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A KEY TO THE INTERPRETATION OF ZECHARIAH'S VISIONS

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THE dates attached to the oracles of the prophets often unexpectedly illuminate details of the prophecies.¹ Zechariah's visions, dated on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month,² are, strangely enough, to be understood not so much in the light of that specific date, as by the proximity of the date to the spring New Year, a little more than a month later.

It has been recognized that the visions of Zechariah are a literary production, to be interpreted as a literary unit.³ They were not delivered as addresses, but were meant to be read,⁴ and the date is probably the day upon which they were issued to that small clique composed of at least Haggai, Zechariah, Joshua, Zerubbabel, Heldai, Tobiah, and Josiah, which was intent upon the establishment of an independent kingdom

¹ See, for instance, the discussion of certain of Ezekiel's prophecies by the present writer in "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LVI (1937), 309 ff., and "Some Aspects of Solar Worship at Jerusalem," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, LVI (1938) (in press). Sometimes, if the context of undated prophecies give a clue as to the time of the year when they were uttered, this, in turn, may throw some light on obscurities in the prophecies. See especially Morgenstern's studies of the utterances of Amos, interpreting them as an oracle delivered at Bethel upon the New Year's Day, the day of the fall equinox: J. Morgenstern, "Amos Studies, I," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, XI (1936), 19 ff.

² Zech 1 7.

³ See Karl Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton, Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament*, Tübingen, 1904, 400, 401.

⁴ See H. G. Mitchell, *Haggai and Zechariah, International Critical Commentary*, New York, 1912, 99.

under Zerubbabel and Joshua. There must have been some reason for issuing the visions, and with them the coronation oracle in 6 9-15, at this particular time of the year.

That reason may be determined from the context of the visions. Zechariah was planning on holding the secret coronation of Zerubbabel in the near future. That he was expecting to do this on the New Year's Day, when Joshua would also have some part in the rites, may be concluded from the symbolism which he employs. The date of the visions suggests that it was the coming New Year festival, the first day of the first month, that Zechariah had in mind.

Zechariah drew his symbolism from the New Year ritual as he had been familiar with it in Babylonia, and as it had been influenced by the pre-exilic ritual.⁵ Although we shall treat primarily the fourth vision from this angle, the data from the other visions are also pertinent. In the first⁶ and the final⁷ vision is reflected the common Mesopotamian representation of the sun rising between the two mountains in the east,⁸ and the horses are adaptations of the usual horses and chariots of the sun-god.⁹

⁵ This is hinted by J. Morgenstern, "The Book of the Covenant," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, V (1928), 73.

⁶ Zech 1 7 ff.

⁷ Zech 6 1 ff.

⁸ See W. H. Ward, *The Seal Cylinders of Western Asia*, Washington, 1910, Figs. 244-257; H. Frankfort, "Tell Asmar, Khafage, and Khorsabad," *Oriental Institute Communications*, No. 16, Chicago, 1933, Fig. 27.

The "hollow" in Zech 1 8 is the valley between the two mountains, and, as A. Van Hoonacker has shown ("Zech 1 8, 10 ff.; 6 1 ff., and the *DUL-AZAG* of the Babylonians," *Journal of Theological Studies*, XVI (1915), 250 ff.) we are to read בן ההרים "between the hills," with the Septuagint, rather than בין החרטים, "between the myrtles." The man standing between the mountains is Yahweh, in the role of Shamash. The symbolism of Zech 14 4 is from the same source. With Marti, *et. al.*, omit רכב על סוס אדם והוא, "he is on horseback."

⁹ See W. C. Graham and H. G. May, *Culture and Conscience*, Chicago, 1936, 242 ff. The horses and chariots of the sun at the Jerusalem temple (2 Ki 23 11) imply the existence of stables in the sacred area. An interesting analogy is found in a letter of Nabushumiddina to the crown prince Ashurbanipal, where it is stated that in the month Iyyar, after the sacred marriage ritual of Nabu in the *bit ʾirsī* and the visit of Nabu in the *adri ekalli* and the park, a charioteer of the gods is to come from the stable of the gods, and he

Zechariah, however, is not depicting the rise of the sun on the morning of any day, but rather on the New Year, at the equinox, when, as we know, the rising sun played an important rôle in both Hebrew and Babylonian ritual.¹⁰ As Jeremias has suggested, the symbolism in Zech 6:1 ff. may be reminiscent of a rite of horse-racing on the New Year.¹¹ Certain details of the New Year drama of the death and resurrection of Bel-Marduk may be pertinent. In lines 57 and 58 we read:

The race which in the month of Nisan before Bel and all the sacred places they run in frenzy; that means; when Ashur sent Ninurta to conquer the god Zu.¹²

Schmidt and Sellin rightly estimate the fourth vision of Zechariah as the most difficult section of the entire book of Zechariah.¹³ Much is clarified when it is appreciated that Zechariah is employing the symbolism of New Year ordination and coronation, with reference to the program which he has in mind for the coming New Year's Day.¹⁴

will take the god forth and carry him in the procession. Directions for this were given in advance, for, like the vision of Zechariah, this letter was written in the month of Shebat! See Leroy Waterman, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire*, Part I, Ann Arbor, 1930, 46 ff., Letter 65. See also מְבוֹא הַסּוּסִים in 2 Ki 11 18, and שַׁעַר הַסּוּסִים in Neh 3 28.

¹⁰ See H. G. May, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LVI, 309 ff.

¹¹ A. Jeremias, *Das alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*, Leipzig, 1930, 4th ed., 740 f.

¹² S. Langdon, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation*, Oxford, 1923, 45, 46. See also line 66:

"The chariot which goes speeding to the house of New Year's sacrifice without its master; that means that without a master (Bel) it runs swiftly."

¹³ See Hans Schmidt, "Das vierte Nachtgesicht des Propheten Sacharja," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, LIV (1936), 48 ff.; E. Sellin, "Der Stein des Sacharja," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, L (1931), 242 ff.

¹⁴ Joshua was to have some part in the rites of the coming New Year, although it is uncertain whether Zechariah intended a complete ordination ceremony for him along with the coronation of Zerubbabel. The argument that Zechariah cannot have been thinking of an ordination ritual for Joshua in view of the fact that he was already a priest is refuted by the consideration that Joshua, who was not one of the returned exiles (See T. J. Meek, "Aaronites and Zadokites," *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XLV (1929), 160 ff.) had not been recognized as a priest by the returned exiles.

The first hint of this appears when we compare the vision with the ritual of ordination in Ex 29 1 ff.; 40 1 ff., and Lev 8 1 ff., from the P source. This ritual was not made of whole cloth by the P school, but was certainly in part based on older practices. The ordination and installation of the Aaronite priests, of whom Joshua was one,¹⁵ took place on the first day of the first month,¹⁶ the day foremost in the mind of Zechariah. In the ritual of ordination the Aaronite priests were washed, and sacred garments (i. e., clean garments) and a turban were placed upon them as a symbol of their new office. This is identically happening to Joshua in Zechariah's vision, as the soiled garments are removed and festal garments are placed upon him, and a turban is placed on his head. The Aaronite priests were anointed, and although anointing of Joshua is not mentioned in the fourth vision, it is evident from the following vision that the prophet had this in mind, when he referred to both Joshua and Zerubbabel as anointed ones.¹⁷

Zechariah planned on but one crown, and that for Zerubbabel.¹⁸ It might not be a wild conjecture that the crown used in the ordination ritual of the Aaronite high priest of the later period¹⁹ was the one which had actually been made for the head of Zerubbabel and had been deposited in the temple.²⁰ In connection with Zechariah's imagery of the lamp with seven light in the fifth vision, immediately following the vision of the ordination of Joshua, we may point to the use of the lampstand in the ordination rites of the Aaronite high priest, hinted in Ex 40 4, 24. The prophet may well have been employing in this fifth

¹⁵ T. J. Meek, *loc. cit.*

¹⁶ Ex 40 1.

¹⁷ Zech 4 14. See Lev 8 1 ff.

¹⁸ Zech 6 9 ff., as most critics reconstruct the text.

¹⁹ Ex 29 6 and Lev 8 9.

²⁰ Zech 6 9 ff. This use of the crown may have been in part responsible for the changes made in the text of Zech 6 9 ff., to give the impression that the crown was made for Joshua. A later tradition ascribed its origin to the time of the sojourn at Sinai: Ex 39 30.

vision as a symbol an object which he expected actually to be utilized in the rites of the coming New Year.²¹

Hans Schmidt has done good service in explaining the symbolism of this fourth vision in the light of the proceedings of a judgment scene at the sacred area, the angel standing for the priest judge, and Satan, not necessarily the supernatural figure as in Job, being the accuser who stood at the right hand of the accused in the "Gottesgericht," while the soiled clothes are not a special contrivance of the vision, but a part of the self-chastisement which the accused underwent when he came to trial, a sign that his guilt was assumed, and the removal of the clothes a sign that he was not guilty.²² Schmidt and others²³ are also not wrong in seeing an analogy in the Adapa myth, in which Adapa, having been summoned to the heavenly courts of Anu, is dressed in soiled garments, and, after making a favorable impression upon Anu, is dressed in a new garment.²⁴

There is much to be learned from this analysis, but a more complete investigation discloses that in the fourth vision of Zechariah we have as a basis not merely a judgment *motif*, but rather a complex symbolism, largely mythological in its more fundamental expressions, which has influenced the New Year's coronation and ordination rituals, and in which the judgment concept is only an element. This becomes evident from an examination of the Adapa story. The mourning garment worn by Adapa was for the vanished gods, Tammuz and Gishzida. Both are vegetation deities, Gishzida (or Ningishzida) being not only a companion of Tammuz, but at the same time in

²¹ Ps 132 17, 18 may reflect the use of a lamp in ordination ritual, and the references to clothing in these two verses and the preceding verse of the psalm are significant in the light of our subsequent discussion, especially that part referring to the judgment *motif*.

²² Ps 109 6 ff.; 26 6; Job 9 20, 21, and other passages quoted by Schmidt are pertinent analogies (Schmidt, *op. cit.*, 51 ff.). Recognition of the judgment element obviates the necessity of deleting the clause "See, I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee" in verse 4. Contrast Mitchell, *op. cit.*, 151.

²³ See H. Gressmann, *Der Messias*, Göttingen, 1929, 260.

²⁴ See G. A. Barton, *Archeology and the Bible* (Philadelphia, 1937), 7th ed. 312 ff.

reality a form of Tammuz. The breaking of the wing of the south wind may have been considered the cause of the death of the vegetation gods. Possibly the new garment is to be taken as evidence that Tammuz and Gishzida were permitted to return to the earth, for it should stand as a sign that the reason for mourning was over. The *motif* of the departing vegetation deity thus appears in this myth which was primarily an explanation of the origin of pain and mortality. The Adapa story may have been considered as part of a creation epic.

At any rate, in the Seven Tablets of Creation there is the strange incident of the perishing and re-creation of a garment at the command of Marduk as he is among the assembly of the gods, and at this miracle they cry, "Marduk is king!" and "add" unto him a sceptre, throne, and hatchet.²⁵ Here is some reflection of coronation ritual, and one wonders whether Marduk wore the re-created garment. The renewing of the garments may appear in the myth Series Irra, wherein Irra says to Marduk that until Marduk enters "that house" and Gira cleanses his garments, and Marduk returns to his place, so long will Irra continue to make mighty the pestilence of heaven and earth.²⁶ We may also note that the first part of the fourth tablet of the Seven Tablets of Creation recalls that part of Zechariah's vision in which Joshua is granted "free access among those who stand here."²⁷ This part of the vision may also find some analogy in

²⁵ Tablet IV, lines 23 ff.

²⁶ (rub)û ilmarduk a-di at-ta ana bîti ša-a-šu tir-ru-bu-ma ilgira šu-bat-ka ub-ba-bu-ma ta-tu-ra aš-ruk-ka (a)-di ul-la a-rad-di-ma ši-pit šamê iršitimūm u-dan-na-an Erich Ebeling, *Der Akkadische Mythos vom Pestgott Eru, Berliner Beiträge zur Keilschriftforschung*, II, 1, Berlin, 1925, 13, lines 18-20.

²⁷ In lines 1-14 Marduk is given access in the assembly of the gods, and made honored among the great gods. The meaning of the words in the vision of Zechariah must be interpreted in the light of the expression אֵל הַעֲמֻדִים אל המעמדים in verse 4, where the reference is to the occupants of the heavenly courts. In the liturgy this was illustrated in the regular entrance of the high priest into the Holy of Holies. The priest became something more than a mortal, and had access to God himself. Mitchell (*op. cit.*, 148) argues that the scene implies mundane surroundings, since Joshua was a human, and since the angel appears in the place of Yahweh, but the post-exilic priest was something more than a human.

the so-called "introduction scene" in Mesopotamian religious art, as Gressmann and Sellin have pointed out.²⁸

This garment *motif* has many variations, and the ritual of the death and resurrection of Bel-Marduk offers another instance of its appearance in the New Year rites. Lines 32 and 56 taken together may indicate that the garment of Marduk is associated with sin:

"The *seritu* garment in which he (Marduk was clothed; that means a coffin (?) (Kadammu).

"This one whose sin is; in a Kadammu he is . . . and in water he is not covered."²⁹

This is perhaps sufficient to make plausible our thesis that the Joshua incident in the fourth vision may have the source of its symbolism in the mythological background of New Year rites.³⁰ A few comments about verses 8 and 9 will further illustrate how the text becomes more understandable when we appreciate the fact that Zechariah was planning on a New Year ceremony, elevating both Zerubbabel and Joshua.³¹ In 3 9, as

²⁸ There is no real inconsistency between 7b and 8a which requires excision of the passage from נחתי to הוֹרֵל הַכֹּהֵן (Hans Schmidt, *op. cit.*, 49). The assumption that here are two visions which have been intermingled (Schmidt), or that radical revision of the present order is necessary (Gressmann) can be dispensed with. It is true that one would expect אָחָם rather than הָמָה in verse 8, but it is better to debit our author with an awkward expression than to make such radical reconstructions that the end result is necessarily so subjective that little can with confidence be concluded from them.

²⁹ Langdon, *Epic of Creation*, 41, 45. See also line 15. The concept of sin is associated with the dead Marduk in line 36. See also lines 17 and 30. One is reminded of the fact that the Suffering Servant in Is 52 13 ff. is reckoned a guilt offering, and dies for the sins of others, making his grave with the wicked, being numbered with transgressors. Those who consider Joshua's guilt that of the Hebrew community, would find a pertinent analogy here.

³⁰ There is much more unity in the symbolism of the visions than is generally recognized. The judgment scene is not without its solar aspects, for the place of judgment in the Shamash texts was at the point of or behind the two mountains, as is suggested by a Babylonian hymn quoted by Hoonacker (*op. cit.*, 251).

³¹ It is clear that the coronation rites of Zech 6 9-15 were to take place in the temple. As Marti (*op. cit.*, 420) has shown, the text from וּבָאָה אֲחֵהָ to בֵּית in 6 10 is to be omitted. The verse must be read: "Take from the Golah, from Heldai, and from Tobiah, and from Jedaiah, and from Josiah, the son of Zephaniah, who have come from Babylon."

in 6 11, the text originally referred to Zerubbabel, rather than to Joshua.³² The stone was to be placed before Zerubbabel. Hans Schmidt's brilliant hypothesis that the stone here and in verses 7 and 10 of the following chapter is *eş-Şakhra*, the sacred rock at the temple at Jerusalem, necessitates the assumption that the sacred rock had been covered up by the debris of the temple destroyed in 586 B. C., and in 520 B. C. it was lying hidden beneath the ground. Before this could be accepted, however, it would have to be established more definitely that the temple lay deserted between 586 B. C. and 520 B. C. Jeremiah 41 4 ff. shows that the cultus at the sacred area was not completely discontinued even immediately after the destruction of the temple. It is not easy to imagine that the most sacred object at the temple area, the sacred rock, would have been permitted to remain hidden beneath the debris, if the sanctuary was not deserted. At any rate, in 538 B. C., when the temple foundations were laid by Sheshbazzar or the altar rebuilt, the sacred rock would have been excavated, if it had remained uncovered to this time.³³ Haggai 1 4 may be taken to imply that there was some building present at the site of the temple, perhaps a poorly repaired structure made from the ruins of the old temple, which most people were accepting as sufficient.³⁴ This mitigates against the identification of the stone in 4 7 as the Jerusalem rock, for in this verse it is implied that the stone must be uncovered, i. e., "brought forth."³⁵

³² Marti, Nowack, *et. al.*

³³ Ezra 5 16; 3 3.

³⁴ The evidence from 2 3 ff. is even more pertinent if, as stated in 2 18, the foundations for the new temple were laid on the 24th of the 9th month. Haggai, two months earlier, according to 2 3 ff., was calling the people's attention to the building that had served as a place of worship at the sacred site throughout the exile, and was saying that, compared with the earlier temple, this was nothing, and the people should get busy to build a structure really worthy of the temple as it was before 586 B. C. For discussion of 2 3 ff. see W. F. Lofthouse, *Israel after the Exile*, Oxford, 1928, 153.

Meek (*op. cit.*, 155, 157) assumes the continuance of the Jerusalem cultus during the exile.

³⁵ Schmidt has made a much better case for the identification of the stone in 3 9 as the Jerusalem rock, than for the references to the stones in chapter 4. There is, of course, nothing which necessitates that all these be the same rock.

One more suggestion may be added to the many which have been given for the identification of the stone in Zech. 3 9. It would seem reasonable that we should look for analogies in the coronation rituals. The incident of the coronation of Joash in 2 Kings 11 suggests a solution. Here is a secret coronation within the temple. The boy king was acclaimed and anointed after the priest Jehoiada "put the crown upon him and the testimony."³⁶ As Robinson suggests, this testimony (עדות) may have been some material symbol of a covenant.³⁷ It is not impossible that such a symbol was made of stone, and it may have been inscribed, as was the stone to be placed before Zerubbabel.³⁸

A pertinent analogy for *es-Sakhra* appearing in a coronation ritual is possibly to be found in 1 Ki 1 9 f., where the coronation of Adonijah takes place beside the Stone of the Serpent (אבן הוֹחֵלֵת) near En-rogel. Compare also the large stone at Beth-Shemesh, upon which the ark and sacred objects were placed, even as the ark rested upon the rock within the temple at Jerusalem (1 Sam 6 14).

³⁶ V. 12— ויתן עליו אתההמר ואיתהערות. The identification of this עדות is most difficult. T. H. Robinson (*History of Israel*, I, Oxford, 1932, 351) rightly cautions against the usual alteration of the text, in changing עֲדוֹת to עֲדוּיֹת.

³⁷ *Loc. cit.*

³⁸ It may have been inscribed with ברכות טוב: see Ps 21 4. Note also the strange pillar (העמוד), doubtless of stone, also used in the coronation rites: 2 Ki 11 14. Cf. 2Ki 23 3.

The stone may have stood somewhat in the position of the tablets of fate in the Babylonian New Year symbolism, and we may find an analogy in the Seven Tablets of Creation. When Tiamat exalted Kingu,

"To him she has entrusted it, made him sit in purple, (saying);

'Thy spell I have uttered, in the assembly of the gods I have made thee great . . .'

She has given him the tablets of destiny, on his breast has laid them (saying),

'Thy command shall be unalterable, established thy word.' "

Translation of Tablet III, lines 100, 101, 105, 106, after G. A. Barton, *op.cit.*, 294. The tablets are transferred to Marduk after his conquest over Tiamat.

It is also interesting that in tablet VI the sequel finds its climax in the building of the temple tower. Incidentally, it would not be strange to find Zechariah influenced by such symbolism as this, for the document comes from the Persian period, Colophon II dating the Seven Tablets of Creation in the month of Ayyar, the ninth day, the twenty-seventh year of Darius. See S. Langdon, *Epic of Creation*, 93.

Joseph Mihelic has called my attention to 1 Sam 10 25, where in the late theocratic source we read **וידבר שמואל אל־העם את משפט המלכה ויכתב בספר וינח לפני יהוה ספר**. This **ספר** in the late tradition may be reminiscent of the use of the **עדות** in the coronation ceremony, which was, in reality, a stone tablet.

Hans Schmidt with reason concludes that the seven eyes in Zech 3 9 are above the stone rather than on it.³⁹ It is, then, in the heavens that we must look for the seven eyes. The parallel in 4 10 suggests that the seven eyes are seven heavenly bodies. The key to the interpretation is to be sought in Mesopotamian symbolism.⁴⁰ One can point to several analogies. There are the seven gods, deified weapons of Ninurta and Ningal, later identified with the Pleiades.⁴¹ In the epic of creation, after the completion of Esagila, Marduk's temple, the seven gods of fate fix the fates.⁴² The Pleiades are the *sibitti ilāni*, the seven gods, and are associated with the fates in some manner. In Tablet VI, line 59 of the epic of creation we read that "the gods of fate who are seven fixed the fate for all men."⁴³ These seven gods appear on many cylinder seal representations of the epic of

³⁹ Schmidt, *op. cit.*, 54.

⁴⁰ Sellin earlier identified the seven eyes with the representation of the sun, moon, and five planets depicted on a stone record of the investiture of a Nebo priest at Borsippa. See E. Sellin, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der jud. Gemeinde nach dem bab. Exile* (1901), II, 78 ff., and see also "Die Bestallungsurkunde eines Nebopriesters zu Borsippa," *Mittheilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, No. 4 (1900), 14 ff.

⁴¹ They appear in the myth of Irra (E. Ebeling, *op. cit.*, 2, 3). See Langdon, *Semitic Mythology*, 147.

⁴² Tablet VI, line 73.

⁴³ Langdon (*Epic of Creation*, 176) says that these refer to the Igigi, or part of them, and that they are in some sense identified with the seven Pleiades, although he thinks that the gods of the seven planets are meant here.

The Pleiades, along with Taurus, were woven into the myth and festival of the first Sumerian month. See S. Langdon, *Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars* (London, 1935), p. 1. See the interesting representation of Taurus, the Pleiades, and the New Moon in A. Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur* (Berlin, 1929), p. 215, figs. 130, 131.

The association of the seven eyes with the Pleiades appears more plausible than any reference to the seven planets, although see Gressmann, *op. cit.*, 265.

creation, the struggle of Bel and the dragon, where they are represented as seven dots, and where they probably stand for the Pleiades.⁴⁴ Upon some such symbolism Zechariah seems to have drawn.

A few words may complete our study. Zechariah thought of himself in the rôle of a Samuel anointing David. But his program, beyond the actual New Year rites which were probably carried through as planned, never matured. The crown deposited in the temple after the ceremonies never stood on the head of a messiah ruling an independent kingdom. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, Zechariah's prophecy of the disintegration of the Persian empire never came to pass, and this had been a prerequisite for the restoration. Darius successfully restored order in his kingdom. Secondly, soon after the New Year ceremonies towards which Zechariah's prophecies had pointed, Tattenai, the governor of the province beyond the river, wrote to Darius, informing him of the rebuilding project.⁴⁵ One wonders whether rumors of the intrigue sponsored by Zechariah had reached the ears of Tattenai. It seems singular that he should have been concerned if nothing more were involved than the mere rebuilding of the temple. Darius wished the sympathies of the inhabitants of Judah, and he not only affirmed their right to continue the rebuilding, but he also subsidized the project. As a result, any anti-Persian sentiment fostering Zechariah's project was dissipated.

It may be that by the time of the utterance of his last oracles in the fourth year of Darius Zechariah recognized the failure of his attempt to foster an independent kingdom under Zerubabel and Joshua. In these prophecies found in chapters 7 and

⁴⁴ See, for instance, the seal from Megiddo described by the present writer in R. S. Lamon, *The Megiddo Water System, Oriental Institute Publications*, XXXII, Pl. VIII, No. 6. See also Ward, *op. cit.*, figs. 569, 638, 644. The seven dots appear often in ritual scenes depicting the seated deity: see Ward, *op. cit.*, figs. 718, 734, 744, 745, etc. See also H. H. von der Osten, *Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. Edward T. Newell, Oriental Institute Publications*, XXII (1934), figs. 200, 435, 446, etc.

⁴⁵ Ezra 5.

8 there is no reference to the expected downfall of the Persian empire. Zechariah still looked for a golden age, but it was not to be introduced by his messianic king. The failure of a part of his prophecy would not have discouraged him from continuing his preaching, any more than did several reverses in the prophetic career of Jeremiah silence that prophet, although they did result in a modification of his message.