

The
BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGIST



Published By
The American Schools of Oriental Research
(Jerusalem and Baghdad)
409 Prospect St., New Haven 11, Conn.

Vol. IX

February, 1946

No. 1

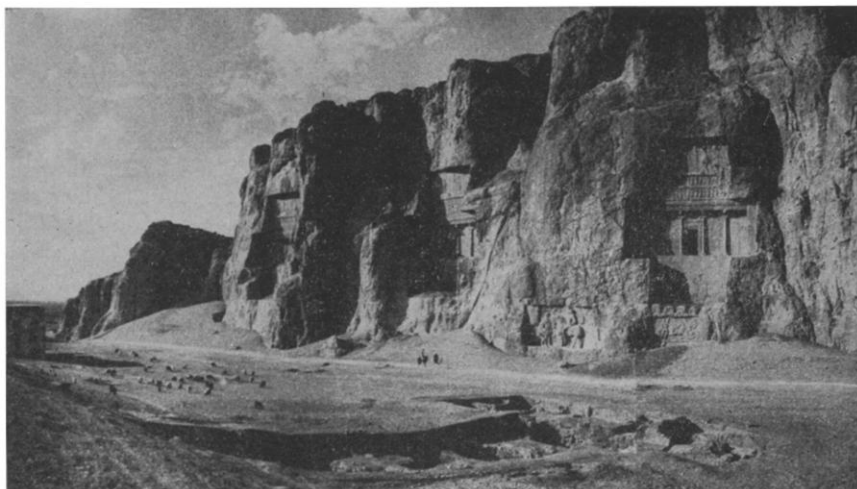


Fig. 1. Tombs of Persian kings at Naqsh-i-Rustam, Iran. On the right is the tomb of Darius I (522-486), early in whose reign Zerubbabel was governor of Judah and who gave special permission for the rebuilding of the temple to proceed (Ezra 3,5-6). In the center is the tomb of Darius II (?) who reigned from 423-404 B. C. The tomb at the left is thought to be that of Artaxerxes I (465-424), the monarch who appointed his cupbearer, Nehemiah, as governor of Judah (Neh. 1-2). The tomb of Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) is to the right, outside the picture. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF JUDAH FROM THE DAYS OF
JOSIAH TO ALEXANDER THE GREAT**

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The Biblical Archaeologist is published quarterly (February, May, September, December) by the American Schools of Oriental Research. Its purpose is to meet the need for a readable, non-technical, yet thoroughly reliable account of archaeological discoveries as they are related to the Bible.

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Subscription Price: 50c per year, payable to the **American Schools of Oriental Research, 409 Prospect St., New Haven, 11.**

Entered as second-class matter, October 2, at the Post Office at New Haven, Connecticut, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

[*EDITOR'S NOTE: Owing to unavoidable circumstances the promised article on the Septuagint by Professor Orlinsky has been delayed. In its place we present a review of the history of Judah from the fall of the Judean Kingdom through the Exilic and Post-Exilic Periods by Professor Albright. This review was written as sections 9 and 10 in a survey of Old Testament history prepared for the book, Judaism and the Jews, edited by President Louis Finkelstein of the Jewish Theological Seminary (to be published toward the end of this year or at the beginning of the next through a grant-in-aid by the American Jewish Committee.) We are greatly indebted to President Finkelstein for permission to publish this material in advance. While some may be unable to follow or agree with all of the conclusions which the article presents (in part owing to the necessity of surveying so much material in so brief a space), it will be noted that here is the type of history, with its careful interweaving of archaeological and literary data, which is now badly needed.*]

Judah declined very rapidly after Josiah's death, in 609 B. C. (II Kgs. 23:29-30). Egyptian rule was superseded within seven years by Chaldaean, when Eliakim (Jehoiakim) was forced to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar's army. His rebellion not long afterwards brought swift retribution, but before the Chaldaean army laid siege to Jerusalem the Jewish king died or was assassinated and his young son, Jehoiachin, went into exile in his place (598 B. C., II Kgs. 24:15; Jer. 22:24 ff.).

THE GREAT REFORM OF JOSIAH

Among the most significant of the undertakings which had been sponsored by Josiah must be reckoned the authoritative collection of the historical traditions of Israel into a new corpus, based on the ancient code found in the Temple (II Kgs. 22:3 ff.). This code was expanded and edited (it is now known as the Book of Deuteronomy), and supplemented by a collection of the historical traditions of the Conquest (Joshua) and subsequent periods (Judges, Samuel and Kings), with a running theological commentary which pointed out the close relationship between evil-doing and divine retribution. Begun after the finding of the ancient code (which had originally been compiled in Northern Israel and carried to Jerusalem after the Fall of Samaria) in 622 B. C., this great work may not have been completed until years after Josiah's death in 609; it was then brought up to date and reedited about 560 B. C. The enthusiasm shown by the Deuteronomist for the work of the prophets and the closeness of his style to that of the prose sections of Jeremiah shows that the two

were written in the same period and under similar auspices; the striking similarity between the rhetorical style of the Deuteronomist and Jeremiah and that of the Lachish Letters¹ forms a strong additional argument in favor of dating the work of the former in the last generation before the Fall of Jerusalem.

Informing the work of the Deuteronomist is a pronounced archaic flavor, arising partly from a desire to seek salvation for the tottering land of Judah by going back to Israel's early history. As a conscious effort to recapture the letter and the spirit of Moses, founder of Israel's institutions, it represents a nostalgic return to the past as the source of all good things. No longer was there facile optimism about Israel's future. As the Northern Kingdom and most of its neighbors had fallen, so would Judah unless it

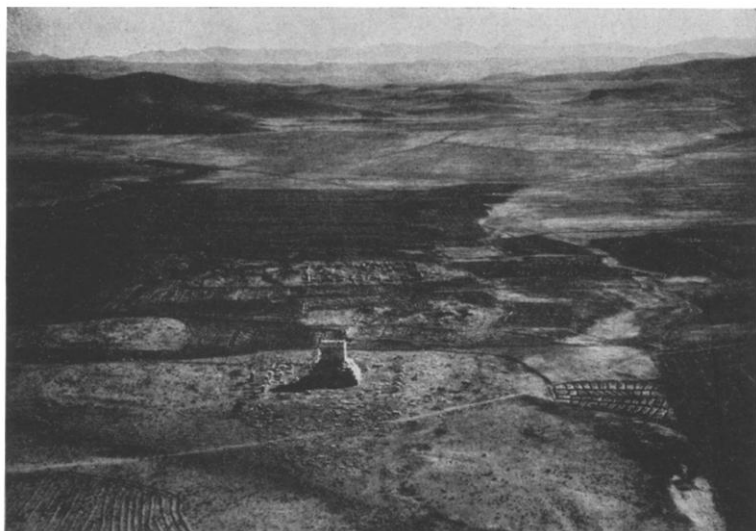


Fig. 2. The tomb of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire whose decree freed the Jews from exile (Ezra 1), at Pasargadae, Iran. (The Aerial Survey of the Oriental Institute, the Mary-Helen Warden Foundation)

abandoned its evil modern ways and its sophisticated adaptations of foreign culture. Some men of Judah went to extremes; among them were the Rechabites, who went so far as to eschew all agriculture along with other innovations of civilization, attracting favorable comment from Jeremiah himself (ch. 35).

(1. These are a group of letters written by the officer in charge of an outpost to the commander in Lachish shortly before the fall of Judah in 587 B. C.: see BA 1.4, pp 30-32; Albright, *Bulletin of the ASOR*, Nos. 58, 61, 70; Gordon, *The Living Past* (1941), ch. IX; Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* (1941), pp. 184 f., 252 ff. — G. E. W.)

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH AND THE FALL OF JUDAH

Jeremiah's poetic addresses to the people of Judah are couched in singularly beautiful verses, which plastically reproduce his intense hatred of paganizing ritual and all kinds of cant. In particular he attacks conventional exaltation of the Temple and its sacrificial ritual at the expense of elementary justice and kindness. Under such conditions, in which each new reign and each new deportation meant progressive deterioration of morals, only one conclusion was possible for so direct and forthright a thinker as Jeremiah: just as in the past history of Israel wickedness had invariably been followed by political catastrophe, so must it, under the prevailing circumstances, happen again. For Jeremiah the only way in which Judah could postpone a similar catastrophe was by patient submission to the will of God as manifested in Chaldaean domination. Hence Jeremiah set himself against the self-styled patriots of his people, preferring to be despised as a coward and condemned as a collaborator. It is instructive to note the extent to which Judahite chauvinism, whipped to a frenzy by the oracles of the prophets whom Jeremiah so roundly denounced (Jer. 23:9-32), went, as illustrated by the Lachish Letters. Toward the end of Zedekiah's reign we find the *sarim* (royal officials and notables) denouncing Jeremiah to the king and demanding that he be executed because of his bad influence on the morale of the people (Jer. 38:4). In Lachish Letter No. 6, a patriotic official writing to the commander of the garrison of Lachish, complains bitterly about circular letters sent out by the *sarim*, alleging in identical words that "they weaken the hands" of the people. Yet these were the *sarim* who wished to put Jeremiah to death!

The period 598-587 B. C. was charged with unmixed gloom. Jehoiachin had been accompanied into exile by the leading men of Judah and its best craftsmen. Jeremiah spoke scathingly of the qualities of the regent, Zedekiah, and his followers, whom he called "bad figs" as against the "good figs" which had been taken by the Chaldaeans (ch. 24). But Zedekiah and his adherents stubbornly followed the path to ruin by conspiring with Pharaoh Psammetichus II and his son Apries against the Chaldaean suzerain. From passages in Jeremiah, vividly illustrated by the Lachish Letters, we learn of the successive fall of the towns of the Negeb (area south of Hebron) and the Shephelah (lowlands), followed by the last siege of Jerusalem (e.g., Jer. 34:7). Excavations at Debir and Lachish show the increasing poverty of the country between the two destructions of these towns in 598 and 587. The population of Judah, which had probably passed 300,000 by the end of the eighth century, can scarcely have been over half this number during this interval. Finally, in August, 587, Jerusalem was stormed and most of the remaining notables and craftsmen were sent into Babylonian captivity.

The former mayor of the palace, Gedaliah, was appointed governor of Judah by the Chaldaeans, and many Jews who had fled to security before the Chaldaean advance returned to the country and accepted his authority (II Kgs. 25:22 ff.). The chiefs of the army in the field, who had hidden in the wilds during the siege, entered into negotiations with Gedaliah, but before any arrangement could be reached a certain ultra-patriotic member of the Davidic family, named Ishmael, treacherously assassinated Gedaliah,

killing many of his followers, as well as the Chaldaeans stationed at Mizpah. The army chiefs then collected a considerable number of the remaining Jews and fled to Egypt, where they entered into military service and were installed as garrison troops at the northern and southern boundaries (Jer. 40:44). A hundred years after their flight to Egypt we begin to learn something of the fortunes of some of their descendants who were settled by the Saite kings at Elephantine (Yeb) before the Persian invasion in 525 B. C. However, even after Gedaliah's assassination there were still enough Jews of rank or skill left in the land to provoke the Chaldaeans to a third deportation (582 B. C.).

In Jer. 52:28 ff. we have an extract from an official document of the Babylonian *golah* (deportation, or exile) giving exact figures for the



Fig. 3. Darius I (522-486 B. C.) on his throne receiving a foreign dignitary. Behind him stands the crown prince Xerxes (Biblical Ahasuerus). South relief of Portico 21 in the Treasury of the Persian government at its capital in Persepolis, Iran. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

three deportations, whose total is there computed at only 4600 souls. The number of those exiled in 598 is set at 3025 instead of 8000 (or 10,000) in Kings; the difference may be partly due to the fact that the latter was only a conjectural estimate, but may also be partly due to the heavy mortality of the starving and diseased captives during the long desert trek to Babylonia. There, however, the native energy and capacity of the captives was not slow in asserting itself. In recently published tablets from a royal archive of Nebuchadnezzar, dating in and about the year 592 B. C., Jehoiachin and five of his sons, as well as at least five other Jews, are mentioned among recipients of rations from the royal court. It is significant that Jehoiachin was still called "king of Judah" in official Babylonian documents.²

THE EXILE

Just as Jeremiah had denounced the wickedness of Judah, urging his people to bow to the Chaldaean yoke, so did his younger contemporary, Ezekiel, in the Babylonian *golah*, whose focus (outside of Babylon) was at a colony established on the Chebar Canal near Nippur in central Babylonia. In spite of the corrupt text of his poems and prose sermons, their purport is clear almost throughout. The prophet depicted the religious perversity of the men of Judah in scathing terms, employing figures of unexcelled vividness. He predicted the downfall of the state and the captivity of its population, just as Jeremiah was doing in Jerusalem. From the Jews in exile he demanded puritanical standards of morality, strict accountability of the individual for his actions, and rigid monotheism. It is significant that we hear no more of pagan practices among the Babylonian Jews, whereas the Egyptian Jews who had flouted Jeremiah, as well as many Yahwists (worshippers of Yahweh, the God of Israel) in North Israel and Transjordan during the next century, practiced syncretistic rites which at best compromised seriously with the surrounding paganism.

It is now possible, thanks to archaeological discoveries, to reconstruct the situation of the Jews in Palestine during the Exile with general clarity. All, or virtually all, of the fortified towns in Judah had been razed to the ground as thoroughly as we know to have been the case at Debir, Lachish, and Beth-shemesh (to mention only those sites which have been both adequately and recently excavated; the evidence is clear for many other sites from soundings and surface explorations). We are expressly told that the Chaldaean general, Nabu-zer-iddin (Biblical Nebuzaradan), left many of the poor in order to harvest grapes and make wine (Jerusalem was captured early in the grape harvest). On the other hand, a number of the Jewish settlements in the Negeb south of Hebron (which seems to have been detached from the Judahite state in 598 B. C.) appear to have escaped destruction, and the Israelite towns north of the old border remained under Babylonian control, being thus saved from the fate of the towns to the south: Bethel, for example, was occupied through this period and down probably into the late sixth century. The territory belonging to Judah in 589 was divided between the Edomites (Idumaeans), who settled in the southern hill country about Adoraim (Dura) and Hebron, and the Babylonian province of Samaria (as shown recently by Albrecht Alt). There was also a considerable Israelite population in Ephraim, Galilee and Transjordan; and at some time before the middle of the fifth century Yahwists became hereditary governors of Samaria and Ammon.

As long as the exiled king lived there was hope for a restoration of the Jewish monarchy, and this hope appears to have flamed up brightly when the news of Jehoiachin's release from prison after the death of Nebuchadnezzar was circulated through the *golah* (561 B. C.). It is not likely that there was a long interval between his death and the fall of the Chaldaean

(2. For the fullest summary in English of the contents and significance of these remarkable tablets, see Albright, BA V. 4 — G. E. W.)

(2a. The "Sheshbazzar" of Ezr. 1:8,11.)

Empire before the onslaught of Cyrus in 539. Jehoiachin's three older sons, all born before 592 (as shown by recently published cuneiform documents), were probably already dead by this time, leaving his fourth son, who bore the well-attested Babylonian name Sin-ab-usur,^{2a} to head the Davidic family and to enter into negotiations with the Persians for a restoration of the Jewish state. The enthusiastic resurgence of Jewish nationalism on a deeper religious basis, which we find at this time, is eloquently portrayed by Deutero-Isaiah (Isa. 40 ff.), who combined Jewish nationalism with religious universalism; nowhere in earlier prophetic literature do we find such explicit recognition of the gulf existing between the One God, whose

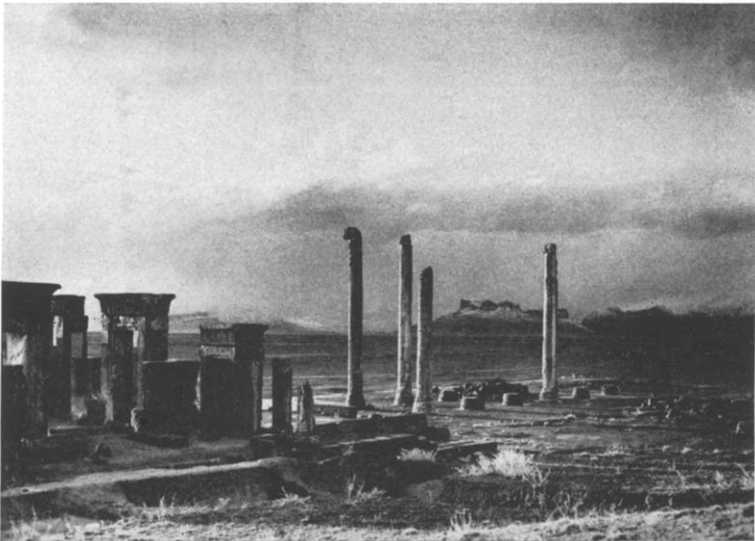


Fig. 4 The ruins of Persepolis, the capital of the ancient Persian empire which was established by Darius I and burned by Alexander the Great. View toward the northwest on the Persepolis terrace, showing a corner of the palace of Darius with the columns of the Apadana (Audience Hall) in the background. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

special favor had been extended to Israel, and the non-existent deities who were mistakenly worshipped by the gentile peoples. In this stage of the Zionism of the Restoration, there was a pure religious idealism which reminds one in certain respects of the cultural idealism of Anad ha-Am and Eliezer ben-Yehuda in the generation before the First World War.

THE RESTORATION

The substantial historicity of the Edict of Cyrus in 538 (Ezra 1:1 ff.) has been confirmed by modern archaeological discoveries, but it is wholly unnecessary to suppose that it was followed by any wide response on the part of the Jews of the *golah*. In the first place, the latter were in general becoming well established in their new homes, as vividly illustrated by

Egyptian papyri beginning in the year 495 and by Babylonian contract tablets dating from various periods (but sporadic and often uncertain until 437 B. C., when Jewish names become abundant in the Nippur documents). In the second place, the journey was dangerous and expensive, while conditions in Judah were certainly very unsatisfactory. However, between 538 and the death of the Persian king Cambyses in 522 many Jews had undoubtedly returned to Palestine, among them Zerubbabel, son of Jehoiachin's eldest son, Shealtiel (who had replaced his uncle

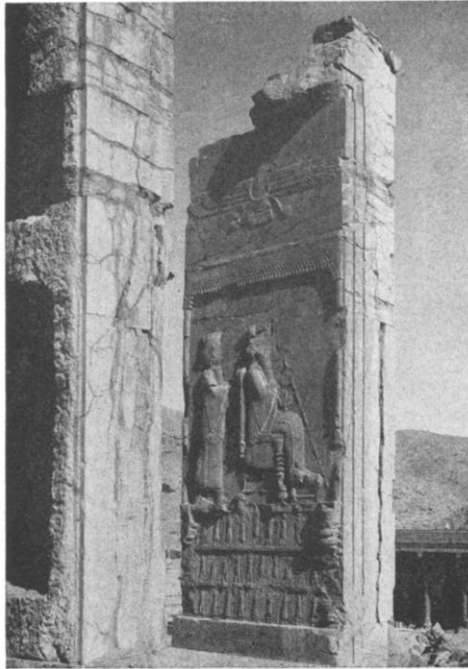


Fig. 5. East door of the Tripylon, presumably the first audience hall of Persepolis, showing Darius I on the throne with Xerxes as crown prince standing behind him. Above them is the winged figure of Ahura Mazda, the chief god of Zoroastrian religion who was the author of all good, "the righteous Master of Righteousness." Zoroaster lived sometime during the 6th century B. C. Darius and his immediate successors, at least, were followers of this religious reformer, a fact which undoubtedly provides at least a partial explanation for the enlightened policies of the Persian government. (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

Sin-ab-usur as head of the Davidic house) and the high priest, Joshua (Jeshua). They found a very small territory to call their own, stretching less than twenty-five miles in a straight line along the watershed-ridge from north of Jerusalem to south of Beth-zur, with a total population which can scarcely have exceeded 20,000 in 522 B. C. The governors and nobles of Samaria, who had regarded this district as part of their province, were openly hostile. On the other hand there were extensive districts in Greater Palestine which were peopled wholly or partly by Jews and Israelites,

and a modest flow of capital was assured by immigrants and gifts to the Holy Place.

Zerubbabel (Zer-Babil, "Offspring of Babylon," a very common Babylonian name), whose father had been born about 597 (as we know from recent finds), was not an impetuous youth, as generally assumed, but a cautious man of middle age (almost certainly born before 570). His caution irritated the fiery prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, who seized the opportunity offered by the continuous rebellions in every part of the Persian Empire which followed the accession of Darius Hystaspes in 522. Haggai's first oracle, in late August, 520, in which he spurred the men of Judah to take up the long overdue rebuilding of the Temple



Fig. 6. A princess of Egypt, the daughter of Psammetichus II (593-588 B. C.). The latter undoubtedly gave tacit approval to the plans for the final revolt of Judah against Babylon (589-587). In any event his successor, Hophra, sent an army against the Babylonians during the siege, but was defeated (Jer. 37:5 ff.; cf. 44:30). From Le Grain, *Statues et Statuettes*, Vol. 3.

in earnest, was delivered about two months after the rebellion of Babylonia under a man who called himself Nebuchadnezzar. Less than a month later work actually began. Haggai's second oracle (Hag. 2:1 ff.), nearly two months later, exults in the approaching downfall of Persia and the coming of a new Jewish state; in his fourth oracle (Hag. 2:20 ff.), dated in December, while the Babylonian rebellion still appeared to be successful, he explicitly declared that the imperial throne would be overturned and implied that Zerubbabel was the Lord's anointed. Most of Zechariah's prophecies are later, reflecting the situation which followed the complete

triumph of Darius over his foes, when the ambiguous stand of the Jews during the previous year naturally became the target of official Persian investigation. Whether Zerubbabel died a natural death or was removed we cannot say; there is not the slightest reason to suppose that he committed any overt act of disloyalty to the crown. In spite of the hostility of the satrap of Syria and the men of Samaria the Temple was finished in March, 515 (Ezra 5:6); evidently the Persian authorities contented themselves with depriving the Davidic family of its political prerogatives, which were turned over to Joshua and his successors. We may safely credit Joshua with political astuteness in the difficult situation in which he found himself.

The disappointment felt by Jews in all parts of the Persian Empire at the failure of the restored Davidic state to materialize must have been followed, just as in recent Zionist history, by sharp decline in their interest in Judah. This shift of interest left the little priestly state of Judah unable for three generations greatly to influence currents of Jewish life in other parts of the world. Meanwhile Jewish communities were being founded in cities as remote from Jerusalem as Sardis, capital of Lydia. It is true that the Temple had been rebuilt, but efforts to reconstruct the ancient city walls had been thwarted by the officials of Samaria, and Jerusalem was surrounded with ruins. In this period of some sixty years, however, the population may have doubled, and more or less normal relations between the returned exiles and the older Jewish population were certainly established. The time was ripe for a new forward step in the resurrection of Zion.

THE WORK OF NEHEMIAH

It may appear strange but it is nevertheless true that the history of the Jews in the fifth century B. C. is in some respects more obscure than any corresponding section of Israel's history after the twelfth century B. C. This is due to the fact that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah have undergone unusual vicissitudes, leaving their text and the order of their contents in quite extraordinary confusion, with sharply divergent recensions to warn us against docilely following any one. It is scarcely surprising that distinguished biblical scholars have dated Ezra and Nehemiah in almost every part of the period covered by this section, or that opinions differ widely as to the order of their careers. Nor is it altogether surprising that the Ezra Memoirs have been declared by C. C. Torrey and others to be quite apocryphal. Thanks to archaeological discoveries, particularly the Elephantine Papyri (since 1906) and the Jehoiachin tablets (1939; see n. 2), we can now date Nehemiah in the third quarter of the fifth century with certainty and can locate Ezra with a high degree of confidence shortly after him. Our arguments and those of our precursors will be found elsewhere; here we can sketch only the results, with emphasis on the degree of probability in each case.

Among the personalities of ancient history there are few which present themselves to us as vividly as that of Nehemiah, thanks to his *apologia pro vita sua*, whose authenticity has never been doubted by any scholar of competence. Endowed with unusual energy and presumably with exceptional charm, he rose to a high rank among the court officials of

Artaxerxes Longimanus (465-424), whose cup-bearer he became. As long since recognized, this position required a eunuch to fill it, and there is strong collateral evidence in favor of this view. Nehemiah's love for his people was so great, however, that his physical handicap became an asset and he was able to serve Israel with rare single-mindedness. On the other hand, the petulance and obstinacy which formed the reverse side of his character made it difficult for him to collaborate, and he made bitter enemies.

It appears to have been in December, 445, that Nehemiah learned from his brother Hanani and other Jews who had recently come from



Fig. 7. An Aramaic document, written on papyrus, which was found at Elephantine in upper Egypt, and dated in the 17th year of Darius II (423-404). A group of Jews there, employed as mercenaries in the garrison of a fortress, had erected a temple sometime before 525 B. C., but in a brief uprising the Egyptians had destroyed it. This is a copy of a letter written by the priests of the temple to Bagohi, the Persian governor of Judah at the time, beseeching his aid in getting the temple rebuilt. A previous letter to Johanan, the high priest in Jerusalem (presumably the friend of Ezra mentioned in Ezra 10:6 and in Neh. 12:22 ff.), had remained unanswered, probably because the Jews in Judah had no sympathy for the heretical Jewish sect in Elephantine (cf., however, Joel 3:19). (From Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraca*, Taf. 1.)

Jerusalem, how bad the situation there really was (Neh. 1:1 ff.). He seems to have been particularly moved by the news that the walls were still in ruins (see above), a fact which made it possible for Arab, Edomite or Ammonite raiders to attack the unprotected holy city almost at will. It was apparently not until considerably later that he succeeded in arousing the interest of the king in the plight of the Jews in Palestine. To judge from the additional details preserved by Josephus, Nehemiah did not actually arrive in Palestine, armed with body-guard and royal rescripts, until the year 440. Early in August, 439, he began the work of rebuilding the great city-wall, almost exactly 148 years after its destruction by the

Chaldaeans (if our chronology is correct). Fifty-two days later, thanks to energetic efforts on his part and to a mass levy from all parts of the little province of Judaea, the wall had been raised (Neh. 2:6). However, work on the wall cannot actually have been completed in such a short time by volunteer workmen; and we may safely follow the explicit statement of Josephus that the entire work took two years and four months, especially since the latter fixes the end of the work in a month which harmonizes exactly with the month given by the Hebrew text for its beginning. The task of finishing the battlements, of building great revetments, towers, gates, etc., was not completed, then, until December, 437.

Nehemiah's personal relationships were not as happy as one might expect from this brilliant initial success. That he was bitterly opposed by Sin-uballit (Sanballat), governor of Samaria, was only natural, since the latter had fallen heir to the old claims of Samaria on the territory of Judah, which had belonged to it during Chaldaean times, as shown recently by Albrecht Alt. Sin-uballit, in spite of his inherited Babylonian name, was a Yahwist by religion, as proved by the fact that two of his sons, according to the Elephantine papyri, were named Delaiah and Shelemiah; some of his hostility may be traced to the machinations of hostile groups among the priests, prophets and nobles of Judaea, about which Nehemiah complains so bitterly in his memoirs. Tobiah, governor of Ammon, who controlled central Transjordan, was also hostile to Nehemiah; his Yahwism is proved by his own name, that of his son Johanan, and the fact that his descendants were still Jewish in the early second century B. C. That the Yahwism of Sin-uballit and Tobiah was not that of the returned exiles in Jerusalem, much less that of the Babylonian *golah*, may be considered as certain, especially after the Elephantine discoveries; it was a syncretistic structure with archaic features, presumably something like the religion of the Jewish colonists at Elephantine.

An excellent idea of the population and social organization of Judaea in the time of Nehemiah is provided by the census list in Neh. 7 (and Ezra 2), which may represent the original list of returned exiles, with corrected numbers and additional entries to bring it up to date. It is composed of two main groups: the returned exiles and their descendants; the inhabitants of towns in northern Judaea whose forebears had presumably returned to their homes not long after the Chaldaean invasion or who had never left them. Among the former are a number of families whose names prove their late origin, as is particularly clear in the case of the family of Bagoi (Bigvai), bearing a characteristic Iranian name, but also in the case of the family of Elam (evidently descended from settlers in the region around Susa) and of the family of the "Governor of Moab" (Pahath-moab). Among the latter are such Judahite towns as Bethlehem and Netophah, Benjamite towns such as Ramah and Geba, and also Ephraimite towns (north of the preexilic border) like Bethel and Ai; farther away were Jericho and a little group of three towns of Ephraim on the edge of the Plain of Sharon around Lod (Lydia). Since Bethzur, Keilah, Tekoa and other towns of Judah farther south, mentioned in the account of Nehemiah's building operations, do not appear in this census, it seems clear that this part of the province was virtually uninhabited

when the exiles began to return after 538 B. C. On the other hand, the region around Jerusalem was already settled and offered less room for the returning Jews. Archaeological work at Bethel has proved that it was occupied down to the latter part of the sixth century, and was then destroyed by a great conflagration; it was later reoccupied but remained thinly settled down into the fourth century. Lydda and the adjoining towns may have been added to the province by Nehemiah himself. Jerusalem was peopled mainly by priests, Levites and Nethinim, etc., as well as by a certain number of wealthy persons, officials and tradesmen. The total population was over 42,000 freeborn Jews, besides over 7000 slaves and menials, approximately 50,000 in all, of whom between 10,000 and 15,000

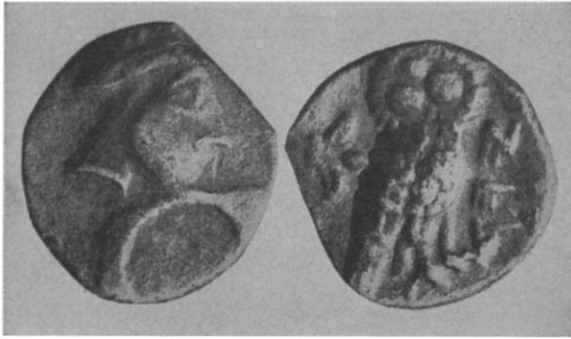


Fig. 8. A coin from the fourth century B. C. (enlarged), bearing the letters **Yhd** (**Yehud**, Judah), which indicates that the theocratic community of that time had been given permission to manufacture its own coinage. The owl was borrowed from Greek coins, in fact, the coin is an imitation of the Greek tetradrachma, except that the head of Athena has been replaced by a male head wearing a turban-like headdress (left). (*Bulletin*, 53, p. 21)

may have lived in and around the capital. While this was only a tiny nucleus for a Jewish state, it was already a respectable development for about a century of growth from extremely small beginnings.

FROM EZRA TO THE FALL OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

Unfortunately, as indicated above, we are very unsatisfactorily informed about the date of Ezra. The most recent evidence favors a date for Ezra's mission in or about the 37th year of Artaxerxes, i. e., about 428 B. C. It is not clear whether Nehemiah was in Jerusalem at the time; he is not specifically mentioned in the Ezra Memoirs proper, and the evidence is conflicting. There can, however, be little doubt that his influence was directly responsible for the royal rescript giving Ezra extensive powers in connection with his plan to reform the religious organization at Jerusalem. The view, brilliantly defended by Eduard Meyer and H. H. Schaeder, that "Judaism was created by the Persian Empire," is grossly exaggerated, and has, in fact, no more real validity than the corresponding statement, sometimes heard, that "Zionism has been created by the British." We need not depreciate the role played by Cyrus and Nehemiah, by

Lord Balfour and Lord Samuel, to recognize that in general there was more opposition than support among Persian and British officials. Judaism and Zionism were both developed by the Jewish people, working against great odds—so great, in fact, that without benevolent assistance at critical moments from the Persian and British imperial authorities success might have been impossible, in spite of the faith of the leaders of both movements.

Nowhere in the Ezra Memoirs proper is there a clear statement about who was then *tirshatha* (governor) of Judaea, but we may safely infer that it was Nehemiah himself, whose brother Hanani (Hananiah) may have taken charge during his absence (cf. Neh. 7:2), especially since the latter was still apparently at the head of Jewish affairs in Jerusalem a few years later in 419, when an edict of Arsames, Persian viceroy of Babylonia, Syria and Egypt, with regard to the orthodox observance of Passover, was forwarded through him to the Jewish colonists at Elephantine. Nor have we any information about what happened between Nehemiah's governorship and the year 411 B. C., when we find a Persian, one Bagoas (Bagohi), named in official documents as governor of Judaea, while the chief political role under him reverts to the high priest. In Nehemiah's time Eliashib, grandson of Joshua, who must have been well along in years, was high priest (until after 433 B. C.). When Ezra came to Jerusalem a few years later Eliashib's grandson Johanan seems already to have been priest (cf. Ezra 10:6 with Neh. 12:23-26). The latter was still high priest in 408, but by that time he had probably lost the respect of all by murdering his brother Joshua in the Temple, an act which shocked the world of that day and brought severe reprisals from Bagoas. Not long afterwards he was succeeded by his son Jedaiah (Jaddua), with whom our knowledge of the succession of high priests stops until the Hellenistic period.³

Ezra's greatest significance in the history of Judaism probably lay in the field of cultic reform rather than in that of political action. He seems to have played an important role in establishing the *Torah* as the normative rule of Israel's faith. The Pentateuch was probably edited in approximately its present form by an orthodox Jewish circle in Babylonia, employing the so-called JE document from the early Monarchy, the Deuteronomic Code from the end of the Monarchy, and the Priestly Code. The last-named component of the Pentateuch represents the official tradition of the Patriarchal Age, the Mosaic period, and the ritual law of the Tabernacle as handed down by the priests of the Temple in Jerusalem. It contains some very early material, most of it probably written down before the Exile. As it stands, however, there is little doubt that it was edited in approximately its present form during the Exile. There seems no adequate reason to deny that it was known in Jerusalem generations before Ezra, but it

(3. For a fuller discussion with bibliography of the date of Ezra, see Albright **Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible**, pp. 169 ff. Three views are possible: (1) the traditional view that Ezra preceded Nehemiah, returning during the reign of Artaxerxes I in 458 B. C. (Ezra 7:7); (2) the view that the Artaxerxes mentioned in Ezra 7 is Artaxerxes II (404-358 B. C.) and that Ezra returned in 397 B. C.; and (3) the view that he returned c. 428 B. C. toward the end of the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 B. C.), the "seventh year" in Ezra 7:7 being considered a mistake for "thirty-seventh." As here explained, Professor Albright now adheres to the third view as the most reasonable compromise of the conflicting data—G. E. W.)

seems highly probable that it was Ezra who introduced the complete Pentateuch into normative Jewish use and who is largely responsible for the way in which its archaic practices were adjusted to actual ritual usage in the Temple. The latter was alone a major contribution to the future of normative Judaism.

In another direction we may credit Ezra with original literary compilation. We owe to C. C. Torrey recognition of the fact that the style and point of view of the Ezra Memoirs (in which Ezra speaks primarily in the first person) are identical with those of the Chronicler. It is, therefore, highly probable that Jewish tradition is in principle correct in identifying Ezra with the Chronicler. Since the first edition of the latter's



Fig. 9. A coin which has been in the British Museum for over 150 years. It has long been considered the only known representation of the God of Israel, because the three letters at the top were read *YHU*, *Yahu* which is a late form of the name *Yahweh*. It is now known that the letters must be read *Yehud*, Judah, and that the coin was issued by the autonomous province of Judah during the 4th century B. C. (See Sukenik, *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Soc.*, Vol. 14, pp. 178 ff., Pl. 1:1)

work brings us down to the time of Johanan, and since (as we may now affirm with confidence) his genealogy of the Davidic house closes before the end of the fifth century, there is no historical improbability in this tradition. All internal and linguistic objections to dating the final redaction of the Chronicler's work during the early fourth century have been disproved by recent archaeological research.

The fourth century is almost wholly without dated Jewish documents. Egypt and Babylonia cease to yield any information about the further fortunes of their Jewish colonies, about which we were so well informed in the latter part of the fifth century. In Judah we lack even the names of the high priests after Jaddua, though we may suspect that the names of a

Johanah and a second Jaddua have dropped out of later lists. On the other hand, archaeology has demonstrated that the Jewish state of the fourth century was recognized by the Persian authorities as a hierocratic commonwealth like that of Hierapolis in northern Syria, which enjoyed the right to levy its own taxes and to strike its own silver coins—employing the *darkemon* standard (imitating, as E. L. Sukenik has shown, contemporary Attic drachmas) which is attested in the work of the Chronicler. The material culture of Jewish Palestine was already saturated with Greek influence, which was soon to engulf the world and to usher in a new era, fraught with both evil and good.

CHRISTIAN BURIAL URNS?

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Under a date line of October 3, 1945, many American newspapers carried brief accounts of an archaeological discovery made at Jerusalem that will naturally be of interest to students of Biblical and particularly of New Testament history. Between them the accounts provide an interesting example of what happens to a simple record of fact when handled by sensation-hunting newspaper reporters. Perhaps the most sensational version of the tale is that published in a New York daily, which quotes the London *Daily Herald* as saying that

“what is believed an eyewitness account of the death of Christ has been discovered by Arabs digging in the foundations of a house outside of Jerusalem. Described by the chief archaeologist of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as a “most important discovery”, the Greek writings were believed the work of a family of Jewish disciples who stood among the multitudes on Calvary. A bitter and moving lamentation, the account probably was written within a few weeks of the crucifixion. It was incised in four stone coffins in a vault within the house, which is on the road to Bethlehem”.

Anyone reading this report would necessarily be forced to conclude that what was found was an extended historical narrative, executed in quadruplicate and dated in the latter part of the month of April, 30 A. D. Such a narrative would not only eclipse the canonical Gospels as historical records of the Passion, but would, if written in Greek, have a direct effect upon current debates about the antiquity of the Gospels and their possible Aramaic origin.

A perusal of the same day's edition of the *New York Times* gives a somewhat different impression, but one only slightly less startling. Here we are told on the authority of the Associated Press that what was found was a “burial urn”. The urn, a truly amazing object judging by the report, had “carved” upon it an inscription “Master Jesus”. The urn's “inscriptions”, suddenly becoming plural in number, are said to have been made perhaps about 70 A. D., and are further described as “containing a lengthy lamentation in which the word “woe” is used frequently”. One “expert” is quoted as saying that the “Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions may have been carved only a few days after Calvary”. In the next sentence it appears that the “urns” are also plural in number, that one of them shows

the earliest example of the use of the Christian cross, and that archaeologists hope the urns "may give a first-hand testimony to the trial and death of Jesus". Precisely how this is to be accomplished is not indicated.

More restrained is Reuter's dispatch about the same episode, in which we are told that in a cave outside Jerusalem there were found stone receptacles for bones, some with Hebrew, some with Aramaic and some with Greek inscriptions. Two such receptacles had upon them Greek inscriptions written with charcoal. They were "cryptic in wording and each included the sign of the Christian cross". "The name of Jesus was clearly distinguishable" (on one or both?). Since the cross was not a common symbol of the period to which the receptacles belong, it was said to have been interpreted by Prof. Sukenik of Jerusalem as a "pictorial representation of what happened to Christ".

The informed reader of these dispatches soon begins to realize that the discovery concerns "ossuaries", that is, the familiar rectangular chests made of stone in which skeletal remains were preserved after their bodies had disintegrated, thus permitting the graves to be used for additional burials (cf. Fig. 10). Moreover the reader begins to suspect that the mysterious text is a crude scrawl or graffito on such an ossuary, the major elements of which are rude crosses and the name Jesus. On October 8 the British Broadcasting Corporation provided an account of an interview of its correspondent Jack Lawton of Cairo with Prof. Sukenik of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem and with Mr. Robert Hamilton, Director of the Palestinian Government Department of Antiquities, in which the whole matter was finally clarified, and these suspicions were confirmed. We are dealing, according to Mr. Lawton, with the discovery of a square funerary chamber hewn in the soft limestone rock of the country-side and provided with eleven *loculi*, or burial recesses, each containing an ossuary. "A number of these ossuaries were inscribed in Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek with the names of the deceased, such common Jewish names as Miriam, Simeon and Matthew." "One of the ossuaries bore on each of its four sides a cross drawn in charcoal", and "on one side of the ossuary marked with the crosses there was scratched the name Jesus in Greek letters, followed by a word which in ancient Greek is used as an exclamation of sorrow". From the pottery in the tomb and from the character of the script used in the *graffiti* it was concluded that the burials were made not later than 70 A. D. So far the BBC.

It is interesting to note Mr. Lawton's comment about the word as an exclamation of sorrow. This can, of course, be nothing else than the word *ouai* "woe", or "alas", which is commonly found on ancient funerary inscriptions in the Near East. Ten chances to one this one word is the basis for the whole fiction of the "bitter and moving lamentation" that was supposed to provide an eye-witness account of the crucifixion according to the New York daily and the *London Daily Herald*.

Perhaps it will interest readers of the *Biblical Archaeologist* to know that this is not the first instance of a discovery of this type, or of suggestions that the actual tomb of Jesus had been found. As far back as 1873 M. Clermont-Ganneau reported to the Palestine Exploration Fund in England the discovery of a funerary cave on the "mount of Offence" near Bethany,

with a number of "Jewish sarcophagi", in this instance also what we call ossuaries today to judge from their description (see the Fund's *Quarterly Statement* for 1874, pp. 7-10). The stone containers had besides the normal decorative rosettes inscriptions in Hebrew and Greek, some painted or traced with ink or with charcoal, others incised with a pointed instrument. The Hebrew inscriptions gave the names Salome, Judah, Simeon son of Jesus, Martha, Eleazar (Lazarus) and Salampson. The Greek inscriptions provided the names Jesus, Nathaniel, Hedeia, Kythras, Moschas and Marias. The name Jesus appeared three times in all, twice with a cross; the name Judah was followed by a cross in one instance. There is no indication of the age of the ossuaries in Clermont-Ganneau's account, or of the final disposition of the finds.

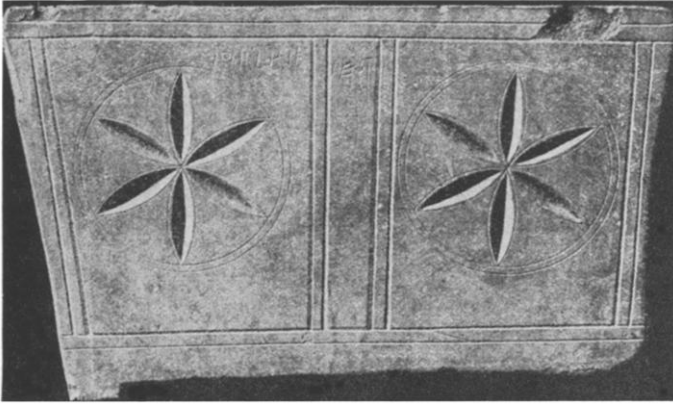


Fig. 10. A Jewish ossuary, or stone chest, used for the bones of one "Jesus, son of Joseph." (**Rendiconti**, Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archaeologia, Vol. VII, Fig. 1)

The discovery of 1873 was challenging, not only because it seemed to give indication of Christians among the Jewish population of Jerusalem at an early date, but also because it provided in a single tomb the names of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, thus suggesting that the Christian group in question was that of the family we know from Gospel story. This was particularly tempting because the tomb was found in the vicinity of Bethany, where the Mary, Martha and Lazarus of Gospel story lived. However, time and the fact that all three of the names are so common in Jewish circles provided the proper perspective upon the discovery, and no one suggested that ossuaries giving the name of Jesus with a cross alongside it had anything to do with Jesus of Nazareth or with his crucifixion. The fact that the combination appeared twice ruled this out from the beginning.

In the year 1931 a flurry very much like that of the past year was occasioned in the daily press by a report originating in Berlin. This was to the effect that the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth had been found at long last. The basis of the report was a communication presented by Professor Sukenik to the German Archaeological Society of Berlin in which he discussed another ossuary, this one with the Aramaic *graffito* "Jesus son

of Joseph" (without crosses; cf. Figs. 10-11). Again the daily press had garbled the statements of Professor Sukenik, the world's greatest authority on Jewish ossuaries, much to his own dismay. A final report on the whole interesting episode and on the ossuary in question was made by Pere Vincent of the Ecole Biblique at Jerusalem in the *Rendiconti* of the Pontifical Roman Academy of Archaeology (Vol. VII, 1932, pp. 215-239).

So far as the discovery of the past year is concerned it is clear, therefore, that we have merely another indication of the frequency with which the name Jesus was given and heard in Palestine at the beginning of our era, and of the use of Greek among the Jews of Jerusalem. Whether this or any other ossuary bearing the name Jesus ever had anything to do with Jesus of Nazareth we shall never know because ossuaries so inscribed are already too numerous. The only real question raised by the find is whether the people whose names were associated on the ossuaries with crosses were Christians.



Fig. 11. Aramaic inscription on the ossuary in Fig. 10 with the name "Jesus, son of Joseph" (*Rendiconti*, Vol. VII, Fig. 2). While to us this appears as a most striking coincidence, the evidence from the ossuaries indicates that Jesus (O. T. Joshua) was one of the most common names, as was also the name Joseph.

Eventually this question will probably be answered to the satisfaction of all scholars. At the moment it is still too early to draw a final conclusion. To us, for whom the cross has become such a familiar symbol even in a funerary context, the inference that a cross marks a Christian burial seems obvious. But it must be remembered in this connection that crosses in demonstrably Christian contexts are relatively late and are in antiquity. True, a cruciform metal object set into the wall of a house has been found recently at Herculaneum, in the Casa del Bicentenario, reviving memories of a similar object once found at Pompeii, in the House of Pansa, and both have now been interpreted as proof of the presence of Christianity in the Campanian cities before 79 A. D., the date of their destruction. Yet it is very doubtful, at least to the present writer, that these T-form objects are anything more important than brackets, and in any event the use of such a T-form Greek cross by the Christians of Italy would not necessarily prove that crosses in the form of a plus sign (Latin cross) found in Palestine had a Christian significance.

The difficulty at this point is that from all we know about the Jewish Christians of Palestine they did not make the death of Jesus on the cross as central a factor in their interpretation of his significance as Paul did, for instance. For them Jesus was the bringer of the New Law, the Holy One who taught the higher righteousness that exceeded the old but did not abolish the Mosaic ordinances. We can still sense the difference of outlook that existed between the Christian communities of Palestine and Paul on this point in Gal 2:21, where Paul says for the benefit of those under Jewish Christian influence, If righteousness comes by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain. Under these circumstances it may be well to think twice before assuming that crosses on ossuaries from Jerusalem identify Christian burials, particularly if other explanations are not yet completely ruled out.

As to the possibility of other explanations, that is a subject worthy of additional study. One could of course imagine that crude crosses written in charcoal served merely to distinguish ossuaries and burials of one family from those of another sharing the same tomb. Again it would be possible to suppose that the crosses had apotropaic significance, being intended to guard the bones against evil demonic powers that might disturb the repose of the deceased. Something of this sort underlies the use of crosses in the funerary and dedicatory inscriptions of Palmyra, some of them in contexts that are definitely pagan, as on an altar dated 134 A. D. (de Vogue, *Syrie centrale*, inscr. no 76, p. 55). Here the crosses are distinctly space-fillers, but space-filling is here itself the result of the fear of demons rather than an expression of esthetic sense. Finally it would be possible to suggest that the crosses have the same function as the rosettes which decorate the more elaborate ossuaries, and are in fact rough attempts to approximate such ornamental devices, whatever their symbolic significance.

With all these possibilities still not thoroughly explored, we shall do well to leave the matter of the crosses in abeyance until a full study of all the Jewish ossuaries, such as Professor Sukenik is preparing, has appeared in print. Meanwhile, newspaper reports of discoveries of this type should be taken not merely with a grain, but with a bushel of salt.

A NEW BASE MAP OF THE NEAR EAST

The Aerial Survey Expedition of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago has published a new base map of the Near East and neighboring areas, under the direction of Dr. Eric F. Schmidt. The region covered by the map extends from Greece to the Indus Valley and from the Volga in Russia to the tip of the Persian Gulf. It can be obtained from the Oriental Institute in one sheet for \$3.50, or in four sheets for \$4.50. In either case the sheets are 36 by 58 inches. The relief is given by contours, graded from 200 to 5,000 meters above sea level. Since all man-made features are omitted, the map is very useful as a working base on which the student can plot his own data.