

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

IN the history of Jerusalem, when we come to the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah it is as if a mist lifted and we were regaining that near view of the City which has been more or less obscured since Baruch's stories of Jeremiah's times, and the Dirges of the desolate Sion. Not only are precise narratives resumed and dated to the month and day—a custom we have found with Jewish writers since Baruch. Documents of state are also offered, and, most valuable of all, we have the memoirs of the principal actors, written in the first person singular: a form of literature to which the only precedents, so far as Jerusalem is concerned, have been Isaiah's account of his vision in the Temple and some passages of his earlier life dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch. These new memoirs, however, not being those of prophets, with whom the spiritual vision always tends to overwhelm the material circumstance and personal detail, provide of the latter a wealth unprecedented in the literature of Jerusalem. Their authors, in explaining their policy and describing their conduct—their conversations, their passions and even their gestures—reveal the characters behind these, and add to the long drama of Jerusalem two of its eight or ten most vivid personalities. To our view of the stage itself the gain is considerable. What Baruch did for the hills of Jerusalem and for the courts of the Palace and Temple, Nehemiah now does, and more, for the full circuit of the City walls. There is, too, an atmosphere through which the voices and the tempers of men rise with a dis-

tinctness we hardly ever again feel about the grey town till Josephus comes upon her with his Romans. We see a wet day in December, with a crowd on the broad place before the Temple, *shivering because of their business, and for the great rain*¹; and again an autumn day when the people fill the same space *and feast and send portions to one another and make great mirth, bringing in from the mountain branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm and thick trees* to build booths, every citizen on the roof of his house and all the pilgrims on the broad places by the Water-gate and the Gate of Ephraim.² Perhaps most vivid of all is the building of the Walls, half the force at work with their swords girt to their sides—as only, a few years ago, I saw the Circassians building their houses from the ruins of Ammân under fear of a Beduin attack—and half behind them under the Wall with spears, bows and habergeons, Nehemiah in the centre and a bugler by his side all the long day *from the rise of the dawn till the stars come out.*³ And besides these crises and festivals the daily life of the people unfolds before us; the country-folk and Tyrian fish-dealers waiting till the gates open of a morning, and bringing in through them the City's food to the markets and the offerings for the Temple; the daily table of the hospitable governor, *one ox a day and six choice sheep, also fowls, and once in ten days store of all wines*⁴; and the discontent of an over-taxed people with their fields mortgaged to the usurer—in fact very much that we wanted to know about Jerusalem and now know, not only for that year or two of Nehemiah's reports but for all the long centuries of the common unchanging life on either side of him.

Yet the whole story is beset with difficulties arising from the composition of its text—difficulties about the sources,

¹ Ezra x. 9.

² Neh. viii.

³ Neh. iv. 15 ff.

⁴ Neh. v. 17 ff.

the chronology and the relations of the two principal actors—all of which are hard and some perhaps insoluble, but with which we must grapple before the Jerusalem of Ezra and Nehemiah becomes certain to us. In this preliminary paper I propose to deal with them alone, leaving the topography and history to another.

In the Hebrew Canon and our own the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are separated; but they were originally one Book: manifestly the compilation of a writer who worked after the fall of the Persian Empire, and whose style in the summary and connective passages which he contributes very closely resembles that of the compiler of the Book of Chronicles. On this ground, and because Ezra-Nehemiah obviously continues Chronicles, he is to be identified with the Chronicler himself, whose date is about 300 B.C., or more than a century after Ezra and Nehemiah visited Jerusalem.¹ Among the constituents of the Book are a historical summary written not in Hebrew but in Aramaic²; several "state-documents" in the direct form³; and two long fragments of "Memoirs" in which Ezra and Nehemiah respectively speak in the first person singular.⁴ As suddenly as these "memoirs" are introduced, so are they again broken off, but other parts of them appear to form the basis of narratives which continue their story but introduce Ezra and Nehemiah in the third person.⁵ Nor

¹ For the proofs of this, which are obvious and accepted by critics of all schools (cf. even Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Ancient Monuments*, 537), see Driver, *Introd.*, 6th ed., 544f., and list of phrases characteristic of the Chronicler, 535 ff.; and § 5 of Ryle's *Ezra and Neh.*, *Camb. Bible for Schools*.

² Ezra iv. 8-vi. 18.

³ Ezra i. 2-4; iv. 11-16, 18-22; v. 8-17; vi. 3-12; vii. 12-26, all but the first in Aramaic.

⁴ Ezra vii. 27-ix.; Neh. i.-vii. 5 (6-73a ?); xii. 31 (32-36 ?), 37-40; xiii. 4-31.

⁵ Ezra x.; Neh. vii. 73b; viii.-xii. 30.

(as we shall see) does the compiler observe the regular sequence of events. All these features visible on the surface of Ezra-Nehemiah and complicated by others of a more subtle kind have provoked what is perhaps the most considerable controversy in the past ten years of Old Testament scholarship. Some of this is not very relevant to the story of Jerusalem ; but we have to determine at least the most probable answers to the questions raised by the "Memoirs" and the chronology.

No serious objections have been taken to the "Memoirs" of Nehemiah.¹ Written in classical Hebrew—in the vocabulary there are, of course, some late elements—and with the spirit and directness of an actor in the scenes they describe, these "Memoirs" form one of the most valuable documents in the history and topography of Jerusalem. Scarcely less reliable, but to be used with more discrimination, are the passages that continue the story of Nehemiah but present him in the third person.²

The question of the "Memoirs of Ezra"³ is much more difficult. They also are written in the first person singular, but objection has been taken to their authenticity⁴ on the ground that their vocabulary and syntax are those of the compiler himself ; that they contain unhistorical elements ; that the whole story of Ezra's activity is improbable ; that Nehemiah does not mention Ezra ; and that Ezra is un-

¹ See last note but one. Renan characteristically guards himself from a final opinion on their authenticity. *Histoire*, iv. 67, 68.

² Neh. x. (?) and xi.

³ Ezra vii. 27-ix.

⁴ Principally by Renan (1893), *Hist.* iv. 96 ff. ; C. C. Torrey (1896), *The Compos. and Histor. Value of Ezra and Neh.* (*Beihfte z. ZATW.* ii.), in which the Ezra memoirs are subjected to a searching analysis with the conclusion that they are the work of the Chronicler himself ; H. P. Smith (1903), *O. T. Hist.* 390 ff., and Foster Kent (1905), *Israel's Hist. and Biogr. Narratives* (in *The Students' O.T.*), 29-34—these last two following Torrey, Foster Kent more moderately. Cf. also Winckler, *Alt-Orient. Forschungen* and KATZ, 294.

known both to the Son of Sirach and the author of Second Maccabees, to whom Nehemiah is the sole champion of Judaism at this period.¹ For these reasons the "Memoirs of Ezra" are held to be the merest fiction, invented by priests of a later age in order to place beside the layman Nehemiah a priestly colleague in the restoration of the Law and the Congregation of Israel. It is even denied that Ezra himself existed, except possibly as an ordinary priest whose name had descended to the generation which made so much of him. As we know from the Apocrypha and from Talmudic literature, Ezra became an attractive centre for legend; according to this argument the legend was already begun by the Chronicler in these "Memoirs." To the theory as a whole two answers suggest themselves at once. So lavish and detailed a story can hardly be conceived as developing except from the real labours of an impressive personality. And against the hypothesis that a later generation of priests, jealous for the history of their order, invented a man learned in the Law as colleague to the layman Nehemiah, may be urged the necessity of the actual appearance of such a man in the conditions in which Nehemiah found himself at Jerusalem. A layman like Nehemiah would hardly have ventured to enforce the religious reforms to which he was obliged after his secular work on the Walls was completed, without some authoritative exposition of the Divine Law of his people. The presence of Ezra by the side of Nehemiah is therefore perfectly natural, if not necessary, to the crisis Nehemiah encountered and overcame.

Turning now to the linguistic evidence which is offered for the theory, one is at first sight very much impressed with a list of words and idioms characteristic of the Chronicler which Dr. C. C. Torrey has gathered from the

¹ Ecclesiasticus xlix. 12 ff. ; 2 Macc. i. 10 ff.

“Memoirs of Ezra”; but a careful examination shows it to be far from sufficient proof that these “Memoirs” are the Chronicler’s work. A number of the terms and constructions given by Dr. C. C. Torrey are not the peculiar property of the Chronicler, but are employed as well by other post-exilic writers. Of the others, which (outside of the “Memoirs”) do only occur in Chronicles some may owe their presence in the “Memoirs” to the Chronicler’s editorial work on the latter; and for the rest the explanation is natural that Ezra belonged to the same school of piety and letters in which the Chronicler worked. Again, while the style of the “Memoirs of Ezra” yields very few phrases peculiar to itself, it borrows from other sources, for example from Deuteronomy, from which the Chronicler in his own work wholly abstains.¹ That contrary to his

¹ These conclusions, except that as to the Deuteronomic influence on Ezra (on which see below), were reached by me from a careful examination of Torrey’s lists, in which he gives some forty-four instances in the “Ezra Memoirs” of phrases characteristic of the Chronicler. Of these forty-four, seventeen at least are found in other post-exilic writers. Several others, such, for instance, as the combined propositions and the instances taken from ix. 7 ff. (where the use of the first person singular ceases) may be due to the Chronicler’s editorial revision. The remainder of the phrases found otherwise in Chronicles alone are too few to support the theory of the identity of authorship, particularly as their presence in the “Ezra Memoirs” may be explained (as I have said above) by Ezra’s being under the same influences, religious and literary, as the Chronicler. I had made this examination of the linguistic evidence before there came into my hand the very instructive treatise of Joh. Geissler, *Die literarischen Beziehungen der Esramemorien insbes. zur Chronik u. d. hexateuch. Quellschriften*, Chemnitz, 1899. Geissler exhibits and emphasizes the direct influence of Deuteronomy and other older strata of the legislation upon the “Ezra Memoirs”; the small signs of the linguistic influence of P. He shows that the prayers, Ezra ix. 6-15, Neh. ix. 6-37, betray much less affinity to the language of the Chronicler than the narrative passages do; that many of the characteristic expressions of the Chronicler are wanting in the “Memoirs”; and that therefore (as against Torrey) we can affirm on the part both of the prayers and the narrative sections a literary independence of the Chronicler. Geissler adds that the greater affinity of the language imputed to Ezra and Nehemiah to Deuteronomy than to P is to be explained by the fact that P was for the first time introduced by them,

usual style, which is that of the priestly and post-exilic writers, the Chronicler has admitted to his story of Ezra—especially into Ezra's prayer as also into the prayer of Nehemiah—so large a proportion of Deuteronomic phrases is sure evidence that he was compiling older materials rather than writing the whole story (as Dr. Torrey concludes) out of his own mind. And, after all, was this a mind which was likely to produce out of itself so large and so defined a figure as Ezra? I feel it unnatural to suppose that the wealth of incidents, names and characteristics which the "Memoirs of Ezra" contains was all a pure invention especially by a writer whose methods are so well known to us as the Chronicler; and in this connexion it may be pointed out that while in Chronicles priests throng everywhere and scribes are little mentioned, the Ezra of the "Memoirs" though a priest is before all a Scribe, and his priesthood is magnified only in passages due to the compiler. If the figure of Ezra had been the entire invention of those later priestly circles to which the Chronicler belonged, it would probably have been a more priestly figure than it is, a close reflection of Jeshua the colleague of Zerubbabel. Nor is the great expedition, which Ezra is said to have led to Jerusalem historically improbable. On the contrary, Nehemiah's removal of the abuses of a century, and his triumph over prejudices and habits of worship, which, as "Malachi" tells us, were nearly universal among the priesthood and laity of Jerusalem, as well as his successful foundation of a compact community which remained true to the stricter Law brought from Babylon and resisted as Judaism before Nehemiah had not been able to do the influences of the surrounding heathen—all these achievements of Nehemiah are best explained

whereas Deuteronomy had been classic and influential for nearly two centuries.

through his reinforcement by just so large a number of Babylonian Jews under just such a leader as Ezra. Finally, the absence of Ezra's name from the list of famous Israelites celebrated by the Son of Sirach is certainly striking, but it may have been easily due to some other cause than that writer's ignorance of or disbelief in him, and in any case it cannot outweigh the considerations we have just adduced.

With some supporters of the theory it would seem to be an argument in its favour that the writing of "Memoirs" was so new a form of literature in Israel that it is unlikely two original instances of it should now spring up together.¹ But this form (as we have seen) had precedents among the pre-exilic prophets; and though these are fragmentary and mere circumstance and personal detail are overwhelmed in them by the prophet's wealth of vision, there is enough of the former to afford a model and incentive to men like Nehemiah and Ezra, who not being men with visions to communicate would naturally develop the circumstantial and personal elements in this kind of literature. As for Ezra himself he had in the school to which his own mind was most akin a very near model of this sort. The priest Ezekiel is of all the prophets the one who brings the story of his visions most into the "Memoir" form. To speak then of Ezra's and Nehemiah's Memoirs as without precedent among the Jews is not correct.

Thus the objections to the authenticity of the Memoirs of Ezra are insufficient. But when we try to date himself and his work, especially in relation to the visits of Nehemiah to Jerusalem, we encounter difficulties not so easily removed. The compiler of Ezra-Nehemiah, while furnishing some unquestionable dates, has left the chronology of his Book confused and ambiguous, as the following review of

¹ Torrey, 28 f.; founding on a quotation from Wellhausen.

the data will show. Starting with Ezra iv.—vi. we have first *the building of the Temple* under Cyrus and Darius, 536–485, with the opposition to it of the people of the land, iv. 1–5, then a long account in Aramaic of intrigues from the same quarter against *the building of the Walls* of the City under Xerxes (Ahasuerus, 485–464) and Artaxerxes (464–424)¹; and then we are suddenly brought back to the work on the Temple,² resumed in the second year of Darius (520) and completed on his sixth (516); but this is ascribed to the decrees not only of Cyrus and Darius, but of Artaxerxes,³ and after the celebration of the Passover on the completion of the Temple—*after these things*⁴—comes the expedition of Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (458). Here the dilemma is inevitable. Either the order of events in the text is correct chronologically and the names Xerxes and Artaxerxes are wrongly given to Persian kings before Darius⁵; or else the compiler, unaware of the true succession of events or careless to observe it, has placed the account of the Samaritan opposition *to the Walls*, which prevailed under Xerxes and Artaxerxes, in the middle of his history of the *building of the Temple* under Darius.⁶

Again, the story of Ezra's activity in Jerusalem, Ezra vii.—x., breaks off with the first month of the eighth year of Artaxerxes,⁷ or April, 457, and thereupon Nehemiah's Memoirs begin with the twentieth year of Artaxerxes,⁸ or 445, and proceed, Nehemiah i. vii–73*a*, up to the completion

¹ iv. 6–23 (6, 7 in Hebrew).

² iv. 24–vi. 18.

³ vi. 14.

⁴ vii. 1.

⁵ Some have tried in vain to explain these names as titles of Cambyses and the Pseudo-Smerdis whom Darius overthrew.

⁶ This is now the generally received opinion, but, as we shall see, some refer the account, Ezra iv. 6–23, to the *defeated* Samaritan opposition to the Walls under Nehemiah in 445–4, others read it of an earlier and *successful* opposition by the Samaritans between 457 and 444.

⁷ Ezra x. 16, 17 ff. (compared with vii. 7, 8, 9 and x. 9).

⁸ Neh. ii. 1 gives the date. i. 1 is due to the compiler and uncertain; it cannot, as י׳י׳ shows, be the beginning of Nehemiah's Memoirs.

of the building of the Walls (after fifty-two days' work) in the month Elul, the sixth, or September of apparently the year 444¹; but Nehemiah also states, incidentally, that his governorship of the City lasted from the twentieth to the thirty-second of Artaxerxes, or from 445 to 433. Nehemiah's Memoirs break off with vii. 73a,² and the story of Ezra which we left at the end of Ezra x. is resumed, Nehemiah vii. 73b, viii., ix.,³ with the account of his introduction of the Law, its public reading, the Feast of Tabernacles and the National Covenant. These events are dated *in the seventh month*.⁴ Of what year? As the Book stands this seventh month belongs to the last year mentioned by Nehemiah, 444,⁵ and this, no doubt, was the compiler's meaning⁶; yet since we are no longer in Nehemiah's Memoirs, but in a section which seems founded rather on Ezra's, the *seventh month* will in that case refer to the last year Ezra has mentioned, viz., 457.⁷ Nehemiah is mentioned in this section only once, viii. 9, and there not certainly.⁸ Is his name then a later insertion? If so, the passage is cleared of all difficulties in the way of ascribing it to 457; but at least the compiler obviously means Nehemiah to be there. Between chapters ix. and x. the connexion is

¹ vi. 15.

² In our Revised Version this verse is rightly divided between the two sections.

³ The Greek Ezra or 1 Esdras, it is significant, immediately connects these two sections of narrative founded on the Ezra Memoirs. Thus Ezra x. and Neh. viii. form together 1 Esdras ix.

⁴ vii. 73b; viii. 2, 13, 18; ix. 1.

⁵ vi. 15.

⁶ So Ryle.

⁷ Ezra x. 16 compared with vii. 6. That Neh. vii. 73b-ix. is based on Ezra's Memoirs has been fully shown, especially by Geissler and Bertholet.

⁸ The text of Neh. viii. 9 is uncertain; *Nehemiah*, he the *Tirshatha*. The LXX. omits *Tirshatha*, the Greek parallel Esdras A ix. 49, omits *Nehemiah* and takes *Tirshatha* as a proper name. Schlatter (*Zur Topogr. u. Gesch. Paläst.* 407) elides *Nehemiah*, Stade (*Gesch.* ii. 177) and others elide *Tirshatha*, Meyer elides both. See, too, Bertholet *in loco*.

difficult.¹ Are the words in ix. 38—*In all this we are (or were) making a sure covenant and writing it, and upon the seal (or sealed) our princes, our Levites and our priests*—the conclusion of the foregoing prayer as our English versions take them? Or are they the opening, as the Hebrew takes them,² of the narrative in chapter x. in which the writer uses the pronoun *we*—the first instance of this form in narrative³—and speaks of Nehemiah in the third person? Chapter x. has been very variously assigned; some declare it inseparable from ix. and therefore based on the Ezra Memoirs⁴; others hold that there is no connexion between the two, except by the Chronicler's compilation, and, pointing to the absence of all mention of Ezra, assign the substance of it to the Memoirs of Nehemiah.⁵ May it not be from another source—the use of the *we*, unique in the narratives in which Ezra or Nehemiah appears in the third person, points to this—by an eye-witness and parallel to the Memoirs of Nehemiah, for some of the reforms it treats of are the same as he describes in chapter xiii.? Chapter xi., describing measures to increase the population of the City, takes us back to a subject which Nehemiah himself had declared to be pressing just after he had finished the Walls,⁶ and as on that occasion so here are lists of persons, which are continued into chapter xii. With xii. 31 the direct form of Nehemiah's Memoirs is resumed,⁷ after a little intro-

¹ The Hebrew begins ch. x. with what is the last verse of ch. ix. in E.V.

² ix. 38 English = x. 1 Hebrew.

³ Previous instances are confined to the prayers and to Nehemiah's Memoirs, where he appears in the first person and uses "we" of himself and others.

⁴ Kusters, Wellhausen. Foster Kent and others who deny the independence of the Ezra Memoirs assign it of course to the Chronicler.

⁵ Bertholet. His reasons are strong, but if ch. x. be Nehemiah's it breaks curiously the close connexion between his Memoirs in ch. vii. and ch. xi.

⁶ Neh. vii. 4.

⁷ For some of their text the compiler is evidently responsible.

duction by the compiler (27-30). Nehemiah describes the Dedication of the Walls but gives no date, though it is natural to conclude that the Walls were dedicated at no long time after they were finished in 444 ; and this is another reason in addition to the one just given for supposing that the substance of chapter xi., evidently based on Nehemiah's Memoirs, originally followed on vii. 4. Then we are told that *on that day*¹—or as the English versions translate,¹ *at that time*—that is of the Dedication of the Walls, appointments were made to certain Temple offices, and it was publicly read in the Book of Moses that the Ammonite and Moabite should not enter the congregation of God. Then with the words *before this*² we come to an account by Nehemiah himself of how Eliashib the priest had given Tobiah the Ammonite a chamber in the Temple formerly used for offerings, and Nehemiah adds: *In all this I was not at Jerusalem: for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had come to the king, and at the end of some days I asked leave of the king, and I came to Jerusalem and got intelligence of the evil which Eliashib committed for the sake of Tobiah.*³ He cast Tobiah's goods out of the chamber, restored this to its sacred purpose, and reformed other abuses—all *in those days.*⁴ Taking these connective dates, and especially the words *before this*, we find that according to the Chronicler Eliashib's grant of a chamber to Tobiah, and consequently Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem between his two visits, took place *before* the Dedication of the Walls. But that this was what Nehemiah's own Memoirs affirmed may well be doubted: it would mean that the Dedication Service was not performed till Nehemiah's second visit, or twelve years after the Walls were finished—a very improbable thing. We have seen above how in the original

¹ xii. 44 ; xiii. 1.

³ xiii. 6.

² xiii. 4.

⁴ xiii. 15, 23.

form of his Memoirs the account of the Dedication Service followed immediately upon that of the building of the Walls.

From this review of the compiler's arrangement of his materials it is clear that he was ignorant of, or indifferent to, the proper chronological order of events before the story of Ezra and Nehemiah commences. That creates a presumption against his chronology during their careers in Jerusalem : and the presumption is confirmed by the facts. He has broken up and rearranged his materials ; some of his dates and connexions are vague and capable of different interpretations ; and in two cases at least he has widely separated passages which appear to belong to each other. He has introduced the long accounts of the introduction of the Law and the Feast of Tabernacles (from Ezra) and of the Covenant (from Nehemiah ?) between two narratives of Nehemiah that are closely connected by their common subject : anxiety for the increase of the population of Jerusalem ¹ ; and he has separated the Dedication of the Walls from their completion by twelve years. It will, therefore, be easily understood how it has been possible for great differences of opinion to arise among scholars as to what was the exact sequence of events in Jerusalem during the period. The expedition of Ezra to Jerusalem with a great company of Babylonian Jews, and the two visits of Nehemiah, the first in which he built the Walls and the second in which he reformed some abuses, are regarded as certain ² ; as also are the dates of these two visits, 445-4 and 433-2 ; the twentieth and thirty-second years of Artaxerxes. But of all else there is question, and chiefly of the date of Ezra's expedition. Did Ezra and his company arrive in Jerusalem, as the Chronicler asserts, some years

¹ Neh. vii. 4 and xi.

² Except, of course, that some, as we have seen, deny Ezra's expedition altogether.

before Nehemiah's first visit and the rebuilding of the Walls ; or did Ezra not appear till the interval between the first and second visits, or not even till the second visit ?

Those who maintain that Ezra came before Nehemiah accept the statements that he arrived in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, 458, and attempted his reforms up to April 457,¹ as belonging to or based on his own Memoirs. What happened then between 457 and Nehemiah's arrival in 445 ? They hold that to these years we must refer the description of attempts to rebuild the Walls and of the successful opposition under Artaxerxes, which (as we have seen) the Chronicler has wrongly placed in the years before the Temple was really begun.² They maintain that the attempt to build the Walls being frustrated and the few repairs which the Jews had succeeded in making upon them being torn down, it was the news of this *fresh* disaster which reached Nehemiah³ by his brother Hanani and moved him to ask leave from Artaxerxes to fortify the City.⁴ It is not necessary to this theory to hold that Ezra himself was concerned in the frustrated attempt to build the Walls—he is not mentioned in the account of it, nor was the rebuilding part of his commission—but some think it a natural step for him to take when he found that in the unprotected state of Jerusalem he was unable to separate between the Jews and the people of the land. Such is the theory which, accepting the dates in Ezra's Memoirs, places his visit to Jerusalem before Nehemiah's. It is a natural one in itself. It is supported, *except in so far as Ezra's share in the*

¹ Ezra vii. 8 ; x. 16^f.

² Ezra iv. 7⁸–vi.

³ Neh. i. 3.

⁴ So Stade, *Gesch.* ii. 141, 152 ff. ; A. B. Davidson, *The Exile and the Restoration*, 96 f. ; Ryle, *Ezr. Neh.* x. 1 ff. ; Wellhausen, *Gesch.* 128 f. ; cf. Driver, *Introd.* 2nd ed., 548 ; Robertson Smith, *O. T. in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed., 226, 445, and the three recent English histories of Israel, by Otley, Wade (both 1901) and Burnside (1904).

building is concerned, by Nehemiah's account of the effect upon him of Hanani's reports, for Nehemiah's consternation is at least less explicable if those reports were merely of the breached condition in which the Walls had lain since Nebuchadrezzar's overthrow of the City, than if they were the news of a recent disaster. And the theory is not inconsistent with the little we know of the general history of the period. Persia was at war with Greece from 499 to 449, busied with a revolt in Egypt about 460 and with another by Megabyzus the Syrian Satrap in 448-7. In the early years of his reign, therefore, Artaxerxes had reasons for delaying his permission to fortify Jerusalem—the Aramaic document expressly says his decision was not final¹—but after he had come to terms with Megabyzus about 447 he was free to grant the permission which Nehemiah obtained in 445. Artaxerxes is represented as “not a bad but a very weak man governed by courtiers and women.”²

The opposite theory, recently developed by a number of scholars,³ is that Ezra's expedition did not arrive in Jeru-

¹ Ezra iv. 21 : *this city be not builded until commandment be given by me.*

² Tiele, *Enc. Bibl.*, 3674.

³ Kosters (*Die Wiederherstellung Israels*, Germ. by Basedow ; also *Enc. Bibl.* 3386) was the real author of this theory. He takes as “natural the conjecture that Nehemiah's journey to the Court [i.e. in 432] on which he got the title of Tirshatha instead of Peha was the occasion of the return of Ezra and his band of exiles to Jerusalem.” So practically Guthe, *Gesch.* 278. Cheyne, *Jewish Relig. Life after the Exile*, ch. ii., Bertholet (in his commentary) and others place Ezra's arrival in the interval between Nehemiah's two visits, Cheyne reading twenty-seventh for seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra vii. 7), i.e. 458 (*Enc. Bibl.* 1474 n. 1). And Wellhausen admits that if Nehemiah's visits did not immediately follow on each other there is room for the possibility of putting Ezra's between. Van Hoonacker, *Néhémie et Esdras*, accepting Nehemiah's report of Ezra's appearance at the Dedication of the Walls and Ezra's own date of his expedition in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, understands by the latter Artaxerxes II. Thus Ezra having first been at Jerusalem as a young man in 444 came back with his great band an old man in 398. Kuenen and others (e.g. Meyer) have shown this to be too late a date for Ezra ; and their arguments hold good against Lagrange's theory (quoted by Guthe) that Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes II., 385, and that he and Ezra worked together from the seventh of Artaxerxes III., 351, onwards.

salem till some years after Nehemiah had come and had rebuilt the Walls; that before Nehemiah there had been no effort to repair the ruins left by Nebuchadrezzar, and in consequence no fresh disaster, so far as the Walls were concerned. For this theory it is maintained that the novel element in Hanani's reports from Jerusalem was the *affliction and reproach* which the orthodox Jews were suffering from at the hands of the heathen; and it is alleged that neither Ezra nor any of the persons who returned with him from Babylon, unless it be the family Parosh, is mentioned by Nehemiah among those who helped him with the reconstruction, that in fact Nehemiah found no Babylonian element in the population worth reckoning with. Even the inclusion of Ezra's name in the account of the Dedication of the Walls is said to be due to the Chronicler.¹ It is also urged that the reforms which Nehemiah reports he accomplished² are not intelligible if Ezra had previously been at work.³ On these grounds some postpone Ezra's arrival to the interval between Nehemiah's two visits, and others to the second of these. To suit these alternatives it is proposed to change *the seventh year of Artaxerxes* to which Ezra assigns his expedition to either the *twenty-seventh* or the *thirty-seventh*.⁴

Between the rival theories, I believe that it is impossible to decide upon the evidence at our disposal. The first of them, as I have shown, is consistent and probable, and true to the dates given in Ezra's own Memoirs, the text of which there is no reason to suspect. But it is entirely unsupported by anything in Nehemiah's Memoirs. In his account of the news he received from Jerusalem, of his arrival there

¹ Neh. xii. 36. So Ryssel, Siegfried and Bertholet.

² xiii. 4 ff.

³ Ezra ix. f.; Neh. viii.-x.

⁴ Ezra vii. 8.

and his rebuilding of the Walls, Nehemiah says absolutely nothing of Ezra or his work—which is very strange if Ezra and his great company were already in Jerusalem by 458—and practically nothing which implies them; except (as has not yet been pointed out) the fact that Nehemiah, a Babylonian Jew, had a *brother* or a *kinsman* Hanani, who had been to Jerusalem, is evidence that some Babylonian Jews had travelled there within recent years, and might be considered as a slight indication of Ezra's expedition. Otherwise not a trace of Ezra and his company is given by Nehemiah in this part of his "Memoirs." But this opens up the whole question of the relations of the two of them, for *neither* of them more than mentions the other, and that is a question for which we are wholly without an answer. Had we their full memoirs we might find that their relations were close, or if not, the reason why. But we have not. We simply do not know what Ezra's and Nehemiah's connexion with each other was, and without this knowledge we can hardly hope to solve the problems which the compiler of their Memoirs has left to us.

The other and different question whether, apart from Ezra altogether, the Memoirs of Nehemiah betray evidence of attempts to build the Walls by the Jews and their disappointment by the Samaritans prior to Nehemiah's arrival is also a difficult one. On this the language of Nehemiah, whether in his account of the news brought him or in his prayer or in his petition to the king, is alike ambiguous. The one apparently definite item in it, so far as I can see, is that the gates of Jerusalem had been burned. That can hardly refer to a recent disaster, for even if the Jews had shortly before 445 begun upon the Walls, none of the evidence for this implies that they had got so far with the work as to make it worth while putting in the gates. Here Hanani must be speaking of what had happened after

Nebuchadrezzar's siege. But the rest of his news may be read as of something recent. As for Nehemiah's dismay, it is equally explicable by his having received the news of fresh disaster as by his realizing for the first time, through the mouth of a brother, what the long defenceless state of Jerusalem actually was. Only one thing is clear, that it is impossible to read the Aramaic account of the harassing opposition of the Samaritans to the building of the Walls as if this referred to the threats from Tobiah and others which troubled Nehemiah in his reconstruction. There is no confirmation of this in Nehemiah's own Memoirs. To break these up as has been done¹ at vi. 19 and to insert the Aramaic document there, and then, immediately after Artaxerxes' letter forbidding the building, to continue Nehemiah's Memoirs with the statement by this loyal servant and friend of the king that the Wall was built, is obviously wrong. The Aramaic document, if genuine, refers to events *before* the arrival of Nehemiah.

But though the chronology of the period and the relations of its two principal actors must remain ambiguous its main events, so critical in the history of Jerusalem and its personalities, are certain. Sufficiently clear also are the contributions which Nehemiah makes to the topography of Jerusalem. To all these we shall proceed in another paper.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

¹ Foster Kent, *Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives*, 358.