*ashera* of Samaria, which was not removed by the house of Jehu, is mentioned in 2 Kings xiii. 6 ; and Hos. viii. 5 seems to speak of calf-idols there, unless the prophet is already using the name of Samaria for tho kingdom as a whole, as later writers often do. Ultimately, in the Greek period, the name of Samaria or Samaritis was applied to the whole tract of which it is the centre—the region between Judaea and Galilee, the country of the Samaritans (q.v); and the New Testament uses Samaria in this sense. The city of Samaria was Hellenized by Alexander, who settled Macedonian colonists in it It became a fortress and was twice taken by siege in the wars of the Diadochi (by Ptolemy I. in 312 and by Demetrius Poliorcetes about 296). Under the Ptolemies Samaria was the head of a separate province, and it continued to be a strong city till John Hyrcanus took and utterly destroyed it after a year’s siege (*c*. 110 b.c.; see Jos., *Ant.,* xiii. 10, 2 *sq.).* Taken from the Jews by Pompey, Samaria was one of the ruined cities which Gabinius ordered to be restored (Jos., *Ant.,* xiv. 5, 3); then given by Augustus to Herod the Great, it was refounded by him on a splendid scale probably in 27 b.c., the autumn of which year, according to Schürer’s calculations, is the probable epoch of the new city of Sebaste, as it was now called in honour of Augustus. Many remains of Herod's buildings, described by Josephus *{Ant.,* xv. 8, 5; *B. J.,* i. 21, 2), still remain; the most notable belong to a long colonnade just above the line of Herod’s wall and those of the great temple of Cæsar. The tombs of John the Baptist, Elisha, and obadiah were visited at Samaria in the time of Jerome (see Obadiah), and that of St John must have been shown there still earlier, for it was violated by Julian. The old crusading church, now a mosque, was built over the tomb of the Baptist, who is reverenced as a prophet by the Moslems. A view and plan of the church, with details, are given in the *Survey of W. Pah (Memoirs,* vol. ii. p. 211 *sq.),* where also there is a plan of the city. (W. R. S.)

SAMARITANS. This term, which primarily means “inhabitants of Samaritis or the region of Samaria,” is specially used, as in the New Testament and in Josephus, as the name of a peculiar religious community which had its headquarters in the Samaritan country, and is still represented by a few families (about 150 souls) at Nábulus, the ancient Shechem. They regard themselves as Israelites, descendants of the ten tribes, and claim to possess the orthodox religion of Moses, accepting the Pentateuch and transmitting it in a text which for the most part has only microscopic variations from the Torah of the Jews. But they regard the Jewish temple and priesthood as schismati­cal, and declare that the true sanctuary of God’s choice is not Zion but Mount Gerizim, overhanging Shechem (John iv. 20); here they had a temple which was destroyed by John Hyrcanus about 128 b.c. (Jos., *Ant.,* xiii. 9, 1), and on the top of the mountain they still celebrate the passover. The sanctity of this site they prove from their Pentateuch, reading Gerizim for Ebal in Deut. xxvii. 4. With this change the chapter of Deuteronomy can be interpreted with a little straining as a command to select Gerizim as the legitimate sanctuary (comp. ver. 7); and accordingly in Exod. xx. and Deut. v. a commandment taken from Deut. xxvii. is inserted at the close of the decalogue. Thus on their reckoning the tenth command­ment is the direction to build an altar and do sacrifice on Gerizim,—from which of course it follows that not only the temple of Zion but the earlier temple of Shiloh and the priesthood of Eli were schismatical. Such at least is the express statement of the later Samaritans; the older Samaritans, as they had no sacred books except the Pentateuch, probably ignored the whole history between Joshua and the captivity, and so escaped a great many difficulties. The contention that the Pentateuch is a law given by Moses for a community worshipping on Mount Gerizim is of course glaringly unhistorical. By the (unnamed) sanc­tuary of God’s choice the Deuteronomist certainly designed the temple of Zion ; and the priestly law, which is through­out based on the practice of the priests of Jerusalem before the captivity, was reduced to form after the exile, and was first published by Ezra as the law of the rebuilt temple of Zion. The Samaritans must therefore have derived their Pentateuch from the Jews after Ezra’s reforms, after 444 b.c Before that time Samaritanism cannot have

existed in a form at all similar to that which we know; but there must have been a community ready to accept the Pentateuch. In point of fact the district of Mount Ephraim was not entirely stripped of its old Hebrew popu­lation by the Assyrian captivity, and the worship of Jehovah went on at the old shrines of Northern Israel side by side, or even interfused, with the old heathenish rites of the new settlers whom the Assyrians brought to fill up the lands desolated by war. The account of the religious condition of the country given in 2 Kings xvii. 24 *sq.* dwells only on the partial adoption of Jehovah-worship by the foreigners who had come into the land, but by no means implies that the foreigners constituted the whole population. Josiah extended his reforms beyond the limits of Juda?a proper to Bethel and other Samaritan cities (2 Kings xxiii. 19), and the narrative shows that at that date things were going on at the Northern sanctuaries much as they had done in the time of Amos and Hosea. To a considerable extent his efforts to make Jerusalem the sanctuary of Samaria as well as of Judæa must have been successful, for in Jer. xli. 5 we find fourscore men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria making a pilgrimage to “the house of Jehovah,” after the catastrophe of Zedekiah. And so it is not surprising to find that the people of this district came to Zerubbabel and Joshua after the restoration, claiming to be of the same religion with the Jews and asking to be asso­ciated with them in the rebuilding of the temple. Their overtures were rejected by the leaders of the new theocracy, who could not but fear the results of interfusion with so large a mass of men of mixed blood and very questionable orthodoxy; and so the Jehovah-worshippers of Samaria were thrown into the ranks of “the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin ” (Ezra iv.). Nevertheless, down to the time of Nehemiah, the breach was not absolute; but the expul­sion from Jerusalem in 432 b.c of a man of high-priestly family who had married a daughter of Sanballat made it so; and it is more than probable, as has been explained in Israel, vol. xiii. p. 419, that this priest is the Manasseh of Josephus, who carried the Pentateuch to Shechem, and for whom the temple of Gerizim was built. For, though the story in Josephus *(Ant.,* xi. 8) is falsely dated and mixed with fable, it agrees with Neh. xiii. in too many essential points to be wholly rejected, and supplies exactly what is wanted to explain the existence in Shechem of a community bitterly hostile to the Jews, and yet constituted in obedience to Ezra’s Pentateuch.

When we consider what difficulties were met with in the introduction of Pentateuchal orthodoxy even at Jerusalem, the foundation of a community of the Law in the Samaritan country, among the mixed populations whom the Judaean leaders did not venture to receive into fellowship, must appear a very remarkable exploit. The Samaritan religion was built on the Pentateuch alone; and the fact that they did not receive even those prophetic books and historical narratives which originated in Northern Israel (all which have been preserved to us only by the Jews) shows that, before they received the Pentateuch, their Jehovah-worship was a mere affair of traditional practice, uninspired by prophetic ideas and unsupported by written record of the great deeds of Jehovah in time past. It can hardly in any respect have risen above the level of the popular religion of North Israel as described and condemned by Hosea and Amos. In Judæa the duty of conformity to the Pentateuch was enforced by appeal to the prophets and to the history of the nation’s sins and chastisements, and the acceptance of a vast and rigid body of ordinances was more easy because they came as the consolidation and logical develop­ment of a movement that had been in progress from the days of Isaiah. Among the Samaritans, on the other hand, the acceptance of the Pentateuch implied a tremendous