

The Northern Origin of Nehemiah 9 *

Many readers of the book of Nehemiah have noted that ch. 9 seems out of place within the narrative as a whole⁽¹⁾. There has also been considerable debate as to whether or not it belongs to the so-called Ezra Memoirs⁽²⁾. One of the most original solutions to these problems was that of A. C. Welch. More than sixty years ago he proposed that Nehemiah 9 originated as “a litany written for the worship of Northern Israel on the occasion of a day of fasting, confession, and prayer”⁽³⁾.

Among the main points which formed the basis for this conclusion were the following: (a) v. 26 refers to the slaying of prophets, an act which recalls the policy of Ahab recorded in 1 Kgs 19,10; (b) the catastrophe which befell the nation referred to in v. 32 is dated from the time of the kings of Assyria, a situation which fits

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For the material on the infinitive absolute, I have benefited greatly from detailed correspondence with Shlomo Izre'el of Tel-Aviv University. I am indebted to him not only for his assistance on this specific subject, which included furnishing me with a copy of the study cited in n. 15 with permission to cite it freely, but also for a critical reading of an earlier draft of the entire article.

(1) For discussion see M. BEHM, “Nehemias 9” *BZ* 1 (1957) 59-69; and F. C. FENSHAM, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Grand Rapids, MI 1982) 222.

(2) For the view that Nehemiah 9 is part of the Ezra Memoirs, see C. C. TORREY, *Ezra Studies* (Chicago 1910) 252-284; and D. J. A. CLINES, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (Grand Rapids, MI 1984) 6. For arguments to the contrary, see H. G. M. WILLIAMSON, *Ezra and Nehemiah* (Sheffield 1987) 26.

(3) A. C. WELCH, “The Source of Nehemiah IX”, *ZAW* 47 (1929) 130-137, in particular 136. See also A. C. WELCH, “The Share of N. Israel in the Restoration of the Temple Worship”, *ZAW* 48 (1930) 175-187.

the history of the northern kingdom of Israel; and (c) there is no mention of exile and restoration, events which otherwise are central to Ezra-Nehemiah. Furthermore, (d) the lengthy recitation of the history of the nation in vv. 6-37 is completely silent regarding David and Solomon, the two most glorious kings who ruled from Jerusalem⁽⁴⁾; and (e) there are numerous nexuses between this chapter and Deuteronomy 32⁽⁵⁾, a poem which almost certainly originated in northern Israel⁽⁶⁾.

In my review of the literature, I have not found a single instance of an exegete who has been convinced of Welch's hypothesis. His article is often quoted, and many of its specific ideas are accepted, but his view that Nehemiah 9 originated in northern Israel is simply never referred to. I am not sure how to account for this strange silence. Nevertheless, I believe Welch was correct, as the new approach taken in this article will attempt to demonstrate. The avenue I have in mind is the linguistic one, based on recent progress in the dialect geography of ancient Hebrew. This research affords us an objective tool by which to judge Welch's position that Nehemiah 9 originated in northern Israel.

Before presenting the evidence, it is necessary to say a few words about this new avenue in the field of Hebrew linguistics. It is obvious that the vast majority of biblical literature was composed in Judah in general or in Jerusalem in particular or by exiles from Judah and Jerusalem. Thus, the regional standard of the Bible may be called Judahite Hebrew (JH). But stories which emanate from the north, such as those concerning the northern judges or the northern kings, often reflect different grammatical usages⁽⁷⁾. In other

⁽⁴⁾ F. C. FENSHAM, "Neh. 9 and Pss. 105, 106, and 136: Post-Exilic Historical Traditions in Poetic Form", *JNSL* 9 (1981) 44-45; and T. C. ESKENAZI, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah* (Atlanta 1988) 22.

⁽⁵⁾ Some were noted by Welch; see also S. HIDAL, "Some Reflections on Deuteronomy 32", *ASTI* 11 (1977-78) 15-21, especially 19.

⁽⁶⁾ O. EISSFELDT, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32,1-43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes* (Berlin 1958) 42; and E. NIELSEN, "Historical Perspectives and Geographical Horizons: On the Question of North-Israelite Elements in Deuteronomy", *ASTI* 11 (1977-78) 82.

⁽⁷⁾ Many have been collected in the two commentaries by C. F. BURNEY, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford 1903) 208-209; and *The Book of Judges* (London 1918) 171-176. For Kings see also M. COGAN - H. TADMOR, *II Kings* (Garden City, NY 1988) 9.

instances, these non-standard usages appear in texts where style-switching (a specific type of code-switching) is evident⁽⁸⁾. These divergences are to be attributed to a northern Hebrew dialect⁽⁹⁾. Moreover, most of these same usages are paralleled in the languages spoken to the north of Israel (Aramaic, Phoenician, and Ugaritic⁽¹⁰⁾) and in Trans-Jordan (Deir 'Alla, Ammonite and Moabite). The results of this line of research are: (a) we now are able to isolate "Israelian" texts in the Bible⁽¹¹⁾, and (b) we now may begin to write a grammar of northern Hebrew⁽¹²⁾.

While pursuing my own investigations into ancient Hebrew dialects, it became clear to me that Nehemiah 9 includes a significant concentration of northern Hebrew features. We turn now to a presentation of the data.

(⁸) See S.A. KAUFMAN, "The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects of the Biblical Period and Some Implications Thereof", *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Panel Sessions: Hebrew and Aramaic Languages) (Jerusalem 1988) 55.

(⁹) In some of my recent publications on Hebrew dialects (most will be cited below in the course of the discussion), I used the term Israelian Hebrew to refer to northern Hebrew. I have coined this term based on the usage of H.L. GINSBERG, *The Israelian Heritage of Judaism* (New York 1982). See the independent usage of the same term by S. GEVIRTZ, "Of Syntax and Style in the 'Late Biblical Hebrew' – 'Old Canaanite' Connection", *JANES* 18 (1986) 25-29.

(¹⁰) I accept the classification system of H.L. GINSBERG, "The Northwest Semitic Languages", *Patriarchs* (ed. B. MAZAR) (World History of the Jewish People; New Brunswick, NJ 1970) 102-106, which places Phoenician and Ugaritic together in the "Phoenic" group.

(¹¹) For illustrations of this method see G.A. RENDSBURG, "The Northern Origin of 'The Last Words of David' (2 Sam 23,1-7)", *Bib* 69 (1988) 113-121; G.A. RENDSBURG, "Additional Notes on 'The Last Words of David' (2 Sam 23,1-7)", *Bib* 70 (1989) 403-408; and G.A. RENDSBURG, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms* (Atlanta 1990). Other "Israelian" texts are noted below in the course of the discussion.

(¹²) See G.A. RENDSBURG, "Morphological Evidence for Regional Dialects in Ancient Hebrew", *Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew* (ed. W. BODINE) (Winona Lake, IN, forthcoming); and the Appendix to RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 105-107. For the theoretical framework see B. HALPERN, "Dialect Distribution in Canaan and the Deir Alla Inscriptions", *Working With No Data": Semitic and Egyptian Studies Presented to Thomas O. Lambdin* (ed. D.M. GOLOMB) (Winona Lake, IN 1987) 119-139. Note especially his comment that "Canaan was linguistically cantonized" (139).

1. Twice in this chapter, in vv.8 and 13, we encounter the infinitive absolute used as a finite verb. The first example reads as follows: *ûmāšā'tā 'et lēbābô ne'ēmān lēpānekā wēkārôt 'immô habbērît* “you found his heart faithful before you and you made a covenant with him”, with the Qal infinitive absolute *kārôt* used as a finite verb. The second example reads as follows: *wē'al har sīnay yāradtā wēdabbēr 'immāhem miššāmāyim* “you descended upon Mount Sinai and you spoke with them from heaven”, with the Piel infinitive absolute *dabbēr* used as a finite verb.

This usage has engendered much discussion over the years, but what has rarely been pointed out is that this syntagma is in origin a northern feature. The cognate evidence certainly points in that direction, since it is more common in Ugaritic⁽¹³⁾, Phoenician⁽¹⁴⁾, and the Amarna letters from Byblos and other northern sites⁽¹⁵⁾,

(13) C. H. GORDON, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome 1967) 80; and S. SEGERT, *A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language* (Berkeley 1984) 93.

(14) J. FRIEDRICH – W. RÖLLIG, *Phönizisch-punische Grammatik* (Rome 1970) 135-136; and S. SEGERT, *A Grammar of Phoenician and Punic* (Munich 1976) 197.

(15) Ten examples from Byblos, *EAT* 89:38-39; 109:40-46; 113:40-42; 116:27-28; 118:36-39; 129:32-34; 129:40-42; 132:30-35; 137:49; 362:25-29, were identified by W. L. MORAN, “The Use of the Canaanite Infinitive Absolute as a Finite Verb in the Amarna Letters from Byblos”, *JCS* 4 (1950) 169-172. In a follow-up article, W. L. MORAN, “‘Does Amarna Bear on Karatepe?’ – An Answer”, *JCS* 6 (1952) 76-80, an additional example was given, *EAT* 287:46, in a letter from Jerusalem. Concerning this last example, it is apposite to cite the opinion of W. L. MORAN, “The Syrian Scribe of the Jerusalem Amarna Letters”, *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (eds. H. GOEDICKE and J. J. M. ROBERTS) (Baltimore 1975) 146-166, that the scribe of the Jerusalem letters hailed from Syria to the north.

Three additional examples, *EAT* 173:12; 185:72, 364:21, were put forward in an unpublished paper by S. IZRE'EL, “Ve-shuv 'al (y)qtl 'nk u-Maqbilav ba-Leshonot ha-Kna 'aniyot”. They are all from northern letters: *EAT* 173 mentions Amqi, i.e., the Beqa'; *EAT* 185 is from Ḥazi in the Beqa'; and *EAT* 364 is from Ashtaroth in Bashan. Some of these examples may be open to alternative readings and interpretations, especially *EAT* 173:12 in a broken context. For further study, see W. L. MORAN, *Les lettres d'el Amarna* (Paris 1987).

In short, it is clear that the evidence of the Amarna tablets supports the conclusion that the syntagma of the infinitive absolute as a finite verb is used more intensively in the northern dialects of Canaan.

than it is in other varieties of Canaanite⁽¹⁶⁾. The distribution of this usage in pre-exilic biblical texts also points to this conclusion (see below)⁽¹⁷⁾.

I have compiled the following lists of biblical examples from previous work on the subject conducted by A. Rubenstein⁽¹⁸⁾, J. Huesman⁽¹⁹⁾, and more recently B. Waltke and M. O'Connor⁽²⁰⁾. From the examples presented in these sources, I exclude from consideration Num 30,3; Deut 14,21; 15,2; Josh 9,20; 2 Kgs 19,29; Isa 8,6; 21,5; 22,13; Jer 7,9; Ezek 1,14; Joel 2,26. In these cases the infinitive absolute is used as an imperative (as reflected in the standard translations) or other phenomena are present.

(16) For general discussion see J. HUESMAN, "Finite Uses of the Infinitive Absolute", *Bib* 37 (1956) 271-284; and W. R. GARR, *Dialect Geography of Syria Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.E.* (Philadelphia 1985) 183-184. For a brief statement see W. L. MORAN, "The Hebrew Language in its Northwest Semitic Background", *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (ed. G. E. WRIGHT) (Garden City, NY 1961) 61-62.

In a similar vein, in the Ugaritic, Phoenician and Amarna examples, the subject (be it noun or pronoun) is always expressed. But in the two examples in Neh 9,8.13 (as well as in some of the other biblical passages to be presented below), the subject is not expressed. Thus there is a slight difference in usage, but again I follow the lead of almost all scholars in the field in subsuming all varieties of the phenomenon under one syntagma.

(17) As S. Izre'el pointed out to me, the use of the infinitive absolute as a finite verb may also occur in the Yavneh Yam inscription, line 5. According to F. M. CROSS, "Epigraphic Notes on Hebrew Documents of the Eighth-Sixth Centuries B.C.: II. The Murabba'at Papyrus and the Letter Found Near Yavneh-Yam", *BASOR* 165 (1962) 44, n.43, the last word in the phrase *wyqsr bdk wyk l w'sm* is an infinitive absolute. But other interpretations are equally possible; see most importantly D. PARDEE, "The Judicial Plea from Mesad Hashavyahu (Yavneh-Yam): A New Philological Study", *Maarav* 1 (1978) 33-66. Cross' reading remains possible, but since it cannot be established beyond doubt, I prefer not to include it as an example of the syntagma under discussion.

(18) A. RUBINSTEIN, "A Finite Verb Continued by an Infinitive Absolute in Biblical Hebrew", *VT* 2 (1952) 362-367.

(19) HUESMAN, "Finite Uses of the Infinitive Absolute", 284-286. I exclude from consideration the passages adduced by Huesman through emendation of the Masoretic Text. Thus on pp. 286-295 of the above article and in the following: J. HUESMAN, "The Infinitive Absolute and the Waw + Perfect Problem", *Bib* 37 (1956) 410-434.

(20) B. WALTKE-M. O'CONNOR, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN 1990) 594-597.

Almost everyone who has studied the use of the infinitive absolute as a finite verb has noticed that its frequency greatly increases in the post-exilic books⁽²¹⁾. We will return to this point in a moment, but first I would like to concentrate on the examples of this construction from pre-exilic books. For it is here that the northern origin of this usage can be demonstrated.

From pre-exilic books I count the following examples as northern: Judg 7,19; 1 Sam 2,28; 22,13; 1 Kgs 9,25; 22,30; 2 Kgs 3,16; 4,43; Amos 4,5; Prov 12,7; 15,22; 17,12; and the following examples as southern: Exod 8,11; Lev 25,14; 1 Sam 25,26; Isa 5,5; 37,19. The southern provenance of the latter list is clear. With rare exceptions, such as the aphorisms concerning the northern tribes in Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33⁽²²⁾, the poem in Deuteronomy 32⁽²³⁾, etc., the Torah is a Judahite composition⁽²⁴⁾. 1 Samuel 25 is the story of David and Abigail set in southern Judah. And the two Isaiah passages come from a book that obviously originated in Jerusalem.

The northern origin of the former list can be demonstrated in the following ways. Judg 7,19 is part of the Gideon cycle; the two passages from 1 Samuel concern Eli (in Shiloh in the territory of Ephraim) and Saul (a Benjaminite)⁽²⁵⁾; 1 Kings 9 concerns Solomon, and yet there are so many Phoenicianisms in the description of his realm that I am forced to conclude that Phoenician scribes are responsible for the material⁽²⁶⁾; 1 Kings 22 deals with an Israelite king (Ahab?); the two passages from 2 Kings 3–4 are part

⁽²¹⁾ E. KAUTZSCH, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford 1910) 345; RUBINSTEIN, "A Finite Verb", 363; and WALTKE – O'CONNOR, *Syntax*, 595.

⁽²²⁾ On the former chapter, see G. A. RENDSBURG, "Israelian Hebrew Features in Genesis 49", forthcoming in the Stanley Gevirtz Memorial Volume. I hope to devote a similar study to the latter chapter in the future.

⁽²³⁾ EISSFELDT, *Das Lied Moses*.

⁽²⁴⁾ In my work on regional dialects, I have found no linguistic evidence to support the theories that "E" and "D" are northern sources.

⁽²⁵⁾ Benjamin, of course, is relatively south in the land of Canaan, and only a few miles north of Jerusalem. Yet many stories set in this territory nonetheless reveal a concentration of northern Hebrew features. See further RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 4, n. 18.

⁽²⁶⁾ RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 29–30. In other words, not only did Phoenician architects and craftsmen build the Temple, their scribes recorded the activities of the realm.

of the Elisha cycle; Amos is a northern prophet⁽²⁷⁾; and Proverbs is unquestionably a northern composition⁽²⁸⁾.

Accordingly, of the seventeen pre-exilic attestations of the infinitive absolute as a finite verb, only five are in Judahite sections of the Bible and twelve are in northern portions. This dichotomy becomes even more acute when one realizes that probably only about 20% of the Bible is of northern provenance. Thus, the ratio of this syntagma in pre-exilic literature is not 12:5 northern vs. southern, but approximately 60:5, or 12:1, northern vs. southern⁽²⁹⁾. In short, the distribution of this usage in the Bible accords with the cognate evidence from Phoenician, Ugaritic and Byblos Amarna. The lines of evidence converge to demonstrate that the use of the infinitive absolute as a finite verb was characteristic of northern dialects of Canaanite, including northern Hebrew.

The reader who is familiar with the presence of this usage in the Bible will have realized that until now I have omitted the data from Jeremiah. This book, after all, contains more examples of this syntagma than any other biblical book. The infinitive absolute is used as a finite verb ten times: 3,1; 7,18; 13,16Q; 14,5; 19,13; 22,14; 32,33.44; 36,23; 37,21. At first glance, Jeremiah might seem to be a southern book, especially as virtually all the action described therein occurred in Jerusalem. But Jeremiah hailed from Anathoth, a city in Benjamin, and it is not improbable that his language was marked by dialect traits of the region. Above I noted that the stories concerning Saul of Benjamin reveal a considerable number of northern characteristics, and the same appears to be true of the book of Jeremiah⁽³⁰⁾.

⁽²⁷⁾ On the language of Amos, as well as of Hosea, see C. RABIN, "Leshonam shel 'Amos ve-Hoshea'", *Iyyunim be-Sefer Tre-Asar* (ed. B. Z. LURIA) (Jerusalem 1981) 117-136.

⁽²⁸⁾ W. F. ALBRIGHT, "Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom", *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (eds. M. NOTH and D. W. THOMAS) (VTS 3; Leiden 1960) 1-15; GINSBERG, *Israelian Heritage*, 36; and Y. AVISHUR, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (AOAT 210; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984) 440 and n. 6.

⁽²⁹⁾ My methodology is similar to that utilized by M. TSEVAT, *A Study of the Language of the Biblical Psalms* (Philadelphia 1955).

⁽³⁰⁾ On Benjamin, see above, n. 25. Space limitations prevent me from undertaking a detailed analysis of Jeremiah at this time. However, many northern Hebrew elements in Jeremiah are assembled in RENDSBURG,

As noted earlier, the use of the infinitive absolute as a finite verb appears more frequently in exilic and post-exilic books. The list follows: Isa 42,20; 59,4; Ezek 23,30.36.47; Hag 1,6.9; Zech 3,4; 7,5; 12,10; Job 15,35; Qoh 4,2; 8,9; 9,11; Esth 2,3; 3,13; 6,9; 8,9; 9,1.6.12.16-18; Dan 9,5.11; Neh 7,3; 8,8; 9,8.13; 1 Chr 5,20; 16,36; 2 Chr 28,19; 31,10. Even here, it should be noted, some of the sources are northern, namely Job⁽³¹⁾, Qohelet⁽³²⁾, and, if Welch's argument is accepted, Nehemiah 9. But the majority, of course, stems from clear Judahite material, i.e., either from Judah itself or from Judean exiles. The appearance of this northernism in exilic and post-exilic books is to be attributed to the influence of northern Hebrew on Judahite Hebrew during the 500s and beyond in the wake of the reunification of northern and southern exiles in Mesopotamia. This phenomenon was first discussed by C.H. Gordon and the very usage under consideration here was one of his prime evidences⁽³³⁾. In conclusion, the two examples of the use of the infinitive absolute as a finite verb in Neh 9,8; 9,13, may be put forward as our first point in favor of the northern origin of this chapter.

"Morphological Evidence". Moshe Bar-Asher of the Hebrew University informs me (oral communication) that he has conducted a detailed study of the language of Jeremiah and that he too finds numerous northern characteristics therein. One such example, I believe, is the *nomen agentis* form *qātōl*, common in Jeremiah and in Mishnaic Hebrew (MH). For examples from Jeremiah, see M. BAR-ASHER, "'Aḥduta ha-Historit shel ha-Lashon ha-ʿIvrit u-Meḥqar Leshon Hakhmim", *Meḥqarim be-Lashon* (ed. M. BAR-ASHER) (Jerusalem 1985) 93-94. For MH as a northern spoken dialect, see G.A. RENDSBURG, "The Galilean Background of Mishnaic Hebrew", *Studies on the Galilee in Late Antiquity* (ed. L. LEVINE) (New York, forthcoming).

⁽³¹⁾ Job is either a northern book (so D.N. FREEDMAN, "Orthographic Peculiarities in the Book of Job", *Eretz-Israel* 9 [1969] 35-44) and/or style-switching is in effect (so KAUFMAN, "Classification").

⁽³²⁾ The northern provenance of Qohelet was first postulated by M. DAHOOD, "Canaanite-Phoenician Influence in Qoheleth", *Bib* 33 (1962) 30-52, 191-221. In many ways he overstated his case, but the overall conclusion generally is correct. See now J.R. DAVILA, "Qoheleth and Northern Hebrew", *Sopher Mahir: Northwest Semitic Studies Presented to Stanislav Segert* (ed. E.M. COOK) (Winona Lake, IN 1990) = *Maarav* 5-6 (1990) 69-87; and RENDSBURG, "Galilean Background".

⁽³³⁾ C.H. GORDON, "North Israelite Influence on Postexilic Hebrew", *IEJ* 5 (1955) 85-88. See also E.Y. KUTSCHER, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem 1982) 85.

2. In v. 19 we encounter the irregular form *b^hhadderek* “in the way” with non-elision of the definite article (*h*) following a uni-consonantal prefixed preposition (*b*, *l*, *k*). This irregularity occurs elsewhere in the Bible in the following passages: 1 Sam 13,21; 2 Kgs 7,12K; Ezek 40,25; 47,22; Ps 36,6; Qoh 8,1; Neh 12,38; 2 Chr 10,7; 25,10; 29,27⁽³⁴⁾. The only parallel usage to the non-elision of *he* in this environment within the Canaanite sphere is its appearance eight times in Punic⁽³⁵⁾. Now it is true that this phenomenon does not occur in any standard Phoenician texts, but nevertheless we may suspect that it was native to some northern Canaanite dialects⁽³⁶⁾. There are indications of this in at least some of the aforementioned biblical attestations.

In 1 Sam 13,21 the action occurs in the territory of Benjamin and the story concerns the kingship of Saul; 2 Kgs 7,12K is in the mouth of an Israelite king (which one is not altogether certain); Ps 36,6 occurs in a psalm with many northern affinities⁽³⁷⁾; and Qoh 8,1 appears in a northern book (see above, n. 32).

When we add Neh 9,19 to this list, we find that five of the eleven attestations of this usage occur in northern texts. Once more, proportionately this is sufficient to label this phenomenon a characteristic of northern Hebrew. The remaining six passages are all in exilic or post-exilic compositions. Here we may again appeal to Gordon’s hypothesis that late biblical literature evinces northern grammatical features due to the reunion of Israelite exiles and Judahite exiles in Mesopotamia in the 6th century BC.

3. The forms *’āmāmîm* “peoples” in v. 22 and *’amēmē* “peoples of” in v. 24 are reduplicatory plurals of a noun based on a geminate stem. Normally, Hebrew simply retains the gemination in

⁽³⁴⁾ I exclude from consideration 2 Sam 21,20.22 *l^hhārāpāh* = 1 Chr 20,6.8 *l^hhārāpā’*, where the *he* is apparently considered part of the title; Dan 8,16 *l^hhallāz* where the *he* is an essential part of the demonstrative pronoun, and the eight cases of *k^hhayyôm* “on this particular day” which is used to distinguish it from *kayyôm* “now”.

⁽³⁵⁾ FRIEDRICH – RÖLLIG, *Phönizisch-punische Grammatik*, 53.

⁽³⁶⁾ See already R. C. STEINER, *The Case for Fricative-Laterals in Proto-Semitic* (New Haven 1977) 43 and 55, n. 42.

⁽³⁷⁾ RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 37-43. For earlier statements, see C. A. BRIGGS, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Vol. 1 (New York 1906) 315; and L. A. F. LE MAT, *Textual Criticism and Exegesis of Psalm XXXVI* (Utrecht 1957) 103-104, 106-107.

such cases, e.g., *ām* “people”, plural *ammīm*. But in a considerable number of instances the reduplicatory type appears⁽³⁸⁾. This latter method of forming the plural is standard in Aramaic, e.g., *mm̄y*’ “peoples”, *kddn* “pitchers”, *lly*’ “shades”⁽³⁹⁾. It will not be surprising to learn that a good number of the reduplicatory plurals in the Bible appear in texts where northern origin may be detected. This was noted already by E. Y. Kutscher⁽⁴⁰⁾, though in the discussion which follows I present many additional examples.

Num 23,7 *harêrê* “mountains of” is in the mouth of Balaam, the Aramean prophet, in a section of the Bible laden with examples of style-switching⁽⁴¹⁾. Deut 33,15 *harêrê* “mountains of” occurs in Moses’ blessing to the tribe of Joseph. Judges 5, a poem of unquestionably northern origin⁽⁴²⁾, includes two reduplicatory plurals: *āmāmekā* “your peoples” in v. 14 and *hiqêqê* “decisions of” in v. 15.

Ps 36,7 *harêrê* “mountains of” is in a northern poem; Ps 50,10 *harêrê* “mountains of”, Ps 76,5 *harêrê* “mountains of”, and Ps 77,18 *hāšāšekā* “your arrows”, all appear in the Asaph collection; Ps 87,1 *harêrê* “mountains of” appears in the Korah collection; and Ps 133,3 *harêrê* “mountains of” occurs in a poem with northern connections⁽⁴³⁾.

⁽³⁸⁾ For the term “reduplicatory” and for the Afroasiatic background of this formation, see J. H. GREENBERG, “Internal *a*-Plurals in Afroasiatic (Hamito-Semitic)”, *Afrikanistische Studien* (ed. J. LUKAS) (Berlin 1955) 198-204.

⁽³⁹⁾ S. SEGERT, *Altaramäische Grammatik* (Leipzig 1975) 537, 546.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ E. Y. KUTSCHER, “Ha-Šafa ha-‘Ivrit u-Venot Livyata be-Meshekh ha-Dorot”, *Hadoar* 47 (1968-69) 507-509 (reprinted in E. Y. KUTSCHER, *Hebrew and Aramaic Studies* [Jerusalem 1977] *šh-šṭw*). For a brief earlier statement, see BURNEY, *Judges*, 172.

⁽⁴¹⁾ See also my remarks in RENDSBURG, “‘The Last Words of David’”, 115-116.

⁽⁴²⁾ BURNEY, *Judges*, 171-176; and C. RABIN, “The Emergence of Classical Hebrew”, *The Age of the Monarchies: Culture and Society* (ed. A. MALAMAT) (World History of the Jewish People; Jerusalem 1979) 71-78, 293-295, in particular 74, 293, n. 4.

⁽⁴³⁾ On Psalm 36, see above, n. 37. — On the northern provenance of the Asaph psalms, see M. J. BUSS, “The Psalms of Asaph and Korah”, *JBL* 82 (1963) 382-392, especially 384. The linguistic evidence is presented in RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 69-81.

On the northern provenance of the Korah psalms, see M. J. GOULDER, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah* (Sheffield 1982). For the linguistic evidence, see RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 45-60.

Prov 29,13 *tekākīm* “oppressions” appears in a northern book (see above, n.28). Cant 2,17; 4,6 *šēlālīm* “shadows” and Cant 4,8 *harēre* “mountains of” occur in a book with northern affinities⁽⁴⁴⁾. Finally, Jer 6,4 *šilelē* “shadows of” appears in a book where Aramaic influence increasingly may be seen and/or we must reckon with the Benjaminite dialect. Thus we are left with only one occurrence which does not fit our interpretation: Hab 3,6.

In short, we have isolated a grammatical feature which links Aramaic and northern Hebrew, and we can use the presence of *āmāmīm* in v.22 and *amēmē* in v.24 as another point to support the argument for the northern provenance of Nehemiah 9.

4. The phrase *ammē hā’ārāšôt* “peoples of the land” in v.30 is a “double plural”, that is, both the *nomen regens* and the *nomen rectum* of a construct chain are in the plural. S. Gevirtz recently noted that this grammatical usage is characteristic of northern texts such as Judges 5, Phoenician inscriptions, and the Amarna letters from Byblos⁽⁴⁵⁾. To the examples adduced by Gevirtz, add the following instances from northern psalms: Ps 29,1 *bēnē ’ēlīm* “sons of the gods”, Ps 45,10 *bēnôt melākīm* “daughters of kings”, Ps 74,13 *rā’šē tannīnīm* “heads of the sea monsters”, Ps 77,6 *šēnôt ’ōlāmīm* “years of eternities”, Ps 78,49 *mal’ākē rā’īm* “messengers of evil”, Ps 116,9 *’aršôt haḥayyim* “lands of the living”⁽⁴⁶⁾. It is

On Psalm 133, I have in mind the mention of Hermon in v.3, the use of the relative pronoun *še-* in vv.2-3, and the presence of the root *nīm*. On this last point, see RENDSBURG, “Additional Notes”. In general, see RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 91-93.

(⁴⁴) S.R. DRIVER, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York 1906) 448-449; and Y. AVISHUR, “Le-Ziqā ha-Signonit Beyn Shir ha-Shirim ve-Sifrut ’Ugarit”, *Beth Miqra* 59 (1974) 508-525.

(⁴⁵) GEVIRTZ, “Of Syntax and Style”, 28-29; and S. GEVIRTZ, “Asher in the Blessing of Jacob (Genesis xlix 20)”, *VT* 37 (1987) 160.

(⁴⁶) On Psalm 29 as a northern composition, see H.L. GINSBERG, “A Phoenician Hymn in the Psalter”, *Atti del XIX Congresso Internazionale degli Orientalisti (Roma 1935)* (Roma 1938) 472-476; and RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 35-37.

Psalm 45 is in the Korah collection, on which see above, n.43. Moreover, many previous scholars have argued that this poem is a northern composition based on its contents. See, e.g., BRIGGS, *Psalms*, 384; and M. BUTTENWEISER, *The Psalms* (Chicago 1938) 85-89.

For the three examples from the Asaph group, see above, n.43.

For Psalm 116 as a northern poem, see RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 83-86.

true that double plurals occur elsewhere in the Bible where northern provenance is not indicated, e.g., in Chronicles⁽⁴⁷⁾, but the overall picture still favors Gevirtz's conclusion⁽⁴⁸⁾. Accordingly, the presence of this syntagma in Neh 9,30 is a fourth linguistic point favoring Welch's position.

5. The phrase *šamtā šēmô*, literally "you placed his name", in v. 7, is paralleled elsewhere in the Bible only in 2 Kgs 17,34 *šām šēmô*, and Judg 8,31 *wayyāšēm 'et šēmô*, both literally "he placed his name"⁽⁴⁹⁾. M. Cogan and H. Tadmor characterized these words as "an unusual expression"⁽⁵⁰⁾, and Burney referred to "this somewhat peculiar usage"⁽⁵¹⁾. The oddity, which any seasoned reader of the Bible can sense, is to be explained by recognizing the northern nature of the idiom. 2 Kings 17 is a lengthy chapter dealing with the final fate of the northern kingdom of Israel, and Judges 8 is part of the Gideon cycle with its many northern affinities. As Welch argued, Nehemiah 9 was also originally composed by a northern Israelite.

The cognate evidence supports our conclusion that this feature is a northern Hebrew trait. In Phoenician we encounter the very similar expression *št 'nk šm*, literally "I placed its name", in Karatepe A ii 9-10, 17-18. Although the Phoenician phrase employs *št* instead of *šm*, the two verbs are of course similar. Both forms occur in both Hebrew and Phoenician, though *šm* is more common in the former, whereas *št* is more common in the latter⁽⁵²⁾. The evidence of Phoenician *št šm* and the distribution of *šm šm* in the Bible converge to demonstrate the northern Hebrew nature of this usage.

(47) R. POLZIN, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose* (Missoula, MT 1976) 42.

(48) Double plurals are also common in MH. See M.H. SEGAL, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford 1927) 187; and KUTSCHER, *History*, 129. Since, in my opinion, MH is based on a form of northern Hebrew (see above, n. 30), this would be further support for Gevirtz's view.

(49) The usage in Dan 1,7 is slightly different; alternatively this late example is an instance of northern influence on post-exilic Hebrew due to the reunification of northern and southern exiles in Mesopotamia.

(50) COGAN-TADMOR, *II Kings*, 213.

(51) BURNEY, *Judges*, 265.

(52) R.S. TOMBACK, *A Comparative Semitic Lexicon of the Phoenician and Punic Languages* (Missoula, MT 1978) 322, 334-335. I am aware that Tomback's book is not a concordance, yet it is obvious from his entries that *št* appears more frequently in Phoenician than *šm*.

6. In v. 6 the 2 msg personal pronoun appears in the consonantal text as 't. This orthography appears elsewhere in Num 11,15, Deut 5,24; 1 Sam 24,19; Ezek 28,14; Ps 6,4; Job 1,10; Qoh 7,22. (In three of these eight cases, the form is vocalized 'at(t); in the other five instances the Qere reads 'attāh. Since I am only concerned with the consonantal text here, I merge these two groups into one category.) In Phoenician the same spelling occurs⁽⁵³⁾, so we may postulate that 't represents another northern feature. This is borne out by the distribution of the remaining biblical examples. Ezek 28,14 occurs within the prophet's speech against Tyre⁽⁵⁴⁾, and Job and Qoheleth are both northern compositions (see above, nn. 31 and 32). Accordingly, four of the eight usages of 2 msg 't are in northern contexts, a ratio which points to the northern Hebrew character of this feature.

7. In v. 35 occurs the expression ūb'ereṣ hārēhābāh wəhaššēmēnāh "and in the broad and fat land" with the unique word pair rḥb and šmn. Although the semantics are slightly different, this word-pair occurs elsewhere in Northwest Semitic only in Ugaritic. The passage is UT 128:iv:4-5, 15-16 where šmn mrik/h "a fat one of your/her fatlings" parallels rḥbt yn "a broad vessel (= flagon) of wine"⁽⁵⁵⁾. As Y. Avishur amply demonstrated, the same word-pair, in this case rḥb and šmn, can occur both in poetry as parallel terms (as in the Ugaritic passage) and in prose as collocated terms (as in Neh 9,35)⁽⁵⁶⁾. The word-pair under consideration, occurring only here in the Bible, must have been characteristic of northern Hebrew though not of Judahite Hebrew.

8. The word 'ēlōah "God" appears in v. 17. This vocable is most likely a northern trait, though I admit that the argument in favor of such a conclusion is colored by the fact that it appears

(⁵³) FRIEDRICH-RÖLLIG, *Phönizisch-punische Grammatik*, 45-46. Again, I am only concerned with the orthography here. It is possible that the Phoenician 2 msg personal pronoun was pronounced similarly to the Hebrew form 'attāh; see SEGERT, *Grammar of Phoenician and Punic*, 95, who cited the possibly relevant form from Plautus' *Poenulus*, namely, *etha*.

(⁵⁴) There are many examples of "addressee-switching" in the prophetic oracles directed at the foreign nations; see G. A. RENDSBURG, "The Strata of Biblical Hebrew" (forthcoming).

(⁵⁵) J. GRAY, *The KRT Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra* (Leiden 1964) 20, 61.

(⁵⁶) AVISHUR, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs*.

forty-one times in the book of Job. On the other hand, it also appears in other northern texts: Deut 32,15.17; 2 Kgs 17,31K; Ps 50,22; Prov 30,5. The first two instances are in a northern poem (see above, n.6); 2 Kings 17 recounts the history of the northern kingdom of Israel; Psalm 50 is part of the Asaph collection, which is northern in origin (see above, n.43); and Proverbs 30 not only is in a northern book (see above, n.28), but it appears in the Massa material, which presumably originates in the Syrian Desert region north-east of Israel⁽⁵⁷⁾.

By contrast, *'ēlōah* appears only five times in identifiably Judahite material, namely, Hab 1,11; 3,3; Ps 18,32; 114,7; 139,19. Elsewhere it occurs in Isa 44,8; Dan 11,37-39 (4x); 2 Chr 32,15; each of these instances requires additional comment. For the first of them, we may invoke the theory of northern Hebrew influence on exilic and post-exilic literature. In Daniel it is most likely that Aramaic influence is at work; the cognate form *'lh* (vocalized *'ēlāh* in Biblical Aramaic) is widespread in all the Aramaic dialects. The last-cited verse, 2 Chr 32,15, is part of the speech of the Assyrian emissaries to Hezekiah. This passage has no exact equivalent in the parallel texts in 2 Kings 18 and Isaiah 36, but in general the words of 2 Chr 32,15 are part of the speech of Rabshakeh in 2 Kgs 18,29; Isa 36,14⁽⁵⁸⁾. Rabshakeh, it has been argued by several scholars, was an Israelite⁽⁵⁹⁾. So it would not be surprising to find a northern Hebrew word in his vocabulary. Alternatively, given the widespread use of Aramaic in the Neo-Assyrian empire, it would not be surprising to find *'ēlōah*, the Hebrew cognate to Aramaic *'ēlāh*, in the speech of a Neo-Assyrian diplomat.

In light of (a) the Aramaic cognate *'ēlāh*, (b) the widespread use of *'ēlōah* in Job, and (c) its not uncommon appearance in other northern texts, I conclude that this word is a northern Hebrew lexeme. Its occurrence in Neh 9,17 is another piece of evidence in favor of the northern origin of this chapter.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ On the location of Massa, see I. EPH'AL, *The Ancient Arabs* (Jerusalem 1982) 218-219. On other northern linguistic elements in the Massa material at the end of Proverbs, see RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 25-26, 39, 48.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ See conveniently A. BENDAVID, *Maqbilot ba-Miqra* (Jerusalem 1972) 145.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ H. TADMOR, "Rabshaqeh", *EnšMiqr* 7 (1976) 323-325. See also C. COHEN, "Neo-Assyrian Elements in the First Speech of the Biblical Rab-šaḡê", *Israel Oriental Studies* 9 (1979) 32-48.

Altogether, there are eight northern Hebrew traits in Nehemiah 9. Such a concentration of northern forms can only be accounted for by concluding that Welch was correct in his belief that the chapter originally was composed in northern Israel. This answers the question of *where* Nehemiah 9 was written, but the document still is open to further investigation. In particular, it remains to be asked *when* was the chapter written, and it is to this issue that the remainder of this paper will be devoted.

Although Welch was correct in his assumption that the composition emanated from the north, he was incorrect in his belief that it dated to the time of Josiah. In Welch's words:

Josiah was seeking to extend his authority over the derelict province, was casting down the bamoth there and was endeavouring to unite N. and S. Israel by the bonds of their common faith. The two psalms [i.e., Psalms 44 and 80, which Welch also proposed as northern in origin] and the chapter in Neh represent the response of the loyalists in N. Israel to this effort on the part of the Judean king⁽⁶⁰⁾.

This position is perfectly sensible, but it will not stand up to the linguistic evidence.

The endeavor of the first half of this article, namely, the use of dialect geography for *locating* the origin of a particular document, is a relatively new enterprise. On the other hand, the use of diachronic comparison for *dating* a particular document is an already well-established tool in the study of the Hebrew Bible. Accordingly, in the discussion which follows, I do not tread new paths, but rather I base the material on the labors of two individuals, specifically A. Hurvitz⁽⁶¹⁾ and R. Polzin⁽⁶²⁾, who have devoted their work to the question of Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH).

⁽⁶⁰⁾ WELCH, "The Share of N. Israel", 177. In WELCH, "The Source of Nehemiah IX", he is less specific about dating the chapter.

⁽⁶¹⁾ The two most important works are A. HURVITZ, *Beyn Lashon le-Lashon* (Jerusalem 1972); and A. HURVITZ, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel* (CahRB 20; Paris 1982).

⁽⁶²⁾ POLZIN, *Late Biblical Hebrew*. However, this work cannot be used uncritically. See my extensive review: G. A. RENDSBURG, "Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of 'P'", *JANES* 12 (1980) 65-80. Below I cite several of Polzin's points characteristic of LBH; in each case I accept the validity of the argumentation as per the aforementioned article.

I may summarize my findings and conclusion as follows: Nehemiah 9 contains five prominent LBH features, leading me to conclude that it dates to the post-exilic period. Since Hurvitz and Polzin have already done the groundwork, I refrain from detailed presentation of the data. Instead, summary statements will suffice.

1. Neh 9,29 uses the 3 msg perfect *ḥāyāh* “live” instead of the standard form *ḥay*. The former appears elsewhere only in Ezekiel, Qohelet and Esther, and is to be considered a trait of LBH⁽⁶³⁾.

2. Twice in Nehemiah, in vv. 17 and 31, the late usage *ḥannûn weraḥûm* “gracious and compassionate” is used, in contrast to the earlier ordering *raḥûm wəḥannûn* “compassionate and gracious”⁽⁶⁴⁾.

3. In v. 5 appears the phrase *ʾad hāʾōlām* “forever”, with the definite article. This is a late usage, in contrast to the standard usage *ʾad ʾōlām*, without the definite article⁽⁶⁵⁾.

4. LBH reflects a radically reduced use of *ʾet* with pronominal suffix; instead the pronominal suffix attached to the verb predominates. In Nehemiah 9, there are no instances of the former usage and 23 of the latter⁽⁶⁶⁾.

5. LBH exhibits a preference for plural forms of words which earlier had been used in the singular. Neh 9,28 includes one example of this phenomenon, namely, the use of the word *ʾittîm* “times”, versus standard *ʾēt* “time”. The former occurs almost exclusively in Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel and Chronicles⁽⁶⁷⁾.

The linguistic study of Nehemiah 9 conducted here demonstrates that this chapter is both northern and late. Eight features demonstrate the document to be northern, and five elements reveal its lateness. There is an additional feature which points in both these directions. I refer to the twofold use of abstract nouns ending in *-ût*: *ʾabdût* “slavery” in v. 17 and *malkût* “kingdom” in v. 35. These words typically are classified as late vocables, and the *-ût* ending itself is considered a late feature, due to increased Aramaic influence⁽⁶⁸⁾. I accept these findings in a general sense, but with one important qualification. Nouns ending in *-ût* become more

⁽⁶³⁾ HURVITZ, *Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel*, 47.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ HURVITZ, *Beyn Lashon le-Lashon*, 104-106.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ POLZIN, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 30.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ On the lateness of these two words, though without mentioning Aramaic influence, see POLZIN, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, 142, 147. For specific reference to Aramaic, see KAUTZSCH, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 241. For

common in LBH, due to Aramaic influence, but they can also appear in pre-exilic Hebrew. When they do occur in earlier texts, these compositions are more likely to be northern ones⁽⁶⁹⁾.

The very word *malkût* is a good example, since its appearance in at least two pre-exilic passages serves to illustrate this point. In Num 24,7 it is used in the mouth of the Aramean prophet Balaam as an example of style-switching, and in Ps 45,7 we are dealing with a northern poem (see above, n.46). In like fashion I believe we can explain the inordinate number of nouns ending in *-ût* in Proverbs. Note such unique vocables as *lezût* "crookedness" in 4,24, *iqšût* "crookedness" in 4,24; 6,12, *rip'ût* "healing" in 3,8, etc. Their presence in Proverbs at a relatively high frequency is due to the book's northern provenance (see above, n.28). I conclude, therefore, that the two usages of this nominal ending in Nehemiah 9, namely *abdût* in v.17 and *malkût* in v.35, may be added to the body of evidence presented above concerning both the northern origin and the late date of this document⁽⁷⁰⁾.

It remains now to situate this composition within the history of ancient Israel. The linguistic evidence, of course, points to a community of Israelites in the northern portion of the country during the Persian period⁽⁷¹⁾. There is hardly a great deal of evidence pointing to the existence of such a community, but one

further discussion see M. WAGNER, *Die lexicalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch* (Berlin 1966) 130-131.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ I exclude from the discussion the *-ût* ending in nouns based on IIIy verbs. In these cases, e.g., *d'mût* "likeness", *k'sût* "covering", *ge'ût* "haughtiness", *z'nût* "whoredom", etc., the ending is standard. Failure to make this distinction somewhat weakens the argument attempted by D.C. FREDERICKS, *Qoheleth's Language* (Lewiston, NY 1988) 137-138, concerning the frequency of the nominal ending *-ût* in Qohelet.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ It should be noted that in actuality the *-ût* suffix is a proto-Semitic form, for it appears in Old Akkadian and Eblaite already. For the former, see I. J. GELB, *Old Akkadian Writing and Grammar* (Chicago 1961) 138. For the latter, at least one example can be cited, namely *a-hu-du-um*, *a-hu-tum* "brotherhood", for which see P. FRONZAROLI, "The Eblaic Lexicon: Problems and Appraisal", *Studies on the Language of Ebla* (ed. P. FRONZAROLI) (Quaderni di Semitistica 13; Florence 1984) 135. Also germane is the Egyptian abstract suffix *-wt*; see E. EDEL, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, I (Rome 1955) 102-104. But the proto-Semitic (proto-Afroasiatic [?]) nature of the *-ût* suffix does not effect the specifics of the preceding discussion.

⁽⁷¹⁾ Most of our northern Hebrew texts are pre-exilic, e.g., the stories of the northern judges and the northern kings, Hosea, etc. But I also have

may be assumed to have been present nonetheless. Certainly, failure to recognize the presence of northern Israelites in Samaria and Galilee during the Persian period can cause one to reach too hasty a conclusion.

For example, H. G. M. Williamson, in an otherwise excellent study with important contributions to the understanding of Nehemiah 9⁽⁷²⁾, had the following to say: "In seeking to formulate a positive proposal concerning Neh. 9, the evidence outlined above can lead us to think only in terms of the Judaeen community which was never exiled to Babylon but which continued to inhabit the decimated land during the period of the exile and after"⁽⁷³⁾. Williamson recognized, as Welch before him had, that Nehemiah 9 does not refer to the exile and restoration and thus must have stemmed from a community which did not experience these events. Apparently he was misled by the assumption that such a community must have been a Judaeen one. The linguistic evidence, to reiterate the point made above, suggests an Israelite community⁽⁷⁴⁾.

In this regard, I would like to conclude by citing one of the few scholars who countenance an Israelite community during the Persian period. S. Japhet, in a discussion of the various communities in the land of Israel during the Persian period, spoke of: (a) "the 'returned exiles'", (b) "those inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah who were not exiled at all, and who remained in the land", and (c) "the Israelite inhabitants of northern Israel who remained settled in Samaria and in Galilee after the Assyrian conquest"⁽⁷⁵⁾. About this

no doubt that northern Hebrew continued to be used in Samaria and Galilee after 721 BC. The presence of Phoenician, Aramaic, etc., would have continued to create the same or similar isoglosses regardless of the downfall of the kingdom of Israel. This is true not only for the Persian period, but for the Hellenistic and Roman periods as well. The Galilean origin of MH, alluded to earlier (see above, n. 30), would fit into this picture as well.

⁽⁷²⁾ H. G. M. WILLIAMSON, "Structure and Historiography in Nehemiah 9", *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Panel Sessions: Bible Studies and Ancient Near East) (Jerusalem 1988) 117-131.

⁽⁷³⁾ *Ibid.*, 129. For a more popular treatment, see H. G. M. WILLIAMSON, "Laments at the Destroyed Temple", *Bible Review* 6:4 (1990) 12-17, 44.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ From the linguistic viewpoint, in theory Nehemiah 9 could have been composed by descendants of the Israelite exiles of 721 BC. However, the chapter's lack of reference to exile precludes such a conclusion.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ S. JAPHET, "People and Land in the Restoration Period", *Das Land Israel in biblischer Zeit* (ed. G. STRECKER) (Göttingen 1983) 103-125, especially 104-105.

third group, Japhet added that "it can be stated with assurance that the Assyrians did not annihilate the Israelite population of the North, and that the rural population of Samaria and Galilee remained and continued to exist ... in the land of Israel in the time of the Restoration" ⁽⁷⁶⁾.

In short, an Israelite community continued uninterruptedly in the regions of Samaria and Galilee, regardless of the occupation of their land by Assyrians and Babylonians and of the deportations of 733, 721, 597 and 586 BC ⁽⁷⁷⁾. We know precious little about these people. But if the analysis presented here is correct, at the very least we have recovered one of their literary remains ⁽⁷⁸⁾.

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SOMMAIRE

En 1929 A. C. Welch soutint que Ne 9 était un texte originellement écrit par les israélites du nord en 720 av.J.-C. Cette hypothèse est partiellement reprise ici, étant donné la présence en ce chapitre de certains traits (huit) de l'hébreu parlé dans le nord du pays. Mais cette section a aussi cinq caractéristiques de l'hébreu biblique tardif qui favorisent une composition post-exilique. En conséquence Ne 9 est un document tardif provenant du nord: c'est le produit d'une communauté vivant au nord du pays et y restant après 721 jusqu'à la période perse.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Ibid., 105.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Traditions exist among segments of the Jewish people to the present day about descent from non-exiled Israelites. The most celebrated case is the village of Peq'in in northern Galilee; see M. AVI-YONAH-J. BRASLAVI, "Peki'in", *EncJud* 13 (1971) 216-218. For a brief mention of a linguistic trait common to the Arabic and Hebrew of these villagers, see A. BAR-ADON, *The Rise and Decline of a Dialect: A Study in the Revival of Modern Hebrew* (The Hague 1975) 35. My thanks to Samuel Morell of the State University of New York at Binghamton for bringing this volume to my attention.

Of course, larger Jewish communities in the Near East claim descent from the exiles of 733 and 721, e.g., the Jews of Ethiopia who claim the tribe of Dan as their ancestors. See briefly GORDON, "North-Israelite Influence", 87, n. 6.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ For another composition reflecting both northern and late language, see my remarks on Psalm 133 in RENDSBURG, *Psalms*, 91-93, 103-104.