

# THE BOOK OF EZRA

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## INTRODUCTION

### § 1. Name and Contents, Object and Plan of the Book of Ezra

The book of Ezra derives its name of **עֶזְרָא** in the Hebrew Bible, of **Ἐσδρας** in the Septuagint, and of *Liber Esdrae* in the Vulgate, from Ezra, **עֶזְרָא**, the priest and scribe who, in *Ezr.* 7-10, narrates his return from captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem, and the particulars of his ministry in the latter city. For the sake of making the number of the books contained in their canon of Scripture correspond with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, the Jews had from of old reckoned the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as *one*; whilst an apocryphal book of Ezra, composed of passages from the second book of Chronicles, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and certain popular legends, had long been current among the Hellenistic Jews together with the canonical book of Ezra. Hence our book of Ezra is called, in the catalogues of the Old Testament writings handed down to us by the Fathers (see the statements of Origen, of the Council of Laodicea, *Can.* 60, of Cyril, Jerome, and others, in the *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, § 216, *Not.* 11, 13), **Ἐσδρας πρῶτος** (*a*), and the book of Nehemiah **Ἐσδρας δεῦτερος** (*β*), and consequently separated as I. Ezra from the book of Nehemiah as II. Ezra; while the Greek book of Ezra is called III. Ezra, to which was subsequently added the falsely so-called book of Ezra as IV. Ezra. In the Septuagint, the *Vet. Itala*, and the Syriac, on the contrary (comp. *Libri V. T. apocryphi syriace e recogn. de Lagarde*), we find the Greek book of Ezra placed as **Ἐσδρας πρῶτον** before the canonical book, and the latter designated **Ἐσδρας δεῦτερον**.

The book of Ezra consists of two parts. The first part, comprising a period anterior to Ezra, begins with the edict of Coresh (Cyrus), king of Persia, permitting the return to their native land of such Jews as were exiles in Babylon, and prescribing the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem (*Ezr.* 1: 1-4); and relates that when the heads of the nation, the priests and Levites, and many of the people, made preparations for returning, Cyrus had the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem brought forth and delivered to Sheshbazzar (*Zerubbabel*), prince of Judah (*Ezr.* 1: 5-11). Next follows a list

of the names of those who returned from captivity (Ezr. 2), and the account of the building of the altar of burnt-offerings, the restoration of divine worship, and the laying of the foundation of the temple (Ezr. 3). Then the manner in which the rebuilding of the temple was hindered by the Samaritans is narrated; and mention made of the written accusation sent by the adversaries of the Jews to the kings Ahashverosh and Artachshasta (Ezr. 4: 1-7): the letter sent to the latter monarch, and his answer thereto, in consequence of which the rebuilding of the temple ceased till the second year of Darius, being inserted in the Chaldee original (Ezr. 4:24). It is then related (also in Chaldee) that Zerubbabel and Joshua, undertaking, in consequence of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, the rebuilding of the temple, were immediately interrogated by Tatnai the Persian governor and his companions as to who had commanded such rebuilding; that the reply of the Jewish rulers was reported in writing to the king, whereupon the latter caused search to be made for the edict of Cyrus, and gave command for the continuance and furtherance of the building in compliance therewith (Ezr. 5: 1-6:13); that hence the Jews were enabled to complete the work, solemnly to dedicate their now finished temple (Ezr. 6:14-18), and (as further related, vv. 19-22, in the Hebrew tongue) to celebrate their passover with rejoicing. In the second part (7-10), the return of Ezra the priest and scribe, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, from Babylon to Jerusalem, with a number of priests, Levites, and Israelites, is related; and (Ezr. 7: 1-10) a copy of the royal decree, in virtue of which Ezra was entrusted with the ordering of divine worship, and of the administration of justice as prescribed in the law, given in the Chaldee original (Ezr. 7:11-26), with a postscript by Ezra (v. 27f.). Then follows a list of those who went up with Ezra (Ezr. 8: 1-14); and particulars given by Ezra himself concerning his journey, his arrival at Jerusalem (Ezr. 8:14-36), and the energetic proceedings by which he effected the separation of the heathen women from the congregation (Ezr. 9: 1-10:17); the book concluding with a list of those who were forced to put away their heathen wives (Ezr. 10:18-44).

The first year of the rule of Cyrus king of Persia corresponding with the year 536 B.C., and the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Longimanus) with 458 B.C., it follows that this book comprises a period of at least eighty years. An interval of fifty-six years, extending from the seventh year of Darius Hystaspis, in which the passover was celebrated after the dedication of the new temple (Ezr. 6:19-22), to the seventh of Artaxerxes, in which Ezra went up from Babylon (Ezr. 7: 6), separates the events of the first part from those of the second. The narrative of the return of Ezra from Babylon in 7: 1 is nevertheless connected with the celebration of the passover under Darius by the usual formula of transition, "Now after these things," without further comment, because nothing

had occurred in the intervening period which the author of the book felt it necessary, in conformity with the plan of his work, to communicate.

Even this cursory notice of its contents shows that the *object* of Ezra was not to give a history of the re-settlement in Judah and Jerusalem of the Jews liberated by Cyrus from the Babylonian captivity, nor to relate all the memorable events which took place from the departure and the arrival in Judah of those who returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua, until his own return and his ministry in Jerusalem. For he tells us nothing at all of the journey of the first band of returning exiles, and so little concerning their arrival in Jerusalem and Judah, that this has merely a passing notice in the superscription of the list of their names; while at the close of this list he only mentions the voluntary gifts which they brought with them for the temple service, and then just remarks that they — the priests, Levites, people, etc. — dwelt in their cities (Ezr. 2:70). The following chapters (3-6), moreover, treat exclusively of the building of the altar of burnt-offering and the temple, the hindrances by which this building was delayed for years, and of the final removal of these hindrances, the continuation and completion of the building, and the dedication of the new temple, by means of which the tribe of Judah was enabled to carry on the worship of God according to the law, and to celebrate the festivals in the house of the Lord. In the second part, indeed, after giving the decree he had obtained from Artaxerxes, he speaks in a comparatively circumstantial manner of the preparations he made for his journey, of the journey itself, and of his arrival at Jerusalem; while he relates but a single incident of his proceedings there, — an incident, indeed, of the utmost importance with respect to the preservation of the returned community as a covenant people, viz., the dissolution of the marriages with Canaanites and other Gentile women, forbidden by the law, but contracted in the period immediately following his arrival at Jerusalem. Of his subsequent proceedings there we learn nothing further from his own writings, although the king had given him authority, “after the wisdom of his God, to set magistrates and judges” (Ezr. 7:25); while the book of Nehemiah testifies that he continued his ministry there for some years in conjunction with Nehemiah, who did not arrive till thirteen years later: comp. Neh. 8-10 and 12:36, 38.

Such being the nature of the contents of this book, it is evident that the *object* and *plan* of its author must have been to collect only such facts and documents as might show the manner in which the Lord God, after the lapse of the seventy years of exile, fulfilled His promise announced by the prophets, by the deliverance of His people from Babylon, the building of the temple at Jerusalem, and the restoration of the temple worship according to the law, and preserved the re-assembled community from fresh relapses into heathen customs and idolatrous worship by the dissolution of the marriages with Gentile women. Moreover, the restoration of the temple and of the legal temple

worship, and the separation of the heathen from the newly settled community, were necessary and indispensable conditions for the gathering out of the people of God from among the heathen, and for the maintenance and continued existence of the nation of Israel, to which and through which God might at His own time fulfil and realize His promises made to their forefathers, to make their seed a blessing to all the families of the earth, in a manner consistent both with His dealings with this people hitherto, and with the further development of His promises made through the prophets. The significance of the book of Ezra in sacred history lies in the fact that it enables us to perceive how the Lord, on the one hand, so disposed the hearts of the kings of Persia, the then rulers of the world, that in spite of all the machinations of the enemies of God's people, they promoted the building of His temple in Jerusalem, and the maintenance of His worship therein; and on the other, raised up for His people, when delivered from Babylon, men like Zerubbabel their governor, Joshua the high priest, and Ezra the scribe, who, supported by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, undertook the work to which they were called, with hearty resolution, and carried it out with a powerful hand.

## **§ 2. Unity and Composition of the Book of Ezra**

Several modern critics (Zunz, Ewald, Bertheau, and others) have raised objections both to the single authorship and to the independent character of this book, and declared it to be but a fragment of a larger work, comprising not only the book of Nehemiah, but that of Chronicles also. The section of this work which forms our canonical book of Ezra is said to have been composed and edited by some unknown author about 200 years after Ezra, partly from an older Chaldee history of the building of the temple and of the walls of Jerusalem, partly from a record drawn up by Ezra himself of his agency in Jerusalem, and from certain other public documents. The evidence in favour of this hypothesis is derived, first, from the fact that not only the official letters to the Persian kings, and their decrees (Ezr. 4: 8-22, 5: 6-17, 6: 6-12, 7:12-26), but also a still longer section on the building of the temple (Ezr. 5:23-6:18), are written in the Chaldee, and the remaining portions in the Hebrew language; next, from the diversity of its style, its lack of internal unity, and its want of finish; and, finally, from the circumstance that the book of Ezra had from of old been combined with that of Nehemiah as one book. These reasons, however, upon closer consideration, prove too weak to confirm this view. For, to begin with the historical testimony, Nägelsback, in *Herzog's Realencycl.* iv. p. 166, justly finds it "incomprehensible" that Bertheau should appeal to the testimony of the Talmud, the Masora, the most ancient catalogues of Old Testament books in the Christian church, the Cod. Alexandr., the Cod. Friderico Aug., and the LXX, because the comprehension of the two books in one in these

authorities is entirely owing to the Jewish mode of computing the books of the Old Testament. Even Josephus (*c. Ap. i. 8*) reckons twenty-two books, which he arranges, in a manner peculiar to himself, into five books of Moses, thirteen of the prophets, and four containing hymns to God and moral precepts for man; and Jerome says, in *Prolog. Gal.*, that the Hebrews reckon twenty-two canonical books, whose names he cites, after the number of the letters of their alphabet, but then adds that some reckoned Ruth and Lamentations separately, thus making twenty-four, because the Rabbis distinguished between  $\$$  and  $\text{ו}$ , and received a double Jod ( $\text{װ}$ ) into the alphabet for the sake of including in it the name יהוה, which when abbreviated is written װ. The number twenty-four is also found in *Baba bathr.* fol. 14. Hence we also find these numbers and computations in the Fathers and in the resolutions of the councils, but with the express distinction of I. and II. Ezra. This distinction is not indeed mentioned in the Talmud; and *Baba bathr.*, *l.c.*, says: *Esra scripsit librum suum et genealogias librorum Chron. usque ad sua tempora.* But what authority can there be in such testimony, which also declares Moses to have been the author not only of the Pentateuch, but also of the book of Job, and Samuel the author of the books of Judges, Ruth, and Samuel? The authority, too, of Cod. Alex. and Cod. Frid. Aug. is opposed to that of Cod. Vatic. and of the LXX, in which the books Ezra and Nehemiah are separated, as they likewise are in the Masoretic text, although the Masoretes regarded and reckoned both as forming but one book. <sup>f</sup>

This mode of computation, however, affords no ground for the supposition that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah originally formed one work. For in this case we should be obliged to regard the books of the twelve minor prophets as the work of one author. If the number of books was to be reduced to twenty-two or twenty-four, it was necessary to combine smaller works of similar character. The single authorship of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is most decidedly negated, not only by the superscription of the latter book, דְּבַרֵי נְחֻמְיָה בֶּן-חַכְבְּלָיָה, there being in the entire Old Testament no other instance of a single portion or section of a longer work being distinguished from its other portions by a similar superscription, with the name of the author; but also by the fact already brought forward in the introduction to Chronicles, *Comm. on Chron.* p. 384, that no reason or motive whatever can be perceived for a subsequent division of the historical work in question into three separate books, on account of its reception into the canon.

The contents, too, and the form of this book, present us with nothing incompatible either with its single authorship or independence. The use of the Chaldee tongue for the official documents of the Persian kings and their subordinates cannot surprise us, this being the official language in the provinces

of the Persian empire west of the Euphrates, and as current with the returning Jews as their Hebrew mother tongue. It is true that the use of the Chaldee language is not in this book confined merely to official documents, but continued, Ezr. 4: 8-22, in the narrative of the building of the temple down to the dedication of the rebuilt temple, Ezr. 4:23-6:18; and that the Hebrew is not employed again till from Ezr. 6:19 to the conclusion of the book, with the exception of Ezr. 7:12-26, where the commission given by Artaxerxes to Ezra is inserted in the Chaldee original. We also meet, however, with the two languages in the book of Daniel, Dan. 2, where the Magi are introduced, v. 4, as answering the king in Aramaic, and where not only their conversation with the monarch, but also the whole course of the event, is given in this dialect, which is again used Dan. 3-7. Hence it has been attempted to account for the use of the Chaldee in the narrative portions of the book of Ezra, by the assertion that the historian, after quoting Chaldee documents, found it convenient to use this language in the narrative combined therewith, and especially because during its course he had to communicate other Chaldee documents (Ezr. 5: 6-17 and 6: 3-12) in the original. But this explanation is not sufficient to solve the problem. Both here and in the book of Daniel, the use of the two languages has a really deeper reason; see § 14f. on Daniel. With respect to the book in question, this view is, moreover, insufficient; because, in the first place, the use of the Chaldee tongue does not begin with the communication of the Chaldee documents (Ezr. 4:11), but is used, v. 8, in the paragraph which introduces them. And then, too, the narrator of the Chaldee historical section, Ezr. 5: 4, gives us to understand, by his use of the first person, "Then said *we* unto them," that he was a participator in the work of rebuilding the temple under Darius; and this, Ezra, who returned to Jerusalem at a much later period, and who relates his return (Ezr. 7:27) in the first person, could not himself have been. These two circumstances show that the Chaldee section, Ezr. 4: 8-6:18, was composed by an eye-witness of the occurrences it relates; that it came into the hands of Ezra when composing his own work, who, finding it adapted to his purpose as a record by one who was contemporary with the events he related, and a sharer in the building of the temple, included it in his own book with very slight alteration. The mention of Artachshasta, besides Coresh and Darjaves, in Ezr. 6:14, seems opposed to this view. But since neither Ezra, nor a later author of this book, contemporary with Darius Hystaspis, could cite the name of Artaxerxes as contributing towards the *building* of the temple, while the position of the name of Artaxerxes after that of Darius, as well as its very mention, contradicts the notion of a predecessor of King Darius, the insertion of this name in Ezr. 6:14 may be a later addition made by Ezra, in grateful retrospect of the splendid gifts devoted by Artaxerxes to the temple, for the purpose of associating him with the two monarchs whose favour rendered the rebuilding of the temple possible (see on Ezr. 6:14). In this case, the mention of

Artaxerxes in the passage just cited, offers no argument against the above-mentioned view of the origin of the Chaldee section. Neither is any doubt cast upon the single authorship of the whole book by the notion that Ezra inserted in his book not only an authentic list of the returned families, Ezr. 2, but also a narrative of the building of the temple, composed in the Chaldee tongue by an eye-witness.

All the other arguments brought forward against the unity of this book are quite unimportant. The variations and discrepancies which Schrader, in his treatise on the duration of the second temple, in the *Theol. Studien u. Kritiken*, 1867, p. 460f., and in De Wette's *Einleitung*, 8th edit. § 235, supposes he has discovered in the Chaldee section, first between Ezr. 4: 8-23 and 5: 1-6, 14a, 15, on the one hand, and Ezr. 4:24 on the other, and then between these passages and the remaining chapters of the first part, Ezr. 1, 3, 4: 1, 7:24, and Ezr. 6:14b, 16-18, 19-22, can have no force of argument except for a criticism which confines its operations to the words and letters of the text of Scripture, because incapable of entering into its spiritual meaning. If the two public documents Ezr. 4: 8-23 differ from what precedes and follows them, by the fact that they speak not of the building of the temple but of the building of the walls of Jerusalem, the reason may be either that the adversaries of the Jews brought a false accusation before King Artachshashta, and for the sake of more surely gaining their own ends, represented the building of the temple as a building of the fortifications, or that the complaint of their enemies and the royal decree really relate to the building of the walls, and that section Ezr. 4: 8-23 is erroneously referred by expositors to the building of the temple. In either case there is no such discrepancy between these public documents and what precedes and follows them as to annul the single authorship of this Chaldee section; see the explanation of the passage. Still less does the circumstance that the narrative of the continuation and completion of the temple-building, Ezr. 5: 1-6:15, is in a simply historical style, and not interspersed with reflections or devotional remarks, offer any proof that the notice, Ezr. 4:24, "Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem, so it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia," and the information, Ezr. 6:16-18, that the Jews brought offerings at the dedication of the temple, and appointed priests and Levites in their courses for the service of God, cannot proceed from the same historian, who at the *building* of the temple says nothing of the offerings and ministrations of the priests and Levites. Still weaker, if possible, is the argument for different authorship derived from characteristic expressions, viz., that in Ezr. 4: 8, 11, 23, 5: 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 17, and Ezr. 6: 1, 3, 12, 13, the Persian kings are simply called "the king," and not "king of Persia," as they are designated by the historian in Ezr. 4: 7, 24, and elsewhere. For a thoughtful reader will scarcely need to be reminded that, in a letter to the

king, the designation king of Persia would be not only superfluous, but inappropriate, while the king in his answer would have still less occasion to call himself king of Persia, and that even the historian has in several places — e.g., Ezr. 5: 5, 6, 6: 1 and 13 — omitted the addition “of Persia” when naming the king. Nor is there any force in the remark that in Ezr. 5:13 Coresh is called king of Babylon. This epithet, **דִּי בָבֶל**, would only be objected to by critics who either do not know or do not consider that Coresh was king of Persia twenty years before he became king of Babylon, or obtained dominion over the Babylonian empire. The title king of Persia would here be misleading, and the mere designation king inexact, — Cyrus having issued the decree for the rebuilding of the temple not in the first year of his reign or rule over Persia, but in the first year of his sway over Babylon.

In Part II. (Ezr. 7-10), which is connected with Part I. by the formula of transition **אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה**, it is not indeed found “striking” that the historian should commence his narrative concerning Ezra by simply relating his doings (Ezr. 7: 1-10), his object being first to make the reader acquainted with the person of Ezra. It is also said to be easy to understand, that when the subsequent royal epistles are given, Ezra should be spoken of in the third person; that the transition to the first person should not be made until the thanksgiving to God (Ezr. 7:27); and that Ezra should then narrate his journey to and arrival at Jerusalem, and his energetic proceedings against the unlawful marriages, in his own words (Ezr. 8 and 9). But it is said to be “striking,” that in the account of this circumstance Ezra is, from Ezr. 10: 1 onwards, again spoken of in the third person. This change of the person speaking is said to show that the second part of the book was not composed by Ezra himself, but that some other historian merely made use of a record by Ezra, giving it verbally in Ezr. 8 and 9, and in Ezr. 7 and 10 relating Ezra’s return from Babylon, and the conclusion of the transaction concerning the unlawful marriages, in his own words, but with careful employment of the said record. This view, however, does not satisfactorily explain the transition from the first to the third person in the narrative. For what could have induced the historian, after giving Ezra’s record verbally in Ezr. 8 and 9, to break off in the midst of Ezra’s account of his proceedings against the unlawful marriages, and, instead of continuing the record, to relate the end of the transaction in his own words? Bertheau’s solution of this question, that the author did this for the sake of brevity, is of no force; for Ezr. 10 shows no trace of brevity, but, on the contrary, the progress and conclusion of the affair are related with the same circumstantiality and attention to details exhibited in its commencement in 8 and 9. To this must be added, that in other historical portions of the Old Testament, in which the view of different authorship is impossible, the narrator, as a person participating in the transaction, frequently makes the transition from the first to



the third person, and *vice versa*. Compare, e.g., Isa. 7: 1f. (“Then said the Lord *unto Isaiah*, Go forth,” etc.) with 8: 1 (“Moreover, the Lord said *unto me*, Take thee a great roll,” etc.); Jer. 20: 1-6, where Jeremiah relates of himself in the third person, that he had been smitten by Pashur, and had prophesied against him, with v. 7f., where, without further explanation, he thus continues: “O Lord, Thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded;” or Jer. 28: 1 (“Hananiah...spake unto me...the Lord said *to me*”) with v. 5 (“Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah”), and also v. 6; while in the verse (7) immediately following, Jeremiah writes, “Hear thou now this word which I speak in thine ears.” As Jeremiah, when here narrating circumstances of his own ministry, suddenly passes from the third to the first person, and then immediately returns to the third; so, too, might Ezra, after speaking (Ezr. 7: 1-10) of his return to Jerusalem in the third person, proceed with a subsequent more circumstantial description of his journey to and arrival at Jerusalem, and narrate his acts and proceedings there in the first person (Ezr. 8 and 9), and then, after giving his prayer concerning the iniquity of his people (Ezr. 9), take up the objective form of speech in his account of what took place in consequence of this prayer; and instead of writing, “Now when I had prayed,” etc., continue, “Now when Ezra had prayed,” and maintain this objective form of statement to the end of Ezr. 10. Thus a change of author cannot be proved by a transition in the narrative from the first to the third person. As little can this be inferred from the remark (Ezr. 7: 6) that “Ezra was a ready scribe in the law of Moses,” by which his vocation, and the import of his return to Jerusalem, are alluded to immediately after the statement of his genealogy.

The reasons, then, just discussed are not of such a nature as to cast any real doubt upon the single authorship of this book; and modern criticism has been unable to adduce any others. Neither is its independence impeached by the circumstance that it breaks off “unexpectedly” at Ezr. 10, without relating Ezra’s subsequent proceedings at Jerusalem, although at Ezr. 7:10 it is said not only that “Ezra had prepared his heart...to teach in Israel statutes and judgments,” but also that Artaxerxes in his edict (Ezr. 7:12-26) commissioned him to uphold the authority of the law of God as the rule of action; nor by the fact that in Neh. 8-10 we find Ezra still a teacher of the law, and that these very chapters form the necessary complement of the notices concerning Ezra in the book of Ezra (Bertheau). For though the narrative in Neh. 8-10 actually does complete the history of Ezra’s ministry, it by no means follows that the book of Ezra is incomplete, and no independent work at all, but only a portion of a larger book, because it does not contain this narrative. For what justifies the assumption that “Ezra purposed to give an account of all that he effected at Jerusalem?” The whole book may be sought through in vain for a single peg on which to hang such a theory. To impute such an intention to Ezra, and to infer

that, because his ministry is spoken of in the book of Nehemiah also, the book of Ezra is but a fragment, we should need far more weighty arguments in proof of the single authorship of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah than the defenders of this hypothesis are able to bring forward. In respect of diction, nothing further has been adduced than that the expression **בְּיַד אֱלֹהֵי עֲלִי**, so frequently recurring in Ezra (Ezr. 7:28; compare 7: 6, 9, 8:18, 22, 31), is also once found in Nehemiah (Neh. 2: 8). But the single occurrence of this one expression, common to himself and Ezra, in the midst of the very peculiar diction and style of Nehemiah, is not the slightest proof of the original combination of the two books; and Neh. 2: 8 simply shows that Nehemiah appropriated words which, in his intercourse with Ezra, he had heard from his lips. — With respect to other instances in which the diction and matter are common to the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, we have already shown, in the introduction to Chronicles, that they are too trifling to establish an identity of authorship in the case of these three books; and at the same time remarked that the agreement between the closing verses of Chronicles and the beginning of Ezra does but render it probable that Ezra may have been the author of the former book also.

### **§ 3. Composition and Historical Character of the Book of Ezra**

If this book is a single one, i.e., the work of one author, there can be no reasonable doubt that that author was Ezra, the priest and scribe, who in Ezr. 7-10 narrates his return from Babylon to Jerusalem, and the circumstances of his ministry there, neither its language nor contents exhibiting any traces of a later date. Its historical character, too, was universally admitted until Schrader, in his beforenamed treatise, p. 399, undertook to dispute it with respect to the first part of this book. The proofs he adduced were, first, that the statement made by the author, who lived 200 years after the building of the temple, in this book, i.e., in the chronicle of the foundation of the temple in the second year after the return from Babylon, concerning the cessation of the building till the second year of Darius, and its resumption in that year, is unhistorical, and rests only upon the insufficiently confirmed assumption that the exiles, penetrated as they were with ardent love for their hereditary religion, full of joy that their deliverance from Babylon was at last effected, and of heartfelt gratitude to God, should have suffered fifteen years to elapse before they set to work to raise the national sanctuary from its ruins; secondly, that the accounts both of the rearing of the altar, 3: 2 and 3, and of the proceedings at laying the foundations of the temple, together with the names, dates, and other seemingly special details found in Ezr. 3, 4: 1-5, 24, 6:14, are not derived from ancient historical narratives, but are manifestly due to the imagination of the chronicler drawing upon the documents given in the book of Ezra, upon other books of the Old

Testament, and upon his own combinations thereof. This whole argument, however, rests upon the assertion, that neither in Ezr. 5: 2 and 16, in Hag. 1: 2, 4, 8, 14, 2:12, nor in Zec. 1:16, 4: 9, 6:12, 13, 8: 9, is the resumption of the temple building in the second year of the reign of Darius spoken of, but that, on the contrary, the laying of its foundations in the said year of Darius is in some of these passages assumed, in others distinctly stated. Such a conclusion can, however, only be arrived at by a misconception of the passages in question. When it is said, Ezr. 5: 2, "Then (i.e., when the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied) rose up Zerubbabel and Jeshua...and began to build the house of God" (שָׂרְרוּ לְמִבְנֵא), there is no need to insist that בָּנָא often signifies to rebuild, but the word may be understood strictly of beginning to build. And this accords with the fact, that while in Ezr. 3 and 4 nothing is related concerning the building of the temple, whose foundations were laid in the second year of the return, it is said that immediately after the foundations were laid the Samaritans came and desired to take part in the building of the temple, and that when their request was refused, they weakened the hands of the people, and deterred them from building (Ezr. 4: 1-5). Schrader can only establish a discrepancy between Ezr. 5: 2 and Ezr. 3 and 4 by confounding building with foundation-laying, two terms which neither in Hebrew nor German have the same signification.

Still less can it be inferred from the statement of the Jewish elders (Ezr. 5:16), when questioned by Tatnai and his companions as to who had commanded them to build the temple, "Then came the same Sheshbazzar and laid the foundation of the house of God, which is in Jerusalem, *and since that time even until now hath it been in building,*" that the building of the temple proceeded *without intermission* from the laying of its foundations under Cyrus till the second year of Darius. For can we be justified in the supposition that the Jewish elders would furnish Tatnai with a detailed statement of matters for the purpose of informing him what had been done year by year, and, by thus enumerating the hindrances which had for an interval put a stop to the building, afford the Persian officials an excuse for consequently declaring the question of resuming the building non-suited? For Tatnai made no inquiry as to the length of time the temple had been in building, or whether this had been going on uninterruptedly, but only who had authorized them to build; and the Jewish elders replied that King Cyrus had commanded the building of the temple, and delivered to Sheshbazzar, whom he made governor, the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away to Babylon, whereupon Sheshbazzar had begun the work of building which had been going on from then till now. Moreover, Schrader himself seems to have felt that not much could be proved from Ezr. 5: 2 and 16. Hence he seeks to construct the chief support of his theory from the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. In this attempt, however,

he shows so little comprehension of prophetic diction, that he expounds Haggai's reproofs of the indifference of the people in building the temple, Hag. 1: 2, 4, 8, as stating that as yet nothing had been done, not even the foundations laid; transforms the words, Hag. 1:14, "they came and did work in the house of the Lord" (יָעֲשׂוּ מִלְאָכָה בַבַּיִת), into "they began to build;" makes Hag. 2:18, by a tautological view of the words לָמַן הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָסַד, mean that the foundations of the temple were not laid till the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of the second year of Darius (see the true meaning of the passage in the commentary on Haggai); and finally, explains the prophecies of Zechariah (Zec. 1:16, 4: 9, 6:12, 8: 9) concerning the rearing of a spiritual temple by Messiah as applying to the temple of wood and stone actually erected by Zerubbabel. By such means he arrives at the result that "neither does the Chaldee section of Ezra (Ezr. 5), including the official documents, say anything of a foundation of the temple in the second year after the return from Babylon; nor do the contemporary prophets Haggai and Zechariah make any mention of this earlier foundation in their writings, but, on the contrary, place the foundation in the second year of Darius: that, consequently, the view advocated by the author of the book of Ezra, that the building of the temple began in the days of Cyrus, and immediately after the return of the exiles, is wholly without documentary proof." This result he seeks further to establish by collecting all the words, expressions, and matters (such as sacrifices, Levites, priests, etc.) in Ezr. 3 and 4 and Ezr. 6:16-22, to which parallels may be found in the books of Chronicles, for the sake of drawing from them the further conclusion that "the chronicler," though he did not indeed invent the facts related in Ezr. 3: 1-4, 5, and Ezr. 6:16-22, combined them from the remaining chapters of the book of Ezra, and from other books of the Old Testament, — a conclusion in which the chief stress is placed upon the supposed fact that the chronicler was sufficiently known to have been a compiler and maker up of history. Such handling of Scripture can, however, in our days no longer assume the guise of "scientific criticism;" this kind of critical produce, by which De Wette and his follower Gramberg endeavoured to gain notoriety sixty years ago, having long been condemned by theological science. Nor can the historical character of this book be shaken by such frivolous objections. Three events of fundamental importance to the restoration and continuance of Israel as a separate people among the other nations of the earth are contained in it, viz.:

- (1) The release of the Jews and Israelites from the Babylonian captivity by Cyrus;
- (2) The re-settlement in Judah and Jerusalem, with the rebuilding of the temple;
- (3) The ordering of the re-settled flock according to the law of Moses, by Ezra.

The actual occurrence of these three events is raised above all doubt by the subsequent historical development of the Jews in their own land; and the narrative of the manner in which this development was rendered possible and

brought to pass, possesses as complete documentary authentication, in virtue of the communication of the official acts of the Persian kings Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, — acts of which the whole contents are given after the manner, so to speak, of State papers, — as any fact of ancient history. The historical narrative, in fact, does but furnish a brief explanation of the documents and edicts which are thus handed down.

For the exegetical literature, see *Lehrb. der Einleitung*, p. 455; to which must be added, E. Bertheau, *die Bücher Esra, Nehemia, und Ester erkl.*, Lpz. (being the seventeenth number of the *kurzgef. exeget. Handbuchs zum A. T.*).

## EXPOSITION

### I. The Return of the Jews from Babylon Under Cyrus.

#### RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE AND OF THE WORSHIP OF GOD AT JERUSALEM. — CH. 1-6.

When the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity had elapsed, King Cyrus, by an edict published in the first year of his rule over Babylon, gave permission to all the Jews in his whole realm to return to their native land, and called upon them to rebuild the temple of God at Jerusalem. The execution of this royal and gracious decree by the Jews forms the subject of the first part of this book, — Ezz. 1 and 2 treating of the return of a considerable number of families of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, under the conduct of Zerubbabel the prince and Joshua the high priest, to Jerusalem and Judaea; the remaining chapters, 3-6, of the restoration of the worship of God, and of the rebuilding of the temple.

#### Ch. 1. — The Edict of Cyrus, the Departure from Babylon, the Restitution of the Sacred Vessels.

*Ezz. 1.* In the first year of his rule over Babylon, Cyrus king of Persia proclaimed throughout his whole kingdom, both by voice and writing, that the God of heaven had commanded him to build His temple at Jerusalem, and called upon the Jews living in exile to return to Jerusalem, and to build there the house of the God of Israel. At the same time, he exhorted all his subjects to facilitate by gifts the journey of the Jews dwelling in their midst, and to assist by free-will offerings the building of the temple (1-4). In consequence of this royal decree, those Jews whose spirit God had raised up prepared for their return, and received from their neighbours gifts and free-will offerings (5 and 6). Cyrus, moreover, delivered to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah, the vessels of the temple which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem to Babylon.

*Ezr. 1: 1-4.* THE EDICT OF CYRUS. — V. 1. The opening word, “and in the first year,” etc., is to be explained by the circumstance that what is here recorded forms also, in 2Ch. 36:22 and 23, the conclusion of the history of the kingdom of Judah at its destruction by the Chaldeans, and is transferred thence to the beginning of the history of the restoration of the Jews by Cyrus. פֹּרְשׁ is the Hebraized form of the ancient Persian Kuru, as Κῦρος, Cyrus, is called upon the monuments, and is perhaps connected with the Indian title Kuru; see Delitzsch on Isa. 44:28. The first year of Cyrus is the first year of his rule over Babylon and the Babylonian empire. <sup>12</sup>

פֶּרַס — in the better editions, such as that of Norzi and J. H. Mich., with Pathach under ר, and only pointed פֶּרַס with a graver pause, as with Silluk, 4: 3, in the cuneiform inscriptions *Pâra{h}a* — signifies in biblical phraseology the Persian empire; comp. Dan. 5:28, 6: 9, etc. לְבַלּוֹת, that the word of Jahve might come to an end. בְּלֵא, to be completed, 2Ch. 29:34. The word of the Lord is completed when its fulfilment takes place; hence in the Vulg. *ut completeretur*, i.e., לְמַלְאוֹת, 2Ch. 36:21. Here, however, בְּלוֹת is more appropriate, because the notion of the lapse or termination of the seventy years predominates. The statement of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11, etc., 29:10; comp. 2Ch. 36:21) concerning the desolation and servitude of Judah is here intended. These seventy years commenced with the first taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, when Daniel and other youths of the seed-royal were carried to Babylon (Dan. 1: 1, 2) in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim; see the explanation of Dan. 1: 1. This year was the year 606 B.C.; hence the seventy years terminate in 536 B.C., the first year of the sole rule of Cyrus over the Babylonian empire. Then “Jahve stirred up the spirit of Coresh,” i.e., moved him, made him willing; comp. with this expression, 1Ch. 5:26 and Hag. 1:14. וַיַּעֲבֵר־קוֹל, “he caused a voice to go forth,” i.e., he proclaimed by heralds; comp. Exo. 36: 6, 2Ch. 30: 5, etc. With this is zeugmatically combined the subsequent וַיִּגַּם בְּמִבְרָתָב, so that the general notion of proclaiming has to be taken from יַעֲבֵר קוֹל, and supplied before these words. The sense is: he proclaimed throughout his whole realm by heralds, and also by written edicts.

*Ezr. 1: 2.* The proclamation — “Jahve the God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah” — corresponds with the edicts of the great kings of Persia preserved in the cuneiform inscriptions, inasmuch as these, too, usually begin with the acknowledgment that they owe their power to the god *Ahuramazdâ* (Ormuzd), the creator of heaven and earth. <sup>13</sup>

In this edict, however, Cyrus expressly calls the God of heaven by His Israelitish name Jahve, and speaks of a commission from this God to build Him a temple at Jerusalem. Hence it is manifest that Cyrus consciously entered into the purposes of Jahve, and sought, as far as he was concerned, to fulfil them. Bertheau thinks, on the contrary, that it is impossible to dismiss the conjecture that our historian, guided by an uncertain tradition, and induced by his own historical prepossessions, remodelled the edict of Cyrus. There is, however, no sufficient foundation for such a conjecture. If the first part of the book of Ezra is founded upon contemporary records of the events, this forbids an *à priori* assertion that the matter of the proclamation of Cyrus rests upon an uncertain tradition, and, on the contrary, presupposes that the historian had accurate knowledge of its contents. Hence, even if the thoroughly Israelitish stamp presented by these verses can afford no support to the view that they faithfully report the contents of the royal edict, it certainly offers as little proof for the opinion that the Israelite historian remodelled the edict of Cyrus after an uncertain tradition, and from historical prepossessions. Even Bertheau finds the fact that Cyrus should have publicly made known by a written edict the permission given to the Jews to depart, probable in itself, and corroborated by the reference to such an edict in Ezzr. 5:17 and 6: 3. This edict of Cyrus, which was deposited in the house of the rolls in the fortress of Achmetha, and still existed there in the reign of Darius Hystaspis, contained, however, not merely the permission for the return of the Jews to their native land, but, according to 6: 3, the command of Cyrus to build the house of God at Jerusalem; and Bertheau himself remarks on Ezzr. 6: 3, etc.: “There is no reason to doubt the correctness of the statement that Cyrus, at the time he gave permission for the re-settlement of the community, also commanded the expenses of rebuilding the temple to be defrayed from the public treasury.” To say this, however, is to admit the historical accuracy of the actual contents of the edict, since it is hence manifest that Cyrus, of his own free will, not only granted to the Jews permission to return to the land of their fathers, but also commanded the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. Although, then, this edict was composed, not in Hebrew, but in the current language of the realm, and is reproduced in this book only in a Hebrew translation, and although the occurrence of the name Jahve therein is not corroborated by Ezzr. 6: 3, yet these two circumstances by no means justify Bertheau’s conclusion, that “if Cyrus in this edict called the universal dominion of which he boasted a gift of the god whom he worshipped as the creator of heaven and earth, the Israelite translator, who could not designate this god by his Persian name, and who was persuaded that the God of Israel had given the kingdom to Cyrus, must have bestowed upon the supreme God, whom Cyrus mocked, the name of Jahve, the God of heaven. When, then, it might further have been said in the document, that Cyrus had resolved, not without the consent of the supreme God, to provide for the

rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, — and such a reference to the supreme God might well occur in the announcement of a royal resolution in a decree of Cyrus, — the Israelite translator could not again but conclude that Cyrus referred to Jahve, and that Jahve had commanded him to provide for the building of the temple.” For if Cyrus found himself impelled to the resolution of building a temple to the God of heaven in Jerusalem, i.e., of causing the temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar to be rebuilt, he must have been acquainted with this God, have conceived a high respect for Him, and have honoured Him as the God of heaven. It was not possible that he should arrive at such a resolution by faith in *Ahuramazdâ*, but only by means of facts which had inspired him with reverence for the God of Israel. It is this consideration which bestows upon the statement of Josephus, *Antt.* xi. 1. 1, — that Cyrus was, by means of the predictions of Isaiah, Isa. 41:25f., 44:28, 45: 1f., who had prophesied of him by name 200 years before, brought to the conviction that the God of the Jews was the Most High God, and was on this account impelled to this resolution, — so high a degree of probability that we cannot but esteem its essence as historical.

For when we consider the position held by Daniel at the court of Darius the Mede, the father-in-law of Cyrus, — that he was there elevated to the rank of one of the three presidents set over the 120 satraps of the realm, placed in the closest relation with the king, and highly esteemed by him (Dan. 6), — we are perfectly justified in adopting the opinion that Cyrus had been made acquainted with the God of the Jews, and with the prophecies of Isaiah concerning Coresh, by Daniel. <sup>4</sup>

Granting, then, that the edict of Cyrus may have been composed in the current language of the realm, and not rendered word for word in Hebrew by the biblical author of the present narrative, its essential contents are nevertheless faithfully reproduced; and there are not sufficient grounds even for the view that the God who had inspired Cyrus with this resolution was in the royal edict designated only as the God of heaven, and not expressly called Jahve. Why may not Cyrus have designated the God of heaven, to whom as the God of the Jews he had resolved to build a temple in Jerusalem, also by His name Jahve? According to polytheistic notions, the worship of this God might be combined with the worship of *Ahuramazdâ* as the supreme God of the Persians. — On פִּקְדוֹן עָלַי וְגוֹי, J. H. Mich. well remarks: *Mandavit mihi, nimirum dudum ante per Jesajam 44:24-28, 45: 1-13, forte etiam per Danielelem, qui annum hunc Cyri primum vivendo attigit (Dan. 1:21, 6:29) et Susis in Perside vixit Ezr. 8: 2 (in saying which, he only infers too much from the last passage; see on Dan. 8: 2).*

*Ezr. 1: 3.* In conformity with the command of God, Cyrus not only invites the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and to rebuild the temple, but also requires all his



subjects to assist the returning Jews, and to give free-will offerings for the temple. **מִי בְכֶם**, who among you of all his people, refers to all those subjects of his realm to whom the decree was to be made known; and all the people of Jahve is the whole nation of Israel, and not Judah only, although, according to v. 5, it was mainly those only who belonged to Judah that availed themselves of this royal permission. **יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו עִמּוֹ**, his God be with him, is a wish for a blessing: comp. Jos. 1:17; 1 Esdras 2: 5, **ἔστω**; while in 2Ch. 36:23 we find, on the other hand, **יְהוָה** for **יהו**. This wish is followed by the summons to go up to Jerusalem and to build the temple, the reason for which is then expressed by the sentence, “He is the God which is in Jerusalem.”

*Ezr. 1: 4.* **וְכָל־הַנְּשָׂאָר וְגו'** are all belonging to the people of God in the provinces of Babylon, all the captives still living: comp. Neh. 1: 2f.; Hag. 2: 3. These words stand first in an absolute sense, and **מִכָּל־הַמְּקֹמֹת וְגו'** belongs to what follows: In all places where he (i.e., each man) sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with gold, etc. The men of his place are the non-Israelite inhabitants of the place. **נְשָׂא**, to assist, like 1Ki. 9: 1. **רְכוּשׁ** specified, besides gold, silver, and cattle, means moveable, various kinds. **עִם־הַנְּדָבָה**, with, besides the free-will offering, i.e., as well as the same, and is therefore supplied in v. 6 by **לְבַד עַל**. Free-will offerings for the temple might also be gold, silver, and vessels: comp. 8:28; Exo. 35:21.

*Ezr. 1: 5, 6.* In consequence of this royal summons, the heads of the houses of Judah and Benjamin, of the priests and Levites, — in short, all whose spirit God stirred up, — rose to go up to build the house of God. The **ל** in **לְכָל** serves to comprise the remaining persons, and may therefore be rendered by, in short, or namely; comp. Ewald, § 310, *a*. The relative sentence then depends upon **כָּל** without **אֲשֶׁר**. The thought is: All the Jews were called upon to return, but those only obeyed the call whom God made willing to build the temple at Jerusalem, i.e., whom the religious craving of their hearts impelled thereto. For, as Josephus says, *Antt.* xi. 1: **πολλοὶ κατέμειναν ἐν τῇ Βαβυλῶνι, τὰ κτήματα καταλιπεῖν οὐ θέλοντες.**

*Ezr. 1: 6.* All their surrounders assisted them with gifts. The surrounders are the people of the places where Jews were making preparations for returning; chiefly, therefore, their heathen neighbours (v. 4), but also those Jews who remained in Babylon. **חֲזַקוּ בְיָדֵיהֶם** is not identical in meaning with **חֲזַק יָד**, to strengthen, e.g., Jer. 23:14, Neh. 2:18; but with **הַחֲזִיק בְּיָד**, the Piel here standing instead of the elsewhere usual Hiphil: to grasp by the hand, i.e., to assist; comp. Lev. 25:34. **לְבַד עַל**, separated to, besides; elsewhere joined with

מן, Exo. 12:37, etc. **הַתְּנַדָּב** connected with **כָּל** without **אֲשֶׁר**, as the *verbum fin.* in v. 5, 1Ch. 29: 3, and elsewhere. **לְבֵית הָאֱלֹהִים** must, according to v. 4, be supplied mentally; comp. Ezr. 2:68, 3: 5, 1Ch. 29: 9, 17.

**Ezr. 1: 7-10.** King Cyrus, moreover, caused those sacred vessels of the temple which had been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar to be brought forth, and delivered them by the hand of his treasurer to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah, for the use of the house of God which was about to be built. **הוֹצִיא**, to fetch out from the royal treasury. The “vessels of the house of Jahve” are the gold and silver vessels of the temple which Nebuchadnezzar, at the first taking of Jerusalem in the reign of Jehoiakim, carried away to Babylon, and lodged in the treasure-house of his god (2Ch. 36: 7 and Dan. 1: 2). For those which he took at its second conquest were broken up (2Ki. 24:13); and the other gold and silver goods which, as well as the large brazen implements, were taken at the third conquest, and the destruction of the temple (2Ki. 25:14f.; Jer. 52:18f.), would hardly have been preserved by the Chaldeans, but rather made use of as valuable booty.

**Ezr. 1: 8.** Cyrus delivered these vessels **עַל יַד**, into the hand of the treasurer, to whose care they were entrusted; i.e., placed them under his inspection, that they might be faithfully restored. **מִתְרַדָּת** is Mithridates. **גְּזַבָּר**, answering to the Zend *gazabara*, means treasurer (see comm. on Dan. p. 514, note 4). This officer counted them out to the prince of Judah Sheshbazzar, undoubtedly the Chaldee name of Zerubbabel. For, according to 5:14, 16, **שֶׁשֶׁבַצָּר** was the governor (**פְּקֹדָה**) placed by Cyrus over the new community in Judah and Jerusalem, and who, according to v. 11 of the present chapter, returned to Jerusalem at the head of those who departed from Babylon; while we are informed (Ezr. 2: 2, 3: 1, 8, and 4: 3, 5: 2) that Zerubbabel was not only at the head of the returning Jews, but also presided as secular ruler over the settlement of the community in Judah and Jerusalem. The identity of Sheshbazzar with Zerubbabel, which has been objected to by Schrader and Nöldeke, is placed beyond a doubt by a comparison of Ezr. 5:16 with Ezr. 3: 8, etc., 5: 2: for in 5:16 Sheshbazzar is named as he who laid the foundation of the new temple in Jerusalem; and this, according to Ezr. 5: 2 and Ezr. 3: 8, was done by Zerubbabel. The view, too, that Zerubbabel, besides this his Hebrew name, had, as the official of the Persian king, also a Chaldee name, is in complete analogy with the case of Daniel and his three companions, who, on being taken into the service of the Babylonian king, received Chaldee names (Dan. 1: 7).

Zerubbabel, moreover, seems, even before his appointment of **פְּקֹדָה** to the Jewish community in Judah, to have held some office in either the Babylonian or Persian Court or State; for Cyrus would hardly have entrusted this office to

any private individual among the Jews. The meaning of the word **שִׁשְׁבָצֵר** is not yet ascertained: in the LXX it is written **Σασαβασάρ**, **Σαβαχασάρ**, and **Σαναβάσασαρος**; 1 Esdras has **Σαμανασσάρ**, or, according to better MSS, **Σαναβασσάρ**; and Josephus, *l.c.*, **Αβασσάρ**.

**Ezr. 1: 9-11.** The enumeration of the vessels: 1. **אֲנָרְטָלִים** of gold 30, and of silver 1000. The word occurs only here, and is translated in the Septuagint **ψυκτῆρες**; in 1 Esdr. 2:11, **σπονδεῖα**. The Talmudic explanation of Aben Ezra, “vessels for collecting the blood of the sacrificed lambs,” is derived from **אָנַר**, to collect, and **מָלָה**, a lamb, but is certainly untenable. **אֲנָרְטָל** is probably connected with Arab. *qartallah*, the rabbinical **קֶרְטָל**, the Syriac *karṭālā*, the Greek **κάρταλλος** or **κάρταλος**, a basket (according to Suidas), **κάρταλος** having no etymology in Greek; but can hardly be derived, as by Meier, *hebr. Wurzelwörterbuch*, p. 683, from the Syriac *rṭl*, *nudavit*, to make bare, the Arabic *arṭala*, to make empty, to hollow, with the sense of hollow basins. 2. **מִחְלָפִים** 29. This word also occurs only here. The Sept. has **παρηλλαγμένα** (interpreting etymologically after **חָלַף**), 1 Esdr. **θύσκαί**, the Vulg. *cultri*, sacrificial knives, according to the rabbinical interpretation, which is based upon **חָלַף**, in the sense of to pierce, to cut through (Jud. 5:26; Job. 20:24). This meaning is, however, certainly incorrect, being based linguistically upon a mere conjecture, and not even offering an appropriate sense, since we do not expect to find knives between vessels and dishes. Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 88), from the analogy of **מִחְלָפוֹת** (Jud. 16:13, 19), plaits, supposes vessels ornamented with plaited or net work; and Bertheau, vessels bored after the manner of a grating for censuring, closed fire-pans with holes and slits. All is, however, uncertain. 3. **כַּפְּוֹרִים**, goblets (goblets with covers; comp. 1Ch. 15:18) of gold, 30; and of silver, 410. The word **מִשְׁנִים** is obscure; connected with **כַּפְּוֹרֵי כֶסֶף** it can only mean goblets of a second order (comp. 1Ch. 15:18). Such an addition appears, however, superfluous; the notion of a second order or class being already involved in their being of silver, when compared with the golden goblets. Hence Bertheau supposes **מִשְׁנִים** to be a numeral corrupted by a false reading; and the more so, because the sum-total given in v. 11 seems to require a larger number than 410. These reasons, however, are not insuperable. The notion of a second order of vessels need not lie in their being composed of a less valuable metal, but may also be used to define the sort of implement; and the difference between the separate numbers and the sum-total is not perfectly reconciled by altering **מִשְׁנִים** into **אלפים**, 2000. 4. 1000 other vessels or implements.

*Ezr. 1:11.* “All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred.” But only 30 + 1000 **אגרטלים**, 29 **מחלפים**, 30 + 410 covered goblets, and 1000 other vessels are enumerated, making together 2499. The same numbers are found in the LXX. Ancient interpreters reconciled the difference by the supposition that in the separate statements only the larger and more valuable vessels are specified, while in the sum-total the greater and lesser are reckoned together. This reconciliation of the discrepancy is, however, evidently arbitrary, and cannot be justified by a reference to 2Ch. 36:18, where the taking away of the greater and lesser vessels of the temple at the destruction of Jerusalem is spoken of. In v. 11 it is indisputably intended to give the sum-total according to the enumeration of the separate numbers. The difference between the two statements has certainly arisen from errors in the numbers, for the correction of which the means are indeed wanting. The error may be supposed to exist in the sum-total, where, instead of 5400, perhaps 2500 should be read, which sum may have been named in round numbers instead of 2499. <sup>f5</sup> **עם העלות הגולה**, at the bringing up of the carried away, i.e., when they were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem. The infinitive Niphal **העלות**, with a passive signification, occurs also Jer. 37:11.

## **Ch. 2. — List of Those Who Returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua.**

*Ezr. 2.* The title (vv. 1 and 2) announces that the list which follows it (vv. 3-67) contains the number of the men of the people of Israel who returned to Jerusalem and Judah from the captivity in Babylon, under the conduct of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and other leaders. It is composed of separate lists: of the families of the people, 3-35; of the priests and Levites, 36-42; of the Nethinims and servants of Solomon, 43-58; of families who could not prove their Israelite descent, and of certain priests whose genealogy could not be found, 59-63; and it closes with the sum-total of the persons, and of their beasts of burden, 64-67. This is followed by an enumeration of the gifts which they brought with them for the temple (vv. 68 and 69), and by a final statement with regard to the entire list (v. 70). Nehemiah also, when he desired to give a list of the members of the community at Jerusalem, met with the same document, and incorporated it in the book which bears his name (Neh. 7: 6-73). It is also contained in 1 Esdr. 5: 7-45. The three texts, however, exhibit in the names, and still more so in the numbers, such variations as involuntarily arise in transcribing long lists of names and figures. The sum-total of 42,630 men and 7337 servants and maids is alike in all three texts; but the addition of the separate numbers in the Hebrew text of Ezra gives only 29,818, those in Nehemiah 31,089, and those in the Greek Esdras 30,143 men. In our elucidation of the list, we shall chiefly have respect

to the differences between the texts of Ezra and Nehemiah, and only notice the variations in 1 Esdras so far as they may appear to conduce to a better understanding of the matter of our text.

*Ezr. 2: 1, 2. The title.* — “These are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of the carrying away (i.e., of those which had been carried away), whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, every one to his city.” In Neh. 7: 6 לְבָבֶל is omitted, through an error of transcription caused by the preceding בָּבֶל; and וְלַיהוּדָה stands instead of וְיַהוּדָה, which does not, however, affect the sense. הַמְדִינָה is the province whose capital was Jerusalem (Neh. 11: 3), i.e., the province of Judaea as a district of the Persian empire; so 5: 8, Neh. 1: 2. The *Chethiv* נְבוּכַדְנֶצְרֹר is similar to the form Nebucadrezor, Jer. 49:28, and is nearer to the Babylonian form of this name than the usual biblical forms *Nebuchadnezzar* or *Nebucadrezzar*. For further remarks on the various forms of this name, see on Dan. 1: 1. They returned “each to his city,” i.e., to the city in which he or his ancestors had dwelt before the captivity. Bertheau, on the contrary, thinks that, “though in the allotment of dwelling-places some respect would certainly be had to the former abode of tribes and families, yet the meaning cannot be that every one returned to the locality where his forefathers had dwelt: first, because it is certain (?) that all memorial of the connection of tribes and families was frequently obliterated, comp. below, 5:59-63; and then, because a small portion only of the former southern kingdom being assigned to the returned community, the descendants of dwellers in those towns which lay without the boundaries of the new state could not return to the cities of their ancestors.” True, however, as this may be, the city of each man cannot mean that “which the authorities, in arranging the affairs of the community, assigned to individuals as their domicile, and of which they were reckoned inhabitants in the lists then drawn up for the sake of levying taxes,” etc. (Bertheau). This would by no means be expressed by the words, “*they returned each to his own city.*” We may, on the contrary, correctly say that the words hold good *à potiori*, i.e., they are used without regard to exceptions induced by the above-named circumstance. אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ, v. 2, corresponds with the הַעֲלִים of v. 1; hence in Neh. 7: 7 we find also the participle בָּאוּ. They came with Zerubbabel, etc., that is, under their conduct and leadership. Zerubbabel (Ζοροβάβελ, זְרֻבְבָל or זְרוּבְבָל, probably abbreviated from בָּבֶל זְרוּעַ, in *Babylonia satus seu genitus*) the son of Shealtiel was a descendant of the captive king Jehoiachin (see on 1Ch. 3:17), and was probably on account of this descent made leader of the expedition, and royal governor of the new settlement, by Cyrus. Jeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ), the subsequently abbreviated form of the

name Jehoshua or Joshua, which is used Neh. 8:17 also for Joshua the son of Nun, the contemporary of Moses) the son of Josedech (Hag. 1: 1), and the grandson of Seraiah the high priest, who was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, was the first high priest of the restored community; see on 1Ch. 5:41. Besides those of Zerubbabel and Joshua, nine (or in Nehemiah more correctly ten) names, probably of heads of families, but of whom nothing further is known, are placed here. 1. Nehemiah, to be distinguished from the well-known Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah, Neh. 1: 1; 2. Seraiah, instead of which we have in Neh. 7: 7 Azariah; 3. Reeliah, in Nehemiah Raamiah; 4. Nahamani in Nehemiah, *Ἐὐνάμος* in Esdras 5: 8, omitted in the text of Ezra; 5. Mordecai, not the Mordecai of the book of Esther (Est. 2: 5f.); 6. Bilshan; 7. Mispar, in Nehemiah Mispereth; 8. Bigvai; 9. Rehum, in 1 Esdras *ὄμιος*; 10. Baanah. These ten, or reckoning Zerubbabel and Joshua, twelve men, are evidently intended, as leaders of the returning nation, to represent the new community as the successor of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is also unmistakably shown by the designation, the people of Israel, in the special title, and by the offering of twelve sin-offerings, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, at the dedication of the new temple, 7:16. The genealogical relation, however, of these twelve representatives to the twelve tribes cannot be ascertained, inasmuch as we are told nothing of the descent of the last ten. Of these ten names, one meets indeed with that of Seraiah, Neh. 10: 3; of Bigvai, in the mention of the sons of Bigvai, v. 14, and 8:14; of Rehum, Neh. 3:17, 12: 3; and of Baanah, Neh. 10:28; but there is nothing to make the identity of these persons probable. Even in case they were all of them descended from members of the former kingdom of Judah, this is no certain proof that they all belonged also to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, since even in the reign of Rehoboam pious Israelites of the ten tribes emigrated thither, and both at and after the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, many Israelites might have taken refuge and settled in Judah. The last words, v. 2, "The number of the men of the people of Israel," contain the special title of the first division of the following list, with which the titles in vv. 36, 40, 43, and 55 correspond. They are called the people of *Israel*, not the people of Judah, because those who returned represented the entire covenant people.

*Ezr. 2: 3-35.* (39)*List of the houses and families of the people.* Comp. Neh. 7: 8-38. — To show the variations in names and numbers between the two texts, we here place them side by side, the names in Nehemiah being inserted in parentheses.

Ezra II — Neh. VII

1. The sons of Parosh 2172 — 2172
2. The sons of Shephatiah 372 — 372
3. The sons of Arah 775 — 652

4. The sons of Pahath Moab, of the sons of Joshua and Joab 2812 — 2818
  5. The sons of Elam 1254 — 1254
  6. The sons of Zattu 945 — 845
  7. The sons of Zaccai 760 — 760
  8. The sons of Bani (Binnui) 642 — 648
  9. The sons of Bebai 623 — 628
  10. The sons of Azgad 1222 — 2322
  11. The sons of Adonikam 666 — 667
  12. The sons of Bigvai 2056 — 2067
  13. The sons of Adin 454 — 655
  14. The sons of Ater of Hezekiah 98 — 98
  15. The sons of Bezai 323 — 324
  16. The sons of Jorah (Harif) 112 — 112
  17. The sons of Hashum 223 — 328
  18. The sons of Gibbar (Gibeon) 95 — 95
  19. The sons of Bethlehem 123 — 188
  20. The men of Netophah 56 — 188
  21. The men of Anathoth 128 — 128
  22. The sons of Azmaveth (men of Beth-Azmaveth) 42 — 42
  23. The sons of Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth 743 — 743
  24. The sons of Ramah and Gaba 621 — 621
  25. The men of Michmas 122 — 122
  26. The men of Bethel and Ai 223 — 123
  27. The sons of Nebo (Acher) 52 — 52
  28. The sons of Magbish 156 — wanting
  29. The sons of the other Elam 1254 — 1254
  30. The sons of Harim 320 — 320
  31. The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono 725 — 721
  32. The sons of Jericho 345 — 345
  33. The sons of Senaah 3630 — 3930
- Total 24,144 — 25,406

The differences in the names are unimportant. In v. 6 the ו copulative inserted between the names יְשׁוּעַ and יוֹאָב, both in Nehemiah and 1 Esdras, is wanting; the name בְּנֵי (v. 10) is written בְּנוֹי in Nehemiah (v. 15); for יוֹרָה (v. 18), Neh. 7:24 has חֲרִיף, evidently another name for the same person, Jorah having a similarity of sound with יוֹרָה, harvest-rain, and חֲרִיף with חֲרַף, harvest; for גְּבַר (v. 20), Neh. 7:25 more correctly read גְּבַעוֹן, the name of the town; and for קְרִיַת עֲרִים (v. 25), Neh. 7:29 has the more correct form קְרִיַת יְעֲרִים: the sons of Azmaveth (v. 24) stands in Nehemiah as the men of Beth-Azmaveth; while, on the other hand, for the sons of Nebo (v. 29), we have in Nehemiah (v. 33) the men of Nebo Acher, where אֲחֵר seems to have been inserted inadvertently, Elam Acher so soon following.<sup>16</sup>

The names Bezai, Jorah, and Hashum (vv. 17-19) are transposed in Nehemiah (vv. 22-24) thus, Hashum, Bezai, and Harif; as are also Lod, etc., and Jericho, (vv. 33, 34) into Jericho and Lod, etc. (Nehemiah, vv. 36, 37). Lastly, the sons of Magbish (v. 30) are omitted in Nehemiah; and the sons of Bethlehem and the men of Netophah (vv. 21 and 22) are in Nehemiah (v. 26) reckoned together, and stated to be 188 instead of  $123 + 56 = 179$ . A glance at the names undoubtedly shows that those numbered 1-17 are names of races or houses: those from 18-27, and from 31-33, are as certainly names of towns; there, therefore, inhabitants of towns are named. This series is, however, interrupted by Nos. 28-30; Harim being undoubtedly, and Magbish very probably, names not of places, but of persons; while the equality of the number of the other, Elam 1254, with that of Elam (No. 6), seems somewhat strange. To this must be added, that Magbish is wanting both in Nehemiah and 2 Esdras, and the other Elam in 1 Esdras; while, in place of the sons of Harim 320, we have in 1 Esdr. 5:16, in a more appropriate position, ὑιοὶ Ἀροῦ 32. Hence Bertheau infers that Nos. 28 and 29, sons of Magbish and sons of Elam Acher (vv. 30 and 31), are spurious, and that Harim should be written Ἀρώμ, and inserted higher up. The reasons for considering these three statements doubtful have certainly some weight; but considering the great untrustworthiness of the statements in the first book of Esdras, and the other differences in the three lists arising, as they evidently do, merely from clerical errors, we could not venture to call them decisive.

Of the names of houses or races (Nos. 1-17 and 30), we meet with many in other lists of the time of Ezra and Nehemiah; <sup>17</sup> whence we perceive,

- (1) that of many houses only a portion returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua, the remaining portion following with Ezra;
- (2) that heads of houses are entered not by their personal names, but by that of the house.

The names, for the most part, descend undoubtedly from the time anterior to the captivity, although we do not meet with them in the historical books of that epoch, because those books give only the genealogies of those more important personages who make a figure in history. Besides this, the genealogies in Chronicles are very incomplete, enumerating for the most part only the families of the more ancient times. Most, if not all, of these races or houses must be regarded as former inhabitants of Jerusalem. Nor can the circumstance that the names given in the present list are not found in the lists of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (1Ch. 9 and Neh. 11) be held as any valid objection; for in those lists only the heads of the great races of Judah and Benjamin are named, and not the houses which those races comprised. The names of cities, on the other hand (Nos. 18-33), are for the most part found in the older books of the Old Testament: Gibeon in Jos. 9: 3; Bethlehem in Rut. 1: 2, Mic. 5: 1; Netophah,



2Sa. 23:28 — see comm. on 1Ch. 2:54; Anathoth in Jos. 21:18, Jer. 1: 1; Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, as cities of the Gibeonites, in Jos. 9:17; Ramah and Geba, which often occur in the histories of Samuel and Saul, also in Jos. 18:24, 25; Michmash in 1Sa. 13: 2, 5, Isa. 10:28; Bethel and Ai in Jos. 7: 2; and Jericho in Jos. 5:13, and elsewhere. All these places were situate in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and were probably taken possession of by former inhabitants or their children immediately after the return. Azmaveth or Beth-Azmaveth (Neh. 7:28) does not occur in the earlier history, nor is it mentioned out of this list, except in Neh. 12:29, according to which it must be sought for in the neighbourhood of Geba. It has not, however, been as yet discovered; for the conjecture of Ritter, *Erdk.* xvi. p. 519, that it may be el-Hizme, near *Anâta*, is unfounded. Nor can the position of Nebo be certainly determined, the mountain of that name (Num. 32: 3) being out of the question. Nob or Nobe (1Sa. 21: 2) has been thought to be this town. Its situation is suitable; and this view is supported by the fact that in Neh. 11:31f., Nob, and not Nebo, is mentioned, together with many of the places here named; in Ezz. 10:43, however, the sons of Nebo are again specified. As far as situation is concerned, Nuba, or Beit-Nuba (Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, p. 189), may, as Bertheau thinks, correspond with this town. Magbish was by many older expositors regarded as the name of a place, but is certainly that of a person; and no place of such a name is known. The localities Lod, Hadid, and Ono (v. 33) first occur in the later books of the Old Testament. On Lod and Ono, see comm. on 1Ch. 8:12. לוד is certainly Ἀδιδά (1 Macc. 12:28, 13:13), not far from Lydda, where there is still a place called el-Hadithe, Arab. *'l-hḏ-th* (Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, p. 186). מגביש, v. 35, is identified by older expositors with Σεννά, ῥῶν Μαγδαλσεννά, which Jerome describes as *terminus Judae, in septimo lapide Jerichus contra septentrionalem plagam* (*Onom. ed. Lars. et Parth.* p. 332f.); in opposition to which, Robinson, in his above-cited work, identifies Magdal-Senna with a place called Mejdél, situate on the summit of a high hill about eighteen miles north of Jericho. The situation, however, of this town does not agree with the distance mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome, and the name Mejdél, i.e., tower, is not of itself sufficient to identify it with Magdal-Senna. The situation of the Senaah in question is not as yet determined; it must be sought for, however, at no great distance from Jericho. Of the towns mentioned in the present list, we find that the men of Jericho, Senaah, and Gibeon, as well as the inhabitants of Tekoa, Zanoah, Beth-haccerem, Mizpah, Beth-zur, and Keilah, assisted at the building of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah (Neh. 3: 2, 3, 7). A larger number of towns of Judah and Benjamin is specified in the list in Neh. 11:25-35, whence we perceive that in process of time a greater multitude of Jews returned from captivity and settled in the land of their fathers.

*Ezr. 2:36-39.* The list of the priests is identical, both in names and numbers, with that of Neh. 7:39-42. (6) These are:

The sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua 973  
The sons of Immer 1052  
The sons of Pashur 1247  
The sons of Harim 1017  
Total 4289

Jedaiah is the head of the second order of priests in 1Ch. 24: 7. If, then, Jedaiah here represents this order, the words “of the house of Jeshua” must not be applied to Jeshua the high priest; the second order belonging in all probability to the line of Ithamar, and the high-priestly race, on the contrary, to that of Eleazar. We also meet the name Jeshua in other priestly families, e.g., as the name of the ninth order of priests in 1Ch. 24:11, so that it may be the old name of another priestly house. Since, however, it is unlikely that no priest of the order from which the high priest descended should return, the view that by Joshua the high priest is intended, and that the sons of Jedaiah were a portion of the house to which Joshua the high priest belonged, is the more probable one. In this case Jedaiah is not the name of the second order of priests, but of the head of a family of the high-priestly race. Immer is the name of the sixteenth order of priests, 1Ch. 24:14. Pashur does not occur among the orders of priests in 1Ch. 24; but we find the name, 1Ch. 9:12, and Neh. 11:12, among the ancestors of Adaijah, a priest of the order of Malchijah; the Pashur of Jer. 20 and 21 being, on the contrary, called the son of Immer, i.e., a member of the order of Immer. Hence Bertheau considers Pashur to have been the name of a priestly race, which first became extensive, and took the place of an older and perhaps extinct order, after the time of David. Gershom of the sons of Phinehas, and Daniel of the sons of Ithamar, are said, 8: 2, to have gone up to Jerusalem with Ezra, while the order to which they belonged is not specified. Among the priests who had married strange wives (Ezr. 10:18-22) are named, sons of Jeshua, Immer, Harim, Pashur; whence it has been inferred “that, till the time of Ezra, only the four divisions of priests here enumerated had the charge of divine worship in the new congregation” (Bertheau). On the relation of the names in vv. 36-39 to those in Neh. 10: 3-9 and 12: 1-22, see remarks on these passages.

*Ezr. 2:40-58. Levites, Nethinim, and Solomon's servants.* Comp. Neh. 7:43-60.

Ezra — Neh.

Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the sons of Hodaviah 74 — 74

Singers: sons of Asaph 128 — 148

Sons of the door-keepers; sons of Shallum, Ater, etc 139 — 138

Nethinim and servants of Solomon, in all 92 — 392

Total 733 — 752

The Levites are divided into three classes: Levites in the stricter sense of the word, i.e., assistants of the priests in divine worship, singers, and door-keepers; comp. 1Ch. 24:20-31, 25, and 26: 1-19. Of Levites in the stricter sense are specified the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel of the sons of Hodaviah (וְקַדְמִיָּאל, and הוֹדְוִיָּה of our text are evidently correct readings; and לְקַדְמִיָּאל and הוֹדְוִיָּה, Keri להוֹדְוִיָּה, Neh. 7:43, errors of transcription). The addition, “of the sons of Hodaviah,” belongs to Kadmiel, to distinguish him from other Levites of similar name. Jeshua and Kadmiel were, according to 3: 9, chiefs of two orders of Levites in the times of Zerubbabel and Joshua. These names recur as names of orders of Levites in Neh. 10:10. We do not find the sons of Hodaviah in the lists of Levites in Chronicles.

*Ezr. 2:41.* Of singers, only the sons of Asaph, i.e., members of the choir of Asaph, returned. In Neh. 11:17 three orders are named, Bakbukiah evidently representing the order of Heman.

*Ezr. 2:42.* Of door-keepers, six orders or divisions returned, among which those of Shallum, Talmon, and Akkub dwelt, according to 1Ch. 9:17, at Jerusalem before the captivity. Of the sons of Ater, Hatita and Shobai, nothing further is known.

*Ezr. 2:43.* The Nethinim, i.e., temple-bondsmen, and the servants of Solomon, are reckoned together, thirty-five families of Nethinim and ten of the servants of Solomon being specified. The sum-total of these amounting only to 392, each family could only have averaged from eight to nine individuals. The sons of Akkub, Hagab and Asnah (vv. 45, 46, and 50), are omitted in Nehemiah; the name Shalmi (v. 46) is in Neh. 7:48 written Salmi; and for נְפִיִּים, v. 50, Neh. 7:52 has נְפֹשִׁים, a form combined from נְפֹשִׁים and נְפִיִּים. All other variations relate only to differences of form. Because Ziha (צִיחָא, v. 43) again occurs in Neh. 11:21 as one of the chiefs of the Nethinim, and the names following seem to stand in the same series with it, Bertheau insists on regarding these names as those of divisions. This cannot, however, be correct; for Ziha is in Neh. 11:21 the name of an individual, and in the present list also the proper names are those of individuals, and only the sons of Ziha, Hasupha, etc., can be called families or divisions. Plural words alone, Mehunim and Nephisim, are names of races or nations; hence the sons of the Mehunim signify individuals belonging to the Mehunim, who, perhaps, after the victory of King Uzziah over that people, were as prisoners of war made vassals for the service of the sanctuary. So likewise may the sons of the Nephisim have been prisoners of war of the Ishmaelite race נְפִישׁ. Most of the families here named may, however, have been descendants of the Gibeonites (Jos. 9:21, 27). The servants of

Solomon must not be identified with the Canaanite bond-servants mentioned 1Ki. 9:20f., 2Ch. 8: 7f., but were probably prisoners of war of some other nation, whom Solomon sentenced to perform, as bondsmen, similar services to those imposed upon the Gibeonites. The sons of these servants are again mentioned in Neh. 11: 3. In other passages they are comprised under the general term Nethinim, with whom they are here computed. Among the names, that of **פְּכֶרֶת הַצְּבִיִּים** (v. 57), i.e., catcher of gazelles, is a singular one; the last name, **אָמִי**, is in Neh. 7:59 **אָמִי**.

**Ezr. 2:59, 60.** Those who went up with, but could not prove that they pertained to, the nation of Israel. Comp. Neh. 7:61 and 62. — Three such families are named, consisting of 652, or according to Nehemiah of 642, persons. These went up, with those who returned, from Tel-melah (Salthill) and Tel-harsa (Thicket or Forest Hill), names of Babylonian districts or regions, the situations of which cannot be ascertained. The words also which follow, **אָמִי בְּרוּב אֲדָן**, are obscure, but are certainly not the names of individuals, the persons who went up not being specified till v. 60. The words are names of places, but it is uncertain whether the three are used to express one or three places. In favour of the notion that they designate but one locality, may be alleged that in v. 60 only three races are named, which would then correspond with the districts named in v. 59: Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, and Cherub-Addan-Immer; a race from each district joining those who went up to Jerusalem. The three last words, however, may also designate three places in close proximity, in which one of the races of v. 60 might be dwelling. These could not show their father's house and their seed, i.e., genealogy, whether they were of Israel. **הֵם**, as well as the suffixes of **וְרָעִים** and **בֵּית־אֲבוֹתָם**, refers to the persons named in v. 60. They could not show that the houses of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda, after which they were called, belonged to Israel, nor that they themselves were of Israelitish origin. Cler. well remarks: *Judaicam religionem dudum sequebantur, quam ob rem se Judaeos censebant; quamvis non possent genealogicas ullas tabulas ostendere, ex quibus constaret, ex Hebraeis oriundos esse.* One of these names, Nekoda, v. 48, occurring among those of the Nethinim, Bertheau conjectures that while the sons of Nekoda here spoken of claimed to belong to Israel, the objection was made that they might belong to the sons of Nekoda mentioned v. 48, and ought therefore to be reckoned among the Nethinim. Similar objections may have been made to the two other houses. Although they could not prove their Israelite origin, they were permitted to go up to Jerusalem with the rest, the rights of citizenship alone being for the present withheld. Hence we meet with none of these names either in the enumeration of the heads and houses of the people, Neh. 10:15-28, or in the list Ezr. 10:25-43.

*Ezr. 2:61-63.* Priests who could not prove themselves members of the priesthood. Comp. Neh. 7:63-65. — Three such families are named: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai. These could not discover their family registers, and were excluded from the exercise of priestly functions. Of these three names, that of Hakkoz occurs as the seventh order of priests; but the names alone did not suffice to prove their priesthood, this being also borne by other persons. Comp. Neh. 3: 4. The sons of Barzillai were the descendants of a priest who had married a daughter, probably an heiress (Num. 36), of Barzillai the Gileadite, so well known in the history of David (2Sa. 17:27, 19:32-39; 1Ki. 2: 7), and had taken her name for the sake of taking possession of her inheritance (the suffix **שָׁמָם** refers to **בְּנוֹתָ**; see on Num. 27: 1-11). That by contracting this marriage he had not renounced for himself and his descendants his priestly privileges, is evident from the fact, that when his posterity returned from captivity, they laid claim to these privileges. The assumption, however, of the name of Barzillai might have cast such a doubt upon their priestly origin as to make it necessary that this should be proved from the genealogical registers, and a search in these did not lead to the desired discovery. **כְּתָבָם** is their **סֵפֶר יְחָשׁ**, Neh. 7: 5, the book or record in which their genealogy was registered. The title of this record was **הַמְתִּיחָשִׁים**, the Enregistered: the word is in apposition to **כְּתָבָם**, and the plural **נִמְצְאוּ** agrees with it, while in Neh. 7:64 the singular **נִמְצָא** agrees with **כְּתָבָם**. They were declared to be polluted from the priesthood, i.e., they were excluded from the priesthood as polluted or unclean. The construction of the Pual **וַיִּגְאָלוּ** with **מִן** is significant.

*Ezr. 2:63.* The Tirshatha, the secular governor of the community, i.e., as is obvious from a comparison of Neh. 7:65 with v. 70, Zerubbabel, called Hag. 1: 1 **פַּחַת יְהוּדָה**. **תִּרְשָׁתָא**, always used with the article, is undoubtedly the Persian designation of the governor or viceroy. Nehemiah is also so called in Neh. 8: 9 and 10: 2, and likewise **הַפָּחָה**, Neh. 12:26. The meaning of the word is still matter of dispute. Some derive it from the Persian *tr̥s-dn*, to fear, and *tr̥s*, fear = the feared or respected one (Meier, *Wurzelb.* p. 714); others from Persian *tr̥š*, *acer*, *auster*, the strict ruler; others, again (with Benfey, *die Monatsnamen*, p. 196), from the Zend. *thvôrestar* (nom. *thvôresta*), i.e., *praefectus, penes quem est imperium*: comp. Gesenius, *thes.* p. 1521. The Tirshatha decided that they were not to eat of the most holy things till there should arise a priest with Urim and Thummim, i.e., to give a final decision by means of Urim and Thummim. **עֵמֶד**, according to the later usage of the language, is equivalent to **קוֹם**, comp. Dan. 8:83, 11: 2, and other places. The prohibition to eat of the most holy things (comp. on Lev. 2: 3) involved the

prohibition to approach the most holy objects, e.g., the altar of burnt-offering (Exo. 29:37, 30:10), and to enter the most holy place, and thus excludes from specific priestly acts: without, however, denying a general inclusion among the priestly order, or abolishing a claim to the priestly revenues, so far as these were not directly connected with priestly functions. On Urim and Thummim, see on Exo. 28:30. From the words, "till a priest shall arise," etc., it is evident that the then high priest was not in a position to entreat, and to pronounce, the divine decision by Urim and Thummim. The reason of this, however, need not be sought in the personality of Joshua (Ewald, *Gesch.* iv. 95), nor supposed to exist in such a fact as that he might not perhaps have been the eldest son of his father, and therefore not have had full right to the priesthood. This conjecture rests upon utterly erroneous notions of the Urim and Thummim, upon a subjectivistic view, which utterly evaporates the objective reality of the grace with which the high priest was in virtue of his office endowed. The obtainment of the divine decision by Urim and Thummim presupposes the gracious presence of Jahve in the midst of His people Israel. And this had been connected by the Lord Himself with the ark of the covenant, and with its cherubim-overshadowed mercy-seat, from above which He communed with His people (Exo. 25:22). The high priest, bearing upon his breast the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim, was to appear before Jahve, and, bringing before Him the judgment of Israel, to entreat the divine decision (Exo. 28:30; Num. 27:21). The ark of the covenant with the mercy-seat was thus, in virtue of the divine promise, the place of judgment, where the high priest was to inquire of the Lord by means of the Urim and Thummim. This ark, however, was no longer in existence, having been destroyed when Solomon's temple was burned by the Chaldeans. Those who returned with Zerubbabel were without the ark, and at first without a temple. In such a state of affairs the high priest could not appear before Jahve with the breastplate and the Urim and Thummim to entreat His decision. The books of Samuel, indeed, relate cases in which the divine will was consulted by Urim and Thummim, when the ark of the covenant was not present for the high priest to appear before (comp. 1Sa. 23: 4, 6, 9, etc., 14:18); whence it appears that the external or local presence of the ark was not absolutely requisite for this purpose. Still these cases occurred at a time when the congregation of Israel as yet possessed the ark with the Lord's cherubim-covered mercy-seat, though this was temporarily separated from the holy of holies of the tabernacle. Matters were in a different state at the return from the captivity. Then, not only were they without either ark or temple, but the Lord had not as yet re-manifested His gracious presence in the congregation; and till this should take place, the high priest could not inquire of the Lord by Urim and Thummim. In the hope that with the restoration of the altar and temple the Lord would again vouchsafe His presence to the returned congregation, Zerubbabel expected that a high priest would arise with Urim and Thummim to pronounce

a final decision with regard to those priests who could not prove their descent from Aaron's posterity. This expectation, however, was unfulfilled. Zerubbabel's temple remained unconsecrated by any visible token of Jahve's presence, as the place where His name should dwell. The ark of the covenant with the cherubim, and the Shechinah in the cloud over the cherubim, were wanting in the holy of holies of this temple. Hence, too, we find no single notice of any declaration of the divine will or the divine decision by Urim and Thummim in the period subsequent to the captivity; but have, on the contrary, the unanimous testimony of the Rabbis, that after the Babylonian exile God no longer manifested His will by Urim and Thummim, this kind of divine revelation being reckoned by them among the five things which were wanting in the second temple. Comp. Buxtorf, *exercitat. ad historiam Urim et Thummim*, c. 5; and Vitrina, *observat. ss. Lib. vi. c. 6*, p. 324f.

*Ezr. 2:64-67*. The whole number of those who returned, their servants, maids, and beasts of burden. Comp. Neh. 7:66-69. — The sum-total of the congregation (אֲנָשֵׁי, as one, i.e., reckoned together; comp. 3: 9, 6:20) is the same in both texts, as also in 1 Esdras, viz., 42,360; the sums of the separate statements being in all three different, and indeed amounting in each to less than the given total.(10)The separate statements are as follow: —

According to Ezra — to Nehemiah — to 1 Esdras  
 Men of Israel — 24,144 — 25,406 — 26,390  
 Priests — 4,289 — 4,289 — 2,388  
 Levites — 341 — 360 — 341  
 Nethinim and servants of Solomon — 392 — 392 — 372  
 Those who could not prove their Israelitish origin — 652 — 642 — 652  
 Total — 29,818 — 31,089 — 30,143

These differences are undoubtedly owing to mere clerical errors, and attempts to reconcile them in other ways cannot be justified. Many older expositors, both Jewish and Christian (Seder olam, Raschi, Ussher, J. H. Mich., and others), were of opinion that only Jews and Benjamites are enumerated in the separate statements, while the sum-total includes also those Israelites of the ten tribes who returned with them. In opposing this notion, it cannot, indeed, be alleged that no regard at all is had to members of the other tribes (Bertheau); for the several families of the men of Israel are not designated according to their tribes, but merely as those whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken away to Babylon; and among these would certainly be included, as Ussher expressly affirms, many belonging to the other tribes who had settled in the kingdom of Judah. But the very circumstances, that neither in the separate statements nor in the sum-total is any allusion made to tribal relations, and that even in the case of those families who could not prove their Israelitish origin the only question was as to whether they were of the houses and of the seed of Israel, exclude all distinction

of tribes, and the sum-total is evidently intended to be the joint sum of the separate numbers. Nor can it be inferred, as J. D. Mich. conjectures, that because the parallel verse to v. 64 of our present chapter, viz., 1 Esdr. 5:41, reads thus, “and all of Israel from twelve years old and upwards, besides the servants and maids, were 42,360,” the separate statements are therefore the numbers only of those of twenty years old and upwards, while the sum-total includes those also from twelve to twenty years of age. The addition “from twelve years and upwards” is devoid of critical value; because, if it had been genuine, the particular “from twenty years old and upwards” must have been added to the separate statements. Hence it is not even probable that the author of the 1st book of Esdras contemplated a reconciliation of the difference by this addition. In transcribing such a multitude of names and figures, errors could scarcely be avoided, whether through false readings of numbers or the omission of single items. The sum-total being alike in all three texts, we are obliged to assume its correctness.

*Ezr. 2:65, etc.* “Besides these, their servants and their maids, 7337.” אֲלֵהָּ is, by the accent, connected with the preceding words. The further statement, “And there were to them (i.e., they had) 200 singing men and singing women,” is striking. The remark of Bertheau, that by לָהֶם the property of the community is intended to be expressed, is incorrect; לָהֶם denotes merely computation among, and does not necessarily imply proprietorship. J. D. Mich., adopting the latter meaning, thought that oxen and cows originally stood in the text, and were changed by transcribers into singing men and singing women, “for both words closely resemble each other in appearance in the Hebrew.” Berth., on the contrary, remarks that שָׁוְרִים, oxen, might easily be exchanged for מְשָׁרְרִים or מְשָׁרְרִים, but that שֹׁר has no feminine form for the plural, and that פְּרוֹת, cows, is very different from מְשָׁרְרוֹת; that hence we are obliged to admit that in the original text שָׁוְרִים stood alone, and that after this word had been exchanged for מְשָׁרְרִים, מְשָׁרְרוֹת was added as its appropriate complement. Such fanciful notions can need no serious refutation. Had animals been spoken of as property, לָהֶם would not have been used, but a suffix, as in the enumeration of the animals in v. 66. Besides, oxen and cows are not beasts of burden used in journeys, like the horses, mules, camels, and asses enumerated in v. 66, and hence are here out of place. מְשָׁרְרִים וּמְשָׁרְרוֹת are singing men and singing women, in 1 Esdras ψάλται καὶ ψαλτωδοί, who, as the Rabbis already supposed, were found among the followers of the returning Jews, *ut laetior esset Israelitarum reditus*. The Israelites had from of old employed singing men and singing women not merely for the purpose of enhancing the cheerfulness of festivities, but also for the singing of lamentations on sorrowful occasions;



comp. Ecc. 2: 8, 2Ch. 35:25: these, because they sang and played for hire, are named along with the servants and maids, and distinguished from the Levitical singers and players. In stead of 200, we find both in Nehemiah and 1 Esdras the number 245, which probably crept into the text from the transcriber fixing his eye upon the 245 of the following verse.

*Ezr. 2:66.* The numbers of the beasts, whether for riding or baggage: horses, 736; mules, 245; camels, 435; and asses, 6720. The numbers are identical in Neh. 7:68. In 1 Esdr. 5:42 the camels are the first named, and the numbers are partially different, viz., horses, 7036, and asses, 5525.

*Ezr. 2:68-70.* CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, AND CONCLUDING REMARKS. Comp. Neh. 7:70-73. — Some of the heads of houses, when they came to the house of Jahve, i.e., arrived at the site of the temple, brought free-will offerings (הַתְּנִידָה; comp. 1Ch. 29: 5) to set it up in its place (הַעֲמִיד, to set up, i.e., to rebuild; identical in meaning both here and 9: 9 with הַקִּים). After their ability (בְּכֹחָם; comp. 1Ch. 29: 2) they gave unto the treasure of the work, i.e., of restoring the temple and its services, 61,000 darics of gold = £68,625, and 5000 mina of silver, above £30,000, and 100 priests' garments. The account of these contributions is more accurately given in Neh. 7:70-72, according to which some of the heads of houses gave unto the work (מִקְצֵתָהּ as Dan. 1: 2 and elsewhere); the Tirshatha gave to the treasure 1000 darics of gold, 50 sacrificial vessels (see on Exo. 27: 3), 30 priests' garments, and 500... This last statement is defective; for the two numbers 30 and 500 must not be combined into 530, as in this case the hundreds would have stood first. The objects enumerated were named before 500, and are omitted through a clerical error, וְכֶסֶף מִנִּים "and silver (500) mina." And some of the heads of houses (others than the Tirshatha) gave of gold 20,000 darics, of silver, 2200 mina; and that which the rest of the people gave was — gold, 20,000 darics, silver, 2000 mina, and 67 priests' garments. According to this statement, the Tirshatha, the heads of houses, and the rest of the people, gave together 41,000 darics in gold, 4200 mina in silver, 97 priests' garments, and 30 golden vessels. In Ezra the vessels are omitted; and instead of the 30 + 67 = 97 priests' garments, they are stated in round numbers to have been 100. The two other differences have arisen from textual errors. Instead of 61,000 darics, it is evident that we must read with Nehemiah, 41,000 (1000 + 20,000 + 20,000); and in addition to the 2200 and 2000 mina, reckon, according to Neh. 7:70, 500 more, in all 4700, for which in the text of Ezra we have the round sum of 5000. The account of the return of the first band of exiles concludes at v. 70, and the narrative proceeds to the subsequent final statement: "So the priests, etc....dwelt in their cities." וּמִן הָעָם, those of the people, are the men of the

people of Israel of v. 2, the laity as distinguished from the priests, Levites, etc. In Nehemiah the words are transposed, so that **מִן הָעָם** stand after the Levitical door-keepers and singers. Bertheau thinks this position more appropriate; but we cannot but judge otherwise. The placing of the people, i.e., the laity of Israel, between the consecrated servants of the temple (the priests and their Levitical assistants in the sacrificial service) and the singers and door-keepers, seems to us quite consistent; while, on the other hand, the naming of the **שׁוֹעֲרִים** before the **מְשָׁרְרִים** in Nehemiah seems inappropriate, because the performance of the choral service of the temple was a higher office than the guardianship of the doors. Neither can we regard Bertheau's view, that **בְּעִרְיָהָם**, which in the present verse follows **וַהֲתִינִיחַם**, should be erased, as a correct one. The word forms a perfectly appropriate close to the sentence beginning with **וַיָּשְׁבוּ**; and the sentence following, "And all Israel were in their cities," forms a well-rounded close to the account; while, on the contrary, the summing up of the different divisions by the words **כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל** in Nehemiah, after the enumeration of those divisions, has a rather heavy effect. <sup>18</sup>

### **Ch. 3. — The Altar of Burnt-Offering Erected, the Feast of Tabernacles Celebrated, and the Foundations of the Temple Laid.**

*Ezr. 3.* On the approach of the seventh month, the people assembled in Jerusalem to restore the altar of burnt-offering and the sacrificial worship, and to keep the feast of tabernacles (vv. 1-7); and in the second month of the following year the foundations of the new temple were laid with due solemnity (vv. 8-13). Comp. 1 Esdr. 5:46-62.

*Ezr. 3: 1-7.* THE BUILDING OF THE ALTAR, THE RESTORATION OF THE DAILY SACRIFICE, AND THE CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. — V. 1. When the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. The year is not stated, but *the* year in which they returned from Babylon is intended, as appears from v. 8, which tells us that the foundations of the temple were laid in the second month of the second year of their return. The words, "and the children of Israel were in the cities," are a circumstantial clause referring to 2:70, and serving to elucidate what follows. From the cities, in which each had settled in his own (Ezr. 2: 1), the people came to Jerusalem as one man, i.e., not entirely (Bertheau), but unanimously (**ἁποθυμαδόν**, 1 Esdr. 5:46); comp. Neh. 8: 1, Jud. 20: 1. <sup>19</sup>

*Ezr. 3: 2.* Then the two leaders of the people, Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the prince (see on 2: 2), with their brethren, i.e., the priests and the

men of Israel (the laity), arose and built the altar, to offer upon it burnt-offerings, as prescribed by the law of Moses, i.e., to restore the legal sacrifices. According to v. 6, the offering of burnt-offerings began on the first day of the seventh month; hence the altar was by this day already completed. This agrees with the statement, “When the seventh month approached” (v. 1), therefore before the first day of this month.

*Ezr. 3: 3.* They reared the altar **עַל־מִבְּנֵיתוֹ**, upon its (former) place; not, upon its bases. The feminine **מִבְּנֵיהָ** has here a like signification with the masculine form **מִבְּנוֹן**, 2:68, and **מִבְּנֵיהָ**, Zec. 5:11. The Keri **מִבְּנֵיתָיו** is an incorrect revision. “For fear was upon them, because of the people of those countries.” The **בְּ** prefixed to **אִמָּה** is the so-called **בְּ** *essentiae*, expressing the being in a condition; properly, a being in fear had come or lay upon them. Comp. on **בְּ** *essentiae*, Ewald, § 217, *f*, and 299, *b*, though in § 295, *f*, he seeks to interpret this passage differently. The “people of those countries” are the people dwelling in the neighbourhood of the new community; comp. 9: 1, 10: 2. The notion is: They erected the altar and restored the worship of Jahve, for the purpose of securing the divine protection, because fear of the surrounding heathen population had fallen upon them. J. H. Mich. had already a correct notion of the verse when he wrote: *ut ita periculi metus eos ad Dei opem quaerendam impulerit.* <sup>n0</sup>

Comp. the similar case in 2Ki. 17:25f., when the heathen colonists settled in the deserted cities of Samaria entreated the king of Assyria to send them a priest to teach them the manner of worshipping the God of the land, that thus they might be protected from the lions which infested it. The Chethiv **ויעל** must be taken impersonally: “one (they) offered;” but is perhaps only an error of transcription, and should be read **ויעלו**. On the morning and evening sacrifices, see on Exo. 28:38f., Num. 28: 3f.

*Ezr. 3: 4.* They kept the feast of tabernacles as prescribed in the law, Lev. 23:34f. “The burnt-offering day by day, according to number,” means the burnt-offering day by day, according to number,” means the burnt-offerings commanded for the several days of this festival, viz., on the first day thirteen oxen, on the second twelve, etc.; comp. Num. 29:13-34, where the words **בְּמִסְפָּרָם בְּמִשְׁפָּט**, vv. 18, 21, 24, etc., occur, which are written in our present verse **בְּמִסְפָּר בְּמִ**, by number, i.e., counted; comp. 1Ch. 9:28, 23:31, etc.

*Ezr. 3: 5.* And afterward, i.e., after the feast of tabernacles, they offered the continual, i.e., the daily, burnt-offering, and (the offerings) for the new moon, and all the festivals of the Lord (the annual feasts). **עֲלוֹת** must be inserted from

the context before לְהַדְרִישִׁים to complete the sense. “And for every one that willingly offered a free-will offering to the Lord.” נִדְבָה is a burnt-offering which was offered from free inclination. Such offerings might be brought on any day, but were chiefly presented at the annual festivals after the sacrifices prescribed by the law; comp. Num. 29:39. — In v. 6 follows the supplementary remark, that the sacrificial worship began from the first day of the seventh month, but that the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid. This forms a transition to what follows. <sup>n1</sup>

*Ezr. 3: 7.* Preparations were also made for the rebuilding of the temple; money was given to hewers of wood and to masons, and meat and drink (i.e., corn and wine) and oil to the Sidonians and Tyrians (i.e., the Phoenicians; comp. 1Ch. 22: 4), to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa (i.e., to the coast of Joppa), as was formerly done by Solomon, 1Ki. 5:20f., 2Ch. 2: 7f. בְּרִשְׁיוֹן, according to the grant of Cyrus to them, i.e., according to the permission given them by Cyrus, sc. to rebuild the temple. For nothing is said of any special grant from Cyrus with respect to wood for building. רִשְׁיוֹן is in the O.T. ἄπ. λαγ.; in Chaldee and rabbinical Hebrew, רְשָׁא and רְשִׁי mean *facultatem habere*; and רְשָׁא power, permission.

*Ezr. 3: 8-13.* THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE LAID. — V. 8. In the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, i.e., after their arrival at Jerusalem on their return from Babylon, in the second month, began Zerubbabel and Joshua to appoint the Levites from twenty years old and upwards to the oversight of the work (the building) of the house of the Lord. That is to say, the work of building was taken in hand. Whether this second year of the return coincides with the second year of the rule of Cyrus, so that the foundations of the temple were laid, as *Theophil. Antioch. ad Autolic.* lib. 3, according to Berossus, relates, in the second year of Cyrus, cannot be determined. For nothing more is said in this book than that Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, issued the decree concerning the return of the Jews from Babylon, whereupon those named in the list, Ezr. 2, set out and returned, without any further notice as to whether this also took place in the first year of Cyrus, or whether the many necessary preparations delayed the departure of the first band till the following year. The former view is certainly a possible though not a very probable one, since it is obvious from 2: 1 that they arrived at Jerusalem and betook themselves to their cities as early as the seventh month of the year. Now the period between the beginning of the year and the seventh month, i.e., at most six months, seems too short for the publication of the edict, the departure, and the arrival at Jerusalem, even supposing that the first year of Cyrus entirely coincided with a year of the Jewish calendar. The second view, however, would

not make the difference between the year of the rule of Cyrus and the year of the return to Jerusalem a great one, since it would scarcely amount to half a year. **וַיַּעֲמִדוּ ... הֵחֵלוּ**, they began and appointed, etc., they began to appoint, i.e., they began the work of building the temple by appointing. Those enumerated are — 1. Zerubbabel and Joshua, the two rulers: 2. The remnant of their brethren = their other brethren, viz., *a*, the priests and Levites as brethren of Joshua; *b*, all who had come out of captivity, i.e., the men of Israel, as brethren of Zerubbabel. These together formed the community who appointed the Levites to preside over, i.e., to conduct the building of the temple. For the expression, comp. 1Ch. 23: 4-24.

*Ezr. 3: 9.* The Levites undertook this appointment, and executed the commission. The singular **וַיַּעֲמִד** stands before a plural subject, as is frequently the case when the verb precedes its subject. Three classes or orders of Levites are named:

1. Jeshua with his sons and brethren;
2. Kadmiel with his sons, the sons of Hodaviah;
3. The sons of Henadad, their sons and brethren.

Jeshua and Kadmiel are the two heads of orders of Levites already named (*Ezr. 2:40*). From a comparison of these passages, we perceive that **בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה** is a clerical error for **הַיְהוּדָיִם** (or **הַיְהוּדִיָּה**) **בְּנֵי**. This more precise designation is not “a comprehensive appellation for all hitherto enumerated” (Bertheau), but, as is undoubtedly obvious from *Ezr. 2:40*, only a more precise designation of the sons of Kadmiel. **בְּאֶחָד**, as one, i.e., all, without exception. The third class, the sons of Henadad, are not expressly named in *Ezr. 2:40* among those who returned from Babylon; but a son of Henadad appears, *Neh. 3:24* and *10:10*, as head of an order of Levites. The naming of this order after the predicate, in the form of a supplementary notice, and unconnected by a **ו** cop., is striking.

Bertheau infers therefrom that the construction of the sentence is incorrect, and desires to alter it according to *1 Esdr. 5:56*, where indeed this class is named immediately after the two first, but **בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה** is separated from what precedes; and of these **בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה** is made a fourth class, **ὁὶοὶ Ἰωδᾶ τοῦ Ἡλιαδοῦδ**. All this sufficiently shows that this text cannot be regarded as authoritative. The striking position or supplementary enumeration of the sons of Henadad may be explained by the fact to which the placing of **בְּאֶחָד** after **בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה** points, viz., that the two classes, Jeshua with his sons and brethren, and Kadmiel with his sons, were more closely connected with each other than with the sons of Henadad, who formed a third class. The **הַלְוִיִּם** at the end of the enumeration offers no argument for the transposition of the words, though this addition

pertains not only to the sons of Henadad, but also to the two first classes. **הַמִּי עָשָׂה** is plural, and only an unusual reading for **עָשָׂה**; see on 1Ch. 23:24.

**Ezr. 3:10.** When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they (Zerubbabel and Joshua, the heads of the community) set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord after the ordinance of David. The perf. **וַיִּסְדּוּ**, followed by an imperf. connected by a *Vav* consecutive, must be construed: When they laid the foundations, then. **מְלִבְשִׁים**, clothed, sc. in their robes of office; comp. 2Ch. 5:12, 20:21. **עַל יְדֵי** as 1Ch. 25: 2. On v. 11, comp. remarks on 1Ch. 16:34, 41, 2Ch. 5:13, 7: 3, and elsewhere. Older expositors (Clericus, J. H. Mich.), referring to Exo. 15:21, understand **וַיַּעֲנוּ בְהַלֵּל** of the alternative singing of two choirs, one of which sang, “Praise the Lord, for He is good;” and the other responded, “And His mercy endureth for ever.” In the present passage, however, there is no decided allusion to responsive singing; hence (with Bertheau) we take **עָנוּ** in the sense of, “They sang to the Lord with hymns of thanksgiving.” Probably they sang such songs as Psa. 106, 107, or 118, which commence with an invitation to praise the Lord because He is good, etc. All the people, moreover, raised a loud shout of joy. **תְּרוּעָה גְדוֹלָה** is repeated in v. 13 by **עַל הוֹסֵד. תְּרוּעַת הַשְּׂמֵחָה**, on account of the founding, of the foundation-laying, of the house of the Lord. **הוֹסֵד** as in 2Ch. 3: 3.

**Ezr. 3:12.** But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the people, the old men who had seen (also) the former temple, at the foundation of this house before their eyes (i.e., when they saw the foundation of this house laid), wept with a loud voice. Solomon’s temple was destroyed B.C. 588, and the foundation of the subsequent temple laid B.C. 535 or 534: hence the older men among those present at the latter event might possibly have seen the former house; indeed, some (according to Hag. 2: 2) were still living in the second year of Darius Hystaspis who had beheld the glory of the earlier building. Upon these aged men, the miserable circumstances under which the foundations of the new temple were laid produced so overwhelming an impression, that they broke into loud weeping. **בִּיִּסְדּוֹ** is connected by its accents with the words preceding: the former temple in its foundation, i.e., in its stability. But this can scarcely be correct. For not only does no noun **יִסָּד**, foundation, occur further on; but even the following words, “of this house before their eyes,” if severed from **בִּיִּסְדּוֹ**, have no meaning. Hence (with Aben Ezra, Cler., Berth., and others) we connect **בִּיִּסְדּוֹ** with the parenthetical sentence following, “when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes;” and then the suffix of the infinitive **יִסָּד** expressly refers to the object following, as is sometimes the case in Hebrew,

e.g., 2Ch. 26:14, Ezr. 9: 1, and mostly in Chaldee; comp. Ew. § 209, c, “But many were in rejoicing and joy to raise their voice,” i.e., many so joyed and rejoiced that they shouted aloud.

*Ezr. 3:13.* And the people could not discern (distinguish) the loud cry of joy in the midst of (beside) the loud weeping of the people; for the people rejoiced with loud rejoicings, and the sound was heard afar off. The meaning is not, that the people could not hear the loud weeping of the older priests, Levites, and heads of the people, because it was overpowered by the loud rejoicings of the multitude. The verse, on the contrary, contains a statement that among the people also (the assembly exclusive of priests, Levites, and chiefs) a shout of joy and a voice of weeping arose; but that the shouting for joy of the multitude was so loud, that the sounds of rejoicing and weeping could not be distinguished from each other. **הַבִּיר**, with the acc. and **לְ**, to perceive something in the presence of (along with) another, i.e., to distinguish one thing from another. “The people could not discern” means: Among the multitude the cry of joy could not be distinguished from the noise of weeping. **עַד לְמַרְחֹק** as 2Ch. 26:15.

#### **Ch. 4. — Hindrances to Building the Temple. Accusations against the Jews concerning the Building of the Walls of Jerusalem.**

*Ezr. 4: 1-5.* The adversaries of the Jews prevent the building of the temple till the reign of Darius (vv. 1, 2). When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the community which had returned from captivity were beginning to rebuild the temple, they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chiefs of the people, and desired to take part in this work, because they also sacrificed to the God of Israel. These adversaries were, according to v. 2, the people whom Esarhaddon king of Assyria had settled in the neighbourhood of Benjamin and Judah. If we compare with this verse the information (2Ki. 17:24) that the kings of Assyria brought men from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, and that they took possession of the depopulated kingdom of the ten tribes, and dwelt therein; then these adversaries of Judah and Benjamin are the inhabitants of the former kingdom of Israel, who were called Samaritans after the central-point of their settlement. **בְּנֵי הַגּוֹלָה**, sons of the captivity (Ezr. 6:19, etc., 8:35, 10: 7, 16), also shortly into **הַגּוֹלָה**, e.g., 1:11, are the Israelites returned from the Babylonian captivity, who composed the new community in Judah and Jerusalem. Those who returned with Zerubbabel, and took possession of the dwelling-places of their ancestors, being, exclusive of priests and Levites, chiefly members of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, are called, especially when

named in distinction from the other inhabitants of the land, Judah and Benjamin. The adversaries give the reason of their request to share in the building of the temple in the words: “For we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, which brought us up hither.” The words **וְלֹא אֲנַחְנוּ זֹבְחִים** are variously explained. Older expositors take the Chethiv **וְלֹא** as a negative, and make **זֹבְחִים** to mean the offering of sacrifices to idols, both because **לֹא** is a negative, and also because the assertion that they had sacrificed to Jahve would not have pleased the Jews, *quia deficiente templo non debuerint sacrificare*; and sacrifices not offered in Jerusalem were regarded as equivalent to sacrifices to idols. They might, moreover, fitly strengthen their case by the remark: “Since the days of Esarhaddon we offer no sacrifices to idols.” On the other hand, however, it is arbitrary to understand **זֹבַח**, without any further definition, of sacrificing to idols; and the statement, “We already sacrifice to the God of Israel,” contains undoubtedly a far stronger reason for granting their request than the circumstance that they do not sacrifice to idols. Hence we incline, with older translators (LXX, Syr., Vulg., 1 Esdras), to regard **לֹא** as an unusual form of **לֹ**, occurring in several places (see on Exo. 21: 8), the latter being also substituted in the present instance as Keri. The position also of **לֹא** before **אֲנַחְנוּ** points the same way, for the negative would certainly have stood with the verb. On Esarhaddon, see remarks on 2Ki. 19:37 and Isa. 37:38.

**Ezr. 4: 3.** Zerubbabel and the other chiefs of Israel answer, “It is not for you and for us to build a house to our God;” i.e., You and we cannot together build a house to the God who is our God; “but we alone will build it to Jahve the God of Israel, as King Cyrus commanded us.” **אֲנַחְנוּ יַחְדָּר**, we together, i.e., we alone (without your assistance). By the emphasis placed upon “our God” and “Jahve the God of Israel,” the assertion of the adversaries, “We seek your God as ye do,” is indirectly refuted. If Jahve is the God of Israel, He is not the God of those whom Esarhaddon brought into the land. The appeal to the decree of Cyrus (Ezr. 1: 3, comp. 3: 6, etc.) forms a strong argument for the sole agency of Jews in building the temple, inasmuch as Cyrus had invited those only who were of His (Jahve’s) people (Ezr. 1: 3). Hence the leaders of the new community were legally justified in rejecting the proposal of the colonists brought in by Esarhaddon. For the latter were neither members of the people of Jahve, nor Israelites, nor genuine worshippers of Jahve. They were non-Israelites, and designated themselves as those whom the king of Assyria had brought into the land. According to 2Ki. 27:24, the king of Assyria brought colonists from Babylon, Cuthah, and other places, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel. Now we cannot suppose that every Israelite, to the very last man, was carried away by the Assyrians; such a



deportation of a conquered people being unusual, and indeed impossible. Apart, then, from the passage, 2Ch. 30: 6, etc., which many expositors refer to the time of the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, we find that in the time of King Josiah (2Ch. 34: 9), when the foreign colonists had been for a considerable period in the country, there were still remnants of Manasseh, of Ephraim, and of all Israel, who gave contributions for the house of God at Jerusalem; and also that in 2Ki. 23:15-20 and 2Ch. 34: 6, a remnant of the Israelite inhabitants still existed in the former territory of the ten tribes. The eighty men, too, who (Jer. 41: 5, etc.) came, after the destruction of the temple, from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria, mourning, and bringing offerings and incense to Jerusalem, to the place of the house of God, which was still a holy place to them, were certainly Israelites of the ten tribes still left in the land, and who had probably from the days of Josiah adhered to the temple worship. These remnants, however, of the Israelites inhabitants in the territories of the former kingdom of the ten tribes, are not taken into account in the present discussion concerning the erection of the temple; because, however considerable their numbers might be, they formed no community independent of the colonists, but were dispersed among them, and without political influence. It is not indeed impossible "that the colonists were induced through the influence exercised upon them by the Israelites living in their midst to prefer to the Jews the request, 'Let us build with you;' still those who made the proposal were not Israelites, but the foreign colonists" (Bertheau). These were neither members of the chosen people nor worshippers of the God of Israel. At their first settlement (2Ki. 17:24, etc.) they evidently feared not the Lord, nor did they learn to do so till the king of Assyria, at their request, sent them one of the priests who had been carried away to teach them the manner of worshipping the God of the land. This priest, being a priest of the Israelitish calf-worship, took up his abode at Bethel, and taught them to worship Jahve under the image of a golden calf. Hence arose a worship which is thus described, 2Ki. 17:29-33: Every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans, i.e., the former inhabitants of the kingdom of the ten tribes, had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. And besides their idols Nergal, Asima, Nibhaz, Tartak, they feared Jahve; they sacrificed to all these gods as well as to Him. A mixed worship which the prophet-historian (2Ki. 17:34) thus condemns: "They fear not the Lord, and do after their statutes and ordinances, not after the law and commandment which the Lord commanded to the sons of Jacob." And so, it is finally said (v. 41), do also their children and children's children unto this day, i.e., about the middle of the Babylonian captivity; nor was it will a subsequent period that the Samaritans renounced gross idolatry. The rulers and heads of Judah could not acknowledge *that* Jahve whom the colonists worshipped as a local god, together with other gods, in the houses of the high places at Bethel and elsewhere, to be the God of

Israel, to whom they were building a temple at Jerusalem. For the question was not whether they would permit Israelites who earnestly sought Jahve to participate in His worship at Jerusalem, — a permission which they certainly would have refused to none who sincerely desired to turn to the Lord God, — but whether they would acknowledge a mixed population of Gentiles and Israelites, whose worship was more heathen than Israelite, and who nevertheless claimed on its account to belong to the people of God. <sup>f12</sup>

To such, the rulers of Judah could not, without unfaithfulness to the Lord their God, permit a participation in the building of the Lord's house.

*Ezr. 4: 4.* In consequence of this refusal, the adversaries of Judah sought to weaken the hands of the people, and to deter them from building. **עַם הָאָרֶץ**, the people of the land, i.e., the inhabitants of the country, the colonists dwelling in the land, the same who in v. 1 are called the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin. **וַיַּהֲדוּ** followed by the participle expresses the continuance of the inimical attempts. To weaken the hands of any one, means to deprive him of strength and courage for action; comp. Jer. 38: 4. **עַם יְהוּדָה** are the inhabitants of the realm of Judah, who, including the Benjamites, had returned from captivity, Judah being now used to designate the whole territory of the new community, as before the captivity the entire southern kingdom; comp. v. 6. Instead of the Chethiv **מִבְּלֵהִים**, the Keri offer **מִבְּהָלִים**, from **בהל**, *Piel*, to terrify, to alarm, 2Ch. 32:18, Job. 21: 6, because the verb **בלה** nowhere else occurs; but the noun **בְּלָהָה**, fear, being not uncommon, and presupposing the existence of a verb **בִּלְהָה**, the correctness of the Chethiv cannot be impugned.

*Ezr. 4: 5.* And they hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose (of building the temple). **וַיִּשְׂכְּרוּ** still depends on the **וַיַּהֲדוּ** of v. 4. **שָׂכַר** is a later orthography of **שָׂכַר**, to hire, to bribe. Whether by the hiring of **יוֹעֲצִים** we are to understand the corruption of royal counsellors or ministers, or the appointment of legal agents to act against the Jewish community at the Persian court, and to endeavour to obtain an inhibition against the erection of the temple, does not appear. Thus much only is evident from the text, that the adversaries succeeded in frustrating the continuance of the building “all the days of Koresh,” i.e., the yet remaining five years of Cyrus, who was for the space of seven years sole ruler of Babylon; while the machinations against the building, begun immediately after the laying of its foundations in the second year of the return, had the effect, in the beginning of the third year of Cyrus (judging from Dan. 10: 2), of putting a stop to the work until the reign of Darius, — in all, fourteen years, viz., five years of Cyrus, seven and a half of Cambyses, seven

months of the Pseudo-Smerdis, and one year of Darius (till the second year of his reign).

*Ezr. 4: 6-23*. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE JEWS TO KINGS AHASHVEROSH AND ARTACHSHASTA. — The right understanding of this section depends upon the question, What kings of Persia are meant by Ahashverosh and Artachshasta? while the answer to this question is, in part at least, determined by the contents of the letter, 8-16, sent by the enemies of the Jews to the latter monarch.

*Ezr. 4: 6*. And in the reign of Ahashverosh, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. שְׂמֵנָה, not to mention the name of the well, Gen. 26:21, occurs here only, and means, according to its derivation from שָׂמַן, to bear enmity, the enmity; hence here, the accusation. עַל יְשָׁבֵי belongs to שְׂמֵנָה, not to בְּתָבוּ; the letter was sent, not to the inhabitants of Judah, but to the king against the Jews. The contents of this letter are not given, but may be inferred from the designation שְׂמֵנָה. The letter to Artachshasta then follows, 7-16. In his days, i.e., during his reign, wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions. בְּנוֹתָו, for which the Keri offers the ordinary form בְּנוֹרָיו, occurs only here in the Hebrew sections, but more frequently in the Chaldee (comp. *Ezr.* 4: 9, 17, 23, 5: 3, and elsewhere), in the sense of companions or fellow-citizens; according to Gesenius, it means those who bear the same surname (Kunje) together with another, though Ewald is of a different opinion; see § 117, *b*, note. The singular would be written בְּנָת (Ewald, § 187, *d*). And the writing of the letter was written in Aramaean (i.e., with Aramaean characters), and interpreted in (i.e., translated into) Aramaean. נִשְׁתָּוּ is of Aryan origin, and connected with the modern Persian *nuwishten*, to write together; it signifies in Hebrew and Chaldee a letter: comp. v. 18, where נִשְׁתָּוּ is used for אֲנָרְתָא of v. 11. Bertheau translates בְּתָב הַנִּשְׁתָּוּ, copy of the letter, and regards it as quite identical with the Chaldee פְּרִשְׁנָא אֲנָרְתָא, v. 11; he can hardly, however, be in the right. בְּתָב does not mean a transcript or copy, but only a writing (comp. *Est.* 4: 8). This, too, does away with the inference “that the writer of this statement had before him only an Aramaean translation of the letter contained in the state-papers or chronicles which he made use of.” It is not בְּתָב, the copy or writing, but הַנִּשְׁתָּוּ, the letter, that is the subject of מִתְּרַגְּמֵי אֲרָמִית, interpreted in Aramaean. This was translated into the Aramaean or Syrian tongue. The passage is not to be understood as stating that the letter was drawn up in the Hebrew or Samaritan tongue, and then translated into Aramaean, but simply that the letter was not composed in the native language of the writers, but in Aramaean. Thus Gesenius rightly asserts, in his *Thes.* p. 1264, *et lingua*

*aramaea scripta erat*; in saying which **תרגום** does not receive the meaning *concepit, expressit*, but retains its own signification, to interpret, to translate into another language. The writers of the letter were Samaritans, who, having sprung from the intermingling of the Babylonian settlers brought in by Esarhaddon and the remnants of the Israelitish population, spoke a language more nearly akin to Hebrew than to Aramaean, which was spoken at the Babylonian court, and was the official language of the Persian kings and the Persian authorities in Western Asia. This Aramaean tongue had also its own characters, differing from those of the Hebrew and Samaritan. This is stated by the words **בְּתוֹב אֲרָמִית**, whence Bertheau erroneously infers that this Aramaean writing was written in other than the ordinary Aramaean, and perhaps in Hebrew characters.

This letter, too, of Bishlam and his companions seems to be omitted. There follows, indeed, in v. 8, etc., a letter to King Artachshasta, of which a copy is given in vv. 11-16; but the names of the writers are different from those mentioned in v. 7. The three names, Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel (v. 7), cannot be identified with the two names Rehum and Shimshai (v. 8). When we consider, however, that the writers named in v. 8 were high officials of the Persian king, sending to the monarch a written accusation against the Jews in their own and their associates' names, it requires but little stretch of the imagination to suppose that these personages were acting at the instance of the adversaries named in v. 7, the Samaritans Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel, and merely inditing the complaints raised by these opponents against the Jews. This view, which is not opposed by the **בְּתוֹב** of v. 7, — this word not necessarily implying an autograph, — commends itself to our acceptance, first, because the notion that the contents of this letter are not given finds no analogy in v. 6, where the contents of the letter to Ahashverosh are sufficiently hinted at by the word **שְׂמָנָה**; while, with regard to the letter of v. 7, we should have not a notion of its purport in case it were not the same which is given in v. 8, etc. <sup>113</sup>

Besides, the statement concerning the Aramaean composition of this letter would have been utterly purposeless if the Aramaean letter following in v. 8 had been an entirely different one. The information concerning the language in which the letter was written has obviously no other motive than to introduce its transcription in the original Aramaean. This conjecture becomes a certainty through the fact that the Aramaean letter follows in v. 8 without a copula of any kind. If any other had been intended, the **ו** copulative would not more have been omitted here than in v. 7. The letter itself, indeed, does not begin till v. 9, while v. 8 contains yet another announcement of it. This circumstance, however, is explained by the fact that the writers of the letters are other individuals than those named in v. 7, but chiefly by the consideration that the

letter, together with the king's answer, being derived from an Aramaean account of the building of the temple, the introduction to the letter found therein was also transcribed.

*Ezr. 4: 8, etc.* The writers of the letter are designated by titles which show them to have been among the higher functionaries of Artachshasta. Rehum is called **בַּעַל מְעַם**, *dominus consilii v. decreti*, by others *consiliarius*, royal counsellor, probably the title of the Persian civil governor (erroneously taken for a proper name in LXX, Syr., Arab.); Shimshai, **סֹפֵר**, the Hebrew **סוֹפֵר**, scribe, secretary. **בְּנָמָא** is interpreted by Rashi and Aben Ezra by **בְּאִשֶּׁר נְאֻמָּר**, as we shall say; **נְמָא** is in the Talmud frequently an abbreviation of **נְאֻמָּר** or **נִימָר**, of like signification with **לְאֻמָּר**: as follows.

*Ezr. 4: 9.* After this introduction we naturally look for the letter itself in v. 9, instead of which we have (9 and 10) a full statement of who were the senders; and then, after a parenthetical interpolation, "This is the copy of the letter," etc., the letter itself in v. 11. The statement is rather a clumsy one, the construction especially exhibiting a want of sequence. The verb to **אָדַן** is wanting; this follows in v. 11, but as an anacoluthon, after an enumeration of the names in 9 and 10 with **שְׁלַח**. The sentence ought properly to run thus: "Then (i.e., in the days of Artachshasta) Rehum, etc., sent a letter to King Artachshasta, of which the following is a copy: Thy servants, the men on this side the river," etc. The names enumerated in vv. 9 and 10 were undoubtedly all inserted in the superscription or preamble of the letter, to give weight to the accusation brought against the Jews. The author of the Chaldee section of the narrative, however, has placed them first, and made the copy of the letter itself begin only with the words, "Thy servants," etc. First come the names of the superior officials, Rehum and Shimshai, and the rest of their companions. The latter are then separately enumerated: The Dinaites, LXX **Δειναῖοι**, — so named, according to the conjecture of Ewald (*Gesch.* iii. p. 676), from the Median city long afterwards called Deinaver (Abulf. *Geógr.* ed. Paris. p. 414); the Apharsathchites, probably the Pharathikites of Strabo (*Ezr.* 15: 3. 12) (**Παρθητακηνοί**, Herod. i. 101), on the borders of Persia and Media, described as being, together with the Elymaites, a predatory people relying on their mountain fastnesses; the Tarpelites, whom Junius already connects with the **ἀπουροί** dwelling east of Elymais (Ptol. vi. 2. 6); the Apharsites, probably the Persians (**פְּרָסִיא** with **א** prosthetic); the Archevites, probably so called from the city **אַרְךָ**, Gen. 10:10, upon inscriptions Uruk, the modern Warka; the **בְּבִלְיָא**, Babylonians, inhabitants of Babylon; the Shushanchites, i.e., the Susanites, inhabitants of the city of Susa; **דְּהַוָּא**, in the Keri **דְּהַוָּיָא**, the Dehavites, the Grecians (**Δάοι**, Herod. i. 125); and lastly, the Elamites, the people of Elam or

Elymais. Full as this enumeration may seem, yet the motive being to name as many races as possible, the addition, “and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnapper brought over and set in the city of Samaria, and the rest that are on this side the river,” etc., is made for the sake of enhancing the statement. Prominence being given both here and v. 17 to the city of Samaria as the city in which Osnapper had settled the colonists here named, the “nations brought in by Osnapper” must be identical with those who, according to v. 2, and 2Ki. 17:24, had been placed in the cities of Samaria by King Esarhaddon. Hence Osnapper would seem to be merely another name for Esarhaddon. But the names Osnapper (LXX *Ἀσσεναφάρ*) and Asarhaddon (LXX *Ἀσαραδάν*) being too different to be identified, and the notion that Osnapper was a second name of Asarhaddon having but little probability, together with the circumstance that Osnapper is not called king, as Asarhaddon is v. 2, but only “the great and noble,” it is more likely that he was some high functionary of Asarhaddon, who presided over the settlement of eastern races in Samaria and the lands west of the Euphrates. “In the cities,” or at least the preposition *בְּ*, must be supplied from the preceding *בְּקִרְיָה* before *שָׂאֵר עִבְר נְהָרָה*; and in the rest of the territory, or in the cities of the rest of the territory, on this side of Euphrates. *עִבְר*, *trans*, is to be understood of the countries west of Euphrates; matters being regarded from the point of view of the settlers, who had been transported from the territories east, to those west of Euphrates. *וּבְעֵנָת* means “and so forth,” and hints that the statement is not complete.

On comparing the names of the nations here mentioned with the names of the cities from which, according to 2Ki. 17:24, colonists were brought to Samaria, we find the inhabitants of most of the cities there named — Babylon, Cuthah, and Ava — here comprised under the name of the country as *בְּבִלְיָא*, Babylonians; while the people of Hamath and Sepharvaim may fitly be included among “the rest of the nations,” since certainly but few colonists would have been transported from the Syrian Hamath to Samaria. The main divergence between the two passages arises from the mention in our present verse, not only of the nations planted in the cities of Samaria, but of all the nations in the great region on this side of Euphrates (*עִבְר נְהָרָה*). All these tribes had similar interests to defend in opposing the Jewish community, and they desired by united action to give greater force to their representation to the Persian monarch, and thus to hinder the people of Jerusalem from becoming powerful. And certainly they had some grounds for uneasiness lest the remnant of the Israelites in Palestine, and in other regions on this side the Euphrates, should combine with the Jerusalem community, and the thus united Israelites should become sufficiently powerful to oppose an effectual resistance to their heathen adversaries. On the anacoluthistic connection of v. 11, see remarks above, p.

65. פִּרְשָׁנָן, vv. 11, 23, Ezr. 5: 6, 7:11, and frequently in the Targums and the Syriac, written פִּתְשָׁנָן Est. 3:14 and 4: 8, is derived from the Zendish *paiti* (Sanscr. prati) and *cenghana* (in Old-Persian *thanhana*), and signifies properly a counterword, i.e., counterpart, copy. The form with פ is either a corruption, or formed from a compound with *fra*; comp. Gildemeister in the *Zeitschr. für die Kunde des Morgenl.* iv. p. 210, and Haug in Ewald's *bibl. Jahrb.* v. p. 163, etc. — The copy of the letter begins with עֲבָדֶיךָ, thy servants, the men, etc. The Chethib עֲבָדֶיךָ is the original form, shortened in the Keri into עֲבָדֶיךָ. Both forms occur elsewhere; comp. Dan. 2:29, 3:12, and other passages. The וּכְעֵנָה, etc., here stands for the full enumeration of the writers already given in v. 9, and also for the customary form of salutation.

*Ezr. 4:12-16.* The letter. V. 12. “Be it known unto the king.” On the form יְהוּא for יְהוּא, peculiar to biblical Chaldee, see remarks on Dan. 2:20. “Which are come up from thee,” i.e., from the territory where thou art tarrying; in other words, from the country beyond Euphrates. This by no means leads to the inference, as Schrader supposes, that these Jews had been transported from Babylon to Jerusalem by King Artachshasta. עָלָה answers to the Hebrew עָלָה, and is used like this of the journey to Jerusalem. “Are come to us, to Jerusalem,” עֲלֵינָא, to us, that is, into the parts where we dwell, is more precisely defined by the words “to Jerusalem.” “They are building the rebellious and bad city, and are setting up its walls and digging its foundations.” Instead of מְרֻדָּא (with Kamets and Metheg under ר) the edition of J. H. Mich. has מְרֻדָּא, answering to the *stat. abs.* מְרֻדָּא, v. 15; on the other hand, the edition of Norzi and several codices read מְרֻדָּא, the feminine of מְרֻד. For מְרֻדָּא Norzi has בְּאִשְׁתָּא, from בְּאִישׁ, a contraction of בְּאִישׁ. For שׁוּרֵי אֲשַׁכְּלֻ must be read, according to the Keri, שׁוּרֵי אֲשַׁכְּלֻ. The *Shaphel* שְׁכַלְל from כַּלַּל, means to complete, to finish. אֲשִׁין, bases, foundations. יְחִיטּוּ may be the imperf. Aphel of חִיט, formed after the example of יְקִים for יְקִים, omitting the reduplication, חִיטּוּ. חִיט means to sew together, and may, like רְפָא, be understood of repairing walls or foundations. But it is more likely to be the imperf. Aphel of חָטַט, in Syriac *ḥaṭ*, and in the Talmud, to dig, to dig out, *fodit, excavavit* — to dig out the foundations for the purpose of erecting new buildings.

*Ezr. 4:13.* “Now be it known unto the king, that if this city be built up and...they will not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and it (the city) will at last bring damage to the king.” The three words מְנַדָּה בְּלוּ וְהֶלֶךְ occur again, v. 20 and 7:24, in this combination as designating the different kinds of imposts. מְנַדָּה,

with resolved *Dagesh forte*, for מְדָה (v. 20), signifies measure, then tax or custom measured to every one. בְּלוּ, probably a duty on consumption, excise; הַקָּדֵי, a toll paid upon roads by travellers and their goods. The word אֶפְתָּם, which occurs only here, and has not been expressed by old translators, depends upon the Pehlevi word אֶוֹדוֹם: it is connected with the Sanscrit *apa*, in the superl. *apama*, and signifies at last, or in the future; comp. Haug, p. 156. מְלָכִים, a Hebraized form for מַלְכֵינָא, v. 15, is perhaps only an error of transcription.

*Ezr. 4:14.* “Now, because we eat the salt of the palace, and it does not become us to see the damage of the king, we send (this letter) and make known to the king.” מֶלַח מֶלַח, to salt salt = to eat salt. To eat the salt of the palace is a figurative expression for: to be in the king’s pay. See this interpretation vindicated from the Syriac and Persian in Gesen. *thes.* p. 790. <sup>fl4</sup> עֲרִיקָה, deprivation, emptying, here injury to the royal power or revenue. אֶרְיָ, participle of אֶרַי, answering to the Hebrew עֲרַי, means fitting, becoming.

*Ezr. 4:15.* “That search may be made in the book of the chronicles of thy fathers, so shalt thou find in the book of the Chronicles that this city has been a rebellious city, and hurtful to kings and countries, and that they have from of old stirred up sedition within it, on which account this city was (also) destroyed.” יִבְקֹר is used impersonally: let one seek, let search be made. סֵפֶר דְּכִבְרֵינַיָא, book of records, is the public royal chronicle in which the chief events of the history of the realm were recorded, called Est. 6: 1 the book of the records of daily events. *Thy* fathers are the predecessors of the king, i.e., his predecessors in government; therefore not merely the Median and Persian, but the Chaldean and Assyrian kings, to whose dominions the Persian monarchs had succeeded. אֶשְׁתַּדְדוּר, a verbal noun from the Ithpeal of שָׁדַר, rebellion. עֲלָמָא מִן יוֹמָת, from the days of eternity, i.e., from time immemorial. יוֹמָת is in the constructive state, plural, formed from the singular יוֹמָא. This form occurs only here and v. 19, but is analogous with the Hebrew poetical form יְמוֹת for יָמִים.

*Ezr. 4:16.* After thus casting suspicion upon the Jews as a seditious people, their adversaries bring the accusation, already raised at the beginning of the letter, to a climax, by saying that if Jerusalem is rebuilt and fortified, the king will lose his supremacy over the lands on this side the river. לְקַבֵּל דְּנָה, on this account, for this reason, that the present inhabitants of the fortified city Jerusalem are like its former inhabitants, thou wilt have no portion west of Euphrates, i.e., thou wilt have nothing more to do with the countries on this side the river — wilt forfeit thy sway over these districts.



*Ezr. 4:17-22.* The royal answer to this letter. פתגמא — a word which has also passed into the Hebrew, Ecc. 8:11, Est. 1:20 — is the Zend. *patigama*, properly that which is to take place, the decree, the sentence; see on Dan. 3:16. וְשָׂר עִבְרֵי נִי still depends upon בָּ: those dwelling in Samaria and the other towns on this side the river. The royal letter begins with שָׁלֹם וּבְכֶתֶת, “Peace,” and so forth. כְּעֵת is abbreviated from כְּעֵתָהּ.

*Ezr. 4:18.* “The letter which you sent to us has been plainly read before me.” מִפְּרָשׁ part. pass. Peal, corresponds with the Hebrew part. Piel מִפְּרָשׁ, made plain, adverbially, plainly, and does not signify “translated into Persian.”

*Ezr. 4:19.* “And by me a command has been given, and search has been made; and it has been found that this city from of old hath lifted itself (risen) up against kings,” etc. מִתְנַשֵּׂא, lifted itself up rebelliously, as (in Hebrew) in 1Ki. 1: 5.

*Ezr. 4:20.* “There have been powerful kings in Jerusalem, and (rulers) exercising dominion over the whole region beyond the river” (westward of Euphrates). This applies in its full extent only to David and Solomon, and in a less degree to subsequent kings of Israel and Judah. On v. 20*b*, comp. v. 13.

*Ezr. 4:21.* “Give ye now commandment to hinder these people (to keep them from the work), that this city be not built until command (sc. to build) be given from me.” יִתְּשֵׁם, Ithpeal of שָׁוֵם.

*Ezr. 4:22.* “And be warned from committing an oversight in this respect,” i.e., take heed to overlook nothing in this matter (נִדְרָהּ, instructed, warned). “Why should the damage become great (i.e., grow), to bring injury to kings?”

*Ezr. 4:23.* The result of this royal command. As soon as the copy of the letter was read before Rehum and his associates, they went up in haste to Jerusalem to the Jews, and hindered them by violence and force. אֶדְרָע with א prosthetic only here, elsewhere דְרָע (= זָרוּע), arm, violence. Bertheau translates, “with forces and a host;” but the rendering of אֶדְרָע or זָרוּע by “force” can neither be shown to be correct from Eze. 17: 9 and Dan. 11:15, 31, nor justified by the translation of the LXX, ἐν ἰπποῖς καὶ δυνάμει.

*Ezr. 4:24.* “Then ceased the work of the house of God at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of Darius king of Persia.” With this statement the narrator returns to the notice in v. 5, that the adversaries of Judah succeeded in delaying the building of the temple till the reign of King Darius, which he takes up, and now adds the more precise information that it ceased till the *second*

year of King Darius. The intervening section, vv. 6-23, gives a more detailed account of those accusations against the Jews made by their adversaries to kings Ahashverosh and Artachshasta. If we read vv. 23 and 24 as successive, we get an impression that the discontinuation to build mentioned in v. 24 was the effect and consequence of the prohibition obtained from King Artachshasta, through the complaints brought against the Jews by his officials on this side the river; the **וַיִּבְנֶה** of v. 24 seeming to refer to the **וַיִּבְנֶה** of v. 23. Under this impression, older expositors have without hesitation referred the contents of vv. 6-23 to the interruption to the building of the temple during the period from Cyrus to Darius, and understood the two names Ahashverosh and Artachshasta as belonging to Cambyses and (Pseudo) Smerdis, the monarchs who reigned between Cyrus and Darius. Grave objections to this view have, however, been raised by Kleinert (in the *Beiträgen der Dorpater Prof. d. Theol.* 8132, vol. i) and J. W. Schultz (*Cyrus der Grosse*, in *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* 1853, p. 624, etc.), who have sought to prove that none but the Persian kings Xerxes and Artaxerxes can be meant by Ahashverosh and Artachshasta, and that the section vv. 6-23 relates not to the building of the temple, but to the building of the walls of Jerusalem, and forms an interpolation or episode, in which the historian makes the efforts of the adversaries of Judah to prevent the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under Xerxes and Artaxerxes follow immediately after his statement of their attempt to hinder the building of the temple, for the sake of presenting at one glance a view of all their machinations against the Jews. This view has been advocated not only by Vaihinger, "On the Elucidation of the History of Israel after the Captivity," in the *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* 1857, p. 87, etc., and Bertheau in his Commentary on this passage, but also by Hengstenberg, *Christol.* iii. p. 143, Auberlen, and others, and opposed by Ewald in the 2nd edition of his *Gesch. Israels*, iv. p. 118, where he embraces the older explanation of these verses, and A. Koehler on Haggai, p. 20. On reviewing the arguments advanced in favour of the more modern view, we can lay no weight at all upon the circumstance that in 6-23 the building of the temple is not spoken of. The contents of the letter sent to Ahashverosh (v. 6) are not stated; in that to Artachshasta (vv. 11-16) the writers certainly accuse the Jews of building the rebellious and bad city (Jerusalem), of setting up its walls and digging out its foundations (v. 12); but the whole document is so evidently the result of ardent hatred and malevolent suspicion, that well-founded objections to the truthfulness of these accusations may reasonably be entertained. Such adversaries might, for the sake of more surely attaining their end of obstructing the work of the Jews, easily represent the act of laying the foundations and building the walls of the temple as a rebuilding of the town walls. The answer of the king, too (vv. 17-22), would naturally treat only of such matters as the accusers had mentioned.

The argument derived from the names of the kings is of far more importance. The name אֲחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ (in v. 6) occurs also in the book of Esther, where, as is now universally acknowledged, the Persian king Xerxes is meant; and in Dan. 9: 1, as the name of the Median king Kyaxares. In the cuneiform inscriptions the name is in Old-Persian *Ksayarsa*, in Assyrian *Hisiarsi*, in which it is easy to recognise both the Hebrew form Ahashverosh, and the Greek forms ἔρξης and Κυαξάρης. On the other hand, the name Cambyses (Old-Persian *Kambudshja*) offers no single point of identity; the words are radically different, whilst nothing is known of Cambyses having ever borne a second name or surname similar in sound to the Hebrew Ahashverosh. The name Artachshasta, moreover, both in Est. 7 and 8, and in the book of Nehemiah, undoubtedly denotes the monarch known as *Artaxerxes (Longimanus)*. It is, indeed, in both these books written אֲרַתַּחְשַׁשְׁתָּא with ם, and in the present section, and in 6:14, אֲרַתַּחְשַׁשְׁתָּא; but this slight difference of orthography is no argument for difference of person, אֲרַתַּחְשַׁשְׁתָּא seeming to be a mode of spelling the word peculiar to the author of the Chaldee section, *Ezr. 4-6*. Two other names, indeed, of Smerdis, the successor of Cambyses, have been handed down to us. According to Xenophon, *Cyrop. viii. 7*, and Ktesias, *Pers. fr. 8-13*, he is said to have been called *Tanyoxares*, and according to *Justini hist. i. 9*, *Oropastes*; and Ewald is of opinion that the latter name is properly *Ortosastes*, which might answer to Artachshasta. It is also not improbable that Smerdis may, as king, have assumed the name of Artachshasta, Αρταξέρξης, which Herodotus (vi. 98) explains by μέγας ἀρήιος. But neither this possibility, nor the opinion of Ewald, that *Ortosastes* is the correct reading for *Oropastes* in *Just. hist. i. 9*, can lay any claim to probability, unless other grounds also exist for the identification of Artachshasta with Smerdis. Such grounds, however, are wanting; while, on the other hand, it is *à priori* improbable that *Psa. Smerdis*, who reigned but about seven months, should in this short period have pronounced such a decision concerning the matter of building the temple of Jerusalem, as we read in the letter of Artachshasta, 17-22, even if the adversaries of the Jews should, though residing in Palestine, have laid their complaints before him, immediately after his accession to the throne. When we consider also the great improbability of Ahashverosh being a surname of Cambyses, we feel constrained to embrace the view that the section 6-23 is an episode inserted by the historian, on the occasion of narrating the interruption to the building of the temple, brought about by the enemies of the Jews, and for the sake of giving a short and comprehensive view of all the hostile acts against the Jewish community on the part of the Samaritans and surrounding nations.

The contents and position of v. 24 may easily be reconciled with this view, which also refutes as unfounded the assertion of Herzfeld, *Gesch. des Volkes*

*Israel*, i. p. 303, and Schrader, p. 469, that the author of the book of Ezra himself erroneously refers the document given, vv. 6-23, to the erection of the temple, instead of to the subsequent building of the walls of Jerusalem. For, to say nothing of the contents of vv. 6-23, although it may seem natural to refer the **בַּשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת** of v. 24 to v. 23, it cannot be affirmed that this reference is either necessary or the only one allowable. The assertion that **בַּשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת** is “*always* connected with that which *immediately* precedes,” cannot be strengthened by an appeal to Ezr. 5: 2, 6: 1, Dan. 2:14, 46, 3: 3, and other passages. **בַּשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת**, *then* (= at that time), in contradistinction to **בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִיא**, *thereupon*, only refers a narrative, in a general manner, to the time spoken of in that which precedes it. When, then, it is said, *then*, or at that time, the work of the house of God ceased (v. 24), the then can only refer to what was before related concerning the building of the house of God, i. e., to the narrative vv. 1-5. This reference of v. 24 to vv. 1-5 is raised above all doubt, by the fact that the contents of v. 24 are but a recapitulation of v. 5; it being said in both, that the cessation from building the temple lasted till the reign, or, as it is more precisely stated in v. 24, till the second year of the reign, of Darius king of Persia. With this recapitulation of the contents of v. 5, the narrative, v. 24, returns to the point which it had reached at v. 5. What lies between is thereby characterized as an illustrative episode, the relation of which to that which precedes and follows it, is to be perceived and determined solely by its contents. If, then, in this episode, we find not only that the building of the temple is not spoken of, but that letters are given addressed to the Kings Ahashverosh and Artachshasta, who, as all Ezra’s contemporaries would know, reigned not before but after Darius, the very introduction of the first letter with the words, “*And* in the reign of Ahashverosh” (v. 6), after the preceding statement, “until the reign of Darius king of Persia” (v. 5), would be sufficient to obviate the misconception that letters addressed to Ahashverosh and Artachshasta related to matters which happened in the period between Cyrus and Darius Hystaspis. Concerning another objection to this view of vv. 6-23, viz., that it would be strange that King Artaxerxes, who is described to us in Ezr. 7 and in Nehemiah as very favourable to the Jews, should have been for a time so prejudiced against them as to forbid the building of the town and walls of Jerusalem, we shall have an opportunity of speaking in our explanations of Neh. 1. — V. 24, so far, then, as its matter is concerned, belongs to the following chapter, to which it forms an introduction.

## **Ch. 5. — The Building of the Temple Continued, and Notice Thereof Sent to King Darius.**

*Ezr. 5.* In the second year of Darius Hystaspis (Darajavus Victacpa) the prophets Zechariah and Haggai arose, and exhorted the people by words, both of reproof and encouragement, to assist in the work of rebuilding the house of God. In consequence of these prophetic admonitions, the rulers of the community resumed the work (vv. 1, 2); and the royal governor on this side the Euphrates allowed them, when in answer to his inquiries they appealed to the decree of Cyrus, to proceed with their building until the arrival of a decision from King Darius, to whom he addressed a written report of the matter (3-17).

*Ezr. 5: 1, 2.* “The prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel upon them.” **עַל־יְהוָה** without **אֱלֹהֵי**, which this word occasionally loses in Hebrew also, comp. 1Sa. 10: 6, 13, Jer. 26: 9. The epithet **נְבִיאָה** added to the name of Haggai serves to distinguish him from others of the same name, and as well as **הַנְּבִיאִים**, Hag. 1: 1, 3, 12, and elsewhere, is used instead of the name of his father; hence, after Zechariah is named, the prophets, as designating the position of both, can follow. **עַל־יְהוָה**, they prophesied to (not against) the Jews; **עַל** as in Eze. 37: 4, = **אֵל**, Eze. 37: 9, 36: 1. The Jews *in Judah and Jerusalem*, in contradistinction to Jews dwelling elsewhere, especially to those who had remained in Babylon. **עַל־יְהוָה** belongs to **בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי**, in the name of God, who was upon them, who was come upon them, had manifested Himself to them. Comp. Jer. 15:16.

*Ezr. 5: 2.* “Then rose up Zerubbabel...and Joshua...and began to build the house of God at Jerusalem, and with them the prophets of God helping them.” The beginning to build is (Ezr. 3: 6, etc.) the commencement of the building properly so called, upon the foundations laid, 3:10; for what was done after this foundation-laying till a stop was put to the work, was so unimportant that no further notice is taken of it. The “prophets of God” are those mentioned v. 1, viz., Haggai, and Zechariah the son, i.e., grandson, of Iddo, for his father’s name was Berechiah (see Introd. to Zechariah). Haggai entered upon his work on the first day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius; and his first address made such an impression, that Zerubbabel and Joshua with the people set about the intermitted work of building as early as the twenty-fourth day of the same month (comp. Hag. 1: 1 and 14f.). Two months later, viz., in the eighth month of the same year, Zechariah began to exhort the people to turn sincerely to the Lord their God, and not to relapse into the sins of their fathers.

*Ezr. 5: 3-5.* When the building was recommenced, the governor on this side Euphrates, and other royal officials, evidently informed of the undertaking by the adversaries of the Jews, made their appearance for the purpose of

investigating matters on the spot. אָתָּה עֲלֵיהֶוּן, came to them, to the two above-named rulers of the community at Jerusalem. Tatnai (LXX Θανθαυαί) was פְּחָה, viceroy, in the provinces west of Euphrates, i.e., as correctly expanded in 1 Esdras, of Syria and Phoenicia, to which Judaea with its *Pecha* Zerubbabel was subordinate. With him came Shethar-Boznai, perhaps his secretary, and their companions, their subordinates. The royal officials inquired: “Who has commanded you to build this house, and to finish this wall?” The form לְבַנָּא here and v. 13 is remarkable, the infinitive in Chaldee being not בְּנִיא, but מְבַנָּא; compare vv. 2, 17, and Ezr. 6: 8. Norzi has both times לְבַנָּא, as through the Dagesh *forte* were compensating for an omitted מ. אֲשֶׁרנָא which occurs only here and v. 9, is variously explained. The Vulgate, the Syriac, and also the Rabbins, translate: these walls. This meaning best answers to the context, and is also linguistically the most correct. It can hardly, however, be derived (Gesenius) from אֲשֶׁר, but rather from אֲשֶׁן, in Chaldee אֲשֶׁן, firm, strong — walls as the strength or firmness of the building. The form אֲשֶׁרנָא has arisen from אֲשֶׁנָּא, and is analogous to the form בְּשֶׁנָּה.<sup>115</sup>

*Ezr. 5: 4.* Then told we them after this manner (בְּנִמָּא, 4: 8), what were the names of the men who were building this building. From אֲמַרנָא, we said, it is obvious that the author of this account was an eye-witness of, and sharer in, the work of building. There is not a shadow of reason for altering אֲמַרנָא into אֲמַרו, or into the participle אֲמַרִּין (Ew., Berth., and others); the εἰποσαν of the LXX being no critical authority for so doing. The answer in v. 4 seems not to correspond with the question in v. 3. The royal officials asked, Who had commanded them to build? The Jews told them the names of those who had undertaken and were conducting the building. But this incongruity between the question and answer is merely caused by the fact that the discussion is reported only by a short extract restricted to the principal subjects. We learn that this is the case from the contents of the letter sent by the officials to the king. According to these, the royal functionary inquired not merely concerning the author of the command to build, but asked also the names of those who were undertaking the work (comp. vv. 9 and 10); while the rulers of the Jews gave a circumstantial answer to both questions (vv. 11-15).

*Ezr. 5: 5.* Tatnai and Shethar-Boznai had power to prohibit them from proceeding; they allowed them, however, to go on with their work till the arrival of an answer from the king, to whom they had furnished a written report of the matter. In these dealings, the historian sees a proof of the divine protection which was watching over the building. “The eye of their God was over the elders of the Jews, that they should not restrain them (from building)

till the matter came to Darius; and they should then receive a letter concerning this matter.” Bertheau incorrectly translates עַד־מַעֲמָא לְדִי יִהְיֶה: until the command of King Darius should arrive. לְ is only used as a paraphrase of the genitive in statements of time; otherwise the genitive, if not expressed by the *status construc.*, is designated by דִּי or דִּי יִהְיֶה, fut. Peal of הִלְךְ, formed by the rejection of ל, construed with לְ, signifies to go to a place (comp. 7:13), or to come to a person. מַעֲמָא (מַעַם) does not here mean commandment, but the matter, *causa*, which the king is to decide; just as פְּתָנָם, 6:11, means thing, *res*. The clause וְאֲדָרְנָן יְתִיבוּן still depends upon עַד: and till they (the royal officials) then receive a letter, i.e., obtain a decision.

**Ezr. 5: 6-17.** In vv. 6-17 follows the letter which the royal officials sent to the king. Vv. 6 and 7a form the introduction to this document, and correspond with vv. 8-11 in Ezr. 4. Copy of the letter (comp. 4:11) which Tatnai, etc., sent. The senders of the letter are, besides Tatnai, Shethar-Boznai and his companions the Apharsachites, the same called 4: 9 the Apharsathchites, who perhaps, as a race specially devoted to the Persian king, took a prominent position among the settlers in Syria, and may have formed the royal garrison. After this general announcement of the letter, follows the more precise statement: They sent the matter to him; and in it was written, To King Darius, much peace. פְּתָנָם here is not command, but matter; see above. כֻּלָּא, its totality, is unconnected with, yet dependent on שְׁלָמָא: peace in all things, in every respect. The letter itself begins with a simple representation of the state of affairs (v. 8): “We went into the province of Judaea, to the house of the great God (for so might Persian officials speak of the God of Israel, after what they had learned from the elders of Judah of the edict of Cyrus), and it is being built with freestone, and timber is laid in the walls; and this work is being diligently carried on, and is prospering under their hands.” The placing of wood in the walls refers to building beams into the wall for flooring; for the building was not so far advanced as to make it possible that this should be said of covering the walls with wainscotting. The word אֲסַפְרָנָא here, and Ezr. 6: 8, 12, 13, 7:17, 21, 26, is of Aryan origin, and is explained by Haug in *Ew. Janro.* v. p. 154, from the Old-Persian *us-parna*, to mean: carefully or exactly finished, — a meaning which suits all these passages.

**Ezr. 5: 9.** Hereupon the royal officials asked the elders of the Jews who had commanded them to build, and inquired concerning their names, that they might write to the king the names of the leading men (see the remark on 3 and 41). דִּי בְרָאִישָׁהֶם does not mean, who are at the head of them: but, who act in the capacity of heads.

**Ezr. 5:11.** The answer of the elders of the Jews. They returned us answer in the following manner (לְאַמֵּר = לְמַמַּר): “We are His, the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house which was built many years ago; and a great king of Israel built and completed it.” מִקְדָּמַת דְּנִהָ, of before this, i.e., before the present; to which is added the more precise definition: many years (accusative of time), i.e., many years before the present time.

**Ezr. 5:12.** For this reason (לְהָ), because (מִדְּדִי = מֵאַשֵּׁר, e.g., Isa. 43: 4) our fathers provoked the God of heaven, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, and he (Nebuch.) destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. For כְּסִדְיָא the Keri requires כְּסִדְיָא, the ordinary form of the *absolute state* of the noun in *ai*. סִתַּר, Pael, in the sense of destroy, appears only here in biblical Chaldee, but more frequently in the Targums. עַמָּה, its people, would refer to the town of Jerusalem; but Norzi and J. H. Mich. have עַמָּה, and the Masora expressly says that the word is to be written without Mappik, and is therefore the *stat. emphat.* for עַמָּא.

**Ezr. 5:13, 14.** In the first year, however, of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus made a decree, etc.; comp. Ezr. 1: 3. The infin. לְבַנָּא like v. 3. — On vv. 14 and 15, comp. Ezr. 1: 7-11. וַיְהִיבוּ, praeter. pass. of Peal; they were given to one Sheshbazzar, (is) his name, i.e., to one of the name of Sheshbazzar, whom he had made pechah. Zerubbabel is also called בְּחָה, Hag. 1: 1, 14, and elsewhere.

**Ezr. 5:15.** Take these vessels, go forth, place them in the temple. For אֱלֵהּ the Keri reads אֵל, according to 1Ch. 20: 8. אֲחַת is imperat. Aphel of נָחַת. The three imperatives succeed each other without any copula in this rapid form of expression. The last sentence, “and let the house of God be built in its place,” i.e., be rebuilt in its former place, gives the reason for the command to deposit the vessels in the temple at Jerusalem, i.e., in the house of God, which is to be rebuilt in its former place.

**Ezr. 5:16.** In virtue of this command of Cyrus, this Sheshbazzar came (from Babylon to Jerusalem), and laid then the foundations of the house of God, and from that time till now it has been building, and is not (yet) finished. שְׁלִים, part. pass. of שָׁלַם, often used in the Targums and in Syriac for the Hebrew תָּמַם; hence in Dan. 5:26 the Aphel, in the meaning of to finish, and Eze. 7:19, to restore. This statement does not exclude the cessation from building from the last year of Cyrus to the second of Darius, narrated 4 to Ezr. 5:24, as Bertheau



and others suppose, but only leaves the unmentioned circumstance which had been the cause of the delay. If the section Ezr. 4: 6-23 does not refer to the building of the temple, then neither is a “forcible interruption” of the building spoken of in Ezr. 4; but it is only said that the adversaries frustrated the purpose of the Jews to rebuild the temple till the time of Darius, and weakened the hands of the people, so that the work of the house of God ceased.

*Ezr. 5:17.* After thus representing the state of affairs, the royal officials request Darius to cause a search to be made among the archives of the kingdom, as to whether a decree made by Cyrus for the erection of the temple at Jerusalem was to be found therein, and then to communicate to them his decision concerning the matter. “And if it seem good to the king, let search be made in the king’s treasure-house there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king.” **הַן מָבַעַל**, like the Hebrew **אֵם מָבַעַל**, Est. 1:19, for which in older Hebrew **מָבַעַל לֹא**, Deu. 23:17, or **טוֹב בְּעֵינַיִם**, Gen. 19: 8, Jud. 10:15, and elsewhere, is used. **בֵּית גִּנְזָא**, house of the treasure, more definitely called, 6: 1, house of the rolls, where also the royal treasures were deposited. Hence it is obvious that important documents and writings were preserved in the royal treasury. **תַּמְחָה**, there, is explained by “which at Babylon.” **רְעוּתָא**, chald. *voluntas*, comp. 7:18. Concerning the behaviour of these officials Brentius well remarks: *vides differentiam inter calumniatores et bonos ac probos viros. Una eademque causa erat aedificii templi, unus idemque populus Judaeorum; attamen hujus populi causa aliter refertur ab impiis calumniatoribus, aliter a bonis viris.*

## **Ch. 6. — The Royal Decree, the Completion and Dedication of the Temple, and the Feast of the Passover.**

*Ezr. 6: 1-12. The decision of Darius.* — Vv. 1-5. At the command of Darius, search was made in the archives of the royal treasury; and in the fortress of Achmetha in Media, was found the roll in which was recorded the edict published by Cyrus, concerning the building of the temple at Jerusalem.

*Ezr. 6: 1.* Search was made in the house of the books where also the treasures were deposited in Babylon. **מִתְחַתֵּינ**, partic. Aphel of **נָחַת**; see Ezr. 5:15.

*Ezr. 6: 2.* “And there was found at Achmetha, in the fortress that is in the land of Media, a roll; and thus was it recorded therein.” In Babylon itself the document sought for was not found; though, probably the search there made, led to the discovery of a statement that documents pertaining to the time of Cyrus were preserved in the fortress of Achmetha, where the record in question was subsequently discovered. **אֲחַמְתָּא**, the capital of Great Media — τὸ

Ἐκβάτανα, Judith 1: 1, 14, or Ἀγβάτανα (Herod. i. 98) — built by Dejokes, was the summer residence of the Persian and Parthian kings, and situate in the neighbourhood of the modern Hamadan. Achmetha is probably the Old-Median or Old-Persian pronunciation of the name, the letters אהמ on Sassanidian coins being explained as denoting this city (Mordtmann in the *Zeitschrift der deutsch morgenl. Gesellschaft*, viii. p. 14). The citadel of Ecbatana probably contained also the royal palace and the official buildings. For בגנה is found in some MSS and editions בגנה; but Norzi and J. H. Mich. have Pathach under ו as the better authorized reading. דברונָה, *stat. emph.* of דברון, *memorandum*, ὑπόμνημα, a record of anything memorable. The contents of this document follow, vv. 3-5. First, the proclamation of King Cyrus in the first year of his reign: “The house of God at Jerusalem, let this house be built as a place where sacrifices are offered.” The meaning of the words following is doubtful. We translate וְאַשׁוּדְי מְסוּבְלִין: and let them raise up its foundations, i.e., its foundations are to be again raised up, restored. אַשׁוּי, foundations (Ezr. 4:12); מְסוּבְלִין, part. Poel of סָבַל, to carry, to raise (not to be raised). סָבַל often stands for the Hebrew נָשָׂא, to carry, to raise up, to erect; compare the Samaritan translation of Gen. 13:10: וּסְבַל אֶת עֵינָיו, he lifted up his eyes. סוּבַל אַשׁוּי is analogous with קוּמַם מוּסְדֵי ד', Isa. 58:12, and signifies to erect buildings upon the foundations. <sup>f16</sup>

Expositors are divided as to the dimensions of the new temple, “its height 60 cubits, and its breadth 60 cubits,” *Antiq.* xi. 4. 6; while Solomon’s temple was but 30 cubits high, and, without the side-buildings, only 20 cubits broad. We nevertheless consider the statements correct, and the text incorrupt, and explain the absence of the measure of length simply by the fact that, as far as length was concerned, the old and new temples were of equal dimensions. Solomon’s temple, measured externally, inclusive of the porch and the additional building at the hinder part, was about 100 cubits long (see the ground plan in my *bibl. Archaeol.* Table II. fig. 1). To correspond with this length, the new temple was, according to the desire of Cyrus, to be both higher and broader, viz., 60 cubits high, and as many wide, — measurements which certainly apply to external dimensions. Zerubbabel’s temple, concerning the structure of which we have no further particulars, was externally of this height and breadth. This may be inferred from the speech of King Herod in Joseph. *Ant.* xv. 11. 1, in which this tyrant, who desired to be famous for the magnificence of his buildings, endeavoured to gain the favour of the people for the rebuilding of the temple, which he was contemplating, by the remark that the temple built by their forefathers, on their return from the Babylonian captivity, was 60 cubits too low, — Solomon’s temple having been double that height (sc. according to the

height given in 2Ch. 3: 4, 120 cubits), — and from the fact that Herod made his temple 100 or 120 cubits high. Hence the temple of Zerubbabel, measured externally, must have been 60 cubits high; and consequently we need not diminish the breadth of 60 cubits, also given in this verse, by alterations of the text, because Herod's temple was likewise of this width, but must understand the given dimensions to relate to external height and breadth. For in Herod's temple the holy places were but 60 cubits high and 20 wide; the holy place, 40 cubits long, 20 wide, and 60 high; the holy of holies, 20 cubits long, 20 wide, and 60 high. And we may assume that the dimensions of Zerubbabel's temple preserved the same proportions, with perhaps the modification, that the internal height did not amount to 60 cubits, — an upper storey being placed above the holy place and the holy of holies, as in Herod's temple; which would make the internal height of these places amount to only about 30 or 40 cubits. <sup>n7</sup>

In like manner must the 60 cubits of breadth be so divided, that the 5 cubits internal breadth of the side-buildings of Solomon's temple must be enlarged to 10, which, allowing 5 cubits of thickness for the walls, would make the entire building 60 cubits wide (5 + 10 + 5 + 20 + 5 + 10 + 5). <sup>n8</sup>

The statement in v. 4, “three layers of great stones, and a layer of new timber,” is obscure. **נִדְבָן** means row, layer, and stands in the Targums for the Hebrew **טוֹר**, “used of a layer of bricks;” see Gesen. *Thes.* p. 311, and Levy, *chald. Wörterbuch*, ii. p. 93. **אֶבֶן גִּלְגַּל**, stone of rolling, one that is rolled and cannot be carried, i.e., a great building stone. **חֲדָת**, *novus*, as an epithet to **אֵץ**, is remarkable, it being self-evident that new wood is generally used for a new building. The LXX translates **אֵץ**, reading the word **חֲדָת** (v. 3). This statement involuntarily recalls the notice, 1Ki. 6:36, that Solomon built the inner court, **שְׁלֹשָׁה טוֹרֵי גִזִּית וְטוֹר כְּרֶתֶת אֲרָזִים**; hence Merz expresses the supposition that “this is certainly a fragment, forming the conclusion of the whole design of the building, which, like that in 1Ki. 6:36, ends with the porch and the walls of the fore-court,” Thus much only is certain, that the words are not to be understood, as by Fritzsche on 1 Esdr. 6:25, as stating that the temple walls were built of “three layers of large stones, upon which was one layer of beams,” and therefore were not massive; such kind of building never being practised in the East in old times. “And let the expenses be given out of the king's house.” This is more precisely stated in v. 8 of the royal revenues on this side the river. **נִפְקָא** the expense (from **נִפְקַח**, Aphel, to expend), therefore the cost of building.

**Ezr. 6: 5.** “And also let the vessels...be restored, and brought again to the temple at Jerusalem, to their place, and (thou) shalt place them in the house of God.” On the matter of this verse, comp. Ezr. 1: 7 and Ezr. 5:14. The sing. **חֲדָת**

(comp. 5: 5) is distributive: it (each vessel) to its place. **וַתַּחַת** (comp. **אַחַת** Ezr. 5:15) cannot, according to the sense, be third pers. fem. (neutr.), but only second pers. imperf. Aphel: thou shalt place. None but Sheshbazzar can be addressed (Ezr. 5:15), though he is not named in v. 3. The historian is evidently not giving the contents of the document word for word, but only its essential matter; hence he infers the address to Sheshbazzar from the answer of the Jewish elders (Ezr. 5:15). Perhaps it was also remarked in the document, that Coresh caused the sacred vessels to be delivered to Sheshbazzar (Ezr. 1: 8).

**Ezr. 6: 6-12.** Acting upon the discovered edict, Darius warned the governor and royal officials on this side the Euphrates, not to hinder the building of the house of God at Jerusalem. On the contrary, they were to promote it by furnishing what was necessary for the work, and paying the expenses of the building out of the royal revenues to the elders of the Jews (vv. 6-8). They were also to provide for the worship of God in this temple such animals as the priests should require for sacrifice (vv. 9, 10), under pain of severe punishment for transgressing this command as also for any injury done to the temple (vv. 11, 12). This decree was undoubtedly communicated to the governor in the form of a written answer to his inquiries (v. 13). Without, however, expressly stating this to be the case, as v. 1 and 4:17 would lead us to expect, the historian gives us in v. 6f. the actual contents of the royal edict, and that in the form of a direct injunction to the governor and his associates on this side the river: “Now Tatnai, governor,...be ye far from thence.” The suffix **וּבְנֵי־הָהוֹן**, and *their* associates, is indeed unsuitable to the form of an address, of which Tatnai and Shethar-Boznai are the subjects; the narrator, however, in using it, had in mind the title or introduction of the royal letter. On this matter, comp. 5: 6. **רָחַק** and **רָחִיק**, to be far from, figuratively to keep from anything, e.g., from good, Psa. 53: 2. **מִן־רָחֵמָה**, from thence, from Jerusalem; in other words, trouble yourselves no longer, as, according to 5: 3, you have done about what is being done there.

**Ezr. 6: 7.** “Let the work of the house of God alone.” **שִׁבַּק** with an accusative, to leave anything, to let it go on without hindrance. “Let the Pechah of the Jews (Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel) and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in its place.” The **לְ** to **לְשִׁבִי** introduces a second subject with special emphasis: And as far as regards the elders of the Jews, i.e., the Pechah, and especially the elders.

**Ezr. 6: 8.** “And a decree is (hereby) made by me, what ye shall do to these elders of the Jews, i.e., how you shall behave towards them (**עָבַד עִם = עִם** **עָשָׂה**, Gen. 24:12f.), to build this house, i.e., that this house may be built:

namely, (1 expl.) of the royal moneys, of the custom (מִדָּה, see remarks on 4:13) on this side the river, let expenses (the cost of building) be punctually given to these men, that there be no hindrance.” דִּי־לֹא לְבַטְלָא, that there be no cessation or leisure from work, i.e., that the work is not to be discontinued. On the construction of the לֹא with the following infinitive, comp. Dan. 6: 9. The Vulgate renders the sense correctly by *ne impediatur opus*.

**Ezr. 6: 9.** “And what is needful, both young bullocks and rams and lambs, for the burnt-offerings of the God of leaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the word of the priests at Jerusalem (i.e., as the priests shall require for the service of God), let it be given them day by day without fail.” מָה is joined with the plur. fem. of the partic. חֲשָׁהֶן, and is defined by the enumeration which follows. מִשְׁחָה, properly the anointing, then oil as the means of anointing. On לְהוֹאֵל and לְהוֹן, see remarks on 4:12. דִּי־לֹא שְׁלוֹ, that there be no failure.

**Ezr. 6:10.** The end the king had in view in all this follows: “That they (the priests) may offer sacrifices well-pleasing to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and of his sons.” נִיחֻחִין (comp. Dan. 2:46) are sacrifices agreeable to God, רִיחַ נִיחֻחִין (Lev. 1: 9, 13, and elsewhere), i.e., sacrifices pleasing to God. Cyrus had commanded the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, because he acknowledged the God of Israel to be the God of heaven, who had given him the kingdoms of the earth (Ezr. 1: 2). Darius was treading in his footsteps by also owning the God of the Jews as the God of heaven, and desiring that the blessing of this God might rest upon himself and his dynasty. Such an acknowledgment it was possible for the Persian kings to make without a renunciation of their polytheism. They could honour Jahve as a mighty, nay, as the mightiest God of heaven, without being unfaithful to the gods of their fathers; while the Jews could also, in the interest of their own welfare, pray and offer sacrifices in the temple of the Lord for the life of the king to whom God had caused them to be subject (comp. Jer. 29: 7). Accordingly we find that in after times sacrifices were regularly offered for the king on appointed days: comp. 1 Macc. 7:33, 12:11; 2 Macc. 3:35, 13:23; Joseph. *Antiq.* xii. 2. 5, and elsewhere.

**Ezr. 6:11.** To inculcate obedience to his command, Darius threatens to punish its transgression with death: “If any one alters this command, let a beam be torn from his house, and let him be fastened hanging thereon.” To alter a command means to transgress or abolish it. אֵע, a piece of wood, a beam. זָקַרְיָה, raised on high, is in Syriac the usual word for crucified, and is to be so understood here. מְחָא, to strike, with עַל, strike upon, fasten to, nail to. This kind of capital punishment was customary among the Assyrians (Diod. Sic. ii. 1), the ancient

Persians, and many other nations, but seems to have been executed in different manners among different people. Among the Assyrians it generally consisted in the impalement of the delinquent upon a sharp strong wooden post; comp. Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 355, and *Nineveh and its Remains*, p. 379, with the illustration fig. 58. According to Herod. iii. 159, Darius impaled as many as 3000 Babylonians after the capture of their city (ἀνεσκολόπισε). Crucifixion proper, however, i.e., nailing to a cross, also occurred among the Persians; it was, however, practised by nailing the body of the criminal to a cross after decapitation; see the passages from Herodotus in *Brissonii de regio Persarum princip.* l. ii. c. 215. “And let his house be made a dunghill.” See remarks on Dan. 2: 5 and 2Ki. 10:27.

*Ezr. 6:12.* Finally, Darius adds the threat: “The God who has caused His name to dwell there, destroy every king and (every) people that shall stretch forth the hand to alter (this command), to destroy this house of God at Jerusalem.” The expression, “the God who has caused His name to dwell there,” is indeed specifically Israelitish (comp. Deu. 12:11, 14:23; Jer. 7:12; Neh. 1: 9), and therefore undoubtedly originated with the Jewish historian; but the matter itself, the wish that God Himself would destroy him who should injure His temple, recalls the close of the inscription of Bisitun, wherein the judgments of Ahuramazda are imprecated upon him who should dare to injure the image and inscription, and his blessing invoked upon him who should respect them (Berth.).

*Ezr. 6:13-18.* THE EXECUTION OF THE ROYAL DECREE, THE COMPLETION OF THE BUILDING, AND THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW TEMPLE. — V. 13. Tatnai and his associate diligently executed the commands of Darius. “Because Darius the king sent (i.e., despatched to them the letter, whose contents have just been given, 6-12), they speedily acted accordingly in the manner stated” (שׁוֹמְרֵי).

*Ezr. 6:14.* The elders of the Jews, moreover, built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai and Zachariah, who thereby effected the resumption of the work, and promised them success. בְּ is used of the rule by which, or manner in which anything is done. “They built and finished (the building) according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artachshasta, kings of Persia.” The naming of Artachshasta presents some difficulty; for since it is impossible to conceive that a predecessor of Darius is intended by a name which follows the name of that monarch, none but Artaxerxes Longimanus can be meant, and he did not reign till long after the completion of the temple. Cleric. and J. H. Mich. explain the mention of his name by the consideration that Artaxerxes, by his edict

(Ezr. 7:15, 21), contributed to the maintenance, though not to the building, of the temple. <sup>f19</sup>

It may in this instance be questionable whether the name **ארתחשתא** was added by the author of the Chaldee section, or by Ezra when he introduced this into his book. We believe the latter to be the correct view, because the Chaldee section, to judge by the **אמרנא**, Ezr. 5: 4, was composed by one who lived contemporaneously with the building of the temple, while from the date of the completion of the temple to the seventh year of Artaxerxes fifty-seven years elapsed.

**Ezr. 6:15.** And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar (the twelfth month), which is the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. **אצי**, according to the Keri **שי**, with the **א** dropped, is the Shaphel of **אצי**, to bring a thing to an end, to finish it. The form **שי** is not a participle pass. formed from the Shaphel (Gesén.), for this would be **משׁי**, but a Hebraized passive form of the Shaphel in the meaning of the Targumistic Ishtaphal, like **הייתי**, Dan. 3:13, and **היתית**, Dan. 6:18, with the active **היתי**, Dan. 6:17. In the Targums **שי** has mostly an active, and only in a few passages the intransitive meaning, to end, to be at the end; comp. *Levy, chald. Wörterbuch, s.v.* <sup>f20</sup>

**Ezr. 6:16, 17.** The sons of Israel, more exactly the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the sons of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy. **עבד חנפה** = the Hebrew **עשה חנפה**, to celebrate the dedication (2Ch. 7: 9). **בחדנה**, Hebrew **בשמחה**; see Neh. 8:10. They brought for the dedication a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs as burnt-offerings, and twelve he-goats for a sin-offering for *all* Israel, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, because the temple was intended for the entire covenant people, whose return to the Lord and to the land of their fathers, according to the predictions of the prophets, was hoped for (comp. e.g., Eze. 37:15f., Jer. 31:27f.), not, as older expositors thought, because certain families of the ten tribes, who had before settled in Judah, were also among those who returned (J. H. Mich. *ad h. l.*).

**Ezr. 6:18.** At the same time, the priests and Levites were appointed, according to their classes and divisions, to the service of the temple, that they might henceforth fulfil their office, each class in its week (2Ch. 23: 4; 2Ki. 11: 9). **וקימו** corresponds with the Hebrew **ועמדו**, Ezr. 3: 8, and elsewhere. As Bertheau justly remarks, “The services of public worship, which after the completion of the temple were to be performed by the priests and

Levites, according to ancient ordinance, are here spoken of.” With these words the Chaldee section closes.

*Ezr. 6:19-22.* Celebration of the feast of the passover, and of the feast of unleavened bread, in the year following the dedication, as an historical testimony to the fact that the worship of God with its festivals was regularly carried on in the new temple.

*Ezr. 6:19.* The feast of the passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month, took place only a few weeks after the dedication of the temple. The reason given in v. 20 — for the priests and Levites had purified themselves without exception (כִּסְּוֹתָם, like Ezr. 3: 9); they were all clean, and they killed the passover for all the sons of the captivity (i.e., the laity who had returned from exile), and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves — has in this connection the meaning: Then the congregation celebrated the passover, and they were able to keep and to eat the passover, because the priests had purified themselves that they might be qualified for performing the office incumbent upon them of sprinkling the blood; and the Levites were also clean, that they might be able to kill the lambs for the whole congregation (comp. the remarks on 2Ch. 30:17, etc., and 35:11, 14). From the days of Josiah, it seems to have been customary for the Levites to take the place of the heads of families (Exo. 12: 6, etc.) in slaughtering the passover lambs for the whole community, both priesthood and laity: for the laity, that no person who was unclean might kill the paschal lamb; for the priests, that their labours might be lightened, the sprinkling of blood and the offering of sacrifices occupying them far into the night (2Ch. 35:11, 14, 15). And this custom was followed at this time also. The priests are called אֶחָיוֹתָם, brethren of the Levites, as in 2Ch. 29:34, 35:15.

*Ezr. 6:21.* Thus the sons of Israel who had returned from captivity, and all that had separated themselves unto them from the uncleanness of the heathen of the country to seek Jahve the God of Israel, could eat the passover. גֵּוֹי הָאֲרָץ = עַמֵּי הָאֲרָץ, Ezr. 10: 2, 11, are the heathen races dwelling in Palestine. The expression is not essentially different from עַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת, Ezr. 9: 1f., 3: 3, and is only distinguishable therefrom, inasmuch as the latter appellation includes not merely the heathen inhabitants of Palestine, but also the heathen of other lands, as the Moabites, Ammonites, Egyptians, etc. (Ezr. 9: 1f.). Those who had separated themselves from the uncleanness of the heathen to them (the Jews) to seek Jahve, are not proselytes from heathenism (Aben Ezra, Rashi, Clericus, and others), but Israelites, who had till now lived in Palestine, and mingled with the heathen inhabitants of the land. They were descended from those Israelites whom the kings of Assyria and Babylon had not carried away from the realms of Israel and Judah, and who with respect to religion had combined heathenism



and the worship of Jahve (2Ki. 17:32, etc.), and thus defiled themselves with heathen impurity, but who now, after the erection of the temple, joined themselves to the new community, for the purpose of worshipping with them the God of their fathers in His temple, according to the law of Moses. For, as Bertheau rightly remarks, “in the days of Ezra the princes of the new community complain that the laity, the priests, and Levites do not separate from the people of the lands (Ezr. 9: 1); reference is made to the dangers which threaten the Israelites, because they dwell in the holy land among the unclean (Ezr. 9:10). To separate from the uncleanness of the nations means to renounce intermarriage and other connection with them. Ezr. 10: 2, 10. They are Israelites who are summoned, Ezr. 10:11, to separate from the peoples of the land; the seed of Israel is, in Neh. 9: 2, separated from the sons of the stranger, and in Neh. 10:29 they who separate from them are evidently Israelites, for, when they bind themselves to walk according to the law of God, they are said to join their brethren, i.e., their fellow-countrymen.” Hence in this passage also we cannot but regard those who separated themselves as Israelites, dissolving their connection with the heathen for the sake of the God of Israel.

*Ezr. 6:22.* Hereupon they kept the feast of unleavened bread for seven days with joy; for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned to them (i.e., had made them joyful by turning to them) the heart of the king of Assyria. With regard to the expression, comp. 2Ch. 20:27, Neh. 12:43. The king of *Assur* is the Persian king Darius, who as ruler of the former realm of Assyria is thus designated. The turning of this king’s heart to them consisted in this, that their hands were strengthened for the work of the house of God, i.e., that through the goodwill of the king they were enabled to complete the building of their temple, and to restore the worship of the God of Israel. On חֲזַק יְדֵיהֶם בְּ, comp. 1Sa. 23:19.

## **II. The Return of Ezra the Scribe from Babylon to Jerusalem, and his Entry upon his Official Duties there. — CH. 7-10.**

**Ezr. 7-10.** In the seventh year of the reign of King Artaxerxes Longimanus, Ezra the priest and scribe returned with certain priests, Levites, and other Israelites from Babylon to Jerusalem, furnished with a royal commission to provide for the worship of God, and the observance of the law, according to the ordinance of God, by the community, Ezr. 7 and 8. This mission he began to execute by sending away such heathen women as were married to Israelites.

### **Ch. 7. — Ezra’s Return and Commission.**

*Ezr. 7: 1-10.* Vv. 1-10 form the introduction to the narrative which follows of Ezra's return to Jerusalem and his ministry there, and speak in general terms of himself and his arrival at Jerusalem with a band of exiles. They are followed, vv. 11-26, by a copy of the royal commission, and a thanksgiving, vv. 27, 28, on the part of Ezra, for the mercy of God bestowed upon him.

*Ezr. 7: 1-6.* What follows is slightly combined with the former occurrences by the formula "after these things," without any more exact chronological definition; comp. Gen. 15: 1, 22: 1, and elsewhere. Between the dedication of the temple in the sixth year of Darius and the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem, a period of fifty-seven years had elapsed. "In the reign of Artachshasta king of Persia, went up Ezra," etc. The verb of the subject **עֲזָרָא** does not follow till v. 6, where, after the interposition of the long genealogy, vv. 1-5, the distant subject is again taken up in **הוּא עֲזָרָא**. It is all but universally agreed that Artaxerxes Longimanus is intended by **אַרְתַּחְשַׁסְתָּא**; the explanation of this appellation as Xerxes in Joseph. *Antiq.* xi. 5. 1, for which Fritzsche (on 1 Esdr. 8: 1) has recently decided, being a mere conjecture on the part of that not very critical historian. The fact that the Artachshasta of the book of Nehemiah (Neh. 1: 1, 5:14, 13: 6) can be no other than Artaxerxes, is decisive of this point: for in Neh. 13: 6 the thirty-second year of Artachshasta is mentioned; while according to Neh. 8: 9, 12:26, 36, Ezra and Nehemiah jointly exercised their respective offices at Jerusalem.<sup>121</sup>

Ezra is called Ben Seraiah, whose pedigree is traced to Eleazar the son of Aaron; Seraiah the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, was the father of Josedec the high priest carried into captivity (1Ch. 5:40, etc.), and was himself the high priest whom Nebuchadnezzar slew at Riblah (2Ki. 25:18-21). Between the execution of Seraiah in the year 588 and the return of Ezra from Babylon in 458 B.C., there is a period of 130 years. Hence Ezra could have been neither the son nor grandson of Seraiah, but only his great or great-great-grandson. When we consider that Joshua, or Jeshua (Ezr. 2: 2), the high priest who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel, was the grandson of Seraiah, we cannot but regard Ezra, who returned thence 78 years later, as a great-great-grandson of Seraiah. Moreover, we are justified in inferring from the fact that Ezra is not, like Joshua, designated as Ben Josedech, that he did not descend from *that* line of Seraiah in which the high-priestly dignity was hereditary, but from a younger son, and hence that his immediate ancestors were not (though his forefathers from Seraiah upwards were) of high-priestly descent. Hence the names of Ezra's ancestors from Seraiah up to Aaron (vv. 1-5) agree also with the genealogy of the high-priestly race (1Ch. 5:30-40), with the *one* deviation that in v. 3, between Azariah and Meraioth, six members are passed over, as is frequently the case in the longer genealogies, for the sake of shortening the list

of names. — In v. 6 Ezra, for the sake of at once alluding to the nature of his office, is designated **סוֹפֵר מְהִיר בַּת'**, a scribe skilful in the law of Moses. The word **סוֹפֵר** means in older works writer or secretary; but even so early as Jer. 8: 8 the lying pen of the **סֹפְרִים** is spoken of, and here therefore **סוֹפֵר** has already attained the meaning of one learned in the Scripture, one who has made the written law a subject of investigation. Ezra is, however, the first of whom the predicate **הַסּוֹפֵר**, ὁ γραμματεὺς, is used as a title. He is so called also in the letter of Artaxerxes (v. 11), because he is said (v. 9) to have applied his heart to seek out and to do the law of the Lord, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgment, i.e., because he had made the investigation of the law, for the sake of introducing the practice of the same among the congregation, his life-task; and the king granted him all his desire, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. The peculiar expression **בְּיַד יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו עָלָיו** which is found only here and in vv. 9, 28, 8:18, Neh. 2: 8, 18, and in a slightly altered guise in Ezr. 8:22, 31, “according to the good hand of his God, which was over him,” means: according to the divine favour or divine care arranging for him; for the hand of God is **הַטּוֹבָה**, the good (v. 9, and 8:18), or **לְטוֹבָה**, 8:22. **בְּקִשָּׁה**, the desire, request, demand, occurs only here and in the book of Esther.

**Ezr. 7: 7.** With Ezra went up a number of Israelites, priests, and Levites. **מִן** partitive: a part of the whole. That they went up with Ezra appears from the context, and is expressly stated both in the royal edict (v. 13) and in the further description of the expedition (v. 28, 8: 1). They went up in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and reached Jerusalem in the fifth month of that year. — In v. 8 Ezra is again, as in v. 6, the subject of the sentence; the intervening seventh verse being really only in apposition with v. 6. — In v. 9 the time occupied by the journey is more precisely defined; **בַּיּוֹם** is explanatory. Namely, on the first day of the first month, he had appointed the journey from Babylon, etc. The **הוּא יִסַּד** can only mean, *ipsum erat fundamentum profectionis*, as J. H. Mich. after R. Sal. explains it, for **יִסַּד** is pointed as the construct state. The departure of the expedition from the place of meeting occurred, according to 8:31, on the twelfth day of the first month. Since, however, they encamped three days there, making the final preparations for their journey, eleven days might easily elapse between the period when the whole caravan had assembled, and the day of actual departure. The Keri offers no appropriate signification; for since **הוּא** can only be taken for the subject, and **יִסַּד הוּא** for the predicate, the sentence would contain an anacoluthon. To translate **הוּא** by *ipsum* cannot be justified by the usages of the language, for there is no such emphasis on **יִסַּד** as to cause **הוּא** to be regarded as an emphatic reference to the following noun.

סֹד must be pointed יָסַד or יִסַּד, as the third pers. perf. Kal or Piel, meaning to arrange, to appoint, and הוּא referred to Ezra. On בְּיַד אֱלֹהָיו הַטּוֹבָה, comp. v. 6. The hand of his God graciously arranged for him, for he had prepared his heart to seek and to do the law of Jahve, i.e., to make the law of God his rule of action. הִכִּין לְבָבוֹ, like 2Ch. 12:14, 19: 3, 30:19. To teach in Israel statutes and judgments, as both are prescribed in the law of God.

*Ezr. 7:11-28. The commission given by Artachshasta to Ezra* (vv. 11-26), *with a short postscript by Ezra* (vv. 27 and 28). — V. 11. The introductory title, “This is the copy of the letter,” On פִּרְשָׁנָן, comp. 4:11, and on נִשְׁתָּנָן, 4: 7. Ezra is here, as also in the letter itself, vv. 12, 21, and in Neh. 8: 9, 12:26, called only הַכֹּהֵן הַסּוֹפֵר, the priest, the scribe; in other places we find merely one title or the other: either the priest, 10:10, 16, Neh. 8: 2; or the scribe, Neh. 8: 4, 13, 12:36. To designate him according to his rank, as the priest, seems to have subsequently become more customary; hence in the first book of Esdras he is constantly called ὁ ἱερεὺς. הַסּוֹפֵר is explained by the addition וְגַם סֹפֵר דְּבָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, scribe of the words of the law of Jahve and of His statutes to Israel, i.e., the scribe, whose investigations referred to the law of God. More briefly in vv. 12 and 21: scribe of the law.

*Ezr. 7:12, etc.* The letter containing the royal commission is given in the Chaldee original. It is questionable what explanation must be given to גְּמִיר in the title. If it were the adjective belonging to סֹפֵר דָּתָא, we should expect the emphatic state גְּמִירָא. Hence Bertheau combines it with the following וּבְעֵנָת as an abbreviation, “completeness, etc.,” which would signify that in the royal commission itself this introductory formula would be found fully given, and that all the words here missing are represented by וּבְעֵנָת. This would be, at all events, an extremely strange expression. We incline to regard גְּמִיר as an adverb used adjectively: To the scribe in the law of God perfectly, for the perfect scribe, etc., corresponding with the translation of the Vulgate, *doctissimo*. The commission begins with an order that those Israelites who desire to go to Jerusalem should depart with Ezra, because the king and his seven counsellors send him to order matters in Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of God, and to carry thither presents and free-will offerings as a contribution towards the sacrifices, and other matters necessary for the worship of God, vv. 13-19. “By me is commandment given,” as in 6: 8. לְמַהֲדָּךְ ... כָּל-מִתְנַדָּב: Every one of the people of Israel in my kingdom, who shows himself willing to go up to Jerusalem, let him go up with thee. On יָהֵד and the infin. מִהֲדָּךְ, comp. 5: 5.

*Ezr. 7:14.* “Forasmuch as thou (art) sent by the king and his seven counsellors to inquire (to institute an inquiry) concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God, which is in thy hand,” i.e., which thou handlest or possessest and understandest. The seven counsellors of the king formed the supreme court of the realm; see remarks on Est. 1:14. It is obvious from the context that **שְׁלִיחַ** must be completed by **אֶנְתָּהּ**, for it is evidently Ezra who is addressed both in what precedes and follows. **בִּקְרָהּ עַל**, to inquire concerning (the condition of) Judah, i.e., concerning the religious and civil relations of the Jewish community, to arrange them in conformity with the divine law.

*Ezr. 7:15, etc.* “To carry the silver and gold which the king and his counsellors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose habitation is at Jerusalem, and all the silver and gold which thou shalt obtain in all the province of Babylon, with the free-will offering of the people and the priests, willingly offering for the house of their God at Jerusalem.” Three kinds of offerings for the temple are here spoken of: *1st*, the gifts of the king and his counsellors for the service of the God of Israel; *2nd*, the gold and the silver that Ezra should obtain in the province of Babylon, i.e., by the collection which he was consequently empowered to make among the non-Israelite population of Babylon; *3rd*, the free-will offerings of his fellow-countrymen. **הַתְּנִדְבוֹת** is an abstract formed from the infin. Hithpael: the freely given. The participle **מִתְנַדְּבִין** (not in the *stat. emph.* i.e., without an article) is but slightly connected, in the sense of, if they, or what they, may freely offer.

*Ezr. 7:17-19.* The application of these contributions. **בְּלִקְבֹּל דְּנָהּ**, for this very reason, sc. because furnished by the king and his counsellors, and by the heathen and Israelite inhabitants of Babylon, thou shalt diligently buy with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat-offerings and their drink-offerings (the meat and drink offerings pertaining by the law, Num. 15: 1, etc., to the sacrifices), and offer them upon the altar... The Pael **תִּקְרַב** instead of the Aphel, Ezr. 6:10, 17. The distribution and collection were thus chiefly destined for the support of public worship, but were larger and more abundant than was necessary for this purpose. Hence the further injunction, v. 18: “And whatsoever shall seem good to thee and to thy brethren to do with the rest of the gold and the silver, that do after the will of your God,” i.e., according to the precept of the law in which the will of God is expressed. “Thy brethren” are the priests, to whom was committed the care of the temple and its worship.

*Ezr. 7:19.* The gold and silver vessels, moreover, which, according to 8:25-27, the king and his counsellors, and the princes and all Israel, presented for the service of the house of God, he is to deliver before the God at Jerusalem (an

abbreviated expression for the God whose dwelling is at Jerusalem). The noun פְּלֶחֶן, only here and in the Targums, in the Syriac פּוֹלְחָן, the service, corresponds with the Hebrew עֲבוּדָה שְׁלֵם in the Aphel, to complete, to make full, then to deliver entirely, to consign.

*Ezr. 7:20.* Ezra is to defray the expenses of all other things necessary for the temple from the royal treasury, on which account a royal order is despatched to the treasurer on this side the river. “And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to give” (i.e., whatever necessary expenses shall be incurred which cannot be determined beforehand), and for which the gifts and contributions already furnished to Ezra shall not suffice, he is to give, i.e., to defray, out of the house of the king’s treasures, i.e., the royal treasury. For this purpose Artaxerxes commands all the treasures on this side the river, that whatsoever Ezra shall require of them shall be immediately done. הֵנָּה is an emphatic repetition of the pronoun, as in Dan. 7:15, and frequently in Hebrew.

*Ezr. 7:22.* Unto one hundred talents of silver, one hundred cors of wheat, one hundred baths of wine, one hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescription, i.e., as much as is needed. Cor had already become, even in Hebrew, the later word for chomer, e.g., 1Ki. 5: 2, Eze. 45:14. It was equal to ten ephahs or baths, almost two sheffels; see by *bibl. Archäol.* ii. § 126. The command closes with the injunction, v. 23: Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, i.e., whatever is needful according to the law for the service of God, let it be completely done for the house of the God of heaven; for why should the wrath of heaven come upon the realm of the king and of his sons? The ἄπ. λεγ. אֲדַרְבֵּי is derived from the Aryan, but is not to be regarded (as by Hitzig and Bertheau) as compounded of אָדַר and אֲדָרָא; but probably (as by Haug in Ewald’s *bibl. Jahrb.* v. p. 152) as formed of the Persian *drsh*, *dorest*, with א prosthetic, from the Zend root *dorec*, to grow, to flourish, to become firm, in the meaning of perfect in all parts, exact. The motive of the royal order, that the priests may offer acceptable offerings to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and of his sons, recalls 6:10. On the formula דֵּי לְמָה, for why should wrath come, comp. 4:22.

*Ezr. 7:24.* The priests, the Levites, and all the servants of the temple, are also to be free from all customs and taxes. וְלָכֶם מְהוֹדְעִין, we also make known to you (it is made known to you). These words also are addressed to the treasures, as levyers of taxes on this side the river. That, with regard to all priests,...and (other) ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose upon them toll, tribute, or custom. The פְּלֶחֶי בֵּית אֱלֹהֵא are not worshippers in the

house of God, but they who do service in the house of God. The expression comprises any servants of the temple who might have been omitted in the classes enumerated. On מְנַדָּה בְּלוּ וּגְרֵי, comp. 4:13. לֹא שְׁלִיט, (any one) has no right, with an infinitive following: it is allowed to no one to do. מְרַמָּא from רָמָא, Targ. for שִׁים. On this matter, compare Josephus, *Ant.* xii. 3. 3, according to which Antiochus the Great freed the priests and Levites from taxation.

*Ezr. 7:25, etc.* Finally, Ezra is empowered to appoint over his whole people (all the Jews) on this side the river, judges who know the law of God, and to inflict severe penalties upon those who transgress it.

*Ezr. 7:25.* “Thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God which is in thy hand (דִּי בִידְךָ like v. 14), set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are on this side the river, namely all such as know the laws of thy God, and teach ye them that know them not.” The form מְנִי is imper. Pael for מְנִי, the A sound probably passing in rapid speech into the flatter E sound. “All the people on this side the river” is limited to Israelites or Jews by the further particulars, “who know the law of thy God,” etc. These are to receive from Ezra judges, viz., such as are acquainted with the law, i.e., Israelite judges, and thus to be placed under the jurisdiction established at Jerusalem. The sentence, “and they who know it (the law) not, them teach ye, make them acquainted with it,” does not refer to the heathen, but to born Israelites or Jews, who, living among the heathen, had not hitherto made the Mosaic law the rule of their lives. Such were the judges to constrain to the observance and obedience of the law.

*Ezr. 7:26.* But whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let a court be speedily (מְנִי) held on his account (i.e., let him be brought to justice, and punished). This, too, applies chiefly to such as were Israelites born. The law of the king is the present edict, the commission therein entrusted to Ezra: whoever opposes, neglects, or transgresses it, shall be condemned, whether to death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment. הֵן ... הֵן = the Hebrew אָם ... אָם = *sive...sive*. שְׁרָשׁוּ (Keri שְׁרָשִׁי), rooting our (from שָׁרַשׁ, to root out), i.e., banishment, *exilium* (Vulg.), not παιδεία (LXX).

*Ezr. 7:27, 28.* This royal commission granted to the Jews all they could possibly desire from the heathen governors of the country, for the establishment and furtherance of their civil and religious polity. By granting these privileges, Artaxerxes was not only treading in the footsteps of Cyrus and Darius

Hystaspes, but even going beyond these princes in granting to the Jews a jurisdiction of their own. Without a magistrate who was one of themselves, the Jewish community could not well prosper in their own land; for the social and religious life of Israel were so closely connected, that heathen magistrates, however well-intentioned, were incapable of exercising a beneficial influence upon the welfare of the Jews. Hence Ezra, having thus reported the royal commission, adds a thanksgiving to God for having put such a thing into the king's heart, namely, to beautify the house of the Lord, and for having granted him favour before the king and his counsellors. The sentence **וְעָלִי הַמָּדָה** is a continuation of the preceding infinitive sentence in the *tempus finit*. **לְ** before **בְּלִשְׁרֵי** is the **לְ** comprehensive. Ezra names the beautifying of the house of God as the occasion of his thanksgiving, not only because this formed the chief matter of the royal favour, but also because the re-establishment of divine worship was the re-establishment of the moral and religious life of the community. “And I felt myself strengthened, and gathered together (so that I gathered together) the heads of Israel to go up with me (to Jerusalem).” Ezra assembled the heads, i.e., of houses, as fellow-travellers, because their decision would be a rule for the families at the head of which they stood. With their heads, the several races and families determined to return to the land of their fathers.

## **Ch. 8. — List of Those Heads of Houses Who Returned with Ezra, and Account of the Journey.**

*Ezr. 8: 1-14.* A list of those heads of houses who returned with Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem. Compare the parallel list, 1 Esdr. 8:28-40. — V. 1. The title: “These are the heads of the houses, and (this is) their genealogy, who went up with me.” **רָאשֵׁי בֵית־אֲבֹתֵיהֶם** for **רָאשֵׁי אֲבֹתֵיהֶם**, as frequently. **וְהִתְיַחֲשָׁם**, “and their genealogy,” is added, because in the list following the heads of the different houses are not merely enumerated according to their own names, but the names of the races to which they belonged are also stated.

*Ezr. 8: 2.* Priests and descendants of David. Of priests, Gershom of the sons of Phinehas, and Daniel of the sons of Ithamar. Gershom and Daniel are the names of heads of priestly houses, and “sons of Phinehas and sons of Ithamar” designations of races. Phinehas was the son of the high priest Eleazar, the son of Aaron, and Ithamar a younger son of Aaron, 1Ch. 5:30 and 29. This does not signify that only the two priests Gershom and Daniel went up with Ezra; for in v. 24 he chose twelve from among the chief of the priests, who went up with him, to have charge of the gifts (Bertheau). The meaning is, that Gershom and Daniel, two heads of priestly houses, went up, and that the house of Gershom belonged to the race of Phinehas, and that of Daniel to the race of Ithamar. A



Daniel is named among the priests in Neh. 10: 7, but whether he is identical with the Daniel in question does not appear. Of the sons (descendants) of David (the king), Hattush, as head of a house. A Hattush, son of Hashabniah, occurs Neh. 3:10, and a priest of this name Neh. 10: 5 and 12: 2. Hattush also holds the first place among the sons of Shemaiah enumerated 1Ch. 3:22, who probably were among the descendants of David. It seems strange that the numbers neither of the priests nor of the sons of David who went up with Ezra should be given, since from v. 3 onwards, in the case of the houses of lay races, the numbers of those who returned to the home of their ancestors is regularly stated.

*Ezr. 8: 3-14.* Twelve lay houses are named both in the present text and in 1 Esdr. 8:30-40. In ten cases the names of the races, which are uniformly introduced with מְבֵנֵי, are identical in both texts, viz., Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Adin, Elam, Shephatiah, Joab, Bebai, Azgad, Adonikam, and Bigvai. On the other hand, it appears surprising, *1st*, that in the first house mentioned, before the name זְבַרְיָהּ, besides “of the sons of Parosh,” we have also מְבֵנֵי שְׁבַנְיָהּ (v. 3), while before all the other names we find only “of the sons of” one individual; *2ndly*, that in v. 5, after בְּנֵי שְׁבַנְיָהּ, instead of a name of the head of a house, only Ben Jahaziel follows; *3rdly*, that in v. 10 also, after וּמְבֵנֵי שְׁלוֹמִית, we have merely Ben Josiphiah, the names themselves being apparently omitted in these two last cases. This conjecture is corroborated by a comparison with the LXX and 1 Esdr. 8, which shows, moreover, that it is not the personal name of the head of the house, but the name of the race, which has been lost. For מְבֵנֵי שְׁבַנְיָהּ בֶן יְחִזְיָאֵל, v. 5, we find in the LXX ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν Ζαθόης Ζεχενίας υἱὸς Ἀζιήλ, and in 1 Esdr. 8:32, ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Ζαθόης Σεχενίας Ἰεζήλου; and for וּמְבֵנֵי שְׁלוֹמִית בֶּן יוֹסֵפִיָּהּ, v. 10, in the LXX καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν Βαανί Σελιμουθ υἱὸς Ἰωσεφία, and in 1 Esdr. 8:36, ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Βανίας Σαλιμῶθ Ἰωσαφίου. In Ζαθόης and Βαανί (Βανίας) we recognise זְהוּא and בְּנֵי of Ezr. 2: 8 and 10. Hence the text of v. 5 needs emendation, and should run מְבֵנֵי זְהוּא שְׁבַנְיָהּ, and that of v. 10, וּמְבֵנֵי בְנֵי שְׁלוֹמִית. It is more difficult to decide concerning מְבֵנֵי שְׁבַנְיָהּ of v. 3, though undoubtedly we have here too a corruption of the text. For, first, there is no other instance in the whole list of the sons of two men being cited before the proper name of the house; and then, too, the absence of the ו copulative before בְּנֵי is opposed to the notion that the house of Zechariah was formed by a union of the sons of Shecaniah and Parosh, since in this case the *and* could not be omitted. It is true that we have in the LXX ἀπὸ υἱῶν Σαχανία καὶ ἀπὸ υἱῶν Φόρος; but in this case the καὶ is certainly derived from the translator, who was thus seeking to make sense of the words. In 1 Esdr. 8 we read Λαττοὺς τοῦ Σεχεύου; and Λαττοὺς

corresponding with **הַפּוֹשֵׁת**, the words **בְּנֵי שְׁכַנְיָה** (or **בֶּן**) are taken into the preceding verse. This treatment of the words Bertheau considers correct, because Hattush in 1Ch. 3:22 is reckoned among the descendants of Shecaniah. This conjecture is, however, a very doubtful one. For, first, in 1Ch. 3:22 Hattush is said to be of the sons of Shemaiah, and Shemaiah of the sons of Shecaniah; then we should as little expect any further statement in the case of Hattush as in the cases of Daniel and Gershom; and further, if he had been thus more precisely designated by naming his father, we should undoubtedly read **בֶּן שְׁכַנְיָה**, not **מִבְּנֵי ש'**, and thus the Masoretic text would at any rate be incorrect; and finally, 1 Esdras, where it differs from the LXX, is, generally speaking, no critical authority upon which to base safe conclusions. Under these circumstances, we must give up the hope of restoring the original text, and explaining the words **עַמּוֹ הַתִּינַחֵשׁ . מִבְּנֵי שְׁכַנְיָה**, “and with Zechariah, his genealogy of 150 males,” i.e., with him his race, consisting of 150 males, registered in the genealogy of the race. In the case of the names which follow, the number only is given after the briefer expression **עַמּוֹ**.

A review, then, of the twelve races, according to the restoration of the original text in vv. 5 and 10, presents us with names already occurring in the list of the races who came from Babylon with Zerubbabel, 2: 3-15, with the exception of the sons of Joab, v. 9, who are wanting in Ezr. 2, where, on the other hand, several other races are enumerated. Bertheau seeks to identify the sons of Joab, v. 9, with the sons of Joab who in 2: 6 are reckoned with the sons of Pahath-Moab, and to explain their special enumeration in the present list, by the conjecture that the one house subsequently separated into the two houses of Pahath-Moab and Joab, This is, indeed, possible; but it is quite a probable that only one portion or branch of the sons (descendants) of Joab was combined with the race of the sons of Pahath-Moab, and that the rest of the *bne Joab* formed a separate house, no family of which returned with Zerubbabel. The occurrence of the other races in both lists is to be explained by the circumstance that portions of them returned with Zerubbabel, and that the rest did not follow till Ezra's departure.

**Ezr. 8:13.** The addition **אַחֲרָיִים**, last (comp. 2Sa. 19:12), is thus explained by J. H. Mich.: *respectu eorum qui primum cum Zorobabele sub Cyro in patriam redierunt c. ii. 13.* Bertheau, however, considers this explanation untenable, because **אַחֲרָיִים** stands in the present series only with the sons of Adonikam, while it is nevertheless certain, that many families belonging also to other races than this had returned with Zerubbabel, in comparison with whom all who returned with Ezra might be called *last*. This reason, however, is not conclusive; for in v. 13 the further statement also differs, both in form and matter, from those in the former verses. Here, instead of the name of the head

of the house, we read the words “last, and these their names;” whereupon three names are given, and not till then וְעִמָּהֶם וְגוֹ, “and with them sixty males.” Here, then, it is not the head of the house who is named, but in his place three heads of families, amounting together to sixty males. Now, as these three families did not form a house, these sixty sons of Adonikam who returned with Ezra are, with regard to the six hundred and sixty-six sons of Adonikam who returned with Zerubbabel, designated the last, or last arrived, and thus comprised with them as one house.

*Ezr. 8:14.* Of the sons of Bigvai also two heads are named, Uthai and Zabbud, and with them seventy males. In 1 Esdr. 8:40, the names Uthai and Zabbud are corrupted into Οὐθὶ ὁ τοῦ Ἰσταλκούρου. The total number of individuals belonging to these twelve races, who returned with Ezra, amounts, according to the Hebrew text, to 1496 males and fifteen heads; according to 1 Esdras, to 1690 males, and the thirteen heads of the twelve races, without reckoning the priests and sons of David, whose numbers are not stated.

*Ezr. 8:15-36.* ACCOUNT OF THE JOURNEY. — Vv. 15-20. The assembling of the expedition. When the Israelites who were about to return to Jerusalem had assembled, and were ready for starting, Ezra perceived that there were no Levites among them. He then sent for certain chief men among them, and by means of the influence of Iddo, the chief at the place Casiphia, induced a number of Levites and Nethinim to determine on joining the expedition (vv. 15-20). He then proclaimed a fast at the place of meeting, for the purpose of supplicating God to grant them a prosperous journey (vv. 21-23).

*Ezr. 8:15.* The travellers assembled at the river Ahava, where they encamped three days. In v. 15 the river is designated הַבַּיַּא אֶל-אָהָוָא, i.e., either which comes (flows) towards Ahava, or flows into Ahava; in v. 21 it is more briefly called נְהַר אָהָוָא, and in v. 31 נְהַר אָהָוָא, which may mean the river of Ahava, of the region or district called Ahava, or, after the analogy of נְהַר פְּרָת, merely the river of the name of Ahava. It is doubtful which of these meanings is correct, the name Ahava being still unexplained. Comp. the various conjectures in A. G. F. Schirmer, *observationes exeg. crit. in libr. Esdrae*, Vratisl. 1820, p. 28ff. The connection points to a place or district in the neighbourhood of Babylon; hence Bertheau is inclined to regard Ahava as a tributary or canal of the Euphrates, flowing through a place, perhaps only a field or open space, of the same name, in the immediate neighbourhood of Babylon; while Ewald supposes it may be the river somewhat to the west or south of Euphrates, called by the Greeks Pallacopas, whose situation would suit the context, and whose name might arise from פְּלַג אָהָוָא, the river Ahwa or Aba. The LXX gives the name Ἐβί; in 1 Esdr. 8:40 and 61 we find Θερά, evidently a false reading.

Josephus says quite generally, *εἰς τὸ πέραν τοῦ Εὐφράτου*. — When Ezra, during the three days' encampment at this place, directed his attention to the people and the priests (הַבִּינָה, to give heed, Neh. 13: 7, Dan. 9:23, and elsewhere), he found no Levites among those who had assembled. V. 16. He then sent several chief men to Iddo, the chief man in the place Casiphia, to beg him and his brethren to bring him servants for the house of God. The LXX translates אֲשַׁלְחָה לְ, "I sent to (or for) Eliezer," etc., which would mean to fetch them: "that I might then send them to Iddo." The Vulgate, on the other hand, and many expositors, understand לְ as *nota accus.*, like 2Ch. 17: 7, which is simpler. Of the nine men here designated as רִאשִׁים, the names of Eliezer, Shemaiah, Jarib, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam occur again in 10:15, 18-31, though we cannot certainly infer the identify of those who bear them. The appellation רִאשִׁים does not determine whether they belonged to the priesthood or laity. The two remaining are called מְבַיְנִים, teachers; comp. Neh. 8: 7, 9, 1Ch. 15:22, 25: 8, and elsewhere. Although this word is, in the passages cited, used of Levites, yet we cannot suppose those here named to have been teaching Levites, because, according to v. 16, there were as yet no Levites amongst the assemblage; hence, too, they could not be teachers properly so called, but only men of wisdom and understanding. The Chethiv וְאֶרְצָאָה must be read וְאֶרְצָאָה: I sent them to (עַל, according to later usage, for אֶל); the Keri וְאֶרְצָאָה, I despatched, sent them. Both readings suit the sense. The place Casiphia is entirely unknown, but cannot have been far from the river Ahava. Caspia, the region of the Caspian Sea, is out of the question, being far too remote. "I put words in their mouth to speak to Iddo," i.e., I told them exactly what they should say to Iddo; comp. 2Sa. 14: 3, 19. The words אֲחִיו הַנֶּתִינִים אֲדֹר give no intelligible meaning; for אֲחִיו we must, with the Vulgate, 1 Esdras, and others, read וְאֲחִיו: to Iddo and his brethren, the Nethinim, at the place Casiphia. This would seem to say that Iddo was one of the Nethinim. Such an inference is not, however, a necessary one; for the expression may also, like "Zadok the (high) priest and his brethren, the (ordinary) priests," 1Ch. 16:39, be understood to mean that Iddo, the chief man of that place, was a Levite, and that the Nethinim were, as a lower order of temple servants, called brethren of Iddo the Levite. The circumstance that not only Nethinim, but also Levites, were induced by Iddo to join the expedition (8-20), requires us thus to understand the words. מְשָׁרְתִים לְבֵית אֱלֹהִים, servants for the house of God, are Levites and Nethinim, the upper and lower orders of the temple ministers. From v. 17 it appears that both Levites and Nethinim had settled in the place Casiphia, and that Iddo, as the chief man of the place, held an influential position among them. No further inferences, however, concerning their settlement and employment can be drawn from this circumstance.

*Ezr. 8:18, 19.* The delegates sent to Iddo succeeded, through the gracious assistance of God ('בְּיַד אֱלֹהִים', see Ezr. 7: 6), in inducing forty Levites, and two hundred and twenty Nethinim, by means of Iddo's influence, to join their fellow-countrymen in their journey to Jerusalem. They brought to us... לְנוּ and עֲלֵינוּ refer to Ezra and his fellow-travellers. אִישׁ שֶׁבֶל, a man of understanding, seems to be a proper name, being joined to Sherebiah, the name following, by a ו copulative. He was one of the descendants of Mahli, the son, i.e., grandson, of Levi the son of Israel, i.e., Jacob: comp. Exo. 6:16, 19, 1Ch. 6: 4. Sherebiah occurs again in v. 24, and Neh. 8: 7, 9: 4, etc., 10:13, 12:24. The Levite Hashabiah, v. 19, is also named again, v. 24, Neh. 10: 2, and 12:24, while the name of the Levite Jeshaiah, on the contrary, is not again met with in the books of either Ezra or Nehemiah.

*Ezr. 8:20.* With respect to the Nethinim, whom David and the princes (of Israel) had given for the service of the Levites (i.e., made servants of the temple, to perform the lowest offices for the Levites), comp. Jos. 9:21 and Ezr. 2:43. "They all were distinguished by name," i.e., were men of note; comp. remarks on 1Ch. 12:31.

*Ezr. 8:21-30.* THE LAST PREPARATIONS FOR THE JOURNEY. — V. 21. Then the company of fellow-travellers was thus completed, Ezra proclaimed a fast at the place of meeting at the river Ahava, "that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a prosperous journey for ourselves, our families, and our goods," Fasting, as a means of humbling themselves before God, for the purpose of obtaining an answer to their petitions, was an ancient custom with the Israelites: Jud. 20:26; 1Sa. 7: 6; Joe. 1:14; 2Ch. 20: 3. דֶּרֶךְ יֵשָׁרָה, a straight way, a way made level by the removal of obstructions, i.e., a prosperous journey; comp. Psal. 112: 7. מִטְרַי, a noun collective, properly the little children, more frequently denoted the entire family, a man's wives and children; see remarks on Exo. 12:37. רְכוּשׁ, possessions in cattle and other goods.

*Ezr. 8:22.* For I was ashamed to request of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against enemies in the way (i.e., to protect us from hostile attacks during our journey); for we had said to the king: The hand of our God is over all them that seek him for good (i.e., for their good), and His power and His wrath against all them that forsake Him. עֲזוֹ in connection with אִפְּו is not His powerful wrath, but His power and might to conquer all enemies, evidencing itself in wrath against the wicked. This confession, which they had uttered before the king, they desired to make good by earnest humble supplication, that God would prove Himself their help and defence against all their enemies. And for this — adds Ezra, looking back on their prosperous

journey after it was accomplished — He was entreated of us. Because they had supplicated His assistance by prayer and fasting, God granted them His protection by the way.

*Ezr. 8:24-30.* Then Ezra delivered the gold, the silver, and the vessels, which he had received as gifts for the temple, to twelve of the chiefs of the priests, and twelve Levites, that they might take charge of them during the journey, and bring them to Jerusalem. “I separated twelve of the chief of the priests,” i.e., from the whole company of priests who were journeying with us. The following לְשֵׁרֵבְיָה does not suit the sense, whether we take the לְ as a sign of the dative (LXX) or of the accusative (Vulgate, and several expositors). For Sherebiah and Hashabiah were neither priests nor chiefs of priests, but Levites of the race of Merari (v. 18), and cannot therefore be reckoned among the twelve chiefs of priests. If we take לְשֵׁרֵבְיָה for a dative, and translate, “I separated twelve of the chiefs of the priests for Sherebiah and Hashabiah,” this would place the priests in a servile relation to the Levites, contrary to their true position. For לְשֵׁרֵבְיָה we must read וְשֵׁרֵבְיָה, and accept the reading of 1 Esdras, καὶ Ἐσερβίαν, as correct. Ezra separated twelve chiefs of the priests and twelve Levites, for the purpose of delivering to their custody the gifts of gold, silver, and implements for the temple. Of the chiefs of the priests no names are mentioned; of the Levites, the two names Sherebiah and Hashabiah are given as those of heads of houses, with whom ten other Levites were associated.

*Ezr. 8:25, etc.* To these chief priests and Levites Ezra weighed the silver and the gold and the vessels; שָׁקַל, to weigh, i.e., to deliver by weight. In the Chethiv אֲשֶׁקוּלָה the O sound is maintained, and consequently the Keri is pointed שָׁ. On the other hand, in ver. 26 the ו is dropped, and the form pointed with שָׁ, though many MSS, followed by J. H. Michaelis, have וֹ here also. אֵלֵּי תְרוּמַת בַּיִת is in apposition with the before-named objects: the gold, the silver, and the vessels, the offering for the house of our God, which the king, his councillors...had offered; comp. Ezr. 7:15, 16, 19. In הַהַרְיָמוֹ the article represents the relative pronoun; see on 1Ch. 26:28. הַנְּמַצְאִים, all Israelites who were found, met with, in Babylon, and were not going with them to Jerusalem; comp. 1Ch. 29:17, 2Ch. 5:11. עַל יָדָם, like עַל יַד, 1: 8, to their hand, i.e., handed over to their keeping. The gifts amounted to: six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels one hundred in talents, i.e., one hundred talents in value, one hundred talents of gold, and twenty covered basins of gold (comp. 1:10) one thousand dariks in value, and two brazen vessels of fine golden brilliancy, precious as gold. מְצַהֵב is an abstract noun, formed from the participle Hophal of צָהַב, to glitter like gold, and constructed as a feminine.

The word, with its adjective, either depends upon **נְחֻשֶׁת**, in the stat. construct., or stands in apposition thereto, and is not, as a participle Hophal, used adjectively and combined with **נְחֻשֶׁת**, for then the two adjectives **מְצָהָב** and **טוֹבָה** would not be in different genders. **הַמּוֹדוֹת**, like **כְּלֵי הַמּוֹדוֹת**, 2Ch. 20:25.

**Ezr. 8:28, etc.** On delivering these treasures, Ezra adds the admonition: Ye are holy to the Lord, and the vessels are holy, and the gold and the silver are a free-will offering unto the Lord God of your fathers; watch and keep (that which is committed to you). Since they were themselves, as priests and Levites, holy to the Lord, they were also to treat and keep the gifts committed to their charge as holy gifts, until, on their arrival at Jerusalem, they should weigh them (i.e., deliver them by weight) before the priests, the Levites, and the princes of Israel, in the chambers of the house of the Lord. The article to **הַלְשָׁכוֹת** (*stat. construct.*) is among the incorrectnesses of the later Hebrew.

**Ezr. 8:30.** Then they took the weight of the silver,...i.e., received the silver, etc., delivered to them by weight.

**Ezr. 8:31-36.** The start, the journey, and the arrival at Jerusalem. — V. 31. The start from the river Ahava (comp. v. 15) did not take place till the twelfth day of the first month; while according to Ezr. 7: 9, the journey from Babylon was appointed for the first day of the month, and according to Ezr. 8:15, the bands of travellers who assembled at the river Ahava encamped there three days. These statements may be reconciled as follows: On the first day the company of travellers began to assemble, and during the three days' encampment at the place of meeting Ezra became aware that no Levites were found among the travellers; upon which he took the measures mentioned, v. 16, etc., to induce certain Levites and Nethinim to accompany them. When these were afterwards present, Ezra ordained a fast, to supplicate the divine protection for the journey, and committed the sacred gifts to the care of the priests and Levites. Eight days elapsed while these preparations for departure were being made, so that the start from the river Ahava did not take place till the twelfth day. The journey was successfully accomplished, God's gracious protection delivering them from the hands of enemies and marauders; comp. v. 22.

**Ezr. 8:32, 33.** They arrived at Jerusalem, as stated 7: 9, on the first day of the fifth month, the journey consequently occupying three months and a half. The particulars of the journey are not communicated; and as we do not even know the locality of the place of meeting at the river Ahava, the length of road to be traversed cannot be determined. After their arrival at Jerusalem, they abode,

i.e., remained, as Nehemiah subsequently did, quiet and inactive three days, to recover from the fatigues and hardships of the journey, Neh. 2:11, before they undertook the arrangement of their affairs. On the fourth day, the gifts they had brought with them were delivered in the house of God (נִשְׁקַל, like אֲשַׁקֶּלָה, v. 16) into the hand of Meremoth and Eleazar the priests, and Jozabad and Noadiah, two Levites, who took charge of them, the chiefs of the priests and Levites being, according to v. 29, also present. Meremoth Ben Uriah reappears in Neh. 3: 4, 21, and is also intended Neh. 12: 3. Eleazar the son of Phinehas, and the Levite Noadiah, are not again met with. Jozabad, of the sons of Jeshua (Ezr. 2:40), may be the Levite Jozabad mentioned 10:23. Binnui is named among the Levites, Neh. 10:10 and 12: 8.

*Ezr. 8:34.* “By number, by weight, as to all,” i.e., all was delivered by number and weight; and the whole weight was written at that time, i.e., an authentic list was made at the delivery which then took place.

*Ezr. 8:35.* After the delivery of the dedicated gifts, those who had come up out of captivity (with Ezra), the sons of the captivity, offered burnt-offerings and sin-offerings, out of gratitude for the favour shown by God in the gracious restoration of His people Israel. This is implied in the words: “burnt-offerings to the God of Israel, twelve bullocks *for all Israel*” (the twelve tribes), and twelve he-goats for a sin-offering, as in 6:17. Ninety-six ( $8 \times 12$ ) lambs and seventy-seven lambs (77, the intensified seven) were likewise brought as a burnt-offering. “All this was a burnt-offering for the Lord,” of which, therefore, nothing could be eaten by the offerers. The sin-offering preceded the burnt-offering, as the necessary basis of an acceptable burnt-offering. The sin-offerings availed as an atonement for the sins of all Israel, and the burnt-offerings typified the surrender of the entire nation to the service of the Lord. Thus the fact that these were offered for all Israel was an actual declaration that they who had now returned were henceforth resolved, together with all Israel, to dedicate their lives to the service of the Lord their God.

*Ezr. 8:36.* Hereupon the royal decrees (the commission, Ezr. 7:12-26) were delivered to the satraps of the king, and to the governors on this side the river; and they furthered the people and the house of God, as Artaxerxes had commanded in his edict, Ezr. 7:20-24. On אֲחֻשְׁדַּרְפָּנִים and בְּחֹוֹת, see rem. on Dan. 3: 2. The satraps were the military chiefs of the province, the בְּחֹוֹת, the heads of the civil government. נָשָׂא, to lift up, to support, like 1: 4.

## **Ch. 9-10. — Ezra’s Proceedings in the Severance of the Strange Women from the Congregation of Israel.**



*Ezr. 9-10.* When Ezra, some time after his arrival, was in the temple at Jerusalem, the princes of the people informed him that the Israelites had mingled themselves by marriage with the people of the lands (Ezr. 9: 1, 2). Deeply moved by this communication, he sat astonished till the time of the evening sacrifice, while all who feared God's word assembled about him (vv. 3, 4). At the evening sacrifice he fell upon his knees and prayed, making a touching confession of sin before God, in the name of the congregation (vv. 5-15). During this prayer many were gathered around him weeping, and Shecaniah coming forth from their midst, acknowledged that transgressions of the congregation, and declared that they would make a covenant with God to put away all the strange wives (Ezr. 10: 1-4). After making the princes, the priests, and Levites take an oath that they would do according to the declaration thus made, Ezra left the temple and retired to the chamber of Johanan, to fast and mourn over the transgression of those who had returned from captivity (vv. 5, 6). An assembly at Jerusalem was then proclaimed, and those who should not attend it were threatened with heavy penalties (vv. 7-9). At this assembly Ezra reproved the people for their transgression, and called upon them to separate themselves from the people of the countries, and from the strange wives (vv. 10, 11); upon which the assembly resolved to appoint a commission to investigate and decide upon individual cases. In spite of the opposition of some, this proposal was accepted, and the commission named (vv. 12-17), which held its sittings from the first day of the tenth month, and made an end of its investigations into all cases brought before it by the close of the year. Then follows the list of those who had taken strange wives (vv. 18-44), with which the book concludes.

*Ezr. 9.* Information given of the intermingling of Israel with the heathen nations of the land by marriage (vv. 1-4), and Ezra's prayer and confession (vv. 5-15). — Vv. 1, 2. "When this was done, the princes came to me, and said, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, do not separate themselves from the people of the lands, according to their abominations, (even) of the Canaanites;...for they have taken (wives) of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, and the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of the lands." What now follows is placed in close chronological sequence with what precedes by the formula **וּבְכַלּוֹת אֵלֶּה**, at the time of the completion of these things; comp. 2Ch. 31: 1, 29:29, 7: 1. **אֵלֶּה** are the things related Ezr. 8:33-36. Of these the delivery of the gifts took place on the fourth day after Ezra's arrival at Jerusalem, i.e., on the fourth or fifth day of the first month (comp. Ezr. 8:32, etc., with 7: 9). The sacrifices (Ezr. 8:35) would undoubtedly be offered immediately; and the royal orders would be transmitted to the satraps and governors (Ezr. 8:36) very soon after. As soon, then, as Ezra received intelligence concerning the illegal marriages, he took the matter in

hand, so that all related (Ezr. 9: 3-10) occurred on one day. The first assemblage of the people with relation to this business was not, however, held till the twentieth day of the ninth month (Ezr. 10: 9); while on the calling of this meeting, appearance thereat was prescribed within three days, thus leaving apparently an interval of nine whole months between Ezr. 8 and 9. Hence Bertheau conjectures that the first proclamation of this assembly encountered opposition, because certain influential personages were averse to the further prosecution of this matter (Ezr. 10:15). But though Ezr. 10: 4-7 does not inform us what period elapsed between the adoption of Shecaniah's proposal to Ezra, and the proclamation for assembling the people at Jerusalem, the narrative does not give the impression that this proclamation was delayed for months through the opposition it met with. Besides, Ezra may have received the information concerning the unlawful marriages, not during the month of his arrival at Jerusalem, but some months later. We are not told whether it was given immediately, or soon after the completion of the matters mentioned Ezr. 8:33-36. The delivery of the royal commands to the satraps and governors (Ezr. 8:36) may have occupied weeks or months, the question being not merely to transmit the king's decrees to the said officials, but to come to such an understanding with them as might secure their favour and goodwill in assisting the newly established community, and supporting the house of God. The last sentence (Ezr. 8:36), "And they furthered the people and the house of God," plainly shows that such an understanding with the royal functionaries was effected, by transactions which must have preceded what is related Ezr. 9.

This matter having been arranged, and Ezra being now about to enter upon the execution of his commission to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of his God (Ezr. 7:12), he received information of the illegal marriages. While he was in the temple, the princes (הַשָּׂרִים, the princes, are those who give the information, the article being used e.g., like that in הַפְּלִיט, Gen. 14:13) came to him, saying: The people (viz., Israel, the priests, and the Levites; the three classes of the Israelite community) do not separate themselves from the people of the lands; comp. Ezr. 6:21. בַּתְּעֲבֹתֵיהֶם, with respect to their abominations, i.e., as Israel should have done with respect to the abominations of these people. The לְ to לְבִנְעֵי might be regarded as introducing the enumeration of the different nations, and corresponding with מַעֲמֵי; it is, however, more likely that it is used merely as a periphrasis for the genitive, and subordinates the names to תְּעֲבֹתֵיהֶם: their, i.e., the Canaanites', etc., abominations, the suffix relating, as e.g., at 3:12 and elsewhere, to the names following. Give Canaanitish races are here named, as in Exo. 13: 5, with this difference, that the Perizzites are here substituted for the Hivites, while in Exo. 3: 8, 23:23, both are enumerated, making six; to these are added in

Deu. 7: 1 the Girgashites, making, generally speaking, seven nations. Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians are here cited besides the Canaanitish races. The non-severance of the Israelites from these nations consisted, according to v. 2, in the fact of their having contracted marriages with them. In the law, indeed (Exo. 34:16; Deu. 7: 3), only marriages with Canaanitish women were forbidden; but the reason of this prohibition, viz., that Israel might not be seduced by them to idolatry, made its extension to Moabites, Ammonites, and Egyptians necessary under existing circumstances, if an effectual check was to be put to the relapse into heathenism of the Israelitish community, now but just gathered out again from among the Gentiles. For during the captivity idolaters of all nations had settled in the depopulated country, and mingled with the remnant of the Israelites left there. By “the people of the lands,” however, we are not to understand, with J. H. Michaelis, remnants of the races subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar and carried to Babylon, — who were now, after seventy years, returning, as well as the Jews, to their native lands under Cyrus; in support of which view Mich. incorrectly refers to Jer. 25: 9, etc., — but those portions, both of the ancient Canaanitish races and of the Moabites and Ammonites, who, escaping the sentence of captivity, remained in the land. נָשִׂים is naturally completed by נְשֵׂאֵי from the context; comp. Ezr. 10:44, 2Ch. 11:21, and other passages. The subject of הִתְעַרְבוּ is the collective זֵרַע הַקֹּדֶשׁ, the holy seed, i.e., the members of the nation called to holiness (Exo. 19: 5). The appellation is taken from Isa. 6:13, where the remnant of the covenant people, preserved in the midst of judgments, and purified thereby, is called a holy seed. The second part of v. 2 contains an explanatory accessory clause: and the hand of the princes and rulers hath been first in this unfaithfulness (מַעַל, comp. Lev. 5:15), i.e., the princes were the first to transgress; on the figurative expression, comp. Deu. 13:10. סֹגְנִים is an Old-Persian word naturalized in Hebrew, signifying commander, prefect; but its etymology is not as yet satisfactorily ascertained: see Delitzsch on Isa. 41:25.

*Ezr. 9: 3, etc.* This information threw Ezra into deep grief and moral consternation. The tearing of the upper and under garments was a sign of heartfelt and grievous affliction (Jos. 8: 6); see remarks on Lev. 10: 6. The plucking out of (a portion of) the hair was the expression of violent wrath or moral indignation, comp. Neh. 13:25, and is not to be identified with the cutting off of the hair in mourning Job. 1:20). “And sat down stunned;” מְשׁוּמָם, desolate, rigid, stunned, without motion. While he was sitting thus, there were gathered unto him all who feared the word of God concerning the transgression of those that had been carried away. הִרְדָּה, trembling, being terrified, generally construed with עַל or אֵל (e.g., Isa. 66: 2, 5), but here with בָּ (like verbs of embracing, believing), and meaning to believe with trembling in the word which

God had spoken concerning this **מַעַל**, i.e., thinking with terror of the punishments which such faithless conduct towards a covenant God involved.

*Ezr. 9: 5-15.* EZRA'S PRAYER AND CONFESSION FOR THE CONGREGATION. — V. 5. And at the time of the evening sacrifice, I rose up from my mortification (**תַּעֲנִיָּה**, humiliation, generally through fasting, here through sitting motionless in deep affliction of soul), and rending my garment and my mantle. These words contribute a second particular to **קָמַתִּי**, and do not mean that Ezra arose with his garments torn, but state that, on arising, he rent his clothing, and therefore again manifested his sorrow in this manner. He then fell on his knees, and spread out his hands to God (comp. 1Ki. 8:22), to make a confession of the heavy guilt of the congregation before God, and thus impressively to set their sins before all who heard his prayer.

*Ezr. 9: 6, etc.* The train of thought in this prayer is as follows: I scarcely dare to lift up my face to God, through shame for the greatness of our misdeeds (v. 6). From the days of our fathers, God has sorely punished us for our sins by delivering us into the power of our enemies; but has now again turned His pity towards us, and revived us in the place of His sanctuary, through the favour of the king of Persia (7-9). But we have again transgressed His commands, with the keeping of which God has connected our possession of the good land given unto us (vv. 10-12). Should we then, after God has spared us more than we through our trespasses have deserved, bring His wrath upon us, till we are wholly consumed? God is just; He has preserved us; but we stand before Him with heavy guilt upon us, such guilt that we cannot endure God's presence (vv. 13-15). Ezra does not pray for the pardon of their sin, for he desires only to bring the congregation to the knowledge of the greatness of their transgression, and so to invite them to do all that in them lies to atone for their guilt, and to appease God's wrath.

*Ezr. 9: 6.* "I am ashamed, and am covered with shame, to lift up my face to Thee, my God." **בְּשָׁתִי וְנִכְלַמְתִּי** united, as in Jer. 31:19, comp. Isa. 45:16, and other passages. **נִכְלַם**, to be covered with shame, is stronger than **בוֹשׁ**. "For our iniquities are increased over our head," i.e., have grown above our head. **לְמַעַלְהָ רֵאשׁ**, to or over the head. **לְמַעַלְהָ** serves to enhance the meaning of **רָבוּ**, like 1Ch. 23:17. "And our guiltiness is great, (reaching) unto the heavens;" comp. 2Ch. 28: 9.

*Ezr. 9: 7.* "Since the days of our fathers, have we, our kings, our priests, been delivered into the hands of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to shame of face." The words from **בְּיַד־כּוֹשְׁדִים** onwards serve to explain what is meant by being delivered into the hand of strange kings. On the

expression **בְּשֵׁת פְּנִים**, comp. Dan. 9: 7, etc., 2Ch. 32:21. **בְּהִיּוֹם הַזֶּה**, as it is this day, as is to-day the case; see remarks on Dan. 9: 7. The thought is: We are still sorely suffering for our sins, by being yet under the yoke of foreign sovereigns.

*Ezr. 9: 8.* “And now for a little moment there has been mercy from the Lord our God, to leave us a rescued remnant, and to give us a nail in His holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.” He calls the short interval between their release from captivity by Cyrus, and the time when he is speaking, **בְּמַעַט רִגַע**, a little moment (comp. Isa. 26:20), in comparison with the long period of suffering from the times of the Assyrians (comp. Neh. 9:32) till the reign of Cyrus. **פְּלִיטָה**, a rescued remnant, is the new community delivered from Babylon, and returned to the land of their fathers. In proportion to the numerous population of former days, it was but a remnant that escaped destruction; but a remnant which, according to the predictions of the prophets, was again to grow into a large nation. A foundation for this hope was given by the fact that God had given them “a nail in the place of His sanctuary.” The expression is figurative. **יָתֵד** is a nail or peg struck into the wall, to hang any kind of domestic utensils upon; comp. Isa. 22:23, etc. Such a nail was the place of God’s sanctuary, the temple, to the rescued community. This was to them a firm nail, by which they were borne and upheld; and this nail God had given them as a support to which they might cling, and gain new life and vigour. The infinitive clauses following, **לְהַאִיר** and **לְתַתְּנוּ**, are dependent upon the preceding infinitives **לְהַשְׂאִיר** and **וּלְתַתְּ**, and state the purpose for which God has given a nail in His house to this remnant. That our God may enlighten our eyes, i.e., may bestow upon us new vitality; comp. Ps. 13: 4. Suffering and misfortune make the eyes dim, and their light is quenched in death: the enlightened or beaming eye is an image of vital power; comp. 1Sa. 14:27, 29. **לְתַתְּנוּ מַחְיָה** is not to be translated, ut daret nobis vivificationem, the suffix to **לְתַתְּנוּ** being not dative, but accusative. The literal rendering is: that He may make us a slight reviving. **מַחְיָה**, the means of supporting life, restoration to life; see on 2Ch. 14:13. Ezra adds **מַעַט**; for the life to which the community had attained was but feeble, in comparison with a vigorous social life. Their deliverance from Babylon and return to the land of their fathers was, so to speak, a revival from death; compare the embodiment of this figure in Ezekiel’s vision, Eze. 37: 1-14: they were, however, still in a state of vassalage, and had not yet regained their independence. This thought is further carried out in v. 9: “For we are bondmen, yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy to us before the kings of Persia; so that they have given us a reviving to build up the house of our God, and to

repair its ruins, and have given us a wall about us in Judah and Jerusalem.” They who have returned to Jerusalem and Judah are still bondmen, for they are yet under the Persian yoke; but God has disposed the kings of Persia so to favour them as to give them a reviving, to enable them to rebuild the house of God. Cyrus and Darius had not merely permitted and commanded the building of the temple, but had also furnished them with considerable assistance towards the carrying out of this work; comp. *Ezr.* 1: 3, etc. *Ezr.* 6: 7-9. The suffix in **הַרְבֵּתוּ** alludes to **בֵּית אֱלֹהִים**. The words of the last sentence are figurative. **גִּדְרָא** means the wall of a vineyard, the wall or fence built for its protection (*Isa.* 5: 2, 5). Hence the wall, or enclosure, is an image of protection from the incursions and attacks of enemies. Such a wall has been given them in Judah and Jerusalem by the kings of Persia. “The meaning is not that they possess a place defended by walls (perhaps, therefore, the temple) in Jerusalem and Judah, but that the Persian kings have given to the new community a safe dwelling-place (or the means of existence), because the power of the Persian empire secures to the returned Israelites continued and undisturbed possession of the city and the land.” (Bertheau.)

After this statement concerning the divine favour, Ezra next sets himself to describe the conduct of his countrymen with respect to the mercy extended to them.

*Ezr.* 9:10. “And now, O our God, what can we say after this? That we have forsaken Thy commandments,” **זֹאנֵת**, i.e., such proofs of the divine compassion as have just been mentioned. The answer which follows commences with **כִּי**, before which **נִאמַר** is mentally repeated: “we can only say that we have forsaken Thy commandments, requited Thy kindness with sins.”

*Ezr.* 9:11. Namely, the commandments “which Thou hast commanded by Thy servants the prophets, saying, The land unto which ye go to possess it is an unclean land through the uncleanness of the people of the lands, through their abominations, wherewith they have filled it from one end to another through their impurity. And now give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons (for wives), nor seek their peace nor their wealth for ever; that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.” The words of the prophets introduced by **לֵאמֹר** are found in these terms neither in the prophetic books nor the Pentateuch. They are not, therefore, to be regarded as a verbal quotation, but only as a declaration that the prohibition of intermarriage with the heathen had been inculcated by the prophets. The introduction of this prohibition by the words: the land unto which ye go to possess it, refers to the Mosaic age, and in using it Ezra had chiefly in view *Deu.* 7: 1-3. He interweaves, however, with

this passage other sayings from the Pentateuch, e.g., Deu. 23: 7, and from the prophetic writings, without designing to make a verbal quotation. He says quite generally, by His servants the prophets, as the author of the books of Kings does in similar cases, e.g., 2Ki. 17:23, 21:10, 24: 2, where the leading idea is, not to give the saying of some one prophet, but to represent the truth in question as one frequently reiterated. The sayings of Moses in Deuteronomy also bear a prophetic character; for in this book he, after the manner of the prophets, seeks to make the people lay to heart the duty of obeying the law. It is true that we do not meet in the other books of Scripture a special prohibition of marriages with Canaanites, though in the prophetic remarks, Jud. 3: 6, such marriages are reproved as occasions of seducing the Israelites to idolatry, and in the prophetic descriptions of the whoredoms of Israel with Baalim, and the general animadversions upon apostasy from the Lord, the transgression of this prohibition is implicitly included; thus justifying the general expression, that God had forbidden the Israelites to contract such marriages, by His servants the prophets. Besides, we must here take into consideration the threatening of the prophets, that the Lord would thrust Israel out of the land for their sins, among which intermarriage with the Canaanites was by no means the least. Ezra, moreover, makes use of the general expression, “by the prophets,” because he desired to say that God had not merely forbidden these marriages one or twice in the law, but had also repeatedly inculcated this prohibition by the prophets. The law was preached by the prophets when they reiterated what was the will of God as revealed in the law of Moses. In this respect Ezra might well designate the prohibition of the law as the saying of the prophets, and cite it as pronounced according to the circumstances of the Mosaic period. <sup>22</sup>

The words: the land into which ye go, etc., recall the introduction of the law in Deu. 7: 1, etc.; but the description of the land as a land of uncleanness through the uncleanness of the people, etc., does not read thus either in the Pentateuch or in the prophets. נָדָה, the uncleanness of women, is first applied to moral impurity by the prophets: comp. Lam. 1:17; Eze. 7:20, 36:17, comp. Isa. 64: 5. The expression מִפֶּה אֶל־פֶּה, from edge to edge, i.e., from one end to the other, like פֶּה לְפֶה, 2Ki. 10:21, 21:16, is taken from vessels filled to their upper rim. וְעַתָּה introduces the consequence: and now, this being the case. The prohibition אַל תִּתְּנוּ וְגו' is worded after Deu. 7: 3. The addition: nor seek their peace, etc., is taken almost verbally from Deu. 23: 7, where this is said in respect of the Ammonites and Moabites. לְמַעַן תִּחְזְקוּ recalls Deu. 11: 8, and the promise: that ye may eat the good of the land for ever, Isa. 1:19. לְבָנֵיכֶם וְהוֹרְשָׁתֶם, and leave it for an inheritance to your children, does not occur in this form in the Pentateuch, but only the promise: that they and their children

should possess the land for ever. On **הוֹרִישׁ** in this sense comp. Jud. 11:24, 2Ch. 20:11.

*Ezr. 9:13, etc.* And after all, continues Ezra, taking up again the **אֲחֲרֵי־זֹאת** of v. 10, — “after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass — yea, Thou our God has spared us more than our iniquity deserved, and hast given us this escaped remnant — can we again break Thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? Wilt Thou not be angry with us even to extirpation, so that no residue and no escaped remnant should be left?” The premiss in v. 13a is followed in v. 14 by the conclusion in the form of a question, while the second clause of v. 13 is an explanatory parenthesis. Bertheau construes the passage otherwise. He finds the continuation of the sentence: and after all this...in the words **כִּי אֶתָּה וְגוֹי**, which, calmly spoken, would read: Thou, O God, hast not wholly destroyed us, but hast preserved to us an escaped remnant; while instead of such a continuation we have an exclamation of grateful wonder, emphatically introduced by **כִּי** in the sense of **אֲמַנָּם כִּי**. With this construction of the clauses, however, no advance is made, and Ezra, in this prayer, does but repeat what he had already said, vv. 8 and 9; although the introductory **אֲחֲרַי** leads us to expect a new thought to close the confession. Then, too, the logical connection between the question v. 14 and what precedes it would be wanting, i.e., a foundation of fact for the question v. 14. Bertheau remarks on v. 14, that the question: should we return to break (i.e., break again) the commands of God? is an antithesis to the exclamation. But neither does this question, to judge by its matter, stand in contrast to the exclamation, nor is any such contrast indicated by its form. The discourse advances in regular progression only when v. 14a forms the conclusion arrived at from v. 13a, and the thought in the premiss (13a) is limited by the thoughts introduced with **כִּי**. What had come upon Israel for their sins was, according to v. 7, deliverance into the hand of heathen kings, to the sword, to captivity, etc. God had not, however, merely chastened and punished His people for their sins, He had also extended mercy to them, v. 8, etc. This, therefore, is also mentioned by Ezra in v. 13b, to justify, or rather to limit, the **כֹּל** in **כָּל־הַבָּא**. The **כִּי** is properly confirmatory: for Thou, our God, hast indeed punished us, but not in such measure as our sins had deserved; and receives through the tenor of the clause the adversative meaning of imo, yea (comp. Ewald, § 330, b). **חָשַׁבְתָּ לְמַטָּה מִי**, Thou hast checked, hast stopped, beneath our iniquities. **חָשַׁדְךָ** is not used intransitively, but actively; the missing object must be supplied from the context: Thou hast withheld that, all of which should have come upon us, i.e., the punishment we deserved, or, as older expositors completed the sense, iram tuam. **לְמַטָּה מֵעוֹנֵינוּ**, infra delicta nostra,



i.e., Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserved. For their iniquities they had merited extirpation; but God had given them a rescued remnant.

**בְּנוֹתָ**, as this, viz., this which exists in the community now returned from Babylon to Judaea. This is the circumstance which justifies the question: should we, or can we, again (**נָשׁוּב** is used adverbially) break Thy commandments, and become related by marriage? (**הִתְחַתֵּן** like Deu. 7: 3.) **עַמֵּי הַתְּעֵבוֹת**, people who live in abominations. The answer to this question is found in the subsequent question: will He not — if, after the sparing mercy we have experienced, we again transgress the commands of God — by angry with us till He have consumed us? **עַד בְּלֹא** (comp. 2Ki. 13:17, 19) is strengthened by the addition: so that there will be no remnant and no escaping. The question introduced by **הֲלוֹא** is an expression of certain assurance: He will most certainly consume us.

*Ezr. 9:15.* “Jahve, God of Israel, Thou art righteous; for we remain an escaped remnant, as (it is) this day. Behold, we are before Thee in our trespass; for no one can stand before Thy face, because of this.” Ezra appeals to the righteousness of God, not to supplicate pardon, as Neh. 9:33, for the righteousness of God would impel Him to extirpate the sinful nation, but to rouse the conscience of the community, to point out to them what, after this relapse into their old abominations, they had to expect from the justice of God. **כִּי נִשְׁאַרְנוּ** is confirmatory. God has shown Himself to be just by so sorely punishing this once numerous nation, that only a small remnant which has escaped destruction now exists. And this remnant has again most grievously offended: we lie before Thee in our trespass; what can we expect from Thy justice? Nothing but destruction; for there is no standing before Thee, i.e., no one can stand before Thee, **עַל-זֹאת**, because of this (comp. 8:23, 10: 2), i.e., because of the fresh guilt which we have incurred.

*Ezr. 10.* The separation of the strange wives from the congregation. — Vv. 1-5. While Ezra was making this confession before God, a numerous assemblage gathered around him, and wept aloud. From this point onwards Ezra relates the further course of events in such wise as to cast his own person in the background, and speaks of himself in the third person. The matter of his prayer is more definitely declared by **וּבִהְתְּוֹדֹתוֹ**, and his posture in prayer by **וּמִתְנַפֵּל בְּכַה**, weeping and casting himself down (lying on his knees, 9: 5). “Before the house of God,” i.e., in the court of the temple. The confirmatory clause: for the people wept much (**הִרְבֵּה בְּכַה**, a weeping in mass), furnishes the motive of so great a number of men, women, and children gathering around Ezra. Very many were as distressed as he was at the marriages with strange wives, and regarded them as a grievous trespass; hence they assembled weeping around him.

*Ezr. 10: 2, etc.* Then one of the sons of Elam, Shecaniah, the son of Jehiel, stood forth from amidst the assembly, and uttered the confession: “We have been unfaithful towards our God by marrying strange wives, but there is yet hope for Israel concerning this thing. We will now make a covenant with God to put away all the strange wives and their children from the congregation, according to the counsel of the Lord, and of those who fear the commandment of our God, that it may be done according to the law.” Shecaniah, of the sons of Elam (comp. *Ezr. 2: 7, 8: 7*), is a different person from the descendant of Zattu, mentioned *Ezr. 8: 5*; nor is Jehiel identical with the individual whose name occurs in v. 26. **וְנָשָׂא**, and have brought home strange wives. **הוֹשִׁיב**, to cause to dwell (in one’s house), said in vv. 10, 14, 17, 18, and *Neh. 13:23, 27*, of bringing a wife home. Shecaniah finds his hope for Israel in this trespass upon the circumstance, that they bind themselves by a solemn covenant before God to put away this scandal from the congregation, and to act in conformity with the law. To make a covenant with our God, i.e., to bind themselves by an oath with respect to God, comp. *2Ch. 29:10*. **הוֹצִיא**, to put away — the opposite of **הוֹשִׁיב**. All the wives are, according to the context, all the strange women (v. 2), and that which is born of them, their children. Instead of **אֲדֹנָי בְּעֵצָת**, according to the counsel of the Lord, De Wette, Bertheau, and others, following the paraphrase in the LXX and 1 Esdras, read **אֲדֹנָי**, according to the counsel of my lord, i.e., of Ezra. But this paraphrase being of no critical authority, there is no sufficient reason for the alteration. For Shecaniah to call Ezra my lord sounds strange, since usually this title was only given by servants to their master, or subjects to their sovereign, and Shecaniah afterwards addresses him simply as thou. Besides, Ezra had given no advice at all in this matter, and still less had he come to any resolution about it with the God-fearing members of the community. **נִפְרָתָהּ בְּרִית**, we will make a covenant, must be taken as hortative: and let it be done according to the law. **בְּחָרָד**, caring for with trembling.

*Ezr. 10: 4.* “Up! for this matter concerns thee (thou art called to carry it out), and we are with thee (will assist thee therein); be strong (courageous) and do it.”

*Ezr. 10: 5.* Then Ezra (who during this speech had continued upon his knees) arose, and made the chiefs of the priests, of the Levites, and of all Israel swear to do according to this word; and they swore. **הִרְבֵּר הִזָּה** is Shecaniah’s proposal to put away the strange wives.

*Ezr. 10: 6.* Hereupon Ezra left the place before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib, to fast and mourn there for the

unfaithfulness (transgression) of them that had been carried away (מעל הגולה) like 9: 4). Johanan the son of Eliashib cannot actually be Johanan ben Eliashib (Neh. 12:23) the high priest, however natural it may be to understand by the chamber of Johanan one of the chambers in the out-buildings of the temple, called after the name of some well-known individual. For the high priest Eliashib was a contemporary of Nehemiah, and the high priest Johanan was not the son, but, according to the definite statement, Neh. 12:10, the grandson, of Eliashib, and the son of Joiada (the correct reading of Neh. 12:11 being: Joiada begat Johanan and Jonathan). Now a chamber of the temple could not in Ezra's time have been as yet called after a grandson of Eliashib the contemporary of Nehemiah; <sup>123</sup> and both Johanan and Eliashib being names which frequently occur (comp. vv. 24, 27, 36), and one of the twenty-four orders of priests being called after the latter (1Ch. 24:12), we, with Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 228), regard the Johanan ben Eliashib here mentioned as an individual of whom nothing further is known, — perhaps a priest descended from the Eliashib of 1Ch. 24:12, and who possessed in the new temple a chamber called by his name. For there is not the slightest reason to suppose, with Bertheau, that a subsequent name of this chamber is used in this narrative, because the narrator desired to state the locality in a manner which should be intelligible to his contemporaries. Cler. and Berth. desire, after 1 Esdr. 9: 1 (καὶ ἀβλιθοεῖς ἐκεῖ), to change וַיֵּלֶךְ שָׁם into וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם: and he passed the night there without eating bread or drinking water. But the LXX having καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἐκεῖ, and the repetition of the same word being, moreover, by no means infrequent, comp. e.g., וַיֵּקָם in vv. 5, 6, and finally שָׁם repeatedly standing for thither, e.g., 1Sa. 2:14 (הַבְּאִים שָׁם), there are no adequate grounds for an alteration of the text. The paraphrase of 1 Esdr. arises merely from the connection, and is devoid of critical value. To eat no bread, etc., means to fast: comp. Exo. 34:28, Deu. 9: 9.

*Ezr. 10: 7-17.* THE RESOLUTION CARRIED INTO EXECUTION. — Vv. 7, 8. A proclamation was sent forth throughout Judah and Jerusalem (הַעֲבִיר קוֹל, comp. Ezr. 1: 1) to all the children of the captivity to assemble at Jerusalem under pain of the punishment, that whoever should not come within three days, all his substance should be forfeited and himself excluded from the congregation, according to the decision of the princes and elders, who, as the heads of the community, had taken the matter in hand, and made this announcement. The forfeiture of substance is not its destruction, as prescribed Deu. 13:13-17 in the case of a city fallen into idolatry, but its appropriation to the benefit of the temple, after the analogy of Lev. 27:28.

*Ezr. 10: 9.* After three days all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem. This took place on the twentieth day of the ninth month. On this statement of time, see the remark in 9: 1. The assembled multitude sat there on the open space of the house of God, i.e., probably the open space (הַרְחֹב) in front of the water-gate, Neh. 8: 1, 3, 16, at the eastern or south-eastern side, before the temple court; see remarks on Neh. 8: 1. “Trembling” because of this matter, the seriousness of which they might perceive from the heavy penalty attached to their non-appearance within three days, and “because of the rain.” The ninth month, corresponding with our December, is in the cold rainy time of the year (comp. v. 13), “when the rain usually falls in torrents” (Robinson, Phys. Geog. p. 287).

*Ezr. 10:10.* Ezra then stood up and reprov'd the assembled multitude, saying: You have brought home (הוֹשִׁיב, comp. v. 2) strange wives to increase the trespass of Israel (comp. Ezra’s confession, 9: 6-15), and exhorted them to give glory to God and to do His pleasure, (viz.) to separate themselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. On תָּנּוּ תוֹדָה, comp. Jos. 7:19. Separation from the people of the land consisted, under the circumstances, in the dismissal of the strange wives.

*Ezr. 10:12.* The whole assembly replied with a loud voice, and therefore with firm resolve: According to thy word it is our duty to do. עָלֵינוּ must not be drawn to what precedes, as in the Vulgate, *juxta verbum tuum ad nos, sic fiat*, but to what follows, as in v. 4, Neh. 13:13, 2Sa. 18:11. But — they further remark, v. 13 — the people are many, — i.e., the assemblage is very large to be able to deal immediately with the several cases; and it is (now) the time of the heavy rains, and there is no power to stand without, — i.e., at the present season we are not able to remain in the open air until the business is discharged; neither is this the work of one day, or of two, for we have transgressed much in this matter, — i.e., one or two days will not suffice to investigate and decide upon all cases, because very many have broken the law in this respect.

*Ezr. 10:14.* “Let then our rulers stand for the whole congregation, and let all who in all our cities have brought home strange wives come at appointed times, and with them the elders of each city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God be turned away from us, as long as this matter lasts.” There were so many cases to deal with, that the rulers, as the judicial authorities, must decide in this matter; and those who in all the cities of the land had transgressed, were to appear before these authorities, and submit their individual cases to their jurisdiction. The choice of the verb יַעֲמְדוּ, to stand or set oneself to discharge some business, here therefore to give judgment, is

occasioned by the preceding **לַעֲמֹד**. The whole community had assembled according to the proclamation, and was standing there for the purpose of bringing the matter to a close. This they were not, however, able to do, for the reasons stated v. 13; hence the princes, as rulers of the community, are to remain for the discharge of the business. **לְכָל־הַקְהָלָה** is not a genitive dependent on **שָׂרֵינוּ**, and explanatory of the suffix of this word — our, viz., the whole congregation's, princes (Bertheau) — an unnatural and superfluous elucidation; for if the whole congregation say: our princes, it is self-evident that not the princes of a section or portion of the people, but of the whole congregation, must be intended. **לְכָל־הַקְהָלָה** is the object of **יַעֲמְדוּ**: let them stand for the whole congregation (**לְ עַמְדָּה** like **לְ קוֹם**, Psa. 94:16), not *instead of*, but for the good of the congregation, and transact its business. In our cities, i.e., including the capital, for there is here no contrast between Jerusalem and the other cities. The article to **הַהֲשִׁיב** stands, as is often the case, for the relative **אֲשֶׁר**, e.g., v. 17, 8:25. **עֵתִים מְזֻמָּנִים**, appointed times, stated terms, used only here and in Neh. 10:35, 13:31. **זְמַן** is a Chaldaistic expression. With the accused were to come the elders and judges of every city, to furnish the necessary explanations and evidence. **עַד לְהֲשִׁיב**, until the turning away of the fierceness of the wrath (**עַד לְ** according to the later usage of the language instead of **עַד** only, comp. Ewald, § 315, a, not instead of **לְ** only, as Bertheau seeks, by incorrectly interpreted passages, to prove). The meaning is: until the fierce wrath of God concerning these marriages shall be turned away, by their dissolution and the dismissal of the strange women from the congregation. The last words, **עַד לְדַבֵּר הַזֶּה**, offer some difficulty. De Wette and Bertheau translate them: on account of this matter, which **עַד לְ** can by no means signify. We regard **עַד לְ** = **עַד** of the older language, in the sense of during, like 2Ki. 9:22, according to which the meaning is: as long as this thing lasts; but we connect these words, not, as J. H. Michaelis, with the immediately preceding clause: the wrath which is fierce during this matter (*quae usque, i.e., constanter ardet*), but take them as more exactly defining the leading idea of the verse: the princes are to stand and judge the guilty as long as this matter lasts, so that **הַזֶּה** **עַד לְדַבֵּר** is co-ordinate with **עַד לְהֲשִׁיב וּגו'**.

**Ezr. 10:15**. Jonathan the son of Asahel, and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah, indeed opposed this proposal on the part of the community, and were supported in their opposition by two Levites, but without being able to carry it out. This statement is introduced by **אֲדָּה**, *only*, in the form of a qualification to the remark that the *whole* assembly (v. 12) made this resolution: nevertheless Jonathan...stood up against this. For **עַמְדָּה עַל**, to stand up against, or as

elsewhere **קום על**, comp. 1Ch. 21: 1, 2Ch. 20:23, Dan. 8:25, 11:14. Such also is the view of R. Sal. and Lightf., while older expositors understand it as meaning: only Jonathan...stood up for this matter, like the *steterunt super hoc* of the Vulgate, or as the decidedly incorrect explanation of J. H. Mich.: *praefecti sunt huic negotio*. — Nothing further is known of the four opponents here named. That they did not succeed in this opposition appears from what follows. V. 16. The children of the captivity, i.e., the returned exiles, did so; i.e., the congregation carried their resolve into execution. And Ezra the priest, and men, heads of houses according to their houses, — i.e., so that each house was represented by its head, — were separated, i.e., chosen to conduct the investigation. The **ו** copulative before **אֲנָשִׁים** has been lost, as asyndeton seeming in this case inadmissible. Bertheau, on the contrary, unnecessarily changes **וַיִּבְדְּלוּ** into **וַיִּבְדֵּל לוֹ** after 1 Esdras 9:16. “And they all by names,” comp. 8:20. **וַיֵּשְׁבוּ**, and they held a sitting (i.e., their first sitting) on the first day of the tenth month, and therefore only ten days after the assembly just spoken of. **לְדַרְיוֹשׁ הַדָּבָר**, to inquire into the matter. It is impossible in Hebrew to form **דַּרְיוֹשׁ** from **דָּרַשׁ**, and this word can only arise from **דָּרוֹשׁ**, as Ewald, § 239, a, note, Olshausen, *Lehrb. d. hebr. Spr.* p. 150, and Böttcher, *ausf. Lehrb. der hebr. Spr.* i. 1, p. 162, note, unanimously agree.

*Ezr. 10:17.* And they made an end with all, with respect to the men who had brought home strange wives. **בְּכֹל** (with the article) cannot be so connected with **אֲנָשִׁים**, from which it is separated by the accentuation of the latter, as to admit of the repetition, as by older expositors, of the preposition **בְּ** before **אֲנָשִׁים**: with all, namely, with the men. Still less can **בְּכֹל**, as Bertheau thinks, be taken in the sense of “in every place,” and **אֲנָשִׁים** connected as an accusative with **וַיִּבְלֹוּ**: they finished in every place the men (!); for **כָּלָה** with an accusative of the person signifies to annihilate, to make an end of, while **כָּלָה בְּ** means to finish, to make an end with, comp. Gen. 44:12. If, as the accentuation requires, we take **בְּכֹל** independently, **אֲנָשִׁים** can only be an accusative of more exact definition: in respect of the men (**אֲנָשִׁים** being without the article, because words which define it follow). As this gives a suitable meaning, it seems unnecessary to alter the punctuation and read **בְּכָל-אֲנָשִׁים**, or with Ewald, § 290, c, note 1, to regard **בְּכֹל אֲנָשִׁים** as a singular combination. — Till the first day of the first month (of the next year), therefore in three months, their sittings having begun, according to v. 13, on the first day of the tenth month. — The account of this transaction closes with —

*The list of the men who had taken strange wives*, vv. 18-44; among whom were priests (18-22), Levites (23, 24), and Israelites, i.e., laymen (25-43).

*Ezr. 10:18, etc.* Among the priests there stand first, four names of sons and brethren of the high priest Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. אֶחָיו, his (Jeshua's) brethren. Judging by 2:36, these were among the descendants of Jedaiah, a section of the house of the high-priestly family (see rem. on Ezr. 2:36), and were therefore distant cousins of the high priest. They gave their hands, i.e., bound themselves by shaking hands, to put away their wives, i.e., to dismiss them, and to sever them from the congregation of Israel, וְאֲשָׁמִים, “and guilty a ram for their trespass,” i.e., condemned to bring a ram as a trespass-offering. וְאֲשָׁמִים is to be regarded as the continuation of the infinitive clause לְהוֹצִיא. As elsewhere, infinitive clauses are continued without anything further in the verb. finit. (comp. Ewald, § 350); so here also does the adjective אֲשָׁמִים follow, requiring that לְהִיּוֹת should be mentally supplied. אֵיל-צֹאן, a ram of the flock, is, as an accusative of more exact definition, dependent on אֲשָׁמִים. This trespass-offering was imposed upon them according to the principle of the law, Lev. 5:14, etc., because they had committed a מַעַל against the Lord, which needed expiation; see on Lev. 5:14. — In what follows, only the names of the individuals, and a statement of the families they belonged to, are given, without repeating that the same obligations, namely, the dismissal of their strange wives, and the bringing of a trespass-offering, were imposed on them also, this being self-evident from the context. — Among the sons of Immer were three, among the sons of Harim five, among the sons of Pashur six offenders; in all, eighteen priests. By comparing 2:36-39, we perceive that not one of the orders of priests who returned with Zerubbabel was free from participation in this transgression. Some of the names given, 20-22, reappear in the lists in Neh. 8: 4 and 10: 2-9, and may belong to the same individuals.

*Ezr. 10:23.* Of Levites, only six names are given, and that without stated the houses to which they belonged. From 2:40, however, it appears that they were of the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel there mentioned. “Kelaiah, the same is Kelita;” the latter is the usual name of the person in question, and that which he bears in Neh. 8: 7 and 10:11. Jozabad also reappears in Neh. 8: 7.

*Ezr. 10:24, etc.* Of singers one, and of porters three names are given; comp. 2:41, 42. In all, ten Levites.

*Ezr. 10:25.* Of Israel, as distinguished from priests and Levites, i.e., of the laity. Of these latter are given in all eighty-six names, belonging to ten races, 25-43, who returned with Zerubbabel. See Nos. 1, 5, 6, 9, 8, 4, 30, 17, and 27 of the survey of these races, p. 22. יְרֵמוֹת in v. 29 should, according to the Chethiv, be read יְרֵמוֹת. — The twofold naming of sons of Bani in this list (vv.

29 and 34) is strange, and Bani is evidently in one of these places a mistake for some other name. Bertheau supposes that Bigvai may have stood in the text in one of these places. The error undoubtedly lies in the second mention of Bani (v. 34), and consists not merely in the wrong transcription of this one name. For, while of every other race four, six, seven, or eight individuals are named, no less than seven and twenty names follow **מְבַנֵּי בְנֵי**, though all these persons could hardly have belonged to one race, unless the greater number of males therein had married strange wives. Besides, no names of inhabitants of cities of Judah and Benjamin are given in this list (as in 2:21-28, and 33-35), although it is stated in vv. 7 and 14 that not only the men of Jerusalem, but also dwellers in other cities, had contracted these prohibited marriages, and been summoned to Jerusalem, that judgment might be pronounced in their several cases. These reasons make it probable that the twenty-seven persons enumerated in vv. 34-42 were inhabitants of various localities in Judah, and not merely individuals belonging to a single house. This supposition cannot, however, be further corroborated, since even the LXX and 1 Esdr. read the name Bani in vv. 27 and 34, nor can any conjecture respecting the correct reading laying claim to probability be ventured on. In the single names, the Greek texts of the Septuagint and 1 Esdras frequently differ from the Hebrew text, but the differences are almost all of a kind to furnish no material for criticism. A considerable number of these names reappear in the lists of names in the book of Nehemiah, but under circumstances which nowhere make the identity of the persons bearing them certain.

*Ezr. 10:44.* V. 44 contains the statement with which the account of this transaction closes. The Chethiv **נְשָׂאִי** seems to be an error of transcription for **נְשָׂאוֹ** (the Keri), which the sense requires. **וַיֵּשׁ מִהֶם וְגוֹ'**, “and there were among them women who had brought forth sons.” **מִהֶם** must be referred to women, notwithstanding the masculine suffix. **וַיֵּשִׁמוּ**, too, can only be referred to **נְשָׂאֵי**, and cannot be explained, as by J. H. Mich.: *unde etiam filios susceperant seu procreaverant*. The gender of the verb is adapted to the form of the word **נְשָׂאֵי**, an incorrectness which must be attributed to the increasing tendency of the language to use the masculine instead of the feminine, or to renounce a distinction of form between the genders. There are no adequate reasons for such an alteration of the text as Bertheau proposes; for the LXX already had our text before them, and the **καὶ ἀπέλυσαν αὐτὰς σὺν τέκνοις** of 1 Esdr. 9:36 is a mere conjecture from the context. The remark itself, that among the women who were sent away were some who had already brought children into the world, is not superfluous, but added for the purpose of showing how thoroughly this matter was carried out. Separation from women who already



have children is far more grievous, *ob communium liberorum caritatem*, than parting with childless wives.

Strictly as this separation was carried out, this evil was not thereby done away with for ever, nor even for very long. After the arrival of Nehemiah at Jerusalem, when the building of the wall was concluded, the congregation again bound themselves by an oath, on the occasion of a day of prayer and fasting, to contract no more such illegal marriages (Neh. 10:31). Nevertheless, Nehemiah, on his second return to Jerusalem, some five and twenty to thirty years after the dissolution of these marriages by Ezra, again found Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Moab, and Ammon, and children of these marriages who spoke the tongue of Ashdod, and could not speak the Jews' language, and even one of the sons of the high priest Jehoiada allied to a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (Neh. 8:23, etc.). Such a phenomenon, however strange it may appear on a superficial view of the matter, becomes comprehensible when we consider more closely the circumstances of the times. The nucleus of the Israelite community in Jerusalem and Judah was formed by those exiles who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Ezra; and to this nucleus the remnant of Jewish and Israelite descent which had been left in the land was gradually united, after the rebuilding of the temple and the restoration of the worship of Jahve. Those who returned from Babylon, as well as those who remained in the land, had now, however, lived seventy, and some of them one hundred and fifty, years (from the captivity of Jehoiachin in 599, to the return of Ezra in 457) among the heathen, and in the midst of heathen surroundings, and had thus become so accustomed to intercourse with them in civil and social transactions, that the consciousness of the barriers placed by the Mosaic law between Israel, the people of Jahve, and the Gentiles, was more and more obliterated. And this would specially be the case when the Gentiles who entered into matrimonial alliance with Israelites did not flagrantly practise idolatrous worship, i.e., did not offer sacrifice to heathen deities. Under such circumstances, it must have been extremely difficult to do away entirely with these unlawful unions; although, without a thorough reform in this respect, the successful development of the new community in the land of their fathers was not to be obtained.

Ezra's narrative of his agency in Jerusalem closes with the account of the dissolution of the unlawful marriages then existing. What he subsequently effected for the revival of religion and morality in the re-established community, in conformity with the law of God, was more of an inward and spiritual kind; and was either of such a nature that no striking results ensued, which could furnish matter for historical narrative, or was performed during the period of his joint agency with Nehemiah, of which an account is furnished by the latter in the record he has handed down to us (Neh. 8:10).

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>ft1</sup> Though Zunz and Ewald appeal also to the Greek book of Ezra, in which portions of Chronicles and of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are comprised, it is not really to be understood how any critical importance can be attributed to this apocryphal compilation. Besides, even if it possessed such importance, the circumstance that only the two last chapters of Chronicles, and only 7:73-8:13 of Nehemiah, are comprised in it, says more against than in favour of the assumed single authorship of the three canonical books.
- <sup>ft2</sup> *Duplex fuit initium, Cyri Persarum regis; prius Persicum, idque antiquius, posterius Babylonicum. de quo Hesdras; quia dum Cyrus in Perside tantum regnaret, regnum ejus ad Judaeos, qui in Babylonia erant, nihil adtinuit.* — Cleric. *ad Esr.* 1: 1.
- <sup>ft3</sup> Comp. e.g., the inscription of Elvend in three languages, explained in Joach. Ménant, *Exposé des éléments de la grammaire assyrienne*, Paris 1868, p. 302, whose Aryan text begins thus: *Deus magnus Auramazdâ, qui maximus deorum, qui hanc terram creavit, qui hoc coelum creavit, qui homines creavit, qui potentiam (?) dedit hominibus, qui Xerxem regem fecit*, etc. An inscription of Xerxes begins in a similar manner, according to Lassen, in *Die altperisischen Keilinschriften*, Bonn 1836, p. 172.
- <sup>ft4</sup> Hence not only ancient expositors, but also in very recent times Pressel (*Herzog's Realencycl.* iii. p. 232), and A. Koehler, *Haggai*, p. 9, etc., defend the statement of Josephus, *l.c.*, ταῖτ' (viz., the previously quoted prophecy, Isa. 44:28) οὐκ ἀναγνόντα καὶ θαυμάσαντα τὸ θεῖον ὄρμη τις ἔλαβε καὶ φιλοτιμία ποιῆσαι τὰ γεγραμμένα, as historically authentic. Pressel remarks, "that Holy Scripture shows what it was that made so favourable an impression upon Cyrus, by relating the rôle played by Daniel at the overthrow of the Babylonian monarchy, Dan. 5:28, 30. What wonder was it that the fulfiller of this prediction should have felt himself attracted towards the prophet who uttered it, and should willingly restore the vessels which Belshazzar had that night committed the sin of polluting?" etc. The remark of Bertheau, on the contrary, "that history knows of no Cyrus who consciously and voluntarily honours Jahve the God of Israel, and consciously and voluntarily receives and executes the commands of this God," is one of the arbitrary *dicta* of neological criticism.

<sup>ft5</sup> Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 88) and Bertheau think they find in 1 Esdr. 2:12, 13, a basis for ascertaining the correct number. In this passage 1000 golden and 1000 silver **σπονδῆια**, 29 silver **θύσκααι**, 30 golden and 2410 silver **φιάλαι**, and 1000 other vessels, are enumerated (1000 + 10000 + 29 + 30 + 2410 + 1000 = 5469); while the total is said to be 5469. But 1000 golden **σπονδῆια** bear no proportion to 1000 silver, still less do 30 golden **φιάλαι** to 2410 silver. Hence Bertheau is of opinion that the more definite statement 30, of the Hebrew text, is to be regarded as original, instead of the first 1000; that, on the other hand, instead of the 30 golden **בַּפּוֹרִים**, 1000 originally stood in the text, making the total 5469. Ewald thinks that we must read 1030 instead of 1000 golden **אֲנַרְטָלִים** (**σπονδῆια**), and make the total 5499. In opposition to these conjectures, we prefer abiding by the Hebrew text; for the numbers of 1 Esdras are evidently the result of an artificial, yet unskilful reconciliation of the discrepancy. It cannot be inferred, from the fact that Ezra subsequently, at his return to Jerusalem, brought with him 20 golden **בַּפּוֹרִים**, that the number of 30 such **בַּפּוֹרִים** given in this passage is too small.

<sup>ft6</sup> This view is more probable than the notion of Dietrich, in A. Merx, *Archiv für wissensch. Forschung des A. T.*, No. 3, p. 345, that by the addition **אָחַר** in Nehemiah, the Nebo in Judah is distinguished from the Nebo in Reuben.

<sup>ft7</sup> In the list of those who went up with Ezra (Ezr. 8), the sons of Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Adin, Elam, Shephathiah, Joab, Bebai, Azgad, Adonikam, Bigvai, and, according to the original text (Ezr. 8: 8, 10), also the sons of Zattu and Bani. In the lists of those who had taken strange wives (Ezr. 10) we meet with individuals of the sons of Parosh, Elam, Zattu, Bebai, Bani, Pahath-Moab, Harim, Hashum, and of the sons of Nebo. Finally, in the lists of the heads of the people in the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 10:15f.) appear the names of Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, Azgad, Bebai, Bigvai, Adin, Ater, Hashum, Bezai, Harif, Harim, Anathoth, together with others which do not occur in the list we are not treating of.

<sup>ft8</sup> In 1 Esdr. 5:46, this verse, freely carrying out the texts of Ezra and Nehemiah, with regard also to Neh. 12:27-30, runs thus: "And so dwelt the priests, and the Levites, and the people, in Jerusalem and in the country, the singers also and the porters, and all Israel in their villages."

<sup>ft9</sup> The more precise statement of 1 Esdr. 5:46, **εἰς τὸ εὐρύχωρον τοῦ πρώτου πυλῶνος τοῦ πρὸς τῇ ἀνατολῇ**, according to which Bertheau insists upon correcting the text of Ezra, is an arbitrary addition on the part of the author of this apocryphal book, and derived from Neh. 8: 1.

<sup>ft10</sup> Bertheau, on the contrary, cannot understand the meaning of this sentence, and endeavours, by an alteration of the text after 1 Esdras, to make it

signify that some of the people of the countries came with the purpose of obstructing the building of the altar, but that the Israelites were able to effect the erection because a fear of God came upon the neighbouring nations, and rendered them incapable of hostile interference.

<sup>ft11</sup> Bertheau, comparing v. 6 with v. 5, incorrectly interprets it as meaning: “From the first day of the seventh month the offering of *thank-offerings* began (comp. v. 2); then, from the fifteenth day of the second month, during the feast of tabernacles, the burnt-offerings prescribed by the law (v. 4); but the daily burnt-offerings were not recommenced till after the feast of tabernacles, etc. *Hence it was not from the first day of the seventh month, but subsequently to the feast of tabernacles*, that the worship of God, so far as this consisted in burnt-offerings, was fully restored.” The words of the cursive manuscript, however, do not stand in the text, but their opposite. In v. 2, not thank-offerings (זְבָחִים or שְׁלָמִים), but burnt-offerings (עֹלֹת), are spoken of, and indeed those prescribed in the law, among which the daily morning and evening burnt-offering, expressly named in v. 3, held the first place. With this, v. 5, “After the feast of tabernacles they offered the continual burnt-offering, and the burnt-offerings for the new moon,” etc., fully harmonizes. The offering of the continual, i.e., of the daily, burnt-offerings, besides the new moon, the feast-days, and the free-will offerings, is named again merely for the sake of completeness. The right order is, on the contrary, as follows: The altar service, with the daily morning and evening sacrifice, began on the first day of the seventh month; this daily sacrifice was regularly offered, according to the law, from then till the fifteenth day of the second month, i.e., till the beginning of the feast of tabernacles; all the offerings commanded in the law for the separate days of this feast were then offered according to the numbers prescribed; and after this festival the sacrifices ordered at the new moon and the other holy days of the year were offered, as well as the daily burnt-offerings, — none but these, neither the sacrifice on the new moon (the first day of the seventh month) nor the sin-offering on the tenth day of the same month, i.e., the day of atonement, having been offered before this feast of tabernacles.

<sup>ft12</sup> The opinion of Knobel, that those who preferred the request were not the heathen colonists placed in the cities of Samaria by the Assyrian king (2Ki. 17:24), but the priests sent by the Assyrian king to Samaria (2Ki. 17:27), has been rejected as utterly unfounded by Bertheau, who at the same time demonstrates, against Fritzsche on 1 Esdr. 5:65, the identity of the unnamed king of Assyria (2Ki. 17:24) with Esarhaddon.

<sup>ft13</sup> The weight of this argument is indirectly admitted by Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 119) and Bertheau, inasmuch as both suppose that there is a long gap in the narrative, and regard the Aramaean letter mentioned in v. 7 to have been a

petition, on the part of persons of consideration in the community at Jerusalem, to the new king, — two notions which immediately betray themselves to be the expedients of perplexity. The supposed “long gaps, which the chronicler might well leave even in transcribing from his documents” (Ew.), do not explain the abrupt commencement of v. 8. If a petition from the Jewish community to the king were spoken of in v. 7, the accusation against the Jews in v. 8 would certainly have been alluded to by at least a ׀ adversative, or some other adversative particle.

<sup>ft14</sup> Luther, in translating “all we who destroyed the temple,” follows the Rabbis, who, from the custom of scattering salt upon destroyed places, Jud. 9:45, understood these words as an expression figurative of destruction, and אֶל־הַיְבֵלָה as the temple.

<sup>ft15</sup> The interpretations of the LXX, τὴν χορηγίαν ταύτην, meaning these building materials, and of 1 Esdr. 6: 4, τὴν στέγην ταύτην καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα, this roof and all besides, for which Bertheau decides, without considering that שְׁבַל־ל may mean to complete, and not to prepare for anything, are but conjectures.

<sup>ft16</sup> The Vulgate, following a rabbinical explanation, has *ponant fundamenta supportantia*, which is here unsuitable. The conjecture of Bertheau, who labours, by all sorts of critical combinations of the letters in the words אֶשְׁוֵהי מְסֻבֵּלִין, to produce the text אֶשְׁוֵהי אֶמִין מֵאָה תִּמְנִין, “its foundation length 180 cubits,” is as needless as it is mistaken. The interpretation of the words in the LXX, καὶ ἔθηκεν ἔπαρμα, and Pseudo-Ezr. 6, διὰ πυρὸς ἐνδεδεχούς, are nothing else than unmeaning suppositions.

<sup>ft17</sup> While we acknowledge it possible that the holy and most holy places, measured within, may have been only 40 cubits high, we cannot admit the objection of H. Merz, in *Herzog's Realencycl.* xv. p. 513, that 20 cubits of internal breadth is an inconceivable proportion to 60 cubits, this being the actual proportion in Herod's temple, as Merz himself states, p. 516, without finding it in this instance “inconceivable.”

<sup>ft18</sup> The conjecture of Merz in his above-cited article, and of Bertheau, that the dimensions of Zerubbabel's temple were double those of Solomon's, — viz. the holy and most holy places 40 cubits high and 40 wide, the upper chambers 20 cubits high, the side-chambers each 10 cubits high, and the whole building 120 cubits long, — must be rejected as erroneous, by the consideration that Herod's temple was only the length of Solomon's, viz., 100 cubits, of which the holy of holies took up 20, the holy place 40, the porch 10, the additional building behind 10, and the four walls 20. For Herod would by no means have diminished the length of his building 20, or

properly 40 cubits. We also see, from the above-named dimensions, that the 60 cubits broad cannot be understood of internal breadth.

<sup>ft19</sup> “*Nam etsi,*” remarks Calovius in J. H. Mich., *adnotatt. uber. ad h. l.*, “*non ad structuram templi conduxerit proprie edictum Artaxerxis, quae Darii secundo anno incepta et sexto absoluta fuit, v. 15 ad ornamenta tamen et additamenta eam spectasse dubium non est: quae ab ipso, ceu rege post Cyrum et Darium erga Judaeos Persarum omnium benignissimo, profecta hic celebratur.*” Similarly but more briefly explained by Clericus.

<sup>ft20</sup> Instead of the “*third day,*” which the LXX also has, in accordance with the Hebrew text, 1 Esdr. 7: 5 gives the three-and-twentieth day of the month Adar, — a statement which Bertheau arbitrarily insists upon regarding as the original reading, because “the view that the compiler altered the third into the twenty-third day, because it seemed to him more fitting to assume an eight days’ celebration of the dedication (comp. 1Ki. 8:60, 2 Chron, 29:18), and to fill up therewith also the eight last days of the year, is rather far-fetched.” Such a view, however, would be entirely consistent with the whole spirit of 1 Esdras.

<sup>ft21</sup> Very superficial are the arguments, and indeed the whole pamphlet, *Etude Chronologique des livres d’Esdras et de Néhémie*, Paris 1868, p. 40, etc., by which F. de Saulcy tries to show that the Artachshasta of Ezr. 7 and of Nehemiah is Artaxerxes II (Mnemon).

<sup>ft22</sup> It is hence evident that these words of Ezra afford no evidence against the single authorship of the Pentateuch. The inference that a saying of the law, uttered during the wanderings in the wilderness, is here cited as a saying of the prophets the servants of Jahve, is, according to the just remark of Bertheau, entirely refuted even by the fact that the words cited are nowhere found in the Pentateuch in this exact form, and that hence Ezra did not intend to make a verbal quotation.

<sup>ft23</sup> This would not, indeed, be impossible, because, as we shall subsequently show (in our Introduction to the book of Nehemiah, § 2), Eliashib’s grandson Johanan might be already ten years of age at the time of the transaction in question; so that his grandfather, the high priest Eliashib, might have called a chamber of the temple after the name of his grandson. This view is not, however, a very probable one.