The Reverse Order of Ezra/Nehemiah Reconsidered

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The most important controversy which has arisen in regard to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is the question of the order of Ezra and Nehemiah. According to the traditional view, Ezra arrived in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (Ezr. 7: 7) in 458 BC, and Nehemiah arrived in the same king's twentieth year (Neh. 2: 1) in 445.

Many scholars have adopted a reverse order in which after Nehemiah arrived in 445, Ezra arrived in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II in 398. Other scholars have favoured an intermediate position which maintains the contemporaneity of the men but places Ezra later than the traditional view in the twenty-seventh or the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes I, that is in 438 or 428.

There are numerous lines of arguments which have been adduced in favour of the reverse order. We shall consider these arguments, and then the counter-arguments of those who are in favour of

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either the traditional or the intermediate position.

1. The High Priests

Advocates of a reverse order assume that the list of high priests in Ezra-Nehemiah is relatively complete and that one can identify certain of these with individuals mentioned by Josephus.

a. Jeshua
Jeshua was the high priest who was the contemporary of Zerubbabel during the reign of Cyrus (Ezr. 2: 2; Hag. 1: 1; Zc. 3: 1, *etc*.)

b. Joiakim
Joiakim was evidently the high priest during the reign of Darius I (late sixth century BC). Those who assume that the list of priests is complete assume that the same Joiakim had an unusually long period in office down to the mid-fifth century (Neh. 12: 12-21, 25-26).

c. Eliashib
Eliashib was the high priest at the time of Nehemiah, assisting in the rebuilding of the wall (Neh. 3: 1, 20-21; 13:28).

A priest named Eliashib was guilty of defiling the temple by assigning rooms to Tobiah the Ammonite (Neh. 13: 4, 7). Scholars disagree as to whether this Eliashib was the same as the high priest.

d. Joiada
Joiada was the son of Eliashib (Neh. 12: 11). It is uncertain from Nehemiah 13: 28 whether Joiada or his father was high priest at the time of Nehemiah's second return.

e. Johanan
Son of Joiada, grandson of Eliashib. (i) Ezra 10: 6 mentions that Ezra went to the chamber of 'Jehohanan the son of Eliashib.' (ii) Nehemiah 12: 11 mentions the son of Joiada, named Jonathan, who was the father of Jaddua. (iii) Nehemiah 12: 22 mentions a Johanan after Joiada and before Jaddua, and Nehemiah 12: 23 identifies Johanan as the son of Eliashib. (iv) Elephantine papyri (Cowley 30: 18; 31: 17, dated 411-410 BC) refer to Johanan as high priest (*ANET,* p. 492). (v) Josephus *Ant.* XI. 297ff. refers to a Johanan who killed his brother Jesus.

Are these five references all to the same individual? Scholars who argue that this was the case reason that in Nehemiah 12: 11 Jonathan is an error for Johanan, and that Nehemiah 12: 23 should mean that Johanan was the descendant (*i.e.* grandson) rather than the son of Eliashib. They would conclude that since the Elephantine papyri indicate that Johanan was high priest in 410 BC, it is much more likely that Ezra came 7 years later in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II (398) rather than 48 years earlier under Artaxerxes I (458).[1]

It must be admitted that if these identifications are correct, this line of reasoning provides one of the strongest arguments for reversing the order of Ezra and Nehemiah.

On the other hand, there are a number of serious objections to such identifications. Would Ezra have consorted with a known murderer, as he would have if he had arrived in 398?[2] This would be the case if we were to identify Ezra's Jehohanan with the Johanan of Josephus.

Such an identification would be further undermined if Jehohanan was indeed the son of Eliashib rather than the grandson as some have proposed.[3]

It must be remembered that Jehohanan (Johanan) was a most common name; it is used by 14 different individuals in the Old Testament, 5 in Maccabees, and 17 in Josephus.[4] It should also be noted that in Ezra 10: 6 Jehohanan is not identified as a high priest. C. G. Tuland concludes his analysis of the data as follows:

> Thus far three basic differences exclude the identification of the high-priestly Jehohanan-Eliashib 'set' (of Neh. 3: 1, 20, 21; 12: 10, 11, 22, 23) found in the Aramaic papyri, Cowley Nos. 30 and 31, with the ordinary priests of Ezra 10: 6: 1. the difference in rank and title; 2. the difference in office; 3. the difference in family relationship.[5]

[1] P. R. Ackroyd, *Israel under Babylon and Persia* (London, 1970), pp. 193, 285-86.
[2] P. R. Ackroyd, *Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah* (London, 1973), p. 258.
[3] J. R. Porter, 'Son or grandson, Ezr. X.6', *JTS* 17 (1966), pp. 54-67.
[4] W. M. F. Scott, 'Nehemiah-Ezra?' *ExpT* 58 (1946-47), p. 265.
[5] C. G. Tuland, 'Ezra-Nehemiah or Nehemiah-Ezra?' *AUSS* 12 (1974), pp. 58-59.

f. Jaddua

A Jaddua, the son of Johanan, is mentioned in Nehemiah 12: 11, 22. Josephus (*Ant.* XI. 302ff.) identified this Jaddua with the high priest at the time of Alexander's invasion of Palestine.

Some conservative scholars who have tried to maintain the traditional order of Ezra/Nehemiah, have argued that the biblical Jaddua may have been a young man *c.* 400, who lived to an unusually advanced age in 333/332 BC.[6] Such a supposition seems most unlikely.

It is probable that Josephus was quite mistaken and identified wrongly the Hellenistic Jaddua with his grandfather. Williamson notes that there are 'strong grounds for believing that Josephus "reduced" the Persian period by at least as much as

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two generations'.[7] He may have been misled by the fact that there was an Artaxerxes and a Darius both in the fifth century and also in the fourth century.

Inspired by the evidence of papponymy in the Samaria papyri, F. M. Cross has proposed a new reconstruction which offers a plausible harmonization of the biblical and extra-biblical data.[8] Papponymy or the repetition of the same name in alternating generations so that grandsons are named after their grandfathers was a common practice. B. Mazar has sought to show that the name Tobiah alternates over nine generations. In a recently published Ammonite inscription the royal name Amminadab recurs over six generations. The Samaria papyri indicate that the name Sanballat alternated over six generations.

Cross's reconstruction assumes that a pair of similar names has fallen out of our extant sources. His reconstructed list would include:

Name	Year of birth	Contemporary of
Jeshua	570	Zerubbabel
Joiakim[9]	545	
Eliashib I	540	
Johanan I	520	Ezra
Eliashib II	495	Nehemiah
Joiada	470	
Johanan II	445	
Jaddua I[10]	420	
Johanan III	395	
Jaddua II	370	Alexander

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[6] C. F. Keil, *The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther* (Grand Rapids, n.d.), p. 147.

[7] H. G. M. Williamson, 'The Historical Value of Josephus' Antiquities XI.297-301', *JTS* 28 (1977), pp. 49-66.

[8] F. M. Cross, Jr., 'A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration', *JBL* 94 (1975), pp. 4-18; *idem, Int* 29 (1975), pp. 187-203.

[9] In Cross's reconstruction every high priest is the son of the preceding, except for Eliashib I, who is listed as the brother of Joiakim. But Nehemiah 12: 10 lists Eliashib as Joiakim's son. This point is raised by G. Widengren, 'Persian Period', *Israelite and Judaean History,* ed. J. H. Hayes and J. M. Miller (Philadelphia, 1977), p. 509.

[10] As Jaddua is a caritative or endearing form of Joiada, Cross lists in alternate generations: Joiada, Jaddua II, and Jaddua III. This may confuse the average reader, however.

By this reconstruction Cross resolves two key issues. Ezra's contemporary is Johanan I, the son of Eliashib I, and not Johanan II, who is mentioned in the Elephantine papyri, as advocates of a reverse order have maintained. The Jaddua mentioned by Nehemiah would have been the grandfather of Jaddua II, who was the high priest at the time of Alexander.[11]

2. The Contemporaneity of Ezra and Nehemiah

As the text stands, Nehemiah and Ezra are noted together in Nehemiah 8: 9 at the reading of the law and in Nehemiah 12: 26, 36 at the dedication of the wall. As the name Nehemiah is lacking in the 1 Esdras 9: 49 parallel to Nehemiah 8: 9, it has been argued that Nehemiah's name has been inserted in the latter passage as a gloss. It has also been argued that Nehemiah 12: 26, 36 were also added to the original text. J. A. Emerton has asserted, 'No meeting between them is recorded and they never both play active parts in the same action; one is active, and at most, the other's name is mentioned in passing.'[12]

But it is not the case that one can delete either Ezra or Nehemiah from Nehemiah 12: 26 without any consequences, for to do so would leave one of the processions without a leader.

The fact that the references to the contemporaneity of Ezra and Nehemiah are few is readily explicable. Bright points out:

> The Chronicler's interests were predominantly ecclesiastical, and to these Nehemiah was peripheral. Nehemiah, on the other hand, intended his memoirs as a personal *apologia* not as a history of the contemporary Jewish community; he was concerned exclusively with what he himself had done.'[13]

We have other examples of contemporary Old Testament figures who do not refer to each other, for example, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Haggai and Zechariah.'[14]

3. Meremoth the son of Uriah of the clan of Hakkoz

Ezra 2: 61-62/Nehemiah 7: 63-64 list the family of Hakkoz as one of those which was not able to prove its priestly status. In Ezra 8: 33 a Meremoth, the son of Uriah, from this family, is designated as one of the priests in charge of the temple treasury. In Nehemiah 3: 4, 21, we also have a Meremoth, the son of Uriah, who builds a double portion of the wall. Without a priestly title, he is evidently considered a layman.

Supporters of the reverse order argue that this suggests that Meremoth in his youth aided in the building of the wall, and in his old age (47 years

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[11] Cross's reconstruction has been accepted by S. Talmon, 'Ezra and Nehemiah', *IDB,* Supplementary Volume, pp. 327-328.

[12] J. A. Emerton, 'Did Ezra Go to Jerusalem in 428 BC?' *JTS* 17 (1966), p. 16; N. H. Snaith, 'The Date of Ezra's Arrival in Jerusalem', *ZAW* 63 (1952), p. 63.

[13] J. Bright, 'The Date of Ezra's Mission to Jerusalem', *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume,* ed. M. Haran (Jerusalem, 1960), p. 86; cf. M. W. Leesberg, 'Ezra and Nehemiah: A Review of the Return and Reform', *CTM* 33 (1962), p. 85.

[14] Josephus, *Ant.* XI. 158 has Ezra passing away before the arrival of Nehemiah, a state of affairs which has not been taken seriously by scholars.

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later in 398) served as a treasurer. They suggest that Meremoth's family must have regained its priestly status after Nehemiah's time at Ezra's coming.

On the other hand, it can be also argued that the situation may be explained on the basis of the traditional order. K. Koch suggests, 'It seems as if Ezra acknowledged Meremoth at the time of his arrival in Jerusalem, but deposed him shortly afterward while carrying out his investigation.[15]

Simpler is Kellermann's suggestion that despite the similar names and patronymics, we have to do with two individuals, one from a priestly and one from a lay family. Though Meremoth is not a very common name (three or four occurrences), Uriah is more common (six or seven occurrences).[16]

4. The Committee of Four

According to the proponents of the reverse order, it was Nehemiah who first appointed a commission of four temple treasurers (Neh. 13: 13). When Ezra arrived he found a similar committee (Ezr. 8: 33).

But it may be the case that Ezra earlier found a committee on his arrival, and that Nehemiah merely filled an existing committee with trustworthy men. The two committees, it should be noted, were not identical. Ezra's committee was made up of two priests and two Levites, but Nehemiah's was made up of a priest, a scribe, a Levite, and a layman.[17]

5. The list of wall builders

It is quite striking that we cannot identify with any certainty any of the wall builders of Nehemiah 3 with those listed as returning with Ezra (Ezr. 8: 1-20), which we might have expected if Ezra preceded Nehemiah. Such names as Meshullam (Neh. 3: 4, 30; *cf.* Ezr. 8: 16) may be too common for certain identification. Hattush in Nehemiah 3: 10 is not the same as the Hattush in Ezra 8: 2-3.

Ezra himself may have been too old to have participated in the rebuilding of the wall. A. E. Cundall suggests, 'But Neh. 3 mentions only the chief builders, who are likely to have been longstanding residents in 'Jerusalem.'[18]

Tuland believes that we can identify Hashabiah and Sherebiah—Levites who accompanied Ezra (Ezr. 8: 18-19)—with the Hashabiah and Sherebiah who signed the covenant according

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[15] K. Koch, 'Ezra and the Origins of Judaism', *JSS* 19 (1974), p. 190.

[16] U. Kellermann, 'Erwägungen zum Problem der Esradatierung', *ZAW* 80 (1968), p. 69.

[17] Ibid., p. 68.

[18] A. E. Cundall, 'Ezra and Nehemiah', *The New Bible Commentary Revised,* ed. D. Guthrie *et al.* (London, 1970), p. 396.

to Nehemiah 10: 9, 11-12. They could not have been Ezra's travelling companions in 398 as they were already leaders in 445.[19]

6. The thirteen-year gap

As the present text is arranged, after Ezra's arrival in 458 and his activities in that first year, we hear nothing further about his ministry until the public reading of the law some 13 years later (Neh. 8: 1—8). A number of scholars would sever Ezra's association with Nehemiah and place the reading of the law by Ezra in his first year.

G. L. Archer responds:

> Yet Nehemiah 8 only records a solemn reading of the law in a public meeting on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles. It by no means implies that Ezra had not been diligently teaching the law to smaller groups of disciples and Levites during the preceding twelve years.[20]

Less satisfactory are suggestions that Ezra may have returned to Mesopotamia, or that he may have fallen out of favour with the Persians by being associated with the attempt to rebuild the wall (Ezr. 4: 7-23).

7. The 'wall' of Ezra 9: 9

Whereas Nehemiah found the defences of Jerusalem destroyed (Neh. 1: 3; 2: 13, 17), Ezra thanked God for a 'wall' at Ezra 9: 9 (KJV). Bowman and others have used this verse to argue that Ezra must have come after Nehemiah had restored the wall.[21]

However, in Ezra 9: 9 the word used is not the usual word for a city wall, *ḥoˆmaˆ,* but rather the word *gader,* which ordinarily refers to the enclosure of fields or vineyards. The LXX renders the word by *phragmos.* Moreover the fact that it is said to be 'in Judah and in Jerusalem' must surely mean that the word is used here in the figurative sense of 'protection' as the RSV (*cf.* NEB, JB) has rendered it.[22]

8. The listing of Nehemiah before Ezra

Nehemiah is listed before Ezra in Nehemiah 12: 26. This fact impressed Albright, who adopted the intermediate position of dating Ezra's coming after Nehemiah's arrival but in association with the latter's second administration.[23]

Other scholars, however, believe that this datum

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[19] Tuland, pp. 59-60.

[20] G. L. Archer, Jr, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (revised edn.; Chicago, 1974), p. 412.

[21] R. A. Bowman, 'The Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah', *IB* III, p. 562.

[22] L. H. Brockington, *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther* (London, 1969), p. 32.

[23] W. F. Albright, 'The Date and Personality of the Chronicler', *JBL* 40 (1921), p. 121.

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has no bearing on the question of chronological sequence. As Harrison points out:

> That Nehemiah may have been mentioned before Ezra in one particular passage (Neh. 12: 26) has actually little bearing upon the larger chronological problem, since it appears fairly obvious that Nehemiah would in any event have taken precedence in his own memoirs in his capacity as civil governor of Judaea.[24]

9. The population of Jerusalem

It has been argued that whereas Nehemiah found Jerusalem almost uninhabited and took steps to repopulate it (Neh. 7:4; 11: 1-3; 13: 10-13), Ezra came to a city that was well populated (Ezr. 1: 1ff.). Therefore Ezra must have come after Nehemiah's repopulation programme.

But the context of Ezra 10: 1ff. implies that the large congregation of those who were sorry for becoming involved in mixed marriages came from throughout Judah.[25]

10. The problem of mixed marriages

Both Ezra (9-10) and Nehemiah (13: 23-28) deal with the problem of mixed marriages. Ezra adopted a more rigorous approach, demanding the dissolution of all such marriages. Apart from the expulsion of Joiada, Nehemiah forbade any future mixed marriages.

Brockington holds that Ezra's handling most naturally follows Nehemiah's attempt, and regards this as 'the strongest argument' for the reverse order.[26] Furthermore, Bowman argues that the situation faced by Nehemiah must have been one of longstanding, since he found the children speaking in foreign dialects (Neh. 13: 23-24).

As to the latter argument, if Ezra's reforms took place in 457—some 25 years before Nehemiah's actions upon his second return after 432—this would certainly be time enough for children of some age to have been born to renewed mixed marriages. The idea that a more rigorous handling of the problem should come later is purely subjective. Perhaps a less rigorous course was felt to be more effective by Nehemiah.'[27]

11. The alleged failure of Ezra

Closely allied to the preceding argument is the often expressed idea that if Ezra preceded Nehemiah, he must have 'failed' as Nehemiah had to correct the same abuse. (Of course, the converse argument could be made, that if Nehemiah preceded Ezra, the former 'failed'.) For example, H. H. Rowley avers:

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[24] R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London, 1970), p. 197.
[25] Ibid., p. 196; Kellerman, pp. 65-68.
[26] Brockington, pp. 19-20.
[27] J. A. Montgomery, *The Samaritans* (Philadelphia, 1907), p. 64.

> It is curious that some of those who are the most zealous to defend the chronological order of Ezra and Nehemiah as it appears in the Bible are willing to do so at the cost of jettisoning the Biblical representation of the character of Ezra, and the reduction of him to the stature of an incompetent who had to be rescued by Nehemiah after his failure.[28]

It should be noted that God's spokesmen do not 'fail' when they faithfully deliver God's messages. The people who disobey are the ones who 'fail'. In the short period of time during his absence after his first term, numerous abuses appeared which Nehemiah had to correct during his second term (Neh. 13: 4-31). Cross remarks drily:

> I am not impressed by such an argument. One may say that all the prophets and reformers failed in biblical history. A fairly close analogy is found in the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, both of which failed.[29]

12. The date of the composition of Ezra-Nehemiah

Inasmuch as the text as it now stands presents Ezra's priority over Nehemiah, if indeed Ezra came later the confusion must have arisen at a later date removed from the events, some hold in the third century BC. P. R. Ackroyd writes, 'But if, as seems more probable, the Chronicler was active in about the middle of the fourth century, not more than a generation after this late dating for Ezra (in 398), then the disorder would be very difficult to explain.'[30]

Other scholars are convinced that the evidence points to an even earlier date for the work of the Chronicler. Cross concludes, 'The fact that all genealogies in Chr_3 end shortly before 400 BC virtually eliminates the popular view that Ezra followed Nehemiah in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes II, 398 BC.[31]

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13. The Political Situation

Inasmuch as the early years of Artaxerxes I were troubled by a major revolt in Egypt, some have questioned whether Ezra would have been sent on an unprotected journey in 458. In the year 459/458 the king sent a 300,000-man army against Egypt. The roads would have been so filled with troop caravans, it has been argued, that there would have been no room for Ezra's caravan.[32]

On the other hand, it could be argued that the presence of such troops would have made the caravan safe from robbers. Indeed, the precarious situation in Egypt probably made it desirable for the Persians to have a friendly agent in Palestine. F. Heichelheim, noting that Dor on the Palestinian coast is found on the Athenian tribute list for 454, concluded: 'If we

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[28] H. H. Rowley, *Men of God* (London, 1963), p. 242.
[29] Cross, *Int,* p. 198, n. 60; *cf.* 201, n. 61.
[30] Ackroyd, *Israel under Babylon,* p. 194; *cf.* Brockington, p. 32.
[31] Cross, *JBL,* p. 14, n. 60; *cf.* Kellermann, p. 75. Others favouring a date of *c.* 400 for the work of the Chronicler, including Ezra and Neheniiah, are: W. Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia* (Tübingen, 1949), p. 25; J. M. Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (Garden City, N.Y., 1965), p. lxx. H. G. M. Williamson, *Israel in the Book of Chronicles* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 86, favours the Persian period.
[32] V. Pavlovský, 'Die Chronilogie der Tätigkeit Esdras', *Bib* 38 (1957), pp. 284-285.

are right the new strength which Ezra was authorized to give... was urgently needed from the point of view of the Persian government to make defections in Palestine to the Athenians less dangerous...'[33] Another classical scholar, J. L. Myres, concurs: 'In particular, the very wide authority given to Ezra in 458 reflects the general uneasiness and the anxieties of the Persian government, during the revolt of Inaros in the Delta.'[34]

At the same time, B. Reicke notes that the political situation in Palestine in 398 would have made Ezra's mission most unlikely. When Johanan, the high priest, killed his brother (Josephus, *Ant.* XI. 297-301), the Persian governor Bagoas imposed a penalty upon Jerusalem for seven years. 'This temple crisis under Bagoas can simply not be squared with Ezra's mission to restore the Temple, supported juridically and monetarily by the Persian throne (Ezr. 7: 6, 11-28).'[35]

14. Supporters of the Reverse Order

It was in 1889 that M. Vernes first suggested the reverse order. But it was primarily the Catholic scholar, A. van Hoonacker, who gave the view currency in a series of publications from 1890 to 1924.'[36] The ablest exposition of this point of view was published in 1948 by H. H. Rowley.[37] In 1948 only a minority of scholars, none of them German, favoured this view.

Originally Rowley listed 24 scholars (between 1908 and 1945) who were adherents of the reverse order, among whom were: L. W. Batten, S. Mowinckel, W. O. E. Oesterley, S. A. Cook, H. W. Robinson, N. H. Snaith, and J. Pedersen. In the 1965 reprint of his article he listed the names of 23 additional scholars who favoured this order. Since 1945 we can add: P. R. Ackroyd, D. Baldi, J. Bonsirven, R. A. Bowman, H. Cazelles, O. Eissfeldt, G. Fohrer, K. Galling, N. Gottwald, J. Gray, E. Hamrick, C. Jean, A. Kapeirud, E. G. Kraeling, P. Lemaire, M. Metzger, F. Michaeli, R. North, G. Rinaldi, and H. Schneider (supplementing Rowley's listing).

In 1970 W. F. Stinespring affirmed:

> Indeed, the placing of Ezra after Nehemiah may now be spoken of as part of 'critical orthodoxy,' having been incorporated into such works as *The International Critical Commentary, The Interpreter's Bible, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, The Oxford Annotated Bible,* and into much of the church-school literature of the leading Protestant churches in North America. The great German introductions of Eissfeldt and SellinFohrer, now translated into English (1965 and 1968 respectively), have also joined the chorus of assent.[38]

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[33] F. Heichelheim, 'Ezra's Palestine and Periclean Athens', *ZRGG* 3 (1951), pp. 251-253. *Cf.* also M. Smith, 'Ezra', *Ex Orbe Religionum,* ed. C. J. Bleeker *et al.* (Leiden, 1972), I, pp. 141-143.

[34] J. L. Myres, 'Persia, Greece and Israel', *PEQ* 85 (1953), p. 13.

[35] B. Reicke, *The New Testament Era* (Philadelphia, 1968), p. 16.

[36] A. van Hoonacker, 'La succession chronologique Nehemie-Esdras', *RB* 32 (1923), pp. 481-494; 33 (1924), pp. 33-64.

[37] H. H. Rowley, 'The Chronological Order of Ezra and Nehemiah', *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume,* ed. S. Löwinger and J. Somogyi (Budapest, 1948), pp. 117-149; reprinted in *The Servant of the Lord* (London, 1952; reprinted Oxford, 1965), pp. 135-168.

[38] W. F. Stinespring, 'Prolegomenon' to C. C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (New York, 1970 reprint), p. xiv.

15. Supporters of the Intermediate Date

Some scholars have attempted to retain the contemporaneity of Ezra and Nehemiah, and yet place Ezra at a later date by emending the number '7' of Ezra 7: 7 to read either '27' or '37'. The former would yield a date for Ezra's arrival in 438 and the latter in 428.

The former emendation was proposed by J. Wellhausen in 1895, and the latter was suggested by J. Markwart in 1896. The first alternative has had relatively few supporters. These would include T. K. Cheyne, R. H. Kennett, H. Lusseau, O. Procksch, and in recent times F. F. Bruce.[39]

More attractive is the reading '37', since both the Hebrew word for '30' and the word for '7' begin with the letter 'š', it has been argued that the

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former word may have dropped out by the process known as *homoiarkton.* The most influential advocate of this position was W. F. Albright, who settled on this date in 1947.[40] Prior to that time he had vacillated, favouring 398 in 1921, 432 in 1932, and 398 in 1940.

A persuasive exposition of this view was set forth in an article by John Bright, published in 1960.[41] Other scholars who would support this date which would associate Ezra with Nehemiah's second term as governor include: D. N. Freedman, H. Kreissig, C. Kuhl, M. Leesberg, J. M. Myers, M. Noth, V. Pavlovský, D. F. Robinson, and W. Rudolph. Though this position avoids the objections raised against the reverse position, there is no textual support for the proposed emendation.[42]

16. Supporters of the traditional order

The traditional order has never lacked defenders. In 1948 Rowley wrote, 'Despite this impressive support (for the reverse order), this view has never been unchallenged, and there have always been scholars of eminence—even more numerous than its supporters—who have refused to adopt it, but have adhered to the traditional view.'[43] In 1965 Rowley listed 26 scholars who supported the traditional order, including B. D. Eerdmans, J. de Frame, C. H. Gordon, R. Kittel, J. Morgenstern,[44] H. H. Schaeder, W. M. Scott, R. de Vaux, and E. J. Young. In 1968 U. Kellermann defended the traditional position by seeking to refute point by point the arguments for the reverse order.[45]

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[39] F. F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations* (Grand Rapids, 1963), p. 110.
[40] W. F. Albright, *The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra* (New York, 1963), pp. 45-55, 62-65, 113. This is a revision of a text which was originally written in 1947.
[41] Bright (*op. cit.,* note 13).
[42] Kellermann, pp. 75-77.
[43] Rowley, *Ignace Goldziher,* p. 122. An important defence of the traditional order is J. S. Wright, *The Date of Ezra's Coming to Jerusalem* (London, 1946).
[Now online at http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_ezra_wright.html]
[44] J. Morgenstern, 'The Dates of Ezra and Nehemiah', *JSS* 7 (1962), pp. 1-11.
[45] Kellermann (*op. cit.,* note 16), *ZAW* 80 (1968), pp. 55-87.

Within the last decade other important scholars have voiced their dissatisfaction with the arguments for the reverse order and have expressed support for the traditional view. Morton Smith, for example, comments: 'The minor reasons commonly given for dating Ezra after Nehemiah are all of them trivial and have been disposed of by Kellermann.'[46] F. M. Cross also writes, 'Of the many arguments brought forward to support the position that Ezra followed Nehemiah to Jerusalem, most are without weight.'[47] S. Talmon suggests, 'Such tenuous argumentation does not warrant a reordering of the biblical presentation... Today a more optimistic appreciation of the biblical presentation seems to be gaining ground.'[48] H. Tadmor notes, 'Actually, more methodological problems are posed by assuming that Ezra came after Nehemiah than by accepting the view that he preceded Nehemiah.'[49]

In addition to those listed by Rowley and Kellerrnann, other scholars who have assumed the traditional order include: Y. Aharoni, G. Archer, M. Avi-Yonah, A. E. Cundall, M. Dandamayev, R. Harrison, S. Herrmann, S. Horn, Y. Kaufmann, B. Kelly, K. A. Kitchen, B. Mazar, M. Meauleau, B. Reicke, M. Segal, J. Slotki, C. Tuland, J. Weinberg, L. Wood, and K. Yates.

In summary, though the reverse order of Nehemiah before Ezra which has dominated for over two decades still has many eminent supporters, there has been within the last decade a remarkable development of support among equally distinguished scholars for the traditional order of Ezra before Nehemiah.

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[46] Smith, 'Ezra', p. 143; *idem, Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament* (New York, 1971), p. 122.
[47] Cross, *JBL* 94 (1975), p. 14, n. 60.
[48] Talmon, p. 320.
[49] H. Tadmor, 'The Babylonian Exile and the Restoration', *A History of the Jewish People,* ed. H. Ben-Sasson (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), p. 174.