

THE DATE OF NEHEMIAH: A REEXAMINATION

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The date for Nehemiah's two terms of governorship in Judah has in recent years been put into question. Did Nehemiah serve in this capacity in the fifth century B.C., during the reign of Persian King Artaxerxes I (465-424)? Or did he perhaps serve, instead, in the fourth century under Artaxerxes II (404-358)? In the former case he would have first arrived in Jerusalem in 445 B.C., and in the latter case, this arrival would have been in 384 B.C.—the 20th year of Artaxerxes (Neh 2:1-9), whichever Artaxerxes that may have been. The present article reviews the arguments on both sides of the question and the date upon which those arguments are built.

1. *The Case for the Fifth-Century Date*

The suggestion of a fifth-century date for Nehemiah rests upon a number of historical data which have been subject to varying interpretations. A key source for fixing upon this time frame is the occurrence of the names Johanan, Sanballat, and Sanballat's sons Delaiah and Shelemiah in a papyrus letter from Elephantine dated to 407 B.C.¹ The latter is an appeal by the Elephantine Jewish community for aid in building a temple, and this appeal is addressed to Sanballat, governor of Samaria, who was assisted in this office by his two sons. Johanan's name appears as that of the high priest in Jerusalem to whom the Elephantine community had addressed an earlier appeal, but without response. There is mention also of an individual named Bagoas as Governor of Judah.

In the OT book of Nehemiah, Johanan's grandfather, Eliashib, and Sanballat the Horonite are indicated as contemporaries of Nehemiah (note especially 2:10, 19; 3:1, 20-21; 4:1; 6:1-2, 5, 12, 14; 13:4, 7, 28). Inasmuch as Nehemiah also refers to Artaxerxes, the Persian king (2:1; 13:6), reasonable synchronization has been established

¹"Aramaic Papyri No. 30: Petition to the Governor of Judea. 408 B.C.," in *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, ed. and trans. A. Cowley (Oxford, 1923), pp. 108-119.

which relates the time frame for the persons mentioned in the Elephantine papyrus with Nehemiah and Artaxerxes I.

It is this line of evidence that has, in turn, led to the dating of Nehemiah's first mission between 445 and 443 B.C. (Neh 2:1, 5:14, 13:6), and his second mission somewhat later (Neh 13:6, 7).² Since the name of Nehemiah does not appear in any extrabiblical source, it is clear that the fifth-century dating for Nehemiah must be drawn from inference.

The Fifth-Century Dating and High-Priestly Succession

A central element in this fifth-century dating is the sequence and genealogy of the high-priestly succession recorded in Neh 12:1-26. OT scholarship long ago determined this list to be a secondary addition to the Chronicler's work, an apparent attempt by the compiler to update the priestly chronology of 1 Chr 6:1-15 in order to bring it down to the postexilic period.³ Within this context, the priestly succession in genealogical order is listed as follows (Neh 12:10-11, 22):

Jeshua (the "Joshua" of Zech 4)
 Joiakim
 Eliashib
 Joiada
 Johanan ("Jonathan")⁴
 Jaddua

²Unsuccessful attempts have been made to argue against a second mission of Nehemiah on the basis of a hypercritical interpretation of Neh 13:6. So, e.g., Ulrich Kellermann, *Nehemiah—Quellen Überlieferung und Geschichte*, BZAW, no. 102 (Berlin, 1967), pp. 49-50.

³It is not possible within the scope of this article to deal with the problems relating to Neh 12:1-26, most of which are thoroughly discussed in leading commentaries. Note, e.g., Jacob M. Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, AB (Garden City, NY, 1965), pp. 193-199; Raymond A. Bowman, "The Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* (Nashville, 1954), 3:784-792; Kellermann, pp. 105-110; Sigmund Mowinckel, *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemiah*, vol. 1, *Die nachchronische Redaktion des Buches: Die Listen* (Oslo, 1964), 1:60-61; and Loring W. Batten, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, ICC (New York, 1913), p. 277.

⁴In LXX Neh 12:35, Johanan is called Jonathan. It is also clear that in Neh 12:11, Jonathan is an error for Johanan (see vv. 22-23), as is evident from Josephus (cf. *Ant.*

These six high priests would have officiated from the time of Zerubbabel, between 538 and 522, to ca. 323, or throughout a period of approximately two centuries. More specifically, the genealogy of the high priesthood lists Jeshua, son of Jehozadak, as a contemporary of Zerubbabel during the reign of Cyrus (Ezra 2:2; Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4; Zech 3:1, 3, 6, 9; 6:11). He was succeeded by Joiakim, son of Hilkiah, of whom nothing more is said. Joiakim was succeeded by Eliashib, who was high priest in the time of Nehemiah (Neh 3:1, 20-21; 13:4-7; Ezra 10:6). Of Joiada, his successor, nothing is known. Johanan, the successor of Joiada, is the high priest identified from the Elephantine correspondence as being in office ca. 410 B.C. He is listed as the son of Joiada (Neh 12:11), as a successor of Joiada (Neh 12:22), as a son of Eliashib (Neh 12:23), and as the father of Jaddua (Neh 12:11). It has been generally agreed by supporters of the fifth-century dating, that the apparently contradictory assertions naming Johanan both as the son of Joiada and as the son of Eliashib may be plausibly explained by the usage here of *ben* to mean either "grandson" or "descendant," not "son."⁵ Of Jaddua, the successor of Johanan, nothing is known except for information from Josephus (*Ant.* 11.8.4-7).⁶

11.7.1). See also Cowley, "No. 30," lines 18-19, where Johanan, a variant of the Jehohanan, is known from the correspondence of the Jewish military colony at Elephantine to have been high priest ca. 410 B.C. In Neh 12:22-23 he is mentioned as a high priest and is called the son of Eliashib. The Jehohanan of Ezra 10:6 has often been identified with the high priest Johanan. Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, Handbuch zum Alten Testament (Tübingen, 1949), pp. 190-193.

⁵This practice has been well attested at Elephantine. See, e.g., Emil G. Kraeling, ed., *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri: New Documents of the Fifth Century B.C. from the Jewish Colony at Elephantine* (New Haven, CT, 1953), p. 108. Also see arguments for "grandson" or "descendant" in Carl G. Tuland, "Ezra-Nehemiah or Nehemiah-Ezra? An Investigation into the Validity of the Van Hoonacker Theory," *AUSS* 12 (1974): 58; Bowman, p. 787; and Richard J. Saley, "The Date of Nehemiah Reconsidered," in *Biblical and Near Eastern Studies: Essays in Honor of William Sanford LaSor*, ed. Gary A. Tuttle (Grand Rapids, MI, 1978), pp. 159-160. On the other hand, the possibility of Johanan's being a son of Eliashib and brother of Joiada has been proposed in G. Hölscher, "Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia," in *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments*, 4th ed. (Tübingen, 1923), p. 553; Kellermann, pp. 108-109; and others.

⁶The only reference to Jaddua (Jaddus) comes from Josephus, where he is linked with Alexander the Great (*Ant.* 11.7.2 and 11.8.4, 7). This relationship could be legendary, or it may preserve some valid evidence that by that time Jaddua was an old man. Note also Bowman, p. 787, and Frank Moore Cross, "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," *JBL* 94 (1975): 4-18.

The data from the biblical text and the Elephantine papyrus may be summarized as follows:

HIGH PRIEST	OTHER INFORMATION
Jeshua	Time of Cyrus and Zerubbabel
Joiakim	-----
Eliashib	Time of Nehemiah
Joiada	-----
Johanán	“Son” of Eliashib/“Son” of Joiada (High Priest ca. 410 B.C.)
Jaddua	-----

2. *The Correlations Made by Josephus*

The sequential order of the high priests derived from both the biblical text and the Elephantine papyri, though transparent in both sources, is complicated by contradictory declarations of Josephus (*Ant.* 11.7.1-2). There are problems in correlating Josephus' high-priestly chronology with that of Neh 12 and the Elephantine papyri, and these are especially apparent in the sequential location of the high priests Johanán and Jaddua.

Briefly put, the Josephus account states that as a result of a quarrel in the temple, Joannes (Johanán) the high priest killed his brother Jesus, who had been a part of a Persian conspiracy to replace him. Bagoas, Artaxerxes' general, is said to have reacted to this horrible crime by polluting the temple and imposing a heavy tribute of 50 drachmae for each sacrificial lamb for a period of seven years (*Ant.* 11.7.1). In all likelihood, he also deposed Johanán from the high priesthood.⁷ Upon the death of Johanán, Jaddus (Jaddua) became high priest and died at an advanced age about the same time as Alexander the Great (*Ant.* 11.8.7). On the basis that Johanán was high priest about 410 B.C. (according to the Elephantine letter), Jaddua probably had an unusually long term of office as high priest (though not an impossible one) if he died ca. 323.

⁷See Rudolph, p. 193. Bowman, pp. 789-790, follows Rudolph in proposing that Johanán was deposed by Bagoas during the reign of Darius II (423-404), yet at the same time suggests that Johanán was the high priest in 398 when Ezra arrived (see esp. pp. 562, 654).

Complicating matters further, however, is Josephus' account of the marriage of Manasses, a son of Johanan and brother of Jaddua, to Nikaso, the daughter of Sanballat (*Ant.* 11.7.2). This Sanballat, according to Josephus, had been sent to Samaria by the Darius who was the last king of Persia—i.e., Darius III (336-331). Thus, a marriage between a member of the Jewish high-priestly family and the daughter of the Samaritan governor took place after 336 B.C., a detail that suggests we are here dealing with a Sanballat and with high priests later than those directly mentioned or presupposed by the convergence of the biblical data and the information from the Elephantine papyrus of 407. On this basis, where should the governorship of Nehemiah be located chronologically?

The usual response of those who hold the fifth-century dating for Nehemiah is that Josephus' statement on Manasses' marriage to Nikaso is simply a duplication of the biblical reference to the marriage of Joiada's brother (and son of Eliashib) to the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite mentioned in Neh 13:28. This marriage is thus left within the time frame dictated by the Elephantine letter; and therefore, Josephus has traditionally been accused of having garbled his historical data, of overstating the case, and of writing his history from the standpoint of the extreme particularism of Nehemiah and Ezra that had come to dominate the spirit of Judaism at Josephus' time.

(For a chart detailing the data pertaining to a fifth-century dating for Nehemiah, see **Figure 1** at the end of this article.)

3. Issues in Regard to Josephus' Account and the Redating of Nehemiah

Nevertheless, there currently is also scholarly argumentation that takes more seriously the data as given by Josephus and consequently proposes a fourth-century date for Nehemiah. The current debate surrounding the validity of the Josephus account and this redating of Nehemiah focuses primarily on three points: 1) the identity of Bagoas, 2) the identity of Sanballat, and 3) certain questions regarding possible papponymy in the records of the postexilic high priesthood.

The Identity of Bagoas

First, we look at the issue of the identity of Bagoas. It is argued that the fourth-century Bagoas of Josephus, the Bagoas who was the

notorious general of the last three Persian kings, is not to be identified with the Bagoas who was Persian governor of Judea and to whom reference is made in the Elephantine letter.⁸ There were thus two Bagoases, whose activities reflect different historical and political circumstances. The later individual by this name not only fits closely into the arena of activity in Palestine during the late fourth century but was also the person involved in the conspiracy with Johanan's brother Jesus in the latter's attempt to obtain the high priesthood.

The Identity of Sanballat

The second issue raised by Josephus' date is the precise identity of the Sanballat or Sanballats referred to in the biblical and extra-biblical sources. The discovery of the Wadi-Daliyeh papyri has indicated the presence of a second Sanballat as governor of Samaria during the reign of Artaxerxes II (404-358). The existence of this second Sanballat, coupled with the assumed evidence of papponymy for the ruling house of Samaria,⁹ along with the possible existence of a third Sanballat during the reign of Darius III (336-331), has led to the proposal that this third individual was the Sanballat of Josephus' account. The grandfather of this last Sanballat would, in this case, be Sanballat II ("the Horonite"), who was the contemporary of Nehemiah and of Artaxerxes II. As a result, the suggestion has been made for fixing the beginning of Nehemiah's first Judean governorship to 384 B.C.¹⁰

This reconstruction presumes the validity of Josephus' account of a late fourth-century marriage of Manasses to Nikaso, the daughter of a governor of Samaria named Sanballat. If Josephus' account is accepted as accurate, the results would be as follows:

⁸See Bezael Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley, CA, 1968), p. 290, n. 24. Note also Ralph W. Klein, "Ezra and Nehemiah in Recent Studies," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Werner E. Lemke, and Patrick D. Miller (Garden City, NY, 1976), pp. 364, 370-372. On the other hand, Saley, pp. 157-158, and Cross, "Judean Restoration," p. 5, consider both passages as a reference to the one Bagoas.

⁹Frank M. Cross, "Aspects of Samaritan and Jewish History in Late Persian and Hellenistic Times," *HTR* 59 (1966): 201-211; and idem, "The Discovery of the Samaria Papyri," *BA* 26 (1963): 110-121.

¹⁰So esp. Kellermann, pp. 49-50; idem, "Erwägungen zum Problem der Esra-datierung," *ZAW* 80 (1968): 55-87; and Saley, pp. 151-165.

First, a daughter of Sanballat II, the Horonite of Samaria who was a contemporary of Nehemiah, and also of Artaxerxes II and of the high priests Eliashib and Joiada, married Joiada's brother (Neh 13:28) at some time between 372 and 358 B.C.—that is, during Nehemiah's second term of governorship and before the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes III (358-338). Then again later, between 336 and 331 (during the reign of Darius III) there would have had to be another marriage of a similar kind—this time that of a daughter of Sanballat III marrying the brother of another high priest: namely, in this case Nikaso marrying Manasses, the son of Johanan (which would have to be a Johanan II inasmuch as Johanan I can be placed ca. 410 B.C., according to the Elephantine papyrus).¹¹

Thus, this reconstruction requires two Bagoases, three Sanballats, and two marriages between daughters of Sanballats and brothers of high priests. Even so, it is not a totally unreasonable reconstruction, as far as it goes, for these names and events might well represent occurrences in different, but closely related, periods.¹² A more sticky point, however, is the proposed separation between Josephus' Johanan and the Johanan of the Elephantine letter, a matter which will be explored below, together with the question of papponymy.

Assumption of Papponymy

The third and primary point in the argumentation for a fourth-century dating of Nehemiah relates to the assumed practice of papponymy in the postexilic Jewish high priesthood. This centers on Neh 12:1-26 and involves the correct placement of Eliashib and Joiada, predecessors of Johanan. It is based on the proposal of separate registers available to the compiler of the Chronicler's history.

¹¹This would be conjecture, based on the idea of papponymy. See Frank M. Cross, Jr., "Papyri of the Fourth Century B.C. from Daliyeh," in *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*, ed. David Noel Freedman and J. C. Greenfield (Garden City, NY, 1969), pp. 56-58. Since Cross's proposal of a third Sanballat on the basis of the information from Wadi Daliyeh, other scholars have tended to advocate this possibility. So, e.g., Porten, pp. 116 and 189-190, n. 31; A. F. Rainey, "The Satrapy 'Beyond the River,'" *AJBA* 1 (1969): 64; K. Galling, *Studien zur Geschichte Israels im persischen Zeitalter* (Tübingen, 1964), p. 210; and Saley, pp. 155-156.

¹²On the basis of this chronological restructuring, Sanballat I would be a contemporary of Artaxerxes I (465-424), Nehemiah, and the high priests Eliashib and Joiada; Sanballat II would be contemporaneous with Artaxerxes II (404-358), Johanan, and Jaddua; and Sanballat III would be paired with Darius III (336-331) (and with another Johanan and Jaddua?).

These registers are believed to have been 1) an earlier register that extended until the days of Johanan, son of Eliashib (Neh 12:23; i.e., the Johanan of the Elephantine letter),¹³ and 2) a later register in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, "until the reign of Darius the Persian" (Neh 12:22), who in this case is assumed to have been Darius III.¹⁴ This situation may be outlined as follows:

Earlier Register (Neh 12:23; cf. v. 26)	Later Register (Neh 12:22)
<i>Jeshua</i>	
<i>Joiakim</i>	
<i>Eliashib</i>	
<i>Johanan</i>	
<i>Jaddua (?)</i>	
	<i>Eliashib</i>
	<i>Joiada</i>
	<i>Johanan</i>
	<i>Jaddua</i>

This two-register hypothesis theorizes that the Johanan in the later register and the Johanan of the Bagoas-Jesus incident are one and the same person and that this high priest was functioning during the time of Darius III in the latter part of the fourth century. This position, therefore, advances the theory that Eliashib, Joiada, and Nehemiah must belong to the earlier part of the fourth century, during the reign of Artaxerxes II. As a consequence, the beginning of Nehemiah's first and second governorship would then be dated to

¹³See esp. Saley, pp. 160-161.

¹⁴The difficulty in determining whether "the Persian" should be applied to Darius I, II, or III is evident from the variety of positions which have been taken in recent years. Arguments for Darius I or II are summarized in Myers, pp. lxix, 198-199. Proponents of Darius II include Cross, "Samaritan History," p. 202, n. 4; idem, "Judean Restoration," p. 11; Kellermann, pp. 107-108; and Rudolph, p. 193. Advocates of Darius III are A. Bertholet, *Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia* (Tübingen, 1902), p. 85; Charles C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (Chicago, 1910), pp. 331-332; H. Schneider, *Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia* (Bonn, 1959), p. 244; Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, 1941), p. 819. Cf. Saley, pp. 159-161.

384 B.C. and to a time after 372 B.C.¹⁵ The fifth-century Johanan, son of Eliashib, of the Elephantine letter would have been an earlier Johanan, and hence this placement of Nehemiah in the fourth century disconnects him from that Johanan.

The Priestly Succession Based on Papponymy

Support for a two-Eliashib and a two-Johanan conjecture is derived, as already observed, on the basis of an assumed practice of papponymy in the postexilic high-priesthood succession, and the prevalence of these names at that time.¹⁶ The actual succession, according to this view, would be as follows:

Jeshua
Joiakim
Eliashib I
Johanan I
Jaddua I (?)
Eliashib II
Joiada
Johanan II
Jaddua II

At the heart of this specific proposal of papponymy is the extraordinary weight given to Neh 12:22, 23, a somewhat obscure passage located in a secondary chapter.¹⁷ The context and order of this passage would indicate that after vv. 12-21, a list of the Levites of the same period is expected; however, that list does not come until vv. 24-25. Verse 22 appears to be a supplement to the preceding list,

¹⁵This is Saley's second option as given on pp. 160-161.

¹⁶There are serious questions which can be raised against this view. In this reconstruction, every high priest is the son of the preceding one, except Eliashib I, of course, who is listed as the brother of Joiakim. See also G. Widengren, "The Persian Period," in *Israelite and Judean History*, ed. John H. Hayes and James M. Miller (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. 508-509; and Cross's reconstruction in "Judean Restoration," pp. 9-11.

¹⁷See n. 3 above, and also Myers, pp. 198-199; Bowman, pp. 789-790; Klein, p. 372; and Saley, pp. 158-159.

an interpolation, the primary concern of which is the priestly families. Verse 23, on the other hand, is concerned with the Levites alone.

However, it should be noted that even if the verses are taken as they stand, "Darius the Persian" could just as well be Darius II (423-404) as Darius III (336-331). It is known from Herodotus, for instance, that the designation, "the Persian," could be written much earlier than the late fourth century.¹⁸ Equally, the statement, "until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib," could also mean to the end of the reign of Darius II, in the late fifth century. If, as would be expected, Johanan's murder of his brother Jesus in the temple resulted in his removal from office by Bagoas, this could have been sometime between 408, when according to the papyrus letter he was still in office, and 405.¹⁹

The Conjectural Nature of the Assumed Papponymy

With its emphasis on Johanan's being "son" as opposed to "descendant" of Eliashib, rather than the son of Joiada as stated in Neh 12:11 (and possibly implied in 12:22, where apparently we have a reference to the same individual), the weight of argument for papponymy during this phase of the high-priestly genealogy is essentially conjectural, resting on a very soft base. The building of the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim in the latter third of the fourth century, as a result of the Nikaso/Manasses marriage, has been listed as support for this position, since it traces the roots of the Samaritan schism to thirty years earlier, during the middle third of the fourth century and to the Nehemiah-Sanballat hostility.²⁰ But if this were indeed the case, then just what was the role of Johanan I in the late fifth century?

¹⁸Herodotus, *Persian Wars* 2.110,158; and Robert Dick Wilson, "Titles of the Persian Kings," in *Festschrift Eduard Sachau zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Gotthold Weil (Berlin, 1915), p. 193. See also n. 14 above; and Myers, pp. 198-199.

¹⁹Cowley, "No. 30," line 18. See also Rudolph, p. 193; Bowman, pp. 789-790; Cross, "Judean Restoration," pp. 6-9; and Kellermann, p. 107.

²⁰On the building of the Samaritan temple, see Josephus, *Ant.* 11.8.2,4,7, and the archaeological confirmation in G. E. Wright, "The Samaritans at Shechem," *HTR* 55 (1962): 362-365. Note also the discussion of Cross, "Papyri," pp. 54-56, in connection with the marriage of Nikaso, Sanballat's daughter, with Manasseh, brother of the high priest Johanan.

(In any event, the proposal for a fourth-century date for Nehemiah can be set forth in overview as is done in **Figure 2** at the end of this article.)

4. *Papponymy and Fifth-century Dating for Nehemiah*

This position regarding papponymy based on the existence of a Sanballat II (and perhaps a Sanballat III), even if it is accepted in spite of its conjectural nature, need not, however, rule out a fifth-century dating for Nehemiah. In this case, the Johanan of Neh 12:11, 22, is one and the same individual cited by the Jewish community in the Elephantine letter during the reign of Darius II (423-404) (“the Persian”)—the person who was high priest ca. 410.²¹ He was, therefore, a late contemporary of Sanballat the Horonite (in this case, “Sanballat I”). Johanan’s brother was married to a daughter of this Sanballat, thereby incurring the wrath of Nehemiah (Neh 13:28). Johanan and his brother were the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib. Joiada was a contemporary of Bagoas, Nehemiah’s successor in the governorship of Judea; and Jaddua, Joiada’s son and successor as high priest, was a contemporary of Darius II (423-404). The circumstances surrounding these events have been fixed to the fifth century.

If papponymy is accepted, even though on a very weak basis, what we find is that the roots of the disagreements and disaffection between the high priesthoods of Samaria and Jerusalem were recorded in two settings: 1) the fifth-century Nehemiah episode of Eliashib’s grandson’s marriage to Sanballat’s daughter, a marriage which resulted in that grandson’s expulsion from the temple (Neh 13:28), and 2) the fourth-century marriage between Nikaso, the daughter of Sanballat, and Manasses, the brother of the high priest Jaddua. As we have already seen, this latter episode led, in turn, to the final schism and the building of the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim.

Hence, even if there were two diplomatic marriages, two Bagoases, and multiple Sanballats, we are left with the fact that the available extant material still suggests that the fifth century, not the fourth century, is the most plausible dating for Nehemiah.

²¹Cowley, “No. 30,” lines 18-19; a point conceded by Saley, pp. 161-162.

(The scenario suggested by this possibility of a fifth-century date for Nehemiah even if there were papponymy is set forth in **Figure 3** at the close of this article.)

5. *Conclusion*

In the foregoing paragraphs we have discussed both evidences and conjectures that have been set forth in attempts by OT scholars to ascertain the correct date for Nehemiah's two missions to Jerusalem. The fifth-century dating proceeds on the basis of straightforward utilization of data from the OT book of Nehemiah and a papyrus letter from Elephantine dated to 407 B.C. Information from Josephus, however, adds complexity and confusion to the matter, and in an effort to do justice to the Josephus account, some OT scholars have proposed papponymy in the postexilic Jewish priesthood, with the accompanying suggestion of a fourth-century dating for Nehemiah's governorships in Judea.

Even if a practice of papponymy for the postexilic high priesthood were to be confirmed, whether on the basis of Neh 12:22-23 or in some other way, the historical arguments which have been proposed in support of a synchronization between the biblical references and the Elephantine letter of 407 B.C. are so strong that they still favor a fifth-century, as opposed to a fourth-century, dating for Nehemiah. Moreover, it must be said, as well, that the proposal of the practice of papponymy among the Sanballats is not clear evidence that papponymy was also in vogue in the postexilic Judean high priesthood. Indeed, the fact is that there is still no hard evidence in any extant material of such a custom.

FIGURE I
CHART FOR FIFTH-CENTURY DATING OF NEHEMIAH

PERSIAN KINGS	HIGH PRIESTS	GOVERNORS OF SAMARIA
Artaxerxes I (465-424)		
Nehemiah after 445 and 433	Eliashib	Sanballat the Horonite
	Joiada	
Xerxes II (423)		
Darius II (423-404)		
	Johanen	
	Jaddua	
Artaxerxes II (404-358)		
Artaxerxes III (358-338)		
Arses (338-336)		
Darius III (336-331)		
ALEXANDER		

FIGURE 2
CHART FOR FOURTH-CENTURY DATING OF NEHEMIAH
WITH ASSUMED PAPPONYMY

PERSIAN KINGS	HIGH PRIESTS	GOVERNORS OF SAMARIA
Artaxerxes I (465-424)		Sanballat I
	Eliashib I	
Xerxes II (423)		
Darius II (423-404)		
	Johanan I	
	Jaddua I	
Artaxerxes II (404-358)		
Nehemiah after 384 and after 372	Eliashib II	Sanballat II the Horonite
	Joiada	
Artaxerxes III (358-338)		
Arses (338-336)	Johanan II	Sanballat III
Darius III (336-331)	Jaddua II	
ALEXANDER		

FIGURE 3
CHART FOR FIFTH-CENTURY DATING OF NEHEMIAH
WITH ASSUMED PAPPONYMY

PERSIAN KINGS	HIGH PRIESTS	GOVERNORS OF SAMARIA
Artaxerxes I (465-424)		
Nehemiah after 445 and 433	Eliashib	Sanballat I the Horonite
	Joiada	
Xerxes II (423)		
Darius II (423-404)	Johanen I	Delaiah
	Jaddua I	
Artaxerxes II (404-358)		Sanballat II
Artaxerxes III (358-338)	Johanen II	Hananiah
Arses (338-336)		
Darius III (336-331)	Jaddua II	Sanballat III
ALEXANDER		