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**Quarterly Statement - Palestine Exploration Fund,
October 1873**

By Palestine Exploration Fund, pp. 157-158

By J. G. PICKARD, GAZA

THE SAMARITAN STONE AT GAZA*

My curiosity was first stimulated in searching after inscriptions by observing the extraordinary amount of energy exhibited by M. Ganneau, who visited Gaza about three years ago. I accompanied this gentleman to several interesting parts of the town, and assisted him in procuring a few Greek inscriptions. We also visited the same spot where the stone was discovered, which is distant from the town about a mile, and half a mile from the sea-shore. It has now been in my possession about a year, and was found in one of the numerous sandpits where excavating is carried on by the natives to obtain stone for building purposes.

About a year ago, passing by the same spot, I questioned some of the labourers then at work about stones bearing inscriptions, &c., and was informed that a few days before three of this description had been found. After making further inquiries I succeeded in finding out to whom they had been sold, but having to act very cautiously, in order not to excite suspicion, I regret that I was obliged to delay the matter too long; and upon opening the question about the stones the owner coolly told me that he had *scraped* the two largest! and the other, I suppose, not being large enough for the purpose required, was thrown aside, to share the same fate at some future time. However, after some difficulty I succeeded in getting it: this is the whole history of the stone.

• See *Quarterly Statement*, July, 1873, p. 118.

About two months ago three marble pillars were discovered in one of the sandpits before mentioned; they are all of the same size and architecture. A drawing of these might likewise be interesting. About a month ago I also found in the town a lamp similar to the one found in the Pool of Bethesda, with this exception: at the broadest end in bas relief is something not unlike a serpent's head.

Many curious seals are at times found here and about the district of Gaza. I might send you sealing-wax impressions of some of these if you think they would be of any interest. I shall always be very glad to keep you duly informed of everything that may be found at Gaza, and supply you with copies, &c.

J. G. PICKARD, GAZA

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

This reference is #3706 listed 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