

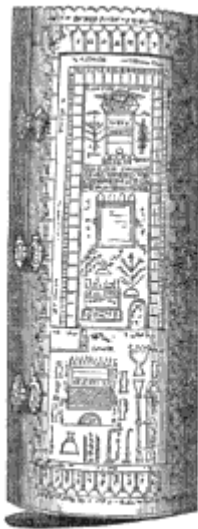
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SACRED BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY,
CONTAINING
Descriptions of Palestine, Ancient and Modern:
LIVES OF THE
PATRIARCHS, KINGS AND PROPHETS,
Christ and the Apostles,
MOST EMINENT REFORMERS. LUTHER, MELANCTHON, CALVIN, &c.
AND SKETCHES OF THE BULKS OF THE CELEBRATED CITIES,
PALMYRA, NINEVEH, JERUSALEM,
AND OTHERS MENTIONED IN THE SACKED WRITINGS.
EDITED BY OSMOND TIFFANY.
TO WHICH IS ADDED
A CLEAR AND CONCISE ACCOUNT OF THE LATE EXPLORA-
TIONS AND DISCOVERIES IN JERUSALEM AND
THE HOLY LAND,
TRUE SITE OF SINAI AND THE DEMONIACS AND SWINE, GREAT CITIES OF
BASHAN, ROUTE OF THE ISRAELITES, ETC.
By Rev. J.W. Harding, D.D.
Illustrated with numerous Beautiful Steel Engravings
Published by Hugh Heron, Chicago, Ill
A. W. Mills, Toledo, O. 1875

(p. 670)

THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH.

When the traveler in Palestine comes to Nablus—the ancient Shechem—situated in the lovely vale between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, a chief point of interest is the Samaritan Synagogue, where worship the little remnant of that exclusive and tenacious sect, numbering perhaps 150 persons. In a recess behind a richly wrought curtain is a copy of the five books of Moses in the ancient Samaritan character, in the form of a scroll, written in letters of gold on beautiful vellum. It is kept in an elegant silver case, which is rolled in an antique looking cloth of blue, scarlet and purple, interwoven with golden (p. 671) threads. It lays claim to great antiquity, and bears the following inscription: "I, Abisha, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the Priest,—upon them be the grace of Jehovah! To His honor have I written this Holy Law at the entrance of the Tabernacle of Testimony on the Mount Gerizim, Beth El, in the thirteenth year of the taking possession of the Land of Canaan, and all its boundaries around it, by the Children of Israel. I praise Jehovah."



SILVER CYLINDER OF SAMARIA.



PART OF ITS CONTENTS—ROLL OF ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT.

But the traveler who pays for the reluctant privilege of searching for this inscription fails to find it. The Samaritans have explained by saying that "this inscription had been in their scroll once, but must have been erased by some wicked hand." Whether there or no is not of much importance. Mr. Levysohn, an attaché of the Russian staff at Jerusalem, who published a fac-simile of a copy of the Nablus Pentateuch, obtained from a private family in 1860, says that he *did* find in the original scroll the inscription in the middle of the text of the Decalogue. But his statements are to be received with much caution. A better authority, Dr. Thompson, author of "The Land and the Book," for thirty years missionary in Syria and Palestine, says: "Though like all other

travelers I have given my *buksheesh* for the privilege of turning over its time-stained pages, I have no faith in their legends in regard to it, estimate its real value at a very low figure, and leave to others the minute description of this curious relic of antiquity."

Besides the one at Nablus, there are at least eighteen other MSS. of the Samaritan Pentateuch now in European libraries. There has been an immense amount of vague and useless discussion about the age, origin and comparative value of this document, and the questions concerning it are about as unsettled to-day as when it first came under the notice of European scholars some two centuries ago.

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

This reference is not located in *A Bibliography of the Samaritans, Third Edition, Revised, Expanded, and Annotated*, by Alan David Crown and Reinhard Pummer, ATLA Bibliography, No. 51, The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford. 2005