

HASMONEAN REALITIES BEHIND
EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND CHRONICLES

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Israel Finkelstein

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Abbreviations

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	The Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, David Noel, ed. <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
AcBib	Academia Biblical
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
A.J.	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAIAS	<i>Bulletin of the Anglo-Israeli Archaeological Society</i>
BARIS	BAR (British Archaeological Reports) International Series
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des Antiken Judentum
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>B.J.</i>	Josephus, <i>Bellum judaicum</i>
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>ESI</i>	<i>Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i>
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DMOA	Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui
<i>ErIsr</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament

<i>HeBAI</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IAA Reports	Israel Antiquity Authority Reports
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scripture</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
MSIA	Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology Tel Aviv University
<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
<i>NEAEHL</i>	Ephraim, Stern, ed. <i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
<i>NSJ</i>	<i>New Studies on Jerusalem</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
<i>Od.</i>	Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>
<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>PJ</i>	<i>Palästinajahrbuch</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series

SBLStBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SJ	Studia Judaica
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
SymS	Symposium Series
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TMO	Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>Transeu</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit Forschungen</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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Introduction

Over the last decade, I published seven articles concerning texts in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. They deal with the construction of Jerusalem's city wall, described in Neh 3; the lists of returnees in Ezra 2:1–67 and Neh 7:6–68; the adversaries of Nehemiah; the genealogies in 1 Chr 2–9; the towns fortified by Rehoboam according to 2 Chr 11:5–12; and the unparallel accounts in 2 Chronicles that relate the expansion of Judah. An additional article gives an overview of the territorial extent of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and Hellenistic periods.

My interest in this material stemmed from a sense of a *déjà vu*: for many years, I dealt—directly or indirectly—with biblical texts that recount the history of Israel and Judah and noticed circular arguments in research regarding their dating. My way out of this impasse was to deploy archaeology and extrabiblical texts in the study of these materials. The case with Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles is similar: some scholarly discussion is mired in circular arguments and uncritical reliance on what the texts say. In this case, too, the solution is to consult data not directly related to the texts—first and foremost archaeology.

The biblical materials discussed in these articles include geographical information, which may shed light on the historical background behind the texts and the goals of their authors. This historical setting can be reached by deploying archaeology in order to verify the settlement history of the sites mentioned in the texts and by comparing the information given by these verses and chapters to extrabiblical written sources.

The articles reprinted in this book were published over a period of several years (2008–2015), with no preplanned scheme, meaning that one theme led to another. But during the process of writing them, it became clear to me that the articles depict a similar picture regarding the historical background behind them—later than assumed by most scholars. And since the geographical texts discussed in the articles constitute significant parts of the books of Nehemiah and Chronicles, they bear on broader

issues than the date of a specific text, including the stratigraphy and chronology of the books involved. This is the reason for my decision to publish the articles as a book: to suggest to the reader their overall significance.¹

The original articles are reprinted here with no change, except for adaptation to SBL style in both the text and the footnotes. This means that I have not added bibliographical entries that appeared after the given article was published. Yet, at the end of five of the seven chapters, I have included an addendum, with archaeological updates and references to specific articles published on the matter discussed in the given chapter. To make reading easier, I have also added several maps, which were not included in the original publications. Evidently in a collection of articles that deal with the same general theme there are certain repetitions, for instance, in references to the archaeology of Gibeon and Beth-zur and the list of places fortified by Bacchides (1 Macc 9:50–52), or in summaries of issues related to the genealogies and Rehoboam fortified towns in the article on the expansion of Judah in Chronicles. This is unavoidable; eliminating these repetitions would have ruined the structures of the articles.

The original articles included in this book are listed below in the order in which they appear here:

- ♦ “Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah.” *JSOT* 32 (2008): 501–20.
- ♦ “Archaeology of the List of Returnees in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.” *PEQ* 140 (2008): 7–16.
- ♦ “The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods.” *RB* 117 (2010): 39–54.
- ♦ “Nehemiah’s Adversaries: A Hasmonaean Reality?” *Transeu* 47 (2015): 47–55.
- ♦ “The Historical Reality behind the Genealogical Lists in 1 Chronicles.” *JBL* 131 (2012): 65–83.
- ♦ “Rehoboam’s Fortified Cities (II Chr 11, 5–12): A Hasmonean Reality?” *ZAW* 123 (2011): 92–107.
- ♦ “The Expansion of Judah in II Chronicles: Territorial Legitimation for the Hasmoneans?” *ZAW* 127 (2015): 669–95.

1. I wish to thank my student Na’ama Walzer and Shimrit Salem for helping me in transforming the original articles to SBL style, to Ido Koch and Assaf Kleiman for preparing the maps (maps 1 and 2–7, respectively), and to Sabine Kleiman for proof-reading the book and preparing the index.