

## JOSEPHUS, *ANTIQUITIES*, BOOK XI

### CORRECTION OR CONFIRMATION OF BIBLICAL POST-EXILIC RECORDS?

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#### *Josephus and his Sources*

The writings of Josephus furnish important source material for the history of the Jewish people, and thus also for the post-exilic period. Among scholars, however, Josephus, in common with other ancient writers, has never enjoyed the reputation of being a fully reliable or accurate historian. This applies particularly to his records describing the return of the Jews from their Babylonian exile, as presented in the eleventh book of *Antiquities*. Yet, opinions as to the degree of accuracy of some parts of these records are widely divergent. There is certainly no need of either outright rejection or unconditional acceptance of the whole book. While Josephus transmitted in some instances incorrect or doubtful information, there has been an increasing confirmation through archaeological findings of certain events presented by him, which formerly were thought to be of a doubtful nature.

Discussing the battle of Carchemish between Nebuchadnezzar and Neco, D. N. Freedman observed: "Noteworthy is the striking agreement between Josephus and the Babylonian Chronicle."<sup>1</sup> In another instance Josephus, quoting Hecataeus, mentions a Jewish high priest Ezekias at the beginning of the Hellenistic period. The discovery at Beth-zur of a Jewish coin bearing the inscription *Yehûd* (Judah) and *Yehazqîyah* (Hezekiah) confirms the existence of that high

<sup>1</sup> D. N. Freedman, "The Babylonian Chronicle," *BA*, XIX (1956), 53, note 11.

priest in the period indicated by Josephus.<sup>2</sup> Even more impressive is the recent discovery of the Samaria papyri, establishing the historicity of a second Sanballat, who lived in the middle of the 4th century B.C. Though it does not solve all the problems posed by *Ant.*, xi, this discovery disproves the views of those historians who denied the existence of another Sanballat besides the one who was a contemporary of Nehemiah.<sup>3</sup>

Inasmuch as it has been demonstrated that Josephus' writings contain both truth and error, the only way to arrive at a just conclusion is to judge each case on its own merits. This investigation attempts to show evidence and reasons for several inaccuracies, *e.g.*, a preconceived historical pattern, incorrect use of his sources, and a pronounced confusion of persons, events, and thus of chronology. Fortunately, for Josephus and other ancient historians alike, a number of incorrect statements in *Ant.*, xi can be checked and corrected quite easily, an advantage of which few scholars seem to have availed themselves. But it is also apparent that Josephus had access to sources not available to the modern student of history, thus enhancing the value of his writings in some respects. Therefore, while some scholars have taken a sceptical attitude toward the reliability of that ancient historian, others have accepted some of his records in preference to the Biblical account.<sup>4</sup>

The specific purpose of the first part of this investigation is to establish the relationship of the eleventh book of *Antiquities* with the source material used by Josephus (especially with I Esdras), the way he utilized his sources, and what effect the use of the same has in regard to Biblical data.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, i. 22 (§§ 187-189); O. R. Sellers, *The Citadel of Beth-zur* (Philadelphia, 1933), pp. 73, 74.

<sup>3</sup> F. M. Cross, Jr., "The Discovery of the Samaria Papyri," *BA*, XXVI (1963), 119-121.

<sup>4</sup> R. A. Bowman, "Ezra and Nehemiah," *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, 1954), III, 561, 598; Ralph Marcus, *Josephus*, VI (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), 324, 325; W. F. Albright, *The Biblical Period From Abraham to Ezra* (New York, 1963), p. 111, note 185.

One of the first errors is Josephus' incorrect identification of Sheshbazzar with Zerubbabel. According to *Ant.*, xi. 1.3, the treasurer Mithridates was associated with Abassaros (Sheshbazzar) in guarding the temple vessels. This refers to I Esdras 2 : 11, 12 and Ezr 1 : 8, and has to be dated shortly after 538 B.C., under Cyrus. However, due to a transposition of sources to be discussed below, Josephus incorrectly identifies the associate of Mithridates with Zerubbabel. But in I Esdras 6 : 17, 18 as well as in Ezr 5 : 15 Sheshbazzar is clearly distinguished from Zerubbabel.

Other mistakes stem from the exchange or confusion of names of several Persian kings as found in xi. 2.1 and 5.1 ff. Following I Esdras, Josephus apparently did not understand why two important kings were ignored and the chronological continuity thus interrupted. He supplied these "missing links" in different ways. In the first place he inserted the name of Cambyses into the account (I Esdras 2 : 16), by changing the name of Artaxerxes to Cambyses, which caused a chronological disturbance. Secondly, finding that a parallel text to Ezr 4 : 6, which mentions Xerxes (Ahasuerus), is missing between I Esdras 2 : 15 and 16, he assigned another event from the reign of Artaxerxes I to that of Xerxes (I Esdras 8 : 1; Ezr 7 : 1). Thus we face the strange situation that Josephus did not only disregard the Hebrew text of Ezra, but also used his actual source, the Greek text of I Esdras, in a very arbitrary manner.

Can it still be argued that such an exchange of names contrary to the existing sources has valid historical support? In *Ant.*, xi. 5.1 Josephus places both Ezra and Nehemiah in the reign of Xerxes, which would fix the activities of these Jewish leaders between the years 486 and 465. But it is now generally accepted on the evidence of the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine that at least Nehemiah belongs to the time of Artaxerxes I (465-423).<sup>5</sup> As for Ezra, contrary to the

<sup>5</sup> S. H. Horn and L. H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7* (Washington D.C., 1953), p. 90; H. H. Rowley, "Nehemiah's Mission and Its Background," *BJRL*, XXXVII (1955), 552.

obsolete theory of A. van Hoonacker, every evidence seems to support the traditional position, according to which he was commissioned in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I.<sup>6</sup> That Josephus was mistaken in his identification of Artaxerxes with Xerxes is also obvious from *Ant.*, xi. 5.7. According to this passage Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem in the 25th year of the reign of Xerxes. But Xerxes reigned only twenty-one years, and here as well as in xi. 5.8. his name must be replaced by Artaxerxes, as the name is correctly found in I Esdras and Ezra. However, the views of other scholars regarding these changes of names and data by Josephus will be discussed in the second part of this article.

Just as with every Bible translation, so also I Esdras and Josephus' *Ant.*, xi require clarification in order to be correctly understood. Josephus apparently paid little attention to the philological aspects of his sources. He uncritically copied names from his Greek MSS without checking the corresponding Hebrew text. Thus in I Esdras and consequently in *Ant.*, xi there appear words which are either titles of Persian officials, or convey ideas whose meaning escaped the translators. Such words from an Aramaic or Hebrew original were transliterated, Grecized, and "translated" into personal names. The following instance may serve as an example.

In *Ant.*, xi. 2.2 there appears a certain "Beelzemos" as one of the Persian envoys investigating the building activities of the Jews. This name is Josephus' Grecized form of "Beel-tethmus" of I Esdras 2 : 16, 25 which in turn is a transliteration of an original *be'el-ṭe'ēm*, the Aramaic equivalent of Persian *formān kara*, the title of a high royal official.<sup>7</sup>

When Josephus wrote the history of his people he did not limit himself to the Bible as source material. He used canonical

<sup>6</sup> See for references Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* (London, 1952), p. 135, notes 1-17; E. Kalt says in his *Biblisches Reallexikon* (2d ed.; Paderborn, 1938), I, 503, 504; "... die durch van Hoonacker aufgestellte These ... wird jetzt fast allgemein abgelehnt."

<sup>7</sup> Bowman, *op. cit.*, pp. 599, 600; Marcus, *op. cit.*, VI, 327, note c.

Biblical books, tradition, and extra-Biblical sources, but also incorporated a miscellaneous mass of traditional lore (Mid-rash, Haggadah, Jubilees, and Halakah) in his writings. He also employed Philo, Berossus, Manetho, and a number of other authors of the ancient gentile world.<sup>8</sup> Even when using Biblical material, he did not always follow his text verbally but treated it rather freely. S. A. Cook makes the same observation with regard to his use of I Esdras: "Unfortunately, Jos. is often extremely paraphrastic, and is therefore no safe guide for the restoring of the original of [I] E[sdras]." <sup>9</sup>

It is obvious that in general Josephus used I Esdras in preference to the book Ezra-Nehemia in writing the post-exilic history of Judah. In part this may be due to its relationship to the canonical literature of that time. I Esdras was not only used by this orthodox Jewish historian, "the book was found important enough to find a place in the Greek Bible, it was known to early Christian writers, and is referred to in terms which indicate that its canonicity and value were not doubtful."<sup>10</sup> Of course, Josephus could have been influenced by the elegant and idiomatic language of I Esdras in contrast to the Greek of Ezra-Nehemiah, which was "un-Greek, literal and mechanical."<sup>11</sup> It is often supposed that I Esdras "is a self-contained work, written and compiled for some specific purpose, e.g., to influence Gentiles in favour of the Jews."<sup>12</sup>

It hardly can be assumed that Josephus made his choice for text-critical reasons. Even though Ezra and Nehemiah present numerous problems, there are many more in I Esdras, for which reason Cook calls it a "confused and self-contradictory book."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus*, IV (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), pp. xii, xiii.

<sup>9</sup> A. S. Cook, "I Esdras," in R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, I (Oxford, 1913), 5.

<sup>10</sup> Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Cook, *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

The fact remains, however, that while Josephus used a Hebrew text or an Aramaic Targum as authority for the early part of his Jewish history, "for the later historical books the position is reversed: from I Samuel to I Maccabees the basis of his text is a Greek Bible, and the Semitic text becomes a subsidiary source."<sup>14</sup> Why? Josephus probably had several reasons for choosing the Greek text of I Esdras as a basis for his eleventh book. The sequence of events as offered there, which differs from that of the canonical books, may have appealed to him. Furthermore, I Esdras does not close with the story of the tenth chapter of Ezra, but continues by bringing in the events recorded in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah. This sequence of textual material, which forms a controversial topic even among modern scholars, has a definite bearing on the question whether Ezra and Nehemiah held office at the same time, and it could have been an additional and deciding factor in Josephus' choice.

According to several passages found in the book of Nehemiah, the two leaders Ezra and Nehemiah appeared repeatedly together at official functions after 444. Since the name of one or the other is missing or added either in some Hebrew or Greek MSS, most of these references are subject to textual criticism. By following I Esdras Josephus presents a totally different sequence of events, including the relationship of Ezra with Nehemiah. Josephus, correctly, makes Ezra, who had come to Jerusalem in 457 B.C., a contemporary of the high priest Joiakim. He then has Ezra, and shortly thereafter also Joiakim, die, the latter leaving the high priestly office to his son Eliashib.<sup>15</sup> These events must have taken place not long after 457, and certainly before the coming of Nehemiah to Jerusalem in 444. That Ezra is made a contemporary of the high priest Joiakim, and Nehemiah of the high priest Eliashib supports the traditional Ezra-Nehemiah sequence. Cook makes the following observations

<sup>14</sup> Thackeray, *op. cit.*, IV, p. xii.

<sup>15</sup> *Ant.*, xi. 5.5.

concerning Josephus' views: "It is very noteworthy that Josephus finishes his account of Ezra before his introduction of Nehemiah."<sup>16</sup> Later he says: "Jos., whose treatment of the story of E[zra] is free and summary, proceeds to refer to the feast of tabernacles (N[eh] viii. 16 seqq.), the return of the people to their homes, the death of the aged E[zra], and his burial in Jerusalem contemporary with the death of the high priest Joiakim and the succession of Eliashib (cf. N[eh] xii. 10)."<sup>17</sup> And again he emphasizes: Josephus "treats the life of E[zra] independently of and before that of N[ehemiah], and his points of agreement with the MT make his divergences the more significant."<sup>18</sup>

Since the chronological sequence seems to have been one of the main concerns of Josephus as he wrote the post-exilic history of Judah, it is reasonable to assume that in his judgment I Esdras offered the best source material for this purpose. That his concern was well founded is seen from the fact that the chronological sequence in Ezra and Nehemiah is still one of the major problems facing Biblical scholars. Though Josephus made some mistakes, especially through arbitrary use of his sources, he must be given credit for certain contributions toward the clarification of issues. The above-mentioned information about Ezra's association with the high priest Joiakim and his reading of the law in the first year after coming to Jerusalem—not thirteen years later as the MT has it—may well lead to a more correct understanding of some problems involved in reconstructing the history of that time.

As already mentioned, Josephus apparently had at his disposal sources not found in Biblical records but which provided him with additional valuable information. His mention of Ezra's association with the high priest Joiakim is one of these instances. It has been stated by Cook that

<sup>16</sup> Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>18</sup> Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

Josephus "presents singular divergences or additions which do not appear to be arbitrary."<sup>19</sup>

Marcus likewise confirms this fact. Referring to the conflicts between the high priest Johanan and his brother Jeshua, and between the high priest Jaddua and his brother Manasseh, he says, "From § 297 on Josephus makes use of extra-biblical sources and relates two incidents otherwise unknown to us."<sup>20</sup> It seems, however, that there are other bits of information that add to our knowledge of that period. For example, his statement that Cyrus died shortly after the Samaritan conflict with the Jews had caused the interruption of the building operations, supports the date 530/529 for the incident reported in Ezr 4 : 1-5 and I Esdras 5 : 47-73.<sup>21</sup> It also indicates that after Sheshbazzar it was Zerubbabel who had attempted the building of the Temple under Cyrus, thus confirming that he was already in office under that monarch. Bowman accepts a first abortive attempt under Cyrus, but limits it to Sheshbazzar.<sup>22</sup> It is of equal importance to learn from Josephus that there was an interval of nine years from 529 to 520, between the first attempt to rebuild the Temple and the resumption of the building activities in the 2d year of Darius.<sup>23</sup> This period is long enough to account for the reign of Cambyses, whose name is not mentioned either in Ezra or in Nehemiah. The observation that Zerubbabel came to Persia *from* Jerusalem when Darius came to the throne, again seems to support the view that Zerubbabel had been commissioned by Cyrus before 530, and re-appointed as governor by Darius.<sup>24</sup>

### *Josephus and the Rebuilding of the Temple*

Not least among the matters disputed has been Josephus'

<sup>19</sup> Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Marcus, *op. cit.*, VI, 499.

<sup>21</sup> *Ant.*, xi. 2.1.

<sup>22</sup> Bowman, *op. cit.*, p. 592.

<sup>23</sup> *Ant.*, xi. 2.2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ant.*, xi. 3.1.



narrative of the events connected with the building of the Second Temple. Here the problem is mainly one of text-sequence and chronology. The historical outline of that period as conceived by Josephus is as follows:

The *first* section (*Ant.*, xi. 1.1.1-3 = §§ 1-18) describes the first phase of the return, from *ca.* 537 B.C.

The *second* section (*Ant.*, xi. 2.1 = §§ 19-20) refers to the first abortive attempt to build the Temple, including the interference of the Samaritans, about 530/529 B.C.

The *third* section (*Ant.*, xi. 2.1.2 = §§ 21-30) deals with the building of the Temple, the city walls and the city proper. This part is assigned by Josephus to the time of Cambyses between the years 529 and 522 B.C.

The *fourth* section (*Ant.*, xi. 3.1-10 = §§ 31-74) contains the story of the three youths, which according to Josephus occurred under the reign of Darius, shortly before 520 B.C.

The *fifth* section (*Ant.*, xi. 4.1-8 = §§ 75-113) has to be divided into two parts (§§ 75-88 and 89-113), these portions being designed to cover the actual building of the Temple and its dedication, 520-515 B.C.

It still appears tempting to consider such a seemingly flawless historical sequence as reliable evidence in preference to the Biblical record. In fact, it sounds so convincing that several outstanding scholars have accepted Josephus' account as an improvement and correction of the traditional chronology. Marcus makes the following observations on *Ant.*, xi. 2.1:

Here Josephus quietly corrects the bibl. chronology of the Persian kings. According to Scripture, the letter which follows (the first letter quoted in the book of Ezra) was written to Artaxerxes. The bibl. account, moreover, makes it appear that Xerxes (Heb. *ʿAḥašwērōs*) and Artaxerxes preceded Darius, and passes over Cambyses entirely. Josephus's corrections here and elsewhere result in presenting the proper historical sequence, Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius (*cf.* § 30), Xerxes (*cf.* § 120) and Artaxerxes (*cf.* § 184).<sup>25</sup>

He continues: "Bibl. Artaxerxes. By omitting the name Josephus avoids the awkwardness of openly correcting

<sup>25</sup> Marcus, *op. cit.*, VI, 324, note b.

Scripture.”<sup>26</sup> These statements indicate that Marcus based his conclusions on the assumption that the Chronicler, like Josephus, followed a strict chronological sequence in Ezra. Hence his note to *Ant.*, xi. 5.1: “Here again Josephus corrects the chronological order of Scripture, in which Artaxerxes follows Darius.”<sup>27</sup> Bowman, too, favors Josephus’ interpretation. “He [Josephus] corrects the impossible order of the Persian kings in I Esdras, which actually reverses the historical sequence, and he puts them in their proper relationship.”<sup>28</sup> But such a viewpoint cannot be supported in view of Ezr 4 : 5-7, where the following sequence of the Persian kings is established: Cyrus—Darius—gap—Xerxes—Artaxerxes (I). If we follow Josephus who in *Ant.*, xi. 2.2 reports an interruption of nine years in the Temple building, then the gap mentioned in Ezr 4 : 5 between Cyrus and Darius comfortably accommodates Cambyses (529-522). Thus the Scriptural account stands vindicated: Cyrus—Cambyses (during the nine-year interval)—Darius—Xerxes—Artaxerxes (I). W. Rudolph finds no contradiction between Biblical and secular historical records.<sup>29</sup> The theory of Josephus’ having corrected Scripture is based on a misunderstanding of the Biblical narrative. A better explanation is to be found in the different purposes of the Chronicler and of Josephus, and is thus comparatively simple: Josephus intentionally wrote a continuous historical narrative, while the Chronicler wrote this part of Jewish history according to subject matter.

Josephus’ sources for the post-exilic period consisted mainly of an early text of I Esdras, and some extra-Biblical material, as pointed out by Thackeray, Cook, Marcus and others. It can safely be maintained that the chronological sequence of that assumed original or earlier text of I Esdras

<sup>26</sup> Marcus, *op. cit.*, VI, 325, note c.

<sup>27</sup> Marcus, *op. cit.*, VI, 372, note a.

<sup>28</sup> Bowman, *op. cit.*, III, 561.

<sup>29</sup> Wilhelm Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia* (Tübingen, 1949), p. XIII.

did not differ chronologically from the present version, which presents the following order:

I Esdras 1	Josiah and Jehoahaz	622 and 609
I Esdras 2 : 1-15	Decree of Cyrus	ca. 538
I Esdras 2 : 16-30	Artaxerxes; building of Jerusalem and the Temple	ca. 457
I Esdras 3-4; 5 : 1-6	The legend of the three youths	ca. 521
I Esdras 5 : 7-45	The list of those who returned	ca. 536
I Esdras 5 : 47-73	First attempt to build the Temple	ca. 530
I Esdras 6 : 1-22	Temple building; Tattenai's investigation	ca. 520
I Esdras 6 : 23 to 7 : 15	Temple dedication	March 12, 515
I Esdras 8 : 1 to 9 : 5	Ezra's mission	457

This table shows that I Esdras does not present a perfect chronological continuity, for besides other irregularities it contains two insertions: (1) the so-called *Tāb'el* document, to be dated after 457 B.C.,<sup>30</sup> and (2) the legend of the three youths, to be placed in the year 521.<sup>31</sup> Josephus apparently considered the events recorded uniformly in I Esdras 2 : 16-30 and in Ezr 4 : 6-23 as belonging to the reign of Cambyses and not to that of Artaxerxes I, since they were contrary to his idea that they must fit into a continuous historical account and pattern. This became the reason for a major chronological discrepancy between Josephus and his sources, which unanimously contradict and refute his narrative. The subsequent analysis of the five periods or phases covered by this discussion will illustrate our point.

*Phase I, ca. 536/530 B.C. (Ant., xi. 1.1-3 = §§ 1-18).* The presence of Tattenai and Shethar-boznai together with Jeshua and Zerubbabel in 538 B.C. poses a problem.<sup>32</sup> Although it

<sup>30</sup> I Esdras 2 : 16-30a; Ezr 4 : 6-23.

<sup>31</sup> I Esdras 3-4; 5 : 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ant.*, xi. 1.3; 4.4; Ezr 5 : 3-17; 6 : 1-22; I Esdras 6 : 3-7 : 1.

is not impossible that these men were in office from 538 to 520 B.C., the first two as envoys of the Persian king, the latter as leaders of the *gólāh*, it is evident that Josephus, as the result of an incorrect use of his sources, placed them together in two completely unrelated events. The solution is rather simple. When Josephus related the events of 538, he needed the decree of Cyrus which he found in I Esdras 6 : 24 ff., but instead of copying only the decree, he took over the whole narrative dealing with the events of the year 520 with all the details of Tattenai's investigation, thus transferring it all to the days of Cyrus when the decree was issued. If this mistake of Josephus is taken into account and if the two events are separated, the confusion created by him is removed and the whole problem disappears.

*Phase II, ca. 530/522 B.C.* (*Ant.*, xi. 2.1 = §§ 19, 20). This phase seems to pose no problems, since Josephus apparently uses I Esdras 5 : 72, 73 (Ezr 4 : 4) and marks the interim between the reigns of Cyrus and Darius. The first attempt of the Jews under Cyrus to rebuild the Temple did not go beyond the laying of the foundation (Ezr 3 : 8-13; I Esdras 5 : 56-65).<sup>33</sup> It failed on account of the hostile actions of the Chuthaeans (= Samaritans, *Ant.*, xi. 4.4) with the result that no work was done during the reign of Cambyses (529-522).

*Phase III, ca. 529-522 B.C.* according to Josephus (*Ant.*, xi. 2.1,2 = §§ 21-30), but 457 B.C. according to I Esdras and Ezra. Here Josephus is again at odds with his sources, although they themselves also contain conflicting elements.<sup>34</sup> By substituting the name of Cambyses for that of Artaxerxes, Josephus caused a chronological displacement of events amounting to some eighty years.<sup>35</sup> This arbitrary transfer also raises other serious objections. The relationship of Cambyses with the Jews, as represented by Josephus, does

<sup>33</sup> C. G. Tuland, "'Uššayyā' and 'Uššarnā,'" *JNES*, XVII (1958), 269-275.

<sup>34</sup> I Esdras 2 : 16-30a; Ezr 4 : 6-23.

<sup>35</sup> Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 27, note 15 (a).

not agree with what other sources indicate, for we know from the Elephantine papyri that Cambyses spared the Jewish temple at Elephantine when he destroyed Egyptian temples. It is therefore highly improbable that Cambyses would have rescinded the decree of his famous father a few years after it was issued, the more so since it was concerned with a religious cult and a temple.

Furthermore, there appear several contradictions in Josephus' narrative, as compared with Ezr 4, which in part can be explained by assuming that Josephus used I Esdras as his source. While Rehum's report in Ezr 4 refers exclusively to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, I Esdras 2 mentions walls, market places and the Temple. And even though the king of Ezr 4 and I Esdras 2 forbids only the rebuilding of the city, Josephus extends this prohibition also to the Temple. Thus his attempt to streamline history by interjecting Cambyses into the records results in a complete distortion of the historical picture. There had been no laying of the Temple foundation under Cambyses. The actual reason for Josephus' placing Ezr 4 in the time of Cambyses instead of Artaxerxes, may be found in his interpretation of Ezr 4 : 24 (I Esdras 2 : 30). But this verse may be understood and explained in different ways, for it can be regarded as a repetition of Ezr 4 : 5, an emendation, a gloss, or a displacement of a passage from elsewhere.<sup>36</sup> Josephus evidently believed that I Esdras (or Ezra) presented an uninterrupted historical account following an exact chronological sequence. Therefore he changed the name of Artaxerxes into Cambyses, who never appears in the Biblical narrative.

Ezra's report reveals an entirely different objective. In relating the history of the restoration he sought to justify the Jews' rejection of the Samaritans, beginning with their opposition even before 530 B.C., from the time of Cyrus until Darius. Apparently he wished to show that they did not cease their hostilities with the completion of the Temple, but

<sup>36</sup> Rudolph, *op. cit.*, pp. XII, XIII, 45-47.

continued their intrigues against Judah under Xerxes and Artaxerxes. Ezra evidently sought to demonstrate by historical records that the Samaritans had always been the religious and political enemies of the Jews, offering as examples the events narrated in I Esdras 5 : 66-73 and 2 : 16-30 (Ezr 4 : 1-5; 4 : 6-24). His arguments were also directed against the pro-Samaritan liberal Jews in the province. In addition, his narrative provided the historical background to justify the religious reforms he was about to introduce. To the historian it also indicates the struggle for hegemony between the Jews of Babylon and those of Jerusalem. Thus Ezra presented the history of Judah's relationship with Samaria to justify their rejection, by which the Jews became a united national and religious body. Josephus, on the other hand, fitted his sources into the pattern of a continual chronological sequence.

*Phase IV* (*Ant.*, xi. 3.1-10 = §§ 31-74). This is the legend of the three youths. Opinion is divided, whether it occurred under Cyrus, Darius I, Darius III, or whether it ever happened at all.<sup>37</sup> The story has no direct bearing on our problem.

*Phase V*, 520/515 B.C. (*Ant.*, xi. 4 : 1-8 = §§ 75-113). Here a comparison of Josephus' narrative with I Esdras and Ezra indicates that he continued to use his sources either arbitrarily or mistakenly through lack of understanding the text.

His records in *Ant.*, xi. 4.1 run parallel with I Esdras 5 : 47-55 and Ezr 3 : 1-7. However, the Esdras and Ezra passages refer to the erection of the altar and the preparation of building material during the reign of Cyrus, approximately 535 B.C., while Josephus places this event in the time of Darius. Obviously aware of this contradiction, he added an explanatory note: "This had first been ordered by Cyrus but was now being carried out at the order of Darius."<sup>38</sup>

The next section, xi. 4.2, corresponding to I Esdras 5 : 56-65

<sup>37</sup> I Esdras 3 : 1 to 5 : 6.

<sup>38</sup> *Ant.*, xi. 4. 1.

and Ezr 3 : 8-13, describes further preparations and the "laying of the foundation" (as  $\tau\theta\zeta$  and  $\theta\epsilon\mu\epsilon\lambda\iota\acute{o}\omega$  are properly translated) and belongs likewise to the time shortly before 530 B.C. The Scriptural references do not go beyond this point. But Josephus understood the texts referring to the rebuilding of the Temple differently. It is perhaps not justified to put all the blame on him, since there are some divergences between I Esdras and the MT. While Ezr 3 : 10-13 consistently describes the reaction of the people at the laying of the cornerstone or the foundation of the Temple, *i.e.*, a gathering during a holiday, the parallel-text of I Esdras 5 : 55 (English v. 58) can be interpreted as speaking of another phase of the building process: "So the builders builded the temple of the Lord." In *Ant.*, xi. 4.2 he expanded the term "to build" into "finishing" the Temple, which resulted in another contradiction with his later narrative. This indicates that Josephus not only ignored the Hebrew text, but also failed to make critical use of I Esdras, for he confuses two events and describes the emotional reaction of the people at the laying of the foundation in 530 as a consequence of the dedication of the Temple completed on the 3d of Adar (March 12), 515.<sup>39</sup>

In the next part, xi. 4.3-8 (I Esdras 5 : 66-73; 6 : 1-7 : 15; Ezr 4 : 1-5, 24; 6 : 1-7 : 22) Josephus uses again the same text which he had incorrectly employed already as a documentation for his Phase I (*ca.* 536-530), and now applies it to the events which occurred under Darius, shortly before 520. The result is an even more hopeless confusion. Sisinēs and Sarabazanēs (Tattenai and Shethar-boznai) who in 536 had allegedly been the recipients of Cyrus' decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem's Temple (xi. 1.3), in 520 seem to be ignorant of the royal order given earlier (xi. 4.4).

The organization of Levites and Priests for the building program in the 2d year after the return (*ca.* 536/535 B.C.; *Ant.*, xi. 4.2; I Esdras 5 : 57-58; Ezr 3 : 8-9), now takes place in the 2d year of Darius, about 520 B.C. Josephus again

<sup>39</sup> *Ant.*, xi. 4.2.

feels compelled to provide an explanation for this apparent difficulty by saying, "They had been commanded to build the Temple, the first time by Cyrus and now by Darius." <sup>40</sup>

It has already been demonstrated that through an erroneous use of his source material Josephus confused the celebration of laying the Temple foundation, before 530, with the actual completion of the building in 515 B.C. This, however, caused another predicament for the ancient historian: "On hearing the sound of the trumpets, the Samaritans, who were, as it happened, hostile to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, came running there, for they wished to learn the reason for the disturbance." <sup>41</sup> According to this, the Samaritans would have been unaware of the Temple building for approximately six years while it had been taking place before their very eyes. To make the confusion complete, the Samaritans now offer to help in the construction of an already completed Temple! <sup>42</sup>

It is hoped that this analysis has explained the errors in the eleventh book of Antiquities and has elucidated Josephus' understanding of his sources. If we have been successful, a conclusion results: The traditional account of the building of the Jerusalem Temple is primarily a defense for the rejection of the Samaritans by the Jews. Furthermore, the claim that Josephus corrected the Biblical sequence of the Persian kings and thus improved the narrative is without valid foundation. The Biblical records furnish the correct historical information, and they were misinterpreted by the Jewish historian.

Nevertheless, Josephus' narrative given in the eleventh book of *Antiquities*, correctly understood constitutes a material and useful contribution to our understanding of Judah's post-exilic period. However, this is not true with regard to the last sections of his eleventh book, because it contains names and events which can neither be reconciled among themselves, nor brought into agreement with other available historical

<sup>40</sup> *Ant.*, xi. 4.3.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*



data.<sup>43</sup> Some of these apparent inconsistencies or contradictions nevertheless may turn out to be historical facts not yet fully understood because of the paucity of historical sources for this comparatively dark period of Jewish history. The recent discovery of the "Samaria Papyri" in a cave north of Jericho points in this direction. They show that a reappraisal of former views with regard to information presented by Josephus is necessary. The editor of these papyri probably reflects the reaction of scholars generally to the fact of a second Sanballat when he says, "Previously I had shared the scepticism of those who have thought that this Sanballat was a creature of Josephus. The appearance of Sanballat II, oddly enough, puts the question of the Sanballat of Josephus in quite a new light."<sup>44</sup> This acknowledgment can be added to the growing list of data contained in Josephus' *Antiquities*, which formerly have been contested but are now confirmed as historical facts. Though Josephus' theory that the Biblical narrative followed a continuous chronology resulted in numerous errors, we may have to allow that it was an attempt to find a solution for the complicated chronological problems of the post-exilic period.

<sup>43</sup> See Adolphe Büchler, "La relation de Josèphe concernant Alexandre le Grand," *Revue des Études Juives*, XXXVI (1898), 1-26; V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1959), pp. 42-49; Marcus, *op. cit.*, VI, 507, 510-511.

<sup>44</sup> Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 121, note 27.