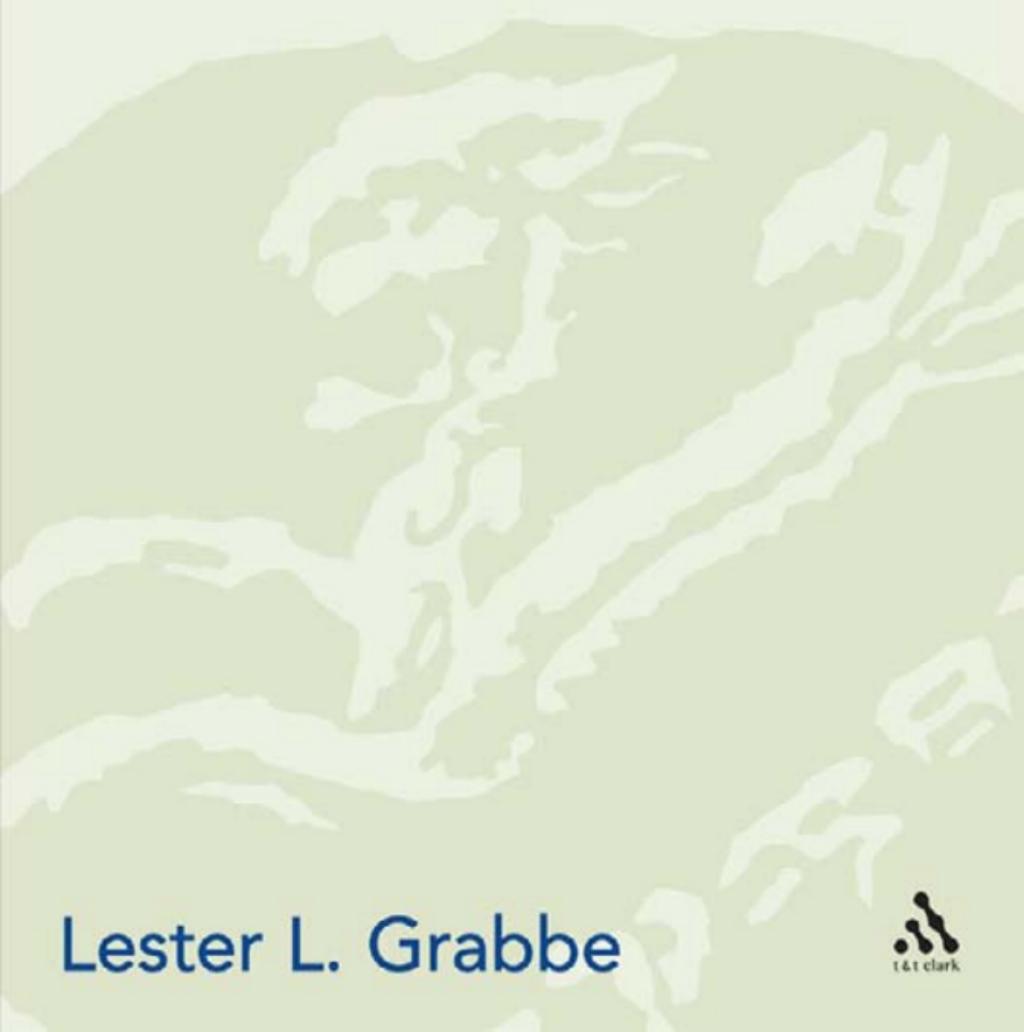


# A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period

Volume 1

Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah



Lester L. Grabbe



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To

Professor John Rogerson  
Friend and Colleague

and to

My Friends and Fellow Labourers in the Persian Paradeisos,  
Professor Amélie Kuhrt and Professor Pierre Briant

A History of the Jews and Judaism  
in the Second Temple Period,  
Volume 1

Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah

Lester L. Grabbe



T & T CLARK INTERNATIONAL  
*A Continuum imprint*  
LONDON • NEW YORK

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Published by T&T Clark International  
The Tower Building, 11 York Road, London SE1 7NX  
15 East 26th Street, Suite 1703, New York, NY 10010  
[www.tandtclark.com](http://www.tandtclark.com)

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Typeset and edited for Continuum by Forthcoming Publications Ltd  
[www.forthcomingpublications.com](http://www.forthcomingpublications.com)

Printed on acid-free paper in Great Britain by Cromwell Press

ISBN 0-5670-8998-3 (hardback)

## CONTENTS

Preface	xiii
Abbreviations	xvi
Map: The Province of Yehud (Borders Reconstructed)	xxi

### Part I INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1	
INTRODUCTION: PRINCIPLES AND METHOD	2
1.1. Aims	2
1.2. Principles of Historical Method: The Current Debate among Historians	3
1.2.1. Writing History from the Ancient Greeks to the 1960s	4
1.2.2. The Past 40 Years: The ‘Linguistic Turn’ and the New Historicism	6
1.3. Principles of Historical Method: The Current Debate among Biblical Scholars	11
1.4. Principles of Historical Method: Those Assumed in this Book	13
1.5. Writing a History of the Persian Period	16
1.5.1. Problems Peculiar to Persian Yehud	16
1.5.2. Plan of the Present Book	17
1.5.3. Modern Secondary Studies	18
1.6. Terminology and Other Technical Matters	19

### Part II SOURCES

Chapter 2	
ARCHAEOLOGY: UNWRITTEN MATERIAL	22
2.1. Judah	22
2.1.1. Individual Sites	22
2.1.2. Surveys and Synthesis	27
2.2. Samaria	30
2.2.1. Individual Sites	30
2.2.2. Surveys and Synthesis	32
2.3. Phoenicia and the Coast (including the Shephelah)	34
2.3.1. Individual Sites	34
2.3.2. Surveys and Synthesis	41

2.4. Idumaea and Arabia (including Transjordan)	43
2.4.1. Individual Sites	43
2.4.2. Surveys and Synthesis	49
 Chapter 3	
ARCHAEOLOGY: WRITTEN MATERIAL	54
3.1. Aramaic Papyri and Ostraca from Egypt	54
3.2. Inscriptions, Ostraca, and Papyri from Palestine	55
3.2.1. Wadi Daliyeh Papyri and Seals	55
3.2.2. Ostraca and Inscriptions from Palestine	58
3.2.3. Seals and Seal Impressions from Palestine	60
3.3. Phoenician Texts	63
3.4. Coins	64
3.4.1. Yehud	64
3.4.2. Samaria	67
3.4.3. Phoenicia and the Coast	68
 Chapter 4	
BIBLICAL WRITINGS	70
4.1. Ezra and Nehemiah	70
4.1.1. Structure and Theology	72
4.1.2. Three (Four?) Foundation Legends	74
4.1.3. Sources in Ezra–Nehemiah	76
4.1.4. 1 Esdras	83
4.2. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	85
4.2.1. Haggai	87
4.2.2. Zechariah	87
4.2.3. Malachi	89
4.3. Other Prophetic Writings	90
4.3.1. The Isaiah Tradition	90
4.3.2. Joel	94
4.3.3. Jonah	95
4.3.4. Ezekiel	96
4.4. The Books of Chronicles	97
4.5. The P Document	99
4.6. The Writings	101
4.6.1. Proverbs	101
4.6.2. Job	102
4.6.3. Esther	104
4.6.4. Ruth	105
4.6.5. Song of Songs	105
 Chapter 5	
PERSIAN, MESOPOTAMIAN, AND EGYPTIAN SOURCES	107
5.1. Aramaic Inscriptions and Papyri	107

5.2. Old Persian Sources	109
5.3. The Elamite Texts from Persepolis	110
5.4. Babylonian Sources	110
5.4.1. The Babylonian Chronicles	111
5.4.2. The Cyrus Cylinder	111
5.4.3. The Murašu Documents	112
5.4.4. Berossus	112
5.5. Egyptian Texts	112
5.5.1. Udjahorresnet	113
5.5.2. Pherendates Correspondence	113
5.5.3. Cambyses Decree on the Reverse of the <i>Demotic Chronicle</i>	115
5.5.4. The Susa Statue of Darius	115
5.6. The Gadatas Inscription	116
<b>Chapter 6</b>	
<b>GREEK AND LATIN SOURCES</b>	118
6.1. General Introduction	118
6.2. Herodotus	120
6.3. Thucydides	122
6.4. Oxyrhynchus Historian	123
6.5. Ctesias	124
6.6. Xenophon	124
6.7. Ephorus	125
6.8. Diodorus Siculus	126
6.9. Pompeius Trogus	126
6.10. Plutarch	126
6.11. Pseudo-Scylax	127
6.12. Strabo	127
6.13. Pliny the Elder	127
6.14. The <i>Oeconomica</i> of Pseudo-Aristotle	127
6.15. Athenaeus	128
6.16. Cornelius Nepos	128
6.17. The Alexander Historians	128
6.18. Josephus	129

### Part III

#### SOCIETY AND INSTITUTIONS

<b>Chapter 7</b>	
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	132
7.1. Organization and Administration of the Persian Empire: An Overview	132
7.2. The Province of Yehud	134
7.2.1. Extent and Status of the Jewish State	134

7.2.2. Was Judah under the Jurisdiction of Samaria?	140
7.2.3. Governmental Structure of Judah	142
7.2.4. Governors of Yehud	148
7.2.5. Other Provincial Structures and Officials	150
7.2.6. Scribes, Language, and Literacy	151
7.2.7. Conclusions with Regard to the Province of Yehud	154
7.3. The Neighbours of Yehud	155
7.3.1. Samaria	155
7.3.2. Phoenicia and the Coast (including the Shephelah)	159
7.3.3. Idumaea and Arabia (including Transjordan)	162
<b>Chapter 8</b>	
<b>SOCIETY AND DAILY LIVING</b>	167
8.1. Jewish Identity and Joining the Community	167
8.2. Social Classes	172
8.3. The Legal Sphere	173
8.4. Women, Marriage, and Sexuality	183
8.5. The Calendar and Chronology	185
<b>Chapter 9</b>	
<b>ECONOMY</b>	189
9.1. General Comments on the Ancient Economy	189
9.1.1. Difficulties of Socio-Economic Studies on Ancient History	190
9.1.2. The Understanding of Economic Theory in Antiquity	190
9.1.3. Interests of Imperial Powers	190
9.1.4. Agriculture vs. Commerce	191
9.1.5. The ‘Asiatic Mode of Production’	191
9.1.6. Dependent Labour	192
9.1.7. Wealth, Poverty, and the Tax Burden	193
9.2. The Persian Empire in General	194
9.3. The Economy of Yehud	197
9.3.1. Geographical Context of Yehud	197
9.3.2. Demography of Yehud	199
9.3.3. The Province of Yehud	202
<b>Chapter 10</b>	
<b>RELIGION I: TEMPLE, CULT, AND PRACTICE</b>	209
10.1. The Persian Government and Religion	209
10.1.1. Documents from Elephantine	210
10.1.2. Other Inscriptions from Egypt and Asia Minor	212
10.1.3. Persepolis Tablets	214
10.1.4. Conclusions about Persian Policy on Religion	215
10.2. The Temple and the Cult	216
10.2.1. The Physical Temple	216

10.2.2. The Sacrificial Cult	218
10.2.3. The Cultic Year and Other Celebrations	220
10.2.4. Music and Singing	223
10.3. The Priests and Other Cult Personnel	224
10.3.1. Priestly Divisions	225
10.3.2. The High Priest of the Achaemenid Period	230
10.3.3. A Sanhedrin?	234
10.4. Financial Support for the Temple	235
10.5. Prayer and the Question of the Synagogue	236
<b>Chapter 11</b>	
RELIGION II: LAW, SCRIPTURE, AND BELIEF	238
11.1. The Development of 'Scripture'	238
11.2. Scriptural Interpretation	238
11.3. Beliefs	239
11.3.1. Deity	240
11.3.2. The Spirit World	243
11.3.3. Land, Exile, and Return	244
11.3.4. Covenant	246
11.3.5. Remnant	246
11.3.6. Concept of Israel	247
11.3.7. Theodicy	247
11.3.8. Eschatology	247
11.4. Prophecy and Apocalypticism	250
11.5. 'Popular Religion'	252
11.6. Magic and the Esoteric Arts	254
11.7. The Question of Sectarianism	256
11.7.1. Morton Smith	257
11.7.2. O. Plöger and P.D. Hanson	258
11.7.3. Other Theories of Persian-Period Sects	259
11.7.4. Analysis of the Theories on Sectarianism	259
<b>Part IV</b>	
<b>HISTORICAL SYNTHESIS</b>	
<b>Chapter 12</b>	
THE EARLY PERSIAN PERIOD	263
12.1. Background	263
12.1.1. Geography and Environment	263
12.1.2. History of Judah before the Persian Period	264
12.2. Persian Rulers	265
12.2.1. Cyrus the Great	265
12.2.2. Cambyses	267
12.2.3. Darius I	268
12.3. Sources and Reliability	269

12.4. The Initial Return	271
12.4.1. An Edict of Cyrus and a Mass Return?	271
12.4.2. Sheshbazzar	276
12.5. Joshua and Zerubbabel	277
12.5.1. Different Stories of Return and Temple Foundation	278
12.5.2. Leadership in the Yehud Community	279
12.5.3. The Building and Completion of the Temple	282
12.6. Original Peoples vs. Returnees	285
12.7. Remaining Events in the Late Sixth and Early Fifth Centuries BCE	288
 Chapter 13	
THE FIFTH CENTURY BCE	290
13.1. Persian Rulers	290
13.1.1. Xerxes I	290
13.1.2. Artaxerxes I	291
13.1.3. Darius II Ochus	291
13.2. Destruction of Jerusalem Between Zerubbabel and Nehemiah?	292
13.3. Nehemiah	294
13.3.1. Sources and Credibility	294
13.3.2. Nehemiah's Commission	295
13.3.3. Opposition to Nehemiah	298
13.3.4. Building of the Wall	301
13.3.5. The Fiscal Crisis	302
13.3.6. The Remainder of Nehemiah's Governorship	304
13.3.7. Nehemiah as Reformer	305
13.3.8. Evaluation of Nehemiah	308
13.4. Alternative Views to those of Nehemiah	310
13.5. The Issue of Marriage with 'Foreign Wives'	313
13.6. Diaspora Jewish Communities	316
13.6.1. Jews in Babylonia	317
13.6.2. The Elephantine Jewish Community	318
13.7. The Episode of Johanan and Jeshua in the Temple	319
 Chapter 14	
THE FOURTH CENTURY BCE	322
14.1. Persian Rulers	322
14.1.1. Artaxerxes II Memnon	322
14.1.2. Artaxerxes III Ochus	323
14.1.3. Arses	324
14.1.4. Darius III Codommanus	324
14.2. The Ezra Tradition	324
14.2.1. Sources and Reliability	324
14.2.2. A Close Reading of Ezra 7–10	325
14.2.3. Conclusions about the <i>Gestalt</i> of Ezra the Scribe	329

14.3. The Development of the Law and ‘Scripture’ in the Persian Period	331
14.3.1. Ezra–Nehemiah	332
14.3.2. Ben Sira	337
14.3.3. Hecataeus of Abdera	341
14.3.4. Conclusions	341
14.4. Other Religious and Literary Developments	344
14.4.1. The Enoch Tradition	344
14.4.2. Different Ways of Thinking: Job and the Song of Songs	345
14.4.3. The Beginnings of the Jewish Novel	346
14.5. The So-Called Revolt of the Satraps and the Tennes Rebellion	346
14.6. The Last Part of Persian Rule	349

**Part V**  
**CONCLUSIONS**

**Chapter 15**

A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE: WHAT WE KNOW, WHAT WE CAN GUESS, AND WHERE OUR IGNORANCE IS	351
15.1. Where Does Our Knowledge Come From?	351
15.2. The Physical and Historical Context	353
15.3. A Province in the Persian Empire	355
15.4. Reformers or Bigots?	356
15.5. The Final Century of Persian Rule	358
15.6. The Real Importance of the Persian Period for Judaism	359

**Appendix:**

THE QUESTION OF PERSIAN INFLUENCE ON JEWISH RELIGION AND THOUGHT	361
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Bibliography	365
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Index of References	435
Index of Authors	452
Index of Subjects	462

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## PREFACE

This is the first volume in what is planned as a four-volume *History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period* (*HJJSTP*). While parallel to my 1992 *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (*JCH*), it will be a much more detailed study. Even though having some of the elements known from the later volumes of E. Schürer's *The Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (revised by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman), its focus is very much on history; in that sense it really has most in common with volume 1 of that work. In my view, a proper understanding of Second Temple Judaism must start with the Persian period, not Alexander the Great (cf. *JRSTP*: 5–6). The present volume is possibly the first attempt to give a comprehensive history of the province of Yehud in the Persian empire, though a number of shorter works have addressed that issue (cf. §1.5.3). For a discussion of my aims and the principles followed in composing this history, see the detailed discussion in Chapter 1.

One of the things that strikes me after many years of studying the Persian period is how little I know about it. Before my critics agree too enthusiastically with that statement, I hasten to add that I think the same of their knowledge. There is a great deal not known and much still to learn—for all of us. The bibliography of this volume has approximately 1400 books and articles. Of these, almost half date from 1990 or later. Yet I know there are still many items of secondary bibliography—unfortunately, no doubt, including some important ones—that I have not seen or even heard of. This burgeoning bibliography is a sign of the dynamic state of the field of Persian studies, including the investigation of Yehud.

I owe a debt of gratitude to a great many people who have in some way helped with my work in writing this volume. In trying to list some of the more prominent ones here, I risk omitting by sheer oversight a number who should be listed and apologize in advance for anyone who belongs here but is not named. A number of people have at various times discussed with me matters relating to Persian history. As always, I have had many conversations with Philip Davies and profitted immensely, even when we often disagreed. I do not see Hans Barstad very frequently, but when I do, we always have a conversation greatly useful to me. Others who have been helpful conversation partners are Bob Becking, Axel Knauf, Joseph Blenkinsopp, Diana Edelman, Rainer Albertz, Niels Peter Lemche, Thomas Thompson, Lisabeth Fried. Gifts of books and offprints have made my work much easier, for which I owe thanks to Pierre Briant, Hans Barstad, Nadav Na'aman, James Barr, Amélie Kuhrt, Axel Knauf, Bob Becking, Joseph Blenkinsopp, Sara Japhet, Mary Douglas, Josette Elayi, Daniel Barag, Michael Knibb, Ehud Ben Zvi,

Christoph Uehlinger, Giovanni Garbini, Hanan Eshel, Hugh Williamson, Peter Machinist, André Lemaire, Herbert Niehr, Kristin De Troyer, Thomas Willi, Eric Meyers, Timothy Lim, Bezalel Porten, Manfred Oeming, Christopher Rollston, Felice Israel, Eckhart Otto, John Van Seters, Gabriele Boccaccini, Louis Feldman, John Hinnells, Zivony Zevit.

Oded Lipschits kindly invited me to attend a conference on the Jews and Judaism in the Persian period in Heidelberg in July 2003, shortly before I completed the manuscript of this book. This proved to be very useful as a final check on my study and a chance to incorporate some of the important papers read at that conference. I am also grateful for the comments of and discussions with the participants of that conference. Finally, I would like to thank the University of Hull, who provided a semester's study leave, and the Arts and Humanities Research Board, which provided funding for a matching semester's study leave in 2002–2003. The application for the AHRB grant was successful no doubt in large part due to my referees, Professors Michael A. Knibb and John Rogerson. Without the year free from teaching and (most) administration, it is doubtful that this book could have been written, and I am sincerely grateful to those who made it possible.

This volume is dedicated to three individuals, one a friend and British colleague for many years, and two others, both friends and fellow toilers in matters Persian. Professor John Rogerson was for many years head of the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield, a neighbour to my own University. I got to know him as someone I could depend on for advice, encouragement, and many references for various applications for research funding and the like. He was invariably generous with his time, patient, courteous, and full of useful advice. He also set a wonderful example as a polymathic scholar whose reach across the entire field of theology seemed to be limitless but whose publications were always thorough, balanced, and well argued. His encouragement of and interest in my research have meant a great deal to me over the years. This dedication is a small way of expressing my heart-felt thanks.

I first got to know Professor Amélie Kuhrt when I wrote an article on ‘Darius the Mede’ (published in 1988) and was looking for someone to advise on the Akkadian aspects of the study. Her name was mentioned as the ideal person, and this indeed proved to be the case. This led to many exchanges of view over the years, both in person and in printed form. The opportunity for personal conversation has been much less than I would have liked, but her influence through her many writings and edited works will be thoroughly evident throughout the present volume and also the next one to come. Her command of both the Near Eastern and the Classical material is impressive and sets a wonderful example of how to go about writing ancient history. I suspect she is not aware of how influential her work has been on my study.

Professor Pierre Briant has produced work of such scope and quality that it is unlikely to be superseded for the foreseeable future. As I point out in Chapter 1, I shall be more than happy if this volume is half as good as his. He has such a command of the Persian-period sources, not to mention an enviable knowledge of and background in social and economic history and in Greek and Roman studies,

that one can only marvel at page after page of detailed synthesis, analysis, and exposition. To me, this is how to write history. But he has also been generous with his time in a willingness to communicate with biblical scholars (who are really only amateurs in this field in most cases) with patience and kindness. I have often been grateful for his offprints of studies otherwise difficult to come by, as well as the work in progress on his website.

Lester L. Grabbe  
Kingston-upon-Hull  
1 September 2003

## ABBREVIATIONS

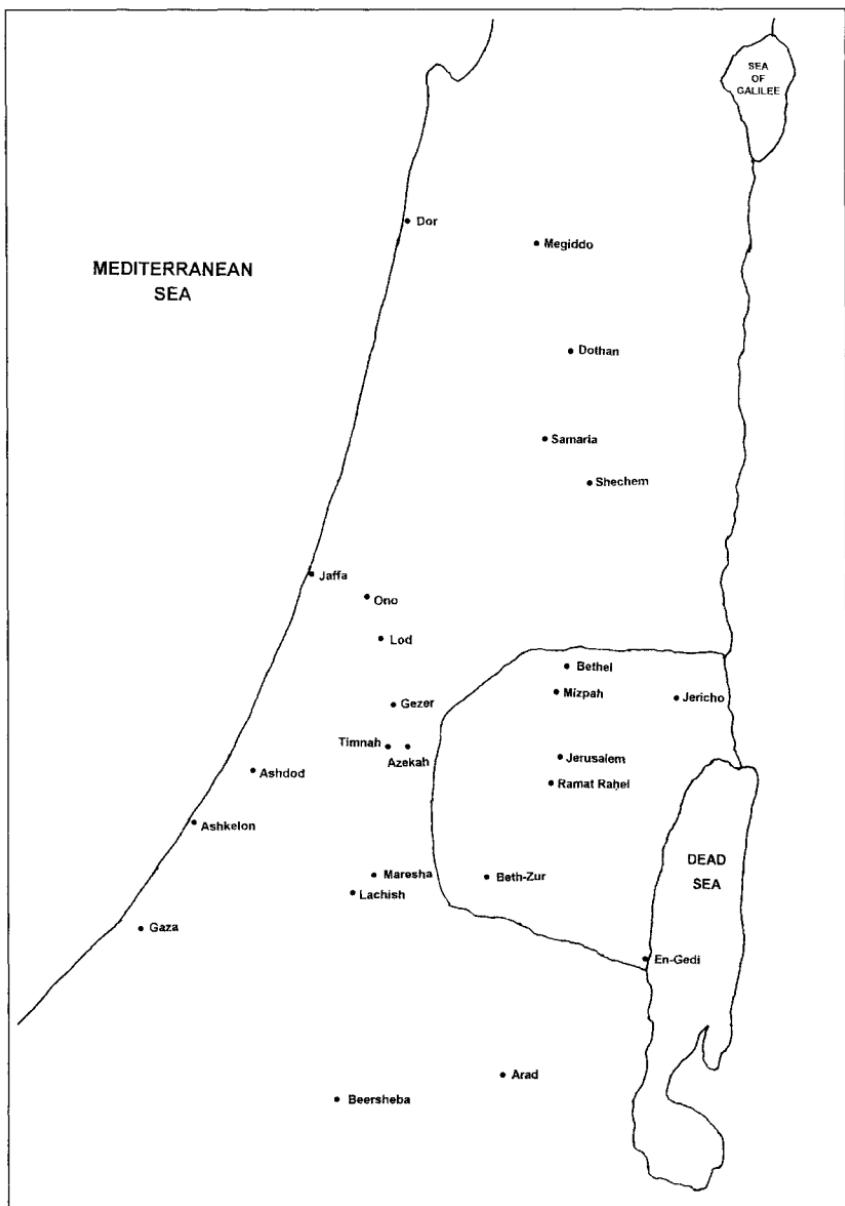
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	David Noel Freedman (ed.), <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> (New York: Doubleday, 1992)
AD	G.R. Driver, <i>Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B.C.</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957 revised edn)
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästinavereins
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AIONSup	<i>Annali dell'istituto orientale di Napoli</i> , Supplement Series
AJAH	<i>American Journal of Ancient History</i>
AJBA	<i>Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
ALB, II	Ephraim Stern, <i>Archaeology of the Land of the Bible. II. The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732–332 B.C.E.)</i> (The Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 2001)
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
AMI	<i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</i>
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANET	James B. Pritchard (ed.), <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950)
ANRW	Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (eds.), <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1972–)
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
AP	A. Cowley, <i>Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923 [reprinted Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1967])
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
b.	<i>ben</i> ('son of')
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BARev	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium

<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibOr</i>	<i>Biblica et orientalia</i>
<i>BJS</i>	<i>Brown Judaic Studies</i>
<i>BKAT</i>	<i>Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament</i>
<i>BM</i>	E.G. Kraeling, <i>The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953)
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
<i>BSO(A)S</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies</i>
<i>BWANT</i>	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>BZAW</i>	Beihefte zur ZAW
<i>CAH</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
<i>CBOT</i>	Conjectanea biblica, Old Testament Series
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBQMS</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Monograph Series</i>
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i> (continuation of <i>CR:BS</i> )
<i>CHI</i>	<i>Cambridge History of Iran</i>
<i>CHJ 1</i>	Louis H. Finkelstein and W.D. Davies (eds.), <i>Cambridge History of Judaism 1: The Persian Period</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)
<i>CIS</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptiorum Semiticarum</i>
<i>CoS</i>	William W. Hallo (ed.), <i>The Context of Scripture</i> , I-III (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997–2002)
<i>CRAIBL</i>	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i>
<i>CR:BS</i>	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
<i>CRINT</i>	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
<i>DDD</i>	Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking and Pieter W. van der Horst (eds.) <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> (Leiden: E.J. Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2nd revised edn, 1999)
<i>DJD</i>	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
<i>DN</i>	divine name
<i>EI</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
<i>ESHM</i>	European Seminar in Historical Methodology (the title of a sub-series of JSOTSup); also a shortened abbreviation for the European Seminar on Methodology in Israel's History (see Grabbe [ed.] 1997: 11–13 for a discussion of its founding and the initial membership; current membership is found in more recent ESHM volumes)
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>FAT</i>	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
<i>FGH</i>	Felix Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Parts 1–17; Berlin: Weidman, 1926–58)
<i>FOTL</i>	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
<i>FRLANT</i>	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>GLAJJ</i>	Menahem Stern, <i>Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism</i> (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1974–84)
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>

<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HdA</i>	<i>Handbuch der Archäologie</i>
<i>HdO</i>	<i>Handbuch der Orientalistik</i>
<i>HPE</i>	Pierre Briant, <i>From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire</i> (trans. Peter T. Daniels; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002) (ET of <i>Histoire de l'empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre</i> , I-II [Achaemenid History, 10; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1996 (originally published by Librairie Arthème Fayard, Paris)])
<i>HSM</i>	<i>Harvard Semitic Monographs</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>ICC</i>	<i>International Critical Commentary</i>
<i>IDBSup</i>	<i>IDB, Supplementary Volume</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>INJ</i>	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IOS</i>	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JANESCU</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCH</i>	Lester L. Grabbe, <i>Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian. I. Persian and Greek Periods; II. Roman Period</i> (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992)
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JRSTP</i>	Lester L. Grabbe, <i>Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh</i> (London/New York: Routledge, 2000)
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period</i>
<i>JSJSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period, Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JSPSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha, Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KAI</i>	Herbert Donner and W. Röllig, <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften, Mit einem Beitrag von O. Rössler</i> , I-III (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962–64)
<i>KAT</i>	Kommentar zum Alten Testament

<i>KTU</i> <sup>2</sup>	Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz and Joaquín Sanmartín (eds.), <i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places (KTU: Second, Enlarged Edition)</i> (Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens, 8; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint or Old Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible
MDOG	<i>Mitteilungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i> (formerly <i>Biblical Archaeologist [BA]</i> )
NEAEHL	Ephraim Stern (ed.), <i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> (4 vols.; New York: Simon & Schuster; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993)
NM	Nehemiah Memorial
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OCD	Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (eds.), <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (Oxford University Press, 3rd edn, 1996)
OEANE	Eric M. Meyers (editor-in-chief), <i>The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East</i> (5 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i>
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studiën
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PN	personal name
PW	Georg Wissowa and Wilhelm Kroll (eds.), <i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagbuchhandlung, 1894)
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i> (available online at < <a href="http://www.bookreviews.org">www.bookreviews.org</a> >)
REA	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLASP	SBL Abstracts and Seminar Papers
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBLSCS	SBL Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSS	SBL Semeia Studies
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SHAJ	<i>Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan</i>
SHANE	Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SPB	Studia postbiblica
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigrapha

<i>TA</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
<i>TAD</i>	Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: 1-4</i> (Hebrew University, Department of the History of the Jewish People, Texts and Studies for Students; Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1986–99)
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>Trans</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
<i>TSAJ</i>	<i>Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum</i>
<i>TSSI</i>	John C.L. Gibson, <i>Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions</i> , I-III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975–82)
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum, Supplements</i>
<i>WBC</i>	<i>Word Biblical Commentary</i>
<i>WD</i>	Mary Joan Winn Leith (ed.), <i>Wadi Daliyah I: The Wadi Daliyah Seal Impressions</i> (DJD, 24; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)
<i>WDSP</i>	Douglas M. Gropp, <i>Wadi Daliyah II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyah</i> ; and Moshe Bernstein, et al., <i>Qumran Cave 4: XXVIII Miscellanea, Part 2</i> (DJD, 28; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001)
<i>WMANT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
<i>ZABR</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>



Map: *The Province of Yehud*  
(Borders Reconstructed)

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## **Part I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION: PRINCIPLES AND METHOD

Trying to write a history of Judah during the Persian period is fraught with dangers but also promises great rewards. Why write a history of Persian-period Judah? This is a fair question even if we accept that any historical period, location, or self-contained entity is a proper object for historical study. As I have argued elsewhere (*JRSTP*: 5–6, 315–17), the Second Temple period of Judaic history should be seen as a unit, marked off at one end by the so-called exilic period and at the other by Yavneh, the period between the two wars with Rome (66–70 and 132–35 CE). According to my argument, the major changes and developments in Judaism and the Jewish people were seminal to the Persian period, not Alexander’s conquest as so often alleged. My view, buttressed by the present study, is that the Persian period is the single most important period for the development of Jewish thought and practice from antiquity to the present.

It has long been thought that major developments and changes took place in the first part of the ‘post-exilic period’ which had great significance for the development of Judaic religion, the biblical and other Jewish literature, and the people of Judah. I shall be arguing that the changes and developments that took place during the period of Persian rule were the key to the direction taken by Judaism ever since. The most important elements of modern Judaism were already extant or in process by the end of the Persian period, whether or not they existed in the pre-exilic kingdom of Judah. An understanding of Judaism in the Second Temple, especially, but also subsequently requires an understanding of the forces and dynamics affecting the Jews in Judah and elsewhere in the Achaemenid empire.

#### 1.1. *Aims*

This study aims to be a history in the widest sense of the word, encompassing society, economy, administration, religion, geography, political events, and intellectual and literary developments. As will become clear, what we can say in each of these areas will vary considerably between topics and periods of time. There are and will continue to remain large gaps in our knowledge. Yet this study is not just a discussion of problems and possibilities. It will also go on to write a history, that is, a historical reconstruction of the period and place. Such a reconstruction can only be a personal, subjective one, but it will be based on the discussions and decisions

made about sources and their interpretation made earlier in the study. It will even include speculation, but that speculation will be clearly labelled and its basis indicated. I have not given up the idea that histories of antiquity can be written—within agreed and defined parameters. In that sense, I do not see my task as essentially different from histories written by classical historians of Greece and Rome nor, indeed, of those written even by historians of the modern period. We know much less about antiquity because of the much greater limits on sources, but the historical methods and principles are the same, in my opinion. Thus, my history aims to accomplish the following:

- Survey comprehensively the sources available to us for constructing the history of Yehud.
- Analyze and evaluate the sources and discriminate between them as to their value, problems, uncertainties, and relative merits for providing usable historical data.
- Summarize the main debates relating to history of the period.
- Catalogue the bulk of the recent secondary studies on the period.
- Provide my own historical synthesis of the period, clearly indicating the basis for it (including why it may differ at various points from that of other scholars).
- Establish a firm basis on which further work can be done by other researchers in a variety of areas of scholarship, not only for historians but including those more interested in literature and theology, and other aspects of study relating to the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism.

### **1.2. Principles of Historical Method: The Current Debate among Historians**

**Appleby, Hunt and Jacob** (1994) *Telling the Truth about History*; **Barstad** (1997b) ‘History and the Hebrew Bible’; (2002b) “Fact” versus “Fiction” and Other Issues in the History Debate’; **Brannigan** (1998) *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*; **Braudel** (1980) *On History*; **Carroll** (1998) ‘Poststructuralist Approaches’; **Collingwood** (1999) *The Principles of History*; **Evans** (1997) *In Defence of History*; **Gordon** (1999) ‘Capital Punishment for Murderous Theorists?’; **Grabbe** (2001b) ‘Who Were the First Real Historians?’; **Hamilton** (1996) *Historicism*; **Hens-Piazza** (2002) *The New Historicism*; **Iggers** (1968) *The German Conception of History*; (1997) *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*; **Jenkins** (1991) *Re-Thinking History*; (1999) *Why History? Ethics and Postmodernity*; **Jenkins (ed.)** (1997) *The Postmodern History Reader*; **Lentricchia** (1988) ‘Foucault’s Legacy’; **McCullagh** (1991) ‘Can Our Understanding of Old Texts Be Objective?’; (1998) *The Truth of History*; **Martin, Scott and Strout** (1995) ‘Forum’: review of Appleby, Hunt, Jacobs, *Telling the Truth*; **Munslow** (1997) *Deconstructing History*; **Pieters** (2000) ‘New Historicism: Postmodern Historiography between Narrativism and Heterology’; **Porter** (1988) ‘Are We Being Historical Yet?’; **Southgate** (2001) *History: What and Why?*; **L. Stone** (1997) ‘The Revival of Narrative’; **Veenstra** (1995) ‘The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt’; **Veeser** (1989) *The New Historicism*; **H. White** (1978) *Tropes of Discourse*;

**Windschuttle** (1997) *The Killing of History*; **Zagorin** (1999) ‘History, the Referent, and Narrative’; **Zammito** (1993) ‘Are We Being Theoretical Yet? The New Historicism’.

Currently, there is a rather fierce debate concerning whether and in what way one can write a history of ancient Israel. This debate will be discussed in the next section; however, the debate on the history of Israel needs to be understood in the context of a much larger debate among contemporary historians and the development of the philosophy of history in the past two centuries (for surveys, see Iggers 1997; Barstad 1997; 2002b).

### **1.2.1. Writing History from the Ancient Greeks to the 1960s**

Early in the development of history writing in ancient Greece, Thucydides drew up principles that still command the admiration of historians (on these, see Grabbe 2001b). Not many historians came up to his level of rigour in antiquity, and there were those who preferred other historians such as Herodotus, but even in antiquity the importance of Thucydides’s achievement was recognized (e.g. Lucian, *How to Write History*). One can summarize the situation by saying that from Thucydides to Edward Gibbon, there was little real development in historiography. Like all generalizations, this statement is to some extent a caricature, but for our purposes here it seems a reasonable way of summing up the situation.

At the end of the eighteenth century, however, the effects of new developments in philosophy and science began to have an impact on how historians saw their task. The Enlightenment and its aftermath produced great debates about epistemology, contributed to by such philosophical giants as Hume, Kant, and especially Hegel, who saw history as the basis for philosophy. J.G. Herder’s *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte (Also a Philosophy of History)* of 1774 anticipated some of the views expressed in recent decades (though he later was to repudiate some of the points made in this work). He placed the focus on the nation which was treated like an individual organism. Nations are born, flourish, die. The nation is also the source of ethics and values. This rejection of universal values meant that there was no basis for truth or objectivity, since these might vary from nation to nation. In anticipation of present-day anti-Western views, he was against a Eurocentric perspective on history.

Wilhelm von Humboldt’s concept of a university (drawn up in 1809), based on the principles of scientific research, had a great influence on the German university system. Much of the work of historical study now took place in the university context; historians had mainly become professionals. Yet this ‘scientific’ perspective still shared a number of essential traits with Thucydides (Iggers 1997: 3) and did not constitute the radical break with past modes of writing history that one might have expected. A rather different development was epitomized in the work of Leopold von Ranke. In his view the goal was to write history ‘as it really [or “essentially”] happened’ (*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*). This famous quote, important as it is as a symbol, is often misunderstood. The context for Ranke’s statement was that, contrary to previous historians who saw it as their right to pronounce judgment on

history, he felt the responsibility of the historian was only to write what had happened, not moralize about it. Ranke's contributions can be summarized under three headings (Evans 1997: 16-18): (a) establishing history as a discipline separate from both philosophy and literature, (b) seeing the past in its own terms rather than judging by the standards of the present, and (c) a critical method of source criticism based on philological principles. He made the important distinction between primary and secondary sources (Iggers 1997: 24).

One of the innovations of the nineteenth century was the conscious effort made to produce a model of history based on that of the natural sciences. This particular movement to create 'scientific history' came to be known as 'positivism'. Although this view could call on the inspiration of Ranke, it was to some extent a distortion of his views. It is important to keep in mind that Ranke belonged to the Romantic tradition and believed in the importance of intuition in historical reconstruction, as well as careful research based on documentation. The extreme form of the positivistic movement could be said to encompass the work of Marx and Engels who championed natural laws and Darwinian progress in history.

An important contribution was made by Wilhelm Dilthey who reacted against the naive positivism of the nineteenth century that treated history as a scientific subject. He rejected such a positivistic approach to history as incompatible with its nature (though he did not reject the concept of objectivity in historical study). The 'mental sciences' (*Geisteswissenschaften*) must take into account the thought, conscience, and decisions of the individual. These cannot be approached by the methodology of the natural sciences. The historian has to gain access to these by the use of imagination. This approach was also a central feature in the influential British historian of the twentieth century, R.G. Collingwood. The influence of Dilthey had its effects mainly after World War I, whereas the positivistic approach to history was dominant in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Real changes developed toward the end of the nineteenth and especially in the early part of the twentieth century. This was the growing impact made by the new discipline of the social sciences. There was a shift in emphasis to social and economic trends rather than the actions of individuals in the political sphere. Many historians became dissatisfied with the 'great man' model of history, which was seen as still the nineteenth-century perspective, despite its pretensions to being scientific. This application of the social sciences to historical study had its major impact after World War II. Especially important was the '*Annales* School', of which one of its leading proponents was F. Braudel. He emphasized the importance of the *longue durée* which looked at changes over long periods of time, as opposed to *l'histoire événementielle* which encompassed rapid and often fleeting events of political history (Braudel 1980: 25-54), though he also admitted a level of *conjonctures* (medium-term history). Yet the fact is that some of the main working assumptions of practitioners of historical study remained the same from Thucydides to the beginnings of the '*Annales* school' (Iggers 1997: 2-7): (a) a correspondence theory of history in which actual persons and events are portrayed; (b) human actions follow the intentions of people, and the historian's job is to look for these intentions in order to construct a coherent narrative; and (c) one event follows another in a

coherent sequence. Braudel, however, questioned the third point, arguing that different sorts of history had their own time, that is, their own rhythms and cycles.

### **1.2.2. The Past 40 Years: The ‘Linguistic Turn’ and the New Historicism**

Trends began in the 1960s that potentially mark a watershed in historical study and are subject to continued debate and discussion in the early twenty-first century. One of the causes was the impact, finally made in the area of history, of a debate on epistemology that had been underway for a long time in philosophy and elsewhere, owing much to Friedrich Nietzsche and Jacob Burckhardt. Some of these trends were important developments but did not cause a major break with the past, such as the desire to write history ‘from below’—to focus on the effect events had on individuals, the common people; to write the story of the ordinary soldier or the ordinary citizen; to recognize the oft omission of women and other minorities from conventional histories. The ‘grand narrative’ so characteristic of some world histories of the nineteenth century and earlier had by and large already been rejected, but the tendency for many historians was now to work on what some called ‘micro-histories’. The optimistic view of continual progress gave way to a more sceptical view of such a perspective.

Yet what made a real break with the past was a radical questioning that undermined the first two major assumptions (mentioned above) that had undergirded historical work from Thucydides to Braudel—the correspondence theory of history and the view that human intentions were the basis of human actions. This radical questioning came from what has broadly been called ‘postmodernism’, though in fact a great many different considerations—philosophical, literary, linguistic, anthropological, feminist—fed into the debate on historical methodology. The expression ‘the linguistic turn’ has been one way of characterizing this watershed among historians. The view now championed by some was that objective historical inquiry was not possible.

An important influence on postmodernism (and also the New Historicism, to be discussed below) was the French philosopher Michel Foucault. He in turn was influenced by the nineteenth-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Two aspects of philosophy were closely shared by the two: the idea of philosophical ‘genealogies’ and the concept of the centrality of power (Brannigan 1998: 43–49). The concept of philosophical genealogy (or ‘archaeology’, to use Foucault’s term) focuses on the random and singular nature of events. The coherence and connectedness of events is a narrative imposed by historians who themselves are trapped in and limited by time and space, rather than being objective observers and reporters of data (this applies, incidentally, to scientific discourse as well). Different areas have their own discourse, assumptions, and systems of thought, and this ideology affects their empirical study. On the second point, the issue of power, Nietzsche argued that there were no truth claims apart from the claim to power. Although power and power relations are often presented in a negative sense by postmodernists, both Nietzsche and Foucault saw them more positively. According to them, power was what determined the dominant concepts of truth and morality. However the dominant group or class saw things was what determined what was true and

what was just, rather than any inherent transcendental content. This does not mean, for Foucault, that it is necessarily anything so crude as the ruling class forcing its views on others; rather the complex power structures and relations of society (including the educational, juridical, economic, literary, scientific, linguistic, and gender/sexual structures) act as determining what will be believed and thought logical and even common sense. Power is not limited to one class, institution, or gender but pervades society.

How to define or characterize ‘postmodernism’ as it applies to history is not an easy task since postmodernists themselves often seem to avoid a positive statement of their historical method. For example, Keith Jenkins’s introduction to his recent (1997) ‘postmodernist reader’ spends a lot of time defining the way most historians do history, but then treats postmodernism only as a critique of this. One useful way of summarizing the movement, however, may be the following (Appleby, Hunt and Jacob 1994: 198–237; Iggers 1997: 6–16, 118–33; Zagorin 1999):

- There is no essential difference between history and literature, between a historical narrative and a narrative of fiction. In the words of Hayden White, ‘historical narratives are verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented as found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences’ (1978: 82, italics in the original).
- The world of the text is self-contained; nothing exists outside the text, because no reality can transcend the discourse that expresses it.
- There is no possibility of certain knowledge; there is no truth, only ideology. ‘The basic idea of postmodern theory of historiography is the denial that historical writing refers to an actual historical past’ (Iggers 1997: 118), that there is an objective truth separate from the subjective thought of the historian. Or one could point to the statement of Foucault that ‘reality does not exist, that only language exists’ (Iggers 1997: 133).
- The text can be interpreted in multiple ways. Authorial intent is an illusion. Texts conceal as much as they reveal, which means they need to be deconstructed to bring out the hidden assumptions, contradictions, and gaps; furthermore, meaning is always deferred.
- The ‘grand narrative’ is at an end, to be replaced by fragmentation, with many different even competing histories and the inclusion of groups formerly omitted or marginalized. The key word is ‘history from below’ but also a shift to a focus on culture.

Before critiquing postmodernism, we need to consider some related trends relevant to historical method. A recent movement is the ‘New Historicism’ (Veeser 1989; Zammito 1993; Brannigan 1998; Hens-Piazza 2002). Its debt to poststructuralism is clear, but it shows a welcome return to history in literary studies, for rather than seeing texts as autonomous, practitioners are concerned to put texts in their historical context. Like postmodernists, the New Historicists seem to shy away from giving a defining theoretical framework but emphasize its diversity; there is also a tendency to describe its main characteristics by resorting to a list of differences

from the ‘old historicism’. Nevertheless, there are a number of characteristics that members of movement tend to have in common (Veeser 1989: xi; Hens-Piazza 2002: 37–53):

- The term ‘text’ applies not just to literary texts but to all aspects of culture; thus all data are treated as if reading a text.
- Texts must be read in their context; on the other hand, the texts themselves form part of the context, that is, New Historicists concern themselves with ‘the historicity of texts and the textuality of history’ (Louis Montrose in Veeser 1989: 20).
- There is a particular concern (under the influence of Foucault) with the structures of power in society.
- History needs to deal with those on the ‘margins’ and the minority currents, as well as the dominant classes and structures. Particular attention is paid to dissenting voices and those who subvert the dominant power structures.
- Special attention is paid to ideology—the assumptions and biases—as found not only in the sources but also in the researcher and historian.
- Every act of ‘unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes’ (Veeser 1989: xi).
- No text gives direct access to the truth of the past or to an unchanging human nature.

A movement closely related to New Historicism is ‘Cultural Materialism’ (Brannigan 1998). There is the possibility of confusion here since ‘cultural materialism’ was already used for the theory of the anthropologist Marvin Harris; however, the Cultural Materialism associated with New Historicism is primarily the offspring of Raymond Williams. Some have characterized it as simply the European version of New Historicism, and the two movements do indeed have much in common; nevertheless, they are not simply two wings of the same entity. Cultural Materialism is more overtly Marxist in its concerns, with a special debt to Williams (vs. New Historicism’s strong influence from Foucault).

As with all movements proclaiming themselves ‘new’, ‘radical’, and a leap forward, critics have been quick either to denounce not only postmodernism historians but also New Historians (and Cultural Materialists) or to note that they are not really as radically new or different as they claim. That even the radical antihistoricist elements of postmodernism are not completely unexpected is indicated by a close scrutiny of the developments in historical theory in the past two centuries (as outlined in the survey above).

The debate about postmodernism continues in a vigorous fashion among professional historians, at least in some parts of the Academy in English-speaking scholarship. One of the main advocates for a postmodern perspective in history, Keith Jenkins, has recently (1997) produced a ‘postmodernist reader’ that tries to bring together some of the most influential articles in the debate. In a long introduction he lays out the main issues, with a defence of his own approach. One can find a

similar advocacy of postmodernism, though perhaps less flamboyantly presented, by Alun Munslow (1997), but the past few years have been especially characterized by a strong resistance movement. Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob (1994) produced a book which might appear at first to have a postmodern agenda in its assault on the way 'outsiders' (women and other minorities) have been excluded or neglected. Yet a good part of their text is a strong attack on such postmodern gurus as Foucault and Derrida. A book achieving widespread circulation in the UK is Evans's *In Defence of History* (1997), which is written for a non-technical readership. It actually tries to explain clearly the different approaches of recent writers on historiography and is not just an assault on the postmodern, but it ultimately rejects postmodernism from being the way forward even if the relevance of some aspects of it is accepted.

A wide-ranging attack on a number of recent trends in history-writing, as the title *The Killing of History* already makes quite plain, has been carried out by Keith Windschuttle. He covers more than postmodernism, and such figures as Derrida are mentioned mainly in passing; however, he has a long chapter attacking Foucault whom he sees as the main culprit in undermining the traditional study of history. Although the title and style might suggest an irresponsible blunderbuss attack on ill-defined targets, the book makes a number of effective points despite some shortcomings (Gordon 1999). C.B. McCullagh (1998) has tried to steer a middle way by recognizing that the critics have not always presented the arguments of the postmodernists fairly and by himself giving due weight to the postmodernist positions; nevertheless, taking into consideration the valid points about subjectiveness and the place of language in reality, he still concludes that historical knowledge is possible (cf. also McCullagh 1991). Interestingly, this debate comes at a time when Collingwood's major work on the philosophy of history, a manuscript left at his death and thought destroyed, has recently surfaced and has now been published (Collingwood 1999).

Yet in all this discussion and debate one can only agree with the observation that 'the majority of professional historians..., as usual, appear to ignore theoretical issues and would prefer to be left undisturbed to get on with their work while no doubt hoping the postmodernist challenge will eventually go away' (Zagorin 1999: 2). This certainly fits the attitudes of most historians I know in my own university who seem to have little interest in the debates on theory. Perez Zagorin has recently divided the reactions to the 'linguistic turn' into three sorts (1999: 3). Whether another division might be truer to the real situation is for others to say, but Zagorin's threefold categorization is certainly clearer and more understandable than the rather confusing attempt to find five different positions by Jenkins (1997: 21-24):

- 'some who evince great alarm at the incursions of postmodernism, considering the latter as a new kind of nihilism threatening the very existence of history as an intellectual discipline, and who tend to regard themselves as a beleaguered minority defending the citadel of reason against its hordes of enemies' (e.g. K. Windschuttle);
- a small number of those who have embraced postmodernism (e.g. K. Jenkins); and

- those who feel that historians still have something to learn from the challenges and questions raised by postmodernism but have rejected it as a framework or at least its more extreme conclusions (e.g. R.J. Evans).

As for New Historicism, some of the criticisms that have been aimed at postmodernism apply here as well, particularly those that relate to the influence of Foucault (F. Lentricchia in Veeser 1989: 231-42). Two criticisms of New Historicism in particular stand out (Brannigan 1998: 205-208). The first argues that the New Historicists have rejected the grand narrative of the old historicists but have then substituted their own grand narrative of power relations (Porter 1988; Lentricchia 1988). A second substantial criticism is that New Historicists are mainly interested in the function of texts rather than their meaning; that is, they give only a generalized reading, rather than a detailed interpretation, and seem not to make much difference between text and text or even between text and historical event.

In sum, there is at present among historians no uniform answer to the question of the value—or not—of postmodernism in historical study. What we see is a reluctance among practising historians to give up the idea that there is some connection between what they write and past reality, though the cogency of some of the main features of recent theoretical movements is recognized (covertly if not overtly). Iggers (1997: 119) summarizes it this way:

There is therefore a difference between a theory that denies any claim to reality in historical accounts and a historiography that is fully conscious of the complexity of historical knowledge but still assumes that real people had real thoughts and feelings that led to real actions that, within limits, can be known and reconstructed.

What might be concluded from this very brief survey of historical theory and methodology in the past few centuries? No doubt a number of points could be made, but I draw primarily four conclusions:

1. Although put in a particularly stringent manner by the postmodernists and their predecessors such as Nietzsche, the question of epistemology has been discussed at length by historians through the centuries.
2. The idea that past historians worked in a mechanical fashion, to produce what they saw as objective descriptions of ‘what actually happened’, is a caricature. The history of historical writing is one of self critique (or at least criticism of the past generation), questioning of rules, and attempts to come to grips with an often-difficult profession.
3. The place of the imagination and the subjective insight of the practising historian has been widely recognized through the past two centuries and more. Despite the occasional temporary reign of positivism, the subjective nature of the task and the important contribution made by the individual interpreter have usually been taken for granted.
4. Perhaps one of the most far-reaching developments has been the embracing of the social sciences and the recognition that history should include all facets of life—economics, the structure and complexity of society, the lives of ordinary people, the material culture, both high and low literature, ideology and beliefs.

### 1.3. Principles of Historical Method: The Current Debate among Biblical Scholars

**Barr** (2000) *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*; **Barstad** (1997b) ‘History and the Hebrew Bible’; (2002b) “Fact” versus “Fiction” and Other Issues in the History Debate’; **Childs** (1970) *Biblical Theology in Crisis*; **P.R. Davies** (1992) *In Search of ‘Ancient Israel’*; (1995b) ‘Method and Madness’; **Dever** (2001) *What Did the Biblical Writers Know?*; **Grabbe** (1987b) ‘Fundamentalism and Scholarship’; (2000a) ‘Writing Israel’s History’; **Grabbe (ed.)** (1997) *Can a ‘History of Israel’ Be Written?*; (1998) *Leading Captivity Captive*; (2001) *Did Moses Speak Attic?*; (2003) ‘Like a Bird in a Cage’; (forthcoming a) *Good Kings/Bad Kings*; (forthcoming b) *Ahab Agonistes*; **Knauf** (2000) ‘The “Low Chronology”’; **Lemche** (2000) ‘Ideology and the History of Ancient Israel’; **Liverani (ed.)** (forthcoming) *Recent Trends in the History of Ancient Israel*; **Long, Baker and Wenham (eds.)** (2002) *Windows into Old Testament History*; **Machinist** (2003) ‘The Voice of the Historian in the Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean World’; **Prován** (1995) ‘Ideologies, Literary and Critical’; (1997) ‘The End of (Israel’s) History? K.W. Whitelam’s *The Invention of Ancient Israel*’; (2000) ‘In the Stable with the Dwarves: Testimony, Interpretation, Faith and the History of Israel’; **T.L. Thompson** (1974) *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*; (1995b) ‘A Neo-Albrightean School in History and Biblical Scholarship’; **Van Seters** (1975) *Abraham in History and Tradition*; **Whitelam** (1996) *The Invention of Ancient Israel*; **Zevit** (2002) ‘Three Debates about Bible and Archaeology’.

The survey in the previous section was given as background to this section which touches the core of research into the Persian period: the crisis of history in Hebrew Bible studies. At the present there is a major debate about writing the history of ‘ancient Israel’ (this term is used for convenience; some would prefer terms such as ‘ancient Palestine’ or ‘Southern Syria’ or ‘the Levant’). This has been widely—but inaccurately—characterized as a debate between ‘minimalists’ and ‘maximalists’. Such a characterization is a caricature since it fails to note the wide variety of positions or principles of working among different scholars (more on the ‘minimalists’ and ‘maximalists’ below).

The current debate has its roots in the 1970s (for a survey of how things have developed, see Grabbe 2000a). The appearance of T.L. Thompson’s *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives* (1974) and J. Van Seters *Abraham in History and Tradition* (1975) marked the first major criticisms of what had been for many a consensus (at least among American scholars) about the historicity of the biblical text. Over the next fifteen to twenty years there were major changes in how the historicity of ancient Israel and Judah was approached. It involved a variety of new directions, many due to the introduction of new methods of studying the text: application of the social sciences, feminist critique, postmodernism, ideology criticism. Over all, it is probably safe to say that interest in history as such declined in favour of literary approaches, but there were those who still thought history was important but should take account of these new developments.

Even those in the more traditional historical mode made significant changes to how they wrote the history of ancient Israel. Thompson’s critique of the patriarchal

narratives was devastating and made a significant impact: within a few years the idea that there was ‘substantial historicity’ in the narratives of Genesis was abandoned by most scholars. The next debate was over the ‘conquest/settlement’. Here, too, the old Albright consensus of a unified conquest under Joshua was largely abandoned, except for student texts and the occasional conservative evangelical. The question was whether to follow the Alt/Noth interpretation, the newer Mendenhall/Gottwald thesis, or some combination of the two.

Despite the widespread acceptance of these changes, many began to feel uneasy with the way the scene was developing. They saw ‘biblical’ or ‘Old Testament’ history slipping out of their fingers, with Israel’s history really beginning at a later and later date. For some in biblical studies this did not seem important, but the Biblical Theology Movement still had a major influence on thinking, despite having met its demise in the late 1960s (Childs 1970). One aspect of this influence was the view that it was important for the Bible to be ‘historical’, but with some now even questioning the reigns of David and Solomon, the very basis of biblical historicity appeared to be under threat. Some biblical scholars—not necessarily known for their contribution to (or even much previous interest in) history—now began to express their unease with the way things were moving.

Certain books became symbolic of a dichotomy in views about how to approach writing the history of Israel. Perhaps the most surprising was the 1992 book, *In Search of ‘Ancient Israel’*, by P.R. Davies. It was ‘surprising’ in its impact because Davies made no claim to originality: his aim was to translate and expound some of the recent trends and their basis for students (Davies 1992: 7). Nevertheless, a Pandora’s box seemed to open about the time Davies’s book appeared, with claims and counter claims. The debate livened up considerably, taking a variety of forms. There were reviews of Davies’s book, such as that by Iain Provan (1995) published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, along with responses from Davies (1995) and Thompson (1995b). Probably the greatest stimulus to controversy, however, was K.W. Whitelam’s 1996 book, *The Invention of Ancient Israel*, with the provocative subtitle of *The Silencing of Palestinian History* (reviewed by Provan 1997).

Unfortunately, the debate took on a shrillness and *ad hominem* character that it had not seemed to possess before (cf. the remarks of Knauf 2000: 57–59; Lemche 2000). The terms ‘maximalist’ and ‘minimalist’ began to be pejorative labels, and the term ‘nihilist’ came to be used of certain positions. Some said the ‘minimalists’ were dangerous; others, that they could be safely ignored. The curious anomaly of dangerous people who can be safely ignored served as a symbol for the unhelpful way in which the debate had moved. On the other hand, those who defended the *status quo* claimed to have been misrepresented, and there were sometimes intimations that they were nothing but biblical fundamentalists—which has not usually been the case. But when things become so ugly that some started using the term ‘anti-Semitic’ of particular academic positions, one began to despair of any chance of a proper scholarly exchange.

This is why I founded the European Seminar on Methodology in Israel’s History (ESHM) in 1995. All the established biblical scholars working in the area of history (known to me or suggested to me by others) in Europe were invited to participate.

Approximately 20 accepted, and the first meeting took place in 1996. Four volumes of proceedings have been published so far (Grabbe [ed.] 1997; 1998; 2001; 2003), with others in the press (Grabbe [ed.] forthcoming a; forthcoming b). The whole purpose of the Seminar was to get people with differing views to talk to one another. The hope was expressed that, with time, participants might understand one another better and perhaps even move closer together. (For further information on the Seminar and its development, see Grabbe [ed.] 1997: 11-13; 2001: 16-20.)

The debate continues, and there is nothing wrong with that (cf. Zevit 2002; Machinist 2003; Liverani forthcoming). This is what we would expect among scholars. But the terms ‘maximalist’ and ‘minimalist’ have distorted the debate and also the true differences between scholars. Most of those so labelled work within the standard critical paradigm of biblical studies, regardless of whether designated one or the other. Furthermore, most critical scholars are ‘minimalists’ on some issues (e.g. the historicity of the patriarchs or the nature of the Israelite settlement). The only real ‘maximalists’ are biblical fundamentalists. Yet some fundamentalists have attempted to express their complete rejection of the critical paradigm under the cloak of criticizing the ‘minimalists’. Provan claims not to be a fundamentalist, but some of his writings (especially Provan 2000) seem to be an attack on the critical approach to the history of ancient Israel, as Barr (2000: 74-82) has recognized. Some of the essays in the volume edited by Long, Baker and Wenham (2002) seem to me to exhibit a fundamentalist approach (cf. Grabbe 1987b). Some critical scholars who cite such attacks on the ‘minimalists’ with approval have apparently not actually read the works they refer to. If they had, they should have realized that they were making strange bedfellows indeed.

#### **1.4. Principles of Historical Method: Those Assumed in this Book**

Grabbe (1997b) ‘Are Historians of Ancient Palestine Fellow Creatures?’; (1998b) ‘“The Exile” under the Theodolite: Historiography as Triangulation’; (1999a) ‘Israel’s Historical Reality after the Exile’; (forthcoming c) ‘The Kingdom of Judah from Sennacherib’s Invasion to the Fall of Jerusalem’; (forthcoming f) ‘The Kingdom of Israel from Omri to the Fall of Samaria’.

According to my own self-understanding I do not consider myself either a ‘maximalist’ or a ‘minimalist’. I do not feel I take an a priori position on any historical issue but try to evaluate each on its merits and consider the arguments advanced before deciding. Thus, on some issues I would be very sceptical of positions widely taken by contemporary scholars, including my rejection of certain sources as misleading, problematic, or of little value. On other issues, I feel that current scholarship has by and large got it right and would hesitate to criticize views that might not be as well or as rigorously established as one would hope. Above all, though, my view is that each case must be argued and the basis on which one works and comes to a decision (or leaves the question open) should be clearly laid out for the reader. For example, I am much more sceptical of the book of Ezra as a usable source than many scholars; on the other hand, it seems to me that assuming that a personal

writing of Nehemiah is at the heart of the book of Nehemiah is justified even though the reasons for doing so are somewhat subjective.

One central area of discussion is to what extent one can use the biblical text in any historical reconstruction. The ESHM has been debating this question for a number of years without any overall consensus. In my opinion, there is not a blanket response to this question. For several years, I have been trying to address this question for various sections of pre-exilic Israeli history (Grabbe 1997b; 1998b; forthcoming c; forthcoming f), as well as for the Persian period in particular (see especially Grabbe 1999a). Certain sorts of data in the biblical text are more likely (*a priori*) to be reliable than others; however, each individual case needs to be studied on its own merits. Like the ‘maximalist’ vs. ‘minimalist’ argument, the question of using the biblical text often produces a gut reaction that has little to do with assessing actual arguments or recognizing complexity: for some it is, sadly, a sort of touchstone that allows the researcher to be categorized in a preconceived list of who is acceptable or unacceptable (‘orthodox’, ‘conservative’, ‘radical’, ‘nihilistic’, or whatever other emotive term comes to be applied). In my experience with actually trying to write history, a number of principles have emerged and will inform my study of the Persian period. These can now be summarized as follows:

1. *Historical knowledge is possible, but our access to the past is only indirect.* I do not accept the view that all we have are texts nor that the past is only a story that we create. Yet we have no direct criteria by which we can measure the historical accounts we write. We cannot rerun history in the laboratory; history cannot be experimentally verified. We cannot take a position outside history as neutral observers. Whatever we conclude and whatever we say is conditioned by our subjective situation as historical beings, each with our own history. It must be stressed, however, that this criterion applies not just to the distant past but to all the past: this means not just events hundreds or thousands of years ago but events of yesterday, an hour ago, in the past second. I accept that there are historical periods, especially in more recent history, where the data are so abundant that many ‘facts’ are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. That the German army marched into Poland on 1 September 1939 has overwhelming support from all sorts of directions.

2. *All our historical knowledge is contingent and provisional.* There are no such things as unargued ‘facts’ or unproblematic data, especially for the distant past. This means that every historical account will be subjective and partial, and there may well be more than one account that makes sense of all the known data. The differences between scholars may range all the way from giving an honest difference of emphasis or arrangement of the data, leading to a different conclusion, to the rather more invidious position of exercising personal prejudice, being influenced by like or dislike for other particular scholars, or even slanting results for personal gain.

3. *Although objectivity in the scientific sense is not possible, ‘qualified objectivity’ or some similar position is still possible in historical study.* Recognizing all the constraints, parameters, boundaries, and conditioning of our individual position in history, it is still possible to take a stance which recognizes and resists the personal and subjective, which attempts to see all the pros and cons and to weigh the possi-

bilities. Various terms are used for this position, including ‘qualified objectivism’ and ‘qualified realism’. We are all children of our times, to a lesser or greater extent. We each have our own prejudices, failings, weaknesses, blind spots. Any history we write will be influenced by these to some extent. Yet it is still possible to write a self-aware, critical history which attempts as far as possible to take into account personal obstacles to objectivity. One can write a historical account which is not just an imposition of contemporary attitudes on the narrative of the past. A historian’s narrative can be a genuine effort to understand, come to grips with, and reconstruct the past without the resulting narrative being a mere surrogate for something else, whether national identity, personal projection, or a powerplay in relation to others. It is still possible—and usually desirable, though there are exceptions—to maintain a critical distance from the object of one’s scholarship. This means that one account or explanation is not just as good as another in most cases. Our accounts are not just stories we make up but must be measured against a set of data whose reality exists outside the narrative—and here I depart decisively from the postmodernists. There is a list of principles by which historians must work and against which their work must be measured. The historical narratives are stories of our creation, but they must be critically created. They must be justified by critical discussion and rational reconstruction from the data. And each of us—in our heart of hearts—must examine our own motives, prejudices, and weaknesses and seek to neutralize them as far as we can. Despite the constraints of our own history and our own humanity, we have a certain freedom of choice: we can attempt to counter our own faults by exercising the will to be as careful and honest as possible. The distinction between truth and falsehood is still fundamental to history (Iggers 1997: 12).

4. *The ultimate goal is a total history, which takes into account all aspects of the past.* In practice, every history is selective, whether the data used, the period of time covered, the topic(s) treated, or the aspects of the past emphasized. But the ideal is that a proper historical account of any period will take notice not just of ‘events’ but also society, economics, culture, intellectual trends, daily life, and all the other myriad of things happening. Every history will define its criteria for selection and, one hopes, justify the reason for that selection. But no aspect of the past is in principle excluded from the historical task. This has been one of the insights of recent study: the need to recognize and include groups formerly excluded or marginalized.

5. *We must use all potential sources.* That is, we should not rule out any sources *ab initio*. Whatever our theory of history—whether we are New Historicists, New Historians, Braudelians, postmodernists, or whatever—we depend on sources from the past. Whether we are talking about settlement populations, dress fashions, military tactics, or temple worship, there is no such thing as a ‘given’—we know what we know because we can appeal to a source of information which we have interpreted. The credibility of our representation of the past is directly proportional to the data of the source and the way in which our analysis of the source is itself justified and cogent to others. It is especially here in the analysis of sources that many of the insights and techniques of recent scholarship come into their own: social scientific

criticism, ideological criticism, close reading, deconstruction, New Historicist analysis. Sources do not speak for themselves: the historian makes them speak, but he or she must justify this voice and convince others that it is not merely a ventriloquist's trick. Where sources are skimpy or problematic, an important method of operation is 'triangulation', attempting to fill out the picture by determining from known data what the likely complement will be—much as a surveyor determines a third point from two known points by means of triangulation (Grabbe 1998b).

Of course, we should give priority to primary sources such as archaeology and epigraphic sources. Subsequent study may show some sources—especially secondary sources—are too problematic to use. The point is that we make judgments *a posteriori*, not *a priori*. The biblical text is problematic, as usual. As noted in some of my other writings, I find the Ezra material very problematic, not because I decided this in advance but because this is the result of analysis of the text. On the other hand, I think we do have some first-hand information in the Nehemiah account. Here the problem is not so much whether we have a primary source (though some will no doubt dispute this) but the extent to which it has been edited in the present account and, especially, the particular perspective, ideology, and prejudices of the narrator.

### **1.5. Writing a History of the Persian Period**

**Berquist** (1995) *Judaism in Persia's Shadow*; **Boyce** (1975) *A History of Zoroastrianism*, I; (1982) *A History of Zoroastrianism*, II; **Briant** (1993) 'L'histoire politique de l'Empire achéménide'; **Brosius and Kuhrt (eds.)** (1998) *Achaemenid History XI*; **CAH<sup>2</sup>**, IV; **CHI**, II; **CHJ** 1; **Dandamaev** (1976) *Persien unter den ersten Achämeniden*; (1989) *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire*; **Dandamaev and Lukonin** (1989) *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*; **Eliay and Sapin** (1998) *Beyond the River*; **Grabbe** (1991c) Review of E. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*; (2001c) 'Sup-urbs or Only Hyp-urbs?'; (2003g) Review of P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*; **Hornblower** (1983) *The Greek World 479–323 BC*; **HPE**; **Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg (eds.)** (1988) *Achaemenid History III*; **Olmstead** (1948) *History of the Persian Empire*; **Sancisi-Weerdenburg (ed.)** (1987) *Achaemenid History I*; **Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Kuhrt (eds.)** (1987) *Achaemenid History II*; (1990) *Achaemenid History IV*; **Sancisi-Weerdenburg, Kuhrt and Root (eds.)** (1994) *Achaemenid History VIII*; **Widengren** (1977) 'The Persian Period'; **Yamauchi** (1990) *Persia and the Bible*.

#### **1.5.1. Problems Peculiar to Persian Yehud**

Although the major principles for writing the history of any period are the same (as already argued in the previous section), each historical period or topic has its own particular problems or considerations. The Persian period is a difficult phase of history about which to write, not just for Palestine but across the entire ancient Near East. Some of the problems of writing either a general history of the Persian empire or of individual parts of it are the following:

- Few primary (contemporary) documents remain, whether Persian specifically or written by the scribes of vassal or conquered peoples in the Persian empire. There are large gaps where the sources are either non-existent or problematic for historical reconstruction. The primary sources that do exist frequently do not lend themselves to constructing a historical narrative or at least a narrative of any length: artifacts, short inscriptions, partially deteriorated realia, or texts whose purpose was entirely different from describing contemporary events (e.g. legal documents, receipts, lists of commodities).
- Most narrative descriptions are in Greek or Latin, not only being often rather later than the period described but also presenting everything from a Hellenic or Roman perspective.
- The Persian period had tended to be of less interest across a number of specialist fields, including Palestinian archaeologists and cuneiform scholars. This means that fewer studies and publications exist for the material and written remains of this period than some others.
- Scholars vary considerably in how much of the biblical text they would date to the Persian period. It is accepted that many of the prophetic books continued to develop during the Persian period, but there is often sharp disagreement on the dating of individual texts or pericopes. In general I shall attempt to follow the consensus (if there is one) while still recognizing the uncertainties.
- Current developments in the social sciences are a major aid to writing a history of this period and will be used where relevant. There are dangers, and the social sciences have often been misused in biblical study (cf. Grabbe 2001c).

### **1.5.2. Plan of the Present Book**

As discussed in the Preface (p. xi above), the present volume is the first in a multiple-volumed history of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple period. The time of the Persian empire was an extremely important period for the development of Second Temple history and religion (which is why this history begins with the Persians and not Alexander [cf. *JRSTP*: 5-6, 315-17]). Many of the important trends, movements, and institutions had their foundation in the Persian period, and this volume hopes to demonstrate and illustrate that.

Unlike some studies, this history attempts to work as far as possible from original sources. This is why a major section of the book is devoted to several chapters surveying the original sources, primarily for the history of Yehud and the Jews but also for the wider Persian empire. Some issues of Persian history and administration have meant looking at primary sources outside those narrowly focused on Yehud. This history conceives itself as a full history, covering society, institutions, religion, and the economy, as well as ‘events’. The heart of the book is found in the Parts III and IV, which try to bring together the primary data into order—with due attention to the many secondary studies—and answer the questions that can be

answered. Many questions cannot be answered, leaving significant gaps in our history, but care is taken to indicate in each case what we know, what is reasonable inference from the primary sources, and what is really only intelligent speculation. The reader should be able to know in every case what the primary data are and the basis of my interpretation.

The present volume could have been much longer than it is. Therefore, it has been written with a certain economy of organization, with avoidance of repetition. Most topics are treated fully in only one place. It was not always easy to decide on the best place to put some topics, but rather than using a rigid organization it was decided that some subjects which might have been discussed elsewhere in the book were best placed in the synthesis section (Part IV). To help the reader, however, many cross-references are given in the text, as well as a detailed Table of Contents and Indices.

For wider Persian history, original sources have often been consulted, but as a non-specialist I have of necessity been dependent to some extent on secondary sources (although on any issue of Persian history and administration relevant for Yehud I have tried to go to primary sources). Fortunately, we have the recent major synthesis of P. Briant (*HPE*), which displaces those that came before it, and will be frequently cited for information on history and administration in the wider Persian empire (see below).

This study is aimed first and foremost at scholars, but a good deal of effort has been expended to make it as ‘user friendly’ as possible for a wider audience, including biblical scholars generally, students, and even educated lay people. It is expected that many readers will find it helpful as a handy reference for information on the Persian period, but users will find it helpful to read the concluding chapter (Chapter 15) to get an overview of my approach and conclusions and see how my interpretation differs from that of others writing on the same period. It is hoped, however, that readers will realize that my conclusions were not conceived *a priori* but arise only *a posteriori* out of a detailed study of the primary sources. The argument, usually in detail, is available in the appropriate sections of the book.

### **1.5.3. Modern Secondary Studies**

There are a number of general studies on the Persian empire that are useful. The most recent and best is the aforementioned *HPE* (reviewed in Grabbe 2003g), with a wealth of both primary information and a detailed discussion of and guide to secondary studies. The volume on the Persian empire in the *CAH* is very useful, with extensive bibliography, as is the first volume of the *CHI*. The older work of Olmstead (1948), which biblical scholars have tended to rely on (with dire consequences at times), is now truly superseded. The more recent volumes of J.M. Cook (1983), Frye (1984), and Dandamaev (1989) still have value, though the last is unfortunately rather uncritical (cf. Briant 1993). The social, economic, and cultural aspects are treated by Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989). Hornblower (1983) gives a good survey of Greek history. The standard history of Zoroastrianism is by Boyce (1975; 1982; see further the Appendix). The series of volumes of *Achaemenid History*, arising out of a series of workshops in the 1980s and early 1990s, and

edited by H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt contain a wealth of information (see also Brosius and Kuhrt 1998). The journal *Transeuphratène* (1989–) is one of the best sources for on-going research on the region west of the Euphrates and often has studies relating to Yehud.

On Persian Judah specifically there has been no comprehensive treatment (which is one of the reasons for the present book). Unfortunately, the first volume of the *CHJ* is rather disappointing: whereas it has some very good articles, there seems to have not been much editorial control so that articles are not always well integrated with one another; more important, most of them were a decade old when the volume appeared, meaning that they are already well out of date in some areas. A short treatment was given by Berquist (1995), though his study emphasizes the literary remains. An overview was given by my long chapter in *JCH* and also by Widen-gren (1977). Of particular value is the methodological volume by Elayi and Sapin (1998); although it relates to the whole of the region, its remarks almost always apply to Judah particularly. The volume by Yamauchi (1990) contains a good deal of useful information but, unfortunately, suffers from some serious methodological problems (see my detailed review in Grabbe 1991c).

### 1.6. Terminology and Other Technical Matters

The transliteration of Hebrew will be clear to scholars who work in that language, generally following the standard forms; however, I have used *v* and *f* for the non-dageshed forms of *bet* and *pe*, while *w* is always used for *waw* (or *vav*, even though now pronounced *v* by most modern users of Hebrew). Because non-specialists will be consulting this book, I have used transliteration as well as Hebrew script. Proper names generally follow the conventional forms used in English Bibles.

This study is based as far as possible on original sources. These sources, along with their published editions and other scholarship, are catalogued in Chapters 2–6 below. Where original sources are quoted, however, this is normally done in English translation. Unless otherwise indicated, the translation is my own.

I use a number of words for convenience as purely descriptive terms. They have no significance beyond trying to convey precise information to readers and are not meant to carry any political or sectarian weight:

- The terms ‘apocalyptic’ and ‘apocalypticism’ are used interchangably here; some North American scholars object to ‘apocalyptic’ as a noun, but it has a long and respectable history of such usage and is still so used on this side of the Atlantic.
- ‘Ebir-nari’ is used for the satrapy of Transeuphratene, that is, the territory west of the Euphrates. Although this is originally an Assyrian term, it continued to be used in the Persian period. It means the same as the Hebrew ‘*Ever ha-Nāhār*’ and Aramaic ‘*var Nahārā*’.
- ‘Edom’ is used for the old area of Edom to the east of the Dead Sea, while the territory that later came to be inhabited by Edomites on the west side of the Dead Sea will be referred to as ‘Idumaea’, even though this latter did not strictly come into use until the Greek period.

- Whenever the term ‘the exile’ is mentioned, it is both a convenient chronological benchmark to refer to the watershed between the monarchy/First Temple period and the Second Temple period and also a means of referring to the deportations from Judah that took place in the early sixth century BCE, regardless of their number or scope (cf. the discussion and essays in Grabbe [ed.] 1998).
- ‘Golah’ is not a frequently used word in this book, but it means those descendants of deported peoples who returned to Yehud to settle.
- The term ‘Jew’ is used interchangeably with ‘Judean’ or ‘Judahite’, where the Semitic texts have *Yəhûdî/Yəhûdîm* (in Hebrew) or *Yəhûdîn/Yəhûdâyâ* (in Aramaic). Some modern scholars wish to limit ‘Jew’ to members of a particular religion and prefer ‘Judeans’ or ‘Judahites’ or some similar term for the geographical connotation. That might be justified for a later period, but as will be argued below (§8.1) such a distinction does not seem applicable to the Persian period. Of course, the English word ‘Jew’ comes ultimately from the Hebrew *Yəhûdî* and thus from a purely etymological point of view is a perfectly good translation for any context. More significant, though, is the fact that the original sources make no such distinction.
- ‘Old Testament’ and ‘Hebrew Bible’ are normally used interchangeably to mean the collection of writings found in the present Hebrew canon. However, if I am referring to the Septuagint version or any other which includes the Deutero-canonical books, I shall use ‘Old Testament’ (or ‘Septuagint’ [LXX] when that is the specific reference).
- ‘Palestine’ is purely a geographical term, used because it has been widely accepted for many years and because it is difficult to find a suitable substitute.
- ‘Yehud’ (an Aramaic term) is often used to refer to the Persian province of Judah and has no other connotation. The Hebrew term ‘Judah’ is used of the territory or province of any period; naturally, the boundaries of this territory varied (sometimes considerably) from time to time.
- The divine name for the God of Israel is written as ‘Ywhh’. Although frequently vocalized as ‘Yahweh’, the precise pronunciation is in fact unknown. The short form at Elephantine is usually written as ‘Yhw’ (probably something like *Yahu*).

## **Part II**

### **SOURCES**

## Chapter 2

### ARCHAEOLOGY: UNWRITTEN MATERIAL

The importance of archaeology for the history of Yehud cannot be overstated, yet the archaeology has traditionally been one of the most neglected areas of study for this period. For a long time many archaeologists were interested only in the pre-exilic period, and some of the most important Persian-period sites were dug when archaeology was a new science, which meant that many valuable data were lost or misinterpreted. The importance of this phase of archaeology is now being recognized, but a great deal remains to be done. My indebtedness to the work of E. Stern will be readily apparent to the most superficial reader. But I have also had access to recent studies by C.E. Carter, O. Lipschits, and others. Original archaeological reports have been consulted where possible, but many of these have not been easily available.

This chapter focuses on the area of Judah and the province of Yehud; however, since it is important to be aware of the broader context, the neighbouring regions of Samaria, Phoenicia, Idumaea, and Transjordan are also surveyed. These other areas discussed are divided up roughly according to geographical areas but also take account of what were probably the political divisions. The concentration here is on the artifactual remains. Those finds containing writing (inscriptions, coins, and texts written on papyrus and vellum) are discussed mainly in the next chapter (Chapter 3). The main discussion of demography is in Chapter 9 (§9.3.2).

#### 2.1. *Judah*

##### 2.1.1. *Individual Sites*

###### 2.1.1.1. *Bethel*

**Blenkinsopp** (2003b) ‘Bethel in the Neo-Babylonian Period’; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 124–26; **Lipschits** (1999) ‘The History of the Benjamin Region under Babylonian Rule’; **NEAEHL**, I: 292–94; **OEANE**, I: 300–301.

The site of modern Beitin was excavated in 1934 by W.F. Albright and again in 1954 and 1957 by J.L. Kelso. Unfortunately, the final combined report is very unsatisfactory, as several writers have pointed out; for example, W. Dever (in *OEANE*, I: 300) comments, ‘The report lacks stratum designations and information on provenience and mixes factual description with imaginative interpretations

(usually biblically inspired), making historical reconstruction almost impossible, except in the broadest sense'. Although the excavators claimed that the site was destroyed at the end of the Neo-Babylonian period and resettled later in the Persian period, the alleged Persian finds are somewhat problematic (Carter 1999; Lipschits 1999: 171-72). A destruction in the middle or late sixth century seems the most certain event; the site may also have recovered during the fifth century and continued to the Hellenistic period, but this has not been absolutely demonstrated archaeologically.

### **2.1.1.2. El-Jib (Gibeon)**

**Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 119-22; **Edelman** (2003) 'Gibeon and the Gibeonites Revisited'; **Lipschits** (1999) 'The History of the Benjamin Region under Babylonian Rule'; *NEAEHL*, II: 511-14; *OEANE*, II: 403-404; **Pritchard** (1962) *Gibeon Where the Sun Stood Still*.

The identification of modern el-Jib with ancient Gibeon seems confirmed by finds of jar handles with *gb'n*. The site was excavated in 1956-59 by J.B. Pritchard (summarized in Pritchard 1962), but many of his interpretations have been contested (though he maintains them in the entry in *NEAEHL* and seems to be followed in *OEANE*). He states that there is scant evidence for habitation of the site between the end of the sixth and beginning of the first centuries BCE. However, the similarity of some of his 'Iron II' pottery to Persian-period pottery has been pointed out by critics (see the discussion in Carter 1999: 119-22; Lipschits 1999: 172-76). Among the Persian-period finds are seal impressions with Greek style motifs (*ALB II*: 543) and a bronze ring with an inscription in Aramaic script (*ALB II*: 545). The inscription may be *mrt šmm* 'lady of heaven' or *mr šmn* 'lord (of) Eshmun' (Edelman 2003: 160-61). The evidence for Pritchard's 'flourishing wine industry' during the Iron Age may in fact be grain storage facilities from the sixth century, though there are still arguments for a wine industry in the Neo-Babylonian period and even the Persian (Lipschits 1999: 173; Edelman 2003: 157). Evidently the site was not destroyed at the beginning of the sixth century as Pritchard had asserted but continued to flourish. The Iron Age pool was filled in, probably in the early Persian period. Whether that meant the abandonment of the site is still a moot point (cf. Neh. 3.7; Edelman 2003: 163-64), but the city seems to have continued into the first part of the Persian period.

### **2.1.1.3. Tell el-Fûl (Gibeah)**

**ALB II**: 433-34; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 122-24; **Lipschits** (1999) 'The History of the Benjamin Region under Babylonian Rule'; *NEAEHL*, II: 445-48; *OEANE*, II: 346-47.

This is now widely, though not unanimously, identified with the Gibeah which was the home town of Saul (1 Sam. 10.26). It was excavated by W.F. Albright in 1922-23 and 1933 and Paul Lapp in 1964. A series of three fortresses characterized the mound. It was earlier argued that stratum III indicates a destruction of the third

fortress on the site, perhaps by Nebuchadnezzar. More recently, though, it has been shown that the destruction was selective and occupation continued through the Neo-Babylonian period (Lipschits 1999: 177–78). On present evidence the site was abandoned probably somewhere around 500 BCE or so and remained unoccupied until the Hellenistic period; it thus had a settlement only in the early Persian period.

#### **2.1.1.4. Tell en-Naṣbeh**

**Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 126–32; **Lipschits** (1999) ‘The History of the Benjamin Region under Babylonian Rule’; **NEAEHL**, III: 1098–102; **OEANE**, IV: 101–103; **Zorn** (1988a) ‘William Frederic Badè’; (1988b) ‘The Badè Institute of Biblical Archaeology’; (1997) ‘Mizpah: Newly Discovered Stratum Reveals Judah’s Other Capital’; (2003) ‘Tell en-Naṣbeh and the Problem of the Material Culture of the Sixth Century’; **Zorn, Yellin and Hayes** (1994) ‘The *m(w)ṣh* Stamp Impressions and the Neo-Babylonian Period’.

Widely, though not universally, identified with ancient Mizpah, this was excavated during 1926–35 by W.F. Badé, but the original excavation reports have recently been re-assessed by J.R. Zorn (his principal study, his 1993 PhD thesis, remains unpublished, but several of the articles listed above summarize the data). Unfortunately, the excavation methods used at the time, combined with severe erosion of the site, have made it difficult to determine the stratigraphy. Because the city was not destroyed during the Iron II period, there was little major change over four centuries. Zorn’s stratum 2 covers the Neo-Babylonian and part or all of the Persian period. During the Babylonian period the inner gate and many of the earlier houses went out of use. Although the plans of the replacement buildings constructed over them are fragmentary, they seem to be four-roomed houses that were oriented differently from the Iron II buildings. Two small kilns outside the outer gate suggest that it no longer had a defensive function. A large new building may be interpreted as a palace or administrative structure because of its size and the presence of a stone pavement. Zorn suggests these changes indicate the growth of the town’s function to that of a small provincial capital in the Babylonian and Persian periods (cf. §7.2.1). About 25 *Yehud* seal impressions from the Persian period have been found, but the dating of the *m(w)ṣh/mṣp* seals (§3.2.3.3) is debated (Zorn thinks they are Neo-Babylonian rather than Persian). Zorn believes there was a gap in occupation in the latter part of the Persian period, with a resumption of occupation at the beginning of the Hellenistic (stratum 1). However, it seems more likely that the settlement existed throughout the Persian period but that there was a long period of decline (Lipschits 1999: 165–70).

#### **2.1.1.5. Tell es-Sultan (Jericho)**

**Avigad** (1951) ‘A New Class of *Yehud* Stamps’; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 160–62; **NEAEHL**, II: 674–81; **OEANE**, III: 220–24.

Tell es-Sultan has been identified as the site of Jericho in pre-Hellenistic times. E. Sellin and C. Watzinger directed excavations there in 1907–1909, J. Garstag in

1930–36, and then K. Kenyon in 1952–58. A number of finds suggest that the site was occupied during Persian times (*pace OEANE*, III: 224). These include some Attic pottery dated to the fifth–fourth centuries and a number of *yh* and *yh(w)d* seals. The dating of a seal with the inscription '*wryw/yhwd*' ('Uriyau/Yehud') is disputed, though the present consensus is that it is from the Persian period. Another which may be a *phw* ('governor') seal has the inscription *lyhw'zr* ('to Yeho'ezer'). One way of explaining the data is that the whole eastern sector of Judah came to an end at the end of the Iron age, either through direct destruction or rapid decline after the more central support was destroyed by the Babylonians (Lipschits 2003: 339–40). The site was then resettled during the fifth century with a small settlement that covered only a few dunams.

#### 2.1.1.6. Jerusalem and Vicinity

**ALB II:** 434–36; **Avi-Yonah** (1954) 'The Walls of Nehemiah': 239–48; **N.A. Bailey** (1990) 'Nehemiah 3:1–32': 34–40; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 132–48; **Eshel** (2000) 'Jerusalem in the Time of Persian Rule'; **Geva (ed.)** (1994) *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*; **Lipschits** (2001) Judah, Jerusalem and the Temple (586–539 B.C.); (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; (forthcoming) *The Rise and Fall of Jerusalem*; **NEAEHL**, II: 698–804 (717–29); **OEANE**, III: 224–38; **Williamson** (1984) 'Nehemiah's Walls Revisited'.

The main excavations relevant to the Persian period were undertaken in 1923–25 by R.A.S. MacAlister and J.G. Duncan, J.W. Crowfoot in 1927, K. Kenyon in 1961–67, A.D. Tushington in 1962–67, M. Broshi and E. Netzer in 1971–72, and Y. Shiloh in 1978–85. Shiloh's stratigraphic analysis labelled the main Persian-period level as stratum 9, evidence for which was found in several areas (D1, D2, E1, G, with Persian-period pottery in other areas as well). This followed a thorough destruction of the city of stratum 10 (universally interpreted as the attack of Nebuchadnezzar in 587/586 BCE), after which the city was apparently uninhabited until the beginning of the Persian period (Lipschits 2001). The resettlement at the beginning of the Persian period seems to have made little impact on the archaeology. The area settled was evidently confined to the old City of David area and covered no more than five or six hectares, with the Western Hill completely left out (Lipschits 2003: 329–33; forthcoming a; Eshel 2000).

One topic of debate seems now to have been settled by the most recent excavations: the question of whether the Persian-period settlement took in the Western Hill (Avi-Yonah 1954; Williamson 1984; Eshel 2000; cf. N.A. Bailey 1990). The various excavations in that area have found no evidence of buildings or occupation for that time, the examples of pottery seeming all to be the result of fill transported from other sections of the city. Thus, the 'minimalist view' now prevails on the dimensions of the city. However, Shiloh's area G, which contained significant finds from the Persian period, is to the east of the postexilic city walls, indicating the extension of settlement outside the city walls in that area. Area D2 was also outside the walls. The eastern slope down into Kedron Valley, which was settled for many

centuries, seems to have been abandoned, with the eastern wall now higher up the hill for the most part (Carter 1999: 137-38; *ALB II*: 435; Lipschits 2003: 330). It should be noted that according to H. Geva none of the finds so far confirm that any wall was newly established by Nehemiah, though the general picture of Nehemiah's wall fits the archaeology (*NEAEHL*, II: 722).

A total of 74 seal impressions are reported to have been found in the course of Shiloh's excavations (Carter 1999: 144-45). These include anepigraphic seals with a lion image and more than twenty with inscriptions: *yh(w)d* ('Yehud'), *yhw d hnnh* ('Yehud Hananah'), *yhw d yh' zr/phw* ('Yehud/Yeho'ezer/governor'), *l'hzy/phw* ('to Ahazai/governor'), and *yh* (abbreviation for 'Yehud'). Also of relevance are some tomb excavations, those at Ketef Hinnom by G. Barkay and at Mamilla Street by R. Reich. Both these sites are outside the postexilic walls. Both sites contained tombs apparently in continual use from the Iron II through the Neo-Babylonian and into the Persian period or even later.

### **2.1.1.7. Ramat Rahel**

**ABD**, V: 615-16; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 150-52; **Lipschits** (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; **Na'amān** (2001) 'An Assyrian Residence at Ramat Rahel?'; *NEAEHL*, IV: 1261-67; **OEANE**, IV: 402-404.

Ramat Rahel (Hirbet Sāliḥ) lies only about 4 km southwest of Jerusalem. It was excavated for five seasons during 1954-62 by Y. Aharoni, and in 1984 by G. Barkay. The site was identified as Beth-haccherem by Aharoni, but Barkay and D. Tushingham both suggest that it is the hitherto-unknown *mmšt* found on some of the *lmlk* seal impressions of the eighth century (*NEAEHL*, IV: 1267). The earliest remains so far found are from Iron II. The destruction of level VA is usually associated with the Babylonian conquest of 587/586 BCE, but it may have happened earlier with the Assyrian vacating of the area (Na'amān 2001: 274). A reduced settlement may have continued there even during the sixth century (Lipschits 2003: 329). Aharoni argued that a citadel was constructed there in the Persian period, but no evidence has so far been discovered (Carter 1999: 151-53). Many *yh(w)d* seal impressions were found, but more important are the *phw* ('governor') seals which seem to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge of governors at the time: 'Yeho'ezer', 'Ahazai'. Part of these finds can be explained by the fact that it apparently became a Persian administrative centre, though the architectural remains are surprisingly poor (Na'amān 2001: 274-75; Lipschits 2003: 330-31).

### **2.1.1.8. Beth-Zur**

**Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 153-57; **Lipschits** (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.', *NEAEHL*, I: 259-61; **OEANE**, I: 314; **Reich** (1992) 'The Beth-Zur Citadel II'; **Sellers** (1933) *The Citadel at Beth-Zur*; (1958) 'The 1957 Campaign at Beth-Zur'; **Sellers (ed.)** (1968) *The 1957 Excavation at Beth-Zur*.

Khirbet et-Tubeiqah is universally identified with Beth-Zur. It was first excavated in 1931 by W.F. Albright and O.R. Sellers (Sellers 1933). A further excavation was made by Sellers and Paul and Nancy Lapp in 1957 (Sellers 1958; 1968). Sellers and Albright argued for a habitation gap until the beginning of the fifth century BCE, but this seems based on considerations other than archaeology since there is no evidence of a destruction in the late seventh or early sixth century. Identifying a Persian phase at the site has presented difficulties. Some Persian pottery has been found, but a good part of this was in a cistern where it could have been dumped at a later time. A coin with the inscription *yhzqyw hphh* ('Hezekiah the governor') was found (§3.4.1), as well as a number of *yhd* stamps. R. Reich (1992) has argued that the citadel, normally dated to the third century (*NEAEHL*, I: 261), was the residence of the provincial governor in the Persian period, but this identification has been opposed by Carter (1999: 154–55). Unless Reich's interpretation turns out to be correct, the settlement at this site during the Persian period was likely to have been only a village at most. The whole region seems to have shrunk in population after the end of Iron II.

### 2.1.1.9. Tell Goren (En-Gedi)

*ALB II*: 438–39; Carter (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 157–60; Lipschits (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; *NEAEHL*, II: 399–409; *OEANE*, II: 222–23.

Tell Goren was excavated under the direction of the Hebrew University in a series of digs from 1949 to 1972. Stratum IV seems to be the one associated with Persian rule. There is evidence of destruction at the end of the Iron II (stratum V). The whole eastern hinterland seems to have suffered a collapse after the destruction of Jerusalem, with the region depopulated (Lipschits 2003: 339–40). Settlement was resumed at the end of the sixth or beginning of the fifth century with stratum IV, the area of which was larger than that in stratum V with a series of terraces for both buildings and agriculture spilling down the slopes. The whole site seems to have been about 4 dunams in area. Finds include Attic ware of the late fifth and early fourth centuries and a number of *yh* and *yh(w)d* seal impressions. The remains of a large building were found on the northern slope. It appears to have been contained two storeys (in part, at least) and an enclosed courtyard, and covered more than 500 m<sup>2</sup>. Evidently built in the first half of the fifth century, it was destroyed about 400 BCE, followed by restoration of one wing to be used another half century. Remains of other buildings suggest a rather crowded area of houses with only narrow passages between them on this part of the mound. Two Aramaic ostraca, apparently dealing with the processing of leather, were also found.

### 2.1.2. Surveys and Synthesis

*ALB II*: 428–43; Carter (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 172–248; I. Finkelstein (1988–89) 'The Land of Ephraim Survey 1980–1987'; (1994) 'The Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh'; Finkelstein and Lederman (eds.) (1997) *Highlands of Many Cultures*; Finkelstein and Silberman (2001)

*The Bible Unearthed; Hoglund* (1991) 'The Achaemenid Context'; (1992) *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine; Lipschits* (1999) 'The History of the Benjamin Region under Babylonian Rule'; (2001) 'Judah, Jerusalem and the Temple (586–539 B.C.)'; (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; (forthcoming) *The Rise and Fall of Jerusalem; Lipschits (ed.)* (forthcoming) *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period; Lipschits and Blenkinsopp (eds.)* (2003) *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period; Na'aman* (1991) 'The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah'; (2000) 'Royal Vassals or Governors?'; *NEAEHL*, III: 815–16, IV: 1313–14.

A general comparison of the situation in the Persian period with that of other periods in the history of the region is instructive. The height of settlement was in Iron II, in the eighth century. Sennacherib's invasion in 701 BCE devastated much of the region that later came to comprise the province of Yehud. Of 354 Judaean settlements in existence in the late eighth century and destroyed, only 39 are presently known to have been rebuilt in the seventh century (*ALB II*: 142; see also the survey in I. Finkelstein 1994). According to Stern (*ALB II*: 130–31), despite the widespread destruction of Sennacherib, the rebuilding process was quite rapid, possibly already being underway during Hezekiah's last days. Much of the southern part of Judah was built back up during the first half of the seventh century, with many new settlements. Jerusalem expanded greatly. A number of finds go together to suggest that the main recovery of prosperity occurred early in the century (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 265–69). The population of the Judaean hills increased considerably, probably as a result of population movement from the Shephelah, which was not only devastated by Sennacherib but also had a large section annexed by the Philistine cities.

This came to an end in the last part of the seventh century and first part of the sixth. A decline began for certain parts of the kingdom of Judah with the Assyrian withdrawal from the region. Rather than leaving a power vacuum, as has often been thought, this withdrawal may have been a strategic one co-ordinated with Assyria's old enemy Egypt, so that there was an orderly transfer of territorial control by mutual agreement (Na'aman 1991: 40). Yet the decline seen in the archaeological record may in some cases have preceded the Babylonian attack. The latter, though, devastated Jerusalem and some other areas (though apparently not the Benjamin area) through military action and caused a rapid decline and depopulation in others because of the social and economic collapse brought about by the destruction of Jerusalem. Although this has been debated, Jerusalem was apparently uninhabited through much of the sixth century, perhaps as a deliberate Babylonian policy (Lipschits 2001; 2003: 326–34). Judah itself became a Babylonian province, then a Persian province with the Persian conquest (Na'aman 2000).

Carter divided the Persian period in Judah into two chronological periods, with the statistics summarized as follows (1999: especially 216–33): Persian I: 86 sites = 534 hectares (estimated population 13,350); Persian II: 125 sites = 826 hectares (estimated population 20,650). This attempt to divide the period was admittedly somewhat artificial and was subsequently criticized as unjustified by the archaeology (Lipschits 2003: 359–60). It was argued that such precise dating within the

Persian period was simply not possible. In addition, scepticism was expressed toward Carter's division by ecological niches. Nevertheless, Lipschits's own estimation of the population as about 30,000 was in the same general region as Carter's and relied on a similar method of reckoning (Lipschits 2003: 355-66).

Persian-period Judah was characterized by two demographic features: (1) a dramatic reduction in population, and (2) an equally dramatic increase in small settlements. The first datum that strikes one in recent studies is the small number of people who seem to have lived in the province of Yehud through the period (for a more detailed discussion of the overall question of population estimation for ancient cities, see §9.3.2). Although there was a gradual increase in population through the two hundred years (so Carter), even at its most densely populated the total population does not seem to have exceeded about 30,000. This was an overall reduction of 70 per cent from the end of the Iron II period. The latest figures on population (Lipschits 2003) show considerable variety in the different regions, in spite of the general situation just given. All areas dropped drastically in the number of settled dunams, with the exception of the region between Jerusalem and Beth-Zur.

Apart from Jerusalem and perhaps one or two other sites (Mizpah [Tell en-Naṣbeh] and Ramat Rahel), most of the inhabitants lived in unwalled villages and towns (Höglund 1991: 57-60; Carter 1999: 215; Lipschits 2003: 357). Carter divides the sites into Very Small (0.1-2.0 dunams, up to 50 persons), Small (2.1-5.0 dunams, 51-125 persons), Medium (5.1-12 dunams, 126-300 persons), Large (12.1-25 dunams, 301-625 persons), Very Large (above 25 dunams and 625 persons). The only Very Large site in this period is Jerusalem. The bulk of the Persian settlements (almost 90 per cent) fall into the Very Small, Small, or Medium categories. Benjamin had a slightly larger percentage of Very Small to Medium sites, and Judah had a larger percentage of Large sites: 75 per cent of the sites with more than 300 persons were in the old territory of Judah. But there does not seem to be a major difference between these two areas with regard to either number or size of sites or the estimated population.

As far as the individual regions are concerned, the province of Yehud included portions of the old tribal area of Benjamin. This area generally escaped the ravages of the Babylonian invasion at the beginning of the sixth century and even flourished through much of the century as the centre of Judah (Lipschits 1999; 2003: 346-55). Mizpah seems to have been the Babylonian capital of the province. This all changed at the end of the sixth century when there is evidence that a settlement decline and depopulation began and continued during the Persian period. This especially affected the eastern and north-eastern parts of the area. The number of settled dunams dropped to about 500 (compared to 1150 in the Iron II), for a population of about 12,500. This can be explained by the revival of Jerusalem as the centre of the province and a shift in population in its direction.

The population of the eastern or desert fringe almost disappeared. It seems that this sector came to be depopulated at the end of the Iron age, either through direct destruction or rapid decline after the more central support was destroyed by the Babylonians (Lipschits 2003: 339-40). Jericho and En-gedi were resettled in the fifth century, but the number of inhabited dunams for the region had dropped from

its Iron II total by about 90 per cent, and the population had reduced from about 2250 to no more than about 250.

The main settlement at Jerusalem was on the old City of David hill and around the Temple Mount. These areas have been calculated as no more than 60 dunams at its largest, or about 1500 inhabitants. To this needs to be added the farms and other settled areas outside the walls, which doubled the size to about 11 hectares, or a population of around 3000 (Lipschits 2003: 329–32, 358). This may not seem very large, though almost 90 per cent of the Judaean settlements had a population of less than 300 persons (Carter 1999: 216, 221). But despite being the largest site, Jerusalem was not the large urban centre that some have pictured, even if it did contain about 10 per cent of the population (cf. Neh. 11). Lipschits has characterized the city as ‘a Temple, alongside of which there was settlement both for those who served in the Temple and for a small number of additional residents’ (2003: 330). The city remained poor throughout the Persian period, even though many of the returnees probably settled there.

In the hill country south of Jerusalem, different areas seem to have responded differently to the situation in the Persian period. Overall the population remained similar to what it was at the end of Iron II, unlike most of the regions of Judah, though there was a general reduction in population as one moved south (Lipschits 2003: 351–55). The larger sites suffered a drastic loss of population, but this was balanced by the fact that medium-sized sites larger than 5 dunams became more important and small sites of less than 5 dunams became much more numerous. Unlike most of this region, the area toward Beth-Zur showed a sharp decline, perhaps because it was a border area.

In recent times it has generally been agreed that the major cities of the Shephelah (Lachish, Azekah) were outside the boundaries of Yehud. Nevertheless, Lipschits includes some clusters of small settlements in the Beth-Shemesh area (2003: 341–46). This was only an ‘insignificant presence’ of 22 sites, never exceeding 15–20 hectares in the total settled area, or no more than 5000 people.

In sum, Judah was a small province of no more than about 30,000 people, with about 10 per cent of those living in and around Jerusalem, the only really urban site. This was a drop of about 70 per cent in population from the end of the Iron II. The bulk of the inhabitants lived in small unwalled villages. A major surprise is that migration from Babylonia does not appear to have left much of a mark on the archaeology or demography (Lipschits 2003: 365).

## **2.2. Samaria**

### **2.2.1. Individual Sites**

#### **2.2.1.1. Samaria**

**ALB II:** 424–27; **Crowfoot, Kenyon and Sukenik** (1942) *The Buildings at Samaria*; **Crowfoot, Crowfoot and Kenyon** (1957) *The Objects from Samaria*; **NEAEHL**, IV: 1300–10; **OEANE**, IV: 463–67; **Reisner, Fisher and Lyon** (1924) *Harvard Excavations at Samaria 1908–1910*.

The site of ancient Samaria was excavated by the Harvard University expedition in 1908–10 and then under a combined expedition under J.W. Crowfoot in 1931–35; a few isolated digs have taken place since then. Much of the Persian-period city had been obliterated by a destruction at the beginning of the Greek period and subsequent Hellenistic building, which means that Persian finds have been few: Greek pottery dated from sixth to the fourth centuries, a bronze throne (for the Persian governor?), some limestone altars, some seal impressions (§3.2.1), and coins, including recently published hoards of coins (§3.4.2). A total of 14 sherds with Aramaic inscriptions were found, all difficult to interpret: a couple have dates and at least one seems to have the word for ‘wine’ (*hmr*). On the summit, in stratum VIII, the entire area had been levelled, with even the remains of walls removed, retaining walls built, and a 25 cm layer of fertile soil spread over a large area (c. 50 m<sup>2</sup>). The soil was of the same type collected by farmers who want to improve the fertility of their fields, suggesting that this was used for creating a garden or park area—perhaps a typical Persian ‘paradise’. Fronting onto this area was a building with thickly plastered floor and walls with two build-in circular basins. This was interpreted as an industrial establishment, perhaps for dyeing. Together the finds from Samaria and Wadi Daliyah indicate that the city was prosperous in the Persian period (*ALB II*: 426–27).

### 2.2.1.2. Tell Balâṭah (Shechem)

**ALB II:** 427–28; **R.T. Anderson** (1991) ‘The Elusive Samaritan Temple’; **Bull** (1978) ‘er-Ras, Tell (Mount Gerizim)’; **Magen** (1986) ‘A Fortified City from the Hellenistic Period on Mount Gerizim’; (1991–92) ‘Mount Gerizim—A Temple-City’; (2000) ‘Mt. Gerizim—A Temple City’; **NEAEHL**, II: 484–92; **OEANE**, IV: 407–409, 469–72; **Pummer** (1989) ‘Samaritan Material Remains and Archaeology’; **Sellers** (1962) ‘Coins of the 1960 Excavation at Shechem’; **E. Stern** (forthcoming) ‘The Religious Revolution in Persian Period Judah’; **Stern and Magen** (2002) ‘Archaeological Evidence for the First Stage of the Samarian Temple’; **G.E. Wright** (1964) *Shechem*.

Since the records and many of the finds of a German expedition between the two world wars were destroyed in World War II, the little known about Shechem comes from a few preliminary publications. New excavations were carried out under the direction of G.E. Wright and B.W. Anderson in 1956–68, with some subsequent campaigns in 1969–73. Like Samaria, finds from Persian Shechem have been few, partly because of a destruction during the Persian period. This destruction was dated to 475 BCE by G.E. Wright, based on the study of black- and red-figured Attic ware by N.R. Lapp (Wright 1964: 167, 238–41), but should now probably be lowered to the fourth century. This redating comes about because of a subsequent find of an Achaemenid tomb with Attic pottery from the mid-fifth century (*ALB II*: 427) and the discovery of remains of a temple on Mt Gerizim from the fifth century (see below).

The Persian-period level is stratum V. This was characterized by square bricks of fine grey clay and floors made of coarse cement. A building with a semi-circular

wall but partly destroyed is assumed to have been circular originally. It was over 3 m in diameter and contained a cobbled surface, but the wall itself may have been built only to a low height, with perhaps a wood structure or even a tent erected on it. In addition to the black- and red-figured Attic pottery noted above, finds include a seal with the Persian motif of the king as hunter, a jar handle with a stamp of a roaring lion, and an old Greek coin from the island of Thasos. The seven jar handles stamped with a *tet*-symbol are now dated to the Hellenistic period, however (§3.2.3.3). The artifacts are said ‘to suggest a cosmopolitan and relatively well-to-do population’ (*NEAEHL*, IV: 1353).

A major question of debate for the past several decades has been whether there were remains of a temple on Mt Gerizim dating from the Persian period. Archaeological opinion on this has been on a roller coaster over half a century. Excavations in the 1950s and 1960s had, it was believed (e.g. Bull 1978), confirmed the building of that Samaritan temple on Mt Gerizim at the end of the Persian or beginning of Greek period, as Josephus suggests (*Ant.* 11.8.1-6 §§304-45). Subsequent excavations by Yitzhak Magen led to the questioning of whether there was anything from before the Roman period (Magen 1986; 1991-92; *NEAEHL*, II: 484-92; Pummer 1989; *OEANE*, IV: 469-72; R.T. Anderson 1991). What was originally believed to be evidence of a Hellenistic structure (identified as a temple by some but otherwise by others) on Tell er-Ras was thought to have been misdated by intruded Hellenistic pottery from a fill. Whether there was a temple and when it was built could not, therefore, be determined. The most recent publications now claim, however, that a temple did indeed exist from the late fifth or early fourth century BCE. According to the interpretation of the excavator, who has reversed his previous opinion, the temple was founded by the Sanballat of the time of Nehemiah (Magen 2000; 113-14, 117; E. Stern forthcoming).

## **2.2.2. Surveys and Synthesis**

*ALB* II: 424-27; **Dar** (1986) *Landscape and Pattern*; **I. Finkelstein** (1988-89) ‘The Land of Ephraim Survey 1980-1987’; **Finkelstein and Lederman** (eds.) (1997) *Highlands of Many Cultures*; *NEAEHL*, IV: 1311-12; **Zertal** (1990) ‘The Pahwah of Samaria (Northern Israel) during the Persian Period’; (2003) ‘The Province of Samaria (Assyrian Samerina) in the Late Iron Age’.

As noted below (§7.3.1), the exact boundaries of the province of Samaria are uncertain. Based on the probable boundaries, however, the only two main sites excavated so far are Samaria and Shechem (as well as the cave in Wadi Daliyah which apparently contained the remains of refugees from Samaria [§3.2.1]). Other excavated sites in the region have not as yet yielded Persian-period finds. Unfortunately, destruction at the end of Persian occupation and later building during the Hellenistic period have obliterated many of the remains from the Persian period at Samaria and Shechem. Several archaeological surveys done in the region of Samaria beginning in the 1960s have provided valuable information about the history of this area. These sometimes show a considerable difference in development

between the different parts. Two main surveys have produced revealing data: the 'Manasseh' survey of the northern part of the hill country, the area centring on Mt Manasseh and the Sanur Valley and including Samaria, Shechem, and Tirzah, an area of about 2000 km<sup>2</sup> (Zertal 1990; *NEAEHL*, IV: 1311-12), and the 'Ephraim' survey of southern Samaria, extending from Bethel in the south to just south of Shechem in the north and from the foothills in the west to the desert fringe in the east.

The northern hill country ('Manasseh') survey indicates a fertile, well watered region, and generally desirable for settlement. Although the geomorphology is quite diverse, it is dominated by the Shechem syncline which is made up of six inner valleys: the Dothan, Sanur, Tubas, Zebabdeh, er-Rameh, and the Shechem Valley between Mt Ebal and Mt Gerizim. The seventh century was admittedly a low point for this area, which dropped from a high of 238 sites in the mid-eighth century to only 95 settlements after the Assyrian conquest of Samaria. In the Persian period, however, the number of sites exceeded even the high in the Iron II, increasing to 247, but then dropping to 140 in the Hellenistic period. The settled area was concentrated in two main sites, one around Samaria and the other focused on the Dothan Valley, but a generally dense population in the region in between. A total population of 42,000 was estimated for the region, based on a settlement figure of just under 1700 dunams (Zertal 1990: 11). Compared with the province of Yehud, Samaria seems to be much more populous. Surprisingly, the Shechem area seems to have been lightly settled, showing more in common with the pattern in the area of southern Samaria (though it was to revive in the Hellenistic period).

About half the sites were newly settled in the Persian period, even though the population seems not to have been much different from that in the eighth century. Similarly, almost half the sites did not continue into the Hellenistic period. About a third of the sites are large settlements (above 10 dunams), about a quarter are villages (up to 10 dunams), and about 40 per cent are farms and other small sites. It may seem astonishing that about 70 per cent of the sites are in the more mountainous regions and only a minority in the valleys, but this is probably to be explained by the economy: a major shift to wine and oil production which tended to be sited on terraced hillsides. This also indicates a large shift of population westward away from the eastern valleys, in comparison with Iron II when the eastern valleys were a population centre (along with Samaria and the Dothan Valley).

The southern Samaria ('Ephraim') survey (I. Finkelstein 1988-89; Finkelstein and Lederman 1997; *NEAEHL*, IV: 1313-14) slightly overlapped the Persian province of Judah at its southern edge but would mainly cover territory in the province of Samaria. The region of the survey was divided into six topographical units. The southern Samarian hills show a rather different pattern of settlement in the Persian period from the northern, largely dictated by the natural features. The northern part of the southern hills (south of Shechem) changes to an anticline, without the inner valleys and water resources of further north. They make up the old area of Ephraim, an area that was part of the Northern Kingdom, but the southern third of which became part of Judah after Samaria was turned into an Assyrian province about

722 BCE. It includes Shiloh and, in the extreme south, the city of Bethel. With a total of 190 sites in the Iron II, this dropped to about 90 during the Persian period, with also a general decrease in the size of settlements. The population estimate was about 7000, much less than in the northern region. Settlements also tended to be focused more toward the western part of the region, bordering on the coastal plain. This may suggest that this region looked toward the west, to the coastal region, for its trade and other relations.

Thus, the concentration of Persian-period settlement was in the north and west, which follows the most fertile and environmentally desirable part of the region. It also indicates the importance of the coastal region for Palestine during this period. Despite the dramatic differences in settlement between regions, Samaria as a province seems to have been much more heavily populated than Yehud. The very southern part of the land of Ephraim survey was in the province of Yehud, yet this was a very sparsely populated region. For the coins, seals and seal impressions, and ostraca found in the region, see Chapter 3. On the question of foreign settlers in Samaria, see below (§12.7).

### **2.3. Phoenicia and the Coast (including the Shephelah)**

NB: the coastal and ‘Philistine’ cities from Gaza south are included in the following section (‘Idumaea and Arabia’) since they seem to have been under ‘Arabian’ control during much or all the Persian period. For a discussion of this question, see §7.3.3.

#### **2.3.1. Individual Sites**

The sites are listed roughly from north to south, regardless of whether they are on the coast or further inland.

##### **2.3.1.1. Acco (Tell Fukhar)**

*ALB II: 382-83; NEAEHL*, I: 16-31.

Excavations were led by M. Dothan in the 1970s and 1980s. Two strata have shown remains from the Persian period. A large building with a courtyard, dated to the reign of Cambyses, may have been an administrative centre. Another building with cult objects and a Phoenician ostraca concerning votive offerings to Asherat may have been associated with a temple (though few remains of the temple have so far been found). Remains of the port, which included a breakwater a thousand feet long (330 m), were found in the southern bay. A residential area showed indications of a planned layout. The pottery finds and also some of the buildings and installations suggest a strong Greek influence on the material culture, along with the Phoenician.

##### **2.3.1.2. Tell Abu Hawam**

*ALB II: 383-85; Balensi, Dunaux and Finkielstztein* (1990) ‘Le niveau perse à Tell Abu Hawam’; *NEAEHL*, I: 7-14.

The site lies at the mouth of the Kishon River and at the base of Mt Carmel. It has not been identified with any known ancient city. A series of rescue operations in the 1920s and 1930s led to a basic stratigraphic scheme by R.W. Hamilton. The datings of the original excavation report have now been revised, partly in the light of the later digs in the 1980s. Stratum II has now been divided into four Persian-period phases, IIA1 (c. 500–450 BCE), IIA2 (c. 540–380 BCE), IIB1 (c. 380–350 BCE), and IIB2 (c. 350 BCE). The site seems to have been reoccupied at the beginning of the Persian period, after an abandonment of two centuries, making use of structures already there. Phase IIA ended in a destruction in the early fourth century. It was rebuilt in the middle of the fourth century in Hippodamic form, and the finds of large numbers of standardized jars suggest a good deal of trading activity. The most recent interpretation thus indicates that the city was rather larger than previously thought and that it was important in the maritime trade, no doubt because of its ideal location. A large horde of Tyrian coins was found to have issues between 390 and 335 BCE.

### **2.3.1.3. *Shiqmona***

*ALB II: 289-90; NEAEHL, IV: 1373-78; OEANE, V: 36-37.*

Excavated from 1963 to 1979 by J. Elgavish, two strata associated with the Persian period were found. The earliest stratum (stratum P, c. late sixth to early fifth centuries) contained a residential quarter laid out in Hippodamian lines that even continued down the slope, with terracing. The later stratum (c. mid-fourth century BCE) contained a large building, apparently hastily constructed, and the first of three fortresses on the site (the other two being later than the Persian period). This building also had a wine cellar, judging from the storage jars and a Phoenician inscription on some of the jars about the amount and origin of wine. The pottery of both strata show a Cypriot influence.

### **2.3.1.4. *Tel Megadim***

*ALB II: 390-92; NEAEHL, III: 1001-1003.*

Excavated by M. Broshi in 1967–69, this site lies at the mouth of the Megadim River and seems to have been newly built as a harbour and port in the Persian period, after being abandoned in the Late Bronze. Of the three Persian-period strata (I-III), the best preserved is stratum II (fifth century) with a well-laid-out, fortified town, one of the earliest in Hippodamic form. The casemate walls around it seem to have been to protect against raids rather than a heavy siege. The finds of large numbers of pottery vessels supports its function as a commercial centre with storehouses. The town was destroyed and abandoned at the beginning of the fourth century. The preceding settlement (stratum III, fifth century) was also apparently well planned, but the final stratum (stratum I, mid-fourth century) shows poorly built structures and a short period of habitation.

### **2.3.1.5. 'Atlit**

*ALB II: 392-93; NEAEHL, I: 112-22.*

This was built on a promontory projecting well out into the sea, but most of the Persian remains seem to be covered by a Crusader castle. The main interest is in the remains of an artificial harbour which is one of the few pre-Hellenistic Phoenician ones with sufficient remains to study the construction techniques of the time. Two moles were built at roughly right angles to one another, one on the south coming out of the shore northward and the other projecting from a small island, running east-west but not connecting with the shore. Another small island near the shore had the gap filled in and was turned into a storage area. The moles seem to have served both as breakwaters and places to load and unload cargo, with ships being able to dock on either side of the mole. It is suggested that the north mole which does not connect with the shore served as a free quay for foreign vessels while the south one was for Phoenician ships. A number of cargoes from ship wrecks were found, including the remains of a Greek warship with an intact ram (C-14 dated to the fourth century).

### **2.3.1.6. Tel Dor**

*ALB II: 393-400; NEAEHL, I: 357-72; E. Stern (1994a) Dor, Ruler of the Seas.*

First dug by the British School of Archaeology in 1923–24, the main work of excavation was resumed in 1980 under the direction of E. Stern. This has proved to be a very important site for the region: it was a significant city during the Persian period, and the finds have been valuable. Two Persian-period strata were identified. A residential area covered the entire eastern portion of the mound and was laid out in Hippodamian format. In Area D were found (commercial?) storehouses, still containing many storage jars, and evidence of an industrial quarter with metal working and possibly even glass production. An especially interesting find was several installations for the production of purple dye from the murex snail. In Area B a *favissa* (deposit of cult objects) produced cult objects reflecting the local cult of Baal and Ashtarte. Some of the finds include faience bead necklaces with Egyptian motifs (apparently used as amulets), bronze censures, stone statues, and clay figurines. Another *favissa* was found in Area C with what seem to be mainly Greek objects, suggesting that it constitutes the remains of a Greek temple. Some dog burials remind one of the more extensive finds at Ashdod. A number of Phoenician ostraca were also discovered (cf. §3.3), as were seals and coins. A destruction in the mid-fourth century was followed by rebuilding which included a new fortification system.

### **2.3.1.7. Megiddo**

*ALB II: 376-78; NEAEHL, II: 1003-24; OEANE, III: 460-69; E. Stern (1982)*

*Material Culture of the Land of the Bible: 5-8.*

After a German dig in 1903–1905, the Oriental Institute of Chicago conducted excavations from 1925 to 1939. Persian-period remains were found in the top stra-

tum (stratum I); unfortunately, this layer was entirely removed and cannot be further investigated by new digs, even though there seems to be considerable confusion in the reports about the stratification of finds. The indication is that stratum I (in several phases) covered the whole of the Persian period from about 500 BCE to the conquest of Alexander. A massive structure that was evidently a fortress building in open-court plan was found in Area C. This was said by the original excavator to have been built in stratum II but reused with some new alterations in the Persian period; however, Stern seems to be saying that it was entirely rebuilt in the Persian period (*ALB II*: 378). Other buildings in Area D in the northern part of the mound were apparently barracks, judging by their internal structure. There were also the remains of a large residential area in Hippodamian style to the south in Area A. The site seems to have been destroyed about 350 BCE. The fortress was rebuilt, though of inferior construction, and apparently guarded an unwalled settlement. This fortress was destroyed not long afterward (probably by Alexander's army), and the site was then abandoned.

### 2.3.1.8. *Tel Mevorakh*

*ALB II*: 403; *NEAEHL*, III: 1031-35.

E. Stern excavated this site in 1973-76 and found three strata from the Persian period. Stratum VI (c. mid-fifth century) contained mainly a large rubbish pit. Stratum V (c. 400 BCE) contained a large building with a central courtyard and storage pits. This was replaced in stratum IV (c. fourth century) by another building with several courtyards, a tower, and a casemate wall. The excavator interpreted the buildings in the two strata as the remains of agricultural estates.

### 2.3.1.9. *Mikhmoret*

*ALB II*: 403-404; *NEAEHL*, III: 1043-46.

After a trial excavation in the late 1950s by the University of Leeds, major excavations took place in the 1980s under a variety of sponsors. This was a port city at the mouth of the Alexander River. In the earliest of two Persian-period strata, what was apparently a fortress, built on bedrock and dating to about 400 BCE, overlooked the harbour. This stratum ended in a conflagration. Storage yards dating to about the middle of the fourth century seem to have been destroyed at the end of the Persian period. A good deal of Attic ware was found throughout the areas excavated, as well as a cuneiform tablet in Babylonian dated to the reign of Cambyses. The finds generally give evidence of engagement in commercial activity during this period.

### 2.3.1.10. *Apollonia (Arsuf; Tell Arshaf)*

**Roll and Tal** (1999) *Apollonia-Arsuf, Final Report of the Excavations*, I.

A series of large-scale excavations have been carried out here since 1977 by I. Roll and E. Ayalon. A city appears to have been built on this site first in the Persian

period (though the Arabic name Arsuf seems to come from the old Phoenician version of the divinity Resheph). Persian remains were found in areas D and H. The main find in area D was a large refuse pit that took up most of the excavated area. Almost a third of the animal bones in it were from dogs, and some pig bones were also found; about 65 per cent were of sheep, goats, and cattle. In area H two Persian-period strata were identified; unfortunately, later building and robbing of building stone have considerably damaged the remains. The few building remains in both strata seem to have been domestic. The presence of shells from murex snails in both areas might be evidence of the purple-dyeing industry, but this is not certain since they could also have been for food.

### **2.3.1.11. Tel Michal (*Makmish*)**

*ALB II: 404–406; NEAEHL, III: 1036–41; Herzog, Rapp and Negbi (eds.) (1989)  
Excavations at Tel Michal, Israel.*

This site on the Mediterranean coast was excavated in 1977–80 under the direction of Z. Herzog and J.D. Muly, with a further salvage operation under Herzog in 1982. Evidence of settlement from the Middle Bronze to the Arab period was found, including extensive remains from the Persian period. Although there is a high mound, the remains are found over five separate hills. The site was abandoned in Iron II (late eighth, stratum XII) and remained uninhabited until the Persian period when there were six phases of settlement (strata XI–VI), with new construction in all phases. In stratum XI (late sixth to early fifth century) were the remains of a fortress building, with a military camp to the south of it, and also storage pits and ovens, suggesting a garrison or military depot of some sort (for the Persian army?). The building of houses took place in stratum X (first half of the fifth), while strata IX–VIII (second half of the fifth) yielded evidence of development into a village with industrial installations. These included a wine press and a wine storage area, with the wine jars produced on the site. A large structure from stratum VII (first half of fourth) appears to have been a grain silo. It contained a bulla still attached to papyrus fragments (a commercial document?). Sidonian coins, apparently of Straton I (c. 370–358 BCE), were also found in this phase. Stratum VI continues stratum VII and shows an extensive, planned settlement, including two temples, an industrial quarter with evidence of several kilns, and two wine presses. A (fourth-century?) cemetery yielded the remains of men, women, and children. A partially broken Phoenician inscription from a pot (apparently not found *in situ*) reads ‘to Baal Sh[amem]’/‘[to] the Lord of H[eaven]’ ([*I*]b [*l*]š[*mm*]). A number of stamps and bullae from the Persian period were also found (§3.2.3). Thus, at its height in the Persian period the settlement seems to have been divided into sections according to function: residential, administrative, industrial, commercial (?), cultic, and the like. Habitation continued into the Hellenistic period (stratum V) without a break, though a Hellenistic fortress (stratum V) has disturbed the top Persian layer. Overall, the remains of imported goods and metal objects suggest a prosperous settlement in the Persian period.

### 2.3.1.12. Jaffa

*ALB II*: 406; **Kaplan** (1972) ‘The Archaeology and History of Tel Aviv-Jaffa’; *NEAEHL*, II: 655-59.

After preliminary excavations in the late 1940s and early 1950s, systematic exploration was conducted by J. Kaplan in 1955–68. Persian remains were found in stratum II. Architectural remains were found mainly in area A, in three phases. The first (IIC) had several silos; the second (IIB), which ended in a destruction, had only some wall remains. It was in the latest phase (IIA) that the most evidence was found. A large building (M) extended across most of the excavated area. It was interpreted as a storage building because of the large number of bowls from a single Athenian workshop found in it. Remains of other buildings were also discovered. Blacksmith waste and a forge with several tools nearby were uncovered. The forge seems to have been in use after the Building M was in ruins.

### 2.3.1.13. Meṣad Ḥashavyahu

**Fantalkin** (2001) ‘Meṣad Ḥashavyahu’.

This is mentioned here only to confirm that there seem to be no Persian-period remains, contrary to some earlier claims (Fantalkin 2001: 128-29). All the remains seem to be from the Neo-Assyrian and Babylonian periods.

### 2.3.1.14. Gezer (Tell Jezer)

*ALB II*: 439-42; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*; **Dever et al.** (1971) ‘Further Excavations at Gezer, 1967–1971’; *NEAEHL*, II: 496-506; *OEANE*, II: 396-400.

Some have included Gezer in the boundaries of Yehud (e.g. E. Stern in *ALB II*: 439-42), but good reasons have been given for excluding it (Carter 1999: 90 n. 48). Tell Jezer was excavated off and on throughout the twentieth century (the latest season in 1990). Unfortunately, the early finds were confusingly reported. The city (stratum VI) was destroyed by the Assyrians in the late eighth century, with only a modest settlement in the seventh century (stratum V) that was evidently destroyed in a fire by the Babylonians. The Persian period (stratum IV) is not well attested, but some remains of houses were found. In Field II a stone silo was built over an oven and surface (Dever et al. 1971: 112). Objects included a seal of Pharaoh Nepherites (c. 399–393 BCE), the first king of the Twenty-Ninth Dynasty, some limestone incense altars, a number of *yhd* stamps and two with *yršlm*, and a large quantity of Attic ware. The ‘Philistine tombs’ yielded rich finds, including some silver vessels.

### 2.3.1.15. Timnah (Tel Batash)

*ABD*, I: 625-26; *ALB II*: 442; **Kelm and Mazar** (1995) *Timnah: A Biblical City in the Sorek Valley*; **Mazar and Panitz-Cohen** (2001) *Timnah (Tel Batash) II*; *NEAEHL*, I: 152-57; *OEANE*, I: 281-83.

This site was excavated between 1977 and 1989 by G.L. Kelm and A. Mazar. The identification with Timnah made in the 1950s is still widely accepted. The thriving city of the seventh century (stratum II) seems to have been already in the sphere of Ekron. It came to an end about 600 BCE when Philistia fell to the Babylonians, after which it was abandoned for a time. Stratum I contains the remains of a small fifth- and fourth-century settlement. The early gate area seems to have been reused, though with rebuilding of inferior quality. Although the remains of some houses were found in area H, many of the remains were found in refuse pits.

### **2.3.1.16. Ashdod**

*ALB II: 407; NEAEHL, I: 93-102.*

Stratum V was identified as Persian, with three phases. Unfortunately, a good deal of the Persian level had been destroyed by building during the Hellenistic period, but evidence of a large brick building on stone foundations was found. A fortress, also with brick walls, was sited on a nearby ridge.

### **2.3.1.17. Ashkelon**

*ALB II: 408-11; Heltzer (1998) ‘On the Vth Century B.C.E. Dogs from Ashkelon’; NEAEHL, I: 103-12; Stager (1991) ‘Why Were Hundreds of Dogs Buried at Ashkelon?’; Wapnish and Hesse (1993) ‘Pampered Pooches or Plain Pariahs?’.*

First excavated in 1921–33 by J. Garstang and W.J. Phythian-Adams, and intermittently in the decades since, major exploration has been carried out by the Harvard Semitic Museum under L.E. Stager since 1985. Destroyed about 603 BCE by the Babylonians, the city was rebuilt only at the beginning of the Persian period, with five phases of settlement identified. Monumental buildings, warehouses (with some storage amphorae still *in situ*), and workshops were found. A variety of objects representing Greek material culture were uncovered, as was a small horde of Phoenician coins from the fourth century, several ostraca with Phoenician names (dated from the late sixth to the fourth centuries), and a bowl with the Phoenician word ‘gm (‘cake’). Thus, both Greek and Phoenician material culture for the sixth to fourth centuries are well represented on the site. One of the most curious discoveries was about 800 dog burials, death apparently from natural causes. A good deal (though sometimes somewhat speculative) has been written on the significance of these. These have been explained as Phoenician and cult related, with reference to a Phoenician text from Cyprus (*CIS*, I: 86) which speaks of dogs in association with the cult of Astarte and Mkl (Heltzer 1998). The problem is that there is nothing in the archaeology to suggest ritual entombment; this is why it has been suggested the burials were simply a way of disposing of those animals that died from natural causes (Wapnish and Hesse 1993).

### 2.3.1.18. Tell el-Hesi

**Bennett and Blakely** (1989) *Tell el-Hesi: The Persian Period; NEAEHL*, II: 630–34; *OEANE*, III: 22.

Located near the borders of the Shephelah and the Negev, this site was inhabited almost continuously from the Chalcolithic period to Hellenistic times. No identification with an ancient city has been agreed on. It was excavated by F. Petrie and F.J. Bliss in 1890–92, and then by the American Schools of Oriental Research in 1970–83. The site seems to have served as a fortress in a border region during both the Iron Ages and the Persian period. The recent dig found strata I–IV for the Islamic and Hellenistic periods, V for the Persian, and VI–VIII for the Iron Age. Four substrata were delineated for the Persian stratum (Va, Vb, Vc, Vd, from latest to earliest). Layer VIIa had ended in a major conflagration, about 600 BCE. Only remnants of a layer VI have been found, though they have been dated to mid-sixth century. Vd shows major construction activity that underpinned the other layers of stratum V, including a wide platform with a hard-packed floor and a large mud-brick building. This seems to have ended in a fire (judging from evidence found by Bliss) about the mid-fifth century. The site was levelled and a new but similar building was built in a short-lived Vc, followed by Vb (late fifth century) which had several new buildings. These buildings continued to be used into Va (end of fifth century), though a large number of storage pits were added at this time. Judging from the pottery and other finds, the excavators concluded that the site was mainly a storage and depot area for the Persian (military?) administration for much of its existence. Among the bones were those of several pigs, one of which showed evidence of having been butchered.

### 2.3.2. Surveys and Synthesis

**ALB II: 379–422; Briend** (1994) ‘L’occupation de la Galilée occidentale à l’époque perse’; **Elayi** (1990b) ‘The Phoenician Cities in the Achaemenid Period; **Grainger** (1991) *Hellenistic Phoenicia*; **Lemaire** (1994b) ‘Histoire et administration de la Palestine à l’époque perse’; **Roll and Tal** (1999) *Apollonia-Arsuf, Final Report of the Excavations*, I.

This section covers a quite large area, encompassing Phoenicia, Galilee, the coast as far south as Ashkelon, and inland as far as the Shephelah. This includes the old Assyrian provinces of Dor and Megiddo, though it is not clear that they continued under the Persians (§7.1). Yet there seems to be a certain unity for this rather extensive region in the dominance of Phoenician material culture in most of the sites that have been excavated. The coastal areas seem to have been well explored, both in the excavation of individual sites and in archaeological surveys (see the survey in *ALB II: 379–422*).

According to the literary sources, the cities of Sidon and Tyre dominated this region, though Sidon was the premiere city throughout most of Persian rule. We have no information on some inland sites (Tel Dan, Tel Anafa, Ayelet ha-Shahar,

Beth Yerah, Hazor, Tel Chinnereth, Megiddo, and Beth-Shean), though all have yielded evidence of Persian-period occupation. Excavated sites that seem to have been under Phoenician control are Achzib, Kabri, Nahariya, Acco, Khirbet Usa, Tell Bireh, Tell Keisan, Gil'am, Tell Abu Hawam, Shiqmona, Tel Megadim, 'Atlit, Dor, Tel Mevorakh, Michmoret, Tel Poleg, Tel Michal, Apollonia, Tell Abu Zeitun, Tell Qasile, Tell Kudadi, Jaffa, and Bir es-Saba'.

Surveys along the coastal region have generally demonstrated that not only the actual coast (especially of the northern part of the old area of Philistia) but the adjoining inland regions were heavily settled. In the region of Acco and also in the mountainous area of the Galilee, surveys show a dense level of rural settlement, many at sites not previously occupied (*ALB II*: 374, 380, 385). Surveys of sites along the coast indicate that every river mouth and bay had a settlement with an anchorage to receive ships. There was also evidently extensive rural settlement inland in the Sharon plain. These Sharon settlements appear to have expanded greatly at this time, many of the sites apparently never having been settled previously (*ALB II*: 406–407).

In the coastal region between Nahal Poleg and Jaffa, O. Tal has noted the number and size of settlements and also the existence of 'core' and 'peripheral' settlements (Roll and Tal 1999: 207–11); that is, many of the main urban settlements ('core cities') appear to have 'satellite towns' which suited the development of the region. Further south the Shephelah seems to show the same heavy use of the available land resources. Any differences between different parts of the Shephelah may be due to the mode of the surveys rather than actual differences (*ALB II*: 417–18). All these inland settlements served as the hinterland to the coastal cities for food production and other agricultural products needed by the urban dwellers.

Many sites have shown evidence of some sort of fortress building during the Persian period, indicating that they might have been part of the Persian defensive strategy. These include Hazor, Acco, Tel Chinnereth, Shiqmona, Gil'am, Tell Abu Hawam, Tel Megadim, Sa'sa', Gush-Halav, Megiddo, Strato's Tower, Nahal Tut, 'En Hofez, Dor, Tel Mevorakh, Michmoret, Tel Michal, Tell Abu Zeitun, Tell Kudadi, Tell Qasile, Rishon le-Zion, Jaffa, Ashdod, and Tell el-Hesi.

The area of what was ancient Philistia was marked by two particular archaeological characteristics (*ALB II*: 422): first, much of the population of the area seems to have been Phoenician in material culture—the 'penetration and settlement of the Phoenicians into previously Philistine territories in the Persian period is evident at almost every new excavation' (*ALB II*: 419). This does not necessarily mean Phoenician occupation or even Phoenician colonization since much of it could be accounted for by trade goods and cultural diffusion (Grainger 1991: 18–19). Secondly, Greek and Cypriot remains are found in nearly every excavation site. Evidence of Greek merchants has been found especially at Jaffa, Dor, and Acco. This also agrees with trade and cultural influence rather than the actual presence of large numbers of Greeks.

## 2.4. Idumaea and Arabia (including Transjordan)

NB: This section includes the coastal and Philistine cities from Gaza south, since these seem to have been under ‘Arabian’ control during much or all the Persian period. For a further discussion of this question, see §7.3.3.

### 2.4.1. Individual Sites

#### 2.4.1.1. Tell Zakariya (Azekah)

**Lipschits** (2003) ‘Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.’; *NEAEHL*, I: 123-24.

This site has been widely identified as ancient Azekah. It was excavated by F.J. Bliss and R.A.S. Macalister at the end of the nineteenth century. Since this was one of the early Palestinian digs, it is perhaps not surprising that the stratigraphy is somewhat uncertain. The city was destroyed at the end of Iron II, presumably by the Babylonians. Persian-period remains are meagre but do exist, suggesting a resettlement of the site in the late sixth or early fifth century BCE (Lipschits 2003: 343).

#### 2.4.1.2. Tel Maresha (Tell eş-Şandahanna)

*ALB* II: 450; *NEAEHL*, III: 948-57; *OEANE*, III: 412-13.

The ancient city of Maresha was especially important in the Hellenistic period. The site was first excavated by F.J. Bliss and R.A.S. Macalister in 1898–1900, who distinguished a ‘Jewish’ (Israelite) and two ‘Hellenistic’ layers and then by A. Kloner in 1989 to 1993 (investigation of the caves took place in the 1970s and 1980s as well). In spite of the unsatisfactory nature of the original excavation, subsequent interpretation of the reports suggests that evidence for the Persian period was found, on the basis of the pottery catalogue. The recent excavations found Persian remains beneath the large Hellenistic tower on the north-western part of the mound. The lower city, which surrounds the mound, includes many caves which were a part of the habitations. Some of the caves show evidence of being inhabited in the Persian period. Two important economic activities for the ancient city seem to have been olive production and the raising of doves. The evidence for these is mainly from the Hellenistic period, however. The burial tombs also all seem to date to the third and second centuries. Some ostraca with names containing the theophoric element Qos/Qaus have been dated to the Persian period.

#### 2.4.1.3. Lachish

**Aharoni** (1975) *Investigations at Lachish*; *ALB* II: 447-50; **Ahlström** (1980) ‘Is Tell ed-Duweir Ancient Lachish?'; **G.I. Davies** (1982) ‘Tell ed-Duweir = Ancient Lachish'; *OEANE*, III: 317-23; **Ussishkin** (1978) ‘The Excavations at Tel Lachish—1973–1977'; (1983) ‘Excavations at Tel Lachish—1978–1983'; (1996) ‘Excavations and Restoration Work at Tel Lachish 1985–1994'.

The location of Lachish is now almost universally accepted as Tell ed-Duweir. The Wellcome-Marston Archaeological Research Expedition led by J.L. Starkey excavated the site from 1932 to 1938. The stratigraphy has been a problem but now seems to be settled by the new excavations of Aharoni (1966; 1968) and, especially, Ussishkin (1973–87). Level II, which had been destroyed by a major conflagration, was interpreted as representing the end of the Judaean monarchy by the Babylonian conquest. The reports on the excavations in the 1930s unfortunately labelled everything after the Judaean monarchy as ‘stratum 1’, while the recent excavations of Ussishkin only occasionally involved stratum 1. This means that clearly distinguishing the Persian from the Hellenistic is problematic. The two main structures that seem to be Persian are the city gate and the ‘Residency’ (*ALB II*: 448–49). The outer and inner gates on the west side were evidently already in use during the early part of the Persian period. Two Persian-period houses were found not far away. The Residency was a large building with a courtyard on the summit of the mound. Attic ware found on the floors suggests 450–350 BCE for its date. A nearby temple (the ‘solar shrine’) has been much discussed. Dated to the Persian period by the original excavators, Aharoni (1975: 3–11) argued for a Hellenistic dating; however, the most recent opinion sees the temple as Persian in origin (*OEANE*, IV: 322–23; *ALB II*: 447–50, 479–80). In addition, a large number of limestone altars seem to date from the same time. One of these is inscribed with an Aramaic(?) inscription, apparently with the word *lbnt*’ (‘incense’) on it (cf. Aharoni 1975: 5–7).

#### **2.4.1.4. Hebron**

**Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 98–100; **NEAEHL**, II: 606–609; **OEANE**, III: 13–14.

Several different areas around the ancient city have been excavated. Tel Hebron was excavated by P.C. Hammond in 1962–64, with more recent excavations under A. Ofer in 1983–86; however, this site seems to have been abandoned in the Persian period. A large Persian-period building stood on nearby Jebel Nimra which has been excavated by I. Magen.

#### **2.4.1.5. Tell ‘Azza/Tell Harube**

**ALB II**: 412–15; **NEAEHL**, I: 49–53, II: 464–67; **OEANE**, I: 38–40, II: 304–305; **E. Stern** (1982) *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible*: 22–29.

The mound of Tell ‘Azza (Tell Harube) was first excavated under the auspices of the Palestinian Exploration Fund in 1922. A number of walls were uncovered in the three trenches cut through the mound, but the reports on the stratigraphy are problematic, and little relating to the Persian period has been identified. W.F.M. Petrie excavated Tell el-Ajjul in 1930–34 and claimed it was ancient Gaza. This identification has not generally been accepted but, again, nothing from the Persian period seems to have been found.

#### **2.4.1.6. *Tel Sera‘ (Tell eš-Šar‘ia)***

*ALB II: 414-15; NEEAHL, IV: 1329-35.*

Excavated in 1972-79 by E.D. Oren, this site has been widely identified with biblical Ziklag. Stratum III seems to be Persian. The site was resettled following a destruction, apparently in the seventh century. Stratum III contained a number of silos and grain pits, including a large brick-lined granary. There were also the remains of a citadel in courtyard style, built on top of an earlier ‘Assyrian’ citadel. A limestone altar and several Aramaic ostraca (receipts?) were recovered from some of the storage pits.

#### **2.4.1.7. *Tell Jemmeh***

*ALB II: 412-14; NEEAHL, II: 667-74; OEANE, III: 213-15.*

Tell Jemmeh was excavated in 1926-27 by Petrie, then from 1970 by G.W. Van Beek. Petrie’s original interpretations have been largely superseded. His best-preserved layer, AB, has been assigned to the Persian period. A large fortress building was first there, replaced by a ‘palace’ and storage building. These were replaced in the final phase of the Persian period with a series of round granaries (so E. Stern [ALB II: 413], though Van Beek dates them to the Ptolemaic period [NEEAEHL, II: 272-73; OEANE, III: 214]); these were spread all over, suggesting there was no longer any settlement as such on the mound. A good deal of Attic pottery was found (including a large red-figured lekythos) but also a jar apparently with a South Arabian inscription. Evidence of camels, apparently for caravans, was another find.

#### **2.4.1.8. *Tel Halif (Tell Khuweilneh; Lahav)***

*ALB II: 450; Borowski (1988) ‘The Biblical Identity of Tel Halif’; Na’aman (1980) ‘The Inheritance of the Sons of Simeon’; NEEAHL, II: 553-60.*

The main excavations were conducted during 1976-89 (most of this time under the direction of J.D. Seger) and found evidence of habitation for most of the period from the Chalcolithic Period to the twentieth century. Although there is no agreed identification for this site, Rimmon (Borowski 1988) and Hormah (Na’aman 1980) are two possibilities. In stratum VIB a fortification complex begun perhaps as early as the ninth century was brought to an end by a violent destruction, apparently by the Assyrian invasion of 701 BCE (judging from the pottery assemblage). Evidence of a brief resettlement turned up in stratum VIA, but this seems then to have been abandoned. Stratum V was identified with the Persian period, with resettlement after perhaps two centuries. It contained evidence of storage pits and also a large building with substantial walls, perhaps a storehouse but perhaps a military building of some sort.

#### **2.4.1.9. *Tel Haror (Tell Abu Hureyra)***

*ALB II: 414; NEEAHL, II: 580-84; OEANE, II: 474-76; Stager (1998) ‘The Impact of the Sea Peoples in Canaan’.*

A number of archaeologists accept the identification with ancient Gerar, but L.E. Stager has argued for Gath (1998: 343). The site was excavated during the period 1982–92 by E.D. Oren who found continuous occupation from the Middle Bronze to the Persian period. After the destruction of the Iron II city (by the Babylonians?), the site was resettled through the fifth and fourth centuries, with much of the Iron II remains levelled. A large building with cobbled floors, another large building with a stone-paved courtyard, grain storage pits, and a cemetery were found. Greek and Cypriot imported objects and an Aramaic ostraca were also uncovered.

#### **2.4.1.10. Arad**

*ABD*, I: 331-36; *Aharoni* (1967) ‘Excavations at Tel Arad’; *ALB II*: 451-52; *NEAEHL*, I: 82-87; *OEANE*, I: 174-76.

This is an important site but also one about which prominent archaeologists have come to some significantly different conclusions (see the summary in *OEANE*, I: 174-76). What most seem to agree on is that the fortress of stratum VI was brought to an end by the Babylonians at the time of Jerusalem’s final siege, but the archaeology, the dating of the previous Iron Age strata, and the possible historical events with which they are to be associated are all disputed. Stratum V held Persian-period remains, indicating a renewed settlement in the fifth and fourth centuries, but these were mainly in twenty pits. The building remains were apparently destroyed by construction in the Hellenistic period. A find of 85 ostraca provided one of the most extensive examples of written remains (§3.2.2). These suggest that Arad was a supply station for the Persian military and administration.

#### **2.4.1.11. Tell el-Far‘ah (South)**

*ALB II*: 414; *NEAEHL*, II: 441-44; *OEANE*, II: 304-305.

To be distinguished from Tell el-Far‘ah (North) in Samaria, this site was excavated by W.M.F. Petrie in 1928–29. Although Petrie found nothing to relate to the Persian period, subsequent interpretations suggest that there are remains of a building with thick walls which seems to be a fortress building similar to the one at Tell Jemmeh. The settlement appears to have been a large one, covering the whole mound. Tombs in the vicinity also yielded Persian-period remains, including a metal couch frame with Phoenician letters.

#### **2.4.1.12. Tel Sheva (Tell es-Saba')**

*ALB II*: 451; *NEAEHL*, I: 167-73; *OEANE*, I: 287-91.

Excavations begun in 1969 by Y. Aharoni have been carried on intermittently by Z. Herzog. The last stratum of Iron II (stratum II) seems to have come to an end late in the eighth century, though the precise cause is debated. There then appears to be a gap of about 300 years before a fourth-century settlement which may have included

a fortress; however, most of the Persian-period finds are from storage pits which seem to have been used for grain. These include more than 50 ostraca that may relate to the supply of rations (see §3.2.2 for a further discussion). Also found were some limestone incense altars.

#### **2.4.1.13. Kadesh-Barnea (*Tell el-Gudeirat*)**

**ALB II: 453; NEEAHL, III: 843-47; OEANE, IV: 365-67; Ussishkin (1995)** ‘The Rectangular Fortress at Kadesh-Barnea’.

The first survey of Tell el-Gudeirat were carried out by C.L. Wooley and T.E. Lawrence in 1914, followed by excavations by M. Dotan in 1956 and R. Cohen in 1976–82. They showed settlement on the site from the tenth century BCE. Both the method of excavation and the interpretation of the results by Cohen have been criticized by Ussishkin (1995). A fortress (Cohen’s ‘Upper Fortress’, though Ussishkin argues there was only one fortress) is thought to have been destroyed about the same time as Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 587/586. An unfortified settlement seems to have existed in the fifth and fourth centuries, though some of the casemate rooms of the previous fortress were used for habitation. Much of the evidence for this phase is found in pits. One of the most interesting finds is a *yhd* seal impression, the only one found outside Judah proper. An ostracon with the inscription ‘škr tb’ (‘good gift’ or something similar) was also assigned to the Persian period (§3.2.2). Since no Hellenistic remains have so far been discovered, this settlement presumably came to an end sometime toward the end of Persian rule.

#### **2.4.1.14. Tell el-Kheleifeh**

**ALB II: 452-53; NEEAHL, III: 867-70; OEANE, III: 293-94; Pratico (1993)**  
*Nelson Glueck’s 1938–1940 Excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh.*

This site on the gulf of Elath was excavated in 1938–40 by N. Glueck whose final report was never published; it has recently been re-evaluated by G.D. Pratico (unpublished PhD thesis). Finds from Iron I to the Persian periods, in five phases, were identified by Glueck. Yet the evidence for dating the earliest phase of building (the ‘casemate fortress’—Glueck’s period I) seems indeterminate; according to Pratico there is only ‘doubtful evidence’ for the ninth century. This was followed by a ‘fortified settlement’ (Glueck’s periods II–IV), which is now dated from the pottery to eighth–sixth centuries BCE. Almost two dozen stamped jar handles have what seems to be an Edomite inscription, ‘to Qausanal, servant of the king’ (*lqws ‘nl ‘bd hmlk*), the script being dated to the late seventh or early sixth century BCE. A final settlement (Glueck’s period V) has yielded only fragmentary remains. It has been dated to the sixth–fourth centuries, including Aramaic and Phoenician ostraca (§3.2.2). Black-glazed Greek pottery was also found. Glueck identified the site with Ezion-geber, which was widely accepted, but Pratico points out that there is no clear archaeological evidence to support this.

#### **2.4.1.15. Rabbath-Ammon**

*ALB II: 454-57; NEAEHL, IV: 1243-52; OEANE, I: 98-102.*

Excavations of this site within the boundaries of the modern city of Amman began with Italian expeditions between the wars and have continued intermittently since, with a variety of sponsoring institutions. The heart of the ancient city was Jebel Qal'a, the hill known as the 'citadel', which contained evidence of settlement from at least as early as the Early Bronze II. The 'Ammonite towers' of the Assyrian-period city had been destroyed at the beginning of the sixth century (presumably by the Babylonians), but some seem to have been rebuilt and used during the Persian period. Some tombs also contained material objects associated with a Persian dating. The overall impression is that the late Iron II city, especially the fortifications, had been in part reused during the Persian period. The pottery of the late Iron II also seems to have continued in use without major modification during the first part of Persian rule.

#### **2.4.1.16. Tell es-Sa'idiyeh**

*ALB II: 455; NEAEHL, IV: 1295-300.*

The first major excavation in this Jordan Valley site was carried out by J.B. Pritchard in the mid-1960s, with J.N. Tubb resuming them beginning in 1985. A large building with a central courtyard, built with mud bricks, seems to be dated to the Persian period (stratum III). It appears to have served as a fortress and perhaps administrative building. Associated with it was found a limestone incense altar, with the word *yknw* (*ALB II: 455*) or *lzkwr* (*NEAEHL, IV: 1296*) engraved on it (the name of the owner, Yekhano or Zakkur?).

#### **2.4.1.17. Tell el-Mazar**

*ALB II: 455; NEAEHL, III: 989-91; OEANE, III: 443-44.*

Excavated in 1977-81 by Kh. Yassine, the site is comprised of a mound and a nearby hillock (also known as Mound A). A large cemetery (on the hillock) was apparently established in the Neo-Babylonian period and continued in use in the Persian, with seals and other Persian-period objects found there. Two strata from the main mound have been identified as Persian. Stratum II (fifth century) held the remains of three poorly constructed buildings of mud brick, each with a central courtyard. The presence of domestic utensils suggested that these were private dwellings. Stratum I (fourth century) showed no evidence of habitation but held a large number of storage pits similar to those found at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh and Deir 'Alla and in Philistia. One interpretation is that these were used for Persian military supplies. Evidence of destruction ending stratum I has been associated with Alexander's invasion. Some Ammonite and Aramaic ostraca were found and have been published (§3.2.2).

#### **2.4.1.18. Tell Hesbân**

*ALB II: 456; Ibach (ed.) (1987) Archaeological Survey of the Hesban Region; Merling and Geraty (eds.) (1994) Hesban after 25 Years; NAEHL, II: 626-30; OEANE, III: 19-22.*

Heshbon, the ancient capital of Moab, was excavated between 1968 and 1978. Although L.T. Geraty (NAEHL, II: 628; OEANE, III: 21) seems to maintain a three-century gap between stratum 16 (Iron II) and stratum 15 (Late Hellenistic), one stratum has been identified as Persian (*ALB II: 456*). It contains sections of the acropolis wall and the remains of a tower, as well as some Aramaic ostraca. The pottery has been labelled ‘Iron IIC-Persian’ and seems to cover both the Neo-Babylonian and Persian period, down to the Hellenistic (J.A. Sauer in Merling and Geraty 1994: 246-47) since many types remained unchanged through this period. Interestingly, it seems to be Ammonite in character even though Heshbon was traditionally a part of Moab. One explanation for this is that Ammon had taken control of this region, or at least dominated it, from the late Iron II.

#### **2.4.1.19. Tell el-‘Umeiri**

*ALB II: 456; Herr (1993) ‘What Ever Happened to the Ammonites?’; OEANE, V: 273-74.*

Strata IV and V are dated to the Persian period. In stratum V was a building that has been interpreted as a Persian administrative centre. Also found were some jar handles with Persian seal impressions containing the inscription *šb' mn*. One interpretation is that the first word in each case is the name ('Shuba') of a governor or other important official, and the second is 'Ammon'. On this view, these are the equivalent of the *yhd* stamps and thus constitute evidence for a province of Ammon (§7.3.3). Stratum IV included the remains of some dwellings.

#### **2.4.1.20. Buṣeirah**

*ALB II: 458.*

This has been widely identified as the ancient Edomite capital Bozrah, though nothing has been found in the way of archaeological or epigraphic remains to confirm this. A large administrative building called the ‘Winged Building’ (Area C) was originally dated as Late Iron, but a pottery find suggests it continued to be used into the Persian period. The pottery found below another building (Area A) indicates it continued to be used throughout the Persian period.

#### **2.4.2. Surveys and Synthesis**

*Aharoni (ed.) (1981) Arad Inscriptions; Bartlett (1989) Edom and the Edomites; (1999) ‘Edomites and Idumaeans’; Beit-Arieh (1995a) Horvat Qitmit; (1995b) ‘The Edomites in Cisjordan’; Bienkowski (1995) ‘The Edomites’; (2001) ‘The Persian Period’; Bienkowski and Sedman (2001) ‘Busayra and Judah’; Bienkowski and van der Steen (2001) ‘Tribes, Trade, and Towns’; Dalley (1984)*

'The Cuneiform Tablet from Tell Tawilan'; **I. Finkelstein** (1995) *Living on the Fringe*; **Homès-Fredericq** (1996) 'Influences diverses en Transjordanie'; **Knauf** (1995) 'Edom: The Social and Economic History'; **Knauf and Lenzen** (1987) 'Edomite Copper Industry'; **Lipschits** (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; **Miller (ed.)** (1991) *Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau*; **J.A. Sauer** (1994) 'The Pottery at Hesban and its Relationships to the History of Jordan'.

The area of Idumaea (whether or not there was a formal province) included parts of the Shephelah, what had once been southern Judah, and the northern Negev. These areas had all suffered at the beginning of the sixth century, either from direct attack by the Babylonians or sharp decline when the central support from Jerusalem ceased (Lipschits 2003: 334-38, 341-46). Settlement was renewed in the Persian period (not until the mid-fifth century at Lachish) with a number of sites around Maresha. Similarly, the southern Judaean hill country had a much reduced number of settlements, down 60 per cent from the end of the Iron Age. Further south, a diminished settlement was re-established in the Beersheba-Arad valleys in the fifth century, but the number of sites had declined by 75 per cent since the end of Iron II.

The main excavated sites in Idumaea showing evidence of Persian-period settlement are Lachish, Maresha, and Tel Ḥalif in the northern part of the area, and in the southern part and the Negev, Tel Sheva, Arad, Kadesh-Barnea, and Tell el-Kheleifeh (*ALB II*: 447). Other Idumaean sites showing Persian period remains from surveys include Khirbet Canaan, Khirbet el-Marjum, Khirbet Tarma, Khirbet el-Hadab, Khirbet Nimra, Tel Zif, Tell Rabud, Khirbet Luzifar, Eshtemoa, and 'Ain 'Arrub (*ALB II*: 443). Some Jews may have remained in the area, but the new settlements seem to have been mainly those of a new population coming from the south and east. These areas were not part of the province of Judah (§7.2.1).

Along the coast south of Gaza a series of sites contained Persian-period remains: Tell Jemmeh, Tell el-Far‘ah (South), Tel Sera, Tell Ruqeish, Sheikh Zuweid, Tell Raphia, Tell Abu Salima, Mount Casius, Rumani, and Tell el-Her (*ALB II*: 421; *NEAEHL*, IV: 1393). The Negev and North Sinai surveys found evidence of a network of small settlements (235 sites in the North Sinai survey) that seem to be related to the road system between the Gulf of Aqaba, Egypt, and the Mediterranean ports, and along the coast between Gaza and Pelusium, including supply depots, way stations, and forts with military personnel whose duty it was to keep the routes open (*NEAEHL*, IV: 1393-94; *OEANE*, IV: 43-44; *ALB II*: 421). This included small settlements along the Darb al-Ghazza (the road connecting the Gulf of Aqaba and the Mediterranean).

One of the main concentrations of settlement seems to have been in the north-western Sinai where the surveys discovered a large number of flourishing settlements in the region of Pelusium (Tell Farama). Another major area of settlement was also up the coast from Pelusium to Gaza. According to literary sources the region south of Gaza to Ienysus (el-Arish? Khan Yunis?) was in the hands of the Arabs (Herodotus 3.5). Gaza itself seems to have been semi-independent, but it is included under Arabia because of its position apparently as an emporium for the spice trade. Despite the importance of Gaza as a port, it was not the only outlet. A

series of landing sites seems to have continued on down the coast. One that appears to have been important was at Tell Ruqeish. Particularly striking was the amount of Greek pottery found throughout the sites, suggesting the important part played by Greeks in the trade of this region. Substantial amounts of Phoenician pottery were also found.

A major problem in the Transjordanian area has been to find evidence of the Persian period. N. Glueck's surveys of the area in the 1930s led him to argue that there was a gap in settlement between the sixth and third centuries (Bienkowski 2001: 348–49). This thesis was subsequently debated at length, though lack of new archaeological data made it difficult to come to a conclusion. Now new digs have altered the situation, especially that at Tell el-'Umeiri with good stratigraphic data covering the transition from Iron II to the Persian period. Yet Iron II pottery seems to have continued in use down to about 400 BCE, well into the Persian period. The pottery alone thus often does not clearly differentiate between late Iron II and the first part of the Persian period (J.A. Sauer 1994: 246–48; Homès-Fredericq 1996: 64; Bienkowski 2001: 349, 352).

Other indications of dating are also less than absolute (Bienkowski 1995: 47–49, 52–53). First, a cuneiform tablet, dated to the succession year of a Darius, was found in the excavations at Tawilan (Dalley 1984). The Darius in the tablet is usually taken to be Darius II, which would date the tablet to 423 BCE, but neither Darius I nor Darius III can be ruled out at this point. Also the tablet was found in an accumulation deposit that built up after the site had been abandoned, which means that it is not even certainly associated with occupation at the site itself. A second indication of dating is a seal impression from Umm el-Biyara which seems to have the inscription 'Qos-Gabr (or Qaus-Gabri), king of Edom' (*qws g[br]/mlk '[dm]*—Bartlett 1989: 213). Since a king of Edom named Gaushgabri is known from an Assyrian inscription of Esarhaddon and also one of Ashurbanipal (*ANET*: 291, 294), a centre point of the king's rule would be about 670 BCE. If correct, this dates the archaeological context where the bulla was dug up, including the pottery in it, but this fact does not remove the difficulty with lack of differentiation of pottery types noted above.

Despite the difficulties, continued study and excavation data have now yielded a number of sites in Transjordan thought to have Persian-period remains, extending from the northern part of the Jordan valley down to the Gulf of Aqaba (Bienkowski 2001: 348–52; Homès-Fredericq 1996: 68–69). The most important of these are Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, Tell el-Mazar, Tell Deir 'Allah, Tell el-'Umeiri, Tell Nimrin, Heshbon, Tell Jalul, Bušeirah, Tell Kheleifeh.

Moab is an exception to this so far. Exactly what the territory of Moab covered at this time is a problem since a city such as Heshbon seems to have been under Ammonite control or domination (§2.4.1.18). What appears to be the site of Dibon, the ancient capital of Moab, has not yielded any Persian-period remains, while the only other significant Persian find was an Aramaic dedicatory inscription found at Kerak (Kir-Moab) (§3.2.2). On the other hand, of the three main sites excavated in the old area of Edom, two had Persian-period remains (Tawilan and Bušeirah; nothing was found at Umm el-Biyara). There is also the copper smelting site of

Khirbet Feinan (Knauf and Lenzen 1987). At this point, it is difficult to say how early copper was smelted in this region, but there is clear evidence from the eighth century. Smelting appears to have continued until about 400 BCE when the Persians lost control of the area.

One of the major questions is the relationship between the old Edomite area in the Transjordanian area and Idumaea in southern Palestine during the Persian period. Unfortunately, this is not as straightforward as one might think. The term ‘Edom/Edomite’ has been used rather promiscuously, and the thesis that Edomites invaded from southern Transjordan and conquered southern Palestine has often been taken as axiomatic (I. Finkelstein 1995: 139–44; Bienkowski in Bienkowski and Sedman 2001: 319–22). Trying to determine ethnicity can be difficult. The presence of the theophoric element ‘Qos/Qaus’ in a name has usually been taken as an indication of an ethnic Edomite. It has been argued that insufficient is known about the worship of the deity to be certain that it was confined to Edomites (Bienkowski in Bienkowski and Sedman 2001: 321), but we go on probabilities, not absolutes. So far, the presence of the element Qos/Qaus has been found only in names with an Edomite association; it thus seems reasonable to continue to use it as a diagnostic element while still recognizing that some uncertainty remains. Yet the cautions expressed are well taken.

The basic situation is that southern Palestine, apparently under Judaean control in the seventh century BCE, has become ‘Idumaea’ by the Hellenistic period. The term ‘Idumaea’ is, of course, only the Greek form of ‘Edom’ (*Idumaia*). It seems unlikely that the region would have taken this name if there had not lived there a significant Edomite population. A number of archaeological and epigraphic considerations suggest Edomite influence on the culture in Idumaea, already beginning in the seventh–sixth centuries BCE (Beit-Arieh 1995b). Edomite-style pottery has been found in a variety of Idumaean and Negev sites from this time, including Tel Malhata, Tel Masos, Tel ‘Ira, Tel ‘Aroer, Tel Arad, Horvat ‘Uza, Horvat Radum, Kadesh Barnea, Horvat Qitmit, and ‘Ein Haṣevah. Neutron analysis of pottery from Horvat Qitmit has suggested that some of it was produced elsewhere, possibly in Edom. On the other hand, much of the ‘Edomite’ pottery seems clearly to have been produced locally. The cultic site of Horvat Qitmit has produced Edomite-style pottery and figurines, and several inscriptions with the name Qaus were identified. An ostraca from Khirbet ‘Uza, a tower fortress, gives a blessing by Qaus.

As has been pointed out, the Edomite pottery and other artifacts are only a portion of those found, others being Judaean and ‘coastal’ (Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001: 27–28). The interpretation of Horvat Qitmit as an Edomite shrine (Beit-Arieh 1995a) is not universally accepted (I. Finkelstein 1995: 139–44; Bienkowski and Sedman 2001: 321–22), the suggestion being that a variety of people may have used it, perhaps including (Edomite or Edomite-influenced) local pastoralists. Not to be overlooked is the inscriptional evidence. Arad Hebrew ostraca 24 (Aharoni 1981: 46–49) seems to be a command to send troops. It apparently ends with the statement, ‘(Send) the men (= troops) to Elisha, lest Edom (i.e. the Edomites) should come there’ (*הַאֲנָשִׁם אֵת אֶלְשֹׁעַ פָּנָה אֶדְם שָׁמָה*) (*h'nšm t' lyš pn tb 'dm šmh*). This suggests that around 600 BCE Edomites of some sort were in some way a

threat to the Arad area. The Aramaic ostraca from Arad and other sites in Idumaea (§3.2.2) yield up a variety of names, but they include many Edomite and Arabic names. Of the theophoric names, the most frequent are those with Qaus, while those with a form of Yhwh are some of the least attested.

None of these data prove an invasion or attack on the region of southern Palestine by Edom or that Edom took political control of it (Beit-Arieh 1995a: 310–15). From an archaeological point of view, however, it is a perfectly reasonable interpretation of the data that the Edomite influence is the result of infiltration into southern Palestine by some of the population of Edom (perhaps over an extended period of time), a view reinforced by the eventual adoption of the name ‘Edom/Idumaea’ for this region. On this question, see further below (§7.3.3).

The catalogue of fortresses throughout most of the region is extensive. Fortified sites have been found in Idumaea at Khirbet Nimra, Khirbet Luzifar, Tel Sheva, Arad; also at Gaza, Tell Jemmeh, Tell el-Far‘ah (South), Tell Sera‘, Tell Haror, Tell Qatif, Ruqeish, Sheikh Zuweid, and Migdol (Tell el-Her) near Pelusium. In the Negev, some seventh-century forts were reused by the Persians: Horvat Ritma, Horvat Masorah, Nahal Ro‘ah (Meşudat ha-Ro‘a), Yatir, and Be‘erotaim; other fortresses were Kadesh-Barnea and Tell el-Khelefeh. In Transjordan were fortresses around Rabbath-Ammon, at Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh in the Jordan Valley, and Heshbon.

## Chapter 3

### ARCHAEOLOGY: WRITTEN MATERIAL

**Eph' al and Naveh** (1998) ‘Changes in Palestine during the Persian Period’; **Israel** (forthcoming) ‘New Achievements in Deciphering Seal Inscriptions’; **Rollston** (2003) ‘Pillaged Antiquities, Northwest Semitic Forgeries, and Protocols for Laboratory Tests’; **Shanks, Stieglitz and Lang** (2003) ‘Real or Fake?’.

Archaeological excavations have turned up a variety of objects with writing of one sort or the other on them. Further objects have appeared on the antiquities market. Some of these are isolated objects, but a number of sizable collections have also been found. Unfortunately, there is a serious problem with forgeries, and the sophistication of the forgers is increasing (Rollston 2003; Israel forthcoming; cf. Eph' al and Naveh 1998). Anything that was not found *in situ* in a documented excavation has to be considered suspect. One would like to think that modern forensic techniques, as well as epigraphic expertise, would easily expose modern fakes (cf. Shanks *et al.* 2003). Sadly, that is not necessarily the case, as C. Rollston has well demonstrated. The situation is such that inauthentic finds may be caught by modern techniques, but there is no such thing as authenticating a find—an expert forgery might pass all the laboratory and epigraphic tests. In other words, many would say we have reached a Popperian situation in which no artifact (obtained outside a proper archaeological context) can be authenticated, only falsified. In any case, the safest objects are those found by proper archaeological work.

This chapter includes all the inscriptional and other written finds from Palestine and elsewhere relating specifically to the Jewish people. For convenience all the Aramaic material from Egypt is treated together even though some of the Aramaic papyri are not Jewish in origin.

#### 3.1. Aramaic Papyri and Ostraca from Egypt

NB: this section includes all the Aramaic material from Egypt even though not all of it (e.g. the Hermopolis and Saqqara papyri) relates to the Jews.

**AP; BM; Bresciana and Kamil** (1965–66) ‘Le lettere aramaiche di Hermopoli’; **Driver** (1957) *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B.C.*; **Eph' al** (1998) ‘Changes in Palestine during the Persian Period’; **Fitzmyer and Kaufman** (1992) *An Aramaic Bibliography*; **Grelot** (1954) ‘Etudes sur le “Papyrus Pascal” d’Eléphantine’; (1972) *Documents araméens d’Egypte*; (1981) ‘Sur le “Papyrus Pascal”’

d'Eléphantine'; **KAI; Koopmans** (1962) *Aramäische Chrestomathie*: ##20-52; **E.M. Meyers** (1994) 'Second Temple Studies in the Light of Recent Archaeology'; **Porten** (1968) *Archives from Elephantine*; (1979) 'Aramaic Papyri and Parchments'; (1996) *The Elephantine Papyri in English*; **Porten and Greenfield** (1974) 'Hermopolis Letter 6'; **Porten and Yardeni** (1993) 'Ostracon Clermont-Ganneau 125(?)'; **Segal** (1983) *Aramaic Texts from North Saqqára*; **TAD; TSSI; Yardeni** (1994) 'Maritime Trade and Royal Accountancy'.

The Aramaic documents from various places are an important source for both details of Persian history and the life and history of certain Jewish communities. Especially important are those from the Jewish colony at Elephantine in Egypt (*AP*; *BM*; Grelot 1972; now newly edited in *TAD*). The papyri mainly represent legal, business, and personal documents relating to this sphere of activities of the community; however, there are certain letters and decrees which form an important witness to Jewish history and religion, for example, the letters to the governor of Judah (*TAD* A4.7-10 = *AP* 30-33) about the rebuilding of the local temple. The study of Porten (1968) has provided an important systematization and interpretation of the data within the documents. For a brief history of the community, see below (§13.6.2). A number of the papyri are discussed and quoted below: the Passover papyrus (*TAD* A4.1 = *AP* 21) and the correspondence regarding the Elephantine temple (§10.1.1).

Regarding other finds in Egypt, the collections published by Bresciana and Kamil (1965–66) and Driver (1957), now re-edited in *TAD*, seem to be the products of non-Jews. The Hermopolis papyri basically represent a family archive of letters, written but apparently never delivered. The documents in Driver are important for understanding the scribal conventions of the Persian administration. The material from Saqqarah (Segal 1983) was not re-edited in *TAD* for the most part. A selection of texts in English translation from the various collections is included in Porten (1996). Some texts, with translation and commentary, from Persian Egypt are found in *KAI* (#267-72) and *TSSI* (#23-29). A list of all texts from Egypt with bibliography is given by Fitzmyer and Kaufman (1992: 53-145).

### 3.2. Inscriptions, Ostraca, and Papyri from Palestine

#### 3.2.1. Wadi Daliyah Papyri and Seals

**Cross** (1969b) 'Papyri of the Fourth Century B.C. from Daliyeh'; (1974) 'The Papyri and their Historical Implications'; (1985) 'Samaria Papyrus 1'; (1988) 'A Report on the Samaria Papyri'; **Gropp** (1990) 'The Language of the Samaria Papyri'; **Lapp and Lapp** (eds.) (1974) *Discoveries in the Wadi ed-Dáliyeh*: 17-24; **Leith** (2000) 'Seals and Coins in Persian Period Samaria'; **Starr** (1975) 'Greeks and Persians in the Fourth Century B.C.'; (1977) 'Greeks and Persians in the Fourth Century B.C.'; **E. Stern** (1992) 'A Hoard of Persian Period Bullae from the Vicinity of Samaria'; **WD; WDSP**.

This section includes all the finds from the Wadi Daliyah, including a horde of seal impressions bought on the antiquities market but which may have come from there.

The artifacts and bones found in a cave in the Wadi Daliyah near the Jordan have been interpreted as the remains of refugees who fled from Alexander's soldiers (Lapp and Lapp 1974; Cross 1969). According to Quintus Curtius (4.8.9–11), while Alexander was in Egypt after taking the Mediterranean coast, the people of Samaria rose up and burned the Greek governor alive. The claim was also made that, as punishment the city was razed, the inhabitants slaughtered or enslaved, and the site resettled with Macedonians, but this is based on Eusebius's *Chronicle* and Syncellus. If so, the human remains at Wadi Daliyah may have been refugees from Samaria who hid in the cave but were caught and killed by the Greek soldiers. The papyri and other objects would have been the few things the refugees had elected to take with them when they fled. Unfortunately, Curtius says nothing about the destruction of the city, and the episode is not even mentioned by Arrian, the main historian of Alexander's activities. This might make the account suspect. If Alexander had already marched away and was not himself in the area at the time of the revolt, it might not have suited Arrian's purpose to include it, but according to Curtius Alexander hurried to the site to punish those guilty of the murder.

Of the papyri, two full documents were published in the late 1980s (Cross 1985; 1988), representing the most complete papyri. Now the rest have been published (*WDSP*), but most are very fragmentary. Reconstruction of the text for many of them has been possible only because of apparently repeated legal formulae and a uniform contract form. Several of the documents have been published as photographs only, without translation, commentary, or even transcription. Most of the documents are deeds of slave sales, but there are also pledges (relating to slaves and perhaps a vineyard in exchange for a loan), a deed of house sale, a consignment of public rooms, and a receipt for repayment of a loan.

Despite the limited range of documents and their poor state of preservation, there is important information about Persian-period Samaria. Samaria is referred to as a 'province', since two papyri are said to be written 'in Samaria the province' (בְּשָׁמַרְיָן מִדִּינָה) [bšmryn mdynt] [*WDSP* 4.1; 5.1]). Governors are named as witnesses: although most of the names have been lost, we appear to have 'before [H]ananiah governor of Samaria' קָרֵם [חֲנַנִּיָּה פָּחוֹת שָׁמַרְיָן) (qdm [h]nnyh pht šmryn [*WDSP* 7.17; also perhaps in *WDSP* 9.14]); the name, however, may be '[A]naniah' (עֲנָנִיָּה) 'nnyh). Another reference to the governor is possibly to someone named 'Joshua', though only one or two letters of the name are preserved in the photograph: '[before Josh]ua son of Sanballat and Hanan the prefect' (לְשָׁוֹעַ) [lyšw' br sn' blt whnn sgn] [*WDSP* 11r.13]). If this reading is correct, it may be the same as the reading on a seal impression (*WD* 23; see below). Apart from Hanan, another prefect is named: 'Isiyaton the prefect' (אִסִּיאָתוֹן) 'sytwn sgn' [*WDSP* 8.12]), and possibly a third: 'Aqabiah [the prefect]' (אֲקַבְּיָה) עֲקַבְּיָה) qbyh [sgn'] [*WDSP* 5.14]).

The names in the documents are mostly Hebrew ones, many Yahwistic (e.g. Jehohanan, Hananiah, Ananiah, Yehonur, Delaiah, Yehopadani, Nehemiah, Yehoshuvah, Mikaiah). Other names are Aramaic, Phoenician, Edomite, Akkadian, and Persian (though names are not necessarily a reliable guide to ethnicity). Most of the slaves have a patronymic included, which is unusual. This might well mean that

these were once free citizens who have become enslaved because of debts. The absence of slave marks on some of them ([לֹא עֲשֵׂם] *rwšm* [l' lyh]: *WDSP* 2.2; cf. also *WDSP* 1.2) seems to confirm this. On the other hand, they are sold ‘in perpetuity’ (*לְעוּלָמָן* *l'm* [*WDSP* 1.4; 2.4; 3.4; 5.5; 6.4; 7.6; perhaps also 4.5; 9.13; 10.8]), and no hint of a release after seven or any other number of years of service is given in any of the documents.

On the legal side, the legal formulary shows a strong affinity with the Neo-Babylonian tradition (*WDSP*, pp. 8-32). This contrasts with that well documented from the Jewish legal papyri in Egypt where the legal tradition is much closer to the Neo-Assyrian. One might ask whether it is a question of the Jewish vs. the Samarian legal tradition; that is, the legal papyri in Egypt are simply one part of a Jewish legal tradition. But that is not at all the case: on the contrary, the later Jewish papyri from the first and second centuries CE (from Murabba‘at and Nahal Hever [*JCH*: 565; *JRSTP*: 106-108]) seem to be in the same tradition as the Wadi Daliyah papyri. Thus, the legal tradition reflected in the Samaria papyri appears likely to be one indigenous to the region, including Yehud, and not confined to Samaria.

Of the more than 170 bullae (lumps of clay stamped with a seal to seal a document) found so far, 40 have been published in preliminary form (E. Stern 1992) and more than 70 in official form (*WD*). When combined with the seals from Yehud, they add greatly to our repertoire of seals with iconography from Palestine in this period and also give an interesting perspective on the population of Samaria about the fourth century. The seals show a variety of motifs, both Greek and Near Eastern, but most seem to have been produced locally (in Phoenicia?). The vast majority of the *bullae* are anepigraphic. M.J.W. Leith treats the seals that she edited under a variety of categories, the most important of which are (1) Hermes and unidentified youths and warriors, (2) Perseus, (3) Heracles, (4) men and women in Persian dress, (5) Dionysian subjects (including satyrs, Eros, Nike), (6) single animals, (7) flanking horses and griffins, (8) flanking sphinxes, and (9) ‘Persian Hero Figure’.

Only a few of the seals and impressions are inscribed. Of those published by Leith (*WD*; cf. Leith 2000), only two have inscriptions (*WD* 23 and 54), both difficult to interpret. One with the image of Perseus (*WD* 54) seems to read ‘*bn*’, which might mean something like ‘stone’; it would be more meaningful if it could be interpreted as ‘*dn*’ ‘lord’ (or even ‘Adonis’) but the *-b-* seems clear in the photograph. The other (*WD* 23), apparently with the image of a boar, is one of two inscribed seal impressions in paleo-Hebrew found at Wadi Daliyah. It has a few letters which seem to be a name, perhaps ‘to Josh[uah]’ ([יְשֻׁעָה] *lyš[w]*). This might coincide with the individual named as ‘son of Sanballat’ in *WDSP* 11r (quoted above), though only a letter or two of the name are now preserved in the photograph. Surprisingly, the other paleo-Hebrew seal impression from Wadi Daliyah is absent from Leith’s collection: the most discussed stamp (*WD* 22) is peculiarly omitted (with only a terse statement, ‘*WD* 22 has been sufficiently published elsewhere’ [*WD*, p. 10 n. 49]). It is, therefore, unfortunately still available only in preliminary form (Cross 1969: especially plates 34-35; 1974: especially 28-29 and plate 61). *WD* 22 apparently reads, ‘[to Is]aiah son of [San]ballat,

governor of Samaria' בֶן־שְׁמַר [bn 'shmr] [lyš 'lyhw bn [sn ]blt pht šmr[n]].

The seals published by Stern (1992) are almost all anepigraphic. Two bullae are said to have the name 'Ishmael', though an inscription on only one seems to be visible on the photographs יִשְׁמָאֵל (yšm 'l, written retrograde [E. Stern 1992: no. 1.1]). Stern divides them into (a) those with eastern-local style and (b) western-Greek style motifs (his third category of 'Persian style' not being represented). In 'eastern-local' style are the motifs of griffins (several), lions (several in various poses), horses (apparently mostly riderless, though some may have riders), a flying bird, and a lily flower. The 'western-Greek' style are divided between nude or semi-nude youths and men and clothed women. They seem to be mostly figures from Greek mythology, including Zeus, Heracles, Hermes, and Aphrodite. On the whole, they tend to parallel those published by Leith (*WD*), except for the bird and lily flower (though cf. *WD* 15A with two sphinxes on either side of a flower).

Several points strike one in examining the seals and impressions in detail (including the horde apparently found in Samaria). The first point is the amount of Greek imagery, though much of this seems to have been mediated through Phoenicia rather than direct borrowing. The seals bearing Greek motifs do not appear to come from a Greek area (at least, for the most part) but represent local borrowing of the imagery. Yet there seems to have been a market for these images, though it is not evident to what extent the owners identified them as figures from Greek mythology. In some cases, they may represent Phoenician interpretation of Greek figures (e.g. Heracles as Melqart), but others are not likely to fall into this category. It cannot be ruled out that the purchaser of the seal simply liked the image or thought ownership would bestow or symbolize sophistication and prestige in the community. If the users recognized the Greek motifs, however, they show no evidence of finding this a problem.

Another point to note is that many of the male figures in Greek style are nude. Whatever objections to nudity there may have been, it did not extend to the use of seals. A further point is that many of seals show a mixed style that has been characterized as Graeco-Persian. This style is probably mediated through Phoenician workshops for most of these seals. The influence of Greek culture in this region was already known by the Persian period and even before (cf. Starr 1975; 1977). Finally, the imagery of the seals and impressions are in many cases shared with the coins found in the Samarian region (§3.4.2).

### **3.2.2. Ostraca and Inscriptions from Palestine**

**Cross** (1964) 'An Ostracon from Nebī Yūnis'; **Dempsey** (1993) 'An Ostracon from Tell Nimrin'; **DiVito** (1993) 'The Tell el-Kheleifeh Inscriptions'; **Dumbrell** (1971) 'The Tell El-Maskhuta Bowls'; **Eph'al** (1998) 'Changes in Palestine during the Persian Period'; **Eph'al and Naveh** (1996) *Aramaic Ostraca of the Fourth Century BC*; **Eshel and Misgav** (1988) 'A Fourth Century B.C.E. Document from Ketef Yeriḥo'; **Fitzmyer and Kaufman** (1992) *An Aramaic Bibliography*; **Glueck** (1971) 'Tell el-Kheleifeh Inscriptions'; **Graf** (1990) 'Arabia during Achaemenid

Times'; **Heltzer** (1989) 'The Tell el-Mazār Inscription n° 7'; **Lemaire** (1974) 'Un nouveau roi arabe de Qedar'; (1994c) 'Epigraphie et numismatique palestiniennes'; (1996a) *Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes d'Idumée au Musée d'Israël*; (2002a) *Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes d'Idumée, II*; **Lozachmeur and Lemaire** (1996) 'Nouveaux ostraca araméens d'Idumée'; **Naveh** (1973) 'The Aramaic Ostraca'; (1979) 'The Aramaic Ostraca from Tel Beer-sheba'; (1981) 'The Aramaic Ostraca from Tel Arad'; (1985) 'Published and Unpublished Aramaic Ostraca'; (1992) 'Aramaic Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions from Tell Jemmeh'; **Rabinowitz** (1956) 'Aramaic Inscriptions of the Fifth Century B.C.E.'; **Rainey** (1989) 'The "Lord of Heaven" at Tel Michal'; **Shea** (1977) 'Ostracon II from Heshbon'; **Yassine and Teixidor** (1986) 'Ammonite and Aramaic Inscriptions'.

Many of the excavations in Palestine and the region have produced a few ostraca, not always easily read or interpreted. Only a sample of the publications can be listed here. A number of these have been published separately by Naveh (1985, 1992) and others; see also the convenient survey of finds in Lemaire (1994c: 262-78) and Fitzmyer and Kaufman (1992: 28-34); cf. also Eph'al (1998). Most of the Persian-period ostraca in Palestine are either Phoenician (§3.3) or Aramaic. However, what seems to be a Hebrew ostracon with the inscription 'škr tb' (שְׁקָר תּוֹב) is known from Kadesh-Barnea (*NEAEHL*, III: 847). It seems to be made up of *tb* ('good') but 'škr' is variously translated as 'gift', 'tribute', or 'intoxicating liquor' [*DNWSI*: 123-24]).

Nearly seventy ostraca in Aramaic were found at Tel Beersheba, dated to the fourth century BCE (Naveh 1973; 1979), though many are too difficult to read to be useful. Some 18 of them are legible. Approximately a hundred Aramaic ostraca, dated to the late fifth century, were dug up in the excavations at Arad (Naveh 1981). Also, the horde of more than 400 ostraca bought on the antiquities market (Eph'al and Naveh 1996; Lemaire 1996a; 2002a; Lozachmeur and Lemaire 1996) seems to come from the same general area of Idumaea, but is dated to the fourth century. These are all similar in being mostly receipts or orders for supplies, usually wheat or barley but also flour, wine, oil, olives, straw, wood. Exactly what sort of administrative unit they were connected with is not clear. It could be a way station relating to official travellers or the Persian postal system, or it could be a local Persian military unit. Some of the receipts might be related to taxes. The ostraca are a valuable resource of names. Of the thirty or so names found in the Beersheba ostraca, about a third contain Edomite deities (usually Qaus/Qos), another third are Arabic, and the final third is made up mostly of common Semitic names (Naveh 1979: 194). The other Idumean ostraca of the fourth century contain a mixture of Edomite and Arabic names (Eph'al and Naveh 1996: 15-16), though a few Hebrew names are present. In the Arad ostraca, however, Hebrew names predominate (Naveh 1981: 176). Of particular interest is reference to a 'house of Yhw' in the most recent publication of the Idumaean ostraca (Lemaire 2002a: 149-56); on this see further below (§10.2.1).

Tell el-Kheleifeh (which may or may not be ancient Ezion-geber) has yielded several objects from the Persian period (Glueck 1971; DiVito 1993). A number of seal impressions are probably pre-Persian, as is a list of Edomite names in Aramaic

script (about 700 BCE?), and a juglet with a single name (also about 700 BCE?); however, there are several ostraca which seem to be from the Persian period. Of those legible, three have only names, single names in two cases. A couple of ostraca seem to be receipts or authorizations for goods. An ostracon in Aramaic script (about 400 BCE?) has been interpreted as a receipt for wine: ‘tax collector: jars [?] wine, jars 2 [] wine (1 + ?)’ ([? + 1] [] חֶמֶר טְבִיאן [?] קָרְפָלוֹם *qrplgs tpy'n* [?] *hmr tpy'n* 2 [] *hmr* [1+ ?]). The word ‘tax collector’ seems to be a borrowing from Greek (*karpologos*). Another ostracon in Aramaic script (fifth–fourth century) is difficult to read. It has the word ‘silver’ (*ksp*) and possibly an abbreviation for ‘wheat’ (*h<ntn>*). The two marks on a jar have been interpreted as a South Arabian inscription and thus as evidence of trade links with the southern Arabain peninsula. The jar may be pre-Persian, though some incense altars from the fifth century might be evidence for such trade links (cf. also Graf 1990: 137).

Among the ostraca from Tell el-Far‘ah (Naveh 1985: 114–16), the one labelled #1 seems to refer to a field of 35 *kor*, that is, a field that requires 35 *kor* (c. 7500 litres) of seed to sow. This would be a huge field to take so much seed and might therefore be a governmental estate, as suggested by Naveh, if the ostracon is correctly read; however, it is admittedly rather uncertain.

A rare parchment find comes from Ketef Jeriho, a cave near Jericho (Eshel and Misgav 1988). It seems to contain a list of names in duplicate and has been interpreted as a record of money loaned and the amounts so far repaid.

### **3.2.3. Seals and Seal Impressions from Palestine**

**ALB II:** 535–54; **Avigad** (1958) ‘New Light on the MSH Seal Impressions’; (1976) *Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive*; **Avigad and Sass** (1997) *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*; **Barak and Amorai-Stark** (1989) ‘Seals and Seal Impressions’; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*: 259–68, 276–83; **Colella** (1973) ‘Les abréviations ☩ et ✠ (XP)’; **Collon** (1987) *First Impressions*; **Cross** (1969a) ‘Judean Stamps’; **Delavault and Lemaire** (1975) ‘La tablette ourgaritique RS 16.127’; **Goldwasser and Naveh** (1976) ‘The Origin of the Tet-Symbol’; **Herr** (1992) ‘Epigraphic Finds from Tell el-Umeiri during the 1989 Season’; **Keel** (1995) *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette*; **Keel and Uehlinger** (1998b) *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*; **Lapp** (1963) ‘Ptolemaic Stamped Handles from Judah’; **Lipiński** (1989) “Cellériers” de la province de Juda’; **E.M. Meyers** (1985) ‘The Sheshmith Seal and the Judean Restoration’; **E. Stern** (1971) ‘Seal Impressions in the Achaemenid Style in the Province of Judah’; (1982) *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible*; (1992) ‘A Hoard of Persian Period Bullae from the Vicinity of Samaria’; (1994b) ‘Notes on the Development of Stamp-Glyptic Art in Palestine’; **WD; Zorn** (1995b) ‘Cross-shaped “Tet” Stamp Impressions’; **Zorn, Yellin and Hayes** (1994) ‘The *m(w)sh* Stamp Impressions and the Neo-Babylonian Period’.

A whole range of seal impressions and some seals, both inscribed and uninscribed, are associated with the Persian period. Although many were found *in situ* in the process of excavation, others have been obtained through the antiquities market and are thus of unknown provenance and, in some cases, are at risk of being forgeries

(see p. 54 above; Avigad and Sass 1997: 453–60; Keel 1995: 189, 263–65; Collon 1987: 94–96). There are many seal impressions that seem to be from imported seals, including those in Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, and Greek style (E. Stern 1982: 196–201; 1994b; *ALB II*: 535–40). Others were produced locally but imitate the styles of the imported seals, though all are stamp seals; no cylinder seals have been found in Palestine for this period (except for one near Pelusium [*ALB II*: 539]). Our focus here will be on those seals produced locally for administrative use; for the wider use of seals under the Persian empire, see the surveys noted earlier in this paragraph and also Leith (*WD*: especially pp. 12–35) and *HPE* (see the index).

Unfortunately, most of the Judean seals, impressions, and bullae for the Persian period are not collected in Avigad and Sass (1997). The most up-to-date summary is found in Carter (1999: 259–68, 276–83) and E. Stern (*ALB II*: 535–54; see also E. Stern 1982: 196–214; Avigad 1976). A good deal of debate has taken place over the past several decades, but a consensus seems to be developing around a number of points. Of particular importance are the ‘Yehud stamps’, including some stamped on jars and jar handles. Many of these have nothing but the name on them except perhaps a motif of some sort, but their distribution is of potential significance, for example, as supporting evidence in determining the boundaries of the province of Judah. Three sorts of seal types seem to have been used in producing these local types: (1) scaraboids, in the shape of an Egyptian scarab; (2) conicoids, in an octagonal conical shape and made of chalcedony material; (3) signet rings, which seem to have been in wide use, judging from the seal impressions, but only a small number of which have been found.

### 3.2.3.1. Yehud Stamps

It is now generally agreed that the two, three, or four letters of these stamps indicate the name of the province of Judah in its Aramaic form of Yehud ( יהודה yhd, יְהוּד yhwd in plene spelling, יה yh in abbreviated form) and that the Yehud stamps are official marks of the administration for various purposes. More than 75 seal impressions are known with the *yhd* spelling of Yehud, distributed among the sites of Ramat Rahel, Tell en-Nasbeh (Mizpah), Moṣah, Jerusalem, Jericho, and En-gedi (Carter 1999: 266). Nearly another fifty are known with the plene spelling *yhwd*, especially from Ramat Rahel but a few from Jerusalem, Tell en-Nasbeh, and En-gedi (Carter 1999: 267). Of those with the abbreviated form *yh*, more than 130 have been found at Ramat Rahel, Tell en-Nasbeh, Moṣah, Jerusalem, Jericho, and En-gedi (Carter 1999: 266). Five have only the letter *h*, though these have also been thought to belong to the category of Yehud seals (E. Stern 1982: 202–203; *ALB II*: 548).

### 3.2.3.2. Stamps with Personal Names

Some, but not all, of these also have the name ‘Yehud’ on them. A number have the title ‘governor’ (שָׁרֵךְ *phw*); others just have a personal name. The reading *phw* is now generally accepted (Avigad 1976: 5–7). F.M. Cross (1969: 24–26) had earlier argued for *phr* ('potter') because of seal impressions on jars, but the same word then turned up on bullae and even on coins, confirming the view that it means

‘governor’ or the like (cf. E. Stern 1982: 204–206). E. Lipiński (1989) accepted the reading *p̄hw*’ but argued for the meaning ‘cellarer, one in charge of stores’; however, this argument has not seemed to commend itself to scholars. The main inscriptions include ‘Yehud, the governor’ (יהָדָה פְּחֹוֹן *yh[w]d phw*’), ‘Yehud, Hananah’ (יהָדָה יְהָנָה *yhwd hnnh*), ‘Yehud, Yeho‘ezer the governor’ (יהָדָה יְהָוֵעֶזֶר פְּחֹוֹן *yhwd yhw‘zr phw*’), ‘to Yeho‘ezer’ (לִיהָוֵעֶזֶר *lyhw‘zr*’), ‘to Ahzai the governor’ (אַחֲזָי פְּחֹוֹן *l'ahzy phw*’), ‘Urio, Yehud’ (אוּרִיוֹ יְהָדָה *awryw yhwd*’), ‘to Elnathan, the go[vernor]’ (לְאַלְנָתָן פְּחֹוֹן *l'alntn phw*’ [Avigad 1976: 5–7]).

Of similar provenance is a seal with the legend, ‘for Shelomith, handmaid of Elnathan the go[vernor]’ (אַמְתָּה אַלְנָתָן פְּחֹוֹן *l'slmyt 'mt lntn p[hw]*’). The exact connotation of ‘handmaid’ (אַמְתָּה *‘amā*) is debated but is probably the female equivalent of ‘servant’ (עֶבֶד ‘eved), which, in contexts such as this, means an official of the king (Avigad 1976: 11–13). On this interpretation which is widely accepted, Shelomith was a woman with considerable authority in the administration, perhaps in charge of the official archives of tax receipts and the like; she may also have been the concubine or wife of the governor, though this is less certain. E.M. Meyers (1985) has argued that Shelomith was the daughter of Zerubbabel (1 Chron. 3.19) and that Elnathan married her to unite with the Davidic family which would be advantageous for his office of governor. See further below (§7.2.4).

### **3.2.3.3. Other Inscribed Stamps**

One group has the name Yehud plus the letter תֵּט *tet* (Colella 1973; Delavault and Lemaire 1975; Goldwasser and Naveh 1976; Zorn 1995b). The meaning of the *tet* is still uncertain, though the suggestion that it means a measure of volume is beginning to be accepted (E. Stern 1982: 206; *ALB II*: 551). As already argued by Lapp (1963) and others (e.g. Avigad 1976: 25) and now confirmed by stratified finds in Jerusalem (Carter 1999: 145, 301), these do not belong to the Persian period but should be dated to the Hellenistic (*ALB II*: 547). Another group that should now also be dated as post-Persian are the ‘Jerusalem’ יְרַשְׁלָם (*yršlm*) seals (Carter 1999: 88–89, 301; *ALB II*: 547).

A much-discussed group is the *mōṣā* seals, from the single word מַצְהָ (mazha, *msh*) on them (Avigad 1958). This is often interpreted as from the name of the village Moṣah; if so, it seems strange that none of the stamps have been found there. For what exactly the village was significant is not known, though Avigad originally suggested three possibilities: that the village was a centre for tax collection, that it produced a special wine that was marked by stamping the name on the jar, or that the stamp was used to mark tax-free wine from the governor’s estate at Moṣah (Avigad 1958). These stamps have all been found in the old area of Benjamin (though including Jerusalem). Similar stamps have been found at Gibeon in a stratum which originally suggested to Stern (1982: 207–209) a date early in the Persian period, but some of these stamps are on jar handles identical with those from Gibeon dating from the Neo-Babylonian period. This fits with both the early dating and the identification of them with produce from the estate of the governor. (Cf. Neh. 3.7 which mentions the governor’s estate in Gibeon.) It has now been argued that these should all be dated to the Neo-Babylonian period and thus pre-

Persian (Zorn, Yellin and Hayes 1994; *ALB II*: 335–38, 547). This interpretation should be received with caution, however, since several *msh* stamps have been found in the Persian stratum in excavations in Jerusalem (Carter 1999: 144–45, 266). Although it is possible that a Neo-Babylonian seal could be preserved as an ‘heirloom’ into the Persian period, that hardly seems the explanation for all four found so far in a Persian context.

### **3.2.3.4. The Uninscribed (Anepigraphic) Seals**

These are widely distributed (Carter 1999: 259–60; *ALB II*: 540–43; E. Stern 1982: 199–200), having been found at the nine Judaean sites of Bethel, Tell en-Naṣbeh, Har Adar, Ḥorvat Zimri, Ramat Rahel, Jerusalem, Jericho, En-Gedi, and El-Jib (Gibeon), as well as other sites in Palestine (e.g. Samaria, Shechem, Tell Keisan, Shiqmona, Atlit, Dor, Tel Michal). Stern (*ALB II*: 540–42) divides them into three styles (drawing especially on the Wadi Daliyeh impressions [on which, see §3.2.1]): (1) a local style that continues the ‘old Phoenician-Israelite’ tradition (including sphinxes; griffins; heads of birds, bulls, and rams; lions; horses and horses with riders; rosettes, lotus flowers); (2) a Persian style, with ‘Babylonian-Persian’ motifs, frequently showing the Persian king; a Judaean variant does not have the monarch but the well-known Persian motif of a lion (in various attitudes) or occasionally a bull (but see below); and (3) a Greek style, with motifs from Greek mythology or military scenes. The placing of stamps in these categories—or even the categories themselves (see below)—would evidently not be agreed on by everyone. This especially applies to the large number of seals with a lion image (more than sixty), which Keel and Uehlinger (1998b: 386–87) see as an adapted motif that nevertheless has pre-exilic Judaean precedents and may well represent Judah or perhaps is even a symbol of Yhwh. Some images of an animal with a solar disk above its head have often been interpreted as a bull, but Keel and Uehlinger (1998b: 387–89) suggest that it is more likely another version of the lion, with the solar disk representing Yhwh.

Several seals and seal impressions from the Persian period found at Tel Michal (Barak and Amorai-Stark 1989), illustrate the problems with categories. Like the Wadi Daliyeh seals and bullae they tend to show a local style that contains both Near Eastern and Graecized elements, which might be characterized as Graeco-Phoenician or Graeco-Persian. One bulla, found in a silo and probably sealing a transaction document, was stamped on both sides, with an eagle holding a snake(?) and a mare (cow?) nursing her offspring. Others have a winged sphinx in stylized form, a Triton (half-man, half-fish from Greek art), a woman seated before an altar, and a bulla with a horse (or two horses?).

On the Wadi Daliyeh seals, see above (§3.2.1).

## **3.3. Phoenician Texts**

Cross (1979) ‘A Recently Published Phoenician Inscription’; Lemaire (1994c) ‘Epigraphie et numismatique palestiniennes’; Peckham (1968) *The Development of the Late Phoenician Scripts*; Naveh (1995) ‘Phoenician Ostraca from Tel Dor’; Vance (1994) ‘Literary Sources for the History of Palestine and Syria’.

Unfortunately, there is no good collection of Phoenician and Punic texts easily available, though a number of extant Phoenician texts from various periods are found in *KAI* and *TSSI* 3 (cf. also the survey in Vance 1994). Texts from the Persian period include *KAI* (#9-11, 13, 14, 27-29, 37, 38, 52, 277) and *TSSI* 3 (#23, 25-29, 33, 34, 37, 38, 42); see also the survey in Lemaire (1994c: 267-69). A number of ostraca with Phoenician inscriptions have also been found in excavations of areas under Phoenician control or with a Phoenician presence along the Palestinian coast, though these are often difficult to decipher.

Of particular importance is the Eshmunazar sarcophagus inscription (*KAI* 14; *TSSI* 28) which gives information on the territory controlled by Sidon (lines 18-20):

וְעַד יְהוָן לְנִין אֲרֹן מֶלֶכְם אַיִת דָאֵר וּוְיִפְיָ אֲרֹצָתָה דָגֵן האֲדָרָה אֲשֶׁר בָּשָׂר שָׂרָן לְמַדָּח  
עַצְמָה אֲשֶׁר פָּעָלָה וַיְסִפְנָנוּ עַל חַנְבָּל אָרֶץ לְנִנְמָ לְצִדְרָנָם לְעַלְמָן  
'yt d'r wypy' r'st dgn h'drt 's b'sd šrn lmdt 'smt 's p'l wyspnmm 'lt gbl 'r's lnmm  
lsdmh l'l[m]

And then the Lord of Kings gave to us Dor and Jaffa, fertile lands of Dagon (grain), which are in the plain of Sharon, a gift for the deeds that I performed. And we added them to the border of the land for a possession of the Sidonians fore[ver].

### 3.4. Coins

#### 3.4.1. Yehud

**ALB II:** 555-70; **Barag** (1985) ‘Some Notes on a Silver Coin’; (1986-87) ‘A Silver Coin of Yohanan the High Priest’; **Bethyon** (1986) ‘The Provincial Government of Persian Period Judea’; **Bivar** (1985) ‘Achaemenid Coins, Weights and Measures’; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*; **Deutsch** (1990-91) ‘Six Unrecorded “Yehud” Silver Coins’; (1994-99) ‘Five Unrecorded “Yehud” Silver Coins’; **Edelman** (1995b) ‘Tracking Observance of the Aniconic Tradition’; **Elayi and Lemaire** (1989) ‘Bulletin d’information sur la Syrie-Palestine: Numismatique’; (1991) ‘Bulletin d’information: Numismatique’; (1995) ‘Bulletin d’information: I. Syrie-Phénicie-Palestine: Numismatique’; (1999) ‘Bulletin d’information: I. Syrie-Phénicie-Palestine: Numismatique’; (2003) ‘Bulletin d’information: I. Syrie-Phénicie-Palestine’; **Fried** (2003) ‘A Silver Coin’; **Gerson** (2001) ‘Fractional Coins of Judea and Samaria in the Fourth Century BCE’; **Lemaire** (1994c) ‘Epigraphie et numismatique palestiniennes’; **Machinist** (1994) ‘The First Coins of Judah and Samaria’; **Meshorer** (1982) *Ancient Jewish Coinage*, I; (1990-91) ‘Ancient Jewish Coinage, Addendum I’; **Meshorer and Qedar** (1991) *The Coinage of Samaria*; (1999) *Samarian Coinage*; **Mildenberg** (1979) ‘Yehud’; (1988) ‘Yehūd Münzen’; (1998) *Vestigia Leonis*; (2000) ‘On Fractional Silver Issues in Palestine’; **Rappaport** (1981) ‘The First Judean Coinage’; (1984) ‘Numismatics’; **Sellers** (1962) ‘Coins of the 1960 Excavation at Shechem’; **Spaer** (1986-87) ‘Jaddua the High Priest?’.

The use of coins as a medium of exchange (as opposed to weighed metal) was apparently a Greek invention, but the practice of minting coins was adopted by the Persians already under Darius I about 515 when the golden *daric* first appeared

(Bivar 1985: 617, 621). Early coins are rare, being the gold *daric* and the silver *siglos*, but these were minted mainly to pay mercenaries, rather than as a commercial means of exchange within the Persian empire, and are hardly represented among the finds in Palestine. The use of coins became common only after about 450 BCE and represented primarily local issues. It was apparently not Persian practice to take charge of minting money (apart from the *darics* and *sigloi* mentioned above), and there seems little evidence of satrapal coinage, for even those bearing the name of a satrap show all the hallmarks of being local currency (Mildenberg 1990: 138-39 [= 1998: 80-81]). With the abundance of local coins there was evidently no need for the satrap of Ebir-nari to use resources in minting, and the Persian administration felt reasonably happy with letting the provinces and cities get on with producing small denominational coins.

Knowledge of the local currency of Palestine has increased enormously in the past few decades, especially with the find of two coin hordes in the region of Samaria and Nablus. There has also been a steady accumulation of coins from Judah (for overviews, see *ALB II*: 555-70; Lemaire 1994c: 279-87; see also Meshorer 1982; Rappaport 1984; Meshorer and Qedar 1991; 1999; the essays in Mildenberg 1998). No Persian issues have been found in Palestine (with one possible exception [Elayi and Lemaire 1989: 163]), and the Palestinian mintings are all local silver coins (minting in gold was apparently a Persian royal monopoly).

In the early days of studying the coinage of Palestine, the term 'Philisto-Arabian coinage' was invented to cover the coins from the central and southern part of the region, including the coins of Yehud and Samaria. These are minted on the Attic standard of weight and borrow Greek motifs. New finds allow us to delineate the coins from Judah and Samaria, though their affinities with the Philisto-Arabian general group are still clear (Mildenberg 1979 [= 1998: 67-76]). The Yehud coins tend to follow Athenian prototypes (in contrast to the Samarian coins which follow Sidonian, Tyrian, and Cilician, in addition to Athenian). Although most coins have not come from documented excavations, of the five Yehud coins whose provenance is known, four come from the Jerusalem area and one from Beth-Zur (cf. Carter 1999: 262, 268-69). This, their general uniformity, and the fact that other Yehud coins were apparently found south of Jerusalem suggests a single mint at Jerusalem (Meshorer 1982: 30-31), but we cannot be certain.

Mildenberg divides most of the Judaean coinage from the Persian period into three groups (1979 [= 1998: 67-76]; cf. Machinist 1994: 366-71). These are small Judaean coins, apparently on Attic weight standard, and all seem to date to the fourth century. The first group seems to be the earliest with rather crudely rendered lettering and images, suggesting that the skill of the die makers needed developing. Most of them have the head of Athena on the obverse and her owl on the reverse, along with the inscription 'Yehud' (*yhd*, *yhwd*) in paleo-Hebrew letters (often written in retrograde). The second group shows much improvement in the skill of the engravers, with the *yhd* much more clearly rendered. New motifs appear, including the lily, Egyptian falcon, and the head of the Persian king. The third group is characterized foremost by a new legend: instead of *yhd* is the Hebrew inscription 'Hezekiah the governor' (*yhzqyh hphh* [one now includes *yh* as well]). Since these

have so far all been found in the area of Judah, it seemed inescapable that the governor in question was the governor of Yehud; now the presence of *yh* on another one of these coins seems to confirm that they are Yehud coins (Deutsch 1990–91: יְהוּדִיָּה הַפְּחָד יְהֹ וְהַזְּגָהָה *yhzqyh hphh yh*). The obverse has a facing head of Greek design and the Athenian owl on the reverse. The execution of the engraving is not generally of a very high standard. One coin dated before Alexander has a human left ear on it (Deutsch 1994–99). (On the question of whether this is the same individual as ‘Ezekias the high priest’ in Josephus, see §7.2.4. On those without the title ‘the governor’, see below.)

These three groups do not take in all the known coins from Yehud. At least three unique coins are known. A coin originally interpreted as a Hezekiah coin, with the same motifs but with ‘blundered lettering’, has now had its inscription read as ‘Johanan the priest’ (יוֹחָנָן הַכֹּהֵן *ywhnn hkwhn*) and dated no earlier than the mid-fourth century (Barag 1985; 1986–87). At first Mildenberg apparently had reservations about this reading (private communication, quoted in Betlyon 1986: 639 n. 26). Assuming the reading is correct, this individual might be a high priest, but this is not certain since he might be a Persian official who happened to be of a priestly family (Mildenberg 1988: 724–25). L.S. Fried (2003) argues he is the same as the high priest Jehohanan mentioned in Elephantine (*TAD* A4.7//A4.8 = *AP* 30//31) and also the one who killed his brother in the temple (§13.7). A second coin that is so far unparalleled has the head of Athena on one side and an owl and the legend ‘Jaddua’ (Յածս *ydw*) on the other; the coin has been dated to the first half of the fourth century BCE (Spaer 1986–87). Some have connected it to a high priest Jaddua, but this is no more than speculation. Also, Meshorer and Qedar point out that the fabric is ‘very much Samarian and is different from the Yehud coins’ (1999: 23–24); therefore, they include it among the Samarian coins ‘with some reservations’.

One Yehud coin differs from all the rest in several ways (Meshorer 1982, I: 21–28 [# 1]; Mildenberg 1979: 183–86 [= 1998: 67–70]). It seems to be a drachm rather than fractional coinage like the other Judaean coins and thus has a weight of 3.29 grams (up to 10 times heavier than other Judaean coinage). Its script is paleo-Aramaic rather than paleo-Hebrew. On the obverse is a bearded head in a Corinthian helmet; on the reverse, a bearded man (a deity?) seated on a winged wheel, along with a head of Bes (a deity of Egyptian origin) in the corner. This coin was first published in the early 1800s and has occasioned a great deal of speculation over the decades. According to one view, it is a picture of Yhwh, the God of Israel (cf. Edelman 1995b: 187–94). This interpretation does not appear to stand up. It was first put forward when the legend was misread as ‘Yahweh’. The Bes figure in the same scene does not seem compatible with the figure of Yhwh (the same would apply if the figure is identified with the satyr Silenus instead of Bes [Edelman 1995b: 192]). In the end, the image does not seem to represent either a Persian or Greek deity but rather seems to be a composite figure representing divinity in general (Mildenberg 1979: 184 [= 1998: 68]). Meshorer (1982, I: 27–28) suggests it was an issue of the governor Bagohi, though there is nothing specific to establish this. It has also been suggested that it was an issue of a Persian authority higher

than the governor of Judah, perhaps the satrap of Syro-Palestine, but as already noted the coinage in Ebir-nari is all local in character (Mildenberg 1990: 138-39 [= 1998: 80-81]). Given Mildenberg's argument that the coin would have been local, Edelman argues that the figure would most logically be Yhwh (1995b: 192), but in the end, although she answers objections to its being Yhwh, she gives no positive evidence that it is Yhwh. To say that a local issue must have the local god ignores the fact that Athena's head is on a number of Yehud issues. The argument that this is Zeus seems as likely as that it is Yhwh. Thus, while the figure might be Yhwh, nothing specifically indicates this.

A footnote should be added about the transition to coins of the Ptolemaic period, since earlier discussions could not always distinguish between Achaemenid-period coins and those of the Hellenistic period. A new series of coins with the legend 'Hezekiah' (*yhzkyh*) alone have been dated by some to the Achaemenid period (Meshorer 1982, I: 17-18, 20, 116-17); however, two points argue that they fit into the early Greek period, in the transition to Ptolemaic rule (Mildenberg 1979 [= 1998: 72-83]; cf. Machinist 1994: 370-71): the lack of the title 'governor' (perhaps in deference to the new Greek overlords) and the motif of the head of a youth in Greek-style curls which has a good resemblance to the head on some Judean coins of the Ptolemaic period. Coinage at the beginning of Greek rule also continues to use *yhd*, though the Hebrew spelling *yh(w)d* starts to appear. (Mildenberg includes the *yhwdh* coins in his list of Persian-period issues [Mildenberg 1979: 192 (= 1998: Taf. XXI, 2-3)], but most now accept that these issues belong to early Greek rule, since this spelling is not found on any Persian-period coins, stamps, or seal impressions [Machinist 1994: 370-71].)

### 3.4.2. Samaria

**Deutsch and Heltzer** (1997) 'Numismatic Evidence from the Persian Period'; **Elayi and Lemaire** (1999) 'Bulletin d'information: I. Syrie-Phénicie-Palestine: Numismatique'; **Gerson** (2001) 'Fractional Coins of Judea and Samaria in the Fourth Century BCE'; **Lemaire** (1994c) 'Epigraphie et numismatique palestiniennes'; **Meshorer and Qedar** (1991) *The Coinage of Samaria*; (1999) *Samarian Coinage*; **Mildenberg** (1990-91) 'Notes on the Coin Issues of Mazday'.

One of the most dramatic increases in primary information for this period is the number of Samarian coins, mainly because of the finding of two coin hoards (one in Nablus and one in Samaria) but also because of individual finds (Meshorer and Qedar 1991; 1999; cf. Gerson 2001). Unfortunately, most of these were not found *in situ* but were purchased on the antiquities market. One of the surprising results of studying these coins is the large number of different types (Meshorer and Qedar [1999] record 224, not including some uncertain ones), with only a few coins representing each type in many cases (Gerson 2001: 117). This is in contrast to the Judean coinage which exhibits only a few types but with a number of coins representing each type. The Samarian coins follow several different prototypes: Sidonian, Tyrian, Cilician, and Athenian (in contrast to Yehud coinage which follows mainly Athenian [Meshorer and Qedar 1999: 32-33; cf. Deutsch and Heltzer 1997]). This

large number of different types for the Samarian coinage is combined with lack of wear, suggesting that most of them have not been circulated very much.

The motifs on the coins fall into several categories. Like the Yehud coinage a number of them show heavy Greek influence: the head of Athena, the head of Arethusa, Heracles, the owl of Athena, the winged horse Pegasus, and nude youths. Others show Mesopotamian/Persian motifs: the Persian king, the Persian king fighting various animals, the Persian king in a chariot, various figures in Persian dress, lions, bulls (some winged), griffins, sphinxes. Some show ship and sea motifs, such as the hippocamp, that are normally found on Sidonian coinage. The figure of the Egyptian god Bes is widespread. Many of the motifs on the coins coincide with those on the Wadi Daliyah seals (§3.2.1).

The inscriptions are quite diverse, in Aramaic and Hebrew script but also some in Greek. Many have the legend ‘Samaria’ (שומריה šmrīn, or abbreviated, e.g., as שם šm or שן šn, or even just שׁ). A number of names of persons are found, especially ‘Sanballat’. Although this is normally abbreviated as סנָבָלָת sn̄bālāt, it occurs almost in full on one coin: סנָבָלָת sn̄bāl(t). Other names include ‘Hananiah’ (חֲנַנִּיָּה hnnyh), ‘Hayyim’ or ‘Hiyam’ (חֵיym), ‘Abdeel’ (עֲבָדְאֵל bd'el), and ‘Jeroboam’ (יְרֻבָּעָם yrba'm). Others are בְּדִיחָבֵל bdyhbl, מְבִנִּי yhw'nh, מְבִגִּי mbgy, מְנַפֶּת mnpt, and וְנִי wny. Several abbreviations occur (in addition to Sanballat, as noted above). בְּתַ is apparently ‘Bagabat’, since we also have the Greek name *Bagabatas*. דָּלַ d̄l may be an abbreviation of ‘Delaiah’ (דְּלֵיאָה dlyh), and שֵׁלֶל šl, an abbreviation for ‘Shelamaiah’ (שְׁלָמִיאָה šlm̄yh). These are reasonable deductions since the names are known as those of the sons of Sanballat and are also found in the Wadi Daliyah papyri (apparently referring to other individuals), but they are of course not certain. Are these governors of Samaria? Some of them might well be, but none is so labelled. To say that any was certainly governor (including the ‘Sanballat’ here) is to go beyond the data. The names of satraps are also found. Masaios (Persian Mazday) was the satrap of Ebir-nari from about 348 to the conquest of Alexander (§14.6). His name appears in various forms on a variety of coinage (Mildenberg 1990–91 [= 1998: 43–53]): ‘Mazday’ (מָזְדֵּי mzdy); ‘Mazday who is over Ebir-nari and Cilicia’ (מָזְדֵּי עַל עֲבָר נָהָרָא וְחַלְקָה mzdy zy 'l 'br nhr' whlk); often just the abbreviation of the two letters מְזֵ mz, which is found on a number of Samarian coins. Greek inscriptions include *Pharnabazos* who may be the satrap, *Bagabatas* (noted above), and the divine name *Zeus* (spelled as *Ieus*). The ‘Jaddua’ coin, originally published as a Yehud coin, is also included among the Samarian coins by Meshorer and Qeder (§3.4.1).

### **3.4.3. Phoenicia and the Coast**

Betlyon (1980) *The Coinage and Mints of Phoenicia; Deutsch and Heltzer* (1997) ‘Numismatic Evidence from the Persian Period’; Elayi and Elayi (1993) *Tresors de monnaies phéniciennes et circulation monétaire*; Elayi and Lemaire (1989) ‘Bulletin d’information sur la Syrie-Palestine: Numismatique’; (1991) ‘Bulletin d’information: Numismatique’; (1995) ‘Bulletin d’information: I. Syrie-Phénicie-Palestine: Numismatique’; (1999) ‘Bulletin d’information: I. Syrie-

Phénicie-Palestine: Numismatique'; (2003) 'Bulletin d'information: I. Syrie-Phénicie-Palestine; **Mildenberg** (1990) 'Gaza Mint Authorities in Persian Times'; **Rappaport** (1970) 'Gaza and Ascalon'.

A great deal of Phoenician coinage has been discovered over the years, now catalogued in Elayi and Elayi (1993) and Betlyon (1980), with regular updates in *Trans-euphratène* (e.g. Elayi and Lemaire 1989; 1991; 1995; 1999; 2003). Phoenician coins are often found in digs all over Palestine and can give useful information about dating, trade links, cultural influence, and the like.

Gaza was an important city in the Persian empire (§7.3.3). Beginning about 420–410 BCE it minted its own coins, of which many have been found, mostly in the general area of Gaza itself. Despite the apparent local circulation of the coins, they were minted on the Attic standard and initially closely imitated the Attic tetradrachmas, with the picture of the owl of Athena on the reverse. Yet in time local Gaza coinage was developed with certain distinctive features: the running horse, the presence of the word 'Gaza' or its abbreviation in Aramaic script ('zh, 'z, '), and sometimes the letter *m*, for Marnas the city god.

## Chapter 4

### BIBLICAL WRITINGS

The aim of this chapter is consider those books that would be accepted by a reasonable number of Old Testament scholars as being Persian in origin or substantial composition. No attempt is made to give a complete introduction to each writing but only to discuss some of the issues that relate to using the work as a historical source. As for which biblical books should be included, we can never expect agreement on the exact list. Some think such works as the Deuteronomistic History were written in the Persian period (and thus a potential source), whereas others date as Hellenistic several of the writings discussed in this chapter.

Most scholars would agree that a number of writings that existed in an earlier written version were nevertheless edited or substantially added to in the Persian period. Many of the Latter Prophets would be thought to fall into this category. For example, some parts of Jeremiah may have been written in Persian times; thus, Jeremiah 50–51 on the fall of Babylon were probably written no earlier than 539 (unless they are genuine prophecies, which is possible, since they have the city of Babylon being destroyed by the ‘Medes’, which did not happen). Nevertheless, I have not devoted a section to Jeremiah since in my opinion most of the book is pre-Persian. On the other hand, some significant sections of Ezekiel may be Persian; even though much of it may be pre-Persian, enough is likely to be Persian for me to include a discussion here.

#### 4.1. Ezra and Nehemiah

**Ackroyd** (1970) *The Age of the Chronicler*; (1988) ‘Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah’; **Allrik** (1954) ‘The Lists of Zerubbabel’; **N.A. Bailey** (1990) ‘Nehemiah 3:1–32’; **Batten** (1913) *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ezra and Nehemiah*; **Becking** (1998) ‘Ezra’s Re-Enactment of the Exile’; **Blenkinsopp** (1988) *Ezra–Nehemiah*; (1990b) ‘The Sage, the Scribe, and Scribalism’; **Böhler** (1997) *Die heilige Stadt in Esdras α und Esra-Nehemia*; **R.L. Braun** (1979) ‘Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah’; **Cazelles** (1979) Review of Williamson, *Israel*; **Clines** (1981) ‘Nehemiah 10 as an Example of Early Jewish Biblical Exegesis’; (1984a) *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*; (1990) ‘The Nehemiah Memoir’; **De Troyer** (2002) ‘Zerubbabel and Ezra’; **Eskenazi** (1986) ‘The Chronicler and the Composition of 1 Esdras’; (1988) *In an Age of Prose*; **Galling** (1964c) ‘Die Liste der aus dem Exil Heimgekehrten’; **Grabbe** (1991a) ‘Reconstructing History from the Book of Ezra’; (1998a) *Ezra and Nehemiah*; (1998c) ‘Triumph of the Pious or Failure of the Xenophobes?’; (2002b) Review of Z. Talshir, *I Esdras*; (forthcoming e) ‘The

“Persian Documents” in the Book of Ezra’; **Gunneweg** (1985) *Ezra*; (1987) *Nehemiah*; **Japhet** (1968) ‘Supposed Common Authorship’; (1982) ‘Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel’; (1983a) ‘Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel’; **Karrer** (2001) *Ringen um die Verfassung Judas*; **Kellermann** (1966) ‘Die Listen in Nehemia 11’; (1967) *Nehemia*; **Lebram** (1987) ‘Die Traditionsgeschichte der Ezragestalt’; **Lipschits** (2002) ‘Literary and Ideological Aspects of Nehemiah 11’; **Mowinckel** (1961) “‘Ich’ und ‘Er’ in der Ezrageschichte”; (1964a) *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemiah, I*; (1964b) *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemiah, II*; (1965) *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemiah, III*; **Noth** (1987) *The Chronicler’s History*; **Pohlmann** (1970) *Studien zum dritten Ezra*; **Reinmuth** (2002) *Der Bericht Nehemias*; **Rudolph** (1949) *Ezra und Nehemia*; **Schwiderski** (2000) *Handbuch des nordwestsemitischen Briefformulars*; **In der Smitten** (1973) *Ezra: Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte*; **Steins** (1995) *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlussphänomen*; **D. Talshir** (1988) ‘A Reinvestigation of the Linguistic Relationship’; **Z. Talshir** (1999) *I Esdras: From Origin to Translation*; (2001) *I Esdras: A Text Critical Commentary*; **Throntveit** (1982) ‘Linguistic Analysis and the Question of Authorship’; **Torrey** (1896) *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra–Nehemiah*; (1970) *Ezra Studies*; **Willi** (1972) *Die Chronik als Auslegung*; (1995) *Juda-Jehud–Israel*; **Williamson** (1977a) *Israel in the Books of Chronicles*; (1983) ‘The Composition of Ezra i–vi’; (1985) *Ezra, Nehemiah*; (1987) *Ezra and Nehemiah*; (1996) ‘The Problem with 1 Esdras’; **Wilson** (1977) *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World*; (1979) ‘Between “Azel” and “Azel”’.

Many of the issues can be addressed only briefly here; a more detailed discussion for most of them can be found in my study of Ezra and Nehemiah (Grabbe 1998a), as well as in the other secondary literature cited here. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are no doubt extremely important for any history of the Jews during the Persian period, but their use is far more complicated than often appreciated. For one thing we have not just the books as found in the Hebrew Bible but also versions and traditions found in Greek and other sources which must be taken into account in trying to make a full evaluation of the Ezra and Nehemiah tradition.

The view was long taken that the two books are part of a larger work by the ‘Chronicler’, also containing 1 and 2 Chronicles and making up ‘the Chronicistic History’ (*das chronistische Geschichtswerk*). It was challenged in recent decades by Japhet (1968) and Williamson (1977), but their views were not always embraced in subsequent studies (e.g. Cazelles 1979; Clines 1984a: 9–10; Blenkinsopp 1988: 47–54). Ackroyd (1988) discussed the difficulties of determining the question, though he indicated his leanings toward common authorship in other publications. Throntveit challenged the linguistic arguments of Japhet and Williamson, though he ultimately questioned whether language could decide the matter (1982: 215; cf. also Ackroyd 1988: 194–95); however, D. Talshir (1988) argued that linguistic study cannot support a division between Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah, though he admitted that it does not prove unity. R.L. Braun (1979) supported the theological differences between Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah. Willi argued that Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah were two independent works by the same author, with different perspectives (1979: 179–84; 1995: 45–47). Most scholars are now cautious about assuming a unified composition with a single perspective and theology.

The combined work of Ezra–Nehemiah cannot be earlier than the beginning of the Hellenistic period (cf. Williamson 1985: xxxv–xxxvi). This is now demonstrated by the supposed ‘Persian documents’ of Ezra 4–7, which use some post-Achaemenid linguistic conventions (§4.1.3.2). In my view 1 Esdras in its original Semitic form was earlier than the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah, and it also must be post-Achaemenid (cf. §4.1.4).

#### **4.1.1. Structure and Theology**

There are a number of elements in the present form of the books which link them together (Grabbe 1998a: 94–96). One of the most detailed analyses of the structure, including arguments for unity, has been given by T.C. Eskenazi (1988; critique in Grabbe 1998a: 96–100, 104). The following table indicates parallels between the two books of Ezra and Nehemiah, pointing to a common structure:

Table 4.1. *Parallels between Ezra and Nehemiah*

<i>Ezra</i>	<i>Nehemiah</i>
1: royal commission (Cyrus edict)	1.1–2.9: royal commission (by Artaxerxes)
3: task of rebuilding (altar/temple)	2–3: task of rebuilding (repair of wall)
4–6: hindrance by ‘enemies’	4, 6: hindrance by ‘enemies’
6: work completed with God’s help	7: work completed with God’s help
7–8: Ezra and the law	8: Ezra and the law
9–10: threat from intermarriage	9–10: threat from intermarriage
10: resolution by public pledge	10: resolution by public pledge

Other sections of Nehemiah are also parallel, even though the parallels do not fit the neat scheme just given:

Table 4.2. *Further Parallel Passages*

<i>Ezra</i>	<i>Nehemiah</i>
2: list of returnees	7: list of returnees
2: list of returnees	11.1–12.26: list of returnees
6.16–17: dedication of temple	12.27–43: dedication of wall
6.18: organization of priests/Levites	12.44–47: organization of priestly/Levitical dues
9–10: mixed marriages/threats from ‘foreigners’/‘peoples of the land’	13: mixed marriages/threats from ‘foreigners’/‘peoples of the land’

A further structural element is provided by chronology (Grabbe 1998a: 98–99). The chronological data in Ezra–Nehemiah often have a function other than dating events; that is, they have an ideological function in which they aim to convey a particular message about events. Apart from the fact that the chronology in relationship to the Persian kings is sometimes nonsense, the chronology in Ezra is very interesting in showing a sequence of events according to months and years. That is, if one ignores the years in relationship to the reigns of kings and looks only at the numbers of the years, months, and days, an interesting sequence takes place. The year numbers are progressive, moving from the first year (of Cyrus), to second year

(of Darius), on to the seventh year (of Artaxerxes), and ending with the twentieth and thirty-second years (of Artaxerxes). It is clear that any attention to Persian chronology would show that a gap of many decades separates Ezra 6 from Ezra 7, yet it moves smoothly from year 6 to year 7 with no indication that one did not take place shortly after the other. Particular attention is paid to festivals, and the majority of months mentioned are those with one or more holy days in them (months 1 and 7 are especially frequent). A full study of chronology is beyond my purpose, but it is another indication of unity of the two books.

So far the unity of the Ezra–Nehemiah has been emphasized in looking at its structure; however, it is important to emphasize that the present unity of Ezra and Nehemiah is an editorial unity. It has been created by a compiler taking separate traditions and putting them together with some care and intelligence to effect a whole. It is perfectly legitimate to read the two books together as a unity. On the other hand, it is also perfectly legitimate to go behind the editor and to look at and interpret the traditions separately (Grabbe 1998a: 102–106). The argument that because the books have traditionally been read together does not mean that we must always do so (*pace* Eskenazi 1988: 13). Both J.C. VanderKam (1992) and D. Kraemer (1993) have addressed the question, apparently independently, and have emphasized that Ezra and Nehemiah were separate compositions. Although some of Kraemer’s arguments are not convincing (cf. Grabbe 1998a: 105–106), it is a salutary reminder that we have not only Ezra–Nehemiah but also Ezra and Nehemiah.

Several common themes are found in both books (Grabbe 1998a: 99–102). Central to both books is the return of people from the ‘exile’, even from the Mesopotamian administrative centre, to rebuild or restore things in Jerusalem. This happens to Joshua and Zerubbabel and those with them in Ezra 1–6; it occurs with Ezra who restores the law and metaphorically rebuilds proper worship; and a similar achievement is made by Nehemiah who repairs the walls. In each case it is the Persian king himself who decrees the Jewish expedition and with care and generosity makes provision for it to take place. A second theme is the threat to the community from ‘foreigners’. This includes the threat of intermarriage with the ‘peoples of the land’, a threat removed by a common oath and physical separation from the ‘foreigners’ (Ezra 9–10; Neh. 9–10; 13.1–3, 23–31). A further threat from ‘foreigners’ is that in both books the activities of the Jews are hampered and harassed by the surrounding peoples, especially those in the area of Samaria (Ezra 4–6; Neh. 4.1–2; 6).

These various themes are an important contribution to the overall message of the book. The story the books of Ezra and Nehemiah together have to tell us is a simple one—one can hardly accuse the compiler of being overly subtle. The narrative progresses to a climax and then ends on what might seem an anti-climax but is actually a skilful additional message. By saying that the story is simple is not to suggest that there is only a single message or that the message does not have its complexity; rather, the message lies on the surface of the narrative.

The story is how God takes a people, defeated and exiled for their sins, and returns them to their land and creates a nation once again, a nation with a restored

temple and cult. The achievement of this goal did not run smoothly; there were difficulties and setbacks caused by enemies who were labelled as ‘foreigners’, but by God’s help (working through the Persian regime) they prevailed. In the next episode Ezra came with the law which is identified in context as the book of the law of Moses. A new problem had arisen, again caused by ‘foreigners’, in the form of unlawful marriages. This problem was also sorted out. In the final episode Nehemiah came to restore the city by repairing the wall and settling it with an adequate population. Again, he is opposed by enemies in the form of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem—labelled by implication as foreigners. When the wall is finished, the law is read by Ezra and the Festival of Tabernacles celebrated. But the problem of the ‘peoples of the land’ still continues and ends in a pledge of the people; only then is the wall dedicated. In the last chapter of the book the threat is also from the surrounding peoples, indirectly by intermarriage and more directly by deliberate insinuation of themselves into the community and even the temple. Thus, the seeming lack of a conclusion is actually a clear warning of the need for eternal vigilance.

This is the message in a nutshell; there are several strands to it: God’s providence, the Persian empire as an instrument in God’s hands, the importance of the temple and cult, the continual threat to the nation and religious community by the surrounding peoples. The message is blatant and unmistakable and, consequently, quite effective.

#### **4.1.2. Three (Four?) Foundation Legends**

In its present form the Hebrew book of Ezra–Nehemiah gives a more or less continuous narrative. This overall unity, which can be demonstrated by a number of structural devices (described in the previous section), does not hide a number of the incongruities: why Ezra repeats some of the actions already done under Zerubbabel/Joshua (bringing priests, Levites, and temple vessels to Jerusalem), why the Nehemiah story begins with a city in ruins, why the law is unknown and the festivals uncelebrated before Ezra when both are already in evidence in Ezra 1–6. But these are easy to overlook, which they have been by most readers for centuries.

When we look at the various traditions about Joshua/Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah—whether in the Ezra–Nehemiah of the Hebrew canon or in other sources—we are struck by a curious phenomenon: *Jerusalem is given three (possibly four) different stories of foundation/restoration after the exile*. That is, within the complex of traditions, there is more than one restorer of Jerusalem and more than one time of restoration. Even though these have now been assembled into one narrative in the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah, so that the three accounts appear to occur in a chronological sequence, there are still loose ends. Each of the three still shows elements that do not fit easily with the other two accounts.

The first foundation story relates to Zerubbabel and Joshua. According to it, Zerubbabel the secular ruler and Joshua the high priest returned from Babylonia with a large group of Jews, 40,000 or more, to settle the empty land of Judah. After a long period of problems and opposition from the ‘peoples of the land’, the temple was rebuilt and the festivals of Tabernacles and Passover celebrated. This is the

story found essentially in Hebrew Ezra 1–6 and 1 Esdras 2–7, and also briefly in Ben Sira 49.11–12.

The second foundation legend relates to Ezra (Ezra 7–10; Neh. 8//1 Esd. 8–9). Although he appears in the present narrative as a successor to Joshua and Zerubbabel, a close look at the narrative presents some puzzling features. For Ezra seems to carry out some of the foundational activities that one would have assumed were already accomplished by Joshua and Zerubbabel. Ezra brings an enormous treasure for the decoration and functioning of the temple, including temple vessels (Ezra 8.26–28, 33), even though the temple had been operating for decades with temple vessels brought back by Sheshbazzar (Ezra 1.8–11). He makes a point of getting Levites to accompany him to Jerusalem (Ezra 8.15–20), even though Levites and temple servants had already been a part of the temple establishment from the beginning (Ezra 2.40–58). Above all, he brought the ‘law of God which is in your hand’ (Ezra 7.14), exemplified in his reading of the law (Neh. 8). Yet we find that the law was being observed in great detail long before his coming (e.g. in the temple cult: Ezra 3.1–3), including the celebration of the Festival of Tabernacles (Ezra 3.4) and Passover (Ezra 6.19–23). Are we to believe that knowledge of these festivals had been abandoned and forgotten by the people in a few decades? The story makes most sense if we assume that it originally told how Ezra alone had restored Jerusalem after the exile. Indeed, in Ezra’s prayer he makes a statement that could suggest that his objectives included restoring the temple and even building the wall: ‘He (God) extended mercy to us before the king of Persia to give us provision to raise up the house of our God and to repair its ruins and to give us a wall [¶] *gādēr* in Judah and Jerusalem’ (Ezra 9.9). Although *gādēr* is used of a dry-stone wall in some passages, it is also used of substantial walls (e.g. Ezek. 42.7, 10). The verse could be making a play on words, with both a physical and a metaphorical wall in mind.

The third foundation story, telling how it was actually Nehemiah who restored Jerusalem, is found mainly in 2 Macc. 1.18–2.15. In the present Hebrew book, Nehemiah rebuilds the walls of the city and institutes reforms to do with the governance and operation of Jerusalem and Judah, but there is already a settlement in Jerusalem before he comes. The original Nehemiah Memorial (NM) apparently did not go beyond Nehemiah’s actual deeds (even if his assessment of them might be different from that of others). Possibly we see the beginnings of the legend in the way the NM has been edited in the book of Nehemiah; in any case, by 2 Maccabees Nehemiah has become the builder of the temple and restorer of the temple cult, with Joshua/Zerubbabel and Ezra completely ignored.

Thus, we have evidence that there were once three foundation legends, each assigning the restoration of Jerusalem after the exile to a different person. Indeed, there seem to be remnants of even a fourth legend, with Sheshbazzar as the restorer. He is an anomalous figure in Ezra 1, bringing back temple vessels but not integrated into the story of Joshua and Zerubbabel. Yet in Ezra 5.14–16 we find that he was governor of the province and had laid the foundations of the temple. The indication of the present text is that his mission was somehow aborted, but was there once an entire foundation legend around him?

In order to use the material of Ezra–Nehemiah for historical purposes, we have to take account of these stereotyped foundation legends. At least two of them (the Zerubbabel/Joshua legend and the Ezra legend) and possibly a third (Sheshbazzar) are part of present narrative of Ezra–Nehemiah, with whatever effects the editing had on them. This does not mean that we reject their story out of hand, but it does mean that we have to read them critically.

#### **4.1.3. Sources in Ezra–Nehemiah**

##### **4.1.3.1. An ‘Ezra Source’?**

As with the Nehemiah Memorial (below), portions of Ezra 7–10 are in the first person. This has led to the hypothesis of an Ezra memoir for part or all of this section; however, although there is general agreement about the Nehemiah Memorial, the idea of an Ezra memoir is controversial. Several recent commentaries in English accept that there is an Ezra substratum to this section even though there may have been a good deal of editorial reworking (Clines 1984a: 6–8; Williamson 1985: xxviii–xxxii; Blenkinsopp 1988: 44). On the other hand, the thesis is rejected by a number of scholars (Noth 1987: 62–66; Gunneweg 1985: 141; Kellermann 1967: 56–69; In der Smitten 1973: 63–66).

Rather than discussing the pros and cons of the arguments that have been used (cf. *JCH*: 36–38), my analysis below (§14.2) ultimately addresses the question. Whereas the NM has a number of realistic features about it, the first-person narrative in Ezra has elements of fantasy and contradiction and does not seem to differ in this regard from the third-person portions of the narrative. Thus, I find the attestation of an Ezra memoir problematic and a completely different situation from that of the NM.

##### **4.1.3.2. The ‘Aramaic Source’ and Alleged Persian Documents in Ezra**

A number of documents are quoted partially or at length in Ezra. These all purport to be the records of official decrees by the Persian king or are letters written by Persian government officials. Most are in Aramaic (Ezra 4.11–16, 17–22; 5.7–17; 6.3–5, 6–12; 7.12–26), though one is in Hebrew (Ezra 1.2–4). The Aramaic documents have been widely accepted as authentic in recent scholarship, though there has been less of a consensus on the ‘Cyrus decree’. Yet there has been another scholarly tradition which has disputed the genuineness of the documents (Torrey 1896; 1970; Gunneweg 1985: 85–86; Lebram 1987). Even those who accept some of the documents have not accepted all or have thought that genuine documents have been touched up by Jewish scribes (cf. Batten 1913: 307–308; Blenkinsopp 1988: 119–23, 126–28, 146–47; 1990: 312–14).

Here I provide a short summary of some of the arguments presented in my study on the alleged Persian documents (Grabbe forthcoming e). The ‘Cyrus decree’ (Ezra 1.2–4) is also discussed below (§12.4.1).

**4.1.3.2.1. Comparative material.** The parallels found in Persian-period documents by earlier scholars are often only on the level of generalities. One of the first

difficulties about determining the presence of genuine royal decrees is the simple fact that we have not a single Aramaic document with which to compare the four alleged royal decrees in Ezra. Apart from one alleged letter quoted in Greek by Thucydides (1.128-29)—whose genuineness some doubt—and the Gadatas inscription (now strongly argued to be a late forgery by Briant [§5.6]), along with the Behistun inscription and the Cyrus Cylinder which are special cases, we have no Persian royal decrees preserved for us. None of these is in Aramaic (apart from the fragments of an Aramaic translation of the Behistun inscription).

**4.1.3.2.2. Linguistic dials.** The alleged Persian decrees have a number of features of post-Achaemenid Aramaic. The most notable is the pronoun ‘**־**’ (*dī*, instead of ‘**־ zy**’). Although we find a very few instances of ‘**־ d**— instead of ‘**־ z**— for Proto-Semitic \*-d— in Achaemenid-period documents, no document so far shows the relative pronoun as anything but ‘**־**’—certainly no document of the Persian administration. There is no question that if an official Persian decree lies behind any of the alleged documents in Ezra, it has been ‘updated’ by Jewish scribes after the Persian period. Much less likely as a scribal updating is the change of the pronominal endings on nouns from the Achaemenid **־km**— and **־hm**— (–*km*, –*hm*) to the later **־kwn**— and **־hwn**— (–*kwn*, –*hwn*). Most of the documents have the later form (as does the Aramaic narrative). Here and there are some of the older forms, however; for example, in Ezra 7 there is a strong mixture of the earlier (7.16, 17, 18, 24) and the later forms (7.17, 21). The pattern is not what one might expect of random scribal assimilations over a lengthy period of copying but rather the consequence of additions made to an earlier document.

**4.1.3.2.3. Problematic contents.** The general contents of the documents are vital for a proper investigation of the question, yet they are the hardest to tackle. With the scarcity of information about the Persian period, many questions of custom, administration, scribal practice, and cultic convention cannot be answered with certainty. Nevertheless, we must weight matters in the light of probability. For example, we find that no less than three of the documents, from three separate periods of time, allege that the Persian government financed Jewish activities. One such document might be credible, two could perhaps be stomached, but three are hard to swallow, especially when they entail enormous sums of money (cf. §10.1).

**4.1.3.2.4. Jewish theology.** Some of the documents contain a good deal of Jewish theology, as is universally admitted (e.g. 6.6-12; 7.12-26). The name ‘Israel’ is used of the people (e.g. 7.13, 15), yet all the genuine Persian-period documents refer to them as ‘Jews’ and ‘Judah’ (§8.1). This has sometimes been dealt with by alleging that Jewish scribes helped to compose the documents, but we have no reason to think Jewish scribes composed any of these royal decrees nor any indication, in any case, that scribes working in the Persian chancellory had the freedom to compose in a different format from the standard one. Besides, it does not explain Ezra 7.25, where Ezra is allowed to impose his own choice of judges and magistrates and also

the laws of his god on all of Ebir-nari (§14.2.2). This seems unlikely on the surface, especially considering that this region had a powerful satrap who seems to be ignored.

**4.1.3.2.5. *The persian attitude to local religions.*** It has often been asserted that the Persian government promoted local cults, but I have argued that this was not the case (§10.1).

**4.1.3.2.6. *Epistolary formulae.*** The format of the letters has now had a full study devoted to it (Schwiderski 2000). In separate chapters he investigates Hebrew and Canaanite letters from the ninth century on, letters in Early and Official (Imperial) Aramaic, and Hebrew and Aramaic letters from the Hellenistic period (along with Greek parallels). He concludes that the Aramaic letters of Ezra do not agree in certain essential points with the Imperial Aramaic letter formula but that where there are differences these are often paralleled from letters of the Hellenistic period. That is, the letters of Ezra 4–6 are most likely fictive letters originating in the early Hellenistic period (third century BCE). Only in the case of Ezra 7.12–26 are the deviations from the Imperial Aramaic formula too narrow to make a clear case for or against authenticity.

**4.1.3.2.7. *What can we conclude?*** Much of what we have seen indicates that the documents are late, post-Achaemenid and likely to be forgeries (which is what Schwiderski concludes), yet there are some passages that seem to have early features. One possibility is that genuine Persian correspondence may lie behind some of the documents. This is the interpretation that I favour. If so, the original documents were worked over by Jewish scribes. On the other hand, one must also recognize that the original meaning of a document can be changed even by only a minor change of wording. In any case, I think we have a spectrum of plausibility:

[NB: highest probability at the top and lowest at the bottom]

Document 4 (5.7-17): Letter of Tattenai

Document 7 (7.12-26): Decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra

Document 5 (6.2-5): (Aramaic) Decree of Cyrus

Document 6 (6.6-12): Reply of Darius

Document 2 (4.9[?]16): Letter to Artaxerxes

Document 3 (4.17-22): Reply of Artaxerxes

Document 1 (1.2-4): (Hebrew) Decree of Cyrus

#### **4.1.3.3. *The Nehemiah Memorial***

There is general agreement that a significant portion of the book of Nehemiah is made up of an account written by Nehemiah himself, the ‘Nehemiah Memorial’ (NM). The striking thing about the NM is the widespread consensus on its existence. Even so sceptical a scholar as Gunneweg accepted that it existed (1987: 176–80). There are several reasons for postulating such a source (cf. Kellermann 1967: 4–8), one being the large amount of material in the first person, an unusual situation in the biblical literature. The precise sort of writing has been much debated without

any strong consensus (see the survey in Kellermann 1967: 76–84; Williamson 1985: xxiv–xxviii).

Some have thought it was a sort of report to the Persian authorities, justifying Nehemiah's actions in Jerusalem (cf. Williamson 1985: xxviii). An explanation which has gained a good deal of support is that it was a 'letter to God', a 'Nehemiah memorial', a personal writing perhaps placed in the temple and meant primarily as a communication with God (Mowinckel 1961; 1964b: 50–104; Ackroyd 1970: 28–30). Tablets written on behalf of the king, detailing his good deeds and pieties, have been found in the foundations of temples of Mesopotamia. Their primary function was to deliver a message to the deity, which means that they were hidden; however, this does not mean that copies might not also be made public. Another explanation is that Nehemiah wrote a variant of the prayer of the accused such as *Jer.* 18.19–23 and 2 *Kgs* 20.3 (Kellermann 1967: 84–88). Williamson himself explains the origin of the NM in two stages, the first being an Aramaic report for the Persians and the second a later reworking with the Jewish community in mind (1985: xxvii–xxviii). Joseph Blenkinsopp (1987) has pointed to the closest parallel in the form of a contemporary account of the life and work of another native appointed as a Persian official, the autobiography of the Egyptian Udjahorresnet. Each of these theories recognizes some of the characteristics of Nehemiah's writing while also having weaknesses. It may be that Nehemiah's writing is unique in its own way, and we should not expect an exact counterpart from elsewhere in the ancient Near East.

The most recent analysis is that of T. Reinmuth (2002). His work is a refinement of preceding analyses, confirming a considerable consensus on the core of the NM. His first main result is that the first-person narrative is made up of two major and distinct strands: the 'narrative of wall building' and the 'Nehemiah Memorial' (NB: I use NM for both strands). The first strand was written at a time more or less contemporary with the repair of Jerusalem's walls and shows no internal conflict. This wall-building narrative is now roughly in *Neh.* 1.1–4, 11; 2.1–20; (3.1–32—this list was not composed by Nehemiah but was incorporated into his narrative;) 3.33–4.17; 6.1–19; 7.1–5; 12.31–32, 37–40. The second strand was written after his activities in Judah, in the last quarter of the fifth century, in the wake of internal opposition to a number of his reforms. This strand is preserved approximately in *Neh.* 5.1–19; 13.4–17, 19–25, 27–31. According to Reinmuth, at least two redactions revised and expanded the first-person account with small additions. If Reinmuth's analysis is accepted, this second strand would likely be more polemical, and also written at a further remove from the events, and thus less trustworthy than the wall-building strand. By a careful and critical reading of Nehemiah's version of events, we gain insight not only into his views and what motivated him but also into the views of others around him, including his opponents. For example, every significant move for which he gives himself credit is paralleled by the same actions and decisions taken by the people (Williamson 1985: xxxii–xxxiii).

Thus, there is a widespread view that much of the book of Nehemiah is taken from the NM. The question is: What is the extent of the NM and how much change has been made to the text by the editors? A reasonable consensus can be obtained for much of the NH, even if there is disagreement about where the 'edges' of the

document might fall. It is usual to find this source in 1.1–7.72a (ET 1.1–7.73a); 11.1–2; 12.31–43. It is also common to assign 13.4–31 to the NM, but an argument has been presented that it is by a later writer imitating the distinctive style of the NM (Ackroyd 1970a: 28, 41; Steins 1995: 198–207). For convenience, this study follows the analysis of Reimnuth (2002) and takes the NM as being found in Neh. 1.1–4, 11; 2.1–20; (the list in 3.1–32 has been incorporated into the narrative by Nehemiah himself) 3.33–4.17; 5.1–19; 6.1–19; 7.1–5; 12.31–32, 37–40; 13.4–17, 19–25, 27–31.

#### **4.1.3.4. Various Lists**

Ezra–Nehemiah is characterized by a series of lists. In fact, apart from the NM and Nehemiah 8, much of the material in the book of Nehemiah is made up of lists of various sorts. The different lists often involve names laid out by family, sometimes with the names of ancestors in the form of a genealogy. It would be naive to take these as straightforward records of actual individuals and actual genealogies. Studies of genealogies in pre-modern societies show that they can have functions other than a simple record of blood descent (cf. Wilson 1977; 1979). They may show social relationships or contain theological messages. The lists in Ezra–Nehemiah often have a theological purpose, whatever else they might be.

**4.1.3.4.1. Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7.** These two lists are almost identical though there is some difference in detail. They both purport to be a list of the returnees under Zerubbabel (Ezra 2.1–2; Neh. 7.6–7), but the list seems to be made up of diverse material: (1) the list of laymen (Ezra 2.3–35//Neh. 7.8–42) is actually made of two lists, one according to family (2.3–20//7.8–24) and one according to place of residence (2.21–35//7.25–38); (2) the residence list is further divided according to ‘sons of’ (**בָּנִים**: 2.21, 24–26, 29–35//7.25, 34–42) and ‘men of’ (**אֲנָשֶׁם**: 2.22–23, 27–28//7.26–33); (3) the heading (2.1//7.6) speaks only of those who came up from Babylon, but the last few verses (2.68–70//7.69–71) include a list of gifts for the building of the temple. A majority of the family names occur elsewhere in Ezra–Nehemiah (e.g. Ezra 8; 10; Neh. 10). The listing by place of settlement falls preponderantly into the old territory of Benjamin.

The next portion of the list (Ezra 2.36–58) is made up of temple personnel: priests (2.36–39), Levites (2.40), singers (2.41), gatekeepers (2.42), Netinim servants (2.43), and Solomon’s servants (2.55–58). There are several peculiarities about this list. First, there are several different groups here which are not found elsewhere in Ezra–Nehemiah or Chronicles, suggesting that some may have merged together or became assimilated to the Levites. Secondly, the priests are quite numerous (well over 3000) whereas the Levites are fewer than 75, and the temple servants of various sorts do not reach 400. The date of the list has been much debated. Williamson feels that the majority of scholars would date it to the early Persian period (1998: 148–50). In any case, a substantial number would put it later and accept that the inclusion of settlement sites suggests that the list was compiled after the sites had been inhabited for a period of time (Mowinckel 1964a: 98–109; Blenkinsopp 1988: 83).

**4.1.3.4.2. Ezra 8.2-14.** This list of those who came with Ezra looks artificial. According to the heading in 8.1, the list that follows in 8.2-14 is of the ‘heads of the fathers’ which seems to be heads of families ‘who came up with me from Babylon in the reign of king Artaxerxes’ (8.1). This is a strange heading for an official list which would be expected to say, ‘with Ezra’. Or, if we take the first-person narrative seriously and assume it is not a formal list, then surely in context there was no need to specify the current king. The list is organized according to families in which a remote ancestor is named and then the immediate head of family. After that the number of the males going with the head of family is often given. It begins with the grandson and son of Aaron respectively, Phinehas and Ithamar. The name David seems to be king David. Why these should be listed is not clear, nor is any number of returnees given. There are some oddities about the list (e.g. the expression ‘sons of Shecaniah’ occurs in both 8.3 and 8.5, yet no representative is given in either case and a number occurs only in the second verse; the name Shelomith in 8.10 is a feminine form). If we ignore the two occurrences of Shecaniah, we have eleven names; of these, nine occur in 2.4-17 (all except Joab and Shelomith). Most also occur in Neh. 10.15-17, which has a rather different context. By emendation on the basis of 1 Esdras, some make the agreement more exact, even to a precise twelve names (e.g. Blenkinsopp 1988: 158-62). The content of the list still suggests that Ezra’s groups could have been borrowed from the list in Ezra 2.

**4.1.3.4.3. Ezra 10.18-44.** This is a list of those who had offended by marrying daughters of ‘the peoples of the land’. The ‘offence’ started at the top since four of the sons (descendants?) of Joshua b. Josadak and his brothers were involved. Joshua the high priest was, of course, one of the ‘founding fathers’ of the *golah* community (Ezra 3; Hag. 1.1, 12, 14; 2.2; Zech. 3-4). But these four were not the only priests: another thirteen names are given by family (Ezra 10.20-22). This means that seventeen priests in all were involved. In addition, other temple groups were implicated: six Levites, one singer, three gate-keepers (10.23-24). The rest of the list is of those from ‘Israel’, listed according to family (‘phratry’). There are sixty-six names in all (though one or two problems suggest textual corruption, such as the listing of Bani twice, 10.29, 34). This small number is extremely surprising, given the amount of fuss made and the indication that it took two months to sort out. On the general issue, see below (§13.5).

**4.1.3.4.4. Nehemiah 3.** The list of repairers of the wall is perhaps the most likely to be authentic, though it has long been recognized that it is probably not a part of the NM. Many of those who worked are said to repair the section of the wall near their own homes, which makes a good deal of sense since there would be a considerable degree of motivation in such circumstances. There is a tendency to give the names of fathers and sometimes even grandfathers, which could suggest that it legitimated the families of those who participated. Interesting is the significant number of priests who participate in the work of building and the fact that Eliashib the high priest heads the list, perhaps suggesting that it was composed by priestly scribes. The question of whether the list is complete is debated since a ‘second section’ is

sometimes mentioned without a first (e.g. 3.11, 30) and several even mentioned in a row (3.19-21). The first part of the list (3.1-15) is characterized by the expression ‘next to them/him’ (**עַל־יָדָם/יָדֶה**) (*al-yādām/yādō*), and the second part (3.16-32) by ‘after him’ (**אַחֲרֵיכֶם**) (*ah'chrāv*). There may be a connection between this and the typographical line of the wall, with the first half referring to the repair of the old wall and the second half to the new line of the wall established where the old one was abandoned (Williamson 1985: 200; Gunneweg 1987: 71; N.A. Bailey 1990).

**4.1.3.4.5. Nehemiah 10.2-28 (ET 10.1-27)//Nehemiah 12.1-26.** These two lists have a considerable overlap, despite their different contexts, especially when slight variants of name are allowed for. Nehemiah 10 is supposed to give the signatories of those who signed a covenant to keep particular laws, whereas Nehemiah 12 lists those ‘who came up with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua’ (12.1). Nehemiah 10.2-28 contains a list of priests (10.2-9), then a list of Levites (10.10-14), and finally a list of heads of families (10.15-28), whereas Neh. 12.1-26 is confined to priest and Levites.

First, the list of priests. Despite the fact that almost a century separates these two, the lists of priests in 10.3-9 and 12.1-7, 12-21 have a common core of fifteen names; in addition, each list has half a dozen names which the other does not have. In 10.3-9, Seraiah, Azariah, and Jeremiah (10.3) are the same as the first three names in 12.1. Then follows a middle section of names in 10.4-8 in which Nehemiah 10 has the same names as in Neh. 12.2-4, but with an additional six. Finally, the last names in the priestly list (10.8: Abijah, Mijamin, Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah) are the same as or similar to those in 12.4-5, but the names in 12.6-7 are missing. The result is that Nehemiah 10 has six names not found in Nehemiah 12 and vice versa. One can only conclude that a basic core list of names has been used in each case, with some additions later made to each one. Although Neh. 12.1-7 is supposedly a list of priests associated with the time of Zerubbabel, it has hardly any agreement with Neh. 7.7//Ezra 2.2; however, Neh. 12.1-7 is mostly in agreement with the list of priestly clans with their heads (Neh. 12.12-21), except that the name Hattush (10.5; 12.2) is missing from 12.14. On the lists of high priests in 12.22, 26, see below (§10.3.2).

The list of Levites has seventeen names in Neh. 10.10-14 but eight in 12.8-9. Four of these (five if Judah is a variant of Hodiah) in 10.10-14 are found in 12.8-9. Of the names in Neh. 9.4-5, all but two (Chenani, Pethahiah) are found in 10.10-14 (if Bunni is a variant of Binnui or Beninu). Of the names of family heads in Neh. 10.15-28, the first eighteen (10.15-20) can almost all also be found in Ezra 2.3-17//Neh. 7.8-24 (with the exception of Bunni, Azzur, and Hodiah), if one allows for slight differences between Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 and some slight variation in names. Those in 10.21-28 are paralleled almost entirely by names in the list of wall builders in Nehemiah 3. Once more this suggests a list compiled from several sources rather than a genuine list of signatories.

**4.1.3.4.6. Nehemiah 11.** This claims to be a list of those who came to settle in Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah, including most of the priests and Levites but

also supposedly a tenth of the people (11.1). The LXX text (*Esdras B*) is rather shorter than the Hebrew. No total is given in the text, but the sum of the separate numbers equals about 3000 which is about the same population as indicated by archaeology (§9.3.2). The largest group is the priests, which is not surprising given that one would expect the priests to live near the temple. The number of Levites is small, as throughout Ezra–Nehemiah. The priests are divided into three groups (11.10–14): (1) those who did the work of the temple, (2) the heads of families, and (3) ‘men mighty in war’. Similarly, the Levites seem to be divided into those who did the external work of the temple and those who praised in the liturgy, though they are not given separate numbers (11.15–18). Singers are named in 11.23 but as a part of the Levites. Priests and Levites occur in more than one passage (11.20, 22). Although the heading (11.3) lists the Netinim, they are not given a number and also appear in 11.21 in what looks like possibly an addition to the list. The ‘sons of Solomon’s servants’ appear in the heading (11.3) but are not listed afterward in the chapter. As far as its authenticity is concerned, it is perhaps significant that the names do not appear to come from elsewhere in Ezra–Nehemiah; on the other hand, Neh. 11.4–19 has important parallels with 1 Chron. 9.1–17, which is alleged to be a list of those who first returned from exile. Some of the places in Neh. 11.25–36 were in the area of the Shephelah and Edom, not Judah; interestingly, however, there are also parallels with the boundary lists in Joshua 15 (Kellermann 1966; Blenkinsopp 1988: 329–30). All this suggests not a straightforward settlement list of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah but rather a compilation from other lists. O. Lipschits (2002) argues that it is an ideological creation, a ‘utopian picture’ in which Jerusalem is envisaged as ruling over all the old area of Judah as a kingdom and also includes all the places in which Jews lived in the Persian period.

The conclusions are that the various lists in Ezra and Nehemiah can be used only with considerable caution. The list of those who worked on the wall (Neh. 3) could well be from an archive. In Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7 the list of sites where people settled may be a reflection of settlement patterns in Judah at a particular time, but pinning that time down is difficult to do with any confidence. Knowing that there may be original data in these lists does not tell how to sort them out from the elements created by the compiler.

#### **4.1.4. 1 Esdras**

1 Esdras is a writing which covers 2 Chron. 35.1–36.21, the entirety of Ezra, and Neh. 7.72(ET 7.73)–8.12. It is known only in a Greek version, though it has often been assumed that there was a Hebrew original. With a separate history of transmission, 1 Esdras would be a valuable textual source for the Joshua/Zerubbabel and Ezra traditions, even if a number of recent treatments are right in their contention that 1 Esdras was created by taking excerpts from Ezra–Nehemiah and 2 Chronicles (Williamson 1977: 12–36; 1996; Eskenazi 1986; Z. Talshir 1999; 2001; De Troyer 2002). Yet it was long the convention to see 1 Esdras as independent of the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah (even if tied up with other theories that might currently be in serious question; e.g. Pohlmann 1970).

The thesis that 1 Esdras is independent of Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah has been revived in recent years in a different form (Böhler 1997; Grabbe 1998a: 69–81, 109–15). D. Böhler and I have argued the case independently and on a different basis. It is not possible to give a full argument here, but I summarize some of the points made in my detailed arguments:

1. If the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah was available and accepted as scripture, it makes little sense that someone created a parallel but truncated edition by excerpting some bits from it, along with a passage from 2 Chronicles. The only cogent argument that I have seen is that of Z. Talshir (1999; 2001) who argues that the purpose was to give a context to the story of the three youths. If the story of the three youths is seen as the centre of the book, then Talshir’s explanation makes sense. Yet if the three youths’ story is the focus of 1 Esdras, then why include the Ezra story? After all, the Zerubbabel story could easily stand alone, if the writer wanted to focus on it. Also, why does Zerubbabel disappear from the story and remain absent at the dedication of the temple? In other words, one can recognize how the three youths’ story forms a significant addition to the story without assuming that it is the core of the book. Also, in my view the thesis founders on some of the other considerations (Grabbe 2002b).

2. If a combined story with Nehemiah as a main protagonist was already in circulation, why eliminate him? There is quite a bit of evidence that the Ezra and Nehemiah traditions circulated separately, and some writers plainly accepted one without knowing of or at least not accepting the other. But if the compiler knew the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah, why would he go to the trouble of omitting Nehemiah? If the combined account of Ezra–Nehemiah already existed and lay before him, it was most likely an authoritative account by this time. There is no clear reason why the compiler of 1 Esdras would then go to such trouble to eliminate Nehemiah.

3. Even if someone decided to eliminate Nehemiah from the narrative, how is it that the ancient author just happened to hit upon a literary analysis that matches that of modern critics? Source criticism has concluded that Nehemiah 8 is indeed a part of the Ezra tradition, but why should we assume an ancient author would have come to the same view? After all, Ezra’s name occurs in some other passages that are not included in 1 Esdras (e.g. Neh. 12.33, 36).

4. My conclusion from these various considerations is that 1 Esdras is a Greek translation and adaptation of a Hebrew/Aramaic work that also served as a source for the later Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah. Note that 1 Esdras was not the specific source used but is itself also a development of that source. The tradition picked up by the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah apparently did not have the story of the youths’ contest. I can see no reason why this story would have been omitted in the Hebrew Ezra if it was extant in the source, so it was probably added at a later date to 1 Esdras. Similarly, 1 Esdras 1, which parallels 2 Chronicles 35–36, could well have been added to give a more suitable introduction to the Ezra tradition. It seems to have been a simple copying out of 2 Chronicles 35–36 with some minor changes. If so, the Ezra tradition used by the compiler of the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah was probably close to that now found in 1 Esdras 2, 5–9. Finally, the original form of 1 Esdras ended with the celebration of Sukkot (as in the present Neh. 8.13–18), but this ending was

somehow lost. The arguments for this are (a) the strange textual reading at the end of the present book and (b) the *inclusio* formed by the first and last chapters, 1 Esdras 1 and 9. The book begins with a significant Passover, the one celebrated by Josiah. If the book originally included the rest of what we now find in Nehemiah 8, the *inclusio* would be even more striking, because it would end with the last festival of the year, the Feast of Tabernacles, just as it began with the first festival of the year, the Passover. (For a diagram illustrating the development of the traditions as I see them, see Grabbe 1998a: 122.)

## 4.2. *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*

**Ackroyd** (1968) *Exile and Restoration*; **Albertz** (1994) *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*; **Barker** (1977) ‘The Two Figures in Zechariah’; (1978) ‘The Evil in Zechariah’; **Blenkinsopp** (1996a) *A History of Prophecy in Israel*; **Butterworth** (1992) *Structure and the Book of Zechariah*; **Coggins** (1987) *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*; **Conrad** (1999) *Zechariah*; **Glazier-McDonald** (1987) *Malachi: The Divine Messenger*; **Grabbe** (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; (2002a) ‘The Samaritans in the Hasmonean Period’; **Hill** (1982) ‘Dating Second Zechariah’; (1983) ‘Dating the Book of Malachi’; (1998) *Malachi: A New Translation*; **Kessler** (2002) *The Book of Haggai*; **K. Koch** (1967) ‘Haggais unreines Volk’; (1983) *The Prophets*, II; **Larkin** (1994) *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah*; **Mason** (1977) ‘The Purpose of the “Editorial Framework”’; (1982) ‘The Prophets of the Restoration’; **May** (1968) “This People” and “This Nation” in Haggai”; **Meyers and Meyers** (1987) *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*; (1993) *Zechariah 9–14*; **O’Brien** (1990) *Priest and Levite in Malachi*; (1995) ‘Malachi in Recent Research’; **Person** (1993) *Second Zechariah and the Deuteronomic School*; **Petersen** (1984) *Haggai and Zechariah 1–8*; (1995) *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi*; **Pfeiffer** (1959) ‘Die Disputationsworte im Buche Maleachi’; **Redditt** (1989) ‘Israel’s Shepherds: Hope and Pessimism in Zechariah 9–14’; (1992) ‘Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the Night Visions of Zechariah’; (1994a) ‘The Book of Malachi in its Social Setting’; (1994b) ‘Nehemiah’s First Mission’; (1995) *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*; **Rose** (2000) *Zemah and Zerubbabel*; **J.M.P. Smith et al.** (1912) *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Jonah*; **R.L. Smith** (1984) *Micah–Malachi*; **Unger** (1991) ‘Noch einmal: Haggais unreines Volk’; **Waterman** (1954) ‘The Camouflaged Purge’; **Wolff** (1988) *Haggai: A Commentary*; **van der Woude** (1986) ‘Malachi’s Struggle for a Pure Community’.

A number of characteristics unite the three writings of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 are dated to the same approximate period of time, with the two prophets of Zechariah and Haggai associated together in Ezra 5.1 in the early reign of Darius I. Both have similar themes, especially on matters relating to Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. Zechariah 9–14 is commonly regarded as later than Zechariah 1–8 and to have a different origin, yet all are presently included in the same book. Furthermore, it has been argued with cogency that Malachi belongs structurally with Zechariah 9–14, as the third in a sequence of three oracles (Petersen 1995: 2–3): first oracle (Zech. 9–11), second oracle (Zech. 12–14), third oracle (Mal. 1.1–3.21 [ET 1.1–4.3]), followed by a

conclusion to the book of the Twelve Minor Prophets as a whole (Mal. 3.22-24 [ET 4.4-6]). There are also a number of themes that unite the three writings of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi:

(1) Restoration of the Judaean community in Palestine. The picture given in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 differs at significant points from the Ezra tradition in both 1 Esdras and the Hebrew Ezra-Nehemiah. The ‘people of the land’ seem to be included in the community and not demonized as in Ezra and Nehemiah (cf. Hag. 2.4). The temple is to be built from local resources, not expensive imports from abroad (Hag. 1.8).

(2) Community leadership. This is also a part of the restoration theme. According to both Haggai and Zechariah, leadership is invested in a diarchy, with Zechariah as the governor of the province (evidently appointed by the Persians) and Joshua as high priest (e.g. Mal. 1.12; Zech. 4). Whether formal sharing of political and religious leadership continued throughout the Persian period cannot be determined, but it likely that the high priest continued to have considerable moral weight. Although there was an officially appointed governor most or all the time, the high priest would still have been the main religious representative of the people. Also bound up with this is the ‘messianic’ theme that appears in both books and is an important stage in the development of messianism in Second Temple Judaism. Haggai emphasizes the role of Zerubbabel (a member of the royal family) as God’s ‘signet ring’ (Hag. 2.4-9, 20-23). Zechariah recognizes both Joshua and Zerubbabel as anointed (Zech. 4). Both Joshua and Zerubbabel are crowned and sit on thrones, but it is expected that Zerubbabel (called ‘the Branch’) will be enthroned as ruler (Zech. 6, though some argue that ‘Branch’ is a reference to a future messianic figure [e.g. Rose 2000]).

(3) Temple and priesthood. Both of these are important in these books. Haggai emphasizes how the people have worried too much about their own welfare and have neglected to rebuild the temple (Hag. 1.2-11). The people begin the work, though when and whether it was completed lies outside the purview of these books, and we have to go elsewhere to confirm what happened once the work began. The purity of the high priest and the sanctuary are the subject of Zechariah 3 and 5. Most of the concern in Haggai and Zechariah is about the high priesthood; however, in Malachi we have a discussion of the priesthood as a whole, including criticism of it. The assumption that Malachi was therefore anti-priest or anti-cult has sometimes been made, but this fails to recognize that strong critique can come internally. The writer seems to see the covenant with Levi as important and accords the priesthood a central role in teaching as well as the cult (Mal. 2.4-7).

(4) Eschatology. This is a theme important to all three books. Haggai seems to focus most of its energies on the present, though present events will inaugurate a new beginning. Zechariah has a number of passages relating to the future (seen as imminent), including 2.11-17; 6.9-13; 8; 9-14. Zechariah 8 ends the first part of the book with a prophecy of prosperity and idyllic existence in Jerusalem now that God’s presence is again there. The ‘Day of Yhwh’ is a theme of Zechariah 14. Malachi ends with a message about the future (3.1-5, 19-24 [ET 3.1-5; 4.1-6]). There

is also the messianic theme (noted in point 2 above) which may be an eschatological motif as well, if the interpretation of some (e.g. Rose 2000) is accepted.

#### **4.2.1. *Haggai***

Haggai's person is unknown. It is possible that he was a cultic prophet (cf. Grabbe 1995: 112–13). The book has only two short chapters, both of which are devoted to a series of prophetic exhortations to get on with rebuilding the temple, accompanied by promises of the blessings which will follow as a result. The message seems to be more simple and straightforward than Zechariah, with the focus almost entirely on the rebuilding of temple. The impression is that the oracles arise out of an actual historical situation in which the community is experiencing hardships. The people are suffering misfortunes because of failure to rebuild the temple and restore proper worship. Implied in this rebuilding, though, is the restoration and renewal of the Jewish community. A good deal of emphasis is placed on what God will do, though the people also have to do their part. A strong eschatological hope is expressed in 2.20–23. The dates given cover only a few short weeks, from the first day of the sixth month (1.1) to the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (2.10, 20), all in the second year of Darius (520 BCE).

It was often argued in the past that 'this people and nation' considered unclean (2.14) were the Samaritans who wanted to participate in the building of the temple. This is now generally rejected (K. Koch 1967; May 1968; Wolff 1988: 40, 73, 78–79). The concept has been revived by Albertz (1994: 523–33), however, who argues that 2 Kgs 17.24–34a is an exilic dispute with the cult of Samaria by those looking to Jerusalem, while vv. 34b–40 is a post-exilic call to the Israelite part of the northern mixed population to return to Jerusalem. The Samaritan temple attested by Josephus and archaeology was a major stumbling block, though it did not cause a final split which probably came only with Hyrcanus's destruction of the temple on Gerizim. I feel that there are some significant problems with applying Haggai's statement to the Samaritans. First, the Samaritan schism is probably much later (cf. Grabbe 2002a: 212–14). Secondly, there are major problems with taking Ezra 4–6 at face value (§12.6). With regard specifically to Hag. 2.14, thirdly, May (1968) seems to be right that Haggai's statement applies to the Jewish people. Finally, although Unger (1991) treats the passage as redactional, Hag. 2.14 does not say that the people are unclean but the 'work of their hands'. If Haggai regarded anyone as unclean, it would have been all the people, not just a part of them. Haggai seems to see the people as a remnant (2.2; cf. §11.3.5). If the Samaritan interpretation is rejected, the verse does not seem to make a distinction between those returned from Babylon and those who had remained in the land.

#### **4.2.2. *Zechariah***

This book has been divided by the conventions of critical scholarship into Proto-Zechariah (1–8) and Deutero-Zechariah (9–14), though the latter is sometimes divided into a Deutero-Zechariah (9–11) and Trito-Zechariah (12–14). Nevertheless, it has even questioned by some as to whether the widely accepted division is

valid; in any case, there is widespread agreement that chs. 9–14 include a diversity of material with different origins and dating (cf. the recent redactional study in Redditt 1989). Zechariah 1–8 is composed of a mixture of visions and oracles, divided by date formula. These chapters include eight visions plus several other oracles, dated by the editorial framework as covering two years from the eighth month of Darius's second year (1.1) to the ninth month of his fourth year (7.1), or 520–518 BCE. The oracles are often seen as later additions, in whole or in part, even if some oracles may have been composed earlier than the visions. It has conventionally been argued that the oracles are secondary additions to the visions, though some now reject the redactional argument and consider the oracles as integral to the visions (e.g. Rose 2000: 142–76). In any case, all the oracles are multiple, with some giving interpretations different from the others (cf. Petersen 1984: 120–24). The visions use two main sorts of imagery, the temple (lampstand) and the Babylonian-Persian court (horse and myrtles).

The message of Zechariah 1–8 is slightly different from (and more sophisticated than) Haggai. The basic emphasis of these chapters is also on the rebuilding of the temple and the establishment of a godly community in Jerusalem. Yet this requires not just the human effort of physical building but a cosmic reordering to remove both the causes and the effects of the exile. The people must be cleansed and Yhwh's presence returned to Zion from which it had been removed before the fall of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 10.18–19; 11.22–23). The visions describe how this comes about through a step-by-step sequence. Several visions emphasize that the time of punishment is over and that of restoration imminent: the horses (1.7–17; 6.1–8), the horns and smiths (2.1–4 [ET 1.18–21]), the man with the measuring line (2.5–17 [ET 2.1–13]). Other visions picture the removal of Israel's guilt: the accusation against Joshua (3.1–5), the flying scroll (5.1–4), the flying ephah (5.5–11). The vision of the lampstand and olive trees, with its accompanying oracle, explicitly says that Zerubbabel would complete the temple by God's power (4.1–10). Chapter 8 ends the section with a prophecy of prosperity and idyllic existence in Jerusalem now that God's presence is again there. Passages such as chs. 3–4 and 6.9–15 are important for their statements about the leadership of the new community.

Zechariah 9–14 has long been thought to be different from Zechariah 1–8, for several reasons: (1) Zech. 11.12–13 is attributed to Jeremiah in Mt. 27.9–10; (2) the differences in structure and style; (3) no visions, dates, references to Zerubbabel and Joshua; (4) the temple has already been built (9.8; 11.13; 14.16–21). Despite the assumptions of a separate writing, there are still themes common to both parts of Zechariah: an emphasis on Zion/Jerusalem (1.12–17; 2; 9.8–10; 12.2–13.1); the cleansing of the community as part of God's final act (3; 5; 13.1–2; 14.20–21); universalism (2.15 [ET 2.11]; 8.20–23; 9.7; 10.14; 14.16–19); an appeal to earlier prophetic traditions (1.2–6; 7.12; many verbal allusions); community leadership in a new age (Zerubbabel; 9.9–10; 11.4–17; 13.7–9).

These chapters are much more difficult to date than chs. 1–8; indeed, some think it is impossible (Mason 1982: 343–44). The idea that they were originally pre-exilic oracles has now generally been given up (R.L. Smith 1984: 242–49; Coggins 1987: 63). The time of Alexander or later has been conventional dating since B. Stade and

continues (e.g. Blenkinsopp 1996a: 231–33), with the following reading of passages: 9.1–8—events in the period of Alexander or the Diadochi; 9.13—reference to Greeks. Some have thought Assyrians and Egypt are code for the Seleucids and Ptolemies. Several recent commentaries, however, prefer the Persian period: some argue that the general tenor of Zechariah 9–14 best fits this period in the history of Yehud (Meyers 1993: 15–26; Petersen 1995: 4–6; Redditt 1995: 94–100); the language of the book is also appealed to (Hill 1982; Petersen 1995: 5; Myers and Myers 1993: 27). Petersen (1995: 5) thinks that 9.1–8 actually alludes to the Persian political structure. As so often, it is easy to find fault with the views of others, but one's own views are equally problematic. The fact is that most criteria for dating are rather vague or at least not definitive. What we can say is that a dating of much or even all the material to the Persian period would be accepted by a number of scholars, but there is not likely to be any consensus for greater precision.

As for the message of Zechariah 9–14, some of the themes have been outlined above, but exact references are often obscure in the allusive language of these chapters (though the language and imagery are often similar to those known from the other prophets). Some see factionalism and sectarianism in the community as a major theme (Reddit 1995: 94–105). Other themes include the restoration of the land and people as victor (9.1–8, 11.17; 12; 13.7–9); the future king and the Davidic dynasty (9.9–10; 12.8–9; 13.1); the enigmatic shepherd narrative (11.4–17); the condemnation of idols (13.2); criticism of the prophets (13.2–6); eschatological events (ch. 14).

#### **4.2.3. Malachi**

As already noted above, Malachi is closely bound with Zechariah in its present structural arrangement, forming a ‘third oracle’ after the two in Zechariah 9–14. Also, the final section of the book seems to be a conclusion for the whole of the Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets (Mal. 3.22–24 [ET 4.4–6]). A number of different recent structural analyses of Malachi are described in Hill (1998: 26–37), some using the *riv* pattern (contention or legal complaint) as the basis (though this is problematic). The book takes the form of a series of questions and answers. The terms ‘disputation’ and ‘diatribe’ have been used.

Like Zechariah 9–14, Malachi is difficult to date. A number of recent English-language commentators put it in the Persian period (Petersen 1995; Redditt 1995; Hill 1983; 1998). It has several issues in common with Ezra–Nehemiah, but this is not definitive since the dating of these books is also in question (see p. 72 above): a concern for proper ritual (Neh. 8.13–18; 13.15–18); the priesthood and the place of the Levites (Neh. 13.28–30); tithing (Neh. 13.10–14); marriage (Ezra 9–10; Neh. 13.23–31). Other indications are a reference to ‘the governor’ (1.8: פֶּהָה *pehâh*); language (Hill 1983); Edom (1.2–5, though it is perhaps symbolic). Beyond the fact that the temple seems to have been rebuilt, no specific time within the Persian period has been agreed on, despite attempts to be more precise (cf. Glazier-McDonald 1987: 14–18; Hill 1983). For example, the reference to Edom (1.2–5) is not only imprecise but may be using ‘Edom’ as a figure for any enemies or opponents.

As already indicated, there are a number of themes in the book: critique of the priesthood, but the author could still be a priest (Mason 1982: 149-50) or Levite (Redditt 1995: 152); eschatology (3.1-5, 17-18; 3.19-21, 23-24 [ET 4.1-3, 5-6]); marriage and divorce (2.10-16); tithing (3.6-12). Although there are a number of parallels in its message to the reforms of Nehemiah (J.M.P. Smith 1912: 7-8), the exact relationship between the two is still uncertain. Its value is primarily for the religious and social issues which were important to the community at the time. Its major aim seems to be that of assuring the community of God's continuing love and concern for them. But since many Jews seemed to be looking for evidence of that love in vain, an explanation of why the promises were not being fulfilled was needed (1.2-5; 2.17; 3.13-18). The reason given is lack of obedience and reverence on the part of the community. The criticisms especially focus on proper cultic observance, with the priests themselves being strongly taken to task along with the people (1.6-2.9; 3.6-12). Lest it be thought that Malachi attacks the priesthood, however, it can be argued that he was himself part of the priestly establishment (Mason 1982: 149-50). There are also social concerns such as proper husband-wife relations (2.14-16, but contrast van der Woude 1986). As with Haggai and Zechariah, eschatology is an important interest at 3.23-24 (ET 4.5-6), though this passage is often dated later than the main part of the book. As Mason observes, Malachi 'holds together concern for the cultic needs of the present theocratic community and lively eschatological hope for the future' (1982: 151).

### **4.3. Other Prophetic Writings**

#### **4.3.1. The Isaiah Tradition**

**Barstad** (1997b) *The Babylonian Captivity of the Book of Isaiah*; **Blenkinsopp** (1996a) *A History of Prophecy in Israel*; (2000) *Isaiah 1-39*; (2002) *Isaiah 40-55*; (2003a) *Isaiah 56-66*; **Carroll** (2001) 'City of Chaos, City of Stone, City of Flesh: Urbanscapes in Prophetic Discourses'; **P.R. Davies** (1995a) 'God of Cyrus, God of Israel'; **Doyle** (2000) *The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking*; **Emmerson** (1992) *Isaiah 56-66*; **Grabbe** (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; **Hanson** (1973) *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*; **D.G. Johnson** (1988) *From Chaos to Restoration*; **Kaiser** (1983) *Isaiah 1-12*; (1974) *Isaiah 13-39*; **K. Koch** (1983) *The Prophets, II*; **Melugin and Sweeney (eds.)** (1996) *New Visions of Isaiah*; **Millar** (1976) *Isaiah 24-27*; **Na'aman** (2003b) 'Updating the Messages'; **Pauritsch** (1971) *Die neue Gemeinde*; **Redditt** (1986b) 'Once Again, The City in Isaiah 24-27'; **van Ruiten and Vervenne (eds.)** (1997) *Studies in the Book of Isaiah*; **Scholl** (2000) *Die Elenden in Gottes Thronrat*; **Schramm** (1995) *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*; **P.A. Smith** (1995) *Rhetoric and Redaction in Trito-Isaiah*; **Sweeney** (1996) *Isaiah 1-39*; **de Vaux** (1971) 'The Decrees of Cyrus and Darius'; **Vermeylen** (1977) *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique*; **Vermeylen (ed.)** (1989) *The Book of Isaiah/Le livre d'Isaïe*; **Westermann** (1969) *Isaiah 40-66*; **Whybray** (1975) *Isaiah 40-66*; (1983) *The Second Isaiah*.

The division of the book of Isaiah into three sections, conventional since the nineteenth century, disguises the fact that many scholars would put some portions

of First Isaiah (Isa. 1–39) into the Persian period (for a summary of much Isaiah scholarship to the mid-1990s, see Sweeney 1996; for more recent studies, see Blenkinsopp 2000). A commentator such as O. Kaiser (1974; 1983) is unusual in assigning much of the book to the post-eighth century, but most Isaiah scholars would see a fair amount of later editing in Isaiah 1–39 (e.g. Na’aman 2003 on Isa. 37.9b–36) and would ascribe some of the material to the post-exilic period. For our purposes, the most important section of First Isaiah to be assigned to the Persian period is the ‘Isaiah Apocalypse’ (Isa. 24–27). Second Isaiah has perhaps the strongest consensus, being thought very widely to be a product of exilic-period Babylonia. Yet a few have argued for a Palestinian origin (e.g. Barstad 1997b) and some have wanted to date the book to the Persian period (e.g. P.R. Davies 1995a).

Along with the ‘Isaiah Apocalypse’, our main text assumed to be from the Persian period is the book of Third Isaiah (Isa. 56–66). The exact origin and unity of the material in Isaiah 56–66 has been widely debated with no clear consensus on the details (Emmerson 1992; Schramm 1995: 11–52; P.A. Smith 1995; Blenkinsopp 2003a: 42–54). Schramm concludes that chs. 56–66 were simply the final stage in the development and redaction of chs. 40–55 and never existed as an independent unit. Without hoping to resolve the question, the following points can be noted: the themes of the book generally fit the Persian period; there is little to demand a post-Persian dating; and the collection of prophetic books in the present Hebrew canon was probably complete by the Greek period (§14.3.2). A complication is that there is little in the book to relate directly to Ezra–Nehemiah, but the complicated nature of Ezra–Nehemiah’s relationship to contemporary history has already been discussed (§4.1.2; §4.1.3). On the other hand, there is little which can be related to specific historical events, and many problems of interpretation exist.

The themes and concerns of Trito-Isaiah are often similar to those of Isaiah 40–55. The geographical setting is clearly different, however, since the perspective is from Judah and Jerusalem rather than Babylon. The return envisaged by Deutero-Isaiah has taken place and the temple rebuilt (60.7, 13; 62.6–9, though a few verses might suggest otherwise: 57.13–19; 58.12; 64.9–10), yet the high expectations of the earlier prophet have not been fulfilled as prophesied. Life is hard, crop failure frequent, and the returnees evidently are having a difficult time making a living (60.17; 62.8–9). Indeed, much of the book could be interpreted as an attempt to cope with a situation in which the expectations of the community are far different from the reality.

A number of passages have been interpreted as reflecting divisions within the religious community. It is even alleged that some passages are an attack on the functioning cult and priesthood of the Jerusalem temple. Isaiah 57.3–13 is difficult to date, some making it pre-exilic (Westermann 1969: 321–25), but even if it is post-exilic, the type of worship here is reminiscent of that ascribed (rightly or wrongly) to the Canaanite cults of pre-exilic times (Whybray 1975: 202). Isaiah 59.1–21 is a scathing attack but its target is vague, likely the whole community rather than a particular group within it (Whybray 1975: 221). K. Koch (1983: 153) thinks that Isa. 60.1–22 shows opposition to rebuilding the temple (and thus to be dated before 520 BCE). Others are more sceptical of an actual historical context and see it as more

eschatological in thought (Westermann 1969: 357). Whether it reflects the existence of the temple is debatable (Whybray 1975: 229-30; cf. Pauritsch 1971: 123). Isaiah 65.1-16 is difficult to date, depending on how one interprets the polemic. Many have seen some sort of syncretistic cult, perhaps even a Hellenistic one (Pauritsch 1971: 172-73; cf. de Vaux 1971). While a religiously divided community may be envisaged (Whybray 1975: 266-68), there is no clear identity of those being criticized. Isaiah 66.1-6 more than any other passage has been taken as a criticism of the current priesthood and temple: condemning all forms of temple worship (so Pauritsch 1971: 195); directed against the view that God wants a temple built for him now, as in Hag. 2.19 (Westermann 1969: 412-13); an attack on the current priesthood for being corrupt (i.e. not seeing things the way the writer of this passage does: Blenkinsopp 1996a: 249-50; 2003a: 42-54; Hanson 1973).

The problem is that if these passages constitute criticism of the temple cult and priesthood *as institutions*, it would be unusual in the Hebrew Bible. The charges outlined have sometimes been taken seriously as reflecting the actual situation at the time, but to do so is to ignore the habits of preachers. It is difficult to believe that this is anything more than stylized invective or that the community was suddenly more wicked than at other times and places. Schramm agrees with Hanson that there were divisions within the post-exilic community but thinks they were the followers of Second Isaiah (who believed in monotheism) versus those who continued the 'syncretistic' religion of pre-exilic Judah. This characterization of the pre-587 religion is problematic, but it may well be that some of the polytheistic practices of pre-exilic times continued and are reflected in Third Isaiah (see below). This seems more likely than the interpretations that the temple and priesthood are being attacked as institutions, though we have a number of passages in the literature of this time that may criticize alleged corruption or failings in the current temple establishment. In any case, the vagueness of the description does not allow an easy determination of the question.

A number of themes in Third Isaiah are significant for history of the times:

- Eschatology. Several passages discuss a future which seems not just a hyperbolic description of the present or the immediate future (cf. Isa. 60). The one referring to the new heavens and new earth (Isa. 65.17-25) is the most striking, but other passages see also the coming of Yhwh in wrath, reminding one of the day of Yhwh (63.1-6; 66.15-16), and the pilgrimage of all nations to Jerusalem with a judgment on the wicked (66.18-24).
- Universalism. A universalist view is found in some passages (especially 56.3-7), a rare perspective if not unknown in other passages (cf. §4.3.3). The idea that non-Israelites could hope for salvation and God's blessings as long as they were obedient to God's law is something found in only a few other contemporary sources.
- Illegitimate cults. Several passages seem to discuss cultic practices condemned in the book and also elsewhere, such as Deut. 18.9-14 (Isa. 57.3-13; 65.1-7, 11-12; 66.3-4, 17). These may relate to a cult of the dead or necromancy (cf. Grabbe 1995: 141-45). Some of the passages

that have been interpreted as attacking the temple and priesthood (see above) could more persuasively be seen as references to such continuing ‘unofficial’ practices (on ‘popular religion’, see §11.5).

The ‘Isaiah Apocalypse’ was first identified in the nineteenth century, though some argue that this designation ought to be abandoned (Blenkinsopp 2000: 346). The passage has some characteristics in common with later apocalyptic literature (especially the idea of an afterlife) but not others. This raises the issue of defining ‘apocalypse’ and ‘apocalyptic’ (§11.4), but the important point is that Isaiah 24–27 seems to give us some insight into thinking in the Persian period. There are few indications of dating, and earlier critics often assigned a very late date to the text, such as the time of the Maccabees (cf. Blenkinsopp 2000: 347–48). R. Scholl (2000) recently opted for the early Ptolemaic period; however, several other recent studies have argued for the early Persian period. W.R. Millar (1976), for example, argues that part of the passage (24.1–16a; 24.26b–25.9; 26.1–8) was composed by a disciple of the Isaiah tradition close to the fall of Jerusalem in 587/586, with 26.11–27.6 added later because of the delay of Yhwh’s victory. M.A. Sweeney (1996: 317–20) also argues for the late sixth century as the best time of composition, while J. Blenkinsopp (2000: 348) thinks that the first of several drafts may have begun about this time.

Isaiah 24–27 appears to form the climax of chs. 2–27 (cf. Sweeney 1996: 320–22). First, Yhwh punishes Israel and then redeems Israel (Isa. 2–12); this is followed by a judgment on and punishment of the nations (Isa. 13–23), culminating in a judgment of the whole world (Isa. 24–27). The entire passage has a twofold structure, with Isaiah 24 as a prophetic announcement of punishment, followed by chs. 25–27 announcing blessings. The ‘city of chaos’ is very important and has been much debated (D.G. Johnson [1988] and Doyle [2000] argue it is Jerusalem), but something of a consensus is forming that it is Babylon or rather Babylon as a wider symbol for opposition to Yhwh’s rule (Sweeney 1996: 318–19; Blenkinsopp 2000: 347). R.P. Carroll (2001) sees it as possibly any city, including Jerusalem as a symbol of Babylon. Redditt (1986b) states that Jerusalem is the only possible specific city, though noting that it might be symbolic of all Judah’s fortified cities after Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction.

The message of Isaiah 24–27 is that the forces of chaos have taken over but Yhwh will intervene to defeat the ‘monsters of chaos’ (e.g. Rephaim [26.14], Leviathan [27.1]), punish the oppressive city (24.10–12; 25.2–3; 26.5; 27.10–11), restore order, and make Israel secure in its land and honoured among the nations (27.2–6, 12–13). Mythical language of fertility and creation is used to express this message (cf. Millar 1976: 65–102). The theme of ‘in that day’ (24.21; 25.9; 26.1; 27.1, 2, 6, 12, 13) is found throughout, parallel to the ‘day of Yhwh’ in other passages (§11.3.8.2). Especially important are those passages showing a development toward a personal afterlife: the destruction of death (25.8) and the resurrection of the dead (26.19). Also of interest is a parallel to the myth of the fallen angels (§14.4.1) in 24.21–22 in which the ‘host of heaven’ is imprisoned. The ‘kings of the earth’ are also imprisoned, which may be an idea similar to *1 Enoch* 22 in which

the dead are preserved in special chambers under the earth until the day of judgment. Thus, eschatology is a major component of the message.

#### **4.3.2. Joel**

**Ahlström** (1971) *Joel and the Temple Cult in Jerusalem*; **Barton** (2001) *Joel and Obadiah*; **Blenkinsopp** (1996a) *A History of Prophecy in Israel*; **Childs** (1979) *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*; **Crenshaw** (1995) *Joel*; **Fohrer** (1968) *Introduction to the Old Testament*; **Linville** (forthcoming) 'The Day of Yahweh and the Mourning'; **Mason** (1982) 'The Prophets of the Restoration'; (1994) *Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Joel*; **Prinsloo** (1985) *The Theology of the Book of Joel*; **Redditt** (1986a) 'The Book of Joel and Peripheral Prophecy'; **Stephenson** (1969) 'The Date of the Book of Joel'; **Wolff** (1977) *Joel and Amos*.

From the time of B. Duhm, part or all of Joel has been dated quite late, as late as the Maccabean period. Of particular importance are the apparent historical references in 1.9, 13; 2.14; 4.6 (ET 3.6). However, a number of writers in the past several decades would date the entirety of the book to the Persian period (Fohrer 1968: 429; Stephenson 1969; Ahlström 1971: 111-29; Wolff 1977: 4-6; Redditt 1986a: 233-35). Although Wolff argues that the book is a literary unity (1977: 6-8), Childs concludes that this unity is achieved redactionally (1979: 389-92). Redditt (1986: 235-37) argues for a single author but one whose writing covers a period of time and reflects the changing status of his group. Although some would still place the first two chapters or even the whole of the book in the pre-exilic period, the majority date at least chs. 1-2 in the Persian period. More controversial are chs. 3-4, which many assign also to the Persian period but others put after Alexander's conquests (primarily because of 4.4-8 [ET 3.4-8]). A substantial number of scholars put the time between the first return and Ezra/Nehemiah (Ahlström 1971: 111-29; Redditt 1986a: 233-35), that is, the late sixth or first half of the fifth century.

Two important aspects of the book are its emphasis on the cult and on eschatology. With regard to the priesthood and cult, the effects of famine and locust plagues on the temple are noted (1.9, 13, 16; 2.17, though a number of scholars [e.g. Linville forthcoming] argue that the locusts of Joel 1-2 are purely imaginary). The future place and holiness of Zion are part of the culmination of the book (2.14; 3.5 [ET 2.32]; 4.16-18, 21 [ET 3.16-18, 21]). Although it has been common to see Joel as anti-cultic (e.g. Wolff 1977: 12-13), the book in fact puts a particular emphasis on priests that is not to be gauged by the number of verses containing the word 'priest' (Linville forthcoming). Because of the ecological crisis, new rituals have to be found, but the social hierarchy is not challenged—indeed, along with elders the priests are the only authority figures. The temple is affirmed as necessary for the stability of the cosmos.

On eschatology, Joel (in common with Zech. 9-14, or at least chs. 12-14) concentrates on the 'Day of Yhwh' and the supernatural intervention of God to exalt Israel, punish its enemies, and bring about a new order. Yet the cult is still vital and required for the salvation of the nation. The suffering of the people is described but little is said about their sins (but see 2.13-14), unlike some other prophetic books; instead, it is the nations and not Judah who will be punished (4.2-14, 19 [ET 3.2-14,

19]). Zion will be restored, God's people Israel exalted, and a new order brought about (2.14, 18-27; 3.5 [ET 2.32]; 4.1, 16-18, 21 [ET 3.1, 16-18, 21]).

A number of motifs found here recur in other prophetic and apocalyptic books, such as judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat (4.2, 12-14 [ET 3.2, 12-14]). Some see theodicy as a major theme within the book (Barton 2001: 76-80).

#### 4.3.3. Jonah

**Blenkinsopp** (1996a) *A History of Prophecy in Israel*; **Bolin** (1997) *Freedom Beyond Forgiveness*; **Burrows** (1970) 'The Literary Category of the Book of Jonah'; **Clements** (1975) 'The Purpose of the Book of Jonah'; **Craig** (1999) 'Jonah in Recent Research'; **Grabbe** (1998c) 'Triumph of the Pious or Failure of the Xenophobes?'; **Holbert** (1981) "Deliverance Belongs to Yahweh!"; **K. Koch** (1983) *The Prophets*, II; **Landes** (1982) 'Linguistic Criteria'; **Levine** (1984) 'Jonah as a Philosophical Book'; **Limburg** (1993) *Jonah*; **Mason** (1982) 'The Prophets of the Restoration'; **Mitchell et al.** (1912) *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Jonah; Person* (1996) *In Conversation with Jonah*; **Porten** (1981) 'Baalshamem and the Date of the Book of Jonah'; **Salters** (1994) *Jonah and Lamentations*; **Sasson** (1990) *Jonah*; **R.L. Smith** (1984) *Micah-Malachi*; **Wolff** (1986) *Obadiah and Jonah*.

R.B. Salters (1994) provides an introduction and earlier bibliography, though this needs to be supplemented by K.M. Craig (1999). The Deuteronomistic History refers to a prophet Jonah in the time of Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14.23-27). The present book of Jonah is long after that time, though the prophetic figure in the book may be deliberately taken from the passage in 2 Kings. No internal indications require a dating later than the Persian period, but neither is the Greek period excluded (cf. Wolff 1986: 76-78). A book of Jonah almost certainly existed in the Persian period because of the reference to it as a part of a collection of Minor Prophets about 200 BCE (Sir. 49.10), though whether it was identical to the present book is less certain. Despite some attempts to date the book in the pre-Persian period (cf. Landes 1982; Porten 1981), the Persian period is still the most popular choice for scholars. With perhaps the exception of Jonah's prayer (2.3-10 [ET 2.2-9]) the book seems to be a unity.

More problematic is the question of its purpose. Several recent commentators have suggested or discussed Jonah as satire or parody (cf. Craig 1999: 104). Two proposals are particularly important for historical considerations: (a) the problem of prophecy, and (b) the place of Gentiles within God's plan of salvation. The theme of the failure of prophecy is not new (assuming the book belongs to the Persian period) but is already addressed in such passages as Ezekiel 33 and Jeremiah 18 (though when these are to be dated is a moot point; Joel 2.12-14 also leaves open the possibility that God will relent). In spite of his initial reluctance, Jonah carries out his prophetic mission, yet God does not destroy Nineveh as prophesied because it repented. Thus, one point of the book is the contingency of prophecy on the actions of the people against whom it is directed. On the other hand, the focus may not be on the failure of prophecy so much as on prophetic hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness (cf. Holbert 1981: 75).

Related to the prophetic question is that of universalism and the place of Gentiles within God's plan (see the discussion in Sasson 1990: 24–26). Although there are some who deny this theme to the book (e.g. Clements 1975), one of its messages still seems to be that non-Israelites can have access to the God of Israel. A similar idea is found in writings which probably also date to the same general period of time (Isa. 56, Ruth, and Mal. 1.11); these indicate a tendency in some circles toward the universalism of worship and salvation. This does not mean that Gentiles would be accepted just as they are because conversion to Yahwism is presupposed, but it goes against the narrow genealogical and exclusivist view in some circles (e.g. Ezra–Nehemiah; cf. Grabbe 1998c). Gentiles can repent of their sins; God will listen to them in such cases; God is concerned for their welfare and not just Israel's. Exactly how this is to be related to the views of Ezra–Nehemiah is not so clear, whether direct opposition (Burrows 1970: 104–105) or simply another view during this time.

#### **4.3.4. *Ezekiel***

**Allen** (1994) *Ezekiel 1–19*; **Bodi** (1991) *The Book of Ezekiel*; **Brownlee** (1986) *Ezekiel 1–19*; **Clements** (1996) *Ezekiel*; **Cooke** (1936) *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*; **Darr** (1994) 'Ezekiel among the Critics'; **Duguid** (1994) *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*; **Eichrodt** (1970) *Ezekiel*; **Greenberg** (1983) *Ezekiel 1–20*; (1997) *Ezekiel 21–37*; **Hurowitz** (1992) *I Have Built You an Exalted House*; **Levenson** (1976) *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48*; **McKeating** (1993) *Ezekiel*; **Niditch** (1986) 'Ezekiel 40–48 in a Visionary Context'; **Stevenson** (1996) *The Vision of Transformation*; **Torrey** (1930) *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy*; **Tuell** (1992) *The Law of the Temple in Ezekiel 40–48*; **Wevers** (1982) *Ezekiel*; **Zimmerli** (1979–83) *Ezekiel 1; 2*.

Ezekiel is listed here because it has been widely argued that certain important sections date to the post-exilic period. In the history of the book's interpretation a variety of dates has been suggested, including that it was a third-century 'pseudepigraph' (Torrey 1930). Zimmerli's commentary (originally appearing in German in 1969) marked a new phase in the study of the book, moving away from the more radical views of earlier critics which saw little of Ezekiel the prophet in the book (Zimmerli 1979–83). On the other hand, the majority today would not go so far as Greenberg (1983; 1997) in assigning most of the book to Ezekiel.

The section of most significance for the Persian period is made up of chs. 37–48, which consists of several different parts: the visions of the dry bones (37.1–14), the prophecy of the two sticks (37.15–28), Gog and Magog (chs. 38–39), and the temple vision (chs. 40–48). Ezekiel 37–39 seems to have several eschatological components. Although the valley of dry bones may represent only the restoration of the 'House of Israel' rather than a resurrection of individuals (cf. 37.11–14), it was an easy move to resurrection of the dead (cf. Isa. 26.19). The vision of the two sticks is also about the restoration of the two nations, Israel and Judah, united once more in the land, with David ruling over them as king. This goes beyond a simple restoration of the Jews to Palestine after the exile and clearly envisages the renewal

of the monarchy. Although the prophecy against Gog of the land of Magog might be using ‘Gog’ as a cipher for Babylon (McKeating 1993: 121–22), the language seems to go beyond the destruction of physical Babylon to an eschatological scenario. The prophecy appears to draw on the legendary ‘foe from the north’ (cf. §11.3.8.2) and to set the events of the attack on and salvation of Israel in a distant future. Ezekiel 37–39 thus has a number of characteristics in common with those writings universally described as ‘apocalyptic’ (§11.4).

With regard to the vision of the temple, some of the passage may go back to Ezekiel himself, but the final text is the result of considerable redaction (Zimmerli 1983: 328; McKeating 1993: 99–104; Tuell 1992: 18–77). Some feel it was a blueprint for the actual restoration of the nation and temple; if so, it was rather utopian and certainly not implemented in any serious way. Tuell (1992: 78–102) argues for a reflection of actual Persian institutions in the temple description (though a number of his points will be tacitly opposed in Chapter 7 below). I.M. Duguid sees Ezekiel’s programme as a utopian product of the exile, with no realization in the post-exilic restoration period (1994: 142–43). Yet the description of the temple has an important theological message: the theology of the writer is conveyed in measurements and the physical description of the temple, as also elsewhere in the ancient Near East (cf. Hurowitz 1992).

The view of the priesthood in Ezekiel 40–48 has been variously interpreted. It is often thought to exalt the Zadokites and downgrade the Levites (e.g. Tuell 1992: 121–52). K.R. Stevenson, however, argues that the point of the central passage in Ezekiel 44 is who has access to the Holy Place—not the laity, only the priests and Levites (1996: 66–76)—thus, the Levites are not being demoted here, though they do not have the right to serve at the altar (unlike the Zadokites). For a further discussion of the development of the priesthood, see below (§10.3.1).

One of the intriguing aspects of these chapters is the reference to the ‘civil’ ruler by the title **נֶשֶׁר nāšî'** (‘prince’, ‘official’), rather than **מֶלֶךְ melek** which is the most common word for king in biblical passages. This choice seems to be the deliberate adoption of a neutral term, since *nāšî'* does not necessarily imply royal status but also does not exclude it (McKeating 1993: 112–13). On the other hand, *melek* and *nāšî'* seem to be used more or less interchangeably in Ezekiel 1–39 (e.g. David is called by both titles: 37.22, 24 vs. 34.24; 37.25). Yet the *nāšî'* of Ezekiel 44 is subordinate to the priests and has no cultic function, unlike the kings of Israel and Judah. The implication may be that there is no human king but only Yhwh functions as king (Stevenson 1996: 119–23). According to Duguid (1994: 11–33, 142–43), the *nāšî'* of Ezekiel owes nothing to a post-exilic person of that title. In any case, the reality was that the monarchy was not restored in any form (§12.5.2; §12.5.3), though the title appears in connection with Sheshbazzar (Ezra 1.8).

#### **4.4. The Books of Chronicles**

Ackroyd (1988) ‘Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah’; Albertz (1994) *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*; Auld (1994) *Kings Without Privilege*; R.L. Braun (1973) ‘Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles’; (1986) *1 Chronicles*;

(1997) '1 Chronicles 1–9'; **Cazelles** (1979) Review of Williamson, *Israel*; **Cross** (1998b) 'A Reconstruction of the Judaean Restoration'; **Dirksen** (1998) '1 Chronicles 9,26–33'; **Dyck** (1998) *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler*; **Grabbe** (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; **Graham, Hoglund and McKenzie (eds.)** (1997) *The Chronicler as Historian*; **Graham and McKenzie (eds.)** (1999) *The Chronicler as Author*; **Gunneweg** (1965) *Leviten und Priester*; **Japhet** (1971) 'Chronicles, Book of'; (1985) 'The Historical Reliability of Chronicles'; (1993) *I & II Chronicles*; (1997) *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*; **D.G. Johnson** (1988) *From Chaos to Restoration*; **Johnstone** (1997) *1 and 2 Chronicles*, I; (1998) *Chronicles and Exodus*; **Jones** (1993) *1 & 2 Chronicles*; **Kalimi** (1995) *Zur Geschichtsschreibung des Chronisten*; (2002) 'The View of Jerusalem in the Ethnographical Introduction'; **Kelly** (1996) *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles*; **Kleinig** (1993) *The Lord's Song*; (1994) 'Recent Research on Chronicles'; **Laato** (1994) 'The Levitical Genealogies in 1 Chronicles 5–6'; **Levin** (2001) 'Understanding Biblical Genealogies'; **McEntire** (1993) *The Function of Sacrifice in Chronicles*; **McKenzie** (1985) *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History*; **Noth** (1987) *The Chronicler's History*; **Oeming** (1990) *Das wahre Israel*; **Peltonen** (1996) *History Debated*; (2001) 'A Jigsaw without a Model?'; **Riley** (1993) *King and Cultus in Chronicles*; **Selman** (1994) *1 Chronicles; 2 Chronicles*; **Steins** (1995) *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlussphänomen*; **Tuell** (2001) *First and Second Chronicles*; **Willi** (1972) *Die Chronik als Auslegung*; (1991–) *Chronik*; (1994) 'Late Persian Judaism'; (1995) *Juda–Jehud–Israel*; **Williamson** (1977a) *Israel in the Books of Chronicles*; (1977c) 'Eschatology in Chronicles'; (1979) 'The Origins of the Twenty-Four Priestly Courses'; (1982) *1 and 2 Chronicles*; **J.W. Wright** (1990) 'Guarding the Gates'.

Chronicles has been the subject of considerable attention in the past quarter of a century. For surveys of this work, see Japhet (1989), Williamson (1982), Braun (1986), Kleinig (1994), and especially Peltonen (1996; 2001). Some of the new thinking is quite important for the use of Chronicles in a historical study. The dating of Chronicles has varied from the early Persian period to the time of the Maccabees (Peltonen 2001: 228–39). The difficulty is that there are no clear criteria, and scholars must seek recourse to more indirect means which are often very subjective. Thus, Noth (1987: 69–73) had argued for the Hellenistic period. Several studies in the 1970s tended to favour the later Achaemenid period (Japhet 1971: 533–34; Williamson 1977a: 83–86). Although a recent case has been made to date the books to the Maccabean period (Steins 1995: 491–99), a consensus for the dating of Chronicles is tending toward the early Greek period, perhaps the late fourth century, but more probably the early third century BCE (Japhet 1993: 27–28; Albertz 1994: 545; Peltonen 2001: 261–71).

If the books are to be dated to the early Greek period, however, they may still have been composed substantially in the Persian period. The books do not seem to be primarily concerned about the Greeks but rather focus on issues left over from the Persian period; they thus potentially tell us something about the community at that time. Most agree that there has been some later editing, but the question of various 'editions' of the Chronicler's work has been hotly disputed, especially the view that a large part of Chronicles can be placed as early as about 520 BCE

(e.g. Cross 1998b, opposed by Williamson 1977c). There is also the question of whether the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9 are an integral part of the composition. Williamson (1977c: 121–22; 1982: 40–92) and D.G. Johnson (1988: 55) argue that they are, against Cross (1998b) and a number of earlier scholars.

The problem with utilizing Chronicles for historical purposes is that the bulk of the material is a version of Israel's history under the monarchy, parallel to Samuel–Kings. Most see Samuel–Kings as its primary source (though note Auld 1994 for a view that both Samuel–Kings and Chronicles drew from a common post-exilic source). Access to post-exilic history has generally to be found in an indirect way. One area where such seems to exist, though, is in relation to the temple: there is a wide consensus that Chronicles reflects the structure of the priesthood and the functioning of the temple cult in the Persian or early Greek period (cf. Japhet 1997: 222–65; Williamson 1979), though some mutual contradictions suggest the juxtaposition of material from different sources (cf. Gunneweg 1965; Japhet 1993: 411–66). There is some indication that cultic prophets in the temple were being absorbed into the levitical ranks of temple singers (Grabbe 1995: 112–13). The book is a crucial indicator of the importance of singing and music in the cult (§10.2.4).

Another area where Chronicles seems to provide clues to the post-exilic situation is in the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9. As noted above, genealogies in the ancient Near East often provide information other than bloodlines of descent (§4.1.3.4; R.L. Braun 1997). In the case of the genealogies in Chronicles, they appear to reflect the structure and settlement patterns of the post-exilic community (Willi 1994; 1995: 110–68). T. Willi argues that these genealogies are ‘citizenship lists’ (*Bürgerrechtslisten*), with Judah and Judaism to be understood as the continuer and defender of the ‘all Israel’ tradition. The tribes of the genealogies are not just a summary from older tradition but represent a renewed message for the present inhabitants of Judah. According to Willi this comes to the fore mainly in the mid-fifth century BCE (Willi 1994; 1995: 119–67). For more on how genealogies help us to understand Persian-period Judah, see below (§10.3.1).

Recent study suggests that for the Chronicler ‘Israel’ includes the northern tribes as well as Judah, so that the sustained anti-Samaritan polemic identified by an earlier scholarship must be abandoned (Willi 1972: 190–93; R.L. Braun: 1973: 515–16; Williamson 1977a: 136–40; Japhet 1997: 325–34). It should be noted, however, that Albertz argues—contrary to these recent trends—that the cultic split with the Samaritan community forms the background to the books (1994: 544–56), though he dates this split to the early Greek period.

#### 4.5. The P Document

**Blenkinsopp** (1991a) *The Pentateuch*; (1996b) ‘An Assessment of the Alleged Pre-Exilic Date of the Priestly Material’; **Budd** (1996) *Leviticus*; **Douglas** (1993) *In the Wilderness*; (1999) *Leviticus as Literature*; **Gerstenberger** (1996) *Leviticus*; **Grabbe** (1993) *Leviticus*; (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; (1997c) ‘The Book of Leviticus’; (2003a) ‘The Priests in Leviticus’; (forthcoming b) Review of Douglas, *Leviticus*; **Grünwaldt** (1999) *Das Heiligkeitsgesetz Leviticus*

17–26; **Haran** (1978) *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel*; **Houston** (1993) *Purity and Monotheism*; **Cees Houtman** (1994) *Der Pentateuch*; **Knöhl** (1987) ‘The Priestly Torah Versus the Holiness School’; (1995) *The Sanctuary of Silence*; **Milgrom** (1991) *Leviticus 1–16*; (2000a) *Leviticus 17–22*; (2001) *Leviticus 23–27*; **Nicholson** (1998) *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century*; **Rendtorff** (1993) ‘Two Kinds of P?’; **Rofé** (1999) *Introduction to the Composition of the Pentateuch*; **Whybray** (1995b) *Introduction to the Pentateuch*.

It is probably fair to say that the classic Graf–Wellhausen or Documentary Hypothesis, with its theory of four sources, still holds sway among scholars as the origin of the Pentateuch (for a survey of scholarship, see Cees Houtman 1994; Nicholson 1998). Nevertheless, it has been under attack from several directions in recent years: (a) a question as to whether the various sources exist at all; (b) acceptance of the various sources but questioning of their late dating. There is not a consistent attack, however, for some tend to date some or all the sources later than was once done. (For recent studies of whether the Documentary Hypothesis is still adequate, see, for example, Blenkinsopp 1991a; Whybray 1995b; Rofé 1999.)

The post-exilic dating of P was a cornerstone of the Graf–Wellhausen thesis, but it is here that one of the main objections to the consensus has emerged (see the summary in Grabbe 1993: 12–18; 1997c). The key study arguing for a pre-exilic date of P was Haran’s (1978). His argument has since been bolstered by a series of individual studies, as well as by the massive commentary of Milgrom (1991–2001). A further complication to the discussion is the question of the Holiness Code (H) which has usually been seen as separate from P and earlier. Several scholars have doubted the existence of H as a separate document (e.g. Gerstenberger 1996). I. Knöhl, though accepting the existence of H, came to the conclusion that it was later than Leviticus 1–16 (1987; 1995), arguing that there were two priestly schools, one of which produced the earlier P document and the other which not only wrote H (the later document) but also did the final editing of the Pentateuch. Milgrom (1991: 26–35) followed Knöhl in arguing that H is later than P, though his thesis differs in detail from Knöhl’s.

Despite these impressive studies, we are a long way from seeing the traditional late dating of P abandoned (cf. Rendtorff 1993; Blenkinsopp 1996b). My study assumes that the most likely date for the composition of P was the Persian period, though it incorporates older traditional material. Whether P is a Persian-period composition or whether it only became widely known in the Persian period, the effect on religion is much the same. The P document summarizes a good deal of the traditional cult practices. The cult is likely to have changed only slowly over time, and even a pre-exilic cultic description was probably still current in early post-exilic times. Many of the other laws were probably traditional in Judaic society; for example, the food taboos (Lev. 11) were most likely those that had been observed for centuries (cf. Houston 1993: 123). Nevertheless, P in general and Leviticus in particular was not a ‘manual’ for the temple service (Grabbe 2003a). Apart from its lack of completeness (much that the priests would need to know is omitted), it is probably to some extent stylized. Part of the reason is that it is set in a hypothetical tabernacle shrine made by Moses in the wilderness. Therefore, the cult in a fixed

temple, with a king and something like a national structure, would have had some differences. For example, there is no place for the king or the cult prophets in the P legislation (cf. Grabbe 1995: 10–40, 112–13).

Much of the legislation fits a small, self-contained community such as one might find in Persian Yehud. It is suggested that the only other such small community as an alternative setting would be pre-monarchic Israel, which is the setting given by Haran (1978) and Milgrom (1991). A good case can be made for how P fits quite well into the context of Persian Yehud (Gerstenberger 1996).

## 4.6. *The Writings*

### 4.6.1. *Proverbs*

**Clifford** (1999) *Proverbs*; **Fox** (2000) *Proverbs 1–9*; **Golka** (1993) *The Leopard's Spots*; **Grabbe** (1997a) *Wisdom of Solomon*; **S.L. Harris** (1995) *Proverbs 1–9*; **Kassis** (1999) *The Book of Proverbs*; **Kayatz** (1966) *Studien zu Proverbien 1–9*; **Lang** (1986) *Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs*; **McKane** (1970) *Proverbs*; **Maier** (1995) *Die 'fremde Frau' in Proverbien 1–9*; **Martin** (1995) *Proverbs*; **A. Müller** (2000) *Proverbien 1–9*; **Murphy and Huwiler** (1999) *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*; **Snell** (1993) *Twice-Told Proverbs*; **Washington** (1994) *Wealth and Poverty*; **Weeks** (1994) *Early Israelite Wisdom*; **Westermann** (1995) *Roots of Wisdom*; **Whybray** (1965) *Wisdom in Proverbs*; (1994a) *Proverbs*; (1994b) *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs*; (1995a) *The Book of Proverbs*; **Yoder** (2001) *Wisdom as Woman of Substance*.

The origin and composition of the book of Proverbs has greatly exercised scholars in recent years (most recently A. Müller 2000; see Whybray 1994a and 1994b for a summary). Whatever the ultimate origin of the individual proverbs, many would accept that the book contains some pre-exilic collections; however, our concern here is with parts that may date to the Persian period. It has often been accepted that Proverbs 1–9 are post-exilic in origin. This is not a simple matter since a good case can be made that much of the material even in these chapters is paralleled in the early Egyptian wisdom tradition, creating the possibility that they could also be pre-exilic (Kayatz 1966; cf. Weeks 1994). But the consensus is probably that they are post-exilic (e.g. A. Müller 2000: 314; Yoder 2001: 15–38), and other sections are also often dated to post-587. What is clear is that much of the book of Proverbs was available in the Persian period, and the book may well have been given its final form then. For example, H.C. Washington argues that Proverbs arose in the village society of Persian Judea (even though some pre-exilic material may be present) and was compiled by 'lay leaders' of the Persian community.

Traditional Israelite wisdom was very influential on the developing religious tradition (cf. its recurrence in such later books as Ben Sira). Proverbs is an important summary of some aspects, even though the phenomenon was rather wider than just what we find in Proverbs. The 'strange woman' of these chapters has been variously interpreted, including foreign women who might lead the faithful Jews astray (cf. Ezra 9–10), though C. Maier (1995) has argued that the most obvious interpretation is the correct one: upper-class young men are being warned about the

dangers of loose women. Women as a whole are given a more prominent place in Proverbs than in many sections of the Bible. For example, the teaching of the mother is stressed (1.8; 6.20; 31.1-9). Proverbs 31.10-31 gives a positive picture of a woman as an independent entity who makes an equal contribution to the household (on this passage, see §8.4).

The figure of wisdom is first attested in Proverbs 1-9. It has a long history in Judaism and makes an important theological contribution (for a survey of this figure in Second Temple Judaism, see Grabbe 1997a: Chapter 4). In the present context, Wisdom is a companion of God, present at creation, and with divine characteristics (Prov. 8.22-31). This is an indication that the figure originated as a goddess figure (Lang 1986). Yet the author of Proverbs seems also to have drawn on images of the world around him, including the ‘woman of substance’ who was the ideal wife for upper-class young men in the Persian period (Yoder 2001). Wisdom later came to be conceived of as an important intermediary between God and man, especially in the Greek period at a time when God was seen as more remote and difficult of access (in some circles, anyway).

#### **4.6.2. Job**

**Beuken (ed.)** (1994) *The Book of Job*; **Cheney** (1994) *Dust, Wind and Agony*; **Clines** (1989) *Job 1-20*; **Course** (1994) *Speech and Response*; **Dell** (1991) *The Book of Job as Sceptical Literature*; **Gordis** (1978) *The Book of Job*; **Grabbe** (1977) *Comparative Philology and the Text of Job*; **Gray** (1970) ‘The Book of Job in the Context of Near Eastern Literature’; **Habel** (1985) *The Book of Job*; **Hoffman** (1996) *A Blemished Perfection*; **Hurvitz** (1974) ‘The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job’; **ven der Lugt** (1995) *Rhetorical Criticism*; **Murphy** (1981) *Wisdom Literature*; **Polzin and Robertson (eds.)** (1977) *Studies in the Book of Job*; **Pope** (1973) *Job*; **Radermakers** (1998) *Dieu, Job et la Sagesse*; **Robertson** (1972) *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry*; (1973) ‘The Book of Job’; (1977) ‘The Comedy of Job’; **von Soden** (1965) ‘Das Fragen nach der Gerechtigkeit Gottes im Alten Orient’; **Whedbee** (1977) ‘The Comedy of Job’; **Whybray** (1998) *Job*; **van Wolde** (1997b) *Mr and Mrs Job*; **Zuckerman** (1991) *Job the Silent*.

As a piece of world literature, the book of Job is no doubt one of the most intriguing books in the Bible. Although specialists disagree about its precise message, its power to engender continuing debate is evidence of its stature which goes well outside the bounds of biblical studies. It is conventional to date it late, but Pope (1973: xxxii-xl) is surely right that the poetic part is early for the most part, not least because of the archaic language and many *hapax legomena* (cf. Robertson 1972; Grabbe 1977). Another small indication is that the poem does not use the name Yhwh (except for the framework) but Eloah and some other divine names (e.g. Shaddai). The form of the folktale that makes up the prologue and epilogue is late, however, and it is likely that the final book was completed during the Persian period (cf. Hurvitz 1974).

The book has been included within what is sometimes called ‘sceptical literature’ (cf. Dell 1991). That is a rather wide category and not really a literary genre,

though it captures some of the essence of a group of wisdom and related writings known not only from the Old Testament but from Egypt and Mesopotamia. A number of these writings pass beyond the normal bounds of pious literature and ask questions about theodicy and about the actions of God/the gods, even if the answers may still be within the conventions of traditional religious sensibilities. The question of God's justice was hardly new in the Persian period. It was already being asked in ancient Sumer, in the writing *A Man and his God* (sometimes referred to as the 'Sumerian Job'). A number of other writings from Egypt (*Admonitions of Ipuwer, Dispute of a Man with his Ba* [or 'A Man Tired of Life'], *The Eloquent Peasant*) and Mesopotamia (*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* [or 'I Shall Praise the Lord of Wisdom'], *Babylonian Theodicy* [or 'The Acrostic Dialogue'], *Dialogue between a Man and his God*) also address the same question.

Job is the pinnacle of such literature, addressing the issue with a sophistication not seen elsewhere at this time. In many of the biblical writings, the answer given is one of obedience or conformity to God's law: if obedient, one will receive good, or if disobedient, bad (often referred to as the *Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang* or 'act-consequence relationship'). One can find this approach in the book of Deuteronomy (e.g. Deut. 28; 30.15-20; cf. also Lev. 26) but also in the views expressed by Job's friends in the dialogue part of the book. The concept is found widely in the literature about why Israel and later Judah went into captivity: because of their continued sin against God (e.g. Amos 5), such as not keeping the seventh-year land rest (Lev. 26.34-35, 43). This *Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang* that made all personal prosperity or misfortune a direct consequence of obedience is an idea still very much around in the Persian period (e.g. Ezra 9; Neh. 9; the view of the Judaean kings in the books of Chronicles). Therefore, any other view of theodicy would not have replaced it but would be competing with it.

This is what makes the book of Job so interesting: that it not only gives a different view of theodicy but also one that challenges the conventional views. This shows a remarkable development in theological thinking with no equal (except for Qohelet, which probably belongs to the Ptolemaic period [JRSTP: 42-44] a century or so later) until the modern period. It shows that some Judaeans, if perhaps only a small number, recognized that the assumptions found elsewhere in the Old Testament do not hold true in real life. Like the later Qohelet, it also recognizes the hiddenness of God, another concept that goes counter to much thinking in the biblical text (e.g. Deut. 30.11-14). Specialists disagree over Job's precise answer, some seeing only irony or a protest against God in the book (or at least its original form, which later editors have tried to soften; cf. Robertson 1973; 1977; Zuckerman 1991). Part of one's approach will depend on how one sees the literary growth of the book, since the original poem may have been closer to its ancient Near Eastern parallels than the present form of the book. However, in my view no modern analyst has captured the structure and message of the book in its final form as well as J.W. Whedbee (1977), who argues that it fits the classic genre of comedy and gives an answer to the question that is both profound and satisfying to modern sensibilities. That the book's perspective was not understood by most people of the time is indicated by the contrast between the book of Job and a work like the

*Testament of Job* (cf. JRSTP: 104-105), which returns to the traditional simple answers.

#### 4.6.3. *Esther*

- Beal** (1997) *The Book of Hiding*; (1999) *Esther*; **Berg** (1979) *The Book of Esther*; **Brenner (ed.)** (1995) *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna*; (1999) *Ruth and Esther*; **Bush** (1996) *Ruth/Esther*; **Clines** (1984a) *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*; (1984b) *The Esther Scroll*; (1991) 'In Quest of the Historical Mordecai'; **Craig** (1995) *Reading Esther*; **L. Day** (1995) *Three Faces of a Queen*; **De Troyer** (2000) *The End of the Alpha Text of Esther*; **Dorothy** (1997) *The Books of Esther*; **Fox** (1991) *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*; **Grabbe** (1999b) Review of K. De Troyer, *Het einde van de Alpha-tekst van Ester*; **Humphries** (1973) 'A Life-Style for Diaspora'; **Jobes** (1996) *The Alpha-Text of Esther*; **Klein** (1997) 'Esther's Lot'; **Kossmann** (2000) *Die Esthernovelle—Vom Erzählten zur Erzählung*; **Laniak** (1998) *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther*; **Larkin** (1995) *Ruth and Esther*; **Levenson** (1997) *Esther: A Commentary*; **Moore** (1971) *Esther*; (1977) *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah*; (1983) 'Esther Revisited Again'; (1985) 'Esther Revisited'; **J.S. Wright** (1970) 'The Historicity of the Book of Esther'; **Yamauchi** (1992) 'Mordecai'.

The book of Esther is ostensibly set in the Persian court and might be able to give us information about the Jews of the Persian period (for a survey of recent scholarship, see Larkin 1995; also Moore 1983; 1985). The question is whether it really knows anything about the events or the context envisaged in the book. First, the text presents textual problems in that the story itself exists in more than one version and has a long history of development (Clines 1984a; Dorothy 1997; Jobes 1996; De Troyer 2000), which raises the question of which version we should use to ask questions about historicity. There are also some indications that it was written, or at least completed, in the Hellenistic period (Berg 1979: 169-73; cf. Clines 1984a: 272). Finally, the term 'novel' (or perhaps more generously, 'historical novel') has often been applied to it. Even if the story is a fiction, it still possible that the book contains genuine historical remembrances and knowledge of certain customs and practices, and perhaps of the Jewish community of Susa, during Persian times. It has even been suggested that the author was a native of Susa since he seems to know the city so well (cf. Yamauchi 1992).

On the other hand, the story it purports to tell about a Jewish adviser to the king and his niece who became queen consort is clearly unhistorical (despite the efforts of apologists such as J.S. Wright 1970), along with such details as a Queen Vashti (cf. Moore 1971: xxxiv-liii; Berg 1979: 1-30; Clines 1984a: 256-61) and Mordecai (cf. Clines 1991). Persian kings practised endogamy, with spouses chosen from a limited number of noble families (*HPE*: 589-90). Xerxes would not have married outside this narrow circle even among the Persian nobility, much less a woman plucked from the streets, as it were. The book represents a genre sometimes known as the *Diasporanovelle*, a 'novel of the Diaspora' (§14.4.3). It was possible for Jews to rise within court circles, though how high any of them went is a matter of speculation. Nevertheless, the story of Esther suggests not only that it could happen

but also provides a model of how those fortunate enough to reach such a high level should conduct themselves *vis-à-vis* their Judaism (Humphries 1973). It also has the function of describing the origins of the festival of Purim, not one of the original Hebrew festivals nor considered a holy day but one that became an important traditional celebration nonetheless. A final point is that the book gives another example of a heroine, alongside people such as Ruth, Jael, and Judith. It is perhaps this feminist aspect that has spawned the great interest in the book recently, along with its textual complexity.

#### **4.6.4. Ruth**

Brenner (ed.) (1993b) *A Feminist Companion to Ruth*; Bush (1996) *Ruth/Esther*; Campbell (1975) *Ruth*; Fischer (2002) *Rut*; Hamlin (1996) *Surely There Is a Future*; Larkin (1995) *Ruth and Esther*; Linafelt (1999) *Ruth*; Nielsen (1997) *Ruth*; Sasson (1989) *Ruth*; van Wolde (1997a) *Ruth and Naomi*; Zakovitch (1999) *Das Buch Rut*.

For recent scholarship on the book of Ruth, see Larkin (1995), as well as most of the commentaries. The book has been variously dated over a huge span of time by recent scholars, all the way from the age of the Judges to the Hellenistic period (see the survey in Sasson 1989: 240-52; Fischer 2002: 86-91), though a substantial number of scholars would still date the book in its present form to the Achaemenid period.

Whatever else the book may be wishing to tell us, an obvious theme is the favourable picture it gives of a non-Israelite, even to the extent of making her a close ancestor of David. This is not the only message, of course, but if the book arose in the Persian period, it would go along with other passages having universalistic tendencies about the same time (§13.4). Another important feature of the book is that it presents not only a female protagonist but one who is an outsider. The figure of another woman (Naomi) is also prominent in the book. This has naturally led to speculation that such stories might even have been written by women.

The book of Ruth also illustrates the complexity of trying to use legal sections of the Old Testament (such as the 'Covenant Code' [Exod. 20-24] and Deuteronomy) as evidence of actual practice, since the book of Ruth differs on several issues from the Pentateuch. For example, the ceremony relating to inheritance where a widow is concerned has some interesting differences from Deut. 25.5-10 (§8.3).

#### **4.6.5. Song of Songs**

Baildam (1999) *Paradisal Love*; Bloch and Bloch (1998) *The Song of Songs*; Brenner (1989) *The Song of Songs*; Brenner (ed.) (1993a) *A Feminist Companion to Song of Songs*; Fox (1985) *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*; Horine (2001) *Interpretive Images in the Song of Songs*; Keel (1994) *The Song of Songs*; Kramer (1969) *The Sacred Marriage Rite*; LaCocque (1998) *Romance She Wrote*; Munro (1995) *Spikenard and Saffron*; Murphy (1990) *The Song of Songs*; Murphy and Huwiler (1999) *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of*

*Songs*; Pope (1977) *Song of Songs*; Sasson (1978–79) Review of M. Pope, *Song of Songs*; Stadelmann (1992) *Love and Politics*; J.B. White (1978) *A Study of the Language of Love in the Song of Songs*.

The Song of Songs (Song of Solomon) has been much commented on in the past two decades (see Brenner 1989 for earlier studies). Although some material in the book may be pre-exilic, much of the contents, as well as the present form of the book are probably products of the Persian or perhaps even the early Greek period (Brenner 1989: 57–61). Perhaps the most significant point about the Song of Songs is that it was considered of sufficient interest to become a part of the Hebrew canon. The argument that this was only because it had been allegorized is possible but hardly provable (one cannot rely on late rabbinic literature such as the targum to the book or the *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*). This theory makes assumptions that may be completely unwarranted, since it is possible that the celebration of human love was welcomed in some circles without need for submerging this in theological sublimation. Although we do not know when the book became authoritative—possibly long after the Persian period—it nevertheless illustrates the complex development of the concept of scripture and then canon.

The language of the book is very important, partly because it may tell us something about the origin of the book and also about how readers may have related to it. Pope (1977) argued that a number of passages use quite explicit language, in a way that might lead some to say the language is even ‘pornographic’. This interpretation has been widely attacked by reviewers (e.g. Sasson 1978–79). We know that some ancient Near Eastern literature could be quite explicit (e.g. the Ugaritic myth *Shachar and Shalim* [KTU<sup>2</sup> 1.23]), even some Old Testament passages [cf. Ezek. 16]). If the Song of Songs arose in the context of sacred marriage or fertility cults (once a popular explanation of its origins), explicit imagery and language would be expected (cf. Kramer 1969); however, more recent studies indicate that there is no fertility language in the Song, and most recent commentators see another origin for the book.

Especially fruitful in providing parallels are the Egyptian love songs (J.B. White 1978; Fox 1985). Although the Egyptians could be quite explicit when they felt it important (cf. the creation myths and the Erotic Papyrus), the love songs avoid such language. It should be noted that love poetry known from the ancient Near East, and the Songs of Songs itself, make no mention of the lovers’ being married. Although the Song could well have been used in the context of married partners, this is not a necessary milieu, which suggests that the mores of the society in which it originated was at least tolerant of sex among unmarried young people (adultery is another matter and seems to have been frowned on in all societies). Thus, the recent argument of Horine (2001) that the Song of Song envisages the context of marriage is not convincing. Especially telling is the lack of references to clear terms like ‘marry’, ‘bridegroom’, and ‘bridal chamber’, and Horine’s attempts to find them in the text depend on weak arguments and a good deal of wishful thinking.

## Chapter 5

### PERSIAN, MESOPOTAMIAN, AND EGYPTIAN SOURCES

This chapter gives an overview of most of the sources from the ancient Near East that are not directly concerned with the Jews and Judah. It is organized essentially by language. This arrangement might seem strange at first, but this generally makes reference to various collections easier since they are often also organized around documents in the same language. A few texts in Greek are included here, including Berossus and the Gadatas inscription.

#### 5.1. Aramaic Inscriptions and Papyri

NB: all Aramaic texts from Egypt, whether relating to Jews or not, are discussed in §3.1.

**Bowman** (1970) *Aramaic Ritual Texts from Persepolis*; **Bryce** (1983) ‘Political Unity in Lycia’; **Dupont-Sommer et al.** (1974) ‘La stèle trilingue’; **Fitzmyer and Kaufman** (1992) *An Aramaic Bibliography*; **Greenfield** (1985) ‘Aramaic in the Achaemenian Empire’; **Lemaire** (1995) ‘The Xanthos Trilingual Revisited’; **Metzger et al.** (1979) *La Stèle trilingue du Létôon*; **Naveh and Shaked** (1973) ‘Ritual Texts or Treasury Documents?’; **Teixidor** (1978) ‘The Aramaic Text in the Trilingual Stele from Xanthus’.

One of the most interesting discoveries in recent years that relates to the Persian period is an inscription in Aramaic, Greek, and Lycian authorizing a cult at Xanthus in Lycia. It seems to be dated to the first year of a king Artaxerxes; this is probably Artaxerxes IV (contrary to the original publication), or about 337 BCE (Bryce 1983). It is particularly relevant because it shows how the Persian government dealt with the establishment of a local cult. The Aramaic version is likely to be the official Persian decree (though it contains a number of linguistic difficulties and the translation can be considered only provisional); in the translation that follows, the rendering of the Lycian version is based on the French translation in Metzger *et al.* (1979) and has no independent value:

Table 5.1. *Xanthus Inscription*

Lycian	Greek	Aramaic
When Pigesere, son of Katamla, became satrap of Termis and he had Iyero(n) and Natrapi-	When Pixōdaros, son of Hekat- tomnos, became satrap of Lycia he appointed Hierōn	In the month Sivan, year 1 of Artaxerxes, the king. In Orna the fortress Pgswdr son

<p>yemi as commissaires for the Termiles, and Ertimeli (as) governor for Arna, the citizenry and dependents of the Arnaians decreed (?) the founding of this sanctuary for the king of Khbide and for Arkazuma the King. And they made Simiya, son of Kondorahi—and those who succeed (?) Simiya—priest for the gods there. And they have given him his possessions free. And the city and its dependents added some fields of the city. For Khesentedi...and Pigres had irrigated them. And all which is adjoined—and whatever will be built there—(will be) the goods of the king of Khbide and of Arkazuma. And Arna gives to him annually 18 (?) <i>adas</i> for a salary. And he requires that the slaves (?)—all those who will be freed hence forth—they will give to him &lt;two?&gt; sheqels. And one has consecrated all engraved upon this stela to the king of Khbide and to Arkazuma. And the one who obtains the benefice shall sacrifice each new moon, ritually with a victim, and annually with an ox to the king of Khbide and to Arkazuma. And it is Simiya who sacrifices and those who will succeed (?) Simiya. And the city Arna and her dependents have sworn by this law: then, this law was established that all that is engraved on this stela be not obliterated, neither with regard to the gods nor with regard to the priest. That if anyone removes (it), punishment is demanded of those gods and the Mother of the enclosure here, the Pentrenni and her children and Eliyana.</p> <p>To Pigesere if one...</p>	<p>and Apollodotos (as) archons of Lycia, and Artemelis (as) epimelētē of Xanthus. Then, he allowed the Xanthians and their dependents to establish an altar to the King of Caunios and Arkesimas. And they chose a priest Simias son of Kondorasis and whosoever is kin to Simias for all time. And they made his property tax free.</p> <p>And the city gave a field that Kesindēlis and Pigrēs worked. Whatever adjoins the field and the buildings belongs to the King of Caunios and Arkesimas.</p> <p>And he will be given each year three half minas from the city. Whichever slaves become freed are to pay to the god two drachmas.</p> <p>And whatever has been written on this stela is all dedicated to belong to the king of Caunios and Arkesimas.</p> <p>And whatever profits come from these are for sacrifice: a sheep each new moon and an ox each year.</p> <p>And the Xanthians and their dependents took oaths over whatever had been written in this stela to perform the commandments to the gods and to the priest, and not to remove anything nor to let another. If anyone removes (it), let him be a sinner before these gods and Leto and (the) Nymphs.</p> <p>Let Pixotaros be lord.</p>	<p>of Ktmnw the satrap who is in Krk and Trmyl, said: The lords of Orna planned to make a cult altar(?) to Kndwṣ the god of Caunios and his companion. And as priest they appointed Simias son of Kdwrs.</p> <p>There is a house that the ‘lords of Orna’ gave to Kndwṣ the god.</p> <p>And year by year from the city will be given silver, 1 minah and a half.</p> <p>And this priest will sacrifice at the beginning of the month a sheep to Kndwṣ the god. And he shall sacrifice year-by-year a bull. And it is decided that what is his is exempt (from city tax). The owner of the property has written this law.</p> <p>Also if (any) man removes from the god Kndwṣ or from the priest what is promised, may Kndwṣ the god and his companion remove (him). And who removes (anything) from the god Leto, Artemis, Hštrpy and others, may these gods require (it) from him.</p>
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The Lycian and Greek versions differ in small but interesting ways from the Aramaic, being slightly more expansive at several points. The Lycian text is probably the version representing the request by the townspeople to establish the cult, but the Greek differs little from it. It also adds details about the local situation that the satrap did not feel necessary to include in the official version. Note also that the land for the cult came from the city or region, and the city also provides the financial support of the priest and offerings. The satrap is the one to whom the request goes, and the satrap has issued the authorization, which seems to be the standard practice.

Bowman's collection comes from inscriptions on mortars, pestles, and the like found at Persepolis. The inscriptions are short and repetitive, and were understood by the original editor as identifying the object as having been used at a particular Zoroastrian *haoma* ceremony. Reviews have generally rejected this interpretation, however, identifying them as treasury records, though there is still uncertainty as to their exact purpose (Naveh and Shaked 1973; Greenfield 1985: 705). The chief interest is the presence of personal names and dates and, especially, that they represent the Mesopotamian usage of Aramaic. Several collections have Persian-period Aramaic texts from outside Egypt: *KAI* (#228-30, 258-64), *TSSI* (#30-37), and Koopmans (1962: #42-52). A list of the main texts with bibliography is given in Fitzmyer and Kaufman (1992: 47-52, 149-57, 159-66).

A recent find of Achaemenid administrative documents (obtained from the antiquities market), reportedly from the Afghanistan/Uzbekistan border region, allegedly have many points in common with the Arsames correspondence (§3.1). They are expected to be published in the near future by S. Shaked.

## 5.2. Old Persian Sources

**Greenfield and Porten** (1982) *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great*; **Kent** (1953) *Old Persian*; **Kervran et al.** (1972) 'Une statue de Darius découverte à Suse'; **Mayrhofer** (1978) *Supplement zur Sammlung der altpersischen Inschriften*; **Perrot and Ladiray** (1974) 'La porte de Darius à Suse'; **Roaf** (1974) 'The Subject Peoples on the Base of the Statue of Darius'; **Stronach** (1974) 'La statue de Darius le Grand découverte à Suse'; **Vallat** (1974a) 'Les textes cunéiformes de la statue de Darius'; (1974b) 'L'inscription trilingue de Xerxès à la porte de Darius'; **Voigtlander** (1978) *The Behistun Inscription of Darius the Great*; **Weissbach** (1911) *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*.

Most of the documents discussed here are in Persian cuneiform, or at least include an Old Persian version alongside inscriptions in other languages. Since these sources often represent official Persian inscriptions or documents, regardless of the language or medium, it seems best to consider them together. The known inscriptions in old Persian have almost all been translated and made available in convenient editions (especially Kent 1953: 107-63, supplemented by Mayrhofer 1978). To this may be added the recent discovery of a statue and gate of Darius, with their multilingual inscriptions in Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, and Egyptian

(Kervran *et al.* 1972; Perrot and Ladiray 1974; Roaf 1974; Stronach 1974; Vallat 1974a; 1974b).

The longest and best known of the Persian inscriptions, as well as being the most important for historical data, is the Behistun inscription, carved high up on the mountainside of Bagistana, beside the main road from Babylon to Ecbatana. It describes Darius's rise to power and the events in the first few years of his reign. While there is no doubt that it is a useful historical source, debate has been rather warm as to how far Darius's own account of his coup can be trusted. Some historians have followed his account more or less faithfully while others have argued that it hides a great deal and is really only propaganda to cover a rather sordid taking of the throne. For a further discussion of some of these questions, see below (§12.2.3). The text of the inscription with translation is conveniently available in Kent (1953: 116-35); the various versions in other languages are Aramaic (Greenfield and Porten 1982), Babylonian (von Voigtlander 1978), and Elamite (Weissbach 1911).

### **5.3. The Elamite Texts from Persepolis**

**Cameron** (1948) *Persepolis Treasury Tablets*; (1958) 'Persepolis Treasury Tablets Old and New'; (1965) 'New Tablets from the Persepolis Treasury'; **Hallock** (1969) *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*; (1985) 'The Evidence of the Persepolis Tablets'; **H. Koch** (1992) *Es kündet Dareios der König...*

Two finds of tablets in Persepolis give some insight into the workings of the Persian empire, especially in the administrative and economic areas: the Persepolis Treasury Tablets and the Persepolis Fortification Tablets. A large number of these texts in Elamite were found in the 1930s and have only been partially published. They relate mainly to foodstuffs in government storehouses. Some record the receipt of taxes and the like. Many of them are orders for the distribution of rations to a variety of work gangs but also to members of the royal family and other high officials. One lot is about the assignment of rations to official travellers. One of the more interesting features is the payment of rations and support to various priests and cult attendants (for a discussion, see §10.1.3).

Although more tablets remain unpublished than have been published, a great many of them are available in the printed editions: Treasury Tablets (Cameron 1948; 1958; 1965), Fortification Tablets (Hallock 1969). For an overview of them and the information they contain, see Cameron (1965), Hallock (1985), H. Koch (1992: especially 25-67), and *HPE* (especially 422-71).

### **5.4. Babylonian Sources**

**Berger** (1975) 'Der Kyros-Zylinder'; **Bickerman** (1986) 'The Generation of Ezra and Nehemiah'; **Berger** (1967-75) *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur*; **Burstein** (1978) *The Babylonica of Berossus*; **Cameron** (1955) 'Ancient Persia'; **Cardascia** (1951) *Les archives des Murašû*; **Coogan** (1976) *West Semitic Personal Names*; **Eilers** (1974) 'Le texte cunéiforme du cylindre de Cyrus'; **A.K. Grayson** (1975a) *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*; **Kuhrt** (1983) 'The Cyrus Cylinder and

Achaemenid Imperial Policy'; (1987a) 'Berossus' *Babylonika* and Seleucid Rule in Babylonia'; (1987b) 'Survey of Written Sources Available for the History of Babylonia'; (1988) 'Babylonia from Cyrus to Xerxes'; **Landsberger and Bauer** (1927) 'Zu neuveröffentlichten Geschichtsquellen'; **Oppenheim** (1985) 'The Babylonian Evidence of Achaemenian Rule in Mesopotamia'; **San Nicolò** (1941) *Beiträge zu einer Prosopographie neubabylonischer Beamten*; **Schaudig** (2001) *Die Inschriften Nabonids*; **Schnabel** (1923) *Berossos und die babylonisch-hellenistische Literatur*; **S. Smith** (1924) *Babylonian Historical Texts*; **Stolper** (1985) *Entrepeneurs and Empire*; **Weissbach** (1911) *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*.

An important source for our knowledge of the Persian period is the large body of documents in cuneiform in the Neo-Babylonian language. Unfortunately, until recently Assyriologists have tended to neglect the writings of the Persian period and later. Even today only a few specialists concentrate in this area, though interest is certainly much greater than it once was. The result is that many of the Babylonian documents have not been published or are available only in autograph copies and thus not easily accessible to the non-specialist. This is unfortunate since this is the most abundant source of data for the Persian period. A useful overview of what Babylonian material is available, with a catalogue of the major older published editions and collections, is R. Borger (1967–75). Later publications are given by A.L. Oppenheim (1985), and A. Kuhrt (1987b; 1988). The following sections discuss some of the main individual cuneiform texts relevant for Persian history.

#### **5.4.1. The Babylonian Chronicles**

A variety of chronicle sources have come to light over the years, now edited into one convenient edition by A.K. Grayson (1975; see also *ANET*: 305–307; *CoS*, I: 467–68 gives only a couple of short excerpts). The one important for the Persian period is the *Nabonidus Chronicle* (Chronicle 7) which describes the rise of Cyrus, the fall of Babylon, and the events immediately following. One should also note an undated fragment from the Achaemenid period (Chronicle 8) and a fragment of the chronicle of Artaxerxes III (Chronicle 9).

#### **5.4.2. The Cyrus Cylinder**

The Cyrus Cylinder is an inscription set up early in his reign. Scholars were interested in it from the beginning because it seemed to indicate a policy of generosity and respect toward other religions within Cyrus's empire and to serve as an illustration of the decree allowing the Jews to return and rebuild the temple. That is, it has usually been understood from the Cyrus Cylinder that this was not just a unique decision on behalf of the Jews but rather only one example of a general religious policy. This view has now been challenged in part by Kuhrt (1983) who argues that insufficient attention has been paid to the propagandistic and stereotypical nature of the inscription (cf. also Cameron 1955: 81–86). The Chaldean rulers had allowed religious freedom, and the Persians were no more liberal in this aspect of things than their predecessors. The basic but incomplete text of the inscription has long been available in the edition of Weissbach (1911); now, however, Berger (1975)

has been able to restore much of the missing conclusion from another fragment. A convenient edition, with German translation, is now included in Schaudig's edition (2001), and an English translation is given in *ANET* (315–16) and *CoS* (II: 314–16).

#### **5.4.3. *The Murašu Documents***

This group of texts is a personal archive from a family firm in Nippur c. 455–403 BCE. See the detailed study by Stolper (1985) which includes many texts in hand copies and transliteration. Apart from Stolper, the definitive study, with a complete listing of sources and many of the texts in transliteration and translation, is that of Cardascia (1951). The Murašu archive has been of special interest to Old Testament scholars because several individuals prominent in the firm were evidently Jews, judging by their names. The dissertation of Coogan (1976) looks at the problem of the names and attempts to determine ethnicity from them, as does the more recent article by Bickerman (1986). For a brief sketch of the Babylonian Jewish community as known from the Murašu and other texts, see below (§13.6.1).

#### **5.4.4. *Berossus***

Writing in Greek in the early Seleucid period, perhaps about 290 BCE, the Babylonian priest Berossus seems to have had cuneiform sources available to him. Where he can be checked, he shows a good knowledge of native Babylonian literature. The major problem is that his work is known only from fragmentary quotations in later writers such as Josephus and Eusebius. For the Persian period, one quotation has survived which describes the conquest of Cyrus (Josephus, *Apion* 1.145–53). The major study, with a collection of the fragments, is still that of Schnabel (1923), though a more recent edition of the fragments is found in Jacoby (1926–58: III C, no. 680). Burstein (1978) gives an English translation and an Assyriological commentary. Kuhrt (1987a) discusses the contents, purpose, and historical context of the work.

### **5.5. *Egyptian Texts***

**Blenkinsopp** (1987) 'Mission of Udjahorresnet and Those of Ezra and Nehemiah'; **Dandamaev and Lukonin** (1989) *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*; **Griffith** (1909) *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri*; **Hughes** (1984) 'The So-called Pherendates Correspondence'; **Kervran et al.** (1972) 'Une statue de Darius découverte à Suse'; **Lichtheim** (1980) *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, III; **Lloyd** (1982) 'The Inscription of Udjahorresnet'; **E. Otto** (1954) *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit*; **Porten** (1996) *The Elephantine Papyri in English*; **Posener** (1936) *La première domination perse en Egypte*; **Spiegelberg** (1914) *Die sogenannte demotische Chronik*; (1928) 'Drei demotische Schreiben'.

Most of the Egyptian inscriptions from the Persian period are transcribed, translated, and studied by Posener. His work is still the basic collection of Egyptian material for this period. This can now be supplemented by the translation of a variety of texts in Lichtheim (1980) and Porten (1996). Some of the main texts relevant to discussions at various points in this book are the following:

### 5.5.1. *Udjahorresnet*

The inscription of Udjahorresnet has been of considerable interest (Lloyd 1972; Blenkinsopp 1987). This individual was an important Egyptian court official and commander of the royal navy under both the Saite and the Persian regimes. He was sent by Darius to take charge of the ‘house of life’ in Egypt (though this was most likely at Udjahorresnet’s own request). Following his special petition to the Persians, the temple at Neith was apparently given certain privileges. At his death Udjahorresnet followed convention by leaving behind a statue inscribed with a personal testament, including a brief biography. It has often been drawn on to illustrate the activities of Ezra and Nehemiah (e.g. Blenkinsopp 1987). The text with French translation is available in Posener (1936: 1-26); English translations are found in Blenkinsopp (1987) and Lichtheim (1980: 36-41, from which the following translation is taken):

The Great Chief of all foreign lands, *Cambyses* came to Egypt, and the foreign peoples of every foreign land were with him. When he had conquered this land in its entirety, they established themselves in it, and he was Great Ruler of Egypt and Great Chief of all foreign lands. His majesty assigned to me the office of chief physician. He made me live at his side as companion and administrator of the palace...

I made a petition to the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, *Cambyses*, about all the foreigners who dwelled in the temple of Neith, in order to have them expelled from it, so as to let the temple of Neith be in all its splendor, as it had been before. His majesty commanded to expel all the foreigners [who] dwelled in the temple of Neith, to demolish all their houses and all their unclean things that were in this temple...

The prince, count, royal seal-bearer, sole companion, prophet of those by whom one lives, the chief physician, Udjahorresne, born of Atemirdis, he says: The majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, *Darius*, ever-living, commanded me to return to Egypt—when his majesty was in Elam and was Great Chief of all foreign lands and Great Ruler of Egypt—in order to restore the establishment of the House of Life—, after it had decayed. The foreigners carried me from country to country. They delivered me to Egypt as commanded by the Lord of the Two Lands. I did as his majesty had commanded me. I furnished them with all their staffs consisting of the wellborn, no lowborn among them. I placed them in the charge of every learned man [in order to teach them] all their crafts. His majesty had commanded to give them every good thing, in order that they might carry out all their crafts. I supplied them with everything useful to them, with all their equipment that was on record, as they had been before. His majesty did this because he knew the worth of this guild in making live all that are sick, in making endure forever the names of all the gods, their temples, their offerings, and the conduct of their festivals.

### 5.5.2. *Pherendates Correspondence*

From these letters we know that Pherendates was satrap of Egypt under Darius I. Three letters were originally published by W. Spiegelberg (1928), though it is now likely that his third writing related to a lower official with a similar but slightly different name from Pherendates (Hughes 1984: 75-77). The first two letters,

however, are the ones that interest us here. The first is a letter from Pherendates and is very awkward in Demotic, apparently because it is a literal translation from an Aramaic original (Hughes 1984: 77-78). Pherendates writes about the proper appointment of a *lesonis* (an important temple administrative post). Although the candidate for the post was chosen internally in the temple, it is likely that originally the Pharaoh or his representative always had the right of veto to the appointment of particular individuals (cf. Spiegelberg 1928: 610-11). Pherendates seems to have retained this traditional final say over the appointee. The following excerpt is from the translation of C.J. Martin (in Porten 1996: 290-91):

Pherendates, to whom Egypt is entrusted, says to all the *wab*-priests (of) Khnum, Lord (of) Elephantine:

'Now, Pherendates (is) the one who says, "There are {the} *wab*-priests whom the leader (of the) first phyle brought before (me) earlier saying, 'Let them be made *lesonis*'. ['] Yet one of these *wab*-priests in question, who had fled, the order was given to seek for him; (another) one of them, he was (a) servant of another man. The like of these it is not suitable to make *lesonis*.

'Now, the *wab*-priest whom it is suitable to make *lesonis* is (a) great man whom, it will happen, I will cause to carry out his functions, there being nothing which he has let fail, one who will be selected in accordance with that which Darius (the) Pharaoh has ordered. The like of this is one whom it is suitable to make *lesonis*.

'Now, the *wab*-priest who will be selected to be made *lesonis* is like this. The one who will be selected, he is to be brought in accordance with that which Darius (the) Pharaoh has ordered. The *wab*-priest whom it will happen that there is (a) thing which he has let fail, or the one who is (a) servant of another man, the like of these, do not let them be brought to be made *lesonis*. Let it happen (that) it is known to you.'...

The second letter is one written to Pherendates from the priests of Khnum to inform him of the appointment of a new *lesonis* (translation of C.J. Martin in Porten 1996: 294-95):

Voice (of the) servants, the *wab*-priests of Khnum (the) great, lord (of) Elephantine, before Pherendates, to whom Egypt is entrusted:

'We make the blessing(s) of Pherendates before Khnum, the great god. Oh, may Khnum cause his lifetime to be long.'

'(It) happened (in) year 30, Pharmouthi, the time for selecting a successor to the *lesonis*. We replaced Petikhnum son of Haibre who was *lesonis*. We caused Eskhnumpemet son of Horkheb to follow him as *lesonis*. We are in agreement [to make him] *lesonis*. He will cause to be carried (and) he will cause burnt-offerings to be made before Khnum' ...

Note that in this second case, Pherendates is only informed about the appointment, not consulted. The situation suggests that in most cases the satrap was not concerned with details about the appointment of temple personnel, even though perhaps retaining a theoretical veto over any appointments.

### **5.5.3. Cambyses Decree on the Reverse of the Demotic Chronicle**

The *Demotic Chronicle* is a product of the Ptolemaic period and will be discussed in volume 2 of the present History. However, on the reverse of the *Chronicle* are some documents of the Persian period, including one in the name of Cambyses that speaks of allotments to the temples in Egypt (Spiegelberg 1914: 32–33; Griffith 1909: 26–27). The following translation is that of Griffith; Spiegelberg made some improvements but the two are very similar:

The matters which were discussed against (?) the custom of the temples in the house of judgement. The boats (or boards?), the fire-wood, the flax (?), the papyrus (?), which used to be given to the temples aforetime in the reign of Per'o Ahmosi [Pharaoh Amasis], except the temple of Memfi [Memphis], the temple of Uon (?) (Hermopolis in the Delta), and the temple of Pubasti (?)—to the temples, Kabuze (Cambyses) commanded, saying, ‘Give them not unto them, from (?) the..., but let places be given unto them in the groves (?) of the South Land (Upper Egypt), that they may procure boats (or boards) and fire-wood for themselves, and bring them to their gods’. The wood-produce (?) for the three temples (named) above, Kabuze commanded, saying, ‘Let them be given to them in the manner of aforetime’. The cattle which used to be given to the temples, the temples of the gods, aforetime, in the reign of Per'o Ahmosi, except the three temples (named) above; Kabuze commanded, saying, ‘[Their] half shall be given to them’. Those which used to be given to them—the three temples above—(he) commanded (that) they be given to them still. The fowls which used to be given to the temples aforetime in the reign of Per'o Ahmosi, except the three temples; Kabuze commanded, saying, ‘Give them not unto them: the priests shall rear geese for themselves, and give them to their gods’. The amount of (?) the silver, the cattle, the fowls, the corn, and other things which used to be given to the temples of the gods aforetime in the time of Per'o Ahmosi (and as to which) Kabuze commanded, saying ‘Give them not unto the gods’...

This shows Cambyses reducing the governmental allotment of requirements for the divine offerings. Only three temples were excepted from the general decree on the native temples.

### **5.5.4. The Susa Statue of Darius**

This statue of Darius I, with an inscription in the languages of Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, and Egyptian, was discovered in Susa (§5.2). Because of the hieroglyphic inscription, some have thought that it was originally made in Egypt; if so, it was later moved to Persia itself. The Egyptian inscription reads as follows (translation from Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989: 355):

May the good god and sovereign of both lands (*i.e.* Upper and Lower Egypt) Darius live forever. The King of Upper and Lower Egypt, the sovereign of the creation of matter (*i.e.* possessing magical force)...the lord who has taken possession of the double crown (*i.e.*, the crown of both parts of Egypt), great through his supremacy in the hearts of all people and imposing in face to him who sees him, the offspring of Aten... Chosen (from among others) by Aten, the sovereign of On (*i.e.* Heliopolis) in order (to become) the sovereign of all that is surrounded by the

solar disk (*i.e.* of the entire earth). He (*i.e.* Aten) found out that this is his son, his protector... (the goddess) Neith gave him her bow, which was in her hand, so that (he might) cast down all his opponents... His might is like unto (the might of the god of war) Mont... the giant, the king of kings... [the son] of the god Vishtaspa, an Achaemenid, who has begun to shine as the king of Upper and Lower Egypt on the throne of Horus of the living like unto the Sun, who goes before the gods eternally... The image (*i.e.* statue) was made for the sovereign of both lands and was created by his majesty out of a desire to erect a monument to him so that they might remember his person along with his father Aten... forever. He (the god of the Sun) created a payment for him (the king) with life, with every kind of prosperity, with every aspect of good health, and with every joy—as to the Sun.

This shows the desire of Darius to appear in the image of the traditional kings of Egypt. It, along with the Udjahorresnet inscription, shows him to be concerned about the prosperity of the Egyptian temples and can be compared with the Egyptian tradition about Cambyses that made him the destroyer of temples, even to the point of killing the Apis bull. The latter was negative propaganda that distorted the Persian role. The truth is in between: the Persian conqueror did not suppress traditional Egyptian worship, but he did take away many of the traditional privileges of the temples and bring them under the tax regime. Darius continued what Cambyses had begun.

### **5.6. *The Gadatas Inscription***

**Boffo** (1978) ‘La lettera di Dario I a Gadata’; **Brandstein and Mayrhofer** (1964) *Handbuch des Altpersischen*; **Briant** (2003) ‘Histoire et archéologie d’un texte’; **Cousin and Deschamps** (1889) ‘Lettre de Darius, fils d’Hystaspes’; **Frei and Koch** (1996) *Reichsidee und Reichsorganisation im Perserreich*; **Grabbe** (1991a) ‘Reconstructing History from the Book of Ezra’; **Hansen** (1986) ‘The Purported Letter of Darius to Gadatas’; **van den Hout** (1949) ‘Studies in Early Greek Letter-Writing’; **Meiggs and Lewis (eds.)** (1969) *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*; **Wiesehöfer** (1987) ‘Zur Frage der Echtheit des Dareios-Briefes an Gadatas’.

An inscription in Greek from Asia Minor tells of a decree of Darius I with regard to the official Gadatas, whom he rebukes for imposing a tax on the gardens of Apollo and otherwise neglecting his duty. Despite mentioning Darius I the inscription does not itself date from the sixth century BCE but is a much later copy dated to the second century CE. Those who cite the inscription often seem to be unaware that its authenticity has been doubted from an early time and has been debated to the present (cf. *JCH*: 59). Some prominent Orientalists and classicists have accepted it as genuine (e.g. Brandstein and Mayrhofer 1964: 91–98; Meiggs and Todd 1969: 20–22; Wiesehöfer 1987) but others have rejected it as a fake (van den Hout 1949: 144–52; Hansen 1986; also apparently Frei in Frei and Koch 1996 who does not make reference to the Gadatas inscription in his comprehensive list of Persian-period inscriptions).

The inscription has been thoroughly re-investigated by P. Briant (2003), even though he had earlier accepted it as genuine. He now concludes that the inscription is a creation of the Hellenistic period and thus does not provide data for the Persian period. The cautions voiced in earlier publications seem to be confirmed (e.g. Grabbe 1991a). The Gadatas inscription now has to be removed from the discussion about the Persian period.

## Chapter 6

### GREEK AND LATIN SOURCES

#### 6.1. General Introduction

T.S. Brown (1973) *The Greek Historians*; Brunt (1993) *Studies in Greek History and Thought*; Cancik and Schneider (eds.) (1996–) *Der Neue Pauly*; Dihle (1994a) *A History of Greek Literature*; (1994b) *Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*; Drews (1973) *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History*; Easterling and Knox (eds.) (1985) *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, I; Fornara (1983) *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome*; von Fritz (1967) *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung*; GLAJJ; Grabbe (2001b) ‘Who Were the First Real Historians?’; Hornblower (ed.) (1994) *Greek Historiography*; Kenney and Clausen (eds.) (1982) *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, II; Kuhrt (1982) ‘Assyrian and Babylonian Traditions in Classical Authors’; Lesky (1966) *A History of Greek Literature*; Marincola (1997) *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography*; OCD; Petzold (1999) *Geschichtsdenken und Geschichtsschreibung*; Thomas (2000) *Herodotus in Context*.

The classical writers in Greek and Latin constitute an important source for the history of the Persian empire. Although they say little about the area of Palestine specifically, a number of them give valuable information on specific points relating to the history of Yehud. The main Greek and Latin writers who touch on Persian history are surveyed below, including some relevant works that are not histories as such. Unfortunately, no direct mention of Judah for this time seems to be found in the surviving classical sources (cf. the collection of texts in *GLAJJ*). Therefore, since the Greek histories are of most use for general information on the Persian period in the eastern Mediterranean, only a brief survey is given here, and only some of the more important and directly relevant bibliography is listed. Josephus is also included because, although a Jewish writer, he writes in Greek and follows the Greek historiographical tradition. (The Babylonian writer Berossus, although writing in Greek, is included in Chapter 5.)

For further information and bibliography on the writers listed here, see von Fritz (1967), T.S. Brown (1973), Drews (1973), Kenney and Clausen (1983), Easterling and Knox (1985), Dihle (1994), the *OCD*, and *Der neue Pauly* (the ‘old Pauly’ [PW] also still has considerable value). Most of the writings are available in the Loeb Classical Library (LCL) whose editions include a minor critical text, an English translation, and some notes. The LCL edition is normally assumed without being specifically listed in the bibliography for the individual writers.

Until the rediscovery of primary sources from the ancient Near East in the nineteenth century, the Greek accounts were the major basis for reconstructing Persian history. Despite methodological problems in some cases, they can still provide very useful information and are an important supplement to the Near Eastern records. From a modern point of view, the Greek and Latin historians have weaknesses as historians, yet the Greeks were the first to write history in the modern sense of history based on critical investigation (Grabbe 2001b).

What might be called the beginnings of historiography can be traced in the myths of origin found in such writers as Hesiod who attempted to synthesize traditional myths into some sort of coherent system. Epic poetry was also a factor in that it consolidated certain traditions that had some elements of actual history into a narrative sequence of events, which might make Homer in some sense ‘the father of history’ (Lesky 1966: 216-19). The dramatic tradition also seems to be important to the development of historical writing and has left its marks even on some of the more scientific writers such as Polybius (Fornara 1983: 171-72). R. Thomas (2000) emphasizes the importance of the intellectual milieu of ‘East Greece’ and the ‘Ionic enlightenment’. She notes that a number of Herodotus’s characteristics are also those of the medical writers and the Pre-Socratic natural philosophers, especially the emphasis on ‘autopsy’ or seeing at first hand: ‘The language of proof, the very need to cite proofs at all, the arguments and overt presentation of reasons why the audience should believe him, are striking’ (Thomas 2000: 271). It was in the ‘Ionic enlightenment’ that we first have attested the important critical attitudes that led to scientific inquiry:

The will toward critical examination and comprehension of truth and actuality embodies itself in a way of approach to certainty through the testing and rejection of hypotheses—an entirely new form of intellectual procedure which has been the basis of all subsequent advance in the sciences. (Lesky 1966: 217)

The same attitudes were essential to the development of the true historical method.

In the fifth century BCE a writer such as Hellanicus of Lesbos used the traditional mythological genealogies to develop a historical chronological system (T.S. Brown 1973: 14-18). Unfortunately, the links between the old literary traditions containing much myth and legend and the rise of history writing is not well documented. The result is that Hecataeus of Miletus is one of the first about whom we know anything extensive, even if his work has not been preserved intact, and some have even suggested that he is the true ‘father of history’. This last designation can probably now be rejected since it seems unlikely that he wrote an actual historical narrative as such (Drews 1973: 11-15). However, we do have indications that he championed the principle so important to subsequent Greek historians, that of autopsy. Not having his work intact creates problems of interpretation, but some of his comments show a critical spirit of mind (translations from Peter Derow in Hornblower 1994: 74):

Hecataeus the Milesian speaks so: I write the things that follow as they seem to me to be true. For the stories of the Greeks are both many and, as they appear to me, ridiculous.

Aegyptus did not himself go to Argos, but his sons did—fifty of them in Hesiod's story, but as I reckon not even twenty.

Despite these important predecessors, all present information points to Herodotus as still the 'father of history' from a modern perspective.

## 6.2. *Herodotus*

**Bakker, de Jong and van Wees (eds.)** (2002) *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*; **Balcer** (1987) *Herodotus & Bisitum*; **Baumgartner** (1959) 'Herodots babylonische und assyrische Nachrichten'; **Fehling** (1989) *Herodotus and his 'Sources'*; **Fowler** (1996) 'Herodotus and his Contemporaries'; **von Fritz** (1967) *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung*: 104–475; **Gould** (1989) *Herodotus*; **Grabbe** (2003b) 'Of Mice and Dead Men'; **Lateiner** (1989) *The Historical Method of Herodotus*; **Murray** (1987) 'Herodotus and Oral History'; **Myres** (1953) *Herodotus, Father of History*; **Reinhardt** (1962) 'Herodots Persergeschichten'; **Thomas** (2000) *Herodotus in Context*; **Waters** (1971) *Herodotus on Tyrants and Despots*.

Modern study has found that Herodotus is one of our most important sources for the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes. The reason is that he had close access to certain Persian traditions of that time. This does not mean that these traditions are not themselves sometimes the product of distortion, misinformation, or deliberate propaganda, but this can also be the case with the native records. Where he can be checked, Herodotus often shows an accurate knowledge of Persian tradition, suggesting that his account can generally be used with some confidence alongside contemporary Persian inscriptions. He of course has his failings, as all historians do.

With all the excavations and new finds, Herodotus remains the 'father of history'. The importance of Herodotus for the development of historiography as a discipline cannot be overestimated. Already in Herodotus we see the critical questioning, the weighing of evidence, the healthy scepticism necessary for doing critical history. In his writing we can see the historian at work and are able to make explicit deductions about the process of critical historiography. A number of Herodotus's characteristics are those of the medical writers such as Hippocrates and the Pre-Socratic natural philosophers, especially the emphasis on 'autopsy' or seeing at first hand (Thomas 2000: 271). Herodotus contains all sorts of material, to the point that some would see him as more of a travel writer than a historian. But a number of points arise from the study of his work, some explicit and some implicit:

1. Herodotus accepts reports of events and forms of causation that would not be entertained by modern historians. For example, 'prodigies' such as a cow giving birth to a lamb are seen as signs presaging certain significant events. Divine causation is also taken for granted. On the other hand, we should not be too patronizing about this. Acceptance of divine causation is not all that different from metaphysical causes that some modern historians have adumbrated with great seriousness. These have included such intangible drivers of history as an organicistic development of nations (birth, youth, maturity, senility, death).

2. Herodotus himself shows a critical spirit at many points in his narrative. For example, he critiques the standard story of the Trojan war and gives reasons why another version is more likely to be correct (12.118-20). He points to a tradition (obtained from the Egyptian priests) at some variance with that found in the Homeric poems, a rather bold criticism since the Homeric poems had a quasi-canonical status in the Greek world. This version says that when the Greeks came, the Trojans swore to them that Helen was no longer there but had already absconded to North Africa. With wonderful critical acumen Herodotus notes that this was likely to be true since no nation would allow itself to be besieged for ten years for the sake of a mere woman, queen though she might be. He also questions stories that he has heard but records them nevertheless, such as the position of the sun in the circumnavigation of Africa (14.42). The story is related to a canal dug from the Nile to the Red Sea by Necho II. He sent out a Phoenician ship to sail round Africa and come back to Egypt through the Pillars of Hercules. The description, which Herodotus himself doubts, shows that they had sailed south of the equator. In this he does not differ in kind from a modern historian who collects data and then attempts to evaluate it critically. The fact that Herodotus happened to have been wrong about the incident of the sun is irrelevant; after all, complete accuracy in judgment is also hardly a trait of modern historical study.

3. We have a fair amount of indirect evidence that Herodotus used good sources for important aspects of his history. True, a great deal of Herodotus's account is taken up with anecdotal material, often about minor incidents or individuals. It is unlikely that we shall find evidence for most of these in the various finds from the Persian period, nor do we; however, for many major episodes we find startling confirmation of the main outlines of Herodotus's story. For example, such is the case with his account of Darius's rise to power: the name of Darius's father, Cambyses's assassination of his brother, this assassination kept secret, the magus who pretends to be the brother and raises a revolt against Cambyses, the death of Cambyses, the plot of Darius and a few others, their killing of the deceiver, and Darius's ascension to the throne.

Some details need further consideration. The Greek name Hystaspes (Darius's father) is clearly the Persian Vishtasphaya, the Persian *v* normally appearing in Greek as a rough breathing. Perhaps less immediately recognizable the Greek name Smerdis is actually a good reflection of the Persian Bardiya. Herodotus's version says nothing of the many revolts that arose after Darius had killed the 'pseudo-Smerdis', though the revolt of Babylon is mentioned somewhat later. But his account of Darius I's taking of the throne is consonant with and complementary to the information we have from Darius's own inscription at Behistun (13.61-87; see especially Balcer 1987). Of course, this is not the only side of the story, only the pro-Darius version. The fact that Herodotus agrees with the Behistun inscription shows only that they both reflect the same perspective, not that one confirms the other. It shows that Herodotus was acquainted with the official version and reported it. He is reliable in the outlines of the version, though the details cannot be confirmed and may in many cases be the result of embellishment. A properly critical approach would recognize the ideological bias and attempt to consider the missing

aspects of the story suppressed by the official version propagated by Darius. Nevertheless, to have searched out a reliable version of the official version is to Herodotus's credit and should not be denigrated. The ability to choose and interrogate good sources is part of the critical historical work.

4. Herodotus's qualitative advance over his predecessors can be seen by comparing him with Hellanicus of Lesbos whose attempts to bring some chronological order into the heroic traditions look primitive beside Herodotus's, yet Hellanicus is a contemporary of Herodotus and actually wrote some of his works after the great historian.

### **6.3. Thucydides**

**Egermann** (1972) 'Thukydides über die Art seiner Reden'; **von Fritz** (1967) *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung*: 523-823; **Gomme et al.** (1956) *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*; **Hornblower** (1987) *Thucydides*; (1991-) *A Commentary on Thucydides*, II; (1995) 'The Fourth-Century and Hellenistic Reception of Thucydides'; **D.M. Lewis** (1977) *Sparta and Persia*; **Pearson** (1947) 'Thucydides as Reporter and Critic'; **Price** (2001) *Thucydides and Internal War*; **Warner** (1954) *Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War*.

As a writer of his own contemporary history during the Peloponnesian wars, Thucydides is generally acknowledged as the pinnacle of the historian's craft in antiquity. Although his interest is in the events in Greece, he constantly refers to dealings with the Persians who were actively involved behind the scenes in the fight between Athens and Sparta (on this, cf. D.M. Lewis 1977). Thus, a good deal can be pieced together about Persian history for the years covered by his history (c. 431-411 BCE). Thucydides tells us about some of the criteria he applied in his work (1.20-22 [translation from Warner 1954: 46-48]):

In investigating past history, and in forming the conclusions which I have formed, it must be admitted that one cannot rely on every detail which has come down to us by way of tradition. People are inclined to accept all stories of ancient times in an uncritical way—even when these stories concern their own native countries... (1.20.1)

However, I do not think that one will be far wrong in accepting the conclusions I have reached from the evidence which I have put forward. It is better evidence than that of the poets, who exaggerate the importance of their themes, or of the prose chroniclers, who are less interested in telling the truth than in catching the attention of their public, whose authorities cannot be checked, and whose subject-matter, owing to the passage of time, is mostly lost in the unreliable streams of mythology. We may claim instead to have used only the plainest evidence and to have reached conclusions which are reasonably accurate, considering that we have been dealing with ancient history... (1.21.1)

And with regard to my factual reporting of the events of the war I have made it a principle not to write down the first story that came my way, and not even to be guided by my own general impressions; either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard of them from eye-witnesses whose reports I

have checked with as much thoroughness as possible. Not that even so the truth was easy to discover: different eye-witnesses give different accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other or else from imperfect memories. And it may well be that my history will seem less easy to read because of the absence in it of a romantic element. (1.22.2-4)

Thucydides ‘pursued an indubitably “scientific” purpose. No other historian of antiquity treasured *akribēia*, strict accuracy, so much as he, and he is unique in estimating the factual detail as important for its own sake’ (Fornara 1983: 105). Some of the principles used by Thucydides include the following (though some of these are already to be found among his predecessors):

1. The traditions about the early history of Greece considered untrustworthy and given no credence.
2. The interrogation of eye witnesses and the collection of a variety of eye witness and other accounts. Although Thucydides unfortunately tells only of the account that he finds most trustworthy, from all we can determine he does appear to have followed his own rule.
3. A critical judgment made about the various accounts to select the one that appears to be most credible according to common-sense criteria.
4. The establishment of a chronological framework which dates all events to within six months.

These are important rules and are still applied in some form or other by most modern historians. Thucydides was by common consent the pinnacle of history writers in antiquity, and his successors did not rise to quite the same heights. On the other hand, he wrote about contemporary history which gave him an edge over writers who were writing about the more distant past.

#### **6.4. Oxyrhynchus Historian**

Breitenbach (1970) ‘Hellenika Oxyrhynchia’; I.A.F. Bruce (1967) *An Historical Commentary on the ‘Hellenica Oxyrhynchia’*; Grenfell and Hunt (eds.) (1908) ‘842. Theopomitus (or Cratippus), *Hellenica*’.

Fragments of an anonymous writer known as the Oxyrhynchus Historian continue the account of the Peloponnesian war where Thucydides left off, covering the same ground as books 1-2 of Xenophon’s *Hellenica* (see below). The extant fragments cover the years 396 and 395 BCE. He has a number of characteristics in common with Thucydides and is thought to be one of the best of the Greek historians, giving on the whole a good quality account of these few years of the Peloponnesian war. The author of this work is unidentified, though one possibility is the Athenian historian Cratippus. Although only a fragment survives, he seems to have been a source of Ephorus and thus of Diodorus Siculus (see below). This is not available in the LCL; for the text, with English translation and notes, one needs to see the original publication (Grenfell and Hunt 1908, though the ascription to Theopomitus or Cratippus is very uncertain).

### 6.5. Ctesias

**Bigwood** (1976) 'Ctesias' Account of the Revolt of Inarus'; (1978) 'Ctesias as Historian of the Persian Wars'; (1980) 'Diodorus and Ctesias'; (1995) 'Ctesias, his Royal Patrons and Indian Swords'; **Grabbe** (2003b) 'Of Mice and Dead Men'; **Jacoby** (1956) 'Ktesias'; **König** (1972) *Die Persika des Ktesias von Knidos*; **D.M. Lewis** (1977) *Sparta and Persia*; **Momigliano** (1969) 'Tradizione e invenzione in Ctesia'.

Perhaps the nadir to Thucydides's zenith is Ctesias of Cnidus. He wrote about the same time as Xenophon and is thus another successor of the great historians. After being captured by the Persians and serving for 17 years as the personal physician of Artaxerxes II, Ctesias should have been in a good position to report on many aspects of the Persian court and Persian history at first hand. But even though he claims to have consulted Persian records, much of his history is actually composed of anecdotal material about court intrigues and scandals among the eunuchs of the harem. Instead of a proper history, he compiled a farrago of legends, inventions, and gossip that was already denounced in antiquity (e.g. by Plutarch, *Artaxerxes* 1.4). This is not to say that genuine historical data cannot be found in his account, but he shows little interest in distinguishing the historical from the romantic. His account is the main source of the Ninus and Semiramis legend that continued to be so influential up to early modern times (for a discussion of this, see Grabbe 2003b: 122–25).

Most of the extant and lost *Persika* written by Greek writers over the centuries were heavily dependent on Ctesias rather than Herodotus. This is unfortunate since Ctesias is generally acknowledged to be a very unreliable source. Scholars continue to use him to supplement Herodotus, but this must be done with a good deal of caution. The most recent studies have continued to be very negative toward his reliability (Drews 1973; Bigwood 1976; 1978; 1995). The fragments are collected in *FGH* (text no. 688). F.W. König's work gives a good assembly of the fragments with a German translation and study, but his treatment otherwise is generally considered too credulous. D.M. Lewis criticizes him a number of times (e.g. 1977: 15 n. 71; 61 n. 77), though he nevertheless also cites him positively on several occasions (e.g. 1977: 85 n. 14).

### 6.6. Xenophon

**Breitenbach** (1967) 'Xenophon'; **Due** (1989) *The Cyropaedia*; **Gera** (1993) *Xenophon's Cyropaedia*; **C.H. Grayson** (1975) 'Did Xenophon Intend to Write History?'; **Hirsch** (1985) *The Friendship of the Barbarians*; **Nadon** (2001) *Xenophon's Prince*; **Pomeroy** (1994) *Xenophon Oeconomicus*; **Sancisi-Weerdenburg** (1985) 'The Death of Cyrus'; **Tatum** (1989) *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction*.

Xenophon, who continued Thucydides's history of the Peloponnesian war, was not of the same calibre as the latter. As a participant in a Greek mercenary army in

Persia about 400 BCE, Xenophon can be a valuable source for contemporary Persian history. This is especially true for the fight of Cyrus the Younger against Artaxerxes II since Xenophon was in Cyrus's mercenary army. His *Anabasis* is a dramatic account of the escape of this small group of Greek soldiers through the Persian empire to the Black Sea and freedom, after the defeat of Cyrus. The *Hellenica* (his account of Greek history which continues that of Thucydides), on the other hand, is definitely inferior in quality. In it he has occasional references to the Persians, though these should be evaluated along the same line as his data about Greek history.

It is the *Cyropaedia*, the life of Cyrus, that is potentially the most interesting but also the most controversial (cf. Due 1989; Tatum 1989; Gera 1993). Scholars accept that there are historical data of genuine value in the work, but there is also much creative interpretation, distortion, and fabrication. The problem is sorting out what is reliable and what is not (cf. Breitenbach 1967). Most scholars feel that it cannot be done with any confidence and are reluctant to give credence to the *Cyropaedia* where it cannot be independently confirmed. The recent book by Hirsch (1985) evaluates the *Cyropaedia* more positively, yet in the final analysis he has to admit the same difficulties of sorting out fact from fiction as other scholars. What Hirsch does demonstrate is that Xenophon's knowledge of the Persians of his own time was quite good. Thus, even when his knowledge of their history is shaky, he is still important for Persian customs, society, and government (cf. also Due 1989).

Xenophon also wrote an 'Economics' (Pomeroy 1994). It is the first attempt in history to explain the principles on how to manage an estate but with implications for the broader economic structures of his times. It is not as useful for our purposes as the Pseudo-Aristotle *Oeconomica* (discussed below, at §6.14), though Xenophon's work was actually a source for a section of Pseudo-Aristotle's work. One of its features is the enlightened view on gender relations and the education of women relative to the conventional views of the times.

### 6.7. Ephorus

**Andrewes** (1985) 'Diodorus and Ephorus'; **Barber** (1935) *The Historian Ephorus*; **Drews** (1962) 'Diodorus and his Sources'; **E. Schwartz** (1909) 'Ephorus'.

The first universal history, by Ephorus of Cyme (c. 405–330 BCE), has perished as an independent work but seems to be the main source for Diodorus's books 11–16 (*FGH* 70). He was praised for his accuracy in antiquity (though a weakness in military matters was recognized). He sometimes used sources now lost and is certainly a main source for the history of the Persian empire in its last 50–75 years. One of his sources was Thucydides, which renders his account of less value since we have the original; however, another seems to have been an original work of good quality, a portion of which we have in the Oxyrhynchus Historian (see above).

### **6.8. Diodorus Siculus**

**Bigwood** (1980) ‘Diodorus and Ctesias’; **Drews** (1962) ‘Diodorus and his Sources’; **E. Schwartz** (1957) ‘Diodorus’.

Diodorus (first century BCE) wrote a universal history in 40 books, some of which are preserved only in fragments. He was not a critical historian but primarily only a compiler, though he probably supplemented and rewrote his sources more extensively than some scholars have allowed (Bigwood 1980). This means that his work varies according to the quality of those whom he copied. For the Persian period his main sources were Ctesias, Ephorus, and Thucydides. Recent study has tended to evaluate Diodorus more positively than in the past (Drews 1962; Bigwood 1980). The reason is that it is now recognized that Diodorus had good sources for portions of his narrative, especially in Ephorus. Part of Ephorus’s narrative depends on Thucydides which we have in unmediated form, but in books 13–14 the ultimate source (mediated through Ephorus) is the original work of which a fragment survives in the Oxyrhynchus Historian.

### **6.9. Pompeius Trogus**

**Seel (ed.)** (1956) *Pompei Trogī Fragmenta*; (1985) *M. Juniani Iustini Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogī*; **Yardley and Develin (ed. and trans.)** (1994) *Justin: Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*.

In the Augustan age Pompeius Trogus wrote in Greek a universal history in 44 books called the *Historiae Philippicae*. Unfortunately, the original work is lost apart from a few fragments. The Greek work was summarized in the Latin epitome of Justin about the third century CE which survives. The epitome is not normally very detailed and shows considerable confusion in certain areas; nevertheless, it has some useful information to supplement other historians of the period.

### **6.10. Plutarch**

**D.A. Russell** (1972) *Plutarch*.

A priest of Delphi for several decades of his life, and devoted to his hometown of Chaeronea in Boetia, Plutarch (c. 50–120 CE) found time to write a voluminous set of volumes. The *Moralia* contains essays on a diversity of topics, some of them of considerable interest for religion in antiquity. Of more direct value for political history are his *Parallel Lives* of noble Greeks and Romans. The quality of his sources for these varies, and his concern is usually more moralistic than historical. Nevertheless, in some cases they provide valuable information on certain individuals. For the Persian period, his *Artaxerxes* (on the life of Artaxerxes II) is extant. His *Alexander* also has important data of relevance for the Persian period.

### 6.11. *Pseudo-Skylax*

**Galling** (1964d) ‘Die syrisch-palästinische Küste nach der Beschreibung bei Pseudo-Skylax’; **Leuze** (1935) *Die Satrapieneinteilung in Syrien*; **C. Müller** (1882) *Geographi Graeci Minores*.

Scylax of Caryanda is said by Herodotus (4.44) to have journeyed the length of the Indus into the Indian Ocean in the time of Darius I (late fifth century), which he then wrote up in his *Periplus*. The work that survives in his name, however, is a work of the fourth century, perhaps a compilation from several sources. It is known essentially from one manuscript which, unfortunately, has many scribal errors and corruptions (C. Müller 1882). Although these make use of this source problematic at times, Pseudo-Skylax nevertheless provides some important information on the geography of Palestine in the Persian period. Galling’s (1964d) efforts to correct the text at various points have been helpful, and any use of Pseudo-Skylax for Syro-Palestinian coast should take account of his suggestions.

### 6.12. *Strabo*

Strabo (c. 64 BCE to after 21 CE) is known for his *Geography* which has survived more or less intact in 17 books. Book 15 covers the areas of Iran and India; book 16, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Arabia; book 17, Egypt and Ethiopia. There is some useful information on Palestinian history as well as geography (16.2.28-46 §§759-65). Strabo also apparently wrote an important world history, which has long been lost but which Josephus seems to have made use of it in the *Antiquities*.

### 6.13. *Pliny the Elder*

Pliny’s death date is well known since he was killed in the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE. His surviving work is his *Natural History* in 37 books. Its contents are much broader than we might expect since for him ‘natural history’ encompassed all of life—not only the natural world of plants and animals but also astronomy, meteorology, medicine, geology, geography, and much about human beings, including sailing, trade, art and sculpture, and customs and institutions. The work is a mine of information and has often been so treated by modern scholars.

### 6.14. *The Oeconomica of Pseudo-Aristotle*

**Altheim** (1951) Review of G.G. Cameron, *The Persepolis Treasury Tablets*; **Altheim and Stiehl** (1963) *Die aramäische Sprache unter den Achaimeniden*: 137-49; **Pomeroy** (1994) *Xenophon Oeconomicus*; **Rostovtzeff** (1941) *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*: 440-46, 469-72.

Among the corpus of writings preserved in Aristotle’s name is an ‘Economics’ (*Oeconomica*; in vol. 18 of the LCL); however, it is universally agreed that this is not a work of Aristotle but a writer not long after Alexander in the late fourth

century (possibly Cratippus), written in imitation of Xenophon's work of the same name (Pomeroy 1994). It seems to have been compiled from a variety of writings, including Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and Aristotle's *Politics* but also some sources now lost. Despite the dating in the early Hellenistic period, Pseudo-Aristotle gives an important discussion of economics and administration in the Persian empire, with information on the structure of the Persian empire before Alexander's conquest. When the Persepolis Treasury and Fortification Tablets were discovered (§5.3), they were found to exhibit significant parallels with Pseudo-Aristotle's work (cf. Altheim 1951; *HPE*: especially 389–90).

### **6.15. Athenaeus**

**Braund and Wilkins (eds.)** (2000) *Athenaeus and His World*.

The *Deipnosophista* of Athenaeus, written about 200 CE, is an example of symposium literature. The symposium or drinking party forms the framework of a discussion that ranges widely over all sorts of different subjects. In the course of the table talk many different earlier writers, including a large number whose works have perished, are quoted. Despite his lateness, therefore, Athenaeus is an important source of quotations. Although many of these are in the nature of anecdotes, they still have value and have been exploited by historians (e.g. *HPE* [see index]).

### **6.16. Cornelius Nepos**

Writing in the first part of the first century BCE, Cornelius Nepos compiled biographies of several hundred 'illustrious men'. These are mainly character sketches rather than biographies in the modern sense of the word. The quality of his work does not rise to a high level and must be used with caution: although he cites sources, he does not seem to have used many of them directly. Nevertheless, he occasionally has data of potential relevance for the Persian period (cf. *HPE* [see index]).

### **6.17. The Alexander Historians**

**Bosworth** (1980–) *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*; (1988) *From Arrian to Alexander*; (1996) *Alexander and the East*; **Hammond** (1983) *Three Historians of Alexander the Great*; (1993) *Sources for Alexander the Great*.

A number of those who wrote about the conquests of Alexander have valuable information here and there about the Persian empire, especially at the very end under the reign of Darius III. A number of the 'Alexander historians' have already been treated because they do not confine themselves to Alexander: Diodorus, Plutarch. The main writers to be included in this present section are Arrian and Quintius Curtius.

Lucius Flavius Arrianus (c. 86–160 CE) is one of our main sources for conquests of Alexander. Although he wrote long after Alexander's time, Arrian is generally reckoned to have used as a main source the account of Ptolemy I who was one of Alexander's generals. Arrian is important for Persian history in that he makes many individual comments that throw light on the Persians and the Persian empire. Quintus Curtius Rufus wrote possibly during the reign of Claudius (mid-first century CE). The surviving work in ten books covers the life of Alexander; unfortunately, the two books covering the period before 333 BCE have been lost. Although a very rhetorical work, it seems often to have used useful sources (even if they are not usually named). Like Arrian, his main value is in episodic comments on the Persians and the Persian empire. A more detailed look at these authors will be given in volume 2 of the present History.

### 6.18. *Josephus*

**Bilde** (1988) *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome*; **Cross** (1998b) 'A Reconstruction of the Judaean Restoration'; **Feldman and Levison (eds.)** (1996) *Josephus' Contra Apionem*; **Grabbe** (1987a) 'Josephus and the Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration'; (1992) 'Who Was the Bagoses of Josephus?'; (1998a) *Ezra and Nehemiah*; **Parente and Sievers (eds.)** (1994) *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period*; **Pucci Ben Zeev** (1993) 'The Reliability of Josephus Flavius'; **Spilsbury** (1998) *The Image of the Jew*; **Williamson** (1977b) 'The Historical Value of Josephus'.

For an introduction to Josephus, with much more extensive bibliography, see *JCH* (4–13) and *JRSTP* (92–94); a more detailed discussion will be given in volume 2 of the present History.

Josephus's discussion of the Persian period takes up most of his *Antiquities* book 11 (except for the very last part which is occupied by the conquest of Alexander). His knowledge of the Persian period seems to have been minimal. For some of the two centuries of Achaemenid rule, he had the Bible as a source and clearly used it, primarily in its Greek form. Thus, he makes use of 1 Esdras and the Greek version of Esther. If he knew the book of Ezra in its MT form, he gives no indication in the *Antiquities*. The exact source of his information on Nehemiah is difficult. While he might have known the present book of Nehemiah, this is problematic since there were other versions of the Nehemiah tradition extant (cf. Grabbe 1987a), and he does not discuss Nehemiah until he finishes with the life and death of Ezra. Nor does his discussion of Nehemiah follow the text of the book of Nehemiah. Although one might think this could be a simple case of adaptation of material, Josephus also has data not in the Hebrew Nehemiah or its extant Greek translation. Thus, it looks as if he had a form of the Nehemiah tradition rather different from that available to us in the MT and LXX Nehemiah (cf. 2 Macc. 1.18–36; Grabbe 1998a: 84–86).

Josephus's use of the biblical material is fairly straightforward for the most part, following an entire biblical book to its end before going on to another rather than integrating the data. There is one exception to this, however, which results in added confusion. Josephus was aware of the order of at least the first few Persian kings:

Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius I, Xerxes, Artaxerxes I, and was also possibly aware that there was more than one Artaxerxes (see the textual tradition of *Ant.* 11.7.1 §297; cf. also Grabbe 1987a). He makes use of this partial knowledge by attempting to associate particular biblical books with these kings, but the result is a confused hodgepodge in which certain confusions in the biblical text (e.g. the documents in Ezra 4) are further rearranged according to Josephus's incorrect understanding of Persian history.

Josephus's knowledge of the Persian period outside the biblical material is extremely limited. Other than knowing the order of the first Persian kings, he gives only one addition tradition which may have a historical basis but which is otherwise unconfirmed (Williamson 1977b; cf. Grabbe 1992). This is found in *Ant.* 11.7.1 §§297-301 (§13.7). Other than this tradition, probably based on traditions which had come down to Josephus, and possibly with a historical basis, Josephus seems almost totally ignorant of the Persian period in Palestine. When his biblical material ran out, he skipped over almost a century to the time of Alexander. One must keep this ignorance in mind in trying to evaluate the small amount of additional material he does provide (Grabbe 1987a). In sum, for the Persian period Josephus had the following information and sources or probable sources, but as should be clear, he had only a small amount of independent information, this being confined to *Ant.* 11.7.1 §§297-301:

<i>Ant.</i>	11.1.1-5.5 §§1-158	1 Esdras
	11.5.6-8 §§159-83	A Nehemiah tradition
	11.6.1-13 §§184-296	Greek Esther
	11.7.1 §§297-301	(Oral?) tradition
	11.7.2 §§302-303	Variant of Neh. 13.28?

**Part III**

**SOCIETY AND INSTITUTIONS**

## Chapter 7

### ADMINISTRATION

This chapter investigates what might be called the civic or provincial structures of Yehud in the context of imperial policy and institutions. Although Judah was no longer a nation but a province in a large empire, it still retained some features that we associate with a sovereign state. It is important that the province of Judah be understood within its context and not treated in isolation. The context includes the organization and administration of the Persian empire and the Persian economy but also the physical and human geography of Palestine and the region.

#### **7.1. Organization and Administration of the Persian Empire: An Overview**

**Aharoni** (1979) *The Land of the Bible*; **Armayor** (1978) ‘Herodotus’ Catalogues of the Persian Empire; **Avi-Yonah** (1966) *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquests*; **Balcer** (1993) ‘The Ancient Persian Satrapies and Satraps in Western Anatolia’; **Cameron** (1973) ‘The Persian Satrapies and Related Matters’; **Dozeman** (2003) ‘Geography and History in Herodotus and in Ezra–Nehemiah’; **Elayi** (1981) ‘The Phoenician Cities in the Persian Period’; **Forrer** (1920) *Die Provinzeneinteilung des assyrischen Reiches*; **Galling** (1964d) ‘Die syrisch-palästinische Küste nach der Beschreibung bei Pseudo-Skylax’; **Graf** (1993) ‘The Persian Royal Road System in Syria-Palestine’; (1994) ‘The Persian Royal Road System’; **Klinkott** (2000) *Die Satrapienregister der Alexander- und Diadochenzeit*; **Lecoq** (1990) ‘Observations sur le sens du mot *dahyu*’; **Leuze** (1935) *Die Satrapieneinteilung in Syrien*; **Na’aman** (2000) ‘Royal Vassals or Governors?’; **Rainey** (1969) ‘The Satrapy “Beyond the River”’; (2003) ‘Herodotus’ Description of the East Mediterranean Coast’; **Schmitt** (1972) ‘Die achaimenidische Satrapie *Tayaī Drayahyā*’; **E. Stern** (1982) *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible*; **Stolper** (1989a) ‘The Governor of Babylon’; **Vogelsang** (1992) *The Rise and Organisation of the Achaemenid Empire*.

We know from a variety of sources that Persian administration was conducted mainly through large divisions known as ‘satrapies’ (‘satrap’ comes from Avestan *xšaθrapāvan* = Old Persian *xšaθapāvan*, ‘protector of the kingdom’, a term that was widely borrowed into Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, and many other languages). The governor of each was a powerful semi-independent satrap who was usually a high-ranking Persian and often a member of the royal family. This organizational structure was both a major strength and a major weakness. The size of the Persian empire made a heavily centralized government impractical. Regionally devolved

government was more appropriate and workable. The negative side, however, was that the satraps had a great deal of power, and if they chose, they could use their power base to oppose rather than support the emperor. This in fact happened periodically during the two centuries of Persian rule, sometimes with single satraps revolting (e.g. Cyrus the Younger against Darius II) and sometimes with something more widespread (though ‘the Revolt of the Satraps’ about 366–360 is complicated [§14.5]). It also meant that the emperor had to make sure that he took steps, on the one hand, to accommodate the satraps and keep them loyal and also, on the other hand, to keep his eye on their activities.

A number of factors held the empire together (*HPE*: 302–54). The person and office of the king was very important. Despite the occasional revolt, the monarchy was never seriously threatened (*HPE*: 675). The king issued regular orders that were expected to be obeyed (and usually were). He had his spies and observers, with the satraps subject to periodic inspection, but the carrot was probably as powerful as the stick: in addition to his moral and traditional authority the king was the potential source of great wealth and honours for those who served him well. An effective means of control lay in the rivalry between the various satraps and officials vying for his attention and favour. Any who seemed to be deviating from the king’s desires was likely to be quickly denounced by another satrap or high official. Most of those who led revolts were betrayed to the king by a supporter or colleague at some point.

According to Herodotus, Darius I divided the Persian empire into ‘20 *archai* (governments) which they (the Persians) called “satrapies”’ (3.89–97). Although this statement has often been quoted and taken as a central datum in the organization of the Persian empire, there are a number of problems with it. First, although Herodotus uses the term ‘satrapy’ at the beginning of the section (as well as *archē*), he switches to *nomos* (‘financial division’) for most of his discussion. This may not have been significant since ‘satrapy’ was not used in either Persian or Greek as a precise term but could designate not only the large satrapies but also smaller divisions such as provinces. Secondly, there is a good deal of duplication in the peoples listed for the various *nomoi*. Thirdly, a number of regions known from other sources are absent from this list. Finally, Herodotus implies but does not state that the *archai* were the equivalent of the fiscal divisions of *nomoi*, yet the groupings often do not make financial sense (Klinkott 2000: 15–16). The basic accuracy of Herodotus’s list as corresponding to financial divisions is defended, however (Vogelsang 1992: 204–205; *HPE*: 391–93), with the notation that they are not necessarily different from the political divisions.

Attempts to reconcile Herodotus’s list of satrapies with the ‘peoples’ (*dahyāva*) of the Behistun inscription (§6.1.14–17) have not been successful, most likely for the reason that the Behistun list is probably not that of the formal satrapies (Schmitt 1972; Cameron 1973; Lecoq 1990). Perhaps the most reliable lists are those associated with the end of Persian rule and the conquests of Alexander (Klinkott 2000), but these show some differences from Herodotus’s list of satrapies. The reconstructed list has 26 satrapies at the time of Darius III (Klinkott 2000: 101–102). This is not too different from Herodotus’s list (whose accuracy is defended by

Vogelsang [1992: 204-205]), especially if one takes into account that some re-organization would not have been unexpected in the century and a half between Darius I and Darius III. One of the difficulties is that not only is Judah not mentioned in any list, but even the region of Ebir-nari (Transeuphrates, called *<sup>4</sup>var-nah<sup>o</sup>rā* in Aramaic and *Ēver-ha-Nāhār* in Hebrew), does not occur in any of the lists that have come down to us (Klinkott 2000: 13). Yet there is primary evidence for the existence of this satrapy at various times during Achaemenid rule (cf. *HPE*: 487, 544, 601, 810-11).

At the beginning of Persian rule, what had been the Neo-Babylonian empire was apparently all included in the one satrapy of 'Babylon and Ebir-nari' (Leuze 1935: 25-36). Sometime under the reign of Darius I this satrapy may have been divided into two, Babylonia and Ebir-nari (cf. Stolper 1989a). This probably did not affect the basic division of provinces. Ebir-nari ('Beyond the River [Euphrates]'), which later became a satrapy in its own right and even later still was known as Coele-Syria, included all the land on the west side of the Euphrates as far as Egypt. It is not certain which city was the seat of the Ebir-nari satrap. A number have argued that it was in Sidon (cf. Diodorus 16.41.2); these include Elayi (1981: 25-26), though she gives no argumentation. Others have argued for Damascus, however. Briant (*HPE*: 879-80, 1004) points to Berossus's list of Achaemenid centres (quoted in Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 5.65.3) which includes Damascus (but not Sidon) and the city's importance at the time of Darius III (Quintus Curtius 3.8.12; 3.13.27).

The provincial divisions of the Palestinian region under Persian rule are only partially known. When it conquered northern Israel, Assyria divided the former kingdom into three administrative districts: Megiddo (*Magidu*), Dor (*Duru*), and Samaria (*Semarina*) (Forrer 1920: 60-61; Aharoni 1979: 371-76). These apparently continued under Neo-Babylonian rule. When Judah was conquered, it seems to have been made into another province with a governor (cf. Jer. 40.5; Na'aman 2000). It has often been inferred that the same basic governmental divisions as under Assyrian and Babylonian rule continued to be used, at least initially (E. Stern 1982: 238; cf. Avi-Yonah 1966: 25-27). This may be true, but we have no direct information.

## 7.2. *The Province of Yehud*

### 7.2.1. *Extent and Status of the Jewish State*

**Ackroyd** (1982) 'Archaeology, Politics and Religion'; **Aharoni** (1979) *The Land of the Bible*; **Avi-Yonah** (1966) *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquests*; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*; **Demsky** (1983) 'Pelekh in Nehemiah 3'; **I. Finkelstein** (1994) 'The Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh'; **Höglund** (1992) *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine*; **Kallai** (1998) 'Judah and the Boundaries'; **Keel, Küchler and Uehlinger** (1982-84) *Orte und Landschaften der Bibel*; **Lemaire** (1990) 'Populations et territoires de Palestine à l'époque perse'; (1994b) 'Histoire et administration de la Palestine à l'époque perse'; **Lipschits** (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah

between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; **Na'aman** (2003a) 'In Search of Reality behind the Account of the Philistine Assault on Ahaz'; **Sapin** (1991) 'Recherches sur les ressources et les fonctions économiques'; **J.J. Schwartz** (1991) *Lod (Lydda), Israel*; **E. Stern** (1981) 'The Province of Yehud'; (1982) *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible*; (1999) 'Religion in Palestine in the Assyrian and Persian Periods'; **Williamson** (1985) *Ezra, Nehemiah*.

Although we have no direct evidence from primary sources that Judah was a province, the Yehud seals suggest this, and the text confirms it (Ezra 5.8; cf. Neh. 1.3; 7.6; 11.3). Information about the extent and borders of Persian Yehud comes from archaeology (especially seals and seal impressions) and indications in the literary texts (especially the lists in Ezra–Nehemiah). There seems to be general agreement on the central core of the province, and debate has centred mostly on the Shephelah, the region of Lod and Ono, and how far south Judaean territory extended (Avi-Yonah 1966: 13–19; E. Stern 1982: 245–49; Williamson 1985: 254–55; J.J. Schwartz 1991: 43–48). Most discussions have been based on literary texts, especially the various lists in Ezra–Nehemiah. Unfortunately, these lists present many problems of origin, sources and principles of compilation, and dating (§4.1.3.4). The lists of returnees (Ezra 2//Neh. 7) are a potential source of information about settlement. As has long been pointed out, these almost-identical lists are divided between the 'sons of PN' (list by genealogy) and 'the sons/men of GN' (place of settlement). Those listings that seem to refer to sites of settlement are as follows:

- Gibeon (Neh. 7.25; Ezra 2.21 has Gibbar)
- Bethlehem (Ezra 2.21//Neh. 7.26)
- Netophah (Ezra 2.22//Neh. 7.26)
- Anathoth (Ezra 2.23//Neh. 7.27)
- Azmaveth (Ezra 2.24; Neh. 7.28 has Beth-azmaveth)
- Kiriath-jearim, with Chephirah and Beeroth (Neh. 7.29; Ezra 2.25 has Kiriath-arim, with Chephirah and Beeroth)
- Ramah (Ezra 2.26//Neh. 7.30)
- Geba (Ezra 2.26//Neh. 7.30)
- Michmas (Ezra 2.27//Neh. 7.31)
- Bethel (Ezra 2.28//Neh. 7.32)
- Ai (Ezra 2.28//Neh. 7.32)
- Nebo (Ezra 2.29//‘the other’ Nebo; Neh. 7.33)
- Magbish (Ezra 2.30//not in Neh. 7)
- ‘the other’ Elam (Ezra 2.31//Neh. 7.34)
- Harim (Ezra 2.32//Neh. 7.35)
- Lod (Ezra 2.33//Neh. 7.37)
- Hadid (Ezra 2.33//Neh. 7.37)
- Ono (Ezra 2.33//Neh. 7.37)
- Jericho (Ezra 2.34//not in Neh. 7)
- Senaah (Ezra 2.35//Neh. 7.38)

Another list is that recording the names and habitations of those who worked on the wall under Nehemiah (Neh. 3). The places are as follows (those agreeing with Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7 are marked with an asterisk):

- \*Jericho (3.2)
- Tekoa (3.5, 27)
- \*Gibeon (3.7)
- Meronoth (3.7)
- Mizpah (3.7, 15, 19)
- Jerusalem (3.9, 12)
- Zanoah (3.13)
- Beth-haccerem (3.14)
- Beth-zur (3.16)
- Keilah (3.17-18)

As will be readily apparent, this list hardly overlaps with that in Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7. It is by no means complete in that many of the builders are designated only by a patronymic rather than a geographical place.

A list of the villages inhabited in the country of Judah and Benjamin is given in Neh. 11.25-36 (those in common with Ezra 2//Neh. 7 marked with an asterisk):

- Kiriath-arba
- Dibon
- Jekabzeel
- Jeshua
- Moladah
- Beth-pelet
- Hazar-shual
- Beersheba
- Ziklag
- Meconah
- En-rimmon
- Zorah
- Jarmuth
- Zanoah
- Adullam
- Lachish
- Azeka
- \*Geba
- \*Michmash
- \*Aija (= Ai?)
- \*Bethel
- \*Anathoth
- Nob
- Ananiah
- Hazor
- \*Ramah
- Gittaim
- \*Haddid
- Zeboim
- Neballat
- \*Lod
- \*Ono
- Ge-harashim

This list has a number of names in common with that in Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7, but these tend to be in the area of Benjamin and in the Lod area. The only name in common with the list in Nehemiah 3 is Zanoah. This list is peculiar in having names from the area of Idumaea or even the Negev.

There is surprisingly little overlap between these three lists. If they were meant to list the settlements included in Yehud, they have singularly failed to provide the information, all being very incomplete as well as differing considerably from one another. In fact, none of them pretends to be listing the habitations of the province; rather, they speak of places where Jews lived. It is likely that there were Jewish settlers in many places outside Yehud. It would be foolish to insist that every name in these lists must have been within the boundaries of Yehud. We have to look for other criteria.

Also of significance in determining the extent and structure of the province of Judah are the seals and seal impressions, though mainly in a supporting capacity (§3.2.3). These are important primarily for two reasons: their distribution pattern tells us something about the extent of the province, and their inscriptions give information on some of the governors and other provincial administrative officials (§7.2.4; §7.2.5). The distribution pattern of the seals and impressions suggests some of the towns that might be in the province and also which are likely to be the more significant administrative centres (Carter 1999: 259–68). Carter catalogues Yehud seals and bullae for six sites:

- Ramat Rahel
- Tell en-Naṣbeh (Mizpah)
- Mošah
- Jerusalem
- Jericho
- En-gedi

Stern (*ALB II*: 548) also lists the site of Tell el-Fūl (Gibeah?), but it seems likely that this was occupied only in the early Persian period (§2.1.1.3), and Nebi Samuel (near Jerusalem). He also lists Gezer plus one example each at Kadesh-Barnea (Tell el-Gudeirat) and Tel Harasim (near Tell eṣ-Ṣafî or Tel Zafit). Gezer was probably—and the last two were definitely (as Stern notes)—outside Yehud and were probably brought there through trade or travel. Carter (1999: 90) mentions a possible one at Tel Michal but found its reading doubtful. In addition to the sites listed above, uninscribed seals with a lion motif (local Judaean?) are also found at the following (Carter 1999: 259–61):

- Horvat Zimri
- Har Adar
- El-Jib (Gibeon)

The three all seem to be well within any borders one would draw for Yehud.

Next, there is the distribution of coins. Unfortunately, since only a few Yehud coins have been found in excavations (Carter 1999: 262, 268–81), these give us little help. It has also been suggested that the presence of fortresses might mark the

border (*ALB II*: 431, 445; E. Stern 1981; 1982: 40, 250). Hoglund has argued that this is unlikely (1992: 202-203), but Lipschits also supports the idea (2003: 355 n. 125). A final point is, interestingly, based on negative evidence. The clay cultic figurines were popular during the Iron II period in Palestine, including in Judah, but they are entirely absent from Judah and Samaria in the Persian period (E. Stern 1999: 250-55; cf. *ALB II*: 478-79, 488).

There is little dispute over the core area of Yehud. From Jerusalem it stretched north to Beit Ur et-Tahta (Lower Beth-Horon) and probably included Bethel. The eastern boundary is likely to have been the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, most likely including Jericho. It also included the old territory of Judah as far west as the Shephelah. Stern (*ALB II*: 439-42) and others have included Gezer in the boundaries of Yehud, but there are good reasons for excluding it (Carter 1999: 90 n. 48). The southern border seems to have been south of Beth-zur (Carter [1999: 98-99] also includes the unoccupied site of Hebron because he finds no evidence that it was under Idumaean control). Four main questions remain: Was the Shephelah included? Was the area of Lod included? How much further south did the boundary go? Was En-gedi included? Carter (1999: 90-100) answers these questions partly on the basis of geographical and environmental considerations, arguing that the boundaries of Judah were those primarily dictated by the natural topography and environment. This is convincing up to a point, but it must be kept in mind that provincial boundaries are ultimately political decisions (Lipschits 2003: 360).

The Shephelah was geographically separate from the Judaean hill country. Although it had formed a part of the Kingdom of Judah until the reign of Hezekiah, it appears to have been removed from Judahite control by the Assyrians throughout most of the seventh century (cf. I. Finkelstein 1994: 172-78). There does not seem to be any good reason why the Persians would have returned the area to Judah. Although the list in Neh. 11.25-36 includes Lachish and Azekah (and Jews may indeed have been living there), nothing else indicates that this area was in the province of Yehud. On the other hand, there seems to have been a Jewish settlement in the north-eastern Shephelah that may have been included in Yehud (Lipschits 2003: 345). If so, this would put the western border on the Beth-shemesh-Azekah line as far as Wadi ha-Elah, though Lachish and Azekah would still be omitted. N. Na'aman (2003a) has suggested that the list of towns in the Shephelah in 2 Chron. 28.18 (though ostensibly relating to the Judaean king Ahaz) in fact reflect the western boundary of Yehud, with the named towns lying west of it and therefore outside the province: Beth-Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco, Timnah, Gimzo.

The area of Lod, including Ono and Hadid, is found in the lists in Ezra 2.33/Neh. 7.37 and Neh. 11.33-35 (including apparently Ramah, Gittaim, Zeboim, Neballat, and Ge-harashim). From an archaeological point of view, Lod seems to be isolated from Judah, with a gap in settlement between it and Beth-horon or Gibeon (J.J. Schwartz 1991: 44). For what it is worth, the lists also show the same gap in settlement. Geographically, this area fits most easily with the coastal plain and the area under Phoenician control. Finally, there is the curious invitation from Sanballat to Nehemiah to meet in the 'valley of Ono' (Neh. 6.2). Since Nehemiah did

not take up the invitation, we have no further information; however, it makes sense that this region would be regarded as ‘neutral territory’, neither a part of Yehud nor Samaria but accessible to both. All in all, it seems most likely that this region lay outside Yehud and was most probably under the nominal control of the city of Sidon (§7.3.2).

From evidence of the Yehud seal impressions En-gedi was likely to have been settled by Jews in the Persian period (§2.1.1.9). As Carter notes (1999: 98), if it is not included in the boundaries of Judah, one is hard put to find another entity in which to place it. The country thus was roughly in the shape of a rectangle, about 40 by 50 km (25 by 30 miles), or only about 2000 km<sup>2</sup> (800 miles<sup>2</sup>). Southward, much of the Negev area had been taken over by the Edomites (§7.3.3); on the north, the Samarians and Phoenicians bordered Judah. M. Avi-Yonah (1966: 19-23) has suggested that the province of Judah was further divided into six districts, each divided into two sub-districts, based on the data mainly from Nehemiah 3, which lists the builders of Jerusalem’s wall (cf. also E. Stern 1982: 247-49):

1. Jerusalem, with perhaps Ramat-Rahel as a sub-centre.
2. Keilah, including the southwestern part of the province. The sub-centre is uncertain but may have been at Adullam.
3. Mizpah, the northern district, with the sub-capital at Gibeon.
4. Beth-hacerem, the western district, with Zanoah perhaps as the sub-capital.
5. Beth-Zur, the southern-most district, Tekoa probably being the secondary capital.
6. Jericho, the eastern district, with the secondary centre apparently at Senaah.

Y. Aharoni (1979: 418) is similar:

<i>District</i>	<i>Sub-District</i>
Keilah	(1) Zanoah, (2) Keilah,
Beth-Zur	(3) Beth-zur, (4) Tekoa,
Beth-hacerem	(5) Beth-hacerem,
Jerusalem	(6) Jerusalem, (7) Gibeon,
Mizpah	(8) Mizpah, (9) Jericho

This detailed reconstruction has now been challenged by Demsky (1983; cf. Lemaire 1990: 39-40). The reconstruction depended on understanding the word *pelek* (Neh. 3.9, 12, 14-18) as ‘district’. The word seems to be a borrowing of Akkadian *pilku* which is used to mean ‘corvée labor’. If this meaning is accepted for the references in Nehemiah, an individual such as Malchijah (Neh. 3.14) should be designated ‘foreman over the work gang from Beth-hacerem’ rather than ‘ruler over the district of Beth-hacerem’. Deriving administrative divisions from such lists could, therefore, be done only indirectly and require considerable caution. On the other hand, *pilku* has the meaning ‘district’ in a number of Persian-period documents from Mesopotamia (as Demsky admits [1983: 243]), which means that Demsky’s interpretation is possible but not necessary. At this point, all we can say

is that the picture of administrative districts given by Avi-Yonah and others—and there is not full agreement on what these were—is not unreasonable but is far from proved.

### **7.2.2. Was Judah under the Jurisdiction of Samaria?**

**Aharoni** (1979) *The Land of the Bible*; **Alt** (1953) ‘Die Rolle Samarias’; **Avi-Yonah** (1966) *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquests*; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*; **Fleishman** (1995) ‘The Investigating Commission of Tattenai’; **Galling** (1964a) *Studien zur Geschichte Israels im persischen Zeitalter*; **Hoglund** (1992) *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine*; **Lemaire** (1990) ‘Populations et territoires de Palestine à l’époque perse’; (1994b) ‘Histoire et administration de la Palestine à l’époque perse’; **McEvenue** (1981) ‘The Political Structure in Judah’; **M. Smith** (1987) *Palestinian Parties and Politics*; **E. Stern** (1982) *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible*; **Widengren** (1977) ‘The Persian Period’; **Williamson** (1985) *Ezra, Nehemiah*; (1988) ‘The Governors of Judah under the Persians’.

Following the hints of earlier scholars, Albrecht Alt (1953) developed the hypothesis that Judah was included in the province of Samaria during the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. This theory was followed by others (e.g. Galling 1964a: 92 n. 3) and has had a good deal of influence (see also E. Stern 1982: 213). For example, J. Weinberg also accepts it as an important plank in his *Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde* thesis (§7.2.3.1). A detailed defence of the theory was advanced by McEvenue (1981) who recognized that ‘the form of political authority in Judah from 597 to 445 B.C. remains obscure’ but stated that Alt’s theory ‘remains the only proposal supported by probable arguments’ (1981: 364). One can summarize the hypothesis as follows (including the further developments of it by McEvenue):

- Under the Babylonians, there was no importation of population to replace the Jews taken; instead, Judah was ruled as a part of the province of Samaria.
- In Ezra 4, members of the Samarian upper class came with the governor of Ebir-nari to investigate as a part of their ruling function which continued under the Persians. No governor of Judah is mentioned at this time, showing that Tattenai did not regard Zerubbabel as governor.
- Although such figures as Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel are referred to as *pehâ*, this term has a very broad meaning. Alt assumes that they were only special commissioners with a specific duty rather than regular governors. McEvenue argues that only in Aramaic does the term mean the ruler of a province or satrapy; in Hebrew it means only the head of an extended family.
- The term *m<sup>ed</sup>dînâ* also meant ‘extended family’ in pre-exilic times and keeps this meaning in Ezra–Nehemiah. It does not mean ‘province’ in these books as is normally believed.
- Only with the arrival of Nehemiah does Judah become a separate province with its own governor. The reaction of Sanballat and his companions is sufficient to show that they envisage a new situation which

encroaches on their powers rather than simply the appointment of a new governor of an independent province. Furthermore, Nehemiah's building of the walls is to make Jerusalem into a provincial capital; earlier attempts to rebuild the walls were not allowed for the reason that it was not such a capital.

In spite of those who still defend Alt, his thesis has come under considerable criticism in recent years. It was attacked by M. Smith (1987: 193–201), whose arguments were accepted by Widengren (1977: 509–11). Although McEvenue wrote after Smith's attack on Alt, he hardly gave a detailed summary of Smith's case. H.G.M. Williamson has written the most detailed attempt to refute Alt and McEvenue (Williamson 1985: 242–44; 1988; 1998: 152–53), but cf. also Lemaire (1990: 32–36; 1994b: 16–17) and Hoglund (1992: 69–86). Some of the main arguments against the view that Judah remained under Samarian administration until about the mid-fifth century are the following:

1. The arguments about the meaning of *m<sup>e</sup>dīnā* and *pehā* seem to be only hair-splitting which ignores the broader philological usage. Granted that both terms can be used in a variety of senses, attempts to confine their usage in Ezra and Nehemiah to a 'pre-exilic' and a 'Hebrew' usage are unconvincing. For example, it is admitted that the book of Esther is Hebrew evidence for the use of both *m<sup>e</sup>dīnā* and *pehā* in a sense contrary to the theory. If Esther is very much influenced by Persian usage, so indeed is Ezra–Nehemiah. Above all, the evidence of archaeology and epigraphy needs to be given their full weight. It is now almost universally agreed that a number of seal impressions on bullae and jars name governors of the province of Yehud (§3.2.3). A similar usage is found on coins (§3.4.1). If Samaria is called a 'province' *בְּשָׁמַרְיָן מִדְיָנָה* 'bšmryn mdynt' [WDSP 4.1; 5.1], then the same usage for 'Yehud the province' *לִיהוּד מִדְיָנָה* 'lyhw<sup>d</sup> mdynt' [Ezra 5.8]) must surely have the same meaning.
2. It is argued that Zerubbabel received his authority directly from Darius. This seems unlikely; rather, Zerubbabel probably came to Palestine before Darius assumed the throne. In the confusion which followed Darius's accession to the throne, Zerubbabel resumed (or began) work on the temple. It is hardly surprising that Tattenai investigated (if this document is based on actual events; see §4.1.3.2). Governor or no governor, the satrap of Ebir-nari had the right to approve or forbid the continuation of the work. Zerubbabel is in fact not mentioned and may not have been on the scene (Fleishman 1995 offers an explanation of why Zerubbabel is not mentioned here). But even if he was, he had no right to appeal to Darius over his superior who was Tattenai.
3. The attempts to prove that Neh. 5.15 does not refer to actual governors of Judah are not very convincing. Nehemiah would not be in a very strong position if he was comparing himself to satraps (rather than governors directly over Judah) or to governors of neighbouring areas.

These points do not of themselves prove that there were governors before Nehemiah. To disprove the arguments of Alt and McEvenue does not therefore automatically establish the contrary hypothesis. One might think that coins and seals would settle the question, but their dating to the time before Nehemiah is still not absolutely established (§3.2.3; §3.4.1). Yet when the balance of the arguments is considered, it seems more likely that there were some governors over Judah before Nehemiah. In view of the large gaps in our knowledge of the period, we cannot be dogmatic that the structure and status of Judah remained exactly the same for two centuries. It makes sense that the Persians appointed governors continually through this period, but we cannot say that there was never a period without a governor or without some other sort of temporary arrangement (M. Smith [1987: 196-97] himself allows that for a period of several decades there was a union of Judah and Samaria). But that Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, and probably several other individuals were governors of the province of Judah before Nehemiah seems the best explanation in light of the present data.

### **7.2.3. Governmental Structure of Judah**

**Bedford** (1991) ‘On Models and Texts’; (2001) *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*; **Blenkinsopp** (1991b) ‘Temple and Society in Achemenid Judah’; **Broughton** (1938) ‘Roman Asia Minor’; (1951) ‘New Evidence on Temple-Estates in Asia Minor’; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*; **S.L. Cook** (1995) *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*; **Dion** (1991) ‘The Civic-and-Temple Community of Persian Period Judaea’; **Grabbe** (1998d) Review of S.L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*; (2003c) ‘Introduction and Overview’; **Horsley** (1991) ‘Empire, Temple and Community’; **Kreissig** (1973) *Die sozialökonomische Situation in Juda zur Achämenidenzeit*; **Laperrousaz** (1982) ‘Le régime théocratique juif a-t-il commencé à l’époque perse?’; **Lindstrom** (1996) ‘Millennial Movements, Millenarianism’; **Rooke** (2000) *Zadok’s Heirs*; **Rose** (2000) *Zemah and Zerubbabel*; **Rostovtzeff** (Rostowzew) (1910) *Studien zur Geschichte des römischen Kolonates*; **Scharbert** (1982) ‘*Bēyt ’Āb* als soziologische Grösse im Alten Testament’; **Tollefson and Williamson** (1992) ‘Nehemiah as Cultural Revitalization’; **Trompf** (ed.) (1990) *Cargo Cults and Millenarian Movements*; **Turner** (1990) ‘Foreword’; **Wallace** (1956) ‘Revitalization Movements’; **Weinberg** (1972) ‘Demographische Notizen zur Geschichte’; (1973) ‘Das *Bēit ’Ābōt* im 6.-4. Jh. v. u. Z.’; (1974) ‘Die Agrarverhältnisse in der Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde’; (1986) ‘Die soziale Gruppe im Weltbild des Chronisten’; (1992) *The Citizen-Temple Community*; **Williamson** (1998) ‘Judah and the Jews’.

Judah was one more province in the Persian empire, and much about it can be understood by comparison with other provinces. Yet the Persian government seems to have allowed a variety of provincial and para-provincial forms of organization (e.g. the Phoenician cities evidently continued to be semi-autonomous rather than organized into a province [§7.3.2]). This section considers some of the models that have been proposed to understand either the organization or history of Yehud.

### 7.2.3.1. Thesis of a Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde

Very influential in the discussion for the past several decades has been the thesis of a *Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde* ('citizen temple community') as a part of the organization of Yehud (Weinberg 1992), drawing on the comparative model of a community centred on a temple which the citizens control. There were three types of these (Weinberg 1974 [= 1992: 103–4]): (1) Group A<sub>1</sub>, in which the temple was the owner of the land but contracted out part of it to be worked by members of the community and administered part of it itself; (2) Group A<sub>2</sub> in which the theoretical ownership was waived and all farming was carried out by members of the community; (3) Group B, in which the temple owned no land and carried on no commerce. Judah was the main example of Group B; indeed, it seems to have been the *only* example of Group B.

Cyrus issued an edict mandating the return and the building of the temple because his plans for the invasion of Egypt required a secure staging platform in Palestine (Weinberg 1977 [= 1992: 110–12]). The returning exiles were not numerous at first, the list of Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7 (totalling about 42,000) being interpreted as the cumulative number from the beginning of the Persian period to 458/457 BCE (Weinberg 1972: 52–53 [= 1992: 34–48]), or about 20 per cent (or 13–15 per cent in Weinberg 1992: 132) of the population of Judah. At that time, Judah was under the administration of Samaria. The returnees received help from the central government who ordered and financed the rebuilding of the temple. Figures like Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel were only unofficial leaders of the emerging community that became the basis for what followed in the mid-fifth century BCE. The Judean *Tempel-Bürger-Gemeinde* did not officially come into existence until 458/457 BCE with the edict of Artaxerxes. Only the returnees would have made up the community, the indigenous inhabitants (the descendants of those not taken captive in 587/586) being mostly excluded. At that time Judah was made into a separate province; however, despite his title Nehemiah was not the governor of the province but only the leader of the *Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde*.

After 458/457 BCE the numbers of the citizens increased radically, with new immigration and a natural increase in population from favourable socio-economic conditions (the citizens were tax exempt, for example), to about 150,000 (as indicated by the lists in Neh. 3 and 11.25–36). At this time, about 70 per cent (Weinberg 1972 [= 1992: 34–48]) or 50–60 per cent (Weinberg 1992: 132–33) of the population were members of the citizen community. The proportion of those who were temple personnel increased from only about 15 per cent to over 50 per cent (Weinberg 1992: 133). The actual concept of land possession centred on the בֵּית אֲבוֹת *bēt 'āvōt* ('extended] family', Weinberg 1973 [= 1992: 49–61]; Scharbert 1982). Most land was thus community owned by the בְּתֵי אֲבוֹת *bāttē 'āvōt* which kept it as an inalienable family inheritance rather than as private property for individuals (Weinberg 1974 [= 1992: 92–104]). Toward the end of Persian rule, the two administrative systems merged, and governorship of the province of Yehud was transferred to the Jerusalem high priest (Weinberg 1997 [= 1992: 123–26]).

Weinberg's thesis has many attractive aspects, not least the fact that it is such a comprehensive theoretical model explaining significant aspects of the society,

administration, and history of Yehud. Yet in recent years there have been a number of important critiques of the *Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde* hypothesis, most of them ultimately rejecting it (Blenkinsopp 1991b; Williamson 1998; Carter 1999: 294–307; Bedford 1991; 2001: 207–30). Some of the main criticisms are the following:

1. Weinberg's assumptions about the population of Yehud now appear to be grossly exaggerated. The most recent scientific studies of demography indicate no more than about 30,000 (§9.3.2), no more than about a tenth of Weinberg's figures.
2. The argument that Judah was under the administration of Samaria until the mid-fifth century has been severely undermined, and most scholars now accept that Judah was an autonomous province in the satrapy of Ebir-nari from the beginning of Persian rule (§7.2.2).
3. Weinberg's refusal to accept that *pehâ* in Haggai and Ezra–Nehemiah means governor of the province of Yehud cannot be maintained when the full evidence is considered (§7.2.2).
4. A good deal depends on the interpretation of a number of lists, in particular Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7, Nehemiah 3 and 11.25–36, for the areas and numbers settled by members of the *Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde*. There is not necessarily a consensus in interpreting these various lists (§4.1.3.4), but Weinberg's view that the boundaries of Yehud can be extracted from them seems unlikely (§7.2.1).
5. The statement that the *Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde* was tax exempt does not fit Persian practice (though a large number of scholars still seem to take Ezra 7.24 at face value); it is doubtful that the Persians granted tax exemption to any Judaeans, much less all the citizens of the community (§10.1.4).
6. Weinberg argues that the Jerusalem temple did not own land but 'does not realize how serious a challenge this is to his hypothesis' (Bedford 1991: 157). Of his two main categories of *Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde*, Judah is the only example of the second (i.e. neither owning land nor carrying on commerce), making it of necessity dependent on donations. But that would undermine its ability to control the society or the economy.

Having given a critique of Weinberg, J. Blenkinsopp (1991b: 44–53) proposes a modified version of the model. He also sets out the basic premise that the *golah* community was in control of the temple and society in general, excluding those with whom they had differences. This meant that many of those Jews descended from those who had remained in the land were excluded from the temple community while others participated only on the terms laid down by the returnees. This 'elite' had been recruited from the Babylonian Jewish community by the Persian government who wanted those of proven loyalty to control the province in a politically sensitive area near Egypt. The rebuilding of the temple was thus mandated by the Persian government (not just permitted) and also financed by it. The new immigrants continued to maintain the social organization that they had developed

in the diaspora community in Mesopotamia. This organization is attested for other minority ethnic communities in Babylonia, including an assembly organized by kinship group and composed of property owners and cult personnel. When the returnees settled in Palestine, they set up an assembly (*puḥru, qāhāl*) organized by ancestral houses and including property-owning citizens and temple personnel. Tribal elders governed them on the local level, though the Persian government had its own appointed representatives to oversee everything.

This thesis avoids most of the objections to Weinberg's reconstruction noted above (cf. the critiques in Bedford [1991] and Horsley [1991]). Nevertheless, there are some fundamental premises that are problematic:

1. I have argued vigorously against the idea that the Persian empire was in the business of promoting religion in the provinces (§10.1). It certainly responded to requests of native peoples on occasion, but there is no evidence that it attempted to establish or maintain or even encourage particular forms of religion outside its heartland.
2. Likewise, the Persian administrative structure was concerned with collecting taxes and revenue from the provinces, not dealing it out lavishly to finance temples and cults or exempting particular peoples or groups from taxation (§9.2). Most of the extant sources that seem to support special tax exemption are those written by Jews to claim special privileges for themselves (on the Gadatas inscription, see §5.6).
3. Blenkinsopp suggests that the Jerusalem temple may have owned land and engaged in commercial activity (1991b: 48-50). There is much we do not know about the economy or society of Yehud, but the support for this suggestion is rather thin (cf. Bedford 1991: 156-57; §9.3.3.6).
4. The question regarding to what extent the returnees dominated society is one that has been extensively debated recently. Many now argue that the clash between those who came back from exile and those who had remained in the land has been exaggerated or that it did not exist at all. This is a complex issue discussed below (§12.6).

#### **7.2.3.2. Models from Social Anthropology**

Several recent works have attempted to use sociological or anthropological models. These are not necessarily laid out as comprehensive theories like that of Weinberg, but they try to understand some of the dynamics of the society in Yehud at particular times. These include the study of K.D. Tollefson and H.G.M. Williamson (1992) on the reform of Nehemiah, the monograph of S.L. Cook (1995) whose interest is primarily in apocalyptic, and P.R. Bedford's (2001) investigation of the restoration at the beginning of the Achaemenid period. D. Janzen (2002) has recently used the model of the 'witch hunt' to understand the situation with the marriages to 'foreign wives' (§13.5).

In trying to explain what Nehemiah was doing, Tollefson and Williamson (1992) use the 'revitalization' model of A.F.C. Wallace (1956). They argue that the book of Nehemiah fits well this model: 'mazeway' (worldview) reformulation (Neh. 1.1-10); communication phase (1.11-2.20); organizational phase (3.1-32), adapta-

tion to the project (Neh. 3.33–7.4 [ET 4.1–7.4]); cultural transformation phase (7.5–10.39); routinization phase (11.1–13.31). Some of the main elements of this model parallel the final form of Nehemiah; however, this could be an editorial fit since the actual progress of Nehemiah's activities seem to have been less neat (a possibility which they recognize [1992: 61–66]). Nevertheless, Wallace's model looks superficially similar because he has described the general contents of most reform movements. That is, the reformers see a need for change, then communicate it; if their communication is successful, they have to organize reform, adapt to changing circumstances (or it will not succeed), reach a stage of major change, and finally a period of adjustment to the new (reformed) situation. Where the thesis is weakest lies in the acceptance of the reforms (cultural transformation phase). The authors of the article seem to have more faith in general support for all Nehemiah's reforms (e.g. 1992: 60) than is justified by the text (§13.3.7). Equally important, not every reform movement is a 'revitalization movement': when looked at as a whole, I do not believe Nehemiah's attempts at reform fit Wallace's model as such.

Both Cook and Bedford draw on 'millenarian movements' to explain the events in the early Persian period (some would use the term to include what Wallace calls 'revitalization movements' as well). Although I myself have argued that such movements can be helpful in some contexts, I do not believe that this fits very well the situation at the time of the temple rebuilding. Indeed, I have already critiqued Cook for his view that the 'Zadokite' authors of the Ezekiel 38–39, Zechariah 1–8, and Joel represent a millenarian movement (Grabbe 1998d). Cook has rightly pointed out that the likely authors of these writings were not an internal protest group against the temple or Jewish community establishment (*contra* P.D. Hanson [§11.7.2]) but a 'central-priestly group'. The question, then, is how this temple-centred group of priestly authors represents a millenarian movement? There are a variety of definitions of 'millenarism' among social anthropologists, which makes a precise definition difficult, but I do not think the post-exilic temple priesthood fits the usage found in most specialists (cf. Trompf 1990: 1–32; Turner 1990; Grabbe 2003c). Note the following scenario for a millenarian group:

Explanation of millenarianism begins with locating tension and disruption within a society. Famine, plague, price inflation, political oppression, colonial disruption of traditional lifeways or some other source of stress unsettles people's lives. Increasingly desperate, they collectively pursue supernatural salvation from their problems in promises of a New Age. Prophets surface with messages that reveal an impending millennium of transformed or revitalized human sociability on earth, and they prescribe what people must do in order to sweep away the present, debased political and economic orders. (Lindstrom 1996: 372)

Every group with radical views or with an eschatology is not millenarian nor are those who happen to disagree with the government. As Turner (1990: xiii) notes,

Suffice it to say that when any expectation of a new future becomes 'millennial', when any problems or tensions are elevated to the status of 'crises' so that all cults become 'crisis cults', and when any strongly-held secular convictions become 'religions', then the distinctions necessary to thought become eroded, and words lose meaning.

To be a millenarian movement, the early community in Yehud would have needed to develop some sort of revolutionary movement (not necessarily a violent one) against their Persian overlords. It is possible (as already argued some time ago [§12.5.2; §12.5.3]) that a genuine revolutionary movement wanted to put Zerubbabel on the throne. It is even conceivable that active attempts were made, and Zerubbabel was removed by the Persians as a threat, though both Cook and Bedford actually deny this. (As a result of an exchange of views [Grabbe 2003c: 19–21], Cook has clarified his views that it is not necessarily the case that all groups writing apocalypses are part of a millenarian movement, though we both hold that millenarian movements form a useful model to explain or to serve as a basis for investigating many apocalyptic writings.) It might be correct, as Bedford suggests, that Haggai and Zechariah were ‘millenarian prophets’ (2001: 264–70), but all the community did was build a temple. This does not make it a millenarian movement, nor does anything else about its activities otherwise suggest such a movement to me, whatever Haggai and Zechariah may have envisaged.

#### **7.2.3.3. Other Temple-State Models**

There is no doubt that in Yehud we find some of the characteristics of a temple state, primarily in the centrality of the Jerusalem temple to the life of the community and in the prominent place of the high priest. A number of examples of temple states are known from the ancient Near East (Rostovtzeff 1910: 269–78; Broughton 1938: 641–46; 1951). J. Blenkinsopp (1991b: 26–33) gives a useful survey of temples in the ancient Near East, though most of these are not temple states. A number of these have characteristics that might be helpful in understanding Yehud, but one must note that being a temple owning land and being a part of the economy is not necessarily the same as being a temple state. Our knowledge of actual temple states is mainly documented from the Greek period, though they were evidently only continuing a constitution already in operation from the Persian period in most cases.

One of the main features of temple states was the importance of the chief priest in the administrative structure. Judah had a governor appointed by the Persians; however, at the beginning of Persian rule, Judah could be said to be under a ‘diarchy’ of Persian governor and high priest. Some have objected to this concept (Rose 2000: 251; Rooke 2000: 128–35), arguing that the governor was in charge of the province. In the case of Zerubbabel, though, he is frequently mentioned in conjunction with Joshua the high priest (Hag. 1.1, 12, 14; 2.2, 4; cf. Ezra 3–5), as if they worked closely in harmony.

If so, the term ‘diarchic government’ would not be an inappropriate designation at this time. The question is: To what extent did the diarchic rule persist after this time? Although it has been proposed that all the governors of Judah appointed by the Achaemenid court were Jewish (§13.7), this is not certain. Several of the ones known were Jewish (§7.2.4), but we cannot be certain of all those recorded, much less those for whom nothing has survived. We also have a good indication that some governors (e.g. Nehemiah) did not feel it necessary to be on good terms with the high priest (§13.4). It may be, therefore, that diarchy was the basic administra-

tion during part or even much of two centuries of Persian rule; however, in the absence of solid evidence after the time of Joshua and Zerubbabel, this can be no more than speculation. On the question of whether the high priest was himself sometimes appointed governor, see next section (§7.2.4).

#### **7.2.4. Governors of Yehud**

**Avigad** (1976) *Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive*; **Bar-Kochva** (1996) *Pseudo-Hecataeus, On the Jews*; **Lemaire** (1990) ‘Populations et territoires de Palestine à l’époque perse’; (1994b) ‘Histoire et administration de la Palestine à l’époque perse’; (2002b) ‘Das Achämenidische Juda und seine Nachbarn im Lichte der Epigraphie’; **Meshorer** (1982) *Ancient Jewish Coinage*, I; **E.M. Meyers** (1985) ‘The Shelomith Seal and the Judean Restoration’; **Mildenberg** (1988) ‘Yehûd Münzen’; **Rappaport** (1981) ‘The First Judean Coinage’; **E. Stern** (1982) *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible*.

The list of governors of Yehud is by no means complete, but we have the names of a number of them in diverse sources, both literary and epigraphic. The epigraphic sources might reasonably be considered the more reliable, though some of the seal impressions (e.g. those published in Avigad 1976) were obtained on the antiquities market rather than from a proper archaeology context (§3.2.3). The sources of information are listed in each case. This list is given in what is felt to be roughly chronological order, but there is inevitably a good deal of uncertainty:

Sheshbazzar (Ezra 5.14; cf. 1.8–11): c. 530s BCE  
 Zerubbabel (Hag. 1.1, 14; 2.2, 21): c. 520 BCE  
 Nehemiah (Neh. 1–7): c. 445–432 BCE  
 Bagohi (*TAD* A4.7.1//A4.8.1; A4.9.1 = (*AP* 30.1//31.1; 32.1): late fifth century  
 Hezekiah (coins): c. 350–330

The seal impressions with the names of individuals labelled as ‘governor’ are not clearly dated, and some of the impressions were not found in an archaeological context. They may be pre-Nehemiah or they may be post-Nehemiah; at this point their dating is very uncertain. It is important to make clear these uncertainties:

Jehoezer (*yhw’zr*: seals from Ramat Rahel)  
 Ahzai (*’hzy*: seals from Ramat Rahel)  
 Elnathan (*’lntn*: Avigad 1976)

The agreement that the seal impressions with Aramaic script belong to the Persian period has not prevented wide differences of dating within this two-century span. Avigad put them in the early part of the Persian rule, the late sixth and early fifth century (1976: 32). This differs from the majority of scholars who agree on a century later, the late fifth/early fourth century (E. Stern 1982: 206; *ALB II*: 550), though Avigad’s early dating has also been accepted (Meyers 1985: 33\*–34\*). Lemaire (2002b: 215) dates the Shelomith seal and thus the governorship of Elnathan to about 500 BCE.

Some have suggested that some additional names be added to the list of governors: Hanana, Uriaw/Urio (on Yehud seal impressions), and Jaddua (on a coin

[3.4.1 below]). It is indeed possible that these individuals were governors, but nothing so labels them (Jaddua has more often been labelled a high priest). Their names on seals or coins probably indicates that they held some sort of public office, but to say that the office was ‘governor’ is simply guessing.

An indication of a governor at the end of the Persian period is the coin with the name ‘the governor Hezekiah’ (*hphh yhzqyh* [Meshorer 1982, I: 33; Mildenberg 1988: 724-25]). Some have identified this individual with a high priest Ezekias in a quotation ascribed to Hecataeus of Abdera. It states that the high priest Ezekias (Hezekiah) came to Egypt under Ptolemy, bringing many Jews with him, and settled there (*Apion* 1.22 §§187-89). This same person has often been identified with ‘Hezekiah the governor’ on this coin. The dating is unusual but not impossible, and the high priest may well have also been the Persian governor of Judah at times. However, since this account of Ezekias is a part of Pseudo-Hecataeus, may well date from a rather later date, and seems to be a piece of Jewish propaganda about the origin of the Jews in Egypt, Bar-Kochva (1996) is opposed to the equation of the two. Rappaport (1981) also argues against this identification, noting that it is not certain that Ezekias was high priest (*archiereus* could also mean just a ‘chief priest’) and that the name was not necessarily uncommon (cf. also Meshorer 1982, I: 33). Thus, a priest Hezekiah who was also a governor in the late Persian period is possible but also rather uncertain.

It has also been suggested that we have other names of governors in the list of apparent leaders that heads the lists in Ezra 2.2//Neh. 7.7: Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah/Azariah, Reeliah/Raamiah, Nahamani (Neh. 7.7 only), Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar/Mispereth, Bigvai, Rehum/Nehum, Baanah. It has to be admitted that there is a remarkable coincidence between a number of these names and individuals important elsewhere in literature of this period (even despite the differences between Ezra 2 and Neh. 7). Seraiah is the father of Ezra (7.1), though the parallel form in Neh. 7.7, Azariah (‘*azaryâ*), is often seen as a variant of Ezra (‘*ezrâ*’). Mordecai is the name of Esther’s uncle and an important figure in the book of Esther. Bigvai is mentioned a few verses later (2.14) as the name of a clan; it is also apparently a variant of the name Bagohi, known from the Elephantine papyri as a governor of Yehud (but not mentioned in the Bible). Bilshan is the name of an individual, possibly an official, who is said to write to Artaxerxes about Jerusalem (Ezra 4.7); it is also a form of *Bēlšunu* who is now known to have been a satrap of Ebir-nari in the late fifth century (Stolper 1987). The name Rehum occurs in several contexts. A person by this name is a Persian official in the time of Artaxerxes (Ezra 4.8-9, 17, 23). Also, one of the Jewish ‘heads of the people’ in Neh. 10.26 has the name Rehum, and a Levite with this name is mentioned among those repairing the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 3.17). The name Baanah is among the Jewish ‘heads of the people’ in Neh. 10.28, and may be a variant of the father’s name of one those repairing the city wall (Neh. 3.4). Thus, this list may contain some individuals who were important in the administration of Yehud over the Persian period, but it also seems apparent that not all these individuals were governor (e.g. Jeshua who was probably the high priest alongside Zerubbabel). It would be going beyond the evidence to use this list to add to our rather meagre list of governors.

### **7.2.5. Other Provincial Structures and Officials**

**Albertz** (2003) ‘The Thwarted Restoration’; **Blenkinsopp** (1991b) ‘Temple and Society in Achemenid Judah’; **Greenfield** (1990) ‘The Aramaic Legal Texts of the Achaemenian Period’; **Janzen** (2000) ‘The “Mission of Ezra”’; **Japhet** (1982) ‘Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel’; (1983a) ‘Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel’; **Petit** (1988) ‘L’évolution sémantique des termes hébreux’; **Porten** (1968) *Archives from Elephantine*.

There are indications in the primary and secondary sources that a number of other officials were employed in the provincial government (cf. Albertz 2003: 11–13). Probably the most important was the ‘prefect’ (**סָגָן** *s'gan*). The name is taken from Akkadian *sagānu* (from *šaknu[m]*) which often refers to a high governmental office. The indication of the Wadi Daliyeh papyri is that in Samaria at least the office of prefect was next after the governor. He is often mentioned alongside the governor as witness to a document (*WDSP* 7.17; 8.12; 10.10; restored in 1.11; 2.11; 5.14; 6.12; 9.15; 15.17). In Ezra–Nehemiah the word is always in the plural and often listed along with ‘nobles’ or other officials: the officers and prefects have taken the lead in forbidden marriage (Ezra 9.2); the priests, nobles, prefects, and the rest did not know of Nehemiah’s night reconnaissance ride (Neh. 2.16); Nehemiah exhorts the nobles, prefects, and the rest of people about the building of the wall (4.8, 13) and censures the nobles and prefects over loans to their ‘brothers’ (5.7); 150 Jews and prefects (plus foreigners) eat at Nehemiah’s table each day (5.17); Nehemiah assembles nobles, prefects, and people to register them by families (7.15); half of the prefects are with Nehemiah at the dedication of the wall (12.40); Nehemiah censures the prefects because the house of God had been neglected (13.11).

The prefect is mentioned in a number of the Elephantine papyri, but mostly in the stereotyped legal phrase about whether one of the parties might in the future complain before ‘prefect, lord, or judge’ (**סָגָן וְמַרְאֵב וְשֻׁפֶט** *sgn wmr' wdyn* [TAD B2.3.13; B3.1.13, 18; B3.10.19; B3.11.13; B3.12.28; B4.6.14; B5.4.2, 5 = AP 8.13; 10.13, 18; BM 9.19; 10.13; 12.28; AP 35.14; 47.2, 5]). The word is always in the singular in these passages, but the context does not rule out the existence of more than one prefect (‘judge’ and ‘lord’ are also in the singular, but more than one such individual occurs in the texts). Although the context does not completely rule out the possibility that a prefect might also be a lord or judge, prefect and judge seem to be separate offices. ‘Lord’ is a more generic title but tends to be used for high officials, such as Arsames the governor of Egypt or Bagohi the governor of Judah, but also for the king and even for the God of heaven.

A somewhat problematic group is that of the ‘elders’ (Hebrew **זְקִנָּים**; Aramaic **שָׂבָעָיָה** *sāvayyā* [Ezra 5.5, 9; 6.7, 8, 14; 10.8, 14]). Because the writer of Ezra is attempting to imitate the situation in pre-state Israel (cf. Albertz 2003: 13), it would have been natural to give a prominent place to the elders in a fictional narrative. On the other hand, at least one passage associates them with the towns, where the old institution of the village elders may have survived (Ezra 8.14). The term may also have been used for the heads of the ‘fathers’ houses’ (§ 7.2.3.1).

Therefore, the ‘elders’ may have had a place in Yehud society, though it was unlikely to have been at provincial level (Ezra 6.7–8). Elders seem to have been elevated in importance in the book of Ezra for ideological reasons (cf. Japhet 1982, 1983). If such a thing as an ‘assembly’ existed, they might have had something to do with it.

At several points in Ezra–Nehemiah an assembly (*קָהֳל qahal*) of the people is called and takes some important decisions (Ezra 10; Neh. 5; 8; 9–10). Does this mean that the ‘assembly’ was a formal decision-making body and a part of the governmental structure of the society? Such is argued by D. Janzen (2000: 638–43) who sees Ezra in Ezra 9–10 as acting as head of the assembly, based on the analogy of the assembly (*pūhru*) and its head (*šatammu*) in some Babylonian temples. To me, this scenario is immediately contradicted by the image of Ezra in Ezra 9–10: he is hardly pictured as the leader of an assembly; rather the people who gather make some suggestions and generally jivvy him up when he seems to be bereft of any idea of what to do in the situation. Janzen’s suggestion also assumes that Yehud functioned as a temple state. Although it had some characteristics in common with temple states (§7.2.3.3), it was not organized as one. The analogy does not seem particularly applicable.

More important, from the surviving literature there is no evidence of such a formal body or function. No example of an ‘assembly’ being ‘called’ by the people occurs in the literature. The examples of public assemblies in Ezra–Nehemiah seem to be *ad hoc* occurrences or to be called together by an official (governor, official, priest) who also presides. The one in Nehemiah 9–10 is curious in that it is not clear who calls it; on the other hand, it seems to be led by Levites, while at the head of those signing the pledge is Nehemiah the governor (10.2). There is the further complication that all except Nehemiah 5 may be literary creations rather than the record of an actual assembly, but whatever their origin they do not give us cause to believe that the assembly was a formal body of government.

Scribes also had an important place in the administration; for them see the next section.

### 7.2.6. Scribes, Language, and Literacy

**Avigad** (1976) *Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive*; **Blenkinsopp** (1995) *Sage, Priest, Prophet*; **Bowman and Woolf** (eds.) (1994) *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*; **Crenshaw** (1998) *Education in Ancient Israel*; **Gershevitch** (1979) ‘The Alloglottography of Old Persian’; **Grabbe** (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; **W.V. Harris** (1989) *Ancient Literacy*; **Hezser** (2001) *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*; **Lipiński** (1990) ‘Géographie linguistique de la Transeuphratène’; **Niditch** (1996) *Oral World and Written Word*; **Schams** (1998) *Jewish Scribes in the Second-Temple Period*; **Street** (1984) *Literacy in Theory and Practice*; **Young** (1998) ‘Israelite Literacy’.

The Persian empire was multilingual, not just in the reality of its large numbers of peoples and ethnic groups, each with its own language. The bureaucratic system also operated in multilingual mode (HPE: 507–10). This may seem surprising since

it is often assumed that Aramaic was the ‘official’ language of the Persian chancellery. In fact, we have official documents in a variety of languages. Although Old Persian was symbolic of Persian rule, it seems to have occupied only a small niche, that of certain royal decrees and official promulgations. The suggestion that only a few scribes ever read Old Persian may well be correct (Gershevitch 1979: 116–17). Elamite, an ancient language of the Persian heartland, was very important for the core of the empire, with a large number of texts issued in that language (§5.3). In the area of Babylonia cuneiform Akkadian (in the form of Neo-Babylonian) continued to be used for texts, as it had for millennia. Many examples of Persian administrative documents in Demotic and other forms of Egyptian have been found in Egypt. Thus, although Aramaic was perhaps the most widely used language, as well as apparently being widely spoken on a vernacular basis, it was not the only one used and does not deserve the title of official language.

Scribes were the backbone of Persian administration, but this was nothing new. The Near Eastern empires from ancient Sumer on depended on scribes to do the actual work of governing apart from those duties performed by the military (cf. Grabbe 1995: 163–68). The Hebrew Bible assumes scribes were used in the administration of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah: David’s scribes (2 Sam. 8.17; 20.25; 1 Chron. 18.16; 24.6); Solomon’s scribe (1 Kgs 4.3); a royal scribe in the time of Jehoash (2 Kgs 12.11; 2 Chron. 24.11); Shebna the scribe (2 Kgs 18.18, 37; 19.2); Shaphan the scribe (2 Kgs 22.3, 8–10, 12; 2 Chron. 34.15, 18, 20); the scribe of the army commander (2 Kgs 25.19; Jer. 52.25). Jeremiah has a number of references to scribes: the chamber of Gemariah son of Shaphan the scribe in the temple (36.10); the chamber of the scribe in the king’s palace (36.12); Elishama the scribe (36.12, 20, 21); Baruch the scribe plays a prominent role (36.26, 32); Jeremiah was imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the scribe (37.15, 20).

In general, scribes were an important part of the intellectual scene during the Second Temple period (Schams 1998; Grabbe 1995: 152–76). A number of our sources about scribes date from after the Persian period but may still help us to understand the earlier situation. Temple scribes are referred to in the decree of Antiochus III about 200 BCE (*Ant.* 12.3.3 §§142). Perhaps the most famous passage on the scribe is that of Ben Sira (38.24–39.11) who makes the scribe responsible for knowledge and study of God’s law. Ben Sira’s close association with the temple should be kept in mind, however (some have argued that he was himself a priest). It is not clear that Ben Sira was suggesting that everyone with scribal training was to be an expert in the law.

With regard to the Persian period specifically, there is evidence that the Levites were especially drawn on for the scribal skills necessary to run the nation as well as the temple (cf. Grabbe 1995: 160–61; J.J. Schwartz 1992: 89–101). The temple personnel were the ones who had the education and leisure for intellectual pursuits and thus constituted the bulk of the educated and those who read, wrote, and commented on religious literature. They were also the primary teachers in religious matters. Thus, not only the cult but also a large portion of the religious activity of other sorts, including teaching and development of the tradition, took place in the temple context. Levites as scribes are mentioned in a number of passages of Chron-

icles that have no parallel in Kings and are thus more likely to provide information on the Persian period: clans of scribes were said to live at Jabez (1 Chron. 2.55); Shemaiah b. Nathanel the Levite was a scribe (1 Chron. 24.6); the clans of the Izharites and Hebronites acted as scribal administrators (1 Chron. 26.29-32); Jeiel the scribe mustered the army under Uzziah (2 Chron. 26.11); some of the Levites were scribes, officials, and gatekeepers (2 Chron. 34.13). Zadok the scribe is appointed to a panel by Nehemiah (Neh. 13.13); his name might suggest he is a priest, but other members of the panel are identified as a priest and Levite while he is said only to be a scribe. Apart from these biblical passages we have few references to scribes in Yehud in primary sources. Ten seal impressions from a horde sold on the antiquities market have the name ‘to Jeremai the scribe’ לירמי הscrפֶר lyrmy hspr [Avigad 1976: 7-8].

Otherwise, our information comes from Elephantine. A number of the documents name the scribe who copied it (e.g. *TAD* A6.2.28; A6.8.4; A6.10.10; A6.11.6; A6.12.3; A6.13.5 = *AP* 26.28; *AD* 4.4; 7.10; 8.6; 9.3; 10.5). A scribe named Anani is ‘chancellor’ בבָּנְעֵל משָׁעַם *b'l t'm*, apparently the person who drew up or gave the order for the document (*TAD* A6.2.23 = *AP* 26.23). ‘Scribes of the province’ are named alongside judges and other officials in a letter to Arsames the governor of Egypt (*TAD* A6.1.1, 6 = *AP* 17.1, 6); we also have references to ‘scribes of the treasury’ ספָּרִי אוֹצָרָא *spr' wṣr'* [*TAD* 4.3.13//4.4.12, 14 = *AP* 3.13//2.12, 14]. An individual, whose salary had not been paid and complained to the ‘officials’ פחֻווֹתָא *phwt'*, was told to complain to the scribes (*TAD* A3.3.5 = *BM* 4.5). Someone whose name has been lost is labelled a scribe in the list of names in a treasury list (*TAD* C3.19.32 = *AP* 73.32). In *The Words of Ahiqar* the sage Ahiqar is described as ‘a wise and rapid/skilful scribe’ ספָּרִים וּמְהִירָה *spr' hkym wmhyr* [*TAD* C1.1.1; cf. line 35]) and as ‘the wise scribe and master of good counsel’ ספָּרָא חֲכִימָא וּבָנְעֵל עַמְתָּא *spr' hkym' wb'l 'tt' tbt'* [*TAD* C1.1.42; cf. lines 12, 18]).

Even though we have little direct evidence of the situation in Yehud, the role and place of scribes in the province can be inferred with reasonable confidence. The main employers of scribes would have been the provincial administration and the temple, and these scribes were probably priests or Levites in many cases (Grabbe 1995: 152-71). Scribes would have worked at various levels, however, all the way from high up in the administration where they advised and supported the governor and the main offices of the provincial administration, to posts in the treasury where records of payments and even lists of taxpayers were kept, to storage warehouses for taxes and tithes where they kept inventory of incoming produce and dispersals for approved purposes. The scribes in the temple would have had similar record-keeping duties, but in addition they would have had the responsibility of copying any sacred writings, manuals, instruction books, lists of regulations, priestly genealogies, and the like relating to the temple administration. Some scribes were quite powerful with a high office whereas others had rather mundane duties. Nevertheless, the office of scribe—whether high or low—required a trained individual and was preferable to back breaking labour for uncertain yields in the fields, vineyards, and orchards.

Another function carried out by some scribes—probably only a very few—was that of literary activity. The legendary scribe Ahiqar was said to be an advisor to the king of Assyria and the composer of wise sayings. Ezra was supposed to have the task of establishing a law, with the requirements of interpretation and implementation. In the Hellenistic period, Ben Sira's ideal scribe was busy with studying and digging out the riches of the written Torah. These are all admittedly idealizations, but they hint at the duties borne by some few individuals (most likely temple scribes who were priests or Levites), at this time: working with and developing religious literature that became viewed as 'scripture' no later than the end of the Persian period (§14.3).

The extent of literacy among the population has been much debated, but in order to understand ancient Judaism fully we must keep in mind that it was mainly an oral society (W.V. Harris 1989; Niditch 1996). Most people in the ancient world were not literate, even in cultures with an alphabetic script, and we have no indication that the Jews were any different from their Near Eastern neighbours (Young 1998). Ability to write one's name or decipher a seal inscription implies a different concept of literacy than the capacity to read, understand, and write long documents (cf. Streeter 1984; Niditch 1996: 39–45). If Jewish literacy at the turn of the era was no more than about 3–5 per cent (cf. Hezser 2001: 496), it is hardly likely to have been higher in the Persian period, with a largely rural population and mediocre economy. Even if there had been widespread functional literacy, there was very little written material available to most people.

Finally, the question of schools has also been much debated (Grabbe 1995: 171–74; Crenshaw 1998). There are two issues: (1) Did schools exist to teach scribes? (2) Did schools exist for general public education? The answer to the first question is: possibly, but the case is not proved. The answer to the second is definitely negative. Although scribes were trained in schools in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, the scribal needs for a small entity such as Judah could probably be met by a form of apprenticeship. If there were schools for others than scribes, they would have been for the wealthy and aristocratic, though these could probably afford to hire tutors.

#### ***7.2.7. Conclusions with Regard to the Province of Yehud***

Judah's formal administration has to be seen in its context in the Persian empire: it was a not-wealthy province in a rather out-of-the-way part of the empire. The proposal that Judah was administered as a sub-unit of Samaria during the early part of the Persian period looks unlikely from all that is now known. Like most provinces Yehud's main administrator was a Persian-appointed governor who was responsible for keeping order and seeing that the tribute was paid. The governor was probably appointed from the local community much of the time, but we cannot be sure that the governor was always Jewish. In any case, he had little discretion over his main duties which especially included making sure the specified amount of tribute was paid. The governor was assisted by 'prefects' and other officers and a body of scribes. It seems unlikely that there was a formal body known as the

'assembly', though we have some examples of some popular assemblies called on an *ad hoc* basis.

Although the precise borders of the province cannot be delineated from present data, we have a reasonable idea of approximately where they were. Yehud included some of the old territory of Benjamin, with the northern border somewhere around Bethel. The eastern border extended to the Jordan and the Dead Sea, apparently including Jericho and En-gedi. Most of the Shephelah was excluded on the west, with Gezer Azekah, and Lachish all outside the province. The southern border took in Beth-zur and might have included Hebron (though that site was abandoned through the Persian period in any case). We have some indications of a division into districts and even sub-districts, but the precise configuration of these is still a matter of speculation.

Various proposals have been made about models for understanding the administrative structure of Judah. The main one is J. Weinberg's *Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde* or 'citizen temple community', but there are significant objections to this model, especially in the light of some recent conclusions from archaeology. Although Judah had some of the characteristics of a temple state (e.g. the high priest seems to have exercised considerable authority at certain times), those theories based on the temple or temple-state model do not fit the data for the most part. Some anthropological models may help to understand some aspects of the history of Yehud, but several examined do not stand up well when examined against the actual textual and other sources. Since most people were engaged in subsistence agriculture, literacy in Judah was unlikely to have been higher than other areas of the Persian empire, probably no more than 5 per cent at most who could read even simple texts, much less extended narratives. This is not surprising since little textual material would have been available to the vast majority of the population.

### 7.3. The Neighbours of Yehud

#### 7.3.1. Samaria

Cross (1998b) 'A Reconstruction of the Judaean Restoration'; Eshel (1999) 'The Rulers of Samaria during the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BCE'; Gerson (2001) 'Fractional Coins of Judea and Samaria in the Fourth Century BCE'; Grabbe (1987a) 'Josephus and the Reconstruction of the Judaean Restoration'; (forthcoming d) 'Pineholes or Pinheads in the *Camera Obscura*?'; Gropp (2000) 'Sanballat'; Meshorer and Qedar (1999) *Samarian Coinage*; D.R. Schwartz (1990) 'On Some Papyri and Josephus' Sources'; WDSP; Zertal (1990) 'The Pahwah of Samaria (Northern Israel) during the Persian Period'.

This section is a somewhat shortened version of a detailed treatment of Samaria and what we know of it in the Persian period (Grabbe forthcoming d). Our knowledge about Samaria is rather skimpy, especially considering that a good deal was known about it when it was a kingdom some centuries before. Extremely valuable are the results of recent archaeological surveys (§2.3.2), including seals (§3.2.1) and coins (§3.4.2).

The geographical area of Samaria was generally better favoured by agricultural resources than Judah. The northern and western parts of the province seem to have been densely populated, with good links to Phoenicia and the coastal regions. Settlements were mainly small, with Samaria and Shechem as the only cities so far yielding evidence of Persian settlement. After a low point in the seventh century, the number of sites in northern Samaria greatly increased, exceeding even the high in the Iron II (though dropping again in the Hellenistic period). In southern Samaria (the old area of Ephraim), on the other hand, the number of settled sites dropped to less than half. The settled area was concentrated in two main sites, one around Samaria and the other focused on the Dothan Valley, but with a generally dense population in the region in between. Surprisingly, the Shechem area seems to have been lightly settled. About 70 per cent of the sites are in the more mountainous regions and only a minority in the valleys, but this is probably to be explained by a major shift to wine and oil production which tended to be grown on terraced hillsides. There also seems to have been a significant shift of population westward away from the eastern valleys in both the southern and the northern regions of Samaria.

Samaria was a Persian province within the larger satrapy of Ebir-nari. Although the precise administrative structure is nowhere described, we have the names of some governors and other officials. Governors are named as witnesses in some of the documents among the Samarian papyri (§3.2.1): we appear to have ‘before [H]ananiah governor of Samaria’ (*WDSP* 7.17; also perhaps in *WDSP* 9.14); the name, however, may be ‘[A]naniah’. Another apparent reference to the governor is possibly to someone named ‘Joshua’, though only one or two letters of the name are preserved in the photograph: ‘[before Josh]ua son of Sanballat and Hanan the prefect’ (*WDSP* 11r.13). If this reading is correct, it may be the same as the reading on a seal impression (*WD* 23).

Delaiah and Shelamaiah are identified as ‘sons of Sanballat governor of Samaria’ in the Elephantine papyri (*TAD* A4.7.29//A4.8.27-28 = *AP* 30.29//31.27-28). Neither is certainly named as governor, though Delaiah acts alongside the governor of Judah in another document (*TAD* A4.9.1-2 = *AP* 32.1-2), raising the possibility that he was governor of Samaria at that time. On Samarian coins *dl* may be an abbreviation of ‘Delaiah’, and *šl* an abbreviation for ‘Shelamaiah’, though the term ‘governor’ is not used. A further governor may be named on a seal impression: ‘[to Is]aiah son of [San]ballat, governor of Samaria’ (*WD* 22). This gives us the following possible list of Samarian governors:

- Sanballat ‘the Horonite’ (Nehemiah)
- Delaiah (?) (Elephantine; coins?)
- Shelemaiah (?) (Elephantine; coins?)
- Sanballat, different from the above (seals, coins)
- Isaiah(?) (seal)
- Joshua(??) (Samarian papyri; seal?)
- Hananiah or ‘Ananiah (Samarian papyri)

There are a lot of uncertainties even with so short a list. Not all are certainly governor and some of the names are no more than intelligent guesses. In addition to governors, we also have some names of the high officials known as ‘prefects’. Apart from Hanan (noted above), another is ‘Isiyaton the prefect’ (*WDSP* 8.12), and possibly a third: ‘Aqabiah [the prefect]’ (*WDSP* 5.14).

Despite the difficulties, some have wanted to add even further names to the list, including a ‘Sanballat III’. F.M. Cross (1998b) attempted to reconstruct a full list of governors of Samaria (called ‘Sanballatids’ by him). Although any attempt to make sense of the data is welcome, and Cross’s list has been widely quoted with approval, a number of weaknesses have been pointed out for this reconstruction (Grabbe 1987a; D.R. Schwartz 1990; Eshel 1999; Groppe 2000). One significant weakness is that it is built on two further hypotheses, that of papponymy (that names are repeated every other generation) and that the governorship was always in the Sanballat family. A second major weakness is the tendency to conflate data from a variety of sources without sufficient critical analysis of the individual sources in their own right. For example, Cross’s ‘Sanballat III’ depends entirely on Josephus, with all the problems that this entails (Grabbe 1987a). Josephus clearly knew little about the Persian period, filling it mainly with the texts of 1 Esdras and the Greek Esther; however, because he knew the correct sequence of at least some of the Persian kings, he attempted to create a more ‘scientific’ narrative by arranging it around this kinglist. It is true that he also has some other material, but we do not know his source(s) nor to what extent he reproduces his source(s) and to what extent he has adapted and reworked his source(s) to create his own narrative.

According to Josephus (*Ant.* 11.7.2–8.6 §§302–45), at the end of the Persian period the high priest Jaddua had a brother named Manasseh who married Nikaso the daughter of Sanballat. The Jerusalem elders gave him an ultimatum, to either divorce his wife or give up his priestly duties, but his father-in-law Sanballat offered to build a temple on Gerizim and make him its high priest. Manasseh accepted this offer, and many Jews who had married foreign wives deserted to him and settled in Samaria. Shortly after this, Alexander invaded. The Jerusalem high priest Jaddua remained loyal to Darius, but Sanballat took soldiers and joined Alexander in his siege of Tyre. Sanballat obtained Alexander’s permission and proceeded to build the temple he had promised to Manasseh; however, he died shortly afterward. When Alexander had finished taking Gaza, he marched in anger to Jerusalem to punish the Jews for remaining loyal to Darius. On the way, though, he had a dream and, when he reached Jerusalem, instead of punishing the high priest he dismounted and prostrated himself and honoured the high priest and the Jewish god.

It seems clear that Josephus’s story of Manasseh and Nikaso is a version of the story found in Neh. 13.28, except that it has been moved a century later. Since Josephus’s story of Manasseh and Nikaso looks like a development of this verse, Neh. 13.28 is more likely to represent or at least be closer to the original than would be Josephus’s version (the story of Joiada’s son being the son-in-law of Sanballat might even come from the Nehemiah Memorial [§4.1.3.3]). Jaddua the high priest of the story has a name in Greek that differs slightly from the Joiada

of Neh. 13.28, though this could be an inter-Greek development. Even though Samaritans are among those opposing Nehemiah in his building of the wall, Josephus does not mention a Sanballat in the time of Nehemiah. Did his Sanballat at the time of Alexander come from a source placing Sanballat in the Alexander context, or has Josephus himself put the two together in his own literary creation? An important episode of Josephus's account is the encounter of the Jerusalem high priest and Alexander, yet this is patently a legend with little foundation in reality, as most modern scholars recognize (Grabbe 1987a; *JCH*: 181–82).

To support Josephus, some have pointed to other data. Among the Samarian coins are several with the letters *sn*, which seems to be an abbreviation of the name *Sanballat*, especially since one coin has the name written out almost in full (Meshorer and Qedar 1999: 27, 93). Meshorer and Qedar identified this as 'Sanballat III' (1999: 27; cf. Gerson 2001: 18); however, as Eshel has noted, the coins fit better with the 'Sanballat II' attested in the primary sources (1999: 10). As for the governor Hananiah or the individual on the seal impression who may be Joshua and who may have been governor, we have no evidence that they were members of the Sanballat family. The assertion that the government of Samaria was kept in the Sanballat family throughout the Persian period is simply conjecture and nothing more. As for the hypothesis of papponymy, the names of Samarian governors now known do not support such a theory (see the list above). Finally, there seems to be evidence of a Persian-period Samarian temple on Mt Gerizim (§2.2.1.2), but contrary to some claims this seems to be dated to the late fifth or early fourth century. If this is correct, it actually undermines Josephus's story rather than supporting it.

Thus, Josephus's account contains a reflex of Neh. 13.28 but dated a century later, an incredible Jewish legend of Alexander visiting Jerusalem and bowing to the high priest, and the misdating of a Samarian temple by a century. It seems to be a very dubious procedure to accept that Josephus is completely confused here—throwing together all sorts of material of varying qualities—yet still claim that he nevertheless had reliable knowledge about a third Sanballat. It hardly needs to be pointed out that Josephus might possibly have had real knowledge of a Sanballat in the time of Alexander; however, the point is that his account is too confused in the present state of study to allow such an individual to be added to the reconstruction.

With regard to other aspects of life in Samaria, the seals, seal impressions, and coins are important for indicating the general cultural influences on Samaria. They show both Persian and Greek influence, though the Greek influence appears to have been mediated primarily through Phoenicia. Pre-Alexander Greek influence on the Persians generally but on the eastern Mediterranean coast particularly is now well documented. The images from classical Greek mythology and nudity seem to have caused no problems to the individuals who used the seals and the coins.

The Samarian papyri inform us on a number of issues. The use of patronymics in the slave sale documents suggest that many of them were freeborn individuals who had been enslaved, perhaps for debts. There is no indication, however, that the enslavement was temporary, for they are sold 'in perpetuity'. The majority of names are Yahwistic, indicating that Yhwh was the main deity. The legal formulary of these documents shows a strong affinity with the Neo-Babylonian tradition

(Gropp 2001: 8-32). This contrasts with that well documented from the Jewish legal papyri in Egypt where the legal tradition is much closer to the Neo-Assyrian. On the other hand, the later Jewish papyri from the first and second centuries CE (from Murabba‘at and Nahal Hever) seem to be in the same tradition as the Wadi Daliyah papyri. Thus, the legal tradition reflected in the Samaria papyri appears likely to be one indigenous to the region, including Yehud, and not confined to Samaria.

On the question of whether Judah was originally administered from Samaria in the Persian period, see above (§7.2.2).

### 7.3.2. Phoenicia and the Coast (including the Shephelah)

**Elayi** (1981) ‘The Phoenician Cities in the Persian Period’; (1982) ‘Studies in Phoenician Geography during the Persian Period’; (1989) *Sidon, cité autonome de l’Empire Persé*; (1990a) *Economie des cités phéniciennes sous l’Empire Persé*; (1990b) ‘The Phoenician Cities in the Achaemenid Period’; **Galling** (1964d) ‘Die syrisch-palästinische Küste nach der Beschreibung bei Pseudo-Skylax’; **Grainger** (1991) *Hellenistic Phoenicia*; **Katzenstein** (1979) ‘Tyre in the Early Persian Period’; **C. Müller** (1882) *Geographi Graeci Minores*; **Na’aman** (2001) ‘An Assyrian Residence at Ramat Rahel?’; **Roll and Tal** (1999) *Apollonia-Arsuf, Final Report of the Excavations*, I.

Phoenicia was a very important neighbour for those who inhabited Judah, both economically and culturally. (Strictly speaking we should refer to the ‘Phoenician cities’ since they were independent of one another and often rivals, but ‘Phoenicia’ as a collective to refer to the region, including all the cities, is often convenient and appropriate in particular contexts.) Phoenicia and the coast are treated together because Phoenicia seems to have dominated the whole region. Of the old Assyrian provinces, that of Megiddo took up most of Galilee while that of Dor took in the Shephelah; however, although it is sometimes assumed that these divisions continued under the Persians, we in fact have no information that they did so (§7.1). Even if they existed early under the Persian empire, they could have been replaced by other territorial divisions as time went on. In any case, most of the areas covered by these former provinces seem to come under the control of Phoenician cities through much of the Persian period, particularly of Sidon and Tyre.

Sidon was the predominant Phoenician city during the Persian period until it was destroyed in 351 BCE (Elayi 1982: 93). With regard to its territory, the inscription on the tomb of Eshmunazar, king of the Sidonians, states that the Persian king gave Dor and Joppa, including the plain of Sharon, to Sidon (§3.3). This should be looked at alongside the statement of Pseudo-Scylax that Dor is a city of the Sidonians (C. Müller 1882, I: 79). Another city coming under the control of Sidon was Adaros(?). Strato’s Tower (not mentioned in Pseudo-Scylax) was founded by the Sidonians, probably by Straton I in the middle of the fourth century BCE (Elayi 1982: 99-100).

Tyre was the second Phoenician city after Sidon, though it took over after Sidon’s destruction in 351 BCE (Elayi 1982: 96). Under its control Pseudo-Scylax (sometimes based on an emended text [Galling 1964d: 195-201]) mentions specifically

Sarepta, Crocodeilon (Tel Mevorakh?), and Ashkelon; Palaetyrus ('Old Tyre') on the mainland opposite the island probably also belonged to Tyre. Some other towns mentioned might have belonged to Tyre but this is uncertain: Ecdippa (Achzib), Ace (Akko), and Sycaminon (Tel Shiqmona).

While not including every major site, the literary sources nevertheless suggest that a considerable portion of the Palestinian coastline was under Phoenician control in at least part of the Persian period (more probably for the fifth century than the fourth). Archaeology also shows Phoenician material culture at most sites, suggesting a Phoenician presence. This is not completely straightforward since material culture does not mean that Phoenicians necessarily occupied the sites or even had colonies there (Grainger 1991: 18). Trade, the presence of some Phoenician merchants in the settlement, and even cultural diffusion could account for the Phoenician pottery and other Phoenician objects. Even though Phoenician inscriptions might suggest Phoenician settlers, most communication would likely have been between administrators (cf. the somewhat contradictory discussion of Tal in Roll and Tal 1999: 207). Yet it is not unreasonable to think that there were many Phoenicians in the region, whether as settlers, traders, resident merchants, or administrators, without denying that many other groups also lived in the coastal region. Indeed, the inscriptions in a variety of languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, as well as Phoenician) suggest a number of ethnic groups in this area (cf. Roll and Tal 1999: 207).

Although a cluster of semi-independent city-states rather than a unified province, Phoenicia seems to have been treated mostly as a unit by the Persians, though Sidon and to a lesser extent Tyre and Arados dominated the region at this time. The Phoenician cities prospered, not least because the Persians seem to have favoured and encouraged them (Grainger 1991: 20). The Persian government needed a navy, and the Phoenician cities were the ones to provide it. This symbiotic relationship was mutually advantageous through much of the Persian period (though it began to breakdown in the fourth century). One of the advantages awarded to the three main cities was control of the coastal regions: Sidon and Tyre, the southern coast; Arados, the northern. The Phoenicians in turn seem to have known how to exploit but also develop and increase the prosperity of these areas with the establishment of urban centres that raised the standard of living of the surrounding rural areas (Grainger 1991: 18). Archaeological surveys have shown that the rural areas along the coast and in the Sharon plain were thickly populated (§2.3.2). The region held a series of outlets along the coast, each river mouth providing an anchorage so that many small ports existed alongside the major ones (*ALB II*: 385). Although discussing specifically the Sharon region between the Nahal Poleg and Jaffa, O. Tal makes an important general point about the areas controlled by the Phoenicians (Roll and Tal 1999: 209-10):

The reconstruction of settlement patterns of core cities and their satellites in the southern Sharon Plain suits the geo-political, social and economic conditions of the Persian period... The patterns are the result of the planned territorial expansion of the Phoenician rulers of Sidon, under patronage of the Persians... From the

current study we may conclude that the Sidonian suzerainty controlled all urban or centralized (in socio-economical aspects) and rural civilizations of the southern Sharon Plain, namely Tel Poleg, Apollonia-Arsuf, Tel Michal, Tell Abu Zeitun, Joppa, and all their satellites.

What emerges from this investigation is that the coast between Tyre and Ashkelon was controlled by the Phoenicians, along with much of Galilee and the plain of Sharon. Only Gaza seems to have remained independent throughout the Persian period, though Phoenician merchants also made use of it. This was important for the trade, cultural, and other relations of Yehud at this time. On Gaza, which was probably an autonomous city and not under Phoenician control, see below (§7.3.3).

Since Phoenicia figures fairly prominently in the literary accounts of Persian history, attempts have been made to match the archaeology of the region with the historical events. Perhaps the fullest example of this is given by O. Tal (in Roll and Tal 1999: 210-14). This impressive table has to be a maximal reconstruction, however, since neither the archaeology nor the history are as certain as the table implies. For example, the rebellion of Megabyzus about 448 BCE is thought to be reflected in the archaeology, yet a number of scholars have doubted that this episode affected Palestine (as Tal actually points out; see Hoglund 1992: 162-63; *HPE*: 577-79). Similarly, it is very doubtful that the Tennes Rebellion caused destruction in the southern coastal sites (§14.5). A further example of equating the events described in literary sources with archaeology concerns E. Stern's argument that the Phoenician rebellion of 391-381 BCE affected most of the coastal towns (Roll and Tal 1999: 207). As Tal notes, however, there is no evidence of a destruction in Apollonia-Arsuf at this time, at least in the areas so far excavated.

From an economic point of view, the data so far known attest to a flourishing and prosperous region (Elayi 1990a: 70-76; Grainger 1991: 17-18, 20, 23-24). It has been suggested that the settlements along the coast further south were to accommodate an expanding population in the Phoenician heartland (Elayi 1990a: 71). No doubt the tax burden was high, including the draining presence of the Persian army using Phoenicia as a staging post for invasions of Egypt, but it does not seem to have stymied the general accumulation of wealth and general prosperity (Elayi 1990a: cf. pp. 61-70 with pp. 70-76). Even if warfare in the fourth century caused the destruction of some sites (so Roll and Tal 1999: 211-14), the economy of the Phoenician cities seems to have recovered quickly (Elayi 1990a: 70). Phoenician influence may have extended to the gulf of Elat, judging from some of the finds from Tell el-Kheleifah (§2.4.1.14).

All this has a number of implications for Judah: (1) the prosperity of the Phoenicians would have been a significant contrast with that of the less-favoured province of Judah; (2) the influence of Phoenician and also Greek material culture would have been great, especially on Samaria but also on Judah; (3) the coastal settlements would no doubt have attracted Jewish settlers and entrepreneurs who hoped to make a fortune but could not do so in their homeland; (4) despite the favours bestowed by the Persian government on the Phoenicians, there is no indication of exemption from taxation or other special measures such as are alleged

for the Jews in the book of Ezra. (For a further discussion of the points raised here, see §12.1.1 and §13.3.2.)

### **7.3.3. Idumaea and Arabia (including Transjordan)**

**Aharoni** (1975) *Investigations at Lachish*; **Bartlett** (1989) *Edom and the Edomites*; (1999) 'Edomites and Idumaeans'; **Beaulieu** (1989) *The Reign of Nabonidus; Beit-Arieh* (1995b) 'The Edomites in Cisjordan'; **Bienkowski** (1995) 'The Edomites'; (2001) 'The Persian Period'; **Cross** (1986) 'A New Aramaic Stele from Tayma'; **Dicou** (1994) *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*; **Dumbrell** (1971) 'The Tell El-Maskhuta Bowls'; **Edgar** (ed.) (1925–40) *Zenon Papyri I–V*; **Eph'al** (1982) *The Ancient Arabs*; **Graf** (1990) 'Arabia during Achaemenid Times'; **A.K. Grayson** (1975a) *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*; **Herr** (1993) 'What Ever Happened to the Ammonites?'; **Homès-Fredericq** (1996) 'Influences diverses en Transjordanie'; **Kasher** (1988) *Jews, Idumaeans, and Ancient Arabs*; **Katzenstein** (1989) 'Gaza in the Persian Period'; (1994) 'Gaza in the Neo-Babylonian Period'; **Knauf** (1988) *Midian: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas*; (1989) *Ismael: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas*; (1990b) 'The Persian Administration in Arabia'; (1992) 'Ishmaelites'; (1995) 'Edom: The Social and Economic History'; **Lemaire** (1974) 'Un nouveau roi arabe de Qedar'; (1994a) 'Les transformations politiques et culturelle de la Transjordanie'; (1994b) 'Histoire et administration de la Palestine à l'époque perse'; (1996a) *Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes d'Idumée au Musée d'Israël*; (2000) 'L'économie de l'Idumée d'après les nouveaux ostraca araméens'; (2001) 'Les religions du Sud de la Palestine au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle'; (2002a) *Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes d'Idumée, II*; **Mildenberg** (1995) 'Petra on the Frankincense Road?'; **Naveh** (1973) 'The Aramaic Ostraca'; (1979) 'The Aramaic Ostraca from Tel Beer-sheba'; **Rabinowitz** (1956) 'Aramaic Inscriptions of the Fifth Century B.C.E.'; **Winnett and Reed** (1970) *Ancient Records from North Arabia*.

'Arabia' is often rather indefinite in the sources but seems to have covered a huge area, including not only Transjordan but the regions further east (the Hejaz) and south into the Arabian peninsula. It also took in the Negev and Sinai and apparently the area of Idumaea, which were at least under Arabian control or semi-control in the Persian period. The coastal region from Gaza south is also included here since it appears to have been under Arabian control and in some ways separate from the 'Philistine' area further north (*ALB II*: 416–17). The discussion here will be confined mainly to the Palestinian and Transjordanian regions and only occasionally refer to the larger area of Arabia (on which see Graf 1990 and Knauf 1989; 1990; 1995).

The general history of the region can be briefly outlined. The Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus (556–539 BCE) spent many years in Arabia, mainly in the area of Teima. According to the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, the king seems to have carried out military operations in the Transjordanian region in his third year. In *Nabonidus Chronicle* 1.17 the statement is made that 'they/he encamped against the city of [E]dom' ([<sup>ur</sup>U]-du-um-mu it-ta-du-ú [A.K. Grayson 1975a: 105 and 282]). This may indicate that Nabonidus conquered this region (cf. Knauf [1990: 211] who also finds evidence in some biblical passages), as well as Teima, though none of

Nabonidus's other inscriptions mention this point, which is why some doubt it (e.g. Bienkowski 2001: 347). According to Herodotus, the Arabs helped Cambyses in his invasion of Egypt by providing water for his army marching through the desert (3.4-9). He also states that Arabia was not included in the boundaries of the Fifth Satrapy (3.91) and that the Arabs did not pay 'tribute' (*atelea*; on this, see below) but were 'friends' (*xeinoi*) of the Persians (3.88).

The sources are apparently inconsistent in the status and administration of Arabia. As noted above, Herodotus states that the Arabs did not pay 'tribute' (*phoros*) but was one of the peoples that only gave gifts to the Persians (3.97). On the other hand, the 'gifts' (*dōra*) consisted of a thousand talents of incense annually, which is a very large contribution and sounds like a fixed tax rather than a voluntary donation. One way of explaining this is that the Persians turned over regulation of the incense trade to the Arabians but rather than taking a percentage (which might be difficult to oversee) set a rather high fixed amount (Eph'al 1982: 206-10; cf. *HPE*: 397). Another explanation of the apparent contradiction is to argue that two different groups of Arabs are referred to by the different sources (Graf 1990: 138-46): the Qedarites who were autonomous and the Hagarites who were subject to Persian rule. This thesis argues that the Qedarite settlement centred on the Nile delta and the area east of it into northwest Arabia. Graf's thesis also depends on interpreting the 'governor' in the inscription discussed below as not a reference to a Persian-appointed office and otherwise seems a less likely solution to the problem than the explanation that the Persian administration of Arabia was dimorphic.

The most convincing way of describing the administration in Arabia seems to be that it was 'dimorphic', that is, with a Persian governor (or governors) alongside a native king or ruler, perhaps with the Persians active in the towns but the tribal chiefs responsible for the countryside (Knauf 1990: 211). This is indicated by comparing a Lihyanite inscription with an Aramaic stela from Teima. The first inscription (JS 349 lih; translation from Knauf 1990: 205) refers to a governor of Dedan: 'Nūrān bin Hādir has inscribed his name at the time of Gušam bin Šahr and 'Abd, the governor of Dedan, under the rule of PN, king of Lihyān' (*nnr/bn/h̄drw/tqt/b'ym/ḡsm/bn/šhr/w/bd/fht/ddn/b-r* '[*y PN mlk lhy*n]'). The inscription from Teima (Teima Inscription 20; cf. Cross 1986; Knauf 1990: 210-11) mentions 'kings of Lihyān' and also reads 'governor' (according to one restoration, though this is hardly the only possible reading): '[The stela that Šahr gover]nor of Teima [r]aised up. P̄sgw Šahr son of [the k]ings of upper Lihyān the te[mple of Ša]lm of Rb' [נְצָבָא זִי שָׁהָרּו פָּחַת תֵּימָא חֲקִים פָּצָנוּ שָׁהָרּו בֶּן מְלֵכִי לְחֹן הָעַלִּי בֵּיתָה]'. A literary source (though perhaps not the most trustworthy) also mentions a 'satrap' sent to govern Arabia (Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.6.7); whether a formal satrapy is envisaged is not clear since the Greek sources often use 'satrap(y)' in relation to administrative units of various sizes. In any event, these sources all seem to show a Persian governor in the administration of Arabia alongside a native king. Further evidence that this region was under Persian supervision is the dating of inscriptions to the reigns of Persian kings, a reference to the 'treasury, tax office' (*śīmtā*), and the use of Aramaic for private records (Knauf 1990: 206-207).

In addition to the inscription above (JS 349 lih), another inscription mentions an individual by the name of Gšm. On a silver bowl found at Tell el-Maskhutęh in Egypt is the votive inscription, ‘That which ‘Qainu son of Gšm king of Qedar offered to (the goddess) han-Ilat’ (זֶה קִינּוֹ בֶּן נֶשֶׁם מֶלֶךְ קָדֵר קָרְבַּת הַנָּאָלָת zy qynw br gšm mlk qdr qrb lhn lt [Rabinowitz 1956; Dumbrell 1971; TSSI II: 122-23 = text #25]). The presence of the inscription in Egypt suggests that the ‘king of Qedar’ included Lower Egypt under his control. This Gšm has been widely identified as the opponent of Nehemiah (Neh. 2.19; 6.1-2, 6). Furthermore, the Gšm bin Šahr’ (or something similar) of the inscription noted above (JS 349 lih) has also been associated with the Geshem of the book of Nehemiah and the Gšm of the Tell el-Maskhuteh inscription (cf. Winnett and Reed 1970: 116-17; Cross 1986: 394; Knauf 1989: 105, 156; Graf 1990: 139). This first identification is a reasonable hypothesis but cannot be proved from the data presently available (cf. Eph'al 1982: 210-14; Bartlett 1989: 170-71), though the second is more problematic. Several points need to be considered.

First, the dating of the inscriptions is not as certain as one would like. The dating of the Tell el-Maskhutęh bowl inscription seems to be more solidly based than that of the Teima inscription; the dating of the latter appears to have been influenced by a belief that the Gšm bin Šahr was to be identified with the contemporary of Nehemiah, a somewhat circular procedure (Eph'al 1982: 204-205 n. 93; cf. Winnett and Read 1970: 116-17). Secondly, if the Gšms of the inscriptions and the biblical text are all the same person, he would have ruled over an enormous area stretching from Dedan to the Nile delta and taking in southern Palestine and Transjordan; not impossible, but unlikely (Knauf 1992, III: 519 suggests ‘influence’ rather than actual rule). Thirdly, Gšm is a fairly common name in Arabian sources of this time, making the existence of two or more individuals a not unlikely scenario (Winnett and Reed 1970: 116).

A. Lemaire (1974) argued that an inscription found on an incense altar uncovered at Lachish should read, ‘Incense altar of Iyš son of Mḥly the king’ (לְבָנָת אִישׁ bñ mḥly hmlk) and argues that this individual was the king of Qedar and also the grandfather of Geshem. Several have argued against this (Knauf 1989: 105; Bartlett 1989: 170-71), noting that there is no evidence that the individual named here is king of Qedar. There is also the question of the reading; for example, the reading ‘the king’ is not at all certain (see the discussion in Aharoni 1975: 5-7).

It has been suggested that Ammon, Moab, and Edom were provinces because the Persians largely continued the administrative system of their predecessors (§7.1). Also, an argument has been presented that evidence for Ammon as a province is found on jar handles discovered at Tell el-Umeiri with seal stamps bearing the inscription šb' 'mn. This has been interpreted as ‘Shuba Ammon’, Shuba being the name of a governor or other important official and Ammon the name of the province, on the analogy of the Yehud stamps from Judah (Herr 1993; Lemaire 1994b: 48; cf. §2.4.1.19). This is a reasonable inference but not certain. It is also possible that the Tobiah of the book of Nehemiah was a governor of Ammon. The rather derogatory reference made to him by Nehemiah as the ‘Ammonite slave’

(Neh. 2.19) seems to mask an important administrative title ('servant of the Persian king in Ammon'). Holding the office of governor would not be inconsistent with this title and what else we know about him. Finally, Ammon is mentioned in the so-called Ma'in Hierodule Lists which might imply the status of a province (Graf 1990: 143).

With regard to Moab, the book of Ezra–Nehemiah has references to a number of individuals who are designated as *בְּנֵי־פָהַת מוֹאָב bənē-paħat mō'āv* (Ezra 2.6; 8.4; 10.30; Neh. 3.11; 7.11). Most translations render this as a proper name ('sons of Paħat-Moab'), but a reading such as 'sons of the governor of Moab' is possible; however, the context of the various references (a variety of names in several different lists) does not encourage the latter reading. The inscription of a 'Philisto-Arab' coin was first read as *b'm*, but it was proposed to read it in reverse (since the direction of writing on coins is not always clear) as *m'b*, 'Moab' (Lemaire 1994b: 46–47). The name of Moab on a coin might indicate a province, though this is not certain since Gaza also issued coins with its name on them. Like Ammon, Moab is mentioned in the so-called Ma'in Hierodule Lists (Graf 1990: 143); this might suggest it was a province.

Certain of the Arab tribes (e.g. the Qedarites) are mentioned in the Old Testament, but especially the Edomites. Some Old Testament passages show a very negative attitude toward Edom (e.g. the book of Obadiah), and it has often been thought that the Edomites participated in the destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6 (cf. Dicou 1994). 'Edom' is symbolic in certain of these passages, however, while the arguments for Edomite atrocities in the fall of Jerusalem are not solidly founded (Bartlett 1989: 151–57; 1999: 102–103). Thus, the common assumption that a nation of Edom invaded and conquered the southern area of Palestine in the seventh century is not securely based (see also the discussion at §2.4.2). Yet we know that by the Hellenistic period the region that was once southern Judah had become known as 'Idumaea', which is only the Greek version of Edom. This seems difficult to explain unless a significant Edomite population had taken up residence there, suggesting a transfer of at least some of the population from the old area of Edom (*pace* Bartlett 1999: 111). This could have been a peaceful movement and could have taken place over a considerable period of time, but the interpretation is consistent with the archaeological data (§2.4.2). The population vacuum left at the beginning of the sixth century with the collapse in Jewish settlement of the southern Judaean highlands and the northern Negev would have encouraged nomadic and other elements from the Negev and areas south and east to move into the area (Lipschits 2003: 356–57). Personal names indicate that a few remained in the old area and were gradually assimilated to the Nabateans (Kasher 1988: 2).

It is somewhat surprising that the region of Idumaea as such seems to be ignored by the literary sources of the Persian period. Although a few sites within the area are mentioned in a problematic passage (Neh. 11.25–30), no reference is made to the region as a whole or to an administrative unit of Idumaea. It is only in the Hellenistic period that we find Idumaea referred to as an administrative unit, known variously as the 'satrapy' of Idumaea and the 'eparchy' of Idumaea (Diodorus 19.95.2; 19.98.1); since the term 'satrapy' was used loosely in Greek sources, even

for provinces (which is also the connotation of ‘eparchy’), the two passages both indicate a province of Idumaea. Also, the dating of the Idumaean ostraca by the reigns of the Persian king argues that Idumaea was under Persian control (Lemaire 1994b: 27-30; 1996: 147-49; 2002a). Lemaire suggests that Idumaea was part of an Arabian kingdom until about 385 BCE (when the Arabs seem to have sided with Egypt) after which the Arabian kingdom was abolished and the territory was organized as a province. It is admitted that there is no direct evidence, and this interpretation seems at least in part based on Lemaire’s interpretation of the Lachish incense altar noted above.

A very important coastal city was Gaza. Although Phoenicians apparently lived there and it was a major outlet for the incense trade from Arabia, it seems to have been an autonomous city, though with a Persian garrison (cf. Arrian 2.25-26; Quintus Curtius 4.6.7). Its semi-independence is indicated by that fact that it began to mint its own coins after 420 BCE (§3.4.3). Thus, it did not come under the sphere of control of either the Arabian chiefs or the Phoenician city-states, which gave it great opportunities for development and wealth accumulation. Gaza had been one of the great emporia under the Assyrians (Na’aman 2002: 260-61). We also have evidence that it was an important trading outlet in the Ptolemaic period (Xenon papyrus 59093 and 59804 [Edgar, I: 113-14; V: 4]). Primary data on Gaza in the Persian period are fewer than one would like (cf. Katzenstein 1989), but those we have do tend to fill the gap and confirm that Gaza remained a significant port for the trade from Arabia.

Herodotus states that Gaza (*Kadutis*) belongs to the ‘Syrians of Palestine’ (*Surōn tōn Palaistinōn*), though the ‘emporium’ on the sea south of the city belonged to Arabia (3.5). This suggests that Gaza was also an ‘emporium’. Gaza’s importance is indicated by its size which is ‘not much smaller than Sardis’. It benefitted from being the endpoint on the main trade route from Arabia as indicated at the time of Alexander’s conquest when the Macedonian king is alleged to have sent 500 talents of incense and 100 of myrrh to his former teacher after Gaza fell (Plutarch, *Alexander* 25.3-5; cf. Pliny 12.32.62).

The trade from Arabia was a very important enterprise for Arabia (or at least for certain people in the region), for Gaza, for the Greek and Phoenician traders, and for those who needed the spices for food preparation, fumigation, and cultic activity. We know about it partly from literary sources, but there are also considerable archaeological data to support the literary references (ALB II: 295-300). A number of scholars have argued that the route went through Petra, but there are considerable doubts about that, not least that Petra may not have existed in the Persian period (Mildenberg 1995). The finds from Tell el-Kheleifeh on the Gulf of Aqaba indicate that the site was active in trade, suggesting that it also served as a part of the trade route from the Arabian peninsula (§2.4.1.14; Graf 1990: 137).

## Chapter 8

### SOCIETY AND DAILY LIVING

In contrast to the previous chapter, the present one focuses on the lives of ordinary people. There is an unavoidable overlap with the imperial and provincial government and administration, since these affected the lives of all people, but the question is one of emphasis and perspective. For convenience, some topics are dealt with here that could have been included in Chapter 7 (e.g. legal issues, the calendar).

#### **8.1. Jewish Identity and Joining the Community**

**Ben Zvi** (1995) ‘Inclusion in and Exclusion from Israel’; **Biran and Naveh** (1993) ‘An Aramaic Stele Fragment from Tel Dan’; (1995) ‘The Tel Dan Inscription’; **Brunneau** (1982) “Les Israélites de Délos” et la juiverie délienne’; **S.J.D. Cohen** (1999) *The Beginnings of Jewishness*; **Grabbe** (2000b) ‘Hat die Bibel doch recht?’; (forthcoming a) Review of S.J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*; **A.K. Grayson** (1975a) *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*; (1996) *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC*, II; **Harvey** (1996) *The True Israel*; **Horbury and Noy** (1992) *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*; **Kraabel** (1984) ‘New Evidence of the Samaritan Diaspora’; **Mayer** (2003) ‘Sennacherib’s Campaign of 701 BC’; **Noy** (1995) *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe*, II; **Pummer** (1987) ‘Αργαριζίν: A Criterion for Samaritan Provenance?'; **T.L. Thompson** (1999) *The Bible in History*; **Willi** (1994) ‘Late Persian Judaism’; (1995) *Juda-Jehud-Israel*.

We know that in the later centuries of the Second Temple period the questions of who was a Jew and how one might become a Jew came to be important ones (cf. JRSTP: 292-97). We have no indication that these were important questions—or even questions at all—in the Persian period. The term ‘Jew/Judaean’ seems to have been taken for granted as an ethnic and geographical designation. (On the question of whether to translate the Hebrew term by ‘Jew/s’ or ‘Judaean/s’, see Chapter 1 [§1.6].) This interpretation has been objected to by T.L. Thompson (1999: 254-66) who states (all quotes from p. 257):

[The name Yehud] was no more reflective of a people than were any of the other names for regions of the empire... Already in the Elephantine texts, the name *Yehud* seems to have been used for a definable group of people who were called ‘Jews’. It is not understood in a geographical sense, but in the context of the religious affiliation of some of the people in this military colony in Egypt...the term *yehudim* is clearly religiously descriptive, and neither ethnic nor geographic.

I have already given a detailed critique of Thompson's position (Grabbe 2000b) and will note only some of the main points here. The term 'Jew/Judean' was, first of all, a designation for the inhabitants of Judah. *Yehûdî* (plural *Yehûdîm*) was the term used to refer to those who were seen as natives of Judah. Furthermore, in the common parlance of the time, those who originated in Judah were also called 'Jews/Judeans' even when they lived elsewhere. This designation could apply to communities that had not lived in the homeland for generations, such as the Jewish community in Elephantine. The members are called 'Jews, Judeans' (Aramaic *Yehûdîn, Yehûdâyâ*) in the documents. The term 'Jews/Judeans' is used of the 'garrison/army' in Elephantine, as well as of private individuals in Elephantine (*TAD* B2.9.2-3; A4.1.1, 10; C3.15.1 = *AP* 20.2-3; 21.2, 11; 22.1). Secondly, the Yehudin of Elephantine write to Bagohi 'the governor of Yehud' and refer to the 'nobles of the Yehudin' in Jerusalem (*AP* 30.18-19 = *TAD* A4.7.18-19). Ethnic identity often involves connection with a real or supposed geographical origin, even if the person in question is far removed from that geographical area. At a later time, the term 'Jew' develops into a religious term in certain contexts (cf. Cohen 1999: 93), and there are debates over who is a 'true Jew' in the Qumran texts and the New Testament, but this does not disprove the ethnic element of Jewishness. Ethnic identity is often a complex affair and may well include religion as well as other factors. Some religions even today are very ethnic, including Judaism.

Thus, membership of the Jewish community or people was primarily a matter of birth. If you were born into the people, whether in Judah or in one of the communities elsewhere in the ancient Near East, you were a 'Jew/Judean'. It is unlikely that the idea of joining the community arose very often. We do find the occasional biblical passage that does envisage members of other ethnic communities wanting to become Jews (Exod. 12.48; Zech. 8.23). This picture is complicated by two issues that were prominent in the Persian-period Jewish community: (a) the question of whether the community could be diluted/corrupted or, conversely, exist in a purer form so that some fellow Jews could be thought to be outside the pale; (b) the question of the use of the term 'Israel' ('Israelite', 'community of Israel', 'house of Israel', etc.).

Since the term universally used for the people (certainly by those outside the community) was 'Jews/Judeans', there are no references to 'Israel' in any of the primary sources. Yet in some of the biblical writings, the term 'Israel' is widely or even exclusively used. Why is this? If we go back to pre-Persian times we do not find examples of the Southern Kingdom being called 'Israel' or its people 'Israelites'. The name 'Israel(ites)' is not one found widely in primary sources of the ancient Near East. The Assyrian inscriptions normally referred to the Northern Kingdom as *Bit-Humri* (apparently named after the king Omri). Nevertheless, we find 'Israel(ites)' used several times, even if it is not frequent. The earliest and most notable occurrence is in the Merneptah stela whose reading has not been contested, as far as I know, from about 1200 BCE (*ANET*: 376-78; *CoS*, II: 40-41). There is also a reference to 'Ahab the Israelite' (*A-ha-ab-bu matSir- 'a-la-a-a*) in an inscription of Shalmaneser III (A.K. Grayson [1996] A.0.102.2 ii 91-92 [p. 23]; *ANET*:

279; *CoS*, II: 263). The Tel Dan inscription (from c. the late ninth century or possibly the early eighth) refers to a ‘king of Israel’ (frag. 1, line 8), and what seems to be the last part of the name ‘Israel’ is preserved (frag. 1, line 4), as well as the first part (line 12) (Biran and Naveh 1993; 1995). From approximately the same time, the Mesha stela twice mentions ‘Israel’ (*KAI* #181.3–4 = *TSSI* #16.3–4 [also lines 10–11, 14, 18, 26]; *CoS*, II: 137–38). Similarly, all the references to the Southern Kingdom in non-biblical sources refer to it as ‘Judah’, for example, ‘Jehoahaz of Judah’ in an inscription of Tiglath-pileser III (*ANET*: 282); Jerusalem as the ‘city of Judah’ ([*muhhi*] ḥl Ia-a-hu-du: *Babyl. Chron.* 5 [A.K. Grayson 1975a: 102]) and as the city of ‘Hezekiah the Jew’ (<sup>m</sup>*Ha-za-qi-a-ú* <sup>amēl</sup>*Ia-ú-da-ai*: Sennacherib inscriptions [*ANET*: 287–88; Mayer 2003: 195–96]); Hezekiah as ‘king of Judah’ (*Ia-ú-di...m Ha-za-qi-a-ú šarra-šu*: Sennacherib inscriptions [*ANET*: 288; Mayer 2003: 193–94, 197]).

When we move to the Persian and Greek periods, there is little evidence for the name Israel in extra-biblical sources. The name does not occur among the Elephantine papyri. It *might* occur once among the Egyptian inscriptions in Greek (in a broken context in what seems to be a synagogue inscription from the Roman period), but some read *Isdraēl* (Horbury and Noy 1992: #17 [p. 25]). The name also does not occur among the Greek papyri in Egypt. It occurs only once in Rome, but in a late inscription of the third–fourth century CE (Noy 1995: #489 [pp. 390–91]), but the significance is puzzling. A woman is referred to as a ‘proselyte’ and a ‘Jew, Israelite’, but it is not clear why the double designation is given. None of the Greek or Roman writers mention Israel until Pompeius Trogus at the turn of the Common Era (*apud Justin, Historiae Philippicae* 36, Epitome 2.3–4; he represents the origin of the Jews as from Damascus, one of whose kings is said to be *Israēl*). Nevertheless, Trogus uses the common term ‘Jews’ for the people of his time, not ‘Israel’.

Apparently the term ‘Israelite’ is used in pre-Christian Greco-Roman sources only to refer to members of a community on Delos associated with the cult on Mt Gerizim. Two inscriptions, one from about 200 BCE and one from about 100 BCE were written by ‘the Israelites in Delos who sent to sacred Argarizein’ an offering (οἱ εὐ δῆλωι ισραελεῖται/ισραηλίται οἱ απαρχομένοι εἰς τερον [σγιον] αργαριζειν [Brunneau 1982; Kraabel 1984]; the mention of Mt Gerizim [*Argarizein*], although not decisive, is often an indication that this is a Samaritan community [cf. Pummer 1987]). They were not ‘Jews’ but ‘Israelites’, while the Jews are nowhere called ‘Israelites’ at this time according to presently available sources.

The obvious conclusion is that use of the term ‘Israel(ites)’ for ‘Judah(ites)’ is an *internal* development. It is beyond the scope of the present discussion to explore the prehistory of this question in detail. One can only note that there are several possibilities, including that it was a purely religious view of a small group and only found its way into religious writings initially; that after the fall of Samaria some kings of Judah (e.g. Hezekiah, Josiah) wanted to take control of former Israelite territory and used this view as a pretext; that there was long a tradition of kinship between the people of Israel and Judah, perhaps even going back to a period of being unified as a single nation under David and Solomon; that there was a long

folk tradition of both being descended from a common ancestor Jacob/Israel; that the Israelite tradition was brought to the Southern Kingdom by refugees after the fall of Samaria and became adopted as a part of their own heritage. No doubt other possible explanations could be added.

Regardless of the reason, the book of Ezra uses almost exclusively ‘Israelite’ for the people. ‘Judah’ occurs as the name of the province, and there are three references to ‘the people of Judah’ (Ezra 4.4, 6; 9.1), but most references to the people associate them with ‘Israel’: ‘people of Israel’ (2.2), ‘(descended) from Israel’ (2.59), ‘all Israel’ (2.70; 8.25, 35; 10.5), ‘descendents [sons] of Israel’ (3.1; 6.21; 7.7). Nehemiah is somewhat more nuanced. A number of passages identify the people with Israel: ‘people of Israel’ (Neh. 7.7), ‘descendents [sons] of Israel’ (1.6; 2.10; 7.72 [Eng. 7.73]; 8.14, 17; 9.1; 10.40; 13.2), ‘all Israel’ (7.72 [Eng. 7.73]; 12.47), ‘seed of Israel’ (9.2). Yet there are also references to the ‘descendents [sons] of Judah’ (11.4, 25; 13.16), ‘all the house of Judah’ (4.10 [Eng. 4.16]), ‘all Judah’ (13.12), ‘the inhabitants of Judah’ (4.6), ‘the nobles of Judah’ (6.17; 13.17). Occasionally, the term ‘Jews/Judeans’ in its normal sense occurs (Ezra 6.7; Neh. 1.2; 5.8; 13.23).

In sum, we would expect references exclusively to ‘Jews/Judeans’ at this time, and this is what we find in straightforward descriptions and contemporary documents. The designation ‘Israel(ites)’ seems to be a literary and theological usage of some sort. It was important for some writers to emphasize the identity of the inhabitants of Yehud, as well as the Jewish communities elsewhere, with Israel. This is a pervasive theme in the literature of the time (cf. Ben Zvi 1995). T. Willi has argued that this comes to the fore mainly in the mid-fifth century BCE, whereas the earlier emphasis had been on the continuity with the Kingdom of Judah (Willi 1994; 1995: 119–67). This can be seen particularly in 1 Chronicles 1–9, in the genealogical lists (or ‘citizenship lists’ [*Bürgerrechtslisten*], as Willi designates them). These take an ‘all-Israel’ perspective. Judah and Judaism are to be grasped only in the larger context of Israel:

Die Botschaft der chronistischen Bürgerrechtslisten und der chronistischen Geschichtserzählung an die Adresse der Gegenwart ist klar: Jehud, die kleine persische Povinz, hat seine Bestimmung und Zukunft nicht als eingeschränktes, selbstzufrieden auf Jerusalem und Juda begrenztes territoriales Gebilde, als exklusives Reservat einer abgekapselten und konventikelhaften ‘Gemeinde’, sondern als Wahrerin und Hüterin gemeinisraelitischer Tradition und Verantwortung, nicht zuletzt im Blick auf die weite Diaspora des Volkes. (Willi 1995: 137)

The contemporary message of the Chronicles citizenship lists and historical narrative is clear: Yehud, the small Persian province, has its destiny and future not as a narrow self-satisfied territorial construct limited to Jerusalem and Judah—as the exclusive reserve of an isolated and sectarian ‘community’—but as the defender and custodian of an all-Israel tradition and responsibility, not least in view of the wide dispersion of the people.

The tribes of the genealogies are not just a summary from older tradition but represent a renewed and redirected message for the present inhabitants of Judah.

These lists are also concerned about land: they include the elements of geography and history, as well as genealogy.

Thus, for the writer of *Chronicles*, and also for Ezra–Nehemiah, the identification with Israel was extremely important. The Jews of Yehud, as well as the communities in Mesopotamia, were not just identified with the Jews, the tribe of Judah, and the small province of Yehud, but in addition constituted a part of Israel and carried forward the name of Israel into the future. It is difficult to say to what extent the average Jew was aware of or even concerned about this identification, but to some it was very important, and among these were those who stamped their views on the biblical literature. This identification of the Jews with Israel which became important at least to some in the Persian period was to be a characteristic of Judaism throughout the Second Temple period and beyond.

The next question is, could an outsider join the community? Could he or she become a ‘Jew/Judaean/Israelite’? As far as we can tell from our sources, there seem to be few non-Jewish males wanting to become a part of the community at this time. The matter is different with females, however, since there are a number of examples of taking ‘foreign wives’ in our literary sources. This is complicated for two reasons: first, many of these ‘foreign’ women were actually probably Jewish, the descendants of those Jews left in the land at the time of the Babylonian captivity; secondly, the writings discussing these marriages usually see them as contrary to God’s law and the marriages and subsequent offspring as illegitimate (§13.5). Yet the fuss made in Ezra–Nehemiah over such matters suggests that it must have been a not infrequent occurrence.

The rejection of marriages contracted with outsiders was just one view, though no doubt an influential one. The picture of disbanding foreign marriages in Ezra–Nehemiah is just one perspective. We also have others, even in literature that eventually became canonical. One prime example is the book of Ruth in which a Moabite woman is not only accepted into the Jewish community to marry a prominent citizen of Bethlehem but becomes an ancestor of King David. A second important writing that did not shy from admitting foreigners into Israel was the books of *Chronicles*. As Willi (1994: 158; 1995: 140–42) has noted, the genealogies of Judah openly admit that the family of Judah has absorbed a number of foreigners other than Ruth: the daughter of Shua the Canaanite (2.3), Jether the Ishmaelite (2.17), Jarha the Egyptian (2.34), Bithiah ‘daughter of Pharaoh’ (4.18), and several men ‘married into Moab’ (4.22).

We have difficulty saying how this worked in practice since we have no specific examples of how women (and perhaps sometimes men) were actually assimilated into the community and took on the Jewish identity at this time (though there is more information at a later time [*JRSTP*: 295–97]). It may have been that in the case of marriage the spouse simply lived in the community, had children, and in time the descendants were accepted as Jews. But some probably never became reconciled to letting outsiders in. This is why centuries later, a procedure for conversion eventually became established.

### **8.2. Social Classes**

With an agrarian based economy (§9.3.3.1), the vast majority of Jews were engaged in some sort of livelihood relating to agriculture. There was probably not a lot of social differentiation among the peasant class. Much farming seems to have been done by individual families on small holdings. Their life style and status is likely to have been much the same, whether they owned their own land or rented it (§9.3.3.4). We get a glimpse of people like this in such passages as Hag. 1.2-11 and Nehemiah 5. Rather lower on the social scale would have been the itinerate workers and day labourers. We know of them by references in some of the law collections that probably date from the Persian period (e.g. Deut. 24.14-15; §8.3). These were not watertight categories, of course. As Neh. 5.2-5 shows, those who owned land might have to sell it to pay debts and thus become renters. One presumes that the next stage would be to become a hired worker, though this is not specifically mentioned here. The worst situation was to sell one's family or oneself into slavery, as Neh. 5.5 envisages. This was not just a theoretical possibility, as is indicated by the slave-sale documents from Wadi Daliyeh in which a number of the slaves being sold seem to have once been free citizens (§3.2.1).

Two other social groups are indicated by a letter from the Jewish community in Elephantine to Jerusalem (*TAD A4.7.18-19//A4.8.17-18 = AP 30.18-19/31.17-18*):

We sent a letter (to) our lord [the Judean governor Bagohi] and to Jehohanan the high priest and his companions the priests who are in Jerusalem and Ostanes the brother of Anani, and the nobles of the Jews/Judeans. They sent not a single letter to us.

Mentioned here are (a) the high priest and his fellow priests and (b) the nobles of the Jews/Judeans. The priests formed a special category. The priests had a certain status in the community by virtue of their office, and the high priest was seen as a community leader (§10.3.2). That set them apart from the ordinary Jews of the community even though few if any could be classified among the nobles at this time. We know that in later centuries, the priesthood became stratified so that some were classified among the aristocracy (cf. *JCH*: 386-89), but we have no information that such was the case at this time. Some probably were, including the high priest, but this conclusion is based on inference, not solid data. Priests held office by heredity and they received their living by a religious tax on the rest of the community. They were not the only temple personnel, but they were at the top of the temple hierarchy (§10.3.1).

The nobles are not further described but do appear at various points in the book of Nehemiah in a way that is consistent with the Elephantine document (Neh. 2.16; 4.8, 13; 5.7; 6.17; 7.5; 13.17). Who constituted the nobles is not discussed but can be guessed at. They were no doubt those who possessed considerable wealth and were seen as the community leaders. They would have inherited their status, even if it was based in considerable part on their financial standing. But it is unlikely that the number in this group was very large since the resources of the community could

not have sustained a large group of such individuals. They were the most likely candidates for provincial offices such as ‘prefect’ (§7.2.5). Interestingly, despite Nehemiah’s feelings of hostility toward the nobles, he seems to have been one himself, since Neh. 5.14–18 indicates he had a large private income. It is also unlikely that he would have been allowed to serve at the king’s table or to be appointed governor unless he possessed such status.

Further information on governors and officials is given above (§7.2.4–5).

### 8.3. *The Legal Sphere*

**Albertz** (1994) *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*; **Alt** (1966) ‘The Origins of Israelite Law’; **Boecker** (1980) *Law and the Administration of Justice*; **Brin (ed.)** (1994) *Studies in Biblical Law*; **Collins** (1997) ‘Marriage, Divorce, and Family’; **Fischer** (2002) *Rut*; **Fried** (2001) “‘You Shall Appoint Judges’”; **Grabbe** (1993) *Leviticus*; (2003a) ‘The Priests in Leviticus’; **Greenfield** (1990) ‘The Aramaic Legal Texts of the Achaemenian Period’; **Green-gus** (1976) ‘Law in the OT’; **Greengus, Sonsino and Sanders** (1992) ‘Law’; **Cornelis Houtman** (1997) *Das Bundesbuch*; **Jackson** (1975) *Essays in Jewish and Comparative Legal History*; (2000) *Studies in the Semiotics of Biblical Law*; **Levinson** (1997) *Deuteronomy*; **Levinson (ed.)** (1994) *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law*; **McKeating** (1979) ‘Sanctions against Adultery’; **Marshall** (1993) *Israel and the Book of the Covenant*; **Muffs** (1969) *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine*; **Eckart Otto** (1989) *Rechtsgeschichte der Redaktionen im Kodex Ešnuna*; **Patrick** (1985) *Old Testament Law*; **Paul** (1970) *Studies in the Book of the Covenant*; **Phillips** (1970) *Ancient Israel’s Criminal Law*; (2002) *Essays on Biblical Law*; **Van Seters** (2003) *A Law Book for the Diaspora*; **Westbrook** (1988) *Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Law*.

When we talk about ‘law’ and the ‘legal sphere’, we could bring in a number of customs and practices in society. Some of these are discussed elsewhere, however, and this section will focus on law and jurisprudence in the narrower sense. Our knowledge of law and jurisprudence in Yehud is fragmentary, based on a number of different sorts of sources. We have little in the way of contemporary evidence for Judah itself: contemporary documents are mainly from neighbouring areas, such as the Jewish community in Elephantine and the Wadi Daliyeh finds. Especially problematic are the biblical writings, though they cannot be ignored.

A variety of laws are found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Although these give the impression of forming a law code, they in fact have large gaps. Laws in such literary and theological works are not easy to assess. The reader should be aware that the laws as embodied in written texts may not necessarily be the same as the laws that had practical effect in society and the legal processes. Unfortunately, this distinction is not always understood, and the legal material of the text is read off as if it were an actual description of law and justice in the living society. Rather, what is written in the biblical text is what certain editors wanted to be said and the community (or certain parts of the community) wanted to be preserved. We have a theological picture, with idealized laws and an ideologically constructed society. To

what extent it corresponded with recognized legal practice and accepted legal tradition in ancient Judah as a whole is a question that needs to be looked at very carefully.

There are four main blocks of legal material ('codes') in the Bible. The first is called the 'Covenant Code' (Exod. 20.19–23.33) and is paralleled by the second law code, Deuteronomy 12–26. In addition, a good deal of legal material is also found in the Holiness Code (H: Lev. 17–26). Finally, the Ten Commandments or Decalogue is a coherent collection found in two slightly different forms (Exod. 20.2–14//Deut. 5.6–18). In addition, there are examples of laws, legal decisions, descriptions of judicial practice, and customary law in many other passages. These other passages are important because they often differ to a lesser or greater extent from the law codes so frequently cited as evidence of law in ancient Israel.

The relationship between Deuteronomy and the Covenant Code has been much discussed. The most widely accepted view has been that Deuteronomy 12–26 knew the Covenant Code, perhaps even rewriting it to fit the current situation (cf. Levinson 1997); however, J. Van Seters (2003) has recently turned the thesis on its head, arguing that the Covenant Code knew and modified Deuteronomic legal material. For our purposes, the different interpretations do not matter since, in any case, the laws were available by the Persian period. The regulations of H have a number of points in common with the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy, but it does not look as if they are a simple borrowing from it. The laws on forbidden types of sexual relations (Lev. 18) have no parallel elsewhere in the Pentateuch. H also has a number of laws about priests (especially in Lev. 21).

Did these biblical laws serve as a 'law book' for the Jewish community? If we look elsewhere in the ancient Near Eastern, we find that most societies were governed by traditional law (Greengus 1976: 533–34; Greengus *et al.* 1992: 4.243; cf. Grabbe 1993: 23–28; Fried 2001: 67–84). This was not codified or written down in most cases and incorporated a lot of what we today would consider only as societal convention. From the famous law codes, such as the *Codex Hammurabi*, it might be assumed that Mesopotamia had a codified legal system comparable to that of the later Roman empire or modern nations. However, a study of Mesopotamian legal decisions known from many records and documents shows that the so-called 'law codes' were never cited in judicial documents as legal precedent. Judges seem to have judged according to unwritten legal convention and tradition and, of course, personal common sense. On the other hand, the contents of the law codes and the documents of actual legal decisions are not completely divorced from each other. That is, the law codes seem to a large extent to incorporate the general practice of the society even if there may be an idealized element to them.

The same seems to be the case with biblical law. The 'law codes' also seem to be scribal creations, but they likewise largely incorporate general convention and custom. Yet there is also a certain utopian aspect to them, and much in P, the Covenant Code, and Deuteronomy is idealized and reflects the theological views of the compiler(s). For example, there is no evidence that the jubilee year was ever anything more than an idealized construct. Although there is evidence that the

sabbatical year was practiced in Judaea during the Second Temple period, the instructions with regard to it and the jubilee are contradictory (Grabbe 1993: 94-97; §10.2.3). Particular views about God, the cult, and Israelite religion in general are reflected in these codes which may not have been the views of the majority of the priests or the people. In sum, the legal sections of the Pentateuch contain Israelite societal convention and actual legal and cultic practice alongside descriptions of practices which probably reflect only the theological desires of the compilers and to have been no more than theoretical, at least at the time of writing. The following table gives the main contents of these three biblical 'law codes' that were probably in existence before the end of the Persian period.

Table 8.1. Biblical 'Law Codes' Compared

<i>Covenant Code (Exodus)</i>	<i>Deuteronomy</i>	<i>Holiness Code (Leviticus)</i>
	Admonition to obey, concluding 16.16-19	
Altar for sacrifices 20.21-23		
	Amelek, blot out the memory of 25.17-19	
Authority, reviling 22.27		
	Birds, do not take mother with young 22.6-7	
		Blasphemy, question of 24.10-23
		Blessings and curses 26
		Blood, do not eat 19.26
		Blood, do not eat 17.10-14
	Cities of refuge for acci- dental manslaughter 19.1-13	
	Clothing, do not wear that of opposite sex 22.5	
	Crucifixion: treatment of impaled body of executed criminal 21.22-23	
		Dead, do not trim hair or make cuttings for 19.26-28
		Disabled, do not mock 19.14
	Disease: see priest about skin disease 24.8-9	
Divination: sorceress not to be allowed to live 22.17	Divination, prohibition of 18.9-14	Divination, do not practise 19.26

	Divination: future prophet like Moses and the testing of prophets 18.15-22	Divination: do not turn to ghosts or familiar spirits 19.31
	Divination: test for prophet or dreamer 13.2-6	Divination: do not turn to ghosts or familiar spirits 20.6
		Divination: death to those turning to ghosts or familiar spirits 20.27
		Elders, respect 19.32
		Fellow countrymen, treat fairly and love as yourself 19.17-18
Festivals, three times in the year 23.14-17	Festivals: observe 16.1-17	Festivals 23
Fire, damage from deliberately set 22.5		
First-fruits and firstborn to go to God 22.28-29	Firstborn: consecrate firstlings to Yhwh 15.19-23	
First-fruits to go to house of God 23.19	First-fruits, ceremony of bringing to the priest 26.1-11	
Food: do not eat meat if torn by wild beasts 22.30	Food: permission to eat meat but without blood 12.20-25	Food: do not eat what has died or been torn by beasts 17.15-16
	Food, regulations relating to meat 14.1-21	Food: animals must be slaughtered at altar 17.2-9
	Food: eating from neighbour's vineyard or field 23.25-26	
		Fruit trees, fruit forbidden for first three years 19.23-25
Gods, no other 20.20	Gods: command against false worship 12.1-7	Gods: Molech worship forbidden 20.2-5
Gods: do not mention other gods 23.13	Gods: do not follow those who call to worship other gods 13.7-19	God: do not swear falsely by Yhwh's name 19.12
Gods: no sacrifices to gods other than Yhwh 22.19	Gods: do not worship as the nations do 12.29-13.1	
	Gods: those turning to false worship to be executed 17.2-7	
Goods left in safekeeping with another 22.6-12		
		Holy, be 20.7-8
	Holy war, law of 20.1-20	

	Idols: no sacred pillar to be set up 16.21-22	Idols, do not worship 19.4
	Impurity in camp of war 23.10-15	Idols, no not set up 26.1
Injury: man in quarrel 21.18-19	Injury: punishment for woman who seizes a man's genitals 25.11-12	
Injury, compensation for pit left open 21.33-34		Jubilee year 25.8-17
Justice, do not miscarry 23.1-3	Justice: judges to judge fairly 16.18-20	
Justice, do not miscarry 23.6-8	Justice: difficult cases to be taken to priests at place Yhwh chooses 17.8-13	
Justice: murder and manslaughter 21.12-14	Justice: do not punish parents for children or children for parents 24.16	
Justice: punishment for theft 21.37-22.3	Justice: flogging not to exceed 40 lashes 25.1-3	
Kid in mother's milk, do not cook 23.19		
Kidnapping 21.16	Kidnapping of Israelite 24.7	
	King, law of 17.14-20	Lamps and bread of presence 24.1-9
		Land, can be sold only until jubilee 22.23-28
	Landmarks, do not remove 19.14	
Livestock: take care of your enemy's animals 23.4-5	Livestock: return the strayed animal 22.1-4	
Livestock: damage to neighbour's property 22.4		
	Loan: rules about pledges 24.10-13	Loans, do not charge interest 22.35-37
	Loan: mill(stone) not to be taken as pledge 24.6	
	Measures: have honest weights and measures 25.13-16	Measures, have honest 19.35-36
Miscarriage caused in fight 21.22-25		

	Mixture: do not sow mixed seed or plough with ox and ass together 22.9-10	Mixtures: you shall allow no interbreeding of cattle, plants, or have mixed cloth 19.19
	Offerings and donations to the place of Yhwh chooses 12.26-28	
Ox, the goring 21.28-32	Ox: do not muzzle the threshing ox 25.4	
Ox, the goring 21.35-36		
Parents, insulting 21.17	Parents: death penalty for the disobedient child 21.18-21	Parents, respect 19.3
Parents: striking father or mother 21.15		Parents: one insulting will be put to death 20.9
Poor, lending to 22.24-26	Poor, give helps to 15.4-11	Poor: leave some of harvest to glean 19.9-10
	Poor, various provisions for 24.17-22	
	Poor: pay the poor on the day they work and do not oppress 24.14-15	Poor: pay wages on the day of work 19.13
	Poor: do not charge interest 23.20-21	
		Priests, laws for 21
Promises of aid in defeating enemies and entering the promised land 23.20-33		
Property, borrowed 23.13-14		Property, houses in cities may be sold 22.29-34
	Red cow ashes for unknown murderer 21.1-9	
	Roof, put parapet around 22.8	
Sabbath day 23.12		Sabbath day 23.1-3
		Sabbaths, keep 19.3
		Sabbaths, keep 19.30
Sabbatical year 23.10-11	Sabbatical year 15.1-3	Sabbatical year 25.2-7, 18-22
Sacrifice, to be without leavening and not left to morning 23.18	Sacrifice only in the place Yhwh chooses 12.8-16	
	Sacrifice: do not sacrifice defective animals 17.1	
Sex: bestiality forbidden 22.18	Sex: accusation of adultery and punishment 22.13-22	Sex: forbidden sexual relations 18

Sex: seduction of an unbetrothed virgin 22.15-16	Sex: bridegroom has year free from public duties 24.5	Sex: do not make daughter a harlot 19.29
	Sex: divorced woman who remarries cannot be taken back 24.1-4	Sex: forbidden sexual relations 20.10-21
	Sex: equal treatment of children from two wives 21.15-17	Sex: relations with slave promised to another 19.20-22
	Sex: laws about rape 22.23-29	
	Sex: prostitution 23.18-19	
	Sex: prohibition of marriage to father's wife 21.10-14	
	Sex: levirate marriage 25.5-10	
Slaves, proper treatment of 21.1-11	Slaves to be freed in seventh year 15.12-18	
Slaves, punishment of 21.20-21	Slave: do not return slave seeking refuge 23.16-17	Slaves: may have foreigners but Israelite must be released in jubilee 22.39-46
Slave, injury allows to go free 21.26-27		Slaves, redeem Israelite kinsman 22.47-55
		Steal, do not 19.11
		Steal: do not rob or defraud 19.13
Strangers not to be oppressed 22.20		Stranger, treat him as yourself 19.33-34
Strangers not to be oppressed 23.9		
	Tassels on the corners of garments 22.12	
	Tithe of the third year for the poor 16.12-15	
	Tithes and offerings to be taken to place Yhwh chooses 12.17-19	
	Tithe, festival 14.22-26	
	Tithe, poor 14.27-29	
	Tithe as a support of the priesthood 18.1-8	
	Vows: keep your vows or do not vow 23.22-24	
Widows and orphans not to be oppressed 22.21-23		

Witnesses, to not be false 23.1-3	Witnesses, law of 19.15-21	
	Yhwh, those excluded from congregation of 23.2-9	

A comparison between the various ‘codes’ shows unevenness in coverage. All three contain rulings on the following:

Table 8.2. *Rulings in All Three ‘Law Codes’*

Divination, prohibition of	Exod. 22.17; Lev. 19.31; 20.6, 27; Deut. 13.2-6; 18.9-22
Festivals, annual	Exod. 23.14-17; Lev. 23; Deut. 16.1-17
Food, various regulations on	Exod. 22.30; Lev. 17.2-9, 15-16; Deut. 12.20-25; 14.1-21; 23.25-26
Gods, command against worshipping those other than Yhwh	Exod. 20.20; 22.19; 23.13; Lev. 20.2-5; Deut. 12.1-7; 12.29-13.1; 13.7-19; 17.2-7
Justice to be given fairly	Exod. 23.1-3, 6-8; Lev. 19.15-16; Deut. 16.18-20; cf. Exod. 21.12-14; 21.37-22.3; 23.19; Deut. 17.8-13; 24.16; 25.1-3
Parents, respect for	Exod. 21.15, 17; Lev. 19.3; 20.9; Deut. 21.18-21
Poor, helping	Exod. 22.24-26; Lev. 19.9-10, 13; Deut. 15.4-11; 23.20-21; 24.14-15, 17-22
Sabbatical year	Exod. 23.10-11; Lev. 25.2-7, 18-22; Deut. 15.1-3
Sacrifice, regulations for offering	Exod. 23.18; Lev. 19.5-8; Deut. 12.8-16; 17.1
Sex, various regulations relating to	Exod. 22.15-16, 18; Lev. 18; 19.20-22, 29; 20.10-21; Deut. 21.10-17; 22.13-29; 23.1, 18-19; 24.1-5; 25.5-10
Slaves, treatment of	Exod. 21.1-11, 20-21, 26-27; Lev. 22.39-55; Deut. 15.12-18; 23.16-17; 25.5-10

This listing of apparent agreements is deceptive, however, since it mainly shows common themes, but there is only occasional agreement in detail. For example, although all three ‘codes’ discuss sacrificial regulations, they all address different aspects of sacrifice. There is very little overlap at the level of detail.

Other biblical books such as Ruth may also give us some insights into aspects of law in the Persian period. Several passages relate to the customary law, if not the civil law, of the time. We also have some contemporary evidence for actual legal practice in the Jewish community, but none of it is from Yehud itself. Yet some of the laws and legal practices known from outside Yehud may suggest what was customary in that province as well. From Wadi Daliyah we have

Deeds of the sale of slaves (this constitutes the bulk of our documents).

Pledges (often of slaves).

Release of a pledged slave.

Deed of the sale of property.

Receipt for repayment of a pledge.

Elephantine provides information on

- Deeds of the sale of property.
- Grants of property.
- Conveyance of slaves.
- Manumission of slaves.
- Grant of usufruct of property.
- Documents of wifehood.
- Document of betrothal(?)
- Lease of land.
- Withdrawals from claims of ownership.
- Apportionment of an inheritance.
- Document of adoption.
- Loans.
- Bequests.
- Deeds of obligation.
- Judicial oaths.
- Records of court cases.

In spite of the problems with using these legal traditions to understand the situation in Judah, they are valuable in giving a means of trying to evaluate the legal material in literary works. In several cases they contradict the biblical legal statements, but there are also clearly many parallels with actual society. The following are some of the areas where comparisons between sources provides commentary on law and justice in Yehud:

- There is no evidence from either Elephantine or Wadi Daliyah that slaves of one's own people were released after serving six years (*pace* Exod. 21.2-6; Deut. 15.12-15). Slaves, including those with Hebrew names, are sold 'in perpetuity'.
- Several of the Elephantine marriage contracts presuppose that a wife might divorce her husband (*TAD* B2.6.22-26 = *AP* 15.22-26; *TAD* B3.8.24-28; Muffs 1969: 3, 55). The Bible makes no pronouncement, but the presumption seems to be that only the husband had that right. Despite a different interpretation by a few modern scholars, present study does not indicate any Palestinian evidence for wives among the common people divorcing their husband in any Second Temple sources (cf. *JRSTP*: 304).
- As was normal in the ancient Near East, a woman would bring personal movable property into the marriage, her 'dowry', which remained hers and was usually inherited by her children, not her husband, at death. In addition, however, no restriction seems to be placed on the ownership of immovable property (real estate) by women. Several of the Elephantine documents record grants or gifts of property to women (*TAD* B2.3; B2.7; B3.5; B3.7; B3.10; B3.11 = *AP* 8, 13; *BM* 4, 6, 9, 10).
- One loan specifies interest of 5 per cent per month, or 60 per cent annual interest rate at simple interest (*TAD* B3.1; B4.2 = *AP* 10, 11). In one document interest has to be paid monthly or it is compounded (*TAD* B4.2 = *AP* 11). In one document the amount doubles if not paid off by a

specified year (B4.2); in another interest becomes 50 per cent if not paid (*TAD* B4.6 = *AP* 35). There is no hint that loans at interest were restricted, contrary to Exod. 22.24 and Deut. 23.20-21.

- The question of Naomi's property and its redemption by Boaz is an intriguing one (cf. Fischer 2002: 227-49). Ruth 4.1-12 seems to cite Deut. 25.5-10, yet the situation does not follow the expectations of the law in Deuteronomy. The next of kin can redeem the property, but marriage to Ruth seems to come with it. This is not levirate marriage, despite the allusion to Deuteronomy 25: the anonymous person with the original claim and Boaz are not brothers. When Boaz later marries Ruth, the children are seen as his and not those of her first husband Elimelech, which differs from the requirements of levirate marriage. Yet the unnamed kinsman who refuses to redeem the property has to remove his sandal, as was supposedly the case with levirate marriage; on the other hand, in the context this gesture seems to be simply a symbol of his refusing the redemption and not one of humiliation for refusing to do his duty, as in Deut. 25.5-10.
- We have no evidence for the observance of either the sabbatical or the jubilee year in the Persian period (cf. §10.2.3). It is clear that the sabbatical year was observed at least from the second century BCE on, which gives reason to think that it goes back much earlier. The jubilee years would have been a disaster for the people and the economy, however, and we have no evidence that it was ever observed.
- Leviticus 17.2-9 seems to forbid the eating of any domestic animal that has not been slaughtered at the altar. It has been argued that Yehud would be small enough to observe this law, but it ignores the difficulties that it would occasion farming people, especially pastoral groups for whom meat was a staple of diet. Even in a territory the size of Yehud it could take a couple of days to reach the central sanctuary and another couple to return. There is also the problem of preserving and transporting the meat. This is another impractical law or utopian law (Grabbe 2003a: 215-19; Schwartz 1996).
- Tithing is discussed in several different passages in an apparently contradictory way (Num. 18.8-32; Deut. 14.22-29; Lev. 27.30-33). Tithing in support of the temple is referred to in Nehemiah, but the place of the festival and poor tithe is uncertain, though they seem to have been observed in later Judaism in some fashion (Grabbe 1993: 71).
- One of the most impractical laws in the text is the death penalty for adultery. The ruling is given in uncompromising terms (Lev. 20.10). Yet as H. McKeating (1979) has pointed out, other passages tell a different story. For example, Prov. 6.32-35 discourages adultery not by reminding of the threat of being stoned to death but by pointing out the nasty things that the wronged husband might do to the adulterer. In most cases and in most communities, adultery was likely to have been dealt with by means other than judicial capital punishment.

There are several things we can conclude about law and jurisprudence in Yehud:

1. The biblical law codes mix cultic law with civil or community law, contrary to all other ancient Near Eastern law codes. This is no doubt due to the theological outlook of the literature in which the laws are preserved; however, it may also reflect the perspective of the community itself, in which no distinction was made between cultic and civil law.
2. The biblical laws do not always agree among themselves. This is probably due to a number of reasons, including the incorporation of laws from different periods of time or at different stages of development. Another apparent reason, though, is that different legal framers (or writers) had a different viewpoint about what the law should be and how it should be worded. This leads to another consideration:
3. The law codes in literary works cannot automatically be taken as the law prevailing in the community. This arises partly from a study of ancient Near Eastern law codes that show no evidence of having been seen as a law book for judges, as one might think, and partly from a comparison between the laws of the ‘biblical codes’ and those found within particular texts relating to actual situations.
4. The actual practice of law, as indicated by examples in other biblical books and by the documentation from Elephantine and Wadi Daliyah, differs at various points from that laid down in the biblical codes.
5. There does not seem to be a unified legal tradition among the Jews with regard to the drawing up and wording of documents. The Wadi Daliyah documents show an affinity with the (Neo-)Babylonian tradition, whereas those from Elephantine show more the influence of the Neo-Assyrian (§3.2.1).

#### **8.4. Women, Marriage, and Sexuality**

**Brosius** (1996) *Women in Ancient Persia*; **Crook** (1954) ‘The Marriageable Maiden of Prov. 31:10-31’; **Lyons** (1987) ‘A Note on Proverbs 31.10-31’; **McCreesh** (1985) ‘Wisdom as Wife’; **Solvang** (2003) *A Woman’s Place is in the House*; **Wolters** (1985) ‘*Sōpiyyā* (Proverbs 31:27) as Hymnic Participle’; **Yoder** (2001) *Wisdom as Woman of Substance*.

For long periods in antiquity, it is not usually possible for modern scholars to say much about the average man, much less the average woman. Literary sources tend to focus on the upper classes and the wealthy; thus, named individuals in the sources are usually the wealthy or the powerful, most frequently men but sometimes women. We have a few striking accounts about queens and a few other highly placed women, but the occasional find about an ordinary person is as rare as it is precious (e.g. the archives of the first-century Jewish women Babatha). The place of women in Second Temple Jewish society is discussed, with bibliography, in *JRSTP* (300-304; add Yoder 2001, which surveys the place of women in society in the Persian period). Many of the topics relating to Jewish women and marriage in

the Persian period are discussed in other sections of the present study. This section will simply draw attention to where these discussions can be found.

Legally, women were restricted in matters of inheritance, ownership, custody of children, and power to act as a free citizen. Socially, women were confined to a clearly defined sphere of activity which tended to centre around the home and family. The fact that the legal position of women and children was often unacceptable from a modern point of view (though that can be said of the position of women and children in many modern societies) should not allow us to assume that the complex relationships within a family that we know today were any different in antiquity. Neither legally nor socially were women and children 'mere chattels', in spite of restrictions placed on their activities (cf. Muffs 1969: 54–56).

There seems to have been no prohibition about the participation of women in the sacrificial cult. With regard to purification after childbirth, the woman herself is envisaged as participating in the sacrificial cult (Lev. 12.6). Although the general directions relating to sacrifice are addressed in the masculine form of the verb (whether singular or plural), this could be thought to include women under normal circumstances. Women are not specifically excluded in the P legislation. The separation of women from men seems to be a development of the temple in the later Second Temple period (cf. Josephus, *Apion* 2 §§102–104).

The place of women in public roles is difficult to ascertain since some of the stories of such are clearly fiction. For example, what should we glean about women from the story of Esther who is presented as becoming queen of Persia? Yet even a romantic novella such as Esther illustrates that royal women were important figures who exercised considerable power and influence (cf. Solvang 2003). There were probably no Jewish women in the royal Persian household (except possibly in very subordinate positions as servants), but even the very partial data we have relating to Judah indicate public activity on the part of some individual women. Although Nehemiah sees the prophetess Noadiah negatively, she must have been of sufficient stature in the community to need to mention her by name (Neh. 6.14). The woman Shelomith, known from her own individual seal impression, is intriguing because she seems to have had a public role, though exactly what that function was is still a matter of debate (§3.2.3.2).

Much farming was a family business, with the wife and children helping out as they were able. In this sort of arrangement, the important contribution made by women outside the home, as well as within, naturally gives them a greater say in the running of things than one in which they were confined to the home. The book of Ruth shows the chief woman protagonist providing for her mother-in-law by undertaking the arduous task of gleaning in the fields, indicating the fact that women in a farming community turn their hands to all sorts of tasks. The spheres of work of men and women in farming areas tend to overlap much more than in some other occupations, and women must help out with all kinds of work when harvest time or other periods of intense labour require every hand that can be mustered (cf. Lyons 1987).

Several passages from Proverbs have been widely dated to the Persian period, mainly chs. 1–9 and 31. The 'excellent wife' (or however one translates אֲשֶׁר־חَالֵל)

*'ēšet ḥayil*) of Prov. 31.10–31 is no doubt an idealized figure; in fact, it has been suggested that she is the figure of Wisdom known from Proverbs 1–9 (cf. McCreesh 1985; Wolters 1985). Other suggestions include an ideal for a girls' finishing school (Crook 1954), though whether it is reasonable to postulate the existence of such schools in the society of the time is another question (§7.2.6). Although it may well be an ideal, the picture in Proverbs 31 is compatible with the point already made, that women had considerable autonomy and responsibility in their domestic arrangements, including directing the activities of other women of the family and female servants: 'a composite figure of real, albeit exceptional, Persian-period women' (Yoder 2001: 113). The idea of a woman purchasing property (31.16) is in line with the legal right to own property known from Elephantine. Women continued to have legal possession of their dowries (even though the husband may have had the right to make use of it), and this might well include real estate. They seem to have even had the right to divorce in some cases. For further on the legal position of women, see above (§8.3).

A major issue for this period was the question of marriage to 'foreign' wives, discussed in detail below (§13.5). Some have seen these women in the figure of the 'strange woman' in Proverbs 1–9 and made comparisons with Ezra 9–10 (§4.6.1). On the question of sexuality, one of the most intriguing pieces of literature is the Song of Songs. If it is to be dated to the Persian period, as many think, it raises an important question of views on sexuality at this time. It seems to go against all the images of the straight-laced attitudes of the ancient Orient that apparently put the protection of a woman's honour above everything else. The book and its message are discussed above (§4.6.5).

### 8.5. The Calendar and Chronology

- Bickerman (1980) *Chronology of the Ancient World*; Blenkinsopp (1988) *Ezra–Nehemiah*; Boccaccini (2001) 'The Solar Calendars of Daniel and Enoch'; Clines (1974) 'The Evidence for an Autumnal New Year'; (1976) 'New Year'; M.E. Cohen (1993) *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East*; Cryer (1987) 'The 360-Day Calendar Year'; Depuydt (1995a) 'Regnal Years and Civil Calendar'; van Goudoever (1961) *Biblical Calendars*; Grabbe (1979) 'Chronography in Hellenistic Jewish Historiography'; Horn and Wood (1954) 'The Fifth-Century Jewish Calendar at Elephantine'; Jaubert (1953) 'Le calendrier des Jubilés et de la secte de Qumrân'; Lim (1992) 'The Chronology of the Flood Story'; Parker (1941) 'Persian and Egyptian Chronology'; (1955) 'Some Considerations on the Nature of the Fifth-Century Jewish Calendar'; Parker and Dubberstein (1956) *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.–A.D. 75*; Porten (1990) 'The Calendar of Aramaic Texts'; S. Stern (2001) *Calendar and Community*; VanderKam (1979) 'The Origin, Character and Early History of the 364-day Calendar'; (1998) *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls*; Wacholder and Wacholder (1995) 'Patterns of Biblical Dates and Qumran's Calendar'; Walker (1997) 'Achaemenid Chronology and the Babylonian Sources'; Zippor (1997) 'The Flood Chronology'.

Strictly speaking the calendar was a part of the administrative apparatus, since it would have been imposed by the authorities, as was the dating formula of documents. Yet the calendar was important not only for administrative and legal reasons (sessions of courts, payments of taxes) but also for much to do with daily life, such as market days, anniversaries, agricultural activities, and many other regular and seasonal activities in society. And of course not to be overlooked were the annual festivals and other religious observances (which coincidentally brought a welcome holiday). The question of which calendar was used is a much debated one (cf. Goudoever 1961; VanderKam 1998; S. Stern 2001).

The Babylonian calendar was widely used in the ancient Near East. The details of its content are well known, thanks to the abundance of cuneiform records (Parker and Dubberstein 1956). It was a lunisolar calendar; that is, its months were reckoned from new moon to new moon, but because the lunar year differs from the solar by being 11 days shorter, it was reconciled periodically by the insertion of an extra Ululu (the sixth month, August–September) or Addaru (twelfth month, February–March). Initially, this was done on an *ad hoc* basis to keep the beginning of the year in its proper season; with the growth of astronomical knowledge, however, it became clear that the solar and lunar years can be reconciled over a 19-year cycle. That is, 19 solar years are almost exactly the equivalent of 235 lunar months ( $12 \times 19 + 7$ ). Thus, if 7 extra months are inserted over the 19 years, the lunar and solar cycles are kept in line. By the later Persian period the cycle had become more or less fixed, so that an extra month was added in the years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 of the 19-year cycle (called the Metonic cycle, after the Greek mathematician who described it, though he seems to have got it ultimately from the Babylonians). Yet some uncertainty remains for the Persian period, both with regard to which years were intercalated and whether an extra Ululu or an extra Addaru was added (Walker 1997). The Babylonian calendar was adopted by the Persians after they conquered Babylonia and appears to have been the main calendar of the Persian empire. Yet other calendars were not ousted: the old Persian calendar continued to be used for Persian religious festivals and the Egyptian calendar was used in Egypt (or alongside the Babylonian in certain periods).

With regard to the Jewish community we have most knowledge about the Elephantine colony's calendrical usage (which also tells us much about the use of the Egyptian calendar). Many documents are dated by both an Egyptian date and a Babylonia or Jewish one (discussed below), though a number of documents have only an Egyptian date. The Egyptian calendar was a 365-day solar calendar. It lost approximately one day every four years, drifting back through the seasons until it reached its starting point after 1460 solar years, known as the Sothic cycle (cf. Depuydt 1995a: 153). Because the Egyptian calendar can be calculated precisely for its equivalence in the Julian calendar, any date corresponding to an Egyptian date can be known to the day. For religious purposes the community seems to have used the Babylonian calendar, judging from the example of the Passover (*TAD A4.1 = AP 21*).

There is little information about usage in Yehud directly, apart from the data in literary sources. In these the months generally are numbered rather than named

(Hag. 1.1, 15; 2.1, 10, 18; Zech. 1.1, 7; 7.3, 5; 8.19; Ezra 3.1, 5, 6, 8; 6.19; 7.8, 9; 8.31; 10.9, 16, 17; Neh. 8.1, 2, 14 [ET 7.73; 8.2, 14]). The Babylonian names of months are used in a few instances, however: Neh. 1.1; 2.1; 6.15—all of which seem to be part of the NM. Several passages in Zechariah have both a number and a name: 1.7 (eleventh month/Shevat); 7.1 (ninth/Kislev).

We do not have primary evidence for the calendar from Yehud; however, we have information from ostraca from the area of Edom almost all of which contain dates (though these are not always legible). The months are almost always named and include the Babylonian names of all twelve months of the year: Nisan, Iyyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Ab, Elul, Tishri, Marheshvan, Kislev, Tebeth, Shebat, Adar. Several ostraca contain dates in ‘the other Adar’ (**אָדָר אֶחָד** *dr ’hry* [Eph’al and Naveh 1996: #11, #28]). Unfortunately, this does not tell us whether the calendar being used was the Babylonian or the Jewish, though the two were very similar, if not identical. Porten (1990: 32) found no evidence of a distinctive Jewish calendar, separate from the Babylonian, at Elephantine.

The Babylonian calendar began in the spring. It has been often assumed that the Jewish calendar was autumn to autumn, with the new year in Tishri (September–October). Evidence for this is thought to be found in Nehemiah: Neh. 1.1 gives the date of Kislev (November–December), twentieth year of Artaxerxes, whereas Neh. 2.1 is dated to Nisan (March–April), also in Artaxerxes’s twentieth year. Since Nisan would be the first month in a year of spring-to-spring reckoning, Neh. 2.1 should give Artaxerxes’s twenty-first year if the calendar being used had a spring new year; therefore, it is argued, this is evidence for an autumn-to-autumn calendar. This argument would be convincing if this was the only evidence we had; however, there are other biblical passages that give a spring-to-spring reckoning. Most notable is Exodus 12, which forms part of the Priestly (P) document; Exodus 12 clearly states that the calendar begins in the spring with the month of Nisan. There are several ways of explaining the text in Nehemiah (cf. Williamson 1985: 169–70; Blenkinsopp 1988: 205), but the simplest is to assume a scribal error.

Since a seminal article by A. Jaubert (1953), it has been widely argued that there is evidence for the use of an old priestly solar calendar in some biblical texts (see also VanderKam 1979; Boccaccini 2001). Reducing all such passages to the 364-day calendar known from Qumran, as some do, is simplistic. For example, some texts presuppose a 360-day year, and it is not possible to assimilate all these to the 364-day model. The question is whether we are dealing with an actual calendar, used in real life, or a theoretical calendar constructed for theological reasons. The latter is suggested by a number of studies (Cryer 1987; Lim 1992; Zipor 1997; Wacholder and Wacholder 1995). The argument is complex, with a number of different facets, and a full discussion is postponed until a later volume of this History.

Chronological reckoning was normally by the reign of the Persian king, as indicated by legal documents and even ostraca from Elephantine, Idumaea, and Samaria. It is rather surprising how quickly knowledge of a new ruler spread across the ancient Near East. Thus, even the common people would be aware of the current ruler. Thanks to cuneiform records we have a good general framework for the Persian period, though sometimes individual events present a problem. For

Jewish history, however, there is a major question as to how well the information about Mesopotamian rulers was remembered by the later compilers of the literature. Ezra–Nehemiah provides a good example. These books know only two Dariuses (Neh. 12.22) and one Artaxerxes. Is this because the third Darius and the second and third Artaxerxes had not yet ruled when they were finally compiled—or had they simply been forgotten? We also notice that the year dates through Ezra seem to form a sequence that may be due to the art of the compiler rather than an actual knowledge of the dates of events (Grabbe 1998a: 98–99): first year (of Cyrus [Ezra 1.1]), second year (of Darius [4.24], sixth year (of Darius [6.15]), seventh year (of Artaxerxes [7.7–8]). Finally, the date for completing the temple (sixth year of Darius [6.15]) happens to be 70 years after its destruction (2 Kgs 25.8; Jer. 52.12). These suggestions of stereotyped dates do not give us reason to put much confidence in the dates in Ezra 4–7.

In many other Second Temple writings we find evidence of dates that have been worked out according to stereotyped patterns rather than being based on actual historical data (Grabbe 1979; *JRSTP*: 246–48). This situation was not new, however, since we find use of such artificial dating in what are probably earlier texts in the Bible. For example, the book of Judges is structured around the figure 40 (including multiples or fractions of 40: Judg. 3.10, 30; 4.3; 8.28; 13.1; 15.20; 16.31). The figure in 1 Kgs 6.1 looks like twelve periods of 40 years. The best examples tend to be in literature later in the Second Temple period, but the concept evidently has a long history. Whether dates are likely to be based on known historical data or are simply stereotyped creations of the author cannot be reduced to hard-and-fast rules. Each context has to be examined in its own right.

## Chapter 9

### ECONOMY

Economic considerations cannot be neatly separated from discussion of the society and the administration of Yehud, and even the religion, as will become clear below. The decision was made to treat the economy in a separate chapter, however, because of its importance. Also, although the discussion here could be expanded many times (especially in certain areas), even this admittedly curtailed survey of some economic factors takes up a significant amount of space.

#### **9.1. General Comments on the Ancient Economy**

**Briant** (1982) *Rois, tributs et paysans*; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*; **Dandamaev** (1984) *Slavery in Babylonia*; **Dandamaev and Lukonin** (1989) *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*; **J.K. Davies** (1984) ‘Cultural, Social and Economic Features of the Hellenistic World’; **Diakonov (ed.)** (1969) *Ancient Mesopotamia*; **Dunn** (1982) *The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production*; **Elayi** (1990a) *Economie des cités phéniciennes sous l’Empire Persé*; **Finley** (1985) *The Ancient Economy*; **Garnsey (ed.)** (1980) *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World*; **Garnsey and Saller** (1987) *The Roman Empire*; **Garnsey and Whittaker (eds.)** (1983) *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity*; **Garnsey et al. (eds.)** (1983) *Trade in the Ancient Economy*; **Grainger** (1991) *Hellenistic Phoenicia*; **Hamel** (1990) *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine*; **Heltzer** (1992a) *Die Organisation des Handwerks im ‘Dunklem [sic] Zeitalter’*; **Krader** (1975) *The Asiatic Mode of Production*; **Kreissig** (1973) *Die sozialökonomische Situation in Juda*; (1977a) ‘Landed Property in the “Hellenistic Orient”’; (1977b) ‘Tempelland, Katoiken, Hierodulen im Seleukidenreich’; **O’Leary** (1989) *The Asiatic Mode of Production*; **Pastor** (1997) *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine*; **de Ste. Croix** (1981) *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*; **Schottroff** (1982) ‘Zur Sozialgeschichte Israels in der Persezeit’; **Silver** (1985) *Economic Structures of the Ancient Near East*; **Svenckaja** (1977) ‘Some Problems of Agrarian Relations in the Province of Asia’; **Welwei** (1979) ‘Abhängige Landbevölkerungen auf “Tempelterritorien”’; **Whittaker** (1980) ‘Rural Labour in Three Roman Provinces’; **Will** (1985) ‘Pour une “Anthropologie Coloniale”’; **Zaccagnini** (1983) ‘Patterns of Mobility among Ancient Near Eastern Craftmen’.

As discussed in the historical survey in Chapter 1 (§1.2) the historical discipline has become very diversified in the last century or so. A great deal of emphasis began to be placed on aspects of history beyond political history or the ‘history of events’. Many studies now focus on the social, the economic, the cultural, and the lives of

ordinary men and women. These not only constitute an aspect of history in their own right but are also important factors in historical change. Only a brief discussion of a complex subject is possible here. The rest of this section will draw attention to some of the main areas that will be important for Yehud.

### **9.1.1. Difficulties of Socio-Economic Studies on Ancient History**

As several scholars have pointed out (e.g. Finley 1985: 17-34, and the essays in Garnsey [ed.] 1980 and Garnsey and Whittaker [eds.] 1983), there are formidable obstacles to extracting economic and sociological data from the sources. The sort of information available in ancient sources does not lend itself to statistical analysis, and there is a constant danger of ignoring the limits of the data extant. We usually know very little even when there appears to be abundant detail. Many different interpretations are often possible, and much depends on one's starting point or inclinations. A good example of this are the numbers in ancient texts, such as those relating to the size of armies or populations. In a striking example, Finley (1985: 24) notes how even so careful a historian as Thucydides gives a figure for the number of escaped slaves during a particular period in the Peloponnesian War, for which he could not have had any properly recorded count. Any statistical data extracted from literary sources are generally suspect. A good example can be found in the numbers given for opposing armies in the books of Maccabees. The numbers for the Jewish forces are probably underestimated whereas those for the Seleucid armies are clearly exaggerated (*JCH*: 291-92). For a further discussion on the question of populations and demography, see below (§9.3.2).

### **9.1.2. The Understanding of Economic Theory in Antiquity**

One of the problems encountered in recent study of antiquity is the assumption that ancient states and empires can be understood in the light of modern economic theory. Thus, one sees terms such as 'investment', 'economic policy', 'agro-business', and the like which, in some cases, fit the situation only in the post-World War II world. It seems that the ancient empires had little understanding of economic theory and cannot have had a conscious economic policy beyond a very rudimentary one. The entire Roman economy was underdeveloped (Garnsey and Saller 1987: 43-44, 41-52), and if this was so for it, how much more for the Persian and Hellenistic kingdoms? The importance of major investment was evidently not realized at the time. If the Roman government did not invest in the provinces and client states, neither did it invest in Italy and Rome. It was found convenient to provide certain public works in Rome itself, as well as to supply a corn dole and public spectacles to keep the masses from rioting, but this seems to have been the extent of public economic planning (Garnsey and Saller 1987: 56). As we shall see below, the Persian empire could hardly have been more enlightened.

### **9.1.3. Interests of Imperial Powers**

The ancient Near East throughout this period was more or less dominated by what in modern terms would be called 'colonial powers'. One can argue the case that the ancient empires differed in many ways from the colonial empires of post-medieval

Europe, though studies drawing on modern sociological studies of colonialism can be useful (e.g. Will 1985). The ancient imperial power seems to have had two main interests: taxes and military service. Its ‘economic policy’ was simply one of maximizing revenue from a short-term point of view, not in making what today we would consider longer-term investments. While it would probably be wrong to claim that the dominant power had no concern for the welfare of those ruled, this was not high on the list of priorities. Thus, there was not a great impetus to invest in the subordinate peoples and nations of the empire. These were treated simply as milk cows, as producers of wealth for the ruling power. Reasonable relations had to be maintained with the local administration which was often made up of the native elite. Certain institutions, such as cities and temples, were frequently honoured (e.g. Athens). There were also building projects such as cities, harbours, aqueducts, and roads, but it was usually the colonial power—especially its military—which benefited most, even if not solely, from these.

#### **9.1.4. Agriculture vs. Commerce**

The economy of this entire period was agrarian, whether one has in mind the Achaemenid or the Roman empire. Trade had an important niche in each period, but it was always very much secondary to farming (cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Oeconomica* 1.2; there were always some exceptions, such as the Phoenician cities). Despite some technological developments through the centuries, work on the land changed little in the Near East (and much of the Mediterranean world) over several millennia. Farming methods were primitive and labour-intensive, yielding only a small surplus on average. The vast majority of the population was employed in agrarian activities, and most wealth derived from the land. Those who were well off (a small minority) almost always derived their wealth from land holdings. Even those few who made their fortune from mercantile activities usually invested it in land rather than back into trading (Garnsey and Saller 1987: 44-45). This is naturally a simplified picture, but the overall truth of it must be kept in mind in any socio-economic discussion.

#### **9.1.5. The ‘Asiatic Mode of Production’**

In most of the ancient Near East (whether in the Persian, the Hellenistic, or the Roman periods), the basis of production was allegedly that of the ‘free’ peasant who farmed land, whether privately owned or not, by means of his own labour and that of his family. The peasant was free only in relative terms, of course, since he was bound to the soil by tradition and by the requirements of taxation and corvée labour, but he was not a slave to be sold or disposed of according to the whim of a master. This type of economy is often referred to as the ‘Asiatic mode of production’. In this system, the basis of production was the village and its inhabitants who engaged mainly in subsistence farming (Krader 1975: 286-96; O’Leary 1989: 16-18). What little commodity trade existed was by and large for immediate local consumption, without significant division of labour. That is, each village had its craftsmen to make certain essential products, but this was done mainly by individual workers producing for local needs and not for distant export. Production may

have (though not necessarily) made considerable use of irrigation systems ('hydraulic technology'). The small agricultural surplus was extracted by the ruling class (more or less the state officialdom) through taxes and forced labour on behalf of the state. The ruling class usually centred around an absolute monarch who ruled with the help of the nobility (often referred to as 'Oriental despotism'). The concepts of both capital investment and private property were only weakly developed. Land was worked mainly on a family and community level rather than privately. Indeed, in theory the land belonged to the king, but regardless of who was thought to own the land, the villagers had no choice about the payment of taxes and other dues such as corvée labour. There was no large-scale merchant class.

The concept originated with Marx and Engels and has been debated especially in Marxist circles, often dominated by ideological or political concerns (cf. Dunn 1982). It is not my purpose to enter into this debate as such, except as it relates to our immediate concern. Whether or not they used the actual term, however, many writers have operated with a concept along the lines of the Asiatic mode of production. While the recent critique of O'Leary is fundamental, his own conclusions are a bit unclear, partly because his ultimate aim is to evaluate the viability of the thesis of historical materialism. The specific empirical test he applies is that of Indian history, and he concludes that the Asiatic mode of production does not stand up in that case. Nevertheless, he seems to allow that it may be valid for other areas (O'Leary 1989: 234; similar statement on 331):

Relatively centralized and autonomous pre-industrial state structures, capable of considerable fiscal exploitation of administratively subordinated urban settlements and corporate agrarian village communities, were features in some pre-industrial socio-political landscapes.

Few historians have written on the economic and social history of Persia, but two who have (P. Briant and H. Kreissig) both argue on the basis of the Asiatic mode of production. The perplexities involved are indicated in O'Leary's defence of Briant and Kreissig against the attack of another Marxist historian, G. de Ste. Croix (O'Leary 1989: 231-33; de Ste. Croix 1981: 29, 155-56, 544 n. 15). His criticisms of de Ste. Croix suggest that he might accept something not too different from the Asiatic mode of production for portions of the ancient Near East in the Persian and Hellenistic periods.

#### **9.1.6. Dependent Labour**

Recognition of broad agreement with the thesis of an 'Asiatic mode of production' in the previous section does not require that it be embraced dogmatically or in all its detail. The situation was complex in both the Graeco-Roman world and in the East. A fundamental point is that the economies of Greece and Rome were not actually slave based as so often asserted. The economy of the Graeco-Roman world has frequently been contrasted with that of the ancient Near East. It is regularly affirmed that the economies of both ancient Greece and Roman were slave based, meaning that slave labour was the prime productive force in all areas of the economy, whether farming, building, shipping, or mining. The Athenian or Italian

small holder might work alongside his slaves, but it was still normal to have them. Nevertheless, although both Greece and Rome made considerable use of slaves, this was mainly as domestics and in certain specialized forms of labour. The backbone of the economy, however, was still the free farmer or worker. There were *latifundia* (large, slaved-worked estates) in both the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, but despite the attention given to these, they were not the major producers overall (Finley 1985: 70-71, 179; Whittaker 1980: 77-79).

In both the eastern and the western parts of the Mediterranean world, there was a complete spectrum of agrarian labourers, all the way from chattel-slaves to free peasants. Slavery was characteristic of the Babylonian area and certain other cultural centres of Persia, as well as perhaps many of the Greek areas of Asia Minor (Dandamaev 1984; Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989: 152-77; cf. de Ste. Croix 1981: 155-56). Yet even here the economy was not primarily slaved based: slave labour still did not play the leading role in the economy, nor were slaves widely used in agricultural work on large estates, whether of landowners or the king (Dandamaev 1984: 649-52, 660-61). Also, while some craftsmen were slaves (e.g. weavers), the general situation was that craftsmen were free individuals but usually palace dependents, thus very comparable to serfs in the agrarian area (Zaccagnini 1983).

In most areas, dependent labour was the norm, such workers commonly being referred to in Greek sources as *laoi* ('peoples'), though other terms were also used, not always with a clear delineation (Whittaker 1980: 83-86; Briant 1982: 114-16). The main conclusion to be drawn is that a great variety of such dependent labour was in existence (Kreissig 1977a; Briant 1982: 95-135; J.K. Davies 1984: 300-301; Whittaker 1980: 83-84). Part of the reason for the variety was the different types of estate on which they worked; for example, those on temple estates may have had a different status than those on royal land (Welwei 1979; Kreissig 1977b). However, the legal question was often less important than the reality (J.K. Davies 1984: 296-97; Hamel 1990: 152): land held in long-term tenancy often came into *de facto* ownership (especially with cleruchy land), while those legally free were often tied to the soil by custom, debt, and other factors (Whittaker 1980: 84-89).

### 9.1.7. *Wealth, Poverty, and the Tax Burden*

Much is often built on assumptions about wealth and poverty, and especially about the tax burden, as it relates to the average person. One frequently comes across statements in literature on the Old Testament or New Testament or Judaism about how difficult things were for the average person because of the crushing taxes. This was no doubt true for some and may very well have been true for many, but it is difficult to estimate. We do not actually know in most cases what taxes were paid, what percentage of one's income they made up, or how much they impinged on day-to-day living (§9.2 on the Persian period). No one welcomes taxes, and most complain about them at some time or other, but to what extent they actually make people's lives a misery is hard to quantify. Most people lived at subsistence level and would be considered in grinding poverty by modern standards. Whether men or women, we know little about them. There was no middle class to speak of, only the vast numbers of the poor and the tiny few of the rich. The difference in wealth

between the upper class and the masses was enormous, whatever differences there were between individuals within each class. Still, what we would call abject poverty seems to have been widely accepted in antiquity, and circumstances other than poverty or wealth can be the major occasion for discontent or acquiescence (cf. Hamel 1990: 94-101).

A good example to illustrate how modern scholars seem to have a fixation on poverty and the class divide comes from the area of Phoenicia. In what is on the whole an excellent study, J. Elayi (1990a: 61-70) discusses the tax burden and emphasizes how heavy it was; however, she immediately goes on to show how prosperous the Phoenician cities actually were (1990: 70-76) without seeming to recognize the contradiction created by her first assumption (that the tax burden was excessive). The data given by Elayi make it clear that we do not really know how heavily the taxes fell on the individuals during this time. As J.D. Grainger (1991: 23) has pointed out, the support of army units garrisoned in one's own territory was a drain on the local people. Yet the presence of this large number of people was also an opportunity to make profits. An army unit had its wages and nowhere else to spend them but in the area where they were billeted.

## **9.2. The Persian Empire in General**

**Altheim** (1951) Review of G.G. Cameron, *The Persepolis Treasury Tablets*; **Briant** (1982) *Rois, tributs et paysans*; **Briant and Herrenschmidt (eds.)** (1989) *Le tribut dans l'empire perse*; **Dandamaev and Lukonin** (1989) *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*; **Graf** (1994) 'The Persian Royal Road System'; **Heltzer** (1992b) 'The Provincial Taxation in the Achaemenian Empire'; **Rostovtzeff** (1941) *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*; **Silver** (1985) *Economic Structures of the Ancient Near East*; **Stolper** (1985) *Entrepreneurs and Empire*; (1989b) 'On Interpreting Tributary Relationships'; **Tuplin** (1987a) 'The Administration of the Achaemenid Empire'; **Yardeni** (1994) 'Maritime Trade and Royal Accountancy.'

The problems with studying the economy in the ancient world were noted in the previous section. For the Persian period, some useful sources of data have become available in recent years, such as the Elamite texts, but we are still overly dependent on the classical sources such as Herodotus and Diodorus. One particularly useful source is (Pseudo-)Aristotle's *Oeconomica*. Although traditionally included in Aristotle's corpus of writings, the *Oeconomica* is generally agreed to have been compiled in the early Greek period from a variety of writings, including Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and Aristotle's *Politics* but also some sources now lost (§6.14). It appears to contain information on the Persian empire which is sometimes cited explicitly by name.

One of the most useful sections of the *Oeconomica* is book 2 which distinguishes various types or levels of government: monarchic, satrapial, city, private citizen (2.1.1-6). The first are the ones of main interest to us. To the 'monarchic' Pseudo-Aristotle assigns the four categories of money (the regulation of prices), exports and imports (the disposal of tribute collected by the regional governors for profit),

and expenditure (the reduction of costs where necessary). The contents of the Persepolis tablets show a surprising agreement with this schema (Altheim 1951; HPE: 451-52) in the administrative operations of assessment, warehousing, archiving, and distribution. The tribute was brought in ('imported'), stored in the treasury depots and warehouses, distributed or sold to officials as part of the business of the state (at predetermined prices), the surplus sold for profit ('export'), and a record kept of each transaction.

Under the second—'satrapial'—Pseudo-Aristotle lists six different classes of revenues: (1) from the land, by which is meant the tithe on agricultural produce; (2) from other products of the countryside, meaning the mineral wealth; (3) from markets; (4) from taxes on land and sales; (5) from the tithe or first-fruits of cattle; and (6) from other sources, that is, the poll tax and the tax on crafts (2.1.4). Although the precise system still eludes us, most of these taxes can be exemplified from other sources, though some of these must be inferred from later Greek sources. Examples of taxes on agricultural produce, animal products, market transactions, and the yields of mines are all known (HPE: 399-401, 439-42).

As far as we can tell, the basic economic and social structures of the Persian empire were mainly a continuation of those extant under the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires, though naturally these varied from area to area. There were also new developments over time. As with both previous and subsequent empires, the primary aim of the government in this sphere was to promote a stable status quo which allowed the collection of as much revenue as possible. In order to do this, the Persians seem generally to have tried to keep the various entities in submission by certain concessions to local custom (e.g. respecting local cults and deities). Nevertheless, they had no hesitation in gaining or maintaining territory by the use of military might.

As already described above (§9.1.5), the economic basis was mainly agrarian. The term 'Asiatic mode of production' is often used of the economic structure. Whether or not this designation is appropriate, production was characterized primarily by free peasant labour. That is, agrarian workers were not slaves, though they were often dependent in the sense of being bound to the soil by law or circumstances (HPE: 456-60). Their condition may often have been no better than that of slaves, but their status was technically different. Some owned their own land, though many worked as tenants on the various estates owned by the aristocracy and the wealthy, especially royal lands. Slavery was characteristic of some areas, such as Babylonia and perhaps many of the Greek areas of Asia Minor, but the overall characteristic was free or semi-free labour rather than slavery.

The desire to exploit the empire for the maximum amount of revenue possible meant the introduction of some new measures under the Persians. Darius I (re)organized the empire into twenty fiscal regions (not necessarily equivalent to the formal satrapies), with a fixed amount of annual tribute due from each one (Herodotus 3.89-94). This seems to have been carefully calculated on the ability of each to pay and was realistic on the whole. Taxation was systematic and thorough, from the references we have (HPE: 388-471); however, we have no indication that it was more oppressive than under previous overlords. A further requirement which might

have been crushing in certain cases was the maintenance of the army and the royal court. The local people also had to provide for the royal court when it moved around the empire (*HPE*: 402–405). The army was more complicated (*HPE*: 405, 454–55). Garrison troops seem to have been paid by the Persian administration (cf. the soldiers at Elephantine). The ‘territorial reserves’ were not maintained at royal expense but instead received allotments of land that provided for their needs (though these were taxed, like any other). The holder was expected to drop everything and go to be mustered when called, taking with him his armaments and other needs. On the other hand, when armies were assembled, the local people inevitably suffered, even more so when there was fighting and the armies of both sides lived off the land (cf. the many examples in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*).

The total amount of tribute from each area seems to have been determined by the king (cf. *HPE*: 393–94). It was then up to the satraps to collect it. There is no indication that they had discretion over the matter. Only the king could exempt from taxation, but this seems to have been a rare occurrence. It is true that some sections of the empire only paid ‘gifts’ rather than ‘tribute’, but the assumption that this implied autonomous discretion to pay what they wanted is contradicted by a systematic survey of the evidence (*HPE*: 394–99). Paying a ‘gift’ rather than ‘tribute’ may have had a certain symbolic significance, but the king determined who paid the one or the other and also the level of the ‘gift’ for those who paid the latter (*HPE*: 399). In any case, this was very much the exception and was due to special circumstances in each case (cf. §7.3.3).

A major question is: What was the level of taxation and how much of a burden was it on the general populace? As noted above (§9.1.7), the level of taxation was unlikely to have been more severe than under previous empires. There is evidence that a tax new in concept was introduced under the Persians, the sales tax (Stolper 1989b: 152–53). It was apparently applied to slave sales, though whether it was extended more generally is difficult to know. Indeed, trying to determine the types and rates of tax is difficult (cf. the essays in Briant and Herrenschmidt [eds.] 1989 and the discussion in Heltzer 1992b). We have the one striking example in a document from Egypt that records the customs duties on shipping over a period of about a year: the rate was a precise 10 per cent, down to the contents of the sailors’ pockets (*TAD* C3.7; Yardeni 1994). The problem is to know what the ultimate effect of this was. P. Briant puts the problem clearly (*HPE*: 809):

The real problem is that it is very difficult to assess the actual burden imposed by the various tributes and taxes paid to the Great King in relation to the production capacities of the countries; without this information, it is also difficult to infer that the tribute and taxes were an exhausting burden on the people.

All the efforts of the Persian government appear to have gone into realizing revenue from a short-term perspective. The king had ‘crown lands’, huge estates that also provided income, though a portion of these would be distributed to his nobles and favourites to hold at the king’s discretion (*HPE*: 415–21). These were not held free of charge, however, but were taxed like all other agricultural areas (e.g. *TAD* A6.13; A6.14 = *AD* 10–11). Otherwise, most of the imperial income came from

taxation which was gathered and then dispersed to pay state expenses (often locally, because of the difficulties of transport over long distances). The Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Tablets (§5.3) give examples of how the tribute was used on state business. There is also evidence that any surplus of the tribute could be sold off for profit to the state at the discretion of the satrap (*HPE*: 451–56). The satraps no doubt passed down a good deal of the responsibility for collecting the tribute to the provincial governors, but there is little indication that they tried to micro-manage the local economy. The concept of investing in regional or local projects for long-term gain does not seem to have been part of their thinking. Some of the things done (e.g. building the road network) would have been a useful boost to the economy, but this seems to have been a bi-product of work done for an entirely different purpose (e.g. the military).

This does not mean that all the Persian rulers did was to extract the surplus from the empire without concern for the producers. Greek authors such as Xenophon (*Oeconomicum*) and Pseudo-Aristotle (*Oeconomica*) write admiringly of the Persian fiscal management of the empire. Xenophon's treatise is admittedly idealized, but its general point that the king regarded it as his duty to see that his territories were populated and well managed (cf. 4.5–11) is supported by the other information we have (*HPE*: 804–809). It is only common sense that uncultivated land and areas without a sufficient population to work it were detrimental to the royal purse. What we do not have evidence of is a sophisticated understanding of economic theory that translated into long-term ‘investment’ and development that we take for granted today nor a heavy-handed interference at local level to try to manage the economy.

It has been argued that the Persians required payment of tribute in precious metal, so that rather than the metal being coined and put into circulation, it was hoarded centrally and gradually made silver and gold more and more scarce (Olmstead 1948: 297–99). It is true that one of the main needs for precious metal was to pay mercenary forces and to influence decisions among potential enemies, in particular the Greeks, and the golden ‘darics’ seem to have been minted precisely to do this. Yet the evidence is that tribute could normally be collected in kind at local level (*HPE*: 406–10; Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989: 177–95). Whatever hoarding of silver and gold took place, it did not prevent the coining of silver denominations at local level (§3.4), and these seem to have been primarily for commerce, not payment of tribute. The Murašu documents, for example, show no evidence of shortage of money in Babylonia of the late fifth century (Stolper 1985: 150–51).

### 9.3. The Economy of Yehud

#### 9.3.1. Geographical Context of Yehud

Baly (1984) ‘The Geography of Palestine and the Levant’; Carter (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*; Hopkins (1985) *The Highlands of Canaan*; (1987) ‘Life on the Land’; Keel, Küchler and Uehlinger (1982–84) *Orte und Landschaften der Bibel*.

This history of the peoples of Palestine was very much shaped by their physical geography: the geology, climate, vegetation, types of agricultural land, routes of communication, and other physical surroundings. The area of Judah was less fertile and more isolated than some other parts of the country; this is why during the monarchic period the kingdom of Judah always took a back seat to the kingdom of Israel to the north which on the whole had better resources and more favourable geography. The Northern Kingdom was more easily accessed by invaders, however, which meant that it more often felt the devastations of hostile powers.

The rainfall and soil fertility vary greatly over a very small geographical area. The most agriculturally productive regions of Palestine were outside Judah: the central Valley of Jezreel, the Sharon and coastal plain, the Shephelah. Extending south from the Valley of Jezreel is the hill country that forms the spine of the country, reaching to the Judaean Desert and the Negev, and incorporates the Samarian Highlands (Mt Manasseh and Mt Ephraim), the Judaean Highlands (including the Bethel Hills and the Hebron Hills), and the Negev Highlands. Even here the northern part of the Samarian Hills tends to provide a more favourable context for agriculture than some other parts of the hill country, with its higher rainfall, more rolling hills, and good soil for growing in general. Much is dependent on rainfall, which tends to diminish as one moves south. The higher section of the hill country also causes a rain shadow so that rainfall rapidly diminishes the further east one goes from the ridge of hills. The result is that the eastern slope down to the Jordan River is mainly useful for animal husbandry rather than crops except where the Jordan can be used for irrigation (or the oasis around Jericho).

Apart from the question of average rainfall there has been the perennial problem of major variations in precipitation from site to site and from year to year (Hopkins 1985: 84–94). An annual rainfall of 300 mm is the minimum required for most farming, but even when adequate precipitation falls the timing can be crucial. Rain needs to be distributed through the six months of the rainy season (from October to April) to allow ploughing and planting at the beginning, a good period of growth peaking in the middle three months, and a gradual tapering off toward the end. Failure of rain in the first or last parts of the rainy season—even if otherwise adequate—can be a major problem. Out of a ten-year period there will be three or four years in which the rains come too late or stop too early. Equally possible is that two or even several such years can come in a row, exhausting reserves and creating a potential for famine. Farming in Judah would always be a risky business with the threat of serious crop failure an ever-present spectre in the background.

During the Persian period the province of Judah was limited basically to the Judaean hill country with all the relative disadvantages that this region had in comparison with some other parts of Palestine such as Samaria. The arid zone centring on the Jordan Valley widens toward the south, and Jerusalem is right on its edge. Much of the soil of the Judaean part of the hill country is Senonian chalk, which is easy to cultivate and forms a good base for routes of travel but is not particularly fertile. The steppe region comes north as far as Hebron, though cultivation extends as far south as Beersheba on the western part of the region. One of the most desolate places is the Wilderness of Judea which extends along the western side of

the Dead Sea. Its proximity to Jerusalem and other centres of population, however, made it an accessible place of refuge for fugitives throughout history. There are oases at En-gedi and Jericho and some springs along the coast also permitted significant settlements.

The area of Yehud was approximately 2000 km<sup>2</sup> (or roughly 800 miles<sup>2</sup>). The area covered by the province could be divided into four main ecological niches: the western slopes, the central hill country, the desert fringe, and the Judaean desert (Carter 1999: 100-13), the first three of which can be further sub-divided into the northwestern and southwestern slopes; the north central, central, and south central hills; and the northern and southern desert fringe. The population statistics are quite revealing about the settlement pattern in the province (Carter 1999: 203-12). Of the ecological niches, the Judaean desert took up about 40 per cent of the area of the province, yet had hardly any inhabitants apart from those at the oases of Jericho and En-gedi (c. 3-4 per cent of the population). In the remaining 60 per cent of the land area, the rainfall and fertility varied considerably. Much of the desert fringe has an average above 300 mm (with an overall average of 400 mm), but many years would be below that. It thus tends to support a mixed economy of agrarian and pastoral activity, meaning a much less dense settlement pattern, especially as one moves from north to south (c. 13 per cent).

The bulk of the population lived in the central hill country and the western slopes. The western slopes had 18-20 per cent of the population; however, this figure masks the fact that the northern slopes contained most of this population, with only 2-3 per cent on the southern slopes. The central hill country had approximately 65 per cent of the population. All three of the sub-divisions had a concentrated population, but the central hills were the most dense, with a focal point in the area of highest rainfall to the southwest of Bethlehem. The main area of population was basically a wedge or Y shape, taking in the northern part of the province (north-western slopes, northern hills, northern desert fringe) and the central hill country (central hills, southern hills). Almost 90 per cent of the sites were inhabited by fewer than 300 people (Carter 1999: 216, 221). What this demonstrates is that Judah was mainly made up of people living in unwalled farming villages, with Jerusalem the only urban area of any significant size. With about 3000 people at its largest Jerusalem had approximately 10 per cent of the province's inhabitants living in it.

### 9.3.2. Demography of Yehud

**Broshi** (2001) 'Estimating the Population of Ancient Jerusalem'; **Broshi and Finkelstein** (1992) 'The Population of Palestine in Iron Age II'; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: 185-248*; **Dever** (1997) 'Archaeology, Urbanism, and the Rise of the Israelite State'; **Grabbe** (2001c) 'Sup-urbs or Only Hyp-urbs?'; **Heltzer** (2002) Review of C.E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud*; **Hoglund** (1991) 'The Achaemenid Context'; **Lipschits** (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; **McGing** (2002) 'Population and Proselytism'; **Van De Mieroop** (1997) *The Ancient Mesopotamian City*; **Zorn** (1995a) 'Estimating the Population Size of Ancient Settlements'.

One of the most discussed—and contested—topics of Judaean society is that of population. How many people actually lived in the province? What was the population at different times? Where did they live? The list of ‘returnees’ in Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7 gives the figure of approximately 42,000 for those who supposedly returned during the time of Zerubbabel and Joshua. Yet the list itself seems partly made up of settlements rather than groups of people, suggesting to many scholars that the list is some sort of census list made rather later than the time of Darius I (cf. §4.1.3.4.1). The question is to what extent any faith can be placed in these numbers and, if they seem at all reliable, how far to extrapolate from them to the total population.

Estimating the populations of ancient towns and cities is a difficult task, and only a brief discussion can be given here (see the survey in Grabbe 2001c; to the bibliography, add McGing 2002). M. Van De Mieroop (1997: 95-96) expressed an appropriate scepticism when he wrote:

It is not easy to determine the area of settlement in a city at any moment in time, because no city has been completely excavated... The number of inhabitants per hectare of settlement is essentially impossible to establish. Comparison with contemporary, or early twentieth-century AD Middle Eastern cities provides a guideline, but the variation there is enormous, and the applicability of the figures is doubtful. Most scholars have adopted a figure of 100-400 persons per hectare, but this is inappropriate as the range is too wide...

Nevertheless, some discussion of the various factors and the figures they yield if used to estimate the population is appropriate. Older estimates often accepted the testimony of the biblical text and of Josephus. For example, Josephus’s statements that the smallest village in Galilee had 15,000 inhabitants (*War* 3.3.2 §43) and that about 1,100,000 were killed in the final siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE have often been taken at face value to estimate the population of the country at that time (*War* 6.9.3 §420). Such figures in literary texts should be treated with great caution (McGing 2002).

In recent years, however, scholars have taken a more systematic approach based on quantitative analysis of archaeological data. The result has been a general trend to revise population estimates downward, with more recent scholarly estimates tending to be lower—often much lower—than older ones. For example, Magen Broshi in a study about a quarter of a century ago worked on the principle that population estimates should be about 40-50 persons per dunum or 160-200 per acre (revised reprint in Broshi 2001: 110-20). (A dunum is 1000 m<sup>2</sup> or one-tenth of a hectare; since approximately 2.5 acres make a hectare, a dunum is one-fourth of an acre.) This led him to produce estimates for the population of ancient Israel and Second Temple Palestine much lower than those of some of his predecessors who had relied on biblical data, Josephus’s figures, and other more subjective criteria. Nevertheless, the most recent calculations have been even lower. Broshi himself, along with Finkelstein, in a joint article has used the figure of 25 persons per dunum (Broshi and Finkelstein 1992; cf. Dever [1997: 182-84] who also uses 100 persons per acre = about 25 per dunum). The recent studies by C.E. Carter

(1999: 198) and O. Lipschits (2003: 324–26, 358–59) confirm that 25 per dunum is a maximum, and a lower figure may sometimes be appropriate, especially in capital cities with unsettled public areas.

Recently, a more scientific approach has been taken to the question, with attempts to develop a methodology by which population can be calculated from archaeological evidence (Zorn 1995a; see the summary in Carter 1999: 195–99). Unfortunately, the sophisticated method outlined by Zorn is not possible for the Persian period because the data required are not available. A more workable estimate based on the area occupied by surveyed and excavated sites has been proposed (Carter 1999: 199–213; Lipschits 2003: 324–26, 355–60); despite differences between Carter and Lipschits, the overall concept is very similar.

The majority of sites in Yehud (the old area of Judah and Benjamin) are small sites of villages, fortresses, or individual farmsteads. The various surveys in the past two or three decades have produced estimates of the settled areas. (Carter goes on to divide the Persian period in two parts, Persian I [538–450 BCE] and Persian II [450–332 BCE], but this has been sharply criticized [Lipschits 2003: 359–60].) Carter's estimate for the height of settlement in the Persian period (826 dunums of settled land and a total population of 20,650) is somewhat lower than Lipschits's (1345 dunums, for a population of 30,125). In spite of this difference, the general principles of calculating population are much the same and the end result is relatively similar. In fact, Carter himself acknowledged the limits of his calculations, noting that we 'can, in fact, expect a *continued increase* in projections of the site distribution and population of the province as new archaeological research is conducted' (Carter 1999: 215).

No doubt there is some room for debate on these calculations, but they are in line with trends already noted above and are likely to be acceptable as a 'ballpark figure'. They certainly should not be dismissed without proper argument. Unfortunately, this is precisely what M. Heltzer (2002: 196–98) has done in his review of Carter. Without discussing the methodology and demonstrating why it is wrong, he simply shifts to the numbers in the literary texts (e.g. Ezra 2//Neh. 7) and asserts that they need to be taken seriously. He then projects from them—without any clear method or control—to a total population for Yehud of about 150,000. This is completely unacceptable. We must get away from this uncontrolled speculation and deal with the data properly.

Unless it can be shown that the model used by Carter, Lipschits, and others is wrong or at least needs major modification, it seems to me better to stick with it for the present. The estimate of Lipschits is the one followed here:

30,000 inhabitants for Persian-period Judah.

If this figure is at all within reasonable limits, the population of Persian Yehud was much smaller than has generally been thought in most treatments of its history.

Compared with the estimated population at the end of the Iron II period, just before the Neo-Babylonian conquest, there was a considerable decline in settlement: 'The data presented above suggest that the province of Yehud was considerably smaller and poorer than previous estimates have allowed' (Carter 1999: 233–48)

[quote from p. 246]). Estimates for Iron II vary, but the calculation of Lipschits for the same territory as that occupied by Yehud in the Persian period comes to about 90,000 (2003: 364). This represents a decline in the Persian period to about one-third of that in Iron II. As for the continuity, about 80 per cent of the Persian-period sites in Benjamin had also been settled in Iron II, and about 70 per cent of those in Judah (Carter 1999: 248).

### **9.3.3. The Province of Yehud**

**Benoit et al. (eds.)** (1961) *Les grottes de Murabba ‘ât*; **Blenkinsopp** (2001b) ‘Did the Second Jerusalemitic Temple Possess Land?’; **Briant and Herrenschmidt (eds.)** (1989) *Le tribut dans l’empire perse*; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*; **Eitam and Heltzer (eds.)** (1996) *Olive Oil in Antiquity*; **Freyne** (1980) *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian*; **Garnsey and Saller** (1987) *The Roman Empire*; **Grabbe** (2001c) ‘Sup-urbs or Only Hypurbs?’; **Graf** (1993) ‘The Persian Royal Road System in Syria-Palestine’; **Hamel** (1990) *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine*; **Heltzer** (1992a) *Die Organisation des Handwerks im ‘Dunklem [sic] Zeitalter’*; (1992c) ‘Again on Some Problems of the Achaemenid Taxation’; **Henry** (1954) ‘Land Tenure in the Old Testament’; **Hoglund** (1991) ‘The Achaemenid Context’; **Hopkins** (1985) *The Highlands of Canaan*; **King and Stager** (2001) *Life in Biblical Israel*; **Kippenberg** (1982) *Religion und Klassenbildung im antiken Judentum*; **Kreissig** (1973) *Die sozialökonomische Situation in Juda zur Achämenidenzeit*; **Lipschits** (2003) ‘Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.’; **Mendelsohn** (1940) ‘Guilds in Ancient Palestine’; **Pastor** (1997) *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine*; **Schaper** (1995) ‘The Jerusalem Temple’; **Weisberg** (1967) *Guild Structure and Political Allegiance*; **Zaccagnini** (1983) ‘Patterns of Mobility among Ancient Near Eastern Craftmen’.

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, there are difficulties with attempting a socio-economic history of any part of the ancient world. Here and there we have some interesting and useful data that relate to the Judaean economy at this time, yet despite some recent studies of merit, it is very doubtful whether an economic history of Judaea could be written at this stage of scholarly study. What can be done in this section is look at some of the problems and potential sources in order to determine where we stand.

#### **9.3.3.1. Agrarian Economy**

The economy of Judah throughout the Persian period—indeed, throughout of its history in antiquity—was agrarian. The three main agriculture staples were cereals, olive oil, and wine (cf. Deut. 12.14). An idealized passage about God’s bounty for obedience lists wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, and honey (Deut. 8.8). Thus, the standard diet of grain, wine, and oil was supplemented by other vegetable products, such as fresh grapes and raisins, tree fruits (figs, dates, apples, pomegranates), nuts (almonds and pistachios), pulses (fava beans, lentils, chickpeas), melons, onions, leeks, garlic, dairy products, and meat (Hopkins 1985: 241-50; King and Stager 2001: 103-106). The several varieties of wheat, including einkorn and emmer needed ground that was reasonably flat and fertile and was likely to

retain sufficient moisture through the late spring (such as valley bottoms). Barley was hardier in drought tolerance and salt resistance (though much less favoured for bread), but even counting barley large sections of Judah were not suitable for grain growing.

The balance between the three main products (livestock, vines and trees, and grain) has varied over time, with the economic focus shifting to meet current physical, economic, and political conditions. Although hillside terracing was primarily used for vines and trees, grains and other crops might be grown here, especially as a rotation crop to preserve fertility (Hopkins 1985: 235-37). Vines were suitable for steep slopes, especially with a certain amount of terracing. Olive trees could be grown on terraced hillsides, as well, but were also compatible with cereal production since the grain crop could in many cases be planted between the trees. Olive oil was very important because it contained concentrated energy, could be consumed without special preparation, and could make up to 40 per cent of a person's daily calories without detriment to health (Eitam and Heltzer 1996: 24-26). Sheep and goats were widely raised, especially on marginal land unsuitable for crops such as the desert fringe, the Transjordanian regions, and the southern steppe north of the Negev. Although meat seems to have been eaten only on special occasions by most people, milk and cheese from sheep and goats were an important part of some people's diet. Cattle were rather rarer.

K. Hoglund (1991: 57-60) has argued for a 'Persian policy' of ruralization. The basic argument is that the Persians depended mainly on agrarian tribute; therefore, when they allowed the Jews to return from Babylonia they required them to settle on the land in order to maximize tribute. The basic evidence offered is that in Judah (and Judah alone) the number of settlements increased at the end of the sixth century BCE, and 65 per cent of these new settlements had no occupation in the Iron II period. Unfortunately, there are some significant arguments against this thesis:

1. Hoglund admits that arguing for a deliberate Persian policy is speculative since the settlement pattern could be explained in other ways.
2. Apart from the practice of micro-managing the economy having little support from Persian-period sources, the hypothesis makes little sense. It assumes that any returnees would settle in cities unless there was a Persian requirement to settle in agrarian areas. But the only really urban area in Judah was Jerusalem, and the vast majority of people lived in the countryside throughout the history of the region (cf. Grabbe 2001c), so why should it be assumed that the returnees would normally settle in Jerusalem? In any case, they had to settle where they had the means to make a living, and there appear to have been few opportunities in Jerusalem.
3. As C.E. Carter (1999: 247-48) pointed out, Hoglund's data needed major correction in the light of new surveys and publications. There was a significant decline in settlement numbers in Judah in the Persian period, not an increase as Hoglund thought. Overall, the return of some exiles had no significant impact on the archaeology or demography (Lipschits 2003: 365).

Despite there being no evidence for any Persian policy of ‘ruralization’, Hoglund is quite right that the population of Yehud lived mainly in small, unwalled villages and had a subsistence-level economy. This is supported by the most recent studies on the archaeology of Persian Yehud (Lipschits 2003: 363–66; Carter 1999: 247–48).

### **9.3.3.2. Trade**

The fact that most of the productivity of Yehud (like that of most provinces in the Persian empire) was in agriculture does not mean that trade had no place in the economy. Until Jerusalem and perhaps other towns were flourishing, there was unlikely to be much in the way of trade since these would serve as an important agricultural market for the peasant farmers (Kreissig 1973: 102, 107). This would have happened with time, though it must be kept in mind that Jerusalem was the only large settlement, and it was only a few thousand at most (§9.3.1). An important passage is found in Neh. 13.13–21:

In those days I saw in Judah men treading grapes on the Sabbath and bringing heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys, and wine, grapes, figs, and all sorts of goods and bringing them to Jerusalem... And the Tyrians who lived there brought fish and all sorts of merchandise...

This passage tells us that the main items of trade by the Judaeans is precisely what we would expect: agricultural products, meaning grain, wine, plus fresh produce (grapes, figs, and the like). Surprisingly, oil is not mentioned. The merchants buying this are Tyrians, and they trade fish (presumably dried fish) which was not produced in Judah. Traders are also mentioned as a profession (see next section). The one hint of international trade involving Judah, which may date from around our time, indicates exclusively agricultural products (Ezek. 27). This suggests that handicrafts and other products of skilled workmen played only a minor part in the Judaean economy at this time (cf. Kippenberg 1982: 47–49; next section).

### **9.3.3.3. Occupations and Professions**

With the vast majority of the populace involved directly in agrarian activities, either in family-worked farms or as farm workers, we have little evidence of much specialization in Judah at this time. It would not have fitted its economy in any case. The main specialists would have been the temple personnel, and they held their occupations by heredity and were supported by a religious tax (§10.3.1; §10.4). Another important profession was that of scribe (§7.2.6). Administrative officials were likely to have come from the scribal profession or the nobility (Neh. 2.16; 4.8, 13; 5.7; 7.5).

We have information about occupations and professions from elsewhere in the ancient Near East (though not necessarily for the Persian period), but little for Judah at this time. Ezra 3.7 mentions ‘stonemasons’ (**חֲצַבִּים** *ḥōṣe'vîm*) and ‘craftsmen (of wood, stone, metal)’ (**חָרָשִׁים** *hārāšîm*), in the context of rebuilding the temple. Because of the references to importing wood from the Lebanon, this scenario might be an invention based on the story of Solomon’s temple (§12.5.3), but the references to workers could easily be based on those known to the author in

his own time. In any case, whenever the temple was built, such skilled individuals would have been needed, to be imported if necessary if there were no local people with such skills.

The description of building Jerusalem's wall (Neh. 3) mentions certain professions in passing. Nehemiah 3.8, 31-32 refers to the 'smiths, metal smelters' (צְוֹרְפִים *sōr̠fîm*), the 'ointment-mixers' (רַקְחִים *raqqāhim*), and the 'traders' (רָכְלִים *rōk̠lîm*). The place name 'valley of craftsmen' (Neh. 11.35: נִהְרָשִׁים *gē haḥ̠r̠âšîm*) would seem on the surface to be rather problematic. It could be an old name and would seem to be too uncertain to draw conclusions about crafts-workers of the Persian period. Yet the expression "‘father’ of the valley of craftsmen" (1 Chron. 4.14: אֲבִי נֵיֶא חֶרְשִׁים *‘avî gē’ h̠r̠âšîm*) suggests the head of some sort of guild or organization.

1 Chronicles 4.21 refers to the 'families of the house of linenworkers' (מִשְׁבְּחוֹת *mišp̠eħôt* bêt-<sup>a</sup>vôdat *habbuš*) at Beth-ashbea, while 1 Chron. 4.23 speaks of potters (יִצְרָרִים *yôṣerîm*) who lived at Netaim and Gederah. The ostensible setting of 1 Chronicles 4 is the monarchy, and the potters are said to be in the service of the king; yet it is possible that the author of Chronicles is referring to the situation in his own time (the Persian or early Greek period [§4.4]). Pottery was an important profession. Although a good deal of imported ceramic ware is known by archaeology, this would have been expensive. Much pottery was made locally or regionally.

The fact that these professions seem to act as groups suggests that they belong to some sort of guild (cf. Mendelsohn 1940). Guilds in the sense of organizations of free craftsmen are documented for Achaemenid Mesopotamia (Weisberg 1967). Although we have no further information for Judah of this time, the few biblical data suggest something similar at least for certain crafts in Yehud, as argued by Heltzer (1992a: 149) based on the biblical data and Phoenician analogies. Considering the relatively free mobility that some skilled workers possessed (Zaccagnini 1983: 257-64), Judah may not have suffered as much from the lack of such workers among the population as one might think, but in the absence of data we can only suggest possibilities. The production of Yehud seals and coins (probably minted in Jerusalem or vicinity) would have required skilled engravers, though these could have been imported (e.g. from Phoenicia) and would not necessarily have been native. Slaves may well have been trained for specialized activities, but we have no direct evidence from the slave documents in either Elephantine or Wadi Daliyeh. Slaves normally performed tasks requiring only mediocre skills, such as baking, weaving, and leatherworking, not highly skilled crafts such as working precious metals or gems (Weisberg 1967: 103-104; Zaccagnini 1983: 245).

#### **9.3.3.4. Problem of Land Ownership**

As noted above, most people had employment in some way associated with agriculture. Many were small farmers, cultivating the land as a family business, with the wife and children helping out as they were able. The impression gained from certain passages is that some people were only tenant farmers or even day labourers (cf. Deut. 24.14-15). This would have been the main avenue of employment open

to those who owned no land and were unable to find land to rent, but it would have been very much a hand-to-mouth existence. This situation may be surprising in that the Israelite tradition was of land as a heritage to be passed down from father to son and not to be alienated from the family except perhaps temporarily (Lev 25.13-28). Unfortunately, this theological theory seems not to have always worked in practice, since we know of ‘king’s land’ (1 Sam. 8.14; Freyne 1980: 156-59), the sale of property in documents from the first century CE (Benoit *et al.* 1961), and even priestly ownership (§9.3.3.6) which were not envisaged by Old Testament law (Henry 1954).

Nevertheless, it seems that at least at the beginning of the Second Temple period most Jews in Yehud worked their own soil (with the help only of their families) for essentially a subsistence living (cf. Freyne 1980: 165-66). This conclusion arises in part from in Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7 which shows the people settled on ancestral property. On the other hand, we are left largely in the dark about what happened to those who had continued to live in Judah during the exile and had taken over land vacated by those in captivity. What little information we do have is mainly indirect. The most direct statement is found in Neh. 5.1-5 in which ‘the people and their wives’ complain that they are even having to sell their sons and daughters into slavery because of the shortage of food or to pay taxes. Contemporary evidence from Samaria and Elephantine supports this, in the form of slave documents. The bulk of the preserved Wadi Daliyeh papyri are slave sales (§3.2.1). The names of the slaves and the use of patronymics suggests that many of them are local members of the community, once free citizens, who have become enslaved.

Nehemiah 5 may give some insight into the mid-fifth century, but the question is how to interpret the three groups of vv. 2-5. Kreissig takes these as three different groups (1973: 78-79): (1) the day labourers who had mortgaged their children because this was all they had; (2) those who were small holders, that is, who owned their own land; and (3) those who sold their children as slaves because they were only tenant farmers and their lands were not their own. Kreissig sees a progress toward large estates (*latifundia*), with the wealthy Jews taking over the property, labour, and even bodies of the poor who could not afford to repay loans or interest. Kippenberg (1982: 55-62) understands the situation somewhat differently: in his opinion it was only three states in one process. First, children were mortgaged to secure loans. Then, when that route was exhausted, the land itself would be mortgaged. Finally, there is nothing left but to sell the children into slavery. Although Kippenberg also believes an important model can be found in the reform of Solon in Athens, this is doubtful (§13.3.7). The one thing that is clear is that some people were losing their property; however, the theory that *latifundia* were being created does not stand up since *latifundia* were not characteristic of the ancient Near East (§9.1.6).

It is often asserted that with time the wealthy accumulated property, especially by making loans and then depriving the poor who defaulted on their land. The result is said to have been the concentration of land into the large estates of the wealthy. If problems had already arisen in the early Persian period, it is not difficult to image a gradual alienation of the land from its traditional ownership. On the

other hand, this charge of land alienation is often made for a wide diversity of times and regions, yet not necessarily with clear cut evidence (cf. the example of Italy in Garnsey and Saller 1987: 58-63). Wealth could be lost as well as gained. Long-term tenancy does not seem to have been too different in practice from actual ownership of the land (Hamel 1990: 158-60). While the loss of a plot of land might be disastrous to the owner, it would not necessarily make the one acquiring it wealthy since plots were often fairly small (§9.3.3.1). Above all, the current estimates of the population of Yehud indicate only a small population (§9.3.2). Yehud may have been a small province, but there were not many people living there, suggesting that quite a bit of land would have been available to settlers.

#### **9.3.3.5. Taxes and Tribute**

One of our main problems is knowing what the burden of taxes was. Despite a great deal of study on the Persian empire, we are unable to get a real handle on them (§9.2). Everyone complains about taxes; the question is whether they were within the means of those being taxed. The agriculture capacity of Judah was always problematic to some extent because one could expect poor crops three or four years out of ten on the average. The question is whether the tax assessment by the government took that into account or assumed only the best-case situation. We simply do not know. Nehemiah 5 certainly portrays a situation in which the people were really suffering, though it seems to have been caused by a combination of factors, not least the requirements of the temple dues (see next section).

Because of the annual tribute to the Persian overlords, it has been suggested that it was necessary for each family to produce a surplus for cash sale since the tax had ultimately to be paid in coin (Kippenberg 1982: 51). If so, this could lead to specialization in such high yield crops as olive trees and vines (Kippenberg 1982: 51-53). This seems a matter of speculation, however, since it is possible that taxes could be completely or in part paid in kind. He also suggests that, with much of the land good for grain production now lost, there is the possibility that Judah was not even self-sufficient in grain (Kippenberg 1982: 47). Again, this is unlikely. The small size of the population means that there should have been enough land available to grow the necessary food in average years; however, as noted above (§9.3.1), this might not have been the case if there were several bad years in a row (cf. Hag. 1.6).

#### **9.3.3.6. The Place of the Temple in the Economy**

The temple would have had a major impact on the economy. There is little evidence that it possessed land that produced an income. The possibility that property could be donated to it (cf. Lev. 27.14-25) may have meant a gradual accumulation of some land over the centuries (cf. Blenkinsopp 2001b), but little is said to indicate that the temple income was supplemented by a substantial income from its own possessions; on the contrary, all indications are that it depended completely or mostly on gifts and tithes from the people (§10.4). The biblical text envisages that a tenth of all agricultural produce was given to the temple (Num. 18.8-32). This would have been in addition to what taxes were levelled by the local and imperial

administration. For the bulk of the population who were peasants, this is likely to have presented difficulties, especially when there were inevitable poor years for crops. In addition, the people were expected to bring other duties such as firstling animals and first-fruits.

How do we know that fulfilling the obligations to the temple were seen as problematic by a significant portion of the population? Several passages give strong support to this view. The pledge made by the community concluded with a promise to bring the tithes and other temple duties so that the temple was not neglected (Neh. 10.36-40). You do not pledge what is already being faithfully carried out. Nehemiah 13.10 can also be interpreted as the dilatoriness of the people in bringing in the tithe to the temple (for another interpretation, see §10.3.1). Finally, Mal. 3.8-11 speaks of the failure to bring the tithes and other offerings as defrauding God, with the strong hint that the people are suffering from crop failure because of locusts and other misfortunes. Thus, we can only conclude that the temple was by and large a drain on the economy.

Following a suggestion of C.C. Torrey's, J. Schaper (1995) has argued that the temple was actually a part of the administrative system, acting as a tax collector and processor on behalf of the Persian government. This includes the interpretation of יֹשֵׁר *yôšēr* ('caster, founder') in Zech. 11.13 to mean that the temple melted down precious metals, received as tithes/taxes, into ingots as a part of its routine. Since there are parallels elsewhere in the Persian empire for temples being used to collect taxes for the government, this is not an unlikely situation. Nevertheless, we have to ask why none of our texts makes any mention of the temple having such a function. This may be accidental, but one cannot help expecting to see some hints if the temple was being used in such a way by the administration.

Even though we have little evidence of temple landholdings and ownership of lands by priests is expressly forbidden in the Pentateuch (Num. 18.20-24), we still have indications from other texts to suggest that some priests may have held lands in private ownership (Jer. 32.6-15; Hecataeus of Abdera [quoted in Diodorus 40.3.7]; Josephus, *Life* 76 §422). None of these references relate specifically to the Persian period, but they indicate a general situation that seems to have pertained over a long period of time. Furthermore, Neh. 13.10 might also suggest that the Levites had private property, though the verse could be interpreted in more than one way. The fact the temple personnel by and large lived from the priestly dues exacted from the people does not by itself preclude some individual ownership of property.

## Chapter 10

### RELIGION I: TEMPLE, CULT, AND PRACTICE

This is the first of two chapters on Judaic religion in the Persian period. This chapter focuses on the practice of religion, including the temple, the cult, the priesthood, and the practice of worship, while the next chapter is more concerned with belief and thought. The division is made primarily for pragmatic reasons since it is not always easy to separate practice from belief.

#### 10.1. *The Persian Government and Religion*

Briant (1998) ‘Droaphernès et la statue de Sardes’; Boyce (1975) *A History of Zoroastrianism*, I; (1982) *A History of Zoroastrianism*, II; Cameron (1948) *Persepolis Treasury Tablets*; Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989) *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*; Frei (2001) ‘Persian Imperial Authorization’; Frei and Koch (1996) *Reichsidee und Reichsorganisation im Perserreich*; Grabbe (2001d) ‘The Law of Moses in the Ezra Tradition’; Gruen (1998) *Heritage and Hellenism*; Hornblower (1982) *Mausolus*; Kent (1953) *Old Persian*; H. Koch (1977) *Die religiösen Verhältnisse der Dareioszeit*; Kuhrt (1983) ‘The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy’; Olmstead (1948) *History of the Persian Empire*; Posener (1936) *La première domination perse en Egypte*; Redford (2001) ‘The So-Called “Codification” of Egyptian Law’; Steiner (2001) ‘The *mbqr* at Qumran’; Tuplin (1987a) ‘The Administration of the Achaemenid Empire’; Watts (ed.) (2001) *Persia and Torah*; Williamson (1991) ‘Ezra and Nehemiah in the Light of the Texts from Persepolis’.

One frequently reads about the ‘Persian religious policy’ and terms such as ‘imperial authorization’ come up quite often in recent writings (e.g. Frei in Frei and Koch 1996; Frei 2001). As with so many alleged policies of the Persian administration, we have no statement in the sources about such a policy. Indeed, there may not have been any formal policy but rather a generally accepted practice or view that informed decisions by officials. Looked at from the perspective of Jewish history, though, the Persian approach to religion is very important. Were the Jews allowed to practise their religion without any interference? Did the Persian administration see itself as guaranteeing the rights of subject peoples to maintain their traditional cult? Did the government promote or subsidize temples or cults within the empire? Did it regularly or occasionally actually favour the Judaic form of worship, as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah suggest?

The traditional law of the Persians from an early period are known to some extent in the writings of Zoroaster, even though the dating of his life is still disputed (see Appendix). One of the bases of law and convention among the Persians (as among the other Indo-Iranian peoples) was that of *aša* (Avestan) or *arta* (Old Persian), which included the ideas of ‘righteousness, wisdom, justice, order’ (cf. the name Artaxerxes ‘having a kingdom of *arta* [justice]’). This was opposed to *drauga* (‘evil, disorder, folly’). Thus, Darius in his famous inscription preserved at Behistun states:

When Cambyses had gone off to Egypt, after that the people became evil. After that the Lie [*drauga*] waxed great in the country, both in Persia and in Media and in the other provinces. (DB §10.33-35 [Kent 1953: 117-19])

Saith Darius the King: May Ahuramazda bear me aid, with the gods of the royal house; and may Ahuramazda protect this country from a (hostile) army, from famine, from the Lie [*drauga*]! (DPd §3.12-20 [Kent 1953: 135-36])

Because of these and other comments in the sources, it is often asserted that the Persians were interested in establishing the rule of law in their empire. The classic statement of this is given by Olmstead (1948: 119-34), but other scholars have also argued this (Frei in Frei and Koch 1996; Frei 2001; Steiner 2001). Olmstead and others point out that Darius I was remembered as a lawgiver. However, the evidence is too thin to assert that Darius I or any of the other Persian kings had a systematic policy of legal form throughout the empire (HPE: 510-11). The main analogy cited concerns Darius’s alleged codification of Egyptian law, but it is now argued that this is a misunderstanding—that there was no authorization, much less a codification (Redford 2001); at best, it was a translation into Aramaic. In order to understand the Persian view, we need to consider some of the main documents and inscriptions that seem relevant or have been cited in the past.

### **10.1.1. Documents from Elephantine**

One of the most direct pieces of evidence about how subject peoples appealed to the Persian administration and how the latter responded in turn is found among the correspondence of the Jewish community at Elephantine. One document authorizes the rebuilding of the Jewish temple that had been destroyed (*TAD* A4.9 = *AP* 32):

Memorandum of Bagohi and Delaiah. They said to me: Memorandum: Let it be said in Egypt before Arsames concerning the altar-house of the God of Heaven which was built in Yeb the fortress before Cambyses (came), which that wicked Vidranga destroyed in year 14 of Darius the king, that it be built in its place as it was formerly, and they shall offer up cereal and incense offerings on that altar as was previously done.

It is useful to compare this official authorization to rebuild the temple and re-establish its cult with the original request (*TAD* A4.7//A4.8 = *AP* 30//31; translation from *TAD*, though for ease of reading the insertions between lines or other corrections have not been indicated):

Now your servant Jedaniah and his colleagues say thus: ...If it please our lord, take thought of that Temple to (re)build (it) since they do not let us (re)build it. Regard your obligees and your friends who are here in Egypt. Let a letter be sent from you to them about the temple of YHW the God to (re)build it in Elephantine the fortress just as it was formerly built. And they will offer the meal-offering and the incense, and the holocaust on the altar of YHW the God in your name and we shall pray for you at all times—we and our wives and our children and the Jews, all (of them) who are here. If they do thus until the Temple be (re)built, you will have a merit before YHW the God of Heaven more than a person who offers him holocaust and sacrifices worth silver, one thousand talents.

A further document to compare is an offer of payment for the expenses if the temple is allowed to be rebuilt (*TAD A4.10 = AP 33*):

Your servants:

Jedaniah son of Gem[ariah] by name 1

Mauzi son of Nathan by name [1],

Shemaiah son of Haggai by name 1

Hosea son of Jathom by name 1

Hosea son of Nattun by name 1: total 5 men,

Syenians, who are heredi[tary property-hold]ers in Yeb the fortress say thus: If our lord [...] and the Temple of Yhw our God be rebuilt in Yeb the fortress as it was former[ly bu]ilt, and sheep, ox, and goat will [n]ot be offered there but incense (and) cereal offerings [will be offered there.] (If) our lord gives an order [...] we shall give to the house of our lord si[lver...and] a thousa[nd] ardabs of barley.

What these letters make clear is that the original request asked to renew the animal sacrifices. This seems to have been a problem, since in the later document the offer is made that animals would not be sacrificed, and it is this version that is endorsed by the satrap. This confirms that the Persians responded to the requests and complaints of the local peoples, including those relating to cultic practice, but in all of this there is no indication that the Persian authorities initiated anything themselves.

The ‘Passover papyrus’ (*TAD A4.1 = AP 21*) is also important. The interpretation is made more difficult by its fragmentary nature. Since only the left-hand side is preserved, the exact width of the column can only be guessed at, making reconstruction of the original text highly arbitrary. The following portion of the text is preserved (quoted here with a minimum of restoration):

Recto

Je]daniah and his colleagues the ga[mmon] of the Jews, your brother Hanan[i]ah.

May God/the gods [seek after] the welfare of my brothers [

And now, this year, year 5 of Darius the king, it has been sent from the king to Arsa[mes]

] ... Now, you thus count four[

ob]serve and from the 15th day until the 21st day of [

] be pure and take heed. [Do] n[ot do] work [

] Do not drink [...] not [eat] anything of leaven

Verso

in] the evening at sunset until the 21st day of Nisa[n

b]ring into your chambers and seal up during [these] days. [

(Address)

To] my brothers Jedaniah and his colleagues the garrison of the Jews, your brother Hananiah s[on]

A variety of plausible reconstructions of the lacunae have been made. The word ‘Passover’ does not occur in the extant text (though it is known at Elephantine in other sources [§10.2.3]), but the subject seems unmistakable because of the content. There are several points to notice about the text. It is not an official Persian decree but a letter from someone called Hananiah to fellow Jews; however, the king and Arsames (Aramaic Aršam) the satrap of Egypt are invoked, suggesting that the letter might be based on an official directive of some sort. Whatever might have come from the king or satrap, the celebration of the Passover was not a new idea: the word appears a couple of times in the ostraca from Elephantine in a way that suggests the festival was a part of the people’s lives.

What was the background of the Passover papyrus? In light of the intriguing gaps in the text, one might come up with a number of plausible scenarios. One of the most likely is that the letter reflects a permit from the Persian court to continue celebrating the Passover, possibly in the light of local opposition. The local Khnum priest may well have opposed the sacrifice of lambs. Whether the Exodus story was a part of the Passover celebration at this time or, if so, whether the Egyptians knew of it and objected to it, is a matter of speculation, though some commentators have argued this point (on the subject, cf. Gruen 1998: 60-63). But one must keep in mind that this was a few years before the destruction of the Jewish temple, and friction between the two temple communities seems to have built up over a period of time. If so, the decree might not have permitted the use of lambs since only leaven is mentioned in the portion of the text preserved, but we cannot be sure. What seems quite unlikely is that the government was primarily trying to tell the Jews how to celebrate one of their festivals, or that it was establishing the Jewish religion in some way. Like the other examples of Persian decrees known to us, this was probably a response to a request from the Jews themselves, not a unilateral act on the part of the Persian king. Although the king’s name is mentioned, the precise situation was handled by the local officials, the satrap and especially the Jewish leader Hannaniah.

#### **10.1.2. Other Inscriptions from Egypt and Asia Minor**

The Udjahorresnet inscription gives the complicated story about one particular temple in Egypt (§5.5.1). Udjahorresnet was an important Egyptian court official and commander of the royal navy under both the Saite and the Persian regimes. At his death he followed convention by leaving behind a statue inscribed with a personal testament, including a brief biography. Several points are to be noted about this inscription (quoted above at §5.5.1). First, Udjahorresnet was a high official and important to the king, which explains why he had direct contact with the king. Secondly, the king was willing to accommodate a personal request about one temple in Egypt; the inference from this is that other temples were not given such special privileges or attention. Thirdly, although the king could have unilaterally

initiated the decision to send Udjahorresnet to take charge of the ‘house of life’ (where medicine was studied), this seems unlikely. Even if the inscription does not say so explicitly, the most likely interpretation is that Udjahorresnet himself suggested the idea to the king or that the king was responding to a request from the Egyptian side.

On the reverse of the *Demotic Chronicle* is a document in the name of Cambyses that speaks of allotments to the temples in Egypt (§5.5.3). It states that former allotments of such things as firewood and animals for offerings, previously distributed to the temples by the ruler, were to be reduced or eliminated altogether. Only three temples were excepted from this order: at Memphis, Hermopolis, and a third one (reading uncertain).

A statue of Darius I, with an inscription in the languages of Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, and Egyptian, was discovered in Susa (§5.5.4 above, including a quotation of the Egyptian inscription). The inscription shows the desire of Darius to appear in the image of the traditional kings of Egypt. It, along with the Udjahorresnet inscription, shows him as concerned about the prosperity of the Egyptian temples. However, this is not the same as exempting the temples from taxes or granting all of them special privileges *carte blanche*. This can be compared with the Egyptian tradition about Cambyses that made him the destroyer of temples and the Egyptian sacred, even to the point of killing the Apis bull (§12.2.2). This is negative propaganda that distorted the Persian role. The truth is in between: the Persian conqueror did not suppress traditional Egyptian worship, but he did take away many of the traditional privileges of the temples and bring them under the tax regime. He did occasionally grant special privileges, but these were the exception (e.g. the temple of Neith, at the request of Udjahorresnet). Darius continued what Cambyses had begun.

The Pherendates letters relate to relations between the satrap of Egypt and the temple of Khnum (§5.5.2). In one the satrap Pherendates gives regulations about the qualities required before someone could be advanced to the office of *lesionis* (an importance administrative position in the temple). This might suggest that the Persian government sought to oversee and regulate all cults and temples. Several considerations militate against such an interpretation. First, his initial letter seems to have been a response to one from the Khnum priests relating to a candidate. Secondly, a letter from the Khnum priests dated some months later simply declares to Pherendates the one whom they had appointed as *lesionis* and makes no reference to the satrap’s ruling about whom to appoint. Yet we have no indication that Pherendates saw this as an affront to his authority. Thirdly, it also seems that it was traditional for the Pharaoh or his representative to have the opportunity of veto over anyone about to be appointed *lesionis*. The Pherendates correspondence should evidently be seen in this context. The Persian administration of course always retained the theoretical right to interfere wherever it felt necessary, including into matters of temples and cults. But the exchange of letters in the Pherendates archive does not suggest regular meddling in temple or religious matters.

The Xanthus Trilingual is an inscription in Aramaic, Greek, and Lycian dating to the end of the Persian period (see §5.1 for a translation of all three texts). As an

authorization of a cult at Xanthus in Lycia, it is particularly relevant because it shows how the Persian government dealt with the establishment of a local cult. Essentially the local people requested the establishment of a cult of the god Kdwrs and donated land for the site. They also pledged an amount for the annual support of the cult, priest, and offerings. The satrap is the one to whom the request goes, not the king, and the satrap has issued the authorization. Not a hint within the inscription suggests that the Persian government provided any support for the cult except to give permission for it to be established. All the expenses, including the donation of land, seem to have been provided by the local community requesting to have the cult established.

Often cited in this connection is the Gadatas inscription (§5.6). Voices have been raised questioning its authenticity from the start. Now, the most thorough study argues that it is a forgery from the Hellenistic period. The arguments appear convincing, which means that this inscription should no longer be used as evidence for imperial support of local cults. Similarly, the inscription of Droaphernes (available only in a Roman-period copy) has been cited as bearing on Achaemenid imperial religious policy, but it now appears to relate only to the dedication of a local statue (Briant 1998; *HPE*: 677-78, 999-1000).

### **10.1.3. Persepolis Tablets**

The Persepolis Treasury Tablets and Persepolis Fortification Tablets are an important addition to our knowledge of Persian times, especially in the administrative and economic areas (§5.3). One of the more interesting features is the payment of rations and support to various priests and cult attendants. One might come to the conclusion that it was general Persian policy to support religion, temples, and the like in its empire (cf. Williamson 1991). This was not the case, however; these most likely relate to official state cults (cf. G.G. Cameron 1948: 5-9). H. Koch argues that the Elamite, Iranian, and Babylonian cults headed by the type of priest called a *šaten* actually devoted part of their offerings to Ahura Mazda and only a portion to the native, local gods (1977: 177, 181). As P. Briant writes (*HPE*: 438):

We have no references to Greek, Cappadocian, or Syrian gods. Considering the fact that more than 120 (of the published) Fortification tablets are concerned with priests, gods, and services, it is hard to imagine that the absence of gods other than Iranian, Elamite, and Babylonian deities is due to chance. Nor is there any good reason to believe that the Persians forbade the *kurtas* [an Elamite term referring to labourers or workers] to honor their traditional gods. However, the available evidence strongly suggests that the administration did not provide grain or wine for their sacrifices. It thus appears justifiable to consider the example of Elamite and Babylonian religious practice a special case.

An important piece of evidence to consider is the so-called *Daiva* Inscription of Xerxes. Of the Achaemenid rulers, Xerxes ostensibly appears as one of the most concerned about matters of religion in his inscriptions. The famous *Daiva* Inscription tells how Ahura Mazda aided him in conquering a country which worshipped the *daivas* (evil deities). Xerxes claims to have destroyed the *daiva* sanctuary and

forbade *daiva* worship (Xerxes Persepolis Inscription H [XPh §4b.35-41, §4d.51-56 = Kent 1953: 150-51]):

And among these countries there was (a place) where previously false gods [*daivā*] were worshipped... Where previously the demons [*daivā*] were worshipped, there I worshipped Ahuramazda and Arta [*artācā*] reverent(l)y... The man who has respect for that law [*dātā*] which Ahurzmazda has established, and worships Ahuramazda and Arta [*artācā*] reverent(l)y, he both becomes happy while living, and becomes blessed when dead.

Some have concluded that this demonstrates a Persian policy to regulate and control religion in a way that previous Near Eastern empires had not. Yet the precise meaning of this inscription is controversial and its significance has eluded scholars (Boyce 1975–, II: 173-77). A reasonable explanation is given by Briant (*HPE*: 550-53) who points to the aim of royal inscriptions (not only of the Persians but also many of the other earlier Mesopotamian rulers) which were ideological assertions, not descriptive or narrative texts. They aim to enhance the glory and greatness of the ruler, including his piety and devotion to the gods. Xerxes may also be asserting—and perhaps even did so in practice—that he introduced a more rigid codification of the official cult. If so, though, this applied only to Persia and the worship of Ahura Mazda, not the local cults of distant provinces.

#### **10.1.4. Conclusions about Persian Policy on Religion**

The alleged support of cults and religion under the Persians is often exaggerated in modern literature. This is in part due to the propaganda of the Persian kings themselves (Kuhrt 1983). In actual practice the Persians continued what was already general policy in the Near Eastern empires: to declare their personal piety in their inscriptions—of how they were diligent to obey their god(s) and follow his (their) will (the inscriptions of Babylonian and Assyrian rulers are filled with these—the Persians are hardly unique); to give precedent to their own state and/or personal royal cults; to tolerate local cults as long as they did not threaten insubordination; and to punish or even destroy any local cults that were seen as providing a support for rebellion (Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989: 356-60; *HPE*: 543-49). If they were consulted or asked to intervene in religious matters, they would respond (at least sometimes from the examples available to us, if possibly not always).

A bibliography and brief discussion of Persian religion is given below (Appendix). Briefly, the Persians had their own cults, including apparently some traditional Elamite and Babylonian cults that were continued under Persian rule. Yet little evidence exists that cults generally received state support, as sometimes alleged, which is hardly surprising since temples usually had their own incomes. On the contrary, temples were regulated and taxed, both in goods and services; overall Persian policy was to reduce the income of temples (Tuplin 1987a: 149-53; Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989: 362-66; Hornblower 1982: 161-63; Posener 1936: 164-76). Apart from the central cults, they also occasionally granted special favours (not necessarily permanent) to certain specific cults for political reasons (such as the cults of certain temples in Egypt, according to a text on the back of the *Demotic Chronicle*

[§5.5.3]; see also above with regard to Udjahorresnet [§5.5.1]; for examples from Mesopotamia, see Tuplin 1987a: 150). In each case there were special reasons.

There is still a lot not known about the administration and the place of religion under Achemenid rule. This makes it hard to assert a negative (e.g. that the Persians did not do certain things). Nevertheless, this does not absolve us of the historians' responsibility to make the best judgment we can from the extant data. In the light of present information, it seems likely that the Persians allowed the Jews to carry out their religion, including the building of temples and the establishment of priesthoods when petitions were made to the appropriate authorities (usually local, not directly to the Persian king). From the evidence available (apart from some admittedly propagandistic passages in later Jewish literature) the Persians would not have provided financial support or other imperial resources or granted tax concessions. The Jewish communities would have been expected to supply that themselves in most or all cases. Any supposed exception to this general practice would need strong and careful argumentation.

## **10.2. *The Temple and the Cult***

The centre of worship in Palestine was the temple cult, and the focus of this was the sacrifices on the altar. To ignore this is to miss the essence of Jewish worship during this time and to misunderstand its main concerns and preoccupations. Sacrifice was not the sum total of Judaic worship, however, nor was it all that happened in the temple: the regular service also seems to have included singing and perhaps even public prayer (private prayer was apparently always possible). Essential to the temple cult was the system of ritual purity since all worshippers had to appear pure before God, and the sanctuary had to be protected from all pollution. These regulations had to be taken seriously and necessarily affected the lives of all worshipers in various ways (especially women).

### **10.2.1. *The Physical Temple***

**Ben-Dov** (1985) *In the Shadow of the Temple*; **Busink** (1980) *Der Tempel von Jerusalem von Salomo bis Herodes*; **Douglas** (1999) *Leviticus as Literature*; **Haran** (1978) *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel*; **Hayward** (1996) *The Jewish Temple*; **Lemaire** (2001) 'Les religions du Sud de la Palestine au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle'; (2002a) *Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes d'Idumée*, II; **Lipschits** (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; **Milgrom** (2000b) 'Does H Advocate the Centralization of Worship?'; **Ritmyer and Ritmyer** (1998) *Secrets of Jerusalem's Temple Mount*; **Yadin** (ed.) (1983) *The Temple Scroll*.

The First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587/586 BCE. Not much is certainly known about it when it stood or what remained after the Babylonians had had their way. Since no archaeological remains have so far been found, we are completely dependent on literary accounts (Ben-Dov 1985; Busink 1980). Whether significant remains of the temple survived through the exilic period is not known,

though Lipschits has emphasized the completeness of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem (2003: 328–34). When we ask about the temple built in the early Persian period (on the context and dating, see §12.5.3), we have no information. The temple for which we have most information is the so-called ‘Herod’s temple’, destroyed in 70 CE. Archaeology, iconographic representations, and literary descriptions have allowed a substantial reconstruction of the temple buildings and court (Ritmyer and Ritmyer 1998; Ben-Dov 1985; Busink 1980; cf. *Ant.* 15.11.3–5 §§391–420; *Apion* 2.8 §§102–109). Beyond that our knowledge becomes much vaguer. The basis of Herod’s temple was probably the temple constructed during the Persian period, and a study of the remains of the Herodian temple indicates some pre-Herodian structures (Ritmyer and Ritmyer 1998). The stereotyped description of exotic building materials such as cedarwood from the Lebanon (*Ezra* 3.7) is unlikely to have been correct; more likely is that local materials were used in the construction (*Hag.* 1.8). It also makes sense that the building was much less impressive than the one destroyed by the Nebuchadnezzar (*Hag.* 2.3).

The tabernacle described in the books of Exodus and Leviticus may have been based in part on one of the actual temples, perhaps that rebuilt in the early Persian period. Also, the *Temple Scroll* (11QT; Yadin 1983) may accurately portray features of the actual temple, though its overall description seems to be an idealized one. The division of the inner temple into two parts, the ‘Holy Place’ and the ‘Holy of Holies’, as described in the P source (*Exod.* 40) is not contradicted by anything in the biblical text. The Holy Place was open only to the priests, while the Holy of Holies were entered only once a year by the high priest on the Day of Atonement (§10.2.3). The main altar would have been in the courtyard and seems to have been accessible to any Israelite in a state of purity (cf. *Lev.* 1.3–4, 11). Interestingly, in light of the later ‘court of women’ in the Herodian temple (cf. *Apion* 2.8 §§102–104), no biblical passage indicates that women were kept away from the sacrificial area that was open to the ordinary Israelite (cf. *Lev.* 12.4–6, and §8.4).

According to 2 Kgs 24.13 and 25.13–17, the Babylonians took away anything of value in the temple as booty, including the temple vessels. Nothing is said about the ark of the covenant which was allegedly in the Holy of Holies until the fall of Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8.7–9; 2 Chron. 35.3; Jer. 3.16), nor is any mention made in biblical writings about it in regard to the Second Temple (e.g. it is absent from Ezekiel’s temple [*Ezek.* 40–48]). This conforms with the much later traditions that the ark of the covenant was hidden at the time of the Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest and was thus not in the Second Temple (cf. Eupolemus [in Eusebius, *Prep. evang.* 9.39]; 2 Macc. 2.4–8). Rather than being hidden, though, it was most likely dismantled or destroyed by the Babylonians, if it was still there in 587/586 BCE. In any case a number of writings indicate that the Holy of Holies in the Second Temple was empty (Josephus, *War* 1.7.6 §§152–53; *Ant.* 14.4.4 §§71–72; cf. also Livy, *apud Scholia in Lucanum* 2.593; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.4; Cassius Dio 37.17.2–3). This calls into question the passages in Ezra affirming that the temple vessels still existed at the beginning of the Persian period (*Ezra* 1.7–11; 5.13–16).

An important question is whether more than one sanctuary might have been envisaged by the Priestly source, as argued by M. Douglas (1999: 93) and J. Milgrom

(2000b). The context of Leviticus is the desert tabernacle of which there is only one. There is no suggestion of multiple altars in P; on the contrary, all references are to ‘the altar’ (some eighty times or so in Leviticus alone), of which only one is ever described. We know there were other altars to Yhwh in existence, particularly in Elephantine and Samaria. Recent evidence has appeared of another temple to Yhw among the Idumaea ostraca of the fourth century (Lemaire 2001; 2002a: 149–56; my translation follows Lemaire’s reading and interpretation for the most part):

- (1) The hill/ruin which is below the House of ‘Z’
- (2) and the parcel (of land) of the House of Yhw,
- (3) the ground of Zby, the terrace of the terebinth,
- (4) the waste ground of S’d/rw, the tomb of Gilgul,
- (5) the pool of the house of Nabu(?),
- (6) the tomb of Ynqm.

This appears to be a list of properties that had not paid contributions, for whatever reason. According to Lemaire’s interpretation, at least three of the names are references to temples of deities (‘house of DN’). This suggests that there was a shrine of some sort to Yhwh at this time in Idumaea (which fits with the Yhwh names among those in the ostraca). This adds another Yhwh temple to those known to be in existence in the Persian period. Yet P does not appear to recognize them. The only shrine to Yhwh is the official central one.

### **10.2.2. The Sacrificial Cult**

**Albertz** (1994) *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*; **Douglas** (1966) *Purity and Danger*; (1975) *Implicit Meanings*; **Grabbe** (1987c) ‘The Scapegoat Ritual’; (1993) *Leviticus*; (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; (1998a) *Ezra and Nehemiah*; (2003a) ‘The Priests in Leviticus’; **Kraus** (1966) *Worship in Israel*; **Porten and Yardeni** (1993) ‘Ostracon Clermont-Ganneau 125(?)’; **de Vaux** (1961) *Ancient Israel*.

We know about how the cultic system worked in practice mainly from P and the books of Chronicles. This creates some difficulties since neither is likely to contain a straightforward description of what actually happened on a daily, monthly, and annual basis; one suspects a certain idealization and a smoothing out of variations of practice over time. Yet it seems *prima facie* that the main features of the temple cult and worship are contained here. The backbone of temple worship was animal sacrifice (though there were also lesser offerings of cereal, wine, and the like), which can be exemplified in later descriptions in Jewish texts and in the many other sacrificial cults known in history (cf. Douglas 1966; Grabbe 1993: 29–43; *JRSTP*: 138–40).

The various sacrifices are described in detail in Leviticus 1–7, and the question of purity discussed in Leviticus 11–15 (for a summary, see Grabbe 1993: 29–43, 49–54; de Vaux 1961: 415–32). The main types of sacrifice are in line with those mentioned in passing in many other biblical and non-biblical texts, yet the theoretical nature of some of the description in Leviticus is indicated by several puzzles in

the text (e.g. the difference between the ‘sin offering’ [חַטָּאת *hattāt*] and the ‘guilt offering’ [עֲשָׂמֵן *āšām*]), and other biblical and Jewish texts show differences of detail. On the other hand, Leviticus does not describe the daily or **תָּמִיד *tāmîd*** animal offering known from a variety of texts (Exod. 29.38-42; Num. 28.3-8), though Leviticus does have a daily meal offering (6.12-16). Yet even on the important *tāmîd* offering the texts differ over details of its content (cf. 1 Sam. 18.29; 2 Kgs 16.15; Ezek. 46.13-15; Dan. 8.11-14). Some of these texts may reflect historical changes, which would not be surprising as the cult was carried out over many centuries and in a changing context in the ancient Near East. Yet the system is likely to have been generally conservative, with little or no change over long periods of time. This is another reason why the descriptions in P are likely to be relevant for the main features of the sacrificial cult in the Persian period. Some details that emerge from texts with a reasonable chance of being from the Persian period include the following:

- The importance of the sacrificial cult is emphasized in most of our Persian-period biblical writings. The first task on the return from exile is to set up the altar (Ezra 3), even before the temple is rebuilt, but there is also great pressure to rebuild the temple as well (Hag. 1; Ezra 3–6).
- Haggai 2.11-13 discusses an issue of sanctity and purity. Leviticus 6.20 states that anything touching the flesh of the sin offering becomes holy, whereas Lev. 7.19 states that anything impure touching the flesh of the offering makes it impure. The matter is complicated because being pure does not automatically mean being holy. The priestly ruling here extrapolates general principles from a mass of detailed regulations that have not been systematized.
- Zechariah 3 uses the metaphor of ritual purity to describe the situation of the high priest Joshua. The priest suffered metaphorical impurity because of the exile. Since a pure priest was required to preside over the altar, the sacrificial system could not be renewed. On the other hand, the sacrificial system needed to be in operation for Joshua to go through ritual purification. In this case, the problem is solved by heavenly activity.
- Malachi 1.7-14 claims that defiled offerings were being made because improper animals were being offered (cf. Lev. 22.17-25).
- The list of laws in Nehemiah 10 which the people bind themselves to obey include references to a gift of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a shekel to buy various sorts of offerings (Neh. 10.33-34). Also mentioned are the wood for the offering (10.35), first-fruits, and firstlings (10.36-37).
- In Neh. 13.4-9 Tobiah has been given some former storerooms in the temple for unspecified use. Nehemiah has him thrown out and the rooms ‘purified’. Since the rooms were given to Tobiah by the high priest, it is unlikely that any temple regulations had been broken, but Nehemiah treats it as if it was a matter of purity, perhaps because this was the easiest way for him to deal with it. (No doubt the high priest totally disagreed with Nehemiah’s actions.)

- In Elephantine offerings at the temple originally included ‘cereal offerings, incense offerings, and whole burnt offerings’ (*TAD* 4.7.21, 25 = *AP* 30.21, 25).

These (plus a few regulations dealing with tithes and support of the temple personnel, discussed below) are about the only allusions to the cultic system and seem to be mainly in the nature of references in passing. This shows that the cultic system was known and taken for granted. Since it was in the hands of priests, there was no need to give a detailed discussion. The detail is given in Leviticus and a few other places in the P source (e.g. Num. 15; 28–29), though these were not primarily for priests but were for the benefit of lay ‘Israelites’ (Grabbe 2003a). Thus, most of our knowledge about the sacrificial system comes from P. Although the description is to some extent schematized, it seems to reflect the actual system in its broad outlines and even in many details.

### **10.2.3. The Cultic Year and Other Celebrations**

**Albertz** (1994) *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*; **Andreasen** (1972) *The Old Testament Sabbath*; **Bokser** (1992) ‘Unleavened Bread and Passover, Feasts of’; **J.J. Finkelstein** (1961) ‘Amisaduqa’s Edict and the Babylonian “Law Codes”’; **Gerstenberger** (1996) *Leviticus*; **Grabbe** (1987c) ‘The Scapegoat Ritual’; (1991b) ‘Maccabean Chronology’; (1993) *Leviticus*; (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; (1998a) *Ezra and Nehemiah*; **Körtting** (1999) *Der Schall des Schofar*; **Kraus** (1966) *Worship in Israel*; (1988) *Psalms 1–59*; **Lemche** (1976) ‘The Manumission of Slaves’; (1979) ‘*Andurārum* and *Mišarum*’; **Lewy** (1958) ‘The Biblical Institution of *Dērōr*’; **Lindenberger** (1994) *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*; **Milgrom** (2001) *Leviticus 23–27*; **Porten and Yardeni** (1993) ‘Ostracon Clermont-Ganneau 125(?)’; **Prosic** (1999) ‘Origin of Passover’; **Rubenstein** (1995) *The History of Sukkot*; **Segal** (1963) *The Hebrew Passover from the Earliest Times to A.D. 70*; **Ulfgard** (1998) *The Story of Sukkot*.

The various religious festivals are discussed here only as they relate to the Persian period. For further information on them in general, see *JRSTP* (141–43). Religious festivals no doubt have a long history in practically any culture, including ancient Judah. Festivals occur at various points within the biblical text, supposedly going back long before the Persian period; however, the actual empirical evidence needs to be looked at since it has long been argued that some celebrations actually originated only in post-exilic times. The origin of the main festivals in the agricultural year is clear in the cultic calendar which appears in Deut. 16.1–17 and focuses on three high points in the year (beginning of the barley harvest; end of the wheat harvest; grape harvest). Most would date this list to pre-exilic times. It differs in a number of respects from the most detailed list of festivals which is found in the P document, primarily in Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28–29, and dated by most scholars to the Persian period.

The weekly sabbath is not mentioned in Deuteronomy and is usually thought to be a late addition to Lev. 23.3 (e.g. Milgrom 2001: 1954). Although many think the sabbath has a long history in Israelite society (cf. Andreasen 1972), it seems

to come to special prominence in texts from the Persian period (e.g. Isa. 56.2-6), with a particular issue made of it about the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 13.15-22). The sabbath is mentioned several times in the Elephantine papyri, though the broken context makes it difficult to interpret some of the references (*TAD* D7.10.5; D7.12.9; D7.28.4). One ostraca from the early fifth century tells of sending some legumes by boat, and the boat is to be met by the recipient on the sabbath to take charge of the cargo (*TAD* D7.16.2). Another ostracon of about the same time asks for goods (including salt) to be dispatched apparently before the sabbath (*TAD* D7.35.7). Finally, an ostracon of a similar date seems to ask for something to be sent apparently on the sabbath, though the word in question is damaged (*TAD* D7.48.5). The impression is that the sabbath was known and given a particular designation but was not observed in any strict sense. This might fit a transition period in which the place of the sabbath was being very much debated.

The day of the new moon (Hebrew **וְיֻמָּה** *hôdeš*) is often mentioned as a term meaning ‘month’. In P it also had special sacrifices associated with it (Num. 28.11-15), a fact mentioned in passing in Ezra 3.5. There is no indication that it was observed as a holy day in the Persian period or later. The new moon established the beginning of each month and was thus very important for the calendar (§8.5).

The Passover is first attested in extra-biblical sources in the Elephantine documents. Perhaps most important but also intriguing is the Passover papyrus (*TAD* A4.1 = *AP* 21; see also Lindenberger 1994: 46-58). As will be clear from the minimal restoration in the rather literal translation quoted above (§10.1.1), the text is missing at key points. Based on the assumption that it describes the Passover in a similar manner to the biblical text, it is possible to restore a good deal of it with a reasonable plausibility: count to the fourteenth day of Nisan and prepare the Passover at twilight (lines 3-4); from the fourteenth to the twenty-first day observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread seven days without eating any leaven (lines 4-5); be ritually pure and do not do any work on the two holy days of the fifteenth and the twenty-first of Nisan (lines 5-6); do not drink any strong drink and do not eat any leaven nor let it be seen in your houses from the fourteenth day of Nisan to the twenty-first at sunset (lines 6-8); any leaven that there is in your houses, take into your chambers and seal it up during these days (line 8). Note that the ‘Passover letter’ does not agree fully with the text of Leviticus 23: (a) in apparently prohibiting fermented beverages during the days of unleavened bread and (b) more clearly in allowing leaven to be sealed up and kept rather than being destroyed. Like Deuteronomy and Leviticus the Passover and the festival of unleavened bread are combined into one festival (though a separate origin for the two has long been the scholarly consensus [cf. Gerstenberger 1996: 342]). The Passover is also mentioned in passing, indicating it was a normal celebration (*TAD* D.7.6.9-10; D7.24.5). For further information on the Passover papyrus, see above (§10.1.1).

The Feast of Weeks (Shavuot or the later Greek name Pentecost), associated with the end of the grain harvest, is presently known only from the biblical text (Lev. 23.9-14). The Day of Trumpets is not mentioned in Deuteronomy 16 but first appears in Lev. 23.23-25 and Num. 28.1-6 as a festival on the first day of the seventh month (Tishri). For many centuries, that day has been considered the Jewish new

year, but this is probably not the case in the Persian period (§8.5). One would have expected some reference to the Day of Trumpets in Neh. 8.1-12, yet the text makes no allusion to the day.

The Day of Atonement is perhaps the most significant festival not mentioned in Deuteronomy 16. This became the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar, and its core celebration may have a long history in Israelite religion but, if so, it is difficult to know precisely when it came into regular cultic usage. Zechariah 7.5 mentions a fast of the fifth month and a fast of the seventh month, while Zech. 8.19 speaks of fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months. The ‘fast of the seventh month’ could be the Day of Atonement, but the context suggests a fast associated with the destruction of the temple. On the other hand, no such holy day is mentioned among the events of the seventh month in Nehemiah 8–9. The only thing we do know is that, according to P (and later Jewish tradition), the high priest went into the Holy of Holies on this day only, and the ceremony with the two goats was enacted (Lev. 16; cf. Grabbe 1987c; 1993: 92–93).

The Festival of Booths or Tabernacles (Sukkot) is one of the most frequently mentioned festivals in the sources of this time (Ezra 3.4; Neh. 8.14–18; Zech. 14.16–19; cf. 2 Chron. 8.13). This actually lasted eight days, beginning with a holy day and concluding with a Closing or Last Great Day (Lev. 23.36; Neh. 8.18; cf. Jn 7.37; Rubenstein 1995; Ulfgard 1998). There are some potential differences between the requirements of the festival as laid down in P (Lev. 23.34–36, 39–43) and the description found in Nehemiah (8.14–17). According to Lev. 23.42–43, the Israelites were to build temporary shelters or booths to live in during the festival. They were also to take certain products of trees (four types are specified) and ‘rejoice before Yhwh your God’ (23.40), but no specific connection is made between the vegetation and the booths. The text of Neh. 8.14–17 refers to what was ‘written in the Torah that Yhwh had commanded by Moses’ as a requirement to dwell in booths. The people were sent to gather the products of trees (the list differs in part from that in Lev. 23.40) to make these booths.

Nehemiah 10.35 mentions that a decision was made to cast lots and have the wood offering brought at set times. Nothing indicates this is a festival. In later Second Temple sources, there are a few references to a Festival of the Wood Offering (e.g. Josephus, *War* 2.17.6 §425). Since the passage in Nehemiah does not indicate a specific festival, the development into one may well have come about in the post-Persian context.

Two other observances are mentioned in the biblical text that belong appropriately to the present discussion. These are the sabbatical year and the jubilee (cf. Grabbe 1993: 94–97). The sabbatical year (**שָׁמִיטָה** *s'mittâ*) as the seventh year when the land was left fallow occurs in Exod. 23.10–11 (whose dating is debated [§8.3]). It is not clear in this passage that a particular community cycle is being followed, but it may be intended that each farmer kept his own cycle (cf. Milgrom 2001: 2156). Other (pre-exilic?) passages indicate a remission of debt and release of indentured slaves as well (Deut. 15.1–3, 12–15; Jer. 34.8–16). Leviticus 25.2–7, 19–22 is similar to Exod. 23.10–11 but seems to presuppose a community or national cycle. No indication of release of debts is given, but the fact that the jubilee year is

in the same context suggests that that part of the command had been transferred from the sabbatical year to the jubilee year by the P writer. In the absence of supporting evidence, it is difficult to say how early the sabbatical year was observed, but a variety of Second Temple sources indicate that it was observed (at least as a fallow year for crops) no later than the mid-second century (see further Grabbe 1991b: 60–63).

The question of the jubilee year is more complicated. It is described in Leviticus (25.8–17, 23–34) though, confusingly, it has some of the characteristics of the sabbatical year such as also being a year of release from debt (cf. also Lev. 27.16–24; Num. 36.4). It appears to be the fiftieth year (Lev. 25.10–11), though some later sources (e.g. *Jubilees*) make it the forty-ninth. It appears to be a reflex of the Mesopotamian custom in which a new king would declare a debt amnesty (*andurārum* or *mīšarum*) in his first year of reign and even occasionally at other times (cf. Lewy 1958; J.J. Finkelstein 1961; Lemche 1976; 1979). The question is whether it was ever observed in Judah. There is no evidence that it ever was and, in any case, it would have been completely impractical (unlike the sabbatical year): two fallow years in a row would have been disastrous for agriculture and food production. In his treatment of the topic, Milgrom agrees that it was only hypothetical (2001: 2247). However, an appendix by L.S. Fried and D.N. Freedman argues that the jubilee was observed, based on an interpretation of Jer. 34.8–22 (Milgrom 2001: 2257–70). This is mainly speculation, but a misleading interpretation of the word *dērōr* is given for Jer. 34.8. *Dērōr* means ‘release’, not ‘jubilee’; also the passage in Jeremiah speaks only about the release of slaves, not about a fallow year. Leviticus 25, the only description we have of the jubilee year, says nothing about the release of slaves (except for those Israelites who become debt slaves to resident aliens—vv. 47–55). The main components of the return of property and the fallow year are not mentioned in Jeremiah 34; furthermore, the law about the release of slaves quoted in Jer. 34.14 is not from Leviticus 25 but is closest to Exod. 21.2. To repeat, there is no evidence that the jubilee was ever observed, whether in the Persian period or later.

On the calendar(s) used by the various Jewish communities at this time, see §8.5.

#### 10.2.4. Music and Singing

**J. Braun** (2002) *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine*; **Grabbe** (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; **Kleinig** (1993) *The Lord's Song*; **Kraus** (1966) *Worship in Israel*; (1988) *Psalm 1–59*.

In spite of the fact that the temple cult has often been described only in terms of the slaughter of animals and the burning of bodily parts on the altar, singing and other forms of music seem to have had an essential part. For example, it has been argued since the nineteenth century that psalms were originally connected with the cult. The dating of individual psalms is difficult, despite the confidence of some commentators, but most would agree that many of the psalms are post-exilic. The headings of many psalms are thought to refer to musical instruments or musicians (see

the summary in Kraus 1988: 21–32), even if there is no certainty on a number of the terms. The ‘Psalms of Asaph’ (Pss. 50; 73–83) are probably to be connected with the Levites and singers of the same name (1 Chron. 25). These data suggest that the central cultic act of blood sacrifice was enriched by accompanying rites of thanksgiving, singing, praise of God, and instrumental music.

Temple singers are mentioned in several sources which probably relate to the Persian period (1 Chron. 25; 2 Chron. 20.14–17; Ezra 2.41; Neh. 7.44; 11.22–23; 12.24). There is some evidence that the singers were once intimately associated with the cultic prophets, though the matter is complicated (Grabbe 1995: 112–13). As discussed in the next section, many passages in Ezra–Nehemiah refer to the temple singers, though they seem to have become assimilated to the Levites during the Persian period. According to Ezra 3, the founding of the new temple was celebrated with instrumental music by priests and Levites (3.10–13). Similarly, the description of the dedication of the wall in the time of Nehemiah includes a band of Levites playing instruments and singing (Neh. 12.27–47).

On the question of public and private prayer, see below (§10.5).

### **10.3. *The Priests and Other Cult Personnel***

**Albertz** (1994) *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*; **Bartlett** (1968) ‘Zadok and his Successors at Jerusalem’; **Blenkinsopp** (1998) ‘The Judaean Priesthood’; (2003b) ‘Bethel in the Neo-Babylonian Period’; **Boccaccini** (2002) *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*; **Cody** (1969) *A History of Old Testament Priesthood*; **Cross** (1973) *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*; **Eissfeldt** (1917) *Erstlinge und Zehnten im Alten Testamente*; **Grabbe** (1993) *Leviticus*; (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; (1998a) *Ezra and Nehemiah*; (2002–2003) Review of J. Schaper, *Priester und Leviten*; (2003a) ‘The Priests in Leviticus’; (2003f) ‘Were the Pre-Maccabean High Priests “Zadokites”?’; **Grabbe and Ogden Bellis (eds.)** (forthcoming) *The Priests in the Prophets*; **Gunneweg** (1965) *Leviten und Priester*; **Knoppers** (1999) ‘Hierodules, Priests, or Janitors?’; **Kraus** (1989) *Psalms 60–150*; **Nurmela** (1998) *The Levites*; **O’Brien** (1990) *Priest and Levite in Malachi*; **Ramsey** (1992) ‘Zadok’; **Rowley** (1939) ‘Zadok and Nehushtan’; **Schaper** (2000) *Priester und Leviten im achämenidischen Judentum*; **M. Smith** (1987) *Palestinian Parties and Politics*; **Spencer** (1992) ‘Aaron’; **Stevenson** (1996) *The Vision of Transformation*; **Talmon** (1958) ‘The Calendar Reckoning of the Sect from the Judaean Desert’; **Tuell** (1992) *The Law of the Temple in Ezekiel 40–48*; **Wellhausen** (1871) *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*; **Werman** (1997) ‘Levi and Levites in the Second Temple Period’; **Williamson** (1979) ‘The Origins of the Twenty-Four Priestly Courses’.

This section covers a diversity of material relating to the priesthood. Most of the subjects are controversial to a lesser or greater extent, including the divisions or classes of the priests and their history. Trying to reconstruct a list of high priests for the period, which is not an easy task despite some recent new information from coins, is potentially important for establishing a chronological framework. This means that several scholarly theories will need to be examined and critiqued in some detail.

### 10.3.1. Priestly Divisions

Although the biblical text gives an overall impression of a priestly structure that goes back to Moses, many discrepancies between texts leave the critical scholar with no doubt that the temple priesthood reached a fairly stable configuration early in the Second Temple period only after a long period of struggle between rival factions (Gunneweg 1965; Cody 1969; Albertz 1994: 219–22, 427–36; Nurmela 1998; Blenkinsopp 1998; Schaper 2000). The question is when that struggle finally subsided to leave a priestly structure that seems then to have continued without major changes until the fall of the temple in 70 CE.

It is quite common to assert that the pre-exilic priesthood was ‘Zadokite’, yet the matter is not as clear cut as might be thought (Grabbe 2003f). The first problem is that the only writing to make the altar priests exclusively Zadokites is Ezekiel (40.46; 43.19; 44.15; 48.11). Here the priesthood is divided into two classes, the altar priests who are the ‘sons of Zadok’ (**בְּנֵי צָדָק** *bēnê Šādôq*) and the ‘sons of Levi’ who are lower clergy. Ezekiel is unique in the Hebrew Bible in referring to the altar priests as ‘sons of Zadok’. Zadok is first mentioned in 2 Sam. 8.17, but the text is problematic. It seems to say that Zadok is son of Ahitub and Ahimelech is son of Abiathar; however, elsewhere Ahitub is the father of Ahimelech who is father of Abiathar (1 Sam. 22.20). This suggests that the text is corrupt here and that the original had a genealogy of Abiathar, like that in 1 Sam. 22.20, but not of Zadok.

If so, then Zadok first appears, without father or mother or genealogy, in 2 Sam. 15.24–36. It has been argued that Zadok’s sudden and mysterious appearance is due to his being a priest of the old Jerusalem Jebusite cult whom David took over to consolidate Jebusite and Jerusalemite inhabitants. The thesis seems to have been developed in detail by H.H. Rowley (1939), though Wellhausen already suggested such a view (Wellhausen 1871: 176–77). Those who have opposed it are Cross (1973: 209–14), followed by Ramsey (1992), but a number have recently favoured the interpretation (Albertz 1994: 129; Grabbe 1995: 61–62; Schaper 2000: 93, 270). David is pictured as having two chief priests; at the end of his life one of these (Abiathar) was disqualified and banished (1 Kgs 2.26–27), leaving only Zadok. Despite the importance of Zadok in this and a few other passages (e.g. 1 Kgs 1), little is made of him elsewhere in the Bible. Yet it is often asserted that at the time of Josiah’s cultic reform, the Jerusalem priests were Zadokite, and that they continued to dominate the Jerusalem priesthood despite attempts by other groups and families of clergy to obtain greater rights and status (Cody 1969: 136–41; Albertz 1994: 220–21; Nurmela 1998: 68–81; Schaper 2000: 93–95). Note, however, the criticisms of Bartlett (1968) that there is no evidence that the office of chief priest was a continuous succession or even remained in the same family under the monarchy.

In addition to the lack of emphasis on Zadok overall, another basic problem is that in the biblical text as a whole the priesthood is considered ‘Aaronic’. Unfortunately, the statements about Aaron as a priest or as the ancestor of the altar priests seem to be primarily in late texts (cf. Spencer 1992; Blenkinsopp 1998: 35–36). The many references in the Pentateuch appear to be mainly from the P source, whereas

Aaron's name is largely absent from the Deuteronomistic History. Apart from Josh. 24.33 and Judg. 20.28 (usually thought to be post-exilic) and Josh. 21.13-19 (whose dating is debated: cf. Schaper 2000: 172-73, who argues for post-exilic dating, with Cody [1969: 162-63] and Nurmela [1998: 76-80] who think it pre-exilic), most of the few references to Aaron in the Deuteronomistic History do not mention a priestly role. Similarly, the single mention of Aaron in the Prophets associates Aaron with Moses but does not say he was a priest (Mic. 6.4). The picture of Aaron in the books of Chronicles is very much that of P: the altar priests are from Aaron. The Levites have important roles, though their role is secondary to that of the Aaronites (cf. 1 Chron. 23-26). The exclusive right of Aaronites to preside at the altar is given graphic illustration in 2 Chron. 26.16-21, in which King Uzziah contracts leprosy for attempting to offer incense. The references in the Psalms are generally thought to be post-exilic (Pss. 105.26; 115.10, 12; 118.3), though there is a question about Psalm 118 (cf. Kraus 1989: 390).

As well as the lateness of most of the texts making Aaron the father of the priests, a further problem is that several passages give a negative view of Aaron. In the golden calf incident, the general view is that Aaron is also criticized (Exod. 32; Deut. 9), though some see the negative comment as aimed primarily at the people rather than at the Aaronites (Gunneweg 1965: 30-36; Nurmela 1998: 37-38). In any case, it is widely accepted that the original story was probably pro-Aaron, with the anti-Aaron tone the result of later editing (cf. Albertz 1994: 145; Schaper 2000: 276); in its present form, though, this chapter is conventionally seen as a criticism of the bull cult at Bethel. If so, the inference is that the Bethel priesthood was Aaronite, which raises the question of when the Jerusalem priests also came to be considered Aaronite. A second negative passage is found in Numbers 12 where Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses. Miriam seems to be the main culprit, but Aaron hardly comes off very well. Thus, the picture that emerges in the analysis of these texts is that Aaron was a priestly group, perhaps based in Bethel, but opposed by other groups who also had a hand in the process of transmitting the tradition. It was only in the post-exilic period that the Aaronites became the dominant group and impressed their identity on all the altar priests (cf. Schaper 2000: 269-79).

Exactly how this came about can only be speculative. Blenkinsopp (1998; 2003) has suggested that the Aaronite-'Zadokite' dispute is reflected in the narratives about conflicts between Judah and Samaria (in Ezra 4), because of the connection between Bethel (the original base of the Aaronites) and Samaria. Considering that two priests accompanying Ezra from Babylon (8.2) plus another in Jerusalem (8.33) have connections with Phinehas and Ithamar (both Aaronites), Blenkinsopp suggests that by the time of Ezra the Aaron and 'Zadokite' priesthoods had become reconciled with both in positions of power, perhaps under pressure from the Persian hierarchy. In the genealogies of Chronicles (1 Chron. 5.29-41 [ET 6.3-15]; 6.35-38 [ET 6.50-53]; 24.3, 6) and Ezra (7.1-5), Zadok is firmly in the line of Aaron, showing the final stage of assimilation of the two priesthoods. The main problem with Blenkinsopp's dating is that it assumes the reliability of the Ezra tradition, but this reliability is questionable (§4.1 and §14.2). Dating of the genealogies is, of course, very difficult.

The other ranks of temple personnel are mentioned a number of times in our sources for the Persian period. Many of these are in various sorts of lists. Scholars have thought to find evidence of the changing organization of the priesthood in the contents of these lists. The first list is in Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7 (= 2 Esd. 3). Ezra 2.36-58, 70//Neh. 7.39-60, 72 is made up of temple personnel of various sorts: priests (2.36-39//7.39-42); Levites (2.40//7.43); singers (2.41//7.44); gatekeepers (2.42//7.45); Netinim servants (2.43-54//7.46-55); Solomon's servants (2.55-57//7.57-59). At the dedication of the newly completed temple in Ezra 6.18, the priests and Levites are appointed to their posts in the cult; however, the parallel text in 1 Esd. 7.6 also mentions 'gatekeepers'. Ezra is himself said to come from Babylon to Jerusalem accompanied by priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and Netinim, as well as 'Israelites' (Ezra 7.7). Artaxerxes's decree claims to exempt from tax the priests, Levites, temple singers, gatekeepers, Netinim, and temple servants (7.24). Among those who divorced their wives in the time of Ezra were priests, Levites, singers, and gatekeepers (Ezra 10.18-44). After the completion of Jerusalem's wall, Nehemiah assigned the duties of the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites (Neh. 8.1). According to Neh. 10.29, those who cut their ties with the 'peoples of the land' included the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, and Netinim (cf. 10.39-40 which also mentions the ministering priests, the gatekeepers, and the singers).

Beginning with the list in Nehemiah 11, however, we start to find some differences from those just outlined. Included in it are priests and Levites but also Netinim and sons of Solomon's servants (11.3), yet in the detailed list later on we find Levites (11.15-18), but now these seem to include singers (11.22-23). Gatekeepers (11.19) and Netinim (11.21) are also listed, though the 'sons of Solomon's servants' are not to be found. When we come to 12.8-9 and 12.24-25, the singers and gatekeepers also seem to be included with the Levites. The genealogies in 1 Chronicles 6 relate several factions of the priesthood in the form of a table of descent. Of the three sons of Levi, the Aaronites are descended from Kohath and labelled the altar priests (1 Chron. 6.34, 39). The Levites as a whole have the duty of service in the house of God (6.33). Some descendants of each son of Levi are chosen to serve as singers: Heman the Kohathite, Asaph the Gershonite, and Ethan the Merariite. Finally, 1 Chronicles 9 lists those returning to the land from exile under the headings of priests, Levites, gatekeepers, and singers; however, the four chief gatekeepers are said to be Levites (9.26), and the singers are part of the Levitical clans (9.33). 1 Chronicles 23-25, which ascribes the organization of the priesthood to David himself, makes the gatekeepers and singers a part of the Levitical clans (23.3-5; 25.1-7; 26.1-11; cf. also 2 Chron. 20.14-19).

Dating texts is difficult: although scholars have tried, there is usually a circularity in the process, with a position about the development of the priesthood being the starting point rather than the endpoint. Considering that later Second Temple texts seem to have the main divisions as only priests (Aaronites) and Levites, however, the most likely scenario is that a number of different groups of lower-rank temple personnel gradually assimilated through the Persian period, so that singers, gatekeepers, and other temple servants all became identified as Levites, in contrast to the altar priests who were seen as Aaronites. Although altar priests would also all

have been seen as descendants of Zadok, that specific designation is found only in Ezekiel and some of the Qumran scrolls (though the genealogy in 1 Chron. 5.27-41 [ET 6.1-15] has Zadok in a central place, with twelve generations before and after him, perhaps also putting an emphasis on him [Blenkinsopp 1998: 40]). ‘Zadokite’ does not seem to be a widespread usage, judging from the written remains of the period.

When we inquire more closely about the details of development, we run into complex arguments about the meaning of various texts and speculations about the relationship between the altar priests and the lower clergy. This has been discussed at length (Gunneweg 1965: 81, 118-26, 188-203; Cody 1969; Albertz 1994: 430-32; Nurmela 1998; Blenkinsopp 1998; cf. Blenkinsopp 2003), but the most thorough investigation is the recent study by J. Schaper (2000). He builds extensively on his predecessors, and many of his individual suggestions and interpretations are not new; his contribution is primarily in the overall synthesis. His reconstruction can be outlined as follows:

At the time of Josiah, the ‘Zadokite’ priesthood was in charge of the Jerusalem temple. The priests supported Josiah’s reform and were able to control it. Although the Deuteronomic law included an attempt to reform the system by giving the priests of the local Yhwh shrines (‘the Levites’) equal rights with the ‘Zadokites’ to preside at the Jerusalem temple, it did not succeed, and the Levites acquired only second-class status. With the Jerusalem priesthood deported during the exile, the Aaronites of Bethel seem to have stepped into the breach and served as priests to those left in the land; however, the status of the Levites continued to decline during the exilic and early post-exilic period. When the exiled priests returned, they reasserted their traditional rights over the altar but were countered by a coalition of opponents. The main critics were the country Levites who had set up the cult in the ruins of the temple during the exile, but along with them were the Abiatharites of Anathoth and perhaps also the Aaronites of Bethel. They were the ones who argued that the priests’ time out of Judah had made them impure. Zechariah 3.1-10 is the priestly response, to convince the people that the newly defined office of high priest was held by a worthy individual with divine approval.

Schaper goes on to argue that the Persian government supported the Zadokite priests; however, the Levites and others cooperated in the rebuilding of the temple because it was also in their interests. It was during the time of Nehemiah (who came in 445 BCE) and Ezra (who is dated to 398) that the Levites were able to gain status. Nehemiah did not trust the high priest and the upper class of priests but used the Levites as his allies, making them into guards at the city gates. The priests retaliated by not passing on the support needed by the Levites from the temple tithes and offerings, forcing many Levites to turn to farming to have enough to eat (Neh. 13.10-13); however, Nehemiah set this right on his return and established a committee equally of Levites and priests to oversee the collection and distribution of the temple dues. Ezra continued to favour them, which gave the Levites a new status and confidence. The singers, gatekeepers, and Netinim were separate from the Levites until the time of Ezra, but they became merged with them toward the

end of the Achaemenid period. This was partly because of the increased importance of singing in the temple liturgy and would not have been seen as a demotion of the Levites.

A number of the points in Schaper's thesis were supported by the analysis presented above, but some conclusions need to be questioned (cf. Grabbe 2002–2003). This mainly has to do with the sharp divisions between the altar priests and the Levites (which had already been hypothesized earlier, e.g., by M. Smith 1987: 96–112). Although there is evidence in the text of disputes between the two groups—disputes that eventually led to the Levites' being relegated to lower clergy—it is not so clear when these occurred; for example, they could already have been settled before the Persian period. The main arguments centre on whether Nehemiah raised the status of the Levites at the expense of the priests.

A number of references to the priests are found in chapters of the book of Nehemiah which may not be based on the Nehemiah Memoir (NM), but priests are also important in the NM itself. The priests are named throughout Nehemiah 3 as supporting the building of the Jerusalem wall, and no opposition is anywhere suggested (even if Neh. 3 is an insertion in the NM). Priests were also full participants in the dedication of the wall (12.27–43). Significantly, Nehemiah makes no mention of priests in his tirade in Nehemiah 5 except to call on them to administer an oath to the nobles and leaders. Three examples only seem to suggest any breach between Nehemiah and the priests, and these are discussed in detail below (§13.4). What is certainly not demonstrated is that Nehemiah had the Levites *en bloc* as his supporters, and the priests as his opponents (Smith himself thinks that the priests were split [1987: 103]). (On the question of Smith's thesis of a ‘mercantile class’ as Nehemiah's ally, see §13.4.)

Although it is possible that a struggle by the Levites to gain full priestly status continued in the Persian period, the sources do not give such an unambiguous view. The matter could have been settled by the beginning of the Persian period, with ‘the Levites’ firmly established as lower clergy (e.g. Num. 3–4; 8). For example, even though some have argued that Ezekiel 40–48 exalts the Zadokites and downgrades the Levites (e.g. Tuell 1992: 121–52), K.R. Stevenson (1996: 66–76) argues that the point of the passage in Ezekiel 44 is who has access to the Holy Place: not the laity, only the priests and Levites. On this view, the Levites are not being demoted here (though they do not have the right to serve at the altar, unlike the Zadokites). O'Brien (1990: 47–48, 111–12) has argued that Malachi (especially 1.6–2.9) makes no distinction between priests and Levites (taking the position conventionally ascribed to Deuteronomy), but it seems unlikely to find the expression of such a view at so late a date (cf. Grabbe 1995: 49). Recognizing various struggles and changes through the Persian period, the situation can be summarized as follows:

The priests were the only ones allowed to preside at the altar (Num. 17.5; 18; Ezek. 40.45–46; 44.15–16). Their main function was to carry out the sacrificial cult (as described especially in Lev. 1–16), but they had other duties as well. They were the custodians of the written law with responsibility to teach it to the people and make cultic rulings where needed (Ezek. 44.23–24; Hag. 2.11–13; 2 Chron. 15.3;

19.11; cf. Deut. 31.9-13, 24-26; 33.10). They had to pronounce on all matters of ritual purity, including certain diseases (Lev. 11-15). According to some texts, they also functioned in a wider civic context in such things as judging lawsuits and acting as appeal judges for lower courts (Ezek. 44.24; 2 Chron. 19.5-11; cf. Deut. 17.8-13; 19.17; 21.5). It is also claimed that they had custody over the sacred objects of priestly divination called the Urim and Thumim (Num. 17.18-21; Deut. 33.8), though these are said to have ceased to function or were perhaps lost by Persian times (Ezra 2.63//Neh. 7.65).

The duties of the ‘Levites’ included a variety of functions. Their most important task was to assist the priests in carrying out the sacrificial cult, though they were not to carry out the ceremonies at the altar itself (Ezek. 44.13; Num. 16). They also had other duties such as maintaining security and evidently a variety of administrative duties (1 Chron. 23.24-32; 2 Chron. 19.11; Ezek. 44.10-14; cf. 1 Chron. 23.4). As already discussed, certain groups of temple personnel, such as the gatekeepers, singers, Netinim, and temple servants alongside the Levites were eventually assimilated into the Levites. There is also evidence that the Levites were especially drawn on for the scribal skills necessary to run the nation as well as the temple (§7.2.6).

The divisions of the priests evidently developed during the Persian period. The lists that seem to be earlier mention only four divisions of the priests (Ezra 2.36-39//Neh. 7.39-42; cf. Ezra 10.18-22; Neh. 11.10-14; 12.1-7). Later lists, however, divide them into 24 courses to serve on a rota basis (1 Chron. 24.1-19), a division that apparently continued to exist as long as the temple stood (cf. Josephus, *Life* 1 §2; Talmon 1958; Williamson 1979). According to 1 Chronicles 25 the Levitical singers were divided into 24 courses. The other Levites also had lots cast with regard to their service (1 Chron. 24.20-31), though the exact number of divisions is not clear. The gatekeepers served in shifts determined by lot, as did others with different duties (1 Chron. 26).

### **10.3.2. The High Priest of the Achaemenid Period**

**Blenkinsopp** (1988) *Ezra-Nehemiah*; **Cross** (1966) ‘Aspects of Samaritan and Jewish History’; (1969b) ‘Papyri of the Fourth Century B.C. from Daliyah’; (1974) ‘The Papyri and their Historical Implications’; (1998b) ‘A Reconstruction of the Judaean Restoration’; **Fried** (2003) ‘A Silver Coin’; **Grabbe** (1987a) ‘Josephus and the Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration’; (1992) ‘Who Was the Bagoses of Josephus’; (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; (1998a) *Ezra and Nehemiah*; **Mowinckel** (1964a) *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemiah*, I; **VanderKam** (1991) ‘Jewish High Priests of the Persian Period’; **Widengren** (1977) ‘The Persian Period’; **Williamson** (1977b) ‘The Historical Value of Josephus’.

According to the biblical text, the most important priestly figure was the chief priest (הַכֹּהן הָגָדֶל *hakkōhēn haggādōl* [e.g. Lev. 21.10; 2 Kgs 23.4]) or high priest (הַכֹּהן הַרְאֵשׁ *hakkōhēn hārō'š* [e.g. Ezra 7.5; 2 Chron. 31.10]) whose existence is envisaged even in texts which are possibly pre-exilic (e.g. the two chief priests Zadok and Abiathar in the time of David [2 Sam. 17.15; 19.12; 20.25]; Jehoida

[2 Kgs 11–12]; Hilkiah [2 Kgs 22.4, 8]). Whatever the exact function of the chief priest under the Judahite kings, the loss of the monarchy and the incorporation of Judah into the Persian empire created a completely new situation. All the evidence indicates that the office of high priest expanded in importance over a period of time to fill the gap of local leadership (§7.2.3.3), even though there was a provincial governor appointed by the Persians.

We know the names of some, though by no means all, the high priests through the two centuries of Persian rule. Our information comes from a variety of sources, some with more reliable data than others. It is important to be aware of our actual data and the question of reliability, since some reconstructions have been more speculative than is sometimes realized. Here is what the sources say about the high priests:

First, the literary sources. The first high priest mentioned is Joshua (also Jeshua), found in both Haggai and Zechariah. (The name is also prominent in Ezra 2–5, though the compiler of this section of Ezra is probably drawing his information from Haggai and Zechariah and thus does not give independent information [§12.3].) According to the dates given (Hag. 1.1; 1.15–2.1; 2.10; Zech. 1.1, 7; 7.1), Joshua would have been in office about 520 BCE. No information is provided about the length of his term of office. In the book of Nehemiah the high priest is named as Eliashib. He apparently participated willingly in the building of the wall (3.1, 20, 21), but he seems to have agreed with those who continued to have contact with Tobiah, the head of a prominent Jewish family in the Transjordanian area (6.17–19); indeed, Eliashib and Tobiah were relatives (13.1). A son of Eliashib the high priest, named Joiada, is listed in Neh. 13.28; however, it is not stated that he was high priest, though the name coincides with a name in Nehemiah 12, discussed in the next paragraph.

Finally, Neh. 12.10 and 12.22–23 have been seen as a list of high priests. There are some difficulties here (cf. Mowinkel 1964a: 158–62; Williamson 1985: 363; Blenkinsopp 1988: 339; VanderKam 1991: 68–69). The lists are not in fact labeled as lists of high priests; this has only been an inference by scholars. Another problem is that the two lists do not actually agree: one list has Jonathan (v. 10) whereas the other has Johanan (v. 22); furthermore, Johanan is listed as the son of Joiada in one verse (v. 22) but the son of Eliashib in another (v. 23). Some commentators have assumed that the difference between ‘Jonathan’ in one list versus ‘Johanan’ in the other is a simple scribal corruption, but if so, it does not explain how Johanan has two different fathers in the second list. The lists are said to extend to the rulership of Darius the Persian, but which Darius is not stated: is it Darius II or Darius III? The books of Ezra and Nehemiah show no knowledge of more than two kings by the name Darius nor more than one (or possibly two) by the name Artaxerxes. To take these lists at face value is to ignore the difficulties.

Another literary source is Josephus. As already discussed (§6.18), Josephus’s knowledge of the Persian period is rather skimpy, based on several different sources, some known and some unknown. At different points he inserts the names of the high priest at the time, evidently being careful to show the sequence of high priests in Jerusalem. His source(s) for this information is/are unknown:

- Joshua (*Iēsous* [Ant. 11.3.10 §73], companion of Zerubbabel)  
 Joiakim (*Iōakeimos* [Ant. 11.5.1 §121])  
 Eliashib (*Eliasibos* [Ant. 11.5.5 §158])  
 Joiada (*Iōdas* [Ant. 11.7.1 §297])  
 Johanan (*Iōannēs* [Ant. 11.7.1 §297], who kills his brother  
     Joshua [*Iēsous*] in the temple [§§297-301])  
 Jaddua (*Iaddous* [Ant. 11.7.2 §302], high priest at time of  
     Alexander [11.8.1-5 §304-39])

In the case of *Ant.* 11.7.1 §§297-301, Josephus seems to have had an actual source (Williamson 1977b). This episode about the high priest Joannes (Johanan) and the murder of his brother Jesus (Joshua) in the temple is most likely to be dated to about 400 BCE (§13.7), and this Johanan is to be identified with the high priest in the Elephantine letter.

As well as the literary sources, which were written long after the events described, we also have some contemporary sources. The letter of the Elephantine Jewish community to the Jerusalem high priest ‘Jehohanan’ (יְהוֹחָנָן *yhw̄nn* [line 18//17]) and the community leadership (*TAD* A4.7//4.8 = *AP* 30//31) is dated to the year 408 BCE. One coin of Yehud has the inscription, ‘Hezekiah the governor’ (§3.4.1). Another coin similar to the Hezekiah coins has now had its inscription read as ‘Johanan the priest’ (*ywhnn hkwhn*) and dated no earlier than the mid-fourth century. If this dating is correct, it could help confirm the hypothesis that there was a high priest Johanan other than that of the Elephantine papyri mentioned above. However, it is not certain that this individual was high priest, as opposed to a Persian official who happened to be of a priestly family. (L.S. Fried [2003] argues he is the same figure as the high priest in the Elephantine papyri.) Another coin, dated to the first half of the fourth century BCE and apparently similar to that of ‘Johanan the priest’, has the name ‘Jaddua’. To connect it with a high priest Jaddua, though, is no more than speculation since no title of any sort is included with the name. It has also been suggested that it is a Samarian coin. Putting together the information, we have a tentative and uncertain list of high priests something like the following:

- Joshua (fairly certain: Haggai, Zechariah)  
 Joiakim (uncertain: Neh. 12.10, 22; Josephus)  
 Eliashib (fairly certain: NM)  
 Joiada (uncertain: Neh. 13.28; perhaps Neh. 12.10, 22; Josephus)  
 Jehohanan (certain: Elephantine papyri; perhaps Josephus)  
 Jonathan (very uncertain: Neh. 12.10)  
 Johanan (uncertain: coin; perhaps Neh. 12.22)  
 Jaddua (very uncertain: possibly a coin; perhaps Neh. 12.10, 22; Josephus)

In 1975 F.M. Cross attempted to create a high priestly list that covered the entirety of the Persian period (see the revised reprint in 1998b; some aspects of the thesis appeared in previous publications: 1966; 1969b; 1974). A reliable high priestly list would be very helpful as a framework for history in this period, but what is surprising is how often Cross’s reconstruction is quoted with approval—without seeming to recognize its highly speculative nature. Here is how he created it:

- There are several lacunae in the list of Jewish high priests for this period. This is indicated by the statistical average for a generation, which comes to about 34 years. According to Cross it should be closer to 25 years, suggesting that some names have dropped out of the list. He tries to fill these gaps primarily by means of information from several sources:
- Paponymy (the naming of a grandson after a grandfather) was a common practice during this period. Thus, we find several figures in a genealogy with the same name (e.g. there were three governors of Samaria named Sanballat to the time of Alexander). Important in arguing for paponymy is the presence of hypocoristic names (i.e. shortened forms or nicknames); for example, Johanan might appear as Honi (Greek Onias). Cross postulates that the presence of the same name repeatedly in the high priestly list was responsible for several scribal haplographies. The restoration of these will produce the proper statistical average for the generations.
- Josephus is also important in restoring the names lost from the priestly genealogy. He preserves the name of a governor of Samaria (Sanballat III) not otherwise known from the Bible or recent discoveries. He describes an altercation between the high priest Johanan and his brother Joshua in which the latter was slain. This caused the governor Bagoses, identified as the general of Artaxerxes III, to intervene. Josephus also describes the situation in which Manasseh the son of the high priest Jaddua married Nicaso the daughter of Sanballat (III). Sanballat built a temple at Gerizim for him about the time of Alexander.

Unfortunately, Cross's thesis has a number of problems with it (Widengren 1977: 506-509; Grabbe 1987a; 1992; VanderKam 1991):

1. The reconstruction depends on the assumption of paponymy as a prevalent usage among the high priests of this time. In attempting to demonstrate this, Cross must postulate two haplographies.
2. Even if we accept the assumption of two haplographies, the theory of paponymy still has difficulties: (a) despite the assumption of a haplography, Eliashib appears only twice; (b) the name Johanan appears once (by hypothesis), then disappears until the *fourth* generation rather than the third; (c) such hypocoristic forms as Jaddua and Onias are treated as if they were identical to Joiada and Johanan—that is, Jaddua is treated as if it were a clear paponymy of Joiada even though the names are actually not the same. Cross replied that names may alternate between normal (formal) and hypocoristic forms (1998a: 155 n. 18). Cross has ignored the force of Widengren's criticism, however, because names like Joiada and Jaddua—while similar—are two different names, not a formal name and its hypocoristic (like 'Johanan' and the hypocoristic 'Honi'). It is unlikely that an individual was called both 'Joiada' and 'Jaddua' by his contemporaries.

3. While the assumption of a new generation every 25 years is correct statistically, it is not necessarily justified historically. One cannot assume that every high priest both married and had a male offspring by age 25, especially in such a troubled period as this (note also Fried's argument for long terms of office [2003]).
4. Cross is actually heavily dependent on Josephus but assumes, without discussion, that Josephus has additional information which is reliable even though Josephus has admittedly misinterpreted it. In actual fact, a closer investigation indicates no evidence that Josephus had genealogical data beyond that which can be found in the biblical text in most cases. As noted above, he does have one additional tradition (about a quarrel between the high priest Johanan and his brother Jesus) which may be reliable, but that seems to be all. If he knew anything about the situation in Judah at the time of Alexander, it seems impossible to sort out fact from legend.

In short, Cross has cobbled together data from a variety of sources without any recognition of the various levels of reliability. To this he has added very speculative elements about paponomy and the length of a generation, combined with an unverified assumption about scribal copying of the list—if the scribes were so careless, why should we believe any of the data? The theory is ingenious but cannot be used as a working hypothesis. It is entirely possible that six high priests could have covered the two centuries of Persian rule (VanderKam 1991). The uncertain nature of the high priestly list during the Persian period simply has to be recognized by all who want to work in this period.

### **10.3.3. *A Sanhedrin?***

**Goodblatt** (1994) *The Monarchic Principle*; **Grabbe** (forthcoming g) ‘Sanhedrin, Sanhedriyyot, or Mere Invention?’; **Mantel** (1961) *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin*; (1976) ‘Sanhedrin’; **Rooke** (2000) *Zadoks’s Heirs*.

It was once common to refer to ‘the Sanhedrin’ as a governing body in the Second Temple period, though there were debates on its nature and even whether there was more than one. Now, however, D. Goodblatt (1994) has argued that no such body existed. I have examined the question in detail (Grabbe forthcoming g) and shall only give a brief summary of the issues, mainly as they relate to the Persian period.

A variety of terms suggesting the existence of such a body are found in the original sources: *gerousia* (‘council of elders, senate’), *boulē* (‘advisory council’), or Sanhedrin, from Greek *sunedrion* (‘assembly’). Part of the problem is that many treatments of this subject have begun with the Mishnaic tractate *Sanhedrin* and later rabbinic texts. These, however, may well be describing an idealized concept centuries after the temple had fallen and the office of high priest had disappeared (a point well recognized and argued by Goodblatt). The unsatisfactory nature of trying to reconcile Second Temple sources with later rabbinic literature is demonstrated by a number of older treatments, some of which even end up hypothesizing two Sanhedrins, a ‘religious’ and a ‘political’ one (e.g. Mantel 1961; 1976).

Nevertheless, I argue that such a body existed (*pace* Goodblatt), though it may have varied in composition, authority, function, and status through the Second Temple period. For the Persian period the following points should be considered:

1. Where the high priest is mentioned in the Old Testament, he is often presented as acting in conjunction with other priests—a natural situation if he was seen as the head of the priests (2 Kgs 23.4; 2 Chron. 26.16–20). Yet the high priest also often brought in others under his leadership to help carry out necessary tasks or worked with others outside the priesthood (2 Kgs 11; 12.8–11; 22.8–14; 2 Chron. 23; 24.4–11; 34.14–22).
2. One of the Elephantine papyri (*TAD* A4.7.18–19//A4.8.17–18 = *AP* 30.18–19/31.17–18) states, ‘We sent a letter to our lord [Bagohi the governor of Judah] and to Yehohanah the high priest and his companions the priests who are in Jerusalem and to Ostan the brother of Anan and the nobles of the Jews’. Here the leadership of the community in Yehud seems to include not only the governor and the high priest but also the other priests and the nobility.
3. It is likely that any ruler would have had his advisers, whether they were ‘official’ or not. The existence of an advisory council is suggested by various later sources, though the earliest clear references are to the Greek period (on which see volume 2 of this History). Although the Elephantine letter suggests that the high priest involved others in his work, we have too little information to be certain that a formal body already existed in the Persian period. It does seem, though, that the roots of ‘the Sanhedrin’ are to be found here.

#### **10.4. Financial Support for the Temple**

The question of whether the temple actually owned land is a complicated one and is discussed elsewhere (§9.3.3.6). Nevertheless, the priestly texts state that the priests and Levites were to have no inheritance (i.e. no land, except for the Levitical cities and a small amount around them [Num. 35.1–8]) but were to live from the tithes and offerings of the people (Deut. 18.1–2). These included the portions of various sacrifices (Lev. 7.29–36), certain one-off payments of agricultural produce such as firstlings and first-fruits (Exod. 13.11–15; 34.19–20; Lev. 2.14–16; 27.26–27; Num. 18.12–18; Deut. 18.4; 26.1–11), and gifts (including land), vows, and dedications (Lev. 27).

These could not be relied on to provide sufficient income for a temple and priesthood of any size, however, as even a superficial analysis would make plain. The main source of revenue would have been the annual tithes of all agricultural produce (supposedly also the livestock, but this is problematic [*JRSTP*: 138]). The whole question of tithing in ancient Israel is one fraught with difficulties. Numbers 18.21–32 states that all the tithes were to go to the Levites who were in turn to tithe this tithe and give it to the priests. Nehemiah 10.38–40 (ET 10.37–39) seems to give a similar picture, yet Deut. 13.17–19 and 14.22–29 speak of eating the tithe in the ‘place that the Lord your God will choose’, as well as of a tithe in the third year to

be brought into the settlements and given to the Levites, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. It is not my aim to try to reconcile these statements—indeed, one can ask whether it is even possible—but see the further discussion (*JRSTP*: 137–38).

For our present purposes, there are a number of statements in the sources relating to the Persian period. The concept of tithing is emphasized in the book of Nehemiah. In Neh. 10.38–40 (ET 10.37–39) the people pledge to bring the temple dues, including the tithe for the Levites, which the Levites would in turn tithe to the priests. In what may be a part of the NM, the claim is made that the dues to the Levites were not being given, the result being that the Levites and singers had scattered to their fields to make a living rather than carrying out their temple duties (Neh. 13.10–13; §13.4).

This suggests two conclusions: first, by the middle of the Persian period (if not earlier), the main support of the temple was the tithes from the people; secondly, the tithes and other dues were not necessarily paid in full by all the people. This latter conclusion comes from the fact that a pledge is necessary to make sure the dues are paid and by the most natural reading of Neh. 13.10–12 (for another reading of this latter passage, see §10.3.1). It is hardly surprising, in view of the difficulties the people had in making a living, that the tithes were not always brought to the temple (§9.3.3.6).

### **10.5. Prayer and the Question of the Synagogue**

**Binder** (1999) *Into the Temple Courts*; **Fine (ed.)** (1996) *Sacred Realm*; **Flesher** (1989) ‘Palestinian Synagogues before 70 CE’; **Grabbe** (1988b) ‘Synagogues in Pre-70 Palestine’; **Griffiths** (1987) ‘Egypt and the Rise of the Synagogue’; **Hachlili** (1997) ‘The Origin of the Synagogue’; **van der Horst** (1999) ‘Was the Synagogue a Place of Sabbath Worship?’; **Hüttenmeister and Reeg** (1977) *Die antiken Synagogen in Israel*; **Levine (ed.)** (1981) *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*; (1996) ‘The Nature and Origin of the Palestinian Synagogue Reconsidered’; **Urman and Flesher (eds.)** (1995) *Ancient Synagogues*.

Since prayer is mentioned so frequently in biblical literature, it is difficult to talk specifically about the Persian period. A prayer of confession is found in Ezra 9.6–15, with an interesting parallel in Neh. 9.5–37. Nehemiah prays when he hears about the dire situation in Jerusalem (Neh. 1.4–11), and references to his praying are found elsewhere (Neh. 2.4; 4.3 [ET 4.9]). For a general discussion about prayer, with bibliography, see *JRSTP* (170–75).

It is frequently asserted, especially in older works, that the synagogue had its origins in the exile because there was no temple available in which to pray. This was based on the widespread assumption that the need for public prayer was always present in Judaism. When the temple was destroyed and the Jews taken captive, it was argued, they would have felt the need to establish some institution for public prayer. Therefore, the concept of the synagogue as a house of prayer first arose during the Exile, according to this logic. Indeed, some have wanted to go further and put them earlier, even in the period of the monarchy, citing certain biblical verses (e.g. Ps. 74.8). Most of this is wishful thinking. This is why recent work has

tended to argue that the synagogue arose at the earliest in the Greek period and became an institution in Palestine only very late in the Second Temple period (Grabbe 1988b; Flesher 1989; Binder 1999; cf. the essays in Urman and Flesher 1995; *JRSTP*: 173–75).

Most of the early Jewish literature that mentions prayer in the Diaspora puts it in the home or a similar setting. Daniel prays on his knees three times a day before an open window turned toward Jerusalem (*Dan.* 6.11). Tobit prays in the courtyard of his house, and his niece Sarah prays toward the window of a roof-chamber (*Tob.* 3; however, it should be noted in Sarah's case that she originally went to the roof-chamber to commit suicide). Prayer forms an important theme in *Judith* (8.4–6; 9; 12.6–8), with different settings. These texts are all post-Achaemenid, as far as we know, but they are still fairly early in the Greek period. The earliest references to an institution like the synagogue is found in inscriptions in Egypt about the middle of the third century BCE (Griffiths 1987). The earliest Jewish writings to refer to a synagogue is Philo of Alexandria, in the first century CE. Thus, we can conclude with a good deal of confidence that the institution of the synagogue was not around during the Persian period, whether in Babylonia or Palestine.

## Chapter 11

### RELIGION II: LAW, SCRIPTURE, AND BELIEF

Although belief cannot be easily separated from practice, this chapter focuses on the Torah, including the concept of scripture, and theological concepts. I have tended to use the term ‘belief’ rather than ‘theology’ because the former encompasses not only the perspective of the average person but also the concerns of professionals and scholars. Theology and belief are as much a part of the history of this period as any other aspect of religion. The debates among professionals and intellectuals are also a part of the history as well as the beliefs of the populace as a whole.

#### **11.1. *The Development of ‘Scripture’***

This important topic is discussed in detail below (§14.3).

#### **11.2. *Scriptural Interpretation***

Auld (1994) *Kings Without Privilege*; Fishbane (1985) *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*; Mulder and Sysling (eds.) (1988) *Mikra*; Pulikottil (2000) *Transmission of Biblical Texts in Qumran*; Sæbø (ed.) (1996) *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*; Schultz (1999) *The Search for Quotation*; Snaith (1967) ‘Biblical Quotations in the Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus’; Trebolle Barrera (1998) *The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible*; Willi (1995) *Juda-Jehud-Israel*.

We know that scriptural interpretation became an important activity during the later Second Temple period (*JRSTP*: 165-70). But did it begin as early as the Persian period as many scholars have thought (cf. Fishbane 1985: 107-13)? A lot hinges on whether there was anything available to interpret. As will be obvious, scriptural interpretation could not begin until there was a body of writings conceived of as scripture or authoritative in some way. Since an oral tradition can be subtly revised and reformulated as it is passed on, it is likely that interpretation as we know it came into play only when the tradition had (a) been written down and (b) come to be seen as authoritative enough not to be easily altered at will. As noted below (§14.3), it was probably written down in something like its present form no later than the end of the Persian period for the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomistic History, the Major and Minor Prophets, and some of the Writings and had also begun the process of being accepted as authoritative. But that it continued to develop at the

literary and especially the textual level is evident from the many versions preserved from antiquity.

Fishbane (1985) has provided a valuable service in pointing out the way tradition may have developed to include intertextual allusions and interpretation in the biblical text itself. Literature (whether on the oral or literary level) drew on the available tradition, with reuse of phraseology and also literary allusions to other literary works, during the process of development. But while much of what Fishbane says has been a source for further study, it seems unlikely that 'intra-scriptural exegesis' had advanced very far before the exile, whatever the state of written portions of what became the Bible. Stories often related to biblical interpretation such as Nehemiah 8 are probably anachronistic (§14.3.1.2). The reason is that the tradition was still fluid enough to be changed and altered so that there was little need for an interpretative process; rewriting and revising the tradition rather than scriptural interpretation was more likely to have been the process (cf. Pulikottil 2000).

It has been conventional to argue that the Jewish writings of the post-exilic period were mainly interpretations of scripture rather than original writings, using Chronicles as a major example (e.g. Willi 1995: 35–36). This does not stand up to investigation. There are many Second Temple works that have little or nothing to do with the Hebrew Bible we know (e.g. Ben Sira, Tobit, Judith, *I Enoch*, the books of Maccabees). Other Jewish literature (called 'parabiblical'), while parallel to writings now in the Hebrew canon, seem to be independent developments of earlier traditions and not based on the biblical writings. In the mind of many, one of the first major acts of interpretation was the production of the books of Chronicles as a retelling of the story in Samuel–Kings (and also in some sense the story of Genesis to Judges by means of the genealogies in 1 Chron. 1–9). It has recently been suggested that perhaps rather than Chronicles using Samuel–Kings, they both revised a common source (Auld 1994). If so, Chronicles is not really an example of scriptural interpretation, and we must look elsewhere for the first example.

It is true that literature from Ben Sira on becomes permeated with a knowledge of portions of the Hebrew Bible in a form similar to or the same as we now use (§14.3.2). This supports the view expressed above that a body of authoritative writings was gradually taking shape in the Persian period but became the basis of interpretation only when it came to be seen as scripture. Yet even then some, if not all, of the biblical writings still continued to develop at the textual and even literary level. Interpretation could still be incorporated directly into the process of shaping the literature to some extent. The various forms of scriptural interpretation (as opposed to the development of a tradition still rather fluid) seem to have come into use primarily in the post-Alexandrian period.

### 11.3. Beliefs

A number of the topics that could be treated here have already been dealt with as major topics, either in the present chapter or the previous one, such as identity, who belonged to the community, prophecy and apocalypticism. This section includes a

number of beliefs thought to be important to the thinking of some or even many Jews during the Persian period, which have not been discussed elsewhere.

### **11.3.1. Deity**

**Ackerman** (1992) *Under Every Green Tree*; **Albertz** (1994) *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*; **Becking et al.** (2001) *Only One God?*; **Bolin** (1995) ‘The Temple of YHWH at Elephantine’; **Dietrich and Klopfenstein (eds.)** (1994) *Ein Gott allein?*; **Edelman** (1995a) ‘Introduction’; (1995b) ‘Tracking Observance of the Aniconic Tradition’; **Edelman (ed.)** (1995b) *The Triumph of Elohim*; **Gnuse** (1997) *No Other Gods*; **Keel and Uehlinger** (1998b) *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*; **Mettinger** (1982) *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*; (1995) *No Graven Image?*; **Niehr** (1990) *Der höchste Gott*; (1999) ‘Religio-Historical Aspects of the “Early Post-Exilic” Period’; **Porten** (1968) *Archives from Elephantine*; **M.S. Smith** (2001) *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*; (2002) *The Early History of God*; **E. Stern** (1999) ‘Religion in Palestine in the Assyrian and Persian Periods’; **T.L. Thompson** (1995a) ‘The Intellectual Matrix of Early Biblical Narrative’; **van der Toorn** (1986) ‘Herem-Bethel and Elephantine Oath Procedure’; (1992) ‘Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine’; **van der Toorn (ed.)** (1997) *The Image and the Book*; **Uehlinger** (1995) ‘Gab es eine josphianische Kultreform?’; **Zevit** (2001) *The Religions of Ancient Israel*.

One developing consensus of the past couple of decades is that ancient Israel was basically a polytheistic society, though Yhwh functioned in some way as a national/ethnic god (much as Chemosh did for the Moabites and Qaus/Qos for the Edomites) for both Israel and Judah. The concept of deity was not necessarily static throughout this time; for example, there may have been groups who were devoted exclusively to Yhwh (such as Morton Smith’s ‘Yhwh alone movement’ [§ 11.7.1]). One of the most momentous changes, therefore, was the development of the concept of monotheism. Yet there were certainly henotheistic or monolatrous tendencies in some texts (circles?) well before the exile which laid the groundwork for the development of monotheism.

In order to discuss monotheism it is necessary to come up with a working definition: monotheism requires that the deity in question is the only one and explicitly rejects the existence of other gods (cf. M.S. Smith 2001: 151-54). Thus, the devotion exclusively to Yhwh is not itself monotheism if it does not deny that other gods exist. The issue has been clouded by the use of terms such as ‘inclusive monotheism’ and ‘exclusive monotheism’, terms which are not clearly defined in the original publication (Thompson 1995a). A clearer definition has been given by B. Becking, though I am not sure it is what Thompson intended: ‘exclusive monotheism...the veneration of one deity, YHWH, is presented as the only possibility for all human beings...inclusive monotheism refers to a form of religion that claims universal veneration of one deity by the community but does not charge others with this obligation’ (in Becking 2001: 191-92). If this definition is acceptable, ‘inclusive monotheism’ is not monotheism by the definition I have given above but is only a form of henotheism. The terms ‘henotheism’ and ‘monolatry’ (and

apparently ‘inclusive monotheism’) imply exclusive devotion to one god but without denying the existence of other deities. This is why the First Commandment (Exod. 20.3//Deut. 5.7) is not monotheistic because it implicitly recognizes the existence of other gods.

Although there is no complete agreement on when monotheism developed, many would argue that we find monotheism already in Second Isaiah with his denial of the existence of other gods (e.g. Albertz 1994: 417–18; M.S. Smith 2001: 179–94; 2002: 191–99; Becking *et al.* 2001: 191–92; *contra* Thompson [1995a: 113] who states that Second Isaiah is an example of ‘inclusive monotheism’): Yhwh alone is without beginning or end, uniquely divine and God alone, the creator of the cosmos, and there is nothing like him (Isa. 46.9; 48.12–13). The book of Deuteronomy has some statements that express similar ideas (e.g. Deut. 4.35, 39), but these exist alongside others that seem to accept the existence of other gods (Deut. 5.7; 6.4 [cf. M.S. Smith 2001: 153]). This could be explained by an editing process in which the monotheistic statements were later additions to the text. Thus, many scholars see the development of monotheism—in some circles, anyway—during the seventh–sixth centuries BCE. For example, it has been pointed out that astral imagery of the late eighth and seventh centuries had disappeared from seals and seal impressions of the Jerusalem elite by the early sixth and also the blessing and salvation functions of Yhwh’s ‘Asherah’, known from several inscriptions, had been absorbed by Yhwh by the time of the Lachish and Arad ostraca (Uehlinger 1995). This has been interpreted as indirect evidence of Josiah’s reform and a move in the direction of monotheism.

Especially important for understanding the views of the deity in the Persian period are the documents from Elephantine. This Jewish military colony had its own temple to God. The normal term for God among the Elephantine papyri is *Yhw* (perhaps pronounced Yahu, though we also find *Yhh* which may be only a graphic variant). A list of contributors to the cult indicates that other divinities also had a place, however; specifically listed are Eshem-Bethel and Anat-Bethel (*TAD* C3.15.127–28 = *AP* 22.124–25). In another text, a man swears by Herem and Anat-Yahu (*TAD* B7.3.3 = *AP* 44.3); Herem is probably not a deity but a piece of temple property (von der Toorn 1986). Bethel was once a separate deity but may have been identified with *Yhw* by the temple participants at Elephantine (cf. van der Toorn 1992: 94, 97). As far as Anat-Bethel and Anat-Yahu are concerned, they originated no doubt as goddess figures (cf. van der Toorn 1992: 95–97), but is this their position in the Elephantine texts? It has been suggested that these were actually only hypostases of *Yhw* by this time (Porten 1968: 179; cf. Niehr 1990: 48). From the contents of the texts currently available, no definitive answer can be given. The existence of the deities’ names in a list, and the fact that ‘Bethel’ is an element in some personal names, could indicate that these were worshipped as separate deities. Yet all references to deities as such in the Elephantine texts relating to the Jewish community are to *Yhw*, and the temple is the ‘temple of *Yhw*’. That these names are known only from lists might suggest only a small place in the cult. It may be, therefore, that no pantheon—or even ‘triad’ of Bethel, Eshem-Bethel, and Anat-Bethel (*DDD*<sup>2</sup>: 174)—of deities existed at Elephantine but that they were seen only

as aspects of Yhw. We simply do not have enough information to make a clear decision between these possibilities.

The generic title 'God of heaven' (*אֱלֹהֶשׁמַיָּא*, *‘elâ šemayā*: *TAD* A3.6.1; A4.3.[2], 3, 5; A4.7.2, 27–28; A4.8.2, 26–27; A4.9.3–4 = *AP* 40.1; 38.[2], 3, 5; 30.2, 27–28; 31.2, 26–27; 32.3–4; Ezra 5.11, 12; 6.9, 10; 7.12, 21, 23; Hebrew אֱלֹהֵי הַשְׁמִים, *‘elōhē haššāmayim*: Ezra 1.2; Neh. 1.4, 5; 2.4, 20) evidently becomes widely used of Yhwh in the Persian period, with occasionally the alternative title, 'Lord of heaven' (*מֶרֶא שְׁמִי*, *mr’ šmy*: *TAD* A4.7.15//A4.8.14 = *AP* 30.15//31.14). The latter is equivalent to the title, 'Lord of heaven' (*בָּעֵל שְׁמָם*, *Baal Shamem*), widely used at this time among the Phoenicians, though 'God of heaven' might also be related (Niehr 1990). It has been suggested that the use of this title was in imitation of the title of the Persian god Ahura Mazda or that it was even meant as a subtle propaganda device to the Persians, so that by avoiding the name Yhw the Jewish god might be identified with Ahura Mazda by the Persians (Bolin 1995). It may well be that some people at this time, even among the Jews, saw the various deities as simply different manifestations of the one supreme god. There is no evidence, however, that the title 'God of heaven' was specifically used for outsiders, nor that 'God of heaven' was a particular title of Ahura Mazda (Niehr 1990: 46; *DDD*<sup>2</sup>: 370–72; Bolin [1995] gives no evidence that Ahura Mazda was ever called the 'God of heaven'). The name Yhw is used without embarrassment in communications with the Persians (*TAD* A4.7.6, 15, 24, 26, 27; A4.8.7, 24, 26–27; A4.10.8; cf. B2.2.4; = *AP* 30.6, 15, 24, 26, 27; 31.7, 24, 26–27; 33.8; 6.4), while 'God of heaven', without the name Yhw, is used in inner Jewish communications (*TAD* A3.6.1; A4.3.[2], 3, 5 = *AP* 40.1; 38.[2], 3, 5).

It is now argued by many scholars that the Jerusalem temple during the monarchy had divine images (see the essays in van der Toorn 1997). Irrespective of this, the Second Temple seems not to have had images as such. Instead, in the Second Temple a variety of substitutes or surrogates took on the functions fulfilled by the cult statue in other temples. Physically, the lampstand (*mēnōrā*) was an important symbol of Yhwh (cf. Zech. 4). Spiritually, two sorts of theology had been developed to explain the connection between Yhwh and the temple: the 'name theology' (or *shem*-theology) developed by the Deuteronomists and the '*kavod*-theology' ('glory theology') of the priestly writers (Mettinger 1982; Niehr 1999: 237–38).

A related question is the use of images in other contexts, such as seals, coins, and the like. The clay cultic figurines frequently found in other areas of Palestine during the Persian period (as well as earlier in Judah itself) are entirely absent from the areas of Judah and Samaria (E. Stern 1999: 254). This suggests some sort of prohibition or cultural change. The seals and seal impressions found in Yehud tend to be imageless for the most part, except for the 'lion' seals, unlike the Samarian seals that have a great deal of imagery paralleled in the Greek, Phoenician, and Persian spheres (§3.2.1; §3.2.3). On the other hand, the Yehud coins have images borrowed from Greek coinage and include not only humans as well as animals but even the head of the goddess Athena (§3.4.1). It has even been suggested that one unique coin pictures Yhwh on a wheeled throne, but this interpretation seems improbable.

To summarize, earlier trends had resulted in a monotheistic view of the deity (meaning exclusive worship of Yhwh and the denial of the existence of other gods) in some circles (especially the priestly and temple establishment) in the Persian period, most likely already by its beginning. The situation at Elephantine is less clear. Only Yhw (= Yhwh) is referred to in the documents, and the temple is the ‘temple of Yhw’. Yet some offering lists include the names Eshem-Bethel and Anat-Bethel, and in one document a man swears by Anat-Yahu. Bethel was probably seen as another name of Yhw, but was Anat seen as his consort? This is possible, but equally possible is that Anat-Bethel and Anat-Yahu were seen only as hypostases of Yhw by this time. No divine statues were in the Elephantine temple; at least, the documents contain no hint of such, nor that one had been destroyed when the temple was destroyed. In the Jerusalem temple Yhwh’s presence was manifested through objects such as the lampstand and theological explanations such as Deuteronomic name-theology and priestly *kavod*-theology. This did not necessarily represent the situation among the general populace, however, where ‘popular religion’ still preserved many of the old practices (§11.5). On the figure of wisdom, which has certain divine characteristics (Prov. 8), see above (§4.6.1).

### **11.3.2. The Spirit World**

P.L. Day (1988) *An Adversary in Heaven*; Grabbe (1987c) ‘The Scapegoat Ritual’; Handy (1994) *Among the Host of Heaven*; Keel (1977) *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst*; Olyan (1993) *A Thousand Thousands Served Him*.

For an overview of beliefs in heavenly beings during the entire Second Temple period, see JRSTP (219–25). The concept of heavenly messengers is already found in the Old Testament, perhaps a reflex of the messenger gods of the old Semitic pantheon (cf. Handy 1994). With the developing monotheism, the angelic figures alongside God are probably derived from the original sons of God in the divine council (cf. Ps. 82.1 [ET 82.2]). The angels are the helpers of the deity and responsible for the workings of the cosmos as well as for carrying out divine tasks relating to the human sphere. Angels have only a minor place in Israelite tradition until the Persian period. The Hebrew word ‘angel’ (*mal’ak* ‘messenger’) may be used of human messengers (cf. Ezek. 23.40; Neh. 6.3); however, some of these figures in the Bible seem to have characteristics of heavenly beings (Gen. 32.23–33; Judg. 6.11–22; 13.2–23; 2 Sam. 24.15–17//1 Chron. 21.16–20). Similarly, angels in the Bible speak for Yhwh; for example, Exod. 3.2–5 mentions that ‘the *mal’ak Yhwh*’ appeared to Moses, but then the rest of the passage goes on to say that ‘Yhwh said’. Thus, the messenger gods (and perhaps other divinities as well) of the original Northwest Semitic pantheon became reduced to angels in later Judaism, but the outlines of the original polytheistic divine council were still retained despite the monotheistic views of the final editors of the tradition.

The question is: How far had the development of the heavenly world gone by the Persian period (by which time monotheism had developed at least in some circles)? The idea of heavenly beings alongside the one God, helping and assisting him, was not seen as incompatible with monotheism. Spirits and lesser heavenly beings are

fully integrated into monotheism from its inception. By this time, we already find some differentiation among the various heavenly beings. The cherubim who act as guardians (Gen. 3; 1 Kgs 6.29, 32, 35) and carry Yhwh's throne (1 Kgs 6.23-28; 1 Sam. 4.4; 2 Sam. 6.2; 22.11 = Ps. 18.11; Ezek. 1.10) probably go well back into Judah's history, at least to the Assyrian period. They bear a resemblance to winged bulls and other figures known from Mesopotamia (cf. Keel 1977). Also well known by post-exilic times were the seraphim (Isa. 6.1-2). These have much in common with the *uraeus*, a cobra-like figure of Egypt which was a symbol of kingship. The *uraeus* is often pictured with hands and feet or wings; the winged figures normally have two or four wings, but there is at least one example with six (Keel 1977: 77).

The question of other angelic beings depends on how one sees the development of the traditions that surface in *1 Enoch* and later literature. As discussed below (§14.4.1), the earliest parts of *1 Enoch* probably date from the third century BCE in their present form, but some parts of the *Book of Watchers* (*1 En.* 1-36) and the *Astronomical Book* (*1 En.* 72-82 probably represents only a reduced version of this)—or at least the traditions lying behind them—most likely date to a time before the coming of Alexander. The list of named leaders of the rebellious angelic hosts (*1 En.* 6; 8), the four or seven archangels (9.1; 10.1, 4, 9, 11; 19.1; 20; 71), and other heavenly beings took some time in developing (unfortunately, Olyan [1993] does not discuss the *Enoch* tradition).

Demonic figures are not well developed in the Old Testament. The figure of *ha-Satan* ('the Adversary') of Job 1-2 seems to be a heavenly prosecutor who is an essential part of the heavenly court and a 'son of God' (Job 1.6-12; 2.1-7). The same interpretation may apply to 1 Chron. 21.1 (cf. 2 Sam. 24.1); however, it is possible that he is taking on some of the characteristics of the evil tempter later associated with the figure of the Devil (cf. P.L. Day 1988). Again, the *Enoch* tradition (including the traditions reflected in the *Book of Giants*) may be an indicator. In the *Book of Watchers* evil enters the world because of the rebellion of some of the angels. The spirits of their offspring the giants become the evil spirits that tempt mankind (7; 9.7-10; 15.8-12). This mythical story only first appears in *1 Enoch* but is likely to have an earlier history of some length. A number of elements go into the 'Devil-gestalt', some of them going back to an early time (Grabbe 1987c). The 'Azazel' of Lev. 16.8-10, 20-22, 26 is an enigmatic figure but has often been thought to be a demonic figure. If not a demon in origin, Azazel certainly became associated with the figure of the Devil at a fairly early time in Jewish literature.

In sum, although precise details do not appear in our extant sources, all indications are that angelology and demonology were developing fairly rapidly by the end of the Persian period.

### **11.3.3. Land, Exile, and Return**

**Ben Zvi** (2003) 'What Is New in Yehud?'; **Duggan** (2001) *The Covenant Renewal in Ezra-Nehemiah*; **Grabbe (ed.)** (1998) *Leading Captivity Captive*; **Japhet** (1983b) 'People and Land in the Restoration Period'; **Knibb** (1977) 'The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period'; **Roberts** (1973) 'The Davidic Origin of the Zion Tradition'; (1982) 'Zion in the Theology of the Davidic-Solomonic Empire'; **Scott (ed.)** (1997) *Exile*.

However many people were ultimately deported from Judah by the Babylonians (§12.1.2), the conquest and exile were traumatic for all concerned. Many biblical passages focus on the importance of the land and how Israel/Judah might lose it, with exile from the land one of the worst punishments (e.g. Lev. 26; Deut. 28; 1 Kgs 8.34, 46–53; Isa. 40.1–11; 51.9–23). Some of these statements (perhaps even all) are exilic or post-exilic, but they and statements in certainly post-exilic literature (e.g. Ezra–Nehemiah) show that a strong theology of the land had developed by the Persian period at the latest (cf. Ben Zvi 2003: 37–38). It is a theme found widely in Second Temple literature (Knibb 1977). A number of elements contributed to such a view, including belief in ‘the inviolability of Zion’ that we find in several biblical passages (cf. Roberts 1973; 1982). The pattern of sin–punishment–exile–repentance–return (see the essays in Scott [ed.] 1997 and Grabbe [ed.] 1998) is a major element of this land theology.

Possession of the land is used as the reason for various religious matters that form major themes in Ezra–Nehemiah and also some other literature of the time. The two great prayers of confession in Ezra–Nehemiah, each in its own way, focuses on the original loss of the land and how it might be lost again (the majority of the references to ‘land’ in Ezra–Nehemiah are found in these two passages). Ezra 9 speaks of the original captivity caused by the sins of the ancestors, but now they enjoy the favour of the Persian king (though they remain in servitude). When they were originally given the land, it was unclean from the original inhabitants, and God’s people were not to intermarry with them. Now that God has returned a remnant, will they violate this command by mixing with those who carry out such abominable practices? In Nehemiah 9–10 the events leading up to and surrounding the original exodus are recounted in much more detail. They were given a rich land, but because of rejection of the Torah, they were delivered into the hands of the peoples of the lands. We are now slaves on our own land. M.W. Duggan sees the prayer of Neh. 9.6–37 as the spiritual apex of and hermeneutical key to the Ezra–Nehemiah story (2001: 298–99). The confession is followed by a pledge to obey a variety of laws, prominent among them being the command to separate from the peoples of the land and not intermarry with them. Leviticus 26 lays out in graphic detail the punishments for disobedience, culminating in removal from the land and scattering among the nations; however, great emphasis is laid on the fact that the land will be desolate to make up for the sabbatical years that the people failed to keep (cf. also 2 Chron. 36.21). For some Jews, draconian measures were the only way to keep pure the ‘remnant’ that God had restored to the land and, therefore, to remain in possession of the land given by God. This view is the basis—or at least the justification—for the rather xenophobic actions and attitudes found in Ezra–Nehemiah.

For a general treatment of the theology of the land in the Second Temple period, see *JRSTP* (297–300). The concept is also tied up with the theology of the remnant, discussed below.

### 11.3.4. Covenant

**Duggan** (2001) *The Covenant Renewal in Ezra–Nehemiah*; **Eichrodt** (1961–67) *Theology of the Old Testament*; **McCarthy** (1972) *Old Testament Covenant*; (1978) *Treaty and Covenant*; **Nicholson** (1986) *God and his People*; **Perlitt** (1969) *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*; **Rendtorff** (1998) *The Covenant Formula*.

For the half century following W. Eichrodt's *Theology* the concept of covenant underwent extensive debate (surveyed in McCarthy 1972; Nicholson 1986: 3–117). Arguments were made that 'covenant' was the central theological metaphor of the Hebrew Bible and even that it went back to the mid-second millennium BCE. By the 1970s and 1980s study had made a full circle and more or less returned to the position of Wellhausen—that the use of covenant as a theological metaphor of the relationship between God and mankind was a late development (Perlitt 1969; McCarthy 1978). Nicholson was willing to argue that Hos. 6.7 and 8.1 did use 'covenant' as a theological metaphor, but this was its beginnings (1986: 179–89). Certainly a number of major prophetic books (e.g. Isa. 1–39) do not have the concept.

Thus, the idea that one way of expressing the relationship between Yhwh and his people was by use of covenant theology had become well established by the Persian period. The Hebrew word for 'covenant' (ברית *b'rît*) is used for this relationship in several passages in Nehemiah (1.5; 9.8, 32), Malachi (2.10; 3.1), and apparently Zechariah (9.11). 1 and 2 Chronicles have many references to the concept. In Ezra, however, it refers only to a covenant made to separate from and expel the 'foreign wives' (10.3). References are also made to the special covenant enacted with the priests and Levites (Mal. 2.4–9; Neh. 13.29). M.W. Duggan (2001) argues that Neh. 7.72–10.40 is composed in the form of a covenant renewal narrative. The 'covenant formulary' (in which Yhwh states that he will be the god of Israel and they will be his people) is found in a number of writings from the Persian period (Rendtorff 1998).

### 11.3.5. Remnant

**Ahlström** (1974) 'Isaiah vi.13'; **Emerton** (1982) 'Translation and Interpretation of Isaiah vi.13'; **Hasel** (1972) *The Remnant*; (1976) 'Remnant'; **Hausmann** (1987) *Israel's Rest*; **M.E.W. Thompson** (1982) *Situation and Theology*.

A theme running through the prophetic and some other literature is that of the 'remnant'. A variety of terms are used in the Hebrew text, though 'remnant' is a fairly common translation of many of them: שָׁאֵר/שְׁאִירִים (*še'ař/s'e'erîm* 'remnant'), מַלְטָפָלָם (*ml̄t, ml̄* '[those who] escaped'), יֶתֶרְתָּה (*ytr* '[those] left'), אֲחַרְתָּה (*'ah̄r̄t̄* 'the remainder'). The concept of remnant is found widely in ancient Near Eastern literature (Hasel 1972, 1976), such as the Sumerian *Atra-hasis*, the *Erra Epic*, the *Book of the Divine Cow*, and the *Prophecy of Neferti*. Most of these texts emphasize the greatness of destruction and wretchedness of survivors. This is carried over into various biblical texts (Amos 3.12; 5.3; 6.9; 9.1; Jer. 8.3; 15.1–3).

Other passages see the survival of a remnant as a cause for hope (the probable significance of the name of Isaiah's son Shear-jashub in Isa. 7.3; Joel 3.5 [ET 2.32]). This leads to another important theological theme, however: the concept of a purified remnant as the basis of a new creation. In contrast to the remnant theme in other ancient Near Eastern texts, the idea of a remnant which had been purified by the 'fire' of exile seems to be a new development in some biblical texts (e.g. Isa. 6.11-13; Hausmann [1987: 162-64] labels this part of a post-exilic stratum). The returnees were identified with the remnant of earlier prophetic texts (Zech. 8.6, 11, 12 [*š̄e' ērīt*]), but now it is also the nucleus of a new 'holy' community, while the peoples living in the land were foreigners usurping what God had given to his people (M.E.W. Thompson 1982). The fact that the majority of the population had not been taken from the land, with their descendants making up a significant portion of the population, was ignored. A main theme in Ezra is this conflict between those living in the land and those returning from exile, whether hindering the building of the temple or creating problems by intermarriage. Particularly relevant to the 'remnant theme' is a passage in Ezra's prayer (Ezra 9.8-15): this emphasizes that, as a 'surviving remnant' (vv. 9, 13, 15 [*p̄lētā*]), the community of the newly returned must not become entangled in the 'uncleanness' of the people around them or this time they would be left without remnant (v. 14 [*š̄e' ērīt*]).

### 11.3.6. Concept of Israel

This topic is discussed above (§8.1).

### 11.3.7. Theodicy

This topic is discussed above (§4.6.2).

### 11.3.8. Eschatology

**Childs** (1959) 'The Enemy from the North'; **Everson** (1974) 'The Days of Yahweh'; **Fohrer** (1982) 'Der Tag Jhwhs'; **Gowan** (1986) *Eschatology in the Old Testament*; **Grabbe** (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; **Hoffmann** (1981) 'The Day of the Lord as a Concept'; **T.J. Lewis** (1992) 'Dead, Abode of the'; **Mowinckel** (1956) *He That Cometh*; **von Rad** (1959) 'The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh'; **Tromp** (1969) *Primitive Conceptions of Death*; **Weiss** (1966) 'The Origin of the "Day of the Lord"—Reconsidered'.

#### 11.3.8.1. General

Eschatology covers a number of concepts, including both personal and cosmic eschatology (see *JRSTP* [257-70] for a survey of the whole Second Temple period). This section is confined to personal eschatology, and cosmic eschatology is discussed in the next two sections below. Most of the books of the Hebrew Bible do not appear to envisage life after death as such. This also seems to be the view in Ben Sira, and the later Sadducees are supposed to have maintained this belief if we can believe our sources. When belief in some form of afterlife began to enter Israelite thinking is not known. Recent study on the cult of the dead suggests that

the idea that the dead could communicate with and influence the living may have been around in some parts of Israelite society from an early time (cf. Grabbe 1995: 141–45). In any case, apparently already as early as the Persian or early Greek period, ideas about an afterlife had entered Jewish thinking.

Our sources are primarily the Isaianic and the Enoch traditions. The traditional view in the biblical texts (and also widely in Syria and Mesopotamia) was not in personal afterlife so much as in dying in peace surrounded by one's family, including several succeeding generations (e.g. Ps. 128) and in the survival of the family and community. Such a view apparently continues in the Persian period in some texts. For example, Isa. 65.17–26 gives an idyllic picture of the future of God's people but puts the emphasis on a long and happy life, not survival after death. Yet like the other ancient Near Eastern peoples, the Israelites and Judaeans believed that some fragment of the person survived the disintegration of death and had a shadowy existence in the grave or underworld (cf. Isa. 14.9–15). One cannot speak of an afterlife as such since what survived in the underworld was not the whole person but comparable to the 'shades' familiar from early Greek texts such as Homer. Yet this may have eventually developed into the concept of a soul that survives death and serves as a basis for a future life which is attested in the *Book of Watchers* (*I En.* 1–36).

Although the *Book of Watchers* in its present form probably dates from Ptolemaic times, some of its traditions and ideas apparently go back to the Persian period (§14.4.1). *I Enoch* 22 describes a tour of the underworld in which Enoch sees four 'beautiful places' or chambers into which the souls or spirits of the dead are gathered until the day of judgment. The souls of the dead are already experiencing reward and punishment in their intermediate state. We cannot be certain that this full picture goes back to the Persian period, but it is a reasonable extrapolation to see at least the roots of an afterlife as pre-Alexandrian. One of the reasons for thinking that views about an afterlife were developing lies in the 'Isaiah Apocalypse' (Isa. 24–27). This passage is thought to be one of the latest in the book of Isaiah, but many would date it to the Persian period (§4.3.1). The importance of the Isaiah Apocalypse is that it seems to contain the earliest reference to the resurrection (26.19–21), in which the rising of the dead into their previous bodily form seems to be in the mind of the author. Other passages of the Old Testament have been interpreted as references to the resurrection but probably did not have that original meaning. For example, Ezekiel 37 (which many would date to the Persian period) talks of the dry bones which become living human beings; in its original context this looks like an allegory for the restoration of Israel (37.11–14), not a return of dead Israelites to life when only skeletons remained. Yet its imagery is very conducive to development of the interpretation that this represents a bodily resurrection of dead individuals.

In the case of *I Enoch* 22, the existence of the soul after death seems to be combined with the idea of a final judgment. This may imply a general resurrection, though this is not stated explicitly. *I Enoch* 10.6 mentions a final judgment when the fate of the fallen angel Asael would be announced (even though he has been bound for the present). Since the Persians seem to have had an idea of a bodily

resurrection, this might reasonably be conjectured as the source of the idea (see the Appendix). A lot of this is uncertain, but there are indications that the concept of a personal afterlife had its beginnings in Yehud, or perhaps other Jewish communities during the Persian period. More certain are views about cosmic eschatology.

### **11.3.8.2. Day of Yhwh**

Whether a cosmic eschatology as such is found in the Hebrew Bible depends on how certain passages are interpreted. One thing is clear, though: there was a developing concept of the ‘day of Yhwh’ before, during, and after the Persian period, eventually reaching a full-blown belief in a cosmic judgment, following a catastrophic climax of history, in the later Second Temple period. The ‘day of Yhwh’ may originally have been an expectation of help from Yhwh on behalf of Israel, implying a theophany and perhaps originally celebrated in a cultic context (cf. Judg. 5.1-12, 20; 2 Sam. 5.22-25; Mowinckel 1956: 143-54); however, it was turned by some of the prophets into a day of judgment on Israel or Judah (Amos 5.18-20). A number of passages (sometimes just referring to ‘that day’) seem to have this concept in mind, such as Isa. 2.12-17; Zeph. 1.7–2.3. Hoffmann (1981) argues that all references to the ‘day of Yhwh’ are eschatological except Amos 5.18-20 and Ezek. 13.5; however, Jer. 46.2-12 appears to be describing the defeat of Egypt at the battle of Carchemish in 605 BCE.

We have several texts about the day of Yhwh that are possibly or probably from the Persian period. Ezekiel 38–39 describe exotic nations with strange names (e.g. Gog, Meshech, Tubal, Put, Gomer) who are brought from the ends of the earth ‘on that day’ against the people Israel who have returned from captivity and are living at peace. The ‘day of Yhwh’ is referred to throughout the book of Joel (1.15; 2.11; 3.3 [ET 2.30]; 4.14 [ET 3.14]). Zechariah 14 describes how Yhwh will come down from heaven and set his foot on the Mount of Olives which will then split in two. Those that fight against Jerusalem will be destroyed, and Jerusalem will become a place of pilgrimage to the survivors among the nations. Although some of these passages are general references to Yhwh intervening to fight against sinners, the nations attacking Zion, and generally defending his people, several of them go beyond the normal threats. There is an eschatological feel to a number of these passages that make them look like references to the ‘end of the age’.

### **11.3.8.3. Enemy from North**

Some of the passages speaking about a ‘day of Yhwh’ also refer to his foes as coming ‘from the north’. This is a natural reference because most invaders—even those armies from the east—would have come down one of the routes that paralleled the coast through Syria, approaching Palestine from the north and thus invading from the north. The theme is very important in Jeremiah, though many of the references are somewhat vague (1.13-15; 4.5-8, 11-17, 19-21; 5.15-17; 6.1-5, 22-26). Eventually, though, the ‘enemy from the north’ is identified with the Babylonians (46.6, 10, 20, 24), in texts that seem to date from the post-exilic period. But then there is the surprising statement that an ‘enemy from north’ (= Medes) would also come to destroy Babylon (50.9). The term seems to be taking on a metaphorical

meaning in which the ‘enemy from the north’ is the archetype of the cruel and implacable enemy. In Ezek. 26.7 the ‘enemy from the north’ is a traditional human enemy (Nebuchadnezzar, in this case). There is a change of perspective in Ezekiel 38–39, however, and the ‘enemy from the north’ is transformed into an eschatological enemy. The context is also the ‘day of Yhwh’ (as discussed above).

#### **11.4. Prophecy and Apocalypticism**

**Blenkinsopp** (1996a) *A History of Prophecy in Israel*; **Collins** (1998) *The Apocalyptic Imagination*; (2003) ‘The Eschatology of Zechariah’; **Collins (ed.)** (1979) *Apocalypse*; (1999) *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, I; **Collins and Charlesworth (eds.)** (1991) *Mysteries and Revelations*; **S.L. Cook** (1995) *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*; **Grabbe** (1989) ‘The Social Setting of Early Jewish Apocalypticism’; (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; (2003c) ‘Introduction and Overview’; (2003d) ‘Prophetic and Apocalyptic’; (2003e) ‘Poets, Scribes, or Preachers?’; **Grabbe and Haak (eds.)** (2003) *Knowing the End from the Beginning*; **Hanson** (1976) ‘Apocalypticism’; **Hellholm (ed.)** (1983) *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*; **Kessler** (2002) *The Book of Haggai*; **Knibb** (1982) ‘Prophecy and the Emergence of the Jewish Apocalypses’; **Sacchi** (1996) *Jewish Apocalyptic and its History*; **Tigchelaar** (1996) *Prophets of Old and the Day of the End*; **VanderKam** (1986) ‘The Prophetic-Sapiential Origins’.

Prophecy was important for Jewish history in the Persian period, with several prophets known by name and several prophetic books being among our sources. Yet many questions of prophecy and apocalyptic at this time remain controversial. For example, it has long been argued that there are substantial differences between pre-exilic and post-exilic prophecy (e.g. Hanson 1976). Post-exilic prophecy was seen to be prophecy of salvation in contrast to pre-exilic. J. Kessler has recently pointed out that Haggai is in the same mould of ‘typical prophet’ as Amos or Jeremiah (2002: 266–69). Thus, although this differentiation between pre- and post-exilic prophecy represents a simplistic analysis, our concern is to focus on the prophecy of the Persian period. It is important, however, to make a clear distinction that is often overlooked: prophets and prophetic writings are not interchangeable. Prophets can be defined as follows (Grabbe 1995: 107):

the prophet is a mediator who claims to receive messages direct from a divinity, by various means, and communicates these messages to recipients.

In some cases we have words or messages from prophetic figures preserved in prophetic writings. Yet we must keep in mind that the contents of a prophetic book may come from a variety of sources, not just prophets. Just because we have a book in the name of Isaiah does not mean we can assume all the words are from Isaiah of Jerusalem in the eighth century nor—very important—can we assume that all the words are from a prophet of any sort. The books were ultimately assembled by scribes, and scribes may have composed some or even many passages. This means that we cannot make an automatic equation between prophetic book and prophetic utterances of a prophet. This is significant because differences between different

prophetic books may be due to scribes and editing more than to differences between particular prophets—and vice versa.

The prophetic writings thought by and large to be from the Persian period are Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Third Isaiah (Isa. 56–66), Joel, and Jonah, as well as portions of Ezekiel. As already noted, these books probably include many passages written by scribes rather than the words uttered by an actual prophet. When we look for prophetic figures, however, only two books have left anything like the portrait of an actual person: Haggai and Zechariah. We also have references to the prophets who supposedly opposed Nehemiah, including the prophet Shemaiah b. Delaiah b. Mehetabel and the prophetess Noadiah as well as some unnamed ‘other prophets’ (Neh. 6.10–14).

The prophetic books other than Haggai and Zechariah do not have a clear prophetic persona behind them. Third Isaiah seems to be made up of diverse material (not all from the Persian period [§4.3.1]), but some parts look as if they were uttered by an actual prophet. Joel also seems to have material from a living prophet. Ezekiel 40–48 may well be a literary composition, though Ezekiel 38–39 might be from a prophetic vision. Malachi might have been entirely a written book, whether by a prophet or a priest. Many would want to exclude Jonah from the prophets, but it is certainly the tale of a prophet, resembling the stories we have about Elijah, Elisha, and other prophets. Thus prophets were active in at least part of the Persian period, and prophetic writings were being produced and edited. It has been conventional to see a ‘decline’ in prophecy and its eventual disappearance in the post-exilic period, but the evidence suggests prophecy continued in various forms throughout the Second Temple period (Grabbe 2003e).

This brings us to the question of apocalyptic: Did it exist as early as Persian rule? Unfortunately, finding a definition of apocalyptic is very difficult, yet many still see a sharp distinction between prophecy and apocalyptic. Note, however, the following points:

- Both prophecy and apocalyptic present themselves as delivering a divine message to human recipients.
- Both have the function of addressing the contemporary audience with regard to their current situation and offering hope or advice or perspective.
- Both presuppose a mythical worldview in which the unseen but very real heavenly world determines what will happen on earth and in the affairs of humans.
- Both look forward to an ideal age in which earth (and heaven, in some cases) will be transformed and the righteous will live in peace and happiness.
- Both contain significant parabolic material, warning, advising, and admonishing the reader not only for the present but also for the future.
- Both prophetic and apocalyptic writings might be the product of a community, but equally they might be produced by a single individual.
- Both have a large element of pseudepigraphic material.

The purpose of this comparison is not to suggest that one cannot distinguish between Amos and *1 Enoch*; the purpose is rather to draw the conclusion that apocalyptic is only a sub-division of prophecy.

In the past two decades, especially, scholarly study has noted strong wisdom elements in apocalyptic (cf. Grabbe 1995: 176–78). Some have taken this as evidence that apocalyptic had a separate origin from prophecy. These wisdom elements tend to be weighted toward what has been called ‘mantic wisdom’, however, and mantic wisdom has much in common with prophecy (cf. VanderKam 1986). The development of apocalyptic is complex, with many different elements and influences enriching it as time went on, but this does not diminish its relationship to prophecy, nor does it suggest a separate origin for apocalyptic since the wisdom influence on prophecy has been recognized for some time.

When we look for the roots of apocalyptic, therefore, we can find plenty of material within the biblical tradition. This does not mean that we should exclude any ‘foreign’ influences or borrowings as some insist, but apocalyptic itself can be seen as simply a development within the Israelite/Judaic prophetic tradition. Very important for its history are Zechariah 1–8 and the Isaiah Apocalypse (Isa. 24–27), and to a lesser degree Third Isaiah. Some would argue that parts of *1 Enoch*, primarily the *Book of Watchers* (*1 En.* 1–36), form our earliest apocalypse, but others would see Zechariah 1–8 as an apocalypse (as well as a prophetic book) (Knibb 1982: 161–65; S.L. Cook 1995: 125–33), though others disagree (Collins 2003). It is partly a matter of definition: Collins seems to feel that to be an apocalypse a writing requires belief in an afterlife (cf. also Collins 1979), but others would argue that this definition is too narrow (Grabbe 2003d). In any case, Zechariah 1–8 has many parallels with later apocalyptic literature and is a significant signpost to the development of apocalyptic.

As discussed below (§14.4.1), *1 Enoch* 1–36 is probably Ptolemaic in its present form, but some (many?) of the traditions are likely to have had a long life before the final editing of the book, some of them going back to the Persian period. When this, together with writings such as Zechariah 1–8, is taken into account, it seems likely that Jewish apocalyptic had its origins in the Persian period. Appeal has naturally been made to apocalyptic sections of Zoroastrian literature as influential on Jewish literature and perhaps even the stimulus for the development of apocalyptic. This is a complicated question dealt with elsewhere in the context of the broader question of Persian influence on Judaic religion (see Appendix).

### **11.5. ‘Popular Religion’**

**Ackerman** (1992) *Under Every Green Tree*; **Albertz** (1978) *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion*; (1994) *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*; **Berlinerblau** (1993) ‘The “Popular Religion” Paradigm’; (1996) *The Vow and the ‘Popular Religious Groups’*; **Segal** (1976) ‘Popular Religion in Ancient Israel’; **E. Stern** (1999) ‘Religion in Palestine in the Assyrian and Persian Periods’; **van der Toorn** (1996) *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel*.

There were several levels or spheres of religion in the ancient world. The ruler often had a favoured cult or deity which he would promote. This cult was not always the only national cult since, in a polytheistic society, there would usually be a number of cults given state sponsorship. These cults can be designated by the term ‘official religion’; however, the term can also be applied to other sorts of religious structures: the religion of the ruling class; the religion of a dominant ethnic group; the religion of a conqueror; even the most popular religion of a people when there is a national deity. In most cases, though, there will also be minority forms of the religion or minority separate religions.

The ‘official religion’ is often—though not always—at a certain remove from the religion as practised by the common people. In recent years the concept of ‘popular religion’ and ‘family religion’ has been investigated in a number of works (Albertz 1978; 1994: 94–103, 186–95, 399–411; Berlinerblau 1993; 1996; van der Toorn 1996). This is not to suggest that there is another sort of religion which can be called ‘popular religion’ nor that there is necessarily a sharp divide between ‘popular’ and ‘official’ religion. What these studies recognize, however, is that the piety, rites, and beliefs carried on in the family and home sometimes have significant variants or additional elements not normally attested for the ‘official’ or ‘dominant’ religion. In the case of Persian Yehud, the ‘official religion’ was that perpetuated by the Jerusalem temple and its priesthood. This religion was official in the sense that the ruling power—the Persians—recognized it and permitted it to function.

As discussed above (§11.3.1), monotheism had developed by the Persian period, but we cannot be sure that it was the view of everyone. It was probably the position of the temple leadership, yet this is no guarantee that all Jews believed likewise. Granted, we have little evidence that polytheism still flourished in Judah itself; on the other hand, it would be surprising if all interest in the Queen of Heaven (cf. Jer. 44.15–19) had completely disappeared. Yahu at Elephantine may have had a consort, though this is uncertain (§11.3.1). Isaiah 65.1–12 covers a whole range of activity that may be magical, divinatory, and/or cultic. One interpretation is that this passage refers to sacrificing on incense altars associated with high places (*בָּמֹת bāmōt*) which included a sacred grove and worship of Asherah, Yhwh’s consort (Ackerman 1992: 165–94).

The problem with finding cult places, such as *bamot*, in this passage is the lack of any attestation from archaeology. Cult objects (such as cultic figurines, common for Judah in the Assyrian period) are completely absent for the Persian period in both Judah and Samaria, as are temples and tombs containing such objects (E. Stern 1999: 254; *ALB II*: 478–79, 488). If *bamot* flourished during the Babylonian or Persian period, we should expect some evidence in the archaeology. This might suggest the passage is referring to some sort of magical practice. On the other hand, we find plenty of incense altars in Judah, which possibly suggests some sort of cultic celebrations among the populace (surprisingly, Stern reports on these but makes no comment on the fact that they seem to contradict his statement about lack of cultic objects in Judah [*ALB II*: 510–13]).

'Popular religion' in the Persian period would be those beliefs and practices of the common people apart from the temple, especially those that would be frowned on by the temple establishment. Unfortunately, because of elements that were viewed with distaste by the temple authorities, popular religion may well be ignored by the preserved sources. Practices such as magic, astrology, divination, the cult of the dead, and analogous rites can be included under popular religion. We shall now discuss these, in the next section.

### **11.6. Magic and the Esoteric Arts**

**Ackerman** (1992) *Under Every Green Tree*; **Douglas** (1999) *Leviticus as Literature*; **Grabbe** (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*; (forthcoming b), Review of M. Douglas, *Leviticus*; **Kitz** (2003) 'Prophecy as Divination'; **T.J. Lewis** (1989) *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*.

The 'esoteric arts' is a useful term to delineate a group of phenomena with certain things in common, primarily a specialist, slightly mysterious knowledge, usually implying some peculiar acquaintance with the divine realm. This includes magic, astrology, divination, dream interpretation, and the like. These are closely related to prophecy and apocalyptic; indeed, if prophecy and apocalyptic are seen as forms of divination, they would naturally fall into this category (cf. Grabbe 1995: 139–41; Kitz 2003). But there were special means of learning the future among the Jews, in particular, via use of the Law and the Prophets. The written word had become a source of divine knowledge and was often thought to have all sorts of esoteric knowledge encoded within it, if one only knew the key to unlocking it. Everyone wants to know what the future holds and also how to control it. Throughout history humans have developed various methods for trying to find out how things look from the perspective of the gods and also how to protect themselves from misfortunes of every sort. This included the ability to curse one's enemies, as well as to protect against the curses of others. Magical and mantic procedures are known from all over the ancient Near East for the first, second, and even third millennium BCE. The peoples of Palestine were no different, and various of the 'esoteric arts' were practised in Judah throughout the Second Temple period, as well as before and afterward (cf. JRSTP: 241–54; Grabbe 1995: 119–51). That Jews practised a variety of magical arts is not in question. Yet we also find denunciations of these same practices in some of the Jewish literature (Deut. 13.2–6; 18.9–22; Lev. 19.26, 31; 20.6, 27), so how do we evaluate all this? Part of the problem is definition. The priestly Urim and Thummim are accepted as legitimate (e.g. Ezra 2.63//Neh. 7.65), yet they are as much mantic practices as anything else. In many cases, it is really an arbitrary decision to label some as 'magic' or illegitimate and others as 'divine' and therefore acceptable. There is no essential difference in how they operate.

Leaving aside the question of value judgments about legitimacy—which is a very subjective one, in any case—what information do we have about the use of the esoteric arts during the Persian period? We know that the traditional practices of astrology, extispicy, and related divination means, well known from Assyrian

and Babylonian texts, continued to operate under the Persians (cf. Grabbe 1995: 131–33). There is considerable archaeological evidence of ‘apotropaic’ practices, to ward off curses, demons, and bad luck (*ALB II*: 507–10). These often took the form of faces and figurines ultimately representing the Egyptian deities such as Bes, Ptah, and Pataikos. A popular practice was the wearing of necklaces with faience or glass beads, and pendants and amulets with images or symbols of the protective deities. These were found in Jerusalem and En-gedi from the sixth and especially the fifth century. Also a part of this tradition were masks, often made of clay, and ‘face’ jars and vases (pots with faces incised in the clay or with the figure in relief). This includes ‘Janus-faced vases’ with two faces. The Bes image was particularly popular, but a variety of grotesque faces are attested, including strange bird figures. The necklaces seem to have been worn particularly by children.

In a number of passages in Second Isaiah—usually dated to the exilic period, but only a decade or so before Persian rule—criticisms are directed at certain practices. Yhwh emphasizes that only he knows the end from the beginning (41.21–29; 42.9; 43.9; 44.7–8; 45.20–21; 46.10; 48.3–8, 14–16), the very sort of esoteric knowledge promised by divination. Yhwh states that he annuls the omens of the diviners (תְּחִזָּקָה בְּדִימָה 'otot baddim), makes fools of the augurs (קְסֻמִּים qōs̄mim), and makes foolish the knowledge of the sages (44.25). As for Babylon, the daughter of the Chaldeans, her spells (בְּשֻׁפִים k'sāfim) and enchantments (חַבְרִים h̄avārīm), her scanners of the heavens (הָוָרֵר שָׁמַיִם hōv̄er šamayim) and her stargazers (הָהֹזִים bakkōkāvīm), will not help her in her time of trouble (47.9, 12–13).

The cult of the dead had existed already under the monarchy (cf. Grabbe 1995: 141–45) and is likely to have continued at this time. Some of the divinatory and other practices hinted at by some texts may have had a connection with the cult of the dead. In several Third Isaiah passages that are conventionally dated to the Persian period are some references to what seem to be secret cults, some of which apparently have the aim of deriving esoteric knowledge from the dead (cf. T.J. Lewis 1989; Ackerman 1992). A passage condemning the religious practices of the people (57.3–13) is addressed to ‘sons of a sorceress’ (v. 3: בְּנֵי עֲנָנָה bēnē 'ōn'nâ). It speaks of worshipping among the terebinths and slaughtering children in the wadis (v. 5) and sacrificing on the hills (v. 7). The people provoke Yhwh to anger by sacrificing in the gardens, burning incense on bricks, passing the night in tombs, and eating unclean things (65.1–7). Although the rites mentioned here are somewhat obscure, the suggestion of some sort of cult of the dead is plausible. Similar is 66.3–4 which speaks of sacrificing dogs and swine’s blood, and 66.17 which talks of eating unclean animals in a ritual context. A passage in Chronicles may also reflect the Persian period. 2 Chronicles 16.12 refers to a foot ailment of Asa (even though he is completely righteous according to the picture of 2 Kgs 15), for which he resorted to the physicians instead of Yhwh. The context sees this as negative, though the reason as to why seeking physicians was wrong is not stated. One suggestion is that ‘healers’ (רָפָאִים rōfē 'im) should be read as ‘Rephaim’. If so, Asa was condemned for seeking the dead or the ancestors for healing.

Even though the data are somewhat scarce, they are sufficient to show the continuation of magical practices known from an earlier time and to bridge the gap

between them and the better-attested examples of the Jewish magic and mantic arts of a later time. Yet M. Douglas (1999: 107–28) has pointed out an important fact about Leviticus in particular and the P document in general: the cult does not make use of magical means to determine what sin the sacrificer has committed. This is a remarkable insight that has often been overlooked (cf. Grabbe forthcoming b). Douglas recognized that the sacrificial system would normally presuppose certain forms of divination as a matter of course. Thus, the complete silence of Leviticus about any sort of divination to determine what sin had been committed and what sort of offering was needed is extremely eloquent: the author has repudiated the past. Society itself had not rejected divination, as indicated above, but the compiler(s) of the Priestly Document have done so. This is no doubt why certain practices that would have been done completely in the open in other societies seem to have been done secretly in Judah. In most societies, some magical practices are seen as threatening and are proscribed, which usually means they do not cease to exist but simply go underground. Thus, some of the private cultic activity criticized in some biblical passages might have been frowned on in any society, but others were probably fairly widely embraced as part of the folk tradition, though religious censorship has meant that much of the evidence has not been preserved.

### **11.7. The Question of Sectarianism**

**Albrektsen** (1967) *History and the Gods*; **Barr** (1976) ‘Story and History in Biblical Theology’; **Blenkinsopp** (1977) *Prophecy and Canon*; (1981) ‘Interpretation and the Tendency to Sectarianism’; (1990a) ‘A Jewish Sect of the Persian Period’; **Carroll** (1979) ‘Twilight of Prophecy or Dawn of Apocalyptic?’; **S.L. Cook** (1995) *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*; **Grabbe** (1989) ‘The Social Setting of Early Jewish Apocalypticism’; **Hanson** (1973) *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*; (1976) ‘Apocalypticism’; (1980) ‘From Prophecy to Apocalyptic’; **Pietersma** (1972) Review of M. Smith, *Palestinian Parties*; **Plöger** (1968) *Theocracy and Eschatology*; **Redditt** (1986a) ‘The Book of Joel and Peripheral Prophecy’; (1986b) ‘Once Again, The City in Isaiah 24–27’; (1989) ‘Israel’s Shepherds’; (1995) *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*; **Roberts** (1976) ‘Myth versus History’; **Rofé** (1985) ‘Isaiah 66:1–4’; (1988) ‘The Onset of Sects in Postexilic Judaism’; **M. Smith** (1968) ‘Palestinian Judaism in the Persian Period’; (1984) ‘Jewish Religious Life in the Persian Period’; (1987) *Palestinian Parties and Politics*; **Talmon** (1986) ‘The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism’.

A number of scholars have evaluated the post-exilic situation as conducive to the creation of sects, so that religious sectarianism developed (or perhaps only came to the surface) already in the early Persian period (Talmon 1986; Blenkinsopp 1981: 24). Despite the divided kingdom under the monarchy, there was a national cohesion and identity, a united people with a central government and cultic establishment. After the exile the authority of the temple and priests was weakened, there was no king to enforce religious conformity, and thousands of Jews now lived outside the homeland. According to this view, the door was now open to dissension and even to the creation of separate sects. Some recent studies will be looked at to illustrate this way of thinking.

### 11.7.1. Morton Smith

Morton Smith's thesis was first expounded in his 1968 article but worked out in detail in his later book (1987 [original edition 1971]). Here are the main points:

- For much of their history the majority of Israelites worshipped Yahweh along with other gods, as those for whom Yahweh was perhaps the major national 'God of Israel' but who by no means regarded his worship as exclusive or henotheistic. This broad, heterogeneous group made up of all social groups and strata of society Smith refers to for convenience as 'the syncretistic party' (a problematic term because this was an original religious situation, not the creation by the syncretization of more than one tradition).
- Sometime in the ninth century another group appeared on the scene who believed that worship of Yahweh should be exclusivistic—the 'Yahweh-alone party'—made up of members of various social groupings within Israel: ordinary Israelites, prophets, priests, kings. It was the products of this party which were collected and edited during the exile to produce the core of the Old Testament. The three main types of literature (prophetic, Deuteronomic, priestly) show so little knowledge of each other that one must conclude the Yahweh-alone party was made up of various 'minority parties'.
- Zerubbabel and the returnees were members of the Yahweh-alone party whereas the 'people of the land' were partisans of the syncretistic party, but the priesthood was divided. In the struggle over the rebuilding of the temple, the priesthood was in a position to bargain with the two groups for their own ends. The result was a compromise between the priests and Zerubbabel's group in which Zerubbabel was crowned as civil leader and allowed to rebuild the temple. In return the high priest Joshua was allowed to be associated with Zerubbabel's messianic claims (Zech. 6.9-15) and a crown hung in the temple to mark the agreement, contributed by Zerubbabel's followers. The attacks on Joshua by Zerubbabel's followers (e.g. Zech 3.2) would now cease, as long as he 'kept the law' (i.e. toed the Yahweh-alone party's line). Also, they would see to it that the people paid the priestly dues.
- Zerubbabel was opposed by the 'people of the land', the Judaeans, because they were not allowed to help in rebuilding the temple. This breach is possibly reflected in Zech. 11.14. Zechariah 12.2-10 may not only suggest the results of this breach but also explain Zerubbabel's disappearance: he was possibly assassinated, perhaps even by other members of the Davidic family in alliance with the syncretistic party. Thus, the history of Judah from this time until the coming of Ezra was dominated by the syncretistic party. The criticisms of the Yahweh-alone party can be found in Isaiah 56–66, Zechariah 12–14, and Malachi.

Smith's thesis seems to work most successfully for the pre-exilic period. The usefulness of the analysis for the pre-exilic period soon ceases in the post-exilic

situation (1987: 110-111), for at that point the issue is seen to be not worship of other gods but a new concern: the question of purity law. Converts to the party are now described as ‘those who had separated themselves from the *impurity* of the peoples of the land’. The thesis has made a significant shift. It is no longer a case of ‘syncretists’ against Yahweh-alone groups but now becomes assimilationists against exclusivists; however, neither of these is necessarily a direct heir to Smith’s original groupings. Indeed, it is not clear that the objections of the ‘exclusivists’ necessarily had a religious basis in many cases.

### **11.7.2. O. Plöger and P.D. Hanson**

Many would regard the theories of O. Plöger and P.D. Hanson as defunct and no longer requiring attention. Although they are now widely rejected, however, some of the main ideas within them continue to have more influence than is sometimes realized. Therefore, it seems appropriate to have a look at their central arguments and the problems with them. In his first German edition of 1959 Plöger developed the thesis of a major polarity in the Jewish community in the last few centuries BCE. His starting point was the period of the Maccabaean crisis. Although Hanson hardly referred to Plöger, most reviewers have pointed out his heavy indebtedness to the latter for his basic thesis; however, Hanson’s textual analysis overlapped Plöger’s only in the case of Zechariah 12–14, while his way of expressing the thesis has certain differences of nuance and terminology. The main points are the following:

- Both postulate a priestly, temple-establishment group, opposed by a charismatic, pietistic group.
- Drawing especially on the book of Daniel, Plöger deduced two opposed factions: the ‘theocratic group’—the pro-Hellenistic, pragmatic, priestly governing hierarchy—and the Hasidim—an eschatologically minded group who had the vision of an idealized Judaism expressed in millenarian terms. Plöger thought he could trace the predecessors of the Hasidim in the ‘Isaiah Apocalypse’ (Isa. 24–27), Trito-Zechariah (Zech. 12–14), and Joel 3–4, while he inferred the attitude of the theocratic group primarily from the priestly source (P) and Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah.
- According to Hanson, the struggle already began in the early post-exilic community. The ‘hieratic group’ comprised the temple hierarchy and supporters, who sought to control not only the cult but also leadership of the community, trying to exercise practical political wisdom for survival under the Persian overlordship. (The programme of the ‘hierocratic’ establishment is more taken for granted by Hanson, with lack of detailed exegesis of the texts used [1973: 209–79]). Opposed to them was the ‘visionary group’, known primarily from Isaiah 56–66 (1973: 32–208) and Zechariah 9–14 (1973: 280–379). These heirs of Deutero-Isaiah were excluded from both temple and government by the hieratic group. Cut off from actual power, they began to see the solution to their difficulties in cosmic terms so that their prophetic vision became other-worldly and mythical rather than envisaged as taking place in terms of history in this world.

Despite the rather different approaches of Plöger and Hanson, they have a good deal in common. For a critique of one or both, a number of reviews and analyses have appeared, only a few of which can be mentioned here (Roberts 1976; Carroll 1979; Grabbe 1989; S.L. Cook 1995: 6–15, 124–27). For general comments on these and other hypotheses, see below.

### **11.7.3. Other Theories of Persian-Period Sects**

Blenkinsopp (1981) has argued that the interpretation of sacred traditions was a major factor in creating conflicts—even that the canonization process was a product of these conflicts and an attempt to reconcile different points of view (also Blenkinsopp 1977). Especially revealing is the group referred to as ‘those who tremble (**הַחֲרָדִים**) at my word’ in Isa. 66.5 (Blenkinsopp 1990a). Using this passage as a focal point, Blenkinsopp has identified similar ideas in Isa. 57.1–2; 65.13–16; 66.1–4, 17; Mal. 3.13–21; and Ezra 9–10. This has led him to associate these with a single group which is not anti-temple as such but is critical of the current priestly establishment, pietistic, eschatological, and temporarily severed from the central cult.

A. Rofé (1985) begins with Isa. 66.1–4 but branches to other passages in Third Isaiah, Malachi and Ezra–Nehemiah (also Rofé 1988). He appears to come to similar conclusions to Blenkinsopp. Interestingly, while both reject the reconstruction of Hanson (Blenkinsopp 1981: 302 n. 34; Rofé 1985: 213 n. 40), the end result does not seem that far away in certain major respects; that is, a pietistic, prophetic, eschatological sect is alienated from the corrupt priestly establishment which it has criticized.

P.L. Redditt examined Joel, Isaiah 24–27, and Zechariah 9–14. Behind Joel he finds a marginalized prophetic group which became exclusivistic, non-messianic, and eschatological but not apocalyptic (1986a). In his opinion, a similar non-priestly, non-messianic group is reflected in Isaiah 24–27 but one which is centred in Jerusalem (1986b). He sees Zechariah 9–14 as made up of six basic collections which a redactor took over and reworked to express his point of view. This individual was part of a community which lived outside Jerusalem and was in opposition to the hopes of the Jerusalemites. They thought the leaders as a whole (the ‘shepherd-herds’: priests, Davidides, prophets) were corrupt and looked for a cleansed Jerusalem, with the whole nation (not just the city or temple) as holy to God.

On the thesis of an ‘Enochic Judaism’, see volume 2 of this History.

### **11.7.4. Analysis of the Theories on Sectarianism**

There is undoubtedly truth in the view that the community in Yehud contained tensions, contrary opinions, and opposed factions. Whether these produced sectarianism, however, is a separate question. The argument goes that the traumas of the post-exilic situation would likely fuel the tendency to produce different groups with different ideas of how to resolve the unacceptable current situation. Nevertheless, one has to ask whether the Persian period was any more traumatic than other periods, for example, the seventh century. The second half of the twentieth century saw the proliferation of sectarianism, yet there was probably more peace and

prosperity than at any time in history. We know of sects at later times because they are well attested in the sources. This is not the case with the Persian period. It would be useful to point out the tenuous nature of some of these interpretations to illustrate how little we know:

1. A number of theories of sectarianism depend heavily on certain socio-logical models. Unfortunately, the ‘sociological’ analyses one encounters are often based on facile assumptions rather than rigorously tested data. Certain sociological ‘truths’ are too often read into the data, such as simple dichotomies (lay vs. priests; Jews vs. Samaritans; apocalypticists vs. establishment). For example, the view of the priestly establishment as pragmatic and this-worldly, interested primarily in maintaining the *status quo*, is a simplistic view which is not based on sound sociological research (Grabbe 1989: 32–33). Similarly, it is usually assumed that criticism of the priesthood automatically makes the group marginal or anti-clerical or cut off from the cultic establishment. This is not necessarily the case, as can easily be demonstrated from religious and social movements today: some of the most acute criticisms can come from within the movement itself. There is reason to believe that much apocalyptic literature came from priestly circles (Grabbe 1989; S.L. Cook 1995).
2. Much depends on a particular interpretation of a small selection of texts. This presents a considerable danger of circular reasoning. The hypothesis is first presented, followed by textual exegesis, and finally the hypothesis and exegesis connected. In many cases, the hypothesis is simply being imposed upon the text. There are few texts that could be taken as straightforward support of some of the hypotheses here. Much exegesis is in danger of over-interpreting the little textual data available. For example, charges of corruption, slackness, deviance, and wickedness of the most perverse kinds are part of the stock rhetoric of the preacher. To turn Isaiah 59, for instance, into a source of sociological data or an objective evaluation of contemporary society is absurd. Theories which draw on a variety of sources, especially extra-biblical ones, have *prima facie* a greater chance of standing up to scrutiny (Blenkinsopp’s exploration of the term פִּירָדִים *hah<sup>a</sup>rēdīm* [‘quakers’] over a variety of literature is suggestive in this regard [1990]).
3. No one questions that many different opinions and polarities existed in the Jewish community during the Persian period and later, as indicated by a variety of post-exilic texts (including Isa. 56–66, Ezra–Nehemiah, Malachi, and perhaps Joel and others). Nevertheless, the sharp opposition postulated, with a significant part of the community supporting the priestly establishment and another large part carrying out a wholesale attack on it, seems rather overdone in the light of the undisputed historical data. Why would such a sharp dichotomy, with most of the community on either one side or the other, leave so little evidence in the literature of the time except in difficult and obscure prophetic oracles?

Several theories of sectarianism depend on the dubious thesis of a strong bi-polar opposition within the community.

4. The relative probability of various theses must be carefully weighed. All sorts of hypotheses explain part of the phenomena gleaned from the texts of this period, but not all are equally likely. Producing new theories is an important part of scholarship, but so is testing and sifting out those which do not appear to be useful when a broader perspective is taken.
5. There is also a persistent trend to argue from silence; that is, if a concept is not mentioned (e.g. a Messiah), then the group did not believe in such. Arguments from silence can be very important when a good deal of information is available, but they are treacherous when argued on the basis of only a few, often heavily edited verses.
6. The treatment of myth and history is important to a number of theories. Yet they ignore some of the important treatments of the subject. For example, although some important studies on myth and history appeared after Plöger and Hanson published (Barr 1976; Roberts 1976), Hanson rejected the seminal work of Albrechtson (1967) for what seem to be arbitrary reasons (Carroll 1979: 21). Symptomatic of the problems is the fact that, starting from similar premises, Plöger and Hanson came to opposite conclusions about what was 'historical' in approach and what was 'mythical'. Thus, Plöger stated that the Chronicler was not interested in history because there is no place for eschatology in his outlook (1968: 39–45); Hanson, on the other hand, considered the views of the visionaries to be the result of allowing their eschatology to become mythologized (1973: 23–28).

The suggestions and speculations about sectarianism at this time can be very interesting and even helpful in advancing knowledge, and the act of producing them should not be castigated. Nevertheless, each must be carefully scrutinized, and one must take care that even then such hypotheses do not become anything more than tentative. The danger is taking a particular thesis as the basis for further research when it is really no more than informed speculation. As discussed elsewhere (*JRSTP*: 185–209), we have reason to bemoan the few data preserved on the later sects such as the Pharisees and Sadducees and to warn of the dangers of over-interpretation. How much more so the few and problematic scraps of information from the Persian period!

**Part IV**

**HISTORICAL SYNTHESIS**

## Chapter 12

### THE EARLY PERSIAN PERIOD

#### 12.1. *Background*

##### 12.1.1. *Geography and Environment*

Dalman (1928–42) *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*.

The history of the peoples of Palestine was very much shaped by their physical geography: the geology, climate, vegetation, types of agricultural land, routes of communication, and other physical surroundings. Different aspects of history have their own rhythm and temporal progress. Some historical constituents tend to change very slowly; others change much more quickly. These aspects of history fall into what has been called by C. Braudel (§1.2.1) the level of *longue durée* (long-term history, over centuries) and *conjonctures* (medium-term history): they concern the things shaped by the landscape, the climate, the needs of agricultural life. The level of *eventuellement* (the rapid and often fleeting events of political history) does not necessarily escape the influence or sometimes even the determination of geography and environment.

Two facts of geography affected Judah (§9.3.1). The first was its relative lack of natural resources in comparison with the areas to the north and west, including its sister Kingdom of Israel (later, the province of Samaria). The central hill country and the desert south of the region dominated the means of making a living. Judah did not have the amount of fertile farm- and pastureland possessed by Samaria and the coastal region. This was no doubt one of the reasons Judah was slower in developing than Israel. The second determining geographical factor was its relative isolation. The characteristics that rendered the country less hospitable to agriculture also served to make it less attractive to invaders. Jerusalem was not so easy to get to by a conquering army. The mountainous terrain meant that invaders had to have a good reason to attack; otherwise, it was easier to march past through the coastal region and lowlands.

Judah's neighbours were always important to it, even if sometimes from a negative perspective (§7.3 above). The area of Samaria to the north was blessed with better land for agriculture, on the whole. It also had closer links with other regions because of trade and proximity, as well as fewer natural barriers. Throughout its history Samaria was like a big sister to Judah, overshadowing her, sometimes dominating her, and often arousing fierce jealousies on the part of the less-favoured sibling. Israel had fallen to the Assyrians well over a century before Judah did, but the movement of migrants to the south meant that there was a good deal of

intermingling of tradition and even population (whatever had been the case before the fall of Samaria). On a theological plane, if not an ethnic one, the people of Judah eventually took over the name Israel as well. This love/hate relationship between Samaria and Judah was to a considerable extent the by-product of the physical environment.

To the west of the Judaean hill country is the Shephelah or foothills. This was a part of the Kingdom of Judah but was removed from under its control at the beginning of the seventh century BCE and seems to have remained outside its territory in the Persian period. Further to the east was the coastal plain, including the old Philistine area. This was dominated by the Phoenician cities, certainly by the Persian period. Although the Phoenicians were primarily characterized by seafaring and trading, much of the area under Phoenician control (extending from Ashdod all the way up the coast almost to Asia Minor) was also fertile and good for agriculture. The hinterland of most Phoenician cities seems to have made them self-sufficient in food, even if they had a narrow coastal strip of land. South of the Phoenician area was the city of Gaza, also an important link in the Arabian caravan trade. This meant that rather poorly resourced Judah was surrounded on the north, east, and even the south to some extent by wealthier, more outward looking, more cosmopolitan neighbours.

Broadly speaking the life of most inhabitants of the ancient Near East seems to have altered very little from the time of ancient Sumer to the early twentieth century. The life of the Palestinian peasant described so well by G. Dalman (1928–42) would probably do reasonably well for most inhabitants of Yehud. As elsewhere in the region, most people made their livelihood from agriculture. The geography and climate of the land limited the options of what crops could be grown and livestock raised, the amount of surplus, the resources available for exploitation. The main crops were cereals (wheat and barley), grapevines, and olive trees. Animal husbandry was the prime activity in the dryer areas, primarily sheep and goats but also cattle. This was how the vast bulk of the inhabitants of Judah made their living until modern times. The only really urban area in Judah for most of the first millennium BCE was Jerusalem, ‘urban’ being a relative term since the city often had no more than a few thousand inhabitants. The history of Judah from Nebuchadnezzar to Antiochus IV was a history of small villages, an agrarian economy, and a back-water in comparison with its neighbours to the north and west.

### **12.1.2. History of Judah before the Persian Period**

**Barstad** (1996) *The Myth of the Empty Land*; **I. Finkelstein** (1994) ‘The Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh’; **Finkelstein and Silberman** (2001) *The Bible Unearthed*; **Grabbe (ed.)** (1998) *Leading Captivity Captive*; (2003) ‘Like a Bird in a Cage’; **Handy (ed.)** (1997) *The Age of Solomon*; **Lipschits and Blenkinsopp (eds.)** (2003) *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*; **Scott (ed.)** (1997) *Exile*.

The early history of Judah is the subject of fierce debate at the moment (§1.3). Many scholars now doubt that there was a Davidic or Solomonic kingdom as

envisioned by the biblical text, though few would deny the existence of individual leaders named David and Solomon (cf. the essays in Handy [ed.] 1997). Judah appears in contemporary records in the eighth century BCE, and it was apparently in the late eighth century that Jerusalem began to grow and show signs of being a capital city of a nation to be reckoned with (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 243–46). This happened to coincide with the fall of the Northern Kingdom which was taken by the Assyrians about 722 BCE, though whether there is a direct connection can be debated. It is often argued that the population of Judah, and especially Jerusalem, was swelled by refugees from the fall of the Kingdom of Israel. If so, administrative and bureaucratic skills, national traditions, and religious lore were likely also to have been imported and to have had influence on the intellectual development of Judah.

Although Judah came into the Assyrian sphere late in the eighth century, it did not seem a major prize and was left alone as long as it paid its tribute. This changed when the Judaean king Hezekiah rebelled. The result was one of the major events in Judaean history: the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE (see the essays in Grabbe [ed.] 2003). This invasion caused a great deal of destruction in Judah, even though Jerusalem itself was not attacked and Hezekiah was left on the throne in the end. The Shephelah was removed from Judah and placed under the Philistine territories. The great destruction caused a drastic decline in population in Judah (I. Finkelstein 1994: 172–77); indeed, there may have been deportation(s) of some of the population, though we cannot confirm this directly. Over the next half century there was some recovery, but Jerusalem was taken and some of the population deported in 598/597 BCE by the Babylonians. A decade later, about 587/586, Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple razed to bring the Kingdom of Judah to an end.

The rest of Neo-Babylonian rule is often referred to as ‘the exile’ (cf. the essays in Scott [ed.] 1997 and Grabbe [ed.] 1998), though it is clear that only a portion of the people was physically deported (Barstad 1996). Some feel the term ‘exile’ is a misnomer, but it is widely known and understood as a chronological period, if nothing else (hence, I continue to use it). There is much debate about what was going on during this dark period, though this debate is in part tied up with what followed next in the Persian period. In any case, Judah of the Persian period cannot be understood apart from its prior history in the periods of the monarchy and the exile.

On the question of the cult during the exilic period, see above (§10.3.1).

## 12.2. Persian Rulers

NB: for general bibliography on the history of the Persians, see above (§1.5.3).

### 12.2.1. Cyrus the Great (539/559–530 BCE)

**Beaulieu** (1993) ‘An Episode in the Fall of Babylon to the Persians’; **Boyce** (1975) *A History of Zoroastrianism. I. The Early Period*; **S.C. Brown** (1988) ‘The *Mēdikos Logos* of Herodotus’; **Cargill** (1978) ‘The Nabonidus Chronicle and the

Fall of Lydia'; **Dandamaev** (1989) *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire*; **Grabbe** (1988a) 'Another Look at the *Gestalt* of "Darius the Mede"'; **Graf** (1984) 'Medianism'; **Kuhrt** (1983) 'The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy'; **Oppenheim** (1985) 'The Babylonian Evidence of Achaemenian Rule in Mesopotamia'; **Petit** (1988) 'L'évolution sémantique des termes hébreux'; **Sancisi-Weerdenburg** (1985) 'The Death of Cyrus'; (1988) 'Was There Ever a Median Empire?'; (1994) 'The Orality of Herodotus'.

As so often with great men, the early part of Cyrus's life lies in the realm of legend, with a number of 'foundation legends' about him (*HPE*: 15-16). One story was that he was the son of the Persian king and his Median wife. On the Median side Cyrus's great grandfather had been the ally of Nabopolassar the Chaldean and had helped bring down the Assyrian empire. The Persians were vassals of the Medes during Cyrus's youth and early adulthood. It has often been assumed there was a Median 'empire' that the Persians replaced (cf. S.C. Brown 1988), but there are good reasons to doubt the existence of any such empire (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988; 1994; *HPE*: 24-28). The one firm datum we have about Cyrus's early life, until he defeated the Medes, was that he was king of Anshan. About 550, Cyrus was apparently attacked by his supposed Median grandfather Astyages but the latter's army revolted and handed him over to Cyrus who captured Ecbatana, Astyages's city (*Nab. Chron.* 2.1-4). This brought Persian hegemony over the Medes, though it evidently appeared to outside observers that there had simply been a change of dynasty among the Medes (Graf 1984). The Persian empire continued to be referred to as 'the Medes' not only at this time but as an alternative to 'Persian' for centuries afterward.

Cyrus's next recorded operations were in Asia Minor where he defeated Croesus, the king of Sardis, and took the city, though the exact date is uncertain (*Nab. Chron.* 2.16 is often cited in this connection but see now Cargill 1978). Other expeditions in the east consolidated his territories until he was ready for the final assault on the heart of the Chaldean empire. In 539 he launched a direct attack against Nabonidus who was apparently expecting it. The Chaldean army was defeated at Opis, and Babylon itself fell without a battle on 12 October 539 (*Nab. Chron.* 3.15-16), though Cyrus himself was not present. The Persian entry into Babylon was led by the general Gobryas who prepared the way for Cyrus's triumphal entry two weeks later. Gobryas himself evidently died only a few days after this (*Nab. Chron.* 3.22; cf. Grabbe 1988a: 206-207).

Cyrus's initial actions were to ingratiate himself with both the Babylonians and the subject peoples. The temples were protected from looting in the conquest of Babylon itself (*Nab. Chron.* 3.16-18), and Cyrus claims to have protected the people of Babylonia (*Cyrus Cyl.* 22-28). Cyrus left in place Nabu-ahhē-bullit who had been the chief administrative officer of Babylon under Nabonidus, but he had his son Cambyses made king of Babylon (Grabbe 1988a: 199-204). This was evidently a mistake since Cambyses held the office for less than a year before the title 'king of Babylon' reverted to Cyrus in various administrative documents. Exactly why Cambyses held the office for only a short period of time is uncertain but may be due to some undiplomatic actions on his part at the new year ceremony which

began Cyrus's first year of rule (cf. the thesis of Oppenheim [e.g. 1985: 554–59] and its criticism by Boyce [1975, II: 73 n. 15a] and Dandamaev [1989: 56–57]).

Cyrus presented himself as liberator and benefactor, in contrast with Nabonidus. This was mainly propaganda, since much of what he claims to have done was already done by Nabonidus (Kuhrt 1983; *HPE*: 43–44), but this was not an unusual claim in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions. A number of these claims are made in the ‘Cyrus Cylinder’, which seems to have been produced in Cyrus’s first year when Cambyses was joint ruler. Although the cylinder is in Babylonian cuneiform and thus probably written by Babylonian scribes, it is clearly propaganda for Cyrus (Kuhrt 1983; *HPE*: 43–44). Further pro-Cyrus propaganda is found in the *Verse Account of Nabonidus* which attacks Nabonidus as the opponent of the Marduk priestly establishment and Cyrus as its deliverer and champion (*ANET*: 312–15).

Because the *Nabonidus Chronicle* breaks off shortly after the conquest of Babylon, the detailed activities of Cyrus until near the end of his reign are no longer known. Although one must treat Cyrus’s own statements with caution, it seems likely that he allowed a return of some of the Jews to Palestine. In his fourth year Cyrus made another Gobryas satrap of ‘Babylon and Ebir-nari’; this individual (probably not the same as the conqueror of Babylon [cf. Grabbe 1988a: 206–7; *contra* Petit 1988: 65–67]) held the office until well into Cambyses’s reign and possibly until the first years of Darius I. Although the preserved accounts do not agree and show legendary elements (cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1985), Cyrus evidently met his death in a military campaign in 530 and was succeeded by the crown prince Cambyses.

### 12.2.2. Cambyses (530–522 BCE)

**Atkinson** (1956) ‘The Legitimacy of Cambyses’; **T.S. Brown** (1982) ‘Herodotus’ Portrait of Cambyses’; **Depuydt** (1995b) ‘Murder in Memphis’; **Dubberstein** (1930) ‘The Chronology of Cyrus and Cambyses’; **Lloyd** (1988) ‘Herodotus on Cambyses’.

Cambyses has suffered from a concerted effort at negative progaganda in antiquity. This campaign to impune his integrity found its way into the Greek histories, primarily that of Herodotus, which has also tended to affect the treatment of Cambyses in many modern histories (T.S. Brown 1982; Lloyd 1988). After a brief reign as king of Babylon in Cyrus’s first year (see above), Cambyses assumed a role of obscurity until the last year of Cyrus’s reign. At this time, he was designated Cyrus’s successor and left in charge while Cyrus conducted his campaign into the Caucasus (*HPE*: 49–50). With Cyrus’s death, Cambyses became king in 530 BCE. The main achievement of his reign was the conquest of Egypt which commenced in 525, after several years of preparation. A new pharaoh Psammetichus III had just come to the throne. Cambyses arranged with the local Arab tribes for supplies in crossing the desert in southern Palestine (Herodotus 3.5–9). Whether the Egyptian admiral Udjahorresnet chose to revolt and support him at this time or only after the Egyptian defeat is uncertain. Although Herodotus says little about it, the Egyptian resistance was apparently quite strong (*HPE*: 53–54).

From contemporary monuments, it seems that Cambyses was quite respectful of the Egyptian cults, except for those that revolted against him (Lloyd 1988: 64; HPE: 55-57). He also took the traditional titles of the pharaoh of Egypt, as rulers—both foreign and native—had always done and would continue to do until the coming of the Romans (cf. the Udjahorresnet inscription [§5.5.1]). The report that he killed the *apis* bull by stabbing it to death seems to be only a piece of anti-Cambyses propaganda since records show that the bull alive at the time of his conquest did not die until several years later (though see the recent re-assessment of this conclusion by Depuydt 1995b). In 522 a revolt against Cambyses took place in Persepolis, led by an individual claiming to be Cambyses's brother Bardya (Greek Smerdis). Cambyses immediately began the march back to Persian but died on the way, the exact cause of his death being uncertain because of differing traditions.

### **12.2.3. Darius I (522–486 BCE)**

Balcer (1987) *Herodotus & Bisitun*; Bickerman and Tadmor (1978) ‘Darius I, Pseudo-Smerdis, and the Magi’; Dandamaev (1976) *Persien unter den ersten Achämeniden*; (1989) *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire*; Redford (2001) ‘The So-Called “Codification” of Egyptian Law’; Redmount (1995) ‘The Wadi Tumilat’.

Darius is one of the best known of the Persian rulers because of the accidents of source preservation. In the Behistun inscription we have Darius's own account of how he came to the throne. The trouble is that there are reasons to think his version of events needs correction at various points, for he was a usurper of the throne if the opinion of some modern scholars is correct. The image Darius presented is that he rescued the throne after it was taken over by an impostor claiming to be Cambyses's brother Bardya. Darius baldly tells us that it could not have been Bardya because Cambyses had already secretly executed him; instead, it was a certain magus by the name of Gautama (*Beh. Inscr.* §§10-13.1.26-61). A similar story is found in Herodotus (3.61-79). According to both accounts, Darius led a party of seven noble Persians who conspired to remove the impostor. They succeeded and, by some means or other, one was chosen to be king, the one who took the name Darius. (Darius was probably a throne name; if so, we do not know his personal name.)

The agreement between Herodotus with the Behistun inscription is not independent confirmation, however, but only shows that his sources gave the ‘official’ version. A more likely interpretation is the following (Balcer 1987: 150-66; cf. Dandamaev 1976: 114-26; 1989: 83-94; Bickerman and Tadmor 1978). Following years of successful campaigning by Cyrus and Cambyses, the Persian army had suffered a major disaster against the Nubians, for which Cambyses was responsible. His brother Bardiya, who had been given a large territory in central Asia, with its tribute coming to him as personal income, took the opportunity to capitalize on growing dissatisfaction in the Persian heartlands and set himself up as king with quite a large following. Cambyses set out from Egypt to crush the rebellion but

died on the way. Darius, who was with Cambyses, went on to assassinate Bardiya, with the aid of a few loyal nobles. Revolts broke out all over because his usurpation of the throne was not immediately accepted in many parts of the empire. However, his leadership was compelling, his loyal troops were successful, and he brought the Persian empire under his own control. At this point, the story of the false Bardiya—the pseudo-Smerdis, the magus Gautama—was invented to explain how an act of regicide was instead the deed of a loyal noble Persian who stepped in to combat the great Lie that had overcome so many.

Whatever faults may be laid at Darius's door, he reigned long and evidently as a good administrator. According to Herodotus, he organized the Persian empire into twenty administrative and military satrapies (3.89–97). Attempts to reconcile Herodotus's list of satrapies with the 'peoples' (*dahyāva*) of the Behistun inscription (§6.1.14–17) have not been successful, most likely for the reason that the Behistun list is probably not that of the formal satrapies (§7.1). Although Darius is also credited with reforming the laws in the empire, this is probably an over-interpretation of a local action in Egypt (Redford 2001; *HPE*: 510–11; p. 199 above). It seems evident that he first introduced coinage into Persian usage, borrowing the concept from the Greeks. At his death, the Persian empire had reached its largest extent.

The precise aims of an incursion against the Scythians (c. 513 BCE) are uncertain (Herodotus 4.83–144; 5.1–27). An outcome was to establish the Danube as the northern boundary of the Persian empire, which may have been the initial aim. Some think Darius was trying to bring the Scythians under his control but, if so, he failed. An accompanying result, however, was the subjugation of Thrace. Even Macedonia was forced to recognize Persian sovereignty. The next major event was the revolt of the Ionian Greek area of Asia Minor about 500 BCE (Herodotus 5.28–6.48). When this revolt was finally put down by 493, the continued activities of Darius were a logical progression in a strategic plan of dominance over the Aegean. Although the Greeks—and their spiritual successors even to today—regarded the battle of Marathon as a great defeat of the Persians, it seems that Darius regarded it as minor event. The Persians may have envisaged it as more of a raid than an invasion (*HPE*: 160–61). Darius lived only a few years beyond this, though he was evidently in the process of planning another attack on the Greek mainland on his death in 486.

### 12.3. Sources and Reliability

**Grabbe** (1991a) 'Reconstructing History from the Book of Ezra'; (1998a) *Ezra and Nehemiah*; **Williamson** (1983) 'The Composition of Ezra i–vi'; (1985) *Ezra, Nehemiah*.

We must always begin with the primary sources, the archaeology and contemporary texts (which are usually epigraphic). These are a very important check on the literary data. The archaeology is not so precise as to allow us to make judgments on individual texts in most cases but only shows a trend over a period of time. It is

usually difficult to differentiate between particular events over the two centuries of Persian rule. For specific events we normally have to use the literary sources or say nothing at all. But the information on settlement patterns, demography, and the economy is not only invaluable in itself but also makes it possible to ask whether the textual sources fit with the primary data. In some cases, as we shall see, these sources will be a major factor in determining what credibility to give to textual sources.

Of the literary sources the closest to the events are likely to be Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 (§4.2). Some have even argued that, because they do not mention the completion of the temple, the two prophetic books were written early in the Persian period. They also have the advantage of giving a somewhat different picture from Ezra 1–6 about the building of the temple. Being prophetic texts, however, they are hardly impartial descriptions of events but reflect the rather peculiar interests and perspective of the prophets who delivered the messages.

Ezra 1–6 provides an apparent account of the initial return and the rebuilding of the temple. If reliable, this would be an invaluable source of information since we have no other narrative accounts of this period. A close examination, however, indicates that the narrative was created on the basis of a limited number of sources (Williamson 1983; cf. Williamson 1985: xxiii–xxiv):

- The Cyrus edict (1.1–4).
- A list of temple vessels (1.9–11).
- A list of returnees (2.1–72).
- The books of Haggai and Zechariah.
- Several alleged Persian documents in Aramaic (Ezra 3–6).

The use of these few sources means, therefore, that much of the narrative (both in Hebrew and in Aramaic) is an inference from the preserved documents and unlikely to have any independent value in those cases where we have the actual sources themselves, including Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 and the documents embedded in the narrative.

A close study of Ezra–Nehemiah and 1 Esdras has indicated that these are first and foremost theological works whose message is primarily an ideological one (§4.1). Their literary structure is set out to advance this theological message. Whatever history they may contain is subordinated to telling the story of how God has acted on behalf of his people to show them mercy and further his own aims for them. A dispassionate description of events or a mere chronicle of what happened is clearly not the primary purpose of the author or compiler. Any record of events is secondary to the theological clarification of what it all meant. However well-intentioned the aim of the authors, they were not writing as historians. They were not exercising critical judgment in selecting their data as we would expect historians to do but were using whatever advanced their ideological aim and were using it in ways which might go counter to good historical practice. They gave a version of events which suited their ideology, regardless of whether it would match the rigorous critical criteria required by historians. This inbuilt canalizing of the data cannot be taken at face value but must be detected and critically evaluated by the historian before the account is used to make any sort of historical reconstruction.

We then come to a series of supposed letters and documents in Ezra 4–6. These are problematic for two reasons. First, they do not fit the chronology and situation for which they are being quoted. The setting of the situation is early in the reign of Darius I, yet reference is made to the time of Cyrus (4.4), the reign of Xerxes (4.6), and the time of Artaxerxes (4.7). It hardly needs to be said that you cannot use a letter from the reign of Artaxerxes (mid-fifth century) to stop a project from the reign of Darius I his predecessor (c. 520 BCE). A second reason has to do with the documents themselves: they are not straightforwardly Persian-period documents. As discussed above (§4.1.3.2), actual documents seem to lie behind at least some of them, though we cannot rule out complete invention in other cases. Wherever actual documents were used, however, they have been heavily edited and even rewritten by later scribes. Any data in them have been used carefully and critically. There seems, however, to be a spectrum of reliability with some more likely to have authentic material than others.

Another factor that has to be considered was already implied above. This is that the narrative of Ezra 1–6 does not always appear to be based on sources. This means that sections of these chapters are only the composition of the author/compiler and represent nothing but his surmises, speculations, or invention. This is important because one of the most frequently quoted data is the supposed date for the completion of the temple. Yet we have no evidence that this was taken from any source, much less a reliable one (§12.5.3).

## 12.4. The Initial Return

**Albertz** (2003) ‘The Thwarted Restoration’; **Beaulieu** (1993) ‘An Episode in the Fall of Babylon to the Persians’; **Becking** (forthcoming) ‘The Myth of the Mass Return’; **Bedford** (2001) *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*; **Berger** (1971) ‘Zu den Namen שְׁבָצֶר (*Esr 1<sub>8,11</sub>, 5<sub>14,16</sub>* bzw. *I Chr 3<sub>18</sub>*)’; **Bickerman** (1976) ‘The Edict of Cyrus in Ezra 1’; **Blenkinsopp** (1988) *Ezra–Nehemiah*; **Clines** (1984a) *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*; **Dion** (1983) ‘סִנְגּוֹרִי שְׁבָצֶר’ and ‘סִנְגּוֹרִי שְׁבָצֶר’; **Edelman** (forthcoming) ‘Did Artaxerxes I Grant Tyre a Trading Concession’; **Galling** (1964a) *Studien zur Geschichte Israels im persischen Zeitalter*; (1964b) ‘Die Proclamation des Kyros in Esra 1’; **Gelston** (1966) ‘The Foundations of the Second Temple’; **A.K. Grayson** (1975a) *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*; **Japhet** (1982) ‘Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel’; (1983a) ‘Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel’; **Kuhrt** (1983) ‘The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy’; **Lipschits** (2003) ‘Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.’; **Lust** (1987) ‘The Identification of Zerubbabel with Sheshbazzar’; **Schaudig** (2001) *Die Inschriften Nabonids*; **M. Smith** (1987) *Palestinian Parties and Politics*; **Tuland** (1958) ‘*Uššayyā* and *uššarnā*'; **de Vaux** (1971) ‘The Decrees of Cyrus and Darius’.

### 12.4.1. An Edict of Cyrus and a Mass Return?

One of the first acts of Cyrus after conquering Babylon was to allow the return of the statues of the various gods to their native cities. In the last days of the Neo-Babylonian empire Nabonidus, for reasons still debated, had collected many of the

divine statues into Babylon (cf. Beaulieu 1993). As a part of Cyrus's propaganda to the newly conquered peoples, he had himself proclaimed as the choice of their particular god. In a decree addressed to Babylon (§5.4.2), he was the choice of Marduk (*Cyrus Cyl.* lines 10-15 [translation from *CoS*, II: 315; text in Schaudig 2001: 552]):

Marduk...surveyed and looked throughout all the lands, searching for a righteous king whom he would support. He called out his name: Cyrus, king of Anshan; he pronounced his name to be king over all (the world). He (Marduk) made the land of Gutium and all the Umman-manda bow in submission at his feet. And he (Cyrus) shepherded with justice and righteousness all the black-headed people, over whom he (Marduk) had given him victory. Marduk...ordered him to march to his city Babylon.

In Nippur, however, Cyrus was presented as the choice of Sin according to a tablet from there (de Vaux 1971: 68-69). A little bit further in the same inscription Cyrus further demonstrates his justice and righteousness (*Cyrus Cyl.* lines 30-33 [translation from *CoS*, II: 315; text in Schaudig 2001: 553]):

From [Ninev]eh (?), Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnunna, Zamban, Meturnu, Der, as far as the region of Gutium, I returned the (images of) the gods to the sacred centers [on the other side of] the Tigris whose sanctuaries had been abandoned for a long time, and I let them dwell in eternal abodes. I gathered all their inhabitants and returned (to them) their dwellings. In addition, at the command of Marduk, the great lord, I settled in their habitations, in pleasing abodes, the gods of Sumer and Akkad, whom Nabonidus, to the anger of the lord of the gods, had brought into Babylon.

A more reliable source is the *Babylonian Chronicles*. These confirm that gods were returned, but only the Babylonian gods are specifically mentioned (*Nab. Chron.* 3.21-22; quotation from A.K. Grayson 1975a: 110):

From the month Kislev to the month Adar the gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had brought down to Babylon returned to their places.

The *Babylonian Chronicles*, along with the *Cyrus Cylinder*, together confirm that Cyrus allowed the restoration of temples and cult statues. In this light, we can take it for granted that the Jerusalem temple would have been allowed to be rebuilt. Less clear is the situation with regard to deported peoples, but it seems that some provision was also made to allow those who desired to return to the land of their ancestors.

Two passages in Ezra state that Cyrus issued a specific decree with regard to Jerusalem and the Jews in his first year. Ezra 1.2-4 says (in Hebrew) that Cyrus issued a decree authorizing—indeed, commanding—the rebuilding of the ruined temple and allowing the return of the Jews to Palestine. Although this decree had seemed to many to fit the propaganda of the *Cyrus Cylinder* and the actions related in the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, the authenticity of this decree has often been questioned or rejected. Despite the fact that it has been defended, especially by no

less a figure than E.J. Bickerman (1976) but also by others (e.g. Williamson 1985: 6-7, 11-14; Clines 1984: 36-39), a number of commentators have not been convinced (e.g. Galling 1964b: 61-77; M. Smith 1987: 78, 186 n. 16; Blenkinsopp 1988: 74-76), for some of the following reasons:

- Although at first blush the *Cyrus Cylinder* might seem to support the issue of a specific decree on behalf of the Jews to allow the Jews to return, it must be noted that Cyrus's decree seems to have been a general policy, not one on behalf of a specific nation. Furthermore, the areas named are limited to 'Sumer and Akkad', while nothing is said even about the other side of the Euphrates, much less the Jews.
- The edict in Ezra 1 is issued in the name of Cyrus 'king of Persia', yet Cyrus never used such a title. This looks like the Jewish designation for Cyrus (Ezra 1.1, 8; 4.3, 5; Dan. 10.1).
- The propagandistic nature of Cyrus's decrees has been made clear since Bickerman wrote (Kuhrt 1983), and we should be careful about taking such pronouncements at face value. The religious policy of the Persians was not that different from the basic practice of the Assyrians and Babylonians before them (§10.1.4). They tolerated—but did not promote—the local cults (except for the traditional temples in the Persian heartland).
- It seems very unlikely that Cyrus would have taken the trouble to issue a decree specifically on behalf of a minority ethnic group in the first year of his reign nor do the parallels cited above suggest otherwise.
- This decree of Cyrus is in Hebrew, whereas the expected scribal language would have been Aramaic. Bickerman (1976) suggests that 1.1-4 was an oral message and therefore in the language of the native peoples (Hebrew in this case). The only evidence offered is from the biblical text, however, and these are all examples which could easily be Jewish propaganda (e.g. Est. 1.22; 2.12; 8.9).
- The alleged decree, despite its short length, is full of biblical theology. The reference to a prophecy of Jeremiah in 1.1 may not be a part of the decree, though this is not certain, but the decree refers to 'Yhwh the God of Israel' (Ezra 1.3). The province was always referred to as 'Judah' and the people as 'Judahites' by non-Jews (§8.1). Bickerman (1976: 103-104) defends even this theology, though others accepting the decree are more cautious (e.g. Williamson [1985: 9-10] admits this is probably the contribution of the editor). A further suspect point is the requirement that the local people (apparently even non-Jews) provide funds and provisions for anyone who wants to go to Jerusalem to build the temple (cf. Blenkinsopp 1988: 75-76). What is the likelihood that an official Persian decree would have such statements from Jewish theology? On the other hand, they are precisely what we would expect from a Jewish writer inventing a decree to support his perspective (e.g. Williamson [1985: 16] sees an exodus motif here).

Others have pointed to Ezra 6.2–5 which claims to give an actual decree of Cyrus in the expected Aramaic. Nevertheless, several points noted above, along with some addition considerations, militate against its trustworthiness. In 6.2 we read the later form *dikrônâ* when we should expect *zkrn* from a document of the Persian chancellery (cf. *TAD* A4.9//*AP* 32.1; contrast *TAD* D3.1, though this is not an official Persian document); however, it is not clear whether this is a part of the document or only a heading given by the compiler. The form Nebuchadnezzar occurs in 6.5 instead of the spelling Nebuchadrezzar which a genuine Persian document is likely to have. Especially puzzling is the oddly proportioned temple in only two dimensions which apparently measures about 90 feet wide by 90 feet high but with no length (6.3). Most important, though, the Persians might well allow the temple of this local cult to be rebuilt, but it seems very unlikely that the Persian government would pay for the building (6.4). As for returning the temple vessels, they were probably long since melted down by the Babylonians (§12.4.2). Finally, as noted above, it seems unrealistic that Cyrus would have taken the trouble in his first year to issue a specific decree on behalf of a small community on the edge of his empire, nor do the *Cyrus Cylinder* and *Babylonian Chronicles* suggest otherwise. Lower officials, at satrapal or even provincial level, would have dealt with such matters.

Ezra–Nehemiah (especially Ezra 2//Neh. 7) presents a picture of thousands of exiled Jews returning to an empty land under Zerubbabel in the reign of Cyrus. This seems unlikely: such a ‘mass return’ is probably only a ‘myth’ created by the author (Becking forthcoming). Once the imperial decree is removed from the equation, what we would expect would be a trickle of people from Babylonia immigrating to Yehud over decades, perhaps even the entire two centuries of Persian rule. This is precisely what the archaeology indicates: there is no evidence of large increases in the population at any time in the Persian period (Lipschits 2003: 365). On the contrary, the end of the sixth and beginning of the fifth century saw a significant reduction in population, especially in the Benjamin area. The returnees were likely to have been a few thousand at most, probably over a period of time. Jerusalem may have been resettled after perhaps a long gap of no inhabitants, but it was only a small settlement early in the Persia period (Lipschits 2003: 329).

The archaeological data also contradict those who argue for a Persian policy of resettlement at this time, either generally or with regard to the Jews in particular. Over the years a number of theories have been developed that have at their core the view that the Persians themselves commanded or arranged the return of a body of Jews to Yehud because of the wider historical context. Thus, J.P. Weinberg argued that Cyrus required the return and rebuilding of the temple because of plans to invade Egypt (§7.2.3.1). Another view is that Persians had a policy of ruralization in the early Achaemenid period (Hoglund 1991), ordered the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah because of the threat from Egypt (Hoglund 1992), and even brought back a group of Jews to settle in the mid-fifth century (cf. Edelman forthcoming). Finally, the ‘Revolt of the Satraps’ and the ‘Tennes Rebellion’ in the mid-fourth century are seen as the background to events in Yehud. Not all of these theories relate to the early Persian period, of course, and comments will be made on Hoglund’s theses (§9.3.3.1; §13.3.2) and the revolts in the mid-fourth century

(§14.5) at the appropriate places below. Nevertheless, most such theories have some assumptions in common and call for some general comments here:

1. The Persians were bound to make proper military preparations to secure, maintain, and defend their empire. This included garrisons, fortresses, and other aspects of a military infrastructure that were set up at strategic points. The question is whether Judah was a strategic area and what the Persians might need to establish there.
2. There is little indication that the Persians saw Egypt as a threat to the rest of their empire (cf. *HPE*: 573–77, 586). With regard to any invasion of Egypt to conquer or reconquer it, the strategic area was Phoenicia and the coast. Although it is possible that Jerusalem had a garrison, at least some of the time, Judah was an inland area far from the coast and not easily accessible in any case. The Persians were interested in the Phoenician cities for strategic reasons, but there is little to demonstrate that they saw Judah as in any way a strategic location. It makes Judah much more important in the Persian thinking than it was likely to have been (*HPE*: 586): ‘The importance of Judah is only an “optical illusion” created by the uneven distribution of evidence. In particular, there is nothing to prove that Susa or Persepolis considered Judah a bulwark of Persian dominion against fickle and unruly Egypt.’
3. Even the supposed Cyrus decree discussed above does not mandate a return but rather *allows* any who want to return to have that opportunity. The only ‘command’ in the decree is to build a house for Yhwh the God of Heaven. The whole emphasis of Ezra is that people were allowed to return, not that they were required to do so. Neither the book of Ezra nor the book of Nehemiah hint that the return (whenever one dates it) was in any way a Persian initiative or the result of a Persian command or directive.
4. Finally, the most recent archaeology shows a decline in population at the beginning of the Persian period, not an increase, and Jerusalem as only a small settlement with little strategic or defensive value. There were already people living in the province of Yehud. The Persians had no need to settle an empty area. On the other hand, if they had wanted to bring in settlers for whatever reason, it would have been worth their while only to bring in a significant number, but such number would surely have left evidence in the archaeology.

In sum, it is likely that the descendants of deported peoples were allowed to return to their homelands and to rebuild ruined temples, along the lines of the *Babylonian Chronicles* and the *Cyrus Cylinder* pronouncements. But this allowance was evidently part of a general policy on the part of Cyrus, of which the Jews were able to take advantage. It seems very unlikely that in his very first year of reign, with all that had to be done in establishing a new empire, Cyrus took the time to issue an edict expressly on behalf of a small ethnic community. This applies even to the Aramaic decree in Ezra 6.2–5 which has been more strongly defended. As for Ezra

1.2.4—written in Hebrew, filled with Jewish theology, and rather unrealistically calling on the community to fund the return—there seems little doubt that it issued not from the Persian chancellory but the desk of a Jewish theologian.

#### **12.4.2. Sheshbazzar**

Sheshbazzar is an enigmatic figure. He makes a brief appearance in Ezra 1.9–11 as the one who brings the temple vessels back to Jerusalem; he then disappears from the narrative without further comment. We are told nothing about him apart from his designation as a ‘prince of Judah’ (*הַנְּשִׁיא לִיהוּדָה* (*hannāši’ lihūdā*)). What precisely this means is much debated, especially in light of the use of the term in reference to the ruler envisaged in Ezekiel 44 (§4.3.4). It was once assumed that Sheshbazzar was to be identified with the Shenazzar who was a son of Jehoiachin (1 Chron. 3.17–18). This would suggest that his title acknowledged him as a member of the Jewish royal family. Further studies make this identification unlikely, however (Berger 1971; Dion 1983), though Sheshbazzar could still possibly be a member of the royal family or the nobility. Blenkinsopp (1991: 34) states that the title need not imply he was a member of the ruling class, but considering the position he occupied, it seems likely that he or his family had considerable stature in the community.

Although Sheshbazzar disappeared after Ezra 1, his name does come up one more time, though not in the narrative but in a quoted document (5.14–16): he was governor and he laid the foundations of the temple. This statement is significant. The document in which it occurs is the one that comes highest in the spectrum of authenticity (§4.1.3.2.7). Furthermore, it goes contrary to statements in the rest of Ezra 1–6. When Sheshbazzar is given the temple vessels in Ezra 1, there is no suggestion that he was to be governor (though Japhet has suggested that the puzzling title, ‘prince of Judah’, is simply another way of saying ‘governor of the province of Judah’ [1982: 96–98]). This puts a whole new perspective on his place in the history of Yehud.

Most interesting, he also laid the foundations of the temple according to 5.16 (cf. Tuland 1958; Gelston 1966). This flatly contradicts Ezra 3.6 which states that Zerubbabel and Joshua set up an altar but the foundations of the temple had not been laid. It is clear that the author of the narrative in Ezra 3 either is ignorant of the Sheshbazzar tradition (cf. Japhet 1982: 96) or he knows it and has suppressed it. It may seem strange that the compiler of the book would have suppressed this information, but it is difficult to believe that he cannot have noticed the information in one of the documents he uses. Thus, it seems more likely that he deliberately ignored the information about Sheshbazzar from the document. For him the founders of the temple are Joshua and Zerubbabel. This means that the activities of Sheshbazzar have had to be reduced to conducting some vessels safely to Jerusalem before disappearing from the narrative. J. Lust (1987) suggests, however, that the compiler of Ezra–Nehemiah meant him to be identified with Zerubbabel. Nevertheless, if the author/editor did not suppress the tradition, the tradents seem to have—by simply failing to preserve further information.

The question of the temple vessels is a difficult one. It seems unlikely that the vessels would have been preserved but would have been melted down for use by the Babylonians (as 2 Kgs 25.13-17 implies). Where the list in Ezra 1.9-11 originated is anyone's guess. It would be naive to assume it was a genuine inventory of temple vessels brought by Sheshbazzar since it could have been compiled in a variety of contexts. All we know is that the compiler associated it with Sheshbazzar. Of more value is the statement in Ezra 5.14-15 because it occurs in this particular document. Although this document was rated higher in the spectrum of authenticity, it still has problems, though it is possible that the Jews being quoted were only stating a tradition that had come down to them rather than specific knowledge about what had actually happened with regard to Sheshbazzar. In the end, I find it difficult to believe that the temple vessels were still in existence.

Ezra 5.14-16 is tantalizingly brief and raises many questions: What exactly would Sheshbazzar have done to 'lay the foundations' of the temple? How long was he governor? What happened between his governorship and the coming of Joshua and Zerubbabel? Why did he not finish what he had started? And, especially, why did he get 'forgotten' by later writers? What *historian* would ignore dealing with these important questions? The writer of Ezra–Nehemiah is clearly no historian.

### 12.5. Joshua and Zerubbabel

- Ackroyd** (1958) 'Two Old Testament Historical Problems'; (1968) *Exile and Restoration*; **Albertz** (2003) 'The Thwarted Restoration'; **Barker** (1977) 'The Two Figures in Zechariah'; **Bedford** (2001) *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*; **Beyse** (1972) *Scrubbabel und die Königserwartungen*; **Bianchi** (1994) 'Le rôle de Zorobabel'; **Blenkinsopp** (1996a) *A History of Prophecy in Israel*; (1998) 'The Judaean Priesthood'; (2003b) 'Bethel in the Neo-Babylonian Period'; **Borger** (1959) 'An Additional Remark on P.R. Ackroyd; **Coggins** (1987) *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*; **Collins** (2003) 'The Eschatology of Zechariah'; **Fleishman** (1995) 'The Investigating Commission of Tattenai'; **Gelston** (1966) 'The Foundations of the Second Temple'; **Gunneweg** (1982) 'Die aramäische und die hebräische Erzählung'; **Halpern** (1978) 'Ritual Background of Zechariah's Temple Song'; **Harrelson** (1982) 'The Trial of the High Priest Joshua'; **Japhet** (1982) 'Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel'; (1983a) 'Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel'; **Lemaire** (1996b) 'Zorobabel et la Judée à la lumière de l'épigraphie'; **Lipschits** (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; **Lust** (1987) 'The Identification of Zerubbabel with Sheshbazzar'; **Meyers and Meyers** (1987) *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*; **Mitchell et al.** (1912) *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Jonah*; **Na'aman** (2000) 'Royal Vassals or Governors?'; **Niehr** (1999) 'Religio-Historical Aspects of the "Early Post-Exilic" Period'; **Olmstead** (1944) 'Tattenai, Governor of "Across the River"'; **Petersen** (1984) *Haggai and Zechariah 1–8*; **G. Sauer** (1967) 'Scrubbabel in der Sicht Haggais und Sacharjas'; **Seybold** (1972) 'Die Königserwartung bei den Propheten Haggai und Sacharja'; **in der Smitten** (1972–74) 'Historische Probleme zum Kyrosdikti'; **Tuland** (1958) 'Ussayā' and 'uššarnā'; **Waterman** (1954) 'The Camouflaged Purge'; **Wolff** (1988) *Haggai: A Commentary*.

### **12.5.1. Different Stories of Return and Temple Foundation**

As discussed above, it is unlikely that Cyrus issued any decrees specifically on behalf of the Jews with regard to a return or rebuilding of the temple. The Persians seemed to have had a general policy of religious tolerance, so that if some of the deported community wanted to return and restore ruined sacred sites, this was permitted (§12.4.1). If so, the return of the descendants of deportees from Babylonia to Judah would have been gradual. The journey would have been costly and not particularly safe. The idea of a mass return as envisaged in Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7 is probably wishful thinking on the part of the compiler and does not fit with the likely numbers of inhabitants at this time (§12.4.1). But there may have been a steady trickle of returnees in the decades following the fall of Babylon to Cyrus.

Ezra 2.1-2 states that Zerubbabel brought a group of Jews along with Joshua as high priest, suggesting that this was shortly after Cyrus's decree in 538 (which ignores Sheshbazzar's alleged activities). In fact, Zerubbabel probably came sometime later, certainly several years after 538 and possibly as late as the latter part of Cambyses's or early part of Darius's reign. Whether he came with a group is unknown, but the numbers were likely to have been small given the demographic situation known from archaeology. A. Lemaire (1996) argues that 'Zerubbabel' was the man's Babylonian name but that the mysterious title of *Semah*, often translated as 'Branch' (Zech. 3.8), was actually Zerubbabel's Hebrew name. Furthermore, he was the nephew of Sheshbazzar whom he succeeded as governor. This suggestion has to be evaluated in light of other proposals for the meaning of *Semah* (§12.5.2).

Zerubbabel certainly seems to have been appointed as governor (Hag. 1.1; 2.2, 21) but this would probably have been by the regional satrap rather than the central Persian court. More problematic is the question of his work on the temple. According to Ezra 3–4, Zerubbabel and Joshua began to work immediately after coming (nothing is said of any previous work done by Sheshbazzar), but the activity was stopped by directives from the Persians; after the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, however, they began work again about 520 (the second year of Darius). Their activities drew the attention of Tattenai who was responsible for the sub-satrapy of Ebir-nari (Olmstead 1944), and he investigated their authorization for the building (cf. Fleishman 1995). Fortunately, the Persian bureaucracy was able to produce the necessary documentation to allow them to continue, and according to 5.1–6.15 they brought the work to a conclusion about 516 BCE.

According to Ezra 5.1–2, the two prophets Haggai and Zechariah served to goad the Jewish leadership into resuming work on the temple which had been stopped for a period of time because of accusations of 'enemies'. The context of Ezra 5.1–2 is the cessation of work on the temple which had been started but was brought to a halt because of accusations made to the Persian government about the intent of the Jews. The content of these prophecies is not given. They either represent the material in the present books of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 (or at least a part of this material) or they are prophecies not otherwise found in the Bible. As noted above (§12.3), it is more likely that the compiler of Ezra 1–6 has drawn on written sources, which means that the source of these verses is some version of the present books of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8. This opinion is confirmed by the dates within

the prophetic books themselves which connect the prophecies with the second year of Darius, precisely the date indicated by Ezra 5.1-2 (Hag. 1.1; 1.15–2.1; 2.10, 20; Zech. 1.1, 7). As a result of Haggai's and Zechariah's prophecies the work is resumed, without official permission, and Tattenai the satrap comes to investigate.

We would expect these events to be reflected in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah; however, this is not the case. The prophets complain that the temple lies in ruins and call on the people to build it (Hag. 1; Zech 4.1-8). There is no mention of any previous activities by anyone (whether Sheshbazzar or Zerubbabel) and nothing is said about any opposition or a Persian decree against the project. In Haggai the problem is not the opposition of 'enemies' or the prohibition of the Persian administration. It is, rather, the people who are more concerned about living in 'luxurious' houses than building the temple (Hag. 1.2-4, 9). They are called on to go to the hills for timber for building (not to the Lebanon for cedarwood, as in Ezra 3.7). The problems suffered by the people come not from adversaries or government officials but drought and poor crops (Hag. 1.5-6, 9-11), and the charge of living in luxury is probably prophetic hyperbole with no relation to reality. Zechariah's message is contained mainly in visions, which makes interpretation more precarious. A major concern is the return of Yhwh himself to Jerusalem (Zech. 1.16; 8.3), after having abandoned it before the exile (Ezek. 10.18; 11.22-23). Another is the removal of the guilt and uncleanness of the exile (Zech. 3; 5). However, there is also an echo of the lack of prosperity until work on the temple got underway (Zech. 8.9-13). Again, nothing is suggested about interference from Persian officials or about threats from the surrounding peoples. If the author of Ezra 5.1-2 has drawn on the books of Haggai and Zechariah, as seems likely, we still find some interesting discrepancies between the two.

Thus, we have three different accounts about the building of the temple: (1) by Sheshbazzar, (2) by Zerubbabel, with the work interrupted (Ezra 4-6), (3) by Zerubbabel without interruptions (Haggai, Zechariah). While one could forcibly harmonize these accounts (as does Tuland 1958), such heavy-handed literalism would ignore the nature of the sources. We are not dealing with historical narratives but three theological accounts which, incidentally, contain some historical data. See below (§12.5.3) for a suggestion of the sequence of events, as reconstructed from the available sources.

### **12.5.2. Leadership in the Yehud Community**

One of the main questions in relation to Zerubbabel and Joshua is that of the leadership of the Jewish community in Jerusalem. A number of passages in Zechariah and Haggai concern this issue, indicating two main views: one, that there was to be one leader Zerubbabel with the high priest definitely subordinate to him; the other, that the leadership consisted of a diarchy in which Zerubbabel and Joshua governed jointly as civil and religious leader respectively. Both views can be justified by various passages within the book, suggesting that different authors and editors had different points of view in the history of the tradition. For example, Petersen (1984: 122) has noted that the visions of Zechariah seem to give a prominent place to the high priest, whereas the oracles focus on a royal figure.

Haggai gives the most straightforward message, especially in 2.20-23 where Zerubbabel is labelled ‘the signet ring’ (**חֹתֶם** *hôtām*). That this signifies royal authority is indicated by Jer. 22.24-30 to which it alludes (as well as the use of traditional coronation language; cf. Pss. 2; 110). However, Haggai is more subtle here than sometimes allowed, for his reference to kingship is implicit rather than explicit—it certainly does not say, ‘Crown Zerubbabel!’—and no timetable is suggested as to when Zerubbabel might assume this authority (cf. Petersen 1984: 105-106). Indeed, some have even argued that the lack of messianic language here takes the spotlight away from Zerubbabel directly (Wolff 1988: 106-107; Meyers and Meyers 1987: 70), though most see a focus on Zerubbabel as a Davidide (Blenkinsopp 1996a: 202-203; Beyse 1972: 56-57).

Zechariah is more complicated, speaking on the subject in several passages. In Zechariah 3 the emphasis is on Joshua who is purified and crowned with a sign of his priesthood. (Some have thought this purification suggested some lapse on Joshua’s part [e.g. Blenkinsopp 1984: 238], but this has also been strongly denied [Ackroyd 1968: 184; Petersen 1984: 194-96].) But 3.8 refers to ‘my servant the Branch’ who is to come, which most take as an insertion and interpret in the light of 6.12 as a reference to Zerubbabel. If the ‘Branch’ is he, this indicates an editorial attempt to focus attention from Joshua to Zerubbabel (but see below). The vision of the olive trees in ch. 4 originally alluded to two co-equal individuals, Joshua and Zerubbabel (4.1-6a, 10b-14). Into this have been inserted oracles which focus on Zerubbabel as the builder of the temple, with royal overtones (4.6b-10a; cf. Halpern 1978: 168-81; Petersen 1984: 121).

Zechariah 6.9-15 has presented a problem to many interpreters (on the tradition history, see Beyse 1978: 78-84, 89-91). One of the difficulties is whether the Hebrew ‘crowns’ in 6.11 is a mistake for ‘crown’. Many advocate emending the text to the singular; however, a number of recent commentators have argued that the plural should be retained because two individuals are being crowned (Petersen 1984: 275; Meyers 1987: 349-50; cf. Coggins 1987: 46-47). The tendency has been to assume that an original oracle favouring Zerubbabel has been toned down by including Joshua at a later time when Zerubbabel was no longer there (e.g. Mitchell *et al.* 1912: 185-86; Blenkinsopp 1988: 238). However, Petersen (1984: 279-80) has argued that it is the reverse: an original oracle which applied equally to Joshua and Zerubbabel has been tilted in favour of Zerubbabel by the insertion of an oracle in which Zerubbabel is the sole recipient (6.12-13). Ackroyd has also noted that an editing out of Zerubbabel is unlikely (1968: 196; cf. also Beyse 1972: 99). In either case, one sees two tendencies: one which focuses on Zerubbabel as the dominant individual, and the other which envisages a diarchical form of governance.

Several scholars have recently proposed that Zerubbabel was not just a governor but that Judah functioned as a vassal kingdom during the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian periods (e.g. Bianchi 1994; Niehr 1999: 230-31, 235-36). A somewhat more cautious proposal was made by A. Lemaire (1996) who suggested something of a dynasty among the early Judaean governors. The idea that the early governors of Yehud were actually vassal kings may not seem a radical suggestion since we know of some vassal kings under Achaemenid rule, such as the Phoenician cities

(§7.3.2) and the Arabs (§7.3.3). The question is whether there is evidence for Judah. N. Na'aman (2000) argues that there is not. He points out that although Jehoiachim continued to be called 'king' of Judah, this does not mean that Judah remained a kingdom. Also Nebuchadnezzar had already demoted a number of former vassal kingdoms (Ashkelon, Ekron, Ammon, Moab, and Edom) and made them part of Babylonian territory. (The same happened to Sidon, though it eventually regained its royal status.) This was the general policy of Nebuchadnezzar, and he seems to have made no exception in the case of Judah. When Cyrus came to the throne, he simply perpetuated the status of Babylonian provinces, of which Judah was one.

A further question concerns the possibility that Zerubbabel had messianic pretensions (Waterman 1954). This question has been much debated recently. The basic reasons for arguing that Zerubbabel aspired to royal status are that (a) he was of the Davidic line, (b) such is suggested by passages like Hag. 2.21-23 and perhaps Zech. 6.9-15, and (c) Zerubbabel disappears abruptly during the rebuilding of the temple and is not referred to at the dedication ceremony on its completion in Ezra 6.14-22. This view has been strongly opposed by Ackroyd (1958; 1968: 164-66) who points out that (1) Zerubbabel was appointed by the Persians who would not have been ignorant of his Davidic origins; (2) even after investigation, Darius was willing to confirm the decree of Cyrus and the activities of the Jews in rebuilding the temple; (3) there was no further disruption of the building. As will become clear in the next section, these last two points are problematic.

Whatever the views of Haggai and Zechariah, however, we have no indication that Zerubbabel himself aspired to royal status or accepted their claim at face value. Also, there is an underlying eschatological focus in the books (even at Hag. 2.20-23) which inevitably takes the emphasis off the immediate presence of a royal figure, even if one is ultimately envisaged. Perhaps this is due to the editor rather than the original prophet, but there is also the question of how trustworthy the narrative in Ezra 6 is: Can we really be sure that the temple was completed in 515 BCE, and if so, can we be sure that Zerubbabel was not there? This is discussed in the next section.

A lot of this discussion hinges on the identity of the figure referred to in Zechariah as Zemah (Hebrew זמָה *Semah*). This is often translated as 'Branch', though Rose (2000) argues that it should be translated 'Growth'. It has frequently been argued that this is a messianic title originally applied to Zerubbabel (e.g. Blenkinsopp 1996a: 207-208; Beyse 1972: 56-57). As already noted above, this view depends heavily on Hag. 2.20-23 and its allusion to Jer. 22.24-30. According to this view, the focus was diverted away from Zerubbabel by later redaction. Yet some have argued that the lack of messianic language in Hag. 2.20-23 takes the focus away from Zerubbabel directly (Wolff 1988: 106-107; Meyers and Meyers 1987: 70). Furthermore, there are those who argue that the identity of Zemah is actually meant to be Joshua (cf. Barker 1977; Harrelson 1982; Coggins 1987: 46).

Another identification is that Zemah is a future messianic figure, most recently argued by Rose (2002). He claims that terms such as 'my servant' and 'chosen' are not necessarily royal. He also argues (rather dubiously) that Hag. 2.23 and

Jer. 22.24 should be translated not ‘signet ring’ but ‘seal’, which is not a symbol of royal power but of the precious nature of Zerubbabel. As noted, Zemah is said to mean ‘Growth’ and is not a Davidic or dynastic reference. This is why Joshua is crowned rather than Zerubbabel (though there are textual problems here as noted above). The name Zemah, when properly understood, actually conveys the idea of discontinuity. Most of the elements in the description are future references.

Rose’s interpretation has been critiqued by J.J. Collins (2003). Contrary to Rose’s view that Jer. 23.5 and 33.15 show a contrast with the *semah* of Zechariah, the oracle in Zech. 6.9–14 is in agreement with Jeremiah 23 and 33 (which themselves give a correction to the oracle about the end of the Davidic line in Jer. 22.24–30). It strongly suggests a figure who will restore the Davidic line. Since Ezra 5.1–2, as well as Zechariah and Hag. 1.14, associate Zerubbabel with the rebuilding of the temple, it is gratuitous to suppose that Zechariah had an eschatological temple in mind. The fact that the crowning of Zerubbabel as king would have been unthinkable under Persian rule is no objection since a prophet would not necessarily have seen things in such practical terms. The textual problem in Zechariah 6 is the result of an alteration with an obvious context: Zerubbabel was not in fact crowned. Zechariah also seems to presuppose a diarchic type of relationship between Joshua and the *semah* (despite Rose’s objections). The type of ruler expected by Zechariah could legitimately be called a ‘messiah’, but not in a superhuman sense.

### **12.5.3. *The Building and Completion of the Temple***

Much of the narrative of Zerubbabel and Joshua relates to the rebuilding of the temple. Re-establishing the cult and temple raises the question of whether there had been any cultic activity since the destruction of the temple in 587/586. As noted above (§10.3.1), some have suggested that Bethel remained a cultic centre of some sort, associated with ‘Aaronites’ (who later implanted their name on the entire Jerusalem altar priesthood), throughout the Neo-Babylonian period. There is also the possibility that Mizpah (Tell en-Naṣbeh) itself functioned as a cult centre (Blenkinsopp 1998). It seems to have become the residency of the governor at the beginning of the Neo-Babylonian period (2 Kgs 25.22–23; Jer. 40.5–6). Jeremiah 41.5–7 refers to men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria who came to offer cereal offerings and frankincense at the ‘house of Yhwh’. Although this is widely assumed to be the Jerusalem temple, the question is whether such a scenario is likely. The temple had been both razed and rendered ritually unclean, the men were from the North, and they came to Mizpah. As Blenkinsopp (1998: 25–26) observes, a more likely interpretation is that they were coming to Mizpah because it was not only a centre of government but also a cult centre. The question is why Mizpah is not then designated as a cult centre in other texts; however, Blenkinsopp (1998: 29–34) points to Judges 20–21, a passage making Mizpah a place of gathering, oath-taking, and other quasi-religious activities. This passage is widely believed to have been edited in the Neo-Babylonian period. Thus, whether Jerusalem itself continued as a cult site during the exilic period is a much-debated question, but if a regular cult was in operation there, it is unlikely to have been presided over by ‘Aaronite’

priests but was more likely carried on by ‘Levites’ (Schaper 2000: 163–68). In any case, Lipschits has argued that Jerusalem was probably uninhabited during the exilic period (2003: 333–34).

The existence of a rival cult site and priesthood at Bethel would have been a major concern to those trying to establish a temple at Jerusalem. Blenkinsopp (1998: 42) has suggested that the rivalry between the Jerusalem priests (on the inappropriateness of the term ‘Zadokite’, see §10.3.1) and the ‘Aaronite’ priests was one of the causes of the Samaritan opposition to the building of the Jerusalem temple (*Ezra* 4–5). In any case, the connection of the Jerusalem priesthood with Aaron seems to be a post-exilic phenomenon (§10.3.1). This indicates that the two priesthoods became assimilated (and reconciled, if there was the rivalry often postulated) so that all altar priests became known as ‘sons of Aaron’, though this probably took some time.

At this point, we resume the discussion of the previous section about how Zerubbabel, especially, and also Joshua were viewed by the Jewish community, on the one hand, and by the Persian authorities, on the other. Neither Joshua nor Zerubbabel are mentioned in connection with the ceremony over the temple’s completion. This has led to speculation that Zerubbabel and possibly also Joshua were removed by the Persian authorities because of messianic pretensions, either on their own part or on the part of others, perhaps without their consent (see previous section). Recently, R. Albertz (2003) has argued that the leading circles of the returnees from Babylonian attempted a restoration of the monarchy in the early Persian period. They were able to get Zerubbabel appointed because Darius needed allies during the rebellions of 522–520 BCE. Unfortunately, the messianic pronouncements of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah alarmed the Persians. Tattenai was sent to investigate and brought the restoration to an abrupt halt. In a compromise, he allowed the temple to continue to be rebuilt but removed Zerubbabel and silenced (perhaps even by execution) the two prophets.

Bedford, on the contrary, argues that Haggai and Zechariah were careful to stop short of calling for a rebellion, and their preaching was not perceived to be seditious by the Persian administration (2001: 298–99). Certainly Haggai and to a lesser extent Zechariah seemed to have seen Zerubbabel as a potential Davidic king over a new Jewish state, but this proves nothing about Zerubbabel’s own aspirations. Considering the confidence placed in him by the Persians in choosing him as governor, Zerubbabel was probably more of a realist than the prophets; while he may have suffered as a result of messianic stirrings in certain quarters, more likely is that he fulfilled his term of office in the normal way. The fact that neither he nor Joshua is referred to in the dedication of the temple is curious, though there are a number of ways to explain this silence: it may be due to the tendentiousness of the editor of *Ezra*, it may show that his information breaks off at this point, or it may indicate no real knowledge of the actual situation in the first place. Yet all these suggestions about Zerubbabel assume that the temple was built early in Darius’s reign. How secure is this date?

The date for the completion of the temple lies at the crux of the discussion. In many scholarly discussions, a great deal of weight has been placed on the date,

normally given as 516 BCE. But this date depends on the literary account(s) of how the temple was built. The question is, how credible is this picture? The only chronological information we have was that the temple was completed in five years (Ezra 6.15), from the second to the sixth year of Darius I (521–516 BCE). The first point to note, though, is that information occurs only in the narrative section of Ezra 1–6 which seems to have no basis in a known source (§12.3). None of the sources likely to have been available to the writer mentions this date, and we have no other indication that he had specific information for the time of the temple's completion. Ezra 6.15 stands alone; it has no confirmation from any source nor any indication of being based on a source.

A second point relates to the resources available for temple building, which were unlikely to have been sufficient to allow completion so soon. Apart from the significant differences between the various accounts, there is the matter of socio-economic reality. Contrary to the list in Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7 (c. 42,000 returnees) and some modern estimates of the population of the province (e.g. 200,000 people), a realistic estimate of the total population at the beginning of the Persian period was likely to have been no more than 30,000, including both returnees and native inhabitants (§9.3.2). Once the implications of such a figure are recognized, we see that the limits of what could have been done are very constrained, and some aspects of the different accounts move outside the bounds of reality.

The Jewish communities in Babylonia and elsewhere might indeed have contributed, as suggested by such texts as Ezra 1.4; 7.16; 8.25 (cf. Blenkinsopp 1991: 39; Carter 1999: 292). We know that centuries later, huge amounts of funds came into the temple from the half shekel tax on all Jews worldwide. But this was much later, when there was a large diaspora community in the Greco-Roman world. The principle of a tax on each Jew seems to come about in the Persian period (Exod. 30.11–16; Neh. 10.33–34), but it would have taken time to become an established practice. Also, what mechanism existed for notifying Jews outside Palestine of the temple needs and then collecting and transporting the money is not at all clear. As for the idea that the Persians provided imperial support and resources to such enterprises, this is only so much propaganda of the texts themselves (§10.1.4).

The reality was that the community was having difficulty with producing sufficient food (Hag. 1.5–6), which was not unusual because of the geography and ecology of the region (§9.3.1). This was no doubt compounded by the problems of trying to integrate those returning from Babylonia, even if immigration was being spread over many years, as seems the case. The idea that the community had the means to commission workers to cut timbers in Lebanon as a special project for the temple (Ezra 3.7) is nothing more than a fantasy. If Lebanese cedar was available on the coastal market, as may have been the case, the builders might have been able to purchase some. More likely, though, is that most timber for the temple needs was harvested locally (Hag. 1.8).

Thus, the claim of the text that the temple was completed in five years almost certainly goes beyond socio-economic reality. Even accepting that Sheshbazzar had done some work in getting it started, the community is not likely to have had either

the resources of material and manpower, nor the economic means to purchase them, to complete the work in so short a period of time. An analogy might be the medieval cathedrals that usually took decades—sometimes even centuries—to build. *The one solid datum we can be confident of was that the temple was built.* But the lack of archaeological study of the site means that much else is very uncertain. To assume that the temple was built over a period of time in the last part of the sixth century and was finished by perhaps 500 BCE or not long afterward does not seem unreasonable, but it is no more than an intelligent guess.

### 12.6. Original Peoples vs. Returnees

**Barstad** (1996) *The Myth of the Empty Land*; (2003) ‘After the “Myth of the Empty Land”’; **Bedford** (2001) *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*; **Carroll** (1992) ‘The Myth of the Empty Land’; **Carter** (1999) *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*; **Gunneweg** (1983) ‘יְהוּדָה בַּזֶּבּוּן—A Semantic Revolution’; **Hoglund** (1991) ‘The Achaemenid Context’; **Lipschits** (2003) ‘Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.’; **Oded** (2003) ‘Where is the “Myth of the Empty Land” to be Found?’; **Oppenheimer** (1977) *The ‘Am ha-Aretz*; **M. Smith** (1987) *Palestinian Parties and Politics*.

One of the consistent pictures found in Ezra especially, but also in Nehemiah, is that the people returning from Babylon under Joshua and Zerubbabel were coming back to resettle a land which had remained uninhabited since the Babylonian captivity (Carroll 1992; Barstad 1996; 2003; cf. Oded 2003). The literary tradition about the Babylonian captivity is ambivalent. 2 Kings suggests a major removal of population at various points, but it admits that the ‘poorest of the land’ remained in Judah (2 Kgs 25.12). The expression ‘poorest of the land’ should be taken with a grain of salt since they were also the only ones supposed to have been left after the deportation in the time of Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24.14). Yet according to 2 Kings 25 and Jeremiah, there were plenty of nobles, soldiers, priests, and even the odd prophet around after this—and they were strong enough to withstand a siege of the Babylonians for several years (2 Kgs 25.1-3). Both 2 Kgs 25.22-26 and Jeremiah 40-43 show not only a large group of Jews, with a governor in the person of Gedaliah, but also a good deal of general activity. This is hardly the description of an empty land. A group is said to have fled to Egypt (including Jeremiah), but it seems difficult to see this number as being large (though the text may well want us to conclude that everyone remaining in Judah left and went to Egypt).

According to the biblical texts, the actual numbers of deportees was quite small, relatively speaking: 10,000 at the time of the captivity of Jehoiachin (according to 2 Kgs 24.14); Jer. 52.28-30 reduces this to 3000, though that might be Jerusalem alone, with the entire total under Nebuchadnezzar being fewer than 5000. Thus it is difficult to speak of actual numbers, but the impression given by the numbers alone in 2 Kings and also at the end of Jeremiah is that only a minority of the population was removed from the land. 2 Chronicles gives a different story. It claims not only that all those who survived the siege were taken to Babylon but also that the land

observed its neglected sabbatical years (36.20-21). That is, the land was not being worked; hence, one can only conclude that it was empty.

The text continues with this picture in Ezra–Nehemiah. When the original settlers come, they return to their old habitations (Ezra 2.1//Neh. 7.6: ‘each to his own city’). Nothing is said about anyone else living there or about any contest over ownership of the property. The people already in the land are labelled ‘foreigners’: they claim to have been brought in as settlers imported by Esarhaddon but are also called ‘the peoples of the land’ (Ezra 4.1-4). The physical location of these ‘adversaries of Judah and Benjamin’ is not given. One might associate them with Samaria, as the reference to Esarhaddon might suggest. Nevertheless, there is nothing to say that they were not (or also not) living in the territory of Judah. It is strange that they are called the ‘peoples of the land’, a phrase always used elsewhere in the Old Testament and also in the later rabbinic literature to refer to people reckoned as being ‘Israel’ (Gunneweg 1983). The term is never used in rabbinic literature for Gentiles (Oppenheimer 1977), so why should those labelled ‘peoples of the land’ be foreigners here?

These ‘nations of the land’ are a problem because they impart ‘uncleanliness’ (Ezra 6.21). This is uncleanness further elaborated in the Ezra story when the intermarriage between the Jews and ‘the peoples of the land’ is discussed in Ezra 9-10: ‘The people of Israel and the priests and Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, whose abominations are those of [like those of?] the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites’ (9.1). Although the ‘peoples of the lands’ may not quite be identified with the Canaanites and other aboriginal peoples displaced by the Israelites (the translation is uncertain), a strong link is made. Certainly, their ‘abominations’—their religious and perhaps other practices—are considered ritually defiling and abhorrent. To ‘mix’ with them by intermarriage is to corrupt the ‘holy seed’ of the Israelites (9.2). The theme of their abominable habits is continued in Ezra’s prayer (9.6-15). The identification of the ‘peoples of the land’ in Ezra’s time with those at the time of the original Israelite settlement is made much more explicit in 9.11-12. The sin of intermarriage because of the people’s abominations is repeated in 9.14. The women of the ‘peoples of the land’ are said to be ‘foreign’ in a number of places in Ezra 10 (vv. 2, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 44). Similar usage is found in Nehemiah 9-10 which talks of a parallel case involving mixed marriages. The people fast and separate themselves ‘from all the sons of the foreigner’ (Neh. 9.2). They separate themselves from ‘the peoples of the lands’ (10.29) and pledge not to marry with ‘the peoples of the land’ nor to buy from them (10.31-32).

The conclusion seems straightforward: the text simply refuses to admit that there were Jewish inhabitants of the land after the deportations under Nebuchadnezzar. There is no suggestion that any foreign peoples were brought in to replace those deported. Yet what we must realize is that this is a *literary* picture. It represents the view of the writer/compiler of Ezra 1-6//Esdras 2-7 who was putting the material together only late in the Achaemenid period or even in the early Hellenistic period (§4.1). It represents a *theological* point of view that those returning were a ‘refined,

'purified remnant' of the community that sinned under the monarchy and was exiled as punishment (§11.3.5).

Probably only a minority of the people were taken away, with tens of thousands still left (though the destruction and economic collapse meant a swift reduction of these numbers in some areas). These people continued to live in Judah, work the land, raise families, carry on their daily life. Presumably they would have quietly taken over any land abandoned because the owners had been killed in fighting or deported to Babylonia. Where are these people—Jews—in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah? They are absent. Instead we find references to the 'peoples of the land' who are identified as foreigners. One can only conclude that many, if not all, these 'peoples of the land' were the Jewish descendants of those who were not deported (e.g. Bedford 2001: 274-76). In the eyes of the author of Ezra, these peoples were no longer kin; the only 'people of Israel' were those who had gone into captivity. The writer ignores the significant community formed by the descendants of those who were not exiled by the Babylonians but remained in the land and continued to live (and, according to some, to thrive) there. The question is: Did the original *golah* community refuse to have anything to do with the native Jews? Did they treat them with hostility as the 'peoples of the land' (so M. Smith 1987: 110)? Or, on the contrary, did they co-operate with them to a lesser or greater extent and begin the process of integrating the two communities (so Bedford 2001: 270-85)? To find an answer to these questions is difficult because we have been mainly dependent on the literary sources that wish to present the picture described above.

Archaeology, however, now provides significant help in finding an answer to these questions. K. Hoglund (1991: 57-60) argued that the number of settled sites actually increased in the Persian period, leading him to conclude, 'The presumption of a class struggle between exiles and "remainees" over land rights does not fit the evidence of the pattern of these Persian period villages' (pp. 59-60). This conclusion arises in the context of a theory about ruralization which does not stand up (§9.3.3.1); however, his conclusions here seem to be solidly founded, as are those of others who take a similar view (e.g. Williamson 1998: 159). The numbers of returnees seems to have been too small to cause a significant impact on the archaeological or demographic picture (Lipschits 2003: 365). If a considerable proportion of those returning was temple personnel, there may have been friction with any indigenous priestly groups; indeed, this has been proposed (§10.3.1), but any priestly infighting was not likely to create major conflicts in the wider community. Because of their small numbers, the returnees would not have been too difficult to absorb into the community. Interestingly, an area where the natives may have differed from the returning exiles was in those practices often referred to as popular religion (§11.5).

In sum, the text presents a sensational picture of a struggle between returnees and those already living in the land. Granted, its view is that it was a case of Jews against 'foreigners', but we know that the main inhabitants of Yehud in the early Persian period were the descendants of Jews who had not been deported. This is why modern scholars have postulated a major conflict between two groups of Jews,

'returnees' and 'remainees'. We would be naive if we thought there was no friction between those coming to an unfamiliar land from which their ancestors had been deported, with the need to establish themselves and build a new life, and those native Jews who had now been established in their property for several generations. This would be especially the case if the returnees had titles to land that had been long settled by others (cf. Jer. 32). Yet a certain amount of friction and occasional quarrels is not the same as wholesale antagonism between the two groups. The numbers of returnees were probably not large at any one time and could be assimilated over a period of time. The two groups seem to have integrated more or less successfully, especially in the long term, leaving little trace of the return in the archaeology record. As we shall see, the real conflict appears to have arisen almost a century later—in the mid-fifth century (§13.3-4).

### **12.7. Remaining Events in the Late Sixth and Early Fifth Centuries BCE**

**Grabbe** (forthcoming e) 'The "Persian Documents" in the Book of Ezra—Are They Authentic?'; **Sowers** (1996) 'Did Xerxes Wage War on Jerusalem?'; **Zertal** (1989) 'The Wedge-Shaped Decorated Bowl and the Origin of the Samaritans'; (1990) 'The Pahwah of Samaria (Northern Israel) during the Persian Period'.

Ezra 1–6 gives a narrative that purports to tell us about the community in Yehud. Ezra 6 ends with the completion of the temple, after which there is a blank in the literary sources until the narratives of Ezra 7–10 and Nehemiah. As has been shown, the presence of a narrative is in many ways illusory, since Ezra 1–6 is problematic from a historical point of view, but it has given us some useful data. Our other sources are not very helpful in filling this gap. We might have the name of a governor or two, but the seals giving the names are probably to be dated to a later time (§3.2.3). Possibly the name of a high priest has been preserved in the Joiakim of Neh. 12.10, 22, though this is uncertain.

According to the opinion of most commentators, the prophet called Trito-Isaiah lived and proclaimed in the early post-exilic period even though not all the material in Isaiah 56–66 is to be assigned to him (§4.3.1). It is a shame that no agreed-on external events seem to be attested in his writings. Whether he was hostile to the temple establishment—or was a member of a group hostile to it—is a matter of speculation since the cultic statements in this collection are capable of more than one interpretation.

One source that many have thought to give an insight into this period is the letter in Ezra 4. The chapter begins by referring to the 'adversaries of Judah and Benjamin' (4.1), though it does not say where these 'adversaries' live. One might infer that they are from Samaria, especially since reference is made to Esarhaddon's bringing their ancestors into the land (4.2); however, we know of no deportations to Samaria by Esarhaddon. Esarhaddon is more likely to have brought in peoples to settle areas destroyed in Sennacherib's invasion, that is, areas of Judah. The question is: What was the writer's perspective? One could argue that we are to understand these 'adversaries' as living in Samaria, as a way of condemning the

inhabitants of that region so that the Jewish settlers would keep separate from them. We finally come to a letter allegedly written in the time of Artaxerxes (4.8-16) in which it is claimed that the writers are descendants of those brought to the ‘city of Samaria and the rest of Avar-Nahara’ from Uruk, Babylonia, and Elam by the great and glorious Osnappar.

Apart from the questionable authenticity of the letter, another problem is that the ‘great and glorious Osnappar’ is unknown from any ancient Near Eastern texts. Commentators have made a number of suggestions, including Esarhaddon (because of his mention in 4.2); however, the focus has been on Ashurbanipal as the name most easily associated with Osnappar, even though most still assume a textual corruption at this point. A further problem, though, is that if this is Ashurbanipal, we know of no deportation to Samaria or elsewhere in the trans-Euphrates region. Here archaeology may help us out. A. Zertal (1989; 1990: 12-14) has pointed to the presence of a wedge-shaped decorated bowl, found in a confined area in the old territory of Manasseh, and argued that it shows the settlement area of those Mesopotamians brought in after the deportations of Samarians in the late eighth century. This region, with Tell el-Far‘ah (North) at its centre but with Samaria on its edge (none were found at Shechem, apparently), is only a small part of the province of Samaria (albeit an important one).

If Zertal’s analysis is accepted, it shows that the area of Samaria from which people were deported and which, in turn, was settled by deportees from Mesopotamia was relatively limited. The entire former kingdom of Samaria was not involved nor was the entire population deported (despite the statements of 2 Kgs 17.6, 23-24). Zertal estimates that the imported population was no more than a few thousand, not more than 10 per cent of the Israelite population, the vast majority of which continued to live in Samaria (1990: 82-83). Although Zertal accepts the statements in Ezra 4.2, 10 as authentic, they are not confirmed by any external data. *Prima facie*, it seems strange that men from a small population far removed from Judah would show up in Jerusalem, identify themselves as deportees, and ask to build with the Jews (Ezra 4.2).

It was suggested above (§4.1.3.2) that some of the alleged documents in Ezra 4-7 were based on genuine Persian-period documents, though they have been reworked at a later time. On the scale of probability of authenticity, however, the letter in Ezra 4 was rated rather low (Grabbe forthcoming e). It is always possible that a genuine letter was written in the reign of Artaxerxes to accuse the Jews of fortifying Jerusalem without permission. Yet the problems with this alleged letter, including the problematic text of Ezra 4.10, cannot give us confidence that we have trustworthy data here. Without further evidence we cannot use Ezra 4 to fill in the gap for the first half of the fifth century (*pace* Sowers 1996).

The question of whether Jerusalem was destroyed sometime in the first part of the fifth century is discussed below (§13.2).

## Chapter 13

### THE FIFTH CENTURY BCE

#### 13.1. *Persian Rulers*

##### 13.1.1. *Xerxes I (486–465 BCE)*

Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987) ‘Xerxes’ Destruction of Babylonian Temples’; Stolper (1989a) ‘The Governor of Babylon’.

An image of Xerxes as a weak character whose reign marked the start of a decadent Persian court has been presented by many modern histories, though this view has been partially justified from the classical sources. But such a biased reading fails to take into account the nature of the source material, which presents a strong Hellenocentric perspective, among other problems (*HPE*: 517–18). Xerxes was not the eldest son of Darius, though he was the eldest born after his father came to power; and his mother was Atossa, a daughter of Cyrus. For these or possibly other reasons he had been designated crown prince, probably before 490. Just before Darius’s death Egypt revolted, and it fell to Xerxes to put the rebellion down, which he did in his first year.

Much has been written about Xerxes’s relationship with Babylon. The revolt of Bēl-šimānni took place about 481. Another led by Šamaš-erība took place in the summer of 479 following the defeats on the Greek mainland and, according to most handbooks, Babylon was severely punished: the wall built by Nebuchadnezzar was destroyed, the temples at Esagila and elsewhere demolished, the huge gold statue of Marduk taken away to be melted down, and the ruins were supposedly not fully cleaned up until the time of Alexander. Much of this has now been discounted by recent study (Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1987). However Babylon was punished, the temples and cult continued to function. It is also alleged that about this time, Xerxes removed the phrase, ‘king of Babylon’, from his titulature. It is now known that Xerxes used the titulature, which continued in use at least into the reign of Artaxerxes I. Ebir-nari may have been hived off from Babylon as a separate province during his reign, but this is not at all certain (Stolper 1989).

The invasion of Greece was Xerxes’s attempt to finish a project of his father’s. The enormous size of the army recounted in the Greek sources bears no relation to reality; a more realistic estimate is an army of 60,000 and a navy of 600 ships (*HPE*: 527). The Greeks were not as outmanned as subsequent legend would have it. Salamis was a major setback, but the story of a ‘headlong flight’ by Xerxes is a gross exaggeration. A ‘Second Ionian Revolt’ and the beginnings of the Delian

League were a result; however, the Great King was far from beaten and continued to control much of Asia Minor, by both diplomatic and military manoeuvrings. Xerxes's building activities are well documented, including the new capital of Persepolis. He was assassinated in a palace coup in 465.

### 13.1.2. *Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE)*

**Bigwood** (1976) 'Ctesias' Account of the Revolt of Inarus'; **Hoglund** (1992) *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine*.

The reign of Artaxerxes has been of particular interest to biblical scholars, but we lack good narrative sources, even if Thucydides, Diodorus, and others refer to individual episodes and events at various points. The new king was a younger son of Xerxes who adopted the name 'Artaxerxes' as a thronename. At the beginning of his long reign Artaxerxes was involved in putting down a number of revolts. Another son of Xerxes, who was satrap of Bactria, revolted as soon as he heard of Artaxerxes's succession to the throne but was defeated. Only a few years later in 460, Egypt rebelled under Inarus (Bigwood 1976; Hoglund 1992: 97–164; *HPE*: 573–77). This was a serious revolt because Athens responded to a call for aid by sending a fleet, and the Persians suffered some initial setbacks, including the death of the satrap Achaemenes. The Persian attempts to enlist Sparta against Athens were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the revolt was suppressed by Megabyzus with the help of the new Egyptian satrap 'Sarsamas' (Photius §35 = *FGH* 688 frag. 14), apparently the same as the Arsames known from the Aramaic papyri. Although some of the rebel forces continued a long term resistance in the inaccessible delta marshes, Egypt was basically back in Persian hands by 454. In spite of being an important challenge to Persian control, the revolt was always confined to the Delta region and was not a threat to wider Persian rule. According to Ctesias (Photius §§34–46 = *FGH* 688 frag. 14) Megabyzus, who was now the satrap of Ebir-nari, revolted about 450 BCE. There are now reasons to doubt the reliability of this story, especially since Ctesias's reasons for the revolt are rather dubious (Bigwood 1976; Hoglund 1992: 162–63; *HPE*: 577–79). Whatever the truth of the Megabyzus revolt, most handbooks state that the 'Peace of Callias' of 449 brought hostilities between Athens and Persian to an end. This is based on Diodorus (12.4.4–6) who presents it as a triumph for the Athenians, but this episode is curiously omitted from Herodotus and especially Thucydides. It seems unlikely that the Persian king gave up in any way his claims on the Ionian Greeks or was outmanoeuvred diplomatically, as events during the rest of Artaxerxes's reign indicate (*HPE*: 579–82).

### 13.1.3. *Darius II Ochus (424–404 BCE)*

**Stolper** (1987) 'Bēlšunu the Satrap'.

Ochus was actually an illegitimate son of Artaxerxes, but the legitimate son who became Xerxes II had only a brief rule before Ochus won out in a brief but bloody struggle for the throne. The thronename Darius was a deliberate choice for propagandistic reasons. Although he concluded a treaty with the Athenians at the

beginning of his reign, it was soon broken. Darius began to intervene in the Peloponnesian war to keep the Greeks divided for Persian advantage. Unfortunately, the two satraps responsible for the diplomatic initiatives, Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus, were themselves rivals and dissipated much of their effectiveness in competing against each other. However, the strategy of the Persian king in all this—if there was one—is difficult to work out; it does not seem to have been very effective. Things changed when Darius's second son Cyrus was put in charge of Asia Minor about 407 BCE and, by means of military aid and funds, enabled the Spartans to bring Athens to submission in 404. It was just about this time that Darius himself died.

There are hints of various revolts under Darius II, though working out the details is difficult. The Elephantine and other documents indicate some troubles in Egypt around 410 BCE, but assessing the importance or extent of the unrest from the brief bits of information is problematic. It does appear that Darius himself came to Egypt at some point. We have some information on two important Persian officials. One is the satrap of Ebir-nari at this time (c. 407–401 BCE) who was the Babylonian Bēlšunu son of Bēl-uṣuršu (Stolper 1987). The other is the governor of Egypt Arsame (O. Pers. Aršāma) for whom we have some original documents in Aramaic (§3.1).

### **13.2. Destruction of Jerusalem Between Zerubbabel and Nehemiah?**

Hoglund (1992) *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine*; Lipschits (2003) 'Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.'; Morgenstern (1956) 'Jerusalem—485 B.C.'; (1957) 'Jerusalem—485 B.C.'; (1960) 'Jerusalem—485 B.C.'; (1966) 'Further Light from the Book of Isaiah'; M. Smith (1987) *Palestinian Parties and Politics*; Sowers (1996) 'Did Xerxes Wage War on Jerusalem?'.

When Nehemiah received word of Jerusalem in 445 BCE (Neh 1.1–4), he was shocked to find the city in a terrible state: 'The survivors of the captivity who are there in the province are in great evil and disgrace. Jerusalem's wall are breached, and its gates destroyed by fire' (Neh. 1.3). This is not what we expect to read after having just finished the book of Ezra, where the city and temple had been rebuilt, the temple and cult restored, and the difficulties of mixed marriages resolved. The question is: Why?

Had Jerusalem remained with a broken-down wall and burnt gates since the time of Nebuchadnezzar? Possibly, but the context suggests that the people of the city were also in a rather bad way, a situation somewhat incongruous with the rebuilding of the temple in the time of Zerubbabel. While it is certainly possible that the rebuilding of the city had not progressed beyond the work done on the temple, this seems peculiar, especially when one considers that about half a century had passed since the temple was completed. On the other hand, it was likely that the compiler did not know what had happened to cause the difficulties described in Neh. 1.3 because he says nothing about it. In other words, the only information he had after

the supposed events of Ezra 10 was the NM, either in pure or edited form. Our lack of information was also the compiler's lack of information. There are several ways to interpret Neh. 1.1-3:

One immediate possibility is that this is a purely literary creation. As noted above (§4.1.2), apparently three or more 'origins' stories about Judah in the Persian period circulated at times. One of these was that Nehemiah had restored everything—the city, the people, the temple. If so, perhaps the premise of Nehemiah 1 is that nothing had been done since the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and Nehemiah comes to restore everything for the first time. Such an 'origins story' relating to Nehemiah may indeed have existed at some point (cf. 2 Macc. 1.18–2.15), but this does not seem to be it. This section appears to be based on the NM, and the continuing story in Nehemiah 2 does not support the idea of an original restoration of Jerusalem by Nehemiah.

A second possibility is that some disaster had overtaken Jerusalem during the intervening decades, which are largely unrecorded, since the governorship of Zerubbabel. For example, J. Morgenstern (1956; 1957; 1960; 1966) argued that a previously unknown catastrophe struck Jerusalem in 485 as the result of a revolt against Persian rule at the beginning of Xerxes's reign. Unfortunately, much of his argument depends on the very specific dating of certain rather unspecific Old Testament passages, a tendentious reinterpretation of their contexts, and often a major rewriting (called 'reconstruction') of the text. A number of scholars (e.g. M. Smith 1987: 123–25) connected it with the charges in the correspondence of Ezra 4.7–22, that is, that work had begun on the city walls without permission of the Persian authorities and was stopped by them. Associated with this was a raid from the Arab tribes to the south shortly before Nehemiah received the news (M. Smith 1987: 127–28). This explanation assumes the reliability of Ezra 4.7–22 which is problematic (§4.1.3.2). Likewise, Sowers's (1996) recent attempt to revive Morgenstern's thesis depends on Ezra 4.7–22.

In conclusion, we have to say that it would not be surprising if there was an event, interpreted by the Persians as a revolt, in Judah during the long decades between 500 and 445. There were periodic revolts in the two hundred years of Persian rule, especially on the fringes of the empire, sometimes led by a wayward satrap. A destruction around 448 would coincide with the alleged revolt of the western satrap Megabyzus. On the other hand, the evidence that such revolts affected Judah is mainly non-existent (cf. §14.5 on the fourth century). The account of Megabyzus's revolt (which depends on Ctesius's often suspect narrative) is very questionable; at the very least we know little about it, and there is no evidence connecting any such revolt with events in Judah (*HPE*: 577–79). What we have to recognize is that the walls of Jerusalem could have lain in ruins for almost a century and a half. The archaeology of Jerusalem indicates that it lay desolate or had been only a small settlement after its destruction in 587/586 BCE until the mid-fifth century (Lipschits 2003: 329–30). There was probably no pressing reason to rebuild the walls, and to do so would require considerable resources for the small population of both Jerusalem and the province of Yehud. Considering Nehemiah's

personality that emerges in the rest of the NM, he might well have reacted as he did based on a rather extreme interpretation of a situation that the local people found acceptable.

### 13.3. *Nehemiah*

**Bienkowski** (2001) ‘The Persian Period’; **Blenkinsopp** (1988) *Ezra–Nehemiah*; (1991b) ‘Temple and Society in Achemenid Judah’; **Clines** (1984a) *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*; (1990) ‘The Nehemiah Memoir’; **Grabbe** (1998c) ‘Triumph of the Pious or Failure of the Xenophobes?’; **Heltzer** (1992a) *Die Organisation des Handwerks im ‘Dunklem [sic] Zeitalter’*; **Hoglund** (1992) *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine*; **Kippenberg** (1982) *Religion und Klassenbildung*; **Lemaire** (1994d) Review of K.G. Hoglund, *Achaemenid Imperial Administration*; **Mazar** (1957) ‘The Tobiads’; **Reinmuth** (2002) *Der Bericht Nehemias*; **Saley** (1978) ‘The Date of Nehemiah Reconsidered’; **Schaper** (2000) *Priester und Leviten im achämenidischen Juda*; **M. Smith** (1987) *Palestinian Parties and Politics*; **Tuplin** (1987b) ‘Xenophon and the Garrisons of the Achaemenid Empire’; **Williamson** (1984) ‘Nehemiah’s Walls Revisited’; (1985) *Ezra, Nehemiah*; (1998) ‘Judah and the Jews’; **Yamauchi** (1980) ‘Two Reformers Compared’.

#### 13.3.1. *Sources and Credibility*

In the case of Nehemiah, we are very fortunate in having a writing of Nehemiah himself in the ‘Nehemiah Memorial’ (NM). This means that we probably know more about Nehemiah than practically any other Judahite of the Persian period. There are two problems with using the NM, however: (1) the original writing has been edited into the broader literary context of the book of Nehemiah, and (2) the NM represents Nehemiah’s own rather individual perspective on events, which was clearly not the perspective held by other individuals and groups. There will always be questions about the precise texts to include in the NM (§4.1.3.3). For the sake of convenience, the present chapter will follow Reinmuth’s delineation unless otherwise noted: Neh. 1.1–4, 11; 2.1–20; (the list in 3.1–32 has been incorporated into the narrative by Nehemiah himself); 3.33–4.17; 5.1–19; 6.1–19; 7.1–5; 12.31–32, 37–40; 13.4–17, 19–25, 27–31.

The second point is extremely important because it is too frequently ignored: Nehemiah gives *a* perspective on events but not *the* perspective. There is no such thing as *the* perspective—each point of view has historical value. Nehemiah seems to have been a man of strong opinions that he held without introspection. He therefore gives a very one-sided view of things (Clines 1990). If Reinmuth’s analysis is accepted, the second strand of the NM (covering approximately Neh. 5.1–19; 13.4–17, 19–25, 27–31) would likely be more polemical, and also written at a further remove from the events, and thus less trustworthy than the wall-building strand. Yet the first-person account—even in edited form—is very valuable and gives us unique information on this period of history. By a careful and critical reading of Nehemiah’s version of events, we gain insight not only into his views and what

motivated him but also into the views of others around him, including his opponents. A critical reading of Nehemiah might give us a good idea of what might have happened even if we reject Nehemiah's own interpretation.

One final question is when Nehemiah's activities took place. There has been a strong consensus of scholarship that he should be dated to the reign of Artaxerxes I, with the activities recorded in the book taking place between 445 and 433 BCE. The main query to this dating is the argument that his governorship should be placed in the reign of Artaxerxes II, or 484 to 472 BCE (Saley 1978). The arguments can be summarized as follows: (1) Josephus gives a trustworthy account of a number of events, such as the founding of the Samaritan temple, a Sanballat III at the time of Alexander, and the marriage of this Sanballat's daughter to the son of the Jerusalem high priest; (2) the Bagoses of Josephus is the general of Artaxerxes III rather than the governor of the Elephantine papyri; (3) there were a number of high priests of the same name because of paponymy so that the names attested in historical records may not be the same as those in the book of Nehemiah. These are all questionable, as discussed elsewhere (§7.3.1; §10.3.2; §13.7). Thus, even though Saley is quite correct that the traditional dating is not firm, it is probably as firm as any conclusion one can draw about Judah in the Persian period.

### **13.3.2. Nehemiah's Commission**

According to Nehemiah 1, Nehemiah was cupbearer to Darius the king. Is this credible? We must keep in mind that there were two sorts of cupbearer. There was the royal office of 'cupbearer to the king' given as an honorary title to high Persian nobles, usually members of the royal family, who would have been intimate with the king and served in his very presence (*HPE*: 292-93, 296-97). We need to be careful, however, for the term could also refer to one of lesser rank. The 'cupbearer' could also be applied to the person who served the king at the table without suggesting a high Persian noble. He carried out his duties in the king's presence and might well come to the king's attention or be known to him for this reason, but his role was basically that of a glorified waiter. Nehemiah was evidently one of this sort. As a non-Persian he would not have held a high rank in the court, though to serve in the presence of the king would have had merit. It also sometimes presented the opportunity to make a request of the king. Therefore, the situation described is more believable than that in the stories of Daniel or Esther and Mordecai. The fact that he could be released for years at a time also shows that he was not central to the Persian administration.

The position is also supported by the description of Nehemiah's journey (whose credibility is rather higher than that of Ezra's). Nehemiah was accompanied by a personal bodyguard and undertook his journey to Jerusalem with some letters of support which he presented to the appropriate Persian officials. He did not bring tonnes of gold and silver; he did not eschew an escort and depend on God; he was not given authority over the established officials in the region of Ebir-nari. The only special authority he had was to obtain timber from the king's park for some of his building work. This is all in contrast with the description of Ezra's journey which

appears to be an idealized narrative (§14.2.2). It is also consistent with the view that Nehemiah received a favour from the king but was not a particularly high official in the Persian administration.

In the text Nehemiah's commission seems straightforward enough: he simply requested, 'Send me to Judah, to the city of my ancestor's graves, and I will rebuild it' (Neh. 2.5). That he would have felt the need to do this seems self-evident and self-explanatory. Yet we soon learn that there is more to it than that. For example, his building project evidently includes building not only the wall but also the building or repair of the 'temple fortress' and even his own house (Neh. 2.8). Then, after a delay of several chapters, it is suddenly revealed that he occupies the office of governor of Judah (Neh. 5.14-18; cf. 8.9; 10.2). Thus, even though the narrative presents Nehemiah's activities as a personal mission and says nothing about a commission from the king, there are hints there was more to it. This has led a number of scholars to suggest other reasons for Nehemiah's mission or at least to have seen resonances elsewhere in the ancient world. A favourite argument has been that Nehemiah was sent by Artaxerxes to secure the western borders of the Persian empire. This suggestion seems to have been around for sometime (e.g. Weinberg [§7.2.3.1]), but has been argued perhaps most persuasively by K.G. Hoglund (1992):

- Although the author(s) managed to submerge the social and historical factors that gave rise to the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah, they have their ultimate background in the events of the mid-fifth century, primarily the Egyptian revolt under Inarus, c. 460–454. It has not been appreciated how grave a challenge this was to the Achaemenid imperial system, with the intervention of the Delian league on the Egyptian side. Olmstead (1948: 313–17) argues that the Megabyzus revolt is the background of Nehemiah's commission, with the assumption that Jerusalem was preparing to take part in the revolt but that Nehemiah was able to intervene both to avoid revolt and also to accomplish the building of the city's defences. On the other hand, Hoglund is firm that little credibility can be given to the Megabyzus revolt whose only source is Ctesias (Briant also points out the problematic nature of the account [*HPE*: 577–79]).
- Archaeology shows that a widely dispersed type of Palestinian fortress (not limited to Yehud) dates to this period of time. These fortresses were not border defences but aimed at securing the main road and routes through the region. Yet a number of these were abandoned not long after their foundation, suggesting that the danger had passed and they were no longer needed.
- Nehemiah's mission was to fortify Jerusalem in order to provide an inland defence centre, while Ezra's was to clarify membership of the community by legal reform in order to restructure and integrate the province into the Achaemenid imperial system. They were an attempt to create a web of economic and social relationships that would tie the community more completely into the imperial system, an effort to compel loyalty by linking the community's self-interest to the goals of the empire.

Hoglund's thesis has a *prima facie* plausibility to it, not least because it puts the activities of Nehemiah in a broader context and explains the favours from the king as not being personal or arbitrary but strategic for the Persian empire. Nevertheless, there are difficulties with this account of why Nehemiah came to take up the office of governor over Yehud. Hoglund notes the similarities with J.P. Weinberg's thesis (though there are also differences) which has already been critiqued above (§7.2.3.1). Here are comments on Hoglund's more specific thesis:

1. What might be the main strength of the argument, the archaeology, turns out to be perhaps the most problematic (Lemaire 1994d; Bienkowski 2001: 358). A lot depends on a fairly precise dating of fortresses, yet even the three main examples are pressed beyond the ability of the data to be specific. Other fortresses—even some unexcavated—are then dated by extrapolation from the three main examples. It seems doubtful that one can be so certain about the dates, yet without a dating to within a decade or so, the thesis loses a major support. Archaeology suggests that fortresses were built all over the region throughout the time of the Persian empire as a general policy, not to counter a specific threat (see Chapter 2 above; Tuplin 1987b).
2. The association of Ezra's mission with the thesis is problematic in the light of the difficulties with the Ezra tradition (§14.2) and also the thesis that Ezra's mission is to be dated to 398 BCE (though I argue that the tradition is too uncertain to discuss a dating of Ezra's 'mission'). It must be stated, however, that Hoglund is aware of this problem even if ultimately he does not seem to take account of it (1992: 227–31). More grave is the assertion that Ezra's breaking up of mixed marriages was Persian policy. This has hardly been thought through. It would have made no sense for the Persian administration to cause major disruption and social unrest over an issue that was not an issue from the Persian point of view (cf. §13.5). This was an internal Jewish matter, not one of the imperial system. It must be said, though, that objections to Hoglund's position on Ezra do not affect his thesis as it applies to Nehemiah.
3. Hoglund's thesis assumes that the situation in Egypt made the Persians fear an invasion that had to be guarded against. This is very questionable. The Persians were concerned to put down the revolt and regain control of Egypt, but there is no indication that they saw Egypt as a threat to the rest of their empire (cf. *HPE*: 573–77, 586).
4. Even if the Egyptians might have seemed to present a threat, the Persian concern would have been with the area of Phoenicia and the coast. There seems little reason to worry about an inland area like Judah, and if the roads were to be guarded, why did Jerusalem—which was rather out of the way—need fortifying? It makes Judah much more important in the Persian thinking than it was likely to have been (*HPE*: 586).
5. Finally, one must ask why there is no indication of any of this in the text. Hoglund assumes that the author(s) 'submerged' the social and historical facts of the matter, but we are talking of more than submerging. There is

not the slightest hint that any of this is imperial policy or carried out at imperial directive. Although Nehemiah omits much in the NM, counter data do emerge at various points (such as his being appointed governor). But everything done by Ezra and Nehemiah relates to inner Judean matters, as far as the text is concerned. We should expect some small indication otherwise if the actions being done were at imperial dictat.

We also have to consider another interesting analogy described by M. Heltzer (1992: 103–12): the building of a new street up to a particular gate in an inscription from the ancient city of Carthage, dating to about 300 BCE. Unfortunately, the inscription is rather fragmentary and difficult to read, but the construction seems to be by corvée labour with certain professions called in to give their services, including merchants, bearers, tailors(?), minters, smiths, vase-makers, bakers, and sandal makers. The translation of some of these is rather uncertain. Heltzer also draws attention to the wall building of Themistocles in 479–478 BCE Athens in which the entire population of the city was called on for support (1992: 109, 149 n. 56). Others have also made comparisons of various sorts with incidents in Athenian history. On these, see below (§13.3.7).

In conclusion, we cannot rule out some sort of Persian imperial project, but we also cannot rule out that Nehemiah was primarily carrying out his own personal mission, compelled by his own vision of how things should be in Judah and Jerusalem. Nor can we rule out a combination of the two, but the text gives little support to such an idea. Judging from the text, the activities of Nehemiah (and Ezra, for that matter) related to inner-Judean measures. There is not the slightest hint that he was implementing specific imperial policies or directives (beyond his general commission as governor to support the Persian system).

### **13.3.3. Opposition to Nehemiah**

A persistent theme through the book is the opposition Nehemiah encountered, which seems to have arisen from the start (Neh. 2.10). We can divide this opposition into two main camps. First, there were Nehemiah's potential rivals: Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian. These were local individuals with power who apparently worked together to mutual advantage. We know from primary sources that Sanballat was governor of the province of Samaria (§7.3.1), that Geshem was probably an Arab ruler over a considerable territory in Idumaea and/or Transjordan (§7.3.3), and that Tobiah was probably a member of an old Jewish upper-class family with an estate in Transjordan (Mazar 1957; cf. *JCH*: 132–35).

If these interpretations are correct, the opposition between these individuals and Nehemiah would be quite understandable. It is the perennial political rivalry between officials of a governmental regime, especially one in which local governors of far-flung areas had a certain amount of autonomy. This type of rivalry was mild compared to what we read of between satraps in the Persian administration who, in many cases, became almost independent kings with their own armies and absolute power in their own satrapies. Achaemenid history is filled with examples of unruly satraps who gave pain not only to their fellow satraps but to the king

himself. That Persian officials governing contiguous areas might have had little love lost between them needs no explanation. From that point of view the conflict between Nehemiah and the others is what we should expect. This might even be more so the case if, as has also been argued, Judah had been a part of the province of Samaria until Nehemiah came, though this now seems unlikely (§7.2.2). Another argument is that Tobiah had been temporary governor of Judah before Nehemiah's arrival (Williamson 1998: 162; 1985: 183–84). In any case, Sanballat and Tobiah probably had sufficient to arouse their political concerns, whoever took over the office.

A second reason for opposition was clearly the personality of Nehemiah himself. Time and again his actions are confrontational or, at best, insensitive. He evidently had the knack of antagonizing those around him. This is shown from the very start. No sooner had he arrived in Jerusalem than he made a night inspection of the wall, yet he did this without the knowledge of the local officials (Neh. 2.11–16). Why this secretive reconnaissance? He does not explain, and it makes little sense. All he had to do was tell the local officials that he had come with authority to build the wall and then go out in broad daylight for a proper inspection with those who would be doing much of the supervisory work. We have no evidence that the local people or officials were suspicious of him; on the contrary, the work of building was apparently undertaken with considerable enthusiasm (cf. Neh. 2.17–18). Yet his actions said from the start that he did not trust them.

A major question is how much of the opposition was genuine and how much was an invention of Nehemiah's. As just noted, some rivalry would have been par for the course, but some of the language used by Nehemiah looks suspiciously like hyperbole, as well illustrated by Nehemiah 4. One has the impression that a set of murdering bandits is about to fall upon the poor builders of the wall, that they were opposed by a set of vicious and wily foes who are described in practically demonic terms. Yet at no point does anyone so much as utter ‘boo’ to them. We should not need to be reminded that we have only Nehemiah's version of the situation. The text in Neh. 4.6–7 is difficult and probably corrupt, but his claim to be able to read Sanballat's mind is simply incredible. If Sanballat was planning a raid on Jerusalem, he is hardly likely to tell the local Jews about it (as is implied in 4.6). If he wanted to stop the building of the wall, why would that have endangered ‘your sons and daughters, your wives and homes’, as suggested in 4.8? One cannot help wondering if the danger from Sanballat was purely a figment of Nehemiah's overheated imagination.

Nehemiah 6 is one long harangue about those who were less than enthusiastic about the governor of Judah. According to Nehemiah's version of events, his main antagonist Sanballat allied with Geshem the Arabian to ‘do evil’ to him (6.2). They sent a message suggesting a meeting. Nehemiah ‘knows’ that this is a mere ruse to get him away by himself to do some unspecified nastiness to him, so he refuses repeated requests to have a meeting (6.2–4). How does he know it is a trap? Nothing in the text suggests that he does know; in other words, he is only guessing. The unknown factor is the ultimate boss of both Nehemiah and Sanballat, the satrap. Perhaps the Sanballat contingent was out to rid themselves of an opponent.

But would the Persian satrap, who was ultimately responsible for law and order in his satrapy, allow one governor to murder another? We have to accept the possibility that Sanballat and his supporters may have had a genuine desire to reach an agreement, no doubt to mutual advantage but nevertheless an offer to shake hands and make up. In any case, to attempt to murder Nehemiah would have been a risky undertaking for Sanballat and likely to bring the wrath of the satrap down on him.

The accusation that Nehemiah was seeking to set himself up as king seems to have struck a chord (6.6-9). Nehemiah rejects this as preposterous, but his own actions belie his suggestion that it was all made up. Nehemiah was too astute to try to rebel against the Persian empire, as charged by Sanballat; however, the accusation that there were prophets making such claims (6.7) is quite believable. This would have been a difficult charge to make if no such prophecies were known. As a politician of some knowledge and ability, Nehemiah probably had no plans to proclaim himself the Judaean king; nevertheless, you do not have to have the title of 'king' to act like one. No wonder some scholars have suggested that he took the role of petty tyrant in Judah (§13.3.7).

Nehemiah's relationships with prophets was an interesting one (and, incidentally, gives us some insight into the prophetic scene at the time). He seems to have had opponents as well as supporters among the prophets. Shemaiah son of Delaiah called him into the sanctuary and warned of a plot against him (6.10-13). Once again, Nehemiah 'knows' what Shemaiah really intends, because he 'knows' that Shemaiah had been hired by his opponents to intimidate him. How he 'knows' this is not discussed. Shemaiah may have been perfectly sincere in the message he gave Nehemiah. If he was merely one of Sanballat's fifth columnists, as Nehemiah 'knows', the reasons for concluding this are not given in the text. From the information in the text, Shemaiah was simply acting by the divine spirit within him like any other prophet. The same seems to apply to the prophetess Noadiah, the intriguing female prophet who remains little more than a name to us. She prophesied something which Nehemiah did not like. That she was actually an opponent of Nehemiah is uncertain, though she, Shemaiah, and the other unnamed prophets may have become opponents (even if they were not originally so) because of how Nehemiah treated them. If they were really sincere in the messages passed on to Nehemiah, his attitude to them must have been extremely galling.

Of all Nehemiah's opponents, the most interesting is Tobiah 'the Ammonite slave' (2.10, 19: *הָעֵד הָעִמּוֹנִי* *hā'ēved hā'ammōnī*). This designation by Nehemiah was no doubt intended to be a derogatory epithet. The term *עֵד* 'ēved' is ambiguous and can designate anyone from the humblest slave to the high government officials who were 'servants' of the king. Nehemiah's sobriquet is likely to be sarcastic because it fails to recognize Tobiah's Jewishness (Mazar 1957; *JCH*: 132-35). Tobiah only lived in the old Ammonite region but was not ethnically an Ammonite. Nehemiah sees Tobiah as one of the conspirators against him, yet Tobiah was from an influential Jewish family and had relations and connections in Jerusalem (6.17-19). At a later date, the high priest even allowed him to set up an office

in one of the storerooms in the temple area (13.4-9). Tobiah was clearly a man of stature in Jerusalem, as well as his home area.

This example of Tobiah begins to help us see part of the cause of the problems. Nehemiah presents the situation in black-and-white terms. As he saw it, people were either for him or against him, and if you supported Tobiah, you were against him. But others among the Jewish leadership did not see it that way. They did not seem to oppose Nehemiah as such, and most of them worked on the wall without hesitation, yet they also saw no reason to treat Tobiah as an enemy. So they tried to maintain good relations with both Tobiah and Nehemiah; moreover, they even attempted to reconcile the two by speaking well of Tobiah to Nehemiah (6.18-19). It did not work because Nehemiah was determined to have nothing to do with Tobiah. What this illustrates, though, is the extent to which the opposition to Nehemiah was his own creation. He simply did not try to get along with the local people. They either did it his way or they were his enemies. No wonder that when he left the province to return to Babylon for a period of time, people were quick to abandon the more extreme of his reforms (§13.3.8).

#### **13.3.4. Building of the Wall**

Nehemiah 3-4 are devoted to the building of the wall. This task also seems to have been accepted by the Jerusalem authorities without any quibbling. The fact that many of them seem to have worked on the section of the wall nearest to their own homes would have been an additional inducement (Neh. 3). There are some indications of friction, such as the statement that although the Tekoaites repaired the wall, ‘their nobles’ (**אֲדִירֵיהֶם** *addiréhem*) refused to help (Neh. 3.5). This is not explained, and there are many possible reasons. It may be that the nobles disagreed with the project. More likely is that Tekoa was some distance from Jerusalem, and they saw no need to get involved in a project which would not benefit their local area. Or perhaps they were quite happy for the common people from the village to do the work but disdained getting their own hands dirty. A good deal of debate has taken place over Jerusalem’s city plan in Nehemiah’s time (§2.1.1.6). The city seems to have been confined to the eastern hill (the old ‘City of David’), but a portion of the old wall on the east side was abandoned and Nehemiah’s wall constructed at the top of the ridge. Williamson (1984: 82) suggested that he followed an earlier wall whose construction is referred to in Ezra 4.8-22. The problematic nature of Ezra 4.8-22 has been pointed out (§4.1.3.2), though it is still possible that Nehemiah followed the line of an earlier wall.

The work in Nehemiah 4 is given in the context of opposition from Sanballat but, as already noted (§13.3.3), it is not at clear that Sanballat was so bothered. The completion of the building work is mentioned in Neh. 6.15, though in the context of opposition to Nehemiah. According to 7.1-5, as soon as the gates were set on their hinges Nehemiah established a guard routine. His lack of trust in those about him is once again indicated by his appointing his brother Hanani to be in charge of this procedure. Hanani (also apparently mentioned in Neh. 1.2) is indicated by the context to be a literal brother of Nehemiah. It is possible that the first part of 7.2 should

be translated, ‘Hanani my brother, even Hananiah the captain of the acra’; in other words, only one person—not two—is put in charge.

Nehemiah 7.1-5 is taken to be part of the NM, yet it presents some problems. It states that Nehemiah decided that Jerusalem’s population was too small for ‘no houses had been built’ (7.4-5). This is rather strange in that the previous verse states that each inhabitant was to watch in front of his own house, and the earlier statements in Nehemiah 3 that the builders had often repaired in front of their own houses. Most commentaries assume that 7.4 is not to be taken literally (cf. Reinhuth 2002: 206). It looks to me like a typical Nehemiac overstatement. It is not until Nehemiah 11 that the story resumes, with Neh. 11.1-2 forming a logical continuation of the account begun in 7.1-5. The question of whether 11.1-2 is a part of the NM has been much discussed (Blenkinsopp 1988: 322-23; Williamson 1985: 345-46), with the conclusion that it probably was not. This would make it part of a document which includes the list in the rest of the chapter. Regardless, it illustrates the likely aims of Nehemiah in his measures relating to Jerusalem.

All of the officials were required to live in Jerusalem. The rest of the people drew lots. The aim was to make a full tenth of the population of the province live in Jerusalem. It was no doubt correct that a minimum population in the city was needed to make it function, but one wonders whether Nehemiah was not thinking beyond this. The effect of building the wall, setting up gates, and increasing the population greatly was to increase the importance and prominence of Jerusalem. It was also possible to control the activities of the city’s population. If one tenth of the inhabitants of Yehud lived in Jerusalem, this would give more power to Nehemiah himself. It is more difficult to control people who live in the countryside, especially nobles who have their own estates and perhaps a private retinue of servants. But if all the officials are required to live in Jerusalem, it would be easier for Nehemiah to keep an eye on them. In any case, archaeology suggests that at this time Jerusalem did contain about 10 per cent of Yehud’s population, perhaps 3000 out of a population of about 30,000 (§9.3.1).

The dedication of the wall is described in Neh. 12.27-43, which is usually reckoned as a part of the NM, though with various editings and insertions (e.g. Reinhuth 2002: 220-33; Blenkinsopp 1988: 343-48). The emphasis in this ceremony is naturally on the priests and Levites who make up the bulk of the procession around the city walls. This is the only account in the biblical text of a city wall’s being dedicated in this manner. The ceremonies described seem more appropriate to the dedication of the temple; however, it would be thoroughly within Nehemiah’s character to give the completion of his building work a divine dimension. From that point of view the report fits well with the NM and Nehemiah’s way of going about things.

### **13.3.5. *The Fiscal Crisis***

With Nehemiah 5 we find a situation which is not clearly dated. To what extent it relates to the building of the wall is an important question, but it seems impossible to answer it from the available data. Some of ‘the people (**הָעֵדָה** *hā-‘ādah*) and their wives’ cried out because they had had to sell property or, in some cases, even their

own children into slavery to buy food or pay taxes. This was an all too familiar situation that arises among the peasant population. They would normally be farming at subsistence level, which would give enough to eat, and one hoped a small surplus to buy goods that could not be produced on the farm, to pay taxes, and to meet other expenses. But most farmland was in areas that were marginal enough to have a fair number of bad years. In such years, it was normal to take out a loan to tide the family over until a good year let them pay it back. The problem is that several bad years could come in a row. We also do not know how the tax was calculated (§9.3.3.5). Tax on produce would usually be a percentage of the crop, but a poll tax would probably remain the same even in bad years.

There was clearly a major problem. Unfortunately, Nehemiah could not handle the matter quietly and effectively to resolve the problem, as a good administrator would. Inevitably, he makes a major issue of it, which is the way of the politician. Nehemiah censures the nobles and leaders publicly for pressing for the repayment of loans, citing his own example of buying back some Jews who had been sold into slavery. He says they have nothing to say for themselves, but this is hardly surprising since Nehemiah himself had gathered a crowd against them (Neh. 5.7-8), the action of a demagogue. He states that he and his servants also have claims against debtors but promises to give them up, thus setting himself up as a righteous example. He then calls the priests and makes ‘them’ swear to keep the promise to return confiscated property (5.12). What part do the priests have in this episode? Some have taken it that the priests are seen as accomplices along with the nobles and officials (cf. Schaper 2000: 241-42), but they have not been mentioned up to this point. Why should they have been omitted if Nehemiah saw them as guilty along with the rest? It looks more like the priests’ being called on to witness the oaths, as representatives of the deity in whose name the oaths are being sworn.

Nehemiah completes his account by enumerating the amount consumed daily at the governor’s table and then boasting that he had not availed himself of the governor’s food allowance to pay for this (5.14-18). Most commentators have viewed his measures with favour, but they usually have not probed beyond the rhetoric to consider the practical implications. Nehemiah has presented himself as a champion of the poor and oppressed, but a close reading of Nehemiah 5 shows elements not entirely consistent with this glowing self-evaluation. Nehemiah mentions that, among other things, an ox a day was served at his table. Over the twelve years of his governorship, this represented more than 4000 cattle—a herd large enough to stock a medium-sized Texas ranch. Who paid for these, not to mention a flock of sheep six times this size and countless thousands of fowl? Nehemiah pats himself on the back by claiming that he did not collect the governor’s tax, in contrast to previous governors, but he is coy about who did pay. One assumes he either collected funds from some other source or he had a private income. But previous governors may not have such advantages. If they were doing their job, why should they not receive appropriate payment?

On the one hand, one has to ask why Nehemiah needed a retinue of 150 locals who ate at his table daily (not to mention visitors from abroad). When we think of the size of Yehud at this time, with a population of probably no more than 30,000

people, why did a governor need such a large group of administrators, friends, and hangers-on? It was customary for the satraps to set up a lavish court in imitation of the Persian emperor (*HPE*: 345–47). One expects that the governors did the same. Was Nehemiah simply indulging in the conspicuous consumption that was characteristic of the Persian government? On the other hand, if such a large group was really needed, it was right that they receive public support.

One of the problems of interpreting this passage is what Nehemiah actually did. Did he require the creditors to write off the debts entirely? This looks to be the case on the most obvious reading of the passage (though Clines argues they only agreed to return the debtors' pledges [1984a 169–70]). What about the much-criticized nobles? It is important to remind ourselves that we do not have their side of the story. No doubt some had exploited the poor and deserved the censure, but did all? How many of them were not in a financial position to write off large unpaid debts? If those to whom they loaned money could not pay them, could the creditors still pay their own taxes? Had they themselves borrowed money which they expected to pay back when they in turn received payment for money loaned out? The assumption seems to be that the nobles had inexhaustible wealth, and that cancelling debts was of no consequence to them, but why should we assume this? We also find that Nehemiah was no different from those he criticized: he himself was evidently a noble and he, too, had made loans. But if he could support his gubernatorial expenses out of his own pocket (if he did), he might have been in a better position to write off loans than his fellow nobles.

The most important question, though, is this: *What did Nehemiah do for the long-term good of the poor?* It was a nice gesture to tell the nobles to cancel their debts. What is often overlooked is the result of this, which was to cease making loans to the poor. Then when the tax demands came that could not be paid or when there was a bad year requiring a loan to get the farmers through, who was going to loan them money to pay it? Nehemiah's intervention had ensured that no one would lend money in the future because they had no way of getting it back. The essential principle of loaning against collateral had been outlawed, so there was no incentive to make a loan. With no suggestion in the passage that Nehemiah had done anything to help the long-term plight of the poor, the problems described at the beginning of the passage were likely to recur. The difference now was that the poor no longer had anywhere to turn for a needed loan when they had a financial crisis. It is clear that Nehemiah took only temporary measures rather than undertaking a wholesale fiscal reform (§13.3.7).

### **13.3.6. *The Remainder of Nehemiah's Governorship***

A number of Nehemiah's activities are not clearly dated. This section looks at the other episodes of his governorship not so far treated. One of the main sections with a good deal of miscellaneous material is 12.44–13.31. As noted above (§13.3.1), the discussion here assumes the analysis that only 13.4–17, 19–25, 27–31 are part of the NM in this section. A redactor has added other elements to fill out Nehemiah's career. Four points are emphasized about Nehemiah's achievements in 12.44–13.31: first are the organization and maintenance of the temple cult and its personnel, of

which several examples are given; secondly would be the repair of the wall, whose completion begins the section (and already described above); thirdly, the issue of interaction with foreigners is mentioned several times; finally, the enforcement of Jewish law generally is a topic of some importance.

The verses taken here as a part of the NM include most of these points. The importance of paying the temple dues is emphasized in 13.10-14 where Nehemiah returns from an appointment with the king in Babylon to find that the tithes and other offerings were not being paid, so that the Levites and singers were working in the fields to make a living (cf. §10.4). Two other examples relate to the general opposition to things foreign. In 13.4-9 Tobiah insinuates himself into the temple precinct (though it is clear that he has the permission of the high priest). Nehemiah is naturally furious; however, one suspects his reaction is as much because of the success of his enemy as of a religious objection to ‘foreigners’. As already noted, Tobiah was undoubtedly Jewish and therefore hardly ‘foreign’. Similarly, when a son of Joiada the son of the high priest had married Sanballat’s daughter, Nehemiah drove him out of Jerusalem (13.28). Thus, zeal against intermarriage and intercourse with outsiders is difficult to distinguish from straightforward animosity toward an opponent. On the question of intermarriage, see below (§13.5). On the high priests, see above (§10.3.2). On the question of Neh. 13.15-22, see the next section.

### 13.3.7. Nehemiah as Reformer

As has been emphasized above, what we have in the book of Nehemiah is by and large Nehemiah’s own assessment of himself plus what an admirer passed on to later generations in the present book. Nehemiah portrayed himself as a courageous reformer who championed the poor and oppressed and who was zealous in enforcing the law of God in the province. Where he presents himself in particular as a reformer (or at least is seen by moderns as a reformer) is especially in the two areas of his economic measures (Neh. 5) and his religious reforms relating to the intermarriage with ‘foreigners’ and to keeping the sabbath (Neh. 13).

This has led a number of scholars to make comparisons with classical Greek reformers, such as Pericles (M. Smith 1987: 108; Blenkinsopp 1991: 29) and Solon (Kippenberg 1982: 55-62; Yamauchi 1980). Pericles’s main action comparable to Nehemiah’s was in the area of intermarriage with aliens (Aelian, *Varia Historia* 6.10). Solon’s reforms parallel Nehemiah’s mainly in the area of cancelling debts and releasing those enslaved because of debt (Aristotle, *Athen. Polit.* 5-9). It is alleged that the complaint of the Athenians was similar to that of those who came to Nehemiah. They wanted redemption from slavery, the abolition of debts, and the redistribution of land. Both Solon and Nehemiah enacted measures to secure the first two but the third was resisted. We know about the reforms of Solon and Nehemiah because both individuals wrote justifications of their actions for posterity. The comparisons between the Greek and the Hebrew are interesting; however, this appears to be not because of any organic connection but probably because in each case the individual is a politician rather than a hereditary ruler and thus needed to gain a certain amount of popular support.

The problem with such comparisons is that they often represent an idealized view of Nehemiah on the part of the modern scholar. For example, Yamauchi states that 'Nehemiah was motivated solely for God's glory' (1980: 292), though how he knows Nehemiah's innermost thoughts is not made clear. It is unfortunate that Nehemiah's own self-assessment of being a courageous champion of the poor and oppressed and zealous promoter of God's the law is too often taken uncritically at face value. The picture of Nehemiah as a champion of the poor against the rich and powerful is a simplistic and misleading one. The problem with the actions he took, as already noted above, is that none of the measures described in the text would alleviate permanently the plight of the poor.

Indeed, it is doubtful that Nehemiah had the authority to make major reforms. He was only the governor of a small province, and he answered to the satrap of all Ebir-nari. The satrap had to gather a certain level of tribute that had been levied by the central government, and it is a reasonable inference that the governor in turn had to deliver a set amount to the satrapal treasury. A one-off cancellation of some debts might be possible, but it could be disastrous for the local economy if this happened too widely and too frequently. But a series of bad years might mean that the debts cannot be paid off, and the property or other collateral reverts to the creditor. There is no simple solution to the problem; indeed, there may not be any solution in Judah with its limited natural resources. The concentration of land in the possession of the few might mean that land redistribution is possible, but we have no indication that this was an option for Nehemiah. The fact is, judging from the little information available, Nehemiah established and forced through certain temporary measures but did not—and probably could not—go beyond that. Even the single cancellation of debts may have been ill advised if it prevented the peasants from borrowing in subsequent years, as already discussed above.

The second area where Nehemiah presents himself as a reformer is religious observance (Neh. 13.4-31). A special point is made about enforcement of the sabbath (13.15-22). He took a number of steps, which included putting a stop to Jews' working and trading on the day, but especially he forced traders to cease their activities in Jerusalem on the sabbath. His actions in this case look almost as much an issue of exclusion or control of 'foreigners' as of observance of the sabbath itself. To what extent the sabbath was simply being brought forcibly to people's attention and to what extent new modes of observing it were being introduced is difficult to say. Complete rest from work and trade may not have been a primary feature of the sabbath before this time.

Nehemiah first of all upbraids the Jews who carry out agricultural work or transport goods to Jerusalem and sell them on the sabbath. He next turns on the Tyrian traders, though he takes up the matter with the Judaean nobles rather than the traders themselves. A plan is set up to shut the gates on the sabbath and guard them against the entry of goods. The traders have little choice but to comply. This is one of the few biblical passages in which sabbath observance is the main issue. Sabbath observance of some sort probably has a long history in Israel, but the complete cessation of work and trading may not have been envisaged until a rather

later time. In any case, the example looks almost as much a polemic against foreign merchants as an argument for a particular form of sabbath keeping.

Nehemiah was especially zealous in preventing the mixing of Jews with outsiders. This seems to have been part of the motive behind shutting the city against traders on the sabbath: it would have reduced the influence of Phoenicians and other outsiders on the native inhabitants of the city. Another passage is in 13.23-28 in which some Jews had allegedly married with 'Ashdodite, Ammonite, and Moabite women'. The actions described are fully compatible with what we know of Nehemiah from elsewhere: he does not just force the violators to separate. This was not Nehemiah's way. He had to curse some and flog others. He even goes so far as to pull out the hair of some of them. Finally, he expelled the grandson of the high priest from the community for marrying the daughter of Sanballat. The other references to mixed marriages are not likely to be from the NM but are compatible with the picture of Nehemiah: 13.1-4 (in which Nehemiah is not mentioned) and 9-10 (in which Nehemiah's name occurs but only as one of the signatories while the action is taken by the community as a whole). Here the comparison with the reforms of Pericles (discussed above) look rather ill fitting. Pericles enacted a law that limited Athenian citizenship to the offspring of both a citizen father and a citizen mother. He did not forbid marriage or attempt to break up unions; in this his actions were very different from Nehemiah's. For further on the issue of 'mixed marriages', see below (§13.5).

We now come to the crux of the matter: Nehemiah was indeed a reformer with a programme that explains a number of his actions. Some of how he related to the people of Yehud seems to have been down to Nehemiah's personality, but what eventually emerges is a man obsessed with a particular vision of the province of Yehud and of Judaism in its widest sense. The various measures instigated by Nehemiah—whether the repair of the wall, the opposition to Sanballat and other 'foreigners', the ban on mixed marriages, or even the regulations about the sabbath—were not just miscellaneous *ad hoc* decisions. Rather, they look distinctly like part of a complete programme. *His goal seems no less than to make Judah into an isolated puritanical theocratic state.* This programme is nowhere explicitly laid out in the book, but the whole thrust of the book is toward this goal.

Even the wall building could be seen as a part of this programme. Repairing the wall was an action which could have a number of purposes, physical protection being one of them. Yet there is no indication in the book that Jerusalem needed a wall for physical protection (*pace* the interpretations mentioned above [§13.3.2]). Most of the people of Judah lived in unwalled villages or in otherwise vulnerable circumstances. The only indication of danger comes when Nehemiah alleges that those working on the wall are going to be attacked, but even if he is right (which is doubtful) it is the repair of the wall itself which invites the attack, not the lack of a wall. If the wall was not needed for defence, what was its function? A wall serves more than just a means of defending against attack. A city wall can have an important social function. It can serve to enclose people into communities and bond them together; it can be used to hold the outside world at arm's length.

A wall can also be a means of controlling those enclosed by it; it can close people off into a ghetto. This seems to have been an important purpose of Nehemiah's wall; however, it seems to have had a number of uses in his term of office. It would have made it easier to defend himself and his administration against any possible interference from the outside by military or physical force. If the officials of the city and province were required to live in Jerusalem (cf. 11.1), it would have been much easier for Nehemiah to keep them under his observation and thus control them. A city whose gates could be shut against outsiders could also serve to minimize the contact with unacceptable ethnic and religious groups, and even influences and ideas. In a real sense, Nehemiah was creating his own religious and ideological ghetto. Thus, the city wall—as mundane as it might seem—was far more than just an architectural project; it was essential to Nehemiah's reforms.

The concept of 'foreignness' was another major weapon. All those not a part of the community of returnees are labelled 'foreign' in Ezra–Nehemiah, which also seems to be Nehemiah's strategy. The bulk of the inhabitants of the region were probably still the descendants of those not deported to Babylon. It was among this group that religious and ideological ideas at variance with those of Nehemiah and his supporters were most likely to be found. They were the group hardest to control, and marriage with them would have eroded the discipline he was able to impose on the *golah* community. Tobiah was a leading representative of the native Jews who had remained in the land and thus of particular danger to Nehemiah's plans. No wonder Nehemiah was outraged when he found that Tobiah had penetrated not only within the city walls of Jerusalem but even into temple court, all with the permission of the chief religious leader the high priest (Neh. 13.4–9).

On the question of whether Nehemiah instigated a 'revitalization movement', see above (§7.2.3.2).

### **13.3.8. Evaluation of Nehemiah**

We probably know more about Nehemiah than about any other Jew of the Persian period. This is mainly because of a unique source: a first-person account, Nehemiah's own composition (the NM). True, its precise borders are disputed, and all agree that it has been edited to a lesser or greater extent; at best, only a portion of the NM is extant. Nevertheless, this does not detract from its importance. Unfortunately, theologians have often connived with the bias of the NM in its creation of an idealized account of Nehemiah. The personality which emerges in my analysis is rather more complicated and is far from being an unblemished hero. He was in fact quite a peculiar individual. A man of determination and perseverance with a clear vision of what he wanted to accomplish, he was also egotistical, bigoted, narrow-minded, vindictive, and had an unsurpassed ability to alienate most of those with whom he worked. To his mind there was only one side of the matter and that was his—compromise or conciliation was anathema to him. Any evaluation of Nehemiah has to recognize his relentless and unyielding nature. Transfer him to a modern context and, ironically, those modern liberal biblical scholars who have made Nehemiah their champion would find that he embodied much that was objectionable to them.

Nehemiah has been compared to the city tyrants who were a feature of this period in the Greek world (M. Smith 1987: 103–12). Greek *turannos*, from which we get the English word ‘tyrant’, meant something a bit different from the modern connotation which is consistently negative. The Greek word simply meant an absolute ruler of a city but not part of a hereditary monarchy. To the democrats such rulers would have been anathema, but not everyone in the Greek world was by any means a democrat; it was easy to see from the example of Athens that democracy had its negative traits, too. To the Greeks Nehemiah would have looked like a typical tyrant. The positive side of the description is that he was able to force through his reforms; the negative, that his reforms were considered wrong-headed by many of those within the Jerusalem community.

Nehemiah’s response to the circumstances of the community of Jerusalem and Judah was a programme of reform which involved some fairly extreme measures. His aim was to cut ties with the outside community as much as possible and to turn the returnee community into a dictatorial theocratic state which enforced endogamous marriage and the strict observance of the Jewish religion as he interpreted it. In order to achieve this he is presented—indeed, he presents himself—as a champion of the Jews against the ‘foreigners’, of the poor and oppressed against the wealthy and powerful, of the priesthood and cult against the impious tendencies found among the people. This is belied by his attempts to force his way by mental will and physical threat. With the authority of the Persian government behind him, it was not difficult to accomplish his purpose as long as he was on the scene to monitor the activities of the people.

The fragility of his reforms and the shallow persuasiveness of his bullying tactics is brought forcibly home by events: as soon as he left the area things began to develop to a more open and cosmopolitan society (or, as he might have put it, to fall into sin and transgression). It was not just the masses, the common people, who deviated from his reforms. The decision to try to accommodate those whom Nehemiah viewed as enemies was made at high levels in the community, by the nobles and the leading priests. Some of these seem to oppose Nehemiah, but others evidently tried to work with both him and such ‘enemies’ as Tobiah who headed an ancient and influential family in the Transjordanian region.

Nehemiah was a failure, at least in the short term. Granted, he built the city wall and was able to accomplish his goals during the twelve years or so that he was in Jerusalem, but even a temporary absence was sufficient for some of his measures to be abandoned or reversed. Our ignorance of what was happening in Judah in the next two centuries makes it difficult to be precise about details of how Judaism developed. Yet when we finally find a partial lifting of the veil two centuries later, we find a Judaism which was certainly not in Nehemiah’s image (Grabbe 1998c). Nehemiah’s attempts to isolate the Jewish community was no more successful. Long before the so-called Hellenistic reform of the mid-second century BCE, the Jews had come under Hellenistic influence, and many found it a very congenial culture (*JCH*: 147–70). Contrary to what Nehemiah probably feared, few Jews appear to have abandoned their religion, but they found little incompatible between their Judaism and the wider culture. There is no evidence that the isolation of

Jerusalem instigated by Nehemiah was maintained; trade and social and intellectual intercourse seems to have been carried out with the surrounding peoples. Most important of all, many of those labelled ‘foreigners’ in Ezra–Nehemiah seem to have been accepted as Jews by the Jerusalem community (§12.6).

Yet we have evidence that views compatible with Nehemiah’s persisted in Judah. Many biblical writings are stamped with just such a Judaism in which foreign nations, foreign customs, foreign religion, and foreign women are the main obstacles to being a proper Jew. The final compiler of Ezra–Nehemiah certainly believed this. The interpretation of Israel’s past like that in Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 9—in which the people go into exile for sins committed by following the surrounding nations—is found widely in the biblical literature. And we know that pietistic reform movements—*Haredim*, *Hasidim*, *Zealots*, and others—arose periodically in Second Temple Judaism. In the *longue durée* Nehemiah’s vision was remarkably long lived.

### **13.4. Alternative Views to those of Nehemiah**

**M. Smith** (1987) *Palestinian Parties and Politics*.

One of the values of the NM is that it gives us a unique view into the society of Yehud at that time, with data on a variety of classes, professions, and attitudes. Because the readership of the Bible is dominated by the views found in Nehemiah, the impression is that the only approach to running the community was that of Nehemiah—or at least this was the only theologically legitimate one. On the contrary, this section will not only demonstrate that Nehemiah’s was merely one view among many at the time but will also indicate the interactions and relationships between different parts of Yehud society in the mid-to-late fifth century. The different groups emerging from the pages of the NM include the nobles, the priests, and to some extent the merchants.

Although the nobles received the rough edge of Nehemiah’s tongue on various occasions, it is important to remember that Nehemiah was actually one of them, judging by his office and apparent wealth. His dispute with them was a dispute among members of the same class. Their significant place in leadership of the community is indicated in Jedaniah’s letter to ‘Jehohanan the high priest and his fellow priests in Jerusalem...and the nobles of the Jews [or “nobles of Yehud”]’ (*TAD* A4.7.18-19//A4.8.17-18 = *AP* 30.18-19//31.17-18).

The nobles shared leadership with the priests in certain matters. As soon as Nehemiah arrived, he unaccountably kept the city leadership of priests and nobles in ignorance of his night observation of the damage to the wall (2.11-16). The nobles of Tekoa did not assist in the building of the wall, but this seems to have been an exception (3.5); most of the nobles seem to have helped with the wall (4.8, 13-15).

In Nehemiah 5 Nehemiah confronts the ‘nobles and officials’ with a large crowd of the people and berates them publicly, then puts them under oath. Treated in such a way, it may seem only natural that the nobles corresponded with Tobiah, to keep

him informed about what was happening. But the fact that some nobles communicated with Tobiah is hardly surprising since that family was an old established one and had married with the Jerusalem nobility. Nehemiah did see Tobiah as an opponent, but that was his view—why should they have to believe the same? On the other hand, they continued to communicate with Nehemiah as well. This shows no hostility toward him (even if he saw them as disloyal). Thus, we definitely see tensions between Nehemiah and the nobles, caused it seems mostly by the abrasive manner of the former, but there is no clear evidence of a breach between Nehemiah and the nobles. They continued to maintain a relationship with Nehemiah, however uneasy it might have been, since they speak well of Tobiah to him (6.17-19).

Finally, when Nehemiah finds examples of sabbath breaking, he calls the nobles to account to resolve the problem, perhaps suggesting that they were benefitting from the sabbath trading (13.15-17). What this all seems to suggest is that the interrelationships among the nobility were complicated. They attempted to get along with individuals so different as Nehemiah and Tobiah. This fits their role as a group who took seriously their responsibility of leadership in community. On the whole, they appear to have taken a rather more cosmopolitan view of matters than Nehemiah and his followers.

A similar situation seems to have been the case with the priests. A number of references to the priests are found in chapters whose relationship to Nehemiah is very uncertain, but priests are also important in the NM itself. The priests initially support the building of the wall; they are named throughout Nehemiah 3, and no opposition is anywhere suggested (even if Neh. 3 is an insertion in the NM). Priests do not seem to be implicated in Nehemiah's tirade in Nehemiah 5 except to be called to witness or administer an oath to the nobles. Priests were full participants in the dedication of the wall (12.27-43). Three examples only might be taken as suggesting any breach between Nehemiah and the priests.

The first is in 13.10-13, which mentions that Levites had left their posts to work in their fields (according to Num. 18.19-20 and Deut. 14.27-29 they had no fields!) because their temple contributions were not being given. Nehemiah gathered them back to their temple duties and set up a commission to oversee the collection and distribution of the agricultural tithes. On the surface, it seems a case of neglect: the people had stopped paying their tithes and other temple duties, and the temple personnel had had to go elsewhere to find a living. Since only the Levites and singers are said to have left their posts, though, it suggests that the altar priests were still carrying on. Therefore, this passage might possibly hint at some old rivalries within the cultic personnel (§10.3.1; cf. Grabbe 1995: 52-53, 57-58, 60-62). Yet there is no specific criticism of the priests, and the emphasis is on making sure that the tithes are paid. Also, a priest is on the committee—or possibly even two, if Zadok is a priest as well as a scribe—to oversee the situation. It does not, as Smith (1987: 96-112) and Schaper (2000: 237-45) assert, show that Nehemiah had enlisted the Levites as his supporters in opposition to the priests.

A second example concerns the issue of carrying on commercial activities on the sabbath (Neh. 13.15-22), in which Nehemiah takes the decision to shut up Jerusalem from sunset to sunset on the sabbath. He uses the Levites as gatekeepers

(13.21), but this would have been a logical decision. He is unlikely to call the priests from the altar to do so, and Levites would be the natural choice. Also, it is possible that gatekeepers were regarded as Levites by this time. Nothing is said about opposition from the priests in this episode.

A final example concerns Eliashib ‘the priest’ (probably the high priest; §10.3.2) who allowed Tobiah to use a storehouse in the temple area (13.4-9). The difference between Nehemiah’s evaluation of Tobiah and that of others has already been commented on. Now, Nehemiah cast out Tobiah’s property and had the storeroom cleansed. This one example does not show a special opposition between Nehemiah and the priests, though it seems clear that some priests did not necessarily agree with all aspects of his programme. Again, we see the friction that Nehemiah created with all groups of any power in Judaean society. What is not demonstrated is that he had the Levites *en bloc* as his supporters, and the priests as his opponents (Smith himself recognizes that the priests were split [1987: 103]).

The merchants do not stand out as very prominent in the NM, but some theories have seen them as more important than their brief mention there. Morton Smith has argued that the nobles and priests were Nehemiah’s opponents, against whom he enlisted the Levites and the ‘new-rich mercantile class’ (1987: 96-112). Smith’s thesis is stimulating, but it must be kept in mind that it forms part of a larger hypothesis about the ‘Yahweh-alone party’ and the ‘syncretistic party’ (§11.7.1). It is doubtful that we can speak of a ‘new-rich mercantile class’ at this time. Those who gained wealth by trading would usually attempt to assimilate to the traditional landed aristocracy (§9.1.4). Smith’s social divisions look too modern and schematic.

There is also evidence of other views outside the Nehemiah narrative. The books of Ruth and Jonah both seem to take a different view of ‘foreigners’ than that found in Ezra–Nehemiah. According to the book of Ruth, a Moabite woman had married a Judahite and considered herself still a part of her husband’s people even after his death (§4.6.4). She eventually married another Judahite and by him had a child who became an ancestor of King David. In the Persian period when this was probably written, with the examples of trying to break up marriage with ‘foreigners’ in Ezra–Nehemiah, a reader could not escape the contrary message of Ruth: foreigners can become good Jews, foreign wives can be exemplary followers of divine law, and there is no reason to think that their offspring should be excluded from the community as polluted or illegitimate.

Jonah gives a message that is compatible with the thought-world of Ruth (§4.3.3). It takes the fearsome Assyrians who had devastated the kingdoms of Israel and Judah—an enemy of the Jews if there ever was one—and makes them receive pity, compassion, and forgiveness in the eyes of Yhwh. The foreigner is not to be despised but treated sympathetically; it may be that they will eventually come to worship the God of the Jews. As long as they are willing to heed Yhwh, they can take their place alongside the Jews as recipients of divine blessings. Again, this is not a conclusion likely to endear itself to the followers of Nehemiah. Trito-Isaiah has a very similar message. Isaiah 56.3, 6-8 is quite radical in comparison with other texts of the time. It says essentially that foreigners can have an equal share

in the temple and the altar, if they keep the sabbath and other aspects of Yhwh's covenant. Foreigners could not only join the community but could even share in its worship in the temple. What could be further from the sentiments of Ezra–Nehemiah?

### 13.5. *The Issue of Marriage with 'Foreign Wives'*

**Grabbe** (1998c) 'Triumph of the Pious or Failure of the Xenophobes?'; **Gunneweg** (1985) *Ezra; Janzen* (2002) *Witch-Hunts, Purity and Social Boundaries*; **Rudolph** (1949) *Ezra und Nehemia*.

The issue of marriage to 'foreign wives' or 'foreign women' is a major theme in Ezra–Nehemiah. This shows a considerable concern on the part of the compilers of the writing and also on the part of some Jews. Whether it was a major issue for many citizens of Yehud is another question; if the 'problem' was as widespread as some passages indicate, this suggests that many Jews saw nothing objectionable with it.

We begin with the NM since there is evidence that Nehemiah himself did take some actual measures against intermarriage. At 13.23–31 marriage with the Ammonites, Ashdodites, and Moabites is condemned, with Nehemiah taking even violent physical action. One of the most drastic steps taken by Nehemiah, however, was to expel the grandson of the high priest from the community for marrying the daughter of Sanballat (Neh. 13.28). No details are given, but this could well have caused a stir in the community. Nehemiah 13.1–3 refers to the Pentateuchal decree against Ammonites and Moabites entering into the congregation of Israel (cf. Deut. 23.4–7) and states that 'the people' removed the 'mixture' from their midst. Nehemiah is not mentioned, and this is not usually considered part of the NM.

Nehemiah's name occurs in a list of signatories relating to intermarriage with the 'people of the land' in Nehemiah 9–10, though he does not take an active role. This section describes a situation similar to Ezra 9–10 in which the issue of intermarriage with 'foreigners' is addressed. Particularly interesting is the reference in both prayers to Jews of Judah as being more or less slaves of the Persians (Ezra 9.9; Neh. 9.36–37). Nehemiah 10 could be a genuine document preserved in the archives. The fact that Nehemiah has no active part suggests that Nehemiah 9 was compiled by someone who was not necessarily a great admirer of Nehemiah and certainly not by Nehemiah himself. The signatories and people swear to observe 'the Torah of God given by the hand of Moses' and also 'all the commandments of the Yhwh' and his statutes and judgments (10.30). The passage preceding the list of commandments mentions separating from 'the peoples of the lands' (10.29), and the list of commandments sworn to begins with keeping pure from the 'peoples of the land'. Yet the following stipulations cover a wide variety of points of conduct and worship. Most of what is said relates to the temple and its upkeep. The fact that this sworn document is presented in the context of ceasing to have intercourse with 'foreigners'—but only partially relates to this context—suggests that it was an independent writing taken over and used in a new literary environment. If we had to

find a context for Nehemiah 10, we would probably see it as being primarily about support for the temple. This indicates that the compiler was most interested in the question of intermarriage and edited the document to emphasize this.

We should next consider the Ezra story of an episode relating to marriage with 'foreign wives' (Ezra 9–10). Officials (of Jerusalem? of the province?) approach Ezra to tell him of the problem that some have intermarried with the 'peoples of the land' (Ezra 9.1–2). What does Ezra do? He has been given the power and authority to teach and enforce the law over the entire satrapy, and to appoint judges to fulfil this task. Yet when confronted with an actual situation, there is only stupification instead of decisive action. Ezra tears his garments and hair and sits on the ground in the square (Nehemiah, on the contrary, tears the hair of his opponents [Neh. 13.25]). After sitting in the dust until evening, he then prays (9.3–15). Perhaps mourning and prayer might be what we expect of a pious priest, but we should also expect action. Action does come about in Ezra 10, but who initiates it? Surprisingly, not Ezra. A great crowd of people gather round him, weeping. It is one of these, Shecaniah b. Jehiel, who recommends a course of action to be followed, primarily the swearing of an oath. Finally, Ezra does something decisive: he accepts this advice and acts on it. Then he goes off to fast. In the meantime, 'they' (not Ezra, interestingly, but perhaps some of the officers [10.7]) send out a decree for all to assemble in Jerusalem. The rest of the chapter describes the measures taken, in which Ezra seems finally to play a full part.

One begins to suspect that we have a literary account in this section of Ezra when the parallels between it and a section of Nehemiah are recognized. The resemblance between Ezra 9–10 and Nehemiah 9–10 seems more than coincidental. The situation of intermarriage is the same. The people gather and repent. A prayer occurs in each passage. The situation is resolved by a separation from the 'foreigners'. In both passages a list records those who agreed to abide by the ruling. Before asking about the precise relationship between the two passages, we should also note the differences. No leader is mentioned in Nehemiah 10. The list is different in each case, the one in Neh. 10.1–30 being those who signed a contract to abide by the pledge (in a sense signing on behalf of all the people) whereas that in Ezra 10.20–43 is a list of those who had 'sinned' by their marriages. Finally, much of Nehemiah 10 is taken up with a list of other points of the law which the people pledge to keep.

It seems strange that the episode of mixed marriages would have recurred so similarly on two separate occasions, yet the differences between them suggest that they were not seen as just two versions of the same event. For this reason, one cannot help being suspicious that the relationship between the two account is that one has been invented but using the other as a model. Determining which might be the prior account is not easy. Considering the general state of the Ezra tradition, it is tempting to consider Ezra 9–10 as dependent on Nehemiah 9–10. Finding formal criteria on which to make such a judgment is difficult, however. Perhaps the one point which might argue in favour of this conclusion is that Nehemiah 10 looks like a community document which may have had a genuine existence and was derived from the archives. In other words, Nehemiah 10 presents itself as a document with

a series of points of agreement and then a list of those who signed on behalf of the entire community. If this was indeed such a document, the entire episode of Nehemiah 9–10 could have been constructed from the data of this document alone and no other information. That is, the contents of Nehemiah 9 were created by the author to give a context for the document which he had before him (and copied out as Neh. 10).

If so, Ezra 9–10 was probably a further development, being a creation on the basis of Nehemiah 9–10. Much of this is speculation because it is difficult to demonstrate that Nehemiah 10 was a genuine document. It could have been, but there seems no way to prove that it was not simply the creation of the literary writer. The same applies to the list in Ezra 10.18–44, which is a list of those who separated from their wives. The question is: Where did this list come from? Was it an actual list that the compiler of Ezra took over or was it perhaps simply created to fit the context? The first point to consider is that, as many commentators have noted, the list of approximately 112 individuals (some commentators emend the text slightly to give a different number of names) is quite short for all the palaver in the text. Why would it have taken several months (10.16–17) to sort out the situation with so few people? The response has been several theories about how the list was incomplete, such as that it was only of the upper classes (Rudolph 1949: 97–99). A more significant observation, though, is that the list seems to be dependent on that in Ezra 2//Nehemiah 7 (Gunneweg 1985: 185). This adds support to the idea that Ezra 9–10 is a literary creation, using Nehemiah 9–10 as a model but drawing on a variety of texts for data. Of course, one can always postulate that the list in Ezra 10.18–44 was an actual list that the compiler of Ezra took over. If so, it might be that the list was even the basis for creating this literary episode for which the writer had no other sources. Either way, what this passage does do (even if it is only a literary creation) is illustrate the attitude of the compiler. All these episodes, whether historical ones (in the NM) or possibly literary ones, address what the writer sees as a significant problem for the community. Nehemiah evidently agreed with the attitude.

Closely relating to this is the theology of the land attested in literature no later than the Persian period and possibly earlier (§11.3.3). The pattern of sin–punishment–exile–repentance–return is a major element of this land theology. Judah had been punished for her sins by being removed from the land, but the punishment was now complete, and Yhwh had intervened to cause her to return (Isa. 40.1–11). Therefore, possession of the land is used as the rationale for taking such drastic measures against ‘foreigners’. Although many of the passages focus on intermarriage and ‘foreign wives’, many other passages show that it was all part of a larger polemic against foreigners: those who want to build the temple with the Jews and then try to get the enterprise stopped (Ezra 4), those who oppose Nehemiah and his wall building (even though some of them were actually Jews [§13.3.3]), and the traders who cause problems about observing the sabbath.

Nehemiah seems to have had a programme of isolating Jerusalem and Yehud as much as possible (§13.3.7), but he was not the only one. The literature embodying this view suggests that there were others (cf. Grabbe 1998c). If the members of the

community mix with the ‘peoples of the land’, they will forsake the law. If they intermarry with outsiders, they will lose the land again. For some Jews, draconian measures were the only way to keep pure the ‘remnant’ that God had restored to the land and, therefore, to remain in possession of the land given by God. This is the message of these various literary episodes in Ezra–Nehemiah, whether or not they can all be related to individual historical events.

A recent study has argued for a larger social context of these episodes about intermarriage (Janzen 2002). D. Janzen’s novel thesis (based in part on social anthropology) is that the expulsion was a type of ‘witch hunt’, that is, the act of a social group to blame a sub-group for social dissension for which the sub-group is not responsible. This is most likely to happen in situations in which there are strong external social boundaries but weak internal boundaries. Janzen argues that the Jewish community in Persian Yehud set boundaries against outsiders but felt threatened because of increased trade and the presence of Persian administrative officials. The community of Yehud suffered anxiety about social integration because of these ‘foreign’ influences. The witch hunt thus functioned as a ritualized act of purification for the community, since there was no obvious target for blame or resolution.

This explanation is not contradictory to the points made above and can easily be made to supplement them. Unfortunately, part of Janzen’s thesis depends on assumptions that have been called into question or rejected in my study. His thesis requires the Ezra account to be historical, not just generally but also in its details. He asserts that this is the case, despite himself considering the decree of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7.12–26) inauthentic and without responding to the problems pointed out in some of my publications that he cites. Janzen must also assume that the Ezra account represents the view of all the community but, as noted above, the details in the Nehemiah account suggest that the community was at least split and perhaps even that the ‘anti-foreigner’ view was a minority one. Thus, the anxiety that Janzen postulates for the people of Yehud as a whole is not convincing in my view; however, it was an anxiety shared by Nehemiah and some others. It seems likely that Nehemiah intervened about marriage with outsiders, and we can postulate that there were other examples. Perhaps in this narrower sense the poor wives (who, with their children, seem to have borne the brunt of these purges) were the victims of a witch-hunt.

### **13.6. Diaspora Jewish Communities**

- Ayad** (1997) ‘From the Archive of Ananiah Son of Azariah’; **Cardascia** (1951) *Les archives des Murašû*; **Coogan** (1976) *West Semitic Personal Names*; **van Driel** (1989) ‘The Murašû in Context’; **Grabbe (ed.)** (1998) *Leading Captivity Captive*; **Joannès and Lemaire** (1999) ‘Trois tablettes cunéiforme’; **Oded** (1979) *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*; (1995) ‘Observations on the Israelite/Judaean Exiles in Mesopotamia’; **Pearce** (forthcoming) ‘Judeans in Babylonia’; **Porten** (1968) *Archives from Elephantine*; (1984) ‘The Jews in Egypt’; **Stolper** (1985) *Entrepeneurs and Empire*; (1992) ‘Murashû, Archive of’.

Much of what we know about the Jews of the Persian period relates to the province of Yehud. Yet we can consider ourselves fortunate in having a window also into some of the Jewish communities in what became known as the ‘Diaspora’. By the Persian period, there were a number of displaced communities of Palestinian groups in the ancient Near East, most of them due to forcible deportation rather than voluntary relocation (Oded 1979; 1995; cf. the essays in Grabbe [ed.] 1998). The resettlement of peoples from and to the area of Samaria took place about 722 BCE and subsequently, though these were Israelites and not Jews. We do not know a lot about most of them. The books of Jeremiah (especially ch. 29) and especially Ezekiel claim to describe the situation in some of the communities of Judaean exiles. The book of Tobit, though claiming to be about an exile from Northern Israel but probably written in the Persian period or later about Judaeans, fits in well with the conditions of the exiled communities under the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians. The situation under the Assyrians as described by Oded (1979: 75–115) does not seem to have been particularly different under the Babylonians and Persians.

### **13.6.1. Jews in Babylonia**

Three tablets from the early Persian period giving some information on Jews in Babylonia were recently published (Joannès and Lemaire 1999). One has twelve Hebrew names and claims to have been written in the ‘city of Judah’ (*uru ia-a-hu-du*) about 498 BCE. This does not appear to be Jerusalem but a place in Babylonia, though several sites in Mesopotamia are known to have been named after the origins of the exiles who lived there. We now apparently have about ninety further texts in a private collection (publication expected in the near future) that relate to exiled Jews in the sixth century (Pearce forthcoming). The tablets range in date from Nebuchadnezzar (year 33 = c. 572 BCE) to Xerxes (year 13 = c. 473 BCE). They also contain references to the ‘city of Judah’ or ‘city of the Jews’. Some sixty names contain a form of Yhwh. The Jewish settlers were apparently engaged in agricultural activities.

One other source seems to mention some Jews specifically. This is the Murašu archive from Nippur, with tablets ranging from c. 454–404 BCE (Cardascia 1951; Coogan 1976; Stolper 1985; 1992; van Driel 1989). The Murašu house was a business and financial establishment that made loans and managed estates for absentee landlords (through a complicated system of leases and contracts). It employed a number of servants and agents, some of whom seem to have been Jewish, though this is based on the form of the names rather than direct identification. Several of the names have a form of Yhwh, however, which is a good indication that they are Jews (Coogan 1976: 119). Genealogical relations indicate, though, that Jews did not necessarily take ‘Jewish’ names, and there may be many more named individuals who were Jews than it is possible to recognize now (as is also indicated in Ezra–Nehemiah by Jews with Babylonian and Iranian names, including theophoric names of other deities).

As far as we can tell from the few individuals with Yahwistic names, Jews seem to have been well-integrated into society. They do not appear to have lived in a

'Jewish quarter' but in various villages in the Nippur area. As far as occupations are concerned, they were small holders and lower-rank officials. Nothing in fact clearly distinguishes them from other members of the Babylonian society in which they seem to have functioned comfortably. This is no doubt why few felt the need to return to the homeland of their ancestors.

### **13.6.2. *The Elephantine Jewish Community***

The Elephantine papyri allow us to get much closer to the daily lives of the community than is the case for most Jewish communities in the Second Temple period, sometimes even closer than in Yehud. Only a brief sketch can be given here, to supplement the history of Yehud. As it happens, the years of most knowledge about the Elephantine community come toward the end of the fifth century BCE, which is why this précis is included in this chapter.

A number of the documents fall into the category of 'archive' of a particular family or individual: Jedaniah, Mibtahiah, Anani. Especially important is the 'communal archive' of Jedaniah who was an important figure in the community. This archive contains a number of documents important for the temple of Yhw, including letters about Passover observance, the destruction of the temple and requests for rebuilding. Indeed, much of what we know about the community as a whole relates to the temple of Yhw. Quite a few documents mention it in passing, including those which happen to touch on property boundaries. We are fortunate in having several writings that discuss ownership of real estate property (e.g. *TAD* B2.1-4, B2.7, B2.10; B3.4-5, B3.7, B3.10-12 = *AP* 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 25; *BM* 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12), from which the actual location of different domiciles in Elephantine can be reconstructed, even if with some uncertainty (see the maps in *TAD*, II: 175-82; Ayad 1997).

We can only guess at the origins of the colony. It may have been founded there as early as the pre-exilic period. According to one letter, the colony was flourishing with its own temple when Cambyses conquered Egypt about 525 BCE (*TAD* A4.7.13-14//A4.8.12-13 = *AP* 30.13-14//31.12-13). The most exciting—and distressing—event came about 410 BCE when the temple was apparently destroyed by the priests carrying out the cult of the ram goat Khnum who had a temple nearby (*TAD* A4.7.4-13//A4.8.3-12 = *AP* 30.4-13//31.3-12). Over a period of several years (410 until after 407 BCE) requests were made to have it rebuilt. At first it was asked to restore it to its previous situation with the cult fully functioning (*TAD* A4.7.25-26//A4.8.24-25 = *AP* 30.25-26//31.24-25); however, eventually the request was scaled down from offering blood sacrifices as before to the offering of only cereal and incense offerings (*TAD* A10 = *AP* 33), and this was approved (*TAD* A9 = *AP* 32). One cannot help wondering whether the cause—or one of the causes—of the destruction was an objection by the Khnum priests to the sacrifice of lambs at the Yhw temple. The Passover Papyrus may have been the response to a request from the Elephantine Jewish community for permission to carry on the traditional celebrations in the face of opposition, though we cannot be certain because of a missing part of the papyrus (§10.1.1).

We do not know for certain whether the temple was rebuilt. A sale of property dated to 402 BCE (*TAD* B3.12.18-19 = *BM* 12.18-19) mentions the temple of Yhw

as forming part of the boundary. There is also a list of payments or gifts of money on behalf of the Jewish garrison to 'Yhw the god' (though some other divine names are mentioned [§11.3.1]), dated to 400 BCE (*TAD C3.15 = AP 22*). These data could certainly be interpreted as indicating that the temple was rebuilt and back in operation, but this is not the only possibility (e.g. the lot where the temple had once stood—even if still vacant—could be written into property deeds, and silver could be given to Yhw in anticipation of reviving the cult). The documentation ceases in 399 BCE, and the ultimate fate of the community is unknown.

### 13.7. *The Episode of Johanan and Jeshua in the Temple*

**Barag** (1985) 'Some Notes on a Silver Coin'; (1986–87) 'A Silver Coin of Yohanan the High Priest'; **Cross** (1998b) 'A Reconstruction of the Judaean Restoration'; **Fried** (2003) 'A Silver Coin'; **Grabbe** (1987a) 'Josephus and the Reconstruction of the Judaean Restoration'; (1992) 'Who Was the Bagoses of Josephus?'; **VanderKam** (1991) 'Jewish High Priests of the Persian Period'; **Williamson** (1977b) 'The Historical Value of Josephus'.

A most curious event occurs in Josephus's version of the Persian period, which has no parallel elsewhere in the surviving sources (*Ant.* 11.7.1 §§297–301, translation from the LCL):

On the death of the high priest Eliasib his son Jōdas succeeded him in the high priesthood. And, when he also died, Jōannēs, who was his son, assumed this office; it was through him that Bagōsēs, the general [*ho stratēgos*] of the second Artaxerxes, defiled the sanctuary and imposed tribute on the Jews, so that before offering the daily sacrifices they had to pay from the public treasury fifty drachmae for every lamb. The reason for this was the following happening. Jōannēs had a brother named Jēsūs, and Bagōsēs, whose friend he was, promised to obtain the high priesthood for him. With this assurance, therefore, Jēsūs quarrelled with Jōannēs in the temple and provoked his brother so far that in his anger he killed him. That Jōannēs should have committed so impious a deed against his brother while serving as priest was terrible enough, but the more terrible in that neither among Greeks nor barbarians had so savage and impious a deed ever been committed. The Deity, however, was not indifferent to it, and it was for this reason that the people were made slaves and the temple was defiled by the Persians. Now, when Bagōsēs, the general of Artaxerxes, learned that Jōannēs, the high priest of the Jews, had murdered his own brother Jēsūs in the temple, he at once set upon the Jews and in anger began to say, 'You have dared to commit murder in your own temple'. But, when he attempted to enter the temple, they sought to prevent him, whereupon he said to them, 'Am I, then, not purer than he who was slain in the temple?' and, having spoken these words, he went in to the temple. This, then, being the pretext which he used, Bagōsēs made the Jews suffer seven years for the death of Jēsūs.

Josephus's knowledge of the Persian period is normally extremely limited, generally only what he gleaned from the use of biblical material (Grabbe 1987a). There are some exceptions to this general observation, though, and here and there he seems to have some additional data, such as here. There is reason to think he is at

least drawing on an actual source independent of the biblical text (Williamson 1977b). Although we are not in position to say what the source was nor to check it independently, the story has nothing in it to cause immediate rejection: for one thing the story of a murder in the temple is not likely to be simply a Jewish invention. (The fifty-drachma fine for each lamb sounds high, though.)

In recent decades a number of influential scholars have connected this Bagoses with the minister of Artaxerxes III (Cross 1998a: 153–54; Williamson 1977b: 56–60; Barag 1985; 1986–87). Diodorus Siculus mentions a Persian official named Bagoas under Artaxerxes III (359–338 BCE) who was apparently even a king-maker at one point (17.5.3–6). This individual also functioned as a high-ranking officer in Artaxerxes's invasion of Egypt in 345/343 BCE (Diodorus Siculus 16.47–50). If he was to be identified with Josephus's Bagoses, this would mean that the high priest Johanan was not the same individual as mentioned in the Elephantine papyri, but a later figure not otherwise attested in the extant sources. The episode described would also be dated about the middle of the fourth century BCE. A further consequence of this interpretation is to allege that it helps to demonstrate Cross's reconstruction of a list of high priests for the Persian period (a reconstruction critiqued above [§7.3.1; §10.3.2]).

Nevertheless, I believe this interpretation is less likely than an older one. The following points summarize two lengthy studies done independently of each other (VanderKam 1991: 81–87; Grabbe 1992):

- Two of the Elephantine papyri from the year 407 BCE (*TAD* A4.7//A4.8 = *AP* 30//31) speak of the high priest Jehohanan. The same papyri show that the Persian governor of Judah at the time was called Bagohi (בָּגָוִהֵי). Thus, in actual documents two names parallel to names in the Josephus episode are found; this is not hypothetical, contrary to the thesis above.
- An important consideration is the ‘Johanan’ coin (§3.4.1). According to Barag’s judgment, the style of the coin shows that it should be dated in the last part of the Achaemenid period, after 350 BCE (Barag 1985: 168; 1986–87: 7–10; Fried [2003] dates it to 378–368 BCE and identifies the person as the high priest Jehohanan mentioned in the Elephantine papyri). However, there is the further consideration that the coin may not have anything to do with the high priest Johanan of Josephus (or that of the Elephantine papyri). As noted above (§10.3.2), it is not clear that ‘Johanan the priest’ on the coin is in fact the high priest. No coins are known by any individual not high in the Persian administration; therefore, this Johanan is likely to have been a governor or at least a high official of Judah. Whether ‘the priest’ was meant to designate him as simply from a priestly family or whether he also held the office of high priest is not clear. This new reading of the coin does not tip the argument one way or the other.
- It is claimed that while Josephus refers to his Bagoses as ‘general’ (*stratēgos*), the Bagohi of the Elephantine papyri would be called ‘governor’ or the like (Williamson 1997: 58; 58; Barag 1986–87: 14). This an

invalid argument. First, the Bagoas of Diodorus is never referred to by the term *stratēgos*. He was in fact the Persian *hazarapatiš* ('commander over the thousand'; Greek *chiliarchos*), the chief friend of the king whose power was second only to that of the king himself (Diodorus 16.47.3; 17.5.3). He was in charge of the king's personal bodyguard, the chief over the 'Immortals', and the person who personally admitted visitors to the king's presence. On the other hand, the term *stratēgos* was not limited to military leaders—'generals'—in Hellenistic Greek usage; on the contrary, it could be used for civil officials alone and for those who combined both military and civic/financial office. Josephus often uses the term to refer to an office in the city or regional government. He himself frequently uses the term for civil as well as military leaders, a prime example being the biblical Joseph, who was hardly a great general (*Ant.* 2.6.8 §§140, 155). In a number of places Josephus uses the term in reference to city officials, though it should be noted that these are in alleged documents about the Jews (e.g. *Ant.* 14.10.14 §231).

- It has been suggested that all the governors of Judah were Jewish, and that since Josephus's Bagoses was clearly not Jewish, he could not be the 'governor of Judah' in the Elephantine papyri (Williamson 1977: 59–60; Porten 1968: 289–90; Barag 1986–87: 20). This begs a number of questions. We do not know whether the Bagohi of the Elephantine papyri was Jewish or not. Secondly, we cannot be sure that the Bagoses of Josephus was not Jewish. Granted, he does some strange things in relation to the temple, but then so did Joannes. This argument is irrelevant to the question.

It is possible that the Bagoses of Josephus is an otherwise unknown official under the Persians. This is by no means to be lightly dismissed with so little known of this section of history. The form of the name (Bagoses instead of Bagoas) would certainly argue for a different person. Nothing argues for the reign of Artaxerxes III except the single name Bagoas. The argument for the late fifth century is based on an actual Bagohi and an actual Jehohanan as attested in dated papyri. Although certainty is impossible, the most probable identification is with the figures known from the Elephantine papyri and dated to the late fifth century BCE. If Josephus's story is credible, it helps to fill in the long gap in our knowledge of events in Yehud after the governorship of Nehemiah.

## Chapter 14

### THE FOURTH CENTURY BCE

The fourth century is notorious for its lack of historical narratives relating to Palestine. This has led to its being characterized as a blank or ‘dark age’ in the history of Yehud. Yet, paradoxically, the fourth century is perhaps the richest part of the Persian period in material remains. Although we lack information on individual events and would be delighted if a useful narrative source were to be discovered, we can still fill in some of our gaps about the society and general history from archaeological finds.

A number of important developments that likely occurred in the Persian period cannot be precisely dated, but they are to be placed late in the Persian period with greater probability than earlier. In some cases, these are developments for which we do not have direct information; however, they are more than speculation because they can be inferred by a process of ‘triangulation’ (§1.4). The arguments are presented here, and readers can judge for themselves as to the plausibility of the development described.

#### 14.1. *Persian Rulers*

##### 14.1.1. *Artaxerxes II Memnon (404–359 BCE)*

D.M. Lewis (1977) *Sparta and Persia*; van der Spek (1998) ‘The Chronology of the Wars of Artaxerxes II’; Weiskopf (1989) *The So-Called ‘Great Satraps’ Revolt*.

Although a number of Greek writers wrote during the reign of Artaxerxes II (Xenophon, Ctesias, Ephorus), we have surprising little information about his reign as a whole—illustrating once again the Hellenocentric bias of the Greek accounts. Even Plutarch’s *Artaxerxes* devotes much attention to Artaxerxes’s mother Parysatis and relatively little to more important aspects of the king’s reign. We have some recent information from Babylonian sources such as the astronomical diaries (Spek 1998). Arsaces the eldest son of Darius II became Artaxerxes II. The longest reign of any of the Persian kings—45 years—began with the rebellion of his brother Cyrus the Younger the details of whose battles are recorded so vividly by Xenophon in the *Anabasis*. Cyrus was defeated and killed in 401. However, when Tissaphernes came to take over Cyrus’s old satrapy the next year, the Ionian cities refused to acknowledge his rule and called on Sparta for aid. The result was a long-standing conflict with the Spartans led by their king Agesilaus and further compli-

cated by attempts of the Athenians to revive their empire. This finally culminated in one of Artaxerxes's major achievements, the King's Peace of 386 with the Greek states. It was a Persian (and Spartan) victory since Persian control of most of the Ionian Greek cities was specifically acknowledged by this treaty.

Egypt had already revolted in 405 in the last days of Darius II, and the rebellion of Cyrus the Younger prevented a concentrated attempt by the Persians to retake it. Egypt managed to stay independent by enlisting Greek aid at various times. The King's Peace temporarily cut off help from Athens, but Nekhtenebef (Greek Nectanebo I [380–363 BCE]), first king of the new Thirtieth Dynasty, was an able ruler. In 373 Pharnabazus led an abortive expedition against Egypt. His successor Datames prepared for another invasion but was forced to postpone it because of a rebellion nearer home in Cataonia. Parallel to these problems Persian control of Cyprus was threatened by Evagoras, king of Salamis, during the first part of the fourth century. He was brought to heel, however, about 381 on terms that were basically a return to the *status quo ante*.

We now come to the so-called 'Revolt of the Satraps'. The situation is much more complicated than is often realized (HPE: 656–75). In recent years, the long statement in Diodorus (15.90) that implied a major threat to the whole empire by a widespread revolt has become increasingly doubted. For a further discussion of this event, see below (§14.5). These various revolts were seen as significant by many ancient Greek writers, followed by many modern scholars. The Persian court had become decadent, riven by harem intrigues, and weakened by too much luxury, or so goes the Greek chorus. Artaxerxes was seen as a beleaguered monarch with weak control over his empire, threatened not just by a handful of uncoordinated revolts but—it has been suggested—by a more concerted effort to remove the Persian yoke. While Artaxerxes's difficulties at times should not be under-estimated, care should be taken to distinguish local revolts from more serious problems such as Evagoras and Egypt—as well as to differentiate the Greek literary *topoi* from the military reality (HPE: 649–51, 674–75). Although Artaxerxes did not fulfil his plans to retake Egypt, he successfully managed the other revolts and setbacks, maintaining his empire intact over his long reign and passing it on in an orderly succession to his son Ochus.

#### 14.1.2. Artaxerxes III Ochus (359–338 BCE)

Ochus, a satrap and commander of his father's armies in the last years of his rule, became Artaxerxes III. At the beginning of his reign, Artabazus satrap of Phrygia seems to have rebelled but was forced to flee to Philip II of Macedon. Artaxerxes's real concern, however, was Egypt. This campaign was not easy and took close to ten years. The first invasion in 351 ended in defeat for the Persians. Then, Phoenicia (allegedly, though Sidon seems to have been the only city involved) revolted about 349 in what is sometimes referred to as the Tennes Rebellion (for further information on this, see §14.5). This revolt was put down no later than 345, and the way was open for the invasion of Egypt that Tennes's actions had interrupted. Egypt finally capitulated in 342, though Nectanebo escaped and fled to Upper Egypt. Artaxerxes himself led the final Egyptian campaign, but an important commander

was a eunuch by the name of Bagoas (on the question of whether he was involved in Jewish history, see §13.7). Bagoas is said to have poisoned the king. With Artaxerxes's death Egypt once again revolted from Persian rule. It was during Artaxerxes's reign that Philip II of Macedon united Greece under his control.

#### **14.1.3. Arses (338–336 BCE)**

The story is that Bagoas could not himself be king because he was not an Achaemenid, but he thought Arses, a son of Artaxerxes III, would do his bidding (Diodorus 17.5.3–6). Arses may have taken the throne name of Artaxerxes IV. When Arses proved difficult and even tried to take Bagoas's control away from him, the story is that Bagoas killed him.

#### **14.1.4. Darius III Codommanus (336–331 BCE)**

**A.K. Grayson** (1975b) *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts*.

We have more than one version of how Darius came to power. The Achaemenid chosen by Bagoas was a grandson of the brother of Artaxerxes III. He was already in his mid-40s and had distinguished himself in a campaign against the Cadousii. Bagoas allegedly realized this was a man he could not control but was himself poisoned before he had a chance to dispose of the new king. The Babylonian version of this is found in the *Dynastic Prophecy* (3.4–8 [A.K. Grayson 1975b: 35], though like all the protagonists in this writing, Darius and Bagoas are not mentioned by name). Diodorus actually gives us two views of Darius's kingship, one from a Macedonian perspective (arguing that Darius's rule was illegitimate) and one from a Persian—both examples of national propaganda (17.5.3–6.3). As Darius began his reign, Philip of Macedon had actually begun the preliminary phases of his invasion of Persia, but Philip's assassination cut them short. It was left to Philip's son Alexander to defeat Darius III and end the Achaemenid empire. This conquest will be discussed in detail in volume 2 of this History.

### **14.2. The Ezra Tradition**

**Becking** (1998) ‘Ezra’s Re-Enactment of the Exile’; **Bivar** (1997) ‘Coins’; **Blenkinsopp** (1990a) ‘A Jewish Sect of the Persian Period’; **Fried** (2001) “‘You Shall Appoint Judges’”; **Grabbe** (1991a) ‘Reconstructing History from the Book of Ezra’; (1994) ‘What Was Ezra’s Mission?’; (1998a) *Ezra and Nehemiah*; (1998c) ‘Triumph of the Pious or Failure of the Xenophobes?’; (2001d) ‘The Law of Moses in the Ezra Tradition’; **Janzen** (2000) ‘The “Mission of Ezra”’; **K. Koch** (1974) ‘Ezra and the Origins of Judaism’; **D.M. Lewis** (1977) *Sparta and Persia*; **Margalith** (1986) ‘The Political Role of Ezra’; **Powell** (1992) ‘Weights and Measures’; **Steiner** (2001) ‘The *mbqr* at Qumran’.

#### **14.2.1. Sources and Reliability**

Our knowledge of Ezra comes entirely from the Ezra tradition. This means Ezra 7–10 and Nehemiah 8 in the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah (and the parallel sections in the Greek translation of Esdras β). There is also the Greek 1 Esdras (or Esdras α)

which has none of the Nehemiah material and in my opinion is not dependent on the extant Ezra–Nehemiah but represents an earlier version of the Ezra tradition (§4.1.4). Ezra then disappears from Jewish literature until the book of *4 Ezra* (or 2 Esdras) about 100 CE. Thus, for any knowledge or understanding of Ezra we have nothing to go on other than our critical analysis of this Ezra tradition.

The paucity of sources does not by itself mean that we do not have substantial historical information. As already discussed in detail (§13.3.1), the single source on Nehemiah in the NM seems to have a good deal of usable information. With the Ezra tradition, however, a close reading of the text reveals many contradictions, incongruities, anachronisms, and absurdities. Therefore, the first task is to give a close reading of the text to demonstrate what might seem to be *prima facie* a radical statement about its inauthenticity. As will become clear, the nature of the Ezra tradition is such that any attempt to date ‘Ezra’s mission’ makes no sense. Those who want a survey of the debate over the dating of Ezra should consult *JCH* (88–93) for a discussion and bibliography, but the historicity of the tradition is too uncertain to think of trying to set dates for the alleged events in it.

#### 14.2.2. A Close Reading of Ezra 7–10

The story of Ezra seems straightforward enough at first glance. He is introduced by his genealogy, tracing his ancestry back to Aaron the priest (Ezra 7.1–5). He is also identified as a scribe and one devoted to study of the law (7.6, 10). He received a document from king Artaxerxes permitting him to return, bring with him various people and gold and silver for the temple, and teach the law (7.12–26). When he arrives, he finds a problem in that certain people have intermarried with ‘foreigners’. He sets about resolving this problem, which is how Ezra 7–10 ends, though an additional section on the reading of the law (Neh. 8) should be included here. Once one goes beyond the surface, though, problems immediately manifest themselves.

The first problem is the letter of Artaxerxes. As discussed above (§4.1.3.2), the ‘Artaxerxes rescript’ of Ezra 7 (along with the other ‘documents’ in Ezra 4–6) are not straightforward Persian documents. In some cases they may be complete inventions, whereas in others they look to have genuine documents at their core but have been heavily edited at a much later time. Ezra 7 has some features that suggest a genuine Persian document, but other aspects of it are problematic in language and background, suggesting an original document that has been extensively reworked by much later tradents. The first statement is that anyone of the ‘people of Israel and its priests and Levites’ who wants to go to Jerusalem has permission to go with Ezra (7.13); a couple of verses later ‘the God of Israel whose dwelling is in Jerusalem’ is mentioned (7.15). Yet foreigners never refer to Judah or its people as ‘Israel’ (§8.1); these are phrases that would be used by a Jew writing with a theological purpose, not by a scribe (whatever his ethnic affinity) drawing up a document in the Persian chancellery. The king and ‘his seven counsellors’ also allow Ezra to regulate (**לְבָקָרָא עַל** *l<sup>e</sup>baqqārā*) ‘al, though the translation ‘act as overseer over’ might be better [Steiner 2001]) Judah and Jerusalem by the ‘law (**דָת** *dāt*) of your God in your hand’ (7.14). These ‘seven counsellors’ appear in no other document relating to the king in the Persian period. That the king had counsellors is

par for the course; that he would have shared his authority by issuing decrees or orders in their names as well as his is unthinkable (cf. HPE 128-30; D.M. Lewis 1977: 22-23).

Next, Ezra is given permission to convey the silver and gold which the king and his counsellors have generously offered to the ‘God of Israel [*sic*] whose dwelling is in Jerusalem’ (7.15). Even the king and his counsellors tacitly place themselves under the sovereignty of Yhwh. Furthermore, ‘all the silver and gold found in all the satrapy of Babylon’ is to be given over to the house of their God in Jerusalem; this is in addition to all the gold and silver freely donated by the people and priests (7.16). This money is to be used for purchasing animals, grain, and drink to be offered on the Jerusalem altar (7.17). Whatever money is left over can be used for whatever the priests want, according to God’s will (7.18). Any other needs, such as temple vessels, are to be paid for from the royal treasury, up to 100 talents of silver (7.19-22). This generosity needs to be scrutinized. The king and his counsellors give donations, the people and priests given donations, Ezra is allowed to take all the silver and gold found in the satrapy of Babylon (nothing is said about the satrapy of Ebir-nari). As if that is not enough, he can take up to another 100 talents of silver from the treasury. God has indeed given Ezra favour in the eyes of the king, if all this should be true. But there is more to come: it was forbidden to tax the priests, Levites, temple singers, and other temple servants (7.24). No wonder that Ezra offers such profuse praise to God at the end of the chapter (7.27-28)! This is all ostensibly done so that sacrifices could be offered on behalf of the king and his sons, but it hardly takes such vast wealth and a relief of taxes to see that sacrifices were offered for the king daily on the Jerusalem altar. A simple gift of an animal or two per day would have sufficed. It is one thing to supply gifts to the temple; it is quite another to provide such lavish riches for what was, after all, only a very local cult site. This is not the decree of a Persian king but the wishful thinking of a Jewish apologist.

After riches comes political power: Ezra is told that he is ‘to appoint officials and judges to be judging all the people in the region of Ebir-nari, both those who know the law and those who do not’, according to the wisdom of the law in his hand (7.25-26). He is to teach those who do not know the law. It is often suggested that this ‘obviously’ refers only to Jews, but such interpretations prefer to apologize for the text rather than read it for what it says. There is no basis in the decree itself for the interpretation that Ezra’s authority is limited to Jews (cf. Fried 2001). The overt referent is ‘all the people’ in the satrapy west of the Euphrates, and the mention of the ‘law of your God and the law of the king’ suggests that not just Jews are being talked about. The intent of the phrase seems to be that ‘the law of your God’ is treated the same as ‘the law of the king’ (cf. Grabbe 2001d). Any who do not obey are to be punished as appropriate. Ezra has clearly been given some very sweeping powers. The extent of these powers is hinted at in Ezra 8.36 where the orders of the king are handed over to the ‘satraps and governors of the province Beyond-the-River’. The element blatantly missing in all this handing out of power is the satrap of Ebir-nari. It is unlikely that Ezra would be allowed to impose his own choice of judges and magistrates and also the laws of his god on all of Ebir-nari, much less

without reference to the powerful satrap of this region, yet the satrap is completely ignored. Although the power and office of the satrap varied from place to place, time to time, and even individual to individual, they were usually members of the royal family with a great deal of independence and power, including military command and troops. It seems unthinkable that Ezra would be allowed to interfere in the legal and judicial system of the satrapy without some reference to the satrap.

The preparation for the journey to Jerusalem and the activities once Ezra arrived there are described in Ezra 8 (the journey itself, as so often in the biblical text, is passed over in silence). He collects together a group of those who wish to return, including priests. Finding that there are no Levites among them, he sends to Casiphia and manages to convince a handful of Levites and a couple of hundred temple servants to accompany him. Why he needs Levites is not discussed other than their designation as ‘ministers for the house of our God’ (8.17)—but Levites had been ministering in the temple for many decades, perhaps even a century or more, if Ezra 1–6 is to be believed. Next Ezra proclaims a fast (8.21–23). Why? Because Ezra is ‘ashamed to ask the king’ for a bodyguard of soldiers and horsemen to protect them on the journey. This might sound like a simple case of putting his faith in God rather than men. However, the narrative goes on state that the gold and silver gathered to take to Jerusalem was committed to the care of twelve priests for the journey. Here the story becomes incredible:

The gold and silver said to have been donated for the Jerusalem temple amounted to 650 talents of silver, 100 talents of gold, and various expensive vessels for the temple. A talent was usually about 3000 shekels, the preserved shekel weights being about 10 grams each (a convenient figure, though it might be a bit heavier, even up to 14 grams; cf. Powell 1992, IV: 905–906). A talent was thus approximately 30 kilograms (roughly 65 pounds); 100 talents of gold was about 3 metric tonnes of gold. In this case, the silver amounted to about 19,500 kilograms or  $19 \times \frac{1}{2}$  tonnes of silver. To this were to be added the 100 silver vessels of a talent each, 20 of gold, and 2 of an exceptionally fine quantity of bronze. Leaving out the two bronze vessels, it all adds up to more than 25 metric tonnes of silver and gold—truly a king’s ransom!

It is difficult to grasp how much wealth his small band was transporting from Babylon to Judah. According to Herodotus 3.91, the entire satrapy of Ebir-nari produced tribute of only about 350 talents of silver per year. A standard rate of gold to silver in the Persian empire seems to have been about 13 to 1 (Herodotus 3.95; Bivar 1997: 44). This would make the 120 talents of gold (including the gold vessels) equivalent in silver to 1560 talents, to make a total equivalent in silver to more than 2300 talents of silver. Considering that the entire Persian empire under Darus is said to have yielded 14560 talents of silver a year, we are expected to believe that a tiny province on the edge of the empire has had 15 per cent of the annual Persian income assigned to it. This in itself is incredible, but it raises a further serious question: Is it likely that the Persian king, having himself donated a large quantity of precious gifts, would have allowed Ezra to risk transporting this all without military protection? Far from Ezra being embarrassed to ask for a guard, the king would have insisted on it! The textual statement that the precious metal

was assigned to just twelve priests to be ‘guarded diligently’ (how?) over hundreds of miles looks almost silly (Ezra 8.24–31).

The text here is clearly not interested in reality but in piety: Ezra and his entourage put their faith in God and he protected this unimagined wealth from all enemies during the hazardous journey. This is not a description of a journey but a treatise of theology. In the more realistic NM, Nehemiah takes the armed escort without question. Nehemiah was not transporting large quantities of wealth, but the king felt it appropriate that he have a proper escort. The contrast between the two highlights how much the Ezra story is a literary ideal. Having arrived in Jerusalem Ezra faithfully gives over the gold and silver and precious vessels to the resident priests and Levites, then appropriate sacrifices are made. Finally, Ezra hands over his orders to the royal satraps and governors of the satrapy Ebir-nari. How he was able to do this is not stated. It seems to be implied that they all assembled in Jerusalem expressly to receive their orders, a very unrealistic scenario.

What emerges at this point is the remnants of another literary creation. As discussed above (§4.1.2) there is evidence of an ‘Ezra foundation legend’, along with several others. The myth in its pure form no longer exists in the book of Ezra because it has been edited together with the ‘Zerubbabel/Joshua foundation legend’, but its outlines remain in Ezra 8. Ezra brings back fellow countrymen, priests, and Levites (even though these already exist in Judah). He brings temple vessels (yet they had been taken back long before, according to Ezra 1) and wealth to support the temple cult (even though it had been functioning since the reign of Darius I). It may seem strange that no high priest is mentioned when Ezra arrives in Jerusalem, but if Ezra was the ‘founder’ of the cult, there would have been no high priest before him. The present text is a compromise: some priests and Levites are mentioned, but not the high priest we should expect. But evidence of the original foundation legend still seems to be there in Ezra’s prayer where the king’s favour has allowed him ‘to raise up the house of our God and restore its ruins and to give us a fence in Judah and Jerusalem’ (Ezra 9.9). In the original Ezra foundation legend he was most likely the one who rebuilt the temple.

The next part of Ezra’s story is an episode relating to marriage with ‘foreign wives’ (Ezra 9–10). This is discussed above (§13.5) along with other passages on the question of ‘foreign’ marriages.

One interesting point in the narrative is the reference to the ones who ‘tremble’ (חֲרָדִים *ḥaradim*) at the commandment of God (Ezra 9.4; 10.3). It has been suggested that this was Ezra’s support group, a pietistic movement who required strict observance of the law and was critical of the current priestly establishment (Blenkinsopp 1990a). Evidence for this group is also found in such passages as Isa. 65.13–16; 66.1–5; Mal. 3.13–21. Although the reliability of the picture in Ezra is very questionable, even a fictional account could still know of and represent a known social phenomenon. In this case, Ezra 10.3 is only one passage which seems to be aware of this group. If such a group existed, much more work needs to be done to ascertain its activities. At the moment, it does not seem to contribute to our evaluation of Ezra’s historicity.

So far, our analysis has unearthed a great many problems with the Ezra story. Whatever historical core there might have been has been heavily overlaid with literary and theological invention and elaboration. For a full evaluation, however, we need to consider the question of the law which is so often associated with Ezra and is the subject of Nehemiah 8 that most modern scholars see as a part of the Ezra tradition. It seems best to consider this within the context of a wider discussion of the development of law and the Torah below (§14.3).

In a recent study D. Janzen (2000) has recognized a number of the problems with Ezra 7–10 (in part dependent on some of my studies). His solution is to reject the decree of Ezra 7 as inauthentic but to give more credence to aspects of Ezra 8–10. While Janzen has recognized the extent to which the Artaxerxes decree creates problems because of differences from the rest of the narrative, one cannot accept that he has given a satisfactory solution. He overlooks what has been pointed out above, namely, that the Ezra narrative in Ezra 8–10 is as problematic and contradictory as Ezra 7. Simply removing Ezra 7 from the equation does not resolve the tensions which run through the whole narrative. The solution is not to abandon parts of the narrative but to attempt to grasp what the writer is trying to do with his story and accept the problematic nature of using the narrative for reconstructing history.

#### **14.2.3. *Conclusions about the Gestalt of Ezra the Scribe***

These conclusions take into account not only the previous section but also the discussions on the ‘mixed marriages’ (§13.5) and the law (§14.3) which include the Ezra material in their wider discussion.

The more we have looked at the traditions about Ezra in Ezra 7–10 and Nehemiah 8, the more puzzling the figure of Ezra has become (Grabbe 1994). The confidence with which his life and activities are reconstructed by many commentators is simply not borne out, either by a careful study of the tradition itself or by those areas where it can be checked against external data. The tradition itself is self-contradictory. His priestly origins are emphasized at various points in the story, and one would gain the impression that he held the office of high priest. Indeed, no other person is said to be high priest in the chapters about him. Yet he is not called high priest, and his name does not occur in the lists of high priests elsewhere (Neh. 12.10–11, 22). His concern to bring Levites and temple servants as well as priests with him in Ezra 9 suggest an attempt to restore the cult, yet there is no hint that the cult lacked ministers, whether priests, Levites, or temple servants. The cult had functioned for decades before Ezra came, and there is no indication when he arrives in Jerusalem that there is anything lacking.

The political powers conferred on Ezra are astounding. One might at least assume that he was appointed governor of Judah, and a number of scholars refer to him as governor without discussion, as if this can be taken for granted (e.g. Margalith 1986). Some of the measures he takes are parallel to those of Nehemiah (e.g. the mixed marriage issue) and might well be taken by the governor of the province. He is nowhere called governor, though this title might have been suppressed by the

editor, as it was in the case of Zerubbabel (and Sheshbazzar). However, the commission of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7 says nothing about being a provincial governor.

If the letter of Artaxerxes gives weight to any political office, it would be that Ezra is over the entire satrapy of Ebir-nari. He has the right to teach and enforce the law in the entire Transeuphrates region and to appoint judges to oversee its enforcement. Nothing is said about the satrap over this area, nor was Ezra's jurisdiction and appointment of judges confined to the Jews. One could well assume that Ezra has been appointed the satrap of the entire area west of the Euphrates. This conclusion would be absurd, in the opinion of most commentators, yet it is a legitimate conclusion to draw from the text—certainly as legitimate as assuming he was governor or high priest. The absurdity of the suggestion simply highlights the literary and theological nature of the tradition. Yet with all that religious and imperial authority behind him, he has trouble dealing with a relatively minor problem in Jerusalem. He can only pray and sit in the street; others make the decisions and give the orders; at least, the initial orders from him come as the result of someone else's decision. Ezra's actions are neither those of the high priest nor the governor; they are certainly not those of a satrap.

Most astounding of all is the amount of wealth alleged to have come under Ezra's control. Some of the points made above show contradictions within the tradition. The money given to Ezra contradicts external historical reality. The amount of gold and silver alleged to have been brought by Ezra was sufficient to pay off the national debt of some Third World countries: more than 25 tonnes of precious metal. Despite having all that wealth to use more or less as he pleases, Ezra also has the authority to draw out another hundred talents of silver (3 tonnes) plus a large quantity of foodstuffs from the imperial treasury (Ezra 7.22), just on his signature, as it were. The author of Ezra seems to have no concept of the worth of the figures he drops casually into his narrative or how large a portion of the Persian empire's wealth they represent. More surprisingly are the number of commentators who have accepted them without question.

The Ezra story simply does not make sense in its own context. For this reason, the arguments that we have an 'Ezra memoir' in parts of Ezra 7–9 seem unlikely. Either this first-person section is mainly an invention or Ezra wrote it but deceived us or it has been heavily worked over by a later editor. There are problems with each of these possibilities, but this is because there are such problems with the Ezra narrative itself. Portions of the story go quite contrary to other parts. It is as if the person of Ezra 7 is an entirely different person from that in Ezra 9–10. The letter of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7 in some of its parts could pass as a genuine Persian decree, but in other respects it looks like a piece of Jewish propaganda. This is especially true in the incredibly generous concessions made to Ezra and the Jews by the king.

The later development of the traditions confirms this impression. The Ezra and Nehemiah traditions known from later sources (cf. Grabbe 1998a: 69–92) show a diversity of perspective on Ezra and what he accomplished. The much later *4 Ezra* 14 gives activities in relation to the law, but the story here is quite different from the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah. In this case Ezra is the conduit for the law and many other books. After drinking from a divine cup, he dictates to five scribes for forty

days and forty nights (14.37–48). The end result is the twenty-four exoteric books which are obviously meant to be the Hebrew canon, but in addition there are another seventy esoteric books to be kept secret except for the wise. The emphasis here is not on Ezra as a teacher or expounder of the law but as a preserver of a law which had been lost and as the source of secret books which were available only to the few. It is doubtful that one can call Ezra a lawgiver here in the sense that Moses was, because the law that he dictates is not new but the old law restored.

Other sources do not know of Ezra as a lawgiver, however. The most important witness is Ben Sira who makes Moses the mediator of the commandments and the covenant (44.23–45.5). Nehemiah is the repairer of the walls and houses (49.13), but Ezra is not mentioned. Ben Sira either did not know the Ezra tradition or knew it but rejected it. Either way, it demonstrates that the concept of Ezra as lawgiver was not a universal view by any means. The Qumran texts emphasize Moses as the lawgiver, even if Ezra is not completely unknown, whereas the New Testament does not mention him at all. Ezra as lawgiver does not seem to be any more established as a historical datum than any other part of the Ezra tradition.

With regard to Ezra and the law, there seem to be three possibilities: (1) Ezra and his image as a lawgiver is a complete invention; (2) a composite figure was created from several different individuals who had something to do with promulgating the law; or (3) there was a historical individual (perhaps named Ezra or something similar) who had a key role in the formal establishment or promulgation of the law. Choosing between these alternatives is arbitrary, however: we simply do not have the data to do so. It is very possible that there was a historical Ezra. It is striking that a number of the lists have the name Ezra or something close to it in them (Neh. 7.7 [cf. Ezra 2.2]; 10.3; 12.1). The Artaxerxes letter could well be based on a genuine letter from the king in regard to a Jewish leader, even of Ezra himself, but the letter in its present form is a piece of later Jewish propaganda. Most of the individual episodes within the Ezra story could conceivably have a historical basis, but they could equally have been invented. To decide that one is historical and another not appears to be arbitrary in the light of present knowledge. For example, it is tempting to say that whatever the problems with the Ezra tradition, at least the story that he had something to do with the law is credible. However, as shown above this is an unjustified favouring of one tradition while ignoring a strong alternative view of the law's origin/promulgation.

### **14.3. *The Development of the Law and ‘Scripture’ in the Persian Period***

**Albertz** (2001) ‘An End to the Confusion?’; **Balentine** (1996) ‘The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period’; **Barstad** (2002a) ‘Is the Hebrew Bible a Hellenistic Book? Or: Niels Peter Lemche, Herodotus, and the Persians’; **Ben Zvi** (2003) ‘What Is New in Yehud?’; **Blenkinsopp** (1988) *Ezra–Nehemiah*; (2001a) ‘Was the Pentateuch the Civic and Religious Constitution?’; **Bolin** (1996) ‘When the End is the Beginning’; **P.R. Davies** (1998) *Scribes and Schools*; **Frei** (2001) ‘Persian Imperial Authorization’; **Frei and Koch** (1996) *Reichsidee und Reichsorganisation im Perserreich*; **Fried** (2001) “You Shall Appoint Judges”; **Grabbe** (1994)

'What Was Ezra's Mission?'; (1997b) 'Are Historians of Ancient Palestine Fellow Creatures?'; (1998b) "The Exile" under the Theodolite'; (2001a) 'Jewish Historiography and Scripture'; (2001d) 'The Law of Moses in the Ezra Tradition'; **Grabbe (ed.)** (2001) *Did Moses Speak Attic?*; **van der Kooij and van der Toorn (eds.)** (1998) *Canonization and Decanonization*; **Kratz** (1991) *Translatio imperii*; **Lemche** (1993) 'The Old Testament—A Hellenistic Book?'; **Orlinsky** (1991) 'Some Terms in the Prologue to Ben Sira'; **Rendtorff** (1984) 'Esra und das "Gesetz"'; **Steiner** (2001) 'The *mbqr* at Qumran'; **Watts (ed.)** (2001) *Persia and Torah*; **Willi** (1995) *Juda-Jehud-Israel*.

One of the most important—as well as one of the most complicated—issues arising out of the Jews in the Persian period is the question of the law. What was 'the law' for the Jews at that time? Were there already writings conceived of as 'scripture'? What was 'the law that is in Ezra's hand'? The question has been and continues to be extensively discussed (e.g. Blenkinsopp 1988: 152–57; 2001; Kratz 1991: 225–60; Willi 1995: 91–117; the essays in Watts [ed.] 2001). The sources that provide information on this process are extremely limited and not always easy to interpret. Yet the development of a 'scripture' proved very important in Judaism and, therefore, deserves to be considered quite carefully. Before evaluating the historical situation, it is important to see the literary picture given to us by the text. This involves primarily Ezra–Nehemiah, but the later book of Ben Sira is an important source for this question.

### **14.3.1. Ezra–Nehemiah**

#### **14.3.1.1. Ezra 7**

Ezra 7 and Nehemiah 8 are usually the focus of discussions about the law. With regard to Ezra 7, the chapter contains two sorts of statements, those in the Aramaic decree ascribed to Artaxerxes and those in the Hebrew narrative. Since the Aramaic decree has already been analyzed above (§14.2.2), some of the main points will only be summarized here:

- Ezra is a priest (7.12).
- Ezra is a scribe of the law (*dātā'*) of the God of heaven (7.12).
- The king gives the order that all who are willing from the people of Israel, the priests, and Levites may go up to Jerusalem (7.13).
- Ezra is commissioned to 'investigate' (or 'act as supervisor over' [Steiner 2001]) Judah and Jerusalem by the law of God that is in his hand (7.14).
- Ezra is to use the money given to him by the king and others to buy animals and other goods to offer on the altar in Jerusalem (7.15–17).
- Ezra is to deliver the vessels given for the house of God in Jerusalem (7.19).
- Any other needs of the temple are to come from the royal treasury, with the treasurers of Eber-nari supplying Ezra what he requests, up to 100 talents of silver (7.20–22).
- There is to be no tax on any priest, Levite, singer, and other servant of the temple (7.24).

- Ezra is to appoint judges and magistrates to judge all the people in the province of Eber-nari who know the laws of God and to teach them to those who do not (7.25).
- Anyone not obeying ‘the law of your God and the law of the king’ is to be put to death (7.26).

The Aramaic term *dat* is used for ‘law’ throughout, whether of ‘the God of heaven’ (7.12, 14, 21) or of the king (7.26). The ‘law of God’ is in Ezra’s hand and is to be used to regulate Judah and Jerusalem (7.14), that is, to become the local law of the province.

In contrast to Artaxerxes’s decree, which is in Aramaic, the Hebrew text into which the decree is set uses the word תֹּרֶה *tôrâ*. The term *torah* means ‘teaching’ and is thus broader than the English word ‘law’. What Ezra possesses is ‘the *torah* of Moses which Yhwh the God of Israel gave to him’ (7.6; cf. 7.10). Ezra had set himself to study this *torah*, in order both to carry it out and to teach it. Therefore, if we ask the question, What does Ezra 7 wish us to understand about the terms *dat* and *torah*? the answer is simple: Ezra was a ‘ready scribe in the *torah* of Moses which Yhwh the God of Israel gave’ (7.6); he was also ‘scribe of the *dat* of the God of heaven’ (7.12). He ‘had set his heart to study the *torah* of Yhwh and to do and teach the statutes and judgments in Israel’ (7.10); the king sent him ‘to investigate (or “supervise”) concerning Judah and Jerusalem by the *dat* of your God in your hand’ (7.14).

Artaxerxes’s decree thus authorizes Ezra to teach the law of Moses, which he has in his possession, and to make it the basis of local law in the province of Judah (or, according to 7.25, the basis of the law of the entire satrapy of Ebir-nari [cf. Fried 2001]). Thus, in the context of Ezra 7, there seems little doubt that *torah* and *dat* are to be understood as the same thing. The *dat* of Artaxerxes’s decree is the same entity as the *torah* which Ezra handles as a scribe and priest. This impression is confirmed when we take account of some other considerations.

Table 14.1. *The Relationship of Artaxerxes’s Decree to Rest of Ezra Tradition*

<i>Artaxerxes’s Decree (Ezra 7)</i>	<i>Parallels in the Ezra Story</i>
Ezra = ‘scribe of the law of God heaven’ (Ezra 7.12)	Law read and Sukkot kept (Neh. 8)
‘People of Israel’, priests, Levites allowed to go to Jerusalem (7.13)	Ezra collects ‘the people’, priests, Levites for the journey (Ezra 8.15-20)
Ezra to ‘inquire concerning’ (or ‘act as overseer over’) Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of God in his hand (7.14)	Mixed marriages dissolved (Ezra 9-10)
Gifts of silver, gold, vessels from king, counsellors, people for temple (7.15-19)	25½ tonnes of gold and silver plus vessels transported, delivered (Ezra 8.24-34)
Other necessities for temple to come from state treasury (7.20-23)	Ezra gives thanks for putting it in the king’s heart to beautify the temple (Ezra 7.27)
No tribute on temple or personnel (7.24)	—
Ezra to appoint judges over whole of Ebir-nari to judge by laws of his God (7.25-26)	Initiative to dissolve mixed marriages comes from leaders and people (Ezra 9-10)

Various elements of the Artaxerxes decree in Ezra 7 can be related to Ezra's activities in Ezra 8–10 and Nehemiah 8 (Kratz 1991: 236; Grabbe 1994: 287–88), as summarized in Table 14.1 (above).

#### **14.3.1.2. *Nehemiah 8–10***

Here it is not just a case of teaching but of reading from a ‘book of the *torah* of Moses’ (8.1; cf. 8.3, 8); the *torah* is the book in which the teaching is contained. So this chapter very much associates the law of God in Ezra’s possession as a book which is read and also expounded to the people (8.8). In the context of Ezra–Nehemiah, the law of God in Ezra 7 would also include a book. Ezra was not just coming to Jerusalem with a teaching but was also bringing a book. Anyone who read both Ezra 7 and Nehemiah 8, as they occur in the present Hebrew canon, could not but conclude anything else. The immediate consequence of reading this book is to find that they should be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, including spending the eight days of the festival in booths, ‘which the Israelites had not done from the days of Joshua’ (8.17). The main points of Nehemiah 8 for our purposes are the following:

- The people (Israelites settled in their towns) assemble in Jerusalem in the seventh month (8.1).
- Ezra, at their request, reads from the book of the *torah* of Moses (8.1–3).
- The Levites explain the *torah* (8.7–8).
- Ezra and the Levites tell the people that the day is holy and to rejoice, not mourn (8.9–12).
- On the second day of the reading, they find the instructions to dwell in booths in the festival of the seventh month; they search out appropriate vegetation and build booths (8.13–17).
- This had not been done since the days of Joshua son of Nun (8.17).
- The scroll of God’s *torah* is read every day, with a celebration of eight days total (8.18).

Thus, Ezra’s ‘law’ is conceived of in context as being in the form of a book, not just a set of teachings. But is it envisaged as a new law? It could not have been regarded as completely new, of course, since it was the law of Moses and by definition had existed for centuries. The question is whether this law had been forgotten and needed to be reintroduced to the Jerusalem community. This might well be a legitimate conclusion from certain passages. For example, the suggestion in Nehemiah 8 is that the people did not know about the Feast of Tabernacles until they read about it in the book of the law. The whole thrust of Nehemiah 8 is that the people were hearing something which was new and momentous to them. It needed to be expounded by levitical assistants (8.7–8).

The idea that the law is new is, however, contradicted by a number of passages in other parts of Ezra–Nehemiah. In Ezra 1–6 the people who came to Jerusalem in the time of Cyrus already had the law, according to the text. When Joshua and Zerubbabel set up the altar, it was to offer sacrifices ‘as written in the *torah* of Moses the man of God’ (Ezra 3.2). When the temple was completed, the priests and

Levites were organized ‘according to what is written in the book of Moses’ (6.18). They celebrate both the Feast of Tabernacles (3.2-6) and the Festival of the Passover and Unleavened Bread (6.19-22), annual festivals discussed in Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16. It seems strange that according to Nehemiah 8 the feast had not been celebrated in such a way since the time of Joshua, yet some decades earlier the Jews of Jerusalem were celebrating it according to the law of Moses. Even the Ezra story speaks of ‘all those who know the laws of your God’ in the satrapy of Ebir-nari (Ezra 7.25). Furthermore, a careful reading of Nehemiah 8 also discloses another rather curious situation. The book of the law is read to the people on the first day of the seventh month (8.2). One of the things they learn is about the festivals of God, and apply this new knowledge by celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles which falls on the 15th-22nd of the seventh month (Lev. 23.39-43; Deut. 16.13-15). The very day of the first reading was the first day of the seventh month, which was the Day of Trumpets (Lev. 23.24-25). This might be indicated by the reference to the day as being holy (Neh. 8.9, 11), but no mention is made of the Day of Atonement which would have followed on the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev. 23.26-32), before the Festival of Tabernacles.

In the present context, the story continues into Nehemiah 9-10 (though these were not part of the Ezra tradition, they have now been edited together). Shortly after the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, on the twenty-fourth of that same month, the people assemble, repent about mixing with ‘foreigners’, and read in ‘the book of the *torah* of Yhwh’ (Neh. 9.1-3). But a reading of the Torah will show that the Day of Atonement was also to have been celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev. 16; 23.26-32), and this would have been the ideal time to have repented of the ‘sin’ of the mixed marriages. Why is such an important observance as the Day of Atonement skipped over without the slightest hint of its existence? We then have another reading of law which parallels that in Nehemiah 8. A summary of the main points is the following:

- The reading evidently takes place shortly after the end of Sukkot (9.1).
- The occasion is one of mourning and separating from the ‘foreigners’ (9.2).
- The law seems to be read by Levites, with Ezra nowhere mentioned (9.3-4).
- A long recital of Israel’s history is given, covering events known from the present Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History (9.6-37).
- A pledge is made and signed by officials, Levites, heads of the people, temple personnel, and others, with Nehemiah’s name at the head of the list (10.1-30).
- The main concern seems to be marriage with ‘the peoples of the land’ (10.29-30; cf. 9.1-2).
- A number of other observances are mentioned, most found in the present form of the Pentateuch and most relating to the temple and its support (10.31-40).
- The one exception is the requirement to bring wood for the altar (10.35) which is not found in the present biblical text.

Even though in the present text of Ezra–Nehemiah, the events of Nehemiah 9–10 seem to follow directly on Nehemiah 8, there are some significant differences. Ezra is entirely absent in Nehemiah 9–10, and the Levites associated with the reading of the law have different names from those listed in Nehemiah 8. This helps confirm the common analysis that Nehemiah 8 is a part of the Ezra tradition and different from Nehemiah 9–10. In both cases, the book read is that of the *torah* of Moses (Neh. 8.1; 9.3, 14, 30). This gives us the important datum that we have two traditions:

1. a tradition that strongly associates the reading and promulgation of the *torah* of Moses with Ezra, and
2. a separate tradition that associates the reading and promulgation of the same law with Nehemiah, the Levites, and the people as a whole, without any mention of Ezra.

When we ask about the content of the law in Nehemiah 9–10, it seems clear that a considerable portion of our present Pentateuch is referred to in one way or the other. The data are summarized in Table 14.2, which picks out the main passages in the whole of Ezra–Nehemiah which relate to the topic of divine law.

Table 14.2. *Passages Relating to the Law in Ezra–Nehemiah*

<i>Law in Ezra–Nehemiah</i>	<i>Intertextual Parallels</i>
Creation: Neh. 9.6	Gen. 1
Abraham: Neh. 9.7–8	Gen. 12–25
Oppression in Egypt and the exodus: Neh. 9.9–11	Exod. 1–18
Wilderness sojourn and giving of the law: Neh. 9.12–21	Exod. 18–Num. 19
Conquest of the Transjordanian kingdoms: Neh. 9.22	Num. 20–36
Conquest of Canaan: Neh. 9.23–25 (There are further items from the Deuteronomistic History, though the emphasis is on a general denunciation of disobedience: Neh. 9.26–37.)	Joshua
Confession that people had ‘forsaken your commandments which you commanded by the hand of your servants the prophets’: Ezra 9.10–12	Cf. Lev. 18.24–30; Deut. 7.1–8; 23.4–7 (though no exact quote)
The phrase ‘your servants the prophets’ (usually taken to be characteristic of the ‘Deuteronomic School’): Ezra 9.11	Cf. Deut. 18.15
Intermarriage with other peoples: Neh. 13.1–2 (quotation) Neh. 13.25 (quotation) (Also Ezra 9–10; Neh. 9.1–2; 10.31)	Deut. 23.4–5 (ET 23.3–4) Deut. 7.3
Sabbath: Neh. 10.32; 13.15–22	Gen. 2.2–3; Exod. 20.8–11; Lev. 23.3–8

Annual festivals:	
Passover/Unleavened Bread: Ezra 6.19-22	Deut. 16.1-8; Lev. 23.5-8
Sukkot: Ezra 3.4; Neh. 8.14-17	Deut. 16.13-15; Lev. 23.33-36, 39-43
Sabbatical year: Neh. 10.32	Deut. 15.1-3; Lev. 25.1-7
Annual tax of $\frac{1}{5}$ shekel: Neh. 10.33	Cf. Exod. 30.11-16 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel)
Wood-offering: Neh. 10.35	
Priestly dues:	
Tithes: Neh. 10.38; 13.10-13; 12.44	Num. 18.21-32
First-fruits: Neh. 10.36	Num. 18.12-13
Firstlings: Neh. 10.37	Num. 18.14-18

### 14.3.1.3. Conclusions about the Law in Ezra–Nehemiah

From a literary point of view we can compare the various laws referred to explicitly or presupposed in Ezra–Nehemiah to determine which law the compiler has in mind. Blenkinsopp (1988: 155) suggests that the redactor is thinking mainly of laws in Deuteronomy but supplemented by some of those in the priestly source (P) and the Holiness Code (H); however, this is not the complete story since we have to take account of the prayer in Nehemiah 9 as well as the list of laws in Nehemiah 10. Nehemiah 9 also covers some of the main points in the Pentateuch so that the information presupposed in Nehemiah 9–10 in the canonical Ezra–Nehemiah relates to the whole of the Pentateuch and not just the legal sections. When we put this fact together with references to the ‘book of the *torah* of Moses’ (Neh. 8.1) and the ‘book of the *torah* of Yhwh’ (Neh. 9.3) and the ‘book of Moses’ (= *torah* [Neh. 13.1, 3]), there seems to be only one conclusion: *the present text of Ezra–Nehemiah wants us to understand that Ezra’s law was the complete Pentateuch*. We cannot absolutely demonstrate that it had in mind the Pentateuch precisely as we know it today, but it is a fair assumption that something quite close was in mind.

Our description of the law so far has been only a literary construct. We have had a close look at what the text says. The question is, what does this have to do with the historical question of Jewish law in the Persian period? Most discussions about Ezra and the law, and about what exactly was the law he brought, start from the assumption that the data in Ezra 7–8 and Nehemiah 8 describe a genuine historical event. When the problematic nature of the Ezra tradition is recognized (§14.2), however, it becomes clear that one cannot proceed on such an assumption. What is important is the dating of the Ezra–Nehemiah texts that clearly refer to portions of the Pentateuch and other texts. It has already been suggested that these should be dated to the early Hellenistic period, though a precise date is difficult to determine (§4.1). Another Hellenistic text whose date is more certain should now be considered, Ben Sira.

### 14.3.2. Ben Sira

The book of Jesus ben Sira, written about 200 BCE, is very important for trying to get a handle on the development of scripture (for general information on the book, see *JCH*: 176; *JRSTP*: 50–52; Grabbe 2001a: 142–48). The most important section for our purposes is the ‘Praise of the Fathers’ (chs. 44–50) which goes through the

heroes (no heroines are listed) of Israel, extending from Adam to Ben Sira's own time. The accompanying table (Table 14.3) shows the extent to which Ben Sira's account follows the text of our Hebrew Bible, often in some interesting details. He begins his survey with Enoch (44.16), followed by Noah (44.17), Abraham (44.19), Isaac (44.22), and Jacob (44.23). A section is devoted to Moses (45.1-5), but particular emphasis is placed on Aaron (45.6-26), including a reference to Phinehas son of Eleazar (45.23). The description of the high priestly garments follows closely the account in Exod. 39.1-31. What is surprising is that Ben Sira follows the biblical text in saying that the priesthood had no inheritance among the tribes, even though it is likely that by his own time the priests owned land, collectively and possibly individually (§9.3.3.6). Then comes Joshua son of Nun who made the sun stand still (46.1-6), Caleb son of Jephunneh who was his companion as they spied out the land (46.7-10), the judges (46.11-12), Samuel the prophet, with a close paraphrase from 1 Sam. 12.3-4 (46.13-20), followed by David son of Jesse who slew the giant, crushed the Philistines, and had a covenant with God (45.25; 47.1-11), along with Nathan the prophet (47.1). The reign of Solomon, who was wealthy and wise but had too many women (47.12-22), was followed by Rehoboam and Jeroboam under whom the kingdom split (47.23-25). Space is then given to Elijah (48.1-11) and Elisha (48.12-14), but the people did not repent (48.15-16). Next are Hezekiah (48.17-25), under whom was Isaiah, followed by Josiah (49.1-3). Except for David, Hezekiah, and Josiah the other kings were guilty of forsaking God's law (49.4-5). The prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve—plus Job—are mentioned (49.6-10), then Zerubbabel and Jeshua son of Jozadak and Nehemiah (49.11-13). The survey is rounded off (49.14-16), including a reference to Adam, Shem, and Seth who had not been mentioned earlier. But then Ben Sira moves on to speak of a contemporary hero, Simon the high priest (50.1-29).

Table 14.3. *Ben Sira's References to Hebrew Bible Passages*

<i>Ben Sira</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible</i>
(49.16: Adam)	Gen. 2-3
וַיֵּתְהַלֵּךְ עַם יִי וַיָּלֹךְ	Gen. 5.24: אֶת־הָאֲלֹהִים... וַיֵּתְהַלֵּךְ
(49.14: Enoch taken away: נִלְקַח פְנִים)	כִּי־לִקַּח אֶת־אֱלֹהִים
(49.16: Seth)	4.25
(49.16: Enosh)	4.26
44.17-18: Noah צְדִיק נִמְצָא חַמִּים	6.9: צְדִיק חַמִּים... בְּדָרְתַּיו
(49.16: Shem)	6.10, etc.
44.19-21: Abraham: אָב הַמּוֹן גּוֹיִם Covenant in flesh Promise to bless the nations through his descendants Inheritance from Euphrates to ends of earth	Gen. 17.5: אָב־הַמּוֹן גּוֹיִם 17 12.2-3; 22.15-18 13.14-17; 15.18
44.22: Isaac	21-22; 24-28; 35
44.23-24: Israel (Greek Jacob)	25; 27-35; 37; 42-50
(49.15: Joseph) (Dead body provided for)	37; 39-50 50.25

45.1-5: Moses Performed miracles In king's presence His meekness Given commandments for his people	Exod. 7-14 7-14 Num. 12.3, 7 Exod. 19-24
45.6-22: Aaron Description of priestly garments Dathan, Abiram, Korah Priests have no inheritance	Exod. 39.1-31 Num. 16 Num. 18
45.23-26: Phinehas, son of Eleazar Covenant of priesthood forever	Num. 25 25.13
46.1-6: Joshua, son of Nun Sun stood still Hail sent down on the enemy	Josh. 10.12-14 10.11
46.7-8: Joshua and Caleb opposed rebels and allowed to go into inheritance	Num. 14.6-38
46.9-10: Caleb	Judg. 1.10-15
46.11-12: Judges	Judges (entire book)
46.13-20: Samuel Prophet Pledged from mother's womb Established the kingship/anointed princes Visited the settlements of Jacob When pressed by enemies, offered sucking lamb God thundered from heaven against Philistines Had taken no bribe Pronounced king's fate from the grave	1 Sam. 9.9 1.11 8-10; 16 7.16-17 7.9-11 7.10 12.3-5 28
47.1: Nathan successor to Samuel	2 Sam. 7
47.2-11: David Killed lions and bears Slew the giant with a slingstone Women ascribed 10,000s defeated by him Defeated the Philistines and other enemies Added string music to altar celebration of festivals	1 Sam. 17.34-37 17.49-50 18.7 2 Sam. 5-12 1 Chron. 16; 23.5; 2 Chron. 7.6
47.12-22: Solomon Built house in God's name Wise when he was young Fame reached wide Astonished by wisdom and proverbs Heaped up gold like iron, silver like lead But gave himself over to women Division of kingdom but something left to David	1 Kgs 6 5.9-14 5.14; 10.1, 23-24 5.9-14 10.21, 27 11.1-5 12.20
47.23-24: Rehoboam and Jeroboam Rehoboam lacked sense and caused the people to rebel Sinner (Jeroboam) who caused Israel to sin and, eventually, to go into captivity	12.1-19 12.25-13.5; 2 Kgs 17.21-23

48.1-11: Elijah	Shattered their staff of bread and shut the heavens Brought down fire three times Brought dead child to life Heard threats/punishment at Sinai/Horeb Anointed prophet in his place Taken up in whirlwind Destined to come before day of Lord, to turn hearts of parents to children	1 Kgs 17-18 18.38; 2 Kgs 1.10, 12 17.17-24 19.5-18 19.19-21 2 Kgs 2.11-12 Mal. 3.23-24
48.12-16: Elisha	Did twice as many miracles Performed miracles after death	2 Kgs 2.9 13.20-21
48.17-25: Hezekiah	Cut through rocks to bring water Sennacherib's invasion Saved by prayer through Isaiah Angel struck down Assyrian army Isaiah turned back the sun and saved life of king (Isaiah) foretold what would happen in future	20.20; 2 Chron. 32.30; Isa. 22.9-11 18-19; Isa. 36-37 19.5-7, 14-34; Isa. 37.5-7, 14-34 19.35-36; Isa. 37.35-36 20.1-11; Isa. 38.1-8 Isaiah (entire book)
49.1-3: Josiah	Destroyed the idols and practiced virtue	2 Kgs 22-23
49.7: Jeremiah	Made prophet in the womb Sent to root out, pull down, destroy, and to build and plant	Jer. 1.5 1.10
49.8: Ezekiel	Vision of creatures with chariot throne	Ezek. 1; 10
49.9: Job		Job (entire book)
49.10: Book of Twelve		Twelve Minor Prophets
49.11: Zerubbabel	Like signet ring on God's hand	Hag. 2.23
49.12: Jeshua b. Jozadak	Rebuilt the altar and erected the temple	Hag. 1-2; Ezra 3-6
49.13: Nehemiah	Rebuilt Jerusalem's walls and defences	Neh. 3-4

Ben Sira has summarized in outline form much of the contents of the present Torah and Prophets sections of the Hebrew Bible. Much is omitted, of course, but we must keep in mind his aim, which is to describe the heroes of Israel. Even the table above cannot list all the various details included by him, but in almost all cases they coincide with information in the present biblical text. Ben Sira is more than just a collection of oral traditions or material derived from several sources. The Minor Prophets are already a unit, for example. He gives a close paraphrase—almost a quote—from a number of passages (e.g. Gen. 5.24; 6.9; 15.18; 1 Sam. 7.10; 12.3-4; Hag. 2.23; Mal. 3.23-24). On the period of the kings, it looks as if he had 1 and 2 Samuel available. But when he describes David, some aspects of his description appear to be taken from 1 Chronicles. For example, his emphasis on David's estab-

lishment of the cult and the various singers (Sir. 47.9-10//1 Chron. 15.16; 16.4-6; 23.5, 31-32). This suggests that Ben Sira's Bible had not only 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings but also 1 and 2 Chronicles. Why must it have had 1 and 2 Kings, since his information on David could all have been taken from Chronicles? It just seems rather unlikely that he had an edition with Samuel and Chronicles but not Kings.

In evaluating these close parallels and allusions in Ben Sira, one must keep in mind that slightly different versions of some parts of the Old Testament circulated in Hebrew until at least the first century CE, and translations of variant Hebrew texts remain in use even today. In some cases, the differences between the various forms of the text are not usually very significant (e.g. the MT, LXX, and Samaritan Pentateuch of the Torah), but in other cases there are rather more substantial differences (e.g. the book of Jeremiah). Just as important, however, is the fact that the many 'parabiblical' traditions known to us from Second Temple Jewish literature are not found in Ben Sira's account. The most reasonable conclusion from these considerations is that Ben Sira had essentially the present biblical text of the Pentateuch, Joshua to 2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, the Prophets, and the book of Job in front of him. For further discussion and references, see *JRSTP* (158-65).

Although Ben Sira was writing well over a century after the coming of Alexander, the sections of the Hebrew Bible that we now call the Torah and both the Former and Latter Prophets were evidently authoritative for him. This is unlikely to have happened overnight. It would have taken some time after the writings were produced before they became widely accepted among the Jews. Although he seems to accept Chronicles, which was probably finished sometime during the Ptolemaic period (§4.4), most of the writings he mentions are likely to have existed in basic form by the end of Persian rule.

#### **14.3.3. Hecataeus of Abdera**

Writing about 300 BCE, Hecataeus is an important witness to Jewish beliefs and history at this time (*JCH*: 173; *JRSTP*: 37-39; Albertz 2001: 40-46), whom we know through quotations in Diodorus of Sicily (40.3.1-7). According to Hecataeus, Moses was the founder of the Jewish temple, priesthood, and state. His successors are the high priests who have authority since the Jews have never had a king [*sic*]. For our present purposes, his most interesting statement is the following: 'Also in their laws it is written at the end that what Moses has heard from God (the god) he declares to the Jews' (40.3.6). The verb used here (*προσγέγραπται*) implies a written book. As shown in the next section, Ben Sira's acceptance of the Pentateuch a century later is unlikely to have been possible if the 'book of the *torah* of Moses' was not complete by the time of Hecataeus.

#### **14.3.4. Conclusions**

One of the important developments for Judaism was the creation of a law book and the concept of scripture. The value was not apparent immediately; indeed, it may have been only toward the end of the Persian period that major advances were made. Nevertheless, there are a number of reasons to think that the roots of Jewish scripture lie primarily in the Persian period. The following points summarize some of the conclusions of the discussion above:

1. It seems to have been Persian policy to allow religious freedom and the exercise of local law and custom, as long as it did not interfere with the imperial administration (§10.1.4). The Persians normally did not intervene either to promote or to suppress local practices. If the local Yehud government wanted to establish a particular religious code, this would probably have been allowed. The evidence is that the Persian bureaucracy would sometimes respond to particular petitions from its subjects, especially if granting the request did not inconvenience or contravene its own operations (§10.1). Most authorizations came from the satrap or governor, however, not from the king.
2. Whatever written traditions existed among the Jews by the beginning of the Persian period, it was in the Persian period that the need for written records of the traditions would have been first strongly felt. The reason is the changed status of the government of Judah. Judah was no longer a nation—not even a vassal state—but functioned as a small distant province within the Persian empire. There was no native king and clearly no prospect of one in the foreseeable future. A major break in religious continuity had occurred with the loss of the monarchy when the king had acted as the main religious figure and religious official. The temple personnel—the high priest in particular—would have been seen by the community as filling this vacuum in leadership. It is at such times when a people is conscious of a break in its history that attempts are often made to collect, organize, and record the traditions that up to then had been the repository of the collective memory.
3. The literary picture of Ezra–Nehemiah is a contradictory one. On the one hand, it wants to make clear that the law of Moses was known and practised from the beginning of the return. On the other hand, it also gives the distinct impression that the book of the law read by Ezra was new to the people. The dichotomy can be explained by assuming that the first is the ideology of the author (Moses wrote the Pentateuch long ago) while the second is much closer to reality; that is, the ‘book of Moses’ was probably something which took shape in the Persian period. By the time that Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah was completed it was presupposed that Ezra promulgated some version of the five books of Moses as an authoritative writing for the Jews.
4. The decree of Ezra 7 is problematic. In its present form it is not the product of the Achaemenid age (§4.1.3.2). It could be an outright invention, though there could have been an actual decree from Artaxerxes lying behind Ezra 7. If so, this decree has been worked over by Jewish scribes of a later age to produce the present text which in no way came from Artaxerxes. If there had been an actual decree, however, it was most likely not one giving great power and authority to Ezra but rather a permission to teach the ‘law in his hand’. This would fit the other ‘authorizations’ surveyed above (§10.1). A request by Ezra or a Jewish group or even the Jews of Judah to promulgate a newly created ‘book of the *torah*

- of Moses' would probably have met with a favourable response from the Persian government, though the idea that this would have come to the king's direct attention and that he would be concerned to issue such a decree in his own name is unlikely. It is easy to accept the idea of permission to teach, without all the gross exaggerations about gifts of great wealth or divine intervention to make the Persian king show favouritism to the Jews.
5. The Ezra tradition makes Ezra the lawgiver par excellence, though it refers to the law that he brought as the 'book of the *torah* of Moses', not the '*torah* of Ezra'. The view that an individual named Ezra existed and had something to do with the promulgation of a new lawbook is a perfectly reasonable one. The tradition's attempt to push Ezra forward, however, founders on the many exaggerations and absurdities within it. What is clear is that other traditions speak of the reading and promulgation of the law with no mention of Ezra (e.g. Neh. 9–10). The association of Ezra with the law of Moses is only one point of view; it is not a universal one. There is certainly no need to give preference to the Ezra tradition.
  6. The suggestion that the Pentateuch was put into shape in the Persian period is confirmed by the data examined above. The picture in Ezra–Nehemiah (which was probably completed in the early Greek period) is of a 'book of Moses' with much of the content of our present Pentateuch already in existence. Ben Sira is clear that the Pentateuch in the same or a similar form to that known today was widely accepted as authoritative by 200 BCE. When we look at 1 and 2 Chronicles (probably also completed in the early Greek period), Hecataeus of Abdera (c. 300 BCE), and the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek in Alexandria (about the mid-third century), as well as considering the time it would take after completion to become widely accepted as sacred literature, the Pentateuch was evidently complete in much its present form by the end of the Persian period. The bulk of the Hebrew Bible is therefore not a 'Hellenistic book' (*pace* Lemche 1993; cf. the critique in Albertz, Grabbe, and other essays in Grabbe [ed.] 2001; Barstad 2002), though everyone accepts that some portions are Hellenistic. This does not, of course, rule out further textual and even literary developments in the books.
  7. This development of the concept of authoritative writings was the beginning of the road that eventually led to a canon. Canonization was a complex process which took place over several centuries and cannot be separated from particular communities or institutions (e.g. the priesthood). Neither can it be easily separated from textual standardization: although the two processes were somewhat different, they ran side by side and affected each other. (For more information on these, see *JRSTP*: 152–65.) Our concern, however, is not with this lengthy process but on what had happened by the end of the Persian period.

#### **14.4. Other Religious and Literary Developments**

Apart from the growth of scripture, a number of developments relating to religious belief and practice are difficult to date. They could have arisen earlier than the fourth century or had a long period of gestation only culminating in the fourth century. Yet most of the ones related here are likely to be later in the Persian period rather than earlier.

##### **14.4.1. The Enoch Tradition**

**Boccaccini** (1998) *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*; **Grabbe** (2003c) ‘Introduction and Overview’; **Kvanvig** (1988) *Roots of Apocalyptic*; (2002) ‘Gen 6,1-4 as an Antediluvian Event’; **Milik** (1976) *The Books of Enoch*; **Nickelsburg** (2001) *1 Enoch I*; **Sacchi** (1996) *Jewish Apocalyptic and its History*; **VanderKam** (1984) *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*.

This section does not attempt to give an introduction to the book of *1 Enoch* or *Ethiopic Enoch*, which will be given in volume 2 of this History; for now see *JCH* (180-81) and *JRSTP* (41-42). *1 Enoch* is a compilation of five different documents, each of which had its own history of development. Now that a large portion of the original Aramaic text is known of four of the books of *1 Enoch*, we can make some judgments about how the Enochic tradition grew, though there will inevitably be disagreements among scholars about various points. Both the *Astronomical Book* (chs. 72-82) and the *Book of Watchers* (chs. 1-36) seem to have been put in much their present form toward the beginning of the Hellenistic period, that is, probably the third century BCE.

Yet we have to distinguish between the antiquity of the extant writings themselves and the traditions that have been used to compose them. Although none of the extant Enochic writings is likely to be pre-Alexander, the traditions in them show a complex development that almost certainly had its roots well in the Persian period. Enoch himself is probably a reflex of the ancient Mesopotamian legendary figure king Enmeduranki (VanderKam 1984: 33-51; Kvanvig 1988: 184-90). The myth of the fallen angels in *1 Enoch* 6-8 seems to be made up of two complexes (Nickelsburg 2001), each centred around a chief fallen angel (Shemihazah and Asael). This suggests a development over a considerable period of time between the original fallen angels story (whatever form it took) and the version found in *1 Enoch* 6-8 which most probably reached its present form in the Ptolemaic period.

One of the main indications of the fallen angels tradition’s antiquity, though, is what seems to be a reference to it in Gen. 6.1-4. Although some have taken the view that the whole scenario developed as an interpretation of the Genesis text (e.g. Nickelsburg 2001), more likely is the interpretation that Genesis gives a highly condensed summary of or reference to a much larger Enoch tradition (Milik 1976: 30-32; Kvanvig 1988: 275-300, 319-28; 2002). The reason for believing this is that the Enoch story in Gen. 5.21-24 and the passage in 6.1-4 are extremely compressed and enigmatic. It is hard to believe that these are meant to be full and clear statements on the subject; rather, they presuppose a much larger tradition that was likely

to be known by many readers. This larger Enoch tradition was taken up and developed by both *1 Enoch* and the *Book of Giants*; that is, the writer of Genesis did not know *1 Enoch* and the *Book of Giants* (which were probably composed later than Genesis) but he had a version of the tradition that was also available to the later authors of *1 Enoch* and the *Book of Giants*.

What this means, if the above argumentation is correct, is that apocalyptic traditions in general and the Enoch tradition in particular were already being developed in the Persian period. Although apocalyptic flourished in the Hellenistic period, it was not a peculiar product of the Hellenization as some had once argued (cf. Grabbe 2003c).

In recent years a proposal has been made for a version of Judaism known as ‘Enochic Judaism’ (cf. Sacchi 1996; Boccaccini 1998). Since such had probably not developed before the end of the Persian period in any event, an evaluation of this thesis is postponed to volume 2 of this History.

#### **14.4.2. Different Ways of Thinking: Job and the Song of Songs**

The question of theodicy is closely tied up with the book of Job which may have been given its final form earlier than the fourth century (§4.6.2). In any case, Job tackles the question in a way that defies conventional wisdom. In the dialogue part of the book, the views stated by Job’s friends seem to be those traditional and accepted, agreeing with earlier writings such as Deuteronomy and the book of Proverbs: your fortune or misfortune is a direct consequence of your obedience or disobedience to God. Therefore, if you are suffering misfortune, it is a result of evil actions. This is what Job’s friends seem to say (apart from some complications which may be the result of misplaced text in Job 26–27). The curious fact is that most readers would have agreed with the friends, yet it is Job who is declared to have spoken rightly (Job 42.7). Perhaps it was only one genius who was willing to think outside the theological box, especially considering that apart from Qohelet nothing equals this way of thinking for many centuries. But someone—at least one person—went against the theological wisdom of centuries to declare that God’s ways were hidden and mysterious.

The Song of Songs is a completely different sort of book from Job, yet in its own way it was revolutionary (§4.6.5). No other book of antiquity celebrates physical love in such an explicit yet poetic way, yet what is most surprising is that this book became a part of Jewish religious literature. The composition of the book in what was most probably the Persian period shows an openness to physical and erotic love in a way unparalleled in extant Jewish literature from antiquity. Its uniqueness is highlighted by the fact that later religious tradition (both Jewish and Christian) found it necessary to allegorize it to make it acceptable. Its composition, propagation, and (eventual) canonization all attest to the remarkable vision of the Persian-period writer who was willing to compose wonderful poetry about such a basic and universal human activity. We can only conclude that both he (she?) and the author of Job belonged to circles that Nehemiah would have opposed.

#### **14.4.3. The Beginnings of the Jewish Novel**

**G. Anderson** (1984) *Ancient Fiction*; **Grabbe** (2003b) ‘Of Mice and Dead Men’; **Gruen** (1998) *Heritage and Hellenism*; **Hägg** (1983) *The Novel in Antiquity*; **Perry** (1967) *The Ancient Romances*; **Wills** (1995) *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World*.

The Persian period seems to witness to the rise of a Jewish literary form that became quite popular in later Second Temple literature: the novel or, as it has often been designated, the *Diasporanovella* (‘novel set in the Diaspora’). Although the novel or romance is well-known from Greek literature (cf. G. Anderson 1984; Hägg 1983; Perry 1967), a case can be made that it originated in the ancient Near East (see Grabbe 2003b on the Ninus/Semiramis and other romances set in the Near East). The book of Esther is a good example (though possibly post-dating the Persian period), and Ruth also has characteristics of the novel as well. Like Ahiqar (which was perhaps not originally Jewish but adopted), it is a story which represents Jewish aspirations in the Diaspora, as well as an example of how Jews were to conduct themselves in relation to their neighbours. The story suggests that it was possible for Jews to attain high office (cf. the later book of Daniel). Like other novels of the period (e.g. Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*) it makes use of historical information, but its aim is not historical and some of its data are actually unhistorical.

#### **14.5. The So-Called Revolt of the Satraps and the Tennes Rebellion**

**Barag** (1966) ‘The Effects of the Tennes Rebellion on Palestine’; **Grainger** (1991) *Hellenistic Phoenicia*; **Helm** (ed.) (1956) *Die Chronik des Hieronymus*; **Roll and Tal** (1999) *Apollonia-Arsuf, Final Report of the Excavations, I*; **E. Stern** (1982) *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible*; **Weiskopf** (1989) *The So-Called ‘Great Satraps’ Revolt*; **Widengren** (1977) ‘The Persian Period’.

The ‘Revolt of the Satraps’ and the ‘Tennes Rebellion’ have both been seen as major events for the region of Phoenicia and Palestine, with potentially serious effects on the history of Judah. The Tennes Rebellion, especially, is routinely referred to in the scholarly literature discussing this period of time, but both are often appealed to in support of theories about the history of Yehud.

According to Diodorus Siculus (15.90) a great revolt of Ionic cities, along with an uprising of some of the Asia Minor satraps, took place against Artaxerxes III. Tachos the king of Egypt took advantage of this by gathering ships and mercenaries to fight against the Persians. There are a number of problems with Diodorus’s account, however, one of the main ones being the lack of any other continuous narrative of the revolt (*HPE*: 656–75). Some occasional references (e.g. Pompeius Trogus, the Greek orators, monuments) give a rather different (and more complicated) picture. There was a revolt—or revolts—but probably less serious than Diodorus states. Briant concludes a lengthy discussion as follows (*HPE*: 674):

While we cannot forget the persistent uncertainties that have been pointed out all along the way, we can at least state with certainty that Diodorus’s thesis is not confirmed by the rest of the evidence. We are not dealing with a general, coordinated conflagration on the western front in 361 but rather with a series of limited local

revolts over the course of a decade... On one side, we stress once more that the Persians, despite the King's determination and great preparations, proved incapable of retaking the Nile Valley; moreover, at one point, the pharaoh even took the offensive... On the other side, it seems difficult to assert that the satrapal revolts attested in Asia Minor illustrate a deep and irreversible degradation of the control that the central authority exercised over the governors...there was in fact no alternative to Achaemenid dynastic continuity.

The main question is what effect these 'series of revolts' had on Palestine, especially the campaign of the Egyptian king Tachos. In spite of Diodorus (15.92.4), it seems unlikely that a general campaign of destroying the Syrian and Phoenician cities took place (*HPE*: 664-65). Tachos was not that strong: when he invaded Phoenicia in 362/361, he was unable to carry through with the plan to besiege cities in Syria because his own troops revolted (Weiskopf 1989: 83). Although some possible raids into the interior cannot be ruled out, an extensive or systematic campaign seems unlikely.

With regard to the Tennes Rebellion, often cited in connection with the history of Yehud, D. Barag's (1966) article has been especially influential. It makes the following series of arguments:

- A rebellion of Cyrus and Phoenicia is recorded for about the year 350 in the Greek historians (in particular, Diodorus 16.41-45).
- Certain late accounts seem to indicate that Judah was caught up in this revolt: (a) Eusebius (*Chron. on the 105th Olympiad* [Helm 1956: 121]) (b) Orosius (*Adver. pagan.* 3.7.6), who basically agrees with Eusebius; (c) Syncellus (1.486.10-14); and (d) Solinus (*Collect.* 35.4 = *GLAJJ*, II: 418-22).
- The archaeology of the period indicates layers of destruction for the mid-fourth century at various sites in Palestine.

Significant objections can be and have been raised against this thesis, however, and seem to me to be decisive (Widengren 1977: 501-502; Grainger 1991: 24-30; *HPE*: 682-85, 1004-1005):

1. As noted above, our main source for the 'Tennes Rebellion' is Diodorus Siculus. A number of points about his account are problematic (*HPE*: 683-85) and other issues are still opaque to the modern historian. The precise dates of the revolt are uncertain, but it appears to have been rather more short lived than the dates 351-345 often given (*HPE*: 683-84). The reasons for the revolt are unclear, and Diodorus's statement (16.41.2) that it was due to the overbearing manner of the Persians is not very credible; more likely is that the machinations of the Egyptian king Nectanebo II lay behind it (Grainger 1991: 24; *HPE*: 684-85). Tennes's betrayal of the city of Sidon is also puzzling: he would hardly have been unaware of the resources that the Persian king would be able to bring to bear on him when he initiated the revolt; on the other hand, if he had relied on help from Egypt but came to realize it would not be forthcoming, betrayal of his own city no doubt seemed the logical way of

surviving. Thus, a number of questions about Diodorus's account remain unanswered.

2. The sources seeming to associate the Jews with the rebellion are 'suspect and contradictory', especially on the chronological level (*HPE*: 685). The trustworthiness of Eusebius's tradition is called in question by his misdating of Artaxerxes's reign by 40 years. The statement assigned to Hecataeus of Abdera (Josephus, *Apion* 1.22 §194; Josephus's alleged quotes of Hecataeus are problematic) about deportation of the Jews by Persians is probably a confusion with the Babylonian captivity. While some Jews may indeed have been settled in Hyrcania by the Persians during the fourth century, there are a number of possible reasons other than participation in a rebellion. Furthermore, Diodorus does not say anything about the Jews, which one might expect. Similarly, Josephus is silent on such a rebellion, suggesting he was either ignorant of any such episode or, inexplicably, suppressed it.
3. Josephus's reference to a Persian official Bagoses during whose time the temple was defiled is best identified with the governor known from the Elephantine papyri (§13.7).
4. Most of the archaeological sites allegedly destroyed lie outside Judah proper, with the exception of Jericho. The archaeology of Jericho does not appear to be precise enough to demonstrate a destruction at this time (§2.1.1.5). As for the Palestinian sites outside Judah, there is no evidence to associate the various destructions with any one particular date; on the contrary, according to the usual interpretation (E. Stern 1982: 253-55; Roll and Tal 1999: 210-14) the destructions of these sites are to be associated with a variety of campaigns and revolts over about 150 years during the fifth and fourth centuries. Also, the pottery of 345 BCE is not clearly distinguishable from that of a decade earlier or, on the other hand, that later from the time of Alexander. That is, some of the destruction layers which Barag associates with the Sidonian revolt may in fact have been caused by the Greek conquest or events earlier in the century. Indeed, there is a serious question as to whether any of the destructions in the coastal cities should be associated with the 'Tennes Rebellion', for only the city of Sidon seems to have been involved. Although Diodorus says 'the Phoenicians' revolted (16.40.5) and that Tennes persuaded 'the other Phoenicians' to seek their freedom (16.41.3), no other Phoenician city is in fact named as having done anything, and only Sidon is punished. Judging from Diodorus's account, there does not seem to have been widespread destruction in Phoenicia, except for Sidon itself. There is even a contradiction with regard to Sidon, since it was a flourishing city only a dozen years later when Alexander invaded (Arrian, *Alexander* 2.20; Quintus Curtius 4.1.15; Grainger 1991: 30)

In sum, although the rebellion of Tennes was potentially serious, it seems to have collapsed suddenly without any major fighting (apart from a preliminary engage-

ment in which the combined armies of the satraps Belesys and Mazaeus were defeated by the Phoenicians [Diodorus 16.42.1-2]). The only city destroyed was Sidon, and this is alleged to have been burnt by the Sidonians themselves. There is little evidence that other areas of Phoenicia suffered from fighting, much less Samaria or Judah or other areas of the Palestinian interior.

#### **14.6. *The Last Part of Persian Rule***

**Mildenberg** (1990–91) ‘Notes on the Coin Issues of Mazday’.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the fourth century is lacking in narrative but is perhaps the richest part of the Persian period in material remains. This allows us to fill in our gaps to some extent about the society and general history, though we still lack a lot relating to individual events.

We have some information on the satrapy of Ebir-nari in the last part of Achaemenid rule. After order was restored following the events associated with the ‘Satraps Revolt’ and the ‘Tennes Rebellion’, in about 345 BCE the satrap of the small satrapy of Cilicia was granted the additional governance of Ebir-nari. This was Mazday, one of whose coin issues reads, ‘Mazday who is over Abar Nahara and Cilicia’ (*mzdy zy 'l 'br nbr' whlk* [Mildenberg 1998: 53]). He remained in post to Alexander’s invasion and fought against him, playing an important role at the battle of Gargamela (see volume 2 of this History). He subsequently fell back with his troops to Babylon where he eventually surrendered to Alexander. In a surprise change of practice, Alexander did not appoint a Greek governor but instead put Mazday in charge of Babylonia where he remained in office until his death in 328 BCE.

As noted above (§13.7), the incident about the Johanan who killed his brother Joshua in the temple should most probably be dated about 400 BCE, not in the reign of Artaxerxes III. We may also know the name of an official named Johanan in the second half of the fourth century BCE, from the coin with the inscription ‘Johanan the priest’ (§3.4.1). Although the named individual is possibly the high priest, this is not at all certain. Such coins were usually issued by administrative officials, judging from other coins, and the designation ‘the priest’ may only indicate he was from a priestly family. We also have the name ‘Jaddua’ on a coin of the first part of the fourth century, and some have identified him as a high priest. But here we have no designation at all, much less ‘high priest’; furthermore, the coin may be Samarian (§3.4.1). The governors Jehoezer, Ahzai, and Elnathan may well belong to the late fifth or early fourth century, but we cannot be sure (§7.2.4). A number of scholars date them to the period between Zerubbabel and Nehemiah. The one governor who seems fairly certain to be in the mid-to-late fourth century is an individual called Hezekiah and known from coins. Some have identified him with a high priest of the same name at the beginning of the Greek period but, again, this is very uncertain.

The coming of Alexander will be dealt with in volume 2 of this History.

**Part V**

**CONCLUSIONS**

## Chapter 15

### A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE: WHAT WE KNOW, WHAT WE CAN GUESS, AND WHERE OUR IGNORANCE IS

The Persian-period Yehud and its history that emerges from this study differs from the *prima facie* picture in the biblical text. It also often looks quite different from the history of Yehud found in many standard handbooks, monographs, and commentaries. There are a number of reasons for this. They come down primarily, though, to issues of historical methodology: How do we know what we know? What are our sources and how do we use them?

#### **15.1. *Where Does Our Knowledge Come From?***

Any history of the Jews under the Persian empire must begin with the problem of writing such a history. The sources are few, often tendentious in some way, and leave out large periods of time. There are enormous gaps in data, and any history must explicitly recognize this. It is important that readers are aware of what is known, what can be reasonably inferred, what is more or less guesswork, and where even speculation is unjustified because nothing is known.

Writing a history of the Persian empire would be difficult enough, though important strides have been made in that direction in the past few years. But the difficulties with coming to grips with Persian history as a whole must be multiplied several times when attempting to produce a history of Judah under Persian rule. The sources are episodic and would thus be insufficient for writing a connected history of Persian Judah, even if they were first-rate accounts. The added complication is that almost all of them are from a very particular point of view, that is, they are biased. We have little inscriptional material specifically from Judah, and archaeology can give only a rough framework in the absence of the necessary literary remains. The bulk of the source material consists of religious literature with its own individual perspectives, prejudices, and blindspots. It would be a mistake to take this literature at face value (though some writing on the history of Judah still insist on doing so), but one who treats the biblical text critically is often left with little more than question marks, speculation, and frustration. Even so simple a matter as a list of high priests for the period cannot be worked out.

One of my governing assumptions has been a negative one; that is, I have *not* made an assumption so often made by biblical scholars: that Judah and the Jews were granted special favours by the Persian government. This non-assumption on

my part may seem to require no explanation, but the fact is that many writers on Persian-period Judah have been quite willing to assume that biblical passages claiming great benefactions from the Persian administration and even the Persian emperor are not to be questioned, only explained. Thus, if Ezra is said to be given 7.5 metric tonnes of gold and silver by Artaxerxes personally, this can be taken as a fact. There must have been a Jewish queen of Xerxes—or of one of the Persian emperors—because the book of Esther says so. A Jewish captive even rose in the royal court to become next to the king under the Babylonians, so the book of Daniel tells us. Not so many accept this picture from Daniel, of course, but even it has been defended. The temple at Jerusalem was honoured far above almost all other cult places, even those in the Babylonian heartland, with gifts, tax exemption, and favourable laws. And whatever Ezra and Nehemiah are alleged to have done was not only done but was even the implementation of Persian imperial policy.

This has not been my starting point. Some exceptional things may occasionally have happened with regard to Judah and the Jews, but my approach has been to recognize that Jewish texts may contain pro-Jewish propaganda, to analyze them carefully in that light, and to seek confirmation for alleged special treatment. A further problem is often overlooked: the degree to which Achaemenid history is itself unknown or uncertain. It has been commonplace to quote A.T. Olmstead (1948) and go from there without acknowledging the problems. In some cases, scenarios have been created simply from putting together biblical accounts with partially understood secondary sources. Such an oft-quoted incident as the Megabyzus revolt is actually based on very doubtful information and may be nothing but a fiction (§13.3.2). Thus, the status of the background history into which the history of Judah is fitted must always be kept in mind. Fortunately, we now have the splendid reference work of P. Briant (*HPE*) which is not only much fuller and more reliable than anything before it but is also several orders of magnitude better in both primary and secondary documentation.

Despite these caveats we are not completely ignorant. Something is known of Persian history, and something is known of the events and situation in Judah which can be fitted into the broader sweep of ancient Near Eastern history. The past few decades have seen a steady accumulation of artifactual and archaeological data. No major new narrative sources have emerged to revolutionize our thinking, but new approaches to the data and new questions are helping to understand better the sources we already possessed. The picture emerging, partial as it is, is not negligible. We do know something about Persian-period Yehud.

Most important are our primary sources of archaeology and inscriptional data. Much more needs to be done in sorting out and synthesizing the archaeology of the Persian period, but headway is being made (see Chapter 2 above). Particularly helpful are the regional surveys done in the 1970s and 1980s. With regard to written sources, especially important are the Elephantine papyri (§3.1): in spite of their origin in Egypt there is significant information in several areas that throws light on the situation in Judah. We also have the papyri and seal impressions from Wadi Daliyeh in Samaria, and a variety of ostraca from the area of Edom and elsewhere in Palestine (§3.2). While these are not from Judah itself, they still provide poten-

tially useful information, and we do have some inscriptional material from Yehud. Very important from Judah itself and also from Samaria and the surrounding regions are coins (§3.4).

Of the ancient secondary sources, the prophetic writings of Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 seem to contain a good deal of information for a narrow period of time. The one contemporary source still by-and-large undisputed is the ‘Nehemiah memorial’ (§4.1.3.3). Despite its strong bias, it does give us a statement by someone who was actually an eye witness of some of the events described. More of a problem is Isaiah 56–66, though many date large sections of it to the early Persian period (§4.3.1).

The Aramaic documents in Ezra 4–7, while widely accepted, are still problematic (§4.1.3.2); in particular, a number of them are strongly redolent of Jewish theology. The criticisms apply not only to the Cyrus decree in Ezra 1, which has often been doubted, but to the Aramaic documents themselves. On the other hand, it seems unjustified at this point to conclude that the documents are complete forgeries: most or all may have been genuine decrees but now considerably reworked by the Jewish writer(s), though some (or even all) may be outright inventions. For the historian the resulting uncertainty is disappointing, but the problem must be faced. Apart from the NM the most accessible account (the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as a whole) is still very problematic and must be scrutinized carefully.

## 15.2. *The Physical and Historical Context*

The Neo-Babylonian empire (c. 626–539 BCE), despite the leadership of such dynamic individuals as Nebuchnezzar II, was short lived. In less than a century it was taken over by a vassal of its erstwhile ally the Medes. For almost exactly two centuries the Persian empire dominated both the Near East and the centre of European culture in the Aegean. When Jerusalem fell in 587/586, many of the population were taken captive to Babylonia, but recent studies indicate that the bulk of the population (though considerably reduced because of fighting and other events) remained in Palestine. Those taken to Babylonia settled down, built up their communities, and became integrated into the society, as is indicated by personal names in such sources as the Murašu documents. The result was a community with two centres, one in Palestine and one in Mesopotamia (plus an additional community in Egypt). The exact size of the community in Babylon is difficult to determine, though judging from the situation in later centuries under the Parthians, it became a relatively large and thriving one. If so, it seems that those who returned to Palestine in the reign of Cyrus and in the intervening decades down to the time of Nehemiah were very much in the minority when compared with either the indigenous Palestinian population or those who remained in the Babylonian region.

Those who chose to live in exile in the East seem to have been well integrated into the wider society, not living in ghettos or being treated as outsiders (judging from the Murašu documents). Their occupations were mainly those of small holders and lower-ranking officials. Yet there may have been some opportunity of advancement under Persian rule. This is indicated by the Jewish court apologies such as

Esther and Daniel 1–6. One does not have to assume the historicity of the specific stories to appreciate that it was possible for a Jew to rise not only in society but even to some extent in the Persian court as well. Such court novellas had a dual function: to give courage to those who were not prospering but saw themselves as only aliens in a pagan environment, and to provide models of how to behave in such circles without compromising proper Jewish worship and religion.

Those who remained in Judah or chose to return there could gain some comfort from being in the Promised Land, but the realities of life were not particularly paradisial. The country was small with a backward economy and surrounded by neighbours who at times could be hostile and who were sometimes treated with suspicion even when they appeared to be friendly. The economy was mainly agrarian, with any skilled handicrafts and manufacturing at a minimum, at least in the early part of the post-exilic period. The best of the farmland was no longer within the borders of the province. Most of the Shephelah had long been taken away, and even the southern area of Judah was now in the hands of Idumaeans and/or Arabs. Much of the country was made up of the Judaean hill country. A diversity of soils and climates allowed a variety of crops and livestock. Good years gave sufficient and even a surplus, but there were on the average three or four bad years in every ten. Several bad years in a row—which was not so infrequent—could be disastrous.

One benefit of the exile had been that many of the farm tenants had been able to come into possession of some land of their own with the deportation of the landlords in 587/586. Things may not have been easy for the ‘poor of the land’ left by the Babylonians, but it was probably better for many of them than it had been under the Judaean monarchy. These individuals would not have been particularly enthusiastic about the return of their fellow Jews from exile if it looked like having to revert to working as a tenant farmer or even as a day labourer, as many of them probably had before 587/586. Therefore, when we read of rivalries and clashes which are explained in religious terms in the Old Testament literature, we have to keep in mind that what is explained as religious may actually have been in part or even largely socio-economic in origin.

Judah’s neighbours to the north and west were rather more prosperous. The area of Samaria had more arable land and fertile areas suitable for farming (e.g. the Valley of Megiddo). Much of the coastal region was under Phoenician control. This included a good deal of land suitable for agriculture of one sort or another (e.g. the coastal plain and the Sharon), but the main economic production related to trade and seafaring. The area of Phoenicia must have been very attractive to some Jews. The influence of Phoenician and also Greek material culture would have been great, especially on Samaria but also on Judah. The coastal settlements would no doubt have attracted Jewish settlers and entrepreneurs who hoped to make a fortune but could not do so in their homeland.

The province of Judah was rather isolated, physically and economically. A benefit was that it was not likely to be the object of attack because it had little strategic value. Although a Persian garrison may have been established there (at least some of the time), it was not a major line of defence for the Persian empire. On the negative side, there was little opportunity for the inhabitants to improve their lot.

The subsistence economy perpetuated itself without the means for radical change. Some stimulus from Phoenician and Samarian culture is evident: Yehud was not so isolated that its citizens were ignorant of developments in the wider world, but the influence was rather less than in some other places.

### 15.3. *A Province in the Persian Empire*

Although we have sources providing data on the first two or three decades of Persian rule, the sequence of events is far from clear. The alleged decree of Cyrus permitting—even commanding—the Jews to rebuild the temple and permitting them to return cannot be considered authentic. On the other hand, there does seem to have been a general policy of allowing deportees to return and to re-establish cult sites. Whether the Jews had to apply for permission to do so, we cannot say, but if it was required, permission was likely to have been granted without undue difficulties. In any case, the initiative lay with the Jews themselves: the various arguments that it was the result of the Persian administration or Persian policy have not been found convincing. It seems that there was a trickle of returnees over a number of years, perhaps even many decades, but there was no mass return. The archaeology shows no evidence of a sudden expansion in settlement, and the population was only about 30,000 at its greatest. We have no credible evidence that there was any particular interest in Yehud or that it received special favours from the emperor or other high Persian officials.

Yet Judah was a province in the satrapy of Ebir-nari and a component of the wider Persian empire. It can be shown that Judah had its own governors for part of the time and was referred to as the ‘province of Judah’ (*Y<sup>e</sup>hūd m<sup>e</sup>dīntā*), the present indication being that this arrangement dated from the beginning of the Persian period, not just the time of Nehemiah in the mid-fifth century. The main task was to collect the taxes which were set by high administrators, even by the king himself. Even with its own governor, however, the priests in general and the high priest in particular played a major role in the leadership of the community. The succession of high priests is especially important for this reason. Judah had some of the characteristics of a temple state in that the temple and priesthood were prominent (whether formally or informally) in the administrative apparatus. Thus, the structure of administration initiated in the early post-exilic period was to continue for much of the history of the country during the Second Temple period.

Our sources for the early Persian period focus on the rebuilding of the temple and the re-establishment of the sacrificial cult. Despite the alleged Cyrus decree we have no indication that the Persians were interested one way or the other. It was the Jews themselves who wanted the temple and set out to restore it. But the laying of the foundations of the temple is ascribed—confusingly—to two different individuals at two different times, Sheshbazzar in the first year or two of Cyrus, and Zerubbabel at the beginning of Darius I’s reign. Sheshbazzar was apparently the first governor of Judah in the new regime and may have taken some steps toward the rebuilding of the temple, but it was under Zerubbabel and Joshua that serious work got under way. Yet the almost universal assumption that the temple was completed

in February or March 516 BCE must be firmly resisted. The human and material resources to finish the building in such a short time were simply not available. All we can say is that the temple was rebuilt. A date of about 500 BCE for the completion is a reasonable guess, but it is still a guess.

#### **15.4. *Reformers or Bigots?***

From all we can tell, the description of Judah as an out-of-the-way, rather poor province trying to get on with life in the relative peace of the Persian empire lasted for about 50–75 years. It may be that our ignorance masks a whole tangle of infighting, community division, and/or class struggle during this period (as some have proposed). But the clear balance of probability is that the integration of returnees went on peacefully. The only contrary indication is found in the dubious picture of Ezra 4–6. From the information available the people's first concern was to make a living in less-than-ideal circumstances. The temple and cult took a significant amount of resources, but they seem to have been central to the community and given wide moral—if not always financial—support. There had been squabbles in the priesthood, though these may have been basically settled by the Persian period (§10.3.1). The temple was finished perhaps around 500 BCE and acted as a natural centre to the community, with the high priest playing an important role in the provincial leadership (whether officially or unofficially). New settlers from Babylonia were tolerated and absorbed, if perhaps not positively welcomed in every case. The big events of world history—the struggle between Persia and Greece in 490 and 480, the revolt of Egypt, the machinations of satraps—all seem to have passed Yehud by, at least as far as our sources tell us.

This calm was shattered in the middle of the fifth century by a back-to-basics drive to make Judah religiously and culturally isolated. The aim seems to have been to purge the community of ‘foreign’ influences, perhaps even including spouses taken from outside the accepted endogamous pool of women. We know of this movement mainly because it was championed by Nehemiah himself who describes in his own NM the measures he took as the Persian-appointed governor. There seems to have been little purpose in Nehemiah’s rebuilding of Jerusalem’s wall for defensive purposes because Judah did not appear to have been a main area for defence for the Persians (§13.3.2). Without the wall they suffered ‘disgrace’ (*תְּפִלָּה* *herpā* [Neh. 2.17])—its value was mainly symbolic. But we also find that the leadership was settled in Jerusalem—perhaps by compulsion (Neh. 7.1–5; 11.1)—and Nehemiah used the wall to shut out the Phoenician traders on the sabbath (Neh. 13.22). Judging simply from what the text says, the function of the wall was primarily to keep the community leadership under supervision and to protect Jerusalem from outside influence. It was a key symbol of Jerusalem’s isolation—religious, cultural, and social.

Nehemiah also intervened in some cases of intermarriage with women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab (Neh. 13.23–27), and a grandson of the high priest’s marriage to a daughter of Sanballat (Neh. 13.28). One could argue that Nehemiah acted in the latter case simply out of pique at his enemy Sanballat, while the former

example may not have constituted very many people. Nevertheless, there are indications of concerted attempts (whether successful or not) to eliminate all such marriages. The main example is in the problematic Ezra tradition (Ezra 9–10) but there are other passages, including the narrative of the communal act that included Nehemiah's signature (Neh. 10).

These and some other events in the last half of the fifth century could be ascribed to the presence and promulgation of a newly codified law. According to the picture in Ezra–Nehemiah, Ezra brought a new law (at least, the reaction of the community to it is that it was new) that was then disseminated to the people. The investigation of the Ezra tradition found many difficulties and improbabilities in it, to the point that it was considered too problematic to use straightforwardly as a historical source. Furthermore, even though Ezra–Nehemiah treats Ezra as a second Moses, there were other traditions about the origin and giving of the law which do not feature Ezra at all. There is thus no reason to favour the tradition of Ezra as the lawgiver over other interpretations.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that the Torah and other writings that eventually became the Hebrew Bible were developing during the Persian period. Nehemiah 9–10 has many parallels with the Pentateuch (§4.3.1.2). Nehemiah's actions could be based on passages in the Pentateuch, though he makes few if any direct references to our present biblical text. When the high priest Jehohanan did not reply to the letter from the Elephantine community about rebuilding their temple, this might be because he believed from the biblical passages that there was only one place that Yhwh had chosen for his temple, Jerusalem. And there is the enigmatic Passover letter that some have interpreted as referring to a recently codified law. This is to a large extent speculation, since it is by no means certain that these various examples were based on a newly promulgated law, but this is definitely a possibility and would provide a rationale for a number of events presently unexplained. The problem is that we cannot be more precise about the development of the law than that it seems to have been in existence before the end of the Persian period (§14.3.4).

Regardless of the reason, it appears that the latter part of the fifth century (and apparently for the first time) saw a religious reaction to many of the practices of the people and serious attempts to restrict its social and commercial relations with those outside a very narrowly defined community. Those leading the attack may be referred to under the name of 'tremblers at the law' in several passages (Ezra 9.4; 10.3). The perspective of Ezra–Nehemiah is that this exclusion from acceptable company included even those Jews who were descended from those who had not been deported. The question of relations between the returnee Jews and the native Jews is complex one, but it has been suggested above (§12.6) that there was not a major breach between the two parts of the community in the early decades of the Persian period—whatever friction there may have been—contrary to what has often been assumed. But the new religious zeal of the late fifth century may have caused some Jews to anathematize their fellow Jews because they were not part of the *golah* community, leading to attempts to break up marriages between members of the two parts of Yehud's population.

It has been argued that Nehemiah came to Yehud because of a Persian commission and that his various activities were the specific furthering of Persian policy. He held a Persian office, of course, but the actions described do not fit easily with Persian policy. It is hard to see how Nehemiah's actions in curtailing commercial activities or splitting up marriages and sending the wives and children away could have promoted Persian interests. Nehemiah did this not because it was wanted by his Persian masters but because his position as governor allowed him a small amount of freedom to take certain initiatives without reference to the Persian administration. As long as his actions did not cause such problems that the Persians got concerned, he could have got away with it. If he collected the tribute and kept order in the province, his religious initiatives would have been overlooked. This is why his supposed reforms could have been only temporary and not very far-reaching in their effects. More drastic reforms could have reduced the revenue from the province, and he did not have the option to do that without permission—which was unlikely to have been given, as far as we can tell.

### **15.5. *The Final Century of Persian Rule***

A curtain comes down over events in Yehud apparently toward the end of Nehemiah's governorship, and we are left in the dark as to how the conflict developed and whether it was resolved, because of the silence of our sources. The last century of Persian rule is frustrating because the narrative sources come to an end. Yet the this period is also especially rich in artifactual evidence, and we have the curious episode of the high priest's killing his brother in the temple (§13.7). Contrary to a number of scholars, I have argued that the governor of Judah, Bogoses, and the high priest, Joannes, are the same as the individuals named in Aramaic papyri from Elephantine dated to 407 BCE.

As noted above, by no means everyone was convinced of the rightness of Nehemiah's programme. The upper echelons of Judaean society, including both the priests and the lay nobles, do not appear to have been very enamoured of Nehemiah's desire to isolate Judah and Jerusalem from the outside world. As soon as Nehemiah was off the scene, they took the opportunity to return things to the *status quo* (cf. Neh. 13.4-9). But who finally won out? In the absence of clear sources, we are left to inferences from the literature itself, and the indications we have are that these reforms were not universally welcomed (§13.4). The merchants are not likely to have taken kindly to measures that reduced their freedom and flexibility to trade with the Phoenicians, which is where money was to be made. The same would apply to farmers who had goods to sell on the international market. The nobles, the high priest and his family, and others seem to have gone along with Nehemiah only up to a point and to have ignored him on some issues when they could. If a new law book was behind his measures, the priests apparently did not always interpret it the way Nehemiah and the 'tremblers' did. Judging from Jewish history over the next couple of centuries, the more extreme of the religious reforms—that is, those that isolated the community and restricted its intercourse with the surrounding peoples—were abandoned by the community as a whole (cf. Grabbe 1998c), even if some continued to advocate them.

The book of Ezra–Nehemiah (probably finished in the third century) is evidence of the success of the reformers. Yet the books of Chronicles do not show a bias against Samaria and the region to the north of Judah. Haggai and Zechariah show no general hostility toward the ‘people of the land’—mainly those descended from the Jews not deported by the Babylonians. The debate must have rumbled on for many decades.

We need to be careful of simple dichotomies, however. It was not just a case of the followers of Nehemiah on the one side and those opposed on the other. The temple establishment (apparently containing many opponents of Nehemiah’s isolation programme) was keen to promote the concept of Jerusalem as the single appropriate Jewish temple. It also seems to have opposed many aspects of the ‘popular religion’ that had long been practised among the people. It promoted monotheism and was the prime mover in the creation of a written law. Thus, the priesthood and its followers had a good deal in common with the so-called ‘reformers’ yet without favouring the latter’s tactics of trying to isolate the Jewish community commercially, socially, and sexually.

The religious developments through the period fill out the picture a great deal. They show that the narrow religious intolerance was only one point of view. The development of a written law and scripture is possibly the most important single feature of Judaism during this period. Yet the production of a written law need not lead to the programme of isolation reflected in the Nehemiah and Ezra traditions; on the contrary, we have opposing tendencies in the developing scripture itself. There are the universalistic tendencies in Trito-Isaiah, Ruth, and Jonah that embrace a wide religious community. Questions of theodicy in Job and Jonah show people challenging the attitudes that lead to dogma, intolerance, and certainty about the mind of God. Finally, the Song of Songs shows freedom and equality between the sexes that must have been revolutionary for the time.

### **15.6. *The Real Importance of the Persian Period for Judaism***

In spite of the many gaps in our knowledge, we have more than enough data to recognize that the Persian period was one of the most crucial in the history of the Jewish people and the Jewish religion. It is not because Cyrus personally issued a decree authorizing—or even requiring—a rebuilding of the temple and permitting a return of exiles. It is not because Zerubbabel and Joshua led a mass return from the exile to an empty land. It is not because Darius paid for the temple cult and warned Judah’s enemies not to interfere. It is not because Ezra and Nehemiah came as reformers to purify the community and cult from sin and evil practices. It is not because Mordechai and Queen Esther saved the Jewish community from extinction. It is not because Jews were in high office or Persians kings lavished the Jews with wealth and favourable decrees over and above all other peoples of the empire.

The Persian period is important for the Jews because at that time the Jews were not important. Yehud was a small, backward province with a rural subsistence economy. Jerusalem, the only urban area, held still no more than a few thousand people at best. Judah did not occupy a strategic position from a geographical point

of view and contributed only a small amount to the imperial coffers. It could have disappeared from Persian history and no one would have noticed. The Persian period was important because it was a day of small things. Its accomplishments were not of might nor power but of the spirit.

Intellectual and religious developments began in the Persian period that were to become dominant in later Second Temple Judaism, some of which would carry over into rabbinic and then modern Judaism. Monotheism may already have existed in some circles before the post-exilic period, but it came to be widely disseminated in the Jewish communities in the Persian period. It was able to take its place by downgrading many other beings to the angelic ranks rather than eliminating them. The development of angelology and demonology seems to have progressed extensively before the coming of Alexander. The same applies to eschatology, both personal and cosmic, which was to be so important to later Judaism.

Yet it was in first and foremost in the area of scripture that the seeds of later Judaism were sown. It is true that Judaism remained a temple-centred religion for many centuries. But alongside temple worship was developing a 'religion of the book'. First in the Diaspora and then in Judah itself the written word came to be more and more the focus of religious practice until, with the temple destroyed, the book was the tangible possession still left with the Jews. Yet that book came about because some unknown individuals, probably a handful of temple personnel, took existing oral traditions, some written documents, stories and teachings, and began to put these together into a coherent theological narrative to tell their story—not 'just as it happened' but in a form that expressed what these traditions meant to them and their support group.

By the end of the Persian period this 'lawbook', made up of the Pentateuch, Joshua to 2 Kings, the prophetic books, and some other writings, had gained a certain authority and began the long process of becoming a religious canon. None of the other peoples of the Persian empire probably noticed, including the Persian overlords. This was one of the 'small things', so vital for later Judaism, to which the Persian period gave birth.

APPENDIX:  
THE QUESTION OF PERSIAN INFLUENCE  
ON JEWISH RELIGION AND THOUGHT

**H.H. Bailey** (1943) *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books*; **Barr** (1985) 'The Question of Religious Influence'; **Boyce** (1975–) *A History of Zoroastrianism*; (1979) *Zoroastrians*; (1984) 'On the Antiquity of Zoroastrian Apocalyptic'; (1987) *Zoroastrianism*; (1988) 'The Religion of Cyrus the Great'; **Boyce** (ed.) (1984) *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*; **Cereti** (1995) *The Zand-i Wahman Yasn*; **Collins** (1979) 'Persian Apocalypses'; **Duchesne-Guillemin** (1973) *Religion of Ancient Iran*; **Flusser** (1982) 'Hystaspes and John of Patmos'; **Frye** (1975) 'Qumran and Iran'; **Gershevitch** (1967) *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*; **Glasson** (1961) *Greek Influence in Jewish Eschatology*; **Gnoli** (2000) *Zoroaster in History*; **Hinnells** (1973) 'The Zoroastrian Doctrine'; (2000a) 'Postmodernism and the Study of Zoroastrianism'; (2000b) 'Zoroastrian Influence on Biblical Imagery'; (2000c) 'Zoroastrian Influence on Judaism and Christianity'; **Hultgård** (1979) 'Das Judentum in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit'; (1983) 'Forms and Origins of Iranian Apocalypticism'; (1991) 'Bahman Yasht'; (1999) 'Persian Apocalypticism'; **Insler** (1975) *The Gāthās of Zarathustra*; **Kobelski** (1981) *Melchizedek and Melchireša*; **H. Koch** (1977) *Die religiösen Verhältnisse der Dareioszeit*; **Kreyenbroek** (1985) *Sraoša in the Zoroastrian Tradition*; **Malandra** (1983) *An Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion*; **Shaked** (1972) 'Qumran and Iran'; (1984) 'Iranian Influence on Judaism'; (1990) 'Zoroastrian Polemics against Jews'; (1992) 'The Myth of Zurvan Cosmogony and Eschatology'; **Winston** (1965–66) 'The Iranian Component in the Bible, Apocrypha, and Qumran'.

The first problem faced in studying the question of Persian influence is that access to Iranian scholarship is particularly difficult for the non-specialist. There are a number of recent guides from Iranian scholars aware of the problem, in some cases by scholars who know both Persian and Judaic scholarship. A good overall guide with bibliography is given by Shaked (1984), though he is focusing on a later period. The main research tool on religion is the enormous history by Boyce (1975–), as well as her shorter version (1979); however, one should be aware that Iranologists disagree considerably even on basic points, so that Boyce's judgments need to be compared with those of other experts. The translation of many of the Iranian sources can be found in Malandra (1983) and Boyce ([ed.] 1984, along with a useful commentary). The all-important *Gathas* are available in an edition and English translation (Insler 1975).

The question of Iranian influence on Judaism appears periodically, though a full-scale debate, with specialists from both sides participating fully, has yet to take

place. The result is a set of scattered and individual studies on aspects of the question—often helpful and even illuminating—but no systematic study of the issue. Only some general comments can be made here, with references to some of the available studies. There is general agreement that Persian religion and tradition had its influence on Judaism over the centuries. The question is where this influence was and which of the developments in Judaism can be ascribed to the Iranian side as opposed to the effect of Greek or other cultures or even purely to internal developments.

### ***Methodological Considerations in Comparative Study***

There are a number of points to consider:

***The Question of Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism in the Persian Period.*** The date of the priest-prophet range from about the twelfth–fifteenth century BCE (Boyce) to the sixth century (H. Koch 1977: 171–74; Malandra 1983: 16–17; Gnoli 2000, who gives a lengthy discussion and critique of the various positions). The next question is what form of religion was promoted by the Persian nobility at the highest level of government. Here there is no consensus. It has been argued by some eminent scholars that the Persian kings were already Zoroastrian adherents from the beginning. Boyce has no doubts that they were, already from the time of Cyrus (e.g. 1988), while H. Koch (e.g. 1977: 176) believes that Darius I followed this belief, but others are more cautious. The general view seems to be that we cannot be sure (HPE: 93–94).

***The Problems of Determining Beliefs in the Early Zoroastrian Community.*** The early Persian literature is often difficult to understand because of philological and textual problems; also, a substantial number of books of the *Avesta* has been lost over the centuries.

***The Question of Dating the Literature and Theological Developments.*** The preserved literature is by and large the product of the post-Islamic period in its present form (H.H. Bailey 1943). It is not always easy to determine what is early and what is late. For example, scholars are agreed that certain of the *Gathas* (the earliest section of the *Avesta*) go back to Zoroaster himself so that his teachings can often be determined. On the other hand, many of the areas of interest for Judaism were not pronounced on by Zoroaster in the extant authentic sayings and can be found only in very late sources such as the *Bundahišn* and the *Denkart*. Boyce has argued that much of this material is early, even though found only in late sources, because it was preserved unchanged in the oral tradition (e.g. 1987: 10). This may be so, but biblical and Judaic scholars would generally be cautious here since such claims were once made about biblical traditions but are now generally rejected. In addition, if large sections of the *Avesta* could be lost, how certain can we be that what is left has been passed down unchanged? Yet there is agreement among Iranologists that certain beliefs and traditions do represent an early stage of Persian religion and are legitimate for comparison with Second Temple Judaism.

**The Channel of Transmission for Such Influence.** Jews were a part of the Persian empire, but one should be sceptical about the extent of religious influence caused by contact with the administration (Shaked 1984: 324-25). More likely would be the experience of individual Jews living among Persians in Persia and Babylonia. Another source which is often overlooked is the Greek accounts of Persians and Persian religion (Barr: 218-20). The Greeks were fascinated by such ‘Eastern sages’ as the ‘magi’ and wrote about them. It may in some cases be these or other accounts in Greek which exerted its influence on Jewish writers rather than direct contact with Zoroastrians.

**The Difficulty of Demonstrating Influence.** Influence is most likely to have taken place in areas of Judaism which already showed some affinity with Persian thought. However, this makes demonstration more difficult, whether to prove or to refute.

### ***Alleged Persian Influence on Judaism***

With these points in mind we shall now survey some of the areas where Persian influence as been alleged:

**Dualism.** The one characteristic perhaps most widely cited for Zoroastrianism is that of dualism, between good and evil and especially between the divine twins of Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu. It occurs in a cosmological sense as well, with the ordered cosmos on one side and chaos on the other. Biblical scholars will immediately see a parallel with the original concept of creation in a number of passages (Gen. 1; Isa. 27.1; 51.9-10). Yet it is likely that the two concepts arose independently, though it is also possible that Iranian tradition has absorbed some aspects of the views about creation from Semitic tradition at a very early stage in its history.

An example of later influence of Persian dualism on Judaism seems to be attested at Qumran (Shaked 1972; Frye 1975). Although various points in Qumran theology have been suggested, one of those often mentioned is the dualism of the Scrolls: the Sons of Light vs. the Sons of Darkness, the good angels vs. the wicked angels, and so forth. Sometimes this has been rejected with the assertion that the absolute dualism of Zoroastrianism does not compare with the Jewish belief in the sovereignty of God over the whole of creation. However, the Zoroastrian belief is actually closer than many realize (Shaked 1984: 315-16; 1990: 86-87). While a strong dualism had developed by the Sassanian period (perhaps as a polemical response to Judaism) the original view of Zoroaster set out in the genuine *Gathas* seems not to refer directly to dualism nor is there much in the *Avesta* as a whole. Thus, Iranian in-fluence of some sort on the Qumran writings has been widely accepted (cf. Kobelski 1981 for a significant example).

**Image of the Deity.** A number of the writers on Yehud have made comparisons between Yhwh and Ahura Mazda, or at least alleged that the Jews and/or Persians compared or equated them. This might at first seem strange since the monotheistic (probably by this time, at least in certain circles) Judaism was quite different from

the dualistic Zoroastrianism. As just noted, however, early Zoroastrianism seemed to make little reference to dualism, even if it was present from the beginning. From the Jewish point of view, the dual nature of the Iranian deity may not have been evident. On the other hand, most of the characteristics we associate with Yhwh have clear roots in the earlier Israelite tradition and are not peculiar to Ahura Mazda even where parallels can be pointed out.

***Eschatology, Including the Resurrection and Judgment.*** This area has occasioned a good deal of debate because of doubts about the antiquity of some of the main Zoroastrian eschatological and apocalyptic texts (Boyce 1984; Hultgård 1979; 1999; Hinnells 2000b). Boyce, for example, claims that the eschatological views go back to Zoroaster himself. While Hinnells agrees that they are early, he looks to the turn of the era for most influence. If so, most of the eschatological influence (even though it could still be called ‘early’, i.e., much earlier than the extant texts) is still post-Achaemenid. There is also the question of weighing possible Iranian influence against that from the Hellenic side. Note some individual aspects of eschatology:

- Belief in the immortality of the soul (attested in Judaism from at least the third century BCE) looks similar to that found in Persian religion, and one could also make a case for a native development from the Israelite tradition. In the end, though, the most likely source (or the source of greatest influence, at least) is Greek thought (cf. Glasson 1961).
- On the other hand, resurrection of the body appears to have its closest parallels in Iranian tradition and probably developed under stimulus from that direction (cf. Barr 1985: 223–24).
- The elaborate angelology and demonology of later Judaism developed over time, but its roots are in the Persian period (§11.3.2). An argument has been made that the Hebrew concept of angels grew out of the messenger deities of the Semitic pantheon, as well as the members of the divine council. Thus, elements within Israelite religion were capable of leading eventually to the elaborate structure of the angelic and demonic world. Yet the Jewish angelology and demonology of the Second Temple period has interesting parallels with the Zoroastrian ‘good spirits’ (*Amesha Spentas*) and ‘wicked spirits’ (*Angra Mainyus*). Here again one might well think of a Persian stimulus to a development already in process rather than borrowings as such (cf. Kobelski 1981: 84–98).

In sum, there is widespread agreement of some Persian influence on Judaism, but it is disputed—fiercely in some cases—as to how much, how early, and what particular areas. A full treatment by a specialist or specialists is very much needed.

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## INDEXES

### INDEX OF REFERENCES

Old Testament		12.48	168	22.27	175
<i>Genesis</i>		13.11-15	235	22.28-29	176
1	336, 363	18	336	22.30	176, 180
2-3	338	19-24	339	23.1-3	177, 180
2.2-3	336	20-24	105	23.4-5	177
3	244	20.2-14	174	23.6-8	177, 180
4.25	338	20.8-11	336	23.9	179
4.26	338	20.19-23.33	174	23.10-11	178, 180,
5.21-24	344	20.20	180		222
5.24	338, 340	20.21-23	175	23.12	178
6.1-4	344	21.1-11	179, 180	23.13-14	178
6.9	338, 340	21.2-6	181	23.13	176, 180
6.10	338	21.2	223	23.14-17	176, 180
12-25	336	21.12-14	177, 180	23.18	178, 180
12.2-3	338	21.15	178, 180	23.19	176, 177,
13.14-17	338	21.16	177		180
15.18	338, 340	21.17	178, 180	23.20-33	178
17	338	21.18-19	177	29.38-42	219
17.5	338	21.20-21	179	30.11-16	284, 337
21-22	338	21.22-25	177	32	226
22.15-18	338	21.26-27	179	34.19-20	235
24-28	338	21.28-32	178	39.1-31	338, 339
25	338	21.33-34	177	40	217
27-35	338	21.35-36	178		
32.23-33	243	21.37-22.3	177, 180	<i>Leviticus</i>	
35	338	22.4	177	1-16	100, 229
37	338	22.5	176	1-7	218
39-50	338	22.6-12	176	1.3-4	217
42-50	338	22.15-16	179, 180	2.14-16	235
50.25	338	22.17	175, 180	6.12-16	219
		22.18	179, 180	6.20	219
<i>Exodus</i>		22.19	176, 180	7.19	219
3.2-5	243	22.20	176, 179	7.29-36	235
3.7	217	22.21-23	180	11-15	218, 230
7-14	339	22.24-26	178, 180	11	100, 217
12	187	22.24	182	12.4-6	217

<i>Leviticus</i> (cont.)		22.29-34	178	8	229
12.6	184	22.35-37	177	12	226
16	222, 335	22.39-55	180	12.3	339
16.8-10	244	22.39-46	179	12.7	339
16.20-22	244	22.47-55	179	14.6-38	339
16.26	244	23	176, 180,	15	220
17-26	174		220, 335	16	230, 339
17.2-9	176, 180,	23.1-3	178	17.5	229
	182	23.3-8	336	17.18-21	230
17.10-14	175	23.3	220	18	229, 339
17.15-16	176, 180	23.5-8	337	18.8-32	182, 207
18	174, 179,	23.9-14	221	18.12-18	235
	180	23.23-25	221	18.12-13	337
18.24-30	336	23.24-25	335	18.14-18	337
19.3	178, 180	23.26-32	335	18.19-20	311
19.4	177	23.33-36	337	18.20-24	208
19.5-8	180	23.34-36	222	18.21-32	235, 337
19.9-10	178, 180	23.36	222	19	336
19.11	179	23.39-43	222, 335,	20-36	336
19.12	176		337	25	339
19.13	178-80	23.40	222	25.13	339
19.14	175	23.42-43	222	28-29	220
19.15-16	180	24.1-9	177	28.1-6	221
19.17-18	176	24.10-23	175	28.3-8	219
19.19	178	25	223	28.11-15	221
19.20-22	179, 180	25.1-7	337	35.1-8	235
19.23-25	176	25.2-7	178, 180,		
19.26-28	175		222		<i>Deuteronomy</i>
19.26	175, 254	25.8-17	177, 223	4.35	241
19.29	179, 180	25.10-11	223	4.39	241
19.30	178	25.13-28	206	5.6-18	174
19.31	175, 180,	25.18-22	178, 180	5.7	241
	254	25.19-22	222	6.4	241
19.32	176	25.23-24	223	7.1-8	336
19.33-34	179	25.47-55	223	7.3	336
19.35-36	177	26	103, 175,	8.8	202
20.2-5	176, 180		245	9	226
20.6	176, 180,	26.1	177	12-26	174
	254	26.34-35	103	12.1-7	176, 180
20.7-8	176	26.43	103	12.8-18	180
20.9	178, 180	27	235	12.8-16	178, 180
20.10-21	179, 180	27.14-25	207	12.14	202
20.27	176, 180,	27.16-24	223	12.17-19	179
	254	27.26-27	235	12.20-25	176, 180
21	174, 178	27.30-33	182	12.26-28	178
21.10	230			12.29-13.1	176, 180
22.17-25	219	<i>Numbers</i>		13.2-6	176, 180,
22.23-28	177	3-4	229		254

13.7-19	176, 180	22.8	178	10.12-14	339
13.17-19	235	22.9-10	178	15	83
14.1-21	176, 180	22.12	179	21.13-19	226
14.22-29	182, 235	22.13-29	180	24.33	226
14.22-26	179	22.13-22	179		
14.27-29	179, 311	22.23-29	179	<i>Judges</i>	
15.1-3	178, 180, 222, 337	23.1 23.2-9	180 180	1.10-15	339
15.4-11	178, 180	23.3-4	336	3.10	188
15.12-18	179, 180	23.4-7	313, 336	3.30	188
15.12-15	181, 222	23.4-5	336	4.3	188
15.19-23	176	23.10-15	177	5.1-12	249
16	221	23.16-17	179, 180	5.20	249
16.1-17	176, 180, 220	23.18-19 23.20-21	179, 180 178, 180,	6.11-22 8.28 13.1	243 188 188
16.1-8	337		182	13.2-23	243
16.12-15	179	23.22-24	179	15.20	188
16.13-15	335, 337	23.25-26	176, 180	16.31	188
16.16-19	175	24.1-5	180	20-21	282
16.18-20	177, 180	24.1-4	179	20.28	226
16.21-22	177	24.5	179		
17.1	179, 180	24.6	177	<i>Ruth</i>	
17.2-7	176, 180	24.7	177	4.1-12	182
17.8-13	177, 180, 230	24.8-9 24.10-13	175 177	<i>I Samuel</i>	
17.14-20	177	24.14-15	172, 180,	1.11	339
18.1-8	179		205	4.4	244
18.1-2	235	24.16	177, 180	7.9-11	339
18.4	235	24.17-22	178, 180	7.10	339, 340
18.9-22	180, 254	25	182	7.16-17	339
18.9-14	92, 175	25.1-3	177, 180	8-10	339
18.15-22	175	25.4	178	8.14	206
18.15	336	25.5-10	105, 179, 180, 182	9.9 12.3-5	339 339
19.1-13	175				
19.14	177	25.11-12	177	12.3-4	338, 340
19.15-21	180	25.13-16	177	16	339
19.17	230	25.17-19	175	17.34-37	339
20.1-20	176	26.1-11	176, 235	17.49-50	339
21.1-9	178	28	103, 245	18.7	339
21.5	230	30.11-14	103	18.29	219
21.10-17	180	30.15-20	103	22.20	225
21.10-14	179	31.9-13	230	28	339
21.15-17	179	31.24-26	230		
21.18-21	178, 180	33.8	230	<i>2 Samuel</i>	
21.22-23	175	33.10	230	5-12	339
22.1-4	177			5.22-25	249
22.5	175	<i>Joshua</i>		6.2	244
22.6-7	175	10.11	339	7	339

<i>2 Samuel</i> (cont.)		15	255	4	205
8.17	152, 225	16.15	219	4.14	205
15.24-36	225	17.6	289	4.18	171
17.15	230	17.17-24	340	4.21	205
19.12	230	17.21-23	339	4.22	171
20.25	152, 230	17.23-24	289	4.23	205
22.11	244	17.24-34	87	5.27-41	228
24.1	244	17.34-40	87	5.29-41	226
24.15-17	243	18-19	340	6	227
		18.18	152	6.1-15	228
<i>1 Kings</i>		18.37	152	6.3-15	226
1	225	19.2	152	6.33	227
2.26-27	225	19.5-18	340	6.34	227
4.3	152	19.5-7	340	6.35-38	226
5.9-14	339	19.14-34	340	6.39	227
5.14	339	19.19-21	340	6.50-53	226
6	339	19.35-36	340	7.1-5	226
6.1	188	20.1-11	340	9	227
6.23-28	244	20.3	79	9.1-17	83
6.29	244	20.20	340	9.26	227
6.32	244	22-23	340	9.33	227
6.35	244	22.3	152	15.16	340
8.7-9	217	22.4	231	16	339
8.34	245	22.8-14	235	16.4-6	340
8.46	245	22.8-10	152	18.16	152
10.1	339	22.8	231	21.1	244
10.21	339	22.12	152	21.16-20	243
10.23-24	339	23.4	230, 235	23-26	226
10.27	339	24.13	217	23-25	227
11.1-5	339	24.14	285	23.3-5	227
12.1-19	339	25	285	23.4	230
12.20	339	25.1-3	285	23.5	339, 341
12.25-13.5	339	25.8	188	23.24-32	230
17-18	340	25.12	285	23.31-32	341
18.38	340	25.13-17	217, 277	24.1-19	230
		25.19	152	24.3	226
<i>2 Kings</i>		25.22-26	285	24.6	152, 153,
1.10	340	25.22-23	282		226
1.12	340	52.28-30	285	24.20-31	230
2.9	340			25	224, 230
2.11-12	340			25.1-7	227
4.2	289	1-9	99, 170,	26	230
4.10	289		239	26.1-11	227
11-12	231	2.3	171	26.29-32	153
11	235	2.17	171		
12.8-11	235	2.34	171		
12.11	152	2.55	153	2 <i>Chronicles</i>	
13.20-21	340	3.17-18	276	7.6	339
14.23-27	95	3.19	62	8.13	222
				15.3	229

16.12	255		135, 136,	2.55-58	80
19.5-11	230		144, 149,	2.55-57	227
19.11	230		200, 201,	2.59	170
20.14-19	227		206, 227,	2.63	230, 254
20.14-17	224		274, 278,	2.68-70	80
23	235		284, 315	2.70	170, 227
24.4-11	235	2.1-72	270	3-6	219, 270,
24.11	152	2.1-2	80, 278		340
26.11	153	2.1	80, 286	3-5	147
26.16-21	226	2.2	82, 149,	3-4	278
26.16-20	235		170, 331	3	72, 81,
28.18	138	2.3-35	80		219, 224,
31.10	230	2.3-20	80		276
32.30	340	2.3-17	82	3.1-3	75
34.13	153	2.4-17	81	3.1	170, 187
34.14-22	235	2.6	165	3.2-6	335
34.15	152	2.10	170	3.2	334
34.18	152	2.14	149	3.4	75, 222,
34.20	152	2.21-35	80		337
35-36	84	2.21	80, 135	3.5	187, 221
35.1-36.21	83	2.22-23	80	3.6	187, 276
35.3	217	2.22	135	3.7	204, 279,
36.20-21	286	2.23	135		284
36.21	245	2.24-26	80	3.8	187
		2.24	135	3.10-13	224
Ezra		2.25	135	4-7	72, 188,
1-6	73-75,	2.26	135		289, 353
	270, 271,	2.27-28	80	4-6	72, 73, 78,
	276, 278,	2.27	135		87, 271,
	284, 286,	2.28	135		279, 325,
	327, 334	2.29-35	80		356
1	72, 276,	2.29	135	4-5	283
	328, 353	2.30	135	4	226, 288,
1.1-4	270, 273	2.31	135		289, 315
1.1	188, 273	2.32	135	4.1-4	286
1.2-4	76, 78,	2.33	135, 138	4.1	288
	272, 276	2.34	135	4.2	288, 289
1.2	242	2.35	135	4.3	273
1.3	273	2.36-58	80, 227	4.4	170, 271
1.4	284	2.36-39	80, 227,	4.5	273
1.6	170		230	4.6	170, 271
1.7-11	217	2.40-58	75	4.7-22	293
1.8-11	75, 148	2.40	80, 227	4.7	149, 271
1.8	97, 273	2.41	80, 224,	4.8-22	301
1.9-11	270, 276,		227	4.8-16	289
	277	2.42	80, 227	4.8-9	149
2-5	231	2.43-54	227	4.9-16	78
2	72, 80-83,	2.43	80	4.10	170, 289

<i>Ezra (cont.)</i>		7-10	75, 76, 288, 324, 325, 329	7.26 7.27-28 7.27	333 326 333
4.11-16	76		330	7.72	170
4.16	170	7-9	72, 337	7.73	170
4.17-22	76, 78	7-8	73, 77, 325, 329,	8-10	329, 334 80, 328
4.17	149	7	330, 332-	8.1	81
4.23	149		34, 342	8.2-14	81
4.24	188		325	8.2	226
5.1-6.15	278		149	8.3	81
5.1-2	278, 279, 282		230	8.4	165
5.1	85	7.1	325, 333	8.5	81
5.5	150	7.5	188	8.14	150, 170
5.7-17	76, 78	7.6	170, 227	8.15-20	75, 333
5.8	135, 141	7.7-8	187	8.17	170, 327
5.9	150	7.7	187	8.21-23	327
5.11	242	7.8	325, 333	8.24-34	333
5.12	242	7.9	76-78,	8.24-31	328
5.13-16	217	7.10	316, 325	8.25	170, 284
5.14-16	75, 276, 277	7.12-26	242, 332,	8.26-28	75
5.14-15	277	7.12	333	8.31	187
5.14	148		77, 325,	8.33	75, 226
5.16	276	7.13	332, 333	8.35	170
6	72, 73, 281		75, 325, 332, 333	8.36	326
6.2-5	78, 274, 275		9-10	72, 73, 89, 101, 151,	
6.2	274	7.15-17	333	185, 259,	
6.3-5	76	7.15	77, 325,	286, 314,	
6.3	274		326	315, 328,	
6.4	274	7.16	77, 284,	330, 333,	
6.5	274		326	336	
6.6-12	76-78	7.17	77, 326	9	103, 310,
6.7-8	151	7.18	77, 326		329
6.7	150, 170	7.19-22	326	9.1-2	314
6.8	150	7.19	332	9.1	170, 286
6.9	242	7.20-23	333	9.2	150, 170,
6.10	242	7.20-22	332		286
6.14-22	281	7.21	77, 242,	9.3-15	314
6.14	150		333	9.4	328, 357
6.15	188, 284	7.22	330	9.6-15	236, 286
6.16-17	72	7.23	242	9.8-15	247
6.17	170	7.24	77, 144,	9.9	75, 247,
6.18	72, 335		227, 326,		313, 328
6.19-23	75		332, 333	9.11-12	286
6.19-22	335, 337	7.25-26	326, 333	9.11	336
6.19	187	7.25	77, 333,	9.13	247
6.21	170, 286		335	9.14	247, 286

9.15	247	1.3	135, 292	3.15	136
10	80, 151, 286, 293, 314	1.4-11 1.4 1.5	236 242 242, 246	3.16-32 3.16 3.17-18	82 136 136
10.2	286	1.7	187	3.17	149
10.3	246, 328, 357	1.11-2.20 1.11	145 79, 80,	3.19-21 3.19	82 136
10.5	170		294	3.20	231
10.7	314	2-3	72	3.21	231
10.8	150	2	293	3.27	136
10.9	187	2.1-20	79, 80, 294	3.30 3.31-32	82 205
10.10	286	2.1	187	3.33-7.4	146
10.11	286	2.4	236, 242	3.33-4.17	79, 80, 294
10.16-17	315	2.5	296		
10.16	187	2.8	296	4	72, 301
10.17	187, 286	2.10	298, 300	4.1-7.4	146
10.18-44	81, 227, 315	2.11-16 2.16	299, 310 150, 204	4.1-2 4.3	73 236
10.18-22	230	2.17-18	299	4.6-7	299
10.18	286	2.17	356	4.6	299
10.20-43	314	2.19	164, 165, 300	4.8	150, 172, 204, 299,
10.20-22	81		242		310
10.23-24	81	2.20	340	4.9	236
10.29	81	3-4	81-83, 135, 137, 143, 144,	4.13-15 4.13	310 150, 172,
10.30	165	3	205, 229, 301, 302, 311	5	204 151, 172, 206, 207,
10.34	81		79, 80, 145, 294		229, 303, 305, 310
10.40	170		82	5.1-19	79, 80, 294
10.44	286		231	5.1-5	206
11.4	170		136	5.2-5	172, 206
11.25	170		149	5.5	172
12.47	170	3.1-32	136, 301, 310	5.7-8	303
13.2	170		231	5.7	150, 172,
13.12	170	3.1-15	136		204
13.16	170	3.1	136	5.12	170
13.17	170	3.2	136	5.12	303
		3.4	149	5.14-18	173, 296,
<i>Nehemiah</i>		3.5	136, 139	5.15	303
1-7	148		82, 165	5.17	141
1.1-7.73	80	3.7	136	5.17	150
1.1-7.72	80		136	6	72, 73, 299
1.1-2.9	72	3.8	205		
1.1-10	145	3.9	136, 139		
1.1-4	79, 80, 292, 294	3.11 3.12	136, 139		
1.1-3	293	3.13	136		
1.1	187	3.14-18	139		
1.2	170, 301	3.14	136, 139		

<i>Nehemiah</i> (cont.)		7.27	135	8.14-17	222, 337
6.1-19	79, 80,	7.28	135	8.14	187
	294	7.29	135	8.17	334
6.1-2	164	7.30	135	8.18	222, 334
6.2-4	299	7.31	135	9-10	72, 73,
6.2	138, 299	7.32	135		151, 245,
6.3	243	7.33	135		286, 313-
6.6-9	300	7.34-42	80		15, 335-
6.6	164	7.34	135		37, 343,
6.7	300	7.35	135		357
6.10-14	251	7.37	135, 138	9	103, 310,
6.10-13	300	7.38	135		313, 315,
6.14	184	7.39-60	227		337
6.15	187, 301	7.39-42	227, 230	9.1-3	335
6.17-19	231, 300,	7.43	227	9.1-2	335, 336
	311	7.44	224, 227	9.1	335
6.17	172	7.45	227	9.2	286, 335
6.18-19	301	7.46-55	227	9.3-4	335
7	72, 80, 82,	7.57-59	227	9.3	336, 337
	83, 135-	7.65	230, 254	9.4-5	82
	37, 144,	7.69-71	80	9.5-37	236
	149, 200,	7.72-10.40	246	9.6-37	245, 335
	201, 206,	7.72-8.12	83	9.6	336
	227, 274,	7.72	227	9.7-8	336
	278, 284,	7.73-8.12	83	9.8	246
	315	7.73	187	9.9-11	336
7.1-5	79, 80,	8-10	334	9.10-12	336
	294, 301,	8-9	222	9.12-21	336
	302, 356	8	72, 75, 80,	9.14	336
7.1	149, 187		84, 85,	9.22	336
7.2	301		151, 324,	9.23-25	336
7.4-5	302		325, 332-	9.26-37	336
7.4	302		36	9.30	336
7.5-10.39	146	8.1-12	222	9.32	246
7.5	172, 204	8.1-3	334	9.36-37	313
7.6-7	80	8.1	187, 227,	10	72, 80, 82,
7.6	80, 135,		334, 336,		313-15,
	286		337		337, 357
7.7	82, 149,	8.2	187, 335	10.1-30	314, 335
	170, 331	8.3	334	10.1-27	82
7.8-42	80	8.7-8	334	10.2-28	82
7.8-24	80, 82	8.8	334	10.2-9	82
7.11	165	8.9-12	334	10.2	151, 296
7.15	150	8.9	296, 335	10.3-9	82
7.25-38	80	8.11	335	10.3	82, 331
7.25	80, 135	8.13-18	84, 89	10.4-8	82
7.26-33	80	8.13-17	334	10.5	82
7.26	135	8.14-18	222	10.8	82

10.10-14	82	11.33-35	138	305, 308,
10.15-28	82	11.35	205	312, 358
10.15-20	82	12	82, 231	13.9-10 307
10.15-17	81	12.1-26	82	13.10-14 89, 305
10.21-28	82	12.1-7	82, 230	13.10-13 228, 236,
10.25	335	12.1	82, 331	311, 337
10.28	149	12.2-4	82	13.10-12 236
10.29-30	335	12.2	82	13.10 208
10.29	227, 286,	12.4-5	82	13.11 150
	313	12.6-7	82	13.13-21 204
10.30	313	12.8-9	82, 227	13.13 153
10.31-40	335	12.10-11	329	13.15-22 221, 305,
10.31-32	286	12.10	231, 232,	306, 311,
10.31	336		288	336
10.32	336, 337	12.12-21	82	13.15-18 89
10.33-34	219, 284	12.14	82	13.15-17 311
10.33	337	12.22-23	231	13.17 172
10.35	219, 222,	12.22	82, 188, 231, 232,	79, 80, 294
	337			
10.36-40	208		288, 329	13.21 312
10.36	337	12.23	231	13.22 356
10.37-39	235, 236	12.24-25	227	13.23-31 73, 89,
10.37	337	12.24	224	313
10.38-40	235, 236	12.26	82	13.23-28 307
10.38	337	12.27-47	224	13.23-27 356
10.39-40	227	12.27-43	229, 302,	13.23 170
11	30, 82, 227, 302	12.31-43	311 80	13.25 13.27-31 314, 336 79, 80,
11.1-12.26	72	12.31-32	79, 80,	294
11.1-2	80, 302		294	13.28-30 89
11.1	83, 308, 356	12.33 12.36	84 84	13.28 130, 157, 158, 231,
11.3	83, 135, 227	12.37-40	79, 80, 294	232, 305, 313, 356
11.4-19	83	12.40	150	13.29 246
11.10-14	83, 230	12.44-13.31	304	19.2-5 304
11.15-18	83, 227	12.44-47	72	19.27-31 304
11.19	227	12.44	337	30.36-37 219
11.20	83	13	72, 305	
11.21	227	13.1-4	307	<i>Esther</i>
11.22-23	224, 227	13.1-3	73, 313	1.22 273
11.22	83	13.1-2	336	2.12 273
11.23	83	13.1	231, 337	8.9 273
11.25-36	83, 136, 138, 143, 144	13.3 13.4-31 13.4-17	337 80, 306 79, 80, 294, 304	<i>Job</i> 1-2 1.6-12 2.1-7 244
11.25-30	165			
11.31	83	13.4-9	219, 301,	244

<i>Job (cont.)</i>		24.1-16	93	56-66	91, 251,
26-27	345	24.10-12	93		257, 258,
42.7	345	24.21-22	93		288
		24.21	93	56	96
<i>Psalms</i>		24.26-25.9	93	56.2-6	221
2	280	25-27	93	56.3-7	92
18.11	244	25.2-3	93	56.3	312
50	224	25.8	93	56.6-8	312
73-83	224	25.9	93	57.1-10	259
74.8	236	26.1-8	93	57.3-13	91, 92,
82.1	243	26.1	93		255
82.2	243	26.5	93	57.5	255
105.26	226	26.11-27.6	93	57.7	255
110	280	26.14	93	57.13-19	91
115.10	226	26.19-21	248	58.12	91
115.12	226	26.19	93, 96	59	260
118	226	27.1	93, 363	59.1-21	91
118.3	226	27.2-6	93	60	92
128	248	27.2	93	60.1-22	91
		27.6	93	60.7	91
<i>Proverbs</i>		27.10-11	93	60.13	91
1-9	101, 102,	27.12-13	93	60.17	91
	184, 185	27.12	93	62.6-9	91
1.8	102	27.13	93	62.8-9	91
6.20	102	36-37	340	63.1-6	92
6.32-35	182	37.5-7	340	64.9-10	91
8	243	37.9-36	91	65.1-16	92
8.22-31	102	37.14-34	340	65.1-12	253
31	184, 185	37.35-36	340	65.1-7	92, 255
31.1-9	102	38.1-8	340	65.11-12	92
31.10-31	102, 185	40-55	91	65.13-16	259, 328
31.16	185	40.1-11	245, 315	65.17-26	248
		41.21-29	255	65.17-25	92
<i>Isaiah</i>		42.9	255	66.1-5	328
1-39	91	43.9	255	66.1-4	259
2-27	93	44.7-8	255	66.3-4	92, 255
2-12	93	44.25	255	66.5	259
2.12-17	249	45.20-21	255	66.15-16	92
6.1-2	244	46.9	241	66.17	92, 255,
6.11-13	247	46.10	255		259
7.3	247	47.9	255	66.18-24	92
13-23	93	47.12-13	255		
14.9-15	248	48.3-8	255	<i>Jeremiah</i>	
22.9-11	340	48.12-13	241	1.1	273
24-27	91, 93,	48.14-16	255	1.13-15	249
	248, 252,	51.9-23	245	3.16	217
	258, 259	51.9-10	363	4.5-8	249
24	93	55-66	260, 353	4.11-17	249

4.19-21	249	10.18-19	88	<i>Joel</i>	
5.15-17	249	10.18	279	1-2	94
6.1-5	249	11.22-23	88, 279	1.9	94
6.22-26	249	13.5	249	1.13	94
8.3	246	16	106	1.15	249
15.1-3	246	23.40	243	1.16	94
18	95	26.7	250	2.11	249
18.19-23	79	27	204	2.12-14	95
22.24-30	280-82	33	95	2.13-14	94
22.24	282	34.24	97	2.14	94, 95
23	282	37-48	96	2.17	94
23.5	282	37-39	96, 97	2.18-27	95
25	223	37	248	2.30	249
29	317	37.1-14	96	2.32	94, 95,
32	288	37.11-14	96, 248		247
32.6-15	208	37.15-28	96	3-4	94, 258
33	282	37.22	97	3.1	95
33.15	282	37.24	97	3.2-14	94
34	223	37.25	97	3.2	95
34.8-22	223	38-39	96, 146,	3.3	249
34.8-16	222		249, 251	3.4-8	94
34.8	223	40-48	96, 97,	3.5	94, 95,
34.14	223		217, 229,		247
36.10	152		251	3.6	94
36.12	152	40.45-46	229	3.12-14	95
36.20	152	40.46	225	3.14	249
36.21	152	42.7	75	3.16-18	94, 95
36.26	152	42.10	75	3.19	95
36.32	152	43.19	225	3.21	94, 95
37.15	152	44	97, 276	4.1	95
37.20	152	44.10-14	230	4.2-14	94
40-43	285	44.13	230	4.2	95
40.5-6	282	44.15-16	229	4.4-8	94
40.5	134	44.15	225	4.6	94
41.5-7	282	44.23-24	229	4.12-14	95
44.15-19	253	44.24	230	4.14	249
46.2-12	249	46.13-15	219	4.16-18	94, 95
46.6	249	48.11	225	4.19	94
46.10	249			4.21	94, 95
46.20	249				
		<i>Daniel</i>			
46.24	249	1-6	354	<i>Amos</i>	
50.9	249	6.11	237	3.12	246
52.12	188	8.11-14	219	5	103
52.25	152	10.1	273	5.3	246
				5.18-20	249
<i>Ezekiel</i>		<i>Hosea</i>		6.9	246
1-39	97	1-39	246	9.1	246
1	340	6.7	246		
10	340	8.1	246		

<i>Jonah</i>		2.23	281, 340	6.9-13	86
2.2-9	95			6.11	280
2.3-10	95	<i>Zechariah</i>		6.12-13	280
		1-8	85-88,	6.12	280
<i>Micah</i>			146, 252,	7.1	88, 231
6.4	226		270, 278,	7.3	187
			353	7.5	187, 222
<i>Zephaniah</i>		1.1	88, 187,	7.12	88
1.7-2.3	249		231, 279	8	86, 88
		1.2-6	88	8.3	279
<i>Haggai</i>		1.7-17	88	8.6	247
1-2	340	1.7	187, 231,	8.9-13	279
1	219, 279		279	8.11	247
1.1	81, 87,	1.12-17	88	8.12	247
	147, 148,	1.16	279	8.19	187, 222
	187, 231,	1.18-21	88	8.20-23	88
	278, 279	2	88	8.23	168
1.2-11	86, 172	2.1-13	88	9-14	85-89, 94,
1.2-4	279	2.1-4	88		258, 259
1.5-6	279, 284	2.5-17	88	9.1-8	89
1.6	207	2.11-17	86	9.7	88
1.8	86, 217,	2.11	88	9.8-10	88
	284	2.15	88	9.8	88
1.9-11	279	3-4	81, 88	9.9-10	88, 89
1.9	279	3	86, 88,	9.11-17	89
1.12	81, 147		219, 279,	9.11	246
1.14	81, 147,		280	9.13	89
	148, 282	3.1-10	228	10.14	88
1.15-2.1	231, 279	3.1-5	86, 88	11.4-17	88, 89
1.15	187	3.2	257	11.12-13	88
2.1	187	3.8	278, 280	11.13	88, 208
2.2	81, 87,	3.19-24	86	11.14	257
	147, 148,	4	86, 242,	12-14	85, 87, 94,
	278		280		257, 258
2.3	217	4.1-10	88	12	89
2.4-9	86	4.1-8	279	12.2-13.1	88
2.4	86, 147	4.1-6	86, 280	12.2-10	257
2.10	87, 187,	4.6-10	280	12.8-9	89
	231, 279	4.10-14	280	13.1-2	88
2.11-13	219, 229	5	86, 88,	13.1	89
2.14	87		279	13.2-6	89
2.18	187	5.1-4	88	13.2	89
2.19	92	5.5-11	88	13.7-9	88, 89
2.20-23	86, 87,	6	86, 282	14	86, 89,
	280, 281	6.1-8	88		249
2.20	87, 279	6.9-15	88, 257,	14.16-21	88
2.21-23	281		280, 281	14.16-19	88, 222
2.21	148, 278	6.9-14	282	14.20-21	88

<i>Malachi</i>		<i>Ben Sira</i>		
1.1–4.3	85	38.24–39.11	152	49.11
1.1–3.21	85	44–50	337	49.12
1.2–5	89, 90	44.16	338	49.13
1.6–2.9	90, 229	44.17–18	338	49.14
1.7–14	219	44.17	338	49.15
1.8	89	44.19–21	338	49.16
1.11	96	44.19	338	50.1–29
1.12	86	44.22	338	338
2.4–9	246	44.23–45.5	331	<i>2 Maccabees</i>
2.4–7	86	44.23–24	338	1.18–2.15
2.10–16	90	44.23	338	75, 293
2.10	246	45.1–6	339	1.18–36
2.14–16	90	45.1–5	338, 339	2.4–8
2.17	90	45.6–26	338	217
3.1–5	90	45.6–22	339	New Testament
3.1	246	45.7–8	339	<i>Matthew</i>
3.6–12	90	45.9–10	339	27.9–10
3.8–11	208	45.11–12	339	88
3.13–21	259, 328	45.13–20	339	<i>John</i>
3.13–18	90	45.23–26	339	7.37
3.17–18	90	45.23	338	222
3.19–21	90	45.25	338	Pseudepigrapha
3.22–24	86, 89	46.1–6	338	<i>1 Enoch</i>
3.23–34	340	46.7–10	338	1–36
3.23–24	90, 340	46.11–12	338	244, 248,
4.1–3	90	46.13–20	338	252, 344
4.4–6	86, 89	47.1–11	338	6–8
4.5–6	90	47.1	338, 339	344
		47.2–11	339	6
			338	244
Apocryphal/Deutero- canonical Books		47.9–10	340	9.1
<i>I Esdras</i>		47.12–22	338, 339	9.7–10
1	84, 85	47.23–25	338	244
2–7	75, 286	47.23–24	339	10.6
2	84	48.1–11	338, 340	248
5–9	84	48.1–3	340	10.9
8–9	75	48.12–16	340	244
9	85	48.12–14	338	10.11
		48.15–16	338	244
		48.17–25	338, 340	15.8–12
<i>Tobit</i>		49.1–3	338	20
3	237	49.4–5	338	22
		49.6–10	338	93, 248
<i>Judith</i>		49.7	338	71
8.4–6	237	49.8	340	244
9	237	49.9	340	14
12.6–8	237	49.10	95, 340	331
		49.11–13	338	

Josephus		Classical	3.5	50, 166
<i>Ant.</i>		Aelian	3.61-79	268
11.1.1-5.5		<i>Varia Historia</i>	3.88	163
1-158	130	6.10	305	3.89-97 133, 269
11.3.10 73	232		3.89-94	195
11.5.1 121	232	Arrian	3.91	163
11.5.5 158	232	<i>Alexander</i>	3.95	327
11.5.6-8		2.20	348	3.97 163
159-83	130	2.25	166	5.1-27 269
11.6.1-13			5.28-6.48	269
184-296	130	Aristotle	12.118-20	121
11.7.1		<i>Athen. Polit.</i>	13.61-87	121
297-301	130, 232, 319	5-9	305	14.42 4.83-144 121 269
11.7.1 297	130, 232	Cassius Dio		
11.7.2		37.17.2-3	217	Justin
302-303	130			<i>Historiae Philippicae</i>
11.7.2 302	232	Clement of Alexandria	36 (Epitome	
11.7.2-8.6		<i>Protrepticus</i>	2.3-4)	169
302-45	157	5.65.3	134	
11.8.1-6				Livy
304-45	32	Diodorus Siculus		<i>apud Scholia in Lucanum</i>
11.8.1-5		12.4.4-6	291	2.593 217
304-39	232	15.90	323, 346	
12.3.3 142	152	15.92.4	347	Orosius
14.10.14 231	321	16.40.5	348	<i>Adver. pagan.</i>
14.4.4 71-72	217	16.41-45	347	3.7.6 347
15.11.3-5		16.41.2	134, 347	
391-420	217	16.41.3	348	Pliny
2.6.8 140	321	16.42.1-2	349	12.32.62 166
2.6.8 155	321	16.47-50	320	
		16.47.3	321	Plutarch
1.145-53	112	17.5.3-6.3	324	<i>Alexander</i>
1.22 187-89	149	17.5.3-6	330, 324	25.3-5 166
1.22 194	348	17.5.3	321	
2 102-104	184	19.95.2	165	Plutarch
2.8 102-109	217	19.98.1	165	<i>Artaxerxes</i>
2.8 102-104	217	40.3.7	208	1.4 124
		40.3-6	341	
<i>Life</i>		40.3.1-7	341	Pseudo-Aristotle
1 2	230			<i>Oeconomica</i>
76 422	208	Eusebius	1.2	191
		<i>Prep. evang.</i>	2	194
<i>War</i>		9.39	217	2.1.1-6 194
1.7.6 152-53	217	Herodotus		
2.17.6 425	222			Quintus Curtius
3.3.2 43	200	3.4-9	163	3.13.27 134
6.9.3 420	200	3.5-9	267	3.8.12 134

4.1.15	348	28.18-20	64	30	210, 320
4.6.7	166			30.1	148
4.8.9-11	56	Xerxes		30.2	242
		<i>Persepolis Inscription H</i>		30.4-13	318
Solinus		4b.35-41	215	30.6	242
<i>Collect.</i>		4d51.56	215	30.13-14	318
35.4	347			30.15	242
		Papyri, Tablets and Seal Impressions		30.18-19	168, 172, 235, 310
Strabo		<i>AD</i>		30.18	232
<i>Geography</i>		4.4	153	30.21	220
16.2.28-46		7.10	153	30.24	242
759-65	127	8.6	153	30.25-26	318
Syncellus		9.3	153	30.25	220
1.486.10-14	347	10-11	196	30.26	242
		10.5	153	30.27-28	242
Tacitus				30.27	242
<i>Hist.</i>		<i>AP</i>		30.29	156
5.4	217	2.12	153	31	210, 320
		2.14	153	31.1	148
Thucydides		3.13	153	31.2	242
1.20-22	122	5	318	31.3-12	318
1.128-29	77	6	318	31.7	242
1.20.1	122	6.4	242	31.12-13	318
1.21.1	122	8	181, 318	31.14	242
1.22.2-4	123	8.13	150	31.17-18	172, 235,
		9	318		310
Xenophon		10.13	150	31.17	232
<i>Cyr.</i>		10.18	150	31.24-25	318
8.6.7	163	13	181, 318	31.24	242
		15.22-26	181	31.26-27	242
Xenophon		17.1	153	31.27-28	156
<i>Oeconomicum</i>		17.6	153	32	210, 318
4.5-11	197	20.2-3	168	32.1-2	156
		21	186, 211,	32.1	148, 274
Inscriptions			221	32.3-4	242
<i>Beh. Inscr.</i>		21.2	168	33	211, 318
10-13.1.26-61	268	21.3-4	221	33.8	242
		21.4-5	221	35	182
<i>KAI</i>		21.5-6	221	35.14	150
14.18-20	64	21.6-8	221	38.2	242
181.10-11	169	21.8	221	38.3	242
181.14	169	21.11	168	38.5	242
181.18	169	22	319	40.1	242
181.26	169	22.1	168	44.3	241
181.3-4	169	22.124-25	241	47.2	150
		25	318	47.5	150
<i>TSSI</i>		26.23	153	73.32	153
16.3-4	169	26.28	153		

<i>BM</i>		A4.7.2	242	B3.1.13	150
3	318	A4.7.24	242	B3.1.18	150
4	181, 318	A4.7.25-26	318	B3.10-12	318
4.5	153	A4.7.26	242	B3.10	181
6	181, 318	A4.7.27-28	242	B3.10.19	150
9	181, 318	A4.7.27	242	B3.11	181
9.19	150	A4.7.29	156	B3.11.13	150
10	181, 318	A4.7.4-13	318	B3.12.18-19	318
10.13	150	A4.7.6	242	B3.12.28	150
11	181	A4.8.1	148	B3.8.24-28	181
12	318	A4.8.12-13	318	B4.2	181, 182
12.18-19	318	A4.8.14	242	B4.6	182
12.28	150	A4.8.17-18	172, 235, 310	B44.6.14 B5.4.2	150 150
<i>TAD</i>		A4.8.2	242	B5.4.5	150
4.3.13	153	A4.8.24-25	318	B7.3.3	241
4.4.12	153	A4.8.24	242	C1.1.12	153
4.4.14	153	A4.8.26-27	242	C1.1.18	153
4.7.15	242	A4.8.27-28	156	C1.1.42	153
4.7.21	220	A4.8.3-12	318	C3.7	196
A10	318	A4.8.7	242	C3.15	319
A3.3.5	153	A4.9.1-2	156	C3.15.1	168
A3.6.1	242	A4.9.1	148	C3.15.127-28	241
A4.1	186, 211, 221	A4.9.3-4	242	C3.19.32	153
A4.3-4	221	A6.1.1	153	D3.1	274
A4.4-5	221	A6.1.6	153	D7.10.5	221
A4.5-6	221	A6.10.10	153	D7.12.9	221
A4.6-8	221	A6.11.6	153	D7.16.2	221
A4.7	210, 320	A6.12.3	153	D7.28.4	221
A4.7.18	232	A6.13.5	153	D7.35.7	221
A4.8	210, 221, 320	A6.14	196	D7.48.5	221
A4.8.17	232	A6.2.23	153	<i>WD</i>	
A4.9	210, 274	A6.2.28	153	22	156
A4.1.1	168	A6.8.4	153	23	156
A4.1.10	168	A9	318		
A4.1.10	168	B2.1-4	318	<i>WDSP</i>	
A4.1.3-4	221	B2.3	181	1.2	57
A4.10	211	B2.7	181, 318	1.4	57
A4.10.8	242	B2.10	318	1.11	150
A4.3.2	242	B2.2.4	242	2.2	57
A4.3.3	242	B2.3.13	150	2.4	57
A4.3.5	242	B2.6.22-26	181	2.11	150
A4.7.1	148	B2.9.2-3	168	3.4	57
A4.7.13-14	318	B3.1	181	4.1	56, 141
A4.7.15	242	B3.4-5	318	4.5	57
A4.7.18-19	168, 172, 235, 310	B3.5	181	5.1	56, 141
		B3.7	181, 318	5.5	57

5.14	56, 150, 157	Near Eastern Texts <i>Cyrus Cyl.</i>	
6.4	57	10-15	272
6.12	150	22-28	266
7.6	57	30-33	272
7.17	56, 150, 156	<i>Dynastic Prophecy</i>	
8.12	56, 150, 157	3.4-8	324
9.13	57	<i>Nab. Chron.</i>	
9.14	56, 156	2.1-4	266
9.15	150	2.16	266
10.8	57	3.15-16	266
10.10	150	3.16-18	266
11r.13	56, 57, 156	3.21-22 3.22	272 266
15.17	150		

## INDEX OF AUTHORS

- Albertz, R. 81  
Ackerman, S. 240, 252, 254, 255, 277  
Ackroyd, P.R. 70, 71, 79, 80, 85, 97, 134, 280, 281  
Aharoni, Y. 43, 44, 46, 49, 132, 134, 139, 140, 162, 164  
Ahlström, G.W. 43, 94, 246  
Albertz, R. 85, 87, 97-99, 150, 173, 218, 220, 224-26, 240, 241, 252, 253, 271, 277, 283, 331, 341, 343  
Albrektson, B. 256, 261  
Allen, L.C. 96  
Allrik, H.L. 70  
Alt, A. 140, 173  
Altheim, F. 127, 128, 194, 195  
Amorai-Stark, S. 60, 63  
Anderson, G. 346  
Anderson, R.T. 31, 32  
Andreasen, N.-E.A. 220  
Andrewes, A. 125  
Appleby, J. 3, 7, 9  
Armaylor, O.K. 132  
Atkinson, K.M.T. 267  
Auld, A.G. 97, 99, 238, 239  
Avi-Yonah, M. 25, 132, 134, 139, 140  
Avigad, N. 24, 60-62, 148, 151, 153  
Ayad, B.A. 316  
  
Baildam, J.D. 105  
Bailey, H.H. 361, 362  
Bailey, N.A. 25, 70, 82  
Baker, D.W. 11, 13  
Bakker, E.J. 120  
Balcer, J.M. 120, 121, 132, 268  
Balensi, J. 34  
Balentine, S. 331  
Baly, D. 197  
Bar-Kochva, B. 148, 149  
Barag, D.P. 64, 66, 319-21, 346, 347  
Barak, M. 60, 63  
Barber, G.L. 125  
Barker, M. 85, 277, 281  
Barr, J. 11, 13, 256, 261, 361, 363, 364  
Barstad, H.M. 3, 11, 90, 91, 264, 265, 285, 331, 343  
Bartlett, J.R. 49, 162, 164, 165, 224, 225  
Barton, J. 94, 95  
Batten, L.W. 70, 76  
Bauer, T. 111  
Baumgartner, W. 120  
Beal, T.K. 104  
Beaulieu, P.-A. 162, 265, 271, 272  
Becking, B. 70, 240, 241, 271, 324  
Bedford, P.R. 142, 144, 145, 147, 271, 277, 283, 285, 287  
Beit-Arieh, I. 49, 52, 53, 162  
Bellis, A.O. 224  
Ben Zvi, E. 167, 170, 244, 245, 331  
Ben-Dov, M. 216, 217  
Bennett, W.J. Jr 41  
Benoit, P. 202, 206  
Berg, S.B. 104  
Berger, P.-R. 110, 111, 271, 276  
Berlinerblau, J. 252, 253  
Berquist, J.L. 16, 19  
Betlyon, J.W. 64, 66, 68, 69  
Beuken, W.A.M. 102  
Beyse, K.-M. 277, 280, 281  
Bianchi, F. 277, 280  
Bickerman, E.J. 110, 112, 185, 268, 271, 273  
Bienkowski, P. 49, 51, 52, 162, 163, 294, 297  
Bigwood, J.M. 124, 126, 291  
Bilde, P. 129  
Binder, D.D. 236, 237  
Biran, A. 167, 169  
Bivar, A.D.H. 64, 65, 324

- Blakely, J.A. 41  
Blenkinsopp, J. 22, 28, 70, 71, 76, 79, 81, 83, 85, 89-95, 99, 100, 112, 113, 142, 144, 147, 150, 151, 185, 187, 202, 207, 224, 225, 228, 230, 231, 250, 256, 259, 260, 264, 271, 273, 276, 277, 280-84, 294, 302, 305, 324, 328, 331, 337  
Bloch, A. 105  
Bloch, C. 105  
Böhler, D. 70, 84  
Boccaccini, G. 185, 187, 224, 344, 345  
Bodi, D. 96  
Boecker, H.J. 173  
Boffo, L. 116  
Bokser, B.M. 220  
Bolin, T.M. 95, 240, 242, 331  
Borger, R. 110, 111, 277  
Borowski, O. 45  
Bosworth, A.B. 128  
Bowman, R.A. 107, 151  
Boyce, M. 16, 18, 209, 215, 265, 267, 361, 362  
Brandstein, W. 116  
Brannigan, J. 3, 6-8, 10  
Braudel, F. 3  
Braun, J. 223  
Braun, R.L. 70, 71, 97, 99  
Braund, D. 128  
Breitenbach, H.R. 123-25  
Brenner, A. 104-106  
Bresciana, E. 54, 55  
Briant, P. 16, 18, 116, 117, 189, 193, 194, 196, 202, 209, 214, 215, 352  
Briend, J. 41  
Brin, G. 173  
Broshi, M. 199, 200  
Brosius, M. 16, 19, 183  
Broughton, T.R.S. 142, 147  
Brown, S.C. 265, 266  
Brown, T.S. 118, 119, 267  
Brownlee, W.H. 96  
Bruce, I.A.F. 123  
Brunneau, P. 167, 169  
Brunt, P.A. 118  
Bryce, T.R. 107  
Budd, P.J. 99  
Bull, R.J. 31, 32  
Burrows, M. 95, 96  
Burstein, S.M. 110, 112  
Bush, F. 104, 105  
Busink, T.A. 216, 217  
Butterworth, M. 85  
Cameron, G.G. 110, 111, 132, 133, 209, 214  
Campbell, E.F. 105  
Cancik, H. 118  
Cardascia, G. 110, 112, 316, 317  
Cargill, J. 265, 266  
Carroll, R.P. 3, 90, 93, 256, 259, 261, 285  
Carter, C.E. 22-30, 39, 44, 60-65, 134, 137-40, 142, 144, 189, 197, 199-204, 284, 285  
Cazelles, H. 70, 71, 98  
Cereti, C.G. 361  
Charlesworth, J.H. 250  
Cheney, M. 102  
Childs, B.S. 11, 12, 94, 247  
Clausen, W.V. 118  
Clements, R.E. 95, 96  
Clifford, R.J. 101  
Clines, D.J.A. 70, 71, 76, 102, 104, 271, 273, 294, 304  
Cody, A. 224-26, 228  
Coggins, R.J. 85, 88, 277, 280, 281  
Cohen, M.E. 185  
Cohen, S.J.D. 167, 168  
Colella, P. 60, 62  
Collingwood, R.G. 3, 9  
Collins, J.J. 173, 250, 252, 277, 282, 361  
Collon, D. 60, 61  
Conrad, E.W. 85  
Coogan, M.D. 110, 112, 316, 317  
Cook, J.M. 18  
Cook, S.L. 142, 145, 250, 256, 259, 260  
Cooke, G.A. 96  
Course, J.E. 102  
Cousin, G. 116  
Craig, K.M. Jr 95  
Crenshaw, J.L. 94, 151, 154  
Crook, M.B. 183, 185  
Cross, F.M. 55-58, 60, 61, 63, 98, 99, 129, 155, 157, 162-64, 224, 230, 232, 233, 319, 320  
Crowfoot, G.M. 30  
Cryer, F.H. 185, 187

- Dalley, S. 49, 51  
 Dalman, G. 263, 264  
 Dandamaev, M.A. 16, 18, 112, 115, 189,  
     193, 194, 197, 209, 215, 266-68  
 Dar, S. 32  
 Darr, K.P. 96  
 Davies, G.I. 43  
 Davies, J.K. 189, 193  
 Davies, P.R. 11, 12, 90, 91, 331  
 Day, L. 104  
 Day, P.L. 243, 244  
 De Troyer, K. 70, 83, 104  
 Delavault, B. 60, 62  
 Dell, K.J. 102  
 Dempsey, N. 58  
 Demsky, A. 134, 139  
 Depuydt, L. 185, 267, 268  
 Deschamps, G. 116  
 Deutsch, R. 64, 66-68  
 Develin, R. 126  
 Dever, W.G. 11, 39, 199, 200  
 DiVito, R.A. 58, 59  
 Diakonov, I.M. 189  
 Dicou, B. 162, 165  
 Dietrich, W. 240  
 Dihle, A. 118  
 Dion, P.E. 142, 271, 276  
 Dirksen, P.B. 98  
 Dorothy, C.V. 104  
 Douglas, M. 99, 216-18, 254, 256  
 Doyle, B. 90, 93  
 Dozeman, T.B. 132  
 Drews, R. 118, 119, 124-26  
 Driel, G. van 317  
 Driver, G.R. 55  
 Dubberstein, W.H. 185, 186, 267  
 Duchesne-Guillemain, J. 361  
 Due, B. 124, 125  
 Duggan, M.W. 244-46  
 Duguid, I.M. 96, 97  
 Dumbrell, W.J. 58, 162  
 Dunaux, I. 34  
 Dunn, S.P. 189, 192  
 Dupont-Sommer, A. 107  
 Dyck, J.E. 98  
 Easterling, P.E. 118  
 Edelman, D.V. 23, 64, 66, 240, 271, 274  
 Edgar, C.C. 162  
 Egermann, F. 122  
 Eichrodt, W. 96, 246  
 Eilers, W. 110  
 Eissfeldt, O. 224  
 Eitam, D. 202, 203  
 Elayi, A.G. 16, 19, 41, 64, 65, 67-69  
 Elayi, J. 68, 69, 132, 134, 159, 161, 189,  
     194  
 Emerton, J.A. 246  
 Emmerson, G.I. 90, 91  
 Eph'el, I. 54, 58, 59, 162-64  
 Eshel, H. 25, 58, 60, 155, 157, 158  
 Eskenazi, T.C. 70, 72, 73, 83  
 Evans, R.J. 3, 5, 9, 10  
 Everson, A.J. 247  
 Fantalkin, A. 39  
 Fehling, D. 120  
 Feldman, L.H. 129  
 Fine, S. 236  
 Finkelstein, I. 27, 28, 32, 33, 50, 52, 134,  
     138, 199, 200, 264, 265  
 Finkelstein, J.J. 220, 223  
 Finkielsztejn, G. 34  
 Finley, M.I. 189, 190, 193  
 Fischer, I. 105, 173, 182  
 Fishbane, M. 238, 239  
 Fisher, C.S. 30  
 Fitzmyer, J.A. 54, 55, 58, 107, 109  
 Fleishman, J. 140, 141, 277, 278  
 Flesher, P.V.M. 236, 237  
 Flusser, D. 361  
 Fohrer, G. 94, 247  
 Fornara, C.W. 118, 119, 123  
 Forrer, E. 132, 134  
 Fowler, R.L. 120  
 Fox, M.V. 101, 104, 106  
 Frei, P. 116, 209, 210, 331  
 Freyne, S. 202, 206  
 Fried, L.S. 64, 66, 173, 174, 230, 232,  
     234, 319, 320, 324, 326, 331, 333  
 Fritz, K. von 118, 120, 122  
 Frye, R.N. 18, 363  
 Galling, K. 70, 127, 132, 140, 159, 271,  
     273  
 Garnsey, P. 189-91, 202, 207

- Gelston, A. 271, 276, 277  
Gera, D.L. 124, 125  
Geraty, T. 49  
Gershevitch, I. 151, 152  
Gerson, S.N. 64, 67, 155, 158  
Gerstenberger, E.S. 99-101, 220, 221  
Geva, H. 25  
Glasson, T.F. 364  
Glazier-McDonald, B. 85, 89  
Glueck, N. 58, 59  
Gnoli, G. 361, 362  
Gnuse, R.K. 240  
Goldwasser, O. 60, 62  
Golka, F.W. 101  
Gomme, A.W. 122  
Goodblatt, D. 234  
Gordis, R. 102  
Gordon, D. 3, 9  
Goudoever, J. van 185, 186  
Gould, J. 120  
Gowan, D.E. 247  
Grabbe, L.L. 3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 16-20, 70-73, 76, 84, 85, 87, 90, 92, 95, 96, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 116-20, 124, 129, 130, 142, 146, 147, 151-53, 155, 157, 158, 167, 168, 173, 174, 182, 185, 188, 199, 200, 202, 203, 209, 218, 220, 222-25, 229, 230, 233, 234, 236, 237, 243-45, 247, 248, 250-52, 254-56, 259, 260, 264-67, 269, 288, 289, 294, 309, 311, 313, 315, 317, 319, 320, 324, 326, 329, 330, 332, 334, 337, 343-46  
Graf, D.F. 58, 60, 132, 162-66, 194, 202, 266  
Graham, M.P. 98  
Grainger, J.D. 41, 42, 159-61, 189, 194, 346-48  
Gray, J. 102  
Grayson, A.K. 110, 111, 162, 167-69, 271, 272, 324  
Grayson, C.H. 124  
Greenberg, M. 96  
Greenfield, J.C. 55, 107, 109, 110, 150, 173  
Greengus, S. 173, 174  
Grelot, P. 54, 55  
Grenfell, B.P. 123  
Griffith, F.L. 112, 115  
Griffiths, J.G. 236, 237  
Gropp, D.M. 55, 155, 157, 159  
Grünwaldt, K. 99  
Gruen, E.S. 209, 212, 346  
Gunneweg, A.H.J. 71, 76, 78, 82, 98, 99, 224-26, 228, 277, 285, 286, 313, 315  
Hägg, T. 346  
Haak, R.D. 250  
Habel, N.C. 102  
Hachlili, R. 236  
Hallock, R.T. 110  
Halpern, B. 277, 280  
Hamel, G. 189, 193, 194, 202, 207  
Hamilton, P. 3  
Hamlin, E.J. 105  
Hammond, N.G.L. 128  
Handy, L.K. 243, 264, 265  
Hansen, O. 116  
Hanson, P.D. 90, 92, 250, 256, 258, 261  
Haran, M. 100, 101, 216  
Harrelson, W. 277, 281  
Harris, S.L. 101  
Harris, W.V. 151, 154  
Harvey, G. 167  
Hasel, G.F. 246  
Hausmann, J. 246, 247  
Hayes, J. 24, 60, 63  
Hayward, C.T.R. 216  
Hellholm, D. 250  
Helm, R. 346, 347  
Heltzer, M. 40, 58, 67, 68, 189, 194, 196, 199, 201-203, 205, 294, 298  
Henry, K.H. 202  
Hens-Piazza, G. 3, 7, 8  
Herr, L.G. 49, 60, 162, 164  
Herrenschmidt, C. 194, 196, 202  
Herzog, Z. 38  
Hesse, B. 40  
Hezser, C. 151, 154  
Hill, A.E. 85, 89  
Hinnells, J.R. 361, 364  
Hirsch, S.W. 124, 125  
Hoffman, Y. 102, 247, 249  
Hoglund, K.G. 28, 29, 98, 134, 138, 140, 141, 161, 199, 202, 203, 274, 285, 287, 291, 292, 294, 296, 297  
Holbert, J.C. 95

- Homès-Fredericq, D. 50, 51, 162  
 Hopkins, D.C. 197, 198, 202, 203  
 Horbury, W. 167, 169  
 Horine, S.C. 105, 106  
 Horn, S.H. 185  
 Hornblower, S. 16, 18, 118, 119, 122,  
     209, 215  
 Horsley, R.A. 142, 145  
 Horst, P.W. van der 236  
 Houston, W. 100  
 Hout, M. van den 116  
 Houtman, Ce. 100  
 Houtman, Co. 173  
 Hüttenmeister, F. 236  
 Hughes, G.R. 112-14  
 Hultgård, A. 361, 364  
 Humphries, W.L. 104, 105  
 Hunt, A.S. 123  
 Hunt, L. 3, 7, 9  
 Hurowitz, V. 96, 97  
 Hurvitz, A. 102  
 Huwiler, E. 101, 105  
 Ibach, R.D. Jr 49  
 Iggers, G.G. 3-5, 7, 10, 15  
 Insler, S. 361  
 Israel, F. 54  
 Jackson, B.S. 173  
 Jacob, M 3, 7, 9  
 Jacoby, F. 112, 124  
 Janzen, D. 145, 150, 151, 313, 316, 324,  
     329  
 Japhet, S. 71, 98, 99, 150, 244, 271, 276,  
     277  
 Jaubert, A. 185, 187  
 Jenkins, K. 3, 7-9  
 Joannès, F. 316, 317  
 Jobes, K.H. 104  
 Johnson, D.G. 90, 93, 98, 99  
 Johnstone, W. 98  
 Jones, G.H. 98  
 Kaiser, O. 90, 91  
 Kalimi, I. 98  
 Kallai, Z. 134  
 Kamil, M. 55  
 Kaplan, J. 39  
 Karrer, C. 71  
 Kasher, A. 162, 165  
 Kassis, R.A. 101  
 Katzenstein, H.J. 159, 162, 166  
 Kaufman, S.A. 54, 55, 58, 107, 109  
 Kayatz, C. 101  
 Keel, O. 60, 61, 63, 105, 134, 197, 240,  
     243, 244  
 Kellermann, U. 71, 76, 78, 79, 83  
 Kelly, B.E. 98  
 Kelm, G.L. 39  
 Kenney, E.J. 118  
 Kent, R.G. 109, 110, 209, 210, 215  
 Kenyon, K.M. 30  
 Kervran, M. 109, 110, 112  
 Kessler, J. 85, 250  
 King, P.J. 202  
 Kippenberg, H.G. 202, 204, 206, 207,  
     294, 305  
 Kitz, A.M. 254  
 Klein, L.R. 104  
 Kleinig, J.W. 98, 223  
 Klinkott, H. 132-34  
 Klopfenstein, M.A. 240  
 Knauf, E.A. 11, 12, 50, 52, 162-64  
 Knibb, M. 244, 245, 250  
 Knohl, I. 100  
 Knoppers, G.N. 224  
 Knox, B.M.W. 118  
 König, F.W. 124  
 Körting, C. 220  
 Kobelski, P.J. 361, 363, 364  
 Koch, H. 110, 209, 214, 361, 362  
 Koch, K. 85, 87, 90, 91, 95, 116, 209,  
     210, 324, 331  
 Kooij, A. van der 332  
 Koopmans, J.J. 55  
 Kossmann, R. 104  
 Kraabel, A.T. 167, 169  
 Krader, L. 189, 191  
 Kramer, S.N. 105, 106  
 Kratz, R.G. 332, 334  
 Kraus, H.-J. 218, 220, 223, 224, 226  
 Kreisig, H. 142, 189, 193, 202, 204, 206  
 Kreyenbroek, G. 361  
 Küchler, M. 134, 197  
 Kuhrt, A. 16, 19, 110-12, 118, 209, 215,  
     266, 267, 271, 273, 290

- Kvanvig, H.S. 344  
LaCocque, A. 105  
Laato, A. 98  
Ladiray, D. 109, 110  
Landes, G.M. 95  
Landsberger, B. 111  
Lang, B. 54, 101, 102  
Laniak, T.S. 104  
Laperrousaz, E.-M. 142  
Lapp, N.L. 55, 56, 60, 62  
Lapp, P.W. 55, 56  
Larkin, K.J.A. 85, 104, 105  
Lateiner, D. 120  
Lebram, J.C.H. 71, 76  
Lecoq, P. 132, 133  
Lederman, Z. 27, 32, 33  
Leith, M.J.W. 55, 61  
Lemaire, A. 41, 59, 60, 62-65, 67-69,  
    107, 134, 139-41, 148, 162, 164-66,  
    216, 218, 277, 278, 280, 294, 297,  
    316, 317  
Lemche, N.P. 11, 12, 220, 223, 332, 343  
Lentricchia, F. 3, 10  
Lenzen, C.J. 50, 52  
Lesky, A.H. 118, 119  
Leuze, O. 127, 134  
Levenson, J.D. 96, 104  
Levin, Y. 98  
Levine, E. 95, 236  
Levinson, B.M. 173, 174  
Levison, J.R. 129  
Lewis, D. 116, 122, 124, 322, 324, 326  
Lewis, T.J. 247, 254, 255  
Lewy, H. 220, 223  
Lichtheim, M. 112, 113  
Lim, T.H. 185, 187  
Limburg, J. 95  
Linafelt, T. 105  
Lindenberger, J.M. 220, 221  
Lindstrom, L. 142, 146  
Linville, J. 94  
Lipiński, E. 60, 62, 151  
Lipschits, O. 22-30, 43, 50, 71, 83, 134,  
    138, 165, 199, 201, 202, 204, 216,  
    217, 264, 271, 274, 277, 283, 285,  
    287, 292, 293  
Liverani, M. 11  
Lloyd, A.B. 112, 113, 267, 268  
Long, V.P. 11, 13  
Lozachmeur, H. 59  
Lugt, P. van der 102  
Lukonin, V.G. 16, 18, 112, 115, 189,  
    193, 194, 197, 209, 215  
Lust, J. 271, 276, 277  
Lyon, D.G. 30  
Lyons, E.L. 183, 184  
McCarthy, D.J. 246  
McCreesh, T.P. 183, 185  
McCullagh, C.B. 3, 9  
McEntire, M.H. 98  
McEvenue, S.E. 140  
McGing, B. 199, 200  
Machinist, P. 11, 64, 65, 67  
McKane, W. 101  
McKeating, H. 96, 97, 173, 182  
McKenzie, S.L. 98  
Magen, Y. 31, 32  
Maier, C. 101  
Malandra, W.W. 361, 362  
Mantel, H. 234  
Margalith, O. 324, 329  
Marincola, J. 118  
Marshall, J.W. 173  
Martin, J.D. 101  
Martin, R. 3  
Mason, R. 85, 88, 90, 94, 95  
May, H.G. 85, 87  
Mayer, W. 167, 169  
Mayrhofer, M. 109, 116  
Mazar, A. 39  
Mazar, B. 294, 298, 300  
Meiggs, R. 116  
Melugin, R.F. 90  
Mendelsohn, I. 202, 205  
Merling, D. 49  
Meshorer, Y. 64-68, 148, 149, 155, 158  
Mettinger, T.N.D. 240, 242  
Metzger, H. 107  
Meyers, C.L. 85, 89, 277, 280, 281  
Meyers, E.M. 55, 60, 62, 85, 89, 148,  
    277, 280, 281  
Mieroop, M. van der 199, 200  
Mildenberg, L. 65-69, 148, 149, 162,  
    166, 349  
Milgrom, J. 100, 101, 216, 217, 220, 222,  
    223

- Milik, J.T. 344  
 Millar, W.R. 90, 93  
 Miller, M.C. 50  
 Misgav, H. 58, 60  
 Mitchell, H.G. 95, 277  
 Momigliano, A. 124  
 Moore, C.A. 104  
 Morgenstern, J. 292, 293  
 Mowinckel, S. 71, 79, 80, 230, 231, 249  
 Müller, A. 101  
 Müller, C. 127, 159  
 Muffs, Y. 173, 181, 184  
 Mulder, M.J. 238  
 Munro, J.M. 105  
 Munslow, A. 3, 9  
 Murphy, R.E. 101, 102, 105  
 Murray, O. 120  
 Myres, J.L. 120
- Na'aman, N. 26, 28, 45, 90, 91, 132, 134, 135, 138, 159, 166, 277, 281  
 Nadon, C. 124  
 Naveh, J. 58-60, 62, 63, 107, 109, 162, 167, 169  
 Negbi, O. 38  
 Nicholson, E.W. 100, 246  
 Nickelsburg, G.W.E. 344  
 Niditch, S. 96, 151, 154  
 Niehr, H. 240, 242, 277, 280  
 Nielsen, K. 105  
 Noth, M. 71, 76, 98  
 Noy, D. 167, 169  
 Nurmela, R. 224-26, 228
- O'Brien, J.M. 85, 229  
 O'Leary, B. 189, 191, 192  
 Oded, B. 285, 316, 317  
 Oeming, M. 98  
 Olmstead, A.T. 18, 197, 209, 210, 277, 278  
 Olyan, S.M. 243  
 Oppenheim, A.L. 111, 266, 267  
 Oppenheimer, A. 285, 286  
 Orlinsky, H.A. 332  
 Otto, E. 112, 173
- Panitz-Cohen, N. 39  
 Parente, F. 129
- Parker, R.A. 185, 186  
 Pastor, J. 189, 202  
 Patrick, D. 173  
 Paul, S. 173  
 Pauritsch, K. 90, 92  
 Pearce, L.E. 316  
 Pearson, L. 122  
 Peckham, J.B. 63  
 Peltonen, K. 98  
 Perlitt, L. 246  
 Perrot, J. 109, 110  
 Perry, B.E. 346  
 Person, R.F. 85, 95  
 Petersen, D.L. 85, 88, 89, 277, 280  
 Petit, T. 150, 266, 267  
 Petzold, K.-E. 118  
 Pfeiffer, E. 85  
 Phillips, A. 173  
 Pieters, J. 3  
 Pietersma, A. 256  
 Plöger, O. 256, 258, 261  
 Pohlmann, K.-F. 71, 83  
 Polzin, R. 102  
 Pomeroy, S.B. 124, 125, 127, 128  
 Pope, M.H. 102, 106  
 Porten, B. 55, 95, 109, 110, 112, 114, 150, 187, 218, 220, 240, 241, 316, 321  
 Porter, C. 3, 10  
 Posener, G. 112, 113, 209, 215  
 Powell, M.A. 324, 327  
 Pratico, G.D. 47  
 Price, J.J. 122  
 Prinsloo, W.S. 94  
 Pritchard, J.B. 23  
 Prosic, T. 220  
 Provan, I.W. 11-13  
 Pucci Ben Zeev, M. 129  
 Pulikottil, P.U. 238, 239  
 Pummer, R. 31, 32, 167, 169
- Qedar, S. 64-68, 155, 158
- Rabinowitz, I. 59, 162  
 Rad, G. von 247  
 Radermakers, J.S.J. 102  
 Rainey, A.F. 59, 132  
 Ramsey, G.W. 224, 225

- Rapp, G. Jr. 38  
Rappaport, U. 64, 65, 69, 148, 149  
Redditt, P.L. 85, 88-90, 93, 94, 256, 259  
Redford, D.B. 209, 210, 268  
Redmount, C.A. 268  
Reed, W.L. 162, 164  
Reeg, G. 236  
Reich, R. 26, 27  
Reinhardt, K. 120  
Reinmuth, T. 71, 79, 80, 294, 302  
Reisner, G.A. 30  
Rendtorff, R. 100, 246, 332  
Riley, W. 98  
Ritmyer, K. 216, 217  
Ritmyer, L. 216, 217  
Roaf, M. 109, 110  
Roberts, J.J.M. 244, 245, 256, 259, 261  
Robertson, D.A. 102, 103  
Rofé, A. 100, 256, 259  
Roll, I. 37, 41, 42, 160, 161, 346, 348  
Rollston, C.A. 54  
Rooke, D.W. 142, 147, 234  
Root, M.C. 16  
Rose, W.H. 86-88, 142, 147, 281  
Rostovtzeff, M. 127, 142, 147  
Rowley, H.H. 225  
Rubenstein, J.L. 220, 222  
Rudolph, W. 71, 313, 315  
Ruiten, J. van 90  
Russell, D.A. 126  
  
Sacchi, P. 250, 344, 345  
Sæbø, M. 238  
Saley, R.J. 294, 295  
Saller, R. 189-91, 202, 207  
Salters, R.B. 95  
San Nicolò, M. 111  
Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H. 16, 19, 124,  
    266, 267  
Sanders, E.P. 173  
Sapin, J. 16, 19, 135  
Sasson, J. 95, 96, 105, 106  
Sauer, G. 277  
Sauer, J.A. 50, 51  
Schams, C. 151, 152  
Schaper, J. 202, 208, 224-26, 228, 283,  
    294, 303, 311  
Scharbert, J. 142  
Schaudig, H. 111, 112, 271, 272  
Schmitt, R. 132  
Schnabel, P. 111, 112  
Schneider, H. 118  
Scholl, R. 90, 93  
Schottroff, W. 189  
Schramm, B. 90, 91  
Schultz, R.L. 238  
Schwartz, D.R. 155, 157  
Schwartz, E. 125, 126  
Schwartz, J.J. 135, 138, 152  
Schwiderski, J.M. 71, 78  
Scott, J.M. 244, 245, 264  
Scott, J.W. 3  
Sedman, L. 49, 52  
Seel, O. 126  
Segal, J. B.-Z. 220, 252  
Sellers, O.R. 26, 27, 31, 64  
Selman, M.J. 98  
Seybold, K. 277  
Shaked, S. 107, 109, 361, 363  
Shanks, H. 54  
Shea, W.H. 59  
Sherwin-White, S. 290  
Sievers, J. 129  
Silberman, N.A. 27, 28, 264, 265  
Silver, M. 189, 194  
Smith, J.M.P. 85, 90  
Smith, M. 140-42, 224, 229, 256, 257,  
    271, 273, 285, 287, 292-94, 305,  
    309-12  
Smith, M.S. 240, 241  
Smith, P.A. 91  
Smith, R.L. 85, 88, 95  
Smith, S. 111  
Smitten, W.T. in der 71, 76, 277  
Snaith, J.G. 238  
Snell, D.C. 101  
Soden, W. von 102  
Solvang, E.K. 183, 184  
Sonsino, R. 173  
Southgate, B. 3  
Sowers, S.G. 288, 289, 292, 293  
Spaer, A. 64, 66  
Spek, R. van der 322  
Spencer, J.R. 224, 225  
Spiegelberg, W. 112-15  
Spilsbury, P. 129  
Stadelmann, L. 106  
Stager, L.E. 40, 45, 46, 202

- Starr, C.G. 55, 58  
 Ste. Croix, G.E.M. de 189, 192, 193  
 Steen, E. van der 49, 52  
 Steiner, R.C. 209, 210, 324  
 Steins, G. 80, 98  
 Stephenson, F.R. 94  
 Stern, E. 31, 32, 36, 44, 55, 57, 58, 60-63,  
     132, 135, 137-40, 148, 240, 242,  
     252, 253, 346, 348  
 Stern, S. 185, 186  
 Stevenson, K.R. 96, 97, 229  
 Stieglitz, R. 54  
 Stiehl, R. 127  
 Stolper, M.W. 111, 112, 132, 134, 149,  
     194, 196, 197, 290-92, 316, 317  
 Street, B.V. 151  
 Stronach, D. 109, 110  
 Strout, C. 3  
 Sukenik, E.L. 30  
 Svencickaja, I.S. 189  
 Sweeney, M.A. 90, 91, 93  
 Sysling, H. 238  
  
 Tadmor, H. 268  
 Tal, O. 37, 41, 42, 160, 161, 346, 348  
 Talmon, S. 224, 230, 256  
 Talshir, D. 71  
 Talshir, Z. 71, 83, 84  
 Tatum, J. 124, 125  
 Teixidor, J. 59, 107  
 Thomas, R. 118-20  
 Thompson, M.E.W. 246, 247  
 Thompson, T.L. 11, 12, 167, 240, 241  
 Thronveit, M.A. 71  
 Tigchelaar, E.J.C. 250  
 Tollefson, K.D. 142, 145  
 Toorn, K. van der 240-42, 252, 253, 332  
 Torrey, C.C. 71, 76, 96  
 Trebolle Barrera, J. 238  
 Tromp, N. 247  
 Trompf, G.W. 142, 146  
 Tuell, S.S. 96-98, 224, 229  
 Tuland, C.G. 271, 276, 277, 279  
 Tuplin, C. 194, 209, 215, 216, 294, 297  
 Turner, H.W. 142, 146  
  
 Uehlinger, C. 60, 63, 134, 197, 240, 241  
 Ulfgard, H. 220, 222  
 Unger, T. 85, 87  
 Urman, D. 236, 237  
 Ussishkin, D. 43, 47  
  
 Vallat, F. 109, 110  
 Van Seters, J. 11, 173, 174  
 Vance, D.R. 63, 64  
 VanderKam, J.C. 73, 185-87, 230, 231,  
     233, 234, 250, 252, 319, 320, 344  
 Vaux, R. de 90, 92, 218, 271, 272  
 Veenstra, J.R. 3  
 Veeser, H.A. 3, 7, 8, 10  
 Vermeylen, J. 90  
 Vervenne, M. 90  
 Vogelsang, W.J. 132-34  
 Voigtlander, E.N. von 109, 110  
  
 Wacholder, B.Z. 185, 187  
 Wacholder, S. 185, 187  
 Walker, C. 185, 186  
 Wallace, A.F.C. 142, 145  
 Wapnish, P. 40  
 Warner, R. 122  
 Washington, H.C. 101  
 Waterman, L. 85, 277  
 Waters, K.H. 120  
 Watts, J.W. 209, 332  
 Weeks, S. 101  
 Weinberg, J.P. 142, 143  
 Weisberg, D.B. 202, 205  
 Weiskopf, M. 322, 346, 347  
 Weiss, M. 247  
 Weissbach, F.H. 109-11  
 Wellhausen, J. 224, 225  
 Welwei, K.W. 189, 193  
 Wenham, G.J. 11, 13  
 Werman, C. 224  
 Westbrook, R. 173  
 Westermann, C. 90-92, 101  
 Wevers, J.W. 96  
 Whedbee, J.W. 102, 103  
 White, H. 4, 7  
 White, J.B. 106  
 Whitelam, K.W. 11  
 Whittaker, C.R. 189, 190, 193  
 Whybray, R.N. 90-92, 100-102  
 Widengren, G. 16, 19, 140, 141, 230,  
     233, 346, 347

- Wiesehöfer, J. 116  
Wilkins, J. 128  
Will, E. 189, 191  
Willi, T. 71, 99, 167, 170, 171, 238, 239,  
    332  
Williamson, H.G.M. 25, 71, 72, 76, 79,  
    80, 82, 83, 98, 99, 129, 130, 135,  
    140-42, 144, 145, 187, 209, 214,  
    224, 230-32, 269, 270, 273, 287,  
    294, 299, 301, 302, 319-21  
Wills, L.M. 346  
Wilson, R.R. 71, 80  
Windschuttle, K. 4, 9  
Winnett, F.V. 162, 164  
Winston, D. 361  
Wolde, Ellen van 102, 105  
Wolff, H.W. 85, 87, 94, 95, 277, 280,  
    281  
Wolters, A. 183, 185  
Wood, L.H. 185  
Woolf, G. 151  
Woude, A.S. van der 85, 90  
Wright, G.E. 31  
Wright, J.S. 104  
Wright, J.W. 98  
Yadin, Y. 216  
Yamauchi, E.M. 16, 19, 104, 294, 305,  
    306  
Yardeni, A. 55, 194, 196, 218, 220  
Yardley, J.C. 126  
Yassine, Kh. 59  
Yellin, J. 24, 60, 63  
Yoder, C.R. 101, 102, 183, 185  
Young, I.M. 151, 154  
Zaccagnini, C. 189, 193, 202, 205  
Zagorin, P. 4, 7, 9  
Zakovitch, Y. 105  
Zammito, J.H. 4, 7  
Zertal, A. 33, 155, 288, 289  
Zevit, Z. 11, 13, 240  
Zimmerli, W. 96, 97  
Zipor, M.A. 185, 187  
Zorn, J. 24, 60, 62, 63, 199, 201  
Zuckerman, B. 102, 103

## INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- Abu Hawam, Tell 34, 42  
Aaron/ite/s 81, 224-28, 282, 283, 325, 338, 339  
Abiathar/ite/s 225, 228, 230  
Abu Ḥureyra, Tell 45  
Abu Salima, Tell 50  
Abu Zeitun, Tell 42, 161  
Acco 34, 42  
Achzib 42, 160  
Adar 63, 137, 187, 272  
Adullam 136, 139  
afterlife 93, 247, 248, 249, 252  
Agesilaus 322  
agrarian/agriculture 27, 155, 172, 191-93, 195, 198, 199, 202-205, 207, 223, 263, 264, 354  
Ahab 11, 99, 168, 254  
Ahaz 135, 138  
Ahazai 26  
Ahimelech 225  
Ahiqar 153, 154, 346  
Ahitub 225  
Ahura Mazda 214, 215, 242  
Ai 135, 136  
‘Ajjul, Tell el- 44  
Alexander 2, 16, 17, 37, 48, 56, 66, 68, 88, 89, 94, 126-30, 132, 133, 157, 158, 166, 202, 232-34, 244, 290, 295, 324, 341, 344, 348, 349, 360  
altar 31, 39, 44, 45, 47, 48, 60, 63, 72, 97, 108, 164, 166, 176, 182, 210, 211, 216-19, 223, 225-30, 253, 276, 282, 283, 311-13, 326, 332, 334, 335, 339, 340  
Amman 48  
Anafa, Tel 41  
Anani 153, 172, 318  
Anathoth 135, 136, 228  
Anat-Yahu 240, 241, 243  
angel/s 93, 243, 244, 248, 340, 344  
Angra Mainyu 363, 364  
*Annales* school 5  
Artaxerxes I 130, 143, 187, 227, 291, 295, 320, 323, 325, 329-31, 333, 352  
Artaxerxes II 188, 295, 296, 320, 322, 323  
Artaxerxes III 188, 233, 295, 320, 321, 323, 324, 346, 348  
Artaxerxes IV 107, 324  
anthropology 316  
Antiochus III 152  
Aphrodite 58  
*apis* bull 268  
apocalyptic/apocalypticism/apocalyptic-ist/s 19, 93, 95, 97, 145, 147, 239, 250-52, 254, 259, 260, 344, 345  
Apollonia 37, 41, 42, 159, 160  
Aqaba 50, 51, 166  
Aqabiah 56, 157  
Arabia/n 34, 43, 44, 50, 58, 60, 65, 127, 264, 298, 299  
Arad 46, 49, 50, 52, 53, 59, 241  
Arados 160  
Arish, el- 50  
‘Aroer, Tel 52  
Arrian 56, 128, 129, 166, 348  
Arsaces 322  
Arsames 109, 150, 153, 210, 212, 291, 292  
Arses 324  
Arsuf/Arshaf 37, 38, 41, 159, 161, 346  
Artabazus 323  
Asael 248, 344  
Ashdod 36, 40, 42, 264, 356  
Asherah 241, 253  
Ashkelon 40, 41, 160, 161, 281  
Ashurbanipal 51, 289

- assembly 124, 145, 151, 155, 234  
 Assyria/n 19, 26, 28, 32-34, 39, 41, 45,  
   48, 51, 57, 89, 110, 118, 154, 159,  
   162, 166-68, 183, 195, 215, 240,  
   244, 252-54, 263, 265, 266, 271,  
   273, 312, 316, 317, 340  
 astrology 254  
 Astyages 266  
 Athena 65, 66-69, 242  
 Athenaeus 128  
 Athens 122, 191, 206, 291, 292, 298,  
   309, 323  
 'Atlit 36, 42, 63  
 Atonement, Day of 217, 222, 335  
 Atossa 290  
 Attic pottery 25, 31, 32, 45  
*Avesta* 362, 363  
 Azariah 82, 149, 316  
 Azekah 30, 43, 136, 138, 155  
 'Azza, Tell 44
- Baal 36, 38, 95, 242  
 Babylon/Babylonia 22-26, 28-30, 37, 39,  
   40, 43, 44, 46-50, 57, 60-63, 70, 74,  
   80, 81, 87-91, 93, 97, 103, 109, 110-  
   12, 115, 118, 121, 132, 134, 140,  
   144, 145, 151, 152, 158, 162, 167,  
   171, 183, 185-87, 189, 193, 195,  
   197, 201, 203, 213-17, 220, 224,  
   226, 227, 237, 245, 249, 252, 253,  
   255, 265-67, 271, 272, 274, 275,  
   277, 278, 280-87, 289, 290, 301,  
   305, 308, 316-18, 324, 326-49, 352-  
   54, 356, 359  
 Babylonian Chronicles 111, 272, 275  
 Bagohi/Bagoses/Bigvai 66, 129, 148-50,  
   168, 172, 210, 230, 233, 235, 295,  
   319-21, 348  
 Balātah, Tell 31  
 Bardiya/Smerdis 121, 121, 268, 269  
 barley 59, 202, 203, 211, 220, 264  
 Baruch 152  
 Batash, Tell 39  
 Beersheba 50, 59, 136, 198  
 Behistun 77, 109, 110, 121, 133, 210,  
   268, 269  
 Beitin 22  
 Ben Sira 75, 101, 152, 154, 239, 247,  
   331, 332, 337, 338, 340, 341, 343  
 Benjamin 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 62, 80, 136,  
   137, 155, 201, 202, 274, 286, 288  
 Berossus 107, 110-12, 118, 134  
 Bes 66, 68, 255  
 Beth Yerah 42  
 Bethel 22, 33, 34, 63, 135, 136, 138, 155,  
   198, 224, 226, 228, 240, 241, 243,  
   277, 282, 283  
 Beth-haccherem 26  
 Beth-Horon 138  
 Bethlehem 135, 171, 199  
 Beth-Shean 42  
 Beth-Shemesh 30, 138  
 Beth-Zur 26, 27, 29, 30, 65, 139  
 Bilshan 149  
 Bireh, Tell 42  
 Boaz 182  
 Bozrah 49  
 'Branch' 86, 278, 280, 281  
 bulla/e 38, 51, 57, 58, 61, 63, 137, 141  
 Bušeirah 49, 51  
*Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde* 140, 142-44,  
   155
- calendar/s 167, 186, 187, 220-23  
 Cambyses 34, 37, 113, 115, 116, 120,  
   121, 130, 163, 210, 213, 266, 267,  
   268, 269, 278, 318  
 Carmel, Mt 35  
 Carthage 298  
 Chinnereth, Tel 42  
 Chronicler 70, 71, 98, 99, 261  
 Chronistic History 71  
 chronology/chronologies 72, 73, 271  
 Cilicia/n 65, 67, 68, 349  
 class/classes 6-8, 101, 102, 140, 172,  
   183, 192-95, 224, 225, 228, 229,  
   253, 276, 287, 298, 310, 312, 315,  
   356  
 cleruchy/cleruchies 193  
 Coele-Syria 134  
 coin/s 22, 27, 31, 32, 34-36, 38, 40, 58,  
   61, 64-69, 137, 141, 142, 148, 149,  
   155, 156, 165, 166, 205, 207, 224,  
   232, 242, 319, 320, 324, 340, 349,  
   353  
 colony/colonies/colonial 55, 146, 160,  
   167, 186, 190, 191, 241, 318  
 Cornelius Nepos 128

- covenant 82, 86, 217, 246, 313, 331, 338, 339  
 ‘Covenant Code’ 105  
 Cratippus 123, 128  
 Croesus 266  
 Ctesias 124, 126, 291, 296, 322  
 cult 36, 40, 74, 75, 78, 86, 87, 91, 92, 94, 99, 100, 101, 106–10, 145, 146, 152, 169, 179, 184, 195, 209, 210, 213–16, 218, 219, 223, 225–30, 241, 242, 247, 253, 254–56, 258, 259, 265, 272–74, 282, 283, 290, 292, 304, 309, 318, 319, 326, 328, 329, 340, 352, 355, 359  
 Cultural Materialism 3, 8  
 cuneiform 17, 37, 51, 109, 111, 112, 152, 186, 187, 267  
 Cyprus/Cypriot 35, 40, 42, 46, 323, 347  
 Cyrus 16, 72, 76, 78, 90, 111, 112, 120, 124, 125, 130, 133, 143, 188, 265, 266–68, 270–75, 278, 281, 290, 292, 322, 323, 334, 353, 355, 359  
 Cyrus Cylinder 77, 110, 111, 209, 266, 267, 271–75
- daiva/s* 214, 215  
 Cyrus the Younger 125, 133, 323  
 Daliyeh, Wadi 31, 32, 55, 56, 63, 68, 150, 159, 172, 173, 180, 181, 183, 205, 206, 230, 352  
 Damascus 134, 169  
 Dan, Tel 41, 167, 169  
 Daniel 104, 185, 237, 295, 346, 352, 354  
*daric* 64, 65, 197  
 Darius I 51, 64, 85, 109, 110, 115, 116, 120–22, 130, 133, 134, 141, 188, 195, 210, 213, 267–69, 271, 278, 283, 284, 290, 292, 355, 362  
 Darius II 51, 133, 210, 211, 231, 291, 292, 295, 322, 323  
 Darius III 51, 133, 134, 157, 188, 231, 324  
 Dead Sea 19, 138, 155, 185, 199  
 Decalogue 174  
 Dedan 163, 164  
 Deir ‘Alla 48, 51  
 Delaiah 56, 68, 156, 210, 251, 300  
 Delian League 290, 296  
 Delos 169  
 demography 22, 30, 144, 190, 199, 203, 270  
 demon/s 215, 244, 255, 364  
 Demotic 112, 114, 115, 152, 213, 215  
 Demotic Chronicle 115  
 Deuteronomy 103, 105, 173–75, 182, 220–22, 229, 241, 335, 337, 345  
 Diadochi 89  
 diarchy/diarchic 86, 147, 279, 280, 282  
 Diaspora 104, 145, 167, 170, 173, 237, 284, 316, 317, 346  
*Diasporanovelle* 104, 346, 360  
 Dibon 51, 136  
 Diodorus Siculus 123, 126, 320, 346, 347  
 divination 175, 176, 230, 254, 255, 256  
 divorce 90, 157, 173, 174, 179, 181, 185, 227  
 dog/s 36, 38, 40, 255  
 Dor, Tell 36, 42, 63  
 Dothan 33, 34, 156  
 dowry 181  
 drachma 69, 108, 319, 320  
 dream/s 157, 254  
 Droaphernes 214  
 dualism 363, 364
- Ebal, Mt 33  
 Ebir-nari 19, 65, 67, 68, 78, 134, 140, 141, 144, 149, 156, 267, 278, 290, 291, 292, 295, 306, 322, 326, 327, 328, 330, 333, 335, 345, 349, 355  
 economy/economic 2, 5, 7, 10, 15, 17, 18, 28, 33, 43, 50, 110, 125, 127, 128, 132, 143, 144–47, 154, 160, 161, 162, 172, 182, 189–95, 197, 199, 202–204, 207, 208, 214, 264, 270, 284, 285, 287, 296, 305, 306, 354, 355, 359  
 Edom/Edomite/s 19, 47, 49, 50–53, 56, 59, 83, 89, 139, 162, 164, 165, 187, 240, 281, 352  
 ‘Ein Haṣevah 52  
 Ekron 40, 281  
 Elam/ite/s 109, 110, 113, 115, 135, 152, 194, 213–15, 289  
 Elat/Elath 47, 161  
 Elephantine 20, 55, 66, 112, 114, 149, 150, 153, 156, 167–69, 172, 173, 181, 183, 185–87, 196, 205, 206,

- 210-12, 218, 220, 221, 232, 235, 240, 241, 243, 253, 292, 295, 316, 320, 321, 348, 352, 357, 358  
 Eliashib 81, 231-33, 312  
 El-Jib 23  
 Elnathan 62, 148, 349  
 ‘enemy from the north’ 249, 250  
 En-gedi 29, 61, 137-39, 155, 199, 255  
 Enoch 93, 185, 239, 244, 248, 252, 259, 338, 344, 345  
 eparch/y 165, 166  
 Ephorus 123, 125, 126, 322  
 Ephraim 27, 32-34, 156, 198  
 er-Ras, Tell 31, 32  
 Esagila 290  
 eschatology 90, 94, 146, 247, 249, 360, 364  
 1 Esdras 71, 72, 75, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86  
 Eshem-Bethel 241, 243  
 Eshmun 23  
 Eshmunazar 64, 159  
 esoteric arts 254  
 Esther 70, 104, 105, 129, 130, 141, 149, 157, 184, 271, 294, 295, 346, 352, 354, 359  
 Euphrates 19, 134, 273, 289, 326, 330, 338  
 Eupolemus 217  
 European Seminar on Methodology in Israel’s History 12  
 Eusebius 56, 112, 217, 347, 348  
 Evagoras 323  
 exile/s 20, 73-75, 83, 88, 96, 97, 143, 145, 203, 206, 219, 227, 228, 236, 239, 240, 245, 246, 256, 267, 265, 274, 279, 287, 310, 315, 317, 353, 354, 359  
 Ezekias 66, 149  
 Ezion-geber 47, 59  
 Far‘ah, Tell (North) 46, 53, 60, 289  
 Far‘ah, Tell (South) 46, 50, 60  
 Farama, Tell 50  
*favissa* 36  
 festival/s 73-75, 85, 105, 113, 179, 182, 186, 212, 220-22, 334, 335, 337, 339  
 figure of wisdom 102, 185  
 firstborn 176  
 first-fruit/s 176, 195, 208, 219, 235, 337  
 fiscal 133, 192, 195, 197, 302, 304  
 foe from the north 97  
 fortress 23, 24, 35, 37, 38, 40-42, 45-48, 52, 53, 107, 137, 201, 210, 211, 275, 296, 297  
 Fukhar, Tell 34  
 Fül, Tell el- 23, 24, 137  
 Gadatas 77, 107, 116, 117, 145, 214  
 Galilee 41, 42, 159, 161, 200, 202  
 Gargamela 349  
 garrison/s 38, 166, 168, 212, 275, 319, 354  
 gatekeepers 80, 153, 227, 228, 230, 311, 312  
 Gath 46  
*Gathas* 361-63  
 Gautama 268, 269  
 Gaza 34, 43, 44, 50, 53, 69, 157, 161, 162, 165, 166, 264  
 Geba 135, 136  
 Ge-harashim 136  
 genealogy/genealogies 6, 80, 96, 99, 119, 135, 153, 170, 171, 225-28, 233, 234, 239, 325  
 Gerizim, Mt 31-33, 87, 157, 158, 169, 233  
 Geshem 74, 164, 298, 299  
 Gezer 39, 137, 138, 155, 199  
 giant/s 116, 244, 338, 339  
 Gibeah 23, 137  
 Gibeon 23, 62, 63, 135-39  
 Gil‘am 42  
 Gimzo 138  
 Gobryas 266, 267  
 Gog 96, 97, 249  
*golah* 81, 144, 287, 308, 357  
 Goren, Tell 27  
 governor 25-27, 31, 49, 55, 56, 58, 61, 62, 65-68, 75, 85, 86, 89, 108, 132, 134, 137, 140, 141-44, 147-51, 153, 154, 156-58, 163-65, 168, 172, 173, 194, 97, 231-33, 235, 276-78, 280, 282, 283, 285, 288, 292, 293, 295-300, 303, 304, 306, 320, 321, 326, 328-30, 342, 347-49, 355, 356, 358  
 grain 23, 38, 45-47, 64, 202-204, 207, 214, 221, 285, 326

- griffin/s 57, 58, 63, 68  
 Gubaru 266  
 Gudeirat, Tell el- 47, 137  
 guild/s 113, 205  
 guilt offering 219  
 Gush-Ḥalav 42  
 Hadid 135, 136, 138  
 Haggai 85-88, 90, 144, 147, 211, 219, 231, 232, 250, 251, 256, 270, 277, 278-81, 283, 353, 359  
 Ḥalif, Tel 45, 50  
 Hanan 56, 156, 157  
 Hananah 26, 62  
 Hanani 301, 302  
 Hananiah 56, 68, 156, 158, 211, 212, 302  
*haoma* 109  
 Haror, Tel 45, 53  
 Ḥarube, Tell 44  
 Hasidim 258, 310  
 Hazor 42, 136  
 Hebron 44, 138, 155, 198  
 Hecataeus of Abdera 119, 149, 208, 341, 343, 348  
 Hellanicus of Lesbos 120, 122  
 Ḥer, Tell el- 50, 53  
 Heracles 57, 58, 68  
 Hermopolis 54, 55, 115  
 Herodotus 4, 50, 119-22, 124, 127, 133, 163, 166, 194, 195, 267-69, 291, 327  
 Ḥesbān, Tell 49  
 Heshbon 49, 51, 53  
 Ḥesi, Tell el- 41, 42  
 Hesiod 119, 120  
 Hezekiah 27, 28, 65-67, 138, 148, 148, 169, 232, 265, 238, 240, 249  
 Hierodule Lists 165  
 Hippodamian/Hippodamic 35-37  
 historiography 4, 7, 9, 10, 119, 120  
 Holiness Code 100, 174, 337  
 Hormah 45  
 Horvat Masorah 53  
 Horvat Qitmit 52  
 Horvat Radum 52  
 Horvat Ritma 53  
 Horvat ‘Uza 52  
 Hyrcanus 87  
 idol/s 89, 340  
 Idumaea 19, 22, 34, 43, 50, 52, 53, 59, 137, 138, 162, 187, 218, 298, 354  
 Ienysus 50  
 immortality 364  
 incense 39, 44, 47, 48, 60, 210, 211, 220, 226, 253, 255, 318  
 income 173, 193, 196, 207, 215, 235, 268, 303, 327  
 ‘Ira, Tel 52  
 Isaiah 90-93, 156, 241, 247, 248, 250-52, 253, 255, 257, 258-60, 288, 312, 338, 340, 353, 359  
 Isiyaton 56, 157  
 Jaddua 66, 68, 148, 149, 157, 232, 233, 349  
 Jaffa/Joppa 39, 42, 64, 160  
 Jalul, Tell 51  
 Janus-faced vases 255  
 Jarmuth 136  
 Jedaniah 211, 212, 310, 318  
 Jehohanan 56, 66, 172, 232, 320, 321, 357  
 Jemmeh, Tell 45, 46, 50, 53  
 Jeroboam 68, 95, 338, 339  
 Jesus (brother of high priest) 232, 234  
 Jezer, Tell 39  
 Jezreel 198  
 Joel 94, 95, 146, 247, 249, 251, 258, 259, 260  
 Johanan 66, 231-34, 319, 320, 349  
 Joiada 157, 231-33, 305  
 Joiakim 232, 288  
 Jonah 95, 251, 312, 359  
 Jonathan 152, 231, 232  
 Jordan 48, 50, 51, 53, 56, 138, 155, 198  
 Josephus 32, 66, 87, 112, 118, 127, 129, 130, 157, 158, 184, 200, 208, 217, 222, 230-34, 295, 319-21  
 Joshua 12, 56, 73-76, 81-83, 85, 86, 88, 147-49, 156, 158, 200, 219, 231-33, 257, 276-85, 328, 334, 355, 359, 360  
 Josiah 85, 169, 225, 228, 241, 338, 340  
 jubilee 174, 177, 179, 182, 222, 223  
 Justin 126, 169

- Kadesh-Barnea 47, 50, 53, 137  
 Kedron Valley 25  
 Keilah 136, 139  
 Keisan, Tell 42, 63  
 Kerak 51  
 Ketef Hinnom 26  
 Ketef Jeriho 60  
 Khelifeh, Tell el- 47, 50, 51, 53, 59, 166  
 Khirbet Feinan 52  
 Khirbet Luzifar 50, 53  
 Khirbet Usa/Khirbet Uza 42  
 Khnum 114, 212, 318  
 Khuweilifeh, Tell 45  
 King's Peace 323  
 king/s 32, 39, 47, 62, 63, 65, 68, 72, 73,  
     75, 76, 79, 81, 89, 96, 97, 101, 103,  
     104, 107, 108, 116, 129, 130, 133,  
     138, 150, 152, 154, 157, 159, 162-  
     66, 168, 169, 173, 187, 192, 193,  
     196, 197, 205, 210-16, 223, 231,  
     245, 256, 257, 265-69, 272, 280,  
     282, 283, 291, 292, 295-300, 305,  
     320, 321-28, 330-33, 338-44, 346,  
     347, 352, 355, 359, 362  
 Kiriath-arba 136  
 Kiriath-jearim 135  
 Kir-Moab 51  
 Kishon 35  
 Kudadi, Tell 42  
 Lachish 30, 43, 50, 136, 138, 155, 164,  
     166, 241  
 Lahav 45  
*latifundia* 193, 206  
 Lebanon 204, 217, 279, 284  
*lesonis* 114  
 levirate marriage 179, 182  
 Levi/te/s 72, 74, 75, 80-83, 85, 86, 89,  
     90, 93, 97, 149, 151-54, 208, 224-  
     30, 235, 236, 246, 283, 286, 302,  
     305, 311, 312, 325-29, 332-36  
 Leviticus 99, 100, 173, 175, 182, 216,  
     217-24, 245, 254, 256, 335  
 lion/s 26, 32, 58, 63, 68, 137, 242, 339  
 literacy 151, 154, 155  
 Livy 217  
 loan/s 56, 60, 150, 181, 182, 206, 303,  
     304, 317  
 Lod 135-38  
 Lucian 4  
 Lycia/n 107-109, 213  
 Lydia/n 266  
 magus/magi 121, 268, 269, 363  
 magic/magical 115, 253-56  
 Magog 96, 97  
 Makmish 38  
 Malachi 85, 86, 89, 90, 95, 219, 224, 229,  
     246, 251, 256, 257, 259, 260, 277  
 Manasseh 27, 33, 134, 157, 198, 233,  
     264, 289  
 mantic wisdom 252  
 Marathon 269  
 Marduk 267, 272, 290  
 Maresha, Tel 43, 50  
 Marjum, Khirbet el- 50  
 marriage 72-74, 89, 90, 106, 145, 150,  
     171, 179, 181-83, 185, 247, 286,  
     295, 297, 305, 307-309, 312-16,  
     328, 329, 333, 335, 336, 356-58  
 Maskhuteh, Tell el- 58, 162, 164  
 Masos, Tel 52  
 'maximalists' 11, 13  
 Mazar, Tell el- 48, 51  
 Mazday 67, 68, 349  
 Mede/s 70, 249, 266, 353  
 Megabyzus 161, 291, 293, 296, 352  
 Megadim, Tel 35, 42  
 Megiddo 36, 41, 42, 134, 159, 354  
 Melqart 58  
 Memphis 115, 213, 267  
 Meşad Ḥashavyahu 39  
 Mesha 169  
 messiah/messianic 86, 87, 257, 259, 280-  
     83  
 Mevorakh, Tell 37, 42, 160  
 Mibtahiah 318  
 Michal, Tell 38, 42, 59, 63, 137, 161  
 Michmas 135, 136  
 Migdol 53  
 Mikhmoret/Michmoret 37, 42  
 mina/s 108  
 'minimalists' 11-13  
 Miriam 226  
 Mizpah 24, 29, 61, 136, 137, 139, 282  
 Moab 49, 51, 164, 171, 281, 307, 312,  
     356  
 Moladah 136

- monotheism 92, 100, 240, 241, 243, 244, 253, 259, 359, 360
- Mordecai 104, 149, 295
- Mošah 57, 159
- Moses 11, 74, 100, 175, 209, 222, 226, 243, 313, 324, 331-39, 341, 342, 343, 357
- Murabba'at 57, 159
- Murašu 110, 112, 197, 316, 317, 353
- music/singing 99, 216, 223, 224, 229, 239
- Nabatea/n/s 165
- Nabonidus 111, 162, 163, 265-67, 271, 272
- Nabopolassar 266
- Nahal Ḥever 57, 159
- Naṣbeh, Tell en- 24
- Nebo 135
- Nebuchadnezzar 24, 25, 93, 250, 264, 274, 281, 285, 286, 290, 292, 317
- Necho II 121
- necromancy 92
- Nectanebo I 323
- Nectanebo II 347
- Negev 41, 50, 52, 53, 137, 139, 162, 165, 198, 208
- Neo-Babylonia/n 22-24, 26, 28, 48, 49, 57, 60, 62, 63, 111, 134, 140, 152, 158, 162, 195, 201, 224, 264, 265, 271, 277, 280, 282, 353
- Nepherites, Pharaoh 39
- Netinim 80, 83, 227, 228, 230
- neutron analysis 52
- New Historicism 3-8, 10
- Nikaso 157
- Nimra, Jebel 44, 50, 53
- Nimrin, Tell 51, 58
- Ninus 124, 346
- Nippur 112, 272, 317, 318
- Nisan 187, 221
- Noadiah 184, 300
- noble/s 104, 126, 150, 168, 170, 173, 196, 229, 235, 268, 269, 285, 295, 301, 302, 304, 306, 309-12, 358
- novel/la/s 104, 184, 346, 354
- Obadiah 94, 95, 165
- olive/s 43, 59, 88, 202, 207, 264, 280
- Onias 233
- Ono 135, 136, 138
- Opis 266
- Osnappar 289
- ostraca/ostraca 27, 34, 36, 40, 43, 45-49, 52, 53, 59, 60, 64, 162, 166, 187, 212, 218, 221, 241, 352
- Oxyrhynchus Historian* 123, 125, 126
- pantheon 241, 243
- papponomy 234
- papyrus/papyri 22, 38, 54-57, 68, 106, 107, 112, 115, 149, 150, 155, 156, 158, 159, 162, 166, 169, 173, 206, 211, 212, 221, 230, 232, 235, 241, 291, 295, 318, 320, 321, 348, 352, 358
- parabiblical 239, 241
- paradise 31
- Passover 55, 74, 75, 85, 186, 211, 212, 220, 221, 318, 335, 337, 357
- peasant/s 103, 172, 191, 193, 195, 204, 208, 264, 303, 306
- Pegasus 68
- Peloponnesian War 122-24, 190, 292
- Pelusium 50, 53, 61
- peoples of the land/s 245, 286, 287, 313, 314, 316
- Pericles 305, 307
- Persepolis 107, 109, 110, 127, 128, 194, 195, 197, 209, 214, 215, 268, 275, 291
- Persepolis Treasury Tablets 110, 128, 197, 214
- Persepolis Fortification Tablets 110, 128, 197, 214
- Perseus 57
- Pharnabazos 68
- Pherendates 112-14, 213
- Philip II of Macedon 323, 324
- Philistine 28, 34, 39, 42, 43, 135, 162, 264, 265
- Philo 237
- philosophers 115
- Phinehas 81, 226, 338, 339
- Phoenicia/n 22, 34-36, 38, 40-42, 46, 47, 51, 56-59, 63, 64, 68, 69, 121, 132,

- 138, 139, 142, 156, 158-61, 166, 189, 191, 194, 205, 242, 264, 275, 280, 297, 307, 323, 346-49, 354, 355, 358
- phw'* 25, 26, 61, 62
- Pliny the Elder 127
- Plutarch 124, 126, 128, 166, 322
- Poleg, Tel 42, 161
- Polybius 119
- Pompeius Trogus 127, 169, 346
- postmodernism 6-11
- prayer 75, 79, 95, 216, 224, 236, 237, 245, 247, 286, 314, 328, 337, 340
- Pre-Socratic 119
- prefect/s 56, 150, 156, 157, 173
- priest/s 66, 72, 74, 80-83, 86, 89-92, 94, 97, 100, 108-10, 112, 114, 115, 121, 126, 143, 147-49, 151-55, 157, 158, 172, 174-77, 208, 212-14, 217, 219, 220, 222, 224-30, 232-236, 246, 251, 256, 257, 259, 260, 278, 279, 283, 285, 286, 288, 295, 300, 302, 303, 305, 307-14, 318-20, 325-30, 332-34, 338, 341, 342, 349, 351, 355-58
- prophecy/prophecies/prophet/s 17, 70, 85-89, 91, 93-97, 99, 101, 113, 147, 175, 176, 184, 224, 239, 246, 247, 249-52, 254, 257-60, 270, 273, 278, 279, 282, 283, 285, 288, 300, 336, 338, 340, 353, 360
- proselyte/s 169
- Proverbs 101, 102, 105, 183-85, 345
- Psammetichus III 267
- Pseudo-Aristotle 125, 127, 128, 191, 194, 195
- Pseudo-Scylax 63, 127, 159
- Ptolemy/Ptolemaic 45, 60, 67, 93, 103, 115, 129, 149, 166, 248, 252, 341, 344
- Qal'a, Jebel 48
- Qasile, Tell 42
- Qedar/ite/s 59, 64-67, 155, 158, 162-65
- Qos/Qaus 43, 51, 52, 59, 240
- Quintus Curtius 56, 129, 134, 166, 348
- Qumran 168, 185, 187, 209, 228, 238, 324, 331, 332
- Rabbath-Ammon 48, 53
- Rabud, Tell 50
- rainfall 198, 199
- Ramah 135, 136, 138
- Ramat Rahel 26, 29, 61, 63, 137, 139, 148, 159
- remnant 87, 245-47, 287, 316
- resurrection 93, 96, 248, 249
- returnee/s 30, 72, 80, 81, 91, 135, 143-45, 200, 203, 247, 257, 270, 274, 278, 284, 288, 308, 309, 355, 357
- revitalization 145, 146, 308
- Rimmon 45
- Rueqish, Tell 50, 51, 53
- ruralization 203, 204, 274, 287
- Ruth 96, 104, 105, 171, 180, 182, 184, 312, 346, 359
- Sa'sa' 42
- Saba, Tell es- 46
- sabbath/s 178, 204, 220, 221, 236, 305-307, 311, 313, 315, 336, 356
- sabbatical year 174, 178, 180, 182, 222, 223, 245, 286, 337
- sacrific/e/s/ial 98, 108, 175, 176, 178, 180, 184, 211, 212, 214, 216, 218-21, 224, 229, 235, 253, 255, 318, 319, 326, 328, 334, 355,
- Sa'idiyeh, Tell es- 48, 51, 53
- Samaria/n 13, 22, 30-34, 46, 55-58, 60, 64-68, 73, 87, 134, 138-44, 150, 154-59, 161, 169, 170, 187, 198, 206, 218, 226, 232, 233, 242, 253, 263, 264, 282, 286, 288, 289, 298, 299, 317, 349, 352-55, 359
- Samaritan 31, 32, 87, 99, 167, 169, 230, 283, 288
- Sanballat 32, 56, 57, 68, 74, 138, 140, 155-158, 233, 295, 298, 299, 300, 301, 305, 307, 313, 356
- Şandahanna, Tell es- 43
- Sanhedrin 234, 235
- Saqqarah 55
- Sardis 166, 266
- Sarepta 160
- Şar'ia, Tell es- 45
- Satan 244
- satrap/s/satrapy/satrapies 19, 65, 67, 78,

- 107-109, 113, 114, 127, 132-34, 140, 141, 144, 149, 156, 156, 163, 165, 194-97, 211-14, 267, 269, 274, 278, 279, 291, 292, 293, 298, 299, 300, 306, 314, 322, 323, 326, 327, 328, 330, 333, 335, 346, 347, 349, 355, 356
- scarab 61
- school/s 5, 11, 36, 41, 85, 100, 154, 185, 331, 336
- scripture 84, 94, 106, 154, 238, 239, 331, 332, 337, 341, 344, 359, 360
- Scythian/s 269
- seal/s/seal impressions 23-27, 31, 32, 34, 36, 39, 47-49, 51, 54-63, 67, 68, 113, 135, 137, 139, 141, 142, 148, 149, 151, 153, 155, 156, 158, 164, 184, 205, 241, 242, 282, 352
- sect/s/sectarian/s/sectarianism 19, 89, 170, 185, 224, 256, 259, 260, 261, 326
- Semiramus 124, 346
- Senaah 135, 139
- Sennacherib 13, 28, 167, 169, 265, 288, 340
- Septuagint 20
- Sera<sup>t</sup>, Tel 45, 50, 53
- Seraiah 82, 149
- Sharon 42, 159-61, 198, 354
- Shavuot/Pentecost 221
- Shechem 31-33, 63, 64, 156, 282, 289
- Sheikh Zuweid 50, 53
- shekel 219, 284, 327, 337
- Shelomith 60, 62, 81, 148, 184
- Shemihazah 344
- Shephelah 28, 30, 34, 41, 42, 50, 83, 135, 138, 155, 159, 198, 264, 265, 354
- Sheshbazzar 71, 75, 76, 97, 140, 142, 143, 148, 150, 271, 276-79, 284, 330, 355
- Sheva, Tel 46, 50, 53
- Shiloh 25, 26, 34, 282
- Shiqmona 35, 42, 63, 160
- Sidon/ian 38, 41, 64, 65, 67, 68, 134, 139, 159, 160, 161, 281, 323, 347, 348, 349
- siglos* 65
- sin offering 219
- singers, temple 99, 224, 227, 326
- slave/s 56, 57, 108, 158, 164, 172, 179, 180, 181, 189-93, 195, 196, 205, 206, 220, 222, 223, 245, 300, 313, 319
- sociology 258-61
- Soco 138
- soil 31, 191, 193, 195, 198, 206, 354
- Solon 206, 305
- South Arabia/n 45, 60
- Sparta/n 122, 124, 291, 292, 322, 323, 324
- sphinx/es 57, 58, 63, 68
- Strabo 127
- Strato's Tower 42, 159
- suicide 237
- Sukkot 84, 220, 222, 333, 335, 337
- Sumer 103, 152, 264, 272, 273
- Susa 104, 115, 213, 272, 275
- synagogue/s 169, 236, 237
- Tabernacles, Festival of 74, 75, 85, 222, 334, 335
- Tachos 346, 347
- Tacitus 217
- talent/s 163, 166, 211, 326, 327, 332
- tamid* offering 219
- Tattenai 78, 140, 141, 277-79, 288
- Tawilan 50, 51
- tax/es 59, 60, 62, 106, 110, 116, 143, 144, 145, 153, 161, 163, 172, 186, 191-96, 204, 206-208, 213, 215, 216, 227, 284, 303, 304, 326, 332, 337, 352, 355
- Teima 162-164
- Tekoa/ite/s 136, 139, 301, 310
- temple/s 216-18, 235, 236, 276-85, 318, 319
- Tennes 161, 274, 323, 346-49
- Thasos 32
- theodicy 95, 103, 247, 345, 359
- Thucydides 4-6, 77, 122-26, 190, 291
- Tiglath-pileser III 169
- Timnah 39, 40, 138
- Tirzah 33
- Tissaphernes 292, 322
- tithe/s 153, 179, 182, 195, 207, 208, 220, 228, 235, 236, 305, 311, 337
- Tobiah 74, 164, 219, 231, 298, 299-301, 305, 308-12

- Tobit 239, 317  
 trader/s 160, 166, 204, 205, 306, 307,  
   315, 356  
 Transjordan/ian 22, 43, 50-53, 162, 164,  
   203, 231, 298, 309, 336  
 transliteration, Hebrew 19  
 treasure/treasury 75, 107, 109, 110, 128,  
   153, 163, 195, 197, 209, 214, 306,  
   319, 326, 330, 332, 333  
 tribute 59, 154, 163, 194-97, 203, 207,  
   265, 268, 306, 319, 327, 333, 358  
 Trito-Isaiah 90, 91, 288, 312, 359  
 Tyre/Tyrian 35, 41, 65, 67, 157, 159,  
   160, 161, 204, 271, 306
- Udjahorresnet 79, 112, 113, 116, 212,  
   213, 216, 267, 268  
 'Umeiri, Tell el- 49, 51, 60, 164  
 Umm el-Biyara 51  
 universalist/universalism 88, 92, 96  
 Unleavened Bread, Festival of 220, 221,  
   335, 337  
 Urim and Thumim 230, 254  
 Uriyau/Uriaw/Urio 25, 62, 148  
 Uruk 289
- Western Hill 25  
 wheat 59, 60, 202, 220, 264  
 wine 23, 31, 33, 35, 38, 59, 60, 62, 156,  
   202, 204, 214, 218  
 witch-hunt 316  
 woman/women 6, 9, 38, 57, 58, 62, 63,  
   101, 102, 104, 105, 121, 125, 169,  
   171, 177, 179, 181, 184, 185, 190,  
   193, 216, 217, 286, 307, 310, 312,  
   313, 338, 339, 356
- Xanthus 107, 108, 213, 214  
 Xenophon 123-25, 128, 163, 194, 196,  
   197, 294, 322, 346  
 Xerxes 104, 111, 120, 130, 214, 215,  
   271, 290-93, 317, 352  
 Xerxes II 291
- Yeho'ezer 25, 26, 62  
 Yehonur 56  
 Yehopadani 56  
*yhd/yhwd* 26, 27, 39, 47, 49, 61, 62, 65,  
   67, 141  
 Yhwh, Day of 94, 249, 250
- Zadok/Zadokite/s 97, 142, 146, 153, 224,  
   225, 226, 228-30, 234, 283, 311  
 Zanoah 136, 137, 139  
 Zechariah 85-90, 95, 146, 147, 187, 219,  
   222, 228, 231, 232, 246, 249, 251,  
   252, 256-59, 270, 277-83, 353, 359  
 Zerubbabel 62, 70, 71, 73, 74, 80, 82-86,  
   88, 140-43, 147-50, 200, 232, 257,  
   271, 274, 276-78, 280-83, 285, 292,  
   293, 328, 330, 334, 338, 340, 349,  
   355, 359  
 Zeus 58, 67, 68  
 Zif, Tell 50  
 Ziklag 45, 136  
 Zion 88, 94, 95, 244, 245, 249  
 Zoroaster/Zoroastrian/s/Zoroastrianism  
   16, 18, 109, 209, 210, 252, 265