

On the Relationship between Textual and Literary Criticism

The Two Recensions of the Book of Ezra:
Ezra-Neh (MT) and 1 Esdras (LXX)

Dieter Böhler

Abstract: Like Proverbs, Jeremiah and Daniel, the book of Ezra has been transmitted in two recensions: Ezra-Nehemiah in the Hebrew Bible and 1 Esdras in the Greek Bible. Each version has its own distinct literary shape. Both editions overlap in the account of Zerubbabel's temple building and Ezra's mission. In addition to this common material both versions contain Sondergut: 1 Esdras starts with the last two chapters of Chronicles (Ezra MT only with the last verses) and includes the so-called guardsmen story, a Zerubbabel legend not found in Ezra-Nehemiah. On the other hand Ezra-Nehemiah contains the account of Nehemiah's city building lacking in 1 Esdras. The article shows that this last difference in literary shape is connected with a whole series of small textual differences between the overlapping material of two versions which therefore betray themselves as being part of an intentional recension rather than scribal errors. The Zerubbabel and Ezra account of 1 Esdras does not expect a coming Nehemiah story whereas MT's Zerubbabel and Ezra text is compatible with the following Nehemiah account.

1. The Literary Differences between the Two Recensions

Whereas the Hebrew Bible has preserved just one version of the Book of Ezra, the Septuagint contains two versions, each one with its own literary shape. Esdras B is a quite literal translation of the Hebrew and Aramaic book of Ezra-Nehemiah (MT). Esdras B is preceeded in the Septuagint by Esdras A (or 1 Esd). The following table outlines the literary differences between the two editions:

1 Esd (LXX)	MT	
1	(2 Chr 35–36)	<i>End of the Southern Kingdom</i>
2:1–14	Ezra 1	Cyrus: Sheshbazzar's return
2:15–25	Ezra 4:7–24	Artaxerxes: correspondence
3:1 – 5:6	—	<i>Guardsmen story</i>
5:7–70	Ezra 2:1– 4:5	Zerubbabel's return, altar building
6–7	Ezra 5–6	Temple building
8–9:37	Ezra 7–10	Ezra story
—	Neh 1–7	<i>Nehemiah story</i>
9:38–55	Neh 8	Ezra story
—	Neh 9–13	<i>Nehemiah story</i>

- Ezra-Neh (MT) begins with the two last verses of Chronicles. 1 Esd begins with the two last chapters of those books.

- The correspondence with king Artaxerxes and the account of Zerubbabel's return to Judah have changed positions in the two versions.

- 1 Esd contains the story of the three guardsmen (a Zerubbabel legend) lacking in Ezra-Neh.

- On the other hand Ezra-Neh contains the story of Nehemiah's city building lacking in 1 Esd.

Both versions share the narration of Zerubbabel's temple building and the Ezra story. Critical research tended to consider 1 Esd as a whole

either as a later compilation of texts from Ezra-Neh, Chronicles and the guardsmen story¹ or as the original ending of the Chronicler's work (with or without the guardsmen story).² Now the four differences in literary shape may be connected to each other, but they are not necessarily so. The relationships between them have to be examined for each case separately. On the other hand the numerous small textual differences between the overlapping parts of the two versions have not been sufficiently taken into consideration in literary criticism.³ Hardly ever has a variant on the text critical level been linked to the literary

¹ Edmund Bayer, *Das dritte Buch Esdras und sein Verhältnis zu den Büchern Esra-Nehemia* (BibS (F) 16/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1911); Bernhard Walde, *Die Esdrasbücher der Septuaginta, ihr gegenseitiges Verhältnis untersucht* (BibS (F) 18/4; Freiburg: Herder, 1913); Wilhelm Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia samt 3. Esra* (HAT I 20, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949); Zipora Talshir, *First Esdras. Origin and Translation* (Hebr., unpubl. Diss. Jerusalem, 1984); Engl: *I Esdras: From Origin to Translation* (SBLSCS 47; Atlanta: SBL, 1999); Hugh G. M. Williamson, *Esra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco/Texas: Word, 1984); Hugh G. M. Williamson, "The Problem with First Esdras," in *After the Exile* (eds. J. Barton and D. J. Reimer, Macon/Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1996) 201–216.

² Johann David Michaelis, *Deutsche Uebersetzung des Alten Testaments mit Anmerkungen für Ungelehrte*, Teil 13 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1783) Notes pp. 40–45; Trendelenburg, "Über den apokryphischen Esras," in *Einleitung in die apokryphischen Schriften des Alten Testaments* (ed. J. G. Eichhorn; Leipzig, 1795) 335–377; Henry Howorth, "Some Unconventional Views on the Text of the Bible," *PSBA* 23 (1901) 147–159, 305–325; 24 (1902) 147–172, 332–340; 25 (1903) 15–22, 90–98; 26 (1904) 25–31, 63–69, 94–100; 27 (1905) 267–278; 29 (1907) 31–38, 61–69; Loring W. Batten, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1913, reprint 1980); Gustav Hölscher, "Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia," *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments* (ed. E. Kautzsch, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1909/10, reprint 1923) vol. 2, 449–492; Sigmund Mowinckel, *Studien zu dem Buche Esra-Nehemia I. Die nachchronistische Redaktion des Buches. Die Listen* (SNVAO.HF 3; Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964); Charles C. Torrey, *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah* (BZAW 2; Gießen: Ricker, 1896); Charles C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (New York: Ktav, 1970, first published 1910); Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum dritten Esra. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem ursprünglichen Schluß des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes* (FRLANT 104; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1970); Frank Moore Cross, "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," *JBL* 94 (1975) 4–18.

³ With the exception of Adrian Schenker, "La Relation d'Esdras A' au texte massorétique d'Esdras-Néhémie," in *Tradition of the Text* (eds. G. J. Norton and S. Pisano; OBO 109; Freiburg/Schweiz & Göttingen: Universitätsverlag – Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) 218–248.

differences. Ezra 4:21 is a noteworthy exception. In Ezra 4 (1 Esd 2) king Artaxerxes prohibits the rebuilding of Jerusalem. In the MT however he adds a reservation which is lacking in 1 Esd: “this city may not be rebuilt until the decree is issued by me”.

Ezra 4:21f	1 Esd 2:23f
כַּעַן שִׁבַח סָעַם לְכַפְּלָא וְנִבְרָא	νῦν οὖν ἐπέταξα ἀποκωλύσαι ἀνθρώπους
אַלְךָ וְקִרְיָתָא בְּדָ לֹא תִבְנֶנָּה	ἐκείνους τοῦ οἰκοδομῆσαι τὴν πόλιν
עַד־כִּי־שִׁמְעָא יְהוָה:	
וְזִהְרִין הוּוּ שְׁלוֹ לְמַעַבְדַּר עַל־דְּנָה	καὶ προνοηθῆναι ὅπως μὴθὲν παρὰ ταῦτα γένηται

Several commentators, such as Williamson, Blenkinsopp, Clines and Rudolph notice the textual variant between Ezra (MT) and 1 Esd and don't explain the difference as a simple scribal error, but relate it to the fact, that in Ezra (MT) there will follow the story of Nehemiah's city building.⁴ Rudolph e.g. comments:

Zu der kategorischen Forderung 22 will es schlecht passen, daß 21bß die spätere Aufhebung des Bauverbots als möglich erscheinen läßt; man wird ... die Worte 'bis von mir Befehl gegeben wird', die 3Esr nicht hat, als einen späteren Zusatz im Hinblick auf die dem Nehemia [Neh 2,4ff] erteilte Erlaubnis ansehen.⁵

Rudolph rightly connects the small text critical issue here with the bigger differences in literary shape. Ezra-Neh (MT) needs this small reservation because it contains the Nehemiah story which will narrate the reconstruction of the city with the king's consent. 1 Esd lacks both. This version preserves, as Rudolph correctly remarks, the more original text of 1 Esd 2:23/Ezra 4:21. It does so because it simply does not know about a following Nehemiah story.

⁴ Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 64; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah. A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1989) 115; David J. A. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (NCBC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott 1984) 81–82.

⁵ Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, 43.

The thesis I propose in this paper is this: One big difference in literary shape of the two versions is that Ezra-Neh (MT) contains the Nehemiah story while 1 Esd does not. This difference in literary shape is related to a whole number of small text differences. These differences seem on first sight to be located on a text critical level as if they were just scribal errors. However they form a coherent series and fit so well with the difference in literary shape, that they obviously leave behind the level of mere textual criticism and enter the realm of literary criticism.⁶ As Emanuel Tov puts it:

The complicated growth of the books of the Bible created situations in which *textual* witnesses reflect different stages in the development of the books and thus contribute to literary rather than textual criticism.⁷

How can we distinguish involuntary mistakes of a copyist from intentional developments which form part of a new conception? According to Tov, textual variants which form a series with a systematic tendency cannot be considered accidental individual variants, they rather betray intentional recension and belong to the process of literary shaping of the relevant book:

Our working hypothesis is to separate the two types of evidence [scil. accidental mistakes and intentional reworking] with a quantitative criterion which also has qualitative aspects. It is assumed that large-scale differences displaying a certain coherence were created at the level of the literary growth of the books by persons who considered themselves actively involved in the literary process of composition.⁸

I will first list a number of textual variants between the two versions. The question which one is more original will be left open at this stage. It will be taken up later. Here I just want to show that: 1) These variants form a coherent series. It betrays systematics. 2) This series of variants is related to the overall literary shapes of the two versions.

⁶ Cf. my detailed analysis in Dieter Böhler, *Die heilige Stadt in Esdras A und Esra-Nehemia. Zwei Konzeptionen der Wiederherstellung Israels* (OBO 158; Freiburg/Schweiz & Göttingen: Universitätsverlag – Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 68–142.

⁷ Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (JBS 3; Jerusalem: Simor, 1981) 33.

⁸ Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Mineapolis: Fortress and Assen: Van Gorkum, 1992) 314.

2. A Series of Textual Variants with a Clear Tendency

Having been informed about the scandal of the mixed marriages, Ezra recites the long prayer of Ezra 9. First he thanks God because the Jews were able to – I quote MT: “erect the house of our God and rebuild its ruins.” Ezra is looking back on the reconstruction of the temple, nothing else. In 1 Esd however he says: “erect our temple and rebuild the ruins of *Zion*.” In 1 Esd Ezra is looking back on the rebuilding of the temple and of the city of Jerusalem! The city of Jerusalem has already been rebuilt!

Vorlage 1 Esd	Ezra 9:9	1 Esd 8:78
לרמם את בית אלהינו	לְרַמֵּם אֶת־בַּיִת אֱלֹהֵינוּ	δοξάσαι τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ κυρίου
ולמעמיד את חרבכת	וּלְהַעֲמִיד אֶת־חַרְבְּתָיו	ἡμῶν καὶ ἐγείραι τὴν ἔρημον
ציון		Σιων
ולתת לנו גדר ביהודה	וּלְתַתְּלֵנוּ גֵּדֵר בִּיהוּדָה	δοῦναι ἡμῖν στερέωμα ἐν τῇ
ובירושלם	וּבִירוּשָׁלַם:	Ἰουδαία καὶ Ἱερουσαλημ

This is not an isolated variant. While Zerubbabel is rebuilding the temple, the governor Tattenai comes along for an inspection. According to the Masoretic text he writes to the Persian king: “We went to the province of Judah to the temple of the great God, which is being rebuilt.” According to 1 Esd however the governor reports: “We went to the province of Judah and came to *the city of Jerusalem*. We found the elders of the exiles of the Jews in *the city of Jerusalem* rebuilding the great temple of God.”

Vorlage 1 Esd ואינו לירושלם קריחא והשכנא לשבי יהודיא בירושלם קריחא	Ezra 5:8 מִלְּמִן לַיהוּדָה קְרִיחָא לְבֵית מִלְּמִן וְהוּא מְחֻבָּנָא	1 Esd 6:8 παραγενόμενοι εἰς τὴν χώραν τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ τὴν πόλιν κατελάβομεν τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ τῇ πόλει οἰκοδομοῦντας οἶκον τῷ κυρίῳ μέγαν
--	--	---

According to 1 Esd Jerusalem was already rebuilt in Zerubbabel's time. Tattenai finds the restored city. Whereas in the MT he finds no city but a temple construction place in the province of Judah.

Both editions state that the exiles returned to "Jerusalem and Judah" (Ezra 2:1; 1 Esd 5:8). But when they settle down 1 Esd says (5:45): "The priests and the Levites and some of the lay people settled in Jerusalem and the province. The singers however, the gatekeepers and all (the other)⁹ Israelites in their towns." Zerubbabel finds the rebuilt city. The clergy and part of the laity can at once move to Jerusalem. The situation in Ezra-Neh is quite different: "The priests and the Levites and part of the lay people and the singers and the gatekeepers and the temple servants settled in their towns and all the rest of the Israelites in their towns" (Ezra 2:70).

⁹ Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch*: (rev. by Frants Buhl, 17th reprint, Berlin et al.: Springer, 1962), sub voce כל: "d. Zshg. nach auch: das Übrige" (with reference to Ex 14:7; Lev 11:23 cf. Jos 8:5); Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 24 translates: "all the rest of."

Vorlage 1 Esd בירושלם ובמדינה	Ezra 2:70 וְשִׁבְעֵהָרֵי וְהַלְוִיִּם וּמְרַקְעֵם וְהַמְשֻׁרְרִים וְהַשְׁוֹעָרִים וְהַתְּנִינִים בְּעָרֵיהֶם וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעָרֵיהֶם:	1 Esd 5:45 καὶ κατακτίσθησαν οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ οἱ Λευῖται καὶ οἱ ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ (B: + αὐτου) ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ τῇ χώρᾳ οἱ τε ἱεροψάλται καὶ οἱ θυρωροὶ καὶ πᾶς Ἰσραηλ ἐν ταῖς κώμαις αὐτῶν
--	--	--

Settlement in Jerusalem does not yet take place in the Masoretic text. That will be Nehemiah's task in his famous *synoikismos* (Neh 7:4–5 and 11:1ff).

1 Esd presupposes in the following, that Jerusalem is inhabited in Ezra's time. After Ezra's prayer "a very large crowd from Jerusalem" gathered around him (1 Esd 8:88). Not so in MT: here gathers "a very large crowd from Israel."

Vorlage 1 Esd מירושלם	Ezra 10:1 וְקָצוּ אֵלָיו מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל קָהַל רַב־מְאֹד	1 Esd 8:88 ἐπισυνήχθησαν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλημ ὄχλος πολὺς σφόδρα
----------------------------------	---	--

The two editions differ in the idea they have about the actual state of the city of Jerusalem at the times of Zerubbabel and Ezra. According to 1 Esd, Jerusalem has been reconstructed before the temple. According to Ezra-Nehemiah, the city is still in ruins. Only later will Nehemiah rebuild Jerusalem and repopulate the city. The beginning of the book of Nehemiah states explicitly:

“The walls of Jerusalem are torn down and its gates are burnt” (Neh 1:3, cf. 2:3). “Jerusalem is in ruins and its gates are burnt with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem!” (Neh 2:17)

This is the conception of Ezra-Nehemiah: the city, especially its gates, are in ruins until the arrival of Nehemiah. It’s Nehemiah who will rebuild the gates of Jerusalem (Neh 2:8; 3; 7:1.3). That is the presupposition of the Nehemiah story. The Masoretic Ezra text complies with this supposition: there is no rebuilt city of Jerusalem and there are no gates.

After their settlement the exiles gather for the reconstruction of the altar. According to 1 Esd they come together “on the square of the first gate facing the east” (5:46). That is not possible in Ezra MT. In fact here it says: “in Jerusalem” (2:70.)¹⁰ According to Ezra-Nehemiah there can be no gate in Jerusalem.

Vorlage 1 Esd	Ezra 3:1	1 Esd 5:46
לרחוב השער הראשון למזרח	וַיִּסְפוּ עִמָּם כְּאִישׁ אֶת אֶלְיָרֵי־שָׁמַיִם:	συνήχθησαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν εἰς τὸ εὐρύχωρον τοῦ πρώτου πυλῶνος τοῦ πρὸς τῇ ἀνατολῇ

1 Esd doesn’t see any problem to talk about gates at the time of Zerubbabel. After the dedication of the temple both versions notice the participation of the clergy: priests and Levites gather in divisions for the service. 1 Esd continues: “and the gatekeepers at every gate.” Such a remark is not yet possible in MT. It is lacking.

¹⁰ Conceived of as a ruin, like the temple in Ezzr 2:68: they came to the temple of the Lord ... to reconstruct it.

<p>Vorlage 1 Esd</p> <p>והרעיא לתרע ותריע</p>	<p>Ezra 6:18</p> <p>והקימו כהנים בשלשלתיהן וליהן כמקלהקה על עבדיך אלהים די בירושלם ככה כפר משה:</p>	<p>1 Esd 7:9</p> <p>καὶ ἕστησαν οἱ ἰωρεῖς καὶ οἱ Λευῖται ἐστολισμένοι κατὰ φυλάς ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων τοῦ κυρίου θεοῦ Ἰσραηλ ἀκολουθῶντες τῇ Μωυσέως βίβλῳ καὶ οἱ θυρωροὶ ἐφ' ἐκάστου πυλῶνος</p>
---	---	--

Both versions do speak of active gate keepers. But 1 Esd knows them already at the time of Zerubbabel. Ezra-Neh will not mention them before the accomplishment of Nehemiah's wall building (Neh 7:1; 10:40; 11:19; 12:25.45). Ezra-Neh reserves all gates, including the temple gates (2:8), for Nehemiah.

That means, of course, that the temple didn't have a temple court, a walled precinct before Nehemiah in MT. In 1 Esd it does: "Ezra got up from the court of the temple" (9:1). MT however: "Ezra got up from before the temple" (10:6). The temple precinct with its gates does not yet exist in MT.

<p>Vorlage 1 Esd</p> <p>מחצר בית האלהים</p>	<p>Ezra 10:6</p> <p>ויקם עזרא מלפני בית האלהים</p>	<p>1 Esd 9:1</p> <p>καὶ ἀναστὰς Ἐσδρας ἀπὸ τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ ἱεροῦ</p>
---	---	---

All these minor and major variants form a coherent series. Every single one could be considered accidental. The series is no accident. It shows intentional reworking. The tendency of all these differences always goes in the same direction. 1 Esd again and again presupposes by the way that (1) the city of Jerusalem is rebuilt at the time of Zerubbabel and Ezra, (2) that the returning exiles can at once settle down in it, and (3) that the temple is furnished with a walled precinct, gates and active

gatekeepers. All remarks of this kind are systematically lacking in Ezra MT. The rebuilding of Jerusalem, settlement in the city, reconstruction of the gates and institution of gatekeepers—all these will be Nehemiah's achievements. Whereas the Masoretic Ezra text is compatible with the following Nehemiah story, 1 Esd is not. The text of 1 Esd is not prepared for a following Nehemiah account.

3. The Priority of 1 Esd

The question whether 1 Esd left out Nehemiah's story or the other way round Ezra-Neh (MT) inserted it cannot be answered on direct literary critical grounds. On these grounds both directions could be conceived and have actually been proposed. But as I have shown it is not just a question of simply omitting or adding a story. The whole text of the Zerubbabel and Ezra stories had to be adapted to the omission or addition of the Nehemiah account. That makes feasible an indirect access to the answer. If Jerusalem has been secondarily reduced to a state of ruins in the Masoretic text; if the repopulation of the city has been secondarily postponed, then this version is a later adaptation in order to become Nehemiah compatible, and then also 1 Esd represents an older stage of the textual and literary development of Ezra-Nehemiah. My thesis is that this is indeed the case: the Masoretic Ezra text has been prepared secondarily to fit with the inserted Nehemiah story.

Quite often the apparatus of the BHS notes the priority of the text of 1 Esd. Ezra 5:8 e.g. as compared with 1 Esd 6:8 deleted the mention of "the city of Jerusalem." As Talshir¹¹ rightly remarks: the translator could subordinate παραγενόμενοι ἐλθόντες to κατελάβομεν, because he had read אולינא ואחניא והשכחנא. Even in the Masoretic version the continuation of the letter refers back to the elders (Ezra 5:9), mentioned in 1 Esd 6:8, now lacking in Ezra 5:8. The omission cannot be explained technically, it is intentional. The twofold mention of "the city of Jerusalem" was not tolerable any more because of the insertion of the Nehemiah account.¹²

The same applies to Ezra 2:70, where MT deleted "Jerusalem and the province" (compare 1 Esd 5:45). We still have in MT two series of settlers in descending rank: (1) higher clergy and part of the laity, (2) lower clergy and the rest of the laity, but it is not understandable any more, why two series of settlers had to be distinguished, why part of the laity and the rest of the laity had to be opposed to each other. The twofold כַּעֲרִידִים does not give the necessary disjunction, which once consisted in

¹¹ Talshir, *First Esdras*, 172.

¹² Böhrer, *Die heilige Stadt*, 154–158.

the distinction of settling places: Jerusalem and other towns. Ezra MT had to omit "Jerusalem" to make room for Nehemiah's *synoikismos*.¹³

The gate of 1 Esd 5:46 has been deleted in Ezra 3:1, but is still preserved in Neh 8:1.¹⁴

Most of the aforementioned variants of the Masoretic text can be shown to be secondary on text critical grounds.¹⁵ The decisive point is however, that only the assumption of a systematic recension does really explain all these variants, their coherence and clear-cut tendency. Every single passage of 1 Esd that had been talking about the already rebuilt city, its repopulation and about its gates has been systematically reworked.¹⁶ Why? To prepare a Nehemiah-compatible text of Ezra.

This reworking shows that the Nehemiah story has been inserted later into the restoration account. Originally Neh 8 (Ezra's reading of the Law) followed directly Ezra 10 (Ezra's action against mixed marriages) and concluded the whole restoration narrative.¹⁷ 1 Esd preserves this older text arrangement.

¹³ Böhler, *Die heilige Stadt*, 144–154.

¹⁴ Böhler, *Die heilige Stadt*, 144–154. Ezra-Neh (MT) creates the variant reading of Ezra 3:1 // 1 Esd 5:46 (see below: 4. Intention and Date). There, in Ezra 3:1, it cannot tolerate a gate (before Nehemiah's activity), whereas here, in Neh 8:1, it does—after Nehemiah's wall building!

¹⁵ Böhler, *Die heilige Stadt*, 158–179.

¹⁶ Even the function and position of the Artaxerxes correspondence in MT can be shown to be secondary: The Masoretic Text changes text and position of the correspondence in order to make it interrupt not only the temple building but also the city building (which then will be taken up again only by Nehemiah). The continuation in Ezr 4:24 ("then the work on *the temple* in Jerusalem stopped") shows, even in MT, which building was interrupted originally, it was the temple, not the city. In 1 Esd the correspondence stopped Sheshbazzar's temple building attempt. Ezr (MT) puts Zerubbabel's return and temple building activity before the correspondence. It thus makes the correspondence interrupt Zerubbabel's (not Sheshbazzar's) temple building. Sheshbazzar has lost any function whatsoever. But still in Ezr 5:14ff we read, that Sheshbazzar was the one who started the temple reconstruction. The transposition of Zerubbabel's return before the correspondence predates Zerubbabel to the time of Cyrus and seemingly identifies Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, an identification excluded by Ezr 5:14ff. The seeming fusion is a result of the text transfer. Cf. Böhler, *Die heilige Stadt*, 119–142 and 216–306.

¹⁷ Pohlmann, *Studien*, 127–143.

4. Intention and Date of the Reworking

The revisor combined the old restoration account 1 Esd* (without the guardsmen story) with the so called Nehemiah Memoirs. These comprised more or less the passages in the first person singular, that is Neh 1–6* and 12*, 13*. These Memoirs had still been circulating independently from the restoration account (Zerubbabel and Ezra story) for a long time. Even Josephus still knew them in the 1st century A.D. In his Jewish Antiquities XI 1–158 he first tells the story of Zerubbabel's temple reconstruction and the Ezra account following closely 1 Esd (including the guardsmen story). Only then (after Ezra's death in Ant. XI 158!) he continues in Ant. XI 159–183 with a Nehemiah story as he knew it: it comprises exactly what we still have in Neh 1–7:3 and 12*–13*, that means the so called Memoirs, which were still much shorter than our book of Nehemiah (lacking chapters 7–12*) and certainly were not yet integrated into the whole of Ezra–Nehemiah.¹⁸

1 Esd*:	Ezr 1–10	Neh 8
Memoirs:	Neh 1–6	Neh 12:27ff; 13*
Redactor:	(Neh 7 = Ezra 2)	Neh 9–12*

The redactor who wanted to insert the Nehemiah Memoirs into the older restoration account reworked the old Zerubbabel and Ezra story (1 Esd*) to make it Nehemiah compatible. He then inserted the wall building account Neh 1–6 placing it before Ezra's Torah reading. Neh 7 is a repetition of Ezr 2, Neh 9–12* are the redactor's material. The end is again taken from Nehemiah's Memoirs (Neh 12* and 13*). The redactor has created an entirely new work with a well defined structure.

The word *הימה*, wall, dominates Neh 1–6, then disappears (7₁) and reappears with the dedication of the walls in 12:27ff. The construction of the wall is the outer frame. The lists in Neh 7 and 11 are the preparation and carrying out of the repopulation of Jerusalem. The core is Neh 8–10 under the leitmotiv "Torah."

¹⁸ Mowinckel, *Studien*, 20–28; Pohlmann, *Studien*, 114–126.

City Walls:	Neh 1–6	Neh 12:27–13:3
Repopulation:	Neh 7	Neh 11
Torah:	Neh 8–10	

Within the frame of Nehemiah's walls the exiles can settle down, and Israel can constitute herself on the basis of the Torah. Obedience to the Torah is not possible without the organizational frame of a visible societal body.

The two restoration accounts define in a narrative way the essentials of Israel: what is to be restored, so that Israel can be called restored? The old story 1 Esd* said: temple and Torah obedience. The new edition says: temple, Torah obedience and social organization of the people of God (symbolized in the City).

A last remark on the possible date of this new recension of the restoration account. Various indications point to the second century B.C.E. for this reworking.¹⁹ The dates of Neh 1:1 and 2:1 which make Kislew precede Nisan of the same year presuppose the Seleucid autumnal year.²⁰ The extension of Judah according to the city list of Neh 11 was achieved only in Maccabean times.²¹ The prayer of Neh 9 cries for political sovereignty which fits Maccabean aspirations.²² 2 Macc 2:13f reports about Nehemiah's (!) and Judah the Maccabee's literary efforts.²³ Kellermann and Blenkinsopp speak of a "Nehemiah renaissance" under the Maccabees.²⁴ In any case the new version Ezra-Nehemiah would better substantiate the Maccabean aspiration for political independence than the old edition did.

¹⁹ Böhler, *Die heilige Stadt*, 382–397.

²⁰ Ulrich Kellermann, *Nehemia. Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte* (BZAW 102, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967) 74–75.

²¹ Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, 189–191; Mowinckel, *Studien* 151, Antonius H. J. Gunneweg, *Nehemia* (KAT 19,2; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1987) 148–150.

²² Böhler, *Die heilige Stadt*, 378–381; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 301–308; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 198.

²³ Böhler, *Die heilige Stadt*, 393–394.

²⁴ Kellermann, *Nehemiah*, 148; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 55–56.

Bibliography

- L. W. Batten. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh: Clark, 1913, reprint 1980).
- E. Bayer. *Das dritte Buch Esdras und sein Verhältnis zu den Büchern Esra-Nehemia* (Biblische Studien (F) 16/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1911).
- J. Blenkinsopp. *Ezra-Nehemiah. A Commentary* (Old Testament Library; London: SCM Press, 1989).
- D. Böhler. *Die heilige Stadt in Esdras A und Esra-Nehemia. Zwei Konzeptionen der Wiederherstellung Israels* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 158; Freiburg/Schweiz & Göttingen: Universitätsverlag—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).
- D. J. A. Clines. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1984).
- F. M. Cross. "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975) 4–18.
- A. H. J. Gunneweg. *Nehemia* (Kommentar zum Alten Testament 19,2; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1987).
- G. Hölscher. "Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia," in *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments, vol. 2.* (ed. E. Kautzsch; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1909/10, reprint 1923) 449–492.
- H. Howorth. "Some Unconventional Views on the Text of the Bible," *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archeology* 23 (1901) 147–159, 305–325; 24 (1902) 147–172, 332–340; 25 (1903) 15–22, 90–98; 26 (1904) 25–31, 63–69, 94–100; 27 (1905) 267–278; 29 (1907) 31–38, 61–69.
- U. Kellermann. *Nehemia. Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 102; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967).
- J. D. Michaelis. *Deutsche Uebersetzung des Alten Testaments mit Anmerkungen für Ungelehrte, Teil 13* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1783) Notes pp 40–45.
- S. Mowinckel. *Studien zu dem Buche Esra-Nehemia I. Die nachchronistische Redaktion des Buches. Die Listen* (Skrifter utgivna av det norske videnskaps-akademi i Oslo—Historisk-filologisk klasse 3. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964).
- K.-F. Pohlmann. *Studien zum dritten Esra. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem ursprünglichen Schluß des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 104; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970).

- W. Rudolph. *Esra und Nehemia samt 3. Esra* (Handbuch zum Alten Testament I 20; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949).
- A. Schenker. "La Relation d'Esdras A' au texte massorétique d'Esdras-Néhémie," *Tradition of the Text* (ed. G. J. Norton and S. Pisano; *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 109; Freiburg/Schweiz & Göttingen: Universitätsverlag—Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) 218–248.
- Z. Talshir. *First Esdras. Origin and Translation* (Hebr., unpubl. Diss. Jerusalem: 1984); English translation: *I Esdras: From Origin to Translation* (Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series 47; Atlanta: SBL, 1999).
- Ch. C. Torrey, *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 2; Gießen: Ricker, 1896).
- . *Ezra Studies* (First published 1910; repr. New York: Ktav, 1970).
- E. Tov. *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 3; Jerusalem: Simor, 1981).
- . *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Mineapolis: Fortress and Assen: Van Gorkum, 1992).
- Trendelenburg. "Über den apokryphischen Esras," *Einleitung in die apokryphischen Schriften des Alten Testaments* (ed. J. G. Eichhorn; Leipzig, 1795) 335–377.
- B. Walde. *Die Esdrasbücher der Septuaginta, ihr gegenseitiges Verhältnis untersucht* (Biblische Studien (F) 18/4; Freiburg: Herder, 1913).
- H. G. M. Williamson. *Ezra, Nehemiah* (Word Biblical Commentary 16; Waco/Texas: Word, 1984).
- . "The Problem with First Esdras," *After the Exile* (ed. J. Barton and D. J. Reimer; Macon/Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1996) 201–216.