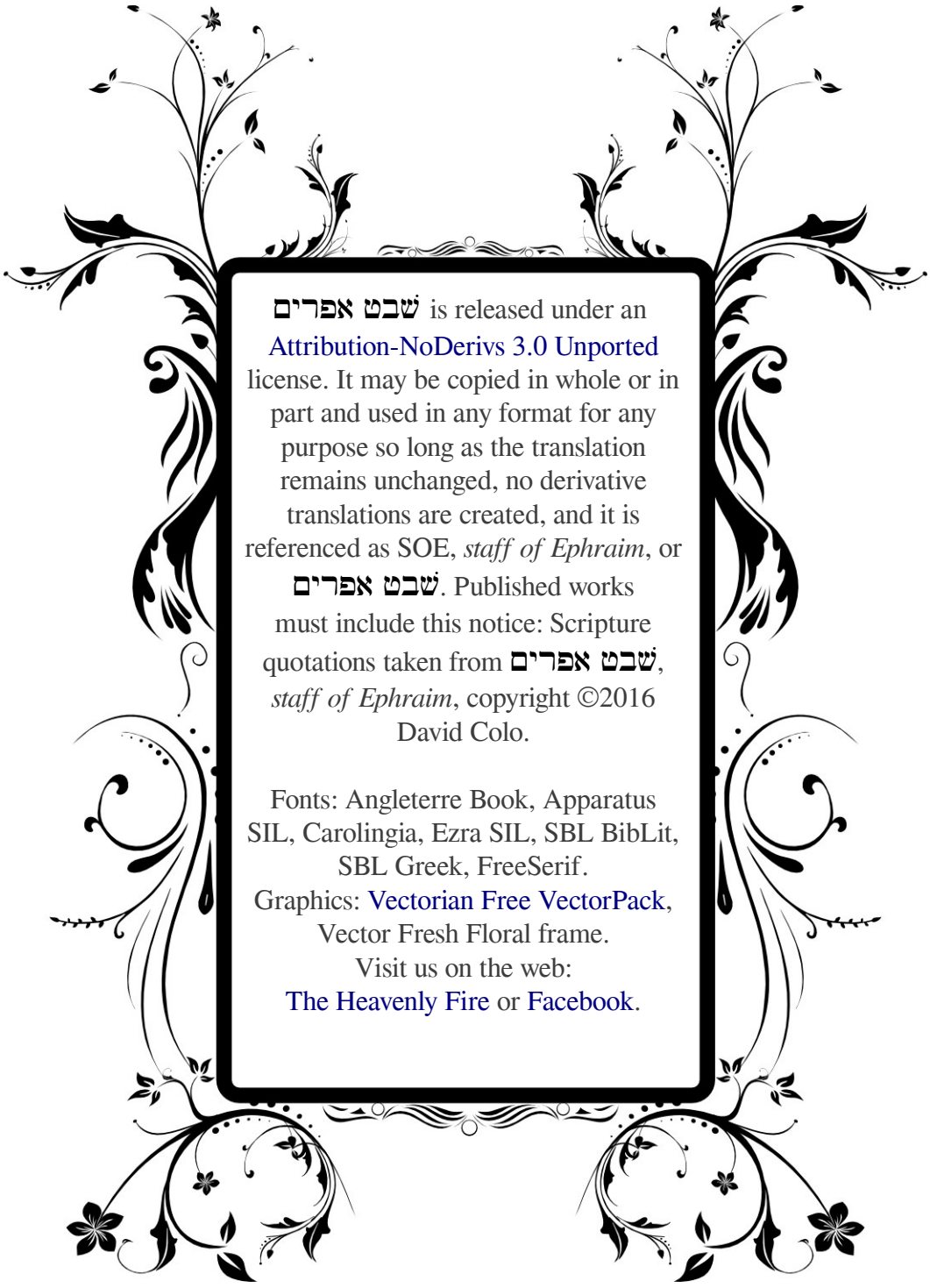


שבט אפרים  
*staff of Ephraim*



שמות  
*Exodus*

David Colo

A decorative floral frame with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns surrounds the central text. The frame is symmetrical and features a central horizontal band with a small floral motif.

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# INTRODUCTION

## NAMES AND TERMINOLOGY

### 1. Of The Translation

שַׁבַּת אֶפְרַיִם (*šēbeṭ 'ep̄rāyim*) means “**staff of Ephraim**” (SOE). The name **Ephraim** appears throughout the prophetic texts of the Judean canon as a synonym for the northern kingdom of Israel. The tribal territory of Ephraim lay in the center of that kingdom. And in the heart of that was Shechem, situated below Mount Gerizim, on which sat a sacred Israelite temple independent of the one rebuilt in Jerusalem. The word **staff** is often used metonymically to describe the ruling power of a king or tribe. Thus, the name for this translation reflects the belief of those who would base their religion on Gerizim that their texts are the divine rule for the tribes of Jacob and a witness to their ancestral heritage.

### 2. Of The Sacred Text

Before Alexander conquered Palestine, the **Samaritans** (or שַׁמְרִיִּים, meaning “**Observant Ones**” or “**Guardians [of the Law]**”)<sup>i</sup> were an Israelite sect that lived, worshiped, and offered sacrifices in northern Israel apart from the Jews of Judea. Like many groups in the Second Temple Period, they considered themselves the “true Israel.” Unlike other groups, they see themselves as descendants of those left behind by the Assyrian campaigns of invasion and deportation; sons and daughters of those who remained in the land while the people of Judah were exiled to Babylon. In fact, they believe that the Jews broke away from them at the time of the priest Eli to establish an illegitimate sanctuary and priesthood at Shiloh. For almost two-thousand years, the Samaritans have safeguarded and transmitted a form of the Mosaic Law that differs from the **Masoretic Text (MT)**, which are the texts that became the canon of Pharasaic-Rabbinic Judaism. Though they had numerous religious traditions, they considered the five scrolls of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) as the primary source of divine authority. One of the names for that body of texts is **Pentateuch**. Thus, the Law passed on by those communities, which is the basis for this translation, is called the **Samaritan Pentateuch (SP)**.

## THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH

### 1. Background

The Samaritan Pentateuch is based on versions of biblical texts used by ancient Israelites that were eventually abandoned by all but Samaritans. Such texts are often called “**proto-Samaritan**” because they agree in character and/or content with texts in SP (with the exception of some late changes). Proto-Samaritan texts were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (most noteworthy, 4QpaleoExodus<sup>m</sup> and 4QNum<sup>b</sup>), have readings that coincide with the Greek **Septuagint (LXX)**, and share passages with pseudepigraphal works like Jubilees. Unique readings in SP are also found in New Testament texts.

<sup>i</sup> The name “Samaritans” is often confused with “Samaritians.” Such confusion arises from a long-standing, but unsupported assumption that the שַׁמְרִיִּים in 2 Kgs 17 refers particularly and exclusively to the Samaritan sect (as opposed to the people of Samaria). The name used by Samaritans both past and present is שַׁמְרִיִּים (*Shomerim*).

Stephen's sermon in Acts 7 contains a quotation from and several words originating in the texts of SP. There is no doubt that SP is based on old MSS considered authoritative by Second Temple Jews even though the texts in MT are largely older. Two of the primary characteristics of proto-Samaritan texts are:

- (A) Widespread harmonization or “clarification” of passages.
  - Taking descriptions from one place and repeating them later where there was no verbatim duplication.
  - Taking similar regulations or statements from different scrolls and placing them next to each other in the same scroll.
- (B) Ubiquitous grammatical and syntactic “corrections.”
  - Modernizing rare or archaic features.
  - Replacing difficult constructions with more typical ones.
  - Changing gender, number, or verbal forms to better sync with other parts of a sentence.

SP shares these features. Three primary differences set it apart:

- (C) Another commandment in the Decalogue.
  - Ten commandments are hard to find in MT. Jews have, historically, interpreted the statement “I, YHWH, [am] your god...” as the First Commandment. SP, however, has another commandment locating YHWH's temple on Mount Gerizim. Thus, their First Commandment is “There must not be for you [any] other gods...”.
- (D) The “choice” of a central place of worship *in the past*.
  - Throughout Deuteronomy, reference is made to the place that YHWH “will choose” (בַּחַר) for his dwelling. In these places, SP has the perfect form “has chosen” (בָּחַר).
- (E) YHWH is more transcendent.
  - According to Masoretic tradition, ancient scribes emended the text in various places to protect YHWH's reverence (or Moses'). One example is the shifting of word order from “YHWH stood before Abraham” to “Abraham stood before YHWH” in Gen 18:22. SP continues that scribal tradition. Where YHWH deals directly with humans in MT, SP has “YHWH's messenger” doing so (as in Num 22:20). Anthropomorphic statements about YHWH are more often emended in SP (such as “YHWH [is] a warrior in battle” in Exod 15:3 instead of MT's “YHWH [is] a man of war”). An example in the direction of Moses occurs in Deut 34:10, where MT says “Never since has a prophet arisen in Israel like Moses,” whereas SP says, “Never again will a prophet in Israel like Moses arise.”

For more on SP, see Robert T. Anderson and Terry Giles' *The Samaritan Pentateuch: An Introduction to Its Origins, History, and Significance for Biblical Studies*. Resources for Biblical Study #72. Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2012.

## 2. Importance

Interest in SP has fluctuated throughout the centuries. When it was first discovered by the West, Catholic churches realized that many readings in SP supported their bibles. To combat Protestantism's dismissal of the Vulgate and LXX, they propped up SP as proof of the superiority of their Greek and Latin texts (and so of their churches). SP gained notoriety not for what it was, but for how it could be

used polemically. Later on, as Protestantism gave birth to the field of biblical scholarship, bias for the Judaic canon caused Protestants to view SP with suspicion, if not disregard. Many prominent scholars declared it worthless for textual reconstruction. Even those who dedicated their research to SP viewed it as inferior to MT and, like those before them, valued SP not for its own sake, but for how it could be used to support their own interests. It was the lone voices crying in the wilderness that prepared the way for a reappraisal of SP. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, which antedated SP, many contained readings shared by SP against MT, LXX, or both. Here is one example:

והיה בעברכם את הירדן  
תקימו את־האבנים האלה  
אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום  
בהר עיבל  
ושדת אותם בשיד  
ובנית שם מזבח  
ליהוה אלהיך

Then, when you cross the Jordan,  
you must erect those stones—  
as I, myself, ordered you today—  
on Mount Ebal.  
You must plaster them with plaster  
and construct an altar there  
to your god YHWH.  
—Deut 27:4-5b, MT

והיה בעברכם את הירדן  
תקימו את־האבנים האלה  
אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום  
בהרגרזים  
ושדת אותם בשיד  
ובנית שם מזבח  
ליהוה אלהיך

Then, when you cross the Jordan,  
you must erect those stones—  
as I, myself, ordered you today—  
on Mount Gerizim.  
You must plaster them with plaster  
and construct an altar there  
to your god YHWH.  
—Deut 27:4-5b, DSS fragment<sup>ii</sup>

As seen above, the only difference between the two is the mention of Ebal or Gerizim. That shift is not accidental. The question is which way the shift occurred. Scholars had long surmised that since SP says “Gerizim,” it was due to Samaritan alteration (ie., the reading of MT and LXX was original). Few asked whether that made sense contextually. Since this fragment was preserved in the Judean desert by Jews before SP was codified by the Samaritans, “Gerizim” cannot be a Samaritan alteration. And since Gerizim is twice described as the mountain of blessing in contradistinction to Mount Ebal, the mountain of cursing (Deut 11:29; 27:11), and it was on Gerizim, not Ebal, that Abraham and Jacob built altars, the reading of SP is probably authentic. What the fragment from the Dead Sea shows is that Samaritans and Jews shared the same scriptural texts before individual canons were formed in the late first and early second centuries AD and that when there are differences between SP and MT, SP may represent the original text. Consequently, SP remains a textual witness with which to be reckoned.

### 3. Language & Script

The type of Hebrew preserved in SP lies somewhere between the sectarian Hebrew used at

ii The dark portions represent what (legibly) remains of the text. The light portions are inserted from MT. For more on this fragment, see James H. Charlesworth's “What is a Variant? Announcing a Dead Sea Scrolls Fragment of Deuteronomy.” *Maarav* 16.2 (2009): 201-12.

Qumran and Rabbinic Hebrew—in other words, a relatively late form of the Hebrew language. It is characterized by, among other things, a lack of distinction between consonants like ך and ך, the weakening, if not disappearance, of gutturals, avoidance of *waw*-consecutive and infinitive absolute forms, and a preference for *plene* spelling. Generally speaking, the Hebrew of SP evinces an updating of the text toward what was common in later Hebrew. At the same time, however, some archaic features are retained—such as the use of אֲנִי instead of אֲנִי. And whereas the people of Judah slowly abandoned the Old Hebrew (sometimes called “Paelo-Hebrew”) script for the Aramaic (sometimes called “square”) script, Samaritans continued to write in Old Hebrew characters. Over time, the script became highly stylized. Though the dating of Samaritan texts paleographically is still in its infancy, changes in script show a clear separation in time between proto-Samaritan texts and SP. For more on Samaritan Hebrew, see Angel Sáenz-Badillos' *A History of the Hebrew Language*. Cambridge: University Press, 1996.

## THE TRANSLATION

### 1. Revision

SOE is a revision of **THF** (*the heavenly fire*), for which extensive work has already been done. That work is not reproduced here. For discussion of format, methodological and literary analysis, as well as translational and interpretational rationale, see THF. Since, however, THF is based on MT instead of SP, there are differences, both large and small, between them. The differences that make SP unique are of primary interest herein. They are the subject of our **Translation Notes** and the guide from which our English rendering departs from the slopes of Zion to climb the heights of Gerizim.

### 2. Source Texts

The eclectic text reconstructed by August Freiherr von Gall (*Der Hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner*), which represents no actual MS and betrays tremendous bias for MT, is not used by SOE. Instead, we use the **della Valle codex** (circa AD 1345) from Damascus, which was published by Blayney in *Pentateuchus Hebraeo-Samaritanus*, used in both the Paris and London Polyglots, and is provided in square script in Kennicott (*Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum, cum Variis Lectionibus*), **MS 6C** from the Samaritan synagogue in Shechem—one of the earliest and most complete SPs (circa AD 1204), which was published by Shoulson (*The Torah: Jewish and Samaritan versions compared*), and the sacrosanct **Abisha Scroll** as transcribed by Perez Castro (*Séfer Abiša': Edición del Fragmento Antiguo del Rollo Sagrado del Pentateuco Hebreo Samaritano de Nablus; Estudio, Transcripción, Aparato Crítico y Facsímiles*). The text is then compared against Tsedaka (*The Israelite Samaritan Version of the Torah*), which draws from four MSS—two in the synagogue on Mount Gerizim (AD 1199 and 1210).

### 3. The Abisha Scroll

Among Samaritans, no copy of the Pentateuch is more revered than the Abisha Scroll, which claims to have been written by the great-grandson of Moses' brother, Aaron (though that is difficult to verify since the scribal acrostic has been badly damaged and remains cryptic). Such sacred status, combined with the scroll's extremely fragile and deteriorated nature, have historically placed it beyond the reach of both scholar and layman. Only once or twice a year is it brought out in public—yet even then it is

only carried around in its case. Those who spend years among the Samaritans hoping to study the scroll have been rebuffed or shown a different one in place of it. In the mid-1900s, however, when facing financial crises, the Samaritan community allowed the scroll to be photographed. As it turns out, the scroll is actually a patchwork of newer and older scrolls and scroll fragments, with many missing and damaged pieces, written and rewritten by numerous hands in a late form of script. The scroll as it exists today is best described as a late Medieval composition. Regardless, however, of its origin, history, or makeup, the scroll retains its sanctity. Therefore, we give it fair consideration herein. References to  $\aleph^A$  in our translation notes are based on the photographic plates and transcription provided by Castro (Num 35:1-Deut 34:12). For more on the Abisha Scroll, see Alan D. Crown's "The Abisha Scroll of the Samaritans." *Bulletin of John Ryland's Library* 58.1 (1975-76): 36-65.



## Sigla and Abbreviations

√	Verbal root
ⲚⲚ	Samaritan Pentateuch
Ⲕ	Ben Chayyim
Ⲙ	Septuagint: Old Greek
ⲛ <sup>L</sup>	Masoretic Text: Leningrad Codex
Ⲥ	Syriac Peshitta
Ⲟ <sup>O</sup>	Targum: Onkelos
Ⲟ <sup>N</sup>	Targum: Neofiti
Ⲟ	Vulgate (Stuttgart)
<i>b.</i>	Babylonian Talmud tractate
DSS	Dead Sea Scroll(s)

Message

Historical Stuff

Form and Genre

# The Exodus

## Chapter 1

ס

<sup>1</sup> Now these [are] the names of Israel's children who came into Egypt. With Jacob, each [man] and his household came: <sup>2</sup> Reuben, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, <sup>3</sup> and Issachar, and Zebulun, and Benjamin. <sup>4</sup> Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. <sup>5</sup> They were—every life having emerged from Jacob's thigh—70 [in] sum. Joseph, however, was in Egypt.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph died, and all his brothers—that is, that whole generation. <sup>7</sup> Yet Israel's descendants were fertile; they swarmed, proliferated, and were so extremely vast that the land was full of them.

<sup>8</sup> Then arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> He said to his people, “Look, a people [are] Israel's children, more numerous and vast than us! <sup>10</sup> Come, let us be wily about him. Otherwise, he will proliferate. And it may be, should war befall us, [that] even he will be allied with our detesters in order to fight against us and go up from the land.”

<sup>11</sup> So they placed over him chiefs of servitude in order to afflict them with their subjugation. They built storage cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Rameses. <sup>12</sup> But the more he afflicted them, the more he was fertile and burst out [in number]. They were horrified [by] the presence of Israel's descendants.

<sup>13</sup> So they, Egypt, imposed work [on] Israel's descendants rigorously. <sup>14</sup> They made their lives bitter with hard work in mud, and in bricks, and in all the work in the field—with all their work that they worked among them rigorously.

<sup>15</sup> Egypt's king pronounced to the Hebrew midwives (of whom the name of the first [was] Shiphrah and the name of the second [was] Puah) <sup>16</sup> a pronouncement: “during the delivering of the Hebrew [women], you must look at the two stones. If a son [is] he, you must slay him. But if a daughter [is] she, she may live.”

<sup>17</sup> Yet the midwives feared The [One] God and

did not do what Egypt's king pronounced to them. They kept the boys alive. <sup>18</sup> So Pharaoh called for the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing? [Why] did you keep the boys alive?”

<sup>19</sup> The midwives replied [to] Pharaoh, “Because different from the Egyptian women [are] the Hebrew [women]. Yes, animals [are] they! Before the midwife comes to them, they have given birth!”

<sup>20</sup> Elohim treated the midwives well. And they, the people, proliferated and were extremely vast. (<sup>21</sup> So it was [that] because the midwives feared The [One] God, he founded for them lineages.)

<sup>22</sup> Then Pharaoh commanded this of all his people: “Every newborn son of the Hebrews—toward the Nile, you must fling. But every daughter, you may keep alive.”

Chapter 2	ב
Chapter 3	ג
Chapter 4	ד
Chapter 5	ה
Chapter 6	ו
Chapter 7	ז
Chapter 8	ח
Chapter 9	ט
Chapter 10	י
Chapter 11	יא
Chapter 12	יב

Chapter 13	יג
Chapter 14	יד
Chapter 15	יה
Chapter 16	יו
Chapter 17	יז
Chapter 18	יח
Chapter 19	יט

## TRANSLATION NOTES



- 1:2 **and Simeon, and Levi** —  $\aleph$  has *waw* (and) before both Simeon and Levi.
- 1:3 **and Issachar** —  $\aleph$  has *waw* (and) before Issachar. This is supported by 4Qpaleo-Gen-Exod<sup>l</sup> and 4QGen-Exod<sup>a</sup>.
- and Zebulun** —  $\aleph$  has *waw* (and) before Zebulun. The cumulative affect of all these conjunctions is to turn  $\aleph^L$ 's list of three sections into two.
- 1:5 **They were** — Instead of the singular (ויהי),  $\aleph$  has the plural (ויהיו). This makes the verb function as a description of the number (they were) instead of as a turn of the narrative (so it was that).
- 1:10 **should war befall us** — Instead of  $\aleph^L$ 's energetic form, תקראנה,  $\aleph$  has a more typical form with first-person plural suffix תקראנו. The presence of a suffix is supported by  $\mathfrak{G}$ : και ηνικα αν συμβη ημιν πολεμος (and whenever war should come to us).
- 1:11 **to afflict them** —  $\aleph$  has a plural suffix (them) instead of  $\aleph^L$ 's singular suffix (him). It is supported by  $\mathfrak{G}$ ,  $\mathfrak{C}^O$ ,  $\mathfrak{C}^N$ ,  $\mathfrak{S}$ , and  $\mathfrak{V}$ . 4QGen-Exod<sup>a</sup>, however, supports  $\aleph^L$ .
- They built** —  $\aleph$  has the plural form of the verb (they built) instead of  $\aleph^L$ 's singular (he built). It is supported by  $\mathfrak{G}$ ,  $\mathfrak{C}^O$ ,  $\mathfrak{C}^N$ ,  $\mathfrak{S}$ , and  $\mathfrak{V}$ . 4QGen-Exod<sup>a</sup>, however, supports  $\aleph^L$ .
- 1:12 **afflicted them** —  $\aleph$  has a plural suffix (them) instead of  $\aleph^L$ 's singular suffix (him). This is supported by 2QExod<sup>a</sup> and  $\mathfrak{G}$  and must reflect a parallel textual tradition. 4QGen-Exod<sup>a</sup> agrees with  $\aleph^L$ .
- he was fertile** —  $\aleph$  has יפרה (he was fertile) instead of  $\aleph^L$ 's ירבה (he proliferated). This is unique to  $\aleph$ .
- 1:14 **They made bitter** — Instead of the plural form of the verb (וימררו), the singular appears in 4QGen-Exod<sup>a</sup> (וימרר). That is unique to the DSS.
- 1:16 **[is] she** — One common archaic feature of the Pentateuch is the use of הוּא for both feminine and masculine singular pronouns. Both  $\aleph^D$  and  $\aleph^O$  have הוּא (s/he).  $\aleph^L$  and  $\aleph$ , however, have הִיא (she). This represents a scribal update to the consonantal text in order to better represent the meaning.
- she may live** —  $\aleph^L$  has the archaic feminine form וחייה.  $\aleph$  has the latter feminine form וחיתה.
- 1:17 **feared** — The more ancient spelling of “they (feminine) feared” (ותיראן) in  $\aleph^L$  is modernized by  $\aleph$  (ותיראנה).
- They kept alive** — The more ancient spelling of “they (feminine) kept alive” (ותחייין) in  $\aleph^L$  is modernized by  $\aleph$  (ותחיינה).
- 1:18 **Pharaoh** —  $\aleph$  has “Pharaoh” instead of “Egypt's king.”
- you keep alive** — The more ancient spelling of “you (feminine) kept alive” in  $\aleph^L$  is modernized by  $\aleph$ .
- 1:19 **replied** — The more ancient spelling of “they (feminine) said” (ותאמרן) in  $\aleph^L$  is modernized by  $\aleph$  (ותאמרנה).
- 1:20 **they, the people, proliferated** — Instead of  $\aleph^L$ 's singular verb form (וירב),  $\aleph$  has the plural

(וִירְבוּ). That creates a mismatch between the singular subject and its verb. The same mismatch appeared in v. 13 and may, therefore, be original.

1:22 **of the Hebrews** — Unlike אִל, אֵל has “of the Hebrews” (לְעִבְרִים). That is supported by אֵל<sup>N</sup>, אֵל<sup>O</sup>, and אֵל.

**fling** — אִל has a suffix “fling *him*.”