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The Collection of Jewish Ceremonial Objects in the United States National Museum

By, **Cyrus Adler** and **I. M. Casanowicz**

of the U. S. National Museum

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21. SAMARITAN CASE OF THE TORAH SCROLL.—Made of copper and inlaid with silver. The case consists of three sections connected with one another by hinges so as to form a cylinder. The top and bottom are closed by three segments of copper forming a circle. Each of the three top segments has a hole which probably served for a projection to hold some ornaments, while from the bottom project two handles for holding the case. The top is decorated with a turreted border. Each section is divided horizontally into two panels, separated by a band outlined in silver. Geometrical designs in silver, formed of arabesques, decorate the center and corners of each panel. Inscriptions in silver, in Samaritan characters but in the Hebrew language, run along the sides of each section and around the bands of the case, and read as follows: " The Lord our God, the Lord is one, He alone" (Deuteronomy vi, 4) ; " The Lord is His name, the Lord is my banner" (Exodus xvii, 15) ; "The Lord God merciful and gracious" (Exodus xxxiv, 6); "God will provide; the Lord will provide" (Genesis xxii. 8 and 14); "The Lord is my God, the Lord is mighty; And it came to pass when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee" (Numbers x, 35); "The Lord bless thee and keep thee "(Numbers vi, 24). "In the name of God. This case for the holy writing was made in Damascus by the humble servant Joseph, son of Abaspoh of the tribe of Patar. Under the direction of Rabban Abi Azzai, son of Rabban Joseph in Damascus." "In the year 976 of the King- (p. 709) dom of the Ishmaelites (Mohammedans=about 1565 A. D.). May the Lord forgive him his sins, Amen." Measurements, 2 feet high, 7 inches in diameter. (Cat. No. 4557, U.S.N.M.) Lent by **Hadji Ephraim Benguiat**.

(p. 744) VIII. Manuscripts and Prints.

214. HEBREW MANUSCRIPT OF THE PENTATEUCH.—Written in Samaritan characters. Probably dated from the fifteenth century A. D. The Samaritan writing is a modification of the ancient Hebrew and Phenician alphabet as preserved on the Moabite stone and the Siloam inscription and Jewish coins and seals, while the Jews subsequent to the Exile gradually adopted the so-called square or Assyrian script, which is of Aramaic origin, and is still in use among them. Height, 4 1/2 inches; width 3 1/2 inches. Palestine. (Cat. No. 216164, U.S.N.M.)

Lent by **Mr. S. S. Howland**.

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

Hadji Ephraim ben Abraham Benguiat was a Jewish art dealer. He was a native of Izmir, who also lived in Damascus and on Gibraltar before immigrating to the US, living in Boston. He donated and support museums.

Mr. S. S. Howland is **Samuel Shaw Howland**, (Aug. 15, 1790- Feb 9, 1853) who resided in Washington, D.C., traveled widely and was an avid collector. He had a house in New York and was a partner in Howland & Aspinwall, foremost merchants in New York.

<http://siris-archives.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1W1964S2528Y8.2683&profile=all&uri=link=3100006~!56296~!3100001~!3100002&aspect=Browse&menu=search&ri=2&source=~!siarchives&term=Howland%2C+S.+S.&index=NAMEP>

http://collections.si.edu/search/results.jsp?q=record_ID:siris_arc_84908

The authors:

Cyrus Adler (September 13, 1863 – April 7, 1940) was a U.S. educator, Jewish religious leader and scholar. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_Adler

I. M. Casanowicz is **Immanuel Moses Casanowicz**, (1853 – 1929) Assistant Curator of Old World Archeology at Smithsonian and author of [*Paronmasia in the Old Testament ...*](#) (Boston, Mass. : [J.S. Cushing & co., etc.], 1894)