

## BOOK REVIEWS

Anderson, Robert T., and Terry Giles. *The Keepers: An Introduction to the History and Culture of the Samaritans*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002. xvi + 165 pp. Hardcover, \$29.95.

Significant archaeological discoveries are waiting to be made in the deserts of American academia and the storerooms of American museums. In the spring of 1968, such a discovery was made in some cardboard boxes in a storage room under the football stadium at Michigan State University. It consisted of important artifacts and manuscripts that had been acquired from the impoverished Samaritans many decades before by E. K. Warren, a wealthy citizen of Three Oaks, Michigan. It was this discovery made by Robert T. Anderson, a professor at the university, that eventually led to the production of the present work, a brief and readable account of Samaritan history and religion. As compared with its larger predecessor by John Macdonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), Anderson and Giles provide a more complete history (largely drawn from the much older work of James Montgomery and the German work of Nathan Schur), but a much more abbreviated description of theology.

The authors make a distinction, not always consistently, between Samaritans as a sect and what they call Proto-Samaritans or Samaritans. They lay out three criteria as markers of Samaritanism: self-awareness as a religious sect, use of the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the choice of Mount Gerizim as their center of worship (9). Accordingly they do not see clear evidence for a final schism from Jerusalemite Judaism until the time of John Hyrcanus in mid-second century B.C.E. They ascribe to Josephus the application of charges of syncretism in places like 2 Kgs 17 against the Samaritan sect and regard it as unjust and tendentious (14-19), yet they acknowledge that the theophoric names found in the documents discovered in caves at Wadi ed-Daliyah (mid-fourth century B.C.E.) include both Yahwistic and pagan deities (26). They therefore term the materials "Samaritan," but in the next paragraph they call the unfortunate owners "Samaritans."

After dealing with the biblical and nonbiblical sources for our knowledge of the Samaritans in the OT, NT, Josephus, and the rabbinic literature, as well as the traditions of the Samaritans themselves, the book covers, in successive chapters the Byzantine and Islamic periods and modern times. Though this people enjoyed occasional times of favor, prosperity, and revival, for the most part their situation has been so wretched that it is a marvel that they still survive at all. (Today they number only a few hundred, about the same number as four centuries ago, but more than at the beginning of the twentieth century.) Ever since the sixteenth century Western scholars have taken an interest in them and begun to acquire Samaritan manuscripts, but the dealings of Westerners until modern times must be characterized as deceptive and exploitive (92-103). The relationship between contemporary Samaritans and Israeli Jews is ambiguous: hostility is now minimal but intermarriage is exceptional and there is reluctance

to allow burial of Samaritans in Jewish cemeteries (103).

Chapter 8 provides a detailed account (with photographic illustrations) of the Samaritan Pentateuch, the earliest surviving manuscript of which is the Abisha Scroll, dating from the ninth century C.E. Written in a variety of the palaeo-Hebrew alphabet, the Samaritan form of the Pentateuch represents a textual tradition that is independent of the MT and the LXX, but related to both. Its recovery by Western scholars catalyzed the beginning of OT textual criticism, and representatives of its type of text have been found at Qumran. The clarity of this chapter is not helped by sentences such as: "The text itself is written in majuscule (large) Samaritan characters in Arabic, or frequently in Arabic using Samaritan characters" (110), especially since the manuscripts are for the most part in Hebrew.

Samaritan theology and religion (chap. 9) was obviously hammered out in dialogue with Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Our authors succinctly describe the theology under the rubrics of monotheism (very rigorous, but allowing for the role of angels), Moses (the ultimate and most exalted prophet), Torah (venerated as something like God's very presence), Mount Gerizim (the navel of the earth and location of all the pivotal events of sacred history), and the day of vengeance and recompense when the Taheb, a sort of messiah and second Moses (cf. Deut 18:18), appears and restores the time of divine favor. They also discuss the priesthood, the Mosaic pilgrimage festivals, and the other rituals of circumcision, Sabbath, funerals, and corporate worship. Special attention is given to the nature of the sacredness of Mount Gerizim (128-33). A final chapter is devoted to the Samaritan collection at Michigan State University, "the largest assemblage of Samaritan materials in the United States" (135).

The authors apparently envisioned a fairly broad audience for this book. Scattered throughout the text are boxed sidebars explaining matters that a lay readership might not be presumed to know, but the standard scholarly apparatus is all there as well. It is a useful introduction.

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*BibleWorks 6*. Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks, 2003. Software Program. \$299.95.

For those who have never used BibleWorks before, it might best be described as a Bible software tool with impressive information and searching capabilities containing all of the major Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic texts, as well as a large number of the best English and modern-language versions. Not a "library on CD" like some other biblical-software offerings, BibleWorks keeps its attention strictly focused on providing the most powerful and up-to-date resources possible for the primary tasks of exegeting the ancient text. This program is one of the small handful that I use (gratefully) every day, as I have done for years.

Verses, passages, and whole chapters can easily be looked up and displayed in several versions simultaneously, either vertically or side by side. Basic parsing and lexical information for the ancient-language biblical texts is always available onscreen as one rolls the cursor across each word. A broader range of lexicons can be consulted by the click of a mouse button; and, for those who want the