

THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

New York School

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

By Albert Yanow

During the past decade or so, some scholars began to express publically the opinion that the book of Lamentations derived not from Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. and the consequent Babylonian Exile, but from an alleged Edomite invasion and destruction of Jerusalem about a century later. Rabbi Yanow undertook a careful analysis of the extra-biblical material bearing on the Neo-Babylonian domination of Judah, the Exile and the rise of the Persian Empire throughout Western Asia. He subjected the pertinent archeological data to sober scrutiny and permitted the biblical text to speak for itself.

His conclusion is that while it is most unlikely that Jeremiah had anything to do with the composition of the book of Lamentations it is equally improbable that the Edomites had any historical hand in its coming into being. Rather, as put by Rabbi Yanow, "a Babylonian destruction in the 6th century B.C.E. for the basis of the book of Lamentations...The evidence derived from verses in the Book, considered in the light of the historical data...appears weighty enough to be . . . conclusive."

Rabbi Yanow has shown that he knows how to do research, and he should be encouraged to go on to write an up-to-date commentary on the book of Lamentations.

It is my recommendation that Rabbi Yanow's thesis be accepted for the Degree of Master of Hebrew Letters.

Dr. Harry M. Orlinsky

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**THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS**

**by Albert Yanow**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Hebrew Letters**

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## PREFACE

As a member of the graduating class of 1945, I did the last year of my studies in absentia. The thesis requirement was waived at that time so that I did not receive the M.H.L. Degree. For two years I served as a rabbi, first as Hillel Director and then as a Navy Chaplain. My service in the Navy entitled me to the benefits of the G. I. Bill of Rights with the help of which I enrolled at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. There I came to the conclusion that no advanced work in the field of Jewish Studies was possible without a more thorough knowledge of the Bible than I possessed. Before I could do much work in this area, however, the War of Independence interfered.

I had begun to work on the administrative staff of the Hebrew University in charge of foreign students, and shortly after the War started, I was sent to the United States to work in the office of the American Friends of the Hebrew University.

In February, 1948, I met with Dr. Harry M. Orlinsky who encouraged me to work on a thesis in Bible which would earn me the M.H.L. Degree and suggested that a study dealing with the book of Lamentations would be timely. Dean Henry Slonimsky approved of this plan.

Several interruptions such as my marriage and trips to and from Israel delayed my work on the thesis, but Dr. Orlinsky's constant and friendly stimulation finally led to its completion. I am indeed grateful to him for his extended assistance which helped me both to finish the thesis and to achieve a greater appreciation of the Bible than I had heretofore.

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## Chapter One

### A Sketch of the Treatment of the Historical Origins of the Book of Lamentations in Ancient, Medieval and Modern Times

#### A.

Little new information concerning the authorship and date of the Book of Lamentations has been forthcoming in recent years. The traditional Jewish belief that Jeremiah composed the elegies shortly after 587 B.C.E. became solidified in the preface to Lamentations in Targum (אמר ירמיהו נביא וכתב לו דברים) and in the Talmud (ירמיה ברג ספרו וספר מלכים וקנין...<sup>1</sup>). The Midrash on Lamentations does ask when the Book was written, and the answer is "after the destruction of the Temple."<sup>2</sup> Later commentators merely noted the tradition in their remarks. Rashi, for example, states very simply: ירמיה ברג ספר קנין, הלא (cf. Jer. 36:23). Ibn Ezra accepts the tradition that Jeremiah wrote Lamentations, but disagrees with the identification of this Book with the מלך in the Book of Jeremiah: ואיננו המלך הנשפך דם ירי יבויקס, כי לא נמצא אל דברי המלך אלא ספר ירמיה וקנין וכן בגז:

1. Baba Bathra 15a. L. Ginsberg, in Legends of the Jews (Philadelphia, 1928), Vol. VI, p. 387, practically quotes the Talmudic statement: "The old rabbinical sources know of no other writings of Jeremiah than the book bearing his name, the Book of Lamentations, which is said to be the 'scroll' mentioned in Jer. 36:2, and the Book of Kings."

2. ואמר ירמיה נאמר מלך קנין? דבר יבנה אמר קנין יבויקס נאמר. אמר לו נאמר, וכי קנין דהא דר אלא יבויקס! אלא אמר ירמיה? אמר קנין דהא דר אלא - איבן יבויקס דר.

"קח יצק חמלה ספר וכבדך אליה יוג כל הדברים אשר  
 דברתי אליך על ידיו ודל יתורה ודל כל האוי" (יחזקאל ל"ד)  
 ודוד כבוד: "חזק ברגל דליך למחר קא יקח חלך קבל וקמיו  
 אה הארץ" (יחזקאל ל"ד) ואן חמלה ספר אויב זכר קבל  
 ואלו חלכה.

Today this tradition is still held by most Jewish Biblical scholars, although the doubts and objections that have been raised by some non-Jewish and an increasing number of Jewish critics have been noted, and answers to specific difficulties have been attempted.

The traditional Christian point of view is the same as the Jewish belief from which it derives and is expressed in the preface to the Septuagint of the book of Lamentations<sup>3</sup> and in the almost identical preface by St. Jerome in the Vulgate.<sup>4</sup> In both of these translations, moreover, the book of Lamentations follows immediately after the book of Jeremiah and is in the section called "Prophets," unlike the Masoretic Text in which "Lamentations follows the book of Ruth and is in the section called "Writings." There is an allusion to this tradition by the Church Fathers who attribute<sup>5</sup> the book to Jeremiah.

Not until late in the nineteenth century was this tradition

3. "And it came to pass, after Israel was led into captivity, and Jerusalem laid waste, that Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said..."

4. Et factum est, postquam in captivitatem redactus est Israel, et Ierusalem deserta est, sedit Ieremias propheta flens, et planxit lamentatione hac in Ierusalem, et amaro animo suspirans, et eiulans dixit.

5. Cf. S.R. Driver, Introduction to the Literature or the Old Testament (New York, 1894), pp. 461-465.

questioned; several scholars reexamined the evidence and arguments for attributing the book of Lamentations to Jeremiah, and almost all of them decided against tradition. To them, and to most scholars up to the present time, it became evident that the arguments against Jeremianic authorship were more compelling than the arguments for. Some scholars came to the conclusion that the Book was written in the time of Jeremiah, but by someone else. As explained by one who held this point of view: when the Chaldeans captured Zedekiah and took him to Riblah, "one of his party who had been with him on that fatal night was a poet who carried the scenes of the siege and the flight fresh in his mind and kept his sorrows deep in his heart till it broke forth into two lamentations which are preserved in the second and fourth chapters of our book of Lamentations."<sup>6</sup>

Some scholars place the Book in <sup>the</sup> post-exilic period, and the opinions range from immediately after the Exile (early in the Persian period, toward the end of the sixth century B.C.E.) <sup>to the Maccabean period, in the second century B.C.E.</sup> One such critic breaks up the five chapters of the Book as follows: "There is nothing in Chapter I which Nehemiah himself might not have written. (According to this author, Nehemiah arrived in Judah about 445 B.C.E.)<sup>7</sup>

6. Julius A. Bewer, The Literature of the Old Testament in Its Historical Development (New York, 1926), p. 189.

7. More recently Nehemiah's arrival in Judah is dated about 440 B.C.E.; cf. W. F. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," Biblical Archaeologist, IX (February, 1946), p.11.

Chapters two and four can hardly be dated earlier than the beginning of the Persian period....by a young man who had witnessed the scenes and wrote about them 50 years later. Budde's date of 500 B.C.E. might not be too early for Chapter five, if it stood alone. But it was evidently written at <sup>the</sup> close of the Book and perhaps to complete the number of five divisions, which would bring it to below the date of Ezra (about 457 B.C.E.) <sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup>."

It is to be noted that those critics who do not accept Jeremiah as the author of the book of Lamentations also do not accept the idea that the five chapters of the Book were written by one person. "The prevailing tendency at present is decidedly adverse to the opinion of unity. Chapters 2 and 4, 1 and 5, and 3 are divided chronologically into these three groups. This scheme of Nöldeke has gained the adherence of Löhr, Cornill, Wildeboer, and now substantially of Budde."<sup>10</sup>

- Thus we see that the following points of view have been advanced by various scholars; some support the traditional point of view that Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations after the destruction of the Temple; others believe that someone other than Jeremiah wrote the Book after the destruction of the Temple; and there are those who believe that the Book was written after the return of the Judean captives from their exile in Babylon, and naturally by some-

8. Cf. Albright, op. cit., where Ezra's mission is dated about 428 B.C.

9. C. J. Ball, "Lamentations," Encyclopedia Britannica, 1911, Vol. XVI, pp. 126-129.

10. J. A. Selbie, "Lamentations," A Dictionary of the Bible, ed. James Hastings (New York, 1901), pp. 22-23.

one other than Jeremiah who did not survive the exile. Reasons are also given for attributing the different chapters to different authors.

# B.

Traditionally-minded scholars, looking for evidence that would antedate such post-Biblical sources as the Targum and the Talmud, point to 2 Chron. 35:25 ( ויקראו יחזקאל ויהונתן ויהויכד ויהויחזקאל ויהויחזקאל ויהויחזקאל )

כס המזבח והמזבח הקטן והמזבח הגדול ויהויחזקאל ויהויחזקאל ויהויחזקאל ) as a reference to the

book of Lamentations. "The Rabbis, as well as Josephus, understand 2 Chron. 35:25 to refer to the book of Lamentations."<sup>11</sup>

If the words ויקראו ויהויחזקאל ויהויחזקאל ויהויחזקאל did refer to the Book, this would be evidence in the Bible outside of Jeremiah and Lamentations, and a tradition established in the time of the Chronicler (about 250 B.C.E.<sup>12</sup>), proving that Jeremiah wrote at least part of the book of Lamentations. This "evidence" is not accepted by any of the scholars as definitive proof. "The Chronicler neither says that Jeremiah wrote all the elegies comprised in the קינות, nor does he imply that the entire collection consisted of only five pieces. It does not seem probable either that the Chronicler mistook Lam. 4 for Jeremiah's dirge on Josiah, or that the book he calls קינות was identical with our קינות."<sup>13</sup>

11. L. Ginzberg, op. cit., p. 378.

12. This date is given by C.J. Ball; see note 8. More recent critical opinion places the time of the Chronicler as "shortly after 400 B.C." (W.F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore, 1942), p. 125 ( and passim ).

13. See note 8.

S. R. Driver, in listing the various arguments in support of the traditional belief, does not even mention the reference to the statement in Chronicles as a possible valid bit of evidence.<sup>14</sup>

None of these conservative scholars seriously considered, as Ibn Ezra did, that the references in Jer. 36:2 and 36:29 were to the book of Lamentations. So, not finding any other external evidence, they examined the book of Lamentations itself, and decided that its tone, spirit, temper and depth of feeling paralleled those in Jeremiah, and that the historical and theological allusions were also similar to those in Jeremiah; the almost natural conclusion was, therefore, that the prophet was the author of Lamentations. The arguments are described as follows: "The tradition may be merely an inference founded on the general resemblance of tone which the Lamentations exhibit with such passages as Jer. 8:18-23, Chapters 14 and 15, and on the reference assumed to be contained in Lam. 3:14, 53-56, to incidents in the prophet's life, Jer. 20:7, 38:6 ff."<sup>15</sup> "Jeremiah was the one well-known inspired writer who had lived through the siege of Jerusalem, so this little book was naturally enough ascribed to him."<sup>16</sup> "It is a bitter and tragic conclusion to the prophet's lifework. Against his whole nature, which was tender and sensitive, but because of evils of his age, he had perforce to be a prophet of woe and

14. See note 5.

15. Ibid.

16. See note 8. This argument is also cited by R.W. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York, 1942), pp. 720-723.

calamity; and he lived to see and bewail the destruction of Judea and Jerusalem which he had so clearly foreseen."<sup>17</sup> The similarities of expression, figures, allusions, representations and emotional outburst between the books of Lamentations and Jeremiah are cited by Driver.<sup>18</sup> C. F. Keil wrote after an exhaustive study: "Wir schliessen daher diese Untersuchung mit dem begründeten Ergebnisse, dass die Überlieferung, welche die Klagelieder dem Propheten Jeremia als Verfasser zuschreibt, so gesichert ist, wie nur eine geschichtliche Überlieferung des Altertums."<sup>19</sup> A little further on he wrote: "Keinem Zweifel scheint es aber zu unterliegen dass Jeremia sie in der Zwischenheit zwischen der Zerstörung Jerusalems und seinem unfreiwilligen Wegzuge nach Aegypten verfasst hat."<sup>20</sup>

None of these opinions, arguments or statements, however, was persuasive or compelling to the contrary-minded group.

An intermediate opinion between those for and those against Jeremianic authorship was held by Otto Thenius.<sup>21</sup> According to him, the differences in diction and spirit among the elegies themselves were so great that they could not all have been written by the same author. He did feel, however, that Jeremiah was the author of Chapters 2 and 4.

17. S. Goldman, The Five Megilloth (in series: Soncino Books of the Bible; Surrey, 1946), p. 68.

18. See note 5.

19. Biblischer Commentar über den Propheten Jeremia und die Klagelieder (Leipzig, 1872), p. 555.

20. Ibid.

21. Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Vierte Lieferung (Leipzig, 1864), pp. 117-123.

An opinion frequently quoted by those who did not believe that Jeremiah wrote Lamentations is that of Max Löhr.<sup>22</sup> While noting that Jeremiah may have become known early as a writer of elegies if he wrote an elegy on Josiah, as is said in 2 Chron. 23:25, Löhr nevertheless did not believe that Jeremiah wrote the elegies of the book under consideration. "The decisive argument against the hypothesis of the Jeremianic authorship is found in the contents of the passages: Lam. 2:9, 4:17, 4:20, 5:7."<sup>23</sup> His arguments may be conveniently summarized as follows:

1. Jeremiah could not have written 'מִן הַנְּבִיאִים הַלֵּז in Lam. 2:9, lamenting the fact that the prophets (whom he had rebuked for giving false prophecy, Jer. 23:9-40) were not finding vision from Yahweh.
2. Jeremiah had counseled against looking to Egypt for help, Jer. 37:5-10; in Lam. 4:17, the author identifies himself with those who looked towards Egypt for assistance.
3. Jeremiah had likened Zedekiah to a bad fig and had prophesied his destruction (Jer. 24:8-10), and had written that Zedekiah did not hearken to the words of the Lord (Jer. 37:2). Would he, therefore, speak of Zedekiah in Lam. 4:20 as 'וְיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי יָדָהּ?
4. Jeremiah had announced that individual responsibility for sins would be recognized in the future (Jer. 31:29,30); Lam. 5:7, however, still retains the idea of children suffering for the sins of their fathers.

22. Die Klagelieder des Jeremias (in series: Handkommentar zum Alten Testament; Göttingen, 1906), Einführung, p. xiii and pp. 1,9,17,23,29.

23. M. Löhr, in The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VII (1904), pp.598-9.

Discussing the date of each chapter separately, Löhr wrote: "The urgent wish for revenge is used to determine the date of Chapter 1 as a few years before 538. The poem stems from prophetic circles and was composed in Judah. Chapter 2 was certainly composed shortly after 586, since the author was an eye-witness. Perhaps one must decide that it was written in exile, because of its affinity to Ezekiel. Chapter 3 is certainly the youngest in our Book. Considering its theological content and the perfected, formal language of Psalms, this chapter must be placed not too soon after the Exile. It was composed in Jerusalem. Chapter 4 is the same as Chapter 2. The sad experiences date Chapter 5 after 586, certainly composed in Judah."<sup>24</sup>

It is noted that Budde agrees with Löhr, as does Driver substantially.<sup>25</sup> Other arguments against Jeremiah's authorship of Lam-entations are mentioned by Driver, and may be summarized as follows:

- 1.. In Chapter 1, in the alphabetic order of the verses, a follows; in Chapters 2,3 and 4 r follows a. This would seem to indicate that Chapters 2,3 and 4 were not by the author of Chapter 1.
2. Jeremiah believed that Yahweh was using the Babylonians as an instrument with which to punish Judah, but in Lam. 1:21 ff. and 3:59-66 the author, speaking in the name of the people, calls for retribution upon the Babylonians. This latter statement expresses a point of view different from that of Jeremiah. (Cf. also Driver's remarks on Lam. 2:9, 4:17, and 4:20.)

24. See the work cited in note 22.

25. See the work cited in note 5.

3. There are contained in Lamentations many expressions which are not found in Jeremiah.

4. Jeremiah was a writer who followed the promptings of nature. Hence it is doubtful if he would use the artificial alphabetical arrangement found in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

As for the date of the composition of Lamentations, Driver believes that a contemporary of Jeremiah wrote the Book shortly after the Exile began.

While pointing out the differences between the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, these scholars nevertheless are all aware of the affinity between the two Books. This affinity is explained on the ground "that this prophet's works were the favorite study of the author or authors of Lamentations."<sup>26</sup> It has also been shown, however, that "Chapters 1 and 5 imply an acquaintance with Deuter Isaiah, while Chapter 3 contains echoes of the later psalms and Job."<sup>26</sup>

As noted above, some critics place the date of the Book after the period of exile. One such critic, like Löhr discussing each chapter separately, wrote as follows: "Lam. 5--no earlier date seems plausible than 470-450 B.C.E. (i.e., pre-Nehemian). At the same time, a later date (359-338) is by no means impossible. Lam. 4--the strong rhetoric and the developed art of the poem are equally adverse to the view that it is the work of one of the Jews left by Nebuchadnezzar in Jerusalem. The same date must, of course, be given to Lam. 2 and 4, twin poems. They probably belong to the

26. See the work cited in note 10.

same age as the many 'persecution' psalms in Ps. 1 - 72 - i.e. to the latter part of the Persian period. Lam. 1 --can hardly be the work of an eye-witness of the fall of Jerusalem. That it is much later than Chapters 2 and 4 seems an unnecessary inference. Lam. 3 --Budde is probably right in assigning Lam. 3 to the pre-Maccabean portion of the Greek age."<sup>27</sup>

Such, then, is the state of critical opinion at the present time. Among most of the critical scholars, the traditional point of view of ascribing the book of Lamentations to Jeremiah is discredited. Many traditionalists have recognized that certain difficulties stand in the way of maintaining the traditional view, but no formidable defense has yet appeared. A protest did appear in one source,<sup>28</sup> but without adequate critical data. Among those who do not accept the traditional point of view there are definite differences of opinion. Some assign the Book to a contemporary or to contemporaries of Jeremiah during the period of exile. Others assign it to the post-exilic period, in the sixth, fifth <sup>or</sup> ~~of~~ fourth centuries.

It was not the intention here to present an exhaustive treatment of everything written on this aspect of the problem. It was felt that a sketch of the main currents of scholarly thought would give the reader an adequate view of the present state of opinion among Biblical scholars. For those interested in more detailed presenta-

27. T. K. Cheyne, in Encyclopedia Biblica, Vol.III, (1913), pp.2700-2705.

28. A. C. Zenos, in Bible Dictionary, 1926, p. 504.

tion, the chapter on the Book of Lamentations by R. H. Pfeiffer<sup>29</sup>  
may be consulted.

29. His work is cited in note 16.

## Chapter Two

### The Historicity of the Babylonian Exile in the Light of Recent Discoveries

The book of Lamentations describes the terrible desolation in the city of Jerusalem following an extensive devastation of Judah, and notes sadly the contrast between her present state and her former splendor. It laments the captivity of her princes and her royalty, the spoliation of her treasures, and the desecration of her Sanctuary. The poetry is rich with the vivid images of an apparently contemporary witness who observed the destruction of the once populous and powerful city and who mourned because God was forced to give the city into the hands of the enemy in retaliation for being abandoned by His people. Sorrow, weeping, dejection and prayer characterize all five chapters of the Book.

This book of Lamentations, however, together with the books of Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Isaiah (chapters 40-66), becomes a mere literary exercise in the light of doubts which Professor C. C. Torrey of Yale University began to raise fifty years ago, culminating in his book Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy (1930). He presented the idea that the Babylonian Exile was a fiction, and that consequently the Biblical Books narrating this event, the Destruction of Judah before the Exile, and the Restoration afterwards were historically inaccurate. Concerning the book of Ezekiel, for example, he wrote: "we may say with certainty that there can have been no extensive settlement of Jewish captives at a time and under the circumstances depicted in our present book of Ezekiel."<sup>1</sup> And since the

1. Op. cit., p. 33.

Talmud says that "Jeremiah wrote his book" but that "the men of the Great Synagogue wrote Ezekiel, the Twelve Prophets, Daniel and Esther,"<sup>2</sup> Torrey concluded that the learned men of Jerusalem "manifest a most significant skepticism as to the authorship of the entire prophecy,"<sup>3</sup> "the oldest Jewish tradition...recognizes no Babylonian prophet Ezekiel,"<sup>4</sup> and that the book of Ezekiel was a "pseudepigraph purporting to come from the reign of Manasseh, but in fact (was) composed many centuries later, converted into a prophecy of the so-called 'Babylonian Golah' by an editor...not many years after the original work had appeared."<sup>5</sup> It was not long before Torrey's theory of Ezekiel and the Babylonian Exile was accepted by many scholars here and abroad.

Torrey's main arguments against the validity of the book of Ezekiel were summed up by Professor H. M. Orlinsky<sup>6</sup> as follows:

1. The prophet Ezekiel dated his prophecies according to the years of Jehoiachin's captivity in Babylonia, instead of according to the year of the reign of King Zedekiah in Jerusalem. Such a system of chronology must have been thought up by someone who lived some time after the period of which he wrote.

2. The Persians are mentioned in Ezek. 27:10 and 38:5,<sup>7</sup> in prophecies

2. Baba Bathra 15.

3. See p. 19 of the work cited in note 1.

4. Op. cit., p. 23.

5. Op. cit., p. 102.

6. "The Babylonian Exile in the Light of Archaeology" (in Yiddish), YIVO Bletter, Vol. XXV, No. 3 (1945), pp. 323-334.

7. Ezek. 27:10

Ezek. 38:5

פנים ופנים ופנים היו קחילך אני מלחמתך  
פנים כור ופנים אגם כדף מן וכוך

dated by modern Biblical critics as of about 580 B.C.E. This, said Torrey confidently, is before the Persians made their appearance on the stage of history. This also can be explained only if the author wrote the Book two or three centuries later, in the period of the Chronicler.

3. In Ezek. 14:14, 20, and 28:3,<sup>8</sup> a wise Daniel is mentioned, and presumably he is the Daniel of the book of Daniel. Since the latter dates from the third-second centuries B.C.E., the author of the book of Ezekiel could hardly have composed the Book before that time.

4. In Isa. 44:28 and 45:1,<sup>9</sup> Cyrus, the king of Persia, is mentioned as a shepherd and a deliverer, and is chosen by God to rebuild Jerusalem and to reestablish the Temple. According to Torrey, the name "Cyrus" was inserted into the original text some centuries after this text was originally written, thus invalidating the last 26 chapters of the book of Isaiah as historical source material for proof of the Exile.

5. In the course of certain excavations at Beth-shemesh, Duncan Mackenzie of the University of Pennsylvania Museum came upon the stratum of a period of civilization which had been completely ruined and which he dated at about 700 B.C.E., when Sennacherib of Assyria had attacked Judah. This meant to Torrey that Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon could not have been responsible for the destruction of the same city about one hundred years later.

These arguments plus other minor ones added up to one complete

8. Ezek. 14:14 ... ובין אלף האנשים באלף דגונה נח נאם ואיון ... דבדקא  
 Ezek. 14:20 ונח נאם ואיון דגונה ... דבדקא וצילו נפשי  
 Ezek. 28:3 בנה חכם אגב מנאם כל סתור לא שחוק  
 9. Isa. 44:28 האמר לכורש כחי וכל כפצו ידעו ... ליכונאם גרני והוכח תוס  
 Isa. 45:1 כב אמר נ' לחייון לכורש ...

complete argument against the historical value of the Books dealing with the period of the Exile, and against the historicity of these events. Some scholars compromised between the Biblical narrative on the one hand and the view of Torrey on the other, and decided that there may have been a destruction and exile, though not actually so pronounced as described in the Bible.

With the development of the science of Archaeology, however, new discoveries were made almost twenty years ago, and each of Torrey's arguments was met successfully and disposed of, as follows:

1. While directing excavations for the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem in 1928, Prof. W. F. Albright<sup>10</sup> dug up a broken clay jar-handle at Tell Beit Mirsim (probably Kiriath-sefer), in southwestern Judah. The handle was stamped with a seal, inscribed in the ancient Hebrew or Phoenician script, in which most of the Bible was originally written.

The inscription read  $\frac{\text{יְהוֹאָכִין}}{\text{שָׁרְיָזִי}}$ , meaning  $\text{יְהוֹאָכִין שָׁרְיָזִי}$ .

Father L. H. Vincent, a Catholic archaeologist in Jerusalem, immediately identified the name  $\text{יְהוֹאָכִין}$  with  $\text{יְהוֹאָכִין}$ , just as  $\text{יְהוֹאָכִין}$  in 1 Chron. 4:22 and in a stamp of the 7th-6th cent. B.C.E. has been recognized as a shortened form of  $\text{יְהוֹאָכִין}$ . In 1930, Prof. Elihu Grant found a jar-handle with the same stamp at Beth-shemesh in northwestern Judah, and Albright found another one, again at Tell Beit Mirsim. The archaeological surroundings in which these jar-handles were found indicated that the handles belonged to the period about 600 B.C.E. From other handles of different periods in the form  $\text{יְהוֹאָכִין}$ , it had been determined that the "א" is always the name of an important royal officer, and the "י" is always the name of

10. "King Joiachin in Exile," The Biblical Archaeologist, Vol. V (December, 1942), pp. 49-55.

the king alone.<sup>11</sup>

With this archaeological evidence Albright made the following analysis:<sup>12</sup> while this /D/ of the seal-impression on the jar handles, who is King Jehoiachin who reigned in Jerusalem for only three months before being deposed and exiled by Nebuchadnezzar, was in captivity in Babylonia, and while his uncle Zedekiah was nominally king over Judah, Eliakim was steward over Jehoiachin's royal property. Jehoiachin was obviously regarded as king by the Jews in Exile, but also by the Jews in Judah. This latter is known to be so because the seals on the jar-handles are known to have been made in Judah and used throughout the country after he had been taken away to Babylonia. He was also regarded as king by the Babylonians themselves, who were ready to use him for political ends. At the same time, however, no Jewish exile in Babylonia could manifest publicly his loyalty to Jehoiachin lest he be punished properly by the Babylonians who would be sensitive to a show of dis-loyalty to their rule. Hence Ezekiel could not date his prophecies according to the year of Jehoiachin's reign, but rather according to the year of Jehoiachin's captivity. This compelling reason for Ezekiel's manner of dating his prophecies makes Torrey's first point unacceptable.

2. Torrey's second point becomes likewise unacceptable in the light of new archaeological evidence. An Old Persian text, published by the Jewish archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld in 1930, has the uncle of Cyrus I calling himself "King of Kings." And in the inscriptions of Assurbanipal

11. Cf. A. Bergman's "Two Hebrew Seals of the 'Ebed Class," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. LV (1936), pp. 221-226.

12. "The Seal of Eliakim and the Latest Preexilic History of Judah, with some Observations on Ezekiel," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. LI (1932), pp. 77-106.

of Assyria dated about 640 B.C.E., published in 1931 by Dr. Weidner<sup>13</sup> of Berlin, the grandfather of Cyrus I is mentioned. At least two generations before Ezekiel began to prophesy, therefore, Persia had already become an important and well-known power in Western Asia.

3. Similarly, new evidence has been uncovered to meet Torrey's third point and to make it unacceptable as an argument. In 1929, as a result of an Arab's ploughing his field in Ras-esh-Shamrah (ancient Ugarit) in Northern Syria, an important discovery was made. A French expedition excavated ancient Canaanite texts dating to about the fourteenth century B.C.E., eight centuries before Ezekiel's time. In these texts mention is made of a famous and righteous sage called Dan-el and it is this Dan-el of the Ugaritic Texts who is now known to be the Dan-el meant by Ezekiel.

4. Torrey's fourth point is met by the references to the Persian and Assyrian texts mentioned above in the answer to Torrey's second objection to the validity of the book of Ezekiel. Cyrus I and the land of Persia, then called Parsuwash, are mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions of Asshurbanipal.

5. Between 1935 and 1938, excavations at the important fortress city of Lachish by an English expedition yielded a number of documents written in ink on potsherds (ostraca) dating "from the autumn of 589 B.C.E., less than two years before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans."<sup>14</sup> It is now known that this city of Lachish and other cities such as Beth-zur, Kiriath-sefer and Beth-el were destroyed by the same Chaldeans who destroyed Jerusalem and during the same period. Likewise, the destruction

13. Archiv für Orientforschung, Vol. VII (1931); pp. 1 ff. (cited by W. F. Albright, op. cit., p. 99 and n. 58).

14. W. F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (2nd ed., Baltimore, 1946), p. 41

of Beth-shemesh, which had earlier been thought to have been accomplished by Sennacherib of Assyria about 700 B.C.E., is now dated in 587 B.C.E., at the time of the last invasion by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, on the basis of a number of stamped jar-handles of the latest pre-exilic type found on this mound by Elihu Grant and by members of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> So the last main point of Torrey's argument, as well as his entire argument, has been disposed of.

However, as though to climax the piling up of evidence in support of the historicity of this Biblical narrative and of the historical value of the Biblical Books under consideration, a truly sensational discovery was made public just over ten years ago. Excavating the ruins of a building in ancient Babylon some forty-five years ago, a German archaeological expedition discovered nearly 300 cuneiform tablets dating back to the beginning of the sixth century B.C.E. These tablets were brought to the Berlin Museum where they lay for thirty years without being noticed, cleaned or read until Dr. Weidner, the Assyriologist mentioned above, came across them and recognized that they were very important documents. He informed W. F. Albright of these documents in a personal letter in 1939, but it was not until 1942 that a single copy of the volume, in which Weidner's article appeared, turned up in the library of Johns Hopkins University, and then the contents of the tablets became known.

These contents deal with the period of the Babylonian Exile, listing the "payment of rations in oil and barley, etc., to captives and skilled workmen from many nations, all living in and around Babylon between the years 595 and 570 B.C.E."<sup>16</sup> Among these captives is mentioned "13" King of Judah," and five royal princes, as well as numerous other men of

15. W. F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible (New York, 1932), p. 186.

16. See the work cited in note 10.

Judah, who are to receive these rations according to a decree of Nebuchadnezzar inscribed on a tablet dated 592 B.C.E.

Weidner interpreted this to mean that Jehoiachin and his sons were permitted freedom of movement in Babylon and that he was not in prison, although something may have happened, perhaps an attempt to escape, which caused him to be imprisoned at a later date. At any rate, Jehoiachin was later released from prison by Evil-merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's son, in the first year of his reign, thirty-seven years after Jehoiachin was taken into captivity, and now the latter's throne was raised above those of the other captive kings who were with him in Babylon.<sup>17</sup> It is quite possible that this release and elevation were caused by a revolt in Judah, and that the Babylonians were prepared to use him, since they considered him still to be king of Judah, to their own best political advantage. The political situation was such, therefore, that Ezekiel could not risk showing publicly his allegiance to Jehoiachin. He was forced to date his prophecies according to the year of Jehoiachin's exile, as argued by Albright ten years earlier.

The episode of honoring such a relatively unimportant king is one which scholars have found hard to accept, but the reference in the tablets to him and to his sons bears out the truth of both 2 Ki. 25:27-29 (cf. Jer. 52:31-34) and also of 1 Chron. 3:17,18, where the names of seven sons born during the Exile are mentioned.

Also mentioned in the tablets are mariners and musicians from Ashkelon, the Philistine seaport; shipworkers and sailors from the Phoenician ports

ויהי קראים וקדש שגל לעלום יבויבין מלך: (cf. Jer. 52:31-34) 2 Ki. 25:27-29 17.  
 יבוצב קאני דע חזר קעגניק וקדש לעלום נא אויף חזק מלך קדש קניג  
 זיכר אה קא יבויבין מלך יבוצב מקור כלל ויזק אה שוקות ויגן אה  
 כסא מלך כסא בחלכין אה אה קדש... ואכל למק לחזר לפניו כל ימי חייו.

of Tyre, Byblus, and Arvad; shipbuilders, horse-trainers and monkey-trainers from Egypt; carpenters and shipbuilders from Greece; a Jewish gardener, Shelemiah, mentioned by name. Rations were given to all of these artisans who had either been captured by Nebuchadnezzar in the course of his campaigns or who had come to Babylon for the high wages paid by Nebuchadnezzar in his extensive building program in his capital city of Babylon. 2 Ki. 24:14-16<sup>18</sup> records that Nebuchadnezzar carried away with him from Judah one thousand craftsmen and smiths. Torrey had stated "that the Jewish exiles under Jehoiachin were 'not farmers' and that 'artisans (craftsmen) could have found no means of support,' "<sup>19</sup> so that the evidence from the tablets proved Torrey wrong again and the Bible right.

In the light of the various archaeological discoveries made during the past twenty years, therefore, the history of the Babylonian Exile as narrated in the Bible has been corroborated and verified for all those who doubt the truth of this history. So convincing have these discoveries been that G. E. Wright felt compelled to say that "any attempt to minimize in any way the importance of this traumatic event (the Babylonian Conquest) in Biblical history is doomed to failure."<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, all the Biblical Books dealing with the various aspects of this portion of Jewish History have been proven from extra-Biblical sources to be substantially correct history-writing.

ובאשר אל כל יבואיץ ואר כל המבין ואר כל אקוני החם עמך אלפים זלך וכל המבין  
ובאשר אל נאמך זלך דך האלף... ואר כל אנאי החם עמך אלפים ובאשר ובאשר  
אלף הכל אקוני דאי אלחמך...

19. See the work cited in note 10.

20. "The Present State of Biblical Archaeology" in The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow (Chicago, 1947), p. 87.

## Chapter Three

## Historical Sketch of Judah from Josiah's Death to the Rebuilding of the Temple

The final stage in the decline of the kingdom of Judah begins with the death of Josiah at the hands of the Egyptians at Megiddo in 609 B. C. E.<sup>1</sup> The "people of the land," who had chosen Josiah to be their king after the assassination of Amon,<sup>2</sup> now anointed and crowned Jehoahaz, the youngest of the late king's four sons,<sup>3</sup> as their sovereign. The choice of the people, however, did not coincide with that of the Saitic Pharaoh, Necho II, under whose hegemony they had come. Jehoahaz was therefore deposed after a reign of three months, taken to Riblah, Necho's camping-ground, and then sent to Egypt in chains.<sup>4</sup> At this critical moment, ~~when~~<sup>4</sup> the choice of the king was dictated by Necho and a huge tribute exacted from the people, the prophet Jeremiah was not satisfied to carry on a long lament for Josiah. He wrote:

"Weep not for the dead, nor bemoan him;  
But weep sore for him who goes away,  
For he shall return no more,  
Nor see the land of his birth."<sup>5</sup>

1. 2 Ki. 23:29, 30. For chronology see W. F. Albright, "The Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, No. 100 (December, 1945), pp. 16-22.

2. 2 Ki. 21:23, 24.

3. 1 Chron. 3:15.

4. 2 Ki. 23:31-33.

5. Jer. 22:10-12.

Necho's choice for king was Eliakim, the second son of Josiah,<sup>6</sup> two years older than Jehoahaz.<sup>7</sup> It being customary for the kings of Judah to bear alternative names, a personal name and a throne-name,<sup>8</sup> Eliakim adopted the throne-name of Jehoiakim.<sup>9</sup> His first task was to pay the heavy tribute of 100 talents of silver and one talent of gold to his Egyptian master. Four years later, in 605 B. C. E., however, the latter's dominion over Judah and his thirst for world power were brought to an end at Carchemish on the Euphrates. Here Nebuchadnezzar displayed the power of his forces by destroying the Egyptian hosts. Jeremiah described the battle in colorful language,<sup>10</sup> one line of which (verse 11) reveals his sarcasm toward Egypt:

"Ascend unto Gilead, and take balm,  
O virgin daughter of Egypt;  
In vain do you use many drugs;  
There is no cure for thee."

Jeremiah's picture of the battle has been supplemented by excavations made at Carchemish. Carbonized timbers and reddened brickwork indicating fire and

6. 1 Chron. 3:15.

7. 2 Ki. 23:31, 36.

8. W. F. Albright, "The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim," Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research, Vols. XXI-XXII (New Haven, 1943), p. 67 (note 9 at bottom of page).

9. A. M. Honeyman, "The Evidence for Regnal Names Among the Hebrews," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 67 (1948), pp. 13-25. It has been suggested that Eliakim's name was changed by Necho to signify Judah's subjection to Egypt; see R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York, 1941), p. 490. The change of name has also been thought to have been a whim of Necho's; see A. T. E. Olmstead, History of Palestine and Syria (New York, 1939), p. 508.

10. Jer. 46:3-12.

hundreds of bronze and iron arrowheads whose points were broken or bent by the force with which they struck the walls were found at the scene of the conflict.<sup>11</sup>

In 602 B. C. E., in the seventh year of his reign, Jehoiakim was forced to acknowledge the overlordship of the Chaldeans.<sup>12</sup> In three years, however, during which time he no doubt maintained an undercover alliance with Egypt, Jehoiakim rebelled against his suzerain, Nebuchadnezzar. But retribution came swiftly, from "bands of Chaldeans, bands of Edomites, bands of Moabites and bands of Ammonites."<sup>13</sup> Nebuchadnezzar himself came and first attacked various cities in southern Judah. The strongly-fortified city of Lachish was almost completely razed;<sup>14</sup> Tell Beit Mirsim (probably Kiriath-sefer) and scores of large and small Jewish towns were at least partially destroyed.<sup>15</sup>

Before Jerusalem was besieged, Jehoiakim died, so that when the walls were breached and the city taken, in 598 B. C. E., his 18 year old son, Jehoiachin, suffered the fate due his father. Like Jehoahaz, his uncle, Jehoiachin reigned only three months, and was likewise exiled from his country. He was taken to Babylon, together with his mother, his wives, his attendants and the leading men of his kingdom. Artisans and smiths were also exiled, leaving behind only the more indigent of the people. In addition, the Temple and the palace were despoiled, and many of the golden vessels made in Solomon's time were shattered.<sup>16</sup>

11. A. T. Olmstead, "The Chaldean Dynasty," Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. II (Cincinnati, 1925), p. 34.

12. W. F. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," The Biblical Archaeologist (February, 1946), p. 2.

13. 2 Ki. 24:1,2.

14. G. E. Wright, "Lachish--Frontier Fortress of Judah," The Biblical Archaeologist (December, 1938), p. 29.

15. W. F. Albright, Archaeology of Palestine, Pelican Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex (Great Britain) 1949, p. 120.

16. 2 Ki. 24:11-16.

According to the reckoning of Jeremiah,<sup>17</sup> 3,023 souls were deported from Jerusalem; according to the book of Kings, the number was as great as 8,000<sup>18</sup> or 10,000.<sup>19</sup>

Jehoiachin's place was filled by an uncle, Mattaniah, as regent, since Jehoiachin was still considered king of Judah by the people of Judah and by the Babylonians, as was shown in the preceding chapter. To make it appear as though he were really king, Mattaniah assumed the crown-name of Zedekiah.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout this period of the final decline of Judah, even from the 13th year of Josiah's reign (626 B. C. E.), Jeremiah had prophesied the political catastrophes which would fall upon the people as a result of their moral wickedness. He pointed out how the Chaldeans were being used as an instrument of God to punish the Judahites for abandoning the God of their youth as a nation, for imitating the pagan rituals, and for not doing elementary justice. In powerful and scathing addresses, Jeremiah spoke his mind freely against the pro-Egyptian policies, first of Jehoiakim and now of Zedekiah whom he called a bad fig,<sup>21</sup> and against the self styled patriots of the people, the false prophets and the priests. As might be expected, Jeremiah's words angered these influential persons, and he barely saved himself on several occasions.

Among the exiles in Babylon, the prophet Ezekiel denounced the wickedness of Judah, and, like Jeremiah, urged the rebellious people of Judah to bow

17. Jer. 52:28.

18. 2 Ki. 24:16.

19. 2 Ki. 24:14.

20. See the work cited in note 9 above.

21. Jer. 24:8.

to the Chaldean yoke. A poet of vivid imagination, he chastised the people and foretold the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, Jerusalem became the center of a revolutionary movement against Babylon.<sup>22</sup> Envoys came from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, seeking alliances with Judah.<sup>23</sup> Zedekiah and his followers conspired with Egypt, just as Jehoiakim had done before him. Among the letters discovered at Lachish in 1935, and dating about to the end of 589 B. C. E., one tells of a royal mission on its way to Egypt, possibly an allusion to the intrigues between Judah and Egypt.<sup>24</sup> Finally, there was an open revolt, and the Chaldeans came to quell the insurrection. Utter devastation was loosed upon all the cities and towns of Judah, before Jerusalem was besieged. The Chaldeans apparently followed the practice of the Assyrians in subjugating the minor towns of a country before laying siege to the capital.<sup>25</sup> Lachish was again attacked and utterly destroyed: "Great portions of the city wall and gate-towers collapsed. So hot was the fire that much of the mud-brick was burned a bright red throughout."<sup>26</sup> Tell Beit Mirsim was also completely destroyed: "how terrific the conflagration by which it was destroyed may have been can be gauged by the fact that limestone was calcined and slivered, while adobe was burned red; the ruins were saturated with free lime, which the seepage of water caused to adhere to pottery and other objects until they became coated with a

22.

23. Jer. 27:3

24. W. F. Albright, "A Supplement to Jeremiah: The Lachish Ostraea", Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, No. 61 (February, 1936) p. 15.  
See also 53-103.

25. See p. 12 of the work of W. F. Albright cited in note 24.

26. See the work cited in note 15 above.

tenacious crust of lime."<sup>27</sup> All the towns in the Shephelah, Beth-Shemesh,<sup>28</sup> Azekah, Socoh, Adullam and Keilah were utterly destroyed.<sup>29</sup> The villages south of Hebron fell to the irresistible Chaldeans.<sup>30</sup> Even towns north of Jerusalem not mentioned in Biblical accounts as having been attacked, are now known to have been at least partially destroyed. Anathoth (Râs el-Kharrubeh)<sup>31</sup> and Gibeah (Tell el-Fûl)<sup>32</sup> succumbed entirely, while Bethel and Tell en-Nasbeh<sup>33</sup> were partly demolished by the Chaldeans. "Ruins discovered at Tell Qasila in recent excavations on the northern outskirts of Tel Aviv testify to the destruction and levelling of this coastal area during this same period."<sup>34</sup> "Excavations in Judah since 1926 have shown with increasing weight of evidence that the Chaldean destruction of Jewish towns was thorough-going...the land was an archaeological tabula rasa for that period."<sup>35</sup>

The siege of Jerusalem lasted a year and a half, from January, 588 B.C.E., to the end of July, 587 B.C.E.<sup>36</sup> In the midst of this extended siege, an Egyptian army ventured into Judah and diverted the attention of the Chaldeans.<sup>37</sup> The

27. Albright, "The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim," p. 68.

28. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," p. 6.

29. Olmstead, History of Palestine and Syria, p. 527.

30. Albright, op. cit., p. 4.

31. See E. P. Blair, A. Bergman, and W. F. Albright on 'Anâtâ-Anathoth, Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, No. 62 (April, 1936), pp. 18-26.

32. Albright, "The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim, p. 74.

33. G. E. Wright, Biblical Archaeologist, Vol. 10 (December, 1947), pp. 69-77. See also C. C. McCown, Tell en-Nasbeh, 2 vols. (Berkeley and New Haven, 1947), Vol. 1, p. 203.

34. ק"מ"ן מ"ס"ר, החפירות ק"מ"ן, (הכ"ח, ר"ע), נ"ר 9

35. W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore, 1940), p. 246.

36. Jer. 39:1, 2.

37. Jer. 37:5.

The latter returned, however, and ultimately breached the walls of the city. Zedekiah and his followers fled by night, but they were captured by the Chaldeans at the plains of Jericho and taken to Riblah. There the regent was compelled to watch the slaying of his sons, and was himself blinded and sent to Babylon in chains. The city of Jerusalem was put to fire and the walls torn down. The Temple, the palace, and every sizable were burned. Whatever gold and silver objects remained after the spoliation in 598 B.C.E. were now removed. The leading figures of Temple and court were either done away with at Riblah or exiled to Babylon.<sup>38</sup>

During the siege and capture of Jerusalem, the Edomites, a foe of Israel since the time of Jacob and Esau, sided with the Chaldeans against Judah.<sup>39</sup> This action by Edom was completely unexpected since an Edomite delegation had come to Zedekiah early in his regency, wishing to become an ally of Judah against the common foe, Babylonia.<sup>40</sup> Hence while appearing to be a friend, Edom turned out to be a treacherous enemy. Intense feelings of revenge were aroused among the people of Judah, finding expression in the writings of the prophets.<sup>41</sup>

Gedaliah, son of Ahikam who had protected Jeremiah,<sup>42</sup> and grandson of Shaphan who had been a power under Josiah,<sup>43</sup> was appointed governor of the pitifully reduced state. As soon as this became known, a number of Jewish officers and men who had escaped the spears and arrows of the Chaldeans went to the new governor who was residing in Mizpah. Though he sought to make the best of the situation, Gedaliah

38. 2 Ki. 25:8-21.

39. Obad. 10-14.

40. Jer. 27:3

41. See Jer. 49:7-22, Ezek. 25:12-14, 35, Isa. 34:5-17, 63:1-6, Obadiah 1-14. See also Ps. 137:7 and Chap. IV below.

42. Jer. 26:24.

43. 2 Ki. 22:3.

was treacherously assassinated by a member of the royal family, as were also his followers and the Chaldeans who were stationed at Mizpah. Fearing the wrath of the Chaldeans, a number of Jews, led by Gedaliah's lieutenant, Johanan-ben-Kareach, fled to Egypt,<sup>44</sup> taking along with them Jeremiah and his scribe, Baruch.<sup>45</sup> Some of the descendants of these exiles were settled in Elephantine in Upper Egypt by the time of the Persian invasion in 525 B.C.E.<sup>46</sup> Other descendants lived near Hermopolis in Middle Egypt, according to papyri discovered there in 1944.<sup>47</sup> These Aramaic papyri mention the cult of the Queen of Heaven against which Jeremiah had tried to turn earlier Jewish colonists.<sup>48</sup>

In 582 B.C.E., a third deportation from Judah to Babylon took place, apparently the result of some ferment or uprising. All told, according to Jeremiah's computation, 4600 persons were exiled to Babylon in the period between 598 B.C.E. and 582 B.C.E.<sup>49</sup>

Among the Exiles in Babylon, there were many who were unhappy and who longed to return home, and others who adjusted to their new homes and who participated in the business life or in the great building projects of Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel, who had earlier prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, now held out hope for the Exiles. He told them that they would be gathered

44. 2 Ki. 25:22-26.

45. Jer. 43:6.

46. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," p. 5.

47. W. F. Albright, "The Rediscovery of Civilizations," Commentary (December, 1948), p. 576.

48. Jer. 44:15ff.

49. Jer. 52:30.

together and returned to their homes in Judea and that their relationship with God would be continued as of old, but in a new and pure spirit.<sup>50</sup> He visualized the erection of a new Temple and the reapportionment of the entire country among the tribes of Israel.<sup>51</sup> Jehoiachin, still called "king of Judah" in official Babylonian documents,<sup>52</sup> was released from prison about 561 B.C.E. and given a place at the table of Evil-Merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's son.<sup>53</sup> As long as Jehoiachin was alive, there was visible hope of restoration. territory as a result of the invasion of their home in Another prophet of hope and of vision was the rhapsodic poet, Deutero-Isaiah, who spoke words of comfort and strength. He foretold the end of captivity and suffering, and the restoration of Jerusalem for themselves.<sup>54</sup> territory

in the northern hill-country of Judah became considerably reduced in size, and was now surrounded by hostile neighbors. Awake, awake, Stand up, O Jerusalem neighbors. That hast drunk at the hand of the Lord The cup of His fury;<sup>54</sup> Such was the king of Persia, succeeded in breaking through the fertile land of Babylon, and in replacing the Babylonian Empire with the Persian Empire. Put on thy strength, O Zion; Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city.<sup>55</sup> religious reasons, Cyrus adopted a policy of conciliation toward deported peoples. After a year as king,

In stirring language this lyric poet foretold a glorious future for all

56. Jer. 52:16.  
mankind, a reward for all who kept justice and righteousness.  
57. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," p. 6.

50. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, p. 247. See also Nelson Glueck, *On the Edge of the Jordan and the Civilization of the Amorites*, *Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 10 (December, 1947) pp. 77-84.

51. Ezek. 11:14-21.  
52. Ezek. 10-18.

53. Ezek. 36:5, and Glueck, *op. cit.*  
54. W. F. Albright, "King Joiachin in Exile," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. V (December, 1942), p. 52. See Chapter II, *Christianity*, p. 247.

55. *Isaiah*, "The Children of Men," pp. 49-55.

56. Glueck, *History of Palestine and Syria*, p. 556.

57. Isa. 51:17.

58. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander

59. Isa. 52:1-3 (under figure 5).

he issued an edict calling for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and for the return of the sacred vessels taken from the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>61</sup>

The response by the Jews in Babylonia was not as great as might be expected, since the majority had settled and established themselves comfortably in Babylonia. Egyptian papyri and Babylonian business documents of the 5th century B.C.E. indicate that many Jews had become wealthy and had assumed Babylonian names, assimilating with the native population. Furthermore, the trip back to Judah was dangerous and expensive, and conditions there unsettled and uncertain.<sup>62</sup>

A considerable number of Jews did return, under the leadership of Sheshbazzar,<sup>63</sup> but hardly enough to bring about a quick restoration. Archaeological excavations indicate that the resettlement of Judah was a slow process. Many of the towns that had been destroyed were never inhabited again; others were partly reoccupied at some later date; still others were resettled only after a long period of abandonment.<sup>64</sup>

For 18 years after the edict of Cyrus there was very little reconstruction in the now tiny province which extended from Bethel to Beth-zur, a distance of about 25 miles. Adverse economic conditions interfered with the plans of those who returned, and made possible only a bare existence.<sup>65</sup>

61. Ezra 6:3-5.  
 62. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," pp. 7-8. See also A.T.W. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire (Chicago, 1948), Chap. XXVI, pp. 322-370.  
 63. Ezra 1:8.  
 64. Albright, Archaeology of Palestine, pp. 141-2.  
 65. Haggar 1:2-6, 10-11.

he issued an edict calling for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and for the return of the sacred vessels taken from the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>64</sup>

The response by the Jews in Babylonia was not as great as might be expected, since the majority had settled and established themselves comfortably in Babylonia. Egyptian papyri and Babylonian business documents of the 5th century B.C.E. indicate that many Jews had become wealthy and had assumed Babylonian names, assimilating with the native population. Furthermore, the trip back to Judah was dangerous and expensive, and conditions there unsettled and uncertain.<sup>65</sup> A considerable number of Jews did return, under the leadership of Sheshbazzar,<sup>66</sup> but hardly enough to bring about a quick restoration. Archaeological excavations indicate that the resettlement of Judah was a slow process. Many of the towns that had been destroyed were never inhabited again; others were partly reoccupied at some later date; still others were resettled only after a long period of abandonment.<sup>67</sup>

For 18 years after the Edict of Cyrus there was very little reconstruction in the now tiny province which extended from Bethel to Beth-zur, a distance of about 25 miles. Adverse economic conditions interfered with the plans of those who returned, and made possible only a bare existence.<sup>68</sup>

64. Ezra 6:3-5.

65. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," pp. 7-8. See also A.T.E. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire (Chicago, 1948), Chap. XXVI, pp. 355-370.

66. Ezra 1:8.

67. Albright, Archaeology of Palestine, pp. 141-2.

68. Haggai 1:5-6, 10-11.

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About the time that Darius ascended the throne of the Persian Empire in 522 B.C.E., Zerubbabel, son of Jehoiachin's eldest son, Shealtiel,<sup>69</sup> and Joshua, the new high priest, came to Jerusalem. In August, 520 B.C.E., the prophet Haggai began to urge the people, who were concerned only with their own houses, to take up the rebuilding of the Temple. Stirred by Haggai, and by Zechariah shortly afterwards, Zerubbabel and Joshua and the people went to work. Men gathered in Jerusalem and built a new altar for the burnt offerings. Money was given to the masons and stonecutters. Food and drink and oil were given to the Sidonians and Tyrians who were to bring cedar wood from Lebanon. Levites, 20 years old and up, were appointed for their work.<sup>70</sup> Despite the hostility of Tattenai, the satrap of Syria,<sup>71</sup> and of the Samaritans,<sup>72</sup> building progressed until the Temple was completed in March, 515 B.C.E.<sup>73</sup>

69. 1 Chron. 3:17.

70. Ezra 3:1-9.

71. Ezra 5:1ff. See also A.T.E. Olmstead, "Tattenai, Governor of 'Across the River,'" Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 3 (1944), p. 46.

72. Ezra 4:1ff.

73. Ezra 6:15. See also Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," p. 8. For the background of this period, see also the work by A.T.E. Olmstead, cited in note 65, Chaps. X (pp. 135 ff.) and XXII (pp. 302-317).

## Chapter Four

## Edom in the Old Testament Outside the Book of Lamentations

Edom makes its first appearance in biblical history in the 13th century B.C.E.,<sup>1</sup> when the Israelites requested permission to pass through the land of Edom.<sup>2</sup> Having reached Kadesh, the Israelites wished to travel northwards along the King's Highway, intending to enter Canaan from the east. It was necessary, however, to ask for permission to traverse the kingdom of Edom since its borders were strongly fortified both by stone fortresses and by natural precipitous walls.<sup>3</sup> Permission was refused by the king of Edom who backed up his refusal by coming out to meet the Israelites with "a multitude of people and a strong arm."

The hostility shown by the Edomites towards the Israelites set a pattern for the relationship between the two peoples throughout their history. There was a constant, bitter struggle between the two nations, marked by continuous warfare. The main cause for this conflict was the ambition of each to control the trade route which ran through the Wadi Arabah and to possess the copper and iron mines along this highway.<sup>4</sup> When David extended his kingdom southwards and conquered the Edomites,<sup>5</sup> exploitation of these mines, in addition to the use of the outlet to the Red Sea at the southern end of the trade route, began to serve important economic ends for his kingdom. The fabulous prosperity of Solomon's reign was doubtless due in part to the mining and smelting of copper, and to the plying of

1. For this chronology, see W. F. Albright, "The Oracles of Balaam," Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. LXIII (Philadelphia, 1944), p. 227-228; see also Nelson Glueck, "The Civilization of the Edomites," Biblical Archaeologist, Vol. X (December, 1947), pp. 77-84.

2. Num. 20:14f.

3. ~~4~~ Glueck, op. cit.

4. Ibid.; see also Nelson Glueck, "The Boundaries of Edom," Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. XI (Cincinnati, 1936), pp. 141-157.

5. 2 Sam. 8:13-14; 1 Ki. 11:15-16; Ps. 60:2.

sea-trade between Ezion-geber and Ophir.<sup>6</sup> During Solomon's reign, however, Hadad, prince of Edom, who had escaped to Egypt at the time of David's conquest of Edom, returned home to harass Solomon.<sup>7</sup>

After the division of the United Kingdom into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah about 926 B.C.E., Edom remained subject to the latter and was governed by a deputy governor appointed by the king of Judah.<sup>8</sup> This deputy governor participated in a war against Moab with Joram, king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.<sup>9</sup> Jehoshaphat attempted to renew the commercial enterprises of Solomon, but was unsuccessful when his ships broke on the rocks of Ezion-geber.<sup>10</sup> The Edomites attacked Engedi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea,<sup>11</sup> during his reign, and eventually won their independence after his son Joram came to the throne.<sup>12</sup>

Edom's independence was curtailed approximately a century later when Amaziah, king of Judah, captured Sela and renamed it Joktheel,<sup>13</sup> and when his son, Uzziah, recovered Elath (apparently now the name of the city formerly called Ezion-geber). Control of all Edom was thus returned to Judah.<sup>14</sup>

6. See the work cited by N. Glueck in note 1.

7. 1 Ki. 11:17-19, 25.

8. 1 Ki. 22:48.

9. 2 Ki. 3.

10. 1 Ki. 22:49.

11. 2 Chron. 20:16.

12. 2 Ki. 8:20-22.

13. 2 Ki. 14:7; 2 Chron. 25:11-12.

14. 2 Ki. 14:22; 2 Chron. 26:1-2.

It was during the reign of Uzziah that the prophet Amos denounced Edom for her transgressions against Israel, for her cruelty and perpetual anger.<sup>15</sup> Many scholars from the time of Wellhausen have doubted the authenticity of this prophecy, asserting that the charge against Edom is more justifiable after 587 B.C.E. than around 750 B.C.E.,<sup>16</sup> or refer, even later, to an Edomite attack on Jerusalem in 485 B.C.E.<sup>17</sup> It has been shown above, however, that unrelenting hostility between the two nations existed from the 13th century B.C.E. onwards.<sup>18</sup> This hostility often broke out into warfare and caused such behavior by Edom as to warrant the denunciation by Amos. Furthermore, the Edomites were known to have engaged in slave traffic<sup>19</sup> and they took captives from Judah whenever the opportunity arose,<sup>20</sup> presumably for this traffic. Amos may have had this in mind when speaking of the cruelty of the Edomites. As to referring this prophecy to 587 B.C.E. or to 485 B.C.E., there is not the slightest hint ~~of any~~ <sup>of any</sup> Edomite attack on Jerusalem, ~~such as~~ <sup>such as</sup> took place in 587 B.C.E., so that these references of the scholars are implausible.

15. Amos 1:11-12.

16. Julius A. Bewer, The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Vol. 1 (New York, 1949), p. 20; Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York, 1941), p. 579; S. R. Driver (mentions Wellhausen, G. A. Smith and W.R. Harper as considering this prophecy a post-exilic addition to the text, presumably agreeing with him on applying this prophecy to 587 B.C.E.), Joel and Amos (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, 2nd edition, Cambridge, England, 1942), p. 144; C. C. Torrey, Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy (New York, 1930), p. 78.

17. Sheldon Blank, "Studies in Post-Exilic Universalism," Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. XI (Cincinnati, 1936), pp. 159-191. Prof. Blank includes J. Morganstern and S. Cook as holding the same opinion concerning the prophecies on Edom as that which he presents in his article.

18. See also: 470 'נר (י'ר, י'ר, י'ר) כ'כ, המקרא, המקרא, המקרא, המקרא.

19. Amos 1:6,9.

20. 2 Chron. 28:17.

21. Amos 9:1-15.

Another passage in Amos deals with Edom,<sup>21</sup> but from the allusions to the "fallen tabernacle of David," the "return of the captivity" and to the "waste cities," the entire section may be considered to be by an exilic or post-exilic author.<sup>22</sup> The "tabernacle of David" probably refers to the "house" or "dynasty" of David, and the "fall of the dynasty" would refer to the end of the kingdom of Judah which took place in 587 B.C.E., rather than to 485 B.C.E. Those who believe in an attack on Jerusalem in 485 B.C.E. maintain that the attack was made by "the neighbors of Judah,"<sup>23</sup> and not by Edom alone,<sup>24</sup> so that the mention of Edom in this passage by itself would not corroborate the belief of these scholars.

In 735 B.C.E., while Ahaz, Uzziah's grandson, was occupied in the Syro-Ephraimitic War, defending himself against Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, the Edomites reoccupied Elath.<sup>24</sup> The Arabah likewise was soon afterwards retaken by the Edomites, since Judah was never again strong enough to dispute their control over it.<sup>25</sup>

Towards the end of the 8th century B.C.E., Isaiah<sup>26</sup> foretold a day of vengeance in which "The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of "Edom."<sup>27</sup>

21. Amos 9:8-15.

22. ~~F. A.~~ Bewer; ~~18p.~~ cit., p. 34.; ~~R. H.~~ Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 580.

23. ~~S.~~ Blank, op. cit., p. 172.

24. 2 Ki. 16:5-6.

25. ~~N.~~ Glueck, "The Boundaries of Edom," p. 152.

26. Isaiah 34.

27. Isaiah 34:6.

In powerful and descriptive poetry, the prophet wrote of Edom:

"From generation to generation it shall lie waste;  
None shall pass through it for ever and ever.  
But the pelican and the bittern shall possess it,  
And the owl and the raven shall dwell therein."<sup>28</sup>

The prophet is obviously incensed by Edomite treatment of his people, but here again scholars have questioned the authenticity of this chapter.<sup>29</sup> The occasion for Isaiah's remarks is said by them to be the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E., an attack on Jerusalem by the neighbors of Judah in 485 B.C.E., or the eternal conflict between Israel and all her enemies who are included in the term "Edom."

Here again it must be pointed out that Edom and Judah were enemies of long standing, waged wars against each other, struggled for control of the Arabah, its mines and its outlet to the Red Sea, used captives as slaves in the mines,<sup>30</sup> until the kingdoms of both were overcome by the Babylonians in the 6th century B.C.E. Furthermore, there is no mention in the entire chapter of the Edomite attack on Jerusalem which took place over 100 years later or of the alleged attack in 485 B.C.E., 200 years after Isaiah's time. As far as Edom's representing all the enemies of Judah, this concept did not come into being until after the Exile.<sup>31</sup>

28. Isaiah 34:10-11.

29. George F. Moore, *The Literature of the Old Testament* (New York, 1913), p. 157; M. Z. Segal, op. cit., p. 309; R. H. Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 421; C.C. Torrey, op. cit., p. 78; J. A. Bewer, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 67; S. Blank, op. cit., p. 172.

30. H. Glueck, "The Boundaries of Edom," p. 148.

31. C.C. Torrey, op. cit., p. 78.

32. Isa. 34:10-11.

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Jeremiah also prophesied shame and destruction for Edom,<sup>32</sup> although his denunciation is mixed with verses almost identical to passages in Obadiah and in other parts of the book of Jeremiah. Verses 7-8 and 10-13 seem to constitute Jeremiah's original statement concerning Edom and were probably uttered before the fall of Jerusalem since nothing is said of the destruction of the city.<sup>33</sup>

Because of the nature of this passage in Jeremiah, there has been ~~unanimity~~ <sup>unanimity</sup> among scholars in considering whatever verses not found in Obadiah or elsewhere in Jeremiah as of late composition.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, we may consider the original statement denoted above an outburst due to the same causes that provoked the prophecies of Amos and Isaiah.

There is no reason to believe that the hostility between the nations ceased or that the attitude of each to the other became friendly, as has been suggested.<sup>35</sup> Edom did seek an alliance with Judah in the early 6th century B.C.E., it is true; envoys were sent to Jerusalem to invite their "brethren" in Judah to join hands against the common enemy, Babylonia.<sup>36</sup> But when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, Edom was discovered to be on his side, fighting against Judah.<sup>37</sup> This act of treachery prompted Ezekiel's prophecy of utter destruction for Edom,<sup>38</sup> Deutero-Isaiah's description of vengeance,<sup>39</sup> the Psalmist's cry not to forget the day of

Jeremiah and the prophecies of Joel.

32. Jer. 49:7-22.

33. ~~M. Z.~~ Segal, op. cit., p. 379.

34. G. F. Moore, op. cit., p. 170; G. A. Smith, Jeremiah (4th ed., New York, 1929), p. 20; R. H. Pfeiffer, op. cit., pp. 507-585-6.

35. ~~R. H.~~ Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 584.

36. Jer. 27:3.

37. Obad. 10-14.

38. Ezek. 25:12-14; 35.

39. Isa. 63:1-6.

Jerusalem,<sup>40</sup> and the prophecies of Joel,<sup>41</sup> Obadiah<sup>42</sup> and Malachi.<sup>43</sup>

Those scholars who have maintained that there was an attack on Jerusalem in 485 B.C.E. claim that all the prophecies dealing with Edom are late insertions and refer to this event of the early 5th century B.C.E. Perhaps under the influence of Torrey,<sup>44</sup> they do not find "in the events around 587 the grounds for hostility against Edom," but do find evidence of friendliness between Judah and her neighbors, including Edom.<sup>45</sup> They overlook, therefore, the long period of hostility between Judah and Edom. They overlook attacks against Judah by "bands of Chaldeans, bands of Edomites, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites"<sup>46</sup> in 598 B.C.E. They overlook Jeremiah's advice against listening to the "magicians, dreamers and sorcerers" sent by Judah's neighbors to discuss an alliance with Judah.<sup>47</sup> They overlook the time of Judah's crisis when not ~~one~~<sup>one</sup> of these "friendly" neighbors fought as an ally against the common foe.

Blank makes the point that Judah was at peace with her neighbors during the century after the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>48</sup> This point is not valid for two reasons. First, Gedaliah who had been appointed governor over Judah following Jerusalem's

40. Ps. 137:7.

41. Joel 3:19.

42. Obad. 1-14.

43. Malachi 1:2-4.

44. See Chapter II for Torrey's position on the Destruction of Judah.

45. Blank, op. cit., p. 172.

46. 2 Ki. 24:2.

47. Jer. 27:3.

48. Blank, op. cit., p. 173.

← destruction was killed by a member of the royal family who was incited to carry out this act by the king of Ammon.<sup>49</sup> Secondly, the Edomites moved into and occupied the southern part of Judah,<sup>50</sup> earning further denunciation.<sup>51</sup>

The contention by Blank that "an event which occurred about 485 B.C.E. was the real occasion for the utterances directed against the immediate neighbors of Judah,"<sup>52</sup> has little to commend it as far as Edom is concerned. In the same volume, the preceding article states: "there commenced a rapid process of disintegration of the power of Edom, which was completed by the 5th century B.C.E."<sup>53</sup> Therefore, Edom was unable to be party to an attack in 485 B.C.E. which would be violent enough to cause such prophetic denunciations as were uttered with reference to 587 B.C.E. Edom had had a long struggle with Judah, and had had to contend with Assyrian and Babylonian armies taking a toll on her strength, and possibly with Persian armies also. And in the 6th century B. C.E., Nabatean Arabs appeared in Edom, slowly driving the Edomites out of their kingdom, consequently weakening and destroying the Edomite state. Those Edomites who remained in their homeland were in time absorbed by the Nabateans and those who invaded southern Judah became Judaized.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, there is no evidence of an Edomite attack on Jerusalem around 485 B.C.E. There are no archaeological remains which testify to Edomite destruction

49. Jer. 40:13-41:2.

50. W. F. Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," Biblical Archaeologist (February, 1946), p. 6.

51. Ezek. 36:5.

52. Blank, op. cit., p. 174.

53. Glueck, "The Boundaries of Edom," p. 142.

54. Glueck, "The Civilization of the Edomites," pp. 79-80.

of Jerusalem or of any towns in southern Judah. Recent excavations at Tell Qasila showed no ruins along the coast dating to this period.<sup>55</sup> There is a gap in pottery remains from the 6th century B.C.E. to the 4th century B.C.E., from the Iron Age pottery of Judah to the pottery characteristic of the Persian period.<sup>56</sup> There is no 5th century pottery showing the influence of the Edomites or of any of her neighbors.

Even the encroachment of the Edomites on the southern part of the country was slight since no strong Edomite element is known to have become part of Jerusalem or any of the large towns or cities.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, there is no evidence to prove that Persian control of Judea was so weak around 485 B.C.E. as to permit Edom to attack Jerusalem. At just that time a letter of accusation against the inhabitants of Jerusalem was sent to Xerxes,<sup>58</sup> but so firm was his hold over the country that no special action was required by him even though he passed through Judea shortly afterwards, on his way to Egypt.<sup>59</sup> The extent of Persian power at that time may be gauged by the fact that Egypt was retaken in 484 and preparations were being made for the invasion of continental Greece.<sup>60</sup>

Under these considerations, therefore, there is no evidence which would corroborate the suggestion of an attack on Jerusalem in 485 B.C.E. by Edom and the other neighbors of Judea.

55: 16 'NY (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, הַמְּדִינָה) קִסְלָה

56. W. F. Albright, Archaeology of Palestine, Pelican Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex (Great Britain) 1949, p. 142.

57. Torrey, op. cit., p. 78.

58. Ezra 4:4, 6.

59. A.T.E. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire (Chicago, 1948), pp. 234-235.

60. A.T.E. Olmstead, Palestine and Syria (New York, 1931), p. 579.

## Chapter Five

## Historical Evidence From the Book of Lamentations

Lamentations is a book of poetry in which the verses containing precise historical data are few in number. It is nevertheless possible to arrive at a definite conclusion regarding the historical background of the Book or, more specifically, regarding the date of the events which it describes. This conclusion is that the Book is concerned with conditions in Jerusalem after the fall of the city to the Babylonians in 587 B.C.E. There is therefore no support for the theory that Jerusalem was attacked by Edom and other neighboring states about 485 B.C.E. and that the book of Lamentations deals with events of this later date.

The reasons which lead to the foregoing conclusion are as follows:

1. Lam. 1:1 speaks of a time when Jerusalem was full of people, great among the nations, a princess among the states; 1:6 tells of Jerusalem's former splendor; 1:10 mentions the city's treasures; 1:15 remarks ~~and~~ the mighty men who once graced the city; 2:1 alludes to Jerusalem as the "beauty of Israel;" 2:15 describes Jerusalem as the "perfection of beauty." These verses, and others, tell of the grandeur and splendor that obtained in Jerusalem before its destruction. On the other hand, the Book as a whole is devoted to an awesome description of the loneliness, emptiness, desolation, hunger and devastation that existed in the city after its fall.

This sharp contrast existed only before and after 587, and only a person who knew the city before and after its siege could appreciate this difference and write about it. Such a contrast did not character-

ize Jerusalem before and after 485. As shown in Chapter 3, only a portion of the Exiles returned from Babylonia after 538, the reconstruction of Jerusalem was slow, and economic conditions were difficult. Discussing the condition of Jerusalem during the period of sixty years after the Edict of Cyrus, Albright wrote: "... efforts to reconstruct the ancient city had been thwarted by the officials of Samaria, and Jerusalem was surrounded with ruins."<sup>1</sup> Since there were no remarkable changes as described in Lamentations before and after 485, the Book must have been written after 587, and must be taken to refer to the events which followed the fall of the city at that time.

2. Several verses, such as Lam. 1:6; 2:2,6,9; 4:20, mention a king and princes who were rejected and profaned by God's wrath at the time of the conquest of Jerusalem. Obviously these verses must refer to a time in Judah's history when there was a royal court in the city and when this court was overthrown. These conditions are met in 587 when Zedekiah, the last king to sit on the throne of David, and the royalty left behind after 598<sup>2</sup> were taken captive.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, these verses must refer to 587 rather than to 485 when neither king nor princes were in evidence.

1. "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," The Biblical Archaeologist (February, 1946), p. 10.
2. 2 Ki. 24:11-16.
3. 2 Ki. 25:5-11.

3. There are several allusions in Lamentations to a captivity and exile. Lam. 1:3,5,6 and 18 may be cited in this connection. The only exile in which the people of Judah are known to have been involved was the Babylonian Exile<sup>4</sup> which began in 598 and which was nominally ended with the Edict of Cyrus in 538<sup>5</sup>. Since no later exile is known, it is impossible to ascribe these references to the period following 485. They must rather be understood to point to the Exile which began in 598 and which was augmented in 587 and in 582.

4. According to those who believe that Jerusalem was attacked in 485, Edom earned the hatred of the Jews by being among the attack-<sup>6</sup>ers at this time rather than for anything the Edomites did in 587. However, the combination of a denunciation of Edom in Lam. 4:21-22 with statements of betrayal (1:2) and deceit (1:19) by Judah's friends makes it evident that these references are to Edom's behavior in 587 when Edom turned against Judah and fought on the side of Nebuchadnezzar. As was shown in Chapters 3 and 4 above, Edom had been among those who sought an alliance against Babylonia in 589, but became an enemy of Judah during the Babylonian assault on Jerusalem. This is the treachery of an erstwhile friend which took place in 587, and which fits perfectly the description of the verses cited.

4. 2 Ki. 24:12-16, 25:11; Jer. 52:30.

5. Ezra 1:1ff.

6. S. Blank, "Studies in Post-Exilic Universalism," Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. XI (Cincinnati, 1936), pp. 159-191.

5. Lam. 2:2.5 speak of strongholds in Judah. There were strongholds and fortified cities throughout the country before 587, but by that date they had been overwhelmed and razed to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar's forces, as was shown in Chapter 3 above. Furthermore, there were no strongholds to speak of in 485. These verses, therefore, must refer to strongholds which existed before the Babylonian destruction in the early part of the sixth century.

6. Lam. 1:7 (  $\text{לֹא־יָשַׁב בָּהּ$  ) and verses with the refrain  $\text{לֹא־יָשַׁב בָּהּ}$  (1:2,9,16,21) indicate that Jerusalem was completely abandoned by her neighbors. The only time that such a situation could exist was during and after 587. When Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonians, no help from any outside source was forthcoming. As reported above, Edom had turned traitor, and according to Lam. 4:17 the people looked in vain towards Egypt for assistance. After the fall of the city there was likewise no one to "comfort her." The verses cited could not possibly be referred to 485 inasmuch as Persia<sup>7</sup> had adopted a friendly policy towards deported peoples. Cyrus had made a pronouncement permitting the Jewish Exiles to return to their homeland and to rebuild their Temple. After Cyrus' death and into the fifth century this policy of conciliation was continued, so that Persia may be considered as having been friendly to Jerusalem before and after 485. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the verses cited describe Jerusalem around the time of its fall in 587.

7.

7. See notes 62 and 63 in Chapter 3.

7. Surprise at the fact that Jerusalem could be conquered is expressed in Lam. 4:12. Jerusalem had withstood the vicissitudes of time and nations for centuries, and was not finally overwhelmed and destroyed until 587. After this date, however, no one could be surprised if what happened before should take place again. No one in 485, for example, would wonder at the possibility of Jerusalem's being taken. There can, therefore, be no doubt that Lam. 4:12 is applicable only to 587.

8. Similarities of language have been found between the book of Lamentations and Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Second Isaiah and certain Psalms.<sup>8</sup> The three Books and the pertinent Psalms are all dated as of the late seventh and the first half of the sixth centuries. On the other hand, not many similarities of language have been noted between Lamentations and Books dated as of the late sixth and fifth centuries, such as Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra and Nehemiah. This fact may be considered as additional evidence that the book of Lamentations was written in the sixth century and that it deals with history of that period, meaning with events in Jerusalem just after 587.

These then are the reasons which support the belief that a Babylonian destruction in the sixth century B.C.E. is the basis of the book of Lamentations, rather than an Edomite destruction in the fifth century B.C.E. The evidence derived from verses in the Book, considered in the light of the historical data established in the earlier chapters, appears weighty enough to be conclusive.<sup>9</sup>

8. R.H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York, 1942), p. 722.

chapters, appears weighty enough to be conclusive.<sup>9</sup>

9. The following commentaries were consulted in connection with this chapter but contained no material that was pertinent to the subject discussed in this chapter:

Max Löhr, Die Klagelieder des Jeremias (Göttingen, 1891).

H. Ewald, Die Dichter des Alten Bundes (2nd. ed., Göttingen, 1866), pp. 321ff.

K. Budde, Fünf Megillot in Kurzer Hand-Commentar Zum Alten Testament (Leipzig, 1898).

H. Jahn, "Das hebraische Leichenleid in Rahman der Volkerdichtung" in Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Giessen, 1923).

A. W. Streane, Lamentations, Cambridge (England), 1903.

S. Goldman, Lamentations in The Five Megilloth, Hindhead, Surrey (England), 1946.

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