



THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE
OF NEHEMIAH

by

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To PATTI
STALWART, COURAGEOUS, TRUE

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PREFACE

The following pages are the result of many hours of research, critical thinking, writing, reflection, rewriting, and the vast array of components which must of necessity be a part of any scholarly endeavour. To call attention to such a fact almost detracts from it. Yet, some things can be properly singled out at this point, and, indeed, to omit doing so would be a gross oversight.

Too much credit cannot be given to the director of this thesis, Dean Stanley Brice Frost. From the suggestion of the research topic to the shaping of the finished product is his influence to be found. Joseph Conrad once said that style was the mutual triumph between writer and reader. Taking the liberty of paraphrasing that statement, I would suggest that this work is the result, at least from the author's stance, of a happy relationship between author and director. He read much of the manuscript and has offered criticisms, suggestions, revisions and general supervision. Yet he has allowed the work to be my own -- from the development of the subject through to the positions taken in the text. From his tutelage I have learned much more than this work is able to convey -- so much, in fact, that it will take a most productive future in order to begin repaying him. For having had this most positive relationship with him I shall forever be grateful.

Much of the material on which I have drawn would never have come within my grasp were it not for the courtesy extended to me

by Miss Vivian Hunter in allowing me to spend many afternoons unattended in the basement area of Divinity Hall Library. Her help in securing several volumes via "interlibrary loan" was also of valuable assistance. Just how adequate Divinity Hall Library is was not realized until I had to continue my research and writing in Philadelphia. Fortunately most of my research was completed at that time. However, the library of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and privileges extended to me there have broadened the scope of this study somewhat through many additional sources in their excellent biblical section. For their courtesy I am also grateful.

To a former neighbour, Mrs. Phyllis Wright, I am indebted for typing the first two chapters. This yeoman service by a former novitiate nun was offered in a spirit of ecumenicity and was extremely important since I could not afford to have the manuscript typed (the last one hundred pages and preliminaries I have typed myself).

I might have completed the work sooner if many variables could have been controlled. However, such was not possible. Rather than present something with which I myself could not be in any way satisfied, it has been necessary to pursue the completion of this work in all too piecemeal a fashion. While certain flaws are still detectable, I can in some measure be proud of the end result. The study has been a fruitful one, and I hope to present some of this material in scholarly journals whenever feasible.

Without the understanding and support of my wife this work would not have been realized, and to her it is affectionately dedicated.

Philadelphia, U.S.A.
April 1966

Arden C. Hander

List of Abbreviations

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|-------------------|--|
| <u>A.A.S.O.R.</u> | - <u>Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</u> |
| <u>A.J.S.L.</u> | - <u>American Journal for Semitic Languages and Literature</u> |
| <u>B.A.</u> | - <u>Biblical Archaeologist</u> |
| <u>B.A.S.O.R.</u> | - <u>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</u> |
| <u>B.J.R.L.</u> | - <u>Bulletin of John Rylands Library</u> |
| <u>E.T.</u> | - <u>Expository Times</u> |
| <u>H.U.C.A.</u> | - <u>Hebrew Union College Annual</u> |
| <u>I.B.</u> | - <u>Interpreter's Bible</u> |
| <u>I.C.C.</u> | - <u>International Critical Commentary</u> |
| <u>IDB</u> | - <u>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</u> |
| <u>J.B.L.</u> | - <u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u> |
| <u>J.N.E.S.</u> | - <u>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</u> |
| <u>J.S.S.</u> | - <u>Journal of Semitic Studies</u> |
| <u>J.T.S.</u> | - <u>Journal of Theological Studies</u> |
| <u>LXX</u> | - The Septuagint |
| <u>MT</u> | - Massoretic Text |
| <u>R.B.</u> | - <u>Revue Biblique</u> |

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEMS AND PRESENT TRENDS OF STUDIES

In this present segment of time and space in which one finds himself there is a great multiplicity of attitudes current that offer one interesting vantage points from which to view contemporary, modern denizens and their thoughts with regard to the study of the Bible. Many would perhaps rise above the masses to express worthy concepts based on a proper orientation to and sincere appreciation of biblical truth, but this, I fear, would be the exception and not the rule. The overwhelming majority, steeped in the traditions of empiricism and scientism, would view the entire enterprise with extreme scepticism because it failed to fit their preconceived categories and methods of investigation. A lesser group, still holding on to an outmoded naturalism-supernaturalism dichotomy of reality, would take the position that the two realms were mutually exclusive, the one having no intercourse with the other, and thus the supernatural realm of which biblical truth would be a part had really descended to man "from above" and was "beyond" interpretation, the truth involved being in a static state. The current movement under which

biblical instruction is given in our public school systems seeks to have the Bible taught as "history" devoid of interpretation and detached from a vantage point in faith. Other views prevalent would reveal interest for personal or social reasons, interest for purposes of refutation, casual interest or mere curiosity. But a dominant element in any modern viewpoint would be that the exercise would be futile and doomed from the outset for want of some standard or canon by which one's results could be gauged or assessed. In physics one has Newton's law, in mathematics exact equations, in chemistry H_2O is always water and so on. In the physical and natural sciences factual exactitude is the norm, but in the humanities and the arts no strict exactitude, at least in the sense of scientific empiricism, is possible, nor is it desirable. In this realm we are dealing with creative thought, the products of literary genius and aesthetics, and no stereotyped rule or undeviating formula is neither an adequate tool nor a workable gauge. Since biblical study is certainly under the category of the humanities, it must be approached with a flexibility which is mandatory if the proper and desirable results are to be obtained. Any other approach will prove unfruitful. This method which is used in biblical studies, theology, and the like should not be construed as being unscientific merely because it employs flexibility. To be sure it is scientific itself in its approach to the subject, the diligence with

which it goes about its work and in the way in which it seeks to make use of the exacting work available to one through the efforts of past and contemporary scholars. Therefore, the results of biblical exegesis are "scientific" in their own right if the concept is properly understood and appreciated.¹

To those who look at any subject which is the object of study in the biblical field to be static and not needful of either interpretation or reinterpretation, no topic of consideration could do more to dispel such a view than the one under consideration. If there is any biblical problem that has evaded the grasp of biblical scholars more consistently than the problem of Ezra-Nehemiah, this writer does not know what it is. The advances that have been made seem to follow one of the several schools of thought which have emerged in this field with little contact between the differing interpretations. While it is true that the state of knowledge on this problem has advanced beyond the naivety of the traditional view which rested solely on the integrity of the Massoretic text in its present order and condition, there is still no real agreement among scholars on many of the perplexing problems which are involved.² While almost every-

¹These statements are in no sense unique or new, but due to the pseudo-scientism which is so normative in our era, they perhaps bear repeating at the outset of a work such as this one.

²The problem of dating the major characters Ezra and Nehemiah is so great that the whole of chapter 2 is devoted to defining the various views and arriving at a conclusion on chronology.

one would insist on at least some rearrangement of the text, others rearrange in drastic proportions, yet others not at all. Some insist that a particular passage is to be taken literally, while others are firmly for interpreting it figuratively. Josephus and/or I Esdras may prove to give evidence superior to the MT in certain cases, but many scholars may reject this evidence due to their skepticism of I Esdras in its entirety. These problems stated here, which are certainly by no means inclusive, are merely indicative of the many problems which do exist. In the immediately following pages this writer seeks to elucidate some facets of these and other most important problems with which one must come to grips in the study of Ezra-Nehemiah.

But before turning directly to some of these problems it will be of great worth to note the character of the problem which lies before us. H. H. Rowley has stated this for us quite well:

Here we have a tangle of inter-related problems that has been long discussed without yielding any final solution, and to which final answers cannot be given. Like so many Biblical problems the evidence is insufficient for any demonstration, and nothing more than probability can be claimed for any solution adopted. The first step towards finding a solution lies in realizing the intricate character of the problem, and it is usually found that a study of the solutions offered will best bring this out.³

³H. H. Rowley, "Nehemiah's Mission and Its Background," Bulletin of John Rylands Library (Vol. 37, No. 2, March 1955), p. 531.

Since these facts and the nature of the problems are such that tentativeness, probability, tolerance and understanding should characterize anyone's work in this area, it will be well to guard against dogmatic assertions and the arrogant air of superiority which one might be prone to attach to his conclusions. Nevertheless, the situation is not so nebulous that one should refrain from drawing any conclusions, in spite of the fact that they may not be demonstrated with finality. This is the weakness reflected in the treatments given in most of the recent introductions. Yet Rowley himself several years earlier in a review of W. Rudolph's Ezra und Nehemia mit 3. Esra seems to be quite disappointed with if not hypercritical of, Rudolph's failure to answer some of the questions which trouble all students of these books and which he himself in the above quotation has indicated to be answered not with finality but with probabilities.⁴ Taking Rowley's above mentioned statement to be normative rather than the latter, one should seek to clarify and shed additional light upon the answers which have already been given or negatively to point to their inadequacy and inconsistency rather than try to solve these quite perplexing and perhaps, indeed, unsolvable questions solely in his own work. There are large gaps and areas virtually

⁴ H. H. Rowley, "Esra and Nehemiah," Expository Times (LXII, February, 1951), p. 158.

untouched or overlooked until now which if looked into might either change or radically modify the direction of studies. This approach it seems to me, will bring forth the best results rather than radical, exaggerated, isolated erudition.

The careful student of Ezra-Nehemiah is quick to perceive that these two books which we now regard as separate and distinct were not so originally, for they were a single unified work. The greatest witness to this fact is the Hebrew text itself. It was common Massoretic practice to affix certain notes concerning the length, midpoint, middle letter, number of verses, etc. upon coming to the end of each canonical book. A look at the end of Nehemiah will reveal such notes, while it is to be observed that at the end of Ezra Nehemiah 1:1 continues straightforward without any break at all.⁵ Looking at these notes it is evident that they refer not merely to our book of Nehemiah but to both Ezra and Nehemiah, the literary unit, for in the Hebrew these were only one book under the title of Ezra, אֶזְרָא . Further evidence for their original unity is to be found in the Hebrew numbering of the canonical books, they being counted as one though removed from the original corpus of which they were apart (cf. below), and

⁵Rudolph Kittel, edidit, Biblia Hebraica (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1937). pp. 1324, 1301.

also "the position of the massoretic colophon at the end of 2 Chronicles."⁶ The Talmud (Baba Bathra, fol. 14, c.2) also is a witness to the original unity in the books because "en la enumeración de los Sagradas Escrituras, no hace mención sino de Esdras."⁷ The Talmudical tractate Sanhedrin 93b contains some secondary information which accents the primitive unity although the reasoning given that Nehemiah was not allowed to have a book bearing his name because of the way in which he praised himself (cf. Neh. 5:19) and spoke rather unkindly of those who preceded him (Neh. 5:15) must certainly be assigned to later rabbinic tradition of a romantic or legendary character.⁸

Our first information on the partition of the two books comes from the Alexandrian christian scholar Origen in mid-third century A. D. He speaks of two books, First and Second Esdras, although he makes mention of the fact that the Hebrews still regarded them as one. It is not clear if this distinction originated with Origen himself or

⁶ Artur Weiser, Introduction to the Old Testament, translation from the fourth edition of Einleitung in Das Alte Testament, by Dorothea M. Barton (London: Dalton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 1961), p. 323.

⁷ P. Andres Fernandez, S.J., Comentario a los Libros de Esdras y Nehemias (Collectanea Biblica, Volumen IV; Madrid: Consejo Superior De Investigaciones Cientificas, 1950), p. 1.

⁸ Judah J. Slotki, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah (The Soncino Books of the Bible, Vol. XIII; London: Soncino Press, 1962), p. 179.

whether he was voicing a trend which was already in existence. He seems to know of the division of the Greek manuscripts current in his time, although the uncial manuscripts of the original Septuagint (LXX) represent the books as being one, and it is called "II Esdras."⁹ What is certain is that a century and a half after Origen both the Greek and Latin bibles separate Ezra and Nehemiah and refer to them as I Esdras and II Esdras.¹⁰ This view was followed by Jerome in the Vulgate which set for all times their distinct identity. This distinction is to be noted in the Hebrew manuscripts themselves from 1448 onwards. The changing of the title II Esdras to Nehemiah is due to Martin Luther who on the basis of the name נְחֵמְיָהּ (Nehemiah) in Neh. 1:1 so dubbed the book.

These arguments for the original singular character of Ezra-Nehemiah are weighty but a further fact to be noted is that II C. 36:22-23 is repeated in Ezra 1:1-3a. This tends to show that Ezra-Nehemiah was originally the immediate

⁹R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, revised edition (New York: Harper, 1948), p. 813.

¹⁰cf. below pp. 39-40, for the problem which exists due to the complete lack of uniformity with respect to the naming of the several "Esdras" books.

continuation of Chronicles.¹¹ Perhaps the common verses in II Chronicles 36 and Ezra 1 were retained intentionally at the time of the separation of the books so that no one in posterity would doubt their oneness.¹² A better explanation is that the overlapping is the result of an accident or mistake at the point of disjuncture.¹³ A copyist or scribe working on the manuscript might have been using as his guide an older edition which contained the work Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah in its entirety. Forgetting momentarily that the work was now divided, he continued on to what is now Ezra 1:3a. However, the "slip" remained in the text where it has continued to be until this day.

Another explanation of this duplication stems from the way in which the work was accepted as canonical. The work, although a unity, readily accommodated the idea that there were two distinct "parts" or sections within it. The Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah complex comprised one section whose contents were definitely pre-exilic and another whose contents covered the exile and post-exilic periods. Noordtzij, while

¹¹Curt Kuhl, The Old Testament, Its Origins and Composition, translated by C. T. M. Herriott (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), p. 280.

¹²Edward Lewis Curtis and Albert Alonzo Madsen, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles (I.C.C.; New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1910), p. 3.

¹³L. W. Batten, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah (I.C.C.; Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1961), p. 2.

maintaining the unity of the work of the Chronicler,¹⁴ has chosen to speak of what we now refer to as Chronicles as "la primera parte del libro del Cronista" and our books of Ezra-Nehemiah as "la segunda parte del mismo libro."¹⁵ It can easily be seen that Ezra-Nehemiah was more important to the Hebrew community than was Chronicles because in Ezra-Nehemiah they had the history of the Jews in the Persian period, a history for which there was no parallel available. This being true, its place in the canon prior to Chronicles is easy to explain. The latter part of the chronicler's work was accepted before the first part or section because Chronicles faced strong competition from Samuel-Kings and was somewhat suspect because of its style and interest whereas Ezra-Nehemiah went in on a bye as it were for lack of competition. This causes an illogical order in the Hebrew canon, the second part preceding the first part, and since Chronicles was the last book it was desirable to have the closing words to be ones of hope. These words were supplied in the next verses of the undivided work and it was only natural that they should become attached to Chronicles as the last

¹⁴ For an explanation of this term, cf. below p. 24ff.

¹⁵ "Les Intentions du Chroniste," Revue Biblique, xlix (1940), p. 164; cf. Fernandez, op. cit., p. 18, note 1.

words of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁶ This step was not necessary in the Greek and Latin manuscripts because they underwent a chronological arrangement which restored the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah sequence.

But other evidence is available also. It can be shown that the same general character pervades Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah from beginning to end. This character stands out rather conspicuously by the fondness which is expressed by the constant use of lists of one kind or another (e.g., I Chronicles 12, Ezra 2, Nehemiah 3, etc.). Genealogical lists are present constantly; those who return without genealogy under Zerubbabel are named, as are also those from among several classes of returnees who are charged with having foreign wives (Ezra 10:18-43). The lists appearing in Chronicles are paralleled in Ezra-Nehemiah¹⁷ so consistently that the original unity of the whole work is quite apparent.

Furthermore, the whole work expresses a marked interest in the celebration of religious festivals and events. In Chronicles items of importance are bring-

¹⁶W. A. L. Elmslie, The Books of Chronicles (The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: The University Press, 1916), p. xvi.

¹⁷Curtis and Madsen, op. cit., p. 4, for full citing of passages.

ing up the ark, the dedication of the Temple, the restoring of Yahweh worship and the celebration of the passover under Hezekiah and Josiah. These are paralleled in Ezra-Nehemiah by the erection of the altar under Joshua and Zerubbabel, the dedication of the Temple, celebration of the passover (Ezra 6:19-22), feast of Tabernacles and reading of the law (P?), and the dedication of the walls of the city.¹⁸

Moreover, the prominence which the religious classes enjoy is not to be paralleled anywhere else in the entire Old Testament. Special attention is paid to priests, levites, musicians, singers, porters and gatekeepers, the last of whom find no mention elsewhere in the Old Testament.¹⁹ Seventeen times in Ezra-Nehemiah the Nethinin (נְתִינִים = "given ones") occur. The only other occurrence of this class, a lower order of Levites who later undoubtedly were taken up into the larger body of Levites, is to be found in I Chronicles 9:2.²⁰

But the greatest affinity which Chronicles shows to Ezra-Nehemiah is to be found in the matter of style and

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 4-5.

¹⁹cf. Ibid., p. 5.

²⁰J. Sidlow Baxter, Explore the Book, Vol. 2 (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1951), p. 210.

diction. Characteristic of this in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah is the phrase "house of God" which stands here in place of the usual "house of Yahweh" and the avoidance of the divine name in general. This is only an example to point out the fact that linguistic peculiarities do exist and exist in such numbers that to try to bring them forth in this introduction to the problems would be futile. Curtis and Madsen²¹ have enumerated in excess of one-hundred of these peculiarities, and their listing should certainly be checked by anyone interested in studying them. Should some skeptic counter with a charge that these linguistic peculiarities are only true for Chronicles, basing his point on the premise that Chronicles is really separate from Ezra-Nehemiah or that different "Writers" are present in each case, he should only take the trouble to work through C. C. Torrey's literary analysis of the Ezra memoirs and all his doubts would be dispelled. His conclusion is that these verses "contain a very large proportion of words and expressions found elsewhere only (or in a few cases, chiefly) in the writings of the Chronicler."²² Should these peculiarities of word and expression have occurred in isolated instances,

²¹Op. cit., pp. 27-36.

²²C. C. Torrey, The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, II; Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Buchhandlung, 1896), p. 20.

they might hardly deserve any notice but the fact is that "they occur only, and that frequently, in the one book Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah."²³ The style adduced points to the "habit of a single writer," and "here, if anywhere, we may see one of the most characteristic of those subtle peculiarities that go to make up individual style."²⁴

S. R. Driver has in his Introduction a study of words and phrases and usages which cement everything which has been said before. In numbers 27-45 of his list he cites instances of "singular syntactical usages."²⁵ It is very revealing to note that of these nineteen peculiarities isolated, all except two, numbers 31 and 42, occur in rather even distribution in Ezra-Nehemiah except in the aramaic document and in the Nehemiah memoirs.²⁶ Other facts and factors weigh heavily on this point both individually and collectively, but the linguistic affinities common throughout Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah make certitude of the question of unity.²⁷

²³Ibid., p. 23

²⁴Ibid., pp. 22, 23.

²⁵S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, ninth edition, (International Theological Library; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1950), pp. 537-539,

²⁶C. C. Torrey, op. cit., p. 20, note 1.

²⁷A yet stronger argument for the original unity is present in the independent Greek version of the Chronicler's work, but for this and other facts and problems which surround I Esdras, cf. below, pp. 40-41.

It is agreed therefore by most scholars that Ezra-Nehemiah was originally one integrated history (as the subject matter and Massoretic notations show conclusively.)

Balmer H. Kelly sums up the position thus:

It is apparent also that the Ezra-Nehemiah story was connected originally with the larger body of literary material we now know as First and Second Chronicles. A comparison of II Chronicles 36:22-23 with Ezra 1:1-4 shows the chronological connection between the two and suggests that in original form First and Second Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah were combined in a single history with perhaps fewer historical difficulties than are posed by the present arrangement and contents of the separate works.²⁸

Raymond A. Bowman who sees the overlap in II Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-3a as conclusive that the original literary unit was Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, also may be cited as follows:

Such duplication seems a deliberate device to indicate an original connection between Ezra-Nehemiah and the books of Chronicles. The conclusion that Ezra-Nehemiah was originally part of Chronicles is further supported by the fact that the same late Hebrew language, the same distinctive literary peculiarities that make the style of the chronicler, are found throughout Ezra-Nehemiah. The same presuppositions, interests, points of view, and theological and ecclesiastical conceptions so dominate all these writings that it is apparent that Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah was originally a literary unit, the product of one school of thought, if not of a single mind, that can be called "The Chronicler."²⁹

²⁸Balmer H. Kelly, Ezra-Nehemiah-Esther-Job (Layman's Bible Commentary, vol. 8; Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1962) p. 7.

²⁹Raymond A. Bowman, "Introduction to the Books of Ezra-Nehemiah" (The Interpreter's Bible, vol. III; New York and Nashville: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1952), p. 552.

R. H. Pfeiffer also says that the same author wrote and edited Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah "...as seems obvious from the style, interest in the ritual and in the Levites, and sacrifice of historical reality to the glorification of Judaism."³⁰

Thus the agreement on the unity of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah is almost unanimous and might be thought to have gone beyond the point of further questioning. But there have been and are a few people holding contrary views, the notable names being N~~o~~ldike, Welch, and Elmslie. At the turn of this century Theodore N~~o~~ldike argued that Nehemiah may have had a separate sphere of circulation on the basis of the silence about Ezra in Ecclesiasticus 44:1, 49:13 and II Maccabees 2:13,³¹ although he has not been generally followed in this. S. Granild has somewhat similarly argued that Chronicles (i.e., the whole of the chronistic work) originally did not contain the Nehemiah memoirs but only those of Ezra.³² Since he sees Nehemiah 8-9 as the original form of Ezra 9-10, the Chronicles would contain Chronicles,

³⁰R. H. Pfeiffer, "The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah" (Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. II; New York and Nashville: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1962), p. 219.

³¹Theodore N~~o~~ldike, "Bemerkungen zum hebräischen Ben Sira," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, xx (1900), p. 89.

³²S. Granild, Ezrabogens literære Genesis, undersøgt med Henblik paa et efterkronistisk Indgreb (1949), p. 128 ff.; cf. Aage Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament, fifth edition (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1959), vol. II, p. 209.

Ezra 1-7 and Nehemiah 8-9. The Scandinavian language in which he wrote is largely responsible for scholarly non-aquaintance with this view. A. C. Welch was the first proponent of the outright separation of Chronicles from Ezra-Nehemiah and of the view that there were distinct authors.³³ He argues for an early post-exilic date with a first draft circa 520 B.C. with a later recension according to the P strand. He arrives at this by denying the validity of the main arguments for the unity of the Chronistic work, claiming that it is perfectly normal to use the term "King of Persia" by a writer in the Persian period, and rejecting the genealogy given in I Chronicles 3:19-24 as spurious on a very subjective use of the Elephantine papyri. His following was virtually nil, but he did make one disciple in W. A. L. Elmslie who carried his ideas forward and far beyond that of their originator in his commentary on Chronicles in the Interpreter's Bible. Elmslie's position here is rather strange, his comments now being the direct antithesis of those which appeared in 1916 in the Cambridge Bible where he argued for the unity of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah and the late date for the Chronicler's work. Let us note

³³cf. Post-Exilic Judaism (The Baird Lecture for 1934; Edinburg and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1935), passim but especially pp. 241-244 and The Work of the Chronicler, Its Purpose and Date (The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1938; London: Oxford University Press, 1939), passim but especially pp. 149-160.

several of his conclusions there:

...the conclusion that Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah were at one time a single work should be unhesitatingly adopted.³⁴

The late date of Chronicles is finally put beyond all doubt by the linguistic peculiarities of the book.³⁵

From this cumulative evidence we infer that the Chronicler was certainly a post-exilic writer later than the period of Ezra-Nehemiah and in all probability not earlier than about 300-250 B.C.³⁶

The fact is well taken that it is not abnormal for one to change his mind on a particular issue whatever its nature. But why the departure from a position which is almost universally held and which rests on scholarly evidence to another that is suspect by biblical scholarship and of which he today is the lone defender? This almost defies logical explanation.³⁷

³⁴Elmslie, op. cit., p. xvii.

³⁵Ibid., p. xxi.

³⁶Ibid., p. xxii

³⁷The purpose of the Interpreter's Bible is supposedly to make available to the ministry and interested laymen the best of biblical scholarship in a readily accessible source. This being true, why was one with so unrepresentative a viewpoint chosen to write the introduction and commentary to Chronicles? Or might this be termed a "slip," the editors not knowing his new fancy, thinking that he would write in the normative strand of scholarship as in his former commentary? Whatever the explanation, the result is that his commentary is excessively individualistic, departing from the consensus of scholars regularly. The reader will find no reference to the unity of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah in his work but has to proceed further in the same volume to the introduction to Ezra and Nehemiah (IB, III, p. 552 ff.) by Raymond A. Bowman for this information.

Elmslie like Welch sees the overlapping of verses in II Chronicles 36 and Ezra 1 as a fact against common authorship rather than for it. It is to be explained merely as being placed here so that the Hebrew Bible might end on a note of hope.³⁸ He is here following Welch who has said that "men do not take the trouble to stitch together two documents unless they have been originally separate."³⁹ Elmslie sees this overlapping as "a minor argument for a very late date" that now carries no weight.⁴⁰ He bases his argument on the exégesis of I Chronicles 3:19-24,⁴¹ saying that the genealogy of the Hebrew MT carries one down only to about 350 B.C., while it is the LXX which extends the list to the eleventh generation or about 250 B.C. As for the linguistic affinities to which most commentators point as implying a date no earlier than late fourth century B.C., Elmslie argues that the similarity of style, the elevation of the Levites and other supposed likenesses of the books "were not part of the Chronicler's original writing, but are corrective additions inserted into his text at a later date."⁴² He then proceeds to date Chronicles to 450-350 B.C., but he wished to hold out for

³⁸Ibid., III, pp. 547-548.

³⁹Post-Exilic Judaism, p. 186.

⁴⁰IB, III, p. 345.

⁴¹Ibid., III, p. 358.

⁴²Ibid., III, p. 346.

a fifth century date. How can he do so in view of the fact that he admits the chronicler's style and vocabulary is that of the latest Hebrew books? Here he really goes deep into the magician's hat and says that this was intentional, a part of the chronicler's purpose. He then appeals to the results of Albright's article⁴³ who has rejuvenated the old rabbinic and early church father idea that the chronicler was Ezra, Taking this as axiomatic and beyond all doubts, he asserts that the diction of Chronicles is thus not incompatible with the end of the fifth century B.C. ⁴⁴ Therefore, Chronicles is one work, Ezra-Nehemiah another, quite unrelated.

Another writer has taken offense at the way the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah unity has been put forth. Noting that modern authors have taken the diction and spirit in which the works were written to identify virtually unanimously the authors of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, and after giving an example that older writers were also so inclined (Cornely, Introductio, vol. 2, p. 328), Fernandez has sought to show that "no está justificado el tono dogmático con que se afirma dicha identidad, dándola por tesis perfecta y definitivamente

⁴³W. F. Albright, "The Date and Personality of the Chronicler" (Journal of Biblical Literature, xl, 1921), pp. 104-124.

⁴⁴IB, III, p. 347.

demonstrada."⁴⁵ He makes it clear that he does not wish "to deny the identity of the author"⁴⁶ and that such an identification does not create any difficulties.⁴⁷ But he thinks some positive arguments can be brought forth to show that the case for unity is not as air-tight as has been supposed. He conceives of two writers, priests or levites, with the same priestly spirit, preoccupation with the temple and cult, having the same literary background and using the same style and language. Taking his cue from the documentary hypothesis in which it is quite correct to speak of individual writers of the Yahwistic, Elohist, Deuteronomic and Priestly schools of thought, he concludes by a parallel to this that "dos individuos pertenecientes a la misma escuela habrían redactado Esd.-Neh. y Paralipómenos."⁴⁸ So far, so good. He has not really suggested anything drastic yet. But then he becomes ambivalent, if not ambiguous, as to the original unity of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah saying:

A esta pregunta, a la que contestan afirmativamente la gran mayoría de autores modernos, respondemos ya en parte con lo que acabamos de decir.⁴⁹

After acknowledging the probability of such a unity, he shows that in Ezra-Nehemiah we are prone to get specific details, minute accounts and documents in their original

⁴⁵Fernandez, op. cit., pp. 17-19.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁹Ibid.

form, while in Chronicles we get abridgments, disarrangement of sources and history from the standpoint of a personal view. He then views the overlapping in II Chronicles 36 and Ezra 1 not as a point for their original unity, but as something "de muy poco, y aun quizá de ningún valor."⁵⁰ He explains this by giving the author of Chronicles, "quienquiera que fuese," a double motive for the overlap: (a) to let his readers know that the exiled ones had not remained forever in exile and (b) that Ezra-Nehemiah and the history therein was a continuation of the work he had written (i.e., I and II Chronicles). What is one to make out of Fernandez's views here? Does he or does he not assert the unity of the chronistic work? In spite of the assertions he has made that he is not questioning the unity, his underlying attitude, along with hints dropped here and there such as "whoever that he may have been" referring to the author of Chronicles, can only cause one to question his intentions here. He really seems inclined against the original unity of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, and if he does believe in their original unity, he is certainly not absolutely convinced of it. At best Fernandez is ambivalent on this relationship.

So much for the protests against the original unity of the whole chronistic work or corpus. These dissensions from the general consensus do not establish their claims. Rather, they are to be viewed merely as the personal fancy of in-

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 20.

dividuals. The main stream of biblical thought on this post-exilic period concludes firmly that Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah were originally one, and we may conclude with Bowman that "Ezra and Nehemiah unquestionably have been formed and transmitted by the anonymous person known as the Chronicler, the author of the books of Chronicles."⁵¹

With the decision on unity having been reached it now remains for us to look closely at the author of this unified work. This is one of the most perplexing problems of this study, for about as specific as one can get is to term this vague individual "the chronicler." The term has been used several times already, but now some delineation and demonstrating is needed.

Traditionally the chronicler has been identified with Ezra in both Jewish and Christian circles. Jewish tradition, following the Talmud of Baba Batha 15a, has held that Ezra "escribió su libro y la genealogia del libro de las Crónicas hasta él."⁵² This view was championed also by the early Christian fathers but has largely been abandoned by modern writers. However, W. F. Albright in the article already noted (cf. p. 20) has revived this view, maintaining again that the chronicler is Ezra. Since he dates Ezra in 428 after Nehemiah,

⁵¹IB, III, p. 552.

⁵²Luis Arnaldich, Libros históricos del Antiguo Testamento (Biblia Comentada, Tomo II; Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1961), p. 549.

Ezra is seen to be the writer of the whole chronistic unity of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah. But this, along with the other works which are attributed to Ezra in Jewish tradition,⁵³ seems to be more legendary than true, a product of a later romanticizing of his person and work.

Who the "chronicler" was as a person is a problem for which the evidence is negligible, so that one must be content to call him by this vague and evasive term. However, the date of his work is somewhat less obscure. Since the unity of the chronistic whole has been shown to be the reasonable position, one may eliminate an early date for the work, either wholly or in part, that is, it must be not earlier than the late fifth century B.C. The arguments for this original unity (but especially the linguistic style and usage) point, in fact, to a date considerably later. Martin Noth in Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I has argued for a date of 300-200 B.C. R. H. Pfeiffer places the chronicler "about the middle of the third century."⁵⁴ Sellin claims that "the Chronicler lived somewhere about 300 B.C."⁵⁵ W. Rudolph has indeed dated the chronicler as early 400 B.C., but has claimed that additions to his work continued to be made for over two centuries. Of this early date, however, Rowley notes

⁵³cf. Baxter, op. cit., p. 199.

⁵⁴R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 830.

⁵⁵E. Sellin, Introduction to the Old Testament, translated by W. Montgomery (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), p. 239.

that this is "much too close to the events to accord easily with the garbling,"⁵⁶ a judgement which seems to be reasonable. Harlan Creelman (a professor of Old Testament in one of the Colleges which preceded this present Faculty of Divinity of McGill University) is thus probably right when he assigns the chronicler to roughly 300-250 B.C.⁵⁷ The book of Ecclesiasticus (ca. 180 B.C.) provides the terminus ad quem for a date because 47:11 alludes to the levitical singers and a direct reference is to be found in 49:13. While a date of mid-third century is to be preferred, one may say with some certainty that the chronicler lived and worked in the general period 350-200 B.C. Such a date best fits the available evidence.

In this period in which the chronicler lived and worked the Jewish people were always a subject people just as they had been vassals to some world power almost from the outset of the Divided Kingdom. The fact that Jews of Palestine were quite openly divided on many matters greatly added to their problems and disunity. Since the first repatriados had returned with Joshua and Zerubbabel two centuries or so before and established themselves with no little difficulty in the vicinity of Jerusalem and had succeeded in re-establishing the temple and the cult, a new definition of "Jew" had come to the fore. A true Jew was held to be a member of the tribes

⁵⁶H. H. Rowley, "Ezra and Nehemiah" (E.T., LXII, February, 1951), p. 158.

⁵⁷Harlan Creelman, An Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Macmillan, 1917), p. 67.

of Benjamin, or Judah or of the levitical clans, and who had come through the formative period of Judaism in Babylonia and had returned to his "fatherland," the question of whether or not he had set foot there before being unimportant. Thus, to be a Jew one had to be one of those who were originally deported or else a direct descendant of them. Since there were originally only a small number of deportees, the descendants of this group were certainly in Jerusalem a minority group of inconsequential size, an indisputable fact since the large bulk of the Babylonian exilic community had chosen not to forsake their new-found prosperity for the hardships of "home" in spite of appeals from their leaders. This kosher or pure group were, then, the true Jews, while all others could not properly claim to be Jews in any sense of the word. These in the second group were classed as בְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ ("people of the land") with the most derogatory inferences which one could conjure up or associate with the term. In these times it came to be roughly synonymous with "Canaanite," a most scornful word in Jewish religious usage. Since the chronicler was one of the minority group seeking to establish the viewpoint of this group in a hostile society, it is only natural that his point of view may be either colored or altered immeasurably to suit his interests and purpose. Bertil Gärtner has made a most interesting observation on this point:

The Chronistic work is stamped by a strange desire on the part of "the chronicler" (i.e., the tradition-ists) to adapt his material to his basic viewpoint; and the material transmitted by tradition is not infrequently enriched with the author's own additions. The choice of sources is more deliberate than in the Deuteronomic work, and "the chronicler's" interpolations are more uncompromising, so that certain sections in the two works, dealing with the same course of events, contradict one another. Since "the chronicler" uses a chronicle-like style and works from material consisting largely of annals, the oral tradition is less represented here than in the Deuteronomic work. He also gives occasional glimpses of the ideas and theology of his own time; this is particularly noticeable in the inserted speeches.⁵⁸

Martin Noth has also made an interesting statement about the chronicler's freedom in altering material to suit his own tastes:

So hat chr entgegen seiner eigenen Absicht die in seinen Zuellen gebotene Geschichtsdarstellung doch stärker verändert, als es Dtr getan hatte, der seine eigene Auffassung vor allern in dem Rahmen seines Werkes zum Ausdruck gebracht, aber in den Wortlaut seiner Quellen nur verhältnismässig wenig eingegriffen hatte.⁵⁹

From these two quotations the chronicler's method in treating existing material is evident. In a strict sense he might be guilty of falsification and/or distortion, but one should not be too quick to judge him, especially by modern standards which have evolved. Adam C. Welch quite

⁵⁸Bertil Gärtner, The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation translated by Carolyn Hanrray King (Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis, XXI; Upsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1955), p. 10.

⁵⁹Martin Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I, p. 213. Cf. Gärtner, Ibid., p. 10, note 1.

rightly notes that

it is somewhat cavalier treatment of an ancient book to measure its contents by the extent to which they conform to the standard laid down by a modern historian. Real recognition of this peculiar element in the book might have suggested that the Chronicler was not specially interested in history qua history, but was using that form of writing in order to convey his judgement on a period. The recognition of this possibility might in turn have explained why he added so little to the record which he took over from Kings, and why he recast some of the incidents in a way which suited his purpose.⁶⁰

With this in our minds, then, the chronicler stands in a somewhat better light. He was not a historian nor interested in history per se. Had he been so, his work would have not been worthwhile, for Samuel-Kings already quite adequately covered a large part of his work. In modern terms we might say he was an "apologist" for post-exilic Judaism. So considered, he was writing history "for a purpose," and thus reflecting developments present in his time as though they had begun at a point far in the past is merely a means toward bringing about that purpose.

In this purpose the chronicler has several interests, some of which have already been noted. His interest in purity of blood we have seen to greatly modify the definition of the term "Jew," and the use he makes of genealogical lists is well known. But there are more than these. The elevation of the Levites to the level of the priests re-

⁶⁰The Work of the Chronicler, p. 4. Welch intends "the chronicler" to be understood only as the author of the book of Chronicles, but in spite of his intended limitation, the insights he produces are equally as valid for the "chronicler" as concerns the original chronistic unity.

flects the period in which he wrote when this was true, and that he too must have been a member of some order of the Levites. Torrey notes that

in magnifying their office he magnified the ecclesiastical organization in Jerusalem, and at the same time filled what must have seemed to him a serious gap in the written history of Israel as it then existed.⁶¹

Whether the rights of the levitical classes ~~were actual~~ or an idealization in the mind of the chronicler is not directly discernible and may be challengeable since these classes are ignored throughout most of Israel's history and not part of the Mosaic-Aaronic complex of institutions narrated in the Pentateuch.

The Temple is most important to the chronicler, and he wishes to establish the authority of its worship and cult in Jerusalem.⁶² This was no real problem so long as there was no rival, but in the chronicler's day there was a real challenge to the supremacy of Jerusalem by the Samaritan Church with a priesthood of Aaronic pedigree and several external facts in its favor.⁶³ In the face of this then existing crisis the chronicler saw the post-exilic community as involved in the same struggle for power and supremacy.

⁶¹C.C. Torrey, "The Chronicler as Editor and Narrator," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, vol. 25, p. 159.

⁶²C.C. Torrey, A.J.S.L., vol. 24, pp. 223-226.

⁶³Torrey, A.J.S.L., vol. 25, p. 158.

In order to establish this supremacy of Jerusalem the chronicler sought to silence the opposition by showing the priority of the Second Temple and that the Jerusalem Judah-Benjamin-Levite blue-bloods via Babylonia were the actual and real successors and heirs to David, Solomon, Moses and Aaron. In establishing this the chronicler, who may here be roughly paralleled by some branches of the christian church, used what we would call in modern terms the doctrine of apostolic succession.⁶⁴ This throws much light, then, on the content he expresses and so viewed should greatly lessen the existing difficulties of his work.

There are several facets to the chronicler's work, and these must be noted and understood if we are to truly comprehend his work. The first fact about the chronicler is that he was an editor.⁶⁵ In this editing the method employed is an eclectic one. Torrey has correctly surmised that "he is not rewriting the whole history of Judah from the standpoint of his own religious interest; he is rewriting only that amount of the history which seems to him desirable."⁶⁶ He is not trying to "supplant" the books of Samuel-Kings but is trying to "supplement" them. Thus, in many cases he merely reproduces his source verbatim and in others emends them only slightly. However, in many other cases one may

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 157-158.

⁶⁵cf. Ibid., pp. 162-173, 188, 192.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 163.

find extensive revision, adaptation or abridgment. These types are rather few in both parts of the originally unified work.

A second fact of the chronicler's work is that he was a narrator.⁶⁷ This is to be seen from the way he cunningly and with great literary skill ties together two facts or stories. While the facts or stories may be based on historical occurrences, the connecting links are interpolations which markedly reflect his qualities as a story-teller. Besides giving local color and freshness to his portrayal of the facts,

he very frequently creates new pictures and invents striking details with a dogmatic purpose, it is true, but perhaps quite as often with a purely literary aim. Few, if any, of all the narrators of the Old Testament could surpass him in vividness of imagination. Every scene stands out clearly before his eyes, as his thought creates the successive incidents. Everything is alive, and in movement. He is fond of putting things in the most concrete form, giving places, names, and dates, even when he is thus taking liberties with the older history. If his skill---or care---in telling the story were equal to his power of invention, he would stand among the first of Hebrew writers. But this is unfortunately not the case. In constructing his narrative he is often careless, sometimes extremely so; his language is inelegant, even for the time in which he lived; and his style is slovenly to the last degree.⁶⁸

That which Torrey has observed is quite true and is well taken, but he is somewhat overly polemical as he is getting ready to dispose of Ezra as a fictitious invention of the chronicler. Even though he holds Ezra to be the chronicler's "creation," Torrey finds the chronicler's hand to be less

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 189.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 197.

extensive in Nehemiah and is to be found chiefly in those "additions" to the Nehemiah Memoirs.

Another fact which is obvious about the chronicler is that he is an author in his own right. The unified work he produced was in many ways a result of his literary genius. The freedom with which he treats his subject is unique among the canonical writings, and the order of events is often manipulated to accomplish his purpose. Torrey has correctly observed that

it is evident that the Chronicler became an editor more from necessity than from choice. By taste and gift he was a novelist. He would doubtless have preferred to give freer rein to his imagination in composing the story of the Jews and their antecedents. But he was now writing not to interest, but with an apologetic purpose.⁶⁹

The chronicler was not an "author" in the most specialized sense of the term which connotes literary creation to a great extent. It should already be evident that sources have been used by him in one way or another to suit his purposes. But that there were sources on which he drew is a point worth noting. There are about fifteen supposed sources in the first part of his work, while the second half is based on an Aramaic document and the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah. In Chronicles the sources are of a rather nebulous nature and all of the works to which we are referred are quite unknown to modern biblical scholarship.⁷⁰ There

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 217.

⁷⁰cf. Ibid., pp. 193-194 for a listing of these sources.

is good reason to think that they were also unknown to the post-exilic community of the third century B.C. All of these different sources could not have been characterized by one general tendency, style and language. Constant reference to sources is a means of "literary adornment" used by the chronicler to embellish his writing and give it a greater sense of authority. Arnaldich seems to take the sources as actual historical and prophetic ones⁷¹ which have been adjusted to the writer's suprahistorical end and essential religious purpose, but great difficulties arise in such a viewpoint. It seems that the only actual sources are the canonical books of Samuel and Kings which appear almost unaltered in the chronicler's work. The view that Chronicles is itself of Midrash (מדרש) in either the earlier or later usage of that term or is based on a Midrash of the book of Kings rather than the present canonical book and MT does not answer the question of the other sources. They are best explained as creations of the chronicler.

However, in Ezra-Nehemiah the situation is altogether different. Here there is almost general agreement that the chronicler is using definite sources of a quite reliable nature. Here only C.C. Torrey, G. Hölischer and a rare follower here and there have doubted the chronicler's sources,⁷²

⁷¹Arnaldich, op. cit., pp. 551-552.

⁷²There is no need to go into their views here as they will come out in the next chapter, but for an excellent summary, cf. Andrew Thomson, "An Inquiry Concerning the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah," A.J.S.L., vol. 48, pp. 99-100.

and even they find no reason to suspect the bulk of the Nehemiah Memoirs. The Aramaic section in Ezra 4:8-6:18 is largely untouched and therefore valid for the insights it gives. Torrey, apparently in the interests of his theory, claims this to be part of the chronicler's method because it was written by one of his own school in his own day. Even so he sees the chronicler as composing 6:6-7 as an introduction and 6:15-18, a passage "filled to the brim with characteristic material,"⁷³ as a conclusion. As against this it should be asserted with Batten that the chronicler incorporated this Aramaic section and did not compose it, for he so misunderstood its tenor and purpose.⁷⁴ The remaining Aramaic section in Ezra 7:12-26 is unmistakably an authentic part of the Ezra Memoirs.

The Ezra Memoirs are a source in which much confusion exists, and it is this confusion that has caused many scholars to classify them as largely legendary or even unhistorical. However, a larger body of biblical scholars is inclined to look upon them as a trustworthy source.⁷⁵ Scholars include in the widest expanse of these Ezra 7-10 and Nehemiah 8-10 which for some reason or other were displaced from their original setting. It is this displacement which has caused many to think of Ezra and Nehemiah as contemporaries. But

⁷³A.J.S.L., vol. 25, p. 189.

⁷⁴Batten, op. cit., p. 19.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 15.

very few would accept all of these chapters as authentic. Batten limits Ezra's Memoirs to 7:27f.; 8:15-19, 21-25, 28f., 36; 9:1-11a, 13-15.⁷⁶ Weiser sees them as running from 7:12 to 9:15 and is also inclined favorably to including Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 8-9.⁷⁷ S.R. Driver sees Ezra's Memoirs as being from 7:12 to 9:15 with chapter 10 an alteration and abridged version of them.⁷⁸ Creelman would give them as being 7:27-8:34; 9:1-15 with the possibility that chapter 10 should also be included. The Aramaic section 7:12-26 offers some true historical records but has probably been modified and adapted by the chronicler. Martin Noth in a source not accessible to me has denied the existence of the Ezra Memoirs and has labeled them as the "creation" of the chronicler. He sees them as based on the royal edict of 7:12-26 and modelled on the basis of Nehemiah's Memoirs, but Weiser rejects this as being an oversimplification⁷⁹ which does not do justice to the facts. Lusseau would include the whole of chapters 7-10 and believes that "este documento representa la relación global de su memorial a los autoridades persas."⁸⁰ R. H. Pfeiffer would limit them to 7:27-9:15 and finds Neh. 8-10 as most puzzling. His view of Ezra is bordering on the unhistorical

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 16.

⁷⁷Weiser, op. cit., pp. 320-321.

⁷⁸Driver, op. cit., pp. 549-550.

⁷⁹Weiser, op. cit., p. 321.

⁸⁰Arnaldich, op. cit., p. 649.

and he concludes that

...even though Ezra may have been a historical character, the information about him is on a par with that offered by the Chronicler on David when he is not quoting from ancient sources.⁸¹

Andrew Thomson has argued for the rather nebulous state of the Ezra sources and has concluded that the Ezra of Ezra 7 cannot possibly be identified with the Ezra of chapters 9-10 and Nehemiah 8-9.⁸² Such a view only creates extra difficulties on top of the already existing ones. An examination of other author's positions in various introductions and commentaries would greatly heighten the picture of the Ezra Memoirs presented here. No two writers agree on their exact extent and the views held would run from the fictitious to the historical, but one fact would seem to result therefrom -- that the "core" of the Ezra Memoirs is too real to deny, and whatever their former extent this core represented in the text is based on a legitimate source.

The Memoirs of Nehemiah are quite universally recognized as accurate and authentic. Pfeiffer characterizes them as "one of the most accurate historical sources in the Old Testament," "the only unimpeachable source for Jewish history between Haggai and Zechariah in 520-516 and I Maccabees for the period 175-135."⁸³ Rowley notes that "the authentic character of Nehemiah's Memoirs has been generally recognized

⁸¹R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 828.

⁸²A.J.S.L., vol. 48, p. 125.

⁸³R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 829.

by leading scholars."⁸⁴ They mark something new in literary history, being "the earliest autobiography extant written by a man who was not a king."⁸⁵ Since these Memoirs are "the only authentic record which the Chronicler unquestionably transcribed in Ezra-Nehemiah," it almost goes without saying that "the genuineness of the Memoirs of Nehemiah has never been questioned, but their extent is disputed."⁸⁶ Arnaldich quite rightly notes that here we have the "Memoirs of Nehemiah" and not the "history of the achievements and acts of Nehemiah."⁸⁷ Pfeiffer lists the following sections as being "generally" held to be parts of the Nehemiah Memoirs: 1-7; 12:27-43 and 13:4-31; while those parts which are "unquestionably" held are 1-2; 4:1-6:19; 7:1-5a; 11:1-2; 12:31, 37-40 and 13:14-27, 29 and 31.⁸⁸ In 1948 Pfeiffer himself held to the following: 1-2; 3:33-6:19; 11:1f; 12:31, 37-40, but nine years later his mind had changed some so that they included 1:1-7:73a and 13:4-31.⁸⁹ C. C. Torrey, whose work was so destructive on the Ezra Memoirs, has here found a legitimate source which is beyond suspicion. His view limits Nehemiah's Memoirs to the greater part of the first six chapters (1:1-2:6; 2:9b-20; 3:33, 3:34a β -5:13a; and 5:13b β -6:19), but views

⁸⁴H. H. Rowley, "Sanballat and the Samaritan Temple," B.J.R.L. (vol. 38, No. 1, September, 1955), p. 170.

⁸⁵Pfeiffer, Introduction, p. 837.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 834.

⁸⁷Arnaldich, op. cit., p. 717.

⁸⁸IDB, II, p. 219.

⁸⁹Introduction, p. 837; IDB, II, p. 219.

all else to be the work of the chronicler.⁹⁰ W. F. Lofthouse claims them to include chapters 1-2; 4-7:5a; 13:3-31 with 12:27-43 containing some traces of authenticity.⁹¹ John E. McFadyen limits the Memoirs to 1:1-7:5; 12:27-43 and 13:4-31 but allows the possibility that other sections rest directly on them.⁹² Batten believes them to be contained in 1:1-4, 1:11b-2:7; 2:9b-20; 3:33-7:5a and 13:6-31. John Bright thinks that they are to be found in 1:1-7:4; 11:1f; 12:27-43 (although they have here been expanded in the process of transmission), and concluded in chapter 13.⁹³ As opposed to most writers Bright believes them originally to have circulated independently. Fernandez sees them as being chapters 1-7; 12:27-43 and 13:6-31.⁹⁴ These examples show that there is no general agreement on the extent or limits of the Memoirs, but as opposed to those Memoirs of Ezra, there is here universal agreement that Nehemiah's Memoirs are an accurate, unimpeachable source. Therefore, this source is of utmost importance for the study of Ezra-Nehemiah and the Persian

⁹⁰Torrey, Composition, p. 50.

⁹¹W. F. Lofthouse, Israel After the Exile (The Clarendon Bible; Old Testament, vol. IV; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), p. 180.

⁹²John Edgar McFadyen, Introduction to the Old Testament, revised edition (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), p. 381.

⁹³John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 379.

⁹⁴Fernandez, op. cit., p. 10.

period. The importance and influence of Nehemiah's Memoirs is to be seen from the static position which Nehemiah occupies, while Ezra has always been in a state of extreme uncertainty and fluctuation. Without this source the already unsettled chronological state of Ezra-Nehemiah would be well nigh intolerable and hopeless.

A unique problem exists for the study of Ezra-Nehemiah in that a large portion of the text is paralleled by an extra-biblical source, the only such phenomenon of this kind although the term "extra-biblical" is not exactly correct when referring to the LXX of which it is a part (Esdras A). In addition to the LXX rendering which is present for all of the Old Testament books, here we have an account in Greek and independent of the LXX, which is now usually treated as an apocryphal book. The problem here is what does one make of it since it is a fragment, reflects a different chronology from the MT, uses a freedom of translation and so on.

In addition to the internal and literary problems which exist there is also a problem of some sorts or at least an existent confusion with reference to its name. It is most commonly called "I Esdras" or the "Greek Ezra," but since there are other books referred to by the names Esdras or Ezra, some delineation is needed.⁹⁵ The nomenclature employed in the Hebrew and English Bibles and their relation

⁹⁵W.O.E. Oesterley, The Books of the Apocrypha, Their Origin, Teaching and Contents (London: Robert Scott, 1916), p. 440; also IB, III, p. 552.

to the LXX is not too confusing. The MT of Ezra-Nehemiah corresponds to II Esdras or Esdras B of the LXX. Esdras A of the LXX (also I Esdras or the "Greek Ezra") is equal to II Chronicles 35-36, Ezra plus Nehemiah 8 in part. No real problem exists here, but the Vulgate and our English Apocrypha really complicates things. Canonical Ezra and Nehemiah are known as I and II Esdras respectively of the Vulgate, while I Esdras or the Greek Ezra is referred to as III Esdras. However, there is another book, the pseudepigraphical "Ezra Apocalypse" for which there is no Hebrew or LXX corollary, which is called IV and V Esdras in the Vulgate. The English Apocrypha calls this book II Esdras, chapters 3-14 equalling IV Esdras and chapters 15-16 being V Esdras. This unnecessary garbling causes confusion where none should really exist. Nevertheless, the book with which we are concerned can be recognized as I Esdras of the Apocrypha, III Esdras of the Vulgate, Esdras A of the LXX or Ezra of the MT plus II Chronicles 35-36 and part of Nehemiah 8.

It is evident at the outset that in I Esdras we have only a remaining fragment of a once larger whole. If I Esdras should prove to be of no value in any other way, it would solidify beyond questioning the fact of the original unity of the chronistic work. Its beginning at the first verse of II Chronicles 35 must be termed an accident, this new chapter just accidentally commencing on a new page, but its breaking off in the middle of a sentence in what cor-

responds to our Nehemiah 8:12 can only show that more originally followed, though what followed must remain conjectural. Whether one accepts or mechanically rejects I Esdras, it shows conclusively that the chronistic work did exist in at least two forms in the first century A.D. (and in all likelihood much earlier) and that I Esdras was the preferred form to Josephus and probably most of his contemporaries in orthodox Judaism for its account of the post-exilic history.⁹⁶

Of great importance is the way in which I Esdras gives us the chronology or order of events. The table below shows its relation to the MT:⁹⁷

| I Esdras | | MT |
|-----------|---|----------------------|
| Chapter 1 | = | II Chronicles 35, 36 |
| 2:1-15 | = | Ezra 1 |
| 2:16-30 | = | Ezra 4:7-24 |
| 3:1-5:6 | = | Not in our MT |
| 5:7-73 | = | Ezra 2:1-4:5 |
| 6, 7 | = | Ezra 5, 6 |
| 8:1-9:36 | = | Ezra 7-10 |
| 9:37-55 | = | Nehemiah 7:72-8:12 |

This chronology is most important because it gives a more probable picture of Ezra's work than does the MT, but it is not itself free from chronological difficulties. Rowley claims that the chronological problem is worse than the MT because "Ezra iv. 7-24 precedes the first return from the exile."⁹⁸ However, Rowley is too eager to scrap I Esdras

⁹⁶ C. C. Torrey, "The Nature and Origin of 'First Esdras'," A.J.S.L., vol. 23, p. 117.

⁹⁷ Batten, op. cit., p. 7.

⁹⁸ B.J.R.L. (vol. 37, No. 2, March, 1955), p. 539, note 1.

and any light it may shed, for given a "ghost of a chance" I Esdras does serious damage to the late date for Ezra. Modern scholarship of whom Rowley may be here termed representative has been content to disregard I Esdras because it is generally believed to be a free compilation with a "tendency" closely akin to the chronicler for adding, emending or abridging according to his own purpose. The commentaries written in the last half of the nineteenth century also took a similar view. Since Jerome took a stand against it in his prologue to Ezra-Nehemiah of the Vulgate it has not gained a fair hearing for itself. It was C. C. Torrey who recognized the worth of I Esdras and who was responsible for giving it thorough study -- "the first recognition of the true nature of the 'book'."⁹⁹ This recognition occurred in 1907. Here he claims the modern view of I Esdras to be "altogether mistaken." He here notes that transpositions in Jeremiah or additions in Daniel-Esther failed to produce contradictions, but

the two recensions of the narrative dealing with the restoration of the Jews and the work of Ezra could not stand thus peaceably side by side, for the one gives the lie to the other. . . . It makes little difference whether Jeremiah 31 comes before or after Jeremiah 41 or even whether I Kings, chapter 20 precedes or follows chapter 21; but it makes all the difference in the world whether the 'train' of exiles described in Ezra, chapter 2, received permission to return from Cyrus or from Darius.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹C.C. Torrey, The Apocryphal Literature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), p. 48.

¹⁰⁰A.J.S.L., vol. 23, p. 117.

Torrey has made a definitive claim for a consideration of the chronology which I Esdras offers us.

There are three possible solutions to the relation between I Esdras and canonical Ezra-Nehemiah: "Ezra-Nehemiah may have been derived from I Esdras; or I Esdras may be a modification of Ezra-Nehemiah; or both forms may derive from a common original."¹⁰¹ The possibility that I Esdras was the older form of the two recensions was championed by Sir Henry Howorth "who concluded that the order and contents of I Esdras are primary and correct while the canonical Ezra-Nehemiah is the product of rabbinical rearrangement and curtailment."¹⁰² Howorth was not the originator of this view but had been preceded by Grotius (1644), Whitston (1722) and Ewald (1866). Howorth claimed that canonical Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah might well be later than the I Esdras recension but failed to show that it is really later. Against this Torrey says that

It is simply a piece taken without change out of the middle of a faithful Greek translation of the chronicler's History of Israel in the form which was generally recognized as authentic in the last century B.C. This was not, however, the original form of the History, but one which had undergone several important changes.¹⁰³

The second hypothesis that I Esdras was based on Ezra-

¹⁰¹ Bruce M. Metzger, An Introduction to the Apocrypha (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 11-12.

¹⁰² R. H. Pfeiffer, A History of New Testament Times With an Introduction to the Apocrypha (New York: Harper, 1949), p. 243.

¹⁰³ A.J.S.L., vol. 23, p. 123 (entire quote in italics).

Nehemiah and is the result of revision and rearrangement is the most popular of the three possible solutions. Those who hold this view naturally dismiss it because of its secondary nature, free style, late compilation, and historical worthlessness. Fernandez, quite typical of this view, after some four plus pages of examination of the book concludes that "puede caracterizarse la versión de 3 Esd. en dos palabras: más elegante; menos fiel."¹⁰⁴ Torrey has again answered this school of thought and has asserted that I Esdras and the MT are merely duplicate versions. He notes:

In every part of all this history the two recensions generally agree with each other sentence for sentence and clause for clause. In the cases where they fail to agree the differences are due to the usual accidents of manuscript transmission, or to mistakes made by the one or the other translator. The universally accepted view, that First Esdras is a free translation, or a free working-over (freie Bearbeitung) of the material, is mistaken. The translation is close, and the text as a whole has not been "edited," nor freely handled.¹⁰⁵

It is the third possibility or hypothesis that Torrey championed in the article cited several times now -- that behind this version lay a Hebrew-Aramaic original.¹⁰⁶ His view¹⁰⁷ is that at the beginning of our christian era two editions of the chronicler's work were in vogue, both con-

¹⁰⁴Fernandez, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁰⁵A.J.S.L., vol. 23, p. 123.

¹⁰⁶cf. Ibid., passim which equals Ezra Studies, pp. 11-36.

¹⁰⁷Cf. Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times, pp. 243-244 for a summary.

taining the story of the Three Youths but differing on the position of Nehemiah 7:73-10:39 -- one occupying its present position in the Hebrew Bible and the other placing it after Ezra 10. Our MT has descended from the first and I Esdras from the other. At the time the canon was closed the Three Youth Story was removed from the Hebrew, believing it to be an interpolation along with part of the chronicler's story now preserved in I Esdras 4:47b-56 and 4:62-5:6. I Esdras is a Greek translation of the second recension made before 150 B.C. Josephus used this recension which we now have substantially in its original form except for the parts lost at its beginning and end.

Oesterley holds a slightly different view.¹⁰⁸ There was certainly an original Hebrew text, but the MT and I Esdras rests on two different Hebrew texts. The text of I Esdras is based on an older text than our MT in which the chronistic work was yet undivided. II Esdras or Esdras B of our LXX rests directly on the MT as can be seen from its stiff, unidiomatic rendering. A Greek translation was made from the Hebrew text before it became static, and the original Greek was the "immediate parent" of our I Esdras. The MT and II Esdras are based on a revised Hebrew text, and the agreement between I Esdras and II Esdras is to be explained by their dependence on the original Greek ("intermediate")

¹⁰⁸cf. Oesterley, op. cit., pp. 444-445.

version.

Jean-Paul Audet has proposed an interesting "working hypothesis" for the origin of I Esdras.¹⁰⁹ It is his contention that corresponding to the two Greek Esdrases of the LXX we have two Aramaic Targums rather than a Hebrew Ezra. Since it is well known that Esdras B rests on the MT, Esdras A must rest on a Targum. There was a Hebrew-Aramaic original which corresponded in the main to our MT. Very early an Aramaic translator took a part of the then chronistic unity, inserted his interpolation about the Three Youths and gave a new look to the story by removing, displacing and recasting. A Greek translation of this Aramaic Targum appeared in Palestine about the end of the second century B.C. being "an indirect and incomplete translation of the Chronicler's work." From here it traveled to Alexandria and became associated with the sacred translations there. It was this translation that was used by Josephus. But since the Targum and the Hebrew differed on many points, the chronicler's work underwent a complete translation based on the Hebrew. Audet then conjectures that there may have developed a three scroll division for the chronicler's work in the history of transmission. Since the second of the scrolls may have ended near II Chronicles 35:1, the point where the

¹⁰⁹Jean-Paul Audet, "A Hebrew-Aramaic List of Books of the Old Testament in Greek Transcription," (Journal of Theological Studies, N.S., Vol. 1, pt. 2, October 1950), pp. 151-154.

Targumist had begun his translation, this quite unconsciously laid the limits for the Greek version depending on this scroll (our Esdras A). The translation observed the three scroll division and thus Ezra-Nehemiah in the Alexandrian canon came to be known as Esdras B, the prior Esdras being termed Esdras A because of its antiquity. Then the Greek name *παραλειπόμενα* (that which remains or is left aside) for the remainder of the chronicler's work, as yet untranslated, is explained. At about the same time of the new Greek translation of Ezra-Nehemiah there appeared a new Aramaic Targum which was closer to the Hebrew corresponding to Esdras B of the LXX. But since after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 Aramaic was no longer an influential language, the Targums would never have come down to us except that they had been translated very early into Greek and retained by Christians. Audet makes it clear that this is only a "working hypothesis," but he insists on its probability and says that if and when it might be possible to connect this hypothesis with facts "then the famous manuscripts of the Didache, of Clement of Rome, of Ignatius of Antioch, will appear to have rendered us yet another great service, late in the day."¹¹⁰

C.C. Torrey has been the real crusader for I Esdras. In one of his latest works he noted several facts about this work which every student of Ezra-Nehemiah should keep in mind:

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 154.

1. First Esdras is simply an unchanged extract from the old ("Septuagint") version of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah which is known to have been in existence in the middle of the 2d century B.C.---2. Our present Greek version, traditionally known as "the LXX," is that of Theodotion, of the 2d century A.D.---3. The Hebrew-Aramaic text which Theodotion rendered, the text of our present Hebrew Bible, is one from which the Story of the Three Guardsmen and its sequel had recently been cut out.---4. When the excision was made, 18 verses of the Chronicler's original narrative were cut out, of necessity. They appear in I Esd. 4:47b-56, 62f., 5:1-6, and originally followed Ezra 1:1.---5. At the beginning of the present era there was probably no text of the Chronicler's history in existence which did not contain the episode of the guardsmen and make Nehemiah 8 the sequel of Ezra 10.---6. The fragment called First Esdras was rescued from a Greek codex, and given a separate existence, with the purpose of saving an old and interesting variant version of the history. We have it in its original extent.¹¹¹

Of these "facts" only the second one seems to be somewhat suspect, and critics seem to have pointed to this shortcoming and/or personal fancy many times. Nevertheless, his research has led the way for study in this field, and his conclusion is well worth noting:

First Esdras does not represent the original form of this portion of the Chronicler's history, but a popular revision consisting partly of interpolation and partly of rearrangement. Our text of this revised form is derived from a rescued Greek fragment (now called "First Esdras"), but the same text in the same arrangement throughout existed in Semitic, partly Hebrew, partly Aramaic, the Greek being a good translation. This seems, moreover, to have been the only form of the Chronicler's history which was in circulation in the 1st century A.D., whether in Semitic or in Greek. Our canonical text of Ezra-Nehemiah was formed in the 2d century A.D., partly by excision of the story and its appendages, partly by rearrangement. It does not give us all that the Chronicler wrote, but the rest can be restored.¹¹²

¹¹¹Torrey, Apocryphal Lit., p. 45.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 48.

There is no agreement on the problem of I Esdras. Torrey has asserted that it "on the whole represents an older form of the Hebrew text, for the portion it covers, than that which we have, though itself much more carelessly written."¹¹³ On the other hand Egon Johannesen has asserted that the MT is superior to I Esdras.¹¹⁴ Pfeiffer has said that I Esdras and the MT "unquestionably are merely different editions of a text which was still in a state of flux."¹¹⁵ Audet holds that I Esdras "may well be the old Greek version of an Aramaic Targum which had itself long ago disappeared."¹¹⁶ Whatever the non-agreement of scholars on its nature, origin, content, worth, etc., it must not be merely dismissed as nonworthwhile. The spirit in which S.A. Cook makes the following statement will yield the most fruit:

It can no longer be assumed that the Massoretic text necessarily represents a more trustworthy record of the age, and that ~~E~~ is necessarily arbitrary and methodless. Both share fundamental imperfections. ~~E~~, therefore, in any case deserves impartial consideration, and its problems involve those of Ezra-Nehemiah. These problems, owing to the absence of decisive and independent evidence, can be handled only provisionally; but enough is clear to permit the conclusion that ~~E~~ represents a text in some respects older than the present Massoretic text, to which, however, some attempt seems to have been made to conform it. . . . From a comparison of both with

¹¹³Torrey, Composition, pp. 50-51.

¹¹⁴Egon Johannesen, Studier over Esdras og Nehemjas Historie (1946); cf. Bentzen, II, p. 220.

¹¹⁵Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times, p. 239.

¹¹⁶Audet, art. cit., p. 154.

Josephus and other sources (notably Daniel) it would further appear that \mathcal{E} represents one of the efforts to give an account of a period, the true course of which was confused and forgotten, if not intentionally obscured; different attempts were made to remove difficulties and inconsistencies, and the desire to give greater prominence to the priestly Ezra than to the secular governor Nehemiah is probably responsible for the arrangement of the extant texts.¹¹⁷

Of the many problems elaborated above it is certainly true that no final answers will be able to be given on the basis of the present state of facts but only probabilities and conjectures with perhaps the exception of the original unity of the chronistic work which seems to be almost unanimously attested. Yet at the same time one should not shy away and make no decisions or assertions because of the nebulous state of affairs. How is one, then, to work effectively in this exceptionally troubled area? It becomes increasingly apparent that one must use literary criticism here and use it consistently and wisely. While some may have been consistent in its use, they have seldom been also wise users. C.C. Torrey is representative of those who have used literary criticism to the widest extent. This has already been noticed in connection with his treatment of the Ezra Memoirs,¹¹⁸ but notice the following statement of his:

Any attempt to "restore the original form" of an ancient document, by rearranging its chapters, para-

¹¹⁷S. A. Cook, "First Esdras" (R.H. Charles, editor; Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament; Oxford: The University Press, 1913), vol. 1, p.2. The symbol \mathcal{E} stands for "1 Esdras."

¹¹⁸Cf. above, p. 13.

graphs, or verses, ought to be met with suspicion and subjected to the severest criticism. In the great majority of cases, either the traditional form can fairly claim to be the original one, in spite of seeming contradictions, or else the evidence enabling us to make a sure restoration is not to be had. Many of the grave inconsistencies which trouble us did not disturb the author himself, simply because he understood, better than we do, what he meant to say. Even where it is a demonstrated fact that the text which lies before us has suffered from transposition of some sort, it is not enough for the would-be restorer to rearrange the passages logically, or symmetrically, or so as to bring the whole into perfect accord with some plausible theory. Very many ancient writers did not bind themselves to observe logical sequence; did not care especially for symmetry; and would have been greatly astonished, or angered, or amused, if they could have heard attributed to them the views which they are now believed to have held. It is not our concern, after all, to find the best possible arrangement of the material -- that would often be very easy; our business is to find the arrangement actually made by the author -- and that is usually very difficult. Nevertheless, perfectly convincing reconstructions by transposition, based solely on internal evidence, are sometimes possible; the history of literature contains a good many instances. In each case it is simply a question of whether the evidence can satisfy the rigorous tests which the nature of the problem demands. The proposed new arrangement must really remove the difficulties which it is designed to overcome; it must create no new difficulties; it must enable us to explain how the disorder was brought about; it must give clear evidence of being the order originally planned by the author himself, and must harmonize with all that we certainly know regarding his purposes and methods; and it must be recognized as the only order which can meet these requirements. If any single link in the chain of evidence is missing, or defective, the critical theory may be tolerated, but it cannot be accepted as demonstrated. I am confident that it will be agreed that the demonstration given in the following pages is a conclusive one, and that this is a case in which the original order of a disarranged narrative has been restored with certainty.¹¹⁹

Torrey has recognized the function of literary criticism in a

¹¹⁹C. C. Torrey, "The Ezra Story In Its Original Sequence," A.J.S.L., vol. 25, pp. 276-277.

remarkable way, but his last statement is extremely excessive and uncalled for. He was certain that his criticism contained no errors or flaws, and gives no possible indication that his reconstruction might perhaps be warped or biased or take the direction of an already preconceived theory. But that his work was somewhat less sure than his own view of it can readily be seen by scholarly non-acceptance of his erudite views. Here is the leftist of literary criticism par excellence.

At the other extreme stands H. H. Rowley, the rightist of literary criticism. That he has been very skeptical of this procedure is a well attested fact and his work on the problem of chronology in Ezra-Nehemiah is exemplary of his attitude.¹²⁰ In an extremely valuable essay Rowley defends the late date (398 B.C.) for Ezra against an upsurge of adherents for the traditional view. But the way in which he meets these challenges is quite less than exemplary. Literary criticism is avoided, and in every case he is content to meet the challengers on their own grounds (i.e., the order and credibility of our present MT) as though this ground itself were a legitimate one. A specific statement of his settles the matter quite decisively. In expressing his disagreement with J. N. Schofield over the relationship between Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, Rowley lays bare his bias and skepticism:

¹²⁰H. H. Rowley, "The Chronological Order of Ezra and Nehemiah," (The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays; London: Lutterworth, 1952), pp. 131-159.

To make literary influence a criterion in this way is unduly hazardous, for its direction is always difficult to establish on merely literary grounds, and within that field judgements are likely to be subjective and speculative.¹²¹

Here we have represented the two extremes of literary criticism, and the faults of both views are so self-evident one need not expose them further. It is evident that something like a "middle way" is needed, but this term must not be construed to necessarily mean a "middle-of-the-road" or median position. I believe this way can be seen at many points in Fernandez's commentary, one of the most meaningful works I have consulted, and is especially to be found in the numerous excursions located throughout the book. Certainly Fernandez's virtue here is also to be found in other writers and/or writings, but he is quite representative of literary criticism used sanely and effectively. This is that of which we need more.

The problems of Ezra-Nehemiah have occupied our thoughts for a considerable time now, and if they have shown us anything at all, it is that the many problems confronting the student of Ezra-Nehemiah constitute many facets of the one central PROBLEM. Let us now turn briefly to examine something which today appears to be a united front -- THE PRESENT TREND OF STUDIES.

¹²¹H. H. Rowley, "The Prophet Jeremiah and The Book of Deuteronomy" (Festschrift Th. H. Robinson; Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, H. H. Rowley editor; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 158.

The united front or unified opinion of current scholarship is to be seen in several areas. Even briefly to review the results of modern treatment of I Esdras is hardly necessary because we have so recently turned from it. It is only necessary to recall that it is today universally considered to be a translation reflecting a certain tendency and exercising a freedom in translation and chronology so that what we have here is an interpretation that is worthless historically and in every other possible way. Thus, any effect that I Esdras might have on the problems of Ezra-Nehemiah is negated by the attitude of most contemporary scholars. No one fact could be more solidly attested.

But the most settled fact in Ezra-Nehemiah studies is that Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I Longimanus. Millar Burrows refers to this as an "exact date" which is able to be confirmed by the Elephantine papyri written in the generation after Nehemiah and by the Zeno papyri of the third century B.C. from which the history of the descendants of Tobiah, Nehemiah's enemy, can be traced back to Nehemiah's own time.¹²² Some writers refer to Nehemiah's coming in 445 B.C. and others in 444 B.C., but here there is no difference reflected. This deviation is due to how one counts the regnal year of the king involved, and since decisive evidence is lacking for the beginning regnal

¹²²Millar Burrows, What Mean These Stones? (New Haven, Conn.: American Schools for Oriental Research, 1941), p. 83.

year, a better and more accurate way of referring to this date would be perhaps to say 445/4 B.C. as some writers do. This goes equally as well for the other dates involved in the book. But the static, fixed state of this date owes its existence only secondarily to the evidence of the papyri, for the authentic character of the Nehemiah Memoirs is really the primary evidence whose trustworthiness is only confirmed by the papyri. The date for Nehemiah is set.

But this is a modern development and indeed, it has not always been so. Nehemiah has been dated almost as widely as has Ezra. H. Winckler wanted to date both Ezra and Nehemiah to the reign of Darius I.¹²³ Henry Preserved Smith placed Nehemiah under Artaxerxes II in 385 B.C.,¹²⁴ and W. A. L. Elmslie placed him under the same monarch but five years later to about 380 B.C.¹²⁵ Torrey has held a multiplicity of views on Nehemiah. He held fast to the idea that the chronicler actually thought Nehemiah to belong to the reign of Artaxerxes II¹²⁶ due to the nebulous state of the historical evidence for this Persian period. But his own idea on when Nehemiah actually was on the scene in Jerusalem shifted

¹²³cf. Rowley, B.J.R.L. (vol. 37, no. 2), p. 547.

¹²⁴Henry Preserved Smith, Old Testament History (International Theological Library; New York: Scribner's, 1925), pp. 382, 395.

¹²⁵W. A. L. Elmslie, How Came Our Faith (Cambridge: The University Press, 1948), p. 178; also IB, III, p. 343.

¹²⁶A.J.S.L., vol. 24, p. 210 note; Ibid., vol. 25, p. 216; Composition, p. 65.

from Artaxerxes II to Artaxerxes I and back again to Artaxerxes II. The Elephantine papyri caused his retreat back to Artaxerxes I but later he again held to the former view.¹²⁷ This, however, represents a past stage in Nehemiah studies, and now the evidence places him unalterably in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I. On the present scene I know of no defectors from this unified situation, although as late as 1954 Torrey in his last published work maintained his former position.¹²⁸

However, on the Ezra problem the date is anything but set and each view (458, 430 or 428, and 398) has its followers today. But here also we have a unified front which faces us not in that there is only one date for Ezra, but that here in scholarly circles, both in written articles and personal preference and/or opinion, one is faced with the preponderant preference for the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence and the late date for Ezra. This view has become so entrenched that it is hardly challenged openly at all anymore. To be sure some writers acknowledge the fact that the situation is not yet static, but go on and write as if it were. For example, take the following quotation from George Ernest Wright and

¹²⁷C. C. Torrey, The Second Isaiah (New York: Scribner's, 1928), pp. 456 ff; also "Sanballat the Horonite" (J.B.L., vol. 47, 1928), pp. 380-389.

¹²⁸C. C. Torrey, The Chronicler's History of Israel, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah Restored to Its Original Form (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. xxiv.

Reginald H. Fuller:

For some time scholars have been debating the rather ambiguous evidence as to the date of Ezra. Traditionally it has been thought that he returned to Jerusalem with a fresh group of exiles in 458 B.C. Today a majority of scholars seem prepared to say that Ezra probably followed, rather than preceded, Nehemiah, and they would date him about 432, 428 or 398 B.C. The reasons for this are complex, and it would not serve our purpose to enter into them in this place.¹²⁹

They do not have time to settle the matter of chronology, but the chronology followed can easily be seen to be the late view for Ezra. The current overwhelming scholarly opinion favoring this view seems to them to be sufficient evidence to proceed on this basis without establishing it further.

The same may be said for those writers who want to work on the basis of a Nehemiah-Ezra order but who want to keep both personages in the time of Artaxerxes I. Gerhard von Rad is a good example here. Take note of the following statement which he makes;

The question of the chronological sequence of events under Ezra and Nehemiah has been thoroughly re-investigated recently, and the view which holds Ezra to be chronologically later than Nehemiah seems to be increasingly gaining ground. In the matter, some put Ezra as early as the time of Artaxerxes I (465-425), while others transfer his activity to the time of Artaxerxes II (404-359). On this discussion no definite position can here be taken up.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, The Book of the Acts of God (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), p. 142.

¹³⁰ Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, translated by D. M. G. Stalker (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), vol. I, p. 88, note 6.

von Rad does refer the reader to certain discussions of the chronological problem, but again he does not himself even take a position on it. He proceeds further on the basis of the Nehemiah-Ezra order with a date of circa 430 B.C. for Ezra, but in no sense does he seek to justify his position. He evidently thinks it hardly to be in need of authentication anymore.

John Bright is more honest than most writers holding to the Nehemiah-Ezra order in that he does give an excursus to the problem and at least acknowledges that some others prefer another order,¹³¹ and that he himself had been favorably inclined to it for a time. Perhaps this may be the reason why he has oscillated between the late and intermediate views for Ezra. In an earlier work he confesses to the dilemma confronting him on the chronological issue -- "I must confess that I have not been able to keep my own mind made up on the point"-- and admits further some difficulties arising from the late view: "It must be said that while this view solves many of the problems, it raises others in its own right."¹³² In the excursus which of course comes some years later Bright has lost the fairness and objectivity which he so admirably earlier possessed. This can be seen in that when

¹³¹Bright, op. cit., pp. 375-386.

¹³²John Bright, The Kingdom of God (New York and Nashville: Abingdom Cokesbury Press, 1953), p. 172.

he takes his position in favor of the intermediate view he does not bother to express the liabilities of his views although he has pointed them out for the other possible views on chronology. To be absolutely fair one must surely point out that he has in fact developed this position in the text of the chapter preceding the excursus and in some sense this may, thus, be justified. But in his concluding paragraph¹³³ the preponderance of the Nehemiah-Ezra order is more than evident, and he feels this view to be "both plausible and faithful to the evidence." But his seeking to elucidate the chronological problem after he has in fact already taken a position in the text itself only goes to show the scholarly solidarity for the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence.

Recent introductions are perhaps the biggest offenders of bypassing the issue of chronology and following the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence without any explanation or certainly without sufficient explanation. Bernhard W. Anderson is certainly a good example of this.¹³⁴ In a short paragraph he puts forth the traditional view followed by one sentence putting forth the intermediate and late views. Then without taking any position or stating that one of these views is his own he says that

¹³³Bright, A History of Israel, p. 386.

¹³⁴Bernhard W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1957), p. 450.

here we shall assume that the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence is the proper one, and go no further into the complex historical problem. Incidentally, this approach will give us an opportunity to treat the great reform of Ezra as the climax of this chapter.¹³⁵

The procedure adopted may rest on some actual conclusion of his, but the reasoning given here only suggests convenience.

Likewise, Norman Gottwald is another example of the modern viewpoint. Much more plausibly than Anderson Gottwald has given some reasoning for adopting the late date for Ezra. Notice his argument:

What is the evidence for this superficially radical theory? It is doubtful that two men would have been appointed at the same time to care for the identical social, political and religious responsibilities. They pay no attention to one another and are mentioned only incidentally in the other's narratives. Nehemiah prepares a census and in his enumeration includes Zerubbabel's returnees but not Ezra's. Nehemiah finds the city sparsely populated and the defenses laid waste, but Ezra discovers Jerusalem active and thriving with the wall restored. Nehemiah is the contemporary of the high priest Eliashib, while Ezra lives in the time of his grandson Jehohanan. The solution to this puzzle has been to place Nehemiah in the reign of Artaxerxes I as indicated, but Ezra later, in the reign of Artaxerxes II (404-358 B.C.). In this way the biblical dates may be retained at the same time the proper sequence of the two men is restored. That the Chronicler could have made such a greivous error in chronology is not without parallel among ancient writers. The whole Persian period was a dark age in Jewish history, no sources have delineated it with exactitude or fullness. In historiography there is always a tendency to compress little known periods and to conflate similar personalities.¹³⁶

To be sure his statement represents a telescoping of the

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Norman Gottwald, A Light to the Nations (New York: Harper, 1959), pp. 432-433.

facts, and this is to be desired above no statement at all. This is not his real sin. The entire Persian period occupies hardly three pages in his treatment, so that in terms of the treatment given the above quotation must surely be adequate. But here he has bypassed or passed over the period for which the rest of the Old Testament has been looking forward -- the formation of the Jewish religion. Certainly it deserves greater discussion and in this discussion a more adequate defense of the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence.

The above instances are representative of the modern approach to the problem of Ezra-Nehemiah, but Raymond A. Bowman puts the icing on the cake! After giving fifteen fairly well developed reasons for accepting the priority of Nehemiah and the late date for Ezra he states:

Not all of the foregoing considerations are of equal weight in determining the priority of Nehemiah, but their cumulative effect is strong, arguing that it is most probable that Nehemiah preceded Ezra in Palestine. Rebuttals to this view are strictly defensive and are often devious and ingenious rather than persuasive.¹³⁷

To Bowman, incidentally again representative of the modern view, the late date for Ezra is absolutely a fact and any other view is hardly worthy of one's conversation or consideration. As will be shown in the following chapter this is an extreme overstatement of unwarranted confidence. The state of evidence here is hardly static, regardless of the

¹³⁷ IB, III, p. 563.

preponderant position of modern scholarship. A closer examination of the facts is mandatory because the positions which Ezra and Nehemiah occupy and their significance derived therefrom is directly dependent on their chronological relationship. This is the subject to which we now turn.

CHAPTER II

EZRA-NEHEMIAH OR NEHEMIAH-EZRA?

THE PROBLEM OF CHRONOLOGY

One can easily see from "the present trend of studies" from which we have just turned that the pre-dominant viewpoint of scholars favors the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence. There is no doubt that on the current scene scholars adhering to this position would greatly outnumber the combined holders of other positions if ever a poll or adequate means of counting were devised. This would not be true if only full length articles were counted, but if every footnote or paragraph occurring in the most obscure and out of the way places were counted, a great majority could be claimed for this viewpoint. J.N. Schofield is typical of this viewpoint by his utter disregard for opposing or conflicting thought on this problem of Ezra-Nehemiah as shown in this statement:

The records have been confused to such an extent that it is only comparatively recently that it has been realized that Nehemiah returned to Palestine before Ezra, and that the dates of their returns were respectively the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I., i.e. 444 B.C., and the seventh year of Artaxerxes II. (404 to 358 B.C.), i.e. 397 B.C.¹

¹J. N. Schofield, The Historical Background of the Bible (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1938), p. 222.

The extremely static statement of Bowman already noted² may be taken as indicative of the "fixed" state of affairs supposed by almost all adherents to this view.

Nevertheless, the actual state of affairs in this perplexing area of biblical study is hardly unified, much less set or fixed. There has always been both individual scholars and groups of scholars who have thought differently, and this diversity is still to be found in our present situation! To be sure this diversity is overshadowed and often obscured by the preponderant position for the late view, but nevertheless it is a significant minority which can often bring forth many points in its favor. Therefore, it behoves us at this juncture to examine and assess the various views which can be put forth and come to a definite position on the chronological sequence of Ezra and Nehemiah. This is absolutely necessary in order to evaluate their respective roles and assess their significance.

Modern scholars normally recognize only three classifications to characterize this chronological relationship: the traditional view, the unhistorical view, and the late view. However convenient this may be, it is also very confusing. Of these categories only the last---the late view---is broken down into two different viewpoints or chronological relationships. I feel that such a rendering is hardly adequate, and therefore, each

²cf. p. 61; IB, III, p. 563.

particular viewpoint will be set forth as an individual unit in the following discussion. They will be set forth in this order: traditional view, late view, intermediate view, un-historical view and the modified traditional view. After each of the views has been expounded, their merits and demerits will be examined, and a position on chronology will then be taken. On this basis it will be possible to give some real attention to Nehemiah's social and religious significance.

In the following portrayals of the various views it should be understood that neither completeness nor encyclopaedic presentation has been attempted here. This has not been possible partly because all of the sources have not been available to me, but furthermore, even if they should have been available, it would have hardly been feasible to present this material in one chapter.³ Here it has been necessary to present the subject in as concise a way as possible and to use representative material. For some good treatments of the problem of dating Ezra and Nehemiah one should consult the relatively full yet concise

³For a very full presentation of the positions which have been taken, literary and historical problems involved and an examination of the various viewpoints, cf. Emmett Willard Hamrick, A New Study of the Ezra Problem (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1951).

analyses of John Bright,⁴ Schneider,⁵ Fernandez⁶ or H.H. Rowley⁷ where valuable and representative statements containing important bibliographical citations will be found. Let us now look at each individual interpretation as a unit.

POSSIBLE POSITIONS ON CHRONOLOGY

The Traditional View. With the beginning of the critical approach to Ezra-Nehemiah in the 1890's this view suffered severe loss of support but in the last 20 years it has begun to reassert itself and has become relatively popular again. In general this view is characterized by a respect for the order and integrity of the MT in its present state and condition and assumes that the chronology presented there reflects the actual relationship between Ezra and Nehemiah. Emmett W. Hamrick has

⁴John Bright, History of Israel, Excursus II, pp. 375-386.

⁵Heinrich Schneider, Die Bucher Esra und Nehemia (Die Heilige Schrift Des Alten Testamentes, IV. Band 2; Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag GMBH, 1959), pp. 67-75.

⁶Fernandez, op. cit., Excursus XIV, pp. 196-218. The majority of this excursus is also to be found in the following articles nearly word for word: idem, "Epoca de la actividad de Esdras," Biblica, vol. 2 (1921), pp. 424-447; and idem, "La voz נִיָא in Esd. 9,9," ibid., vol. 16 (1935), pp. 82-84.

⁷Rowley, Servant of the Lord, pp. 131-159.

given us a very short summation of this viewpoint:

The traditional view may be stated succinctly as follows: Ezra came to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, 458 B.C. Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I, 445 B.C. The two men collaborated during the events narrated in Neh. 8-10, 12. Ezra then disappears from the scene, but Nehemiah makes a trip to Susa and afterward undertakes a second mission in Jerusalem c. 432.⁸

As with all attempts at conciseness, this is more or less true but does not allow for various differences of individual treatments. The following facts one may put forth with certainty as regards this view: 1. The MT is taken at face value, after vigorous questioning, having been found to be "correct". 2. Collaboration between Ezra and Nehemiah is assumed. 3. Ezra is dated in 458 prior to Nehemiah's coming in 445 B.C. Beyond these three general factual statements one should not go in a characterization of this view, but these three statements are found in every adherent's interpretation of it.

This traditional view prevailed among most of the older interpreters and still has quite current subscribers. Among its line of defense are to be found such stalwarts as G.W. Wade,⁹ S.R. Driver,¹⁰ Judah J. Slotki,¹¹ R.K. Harrison¹² and E.J. Young.¹³

⁸Hamrick, op. cit., p. 10, note 35.

⁹G.W. Wade, Old Testament History (London: Methuen, 1926), Tenth Revised edition, pp. 473-486.

¹⁰Introduction, pp. 540-544. ¹¹Slotki, op. cit., p. 107 ff.

¹²R.K. Harrison, A History of Old Testament Times (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1957), pp. 216-224.

¹³E.J. Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament (London: Tyndale Press, 1949), pp. 369 ff.

It is almost ironic to find the name of Julius Wellhausen, the great iconoclast of biblical traditionalism, among this group of writers, but it is most definitely to be found here. How he could accept a static view of biblical evidence here when he was so destructive in other areas must always remain a mystery (To be perfectly objective one must certainly recognize that he did not intend to be a destroyer of tradition but actually a restorer of the history of Israel). Wellhausen not only held this view in a general way in his writings¹⁴ but was an apologist for this position as can be seen by his only full length article on this subject¹⁵ where he shows his skepticism of the newer interpretations then coming to the fore (the conservatism of a rebel in his old age?).

The best recent exposition of this viewpoint is to be found in a short paper¹⁶ presented in London January 3, 1947 by J. Stafford Wright as the Tyndale Old Testament Lecture for 1946. After arguing in a negative vein about the problems concerned with the modern view, Wright sets forth positively the

¹⁴ Julius Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), pp. 495-497, 405-409.

¹⁵ "Die Rückkehr der Juden aus dem babylonischen Exil" in Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Göttingen, 1895, pp. 166-186. Cf. Hamrick, op. cit., pp. 58-62 for a summary of the contents.

¹⁶ J. Stafford Wright, The Date of Ezra's Coming to Jerusalem (London: Tyndale Press, 1958), Second Edition. This edition has been revised in order to meet the criticisms presented in Rowley's chapter in Servant of the Lord. However, pp. 23-28 of this paper sets forth clearly and fairly concisely the traditional view under the subtitle "The consistency of the Chronicler's account." Wright's position is set forth in very concise form in his article on "Ezra" in The New Bible Dictionary (London: Inter Varsity Fellowship, 1962), p. 408.

traditional position. Ezra, having a regal commission from Artaxerxes I, arrived in Jerusalem in 458 B.C. No doubt he had been a court official serving Artaxerxes, for his mission in Jerusalem made him Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, a position involving both secular and religious spheres. This is hardly to be taken as an innovation as is confirmed by the Elephantine Papyri,¹⁷ and in fact it is the religious condition of the community with which Ezra is most concerned. Ezra 7:25 records that he was given authority to appoint judges, but they were only to exercise jurisdiction over the adherents to Ezra's God (i.e., their authority extended only to the Jewish community). The book of Ezra closes with an account of mixed marriages discovered among the people which sends Ezra into a grievous state. One hundred and thirteen members of the community are charged with having foreign wives and polluting the "holy seed." Ezra initiates the exclusivistic policy (𐤇𐤌𐤁 = to separate decisively) in this situation and divorces the foreign wives and their children from the community.

Wright believes the next event to be that recorded in Ezra 4:7-23 where an unauthorized attempt is being made to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Protests are made by Persian officials,

¹⁷Cf. A.E. Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), pp. 60-65. Here Darius II is definitely intruding in the celebration of Passover at the Elephantine community.

and Artaxerxes orders the work stopped. Ezra's part in this attempt is hard to determine: (a) he may have been in the middle of this attempt and received censure for his action, resulting in his obscure position during Nehemiah's tenure in Jerusalem; or (b) perhaps he had returned to Babylon after the events described in chapter 10 and here wrote his Memoirs of his tenure in Jerusalem which were deposited with Jews there and employed by the chronicler later.¹⁸ Wright does not insist on either of these possible interpretations, but he sees a reflection of the situation in Ezra 9:9 where prayer is made for the walls. But when these walls were destroyed on orders of Artaxerxes, the people react against Ezra and his reform measures making it necessary for Nehemiah to again deal with them later. The dislocated passage of Ezra 4 may be the chronicler's doing to remove suspicion from Ezra's work as a reformer, but Wright maintains Ezra's integrity in the matter. However, a larger number of adherents to this view would interpret this passage in its present context of the rebuilding of the temple.

It is at this point that Nehemiah makes his appearance on the scene. He has managed to obtain leave from Artaxerxes to

¹⁸cf. Wright, op. cit., p. 25. Wright here admits that this is rather speculative, and that he should really rest his case on the chronicler's placing of Ezra prior to Nehemiah as decisive. If Ezra were in Jerusalem, he feels it justifiable to speculate as to what he was doing during this time. If he had returned to Babylon (i.e., Persia), he certainly returns after Nehemiah has rebuilt the walls. However, most exponents of the traditional view would seek to interpret this section in its present position and allow for no transposition. On this cf. e.g. Slotski, op. cit., pp. 132-138. For the opposite viewpoint cf. Rowley's negative assessment of any association of Ezra with the passage under consideration, Servant, pp. 141-142.

whom he is cupbearer, be appointed governor of Jerusalem and be escorted there by ~~royal troops~~. Nehemiah has sought the position because of the deteriorating state of affairs in Jerusalem about which he has only recently heard. Finding the city in a deplorable state he acts at once to rebuild the walls in a remarkably short period of only fifty-two days and carry out other social reforms. In Nehemiah 8 Ezra again appears on the scene at an assembly of the people to read the law, being probably "extracts from the whole Pentateuch."¹⁹ Here and in Neh. 10 Ezra and Nehemiah act in consort and must definitely be taken as contemporaries. When the wall is dedicated in Neh. 12:36, one again sees Ezra involved, perhaps even greater than was Nehemiah on the basis of verse 38. The passages which bring them together are quite adequate for our making them contemporaries.

Wright's interpretation is based primarily and perhaps even solely on the basis of the MT, its supposed integrity and chronology. Only once does he conjecture a misplacing of the narrative (i.e., Ezra 4:7-23), and he is not emphatic on this point. Other "traditionalists" would not even venture that far, making of it what they could for the present, and relegating its full decipherment to that day of days when all shall be revealed as R.A. Bowman suggests.²⁰ The synopsis here presented characterizes the traditional view.²¹

¹⁹Wright, op. cit., p. 27.

²⁰IB, III, p. 564.

²¹For a rather short statement of this view also cf. the article on "Esdras, First and Second Books of" in The Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia (vol. 1: The Old Testament; New York: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1959), edited by John E. Steinmueller and Kathryn Sullivan, pp. 329-333.

The Late View. This view has already been shown to be the most popular currently among scholars, so much so that it is considered by most adherents to be the only tenable one. The chief characteristic of this view is that Ezra is assigned to the seventh year of Artaxerxes II in 398/7 B.C. long after Nehemiah's tenure in Jerusalem in 445 B.C. In this way the text of Ezra 7:7 is retained and emendation is avoided, but rearrangement is necessary due to serious dislocation of his material by the chronicler. On the two dates for Nehemiah and Ezra there is one-hundred per cent agreement, but for the rearrangement there is little, if any, ~~agreement~~. There are almost as many schemes here as there are adherents to this view, thus making it impractical to present a "representative" reconstruction.

It is Alben van Hoonacker, a Flemish Roman Catholic scholar, who is credited with being the originator of this view in 1890. This is highly disrespectful to the work of older scholars who recognized or suspected something to be wrong with the chronicler's account and had in fact themselves ventured toward a solution of the discrepancy. One must note especially here the groundwork of Joseph Halevy in three articles,²² of Ernest Havet,²³ of de

²² Joseph Halevy, "Esdras et le Code Sacerdotal," Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, IV (1881), pp. 22-45; "Esdras a-t-il Promulgue une Loi Nouvelle?," ibid., XII (1885), pp. 26-38; and "Le Code Sacerdotal Pendant l'Exil," ibid., XIV (1886), pp. 189-202. These are presently unavailable to me, but in the last of these articles he definitely proposed the sequence to be Nehemiah-Ezra.

²³ Ernest Havet, "La Modernite des Prophets," Revue des Deux Mondes, XCIV (August, 1889), pp. 516-565.

Saulcy,²⁴ and Maurice Vernes,²⁵ and point out that these are all prior to van Hoonacker's first article. Therefore, one cannot say that this viewpoint originated with him, but one can say quite emphatically with Norman H. Snaith that van Hoonacker marks the "first effective break" with the traditional view.²⁶

Van Hoonacker is the most important figure ever to arise in Ezra studies because of his provocativeness and the apologetic way in which he defended his view. From the appearance of his first article in 1890 there was a wide discussion which involved replies to his article and further refutations of the replies by van Hoonacker. However, in all of this conversation van Hoonacker's views remained static and set. Therefore, one can look equally well at the fullest statement of his position in his magnum opus,²⁷ or at a later statement in article form²⁸

²⁴F. de Saulcy, Etude chronologique des Livres d'Esdras et de Nehemie (Paris: A. Levy, 1868). De Saulcy here keeps the Ezra-Nehemiah sequence but places them both under Artaxerxes II (cf. pp. 41-42). Later, however, in an untraced article or work he favored this Nehemiah-Ezra sequence or chronological scheme according to T. Witton Davies, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther (The Century Bible; London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, n.d.), p. 25.

²⁵Precis d'histoire juive depuis les origines jusqu'a l'epoque persane (Paris, 1889), pp. 582-584. Cf. Hamrick, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁶Norman H. Snaith, "The Date of Ezra's Arrival in Jerusalem," ZAW, vol. 63 (1951), p. 53.

²⁷Nouvelles Etudes sur la Restauration Juive (Paris: Ernest Lerous, 1896).

²⁸"La Succession Chronologique Nehemie-Esdras," Revue Biblique, XXXII (1923), pp. 481-494; XXXIII (1924), pp. 36-64.

or at his first article and receive from any of them the essence of his position. Van Hoonacker assumed that the chronicler knew what he was doing in making Ezra and Nehemiah contemporaries and assumed that the sources he used were valid ones. There were two periods of activity for Ezra in Jerusalem: (a) as a young man in 443/2 when he was definitely subordinate to Nehemiah²⁹ and (b) as an old man in 398/7 B.C. when he was the leader of the Jewish community. The failure to find Ezra mentioned in the Nehemiah Memoirs is quite natural and due to his menial position. He does not promulgate a new law in Nehemiah 8 during the collaboration but is merely invited to read, this being "une fonction tres secondaire!" Nehemiah is the number one man in Neh. 8-10 and in chapter 12 at the dedication of the wall.

The reasons for his placing Ezra's work under Artaxerxes II have been used by all later followers of this view. These will be dealt with later in the discussion of the merits and demerits of this view. But of van Hoonacker's significant contribution the following facts may be noted:

1. Ezra's role in Neh. 8-10 is secondary while that of Ezra 7-10 is primary. Therefore, his real leadership must be at a later time, and the confusion in the narrative is caused by the chronicler's displacement.

²⁹This fact of van Hoonacker's theory has been overlooked by almost everyone except John Bright, Kingdom of God, p. 172, note 21; Fernandez, op. cit., p. 215 & Biblica, vol. 2 (1921), pp. 444-445, note; and Hamrick, op. cit., p. 30.

2. Nehemiah tolerated those mixed marriages which had taken place but took a pledge that they would not be further multiplied. Ezra had to deal with them by compelling their dissolution much later when the community was threatened by them.

3. Conditions of Judea reflected in Nehemiah and Ezra 7-10 leads him to conclude that Ezra 7-10 is later. The wall, rebuilding and repopulating are more advanced at this time, he believes, and this greatly influences his decision.

4. Eliashib was high priest during Nehemiah's tenure, but his grandson was high priest when Ezra arrived.

5. The Nehemiah-Ezra order solves the problem of which of the Artaxerxes was involved, and his giving of sweeping powers to two Jews in such a short span of time.³⁰

Needless to say this late view today is hardly as simple as was the starting point in van Hoonacker. His theory of collaboration has been rejected altogether so that Ezra's coming in 398/7 is the first and only coming, the wide gap between 445/4 and 398/7 making them never meet. Whereas van Hoonacker trusted the sources in an almost naive way, today the problem of what is and what is not authentic has reached its zenith as can be seen from the general lack of agreement as to the contents of the Memoirs. The reasons for accepting this view have become very numerous and involved. Indeed, the only actual thing retained in toto from van Hoonacker in the modern late view is the

³⁰cf. Hamrick, op. cit., pp. 31-35 for a statement of van Hoonacker's reasons, all taken from his first article, "Néhémie et Esdras" in Le Museon, IX (1890).

rigid assurance manifested by its adherents.

This view is presently the most popular among scholars. It is quite amazing to see many Roman Catholic scholars among the adherents of this view. To be found in this group are Santiago Navarro,³¹ J. Vandervorst,³² Guiseppe Ricciotti,³³ J. Touzard,³⁴ M.J. Lagrange,³⁵ B.M. Pelaia and G. Rinaldi,³⁶ P. Lemaire and D. Baldi³⁷ and doubtless many others as well. That this late view is favored by most scholars today is indicated by their asserting sympathy for it in some of the most unsuspected places, e.g., John Gray's footnote in his latest book on archaeology indicating his favoring of this view.³⁸ However, for whatever it may be worth (and perhaps this is nil!), there is one large group of scholars who have not yet yielded to this theory. No German

³¹"¿Esdras Nehemias?," Estudios Biblicos, Series 1, vol. 5 (1933), pp. 12-19. The only known copy in North America is to be found in the Library of the Ecclesiastical Faculty of the University of Ottawa.

³²Israël et L'ancien orient (Bruxelles: Librairie Albert Dewit, 1924), pp. 213-216.

³³The History of Israel (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1958), second edition, vol. II, pp. 101-107. This is the most sane portrayal of this view I have yet seen.

³⁴"Les Juifs au Temps de la Période Persane," R.B., XXIV (1915), pp. 112ff.

³⁵"Néhémie et Esdras," R.B., III (1894), pp. 561-585.

³⁶B.M. Pelaia and G. Rinaldi, Esdra e Neemia, 1957, p. 14.

³⁷P. Lemairi and D. Baldi, Atlante Storico della Bibbia, 1955, p. 146. cf. Schneider, op. cit., p. 71 for other known Catholic holders of the late view.

³⁸Archaeology and the Old Testament World (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), p. 195.

scholar has past or presently been favorable to this view, although G. Hölscher did adhere to it for a very short period of time. However, all this may indicate is their reluctance to acknowledge its validity, since they did not think of it first!

The Intermediate View. This is the view that has been the only serious rival to the late view in recent years. It arose as part of the reaction against van Hoonacker's theory proposed in 1890, being an answer that was put forth to challenge this new position.

W.H. Kusters was the first to set forth this position in a work appearing in 1894 in Danish and translated into German in 1895.³⁹ He here maintained that Ezra led a caravan of returnees to Jerusalem about 432, coming on the lip of Nehemiah's second arrival. Nehemiah had come in 445 and took considerable measures for the city, restoring its walls, repopulating it and initiating Temple reform. When Nehemiah returned to the Persian court to secure more Jewish colonists, he met Ezra who became part of his plans for Jerusalem. With a new zeal he returned to Jerusalem and attempted the reforms described in Nehemiah 13:4-31. Then Ezra arrived and tried to complete the marriage reform begun by Nehemiah, but in this he was unsuccessful. They acted in consort to establish exclusivism as the basis of the new community. Any deviation from this norm was met with expulsion. With things well in hand Ezra then gave the

³⁹Die Wiederherstellung Israels in der perischen Periode, Translated by A. Basedow, Heidelberg, 1895.

Priestly Code to the community which he had brought with him from Babylonia.

Using the first interpretation as a starting point, current scholars have made this view rather popular. It is easily recognizable that Kusters had to rearrange the text in a rather drastic way to achieve this interpretation. From this time forward rearrangement is considered to be a necessity due to the unreliable nature and order of the sources. This is probably Koster's greatest contribution to Ezra-Nehemiah studies, even taking precedence over the creation of the Intermediate View.

There are at least two possible views within the general position itself. The first is that Ezra's coming to Jerusalem took place entirely between Nehemiah's first and second missions or administrations and without any collaboration between them.⁴⁰ The other possibility is that Ezra comes either between the missions of Nehemiah and is joined by Nehemiah very shortly on beginning his second tenure or that he makes his appearance coincident with or adjacent to Nehemiah's second term. This

⁴⁰R. H. Kennett, Old Testament Essays (Cambridge: The University press, 1928), pp. 85-88; idem, The Church of Israel (Cambridge: The University Press, 1933), pp. 62-64; T.K. Cheyne, Jewish Religious Life After the Exile (American Lectures on the History of Religions; Third Series, 1897-1898; New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), pp. 54-64; Julius A. Bewer, The Literature of the Old Testament, Revised Edition (Number V of the Records of Civilization; New York: Columbia U. Press, 1933), pp. 280-282, places Ezra in 428 and makes him non-collaborating, but the relationship to Nehemiah's second mission is not mentioned.

latter possibility has been the more popular recently, and its adherents include, among others, W.F. Albright,⁴¹ John Bright⁴² and Martin Noth.⁴³

Noth gives us a good picture of the modern interpretation. After giving some examination to the various possibilities for Ezra and Nehemiah's chronological relationship, he takes his stand for the intermediate view, feeling that the available

⁴¹"A Brief History of Judah From the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," Biblical Archaeologist, vol. IX (1946), No. 1, pp. 13-14 and more recently in "The Biblical Period," p. 53 ff. and note 133, p. 64 from Louis Finkelstein, editor, The Jews; Their History, Culture and Religion (New York: Harper, 1949, vol. 1; also reprinted separately by the Biblical Colloquium, Pittsburgh). For many years Albright had been oscillating between the late and intermediate views. In 1932 he held to the intermediate view in The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible (The Richards Lectures; New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1932), p. 219. However, earlier he had held to the late view in JBL, XL (1921), pp. 119-123. In the first edition of From the Stone Age to Christianity (1940) he reverted to the late view but in the Second edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), p. 248 he has once again favored the intermediate view. The intermediate view is his settled and weighed opinion as can be seen from his most recent stand in The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra (New York: Harper TB/102, 1962), presently not available to me.

⁴²History of Israel, ch. 10 and Excursus II following, pp. 356-386. W.F. Stinespring, reviewing this book in the Duke Divinity School Bulletin in 1959 or 1960 (Presently unavailable to me) chides Bright for his excessive "Albrightisms." It is a well known fact that "Uncle Dudley" is not an avid follower of Albright, but perhaps, even so, his criticism might be justified. A great teacher will certainly be mirrored in his students, but it is hardly to be expected that on every minute detail a "ditto mark" would be adequate! But Bright escapes at least on this point for it was ten years after Albright announced his weighed opinion that Bright announced his adherence to it.

⁴³The History of Israel, Second English Edition (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), pp. 317-336.

evidence favors placing Ezra during Nehemiah's second administration. He then in a most admirable way removes himself from any dogmatism on this issue, a factor lacking in almost every modern interpreter regardless of his particular position. He states:

It must be stressed, however, that it is impossible to reach an absolutely firm decision on this point because there is a lack of reliable and unambiguous evidence, and that all we can hope to attain is a limited degree of probability.⁴⁴

Nehemiah began his tenure in Jerusalem in 445 and immediately began to accomplish the real reason for his mission --- the building of the walls. This was met with stern opposition from Samaria because this marked the beginning of Jerusalem as an independent province and also from an ally of Samaria, Tobiah the Ammonite from east of the Jordan. Samaritan opposition had already expressed itself to the Persian King prior to Nehemiah's coming most unfavorably toward an unauthorized attempt to rebuild the walls and was met with support from Artaxerxes I. Nehemiah's appearance was closely related to this incident misplaced in Ezra 4:7-23 in the section on the rebuilding of the Temple, and his coming no doubt is due to the King's personal trust in and favor toward him. After inspecting the work to be done, he announced his plans to "willing hearers" and acted as fast as possible to complete the work before the opposition was able to have the work stopped

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 320.

as before. In this situation his strong character shows itself many times as master of the situation and the result of his program is a great psychological boost to the repatriates. He then initiated a most important project --- the repopulation of the city. Colonists were chosen from among the various settlements by lot, taking one of every ten. The city was still small and consisted mainly of the original Jebusite-Davidite city on the southeast hill. Beyond Nehemiah's original task was the governorship of the city and/or province, placing chiefs or heads over the various districts. In the social sphere he achieved the remission of debts in general which had been created by abuse and thus recreated a middle class among the people. This concludes Nehemiah's first period of governorship which lasted until 433 or a period of twelve years.

Why Nehemiah returned to Babylon is not known, but his absence from Jerusalem must have been a short one. During his absence various abuses arose, and no doubt it is these which made a return by Nehemiah mandatory. His actions here fall in a general category of religious acts. The high priest Eliashib had asserted his power to cultivate good relations with the neighboring provinces in direct opposition to the exclusivistic line followed by Nehemiah. The foreigner Tobiah had even been given quarters in the Temple, a state of affairs on which Nehemiah took drastic measures. The cult was in a bad state because of a laziness much akin to that described by Malachi. Here Nehemiah made provision for Temple support, both in tithes and in wood for the altar. The

Sabbath was being desecrated by merchandizing. This Nehemiah dealt with by not permitting the city gates to be opened on the Sabbath. Marriages were being contracted with foreigners. Here Nehemiah obtained a pledge from the people that this practice would be discontinued. The religious nature of his entire second administration culminates in the covenant of Nehemiah 10. The people as a collective unit promise to maintain the recent reforms of Nehemiah, and leaders of the community sign as responsible agents of the populus. With this completed Nehemiah has run his course and is heard of no more.

It is at this point that Ezra comes on the scene. Ezra's reforms and scope of activity are confined totally to the religious sphere and naturally build on the sure foundation laid by his predecessor. Ezra too has regal authority for his mission given by Artaxerxes I. Not having to deal with many menial and time-consuming trivialities as had Nehemiah, the scribe and priest Ezra accomplishes much on the basis of the sacral law which he enforces on the people. There was no coercion involved in a physical or military way, but adherence to the law was the factor on which membership in the community was based. This was a strictly religious law with Persian imperial authority behind it and quite naturally its effect was widespread. Theoretically it was wide enough to include Israelite nationals as well as returnees, but practically it was the latter whose interests were furthered

by this law. Before Ezra left Babylon he received contributions from fellow Exiles for the cult, an imperial contribution for the Jerusalem Temple and tax exemptions for its functionaries.

Ezra's rigidity comes to the fore immediately in the abolition of mixed marriages, a fact which causes him much grief and consternation at the outset. With the purity of Israel secured by this "separatist" act the law which he brought with him was proclaimed (Nehemiah 8) in the sense of being "an absolute revelation of the divine will" (cf. p. 335). This law was not P but was "probably" the Law of Holiness or other cult regularory laws of Leviticus. What is important is that the religious life of the new Jerusalem community was secured by Ezra's work and achieved a new virility because of it.

This foregoing view of Noth's presents Nehemiah's first and second administrations entirely before Ezra's appearance on the scene to complete the reform measures. Thus the two reformers never met or collaborated. John Bright's picture would be quite the same except that Nehemiah's second term as governor and Ezra's reform measures would run concurrently. His reasoning for this is the strong tradition that the two reformers were contemporaries and not to be dismissed lightly. However, in each of these views one gets basically the same picture --- that Ezra is the crux of the whole episode. And it is this phenomenon that is the genius of the intermediate view --- maintaining a close chronological relationship be-

tween Ezra and Nehemiah yet making Ezra's reforms dependent on Nehemiah's prior stabilizing of the community.

A rather novel view which would best be placed under this category was put forth some time ago by Sidney Jellicoe.⁴⁵ Claiming that it would solve the difficulties of both early and late dates, he claimed that the chronicler's original order was Nehemiah-Ezra but that this was reversed to secure the pre-eminence of the priest over the layman, the dates also being reversed in the process. Thus Nehemiah first returned in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I or 457 B.C., made a second visit twelve years later in 445 and Ezra came in 444, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I. It was his opinion that such a reconstruction would create no further difficulties and still give one of the benefit of having Ezra come last. This reconstruction is as follows:

Nehemiah's first visit accomplished the repair of the walls, the repopulating (Neh. 11: 1-2; cf. Sir. 49:13), and the remedying of such social abuses as had brought about the disintegration of community life (Neh. 5). Believing that all would henceforth be well, and leaving the civil and ecclesiastical administration in what he considered capable hands (Neh. 5:26, 7:1-5) he returns, his mission accomplished, to the Persian court. But his hopes were not to find realization. With the passing of the years fresh abuses established themselves and demanded a further visit (Neh. 13:4ff.). These were, in the main, religious, but were of such a nature as to call for one armed primarily with civil authority to rectify

⁴⁵"Nehemiah-Ezra: A Reconstruction," E.T., vol. LIX, no. 2, p. 54.

(13:15-28). Nehemiah therefore leaves again for Jerusalem in 445 to do the preliminary work, and is followed in the succeeding year by Ezra, who appears, armed with the sanction of a religious Law, to consolidate in the "covenant" (Neh. 9:38-10:39; 10:1-40 in Hebrew) the pioneer work of his precursor. It would be interesting to speculate upon the mutual relationship of the two during the period immediately preceding the year 445, but this would be largely conjectural and outside the scope of the present brief study. Suffice it to observe that, if the Ezra narrative be reliable, both he and Nehemiah are stated to have set out with the royal approval. This would seem to suggest that their respective missions in 445 and 444 were in concert, if not actually the execution of a jointly preconceived plan.⁴⁶

Jellicoe is very optimistic for his theory because it is "chronologically satisfactory" and because it "avoids the difficulties of the half-century gap necessitated by van Hoonacker's dating." He offers us other reasons in support of his scheme. However, Norman Snaith⁴⁷ has rejected it as without value because of the final success visualized in Nehemiah 13 and because it ignores Ezra 10, among other things. This view is hardly to be considered as a part of the intermediate view (though it can hardly be considered in any other view) but rather as one of the "novel conjectures" into which one sometimes runs.

The Unhistorical View. This view was born out of the discussions of the 1890's and owes its existence partially to both the late and intermediate views. Its champion and most

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ art. cit., p. 62, note 50.

vigorous defender was Charles Cutler Torrey who asserted with confidence that he had found the key for the difficult lock of Ezra-Nehemiah and that his restoring of the narrative to its original order and stature would soon be met with vigorous scholarly acceptance. His book⁴⁸ which appeared in 1896 as a Beihefte of Z.A.W. is undoubtedly the most individualistic treatise ever to appear in this field of biblical study. Approaching the problem entirely from the viewpoint of literary criticism,⁴⁹ he compares words and characteristic phrases or expressions found in Ezra-Nehemiah with those known stereotyped words and phrases of the chronicler.⁵⁰ On the basis of a microscopic treatment of the text he concludes that the only valid sources used by the chronicler were an Aramaic one (Ezra 4:6-6:18) and the greater part of the Nehemiah Memoirs (Neh. 1-6). The next step is quite natural for one who has so concluded, namely that almost everything in these books is of no historical value or worth due to the chronicler's creative pen. Many writers of various positions have dealt with

⁴⁸Compisition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah.

⁴⁹It has already been noted that Torrey used this device or approach in an extreme way; cf. above pp. 50-52.

⁵⁰This consumes the greater part of the small book running from pages 16 through 51.

the chronicler most harshly, but none have been more confident in their denouncement than has Torrey. He notes that

no fact of O.T. criticism is more firmly established than this; that the Chronicler, as a historian, is thoroughly untrustworthy. He distorts facts deliberately and habitually; invents chapter after chapter with the greatest freedom; and, what is most dangerous of all, his history is not written for its own sake, but in the interest of an extremely one-sided theory.⁵¹

Unless some other writer or witness is able to substantiate the text, "the matter is settled, strictly speaking, without further discussion."⁵²

This being accepted, Torrey's verdict on Ezra is quite explicit:

The story of Ezra is the Chronicler's masterpiece. It is the best exemplification of the traits that appear so prominently in the long passages in the book of Chronicles, his own qualities as a writer of fiction and his idea of the history of Israel.⁵³

He denies with vigor that there is any historical kernel underlying the Ezra narrative and feels that there are three good reasons for so doing:

(1) The story itself is improbable, "mechanical and unnatural to the last degree," of which other examples exist among the priestly complex in the Old Testament;

(2) The wealth of incident present in Ezra cannot deceive anyone who has read Chronicles but that this exempli-

⁵¹Composition, p. 52.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 57.

fies the Chronicler's talent for creating stories;

(3) The neglected law was now ready to be restored, and it was necessary to create a character suitable for this task.⁵⁴

Ezra's social reforms are found by Torrey to be just as fabricated as other aspects of the chronicler's story.⁵⁵ They lack both internal and external support. The characters act as puppets acting out a preconceived theory.

Thus, Torrey quite neatly solves the problem of the chronological relationship of Ezra to Nehemiah. Since Ezra was only a fictitious character created by the chronicler, there was no relationship or collaboration between them. The material in Ezra 7-10 and Nehemiah 8-10 Torrey arranges into what he considers to be their original order: Ezra 7, 8; Neh. 7:70-8:18; Ezra 9, 10; Neh. 9, 10.⁵⁶ But his feeling toward these chapters can be seen quite graphically to be unhistorical:

The material contained in these seven chapters is thoroughly homogeneous, and bears the marks of a single author; but it is the same hand and the same spirit that appear no less plainly in Ezra 1-6. It is the Chronicler, and he alone, whose work can be discerned here. And the indications are truly unmistakable. His own favorite ideas, and even his most characteristic expressions, are to be seen in these chapters, if anywhere; not in a few places, but in many. The fact could hardly fail to have been generally recognized, if it were not for the

⁵⁴Ibid. pp. 59-61.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 62.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 34.

time-honored ideas concerning the importance of Ezra in the post-exilic history.⁵⁷

It was Torrey's contention that the exile was a negligible event, that no literature was written in Babylon and that the bulk of the Judean populus who never left maintained a historical continuity.⁵⁸ He considered the return of exiles, bringing of the Law and divorcing of Gentile wives and children all to be fictitious.

Torrey's converts, needless to say, have been rather sparse. However, some adherents may be noted in E. Renan, G. Hölcher and R.H. Pfeiffer. Torrey attributed the lack of success his view suffered to the negative, devastating portrayal of his Composition. In his Ezra Studies he attempted to offset this by being positive in the last half of the work, but still convinced only a few scholars to accept his viewpoint. One scholar feeling that Torrey had a valid point was George R. Berry, who notes the following:

There seems to be good reason for the acceptance of the general conclusion of Professor Torrey that the only source used by the Chronicler in Ezra-Nehemiah was the memoir of Nehemiah, comprising most of ch. 1-2, 4-6 of Nehemiah; that no sources aside from the canonical books were used by him in the Books of Chronicles; and that the material not based on these sources is original with the Chronicler and therefore unhistorical.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 15.

⁵⁸Thomson, A.J.S.L., vol. 48, p. 100.

⁵⁹"Priests and Levites," JBL, XLII (1923), p. 227.

Andrew Thomson in commenting on Torrey's Ezra Studies assesses the negative and positive importance of the work quite the opposite from that intended by its author. He notes:

The general estimate I would make is that the earlier chapters contain Torrey's positive and constructive contribution, while the concluding chapter is destructive. It is the microscopic attention he has given to the text of Ezra and of Esdras, and in bringing into notice the characteristics of the chronicler as an author, that he has rendered most service.

But he has allowed the interest of a theory so to dominate him that it has distorted his interpretation of the facts. Whatever favors his theory he enhances and raises to the Nth power; whatever is unfavorable, he depresses or wrests to support a different interpretation from what the facts seem to warrant.⁶⁰

However, it is interesting to note several affinities that Thomson has in common with Torrey even though he places Ezra as a definite historical person in 397 B.C.⁶¹ Thomson confuses the issues by concluding that the Ezra of Ezra 7 and Neh. 8 is not the same person, nor is the Ezra of Ezra 9 identical with the Ezra of Ezra 10.⁶² Here there are at least two Ezras and perhaps more! Nor are Ezra's prayers in Ezra 9 and Neh. 9 from the same hand, but events described in Neh. 9 and Ezra 9-10 allude to concrete conditions explicable only as reflections of an actual occurrence. How can these conclusions be made compatible with each other? The answer is that they cannot! The positing of two or more Ezras and seeing several hands composing Ezra material is

⁶⁰ art. cit., pp. 128-129.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 101.

⁶² Ibid., p. 125.

very close to Torrey's assertion that Ezra is fictitious and unhistorical and stands in marked contrast to his final conclusion that actual events are mirrored therein. One can only take this as meaning that Thomson is ambivalent about Ezra's historicity.

This unhistorical interpretation of Ezra has never won many adherents to its fold. R. H. Pfeiffer in his Introduction is the only other recent scholar known to hold this point of view. Many today have even removed this view from the realm of possibility as to what views one can take. This was shown graphically several years ago by G. Ernest Wright in an editorial footnote to Albright's article⁶³ that there were three possible positions to take --- the traditional, late or intermediate views. His omission of the unhistorical view obviously means it is beside the point nowadays, at least as far as he is concerned.

However, a modification of this viewpoint was taken recently in an article by Donald Fay Robinson.⁶⁴ Robinson is quite impressed with Torrey's theory that in certain passages, especially Neh. 12:27-13:31 (cf. Ezra Studies, p. 248), Nehemiah is merely a pseudonym for Ezra. But he envisages the situation to be the opposite --- that Ezra is the Chronicler's reincarnation of Nehemiah. On the basis of the Chronicler himself Ezra seems to border on the fringe of the unhistorical.

⁶³B.A., IX, no. 1, p.14.

⁶⁴"Was Ezra Nehemiah?," Anglican Theological Review, vol. 37 (1955), pp. 177-189.

Robinson finds, in addition to Ben Sira's omission of Ezra from his list of heroes,

it most impressive that the founder of Jewish racial exclusiveness, who dissolved marriages and orphaned children to maintain the purity of the Jewish people, did not leave on record so much as his own father's name. For a comparison of his genealogy as given in Ezra 7:1-5 with the list of high priests in I Chr. 6:4-15 makes it clear that one is but an abbreviation of the other; and according to this Ezra must have been a brother of Jehozadak and upwards of 200 years old in the seventh year of the second Artaxerxes.⁶⁵

Though this author remarks on Ezra's advanced age only as it concerns the late view for Ezra, 60 or 61 years removed from that advanced age would make him no less improbable if not impossible for his position in the traditional or modified traditional scheme!

Robinson presumes that Ezra-Nehemiah is a part of the larger chronistic corpus but not that Ezra-Nehemiah is necessarily its end. Indeed, he finds it feasible to entertain the idea of its being the "central text" which absorbed various other material from time to time inserted into it for safekeeping. As for the deviations between the MT and I Esdras,

anything present in one text but missing in the other or anything occurring in both texts but in different contexts, may very probably be an interpolation; and that by dropping such passages we may have left an approximation to the original Chronicle.⁶⁶

He thus omits Ezra 4:7-24 (= I Esd. 2:16-30) because it appears in different contexts; the story of the three youths in I Esd. 3:1-5:6 because no one considers it to be a part of

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 178

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 179.

the chronicler's original work, Ezra 4:6 because it is a unique attempt by an editor to cope with the following chronological difficulty, and the Nehemiah Memoirs because of no signs of the chronicler's tampering. He claims that

All the foregoing material sits uncomfortably in its context, and the continuity is not disturbed but improved by its omission. There is thus no serious difficulty in the way of making a basic restoration of that section of the Chronicle which is to be found in both Ezra-Nehemiah and First Esdras by a quite mechanical use of exact parallelism.⁶⁷

The material contained in the last three chapters of Nehemiah is a "scrapheap of material" placed there by later editors for preservation in which there is no continuity present. Since the chronicler has proven his ability as a writer many times, it hardly follows that this is his work. Therefore,

It is suggested then that the conclusion of the original Chronicle comprised the following passages: Ezra 1:1-4:5, 5:1-10:44, Neh. 7:73-9:38, 10:30-39. Corruptions mar the text, and there may be deliberate omissions and interpolations and even purposeful alterations here and there. But on the whole the above passages constitute a relatively smooth continuity. And a point in favor of the suggestion is that it does not depend at all on rearrangement.⁶⁸

In Nehemiah 8 the chief character in our MT is Ezra. But since the preceding material is a continuation of Nehemiah's Memoirs, and since Neh. 7:5 introduces the census in the first person who is undoubtedly Nehemiah, this can only mean that there existed a version of the Nehemiah Memoirs or a

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 181.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 183.

history incorporating them in which the census stood in this position. In this case Nehemiah 8 would have originally had as its principal character Nehemiah. Since Neh. 12:27-43 is definitely a type of history incorporating Nehemiah's Memoirs, it stands to reason that Nehemiah 7:6-8:18 might "be another fragment of the same document." Robinson then states that for which he has been readying the reader:

...if Neh. 8:1b-18 is part of an older history, in which Ezra has displaced Nehemiah, and if this same history elsewhere incorporates sections of the Nehemiah memoirs in their original autobiographical form, why may not the principal part of the Ezra story, Ezra 7-10, be a rewriting of another part of this same history?⁶⁹

There are four points given in support of this theory, and these are as follows:⁷⁰

1. Nehemiah's name occurs only two times in the suggested reconstruction --- with Zerubbabel in Ezra 2:2 and with the title Tirshatha and Ezra in Nehemiah 8:9. The first instance is definitely not our Nehemiah, and since I Esdras 9:49 mentions Tirshatha and Ezra but not Nehemiah, it must be a later editorial gloss. The things for which Ben Sira in 49:13 praises Nehemiah are also overlooked.

2. Ezra's name is scarcely to be found outside the supposed limits of the Chronicle, and in the Chronicle itself only the association with Nehemiah the governor in Neh 12:26 and the obvious interpolation of Nehemiah 12:36 refer definitely to Ezra the Scribe. The possibility is that "both

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 185.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 185-188.

sentences come from a source that did not mention Ezra, and that the name was added in 12:26 either by the person who put the present text together or by a later editor."⁷¹ Neh. 12:1 and 13 when compared with Neh. 10:2 are shown to be definite corruptions, and Azariah in Neh. 12:33 may be a corruption, repetition or interpolation. It follows naturally that

If Nehemiah son of Hacaliah is mentioned outside the Chronicle but never within it, and if Ezra the scribe is mentioned in the Chronicle but not elsewhere, then the road is open to an identification of the two.⁷²

Josephus follows the Nehemiah Memoirs solely except for his section on the dedication of the city walls. But the passage in Antiquities xl.5.7 ---"Now when he was come to Babylon, and had taken with him many of his countrymen, he came to Jerusalem"---is not in our MT. Robinson claims that the I-sections of Ezra are merely an expression of this omission.

3. The order of the Ezra story contains several awkward transitions which favor a written source:

If in fact Ezra 7:27-8:36 is an expansion of a passage from Nehemiah, it cannot have been followed originally by Ezra 9. But the fact is that Ezra 9 does not read like the sequel to Ezra 8 anyway; and it is quite usually believed that Neh. 7:70-8:18 originally intervened. There is no reason why a recasting of the whole of Neh. 2:12-7:4, plus the census, may not also have preceded Ezra 9 in the Chronicler's source.⁷³

4. The covenant is credited to Ezra in Neh. 10 but Neh. 13:4-31 contains the same elements. Ezra 9-10 concerns mixed marriages but Neh. 13:23-30 shows Nehemiah to be concerned

⁷¹Ibid., p. 186.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., p. 187.

with these also. "In short all acts of historic importance that Ezra is supposed to have performed were performed also by Nehemiah. It may be that they were performed only by Nehemiah."⁷⁴ In the reading of the Law in Neh. 8 no doubt two individuals were a part of the story from the beginning, but the scribe involved was definitely subordinate. The scribe may have been named Ezra but whatever his name the Chronicler takes this minor character and creates from him the hero of his story. The probability that Nehemiah was a eunuch is great because of his royal position in Persia, and since Jewish law prevents such individuals from becoming priests and Deuteronomy even legislated them out of the community, the chronicler could not allow such an individual to be head of the community. But this was not such a simple thing to overcome, for

Nehemiah's name was inextricably associated with the rebuilding of the city walls, and it was hopeless to try to alter that piece of history. But the Chronicler could ---and I contend did--- suppress all reference to the rebuilding of the city walls; and he could ---and again I say did--- assign Nehemiah's religious reforms, reforms which were the very cornerstone of later Judaism, to an otherwise unknown but physically sound priest and scribe named Ezra. Whether a man named Ezra actually existed at that or some other time is beside the point. He may have. But I submit that the Ezra we know from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah was a fictitious stand-in for the unacceptable person who actually had performed the deeds recorded in the book, Nehemiah son of Hacaliah, one-time cupbearer to the King of Persia.⁷⁵

Thus, for all practical purposes Robinson is the last known

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 188.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 189.

person to support the unhistorical view (at least in writing), although his interpretation is a bit different from his predecessors.

The Modified Traditional View. In the minds of most scholars there is no such thing as a "modified" traditional view because anyone who holds to the date of 458 for Ezra is definitely one of the traditionalists. Yet it is hardly just to lump together the literalist who takes the text just as it is and the scholar who thinks the traditional dates to be correct but sees the necessity to rearrange the events narrated for us in the text. I, therefore, feel that it would be quite appropriate to separate these two groups on the basis of whether or not a critical approach is made to the subject. Writers on the Ezra-Nehemiah problem who could be so classed are Morton Smith,⁷⁶ Cyrus H. Gordon,⁷⁷ T. Witton Davies⁷⁸ and W.M.F. Scott.⁷⁹

⁷⁶I am referring to the American Council of Learned Societies Lectures given at McGill University on November 23-24, 1961. His Harvard Th.D. thesis (The Development of Judaism in Palestine I, 1957) from which these lectures were taken was not available to me on interlibrary loan, being a non-circulating document. In his letter to me in January 1963 Dr. Smith informs me that he is presently reworking that manuscript and will send it to the publisher this spring or summer. The book, whose title he did not mention, is to be expected in the summer or fall of 1964.

⁷⁷The World of the Old Testament (London: Phoenix House, 1956), p. 276.

⁷⁸op. cit., pp. 4-8. Davies treats Ezra's entire mission as coming before Nehemiah's arrival.

⁷⁹"Nehemiah-Ezra?" E.T., vol. LVIII, no. 10, July 1947, pp. 263-267.

It is quite unnecessary to put forth here a representative reconstruction because one is not needed. Nehemiah's message and mission is known very well and more or less fixed. One need only concern himself here with Ezra and his mission in Jerusalem. The crux of the matter is that the MT makes Ezra to wait for thirteen years to proclaim the law brought with urgency by him from Babylonia. It goes without saying that there is a discrepancy here in the account, and it is just this main discrepancy which caused the views already described to come to the fore. Now, if it is legitimate for one to arrange Ezra's activity into a year or eighteen months span of time in the late and intermediate views, why is it not also legitimate to do so here? This is very attractive because it keeps Ezra 7:7 under Artaxerxes I and removes the possibility of collaboration. John Bright has criticized these deviations from the traditional view, but justifies it for himself as a part of his intermediate view. If one grants, as would any serious student of the text, the premise that rearrangement and reconstruction are necessary due to the nebulous state of affairs, then one must not deny this privilege to viewpoints other than his own.

Ezra's action in Ezra 7-10 is well taken, the prime consideration being the mixed marriage affair. Following close on the heels of this action, Ezra reads the law to the people (Neh. 7:73b-8:8) and commands the people to rejoice. Then the Feast of Tabernacles is observed followed by confession and prayer. A cov-

enant is made, signed and obligations are assumed by the people. Each of these events followed in chronological order and was completed in a twelve to eighteen month period directly after Ezra's arrival in 458. Ezra's mission is completed so far as our limited records tell us. But it is hardly likely that he returned to Babylonia since his mission was entirely religious in nature and he was therefore not an indispensable court functionary, although certainly there were secondary political aims achieved such as the cementing of Persian loyalty and this no doubt was a prime consideration in the regal appointment of him. It is quite likely that he remained in Jerusalem in an authoritative religious position to the Jewish community, although another tradition says he returned to Babylonia and lived to be an old man. If Ezra remained in Jerusalem, he may have had at least a secondary connection with the unauthorized attempt to rebuild the walls about 450. In any case Ezra would have counseled against such a course because he favored loyalty to the powers that be. He could have been held responsible by Artaxerxes nevertheless because he was leader of the community. Too, Jerusalem had had a long history as a city of messianic nationalism (cf. Ezra 4:6-24, Artaxerxes I being undeniably the King in question), and this could only have an adverse effect at court on the reputation of the community leader, whoever he may have been. This could very well account for the silence about Ezra in the remainder of the Chronicler's record, but whether or not Ezra was involved in any way in the wall

building episode, Ezra was definitely finished as a leader of the community when Nehemiah arrived on the scene. The presence of the name Ezra in Nehemiah 12 and Nehemiah in Nehemiah 8-9 are later scribal interpolations. Such a view maintains the Ezra-Nehemiah sequence of the text, a point the chronicler could have hardly bungled being only 150-200 years removed from the scene, and thus Nehemiah is the legatee of Ezra's message and mission.

THE VIEWS ASSESSED

The views presented above, give one at least a fair acquaintance with the possible positions which are open to the student of the period. Since these positions represent a wide range of opinion and scholarship it is highly desirable that one establish at least a tenable working theory somewhere in this range and not confuse the issues unduly by setting forth erratically on his own. Toward this end it might be wise to bring to our minds again Rowley's statement that

the first step toward finding a solution lies in realizing the intricate character of the problem, and it is usually found that a study of the solutions offered will best bring this out.⁸⁰

Therefore, it goes without saying that all of the possible views have points which may be adduced in their favor, yet no one view may be said to have an air-tight case. No particular view totally satisfies all of the evidence

⁸⁰B.J.R.L., vol. 37, p. 531.

presented by the chronicler. Unless some new manuscript should be discovered in the future yielding additional and much needed information on this problem, one will not face a static situation nor will he have to consider any new views as the present situation has about produced its limit as to various possibilities. The existing possibilities will continue to be challenge enough for even the most competent of scholars. It goes without saying that here as in any other area of textual and/or historical criticism it is useless to count reputable scholars on each side of the issue and side with the majority. In matters such as this one seeks the facts involved and not necessarily a majority opinion (such a procedure is exactly that which made possible the long reign of the Textus Receptus of the New Testament).

One may begin this assessment by considering the theory proposed by Torrey that Ezra was unhistorical. Despite the few scholars who aligned themselves with this viewpoint, there are several facts in its favor:

1. The so-called Ezra Memoirs are very nebulous and inexact as compared with those of Nehemiah and give many indications of the chronicler's traces or perhaps actual composition of them.

2. The chronicler, whose fondness for genealogies is universally accepted, could not or did not give any indication of Ezra's father's name. To compare Ezra 7:1-5 with I Chronicles 6:4-15 gives the indication that Ezra's genea-

ology is but an abbreviation of that of the high priests, and if historical Ezra was according to this geneology of such an advanced age (± 200) that he could not have done the job which he is pictured as doing.

3. If Nehemiah was a eunuch because of his access to the King's harem at Susa as pictorial records from the Persian empire suggest, the chronicler's creation of a fictitious priestly alternate to him is quite to be expected.

4. Ben Sira, about 180 B.C., completely omits Ezra in his list of Jewish national heroes.

Needless to say there are definite answers to these favorable points, or the view would not be nearing extinction today. That the chronicler's hand is to be found through part or even most of the passages generally assigned to the Ezra Memoirs is not considered to be a reason for discarding the personage of Ezra, for this only suggests that the chronicler is altering to his viewpoint and purpose some Ezra material from some pre-existing source. It is no doubt strange why these Memoirs would lack any uniformity of person, shifting from the first to the third person, and especially is this a factor of note when his great literary skill can be seen in the earlier part of his work (S. B. Frost in reading the first draft of this manuscript suggested that perhaps the chronicler died before he finished his work). The probability is that the chronicler had these Memoirs from a first person account but in his adaptation of them failed

to maintain strict uniformity of person. Adolphe Lods⁸¹ has pointed out a most important fact against the free creation of the Ezra story by the chronicler. It is well known that the chronicler was most probably a Levite and definitely a champion of their cause. Yet the Ezra memoirs contain definite derogatory facts about this group. In Ezra 8:15-20 it is this group which does not particularly want to return to Judea, and later in the account of those who are involved in the mixed marriage situation (Ezra 10:23-24) some Levites are among the offenders. If the chronicler were creating this story, he undoubtedly would have presented them in a better light, but since he did not there must have been an Ezra source which he was following. This could be the reason why he gives the inconclusive genealogy in a section generally recognized as being the chronicler's own introduction in Ezra 7. Since he had no source and no information, perhaps he feels compelled to leave the matter much as he found it. But no one should make too much from the chronicler's lists and genealogies anyway, for he was not writing history or transmitting facts per se, but writing for a specific purpose and intention. Furthermore, any type of priestly pedigree, like that given to Zadok, is almost an open admission of its falsity.

⁸¹The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1937), p. 299.

Although Ezra's genealogy (whose priestly character is generally recognized) makes him an impossible human being of a most advanced age, we should not make him to be a fictitious creation of the chronicler. Nor should one conclude that Nehemiah was a eunuch on the basis of Persian pictorial records of men in like positions. To be sure Nehemiah's reluctance to enter the Temple and other minor incidents in his Memoirs may be best explained by this conjecture and certainly if this fact were true the chronicler would have had all of the reason he needed for a rephrasing of the original history. But actual evidence for or against this conjecture is not to be had, and therefore, conclusions must remain inconclusive. Ben Sira's omission is perhaps the hardest fact to circumvent unless one takes a position with Lods⁸² that perhaps the chronicler's history was too newly edited (perhaps about 190 B.C.) to be used by Sirach as authoritative. However, W.O.E. Oesterley maintains that this omission of a strict Pharisee such as Ezra would be quite normal and natural for one with Sadducean tendencies.⁸³ In addition to the above refutations one more, perhaps the weightiest of all, may be stated. It is that Jewish tradition, however romanticized, embellished and far-fetched it may seem (with the exception of an historical myth such as *Jonah* or a theological reworking of a canonical book like *Judith*), has never been known not to be

⁸²Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁸³A History of Israel, II (London: Oxford, 1939), p. 139.

based on some factual, historic incident. It may be hard to get at this "core" of truth but somewhere in the hodgepodge of details some truth will be found. In support of this historic essence embodied in the Ezra stories one may say with sternness that the Jews would not have accepted as their hero one who had no prior place in their actual history and tradition. Whether the Ezra of history did all or any of the things tradition ascribes to him is quite another matter. But that there was a priest-scribe Ezra in the Persian period who played a role in the development of Judaism, however secondary or insignificant it might have been, is a fact now almost universally accepted. The argument pro and con the unhistorical theory is much more involved and complicated than stated here, these being only the major points. One can only conclude that Ezra was an actual person and not just Nehemiah under another name or the chronicler's creation, however appealing for the solution of chronological problems this may be. The unhistorical theory is therefore to be rejected as an inadequate interpretation of the facts.

Having rejected the unhistorical theory, one is still left with a vast and perplexing problem at hand. For purposes of simplification and conciseness I propose to treat the remaining four views in groups of two. Since the traditional and modified traditional views involve the same Ezra-Nehemiah sequence and the arguments for dating would be equally applicable for each, and since the late and intermediate views both adhere to the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence and the reasons for this sequence are virtually the

same, this procedure is quite feasible. But it is to be understood even so that there are distinctive reasons for preferring either view to the other and these will be brought out after the general assessment has been made, taking one view from each group as best satisfying the facts and finally taking a position on or from which Nehemiah's role in Jerusalem and Judaism can be determined. Since it is the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence which has provoked the study in the last three-quarters of a century, and since it challenges the argument for dating Ezra in 458, its reasoning will be presented first, after which arguments against it will be offered. With the arguments for and against before us we can then adopt that view which best satisfies the evidence as we see it but we must keep in mind at the same time that we have by no means finally settled the matter.

The Nehemiah-Ezra Sequence. There are many reasons that have been adduced for preferring the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence over that of the traditional view as presented in the text itself. There are basically a dozen reasons, however, which are most important among the many reasons, and it is these which we put forth below:⁸⁴

1. Nehemiah's silence with regard to Ezra is difficult to explain if Ezra had preceded him to Jerusalem.

⁸⁴For some of the many sources where such reasons are to be found cf. Ricciotti, op. cit., pp. 104-107; Batten, op. cit., pp. 28-30; W.F. Lofthouse, Israel after the Exile (The Clarendon Bible; O.T. vol. IV; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), pp. 197-198; Ismar J. Peritz, Old Testament History (New York: Abingdon, 1915), pp. 260-261; Bright, History, pp. 383-384, et al.

2. Nehemiah in 5:15 of his Memoirs openly accuses all previous governors and leaders of having oppressed the poor and corrupted the community. If Ezra preceded Nehemiah, why is there no passing over of him in this criticism?

3. When Nehemiah arrives, the city walls are in ill repair and its gates burned, few houses and only sparse population. But when Ezra arrives the city is peopled and walled.

4. Ezra 9:9 expresses thanks to God for a "wall in Judah and in Jerusalem." This can best refer to an actual wall built earlier by Nehemiah.

5. Nehemiah tolerated mixed marriages calling for only a pledge that they would be discontinued, but Ezra dealt drastically with them by dissolution. Presumably, the more severe measures followed rather than preceded Nehemiah's softer policy.

6. If Ezra 4:7-23 refers to work on the walls under Ezra, why would the same Artaxerxes I allow Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem with that specific purpose sanctioned by him?

7. Eliashib was high priest during Nehemiah's tenure in Jerusalem, yet his grandson Jehohanan was high priest under Ezra.

8. When Nehemiah arrived, he had to contend with three foreign rulers: Sanballat the Horonite, Tobias the Ammonite and Geshem the Arabian. Ezra encounters no such opposition.

9. The order Nehemiah-Ezra is given in Neh. 12:26.

10. Nehemiah established a board of treasurers in Jerusalem (13:13) while Ezra (Ezra 8:33) found them functioning

already and deposited his treasures brought from Babylon with them.

11. Jewish tradition made Ezra the founding father of Judaism, and later tradition makes him in fact the recipient of Nehemiah's reforms in spite of holding to the traditional order.

12. Nehemiah found the Jerusalem cultus sadly neglected and set out to right this. Ezra finds everything functioning properly.

13. The passages which make Ezra and Nehemiah contemporaries are few, secondary and incidental to the narrative.

Assuming for the moment that these reasons are quite adequate for the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence,⁸⁵ let us look more closely at strong and weak points and see whether the late or intermediate view is to be preferred.

(a) The Late View. 1. The late view's placing of Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II (i.e., 398/7 B.C.) makes it possible to keep the text of Ezra 7:7, 8 without emendation. Since the King whose name was Artaxerxes is not specified, Artaxerxes II is definitely a possibility.

2. The chronicler's history has disrupted the original order, Nehemiah 7:73ff. coming originally after Ezra 10 as shown by I Esdras. Therefore, Ezra's mission took place

⁸⁵cf. below pp. 112-114 for a more critical analysis of this sequence.

uninterrupted and the two were not contemporaries. The absence of the other in his own Memoirs is quite to be expected..

3. Ezra's ignorance of problems in Jerusalem such as the mixed marriage situation would be quite explicable in 398. However, if Ezra's mission were adjacent to, coincident with, or in between Nehemiah's two missions or in any sense sponsored by Nehemiah, this ignorance cannot be explained, nor in this case does the omission of the other party in each of their Memoirs seem reasonable.

4. Nehemiah found Eliashib in the highpriesthood at the time of his second mission, and terms of office for this position were generally quite long. If Ezra is placed in 428 as the most popular intermediate date calls for and found Jehohanan ben Eliashib in the highpriesthood, this leaves very little time for the highpriesthood of Jehohanan's father, Joiada.

5. A very weak point often brought forth is concerning the board of treasurers, claiming that a change in personnel is unlikely in 428 but quite possible or feasible in 398. Ezra 8:33 does give different administrators from those whom Nehemiah had appointed in 13:13, but who can say what length a term of office is? This point is very inconclusive.

(b) The Intermediate View. The above points would seem to exclude the intermediate view and say that the late view

is the only possible one for the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence. Such a positive statement is quite normal in view of the preponderance of the late view among scholars, and one here need only recall the excessive statement of Bowman⁸⁶ that any deviation from the late view (such as the intermediate view still maintaining the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence) is more ingenious than correct and a method used to dodge the verdict of the facts. But in spite of such statements, one may note the following defections from the late view in favor of the intermediate position:

1. Whatever might be the historical significance of Ezra, tradition has perhaps associated him with Nehemiah's second visit, and it was only later that the MT (Ezra 7-10) and I Esdras placed him before Nehemiah.⁸⁷

2. If van Hoonacker was in any sense correct in saying that Ezra's mission in 398 was a second coming to Jerusalem, his first coming taking place in 445, Ezra was a man of a most advanced age. Fernandez has noted⁸⁸ that if Ezra were 30 at his first mission this would make him 77 in 398. (This

⁸⁶IB, III, p. 564.

⁸⁷S.A. Cook, "The Age of Zerubbabel" in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, p. 34.

⁸⁸Biblica, 2 (1921), p. 445 note.

aspect of van Hoonacker's theory has been abandoned today in favor of a first coming in 398, thus avoiding the difficulty.)

3. The Elephantine Papyri in the so-called "Passover Papyrus" shows that by 419, the fifth year of Darius II, the Persian government was regulating Jewish religion on the basis of Torah.⁸⁹ And there is some indication that this was mediated through Jerusalem.⁹⁰ If this be true, how can Ezra in 398 carry a religious, regulatory mandate from the Persian King to Jerusalem and this still be the first such mandate given to Jerusalem? By 398 the chances are that this practice had been in effect for some time.

4. The possibility of the strict, exclusivistic, Pharisee Ezra having cordial relations with Jehohanan ben Eliashib as appears in Ezra 10:6 is hardly probable. Josephus⁹¹ relates for us that this person was a fratricide, quarrelling with his brother in the Temple and killing him there, a heinous crime. The Elephantine Papyri from a letter written in 408 B.C. shows Johanan to have been highpriest at least by 411. The date of the crime is unknown but the probability that it could have happened after 398 is very slight. It must have been earlier in his highpriesthood that Ezra associates with him on a friendly basis,

⁸⁹cf. James B. Pritchard, editor, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1950), p. 491.

⁹⁰C.G. Tuland, "Hanani-Hananiah," J.B.L., LXXVII (1958), pp. 157-161.

⁹¹Antiquities XI, vii, 1.

for Ezra would not have supported a murderer, and this rules out the late date for Ezra. Albright⁹² has noted that this may be the chronicler's reason for failing to call Jehohanan "high priest."

5. As for the relatively short period of Joiada's high priesthood, this is best to be explained by a short reign between 428 and 411 or there about. This fits the facts that we now have, as Eliashib was still high priest at Nehemiah's second mission and Jehohanan was the occupant of this office at least by 411. The MT does not make Jehohanan high priest at the time of Ezra's association with him.

6. Ezra and Nehemiah were never contemporaries though the chronicler thought them to be according to several passages where they are placed together. In every such case, however, these are the result of tampering by later scribes with the text and in all such cases they are secondary to the chronicler's aim. Therefore, Ezra's mission could be entirely separate from Nehemiah's last term, and yet not necessitate one placing him in 398 B.C., something quite improbable in light of the foregoing considerations. (There are holders, however, of the intermediate view who view the colloboration as an authentic part of the record⁹³ and to be preserved, explaining Ezra's role under Nehemiah's second administration as governor and going further to conjecture a falling-out between the two so as to show why

⁹²J.B.L., XL (1921), pp. 121-124.

⁹³e.g. Bright, History, p. 386.

the Memoirs do not reveal the name of the opposite contemporary, but to my mind this is best explained in another way.)

7. Ezra's reaction in regard to the mixed marriage problem is not one of ignorance. It is rather that the chronicler so pictures him as maintaining a strict priestly Pharasaic outlook, so that his piety might truly be shocked upon a direct confrontation. Ezra's rigidity fits 428 as well as it does 398.

8. It is easily explainable how "seventh" in Ezra 7:7 was originally "thirty-seventh" (i.e., 428) by the process of haplography, the overlooking of one word in a sequence of three words all beginning with the letter **ו**. Even if this legitimate reasoning may be doubted in view of the absence of manuscript evidence to support it, "seventh" may be doubted because this is in the section of Ezra 7:1-10 which all recognize as the chronicler's free composition.

(c) The Preferable View of the Nehemiah-Ezra Sequence. From the arguments for and against presented directly above one can view the positions in a fuller way and see which is to be preferred between the two. Emmett Hamrick in his Duke U. thesis in 1950 arrived at several conclusions,⁹⁴ namely that Ezra was a historical character though his entire role was secondary and that the facts best supported Ezra being dated in 398 although there was a definite trend away from this in favor of 428. However, his opinion that 398 was being supplanted by 428 has not

⁹⁴cf. Hamrick, op. cit., pp. 297-307.

proved to be true. It is certain that some notable studies since that time have pronounced themselves in favor of it, notably Bright, Noth, Schneider and V. Pavlovsky, but the late date for Ezra has gathered to itself an ever increasing band of adherents as can be witnessed by footnotes and brief paragraphs in works on various other problems. But the question for us is not "Should we allign ourselves with this numerical superiority?" but rather "What position should one take in light of the facts?" To this significant question I suggest that the facts definitely point one to the intermediate view as being the most likely. Of particular note here is Ezra's relation with the high priest Jehohanan ben Eliashib in Ezra 10:6 which could not have taken place in 398 and the matter of Persian religious mediation in Egypt via Jerusalem by at least 419. Therefore, given the fact that the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence is justified, we see the intermediate view as much more probable and greatly desirable over the late view. In our estimation the late view now joins the company of the unhistorical view.

The Ezra-Nehemiah Sequence. Now it has come time to look at the other side of the picture, and examine the two possible views remaining --- the traditional and modified traditional --- and see which of these is the more desirable and truer to the facts. Here a number of important points favor this sequence, and they may be noted as follows:

1. Ezra 4:12, a part of the Aramaic source incorporated rather than corrected to the Chronicler's viewpoint but obviously chronologically out of place, says "that the

Jews that came up from thee are come to us unto Jerusalem; they are building the rebellious and the bad city and have finished the walls and are digging out the foundations" (American Jewish Translation). This is a report sent to Artaxerxes I by Rehum and Shimshai to complain about the Jew's proceedings. The king is recognized by everyone as Artaxerxes Longimanus except by a few traditionalists who make what they can of this passage in its Temple context a century before. The only known caravan that departed under Artaxerxes I was that of Ezra, and this would definitely place Ezra in Jerusalem prior to Nehemiah. The only other real possibility that could have occurred would have been for Nehemiah's brother Hanani (who, no doubt, had been involved in Ezra's expedition and rebuilding attempt) to have returned to Susa and here informed Nehemiah of the consequences, state of the city and the Samaritan triumph, thereafter returning to Jerusalem as leader of an expedition of Exiles himself. But Hanani's presence in Jerusalem could better be explained as being part of the Persian civil or foreign service, not a farfetched conjecture recognizing Nehemiah's high position in the Persian court.⁹⁵

2. The unsettled state of affairs in the Western part of the Persian Empire is often adduced as making a regal appointment by Artaxerxes I improbable or impossible, but actually just

⁹⁵Ricciotti, op. cit., p. 107, notes this as a "grave difficulty" against the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence.

the opposite is true. Just this situation was instrumental in Ezra's appointment at this time.⁹⁶ In the turbulent year 458 Ezra recognizes the psychological advantages of promising Artaxerxes I divine protection against his enemies and does so, obtaining thereby besides the royal decree Persian monetary support, privileges and advantages for Palestinian Jewry. The Persian realm in 461 had suffered from the revolt of Xerxes son, Hystaspes, in Eastern Iran, and this gave Egypt the looked for chance to revolt under Inarus and Amyrtaios. The Attic Empire under Pericles in this period of expansion (460-450) had a Palestinian port at Dor in Phoenicia just below Mt. Carmel. Athenian strategy used this port to aid Egypt's rebellion, and this was a real reason for Greek-Persian military conflicts near Dor. Sending Ezra to Palestine greatly helped to solidify Persian sentiment among the Jews, especially because of the favors granted them, and helped to stop or at least reduce defection to the Athenians. Therefore,

...there is no alternative date which could be suggested for Ezra's reform which would be as understandable as 458 B.C., a year during which the vital needs of Persian domestic and foreign policy during the time of a two front attack against Artaxerxes I overshadowed all other considerations.⁹⁷

⁹⁶Fritz M. Heichelheim, "Ezra's Palestine and Periclean Athens," Zeitschrift für Religions und Geistesgeschichte, vol. 3 (1951), pp. 251-253. This article is very concise and not elaborated, but the documentation is voluminous and would provide for much fertile study.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 252.

The foregoing receives a certain amount of support from archaeology.⁹⁸ In the Iron III period (550-330 B.C.) which is roughly equivalent with the Persian period Greek influence became more and more pronounced. Already in the sixth century B.C. Greek trading posts had been established along the Palestinian coast. Attic and Ionian black-figured pottery has been found at these posts. In the fifth century Attic red-figured pottery becomes the major import into Palestine, some being found at every excavation. And for more than 125 years prior to the Greek period (i.e., at least by 455 B.C.) Attic coins were the standard medium of exchange in Palestine. All of this greatly confirms the Greek threat to the Persian empire and makes 458 the best possible date for Ezra.⁹⁹

3. An understanding of Ezra 9:9 calls for a date of 458 though this has often been adduced as a certain factor favoring the late view. The problem in this verse is that in his prayer Ezra thanks God for giving them a "wall in Judah and Jerusalem." This has been given long treatments by a number of writers. Batten solves the problem by deleting "in Judah" on the basis of the literal statements which precede. He admits that it sometimes can be taken in a figurative sense as meaning "divine protection" but sees it here as referring

⁹⁸W.F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine (Pelican Books Al99; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949 ff.) pp. 143-145.

⁹⁹There are other external factors which equally call for a date in 458. For these see the beginning of chapter 3.

to the walls built by Nehemiah.¹⁰⁰ But this is really not very helpful. The essence of the argument for a figurative interpretation here is the use of the word $\overline{\text{גדר}}$ instead of the usual one גדר . The latter always means a material wall whereas $\overline{\text{גדר}}$ only means a material wall in a limited number of places, perhaps only in Micah 7:11, though some deny it there also,¹⁰¹ saying it always means a hedge, fence, or the protecting wall of a vineyard. The lexical evidence is very inconclusive, but surely there is

¹⁰⁰Batten, op. cit., p. 334.

¹⁰¹Fernandez, "La voz $\overline{\text{גדר}}$ in Esd. 9,9," Biblica, XVI (1935), p. 83. For the direct antithesis note the following statement of Arvid S. Kapelrud, The Question of Authorship in the Ezra-Narrative (Oslo: I Kommisjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1944), pp. 66-67:

The word means wall in every instance, even if it in certain places can be interpreted figuratively (Ezek. 22:30). The usual thing is to interpret this word figuratively here: enclosure, protected spot, etc. This is in reality to interpret away the word that is in the text, gader, and there is no foundation for such an interpretation in the text itself. The supposition is founded on the hypothesis that the Ezra-narrative was written by Ezra himself and that he came to Jerusalem in 458 B.C., at a time when the city had no wall. As against this we insist that the word in the present passage means wall, wall of defence, but no more. The question is only whether this is to be understood literally or figuratively. As a matter of fact it is really on this point that researchers find it most difficult to agree. Mowinckel (Ezra den skriftlaerde, p. 71) and Oesterley (History of Israel, vol. II, London 1932, p. 117) insist that the word must be understood literally here, as well as elsewhere. This opinion is strengthened if one asks the question negatively: would the word gader have been used if, at the time at which it is used, there had not been a wall around Jerusalem? Surely not. The word concerned is moreover one which was seldom used in late scriptures.

That this statement is an extreme one is to be seen from his insistence that a date of 458 B.C. calls for this narrative to have been written by Ezra himself. This, of course, just does not follow.

some reason for $\aleph \aleph \lambda$ standing here in Ezra 9:9 because $\aleph \aleph \aleph$ is used in every other reference to wall in Ezra-Nehemiah. To support its figurative sense one may point out that Ezra has spoken figuratively of nail in Ezra 9:8 and this is not the usual word there either. The LXX recognizes a distinction between $\aleph \aleph \lambda$ and $\aleph \aleph \aleph$ here, rendering the latter always $\tau \epsilon \iota \chi \omicron \varsigma$ in all its occurrences in Ezra-Nehemiah while rendering $\aleph \aleph \lambda$ as $\phi \rho \alpha \gamma \mu \omicron \varsigma$ (a fence). I Esdras 8:82 (Greek vs. 78) here reads in support of a figurative interpretation: "to give us a sure abiding ($\sigma \tau \epsilon \rho \acute{\epsilon} \omega \mu \alpha$) in Jewry and Jerusalem."¹⁰² Several translations have also taken $\aleph \aleph \lambda$ in a figurative sense. The American Jewish Version translates it as "fence," the Revised Standard Version of 1952 takes it as "protection," the American Standard Version of 1901 translates it "wall" but places "fence" in the margin as an alternate reading, and the Spanish translation of Nacar-Colunga translates it as "refugio seguro," sure or certain refuge.¹⁰³ However, some scholars who support the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence have also interpreted it figuratively. W. Rudolph¹⁰⁴ is an example of one who favors the intermediate view who takes

¹⁰²W.F.M. Scott, art. cit., p. 264.

¹⁰³cf. Luis Araldich, op. cit., p. 710. This causes him some concern because he favors the Nehemiah-Ezra sequence although he takes no specific stand for the late or intermediate view. His claim that one interprets $\aleph \aleph \lambda$ according to his preconceived position on chronology must be rejected, because it removes honesty, integrity and objectivity from the realm of interpretation, regardless of the position one might take here.

¹⁰⁴Esra und Nehemia mit 3. Esdras, p. 88; cf. also the review by Fernandez in Biblica XXXIV (1953), p. 100.

נִיִּל in a metaphorical way.

The most interesting discussion of this word yet to appear took place several years ago in the journal Biblica. Fernandez began the exchange by criticizing an article by H. Kaupel which had appeared the preceding year.¹⁰⁵ Kaupel arrived at the double conclusion that נִיִּל in the majority of cases referred to an actual wall (mauer, stadtmauer) and that we are given nothing on which to conclude why this word was used in place of חֲבִיר. Fernandez charged that Kaupel's article was very general and unspecific and said that in not a single case does — mean a material wall. Kaupel has for some unknown reason inverted the phrase "in Judah and Jerusalem," placing Jerusalem first and Judah second without giving any cause. Fernandez asked why Judah is mentioned at all if it was the Jerusalem wall being spoken about. He concluded that it was possible only to interpret נִיִּל in a figurative way.

Kaupel was not long in letting this go unanswered. He made a reply to Fernandez¹⁰⁶ but brought forth nothing new, only reaffirming his prior position and pointing to the numerical superiority in its favor. Fernandez is also answered by G. Ricciotti who was criticized for his literal interpretation of the passage in Fernandez's original article. Ricciotti's individualism brings to the controversy some most novel evidence

¹⁰⁵Fernandez, op. cit., Biblica XVI (1935), pp. 82-84 (also in Comentario, pp. 206-207); Kaupel's article being criticized is "Die Bedeutung von Gader in Esr. 9,9," Biblische Zeitschrift XXII (1934), pp. 89-92.

¹⁰⁶"Zu נִיִּל in Esr. 9,9," Biblica XVI (1935), pp. 213-214.

from Flavius Josephus.¹⁰⁷ He argues that on the basis of Jewish Wars I, 10, 3, 4199 and Antiquities XIV, 8, 5, 4144 that $\gamma\tau\lambda$ signifies muro di cinta, muro di protezione. He claims that $\pi\alpha\tau\rho\iota\varsigma$ had its first use as a feminine adjective signifying "paternal" because it was always understood as terra. In Jewish Wars $\pi\alpha\tau\rho\iota\varsigma$ means terra paterna, patria. $\pi\alpha\tau\rho\iota\varsigma$ means land and terra can never refer to $\pi\omicron\lambda\iota\varsigma$ (city). A "native land" could be a city surrounded by walls or only a little group of houses. Flavius Josephus in the two cited passages speaks of Jerusalem's walls as the "wall of the fatherland" knowing full well that all Jews weren't in Jerusalem. For the ancient the capital meant the country and the rest was an appendix to the country. For Ricciotti Flavius Josephus's usage confirms that $\gamma\tau\lambda$ in Ezra 9:9 has both a material and a moral sense, Judah being mentioned before Jerusalem for the same reason as here in Josephus.

That concludes the discussion in that volume but Fernandez gets the last word two years later.¹⁰⁸ He grants that Ricciotti is correct in his exegesis referring $\gamma\tau\lambda$ "to the country in a moral sense, to the city in a material sense," but that it is his conclusion which is wrong. Fernandez concludes that (a) $\tau\epsilon\iota\chi\omicron\varsigma$ in Flavius Josephus equals $\eta\pi\iota\nu$ (claims that Hatch & Redpath support him here); (b) in the Old Testament $\gamma\tau\lambda$ does not mean city walls anywhere and is

¹⁰⁷"La voce $\gamma\tau\lambda$ e un passo di Flavio Guiseppe," Biblica 16 (1935), pp. 443-445.

¹⁰⁸"Esdr. 9, 9 y un Texto de Josefo," Biblica 18 (1937), pp. 207-208.

generally figurative; (c) in the Josephus passage the context is doubtful if he is treating the actual restoration of the city walls while in Ezra the actual walls are certainly not being treated; and (d) the Josephus passages are not at all parallel with Ezra 9:9. Thus, Fernandez rejects any basis for חָלָה being taken as referring to the literal walls in Ezra 9:9. The Greek translations of this word seem to confirm its figurative significance and the use of חָלָה in other passages also points to a figurative interpretation.¹⁰⁹

Another part of this verse makes 458 the best possible date for Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem. The word קָדַשׁ in Ezra 7:27 designates an important aspect of Ezra's mission --- to beautify, glorify, renovate, rebuild or restore the Jerusalem Temple. Julian Morgenstern has postulated a catastrophe which struck the Jerusalem community about 485 B.C. which caused far-reaching calamities,¹¹⁰ one which was the destruction of the Second Temple. Though his reconstruction from various texts is almost beyond reproach, it is not necessary to say that the Temple was destroyed and had to be rebuilt, thus making Ezra and his group the builders of the Third Temple. However, the word קָדַשׁ is significant for in Ezra 9:9 we find that Ezra has been commissioned to set up (וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ) the Temple and repair (וַיְבָרֵךְ) its ruins. This would call

¹⁰⁹cf. Commentario, p. 207.

¹¹⁰"Jerusalem - 485 B.C.," Hebrew Union College Annual, XXVII (1956), pp. 101-179; XXVIII (1957), pp. 15-47; XXXI (1960), pp. 1-29.

for a milder reading of Ezra 7:27, but it nevertheless does attest that Ezra and his group had some special mission concerning the Temple. With the Greek threat so close at hand to the Jerusalem repatriados Artaxerxes I probably granted Ezra's request out of political expediency more than humanitarian interests. This we have already seen; but, more important for the dating of Ezra, in Ezra 6:14 we find mention of Artaxerxes, Cyrus and Darius as kings who authorized the Temple to be rebuilt. In this setting of the rebuilding of the Temple (521-516 B.C.) the name Artaxerxes can only be a gloss in its present location, but the reference to it may contain some historical seed. Since Nehemiah found the Temple in good repair and its cult in operation in 445 B.C., Ezra's commission in 7:27 requires a date early in the reign of Artaxerxes I. This too marks the beginning of Persian overlordship in Jewish religious affairs, a factor which grows stronger as the years proceed as is seen in the Elephantine Papyri. After the cult is fully established and supported by tithes from the people due to Nehemiah's work, caring for the Temple will be part of the normal course of events. But between 516 and 458 when the community is struggling for physical survival naturally the care of the Temple would be allowed to lag. Since we know that the Second Temple was no mirror of the first, the possibility looms large that certain hastily or poorly constructed aspects of the Temple would be in need of major repair. But even if it were well built, 58 years without adequate care would be more than enough time for it to be in

an advanced state of deterioration. Ezra came in 458 with specific orders from Artaxerxes I to alleviate this condition and renew the cult in general, for which there is more than adequate attestation.

Therefore, all factors considered and weighed, a proper understanding of Ezra 9:9 calls for Ezra's presence in Jerusalem prior to Nehemiah.

4. One factor which has influenced many in favor of the late view is that Nehemiah found Eliashib as high priest on both missions, while Ezra found his grandson Johanan occupying this post. There is nothing involved here that cannot be answered a priori but another and better answer is desirable. If the three previously adduced reasons for holding to 458 as Ezra's coming to Jerusalem are adequate (as I believe they are), but especially the archaeological-historical support and a proper interpretation of Ezra 9:9, these facts must be dealt with, not passed over, in interpreting Ezra 10:6. Here W.O.E. Oesterley may be cited as an example of the usual way it is interpreted by a holder of the late view in which the Elephantine Papyri are used to show that Jehohanan was high priest in 408 B.C.:

As Ezra lived under his highpriesthood, it is clear that when ... it is said in Ezra 7:1 and Nehemiah 2:1 that Ezra and Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the seventh and the twentieth years of Artaxerxes respectively, without specifying which Artaxerxes is meant, we must understand that in the case of Nehemiah it was Artaxerxes I 464-424 and therefore the year 444 B.C. while in the

case of Ezra it was Artaxerxes II 404-359, and therefore the year 397 B.C.¹¹¹

That Jehohanan or Johanan was high priest in 411 B.C. is incontestible, but since this office was hereditary the line of succession must have been Eliashib, Joiada, Jehohanan. Eliashib we know to have been the "anointed priest" in both of Nehemiah's missions (which would make Joiada come somewhere between 428 and 411 B.C.). On the basis of the previous strong reasons it could be assumed that Eliashib also held this same position in Ezra's time, Johanan being a young priest at the time of Ezra's association with him in his Temple quarters. Regressing back from 411 B.C. to allow for the high-priesthood of his father and grandfather, the latter who was most probably also high priest in 458 when Ezra arrived and whom we know definitely to have been high priest in 445, we have Ezra arriving in 458 and Nehemiah in 445.¹¹² Joiada's

¹¹¹W.O.E. Oesterley, History of Israel, vol. II (London: Oxford, 1932), p. 115. For the usual a priori answers to such an assertion cf. Scott, art. cit., pp. 264-265. Scott replies that the Chronicler's usage suggests that Jehohanan wasn't high priest because he is not so designated, that there is no need to identify the two Jehohanan's involved because this is a most common name like our "John," and that Jehohanan had a Temple chamber in no way implies that he was high priest for many people had quarters in the Temple. The reason here adduced as my fourth reason for dating Ezra in 458 may not be identified with Scott's third reason in any way because his reasoning is strictly surface, unrelated and a priori, while in my case I believe it is justified as being dependent on the previous reasons.

¹¹²cf. Julian Morgenstern, "A Chapter in the History of the High-priesthood," AJSL, LV (1938), pp. 1-24, 183-197, 360-377, for a very full, useful and illuminating portrayal of this point.

reign must then take place between 428 and 411, and its relative shortness when compared with that of his father is not a factor to be dealt with as an untimely death or physical illness could have been responsible for this.

5. One further reason may be brought forth, which confirms 458 as the only likely date for Ezra's coming to Jerusalem.¹¹³ This is concerned with two alternative dating systems for the Festival of Sukkot or Booths. 458 has always been criticized as a possibility because it was said that Ezra and his party would not begin such a journey from Babylon on the twelveth of the first month when the Pesah-Massot began on the night of the fourteenth and continued for seven days. This charge dissolves, however, when it is seen that two different calenders were in use in Ezra-Nehemiah and at least for the first part of Ezra's mission the older calendar was used.

In Nehemiah 8, a displaced section of the Ezra Memoirs, Ezra is reading the Torah to the assembled community in the Temple courtyard on the first day of the seventh month. On the second day he reads concerning the celebration of the Feast of Booths, here termed according to earlier usage as

¹¹³This has recently been synthesized out of earlier articles by J. Morgenstern in "The Dates of Ezra and Nehemiah," Journal of Semitic Studies, VII (1962), pp. 9-11. The earlier articles are "The Three Calendars of Ancient Israel," HUCA, I (1924), pp. 22-35; "Supplementary Studies in the Calendars of Ancient Israel," ibid., X (1935), pp. 52-72, 108-149; and "The Chanukkah Festival and the Calendar of Ancient Israel," ibid., XXI (1948), pp. 457-470.

$\lambda\eta$ or $\lambda\eta\eta$, "The Festival," with the implication that it is the most important of all the festivals. The people immediately begin to gather foliage and branches for the construction of the booths in which they would live during the duration of the festival. Leviticus 23:34-36 from the P legislation terms this feast as $\eta\iota\eta\eta$, its name in later usage, and its celebration was set from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of the seventh month, with the twenty-second day being a "concluding festival" ($\eta\eta\eta\eta$) with its own especial sanctity. If the community gathered material for the construction of booths on the second day, it goes without saying that by the fifteenth of the month they would be unfit for the purpose they were intended to serve. Obviously they were readying for the celebration of this festival on the following day (the third) which continued for seven days through the ninth, the tenth day being the consummation with a special significance of its own. That this is not a conjecture but the earlier tradition itself is confirmed by the K, C, D and H Codes,¹¹⁴ all of which are earlier than both P and Ezra. This testifies that P or Pg (the nucleus of P) was not yet incorporated into the Torah and that the solar calendar initiated by Solomon in which $\lambda\eta$ came at the end of the year from the third to the ninth of the seventh month with the tenth day being celebrated as New

¹¹⁴ Exodus 34:22, 23:16; Deut. 31:10f. and Morgenstern HUCA, I, loc. cit.

Year's Day was still the official calendar when Ezra got to Jerusalem and some time after as well. From the Elephantine Papyri¹¹⁵ we know that the Pesah-Massôṭ Festival was introduced in Egypt under Darius II in 419 B.C. and that it was fixed for Nisan 15-21. It is reasonable to assume that this celebratory date based on the new lunar calendar of Pg was also made normative in Palestine at this time. This would make the late date for Ezra an impossibility and establish high probability for 458 when it is definitely known that the older solar calendar was in use. Since it cannot be proved that the lunar calendar became normative before 419, 430-428 is still a possibility but this is not likely, as the new lunar calendar was probably coming into existence or had already done so.

One may now see clearly why Ezra and his party began their journey on the twelfth of the first month (Ezra 8:31). They were not leaving on the lip of an important festival; they had in fact just completed the celebration of it two days before! Even though there was only synagogue type worship services in Babylon, the Jewish community had observed the festival in some fashion using the older and probably the only known religious calendar at that time. This unequivocally calls for an early date for Ezra's mission.

Another writer some years ago brought forth other evidence in favor of Ezra preceding Nehemiah by suggesting that

¹¹⁵Cowley, op. cit., No. 21, pp. 60-65.

there were two chronologies used to designate the reigns of Persian Kings. This appeared in chapters five and six of an off-beat article¹¹⁶ in which the writer (who is only known to me as P.C. of Quito, Ecuador) was trying to make the Seventy Weeks of the apocalyptic Daniel fit literal historical situations, a most precarious task if not an impossible one. He contended that the mission of Nehemiah was the initial point of the Seventy Weeks and that this began in Nisan 453 B.C. Disregarding the setting in which it is found one may gain some important insights from this article.

P.C. takes his cue for this dating from L. Bigot's article on Esther in column 863 ~~of~~ the Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique. Bigot contends that 479, the seventh year of Xerxes, is our last true date for this reign and that the historians of the times were acquainted only with the western part of the Persian Empire, not Persia itself. Herodotus does not even trace the events in the last years of Xerxes and De Ctesias possessed only skeletonary fragments.

¹¹⁶P.C., "La Profecia de las Setentas Semanas de Daniel," Estudios Biblicos, Series I, vol. IV (1932), capitulos 5 y 6, pp. 272-280. cf. pp. 277-280 for that which follows. Cf. also A.T. Olmstead, A History of the Persian Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 328-342 for discussion of Babylonian or Persian calendar reform in this period. Apparently, according to Luis Arnaldich, Los Estudios Biblicos En Espana Desde el año 1900 al año 1955 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1957) pp. 120, P.C. is P. Sanchez Caballero and the several articles appearing in vol. IV and later volumes were collected and reprinted separately as La Profecia de los 70 semanas de Daniel y los destinos del pueblo judio (Madrid, 1946). I, however, had access to the original article itself on loan from the University of Ottawa.

P.C. believes (a) that the Alexandrian computations, known through the name of Canon de Tolomeo, are not irreproachable with respect to dates for Artaxerxes I if compared with dates from other ancient historians and (b) that another computation existed for the years of Artaxerxes, older and more realistic, and it is this computation which Ezra-Nehemiah used. He sees it a mistake to count Artaxerxes reign from the death of his father Xerxes in 465, as Xerxes was in his decrepitude during the last half of his reign. Moreover, the unsettled state of affairs due to campaigns against Greece may have made it necessary to have father and son consolidated in the throne. He sees Artaxerxes as having taken over the various government functions, including the harem and the title "King." Support may be found in Thucydides, the oldest and best informed of the Greek historians, who affirms that Themistocles, to give knowledge that he came from the Persian court "wrote letters to the King Artaxerxes, son of Xerxes, recently reigning":

ἐκπέμπετε γράμματα εἰς βασιλέα
Ἄρταξέρξην, τὸν Ξέρξου, νεώστ'
βασίλευοντα (I, 137).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷D.H. Haigh in an article "Coincidence of the History of Ezra with the First Part of the History of Nehemiah" appearing in Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, II (1873), pp. 110-113, has also seen in this evidence for Artaxerxes reigning in 474-473 B.C. He, too, thought there were two regnal computations, Nehemiah coming from Susa and using the Persian one while Ezra used the Babylonian computation. The twentieth year in Persia was the seventh year in Babylonia. He sees Ezra as beginning the journey first but Nehemiah joined him at Ahava and they proceeded together to Jerusalem. However, no one has followed him in this interpretation.

Eusebius indicates the date of Temistocles-al-Asia on the basis of letters from the exiled ones of the recently enthroned Artaxerxes to their King in the fourth year of the seventy-sixth olimpiada or 473/2 B.C. This makes Ezra's mission come in 467/6, the year of Artabano's revolt, Artaxerxes escape and Xerxes death, Ezra and his group being granted permission to leave for they were only interested in religion. The twentieth year in this calculation would be from Tischri 454 to Tischri 453. This article does not give information on how this chronology ties in with the reigns after Artaxerxes or whether the years of co-reign are added to the already quite long rule. Without such information it would be impossible to assess this chronology. At best one can say that the Greek historians give some additional secondary support to the Ezra-Nehemiah sequence, but this point is in no way parallel to the evidence for the use of the old solar calendar.

From the preceding points it can be seen not only that it is not necessary to entertain the late and intermediate views because of the additional problems they create but also that it is quite unwise to do so in the face of the very strong evidence for the Ezra-Nehemiah sequence. However, it is equally clear that any attempt to maintain the traditional view as represented by the MT in this sequence is quite impossible and that a critical reconstruction of the events narrated in the text is mandatory. Therefore, the modified traditional view is seen to be the best possible one in the Ezra-Nehemiah

sequence and also to be greatly preferred to the intermediate view.

CHRONOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

It is wise before proceeding further to sketch at least in brief fashion the chronology with respect to Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra was the first to come to Jerusalem with a royal commission from Artaxerxes I and arrived in 458 with the hope of cementing Jewish loyalty to the Persian throne. He had come unescorted not for the pious reasons given in the text but because Artaxerxes I was involved in military conflict with the Attic Empire, and he dared not ask any further favor of the King at that time. After having celebrated the Feast of Booths according to the old solar calendar, probably the only religious calendar he knew, from the third through the ninth of the seventh month, Ezra and his group, after stopping at the Ahava to recruit some Levites, began their journey toward Jerusalem. After almost four months of hard, tiresome travel the group arrived and deposited their treasures. Within two months after his arrival, Ezra was involved in the presentation of the Torah to the congregation,¹¹⁸ though not completed by the P editors as we now know it. This presentation was his prime purpose in coming, and he proceeded almost straightforward to it. The task was a difficult one as of course the Law was in Hebrew while the people spoke only Aramaic, necessitating a

¹¹⁸ A.T. Olmstead, op. cit., p. 306.

spoken translation and probably a written one (origin of the Targum?) as well. This event took at least two months and perhaps more but once completed Ezra's major role was finished. By his role here he has perhaps rightly been termed the "Second Moses" and "Founder of Judaism." Now the Law only needed to be enforced, and it was here that Ezra acted in a most forceful way, initiating the נִסְתָּר policy which removed many foreign wives and their children from the community. This completed his work which lasted no more than eighteen months. Probably he returned to Babylon and completed his life there rather than, according to the tradition of the MT, in Jerusalem.

No doubt Ezra was successful in securing Jewish support for Persia. In 449 the Persian-Greek wars ceased with the coming of the "Peace of Callias." This provided each power with the possibility of dealing more effectively with internal problems of which there were many. Somewhere in this period 454-448 we may place the fanatical nationalism by some of the repatriados who openly and publicly disregarded the model given by Ezra and without royal permission started the reconstruction of the walls, no doubt having in mind the independence of Judah and proclaiming the arrival of Yahweh's Anointed as had been Zerubbabel before. If Ezra was in Jerusalem we may be sure that he counseled against such a course because his policy was in favor of the

abandonment of nationalistic hopes, reconciliation to the political rule of foreigners, loyalty to the powers that be, and full acceptance of the unique

position of the Jew as the guardian of God's moral law.¹¹⁹

The result of this nationalistic episode was quite disastrous to the community psychologically as well as religiously, and also led to suspicion on the part of the Persian throne and her governors in Samaria.

Nehemiah was the legatee of all that Ezra and the former returnees had done, both good and bad. The Hierosolymite party was still active and a threat to the security of the city, refusing to accept the norm laid down by Ezra. Nehemiah accepted the norm set down by his predecessor that a true Jew is a **יְהוּדִי**, a **φειδους** --- one that is separate.¹²⁰ But he is able to give the community stability in a way Ezra could not, for he is also governor (**רִבְנָה**) of the province of Judah, whereas Ezra was only endowed with power concerning the cult. Nehemiah's prime aim in coming to Jerusalem ---the rebuilding of the walls--- was begun almost immediately and completed remarkably only fifty-two days later after much conflict. At the dedication service which followed shortly thereafter the people were given the security they needed and Judaism originated at this commemoration. The other events of his first administration which was probably a short one (cf. Neh. 2:6) were mostly in the social sphere --- repopulation of Jerusalem, remission of debts, removal of over-

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 307.

¹²⁰E. Renan, History of the People of Israel (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1895), Vol. IV, Book 7, p. 113.

taxation and the securing of Jerusalem against its hostile neighbors --- although in the religious sphere Nehemiah inaugurated the clerical reform which gave support to the Levites. On a second visit about 428 Nehemiah found it necessary to correct abuses that had arisen in his absence, notably reform in the Temple, Sabbath observance and the mixed marriage problem. In the whole of Nehemiah's administrations he took no support from the people and in no way caused himself to be a burden, hoping to set an example for those who followed him in this post. Nehemiah's governorship was a fruitful one although by later standards he would be considered to be harsh. He provided the basis needed for the community, both religious and physical. On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this chapter it will be possible to evaluate in more specific terms that contribution in the social and religious spheres which is to be attributed to Nehemiah.

The findings represented above are I believe founded on the best possible interpretation of the facts, but do not wish to be dogmatic on this point as certainty is impossible with regard to this welter of jumbled information contained in Ezra-Nehemiah. It is not put forth as solving all of the problems but as an objective interpretation the findings of which must be reckoned with in studying not only the chronological relationships of Ezra and Nehemiah but the assessment of the roles they played.

R.H. Kennett many years ago made a most important statement quite appropriate to the task undertaken in this chapter, although the subject of his consideration was altogether different. This

statement is worth our noting and is now presented:

In any attempt to reconstruct history from the fragmentary materials of the Old Testament, there is of necessity great room for subjectivity; and from the very nature of the case proof, such as the mathematician demands, is impossible. But as the anatomist, who from a few scattered bones reconstructs a whole skeleton ---always provided that such a skeleton is in accordance with the ascertained facts of comparative anatomy--- may be considered to have given a correct restoration of the original skeleton, until some other bone be found which will not fit into it; so a theory, which gathers into a whole the ascertained facts of criticism, may, in the absence of any proof to the contrary, be considered as giving in the main a correct view of history.¹²¹

Professor Kennett drew fire in a later issue of the same journal for not substantiating the pre-exilic date for Deuteronomy of which the article merely presumed. The following year the Professor not only defended the date of Deuteronomy¹²² but replied to his critic as well in the same issue of the Journal:

Certainly if any 'bones' could be found 'which will not fit into the conjectural skeleton', it must be frankly admitted that a new skeleton must be reconstructed, but before attempting to do this it will be well to subject the alleged bones to a careful scrutiny.¹²³

I hope and believe that objectivity rather than subjectivity has been the norm here in this presentation, and believe that the modified traditional scheme as found in pages 113-129 of this chapter should be considered "correct" until some "bone" is

¹²¹ "The Origin of the Aaronite Priesthood," J.T.S., vol. 6 (January 1905), p. 181.

¹²² "The Date of Deuteronomy," ibid., vol. VII (July 1906), pp. 481-500.

¹²³ "The Origin of the Aaronite Priesthood: A Reply," ibid., p. 620.

found that would show it necessary to reconstruct a new skeleton. But until such time the view presented should be maintained. In the event that new information should show this position untenable I should be most happy to align myself with the new facts quite quickly, saying with Fernandez: "En tal caso nosotros seriamos les primeros en admitir la nueva sucesion Nehemias-Esdras."¹²⁴

¹²⁴Biblica 2 (1921), p. 447.

CHAPTER III

NEHEMIAH'S SOCIAL REFORMS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR EARLY JEWRY

For many years Nehemiah has suffered at the hands of writers and interpreters who have not intentionally played the role of "debunker" but have actually done so as a result of their limitation of Nehemiah's role in the restoration of the Judahite-Benjaminite state and in the beginning of the phenomenon now known as Judaism. This limitation is an inevitable consequence of the late chronological view and its placing of Ezra, a view which we have already seen to be the preponderant one currently, which makes Nehemiah come half a century before Ezra and do things which have no real or lasting effect but which have to be reinitiated and finalized by Ezra. But this is only the apex of a long process. The impetus for the limiting of Nehemiah's role is to be found early in Jewish tradition where Nehemiah the layman has been played down in favor of the priest-scribe (נָחֵמְיָאֵם - נָחֵמְיָאֵם) Ezra. Ezra is credited with everything religious and social except the building of the walls very early in the tradition, and as this tradition develops and evolves the role of Ezra becomes greater and greater, making of him a "Second

Moses," crediting him with many things he never did and inflating his character even more than is David in the Book of Chronicles. To be sure Nehemiah was exalted in certain isolated instances. In Ecclus. 49:13 Nehemiah is listed in Sirach's recitation of Israel's heroes at the expense of Ezra who here goes unmentioned, but this is to be expected from a person such as Ben Sirach with Sadducean tendencies. However, such is the exception and not the rule.

Nehemiah's role has generally been limited to the rebuilding of the walls, and his influence upon the community, even though he exercised the position of governor, has been construed as being insignificant. Here Adam C. Welch may be noted as typical of this viewpoint. In the Preface to his Baird Lecture for 1934 he notes the following:

THE title of this volume has been chosen in order at once to define its aim and to mark its limitation. Its leading purpose is to trace the character of the new polity which was constituted by the men who rebuilt the temple and restored the cult at Jerusalem. In order to discover this, it has been necessary to submit the documents which bear on the period to a fresh examination, to seek to determine their relative dates, and thus to explore the factors which contributed to the development of the new community. But the ultimate end of this inquiry has been to bring to light, so far as possible, the ideals and the convictions of the men who guided the movement. For it was these, as embodied in the restored institutions, which strongly influenced, though they did not wholly control, the life of Jewry, both in Palestine and in the diaspora.

The title, however, also serves to mark the limitation of the volume. It has not been found necessary to include any discussion of the work of Nehemiah. That leader's chief contribution was the rebuilding of the city-wall, but he does not seem to have intervened

in the work of reconstruction which was going on inside that wall. At the utmost he may have lent the weight of his authority as Persian official to the measures by which other leaders were restoring a Jewish polity. His Memoirs reveal a picturesque and vigorous personality, and serve to show the characteristic qualities of a devout Jew in that period. They are also suggestive to the historian in the glimpse they give of the Persian court and its relation to its provinces. But they contribute little to the understanding of post-exilic Judaism. That was well under weigh before Nehemiah arrived, and would have continued, although Jerusalem had remained an open town.¹

Welch is extreme in his assertion of Nehemiah's unimportance. Things would hardly have been the same if Nehemiah had not contributed to the new state both socially and religiously. In this chapter and the next Nehemiah's contribution in both of these areas will be exposed. Immediately below Nehemiah's social role will be examined.

THE REBUILDING OF THE WALLS AND THE SITUATION NEHEMIAH FACED

Our first acquaintance with Nehemiah finds him in the palace at Shushan questioning his brother Hanani who has recently returned from Judea (Neh. 1:2) concerning the state of affairs in Jerusalem and among the returnees of a comparatively recent date. Nehemiah is touched deeply by the reply he receives -- the returnees are in dire straits (1:3 - in great affliction and reproach - *וְהָיָה יְרוּשָׁלַם עִיר מְצוּרָה*), and Jerusalem is defenceless, its walls being broken and its gates burned.

What should one make of this news and Nehemiah's reaction

¹Adam C. Welch, Post-Exilic Judaism (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, Ltd., 1935), pp. vii-viii.

to it? There are several things that must be said here. It is hardly credible that Nehemiah could have become as disturbed as he apparently did about the destruction of Jerusalem in 597 and 586 B.C. at this time. Whatever the state of communication in the ancient world, it is entirely fictional to suggest that Nehemiah was only then in 446/5 hearing of an event with such far-reaching consequences for Jews everywhere which had happened a century and a half before. It is true that even today certain sectarian groups of Orthodox Judaism fast and lament on the traditional date of the destruction of Jerusalem. While Nehemiah is certainly of this *ת'דן* conviction, no indication is given that his mourning has any connection with an established period of lament for the destruction of the Holy City. In spite of the unexplicit nature of the MT, some recent catastrophe, attack or setback must be considered, for "we cannot suppose that the conditions in Jerusalem on Nehemiah's first visit date from the fall of Jerusalem in 597 and 586."²

What was, then, this distressing event? Julian Morgenstern has postulated a catastrophe which befell Jerusalem in 485 B.C. similar to that of 586 B.C. and the later catastrophes of 70 and 135 A.D.³ He bases his interpretation on implications of Lamentations, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Malachi, certain Psalms (2 and

²S.A. Cook, "The Age of Zerubbabel" in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, p. 34.

³cf. above, p. 122, note 110 for references, and J.S.S., vol. VII, pp. 1-2 for a short synopsis of this postulation; cf. also H.U.C.A., XXVII, pp. 170ff.

48 in particular), Isaiah 63:15-64:11, Joel 4:2b β -8, 19-20; Nehemiah 5:8 and Isaiah 60:4, 8-22. All of these passages undoubtedly reflect on a single, specific, historical happening, and several of them speak of judgment on the instruments of the tragedy.

Though the attempt to make Zerubbabel "Yahweh's Anointed" ended in utter failure and the Hierosolymte party remained active in an underground way, the Second Temple was completed and dedicated in 516, and it is only reasonable to assume that the Temple if nothing else caused Jerusalem to be a thriving city for a considerable period thereafter. Something closer than the original destruction must be the cause of concern. On the basis of Ezra 4:6ff. Morgenstern sees the catastrophe as coming before Artaxerxes and in the reign of Xerxes. The Zionist Nationalists who had been thwarted in the Zerubbabel episode were looking for an opportunity to repeat the incident, but this time they hoped to complete it. In 486 with Darius I on his death bed the Nationalist Party felt secure enough to anoint their king on the Jewish New Year's Day (VII/10 according to the calendar then in use) and proclaim the independence of Judah as Psalm 2 informs us. In November shortly thereafter Darius died and this was all that was needed for the rebellion to be openly under way. The new King Xerxes had more than enough problems with rival claimants to the throne and rebellion in Egypt. Since Egypt was far more important than the Jews, Xerxes dealt directly with Egypt and indirectly with Judah by granting the surrounding nations of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, Tyre and Sidon power to organize and suppress the

rebellion. This group had for some while expressed growing animosities toward the growing Jewish nationalism as it expressed itself toward them, and thus needed no added incentive for revenge. Psalm 83:7-9 asserts that Ashur (= Persia) has alligned itself with Judah's enemies by giving support to Lot (= Ammon and Moab). Caught temporarily but completely off guard, the Hierosolymites could offer no resistance but could only seek refuge in Jerusalem. The city was sieged and systematically destroyed, and if Obadiah 11-14b and Psalm 137:7-9 are indicative of anything, Edom seems to have figured more prominently in the razing than did the other nations. The walls were broken down, many people killed and others sold into slavery to the Greeks who resold them in turn to the Western World. Only "the remnant left from the captivity" survived. I Enoch 89:66, 74 seems to have knowledge of a destruction of Jerusalem by Edom later than 586 B.C. So also does Justin who relates a conquest of Judah by Xerxes, and the Dead Sea Scroll, The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness, gives the members of the coalition as part of the army of the sons of Darkness.

While the postulation of Morgenstern is based on sound exegesis, it, nevertheless, cannot be proven. It should be given due consideration, however, as there is much in its favor. W.C. Graham has quite rightly pointed out that there are "three distinct stages of Jewish consciousness concerning Edom during

these years."⁴ These three stages are represented in Isaiah 63:1-6, Obadiah 1-7e, 10-14 and Malachi 1:2-5. These passages have in common "that quintessence of hatred for that southern land which marks Jewish world outlook, especially after the Exile."⁵ Yet, they differ greatly. While Isaiah knows of no impending disaster of Edom, Obadiah speaks with foreknowledge of Edom's doom. Verse 7 speaks of the Arabs as ready to betray the Edomites. In Malachi Edom has been destroyed though no clue as to this destruction is given. The fact that it has happened is in itself taken to be proof of Yahweh's love for his people. If Edom can in any way be related to the destruction of Jerusalem for which we have no direct documentary evidence, this late hatred for Edom certainly takes on a new light. But it is not Edom alone who is the enemy. When Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem, we find a threefold opposition to his presence and the work he intends to do.

The first center of opposition is centered in one called Sanballat the Horonite. As is often the case with biblical history, the facts are not explicit enough for us to give a static answer free from all objections. Therefore, several possibilities exist. Sanballat has by Josephus (Ant. XI. 7,2) and Jewish tradition been connected with the Samaritans. In

⁴W.C. Graham, "Gashmu the Arabian," A.J.S.L., vol. 42, p. 276.

⁵Ibid.

Rabbinic literature Samaritans are called סְמָרִיטָיִם .⁶ This term refers to the colonists from Cuthah and is intended to be contemptuous. This is at least in part responsible for the negative attitude toward Sanballat. Schlatter and Winckler have maintained that Sanballat was from Horonaim in Southern Moab.⁷ This identification would take on added significance in light of Isaiah 15:5 and Jeremiah 48:3, but also because Nehemiah 13:1 excludes both Ammonites and Moabites from the congregation of Yahweh. However, such an identification is out of the question if Guthe's emendation of Nehemiah 4:2 (Hebrew 3:34) is acceptable: "and he said in the presence of his brethren (- the Samaritans), "Is this ($\text{הִנֵּה הַמִּצְדָּה}$) the might of Samaria that these Jews are building their city?"⁸ The term Horoni may refer to a citizen of Beth-Horon. There were two Beth-Horons in post-exilic times, a lower ($\text{בֵּית הָהָרִים הַתַּיִתִּים}$) one and a higher ($\text{בֵּית הָהָרִים הַלְיוֹנִי}$) one, and both were populated by Samaritans. The LXX's form of Beth-Horon in Joshua 10:10 (B) and II Samuel 13:34, that is, ἐκ τῆς βηθ ὁρων ,⁹ seems to confirm the meaning of "from Beth-Horon" for San-

⁶A.E. Cowley, "Samaritans," Encyclopaedia Biblica, vol. 4, column 4256.

⁷Zur Topographie u. Gesh. Pal. 4, pp. 52ff.; Altorientalische Forschungen, 11, pp. 228ff.

⁸T.K. Cheyne, "Sanballat," Encyclopaedia Biblica, vol. 4, column 4281. Sources in note 7 are quoted from this article.

⁹cf. George A. Smith, "Beth-Horon," ibid., vol. 1, col. 559.

ballat. Fernandez has not committed himself on the question except to favor a Samaritan association for Sanballat.¹⁰

Cheyne believes it possible that Sanballat was the "coinage of a redactor" and that the original name here was Nebai-oth (= man of Nebaioth). Sanballat's ethnic connection and his name pass "into a new phase" if Nehemiah's opponents can be determined to have come from the North Arabian territory. Guthe's emendation of Nehemiah 4:2 then can be read better thus: "and he said before the Jerahmeelites in Shimron, What do the Jews?"¹¹ The consonants ']]] will then be read as Haranite, there being a southern as well as a northern Haran.

C.C. Torrey postulated the entire episode to have happened in the fourth century B.C.¹² Since we know from the Elephantine Papyri that there was a Sanballat who was governor of Samaria, this must be a second one, and this one is Nehemiah's adversary. Placing the events of Ezra-Nehemiah in the

¹⁰Comentario, p. 250.

¹¹art. cit. Cheyney here sees ש'נל ו'נל and ד'שנל as coming from ש'נל ו'נל, i.e., Jerahmeelites. ש'נל is also seen to be the Shimron mentioned in Amos. If the name of Sanballat is here emended, and we would also emend the names of his cohorts on the basis given, we would have the following: "The Nebaiothite, the Haranite, the Tubalite, the Jerahmeelite, the Cushamite, the Arabian." In this contention Cheyney has had no following and for our purposes may be dismissed.

¹²"Sanballat the Horonite," J.B.L., vol. 47, pp. 380-389. Much earlier John Kitto had also postulated two Sanballats in "Sanballat," Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature, third edition (Edinburg: Adam and Charles Black, 1870), vol. 3, pp. 763-764.

fourth century was quite common in the early part of this century, but now the fifth century is set. To this contention of Torrey we need pay no heed. H.H. Rowley has refuted this thesis quite satisfactorily in his monograph "Sanballat and the Samaritan Temple."¹³

I believe that it may be satisfactorily concluded that Sanballat was a resident of one of the two Beth-Horons, as he was most certainly close enough to deal mischief to Nehemiah's cause. While the MT does not speak of him as גביר (i.e., governor) of the province of Samaria, we may at least conclude, on the basis of the Elephantine Papyri, that he was closely connected or associated with the best interests of Samaria, and that this probably included a concern for the political as well as religious aspects of that realm.

A second center of opposition seems to have been found in Tobiah the Ammonite. The term "Ammonite" is quite ambivalent, and it is not certain whether it refers to the race or whether it means here a "native of Cephars-Ammoni." Cheyne has taken the position of the latter,¹⁴ as the Benjamite town has connections with leading Judeans (cf. Neh. 6:17-19), and also because of Eliashib who granted Tobiah temple quarters. Because later post-exilic history relates that the notable

¹³B.J.R.L., vol. 38, no. 1 (September, 1955), pp. 166-198; recently reprinted in Men of God: Studies in Old Testament Prophecy (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963), chap. 8.

¹⁴T.K. Cheyne, "Tobiah," Encyclopaedia Biblica, vol. 4, column 5109.

Tobiad family could not prove its pedigree, it has been suggested that Tobiah was either half-Ammonite and half-Jew, or else pure Ammonite.¹⁵ Another possible explanation concerns Ammonites who had married into Jewish families, a practice not uncommon in post-exilic times (cf. Ezra 9:2 and Joshua 18:24(P)). Deuteronomy 23:1-8 may also refer to the same problem, and Ryle has so taken it, thinking that "the mention of the Ammonite, Moabite and Egyptian together, suggests the influence of Deut. 23:3-7."¹⁶ H.L. Ginsberg sees here a social explanation. Since it was commonplace for Ammonite nobility to take wives from among their slaves, a similar fact occurred here in the family of Tobiah.¹⁷ This would seem to have been possible at least as "the servant" (״7197) appears as a part of Tobiah's name in Nehemiah 2:10 and 19. However, B.T. Dahlberg presents a much more realistic viewpoint in saying that "the reference to him (that is, Tobiah) as 'the servant' probably signifies his official title in the provincial government under Persian rule; perhaps he was 'governor' of Ammon, as Sanballat was of Samaria and Nehemiah of

¹⁵cf. R. Kittel, Geschichte, III; E. Bickerman, Der Gott der Makkabäer (Berlin, 1937), p. 68; Y. Kaufmann, History of the Faith of Israel (Tel Aviv, 1956, in Hebrew), vol. viii, pp. 310-311.

¹⁶Ryle, Ezra and Nehemiah (Cambridge Bible), p. 115.

¹⁷H.L. Ginsberg, "Judah and the Transjordan States from 734-582 B.C.," Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume (New York, 1950), p. 356, note 33.

Judah."¹⁸ Likewise, B. Mazar indicates that "the Ammonite servant" refers to an official of high standing,¹⁹ in spite of the fact that it is used as a term of scorn in Nehemiah 13:1-3. Nor may it be assumed that Tobiards of Nehemiah's time were supposed to be servants because their genealogical register could not be found.²⁰ Albright believes him to have been actual governor of Ammon and that he controlled central Transjordan.²¹

Mazar argues that the Tobiards' land was in Gilead, not Ammon, and that there was no administrative link between the Tobiards in general or Rabbath-Ammon (Ammonite capital) in particular.²² Tobiad connection with Ammon was as landowners and local rulers, and ruling officers of this family did not change substantially from the time of Nehemiah to Ptolemy II in the first half of the third century. Tobiah himself lived at Sor beyond the Jordan and had come to power prior to Nehemiah's time. Perhaps he was an ancestor of the Jews who fled to Gilead at the destruction of the First Temple, settling

¹⁸B.T. Dahlberg, "Tobiah," IDB, vol. IV, p. 657.

¹⁹B. Mazar, "The Tobiards," Israel Exploration Journal, vol. 7, No. 3, p. 144 (references in notes 15 and 17 are from this source).

²⁰Ibid., p. 231; Mazar, using frequently occurring verses, traces their genealogy back through the Babylonian Exile and well into the period of the First Temple.

²¹W.F. Albright, The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 92.

²²Mazar, art. cit., pp. 143-144.

there with a Judean-Israelite section of the local population who had long been under Ammonite rule. At any rate his ethnic status was definitely Jewish²³ and his stature in Jerusalem was derived from the fact that he was chief of the party supporting the Zadokite highpriesthood. As a Jewish leader, others in Judah were sworn to him (Nehemiah 6:18). Nobles so sworn (cf. Nehemiah 5:17) were Shecaniah his father-in-law, the son of Arah (cf. Ezra 2:5 = Nehemiah 7:10) and by marriage Meshullam, son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel (Nehemiah 3:4).

George M. Landes also argues that Tobiah was not the governor of Ammon, being instead "de facto head of a Jewish enclave in Ammon."²⁴ According to a recently published Lihyanite inscription, "Abd the governor" is mentioned in connection with Gashmu bin Shahru (Nehemiah 2:19, 6:1-2). Landes notes further the following:

From the context it appears that 'Abd was the contemporary Persian governor of Ammon and Dedan. The twice-mentioned formula for Tobiah (Neh. 2:10, 19) may be in reality a corruption of an original "Tobiah and 'Abd the Ammonite" (such successive haplographies and dittographies in the Hebrew text are not uncommon).

²³Mazar also notes that Joseph Klausner takes this position in 'IWN T'7774W T'70D'77 (History of the Second Temple, 1949, vol. I, p. 275). In a review of this work J. Bonsirven also notes that Klausner has rejected van Hoonacker's hypothesis as to dating Ezra and Nehemiah. Cf. Biblica XXXIII (1952), p. 288. L.E. Brown (Early Judaism (Cambridge: University Press, 1920), p. 149) believes that Tobiah was "the child of a mixed marriage of an Ammonite and a Jewess."

²⁴"Ammon: 7. Postexilic Ammon" in IDB, vol. I, p. 113.

The association between 'Abd the Ammonite and Tobiah the Jew would thus be quite parallel to that between Gashmu the Arab chieftain and 'Abd the Ammonite governor, although the precise nature of this association cannot be defined.²⁵

Whereas most commentators have favored looking upon Tobiah as governor of Ammon, I believe that we may safely adopt a position following Mazar and Landes. This would make him a Jewish chief who resided in South Gilead and had connections with Ammon by virtue of his Transjordan residence. His "evil intentions" which Nehemiah mentions (2:19; 4:3, 7; 6:1, 12, 14; 13:1-9), as we will find out, are the result of political rivalry. The fact that Judas Maccabeus had to rescue the very few Jews present in Gilead in later times from both Greeks and Ammonites (cf. I. Macc. 5:9-54)²⁶ does not affect the presence of Jews in Gilead at an earlier time. Also, the fact that Nelson Glueck²⁷ has proven by archaeological exploration that the area had no sedentary population from circa 550 B.C. until the third century does nothing to Jewish enclaves being sparsely settled there. In fact, it only underscores the fact that Tobiah was not governor of Ammon but landowner and local ruler.

²⁵Ibid. Cheyne noticed textual difficulties in Nehemiah 2:10 and 19 much earlier (cf. note 14 above, p. 147, for source). He claimed that '7297 ("the servant") is almost certainly corrupted from '7797 ("the Arabian"). In 2:19 he claimed that "the servant" was a gloss on '7797 - "the Ammonite."

²⁶S. Cohen, "Gilead," IDB, vol. II, p. 398.

²⁷"Explorations in Eastern Palestine II," AASOR XV (1935), pp. 138ff.; Landes, art. cit., p. 112.

A third major center of opposition to Nehemiah and his reform measures was Geshem or Gashmu the Arabian. This figure has been the subject of many conjectures. Henry Preserved Smith thought that Geshem was an Israelite by blood but that "Arabian" was his nickname.²⁸ Martin Noth thinks that Geshem was perhaps "no more than a tribal chieftain."²⁹ W.C. Graham notes that the usual treatment of Nehemiah's enemies makes them to be

little better than local chieftains of organized free-booters opposing Nehemiah with instinctive hostility. The Jewish leaders who joined cause with them are represented as having done so because of the possibilities of personal gain through intermarriage with the families of these local sheiks.³⁰

R.H. Kennett saw that "the stress of Arab invasion" from the south was the reason for many Edomites in Judah "less than a generation after the destruction of Jerusalem."³¹ According to his view, there was enough in common between the Judeans and the Edomites to make their fusion an easy matter. However, their actual mingling may not have become too widespread, for most of those who were not deported in 586 B.C. fled at the assassination of Gedaliah by Ishmael of Ammon (cf. Jer. 40-41). With southern Judah largely depopulated, the Edomites eased pressures to their south by moving their cap-

²⁸Old Testament History, p. 384.

²⁹HI, p. 324, note 2.

³⁰art. cit., p. 276.

³¹"The Date of Deuteronomy," J.T.S., vol. VII (July 1906), p. 487.

ital up to Hebron.³² This situation remained until the Persian Period when the bene gedhem (בְּנֵי גֶדְחָם - Sons or Children of the East) took over the area.

Graham, whom we have already noted earlier³³ as recognizing three distinct stages in the Old Testament's looking at Edom, sees Obadiah, particularly verse 7, as the key to understanding Gashmu's presence in Jerusalem. He argues that it is quite possible that the Jerusalem community had helped in organizing Arab tribes against Edom, and

in return for the relief which they thus obtained, they had concluded some kind of treaty with the conquerors of Edom which treaty may have included a subsidy after the immemorial system prevailing, even in our own day, in all areas bordering the desert.

This position effectively explains Obadiah's advance knowledge of Edom's fate. Likewise, Geshem must have been present in Jerusalem in the capacity of "watchdog," insuring his people that Jerusalem was living up to its obligations. Because the Arabs were nomads and dependent on trade, they would naturally take a dim view of any recurrence of the practice of levying tariffs on caravan traffic before it reached them, a phenomenon practiced earlier both by Jerusalem and Edom. Also, that a foreign administrative official would have friends in the city of his residence is quite natural. Marriage alliances were probably a result of the conciliation policy, a dictated ne-

³²S. Cohen, "Edom," IDB, vol. II, p. 26.

³³Cf. note 4, p. 144. On the view now being expounded cf. ibid., p. 277.

cessity and realistic accomodation to Jerusalem life in spite of training in Babylonian Jewish exclusiveness. Graham's conclusions must be seriously considered.

However, about ten years ago an archaeological discovery was made which has proved to be most important in solving the dilemma of Geshem. The name Gashmu is quite familiar in north Arab circles, being "found in Lihyante, Thamudic, Safaitic and Nabataean epigraphs." It bears even greater distinction as the only individual north Arab mentioned in the Old Testament.³⁴ Nabataean society was made up of several tribes, including the Dedanites and the Kedarites,³⁵ and this has proved most fruitful concerning our problem. Kedar (or Qedar) is a biblical term occurring with some frequency, as, e.g., Jer. 49: 28-33, and is associated with North-Arabian tribes near the territory of Median.³⁶ Jean Starcky has noted that the Kedarites "roamed the borders of Wadi Sirhan which connects the Hauran with the oasis of el-Jof, Ancient Dumah" and that the southern oasis of Dedan (modern el-'Ula) was the center for a coalition of Arab tribes in the Persian Period who had several kings named Gashmu.³⁷ On a silver vessel found in Egypt

³⁴Isaac Rabinowitz, "Aramaic Inscriptions of the Fifth Century B.C.E. from a North-Arab Shrine in Egypt," J.N.E.S., XV (1956), pp. 1-9.

³⁵A. Jeffrey, "Arabians," IDB, vol. I, p. 183.

³⁶Frank M. Cross Jr., "Geshem the Arabian, Enemy of Nehemiah," B.A., XVIII (1955), pp. 46-47.

³⁷Jean Starcky, "The Nabataeans: A Historical Sketch," B.A., ibid., p. 86.

near the Suez Canal and now in the Brooklyn Museum is found an Aramaic inscription: "Qaynu son of Gashmu, King of Qedar." The fact that Aramaic is the language of the inscription confirms its Nabataean background, as the Nabataeans, in spite of their Arab origins, gave up their own language in favor of the Aramaic of the Persian court because that language was the one spoken by settled peoples with whom they came in contact.³⁸ F.M. Cross tells us that

the vessels were gifts to the Arabian goddess Han-'ilat (Kuranic Allat), originally presented to an Arabic shrine at Tell el-Maskhuta (ancient Succoth) in the Wadi Tumilat (Goshen) of the eastern part of the Egyptian Delta.³⁹

This discovery is most important in that it offers us a second extra-biblical reference to Geshem. The earlier reference was a Lihyanite inscription at al-'Ula (biblical Dedan) associating him with its Persian governor. Rabinowitz⁴⁰ concludes that the Geshem on the vessel is in fact Nehemiah's adversary because coins and other evidence, including palaeographic, date the inscriptions to the end of the fifth century B.C., placing the father's floruit ca. 440 and the son Gainu's ca. 400. Second, only a person of stature enough to make his influence felt at Wadi Tumilat and Tell el-Maskhuta in Egypt could give support to Sanballat's threats (Neh. 6:6-7). Thirdly, just how strong his influence was is indicated in the

³⁸Ibid., p. 87.

³⁹Cross, art. cit.

⁴⁰art. cit.

way he imposed his name on the entire Wadi Tumilat area. Whereas the Hebrew of Genesis 45:10 says "and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen," the LXX translators made it understandable for Egyptian Jewish readers by writing *καὶ κατοικήσεις ἐν γῆν Τεσέω Ἀραβίας* -- "and thou shalt dwell in the land of Geshem of Arabia."

J.A. Thompson notes that Kedar influence extended to the eastern border of Egypt, "perhaps stationed there as guards by the Persians" and that the territory was virtually the same as was controlled by the later Nabataeans.⁴¹ Gashmu and his son Qaynu (Cain) were suzerain over all other North-Arab tribes. They absorbed both Edom and south Judahites into their system, and the name applied to their territory at a later time -- Idumea -- contains remnants of both terms. Archaeological work at Tell el-duwer, Ancient Lachish, has revealed the remains of a Persian palace dating from the end of the fifth or early fourth century,⁴² suggesting that Lachish was at least in some measure a center of the Persian government. G.E. Wright has suggested that Geshem's territory extended up into south Judah at this time and included Lachish, this being probably one of Geshem's regal residences.⁴³ Noth does not link Lachish with Geshem but says it was probably the seat of

⁴¹J.A. Thompson, "Kedar," IDB, vol. III, p. 4.

⁴²Albright, Archaeology of Palestine, p. 144.

⁴³"Judean Lachish," B.A., XVIII (1955), pp. 16-17.

the Persian governor of Edom.⁴⁴ If so, its closeness to Gezer (Tell Jezer) in southwest Samaria where some sort of a Persian enclave resided would certainly have made it a strategic location. Undoubtedly this is why Geshem was able to enforce his claims in Jerusalem.

Thus are the three main sources of opposition to Nehemiah in Jerusalem.⁴⁵ Obviously they are presented in a bad light in our sources because of the role they play, but we must be careful not to discredit them. They were not only sincere but men of dignity and respect as their positions indicate. Sanballat was the Persian governor of Samaria, Tobiah was a landlord and local ruler in South Gilead, and Geshem was King of Qedar. As these three provinces completely surrounded Judah, these leaders were able to bring pressures to bear on Nehemiah in his attempt to give Judea stability. Quite likely their opposition derives from the fact that Judea had not had a governor before or else had not had one for quite some time, thus feeling their powers endangered by Nehemiah's presence. Nehemiah's tasks were made harder by their attempts to frustrate his endeavours, but in these Nehemiah shows his

⁴⁴HI, p. 345.

⁴⁵For a general discussion of Nehemiah's enemies and the situation he faced, cf. Albrecht Alt, "Judas Nachbar zur Zeit Nehemias," Palästina-jahrbuch 27 (1931), pp. 66-74, reprinted in Kleinen Schriften, Vol. II (München: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), pp. 338-345; also Fernandez's Excursus XV, "Los Adversarios de Nehemias" and Excursus XVI, "Abar-nahara y sus provincias" in Comentario, pp. 253-257 and 300-308.

character and determination.

Shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem, Nehemiah made a nocturnal inspection of the walls to determine the extent of the work which it was his intent to accomplish (cf. 2:11f.). His rest period of three days after his arrival parallels that which Ezra took (cf. Ezra 8:33) on his arrival. Whether Ezra 8:33 is a chronistic borrowing from Nehemiah 2:11 as Kapelrud⁴⁶ insists is not at all certain, but the fact that these periods of repose or disembarkment are identical seems suspect to me. Whereas most commentators gloss over this verse, Fernandez⁴⁷ sees here a symbolic representation for a short period of time, much in the same manner in which the numeral "forty" was used in the Old Testament. At any rate Nehemiah wasted no time in surveying the situation. The secrecy of his action -- surveying the ruined walls at night with but a few entrusted men -- very likely indicates his anticipation of hostilities by surrounding peoples and their leaders. Apparently Nehemiah himself rode upon some beast of burden while those in his party followed closely on foot, taking care to arouse no attention to them. Nehemiah's intent was clear as far as he was concerned, but those of his party had not yet heard of his plan. 2:12 reveals the piety which motivated Nehemiah, and indicates that he thought his

⁴⁶Kapelrud, op. cit., p. 57.

⁴⁷Comentario, p. 241.

plan was initiated by God. H.G. May sees the use of "sepulchres" in 2:5 as "a polite understatement, for his plan was to restore the walls."⁴⁸ There is no question as to Nehemiah's intention here, for the object of "build it" (*לִבְנוֹתָהּ* from *בָּנָה* -- to build) is the city of Jerusalem, understood though unstated. The formula -- "If it please the king ..." - *אִם יִשְׂמַח הַמֶּלֶךְ* -- is "a polite form of introducing a request (cf. Esther 1.19, iii.9, ix.13)," and the mention of his father's sepulchres, correlative to respective for the dead, was intended to "touch the sense of ancestral piety which was strong in the oriental heart."⁴⁹

Nehemiah 2:13-15 is one of the most important sources for determining the extent of ancient Jerusalem. It is generally recognized that chapter three is a chronistic interruptor placed in the text at a later time, as chapter four carries straight forward the last verses of chapter 2. Yet, because of its length and apparent authentic rendering of the building of the walls, it too is a source of extreme importance in determining the exact size of Nehemiah's Jerusalem. The problem with chapter three is that first the wall is described by workmen assigned to the work, but then the description moves to locating the walls in terms of landmarks. Millar

⁴⁸The Oxford Annotated Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 587.

⁴⁹Slotki, op. cit., p. 188.

Burrows⁵⁰ has explained this inconsistency as a literary device to give variety of expression to an otherwise dull list, the northern and western parts of the city being basically residential while the older eastern part of the city abounded with familiar landmarks. But what information do these accounts give us?

Many years ago C.F. Keil's masterful analysis of chapter III showed conclusively that the entire extent of Jerusalem's walls was not demolished.⁵¹ Portions of the wall not mentioned in chapter III or 12:37-39 (parallel to 2:13-15) are omitted because they had not been damaged, and, hence, were in no need of repair. The purpose of a wall was to circumvallate the city, and thereby give protection to its inhabitants. If its gates were made inoperative by burning and/or sections of the walls were broken down by seige, a wall could no longer serve its protective function. If it were only destroyed or broken at one point, a city and its inhabitants would be at the mercy of those outside. Keil notes that

the wall was only so far demolished as to be incapable of any longer serving as a defence to the city. And this end was fully accomplished when it was partially demolished in several places, because the portions of the wall, and even the towers and gates, still perhaps left standing, could then no longer afford any protection to the city. The danger that the Jews might eas-

⁵⁰"Nehemiah 3:1-32 as a Source for the Topography of Ancient Jerusalem," AASOR, XIV (1934), pp. 116-121.

⁵¹C.F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament; Vol. X, The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, by C.F. Keil, date of original unknown (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), pp. 196-197.

ily refortify the city unless the fortifications were entirely demolished, was sufficiently obviated by the carrying away into captivity of the greater part of the population. This explains the fact that nothing is said in this description of the restoration of the towers of Hananeel and Hammeah (ver. 11), and that certain building parties repaired very long lengths of walls, as e.g. the 1000 cubits between the fountain-gate and the dung-gate, while others had very short portions appointed them. The latter was especially the case with those who built on the east side of Zion, because this being the part at which King Zedekiah fled from the city, the wall may here have been levelled to the ground.⁵²

Although the walls are spoken of throughout as being "built," it should be emphasized that they are only being "re-built" or repaired. The witness of Nehemiah 6:15 that the work was completed in fifty-two days should also bear out this fact, even though nearly three times that many modern workdays are involved because of their near day and night shift-work. But what does this indicate of the size of Nehemiah's Jerusalem? J. Simons⁵³ believes that Nehemiah's Jerusalem included a western hill as well as the southeastern one. He finds a large number of gates mentioned in Nehemiah to be incompatible with the area of only the southeastern hill and is not happy with some commentators' location of the Valley Gate apart from the Hinnon Valley.⁵⁴ Considering every possible

⁵²Ibid., p. 197.

⁵³J. Simons, Jerusalem in the Old Testament (Leiden: Brill, 1952), p. 437.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 281.

scriptural allusion and shred of evidence, he builds up a strong case that the southwestern hill was walled in late post-exilic times.⁵⁵ Millar Burrows, after examination of the relevant information, is somewhat undecided as to his opinion concerning the extent of the walls,⁵⁶ but he leans toward including the western hill, though not dogmatically.⁵⁷

The question which we must ask is this: Is it realistic to assume that the western hill was a part of Nehemiah's Jerusalem and included in the rebuilt wall when no evidence is available in the preceding post-exilic literature or in the late pre-exilic literature to indicate such? The answer is obviously and emphatically "NO". Nehemiah's wall encompassed the southeastern hill only, a fact well attested by the archaeological explorations up to this time.⁵⁸ To insist on two hills is most precarious when the earliest fortifications found on the western hill date from the Hellenistic period.

M. Avi-Yonah has made a study of "Nehemiah's walls on the a priori assumption that the walled area of the city did not include the West Hill till the Hellenistic period,"⁵⁹ and

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 226-281.

⁵⁶"Nehemiah's Tour of Inspection," BASOR, No. 64 (December, 1936), pp. 11-21.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁸Cf. Bowman, IB, III, p. 213 for sources giving strong archaeological evidence.

⁵⁹"The Walls of Nehemiah -- A Minimalist View," Israel Exploration Journal, Vol. IV (1954), p. 241.

his position is most convincing. The fragmentary and sketchy representation of Nehemiah's night ride do not give one much basis for determining his course, and there is no reason to insist that he made a complete circuit of the walls, though some, however, have taken that position.⁶⁰ Avi-Yonah notes that

in his nightly reconnaissance Nehemiah went out of the Valley Gate 'in the direction of' (el-peney) the Dragon's Fountain; he reached the Dung Gate, the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, rounding the city from the south; as there was no place for his beast to pass onward, he continued up the Kidron Valley on foot. 'And there was a breach in the wall' (reading $\Pi'N$ for MT $\Pi'N$) and so he entered it, crossed the city and reached the Valley Gate from the inside.⁶¹

Avi-Yonah's emendation of 2:15b is based on the LXX's reading $\Pi'N$ instead of the MT's $\Pi'N$,⁶² and makes perfect sense with available evidence on Nehemiah's tour. It can be "minimally" concluded that Nehemiah's inspection was only partial rather than complete, yet giving him an accurate indication of the work to be done.

Avi-Yonah's closing words indicate a problem not faced realistically by interpreters expanding Jerusalem beyond the southeastern hill. The first Zionists under Haggai and Zechariah had rebuilt the Temple and nothing else. The Jerusalem

⁶⁰H. Vincent, "Les murs de Jérusalem d'après Néhémie," *R.B.*, XII (1904), pp. 56-74.

⁶¹Avi-Yonah, *art. cit.*, p. 248.

⁶²Cf. Keil, *op. cit.*, p. 169 for the opposite position.

of David and Solomon was only one-hilled, and no positive evidence makes it any larger until after Nehemiah. He indicates that his proposal "is at least as logical and convincing as the various proposals which would inflate the Jerusalem of the First Temple to ten times the size of any other Iron Age city known to us."⁶³ When this fact is considered, the two-hill hypothesis readily reveals itself as something very much like chronistic fiction!

Torrey has reminded us that "the reproach of a ruined city wall was an old story,"⁶⁴ and the Jerusalemites' situation would remain -- getting no better and perhaps worse -- until something were done to restore the walls, thereby alleviating their contempt and restoring their dignity. Nehemiah is the man who will lead them. George Adam Smith has described him as

a strong individuality, full of piety towards God and his people; with a power both of sincere prayer and the persuading of men; cut to the quick by the thought of the place of the graves of his fathers lying waste, but more concerned for the affliction and reproach of his living brethren, and with a conscience, too, of their sins, especially towards the poor and the easily defrauded Levites. Without Isaiah's vision or Jeremiah's later patience, he fulfils the prophetic ideal of the ruler, whose chief qualities shall be that he draws breath in the fear of the Lord, that he defends the cause of the poor, that he has gifts of persuasion and inspiration, that he is quick to distinguish between the worthy and the evil, and that he does not spare the evil in their

⁶³Avi-Yonah, loc. cit.

⁶⁴"Sanballat the Horonite," J.B.L., XLVII, p. 387.

way. Nehemiah is everywhere dependent upon God, and conscious of the good hand of his God upon him. He has the strong man's power of keeping things to himself, but when the proper time comes he can persuade and lift the people to their work. He has a keen discernment of character and motive. He is intolerant of the indulgent, the compromising and the lazy, even when they are nobles --who, as he expresses it, put not their necks to the work of the Lord.⁶⁵

Smith further indicates that "what Baruch did for the hills of Jerusalem and for the courts of the Palace and Temple, Nehemiah now does, and more, for the full circuit of the City Walls."⁶⁶

Nehemiah 2:16 confirms the secrecy of Nehemiah's action with regard to those mentioned,⁶⁷ and 2:17 shows him telling a body of some sort of his intentions, but how such a group got assembled is not known. What is important is that Nehemiah is in complete control of the situation, and the people respond favorably to his plan.

Batten has characterized the situation thus:

The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was a big undertaking. Nehemiah was no near-sighted fanatic going to war without reckoning the cost. He did not desire to kindle an enthusiasm quick to begin and

⁶⁵"Nehemiah's Jerusalem," The Expositor (7th Series, August 1906), Volume II, p. 127.

⁶⁶"Ezra and Nehemiah," ibid., (July, 1906), Vol. II, p. 1.

⁶⁷H. Kaupel interprets those mentioned as referring to those who held public office (cf. "Der Sinn von הַלְוִיָּם וְהַכֹּהֲנִים in Neh. 2, 16," Biblica, XXI (1940), pp. 40-44. Cf. also Fernandez, Comentario, pp. 243-245; Arnaldich, op. cit., p. 725; and J. De Fraine, S.J., Esdras en Nehemias uit de grondtekst vertaald en uitgelegd (Uitgevers: J.J. Romen & Zonen, Roermond en Maaseik, 1961), pp. 80-81.

soon to end. He proposed to carry the project to its conclusion. Therefore he now discloses two facts which were the foundation of his confidence. First, he tells them how God had at every point opened the way before him; and second, how he was supported by the authority of the king.⁶⁸

From this point forward we hear consistently of Nehemiah's confrontation with his adversaries. The first charge levied against Nehemiah is treason, a most serious offence in any day. The adversaries were quite right in their suspicion, as building a city's walls in ancient history very often was a preface to open rebellion, and Jerusalem's history as a city of Messianic nationalism was a factor certainly not in its favor.

Here there has evidently been some textual dislocation, very likely attributable to the intrusion of chapter three, for the end of chapter two is carried forward nicely by 4:1-6 (Hebrew 3:33-38). Millar Burrows has dealt with this problem and proposed a workable solution.⁶⁹ Batten had noted that 2:19 provides no object for the verb and hence what Sanballat heard is obscure.⁷⁰ Burrows reminds us that Tobiah's response is clear and vigorous here and that

both men evidently express a scornful incredulity as to Nehemiah's success. The reply given in 2:20 would be as apposite in this connection as it is strange where it stands in the text.⁷¹

⁶⁸Batten, op. cit., p. 202.

⁶⁹"The Origin of Nehemiah 3:33-37," A.J.S.L., LII (1936), pp. 235-244.

⁷⁰Batten, op. cit., p. 203. ⁷¹A.J.S.L., LII, p. 237.

Therefore, he has translated 2:19a, 3:33, 2:19bc, 3:35, and 2:20 to make better sense, changing the verbs in 2:19bc to the singular and inserting "came" in 3:35, following the LXX. This reads as follows:

And Sanballat the Horonite heard that we were building the wall, and he mocked us and came to us and said, "What's this thing that you're doing? Are you rebelling against the King?" And Tobiah the Ammonite came with him, and he said, "Why, as to what they are building, if a jackal goes up, he'll break down their walls of stones!" But I made reply and said to them, "The God of Heaven, He will help us, and we, His servants, will do the building. But you have no share nor right nor memorial in Jerusalem."⁷²

Tobiah's remarks in 3:35 (English 4:3) are indicative of a Semitic variety of humor but extremely sharp in their meaning. Slotki brings out the association of foxes in connection with ruins (e.g., Lam. 5:18), as great numbers of foxes were said to have infested desolate parts of the city. He states that the word "tear down" or "break down" indicates the frailness of the building and "may be a jibe at the unskilled labour employed in the construction."⁷³ J.G. Duncan excavated a wall in 1924 which he believed to have stood on the east side of Jebusite Jerusalem when David conquered it. On this wall Duncan remarks:

It is very probable this was the wall repaired by Nehemiah on the eastern side. On the face of the square tower there is a portion 12 ft. by 6 ft., a later repair, which I am inclined to assign to Nehemiah. The masonry is bad. The stones are thrust

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Slotki, op. cit., p. 202.

in with no regard to the original courses: they are casual blocks picked up in haste and set with unstinted use of mud mortar. All this is suggestive of the hurried work of his men.⁷⁴

Sanballat's series of taunts in 4:2 (Hebrew 3:34)

neither credited the Jews with ability to carry out the work, nor believed in the overruling providence of the God whom the Jews worshipped, and therefore casts scorn by ^{אֵלֹהֵינוּ} both upon the faith of the Jews in their God and upon the living God Himself.⁷⁵

But the last question mentioned ridicules the position (or rather lack of it!) which the Jews faced and their ensuing plight, so dire as to be forced to use rubbish and scraps as their resources. What does the phrase ^{לְהַחְיֵה מֵהַחֲרָבִים} ("on restoring burned stones from the dust heaps") tell us? The natural building stone of Jerusalem was Palestinian limestone which softens and even disintegrates when exposed to fire. Modern Bedouin burn stones for the lime they give. Burrows conjectures that perhaps the original stones from the wall had suffered in such a way if the wall had been in ruins for any length of time. At any rate they were not quarrying new stones from out of the rock but digging out the old stones from the rubbish and reusing them.⁷⁶ Keil remarks that Jerusalem limestone

gets softened by fire, losing its durability, and, so to speak, its vitality. This explains the use of the verb ^{חָיָה}, to revive, to give fresh vital power. To revive burnt stones means, to bestow

⁷⁴Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement, 1924, p. 128.

⁷⁵Keil, op. cit., p. 200. ⁷⁶A.J.S.L., LII, pp. 241-242.

strength and durability upon the softened crumbled stones, to fit the stones into a new building (Ges. Lex.). The construction לִבְנוֹתָם is explained by the circumstance that לִבְנוֹתָם is by its form masculine, but by its meaning feminine, and that לִבְנוֹתָם agrees with the form לִבְנוֹתָם.⁷⁷

Such pregnant descriptions indicate the plight of Nehemiah's party and the haste with which they built.

That Nehemiah could not be interested in an "A-1" repair job is confirmed by his urgent action in the face of threatened violence by his adversaries. Nehemiah 3:38 (English 4:6) may give the key for the transition from ridicule to more positive action, as the meaning may well be that the job of rebuilding was now half completed,⁷⁸ giving some hope to the Zionists for their ultimate success. Though half successful now, Nehemiah had a morale problem on his hands, as we can well imagine, and some have taken 4:10 as a remnant of the builders' lament. In addition to the usual adversaries we now have another group listed -- the Ashdodites. Most scholars have taken this to mean literally inhabitants of the city of Ashdod, a Philistine city on the southern coast. This is possible since Ashdod was one of the five divisions of the satrapy "Beyond the River."⁷⁹ But their allegiance to Sanballat points to a better solution. Fernandez believes that they were from Philistine groups living in the area of Samaria,⁸⁰ and this also places them much closer to the ac-

⁷⁷Keil, op. cit., p. 201. ⁷⁸IB, III, p. 699.

⁷⁹Comentario, p. 301. ⁸⁰Ibid., p. 290.

tion. The combined enemies sought to stop the restoration by infiltrating their midst and then rising up to kill them. Since many of the builders came from some distance and returned home at some interval, infiltration would not have been too difficult. Nehemiah approached the problem first piously (that is, he prayed) and then practically, setting a watch $\square \eta' \zeta \eta$, "against them," both day and night. Verses 15ff. (Hebrew 9ff.) tell of the specific action taken. Nehemiah divided his personal bodyguards, probably so designated by Persian Royal decree, into workers and warriors, and this pattern was followed throughout the people. Even those who worked had weapons at their hands in case it proved necessary to use them. With the determination and measures so manifested, Nehemiah's enemies found it necessary to make other plans.

Again the intrusion of chapter five represents a break in the chronology, and most commentators⁸¹ hold that chapter six is a direct continuation of the events described in chapter four, though Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich believes the plots to trap Nehemiah in chapter six to have resulted from opposition to Nehemiah's social reforms described in chapter five.⁸² I believe that the former position is much more acceptable be-

⁸¹E.g., Batten, op. cit., p. 249; Bowman, IB, III, p. 715.

⁸²A Concise History of Israel, James Barr translator (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 76; Geschichte Israels von Dem Anfängen Bis Zur Zerstörung Des Tempels (70 n. CHR.), (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1958), pp. 79-80.

cause of the textual difficulties involved.

The ancient world was much more disposed to violence than our modern one, especially where governments and royalty were concerned. The slaying of those in a dynastic line by a claimant to the throne is well attested in both biblical and extra-biblical literature, sometimes occurring between rival governors of an empire. Here the attempt on Nehemiah's life should be viewed in the light of such precedent. The adversaries sent messages to Nehemiah four times, presumably for a meeting, though it was but a bold attempt to get Nehemiah out of Jerusalem in a position where they could do him harm. L.E. Browne has conjectured that Sanballat had given such oversight to the province of Judah as had been necessary in the absence of a governor, and his opposing Nehemiah is due to the end of his own power over Judah. He notes that

the opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah to Nehemiah was not an attack of heathen against the servants of Yahweh, much less was it due to unfriendly feelings toward the Jewish people. It was purely political rivalry, arising probably because Nehemiah's arrival curtailed the authority of Sanballat, and threatened the supremacy of Samaria over Jerusalem.⁸³

But 6:5ff. indicates a new charge with the fifth invitation to parley. In the light of the earlier abortive attempt to rebuild the walls, also in Artaxerxes I's reign, the charge of sedition here may be viewed as but a repetition of the earlier charge. In the light of this Rowley has noted that the

⁸³Browne, op. cit., p. 149.

earlier rebuilding

had been brought to a premature end on the ground of the political danger that might come in the train of such a rebuilding. Sanballat was merely continuing the jealous watch on Jerusalem, and though it was impossible to stop it this time by the same means as before, partly because Nehemiah was armed with authority from the Crown, and partly because he was acting so swiftly that the machinery of an appeal to the royal chancellery would take far too long to be effective, he sought to exploit every avenue open to him to prevent the completion of Nehemiah's work.⁸⁴

Verse 7 must be viewed in the light of Haggai and Zechariah's support of Zerubbabel as the Messiah, and integrity must be granted to Jerusalem's neighbors who suspected Nehemiah's ambitions,⁸⁵ the building of walls generally being noted as a preface to rebellion. That there were religiously inspired prophets of fanaticism in the post-exilic period is indicated by Zechariah 13 where their position is decried. Batten notes that prophets of this period were generally deserving of the contempt granted them and that Nehemiah would "not be likely to have dealings with them."⁸⁶ Nehemiah answered the "open letter" and the charges therein with an emphatic denial of their authenticity, indicating that the charges were mere rumors and inventions. To meet with them even if his life were not at stake would have meant a slowdown in the work, for Nehemiah himself was an inspiration to the workers as well as

⁸⁴B.J.R.L., Vol. 38, No. 1 (September, 1955), p. 184.

⁸⁵Alfred Bertholet, Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia (Kurzer Hand-Commentar Zum Alten Testament, Abteilung XIX; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1902), p. 64.

⁸⁶Batten, op. cit., p. 253.

their leader.

Rowley believes that the "personal plots against Nehemiah" were conceived because the enemies could "not wait on the cumbrous machinery of an appeal to the throne."⁸⁷ An ingenious plot to damage Nehemiah's character is described in 6:10-13. Shemaiah, a prophet under employ of Sanballat, sought to trap Nehemiah. Shemaiah is the one desiring the interview and Nehemiah went at his request. Keil indicates that

he had shut himself in his house, to intimate to Nehemiah that also he felt his life in danger through the machinations of his enemies, and that he was thus dissembling in order the more easily to induce him to agree to his proposal, that they should together escape the shares laid for them by fleeing to the temple.⁸⁸

It has been rightly noted by Bowman that the idea of asylum in the temple area was no great innovation, but that "it was the suggestion that they enter the building itself and shut the doors for greater safety that shocked Nehemiah."⁸⁹ Robert Jamieson has indicated Nehemiah's strength of character as the determining factor which caused him to fail to ask for or seek protection for his own life when others and the city would be in jeopardy.⁹⁰ Fernandez sees his being

⁸⁷B.J.R.L., Vol. 37, No. 2 (March, 1955), pp. 559-560.

⁸⁸Keil, op. cit., p. 219. ⁸⁹IB, III, p. 719.

⁹⁰Robert Jamieson, Joshua-Esther, Vol. II in A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments, date of original unknown, by Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), pp. 614-615.

only a layman as the reason for his refusing to enter the Temple,⁹¹ having Numbers 18:7 in mind where the Temple was reserved for priests alone under penalty of death. Bowman agrees with that statement but believes Nehemiah's being a eunuch to have been the determining factor, the profaning of the sanctuary by a blemished man being involved (cf. Lev. 21:17-20, 23 and Deut. 23:1).⁹² However, I have already stated earlier my conviction that the evidence for Nehemiah's being a eunuch is not convincing, though it was certainly possible for him to have been one in his royal position. Batten and Slotki believe that his position of and responsibility as governor amply explain his action,⁹³ and I concur here. When one has legitimate reasons present, he need not stretch the evidence in support of a personal thesis or conjecture. Nehemiah's comment in verse 12 is quite strong, as $\Delta' \eta' \zeta \eta' - \eta' \zeta$, "not God", is an emphatic construction.⁹⁴

With the completion of the walls a place for Judah and Jerusalem was secured in subsequent history. But this did not immediately silence Tobiah. 6:17-19 tells of his further attempts to discredit Nehemiah, trying thereby to make him afraid. Nehemiah remained steadfast in his attitude toward Tobiah in

⁹¹Comentario, p. 328.

⁹²IB, III, p. 720.

⁹³Batten, op. cit., pp. 256-257; Slotki, op. cit., p. 217.

⁹⁴Keil, op. cit., p. 220.

spite of strong efforts by leading Jews to make Tobiah acceptable to Nehemiah. While a few scholars have disagreed as to Nehemiah's harsh actions, most would agree that the cautious policy which Nehemiah adopted was supportable by the circumstances in which he found himself. If Nehemiah had trusted his adversaries, such action may have proved fatal to Nehemiah and his mission."⁹⁵ Browne has stated that "the story that he has left us . . . is sufficient to show how many and varied were the obstacles in the way of the work, and how splendidly he overcame them."⁹⁶ Batten has observed the following:

Here we reach the end of the long story of obstacles placed in Neh.'s path by the determined efforts of Sanb. To. and Geshem to prevent his restoration of the defences of Jerus. The section dealing with the walls in N.(2¹⁰-7⁴, omitting c. 3, 5) is really a history of Neh.'s successful thwarting of all their plots. The work on the walls is mentioned only incidentally. We cannot appreciate the stupendous accomplishment of the great leader unless we take into account the fact that the walls were restored in the face of great danger and of constant interference.⁹⁷

T.K. Cheyne, too, has given us these most appreciative words:

That he was impatient and masterful, is but a way of saying that he was extremely able and knew his own ability. The times demanded such a man, and any other living Jew would probably have failed.⁹⁸

Nehemiah's action must surely be viewed in its context

⁹⁵Rowley, B.J.R.L., Vol. 37, No. 2 (March 1955), p. 560, note 1.

⁹⁶Browne, op. cit., p. 153. ⁹⁷Batten, op. cit., p. 261.

⁹⁸T.K. Cheyne, Jewish Religious Life After the Exile (American Lectures on the History of Religions, Third Series--1897-1898; New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), pp. 44-45.

if it is to be appreciated and understood. Morton Smith has noted that while Herodotus does not mention Nehemiah in his history, he would surely have termed him as "tyrant" if he had. Smith personally categorizes Nehemiah as the "forerunner of the Greek tyrant,"⁹⁹ for his control of the situation was dictatorial. Such action was not considered negatively in the ancient world as it is today; in fact, it compelled rather than repulsed constituents. What we would consider as extremely harsh, inhuman and unworthy of respect would engender respect among these peoples. Nehemiah's action described in 13:25 can only be so viewed, but of this we will speak later.

I do not find it necessary here to defend the MT's 52 days for the construction of the walls (6:15) against the statement of Josephus (Ant. XI, 5.7ff.) which indicates a much longer period of two years and four months or 852 days. I have already indicated my preference for a rebuilding of the walls rather than a complete construction, as well as a minimalist view of the extent of Nehemiah's Jerusalem. Keil has adequately shown the impossibility of deriving 52 days from two years and four months or vice versa on lin-

⁹⁹Cf. above, p. 97, note 76 for the source. Though an unfortunate yet uncontrollable lapse of two years has taken place since completion of the first two chapters of this study, I have not yet seen Smith's work in print or observed any book notices on it.

guistic grounds.¹⁰⁰ However, the intrusion of chapters three and five into the narrative is best to be explained as the chronicler's adherence to the tradition of 852 days for the walling operation. For problems concerned, here cf. the work of J.A. Bewer.¹⁰¹

What a noticeable change in attitude took place in the three-quarter's of a century between the rebuilding of the Temple and that of the walls! Both the exiles who had returned and the people who had stayed behind (לְיִשְׂרָאֵל) were exhorted to unite in the common task of rebuilding the Temple. T. Henshaw has noted that in Haggai 2:4 "Haggai addresses himself in the first place not to the returned exiles but to the people who had remained in Palestine."¹⁰² "People of the land" are neither invited nor wanted in Nehemiah's task, and once the wall is completed the situation becomes even stronger. M. Bailey has noted that

Nehemiah's difficulties with Sanballat and his friends were part of the early estrangement of the citizens of the Holy City from the People of the Land. The repair-

¹⁰⁰op. cit., p. 222: "It is vain to seek for any common ground on which these two different statements can be harmonized."

¹⁰¹"Josephus' Account of Nehemiah," J.B.L., XLIII (1924), pp. 224-226.

¹⁰²The Writings, the Third Division of the Old Testament Canon (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1963), p. 315, note 1.

ed city wall served to isolate the pious Zionists from their neighbors.¹⁰³

This surely has both social and religious consequences but will be discussed further in the latter category.

Nehemiah's success makes it possible to credit him as being more than the protector of Jerusalem. His reestablishment of the governorship of Judea and removing control of the province from the realm of Sanballat is quite important. As Browne has noted, he

gained for Judah a new reputation in the eyes of the other nations. Hitherto they had looked up to Samaria, but now they despised it: the expression in vi.16 □ □ 1'92 7'88 14@'1 "they fell greatly in their eyes" can scarcely mean anything else than that the Samaritans fell greatly in the eyes of the heathen. From this time onwards the power of Samaria began to wane and that of Judah to increase.¹⁰⁴

Let us now move to a consideration of Nehemiah's action in the social realm.

MEASURES OF SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

A Problem of Usury. Chapter Five, the second major insertion into the Memoirs of Nehemiah, contains a record of an urgent social situation and the way Nehemiah dealt with it. The culprits here are not the conspiracy of enemies already confronted. According to verse 1 they were fellow Ju-

¹⁰³"Levitical Legend in the Persian Period," J.B.L., XLVI (1927), pp. 135-136. Cheyne (Jewish Religious Life After the Exile, p. 46) believes that the wall was repaired "not so much as a protection against ordinary foes as to keep out the Samaritans."

¹⁰⁴Browne, op. cit., p. 153.

dahites (דָּהִיטִים) who were taking undue advantage of their poorer brethren. We are not given an indication as to where this chapter should stand chronologically. Obviously it did not occur in the context of rebuilding the walls, for time would not have allowed such measures. We can only place it late in Nehemiah's first administration, following the statement of time ⁱⁿ 5:14. But its exact position must remain one of conjecture.

The position of the poor in the ancient Near East was deplorable, and their plight in Palestine was only slightly better than in the surrounding areas, if it were better at all. Everywhere the Law and Prophets warn against oppression of the poor,¹⁰⁵ and the codes of Leviticus (chs. 19, 23) and Deuteronomy (chs. 14-15, 25) all legislate in behalf of the poor, who, like death and taxes, were always present. But while we know considerable about protective measures in their behalf, we have little evidence to show that these measures were enforced, much less obeyed. The cry for social justice by Amos centuries before is here being mirrored in the charges brought forward. In the time of Amos the middle class had been completely removed and inundated by oppressive intrusion on the part of the wealthy. They could not buy goods without being cheated by means of unstandard weights, and the aristo-

¹⁰⁵Cf. C.U. Wolf, "Poor," IDB, III, pp. 843-844; and "Poverty," ibid., pp. 853-854.

cratic gentry had such power as to sell children into slavery when a pair of shoes was not paid for.¹⁰⁶

To have laws for the protection of the poor is fine, but it helps them not at all unless they are adhered to. There were laws which governed the situation but they were not being obeyed. The first five verses of chapter 5 describe the situation for us, verse 3c giving the cause as "famine." They could not join the government "Soil Bank" program nor get a low interest loan from the Department of Agriculture to enable them to plant a crop. Nor were there government surpluses on which they could draw in case of need. Those who had not were at the mercy of those who had, and the latter were playing their hand for all that it was worth! Just who these were is indicated by verse 7: nobles (𐎡'𐎧𐎢) and rulers (𐎡'𐎧𐎢𐎠). We have heard complaints against them before and will again later.¹⁰⁷ Batten¹⁰⁸ and Keil¹⁰⁹ have divided the complaints into three categories: (a) insufficient food for large families; (b) property has been mortgaged away; and (c) taxes have been paid with borrowed money. Most commentators have read 𐎡'𐎧𐎢𐎠, "pledging," "giving as security" in verse 2

¹⁰⁶Cf. Bowman's fine introduction to the background of this problem in IB, III, p. 706.

¹⁰⁷Arnaldich, op. cit., pp. 725, 737.

¹⁰⁸Batten, op. cit., p. 238.

¹⁰⁹Keil, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

rather than "many" (Π^{27}).¹¹⁰ Bowman has noted that Hebrews never complained of large families, and it is not likely to be the case here. Rather, "It is highly probable that vs. 2 is but an early corruption of vs. 3, for the verses begin alike and are almost identical in Hebrew word order."¹¹¹

Undoubtedly the poor were in dire straits, and with their fields and vineyards mortgaged up, their hopes were low. While most moderns have borrowed money at some time or another and thought little or nothing about it, we must point out very quickly that ancient borrowing conditions were enough to make anyone shirk at the prospect of a loan. Præogatives of usurers far outstripped our notorious contemporary "loan sharks." Through a notable study of the secondary indications available to us, E. Neufeld¹¹² has offered much insight on this problem, and I am following him below.

Among the Babylonians interest for money was anywhere from 20% to 25% but for grain reached as high as 33 1/3%. If a loan became overdue, interest rose to 100%, but this was mild when compared with the 141% of Assyria. Hammurabi found

¹¹⁰E.g., Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Bertholet, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61; P.A. Medebielle, *Esdras-Nehemie in La Sainte Bible*, Louis Pirot and Albert Clamer, editors (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1952), Tome IV, p. 343.

¹¹¹*IB*, III, p. 706.

¹¹²"The Rate of Interest and the Text of Nehemiah 5.11," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XLIV (1953/54), pp. 194-204.

it necessary to standardize interest rates as a result of creditor exploitation and made forfeiture a consequence of disobeying. While it is difficult to determine whether interest was monthly or yearly, it is probable that in Babylonian the rate was 20% on yearly notes.¹¹³

While all biblical documentary evidence is of late date, we do have a number of prohibitions against usury as a practice (Exodus 22:24, Deuteronomy 23:20 and Leviticus 25:35-37--money; Deuteronomy 23:20 and Leviticus 25:37 on victuals, and Deuteronomy 23:20 on anything, et al). But condemnation of money-lenders by the prophets shows all too graphically that these laws were not necessarily obeyed.¹¹⁴ In later times it was customary for the Temple to provide money on loan at interest as B.M.57b, Shek. 4,3 and Ket. 106b show. Nehemiah 5:11 is the only incident in Hebrew law which gives a hint as to how interest may have been calculated. Neufeld has noted that the money-lender must have had extensive freedom in early times in determining interest and that

the debtor was almost entirely at his mercy and the rate of interest was bound to be very high. The constant sympathy towards the debtor, is inter alia, a manifestation of the heavy burden to which the debtor was subjected by the high rate of interest.¹¹⁵

On hearing these complaints Nehemiah "was very angry" (vs. 6), and reforms in the measures indicated began almost

¹¹³Ibid., pp. 194-195.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 196.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 197.

immediately. It is very interesting to place these reforms in their proper comparative setting, and for the following we are indebted to Morton Smith:¹¹⁶

| | ATHENS | COVENANT CODE | DEUT. | HOLINESS CODE | NEHEMIAH |
|------------------|----------|------------------|-------|------------------|----------|
| LEGAL REFORM: | 621, 529 | 650 | 621 | 550 | 444 |
| USURY: | 600 | 650 | 621 | 550 | 444 |
| DEBTS: | 592 | --- | 621 | --- | 444 |
| SLAVES: | 592 | 650 | 621 | 550 | 444 |
| LAND: | 530 | --- | --- | 550 | 444 |

Smith believes Nehemiah's reforms, however, to have been not unlike others carried out by Persian tyrants whose pattern it was to play the poor and depressed against the wealthy. While I myself might be inclined to place these reforms a bit later in Nehemiah's mission (an early date would be correct, however, if Nehemiah 2:6 is an indication for a relatively short first mission), the biblical evidence compares favorably from a standpoint of time with reforms in Athens. Nevertheless, what this really does is emphasize the plight of the poor in the ancient world in the centuries before reform began.

Nehemiah first charged the nobles and officials, but he apparently did not have much success with them as he had to resort to calling an assembly of all the people, the purpose of which was "to induce in them a sense of shame through pres-

¹¹⁶Lecture cited.

sure of public opinion."¹¹⁷ Before the assembled body Nehemiah exhorts them to return the goods and property which they had taken, including the hundredth part of the money" (5:11). Since the LXX rendered $\eta\delta\delta\eta \mu\lambda\eta$ with $\kappa\alpha\iota \alpha\pi\omicron \tau\omicron\upsilon \alpha\rho\lambda\omicron\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$, many have taken Umeat to indicate that interest was 1% monthly or 12% annually.¹¹⁸ The fact that the LXX understood the consonants thus is certainly an indication that such a rate was not unusual,¹¹⁹ but I agree with Bowman¹²⁰ that such a rate would hardly have produced the condition described in the text. Neufeld notes that there is no evidence for $\mu\lambda\eta$ as per centum in either biblical or post-biblical literature, and has offered the following on how they got connected:

It is suggested that the meaning of $\mu\lambda\eta$ as per centum was invented by Hieronymus or his predecessor under the influence of the Greek hekatostos and Latin centesima which have our technical meaning of per cent. The term centesima in Latin means "the hundredth part of a thing," as a revenue, tax, a percentage; and of interest "1%monthly," though it does not follow that it was paid by the month. It is almost certain that Hieronymus understood the text in such a way. Such a meaning of $\mu\lambda\eta$ is, however, not found in Hebrew.¹²¹

We must understand Nehemiah's remarks in 5:11 as meaning not "the hundredth part" but everything which a debtor has to

¹¹⁷Slotki, op. cit., p. 210.

¹¹⁸Neufeld, art. cit., p. 198.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 201.

¹²⁰IB, III, pp. 710-711.

¹²¹Neufeld, art. cit., p. 200.

pay, that is, capital plus interest. Perhaps the װ disappeared from the original ה'ש"מ as a result of a scribe's being familiar with the Greek and Latin use of "hundredth" and unconsciously read חס"מ here, changing the meaning from capital plus interest to simply interest.¹²² If the emendation ה'ש"מ has merit, we have here a figura etymologica -- ח'ש"מ חס"מ אשר חס"מ -- which very likely has the same meaning as the masculine form ח'ש"מ in verse 7: ח'ש"מ ה'ש"מ meaning to loan a loan, to lend upon pawn. ח'ש"מ means "a loan of money or grain" which is given for a pledge of persons or things. We must understand ח'ש"מ חס"מ ח'ש"מ in 5:10 as meaning remitting a debt by giving back the pledge. Also the ח'ש"מ חס"מ (not ח'ש"מ) of Nehemiah 10:32 will mean "to loan of every hand" or that which is lent out of hand without taking a pledge for it.¹²³ Nehemiah in 5:10 admits that he and his associates were in the habit of lending both money and grain, and it must be taken as meaning there was nothing wrong per se with lending. What incited him was the collateral which was being required, and he demanded that the practice be stopped.

Verse 8 indicates a most serious problem indeed. While Nehemiah has been buying back Jewish brethren sold to foreigners as slaves, others have been making money at his expense by selling their fellow Jews so that the foreigners (i.e.,

¹²²Ibid., p. 201.

¹²³Ibid., p. 200.

those from the $\text{D}^1 \lambda$) could in return sell them to Nehemiah. Though the exact situation is not stated by the text, it is very probable that those involved in this slave traffic were exacting interest from their foreign conspirators. However, since the community leaders were foreclosing on loans because of the economic depression, they undoubtedly had more than ample children to sell, as the recipients of their loans had had to offer their children as pledges. Hammurabi much earlier had guarded against just such as this by providing in paragraph 117 of his code that "a defaulting debtor and his family who have been sold or handed over to service are to be freed after three years of work in the house of their purchaser or obligee."¹²⁴ However, this is undoubtedly idealistic, as we are without record of its enforcement and may certainly assume that such humanitarian measures are wanting here. So apparent is the guilt of the offenders that they remain silent, attempting no defence. With a lesser prosecutor they might have taken exception but not with Nehemiah! After spelling out exactly what was to be required of them, Nehemiah accepted their pledges that they would do as he had said (vss. 11-12). Return of the people to their ancestral lands would solve most of the complaints concerned, as the land guaranteed their livelihood. In most cases the difference between a slave and a peasant was his ancestral plot.

¹²⁴Cf. I. Mendelsohn, "Slavery in the Old Testament," IDB, IV, p. 387.

Nehemiah gave the nobles' pledge religious significance by solemnizing their words with an oath. He then emptied out his "lap" (לִשְׁמֹרֶת) in an act of prophetic symbolism, acting out graphically what would come to them if they defaulted. Jeremiah had undertaken numerous such acts in that very city one and a half centuries earlier. The gesture of emptying his pocket was symbolic of the penalty for their taking their pledges lightly. No doubt this was necessary, for Malachi, writing only shortly before Nehemiah's tenure in Jerusalem, acknowledged the general unreliability of their pledged word and their failure to live up to their vows (cf. Mal. 3:8).

It is no doubt true that 5:16b ("and acquired no land") was placed between 16a ("I also held to the work on the wall") and 16c ("and all my servants were gathered there for the work") by one who thought the walling venture to have taken 852 days.¹²⁵ I am, nevertheless, inclined to take the statement as authentically Nehemiah's. We must remember Jeremiah's purchase of a field in his native Anathoth (cf. Jeremiah 32: 6-15) as a symbol of hope for the future in a time when there was no apparent cause to hope. Although Jeremiah's action was prophetic and symbolic, it also was a provision for at least bare security. Here Nehemiah may not only be indicating that he had not acquired land illicitly as had the nobles

¹²⁵Browne, op. cit., p. 153, note 1.

or as a consequence of his being governor,¹²⁶ but that he had forsaken even the most minimal form of personal security in his zealous program of stabilizing Jerusalem. I have not found this position offered elsewhere, but believe it to be quite possible and even plausible.

However, Nehemiah's refusing to purchase land must also be viewed as a boon to his land reform measures. It is unfortunate that we do not have more information here in this area, and one cannot support a drastic land reform program which lasted throughout his first administration -- even if it were a short one -- on the basis of available evidence, but it is most significant that the first thing mentioned in 5:11, when Nehemiah is enumerating that which is to be restored, is land. This is not a new problem either. Isaiah of Jerusalem faced a similar problem centuries earlier. After his allegoric "Song of the Vineyard" (cf. Isaiah 5:1-7) in which he called for justice and righteousness, Isaiah begins a series of "woes," the first of which reads as follows:

Woe to those who join house to house,
 who add field to field,
 until there is no more room
 and you are made to dwell alone
 in the midst of the land.¹²⁷

The ancient practice of taking property for debts is here being referred to. The wealthy were gradually taking the country-

¹²⁶Batten, op. cit., p. 246.

¹²⁷Isaiah 5:8 (RSV).

side house and field at a time, increasing their power and holdings but depleting and draining the middle class of all it had. Thus, the contrast between rich and poor. Nehemiah knew that no lasting measures could be hoped for unless the people were returned to the land, and his listing of this reform first is not accidental.

Nehemiah 5:15 states Nehemiah's virtues but at the expense of his predecessors. Whether previous governors were either inefficient or completely indifferent to the rights and needs of their subjects or both, they undoubtedly demanded the dues which were their right as governor. Elmer W.K. Mould has stated that

the system of expecting "presents" along with every grievance or for favoritism is some affair was taken as a matter of course by Persian officials and could not have failed to lead to gross misgovernment so far as the poor and uninfluential were concerned. The system is casually alluded to in Mal. 1:8 in a telling way. To bring home to his countrymen how foolish and shortsighted they were to bring sick and crippled animals for sacrifices, Malachi ironically suggested that they try presenting such a "gift" to their governor! "Will he be pleased with thee?" he caustically asks; "Will he accept thy person?" The answer was too obvious to admit of debate.¹²⁸

Doubtless this system of offering "gifts" is what Nehemiah meant by "heavy burdens" which predecessors had exacted. Food, wine and silver (undoubtedly a tax) were their legal requirements, but Nehemiah even forfeited these because of the dire state of his subjects. Though this measure was certainly realistic, it undoubtedly was motivated by his piety. Yet it must have been

¹²⁸Elmer W.K. Mould, Essentials of Bible History, revised edition (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1951), p. 355.

a strong and deep piety because the food which he fed his entourage had to come from somewhere. To feed 150+ people consistently could not help but run into a sizeable burden to Nehemiah, but he was willing to bear this out of his personal assets rather than impose further on his brethren. Rejuvenated Jerusalem owed everything which it was and would become to the personal sacrifice and leadership of Nehemiah.

REPOPULATING THE CITY

Rewalling of the city must not be underestimated, for there could have been no Jerusalem without it. Yet with the enforcing of the social measures described above and particularly land reform, the Judeans were content to live outside of Jerusalem where they could follow a relatively free life in a rural agrarian atmosphere. Such a life was quite appealing to them now, especially after enduring the hardships which many of them had had to endure off of their property. Moreover, as chapter three tells us of the laborers on the wall and the cities and districts from which they came, it is rather evident that most of the people lived outside of the city and scattered throughout the province. And why should they leave the land on which they had only recently been established? It is true that Jerusalem would provide walled protection, but this they were willing to sacrifice for the convenience of living at their homes and places of work. To live in Jerusalem might involve a shift in occupation, likely the becoming of some sort of artisan, and for this the people

were not prepared. If the Judeans were apathetic about the prospects of moving to Jerusalem, it was certainly an understandable, if not justifiable, apathy. I agree with Mould that

the reluctance of the majority to take up residence within the city, even after security had been assured by repairs of the city walls, shows how unattractive it must have been for residential purposes. One is forced to conclude that Jerusalem was still a much ruined place. Perhaps what Neh. 11:1f. implies is that a few of the more substantial buildings had survived the centuries, but that most of the old dwellings had been allowed to disintegrate in the swift way that the mud-walled and mud-roofed structure of the Orient does.¹²⁹

Yet Nehemiah could not allow the city to remain in its virtually uninhabited state.

We may say with Batten that "the problem confronting Nehemiah was to induce people to live in the city and to see that they had houses to dwell in."¹³⁰ That Nehemiah accomplished this feat is attested by Ben Sira in his remembrance that Nehemiah "raised up our homes again" (Ecclus. 49:13). Such success as Nehemiah had may partially be attributed to the presence of the Temple, the seat of all Jewish religion, in Jerusalem. In the Persian period Jewish pilgrimage became something of an important rite and because of this the citizenry of Jerusalem acquired a "peculiarly pious quality."¹³¹

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 370.

¹³⁰Batten, op. cit., p. 264.

¹³¹M. Bailey, art. cit., p. 138.

Just how normative this became is shown by the frequency with which the name Haggai ("to make a pilgrimage," "to keep a pilgrim feast") occurs in the Elephantine Papyri (eleven times) as a common name.¹³² However, the success of Jerusalem in the period following Nehemiah could not have occurred without Nehemiah's prior success in making the city a center for population.

Although a scribal addition to Micah 7:12f. makes the poverty and dire state of Jerusalem to be a result of sin,¹³³ we may pass this off as a pious oversimplification, though it is a valid insight to realize that the results of sin do manifest themselves in social situations. Jerusalem's barren unattractiveness is that with which Nehemiah has to deal.

Our textual evidence begins in 7:4-5, telling us that the city was wide and large but having few people and houses. It has often been assumed that a contradiction exists between verses 3 and 4.¹³⁴ However, Slotki¹³⁵ and Keil¹³⁶ indicate that verse 4 need not be taken literally, the statement "no houses had been built" meaning that houses had not been built in proportion to the size of the city, much space remaining. Fernandez also prefers this interpretation.¹³⁷

¹³²Ibid., pp. 132-133.

¹³³Ibid., p. 137.

¹³⁴Bowman, IB, III, p. 726.

¹³⁵Slotki, op. cit., p. 221. ¹³⁶Keil, op. cit., p. 226.

¹³⁷Comentario, p. 341.

At 7:5b the chronicler apparently picks up again, for it serves as a transition to 6-73a which is for all practical purposes a repetition of the list found in Ezra 2. Various opinions exist as to the worth of chronistic genealogies. While most scholars have taken them rather lightly, the many lists which he includes in his work, especially in the first part (i.e., Chronicles), must have stood for something other than family trees. The list here seems to list the original returnees with Zerubbabel but with sporadic bringing of the list up to date for Nehemiah's time. On the many problems involved here see the fine article of Kurt Galling.¹³⁸

That 7:5a is continued with 11:1f. is almost universally agreed on. Verse 1 tells us that the casting of lots was used to determine that 10% from the towns of the province should live in Jerusalem, 90% staying, but verse 2 alludes to some making their residence in the city willingly, if not, perhaps, by choice. Doubtless the means of choosing employed (i.e., lots) and the precision which that means gives indicates the unwillingness of most to consider Jerusalem for residential purposes. While moderns would frown on such force being exerted, wholesale transportation of peoples was not uncommon in the ancient world. Particularly was this true as a spoil of war when the skilled artisans and intelligencia of a country were moved to a foreign land. The extremity of

¹³⁸"The Gola List According to Ezra 2/Nehemiah 7," J.B.L. LXX (1951), pp. 149-158.

Nehemiah's action must be considered in light of his plight. People are an obvious necessity for any city and Jerusalem was no exception. Without inhabitants Nehemiah's adversaries would undoubtedly have been able to make havock of the walls in short fashion, and his zeal did not lead in their rebuilding for such to occur.

The verses which follow (11:3-24) indicate the extent of the laymen (vss. 3-6) and leaders living in Jerusalem and attest to Nehemiah's success in repopulation efforts. Again, this list is paralleled by that of I Chronicles 9:2-34. S.A. Cook has dealt with chronistic lists extensively¹²⁹ and sheds much light on problems of such parallels.

Nehemiah's actions in the social sphere were both extensive and significant and his success here not only saved the Judean state from extinction, but created a firm foundation for the independent state of Maccabbean times.

¹²⁹S.A. Cook, Cambridge Ancient History, III, pp. 405ff.

CHAPTER IV

ACTIONS OF RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE

It has already been noted at the outset of the preceding chapter that most interpreters limit Nehemiah's significance in a marked way, giving him no credit at all in the religious realm. I believe the last chapter has established the importance of his measures in the social field well beyond the re-wallling of Jerusalem. In like manner this chapter will seek to elucidate his role in the religious realm.. Though his reforms (or impetus to reform) may not be as extensive in this realm, they, nevertheless, are noteworthy.

DEDICATION OF THE WALLS

Perhaps the event with the most lasting significance was the dedication of the city walls. It is best to place this act sometime after the walls had been completed and the city repopulated,¹ though its exact time must remain uncertain. Yet we may assume that the act of dedication followed closely on the heels of these two measures, as the primitive mentality would not let such an important act wait for long.

While moderns do not "dedicate" to the extent of our prim-

¹Keil, op. cit, p. 274.

itive forebearers, some remnants of this still remain today. At several points along the Gulf Coast of which I know there occurs an annual festival climaxed by an event known as "The Blessing of the Fleet." Here the Roman Catholic priest throws Holy Water toward the fishing vessels, invoking the protection of God for the coming year on the fisherman and their craft and enlisting God's favours as they seek the denizens of the deep with their nets. In spite of the secular air of such an event its function is basically religious and at least its consummation is quite solemn. It resembles graphically a covenant which must be reaffirmed annually. This is only one example of an ancient dedicatory tradition which continues today.

The Hebrews were prone to dedicate almost everything, for, as Bowman notes, "through dedication secular products are made holy and placed under divine protection."² There is no question but what this act of dedication in which Nehemiah engages was prompted by his personal piety -- a factor which numerous instances manifest. Torrey's assertions that this whole episode stems from the chronicler's imagination³ does not fit Nehemiah's personal character as we have found it. Individuals were dedicated to God as the Old Testament reveals in the Samuel episode, and on a more wholesale basis we know of the Nazarites (literally "devoted one" or "separated ones" from נָזַר meaning to dedicate, to consecrate, to set apart, to vow) who lived as sacred

²IB, III, p 792.

³Composition, pp. 43-44.

persons set apart from the community by their abstinence from certain things.⁴ Such a vow taken was an act of "self-dedication" on the part of those involved, and Numbers 6:8 ties this dedication to the concept of holiness: "All the days of his separation (|77J) he is holy to Yahweh (777 7'5 777 777)." Whereas in earlier times holiness was limited to cultic items, the P tradition made even Creation a part of this realm.⁵ Genesis 2:3 says that "God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it (777'1)." All primitive associations with the root 777 have to do with separation.⁶

Not only was Nehemiah interested in giving religious sanction to the walls, for his purpose was also quite practical. The catastrophe misplaced textually in Ezra iv was all too close at hand to be forgotten. Most likely it was Sanballat and his allies who had stopped the unauthorized attempt at rebuilding with their forces and battering rams. With these foes still almost within sight Nehemiah wished not only to invoke God's protection but to make sure that He was on his side.

Our source textually here is Nehemiah 12:27-43,⁷ and most scholars have been prone to give credit for at least some of its composition to Nehemiah because of the "I" sections here. That

⁴cf. J.C. Rylaarsdam, "Nazirite," IDB, III, pp. 526-527.

⁵cf. J. Muilenburg, "Holiness," IDB, II, p. 622.

⁶Ibid., p. 617.

⁷Mediebelle, op. cit., pp. 374-376.

these sections have been worked over and over, so much as to even make them obscure,⁸ we may certainly agree. However, in the conclusion to his study Kapelrud is certainly excessive in saying that

it has not been possible to prove any difference between those sections written in the first person, and the other sections of the Ezra-narrative. Absolutely the only difference between these sections is that the first are written in the first person whereas the latter are written in the third person. And this is contingent upon the style....

We are also able to go further than to this purely negative ascertainment that there is no linguistic or stylistic difference between the sections written in the first person and the others. For we have found extreme examples of agreement and it has proven that these examples of agreement have a common denominator. And there can be no doubt whatsoever about who this common denominator is, it must be the Chronicler.⁹

In spite of this quoted statement he later says that the one difference between the Ezra-narrative and Nehemiah is that Nehemiah's memoirs enable one "to separate, with a great degree of exactitude, long sections that clearly must have belonged to the memorial."¹⁰ This section must certainly be assigned to Nehemiah's origin but not, of course, in the exact way in which it has been preserved.

Jewish tradition preserved in II Maccabees 1:18 has made the rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus on the 25th of Kislew 165 B.C. to coincide calendrically with Nehemiah's building the Temple and altar.¹¹ This is generally recognized to be an

⁸Batten, op. cit., p. 279.

⁹Kapelrud, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 96.

¹¹Slotki, op. cit., p. 257; J.C. Rylaarsdam, "Dedication, Feast of," IDB, I, pp. 812-813.

error as his measures of Temple reform do not mention such acts. If that passage altered "walls" to "Temple and altar" for religious reasons, the date would still not fit, for the only date for the completion of the walls is the "sixth month" given in Nehemiah 6:15. However, there is a connection to be found here. It is the use of חנניקא (Hannukah) in 12:27. Nehemiah's action is not a simple dedication like had been held before from the earliest times whether individually or collectively, such as the laying of a cornerstone or the consecrating of a building. Whereas the word hannukah had been used almost promiscuously before and even for items which bordered on the inconsequential, Nehemiah moves the term into a new and significant meaning. Doubtless city walls had been dedicated before not only to Yahweh but to other deities as well. But Nehemiah dedicated not merely the walls but all that was inside as well. In earlier times the Temple had been considered to be holy and the holiness extended to the immediate environs. This is doubtless reflected in the tradition that Yahweh had chosen Zion because he desired it for his habitation (Psalm 132:13) and because Zion was His "holy hill" (הר קודש) where the Davidic King would reign (Psalm 2:6). Since Zion was Yahweh's abode, from here He would roar forth (Amos 1:2) and from here He would send forth his law (Micah 4:2). But at no time did the holiness extend beyond the mount of Zion. While the minimalist view which we have taken on the extent of Nehemiah's walls does not include the later expanded city, the entire southeast hill is certainly more than the Temple environs (i.e., Zion) which was

previously considered holy. Nehemiah dedicated the whole city with the walls, and this is doubtless the basis for the pious quality which the city and its inhabitants took on. The flourishing success in the century after Nehemiah must be attributed to Nehemiah's action. At this hannukah post-exilic religion took a significant turn. The whole of the people -- priests, levites, Jerusalem dwellers and those from without -- now were no longer merely Yahwists but Yahwists with a specific racial and religious consciousness. The first consciousness made them Jews rather than mere Judeans though the term דְּתִינִי remained the same, and the second consciousness made them charter members of the phenomenon we know as Judaism. Without both of these transformations future history would have appeared much differently. All Jewish history hinges on these facts.

The account of the dedicatory procession provides us with some of the most important topographical information for Nehemiah's Jerusalem.¹² Yet it too has been modified by the chronicler's hand as is all too evident from the intrusion of Ezra's name in 12:36.¹³ Avi-Yonah's synopsis best portrays this dedicatory procession, and it is here noted:

In Nehemiah xii we find an account of the marshalling of two thanksgiving processions which circled the walls upon their completion. One company went to the left, counter-clockwise, and past the Dung Gate, the Fountain

¹²cf. Millar Burrows, "The Topography of Nehemiah 12:31-43," J.B.L., LIV (1935), pp. 29-40.

¹³Browne, op. cit., p. 178.

Gate, against the stairs of the City of David, at the going up on the wall above the house of David (near the 'House of the Mighty') even unto (79) the Water Gate eastward. The preposition 'ad appears to mark in the case of both processions the point at which they descended from the wall. The right-hand company must in any case have got down to pass through the Water Gate of the palace and so up to the Temple.

The second company went clockwise in a direction contrary to that of the description of the wall in chap. iii. Thus it passed successively the Tower of the Furnaces and the Broad Wall and continued above the Mishneh Gate; the Fish Gate and the Tower of Haneel and Meah as far as (79) the Sheep Gate, where it descended. It then turned the corner of the inner Temple Wall and stood in front of the East Gate (Mifkad).¹⁴

Verse 43 closes the incident and is vague except in that it gives an indication of the joyousness of the occasion. Because this entire episode was displaced by the chronicler, it goes without saying that there is no connection with the following verses. The measures of Temple provision taken in the following verses are artificially connected to ver. 43 because the Temple is mentioned by the chronicler or one preoccupied with the cult.

Thus, the rewalling of Jerusalem was of religious as well as practical significance. Nehemiah's influence and leadership were of supreme importance. Just as Nehemiah is responsible almost solely for the practical considerations, so, too, did he give the dedication of the walls its pious and religious stature.

EXCLUSIVISM AND PARTICULARISM

The two phenomena to be discussed in this section are very

¹⁴Avi-Yonah, art. cit., p. 248.

closely related. While they have both social and religious significance, I choose to discuss them here because I believe such social significance as they might have to be a by-product of their religious significance.

Exclusivism is that quality or attitude on the part of a people which seeks to exclude others from their association on the basis of racial qualifications. A more contemporary term meaning much the same thing is "racism." Intolerance is one of its prime characteristics. When this concept moves into the religious realm, it is known as particularism. Originally particularism was a positive category indicating that the Israelites were God's chosen people, and it is in this connection that they were "an holy people to the Lord" (Deut. 7:6, 14:2, 21) and He was the Holy One of Israel (Psalm 71:22; Isaiah 5:19, 12:6, 29:19, 55:5; Ezekiel 39:7, etc.). However, Israel came to interpret their chosenness as being something which they merited and salvation as possible for them alone. The once legitimate but now corrupted category manifested itself in the negativeness of "complete separation from the surrounding heathen nations."¹⁵

The $\square 7n$ (ban, interdict) was never followed consistently as the Hexateuch bears ample witness. While some peoples and cities were massacred according to ancient Semitic practice, most of the Canaanites and other peoples were simply left alone and gradually were assimilated into Israelite life and practice

¹⁵T. Henshaw, op. cit., "Appendix D: Particularism and Universalism," p. 338. Cf. Rowley's full scale treatment of this and related matters in The Doctrine of Election (revised ed.; London: Lutterworth, 1965).

(cf. Judges 3:5). In fact the Israelites borrowed both culturally and religiously from their neighbors, a fact which was detrimental only rarely because of Israel's remoulding of that which she borrowed. However, all of this changed with the coming of the Exile. Those deported to Babylon had to form "themselves into a close-knit society for the purpose of preserving their religion and their national identity."¹⁶ While we today look back in retrospect with horror on such measures, a realistic appraisal must give credit to Babylonian Jewry and its leaders for recognizing the dangers which they faced. Any lesser policy would have spelled failure to the Jews both nationalistically and religiously.

The exclusivistic spirit which we find in Ezra-Nehemiah is generally attributed to Babylonian Jewry, but it would be wrong to give the impression that no other attitude existed. One of the most remarkable works found in the Old Testament is a work of this period. In many ways Deutero-Isaiah is the greatest of the prophets and the apex of the Old Testament is undoubtedly his ebedh YHWH (עבד' יהוה) Songs. Second Isaiah or the Unknown Prophet of the Exile believed that history was under the Lordship of Yahweh and that salvation was available to all. Therefore, God was not Israel's possession but God of all nations. Israel's function is to point the nations to God by her life. This great prophet preached a doctrine of theocentric universalism. No doubt this type of thought never became norma-

¹⁶Ibid., p. 339.

tive in the Exile, but it is a credit to the Unknown Prophet that it could blossom in the midst of the separatism that characterized his coreligionists.

Why did not Nehemiah follow such a tradition as this? As realistic an answer as is to be found is the fact that these prophecies of Second Isaiah had had at least a century and a half in which to come true but as yet showed no signs of doing so. Nehemiah could see nothing save the suppression and ridicule of his people. No doubt such prophecies sounded as no more than pious platitudes to Nehemiah and his people in their extremity. L.E. Browne has noted that

If only the Jews had wished it, and had followed the teaching of Deutero-Isaiah, Jerusalem could have become a Mecca to which Samaritans, Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites and Arabians would have come in pilgrimage to learn the worship of the one true God.¹⁷

But they did not wish it! Universalistic tendencies present in the Exile were not even allowed to stand in a position of creative tension by Nehemiah, for his mind was made up. His only problem was the execution of his plans. Perhaps Nehemiah was driven on by the desire to be remembered in posterity. While the normal Jew was a family man who would continue to live on in the person of his son and his son's sons, Nehemiah was a bachelor and had no such memorial. If he were a eunuch (though I do not personally believe that he was), this fact would be heightened. Nehemiah had to create a place for himself in the memory of his people.

¹⁷L.E. Browne, op. cit., p. 150.

When Nehemiah initiated work on the city wall, he aided in further isolating his people from contact with their neighbors. The Samaritans were Yahweh worshippers as we well know. Their separation from Judah in the divided Kingdom was certainly superficial religiously and perhaps in other ways as well. As long as they went on pilgrimages to Jerusalem, they remained the worshippers of the same God (cf. I Kings 12:27) and basically one people. Many would doubtless have joined Nehemiah in his projects if allowed to do so, but they were isolated forcibly. Once the walls were built, hatred for the "people of the land" became more pronounced, especially for Samaritans and Ammonites.¹⁸

However, we must be careful not to condemn these peoples. We have noted several times that Nehemiah's rivalry with his adversaries was political rather than religious, and best evidence indicates that Tobiah was a Jew who was labeled with the epithet "Ammonite" because of his transjordan connections. Tobiah's name is one of the clearest indications of his religion. Since names in this primitive society were also descriptive of their bearer's character and personality, one whose name was "Yah is good" could scarcely have been anything other than a Yahwist. Likewise, in spite of his foreign name Sin-uballit must be considered a Yahwist, as the names of his two sons, Delaiah and Shelemiah, are "Yah" compounds. I cannot agree with Albright¹⁹ that this Yahwism was any different than that of the

¹⁸M. Bailey, art. cit., p. 137.

¹⁹The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra, p. 92.

returnees or those of the Exile. The Jews of Elephantine may have appealed to Samaria after the destruction of their Temple because of "close cultic sympathy,"²⁰ but this is not at all certain. The Samaritans were certainly on better grounds for relations with the surrounding peoples (goyim - גוים) than were the Jews, and doubtless they were on better terms with the Persians too. Just as Samaritans were prohibited from worshipping at Jerusalem against their own will and politically isolated so that they had no choice but to align with others,²¹ the Elephantine colonists' appeal for help to Samaria may be due to their being refused assistance or even the dignity of a response from Jerusalem.²² C.H. Gordon has postulated their heterodoxy as being due to something entirely different.²³ He believes that they came from one or more Judean enclaves in Syria who had been cut off from their fatherland since the break-up of Solomon's empire in Rehoboam's reign. This explains their ignorance of Hebrew and also their being untouched by developments in Judah since the 10th century B.C.

Gordon may be entirely right in this contention, but I believe other considerations to be more important and show that the anti-Samaritan feeling is one which reflects not this time

²⁰Ibid., p. 112, note 189.

²¹Browne, op. cit., p. 150.

²²cf. H.H. Rowley, "Papyri from Elephantine" in D. Winton Thomas, editor, Documents from Old Testament Times (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), pp. 260-261.

²³"The origin of the Jews in Elephantine," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XIV (1955), pp. 56-58.

but the hatred of later years. It is well known that the Samaritans accepted only the Torah as Scripture. Since this includes Deuteronomy, the importance of the Shechem assembly is thereby acknowledged. Obviously this could not have been if the D editors viewed the Samaritan community in light of II Kings 17. Rowley has treated that chapter as a post-exilic addition to Kings "reflecting the growing bitterness of later times."²⁴ The name Shechem means "shoulder" or "slope," a geographical designation alluding to Mount Gerizim or Mount Ebal (cf. Gen. 48:22) and descriptive of its important connection with these Samaritan holy places.²⁵ D presents not Zion but Mount Gerizim as God's chosen place. The Samaritan text of Deuteronomy 12:5 (Hebrew 12:4) says that God "has chosen" a holy place as compared to the Hebrew's "will choose", and in 27:4 the Samaritan text represents the curse as pronounced on Ebal and the blessing on Gerizim rather than the reverse as the Hebrew reads.²⁶ G.F. Moore comments on the latter passage by saying that

the whole tenor of the context demands 'Gerizim', as the Samaritan Hebrew reads; ...Shechem-Gerizim was therefore manifestly the place so often spoken of in Deuteronomy where God would put his name; Jerusalem had usurped a precedence never meant for it.²⁷

²⁴"The Samaritan Schism in Legend and History," in Israel's Prophetic Heritage (Festschrift James Muilenburg, edited by Bernard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 210.

²⁵cf. W.L. Reed, "Shechem (city)," IDB, IV, p. 313.

²⁶cf. T.H. Gaster, "Samaritans," ibid., p. 194; the "holy place" chosen is obviously and undeniably Gerizim.

²⁷G.F. Moore, Judaism, I, pp. 25-26.

Rowley notes that Ezekiel has no anti-Samaritan feeling and that he even represents Jerusalem as "a city of doubtful racial purity."²⁸ Most scholars agree that Ezekiel thought of the central shrine as being the one in the center of the land rather than at Jerusalem, and Moses Gaster notes that

anyone who studies his description of the Temple to be and the place in which it is to be erected in the future, will find that he rejects Jerusalem and selects a central spot in Palestine, which could be nothing else but Sichem or Mount Gerizim.²⁹

One of the ways of saying Shechem was "navel of the land" or "center of the land" (קֶרֶן הָאֶרֶץ) as Judges 9:37 shows.³⁰

From the preceding it certainly appears that the Samaritans had much in their favor. Again, let me say that the hostility of Jews and Samaritans in Nehemiah's time was political rather than religious. However, undoubtedly some religious competition follows, and I view the Elephantine colony's failure to get a reply from Jerusalem as part of such competition, Jerusalem giving its foes the silent treatment. S.A. Cook has suggested ties between Bethel and Elephantine as supplying the answer to Samaritan-Judean relations.³¹ Bethel was an old holy place long before we hear about it in the Abraham narratives,

²⁸Rowley, art. cit. (cf. note 24, above), p. 212.

²⁹Moses Gaster, The Samaritans (1925), p. 15; quoted by Rowley, ibid., p. 213.

³⁰W.L. Reed, loc. cit.

³¹"The Significance of the Elephantine Papyri for the History of Hebrew Religion," American Journal of Theology, XIX (1915), pp. 346-382; pp. 376-378 on the Bethel-Jerusalem problem.

and it ranks second only to Jerusalem in the Old Testament in frequency of occurrence. Jeroboam I made it the Northern Kingdom's chief shrine when he broke with Jerusalem (cf. I Kings 12:26-33, II Chronicles 13:8-9), and it remained so until the time of Amos.³² Bethel's importance religiously is shown by Judges 20:31 and 21:19 where Shiloh is located in terms of Bethel rather than Shechem.

Cook notes that it is a wonder that the P editors did not remove the "tell-tale evidence" of the Older JE school and terms this "a striking example of the compromise between different levels of thought."³³ Genesis 28:18ff. preserves in writing the clearest recollection of the massebah -- the sacred stone of Bethel -- which was primarily a seat of supernatural presence and influence. In earlier times it was not looked on as a harmless memorial as it was in later history. Cook believes that the "cruder ideas," not to be confused with the more spiritual developments, connect with the Elephantine data. The massebah of Bethel aligns itself to the Masgeda (stele or altar) which is joined with Anath-Yahu in the oath. Joshua 22 and its story of the transjordan altar 'ed is an example of how the editors tried to show unity of worship as having existed from the beginning. Rivalry of religious centers was only natural when one considers the various competing conceptions of deity,

³²cf. J.L. Kelso, "Bethel (Sanctuary)," IDB, I, pp. 391-392.

³³Cook, art. cit., p. 376.

and "of all the rivalries one of the latest and most significant appears to have been that between Jerusalem and Bethel."³⁴ On the period following Nehemiah, Cook concludes:

A period of very close interrelationship between Judah and Samaria was followed by one of hostility, and the exclusivism associated with the names of Nehemiah and Ezra is a new phase in the period -- culminating in the Samaritan schism. The question arises therefore whether the silence of Bagohi and Jerusalem on the first occasion is to be connected with the developments in Palestine; and what significance, if any, is to be attached to the fact that the appeal to both Bagohi and the sons of Sanballat receives attention and that Bagohi and Delaiah reply.... Since the reply comes from Bagohi and Delaiah ben Sanballat, it may be that the son of the Samaritan was especially interested in the colony, perhaps because it had traditional associations with Bethel; or perhaps, too, his own relations with Jerusalem were strained, and Judean exclusivism rankled.³⁵

We may safely assume that this rivalry was present in Nehemiah's time also, for it did not develop overnight. A religious rivalry between Samaria and Jerusalem may very well have been a secondary factor in Nehemiah's isolationist tactics. Though Bethel was shunned from the time of Jeroboam's innovation of Bulls as part of the worship of Yahweh and though Jewish historians treat it harshly because of this fact, the worshippers at the Northern shrine still considered themselves true Yahweh devotees. Doubtless the same must be said for the colonists in Egypt in bringing Anath to the altar with Yahweh. The first situation cannot be viewed negatively and used to argue forward nor can the second be used to argue back to Nehemiah's time to

³⁴Ibid., p. 377.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 378-379.

make legitimate the position of Jerusalem. Bethel (or Gerizim) and Elephantine only appear unorthodox when viewed from a later and more developed viewpoint. While what comes to be known as "normative Judaism" must certainly look back to the foundation given by Nehemiah, that phenomenon would also appear in a risqué light had another party like Samaria been able to assert its supremacy. No sound basis exists for determining that the faith of Sanballat and Tobiah was anything other than worthy Yahwism. If measured by a standard applicable for their own day, their devotion to their cause and the faith to which they hold appear as exemplary. Such only points out all the more the secondary character of the religious rivalry and the primariness of the political situation. Nehemiah's action against these adversaries must not be allowed to reflect on their integrity.

The key to Nehemiah's exclusiveness must be looked for in his predecessor Ezra. It was Ezra who initiated the habdalah (הבדלה) policy in dealing with the mixed marriage altercations. After Ezra called an assembly in Jerusalem for all offenders, all who did not appear before the counsel of the elders were "separated from the congregation of the community" (Ezra 10:8). The root הבדל means to divide or separate. The hiphil is not used in this verse but the meaning is nevertheless intensive. The use of the intensive by the P editor or chronicler in Nehemiah 13:3 must be related to his understanding of Ezra's policy, and these verses must be viewed together. Norman H. Smaith has pointed out that one of the most convincing arguments for

assigning Genesis 1 to P is the use of habdalah.³⁶ It pictures God as separating decisively light from dark, etc. This word is a late one which can be isolated to P usage. Some scholars such as Fernandez³⁷ want to take the extent of the separation as merely isolation from cultural, racial and religious affairs, while Bowman³⁸ seems to be undecided on this matter, interpreting Ezra 10:8 as meaning "ostracized from the society of true Israel" and taking no position on the latter. I believe that here we must interpret חל intensively, and its meaning must be "to separate by decisive action." Such satisfies the setting and must be interpreted as meaning "excommunicated and deprived of rights as citizens" and "banishment from the land."³⁹ Batten also interprets this in terms of excommunication.⁴⁰

Excommunication must not be taken in a modern light but in its ancient social setting. Excommunication was taken lightly, even as a nonconsequential act, by Joe DiMaggio and Fidel Castro, for they could go right on living with such an edict. But for an individual under ancient and primitive and repressive social stigmas and taboos, it must have been tantamount to modern life imprisonment, if not more than this. M.H. Pope has noted Ezra's action thusly:

³⁶art. cit.

³⁷Comentario, p. 430.

³⁸IB, III, pp. 655, 803.

³⁹Slotki, op. cit., pp. 171, 262.

⁴⁰Batten, op. cit., pp. 287, 342.

The first instance of the use of the threat of excommunication against recalcitrant members of the religious community was that of Ezra in his campaign against mixed marriages; failure to respond to Ezra's summons to a meeting in Jerusalem was to be punished by the confiscation of all the offender's property and expulsion from the congregation of the exiles (Ezra 10:8). This was a mitigated form of the ancient herem (חרם), which involved death for the person and destruction for his property (Lev. 27:28-29).⁴¹

Although Ezra's threat concerns only the members of a specific religious community, that is, the returnees, it is very difficult to support such action. Even if we could agree that "Ezra's edict commanding the Hebrews of his day to divorce their non-Jewish spouses was not prompted by fears of the danger to racial purity, but rather to the religious integrity of the recently reconstituted commonwealth,"⁴² the wholesale dissolution of family ties which he required as the basis for continuance in the community is unprecedented in biblical history. We have already noted at several points the dichotomy which exists in Ezra-Nehemiah between חרם on the one hand and לחם on the other, the former taking on a racial distinction rather than the usual territorial one. Some of the polar contrast presented in Ezra-Nehemiah concerning this matter is doubtless due to the situation in the Chronicler's time, and must be read in light of editorial heightening to satisfy the

⁴¹M.H. Pope, "Excommunication," IDB, II, p. 184.

⁴²Rabbi Bernard Heller, The Jewish Concept of the Chosen People (Popular Studies in Judaism, Number 31; New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, n.d.), p. 11.

conditions of that later time. Nevertheless, most would agree that Ezra's forcing of wholesale divorce on this group of exiles who were his subjects under threat of excommunication was an act which was racially motivated. Though Nehemiah did not follow such an extreme course, he nevertheless did pursue the same general philosophy, as Nehemiah 13:23-29 indicates. The chief difference between Ezra's and Nehemiah's actions here is that Ezra dealt with the problem of "mixed marriages" on the communal level while Nehemiah dealt with it more personally. Nehemiah 13:25 characterizes Nehemiah's action as quite harsh, but we may view it as not unexpected of one in a position of prominence such as he. Cursing, beating and pulling the hair of the offenders was not altogether negative to the primitive mentality, and it actually called forth respect in many cases. Nehemiah's action called for only a pledge that further "mixed marriages" would not be consummated, and the solemnity of 13:27 would seem to indicate the populus' recognition of the evil effects of such marriages on the community. Nehemiah uses the incident of Solomon's marrying of foreign wives as an a fortiori argument⁴³ to press his point that such alliances lead to moral chaos.

Nehemiah's action was much less harsh than that of his predecessor Ezra, but still it is Ezra's policy of racism that is being supported. We might dismiss the mention of Moab and Ammon in 13:23 as an influence of 13:1-3 and the P editor of a

⁴³Comentario, p. 445.

later time, but still this leaves the "Ashdod" reference with which to deal. Nehemiah's attitude is the intolerant one with which he grew up in Babylonia but no less necessary in these circumstances to maintain the integrity of the community. His situation bespeaks the contemporary answer to the problematic question of "who is a Jew?" The answer to this question, based on a long historical tradition, is anyone who is born of a Jewish mother. There is a trace of this attitude in Nehemiah's concern, for he rightly saw a threat to the Jewishness of the returnees through foreign wives and mothers. Ashdod may simply be a reference to remaining remnants of Israelite groups which fled at the hands of the Assyrians in 722 B.C., and, if so, their living in Judah and exemplifying a conflated language would be explained. However, since Ashdod was the middle Persian satrapy of Abar-Nahara⁴⁴ and because of the reference to Tyre a few verses earlier, I am inclined to look on this as a reference to Philistine influence. Intermarriage with non-Israelitish stock had a long history in the Old Testament, and there is no valid reason to conclude that the strictness of Ezra and Nehemiah caused it to cease entirely. Redcliffe N. Solomon has indicated that here we find the "last echo" of the Philistine and that this is a "last echo" because the Philistines were "gradually absorbed into the Israelite nation."⁴⁵ He postulates the existence of

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 301.

⁴⁵Redcliffe N. Solomon, "What has become of the Philistines? A Biologist's Point of View," Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement, 1925, p. 77.

the Philistine or pseudo-gentilic type -- one of his three biological types of modern Jews -- in our midst today as an indication of this absorption. Browne says of Nehemiah's measures against mixed marriages, in view of his other strictures, that "it was natural that he should pursue the policy of putting every barrier between Jew and non-Jew."⁴⁶

In spite of the fact that the garbled records at this point only give a single specific instance and that the prominent one involving Sanballat's son-in-law, it must be assumed that the problem was a formidable one. The little book of Malachi mirrors many of the same problems Nehemiah faced, and most scholars date it to circa 450 B.C. accordingly. Malachi 2:15b hints at a most serious problem of a matrimonial nature, and it is possible that something of this nature is Nehemiah's problem too although we have no specific evidence for it. "Let none break faith with the wife of his youth" carries the thrust of Malachi's third oracle which is concerned with mixed marriage and divorce. The forsaking of one's faithful wife after she has borne him his children for a younger and prettier one was a prevalent problem just before Nehemiah arrived. The normal marital pattern for the Hebrew male has been excellently characterized for us by Ludwig Köhler,⁴⁷ but it is clear that mixed marriage or the like was not a part of the proceedings since marriage was thought of "rather

⁴⁶Browne, op. cit., p. 159.

⁴⁷Hebrew Man (translated by Peter R. Ackroyd; London: SCM, 1956), pp. 87-95.

as an occasion of the family than as a matter of the inclinations and feelings of the individual."⁴⁸ There must have been many instances of mixed marriage altercations besides the one involving Sanballat's son-in-law, and we can only conclude on the basis of evidence given that further such unions were discouraged according to Nehemiah's racist philosophy. The union of two Jews was the only legitimate pattern so far as he was concerned. This moral reform occurred in his second administration after he had been absent from their midst for some time. Nehemiah had in mind the purity of the race in line with strict Babylonian standards. Since a Benjamite-Judahite pedigree was required for one to be able to be a part of the community, many legitimate Jews were categorically ruled out. Because those "expelled" from the ^{TD} on such a technical ground were still for the most part religiously concerned individuals, they, no doubt, sought others of like mind with whom they could associate and practice their religion. Nehemiah had nothing to do, at least directly, with the setting of the barrier between Samaritan and Jew. This was to come quite a bit later,⁴⁹ but we may rightly assay that Nehemiah's racist action in alienating the returnees from the "people of the land" makes him one of the precipitators of the schism, his action helping to widen the gap then existing between the two -- a gap which would eventually become a chasm.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 94.

⁴⁹cf. supra, p. 209, note 24 for Rowley's article dealing with this problem.

There is little doubt but that the P editor has been influenced in his attitude toward Ammon and Moab by the Deuteronomist in Deuteronomy 23:3-7,⁵⁰ and this editorial hand may account for their inclusion in 13:23 also. But in spite of our noting that Nehemiah's dealing with extraneous marriages in a somewhat more humane manner than his predecessor Ezra, Nehemiah himself is not exactly free from such harshness. No where does Nehemiah's exclusiveness show itself more strongly and highhandedly than his answer to his adversaries in 2:20c: "but you have no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem." How sweeping is this three-fold indictment! Because of the political rivalry between the repatriados and the remnant whose forefathers had never left the land, Nehemiah excluded the surrounding peoples who thought of themselves as good Yahwists from a share, from a fixed right (that is, an inherited right) in Jerusalem and from even a זכרון. The third indictment is that which puts the icing on the cake. The first two terms abrogated former rights of possession which these peoples formerly had but "no memorial" signifies that there would be no remembrance of these peoples as ever having had any connection with the Holy City, most harsh indeed for the primitive mentality as they all strove to be remembered in the future. Such segregation may have been necessary in the circumstances, but even so it shows Nehemiah's hard-core exclusivism.

⁵⁰cf. S.R. Driver's excellent analysis of this in A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy (I.C.C.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), pp. 259-262.

Nehemiah's isolationist tactics had succeeded in making Judahites become Jews -- separated ones, truly nivdalim, truly pherous. If Nehemiah knew the D tradition in anything like it has been preserved for us, he would have realized that 23:3-7 was followed by some qualifying passages which made room for heathen who were truly penitent and willing to take on the sign of circumcision. The Prophetic corpus points out at many points the folly of interpreting the chosenness of Israel as a possession due to merit or a matter of biology. Amos 9:7 reminds Israel against the folly of such thinking: "Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O People of Israel?" says the Lord. "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?" (Revised Standard Version). Here Amos chides his people for thinking that they were any better than the Ethiopians (or Cushites) who, because they were outside the group of civilized nations known to them, were thought to be in a least favored position to Yahweh.⁵¹ Isaiah of Jerusalem makes God say "My heart cries out for Moab" (Isa. 15:5) and again "...as to Moab, be thou a cover to him from the face of the spoiler" (Isa. 16:4). Jeremiah sees God as protector of the Tammanites, Edomites and Kedarites (Jer. 49:11) and as moaning for Moab because of the punishment he must deal them (Jer. 48:31). Nehemiah's spirit must certainly be viewed as alien to the prophetic voice, and his reform may be characterized

⁵¹on this cf. H.G. Mitchell, Amos: An Essay in Exegesis (revised edition; Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1900), pp. 170-171.

as being anti-prophetic. This is all too evident from 6:14 where Nehemiah places the prophetess Nodiah and the other prophets into the same class as Sanballat and Tobiah. On this Kuenen has aptly noted the following:

History teaches us that the reformation of Ezra and Nehemiah nearly coincides in date with the disappearance of prophecy in Israel. Can this be pure accident? Rather is it evident at once that the prophets required a different atmosphere from that which was produced by the measures of these two men. The prophet is the man of inspiration and enthusiasm; his sphere can in no way be measured out and circumscribed; he is driven to act and speak by what he sees; the anxious calculation of the consequences of his actions or words is unknown to him. Thus there is no room for him in such a society as Ezra and Nehemiah tried to establish. He is "the man of the spirit," (Hos. ix.7) and therefore a child of freedom. He must be able to speak as his heart prompts him, upon every subject which seems to him to concern religion, against all who endanger the spiritual worship of Jahveh. We have no difficulty in discovering in the writings of the prophets before the exile more than one saying which, spoken in Ezra's days, would have been considered high treason....Now let it not be thought from this that Ezra and Nehemiah repressed the prophetic preaching by force, or at all events were ready to do so as soon as it first appeared, so that it disappeared solely or chiefly through these violent measures or the fear of them. The truth is rather, as is evident from the mere fact that these two men came forward in this manner, that the time of free productiveness was past in Israel, and had changed of itself, as it were, into a period devoted to the collection and preservation of the treasures already produced. Their reformation and the cessation of prophecy are not related as cause and effect, but are the two sides of one and the same phenomenon.⁵²

A silencing of the prophetic spirit is a result of Nehemiah's action, and even the demise of this class in Israel. We may fur-

⁵²A. Kuenen, The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State, Volume II (translated from the Dutch by Alfred Heath May; London: Williams and Norgate, 1882), pp. 240-241.

ther agree with Kuenen that

it was even most natural that the prophetic order of those days was ill-disposed towards Ezra and looked upon his companion Nehemiah with evil eyes. Supposing it to be true that some members of that order disgraced their name, conspired with the foreigner and took refuge in deceit -- still their prophetic instinct, that spirit that animated them as a class, very justly rebelled against the efforts of the priest and scribe from Babylonia. Nay, even had they all been unworthy representatives of the title they bore, prophecy would still have had grounds for protesting against the new state of affairs which Ezra and Nehemiah were attempting to create.⁵³

Prophets were an integral part of Israel's progress. Now this voice has been silenced. True, one will appear in the tradition now and then, but one such as Joshua ben Joseph is forced to operate on the periphery of the tradition because of religious censure, and eventually his devotees find themselves alienated from the tradition entirely. Prophecy is over in Hebrew religion at the moment the phenomenon of Judaism appears. Nehemiah's crystallization of ideals was stifling to the prophetic vision. It is no wonder that the individual is in a subserviant position to the community throughout Jewish history.

Nehemiah's anti-prophetic and anti-universalistic programs go hand in hand. While Nehemiah was almost entirely successful in silencing the prophetic factor in Israel, he was somewhat less than successful in dealing with universalistic motifs. In fact, his intolerant judgment on the heathen and surrounding nations prompted two of the most noble defences of an open attitude to be found in the entire Old Testament -- the books of

⁵³Ibid., pp. 241-242.

Jonah and Ruth. It is not our purpose to deal with these here, for they are not without their problems. Suffice it to say that both deal with the problem of intolerance in different ways: Jonah from a standpoint of narrowness and lack of concern, and Ruth from a point of view of compassionate understanding that ruined the pedigree of one of Israel's chief heroes. These books may be said to have been successful in that they maintained a tension between them and the prevailing attitudes. Yet in initiating Judaism with these attitudes Nehemiah set the standard for Jews and Judaism from that day to this. Judaism is a "people" religion concerned with and bound to a past as Eastern haskalah and the opening attempts at Reform found out in the nineteenth century. The fusion of race and religion by Nehemiah are still to be seen on the current scene, so thoroughgoing were his measures. Exclusivism and particularism triumphed over universalism.

CULTIC REFORM

The area to be dealt with now might be passed over by most but some brief words are in order. A crucial problem concerning Nehemiah's activity here is his status as a layman. How could cultic reform be accomplished through a layman? Nehemiah's unclerical status was no barrier to his zeal for the Torah, and because he was also armed with official power as pehah he commanded wide influence and respect. The lot of his subjects and their forebearers from the time of return had not been a happy one. Rather, it had been one of "uninterrupted disappointment."

So bad was their plight that only the few could continue to believe in Israel's destiny.⁵⁴ Nehemiah's zeal is the factor which turned the tide.

This zeal was directed toward the Torah and toward making it the normative standard in Jerusalem. The Torah was placed in a position of prime importance and obeying its precepts was most desirable. Nehemiah's predecessor Ezra was both priest and scribe, the first of the latter category. The priest's position was within the hierarchical structure and the Temple, a position which held considerable sway up to the time of Ezra and sometime beyond. However, Ezra placed his weight upon the scribal function of his mission, thereby raising the Law to a position of exaltation above the priesthood. Nehemiah, too, accented this tendency in spite of the several measures of cultic reform he pursued. Kuenen rightly assesses this phenomenon as follows:

The outcome of the whole of this inquiry can be summed up in a few words. A new period in the history of Israel's religion begins with Ezra and Nehemiah. That which had long been in preparation comes into existence under their influence: Judaism is founded. The characteristic of this phase in the development of the religion of the Israelites lies in this, that it starts from the revealed will of Jahveh, the Law, acknowledges it as the rule of its faith and life, and refers everything to it.⁵⁵

A real problem of ascribing cultic reform measures to Nehemiah concerns the dilemma of what to do with chapter ten of the book bearing his name. Multiple positions and sub-positions

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 216.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 249.

on this matter are possible so that in many ways it is one of the greatest literary problems in the book. The fullest and perhaps best treatment of the problem yet to appear is by Andrés Ibañez Arana⁵⁶ which deals with all of the alternatives. Many scholars have relegated it to a part of the Ezra complex, thus having nothing to do with Nehemiah's mission. Bowman has argued that the basic material of chapter ten less the lists of names shows affinities with chapter thirteen and that "ch. 10 is best explained as a summary of the items included in the oath which Nehemiah required during his second administration (cf. 13:25). As such the material is now dislocated and belongs after ch. 13."⁵⁷ Otto Eissfeldt's conclusion, reached after examining the various possibilities, is much weightier. I find this position to be very attractive and it is here presented as a working basis in this difficult area:

it ... appears that the cultic actions mentioned in x, 31-40 correspond very largely with the measures carried through by Nehemiah in xiii, 4-31, we should link ch. x with these measures and assume that in connection with them, perhaps at their conclusion to ensure their continued observance, Nehemiah urged the people to make the formal declaration of ch. x, just as, according to ch. v, in a similar way he compelled them to desist from making demands upon their poorer compatriots. It does not automatically follow from this that the assumption made by Bertholet and Schaeder is correct, namely that Neh. x comes from the Nehemiah Memoirs. It may well be that the

⁵⁶"Sobre la colocación original de Neh. 10," Estudios Bíblicos (Series 2, vol. 10 (1951)), pp. 379-402; cf. also the article of A. Jepsen, "Nehemia 10," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LXVI (1954), pp. 87-106.

⁵⁷IB, III, p. 757.

the document came to the Chronicler from elsewhere, perhaps from the Temple archives. But it seems certain that we should recognize what took place in Neh. x as Nehemiah's own action.⁵⁸

Apart from the problem of chapter ten we may ascribe certain significant acts of a cultic nature to Nehemiah. Of chief interest here is the Tobiah episode. We have already noticed that Tobiah was one of the three chief adversaries which Nehemiah faced in his first administration. When Nehemiah was on the scene, no one dared challenge his authority, but when he returned to Persia for a time, the adversaries were quick to reassert their previous claims. Tobiah, because of his transjordan connections and holdings, obviously needed some base from which he could operate while in Jerusalem. By friendship with Eliashib he was able to secure quarters in the Temple itself. On his return from Persia Nehemiah was horrified to find this reversion of his policy, and here Nehemiah's action undoubtedly is religiously and piously motivated. Rowley notes that "Nehemiah did not rejoice in this evidence of religious sympathy with the worship of the Temple but threw Tobiah out lock, stock and barrel."⁵⁹ Bowman notes that this action "is in keeping with Nehemiah's volatile personality."⁶⁰ His action must be related to his habdalah policy but in its cultural isolation

⁵⁸Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction (Peter R. Ackroyd, translator; New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 549.

⁵⁹cf. Israel's Prophetic Heritage, p. 217.

⁶⁰IB, III, p. 808.

aspects rather than on Tobiah's being an Ammonite racially. The religious nature of this action is further underscored by the purificatory rites which were found necessary to restore things to a proper basis.⁶¹ Nehemiah's authority over even the Temple and its personnel is seen in 13:9 ("Then I commanded, and they cleansed ...").

Ezra's making the Torah the basis of the community eventually led to the elevation of the synagogue over the Temple as Sopherism became more important. Yet, the Temple was not taken lightly throughout its existence, and Nehemiah does certainly not allow such here. His religious actions are of extreme consequence for the Jerusalemites and later Jewry. Nehemiah 10:34 indicates his concern for the "house of our God" by seeing that wood is supplied for the altars. This was a basic provision since sacrifice was the most important cultic act. The precision associated with the designation of providers gives an indication as to how important Nehemiah thought this element of Temple reform to have been. Casting lots by priestly manipulation of the Urim and Thummim left little doubt as to certitude, only yea or nea being possible. This same method he had used before to furnish inhabitants for Jerusalem, a reform without which other reforms would have been both impossible and unnecessary. Wood was not only important for sacrificial offer-

⁶¹cf. R.H. Pfeiffer, Religion in the Old Testament (New York: Harper, 1961), pp. 28-31 on purifications in general; Pederson, Israel, Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), III-IV, pp. 747-748 on purification rites in Babylonia.

ings. Apart from this its being consumed by fire provided a primitive symbol often associated with the presence of God i.e., light - $\gamma(\lambda')$.

Nehemiah was not concerned only with the Temple per se but with its functionaries as well. Nehemiah 13:10-14 tells how he made it possible for the Levites and singers to return to the Temple by securing support for them. Such had not been the rule previously, and these classes had to flee the city for the country where they could cultivate fields for their necessities. The Jerusalem Temple now had a permanent staff of cultic functionaries as a result of Nehemiah's efforts. Lack of empathy for cultic matters is described more fully in Malachi which means that the problem was existent for some time before Nehemiah's tenure in Jerusalem. Nehemiah's authority and the making of the tithe again normative corrected the lack of support from which the Levites had suffered. It might be said that Nehemiah's action here can be characterized as reestablishing the rights of the clergy.

A final area of cultic reform concerned restoring the Sabbath to its proper place. In truly pious passion Nehemiah reminds his subjects that the low position of Jerusalem historically has been due to its "profaning the Sabbath" (13:18). Just prior to the Babylonian Captivity Jeremiah had campaigned for Sabbath reform and the restoration of proper observance (cf. Jeremiah 17:19-27), and Fernandez thinks that Nehemiah is fol-

lowing Jeremiah here.⁶² While this certainly is possible, knowing Nehemiah's zeal for the Law, we may regard Nehemiah's action here as a guarding against infractions of the Law in the $\overline{\text{נְתִיבֵי הַתּוֹרָה}}$ sense of Pirke Aboth 1:2. That this "fencing the Torah" tradition was to be heightened throughout Sopheric history and would crystalize into the rigidity of first century Pharasicism's six hundred and twelve laws dealing with Sabbath observance may be taken as an indication of Nehemiah's failure in his strictures here. However, if the covenant ceremony described in Nehemiah 10 is in any way authentic, we may grant him a certain success in this and other reform measures and may suppose that his own dominant stature maintained legitimate Sabbath observance so long as he continued on in Jerusalem. Every conceivable type of labour and merchandizing were taking place, but all ceased when Nehemiah made Jerusalem a "closed" city on the Sabbath. When the expelled merchants camped outside the walls and waited impatiently for the Sabbath to be over so their selling could continue, Nehemiah threatened to do them physical harm if they appeared there again. Browne indicates that they may have been there trying to smuggle their goods to ones inside the walls for dissemination,⁶³ but Nehemiah's own servants soon stopped this possibility by keeping the gates of Jerusalem closed for the duration of the Sabbath. They were reinforced by a body of Levites which gave the proceedings a distinctly religious quality. Again Nehemiah

⁶²Comentario, p. 439.

⁶³Browne, op. cit., p. 158.

proved to be the master of the situation.

It is no wonder that Nehemiah's acts of both social and religious significance and consequence caused him to be placed in tradition with the "Men of the Great Synagogue." The entire problem concerning the function or even existence of such a body is very problematical,⁶⁴ and these cannot be discussed here. Yet most Jewish traditions contain a kernel of truth, the problem being the finding of that kernel. Nehemiah's listing in such a grouping shows that posterity approved of his reforms and of his establishing the foundation on which later normative Judaism could build. Nehemiah's significance in both social and religious realms has, I believe, been firmly established in the preceding pages. Tradition has by including him in the "Great Synagogue" affirmed his acts in cementing the Jewish community at a crucial time and in the founding of Judaism. While many of his measures seem harsh by later standards, if placed in context most would agree that $\varsigma\iota\tau\lambda\eta\eta$ would not be too strong an adjective to describe this formative individual.

⁶⁴On the many problems concerning the "Great Synagogue," cf. Moore, Judaism, III, pp. 7-11, and H. Englander, "The Men of the Great Synagogue," Hebrew Union College Annual, Jubilee Volume (1925), pp. 145-169.

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