given the civic resonance of Chrysostom’s semantic register, the Samaritan woman also sometimes finds direct contrast with Chrysostom’s own congregation, in much the same way as, as Azar emphasizes it, Chrysostom holds up “the Johannine Jews as a mirror into which his audience might look and see themselves.”\(^{105}\)

Αἰσχυνθῶμεν τοίνυν καὶ ἐρυθριάσωμεν λοιπόν. Γυνὴ πέντε ἀνδρῶν ἐσχηκύια, καὶ Σαμαρείτις οὕς, τοσαύτην περὶ δογμάτων ποιεῖται σπουδὴν, καὶ σὺ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἡμέρας, οὐ τὸ ὕφ' ἔτερὸν τι παραγενέσθαι, οὐκ ἄλλο οὐδὲν αὐτὴν ἀπήγαγε τῆς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ζητήσεως: ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ μόνον περὶ δογμάτων οὐ ζητοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ πάντων ἀπλῶς, καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε διακείμεθα. Διὰ τούτο τὰ πάντα ἠμέληται.

Let us be ashamed then; and then let us blush. A woman with five husbands, who is a Samaritan, acted with such eagerness about doctrines, and neither the time of day, nor some interest in anything else, nor any other thing distracted her from seeking after these things. We not only fail to inquire after doctrines, but generally about everything, and so we settle on anything. Because of this, everything is neglected.\(^{106}\)

The contrast between Chrysostom’s congregation and the Samaritan woman finds expression not just in terms of attitude, but in terms of space and comfort. Chrysostom returns frequently to the relative ease with which his congregations experience liturgy and preaching—not least to contrast it with the discomfort endured by those who sweat through theatre performances—but devote themselves to going anyway.\(^{107}\)

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\(^{105}\) Azar, *Exegeting the Jews*, 141.

\(^{106}\) *Hom. Jo.* 32 (PG 59:186.50-58); see FOTC, 319.

\(^{107}\) See *Vidi Dominum* 4.3.76-77 (SC 277.156); *De Anna* 4.1 (PG 54.661); Leyerle, *Theatrical Shows*, 13-14.
In a final comparison in *Hom. Jo. 34*, the Samaritan woman surpasses even the apostles Andrew and Philip in her apostolic zeal and her imitation of Christ’s persuasive strategy:

Κατὰ γὰρ τὴν ἰδίαν δύναμιν, ὑπὲρ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἐποίησαν, καὶ αὐτὴ πεποίηκε μειζόνως. Ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ οἱ κληθέντες ἀφήκαν τὰ δίκτυα· αὐτὴ δὲ αὐτομάτως, οὐδενὸς παραγγείλαντος, ἀφίησε τὴν ὕδριαν καὶ εὐαγγελιστῶν ἔργον ποιεῖ ὑπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς ἀναπτερωθεὶσα. Καὶ οὔχ ἕνα καλεῖ καὶ δεύτερον, καθάπερ Ἀνδρέας καὶ Φίλιππος, ἄλλα πόλιν ὅλοκληρον ἀναστήσασα καὶ δήμον τοσοῦτον, οὕτω πρὸς αὐτὸν ἠγαγε. Καὶ σκόπει πῶς συνετῶς λέγει. Όὐ γὰρ εἶπε, Δεῦτε, ἱδετε τὸν Χριστὸν, ἄλλα καὶ αὐτὴ μετὰ συγκαταβάσεως, μεθ’ ἥς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς αὐτὴν ἐσαγήνευσεν, ἐπισπάτα τοὺς ἄνδρας. Δεῦτε γὰρ, ἱδετε ἄνθρωπον, φησίν, δὲ εἶπε μοι πάντα ὡς ἐποίησα.

For according to her own power, she did as the apostles did—and even greater! For when they were called they left their nets—but she automatically, without prompting, left her water jar and did the work of an evangelist, having been given wings by joy. And she did not call one and a second, like Andrew and Philip, but having raised up a whole city—even so large a demos—thus led them to him. And notice how intelligently she spoke. She didn’t say: “Come, see the Christ,” but she too with accommodation like that which Christ had reeled her in, drew in the men. “Come see a man,” she said, “who told me everything which I have ever done.”

Even as the Samaritan woman functions as exemplar, however, her Samaritanness matters less than her superlative attitude and behaviour in a civic context. She demonstrates a well-ordered mind, reasoning cautiously but accurately from what she was told to what she came to know. She succeeds in faith, and brings those around her to that same faith; a “disciple burning with zeal and prepared to risk all dangers” (πεπυρωμένον μαθητὴν καὶ πρὸς πάντα κίνδυνον παρεσκευασμένον), she brought her whole city population (πάντα τὸν δῆμον) to Jesus. She does so in wisdom, imitating

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Christ; like Christ, she brings them gradually into the position to hear themselves (ἐκ τῆς ἀκροάσεως), make their own verdict, and this way share her opinion.\textsuperscript{110}

Some kernels of information can be gleaned about what must be assumed true of Samaritans \textit{qua} Samaritan for this contrast to work. For example, “Samaritan,” for Chrysostom, does in some way stand in tension with a “deep interest with doctrine.” Nevertheless, in general, Chrysostom has no qualms about defining a Samaritan with positive virtues for the good of her city; there is nothing indispensably heretical or immoral about Samaritans that would make a virtuous Samaritan a contradiction in terms.\textsuperscript{111} How could there be, when this Samaritan imitates Christ and his tactics of persuasion in such a way that her evangelical deeds surpass even Philip and Andrew? Furthermore, what purpose would a heresiological Samaritan woman serve when she acts as an exemplar of the persuasive Christian which Chrysostom aspires to form in his congregation?

When \textit{Hom. Jo.} does invoke a contrastive relationship between the Samaritans and ancient Israel that more specifically focuses on their Samaritanness, Chrysostom primarily uses Samaritans to represent Jews failing to live up to their Israelite heritage. As Elizabeth Clark writes, he mobilizes the “erasure of difference between the ancient Hebrews and contemporary Christians” for the purpose of ethical

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Hom. Jo.} 34 (PG 59.193.44-48).
\textsuperscript{111} Nor are those virtues particularly “Christian.” Rather, as Chrysostom himself admits, non-believers seem to display some of them more actively than failing believers. The Emperor Julian, for what it is worth, would have seconded many of John’s statements about the moral evil of the theatre, and for many of the same reasons; see for example Julian’s own satirical \textit{Misopogon}, 342d-344b; 357d; Susanna Elm, \textit{Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 329-30.
exhortation. In *Hom. Jo.* 31, noting that John 4:4 specifies Sychar, at Shechem, he asks: “Why did the gospel writer take such care for accuracy concerning the place [of the encounter] (Τίνος ἐνεκεν ἀκριβολογεῖται ὁ Εὐαγγελιστής περὶ τοῦ τόπου)?” Alongside a basic answer—context—Chrysostom provides a miniature ethnographic history of the Samaritan name, their biblical past through 2 Kings 17 via Josephus’ reworking in *Antiquities* 9:288-91, their religious practices, and the significance of those by now eight-hundred year distant practices for contemporary Ioudaioi.

Τίνος ἐνεκεν ἀκριβολογεῖται ὁ Εὐαγγελιστής περὶ τοῦ τόπου; Ἡν ὅταν ἄκουσης τῆς γυναικὸς λαλούσης, ἴακῳβ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν ἐδοκεν ἡμῖν τὴν πηγὴν (178) ταῦτην, μὴ ἐξενισθῆς. Ὁ γὰρ τόπος ἐκεῖνος ἦν ἐνθα υπέρ τῆς Δείνας οἱ περὶ τὸν Λευὶ καὶ Συμεὼν ἀγανακτοῦντες, τὸν χαλέπον ἐκεῖνον εἰργάσαντο φόνον.

Ἀξίων δὲ εἰπεῖν καὶ πόθεν οἱ Σαμαρεῖται συνέστησαν. Καὶ γὰρ ὁ τόπος οὗτος ἀπὸς Σαμαρία καλεῖται.

Why did the evangelist take such care for accuracy concerning the place? So that whenever you hear the woman saying, “Our father Jacob gave this spring to us,” it might not strike you as odd. For this was the place where, because of Dinah, those around Levi and Simeon becoming angry, they brought about that harsh slaughter.

But it is worth it to say also from whence the Samaritans came together to be. For even this place is all called Samaria.

This miniature ethnographic history leans on the first-century Jewish historian Josephus. Josephus argued in his *Antiquities* that initial tension between Jews and Samaritans began with the Assyrian capture of the northern kingdom of Israel in

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722BCE and the importation of foreign populations to resettle the ruined north (A.J. 9.288-291). In constructing this long backstory of Jewish versus Samaritan conflict, he leant heavily on 2 Kings 17:23-41, the only passage in the Hebrew Bible to refer explicitly to any group called *ha-shomronim* (Gk.: οἱ Σαμαρίται), in the rewriting of which he—against the grain of 2 Kings, in which these groups are clearly distinct—represents Samaritans as both those from Cutha and *ha-shomronim*. Initially, like two other fourth-century Christians writers Eusebius and Epiphanius, Chrysostom follows Josephus in linking the Samaritans to this ethnically and religiously hybrid, transplanted group.

From where did they receive their appellation? The mountain was had been called Somor after its owner (1 Kings 16:24), just as also Isaiah says, And the head of Somoron, Ephraim. But the inhabitants were not called Samaritans but Israelites. But time having passed, they offended God, and during the reign of Pekah, Tiggath-Pileser came up, took

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115 For an overview of the general scholarly consensus that Samaritans are absent from the Hebrew Bible, and for this passage, see Pummer, *Samaritans*, 26-35.
many cities, and attacked Elah, and having killed him he gave the kingdom to Hoshea (2 Kings 15:29). Shalmanezer came upon him, took other cities, and made them subjects and tribute-bearers (2 Kings 17:3). At first this king yielded. But later he rose up against the empire, and fled into alliance with the Ethiopians (τὴν τῶν Αἰθίων κατέψυχε συμμαχίαν.) The Assyrian learned this, and having marched against them and killed them, he did not permit the nation (τὸ ἐθνός) to remain there, because of such strong suspicion of uprising (2 Kings 17:4).

But he led them to Babylon and the Medes, and from there led nations from different places, and they settled in Samaria, so as to finally make his rule safe, with his own people holding the place. These things having happened, God wanted to show his power, and that he had not given up the Jews because of weakness, but because of the sins of those he gave up. He sent lions against the barbarians (ἔπαφησι λέοντας τοῖς βαρβάροις), and they ruined the whole people. These things were reported to the king, and he sent some priest to transmit to them the laws of God. But nevertheless, they did not entirely leave their impiety behind, but only half.\footnote{31, PG 59:178.6}

But Chrysostom then swerves away from Josephus. Whereas Josephus’ narrative attacks the Samaritans as inauthentic ethnic and religious hybrids, and unrepentant idolaters, Chrysostom inverts the polemical charges, weaponizing them against Ioudaioi.

Χρόνου δὲ προϊόντος, πάλιν τῶν μὲν εἰδώλων ἀπεπήρησαν, ἐσεβον δὲ τῶν Θεῶν. Τῶν οὖν πραγμάτων ἐν τούτοις ὄντων, ἔπανελθόντες Ἰουδαίοι λειπὼν, ζηλοτύπως πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἶχον ἄτε πρὸς ἄλλοφύλους καὶ πολεμίους, οἳ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ὅρων Σαμαρείταις αὐτούς ἐκάλουσιν. Ἰουδαίοις δὲ οὐ μικρὰ καὶ ἐντεύθεν ἦν πρὸς αὐτούς ἡ φιλονείκια. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ταῖς Γραφαῖς πάσαις ἐκέχρησθο, ἀλλὰ τὰ Μωυσεῖος μόνα ἐξελέγησιν, τῶν προφητῶν οὐ πολὺν ἐποιοῦντο λόγον. Ἐφιλονείκισαν μέντοι εἰς τὴν εὐγένειαν εἰσωθεὶν ἑαυτοὺς τὴν Ἰουδαίκην, καὶ ἐφιλοτιμοῦντο ἐπὶ τῷ Αβραάμ, καὶ πρόγονον αὐτῶν ἐπεγράφοντο, ἄτε ἀπὸ τῆς Χαλδαίας ὄντα· καὶ τὸν Ἰακώβ δὲ πατέρα ἐκάλουσιν, ἄτε ἐκείνου ὄντα ἀπόγονον·

οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαίοι μετὰ πάντων καὶ τούτως ἐβδελύσσοντο. Ὄθεν καὶ τῷ Χριστῷ ταῦτα ὑνειδίζον λέγοντες· Σαμαρείτης εἶ εὖ, καὶ δαμιάνον ἔχεις· καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ καταβάντος ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλήμ εἰς Ἰεριχω, ταύτης ἐνεκὺ τῆς ὑποθέσεως ὁ Χριστὸς Σαμαρείτην εἰσάγει, τὸν ἔλεον εἰς αὐτὸν πεποιηκότα, τὸν εὐτελῆ, τὸν εὐκαταφρόνητον, τὸν βεβληκτὸν παρ’ αὐτοῖς· καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἐκα λεπτῶν, ἅλλογενὲς τὸν ἑνα φισὶ διὰ τούτο (Σαμαρείτης γὰρ ἂν)· καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ τοῖς μαθηταῖς οὗτος λέγον ἐκέλευσεν· Εἰς όδόν ἐθνὸν μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε, καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαρειτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθητε.

\footnote{Hom. Jo. 31, PG 59:178.6-32.}
Time passed, and they in turn abandoned the idols, and worshipped God. With things in this state, when later the Jews returned, they were jealous towards them, as if towards foreigners and enemies, and even named them Samaritans from the name of the mountain. There was also no little contention (ἡ φιλονεικία) between them and the Jews for this reason as well: They do not use all the scriptures, but receiving only the writings of Moses they did not much use the word of the prophets. They moreover contended to insert themselves into the noble Jewish lineage (εἰς τὴν εὐγένειαν… Ἰουδαϊκὴν), and gloried in Abraham, and inscribed him as their progenitor insofar as he was from Chaldea. And Jacob they called father, since he was his descendant. But the Jews loathed them—as with everyone else. Hence also they smeared Christ with this saying You are a Samaritan, and have a demon (John 8:48). And in the story of the man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, on account of this characterization, Christ introduces a Samaritan as the one who had mercy on him, the one considered by them as cheap, worthy of contempt, loathsome (Luke 10:33). And in the story of the ten lepers, he calls one a foreigner (ἀλλογενῆ) because of this—he was a Samaritan. And he commanded his disciples thus, saying, Do not go out on the ways of the nations, and do not enter into a city of Samaritans (Matt 10:5).

Nor does the evangelist remind us of Jacob only on account of the history of the place, but also to prove the Jewish rejection happened a long time ago (ἄλλα καὶ ύπέρ τοῦ δείξαι τὴν ἀποβολὴν τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν πάλαι γεγενημένην.) For even in the time of their ancestors, these ones possessed the places instead of them. And whatever their forefathers had gained when it was not theirs, they lost because of their laziness and transgression even when it was theirs. Thus so empty a thing, to have good forefathers, whenever those coming after them happen to not be like them. The barbarians, having only been tested by lions, returned straightaway to Jewish piety; but these others, enduring so many afflictions, were not even brought back to their right minds.¹¹⁷

For Chrysostom, the sharp failure of the idolaters in 2 Kings 17 enables sincere repentance when faced with what he characterizes as a relatively mild rebuke—a mere plague of beasts. The Samaritans, not really of the lineage of Abraham, nevertheless

¹¹⁷ Hom. Jo. 31, PG 59.178.32-179.5.
supplant the *Ioudaioi* vis-à-vis their own Jewish piety: “For the barbarians, having only been tested by lions, returned straightaway to Jewish piety (Οἱ μὲν γὰρ βάρβαροι, ἵνα λεόντων πείραν λάβοσι μόνον, πρὸς τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν εὐσέβειαν ἐπανηλθοῦν εὐθέως).”¹¹⁸ The real failure, in his retelling, comes on the part of the Jews. They received, he argues, a much greater rebuke than the Samaritans suffered. Animal attack was nothing beside the suffering of the Jews. Nevertheless, even with all the efforts of God to support the lineage of his chosen people, a group of foreign transplants did Jewish piety better.¹¹⁹ Not only this, but rather than repent or accept that another people were doing a better job at worshipping the Lord, the God of Israel, the Jews stoop to name-calling, giving a hostile polemical exonym to the Samaritans out of envy.¹²⁰

This ethnographic tale of inadequacy and repentance demonstrates, stretching a long history of Jewish religious failure back for more than five hundred years before the incarnation of Christ, how bad a choice Judaizing would be for any Christians tempted, as we know they were, to involve themselves in Jewish religious life in

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¹¹⁹ This approach also strikingly inverts the relationship between Samaritans and idolatry sketched out by some contemporary rabbis to undermine the status of the Samaritans within Israel. See more on rabbinic literature in Chapter 4.

¹²⁰ Interestingly, “Samaritan,” “Jew,” and “Christian” all seem to originate as exonyms rather than insider desgnations. Whilst *christianos* is very quickly adapted by some as a badge of pride, and cemented as a noble name by Christian political success, both “Jew” and “Samaritan” are largely used, through history—and today—by those outside the community. Both Jewish and Samaritan communities tend to refer to themselves in terms that invoke the Israelite past; *Yisrael*, or bene *Yisrael*, for example. See on Jewish naming habits and bibliography excellent treatment by Cynthia Baker, *Jew* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2017), 3-27. That Samaritans refer to themselves as *shamerin* (שמרים), “keepers,” has been an observation familiar to scholars since at least James A. Montgomery, *The Samaritans, The Earliest Jewish Sect: Their History, Theology, and Literature* (Philadelphia: J.C. Winston Co., 1907), 24. “Israelites” is also relatively common; the contemporary community call themselves in English “Israelite Samaritans.”
Antioch. By means of the Samaritans, Chrysostom sharpens his reconfiguration of “contemporary Jews as something other than real Jews and contemporary Judaism as something other than real Judaism.”¹²¹ “Jewish piety,” in proper worship of the true God, was performed centuries before the coming of Christ by Samaritans—who were not even Israelites. How could it possibly be worth a Christian’s time to Judaize in the present?

He also emphasizes the failure of Jewish lineage. They attack the Samaritans for not having an ancestral claim to the land, he says—but it is the Samaritans, even though they lack that ancestral claim, who perform acceptably pious acts. In this way, talk of lineage connects this passage with other sections in Chrysostom’s Homilies which focus on the limits of privileges brought by noble birth. The Jewish claim to belong to the lineage of Abraham is accurate enough as it stands, but complacent in that lineage, Chrysostom claims, they fail to attend to virtue and piety, and lose everything their forefathers gained.¹²² This argument revisits his earlier interpretation of Jesus’ apparent disrespect to his mother at Cana (“What has it got to do with me, woman?”). Jesus treated his mother in a way which appeared aggressively disrespectful in order to demonstrate that quirks of birth do not save. Mary would not have been called Makarios, in the end, if she had not been an exceptionally good and faithful woman (εἰ μὴ σφόδρα ἦν ἀγαθὴ καὶ πιστὴ.)¹²³ The Jews were proof of this. Their kinship with Jesus was empty since they lacked their own virtue (ἐπειδή τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἡρετῆς προστασίαν οὐκ εἴχον.) They, his kin “by the flesh,” (οἱ κατὰ σάρκα

¹²¹ Sizgorich, Violence and Belief, 28.
¹²² Hom. Jo. 31 (PG 59.178.61-64).
¹²³ Hom. Jo. 21 (PG 59.131.62-132.1).
συγγενεῖς) were killed, and their city, Jerusalem, burned—the apostles, who were his people but “shone by their own virtue,” (ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκείας ἔλαμψαν ἀρετῆς) were elevated (ἀνεφάνησαν).124

By harnessing comparison and contrast, Chrysostom acts as one of those Christian writers whom Clark called “rhetoricians of shame.”125 As Clark writes: “…examples of the rhetoric of shame were constructed via unflattering comparisons between alleged Christians and “others” whom Christians might consider religiously or socially inferior. To throw in the face of confessing Christians that their behavior was no better than that of Jews, pagans, barbarians, slaves, or even dumb animals—and might be a good deal worse—became a standard rhetorical device productive of ethical norms.”126

To Clark’s list above, we should add Samaritans, involved in a particularly sharp way due to their contestation of Israelite lineage, a favourite piece of the repertoire of rhetoricians of shame and theorists of acceptable Christian behaviour alike.127 In Homilies 54-55, dealing with the moment in John 8:48 at which the Ioudaioi

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125 See Elizabeth Clark, “1990 Presidential Address: Sex, Shame, and Rhetoric: En-Gendering Early Christian Ethics,” JAAR 59.2 (1991): 221-45. For extensive discussion of this rhetorical technique and its possible links to contemporary Jewish interpretation, see her Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). For a robustly theorized complication of the doubled affect of this rhetoric, noticing that early Christians both revelled in shame whilst also deploying “shaming rhetoric,” see Virginia Burrus, Saving Shame: Martyrs, Saints, and Other Abject Subjects (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). As Burrus writes, “the shame culture of the early Christians, the defiant edge of cultural and political critique combines with the generative power of an excessive self-humbling” (Saving Shame, 8).
126 Clark, “Sex, Shame, and Rhetoric,” 224.
127 Clark, Reading Renunciation, 134-35; on repurposing of passages relating Israelite purity practices by late antique theorists of asceticism see 209-32. For earlier centuries, Moshe Bliedstein catalogues and comments at length on the way in which Christian conceptualization and practice of purity links to broader Mediterranean and Jewish practices; Purity, Community, and Ritual in Early Christian Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
interpellate Jesus as Samaritan, Chrysostom writes that the *Ioudaioi* did not make the most of their noble past. In fact, Jesus aims to strip them of the entitlement they built on this kinship, to persuade them to rely not on the hope of salvation placed in Abraham, or else “in lineage according to nature” (*ἐν τῇ κατὰ φύσιν συγγενείᾳ*), but on “kinship of choice” (*ἐν τῇ κατὰ προαίρεσιν*).¹²⁸ The Samaritan woman, as he puts it, demonstrated an admirable response to her own lack of natural kinship, and thus a good example of *prohaeresis* done well. In his eyes, she responded properly to one who understood how far Jesus surpassed even the patriarchs of the Jewish tradition.

Μάλιστα μὲν γὰρ εἰ καὶ ὁ τυχὼν, φησίν, ἡμῖν, οὐκ ἔδει ἀποθανεῖν οὐδὲν ἀδικίσαντα· ὅταν δὲ καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω, καὶ μηδεμίαν ἁμαρτίαν ἔχω, καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀπεσταλμένος ὦ, καὶ Ἀβραᾶμ ὦ κρείττων, πῶς οὐ μαίνεσθε καὶ ἀνόνητα πονεῖτε, ἐπιχειροῦντες ἀνελεῖν; Τί οὖν ἔκεινοι; Νῦν ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι δαμόνιον ἔχεις.

Ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ἡ Σαμαρεῖτις οὕτως· οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Δαμόνιον ἔχεις· ἀλλὰ τοσοῦτον μόνον, Μὴ σύ μείζων εἰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰακὼβ; Ὁτοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἠσαν ὑβρισταὶ ἀλάστορες· ἐκεῖνη δὲ μαθεῖν ἐβουλεῖτο.

“For surely, even if were just anyone,” he said, “it is not necessary for me to die if I have done nothing wrong. But also when I speak the truth, and I have no sin at all, and have been set from God and am greater than Abraham—how are you not mad and act senselessly, in undertaking to destroy me?” Then what did they say? “Now we know you have a demon.”

But the Samaritan woman was not like this. For she did not say to him, “You have a demon,” but only this: “Surely you are not greater than our father Jacob?” For those ones were insolent men, worthy of judgement; she wanted to learn.¹²⁹

The same argument appears here as in *Hom. Jo.* 31, but with a twist. In *Hom. Jo.* 31, Samaritans, who try to graft themselves into the line of Abraham, did a better job in the time of 2 Kings 17, and in the time of Jesus. In *Hom. Jo.* 54-55, the Jews, in contrast to the openness to learning of the Samaritan woman—once again take refuge

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in Abraham—their lineage—rather than recognizing Christ: “O what empty glory! Again they flee to kinship with him [Abraham]” (Ὢ τῆς κενοδοξίας! πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν συγγένειαν αὐτοῦ καταφεύγουσι). In this way, backsliding Christians in Chrysostom’s own time have made themselves similar to the Ioudaioi. They have let positive reputation, doxa, collapse into empty glory (kenodoxia), and complacency in the good opinions of others towards the reputation garnered by their family relations.

For Chrysostom, when it is homiletically useful, the Samaritans can be permitted clear-sighted access as Samaritans to the truth of God—when their Samaritanness is useful to sharpen contrast with Jewish negative exemplars. When their Samaritanness becomes unnecessary, or impede Chrysostom’s presentation of the divine plan for salvation, it disappears to be replaced by generic virtues.

Turning again to the Adversus Iudaeos homilies, a similarly mercenary concern for Samaritanness appears in a second example: the parable of the Good Samaritan in Adv. Jud. 8. As noted above, these orations take aim at Ioudaioi. They do so, however, not to persuade Jews to disaffiliate from their own religious practices as to prevent Christians from sliding away from what Chrysostom understood as the true faith towards “Judaizing”—in short, to maintain a defence of the boundaries of

131 The risks posed by doxa represent one of the clearest links between Chrysostom and asceticism; “The perfected monk was understood to be particularly susceptible to the affection of vainglory (kenodoxia)” (Wright, “Despondency and the Demon,” 364-36). Kenodoxia is diabolized by Evagrius of Pontus in his Antirrētikos as the seventh of eight demons also cast as logismoi (i.e. psychotherapeutic functions); see the extremely helpful discussion, accompanying the English translation, in David Brakke, Evagrius of Pontus: Talking Back – A Monastic Handbook for Combating Demons (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009). Kenodoxia consistently troubled Chrysostom; see for example his De inani Gloria 16-90, in which he argues it tears the church apart (Kelly, Golden Mouth, 85-7).
Christian community against what Sizgorich argues he perceived as a “special threat.” As scholars have noted, it is debatable that the eight discourses ought even to be considered a series. After all, by the time John delivered the eighth the Jewish festivals that had framed his earlier speeches were long past – in fact, two Passovers had been and gone. But the task of his Christian militants continued:

But just like soldiers do: after meeting in battle they rout the enemy, but returning from the pursuit, they don’t race back to camp straightaway, but first go to the battlefield and pick up those of their own who fell. And they bury in the earth those who died, but if they should see some still breathing amongst the dead, who don’t have fatal wounds, they carry them to the camp after giving them as much first aid as possible. And they tug out the arrow, and call the doctors, and wash off the blood, and treat wounds with remedies, and by application of all these, they bring them back to health.

His militarized rhetoric here zooms in on what Christians should, like soldiers, be prepared to do for those who have fallen. They make every effort, and apply every technique, and call every specialist, to return those who are not dead or dying to full health, He exhorts his congregation to do likewise:

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132 Sizgorich, Violence and Belief, 25; see 24-36 more generally for Adversus Judaeos orations; see also Shepardson, Controlling Contested Places, 98-113.

Likewise also, we, therefore, have chased off the *Ioudaioi* by the grace of God, mobilizing the prophets against them. Now as we return, let us look everywhere, lest some of our brothers fell, lest some of them were dragged off by the fast, lest some of them shared in the feast.\footnote{Adv. Jud. 8.1.6 (PG 48:928.40-45).}

The prophets fought with the Christians against the *Ioudaioi*, and—inevitably—gained victory. But despite this, Chrysostom expects there may be casualties, those whose faith did not preserve them. He exhorts his community not to give them up for dead. Like warriors, his Christians should take care for their recovery. As well as the similarity with the aftermath of battle, his martial semantics also enable Chrysostom to present a striking contrast:

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καὶ ταφὴ μὲν μηδένα παραδόμεν, πάντας δὲ ἀνελόμενοι θεραπεύσομεν. Ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τὸν ἐξωθεὶν πολέμου, τὸν πεσόντα ἀπαξ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὑφέντα ἀδύνατον στρατιώτη πάλιν ἀνακτήσασθαι καὶ πρὸς ζωὴν ἐπαναγαγεῖν ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ πολέμου τοῦτον καὶ τῆς μάχης, καὶ καυρία τις ἐκ ἐνεργείας πληγῆς, δυνατὸν, ἄν θέλωμεν, τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριτος συνεφαπτομένης ἡμῖν, πρὸς ζωὴν αὐτὸν χειραγωγῆσαι πάλιν. Ὅν γὰρ φύσεως οὗτος ὁ θάνατος, καθάπερ ἐκείνος, ἀλλὰ προαιρέσεως καὶ γνώμης· προαίρεσιν δὲ ἀποθανοῦσαν δυνατὸν ἀναστῆσαι πάλιν, καὶ ψυχὴν νεκρωθεῖσαν πείσαι πρὸς τὴν οἰκείαν ζωὴν ἐπανελθεῖν, καὶ τὸν αὐτῆς ἐπιγνῶναι Δεσπότην.
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And let us give up no-one to the grave—but let us, picking everyone up, treat them. For in the case of secular wars, it is impossible for a soldier to recover or to bring back to life the one who falls even once, and gives up his soul. But in this war and this fight, even if someone has received a fatal wound it is possible, if we will, the grace of God laying hold of them with us, to lead him by the hand back to life again. For this death is not of nature, like the other, but of resolve and judgement. It is possible to raise up again a resolve that died, and to persuade a necrotic soul to return to its proper life, and to acknowledge again its master.\footnote{Adv. Jud. 8.1.6 (PG 48:928.45-929.2).}

John’s Christians are not merely superlative soldiers, encouraged to participate in the example of warriors who care for their companions, but they are equipped with greater powers of recovery in their battle than military men on campaign. By application of the right aids and correctives, they can effectively raise the fallen, and
reverse the death of the soul. Unlike in war, purpose and judgement govern the fight for Christians—and purpose and judgement are cognitive habits, that can be adjusted and changed.

Into this vibrant campaigning metaphor steps the Samaritan. First, Chrysostom exposit, at great length, how Cain (vis-à-vis Abel) and Paul (with respect to Peter) exemplify bad and good practices of care. Paul acts, as Margaret Mitchell has written, as a “mimetic intermediary”—although human, Paul acts as a concrete model of Christ, proving the possibility of *imitatio Christi* and demonstrating how it should be done. First, Chrysostom emphasizes the excellence of Paul’s action. Perceiving those who sinned, he did not ask himself about the cost or benefit to himself, and nor did he abandon them, but treated them, to bring them again “into the body of the *ekklesia*” (τῷ σώματι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας πάλιν). Then, Chrysostom turns his attention to the Good Samaritan:

You should really do this as well. Imitate that Samaritan, the one in the Gospel who demonstrated such care (πρόνοιαν) for the one wounded. For also a Levite passed by there, and a Pharisee passed by, and neither inclined to the man lying there, but without pity, cruel, leaving him, 

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137 Paul, as Chrysostom writes elsewhere, has a unique, close union with Christ: “Paul’s heart was Christ’s heart” (*In epist. Rom.* 32 (PG 60:680); “Paul filled out the picture of the perfect priest” (*De sacer.* 6.5).
they went away. But some Samaritan, in no way related to the man, did not run by but having stopped showed mercy, and applied drops of oil and wine. He placed him on his ass, led him to a pandokheion, and gave silver, as well as promising more for treating someone to whom he was in no way related.\footnote{Adv. Jud. 8.3.8 (PG 48:931.61-932.11).}

The worst thing the Christian can do is fail to set those who have fallen back on their feet. Three particular points stand out. First, Chrysostom twice stresses that the Samaritan was in no way related to the fallen man. This emphasis mobilizes a double rhetoric, pulling its force from both ethnic and familial relation. Regarding the first, he tacitly deploys the claim, made by Josephus and others, that Jews and Samaritans are in no way related. Regarding the second, he argued earlier in the homiletic series about noble birth, attacking the complacency of thinking it is sufficient for piety that one’s family have been Christian for generations. The Samaritan’s pity explicitly has nothing to do, Chrysostom emphasizes, with any motivation other than personal, individual “pity.” Second, this “pity” is not the “mercy” of the biblical text. Instead, it is pronoia, “forethought.” In this respect, like the Samaritan woman of the Homilies, this Samaritan offers a figure of intellectual virtue. Third, Chrysostom diverges from Luke 10 in representing the pair who disregard the fallen man not as a Levite and a priest, but as a Levite and a Pharisee (with priests and Pharisees very much not the same thing). Why? Possibly to sharpen polemic. Pharisees appear in Chrysostom’s other preaching in particularly hostile contexts (\textit{Hom. Jo. 50}, \textit{Hom. Jo. 65}). Partially, this may also reflect Chrysostom’s highly positive development of the character of
priests—he had no desire to complicate the rhetorical effect of the name of “priest,” applied to Christian ordinands, with such behaviour.139

Chrysostom then spins a tale about what his audience might think a Samaritan in such a position would think.

Καὶ οὐκ εἶπε πρὸς ἑαυτὸν, Τί δὲ μοι μέλει περὶ τούτου; Σαμαρείτης εἰμί, οὐδὲν κοινὸν ἔχω πρὸς αὐτὸν· πόρρῳ τῆς πόλεως ἔσμεν, οὐδὲ βαδίσαι δύναται. Τί δὲ, εάν μὴ πρὸς τὸ μὴκὸς ἁρκέσῃ τῆς ὀδοιπορίας, μέλλω νεκρόν ἐπιφέρεσθαι, μέλλω σφαγῆς ἀλίσκεσθαι, μέλλω τοῦ φόνου ὑπεύθυνος εἶναι; Καὶ γὰρ πολλοὶ πολλάκις παρίσταντες καὶ ὄρωντες ἀνθρώπως πεπληγότας καὶ σπαίροντας, διὰ τοῦτο παρατρέχουσιν, οὐκ ὄνομαντες ἀνελέσθαι, οὐδὲ χρημάτων φειδόµενοι, ἀλλὰ δεδοικότες, μὴ καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰς δικαστήριον ἐλκυσθοῦσιν, ὡς τῆς σφαγῆς ὑπεύθυνοι.

And he did not say to himself: “Why should I be concerned about this person? I am a Samaritan; I have nothing in common with him. We are far from the city, and he is not able to walk. And what about this: what if he does not last the length of the journey—am I likely to carry a corpse—am I likely to be seized for slaughter—am I likely to be answerable for murder? And moreover often, many travelling around, when seeing people who have been wounded and torn up, they will run away because of this, not stopping to raise them up, without sparing a thought for the affair, but having become afraid lest they also be dragged to the courthouse, just like those liable for the murder.140

Only the first of these concerns, taken directly from John 4:9b, has anything specifically to do with the man’s Samaritan status. The idea that dominates the Samaritan’s fictive musings is that of prosecution—a broader set of concerns, in no way limited—even fictively—to any ethnic or religious group called Samaritans. This is not a question of stinginess—which would be a moral failing, and one which Chrysostom returns to over and over in his homilies and his preaching more generally—but of reasonable fear of litigation, in a case without witnesses. These are

139 Rylaarsdam, Divine Pedagogy, 194-227. Rylaarsdam usefully juxaposes De Sacer. 3.4: “The work of the priesthood is done on earth, but it is ranked among heavenly ordinances...The Holy Spirit himself persuaded men, while still remaining in the flesh, to represent the ministry of angels. The priest, therefore, must be as pure as if he were standing in heaven itself.”

the counterfactual mental states the Samaritan could have inhabited, reflecting the reasonable fears of Christians going to help a Judaizing fellow believer. What happens if it all goes wrong? What happens if the Christian does Judaize? Will they be to blame—and how will they prove to someone that they are not accountable? But the key is that these are counterfactual. The Samaritan did not entertain such fears. Rather, even in Chrysostom’s creative reconstruction of his internal monologue he acted in a way to be imitated:

\[\text{Ἀλλ'] ἑκεῖνος οὐδὲν τούτων ἔδεισεν ὁ ἡμερος καὶ φιλάνθρωπος, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα πάντα ὑπερθὺν ἐπέθεκεν ἐπὶ τὸν ὅνον, καὶ εἰς πάνδοχον ἡγαγεν' οὐδὲν τούτων ὑπείδετο, οὐ κινδύνον, οὐ χρημάτων ὁπανήν, οὐκ ἀλλο οὐδέν. Εἰ δὲ ὁ Σαμαρείτης οὗτο φιλάνθρωπος καὶ ἡμερος γέγονε περὶ ἄνθρωπον ἄγνωστον, τίνα ἂν ἔχομεν συγγνώμιν ἡμεῖς, τὸν ἄδελφον τῶν οἰκεῖων ἀμελοῦντες ἐπὶ μείζονες ἑαυτούς; Καὶ γὰρ καὶ οὕτοι οἱ νῦν νηστεύοντες λησταῖς περίπεσον τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις, μᾶλλον δὲ ληστῶν ἀπάντων χαλεπωτέροις, καὶ μεῖζονα τοὺς εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐμπίπτοντας ἐργαζομένους κακά. Οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἰμάτια αὐτῶν περιέρρηξαν, οὐδὲ τῶ σώματι πληγάς ἐπήγαγον, καθάπερ ἐκεῖνοι τότε, ἀλλὰ τὴν ψυχὴν κατέτρωσαν, καὶ μυρία αὐτῇ τραύματα δόντες, οὕτως ἀπῆλθον, ἀφέντες ἐν τῷ λάκκῳ τῆς ἁπατώτητος κατέτρωσαν. \]

But this one, merciful and philanthropic, feared none of these. But rather, superior to all these things, he put the man on the beast, and led it to a pandokheion. He did not think of any of these—not danger, not financial cost, not anything else. But if the Samaritan was thus philanthropic and merciful about an unknown person, what excuse do we have, neglecting our own brothers in a case of greater troubles? For it is the case; those ones, those who now fasted have fallen among the robbers, the Ioudaioi, or rather among harsher than robbers, and whose working greater harm to those who have fallen in with them. For they have not stripped their clothes, nor inflicted wounds on the body—like those others did—but tore open the soul, and giving it a thousand wounds, thus dropped it—abandoning it, lying in the shallow pool of impiety.\(^\text{141}\)

Here, the Samaritan’s *philanthropia* comes to the fore, an imperial virtue par excellence, and this meant that he did not even think of danger or expense.\(^\text{142}\) The

\(^{141}\) Adv. Jud. 8.3.10 (PG 48:932.22-38).

\(^{142}\) A topic that, for example, the fourth-century orator Themistius returned to much and often; *Or.* 1, 6, 14, 15, etc.
rhetorical force lies in reasoning from lesser obligation to greater; if the Samaritan did so much out of *philanthropia* even for a stranger, how much more should the Christian act towards one of their brothers? Chrysostom articulates the Samaritan’s *philanthropia* as a catalyst to encourage Christians to develop feelings of obligation—and thus be persuaded to intervene when other Christians appear to them to Judaize, displaying their Christianity and reforming the practices of others.\(^{143}\) He pairs this with a vivid image of the dismembering of the soul by the *Ioudaioi*—worse than the bandits of Luke, they tear apart the soul rather than just hurting the body. We find the counterpoint to the earlier military metaphor: Christians have a much greater chance to save their brothers than soldiers on the battlefield, but the stakes are much higher—because their opponents are capable of harming the soul. Chrysostom combines both urgency with possibility; he empowers and demands.

In his rhetorical efforts to demarcate community boundaries and shape the limits of acceptable behaviour for individual Christians by shaping what fears and anxieties counted as admirable, Chrysostom fits neatly into scholarly narratives which see the late fourth-century as a period of particularly intensive exclusionary boundary policing. His repertoire for the Samaritans connects with urbane strategies for dealing with dissent on the one hand and the pressure of the theologizing of power even on the functional *auctoritas* of the late antique Roman emperor.\(^{144}\) So far, so good. But

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that he leans into the Samaritans in the way that he does incentivizes a more expansive approach to his work than scholars have so far pursued. Shaping our reading of Chrysostom through his attitude to the Jews, as if they were the only part of the Israelite past that we need to grasp to understand his rhetoric, means we miss the way he technologizes Samaritans—and the significance of those rhetoric acts.

When Chrysostom deploys the Samaritan component of the Israelite past, especially exploiting their contested lineage and claims to “Jewish piety,” he creates a biblical exemplar for Christian behaviour using a “pictorial idiom” to attack “Jewish” failures.\textsuperscript{145} The “Jews,” and thus the group he wants to influence, the Christian Judaizers, are dismantled by a revision of the history of the people of Israel in which the Samaritans play their part as an alternative people who worship the God of Israel without making the egregious mistakes of the Ioudaioi—and in the face of Jewish envy and hostility. By emphasizing the failure of the Ioudaioi to act as good Israelites he uses representations of Samaritans to rebuke the choice of any Judaizing Christian. Conversely, the Samaritan becomes a good Israelite, along with the (true) Christian, appealing to the desire to be like “biblical” Jews that so energizes his “Judaizing” opponents.

Moreover, the Samaritan is also the Samaritan of Chrysostom’s New Testament; a thematically Israelite vessel whose Israelite identity is sublated and replaced by Christianized virtues. Chrysostom’s philanthropic Samaritan exemplifies the diligence of Christian mercy—whilst also emphasizing that the obligations are even greater for the

\textsuperscript{145} See Rylaarsdam, Divine Pedagogy, 243: “Chrysostom’s homiletical techniques provide a pictorial idiom through which he seeks to guide the affections, worldview, values, and actions of his listeners.”
Christian. He technologizes Samaritans as a motif, characteristically and provocatively close to the lineage of “Israel,” around which Chrysostom’s aspirations for his congregation’s behaviour can take form and receive support. The Samaritans themselves do not represent any threat to community identity. Rather they are a biblical fossil by which Chrysostom can attack habits he perceived as morally and religiously corrosive.

Amphilochius of Iconium: “The Samaritans Among Us”

Chrysostom in Antioch makes extensive use of Samaritans as an exegetical technology of community discipline; Cyril in Jerusalem writes against them as a keenly-felt, albeit sporadic, religious threat. One of the more striking other fourth-century interactions with Samaritans, not yet translated into English and absent from Pummer’s collection, comprises a large section of what survives of the On False Asceticism of another bishop, rather less well known; Amphilochius of Iconium.146

On False Asceticism was written between 375 and 381—a few years prior to Chrysostom’s orations, and more or less simultaneous with the probable date of

146 Amphilochius possesses the rare honour of, as of the time of writing, being the only “heresiologist” whose concerns have drawn the attention of a scholar writing in The Journal of Roman Studies: Peter Thonemann, “Amphilochius of Iconium and Lycaonian Asceticism” in JRS 101 (2011): 185-205. On False Asceticism was first published, from the only surviving manuscript, with extensive commentary in Amphilochiana, I. Teil, ed. Gerhard Ficker (Leipzig, 1906), 21-280; the standard edition and that used here is Amphilochii Iconiensis Opera, ed. Cornelis Datema (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978), 185-214. All translations are my own; Amphilochius’ On False Asceticism has not yet been translated. Relatively few scholars have shown much interest in Amphilochius otherwise: see Constantine Bonis, “What are the Heresies Combatted in the Work of Amphilochios Metropolitan of Iconium (ca 341/5 – ca. 395/400) ‘Regarding False Asceticism’?” Greek Orthodox Theological Review 9 (1963), 79-96; E. Rosson, “Anfilochio di Iconio e il canonico biblico ‘Contra Haereticos,’” SP 43.2 (1996): 131-57; also a brief treatment in Andrew S. Jacobs, Christ Circumcised: A Study in Early Christian History and Difference (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 92-94.
Epiphanius’ hefty heresiological catalogue, the *Panarion*. It targeted ascetic groups at Iconium, in Lycaonia. Amphilochius’ treatise, as Andrea Sterk notes, with the exception of a short sixth-century flurry of interest, was “otherwise lost to semiobscurity.” It is, however, one of the earlier examples of a very common heresiological variant. Rather than a heresiological catalogue in the style of Hippolytus or Epiphanius, it systematically compares one named Christian group to a variety of heresies to emphasize the seriousness of their deviance.

Basil of Caesarea had already written to Amphilochius concerning a number of Lycaonian groups that concerned him in three letters (*Ep.* 188, 199, and 217) that came to be read as authoritative canonical letters in later centuries. Basil’s arguments against the group’s deviance are fragile—he resorts at one point to arguing that their baptism was unacceptable because it was indistinguishable from orthodox baptism (*Ep.* 199), merely performed outside the authority of the bishop. He also makes a comparison to Marcionite teachings which appear not to stand up to scrutiny either, making no appearance in the surviving parts of Amphilochius’ treatise directly written against the group.

But Basil’s somewhat flimsy argumentation does make the stakes of the Lycaonian problem visible—a group baptizing in the same way the bishopric ordained

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147 See Chapter 3, following.
were nevertheless diverging from the official position of the bishop when it came to
the features of the life for which baptism served as the initiation—specifically,
partaking in Eucharist wine and, a common problem that Chrysostom also rails
against, spiritual marriage. Not only did they do so, but they appear to have done so
with relative confidence in their own position. In his recent discussion of
Amphilochius, Peter Thonemann connects the references of Amphilochius to deviant
groups under his diocesan authority to this sparse – but extant – evidence for the
concretely monumentalized existence of “heretical” groups otherwise known from
their representation in Christian heresiology. Thonemann points to an inscription
from Kindyria in Lycaonia which incorporates a scornful reference to Christians who
drink wine as part of a funerary threat:

Meiros, son of <Va>lentinus, of the enkrateis, set this up while living
and in his right mind for himself and his cousin Tatis and his brother
Paulos and his brother Pribis, in memoriam. If any of the Winedrinkers
inters [another body], he will have to reckon with God and Jesus Christ
[MAMA VII 96].

Fergus Millar notes a similar epigraphic example from Deir Ali south of
Damascus, dated to 318/9 CE, which marks a building as the “Synagōgē of the
Markiōnistai of the village of Lebaba of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”. What

151 See Leyerle, Theatrical Shows, esp. 75-99.
152 For the importance of epigraphy within the discipline see Fergus Millar, “Epigraphy,” in Sources for Ancient History, ed. Michael Crawford; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 80-136; for the type of information ancient historians invest in extracting from inscriptions, see the seminal article by Ramsay MacMullen, “The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire,” AJP 103.3 (1982): 233-46.
154 OGIS no. 608. For the inscription, as well as other references in Epiphanius and Jerome to deviant groups in remote villages, see Fergus Millar, The Greek World, The Jews, and The East, ed. Hannah M. Cotton and Guy M. Rogers (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 391 - 92.
matters to these scholars is not so much the existence of “Marcionites” or “Encratites” alongside other Christians. Our written sources attest that members of such groups rubbed shoulders with those valorized by posterity as exemplary, as in for example the martyrdom of Pionius alongside a follower of Marcion.\(^{155}\) Rather, for both Thonemann and Millar, an air of excitement characterizes their treatment of the material as if epigraphy, by dint of being engraved in something so solid, can finally be mobilized to write robust social or conceptual history.\(^{156}\)

But there is more to Amphilochius’ text than having its plausibility confirmed by stonework. As noted above, the *On False Asceticism* is not complete. But those pieces which survive represent a striking mobilization of heresiological rhetoric; specifically, an extended weaponization of the relationship between Samaritans and Jews. The repertoire of difference takes a very different form, however, than in Chrysostom. Despite Amphilochius’ shared use of the *psogos*, Chrysostom’s Samaritans served as a fossilized biblical trope used to attack Judaizers. His Samaritans do not factor into his heresiological grid, either as an imagined opponent or a theological risk. In contrast, Amphilochius’ Samaritans are represented as genuinely schismatic as Samaritans. In this respect, then, Amphilochius resembles Cyril. But unlike the bishop of Jerusalem, Amphilochius’ treatise does not target Samaritans directly. Rather, it aims by means of analogy to mobilize genuinely anti-Samaritan rhetoric as an anti-Lycaonian polemic. Amphilochius’s repertoire does so,


\(^{156}\) For a recent instance of an ancient historian examining the role of material things in motivating specific types of story about the ancient world, see Serafina Cuomo on the Saldae aqueduct in “A Roman Engineer’s Tales,” *JRS* 101 (2011): 143-65.
furthermore, by reworking a biblical past into an alternate history, numerous features of which appear nowhere else in our surviving texts from antiquity.\textsuperscript{157}

The Samaritan section of Amphilochius’ treatise involves three main parts. First, he traces the name “Samaritan” back to the rebellion of Jeroboam. Jeroboam, idolatrous and arrogant, rejected the true people of God.

Πλὴν ἀλλ᾿ εἰ καὶ Μωυσῆς πολλάκις τὰ αὐτὰ ἔγραψεν ἄλλοις μὴ ἀνενεγκεῖν θυσίαν, ἀλλ᾿ Ἰεροβο<ά>μ ὁ <ν>ίς Ν<α>βάτ, ὁ ἀγενήζ, ὁ μὴ φοβοῦμενος τὸν θεὸν, ὁ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν ἐπιλαθόμενος, ἀποσχίζει τὸν λαὸν ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλήμ· ἢ καὶ ἀποστασίαν διδάξεις ἔνομοθέτησεν ἐν αὐτοῖς μὴ αναβαίνειν εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ, μηδὲ ἐκεῖ ἀναφέρειν τὰς λατρείας ἡς προσέταξεν ὁ νόμος, μηδὲ ἐπακούειν τὸν γραφόν, μηδὲ ἄλος βλέπειν τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ, λογιζόμενος τούτο, ὅτι εὰν ὁ λαὸς ἔρχηταί εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ καὶ ἐπακούη τὸν ἐντολὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, προστεθῆσαι τῷ οίκῳ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τιμῆσι οἶκον τὸν ἐννομον βασιλέα καὶ αὐτὸν καταλείψει. Τί οὖν ποιεῖ διὰ τὴν φιλαρχίαν καὶ κενήν ἀπάτην; Ἡνα δόξη ἄρχειν τοῦ λαοῦ, δύο δαμάλεις ιστήσει χρυσᾶς τοῖς ὀρθὶς λέγων. Όὕτω οἱ θεοὶ σου, Ἰσραήλ, οἱ ἐξαγαγόντες σε έκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου· τούτοις προσκύνει, μὴ ἀνέρχου εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ. Καὶ νομοθετήσῃς ταῦτα τῷ λαῷ ἀπέστησεν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῆς Ἰερουσαλήμ.

Even Moses often wrote the same things—often!—not to offer sacrifice elsewhere, but Jeroboam the son of Nabat, the bastard, unafraid of God, the attacker of the law and the prophets, tore the people away from Jerusalem and having taught them apostasy made it a law for them neither to go to Jerusalem nor to offer any of the offerings which the law commanded, nor to obey the scriptures, nor to even set eyes on the house of God reasoning thus: that if the people went to Jerusalem and obeyed the commands of God, they might presents offerings in the house of God and honour the lawful king and abandon him. What, then, did he do because of such lust for power (philarkhia) and empty vanity? In order that he might seem fit to rule the people, he set up two golden calves on the mountains saying, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you out of Egypt. Worship these—do not go up to Jerusalem.” And having legislated these things for the people, he took them away from God and Jerusalem”\textsuperscript{158}.

\textsuperscript{157} They do share key features intriguingly, with two sections from Tertullian’s treatise Against Marcion (3:13.8-10; 4:35.9-11), but this probably reflects independent development of the potential for identity-generation of the biblical past—not any influence or textual link. The significance of this remains to be explored. The association of Samaritan origins with Jeroboam also appears in John of Nikui’s likely late seventh-century Chronicle 93:4-9 (=Pummer no.165), but only in terms of idolatry.

\textsuperscript{158} Haer. 567-581.
Amphilochius shows Jeroboam as motivated by *philarkhia*, a lust for power that threatens the church. Read straight, this signals that Amphilochius comes from the same camp of ecclesiastical order as Chrysostom. But in Amphilochius, *philarkhia* glosses the monarchic Israelite past, and in doing so shapes a novel account of Samaritan religious error. 1 Kings 11-12 recalls how Jeroboam, an Ephraimite (1 Kings 11:26), was declared king by Israel against the House of David (1 Kings 12:19-20). Specifically, it recalls how he repeated—and doubled the sin of Aaron. Having been appointed king by the ten tribes, Jeroboam, to avoid the heart of the people turning back to Rehoboam of Judah—the inevitable result of their offering sacrifices in Jerusalem—forged two golden calves, and declared them to represent the Lord, the god of Israel (1 Kings 12:27-8).

Amphilochius transforms this story of Israelite division into an origin story of the Samaritans. It is Jeroboam, Amphilochius argues, who gave the northerners the name “Samaritan” as an expression of self-pride. In this way, Amphilochius, like Origen, Epiphanius, and Jerome, recognizes in the name “Samaritan” the claim made

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159 See Chrysostom, *In Eph* 10 and 11 on *philarkhia* as church destroying; Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 101.

160 We know at least three distinct versions of Jeroboam’s ascent in the MT and LXX versions; see for an overview Marvin A. Sweeney, “A Reassessment of the Masoretic and Septuagint Variants of the Jeroboam Narratives in 1 Kings/3 Kingdoms 11-14,” *JSJ* 38 (2007): 165-95. Note, however, that whilst these often differ significantly, Amphilochius’ Samaritan origin narrative is not present in any of them.

161 Interestingly, Mordechai Coogan also thinks that the story of Jeroboam’s treason in the LXXA/LXXB accounts reflects rivalry with Samaritans; *1 Kings* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 356. In these Greek accounts, very different from Amphilochius’ approach, the condemnation of the house of Jeroboam occurs prior to the narration of Jeroboam’s cultic wrongdoings rather than after it (as in MT, and in Amphilochius). His treachery is cemented with his marriage into the Egyptian royal family (Sweeney, “Jeroboam Narratives,” 171). Whilst this at first suggests Amphilochius follows a text closer to the MT, his emphasis on Jeroboam’s culpability resembles the Greek LXXA/LXXB.
by the Samaritans to be shamerin (שמרין), “keepers of the law.” The Greek of Amphilochius (φύλαξ νόμου) directly translates not only the Hebrew (שמרין) but also the interpretation of legal fidelity. He embeds it, however, in an extended narrative of revolt:

You see what vain glory does, what boastfulness and arrogance bring about? He was raised up against the lawful king, he was compelled by the sickness of self-love even to act impiously against God himself. And what more? He named himself and the people “Samaritan” — Samaritan in the Hebrew language is a “guardian of the law.” So did he consistently succeed or fail to live up to the name of “Samaritan”?  

Amphilochius diagnoses what he understands as latent in 1 Kings; Jeroboam’s behaviour was inflicted on his people. Not only does Jeroboam fail to observe the prescriptions of the law, he also raises up idols precisely out of desire to preserve his own rule and keep the people’s attention fixed on himself. But adding to 1 Kings 12, Amphilochius’ story represents Jeroboam driven to idolatry due to his arrogance against the rightful king, claiming the observance explicit in the name “Samaritan.”  

Amphilochius expands on his critique:

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163 *Haer.* 582-88.  
164 Again, the same association appears in John of Nikui, *Chronicle* 93:5 (= Pummer no.165); the link between Jeroboam and idolatry is so well established in late antique interpretation that it is somewhat surprising the link to the Samaritans as a group is made only rarely.
If you were a guardian of law, you would have guarded the law, you would have gone up to the temple of God, offered up there the first fruits and tithes and all the prayers, as God commanded through Moses—and you would have been truly a guardian of law. But in contrast you drew his people away from God, you raised up idols—and you call yourself a guardian of the law!  

The Mosaic law, he argues, demanded veneration of the temple in Jerusalem, with all appropriate tithes, prayers, and festival observances. Since Jeroboam did not such thing, he failed to guard the law. He also dragged his people away into idolatry. Significantly, Amphilochius does not acknowledge the Samaritan Pentateuch’s claims that such acts were properly performed towards Gerizim. The proper site of worship, for Amphilochius, remained Jerusalem—he does not mention the precise details of the Samaritan mistake despite its appearance in the Gospel of John. The Samaritans’ schismatic identity manifests itself in aggression towards Jews:
They are entirely guardians of the law who remained in Jerusalem, and
guarded the commandments of the law and of the prophets. But it was
not sufficient just to keep the false name, he also calls the people of
God remaining in Jerusalem unclean, and renders them thoroughly
loathsome: the one being loathsome who is also unclean [probably
short citation from Job 15:16.] For they touch no one who is of the
people of God, or drink from some vessel from which the people of
God previously made use.\textsuperscript{167}

Here, Amphilochius adds a hook to the story of 1 Kings. Jeroboam doubles down
on his own failure. Not content with leading his people away from Jerusalem, and the
true commandments of the law and prophets, he intensified his anti-Jerusalem policy.
Amphilochius portrays Jeroboam calling those resident in Jerusalem, the real people
of God, “loathsome.” He even uses τὸ βδέλυγμα, the visceral LXX terminology for
ritual impurity throughout Leviticus and Deuteronomy, as well as Psalms and
Wisdom literature, as well as the basic form of the eschatological “desecrating
sacrilege” (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως) of Daniel 9:37, 11:31, and 12:11, and a
visceral, affective term for a peculiarly intolerable form of disgust more broadly.\textsuperscript{168}

His attention to detail extends both to touch and to vessels; Jeroboam harnesses purity
law to try and establish that the Israelites in Jerusalem are inauthentic, unclean even
to the touch, whilst he continually calls himself (falsely) the guard of the law that
makes them so.

In the second part of his argument, Amphilochius clarifies the reason Samaritan
hostility is problematic is not that it spoils the relationship of Samaritans to Jews—
who he admits he doesn’t care all that much about. Rather, the problem lies in that the
Samaritans learned to act like Jeroboam. To keep their false name, they have charged

\textsuperscript{167} Haer. 593-600.

\textsuperscript{168} On the affective range of βδέλυγμα, see an illustration with reference to Revelation and the
Apocalypse of John; Stephen D. Moore, “Retching on Rome: Vomitous Loathing and Visceral Disgust
the righteous with acts of uncleanness ever since. As a result of this error, the attitude born of Samaritan failure directs itself “even to this day” against even those he considers the true chosen people—the Christians—and even Jesus himself. In an aggressively polarized reading of John 4:4-42, Amphilochius finds an account of a Samaritan unwilling to give water to even Christ himself.

Τί δὲ λέγω, εἰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἐβδελύξατο; Ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντα χριστιανὸν μέχρι καὶ τήμερον ἀποστρέφονται καὶ οὔτε ποτήριον οὔτε πινάκιον ἰδιόν αὐτῶν κηρύσσιν, ἀλλὰ λέγουσι καὶ τὰ σκεύη αὐτῶν μιαίνεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Καὶ ἵνα γνῷ ἕκαστος ἡμῶν εἰς πόσον ἔξεχεσαν, αὐτῷ τῷ Χριστῷ οὐκ ἀμαρέτησις γυνὴ εἶπε πρῶτον περὶ τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἀπομαχομένης. Οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὅρει τούτῳ προσκυνήσαν, καὶ πῶς υμῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμως ἐστιν ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔσπερ ἐποτίσατο; Περιτομαχεῖ ὁ θάνατος, ὡς ἐπεν αὐτῷ. Δός μοι πεῖν ἐκ τῆς ύδρειας, λέγεις αὐτῷ. Καὶ πῶς σὺ πεῖν αἵτινες παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ υἱὸς γυναικὸς Σαμαρίτης τίδος; Ὁρᾶς ὅτι οὐκ ἠθέλησαν αὐτῷ δοθῆναι, ἵνα μὴ μιαίνῃ αὐτῇ ἤτοι ὑδρείαν, ὡς ἔκεινη ἐνόμισεν, φανερὰ τε τὰ πράγματα.

What do I say, if someone abominated the Jews? But also they turn away from every Christian even to today, and they make use of neither their cup nor their particular bowl, but they say that their vessels are defiled by the people. And in order that each of us might know how far they have fallen, the Samaritan woman spoke first about Jerusalem, fighting it out with Christ himself: “Our Fathers worshipped on this mountain. So how do you say that the place where it is necessary to worship is in Jerusalem?” But about water, he spoke thus to her: “Give to me water from the watering place.” And she said to him: “And how is it that you ask me for a drink, since I am a Samaritan woman?” You see that she did not wish to give it to him, so that he would not pollute her watering place, as she considered. These things are obvious.\(^{169}\)

This argument sharply contrasts with Chrysostom’s treatment of the Samaritan woman. Even the notoriously grumbly Epiphanius opens his De Gemmis by comparing his acquisition of knowledge, to the meeting between the Samaritan woman and Christ.\(^{170}\) For Amphilochius, the Samaritan woman passage—at least in On False Asceticism—provides a means to demonstrate the Samaritans as

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\(^{169}\) *Haer.* 600-12.

\(^{170}\) See chapter 3, below.
irretrievably hostile. One of them fought (ἀπομαχομένη) even against Christ himself. And the Samaritans “even to this day” maintain stringent—and Amphilochius implies, hateful—purity practices. Thus, Amphilochius begins to construct a comparison between such Samaritans and his overly stringent ascetic opponents.

Returning to On False Asceticism, Amphilochius inverts the relation between Ioudaioi and Samaritans in John 4:9b, and thus the commentary on it by other important interpreters. Chrysostom takes careful note that it is the Ioudaioi who do not have dealings with the Samaritans—not vice versa. The Samaritan woman acts in the way that she does because she accommodates to the practices of the people to whom she perceives that Jesus belongs. She treats Jesus with appropriate restraint to

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171 Amphilochius’ orations have received only a little more scholarly attention than On False Asceticism; see a handful of articles by J.H. Barkhuizen: “Imagery in the (Greek) homilies of Amphilochius of Iconium,” Acta Patristica et Byzantina 13 (2002): 1-30; “The Preaching of Amphilochius of Iconium: An Introduction to the authentic (Greek) homilies,” Acta Patristica et Byzantina 16 (2005): 132-56; “The Use of Imagery as Structural Element in Amphilochius of Iconium. In mulierem peccatrice [Homily IV],” Ekklesiastikos Pharos 92 (2010): 57-73. Barkhuizen does not comment on the Samaritan woman—it should be noticed also that his fidelity to the Greek sometimes plays second fiddle to his analysis of the effectiveness of the homilies.

172 Samaritan purity practices are noticed by most heresiologists and some rabbis. The stringency of Samaritan halakha is common knowledge in at least the eastern mediterranean, although Samaritan halakhic manuals only appear much later; see Pummer, Samaritans, 231-39.

173 The Samaritan woman is also mentioned in Amphilochius’ Homily 4, designated in the manuscript tradition as In mulierem peccatrice and focused on the woman who anoints Jesus’ feet with oil in Luke 7:36-50. Barkhuizen outlines the content of this homily, and usefully contextualizes it with Romanos’ later Kontakion 10; see “Use of Imagery as Structural Element,” 59-60. In this Homily, one of the longest out of the nine which survive, she appears twice. In the first instance, she is part of a list of those with whom Christ speaks and demonstrates his remarkable philanthropia, as well as his intention to act as healer (ἰατρός) for all (Hom. 4, 53-57). The second instance reiterates this list, but to use Jesus’ conversation with women and sinners to justify his own policing of women’s behavior and appearance. By haranguing them he, like Jesus, helps them avoid future sin and punishment (Hom. 4, 122-24.) For illuminating Amphilochius’ attitude to the Samaritans more generally, these passing mentions can be only suggestive. Both instances strengthen the inference that, in general, Samaritan carries negative associations—but in both cases, the Samaritan woman is clustered with a set of other biblical figures (tax collectors, prostitutes, Pharisees), making it difficult to gauge whether her Samaritanness is an active part of her negative characterization.
avoid imposing on him to break the customs of his Jewish people. Origen, in his earlier commentary on the Gospel, likewise took his point of departure from the text of John’s gospel. The scriptures attest, he writes, that the Samaritans are *allogenes,* but it is the *Ioudaioi* who avoid touching the *sarx* (“flesh”) of other races. Origen even notes, later in the commentary, that John 4:9b may not be true, since Jesus has dealings with Samaritans so as to benefit them. Despite the order of John 4:9b, Amphilochius flips the relationship. The Gospel reports, he asserts, not a failure by the *Ioudaioi* but evidence that the failure of Jeroboam was replicated in the Samaritan woman. He reads her as unwilling to give Jesus drink because she understands him to be ethnically and religiously distinct from herself.

In the third and final part of this argument, having leapt through—and out of—biblical time, from Jeroboam to Jesus, and then to his own time, Amphilochius then confirms the direction of his analogy by extended comparison. As Samaritan to Jew, so heretic to Christian.

Τίς οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκει τοὺς παρ’ ἡμῖν Σαμαρεῖτας; Τοὺς ἀποστάντας ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰερουσαλήμ, τούτων ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοὺς νομοθετήσαντας μηκέτι εὐχήν ἢ ἀπαρχάς προσφέρειν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τῇ Ἰερουσαλήμ, μηδὲ ἐπακουεῖν τῶν γραφῶν ἢ τῶν διδασκαλιῶν τῶν διδόμενων ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῖς ποιμένι παρὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἀγίου, ἀλλ’ εἶναι κεχωρισμένους καὶ ἀλλοτρίους παντελῶς τῶν λαοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὄνοματα σεμνὰ ψευδώς ἑαυτοῖς ἐπονομάσαντας. <Ως> γὰρ ἐκεῖνος μετὰ πάσαν τὴν ἀσέβειαν φύλακα τοῦ νόμου ἐκαθόρισεν, όπως οὕτως ἀρνηθῆναι θυσίαν ἡ ρέειν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Ἔγκρατετας καὶ Α<ποκ>τῆς τοῦ προσκυνήσεως, ὅτι τάς πρὸς θεον συνθήκας παρὰ δ’ ἐμαυτοῦ ἐπεκτάξατε, ὅτι τάς πρὸς θεον συνθήκας παρὰ δ’ ἐμαυτοῦ ἐπεκτάξατε.
Jerusalem, nor obeying the scriptures or teachings given in the churches according to the shepherds from the holy spirit, but to be separated from and totally alien to the people of God, falsely adopting for themselves holy names. For just as this one after every impiety calls himself a guardian of the law, so these ones deny the deposit received in the church, calling themselves Encratites and Apotaktites. It is necessary to say that they are transgressors, because they have transgressed the covenants with God.176

The failure of his Lyconian opponents was foreshadowed in the failure of the northern kingdom of Israel to fulfil their covenant with the God of Israel and the rejection of Jesus by the Samaritan woman. They take pleasure in alienating themselves from the people of God. Jacobs comments that Amphilochius places Christ as “paradigmatic object of ascetic imitation firmly within the heart of Jewish ritual and religious otherness.”177 But Amphilochius goes even further than this. He imagines his orthodox congregation firmly in that ritual and religious heart. His Lycaonian opponents are to the true church what the Samaritans are to the Jews, and what Jeroboam was to the people of Jerusalem—a deviant group, incapable of fulfilling the “great name” that they attempt to claim. In their attempt, they have become fixated with purity such that they assert even permissible things are unclean.

They were baptized into the church by the priests of God, after the baptism they fed on the holy body and honoured blood of Christ. So have they guarded these traditions? If someone denies one of these, they have denied the whole. So then have they guarded the three: baptism, body, blood? One priest has handed down the trinity of mysteries to you.178

176Haer. 613-25.
177 Jacobs, Christ Circumcised, 93.
178 Haer. 626-31.
For Amphilochius, despite being baptized and taking first Eucharistic rites, his opponents fail to live up to the corresponding expectations. They fail to live up to the observance of those mysteries which marks them as full members of the orthodox church. As we see in Amphilochius’ treatise to the newly baptized, baptism became the mark and seal of the collapse of the power of the devil and demons. To then impose a different set of purity practices denigrated the power of baptism, and disrespected what had been ordained by God as sufficient for his people. They undermine their own inclusion by failing to revere one part of the process by which they had been admitted into the ekklesia—a part Amphilochius stresses as vital. In *On False Asceticism* he targets a specific mistake—the rejection of wine. If someone rejects even one of the three important mysteries, one rejects them all: Ἐάν τις ἐν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἠθετήσῃ, τὴν τριάδα ἠθέτησεν.\(^{179}\)

Failure to live up to their inclusion within the people of God is, furthermore, emphasized by comparison with Samaritan circumcision. Samaritans were bodily Israelites, he writes, but by transgression rejected the identity gained by their embodied transformation.

\(^{179}\) *Haer.* 643.
you have refuted by the seal. For you have received baptism in the church of Christ.\textsuperscript{180}

Thus, not only does the group’s obsession with purity leads them to mischaracterize their relationship to the (true) people of God; their betrayal is felt particularly keenly because they shared so much with those they betrayed. The heretics, like the Samaritans, received every marker of the chosen people—including embodied rites of affiliation: for the Samaritans, circumcision, for the Christians, baptism. The Lycaonian ascetics also mark themselves as no longer ecclesial despite any active participation in the life and rituals of the church—specifically, baptism and the consumption of blood and body. Yes, Amphilochius argues, their baptism is identical to that of the orthodox church. But the circumcision, and ethnic origins of the Samaritans were similar to that of Israel. They not only proved unworthy of the name that associated them with an Israelite region, but attitudinally unworthy, looking down on those properly part of the people of God who did not also engage in unnecessary purity practices which they flaunt over other Christians.

Πόθεν δέ σοι καὶ ἡ τοσαύτη ὁμοιότης πρὸς τὴν Σαμάρειαν; Ἕστω ἀπέσχισας, ἐστω ἐνομοθέτησας τοῖς ὑποσκελισθεῖσιν ὑπὸ σοῦ μηκέτι πετεῖν τὸν οἴκον τοῦ θεοῦ, μηκέτι ἀκοῦειν τῶν ἱερέων τῶν βαπτισάντων καὶ χριστιανόν σε ποιησάντων. πόθεν δέ σοι καὶ ἡ τῶν σκευῶν παρατήρησις; Ἐκ ποίας παραδόσεως;

From what else, also is the similarity between you and the Samaritan? Let it be so, you split off; let it be so, you made laws for those tripped up by you to no longer walk in the house of God, no longer to hear the priests who the baptise and who made you \textit{christianos}. From where did

\textsuperscript{180} \textit{Haer.} 656-62.
the observance of vessel purity come to you? From what kind of tradition? 181

In summary, Amphilochius’ “Samaritan” occupies a discursive space somewhere between Chrysostom’s exegetical technology and Cyril’s keenly felt religious threat. Like Chrysostom, he technologizes “Samaritans” as part of the biblical past. By shaming any possible Christian who might become attached to unacceptable groups, he hopes to incentivize Christian behavior he approves of, just like Chrysostom—although Amphilochius Samaritans are a negative rather than a positive foil. Like Cyril, he represents them as deviant down to his own time, a heresiological shorthand—although unlike Cyril and like Chrysostom, Samaritans themselves are not his target. He analogizes rather than demonizes them; for Amphilochius, the name “Samaritan” signals doctrinal deviance, historical failure, and an inauthentic, unstable group identity bound to extreme renunciation, then applied by close analogy to his direct opponents. 182

They are characterized as (1) fixated by misplaced purity practices that lead them to reject orthodox co-religionists, (2) reneging on the conditions of their covenant with God, and (3) excluded from the people of God by their disingenuous claim to a

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181 Haer. 663-67. Note that the text switches between Σαμάρειαν and Σαμαρείτης. Elsewhere this type of difference sometimes signals a distinction between Samaritan (a member of the ethnic or religious group) and Samarian (an occupant of the region of Samaria); see for a brief summary Pummer, Flavius Josephus, 4-7. Here, given the interchangeability of the terms, the importance of the polemic, and the survival of On False Asceticism in only one manuscript, it seems no such distinction is present.

182 This sets precedent for one of the more durable tropes of Samaritan appearance as non-generic heresiological comparison. Amphilochius’ approach is characteristic of later Byzantine heresiology as well, as in the anti-heretical writings of Germanus I (d.733) where Samaritans serve as a touchstone for the rigorist, Judaizing Athenagai in his Narratio de haeresibus et synodis ad Anthimum diaconum (PG 92.85); see Philippe Gardette, “The Judaizing Christians of Byzantium: An Objectionable Form of Spirituality,” in Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures, ed. Robert Bonfil, Oded Irshai, Guy G. Stroumsa, and Rina Talgam (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 587-612, esp. 591-97.
noble name that their behaviour prevents them from earning. Reference to Samaritans emphasizes these deviances. It is remarkable, Amphilochius hammers home over and over, how far they, his Lycaonian opponents, a blurred Samaritan/heterodox hybrid mutually imbricated by Jeroboam’s idolatry and contemporary obsession with false laws, half in their own time and half as the failed northern Israelites, did not live up to the demands of that shared deposit—even unfaithful to the signs of affiliation and piety which they received on their own bodies.

Comparison with Origen again helps indicate even more precisely the distinctive features of Amphilochius’ angle of attack. In his Commentary on John, Origen writes:

'Αλλ' ἐπεί Ιουδαίοι μὲν—ἀπ’ αὐτῶν γὰρ ἡ σωτηρία—εἰκόνες εἰσὶν τῶν τοὺς ὑγιαίνοντας φρονούντων λόγως, Σαμαρεῖς δὲ τῶν ἐπεροδόξων, ἀκολούθως τὸ μὲν Γαρίζην θεοποίουσιν οἱ Σαμαρεῖς, ὡπερ ἐρμηνεύεται «διατομὴ ἢ διαίρεσις»—καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν διατομῆς καὶ διαιρέσεως τῶν δέκα φυλῶν διατετμημένων ἀπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν δύο γεγενημένης κατὰ τοὺς τοῦ Ἰεροβοάμ χρόνους, δὲ καὶ αὐτῶς ἐρμηνεύεται «δικασμὸς λαοῦ».

But since the Jews—for salvation is from them—are icons of those thinking sound thoughts, but Samarians the heterodox, it follows that the Samaritans deify Garizim, which is translated as “separation” or “division,” which is also a separation and division according to history, ten tribes cut off from the other two in the days of Jeroboam, whose very name is translated “judgement of a people.”

Here, Origen represents “the heterodox” using the Samaritan as icons (εἰκόνες.) Origen, like Amphilochius, takes for granted something resembling the Samaritan origin story which Amphilochius relies so heavily on. Deviance is tied to the moment when the ten tribes split from the faithful in Jerusalem, in the time of Jeroboam (as,
again, in 1Kings 12). But whilst, for Origen, the Samaritan is the *eikōn* of the heterodox, John 4 remains ultimately a story of persuasion, and of the possibility of coming to new understandings—both in biblical time and that of Origen’s own Egyptian context. Origen clarifies this in what survives of his interpretation:

Πείθεται μέντοι γε ἡ Σαμαρείτις αἰτήσαι τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὄδωρ, εἰκών, ὡς προείπομεν, τυγχάνουσα γνώμης ἐτεροδοξοῦντον περὶ τὰς θείας ἁσχολομένων γραφάς, διε ἄκουει περὶ τῆς συγκρίσεως ἁμφοτέρων τῶν ὑδάτων.

Moreover, the woman is persuaded to ask water of Jesus (happening to be an image, as we said before, of the opinion of the heterodox, busying themselves concerning the divine scripture) when she hears about the comparison of both the waters.\(^{185}\)

The woman typifies the heterodox not only in her misunderstanding, but in her responsiveness to well-reasoned correction, and her curiosity with respect to the scriptures—a curiosity Origen, in his lively engagement with the exegesis of Heracleon, for example, appreciated—the importance of her curiosity was one point on which they agreed. His interpretation of the passage valorizes her ability to think flexibly because it implies flexibility also of his opponents—and the possibility that they change their minds. No such rehabilitation of the dissenting party exists in Amphilochius’ repertoire. The Samaritan woman reflects his characterization of Samaritan kenodoxia, typical of their group from Jeroboam to Jesus, and from Jesus to Amphilochius’ own time. Nor do we find in Amphilochius anything like Origen’s ambivalence, or willingness to bend scriptures back on themselves to render meanings in productive tension with one another. Instead, the Samaritan woman slots into a scaffolding of deviance that includes the arrogance of Jeroboam, the rejection of the

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true people of Israel, misplaced purity fixation, and the unacceptable beliefs and practices of Amphilochius’ Lycaonian opponents all at once.

Further thoughts

Paying attention to Samaritans helps pinpoint how our narratives of fourth-century religion could make much better use than they currently do of the complex repertoire for difference in our archive. The “confessional arrays” of late antique religious affiliation which Sizgorich flags are misserved if reduced too quickly to binaries.186 Our ancient sources may not fixate on “Samaritan” to the same degree as they do on “Jew” or “heretic” or “Hellene.” Nevertheless, although only one of these sources appears to tell us anything about Samaritans directly, each offers a means to excavate something more of each writer’s way of conceptualizing and negotiating religious difference.

All three of these writers draw on traditions about Samaritans that differ from the Samaritans of Josephus or of the New Testament—sources that still largely dominate scholarly usage. Chrysostom departs from his Josephan source text to portray repentant Samaritans in contrast to continuously sinful Jews. Cyril speaks, it seems, from a place of contemporary urgency, with little concern for the history of the Samaritans or their New Testament personae. And Amphilochius represents a very hostile image of Samaritans drawing from traditions also represented in Origen and Eusebius not used by either Chrysostom or Cyril. These Christian writers work within

186 Sizgorich, Violence and Belief, 32.
a repertoire of overlapping but variously available traditions about Samaritans that noticeably evolved through late antiquity, from the early third century into the later fifth and beyond. These traditions are, furthermore, rather removed from, though occasionally overlapping with, the traditions in Josephus, despite the dominance of Josephus’ writings in reconstructing the ancient history of Samaritans.  

It might be objected that the different representations of Samaritans result from the different genres of text examined. Chrysostom’s *Homilies on John* are, after all, a different type of text to Amphilochius’ *On False Ascetism*. Precisely. But this reflects a second realization. Like “Jews” or “Pagans,” Samaritans are not limited to a single role: heresiological, exegetical, rhetorical. Rather, they appear with a wide range of meanings across a wide range of texts. Therefore, I suggest, the Samaritans represented, for at least some fourth-century Christians, a potent reservoir of present possibilities for encounter, polemic, and even threat. If we pass over them in silence, we shape our approach to late antique identity in a way that actively departs from how our sources deal with difference. This may not be a bad thing. All history is, in one sense, a result of departure from the past. But it is an approach subject to artificial narrowing – and that calls for serious scrutiny.

Examining the technologization of Samaritans also, should we want it, exemplifies one way to decompress the habitual set of identities which we select for close attention. We know that terms like “barbarian,” “pagan,” “heretic” etc. could

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function as technologies for explaining or creating difference at every point along a
spectrum from direct confrontation to complete invention. But the Samaritans also
appear in these fourth-century Christian documents not as an inert stable unit, but as a
plastic and intermittent presence, the technologized effects of which vary dramatically
between sources—in ways well-suited to the sophisticated toolkit scholars of late
antiquity have become adept at using to analyse identity and alterity in their unstable
and continually restabilized forms, but not incorporated into standard scholarly
taxonomies of late antique difference. Precisely by being less durable, less continually
present in the diachronic horizons of scholarly literature, the set of Samaritan
representations gifts us an excellent opportunity for raising the question of how our
own impressions of long duration importance affect what gets included in histories of
religious identity and difference.

The technologization of Samaritans in Chrysostom, Cyril, and Amphilochius
signals the presence of viable alternative stories of fourth-century identity to the
stories usually told from those texts—and the possibility that scholars can thus talk
about those texts with alternative conceptualizations of identity and alterity that upset,
or at least, do not hew as close to, the categories—such as Jewishness and
Christianness—that come to have such diachronic longevity. In Chrysostom,
Samaritans are paired with Jews to emphasize by contrast the deep failure of Jews—
but the target of the rhetoric is Judaizing Christians. In Cyril, the Samaritans appear

188 For some examples of this in action see Boin, “Social Origins”; Jason Moralee, “Maximinus
Maijastina Kahllos, “Artis Heu Magicis: The Label of Magic in Fourth-Century Conflicts and
Disputes,” in Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity, ed. Michele R. Salzman, Marianne Sághy, and
Rita Lizzi Testa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 162-77.
as one of a list of real religious threats, as *samareitismos* to *ioudaismos* and *hellenismos*, requiring of his Christian *photizomenoi* a different approach in disputation than to either of those others. And in Amphilochius they function as a type of heresiological parallel useful for their specific past and practices—heretic Lycaonian is to orthodox what Samaritan is to Jew.

In their variety, these representations of Samaritans encourage our modified images of the late antique “mechanics of the other.”

Conflict, in this time as others, does not always generate a stabilized other, exteriorized and stereotyped. Sometimes, it dissipates the other. Sometimes, it cannibalizes them. Sometimes, it ensures their continued relevance but only in an inert form, almost like a vaccination. Sometimes, multiple of these at once. Sizgorich phrases it well for a later century: that as well as “first-contact fascination” or, we might add, continued fixation, sometimes “we should not be surprised to find instead a frankly complacent indifference born of a century and more of relatively pacific, if not dull, coexistence.”

The possibilities of dull coexistence should be reckoned alongside those of direct polemic, or extended contestation. We see the full range of these on display in the writings of these three bishops. Crucially, despite Samaritan absence from much of the scholarly treatment of this period, we see this full range deployed against, on, and regarding Samaritans.

Samaritans are therefore a particularly good example of peripheral others—part implicated, and part divorced from the attempts of Christian writers to produce a stable Christian identity by polarizing their cities, communities, and worlds. As one of the other

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others, they occupy the edges of ancient Christian discourse—and, moreover, of the attention of historians of the period. Attention paid to them thus opens up new avenues of possibility and new directions from which to take a stab at the complex questions the fourth-century solicits—of repertoires of Christian difference, and of the intermittent technologies used to produce and perform Christian identities. This is even the case for the Christian writers in this chapter, in whose overall work Samaritans play a relatively minimal role. In the next chapter I take this argument a step further, to model how attention to Samaritans can reshape our understanding of a Christian writer who pays them a great deal of attention: Epiphanius of Cyprus.
Epiphanius of Cyprus’ work has often been pilloried as tedious, pernicious, vicious, or a combination of all three.\footnote{As summarized by his English translator: “It would be easy to assemble, from the writings of patrologists and historians of religion, a bill of particulars against him. He is a heresy hunter, a name caller, and “nasty.” His judgements are uncritical. His theology is shallow and his manner of holding it intransigent,” in \textit{The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, vol. 1, Book 1 (Sects 1-46)}, trans. Frank Williams, 2nd rev. ed. (NHMS 63; Leiden: Brill, 2009), xxxi. Williams also translated the remainder of the \textit{Panarion} and \textit{De Fide}, in \textit{The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III. De Fide}, vol.2, 2nd rev. ed. (NHMS 79; Leiden: Brill, 2013).} Such classifications were partly judgements on heresiological genre, perceived as an uncivil, low-brow form of Christian self-fashioning.\footnote{Karen King, “Social and Theological Effects of Heresiological Discourse,” in \textit{Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity}, ed. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 28-49. With respect to Irenaeus as an example, though a statement easily transferable to Epiphanius, King writes: “as scholars have assessed the adequacy of Irenaeus’ portraits of his opponents, his partiality and tendentiousness have become clearer. Moreover, his tone of derogation and ridicule are judged antithetical to modern canons of impartiality and even appear unseemly, intolerant, and uncivil. Not only his accuracy but his moral character have come into question” (29).} They were partly on Epiphanius’ own merits – or perceived lack of them. His work most often received academic attention in a small sub-genre of one-off articles examining how he uses aggressive, often herpetological, rhetoric and polemical naming to formulate theological boundaries.\footnote{Thomas J. Whitley, “Poison in the Panarion: Beasts, Heretics, and Sexual Deviants,” \textit{VC} 70.3 (2016): 237-258. Recent scholarship has lingered on this: see Ingvild S. Gilhus, “The Construction of Heresy and the Creation of Identity: Epiphanius of Salamis and his Medicine-Chest against Heretics,” \textit{Numen} 62.2-3 (2015): 152-68; Young Richard Kim, “The Transformation of Heresy in the Panarion of Epiphanius of Cyprus,” in \textit{Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity}, ed. Geoffrey Greatrex and Hugh Elton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 53-65; Paul Robertson, “The Polemic of Individualized Appellation in Late Antiquity: Creating Marcionism, Valentinianism, and Heresy,” \textit{SLA} 2:2 (2018): 180-214.}
on the structure and significance of his writings. Epiphanius,” in Young Kim’s vivid phrase, “was late antiquity,” emblematic of late antique learning as well as elite prejudices. Todd Berzon suggests his work is the epitome of heresiological genre, but also indicates how that genre structures difference analogously to the “fixation of ethnologists and early anthropologists on mentalities and dispositions.” He sums up the imperial Christianity of his age, Andrew Jacobs argues—a muscular Christianity distasteful to our contemporary taste in the ways it exerted power and control from an imperialized centre.

One of the important insights from this recent scholarship is that by scrutinizing Epiphanius’ heresiological persona, we understand better his ways of accumulating, managing, and asserting knowledge of religious difference. Heresiology is often anxious, fearful of its own unmaking, or of contamination. This anxiety, however, does not exhaust the knowledge ordering function of heresiological behaviour. Epiphanius’ methods of collection and representation of information reflect what


6 Todd S. Berzon, Classifying Christians: Ethnography, Heresiology, and the Limits of Knowledge in Late Antiquity (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 85-86.


Maldonado Rivera calls “a paradoxical articulation (and reformation) of Christian curiosity,” a “Christian erudition,” with a “Christian cultural project.”

Simultaneously, Christian literature elites continued a trend towards universalism in erudition, as Jeremy Schott has noted. Since his heresiology, then, attempts such a complicated set of tasks, it becomes less a genre of control and more an array of knowledge-ordering techniques, some of which even introduce tension into its own textualized taxonomies.

That Epiphanius’ epistemological management of the pious (or impious) past, and its relation to a Christian present, is not neat will come as no surprise. Scholars of early Christianity have learned to live with the messiness of Christianization, the process according to which Christianness became a fundamental piece in a composite high-prestige ancient identity. As David Frankfurter writes:

“The process of Christianization in late antiquity can no longer be said to have involved the encounter or conflict between two mighty worldviews, Christian and heathen, or one mighty worldview and the inconsequential detritus of Greco-Roman religions. There was always, in some form, religious mixture and contestation—at the local as well as the trans-local, “discursive” level...We have begun to turn to more performative, expressive, social contexts for understanding Christianization.”

Similarly, we have grown used to talking in terms of contested social and theological networks of early Christian affiliations. As Richard Flower recently noted, Epiphanius composed the work for which he is most often remembered, the

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pugnacious *Panarion*, “in the uncertain theological climate of the reign of the emperor Valens, when Epiphanius’ own Nicene orthodoxy was officially heretical.”\(^{12}\)

In addition, scholars have more and more reckoned with the way heresiological functions shaping behaviour through discourse and rhetoric, rather than merely (or perhaps ever) to directly contest and refute opponents. Scholars have moved away from source criticism of the succession of heresiologists from Irenaeus to Epiphanius, towards thinking about each in their cultural and social context. As Jacobs writes: “Even—or especially—at the moment in which unitary truth is forged, the edifice of orthodoxy cracks, the discourse of singular truth slips, and the shadow of the “other” creeps in.”\(^{13}\)

Nevertheless, this “shadow” of the other, when it is not clearly “Jew,” “pagan,” or “heretic,” has often been left to scholars dealing with late antique texts such as the *Protoevangelium of James* or the *Testimony of Truth*, or late antique groups like “Jewish-Christians,” often categorized as in some way “marginal.”\(^ {14}\) Rebillard writes that, “while historians no longer view groups as sharply differentiated, they do,


nevertheless, still tend to treat them as internally homogeneous.”

When not dealing with “marginal” texts, scholars of late antiquity do often limit religious variety or intermittent Christian identities to “ordinary” Christians. Those within the groups counted as most emblematic of that group’s core identity, like the Christian bishop, often end up with a remarkable uniform, coherent set of Christianized motivations. According to this account, the complex practice of everyday knowing often reduces to binaries: orthodox/heretic, Christian/pagan, Christian/Jewish. Moreover, the reduction of this knowledge organization to binaries is taken as a fundamental core mechanism of the late antique processes producing Christianized erudite culture according to what Schott calls “a system of knowledge that structured contact between Christians and the ethne.”

“Christian” remains a prototypic term. It is assumed that an author like Epiphanius retains an uncomplicated relationship to their own Christian identity; that all his knowledge must be, in some important sense, motivated by a serious concern or desire for Christianness.

Epiphanius’ treatment of Samaritans enables a crucial intervention. Epiphanius, in line with his ethnographic-heresiological style, weaponizes bookish knowledge of the Samaritans within the history of Israel. When he does so, however, the informational dynamics of his imperialized Christian centre have a remarkable effect.

The articulation of a universal and maximal knowledge often squeezes management

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17 Schott, Making of Religion, 169.
of Christian difference into a subordinate and secondary role. Instead, Epiphanius is unselfconsciously distractible and divertible. He picks a fight with Samaritan exegetes. He retells Israelite history in a curiously Samaritan-focused way. Even in the *Panarion*, he sometimes thinks in a Samaritan register, with a sympathetic approach to Samaritan tradition (*paradosis*).

In handling knowledge such that his intellectual attention can be absorbed and exhausted by distinctive features of Samaritans, Epiphanius decentres “Christianness” from his management of difference. The universalized scope of imperial knowledge encourages and even facilitates his operation outside of the Christianized centre with respect to which he appears so deeply typical. In other words, Epiphanius, at the heart of imperial Christianity, provincializes himself for the sake of universalizing knowledge.

I take the term “provincialize” from Dipesh Chakrabarty’s postcolonial historiography, particularly useful as a lexical counterweight to the accurate characterization of elite Roman erudition like that of Pliny, Galen, or Aulus Gellius as “colonizing.”¹⁸ In *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty writes that his work focuses not on Europe as a geo-political entity, but on “the imaginary figure that remains deeply embedded in clichés and shorthand forms in some everyday habits of thought.”¹⁹ Chakrabarty aims, therefore, to demystify the material processes by which

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¹⁸ A particularly influential frame both for work on Roman knowledge and empire, and late antique Christian empire. On the former, see e.g Trevor Murphy, *Pliny the Elder’s ‘Natural History’: The Empire in the Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); on the latter, Jacobs, *Epiphanius*, 132-75.

that figure, “Europe,” became intrinsic; to make Europe, in other words, not a prototypic term against which everywhere else is measured by default, but one in a constellation of others. During his erudite performance, Epiphanius demystifies himself. He does not act as a prototypic Christian authority, with his intellectual activities reducible to combatting heretics and buttressing the orthodox. Rather than simply using the Samaritans as a foil to reinforce a specific form of Christian identity, Epiphanius often claims knowledge of Samaritans in their own right.

This chapter has four parts. First, I discuss the recircumcision of Symmachus in *On Weights and Measures*. Here, an aspiration to total knowledge leads to Epiphanius presenting a Samaritan where there was none before. Moreover, in a context where we would expect a Jewish/Christian battle over the proper form of scripture we find an exhibition of Jewish/Samaritan difference. Second, I turn to one of Epiphanius’ most characteristic – and unusual – engagements with Samaritans: a narrative of their origins in the time of Ezra found nowhere else in late antique texts except Samaritan internal traditions. Epiphanius’ interest in Christianness is again displaced by an intense focus on how post-exilic Samaritans and Jews contested the “holy seed” of Abraham. Third, I re-read Epiphanius’ heresiological account of Samaritans with a view to seeing how it fits this pattern: what does a Christian heresiology look like when decoupled from a primary interest in engineering heretical others? I argue scrutinizing how Epiphanius pays Samaritans attention in their own terms extends our conversation about the management of difference. Finally, I return to the matter of Epiphanius’ provincialization and its relation to his behavior of epistemological excess. What does it meant for Epiphanius, a Christian bishop whose career in many ways epitomizes the ascent of Christianness to a
prestige identity, to operate without reference to Christianity as a term of prototypic
difference?

Circumcision and Recircumcision in On Weights and Measures

Epiphanius’ life shares similarities with that of Chrysostom in the previous chapter. Born in Palestine to Christian parents, he went to Alexandria to study rhetoric. Returning to Palestine with an enthusiasm for monasticism, he eventually founded a monastery of his own near his hometown Besanduk, near Eleutheropolis. Whilst in charge of the monastery, he affiliated with pro-Nicene bishops, including the exiled Italian Eusebius of Vercelli, and in 367 was ordained bishop of Constantia, nee Salamis. Over the next forty years, he travelled widely, diving into multiple theological and ecclesiastical controversies, and eventually died on a sea trip back from Constantinople to Cyprus in the early fifth century. An extensive hagiographical tradition grew up after his death, and the Piacenza pilgrim, travelling around 570, reports his tomb on Cyprus as a site of active veneration. His surviving works include two understudied exegetical miscellanies, On Gems and On Weights and Measures, as well as two treatises on church doctrine, the Ancoratus and a De Fide. But he is known best for a massive work on Christian heresies in three books, the Panarion (c.374/5-377.)

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20 For these years of Epiphanius’ life, see Jon F. Dechow, Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988), 25-43. For a brief overview of what we know of his life as a whole see Jacobs, Epiphanius, 8-12. Young Kim frames his work as a “critical biography” (Epiphanius, 7), but focuses on understanding Epiphanius’ character more than reconstructing his career.

21 Jacobs, Epiphanius, 221-40.

22 See for an overview Jacobs, Epiphanius, 13-27. 

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I begin not with the Panarion, but with On Weights and Measures (and, discussed below, On [the Twelve] Gems.) The reason for discussing this relatively short work first will become rapidly apparent; it is one of the clearest examples of the Samaritans playing a major role in Epiphanius’ organization of knowledge, specifically, knowledge about the Bible and its translators, where otherwise their role – at least amongst his Christian contemporaries – was relatively minor.

On Weights and Measures, written ca.392, survives in something resembling a complete version only in Syriac, but with substantial Greek, Armenian, and Georgian fragments. The text is explicitly anthological, announcing how it bundles together a disparate set of facts, figures, and traditions united only by the decision to select and

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23 For the Syriac, James E. Dean (ed.), Epiphanius’ Treatise on Weights and Measures: The Syriac Version (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935); the relevant Greek texts can be found in Pummer, Early Christian Authors; for the Georgian, see Les versions géorgiennes d’Épiphane de Chypre Traité des poids et des mesures, ed. Michel van Esbroeck (CSCO 460-61; Leuven: Peeters, 1984); the Armenian in The Armenian Texts of Epiphanius of Salamis, De Mensuris et Ponderibus, ed. M.E. Stone and R.R. Ervine (CSCO 583; Leuven: Peeters, 2000). I cite providing Dean’s chapter numbers, page numbers for translation, and Syriac foliation. I have worked primarily from the Syriac and Greek due to the fragmented nature of the other witnesses, but with reference to the other versions when relevant, in line with van Esbroecks argument that they preserve a less muddled version than the Syriac. Aside from these editions and translations, On Weights is almost entirely unstudied, with the recent exception of Andrew Jacobs, “Epiphanius of Salamis and the Antiquarian’s Bible,” JECS 21:3 (2013): 437-64. When it does see broader use, it is as a databank of facts and figures against which to compare papyrological readings, for example Philip Mayerson, “Another Unreported Ascalonian Jar: The Sabitha/Sapation,” Israel Exploration Journal 46:3/4 (1996): 258-61; R.P. Duncan-Jones, “The Size of the Modius Castresis,” Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 21 (1976): 53-62.
collate them. A later preface in the Syriac version explains, whimsically, that the tetrarchs Valentinian and Theodosius joined forces to summon Epiphanius, so that he could produce a reference work to aid understanding weights and measurements in scripture. The second half of On Weights, follows through in the most chaotically erudite sense, listing and commenting on a bundle of such terms. The first half, however, is interested not in the lexicon of biblical measurement but in scripture itself, including its divisions, its punctuation, its translation into Greek, its retranslation by Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and so on. As Epiphanius writes at the close of this section:

And thus far, O great lover of the good, all these things related to us must suffice; we have given an account of the translators and of those things mentioned before the subject of the translators. Hereafter we give our attention to the rest of the topics which we mentioned before, according to our promise in response to your entreaties, O man of God, concerning the weights and measures and numbers in the divine Scriptures, whence each is named, and why it is so called, and whence it gets the reason for its name, and what is the quality or the weight or the force of every one of them.

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24 On the functions of anthological genre, and a range of ways to understand the mechanics of anthologizing, see David Stern (ed.), The Anthology in Jewish Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5-7. Regarding the aesthetics of anthology for Epiphanius, specifically “antiquarian” anthology, see Jacobs, Epiphanius, 136-40. The terminology of anthology remains relatively underutilized by scholars of ancient Greek and Latin literature, despite the ancient etymology of anthologia. They tend to rely instead on talk of “miscellany,” or “encyclopedism”; see recently Joseph A. Howley, Aulus Gellius and Roman Reading Culture: Text, Presence, and Imperial Knowledge in the Noctes Atticae (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) – perhaps at least in part because encyclopedism retains a much stronger sense of an author, important in Classical Studies, perhaps at least in part due to etymologically narrowing the sense of anthologia to a collection of botanical knowledge in Pliny (Hist Nat 21.13), or else a specifically poetic collection; perhaps at least in part due to an aversion to the later Byzantine Greek use for collections, as in Maximus Planudes’ (c.1260-c.1305) Anthologia Planudea (sometimes called Ἀνθολογία διαφόρων ἐπιγραμμάτων); perhaps because, as Jacobs suggests, we have internalized prejudice against antiquarianism as “messier than philosophy” (Epiphanius, 138-39).


26 Epiphanius, De mensuris et ponderibus 20 (Dean, Weights and Measures, 39 [Eng.] and 58d [Syr.]).
In actuality, Epiphanius provided much more than just “an account of the translators.” He composed, from a mishmash of imperial and consular chronology, hostile bibliography, and often obscure tidbits of general knowledge, a temporally continuous history of the Hebrew Bible as it was authoritatively translated into Greek, and then as it was continually changed. This continuous history incorporates the original Hebrew divisions of books, the authoritative Septuagint, the other Greek translators, the Hexapla of Origen and the text-critical marks he used, into imperial Roman chronology, setting these processes in linear time and linking them smoothly to Epiphanius himself, in the second consulship of Arcadius Augustus and Rufinus (392 C.E., the terminus of the tractate).\(^27\)

Throughout this process, Epiphanius’ central purpose is a spirited defence of the Septuagint. He argues that it preserves, more or less, the original Hebrew divisions of the scriptures, which he here calls simply “prophetic books.” All of its seventy-two translators were from among the tribes of Israel, unlike the hybrid ethnic and religious misfits Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Origen even placed the Septuagintal Greek in the middle of the Hexapla, Epiphanius argues, precisely so that it could be used to correct the other versions – even though some people misunderstand this ordering as suggesting Aquila and Symmachus translated before the seventy-two, since Aquila and Symmachus are columns one and two.

By supplying the history of each of Origen’s punctuation marks, even describing how Origen made his Hexapla, Epiphanius flaunts a technical knowledge of the

origins of not only the scripture itself but its hexaplaric material form.28 He even
describes a pair of Roman-period discoveries suspiciously similar to those mentioned
in Eusebius (HE 6:16): a fifth and sixth Greek version, apparently discovered in wine
jars during the time of Caracalla.29 If anyone would know which version was best,
this argument less than subtly suggests, it would be Epiphanius himself. He knows the
history and provenance of even the versions in the Hexapla, and thus both scripture
and its material texts, better than anyone.

In the process of constructing himself as a master of material text of scripture,
however, Epiphanius manages and organizes knowledge on an excessive variety of
other topics, including religious difference. It is in this context of epistemological
excess that a peculiar story involving Samaritans appears. Embedded in the middle of
Epiphanius’ discussion of the six Greek translations incorporated into the Hexapla,
On Weights presents a striking mini-biography of Symmachus, one of the Greek
translators of the Hebrew Bible (along with Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and the
two anonymous wine-jar versions).30 This passage reads as follows in a Greek
fragment:

28 Focused on Origen’s text-critical skill, Epiphanius does not emphasize the heresy for which he
skewers the Alexandrian in Panarion 64. Epiphanius’ anti-Origenism has received some significant
attention; see e.g. Jacobs, Epiphanius, 83-85, 132-5, and especially 205-20; Elizabeth Clark, The
University Press, 1992), 11-42, 86-104; Dechow, “From Methodius to Epiphanius in Anti-Origenist
Polemic,” Adamantius 19 (2013): 10-29; Dechow, Dogma and Mysticism, esp. 243-70, 349-90;
Blossom Stefaniw, “Straight Reading: Shame and the Normal in Epiphanius’s Polemic against
29 Epiphanius, De mensuris et ponderibus 18 (Dean, Weights and Measures, 34 [Eng.] and 56c
[Syr.])
30 See careful discussion by Jacobs, Epiphanius, 65-68; also “Matters (Un-)Becoming:
Ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Σεβήρου χρόνοις Σύμμαχος τις Σαμαρείτης τὸν παρ’ αὐτοῖς σοφῶν μὴ τιμηθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ οἰκείου ἐθνοῦς νοσήσας φιλαρχίαν καὶ ἀγανακτήσας κατὰ τῆς ἱδίας φυλῆς προσέρχεται Ἰουδαίοις καὶ προσηλυτεύει καὶ περιτέμνεται δευτέραν περιτομήν. Καὶ μὴ διψαμένει περὶ τούτου, ὡς ἀκροβατή· γίγνεται γάρ. Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων Σαμαρείταις προσφεύγουσιν ἀντιπεριτεμένονται ὡσάυτος· καὶ ὁ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων πρὸς Ἰουδαίους ἐρχόμενοι. Τὸ δὲ ἐτὶ τούτων χαλεπώτερον, ὅτι καὶ ἀπὸ περιτομῆς ἀκροβυστοὶ γίνονται, τέχνῃ τινὶ ἱατρικῇ διὰ τοῦ καλουμένου σπαθιστήρος τὴν τῶν μελῶν ύποδέρμιτά ὑποσπαιθέντες, ῥαφέντες τε καὶ κολλητικοὶ περιδεθέντες ἀκροβυστίαν αὐθίνας αὐτοῖς ἐπιτελοῦσιν. Ἔχεις καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν παρὰ τῷ ἄγιῳ ἀποστόλῳ, ὃς φιλοκαλῶτατε, δι’ ὅν αὐτοῖς ῥήμασιν ὁδὸ ποὺ λέγει «περιτετμιμένος τις ἐκλήθη; μὴ ἐπισπάσθω. Ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ τις ὑπάρχει; μὴ περιπεριενέσθω». Ταῦτην δὲ τὴν παράδοσιν τῆς κακοδαίμονος ἐννοίας φασὶ τὸν ῾Ησαῦ τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ ᾿Ιακώβ εὑρήκειν πρὸς ἀπαγορευθένταν καὶ πρὸς ἀφανισμὸν τοῦ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ χαρακτήρος. Δι’ ὧν φασὶ τὸν ῾Ησαῦ εἰρηκέναι «τὸν ῾Ησαῦ ἐμίσησα, τὸν δὲ ᾿Ιακώβ ἡγασάσα». Ὁδὸς τοῦν ὁ Σύμμαχος πρὸς διαστροφὴν τῶν παρὰ Σαμαρείταις ἐρμηνεύον ἐρμηνεύσας τὴν τρίτην ἔξεδουκεν ἐρμηνεῖαν.

“In the time of Severus there was a certain Symmachus, a Samaritan, of their wise men, but not honored by his own people. He was afflicted with the lust for power and became angry with his tribe. He approached the Jews, became a proselyte, and was circumcised a second time.31 Do not be surprised at this, O hearer, for it happens. For all who fled from the Jews to the Samaritans were likewise circumcised again; likewise all those who came from the Samaritans to the Jews. And moreover, what is even more difficult than these things, some of the circumcised because uncircumcised. By a certain operation of the medical art, by means of a knife called the spathistatos, the inner skin of the organ having been cut loose and sewed together and bound in place by adhesive medicaments, they again complete foreskins for them. You have also the testimony of the holy apostle, O great lover of the good, speaking in such words as these: “If a circumcised man be called, let him not change to a foreskin; if a man be in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised” (1 Cor. 7:18). This tradition of a demoniacally wicked notion they say that Esau, the brother of Jacob, invented for the denial and the obliteration of the characteristic mark of his fathers. Therefore, they say that God said: “Esau I have hated, but I have loved Jacob” (Rom. 9:13) So this Symmachus, translating in order to prevent the translation current among the Samaritans, published the third translation.”32

This is a rich passage. In it, Epiphanius’ epistemological excess even extends to how a specific knife, the spathistatos, is used to engineer the uncircumcision of a Jew.

31 The marginal notation in the Syriac explains this term: “became a proselyte to the Jews.”
32 Epiphanius, De mensuris et ponderibus 16 (Dean, Weights and Measures, 32-33 [Eng.] and 55c-55d [Syr.].
or Samaritan. By this addition, Epiphanius juggles knowledge accumulated from multiple spheres. Greco-Roman medical knowledge of so-called “epispasm” was common, and methods of ensuring penile coverage by operation on infants were discussed by Soranus, Galen, and Celsus, and were excerpted in later practical handbooks like the compilation of Oribasius, physician to the emperor Julian. Such technical medical concern also reflects a durable Greco-Roman interest in circumcision as a quirky variant of genital mutilation. In contrast, the association with Esau also echoes the parabiblical book of Jubilees, a Second Temple period rewriting of Genesis. In its discussion of those who fail to qualify as Jewish by not circumcising on the eighth day, Esau sneaks into Jubilees (Jub. 15:30) against the grain of the biblical text in which, as Isaac Oliver reminds us, he did not appear until

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33 Sometimes Epiphanius is cited as evidence for the practice of foreskin reconstruction late antiquity, as in Robert G. Hall, “Epispasm and the Dating of Ancient Jewish Writings,” JSP 2 (1988): 71-86. Pummer argues that, given Epiphanius is the “only such account in ancient literature” (Pummer, Early Christian Authors, 135) there is little reason to think the practice widespread.


35 On the categorization of circumcision with castration, and more generally with genital mutilation, see Ra’anan (Abusch) Boustan, “Circumcision and Castration under Roman Law in the Early Empire,” in The Covenant of Circumcision: New Perspectives on an Ancient Jewish Rite, ed. Elizabeth Wyner Mark (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2003), 75-86.
In introducing Esau in the same context, Epiphanius mobilizes a broader knowledge of the biblical past than his Bible could give him.\(^{37}\)

When scholars have paid sustained attention to this text, however, it has been to seek evidence for a Samaritan Greek translation of the scriptures, the so-called *Samareitikon*.\(^{38}\) Ironically following in the footsteps of Epiphanius’ own interest in scriptural versions, scholars still debate the existence of this text, especially given fragments of something like it in Origen. More importantly here, Epiphanius posits that the version of the Greek Bible produced by Symmachus was motivated by anti-Samaritan readings.\(^{39}\) A whole version of the scriptures resulted from Symmachus’ inability to endure a version of the scriptures like the one circulating amongst his former people—a translation of scripture forged against Samaritan users. Symmachus can only firmly establish his change of religious affiliation by inscribing it on his


\(^{39}\) For the *Samareitikon* see Joosten, “*Samareitikon*,” who makes a robust case for a proposal that goes at least back to Montgomery, *Samaritans*, 285.
penis—a Samaritan variant on the way in which circumcision functioned in an “economy of signs.”

Epiphanius, of course, can tell us exactly how it happened.

Neither an analysis of contemporaneous medical knowledge of circumcision, nor the search for the Samareitikon, however, fully cashes out the significance that the circumcision of Symmachus is explicitly Samaritan re-circumcision. In this respect, Epiphanius is remarkable. Contemporary Christian writers largely do not discuss Samaritan circumcision, and therefore display no feelings one way or the other about its relevance for marking the boundary between Samaritans and Jews. In contrast, Epiphanius makes Symmachus Samaritan, contradicting the claims of both Eusebius and Jerome that he was an Ebionite.

The practice of circumcision had become in the Roman Empire both a stereotypical signifier of Jews and a contested sign within Christianity. Jacobs writes that it “acted as a kaleidoscope in which gentile Christians saw themselves reflected and refracted, and through which they also gazed upon their despised ‘other,’ the Jews….This simultaneous appropriation of and fear of the sign of circumcision amplifies and twists discourses of identity and stereotype already at work at the fractious contact zone of Jews and Romans.” Here, however, Epiphanius manages religious difference differently from the cases Jacobs dissects when rethinking

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40 Jacobs, Christ Circumcised, 11. Jacobs focuses on a specific circumcision—that of Jesus. Samaritan circumcision disrupts any account of circumcision (of any complexity) that sees it as obviously fundamental in a symbolic economy regulating only Jewish-Christian interactions.

41 Some earlier Christians mentioned Samaritan circumcision: Hegesippus, Hypomnemata = Eusebius, HE 4.22.7 (=Pummer no.2); Origen, De princ. 4.3.2 (=Pummer no.9); C.Cels 2:13 (=Pummer no.12); Comm. in Matt. 17.29 (=Pummer no.18). See also Amphilochius, On False Asceticism in chapter 2.

42 Eusebius, HE 6:17; Jerome, Prologue to Job.

43 Jacobs, Christ Circumcised, 40.
religious transformation in Epiphanius: Valentinus, Hieracas, Origen, Arius, Count Joseph, Hillel, and Paul. For Epiphanius, despite the resonance of circumcision in the contested territory between Christians and Jews, and despite Epiphanius’ own often ferocious heresiological interest in forming Christian selves, the account of Symmachus’ affiliation includes Jews and Samaritans only. Christian identity is nowhere to be found. Scholars too have argued that Symmachus was more likely to have remained Jewish; Epiphanius, however, does not even admit the possibility. His Symmachus, a resentful Samaritan wise man, could be offended enough to approach the Jews to get the respect he felt he deserved. Samaritans come as a counterpart to Jews—a circumcised pair. The border between Judaism and Samaritanism seems moderated by intention more than legible difference; what makes translation fraught, here, is the same lack of clear external legibility that makes Jewish and Samaritan affiliation fraught.

In addition, when we take all three translators as a set, we see that although Christian salvation history frames the discussion, Epiphanius does not position his translators equally with respect to a Christian centre. Aquila becomes Christian but slides away from truth due to his reliance on astrology. Then, jealousy leads him to become Jewish, to learn Hebrew, and to translate “so as to distort certain of the words

44 Jacobs, *Epiphanius*, 82-94.
45 See Dominique Barthélemy, “Qui est Symmaque?” *CBQ* 36 (1974): 451-465; Alison Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (JSS 15; Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1991.) The debate is intricate and largely not relevant to the current argument; Barthélemy builds his argument on one made by Abraham Geiger (L. Geiger, ed., *Abraham Geiger’s Nachgelassene Schriften* (Berlin: Louis Gerschel, 1876), 4:88-92); the disciple of R. Meir in bEruv 13b (סומוכוס) is to be identified with Symmachus. Salvesen is more cautious about such claims, arguing that Symmachus’ translation is just much more familiar with rabbinic exegesis and thus should be categorized as Jewish by proximity to Caesarean Haggadah (Symmachus, 297.)
occurring in the translation of the seventy-two” in order to counteract testimony about Christ in the scriptures to counteract shame at disaffiliating with the truth.\footnote{Epiphanius, \textit{De mensuris et ponderibus} 15 (Dean, \textit{Weights and Measures}, 31 [Eng.] and 55b [Syr.]).} Theodotion begins as a Marcionite, but after becoming angry with the group – for some unspecified reason – he becomes Jewish, is circumcised, learns Hebrew, and publishes a translation of the scriptures.\footnote{Epiphanius, \textit{De mensuris et ponderibus} 17 (Dean, \textit{Weights and Measures}, 33 [Eng.] and 56a [Syr.]).} Both translators intersect with Christianity. Aquila becomes steps away from truth, moving from Christianity to Judaism; Theodotion begins with a twisted Christian truth (with Marcion) and steps away to Judaism.

Symmachus’ case, in contrast, is detached from Christianity entirely. He begins a Samaritan, one of their wise men, who feels unappreciated. In a lust for power, he approaches the Jews, and is circumcised again. Symmachus’ translation, rather than attacking the Christian Bible, or misusing the Septuagint, directly attacks the translation current among the Samaritans. He begins one step away from truth – as a Samaritan – and makes a lateral move to Judaism, with no stops along the way either in Christian orthodoxy or Christian heresy. For good measure, Epiphanius includes an excursus on the mechanics of so-called epispasm, as well as an attack on it as a “demoniacally wicked notion.” “Christian identity,” whether that of Epiphanius, his audience, or a broader community, is conspicuous only by its absence.

Therefore, Symmachus’ recircumcision stands as an example of what happens when Epiphanius manages difference without Christianness as a central occupation. Even his
conception of the Bible moves, with Symmachus, outside of Christianess. Jacobs has argued that in the account of the boundary-crossing of these translators “a kind of cluster forms in the conceptual space around orthodox Christianity.” This is spot on for Aquila and Theodotion, but the asymmetry of Symmachus’ Jewish/Samaritan biographical note compared to the proximity of Aquila and Theodotion to Christianity signifies something else. In the case of Symmachus as Samaritan, Epiphanius’ emphasis on a universalizing history of scripture steps outside an orthodox center, into a history in which hybrid and intermittent Samaritan and Jewish identities, occupied with one another, complicate translators’ abilities to render Hebrew scripture in Greek. The thematic centre of this whole account is instead the Bible, and when positioned vis-à-vis the chronologizing sweep of Epiphanius’ knowledge claims about its translation, interpretation, and material history, Christian identity plays second fiddle. In the process, Epiphanius provincializes his own attention, detaching it from any explicit link to Christian identity, and focusing instead on inter-Israelite competition. Pondering the motivations that might lead a Samaritan to become a Jew, even in a hostile account, shows a significant degree of imaginative attention, energized by the possibility that individuals shift their religious affiliation without ever passing through a Christian conceptual space.

*On the Twelve Gems* and the Deuteronomic Gerizim

In his second surviving exegetical treatise, *On the Twelve Gems*, likely completed c.394 some two years after *On Weights*, we find a similarly explicit anti-Samaritan

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argument to the Symmachus section of the earlier treatise.\(^49\) \textit{On the Twelve Gems} takes as its point of scriptural departure the gems on the breastplate of the Israelite high priest in Exodus 28:6-43 (Gk: 28:6-39), twelve stones for the twelve tribes, and engraved “with the names of the sons of Israel” (Ex. 28:21: \(עַל־שְׁמֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל\); Gk. \(ἐκ τῶν ὄνομάτων τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ\)).\(^{50}\)

\textit{On [the Twelve] Gems} divides into three parts, at least in the most complete Georgian manuscript. After a brief preface, in which Epiphanius compares his modest intellect and feelings of obligation towards a certain Diodore, who requested his insight into “the oracular tablet of the law,” Epiphanius presents a catalogue of gems, with descriptions and properties drawing on lapidarian traditions. After reviewing all twelve gems, from sardion to onyx, he recalls, following the same sequence, the power of each gem, the names of the tribes inscribed on them, and the meaning and interpretation of the conjunction of name and stone. Finally, he catalogues each place in the Pentateuch to list the tribes of Israel, presumably to justify his attaching specific exegesis to specific tribes based on the ordering of gems. The state of the end of the work is rather confused, since the Georgian manuscript has an extensive lacuna...


\(^{50}\) In general, the LXX/OG of Exodus displays significant expansionist tendencies compared to MT, while chapters 35-40 are, in contrast, heavily truncated. Chapter 28, however, has only one significant editorial issue; vv. 24-28 in modern Hebrew editions is missing from the LXX/OG. See the \textit{NETS} translation prepared by Larry Perkins, \textit{Exodus}, 50-51.
and the Latin manuscript is abbreviated. As it stands, nevertheless, the Georgian version closes with a combative digression that nevertheless preserves an account of Samaritan origins found nowhere else in late antique texts outside of Samaritan-authored sources.

In this digression, Epiphanius departs from the stacked associations characteristic of much of the rest of the treatise. Instead, he takes the opportunity to attack at length exegetical opponents who propose, contrary to his reading, that the Gerizim of Deuteronomy 27:14, the mountain of blessings, is the Gerizim near Shechem. Foremost among such opponents are the Samaritans:

“But certain people there are who think thus, who have not read through the divine books with understanding, most especially the tribe of the Samaritans, say that Mount Gerizim is elsewhere—the lofty mount whereon is Sikimay, which is Syk’em, that is over against Syk’em, the city of the Samaritans, into which the Lord entered, and from which came the woman of Samaria and beheld the Lord Who say at the well.”

As we know from Sifre Devarim, a Palestinian midrashic collection on Deuteronomy likely dated to the fourth century, rabbis also debated Samaritans on this point. Sifre Devarim 56:2 records a tradition in which the Samaritans come to blows with a rabbi over how the text of Deuteronomy should be copied, this time with respect to Deuteronomy 11:30. The Samaritans, he argues, have tried to associate the entrance of Abraham into the land of Israel with Shechem, and thus, like the Samaritans attacked by Epiphanius, artificially elevate the status of Mount Gerizim:

Said R. Elazar b. R. Yose: I said to the Samaritan scribes—you have corrupted the Torah! Yet you gain nothing by copying that text as

Blake and De Vis, Epiphanius, 185.9-16.
follows: “by the terebinths of Moreh, that is, Shechem.” (Sifre Dev 56:2) 52

Even more striking than Epiphanius’ convergence with contemporary Palestinian rabbinic concern to combat pro-Samaritan readings of Deuteronomy, for elements unattested elsewhere, is the alternative history of Samaritan difference from Jews that follows Epiphanius’ initial exegetical salvo. Just as in the case of Symmachus in On Weights, Epiphanius, narrating specialized knowledge of an important event in the Israelite past, shows no concern for Christian identity. Instead, he manages Jewish/Samaritan difference by narrating a curious narrative in which the prophet Ezra decides to exclude Samaritans from the “holy seed” of Abraham once and for all by giving them a different Bible – the Pentateuch alone, written in Samaritan script.

According to this narrative, the Samaritans owe their existence as an identifiable group to the misadventures one of two Ezras present in Epiphanius’ reconstruction of

post-exilic Israel. To set the scene, Epiphanius begins by evoking his own contemporary Shechem, Neapolis in contemporaneous Roman provincial organization:

“Sichem is now a fat and full city which is in the land of the Palestinians, which Samaritans and Jews inhabited at that time, and it is called Samaritan. For the mountain which is near to this city is called the mount of Someray, and he had a son and he called his name Somoron; the name of the mountain, too, is called Somer. Because of this, the name was given to the tribe of the Samaritans, and the tribe of the Samaritans were from the land of the Babylonians and of the Assyrians; they were brought in by Nebuchadnezzar [G: rex Assyrius] and settled in the land of the Galileans and of the Palestinians, when Nebuchadnezzar [G: rex Assyrius] led the sons of Israel into captivity.”

The account includes some peculiar details. In terms of chronology, Epiphanius collapses a resettlement narrative set in the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, and Sargon II (campaigning between 740-722BCE, the traditional date also verified by contemporary Assyrian sources) into the time of Ezra. On this account, the exile narrative from which the Samaritans emerge coincides not with resettlement in 2

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53 Blake and De Vis translate from the Georgian, and signal that the passage is confusing: “This is not the Ezra who is the son of Salathiel, the son of Zerubbabel, but another called by this name (?) and this Ezra has been a priest in the land of Israel” (Epiphanius, 188). The Latin confirms the absolute refusal to identify this Ezra with the Ezra of Ezra-Nehemiah, and contains an element not captured in their translation that helps explain the fuzziness: non loquor de Esdra qui vocatur Salathiel, qui proximus est Zorobabel, filius lechoniea. Iste autem Esdras sacerdos…,” “I do not reference Ezra who has been called Salathiel, who was related to Zorobabel, [Salathiel was] son of Jeconiah. This [other] Ezra was a priest…” The Coptic also confirms the doubling, with parallel between the first Ezra, denoted with a negated relative, and the second, with an emphasized nominal (αν εσαρα πε…παι αε εσαρα…) In Ezra 3:2, 3:8, and 5:2, Haggai 1:1, 12, and 14, and Neh 12:10, it is stated that Salathiel was the father of Zerubbabel, but Ezra is listed separately as a priest in Ezra 7:1-5. Epiphanius seems to hold that the Ezra of Ezra-Nehemiah is also Salathiel, an opinion shared by 4 Ezra/2 Esdras 3:1 (James H. Charlesworth, ed., The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, vol. 1 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983), 528). If Ezra is Salathiel, this produces an extra Ezra in Ezra-Nehemiah, a doubling which Epiphanius then explains. Epiphanius also follows the LXX/OG of 1 Chronicles 3:19, which along with Matt. 1:12 and Luke 3:27-28 represents Jeconiah as father of Shealtiel, who fathers Zorobabel, over against the MT, according to which Jeconiah is both father of Shealtiel/Salathiel and father of Pedaiah, father of Zorobabel.

54 Blake and De Vis, Epiphanius, 185.16-186.5.
Kings 17, but with the time of the Babylonian exile of the southern kingdom of Judah.

This displacement echoes, though probably shares no direct relation to, the narrative of Samaritan origins in 4 Baruch (also known as the Paralipomena Jeremiae) 8:1-12, in which Samaria is founded by those who refused to leave their Babylonian wives behind.\(^{55}\) As Pieter van der Horst comments, 4 Baruch thus places the origins of the Samaritans almost two centuries later than the dramatic setting of 2 Kings.\(^{56}\) Van der Horst also asserts that “in as far as Christians polemicized against Samaritans, their polemics have an entirely different character from what we find in ParJer.”\(^{57}\) But in the case of Epiphanius, we have to modify that position.\(^{58}\)

This passage also recasts the population exchange which brought Samaritans into the land, represented by Eusebius (Onom. 160:26-27), Jerome (Chron. 47.88b.22-26 = PL 27.367-68) and Josephus (Ant. 9:277-91) as the clear meaning of 2 Kings 17, as a response to a request from the elders of the sons of Israel:

The elders of the sons of Israel came in unto Nebuchadnezzar, and the men who came before Nebuchadnezzar were Ezra and others of the priests and the elders of the sons of Israel. They besought


\(^{58}\) This compression is not unusual. As Fried points out, Ezra-Nehemiah itself compresses the Persian period (Ezra, 32-33).
Nebuchadnezzar [Latin: Assyriorum rex] to send men to guard their land, that it might not be turned into an oak grove and be destroyed.  

The Israelites themselves are responsible for the presence of Samaritans on their land, since they wanted it, Epiphanius asserts, to stay fertile and to be guarded. This likely plays on the direct interpretation of the name shomron, “keepers or guards,” which we know from the Panarion and from the continuation of this passage in On Gems that Epiphanius knew:

Nebuchadnezzar heard their petition and chose his servants from four tribes. He sent them to protect the land and the names of the tribes were these: Kudians and Kyt’ians and Sep’uans and Anagonians, who went to settle in the land of Israel. Each of these tribes had their idols to whom they bowed down and whom they addressed as a god. They came and were established near to the mount of Someray and they were called from the name of the mountain and their own deeds Samaritans.

This passage converges with the narrative of 2 Kings 17 in which the settlers, worshippers of idols, are initially attacked by beasts. Like Amphilochius and Chrysostom, and like Origen before them (Comm in Joh. 20.35.321), Epiphanius also mentions that “Samaritan” (Latin: samaritanus; Coptic: ⲟⲥⲁⲙⲁⲣⲓⲧⲏⲥ) is an exonym, rather than an insider name—although he differs from Tertullian, for example, who recognizes the Samaritans as Israelites.  

Epiphanius, however, goes one step further, emphasizing ethnic difference between the tribes of Israel and the Samaritan settlers by means of the extreme susceptibility of the latter to the beasts:

For in the guardianship Somer is called enemy(?), for these were the guardians of the land, and at that time upon those guardians of Samaria lions and panthers and bears had increased and raged against them…

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59 Blake and De Vis, Epiphanius, 186.6-11.
60 Tertullian, Adv. Marcionem 4.35 (=Pummer no.5, 34-36): quoniam ex Iudaeis salus, licet Israelitae et Samaritae (“because salvation is from the Jews, although the Samaritans count as Israelite.”)
61 Blake and De Vis, Epiphanius, 187.3-6.
This section requires some careful attention. First, the editors notice the Georgian mistranslation, “enemy.” This likely corrupted the “guardian” found in the Latin (Samari<tanus> enim volet vocati custos: terram quippe custodiebant) and Coptic (ἐβολ ἔς σαμαρὲ εμαγμοῦτε εροφ ἔς πετροεὶς. νεγροεὶς γαρ νὲ ἐπκας.). Second, as Josephus and others claimed, the guardians of Samaria here are separate from the tribes of Israel. In contrast with other versions of this Samaritan origin narrative, however, they are just doing their job. Instead of populations moved wholesale, Nebuchadnezzar selected from four tribes, and sent that group to the land to fulfil a royal petition of the elders of Israel. The story of a displaced population modulates into a collaborative narrative about land held in trust. Epiphanius even goes one step further by presenting the beast attacks as a problem for the Israelites as well. The elders of the sons of Israel wanted Israelite land kept safe.

Overall, Epiphanius writes what is in effect an alternative history to the narrative of 2 Kings 17. The Samaritans are foreigners. But their presence in the land was consensual and contractual. He appears broadly sympathetic, furthermore, to Samaritan claims to be guardians of the land and law. As Reinhard Pummer notes, he was the first ancient Christian writer who transmitted, whether by direct contact with Samaritans or not, a Samaritan insider claim to be guardians of law as a reasonably

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62 It is likely that this hostile gloss in the Georgian links the Samaritans to the “enemies” or “oppressors” of Ezra 4 by following Josephus’ introduction of the group into this section (Ant. 11:19-20.) Reinhard Pummer has dealt with Josephus’ extensive engagement with the Samaritans (who Josephus calls “Cuthaioi”) in detail in The Samaritans in Flavius Josephus (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009). As Pummer notes, neither Ezra 4:1-2 nor 1 Esdras 5:63 mention the Cutheans in this context (Flavius Josephus, 83.) For Latin and Coptic, see Blake and De Vis, Epiphanius, 272-73.
plausible etymology for the name of the group. While Epiphanius’ account strips the Samaritans of any ethnic Israelite identity, he narrates how Nebuchadnezzar consults the elders of the sons of Israel—who themselves willingly help him solve the beast problem of the Samaritans:

He summoned to him the elders of the sons of Israel and inquired: “How is it possible to dwell in this land?” They gave a true and correct response, saying to Nebuchadnezzar: “No one of the tribes can dwell there if someone has not the law of the Lord and if he does not walk in accordance with the law and serve the Lord God.

The elders even write down the law for him, and Nebuchadnezzar commands the Samaritans to live by it.

Ezra the priest set forth from Babylon. He wished to separate the tribe of the Israelites from the Samaritans, lest the Samaritans should become mixed with the race of Abraham. For the law of Moses he took, but he did not keep the writings of the prophetic books in the desinon, but only those of Genesis (i.e. the Pentateuch), which the Samaritans received—the natural law, in order that thereby a division might be induced between the race of Abraham and the race of the Samaritans.

Terminology frequently translated into “race” or “ethnicity” in Anglophone scholarship has seen particularly scholarly scrutiny over recent decades, especially for scholars of early Christianity in light of work by Denise Kimber Buell, and as scholars of antiquity have realized the complicity of race-talk in structures which

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63 Pummer, *Early Christian Authors*, 123. As I explored in Chapter 2, Amphilochius communicates a similar understanding but dating the *On False Asceticism* is tricky. As Pummer also notes, Origen (*In Joh. 20.35.321; Hom. In Ez.* 9.1) and Eusebius’ *Chronicon* also link the term “Samaritan” to “guard, guardian” but without any mention of the claim to guard Torah specifically.


reify race as a natural or given category for classifying difference.\textsuperscript{66} Similarly, the precise degree to which Samaritan and Jewish identity are ethnic, or even genetic, has similarly received recent and historical attention.\textsuperscript{67} Blake and De Vis translate an intention to keep separate the Samaritans from the “race” of Abraham. Thus, it is worth slowing down to clarify precisely what \textit{On Gems} claims that Ezra aimed to delineate.

In the Latin translation, Epiphanius’ Ezra aims “to isolate Israel in order that the people of Abraham not become mixed up with Samaritans” (Latin: \textit{secludere Israelem ne forte permisceretur genus Abraham cum Samaritanis}). The Coptic translation confirms the reading, with “people of Abraham” rendered with the borrowed Greek: \textit{ⲡⲁⲛⲟⲥⲓⲅⲣⲁⲓⲓ} (\textit{p-genos n-abraham}).\textsuperscript{68} A genealogical focus emerges even more clearly once we consider the second mention in the Latin and Coptic of what the translator of the Georgian text flatly translates as “race.” The Latin reads that Ezra intended to divide the Samaritans from the \textit{semen Abraham} (rendering the Greek \textit{σπέρμα}), translated as “seed” or “semen.” The emphasis of this passage lies on the mechanic of genealogy, the seed, rather than a taxonomy of categorical difference.


\textsuperscript{67} In the context of genomic theory and Israeli law, see overview in Steven Weitzman, \textit{The Origin of the Jews: The Quest for Roots in a Rootless Age} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 274-316.

\textsuperscript{68} Blake and De Vis, \textit{Epiphanius}, 276-77. The Coptic transcribes Paris. Bibl. Nation. Fonds Copte, 131\textsuperscript{3} fol.46-50; the editors give for the interlinear comparison Foggini’s Latin, from PG 43, col.350b and following.
The Coptic again confirms: τὸ sperma ἀβραὰμ (pe-sperma n-abraham). These Latin and Coptic comparisons clarify that what is at stake here is not straightforwardly “race,” a generic taxonomy for naturalizing essential difference. Nor is this passage an instance of the universalizing “ethno-racial” reasoning that Buell argues early Christians used to separate themselves from the world, from “Jews,” or from both. Nevertheless, while “race” might be misleading, On Gems here absolutely comments on claims to hereditary lineage—specifically, the lineage of Abraham.

The surviving Greek witness in Anastasius Sinaiticus further corroborates that Ezra aimed to circumscribe a separate Samaritan genealogy:

Σομορὼν μὲν οὖν ἐκλήθη τὸ ὄρος, καὶ τὰ ὄμοροῦντα, ἀπὸ Σεμὴρ ἔνος υἱὸ τῶν Χαναναίων, πρὶν ἢ ἐπιβηγχεῖ τὸν Ἀβραὰμ τῇ γη. Ἐλθόντων δὲ τῶν φύλακῶν, ἐκλήθησαν Σαμαρεῖται, τούτῳ, φύλακες. Φύλακες δὲ ἦσαν οὐ μόνον τῆς γῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ νόμου· ἐφύλαττον γὰρ τὴν Πεντάτευχον μόνην, ἢν ἔλαβον διὰ Ἐσδρα τοῦ βασιλέως, ἵνα ἐκ τούτου διακρίνηται τὸ σπέρμα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ. Αὐτ' οὖ τελείως τὸν νόμον ἐφύλαττον· διὸ φησιν ἡ Γραφή. «Ἐμείναν ποιοῦντες τὸν νόμον τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ προσκυνοῦντες τὰ εἴδωλα.»

Τοῦ δὲ νόμου κελεύοντος εἴδωλα μὴ προσκυνεῖσθαι, πῶς ἐτί πληρωθῆσαι; Ἐχει δὲ ἡ ὑπόθεσις τὸν τρόπον τούτον· Γνώντες γὰρ οἱ μιρεῖς τῶν τεσσάρων ἐθνῶν, ὃτι ἐνεδήμησαν Ἐσδρας, βδελυγμένος τὰ εἴδωλα κατὰ τὸν νόμον Θεοῦ, σπεύσαντες ἔκρυψαν τὰ εἴδωλα ἐν τῷ Γαρίζῃ ὅρει ἐν μυχῷ τινι, καὶ ἀπέστρεψαν τὴν καρδίαν τῶν Σαμαρειτῶν πρὸς τὸ ὄρος εὑχθεὶ. Ὁθεν, ὅπου δ' ἂν ὡσι, πρὸς τὸ ὄρος εὐχόντας οἱ ἀπὸ ἀνταλῆς πρὸς δυσμάς ἀποστρεφόμενοι, καὶ ἀπὸ δυσμῶν πρὸς ἀνατολάς, καὶ ἀπὸ βορρᾶς πρὸς τὴν μεσημβρίαν, πρὸς τὸ ἀρκτὸν τῷ ὄρει προσέχοντες εὑχόνται, ἵνα πληρωθῇ ἡ Γραφή, ἡ λέγουσα· «Ἐμείναν ποιοῦντες τὸν νόμον τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ προσκυνοῦντες αὐτῶν τὰ εἴδωλα.» Εἰ γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁγνόσκεις κειμένων τῶν εἰδώλων ἐκείς, ἀλλ' οὐ δυνατὸν ἐστί τὴν βασιλείαν Γραφῆς ψεύδασθαί.

Then the mountain had been called Somoror, and the land around it, after Semer, one of the sons of Canaan, before Abram came to the land. Since they were coming as guardians, they were called Samaritans, that is, guardians. But they were not only guardians of the land, but also of

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69 Buell, Why This New Race, 138-151.
the law. For they kept the Pentateuch alone, which they received through Esdras from the king, in order that from it they might be separated from the seed of Abraham. But they did not keep the law fully. Since as the Scripture says: “They continued, observing the law of God and worshipping idols.”

But since law commanded that idols not be worshipped, how will it yet be fulfilled? It came about in this way. The defiled ones among the four nations, knowing that Esdras was staying, abominating the idols in accordance with the law of God, preparing, they concealed the idols in Mount Gerizim in some dark recess, and turned the heart of the Samaritans to pray towards the mountain. Whence, wherever they might be, they pray towards the mountain; those from the east turning to the west, and from the west to the east, and from the north to the south, to the north devoting themselves, they pray to the mountain, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, the one that says: “They continued, observing the law of God and worshipping idols.” For even if they are ignorant of the idols lying there, it is nevertheless not possible for the divine Scripture to lie. (*Quest. 45 = PG 89.596.51-597.23*)

Blake suggests, probably correctly, that Anastasius had a complete text of Epiphanius *On Gems* in front of him when writing this epitomized answer to *Question 45* of a larger *erotapokriseis*, or “question-and-answer” text; “From where did the Samaritans receive their name?” The core content present and correct: the Samaritans are named because they are guardians of land and law. Similarly, Ezra introduced only the Pentateuch to them, out of a desire to “separate them from the seed of Abraham” (διακρίνηται τὸ σπέρμα τοῦ Ἄβραάμ.) The “defiled ones” among the nations brought into the land engineer a coping mechanism, but trick the (well-intentioned) Samaritans into prayer to idols. Throughout, the statement made by the scriptures is presented as reflecting the truth of the Israelite past.

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The Greek epitome skips over, however, an even more striking feature of Epiphanius’ text otherwise preserved in the Georgian, Latin, and Coptic. Distinct from Ezra-Nehemiah, and any emphasis on prohibited marriage as a threat to lineage, Ezra’s intervention against their genealogical claims takes the form of supplying them with a defective version of the Torah associated with Abraham’s descendants. It was, Epiphanius notes, written in the first script, changed by the Hebrews since:

“He gave to the Samaritans only the first five books (lit. heads) of the Old Testament (lit. Genesis), written in the first script in accordance with the form which the Lord gave on the mount of Sinai, and the form of this script the sons of the Hebrews call diesinon, which being interpreted is laid down on (or, set in) the tablets. The form of script, however, which the Hebrews now have is not like to the former one which was written on the tablets but to the one which the Jews now have they give the name somoronos. The Samaritans, however, call desinon what was written at that time on the graven tablets.”

71 Fried notes that “relationship with the Torah is Ezra’s most important and most enduring characteristic” (Ezra, 3); likewise, Ezra 7:10 narrates his concern “to enquire after the Torah of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach in Israel law and commandment” (Ezra, 7:10). As she notes, however, we do not find in Ezra any mention of the material form of the Torah. The term often translated as “law of your God” (ךְָ֖בְּד אֱלָהָ; Ezra 7:14), rather than a physical Pentateuch in fact more likely renders a more complex concept in Persian administration, dātā (Fried, Ezra, 14-18). While connoting divine order, it also connotes divine order in service to Achaemenid rule. Also absent therefore is Epiphanius’ reference to the physical form of the Pentateuch as a tool for subdividing the people.
In this section of *On Gems*, a lineage defined by “holy seed” has something important to do with the exclusion of Samaritans. But Epiphanius’ Ezra also uses a Torah written in a different Hebrew script in order to actively and deliberately reinforce religious and ethnic difference between Jews and Samaritans. The Jewish people, in contrast, retained the whole scriptures in the newer square script.

Here, we find a remarkable claim about the process by which lineage-based Israelite identity was made. Ezra decides, apparently of his own volition, that there is a high risk that the Samaritans become “mixed with the race of Abraham.” Moreover, affiliation with that “race” depends, in some important way, on the possession of a set of scriptures. Ezra gives the Samaritans, as a result, not the whole set of “prophetic books” – Epiphanius’ common term for referring to scripture, as we saw above in the case of *On Weights* – but only the Pentateuch. Epiphanius’ Ezra here makes possessing scriptures *like those of the Jews* into the definitional constant required for identification as a descendant of Abraham – a fragile differentiating device, since much of the overlap between Jews and Samaritans is retained just as in the

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72 Christine Hayes, “The Others in Rabbinic Literature,” in *Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, ed. Charlotte E. Fonrobert and Martin Jaffee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 243-69, at 251-52. Hayes argues this is particularly striking because the rabbis themselves usually decline the “holy seed” explanation of Israelite identity even though they represent themselves as the successors of Ezra (“Others,” 252). This broadly accurate conclusion can be modulated by occasional appearances of “seed of Abraham,” or “seed of Jacob,” bearing conceptual weight, as in bGit 57b (a baraita: אֲנִי הַמִּדְנָשׁתָּל שְׁמוֹעַל שְׁמוּא לְאָם שְׁנוּא כָּלַּה וּלְתֶבֶק "אִיּוֹן", “no prayer is effective unless the seed of Jacob has a stake in it”), yNed 3:8 (“and Ishmael is not included in the line (lit. the seed) of Abraham”) (Vilna), or a particularly curious discussion in Pesiqta Rabbati, Pisqa 31: אֲרֵי חֵלֶף אוֹד הָיֶה בָּשָׂם רְבִּי לֹא חָמָה שְׁפָחָהּ וְקִרְיָנים הָיוּ וְשַׁפְּאִים וְשָׁפִּימוּ וְשָׁפִים לְהַמְּשָׁפְּטָה שֶלֶם שֶׁהָיוּ בְּנֵי רֹן שְׁלֵמָה שֶׁלֶם שֶׁלֶם בְּרִית מְלֵא שְׁלֵמָה שֶׁלֶם בְּרִית מְלֵא שְׁלֵמָה שֶׁלֶם Sh"a"a’ah? Because of their families, since they are children of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, except they had sex with them, and thus they corrupted their families.”
Symmachus story. Only the script visibly materializes the rival claims of Jews and Samaritans to that lineage. The Samaritans are unambiguously excluded, in the logic of the passage, not because they cannot claim to be descendants of Abraham, but because their version of the scriptures is different from that of the Jewish people.

Samaritans are thus an example and proof of the power of the material form of the Bible to divide “Israel” – in other words, to divide true religion. Epiphanius emphasizes, in his deployment of a claimed knowledge of the Israelite past, Jewish versus Samaritan competition. He makes no connection between this Jewish/Samaritan episode and the relative respectability of either tradition compared to orthodoxy. The episode acknowledges in some detail the difference between Samaritan and Jewish tradition in terms of lineage and script. Christian identity plays no role in surveying the management of Israelite difference by Ezra.

Even the polemical frame of this narrative hinges on the accusation of inadequate exegesis and an expanded version of an argument found also in Eusebius that Mount Gerizim is too tall to have been the mountain of blessing in Deuteronomy. The argument is topographical, and as a result, Christianness is nowhere to be seen. Mount Gerizim would always have been too high, regardless of any contrast between Samaritan error and Christian truth. In pursuit of exegetical closure, Epiphanius directly argues against Samaritans as exegetes of the scripture shared by Christians and Jews, rather than as a heresiological proxy. He battles with them vis-à-vis exegetical correctness, rather than because of any incompatibility of Samaritan identity with Christian identity. In other words, he operates outside any conception of knowledge as tagged “Christian” even while maintaining that as a Christian he
arbitrates biblical knowledge. He himself, while pursuing scriptural truth as Christian, does so in a way unmarked as in any way *categorically* distinct from those against whom he argues.

In summary, the Samaritans and Jews of *On Gems* function as distinctly defined historical collectives with their own interrelated relationships based in competition over the line of Abraham. Moreover, Epiphanius contests Samaritans on their own turf regarding exegesis, without any sign that he felt the need to relate the group to Christianness as a prototypic term. These Samaritans have form and content regardless of comparison to Christian orthodoxy – even though they are, also, in theory “heretical” groups. Again, as in *On Weights*, Epiphanius manages difference without even a hint that it might be important for truth to be limited to what was rendered visibly “Christian.”

The Samaritans in Epiphanius: The Mysterious Case of *Panarion* 9

In the previous two examples, both taken from Epiphanius’ shorter exegetical treatises, his concern for universalizing knowledge led him to operate outside a discourse of religious difference either exhausted by, or centred on, Christian orthodoxy. Christian identity dropped out of his textual management of Samaritan difference; it proved more important to narrate complicated Samaritan relations with Jews in the context of (1) the history of Greek translations of the Bible (*On Weights*) and (2) the post-exilic history of Israel (*On Gems*). In this final section, I examine Samaritans where they appear in Epiphanius’ *Panarion*, the three-volume heresiological work for which he is best known. Does attention to the Samaritans
displace Christian identity to the same degree in a work commonly assumed to be the pinnacle of a genre concerned about all else with heresy and the making of orthodox Christian subjects? What emerges from the Panarion if we understand the Epiphanius who wrote it to be provincializing himself in the course of the epistemological excess that he displays so clearly in his exegetical treatises?

It is worth briefly commenting on what the Panarion is to better understand how the Samaritans fit into the larger arc of the work. The Panarion has dominated scholarly attention to Epiphanius, and which remains the longest and most complete text commonly categorized as “heresiological” that survives from late antiquity. In addition to its length, this work has come to “enshrine” certain functions later taken as ideal-typical of Christian heresiology. As Averil Cameron writes:

“…it names the many heresies it wishes to condemn; in so doing it differentiates them from a stated norm, and thereby defines the nature of that norm; it classifies, that is, it imposes an ordering on things according to the principles of the writer; it lays down a virtual hierarchy of heresies according to their origins; and finally it prescribes their nature, and thereby defines and lays down the structure of knowledge”.

As Maldonado Rivera puts it, the Panarion articulates “a double-bind of expansive interests (historical, ethnographic, naturalist, and scriptural, among others) and a strong desire to control deviance.” Recent scholarship on heresiology has linked such categorization, as with Epiphanius’ shorter exegetical treatises, with the

74 Augustine never completed a promised heresiological handbook. On the summarized Anacephalaioses, more commonly used and circulated, see Jacobs, Epiphanius, 198 n.84; for such epitomes in Latin, see Judith McClure, “Handbooks against Heresy in the West: From the Late Fourth to the Late Sixth Centuries,” JTS 30.1 (1979): 186-97.
76 Maldonado Rivera, “Encyclopedia Trends,,” 68.
“compilatory aesthetic” of elite Roman learning.77 In their influential work on ancient organization of knowledge, König and Whitmarsh write that “it is sometimes hard to avoid the impression that accumulation of knowledge is the driving force for all of [Roman] Imperial prose literature.”78 We could say of Epiphanius’ *Panarion* what Laura Nasrallah says of Justin, Tatian, and Lucian two centuries prior: like them, it was “from the eastern parts of the empire, toying with barbarian identity as well as Greekness, mentally mapping the *oikoumen* simultaneously in terms of its geography, its ethnicities, and its authoritative locations of knowledge.”79

The *Panarion* similarly exerted compilatory authority by arranging accounts of doctrinal and behavioural dissent in the social context of a discursive orthodoxy. Epiphanius produced it in response to a request by a certain Acacius and Paul for explanation of a list of heresies they probably came across in the earlier *Ancoratus*.80 Such a response was very in-character. In addition to Epiphanius’ own *Letter to the Arabian Bishops* reproduced in the *Panarion*, a letter from Basil of Caesarea, one from a relatively small collection of surviving correspondence addressed to Epiphanius, indicates that Epiphanius’ epistolary habits also included, at least, the distribution of modular nuggets of heresiological advice:

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80 *Epistula Acacii et Pauli* 1.9 (GCS n.F. 10.1:154): “We have heard names assigned to the heresies by your Honor.” The letter’s preface dates it to 376CE; Jacobs plausible suggests that, given the *Panarion* was likely finished in 377, Epiphanius was already writing it when he received the letter (*Epiphanius*, 44 n.48).
Τὸ δὲ τῶν Μαγουσαίων ἔθνος (ὅπερ διὰ τῆς ἐτέρας ἐπιστολῆς σημάναι ἥμας κατηξίωσας) πολὺ ἐστὶ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν κατὰ πᾶσαν σχεδὸν τὴν χώραν διεσπαρμένον, ἀποίκων τὸ παλαίδον ἐκ τῆς Βαβυλωνίας ἡμῖν ἐπεισαχθέντων.

And as for the *ethnos* of the Magusaeans (which, in your other letter, you deemed worthy to point out to us), there are many of them around us, scattered all over the surrounding country, colonists brought as prisoners of war in ancient times from Babylon to us.81

This letter suggests that Epiphanius frequently acted as a broker of heresiological information, performing a type of weaponized bookishness.82 The same role is clear in the letter which prompted Epiphanius to send the completed *Panarion* to Acacius and Paul: “We have heard names assigned to the sects by you…tell us explicitly the heresy held by each…For not everyone’s gift is the same.” *(Letter of Acacius and Paul, 1.9).* Epiphanius has a gift for clearly labelling heresies—but the names he gives so confidently—and thus the heresiological subjects he conjures—are not transparent to them.83 As C. Michael Chin has noted of lists, the incorporation of fragments of knowledge about religious deviance into a single, unified, text articulated a claim to control that knowledge.84

It makes sense that the Samaritans are in the *Panarion*, at least according to Epiphanius’ archival interests. As we saw in his exegetical treatises, Samaritan

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82 See Maldonado Rivera, “Encyclopedic Trends,” 69: such habits were “the contingent deployment of a strategy which authorizes the investigator of heresies to display *philomatheia* as a mode of cultural disengagement and disintegration.”
83 In 397, the young Augustine expresses a similar problem to Jerome about the heretics in his *De Viris Illustribus* (Augustine *Ep.*40//Jerome, *Ep.*67)—and thirty years later, the young Quodvultdeus complains of the same problem to the older Augustine (*Ep.* 221-4.) Evidently, forging a transportable catalogue of exclusion was not straightforward, easy, or ever fully successful. See for example, the ad-hoc collection of treatises circulating in the late antique Latin west, in McClure, “Handbooks against Heresy,” 188-89.
existence intertwines with the Israelite past, the narration of which is fundamental to
Epiphanius’ naturalization of heresy as an ordering principle of human culture. In
Epiphanius’ first work, the Ancoratus, they are one of five mother heresies from
which all others are spawned. And although they have been dethroned from this
position in the Panarion, the birth of the Samaritans still functions as a pivotal
moment in Epiphanius’ historicised scheme of orthodox church and perennial heresy:

But how amazing – it so happened that according to the four ethne, four
heresies arose, one for each of the ethne: I mean, first the Essenes,
second the Gorothenes, third the Sebuaean, fourth the Dositheans –
from this I take my starting point for treating the matter of heresy and
its cause…

What other way but the way that tribes began from the dissonant
polyphony of languages, and then different nation emerged according to
each tribe and lineage, and every ethnos put a king at its head, and

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546-63.
86 Anc. 12:8; see Schott, “Universal History,” 547-50. Schott, curiously, does not discuss the
discrepancy between the five “mother heresies” in the Ancoratus and the four in the Panarion (absent
Samaritans).
from this came about the origin of war, and conflict, nations clashing together with nations, each using brute force to obtain its own way, and to seize for itself the property of its neighbours, because of the insatiable greed in all our lives? So also at this time we have been discussing, the one religion of Israel having slipped away, and the scriptures according to law likewise to other genē – I mean to the Assyrian, of whom the Samaritans are descendants. And then opinions differed, and after that error began, and dissonance to sow seed from the one true piety into many falsely-made knowledges, just as it seemed fitting to each person, to think themselves trained in letters, and to assert each to their own will.  

Here, the Samaritans represent the moment at which the religion of Israel fractured. They are the deviant group with whom the splitting of scripture first occurred. They are thus the heresy which makes all other heresies possible. No other ancient Christian writer grants the Samaritans this definitional power. Even amongst modern scholars, the possibility has hardly been floated outside of Heinrich Graetz, Abraham Geiger, working within the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement amongst nineteenth-century German Jewish scholars. In Epiphanius’ Samaritans, we see an ancient story of the development of orthodox truth that admits the Samaritans as an important variation within Israel. They originate the possibility of religious change over time, as well as serving as the necessary condition for the array of difference in Epiphanius’ history of heresy. They therefore become a key element ordered by the historiographical grid by which the *Panarion* functions – proximity to orthodoxy and heresy, as what Jacobs calls “a statement of human history, morality, and divisibility, a story of humans have moved away, and continue to move away, from unity with each other and with God.”

87 Pan. 8.9.1-4; Holl 1.196.16-1.197.11.
88 See Introduction, above.
As well as their historiographical function, Epiphanius classifies the group as the ninth modular *hairesis* (“sect”) of eighty. The Samaritan module divides into two distinct halves.\(^90\) Stanley Isser, even while sifting Epiphanius for details of Dositheus, noticed the rough edges of the archive and flagged that there existed “several historical problems” with the material.\(^91\) The features which Isser identified reflect, however, a more significant point. The Samaritans of the *Panarion* represent a perfect microcosm of the ways Samaritans in general let scholars extend our discussion of the management of difference beyond binarization in terms of triumph/failure or control/disruption.

Initially, the module fits perfectly within the Epiphanius’ ethnographic vision of heretical alterity. The first half (*Pan. 9.1.1-2.6*) contains a detailed ethnographic and theological overview of the group and their mistakes.\(^92\) The Samaritans, according to this section, are the first heresy to begin from the scriptures, as opposed to Hellenism’s origins in foolish logic.

\[Σαμαρείται μεν οὖν ἀρχὴ τῶν αἱρέσεων ἀπὸ γραφῆς θεϊκῆς ὑμνιομένων μετὰ τὰς προειρημένας ἄνευ γραφῆς θεϊκῆς Ἑλληνικὰς αἱρέσεις ἀπ’ ἱδιῶν λογισμῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐμβρονθείσας ἀπὸ διανοίας.\]

The Samaritans are the first of the *haereseis* starting from the divine scripture, after the *haereseis* mentioned before which lacked divine

\(^{90}\) *Pan. 9.1.1* (Holl 1.197.12)- *Pan. 9.5.5* (Holl 1.203.15).

\(^{91}\) Isser, *Dositheans*, 38.

\(^{92}\) Scholarship has often decoupled early Christian writings from “ethnic” or “racial” strategies for fashioning identity, in line with assumptions that Christianity primarily differed from Judaism in being not a national but a universal religion. But over recent decades, scholars have paid increasing attention to the way in which religious difference is patterned as ethnic difference in early Christianity and in its Mediterranean contexts; see in particular Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.) For a robust recent case study on how taxonomical assumptions about—and obsession with—“religion” have affected approaches to antiquity, see Vaia Touna, *Fabrications of the Greek Past: Religion, Tradition, and the Making of Modern Identities* (Leiden: Brill, 2017.)
scripture, those of the Greeks, from the individual speculations of humans, thunderstruck by thought.93

This passage defines Samaritans by their generation from “divine scriptures” (ἀπὸ γραφῆς θεϊκῆς) and their being chronologically subsequent to the Greek hairesis which interrupted his period of ioudaïmos—Stoics, Platonists, Pythagoreans, and Epicureans.94 Four specific etymological explanations for the name “Samaritan” follow:

καὶ συμβέβηκε τὸ ὄνομα ἐκ διαφόρων προφάσεων καλείσθαι Σαμαρείτας ἐκ τοῦ Σωμήρ ἐκ τοῦ Σομόρον ἐκ τοῦ φυλάττειν τὴν γῆν ἐκ τοῦ φυλάττειν τὰ παιδεύματα τοῦ νόμου.

And the name has been explained with different justifications; to be called Samaritans from Somer, or from Somoron, from being guardians of the land, or from guarding the principles of the law.95

Here we see a collection of possible explanations for the Samaritan name, one linking the Samaritans to a land of origin outside Israel, and the other to Somoron, a descendant of Canaan.96 Epiphanius stacks multiple explanations of the Samaritan ethnonym in typical later Roman antiquarian style. He also, characteristically, directly deploys his knowledge of ancient etymology to do so, linking the Greek τοῦ φυλάττειν to the Hebrew equivalent (shomer) that explains the mention of both Somer and Somoron.

Moreover, Epiphanius directly attacks Samaritan failure to believe in the resurrection of the dead. The second half of the section (Pan. 9.3.1-5.3) swerves into

93 Pan. 9.1.1; Holl 1.197.13-16.
94 Pan. 5.1.1-8.1.5; Holl 1.183.11-197.11.
95 Pan. 9.1.5; Holl 1.198.5-8.
96 Reinhard Pummer, Early Christian Authors, 123-24; see also Gedaliah Alon, “The Origin of the Samaritans in the Halakhic Tradition,” in Jews, Judaism and the Classical World: Studies in Jewish History in the Times of the Second Temple and Talmud (translated by I. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1977), 354-73, esp. 359-65. Alon also notices that traditions linking the Samaritans to Canaan can be found in Test. Levi 7 and Procopius of Gaza, In Gen. (PG 87.1 col.309), as well as in rabbinic sources (bHag 25a on mHag 3; tShev 6:36c)
unrestrained hostility on this point: “But they are refuted in every way about a resurrection of the dead” (Ἐλέγχονται δὲ οὕτω πανταχόθεν περὶ νεκρῶν ἀναστάσεως.) A litany of arguments against these deniers of resurrection follows one after the other, in which Epiphanius challenges those who argue the scriptures do not attest the resurrection of the body by a series of interpretations concerning important Pentateuchal figures. Epiphanius refers in turn to Abel’s blood (Gen. 4.10), Enoch’s being taken by God (Gen. 5.24), Sarah’s conceiving Isaac (Gen. 21.1-7), Jacob’s funerary arrangements including his carriage out of Egypt to be buried with his fathers (Gen. 47.29-30; also Gen. 49.29), the prescription made by Joseph to carry out his bones from Egypt (Gen. 50.24-26), the rod of Aaron budding (Num. 17.8), the rod of Moses becoming a serpent (Ex. 4.3-5), and the blessing of Reuben as if alive (Deut. 33:6.) As standard for proof-texts, the passages stack one after the other, overlooking their qualitative differences to produce a quantitatively overwhelming flood of attestation of resurrection, in line with a typically unitary view of the meaning of scripture. Epiphanius thereby presents for the delectation of his audience opponents who ought to be cowed by arguments from scripture. These function, he says, as clear demonstration (δεικνὺς ὅτι):

πρῶτον ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀβελ, ὅτι μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν τὸ αἷμα προσδιαλέγεται τῷ δεσπότῃ. αἷμα δὲ οὐ ψυχῇ τυγχάνει, ἀλλ’ ἐν αἵματι ἡ ψυχή, καὶ οὐκ

97 Pan. 9.3.1; Holl 1.9.199.15.
98 Pan. 9.3.1-5; Holl 1.199.15-200.9.
99 Flower, “Genealogies.” Epiphanius frequently attacks both opponents’ ability to read and interpret language, as well as their canonical selections. See for example Panarion 26, in which he attacks what he understands as “Gnostic” or “Borborite” reliance on false translations (e.g. Pan. 26.1.4-5, Holl 1.276.1-5; 2.2-3, Holl 1.277.2-8 etc.) as well as their claim to a “Gospel” (Pan. 26.3.1, Holl 1.278.7-8).
The first [proof] from the case of Abel, because after death the blood spoke out to the Lord. But blood does not just coincide with psyche, rather psyche is in blood. And he does not say “the soul cries out to me,” but “the blood cries out to me”—it is clear that there is hope of resurrection of bodies.100

In recourse to these passages, Epiphanius taps into a well-established Christian tradition of exegesis around these specific scriptural passages.101 These arguments resemble in form not so much the ethnographic catalogue in the first half of Pan. 9, but Epiphanius’ anti-Origenist arguments in Pan. 64.102 They also share significant similarities with the criticisms leveled against Origen by Eustathius and Methodius. Epiphanius’ argument from the urn of Joseph is a particularly clear example.

νεκρόν μὲν γὰρ εὐθέως βδελύττονται, αὐτοὶ νεκροὶ ὄντες τοῖς ἐργοῖς. μαρτυροῦσι γὰρ οὗ μιὰ μαρτυρία, ἄλλα πολλαὶ τῷ μὴ εἶναι τὸν νεκρὸν ἐβδολυγμένον, ἄλλῃ ὁτι αἰνιγματωδὸς ὁ νόμος ἔληλην. οὐκέτι γὰρ δύο ἡ τρεῖς μαρτυρίαι εἰς τοῦτο ἤμιν ἐπιμαρτυροῦσιν, ἄλλα μιριάδες ἔξηκοντα δύο αἱ ἡρθηκέναι ἐν τῇ ἑρήμῳ καὶ ἄλλαι τοσάμεναι καὶ ἐπέκειναι καὶ ἐτοι πολλὲς αἱ τῇ σορῷ τοῦ Ἰωσήφ ἐπακολουθοῦσαι τῇ διὰ τεσσαράκοντα ἐτῶν βασταζομένη ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ παρεμβολῇ καὶ μὴ βδελυττομένῃ μήτε μολυνοῦσῃ.

For straightaway they abhor a corpse, being themselves corpses according to their works. For not only one witness but many testify that a corpse is not abominating, although the law speaks in a hidden way. For no longer do two or three witnesses testify this for us, but sixty-two thousand as counted in the desert, and as many as these after them, and still many more who followed the funeral urn of Joseph, having contact with it for forty years, in the whole camp—and who did not become abominable or impure.103

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100 Pan. 9.3.1; Holl 1.199.16-19.
101 Note a contrastive exegesis in the Catecheses ad illuminandos attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem: Enoch’s disappearance illustrates how the prophets were inferior to John the Baptist. Enoch was transferred (μετετέθη), the homily argues, but Jesus ascended (ἀνήλθεν) (Cat. Ill. 3.6).
102 For example, the repetition of the significance of Enoch’s “translation” (Pan. 64.64.1), as well as logic-chopping grammatical arguments about scripture (Pan. 64.67.14-4.4); see also Dechow, Dogma, 80-82 246-48.
103 Pan. 9.4.1-4.2; Holl 1.200.19-201.2.
Josh. 24:32, recalling the burial of the bones of Joseph near Shechem, the approximate cumulative total of the Israelites in Num. 1.47, and the Levites and priests in Num. 3:41-43, combine with Christological interpretation of the truth of the law re. purity in a close intertextual weave that resembles very similar use in Methodius’ De Cibis 13:3-7. Methodius, like Epiphanius, attacks corpse impurity using the people carrying the bones of Joseph (De Cibis 13:7), as well as linking the argument to what he asserted was the true meaning of nomos, in the life and sacrifice of Christ fulfilling the meaning of the scriptures (De Cibis 13:5). This argument sets Israelite history against the stipulations of Jewish law to prove that corpses cannot be considered generically unclean. Epiphanius even includes a long quotation from Methodius in Pan. 64 to oppose Origen on, precisely, the resurrection of the dead. Like Epiphanius’ own declaration of plain proof texts (δεικνύει τὰ!), these arguments make no concessions to Samaritan traditions. Similarly, the closing

De Cibis survives only in Old Slavonic. G. Bonwetsch published a German translation in Methodius (GCS 27; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1917). Roger Pearse has commissioned and released into the public domain an English translation by Ralph Cleminson from the manuscript (f. 173.I, no.40, folios 108v-120v) held in the Russian State Library (one of two used by Bonwetsch; see Methodius, 426): [Link to translation]. Chapter and verse numbers are from Bonwetsch.

Methodius’ argument is one of the clearest expressions of an attack on purity practice in the form of the impossibility of Jewish observance. There is no way to purify oneself, according to Law taken literally, since the sacrifice of the red heifer no longer occurs (De Cibis 10:1-4.) Methodius argues that Jews are shown to lack concern for purity and Law, since they still risk impurity by obedience to the letter of the law, even while they know purification is not a possibility since there is no water mixed with the ashes of the heifer. Nomos must be understood as always having been, properly speaking, a symbolic concern – and it is his community who show the proper caution: “For the mystery of the heifer is kept in us, who keep the nomos not according to the letter, but according to the spirit, not serving the shadow, or the likeness, or the image, but the truth itself according to the truth” (De Cibis 11.1.)

It should be clarified that Joseph had (and has) particular importance to Samaritan identity, as the individual whose marriage produced the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. For a late antique Samaritan claim to this lineage, albeit disputed by R. Meir, see GenR 94. Nevertheless, Methodius’ use demonstrates that the mere appearance of Joseph does not guarantee a Samaritan connection.

Pan. 64.12.1-62.15.
arguments in the section takes aim at those who fail to properly understand the Trinity.⁹⁸ They instead assert clear scriptural demonstration about the resurrection of the dead, presumably in the context of broader controversies, as Rebecca Lyman has argued, about the value of asceticism in the institutional churches.⁹⁹

Just as we would expect of a group subjected to heresiological classification, moreover, the Samaritans never homogenize into “pure conveyable knowledge” safely filed away and incorporated.¹⁰⁰ For example, the etymology with which Epiphanius opens Pan. 9 introduces an ethnographic segment that explains Samaritan commitments along with their claim to the Pentateuch:

Διαφέρονται δὲ οὕτωι Ἰουδαίοις κατὰ τοῦτο πρῶτον, ὃτι οὐκ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς προφητῶν τῶν μετὰ Μωσεία γραφὴ ἢ μόνον ἡ πεντάτευχος ἢ διὰ Μωσεώς τῷ σπέρματι Ἰσραήλ ἐν τῇ ἐξόδῳ τῆς ἀπ’ Ἅγιοντος πορείας διδάσκα, φημι δὲ Γένεσις Ἔξοδος Λευιτικόν Αριθμοί Δευτερονόμων. ἐν δὲ τῇ Ἐβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ οὕτως καλοῦνται, Βρεσιθ Ἐλλεσιμώθ Οὐκρά Ὀυδάβηρ Ἐλλεαδεβαρίν.

These ones differ from Ioudaioi primarily in this, that the writing of the prophets after Moses has not been given to them, but only the Pentateuch, which was given through Moses to the seed of Israel during the Exodus of their journey from Egypt, I mean, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These are called in the Hebrew dialect: Bereshith, Ellesimoth, Vayikra, Vayedaber, Elleaddebarin.¹¹¹

Here, Samaritans are both primarily compared to Jews and primarily differentiated from Jews in scriptural, rather than ethnic, terms. Later, Epiphanius traces Samaritan idolatry to the traditional origin story of the group found in Josephus and the first part of 2 Kings 17:10-34; they worship idols “even until today (ἐως τῆς

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⁹⁸ Pan. 9.5.2-3; Holl 1.202.25-203.7.
¹⁰⁰ Chin, Grammar and Christianity, 25.
¹¹¹ Pan. 9.2.1-2.2; Holl 1.198.9-19.
σήμερον ἡμέρας).” His discussion of the Sadducees assumes Samaritans are categorically distinct from Jews: οὐκ ἦσαν δὲ οὗτοι Σαμαρεῖται, ἀλλὰ Ἰουδαῖοι (But they [the Sadducees] were not Samaritans, but Jews.)112 In this section, however, Epiphanius implies the opposite. He explains, confusingly, that they have the Pentateuch given through Moses “to the seed of Israel,” – an admission that comes close to admitting Samaritans to the lineage of Abraham. That they accept only the Pentateuch, as he makes clear also in On Gems, consistently modulates their relationship to that lineage by toeing a very fine line of differentiation. What differentiates Jews and Samaritans makes them, at the same time, very similar.

The contusions in Epiphanius’ classification of Samaritan difference are perhaps clearest in his treatment of four Samaritan sects: the Essenes (Κατὰ Ἑσσηνῶν), Sebueans (Κατὰ Σεβουαίων), Gorothenes (Κατὰ Γοροθηνῶν), and Dositheans (Κατὰ Δοσιθέων).113 These groups are placed in their own miniature genealogy as an attempt to systematize their classification, but the whole section disrupts the taxonomic deviances used to box the different Samaritan groups off from one another.

Firstly, chronology buckles. The time at which these sects became different from one another is unclear. They differ from one another “in unimportant ways and to a limited extent – except for the Dositheans” (ἐν βραχεῖ δὲ καὶ ἐν τινὶ ποσῶς ἐκαστὸς τῶν τριῶν πρὸς τοὺς πέλας διαφέρεται, πλὴν τῶν Δοσιθέων μόνον).114 Consequently, they frustrate Epiphanius’ own chronology of heresy. Unlike other pre-Incarnation

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112 Pan. 14.2.2; Holl 1.208.4-5.
113 As follows: Essenes (Pan. 10.1.1-5; Holl 1.203.16-204.13), Sebueans (Pan. 11.1.1-3; Holl 1.204.14-205.3), Gorothenes (Pan. 12.1.1-2; Holl 1.205.4-205.12), Dositheans (Pan. 13.1.1-4; Holl 1.205.13-206.18).
114 Pan. 10.1.1; Holl 1.203.19-20.
heresies which disappear, but like the Ossaeans and Nazoraeans, the Gorothenes, Dositheans, and Sebuaens survive, perhaps because they are so indistinct from one another. The text tries to gloss over this with a rhetoric of heretical disappearance: “Up to here, thus: the account of the four heresies of the Samaritans and the seven of the Jews, from which there exist none any longer except...” (ἕως ὄδε ἡ περὶ τῶν τεσσάρων αἱρέσεων τῶν Σαμαρειτῶν διαλογῆ καὶ τῶν ἐπτὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἐξ ὧν οὐκέτι φέρονται <ἀλλ’> ἦ…). Nevertheless, three out of four Samaritan sects do not comply with Epiphanius’ attempt to erase them from his heresiological present.115

Second, the distinctive compartmentalization of the groups is extreme fragile. It remains unclear how exactly these Samaritan sects count as heresiological. They are not generated by a heresiarch, with the exception of Dositheus.116 Although the Dositheans have a heresiarch, they fail to adhere to the basic definition of a Samaritan in Pan. 9, since they accept the resurrection of the dead.117 Unusually, Epiphanius explicitly admits that his knowledge, wherever it came from, is at least second-hand: νηστείας δὲ τοὺς αὕτους φυλάττειν καὶ ἐξασκεῖσθαι εἰσάγει ὁ λόγος.118 Even the boundaries between the groups remain fuzzy.

A quick overview of the groups’ distinctive histories, such as they are, exemplifies this fuzziness. While the Essenes continued their “original practice,” Epiphanius says, the Sebuaens and Gorothenes ended up in disagreement. The

115 Pan. 20.3.4; Holl 1.227.1-6.
118 Pan. 13.2.1; Holl 1.206.4-5. Much of Epiphanius’ knowledge, presumably, was second-hand. Most often, however, he declines to draw attention to the fact. In the Proem 2.2.4, he gives an overview of his knowledge as variously from study, hearsay, eyewitness experience, accurate report, ancient authors, and confirmation from the learned.
Sebuaeans, then, changed the date of their festivals because of anger at Ezra and frustration with violent clashes occurring whenever Jews crossed their land to go to Jerusalem for the feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. The Gorothenes have no distinct existence except for their disagreement with the Sebuaeans, just like Dositheans, but different from the Essenes who agree with the Sebuaeans if they are in their land. This whole section renders Samaritan sects distinct by their disagreements over Samaritan-insider practices around festival timings. It may be true that deviation from a heresiological standard remains heretical – but here there is no indication of how any of these festival timings relate to Samaritan heretical identity, since Samaritan heretical identity was not grounded in their practice of Israelite festivals but in denial of the resurrection of the dead.

Thus far, the Samaritans of the Panarion function as a particularly clear example of the ethnographic paradox shared by heresiological thinking. As Berzon puts it, “Scholars routinely identity Christian heresiology as a site of ecclesiastical and imperial control. In my view, however, the genre of heresiology actually reveals the internal tensions and constraints embedded within claims of totalizing knowledge, rather than illustrating complete mastery.” 119 The Samaritans even receive an ethnographic origin narrative that ties them to the scriptures, in fitting with Epiphanius’ conception of totalizing difference in biblical terms. Furthermore, when we zero in on the details of that difference we see that its totalizing frame, precisely because of its aspiration to fix knowledge of Samaritans, makes its own limitations, especially in terms of organization and refutation, particularly visible.

119 Berzon, “Limits of Heresiology,” 86.
The self-provincializing function of Epiphanius’ attention to the Samaritans, however, lets us go even one step further. In Epiphanius’ exegetical treatises above, *On [the Twelve] Gems* and *On Weights*, it was clear that the Samaritans distract him to epistemological excess. Epiphanius’ aspiration to maximal knowledge lures him away from intellectual spaces which take Christianess as prototypic towards an emphasis on knowledge of Samaritans in their own terms. He even debates with Samaritans treated not as heretical deviants most important in being categorically different from Christians, but as rival exegetes, important in their categorical relationship (ethnic and otherwise) with Jews. When we look a little closer at the *Panarion*, we see this tendency in the younger Epiphanius as well. The *Panarion* often takes Samaritans on their own terms, without an attempt to tie the communication of that knowledge either explicitly or implicitly to the heresiological frame.

For example, Samaritan deviance in *Pan. 9* does not meet with dismissal and aggressive polemic:

καὶ ἔσπαρται μὲν ἐν ταὐταῖς ταῖς πέντε βιβλίοις ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν τὸ σημεῖον, οὐ μέντοι γε τηλαγωγὰς κεκήρυκται, καὶ ἔσπαρται ἐν αὐταῖς περὶ τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος καὶ κατὰ εἰδώλων· τὸ δὲ τηλαγεστερον ἐν αὐταῖς <τὸ> περὶ μοναρχίας ἔχει τὴν εἰσαγωγὴν, ἐν δὲ τῇ μοναρχίᾳ πνευματικῷ ή τριάς καταγγελλομένη ἐστίν.

And the sign of the resurrection of the dead is sprinkled over these five books, but certainly it has not been clearly announced; and scattered in them also is the sign of the only-begotten son of God and the holy spirit and that against idols. But most clear in them is the introduction of monarchia, and it is in monarchia that the trinity are proclaimed, spiritually.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{120} *Pan. 9.2.2; Holl 1.198.15-19*
Instead, Epiphanius is at least sympathetic towards Samaritan reading of the Pentateuch. The Samaritans are passive recipients of an unequal portion of scriptural truth (“it had not been given to them”), and Epiphanius accordingly concedes that their doctrinal errors are understandable. The Pentateuch does, he admits, contain only intimations of the resurrection of the body and the Trinity. Samaritans are competent readers of those texts which they accept. Their limit is the books they have been given.

Furthermore, while their idolatry is unequivocal, they are only ambiguously to blame. Their failure was only partially their fault, even if it resulted from a lack of determination for chasing accurate knowledge:

οἱ δὲ δεξάμενοι τὸν νόμον εἰς τὸ μετατεθῆναι τῆς εἰδωλολατρείας καὶ τὸν ἕνα θεὸν ἐπιγνώναι ἐσπουδάσθησαν, οἷς οὐ γέγονεν ἐπιμέλεια τις τὸ ἀκριβέστερον ἐπιγνώναι.

They received the law but participated in idolatry, and they tried to come to know the one God, but for them it did not become a care to know accurately.¹²¹

Unlike most other sects in the Panarion, the Samaritans are credited with at least trying to “know the one God” properly (καὶ τὸν ἕνα θεὸν ἐπιγνώναι ἐσπουδάσθησαν.) Moreover, in what follows, it becomes clear that the hidden idols concealed in Gerizim resulted from a concealment of which the Samaritans of Epiphanius’ time have no knowledge themselves.

καὶ αὕτη ἡ αἵρεσις ἀθετοῦσα μὲν νεκρὸν ἀνάστασιν, ἀπωθομένη δὲ εἰδωλολατρείαν, ἐν ἑαυτῇ δὲ εἰδωλολατροῦσα κατ’ ἄγνοιαν διὰ τὸ ἀποκεκρύφθαι τὰ εἰδώλα τῶν τεσσάρων ἐθνῶν ἐν τῷ θρεῖ τῷ παρ’ αὐτοῖς Γαριζίν σεσυκοφαντημένος καλομένῳ.

And this heresy, having disbelieved the resurrection of the dead, but rejecting idolatry; is itself idolatrous by ignorance because of the

¹²¹ Pan. 9.2.3; Holl 1.198.20-22
concealing of the idols of the four nations in the mountain credulously called by them “Gerizim.”

Someone hid the idols of the nations in their holy mountain, and, since the Samaritans did not know, they became idolaters out of ignorance of that fact. Thus, the Samaritans become double victims. They received a truncated scripture – through a fault, unlike any other sect, not of their own – and thus cannot come to correct exegetical conclusions. Furthermore, they worship idols only inadvertently.

Their critical mistake in accepting only the Books of Moses as scripture is justified, as Epiphanius points out in closing the section, by long-standing tradition (“They grasp traditions as they have been handed down to them from their own fathers”; κατεχόμενοι παραδόσει τῇ προαχθείσῃ παρ’ αὑτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων πατέρων). Anne Kreps recently examined Epiphanius’ use of the term “paradosis,” noticing that he uses it to describe the traditions about the patriarchs in Jubilees. “Paradosis,” Kreps argues, “measured the criteria for something to be true and excluded the errors of sectarian Christians.” It marked also, the residue of ancient traditions. For example, the Egyptian practice of anointing their lambs echoed, albeit in a distorted way, Passover. In other words, “paradosis” for Epiphanius signals a position of great antiquity, that in some way confirms an age-old narrative of proper belief and practice. The Samaritans share with the Jews this link by tradition to an Israelite past greater than their sectarian identity; their exegesis derives from the residual value of age-old tradition.

122 Pan. 9.2.4; Holl 1.199.1-5.
123 Pan. 9.5.4; Holl 1.203.11-12.
125 In the discussion of the Nasaraeans; Pan. 18.1.1-3.5; Holl 1.215.13-217.16.
This link between Samaritans and the Israelite past also helps explain why the refutation of the Samaritans is comparatively muted. For most of the other groups in the *Panarion*, refutation comes hand in hand with description, usually fortified with a healthy dosage of violent rhetoric. It is not unusual that the animalizing rhetoric found elsewhere in the *Panarion*, for example, dealing with the Ebionites is like spending onerous time on tidal beaches full of stranded fish and an array of dangerous and poisonous sea life, is nowhere to be seen.126 As Joseph Verheyden reminds us that for all it has captured the imagination of scholars in characterizing Epiphanius’ rhetoric *tout court*, this animalization only characterizes the post-incarnation heresies.127 We do not find, however, much condemnation of the Samaritans at all. Elsewhere, as Peter Mena points out, Epiphanius’ rhetoric frequently constructs the heretic as a sexually voracious deviant, by proximity to medical rhetoric of healthy bodies.128 Contrary to these expectations, the Samaritans receive a relatively high degree of sympathetic thinking.

Taking Samaritans on their own terms in this way does not threaten Epiphanius’ knowledge. The knowledge claims Epiphanius makes about the group are, at least within the archive, presented as accurate and sorted knowledge. Rather, these


127 Verheyden, “Beasts and Heretics,” 149-50. Epiphanius deploys a herpetological rhetoric upon ending his discussion of the four Samaritan sects (*Pan*. 13.2.2 Williams p.39), and as a way of describing the divisions between the seven Jewish ones (*Pan*. 20.3.3, Williams p.54), but the tailored animalizing invective characteristic of his treatment of many post-incarnation sects are absent. In the last thirteen sects, also – a curiosity on which Verheyden does not comment – the animalizing rhetoric is often missing.

knowledge claims are not primarily about control or disruption, about Christian heresiological triumph or failure. Instead, they support Epiphanius’ claim to knowledge even while exceeding heresiological knowing. In this way, as in the case of Symmachus’ recircumcision and a certain Ezra’s truncated Torah, Epiphanius decouples his management of difference from an emphasis on their difference from Christians. Simultaneously, what Blossom Stefaniw has called Epiphanius’ “drive for a form of Christianity that is sorted” dislocates the bishop from the imperial Christian centre that generates the Panarion as a project, and into a more complicated terrain of provincialized negotiation of knowledge of difference in terms of larger third terms: Bible, tradition, and the land of Palestine.129

With this in mind, the Samaritans in the Panarion start to make much more sense. The Samaritans slip between a “real” group accessed by ethnographic investigation, and Samaritan-shaped opportunities to attack Christian opponents. Disbelief is tagged as “Samaritan,” but often using arguments that Epiphanius heavily implied Samaritan paradosis rendered useless. The historicized Samaritans slip out of view in Pan. 9, having acted as an opportunity to rehearse more general arguments targeting those who resist the doctrine of the resurrection of the corporeal body. Nevertheless, they then pop up out of heresiological place in the rest of the Panarion. For example, the Sadducees compare to Samaritans.130 Ebion has “the loathsomeness” (τὸ βδελυρόν) of the Samaritans.131 Justin Martyr is an ethnic Samaritan (ὁ Ἰουστῖνος Σαμαρείτης ἦν τὸ γένος), who turns from the Samaritans to Christ (τὸ ἀπὸ

129 Stefaniw, “Straight Reading,” 414.
130 Pan. 14.2.2-3; Holl 1.208.1-2
131 Pan. 20.1.3; Holl 1.333.14-15.
Σαμαρείτων εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότι. 132 Epiphanius is impelled to challenge “Samaritan” opinions about Melchizedek. 133 An open air Samaritan prayer-house sneaks into the refutation of the prayer-practices of the “Massalians.” 134

Considered in terms of epistemological excess, this Samaritan recurrence likewise becomes more understandable. Epiphanius’ erudite attentions are as prone to distractibility in the Panarion as they are in the exegetical treatises. Like in those treatises, the Samaritans are one of the major distractions; as with those treatises, the Epiphanius of the Panarion has a drive to maximal knowledge such that Christianness sometimes falls by the wayside. As a result, the (heretical) group pops up frequently without its heresiological trappings, and without being ordered with respect to a Christian identity. The Samaritans have at least two intermittent functions, in the Panarion: one, as a heresiological target, and two, as a subject compelling the display of specialist knowledge decoupled from Christianness as a prototypic term.

As we have seen, the sense that Epiphanius does not need – or apparently desire – a Christian prototypic term to manage Samaritan difference is a feature of his engagement with the Samaritans, rather than a bug. It is a feature the Panarion turns out to share with Epiphanius’ later exegetical treatises. In important senses, the Samaritans of the Panarion both result from to the sectarian splintering of divine truth and provide a basic operating condition that enable the distortion of God’s relationship with Israel. Thus, their modular heresiological presence butts up against their claims to Israelite antiquity, continually pressing in on Epiphanius’

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132 Pan. 46.1.2-3; Holl 2.203.4-5.
133 Pan. 55.6.1-6.11; Holl 2.331.6-333.12.
134 Pan. 80.1.6; Holl 3.485.19-22.
argumentation precisely because of his claims to universalized knowledge of the scriptures and of the past.

The Samaritans, therefore, do not function in Epiphanius’ heresiological work as a heretical entity simpliciter, a building block vis-à-vis Christian orthodoxy. Rather they are simultaneously present as a historicized presence susceptible to Jewish interpellation, as a population linking biblical times with encounters in contemporary Palestine, as sharing a paradosis rival to the Jews or Christians, and as a group whose own management of religious difference was not exhausted by its relationship to Christianity. Epiphanius, in the *Panarion*, often takes the Samaritans on their own terms. As a result they both share a privileged position to Israelite tradition to which Epiphanius himself shows relative sympathy, and break into the structure of his *Panarion* at relatively unexpected moments. When Epiphanius discusses Samaritans, epistemological excess decentres Epiphanius as a Christian knower; it is never quite clear, overall, *what the stakes of representing* Samaritan difference are, beyond the forward march of maximal knowledge – or even whether a modern scholarly search for such stakes would misrepresent Epiphanius’ management of difference.

**Provincialization and Epistemological Excess**

As these three examples demonstrate, the Samaritans do a lot of work for Epiphanius. In *On Weights*, Symmachus’ Samaritan identity clashes with a Jewish past, but the difference attracts expansive knowledge display without reference to a Christian alternative. In *On [the Twelve] Gems*, an alternative story of Samaritan
origins maps ethnic belonging onto possession of scriptures. Its Samaritan-sympathetic account of Jewish boundary management again emphasizes Jewish versus Samaritan difference, instead of attempting to gain ground for Christian identity at the cost of either Torah-observing group. Finally, in Pan. 9, Epiphanius fits the Samaritans into his ethnographic vision of heresiological difference, even while he considers their own “paradosis” in its own terms as a justification (albeit a bad one) for their rejection of Trinity and bodily resurrection. In attention to the Samaritans, therefore, Epiphanius’ own pursuit of maximal knowledge leads to epistemological excess. This excess impels him beyond a centre concerned with Christianness to focus on Samaritan identity vis-à-vis Jews, even sometimes on their own terms. As Jacobs writes, “Epiphanius’s attention to the other is excessive. There is seemingly nothing to him but a frothing desire to find, even invent, others.”

Exactly. But in excessive attention to the Samaritans, we see also how Epiphanius provincializes himself.

Considering Samaritans on their own terms, notably, does not only mean operating outside a space dominated by Christianness. It also signals a degree of comfort with an absence of Christianity-centred control over concepts elsewhere fundamental for ordering a universal history of orthodoxy. Epiphanius could and did decouple Christianness from his management of difference with respect to both the Israelite past and the Bible. Both become contested not just between orthodox and heretic but also in a Samaritan key. Christianness is sometimes visible, if at all, only dimly. Moreover, the categorization and classification of Samaritans as distinct from

the orthodox in these passages, even though they lay claim to Bible and Israelite lineage, is seldom of primary importance.

The degree of control that Epiphanius’ epistemological excess sacrifices is particularly notable because much of the time he does not seem to actively choose to do so. His preoccupation with Samaritans as Samaritans is not a tactical retreat from control, but unselfconscious; it seems to be part of the multilateral way in which he, a Christian bishop, engages religious difference in his world. To consider again the cases in this chapter, he does not anxiously choose to make Symmachus a Samaritan in *On Weights*; rather, it signals Samaritan/Jewish contest embedded in how he frames the contestation of the text of the Greek Bible. There is no sign that his alternative narrative of Samaritan origins and lineage in *On Gems* strategically deploys a Samaritan/Jewish hybridization of the text of the scriptures, or anxiously admits it. Rather, it occurs in what Jacobs calls an “antiquarian digression.” Samaritan/Jewish difference is part of his received script about the history of Israel. Similarly, while *Panarion* 9 incorporates Samaritans into his ethno-heresiological vision, his reference to Samaritan *paradosis* is matter of fact, not defensive. Samaritans just do interpret Torah, in Epiphanius’ world, and in a way comprehensible given their reception only of the Books of Moses. In other words, Epiphanius’ distractibility, particularly pronounced with respect to Samaritans, is a symptom of how far his set of techniques for managing difference do not reduce to a binary pair of Christian/other, even, perhaps especially, when thinking about the Israelite past and the Bible.

In this way, Samaritans do not behave, for Epiphanius, the way that Arians, Jews, or Magusaeans (for example) behave, in accordance with Michael Satlow’s
observations about the function of stereotyping: “Stereotypes do not lump the Other into a single category; they parcel out fears and fantasies into different groups.”136 Samaritan others, like Jewish others, distinctively belong to a semi-stable terrain of religious meaning and identification already given, to which Epiphanius also belongs as a component. The group came included as a feature of his world, especially connected to biblical bookishness and knowledge of Palestine. What is more, Epiphanius frequently, at least in contact with the Samaritans, reflects in his unselfconscious epistemological excess this understanding of the inevitability of religious difference and a lack of anxiety about his own provincialization.

For example, Epiphanius is peculiarly alert to extra-biblical Israelite history. Even though Samaritans are, in some ways, extraneous to how the texts that became canonical scriptures for Jews and Christians ordered the past – which so often emphasize a Judean/Jewish past, they were – uniquely amongst Epiphanius’ “heresies,” aside from Jews – a continuous part of both that past and the long-term landscape of the land of Palestine. Thus, they, an otherwise submerged part of the Israelite past barely present in the Bible Epiphanius knew, can reemerge in Epiphanius intermittently but often. The mechanic of imperial organization of knowledge which catalyzes Epiphanius’ epistemological excess makes space for the resurgence of an extra-scriptural Israelite group to play a major role in his management of his contemporary religious difference. By incorporating the Samaritans, because of the universal scope of his heresiological schema, Epiphanius

goes beyond his contemporaries and beyond the Bible in witnessing the extra-biblical Israelite past that shaped the late antique religious present.

These observations supply an important corrective for scholarly thinking about knowledge organization in late antiquity more broadly. After all, we know variegated ways of managing difference, especially among late antique antiquarians, existed. Late antique Christianity did not unilaterally flatten forms of discourse and disagreement. Rather it played an important centralizing role, especially amongst Roman elites, with the nomen christianorum as a desirable idiom of power capable of articulation through pressure directly employed in ways it had not been previously. By exerting often domineering social and cultural force, as Jacobs points out by analogy to the imperial knowledge-ordering function of “Rome,” Christianness reformatted the multilateral ways in which disagreement and discourses could function.

Nevertheless, we tend to conceptualize Epiphanius (and other ecclesiastical and heresiological heavy-hitters) as writing from a position stably governed by reference to Christianness as a prototypic term, organizing acceptable and unacceptable knowledge with respect to a variety of proximate, interchangeable “others.” Scholars thus inadvertently narrow late antique religious options into Christian/other as if the most important thing to say about someone like Epiphanius often slips into orbit

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137 Richard Lim, Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
139 Jacobs, Circumcision, 41-3. As Jacobs writes: “To be Roman was to exert an ostentatiously precarious control over an omnipresent parade of “others”; to engage with, and even internalize, their strange voices” (43).
around large, durable, long-duration categories like “Christianity” or “religion,” perceived to have won out in such a shifted competitive landscape. Instead, through the alternative actions of Epiphanius highlighted in contact with Samaritans we can think more directly about how the same intermittence of Christian identity observed amongst “Jewish-Christian” texts or “ordinary” Christians, also manifests in the bishop of Cyprus, and thus even in those working in the engine-room of fourth-century imperialized orthodoxy and its organization of a Christianized world.140

What if, more generally, we were to reconfigure our modern scholarly understanding of what a late antique “other” looks like to account for this type of provincialization, and the intermittent importance of Christianness as a prototypic term for managing difference? What if we read others not as inert building blocks for Christian classification, but, like the Samaritans in Epiphanius as symptoms of the epistemological excess decentring their (Christian) knowers? Both Epiphanius’ knowledge claims and his distractibility, I suggest, are symptoms of a broader practice of late antique knowing. With respect to this way of knowing, Christianness was sometimes more important and sometimes less – even for the most deeply and aggressively Christianizing writers. Our scholarly ways of mapping knowing claims and management of difference must become flexible enough to allow for this possibility not as an exception or a failure or a sign of incomplete Christianization.

140 As David Frankfurter noticed of second- and third-century prophetic literature (Ascension of Isaiah, so-called 5 and 6 Ezra, Revelation, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs): “forging a macro-identity is not nearly as important in these texts as establishing internicene boundaries and authority”; “Beyond ‘Jewish Christianity’: Continuing Religious Sub-Cultures of the Second and Third Centuries and Their Documents,” The Ways that Never Parted, ed. Annette Yoshiko Reed and Adam H. Becker (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 131-44, at 140.
but as a feature of what it meant for Christian subjects to know. Christian identities do not, always, exhaust their worlds.

Through attention to Epiphanius’ Samaritans we can work more expansively and deliberately to shape our accounts of late antique difference also to allow for Christian writers navigating difference while themselves regional in place, intermittent in time, partly manufactured by their own concerns but partly impressed by a terrain of meaning and identification already shaping what is intelligible to them. Not even deeply Christianizing writers were always, directed at carving out a distinctive Christian identity, with the fear and anxiety and firmly drawn boundaries that entails. As with Epiphanius when occupied with the Samaritans, late antique Christian writings sometimes reflect a broad conceptual terrain of universal knowledge, proper Christian occupation of which both demands the provincialization of oneself as a knower (because of the universality of that knowledge) and galvanizes epistemological excess (because of the impulse towards totality). That epistemological excess, in turn, quietly erodes the stringency with which knowledge must be explicitly “Christian” even in a time of intensive, imperialized Christianization. The next and final chapter examines another archive in which Samaritans are of sustained importance, and again within which knowledge of the group comes characterized by a type of excess: late antique rabbinic literature.
In the Mishnah, a Hebrew compilation from Roman Palestine of rabbinic rulings about acceptable practice (halakha) compiled c.220CE, a discussion about an “important ruling” (כלל גדול) for the Sabbatical year unfolds: what counts as food for humans and what can be made into a “medicinal poultice” (מלוגמא)? Some way into the discussion, the Mishnah turns to a disagreement between the Sages (חכמים), who at least in the Mishnah tend to represent the authoritative halakhic position (the “right” answer, as it were), and R. Eliezer (R. Akiva’s controversial teacher.) R. Eliezer, it seems, had strong feelings about Samaritan bread, and expresses those feelings using the standard rabbinic term for all things Samaritan, “kutim”:

An animal skin smeared with oil of the Seventh [Year]. R. Eliezer says: Let it be burned. But the Sages say: Let someone eat of equal value. They said to the face of R. Akiva: “R. Eliezer used to say: An animal skin smeared with oil of the Seventh Year – let it be burned.” He said to them: Shut it. I will not speak to you [about] what R. Eliezer said about this.”

And again, they said to his face: “R. Eliezer used to say: The one who eats Samaritan bread (פת כותים) is like someone who eats pig-meat.” He said to them: “Shut it. I will not speak to you [about] what R. Eliezer said about this.”

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1 mShev 8:9-10 (text in accordance with MS Kaufman 50). All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.
A major preoccupation of rabbinic material becomes the explanation, reconciliation, and regulation of dissent among earlier rabbinic authorities. In *mShev* 8 we see the Mishnah already active at work on a comparable type of dispute resolution, into which Samaritans sneak. R. Eliezer’s opposition to the Sages regarding the ruling on animal skins soaked in Sabbatical year oil is taken by them to a rabbinic authority of particular prominence in the Mishnah, R. Akiva. R. Akiva, however, refuses to even discuss it. The Sages then mention a second, apparently unrelated, teaching of R. Eliezer, concerning the bread of the Samaritans. Again, R. Akiva refuses even to dignify the statement with a response.

Two points emerge from the text-internal justification by which the Mishnah justifies the position of the Sages. First, a ruling about the consumption of Samaritan bread is part of the standard fare of rabbinic disagreement. Samaritans matter with respect to everyday halakhic practice. Second, the condemnation of someone who eats Samaritan bread is dismissed out of hand.

R. Eliezer’s hostility, curiously, then dips out of view for centuries, recurring only twice (*tḤull* 2:20; *bḤull* 13a-b), and lacking the initial seriousness which R. Eliezer assigned it. The attack on “Samaritan bread” resurfaces with a vengeance,

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however, in ninth-century Babylonia. It slots into a vicious, explicitly anti-Samaritan retelling of Ezra-Nehemiah in the midrash *Pirqei deRabbi Eliezer.*

What did Ezra, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jehozadak, do [in response to Samaritan obstruction of the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem (citing Ezra 4:24)? They gathered all the congregation to the Temple of the Lord, and they brought 300 priests, 300 children, and 300 scrolls of the Torah in their hands, and they blew (the trumpets), and the Levites sang songs and praises, and they excommunicated the Samaritans with the mystery of the Ineffable Name, and with the script such as was written upon the tablets (of the Law), and by the ban of the heavenly Court of Justice, and by the ban of the earthly Court of Justice (decreeing) that no one of Israel should eat the bread of the Samaritans. Hence (the sages) said: Everyone who eats the bread of the Samaritans is as though he had eaten of the flesh of swine. Let no man make a proselyte in Israel from among the Samaritans. They have no portion in the resurrection of the dead, as it is said, “Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God” (ibid. 3), neither in this world, nor the world to come. So that they should have neither portion nor inheritance in Israel, as it is said, “But ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.” (Neh. ii.20)

They sent the ban (letter) to the Israelites who were in Babylon. Moreover, they added an additional ban upon them, and King Cyrus ordained it as a perpetual ban upon them, (as it is said), “And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there overthrow all kings and peoples that shall put forth their hand to alter the same, to destroy this

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6 On the work, see Katharina E. Keim, *Pirqei deRabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1-47. This passage also has parallels in Midrash Tanhumah *Vayeshev* 2 (Vilna edition) and *Yalkut Shimoni* 234 (on 2 Kings 17).
house of God which is at Jerusalem. I, Darius, have made a decree; let it be done with all diligence.” (Ezra vi.12).7

Here, the prohibition of Samaritan bread is treated with absolute seriousness.8 Moreover, Samaritans occupy the attention of the midrash when narrating a highly significant chronological moment within the history of the Jewish people. When re-imagining the sharp intervention of Ezra in the boundaries of post-exilic Israel, it is the Samaritans who function as the sharply-delineated proximate other – more than five centuries, conservatively, after the Mishnaic bread tradition that forms a centerpiece of Ezra’s ban.

In this final chapter, I scrutinize the continued rabbinic interest in Samaritans that enables the resurfacing of mShev 8:9. I bring the toolkit for examining representation, reality, and imagination deployed in previous chapters, along with attention to scholarly habits of attention and narration, to bear on classical rabbinic literature. While scholarly accounts of Jewish difference have incorporated alterity effectively, as I outline below, the frequent absence of Samaritans, or discussion only in halakhic terms based in pre-talmudic material, has often tacitly left uninterrogated rabbinic claims to elements of “Jewishness” which Samaritans challenge. When thinking through the worldbuilding in rabbinic texts with Samaritans included, we see how that world was a more complicated place than emphasis on halakha would imply; a world in which rabbis needed to find multiple ways to grapple with the fact that Torah

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7 Based on the translation by Gerald Friedlander (London: Kegan Paul, 1916). Translations of rabbinic texts render kuti and its forms variously as “Cuthean,” “Cuthite,” and “Samaritan.” I have standardized throughout the chapter using “Samaritan” but otherwise use existing translations wherever possible.

8 This seriousness, and the lack of evidence for Babylonian Samaritans in the Talmud, even leads Büchler to suggest this narrative provides evidence for the emergence of Samaritan sectarianism in “the fermentation of Persian-Babylonian Judaism” (“Les Dositheëns,” 68).
interpretation, Torah observance, and circumcision vulnerable to rival claims and classifications by a group who resisted characterization as an abstract other, and remained threateningly close to rabbinic Israel.

Rabbinic classification with respect to Samaritans, in fact, functions appositely compared to the treatment of other groups, such as the minim, goyim, or ‘am ha-aretz. While these groups come to refer to a generic anti-type to rabbinic Israel, the Samaritans retain the concrete markers of their (Israelite) difference. In the Babylonian Talmud, I argue – the prototypic master-text of rabbinic literature – the Samaritans function as an excess, a limit-case, and an opportunity for halakhic creativity by being taken as coherently and concretely Samaritan. I suggest a model of rabbinic difference as self-consciously part of a sustained constellation of identities, including Samaritans, contesting continuity with the past of Israel.

Although it would be possible to expand this analysis well into later periods, as the example of Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer shows, this chapter focuses on the rabbinic material most actively discussed by scholars of rabbinics and of ancient Judaism: classical rabbinic literature. Traditionally, the category “rabbinic literature” groups together Mishnah, Tosefta, the Palestinian (sometimes called Jerusalem) Talmud (Yerushalmi), the Babylonian Talmud (Bavli), and early rabbinic midrash. The Mishnah, traditionally attributed to R. Yehuda ha-Nasi (fl.ca. 200C.E), collects the orally-transmitted rulings of

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rabbis on halakha, the way to live life, into an anthological collection. The Tosefta was probably formed at roughly the same time, again in Palestine. Scholars of rabbinics actively debate precisely the relationship between Mishnah and Tosefta. Suffice it to say that while some of the traditions collected in Mishnah appear also in Tosefta, some appear with variants, and others appear only in one or the other. The Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds reproduce sections of the Mishnah along with often extensive commentary (the Gemara.) The Talmuds are traditionally dated to the fifth century and late sixth century respectively and as the names suggest, they emerge from a Roman Palestinian and Sasanian Persian (Babylonian) context. Midrash is different from this largely legal material, instead collecting extensive interpretive material organized around


11 See essays in Harry Fox and Tirzah Meacham (ed.), Introducing Tosefta: Textual, Intra- 

12 For Talmud Yerushalmi, Leiden Or. 4720 is the only complete extant manuscript. In contrast, Menachem Katz presents 68 relevant text witnesses for the Bavli, perhaps the foremost of which is MS Munich 95 currently held in the Bavarian State Library and available online: https://www.wdl.org/en/item/8910/. With rabbinic material, textual fluidity means that the edition used often dictates the content of a given text. In general, see primary text bibliography for editions used, unless clarified in the chapter.

Jewish scriptures. The earliest so-called exegetical midrash deal with the text of Genesis and Lamentations.\textsuperscript{14}

**Samaritan Purity and Samaritan Danger**

There is more to the articulation of Samaritan difference than its complexity. Complexity is not that surprising. As scholars have frequently observed, attempts to classify and comprehensively regulate difference also include and preserve that difference.\textsuperscript{15} The rabbis are no exception: David Grossberg recently argued that the rabbis, like Christian heresiologists but with their own genres and distinctive lexicon, inscribe “rhetorical boundaries around themselves.”\textsuperscript{16} Thus, it is precisely its genericizing function which makes heresiological, and heresiology-like, systems so


\textsuperscript{15} For example, Eric S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 352: “the expression of collective character in antiquity…owes less to insisting on distinctiveness from the alien than to postulating links with, adaptation to, and even incorporation of the alien.”

\textsuperscript{16} David M. Grossberg, *Heresy and the Formation of the Rabbinic Community* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 17. The comparison with heresiologists has been much discussed recently, especially in the debate following Boyarin’s claims that rabbis developed exclusive Jewish religious identity in part by mimicry of imperial Christian heresiology (*Border Lines*). We can sidestep the disagreement, since it hinges on the uniqueness of “rabbinic” (Jewish) genre compared to “heresiological” (Christian) genre. In my opinion, heresiology is more usefully thought of as a scholarly classification referring to an array of ancient difference-making technologies. Thus, since an array of technologies need not index to any single tradition, there is no difficulty in treating rabbinic and Christian boundary rhetoric, for instance, as “heresiological.”
unstable.\textsuperscript{17} Such systems generalize to comprehensively classify difference. The more they do so, however, the more fragile and prone to exception any of their individual acts of classification. The same is true of the array of rabbinic difference. The process relies on genericizing polemical classifications: \textit{goy}, \textit{‘apiqorsim}, \textit{minim}; each signals unacceptability, but none consistently maps onto any concrete collective group or history.

Accordingly, as Richard Kalmin demonstrates, \textit{minut} modulates in meaning from earlier Tannaitic to later Talmudic traditions, no longer meaning intra-Jewish deviance but simply referring to false practices of any kind. \textit{Minim}, consequently, comes to signify a transparent – but generic – non-Jewish threat.\textsuperscript{18} Jenny Labendz traces the same evolution, from specific to generic classification, for \textit{‘apiqoros}.\textsuperscript{19} Likewise, Idi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi argue that \textit{goy} becomes a unified category, with later rabbinic texts such as \textit{Mekhilta de-Arayot} evidence for the transferability of ethnic stereotypes between gentile peoples with impunity: “that all gentiles become one is evident also from the erasure of the distinction between ethnicities. While particularized ethnic stereotypes – both Greco-Roman and biblical – may still be

\textsuperscript{17} See also Todd Berzon, “Known Knowns and Known Unknowns: Epiphanius of Salamis and the Limits of Heresiology,” \textit{HTR} 109:1 (2016): 75-101. As touched on in Chapter 3, Berzon emphasizes how Christian representation of heresies magnified diverse “heresy” as a universal constant, like ethnographers magnified cultural and ethnic difference, and thus introduced a discursive (theological) incoherence into heresiological (as ethnographic) claims of mastery. My point is more specifically about the mechanics of difference-management: the reliance of systematic classification on generic features means the increased power of classified elements to buck the trend, regardless of any diversity or not among the classified elements.


\textsuperscript{19} Jenny R. Labendz, “‘Know What to Answer the Epicurean’: A Diachronic Study of the \textit{‘Apiqoros} in Rabbinic Literature,” \textit{HUCA} 74 (2003): 175-214.
found occasionally in rabbinic literature, they are presented as merely specifications of a basic unity." As a result of this genericizing, rabbinic others act as both opportunity and threat vis-à-vis stable rabbinic Jewish identity.

Samaritans function differently from collective identities like ‘apiqorsim or minim, however, because despite the sporadic rabbinic efforts surveyed above the group never comes to signify a generic difference-making category. In late antique Jewish eyes, “Samaritan” never becomes only a transposable way to relay deviation from a rabbinic norm. Samaritan difference, therefore, is not just another example of the ambivalence of systematized difference-making, or another instance of diversity resisting classification (even when it is both these things). Rather, the Samaritans destabilize the claims of rabbis to exhaustive definition of “Israel” even while retaining, within the rabbinic text, a distinctive collective identity, even an autonomy, that reflects what we know about their extra-textual existence. The rabbis confront and connect Samaritans as Samaritans: potentially law-observant, and making claims to Israelite observance of circumcision, halakha, and blessing, that could oppose those of rabbis.

The durability of Samaritan-specific difference is bypassed by scholarly accounts of rabbinic Jewishness, which often rely on a developmental narrative according to which a more and more stringent categorical sense of “Jews” separate from “others” emerges over time. Christine Hayes writes:

“In rabbinic literature, reference is made to non-Israelites (gentiles of various description). These “external others” often appear in rabbinic

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literature as mirror opposites of Israelites, and so sharpen the rabbis’
definition of Israel. However, insofar as this literature explores and
develops a definition of the rabbi as the ideal Jew, reference is made to
non-rabbinic Jews (of various descriptions). These “internal others”
often appear in rabbinic literature as mirror opposites of the rabbis and
so sharpen the rabbis’ definition of their own class.

Yet theories of the other do more than prescribe and maintain group
boundaries. They also serve as the means by which a group can explore
its own internal ambiguities, experiment with alternative possibilities,
embrace negativities, and ‘confront (even admire) what they
themselves are not.’ As we shall see, at times the ‘other’ – both
external and internal – is deployed in rabbinic literature not to facilitate
but rather to complicate and even undermine attempts to construct a
Jewish, or rabbinic, self.”

Often, scholars approach the process of defining Israel by attention to the binary
oppositions involved. Ophir and Rosen-Zvi recently put it thus: “We wish to recover
the discursive framework that naturalized the radical alterity of the gentile and its
binary opposition to the Jew, and made it into a fact of life.” As this binary
opposition develops, difference must be either halakhic or theological – and thus
“Jewish” and resolvable by debate – or else categorical – and thus “non-Jewish” and
isolated. Other scholars prefer to model categorical difference along what Christine
Hayes calls a “spectrum of proximity.” Some gentiles, and some non-rabbinic Jews,
which “embody a genuine alternative – an alterity within – the min, the holy man, and
the ‘am ha-aretz pose a unique threat to, and resource for, the rabbinic attempt to
construct a stable self.” Both approaches, however, present rabbis differentiating
Jewishness from non-Jewishness; Hayes differs from Ophir and Rosen-Zvi by
modelling for degrees of proximity, but she agrees that ultimately a rabbinic sense of

21 Christine Hayes, “The Other in Rabbinic Literature” in Fonrobert and Jaffe, Talmud and
Rabbinic Literature, 243-69, at 243-44.
22 Ophir and Rosen-Zvi, Goy, 6.
23 Hayes, “The Other,” 263.
Jewishness develops and clarifies over time in contrast with variously constituted “external and internal” others.

Such an examination of rabbinic identity and alterity reaps the benefits of decades of discussion of how rabbis did or did not fit in their late antique world, and of the best scholarly framing in which to understand their activities.\textsuperscript{24} Scholars have rightly criticized the “rabbinocentric” approach to late antique Jewishness, emphasizing that pluriform Jewish practice was the order of the day – though disagreeing about the form that practice took.\textsuperscript{25} As Annette Yoshiko Reed says, late antiquity is characterized by “a setting of continued inner-Jewish competition.”\textsuperscript{26}

Nevertheless, such approaches often focused on Samaritans only to extract “real” Samaritans behind a given text or bracket Samaritan episodes as merely constructs.\textsuperscript{27}

The possibility of Samaritan relevance to rabbinic identity formation has often been


\textsuperscript{25} See Seth Schwartz, \textit{Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Stuart Miller, \textit{Sages and Commoners in Late Antique ‘Erez Israel} (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) and \textit{At the Intersection of Texts and Material Finds: Stepped Pools, Stone Vessels, and Ritual Purity Among the Jews of Roman Galilee} (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2015). The main sticking point is continuity. Schwartz argues that Judaism as a religious practice fragments and disappears into provincial Greco-Roman behaviours between 70 and ca.350, only to reform in a synagogue-based, largely non-rabbinic form partly in response to the Christianization of the Roman Empire (\textit{Imperialism}, 1). Miller, in contrast, argues that a diversified “complex common Judaism” provided a more consistent backdrop and support for a largely non-rabbinic Jewish society (Miller, \textit{Sages and Commoners}, 2006), 1-28.


\textsuperscript{27} For this method of extraction vs. reduction, scholars of Samaritans look back to Israel Taglicht, \textit{Kuthäer als Beobachter des Gesetzes nach talmudischen Quellen nebst Berücksichtigung der samaritanischen Correspondenz und Liturgie} (PhD Dissertation, Berlin 1888), 7. See also Isaiah Gafni, \textit{Ha-Yaḥasim ben Yehudim we-Shomronim bi-Tequfat ah-Mishnah we-ha-Talmud} (M.A. Thesis, Hebrew University 1969), 69-95 [Heb.]; recently, Andreas Lehnardt, “The Samaritans (Kutim) in the Talmud Yerushalmi: Constructs of “Rabbinic Mind” or Reflections of Social Reality?” in Schäfer, \textit{Talmud Yerushalmi III}, 139-60, at 149.
squeezed out of view by an inherited regime of classification similar to that which has shaped the contextual architecture within which scholars have understood New Testament and early Christian material. The preoccupation with a New Testament-like image of Samaritans as anti-Jews within Jewish Studies is aided and abetted by heavy reliance on Josephus. Reading Josephus as a source of data, Anglophone scholars have often reconstructed a Second Temple period during which Samaritans separated, ethnically and religiously, from Judaeans. Thus, the Samaritans in rabbinic texts end up assumed to be a leftover from this earlier phase of the development of Judaism, already one step removed from the main stream of developing rabbinic tradition.

Even aside from the theological entanglements of this above process, the strangeness in sifting rabbinic taxonomies for their most Christian-like groups appears more clearly when the role of *minim* in this transformation is scrutinized. Since frequently interpreted by scholars as Christians, at least as early as in the formative

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29 There are some exceptions: Salo Baron, for instance, consistently integrated rabbinic material as evidence for social history and frequently draws on Israeli scholarship; see *Social and Religious History of the Jews: Volume II, Christian Era: The First Five Centuries*, 2nd edition (New York: Columbia University Press 1952 [1937]), 2:339 n.33, in which he jumps smoothly from Samaritan liturgy to the Bavli (*bAZ* 26b-27a) to Israeli scholarship in the course of a single footnote. Nevertheless, Baron too talks habitually in terms of Samaritan “schism” (*Social and Religious History, 2:318*).
monograph by Travers Herford, they often served as a site to thrash out the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Moreover, while recent scholarship has been more skeptical of the identification of minim as Christians, they have still served as a rabbinic “other” par excellence, with shifts in the presentation of minim taken as definitive of larger changes in rabbinic self-identification. The terms “minim” and “minut” appear, however, depending on one’s angle on a couple of debated passages, either thirty-two or thirty-three times in the Mishnah and Tosefta.

This is significantly fewer passages than deal with Samaritans. Gary Porton lists approximately seventy appearances of Samaritans in Mishnah and Tosefta alone—double the appearances of minim. Lehnardt counts sixty-one relevant passages. To this, we can add 9 from Tannaitic midrash.

When we turn to later rabbinic material, including both Talmudim and the later Midrashim (traditionally denoted Midrashei Aggadah), the disproportion becomes even more striking. “Minim” or “minut” appears in approximately 56 and 29

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31 See for a list of his thirty-two passages Joshua Ezra Burns, *The Christian Schism in Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 168 n.33 (Mishnah and Tosefta), 168 n.34 (Midrash Halakhah); for thirty-three, see Grossberg, *Heresy*, 54-55.
33 Lehnardt, “Talmud Yerushalmi,” 142 n.20.
34 *Mekhilta de Rabbi Yishmael, Nezikin* 12; *Midrash Tannaim Devarim* 11, 32, 33; *Sifre Numbers* 112 (see Burns, *Christian Schism*, 168 n.34: uncensored manuscripts read “kutim” not “minim”); *Sifre Bamidmar Sholeach* 112; *Sifre Devarim Roeh* 56, *Haazeynu* 331.
35 These calculations were made using the texts available via the Bar-Ilan Responsa Project. They are subject to some minor redactional issues, but on this see note below.
passages, respectively, 85 passages in total. The clusters of terms denoting Samaritans (כותי, כותים, כותאי, כותים, very rarely shomrē), in contrast, appear 138 times between the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds (using the editio princeps of the Yerushalmi; 141 including the Vilna text printed in Jerusalem), and 159 times in the (admittedly extensive) midrashei aggadah. The only analogous term for a classified “other” with greater frequency is the important goy.

Occasional scribal discrepancies, as well as differences between manuscripts, do not affect the overall observation: Samaritans feature much more often. The effect of later censorial edits, often appended as a caution, is much less than previous scholarship has sometimes worried. Nor do these totals include the extra-talmudic Massekhet Kutim, a minor tractate probably edited around the same time as Talmud Yerushalmi, which collates traditions about Samaritans. The chance that min might mean “Christian,” in other words, has attracted disproportionate attention – to the neglect of a group, the Samaritans, who serve as a concrete rabbinic problem case.

Recent work on rabbinic Samaritans by Lawrence Schiffman and Moshe Lavee, building on earlier Hebrew scholarship, exemplifies both the relative success of scholarly approaches and their limitations. Correcting the relegation of Samaritans to a pre-rabbinic (and thus pre-Christian) past, and moving away from a view of Samaritans as definitively anti-Jews, Schiffman and Lavee explore the rabbinic

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36 By the early modern period, kutim does sometimes sneak into the print editions of rabbinic texts interchangeably with minim or goyim. A particularly striking example: in several appearances of non-Jewish women, the Vilna-Romm edition of the Bavli replaces goya with kutit, perhaps as a precaution to evade anti-Semitic accusations of lascivious Jewish men: bBek 56b, bBer 20a, bHull 109b, bMeg 25a, bQet 111a. Nevertheless, as I argue elsewhere, kutim and its variants are generally stable across the manuscript and print tradition of the Babylonian Talmud, and the issues of censorship are less pronounced with the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud Yerushalmi.
material which uses Samaritans as a foil for developing self-consciously separation-oriented claims regarding the exclusivity of practical lived Judaism, halakha. Nevertheless, their approach compresses Samaritans into a merely halakhic problem ultimately solved by the Tannaim – and consequently compresses their model of rabbinic culture into a world in which Israel was by default defined by commitment to (rabbinic) halakha.

Schiffman identified that at least until the time of the later Tannaim, those sages whose sayings are collated in the Mishnah (and Tosefta), Samaritans seem to have been included within Israel, albeit with qualifications. Lavee examines in detail the rabbinic commentary on mBer 8:8, which regulates how zimmun, the blessing after a meal, can be said by a Yisrael or a kuti:

There comes wine after the meal – and there is nothing except the cup, Bet Shammai say: Say a blessing over the wine, and after that say a blessing over the meal; Bet Hillel say: Say a blessing over the meal and that say a blessing over the wine. Respond “Amen” after an Israelite

37 For example, Burns sneaks into a footnote that Samaritans occupy an “anomalous space” in the Tannaitic legal imagination, but passes over them largely in silence: Christian Schism, 177 n.64; Mira Wasserman examines Babylonian Talmud Avodah Zara, with specific interest in two stories about boundary formation and Jewish identity that involve kutim explicitly and their inclusion (or otherwise) in the community of Israel. She does not mention the kutim in these sugyot, despite their disruptive affect on the category formation her book explores: Jews, Gentiles, and Other Animals: The Talmud after the Humanities (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).
38 Ophir and Rosen-Zvi (Goy, 185-92) likewise assert that the exclusion of the Samaritans was radical, from Samaritans considered Jews in the Mishnah, to Samaritans marked as “defective Jews” and then gentiles in a binary rabbinic schema of Jewish-gentile by the time of the Amoraim.
says a blessing, and do not respond “Amen” after a Samaritan says a blessing until you have heard the whole blessing.

There is a hierarchy of relative trust involved in this muted acceptance. The Samaritan cannot be trusted to say the whole blessing in a form to which an Israelite could assent before hearing the whole pronouncement. Nevertheless, the idea of regularly sharing meals with a Samaritan in *mBer* 8:8 raised no rabbinic eyebrows. As Sacha Stern and Jordan Rosenblum, amongst others, have pointed out, the regulation of table-fellowship (sometimes called “commensality”) was an important part of tannaitic identity construction.\(^{40}\) This is despite it being the case that, as Rosenblum writes, table-fellowship signified a significant degree of social integration: “The concern here is commensal in nature, and not culinary; that is, with whom you eat, and not what you eat.”\(^{41}\)

By the same approach, Schiffman and Lavee highlighted how attitudes to Samaritan halakhic status change within rabbinic tradition between the earlier Tannaim and the later Amoraim. In *Yerushalmi Avodah Zara* 5:4, 44d, a pivotal decision is ascribed to R. Abbahu. The passage in question reads as follows:


\(^{41}\) Rosenblum, “From Their Bread,” 22.

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R. Abbahu forbade their wine on the testimony of R. Hiyya, R. Assai, and R. Immi who went up King’s Mountain and saw a gentile (goy) who was suspect because of their wine [or with Schiffman: and saw a Samaritan who was suspect regarding their wine, i.e. the wine of non-Jews]. They came and said it before him. He told them, “And not on this reason?” But some say, one Sabbath evening no wine was found in all Samaria. When Sabbath ended, it was found full from what the Aramaeans brought and the Samaritans accepted from them. But some say, when King Diocletian came here he decreed and said, All peoples (ummaya) have to offer libations except the Jews. The Samaritans offered libations and their wine was forbidden. But some say, they have a kind of dove and they offer libations to it.

The Samaritans of Caesarea asked R. Abbahu: Your fathers were providing for themselves from us. Why are you not providing for yourselves from us? He answered them, Your fathers did not corrupt (qilqul) their deeds. You are corrupting (qilqaltem) your deeds. (yAZ 5:4, 44d)

To the R. Abbahu of this tradition, the discovery that Samaritans might be consuming (or selling) wine to non-Jews was sufficient for forbidding that wine for “Israel.” The decision, however, seems to come as somewhat of a surprise, and R. Abbahu is confronted by Samaritans from his base in Caesarea who, in line with earlier traditions and as archaeological evidence suggests, seem to have relatively happily relied on networks of extensive commercial and business interactions with Jews. R. Abbahu answers the Samaritans by blaming them for becoming qilqul (“corrupted”); they did something their fathers did not.43

Moreover, Schiffman and Lavee also notice that a hardened rhetoric of Samaritan exclusion shapes several sugyot in the Babylonian Talmud.44 As Schiffman noticed, the Bavli sometimes excludes Samaritans by attributing Amoraic comments on the

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43 Schiffman points similarly to a moment of Samaritan “corruption” in tDem 5:24 (“Tannaitic Halakhah,” 344).

44 Lavee situates this rhetoric within a larger model of the Talmud as structured by exclusionary binaries: see his recent “Either Jews or Gentiles, Men or Women: The Talmudic Move from Legal to Essentialist Polarization of Identities,” JSQ 25 (2018): 345-67.
group to early Tannaitic sages instead; retrodicting harsh statements against Samaritans into a generation of sages who seem to have considered Samaritan Israelite inclusion a reasonably open question. For example, much of the debate over Samaritan status has hinged on a famous discussion in \textit{bQid} 75a-b and \textit{yGit} 1:4, 43c concerning whether Samaritans are \textit{gere ‘arayot} (“lion proselytes,” in other words, those who proselytized from fear of wild beasts, a reference to the plight of the settlers in 2 Kings 17) or \textit{gere ‘emet} (or \textit{gere tzedeq}, “true” or “righteous proselytes”). This whole exchange, however, is probably an Amoraic creation. Schiffman writes:

> “Amoraic sources [\textit{bQid} 75a-b and \textit{yGit} 1:4]...attribute this dispute the Tannaim and say that R. Ishmael regarded the Samaritans as \textit{gere ‘arayot}, while R. ‘Akiva considered them \textit{gere ‘emet}. As noticed, however, already by Rashi, and as emphasized by Hershkovitz, the Tannaim never explicitly took such positions. Indeed, this dispute is suggested by the Amoraim to explain another dispute and is an Amoraic creation. The term \textit{gere ‘arayot} does appear in a baraita which appears in both Talmudim. It is attributed in B. Yeb. 24b to R. Nehemiah, one of the later disciples of R. ‘Akiva, but it is unattributed in P. Qid. 4:1 (65b).”\textsuperscript{45}

Not only did the Babylonian editors attribute the term “lion proselytes” to an early Tannaitic sage, a disciple of R. Aqiba, but they inserted the terms of debate important for the Babylonian text back into a fictive Tannaitic context. Using this as historical evidence for the Tannaitic period is off the table for Schiffman. Instead, the redaction of \textit{bQid} 75a-b and \textit{yGit} 1:4 illustrates how the Amoraim reshaped memory of the Tannaim to backdate the exclusion of Samaritans using a \textit{baraita}.\textsuperscript{46} Schiffman notices the change from a decision-based exclusion in \textit{yAZ} 5:4, 44d to a default position in the Babylonian Talmud:

\textsuperscript{45} Schiffman, “Tannaitic Halakha,” 328.
\textsuperscript{46} A \textit{baraita} is a tradition attributed to a Tanna but not contained within the Mishnah.
“...we find that there was an amoraic story about a tanna that already called into question the status of the wine of the Samaritans. In later anonymous material the Samaritans already were considered to be practicing idolaters and not part of the Jewish people. In R. Abbahu’s decree it was only their wine; in the later anonymous material, it is they as individuals who are regarded as outside the Jewish people.”

This survey of their arguments demonstrates that Schiffman and Lavee make a persuasive case for a shift in Samaritan halakhic status between earlier and later rabbinic materials. The Mishnah, like earlier Second Temple literature, sometimes represents Samaritans as characteristically distinct from ieudim and Yisrael in ways that resemble the otherness of the goyim. More often, however, they are included within Israelite practices, rituals, and identity. As Ophir and Rosen-Zvi argue, these texts “made the Samaritans into a ‘normal’ halakhic issue by deciding each case based on their specific practices.”

This degree of inclusion, however, is not maintained in later rabbinic material, in which earlier tensions crystallized into legal or conceptual exclusivity. Schiffman argues that we see a transition from Samaritans considered as “semi-Jews” to “non-Jews.” Lavee comes to a similar conclusion but framed in terms of discourse analysis: “the Bavli explains tannaitic views by conflating the assessment of the Samaritans as true converts with the classical tannaitic approach...This construction enables the Talmud to support the polar perception of identity, in which there is only [a] place for Jews or Non-Jews.”

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47 Schiffman, “Amoraic Halakhah,” 385. Although Lavee, in deliberate contrast to Schiffman, emphasizes what he calls a “conceptual cognitivist” approach to Samaritan inclusion, his conclusion is similar and draws on the same set of Tannatic and Amoraic material. According to this later rabbinic conceptual framework, it becomes increasingly the case that “there is no place for quasi-Jewish identities” (Lavee, “Samaritan,” 147).

48 Ophir and Rosen-Zvi, Goy, 191.


This binarizing account of Jewish identity, however, results from an approach focused on features of “Jewishness” narrowly focused on what Hayes neatly summarizes as “interaction that would involve the observant Jew in a violation of the halakha.”\(^\text{51}\) This only gets us so far. Lavee himself states, “rabbinic sources supply us with information about the Halakhic status of the Samaritans, which is only one component in the identity of both groups…it is not justified to see the survey of Halakhic sources as giving the full picture of the separation of both groups.”\(^\text{52}\)

Schiffman and Lavee’s set of sources, as a result, is necessarily selective. They cite around forty passages mentioning Samaritans, at least half of which in passing.\(^\text{53}\) Lavee even argues that “in the latest strata of the Bavli, the status of the Samaritans is based on two foundational stories that constituted the essential identity of the Samaritans as Gentiles.”\(^\text{54}\)

This approach nowhere signals, and in fact inadvertently works to obscure, the fact I observed above; Samaritans appear on more than three hundred separate occasions in classical rabbinic literature. The Samaritans in fact, are one of the most frequent characters in the array of rabbinic “others.”\(^\text{55}\) Amongst that array, the word “kutim” usually denotes something distinct from other classifications of rabbinic others. “Kutim”

\(^\text{51}\) Hayes, “The Others,” 248.
\(^\text{52}\) Lavee, “Samaritan,” 170.
\(^\text{53}\) So too Ophir and Rosen-Zvi, who heavily emphasize tannaitic traditions: Goy, 186-88. The more extensive Talmudic discussion is reduced to a footnote (188 n.38), which simply states that the rule that Samaritans are “like gentiles…becomes a general rule in the Talmuds.”
\(^\text{54}\) Lavee, “From Legal to Essentialist,” 358.
\(^\text{55}\) Sometimes, far from simply failing to grapple with the fact, scholars even state the opposite. For example, Timothy Lim writes that “Rabbinic literature mentions the ‘Cutheans’ several times,” see: “The Emergence of the Samaritan Pentateuch” in Reading the Bible in Ancient Traditions and Modern Editions: Studies in Textual and Reception History in Memory of Peter W. Flint, ed. Andrew Perrin (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 89-104, at 90.
usually refers to something other than *goyim*, despite sporadic rabbinic efforts to classify the former with the latter.\(^{56}\) Most of the time, moreover, Samaritans are not *minim* either, “min” designating an unspecified, but definitely excluded, garden variety of rabbinic other.\(^{57}\) Schiffman and Lavee engage some of these appearances of Samaritans on their own terms, but they overlook many more. Attention to the appearances of Samaritans in rabbinic literature more broadly can lead us to understand rabbinic identity-formation without compressing our approach into a search for Samaritans as excluded from Jewishness.

**Sterile Regulations: Halakhic Accounting for Samaritan Difference**

Recent work indicates the potential of just such an expanded approach. Yair Furstenberg, for example, recently reopened the question of Samaritan inclusion for the Tannaim, arguing that against Second Temple period exclusion the rabbis deployed a form of collective degrees of citizenship modelled on Roman practice.\(^{58}\) Andreas Lehnardt, also, investigated the historical Samaritans behind traditions in Talmud Yerushalmi, concluding that “the assumed change in the rabbinic view of the

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\(^{56}\) bHul 13b (MS Munich 95): טבר כנף אhiên רב המח צד אינד מינים נאמות וה cup הקדמנים דא''ל אלא אינד אך אינד רב מחנה א''ד רב אחא א''ד ר' חייא רב אב ATA' ה'יפה נגות השבטים לא רוק פון אלא תימן. R. Nahman in the name of Rabbah b. Abbuha: There are no minim among the nations. [Editor] But we see that there are! Therefore, say: There are not minim among most nations. Because he [R. Nahman] agrees with what R. Hiyya bar Aba said I the name of R. Yonatan: Goyim outside the land of Israel do not do *avodah zarah*; they only follow in the traditions of their fathers.”

\(^{57}\) Grossberg, *Heresy*, 56. In general, as he notes, *minim* are distinct from Sadducees, Pharisees, Samaritans, Hemerobaptists, etc. even if it is somewhat unclear precisely what defines them apart from their exclusion.

Samaritans in Amoraic times, therefore, may have occurred not only once, but time and time again, i.e. repeatedly. And this may also be the reason why a certain degree of ambiguity towards the status of the Samaritans continued to exist until post-talmudic times.  

Building on this work, I argue that Samaritans retained generative relevance for rabbinic identity even in the Babylonian Talmud, the latest text traditionally classified as “classical rabbinic literature.” Two important characteristics mark representations of Samaritans in this late antique Jewish text. First: the terms of Samaritan dissimilarity and exclusion from “Israel,” particularly the attribution of the relevant traditions to named rabbis, are unstable. It cannot be maintained, therefore, that Samaritans are ejected from Israel after any specific moment. Rather they remain entangled in the debates defining and limiting what Israel became. Second: rather than a passive presence, the Samaritans acted as a site for creative excess in halakhic thinking. In the Bavli, in which representations of Samaritans tend to be “disconnected from actual historical relation with Samaritans,” they represent a powerful resource for the process of remodelling Israel. Thus, I argue we should think about rabbinic and late antique Jewish identity in somewhat different terms, beyond the model of Tannaitic fluidity and Talmudic unification as emphasized by Lavee and Schiffman, and beyond the notion that either Torah or tradition could be taken for granted as part of the Israelite past with which the rabbis attempted to position


60 A similar broadening of vision to include midrash, such as the Samaritans in Genesis Rabbah, would equally demonstrate the importance of Samaritans for troubling rabbinic Israel. It is simply convenient to limit the case to the texts particularly important to scholars who have already discussed this topic.
themselves. Instead, Samaritans remained a not-quite-other-other, whose continued claims – and the memory of those claims – to Israelite heritage retained their potency to confuse, frustrate, and stimulate rabbinic fashioning of Israelite identity.

“Their decree was not accepted”: The Instability of Samaritan Exclusion

By attributing traditions to rabbis, rabbinic texts aim to produce an authoritative interpretive community able to speak (for) Torah. Sometimes, admittedly, the manufacture of these traditions is rather contorted, even problematic. As Michael D. Swartz has demonstrated, the chain of tradition motif had a long Mediterranean history. Furthermore, it sometimes caused more problems than it solved for rabbis. The successions of authoritative figures in Genesis Rabbah and Midrash Tanhuma Buber emphasize priestly lineage, as does the (probably non-rabbinic) Avodah piyyutim, thus raising up a “form of inherited authority” in sharp contrast to the rabbinic attempt in Avot to eliminate priestly traditions of Torah. Nevertheless, the practice of attributing traditions to named rabbis is one of the vital knowledge-ordering techniques of classical rabbinic literature, and reattribution an attempt by

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62 On Talmudic editing, and the question of continuity or contrast with the past, see Moulie Vidas, Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).
63 On rabbinic “authorship,” including attribution, Martin S. Jaffee provides a clear overview: “Rabbinic Authorship as a Collective Enterprise,” in Fonrobert and Jaffee, Talmud and Rabbinic Literature, 17-37.
64 Michael D. Swartz, “Chains of Tradition from Avot to the Avodah Piyutim,” in Dohrmann and Reed, Jews, Christians, and the Roman Empire, 189-208.
later rabbinic editors to stabilize their traditions. As Schiffman puts it: “the use of oral as opposed to written transmission, the attribution of specific statements to particular authorities, and other such techniques are indicative of the conceptual or theological universe of the authors or compilers.”

It is striking, therefore, that Samaritan identity and difference consistently resists stable indexing to place, time, or personage by this mechanic of rabbinic attribution.

This is perhaps clearest in *bHul* 5b-6a. As *bHul* 6a admits:

> The Rabbis had previously proscribed them [the Samaritans] but their decree was not accepted; R. Ammi and R. Assi came now and proscribed them and their decree was accepted.

In other words, a proscription against Samaritans issued by an early generation of sages was to no avail. Rabbinic memory itself seems to have been self-conscious regarding the inclusion or exclusion of the Samaritans within halakha. This is clearest in the section of *bHul* 5b that prefaces the short passage above, which is worth citing in full:

> ונה_enqueue גזרו על קבילה מנייה, ונה_enqueue רבי אמי ורבי אסי גזרו מנייה

> The Rabbis had previously proscribed them [the Samaritans] but their decree was not accepted; R. Ammi and R. Assi came now and proscribed them and their decree was accepted.

### Footnotes


R. Hanan reported in the name of R. Jacob b. Idi, who reported in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi, who reported in the name of Bar Kappara, as follows: R. Gamaliel and his Court took a vote concerning the slaughtering by a Samaritan, and declared it invalid. Thereupon R. Zera suggested to R. Jacob b. Idi: May it not be that my Master heard this ruling only in the case where no Israelite was standing over him? — He retorted: This student is as one who has never studied the law! Where no Israelite was standing over him is it necessary to rule [that it is invalid].

Now the question arises: Did R. Zera accept [the retort] or not? — Come and hear: R. Nahman b. Isaac reported in the name of R. Assi as follows: I saw R. Johanan eating the flesh of an animal slaughtered by a Samaritan. Even R. Assi ate of the flesh of an animal slaughtered by a Samaritan. Now R. Zera was astonished at this. Could it be that they had not heard of this ruling [of the court of R. Gamaliel], but had they heard of it they would have abided by it; or did they know of it but did not accept it? In the end R. Zera came to the conclusion: It is reasonable to suppose that they knew of it but did not accept it; for if you were to say that they had not heard of it, but had they known of it they would have accepted it, it is difficult [to understand] how it should come about that such righteous men should eat something forbidden. If the Holy One, Blessed be He, would not permit the beast of the righteous to sin in error, how much less the righteous themselves!

[6a] Now, if you say that R. Zera did not accept [the retort of R. Jacob b. Idi], then he could have answered his query thus: In the one case there was an Israelite standing over [the Samaritan] but in the other case there was not. You must therefore say that R. Zera accepted [the retort]. It stands proved.

This passage is not about the acceptability of Samaritan hullin. That matter is taken as settled; Samaritan slaughtered meat, contrary to the stance of the Mishnah, is assumed to be unacceptable. Rather, the debate signals that the variety of earlier rabbinic opinions on the Samaritans became troubling. Two elements in particular mark how the comparably relaxed Tannaitic approach to Samaritans caused conceptual problems for the Bavli even as it attributed the exclusion of the group to rabbinic tradition.

67 A somewhat intricate affair, as in the comparable case of the meat of the minim; see Rosenblum, Food and Identity, 155-57.
First, the long list of tradents which opens the sugya suggests gnawing concern for the succession of rabbis who linked the unacceptability of Samaritan hullin with R. Gamaliel. Presumably, at least in part, this is because the Tosefta claims (and the Mishnah allows) that Samaritan hullin is acceptable.\(^68\) There is no Tannaitic tradition of such a ban on Samaritan hullin attributed to R. Gamaliel and his court.\(^69\) Moreover, in some traditions, R. Gamaliel himself, like R. Assi and R. Jonatan in bHul 5b, appears initially moderate in the case of Samaritan produce, accepting in tDem 5:24 that grain and legumes could be considered doubtful rather than definitely untithed.\(^70\)

Second, the rabbinic attempt to conclude discussion of R. Zera only partly masks the undermining of rabbinic consensus. We see in R. Zera’s doubt about R. Assi’s knowledge about the proscription of Samaritan hullin that confidence in the halakhic memory of other rabbis could be shaken. Moreover, rabbinic behavior appears increasingly disunited. R. Assi and R. Jochanan, after all, both eat Samaritan hullin. Finally, this case also undermines the trust of the Bavli’s editors in R. Zera’s own cognitive apprehension and understanding of halakha. They find themselves impelled to intricately reconstruct his thought process, in order to understand a decision that R. Idi thought was obvious. To themselves, and to R. Zera, it was anything but. The

\(^{68}\) tHull 1:1; see mHull 1:1.

\(^{69}\) As noted also by Lavee, “Samaritan,” 162. Lavee leans on Rosenfeld, and argues that the use of this trope for locating a Tannaitic decision signifies a Babylonian origin for the narrative; see Ben-Zion Rosenfeld, “The Changing Significance of the Name ‘Yavne’ in Rabbinic Tradition” in Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple, Mishnah and Talmud Period – Studies in Honor of Shmuel Safrai, ed. Isaiah Gafni, Aharon Oppenheimer, and Menachem Stern (Jerusalem, 1993), 149-165 [Heb].

implication of this web of concern: the effortless way in which R. Idi navigated traditions about Samaritan exclusion, at least for the editors, provided no stability in regulating rabbinic difference. Rather, they perceived a need for a more precise ordering of the traditions involved.

The next section of *bHilul* 5b-6a, set more than a century later in the chronology of the narrative, shows how far traditions about Samaritan exclusion could shift, even when preserving the same outcome:

For what reason did the Rabbis proscribe them? – Because of the following incident. R. Shimon b. Eleazar was sent by R. Meir to fetch some wine from among the Samaritans. He was met by a certain old man who said to him, Put a knife to your throat, if you are a man given to appetite. [Prov. 23:2; see also yAZ 5.4]. Whereupon R. Shimon b. Eleazar returned and reported the matter to R. Meir who thereupon proscribed them. Why? – R. Nahman b. Isaac explained: Because they found a figure of a dove on the top of Mount Gerizim and they worshipped it. R. Meir, therefore, consistent with his principle that the minority must be taken into consideration, proscribed all Samaritans because of this minority, and R. Gamliel and his Court also held this principle.

What is the plain meaning of the above quoted text? [i.e. Prov. 23:2] – It refers to a pupil sitting before his master. For R. Hiyya taught: When you sit to eat with a ruler, consider well the one before you. And put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite. If the pupil knows that the master is capable of answering the question, then he may ask it; otherwise…consider well him that is before you. And put a knife to your throat, if you are a man given to appetite, and leave him.
R. Isaac b. Joseph was sent by R. Abbahu to fetch some wine from among the Samaritans. He was met by a certain old man who said to him: There are none here that observe the Torah. R. Isaac went and reported the matter to R. Abbahu who reported it to R. Ammi and R. Assi; the latter forthwith declared the kutim to be in every respect gentiles (for read גוים גמורים). In what respect? If in respect of their slaughtering and in respect of their wine as idolatrous, had not the Rabbis proscribed them from a former time? – The Rabbis had previously proscribed them but their decree was not accepted; R. Ammi and R. Assi came now and proscribed them and their decree was accepted.71

Here, in an expansion and reorganization of the vigilante investigating of R. Hiyya, R. Assi, and R. Ammi from yAZ 5.4, the Bavli narrates two parallel stories of disciples sent by their masters to buy Samaritan wine.72 Firstly, R. Meir sent R. Shimon b. Eleazar. An old man met him, warning away with the cryptic words also found in the Yerushalmi. R. Meir proscribed their wine when R. Shimon reported this. Why? The Bavli gives a clear answer: due to a report of Samaritan dove-worship on Gerizim. Thus, it selects the idolatry explanation from three possibilities in yAZ 5:4. Diocletian and his Roman imperial attempt to regulate universal piety fades into the background.73 So too does the accusation that the Samaritans were peddling wine that

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71 The Vilna-Romm text has here: עובדי כוכבים גמורים. Other versions, however, including Bomberg’s editio princeps (Venice 1523) and MS Munich 95 read גוים גמורים. The section has, therefore, been subject to a typical censorial insertion for גוים, as in bQidd 75a-75b.

72 For an introduction to the transportation of rabbinic traditions between Palestine and Babylonian, see Ronit Nikolsky and Tal Ilan, “מהתם לחכא, From There to Here (bSanh 5a), Rabbinic Traditions between Palestine and Babylonia: An Introduction” in Rabbinic Traditions between Palestine and Babylonia, ed. Ronit Nikolsky and Tal Ilan (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1-31.

they had bought, untithed, from the Aramaeans. The editors frame the whole narrative as a response to a leading question: “For what reason did the rabbis proscribe them?”

The editorial layer states acceptance of Samaritan proscription as a basic fact: “this time R. Ami and R. Asi proscribed them and it was accepted from them.” Nonetheless despite the rhetorical effects of both leading question and statement of fact, there is no evidence in the Babylonian sugya that a tradition of Samaritan exclusion, like the one clearly narrated in yAZ 5:4, directed rabbinic opinion on the Samaritans in any decisive way. The earlier traditions, while varied, had much more clearly justified the exclusion of the Samaritans by attribution to R. Abbahu. While R. Abbahu does feature in bḤul 5b-6a, along with R. Assi and R. Ammi, just as in the account of yAZ 5:4, the Bavli lacks any account of R. Abbahu’s decision, and also lacks the protest of the Samaritans. Instead, it introduces the notion that for more than a century a (halakhically) correct ruling was ignored (“not received,” even by rabbis. A story of Samaritan exclusion comes coupled with an admission of the failure of rabbinic power. Moreover, even the attribution of the decision to exclude is destabilized—the tradition of Samaritan exclusion assigned to R. Abbuhu in the Yerushalmi is reassigned to R. Assi. R. Abbahu’s declaration of

74 The disappearance of ארמייא from the Babylonian material is perhaps not surprising, since (1) it is rare in the Yerushalmi, although appears in Syriac Christian texts to denote both an ethnos as well as the label “pagan” and (2) generically seems to connote “non-Jew,” which seems served better by the development of the terminology goy. See Alison Salvesen, “Keeping it in the Family? Jacob and his Aramean Heritage according to Jewish and Christian Sources,” in The Exegetical Encounter between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity, ed. Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 181-203, esp. 183-84; Stern, Jewish Identity, 17-18.
yAZ 5:4. In the course of reading back Samaritan exclusion, the rabbis make visible the instability of their own justifications for separation from Samaritans.

This sugya confirms what the first two examples only suggested: that Samaritans continually generated reinterpretation in later rabbinic tradition. It also confirms that the group generated new formulations of the precise nature of their difference. This passage directly challenges Samaritan insider accounts of themselves. Samaritans do not accept the Jewish designation shomronim, which they correctly view as based in the polemic of 2 Kings 17. Rather, they refer to themselves as shamrim, “keepers” or “guardians.” We know that this was known both to some late antique Christians and Jews. The tradition found here snipes at this Samaritan self-designation, when the old man tells R. Isaac b. Joseph that “There are no guardians of Torah here” (לָיָה כָּאן שומרי תּוֹרָה).

Perhaps this tradition preserves, albeit in modulated form, an encounter with Samaritans. Perhaps the linguistic similarity with the Samaritan perception of themselves is simply an attack, and the etymological link a coincidence. In either case, however, the Bavli transmits a direct attack on Samaritan identity not found in earlier iterations of the narrative. Moreover, by denying the Samaritan inhabitants are shomrei torah the text nevertheless admits the Samaritans as potential “guardians of Torah,” since the force of the story hinges on their failure to observe as expected by

75 For example, see Epiphanius (chapter 3) and Amphilochius (ch.2).
R. Isaac b. Joseph. In the logic of the narrative, R. Isaac did not initially know that the settlement had no one Torah-observant to certify the halakhic acceptability of the wine. He had to be thus informed. Admitting at least the possibility of observant Samaritans, however, results in editorial overtime to figure out how to consolidate the classification Samaritans as *goyim gemorim*.

The response of *bHul* 7a confirms the capacity of Samaritans to throw rabbinic ordering of traditions for a loop. In this passage the editors of the Bavli assert, somewhat anxiously, that citation of scholarly opinion be let stand:

"From this is to be learned that whenever a scholar reports a decision [however strange it may sound], he should not be made to move [mezihin] from his tradition. Others say he should not be rejected [maznihin]. And others say: He should not be regarded as arrogant [mazhihin]. Those who say he should not be made to move from his tradition base it on the verse "And the breastplate be not moved [yizzah] from the ephod (Ex. 28:28)." Those who say he should not be rejected base it on the verse: "For the Lord will not reject [yiznah] for ever (Lam 3:31). Ad those who say he should not be regarded as arrogant base it on the following: For we learnt, "When the arrogant increased, disputes increased in Israel." (*mSot* 47a).

Against the instability of rabbinic attribution in the preceding sugyot of *bHul*, sections which represent Samaritans as by default “absolute gentiles,” *goyim gemorim*, the Bavli here finds itself impelled to affirm by three different appeals to authority the importance of rabbinic attribution. An assertion of the inviolability of tradition following on the lengthy, messy debate over Samaritan status reflects, again, that the failure to straightforwardly resolve Samaritan exclusion in particular caused anxiety about rabbinic control of the halakhic bounds of Israelite collective identity.
The unsettled nature of rabbinic control is not remarkable just because it is unsettled. One of the long-running debates in rabbinics is over the pluriformity of rabbinic discourse. Rather, its significance lies in illustrating that in the Babylonian Talmud the question of Samaritan exclusion not only remains disputed but creates new epistemological concerns despite the scholarly position that the specific question of the Samaritans was solved much earlier.

In all three of these Talmudic sections, therefore, major figures of the Tannaitic past, defining limits for “Israel” vis-à-vis the complicated Samaritans, present later sages with a cluster of contrastive limits and debates. Much of the reasoning for those limits is either unresolved or opaque. Moreover, much of the time, the decision of previous generations of sages do not remain authoritative – as the decision of R. Gamliel – or else end up ascribed to others – as in the case of R. Abbahu.

Perhaps the best example of the problem of confused attribution undermining any authoritative ruling on Samaritan status is bQidd 75a-76a. The sugya opens with a tricky question about genealogy, and it proceeds to complicate matters from there.

[75a] It was taught: And thus did R. Eleazar say: A Samaritan may not marry a Samaritan. What is the reason?

No obvious sense emerges from R. Eleazar’s initial statement, grounded in Mishnah Qiddushin 4:3 but explicitly present only in tQid 5:1, except to notice that it

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77 See Hidary, Dispute, 17-31.
78 Schiffman, “Amoraic,” 375-77. This is a partial parallel, also, to yAZ 5:4.
assumes Samaritans ought to answer to rabbinic prescriptions. The editors of the Bavli seem confused as well, assuming the underlying reason for the Tannaitic statement is some unresolved feature of the Samaritan’s classification. The editors then attempt an extensive reconstruction and harmonization of a raft of antithetical rulings. They juxtapose the status of the Samaritan with the relative status of a proselyte on the one hand and an Israelite on the other. R. Eleazar’s position, in line with the preceding sections, becomes a sorting device for traditions about Samaritan proselytism.

The editors dismiss the first two arguments they introduce to explain R. Eleazar’s statement. First, R. Joseph argues that a Samaritan was treated like an ordinary proselyte. His position is discarded more due to problems of delimiting proselytes than anything to do with Samaritans. A second explanation, given by R. Dimi, combines R. Eleazar’s opinion with R. Ishmael’s statement that the Samaritans are not really proselytes and R. Akiva’s statement that *mamzerim*, illegitimate offspring, result from sex between pagans or slaves and Israelite women. If true, this would mean any Samaritan could be a *mamzer*, and thus invalidate their offspring. The rejection of this position takes a little longer, but the editors ultimately demonstrate

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80 Perhaps the answer lies in the status of Samaritans as possible *mamzerim*: if any Samaritan could be a *mamzer* but Samaritans remained, in general, like Israelites, then to permit Samaritan marriages to Samaritans would be to risk creating more *mamzerim*.

81 The confusion is justified, since in *mQidd* 4:1 the Samaritan is not explicitly named in the genealogical classes that returned from Babylon, whereas in R. Eleazer’s statement in *mQidd* 4:3 the Samaritan is listed along with the *shetuki* and *asuti*, who do appear in the earlier list, as doubtful classes. See Christine Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 166-67. Schiffman suggests that a later redactor glossed *mQidd* 4:3 and added the Samaritan (“Tannaitic,” 330).

82 Schiffman, “Amoraic,” 375-78.
that R. Eleazar agrees with neither of the other authorities, and so R. Dimi cannot be correct.

These two neat answers for rabbinic prohibition of Samaritan marriage having failed, the editors, courtesy of a tradition attached to the Palestinian sage Rabin, append three attributions for three different decisions vis-à-vis Samaritan status.\(^8\)

But when Rabin came, he said in the name of R. Hiyya in R. Johanan’s name – others state, in the name of R. Aba b. Zabda in R. Hanina’s name – others state, in the name of R. Jacob b. Idi in R. Joshua b. Levi’s name: There are three opposing views in this matter: R. Ishmael holds: Samaritans are proselytes [through fear] of lions, and the priests who became mixed up in them were unfit priests, as it is said, and they made unto them from among themselves [miqetzotam] priests of the high places, whereon Rabbah b. Bar Hanah commented [in the name of Rabbi Johanan]: from the most unworthy (miqotzim) of the people, and on that account they were disqualified.

This first view argues that Samaritans are lion proselytes. The priests associated with them were unfit and neglected their status. R. Ishmael then claims the interpretive authority of Rabbah b. Bar Hanah in reading miqetzotam in 2 Kings 17:32 (מִקְצוֹתָם) (from קֹצָה, meaning something like “from amongst all of them”) as a reference to qotzim, “thorns”; the worst among the people. Since the priests mingled their lineage with the worst crop, they could not be trusted to have maintained an Israelite genealogy. This is not, however, the only option to explain R. Eleazar’s initial statement, and Rabin recalls another.

\(^8\) As Schiffman notices, all three are early Palestinian sages; it seems the redactors were trying to harmonize three versions of the passage (“Amoraic,” 376).
R. Akiva holds: Samaritans are true proselytes, and the priests who became mixed up with them were fit priests, as it is said: ‘and they made unto them from among themselves priests of the high places,’ which Rabbah b. Bar Hanah [in the name of Rabbi Johanan] interpreted: from the choicest (bekhirim) of the people. Yet why did they interdict them? – Because they subject arusoth to yibum but exempted married women. What was their interpretation? – The wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: she who sat ‘without’ shall not marry a stranger; but she who did not sit ‘without’ may marry a stranger. And R. Akiva follows his view, for he maintained, there is mamzer from those who are subject [only] to negative injunctions.

The second view again appeals to interpretation of scripture. R. Akiva, Rabin reports, understood Rabbah b. Bar Hanah to have interpreted 2 Kings 17:32 differently. The term miqetzotam refers, he argues, to the chosen among the people (הבחירים). Thus, the attempt to portray Samaritans as insincere proselytes fails. If they chose the best amongst themselves to lead, those priests ought to understand proper purity practices. Nevertheless, this leaves the statement on Samaritan intermarriage unexplained. R. Akiva’s stance on Samaritans instead engages a supposed Samaritan reading of Deut. 25:5 on Levirate marriage. According to their reading, an engaged woman whose fiancé dies is expected to marry her dead fiancé’s

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84 Interestingly, this mirrors the distinction between the interpretive approaches attached to R. Ishmael and R. Akiva, as Azzan Yadin-Israel has argued forcefully. In this passage, the approach attributed to R. Ishmael works from within the scriptural text, with a pun interpretation related to the binyan. The approach of R. Akiva departs from the text, instead reasoning that the choices made by a given group would reflect good social sense. See Yadin-Israel’s two monographs: Scripture as Logos: Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) and Scripture and Tradition: Rabbi Akiva and the Triumph of Midrash (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); also a summarized version “Concepts of Scripture in the Schools of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael,” in Jewish Concepts of Scripture: A Comparative Introduction (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 47-64.
brother. He rejects their reading, and notices that such a practice would produce *mamzerim*.

Yet a third view is presented by Rabin, this time simultaneously more obscure in origins and more authoritative for the editors.

Some state, because they are not thoroughly versed in the [minute] details of precepts. Who is meant by ‘some state?’ – said R. Idi b. Abin: It is R. Eliezer. For it was taught: the unleavened bread of a Samaritan is permitted, and one fulfils his obligation therewith on Passover; but R. Eliezer forbids it, because they are not thoroughly versed in the [minute] details of precepts. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: Every precept which Samaritans have adopted, they observe it with minute care, [even] more than the Israelites. But here [in respect to marriage], wherein are they not well-versed? – Because they are not well-versed in the law of betrothal and divorce.

Here, the editors themselves summarize the consequences of this bundle of Tannaitic traditions. First, a floating statement that Samaritans are not well-versed in halakhic detail work is attributed to a named authority, R. Eliezer, to coincide with his own position on Samaritan unleavened bread at Passover. Second, the editors reinterpret R. Simeon b. Gamaliel’s *baraita* regarding Samaritan halakhic expertise. The statement “every precept which Samaritans have adopted” implies that there are numerous precepts Samaritans have not adopted, into which category must fall the law of marriage and divorce.

In the process, the editors agree with the general principle of R. Shimon ben Gamaliel’s *baraita*. Moreover, in contrast to the appearance of the *baraita* in y*Pes* 1:1 (תני רשב"ג: אמר רבי יוסי_LINES_17_, the Bavli passage...
retains the Toseftan version (רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: כל מצוה שהחזיקו בה כותים, הרמה). The version from the Tosefta emphasizes intentional rather than inadvertent Samaritan observance, using נוהגין instead of החזיק. It also disambiguates the degree of Samaritan commitment, intensifying their observance of the mitzvot in question (using הרבה). On the one hand, there is no love lost between the Bavli and the Samaritans. Whatever Samaritan expertise, the argument goes, it does not include this specific matter. On the other hand, even in the process of harmonizing traditions to undermine Samaritan genealogy the Bavli permits, according to its version of the baraita, that Samaritans really can be halakhic experts, and that their Jewishness is not a relevant matter for doubt. Conceding that expertise is the cost of its own dismissal of Samaritans, and harmonization of contested attribution.

A final attempt to foreclose matters supports these Palestinian traditions with a claim to Babylonian knowledge of real incest on the part of Samaritans, using the narrative form of ma’asim (from מעשה, "it actually happened") and traditions of the Babylonian sages R. Nahman and Raba.

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86 See also Schiffman, who differs from my angle in seeing the lack of doubt as evidence that this passage accurately reflects early Tannaitic views (“Tannaitic,” 334).
87 A narrative form native to Tannaitic traditions; see Moshe Simon-Shoshan, *Stories of the Law: Narrative Discourse and the Construction of Authority in the Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 45-49. Raba is, obviously, not a Tanna – the form, however, becomes important for rabbinic literature more generally.
R. Nahman said in Rabbah b. Abbuha’s name: A mamzer by a sister and a mamzer by a brother’s wife became mixed up among them [the Samaritans]. What does he inform us? – That there is mamzer from those who are liable to kareth. Then let one [only] be taught? – the actual event happened thus. Raba said: A [heathen] slave and a bondmaid were mixed up in them. Now on whose account is the interdict? On account of the bondmaid! Then let one [only] be taught! – The actual event happened thus.

More than anything else, the complications establishing transmission and tradition here on display draw attention to an excess in the argument over Samaritan status. Even when Samaritans are assumed excluded by default, the chain of rabbis attributed with that decision is unclear. Even when rabbinic traditions are assumed to agree vis-à-vis Samaritan status, the process of sorting traditions makes visible the variety of variant stances on Samaritan status. Even in the closing section of *bQidd* 75b-76a, which attempts straightforwardly to assert, in the mouth of Raba, a decision that judges Samaritans as subject to genealogical mixture, the rhetoric of closure can stand only on an otherwise unattested *baraita* that repeatedly has to proclaim its link to real events. As elsewhere, the Bavli fails to close the Samaritan question; here, discussion of the group creates problems of rabbinic disagreement, as well as highlights the failure of rabbis to make binding and effective halakhic judgements.

As these cases demonstrate, the rabbinic articulation of Samaritan difference in the Bavli, including justifications of that difference, is fraught. The text deploys an array of knowledge-ordering techniques to maintain stable Samaritan exclusion, but in the process unveils the artificiality of that exclusion. The Samaritans appear, in our examples, as an active part of the complex processes of rabbinic reinvention that generated a rabbinicized “Israel” out of common Israelite past, impressing the rabbis
as something with an active effect, and frustrating them with the lack of clarity received from the generations of sages before them.\footnote{Genealogy was a tricky business. As Hayes indicates, earlier authorities tended to “trend towards leniency” with respect to proselytes and offspring vis-à-vis personal status and intermarriage (\textit{Gentile Impurities}, 184-91).}

Consequently, it seems misplaced to understand rabbinic tradition vis-à-vis Samaritans as if limited to exclusion. Rabbinics scholarship has, so far, maintained two positions somewhat in tension with one another. On the one hand, scholars agree that talk of “schism” between Jews and Samaritans is oversimplified. On the other, a shorthand of “schism” finds its way, consistently, to characterize the \textit{type} of relationship between an identity, “Jewish,” and the identity, “Samaritan” – implying that whilst a historical schism is impossible to extract from the sources, the idea of schism is nevertheless fundamental to explain why Jews and Samaritans differ. Maintaining both horns of this dilemma is unnecessary. Rabbinic sources may talk in terms of Samaritan corruption, sometimes; they may talk in terms of Samaritans as \textit{like goyim}, sometimes. But the ideology of schism from Samaritans is as absent in classical rabbinic literature as the reasons to view schism as an accurate historiographical narrative of some social history between Jewish and Samaritan groups. If there had ever been a clear dividing line between Samaritans and Israel, the rabbis of Babylonia forgot it.
Yisrael, Kutim, Goyim: Samaritans as a Site for Multiplying Halakhic Meaning

Instead, even though the Babylonian Talmud was probably compiled in an environment without living Samaritan communities, its Samaritans function as a foil for rabbinic cleverness. They do so, moreover, as a categorical limit-case with concrete, non-generic characteristics. My four examples in this section each illustrate one of those non-generic features: *bMen* 42a, *bAZ* 21b-22a, *bNid* 33b, and *bMQ* 12a-b.

Turning first to *bMen* 42a, Samaritan circumcision suddenly appears as a possible counterexample to a discussion of R. Hisda’s claim that Rab contradicted himself. The tradition states that Rab said: “when making the *tzizith* no blessing is to be pronounced.” To this R. Hisda appends a contradiction, based on his observation that the *tzizith* must be made by children of Israel. The editors bring a third rabbi, R. Joseph, to explain: “R Hisda is of the opinion that a precept which may be performed by a gentile does not require a blessing when performed by an Israelite, but a precept which may not be performed by a gentile requires a blessing when performed by an Israelite.” The reliability of this claim as a “general principle” is tested with a variety of cases: circumcision, the *sukkah*, and the *tefillin*. In the case of circumcision, Samaritans suddenly appear on the scene in a tannaitic tradition:

עכללא הוה? והרי מילה דכשירה בעובד כוכבים, דתניא: עיר שאיננה ברוחם ישראל יוש בה רופא ארמני ונופא כות'; ימליל אפרים ומליל כות'; דיבר רבי יהודה; דיבר יהודה; אוסר: וכתי ולא ארמני, ומשארא דורי כות'; ואוסר למע; ברוך: ברוך אתא.

89 A concern over the manufacture of the fringes placed, according to *Num* 15:37-40, on the corners of garments.
“Is this a general principle? But take the case of circumcision. This is permitted to be performed by a gentile (for read גוי), for it has been taught (דרהא): In a town where there is no Israelite physician but there is a Samaritan physician as well as a gentile one, circumcision should be performed by the gentile but not by the Samaritan. This is the opinion of R. Meir. But R. Judah said, It should be performed by the Samaritan but not by the gentile. And yet when performed on an Israelite a blessing must be pronounced, for a Master has said, He that performs the circumcision must say, ‘Blessed...who has sanctified us by your commandments, and has given us command concerning the circumcision!’

This question [by R. Hisda, about the blessing] concerns Rab, does it not? Surely Rab declares it invalid! For it has been stated: Whence do we know that circumcision performed by a gentile is invalid. Daru b. Papa said in the name of Rab, From the verse, And as for you, you shall keep my covenant. R. Yohanan said, From the words, must needs be circumcised, that is, he who is circumcised shall circumcise.

The contradiction (or not) of Rab, for my purposes, is not the main point, so much as the emergent tension over Samaritan circumcision. Samaritans are categorically not Jewish, according to the basic framing of this discussion – nor, however, are they gentiles. The stipulation that gentiles could circumcise but Samaritans should not shows an active exclusion of Samaritans to a remarkable degree, in stark contrast to the relative toleration Schiffman and Lavee noticed in an earlier period, and which R. Judah shows in permitting Samaritans to circumcise Israelites as long as they say a specific blessing. Nevertheless, the similarity of Samaritan practice to rabbinic halakhah encourages a new argument to form around them that modifies the older tradition. It also introduces an element of ritual phrasing not present in earlier traditions in order to buttress an argument in favour of Samaritan circumcisers against R. Meir. As presumably the editors knew, from

90 As in the case of bQid 75a-75b and bHul 5b-6a, Vilna-Romm uses a censored text. The editio princeps and MSS witnesses read וְזֹּ֣אֲכִירוּ.
elsewhere Samaritans could not be trusted to circumcise without blessing in the name of Gerizim.\textsuperscript{91}

The parallel discussion in \textit{bAZ} 26b-27a further demonstrates that Samaritan-specific circumcision generated continued categorial creativity precisely because earlier rabbinic texts are silent on the matter of Samaritan circumcision, including in the Mishnah. The Bavli bases its interventions, on Samaritan circumcision, on repeated baraita. Thus, in these passages we see a taxonomy of acceptable circumcizers, including Samaritan circumcision, becoming formalized as conceptual problem in media res, at the time of the editing of the Bavli.

The Samaritan also retains a non-generic characteristic in a second taxonomy constructed in \textit{bMen} 42a. The arguments presented by Daru b. Papa and R. Yohanan forbid circumcision by a gentile, but both would permit circumcision by a Samaritan. To avoid this, the editors of the Bavli present later traditions before the opinions given by these two authorities, so that the Samaritan is already excluded from a discussion that would otherwise endorse their ability to circumcise. Then, since Rab’s words have already been reduced to a dyad, the editors heavily limit Rab’s meaning; only a goy or a (non-Samaritan) Israelite can circumcise. This editorial move does seek to exclude Samaritans. But the mechanics of the exclusion are revealing. Samaritans function as a foil to make a more stringent case, but in the process, the Samaritan must necessarily become non-gentile, and thus possibly Israelite. While categorized as un-Israelite, this argument depends on the Samaritan not counting as a gentile.

\textsuperscript{91} See \textit{bAZ} 27a.
The logic of this section preserves a clearer differentiation between gentile and Samaritan than between Samaritan and Israelite. The proximate other becomes those who circumcise themselves. The absolute other becomes the gentiles. Even though the passage is explicitly interested in the status of the gentile, the Samaritan’s circumcision retains the power to cause category trouble. Overall, the Samaritans function in a hierarchy of Israelite-Samaritan-Gentile, but also in a taxonomy according to which Israelite and (Samaritan) Israelite stand against uncircumcised gentiles. Samaritan non-gentile status and their practice of circumcision that provides the opportunity to exclude the goy.

In my second example, a Samaritan acts as a creative limit case on rabbinic claims to definitive Israelite identity because of an expectation that they will observe the law and maintain their interpretation over against a rabbinic teacher (bAZ 21b-22a). Here, the Bavli comments directly on conditions for renting a bath-house:

“$It$ has been taught: Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel said: One should not let his bath-house to a gentile (for read לגוי, for it is called the owner’s name, and the gentile will work in it on Sabbath and festivals. It would seem, then, that to a Samaritan it may be let? But might not a Samaritan do work in it on the Intermediate Days? – We, too, are permitted to do [such] work on the Intermediate Days. [Again] it would seem that in the case of a field, letting to a heathen is permitted! What is the reason? – Because people will say that he is
merely a metayer working for his tenancy. Why then not apply the same principle to a bath-house? – people do not generally let a bath-house on terms of metayage.

It has been taught: R. Simeon b. Eleazar says: One should not let one’s field to a Samaritan, for it is called by the owner’s name and that Samaritan will do work in it on the Intermediate Days. So that to a gentile such letting is permitted? Because it will be said that he is a metayer working for his own tenancy. If so, why should it not be said in the case of a Samaritan, too, that he is a metayer working for his own tenancy.

R. Simeon b. Eleazar has not in mind the metayage principle at all; but the reason why he permits it in the case of a gentile is because if he is told [to abstain from work on forbidden days] he obeys. But a Samaritan too, if told, would surely obey! – A Samaritan would not obey; he would say ‘I am more learned than you!’ (אנא גמירנא טפי מינך) If that is so, why then mention the objection of the field being called by the owner’s name; he could have given the reason of not placing a stumbling block before the blind? – He mentions that reason as an additional one, as if to say: There is the one reason of [not placing a stumbling block] before the blind, and there is also the objection of its being called by his name.92

Here, the creative halakhic possibility of the “kutim” lies in specific Samaritan claims to intentional halakhic observance in line with legal expertise. On the one hand, in this passage, the Samaritans attract criticism. The Samaritan can be distinguished from an idolater in their stubborn refusal to bow to rabbinic authority regarding the correct manner of Torah observance. On the other hand, while categorically separate from both Jews and gentiles, their case provides a unique difficulty because their observance, by rabbinic opinion, is directly in competition with those of rabbis. The practices of gentiles are not. The editors imagine a Samaritan response to their own arguments that claims greater learning than the rabbi using the same Aramaic participle, גميزנא, that rabbis use to describe their own pedagogy. The same verb occurs, for example, in bShab 63a, where Rab Kahana says that at eighteen “the whole Talmud was well known to him” (והוה גميزנא ליה לכוליה).

92 See notes above for correction from MSS tradition and editio princeps.
As Marc Hirshman outlines, this reflects one of two poles of rabbinic pedagogy: gemara (“tradition”) then complemented, at least in an ideal pedagogical setting, by severa (“reasoning”). Therefore, they serve as a limit case for rabbinic disputation, imagined to challenge rabbinic decisions in terminology belonging to rabbinic pedagogy.

This example again demonstrates how Samaritans function in the Talmud to expand arguments in ways they did not serve in earlier rabbinic literature. Samaritans are never imagined talking directly to rabbis in the Mishnah or the Tosefta. They are a relatively passive piece in the project of rabbinic taxonomic difference. In contrast, however – as also happens in midrashic literature – Samaritans speak back to rabbis, both to challenge and in being challenged, about explicitly understanding what it means to act in accordance with a proper interpretation of Torah.

This sets them apart, categorically, from the goy, especially if, as Ophir and Rosen-Zvi argue, “the goy is not simply an object of the law but its non-subject, the one who is not subjected, precisely because he is not elected and cannot be commanded. As such, the goy demarcates the realm of the law’s applicability from the outside…inasmuch as the goy is dismissed as a speaking subject, his exclusion also demarcates the realm of halakhic discourse.” In contrast, Samaritans speak

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95 Another example of rabbinic alertness to Samaritan argument occurs in yAZ 96 Ophir and Rosen-Zvi, *Goy*, 243-44.
while identifiably Samaritan in the Talmud. The Samaritan is both an object and subject with respect to the law’s applicability.

My third example, a slightly longer dialogue, entertains the possibility that the Samaritan is commanded by the law, exploring legal observance in a case including a Samaritan haver (bNid 33b). The Samaritan haver is a recurring Babylonian rabbinic character; ordinarily a haver is a student of a sage, and therefore an Israelite who can be trusted with respect to purity norms. The passage therefore includes a clash between incongruous rabbinic purity categories:

On account of their [uncleanness]. However, no obligation is incurred for entrance into the temple etc. (mNid 4:1) R. Papa (BA5) once visited Tuak [not far from Sura] and said: “If there lives a scholar in this place I will go and pay him my respects.” “A scholar lives here,” said an old woman to him, “And his name is R. Shmuel and he learns Tannaitic traditions. May it be God’s will that you be like him.”

“Since,” he thought, “She blesses me by him I can gather that he is a God-fearing man.” He thereupon visited him when the latter threw a bull at him, and he also threw at him an incongruity between Tannaitic teachings: “We have learned, On account of their [uncleanness]. However, no obligation is incurred for entrance into the temple nor is terumah burned on their account since their uncleanness is only of a doubtful nature, from which it is evidence that terumah is not burnt in a case of doubt. But have we not learned to the contrary: “In six doubtful

97 Also bBer 47b; bGit 10a. See Lavee, “Samaritan,” 150-51.
cases of uncleanness is terumah burned; [and one is] the doubtful uncleanness of the clothes of an ‘am ha-aretz?”

This argument is dense, so it is worth unpacking the logic a little. On visiting his fellow sage R. Shmuel, R. Papa finds himself confronted with a halakhic problem case. On the one hand, R. Shmuel remarks, terumah, the offering separated for priestly consumption according to Deuteronomy 18:4 and burned if it becomes impure, is not burned because of contact with someone whose state of ritual purity might be doubted. For this, R. Shmuel relies on Mishnah Niddah 4:1-2, a section of the Mishnaic tractate focused specifically on Samaritans. On the other hand, a baraita contradicts the Mishnah: there are six cases in which terumah is burned, and one of these is the doubtful case of the clothing of an ‘am ha-aretz; the clothing of a non-rabbinic Israelite whose halakhic stringency cannot be trusted. In the first case, terumah is not burned despite doubt. In the second, terumah is burnt in six cases of doubt.

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100 For an overview of the group see Stern, Jewish Identity, 114-126. On the transformation of the reference ‘am ha-aretz from biblical to Mishnaic meaning, see Rocco Bernasconi, “Meanings, Function, and Linguistic Usages of the Term ‘am ha-aretz in the Mishnah,” REJ 170:3-4 (2011): 399-428. The standard position in the field tended to view the Palestinian Talmud as positive towards the class, and the Babylonian sages as negative; on this, however, see recently Pomeranz, “Babylonian Sages,” 140-43.
This case shapes its debate around the assumption, therefore, that the Samaritan’s status can be blurred together with that of the ‘am ha-aretz. Perhaps reassured by the old woman’s recommendation, and her acknowledgement that she trusts his fellow teacher’s opinion, R. Papa responds quickly and perhaps incautiously to resolve the tension between the Israelite who cannot be trusted (the ‘am ha-aretz introduced in the baraita) and the Samaritan (from the Mishnah). In response to R. Shmuel’s challenge, which categorizes the clothes of the Samaritan as like the clothes of an ‘am ha-aretz, R. Papa introduces an exception case. He classifies the Samaritan as someone who can be trusted:

אמר רב פפא: יהא רעוא דלתאכ יל’ai תוֹרא לשלמא, הכא במאי עסקינן בכותי חבר.

“May it be God’s will,” cried R. Papa, that this bull be eaten in peace. Here we are dealing with the case of a Samaritan who was a haver.” “But would you presume that a Samaritan who is a haver had intercourse with a menstruant?”

The Samaritan in question is not at risk of their clothes contracting impurity, since they are a haver, trusted according to their (learned) halakhic expertise. Notably, R. Papa accepts the basic premise of tension between the Tannaitic traditions under issue, and thus tacitly confirms the equation by R. Shmuel of Samaritans with ‘am ha-aretz. Since for the Bavli a haver is usually an Israelite, this passage, as in my first two examples, categorizes the Samaritans as an Israel-like, if not quite Israelite, 101

With ‘am ha-aretz as a group whose behavior tended to be contrasted with the haver; Bernasconi, “Meanings, Function, and Linguistic Usages,” 408; Schiffman, “Tannaitic Halakhah,” 337-45; Stern, Jewish Identity, 114. Stern explicitly compares the ‘am ha-aretz to Samaritans, minim, meshummadin, and gerim, and understands them to be “emphatically Israel but simultaneously akin to the non-Jews,” (Jewish Identity, 126).
group. R. Papa must make the Samaritan Israel-like in order to call a Samaritan a *haver*, since nowhere in rabbinic literature is a gentile trusted in halakhic norms.

Had this response been accepted, presumably they could have gone back to eating beef—the main priority of R. Papa. But R. Shmuel stings him by reminding him of the Mishnaic context of the Tannaitic premise at stake, in tension with the categorization of the Samaritan made by R. Papa. If a Samaritan is can be trusted in halakhic norms, how can it be the case that, as *Mishnah Niddah* 4:2 states, Samaritans are always suspect because Samaritan women are considered in a continuous state of *niddah* ("menstrual impurity")? R. Papa’s desire for meeting a teacher who knows tannaitic teachings comes back to bite him; R. Shmuel embarrasses him with a tannaitic riposte to his—inadequate—answer to the challenge.

But the Bavli does not stop here with a straightforward refutation of R. Papa’s categorization of the Samaritan as *haver*. Rather, it uses the tension to explore further the possibility – a possibility which includes treating the Samaritan as Israel-like.

R. Papa meets R. Shimi b. Ashi, who presents a third Tannaitic counter-case as a rebuke to R. Papa’s failed answer.

> שבקיה, ואתא לקמיה דרב שימי בר אשי. אמר ליה: מאי טעמא לא משנית ליה; בכותי שבלללו, רזר עלי בנני תבר, ואולו בדר שבה וצורה. איה מעשה עתה עשה - ספקל על בברור ספקל על בברור, ואם הארי - אא שבלללו, איא מעשה בברור - שמיעת חבירו רוח ספקל על בברור, הוא ספקל ספקל, והון ספקל ספקל, און ספקל ספקל לא שבלללו חבירו.

When he left him and came to R. Shimi b. Ashi the latter said to him: “Why did you not answer him with the case of a Samaritan who, having

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103 As Kaye writes: “Sometimes the most interesting responses to failure are displayed in the editorial choices that depict the failure” (“Scholastic Failure,” 309). Kaye refers specifically to editors changing the subject; in this case, R. Papa gets a lesson in effective intellectual performance.
performed ritual immersion, came up and trod upon the clothes of a haver and the clothes of this haver then came in contact with terumah, so that if [the terumah were to be treated as unclean] on account of the uncleanness of the 'am ha-aretz [it could be objected]: He has surely performed ritual immersion. And if the uncleanness were to be attributed to his likely intercourse with a menstruant [it could be objected]: It is doubtful whether he had his intercourse recently or some time ago. And even if you were to find some ground for assuming that his intercourse took place recently, there is still doubt as to whether she had completed her period of cleanness for yellow blood or not. This then is a case of double doubt, and no terumah may be burned on account of a doubly doubtful uncleanness…

R. Shimi is unimpressed with the discussion as he understands it. Instead, he incorporates both of the binary classifications involved in R. Papa and R. Shmuel’s original discussion (Samaritan/‘am ha-aretz vs. haver/‘am ha-aretz) into a single taxonomy. R. Shmuel, by maintaining these binaries, argued that a contradiction emerged: R. Papa would treat a Samaritan like a haver not an ‘am ha-aretz, but from the Mishnah it should be clear that a Samaritan cannot be a haver. R. Shimi simply argues that regardless of the classification of the Samaritan as haver, terumah is not burned. The Samaritan could have been expected to have performed ritual immersion even if he was not a haver. In other words, R. Shimi takes advantage of the ambivalence of the Tannaitic traditions on Samaritans. Even if a Samaritan could not be a haver, in line with a hostile reading of Mishnah Niddah 4:2, a Samaritan can be assumed to be both susceptible to ritual impurity and halakhically stringent in the case of ritual immersion. In the background is presumably the Tannaitic statement (tMiq
6:1, ed. Zuckermandel) that “Samaritan territory is clean; its miqvaot and its dwellings and its paths are clean” (ארץ הכותים טהורה מקוותיה ומדוריה ושביליה טהורות). This would refute even the basis for the dilemma presented to R. Papa. But R. Shimi then even provides an escape route for the logical trap R. Papa got himself into. First, he again accepts R. Shmuel’s problem case. He accepts that Samaritans are suspected of intercourse with menstruants, but then rejects the suspicion. Even in the case in which the Samaritan is suspected of recent intercourse, it is unclear when that happened—and male Samaritans themselves are not suspect of niddah. Who is sure when someone else had sex? Even if there were a ground to think the intercourse was recent, it could still be the case that the woman reckoned her period of yellow blood correctly. First by appeal to lack of knowledge about sexual activity, and second by appeal to the Samaritan woman’s medicalized perception of her own body, R. Shimi presents two cases of reasonable doubt; a doubt of a doubt. And if terumah is not burnt in a doubtful case, how much more so is it not burnt for double doubt?

R. Papa gets the message. The complexity of Samaritan purity, including the fuzzy classificatory line that divides the Samaritan from the ‘am ha-aretz and both from the haver, is an opportunity for rabbinic cleverness. Complexity provides an opportunity to deploy classification of Samaritans flexibly, rather than to give quick answers or straightforward appeals to tannaitic tradition. R. Papa lost face when he

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was caught by surprise by the challenge of R. Shmuel, facing what Lynn Kaye calls the “social consequences of academic defeat.”

R. Shimi, in contrast, demonstrates good rabbinic performance for him, improvising a series of rabbinic refutations based in Tannaitic traditions about Samaritan halakhic observance to defend even R. Papa’s improvised reason for ending the conversation quickly. The learning process is completed when R. Papa responds appropriately to R. Shimi’s testing final question:

והי פוק הלל משה בנדרי עםAaron, אמר מר: בנדרי עםAaron מדורס לפוריות! אמר לה: בכותי ע룸

“But why should not the uncleanness of the terumah be established on account of its contact with the clothes of an ‘am ha-aretz, a Master having stated: The clothes of an ‘am ha-aretz are like midras uncleanness to Pharisees?” The other replied: “This is a case of a naked (also a pun: “wise”) Samaritan.”

Here R. Shimi signals a weakness in his own counter-case. He had acknowledged that a Samaritan was like an ‘am ha-aretz to evade R. Shmuel’s first classificatory challenge. But, from Tannaitic tradition, this means another passage can be introduced. If a Samaritan is like an ‘am ha-aretz, this means terumah could become unclean on the basis of contact with wet clothes. R. Papa, however, proves he has learned his lesson, and finds the loophole. If the Samaritan was naked, then his clothes could not have contracted impurity. Thus, even given the new tannaitic

tradition introduced, and even if a Samaritan is an ‘am ha-aretz, R. Papa proves himself, this time, able to resolve the difficulty presented by R. Shmuel.107

Despite being about eating beef more so than about Samaritans, this passage confirms that as in bMen 42a and bAZ 21b-22a, Samaritan difference remained a site for debate because of the specificity with which rabbis continued to associate them with claims to legal observance. Moreover, those claims were often admitted as valid by rabbinic tradition. On the one hand, the categorization of a Samaritan as an ‘am ha-aretz was common enough for R. Papa to refer to it as his immediate solution to a logical tangle. On the other hand, the precise significance of representing a Samaritan as unobservant remained under construction. The rabbinic exchange depended on categorizing and recategorizing the Samaritan as haver, granting Samaritans the sort of potential halakhic excellence permitted otherwise only to those definitively included within Israel and positioning then genealogically vis-à-vis the (Israelite) ‘am ha-aretz.

Perhaps even more striking, despite the Bavli considering Samaritans as excluded by default from “Israel” elsewhere, the Bavli plays with the possibility of Samaritan halakhic excellence.108 This passage is funny.109 The storyline is silly. It contains

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107 R. Papa redeeming his own interpretive status; see on editorial opportunities Kaye, “Scholastic Failure,” 331.
108 For an in-depth study of rabbinic literary play, see Holger M. Zellentin, Rabbinic Parodies of Jewish and Christian Literature (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).
109 Daniel Boyarin argues that the writers of the Bavli were aware of Menippean satire and wrote a seriocomic work as a result; see Socrates and the Fat Rabbis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). This thesis has been sharply challenged by Adam Becker in his review: “Positing a ‘Cultural Relationship’ between Plato and the Babylonian Talmud,” JQR 101:2 (2011): 255-69. Even without satirical genre, however, puns and flying cows tap into a pervasive rabbinic humor sometimes disorienting at first contact; see David Stern and Mark Mirsky (eds.), Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 350.
bizarre visuals: R. Shmuel literally tosses a bull onto R. Papa (רמא לו הורא), in just the same way as he throws a Tannaitic incongruity onto him (רמא לו מתני' אהדדי).

Then, we are to picture the resolution of the difficulty in the imagined “nakedness” (or wisdom, or both) of a Samaritan. Samaritan exclusion, and the question of Samaritan observance, is harmless, defused, and funny even though unsettled. Here we may see the effect of Babylonian distance from Samaritan populations in Palestine; it may be precisely this distance that permits the appropriation of the Samaritan character without anxiety.110

My fourth and final example explicitly states a characteristic of Samaritans only tacit in the above discussions. For rabbis, a systematic halakhic account of the Samaritans remains elusive. When discussing at length the halakhic regulations concerning the festival week, the editors in bMQ 12a-b justify practices that, apparently, have no discernable basis in anything other than habit or tradition. Of all the possible analogies for dissonance, the sugya recalls an otherwise unattested baraita to do with Samaritans:

R. Hama b. Guria citing Rab said: The halakhoth appertaining to the festival [week] are like the halakhoth regulating the dealings with

[12b]

يش מון פטור אבל אפור, ויש מון מותר לכתולות

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Samaritans. What is the legal import [of this dictum]? – Said R. Daniel son of R. Ketina, It is to say that they are ‘sterile’ (עקורות) [regulations] and communicate nothing to each other, as [for instance] Samuel said that they [may] coat a jug with pitch but may not coat a cask, while R. Dimi of Nehardea said that they [may] coat a cask with pitch but they may not coat a jug; one master being solicitous to avoid exertion [during the festival week]. Said Abaye, We have it has tradition that the halakhoth appertaining to the festival [week] are like the halakhoth appertaining to the Sabbath:

[12b] some acts involve no penalty, though forbidden, while other acts are allowed ab initio.

The Samaritans appear here in the natural course of a larger argument. Not only is the halakha unsettled regarding the Samaritans, but it is also proverbially unsettled to the extent that R. Hama can introduce it, in the name of Rab himself, as a point of comparison for the difficulty of disputing festival time. Samaritans are enduringly disruptive with respect to specific elements of their concrete identity as Samaritans: halakha, legal observance, and boundaries of Israel. At least during late antiquity, Samaritan categorical difference never stabilizes in the abstract. Even detached from the historicizable Samaritan communities in Palestine, the concrete features of Samaritan Israelite practice trouble the rabbinic ordering of proximate alterative identities.

To return to the critique with which I began, Schiffman and Lavee were not wrong to notice a late-Tannaitic, or early-Amoraic intensification of one halakhic line related to Samaritan status.¹¹¹ Their mistake, however, was stopping with the subset of traditions which pointed to definitive Samaritan separation. From those traditions, Lavee then traced a “rhetoric of exclusivity” as it hardened in the Bavli into a “polar

¹¹¹ Nor is this unusual. As Christine Hayes has pointed out, Talmudic editors often “manufactured a Tannaitic pedigree” for their statements about legitimate lineage and offspring. (“Genealogy, Illegitimacy, and Personal Status: The Yerushalmi in Comparative Perspective,” in Schäfer, Talmud-Yerushalmi III, 73-90, at 83.)
perception of identity.” Schiffman subordinated the Bavli material to the traditions in yAZ in pursuit of a reliable “historical” source for the adjustment of Samaritan status. In contrast, as I have argued above, the Babylonian Talmud continues to display, respond to, and theorize Samaritan difference. Moreover, it does so in a way precisely the inverse of its classificatory approach to minim, ‘apiqorsim, goyim, and ‘am ha-aretz, by retaining a concrete Samaritan collective identity linking Samaritans with specific matters of legal observance and Torah even when that complicates rabbinic classificatory efforts.

The extra-talmudic Massekhet Kutim confirms that late antique rabbis grappled with the consequences of collective Samaritan identity as Samaritan, an identity linked to an alternative expression and observance of Torah. Probably compiled after the completion of the Babylonian Talmud, this short tractate collates Tannaitic material on Samaritans. It comes, however, to the opposite conclusion to yAZ 5:4,

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115 Previous scholars, including Higger, suggested Massekhet Kutim was the first post-Mishnaic tractate, based largely on the presumption that it was a short-commentary on the Mishnah. Lehnardt presents the argument most clearly, confirming that nothing of the internal content of the treatise allows a more specific date (“Talmud-Traktat Kutim,” 117), but a late Tannaitic date is reasonable given (1) the tractate is written in Mishnaic Hebrew and (2) references only to Tannaitic rabbis (“Talmud-Traktat Kutim,” 116). In a later article he argues, to my mind convincingly, that both these features could be explained by archaizing. The literary reference at the end of the tractate to tehiyyat ha-metim, the resurrection of the dead, implies a date after the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud, and at earliest after the redaction of the Yerushalmi. See “Massekhet Kutim and the Resurrection of the Dead,” in Samaritans: Past and Present, Current Studies, ed. Menachem Mor and Friedrich V. Reiterer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 175-92, at 188.
as well as taking a position that, as these four passages just discussed, complicates scholarly assessments of the rhetorical hostility of passages such as *bHul* 5b-6a.\textsuperscript{116}

In *Massekhet Kutim*, the Samaritan is like an Israelite in nearly all respects (1:1). With some ambivalence, like the Mishnah and Tosefta, it treats Samaritans as more proximate to Israel than to the nations. On the one hand, for example, intermarriage is forbidden, and commercial exchange between Samaritans and Jews is limited. Samaritans, like gentiles, invalidate the *erub* (the boundaries set for observance of *shabbat*), and their fruit is considered by default untithed (1:7-8). On the other hand, a Samaritan can circumcise an Israelite, and an Israelite can trust a Samaritan to look after their cattle, to teach their son a trade, or to cut their hair (1:10). With respect to any damages mentioned in the Torah, the Samaritan is like the Israelite (2:2), although Samaritan butchers are suspected of selling carcass flesh (2:1). In a curious version of the generalizing found elsewhere in the baraita of R. Shimon ben Gamliel, *Massekhet Kutim* states simply: “They are not to be trusted in any matter in which they are open to suspicion” (1:13). While at first this seems hostile, doubt and suspicion are well-acknowledged Mishnaic mechanics of social management.\textsuperscript{117} Such a space allows for Samaritan Torah observance, as well as freeing Jews to trust Samaritan claims to observe without limiting that trust to Samaritans holding a truncated set of legal principles.

\textsuperscript{116} Intriguingly, such a moderation compares to the treatment of *mamzerim*, at least in Palestinian Amoraic sources. These, as Hayes argues, follow Roman approaches to offspring of native women and foreigners lacking *connubium* or slaves in partially legitimating the *mamzer* offspring of a Jewish woman and a Gentile or slave (“Genealogy,” 86-7; see also *Gentile Impurities*, 164-91).

The route taken by *Massekhet Kutim* is perhaps most clearly encapsulated by a short exchange regarding sale and purchase:

These are the things we may not sell them: carcasses not ritually slaughtered, and animals with organic diseases; forbidden animals, and reptiles; the hoof of a dead animal; oil that has been polluted or into which a mouse has fallen; meat of an animal that has been mortally ill, and of an embryo, although Israelites eat them.

We do not sell them these things, for, such sales are frauds. And as we do not sell such things to them, so do we not buy these things from them. For, it is written, “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God (Deut. 14:21).” Inasmuch as you are holy, you shall not make another people holier than yourselves. (1:12, p.43)

This passage frames appropriate selling and buying behavior in symmetrical terms contesting status as a holy people (*’am qodesh*). The text assumes both Samaritans and Israelites are bound by the extended text of the quotation here from Deut. 14:21. The one selling such meat, according to Deuteronomy belongs to the people of the covenant, but the one buying becomes classified as a *ger*, an outsider living amongst Israel. The Samaritans, it seems, could be counted holier than “Israelites” if the latter bought such items from the former. At least according to the rhetoric of the passage, if Israelites bought from the Samaritans, both of whom are Torah-observing groups, then the latter could claim (with justification) that the Israelites had accepted a position as gerim. The Samaritans could take status as holy people away from the Israelites.

Second, the proof text given to link Jews to the “holy people” of God is a passage associated with alterations in the Samaritan Pentateuch: Deut. 14:21. In the
Pentateuch, this passage is immediately followed by the famously opaque proscription against boiling a young goat in its mother’s milk.\textsuperscript{118} For rabbinic texts, this proscription becomes an important prooftext for kosher practice (see e.g. \textit{mḤul} 8:1), but it is not only a boundary-marking passage for Jews.\textsuperscript{119}

In the Samaritan Pentateuch version of Ex. 23:19, this proscription attracts an extended explanation: “Do not boil a kid in its mother’s milk \textit{for whoever is doing this, it is like a sacrifice of forgetting and indignation to the God of Jacob}” (לא תבשל אמו כי עשה זאת כזבח שכח ועברה היא לאלהי יעקב).\textsuperscript{120} The same verse quoted by rabbis to make exhaustive claim to Israel is subject to (polemical) editing when it appears elsewhere in the Samaritan Pentateuch to emphasize proper worship of the God of Israel as opposed to forgetfulness vis-à-vis the God of Jacob. Therefore, use of Deut. 14:21 in \textit{Massekhet Kutim} suggests that rabbi-Samaritan polemic over the content of scripture provided a vocabulary of contested scriptural verses that could be, and were, weaponized.

In its emphasis on symmetrical competition between Samaritans and Israelites able to claim the status of holy people, and the pointed reference to Deuteronomy 14:21, this passage provides further evidence that Samaritans in rabbinic literature often function as a non-generic collective identity, durable and identifiable, able to support rival schematizations of the Tannaitic traditions that manage their status. The


\textsuperscript{119} Schorch, “Young Goat,” 117; Raik Heckl, "\textit{Ḥešeḇ} oder \textit{kālāḇ}? Ein möglicher Einfluss der frühjüdischen Halacha auf die Vokalisation des MT in Ex 23,19b; Ex 34,26b; Dtn 14,21b,” \textit{ZAH} 14 (2002): 144-58.

\textsuperscript{120} Schorch, “Young Goat,” 125.
late traditions in *Massekhet Kutim*, like the examples from the Bavli, take Samaritan Torah observance seriously as a key component of the group’s identifiable characteristics. Furthermore, as Lehnardt points out, *Massekhet Kutim* likely reflects “a growing need to refute the Samaritan opinion that the Tora does not speak of resurrection at all…from the growing influence of an increasingly fixed rabbinic Biblical text.”  

Thus, a halakhic slide from Tannaitic tolerance to Talmudic alienation only tells one of the possible stories about Samaritan significance for Jewish difference. Samaritans are not just a rogue element. They are also a recurring limit case on the authority of rabbinic cleverness and the articulation of rabbinic classification. As scholars have recently argued, later rabbinic literature transformed the categories of *goy* and *min* to externalize difference, to signify not a specific Israelite disagreement, but an alien quantity. In contrast, Samaritans retained their concrete intra-Israelite identity. They could not be categorized efficiently and without excess as non-Israelite, as these traditions demonstrate, since too closely connected to matters of circumcision, legal observance, and Torah. Nor, however, would the rabbinic attempt to rabbinicize the Israelite past admit their claims to keep Torah.

This tells us something important about rabbinic community more broadly. In forging a collective identity centred on rabbinic consensus, the rabbis multiplied the possibilities for dissent. Without rabbinic consensus, there might not have been any Karaites, for example. They did not, however, simply exert a hegemonic definitional force over what could count as linked to ancient Israel, and force those who

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121 Lehnardt, “Resurrection,” 186.
disagreement to crystallize the form of that disagreement. Rather, their multiplying attempts to deal efficiently with Samaritans show how rabbinic community grounded itself in an Israelite past that confronted rabbis with the possibility of their own absence and/or failure. The Samaritans serve, more than the minim, ‘am ha-aretz, goyim or aphiqorsim, and certainly more than the Christian, as the abject of the rabbinic claims to continue the legacy of Israel.

It also indicates that Samaritans exerted an ideological effect on their rabbinic counterparts not dissipated by the lack of direct contact between Babylonian Jewish and Samaritan communities. The ideological Samaritan – a halakhic, circumcised, Israelite-like challenger with often specific claims to Torah learning and Torah interpretation – resonated enough in rabbinic memory and tradition. If anything, the absence of real Samaritan communities to navigate seems to have enabled the amplification and recurrence of Samaritans as a literary and conceptual limit case. Rabbinic self-fashioning was not simply a matter of increasingly abstracted borders and exclusions. In processing rabbinic identity, it retained the concrete contestability of non-generic Israelite identity, in Samaritan form, as a potential resource for dealing with its own controversies.

Further Thoughts

During the post-exilic period of Persian and Hellenistic rule over Israel, the relationship between the Judean south and northern Israelites that framed later narratives of Jews and Samaritans never settled on a single account of Samaritan
difference. In a similar vein, Gedaliah Alon argued that Josephus, the fundamental starting point for much modern scholarship on ancient Samaritans, had at least three origin narratives for Samaritan ethnicity. So too, Alon suggested, did the Tannaim. Furstenberg argues that the case of the Samaritans demonstrates how far the early rabbinc community incorporated a constellation of different identities, by deploying a Roman-style “system of legal citizenship” rather than drawing sharp exclusive boundaries around a monolithic Jewish community body.

This chapter suggests that the multiple possibilities of Samaritan difference for rabbis do not disappear from later rabbinic material. It may be the case that, as Lavee puts it, there was no space amongst the editors of the Babylonian Talmud for “quasi-Jewish” identities. Indeed, one line of rabbinic logic, that which has received the lion’s share of scholarly attention, does narrate a breaking of ways due to Samaritan corruption, drawing on a rhetoric which excludes Samaritans by default. According to several Babylonian comments on earlier Palestinian traditions, a “liminal” halakhic identity for Samaritans is explicitly rejected. Nevertheless, the complexity of Jewish relations with Samaritans – real, rhetorical, and imagined – shows that this does not tell the whole story. A lack of space for “quasi-Jewish” identities did not

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125 Lavee, “From Legal to Essentialist,” 363.
mean the disappearance of contest over the Israelite past. On the contrary, classical rabbinic literature exhibits an excess of Samaritan meaning in contexts of real, rhetorical, and imagined engagement, and a multiplication over time of the types and significances of specifically Samaritan difference from specifically rabbinic “Israel.” Rabbis continued to tangle with Samaritans without resolving once-and-for-all the question of Samaritan classification. No single clean rabbinic cut separates the Samaritans from “Israel.” Some rabbis tried to impose one; others failed to find one; some rabbis neglected to look. Rabbinic tradition repeatedly tangles with Samaritans, sometimes polemicizing against definitively non-Israelite Samaritans and sometimes using Samaritan non-gentiles as a conceptual pivot.

The Samaritans support, instead, our viewing rabbinic self-fashioning as participant in a debate over late antique Israelite identity that resembles how Azzan Yadin-Israel, when discussing the Mishnaic encounter of Rabban Gamliel and the philosopher by the bathhouse of Aphrodite, sees both individuals not as representatives or metonyms of their respective traditions, but as vocalizing more generalizable intellectual concerns. As he writes:

“On the reading offered here, mAZ 3.4 and the Mekhilta passage are concerned with coexistence, but not between pagans and Jews. Rather, their concern is with attempts of like-minded members of different religious elites to coexist with the surrounding religious environment. The exchanges between Rabban Gamliel and the philosopher are polemical, but polemic is not their final end. Rather, the surface polemics raise a potential difficulty that is resolved by recognizing the

126 Chiming with Fonrobert’s observation that “in rabbinic Judaism that which constitutes “Israel” remains under construction. As a performative category – Israel are those who observe the law as explicated by the rabbinic sages – it necessarily remains under construction. It is the signifier of the utopian community constituted by the Oral Torah of the rabbinic sages.” See Fonrobert, “Blood and Law,” 248 n.21.
shared elements in the two interlocutors; respective traditions: both oppose idols and contain authoritative statements to that effect.”

Rachel Neis argues similarly for somewhat later Palestinian material. Stories about the reaction of material things, including idols, to rabbinic death are motivated “not just by the witnessing of Christian iconoclasm or related claims, but also as partaking in a broader debate about religious image-things, idols, and the sacred” in the context of a Christianizing Palestine. Daniel Boyarin suggests, likewise, that Babylonian rabbis partake of both a broadly diffused Hellenism and the elite culture of Sasanian Iran, intermittently oral and literary. In each case, the difference between rabbis and others is governed not primarily by categorical separation but by contrastive approaches to a shared debate.

Attention to the Samaritans even takes us another step further. Yadin-Israel, Neis, and Boyarin still talk in terms of the relationship between, as Yadin-Israel puts it, “different religious elites,” with those elements in common shared between distinct religious traditions (Jews, Pagans, Christians). The Samaritans, however, lay claim to the tradition of the rabbis not on the authority of a different pantheon or of a transformed teaching but by a collective identity linked to Israel and the Torah often recognized as legitimate by rabbinic tradition. In other words, the Samaritans always carried the potential to contest rabbinic ownership over the project of defining

“Israel.” Rabbis perhaps had to, therefore, absorb Samaritan difference rather than exclude it.

As a result, Samaritans are capable of preoccupying rabbinic sources differently from Christians, or *minim* – perhaps anyone else. Only Samaritans elicit an extra-Talmudic tractate, *Massekhet Kutim*, which collects Palestinian traditions relevant to their status vis-à-vis Israel into one place. The Samaritans could have been, in the words of *bHul* 6a, *shomrei torah*. In the words of R. Shimon b. Gamliel, in those commandments to which they hold, they are much more scrupulous than (rabbinic) Israel. Even the narrative of halakhic corruption isolated by Schiffman and Lavee has to rationalize an exclusion of Samaritans based on traditions of a time during which their practice was acceptable, and thus fixes those traditions in rabbinic memory. Rabbinic identity, whatever else it was, was particularly fragile at precisely the point upon which the collective identity of the Samaritans placed pressure: Torah interpretation, Torah observance, and Israelite lineage. Thus, rabbis continued to respond to the challenge of a group whose sustained collective identity made rival claims to the Israelite tradition.

It is the Samaritans, therefore, that most clearly bring our attention the ambivalence of that Israelite past. Israelite identity came already shared with non-rabbinic parties, of course, hence rabbinization of figures like Ezra and determined negotiation of the status of Moses. To this rabbinization, Samaritans presented a continual challenge by their durability. Ezra and Moses were both dead and gone. The Samaritans, however, hovered in the wings of the performance of rabbinic identity, like proselytes, but while sometimes claiming the possibility of becoming
genealogically “Israelite” in precisely a “rabbinic” way (descent from the sons of Israel). They heckle rabbis, like gentiles, but while dangerously contesting (from a claimed inside) Israelite lineage, law, and long-held tradition (based on observance of the Torah of Moses). The concrete, collective character of Samaritans even generates new, specific halakhic discussions based in a not-quite-Jewish, not-quite-gentile, identity.

This resistance to encapsulation in rabbinic categories provides, I hope to have shown, an opportunity for modern scholars. The continued relevance of the Samaritans to classical rabbinic literature suggests the need to change the terms with which we write about late antique Jewish self-fashioning in general. For us, upsetting a stable rabbinic “Israel” lurks just a Samaritan comparison away—from Mishnah to Talmud, and beyond, in various forms and not a simple trajectory of parting—because they contest the very items often claimed by rabbis as central to their own Jewishness: interpretation of Torah and observance of Torah.

Thus, any scholarly approach that considers concern for these as self-evidently setting Jewish identity apart must reckon not only with the division between Israel and the goyim but with the Samaritans, included throughout rabbinic literature even as they threaten to subvert rabbinic claims to hegemony. The Samaritans even prevent binarization of our accounts of late antique Jewish identity by demonstrating that even within the thought-world of rabbinic literature the “Israel” to which the rabbis laid claim remained a contested term between not two but at least three parties: Jews, the gentile world (with Christians as an occasional subset), and Samaritans taken as Samaritans, with a symmetrical alternative claim to the Israelite past.
Perhaps the best example of this disruption in action comes from the fourth/fifth-century Palestinian midrash *Genesis Rabbah*. The notion of corruption, *qilqul*, in the famous passage in *Talmud Yerushalmi Avodah Zara* discussed above (yAZ 5:4, 44d), could cut both ways. In the exchange between R. Yishmael and the Samaritan, the Samaritan attacks in strikingly familiar terms.

"וגו' ר' ישמעאל בר' יוסי סלק מצלייה בירושלם עבר בהדין פלטנוס וחמתיה חד שמריי אמר ליה לאן את אזל אמר ליה למסק מצלייה בירושלם אמר ליה ולא טב לך מצלי בהדין טורה בריכה ולא בייתה קיקלעה"  

And R. Yishmael recalled that R. Yose went up to pray in Jerusalem. He passed by a place with a plane tree, and met a certain Samaritan (*shomrei*). He said, “For what reason are you going out?” The other replied, “To go up and pray in Jerusalem.” He said, “Why isn’t it good for you to pray at this blessed mountain [i.e. Gerizim] and not that ruined house (בייתה קיקלעה)?”

This passage articulates the perspective of the Samaritan. R. Yose’s statement, to him, makes no sense. The site of blessing, Gerizim, towers above them, but the Jewish rabbi chooses to go instead to the “house of corruption” or the “ruined house” (בייתה קיקלעה), Jerusalem of David, which according to Samaritan tradition was a site of repeated Jewish corruption of Israelite tradition.\(^\text{131}\) By this polemical labelling, the Samaritan demonstrates that the accusations of becoming *qilqul* that we see so often levied against Samaritans may not have been the monopoly of rabbis. Rather, they belonged to a larger context by which Israelites competed over the parameters of

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\(^{131}\) In the *Kitāb al-Tarīkh*, a medieval chronicle in Samaritan Arabic completed in 1355, the writer Abu’l Fath presents five such moments of corruption: (1) by association with the breakaway group of Eli at Shiloh; (2) David’s rejection of Gerizim; (3) Solomon’s choice to build a corrupted temple; (4) Ezra’s forged Torah on rebuilding Jerusalem after Exile; and (5) the destruction of the rebuilt Jerusalem Temple by the Romans. See translation by Paul Stenhouse (Sydney: University of Sydney Mandelbaum Trust, 1985), based on his edition of the *Kitāb* presently available, unfortunately, only in microfiche.
“Israel” and its connection to the biblical past. Here the midrash places that accusation, reflexively, in the mouth of one who might plausibly have made an alternate claim to Israelite tradition. The limits of rabbinic worldbuilding run up against a Samaritan, representing a group who view Israelite history according to a fundamentally counter-historical account.

In this way, the rabbinic Samaritans respond to the same attention to ambivalence useful in approaching the heresiological and discursive wrangling of Christian texts in previous chapters. True enough, as Grossberg and Schremer have demonstrated, it is misleading to read rabbinic boundary rhetoric as if it is Christian heresiology, that is, as if it relies on Christian categories of heterodox versus orthodox belief. But it would similarly be a mistake to read rabbinic texts without attention to the overdetermined multiple functions of boundary rhetoric, reliant on not excluding, but on absorbing, taming, cannibalizing – exemplified perhaps most clearly for the late antique context by the heresiological double bind. Rabbinic texts do heresiology-like work, once we broaden heresiology to take account not just of identities as enclaves to be defended, but as inhabited and continually retrofitted.

Throughout classical rabbinic literature Samaritan difference acts not as a diversion, but a continued opportunity and risk for a triple set of cooperation, conflict, and

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132 The Palestinian midrash *Genesis Rabbah* includes several such confrontations between rabbis and Samaritans, comparable to Samaritan claims to learning in Talmudic traditions but usually including the content of exegetical debate; see, for example, discussion of *GenR* 70:7 by Jenny Labendz, *Socratic Torah: Non-Jews in Rabbinic Intellectual Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 51-57.

133 As Amos Funkenstein: “Counterhistories form a specific genre…Their function is polemical. Their method consists of the systematic exploitation of the adversary’s most trusted sources against their grain…Their aim is the distortion of the adversary’s self-image, of his identity, through the deconstruction of his memory” (*Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 36).
coexistence. The Samaritans, despite being often excluded from “Israel,” are also not-quite-other “others,” and they remain consistently a category challenge throughout rabbinic tradition. By attention to Samaritans we can, therefore, aim to move past any developmental account of Jewish final differentiation at a specific point in time. Instead, we can model the continual generation of rabbinic community as self-consciously within an array of Israelite difference, both managing a genericized array of others such as minim, 'apiqorsim, and goyim, and responsive to at least one non-generic, not-quite-other “other”: the Samaritans.
EPILOGUE

At the court of Charlemagne, sometime between 790 and 792 CE, an unknown theologian in the Carolingian king’s service took an aggressively middle-of-the-road position between the iconoclast position at the Synod of Hiereia (754) and proclamation in favour of the veneration of icons at the Second Council of Nicaea (787). In the course of his letter, the theologian writes:

“That the Samaritans, being really Gentiles and only in appearance holding to the Jews’ religion, are not more really opposed to the Church than any other sect of unbelievers; while they [the members of the council], considering them as Christian heretics and having declared that they are worse than any other heretics, conclude with showing them some favour in declaring that their own ancestors are yet worse.”²

As far as we know, the Samaritans were conspicuous in Carolingian lands only by their absence. The Carolingian theologian, however, interacted directly with the arguments made in a letter attributed to Symeon the (Younger) Stylite (521-592) and read at the iconophile Nicene council.³ That letter, itself undated but directed to Justin II (565-78), savaged Samaritans near Porphyreon for in some unspecified way dishonouring the icons of the saints. They were, Symeon writes, “atheistic and impure beyond all impurity and abominable” (τῶν ἀθέων καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἀκαθαρσίαν

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² Text in the Libri Carolini, ed. Anne Freeman, Opis Caroli regis contra synodum (MGH Concilia 2, Supplement 1; Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1998), 507.
³ See for text, translation, and comments, Pummer, Early Christian Authors no.141, 317-25. Greek text = PG 86.3216-3217, 3220.
ἀκαθάρτων καὶ βδελυκτῶν.)⁴ At the council, in response to the reading of the letter John, Legate of the East, claimed:

“…it is evident to all that the Samaritans are worse than other heretics, and their heresy is exceedingly abominable and base, and alien from grace; and from this history we may infer that they who subvert holy images are as bad as these – wherefore they may well be styled Samaritans.”⁵

At the Second Council of Nicaea, the Samaritans become mimic Jews, the worst heretics—and a heresiological stick with which to beat iconoclast opponents. They take this form, however, only by means of a spontaneous conciliar expansion on Symeon’s letter, who himself complained (albeit at length) about a local act of vandalism or disrespect. The grumpy Stylite, while using the language of impiety as well as appeals to the “Christ-loving” (φιλόχριστος) reign of the emperor, nowhere deploys “Samaritan” as a heretical classification. Moreover, the Libri Carolini reframes Samaritans again as gentiles, fake Jews, and therefore not as bad as Christian heretics. From Symeon to Charlemagne, a localized brouhaha became a heresiological extreme in the east, then softened into a middle-of-the-road attempt at a consensus position for Christian doctrine in the west.

The case of Symeon’s Samaritans embodies the multiple possibilities that scholarly attention to the group holds for engaging late antique identity categories.

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⁴ PG 86.3216.7-9.
The initial sixth-century regional conflict highlights how far Christian identity—and continued practice—bumped up against an array of others just as much after imperial “Christianization” as prior to it. Moreover, the Samaritans, a group not continually present in scholarship or the ancient archive in the way that, for example, “Jews” are nevertheless act as a focal point for a trans-regional polemic, including creative adaptation of prior engagement with the group that takes the Samaritans as well as Christian commentary on Samaritans as a foil.

Then, these Samaritans dipped out of view for more than a century, only to reemerge as “worse than other heretics” at a point in time when nobody making those claims had any reason to fear that a Samaritan would loom out of the darkness to deny the resurrection of the dead. Samaritan relevance has a gymnastic temporality, which disrupts any narrative of this period that sees Samaritan appearance as atypical or unimportant because of their peripherality. Systems of heresiological identification, it seems, were well suited to precisely the transmission and exaggeration of modular details of exotic difference, and the preservation of modular authoritative issuance in the form of conciliar acta and legal interpretation. The dual characteristics of Samaritan intermittence and durability has broader conceptual consequences. The examination of Christian identity and alterity is not just about the center and the periphery, or about how the diversity of human existence resists such classification, but about how Christianness itself was often not the most important, explicit feature in its own world. Perhaps especially when Christians preoccupied themselves with others, the mobilization of academic attention has overly streamlined the story. The power of representations of Samaritans to produce creative theology, as in the Libri
Carolini, juxtaposed with scholarly inattention to them, shows how thin scholarly accounting for ancient taxonomies of difference-making can become, with Samaritans often excluded because Samaritan populations are not well-attested in the western Mediterranean.

The realization that missing out Samaritans artificially compresses scholarly narrative emerges also from a shift from Aachen to the opposite end of the Mediterranean. In late antique eastern Christian literature, and in contrast with the Libri Carolini, Syriac commentary on the New Testament supplies continued Samaritan presence. In his Commentary of Tatian’s Diatessaron, a fourth-century Syriac commentary on the composite Gospel text frequently used liturgically by the early Syriac church, Ephrem addresses the curious polemic against Jesus in John 8:48. In this passage, the Ioudaioi call Jesus a Samaritan and demon-possessed: Οὐ καλῶς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς ὅτι Σαμαρίτης εἶ σὺ καὶ δαμόνιον ἔχεις; (“Have we not said well that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?”). This line has foxed modern commentators, who usually assume it articulates a baseline Jewish-Samaritan hostility (as I critiqued in Chapter 1 above), or else functions synonymously with “heretic” or

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“madman” (despite acknowledging the lack of evidence for either). Ephrem, however, understands it differently:

They called our Lord “a Samaritan” because the Samaritans say about themselves against the Jews, “We are Abraham’s sons,” and the Jews say against them, *It is we who are Abraham’s sons.* Our Lord however said to the Jews, *If you were Abraham’s sons you would be doing the works of Abraham.* His word appeared to the Jews to be ranged on the side of the Samaritans, while clothed with a Jewish aspect. This is why they said to him, *You are a Samaritan.*

Perhaps Ephrem is right about the meaning of John 8:48 – at least, his reading is very plausible. Regardless of whether he correctly interprets the verse or not, however, his understanding of the polemical exchange to relate to symmetrical Jewish and Samaritan claims to represent the “sons of Abraham” signals that to at least one Christian writer in Syria the Samaritans remained a potent presence capable of contesting the Jewish past with their own accounts of the lineage of Abraham. This understanding supplies a corrective to scholars, who have tended to gravitate to consider Jewishness largely in contrast with or separation from Christianness. To Ephrem, it remained natural to place Jesus’ exchange in the context of inter-Israelite genealogical competition.

In the Latin West, information about the Samaritan Pentateuch faded from view. Despite Jerome’s references to the Samaritan text, its differences from both the Septuagint and Masoretic text were largely overlooked by non-Jewish commentators until the sixteenth century. In the eastern Mediterranean world, however, even five

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7 McCarthy, *Ephrem’s Commentary* 8:26, 257.
8 *Questiones Hebraicae in libro Geneseos* on Gen. 4:8 and Gen 5:25 (9.12-15 and 11.6-12 in the edition of De Lagarde); see Pummer, *Early Christian Authors*, 190-91. For Jewish scholarship, especially encapsulated in Azariah de Rossi, see Introduction. An intellectual history of European Jewish knowledge of Samaritans has not yet been written.
centuries later, the *Commentary on John* of Iso’dad of Merv (d.852) repeats Ephrem’s interpretation. The profound plausibility of Jewish versus Samaritan contest, escaping the imaginations of modern scholars except in Josephus’ polemical form or where Samaritans stand in for Christians as Gentiles hated by Jews, still struck Iso’dad as particularly usable all those years later. For Iso’dad, moreover, the Samaritan Pentateuch itself provided a resource and source of debate. He directs critic to the claims of the Samaritan Pentateuch in his *Commentary on the Old Testament* so as to support his own argument about the geography of the holy land.9

There was no interruption to Iso’dad’s access to knowledge about Samaritans, and he continued to work with the knowledge that the claim to the Books of Moses remained contested by multiple Israelite parties. Such knowledge continued, although it became a more complicated affair with the addition of Muslim claims into the fray.10 Samaritans appear in some of the earliest sources after the so-called Islamic conquests.11 Nor do they go away.12 The group remains well-represented in literature

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under early Islam, such as the *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eliezer*, Syriac chronicles, the work of Karaite polemicists, and so on. In a version of the so-called “Pact of Umar” composed in the ‘Abbasid period, outlining the status and rights of non-Muslim groups under Islamic rule, it becomes apparent that early medieval Muslim heresiography commonly divided “Jewish” sects (*firaq*) into three: “Rabban, Qarran, and Samira” – in other words, the rabbinate Jews, the Karaites, and the Samaritans. This triadic division of Muslim perceptions of Jewishness continues into the Middle Ages in Egypt and Syria-Palestine, as Marina Rustow’s work on Fatimid Jewish communal politics and Benjamin of Tudela’s report of his journeys in the eastern Mediterranean between 1165 and 1173 demonstrate, respectively. In both the Latin kingdoms and Muslim Mediterranean, despite stark difference in terms of direct experience of Samaritan communities and knowledge of the Samaritan scriptures,

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12 One of the overlooked elements of Patricia Crone and Michael Cook’s controversial revisionist account of the origins of Islam was their frequent reliance on Samaritan texts and practices to explain distinctive features of early Islam; see *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 14-27, 29, 32-33, 123-24, 131-35. They suspected, at least at the time, that more influences of Samaritanism on Islam could be found: see 170 n.3. While Crone and Cook’s reliance on Samaritanism cannot be maintained, they were right to be struck by the presence of Samaritans in the world of early Islam.

13 Scholarly bibliography on this continued presence is, however, extremely sparse. The Samaritans of the *PRE* have received little attention beyond the discussion by Büchler and others about the Geonic date of the Ezra episode discussed briefly above in Chapter 4.


representations of Samaritans remained a site for rhetorical creativity and reinterpretation.

In this dissertation I limited myself to the centuries at the heart of scholarly Late Antiquity – the fourth and fifth – in order to most effectively decouple Samaritans from the bounds of Biblical Studies. Thus, I did not deal with the consequences of Symeon’s insecurity as they slid in literary form from Porphyreon to Aachen. Nor did I examine Syriac literature, nor Samaritans in Arabic heresiography roughly contemporaneous with the Carolingians, whether written by Karaite Jews or Muslim chroniclers. In Symeon, Ephrem, Iso’dad, and these others, however, we see the consequences of the complexity in Christian and Jewish writings from earlier centuries. We see the dynamic interactivity of Jewish and Christian identity as it tangles with pervasive Samaritans as representatives of an alternative Israelite past that, resurgent, remained constantly in the corner of the eye and often strayed into clear vision in particularly disruptive ways. This later interest in Samaritans did not spring up out of a hole in the ground. They are an active, functioning piece of the ancient and late antique religious landscape.

The demonstrable presence of Samaritans in our ancient sources disrupts scholarly articulations of Jewish and Christian identity. A more representative account of the group, hewing closer to their presence in the late antique archive, draws attention to how multilateral ancient taxonomies of religious difference were. The messy fractal of Samaritan involvement with late antique Jews and Christians stems precisely from their occupation of the same real, rhetorical, and imagined world. If they appear a curiosity, an anomaly, an understudied group, it is not because
of a lack of ancient presence. It is natural for Samaritans to appear in the New Testament Gospels, just as it is natural that they sometimes clash with Jesus and sometimes respond to him. It makes sense that Cyril of Jerusalem can present the group as, like Jews, a real religious threat, even while John Chrysostom feels at ease using them as a biblical fossil to critique the Jews. Even as Samaritans contest rabbinic claims to Torah and Israel, it makes sense that some rabbinic traditions accept them as part of a larger franchise of what Israel could have been. And since Samaritans contest these claims, it is understandable that to Epiphanius they serve as both a heresy to be ordered and dismissed and a distraction to epistemological excess that pulls him away from a Christianizing centre towards a world of older Israelite possibilities.

Rather, the selectivity of scholars in rendering groups anomalous or otherwise becomes visible for critique and adjustment. Over the last fifty years, we have become adept at exploring how identities formed in contact and encounter with one another. Scholars have become well-practiced examining “Judaism” and “Christianity” as categories with diachronic durability, able to attract, enforce, and evoke talk of continuity or change, disruption or transformation, rather than serving as inert subjects of such narratives. But imbalance between Samaritan archival presence and scholarly absence shows how far overt attention to the pair “Judaism” and “Christianity” reproduces an inherited theological frame for late antiquity in which Samaritans – and other others – are unnecessarily secondary by default, in

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contrast to their notable multilateral relevance in our sources. Correspondingly, scholarly exploration has often habitually defaulted to compressed forms of identity and difference, often taking a binary of “Jewish” and “Christian” as prototypic even while reversing and challenging methodological supersessionism, often reading those prototypic terms as exhaustive of ancient management of difference. Attention to Samaritans, instead, acts as a tool for archival decompression and continual alertness to the moments when methodological renovation leaves questions of selectivity unasked.

In thinking through rabbinic and patristic sources with Samaritans in the foreground, it becomes increasingly clear that the binary function of the categories “Jewish” and “Christian” is more a manufactured product of selective scholarly engagement with our ancient archive than shaped by the arrayed archive itself. A sample of scholarly attention makes this clear. It is possible for Boyarin to claim that during the time of the Tannaim “Jewish sectarianism as a form of decentralized pluralism by default had been replaced by the binary opposition of Jewish orthodox and Jewish heretics,” precisely because Daniel Boyarin gets this binary by focusing on one imperialized frontier zone; the border lands between Jewish and Christian communities.17 It is possible for Adiel Schremer to critique Boyarin’s “Christianizing” emphasis on heresiology for making Judaism articulated only in response to “competing religious claims” of Christianity even while framing his argument in terms of the internal vibrancy of Judaism without Christianity, thus

preserving the binary he critiques because he has taken for granted that the most important question of Jewish identity is its degree of reliance or independence from Christianity.\(^\text{18}\) It is possible for Naftali Cohn to argue that Samaritans were a fringe case, not even considered on the rabbinic spectrum of difference despite their presence in rabbinic texts because Cohn already assumes that rabbinic difference is in some way prototypically “Jewish” difference; in other words, that the Jewishness of the rabbis, and their constructed “Israel,” was for all meaningful purposes of historical narrative a stable central point.\(^\text{19}\) Insightful scholarship nevertheless artificially narrows its possible conclusions.

Similarly, the late antique Christian fixation with Jewishness, and the fixation of scholars of the New Testament and early Christianity with the relationship between Christians and Jews, result from privileging parts of broader taxonomies of difference in both our ancient archive and its modern trajectories. Again, to take a few recent examples, Michael Azar can focus on the anti-Jewish rhetoric in Origen, Cyril, and Chrysostom without a mention of Samaritans because New Testament scholarship on the Gospel of John has reinvented itself specifically through an act of resistance to anti-Jewish theological interpretation of John.\(^\text{20}\) Susanna Drake’s account of Origen’s sexualized slander against Jews using the appearances of Oholah and Oholibah, the daughters of Lot in Ezekiel 23, can on the one hand explicitly contrast Christian

\(^{18}\) Adiel Schremer, *Brothers Estranged: Heresy, Christianity and Jewish Identity in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12-16.


hermeneutics with Origen’s symmetrical emphasis on “the interpretive deviance of Jews and Samaritans” (*Hom. Gen.* 5:2), and on the other take these passages to demonstrate “the rhetorical association of Jewishness” alone, compressing symmetrical Jewish/Samaritan otherness into a Jewish other to Christian anxiety.\(^2\) It is possible for Andrew Jacobs to scrutinize Epiphanius, circumcision, and the religious memoryscape of late antique Palestine without much attention to Samaritans, because each of the scholarly discussions into which he intervenes emphasizes Christian identity as the focal point of late antiquity, either for scrutiny or decentring.\(^2\)

The Samaritans throw a spanner into the intellectual machinery working with, and continuing to generate, scholarship along the lines of these well-oiled selectivities. Via the Samaritans we see particularly clearly how even the most committed heresiologist functioned beyond any single scholarly framework for managing different identities, and how scholarly selectivity has sometimes excluded the complexity of ancient difference from being more fully articulated. As Jacobs pointed out with respect to Epiphanius, “we should take seriously those leaders who

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were famous in their time” precisely because “their transient fame might tell us more about their specific and contingent concerns than we might other appreciate.”

A transient group like the Samaritans make the twists and turns of those specific concerns visible. They appear in late antique texts much more often than their absence in much modern scholarship would suggest, neglected due to their diachronic intermittence.

This realization, in theory understood by scholars but with the habit of focus on Jewish/Christian difference not broken, galvanizes a sense of urgency regarding alternative narratives about Judaism and Christianity. For example, rather than rival religions, taking sharpened form in late antiquity, we see via the Samaritans how sometimes Christians cared more about Samaritans than Christian orthodoxy, or how rabbis cared more about challenges to Torah than Christian empire. This realization challenges teleologies of development—schism, decline, separation—since all are actively misleading in the Samaritan case. Sometimes, neither Christianity nor Judaism was preoccupied with the other when it debated religious difference. Thomas Sizgorich points out one possible reason for this when discussing Jews, Christians, and Muslims. These groups stayed in contact for a long time. Therefore, in such circumstances “although we might like to find some traces or remnants of first-contact fascination in such texts, we should not be surprised to find instead a frankly...

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complacent indifference born of a century and more of relatively pacific, if not dull, coexistence.”

In closing, then, talk of coexistence brings us sharply back, for a moment, to the contrastive case of the Second Council of Nicaea, when the reading of Symeon’s letter provoked such an outburst from John the legate of the East. This encounter, and its Latin response, encapsulates many—though not all—of the ways Samaritans disrupt our own scholarly ways of thinking about religious identity in the period. It was, in fact, a case of dull absence and repurposed identity, excited because engaging not with Samaritans but with other Christians through Samaritans. Alternative stories become visible when we take an approach to difference which does not rely on Jews and Christians only, but sees both groups sometimes awkwardly confronted with a group who would not stay lost in the Israelite past, and which comprised sometimes a threat, sometimes a contrast, and sometimes a resource for making Jewish and Christian identities. The Jewish past that Christianity often relies on inhabiting already excludes Samaritans. The Samaritans haunt Christian claims even while reminding Christians that there was a time in Israel when Christianity was not. Likewise, rabbinic Jewishness struggles to come to terms with Samaritans simultaneously trying follow Torah and develop liturgical, scriptural, and communal norms in a newly Christianizing holy land—and beyond. Even while rabbis grapple for control of Torah, the Samaritans retain their population, their synagogues, and their claims to constitute true “Israel.”

When I began writing on Samaritans, with Epiphanius’ *Panarion* I.9, I toyed with the idea that Epiphanius’ unusual attention to the Samaritans signified some broader social historical realization. What if it could be demonstrated that he wrote about Samaritans because he felt their impression on his world? What if this impression could be salvaged, given voice, and revivified in a way which scholarship on late antique religion has largely not realized? The argument that real Samaritans mattered in late antiquity is possible, even assisted by parts of the previous chapters. Ultimately, however, at least in my opinion, pursuing this type of connection between authorial content and historical world engages a different mode of historiographical imagination, even if my work is hospitable to such arguments.

As a result, this dissertation did not primarily aim to salvage historical Samaritan presence. I hope, instead, to have achieved a parallel goal: to show that the ancient and late antique Samaritan other—real, rhetorical, imagined, affective—mattered in the late antique machinery generating religious identity, and to model a decompressed scholarly approach to that identity. Even more than this, because of their intermittence and their importance, because of their Israelite past as well as their connection with scripture, and because of their presence in many of the same late antique texts from which we reconstruct and debate Jewish and Christian identity formation whilst leaving them undiscussed, they can serve as a catalyst for adjusting and retrofitting modern scholarly approaches to engaging late antique religious identity, and writing the history of Judaism, Christianity, and their other others. They remind us that our habitual attachment to questions of Jews and Christians, however usable its fruits, shares its categorical choices with the theological supersessionism
and Orientalizing taxonomies of the nineteenth century. When we discuss Jews and Christians as a binary, we visibly neglect a group whose past—and involvement with scripture and claims to “Israel”—goes back just as far, and whose challenge was often recognized by Jews and Christians.

Representations of Samaritans, therefore, provide a rich alternative set of opportunities for those writing histories of religious identities in antiquity to renovate the acts of classification and knowledge-ordering that shape the selection of scholarly topics for discussion. They also embody a reproof to those who overlook the importance of intermittent, inconsistent, contingent historical pieces when dealing with the narration and conceptualization of religious identity and difference, and a corrective to focusing on durable trans-historical categories like Jewish or Christian, with which we are used to narrating our past. An alternative story of late antique religion, late antique religious identity, and even a depolarized history of Judaism or Christianity is only a Samaritan comparison away.
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