

Chapter XIV

The Aristocratic System (System A)

The Aristocratic understanding (System A) of “בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים” (*byn ha-arabim*)” was represented by the Jews called Sadducees, the Boethusian Sadducees, and by the ancient Samaritans. Moreover, it was used by the early assemblies following Yahushua the messiah.¹ Very few writings which discuss just how to observe Phasekh have come down to us directly from any acknowledged Sadducean, Boethusian, or ancient Samaritan source, so that for an acquaintance with their opinions we are mainly dependent upon their antagonists.² These antagonists, and records which are derived from the later variations of this view (as demonstrated by the neo-Samaritans and Karaites),³ show that, contrary to the Hasidic views, the Aristocratic approach understood that the first עֶרֶב (*arab*; intermixing of light and dark) occurred at sunset and the second at deep twilight (the setting of darkness).

Aristocratic Interpretation

The *Gesenius's Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* explains the Aristocratic interpretation:

Dual. עֶרְבִים the two evenings; only in the phrase בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים, between the two evenings, Ex. 16:12; 30:8; used as marking the space of time during which the paschal lamb was slain, Ex. 12:6; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3; and the evening sacrifice was offered, Ex. 29:39, 41; Num. 28:4; i.e. according to the opinion of the Karaites and Samaritans (which is favoured by the words of Deut. 16:6), the time between sunset and deep twilight.⁴

James Hastings notes:

The time of the Passover sacrifice is defined in the Law as ‘between the two evenings’ (בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים, Ex 12⁶, Lv 23⁵, Nu 9^{3. 5. 11}). This was interpreted by the Pharisees and Talmudists to mean from the hour of the sun’s decline until its setting; and this was the

¹ For the system used by the early assemblies following Yahushua the messiah see below Chap. XVII.

² CBTEL, 9, p. 235.

³ The neo-Aristocratic view, see below Chap. XV.

⁴ GHCL, p. 652, s.v. עֶרֶב.

later temple practice (cf. *Pesach.* v. 1; Jubilees, 49; Jos., BJ vi. ix. 3). The Samaritans, Karaites, and Sadducees, on the other hand, held that the period between sunset and dark was intended.⁵

The Targum Onqelos renders the term *בין הערבים* (*byn ha-arabim*) into its Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch as *בין שמשא* (*byn shamashia*; between suns).⁶ The Talmud explains *בין שמשא* (*byn shamashia*) to mean the time between sunset and the stars becoming visible,⁷ i.e., the twilight after sunset. In support of this view, the noted Jewish scholar, Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089–1164 C.E.), made an attempt to independently establish the literal meaning of the Hebrew text.⁸ His examination of the term *byn ha-arabim* resulted in his agreement with the view held by the Aristocratic school. He states:

Behold, we have two *arab* periods, the first is when the sun sets, and that is at the time when it disappears beneath the horizon; while the second is at the time when the light disappears which is reflected in the clouds, and there is between them an interval of about one hour and twenty minutes.⁹

Though records are sparse and direct evidence limited, there is no doubt that those of the original Aristocratic school began their day at sunset.¹⁰ The Mishnah, for example, reports that the Sadducees render a thing clean with “the setting of the sun.”¹¹ Since their point of view held that the period of *byn ha-arabim* was between sunset and dark, we have our first indication that the Sadducees and others of the Aristocratic school originally preferred to sacrifice their Phasekh victim at the beginning of the day, just after sunset, during the twilight of the 14th of Nisan.

The Aristocratic view is also demonstrable in the instruction of Exodus, 12:6–8, which ordered the Israelites to eat the lamb “THIS NIGHT,” immediately after its sacrifice. Since *byn ha-arabim* was followed by night, the early Sadducees, Samaritans, and others of like mind held to the view that one should eat their Phasekh supper on the night of the 14th rather than on the night of 15th, as the Hasidic Pharisees and others were accustomed. Indeed, there is some indication of this practice in ancient records during the early life of the messiah.¹² But after 6 C.E. the Pharisees gained religious dominance and the ruling Sadducees were forced by their adversaries to hold Phasekh supper on the night of the 15th.¹³ How long other Jewish groups who practiced the

⁵ ADB, 3, p. 691.

⁶ Targ. Onq., Exod., 12:6, 16:12, 29:39, 30:8; Lev., 23:5; Num., 9:3, 5, 11, 28:4, 8.

⁷ E.g., B. Shab., 34a–b; cf., B. Ber., 2a–b. Also see S. R. Driver’s comments (BE, p. 89).

⁸ EJ, 8, p. 1166.

⁹ Abraham, *Com. Exod.*, 12:6.

¹⁰ Par., 3:3, 7; B. Hag., 23a; B. Par., 34b, 36b; B. Yom., 1:19b.

¹¹ Par., 3:7; cf. B. Yom., 1:1a.

¹² The Sadducees controlled the celebration of Phasekh until Archelaus was removed as king of Judaea in 6 C.E. and an aristocratic government of priests was set up in mid-7 C.E. Yahushua was 12 years old in the spring of 7 C.E. and is said to have gone with his parents to Jerusalem every year until then to celebrate Phasekh (Luke, 2:41f). Since the messiah never sinned, and since he observed the Phasekh supper on Abib 14, it stands to reason that his parents, to whom he was subject, did likewise. Also see our discussions in FSDY, 2 and 3.

¹³ This point is especially true in light of Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:1:3, that “all prayers (vows) and sacred rites of divine worship are performed according to their (the Pharisees’) exposition.”

Aristocratic method held out in their belief is unknown. Yet it is certain that nearly all of the Jews living in Judaea, with the exception of the early assemblies following Yahushua the messiah,¹⁴ fell beneath the iron hand of the Pharisees prior to the end of the first century C.E., which certainly would have influenced their subsequent decisions.

Shortly after the fall of the city of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., and because of their conservative religious nature and close ties to the Temple, the power of the Sadducees died out.¹⁵ The Boethusian branch of the Sadducees did continue as a recognized group for a number of years longer but they too passed into history.¹⁶ The neo-Samaritans and Karaites, who observed a modified form of the Aristocratic view (System C), have remained to our present time but, for all intents and purposes, they too have ceased as a religious force in this latter half of the 20th century. Originally, the assemblies following Yahushua the messiah also observed the Aristocratic system. Yet as time passed they suffered through a period of radical change with regard to the Phasekh festival, a transformation which began in the first half of the second century C.E. We shall discuss this transformation in our subsequent chapters.

Issues for the Aristocratic View

Those adhering to the original Aristocratic reckoning for Phasekh (System A) saw the issues quite differently from the Hasidim (System B). For them the expression *byn ha-arabim*, the time of day on the 14th when the Phasekh lamb was sacrificed, was the twilight after sunset and was the first part of the day. The Phasekh supper was eaten during the night of the 14th.¹⁷ Further, they followed the statements in Exodus, 12:18f, and Ezekiel, 45:21, indicating that the 14th of Abib (Nisan) was the first day of the seven days of eating unleavened bread. The expression, "In the first (moon) on the 14th day of the moon within *arab* you shall eat unleavened bread until the 21st day of the moon within *arab*,"¹⁸ was understood as inclusive of the 14th day and exclusive of the 21st day. Accordingly, the seven days lasted only "until" *arab* (twilight)—i.e., to the beginning of—the 21st day.

For the Hasidic interpretation the statements found in Leviticus, 23:5–8, and Numbers, 28:16–25, where the 14th was the Phasekh and the 15th was called a Khag of Unleavened Bread for Yahweh, are pivotal points for their case. For those holding to the original Aristocratic view, the adherents to the Hasidic system were suffering from a case of overinterpretation. They saw the solution as follows:

- To begin with, for the advocates of the original Aristocratic system, per scriptural command,¹⁹ there are only seven days of unleavened bread—

¹⁴ The Aristocratic practice continued strong among many Christian groups until the third century C.E. It began to be heavily suppressed after the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. but lingered on in more remote regions until the seventh century C.E. See our Chaps. XVII–XIX.

¹⁵ NBD, p. 1124; MDB, p. 785.

¹⁶ The Talmud mentions a Boethusian in a dispute with one of the pupils of Rabbi Akiba during the first half of the second century C.E. (Shab., 108a; Sof., 1:2).

¹⁷ Exod., 12:11f.

¹⁸ Exod., 12:18.

¹⁹ Exod., 12:15–20, 13:6f, 34:18; Lev., 23:5–8; Num., 28:16–18; Deut., 16:3.

not seven and one-fourth days (eight days) as produced in the Hasidic system. Since the 14th was a day of unleavened bread,²⁰ they counted these seven days from the beginning of the 14th until the end of the 20th day (beginning of the 21st day) of the first moon.

- Second, when the festival is referred to in Scriptures as the Festival of Unleavened Bread, without reference to the Phasekh, it has seven days.²¹ And, when the festival is referred to only as the Festival of Phasekh, with no reference to it as the Khag of Unleavened Bread, it still has only seven days.²² Therefore, Phasekh and Unleavened Bread are two names for one-and-the-same seven-day festival period.
- Third, the entire seven-day festival was originally named the Khag of Unleavened Bread.²³ Therefore, each day is a *khag*, not just the first day. At the time of the Exodus, the first day of the seven-day Khag of Unleavened Bread, which is a *sabbathon*, was renamed the Khag of Phasekh. That left six more *khag*-days from the original description. These remaining six days formed the Khag of Unleavened Bread and began on the 15th of Abib. This construct is explained by the six days of eating unleavened bread found in Deuteronomy, 16:8. For those holding to the original Aristocratic view, that is all that Leviticus, 23:5–8, and Numbers, 28:16–25, are saying.

What then of the issue of Leviticus, 23:32, with reference to the Day of Atonement on the 10th day of the seventh moon? As we have shown, the advocates of the Hasidic view argue that the phrase *בתשעה לחדש בערב* (*be-teshuah la-khodesh be-arab*) means, “in the ninth (day) of the moon at *arab*,” and that this proves that there is a period of *arab* at the end of the ninth day. Those adhering to the Aristocratic view, meanwhile, see this translation as an error, concocted by the Hasidim in an effort to create support for their interpretation. In the eyes of those advocating the Aristocratic system, this verse does not even mention the ninth. Rather, this passage actually reads that the Israelites should humble themselves, “*בתשעה* (*be-teshuah*; with deliverance) *לחדש* (*la-khadash*; for renewing) at *arab*.”²⁴ That is, one is delivered from his sins when he renews himself by making atonement, symbolized by fasting. This fasting starts at *arab*, at the beginning of the 10th day.

²⁰ Exod., 12:18; Ezek., 45:21; cf., Num., 9:11f.

²¹ Exod., 23:14f.

²² Ezek., 45:20–24.

²³ The evidence shows that the Phasekh, as a commanded sacrifice, was not originally part of the seven-day festival. It was originally intended only as a one-time event in Egypt meant for the Exodus. To demonstrate, there were no commanded sacrifices after the Israelites left Egypt (Jer., 7:21–26). As a result, in the covenant at Mount Sinai, only the statute to keep “the Khag of Unleavened Bread” was affirmed, with no reference to any Phasekh sacrifice (Exod., 23:14–17). The Phasekh sacrifice was reintroduced only after the Israelites rebelled by building the golden calf at Mount Sinai. With this act of idolatry, the Israelites had broken their marriage covenant with Yahweh. To reinstate them into this covenant, Yahweh commanded that a Phasekh victim be sacrificed each year with the unleavened bread (Exod., 34:25).

²⁴ In Hebrew, *בתשעה* (*be-teshuah*) means, *ב* (*be*) = “in, among, with” (HEL, p. 30), and *תשעה* (*teshuah*) = “rescue . . . deliverance, help, safety, salvation, victory” (SEC, Heb. #8668), “freedom, safety, salvation, deliverance” (HEL, p. 262). The word *לחדש* (*la-khadash*; for renewing) means, *ל* (*la*)

Early Aristocratic View

At present we have very few extra-biblical sources demonstrating exactly how the Festival of Phasekh and Unleavened Bread was observed prior to the outbreak of the Hasmonaean (Maccabean) Revolt (late 167 B.C.E.). Two Aramaic ostraca dated to the early fifth century B.C.E., though quite probably written later,²⁵ do mention the Phasekh but give no definition.²⁶ One heavily damaged papyrus from Elephantine, Egypt, dated to the fifth year of Darius II of Persia (419 B.C.E.), does mention the days of unleavened bread.²⁷ The text also says something to the effect that, “thus shall you count: fo[urteen . . . ,” and adds, evidently by continuing to count, “and from the 15th day until the 21st.”²⁸ It also explains that something occurs from some date (now lost in the text), extending “. . . f]rom the setting of the sun until the 21st day of Nisa[n”²⁹ Nevertheless, the text is so defective that we are unable to decipher its precise meaning. If “until the 21st” is by exclusive dating, it would refer to the Aristocratic system; yet if that phrase is inclusive, it would reflect the Hasidic method. There is simply no clear way of knowing.

Fortunately, we do have at least one solid reference to the practice of the Jewish priests in the pre-Hasmonaean period and it demonstrates the Aristocratic view (System A). This one record comes from the works of Aristobulus of Paneas and is found in the *Canons of Anatolius on the Phasekh*.³⁰ Anatolius (c. 262–282 C.E.) was an Alexandrian Christian teacher who became bishop of Laodicea in Syria.³¹ A. Yarbro Collins writes of Anatolius, “In his work *On the Passover*, he apparently defended the position of the Quartodecimans,” i.e., the early Aristocratic understanding which held that the seven days of unleavened bread were to be celebrated from the beginning of the 14th day until the end of the 20th of the moon of Abib/Nisan and that the Phasekh supper should take place on the night of the 14th.³²

As part of his treatise on the Phasekh, Anatolius defers to the authority of “the excellent Aristobulus from Paneas,”³³ a city better known as Caesarea

= “to, towards . . . at, in . . . till, until . . . in order to, for the purpose of . . . for, belonging to, with respect to” (HEL, p. 131), and כְּחַדָּשׁ (*khadash*) = “a prim. root; to be new; caus. to rebuild:—renew, repair . . . new:—fresh” (SEC, Heb. #2318–2319), “renew, restore” (HEL, p. 80). We shall have much more to say about this verse in FSDY, 2.

²⁵ Cf., comments in THP, p. 8, ns. 2, 8.

²⁶ ESE, 2, pp. 1903–1907; RES, no. 1792; PSBA, 33, facing p. 184; THP, p. 8.

²⁷ APOJ, tafel 6; THP, pp. 9f.

²⁸ APOJ, tafel 6, ll. 4–5.

²⁹ APOJ, tafel 6, ll. 8.

³⁰ The relevant quotation from the *Canons of Anatolius on the Phasekh* is found in Eusebius, *H.E.*, 32:14–19.

³¹ Jerome, *Lives*, 58; Eusebius, *H.E.*, 7:32; ANF, 6, p. 145; OTP, 2, p. 837, n. a.

³² OTP, 2, p. 837, n. a. Also see below n. 37 and below Chap. XIX, pp. 299–304.

³³ The connection with Paneas is found in the Latin and Syriac text (OTP, 2, p. 837, n. c). This “Aristobulus the famous” (i.e., Aristobulus of Paneas) must not be confounded, as is often the case (as done in HJP, 3, pp. 579–586; JE, 2, p. 97f; EJ, 3, pp. 443f; and so forth), with the philosopher named “Aristobulus of Alexandria,” also called “Aristobulus the Peripatetic,” who flourished in the time of Ptolemy Philometor (181–145 B.C.E.) (Eusebius, *P.E.*, 9:6). The fragments from both are found in Eusebius, *H.E.*, 7:32:16–18, *P.E.*, 8:9:38–8:10:17, 13:12:1f, 9–16, 13:13:3–8, 34; Clement, *Strom.*, 1:148:1, 1:150:1–3, 5:99:3, 5:107:2, 6:32:3–33:1, 6:137–144. An English translation of these is provided in OTP, 2, pp. 837–842.

Of this second Aristobulus, Eusebius notes that he was a “wise man of the Hebrews, who flourished under the rule of the Ptolemies” (Eusebius, *P.E.*, 7:13). He adds that this Aristobulus partook of Aristotle’s philosophy as well as that of his own country and he is the person

Philippi, located about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee near the source of the Jordan river. It is today called Banias.³⁴ Anatolius notes that Aristobulus, also called Aristobulus the famous,³⁵ was one of the 70 Judahite priests (Levites) who translated the Pentateuch into the Greek LXX during the reign of Ptolemy II (Ptolemy Philadelphus) (283–246 B.C.E.).³⁶

While noting that the Festival of Unleavened Bread continued from the beginning of the 14th until the end of the 20th (as opposed to the Hasidic idea that it began with the 15th and ended at the end of the 21st),³⁷ Anatolius cites Aristobulus of Paneas as one of his chief proofs. He adds that, “the day of διαβατηρίον (*diabaterion*; the crossing-festival, Phasekh) was assigned to the 14th of the moon μεθ’ ἑσπέραν (*meth hesperan*; within twilight = *byn ha-arabim*).”³⁸ As a result, Anatolius, who is using Aristobulus of Paneas to support the Quartodeciman reckoning, has revealed to us that during the mid-third century B.C.E., the priests sacrificed the Phasekh lamb “within” the time of *hesperan*, i.e., within the time of twilight following sunset,³⁹ at the beginning of the 14th day, being the first day of the seven-day festival.⁴⁰

The Ancient Samaritans

There is little doubt that the ancient Samaritans reflected the Sadducean position with regard to the timing of *byn ha-arabim*. To support this detail, we retain one

mentioned at the beginning of 2 Maccabees” (Eusebius, *P.E.*, 8:9). The book of 2 Maccabees refers to this Aristobulus as a teacher of King Ptolemy and “of the stock of the anointed priests” (2 Macc., 1:10). This passage adds that the leadership of Judaea sent a letter to this Aristobulus in the 188th Jewish Seleucid year (124 B.C.E.). In a work of this second Aristobulus (Aristob. Alex., frag. 3; Eusebius, *P.E.*, 13:12:2), which he dedicates to a King Ptolemy, he comments that, “the entire translation of all the (books) of the Torah (was made) in the time of the king called Philadelphus, your progenitor.”

All problems disappear once it is realized that we are speaking of two different men named Aristobulus (a common name used by the Jews during the Seleucid period). Anatolius spoke only of the man who assisted in the translation of the Torah into Greek. As for the claim that the name Aristobulus does not appear in Aristeas’ list of the 72 translators (Aristeas, 47–51), any such objection fails on three counts. First, Jewish priests of this period often carried more than one name—e.g., Jonathan Johanan (379–348 B.C.E.); Joshua Jason (180–178 B.C.E.); Onias Menelaus (177–162 B.C.E.). Second, the list at question claims 72 names but only 71 remain (one name clearly being erased). The name missing is the sixth name of the fourth tribe (OTP, 2, p. 16, n. k). That someone begrudged Aristobulus of Paneas his place in this list might well serve as a reason to erase his name. Third, the fourth name of the tenth tribe is Baneas, which seems nothing less than Paneas, which easily could represent Aristobulus of Paneas. Any one of these reasons would explain why the name of Aristobulus does not presently appear.

³⁴ Pliny, 7:16 §74; Eusebius, *H.E.*, 7:17; Jos., *Wars*, 2:9:1, *Antiq.*, 18:2:1. Also see DGRG, 2, p. 540; NBD, p. 175; DB, p. 100.

³⁵ Eusebius, *H.E.*, 7:32:16, “Ἀριστοβούλου τοῦ πάνυ.”

³⁶ Eusebius, *H.E.*, 7:32:16.

³⁷ Anatolius went to great lengths to define what he meant by the “seven days of unleavened bread.” He explains that the 14th day was the first day of unleavened bread and the day in which the messiah ate the Phasekh. He then demonstrates that if one counts “from the end of the 13th day of the moon, which marks the beginning of the 14th, on to the end of the 20th, at which the 21st day also begins, and you will have only seven days of unleavened bread, in which, by the guidance of the sovereign, it has been determined before that the most true Festival of the Phasekh ought to be celebrated,” and that these seven days do not go “beyond the limit of the moon’s 20th day” (Anatolius, 8, 11).

³⁸ Eusebius, *H.E.*, 7:32:18.

³⁹ For μεθ’ (*meth*), a form of μετά (*meta*), “within,” i.e., “in the midst of, among, between . . . of motion, into the middle of, coming into or among” (GEL, 1968, pp. 1108f). For ἑσπέραν (*hesperan*) see above Chap. XIII, p. 215f, n. 36.

⁴⁰ For the Aristocratic understanding of these seven days see Chaps. XVIII–XIX.

piece of evidence from an ancient Samaritan writer, Ezekielos the Tragedian, in his work entitled ἐξαγωγή (*Exagoge*; Deliverance).⁴¹ This work was composed sometime between the first part of the second century until about 90 B.C.E.,⁴² i.e., as early as the outbreak of the Hasmonaeen Revolt or as late as the first decade of the next century. Clement of Alexandria calls Ezekielos “the poet of Jewish tragedies.”⁴³ Important fragments of the *Exagoge* have survived in the works of Eusebius.⁴⁴ Internal evidence from this tragic drama reveals that the author belonged to the ancient Samaritan sect, which used the Aristocratic method.⁴⁵

These Samaritans (called “Kuthim” by the Judaeans) were a mixture of foreign peoples, largely from the Babylonian, Median, and Persian regions, who had been forcibly settled in the country of Samaria, north of Judah, after the northern Israelites were deported out of their homeland by the powerful Assyrian empire in the late eighth until the mid-seventh century B.C.E.⁴⁶ Finding it difficult in their new home, and believing that their problems stemmed from their failure to worship the deity of the land, the Samaritans sent for a Levitical priest who converted them to the religion of Yahweh.⁴⁷ Though they were not actually descendants of the Israelite people, these foreigners made claim to being descendants of the Israelites when the circumstances suited them—a point of great irritation to and a source of condemnation by the first century Judahites of Judaea.⁴⁸

Later, in the year that Alexander the Great invaded Samaria and Judaea (332 B.C.E.), Manasseh—a Levitical high priest of the Zadok (Tsadoq) line of Aaron, and brother of Jaddua,⁴⁹ the high priest of Yahweh at Jerusalem—married Nikaso, the daughter of Sanaballetes, king of the Samaritans.⁵⁰ As the result of this marriage, Manasseh was made high priest of a new Temple of Yahweh built for the Samaritan people on Mount Gerizim, situated in Samaritan territory.⁵¹ Manasseh would have brought with him the Aristocratic view of Phasekh and the seven days of unleavened bread.

⁴¹ Fragments are quoted by Eusebius, *P.E.*, 9:28f; Clement, *Strom.*, 1:23:155f; and Ps.-Eustathius (PG, 18, p. 729).

⁴² OTP, 2, p. 804, “perhaps the first part of the second century B.C.”; AOASH, 2, p. 148, suggests that Ezekielos flourished about 90 B.C.E.

⁴³ Clement, *Strom.*, 1:23.

⁴⁴ Eusebius, *P.E.*, 9:28.

⁴⁵ This evidence comes from two details. First, Ezekielos shows a clear bias toward the Aristocratic view that *byn ha-arabim* begins the day and that the entire Festival of Phasekh and Unleavened Bread lasts only seven days, beginning with the 14th. Second, Ezekielos regards the ordinances from the time of the Exodus out of Egypt—that is, the selection of the Phasekh victim on the 10th day, the smearing of the blood of the Phasekh victim, and the special wardrobe worn—as binding on later generations. Only the Samaritans are known to have continued these customs (see REJ, 46, pp. 174ff; THP, pp. 24f). The fact that Ezekielos is a Samaritan yet is called a Jew is easily explained. The Samaritans were considered a Jewish sect by ancient writers (Eusebius, *H.E.*, 4:22:7; Socrates Schol., 5:22), and the Samaritans (Kuthim) often made the claim that they were descendants of the ancient Israelites who had originally settled in the districts of Samaria (see below n. 48). Also see SHDL, pp. 143f.

⁴⁶ 2 Kings, 17:24; Ezra, 4:8–10; Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:14:1, 3, 11:4:3, cf., 11:7:2.

⁴⁷ 2 Kings, 17:24–34; Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:14:3.

⁴⁸ E.g., Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:14:3, 10:9:7, 11:2:1, 11:4:3f, 9, 11:7:2, 11:8:6, 12:5:5; John, 4:9; Luke, 9:51–56; Shebi., 8:10, “one who eats the bread of the Kuthim is as if he eats swine’s flesh.”

⁴⁹ Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:7:2–11:8:4, cf., 20:10:1f.

⁵⁰ Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:7:2, 11:8:2–4.

⁵¹ Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:7:2, 11:8:2–4, 13:9:1.

Our first proof of the relationship between the conservative Zadok priests and the Samaritans is found in the works of Hippolytus (early third century C.E.), who writes that a sect of the Sadducees “had its stronghold especially in the region around Samaria.”⁵² Epiphanius and John of Damascus likewise identify the Samaritans with the Sadducees.⁵³ Next, these Samaritans followed only the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua, discounting even the Old Testament books of the Prophets, and like the Sadducees they dismissed any need to observe the oral laws of the Pharisees.⁵⁴

The Samaritans, from the latter part of the second century B.C.E., differed from the Sadducees in that they argued that the high priest and the priesthood at Jerusalem, as well as the Temple built there, were not legitimate.⁵⁵ The high priests of Jerusalem had been dominated for years by the Hasmonaeans and others who were appointed by the Herods or controlled by the Pharisees. On the other hand, the priesthood established among the Samaritans claimed Zadok heritage through Manasseh, the brother of Jaddua. Also in their eyes, the holy mountain was not Mount Zion but Mount Gerizim.⁵⁶

The Sadducees and early Samaritans were politically opposed to one another. Therefore, the many points of agreement they shared in reference to the issues about Phasekh, the seven days of unleavened bread, and the Festival of Weeks (Pentecost) must all have come from a previous long-standing practice prior to their schism. Since the schism between the two parties was among the ruling priests and occurred in the later half of the fourth century B.C.E., this information indicates that the Aristocratic practice for these festivals was both dominant and very early.

Ancient Samaritan Understanding

With the fact that the high priests of the Samaritans were derived from the conservative Zadokites and were so similar to the Sadducees that they were called by that name, we can now examine the ancient Samaritan beliefs about Phasekh as revealed in the record from Ezekielos. In Ezekielos’ drama of the Exodus, Yahweh tells Moses:

And you shall say to all the people, The full moon of the moon of which I speak, having sacrificed the Phasekh to the deity τῇ πρόσθε νυκτὶ (*te prosthe nukti*; before night), touch the doors with blood, which sign the fearsome angel will pass by. But you shall eat the roasted flesh by night.⁵⁷

⁵² Hippolytus, *Ref. Her.*, 9:24.

⁵³ Epiphanius, *Pan.*, 1:14; John Dam., 16.

⁵⁴ SEJS, pp. 225f; BJK, p. 387; DB, p. 584; EBD, p. 907; cf., Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:8:6, 18:1:4. John Dam., 14, states that the Samaritans “reject the post-Mosaic prophecies.” The statements asserted by Epiphanius (*Pan.*, 14), Origen (*Celsus*, 1:49), and Jerome (*Com. Matt.*, 3, on 22:31–33), that the Sadducees rejected the prophets and Hagiographa, and relied upon the Pentateuch, refer only to the Samaritans and not to the Judahite Sadducees (cf., CBTEL, 9, pp. 235f).

⁵⁵ SHDL, p. 65.

⁵⁶ SHDL, pp. 7, 55–57; SEJS, pp. 234–239; SAJ, pp. 142–144.

⁵⁷ Eusebius, *P.E.*, 9:28:16 (l. 156–160).

The Greek phrase τῇ πρόσθε νυκτὶ (*te prosthe nukti*) refers to the time in front of and immediately preceding the dark of night,⁵⁸ i.e., the period of twilight after sunset. To this passage we add another that makes reference to the separation of the Phasekh lamb on the tenth of the moon. Ezekielos writes:

And when the 10th day of this moon is come, let Hebrew men by families thus select unblemished sheep and calves, and keep them until the 14th ἐπιλάμψει (*epilampsei*; has fully come in) and sacrifice it πρὸς ἑσπέραν (*pros hesperan*; at twilight).⁵⁹

The Phasekh victim was kept until the 14th day ἐπιλάμψει (*epilampsei*; has fully come in).⁶⁰ R. G. Robertson translates ἐπιλάμψει (*epilampsei*) to mean “has dawned,” i.e., the 14th day had just begun.⁶¹ It has been known for some time now that the Hebrew-Aramaic word אֹר (aur; to illuminate)⁶² is a technical term used for the twilight after sunset (a type of dawning light of a new day) which comes before the dawn of daylight (since in Hebrew and Samaritan time-reckoning the night precedes daylight).⁶³ This usage is well-attested in the Mishnah,⁶⁴ and, as Jehoshua M. Grintz so poignantly notes, “in the Gemara there is a discussion about the exact meaning and origin of this strange usage: ‘light’ is an euphemistic surrogate for ‘night.’”⁶⁵ This same Hebrew phrasing is found behind the Greek of Matthew, 28:1.⁶⁶ Ezekielos was a Samaritan, and the Samaritans spoke a form of Hebrew-Aramaic. His Greek tragedy about the Exodus merely reflects this old Hebrew-Aramaic thought and usage. In effect, from his perspective, the twilight (dawn) coming after sunset begins a 24-hour day, just as much as the twilight (dawn) before sunrise begins the daylight portion of a common day.

It is within this context that the Greek expression πρὸς ἑσπέραν (*pros hesperan*; at twilight),⁶⁷ being the time of the sacrifice, must be understood.

⁵⁸ For the Greek term πρόσθε (*prosthe*) see GEL, 1968, p. 1513, “of Time, before”; and for νυκτὶ (*nukti*), a form of νύξ (*nuks*), see GEL, 1968, p. 1185, “night.”

⁵⁹ Eusebius, *P.E.*, 9:28:19 (l. 175–179).

⁶⁰ The Greek term ἐπιλάμψει (*epilampsei*) means to “shine after or thereupon” and in the case of ἡμέρης ἐπιλάμψας, “when day had fully come,” i.e., when a day had fully begun (GEL, 1968, p. 642).

⁶¹ OTP, 2, p. 816 (l. 178). The Syrian Christian writer Aphraates (*Dem.*, 12:12, cf., v. 6–8, 12–13) similarly follows this Aristocratic interpretation and places the correct observance of the Phasekh supper on the “dawn of the 14th,” equating it with the time of night that the messiah kept his Last Supper with his disciples.

⁶² SEC, Heb. #215.

⁶³ JBL, 79, pp. 37–39.

⁶⁴ E.g., Pes., 1:1, 1:3.

⁶⁵ JBL, 79, pp. 38.

⁶⁶ JBL, 79, pp. 37–39. In the case of Matt., 28:1, the Greek term ἐπιφωσκούση (*epiphoskouse*) was used, meaning “to begin to grow light:—begin to dawn” (SEC, Gk. #2020).

⁶⁷ The term πρὸς (*pros*), when used with ἑσπέραν (*hesperan*), means “at” or “on the side of” the time of *hesperan* (GEL, 1968, pp. 697, 1496f). More exactly, this phrase refers to the very beginning time or just upon the time of *hesperan* (= *arab*). The Greek phrase πρὸς ἑσπέραν (*pros hesperan*) is used in the LXX as the equivalent of the Hebrew לַעַת עֲרַב (*la-ath arab*; at the time of *arab*), cf., LXX at Gen., 8:11; 2 Sam. (MT 2 Kings), 11:2; Isa., 17:14; and the Hebrew בֵּין הָעֲרָבִים (*byn ha-arabim*), cf., LXX at Exod., 12:6, 16:12; Num., 9:3, 11, 28:4, 8. This detail seems to indicate that the original thought in this passage was the time *byn ha-arabim*. The Samaritans considered the time of *byn ha-arabim* to be two minutes past sunset (PHT, p. 81.), therefore just at the beginning of twilight.

When these thoughts are all placed together, it shows that the sacrifice was made *προς ἑσπέραν* (*pros hesperan*; at twilight), just when the 14th *ἐπιλάμψει* (*epilampsei*; had dawned, had fully come in), yet *τῇ πρόσθε νυκτὶ* (*te prosthē nukti*; before night). Therefore, the Phasekh was sacrificed at twilight, just before nightfall, on the 14th day of the first moon; it was then eaten on that same night, on the 14th day of the moon.

Finally, Ezekielos states, “You shall keep this festival to the master (Yahweh) seven days unleavened. Leaven will not be eaten.”⁶⁸ For the early Samaritans, these seven days of Phasekh were counted “from the morn in which you fled from Egypt, and did journey seven days, from that same morn.”⁶⁹ This passage is only correctly understood from the ancient Aristocratic viewpoint. It is more fully expressed in the Samaritan *Commentary to the Asatir*, which notes, “The sacrifice of the Phasekh was from *arab* until the break of the first dawn. And the festival is from the break of the first dawn to the setting of the sun.”⁷⁰

This statement reveals that, for those of the Aristocratic school, like the ancient Samaritans, *byn ha-arabim*—being the time when the lamb was sacrificed—and the nighttime period when the lamb was consumed were both part of the first half of the 14th day. The remains of the lamb were burnt in the morning, thereby ending that part of the festival. Meanwhile, sunset ended the second half of the day. The seven days are thereby divided so that the first day of unleavened bread consists of the sacrifice and Phasekh supper, lasting from the period immediately following sunset (= *arab*) until the dawn of the first day. The Khag of Unleavened Bread follows in the second half of the first day, from the dawn until sunset of the 14th, and then continues six more days. It was a technical way for the early Samaritans to explain the superimposition of the one-day Khag of Phasekh atop the seven-day Khag of Unleavened Bread at the time of the Exodus. The day of the Phasekh, accordingly, was the same day as first of the seven days of unleavened bread.

Except for Ezekielos the Tragedian and the later *Commentary to the Asatir*, we know little more of how the ancient Samaritans kept the Festival of Phasekh and Unleavened Bread. Nevertheless, we cannot fail to realize that the neo-Samaritans, who are a much more recent sect, would not have held on to their Aristocratic interpretation of *byn ha-arabim* (= twilight after sunset), neither would they have resisted the pressure from the more powerful Pharisees to adopt the Hasidic view, unless the Aristocratic approach was indeed their own original understanding.

Conclusion

The records show that the Samaritans were first taught by the early Levitical priests and, in the days of Alexander the Great, established Manasseh (the

⁶⁸ Eusebius, *P.E.*, 9:28:19 (l. 188f). Line 189 literally states, “Seven days (of eating) unleavened (bread), and you will not eat leavened (bread).” An alternate form of punctuation links the first part of this line with the preceding line, resulting in the translation, “You will keep this festival to the master, seven days unleavened. Leaven will not be eaten” (OTP, 2, p. 816, n. b3).

⁶⁹ Eusebius, *P.E.*, 9:28:17 (l. 168f).

⁷⁰ Com. *Asatir*, 8:32.

brother of Jaddua, the conservative Zadok high priest of Jerusalem) as the founder of their own high priest line. As a result, ancient Samaritan ideas about the Phasekh and the seven days of unleavened bread paralleled the conservative Aristocratic understanding.

The evidence also proves that the Aristocratic system was in practice long before the founding of the Hasidic school. Therefore, the ancient Zadokite priests and their spiritual brothers and descendants the Sadducees, ancient Samaritans, and Boethusian Sadducees retained a more ancient view of *byn ha-arabim*. In their understanding *byn ha-arabim* meant the period between sunset and dark. In turn, the earlier Aristocratic groups, including the Sadducees and ancient Samaritans, kept only a seven-day festival, lasting from the beginning of the 14th until the end of the 20th. This point shall be demonstrated even further in our Section II while dealing with the Quartodeciman Christians, who followed the Aristocratic system.

