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Palestine, Past and Present.
with Biblical, Literary, and Scientific Notices
By Henry Stafford Osborn
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(p. 329)

The following morning we were up at daylight; and at the proper time, and after some visits, we presented ourselves at the Samaritan synagogue. In a room adjoining (p. 330) the synagogue we had some conversation with the patriarchal Samaritan priest, who wears a long white beard. He soon became quite social, and among other inquiries added one which seems to be a standing question in reference to the number of his sect in America, England, and elsewhere, which we answered "according to the best of our knowledge." He then led us into the synagogue, but did not require that we should remove our shoes, though one of our number did so. My companion and myself, finding it inconvenient, did not follow his example. After exhibiting several antiquities and the ark where were kept various manuscripts, he concluded by showing us the rare old manuscript of the books of Moses. This manuscript of the Pentateuch has been for a long time a matter of curiosity to the learned,¹ as being one of the earliest manuscripts of the books of Moses. It is in a scroll-like form, written, in remarkably regular Samaritan characters, in columns four inches and three-quarters wide and thirteen long, and kept, carefully wrapped in silk, in a case nineteen inches in length. The old man remarked that it was three thousand two hundred years old, and was written by Abisha, son of Phineas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron. The genealogy of the Samaritan as a written language may be seen by referring to Appendix I. The parchment was quite strong; for, in the act of measuring, I took a "quiet liberty" of testing it on the edge. A part is soiled—perhaps fourteen inches—and somewhat injured from constant opening, but not from the handling of visitors, (p. 331) as the old priest seemed very careful in exhibiting it, and, though quite friendly, would not permit me to feel the weight by holding it myself. On unrolling it further, it was clean, but yellow. The old man informed me that there were "seventy Samaritan men and boys and one hundred girls and women"—simply meaning one hundred and seventy—in Nabulous.

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

¹ See its history in Rob. Bibl. Res., vol. iii. 129-132.