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THE DOCUMENTS OF THE BOOK OF EZRA.

ABOUT four years ago, Eduard Meyer, the historian of antiquity, published a book entitled *The Origin of Judaism*,* in which he reached certain results that flatly contradicted the views then generally prevalent in critical circles, concerning the historical value of the Book of Ezra. Strictly from the historian's point of view, Meyer, on approaching this book of the Old Testament to test its importance as a source for the history of the earlier Persian period, found in it, to his own surprise as he freely confesses, a source of the first importance and worthy of the most thorough credence. Quite apart from the epoch-making character of this work for the criticism of Ezra, it deserves a place of unique distinction among the mass of literature upon kindred topics in Biblical criticism, because of the manner, at once sensible and scientific, in which it pleads for a juster method of dealing with any ancient work containing documentary material professedly contemporaneous with the facts narrated. And it is on account of the principles which Meyer lays down in the introduction of his book, that it has seemed appropriate to begin a discussion of the historicity of Ezra with a statement of the position of this critic.

In his introduction Meyer calls attention, first, to the primary claims of professed contemporary documents to a thorough investigation, in advance of all hypothetical reconstructions of history; and second, to the side with which rests the burden of proof in the investigation of those documents, namely, with those who attack, not those who defend, their genuineness. So much in general. In regard to the criticism of Ezra in particular, he points out that it deals with a period well within the sphere of established historical results, and that therefore it is doubly unscientific to reconstruct the traditional course of history without regard to the documents, and only then as an after-thought and corollary, to reject the documents as inconsistent with this critical reconstruction. On the contrary, the correct procedure is, "to place the documents in the central position of the discussion from

* *Die Entstehung des Judenthums*, Halle a. S., 1896.

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the very start, and to direct the attacks against them before all else; . . . because before a genuine document, every construction, however clever, falls helpless to the ground if it be found contrary to it." These principles must henceforth determine the method and order of all historical criticism of Ezra, and accordingly, the task first presented to the critic of that book as a *history* is the examination of its documents.

THE GENUINENESS OF THE DOCUMENTS OF EZRA.

In the analysis of Ezra, certain well-marked sections have been separated from the narrative in which they are embodied, because they profess to be copies of official documents that date from the occurrences therein described. Besides a few short passages which are, for one reason or another, better considered in connection with the surrounding narrative, there are seven more or less extended documents or parts of documents, which arrange themselves into four groups.* These are the sections to which the discussion is to be limited in this division, and the order in which they will be considered is the following :

A. The Aramaic documents.

I. The correspondence under Darius (2).†

II. The correspondence under Artaxerxes (3).

III. The letter of Artaxerxes to Ezra (4).

B. The Hebrew list, chap. ii (Neh. vii) (5).

A. Genuineness of the Aramaic Documents: I. Genuineness of the correspondence under Darius—v. 6—vi. 12.

First in order should come the objections which have been raised by critics against the genuineness and integrity of the report of Tattenai, the answer of Darius and the fragment of the edict of Cyrus. And although, in conformity with the principle just laid down in the introductory remarks, we should already be entitled to consider the documents genuine if these objections prove un-

*The reason for passing over the memoirs of Ezra in this discussion, is the fact that their historicity is universally admitted by leading critics of all schools. Thus Meyer, in reviewing the criticism of the book, says: "Thus of all the documents which the Chronicler has preserved, there remain unchallenged only the fragments of the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah; and it is probably hardly to be expected that a scientific investigator will ever dare to contest the authenticity of these sections" (*Ent. d. Jud.*, p. 3). The pamphlet by Prof. Torrey, of Andover, which appeared about the same time as these words of Meyer were written, has found no acceptance. (See the humorous estimate of this pamphlet, in an article in *Expos. Times*, '97, pp. 268ff.)

† These figures refer to the sections thus numbered in the primary analysis of Ezra, as presented in the article "The Composition of the Book of Ezra," in the April number of this REVIEW, pp. 261 sq.

sound, yet it will not be amiss to state, in the second place, such positive reasons as may appear to establish more firmly the same conclusion.

1. Objections which have been urged against these documents.

Kosters divides this whole section between two sources, neither of which, naturally, is of such a character as to deserve any more credence than can be given to a more or less distorted, because late, tradition. Ostensible official documents contained in them are of course inventions of their respective writers, and serve no higher purpose than to show "the growth of the Cyrus-tradition."^{*} This attempt of Kosters has been answered rather unsatisfactorily by Wellhausen,[†] but convincingly by Van Hoonacker.[‡] The latter has been followed in the presentation of the literary side of this same question,[§] and there is no need to repeat here the arguments, on the ground of which this ingenious but utterly unsupported hypothesis must be rejected. With the failure of his literary partition, all those historical conclusions which Kosters deduces from it fall to the ground.

Wellhausen objects to these documents for two reasons: first, that they contain unhistorical matter, and second, that they show a Jewish coloring. Meyer answers these arguments in an odd way. Without having previously investigated the question in his own book, he simply accepts Schrader's results || in regard to the unhistorical character of the Hebrew narrative, and then is at pains to distinguish what is narrated in our documents from the parallel account in that Hebrew narrative, thinking thus to vindicate the former. But it is perfectly obvious that in doing this Meyer is violating the principle on which he bases the justice of his method. Documents first, surrounding material afterwards—this as we have seen, is his fundamental position. He ought rather to have met Wellhausen's first objection by a reiteration of this principle of the scientific study of history. Do you assert that these documents contain unhistorical material? Prove it then from their *disagreement* with acknowledged contemporary *documents*, not from their *agreement* with historical narratives of later date, the question of whose credibility is entirely dependent on the verdict concerning the earlier documents and the agreement or

* Cf. *Theol. Tijds.*, '97, pp. 548f., where Kosters attempts a schematization of "the course of the history of the Cyrus-tradition" from Deutero-Isaiah to the Chronicler.

† In his *Die Rückkehr der Juden*, etc., in *Nachrichten der Gött. Gesellsch.*, '95, pp. 176ff.

‡ In his *Nouvelles Études sur la Restauration Juive*, pp. 21-29.

§ Cf. "Comp. of Ezra," April number of this REVIEW, pp. 268ff.

|| In his essay in *Stud. u. Krit.*, '67, pp. 460ff. •

variance existing between them. This should have been Meyer's answer. It belongs to a later section to show to what serious consequences Meyer has been led by this divergence from his own pronounced principles.

As to the charge that our documents give evidence of Jewish coloring, Meyer answers each particular instance partly by denial, partly by explanation, and partly by sundering the offending phrase or sentence from the true text of the document. Thus the "Jewish coloring" complained of in v. 11-16, admits of the simple explanation that Tattenai, as he himself says, was writing the words which the Jews had used to him. The similarity of vi. 5*a* and v. 14*a* may be explained as a mere coincidence, or better still, as due to the verbal repetition by the Jews of a passage from a decree so significant to them as that of Cyrus. As a cherished charter, its very phraseology would be familiar to them; and there is no need of calling in Meyer's alternative explanation that the similarity may be due to "the writer's harmonizing operations."

With vi. 12*a* Meyer deals differently. This sentence is condemned by many critics as hopelessly "Deuteronomistic." Yet Meyer will not agree that this phenomenon is only to be explained by later Jewish tampering with the text. "It is," says he, "conceivable that one of the Jews, of whom there were always some at court, might have influenced the king." He might perhaps have added that it is by no means sure that the idea of a god's "causing his name to dwell" here or there, is purely a Hebrew conception. It seems rather a mode of thought and expression natural to the general Semitic mind.* But from quite another ground Meyer yields that this sentence is not a part of the original document. "It is quite impossible," according to him, "that Darius in an official document puts in question the continuance of the Persian domination, and speaks of kings and peoples who might in future reverse his command." It is hard to believe that all critics will agree with Meyer on the "impossibility" of Darius' using such words, or on so extreme an interpretation of their very generalized anathema. Bertheau† justly compares the close of the Behistun inscription, "where the punishment of Ahuramazda is called down upon him who dares to injure the picture and the writing."‡ But in addition to this answer to Meyer's objection, there is positive indication that the document

* Cf. *e. g.*, in the Tell-el-Amarna letters, the expression, "the king's name dwells at Jerusalem." (Art. יָדַשׁ in *Ges. Dict.*)

† *Commentar*, p. 80.

‡ See also *Records of the Past*, 2nd ed., i, 56, 107, 128.

never lacked this (or some other) sentence between ver. 11 and ver. 12b. For the word **יִתְעַבֵּר** would then occur twice with only six words between, and each time in a slightly different sense. This fact Meyer was probably led to overlook through his use of the LXX. text (which reads *ποιηθησεται* and *εσται*) instead of the Aramaic text. There does not then seem to be any well-grounded reason for denying that v. 12a, or any other part of our document, is an integral part of the text.

Finally, Stade and others have objected to ver. 10f. as betraying a Jewish view-point. But, as Meyer points out, the following are positive results of historical study: that the great world-rulers of antiquity had sacrifices made for them at the shrines of the national cults, Jerusalem among the rest, and that the Persian kings were preëminent in this respect; that the sanctuary-privileges and inviolable sanctity of those shrines were respected by the governing powers, and offenses against them were most severely punished; and finally, that the punishment of impaling here threatened, was a "genuinely Persian" form of meting out justice or injustice as the case might be.

2. Positive considerations confirming their genuineness.

The language in which they are written is Aramaic, which "in the Persian empire was the official tongue for all the Western provinces, even far beyond the boundaries of the Semitic world." "The Aramaic was admirably adapted for the needs of the Persian empire, and was generally used under its sway not only in Syria, but also in Egypt and eastern Asia Minor."*

Striking confirmation of the historicity of this whole section has unexpectedly come to light recently, in the discovery of the principle personage, Tattenai, under the appellation, "Uš-ta-nu, governor of Babylon and Syria," in Babylonian contracts of the first and third years of Darius. The date and the title exactly agree with those ascribed to the Tattenai of Ezra, and the name is sufficiently similar to leave no room for doubt that both are intended to represent the Persian name Vištana (Gr. *Ἰστανης*).†

The form in which the report of Tattenai opens finds a close parallel in similar contemporary Aramaic documents discovered recently in Egypt. Meyer quotes one such document, in which the introductory formula is almost word for word a parallel to v. 7f.: "To my lord Mithrawahishta, thy servant Pachim . . . life, joy and health to my lord! There . . ." Compare with this, "To king Darius [here supply the names from v. 6, as is actually

* *Ent. d. Jud.*, pp. 9f.

† See Meyer's *Julius Wellhausen und Meine Schrift*, p. 24, and Meissner in *Zeitschrift für Alt. Wiss.*, xvii, pp. 191f.

done in iv. 11b, "thy servants the men beyond-the-river"], all peace! Be it known to the king," etc.

The large number of Persian words, which to a great extent were already unintelligible to the Greek translators of the book, is hardly to be explained on the hypothesis of a forgery of the documents, and entirely prohibits the thought of a *late* forgery. Meyer is justified in saying, in view of this fact: "If they are forged, then the forgery must fall extraordinarily early;" and, "if then the documents are forgeries, they certainly are extremely cleverly forged."*

The following Persian words occur in v. 6-vi. 12: פִּרְשָׁנִים, "copy," v. 6; probably to be read פִּתְשָׁנִים, as in Esther. פִּתְשָׁנִים (emph. פִּתְשָׁנִים), "statement," v. 7, 11, vi. 11. גִּנְזֵיִם (in the form גִּנְזֵיָה), "treasures," v. 17, vi. 1. מִדָּה (for מִנְדָּה), "tribute," vi. 8; a word of Assyrian origin and Persian adoption. אֲסַפְרָנָא, "diligently" or "duly," v. 8, vi. 8, 12. Among these some were still current in later Judaism, but others had become obsolete with the close of the Persian period. In addition to these words, there might properly be mentioned here the technical term רְכֻזוֹנָה in vi. 2. It was the proper word to indicate that the document so labeled was a "memorandum" or "protocol"—a copy for filing away in the archives, whereas the full and formal writ passed into the hands of those to whom it was addressed.

The general policy of Cyrus, the fidelity of Darius to it and his extension of it, and the naturalness of Tattenai's whole proceeding and report, speak strongly in favor of the historicity of this correspondence under Darius. It is impossible to believe that a forger with a "tendency," such as the contrary hypothesis postulates, should have both contented himself with so mild a production, and constructed his documents in so clever a fashion that the most hostile criticism has been unable to bring against them any objections that do not admit of a simple and reasonable answer. With Koster's failure to establish his literary partition of these chapters, the only plausible attack upon them has failed. As a unity, they are demonstrably genuine.

II. Genuineness of the Correspondence under Artaxerxes—iv. 6-23.

"This paragraph is devoted to the consideration of a passage which, if it were credible, would overthrow utterly the result we

* *Ent. d. Jud.*, pp. 27, 30. It is to be observed that the apologetic value of these Persian words is entirely independent of the view held as to the correctness of Meyer's theory of a Persian original of the documents. This theory must be reserved for discussion in connection with the only passage where a proof, and not mere general probability, may be claimed for it, viz., iv. 7 (as reconstructed by Meyer).

have reached." With these words Koster opens his discussion* of this famous correspondence about the walls. The quotation betrays at once the unscientific order of his investigation, and the necessity he is under of proving the passage unguine and so untrustworthy. But Koster† is not the only one who has denied its credibility. Wellhausen pronounces it "forged and worthless." Grätz denies its trustworthiness. And both Kuenen and Stade detect in it the evidences of "Jewish tendencies." Here, therefore, as in the preceding section, the arguments of these objectors will be considered, and, if these prove unsound, it will be admissible to confirm the genuineness of the documents by positive considerations.

1. Objections to the genuineness of this passage.

The names of persons and peoples in ver. 9f. have been pronounced a late fiction; and this on several distinct counts. Koster argues that it is not certain that Assurbanipal (if by Osnappar this king indeed be meant) brought men of any of these nationalities to Samaria and Syria; while to assert that he brought *all* of these colonists thither is incredible and is opposed to 2 Kings xvii. Again, the length of the list is in itself a suspicious circumstance; it looks like an anti-Samaritan "tendency" of the writer. And finally, the Apharsathchites and the Apharsites must surely be combined with the Apharsachites of v. 6, vi. 6; but these last are evidently fellow-officials of Tattenai, as indicated by the word כנת used of them; here, therefore, where they are made into two nations, parallel with Babylonians, etc., they betray an ignorant writer—ignorant both of the name itself and of the word כנת, which he makes to mean "supporters."

In answer to these objections, it is sufficient to indicate the lines of Meyer's critique of these verses. As to the deportation by Assurbanipal, every scholar except Koster recognizes the striking agreement of this passage with the known course of events in the time of that king. We know from ancient records that he (and he alone of Assyrian kings) was in possession of Susa, and that he actually transported inhabitants of Susa and of Babylon to Assyria.‡ Therefore, though we know from no other source of such a colonization in Samaria, yet there is nothing surprising or unnatural in the account here, and the objection is of no force. Moreover, the account neither says nor implies that *all* those named were brought by this particular prince; and the true ren-

* *Het Herstel van Israel*, pp. 63-74.

† And, following him, Wildeboer *Litt. d. A. T.'s* (Ger. tr.), p. 411, and Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, Introd.

‡ Cf. Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscr. and the O. T.*, Vol. ii, p. 65.

dering of the list of names does away with the suspicion roused by the supposed length of the list. The difficulty centering in the words "Apharsathchites" and "Apharsites" is more serious, but does not involve, however settled, the conclusions which Kusters would draw from it. Meyer adopts the view of Hoffmann that notwithstanding the prosthetic **N** not elsewhere found in connection with the particular name פֶּרֶס, these words in all three forms are nothing but the name "Persians" in a more or less Aryan form of spelling. "In אֶפְרָסִיָּא, iv. 9, this appears in its pure form; in אֶפְרָסְכִיָּא, v. 6, vi. 6, the familiar Iranic adjective-suffix -ka has been added; and in אֶפְרָסְתְּכִיָּא iv. 9, the ת is to be rejected as an error in writing."* So that there is no basis whatever for the charge by Kusters that "out of the title of certain officials, he [the author] has by small variations made two names of peoples."† Lastly, as already intimated, the long list of names which appears in most texts of ver. 9 and seems to give color to Kusters' suspicions, may in fact be reduced to three peoples, and the representatives of one other nationality.‡ Wellhausen, who rejects the documents of chap. iv as worthless, does not agree with Kusters in this estimate of vers. 9b, 10, but assigns them to a different source. Kusters himself feels how ineffective in this case would become his arguments drawn from these verses; for in passing to his next objections he grants that "the unhistorical character of vers. 9b, 10, proves nothing against the credibility of the passage," in case these verses "are interpolated." We are thus introduced to his further arguments.

Certain expressions are held to indicate that these documents are not genuine. "The book of the records of thy fathers," ver. 15; "mighty kings . . . which have ruled over all beyond-the-river," ver. 20; and, "until a decree shall be made by me," ver. 21: these are expressly cited by Kusters. But a fair consideration of these expressions, taking into account their setting and their author, leaves no basis for the charge. The "book" referred to in ver. 15 is simply the collection of memoranda of the official governmental acts, such as we find in vi. 1f. And that the Persian kings had access to the archives of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings (their "fathers," according to Oriental usage), is abundantly

* *Ent. d. Jud.*, p. 38.

† *Het Herstel*, p. 67.

‡ Meyer's rendering of this verse is as follows: "Rehum, etc. . . . the Persian judges, the Persian trpl [a word not yet explained], the men of Urnk, Babel, Susa (which is Elam), and the other peoples," etc. This is to read רִינִיא "judges," after Esdras, Josephus and Lucian; and רְהוּא (instead of רְרִיא, Q're) "which are," after one reading of the LXX. The various explanations of טְרַפְלִיא hitherto given are unsatisfactory.

proved by the fact that Berossus at the time of Alexander made diligent use of them. Again, it is idle to speculate on the question, just what king or kings of Jerusalem can be meant in ver. 20; and it is equally useless to argue, as Kosters does, that because neither this king nor that king fits the account, therefore the account could not be from Artaxerxes, but must be from a Jew. For neither Rehum and his companions in their extravagant letter, nor the king in his reply, is to be interpreted in this literal fashion. Both exaggerated, as was natural in the situation. Finally, it is a *petitio principii* for Kosters to use the expression in ver. 21 as an argument for his position. For while it is of course true that on *his* hypothesis, the words seem to point forward to a time when Artaxerxes *would* reverse his attitude, yet on the contrary hypothesis they have no such force. They simply stamp the letter as a provisional order, in answer to a distinct appeal and prompted by the need of haste; while the formal decree, issued to the Jews directly, would give the final verdict of the government upon the project of rebuilding the walls, only after the slower processes of official formality, and presumably after the Jews had presented their side of the case. If Rehum and his partisans exceeded their instructions, it was because they wished and dared, not because they were ordered to do so.

"But apart from all these singularities," writes Kosters, "we cannot possibly find a place for the wall-building here undertaken and the frustration of it in the complex of well-established facts." And Wellhausen declares that in view of the contemporary revolt of Megabyzus "it is unthinkable" that such a correspondence as this could be carried on. He also pronounces it "unthinkable" that Artaxerxes, the patron of Nehemiah, "should have himself commanded the destruction of the wall."*

Here, then, we have an appeal by these critics to the facts of contemporary history, both of the Jews and of the empire. What, according to the generally accepted chronology of the period, were the two leading facts in Jewish history nearest in point of time to the events recorded in our documents? The latest information we have from an earlier date shows us Ezra engaged in his reformatory work at Jerusalem, about 457. The first recorded event of later date is the visit of Hanani and certain other Jews to Susa, and the subsequent mission of Nehemiah under the king's patronage, in 445. Now it appears that we have a series of "undesigned coincidences," connecting these three events in a chain of antecedents and consequents. In iv. 12, understand "the Jews which came up from thee . . . to Jerusa-

* But note that Artaxerxes never did "command the destruction of the wall."

lem" to mean Ezra and his company. And in Neh. i. 3, understand the report of Hanani on the miserable condition of Jerusalem, its inhabitants, its walls and its gates, to refer to the condition in which Rehum and his companions left it, iv. 23. So natural and so convincing is this simple sequence of events, that even Kusters is compelled to admit (that is, in reference to the latter half of it): "in truth this combination has great attractiveness, and it appears at first sight unanswerable." His own attempt to answer it has not commended itself to either Wellhausen or Meyer.* And with good reason, for it involves the preposterous supposition that Nehemiah mourned and pined over the intelligence that the Jews were oppressed and Jerusalem was destroyed, though this "news" was nearly a century and a half old. If we did not have the account of the attempted wall-building as our chapter gives it, it is safe to assert that such an attempt would long since have been inferred by critics, to explain the opening chapters of Nehemiah.†

As to that revolt of Megabyzus, which according to Wellhausen makes it impossible to believe that "the Palestinian officials should even have turned to Artaxerxes," there is no real difficulty for the passage before us. For all that we know of the revolt, is that soon after 454 this Persian satrap of Syria rebelled against the royal authority, and, after some successes, finally became reconciled with Artaxerxes. Of the extent of his authority, and of the time it lasted, we know nothing. To draw any objection to our documents, therefore, from this external historical event, is only an appeal to ignorance.‡ Nor is the argument from the part which Artaxerxes is made to play, worthy to meet with any better verdict in the light of candid criticism. As already shown,

* The former says: "that Kusters will not recognize this is no help to him;" and the latter: "in that [*viz.* his own theory] he will hardly find anyone to agree with him."

† It is impossible to resist the temptation to call attention to the striking similarity between Kusters' course in interpreting Neh. i. 3 (in *Het Herstel*, p. 72), and Elhorst's interpretation of Zech. vi. 15, which Kusters ridicules in his article in *Theol. Tijds.*, '96. p. 495. Elhorst inserts the word *nog*. "still," in the expression, "they that are far off," and Kusters says: "Too bad, that the little word is not by Zechariah, but by Elhorst!" Just so Kusters paraphrases Neh. i. 3: "The sad condition in Palestine *still* (*nog*) continues, and the walls and gates are *still* not established." We too may well exclaim: "Too bad, that the little word is not by Nehemiah, but by Kusters!"

‡ If any influence over Jewish affairs is to be assigned to this revolt, the suggestion is ventured that it serves quite as well to explain the possibility of the Jews' proceeding so far with their undertaking before being stopped (a feature which Kusters finds to be one of the improbabilities of our passage), or perhaps even their embarking upon it in the first place, without permission, as it does to point the objection which Wellhausen draws from it.

his part in the destruction of the wall has been exaggerated. His disposition seems to have been in the main favorable to the Jews, especially to those individual members of the nation who were fortunate or influential enough to gain the special good-will of the good-natured but weak despot. The Jewish community received its blessings from Artaxerxes mediately, through its patriotic sons, who were willing to use their influence at court not selfishly, but for the good of the nation. That such a monarch, however, should respond to the suggestion, "if this city be builded . . . thou shalt have no portion beyond-the-river," with the order, "cause that this be not builded; . . . why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?"—this, it must be maintained, is not only explicable, but the very course of action to be expected from him.*

As in the case of the correspondence in Darius' reign, so also in the documents of chap. iv, it is urged that "Jewish tendencies" are manifest in their wording, and that therefore, at least in their present form, they cannot be genuine. This alleged Jewish turn is shown chiefly in the exaltation of Jerusalem and its ancient authority and importance. But the question is not, Are these words appropriate, and often found, on the lips of Jews? but rather, Are they appropriate on the lips of outsiders in the given circumstances? To this latter question only one answer can fairly be given. For in the first place, it was certainly to the interest of Rehum and his fellows to magnify to the utmost the importance and hence the dangerousness of Jerusalem, that the king might thereby be impressed and decide as they wished.† And in the second place, the language of the king's answer is perfectly natural, if the following facts are considered: the really troublesome record of Jerusalem under Assyrian and Babylonian domination; the tradition of early military glory which the Jews always cherished over against their enemies, and never more dearly than when their fortunes were at their lowest ebb; the natural desire of the king to magnify the grounds upon which he based his at least partial change of policy; and finally, the analogy of universal ancient custom—to view a political achievement through a lens, which, by magnifying the subject, the captive, the campaign, cast double glory upon the conqueror and master.

* What could have been more impolitic than for Nehemiah to have mentioned to Artaxerxes his former unfavorable action, as Kusters says that he should have done? Nevertheless, Nehemiah's words and actions betray an inward anxiety that is best accounted for on the supposition that Ezra iv. 17ff. is authentic.

† Meyer puts this thought strikingly: "Was Rehum then to write to the king: 'Jerusalem has always been an insignificant place, and now also is no longer dangerous; still, do not permit the building of this wall?'" (p. 58).

2. Positive considerations, confirming their genuineness.

The formula with which the letter of Rehum opens, is even more strikingly similar to the Aramaic official documents of the Persian period to which Meyer calls attention, than are the opening words of Tattenai's letter. "To Artaxerxes the king, thy servants the men of Abar-naharah [here supply the names from ver. 9, and the formula of greeting, *cf.* ver. 17 and v. 7]; be it known unto the king that," etc. So also the original introduction to the פתנם or answer of Artaxerxes may easily be restored from the analogy of ver. 11 and v. 6f. It must have read thus: "Artaxerxes the king, etc. . . . unto Rehum the בעל־טעם and to Shimshai the secretary, and to the rest of their companions, who dwell in Samaria and the rest of Abar-naharah, peace [further official formulas are indicated by וכעת for וכענת, translated "and so forth," as in ver. 10f., vii. 12]; as to the letter," etc. If these documents are not genuine, they certainly were forged by one who was thoroughly acquainted with the official style, and who must, moreover, have intended to deceive his readers by introducing every mark of genuineness. But in proportion as that hypothesis appears improbable, in just that proportion will the genuineness of the chapter commend itself as the true critical view.

The Persian words in the passage lend the weight of their testimony rather to the view that the documents are genuine than to the contrary position. The following is a list of them. פרשגן, "copy," ver. 11. פתגם (emph. פתגמא), "statement" or "notification," ver. 17. מנדה בלו והלך, "tribute, custom and toll," vers. 13, 20; for this, LXX. in ver. 13 gives simply φόροι, in ver. 20, φόροι, πληρεις καὶ μέρος, showing that the words were then no longer intelligible. אפתם (so Baer's text; probably not אפתם as in most editions) perhaps "income" (or some such meaning—a word not yet satisfactorily explained), ver. 13. אסנפר, LXX. Ἀσσηναφάρ, which by its final ר for ל (if it be indeed a contraction from אס(ר)בנפר. Assurbanipal), betrays Persian usage; for the Persians had no form for the *l*-sound, but represented it by *r*, the sound which most resembled it.

The "undesigned coincidence" referred to above seems to possess great apologetic value of a positive character. The position of iv. 6-23 has been a source of misunderstanding and controversy from the time of the author of 1st. Esdras to the present day. And it has been a constantly repeated charge of critics*

* These older critical views are not shared by Kosters and those of his school. "Extremes meet," is true in the history of the criticism of Ezra. For these critics are at one with the most conservative writers in maintaining that the author both knew what the section was about, and had an intelligent reason for putting it where it stands. Cf. *Het Herstel*, pp. 73f.

that the author of the Book of Ezra did not know what he was about when he put these documents where they stand, that he entirely misunderstood their meaning, and that he confused the whole chronology of the period. In proportion as this position is maintained, in just that proportion is the undesignedness and hence the value of this evidence enhanced. In ver. 12 we read: "Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee are come to us unto Jerusalem," etc. No satisfactory explanation* of these words has ever been given, save that which understands them to refer to the events narrated in chaps. vii and viii. Again, the letter of Artaxerxes, and the statement of ver. 23 which immediately follows it, are the only sufficient explanation of the language of Nehemiah in Neh. i. 3, ii. 3, 13, 17. (So also Bertheau-Ryssel, Van Hoonacker, Kuenen, Meyer and others.) How unnatural is the alternative explanation which Kusters offers, has already been seen. Now if these conclusions as to the significance of iv. 12 and 21-23 be correct, then those verses furnish the only historical information that we possess, as to the events which intervened between Ezra x and Neh. i. And what was more natural than that the community at whose head Ezra had placed himself, and which he had inspired with the strong sense of national and religious separateness, should, in the troubled years of the middle of the century, avail itself of the opportunity to repair the outward fortunes of its ruined capital? And what more reasonable explanation can be given, both of the condition of Jerusalem at the arrival of Nehemiah, and of his deep emotion and energetic action on first learning of its condition, than just the account which we find in Ezra iv?

Finally, attention should be called, briefly, to the utter unsatisfactoriness of the alternative position. It has already been shown how weak are the arguments with which it attacks the genuineness of these documents, and how strong are the reasons for maintaining their trustworthiness; but the same conclusion is no less clearly reached by reflecting upon what is involved in the opposite claim. It necessitates the view that at a very early date, not long

*These explanations may be classified thus: 1. That of Ewald and other older interpreters, that the Artachshasta of chap. iv is Pseudo-Smerdis; but even if this were correct, the first Gola could not be said to have "come up from thee." 2. That of Wellhausen and others, who would weaken the force of "from thee" into "out of the East where thou dwellest," with allusion to the first Gola, long since in the land; but it is difficult to see why Rehum should have made such a reference to the return under Cyrus in this connection. 3. That of Van Hoonacker, who retains the proper force of מן-לתיך, but denies that it was *Ezra's* Gola. It was another caravan or large accession to the Jewish community not elsewhere mentioned.

after the events were supposed to have occurred, a Jewish writer, familiar with the forms of Persian official correspondence and thoroughly at home in the real history of the nation and its enemies, deliberately forged a report of a governor of Samaria to the king, and an answer to the same, with the intent of misrepresenting the history of the time immediately preceding Nehemiah, in the interests of Ezra's Gola, and to magnify their share in the Restoration of Israel. Furthermore, it involves the position that the exclusive mention in ver. 10 of Assurbanipal's colonization of Susianians, Babylonians and others, so strikingly sustained by independent testimony, is pure invention; that the clever appeal of the Samaritans to the king's weakest point and Artaxerxes' quick response to that appeal, are an incredible reversal of what we know elsewhere of Artaxerxes' attitude toward the Jews; and that, with or without the accession of Ezra's Gola,* the Jewish community did not even make a motion for over seventy years after their temple was completed toward repairing the walls of Jerusalem, which "lay waste" and were a perpetual "reproach" (Neh. ii. 17). Until such views can be commended to the critical world, we are not only at liberty, but compelled, to regard the Aramaic documents of Ezra iv as genuine and historical.

III. Genuineness of Artaxerxes' Letter to Ezra—vii. 11-26.

Most of those who have denied the genuineness of this document, have treated the subject in quite a different manner from the other Aramaic documents. Instead of analyzing and criticizing it at length, they have dismissed it with a few words and considered their point established without a labored argument. Nor is this procedure as unjustifiable as may at first sight appear. For they rest their case upon one argument, and this argument they briefly and clearly establish. They affirm that this document throughout betrays Jewish coloring, and they make good their affirmation. But an unexpressed assumption lies at the basis of the argument, and unless this assumption be justifiable the conclusion is unwarranted.

Put syllogistically, the actual reasoning is as follows: every document betraying Jewish coloring is of Jewish origin; this document betrays Jewish coloring; therefore this document is—not genuine. When the process is thus analyzed, it is not difficult to see the subtle substitution of terms which vitiates the whole. The major premise, which, probably with justice, is regarded as not needing any proof, is passed over in silence. The minor premise is the point argued and established. But the conclusion is not at all a conclusion from these premises. For obviously it must first

* Wellhausen would say, with; Koster, without.

be demonstrated that a document cannot be at once of Jewish origin and yet genuine, though professing to emanate from the Persian government. And how far from necessary such an assumption in reality proves to be, it has been the service of Meyer to show.*

There are then two lines of argument in support of the genuineness of this document, and the historicity of the facts which it implies: first, the *à priori* argument for the probability of Jewish influence in the production and wording of the document; and second, proof from the memoirs of Ezra that a document, and just such a document as this, always stood in them where this now stands.

1. No argument, so far as the writer is aware, has ever been brought forward to dispute the assertion that there is a strong antecedent probability that Jewish ideas, customs and phrases would find expression in such a document as the one under discussion. If Ezra ever received a firman from the Persian king—and it is impossible to deny this, as will presently appear—he received it as a concession to himself and his people, *being what they were*. It did not drop out of the skies; it did not issue hap-hazard from the royal chancellery. There was a history behind it. And that history can only be explained on the hypothesis of an insistent and comprehensive presentation of the Jewish ideals. It was in answer to urgent pressure and only after a vigorous effort, that the slow mill of oriental politics ground out the fine flour of governmental support on which the feeble Jewish community was to be nourished. The representations of Ezra and the other leaders of the Jews at Babylon were undoubtedly the occasion of their attainment of the royal sanction. Nor are we left even here entirely to the field of inferential probabilities. For in viii. 22, Ezra has given us a glimpse of these past struggles for the attainment of influence with the king. "We had," says Ezra, "spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all that seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him." The Jewish ideals were always theocentric. The utterances of the ancient prophets which had moved kings and peoples to bow before the God of goodness and of wrath, were not more God-centered than the plans for their nation which Ezra and his companions laid before the Persian monarch. And the Artaxerxes of Ezra and of Nehemiah, the Longimanus of profane history, was not the man to remain unimpressed by these representations.

Beyond the mere fact that the Jewish religious ideals influenced

* *Ent. d. Jud.*, pp. 60-70.

the king to action, there is the further fact to be faced, that if Artaxerxes and his ministers were to do anything for the Jews, they were helpless over against their specific, national customs. These must be learned from those who were to be benefited by the decree. If an impression had really been made, it was to those who had made the impression that the rulers must go, in order to find a satisfactory embodiment of their favorable sentiments toward them. And finally, if these purely Jewish ideals and customs were to be adequately expressed, they could only be clothed in the Jewish terminology. Ritual distinctions, observances prescribed for the national cult, and the like, were all, from the Persian standpoint, local and peculiar. They demanded a technical, not to say national, intimacy to understand; but a hundred-fold more, they demanded a particular nomenclature to express.

These considerations must lead to a recognition of the justice, or rather the necessary truthfulness, of the following assertions of Meyer: "It stands to reason that Artaxerxes' rescript is nothing else than a redaction of a paper that Ezra and his Jewish companions who had influence at court, laid before the ministers. The king beyond all doubt commanded that the law in Ezra's possession should be introduced among the Jews, and made the fundamental law of the Jewish community. This the Persian government cannot have done from its own initiative, for it could know nothing of it; but it approved the proposals which the Babylonian Jews made to it. In general, that a person, when he intends to make offerings to the God of Jerusalem, should seek information on the ritual of his service, gives surely just as little occasion for any justifiable astonishment."*

2. A further argument, and one of a more tangible character, may be drawn from a careful study of the memoirs of Ezra. This portion of the book being universally accepted among critics as historical and trustworthy, it is perfectly reasonable to use it in establishing the genuineness of the document which precedes it. It is maintained, therefore, that reference to Ezra's narrative confirms not only the fact that a document belongs where this document stands, but also that this document must be substantially what we possess in vii. 12-26. Ezra tells us the following points in this connection: he has received a written communication (*cf.* כְּתוּבָה) from the king, which concerned the beautification of the temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem, and which exhibited to him, in a way profoundly to stir his emotions, the favor of the king, his counsellors and his courtiers. This edict contained matter relating to his departure with a caravan from Babylon to Jerusa-

* *Ent. d. Jud.*, p. 65.

lem (vii. 27f.). The authority conveyed to Ezra by the edict included, besides the right to take with him all whom he could persuade to go (viii. 16-20), the right to manage all the outward and inward details of the journey (viii. 15, 21f.); to handle and disburse the money and treasure given (viii. 24-30); to receive the "princes" at Jerusalem as his inferiors (ix. 1f.); and (if we include the sections which almost all critics assign to the same source for the general information which they contain), to administer absolutely the most private and important matters that could come under the hand of a magistrate (x. 4, 12). The favor of the king extended to Ezra was comparable to that of Cyrus (?) and Darius (ix. 9), and included the gift of specie and vessels of the precious metals from himself and his counsellors and princes (viii. 25); also the permission to collect and convey a free-will offering of the Babylonian Jews for the temple (viii. 25, 28, 30). Finally, Artaxerxes is said to have been impressed with the power of the God of Jerusalem, for good to "those that seek him," and for wrath to "those that forsake him" (viii. 22). If it be granted that viii. 36 is accredited to the same extent as chap. x, then we have also the information that Ezra received commissions to royal officials whom he would encounter in carrying out the decree, and that these commissions were of such nature that the officials helped the Jews in their undertakings. But even without this verse, we should of course be compelled to hold that just such facts as it relates actually occurred, provided the other facts of Ezra's narrative are historical.

When all these facts are pieced together, what is obtained as the result but the firman as it is given in the seventh chapter? If this is not the genuine document, then that document was so much like this, that the very same objections would be made against it as have been urged against vii. 12-26. It would be full of "Jewish coloring." It would grant all that Ezra asked. For, as Meyer well says, "if even to the Jewish priest [Ezra] who was not over-modest in his religious demands, the sanction of the king appears vast and almost greater than could be expected, then the objection falls to the ground that the power granted Ezra in the document oversteps all bounds; it would be more rational to object that the grant is too restricted than that it is too large."*

B. Genuineness of the Hebrew List—Ezra ii. (Neh. vii).

As a comparison of chap. ii with the Aramaic documents of chaps. iv-vii reveals the wide difference between them in language, in manner of incorporation, and in character of the contents, so a comparison of the critical treatment accorded them

* *Ent. d. Jud.*, p. 63.

shows quite as radical a difference. No one has ventured to deny that this list is, at least in the main, historical. The documents of chap. iv have been pronounced forged and worthless; those of chaps. v and vi the mere literary embodiment of early but unreliable traditions; that of chap. vii has been dismissed with a wave of the hand, as utterly lacking the first claim to credibility. But to pronounce the long, statistical, precise list of persons, places and figures which meets us twice over in Ezra and Nehemiah a forgery or an invention, has been a feat beyond the daring of even the most radical critic,* however his thesis might make it desirable for him to clear it out of his way. Nevertheless this very section can claim the distinction of being the storm-centre in the latest discussions of the Book of Ezra. Kusters devoted more space in his book† to it than to any other passage. Wellhausen draws his first argument from it in his reply‡ to Kusters. The longest chapter of Meyer's book§ is largely devoted to historical deductions drawn mainly from its facts and figures. And finally, the bulk of Kusters' latest utterances¶ in answer to these critics, consists in a restatement of his attitude toward this list.

This discussion concerns the *integrity* and the *significance* of the document. As it stands, it is admittedly a powerful witness to the truth of that historical event whose occurrence Kusters denies, the return in the sixth century. If its witness is to be silenced, there are two ways in which this must be done. Explicit passages must be rejected as interpolations; implicit passages, now robbed of this support, must be explained away. This is just what Kusters has done. And in addition he has brought forward certain positive arguments intended to confirm the conclusion already reached by this method. Now we are not at present concerned with the main question at issue between these critics—the return under Cyrus. That will be discussed later. For our list stands in the same relation to that problem as do the documents of chaps. v and vi. All are witnesses in the case, and as such are to be examined before their testimony is heard. The present task, therefore, is that of investigating the integrity and the significance of chap. ii. If the result be favorable, then all the facts narrated in it are to be received as established facts of history.

1. Is there sufficient reason to reject any part of chap. ii as an interpolation? This question primarily concerns ver. 2. Kusters' arguments against it are as follows: the number of the leaders,

* Once more an exception must be made, in the case of Torrey's pamphlet already referred to.

† *Het Herstel*, pp. 34-49.

‡ *Ent. d. Jud.*, pp. 94-198.

‡ *Rückkehr der Juden*.

¶ *In Theol. Tijds.*, 1897, pp. 523-541.

twelve, and the expression "Israel," betray ideals concerning the (supposed) return under Zerubbabel and Jeshua, which at first were only applied to the coming of Ezra, who established the "congregation of Israel;"* and certain of these twelve names awaken the suspicion that the whole list of leaders is "the work of the Chronicler, who also elsewhere shows he understands the art of gathering together names from various periods and representing them as contemporaries."

a. Is it true that until after the time of Ezra's return, the idea of a restored "Israel" representing the ancient twelve tribes was unknown, and that not until long after Ezra's time was this idea projected back from Ezra's "congregation" to the earlier Palestinian Jewish community? In the face of the facts in hand, it is impossible to answer this question save in the negative. Nor is appeal made to any passage whose reliability either has not been already vindicated, or is not universally granted. Such a procedure would be manifestly unfair. An exhaustive examination of this broad question is of course beyond the limits of the present discussion.† Suffice it to notice certain passages, *any one of which*, if valid, would disprove Koster's assertion. The following writings refer to a date previous to Ezra's arrival and the forming of the "congregation" (arranged in inverse order of age): the memoirs of Ezra and of Nehemiah,‡ Artaxerxes' letter to Ezra, Tattenai's letter to Darius, and the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. Now in all of these we find the name "Israel" used, except in the little book of Haggai.§ Koster does not of course deny this. But he attempts to weaken its force by saying that "the name Israel is only used when the people is thought of in an ideal or an historical sense." But does this really weaken the testimony? And is it a fact that the name is only used as he avers?

The passages are Neh. i. 6 (*bis*), ii. 10, xiii. 18, 26; Ezra vii. 28, viii. 25, 29, ix. 1, 4, 15, vii. 13, 15, v. 11; Zech. i. 19, viii. 13—in all, sixteen. There may be eliminated at once from this

* It is difficult to word this argument of Koster in such a way as not to do injustice to his *positive* view, that the list dates from after the forming of the "congregation," yet long before the time of "the Chronicler."

† Koster has examined the usage of the word "Israel" during the exile, in a special paper in *Theol. Tijds*, 1895, pp. 353-385. The position here taken will not contradict in any particular the results he there reaches. We are concerned only with the usage of the word between 538 and 458 (or 432).

‡ This latter, of course, only according to the chronology of Koster and Van Hoonacker, in opposition to the traditional chronological order. Koster must be met on his own ground, except in so far as he has already been answered.

§ Haggai, however, uses no name to designate the community, save the *official title* "Judah" in the phrase "Zerubbabel, Pechah of Judah."

list the two references, Neh. xiii. 26 and Ezra v. 11, which refer to Solomon, "king of Israel," as not to the point, and as proving nothing on either side of the question. Of the rest, three refer to the "God of Israel," and may be dismissed as no valid arguments.* Eight are, it is believed, confirmatory of the position taken, but being sufficiently represented by the remaining three, they will not be dwelt upon. The three are strikingly convincing, and being divided among the three books, they are representative instances.

Neh. ii. 10: "And when Sanballat, etc. . . . heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly, for that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel." Here Nehemiah writes in his own language the sentiments of the Jews' chief enemies, as they were represented to him. It will not do to object to this passage that the word is here used in an ideal sense. Every collective name has in fact a certain ideal element in it; but there is nothing whatever to indicate here that Nehemiah did not have in mind the actual "Israel" of his own time, since *these* were the men whom his coming was to benefit.

Ezra viii. 29: "Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chiefs of the priests and the Levites, and the princes of the fathers' (houses) of Israel, at Jerusalem." Here Ezra expressly applies the term to the Jewish community in Palestine *before* his arrival. How then can Kusters write: "We venture the inquiry whether Ezra could have represented his relatively little band as 'Israel,' if the twelve tribes were regarded as having already returned to Palestine. In this case those that came afterwards with Ezra could make no claim upon the name 'Israel'; they could be a part of the people of Israel, they could be Israelites, but their return could not be represented as the return of 'Israel'?" Could Kusters have favored us with a single passage where Ezra's Gola is represented as being Israel, and their return the return of Israel? What is this but a wilful blindness to the simple distinction between "representing themselves as being," and "being representatives?" The twelve families, the sacrifices by twelve and multiples of twelve, the twelve priests and the twelve Levites—all these things were designed to show in figurative form that they were "representatives" of Israel, but by no means excluded a hundred other such companies who might similarly "represent Israel."

* "God of Israel" and "king of Israel" are the two phrases which Kusters cites, as illustrating his expression, "an ideal or an historical sense" (quoted above). If these five were *all* the instances, his point might be held as established, as far as an *arg. e sil.* can establish anything. But they are not all, and so his language is misleading.

Zech. viii. 13 : " And it shall come to pass that, as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you," etc. Here the words " and house of Israel " would be stricken from the text, if Kusters had his way, on the ground that they conflict with the view to which he adheres, though there is no real evidence whatever that Zechariah did not write them.* And at the same time there could be found no better proof than this desire to strike them out, that they actually conflict with his unwarranted dictum. Zechariah addresses the men of the present as representing the ancient people of twelve tribes; *they* are at once the Judah and the Israel of the present, and the seed of the future people of " blessing;" hence he exhorts them—despite your troubles, " let your hands be strong!"

Thus from Nehemiah, Ezra and Zechariah, we have convincing proof that the Jewish community of Palestine, before Ezra's arrival and career, was already felt to be, and actually called, " Israel." The conclusion therefore is, that Kusters' first argument against ver. 2 as an integral part of chap. ii, is without foundation.

b. Nor is there any force in the suspicions which Kusters raises against certain of the names of the twelve leaders, which, he says, " inspire little confidence." Of the origin of the name כְּנָנִי, nothing can be affirmed with certainty; even if the first two consonants point to the Persian word *baga*, God, there can be no positive deductions drawn from this circumstance. Certainly Wellhausen is not justified in saying that " this Persian name (?) surely refers the list Nehemiah found to a later time than he assumes." Rehum and Baanah do indeed occur also among the signatures to the covenant of Nehemiah's time (Neh. x); but the presence of these *family-names* there is entirely in harmony with the view that ver. 2 is genuine and historical. The occurrence of the names Nehemiah and Azariah or Seraiah immediately after the leaders is indeed a striking coincidence. But in view of the occurrence of the name Nehemiah at least once elsewhere (Neh. iii. 16), and that of the name Azariah or Ezra countless times in Hebrew history, it is altogether gratuitous to assume that there is here any reference to the two well-known figures of the fifth century. But least of all does it fit in with Kusters' theory of the origin of ver. 2, to suppose such a reference in it. For it is incredible that " the Chronicler," the writer to whom he assigns the verse, could for a moment have confused the two returns. It is

* If Wellhausen's omission of these words (on which Kusters relies as his sole support) was *purely* unintentional, how could he have been " led by a true instinct " ? (*Het Herstel*, p. 20).

just this "ignorance theory," as held, for example, by Elhorst, that Kusters so vehemently opposes.* He is in fact the chief defender of "the Chronicler's" acquaintance with these details of the supposed history of this whole period; it is for his own purpose that he has assigned to each Gola a separate, honorable share in the work of restoration.† How then could "the Chronicler" so stultify himself as to insert the names of his later heroes among those of his earlier ones? The case which Kusters cites‡ as an example of the supposed tendency of the writer to this sort of mixing, would, even if a fair example, lag far behind the present case in utterly incomprehensible folly. And in general it deserves remark, that a writer who approaches the lists of Ezra and Nehemiah with a preconceived theory can prove anything he wishes from them. An inductive study of them is the only justifiable use to which they may be put.

Besides ver. 2, Kusters rejects as untrustworthy all those parts of our list which differ from, or add to, the form in which the same document is preserved in Neh. vii. The most important of these passages is vers. 68f. As has already been shown in another connection,§ these verses are undoubtedly by the same author as chap. iii. It is therefore only justice to forbear from the use of these passages as proofs, and to place the argument upon the basis of the list as it appears in Nehemiah. But it may no less justly be claimed that, on the other hand, if chap. iii and what goes with it shall prove to be historical, these verses of chap. ii also be regarded as historical; and any critic who grants the one, will not be disposed to deny the other.

2. But now Kusters advances another step. Being now rid of the troublesome ver. 2 and the manifest implications of vers. 68f., he proceeds|| to *interpret* the rest in such a way as that there shall be no allusions to the supposed events of the sixth century, but only references consonant with fifth century conditions. These interpretations are presented by him as positive arguments in favor of the hypothesis which he advocates. But as they have been interpreted by every critic previous to the appearance of his book, in a manner entirely agreeable with the sixth century view, the most

* Cf. *Theol. Tijds*, 1896, pp. 497 ff.

† Cf. especially *Het Herstel*, p. 74: "In my view the Chronicler has *not* placed iv. 6-23 in the midst of the account of the interruption of the temple-building from forgetfulness or in consequence of ignorance."

‡ *Het Herstel*, p. 45, note.

§ See *Comp. of Ezra*, p. 276.

|| As a matter of fact, the order and method of Kusters' book are so illogical, that this material, which is really a later stage of his argument, is put before what has just been criticised.

that he can justly claim is that these phenomena *fall in* with his theory of the chapter in a more or less plausible harmony. If his position were already established, these interpretations might be considered confirmatory. As independent proofs they are worthless. Only those statements of Kusters, therefore, demand attention here, in which he oversteps the bounds of this course of thought, and actually denies the *possibility* of the traditional interpretation of this or that phenomenon. He makes three such denials.

He denies that vers. 64f. can refer to the caravan that returned from Babylon, on the ground that 42,360 is a considerably larger total than the sum of the several figures preceding it. This fact, he avers, is a clear indication that not all those reckoned in the "congregation" were returned exiles. To this may be replied: (i) As the separate figures include only the adult males of each several family, yet in the verse before us (v. 65) not only the menservants, but also the maidservants are explicitly included, therefore it is a natural and rational conclusion, that the 12,000 (more or less) difference between the sum obtained by adding and the total here given, is simply the number of *the adult females* in the caravan. (ii) A point not easily noticed in a hasty reading of Kusters' argument, is nevertheless of great weight. In order to use this argument, he has to grant that the separate figures which add up to 30,000 (more or less), do in fact refer to returned exiles—an admission which no other passage in any of his writings explains or gathers up. (iii) Ver. 2, which may now be justly cited as an integral part of the document, proves conclusively that ver. 1 (and so ver. 64) *can* and *must* refer to the return under Cyrus.

Kusters denies, in the second place, that the title "Tirshatha" can refer to anyone except Nehemiah. Granted that the title is nowhere else used of anyone save Nehemiah, it does not follow that this expression of honor* might not be so used; nor is Kusters' later remark on this subject either just or logical: "Since no other is so named, and in our list no one (!) occurs to whom reference is made by 'the Tirshatha,' we have to maintain, until proofs to the contrary are produced, that here also Nehemiah is meant."†

* Cf. *Ent. d. Jud.*, p. 194, where Meyer makes it a Persian participle with the general signification of "excellency." The suggestion is ventured that the root of this word may be the same as that which appears in the np. *tarsad*="fürchtet sich" (connected with Gr. *τρωω*, Lat. *terreo*?) ; thus the title would mean "the one feared" or "to be feared," like the Lat. "reverendus." Cf. Hübschmann, *Armen. Gram.*, p. 443.

† In *Theol. Tijds.*, 1897, p. 533.

In Neh. vii. 70-72, we read of what the Tirshatha, the chiefs of fathers' houses and the rest of the people gave to "the work," "the treasury" or "the treasury of the work." Koster's denies that these expressions can refer to the fund for the building of the temple, especially in view of the gift of priests' garments there recorded. "The time," says he, "before or at the beginning of the temple-building is expressly excluded." Meyer, in speaking of this use of the term "work," refers the reader to what he has said elsewhere on the meaning of the same word in Neh. ii. 16, and his answer to Koster is confined to showing that service was carried on at the sacred place from the first arrival of the immigrants. But this answer appears inadequate. "The functions of the service at the altar of sacrifice required money, vessels and priestly vestments;" all this is true. But it is absurd to suppose that the vast sums actually recorded as given for this "work" (sums which Meyer also accepts as trustworthy), were given to defray the costs of this moderate, limited and half-hearted worship. And there is no ground for denying to the word מלאכה a special reference to the work of building as distinct from that of the ritual. A comparison of 1 Kings v. 30 (E. V. 16) and 2 Kings xii. 12 (E. V. 11) establishes this usage beyond the shadow of a doubt, and confirms the similar interpretation of Neh. ii. 16, which is favored by Bertheau-Ryssel (after Reuss), Rawlinson and other commentators. On either supposition, however, the gift of priests' garments by anticipation is not only compatible with the traditional view of the situation in 538, but seems most natural and reasonable when so interpreted.*

This is as far as the present inquiry leads in the investigation of chap. ii. The right may now be justly claimed, to use this document, at least in its form in Neh. vii, as a trustworthy witness in the later arguments. For the case stands thus: first, negatively, there is nothing in the chapter that is not capable of a reasonable interpretation—to say the least—on the view that it is the list of those who returned under Cyrus; and second, positively, there is a passage in it (ver. 2) that gives no evidence of being an interpolation, which confirms beyond a doubt the reference of the list to these returned exiles of the sixth century, and to them alone.

PRINCETON.

JAMES OSCAR BOYD.

* On the mention of "darics," דרַכְּיָנִים, which has been used to support a date for the list subsequent to Darius' reign, see Meyer, *Ent. d. Jud.*, pp. 196f. where the matter seems to be settled once for all. Van Hoonacker's theory is suggestive, but less satisfactory (*Nouv. Études*, pp. 143 f.).





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