

*The Pentateuch: The Samaritan Version and the Masoretic Version*. Edited by Abraham Tal and Moshe Florentin. Tel Aviv: The Haim Rubín Tel Aviv University Press, 2010. Hardcover. Pp. vii + 765. NIS 149. ISBN 9789657241431 (Hebrew).

The Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) contains the text of the Torah written in a special version of the early Hebrew script that was preserved for centuries by the Samaritan community. SP contains a few ideological elements that form a thin layer added to an otherwise non-sectarian early text, very similar to the so-called pre-Samaritan texts found at Qumran. Scholars are divided in their opinions on the date of creation of the Samaritan text. Often, the pre-Samaritan texts and SP are together named the SP-group. The SP-group differs from the other biblical texts (among them MT) in many details. Research is still underway concerning the textual status of SP, because its exact relationship to the similar Qumran texts and the LXX is in need of refinement.

The appearance of a new edition of SP is an important event for the scholarly world. From now onwards, SP can be studied with renewed vigor and advancements can be made towards its understanding. Several other editions preceded the present one, starting with the Paris Polyglot (1629–1645).

The first of the modern critical editions, by A. F. von Gall, *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner*, vols. I–V (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1914–1918; repr. Berlin, 1966), presents an eclectic reconstruction of the original text, accompanied by an apparatus of variant readings. The edition, based on many manuscripts but not all those known at the time, is detailed and accurate, but the reconstructed text is artificially close to MT because von Gall often chose readings that were identical to MT.

A. and R. Sadaqa, *Jewish and Samaritan Version of the Pentateuch: With Particular Stress on the Differences between Both Texts* (Tel Aviv/Jerusalem: Reuven Mas, 1961–1965): The text of the first four Pentateuchal books is based on “an old Samaritan manuscript from the eleventh century,” while that of Deuteronomy is based on the Abisha‘ scroll. The volume presents the text of MT and SP in parallel columns with typographical emphasis on the differences between them.

A. Tal, *The Samaritan Pentateuch, Edited According to MS 6 (C) of the Shekhem Synagogue* (Texts and Studies in the Hebrew Language and Related Subjects 8; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1994) = Tal 1994. This diplomatic edition of manuscript Shechem 6 (1204 C.E.) was considered the central critical text of SP until the appearance of the edition under review. Tal 1994 forms the base of a module of SP included in *Accordance*. This module takes into consideration the Samaritan reading tradition, as recorded by Z. Ben-Ḥayyim, *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic amongst the Samaritans*, vols. 1–5 (Heb.; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1957–1977), not in the text itself, but in the morphological analysis that lies at the base of the search facilities.

The edition under review, by A. Tal and M. Florentin, both of Tel Aviv University, presents an improved edition of the manuscript Shechem 6 together with an extensive introduction and several appendices. As in Tal 1994, the new edition (= T–F) presents the text of that manuscript, which “contains a greater part of the Torah than the other manuscripts” (47). The text is presented as a running text unlike the Tal 1994 edition, which as a diplomatic edition of its base manuscript included somewhat misleading square brackets in places where missing elements in the main manuscript were supplemented by other sources. The present edition likewise supplements the missing information from other ancient sources, but leaves no notation in the text itself. It alerts the reader to these missing elements in a list on p. 754. As in Tal 1994, the new edition does not have a critical apparatus of variants representing other manuscripts of SP. T–F preferred a diplomatic to an eclectic edition because of the inability to choose between orthographic variants. This view does not imply that T–F reject the idea of one central Samaritan text. They would probably consider that the oral tradition reflects such a central text, represented by different types of spellings, even by the same scribe.

One of the main laudable features of T–F is the clarity with which it presents the differences between SP and MT (the latter probably represents the Leningrad codex, although this has not been specified; 43). These two texts are printed on facing pages with typographical emphasis on the differences between them (in fact, the clarity of these differences, now presented in gray on the SP page, could have been improved even further had they been printed in bold type, as may have been the original intention [p. v of the English summary: “bold-face print”]). Plus elements of SP are indicated in the MT page with elegant omission signs, opposite the editorial additions of SP, e.g., in Exod 7–11, the page of MT presents empty spaces.

The conventions used in the diplomatic presentation of the base manuscript are explained on pp. 50–51. The edition includes all the unusual spellings of manuscript Shechem 6, listed also in an appendix on pp. 755–57 (e.g., נשבא instead of נשבה in Exod 14:14). Superscript letters and corrections in Shechem 6 are not included in the edition itself, but instead are included in a special appendix on pp. 746–53. By the same token, the scribal signs of the manuscript are not included in the edition (see 51). The diplomatic presentation includes the indication of the paragraph divisions with a paragraph sign named *qiṣṣah* (a combination of colons or sometimes two dots and a long hyphen), but with no signs in the middle and at the end of verses (see 56). A major break is indicated by a space extending from the *qiṣṣah* sign at the end of the paragraph to the end of the line.

The present volume is a precise and very helpful tool for the student of SP, for all specialists in textual criticism, and students of the Hebrew language. We will now turn to the aspect that the authors consider to be one of the main tasks of their edition, viz., the emphasis on the differences between MT and SP, a task in which they succeeded very well (51). All the differences between these two sources

can be viewed easily by comparing the details on the facing pages, while, in addition, T–F highlight those differences that they consider important. This highlighting provides far fewer details than the traditional number of 6,000 differences between MT and SP. That figure is based on the list produced by B. Walton, E. Castellus, and J. Lightfoot in B. Walton, *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta complectentia textus originales, Hebraicum, cum Pentateucho Samaritano, Chaldaicum, Graecum; versionumque antiquarum, Samaritanae, Graecae LXXII Interpretum, Chaldaicae, Syriacae; Arabicae; Aethiopicae, Persicae, Vulg. Lat. etc.* (London: Roycroft, 1657; repr. Graz, 1965), VI, IV.19–34, on the basis of now outdated editions. I calculated the total number of these differences to be approximately 7,000 on the basis of the SP module in *Accordance*, which is more or less identical to the text of T–F.

T–F describe the character of the highlighted details as “intentional changes” (25), following the very distinction between intentional and unintentional changes introduced by Ben-Hayyim, *The Literary and Oral Tradition*, vol. 5 (1977), 2–3. The intentional changes in SP in language and content receive major attention in T–F and are analyzed on pp. 28–38, and again on pp. 51–56 of the introduction, where Tal and Florentin describe the nature of the edition. The details in question are named “real variants ... that is, differences based on the intentional editing of SP” (51). Among the intentional changes highlighted on the SP page, the editors count these groups (28–38):

1. Linguistic changes of the earlier text, such as the removal of unusual morphological forms in MT, e.g., וְחִיתוֹ-אֶרֶץ/SP וחית הארץ (Gen 1:24), or syntactical structures, e.g., נשא...הארץ/SP נשאה...הארץ (Gen 13:6). Incidentally, not all forms exemplified for this group in the introduction are highlighted in the edition itself. Thus, the morphological difference between MT מְרִדָּה/אל תירא מְרִדָּה/SP מרדת (Gen 46:3) should have been highlighted according to p. 29. The replacement of MT נער in SP by נערה in Gen 24:14, 16, 28 is not indicated in the edition (see 29).

2. Content editing is subdivided into several categories: (a) logical arrangement of the text, e.g., the supplying of content to the missing phrase in Gen 4:8 “Cain said to his brother Abel. And when they were in the field,” where SP added “Let us go to the field.” after “Abel.” Likewise, Gen 47:21 MT “And as for the population, *he transferred them to the cities*” is changed in SP to “And as for the population, *he enslaved them to servitude.*” There are also (b) harmonizing changes, especially additions, e.g., Gen 7:2, “a male (literally: *a man*) and his mate (literally: *his wife*),” changed in SP to “male and female”; (c) apologetic changes, e.g., ארור אפם (“*cursed be their anger*”) changed in SP to אדיר אפם (“*mighty was their anger*”; Gen 49:7). This group is probably the most problematic among the sub-categories of the assumed changes. There are also (d) ideological Samaritan changes, especially regarding the place of worship.

While “changes” of this type (T–F do not consider at least some of them to be “differences”; see below) were highlighted, the majority of the SP readings were not highlighted. These are the “unintentional” changes of SP, forming the majority of the differences between the two texts (25), comprising two categories: (1) orthography and (2) morphology. In the words of T–F, these changes do not display “the intentional editing” of SP (51).

(1) Thus, in Gen 49, spelling variants of SP in fifteen words are not graphically highlighted. Only orthographical differences that have content implications have been highlighted on the SP page. I presume that T–F would count the highlighting of נָטַע/SP נָטָה (Num 24:6) to be such a case. This procedure also implies the lack of marking of the special endings of nouns with הַ-, which are replaced in SP with יְ-.

(2) Morphological differences may involve the conjugations of the verb and different word patterns, as exemplified in detail on pp. 25–28, such as the removal of the apocopated future. In this group, we note the change of MT *yireb* to SP *yirbeh* (Gen 1:22), which is not highlighted in the edition (see 26). Further examples of categories that are not highlighted are: lengthened futures of MT replaced by regular ones, e.g., MT וַאֲבָרְכָה/SP וַאֲבָרַךְ (Gen 12:3); apocopated future forms of verbs *primae yod* replaced in SP by regular ones (e.g., וַיִּלְדַּד changed 33 times in SP to וַיִּלְדֵּד in Gen 5 and 11).

The authors are well aware that their binary classification of intentional/unintentional changes differs from previously suggested analyses of the differences between SP and MT (25). Other classifications are more detailed, but T–F preferred the system suggested by Ben-Ḥayyim. The validity of T–F’s system depends on this distinction, about which I submit a few reactions:

1. According to this reviewer, T–F’s argument about the presence or lack of intentions has not been proven. It is very unlikely that all the differences (not “changes,” as in T–F) in orthography and morphology are unintentional, nor is it likely that all the assumed “changes” described as intentional were indeed intended. Note that this group includes most interchanges of consonants, such as the previously mentioned interchange of אָפַם and אָפִיר in SP (Gen 49:7), most of which are not intentional, but rather are exponents of the scribal transmission.

It remains very difficult to prove the intention behind the occurrence of different noun patterns in SP. According to T–F, the different patterns לָמַס/SP לָמוֹס עָבַד (Gen 49:15), and בְּלִטְיָהֶם/SP בְּלִטְיָהֶם (Exod 8:14) are intentional. But why is the systematic, albeit inconsistent, removal of the *nun* in future forms of the type of יִשְׁמְעוּן (e.g., Exod 4:9) not intentional?

2. The distinction between these two groups depends on one’s view of the nature of SP. According to T–F, all the SP readings are in the nature of “changes” made to MT, and when making this claim they exclude the possibility that SP

contains early readings that did not change readings of MT or of a text like MT. In accordance with this view, T–F’s analysis disregards the presence of similar readings found in Qumran manuscripts, thus not considering the possibility that the readings of SP are not changes made to MT or to a text like MT, but rather are early readings. Many of these early readings would indeed have changed a text like MT, but they were not “changes” made to SP but to the scroll on which SP was based.

3. The limited notation of the differences between SP and MT has its drawbacks, since the format disregards major agreements between SP on the one hand and LXX and important Qumran manuscripts on the other. The lack of these notations does not constitute a major problem, since a text edition does not form the end of the research process but rather is the basis for further research. However, this approach exposes the weaknesses of the binary classification of the variants that underlies this edition. Furthermore, although SP is compared to MT, it is often closer to the pre-Samaritan Qumran manuscripts than to MT. Likewise, in harmonizing pluses, recognized by T–F (32–34), SP is closer to the LXX than to MT. T–F chose not to include these data as theirs is not a full-fledged textual edition, but these facts have to be taken into consideration when evaluating the classification offered by this edition.

While I disagree with elements in T–F’s classification in the introduction, I consider the edition an excellent research tool. The major advantage of the new approach of T–F is in the separation between two groups in the introduction, and their separate treatment in the notation in the edition itself. The very division into intentional and unintentional variations is more subjective than the authors would be ready to admit. If I were to make a binary distinction between two groups of variants, I would probably end up with two groups of variants similar in scope to those indicated by T–F, but I would probably characterize them as *important/unimportant* for the text-critical analysis of SP. This type of binary division, parallel to other critical apparatuses, is admittedly subjective, but the highlighting of T–F is equally subjective.

I do not think that T–F should have stopped here in their separation of two types of readings. In addition, the information on the orthographic and grammatical variants could have been made available to the readers who would have enjoyed benefiting from the vast experience of the editors in this area. Technically, it would have been possible somehow to indicate these differences between the two traditions. The reader needs this type of guidance, as the introduction shows that orthography should not be taken at face value since the reading tradition must also be taken into consideration.

This brings us to the representation in the edition of the oral tradition of the Samaritans, heralding a major advancement in the *Editionstechnik* of SP. The Samaritan dimension of the SP edition has been greatly enhanced by Tal and Florentin, both experts in the oral transmission of that text. The importance of the

recording of the oral tradition has been known for a long time through the groundbreaking work of Ben-Ḥayyim, but this information has not yet been included in a text edition that records the differences between the Samaritan and Masoretic readings. A start was made in the first part of the promising monograph by S. Schorch, *Die Vokale des Gesetzes: Die samaritanische Lesetradition als Textzeugin der Tora, 1. Das Buch Genesis* (BZAW 339; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2004). T–F included the part of the oral tradition that is relevant for the use of SP in textual criticism in the form of notes on the running text in an extensive appendix on pp. 621–736, to which the Samaritan page in the text edition refers by way of a little circullus added to the text words. Thus, T–F do not provide the full reading of SP, but only those instances in which it differs from MT. Schorch 2004 followed a similar notation system, not accompanied by a complete text edition. The attentive reader notes immediately that the two monographs interpret Ben-Ḥayyim's transcription differently. Schorch records many more differences between MT and SP, and when the two monographs remark on the same word, they often interpret the transcription differently. Schorch also records his preference for the vocalization of either MT or SP (usually MT), and he records the evidence of the other ancient sources such as the LXX separately.

In the introduction (45–46), T–F remind the reader that we should not blindly follow the written tradition of the consonants in SP, but should always be aware of the reading tradition, as it sometimes goes against the consonants. Thus, a presumed difference between MT שמה and SP שם is not a real difference, since the pronunciation of both שם and שמה in SP is always *šamma* (46). Furthermore, even when words are written with the same consonants in MT and SP, the reading of the Samaritans may actually be based on a different vowel pattern. Some of these differences are significant. Thus in Exod 15:4, MT טבעו was read by SP as (טבעו). Likewise, in Gen 27:5, MT בְּדָבָר was read by SP as בְּדָבָר. Each of these cases is indicated in the SP edition alerting the reader to the full information.

We should add, however, that the Samaritan oral tradition is not the only possible way of understanding the consonants of SP, just as the Masoretic vocalization is not the only way of understanding the consonants of MT. T–F stress several times that the purpose of their edition is the comparison of SP with MT since SP is embraced by the Samaritan community, is rendered into Samaritan Aramaic and Arabic translations, and quoted in the early Samaritan literature. Accordingly, the reader now has full insight into the Samaritan dimension of SP.

However, the content of SP was not always Samaritan. T–F are aware of the Qumran texts that resemble SP (23 and the very long note 31 on 23–24; 33 esp. n. 53), but this dimension is not taken into consideration sufficiently in the introduction, nor are these texts reflected in the edition. Actually, T–F's approach to these early texts is unclear but is explained possibly by their opinion (23 n. 31) that SP in its present form was finally shaped only in the Middle Ages. The assumption of the late crystallization of SP is probably correct, definitely with

regard to the reading of the Samaritans, which is central to this edition. However, the main ingredients of SP existed already in antiquity, as is evident from a comparison of SP with the Qumran texts and the harmonizing elements in the LXX. Of course, we do not possess any SP manuscripts dating from the period between the turn of the era and the Middle Ages, but the Samaritan *targum* is close to SP (although T–F mention a few small differences; 39–41) and therefore its date can be pushed back a few centuries.

The omission of consideration of the non-Samaritan dimension is not an oversight, but is based on the conviction held by the master of Samaritan studies, Z. Ben-Hayyim, that the pre-Samaritan Qumran scrolls were not relevant to SP (“Comments on the Use of the Term ‘Proto-Samaritan,’” in *Language Studies V–VI* [Heb.; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1992], 13–23). At the same time, Ben-Hayyim realized that SP is not a reflection of a special Samaritan language or dialect, but reflects the Hebrew of the Second Temple period, parallel to rabbinic Hebrew and the language of the Dead Sea Scrolls, as opposed to the First Temple background of MT (“Traditions in the Hebrew Language, with Special Reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls* [eds. C. Rabin and Y. Yadin; ScrHier 4; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1965], 200–14; idem, *The Literary and Oral Tradition*, vol. 5 [1977], 2–3).

The limiting of the recording of information to that of the Samaritan oral tradition presents a logical procedure, since SP is a Samaritan text. Furthermore, we have no solid information about the non-Samaritan reading of the consonantal text of SP in the 2d century B.C.E. But, in our view, the oral tradition of SP is not the only way of understanding the consonants of SP.

My view about some of T–F’s insights in the introduction to the edition may be right or wrong, but even if I am right, the nature of the edition is not at stake. This is an excellent research tool, incorporating major innovations embodied in the Samaritan reading tradition.

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