

1. Contemporary Tanach

Build-up to the exile	Melachim II, Yeshayah, Yirmiyah, Divrei haYamim II
The exile	Yechezkel, Daniel, Esther
The return	Chaggai, Zechariah, Malachi

2. Rabbi Hayyim Angel's series <http://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=80344&collection=5815>

3. Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi, Kuzari 3:63

כותב המקרא לא הרגיש לנסתרות אבל כתב המפורסמות הגלויות, ולא העתיק מיהושע מחכמתו שקבל מאלקים וממשה דבר, אבל זכר יום עמידת הירדן... וכן לא כתב מדברי עזרא ונחמיה אלא המפורסם בהמון.

The author was not concerned with hidden matters, recording only well-known, public matters. He did not record any of the wisdom which Yehoshua received from Gd and from Moshe, but he mentioned the day the Jordan stood still... And so he did not record of Ezra and Nechemiah other than that which was publicly known.

4. Don Isaac Abarbanel to Neviim Rishonim, pg. 165

כאשר ראה הסופר השלם הזה שהשבטים אשר הגלו אשורה ספו... ונותרה בת ציון... וראה ג' כ שהמלכות באמת נתן אלקים לדוד ולזרעו עד עולם, ושאר המלכים אשר מלכו בישראל משאר השבטים לא היו כפי הרצון האלקי, ושלעתיד לבא לא ישאר כי אם מלכות בית דוד... חשב למעלת המלך דוד לספר יחוסו ויחוס שבטו וענינו ומעשיו כלם המורים על שלמותו, והשתלשלות המלכים אשר באו מזרעו

When this complete scribe saw that the tribes exiled to Assyria had been finished... and the daughter of Zion remained... And he saw that Gd had given true monarchy to David and his descendants eternally, and that the other kings who had reigned for Israel from the other tribes had not been in accord with Divine desire, and that in the future only the monarchy of the house of David would remain... He thought to aid King David's stature by telling of his lineage, and that of his tribe, and his matters and deeds, all of which would indicate his completeness. He also thought to speak of the line of kings who came from his descendants...

5. Persian kings of this period, with their secular chronology

• Cyrus (Koresch)	559 BCE – 530 BCE (reigned over Babylon from 539 BCE)
• Cambyses II	530 BCE – 522 BCE
• Darius I (Daryavesh?)	522 BCE – 486 BCE
• Xerxes (Achashverosh?)	486 BCE – 465 BCE
• Artaxerxes I (Artachshasta?)	465 BCE – 424 BCE

6. Talmud, Rosh HaShanah 3b

תנא: הוא כורש הוא דריוש הוא ארתחשסתא.

It was taught: He is Koresch, he is Daryavesh, he is Artachshasta.

7. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra to Ezra 4:24

דריוש - הוא אחשורוש:

Daryavesh – This is Achashverosh.

8. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra to Ezra 6:14

ודריוש - הוא הזקן המדי. וארתחששתא הוא אחשורוש. "למלכות דריוש (ד:כד, ו:טו)" הוא בן אחשורוש:

And Daryavesh – This is the elderly Mede. And Artachshasta is Achashverosh. "To the reign of Daryavesh (4:24, 6:15)" is the son of Achashverosh.

9. Leaders before Ezra and Nechemiah

• Sheshbatar	Political leader of Judea at the start of the return
• Zerubavel	Ascended from Babylon to lead the Jews in Judea as of Ezra 3
• Yehoshua ben Yehotzadak	Kohen Gadol when the altar is built
• Chaggai, Zechariah, Malachi	Prophets

## 10. Talmud, Bava Batra 14b

סידרן של כתובים: רות וספר תהלים ואיוב... ומגילת אסתר עזרא ודברי הימים.

The order of Ketuvim: Ruth, Psalms, Job... Esther, Ezra, Chronicles.

## 11. Talmud, Sanhedrin 93a

מכדי כל מילי דעזרא נחמיה בן חכליה אמרינהו, ונחמיה בן חכליה מאי טעמא לא איקרי סיפרא על שמיה? אמר רבי ירמיה בר אבא, מפני שהחזיק טובה לעצמו שנאמר "זכרה לי אלקי לטובה" [כל אשר עשיתי על העם הזה]. (נחמיה ה:ט) "... רב יוסף אמר מפני שסיפר בגנותן של ראשונים שנאמר "והפחות הראשונים אשר לפני הכבידו על העם ויקחו מהם בלחם ויין אחר כסף שקלים ארבעים וגו'". (נחמיה ה:טו) ואף על דניאל שגדול ממנו סיפר...

But Nechemiah son of Chakaliah recorded all of Ezra's deeds; why wasn't the book named for him? Rabbi Yirmiyah bar Abba said: Because he took credit for himself, as in Nechemiah 5:19... Rav Yosef said: Because he degraded earlier ones, as in Nechemiah 5:15... And even of Daniel, who was greater, he spoke thus...

## 12. Rashi to Bava Kama 61b

מעזיבה - טיח של סיד על תקרה, ודומה לו בספר עזרא (נחמיה ג) "ויעזבו ירושלים עד החומה..."

*Ma'azivah* – a lime lining on a roof, like in Nechemiah 3:8, "*Vaya'azvu...*"

## 13. Structure of the books

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|-------------------|--|
| • Ezra 1          | The original decree of Cyrus and aliyah      |
| • Ezra 2-3        | Zerubavel's aliyah, and initial construction |
| • Ezra 4-6        | Halting and re-starting of the construction  |
| • Ezra 7-8        | Ezra's aliyah under Artachshasta             |
| • Ezra 9-10       | Ezra's religious leadership                  |
| • Nechemiah 1-2   | Nechemiah's aliyah under Artachshasta        |
| • Nechemiah 2-7   | Nechemiah's administration                   |
| • Nechemiah 8-10  | Ezra leads a national return to Gd           |
| • Nechemiah 11-12 | Lists  |
| • Nechemiah 12-13 | Nechemiah's religious leadership             |

## 14. Josephus, Antiquities Book 11, Chapter 3:10 (Whiston translation)

And thus did these men go, a certain and determinate number out of every family, though I do not think it proper to recite particularly the names of those families, that I may not take off the mind of my readers from the connexion of the historical facts, and make it hard for them to follow the coherence of my narrations...

## 15. Rabbi Elhanan Samet, Parshat Vayigash: Seventy Souls

Lists of various types are an important and common literary phenomenon in Tanakh, and the modern reader tends to ignore them – generally for lack of interest. This often has a sound objective basis: lists of names of people or places or objects don't mean the same to us today as they meant to the reader of ancient times, to whom such names were familiar and connected to his life and his environment. But this is only a partial explanation. The main reason for the lack of interest is the change in literary taste of the modern reader as opposed to that of the ancient one who, after all, represented the initial audience to which the Tanakh was addressed. Readers of ancient times were very fond of these lists, and some were even a sort of "poetry" for them. Many lists are recorded in Tanakh specifically for the purpose of introducing a more celebratory and elevated note into the "routine" biblical story, and some lists are poetical in nature even in the form in which they are written in the Torah.

## 16. Rabbi Hayyim Angel, *The Literary Significance of the Name Lists in Ezra-Nehemiah*, JBQ July 2007