The Sabbath and Jubilee Cycle

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THIS BOOK IS NOT TO BE SOLD.

Obtain the truth and do not sell wisdom, instruction, and understanding. (Proverbs, 23:23)

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Note to Reader

This book has been assembled with the serious student of scriptural studies in mind. Its objective is to familiarize its reader, not only with the arguments, both pro and con, with regard to the different sabbath and Jubilee cycle theories but to provide detailed evidence demonstrating that knowledge of the exact cycle used by the ancient Israelites is attainable. The text is also designed for use in discussing and teaching specific subjects dealing with the sabbath and Jubilee years. To assist in this endeavor, the Table of Contents not only lists the chapter headings, which express the broader issues examined, but the sub-topics as well. This format, when used in conjunction with the Index, will provide quick and easy access to specific topics and items of evidence.

We have departed from some conventions to assist those not experienced with historical pursuits but desirous of seeking the truth of the matter. For example, we have included in our footnotes references to various dictionaries and concordances which make available definitions for ancient, foreign terms. These will provide quick verification for new students who often have no easy way of checking the accuracy of the author's translations. Also, we have provided secondary sources to assist in authenticating various statements we have cited from ancient authors. Not everyone can get copies of rare documents and ancient historical texts or has access to libraries substantial enough to meet everyone's needs. Hopefully, those more adept in reading ancient languages and having a much wider range of sources at their disposal will excuse this extension of courtesy in the spirit of advancing knowledge. The reader should also be advised that throughout our text we have utilized all capital letters for certain passages to indicate that the emphasis is ours.

Preliminary Discussion

The Sabbath and Jubilee Years in Leviticus, 25:1–13

And Yahweh spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai saying, Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, Without a doubt you shall come into the land which I am giving to you and the land shall have a sabbath,[1] a sabbath for Yahweh. Six years you shall sow your field and six years you shall prune your vineyard and shall gather the produce. And in the seventh year a sabbath *sabbathon*[2] shall be for the land, a sabbath for Yahweh. Your field you shall not sow and your vineyard you shall not prune. That which grows of itself of your harvest you shall not harvest and the grapes of your unkept vine you shall not gather. A year of sabbathon it shall be for the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be to you for food, to you and to your male servant and your female servant, and to your hired one and to your tenant, those living among you, and to your cattle and to the beast which is on your land, shall all the produce of it be for food.

And you shall count seven sabbaths of years, seven years seven times, and shall be to you the days of the seven sabbaths of years, forty-nine years. And you shall let sound a ram's horn, a signal in the seventh moon, on the tenth of the moon. On the Day of Atonement the ram's horn shall sound in all your land. And you shall make sacred this year, the fiftieth year, and you shall proclaim liberty in the land to all its dwellers. A Jubilee it shall be for you. And you shall return a male to his possession; and each to his family you shall return him. A Jubilee it is, the fiftieth year. A year it is for you, not shall you sow it and not shall you harvest that which grows of itself and not gather the unkept vine, for a Jubilee it shall be. Sacred it shall be to you. Out of the field you shall eat its store in the year of this Jubilee. You shall return each one to his possession.

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1 The Hebrew word שבת (*sabbath*) means, "*ceased… intermission… cessation*" (HEL, p. 260), "to *repose… rest, interruption, cessation… intermission*" (SEC, Heb. #7673–7676). The primary meaning of "sabbath" is to "cease" or "rest" from some action or work.

2 The Hebrew word שבתון (*sabbathon*) derives from the term שבת (*sabbath*), i.e. to "cease" from some action or work, and means, "*a time of rest*" (HEL, p. 260), "a *sabbatism* or special holiday" (SEC, Heb. #7677). A sabbathon is defined in Scriptures as "a sacred sabbath for Yahweh" (Exod., 16:23).

CHART A

The Four Sabbath Cycle Theories:

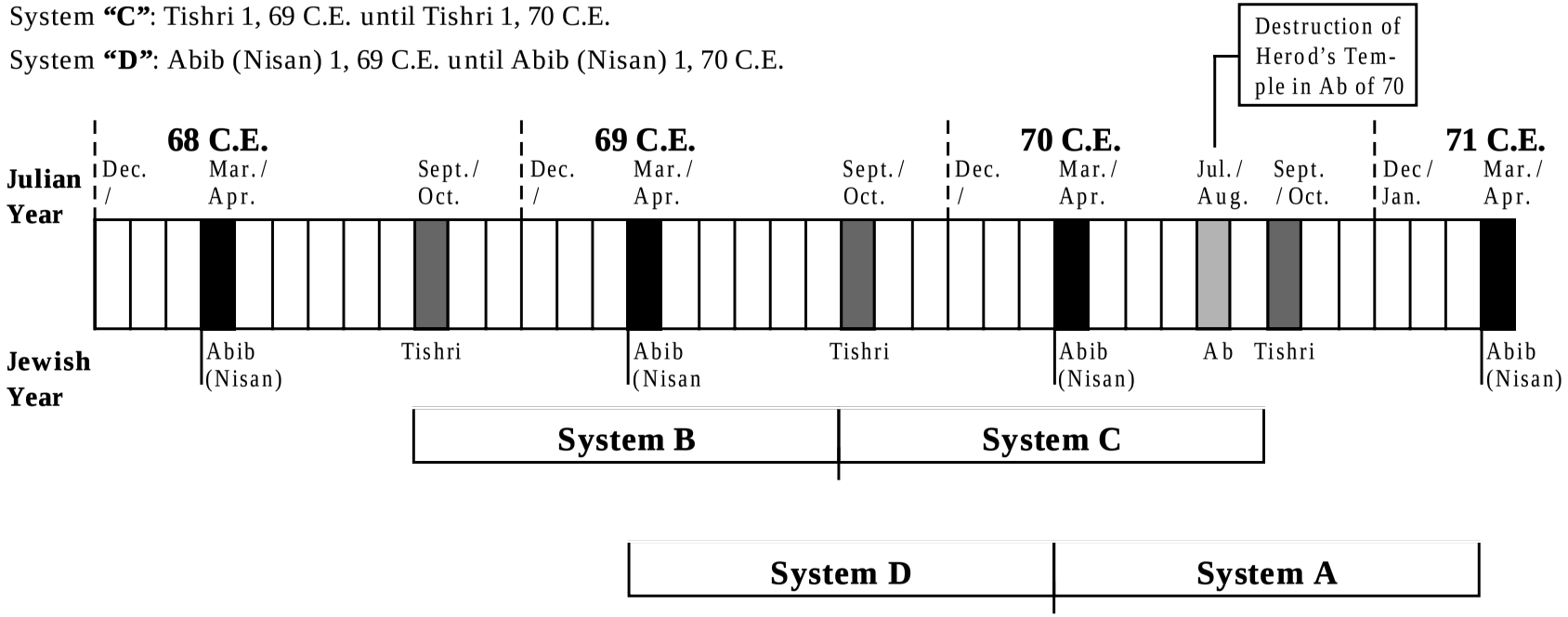
Their Proposed Sabbath Year at the Time of the Destruction of the Second (Herod's) Temple

System **"A"**: Abib (Mar./Apr.) 1, 70 C.E. until Abib (Nisan) 1, 71 C.E.

System **"B"**: Tishri (Sept./Oct.) 1, 68 C.E. until Tishri 1, 69 C.E.

System **"C"**: Tishri 1, 69 C.E. until Tishri 1, 70 C.E.

System **"D"**: Abib (Nisan) 1, 69 C.E. until Abib (Nisan) 1, 70 C.E.



Introduction

This study presents the evidence from ancient biblical and secular sources for the dating of the sabbath year and Jubilee cycle.

There has been a long standing debate over exactly which sabbath and Jubilee cycle system represents the one actually practiced by the ancient Israelites. To the novice this dispute may at first glance seem trivial. Nevertheless, there are two reasons that its solution is extremely valuable. First, this cycle is an essential tool for any reconstruction of the chronological framework of ancient Israelite history. The strong foundation it provides, in turn, acts as a guide for other contemporary dynasties and events.[1]

Second, once the correct cycle is ascertained, it allows us to "clock in" and discover which years are presently sabbaths and Jubilees. This possibility holds great significance for students of biblical eschatology. The book of Hebrews, for example, notes that, "The Law," of which the sabbath and Jubilee years are a part, is "a shadow of the coming good things."[2] The sabbath day, to demonstrate, was reckoned as a type of the great sabbatism and rest into which the people of Yahweh will one day enter.[3]

Likewise, the prophetic character of the Jubilee year is strongly attested to. The ancient book of Jubilees, for instance, notes that the sabbath and Jubilee cycle would continue "until the sanctuary of the sovereign (Yahweh) is created in Jerusalem upon Mount Zion."[4] The text of 11Q Melchizedek, found in the caves at Qumran, explains the Jubilee statutes of Leviticus, 25, by stating:

> 1. [saying to Zion] 'your eloahim[5] reigns.' . . . [
> 2. [ ] . . . and where it says, 'In [this] year of Jubilee you shall return, each man to his possession.'
> 3. [and where it says, 'Let] every holder of a debt [let drop] what he loans [to his neighbor. Let him not exact payment from his neighbor nor from his brother, for there is proclaimed a] remission
> 4. [of el.' Its interpretation concerns the e]nd of days as regards 'those taken captive' who [. . . etc.].[6]

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1 See our forthcoming books entitled *Israelite Chronology* and *Old World Chronologies*.

2 Heb., 10:1. Also cf. Luke, 4:16–22, quoting Isa., 61:1–9, in reference to Lev., 25:f, where liberty is to be proclaimed to all the inhabitants of the land during the Jubilee year.

3 Heb., 3:7–4:13; esp. v. 4:9, were the Greek term σαββατισμός (sabbatismos), meaning, "a *sabbatism*" (SEC, Gk. #4520, derived from 4521, σάββατον), i.e. "*a keeping of sabbath, a sabbath rest*" (ILT, Lex., p. 88), is used.

4 Jub., 1:29.

5 The generic term אלה (eloah), its plural form אלהי (eloahi) and collective noun form אלהים (eloahim), and the title אל (el) are indiscriminately translated into English by the single word God. Each term actually has its own unique meaning (see SNY, pp. 5–14). To avoid any confusion, we shall continue throughout our study with the proper transliterations.

6 MTCE, p. 67.

"Those taken captive" is a reference to the future captivity of the Israelites among the nations during the end of days. The prophets foretold that out of this captivity a remnant of Israel and Judah would return to the Promised Land and eternally dwell with Yahweh.[7] This return was symbolized by the Israelites regaining their liberty during the Jubilee year. The coming of the messiah during the end of days, at which time he will save Israel and Judah from their captivity and return them to their homeland, was, by extension, understood as occurring in one of these future Jubilee years.[8]

In either case, whether for an accurate Israelite chronology or for eschatological purposes, a precise knowledge of this ancient cycle is required. Therefore, we must take the utmost care in uncovering the true and original sabbath year and Jubilee cycle.

There are four possible sabbath cycle systems we must consider.[9] For simplification purposes, this study shall utilize the following labels for these four systems. Our "key" or "example" date will be the sabbath year in each system which is either on or nearest to the year that Jerusalem and Herod's Temple (the second Temple) were destroyed (the summer of 70 C.E.).[10]

System "A": Abib (March / April)[11] 1, 70 C.E. until Abib 1, 71 C.E. The month of Abib was also called Nisan. System "A" is advocated by this study.

System "B": Tishri (Sept. / Oct.)[12] 1, 68 C.E. until Tishri 1, 69 C.E. The Zuckermann-Schürer system.

System "C": Tishri 1, 69 C.E. until Tishri 1, 70 C.E. The Marcus-Wacholder theory.

System "D": Abib 1, 69 C.E. until Abib 1, 70 C.E. A possibility based upon the evidence of an Abib 1 beginning for the year coupled with the claim of Rabbi Jose and other Talmudic writers that the year before the fall of Jerusalem was a sabbath year.

Today the most popular of these theories is system "B." This system has been advocated since the time of the *Mishnah* (formed at the end of the second century C.E.). It only differs from system "D" in that system "D" would start the sabbath year in the spring rather than in the fall. System "C" has also been advocated since the *Gemara* portion of written Talmudic times,[13] but it has

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7 E.g. Lev., 16:14–45; Deut., 29:10–30:20; Jer., 30:10–31:34; Ezek., 37:1–28; Hosea, 1:1–3:5; Amos, 9:11–15; etc., cf. Acts, 1:1–7; Hebs., 8:8–13.

8 See the study in HUCA, 46, pp. 201–218.

9 See Chart A.

10 In our study the abbreviations C.E. (Common Era) and B.C.E. (Before Common Era), the scholarly, religiously neutral designations, shall be utilized rather than the corresponding A.D. and B.C.

11 See Chart G. The Hebrew month generally begins during the latter part of the first or the early part of the second Gregorian (Julian, Roman) month-name mentioned as its equivalent.

12 Ibid.

13 For the purposes of our study, Talmudic times, which essentially represent Pharisaic traditions and interpretations of Scriptural laws, can be divided into three phases. First is the halakoth or oral laws period (mid-second century B.C.E. until the end of the second century C.E.). Second is the period when these oral laws were codified in written form. This event took place in about 200 C.E. with the composition of the *Mishnah*. It continued until about 500 C.E. with the *Gemara*, comments by the Rabbis on the Mishnah. The post-Gemara era is also called the post-Talmudic period. It represents the third phase of Talmudic times. Jewish scholars during this phase advocated the earlier codified Talmudic laws and traditions.

been the lesser sister to system "B." It has again gained some popularity in recent years due to the work of Ralph Marcus and Zion Wacholder. System "A," on the other hand, is the conclusion based upon the in-depth research into the ancient evidence provided in this study. In reality, system "A" has merely allowed the evidence to present its own case.

It is the contention of this study that the Jews who supported system "B," beginning in the late second century C.E., lost touch with the accurate chronology and the true sabbath year and Jubilee cycle. They, in turn, incorrectly calculated the sabbath year for more ancient times so as to make it fall one year prior to the destruction of Jerusalem rather than during that event. System "D" is merely a modified form of "B." System "D" takes notice of the fact that the earlier Israelites actually began their sabbath year in the spring and not with the fall (the Jewish reckoning of fall as the official beginning of the sabbath year taking place at a relatively late date). System "C" takes into account that the year Jerusalem fell (70 C.E.) was a sabbath year but it errs in that it continues the late and, what we shall prove to be, false practice of reckoning the beginning of a sabbath year from the fall.

All three systems ("B," "C," and "D") are faced with important obstacles. Advocates of these various theories have often been forced to harshly criticize ancient records, like those from Josephus and the Maccabean books, because the historical data is inconsistent with present theory. Robert North, for example, takes Josephus to task by challenging his historical year as exhibiting "internal inconsistencies which invalidate their use for chronology." North concludes, "It should be abundantly clear that the sabbath year dates of Josephus are either palpably incommensurate, or else insolubly obscure."[14]

This study disagrees. It is not Josephus or any other pre-second century C.E. ancient report that is the source for the confusion. Indeed, we find them all remarkably accurate. Rather, it is the attempt to force these early records to conform with one of the three erroneous sabbath cycle theories now prevalent which has created an illusion of historical error.

System "A," on the other hand, does not start from the premise of an existing theory which is built upon the interpretation of one or two dates or upon a late tradition, as the three other systems do. Instead, it allows the evidence to build its own structure. The results of this method reveal that the ancient sources are in perfect harmony and reflect an entirely different sabbath cycle than heretofore presented. As is to be expected, the fact that system "A" is a new and radical departure from the three established theories demands that it must submit in every detail to very close scrutiny. Yet, there is no doubt in this researcher's mind that system "A" not only survives meticulous scrutiny but its solution is compelling.

As part of our **Preliminary Discussion** we shall review some major flaws in the system "B" chronology. These observations will be followed by some initial comments with regard to the question about which month served as the beginning of the ancient sabbath year during the post-exile period. These two chapters will set the stage for other numerous proofs presented throughout which shall conclusively show that the first day of the Hebrew month of Abib (later called Nisan) was the true New Year date for the Jews up and until the time of the Bar Kochba revolt (133–135 C.E.). The month of Abib, which

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14 Bib., 34, pp. 503, 511.

began with the new moon whose cycle contained the first full moon after the spring equinox,[15] therefore, finds its start sometime during the Gregorian (Roman or Julian) month-names of either March or April.

With this preliminary discussion accomplished, we shall begin a detailed look at the evidence for the sabbath and Jubilee years. This study has divided this examination into five Sections, each representing the evidence for a specific historical period:

In **Section I** of our text the records for a sabbath year and a Jubilee year which occurred during the pre-exile period (before 587 B.C.E.)[16] shall be thoroughly discussed. It shall be demonstrated that a sabbath year and a Jubilee year were observed in the fifteenth and sixteenth year of the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah (701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E., spring reckoning). The complexities of this evidence demand a full investigation of the conflict between the Assyrian king Sennacherib and the Judahite king Hezekiah, as well as the important involvement of the Kushite king Tirhakah. The results of this study will in turn lay the groundwork for what will prove to be the true and correct sabbath and Jubilee cycle, which for our study has been dubbed system "A." This conclusion will be amply supported by the remainder of our work.

In **Section II** we shall examine the records of the Jewish post-exile period (538–40 B.C.E.). These documents will reveal the observance of a sabbath year in the eighth year of the Persian king Arta-xerxes I; in the 150th Seleucid year; in the 178th Seleucid year; and, finally, in the year following the fifth consulship of Gaius Julius Caesar.

Section III will delve into the evidence for two sabbath years observed during the reign of King Herod of Judaea (40–4 B.C.E.). In these chapters we shall provide an in-depth examination of which year and season Herod conquered Jerusalem. This conquest is very important for our study since a sabbath year occurred around that time. Systems "B," "C," and "D" all make their interpretations of this sabbath year the heart of their arguments. The evidence from Herod's thirteenth through seventeenth years adds further definition as to which of the four possible sabbath cycle systems can plausibly work.

Section IV will deal with the evidence for the sabbath years in the post-Herod period, extending up until the end of the First Revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. This investigation will include the proof that there could not have been a sabbath year in 40/41 C.E.—which will verify that system "B" (Zuckermann's view) and system "D" are inaccurate. We shall also show proof of a sabbath year in the second year of Emperor Nero (56/57 C.E., Abib reckoning) and shall demonstrate that a sabbath year could not have occurred in the winter of 68/69 C.E. (which again disproves systems "B" and "D"). These records will reveal that the year Jerusalem fell to the Romans (i.e. 70/71 C.E., spring reckoning) was a sabbath year.

Section V shall analyze the evidence for the sabbath year of 133/134 C.E., during the Bar Kochba revolt, and the references to an upcoming sabbath year in 140/141 C.E. The sabbath year of 133/134 C.E. was the last official sabbath year observed by the Judaean state. With the traumatic defeat of the Jews by the Romans in the summer of 135 C.E., the practice of observing the sabbath years by the Judaean state was thereafter suppressed. It was abolished altogether as a requirement for Judaism by its leaders during the third century C.E.

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15 See Chap. XXVIII, pp. 341–344.

16 See above n. 10.

Chapter I

Flaws in the System "B" Reconstruction

The system "B" reconstruction (which makes the period from Tishri [Sept./Oct.], 68 until Tishri, 69 C.E.—the year before the fall of the Temple—a sabbath year)[1] is widely held today as legitimate because of the works of Zuckermann (1857) and Schürer (1901).[2] When scrutinized, their arguments are found to rest almost entirely upon a statement from the mid to late second century C.E. Jewish work entitled *Seder Olam* (chapter 30), written by the chronographer Rabbi Jose (Yose) ben Khalaphta. Jose comments that the year prior, both to the destruction of the first Temple and of the second Temple, was a sabbath year. The opinions voiced in Rabbi Jose's text became the opinion of numerous Talmudic writers that followed him. It was the tradition of the Geonim,[3] and it was the considered opinion of, among others, Moses Maimonides, a well-respected Talmudist of the twelfth century C.E.

Proof for this historical construction is believed found in a statement made by Josephus, while he was discussing the siege of Jerusalem by Herod the Great in 37 B.C.E. According to this view, Josephus would have this siege take place during a sabbath year. Another item of evidence which is offered comes from some documents produced during the Bar Kochba revolt. This war, the advocates of system "B" hold, continued from 132 to 135 C.E. for all of Judaea. A contract dated towards the end of the second year of this Judaean revolt mentions that after the next five years of harvesting there would be another shemitah (rest), i.e. sabbath year. Having reasoned that the first year of the war for all Judaea began in the spring of 132 C.E., the year 138/139 C.E. (Tishri reckoning) is hailed as the oncoming sabbath year intended by the documents.

It is clear that the majority of the Talmudic writers believed that system "B" was valid, beginning with many of the Jewish rabbis from the early third century C.E. Authority has also been lent to this calendar system during the last 150 years due to the studies and concurrence made by more recent historians, beginning with Zuckermann. As Wacholder adds, "The prestige of Schürer's agreement with this reckoning made Zuckermann's calendar the mainstay of scholarship."[4]

Nevertheless, as this study will show, a number of flaws exist in this popular view, flaws which should cause a great deal of hesitation before system "B" should be so eagerly accepted. These defects arise from the following points:

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1 Chart A.

2 TSCJ; GJV; HJP.

3 The Geonim were the rectors of the great Rabbinic academies of Sura and Pumbeditha in pre-Mohammedan Babylonia. The "Geonic period" lasted from the end of the sixth until the first half of the eleventh centuries C.E. World Jewry recognized these men as their highest religious authorities.

4 HUCA, 54, p. 123.

Other Views

First, the opinion held by Rabbi Yose (Jose) in the *Seder Olam*, and subsequently by the majority of the Talmudic writers that followed him, was not the only view on the subject. Indeed, there were important exceptions which demonstrate that there was no universal Jewish understanding about the sabbath year cycle.

The Babylonian Talmudic work entitled *Arakin* reports one calculation, stating: "thus it is found that it (the destruction of the second Temple) happened during the last part of a septennate (seven year cycle)."[5] That is, the second Temple, which had been enlarged and called Herod's Temple, fell to the Romans during a sabbath year, not in the year after as system "B" requires.

The *Abodah Zarah* shows that the early third century C.E. rabbi named Hunna also calculated the sabbatical cycle based upon the fact that the second Temple was destroyed during a sabbath year.[6]

The Arakin on the other hand, points out that Rabbi Judah had argued that the destruction of the second Temple could not have happened in a sabbath year because the first Temple was destroyed in the third year of the cycle.[7] Therefore, based upon a chronology agreed upon by the Talmudists, the second Temple was destroyed in the same third year of the cycle. The author of the Arakin adhered to the same chronology as Rabbi Judah and the others, but against them he mentions the argument that the first and second Temples were both destroyed during a sabbath year.

The Seder Olam, as well as Talmudic works like the *Taanith*,[8] hold that both the first and second Temples were destroyed in a post-sabbath year. Yet, they too clung to the same chronological framework used by Rabbi Judah and the Arakin text.

An Error in Chronology

Second, all of the opinions held by Talmudic Jewish writers from the late second century C.E. and beyond are further colored by some flagrant and basic chronological errors. Using a distorted interpretation of the prophecy in Daniel, 9:24–27 (70 weeks being understood to mean 70 weeks of years—i.e. 490 years), their chronology was built upon the supposition that the second Temple stood for 420 years, being destroyed in the 421st year.[9] Under this construction, the second Temple began to be erected in 351 B.C.E. (Chart B). It is obvious from reading the Seder Olam (29–30) that Rabbi Jose's chronology is based entirely upon the rabbinical interpretation of this prophecy from Daniel and that he purposely makes the destruction of the temples built by Solomon and Herod (the first and second Temples) conform to this premise.

According to the prophecy in Daniel, 69 weeks (7 weeks plus 62 weeks) would pass before the appearance of the messiah, which was understood to

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5 B. Arak., 12b. The Heb. term מוצאי is utilized, meaning the "outgoing" or last part of a thing (HEL, pp. 141, 113). In this passage it refers to the last year of the septennate.

6 B. A.Zar., 9b.

7 B. Arak., 12b.

8 B. Taan., 29a.

9 E.g. B. Arak., 12b; B. Yom., 9a; J. Meg., 1:12; TSCJ, pp. 39–43; TRC, pp. 9f, n. 1.

mean 483 years; i.e. the messiah would appear in the 484th year. The 421st year of this chronology brings us to the destruction of the second Temple in 70 C.E., the 484th year becomes 133 C.E., the actual beginning of the Bar Kochba revolt.[10] During this revolt some of the important rabbis of that period declared Simeon Bar Kochba to be the messiah. The drift of this evidence leads one to suspect that the chronology advocated by Rabbi Jose was in truth originally devised to support the claim of Bar Kochba as the messiah. After Bar Kochba failed, his claim as the messiah died, but the chronology which had been made popular at that time continued with a life of its own.

Unfortunately, Rabbi Jose's arrangement is impossible since the book of Ezra places the completion of the second Temple in the sixth year of King Darius of Persia (515 B.C.E.).[11] Ezra and Nehemiah, noted for their involvement in the activities of the second Temple, lived in the fifth century B.C.E., long before 351 B.C.E. Further, as history reveals, Bar Kochba was not the messiah, as many other rabbis of that time had themselves argued. Nevertheless, the chronology continued as if it had been valid.

Three divergent opinions were also expressed among the Jews as to what year represented the first celebration of a sabbath and Jubilee after the Israelites entered the land of Kanaan under Yahushua (Joshua) the son of Nun. These opinions colored their interpretation of chronology and their understanding of which years represented sabbaths.

- Most of the Talmudic writers claimed that the Israelites took seven years to conquer Kanaan and seven years to divide up the land. The fifteenth year in the land was a Jubilee.[12]

- The first century B.C.E. Jewish work entitled The Book of Jubilees, on the other hand, argued that the Jubilee was celebrated in the first year that the Israelites entered Kanaan.[13]

- The book of *Sepher Yashar* and the works of Josephus held a quite different position.[14] Both calculated that the sixth year of the invasion into Kanaan was a year of rest (sabbath), implying that the Jubilee was in the fourteenth year: i.e. the seven years of conquest included a one year period prior to entering Kanaan—with the defeat of the Kanaani Emori (Amorites) located east of the Jordan—and then five years of conquest west of the Jordan before the sabbath year. During the sabbath year (year six in Kanaan) the land was distributed among the tribes of Israel. This sabbath year was followed by six

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10 Not in 132 C.E. as popularly assumed. Bar Kochba was involved in a local revolt in 132 C.E. but he was not recognized by all Judaea until spring of 133 C.E. After formal recognition, coins and other documents for all Judaea began to be dated by the revolt (see Section V).

11 Ezra, 6:14–16.

12 TSCJ, pp. 25–28.

13 Jub., 50:1–4.

14 Yashar, 89:54–90:1; Jos., *Antiq.*, 5:1:19 (cf. Joshua, 14:1–15). The Hebrew work of Sepher Yashar (also called Jasher) must not be confused with *The Book of Jasher* by Alcuin, which is a fraudulent work. In the citations from the Hebrew Yashar we utilize the numbering system of M. M. Noah's English translation; but, in as much as this edition has several flaws, we remind our reader to rely on the Hebrew text (e.g. SHJ).

years of planting and harvesting in order to produce enough store for the next sabbath and following Jubilee.

Next, beginning in the latter part of the second century C.E., Jewish writers incorrectly established the first of Tishri of the seventh month in the sixth year of the sabbath cycle as the start of the sabbath year. In doing so, they abandoned the first of Abib (called "Nisan" by the Babylonians and postexilian Jews), being the first month (March/April) in the calendar originally used among the Israelites.[15] This arrangement was the outgrowth of centuries of tradition intent upon building "a fence around the Law."[16] By putting into place sabbath year precepts during the months just prior to the actual start of the sabbath year, the religious leaders of Judaea believed they were preventing their followers from inadvertently breaking the Law. This interpretation at first created a sabbath year that extended from Tishri of year six until the last day of Adar, the twelfth month (Feb./March), of year seven. In the second century C.E., even this was shortened so that the year ended with the arrival of Tishri in the seventh year. The eighth year (or first year of the next cycle) was, in turn, made to begin on the first day of Tishri of year seven.[17]

Modern day chronologists have assumed that this first of Tishri beginning was used as the official start of the sabbath year not only from the time of the Mishnah, when the oral laws of the Talmudists were first put into writing (about 200 C.E. forward) but in the Halakoth (oral laws) period, which started in about the mid-second century B.C.E. and continued until around 200 C.E. Indeed, many apply it not only to the sabbath year but for every year in the post-exile period. Yet, as this investigation will demonstrate, evidence from the pre-destruction era (i.e. before Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 C.E.) and even as late as the Bar Kochba revolt (133–135 B.C.E.) proves that the early Jews of Judaea observed an Abib (Nisan) 1 beginning for all of their years, including the sabbath year.

We will have more to say on these particular subjects in our next chapter and throughout our study. The point to be considered here is that the shifting of the beginning of the year from the spring to the fall by the Jews in the post-Halakoth period added to the confusion already in process.

It is evident that even before the Bar Kochba revolt, which for all intents and purposes ended with the fall of Jerusalem and Beth Thera in Ab (July/Aug.), 135 C.E., there had arisen various opinions about chronology among the different Jewish factions. These opinions became divisive after the chronological works of Demetrius were published (third century B.C.E.), who established the notion that the Israelite sojourn in Egypt lasted only 215 years rather than 400 years.[18] A simple comparison between Josephus, the book of Jubilees and later Jewish works makes this point. This debate and the subsequent confusion it caused was further exacerbated by the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., after which the Jews came to believe that the messiah must surely

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15 See for example R.Sh., 1:1, and B. A.Zar., 10a.

16 Ab., 1:1–5. As C. K. Barrett points out, the Jews understood that by this fence making they were to, "Make additional commandments in order to safeguard the original commandments; for example, certain acts should be avoided towards the approach of evening on Friday lest one should forget and inadvertently continue to do them on the Sabbath" (TNTB, p. 149).

17 E.g. Sot., 7:8.

18 ESJ, pp. 98–104.

come now to recover their city and to rebuild the Temple. This messianic dream found its expression in the Bar Kochba revolt of 133–135 C.E.

Other Factors

The destruction of Jewish records by the Romans created a situation where only partial documentation was able to survive. Indeed, the Romans were notorious for destroying the records and culture of the people whom they hated and conquered (e.g. they even went so far as to salt the earth of Carthage after their victory over that city to prevent a future return of those people to their homeland). The decimation of Jewish documents especially took its toll with the burning and the ruination of both the second Temple and the city of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and again with the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans after the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E.

The extreme anti-Jewish sentiment that had developed in the Roman attitude, due to the Jewish revolt of 66–70 C.E., led to the suppression of the practice of keeping the sabbath years. The observance of a sabbath year during the Bar Kochba revolt was only a momentary interlude in this suppression. There can be little doubt, as North observes,[19] that the rabbinical ruling in the *Mishnah*, which allowed for cultivation during sabbath years when such sowing was commanded by foreign conquerors, came into existence during this post-second Temple period. It is also known that during the third century C.E. greedy Roman proconsuls used force and threats of severe punishment to extract land-taxes from the Jews in the sabbath years. These conditions led Yannai (called Rabbah), a chief Rabbinic authority of that time, to issue a proclamation abrogating the sabbath year laws.[20]

The loss of records and other sources of documentation for keeping the sabbath year was further complicated by the dispersion of the Judaean population after the demise of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It was further aggravated by a permanent ban against all Jews—preventing them from coming near the region surrounding the city of Jerusalem—which took effect after the collapse of the Bar Kochba revolt in August of 135 C.E. This ban came about in the reign of emperor Hadrian (first half of the second century C.E.). At that time, the Romans began to build a temple dedicated to Jupiter on the site of the ancient Temple of Yahweh. As Dio points out, this sacrilege "brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration."[21]

The Jews, deeming it intolerable that a foreign people should be settled in their holy city and worship a pagan deity there, looked for a messianic deliverance from the evil. They believed they found one in Bar Kochba. The prophecy of 70 weeks found in the book of Daniel was interpreted by the followers of Bar Kochba to mean 70 weeks of years (490 years); and the sabbath year arriving in 133 B.C.E.[22]—which was followed by a Jubilee—was set forth as the time of deliverance per this prophecy. Records from the time of the Bar Kochba revolt reveal that the Jews had once again re-established the practice of keeping the sabbath year.[23]

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19 Bib., 34, pp. 512f.
20 BJK, p. 382.
21 Dio, 69:12.
22 For the evidence of this sabbath year see Section V, Chaps. XXVI–XXIX.
23 See Chap. XXVI.

In 135 C.E. the revolt in Jerusalem was crushed. At the time of this last revolt, the Roman government made "a legal decree and ordinances" that "the whole nation (of the Jews) should be absolutely prevented from entering from thenceforth even the district around Jerusalem,"[24] "the whole of Judaea was made desolate,"[25] and for the most part the Jews were scattered throughout the world. Once again Jewish practices, including the sabbath year, were suppressed and important records destroyed. This condition opened the door for minority opinions and misinformation to flourish.

With the forced non-observance of the sabbath year, combined with the lapse of time, Jewish scholars, beginning with the mid-second century C.E., were left to determine the sabbath and Jubilee cycle by chronographical considerations, largely derived out of their own devices. The school that rose to dominance was one which calculated that the sabbath and Jubilee were the fourteenth and fifteenth year after the Israelites entered into the land of Kanaan. Also remaining in their possession were the calculations used by the supporters of Bar Kochba.

The following is the Talmudic chronology that became popular and was assumed to be correct:

Exodus to building the Temple	480 years
Existence of first Temple	410
Babylonian Exile	70
Existence of second Temple	420
Exodus to end of second Temple	1380

Except for the figure of 480 years,[26] the remaining calculations are all spurious. For example, from the end of the first Temple, destroyed in 587 B.C.E., until the destruction of the second Temple (Herod's Temple) in 70 C.E. is 658 years not 490 (70 plus 420) years as given. The error was further complicated by the formula that 483 years had passed from the rebuilding of the Temple to the appearance of Bar Kochba as the messiah.

With this error in hand, the rabbis, based upon their incorrect date for the Exodus, calculated what they believed were the sabbath year cycle and first Jubilee practiced by the Israelites upon their entering Kanaan. This cycle was then extended down until their own time. The rabbis simply subtracted from their figures 40 years for the wilderness sojourn. From here, one school determined that the fifteenth year of entry into Kanaan was the first Jubilee. Those who held to a complete 50 year Jubilee cycle before a new 50 year cycle started, as a result, found that there were 850 years from the Israelite entrance into Kanaan until the end of the first Temple.[27] Therefore, the first Temple, they argued, was destroyed on a sabbath year.

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24 Eusebius, H.E., 4:6.

25 Dio, 69:14.

26 1 Kings, 6:1. The existence of the first Temple was actually 372 years; the period of the Babylonian exile, beginning the year after the destruction of the first Temple, was 49 years; and from the time that the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity in 538 B.C.E., until the destruction of the second Temple in 70 C.E. was 608 years. For details see our forthcoming text entitled *Israelite Chronology*.

27 TSCJ, p. 32.

Rabbi Judah and those of his school, meanwhile, who believed in a 49 year Jubilee cycle, the 50th year being the first year in the next 49 year cycle, found that the 850th year was the third year in the sabbath cycle. Herein lies the source for the differences between these two systems (as mentioned above).

There is yet one other method of calculation that appears to have been used. Almost without a doubt, the rabbis in the mid-second century C.E. knew what years had been celebrated as a sabbath and a Jubilee during the Bar Kochba revolt. These dates, as shall be proven later on, were 133/134 and 134/135 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. Yet, no exact record was known for the observance of the sabbath year around the time of the destruction of the second Temple in 70 C.E.

The debate over the exact cycle (whether it was 50 years or 49 years) was very strong during the late Halakoth and early post-Halakoth period, as their records show. Those who adhered to a 50 year cycle were also those who voiced the opinion that the first sabbath and Jubilee observed by the Israelites in Kanaan took place in the fourteenth and fifteenth years upon their coming into that land.

Many Jews, meanwhile, continued to observe the Jubilee years long after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. (a fact clearly indicated by the Babylonian Rosh ha-Shanah,[28] which not only gives opinions on how the Jubilee should be kept but argues that "it must be kept even outside of Palestine"). This view, by the way, did not interfere with the opinion, held by many of the rabbis since the latter part of the second century B.C.E., that after the fall of Samaria, until the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., the Jubilee was not required.[29]

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28 B. R.Sh., 8b–9b.

29 It was the opinion of the rabbis, who were dominated by the sect of the Pharisees, that after the fall of Samaria the Jubilee was no longer observed or required (B. Arak., 32; HUCA, 44, p. 154, ns. 4, 6). For two reasons this interpretation is manifestly an error. First, the leadership of the post-exile Jews, up until the mid-fifth century B.C.E., was in the hands of leading Yahwehists, like Ezra the scribe, Nehemiah the governor, and the high priest Yahushua, as well as important prophets of Yahweh, e.g. Haggai and Zechariah. The people during this period even formally agreed to observe the sabbath years (Neh., 10:31). It is extremely unlikely that during a period of restoration and strong adherence to the Torah that these Jews would, in contradiction to their purpose, find a reason to avoid the Jubilee, itself a sabbath year. Second, exemption was argued only by the Pharisees and the agreement to set aside the Jubilee was certainly not universal among the Jews. This fact is demonstrated by the book of Jubilees, which was composed in the latter half of the second century B.C.E. by a non-Pharisee (OTP, 2, pp. 43f). It goes to great lengths to promote the Jubilee cycle. This text clearly reflects the debate, then raging, over whether or not the Jews were still required to continue their observance of the Jubilee cycle. Later on, the Qumran Community bewailed the fact that Israel had in their time turned "a blind eye" to the issues of the Jubilee and sabbath years and that men should return to the Torah of Moses (DR, 16:2–4).

The Pharisees were unable to press their interpretation until they had gained great influence among the masses, which circumstance did not become evident until the reign of Hyrcanus (134/133–105/104 B.C.E.), see Jos., *Antiq.,* 13:10:5. During the reign of Queen Alexandra (76/75–68/67 B.C.E.), they even gained political power (see Jos., *Antiq.,* 13:16:1–3, *Wars,* 1:5:2). The influence of the Pharisees over the masses, beginning in the latter half of the second century B.C.E., became so great that it made the more conservative sect of the Sadducees "submit unwillingly and perforce, yet submit they do to the formulas of the Pharisees, since otherwise the masses would not tolerate them" (Jos., *Antiq.,* 18:1:4). It may very well be that the severity of the famine suffered during the Jubilee of the 151st Seleucid (161/160 B.C.E.), see 1 Macc., 9:23f, cf. 9:1–18, served to convince these rabbis and the masses that continual observance of the Jubilee was unnecessary, since it resulted more in divine punishment than in a national blessing. With the attainment of political power for the Pharisees in the early part of the first century B.C.E., the setting aside of the observance of the Jubilee year became a *fait accompli*.

This abstinence was allowed, so they claimed, by "rabbinical" rather than "scriptural" ordinance;[30] i.e. the rabbis had no scriptural authority but had invested themselves with the power to make such a decision.

In accordance with this view, these rabbis counted 50 years back from the last known Jubilee in 134/135 C.E. = 84/85 C.E. (Nisan reckoning). The year 84/85 C.E., therefore, was determined to be a Jubilee and the year prior, 83/84 C.E., a sabbath year. Continuing the seven year cycle back from 83/84 C.E., they arrived at 69/70 C.E., Nisan reckoning, as a sabbath year. When the calendar using a Tishri beginning for the sabbath year was applied, this year was moved back 6 months, beginning in Tishri 68 and ending before the first of Tishri of 69 C.E. The result of this calculation is the system "B" cycle.

What then of those Jews who claimed that the year in which the second Temple was destroyed was a sabbath year? This conclusion is certainly not explained by popular Talmudic chronology. It is suggested by the evidence that this lesser known understanding was based either upon some actual piece of data about the destruction or, as is more likely the case, upon the correct calculation of the sabbath cycle (i.e. a 49 year cycle wherein the 50th year represents the first year of the next 49 year period; a calculation deemed accurate even by Zuckermann).[31] Using a correct calculation they could easily count back from 133/134 B.C.E., when the sabbath was observed during the Bar Kochba revolt, to the year that Jerusalem fell. From this method they could easily conclude that the city's demise occurred during a sabbath year.

Unfortunately, the Talmudists of this minority view continued to use the same flawed chronology as their brothers and when they calculated backwards from their date for the destruction of the second Temple their figures showed that the first Temple would also have been destroyed in a sabbath year (which is impossible as any accurate chronology for this period will demonstrate).

It is the charge of this study that the underlying reason that the Talmudic Jews, from the time of the mid-second century C.E., expounded system "B" is the fact that they calculated their answers from flawed and misinformed chronographical data developed just prior to or during the outbreak of the Bar Kochba war and as expanded upon in later centuries.

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30 HUCA, 44, p. 154, ns. 4, 6.

31 Zuckermann correctly notes that, "The fiftieth year forms no part of the past period of the Jubilee, but opens *a new series* of a Jubilee-cycle of 49 years. This Jubilee-year appears to be independent, but is really included in the subsequent period. This has been correctly conceived by R. Jehudah, who maintains that '*the Jubilee-year is reckoned to the following Sabbatical cycle and to the following period of the Jubilee*.' The year of Jubilee, moreover, is not celebrated as the conclusion of a period, but as the commencement of a new series of years" (TSCJ, p. 23.). This fifty year calculation holds the same relationship to sabbath years that the Feast of Weeks holds to sabbath days. The Feast of Weeks is calculated by counting seven weeks of days (49 days) from the weekly sabbath that falls during Passover, and celebrating the next day, the 50th day, which is the first day of the week (cf. Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:8:4), as a feast and high sabbath (Lev., 23:9–21). The normal cycle of a seven day week never changes because of the Feast of Weeks. Neither does the normal cycle of the sabbath years.

Conclusion

The system "B" calculations were based upon a flawed chronological system which must have been created several years after the First Revolt and (based upon their interpretation of the prophecy in Daniel, 9:24–27) seems to have served as an added impetus for the Second Revolt. The rabbis relied far too heavily upon their religious traditions and scribal interpretations and did not adequately utilize sound historical documentation. Later, the calculations left over from the rabbis during the Bar Kochba revolt were combined with a Tishri (Sept./Oct.) beginning for the sabbath year to create a new interpretation—far different, for example, than the chronology found in Josephus (c. 90 C.E.).

For those who believed in a full 50 years for each Jubilee cycle, the second Temple was destroyed in a post-sabbath year. For some of those who adhered to a 49 year cycle (e.g. Rabbi Judah), it occurred in the third year of a sabbath cycle. Those who opposed these views and contended that Jerusalem and the Temple fell during a sabbath year did so because they either had retained some vague tradition that such had been the case or correctly calculated the cycle, which achieved for them the correct answer. They simply adjusted their chronology to reflect this solution.

In time and despite the fact that the debate as to whether the Jubilee cycle had originally been a complete 50 year unit or one of 49 years (with the 50th year also being the first of the next cycle), the arguments that the second Temple had been destroyed in the third year of a sabbath cycle or in a sabbath year itself were eventually suppressed by the rabbinical view of system "B."

The problem was made even more acute when the rabbis changed the New Year date. This date had previously been Abib, later called Nisan (March/April), 1 but sometime after the conquest of Jerusalem in 135 C.E. and before 200 C.E., as reflected in the Mishnah, officially became Tishri 1—at least for the sabbath year and the first year of the next cycle. This change, though, was by no means immediate and had been in the process over a long, drawn out period of time. At first, apparently beginning in the last part of the second century B.C.E., Tishri 1 was introduced as a de facto beginning only for the practice of not planting or sowing crops in the last part of the year before the sabbath year. Shortly before the Mishnah was written (about 200 C.E. or soon after) every sabbath year officially started with Tishri 1.

The background of the system "B" scenario is suspect and its arrangement is flawed. Therefore, it would be unwise to simply accept its premise as valid without a thorough and close examination of earlier and much more reliable records. A judicious approach is to set aside the Talmudic speculations of Rabbi Jose and others who followed his lead and to examine the records from the period prior to the composition of the Seder Olam (about 160 C.E.). These earlier records should first be judged on their own merits. Only then, if these earlier records agree with the conclusions of system "B," should we bring the Talmudic documents into the picture as added support.

Yet what our study has discovered is quite to the contrary. The earlier records actually disagree with Rabbi Jose and the Talmudic writers who followed him. The evidence clearly establishes a cycle of its own and, accordingly, it is time to dismiss the calculations set forth by the advocates of system "B" and return to this original understanding.

Chapter II

The Tishri 1 New Year Question

The next issue we must contend with is the concept that the Jews, from the time of their return to Judaea from Babylon in 538 B.C.E. until the end of the Bar Kochba revolt (135 C.E.), officially began their sabbath years with Tishri (Sept./Oct.) 1 of the sixth year of the sabbath cycle, as had become their custom sometime after the Bar Kochba war. This view is held as gospel not only by those advocating system "B" but even by historians like Ralph Marcus and Zion Wacholder (system "C").[1] This view, as we shall prove, is false.

The supposition that the sabbath year officially began with the first of Tishri arose as a Jewish Talmudic "interpretation" which had gained popularity among their chronographers during the second century C.E. As a preliminary to dispelling this error, the following facts must be considered.

The Seventh Month and the Jubilee

To begin with, a close examination of all the scriptural verses relevant to the sabbath years (both regular and Jubilee) proves that there is no commandment to begin any of these years with the seventh month of the preceding year.[2] The only time that the seventh month, later identified as Tishri, is mentioned in association with a sabbath year is in Leviticus, 25:8–13, and here it has only to do with the year of Jubilee. Furthermore, even in this passage from Leviticus it is specifically called "the seventh month," not the first or the beginning of any year system. In fact, Scriptures specifically define the feast of the seventh month as occurring at "the going out of the year," while events which happened during the spring are said to have taken place "at the return of the year."[3]

The Talmudists misinterpreted Leviticus, 25:8–13, to mean that the observances of the Jubilee rituals designated for the seventh month belonged to the 49th year in the cycle. Nevertheless, a careful reading proves that the seventh month spoken of actually belongs to the 50th year, not the 49th.

> And you shall count seven sabbaths of years, seven years seven times, and shall be to you the days of the seven sabbaths of years, forty-nine years. And you shall let sound a ram's horn, a signal in the seventh

1 HUCA, 44, pp. 153–196; Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, pp. 196f, n. a, pp. 694f, n. a, viii, p. 5, n. e. Also see Chart A.

2 E.g. Exod., 23:10–11; Lev., 25:1–28, 27:16–24; Num., 36:4; Ezek., 46:16–18.

3 Exod., 23:16, "going out of the year"; 1 Kings, 20:26; 2 Chron., 36:10, "the return of the year"; NBD, p. 178, equates the "going out of the year" with the autumnal equinox and the "return of the year" with the vernal or spring equinox. Also see THP, p. 116, n. 5.

> moon, on the tenth of the moon. On the Day of Atonement the ram's horn shall sound in all your land. AND YOU SHALL MAKE SACRED את (AYTH; THIS) YEAR, THE FIFTIETH YEAR, and you shall proclaim liberty in the land to all its dwellers. A Jubilee it shall be for you. And you shall return a male to his possession; and each to his family you shall return him. A Jubilee it is, the fiftieth year. A year it is for you, not shall you sow it and not shall you harvest that which grows of itself and not gather the unkept vine, for a Jubilee it shall be. Sacred it shall be to you. (Lev. 25:8ff)

This passage clearly states that 49 years had already been counted before one was to consider the seventh month, thereby placing the seventh month in the 50th year. Furthermore, the statement attaches to the duties of the seventh month the phrase, "and you shall make sacred this year, the 50th year, and you shall proclaim liberty in the land to all its dwellers." Also, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, a ram's horn or trumpet was to be sounded. The passage in no way implies that the trumpets were to be sounded because it announced the coming of the Jubilee, which would yet be six months off. Rather, it was to be sounded because one was in the seventh month of the Jubilee year and the nation was proclaiming "liberty." Further, the very fact that the seventh month is mentioned without a qualifying statement, such as, "being the first month of the sabbath year," demonstrates that this seventh month belongs to a year already in progress.

יובל (*Jubil*; Jubilee) literally means, "the *blast* of a horn (from its *continuous* sound)."[4] The year of Jubilee, therefore, is named from the fact that in that year the trumpet is blown. It would make no sense if the trumpet was blown in the middle of the 49th year, for in that case the 49th year would be the year of Jubilee (trumpet blowing). Josephus, accordingly, pronounced that "the 50th year is called by the Hebrews Jubil; at that season debtors are absolved from their debts and slaves are set at liberty."[5] Philo adds clarification by noting that Yahweh "consecrated the whole of the 50th year."[6] Nothing is said about consecrating the last six months of the 49th year as the beginning of the Jubilee.

The awkwardness created by the explanation that the Jubilee year began with the seventh month of the 49th year in the cycle is further manifested by the fact that many of the Talmudic Jews actually started this year not with the first day of the seventh month but with the tenth day—the day that the trumpets of Jubilee were actually sounded. The Babylonian Rosh ha-Shanah, for example, argues: "(Is the New Year for) Jubilees on the first of Tishri? Surely (the New year for) Jubilees is on the tenth of Tishri, as it is written, On the day of Atonement shall you make proclamation with the horn."[7] It is clear that the original scheme of the Jubilee and sabbath cycles came to be obscured by inventive over-interpretations of later ill-informed theologians.

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4 SEC, Heb. #3104.
5 Jos., *Antiq.*, 3:12:3.
6 Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 2:22.
7 B. R.Sh., 8a.

The prophetic character attached to the year of Jubilee and the seventh month of that year further compels us to place the trumpet blowing of the seventh month within the 50th year. The seventh month, for example, brings with it the Feast of Trumpets on the first day, the Day of Atonement on the tenth, and the Feast of Tabernacles from the fifteenth to twenty-second days. These celebrations point towards the final atonement of man by his death, resurrection into the Judgment which follows,[8] the final quickening of mankind into immortal beings, and the attainment of true liberty from sin after the Judgment. At that time the great inheritance of land will be parceled out to those attaining salvation. This liberty is symbolized by such things as the redemption of slaves and the land being freed from debt and returning to its original owner.[9] The rightful time for "liberty" to be proclaimed, therefore, is within the seventh month of the Jubilee year.

The Tishri Year

The Talmudic doctrine that the month of Tishri in the sixth year of a sabbath cycle should officially begin the sabbath year is not proclaimed in any writings before the end of the second century C.E. Important works from the first century C.E. and prior, which delve heavily into this subject, never even imply such an arrangement. They hold that the month of Abib (Nisan) is always the first month in determining scriptural practices.[10]

Josephus (c. 90 C.E.) states that before the Exodus the Israelites in Egypt, following Egyptian practice, observed the month of Marheshuan, called Dios (Oct./Nov.)[11] in Greek, as the second month making the first month Tishri, yet with Moses it became the eighth month. "Moses," he points out, "appointed Nisan, that is to say Xanthicus (March/April), as the first month for the festivals, because it was in this month that he brought the Hebrews out of Egypt; he also reckoned this month as the commencement of the year FOR EVERYTHING RELATING TO DIVINE WORSHIP, but for selling and buying and other ordinary affairs he preserved the ancient order."[12]

Notice that the month of Tishri, the seventh month, was the beginning of a year system practiced among the pagans in Egypt. We also know that the month of Tishri was used by the pagan Macedonians as the first month of their year. Yahweh changed this system for the Israelites just before their famous Exodus out of Egypt during the month of Abib, 1439 B.C.E.[13]

Josephus, living in the latter part of the first century C.E., points out that even in his day, writing some 20 years after the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, "the ancient order," which began with Tishri, was only "for selling and buying and other ORDINARY AFFAIRS." Since the sabbath year is part of divine worship, and in no way is to be construed as in the category of

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8 Cf. Heb., 9:27; Rev., 20:11–15.

9 Lev., 25:11–17.

10 E.g. Jub., 49:1–10, 50:1–4; Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 1:35(180–189), 2:17–23(71–119); Jos., *Antiq.*, 3:10:1–6, 3:8:4; a first century Jewish omen text (JNES, 48, pp. 201–214) and the Meg. Taan. (JQR, 10, pp. 237–243).

11 For the equivalency between the Greek, Hebrew, and Roman months see Chart G.

12 Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:3:3.

13 Exod., 12:1–20, 13:4–10. For the date of the Exodus see our forthcoming book entitled *Israelite Chronology*.

"ordinary affairs," Josephus is here understood to mean that the sacred year was required to begin with the month of Nisan (Abib), roughly our April. His comment also reveals the seed for the later view of the Talmudic Jews, the transition from the system used for "ordinary affairs" to things of "divine worship" being but a short step.

Philo (c. 40 C.E.) indicates the same thing as Josephus. He writes that the year began in the spring and that Moses "proclaimed a rest for the land and made the husbandman stay his work δι' (di; after completing) six years."[14] He does not say "from the latter part of the sixth year" but "after completing six years."

From the First Revolt (66–70 C.E.) against Rome, continuing through the Bar Kochba revolt (133–135 C.E.), the records show that the Jewish year was still reckoned from Nisan and not Tishri.[15] As we shall later see, the sabbath year was still determined in this period by this same Nisan method.[16]

The first time that we notice the reckoning of a sabbath year as officially beginning with the month of Tishri in the year prior to the seventh year is from a passage in the Mishnah (about 200 C.E.):

> There are four 'New Year' days: on the first of Nisan is the New Year for kings and feasts; on the first of Elul is the New Year for the Tithe of cattle (Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Simeon say: the first of Tishri); on the first of Tishri is the New Year for [the reckoning of] the years [of foreign eras], the Years of Release and Jubilee years, for the planting [of trees] and for vegetables; and the first of Shebat is the New Year for [fruit-]trees (so the School of Shammai; and the School of Hillel say: on the 15th thereof).[17]

This claim of four New Year days in one year is not substantiated in Scriptures, which proclaims only one New Year's day, the first of Abib (Nisan).[18] It is also important to notice that even in the Mishnah the first of Nisan was the New Year for "(Israelite) kings and feasts." Tishri was used for "the years (of foreign eras)."[19] There can be little doubt that the foreign era referred to means the Macedonian Seleucid era, which began its year with Hyperberetaeus (Sept./Oct.). Yet it was an era used by foreign peoples, not an early Israelite (i.e. from the time of Moses) or scriptural calendar system.

An important Talmudic work called Abodah Zarah confirms that the beginning month for the year had indeed been changed and that it now differed from the days when the Jews had their own kings. While commenting upon the issues presented by the above passage from the Mishnah, it states:

> The one refers to Jewish kings, the other to kings of other nations—the year of other nations' kings being

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14 Philo, *Spec. Laws*, l:35, par. 180ff, 2:21, par. 104.
15 IEJ, 21, pp. 40f and n. 11.
16 See Chaps. XXVI–XXIX.
17 R.Sh., 1:1.
18 Exod., 12:1–19, 13:4, 23:15, 34:18; Deut., 15:1.
19 Danby, *Mishnah*, p. 188, n. 7; cf. Gitt., 8:5.

> counted from Tishri, and of Jewish kings from Nisan. Now, IN THE PRESENT TIME we count the years from Tishri; were we then to say that our Era is connected with the Exodus it is surely from Nisan that we ought to count. Does this not prove that our reckoning is based on the reign of the Greek kings (and not the Exodus)? That indeed proves it.[20]

The Transition to the Tishri Year

The New Year date of Tishri 1 for the sabbath year is an offshoot of late Talmudic interpretation. As has been previously noted, the Scriptures never claim that the seventh month began a regular sabbath year. The deduction that Tishri began a Jubilee year was itself a misreading of Leviticus, 25:8–13. The rabbis of the post-Bar Kochba period, in an effort to "build a fence around the Law,"[21] merely extended their misreading of Leviticus 25:8–13, which dealt only with the year of Jubilee, to the regular sabbath year.

Nowhere is the superimposition of a Tishri year by the Jews of the post-Bar Kochba period (after 135 C.E.) more self-evident than when we compare Deuteronomy, 31:10–13, with Josephus (*Antiq*., 4:8:12) and the Mishnah (Sotah, 7:8). Deuteronomy commands that, "מִקֵּץ (in the last part)[22] of the seven years," there would be a public reading of the Torah, "in the appointed time of the year of the shemitah (sabbath year),[23] in the feast of Tabernacles (i.e. in the seventh month)." Josephus (late first century C.E.) proves that this was still the understanding in his time. The Sotah (200 C.E.), meanwhile, contradicts it, making this public reading occur at the beginning of the eighth year.

Further, there is no record of Tishri as the official beginning of the sabbath year until some 65 years after the Bar Kochba revolt. Earlier records make no such claim. As a result, there is no justification for assuming that it was common practice before the post-Bar Kochba period.

There can be little doubt that part of this transition from an Abib (spring) to a Tishri (fall) New Year date was influenced by the dominance of foreigners and pagans in Jerusalem and Judaea after the overthrow of the Bar Kochba revolt, and the decrees and ordinances established by Hadrian thereafter. These foreigners utilized the Macedonian version of the Seleucid era, which began the year in Hyperberetaeus (Sept./Oct.; Tishri). The Seder Olam, for example, states, "And in the Exile they write in documents according to the reckoning of the Greeks (i.e. Seleucid Era)."[24] After the rabbis had determined that the sabbath year should begin with Tishri, it was an easy step to determine every year as starting from this same point.

A further indication that the sabbath and Jubilee years, up until the Bar Kochba revolt, continued among the Judaeans to begin with the month of Abib (Nisan) can be drawn from these facts. It is inconceivable, for example, that the Jews of the late sixth century B.C.E., having left their Babylonian exile

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20 B. A.Zar., 10a.
21 Ab., 1:1–5, e.g., 3:1–4.
22 HEL, p. 234, מִקֵּץ, "*from the end*" or "*at the end*," meaning *in the last part* of something.
23 That the shemitah is the sabbath year see below Chap. XI, p. 159, ns. 2, 3.
24 S.O., 30.

in 538 B.C.E. to resettle Judaea, would not have known the correct way of observing scriptural years. Several sabbath years and a Jubilee year transpired during this exile and those faithful Yahwehists who returned to Judaea, such as the high priest Yahushua (Joshua), the son of the high priest Yahuzadaq (Jozadak), would certainly have continued to count them. Also, many who lived in Judah before the destruction of the first Temple and their exile into Babylonia in 587 B.C.E. were still alive. One noted example was the prophet Daniel.[25] When a portion of the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity in 538 B.C.E., this older generation was available for guidance.

In the mid-fifth century B.C.E., the knowledge and timing of the sabbath and Jubilee years would still be known. It was during this period that the scribe Ezra (author of the books of Chronicles and Ezra) and Nehemiah (of the book of Nehemiah fame) settled in Judaea. The devout prophets of Yahweh named Haggai and Zechariah, among others, also lived there. These men, well-versed in scriptural knowledge and inspired of Yahweh, would undoubtedly be aware of which years and seasons represented the sabbath and Jubilee years. In full support of this view, we know that the Jews who returned from their Babylonian captivity took a pledge to keep the sabbath year.[26] That they continued to keep the sabbath year is verified in the records of Josephus, who points out that Alexander the Great (331 B.C.E.) permitted them to continue this practice, as did the Romans in the first century B.C.E.[27]

Interpretations with regard to the understanding of the laws of the Torah began to change when Antiochus Epiphanes tried to hellenize Judaea (169–165 B.C.E.). At this time there arose a Jewish party called the Pharisees. They believed in a system of oral laws, based upon rabbinic traditions, that were later to be codified in the Mishnah. This sect was opposed by the older and more conservative party of the Sadducees, who held to a strict understanding of the Torah and gave no regard to oral tradition. In the reign of Hyrcanus (134/133–105/104 B.C.E.) the Pharisees had already gained great influence among the masses and, during the reign of Queen Alexandra (76/75–68/67 B.C.E.), they rose to power over Judaea.[28]

At the time of King Herod, 37–4 B.C.E., the legitimate line of Hasmonaean high priests was removed and in their place Herod set up "some insignificant persons who were merely of priestly descent."[29] This degenerated priesthood, combined with the rise of the scribes as a religious power (who brought into being the Pharisee sect and the Talmudic traditions), soon perverted the sound doctrines originally practiced. Traditions and interpretations replaced the authority of Scriptures and from the time of Herod onwards the doctrine of "traditions" dominated Jewish life. These numerous traditions were condemned by Yahushua the messiah (whose name is often translated into English as "Jesus Christ") as actually being opposed to sound scriptural doctrine.[30] It was by these lower ranked, "insignificant" priests and the new

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25 Dan., 1:1–21, 5:1–31, 8:1, 9:1–2, 10:1; 2 Kings, 24:1–25:21; 2 Chron., 36:5–23; Ezra, 1:1–3:13.
26 Neh., 10:31.
27 Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:8:5–6, 14:10:5–6.
28 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:10:5, 13:16:1–3, *Wars*, 1:5:2.
29 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:16:4, 20:10:5.
30 E.g. Matt., 15:1–9; Mark, 7:1–13; Col., 2:8; 1 Pet., 1:18.

scribe class that Yahushua the messiah was wrongfully tried and executed.

Josephus refers to a Judaean high priest of the first century C.E., named Ananus, as "rash in his temper and unusually daring" and tells of his conspiracy to kill Jacob (James) the brother of the messiah, Yahushua.[31] The servants of a subsequent priest named Ananias are called "utter rascals" who combined their operations with "the most reckless men." These men "would go to the threshing floors and take by force the tithes of the priests. Neither did they refrain from beating those who refused to give. The high priests were guilty of the same practices as their slaves, and no one could stop them."[32]

Out of this degenerated class of priests and the "tradition" believing rabbis and scribes there arose support for the Bar Kochba revolt. It was thought that Simeon Bar Kochba (Simeon ben Kosiba) would restore the rabbis to power in Judaea. Many of the rabbis, of course, did not believe in the messianic attributes of Bar Kochba, but they nevertheless supported the rebellion in his name as a political quest for freedom.

Wacholder and others speak of "the gradual shifting of the New Year from Nisan to Tishri, which has been formalized into our Rosh ha-Shanah."[33] Yet their perception of this "gradual shifting," at least for the sabbath years, assumes that it occurred shortly after the return of the exiles in 538 B.C.E. In turn, this view leads them to interpret passages from the book of Maccabees, Josephus, and other early records as if the month of Tishri had long been the official beginning for the sabbath year. Many others go so far as to assume that the month of Tishri began every year, not just the sabbath year.

Contrary to this view, nothing in these records even suggests such an early change. Most likely, the alteration did not become official until long after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. Indeed, one cannot even find evidence that the Jewish sabbath year officially began with Tishri during the Bar Kochba revolt (133–135 C.E.). Not until the Mishnah (about 200 C.E.) do we find this interpretation, and historians admit that this late text does not prove ancient practice.[34]

The change in the beginning of the year could only start to occur after the degenerated priesthood had been put into place (in Herod's day) and after a substantial period of time had elapsed, when memories of the correct observances under a more honorable priesthood had died, had become grossly misunderstood, or were wrongly overturned by an ill-considered notion that the former leaders had been in error. Its growth would more properly have mushroomed after the First Revolt, while the Zealots and other extremists had come to power, yet not truly fashionable until after the Second Revolt, when the vision of Bar Kochba as a "messiah" had been crushed. Foreign domination of Jerusalem and Judaea after the Bar Kochba revolt necessitated contracts and other civil matters to be conducted with the Macedonian version of the Seleucid year (beginning in Tishri). This reality would certainly contribute to the movement towards a Tishri calendar.

There was also a problem created by a winter planting season in Judaea, which had need of harvesting in the spring and summer. It was much more

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31 Jos., *Antiq.*, 20:9:1.
32 Jos., *Antiq.*, 20:9:1–2.
33 HUCA, 44, p. 155.
34 See CKIJ, p. 70; and OOGA, pp. 439, 454f; MNHK, p. 51.

convenient to begin a sabbath year with the planting season and end it before the next planting season began. Discontinuing the sabbath year in the midst of an agricultural season would have been construed by many rabbis as a hardship. It became a simple matter to reinterpret Leviticus, 25:9, to mean that the seventh month of the 49th year of the Jubilee cycle represented the beginning of the year of Jubilee, and by extension the seventh month of every sixth year of the sabbath cycle represented the start of the sabbath year.

Conclusion

Based upon this preliminary evidence, it is the conclusion of this study that one cannot automatically assume that the early pre-Mishnah records (i.e. before 200 C.E.) are to be read with the understanding that the month of Tishri in the sixth year of the sabbath cycle was utilized by the Jews of those times as the official beginning of the sabbath year. Each record must be analyzed in context to determine when the beginning of the sabbath year actually took place.

As this study proceeds, the evidence will prove that late Talmudic interpretations misunderstood certain earlier Jewish agricultural practices that came into existence after the mid-second century B.C.E. These earlier Jewish practices, which built "a fence around the Law," required the observance of the sabbath year during the latter part of the sixth year of the cycle in an effort to protect the sabbath year. It was believed that, by prohibiting harvesting and sowing in the months just before the sabbath year had actually begun, they could prevent people from inadvertently crossing over the time line and defiling the sabbath year. The few months prior to the sabbath year, therefore, conformed with the practices of the oncoming sabbath year. The later Talmudic Jews (second century C.E. and after) simply misinterpreted these previous safeguards and falsely assumed that the sabbath year should begin at the time of the year when the above mentioned prohibitions started.

Nevertheless, all of the pre-Mishnah records demonstrate that the earlier Jews officially began their seventh year, the sabbath year, with Abib (Nisan) 1. The decision to change was encouraged by the loss of official records, the loss of Jewish governmental authority, and circumstance. For example, after the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E. the Jews came under even heavier influence of foreign kings and cultures utilizing a year reckoned from the fall. This transition was further facilitated by the preservation of a Tishri year among the Jews themselves. Josephus poignantly reminds us that a Tishri year was still used during the first century C.E. for things not related to divine worship, such as "selling and buying and other ordinary things." The agricultural season was also an influence.

The "need" of most present-day chronologists to interpret a "Tishri" beginning for the sabbath year is pursued in order to make the earlier records conform with late Talmudic interpretation and more recent theory. In turn, important items of evidence from the pre-Mishnah period are adjusted to fit either the system "B" scenario, as with the Zuckermann-Schürer calendar, or to pursue the idea that the later Talmudic writers really did agree with the more ancient records but that their works have been misunderstood (Wacholder, system "C").

Part I

The Pre-Exile Period

Chapter III

Events in Hezekiah's Reign

Part I of the Sabbath and Jubilee of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

The first datable sabbath year and Jubilee year occurred in the pre-exile period, during the reign of the Judahite king named Hezekiah (715/714-687/686 B.C.E., spring reckoning). A sabbath year came around at the time that an Assyrian army sent by King Sennacherib was preparing to lay siege against the city of Jerusalem. This sabbath year, in turn, was followed by a Jubilee year.

The Order of Events

A sabbath year and a Jubilee year are revealed in Scriptures and in the histories of the first century C.E. Jewish priest named Josephus as part of their discussion of the invasion of Judah by the Assyrian king Sennacherib. The order of events are as follows (cf. Chart F):

- "And in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and captured them."[1]

- Hezekiah, hearing that the Assyrians were coming against his country, and knowing full well that Sennacherib's intention would be to lay siege against Jerusalem, in haste prepared the city for the war, building up the walls, raising towers, cutting off water supplies outside the city, etc.2

- Seeing his fortified cities rapidly falling and fearful of further retribution, Hezekiah sent to Sennacherib, who was now assaulting the Judahite city of Lachish, offering to pay him tribute and to come to terms of peace. Sennacherib agreed and Hezekiah sent the tribute.[3]

- After receiving the tribute, Sennacherib ignored the agreed peace and sent a large number of troops, his *turtānu* (chief military officer), his chief of the eunuchs, and his chief cupbearer (Rabshakeh) to sack Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Sennacherib took to the field with his main force to prepare his opposition to the arrival of an approaching army of Ethiopians and Egyptians.[4]

- Rabshakeh sent a message to Hezekiah ordering the Jewish people to come out of the city so that the Assyrians could exile them to another land, warning Hezekiah that no one could resist the king of Assyria.[5]

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1 2 Kings, 18:13; Isa. 36:1; 2 Chron., 32:1; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:1.

2 2 Chron., 32:2–7.

3 2 Kings, 18:14–16; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:1.

4 Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:1; cf. 2 Kings, 18:17; 2 Chron., 32:9; Isa., 36:2; and AS, pp. 31f, *ℓ.* 2:73–3:5, p. 69, *ℓ.* 22–25, where Sennacherib reports his victory over these Egyptian and Ethiopian forces.

5 2 Kings, 18:17–37; 2 Chron., 32:9–19; Isa., 36:2–22; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:1–2.

• Upon hearing the message from the Assyrian king, Hezekiah went to the Temple and prayed to Yahweh.[6]

• Hezekiah then sent his servants to the prophet Isaiah. In response, Isaiah sent back to Hezekiah the words of Yahweh, which advised him not to be afraid of the Assyrian king, for the Assyrian would hear a rumor and return back to his own land.[7] Obeying Yahweh, Hezekiah refused to surrender.

• The chief cupbearer returned to Lachish but found that Sennacherib and his forces had left and were besieging Libnah (shortly after which came the Assyrian victory over the combined Egyptian and Ethiopian army).[8]

• Next, Sennacherib's army, as part of the Assyrian war effort against Egypt—the ally of Judah and sponsor of the Judahite revolt—laid siege against the Egyptian border city of Pelusium, raising earthworks against its walls. At the time when Sennacherib was about to attack that city, his army was struck by a plague.[9] Immediately after, news reached him that Tirhakah, the king of Kush (Ethiopia, the country later called Nubia), the nation dominating Egypt during these years, was proceeding by a desert route to do battle against the Assyrians.[10]

• Hearing that Tirhakah was coming, Sennacherib sent a letter to Hezekiah warning him that Jerusalem would still fall into his hands—an obvious effort to intimidate the Judahite king into surrender.[11]

• After receiving the message from Sennacherib, Hezekiah went to the Temple both to pray and to present Sennacherib's letter before Yahweh.[12]

• Isaiah the prophet sent Yahweh's reply to Hezekiah, foretelling the downfall of the Assyrian king and the deliverance of Jerusalem without an arrow being shot.[13] To confirm this prophecy Yahweh gave Hezekiah a sign:

> And this is a sign for you: eat THIS YEAR that which is sown of itself, and in THE SECOND YEAR that which grows of the same, and in THE THIRD YEAR you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (2 Kings, 19:29; Isa., 37:30)

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6 2 Kings, 19:1–4; 2 Chron., 32:20; Isa., 37:1–4; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:3.

7 2 Kings, 19:5–7; Isa., 37:5–7; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:3.

8 2 Kings, 19:8; Isa., 37:8. Libnah of Judah was very near Ekron and Eltekeh (cf. Josh., 19:40–45, 21:13, 23; 1 Chron., 6:57; NBD, p. 734, maps 3, 4). The latter place was where Sennacherib fought the combined Egyptian and Ethiopian forces (see above n. 4). His conquest of Libnah was no doubt in preparation for his meeting of the enemy Egyptian and Ethiopian troops. It was necessary for the Assyrians to clear the immediate area of safe havens friendly to the opposing forces.

9 Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4; Herodotus, 2:141.

10 2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4.

11 2 Kings, 19:9–13; Isa., 37:9–13; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4.

12 2 Kings, 19:14–19; 2 Chron., 32:20; Isa., 37:14–20; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4.

13 2 Kings, 19:20–34; 2 Chron., 32:20; Isa., 37:21–35; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4.

The Sabbath Year in Hezekiah's Reign

Yahweh's sign to Hezekiah (mentioned in 2 Kings, 19:29, and Isaiah, 37:30, and quoted above) clearly reflects the fact that a sabbath year—"this year"—was currently in progress. It is against sabbath year law to "harvest" that which is sown of itself during the sabbath and Jubilee years.[14] Nevertheless, during a sabbath or Jubilee year the Israelites are permitted to eat directly out of the field from that which is sown of itself,[15] much as the messiah, who never sinned,[16] illustrated that it was permissible to eat directly from the field on a sabbath day.[17]

The following year, therefore, was also a sabbath and accordingly the "sabbath of sabbaths," i.e. the year of Jubilee, since this is the only sabbath year that follows a sabbath year. After the Jubilee came a third year wherein the Judahites would return to planting and reaping their crops.

This observance was seen as a sign that the Assyrian king would not deport the remaining people of Judah, as Sennacherib's messenger boasted to Hezekiah that he was about to do.[18] Against these words of Sennacherib, Yahweh promised the Judahites that they would still be found in their land, long after the downfall of the Assyrian king, observing the sabbath and Jubilee years and sowing and harvesting their crops in the year that followed. That this was the intent of the sign is further supported by the Targums of Jonathan ben Uzziel (first century B.C.E.). In his version of 2 Kings, 19:29–31, we read:

> And this will be the sign for you: Eat in one year that which is sown of itself, and in the second year the third crop,[19] and in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. And the survivors of the house of Judah who will be left will continue like a tree that sends forth its roots below and raises up its branch above. Because from Jerusalem the remnant of the just ones will go forth and the survival of those upholding the Torah from Mount Zion.[20]

Josephus, likewise, understood this sign in this way, writing:

> And, when he (Hezekiah) offered a second prayer to

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14 Lev., 25:4–5, 11.

15 Lev., 25:11–12, esp. v. 12, which states, as the NIV correctly translates it, "eat only what is taken directly from the fields." The LXX of Lev., 25:12, reads, "You shall eat its fruits off the fields."

16 1 Pet., 2:21f; 2 Cor., 5:20f; Heb., 4:14f. Sin is defined in 1 John, 3:4, as "transgression of the Law." These passages demonstrate that the messiah never broke the Torah. Therefore, he committed no wrongdoing by eating his meal directly from the field on the sabbath.

17 E.g. Matt., 12:1–8; Mark, 2:23–28.

18 2 Kings, 18:17–37, esp. vv. 31f.

19 The second year of eating that which is sown of itself is the third crop, i.e. of that which was originally planted and harvested in the year before the sabbath year in question.

20 Targ. Jon., *2 Kings*, 19:29–31; cf. Targ. Jon., Isa., 37:30–33.

> the deity on behalf of the city and the safety of all, the prophet Isaiah told him that he (Yahweh) had hearkened to his prayer, and that at the present time he would not be besieged by the Assyrian, while in the future his subjects, relieved of all apprehension, would till their land in peace and look after their own possessions without fear of anything.[21]

William Whiston, in his translation of Josephus, writes of the passages found in 2 Kings, 19:29, and Isaiah, 37:30, that these words "seem to me plainly to design a Sabbatic year, a year of Jubilee next after it, and the succeeding usual labours and fruits of them on the third and following years."[22] In another place Whiston gives the following interpretation to Isaiah, 37:30.

> You shall be so far from being disturbed by Sennacherib, of whom you are now so terribly afraid, that you shall be able to keep your two years of rest, which are already begun, your ordinary sabbatic year, and your extraordinary year of jubilee, without any molestation from Sennacherib, till you fall to your ordinary occupations the third year, as you were wont to do in times of the greatest peace and quietness.[23]

"That night" the angel of Yahweh struck the Assyrian army set against Jerusalem with a plague. Shortly thereafter Sennacherib, who was in retreat from his failed siege at Pelusium, returned to Jerusalem. Finding 185,000 of his soldiers dead, and fearing for the lives of the remaining army, he fled back to Nineveh.[24]

The Length of the Conflict

It is the common opinion of many present-day biblical scholars that Sennacherib's destruction occurred in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah.[25] This theory rests solely upon the statement, as cited above, that "in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah" the Assyrian king invaded the land of Judah. But the records do not claim that Sennacherib's army was destroyed during the same year as his initial invasion. This idea is merely an assumption. Close examination of the evidence, on the other hand, reveals that the army of Sennacherib was actually destroyed at the beginning of Hezekiah's fifteenth year—after, at minimum, a couple of months of war. It is Hezekiah's fifteenth year that represents the sabbath year; his sixteenth year is a Jubilee.

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21 Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4(16).
22 Whiston, *Jos.,* p. 213, n.*
23 Whiston, *Jos.,* p. 701, #41.
24 2 Kings, 19:34–37; 2 Chron., 32:21–23; Isa., 37:36–38; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:l:5; Herodotus, 2:141.
25 E.g. NBD, p. 1159.

Proof of this chronology is found in the length of the conflict. The details are as follows:

• When Sennacherib came out against Judah, he camped "against all the fortified cities of Judah," "commanded to break them open," and "captured them."[26]

• While Sennacherib was besieging other cities in Judah, Hezekiah had enough time to fortify the walls of Jerusalem and build defense towers.[27]

• Sennacherib was laying siege to Lachish when Hezekiah sent him tribute. It was at this point that Sennacherib sent an army against Jerusalem to begin a blockade of that city, despite the tribute sent to him and the agreement of peace.[28]

• After taking Lachish, Sennacherib moved against the city of Libnah and an Egyptian and Ethiopian army (whom he defeated).[29]

• Later, part of the Assyrian army was sent to build siege works against the Egyptian city of Pelusium.[30] According to Josephus, Sennacherib's army "spent a great deal of time on the siege of Pelusium."[31]

• The invasion against Judah had broader geopolitical goals than merely a conquest of that state. King Hezekiah had allied himself with the Egyptians (who in turn were dominated by the Ethiopians). In changing his allegiance Hezekiah rebelled against the Assyrians and discontinued tribute payments.[32] Josephus and Herodotus prove that the invasion was actually directed against "the Egyptians and Ethiopians," not only to recover the rebel Palestinian states but to subdue Egypt.[33] Suddenly struck by a plague, followed by the surprise appearance of the powerful Ethiopian forces under King Tirhakah, Sennacherib pulled back to Jerusalem.[34] At Jerusalem, he found that the Assyrian troops left there were also decimated by a plague.[35]

This data proves that the war was not of short duration. Numerous Judahite cities had been put under siege and the Assyrians had been building siege works at the Egyptian city of Pelusium for "a great deal of time." The evidence indicates that at least two or more months had transpired from the time Sennacherib invaded until his army was destroyed before the walls of

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26 2 Kings, 18:13; 2 Chron., 32:1; Isa., 36:1.
27 2 Chron., 32:1–8.
28 2 Kings, 18:14–32; 2 Chron., 32:9–19; Isa., 36:2–22; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:1–2.
29 2 Kings, 19:8; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:1; AS, pp. 31f, *ℓ.* 2:73–3:5, p. 69, *ℓ.* 22–25; and see Chart F.
30 2 Kings, 19:8–13; Isa., 37:8–13; cf. Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4.
31 Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4.
32 2 Kings, 18:19–21; Isa., 36:4–6; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:2.
33 Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:1,3–5; Herodotus 2:141.
34 2 Kings, 19:9, 35–37; Isa., 37:9, 36–38; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4–5.
35 2 Kings, 19:35; Isa., 37:36; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4–5. The angel of Yahweh smiting the Assyrians with a plague implies being struck with a pestilence (cf. 2 Sam., 24:14–17; Acts, 12:23; Exod., 12:21ff). It is supported by the story in Herodotus (2:141; cf. Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:1:4), which connects the plague at Pelusium with mice (rats and mice being known carriers of bubonic plague).

Jerusalem. Added to this time is at least a month for Sennacherib to march his army approximately 500 miles from Assyria to the region of Judah.[36]

More evidence that the third campaign of Sennacherib was of considerable length is also found in the Assyrian records. Our study will present the evidence from these documents in our next chapter, in the subsection entitled *The Length of Sennacherib's Third Campaign*. For now, the evidence is sufficient enough to prove that the Assyrian king could not have accomplished all the deeds attributed to him in the matter of two or three weeks.

The Illness of Hezekiah

We are told that before the defeat of the Assyrian army, King Hezekiah of Judah became very ill and was near death.[37]After praying to Yahweh, Yahweh responded to Hezekiah that he would heal him and that "on the third day" he would be able to go up to the Temple.[38] Josephus translates this verse stating that the king was informed that, "μετὰ τρίτην ἡμέραν (within the third day after), he should be rid of his illness."[39] Yahweh continues, "And I have added to your days fifteen years."[40]

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36 A day's march varied depending upon the terrain, mode of transportation, numbers of military personnel, and other factors. Yet an approximation of travel time for a military expedition during this early period can be determined by the following facts: Ezra and his Jewish companions took about three and one half months to make the journey from Babylonia to Judaea in the fifth century B.C.E. (Ezra, 7:6–9, 8:31). A military expedition on a forced march, of course, would be quicker, but these figures set the outside limits for the journey from Assyria to Judaea, since the distance from Babylonia to Judaea is nearly the same as that from Assyria.

Next, Pharaoh Tuthmosis III records his forced march from Tzru (modern El-Qantara) to Gaza, a trip of about 160 miles, in ten days (ARE, 2, #409). This march resulted in an average of sixteen miles per day. During the fifth century B.C.E., the Greeks retreating from the Persians, as reported by Xenophon, took their march through Assyria, northwards along the Tigris river. Xenophon states that they marched four stages for twenty parsangs (about 70 miles), six stages for 30 parsangs (about 105 miles), and then four stages for another 20 parsangs (about 70 miles) (Xenophon, *Anab*., 2:4). The total was fourteen stages (or fourteen days of marching) to achieve 70 parsangs, about 245 miles. The average march per day was seventeen and one half miles.

Similarly, we are told that Alexander the Great made the journey from Gaza to Pelusium, Egypt, a distance of about 145 miles, in seven days (Arrian, 3:1; Curtius, 4:7). These numbers give us an average day's march of about twenty and one half miles. As our final example, we have the history from Josephus recording the forced march of the Roman army under Titus from Pelusium to Rhinocorura (El-Arish), a distance of about 80 miles. Titus accomplished his mission in three days, an average of twenty-six and one half miles per day (Jos., *Wars*, 4:11:5).

Therefore, if the huge Assyrian army under Sennacherib made the excellent time of about 20 miles a day, and without considering their campaigns against the Phoenicians, they would have arrived in Judah in approximately twenty-five days after leaving Assyria. If we add to our equation the fact that Sennacherib first dealt with the Phoenicians, then moved against Palestia and the dozens of fortified cities of Judah, it may have taken his army as long as six to eight weeks before he actually sent soldiers against Jerusalem itself.

37 It is very probable that the illness suffered by Hezekiah was in some way connected with the plague that infected the Assyrian army (see above n. 35).

38 2 Kings, 20:5.

39 Jos., *Antiq*., 10:2:1, par. 27. The Greek word μετὰ (*meta*) means, "prop. denoting *accompaniment*; '*amid*' (local or causal); modified variously according to the case (gen. *association*, or acc. succession) with which it is joined" (SEC, Gk. #3326); "of Time, *after, next to*" (GEL, p. 501). Therefore μετὰ (*meta*) carries with it not only the idea of being "after" but to be "in association," "amid," and "to accompany." Accordingly, Hezekiah would be cured "within the third day after" the present day. This understanding is also that of the Seder Olam (23).

40 2 Kings, 20:6, cf. Isa., 38:5f.

As a sign that this prophecy was true, Yahweh made the sun recline so that the shadow on the sundial at the house of Ahaz returned by ten steps (hours).[41] Targum Jonathan, for example, states that Yahweh "turned back the shadow on the stone figure of the hours, on which the sun went down on the stairs of Ahaz, backward ten hours."[42] Josephus notes that this sundial was part of the house that had belonged to Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah.[43]

This movement of the sun happened on the third day after the prophecy, the same day Hezekiah recovered from his illness. Josephus writes:

> And, when the prophet exhorted the deity to show this sign to the king, he saw what he wished and was at once freed from his illness, then he went up to the temple and did obeisance to the deity and offered prayers to him.[44]

Since Hezekiah went up to the Temple the same day he was healed and saw the sun move backwards, the evidence shows that both events had to occur on the third day after the prophecy.

Importantly, the fact that Hezekiah was granted another fifteen years of life at a point when he was about to die proves that the prophecy had to be given very late in Hezekiah's fourteenth or very early in his fifteenth year of reign. This is true because Hezekiah reigned only twenty-nine years,[45] and the Assyrians had invaded in his fourteenth year of rule. If the prophecy would have been given earlier in the fourteenth year the time left to Hezekiah would have been more than fifteen years.

William Whiston (in another edition of his translation of *Josephus*) concludes:

> Nor will the fifteen years' prolongation of his life after his sickness allow that sickness to have been later than the former part of the fifteenth year of his reign, since chronology does not allow him in all above twenty-nine years and a few months.[46]

The prophecy that Hezekiah would be healed in three days carried with it yet another important revelation. Not only had Yahweh added, as of this date, another fifteen years to the life of Hezekiah but he also told him, "And from the hand of the king of Assyria I shall deliver you and the city. And I shall defend over this city for my own sake, and for the sake of David, my servant."[47] Accordingly, after Hezekiah was to be healed, punishment was to be inflicted upon the army of Sennacherib.

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41 2 Kings, 20:1–11; 2 Chron., 32:24–26; Isa., 38:1–8, 22; Jos., *Antiq.,* 10:2:1.

42 Targ. Jon., *2 Kings*, 20:11. Cf. Targ. Jon., *Isa.*, 38:8, where it is said that the sun "turned back ten hours by the marking of the stone hours where it had declined."

43 Jos., *Antiq*., 10:2:1.

44 Ibid.

45 2 Kings, 18:2, 2 Chron., 29:1; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:3:1.

46 Whiston, *Flav. Jos*., p. 301, n. †.

47 2 Kings, 20:6; cf. Isa. 38:6.

The Talmudic writers also connect the episode of the sun returning ten steps, when Hezekiah recovered from his illness, with the time that the Assyrians heard the "song of the celestials" and were as a result destroyed.[48] This information accords with the fact that in the daylight hours, just before the "night" that the Assyrians were afflicted, Hezekiah was found praying in the Temple,[49] having just that day recovered from his illness.

The Seder Olam, composed in the mid-second century C.E., makes the same conclusion:

> Three days before Sennacherib's downfall Hezekiah became ill. Rabbi Yose says: the third day of Hezekiah's illness was (the time of) Sennacherib's downfall. The sun, which had descended for Ahaz his father, stood still for him, as it says, "Behold, I will turn back ten steps the shadow."[50]

The Assyrian Army was Destroyed Near the Beginning of the Year

In the prophecy given by Isaiah to King Hezekiah just prior to the night of the destruction of the Assyrian army, Isaiah reports that the sign provided by Yahweh was that "this year" the Judahites would eat that which is sown of itself, i.e. it was a sabbath year. "That night" the angel of Yahweh struck the Assyrians.[51] The prophetic nature of the "sign," indicating an event that was yet to occur, implies that the eating of grain sown of itself was something about to happen, not something that had already been in practice. There would have been no reason for Yahweh to advise the Jewish people to eat "that which is sown of itself" if crops had already been planted before the Assyrian invasion. They could have eaten from their remaining crops.

One might conclude that—if the invasion had taken place during the final few months of Hezekiah's fourteenth year, prior to spring, and continued into the beginning of his fifteenth year—the Jewish people, restrained within the walls of their cities, would not have been able to plant their winter crops, which could have been harvested in the spring. But more probably, Hezekiah and the Judahites were already observing the sabbath year. Further, the context of the records is that the "sign" was prophetic. Yahweh would not have permitted the Jews to plant crops for a sabbath year. The sign points to the fact that the Jews were about to begin eating from that which grows of itself, thereby indicating that spring had just arrived. It is also certain that at this time the correct sabbath year and Jubilee cycle were being confirmed.

According to the Seder Olam and later Talmudic writers, Sennacherib's army was destroyed two weeks into the new year, on the first day of Pass-

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48 LJ, 4, pp. 269, 272–275, and ns. 58, 8l.
49 2 Kings 19:14–37; Isa., 37:14–35.
50 S.O., 23.
51 2 Kings, 19:20–37; Isa., 37:21–38.

over, i.e. the fourteenth of Abib.[52] The Seder Olam states, "because (the Assyrians) came up (against Jerusalem) in the time before Passover," they were not able to plant and so they ate what grows of itself."[53] The Midrash Rabbah reports:

> Israel and Hezekiah sat that night and recited the Hallel, for it was Passover, yet were in terror lest at any moment Jerusalem might fall in his (Sennacherib's) hand. When they arose early in the morning to recite the *shema'* and pray, they found their enemies' dead corpses.[54]

In another place, paralleling the story with the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt at Passover, the Midrash Rabbah adds:

> Rabbi Judan said: While Hezekiah and his followers were still eating their paschal lambs in Jerusalem, eloahim had already wrought (their deliverance) in that night, as it says, And it came to pass that night, that the angel of Yahweh went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians.[55]

The 14th of Abib as the date for the destruction of the Assyrian army also explains why the Judahites had, as of the time of Isaiah's prophecy to Hezekiah, not eaten that which grows of itself, even though it was already "this year." According to scriptural law, the Israelites were forbidden to eat from the new year's crops (whether harvested or eaten directly from the field) until after the wave sheaf offering from that crop had been accomplished. This offering took place on the day after the weekly sabbath that fell during Passover week.[56] The people of Jerusalem, therefore, would not partake of this year's crops until after Passover began, and Passover began on Abib 14. This fact brings the words of Isaiah into complete harmony with a destruction of the Assyrian army just after the beginning of the year and during Passover.

An edition of the *Seder Olam Rabbah*,[57] on the basis of Isaiah 37:30, also reports that Sennacherib's disaster occurred during a sabbath year.[58] This tradition supports the conclusion that the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib first struck Judah, had just passed and that the destruction of the Assyrian army took place in the first part of his fifteenth year.

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52 LJ, 4, p. 268, and n. 54; also see Tosef.-Targum, *2 Kings*, 19:35–37; J. Pes., 9:36d. The Pharisees of the second century B.C.E. and after altered the observance of the Passover supper from the 14th to the 15th (Jos., *Antiq*., 2:14:6, 3:10:5, *Wars*, 6:9:3; Jub., 49:1). Nevertheless, the original practice, the one followed in the days of Hezekiah, was to observe the paschal supper the same day as the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, i.e. the 14th of Abib. See our forthcoming book entitled *Yahweh's Sacred Calendar*.

53 S.O., 23.

54 Mid. Rab., *Exod*., 18:5.

55 Mid. Rab., *Song*, 1:12:3.

56 Lev., 23:9–14. Also see our forthcoming work *Yahweh's Sacred Calendar*.

57 Seder Olam Rabbah (ed. B. Ratner), 23, p. 53a-b; and see below n. 58.

58 HUCA, 46, p. 211, n. 30.

The sequence of events occurred as follows (also see Chart F):

• Abib 10. Hezekiah was severely ill and dying. Yahweh answers his prayer and tells him that on the third day from now he will see the sun move backwards, recover from his illness, and go up to the Temple.

• Abib 13…Daytime.[59] The sun moves back ten steps on the sundial. Hezekiah recovers from his illness. On this day a letter arrives from King Sennacherib notifying Hezekiah that the Assyrians fully expect to take Jerusalem. Hezekiah goes up to the Temple, where he presents the letter and begins to pray. Then, the prophet Isaiah came to him with Yahweh's guarantee that the city would not be taken. A sign was also foretold to the king that this year the Judahites would eat that which grows of itself, do the same the second year, and that they would plant and harvest again in the third year.

• Abib 14, the first day of Passover…Nighttime.[60] The Assyrian army encamped outside the city is struck down by the angel of Yahweh and 185,000 men are killed.

Conclusion

All of the above evidence points to the fact that, although Sennacherib invaded Judah during Hezekiah's fourteenth year, the war continued for at least a couple of months, if not much longer, until the fourteenth day of the month of Abib, the first month of Hezekiah's fifteenth year (a detail that is supported by the Assyrian records).[61] It would have been impossible for Sennacherib to have accomplished all of the feats attributed to him in only two short weeks and still have his army destroyed on Passover night in Hezekiah's fourteenth year (i.e. on the fourteenth day of the New Year). On the thirteenth of Abib, Hezekiah was told that the sign for the deliverance of Jerusalem from the hand of the Assyrian king was that the people of Judah would still be found "this year" observing a sabbath year; and that "the second year" they would still be in the land observing a Jubilee. Accordingly, Hezekiah's fifteenth year was a sabbath year and his sixteenth year was a Jubilee.

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59 The first half of the Hebrew day began at sunset and the second half with sunrise (EBD, p. 266; DB, p. 140). Also see our forthcoming book entitled *Yahweh's Sacred Calendar*.

60 Ibid.

61 See Chap. IV, pp. 43f.

Chapter IV

The Assyrian Version

Part II of the Sabbath and Jubilee of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

The precise dating of the sabbath and Jubilee of Hezekiah's fifteenth and sixteenth years is uncovered in the records of the Assyrian king Sennacherib. Sennacherib reports the conquest of the cities in Judah and the reception of tribute from King Hezekiah during his third campaign.

Dating the Third Campaign

Sennacherib's third campaign can be dated by the following information: To begin with, this study is in complete agreement with the accepted dating of the Nineveh dynasty of Assyria, from Tiglath-pilneser III (745/744–727/726 B.C.E.) until the end of that line under Sin-sarra-ishkun (622/621–613/612 B.C.E.).[1] The Assyrians, like the ancient Israelites, reckoned their year from Nisânu (March/April) in the spring.[2] Their records prove that Sennacherib ascended to the throne upon the death of his father, Sargon, on Abu (July/Aug.) 12 of Sargon's seventeenth year (705/704 B.C.E.).[3] His first regnal year, therefore, began in March/April of 704 B.C.E., the same first month as the Hebrew Abib (Nisan). He reigned twenty-three regnal years and died at the hands of one of his rebellious sons on Tebetu (Dec./Jan.) 20, 681 B.C.E.[4]

The *Bellino Cylinder* inscription, dated to the eponymy (year-name) of Nabuli (limmu *Nabuli of Arbailu*)—being the third regnal year of Sennacherib,[5] which began with Nisânu (Nisan, Abib) of 702 B.C.E.—is the earliest record of Sennacherib's first two campaigns. In this document only the first and second campaigns are discussed.[6]

The earliest mention of the third campaign, wherein the expedition against King Hezekiah is given, comes on the *Rassam Cylinder*. It is dated in the eponymy of Metunu (limmu *Metunu of Isana*)—being the fifth regnal year of Sennacherib,[7] which began with Nisânu 1 of 700 B.C.E.

The *Babylonian Chronicle* reports that in the third year of the Babylonian king Belibni, Sennacherib invaded Akkad and set his own son Assur-nadin-shumi on the Babylonian throne.[8] According to the limmu-chronicle, this event took place in the limmu of Metunu—beginning with Nisânu 1, 700 B.C.E.[9] Sennacherib's own records make this event his "fourth campaign."[10]

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1 CAW, pp. 7f; and see our forthcoming text *The Golden Age of Empires*.
2 ARAB, 2, p. 499; HBC, p. 30.
3 JCS, 12, p. 97.
4 ANET, p. 302.
5 ARAB, 2, p. 438.
6 AS, pp. 55–60; ARAB, 2, #268–282.
7 ARAB, 2, #283–284a, and p. 438.
8 ABC, p. 77, ℓ. 26–32.
9 CAW, p. 43.
10 AS, pp. 34f, 71; ARAB, 2, #241–243.

Sennacherib's first campaign began on the twentieth of Shabatu (Heb. "Shebat," Jan./Feb.).[11] The *Babylonian Chronicle* also states that in the first year of Belibni (i.e. the year beginning Nisânu 1, 702 B.C.E.) Sennacherib destroyed the cities of Hirimma and Hararatum.[12] Sennacherib's own records make this destruction part of his first campaign and part of the same expedition wherein he placed Belibni over the throne of Akkad.[13] Yet the Babylonian kings were not officially recognized with a regnal year until the first of Nisânu (March/April), when they had to "take the hand of Bel."[14]

It is clear from these records that Sennacherib's first campaign extended from the month of Shabatu, near the end of his second regnal year (703/702 B.C.E.), and continued beyond the first of Nisânu, 702 B.C.E., the beginning of Sennacherib's third regnal year. His third regnal year, therefore, equals the first regnal year of Belibni, who Sennacherib placed upon the throne of Akkad in Babylonia during his first campaign.

Since the second campaign of Sennacherib had to be accomplished after his first (which took place in the first few months of 702 B.C.E.), yet before the *Bellino Cylinder*, which reported the second campaign, was composed (dated to the limmu of 702/701 B.C.E.), it is clear that the second campaign was also completed in the year 702, in Sennacherib's third regnal year. Neither was this a short-lived expedition. Sennacherib not only invaded the land of the Kassites, east of Babylonia, but marched further east into the distant lands of the Ellipi and then into the lands of the distant Medes, where he received heavy tribute (regions lying in what is today called Iran).[15] Considering 25 miles per day as an average march (a liberal figure), and counting in time for sieges, battles, and rest periods, a campaign lasting three to four months is indicated.

This evidence proves that Sennacherib's third campaign, which included his expedition against King Hezekiah, must have taken place in the period AFTER the *Bellino Cylinder* was published, sometime in the year 702/701 B.C.E., Nisânu (Abib) reckoning, yet BEFORE the composition of the *Rassam Cylinder* inscription, published sometime in the year 700/699 B.C.E.—and still before his fourth campaign mentioned in that same inscription and falling within the third regnal year of Belibni of Akkad.[16]

Sennacherib's first campaign started in Shabatu and continued until at least the beginning of Nisânu of 702 B.C.E. Therefore, his second campaign must have been three to four months long during that same year, with a reasonable period between each event to allow his army to recoup and prepare for the next expedition. Allowing a minimum six weeks for repose between each expedition, the earliest possible chronology would be as follows:

- After April, 702 B.C.E., Sennacherib returns from his first campaign.

- The month of May, 702 B.C.E., Sennacherib rests and prepares for his second campaign.

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11 ARAB, 2, #255–258; AS, p. 50, ℓ. 20.
12 ANET, p. 301; ABC, p. 77, ℓ. 26–28.
13 ARAB, 2, #232–238, 270–282.
14 CAW, p. 7; HBC, pp. 85f.
15 ARAB, 2, #236–238, 277–282.
16 Also see the discussion in CIOT, 1, pp. 307–310; SIP, pp. 2–4.

• June to September (or possibly until as late as October), 702 B.C.E., Sennacherib conducts his second campaign.

• The month of October (or possibly as late as November), 702 B.C.E., Sennacherib rests and prepares for his third campaign.

These limitations mean that Sennacherib, at the earliest, could not possibly have begun his campaign against Judah before late October of his third regnal year. At the same time—since his army was destroyed shortly after the beginning of spring—Sennacherib's great defeat must have occurred at the beginning of his fourth regnal year. These details mean that Sennacherib's third campaign got under way sometime between late fall of 702 and late winter of 701 B.C.E.: a period consisting of only about four months.

These details mean that Sennacherib's third campaign must have taken place shortly after his second, and therefore in the winter. Indeed, even though Hezekiah had revolted from his Assyrian overlord and had not paid tribute, he was nonetheless surprised at Sennacherib's invasion. This fact is indicated when Hezekiah had to hastily build fortifications after hearing of Sennacherib's drive into the region, and even then conceded in his own mind that it would now be fruitless to continue the revolt.[17] This detail would imply that a strike by Sennacherib would not have been expected at least until the spring, the usual time for military expeditions because of weather considerations.

In mid-702 B.C.E. Sennacherib was on his second campaign against the Kassites, Ellipi, and distant Medes far to the east. Hezekiah and the Judahites saw no reason for alarm. They had already been successful in their revolt for several years and in the present year others in the West were joining them.[18]

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17 2 Chron., 32:2–8; 2 Kings, 18:13–16; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:1; cf. CIOT, 1, p. 299; CAH, 3, p. 72.

18 The assumption is often made that the nations of Phoenicia, Palestia, and Judah all revolted from Assyria upon the death of Sargon in Abu (July/Aug.) of 705 B.C.E. (e.g. AATB, p. 69; HI, p. 265). This conjecture, however, has no substance. Sargon's records report that it was during his reign that "the lands of the Palestim, Yahudahi (Judahites) Edomites and Moabites" revolted and sent presents to Pharaoh of Egypt to become his ally (ARAB, 2, #195). In response, the Assyrian king crossed the Euphrates at the time of the spring floods (ibid.). This expedition took place in Sargon's 11th year (711/710 B.C.E.), see ARAB, 2, #29f. Since his response to the revolt was in the spring, i.e. at the beginning of his 11th regnal year, the revolt took place sometime before this year began, and most probably in conjunction with the revolt of Israel in 712/711 B.C.E. (2 Kings, 18:9).

Sargon only mentions the overthrow of Iamani, king of Ashdod, the northernmost coastal city of Palestia, and two nearby cities, Gimtu and Asdudimmu (ARAB, 2, #29f, 195). [*Gi-im-tu* certainly is not Gath, as Luckenbill and others speculate. The Judahites held Gath at this time (see below). B. Mazar-Maisler connects this name with Gittaim of 2 Sam., 4:3, (JCS, 12, p. 83, n. 242); but גבתון (*G-b-t-u-n*; *m* = *b*) of Josh., 19:44, 21:23, located northeast of Ashdod, is phonetically much more suited]. Both the Assyrian accounts and the record in Isa., 20:1, report that Sargon's chief military officer or *turtānu* (turtan, tartan) overthrew Ashdod. Nothing is mentioned of the recovery of Judah, Edom, Moab, or the other Palestia city-states. This data agrees with the ancient evidence that Hezekiah revolted from Assyria early in his reign (2 Kings, 18:1–9; Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:13:3). As part of this revolt, Hezekiah seized control of the Palestia (Philistia) states from Gath to Gaza (2 Kings, 18:8; Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:13:3, cf. 9:8:4, & 2 Kings, 12:17). For the time being Judah and the rest of Palestia remained free and their recovery was not undertaken until Sennacherib made the attempt. It was Sennacherib who stripped Judah's control away from the Palestim city-states (AS, p. 33, 3:27–36, p. 70, ℓ. 27–30).

A previous revolt of Phoenicia occurred in 707/706 B.C.E. and lasted for five years, until 703/702 B.C.E. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:14:2; and see below n. 36). This evidence reveals that Phoenicia revolted again in 702 B.C.E. Ashdod would also have joined at this time. The revolt of Phoenicia and Ashdod were seen as far more of a concern for Assyria, who up until this time still

They felt secure because of their alliance with the Egyptians and Ethiopians and because they believed Sennacherib's involvement in his eastern wars would, at least for the time being, distract the attention of the Assyrians. But Sennacherib did the unexpected. Upon returning to Assyria from the East and hearing of the failure of other western vassals to pay tribute, he did not wait for spring. Instead, he immediately prepared for a massive surprise winter offensive.

We also know that Sennacherib was willing to commit his forces during the heart of winter, rarely done by other Assyrian kings.[19] His first campaign, for example, began in Shabatu (Shebat) of 702 B.C.E. It was against the districts of Babylonia lying south of Assyria.[20] Based upon the records from both Sennacherib and the Jewish sources, the indication is that Sennacherib's third campaign began no sooner than late fall, but more probably in the winter of 702/701 B.C.E., during the latter part of his third regnal year (i.e., in the months before Abib of 701 B.C.E.). The year 702/701 B.C.E., therefore, is equivalent to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, being the third regnal year of Sennacherib.

The year 701/700 B.C.E., the fourth regnal year of Sennacherib, as a result, is equivalent to the fifteenth year of Hezekiah. Sennacherib's army was destroyed at the beginning of Sennacherib's fourth regnal year, in the month of Abib (Nisan), on the fourteenth day, the first day of Passover, in the first part of that day, being nighttime. This year was a sabbath. The next year, 700/699 B.C.E., the sixteenth year of Hezekiah and the fifth year of Sennacherib, was the year of Jubilee.

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retained control over them and through them held the Mediterranean Sea and kept Egypt in check. The fact that Ashdod submitted to the Assyrians immediately after the fall of Phoenicia, while the remaining Palestim (Philistine) states held out with Judah, demonstrates that the other Palestim states were in alliance with Judah. The revolt of Phoenicia and Ashdod best fits the description of Honor, who admits, "If we assume that the plans for revolt were not made in 705 but in 702–701, it is possible to surmise that Sennacherib learned of the conspiracy that was being planned against him before it was fully hatched; that Sennacherib advanced into Palestine with remarkable speed and surprised his foes before they were fully ready" (SIP, p. 65).

Luckenbill calculates that trouble doubtlessly began in the West as soon as the reports of Sargon's violent death reached these regions. Yet, it is also true that, because Sennacherib had been "kept occupied for some time after his accession by events in Babylonia," by the year 701 we find "respect for the Assyrian authority rapidly disappearing" (AS, p. 10). The fact that Sargon died would not, in itself, serve as an impetus strong enough to convince the petty western states to defect from such a powerful overlord as the Assyrian empire, whose military might during this period was immense. The evidence better suggests that it was only after the revolt of the eastern countries in Babylonia, Merodach-Baladan of Babylon (who formed an alliance with the Elamite empire), and some tribes east of the Tigris (the Kassites, Iasubigallai, and Ellipi) in late 703 B.C.E. (the nations towards which the first and second campaigns of Sennacherib were directed) that Phoenicia and Ashdod saw a chance. Their opportunity came while Sennacherib was consumed with his second campaign in mid-702 B.C.E.

19 There is an Assyrian inscription which tells of an expedition by Adad-Nirari II against the province of Dûr-Kurigalzu in Babylonia during the month of Shabatu (Jan./Feb.) (ARAB, 1, #390). The region of Babylonia laid in the low country south of Assyria. Therefore, neither distance nor severe climate would have served as too great an obstacle for this isolated event. Otherwise, until we arrive at the time of Sennacherib and his own invasion of Babylonia, which began on the twentieth of Shebatu during his first campaign, expeditions at this time of year are unknown. Before Sennacherib, no expeditions are reported either for the month of Tebetu (Dec./Jan.) or Addaru (Feb./March). Further, when Sennacherib attempted a march against Babylonia in the month of Tebetu during his seventh campaign, he was turned back by a severe rain and snow storm (ARAB, 2, #351). His attempt, nevertheless, demonstrates the willingness of Sennacherib to campaign during the heart of winter.

20 ARAB, 2, #255–267.

We also must conclude that after Sennacherib's humiliating defeat before the walls of Jerusalem (where he lost 185,000 men) he would need an extended period of time to recoup from his losses in order to commit new troops to his fourth campaign in 700 B.C.E. It is not unreasonable to allow for approximately a year to accomplish this task.[21] Interestingly, it was during this post-Jerusalem period that Sennacherib suffered from a major revolt of his Babylonian vassals, i.e. Belibni and other subkings. This revolt was temporarily successful because of the large military setback suffered by the Assyrian king during the end of his third campaign. Sennacherib's fourth campaign in 700 B.C.E. was, in part, against Belibni to recover Akkad for the Assyrians.[22]

The Length of Sennacherib's Third Campaign

Another item of evidence that substantiates the fact that Sennacherib's third campaign was of no short duration, and therefore extended from the latter part of his third year into the early part of his fourth, comes from this Assyrian king's own records on this expedition. These inscriptions show that it was not just Judah that revolted but the whole of Phoenicia-Palestine (Chart F).

Sennacherib was forced to invade Khatti-land (Syria-Phoenicia), going against King Luli of Sidon and capturing all the fortified cities of his country.[23] Coming to Ushû (mainland Tyre), he received heavy tribute from the Phoenician city-states of Shamsimuruni, Sidoni, Arvadi, the Gubli (Byblos), the Palestim (Philistine) people of Ashdod, and the Trans-Jordan states of the Ammoni, the Moabi, and the Edomi[24] (these last three tribes residing just east of Judah).

Most of the Palestim people living in Palestia (Philistia) and their overlords of Judah, which ruled Palestia at the time,[25] still refused to submit. So Sennacherib next marched south along the coast and went to war against the king of Ashkelon. Along the way, he besieged and conquered Ashkelon's tributary cities of Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Banaibarka, and Asuru, carrying off their spoils.[26] With the submission of Ashkelon, the Assyrians were now on the borders of Judah.

Sennacherib's attack on Judah was especially violent. The ferocity of his onslaught was no doubt brought on because King Hezekiah of Judah was considered the ringleader of the revolt.[27] This fact is revealed when Sennacherib reports that the nobles and people of Ekron in Palestia had delivered up their own king, named Padi, a loyalist to the Assyrians, in iron fetters to Hezekiah to keep in confinement.[28]

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21 E.g., after Nebuchadnezzar took heavy losses in his campaign against Egypt during his fourth year, he was forced to stay home for the entire part of year five to refit "his numerous horses and chariotry" (ABC, p. 101, ℓ. 5–9).

22 CAW, p. 43.

23 ARAB, 2, #239, 309, 326, 347.

24 ARAB, 2, #239, 310; AS, pp. 30, 69.

25 2 Kings, 18:7–8, reveals that Hezekiah conquered the Palestim country "as far as Gaza and its borders" shortly after he had revolted from the Assyrians. Josephus states that Hezekiah seized all the Palestim cities "from Gaza to Gitta (Gath)" (Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:13:3). In the Assyrian records, Hezekiah is the ringleader of the revolt. Padi the king of Ekron, Palestia, to demonstrate, was thrown into iron fetters and given to Hezekiah to keep in confinement at Jerusalem (AS, pp. 31f, ℓ. 2:73–77, 3:14–17, pp. 69f, ℓ. 22–27).

26 ARAB, 2, #239, 310; AS, pp. 30f, 69.

27 AHI, p. 283; HI, p. 265. Also see above n. 25 and Chap. V, p. 57, n. 37.

28 ARAB, 2, #240, 311; AS, p. 31, 2:73–77, p. 69, ℓ. 22f.

When the soldiers of the Assyrian king came against the land of Judah they captured 46 of its walled cities and innumerable smaller cities.[29] Among these overthrown fortified cities were Lachish and Libnah.[30] Sennacherib then claimed to have shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a caged bird."[31] Hezekiah, of course, had already submitted to Sennacherib before the blockade began. Further, he had paid the Assyrians a substantial amount of tribute and was forced to release King Padi of Ekron. Some Judahite territory was also taken away and given to the kings of Palestia.[32] Nevertheless, Sennacherib reneged on the treaty and blockaded Jerusalem in hopes of deporting its entire population into a distant country and with an eye on sacking the wealthy city.

When the rebellious people of Ekron had heard that Sennacherib was coming, they called for military assistance from the Egyptians and Ethiopians. It was at this moment that these forces arrived. Sennacherib, therefore, was obliged to meet this "countless host" in battle. He defeated them on the plain of Altakû (Eltekeh)—a claim obviously referring to an initial victory over the Egyptians and Ethiopians before the plague at Pelusium and the arrival of the army of Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia.[33] Sennacherib then besieged the cities of Altakû (Eltekeh) and Tamnah, capturing them. He also took the city of Ekron, placing Padi back on the throne.[34] At this point, Sennacherib's records finish.

The list of conquests and battles itemized in the records of Sennacherib compels us to conclude that his third campaign could not have been a short one. When we compare his records with those from ancient scriptural and Jewish accounts,[35] it is clear that the expedition lasted at least two to three months. Since his first and second expeditions took up most of the year 702 B.C.E., we are forced to look for his third campaign in the latter part of the king's third year, possibly beginning as early as late fall (Oct./Nov.) but no later than Shebat (Jan./Feb.) of 702/701 B.C.E., during the same time of the year as when he had previously and successfully attacked the Babylonians. Once again we are led to the conclusion that Sennacherib's army at Jerusalem was destroyed during the first month of the new year (Abib) of 701 B.C.E., the fifteenth year of Hezekiah.[36]

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29 ARAB, 2, #240, 312, 327, 347; AS, pp. 32f, 3:18–27, p. 70, ℓ. 27f, p. 77, ℓ. 20f, p. 86, ℓ. 15.

30 Lachish and Libnah are specifically mentioned in 2 Kings, 18:14, 17, 19:8; Isa., 36:2, 37:8; and 2 Chron., 32:9. In place of the discussion of these battles, Josephus only reports that the Assyrian king "took the field against the Egyptians and Ethiopians" while leaving behind Rabshakeh and his forces to sack the city of Jerusalem (Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:1). This information reflects the fact that the Assyrian king heard of the coming of the Egyptian and Ethiopian troops as he was taking Lachish and in response sent his troops to Libnah to prepare the region for the upcoming conflict (Libnah being very near Eltekeh and the site of the battle).

31 ARAB, 2, #240, 312; AS, p. 33, 3:27f, p. 70, ℓ. 28f.

32 ARAB, 2, #240, 312, 327, 248, 284a.

33 AS, pp. 31f, 2:73–1:7; p. 69, ℓ. 22–25; ARAB, 2, #240, 311. A formidable response from the king of Kush came later, when the army led by Tirhakah came out to fight against the Assyrians (2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4).

34 AS, p. 32, 3:6–17, p. 70, ℓ. 25–27; ARAB, 2, #240, 312.

35 See Chart F and above Chap. III, pp. 32f.

36 Support for this arrangement is also found in the reconstruction of the reign of Shalmaneser III. (This reconstruction shall be demonstrated in our forthcoming book entitled *Old World Chronologies*.) These findings show that the five year blockade of Tyre and their king Eluli (Luli), which Shalmaneser III began in 707/706 B.C.E., his twenty-first year, ended the year prior to its

Addressing the Opposing View

Those who will oppose the conclusion that 701/700 B.C.E. was a sabbath year are compelled to argue that, instead of the fifteenth year of Hezekiah, the sabbath year had to be equivalent to his fourteenth year (702/701 B.C.E.). To do so they must ignore the evidence that the destruction of the Assyrian army occurred towards the beginning of the year, which would place it in Abib of 701 B.C.E. Clearly, Sennacherib's invasion could not have taken place during the early part of 702/701 B.C.E. Sennacherib was just then completing his first campaign and beginning his second. Therefore, when the prophet Isaiah observed that a sign for Hezekiah was the fact that his people would eat "that which is sown of itself," in "this year," those who oppose our view must submit to the idea that such was spoken in reference to the fall or winter of the year—which, if correct, makes little sense, since harvest time would have already passed.

Another factor to consider is that most experts in Assyrian history place the entire episode of Sennacherib's third campaign in the year 701 B.C.E.[37] Delbert Regier, for example, remarks that "the generally accepted date of this campaign into Palestine is about 701."[38] Spring of 701 B.C.E. is also the date arrived at by this study for the end of this campaign. The first edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* went so far as to place this invasion in early 700 B.C.E.,[39] but this period, based upon a detailed analysis of the records, is now recognized as far too late.

If the advocates of a sabbath year for the fourteenth year of Hezekiah are correct, and the year 702/701 B.C.E. would be the sabbath year, then the records are in disagreement with a campaign in 701 B.C.E. In that implausible case, possibly the Talmudic Jews might have confused the Feast of Tabernacles for the Passover Feast as the day that the Assyrian army is said to have perished. Yet, it does not explain the sign of eating "that which is sown of itself," for crops would have already been harvested for that year.

Nevertheless, the very fact that Hezekiah was unprepared for Sennacherib's invasion, even though Hezekiah had revolted and allied himself to the Egyptians, would indicate that Sennacherib had moved against the West shortly after his return from his second campaign, which extended into the districts far to the east of Assyria. This detail compels us to conclude that Sennacherib undertook a winter campaign in late 702/701 B.C.E., Abib reckoning, and his army at Jerusalem was destroyed in early spring of 701/700 B.C.E., Abib reckoning.

The truth of the matter is that regardless of which set of facts one wishes to choose, system "B," which would make the sabbath year Tishri, 703 until Tishri, 702 B.C.E. has little possibility of working. There is simply not enough time for Sennacherib to finish his first campaign, carry out a second, and endure a third before the arrival of Tishri, 702 B.C.E.

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revolt and its defeat by Sennacherib (See Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:14:1–2; and cf. Shalmaneser III's records for his twenty-first year with those of Sennacherib's third campaign in ARAB, 1, #578, 614, 2, #239, 309, 326, 347, etc.). Also cf. above n. 18.

37 E.g. CIOT, 1, pp. 307–310; NOT, p. 55; HBC, p. 198; ARAB, 2, p. 136; AS, pp. 10–14; NBD, p. 1159; etc.

38 SIJ, p. 20.

39 CAH, 3, pp. 72f, 277f, 389f.

System "D," Abib, 702 until Abib, 701 B.C.E., has some possibility only if one discounts the evidence that Sennacherib's army was destroyed at the beginning of the year. Under this system Sennacherib would come against Judah very late in 702 B.C.E. His army would have to be destroyed before the first of the next year (March/April of 701 B.C.E.). Yet this interpretation has difficulty with the problem of the Jews eating those things which grew of themselves in "this year." Springtime is certainly indicated, not fall or winter.

System "C" (Tishri, 702 until Tishri, 701 B.C.E.) and System "A" (Abib, 701 until Abib, 700 B.C.E.) both cover a period of time that would meet the requirements; but as we have already pointed out (and shall further prove as we proceed) the Jews of this early period observed an Abib beginning for their year. There is no evidence for the Talmudic interpretation of a Tishri beginning for a regular sabbath year prior to the second century C.E. This fact gives the nod to system "A."

Conclusion

The weight of the evidence strongly indicates that Sennacherib's expedition got under way in the winter months of 702/701 B.C.E., in the latter part of the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. The sabbath year, in turn, took place in the spring, in the opening of Hezekiah's fifteenth year, which began on the first of Abib (March/April) of 701 B.C.E. As a result, the year 700/699 B.C.E., Abib reckoning, Hezekiah's sixteenth year, was a Jubilee. These dates establish the system "A" sabbath-Jubilee cycle,[40] and, as this study shall demonstrate throughout, this cycle is fully supported by the evidence for a number of other sabbath years.

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40 Charts A and B.

CHART B

System “A”

From 750 B.C.E. to 150 C.E.

CHART B (System "A" 750 B.C.E. to 150 C.E.)

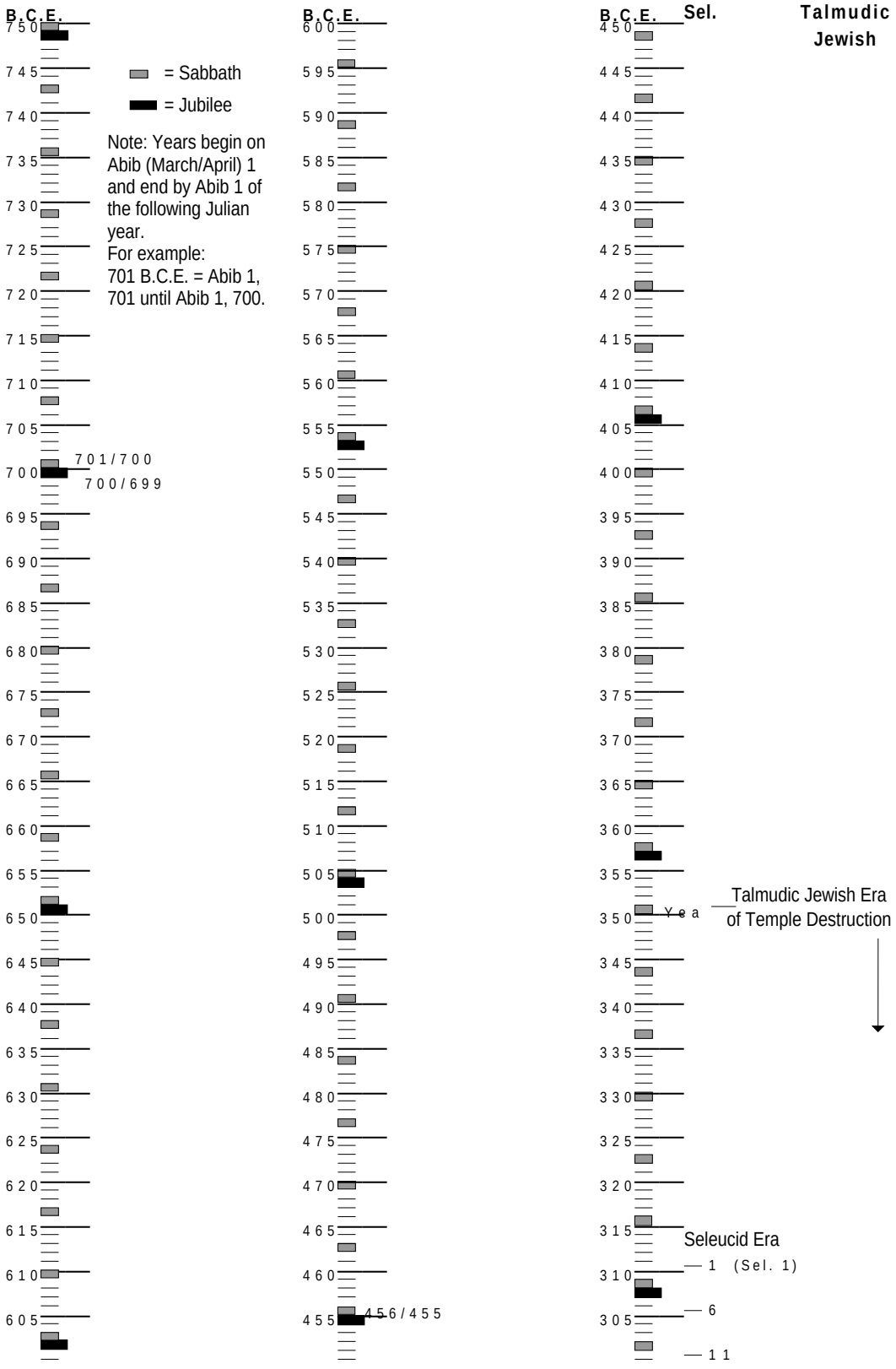
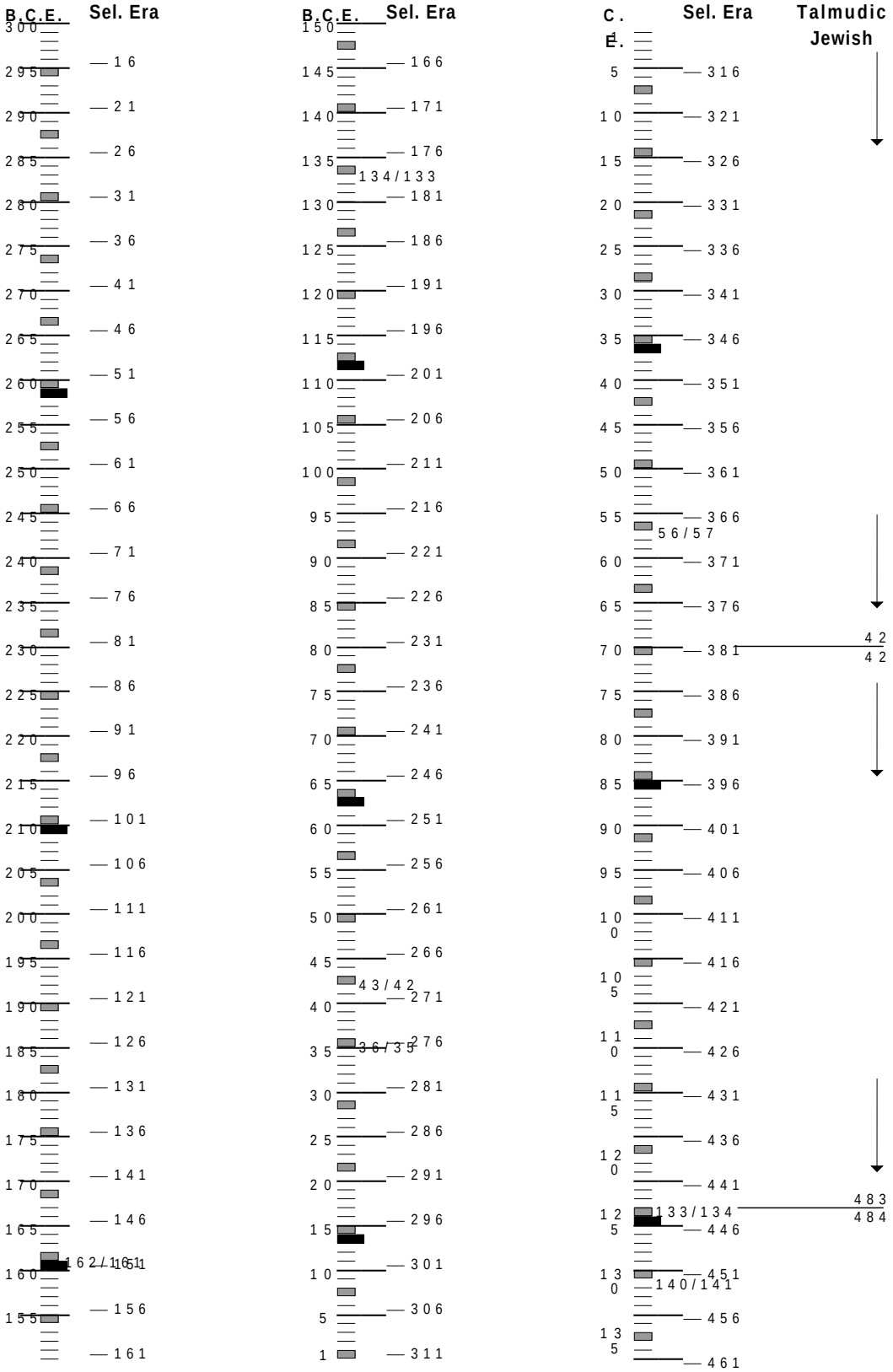


CHART B (System "A" 750 B.C.E. to 150 C.E.)



Chapter V

One or Two Invasions?

Part III of the Sabbath and Jubilee of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

Historians have for some time now been divided with regard to the question about whether the records found in 2 Kings, 18–20; Isaiah, 36–38; and 2 Chronicles, 32, represent one or two invasions of Judah by the Assyrian king Sennacherib. Those adhering to one invasion, as this study does, contend that all the events recorded in these above passages belong to Sennacherib's third campaign. The primary support for this conclusion is the fact that Scriptures and secondary ancient sources, like Josephus and Berosus, acknowledge only one attack against Judah by Sennacherib.

Those holding to the two-invasion hypothesis, meanwhile, dismiss the authority of Scriptures and the statements of secondary non-Assyrian writers. They hold that in the first war, being Sennacherib's third campaign of 701 B.C.E., the Assyrians received tribute from Hezekiah and then returned home victorious. During the second invasion—which they date sometime after 689 B.C.E., but not later than 687 B.C.E., the year Hezekiah died—Sennacherib is believed to have once again set his army against Jerusalem. This time the Assyrian king suffered a great defeat.[1]

Many notable historians have over the years rejected the "two-invasion" hypothesis.[2] Indeed, we have overwhelming evidence which demonstrates that there was only one invasion by Sennacherib against Jerusalem, and that this one and only campaign ended in a defeat for the Assyrian forces at the beginning of the sabbath year of 701/700 B.C.E. Nevertheless, it is important to determine if the two-invasion construction has any merit. For if the destruction of Sennacherib's Assyrian army, as mentioned in Scriptures, took place sometime after 690 B.C.E., the sabbath and Jubilee years, which are associated with this defeat, would be radically different from those proposed by our study.

The Siege of Lachish

The first item of evidence demonstrating a single invasion comes with the conquest of Lachish during Sennacherib's third campaign. Confirmation that

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1 Those advocating two invasions by Sennacherib against Judah include Albright (BASOR, 139, pp. 4–11); Barton (AATB, pp. 471–476); Bright (AHI, pp. 277–286, 296–308); Budge (HE, 6, pp. 148–132); Fullerton (BS, 63, pp. 577–634); Horn (AUSS, 4, pp. 1–28); Smith (JTEH, 2, pp. 148–180).

2 Those advocating only one invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, his third campaign, include Luckenbill (AS, pp. 9–14); McCurdy (HPM, 2, pp. 276–321); Noth (HI, pp. 265–269); Parrot (NOT, pp. 51–63); Petrie (AHOE, 3, pp. 296f); Schrader (CIOT, 1, pp. 277–310, 2, pp. 1–27); Tadmor (AHJP, pp. 142–146); Unger (AOT, pp. 267–271); Wellhausen (PHAI, pp. 481–484). Others, like Honor (SIP) and Childs (IAC), have drawn no conclusion. Their failure to commit themselves to either view is based chiefly upon the issue of Tirhakah, an issue that we shall fully examine in Chaps. VIII and IX.

Sennacherib besieged Lachish is found depicted on the walls of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh (now preserved in the British Museum). The inscription found above the scene reads, "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, sat upon a *nîmedu*-throne (standing-chair) while the booty taken from Lachish passed in review."[3] Only one siege of Lachish is recorded in the Assyrian records, and only one is found in Scriptures.

Scriptures and Josephus point out that, in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib came against the fortified cities of Judah and began capturing them (Chart F).[4] As the result of these victories, King Hezekiah sent a message to Sennacherib, while the latter was at "Lachish," submitting to the Assyrian and paying tribute.[5] After this submission, the Assyrian king disregarded the treaty and sent a large force against Jerusalem anyway.

> And the king of Assyria sent the tartan (*turtānu*), and the chief of the eunuchs, and Rabshakeh FROM LACHISH to King Hezekiah, with a heavy force, to Jerusalem. (2 Kings, 18:17)
>
> And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh FROM LACHISH to Jerusalem to King Hezekiah with a great army. (Isa., 36:2)
>
> After this Sennacherib the king of Assur sent his servants to Jerusalem—and HE WAS AGAINST LACHISH, and all his power with him—against Hezekiah the king of Judah who was in Jerusalem. (2 Chron., 32:9)
>
> But, when the Assyrian received the money, he paid no regard to the agreement he had made; instead, while he himself took the field against the Egyptians and Ethiopians, he left behind his general Rapsakeμs (Rabshakeh) with a large force, and also two other commanding officers, to sack Jerusalem. (Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:1)

Rabshakeh (i.e. the chief cupbearer or chief butler),[6] in the name of Sennacherib, requested much more than tribute. He wanted Hezekiah to submit his entire nation to exile in another distant land.[7] When Hezekiah, under the

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3 AS, p. 156, no. xxv; ANET, p. 288 (4); ANETP, #371–373.

4 2 Kings, 18:13; Isa., 36:1; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:1(1).

5 2 Kings, 18:14–16; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:1(2–3).

6 SEC, Heb. #7262 (7227 & 8248); DB, p. 550. In Scriptures and Josephus this title is used as a personal name of the general, and correctly so. When men rose in rank to such an office they often acquired the office title as their own name (e.g. the office of Pharaoh in Egypt). It was common practice in the ancient world to refer to the individual by his title-name.

7 2 Kings, 18:13f. Deportation and exile was a common political tool used by the Assyrians to control rebel populations (CIOT, 2, p. 5). Assyria, for example, had just a short time before Sennacherib's invasion of Judah exiled the entire nation of Israel into distant countries (2 Kings, 15:27–31; 17:1–6; 18:9–12; Jos, *Antiq*., 9:14:1, 10:9:7, 11:5:2, *Table*, 9:16).

advice of Yahweh via the prophet Isaiah, refused, the Assyrians blockaded the city. To report Hezekiah's defiance, "Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he had heard that HE HAD TRAVELED FROM LACHISH."[8] It was this army, sent to Jerusalem under the leadership of Rabshakeh, that was destroyed.[9]

This data means that Sennacherib was stationed at Lachish both at the time that Hezekiah agreed to pay tribute and at the time that Sennacherib sent a large military force to blockade Jerusalem. When Rabshakeh returned from Jerusalem, he discovered that Lachish had been captured and that the king's main army had now moved on to Libnah. Later, the army that Sennacherib had stationed at Jerusalem under Rabshakeh was destroyed.

According to the two-invasion scenario, the events at Lachish must be divided between two campaigns.[10] Kemper Fullerton, for example, argues that it was just coincidence that Sennacherib had made his headquarters at Lachish during both invasions of Judah. He then reasons that, because Sennacherib's dealings with Hezekiah happened from Lachish during both invasions, this coincidence accounts for the confusion of the two separate campaigns in the present form of our biblical narrative.[11]

Fullerton's view is difficult to justify and cannot be substantiated by the evidence. Scriptures plainly set forth that both the paying of tribute and the force under Rabshakeh occurred while Sennacherib was laying siege to Lachish. At the same time, nowhere does any source state that Lachish was the chief headquarters during his western campaigns. It was only one of many cities seized and conquered. We must agree with Eberhard Schrader when he concludes:

> Yet it is hardly to be supposed that Sanherib [Sennacherib] on both occasions made exactly the same spot his head-quarters, and also that Hezekiah despatched envoys to him both times just at the moment when the Great King was staying at this place, no earlier and no later![12]

These events are all centered around the conquest of Lachish. The Scriptures refer to Hezekiah's payment of tribute and Sennacherib's sending of troops against Jerusalem as both part of the same siege and conquest of Lachish. The Assyrians similarily refer to only one conquest of Lachish. The evidence, therefore, points to only one invasion, the campaign in 701 B.C.E.

Hezekiah's Illness

The episode of Hezekiah's illness gives our next confirmation of one invasion. This story follows immediately upon that of the destruction of the Assyrian

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8 2 Kings, 19:8.

9 In Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4–5, he cites Berosus, the Chaldaean historian, that Rapsakēs (Rabshakeh) was the leader of the destroyed Assyrian army.

10 See references in above n. 1.

11 BS, 63, pp. 616–618.

12 CIOT, 1, p. 306.

army and begins with a direct reference back to that time, i.e. "in those days."[13] During that period Hezekiah was sick and about to die.[14] After praying to Yahweh, the king was foretold of a sign—the sun returning 10 steps (hours). This sign would verify that in three days Hezekiah would recover from his illness and would also live yet another fifteen years.[15] Since Hezekiah reigned only 29 years,[16] this evidence proves he was near the end of his fourteenth year or at the very beginning of his fifteenth year of reign at the time the sign was given. Scriptures specifically note that it was in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah that Sennacherib invaded Judah.[17] This fourteenth year of Hezekiah, accordingly, was the same year in which the third campaign of Sennacherib began. The end of Hezekiah's fourteenth or the beginning of his fifteenth year, therefore, is indicated as the time of the sign.

This dating is further verified by the subsequent mentioning of Merodach-Baladan (Berodach-Baladan), king of Bit-Yakin in Babylonia, who wrote Hezekiah a letter after he had heard that the latter had "recovered" from his illness.[18] Merodach-Baladan ruled the city of Babylon from 721/720 to 710/709 B.C.E., after which King Sargon of Assyria forced him to flee to Elam.[19] Merodach-Baladan, the king of Bit-Yakin, again came to the throne of Akkad and the city of Babylon for nine months in 703/702 B.C.E.[20] Once more he was forced out, this time by Sennacherib. He was succeeded in Babylon by Belibni, a client of Sennacherib's who reigned from 702/701 to 700/699 B.C.E.[21]

Before Belibni's third year, apparently because of Sennacherib's defeat at Jerusalem, and in conjunction with Merodach-Baladan (who was still ruling Bit-Yakin in Babylonia),[22] Belibni revolted from Sennacherib.[23] It was during this period that Merodach-Baladan wrote to Hezekiah. In 700 B.C.E. Sennacherib conducted his fourth campaign, setting out against the districts of Babylonia. He defeated Belibni and marched against Merodach-Baladan, who once more fled to Elam. Sennacherib then placed his own son, Assur-nadin-shumi, on the throne of Babylon.[24]

We also know that Merodach-Baladan was dead by 694 B.C.E., for at this time, during Sennacherib's eighth campaign, we find Merodach-Baladan's son, Nabu-shumishkun, now sitting on the throne of Bit-Yakin.[25] It is evident, therefore, that the period of Hezekiah's illness cannot be associated with any invasion by the Assyrians after 694 B.C.E.

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13 2 Kings, 20:1; Isa., 38:1; 2 Chron., 32:24.
14 2 Kings, 20:1; Isa., 38:1; 2 Chron., 32:24; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:2:1(25); S.O., 23.
15 2 Kings, 20:1–11; Isa., 38:1–8; 2 Chron., 32:24; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:2:1(25–29).
16 2 Kings, 18:1–2; 2 Chron., 29:1; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:3:1.
17 See above n. 4.
18 2 Kings, 20:12–19; 2 Chron., 32:27–31; Isa., 39:1–8; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:2:2.
19 ABC, pp. 73–75; CAW, pp. 7, 42; ARAB, 2, #31–38.
20 CAW, p. 43; ABC, p. 77.
21 CAW, p. 43; ABC, p. 77; ARAB, 2, #263, 273.
22 ARAB, 2, #241–243, 313–315.
23 CAW, p. 43; ABC, p. 77.
24 ARAB, 2, #241–243, 313–315, 324, 325; CAH, 3, p. 65f; ABC, p. 77.
25 ARAB, 2, #252–254, 356–357.

With the time firmly established as to when Hezekiah recovered from his illness, we now must return to the promises given to him by Yahweh. To the promise of an additional fifteen years to Hezekiah's life, Yahweh adds:

> And I shall deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and shall defend this city for my own sake, and for the sake of David, my servant. (2 Kings, 20:6; cf. Isa., 38:6)

Yahweh gives Hezekiah an assurance of a delivery at the very same time he has granted him fifteen more years of life. His words, thereby, are placed within the context of Sennacherib's third campaign in 701 B.C.E.

The question now arises, "If Hezekiah had bought off the king of Assyria by paying tribute, and the king of Assyria victoriously returned home, as the two-invasion advocates contend, why would Yahweh need to deliver the city out of the hand of the king of Assyria?" If the king of Assyria was being bought off with tribute, Hezekiah would not require Yahweh's intervention. If the king of Assyria had already been paid off, there was no need for Yahweh's delivery. And if Yahweh was going to deliver Hezekiah before he paid tribute, Hezekiah would not have paid the tribute. No matter which way it is constructed, the details make no sense unless there was just one campaign against Judah by Sennacherib. When Hezekiah paid tribute, Sennacherib simply disregarded the agreement and sent troops against Jerusalem anyway.[26]

Josephus and the Seder Olam

Josephus and the Seder Olam (the latter being an important source document for the Talmudic writers) also understood that there was but one campaign by Sennacherib against Hezekiah. Josephus, for example, writes that it was during the fourteenth year of Hezekiah that Sennacherib marched against him and took "all the cities of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin."[27] When Sennacherib "was about to lead his force against Jerusalem also," Hezekiah sent word to the Assyrian king promising tribute if he would do no harm and would retire from the Jewish kingdom.[28] The Assyrian king agreed to the terms and gave his sworn pledge:

> So Hezekiah, being persuaded by this offer, emptied his treasuries and sent the money in the belief that he would be rid of the war and the struggle for his throne. But, when the Assyrian received the money, HE PAID NO REGARD TO THE AGREEMENT HE HAD MADE; instead, while he himself took the field against the Egyptians and Ethiopians, he left behind

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26 Wellhausen writes, "Notwithstanding the recently ratified treaty, therefore, he demanded the surrender of the city, believing that a policy of intimidation would be enough to secure it from Hezekiah" (PHAI, p. 482).

27 Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:1.

28 Ibid.

> his general Rapsakēs (Rabshakeh) with a large force, and also two other commanding officers, to sack Jerusalem. (Jos., *Antiq*. 10:1:1)

The first century C.E. Jewish priest Josephus, accordingly, understood the story in Scriptures to refer to one campaign. Josephus adds that after Sennacherib had failed in his war effort against Egypt, he returned and found his army destroyed outside the walls of Jerusalem.[29] Again the evidence demonstrates only one invasion.

The Seder Olam agrees with this scenario. It notes, "The third day of Hezekiah's illness was (the time of) Sennacherib's downfall."[30] The event of Hezekiah's illness, his recovery three days later, the sign of the sun returning ten steps (hours), and Sennacherib's downfall, which accompanied the destruction of his Assyrian army, were understood as all part of the same event.[31] As previously demonstrated, Hezekiah's three day illness occurred at the beginning of his fifteenth year and therefore during the time of Sennacherib's third campaign.

The Assyrian Records Reflect a Defeat

Sennacherib's accounts of his conquest of the cities of Judah and his reception of tribute from king Hezekiah during his third campaign read as a great victory. Yet a closer look at the context, form, and style of these records indicates that, in truth, the Assyrian king suffered a humiliating defeat at Jerusalem. Sennacherib writes:

> As for Hezekiah, the Judahite, who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities, and the small cities in their neighborhood, which were without number,—by leveling with battering-rams and by bringing up siege engines (?), by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels and breaches (?), I besieged and took (those cities). 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep, without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil.
>
> Himself (Hezekiah), like a caged bird, in Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut up. Earthworks I threw up against him,—the one coming out of his city gate I turned back to his misery.[32] The cities of his, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land and to Mitinti,

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29 Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:1–4.

30 S.O., 23.

31 Ibid.

32 This statement shows that the earthworks were thrown up against the various city gates of Jerusalem, and therefore were not siege works. It is now recognized that this statement refers only to a blockade of the city and not to a siege or assault against it (e.g. BS, 63, pp. 592, 626, n. 50). The fact that the Assyrians only blockaded the gates confirms the prophecy given by the prophet Isaiah that the Assyrians would neither enter into the city, build siege mounds against it, or make an assault with arrows or shield (2 Kings, 19:32–34; Isa., 37:33–35).

> king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-bel, king of Gaza, I gave (them). I diminished his land.
>
> I added to the former tribute, and laid upon them the giving (up) of their land (as well as) imposts—gifts for my majesty.
>
> As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and the Urbi (shock troops)[33] and his mercenary (or "picked") troops which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted him.
>
> In addition to 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver,[34] [there were] gems, antimony, jewels, large *sandu*-stones, couches of ivory, house chairs of ivory, elephant's hide, ivory (teeth), ebony (?), boxwood (?), all kinds of valuable treasures, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians, [which] he had [them] bring after me to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers.[35]

Lying within this boast, expressed especially by what is not said and by the chosen order of the events, comes forth what really happened.

To begin with, Sennacherib's lengthy discussion of Hezekiah and Judah points to the fact that one of the main efforts of his expedition was to defeat this rebel.[36] His records clearly refer to Hezekiah as one of the main leaders of the entire western revolt.[37] Hezekiah's treason would certainly not go unpunished. Assyrian policy for leaders of revolts was severe. During the third campaign, Luli, king of Sidon, fled to Cyprus rather than fall into Sennacherib's hand.[38] Sidka, king of Ashkelon, and his family—minor figures in the revolt and not even referred to as rebels but leaders who simply did not submit fast enough—were deported to Assyria.[39] The governors and nobles of

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33 That *Urbi* is an Aramaic and Hebrew term for shock troops see AHJP, p. 142.

34 The 300 talents of silver (2 Kings, 18:14), plus all the silver found in the house of Yahweh (2 Kings, 18:15), represent the 800 talents of silver reported in the parallel Assyrian accounts.

35 AS, p. 32–34, 3:18–49, cf. p. 70, 1:27–32.

36 This detail is supported by the F2 Bull Inscription and the Nebi Yunis Inscription, which in both cases only mention the overthrow of the countries of Sidon and Judah for the third campaign of Sennacherib (AS, p. 77, *l.* 20–22, p. 86, *l.* 12–15).

37 That Hezekiah was the rebel leader in his region is demonstrated when the people of Ekron, who were allied with Judah, willingly turned their own king, named Padi, a loyalist to Assyria, over to Hezekiah, who kept him imprisoned at Jerusalem (AS, pp. 31f, 2:73–77, 3:8–17; pp. 69f, *l.* 22–27). This detail is in accordance with the fact that Hezekiah had conquered and was ruling over the Palestim country (2 Kings, 18:7f; Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:13:3[275]). The second indication comes with the number of cities attacked by Sennacherib in Judah. He reports the overthrow of only eight cities in Phoenicia (AS, p. 29, 2:38–44) and five cities belonging to the king of Ashkelon (AS, pp. 30f, 2:60–72). Yet for Judah he lays claim to the conquest of "46 of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small cities in their neighborhood" (AS, p. 32, 2:18–20, p. 70, *l.* 27–28). Also see AHI, p. 283, where Bright refers to Hezekiah as a "ringleader in the revolt"; BS, 63, pp. 585, 589f, does the same; JTEH, p. 154, where Smith calls Hezekiah the "head of this coalition."

38 AS, p. 29, 2:37–40, p. 68f, *l.* 18–19.

39 AS, p. 30, 2:60–72, p. 69, *l.* 20–22.

Ekron, meanwhile, co-conspirators with and loyal to their leader, Hezekiah,[40] men who had "committed sin (rebelled)," were murdered and their bodies hung on stakes around the city.[41] Hezekiah could expect no less.

In light of an expected punishment, it is noteworthy that Sennacherib makes his readers believe that the history of this expedition only continued up to the point where Hezekiah had paid tribute. The Assyrian blockade, where earthworks were placed at the gates of the city of Jerusalem to prevent people from leaving or entering, is made to appear as if it resulted in this tribute. In reality, as reported by Scriptures and Josephus, Hezekiah sent the tribute to Sennacherib before the Assyrian army even arrived to begin their blockade of Jerusalem.[42] This convenient reordering of events indicates that Sennacherib's true effort to overthrow and punish Hezekiah had not been realized.

The next question naturally arises, "If Sennacherib and his huge army devastated most of Judah and then blockaded the city of Jerusalem, and as a result received tribute from Hezekiah, why does he not report capturing this capital city?" Certainly, if Hezekiah had submitted, he would have been required to throw open his gates. The reason can only be that Sennacherib failed in this effort.

It is true that a long blockade and siege would have been probable in order for the Assyrians to take Jerusalem. It took a year and a half for Nebuchadnezzar to accomplish the same task over a century later,[43] and it took Shalmaneser three years to take her sister city Samaria only a few years previous.[44] But this obstacle never stopped the Assyrians before.[45] Furthermore, the countless host of Egyptians and Ethiopians, sent to aid the rebels, had just been defeated.[46] Sennacherib was secure on all fronts and nothing prevented him from leaving behind a large siege force while he tended to other affairs. The Assyrian failure to press the blockade and begin a siege against the ringleader of the revolt, therefore, indicates a disaster of major proportions.

Furthermore, if Sennacherib had made peace with Hezekiah during his third campaign, as the two-invasion hypothesis reasons, he would have boasted of forgiving and returning Hezekiah to his throne.[47] An oath of loyalty to the Assyrian king would also have been in order. Neither do we find the usual procedure followed by the Assyrian kings which would have Hezekiah grab hold of and kiss the feet of his Assyrian overlord as a demonstration of submission.[48] The act of kissing the Assyrian king's feet is exactly

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40 AS, p. 30, 2:73–77, p. 69f, *ℓ.* 22–23.

41 AS, pp. 30f, 2:78–3:17, pp. 69f, *ℓ.* 23–27.

42 2 Kings, 18:13–17; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:1(1–4).

43 2 Kings, 25:1–8; Jer., 39:1–3, 52:1–13; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:7:4–10:8:2.

44 2 Kings, 18:9–12; Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:14:1.

45 Besides the siege of Samaria (above n. 44), another example for this region is the siege and blockade of Tyre by Shalmaneser III. After retiring from his initial attack he set up blockades at the river and the aqueducts to prevent the Tyrians from drawing water. Menander, cited by Josephus, informs us that the Tyrians endured this state of affairs for five years (Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:14:2).

46 AS, pp. 31f, 2:78–3:7, p. 69, *ℓ.* 22–25.

47 For example, as Sargon forgave Ullusunu the Manni (ARAB, 2, #10, 56, 147–149), and pardoned the people of Gurgum (ARAB, 2, #29, 61)

48 For example, ARAB, 2, #70, 144, 149, 169, 210, which demonstrate that kissing the feet of the Assyrian king was part of the act of surrender.

what was required of the other monarchs who did submit during this campaign.[49] Sennacherib was unable to make such claims because, when he left Jerusalem, Hezekiah was still in revolt and had actually gained freedom from the Assyrians. All Sennacherib could do at this point was put a good face on what ultimately was a great defeat.

Sennacherib's records also conveniently leave out the fact that he had abandoned the war against Egypt and Ethiopia. If he had conquered the "countless hosts" of Egyptians and Ethiopians, as he proclaimed, his next effort would have been to seize the Egyptian Delta. The solution comes with the fact that, as both Herodotus and Josephus note, part of his army was struck down by a plague at Pelusium.[50] Subsequently, as Scriptures and the Chaldaean historian Berosus inform us, this disaster was followed by major losses from the plague outside the walls of Jerusalem.[51] These losses were so severe that Sennacherib had no option but to return home. We must agree with Schrader when he concludes:

> Contemptuous reference is made to Hezekiah's being shut up in Jerusalem by Sanherib [Sennacherib] like a bird in its cage. It is also specially remarked that he had compelled Hezekiah to deliver up Padi, had forced the Jewish king to pay a large sum of tribute, and lastly had received from him through an envoy a vow of submission. He does not intimate by the faintest syllable that he had been obliged to retire from Jerusalem without effecting his object. And it is for this very reason that he purposely shifts the chronological order of events and ends with a reference to the rich tribute, as though this set the seal to the whole narrative.[52]

Conclusion

The evidence clearly demonstrates that the ancients believed in only one invasion of Judah by Sennacherib—the third campaign of Sennacherib. This is the understanding of the authors of 2 Kings, Isaiah, and 2 Chronicles, as well as later authors like Josephus and the Seder Olam. The Assyrian records, by their transparent attempt to make a defeat look like a victory, also accomodate the history found in the Scriptures. These records indicate that some sort of dramatic calamity was suffered by the Assyrian army at the end of Sennacherib's third campaign. This disaster prevented them from laying their hands upon Hezekiah, the chief rebel of the Judah-Palestia region, and from gaining entry into his wealthy capital city, Jerusalem.

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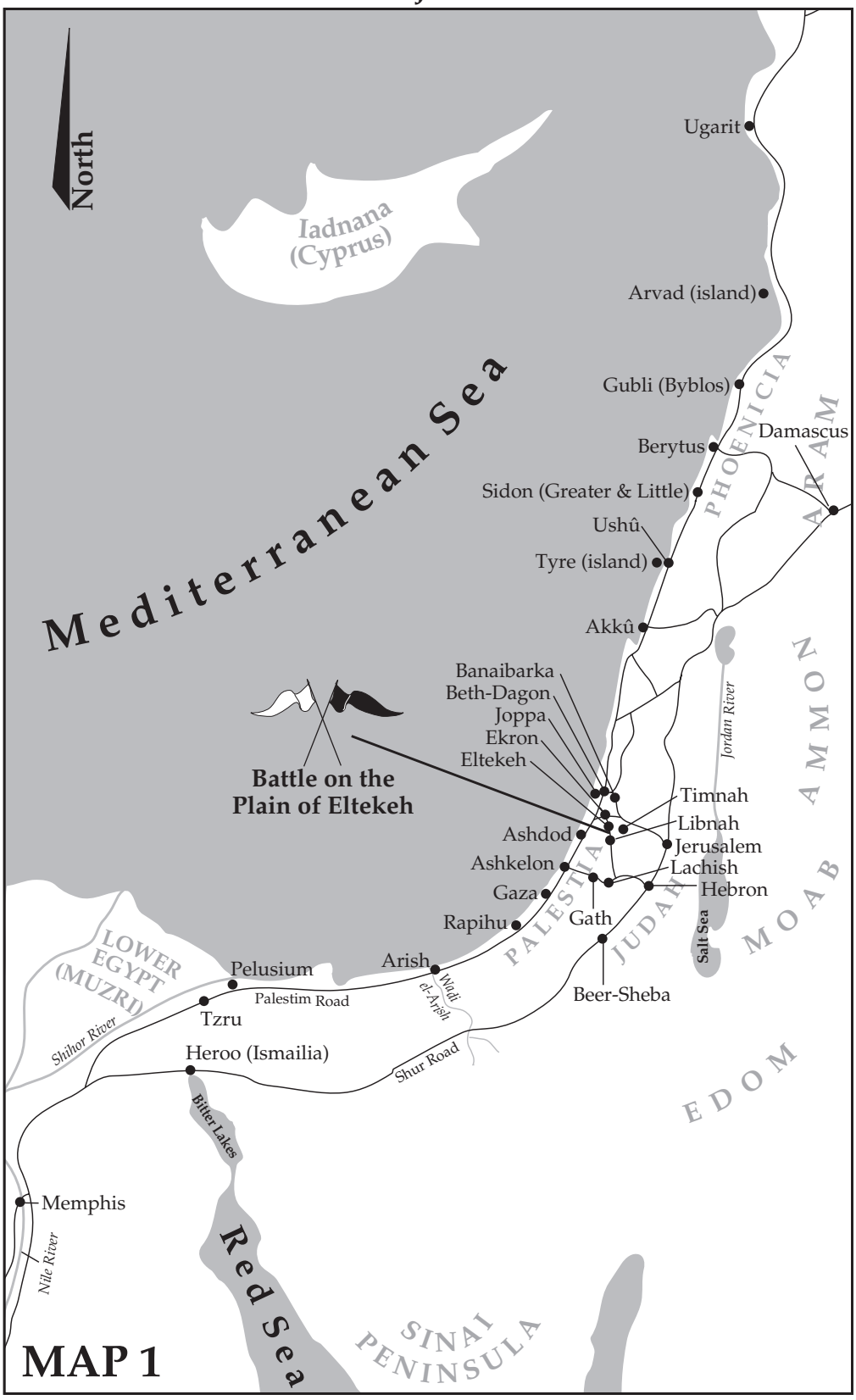
49 AS, p. 30, 2:50–60.

50 Herodotus, 2:141; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:4.

51 2 Kings, 19:35; Isa., 37:36; 2 Chron., 32:21; Berosus, quoted in Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:4–5(20–21), fullfilling 2 Kings, 19:32–34; Isa., 37:33–35. The plague mentioned at Pelusium and the illness of Hezekiah both reveal that some kind of plague appeared in this general area at the time. Also see Chap. III, p. 33, n. 35.

52 CIOT, 1, p. 301.

PHOENICIA AND JUDAH: 701 B.C.E.



Chapter VI

Defects in the Second Invasion Hypothesis

Part IV of the Sabbath and Jubilee of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

The two-invasion hypothesis suffers from numerous defects. When pressed with the demand for proof, its advocates admit that real evidence is lacking. Rather, its premise is a matter of interpretation and possibilities. An examination of the reasoning process and the interpretations of evidence used to support this second invasion hypothesis reveals that it has little merit. What are presumed as "contradictions" between various ancient sources simply do not exist. Rather, the charge of confusion arises because the ancient accounts do not agree with the two-invasion reconstruction of events. As we shall demonstrate, it is not the ancient writings that fall short but the modern interpretations and reconstructions which have been superimposed upon these ancient records.

Why the Two-Invasion View?

With the ancient accounts so forcefully speaking of only one invasion, why does the concept of two invasions persist? Further, why are there so many variations in the two-invasion view? Leo Honor correctly observed that with the story of Sennacherib's third campaign, "the different conclusions which different writers have reached are not due to differences in the sources employed by them, but to different constructions put upon them."[1] These different reconstructions have resulted in unceasing disagreement. As John Bright states:

> The question has been a subject of debate for more than a century without any consensus having been arrived at; it is probable that none will be, short of the discovery of fresh extra-Biblical evidence—say, of Sennacherib's official annals for approximately the last decade of his reign (if such ever existed).[2]

The heart of these many reconstructions lies in the weight given to the different pieces of evidence. Those advocating two invasions, for example, prefer to give less credit to the scriptural accounts and rely more heavily upon their own understanding of what they believe the Assyrian records affirm.[3]

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1 SIP, p. xiv.

2 AHI, p. 296.

3 This tendency has become well-established on both sides of the debate, to the point of *reduction ad absurdum*. For example, Meinhold, who adheres to the view of only one invasion, nevertheless, concludes that the story of the defeat of the Assyrian army was fabricated to satisfy the prophecies of Isaiah. Fullerton, who supports two invasions, meanwhile, feels it necessary to

These historians often concluded that the three scriptural accounts are "confused" or "mistaken," that they contain "many legendary elements" and reveal "irreconcilable" contradictions, especially when compared with the Assyrian reports.[4] Ancient secondary sources, like Josephus, Berosus, Herodotus, and the Seder Olam, are almost entirely ignored.

The case for two invasions of Judah rests entirely upon a single issue: the fact that the Scriptures mention an army led by Tirhakah, the king of Kush (Ethiopia), coming against Sennacherib just prior to the destruction of the Assyrian army at Jerusalem.[5] Without any historical documentation or support, and based solely upon the nearness of time and their similarity in name, King Tirhakah of Scriptures is identified with Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah, the Ethiopian monarch of Egypt's Twenty-fifth Dynasty, ruler of Egypt from 691/690 to 666/665 B.C.E. (autumn reckoning).[6]

With this presumed identification in hand, it is then reasoned that the mentioning of Tirhakah demonstrates that the destruction of Sennacherib's army could not have taken place until sometime after this Ethiopian monarch rose to power over Egypt and Kush. The third campaign of Sennacherib, which matches the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, therefore, cannot be the same event. It is then assumed that these two separate invasions were merged or telescoped into one story. All other information is rearranged to fit this interpretation.

In Chapters VIII and IX we shall deal in detail with the issue of Tirhakah, the foundation upon which the entire two-invasion hypothesis is built. Before this, we must concentrate upon the validity of the evidence and the chief arguments used to defend and support the results of identifying Tirhakah with the pharaoh of Egypt by that name. Our approach will serve to isolate the discussion to the real issue: the identification of Tirhakah.

The Lack of Evidence

The two-invasion hypothesis, unlike the one campaign view, is erected upon a lack of evidence. Remarkably, even the historians who advocate the two-invasion hypothesis acknowledge that they have no real proof, scriptural or secular, to back them up. The idea is built entirely upon "a possibility." When it comes to the actual evidence for this supposed second campaign, its advocates

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give more credit to the accounts found in Scriptures (BS, 63, pp. 602–607). By doing so, Fullerton realized that he had exposed himself "to attack from two quarters": from those who contend that the prophecies are not genuine, and from those who will charge him with being influenced by purely dogmatic and subjective considerations, because, as he acknowledges, he is reluctant to admit that Isaiah played such an utterly misleading part in this history (ibid., pp. 606f). One should immediately take notice of the bias against the history found in Scriptures. This bias is so ingrained that historians find the need to apologize for even considering any part of the Scriptures as truthful. Yet the pagan Assyrian documents, written with an Assyrian bias and in the context of their own religious preference, are perceived as nearly unimpeachable.

4 E.g. CAH, 3, p. 73; LAP, p. 178; SIP, p. 40; HE, 6, p. 149; BS, 63, pp. 578, 587, 604f.

5 2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9.

6 For the calculations of Nefertem's dates see Chap. VIII, pp. 87–91. Also see e.g. CAW, p. 81; LAP, pp. 177f; AATB, p. 21; AUSS, 4, p. 3; SIP, pp. 24f, 51f; HE, 6, pp. 148–152; AHI, pp. 297f; BS, 63, pp. 608f; etc. The blind acceptance that the Tirhakah of Scriptures is to be equated with the Tirhakah of D. XXV is nearly universal, held by historians on both sides of the issue. Yet this widely accepted assumption is, in fact, the Achilles' heel of the entire debate.

come up empty-handed. Nothing, for example, is found in the extant Assyrian annals or the Babylonian chronicles that mentions a second campaign.

Neither do Scriptures nor ancient Jewish and Christian works make any reference to a second invasion. Quite to the contrary, these versions of the story fall under the heading, "in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah." There is not even a suggestion in Scriptures or by later Jewish and Christian writings that the Assyrian king successfully returned home after receiving Hezekiah's tribute or that a new campaign against Jerusalem had begun. At no time, for example, do these records indicate the passing of years between Sennacherib's reception of the tribute from Hezekiah, during Sennacherib's third campaign, and the time when he sent the Assyrian troops against Jerusalem who were subsequently destroyed. Nothing is said to the effect that it was during another year of Hezekiah's reign that the Assyrian king "once again" came against Judah or Jerusalem.

This lack of internal evidence is further demonstrated by the interpretations as to where one should draw the line in the stories found in Scriptures. For example, some separate these two invasions at the end of 2 Kings, 18:16, and Isaiah, 36:1,[7] others at 2 Kings, 19:8.[8] The basic idea is to associate the Assyrian version of a successful campaign (Sennacherib's third campaign) with the humiliation of Hezekiah dated to his fourteenth year. A break in the story is therefore sought to begin the second and unsuccessful invasion of Judah years later. To accommodate this logic, the abridged version in 2 Chronicles, 32, and secondary sources, such as Josephus, which demonstrate no breaks, are discredited or ignored.

The case for two campaigns, accordingly, relies upon innuendo and the absence of information. The idea of a second invasion is nothing but a conjecture which presumes an indentification of Tirhakah. It is a concept built out of "possibility" and not historical fact. As Delbert Regier points out, "the key to their interpretation is the lack of records from 689 till 681." He continues:

> Since all of Sennacherib's military activities are not recorded in his annals, there is the possibility of a second invasion. . . . The general admission of those who hold to the two-invasion view is that this second invasion after 690 is an argument from silence so far as the Assyrian records are concerned.[9]

A possibility is not proof; it is only wishful thinking. Even Bright, who supports the two-invasion hypothesis, after relating his reconstruction and analysis of the event, was forced to conclude:

> Let it be repeated that what has been said does not add up to proof. The matter must be left open. But in view of the foregoing lines of evidence, serious consideration should be given TO THE POSSIBILITY

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7 JTEH, p. 165; AUSS, 4, pp. 23–28.
8 LAP, p. 178; AATB, p. 474.
9 SIJ, pp. 23, 24.

> that II Kings has telescoped the accounts of two campaigns, one in 701 (ch. 18:13–16), the other later (chs. 18:17 to 19:37).[10]

Indeed, the hypothesis of a second invasion will not stand up to critical analysis. As the well-respected historian Hayim Tadmor concludes:

> However, the supposition of two campaigns cannot be upheld. There is no independent evidence from Assyrian sources that could lead us to postulate an additional campaign against Judah on the part of Sennacherib. On the contrary, there is reason to suppose that Sennacherib had no further interest in the west after his campaign of 701. He had abandoned his father's expansionist policies, concentrating on his enormous building projects, especially the transformation of Nineveh into his new capital. Sennacherib consciously acquiesced in the *de facto* independence of Judah and the Philistine cities, being content with their remaining vassal states as a buffer between Assyria and the growing power of the Nubian dynasty.[11]

"Nevertheless," as the noted Assyriologist David Luckenbill states, "its alternative which holds that one campaign, that of 701, is all we need to posit, is easily defended."[12] Indeed, in our last chapter we have already demonstrated overwhelming evidence that there was but one invasion by Sennacherib against Jerusalem, and that this one and only campaign ended in a defeat for the Assyrian forces at the beginning of the sabbath year of 701 / 700 B.C.E.

Propaganda in the Assyrian Records

Another major error in the two-invasion scenario is the reliance on the Assyrian records as if these were the only true primary sources. This approach relegates the three accounts in Scriptures to a secondary role, charged with confusion and errors. The versions found in Scriptures, therefore, are seen as needing corrections and adjustments to bring them into harmony with what the Assyrian inscriptions say. In reality, there is no conflict with the Assyrian inscriptions, only with the two-invasion reconstruction of those records.

The propaganda found in the Assyrian records makes no mention of a great defeat of Sennacherib during his third campaign. Rather, it speaks of this campaign as a great victory. Therefore, it is argued, the context of these records support the idea that such a defeat did not take place until later. The records of this later defeat, believed suffered during the time of Nefertem Tirhakah, king of Egypt, have either been lost or were never written because the Assyrians did not feel obligated to report it.

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10 AHI, p. 307.
11 AHJP, p. 144.
12 AS, p. 13.

Nevertheless, the circumstance that Sennacherib did not mention a defeat during his third campaign is evidence of nothing. In fact, such a practice was in keeping with official Assyrian policy. In several cases, for example, the Assyrians are known to have lied about the outcome of a battle, claiming victory in the face of defeat.[13] Even Sennacherib is blatantly guilty of this charge. For his eighth campaign, he reports a great victory over the Akkadian and Elamite forces at Halulê.[14] He claims that he "decimated the enemy host with arrow and spear," speedily "cut them down and established their defeat" and "the terror of my battle overturned them."[15] Those who escaped and fled for their lives, when found by his troops, were cut "down with the sword."[16] In another report of this battle, Sennacherib claims that he not only defeated them but cut down 150,000 enemy troops.[17] The report of the Babylonian chroniclers, on the other hand, who give a much more neutral view of these wars, proclaims:

> In an unknown year [it was 691 B.C.E.], Menanu mustered the armies of Elam and Akkad, made an attack upon Assyria at Halulê and defeated Assyria.[18]

Luckenbill summarizes Sennacherib's version by stating that it is "the finest rhetorical smoke-screen that has ever been thrown around a monarch retiring with dignity from a situation that had proved to be too much for him."[19] Sennacherib, accordingly, for his own political purposes, was not shy about reorganizing the facts. His inscriptions must be judged with this proclivity in mind.

Parrot notes, "The annalists of Nineveh were subject to a censorship and the official records did not tell everything."[20] Bright warns, "Assyrian kings did not customarily celebrate reverses, and they often falsified to depict defeats as victories; one ought never to trust their boasting uncritically."[21] Otto Weber, likewise, points out:

> All official historical literature of the Assyrians culminates in the excessive praise of the king, and has

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13 An example would be the well-known attempt by Sargon, the father of Sennacherib, to cover up his defeat by Humban-nikash, king of Elam. Sargon claims that he "shattered the might of Humban-nikash" and "defeated" the Elamite (ARAB, 2, #4, 55, 92, 99, 118, 134, 137, 183). The Babylonian chroniclers, meanwhile, who gave a much more evenhanded appraisal of such matters, report, "Humban-nikash, king of Elam, did battle against Sargon, king of Assyria, in the district of Der, effected an Assyrian retreat, (and) inflicted a major defeat upon them" (ABC, p. 73, 1:31–35). Interestingly, many of those holding to the two-invasion hypothesis admit to these Assyrian fabrications (e.g. BS, 63, pp. 588, 626, n. 49; AHI, p. 300). Yet they still fail to give the proper weight and consideration to this policy when using the Assyrian inscriptions in conjunction with the history found in Scriptures. This failure reflects an underlying bias against Scriptures.

14 AS, pp. 41–47, 5:17–6:35, pp. 87–89, ℓ. 27–55.

15 AS, p. 45, 5:80, 6:1, p. 47, 6:26f.

16 AS, p. 47, 6:35.

17 AS, pp. 88f, ℓ. 47f.

18 AS, p. 17; ABC, p. 80, 3:16–18, rendering the last verse, "He effected an Assyrian retreat."

19 AS, p. 17.

20 NOT, p. 62.

21 AHI, p. 300.

> as its only aim the transmission of this praise to posterity. It is clear that under these circumstances the credibility of royal inscriptions is subject to suspicion. Not one royal inscription admits a failure in clear words; instead we know of cases in which an obvious defeat has been converted into a brilliant victory by the accommodating historiographer. In most cases, however, it was common practice to pass in silence over any enterprises of which the king had little reason to boast. Even where the king was successful, one must not fail to deduct much from the enthusiastic battle reports, and one should not forget to remain critical toward unexpected transitions or sudden breaks in the narrative where the reader hoped to hear much more.[22]

The reports of Sennacherib's third campaign fit this characterization exactly. As we have already demonstrated in our last chapter, the internal evidence left by Sennacherib's scribes shows that they rearranged the order of events. The failure of Sennacherib to either punish Hezekiah or to enter Jerusalem, as well as other glaring omissions found in these records, testify that a great disaster befell his army before his goals could be realized. Julius Wellhausen observes, "Sennacherib's inscription speaks only of the first and prosperous stage of the expedition, not of the decisive one which resulted so disastrously for him, as must be clear from the words themselves to every unprejudiced reader."[23] Jack Finegan was forced to admit:

> In view of the general note of boasting which pervades the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings, however, it is hardly to be expected that Sennacherib would record such a defeat. Perhaps the fact that he claims to have shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a caged bird" but does not claim to have taken the city is evidence that he did suffer discomfiture there.[24]

One cannot claim the lack of Assyrian records as a foundation to set aside hard evidence from Scriptures. The Assyrian annalists left us a report of only one campaign by Sennacherib against Judah. To postulate another in an effort to accommodate a hypothesis is unwarranted. Neither can the Assyrian records be taken at face value. Their hidden agenda and political purpose must be accounted for. It is a fact that the Assyrians politically did not wish to record for posterity a defeat of any one of their monarchs. The fact that Sennacherib would only mention the victorious parts of his third campaign

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22 DLBA, pp. 227f; English translation in AUSS, 4, p. 13, n. 41.
23 PHAI, pp. 483f.
24 LAP, p. 178.

is in keeping with this attitude. On the other hand, the Judahites would certainly feel justified in handing down to their descendants the history of the great victory given them by Yahweh over their Assyrian foes.

Why Not Invade Egypt?

Another problem with the two-invasion hypothesis surfaces with motive. Why did Sennacherib stop where he did during his third campaign? Having defeated a "countless host" of Ethiopian and Egyptian forces, conquering Sidon, Ashkelon, Ekron, and numerous other cities, as well as devastating Judah, why did he retreat after receiving tribute from Hezekiah? As Regier comments:

> The primary issue involved here is the problem of why Sennacherib stopped where he did and returned home. Since these hold that the miraculous deliverance of II Kings 18:17–19:35 took place during the second invasion, it has been necessary that they construct a legitimate reason for Sennacherib's retreat in 701.[25]

Siegfried Horn, in response to this dilemma, makes the following typical rationalization:

> News from the east, where Elam and Babylonia were ever-festering sores in the Assyrian empire, MAY HAVE been of such a nature that it seemed wise to be satisfied with the voluntary submission of Hezekiah, without losing precious time which a prolonged siege and attack of the strongly fortified city of Jerusalem would have taken.[26]

Not only is this reasoning a fabrication, built without any historical foundation, but it sets against the evidence. If the immediacy of the Babylonian and Elamite problem had been of such magnitude that the Assyrian king felt the need to vacate his western campaign in 701 B.C.E., why did Sennacherib wait an entire year (until 700 B.C.E.) to undertake a campaign against Babylonia?[27]

Some conclude that Sennacherib may have simply not wanted to invade Egypt.[28] This excuse is also unreasonable. Sennacherib knew that trouble would continue in the districts of Syria-Judah as long as the nearby Egyptian and Kushite power exerted itself. That Sennacherib, after defeating a great

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25 SIJ, p. 22.

26 AUSS, 4, p. 16.

27 For the fourth campaign see AS, pp. 34f, 71. That the fourth campaign occurred in 700/699 B.C.E., the third year of Belibni, the king of Babylon, is confirmed by the Babylonian chroniclers (ABC, p. 77, 2:36–31). Neither is there any immediacy about Babylonia in the records of either the third or fourth campaigns of Sennacherib. If Sennacherib was concerned about meeting a Babylonian threat during his third campaign he would not have waited until the next year. Even then there was no reason for him to expunge all of his troops from the blockade and planned siege of Jerusalem.

28 E.g. SIP, pp. 17f.

Egyptian and Kushite army, would, on a whim, give up an opportunity to rid himself of his arch enemy and control at least northern Egypt is hard to justify. A defeated Egypt was simply far too tempting a prize. Indeed, the very fact that Assyria invaded Ekron and Judah, allies of Egypt and Kush and considered by the Egyptians as members of their empire, meant that Assyria and Egypt were already at war.

Assyrian motives are clearly spelled out by the actions of their previous and subsequent kings. Sargon (721/720–705/704 B.C.E., spring reckoning), the father of Sennacherib, for example, considered his provinces as extending west to the river of Egypt (Wadi el-Arish).[29] In his second year Sargon defeated a large Egyptian army at Rapihu (Raphia), under the command of an Egyptian *turtānu* (chief military official) named Re'e, who had come to the aid of the king of Gaza in Palestia.[30] During Sargon's sixth year (716/715 B.C.E.), he received a gift of twelve horses from "Silkanni, king of Muzri (Lower Egypt)."[31] Then, in his seventh year (715/714 B.C.E.), Sargon reports receiving tribute from "Pir'u (Pharaoh), king of Muzri (Lower Egypt)."[32]

Sargon's threat against Muzri and *Meluḫḫa* (Lower and Upper Egypt), was so great that when Iamani, the king of Ashdod, fled from Sargon to Egypt, the Kushite king of Meluḫḫa (Upper Egypt), finding Iamani to be a trouble maker, cast him into chains and sent him back to Assyria.[33] Two seals inscribed with the prenomen of Shabako (714/713–700/699 B.C.E.), the Kushite Pharaoh of Egypt at this time, were found among the tablets of the Royal Library at Nineveh, Sargon's capital city.[34] As Budge points out, these "appear to have been attached to some object which Shabaka sent from Egypt to Sargon."[35] What gifts were attached are unknown, but the fact that gifts were being sent at all reflects the status of Egypt with Assyria during this period. The Ethiopians and Egyptians were behind many of the intrigues and revolts against Assyria in western Asia. Gifts and the return of Iamani were undoubtedly performed to help keep the peace and to avoid any provocation which might lead to an Assyrian invasion of Egypt or her allies.

Egypt and Kush were not, during Sargon's time, occupied countries or directly subject to Assyria. Nonetheless, they had paid tribute and gifts to the empire on their northeast border. Therefore, when the alliance of Judah and a great part of Palestia changed from Assyria to Egypt during the latter part of Sargon's reign,[36] Sennacherib could only interpret the interference of Egypt and Ethiopia into the western provinces of the Assyrian empire as an attack upon Assyria. This act was in itself a cause for war between the two empires.

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29 ARAB, 2, #54, 82, 96, 97, 99, 102, 118, 183. See Chap. IX, p. 109, n. 35.

30 ARAB, 2, #5, 55, 80, 92, 99, 118. The name Re'e was previously mistranslated as Sib'e (CAH, 3, pt. 1, p. 576).

31 JCS, 12, pp. 77f. Silkanni is Assyrian for Osorkon (JCS, 12, pp. 77f; TIP, p. 143).

32 ARAB, 2, #18 (cf. 12–18), 55.

33 ARAB, 2, #62f, 79f. For the identification of Meluḫḫa (Upper Egypt) see Chap. IX, pp. 108–110.

34 HE, 6, pp. 127f; NB, p. 156; AHOE, 3, p. 284. For Shabako's reign see Chap. VIII, pp. 95–97 and p. 95, n. 86.

35 HE, 6, p. 128.

36 See above Chap. IV, pp. 41f, n. 18.

Esarhaddon (681/680–669/668 B.C.E.), the son of Sennacherib, certainly followed up with what Sargon had started. During his seventh and tenth years, he invaded northern Egypt. Esarhaddon drove all the way to Memphis in his tenth year, appointing new kings over that country.[37] Two years later he died of an illness while marching on Egypt after that country had revolted.[38] Assurbanipal (668/667–627/626 B.C.E.), the grandson of Sennacherib, not only twice conquered Lower Egypt but pressed on into Upper Egypt, sacking Ni (Thebes) and causing the Ethiopian king of Egypt to flee back to Nubia.[39] There can be little doubt that it was a mainstay of Assyrian foreign policy to eliminate the troublesome Egyptian and Ethiopian opposition.

Leo Honor, though not considering the evidence from Scriptures, as well as the secondary historians like Josephus, Berosus, and Herodotus, nonetheless, on the Assyrian records of Sennacherib's third campaign alone, concludes:

> The object of the campaign is not stated. It is fair, however, to assume, even though it can not be stated with any degree of certainty, that Egypt was Sennacherib's ultimate objective. Egypt was the ultimate goal of Assyria's ambition in the West, not only because of the incentive of rich booty and spoils, but also because Assyria knew that its control in the West would not be complete as long as Egypt remained independent. (The frequent rebellions in the West, 735, 727, 720, 711 and 701, were all due to Egyptian intrigues and stimulations).[40]

Sennacherib was positioned at Lachish when he set out to oppose the combined Egyptian and Ethiopian forces.[41] The road through Lachish was ideally positioned to watch the Egyptian frontier and to block any Egyptian assistance to Jerusalem.[42] There were only two roads by which the Egyptians and Kushites could counterattack: the Palestim coastal road and the Shur road which stretched through the north Sinai desert.[43] From Lachish the Assyrians could meet an advance from either highway (Map 1).

Keeping an eye on the Egyptian reaction to his invasion explains Sennacherib's choice of an invasion route, i.e. marching south along the coastal road, the international highway, from Sidon to Ashkelon. This important roadway

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37 ARAB, 2, #554–559, 563f, 580, 583–585; ANET, pp. 302f (1. iv), p. 303 (2. rev.).

38 ANET, pp. 302f (1. iv), p. 303 (2. rev.).

39 ARAB, 2, #770–775, 776–778, 844–846, 875, 892, 897, 900–907; ANET, p. 303 (2. rev.).

40 SIP, p. 31, n. 69.

41 Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:1; cf. 2 Kings, 18:17; Isa., 36:2; 2 Chron., 32:9.

42 SIP, p. 15; CIOT, 1, p. 299, 2, p. 1.

43 There were only two roadways out of Egypt by which any Egyptian army could arrive in Judah or Palestia (Map 1). The first was the Palestim road, which extended from Pelusium on the northeast corner of Egypt along the coast to Gaza in southern Palestia. From Gaza the highway stretched north along the coast to Phoenicia. This was the best and fastest roadway eastward out of Egypt. The second, the Shur road, was much longer and far more treacherous. It left Heroo (Ismailia), located above Lake Timsah, and stretched through the north Sinai and Negeb deserts until it came to Beer-Sheba, located in southern Judah.

continued on into Pelusium, being the main highway into and out of Egypt. It was the most likely route that any Egyptian army would use. This highway had to be seized and perpetually secured.

At Ashkelon, Sennacherib made a sharp turn inland against Judah, one of his main objectives. He positioned his battalions at Lachish and, while he personally attacked that city, he directed other units against the walled cities of Judah. The inland cities of Palestia belonging to Ekron, meanwhile, were encircled. This path allowed the Assyrian king an excellent position to oppose the Egyptian and Ethiopian forces, regardless from which road they came. At the same time, he could block off any attempt of his enemies to join forces with their Judahite allies.

The Scriptures also reveal that Sennacherib's original intent was to oppose the Egyptians. In Rabshakeh's first message to Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem, he scorns the possibility that the Judahites were hoping on assistance from the Egyptian chariots and horsemen.[44] Josephus states:

> Was it perhaps, he (Rabshakeh) asked, because of the Egyptians, and in the hope that the Assyrian army had been beaten by them? (Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:2)

These words reflect the belief that a conflict with Egypt was both imminent and expected by the Assyrians. Later on in the story, shortly before the plague struck the Assyrian army at Jerusalem, Yahweh relates the attitude of the Assyrian king in his numerous conquests. He cites the Assyrian king as saying, "I will dry up the rivers of Egypt with the sole of my feet."[45] This statement reveals the intention of Sennacherib and the Assyrians to invade Lower Egypt where the seven great river branches of the Nile flow.

That the primary purpose of Sennacherib was to invade Lower Egypt is also affirmed by the secondary sources. Josephus, for instance, writes that "the king of Assyria failed in his attack upon the Egyptians and returned home without accomplishing anything."[46] Berosus names Sennacherib and tells "how he ruled over the Assyrians and how he made an expedition against all Asia and Egypt."[47] Herodotus, likewise, speaks of the time when King Sennacherib came "against Egypt" and laid siege to Pelusium,[48] the important Egyptian border city located on the main road from Palestia to Egypt.[49] Pelusium was the gate or "road into Egypt."[50]

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44 2 Kings, 18:19–24; Isa., 36:6–9.

45 Isa., 37:25; 2 Kings, 19:24. The verb is pointed future by the Massoretic text, "I shall dry up," not "I have dried up" (HPM, p. 301). Fullerton thinks that a future reading is against the context (BS, 63, p. 627, n. 62). His view is not convincing and there is no sound reason for it. Yahweh is merely informing Hezekiah of the attitude of the king of Assyria; he had already conquered many nations and was next intending on the overthrow of Egypt. This passage demonstrates that the defeat of Egypt was Sennacherib's ultimate goal.

46 Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4.

47 Cited in Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4.

48 Herodotus, 2:141.

49 Pelusium (Modern *Tell Farama)* was located at the mouth of the easternmost branch of the Nile (Dio, 42:41; Pliny, 5:11,12, 14, 6:33; Strabo, 16:2:33, 17:1:21, 24; Ptolemy, 4:5, & *The Third Map of Libya*).

50 Herodotus, 2:141.

To march all the way into Palestia, inside the Egyptian empire and near the border of Egypt, with a massive army, defeat "countless hosts" of Egyptian and Ethiopian troops,[51] and then not take advantage of the situation by continuing to march on Egypt is unthinkable. No better moment could have been hoped for. It would have been the most opportune time to change the war front from Syria-Judah to Lower Egypt. The national interest of Assyria demanded dealing with the Egyptian threat. Only a devastating defeat of some magnitude during Sennacherib's third campaign could politically justify a retreat.

Conclusion

The above evidence reveals that the two-invasion hypothesis has little substance upon which to be based. There is simply no hard evidence of a second invasion of Judah by Sennacherib. Not only do we lack any ancient testimony proclaiming a second invasion but all of the existing records only speak of one campaign. All that is left to the advocates of the two-invasion hypothesis is the "possibility" that a second invasion might have occurred.

In order to facilitate this supposed second invasion, a bias against the authenticity and reliability of Scriptures is expressed and then an unrealistic interpretation and primacy is placed upon the Assyrian records. It is obvious that the Assyrian scribes rearranged the chronological order of events for Sennacherib's third campaign. It is also known that it was Assyrian policy to ignore recording humiliating defeats (often rewriting a defeat as a victory). Further, this propaganda dimension to the Assyrian reports of Sennacherib's campaign against Judah is simply not given its full consideration and proper weight. The very fact that Sennacherib admits that he only blockaded Jerusalem and never claims to have conquered it stands as testimony enough that he failed in one of his primary goals for his third campaign. This failure indicates an important defeat for the Assyrians, which is corroborated by Scriptures and other ancient sources.

Finally, that the Assyrians would defeat a countless host of Egyptians and Ethiopians, yet would not follow up with an invasion of Egypt, is incredible. The activities of the Assyrian kings, both before and after Sennacherib, reveal that it was a cornerstone of Assyrian foreign policy to eliminate the Egyptian and Kushite threat to their empire. Therefore, Sennacherib's failure to seize this golden opportunity and strike a fatal blow by invading the Egyptian Delta is only explained if the Assyrians had suffered some sort of major setback during that campaign. Since only one Assyrian campaign, which ended in failure, is all that is testified to by Scriptures and other ancient writers, there is simply no reason to explain the Assyrian records by postulating a second.

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51 AS, pp. 31f, 2:73–3:5; p. 69, ℓ. 22–25.

Chapter VII

Supportive Arguments for Two Invasions

Part V of the Sabbath and Jubilee of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

There are a number of other issues brought up by the advocates of the two-invasion hypothesis which are used to support their view. These arguments, nevertheless, are heavily flawed. They reflect a bias against Scriptures and the secondary sources while unduly emphasizing what is falsely perceived as a conflict between these writings and the Assyrian inscriptions. As we shall demonstrate, the ancient sources are all in harmony. The only conflict that exists lies between the interpretations of those insisting on two invasions and these ancient accounts.

The Arab Campaign

The best that the advocates for the two-invasion hypothesis can put forth as support for the "possibility" of a second attack on Judah is the mentioning of an Arab expedition undertaken by Sennacherib sometime during or after his eighth campaign (the exact date being unknown).[1] This record reports how Sennacherib (or one of his generals) went against Queen Telhunu and King Hazael of the Arabs and conquered a region located "in the midst of the desert."[2]

There are two cities named (one now lost in a lacuna): i.e. ". . . [and] Adummatu, which are situated in the desert."[3] The location of the city of Adummatu is unknown;[4] but Arabia, during the Assyrian period, consisted

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1 AUSS, p. 25; JTEH, p. 171; BS, 63, pp. 609f.

2 AS, p. 92, *l.* 22.

3 AS, p. 93, *l.* 26.

4 The identity of Adummatu is still a mystery. Yet, because it is also called Adumu by Esarhaddon (ARAB, 2, #536), some have attempted to equate Adummatu with Edom, located on Judah's southeast border (e.g. CAH, 3, pp. 74f). This identification, nevertheless, fails on several counts. First, Edom was the name of a country not a city. Second, Edom was not an Arab country. The Arabs did not inhabit old Edomite lands until the fifth century B.C.E. (Strabo, 16:1:34). Third, the country of Edom is separately listed by both Sennacherib (AS, p. 30, 2:57) and Esarhaddon (ARAB, 2, #690) under the spelling U-du-um-ma-ai, which is substantially dissimilar from Adummatu (A-du-um-ma-tu). Fourth, Edom was located in the mountains, not the desert.

The attempt to identify the Arab city of Adummatu with a place near Palestine is a direct outgrowth of the desire to reframe the evidence to fit the hypothesis. The Assyrian records clearly point out that Adummatu was an Arab city located in the desert. They associate their victory in this district with the Assyrian campaigns in and around Babylonia. The identification of Adummatu (Adumu) with Dumat al-Ghandal (modern el-Jawf) is a better possibility (EBD, p. 295; HBD, p. 229; NBD, p. 328). It is located halfway between the head of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Aqabah, and along a road to Babylon (Map 3). Dumat (Adumu, Adummatu) may be a form of the name Dumah (a son of Ishmael, father of the Arab tribes; cf. Gen., 25:14, 1 Chron., 1:30). Yet even this is speculation. Ancient Adummatu may be another place entirely and, if so, located much closer to the Babylonian region. But if Adummatu can be identified as Dumat, it can easily be attacked from the east by taking the road from Babylon going to Dumat.

of that broad land located between Babylonia on the east and Syria and the Trans-Jordan on the west.[5] Therefore, the reasoning goes, a possibility exists that, as part of this Arab campaign, Sennacherib led an expedition against Judah and Egypt.

A closer look at this information demonstrates just how inadequate this explanation is. To begin with, Sennacherib had difficulties with Arab tribes located in the Babylonian region, along with the Aramaeans and the Chaldaeans of that area.[6] Sennacherib's records, therefore, testify to the fact that many Arabs bordering on the districts of Babylonia had resettled in several Babylonian cities. This proves that the Arabs positioned in northeastern Arabia served as a source of difficulty for the Assyrians, not those of the west or southwest.

Second, Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib, while referring back to his father's campaign against these Arabs, writes that the Arab king named Hazael had likewise submitted to him.[7] He places his own victory over these Arabs after his conquest of Bit-Dakkuri in Chaldaea, Babylonia.[8] He follows with the conquest of Bazu, a district located in a desert region of sand,[9] the submission of the king of the city of Iadi' in the Bazu district,[10] and the conquest of the land of Gambuli, which lay on the border of Elam.[11] Among these victories he also recalls the submission of several Median states.[12]

These lists associate the conquest of Adummatu in Arabia with the districts near Babylonia and the East, not the West. There is no evidence whatsoever that indicates that Sennacherib was anywhere near Syria-Judaea, let alone Egypt, when he invaded (or made a raid into) Arabia. In fact, when Sennacherib mentions his defeat of Telhunu and Hazael, he places it in conjunction with his war against the Babylonians and Elamites.[13] The context of the inscription itself points to the fact that Sennacherib's defeat of some of the Arabs was directly related to his eighth campaign and was part of his march against the regions of Babylonia. It is highly probable, therefore, that these Arabs lived in northeast or north central Arabia, in the desert south of the Euphrates river, to the west of Babylonia (see Map 3).

The advocates of a second invasion are forced to admit that their coupling of this thrust against some of the Arabs with a major campaign against Judah

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5 The Assyrians listed the Arabian lands separately from the Akkadian, Chaldaean and other Babylonian countries and separately from the Khatti-Arami (Phoenician-Syrian) and Trans-Jordan countries (Ammon, Moab, and Edom). The Assyrians, themselves, held Mesopotamia during the time of Sennacherib. This data places the Arab countries south of the Euphrates river, east of Syria and the Trans-Jordan, and west of the Babylonian countries. The sons of Ishmael, who formed the Arab tribes, are said by Josephus to have inhabited the country "extending from the Euphrates to the Red Sea and called it Nabatene; and it is these who conferred their names on the Arabian nation and its tribes in honour both of their own prowess and of the fame of Abraham" (Jos., *Antiq*., 1:12:4).

6 AS, pp. 24f, 1:18–41, pp. 50f, *l*. 22–30; pp. 53f, *l*. 34–52, pp. 56f, *l*. 6–15.

7 ARAB, 2, #518a, 536.

8 Ibid., 2, #517–518a.

9 Ibid., 2, #520, 537.

10 Ibid., 2, #520, 538.

11 Ibid., 2, #539.

12 Ibid., 2, #519, 542.

13 AS, pp. 89–93.

and Egypt is only inferred by an "allusion" and that it is "not conclusive."[14] The self-deception involved in this interpretation is revealed in the conclusion of Fullerton, who writes:

> It must be admitted that these casual monumental allusions are to an Arabian expedition, not to a Palestinian expedition, but it certainly cannot be considered "*kühne Phantasie*" to bring the two into connection.[15]

Yet, based solely upon the evidence, use of this Arab campaign of Sennacherib as support for a second invasion against Judah has no historical merit. There is no connection whatsoever between this event and a campaign against Palestine or Egypt. To make such a connection merely because it suits the purpose of a hypothesis is unsound. The hard fact is that Sennacherib's Arab campaign is associated with the Babylonian regions and not with Syria-Palestine. Rather than giving hope that there was a second campaign towards Egypt and the West, this record is but further confirmation that, after his humiliation in Judah during his third campaign, Sennacherib only involved himself with issues closer to home and in the East.

Herodotus

Herodotus, 2:141, is cited in support for the argument, mentioned above, associating the "Arab campaign" of Sennacherib with an Egyptian expedition.[16] In Herodotus' version, King Sennacherib is said to have moved against Egypt with a "great host of Arabians and Assyrians," also called a "host from Arabia."[17] It is reasoned, therefore, that if the attack on Palestine and Egypt was an outgrowth of the Arabian campaign such might explain Herodotus' unusual definition.[18]

First, there is no justification for the idea that because Sennacherib conquered two Arab cities that he would subsequently lead an army as king of the Arabs in an attack upon the Egyptian and Ethiopian empire. Sennacherib was king of Assyria and Babylonia, but he was never referred to as the king of Arabia.[19] Second, when Berosus, the Chaldaean historian, speaks of this war, he states that Sennacherib "made an expedition against all Asia and Egypt."[20] Nothing is said of Arabia.

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14 E.g. JTEH, p. 171.

15 BS, 63, p. 610.

16 BS, 63, pp. 610, 632f, n. 114; AUSS, 4, pp. 24f, n. 65; JTEH, p. 171.

17 Josephus remarks that Herodotus was in error by referring to Sennacherib as "king of the Arabs instead of king of the Assyrians" (Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4). His statement shows that he saw no connection with an Arab army. But Herodotus was speaking from a Greek and Egyptian definition of his own day. It was geographical not ethnic.

18 SIP, p. 25. This idea was first suggested by H. Winckler.

19 That Sennacherib was king of Babylon see CAW, p. 43. According to the Babylonian king-list A, Sennacherib ruled as king of Babylon for his first two years and his last eight years. Between these two times he had appointed Belibni to be king under him, and after Belibni he placed his own son, Assur-nadin-shumi, on the throne of Babylon. The latter was killed after a reign of six years (CAW, p. 43).

20 Quoted in Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4.

Third, this framing of the words of Herodotus and his sources shows no regard for the age in which Herodotus lived (fifth century B.C.E.). When seen from the eyes of a Greek or Egyptian contemporary of Herodotus, his statement about the Assyrian army was correct, regardless of any Arab campaign.

The regional name "Assyria," during the fifth century B.C.E. and after, included not only Assyria proper but Babylonia and Mesopotamia.[21] Herodotus himself labeled the entire region of Mesopotamia, Assyria east of the Tigris river, and the Babylonian region under the single designation "Assyria."[22] Mesopotamia, for example, was held by the Assyrians during Sennacherib's day, the city of Harran being a major Assyrian stronghold.[23] Pliny writes, "The whole of Mesopotamia once belonged to the Assyrians, and the population was scattered in villages, with the exception of Babylon and Nineveh," and refers to "the prefecture of Mesopotamia, which derives its origin from the Assyrians."[24]

In Herodotus' day, much of the land formerly possessed by the Assyrians (who properly held both sides of the Tigris river north of Babylonia) had been resettled by Arabs. On the east bank was the country of "Adiabene, which was previously called Assyria."[25] On the Mesopotamian side of the river lived the Arabs called Orroei, and next to them, in the interior, the Arabian tribes called the Eldamari and then the Salmani.[26] After the collapse of the Assyrian and then Babylonian empires, much of these territories were repopulated with Arabs (from whom a great number of the modern Arab tribes of Iraq descend today). What had previously been the land of the Assyrians was in Herodotus' day considered in the minds of many as Arab territory. As with numerous other civilizations, the names of the more recent populations have been anachronistically applied to earlier ones. Validating this connection, Herodotus speaks of the host from Arabia, which Sennacherib led, as the "Assyrian camp" at Pelusium.[27]

Sennacherib came against Judah and Egypt after re-establishing Assyrian control over Babylon in 702 B.C.E. It was quite appropriate, therefore, for the sources used by Herodotus to refer to Sennacherib as leader of the Arabs and Assyrians (i.e. Assyrians, Babylonians and Mesopotamians), and to call Sennacherib an Arab, since western Assyria was known in his day as an Arab country and Babylonia was still referred to as Assyria. Indeed, Babylonia

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21 Strabo, 16:1:1; Pliny, 6:30.

22 Herodotus, 1:95, 102, 106, 178, 184, 188f, 192–194, 4:87. Assyria represented the ninth Persian province, separate from the Armenian thirteenth province and separate from Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Phoenicia, and Cyprus, which make up the fifth province (Herodotus, 3:91–93, cf. 2: 8, 11, 12, 15, 19, 116, 159, 3:5–6, 7:60–81). The Arabians, as Strabo notes, properly held the region opposite the Euphrates river and the Assyrian country (16:1:1). That the Assyria of Herodotus also included Mesopotamia also see HH, 1, p. 122, n. 4; Godley, *Her*., ii, map of the Persian Empire located in the back of the volume.

23 From the time of King Sargon until the end of the Assyrian empire, Harran was an Assyrian capital city, protected like the city of Assur (e.g. ARAB, 2, #54, 79, 92, 99, 102, 104, 107, 117, 182, 913, 914, 983, 1008, 1180, 1182, 1183). Harran was the capital city of Assur-uballit, the last Assyrian king (ARAB., 2, #1180, 1182, 1183).

24 Pliny, 5:21, 6:30. Also see Amm. Mar., 23:22f.

25 Pliny, 5:13, 6:10, 17, 29, 31; Ptolemy, 6:1; Amm. Mar., 23:6:20–22.

26 Pliny, 6:30, also, 5:20, 6:9, 31; Strabo, 16:1:26f;

27 Herodotus, 2:141.

itself, from the days of Sennacherib, had been repopulated with various Arab tribes. These Arabs settled among the remaining Chaldaean and other native people still in that land. The words of Herodotus are merely a matter of fifth century B.C.E. definition and not proof of a second campaign.

Tribute to Nineveh

An indication of two campaigns is also believed found in the Assyrian annals of Sennacherib which mention Hezekiah's tribute.[28] In the documents concerned with the third campaign, those advocating two invasions charge that Hezekiah sent his tribute to Nineveh.[29] In Scriptures, meanwhile, Hezekiah is said to have sent his tribute to Sennacherib at Lachish.[30] The perceived difference is used to discredit the accuracy of the Biblical account.

This argument is a misrepresentation of these records. To begin with, 2 Kings, 18:14–16, only states that Hezekiah sent 300 talents of silver, along with all of the silver that was found in the house of Yahweh (i.e. the total of 800 talents of silver reported in the Assyrian account)[31] and 30 talents of gold to Sennacherib while the latter was at Lachish. It does not mention any other gifts. The Assyrian records, on the other hand, were much more concerned with itemizing the spoils. As a result, they gave a more complete catalogue.[32]

The point is that the Assyrian records do not say that all the presents were sent to Nineveh. It distinguishes between two types of gifts: hard currency and the gifts of servants, women and others kinds of treasures (couches of ivory, sandu-stones, jewels, etc.).[33] The gifts of people and other treasures are introduced with the statement, "In addition to the 30 talents of gold and the 800 talents of silver there were (etc.)."[34] These items are specifically said to have been brought "after me to Nineveh, my royal city."[35] The money, on the other hand, was personally delivered:

> To pay tribute and to accept (lit. do) servitude, he dispatched his messengers (to me).[36]

These words agree with Josephus, who states that Hezekiah sent the money to the Assyrian king, but "when the Assyrian received the money, he paid no regard to the agreement he had made."[37] Only the money was received while Sennacherib was at Lachish. The other treasures and the servants were sent directly to Assyria.

Fullerton, interestingly, confesses that the Assyrian record "is here admittedly obscure" and even offers a possible explanation that would solve the contradiction.[38] Yet, the Assyrian records are not obscure. The real issue is

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28 AS, p. 34, 3:41–49, p. 60, *ℓ.* 56–58, p. 70, *ℓ.* 31f.
29 BS, 63, p. 593.
30 2 Kings, 18:14–17.
31 See above n. 28.
32 See above n. 28; also see Chart F, pp. 137f.
33 Ibid.
34 AS, p. 34, 3:41, p. 60, *ℓ.* 56, p. 70, *ℓ.* 31.
35 AS, p. 34, 3:47f, p. 60, *ℓ.* 58, p. 70, *ℓ.* 32.
36 AS, p. 34, 3:48f, p. 60, *ℓ.* 58, p. 70, *ℓ.* 32.
37 Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:1(4).
38 BS, 63, p. 593, p. 627, n. 59.

whether or not Sennacherib ever claimed that the hard currency was sent to Nineveh. The simple fact is, he never did. Therefore, 2 Kings and the Assyrian records remain in harmony.

The Number of Assyrian Dead

Another issue used to discredit the account in Scriptures comes with the stated number of Assyrians killed by the plague at Jerusalem. In 2 Kings, 19:35, and Isaiah, 37:36, supported by Josephus and Berosus,[39] it is mentioned that 185,000 Assyrian soldiers died.[40] Josephus even notes that this number only represented "some" of the Assyrian army positioned at Jerusalem and that the rest were removed after the plague's destruction.[41] This figure is summarily dismissed as being far too excessive.[42] Once again a clear bias is shown against Scriptures.

The number of 185,000 men killed outside the city of Jerusalem is snubbed only because those disbelieving have their own personal concept of what is reasonable. Their own prejudice envisions a limited capacity for these ancient empires, picturing them as petty states incapable of manning more than a few thousand men in arms. Standing against this assumption is the ancient testimony of vast armies. King Xerxes of Persia, for example, put into the field 1,700,000 men when he invaded Greece in 480 B.C.E.[43] It took his army seven days and seven nights to cross the Hellespont.[44] Yet the Assyrian-Mesopotamian region, from which Sennacherib drew his army, held a far greater population than the one found at the time of the Persian empire.[45]

The Assyrian inscriptions, in fact, support the high figures found in Scriptures. For example, the invasion of Syria by Shalmaneser III reflects the large military capacity of the Assyrians. In Shalmaneser III's fourteenth campaign he mustered 120,000 men, crossed the Euphrates and defeated a revolt of the kings in Syria.[46] Shalmaneser III was not as powerful a king as Sennacherib and his invasion against Syria was far more limited in scope. Imagine how

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39 Josephus citing Berosus, Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4–5.

40 The B. Sanh., 95b, reports that there were 45,000 princes on chariots (i.e. sons of well-to-do families), 80,000 warriors in coat-of-mail, and 60,000 swordsmen of the front line and cavalrymen. The Baraitha teaches that the total army of Sennacherib consisted of 2,600,000 men less one *ribbo* (10,000?), i.e. 2,590,000 (B. Sanh., 95b). This figure undoubtedly represents the entire host brought with the Assyrian king, including wives, children, prostitutes, baggage men, etc., who accompanied and acted as support units for the army.

41 Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:2:1(24).

42 E.g. AUSS, 4, p. 28.

43 For the size of the army of Xerxes the Great see Herodotus, 7:60.

44 Ibid., 7:56.

45 The marked difference in population is strikingly portrayed with the resistance faced by the Assyrians while driving west. They fought numerous wars with their neighbors to the west during the ninth and eighth centuries. The Persian empire of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E., on the other hand, had no opposition in Mesopotamia and the Syrian-Judaean regions. The land once held by the nation of Israel, for example, had but a small population remaining, the Samaritans, who had been exiled from Persia and resettled into that land. Judah, which had remained desolate during the latter part of the Babylonian empire, had but a small number of Jews returned to its soil by the Persians. Indeed, the march of the Persian army to the west was faced with such limited populations that, passing through Mesopotamia and Syria until they reached Egypt, they met no opposition. Even Egypt was easily conquered. We shall have much more to say with regard to this issue in our forthcoming volumes entitled *The Sax*, which examine the great migrations coming out of the Middle East into Europe, beginning especially with the fall of the Assyrian empire.

46 ARAB, 1, #658f.

large an army it would be deemed as necessary to take on the Egyptian and Kushite empire rather than the petty Syrian states.

When the Egyptians and Ethiopians invaded western Asia they also brought with them huge armies. Shishak of Egypt, for example, came against Jerusalem "with 1,200 chariots, and with 60,000 horsemen; and there was no counting the people of who came with them out of Egypt, Lubim, Sukkim, and Kushim."[47] Josephus is even more specific, stating that besides the horsemen and chariots Shishak had "four hundred thousand foot-soldiers."[48] Not long after, Zerah the Kushite moved against Judah "with an army of a million and 300 chariots."[49] Josephus further defines these numbers as "900,000 foot-soldiers, and 100,000 horsemen and 300 chariots."[50] At the same time, King Asa of Judah opposed Zerah with 580,000 warriors.[51]

The size of Sennacherib's forces can also be judged. Years after the humiliation of his third campaign, Sennacherib went to war against the Babylonian regions (an event comparable to a war against Egypt). The Assyrian king claims to have destroyed 150,000 enemy warriors in a single battle at Halulê.[52] Yet, Assyria was defeated in this contest, which at best could be described as a draw.[53] The Assyrian losses, therefore, must have been comparable, if not greater, than that of their foes—and the wounded are not even considered. At the same time, no one would be audacious enough to believe that the Assyrian army was totally destroyed, for Sennacherib returned home with more than enough troops to enable him to claim victory.[54] An attack force of some 360,000 to 400,000 would be wholly in keeping with the ratio to their losses.

Large numbers of troops, therefore, were not uncommon. A major thrust against western Asia and Egypt would, by logistics alone, require an immense army. Further, it need not be assumed that all 185,000 men who died outside Jerusalem arrived at that city when Rabshakeh made his initial appearance before its walls. Undoubtedly, a large force of around 50,000 could have been sent to build the earth mounds at the various city gates to enforce the blockade of the city until others arrived. The greater army would have remained with Sennacherib until after the battle near Eltekeh, where he defeated a combined army of Egyptians and Ethiopians, described as "a countless host."[55] After his victory at Eltekeh, Sennacherib would have sent a large force in pursuit of the remaining Egyptian and Ethiopian troops. This pursuit would be followed up with an order to begin the siege at Pelusium. The control of Pelusium was necessary in order to close the door on the main highway out of Egypt. Sennacherib, meanwhile, took the last bastion of Palestim resistance away by conquering Ekron and the surrounding towns.[56]

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47 2 Chron., 12:3.
48 Jos., *Antiq*., 8:10:2.
49 2 Chron., 14:9.
50 Jos., *Antiq*., 8:12:1.
51 2 Chron., 14:8; Jos., *Antiq*., 8:12:1.
52 AS, pp. 91f, rev. *l*. 9–15.
53 ABC, p. 80, 3:13–18.
54 AS, pp. 15–17.
55 AS, p. 31, 2:80, p. 69, *l*. 24.
56 AS, p. 32, 3:6–14, p. 70, *l*. 25–27.

After the overthrow of Ekron, the Assyrian king would, by necessity, require a period of time to consolidate his conquest, rest his main army, and to reorganize and establish his full political control over the area. Three weeks or so would be a minimum to accomplish this phase. At the end of this period, the siege works at Pelusium would begin to reach a level that would facilitate an assault on the city. Sennacherib would have, at this moment, divided up his forces, sending a large number to the city of Jerusalem. These reinforcements would raise the total to above the 185,000 mentioned in Scriptures. At this point these men would begin the ground work for a siege (e.g. cutting trees for lumber, bringing in supplies and building siege engines, etc.).

Meanwhile, Sennacherib marched to Pelusium with the larger part of his army, where he joined forces with his advance troops and positioned himself to make an attack. This last detail is verified by Herodotus. He states that the Assyrian king came against Egypt with a "great host," which prompted the Egyptian king named Sethos to gather a ragtag army and march to Pelusium. At Pelusium, meanwhile, the Assyrians had by now spent "a great deal of time on the siege."[57] After the Egyptian units arrived at Pelusium, "Their enemies too came here," i.e. the main force under Sennacherib arrived. That night, with the earthworks having already been raised "against the walls on the point of attacking,"[58] the Assyrians were struck by a plague.[59]

With one calamity came word of another: King Tirhakah of Kush was advancing through the desert with a large army to make an attack. Upon hearing this news, Sennacherib retreated with what forces remained to him, still in hope of laying his hands on Hezekiah and the city of Jerusalem.[60] But, as Berosus states, "When Sennacherib returned to Jerusalem from his war with Egypt, he found the force under Rabshakeh in danger from a plague, for the deity had visited a pestilential sickness upon his army, and on the first night of the siege one hundred and eighty-five thousand men had perished with their commanders and officers."[61] He had no choice but to retreat in shame with what remained of his army to Nineveh.[62]

Since there were only two great cities on Sennacherib's agenda at this time, Pelusium and Jerusalem, it is a fair deduction that the king divided his forces between the two. For glory's sake, he would have personally led the assault on Pelusium. Besides, though Pelusium was less fortified, it was more important. It needed to be brought under control in order to close off any further Egyptian counterattacks. For this reason it had been prepared for assault first. Accordingly, it is fair to conclude that the army brought from Assyria was at least twice the size of that part of the army set against Jerusalem. A total of some 370,000 to 400,000 is very likely (a similar estimate to

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57 Jos., *Antiq*., 10:2:1(17).
58 Ibid.
59 Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:4; Herodotus, 2:141.
60 2 Kings, 19:9–13; Isa., 37:9–13; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:2:1(17)
61 Quoted in Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:4–5; cf. 2 Kings, 19:35; Isa., 37:36; 2 Chron., 32:21.
62 2 Kings, 19:36; Isa., 37:37; 2 Chron., 32:21; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:5.

that which can be applied to Sennacherib's Babylonian campaign, wherein he claims to have killed 150,000 enemy troops in a single losing contest).[63]

The Death of Sennacherib

To buttress their view, those holding to the two-invasion concept also point to the statement found in both 2 Kings, 19:36f, and Isaiah, 37:37f, which reports the following as taking place after the destruction of Sennacherib's army:

> And Sennacherib the king of Assyria departed and went, and returned and lived in Nineveh. And it was as he was bowing himself in the house of Nisroch his eloahi,[64] and Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons struck him with the sword and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And reigned Esarhaddon his son in his place.

This passage is interpreted to "imply" or give the "impression" that Sennacherib was murdered soon after returning to Nineveh,[65] an occurrence which took place on Tebeth (Dec./Jan.) 20, 681 B.C.E.[66] Unfortunately, this interpretation is self-serving. First, the statement does not give the length of time between Sennacherib's return from Judah and his death. Neither does it imply any. It only reports that Sennacherib went back to live in Nineveh and that, at some later unspecified point, he was murdered while worshiping in the temple of Nisroch.

Second, there would have been several years between the two events with either explanation: 20 years if he returned in 701 and 6 years if in 687 B.C.E., the last possible year in the two-invasion scenario. Neither construction accommodates the interpretation that Sennacherib was murdered immediately after his return nor does the Hebrew style of writing suggest one.[67] Even Siegfried Horn, a leading advocate for two invasions, was forced to admit that this argument was "not very strong, since the Biblical stories do not say how long Sennacherib 'dwelt at Nineveh' after his return from Palestine before he was murdered."[68]

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63 See above n. 52.

64 In Hebrew the generic word for a deity is "eloah," plural "eloahi," and collective noun "eloahim." Each term has a significance which is glossed over by the single English translation "God." Accordingly, we shall utilize a transliteration of the Hebrew for a clearer understanding of the original texts (see discussion in SNY, pp. 5–10).

65 AUSS, 4, pp. 26f; AHI, p. 303; BS, 63, p. 596.

66 AS, p. 161, 3:34.

67 Fullerton agrees that the Hebrew expression "and he dwelt in Nineveh" might in itself "allow the supposition that considerable time elapsed between the arrival of Sennacherib in his capital and his murder." But he then disallows it, interpreting that the point of the judgment against the Assyrian king for his invasion of Judah would in that case be largely lost (BS, 63, p. 628, n. 69). Yet nowhere in Scriptures does it claim that the death of Sennacherib was a judgment for his invasion of Judah. All that Isaiah prophesied was that the Assyrian king would not shoot an arrow at the city or enter into Jerusalem, and that he would return to his home by the road upon which he came (2 Kings, 19:32–34; Isa., 37:33–35). The statement of Sennacherib's death merely reports how the Assyrian king died. It is not meant to support any particular prophecy.

68 AUSS, 4, p. 27.

Horn felt that his own "impression" of the passages from Scriptures was that it did not allow that two decades had passed.[69] Yet a subjective impression is not a fact. Neither is it a basis for concluding two invasions. Reading the text for exactly what it has to offer, it is unreasonable to assume that it does not accommodate 20 years. It leaves this issue wide open.

The Spelling of Hezekiah

Another argument advanced to suggest a break in the text of 2 Kings, which would allow for the insertion of a second campaign against Judah, is the circumstance that in 2 Kings, 18:14–16, which deals with the tribute paid by Hezekiah, the name of Hezekiah is spelt חזקיה (*Ḥ-z-q-y-h*; Hezekiyah). In verses 17ff, meanwhile, it is rendered חזקיהו (*Ḥ-z-q-y-h-u*; Hezekiyahu). This variation in the spelling of Hezekiah's name, it is adjudged, reveals a later hand in the material.[70] It is then suggested that the story found in 2 Kings, 18:14–16, is the first invasion, while the verses beginning with 18:17 represent the second.

This construction holds a number of difficulties. To begin with, verse 13, which begins this history with the words, "In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah," also gives the king's name as חזקיהו (*Ḥ-z-q-y-h-u*), the same as verses 17ff. If verses 14–16 (which story is not contained within the two other versions found in Scriptures) is in fact the work of a later editor, then this detail would indicate that 14–16 were inserted between verses 13 and 17. Yet if this is true, then verses 17 and following are dated to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. It would disprove the second invasion hypothesis, for Hezekiah's fourteenth year is undeniably the same year that Sennacherib began his third campaign (702/701 B.C.E., spring reckoning)!

Further, the king's name is spelt חזקיהו (*Ḥ-z-q-y-h-u*) in the entire history of both Isaiah and 2 Chronicles, starting from the fourteenth year of Hezekiah on. Indeed, Isaiah's version goes from the introduction of the invasion of Judah in Hezekiah's fourteenth year (Isa., 36:1), which parallels 2 Kings, 18:13, directly to the history of Rabshakeh being sent from Lachish (Isa., 32:2), which parallels 2 Kings, 18:17 (see Chart F). The Aramaic texts of Targum Jonathan, on the other hand, uses חזקיה (*Ḥ-z-q-y-h*) throughout its translation of both 2 Kings and Isaiah.

The response to this dilemma by those advocating two invasions is to dismiss the evidence because, based upon their own reconstruction, 2 Kings, 18:13a, which mentions the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, is "incompatible with verses 17ff."[71] Yet it is only incompatible because of their own reconstruction, not because of the evidence. Leo Honor immediately recognized this confused thinking when he writes:

> Consequently, since v.13 does not meet either of the two criteria that have been used for distinguishing vv.14–16 from the rest of the account, the most natural inference to draw concerning v.13 is that it is derived from the same source as II K xviii 17ff. To do

69 Ibid.
70 E.g. BS, 63, pp. 621f, n. 16; SIP, pp. 37f; JTEH, p. 165.
71 BS, 63, pp. 621f, n. 16.

> so, however, makes untenable the position of those scholars who see an irreconcilable conflict between vv.14–16 and 17ff., and, as a result, conclude that the two can not refer to the same events, because 13b is in complete harmony with vv.14–16, and whatever conflict exists between vv.14–16 and 17ff. also exists between 13b and 17ff.[72]

In order to maintain their thesis, it is necessary for the advocates of two invasions to charge the authors of these books from Scriptures with borrowing verse 13a from another source as an introductory statement and then superimposing it upon 13b. They also conclude that the Isaiah recension, in turn, borrowed this introduction from 2 Kings.[73] But if this is true, would not the Isaiah recension also borrow vv.13bff? Yet, Isaiah does not even mention the section which is attributed to a so-called first invasion.

In actuality, their defense comes down to accusing the accounts in Scriptures with either falsely merging the histories of two invasions or of ignorance in the matter. In essence, it is argued, the versions found in Scriptures are mistakes, deceptions, half-truths, myths or outright lies. This attitude persists despite the fact that there is no evidence whatsoever that proves these versions incorrect. There is only disagreement when one sets Scriptures against the reconstruction of history based upon the personal preference for two invasions.

If, for the moment, we credit the ancient authors with knowing about that which they spoke—that their national annals and histories reflect what really happened—and if we allow that the intentions of the prophets and men of Yahweh were honorable and did not intend to deceive their readers, then three excellent reasons for the variant spelling of Hezekiah's name are available to us.

First, the name חזקיהו (*Ḥ-z-q-y-h-u*) means "strengthened of Yahu."[74] As we demonstrate in our text entitled *The Sacred Name* 𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄, the form יה (*Y-h*) is likewise spelt יהו (*Y-h-u*), hy being pronounced Yahu.[75] It is also spelt יו (*Y-u*) but pronounced Yahu.[76] Therefore, חזקיה (*Ḥ-z-q-y-h*) is but another form of חזקיהו (*Ḥ-z-q-y-h-u*). Since all three letters in the name יהו were Hebrew vowel-consonants, and, in Hebrew, vowels were for the most part left out of words, it is not uncommon to find the spelling of a person's name sometimes using the ו (*u*) and other times not.[77] Therefore, as Honor points out, it is possible to assume that "the spelling is interchangeable, and that it is purely an accidental circumstance that it is spelled one way in vv.14–16, and another in II K xviii 17–xx 19."[78] Indeed, ancient writers were never consistent in such matters.

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72 SIP, pp. 37f.

73 Ibid.

74 SEC, Heb. #2396; 2388–2392, plus 3050; DB, p. 246. The deity Yahu Yahweh, Isa., 12:2, 26:4.

75 SNY, pp. 99–114.

76 E.g. יוזכר (*Yahuzakar*), SEC, Heb. #3108; יוחא (*Yahukhah*), SEC, Heb. #3109; יוחנן (*Yahukhanan*), SEC, Heb. #3110, 3076; etc.

77 For example, in Jer., 40, we find the same person called both גדליה (*G-d-l-y-h*) and גדליהו (*G-d-l-y-h-u*); in Jer., 41, we find the same person called both נתניה (*N-th-n-y-h*) and נתניהו (*N-th-n-y-h-u*); in 1 Kings, 22, we find the same person called both צדקיה (*Z-d-q-y-h*) and צדקיהו (*Z-d-q-y-h-u*); in 2 Kings, 15, the same person is called both זכריה (*Z-k-r-y-h*) and זכריהו (*Z-k-r-y-h-u*); and so forth. Also see examples in SNY, p. 107.

78 SIP, p. 38.

Second, the absence of the ו (*u*) in the name Hezekiyahu in vv. 14–16, may have been quite by accident. A scribe might simply have left off the ו (*u*) ending unintentionally while copying the text, and this error has been carried on by later copyists.

Third, vv. 14–16 may in fact be the hand of the prophet Ezra, who composed 2 Kings. He might well of had in his possession extra data about this story from a second source—vv. 14–16, by the way, are fully corroborated by the Assyrian inscriptions.[79] Ezra then added this information to the history he acquired from the ancient Judahite annals. None of these possibilities remove the important contributions provided by these histories. The evidence of only one invasion is still fully established.

Conclusion

Our close examination of the supportive arguments and items of evidence used by the advocates of the two-invasion hypothesis to buttress their reconstruction proves that none of these contain any substance or carry any weight. Not one proves two invasions. They are merely interpretations based on the preconceived premise that there were two separate invasions by Sennacherib against Judah and that the records must be reworked in order to reflect this view. What these arguments do demonstrate is an unfair and unrealistic bias against Scriptures. When the clutter of these arguments has been cleared, we find that the case for two invasions rests upon one issue, and one issue alone: the popular identification of King Tirhakah of Kush, who came out against Sennacherib at the time the Assyrian army was decimated by a plague.

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79 Cf. AS, p. 34, 3:41–49, p. 60, *ℓ.* 56–60, p. 70, *ℓ.* 31f. Also see Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:1.

Chapter VIII

Tirhakah

Part VI of the Sabbath and Jubilee of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

Ultimately, the entire debate over whether there was one or two invasions against Judah by Sennacherib can be reduced to a single issue: the mentioning in Scriptures of a Kushite king named Tirhakah (Tarku, Taharqa, Tarqu, Terhak, Tirhak, etc.),[1] who led an expedition against Sennacherib at the time that the Assyrian army was destroyed by a plague at Jerusalem.[2]

Who was this "Tirhakah, the king of Kush" (i.e. Ethiopia, the country which was later called Nubia) who opposed Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E.? According to popular presumption, the Tirhakah who came out to fight against Sennacherib is to be identified with Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah,[3] the Kushite pharaoh of Egypt's Dynasty XXV.[4] Nefertem Tirhakah ruled Egypt from 691/690 to 666/665 B.C.E. (autumn reckoning). Upon this identification the entire scenario for the two-invasion hypothesis rests. For its advocates, since this Tirhakah did not rule in 701 B.C.E., a second invasion of Judah is deemed necessary. All other discussions arise merely as an outgrowth of this interpretation.

Opposed to the view that there was only one Tirhakah is the fact that all the available records left to us accommodate only one invasion of Judah by Sennacherib. Yet if the Tirhakah mentioned in the Scriptures was indeed Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah then a second invasion must be postulated and the evidence reorganized to explain his appearance in the story. And if there was a second invasion then the sabbath and Jubilee years in the days of Hezekiah must also, as a consequence, be radically different. It is paramount for our investigation, therefore, that we correctly identify the king of Kush from whom Sennacherib fled.

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1 The name Tirhakah—תִּרְהָקָה (*Tirhakah; Tirhaqah*) in Hebrew;  (*Taharqa*) in Ethiopian/Egyptian; תִּרְהָק (*Tirhak; Tirhaq*) in the Aramaic text of Targ. Jon.; Θαρακὰ (*Tharaka*) in the LXX; Θαρθάκ (*Tharthak*) in the Lucian text; Θαρσίκην (*Tharsikēn*) by Josephus—is variously transcribed and given. E.g., AHOE, 3, p. 294, and TK, 1, p. 14, *Taharqa*; HE, 6, p. 142, *Taherq or Taharqa*; EP, p. 450, *Taharḳa*; CAW, p. 81, *Taḥarqa*; etc. He is called *Tarḳu* by the Assyrians, and *Eterarchos, Tarakos, Tearkos*, and *Saracus* by the Greeks and Latins (CAH, 3, p. 279; HPM, p. 280; Manetho, frags. 66–68; Strabo, 15:1:6).

2 2 Kings, 19:9–36; Isa., 37:9–37; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:4–5.

3 Some writings have *Khu-Nefertem Re'* (TK, 1, p. 9, n. 2; TIP, p. 388, n. 834). Petrie gives *Nefer-Atmu-Khu-Ra* (AHOE, 3, p. 294). Breasted has *Nefertem-Khure* (ARE, 4, p. 452, #888; cf. TIP, p. 388). We shall follow the form "Khu-Re' Nefertem," used by Macadam (TK, 1, p. 5, et al), and for the sake of brevity the short form "Nefertem," recognizing that the issue of just how this name is reproduced is not yet settled.

4 George Smith summarizes the two-invasion premise when he writes, "It is his [the compiler of 2 Kings] preservation of the name of Tirhak\ah, who did not come to power over Egypt till 691, that enables us to separate the Second narrative and assign its different story to that second southern campaign of Sennacherib, which the Assyrian evidence gives us some ground to suppose took place between 691 and 689" (JTEH, pp. 173f). One can conversely conclude that if it had not been for the unwarranted identification of the Tirhakah of 2 Kings and Isaiah with Nefertem Tirhakah there would have been no basis for the two-invasion hypothesis.

One Tirhakah?

The basic error made by the proponents of the two-invasion hypothesis, and for that matter even by those advocating a single invasion, is their careless assumption that there was only one king from this general period named Tirhakah: the Ethiopian pharaoh of Egypt's Dynasty XXV known by the names Khu-Re' Nefertem and Tirhakah.[5]

To begin with, it is unjustified to write off the problem of King Tirhakah, as some do, by rationalizing that his mentioning in Scriptures was either a mistake or a later scribal addition.[6] The name is testified to by several excellent early sources: Isaiah and 2 Kings (supported by the LXX versions), Targum Jonathan (first century B.C.E.) and Josephus (first century C.E.).[7] We simply have no reason to doubt their authenticity. In each case Tirhakah is claimed to be the king of Kush and is an integral part of the story. Indeed, the fact that the authors of these texts would remember the names of Hezekiah's officials,[8] relatively minor players in the story, yet would be confused about the identity of a major player, the king of Kush, is very improbable.[9]

John Bright, an advocate of the two-invasion hypothesis, frames the argument by suggesting that we should regard the verses from 2 Kings, 18:17 to 19:37, "as late, legendary, and of minimal historical value, or must at the very least regard the mention of Tirhakah as an error." He then admits that if Tirhakah's name is removed from the equation (assuming the reference is to Nefertem Tirhakah) various one-invasion scenarios are plausible.[10]

Even those who conclude that there could only have been one campaign against Judah have carelessly accepted this identification. In most of these cases they merely reason that Israelite scribes anachronistically referred to Tirhakah as a king years before he actually came to power.[11] The historian Kenneth Kitchen removes the problem by making the Hebrew words *melek Kush* (the king of Kush) a "gloss."[12] Martin Noth, who also believes in only one invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, dismissed the difficulty by simply declaring that the mention of Tirhakah in Scriptures was a "mistake."[13]

A close examination of the ancient evidence, nevertheless, reveals that this popular identification of the Tirhakah who attacked Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E. is wrong. To cast this figure as Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt is not only unnecessary it is unwarranted. Ancient records show that in the early days of Sennacherib there lived another powerful monarch of Kush also

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5 Until now, this narrow assumption about the identity of Tirhakah seems amazingly universal, this author not having been able to find a single contrary instance. Examples from those adhering to two invasions are TK, 1, pp. 18ff, n. 30; CAW, p. 82; HE, 6, pp. 148f; BASOR, 130, pp. 4–9; CAH, 3, p. 74; AHI, p. 297f; BS, 63, pp. 610f; AUSS, 4, pp. 1–11; AATB, p. 21. Examples from those adhering to only one invasion are AHOE, 3, p. 296; HI, p. 268; AHJP, pp. 143f; NOT, p. 55, n. 3; AOT, pp. 268f; TIP, pp. 157–172. Examples from those uncommitted to either view are SIP, p. 51; LAP, pp. 177f.

6 As conclude Noth (HI, p. 268) and Tadmor (AHJP, p. 144); also see AHI, pp. 298–300.

7 2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9; LXX, 4 Kings, 19:9; LXX Isa., 37:9; Targ. Jon., *2 Kings*, 19:9, & *Isa*., 37:9; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:2:1.

8 Eliakim, Shebna and Joah, see 2 Kings, 18:18; Isa., 36:3; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:2.

9 See comments in AHI, pp. 298–300.

10 AHI, pp. 298, 300f.

11 E.g. AHOE, 3, p. 296; AHE, p. 552; AOT, p. 269; SIP, p. 34., n. 112, p. 51; TIP, pp. 158f.

12 TIP, pp. 158f.

13 HI, p. 268.

named Tirhakah. This earlier Tirhakah, for a short time, ruled a vast empire covering western Asia and northern Africa. He is found in the Ethiopian archives as Tsawi Tirhakah Warada Nagash.[14] As we shall prove in our next chapter, he is also known from ancient inscriptions as Snefer-Ra Piankhi.

The failure of historians during the last two centuries to recognize two different Tirhakahs was, in part, the result of the ongoing process to recover Egyptian chronology. In the days when the issue was first considered, the chronology of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt was sorely misdated. It was believed that Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt was a contemporary with the early years of Hezekiah.[15] Later on, as the Egyptian records became better known, the chronology of this dynasty was corrected to its proper place. It was then discovered that Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt could not possibly have ruled at so early a date. By the time this mistake had been rectified, the association of the Tirhakah of Scriptures with Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah was so deeply entrenched that no one questioned it.[16]

When records of another Tirhakah were unearthed (as we shall demonstrate in our next chapter), they were mistakenly grouped among those belonging to Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah; and, at the same time, they were discredited and ignored because they did not agree with the known history of that Egyptian monarch. If it had not been for the subtle bias against Scriptures—ingrained in modern day schools of historical study (with their tendency to discredit scriptural history)—the solution of a second and earlier Tirhakah, which is presented by these other records, would have become evident long ago. But the unwillingness to accept the correctness of the account found in Scriptures resulted in a blind spot with regard to the issue. The possibility had not been considered because it was already decided that the report from Scriptures was fabricated or heavily flawed.

Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah

Could Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt's Dynasty XXV have been in command of an Ethiopian army as a Kushite king at the time of Sennacherib's third campaign in 701 B.C.E.? Nefertem Tirhakah's reign is dated by an Apis stele. This stele states that an Apis was born in the 26th year of Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah and died in the 20th year, fourth month of the third season (twelfth month) of Psamtik (pharaoh of Dynasty XXVI). Its total life "makes 21 years, 2 months 7 days."[17] These figures show that one year intervened between the 26th year of Nefertem Tirhakah and the first year of Psamtik (i.e. Nefertem reigned 26 full years and at least part of year 27).[18]

Psamtik of Dynasty XXVI is known to have reigned a total of 54 years.[19]

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14 CBN, app. A, p. 266, iv, xiii. Rey transliterates the name as *Terhak* instead of *Tirhakah*.

15 Syncellus (died about 810 C.E.), for example, has Tirhakah of Egypt's D. XXV begin his reign seven years before the beginning of Hezekiah's reign (Syncellus, 2, pp. 208–211).

16 The reaction of those who continue to follow the evidence of only one invasion is to maintain that Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt was anachronistically referred to as a king. They assert that, at the time of Sennacherib's campaign against Judah, he was in reality only the general of Shabako's, or possibly of Shebitku's, army (for examples see above n. 11).

17 ARE, 4, #959–962: CAW, p. 81.

18 AUSS, 4, pp. 4f.

19 ARE, 4, #974–979; Manetho, frag. 68; EP, p. 451; cf. MDA, 15, pp. 208–212; ZAS, 92, pp. 38f.

He succeeded his father, Nekao, to the throne at Sais.[20] Nekao was appointed as a king in Lower Egypt by the Assyrian monarch Esarhaddon in the spring of the latter's tenth year (671 B.C.E.), after a victory over Nefertem Tirhakah.[21] Nekao continued to rule parts of Lower Egypt for the eight years previous to his son Psamtik (i.e. 672/671–665/664 B.C.E., autumn reckoning).[22] "Year 1" of Psamtik, therefore, would be 664/663 B.C.E., autumn reckoning, which is confirmed as well by other records.[23] Tirhakah's 26th year, as a result, was 666/665 B.C.E., the year prior to the last year of Nekao. Tirhakah's 26 year reign, accordingly, began in 691/690 B.C.E. (autumn reckoning).

Nefertem Tirhakah did not reign a full 27 years. The one intervening year (665/664 B.C.E., autumn reckoning) between the 26th of Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah and the first year of Psamtik was the year that Urdamane, the son of Shabako, obtained power.[24] He was driven back to Kush during the second invasion of Egypt by the Assyrian king Assurbanipal in 663 B.C.E.[25] At that time Psamtik, a loyalist to the Assyrians, was placed on the throne of his father, Nekao, king of Sais and Memphis—Nekao having been killed just before the Kushites retreated.[26]

There are two views towards calculating the age of Nefertem when he died. Inscriptions found at Kawa, dated to the sixth year of Nefertem Tirhakah, relate that, as a twenty year old youth, Nefertem Tirhakah was brought north from Nubia to Egypt by his brother, King Shebitku.[27] As he proceeded towards Egypt, the young man beheld a temple in Gempaten that had fallen into a ruinous state.[28] Nefertem Tirhakah then gives a statement which, by

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20 Manetho, frags. 68–69; Herodotus, 2:152.

21 ARAB, 2, #771, 774, 902–905, cf. #554–558, 580, 582–585, 710; ANET, pp. 302f, iv, p. 303, 2 (rev.).

22 Manetho, frags. 68–69. The name is variously spelled Necao, Neco, Necos, etc.

23 MDA, 15, pp. 208–212; ZAS, 92, pp. 38f.

24 ANET, p. 295.

25 That this year was 663 B.C.E. see EP, p. 349; CAH, 3, pp. 285, 288 & n. 1; TIP, p. 394.

26 That Nekao ruled Memphis and Sais see ANET, p. 294. Shabako murdered Nekao before he abandoned Egypt (Herodotus, 2:152). Herodotus adds that Shabako "fled" Egypt because of an oracle that he was only to rule that country for 50 years, which time was "now fulfilled," so he departed Egypt for Ethiopia "of his own accord" (Herodotus, 2:139). This statement implies that either Shabako left behind his son Urdamane, who shortly thereafter was defeated by the Assyrians, or that this was the Ethiopian explanation for their retreat (little resistance being offered to the Assyrians), cf. ANET, p. 295; ARAB, 2, #776ff. Herodotus also notes that it was the province of Sais that brought Psammethichus (Psamtik), the son of Nekao, back from Syria and placed him on their throne (Herodotus, 2:152). By this time all of Syria, as far south as Judah, Moab, and Edom, was once again under the complete control of the Assyrian empire in the person of King Esarhaddon (681/680–669/668 B.C.E., spring reckoning), see ARAB, 2, #690. In the Assyrian records Psamtik is called Tushamilk (ARAB, 2 #785; cf. EP, p. 353).

In the records of Assurbanipal's third campaign (which took place in the year 657 B.C.E., see JNES, 21, pp. 25–37), Psamtik is said to have revolted from the Assyrian king (ARAB, 2, #779–785). This evidence demonstrates that, when Psamtik was an Assyrian subject and when he achieved an Egyptian throne in 664/663 B.C.E., autumn reckoning, it was with Assyrian approval. At the same time, Psamtik should not be confused with another son of Nekao's called by the Assyrians "Nabushezibanni" (as some speculate, see CAH, 3, p. 286; EP, pp. 352f). He was placed on the throne of Athribis, Egypt during Assurbanipal's first campaign in 667 B.C.E. (ANET, p. 295). There is no evidence that the two are the same. But more important, if they had been the same person, Psamtik would have counted his reign from 668/667 and not from 664/663 B.C.E. Since he did not, and his reign is already counted as 54 years (664/663–611/610 B.C.E.), it seems better to conclude that Nabushezibanni was an older brother of Psamtik.

27 TK, 1, pp. 15f, 23–28. Also see App. A.

28 TK, 1, p. 15, *l.* 9–11.

the placement of a comma, can be translated and understood in one of two ways.[29] The first school of thought, led by M. F. Laming Macadam, renders this verse as follows:

> Horus Lofty-of-Diadems, he called to mind this temple, which he had beheld as a youth in the first year of his reign.

This translation is understood by Macadam and those following him to mean that the temple was seen by Nefertem when he was 20 years old and that this was also the first year of his reign.[30] According to Macadam's reading, Shebitku died in the sixth year of a joint reign with his brother Nefertem Tirhakah.[31] This means that Nefertem was twenty years old at the time he began his 26 years as pharaoh (i.e. in 691/690 B.C.E.). If this be true, Nefertem Tirhakah was born in 711/710 B.C.E. and would have died at the age of 46.[32] Accordingly, he would have only been about nine or ten years old in 701 B.C.E., an age hardly suitable for the leadership of a Kushite military expedition against a powerful Assyrian army.[33] It is also hard to believe that Sennacherib would have held much respect for such a youthful adversary.

The second view of this verse, held by Jean Leclant, Jean Yoyotte, Kenneth Kitchen and others,[34] reads:

> Horus Lofty-of-Diadems, he called to mind this temple, which he had beheld as a youth, in the first year of his reign.

This translation of the inscription is understood to mean that the temple that Nefertem saw as a youth was called to mind in the first year of Nefertem's reign. The northward journey from Nubia for Nefertem, as a result, took place sometime during the reign of Pharaoh Shebitku. The longest date known for the reign of Shebitku is found in Africanus' version of Manetho,

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29 TK, 1, p. 15, *l.* 12f; TIP, p. 166.

30 TK, 1, p. 17, n. 17, pp. 18–20, ns. 30, 31; BASOR, 130, pp. 8–9; ARI, pp. 297f.

31 TK, 1, pp. 18f, n. 30.

32 TK, 1, pp. 18–20, n. 30; BASOR, 130, pp. 8f. These writers would have Nefertem come to power in 690/689 B.C.E., placing his birth in 710/709 B.C.E. In our text we merely correct their error of leaving out the one year between Nefertem's 26th and Psamtik's first year (above pp. 87f).

33 An excellent example of the age required for an Egyptian or Kushite king to lead a military expedition comes with the history of Tuthmosis III. Tuthmosis III ascended to the throne of Egypt in the last year of his father Tuthmosis II, being but a newborn child. After Tuthmosis II suddenly died, the consort Queen, Hatshepsut, proclaimed herself ruler and guardian of the child-king. This event took place during the child's second year (CAH, 2, pt. 1, pp. 316f). As he was maturing, Tuthmosis III was under the domination of Queen Hatshepsut (ibid.). He was not eligible for sole rulership until his twenty-second regnal year (Ibid., p. 318). In that year Tuthmosis III led his first military expedition, directed towards the Asiatics (ARE, 2, p. 179). Since it is almost certain that, shortly after his birth, Tuthmusis III was placed on the throne of his seriously ill father, he would have been 21 or 22 years old during his first campaign.

34 BIFAO, 51, pp. 15–29; TIP, pp. 161–172. Gardiner also does not accept the six year coregency premise of Macadam for Shebitku and Nefertem Tirhakah (EP, pp. 345f, 450). Kitchen only gives Shebitku 13 years and ends his reign in 690 B.C.E. (TIP, p. 468). He, therefore, calculates the arrival of Tirhakah in Egypt in 701 B.C.E., in time for the war with Sennacherib (TIP, pp. 165–171). For a rebuttal to this view see AUSS, 4, pp. 1–11.

14 years.[35] Disregarding any co-regencies, and assuming Nefertem came north in the first year of Shebitku, the earliest that we could begin Shebitku's reign would be 705/704 B.C.E. Kitchen claims that Nefertem could have been twenty years of age by 701 B.C.E. and therefore old enough to lead a military expedition,[36] a pharaoh not being considered capable until he was at least twenty.[37]

Kitchen's understanding of the "Year 6" texts of Nefertem is better than Macadam's only in that the inscriptions do appear to mean that Tirhakah recalled the ruined temple in the first year of his reign. They do not mean that he was twenty years old at the time he took the throne. Yet Kitchen is certainly wrong by claiming that there was no co-regency of Tirhakah and Shebitku. This co-regency is demonstrated when we compare the words of the transmitters of Manetho with the data from the inscriptions (cf. Chart C). Also, the "Year 6" texts of Nefertem certainly allows for it.[38]

A co-regency is likewise inherent in Eusebius' comment about how Tirhakah came to rule Egypt as sole monarch, i.e. "*hic ab Ethiopia duxit exercitium atque Sebiconem occidit ipseque regnavit Egiptiorum*" (he led the army from Ethiopia to here and thus killed Shebitku and he himself ruled [over] Egypt).[39] These words do not fit the events of a youthful Nefertem Tirhakah being summoned by King Shebitku and then taken north to Egypt by King Shebitku's army so that Nefertem "might be there with him."[40] But it does relate to a later time, when Nefertem was in command of his own army (a right primarily retained by Egyptian and Kushite kings).

Accordingly, long ago, after examining this verse, Georg Unger presumed that Nefertem Tirhakah "already beforehand had possessed kingly power."[41] Whatever the dispute, Nefertem Tirhakah found it necessary to remove his brother from the throne, leaving himself as sole pharaoh. Since the death of Shebitku is mentioned in the stele dealing with Nefertem's sixth year, and since the records show that there was a co-regency, the death of Shebitku must have occurred sometime after Nefertem's first year but not later than his sixth. He is known to have returned to Kush to dedicate gifts at the temple

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35 Manetho, frag. 66.

36 TIP, pp. 161–172.

37 See above n. 33.

38 This three year co-regency, found on Nile Level text no. 33 (ARE, 4, #887; CAW, p. 82), is also accounted for by Manetho's transmitters, Eusebius and Africanus. Africanus, starting from Shebitku's accession year, when he was associated with Shabako on the throne of Egypt, gives Shebitku 14 years. Eusebius, meanwhile, starting from the first year of his sole reign as pharaoh (though not the only king of Egypt), gives Shebitku only 12 years (Manetho, frags. 66, 67). Kitchen's attempt to overthrow the reading of the Egyptian inscription from the Nile Level text is unconvincing (TIP, pp. 170f). His effort is to avoid any co-regency, thereby lengthening the chronology so that Tirhakah could be 20 years old in 701 B.C.E. Kitchen is forced to totally dismiss the information from Manetho (TIP, pp. 153f, n. 298, 448f, 452f). His reasons for holding to this view are based upon the fact that Manetho's figures do not directly agree with the numbers found on the monuments and inscriptions. This view is unreasonable. Manetho's numbers are based upon an entirely different way of calculating the Egyptian reigns and can only be judged in the light of complimenting known Egyptian inscriptions. Interestingly, the figures from Manetho, when compared with the inscriptions, actually confirm the fact that there was a co-regency for Shebitku and Nefertem Tirhakah (see Chart C).

39 CM, p. 251.

40 TK, 1, p. 28, ∞. 13f. And see App. A.

41 CM, p. 251.

of Gempaten every year from his second to eighth.[42] It must have been upon his return from one of these dedications in Kush that the plot to overthrow his brother was acted out.

Setting aside the issue of co-regency, there is no evidence at all that Nefertem came north from Nubia during Shebitku's early reign. Indeed, since the inscriptions of Nefertem Tirhakah suggest that this call to come to Egypt was intended to associate Nefertem on the throne,[43] it is much more likely that it occurred in the latter part of Shebitku's reign. Regardless, even if we did assume that Nefertem Tirhakah's inscriptions meant to say that he was brought to Egypt at the beginning of Shebitku's reign,[44] the logic of Kitchen and those following him is still flawed.

First, Bright is correct when he concludes that it is very unlikely, "that an untried youth of twenty who by his own statement had never before left his home in Nubia, would have been placed in command of an expeditionary force in Palestine" to oppose the mighty Assyrian military machine.[45]

Second, sidestepped is the issue of co-regencies (demonstrated by the transmitters of Manetho and evidence of at least a three year joint reign with Shabako in an inscription belonging to Shebitku).[46]

Third, this scenario passes off the term מלך כוש (*melek Kush*; the king of Kush), which is used for the Tirhakah found in Scriptures, as either a gloss or an anachronism. Scriptures, Targum Jonathan, and Josephus all make it clear that it was the king of Kush named Tirhakah that came out to oppose Sennacherib, not his *turtānu* or a prince who would later become king. This reinterpretation of the words from Scriptures is wholly unwarranted.

Fourth, Nefertem Tirhakah, as Gardiner points out, "was nothing loath to publicize his fortunes and his achievements."[47] Yet, in the various inscriptions proclaiming how he came to power and the wondrous things of his reign, not once does he mention a victorious campaign occurring against the Assyrian empire, either before or after his rule began in Egypt.[48] Indeed, nothing of such importance is even implied in his inscriptions recounting the events of his first six years as pharaoh (i.e. 691/690–686/686 B.C.E.),[49] a time which would encompass any possibility for the proposed second invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.

These facts demonstrate conclusively that there is no evidence, nor is there a possibility that Nefertem Tirhakah was the Tirhakah from whom Sennacherib fled in 701 B.C.E. This being the state of the problem, we must look elsewhere for the Tirhakah of Scriptures.

A Confederation of Kings

The next circumstance allowing for the existence of another Kushite king during Sennacherib's time named Tirhakah comes from the political system

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42 TK, 1, pp. 4–9.

43 TK, 1, p. 15, *l.* 8f, pp. 17f, ns. 17, 30; p. 28, *l.* 13f.

44 CAW, p. 82, also considers this possibility but concludes that, either way, it leaves Tirhakah too young to lead an expedition against the Assyrians.

45 AHI, p. 298, n. 9.

46 See above n. 38.

47 EP, p. 344.

48 See inscriptions in TK, 1, pp. 4–44; ARE, 4, #892–900, 918.

49 TK, 1, pp. 4–9, 14–16, 22–28; ARE, 4, #892–896.

generally used among these ancient Middle Eastern kingdoms. Evidence strongly demonstrates that Kush, like many other countries in the ancient Near East, was ruled by a confederation of kings. For example, Scriptures speak of a confederation of kings for the Assyrians, the Hittites, the Egyptians, and many others.[50] Sennacherib's own records tell of his defeat of some "kings of Muzri (Lower Egypt)"[51] and a "king of Meluḫḫa" ("Meluḫḫa" being the Assyrian designation for Upper Egypt)[52] during his third campaign in 701 B.C.E.[53] At this time, the Ethiopian king named Shabako (714/713-700/699 B.C.E.)[54] was ruling Egypt as pharaoh in conjunction with other local Egyptian dynasts.

Pliny notes that Ethiopia was anciently divided into 45 kingdoms.[55] Among these, the island of Meroe was in his day ruled by Queen Kandake, "a name that has passed on through a succession of queens for many years."[56] Diodorus points out that a good part of Ethiopia was composed of several elective monarchies—the heads of which were chosen out of their priests—and that all these princes made the laws of their respective realms the basis of their government.[57]

Ancient records also prove that more than one Kushite king ruled Egypt at the same time. Herodotus, for example, reports that in the reign of an Egyptian king named Anysis, "Egypt was invaded by Shabako, king of Ethiopia, and a great army of Ethiopians."[58] Shabako began Manetho's list of Ethiopian kings of Egypt represented by the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.[59]

When Herodotus referred to the invasion of Egypt by Shabako, it was only to Lower and Middle Egypt. Upper Egypt had already been under Kushite control for a number of years. Diodorus, for example, reports that it was under "Actisanes, the king of the Ethiopians," that "Egypt fell under the rule of the Ethiopians."[60] Diodorus then lists Shabako as a later Ethiopian monarch of Egypt.[61] Kashta, the father of Shabako, likewise, had previously ruled Thebes in Upper Egypt.[62] Before Kashta, the king of Kush named Usimare Piankhi (Miamun Piankhi) held sway over Egypt (Charts D & E). In some quarters, the real reading of the name Piankhi is believed to be "Py."[63]

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50 Listed as a confederation of kings are the kings of the Assyrians (2 Chron., 28:16, 30:6, 32:4), kings of the Hittites (1 Kings, 10:29; 2 Kings, 7:6; 2 Chron., 1:17), kings of the Egyptians (2 Kings, 7:6), kings of Babylon (2 Kings, 25:28), kings of Persia (Ezra, 9:9), kings of Arabia (1 Kings, 10:15; 2 Chron., 9:14), kings of Aram/Syria (2 Sam., 10:19; 1 Kings, 10:29; 2 Chron., 1:17, 28:23), kings of Zobah (1 Sam., 14:47), kings of the Emori (Josh., 2:10, 9:10, 10:6, 24:12), kings of the Kanaani (Josh., 5:1; Judges, 5:19), kings of the Midiani (Judges, 8:5, 12). Also see our discussion in our forthcoming book entitled *Old World Chronologies*.

51 A "king of Egypt" in some inscriptions (JTEH, p. 155).

52 That the Assyrians referred to Upper Egypt as Kush/Meluḫḫa see Chap. IX, pp. 108–110.

53 AS, p. 31, 2:78–80, p. 69, *ℓ.* 23–25.

54 For Shabako's dates see below p. 95.

55 Pliny, 6:35.

56 Pliny, 6:35. The Queen of Saba (Sheba) is likewise called Kandake (Kebra Nagast, 24). There is also a Queen Kandake of the first century C.E. mentioned in Acts, 8:27.

57 Diodorus, 3:5, 9; UH, 18, pp. 278–281.

58 Herodotus, 2:137.

59 Manetho, frags. 66–68; Diodorus, 1:65:1–8.

60 Diodorus, 1:60:2–3.

61 Diodorus, 1:65.

62 EP, p. 343; AHOE, 3, p. 280.

63 Edwards goes so far as to say that the name Py (Pye, Pi, etc.) was "formerly misread as Piankhy" (CAH, 3, pt. 1, p. 569). The belief being that the signs  with  for the Ethiopians represented the sound *pi* or *p* instead of *ankh*. The Egyptian (*Py*), therefore, becomes a variant of

Usimare Piankhi is called Piankhi I by modern day historians, though the ancient Ethiopian king list labels him Piankhi II. He made his royal residence at Napata in Nubia yet ruled Egypt from Thebes.[64] His chronological place is known from the monuments, which have him govern Egypt at the time when kings from Egypt's Dynasty XXIII held authority and during the time that Tefnakhte, a king of Dynasty XXIV, rose to power.[65] "Year 21" of Usimare Piankhi's rule over Upper Egypt was the first year of Tefnakhte (726/725 B.C.E.).[66] Tefnakhte governed Lower Egypt for eight years.[67] Meanwhile, after Shabako conquered Lower Egypt, he killed Bekenrinef (Bocchoris), the son of Tefnakhte, the last king of Dynasty XXIV.[68] We know from his records that "Year 2" of Shabako was the same as the sixth and last year of Bekenrinef (i.e. 713/712 B.C.E.).[69]

Usimare Piankhi's place is also upheld by the Ethiopian archives, which make him rule Kush before Aksumay Warada Tsahay, Kashta, and Shabako (Chart E).[70] Since it is known that Kashta followed Usimare Piankhi, partly as co-regent in Usimare's last years,[71] and that Shabako followed his father Kashta, the twenty-three year reign of Aksumay Warada Tsahay over Kush must have been as a co-regent with Usimare Piankhi and Kashta.

Usimare Piankhi's authority came as the result of intermarriage between the Egyptian and Nubian royal houses at the time that Egypt ruled Kush.[72]

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the Ethiopian  (*Piankhi*). Also see MDA, 24, pp. 58–62; MIO, 14, pp. 166–175; JEA, 54, pp. 165-172; ZAS, 98, pp. 16–32. But even Parker (ZAS, 93, pp. 111–114), the first to propose the idea and whom Edwards and others cite, only believes it is possible that Py is but a hypocoristic version of the name Piankhi and not a better reading. Parker does not allow that even this equation is proven. The translation of the Ethiopian king list by Rey refers to this name as Piyankihi (var. Piankhi, Py-ankhi, Wiyankihi, etc.), see CBN, p. 266, xliv, viii, xvii. In either case, this debate changes nothing as far as the history of those carrying this name. We shall, accordingly, continue with Piankhi until further evidence is forthcoming.

64 CAH, 3, pp. 271–273; AHOE, 3, pp. 268–277; AHE, pp. 539–546.

65 ARE, 4, #816–883.

66 TIP, pp. 139f, 142.

67 LR, 3, p. 409, v; EP, pp. 340, 449.

68 Manetho, frags. 66–67. That Bocchoris was the son of Tefnakhte (Technactis, Tnephachthus; etc.) see Plutarch, Isis, 8; Diodorus, 1:45:2; cf. EP, p. 449. Eusebius informs us that Dynasty XXIV, to which Bocchoris belonged, lasted 44 years (Manetho, frag. 65). The Old Chronicle points out that three kings ruled during these 44 years (Waddell, *Manetho*, app. iii, p. 229).

69 TIP, pp. 141f; CAH, 3, pt. 1, p. 575.

70 CBN, p. 266. The issue of just how many Piankhis there were is strongly contested among Egyptologists. Gauthier (LR, 4, pp. 2–4, 49–54, 59) postulates several while Reisner (ZAS, 66, pp. 94f) combines all the records under one king. Reisner's view is too extreme and discounts the evidence that there was a king who ruled prior to Kashta named Piankhi and another that was Kashta's own son. In this debate, Petrie is certainly correct in his arrangement, placing Usimare Piankhi first, then Kashta, and then Shabako and Snefer-Ra Piankhi (AHOE, 3, pp. 267–291). At least two Piankhis are also recognized by the CAH, 3, p. 760. Petrie's view is fully supported by the ancient Ethiopian archive list (CBN, p. 266, viii–xi). During Usimare Piankhi's 20th year, he came into conflict with the "great prince" Tefnakhte of D. XXIV (ARE, 4, #816–883; TIP, p. 146). Tefnakhte had just begun his reach for power at that time. This dynasty ended with the death of his son Bocchoris, killed at the hands of Shabako shortly after the latter came to power. Yet there are records that indicate that a king named Piankhi was not only ruling in Shabako's fifteenth year (CAH, 3, p. 277, n. 1) but that he was a contemporary in rulership with Shebitku (AHOE, 3, p. 287). This and other evidence, which we shall discuss at some length in our forthcoming text *Old World Chronologies*, proves that Usimare Piankhi is not the same as Snefer-Ra Piankhi, the son of Kashta.

71 AHOE, 3, p. 280; HE, 6, p. 122; and see below ns. 74, 78.

72 This intermarriage goes back at least to Dynasty XVIII. This union is demonstrated with the Queen of Saba (Sheba, Shaba), who lived in Solomon's day (see 1 Kings, 1–13; 2 Chron., 9:1–12).

Macadam, in fact, believes that the name Piankhi is suspiciously "Egyptian" and means "king."[73] It, no doubt, was adopted by the Ethiopian kings descended from the Egyptian ruling house. Kashta, meanwhile, was a true Kushite and had no known hereditary right to the Egyptian throne. This detail, when added to Aksumay's place after Piankhi in the Ethiopian list, indicates that Aksumay was the son of Usimare Piankhi.

It would have been during Aksumay's reign that the Ethiopian Kashta came to power, politically joining with the house of Usimare Piankhi. It therefore stands to reason that Aksumay is to be identified with the Kushite king Piankhi Alara, often simply called Alara.[74] Piankhi Alara carried the Piankhi family name, reflecting his descent from Usimare Piankhi. He was also the contemporary of the Kushite king Kashta.[75] These details place him exactly in the position of Aksumay of the Ethiopian list.

Another Piankhi, called Snefer-Ra Piankhi, was the son of Kashta.[76] He was the father of both Shebitku and Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah (Chart D).[77] Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah, the son of Snefer-Ra Piankhi, traced his female ancestors back to a sister of Piankhi Alara (i.e. the daughter of Usimare Piankhi), deeming her importance as contributing to the greatness of his rank and supporting his ascent to the throne.[78] Abar, the mother of Nefertem, was

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Saba was located in the district of Nubia called Meroe, an important Ethiopian capital city (Jos., *Antiq.*, 2:10:2). Josephus states that this Queen was the ruler of both Egypt and Kush (Jos., *Antiq.*, 8:6:2, 5–6). Solomon had also intermarried with the Egyptian royal house (1 Kings, 3:1,11:1; 2 Chron., 8:11). According to the Ethiopian Kebra Nagast (1–39), the Queen of Saba (who ruled both in Egypt and Kush) was the mother of Menelik, the son of Solomon, founder of the Dynasty of Menelik in Nubia from which the family of Piankhi is descended (cf. CBN, p. 266). The connection between Egypt and Nubia at the time of Dynasty XXV is also demonstrated by their cultural ties. Dunham and Macadam write, "Anyone seeking to explain the cultural inheritance of Napata and Meroë sees at once that almost all that was received came by way of Egypt" (JEA, 35, pp. 139f). The Theban influence in Napata, Nubia was everywhere present. Breasted writes, "Of the Egyptian origin of this state there is no doubt; nor can there be any doubt of its Theban character, although there may be some differences of opinion as to how this last fact is to be accounted for" (AHE, p. 539). In some ways the Nubian ruling house of Napata was more Egyptian than the Egyptians. The Kushite conquest of Egypt was an attempt to return that country to their ancient Egyptian gods and culture.

73 TK, 1, p. 123.

74 Those following Reisner and the one Piankhi hypothesis are bewildered by the mentioning of Piankhi Alara. He is clearly set in the generation of Kashta and before Snefer-Ra Piankhi, the son of Kashta (TK, 1, p. 127). They admit that there is good reason for supposing that Alara and Piankhi Alara are the same (TK, 1, p. 123; TIP, p. 149, n. 282). It is likewise acknowledged that he should be identified with a Piankhi (TK, 1, p. 127). Yet, since Alara was in the second generation before Tirhakah, the son of Snefer-Ra Piankhi, the son of Kashta, they cannot identify him with Snefer-Ra Piankhi (whom they falsely associate with Usimare Piankhi). All confusion passes once we realize that Piankhi Alara, the important ancestor of Tirhakah of Egypt, and upon whom Nefertem Tirhakah based his right to the throne, was the king called Aksumay Warada Tsahay in the Ethiopian list, and that Aksumay (Alara) was the son of Usimare Piankhi.

75 TK, 1, pp. 127f.

76 JEA, 35, p. 146, #61; AHOE, 3, pp. 278f, 290.

77 JEA, 35, p. 147, #69 & 74; EP, p. 450.

78 Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah places emphasis on the line of Piankhi Alara, stating, "For the 'mothers' of my mother were committed to him (Amon- Rēᶜ) by their brother, the Chieftain, the son of Rēᶜ, Alara" (TK, 1, pp. 16, 120–122), and that by this connection he was set up as king (TK, 1, p. 36). The plural mothers of my mother indicates that the female line of Nefertem Tirhakah descended from the family of Piankhi Alara (the son of Usimare Piankhi). Brother-sister marriages and adoptions were common place in these ruling houses of Egypt and Ethiopia and rights to the throne of Kush were often determined by the female line. It is, therefore, concluded that Nefertem's grandmother was the sister of Alara and the mothers were other sisters who adopted

also the daughter of Kashta and was the sister/wife of Snefer-Ra.[79] It is therefore apparent that Kashta married the sister of Piankhi Alara, the son of Usimare Piankhi.

Snefer-Ra Piankhi reigned Egypt jointly with both his brother Shabako and his own son Shebitku.[80] At least 30 plus an x number of years are recorded for him in an inscription from a fragmentary bandage found in western Thebes, indicating a long rule over Upper Egypt for this Kushite monarch.[81] Snefer-Ra would have chosen his name Piankhi after the family of his grandfather, Usimare Piankhi.

There is a record that Shabako, the son of Kashta, ruled 3 years jointly with Shebitku, the son of Snefer-Ra Piankhi.[82] A co-regency with Shebitku is also demonstrated by Manetho's transmitters.[83] Further, though only 15 years as pharaoh are found for Shabako on an Egyptian inscription,[84] Herodotus states that Shabako actually ruled a complete 50 years over Egypt. He adds that, before Shabako left that country, he killed King Nekao of Dynasty XXVI, the father of Psamtik (Psammethichus).[85]

This data from Herodotus makes Shabako reign from 714/713 to 665/664 B.C.E. (autumn reckoning), the beginning year being supported by the Assyrian records.[86] The year Shabako left Egypt (664/663 B.C.E., autumn reckoning) was the same year that his son, Urdamane, was driven out of Lower, Middle, and Upper Egypt by the Assyrians.[87] It was also the first year of Psamtik of Dynasty XXVI, who replaced Nekao as the Assyrian representative in parts of Lower Egypt. Shabako, therefore, reigned Upper and Lower Egypt in confederation with the king of Kush, Snefer-Ra Piankhi, and other Ethiopian pharaohs of Egypt: Shebitku, Nefertem Tirhakah, and Urdamane.

Abar, the mother of Tirhakah (also see TK, 1, pp. 119–130; TIP, p. 149, n. 282). Kashta is made to be the father of Abar, explained by his marriage to Alara's sister. We might also add that Alara's daughter, Tabiry, married Snefer-Ra Piankhi (JEA, 35, p. 147, #72). What apparently happened was, by a process of intermarriage and adoptions, the house of Piankhi and Kashta joined to form the political foundation of Kashta's family over Egypt and Kush.

79 JEA, 35, p. 141, #1.

80 CAH, 3, p. 277, n. 1; AHOE, 3, p. 287.

81 TIP, p. 152 and n. 292.

82 ARE, 4, #887. Shebitku was the son of Snefer-Ra Piankhi see JEA, 35, p. 147, #69; EP, p. 450.

83 Manetho, frags. 66, 67; Eusebius, *Inter. Arm.* , p. 10.

84 A statue dated to day 11, 10th month, Year 15; CAH, 3, p. 277, n. 1; EP, p. 450; TIP, pp. 153f.

85 Herodotus, 2:139, 152.

86 The records of King Sargon of Assyria state that during his fifth *palū* (campaign) he received twelve horses as a present from "Silkanni (Osorkon), king of Muzri," i.e. from the king of Lower Egypt. This fifth campaign occurred in 716 B.C.E. (JCS, 12, pp. 77f). The next year, his seventh (715 B.C.E.), Sargon reports that he received tribute from "Pir'u (Pharaoh), king of Muzri" (ARAB, 2, #18, 55). Pir'u means "Pharaoh" (CAH, 3, p. 275; TIP, p. 143), king of Muzri (Lower Egypt in Assyrian terms). He undoubtedly must be identified with Bekenrinef (Bocchoris) of D. XXIV (718/717–713/712 B.C.E.). The connection of these kings with only Muzri shows that they ruled no further south than Memphis. The Kushite kings of Upper Egypt, therefore, had not yet captured northern Egypt. Then, in 712 B.C.E. (JCS, 12, pp. 78–84, 92f), Sargon sent troops against Iamani, the king of Ashdod. Iamani fled to Muzri but was subsequently returned to the Assyrians by a new king of Egypt, "the king of Meluḫḫa (Upper Egypt)" (ARAB, 2, #62f, 194f), the title applied by the Assyrians to the Ethiopian monarchs who ruled Egypt. Muzri, the Assyrian wrote, "now belongs to Meluḫḫa" (TIP, p. 143). This evidence proves that between 715 and 712 B.C.E. Lower Egypt fell into the hands of the Ethiopian kings of Upper Egypt (TIP, pp. 143f). The information provided by Herodotus, that Shabako began to rule Lower Egypt in 714/713 B.C.E., autumn reckoning, is thereby demonstrably proven to be quite accurate.

87 See above ns. 24, 25.

Manetho also listed an Ethiopian ruler of Sais at the beginning of Dynasty XXVI named "Ammeris the Ethiopian."[88] The dates for Ammeris are 697/696 to 686/685 B.C.E.[89] These dates make Ammeris contemporary with Shebitku, Nefertem Tirhakah, and Shabako. Nefertem, the son of Snefer-Ra Piankhi,[90] also had a short co-regency with Ta-Nuat-Amun, the son of Shebitku, at the beginning of the latter's eight year reign.[91] This means that the Egyptian Psamtik and the Kushite Ta-Nuat-Amun were, likewise, contemporaries in rulership.

Meanwhile, according to the Assyrian inscriptions, Urdamane, the son of Shabako, succeeded Nefertem Tirhakah.[92] Because Ta-Nuat-Amun and Urdamane ruled during the same period, today's historians have often confused Urdamane with his nephew Ta-Nuat-Amun[93]—this despite the fact that the records specifically give them different fathers and the Ethiopian archives list them separately (Chart E), one ruling Kush immediately after the other.[94]

Just as important, even though Snefer-Ra Piankhi, the father of Shebitku and Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt's Dynasty XXV, is known to have ruled both in Kush and Egypt,[95] neither Manetho's dynasty list nor the ancient Ethiopian king list mention him under these names. Instead, after Kashta the Ethiopian list gives Shabako (the son of Kashta), then Queen Nicauta Kandake, and then a king named Tsawi Terhak (Tirhakah) Warada Nagash,[96] which, as we shall see, is not the same as Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah, the son of Snefer-Ra Piankhi. We shall have more to say about the identity of Snefer-Ra Piankhi in our next chapter.

A comparison of these various records demonstrates that for Egypt, during the period of Ethiopian domination, emphasis was stressed in Manetho's Dynasty XXV on only part of Kashta's family: Shabako, Shebitku, and (Nefertem)

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88 Manetho, frag. 69. One must agree with Kitchen that there is no merit whatsoever in Rowton's speculation that Ammeris is Ta-Nuat-Amun (TIP, p. 145, n. 259). This speculation does not match any known name for Ta-Nuat-Amun and it is placed by Manetho in the wrong dynasty and at the wrong date for any possible connection.

89 Manetho, frag. 69 (Eusebius) gives two sets of figures: 12 and 18. The version from Africanus does not even mention Ammeris (Manetho, frag. 68). Africanus left him out because Ammeris was contemporary with both Dynasty XXV and the first rulers of Dynasty XXVI.

90 JEA, 35, p. 147, #74; EP, p. 450.

91 ARE, 4, #920; HE, 6, p. 158. For eight years of reign see EP, p. 349; TIP, p. 172, n. 382.

92 ANET, p. 295 (ii). Urdamane is called both the "son of Shabako" and "son of his (Tirhakah's) sister (ANET, p. 295; ARAB, 2, #845, 906). The term "sister" in ancient Semitic understanding had a wide latitude. Abraham, for example, referred to his niece/wife as his sister (Gen., 12:11–19, 20:1–12; cf. Gen., 11:27–31 and Jos., *Antiq*., 1:6:5). Abraham calls his nephew Lot his brother (Gen., 13:8–11, cf. 11:27–30). Isaak similarly calls his cousin/wife, Rebekkah, his sister (Gen., 26:1–11, cf. 24:15). In fact, the word translated from the Assyrian as sister has as its usual meaning "lady" (HE, 6, p. 166, n. 2). In the above instance, it may refer to Tirhakah's aunt, adopted sister, or sister-in-law; or it may mean that Shabako married his niece (ARE, 4, p. 468, n. a).

93 Because of the association of these two kings, many have merged them by simply translating Urdamane as Tandamane (e.g. ARAB, 2, #775–777, 845, 908, 944, 1117; CAH, 3, p. 115, 284). Budge immediately recognized the problem and admitted that it seems "impossible that the Assyrian name Urdamanie could represent the Egyptian Tanut-Amen" (HE, 6, p. 165). Rather than reason that there were two different Ethiopian kings ruling Egypt at this time, he tried to explain the discrepancy as an error in transliteration of the Assyrian characters (ibid., pp. 165f).

94 Urdamane was the son of Shabako (above n. 92). Ta-Nuat-Amun was the son of Shebitku (JEA, 35, p. 147, #76; EP, p. 450). In the Royal Ethiopian List they are catalogued as Erda-Amen and (Ta)-Nuat-Meawn (CBN, p. 266). Their reigns over Ethiopia were Urdamane 6 years (664/663–659/658 B.C.E.) and Ta-Nuat-Amun 4 years (658/657–655/654 B.C.E.), autumn reckoning.

95 LR, 4, pp. 50f; TIP, p. 152.

96 CBN, p. 266, x–xiii.

Tirhakah.[97] In Egypt, as we have said, an inscription shows that Shabako, the son of Kashta, governed as pharaoh for only 15 years, though he ruled for a total of 50 years as king. He apparently intermarried with an established royal Egyptian family to secure his claim to the throne. After these 15 years as pharaoh, Shabako turned direct power over to the descendants of Snefer-Ra Piankhi, who had legal rights to the Egyptian throne from Usimare Piankhi's family. Shebitku married Shabako's daughter to seal their alliance.[98]

Therefore, except for Shabako, Dynasty XXV of Egypt, which ruled in conjunction with the first part of the native Dynasty XXVI, represented members of the royal Kushite ruling house who were also descended by blood from an Egyptian royal family. They were sent to Egypt to govern that province. Though these two brothers were descended from Kashta, their Egyptian bloodline was certainly seen as important. Shabako was mentioned before them because it was he who seized Lower Egypt and established himself as an active pharaoh of the Delta (not just in name). The question naturally arises from this circumstance, "Why did Shabako submit his own authority to that of the sons of Snefer-Ra Piankhi?" The answer shall be forthcoming towards the end of our next chapter.

In Kush, meanwhile, other important members of the royal Kushite family continued to rule. In the period just before and during Dynasty XXV, except for Shabako, the Ethiopian king list differs from Manetho's list of Ethiopian kings of Egypt by reporting that in Kush ruled Aksumay Warada Tsahay (Alara), Kashta (the father of Shabako and Snefer-Ra Piankhi), and Queen Nicauta Kandake (Charts D & E). Also listed as following these is the mysterious king named Tsawi Tirhakah Warada Nagash.[99] These kings formed the confederation of kings from Kush.

The Issue of Name

To disregard the fact that there would have been more than one king from Kush with the same name is short-sighted. It fails to consider the examples of other Near Eastern kingdoms. For example, among others, there were several kings of Assyria named Shalmaneser, and Tiglath-pilneser, and Adad-nirari.[100] Likewise, there were several pharaohs of Egypt who used the name Ramesses, and Tuthmosis, and Amenophis, and Soshenk.[101]

Even among the two nearby Israelite nations, Israel and Judah, we have the example of two contemporary kings, both named Yahuram, ruling at the same time, one over each country.[102] Later, the same thing occurred in Israel and Judah with two kings named Yahuash.[103] In ancient Syria there were several

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97 Manetho, frags. 66–67.

98 That Shebitku married Shabako's daughter explains the statement by Manetho that Shebitku was the son (i.e. son-in-law) of Shabako (Manetho, frags. 66–67).

99 CBN, p. 266, ix–xiii.

100 There were at least five Shalmaneser, three Tiglathpilneser, five Shamshi-Adad, three Adad-nirari, two Assur-uballit, two Assur-dan, and so on (ARAB, pp. 439–442).

101 For example, there were at least two Ramesses in D. XIX and eleven in the so-called D. XX (EP, pp. 445, 446). The book of Sothis lists a D. XVI with six Ramesses (Waddell, *Manetho*, p. 237). There were at least three Tuthmosis and four Amenophis in D. XVIII (EP, p. 443), and four Soshenk in the so-called D. XXII.

102 2 Kings, 8:16–25. Jehoram in English.

103 2 Kings, 13:1–13; 2 Chron., 25:17–25. Joash and Jehoash in English.

generations of kings named Ben-Hadad (Adados, Hadad, etc.).[104] In Egypt the line of Ptolemies was famous while in Syria there ruled the Seleucids.[105] In Ethiopia, meanwhile, where Egyptian custom was followed, there are the examples of several kings named Piankhi, and Atserk, and Warada and several queens named Kandake.[106]

Further, ancient Egyptian and Ethiopian kings, as was the case with most other Near Eastern monarchs, held several throne names: the Egyptians, to demonstrate, had a Hawk name, a Horus name, a Son of Ra name, a Reed and Hornet name, and so forth.[107] With so many throne names, it should be expected that similar names would be common. Why, then, is it assumed by almost everyone that there was only one king named Tirhakah?[108]

Conclusion

To draw the conclusion that the Tirhakah of Scriptures is the same as Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt's Dynasty XXV, based upon no other data than their similarity of name and despite the fact that Nefertem Tirhakah did not even reign at the time of Sennacherib's third campaign, makes no sense. Then, from this one Tirhakah premise, to deny the authenticity of Scriptures and postulate two different invasions against Judah lacks reason.

This much the advocates of the two-invasion scenario have determined correctly. Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah, pharaoh of Egypt, could not have opposed Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E. as the king of Kush. Their mistake is with the failure to ask whether or not there was another Tirhakah who could have been ruling Kush in Sennacherib's early days. Sidestepped is the fact that Kush was ruled by a confederation of kings. Selectively forgotten is the reality that royal names were commonly shared by more than one king in both Egypt and Kush. A closer look at the ancient evidence will reveal that there did exist in 701 B.C.E. another king of Kush named Tirhakah.

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104 That the line of Ben-Hadad (the son of Hadad) was known by that family name see Jos., *Antiq*., 7:5:2, and cf. 8:14:1, 9:8:7, with 1 Kings, 20:1ff, 2 Kings, 13:24f.

105 In the Seleucid Dynasty of Syria there were at least six kings named Seleucus and thirteen kings named Antiochus (PHP, pp. 270f). There were at least 11 kings named Ptolemy in the Ptolemaic Dynasty of Egypt (Eusebius, *Chron*., 1, pp. 169ff; app. I, p. 15).

106 Gauthier (LR, 4, pp. 2–59) determined four or five kings named Piankhi, while Petrie (AHOE, 3, pp. 267–277, 290f) understood at least two and possibly as many as seven. The Ethiopian list reports at least four Piankhi in the early Middle Kushite Dynasties, along with two Kashta, two Warada, five Queen Kandake, and six Atserk (CBN, pp. 266f). Makeda, the Queen of Saba, was also known as Kandake (Kebra Nagast, 34). Also see above ns. 70, 74, 78.

107 HP, pp. 61–77. We should not forget that the Kushite kings were fully Egyptianized (see above n. 72) and followed Egyptian custom in the use of several throne names.

108 John C. Laughlin does admit to the possibility that "another pharaoh may have been involved in the 701 siege" (MDB, p. 680).

CHART C

Kushite Rulers of Egypt's Dynasties 25 & 26

	Source	Years	B.C.E. (Autumn Reckoning)
Shabako	H	50	714 / 713–665 / 664
	I	15	714 / 713–700 / 699
	E, EA	12	712 / 711–701 / 700
	EI	10	710 / 709–701 / 700
	A	8	710 / 709–703 / 702
Snefer-Ra Piankhi (Tsawi Tirhakah)	I	3(8)	702 / 701–665 / 664
Shebitku	I	3	702 / 701–700 / 699
	E, EA, EI	12	700 / 699–689 / 688
	A	14	702 / 701–689 / 688
Tirhakah (Khu-Re' Nefertem)	I	26	691 / 690–666 / 665
	E, EA, EI	20	688 / 687–669 / 668
	A	18	688 / 687–671 / 670
Ammeris	E	12	697 / 696–686 / 685
	EA	18	703 / 702–686 / 685
Urdamane	I	2	665 / 664–664 / 663
Ta-Nuat-Amun	I	8	665 / 664–658 / 657

Early Dynasty 26, Native Kings of Sais

Stephinates	E, EA, EI, A	7	685 / 684–679 / 678
Nechepsos	E, EA, EI, A	6	678 / 677–673 / 672
Nekao (Necao)	E, EA, EI, A	8	672 / 671–665 / 664
Psamtik (Psammethichus)	I, A, H	54	664 / 663–611 / 610

I = Inscriptions (highest date found or indicated)
E = Eusebius
EA = Eusebius Armenian
EI = Eusebius Interpretem Armenum
A = Africanus
H = Herodotus

CHART D

The Royal Family of Kush

(Italics indicate a female.)

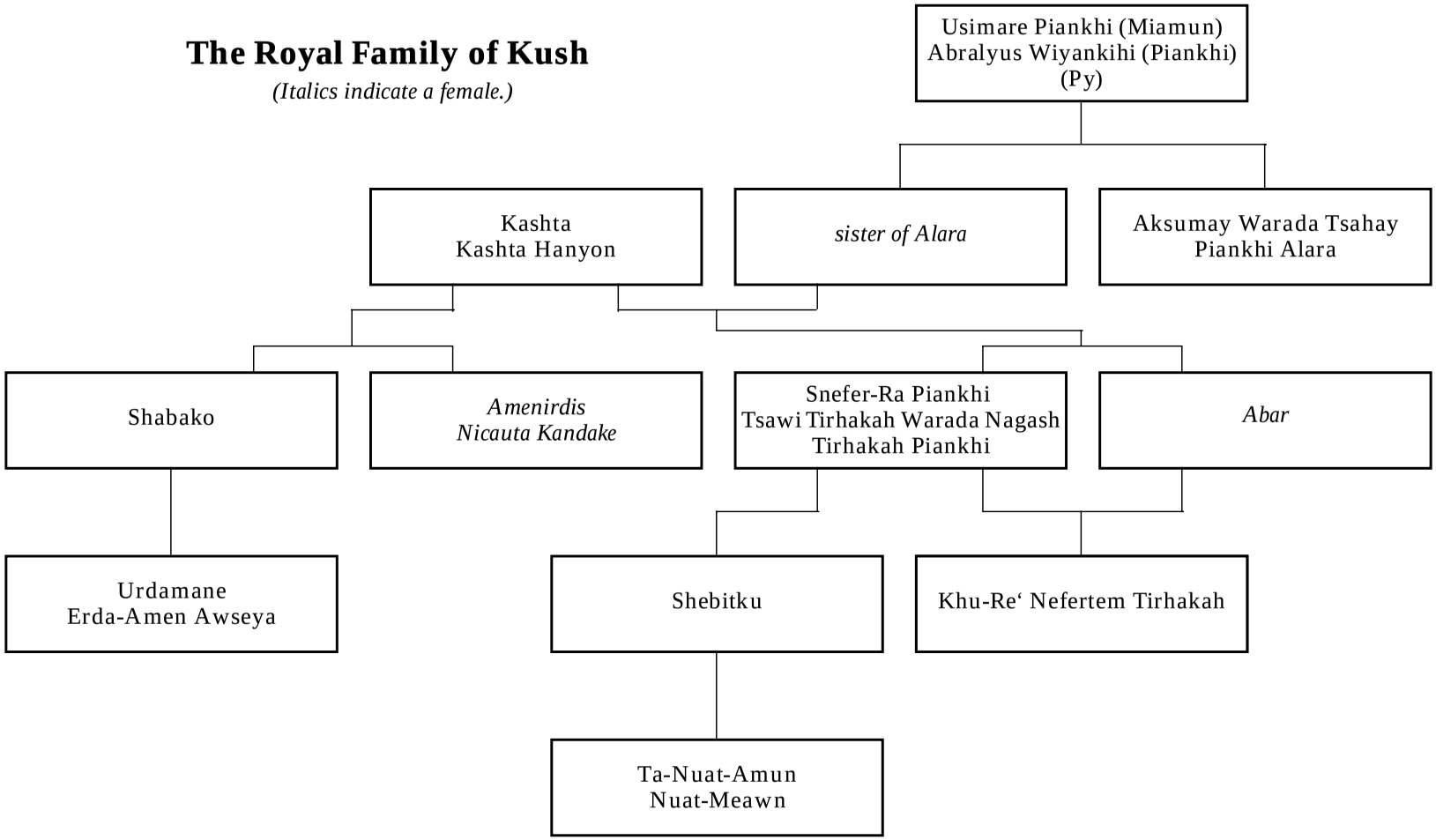

CHART E

The Ethiopian King List
Dynasty of Menelik
(Makeda to Nastossanan)

(Transliterations used in CBN, p. 266)	**Reign**	**Dates B.C.E.** *(Autumn Reckoning)*
Makeda (the Queen of Saba)[1]	31	952 / 951–922 / 921
Menelik (the son of Solomon)[2]	25	921 / 920–897 / 896
Hanyon	1	896 / 895
Sera I (Zerah)[3]	26	895 / 894–870 / 869
Amen Hotep Zagdur	31	869 / 868–839 / 838
Aksumay Ramissu	20	838 / 837–819 / 818
Awseyo Sera II	38	818 / 817–781 / 780
Tawasya	21	780 / 779–760 / 759
Abralyus Wiyankihi [Piankhi] II (Usi-mare Piankhi)	32	759 / 758–728 / 727
Aksumay Warada Tsahay (Piankhi Alara)	23	746 / 745–724 / 723
Kashta Hanyon	13	727 / 726–715 / 714
Sabaka II (Shabako)	12	714 / 713–703 / 702
Nicauta Kandake (Queen Amenirdis)	10	723 / 722–714 / 713
Tsawi Terhak Warada Nagash (Tir-hakah Piankhi)	49	713 / 712–665 / 664
Erda-Amen Awseya (Urdamane)	6	664 / 663–659 / 658
Gasiyo Eskikatir	– days –	658 / 657
Nuat-Meawn (Ta-Nuat-Amun)	4	658 / 657–655 / 654
Tomadyon Piankihi III	12	654 / 653–643 / 642
Amen Asero	16	642 / 642–627 / 626
Piankihi IV	34	626 / 625–593 / 592
Zaware Nebret Aspurta (Aspelta)	41	592 / 591–552 / 551
Saifay Harsiataw II	12	551 / 550–540 / 539
Ramhay Nastossanan[4]	14	539 / 538–526 / 525
Handu Wuha Abra	11	525 / 524–515 / 514

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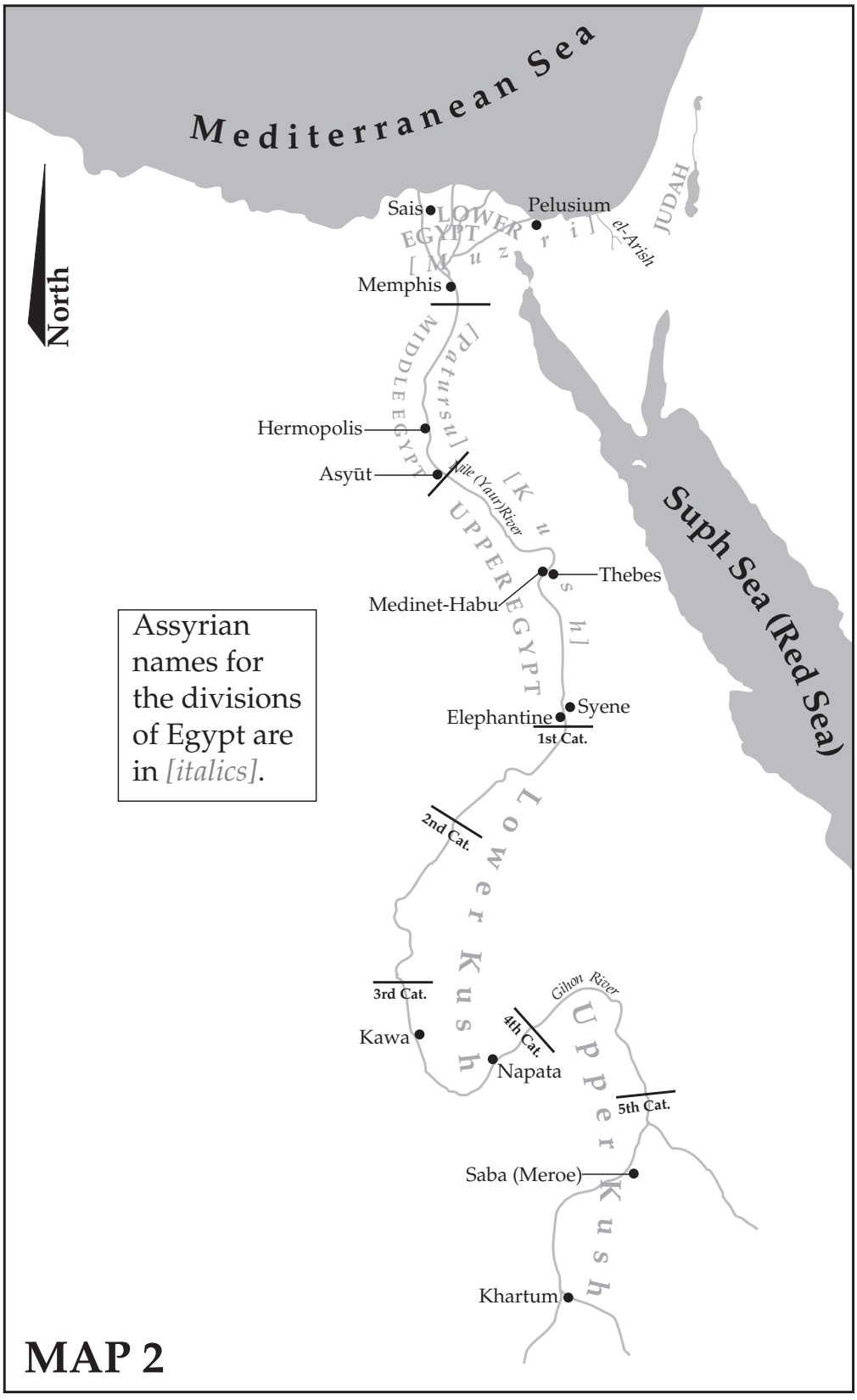
1 That Makeda is the Queen of Saba of 1 Kings, 10:1-13; 2 Chron., 9:1-12; the Queen of Egypt and Ethiopia of Jos., *Antiq*., 8:6:2,5-6; and cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Cant. Hom.* 7; see Kebra Nagast, 21-32, which makes her the Queen of Ethiopia.

2 That Menelik, the son of Makeda, was the son of Solomon see Kebra Nagast, 21-50.

3 This Zerah was the king of the Kushites who invaded Judah during the reign of Asa (2 Chron., 14:9; Jos., *Antiq*., 8:12:1, where Zerah is specifically called "king of the Ethiopians").

4 Nastossanan was a contemporary of Cambyses, king of Persia, when the latter invaded Egypt and Ethiopia in 525 B.C.E. (see App. B).

EGYPT AND KUSH: 701 B.C.E.



Chapter IX

The Identity of Tirhakah

Part VII of the Sabbath and Jubilee of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

The Tirhakah of Scriptures was not Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah of Dynasty XXV of Egypt. It is true that both were Ethiopians, and that the Ethiopians controlled Egypt during the latter half of the eighth and early part of the seventh centuries B.C.E. But here the similarity ends. Historians have simply ignored the fact that Kush was ruled by a confederation of kings and that two of these kings from the same general period both carried the name Tirhakah. A close examination and analysis of the relevant ancient records reveals the existence of two Kushite kings named Tirhakah—Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah and Tsawi Tirhakah Warada Nagash—one a pharaoh of Egypt and the other a king of Kush. Evidence will also show that Tsawi Tirhakah is better known under the name Snefer-Ra Piankhi.

Tsawi Tirhakah

We begin to uncover the identity of the king named Tirhakah, the contemporary with the third campaign of King Sennacherib of Assyria in 701 B.C.E., with the following details:

First, the king list from the Ethiopian archives reveals that there was a monarch named Tsawi Tirhakah Warada Nagash who ruled Kush for 49 years.[1] Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah, on the other hand, ruled Egypt as pharaoh for only 26 full years.[2] Regardless of whether we read the evidence, as Macadam does, to indicate that Nefertem Tirhakah was born around 711/710 B.C.E.,[3] or use the longer chronology of Kitchen,[4] making Nefertem 20 years old before 701 B.C.E., there is a substantial difference in the reigns of these two kings. Tsawi Tirhakah reigned over Kush 23 years longer than Nefertem Tirhakah ruled Egypt.

Second, by comparing the Ethiopian king list with other historical records, we have the dates for Tsawi Tirhakah. These records show that he reigned from 713/712 to 665/664 B.C.E. (autumn reckoning).[5] His last year as monarch came one year after the last year of Nefertem Tirhakah.[6] Even if we use the longer chronology of Kitchen, which would have Nefertem arrive in Egypt at twenty years of age in 702/701 B.C.E.,[7] for Nefertem Tirhakah to be Tsawi Tirhakah, he would have ascended the throne of Kush at age eleven.

1 CBN, p. 266, #xiii. See Chart E.
2 See above, Chap. VIII, pp. 87f.
3 TK, 1, pp. 18ff, n. 30.
4 TIP, pp. 154–172.
5 App. B. For the autumn reckoning see CBN, p. 263.
6 Cf. App. B with Chap. VIII, pp. 87–91.
7 TIP, pp. 164–172, 383–386.

This circumstance is not impossible but extremely unlikely since there were plenty of seasoned men and women of royal blood already ruling at the time (e.g. Shabako, Snefer-Ra Piankhi, Queen Kandake).

Third, even if Kitchen was correct in his theory that Nefertem Tirhakah gained some kind of political power in the year 702/701 B.C.E. at the age of twenty, by this date Tsawi Tirhakah would have already been in power over Kush for eleven years.

Fourth, the above theory would place Nefertem in power in Kush (as Tsawi Tirhakah) before his elder brother Shebitku gained authority in Egypt. This arrangement is impossible due to the fact that it was King Shebitku who summoned Nefertem and his other brothers out of Nubia to come to Egypt to be with him. Shebitku, being ruler of Egypt and not Kush, is in such a scenario made to be a junior king. He could hardly command such authority over another earlier king of Kush. Yet in Nefertem's inscriptions, he clearly places himself in a lesser status to Shebitku at the time he came north to be with him and never even hints to any kingly status for himself.[8] Further, Nefertem gained the throne of Egypt after Shebitku. None of these details would allow Nefertem to rule Kush before his brother held power in Egypt.

These different records could hardly represent the same monarch. More importantly, Tsawi Tirhakah ruled during the time of Sennacherib's third campaign. Nefertem Tirhakah did not. By the time Nefertem Tirhakah became sole Kushite ruler of Egypt's Dynasty XXV, Tsawi Tirhakah had reigned twenty-two years. In the spring of 701 B.C.E., as we have said, Tsawi Tirhakah would have already been in power for over eleven years. Since a king's early years are his most active, and his most likely for leading armies into military expeditions, the time frame of Tsawi Tirhakah perfectly matches that of the Tirhakah from Scriptures.

Bifurcated Dynasty

In the Ethiopian king list, Tsawi Tirhakah follows Aksumay, Kashta, Shabako, and Queen Nicauta Kandake.[9] We are struck by the fact that there is no mention of Snefer-Ra Piankhi or his sons Shebitku and Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah. At the same time, Nefertem Tirhakah makes an issue out of his kinship, on his mother's side, to Piankhi Alara (son of Usimare Piankhi).[10] Further, as we have already discussed, Alara (Aksumay) must have, in part, ruled jointly with Kashta.[11]

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8 TK, 1, pp. 14–44. Kitchen makes an issue out of the fact that when Nefertem Tirhakah went to Egypt as a twenty year old he came north "with an army" (TK, 1, p. 15, *l.* 10; see TIP, p. 157). Obviously, the members of the royal family would be escorted from Nubia to Egypt (the roads being filled with various threats). But this circumstance does not prove that Tirhakah led that army against the Assyrians, as Kitchen would have us believe. In fact, that the text mentions the army proves just the opposite. First, it expressly states that the army belonged to "his majesty," i.e. King Shebitku (TK, 1, p. 15, *l.* 10; also see App. A). If Tirhakah was a king at that time, he would have led his own army. Second, if he had led this army against Sennacherib he most certainly would have mentioned this glorious deed in his texts. But all that the text informs us is that on the journey Tirhakah found a temple in the nome of Amun of Gempaten in poor condition. These are hardly the words of a man who had caused the army of the Assyrian king to flee.

9 CBN, p. 266, #x–xiii. See Chart E.

10 TK, 1, p. 16. Also see above Chap. VIII, pp. 94f, n. 78.

11 See above Chap. VIII, pp. 92ff.

This evidence indicates that, at the time just before the conquest of Egypt by the Ethiopian king, Shabako, the Menelik Dynasty of Kush bifurcated. At first, the Kushite ruling house was divided between Kashta and Alara (Aksumay). Since Kashta followed Usimare Piankhi, Alara would have most likely been placed on the throne of Kush at the time his father, Usimare Piankhi, was also seated upon the throne at Thebes (746/745 B.C.E., autumn reckoning).[12] Kashta received rights to the throne of Kush in the twentieth year of Usimare Piankhi's Egyptian rule, the year Usimare marched against the rebellion of Tefnakhte in Lower Egypt (727/726 B.C.E.).[13]

After Kashta left or retired from the throne of Kush, his rulership over Napata and Thebes was given to his son Shabako, who that same year conquered Lower Egypt (714/713 B.C.E.).[14] This chronology is verified by Manetho and Herodotus. Manetho gives Shabako 12 years in Egypt following the six year rule of Bekenrinef (Bocchoris).[15] At the same time, Herodotus begins Shabako's Egyptian reign 50 years before Psamtik took the throne in 664/663 B.C.E. Shabako's 15 year pharaohship, therefore, started in 714/713 B.C.E.[16] In Shabako's second year, meanwhile, he eliminated Bekenrinef, the last king of Dynasty XXIV, and assumed the sole leadership of Lower Egypt (713/712 B.C.E.).[17] The data shows that it was this same year that Tsawi Tirhakah assumed the throne of Kush (Chart E). Both men, as we shall demonstrate, not only were kings of Kush but ruled as kings over Egypt. Therefore, when Kashta's family established Shabako as a Pharaoh in Lower Egypt, the dominance of Kush was given into the hands of Tsawi Tirhakah.

Shabako's third year (712/711 B.C.E.), the year following Bekenrinef's sixth and last year, accordingly, is the first year for Shabako as proclaimed by Manetho. Manetho also points out that Shebitku ruled jointly with Shabako for two years before he acquired the pharaohship by himself.[18] The Nile Level text of Shebitku confirms that during Shebitku's third year he was raised to that throne.[19] Since Shabako only reigned as pharaoh for 15 years, all of these sources prove that Shabako reigned two years with Bekenrinef, 10 years alone, and 3 years jointly with Shebitku. In Shabako's fifteenth and last year, while Snefer-Ra Piankhi was ruling Napata, being the third year of Shebitku, Shebitku was raised to the throne of Egypt as chief pharaoh. After that year, the official records were no longer dated by Shabako's reign.

Another important point, even though there was a temporary dominance of Shabako in Egypt at the beginning of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, the descendants of the line of Usimare Piankhi (a legitimate pharaoh at Thebes and

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12 This date is arrived at by the following: Shabako began to rule Egypt 50 years prior to the death of Nekao and the year that Nekao's son, Psamtik, obtained the throne at Sais (Her., 2:138f, 152), i.e. fifty years prior to 664/663 B.C.E., being 714/713 B.C.E. Shabako's second year was also the sixth and last year of Bekenrinef (TIP, pp. 141f). Tefnakhte ruled prior to Bekenrinef for eight years (LR, 3, p. 409 V). Tefnakhte's first year was also the twenty-first year of Usimare Piankhi (TIP, pp. 139f, 142). Therefore, the first year of Usimare Piankhi at Thebes was 734/733 B.C.E.

13 ARE, 4, #816–883; TIP, p. 146.

14 See above Chap. VIII, pp. 92–95.

15 Manetho, frags. 64–67.

16 Her., 2:2:139, 152; and see above Chap. VIII, pp. 92–95.

17 TIP, pp. 141f; CAH, 3, pt. 1, p. 575.

18 Manetho, frag. 66, cf. frag. 67 and Eusebius, *Inter. Arm.*, p. 10.

19 ARE, 4, #887. See TK, 1, p. 19; CAW, p. 82; AUSS, 4, pp. 5f.

Napata) were eventually given primary control over Egypt. Shabako remained in Egypt to assure his interest and the dominance of Kush. This bifurcation ceased after Shabako gave up Egypt and returned to Kush.[20] At that time, upon the demise of Tsawi Tirhakah, Urdamane, the son of Shabako, who had ruled Egypt under his father, took the throne of Kush.[21]

Different Realms

Not only did the two Tirhakahs rule at different times, but they ruled different realms. It is true that Manetho refers to all of the kings of Dynasty XXV as "Ethiopian kings,"[22] but this is tempered by the fact that neither Shebitku or Nefertem Tirhakah ever ruled Kush proper. In the records of Nefertem Tirhakah, for example, he only refers to himself as "the king of Upper and Lower Egypt," never as the king of Kush.[23] He also states that he was "fetched from Nubia" and "came from Nubia" to Egypt, where he later came to rule.[24] His claims make no sense if he was also the only king in Kush. But his words are compatible with the fact that he was an Ethiopian from Kush ruling Egypt, while someone else from his family was ruling the homeland.

To support the idea that Nefertem Tirhakah was the king of Kush proper it is pointed out that the Assyrians referred to him as the king of Egypt (Muzur, Muzri, Mizri, etc.) and Kush.[25] But this is a clear misrepresentation of the Assyrian definition. The term Kush, also called Meluḫḫa,[26] was applied by the Assyrian scribes to Upper Egypt. Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, for example, both claimed that they invaded and conquered Kush/Meluḫḫa.[27] At the same time, the Assyrian records reveal that they never drove further south than Thebes (Ni), the capital of Upper Egypt.[28] In fact, Thebes, the capital of Upper and Lower Egypt, is said in the Assyrian records to be the capital of Muzri and Kush.[29] Napata was the capital of Kush proper,[30] not Thebes (cf. Map 2). Thebes was the capital of all Egypt during this Ethiopian period.

George Smith, likewise, concludes that Kush "appears in the Assyrian inscriptions to include part of Upper Egypt as well as Ethiopia; for although Esarhaddon's conquests did not extend higher than Thebes, he is said to have

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20 Shabako gave up Egypt the year that Psamtik I came to the throne (Herodotus, 2:152). This was the same year that Assurbanipal invaded Egypt and drove all the way to Thebes (ARAB, 2, #770–778, 844–846, 900–907; ANET, pp. 294–297), i.e. his second campaign in 663 B.C.E.

21 That Urdamane was the son of Shabako and followed Nefertem Tirhakah on the throne of Egypt see ANET, p. 295 (ii). That Urdamane later followed Tsawi Tirhakah on the throne of Kush see CBN, p. 266, #xiii–xiv; and see Chart E.

22 Manetho, frags. 66–67.

23 TK, 1, pp. 4–41; ARE, 4, #888, 895, 918.

24 TK, 1, p. 15, *l.* 8, p. 28, *l.* 13.

25 Esarhaddon refers to Nefertem Tirhakah as "the king of Egypt and Kush" before driving him out of Memphis (ARAB, 2, #580). Assurbanipal calls him the "king of Egypt and Kush" when he names Tirhakah in his records dealing with the Assyrian invasion against "Egypt and Kush" (ARAB, 2, #770, 771, 875).

26 HA, p. 48; cf. ARAB, 2, #568, 770, 875.

27 ARAB, 2, #571, 710, 770–771, 778, 846, 892, 901, where Assurbanipal states his objective was to drive Tirhakah out of both Egypt and Kush, which he equates with Memphis (Lower Egypt) and Thebes (Upper Egypt), 939, 944.

28 Accomplished by Assurbanipal in his second campaign (663 B.C.E.), see ANET, p. 295 (ii); ARAB, 2 #776–778, 900–906.

29 ANET, p. 295, n. 12.

30 CAH, 3, pp. 268, 313; CAH, 3, pt. 1, p. 570; EP, p. 335.

conquered both Muzur and Kush."[31] The definition used by Esarhaddon, that he conquered "Muzri, Patursu and Kush"[32] (Patursu being the regular name applied to Upper Egypt), despite the fact that he never actually reached further south than the districts of Thebes, is merely the Assyrian way of dividing Egypt into Lower, Middle, and Upper Egypt—divisions which have long been applied to that country. Middle Egypt, a district normally included by the Egyptians in their definition of Upper Egypt (Patursu), represented all of Patursu for the Assyrians.

Indeed, the Assyrian king, Esarhaddon, called himself the "king of the kings of Muzri, Patursu and Kush."[33] Yet, when Assurbanipal, whose Egyptian conquests went farther than that of his father Esarhaddon, lists these subkings of "Egypt and Kush, which my father had conquered," he only mentions those cities located in Lower, Middle, and Upper Egypt—and then only cities as far south as Thebes.[34]

The Assyrian definition of Upper Egypt as Kush arose because that part of Egypt was then under direct Kushite control. This definition also helped aggrandize the deeds of the Assyrian kings, making it appear as if their conquest included the land of Kush proper.[35] In fact, no foreign power outside of Egypt had conquered any part of Kush proper until that feat was accomplished years later by the Persian monarch Cambyses in 525 B.C.E. The Assyrian definition of Kush, therefore, is not to be confused with the Scriptural definition of Kush, which, as supported by the LXX, Josephus, and other ancient Jewish writers, is applied only to the regions south of Syene (modern Aswan) and the first cataract.[36] When the Assyrian scribes said that Nefertem Tirhakah was king of Muzri (Egypt) and Kush, it is certain that they meant

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31 HA, p. 48.

32 ARAB, 2, #575, 710, 758; ANET, p. 290.

33 ARAB, 2, #583.

34 ANET, p. 294; ARAB, 2, #771. Also see Map 2.

35 Assyrian geography often reinterpreted boundaries to give the impression of a greater conquest. Their use of the term Khatti-land (Hatti-land, Khitti-land, etc.), which properly belongs to central and western Asia Minor, to designate Syria-Palestine is well-known. Another example, one relating to Egypt, is the Assyrian reference to the Wadi el-Arish, located south of Raphia (called Rapikhu, Rapihu, etc. in the Assyrian inscriptions) and near Arzani, as the "River of Egypt" and the "border of Egypt." Sargon's defeat of an Egyptian force at Raphia, to demonstrate, is framed as a defeat of his foes and as conquering as far as the "borders of Egypt" and the "river of Egypt" (cf. ARAB, 2, #18, 54f, 82, 92, 96–99, 118, 515, 529, 550, 557, 712). Esarhaddon even mocks this definition, stating that Raphia is by the river of Egypt, "where there is no river" (ARAB, 2, #557), the wadi often being dry.

It is true that during Sargon's period the Wadi el-Arish was considered by the Egyptians as their empire border with their Asiatic neighbors, but it is certainly not the border of Egypt proper. This honor belonged to the Shihor arm of the Nile (Gihon, Yaur) river and its Bubastis mouth, near the city of Pelusium. The Shihor was understood even by the Israelites as the river, border, and gateway into Egypt (e.g. cf. Gen., 15:18, with Philo, *Gen.*, 3:16; Josh., 13:2–3; Jer., 2:18 [& LXX]; Isa., 23:3; 1 Chron., 13:15 [& LXX]; 2 Kings, 24:7 and Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:6:1; Jos., *Wars*, 4:10:5; Yashar, 10:21–22, 15:1–3, 8; Gen. Apoc., 19:11–14; Diodorus, 15:42, 18:6; and so forth; also cf. Gen., 2:13, with LXX; Gen. Apoc., 21:15, 17f; Philo, *Leg. All.*, 1:19, 21, 27; Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:1:3).

36 The LXX translates the name Kush found in the MT text as Ethiopia: e.g. Gen., 2:13; 4 Kings, 19:9 (cf. MT 2 Kings, 19:9); Esther, 8:9; Job, 28:19, Ps., 86:4 (cf. MT Ps., 87:4); Isa., 18:1, 20:3, 5, 37:9, 43:3, 45:14; Ezek., 29:10, 30:4, 38:5; Nah., 3:9; Zeph., 3:10. Josephus, likewise, states that those called by the Hebrews "Kushites" are by others called "Ethiopians" (Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:6:2). Thebes (Noa, Noa Ammon, Ammon, Diospolis, etc.), meanwhile, is described in the Hebrew and LXX texts, as well as in the works of Josephus, as located in Mizraim (Egypt), see Jer., 46:25 (LXX Jer., 26:25, Ammon); Ezek., 30:13–19 (LXX Diospolis); Nah., 3:8 (LXX Ammon); Jos., *Wars*,

only Lower and Upper Egypt, the same definition applied by Nefertem Tirhakah to himself.

Accordingly, the pharaohship of Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt presents a problem. If the scribes of Scriptures anachronistically meant that the Tirhakah who opposed Sennacherib was the pharaoh of Egypt by that name, they should have more properly labeled him "the king of Egypt," or at least "the king of Egypt and Kush." In Scriptures, to demonstrate, Shabako is called "Sua the king of Egypt,"[37] though the Lucianic recension of the LXX substitutes with "Adrammelech the Ethiopian, living in Egypt."[38] Indeed, "the king of Egypt" is how the Greek writers referred to Shabako, the uncle of Nefertem Tirhakah, a known Ethiopian king who ruled Egypt as pharaoh during this period.[39] The Tirhakah of Scriptures, on the other hand, is only referred to as the "king of Kush."[40] Tsawi Tirhakah, in conformity, is listed as the king of Kush proper.[41]

Next, Josephus remarks that, "Tharsikēn (Tirhakah), the king of Ethiopia, was coming to the aid of the Egyptians with a large force and had decided to make the journey through the desert and fall upon the Assyrians

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7:10:1, *Antiq*., 11:8:6, *Apion*, 1:14. At the same time, Ezek., 29:10, and Jos., *Wars*, 4:10:5, both state that Kush (Ethiopia) laid south of Syene (Aswan), Egypt. The country of Kush, as described in Scriptures, therefore, started at the first cataract, well over 120 miles south of Thebes. It should not go unnoticed that the Israelites referred to Upper and Lower Egypt by the plural Mizraim (SEC, #4714), i.e. the two Mizri (cf. SEC, #4693). The Assyrians, meanwhile, only named Muzri, indicating only one of the two regions. Kush/Meluḫḫa became their designation for Upper Egypt.

37 2 Kings, 17:4. The identification of Sua with Shabako derives from the following details: King Sua was in alliance with Hosea, the king of Israel, during the latter's sixth and seventh years (2 Kings, 17:4), i.e. 713/712 and 712/711 B.C.E., spring reckoning. These dates are established by the fact that the fourth and sixth years of Hezekiah equal the seventh and ninth years of Hosea (2 Kings, 18:9f) (also see below n. 38). In the Lucianic recensions of the Septuagint, "Sua, king of Egypt" is substituted with "Adrammelech the Ethiopian, living in Egypt." Sua, therefore, was a Kushite living and ruling in Egypt. The chronology of Shabako also supports this connection. Shabako ruled Egypt from 714/713–700/699 B.C.E., autumn reckoning, precisely at the time Hosea was in alliance with Sua.

Next, the Hebrew spelling, סוא (*Sua, So*), easily complies as the short form of the Egyptian name Shaba-ko (i.e. *Shaua-ko: b = u*). This connection is supported by Josephus (*Antiq*., 9:14:1), who renders the name Σώαν (*Soan*), and by the transliterations found in the LXX texts, Σωά (*Soa*), Σωβά (*Soba*), and Σηγώρ (*Segor*) (Marcus, *Jos*., vi, p. 146, n. a). Σωβά (*Soba*) is certainly Shaba and Σηγώρ (*Segor*) is a rough attempt at Sua-ko(r) = Shaba-ko.

Sua was originally believed to be Shabako (cf. CAH, 3, pp. 275f) but was later rejected for an identification with Sib'e, the assumed name of an Egyptian *turtānu* found in the Assyrian records. The reading "Sib'e," though, was an error and is now known to be "Re'e," so this association has lost all possibility (CAH, 3, pt. 1, pp. 575f). The only other objection has been chronological, based upon the dating of Hosea. With regard to this issue of dating Hosea, it can be verified beyond any doubt that Hosea's reign began in 718 B.C.E., not earlier as often assumed. For the dating of Hosea, the king of Israel, see our forthcoming text entitled *Israelite Chronology*.

38 CAH, 3, p. 275. The dates for Hosea (718/717–710/709 B.C.E., spring reckoning), who (according to 2 Kings, 17:4–6 and 18:9) was contemporary with Sua during the former's sixth and seventh years (713/712 and 712/711 B.C.E.), are proven by the chronological statement in 2 Kings, 18:9f, and in our forthcoming book entitled *Israelite Chronology*. This chronology reflects the fact that Hosea entered into his conspiracy with Shabako the very year that Shabako killed Bekenrinef of D. XXIV and took total control of Lower Egypt.

39 For example, for Shabako as king of Egypt see Diodorus, 1:65, Manetho, frag. 66–67. Herodotus (2:137), referring to the time that Shabako invaded Lower Egypt, calls him the "king of Ethiopia," which is in conformity with the Ethiopian list, declaring him a king of Kush. The expression found in the works of Manetho's transmitters, referring to the three kings of Dynasty XXV as "three Ethiopian kings," i.e. kings of Egypt from Ethiopia," on the other hand, does not say that the last two (Shebitku and Nefertem Tirhakah) ever ruled Ethiopia proper, only Egypt.

40 2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9.

41 CBN, p. 266.

suddenly."[42] If Sennacherib was fighting against Egypt, and Tirhakah was Pharaoh of Egypt, why would it be said that he was coming to aid the Egyptians? Would he not be coming to his own aid?

Another consideration is that, although their homeland was Kush, there is little evidence that the first two Ethiopians of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (Shabako and Shebitku, the uncle and brother of Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah) ever spent much time in their homeland. Egyptologist Alan Gardiner notes:

> Considering the combined length of these two reigns, it is strange how seldom the names of Shabako and Shebitku are encountered. Apart from the pyramids at Kurru where they were buried and from a horse-cemetery in the same place, their Nubian home has hardly a trace of them to show.[43]

The lack of records from Nubia indicate that the main influence of the Dynasty XXV pharaohs was in Egypt and not Kush. For instance, because of the lack of records from Shebitku's reign, Petrie concludes:

> Not a single fact of his [Shebitku's] history is recorded. It seems not improbable that he was only the viceroy of Lower and Middle Egypt, which he may have ruled while his aunt Amenardus held Thebes, and his uncle Pankhy II. reigned at Napata.[44]

Though it is now known that Shebitku was the son and not the nephew of Snefer-Ra Piankhi (Petrie's Pankhy II),[45] Petrie introduces an important point. At the very time that Shabako and then Shebitku were ruling Egypt, Snefer-Ra Piankhi, the father of Shebitku and Nefertem, was ruling from Napata, the capital of Kush proper. According to the Ethiopian king list, it was Tsawi Tirhakah. This timing is our first direct indication that Tsawi Tirhakah and Snefer-Ra were one and the same person.

Though Shabako was a king of Kush who conquered Middle and Lower Egypt for himself, his conquests occurred during his first and second year. He spent the rest of his 50 year reign in the country of Egypt.[46] Shebitku, like his brother Nefertem Tirhakah, is not listed in the Ethiopian archives as a king of Kush. He too spent his entire reign in Egypt. During their Egyptian rule it was Snefer-Ra Piankhi who governed Kush.

When Nefertem Tirhakah became sole monarch after the death of Shebitku, his records increased somewhat in Kush.[47] But these are primarily religious

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42 Jos, *Antiq.*, 10:1:4(17).
43 EP, pp. 342f
44 AHOE, 3, p. 287.
45 JEA, 35, p. 147, #69; EP, p. 450.
46 Herodotus, 2:139f, 152.
47 TK, 1, pp. 4–44; and see the list in AHOE, 3, pp. 294f. These show that the overwhelming portions of Tirhakah's inscriptions were in Egypt and not Kush. Those in Kush are found in Lower or northern Kush.

dedications, which are to be expected from the priestly position of an Ethiopian acting in the role of a Kushite king in Egypt. They show no more than a required appearance to the shrines and temples of his homeland, especially at the time when his father, Snefer-Ra Piankhi, was aging and less able to serve in his priestly functions. We also know that Nefertem Tirhakah was forced back to Thebes, and eventually even to Nubia, by the Assyrian military power of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal.[48] Yet even in these inscriptions, as we shall see, not all of the records found in Egypt and Kush presently attributed to Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah actually belonged to him.

Different Kings

These details indicate that someone else was dominating Kush during the years that Dynasty XXV ruled Egypt. This other Kushite king is reflected in the king list from the Nubian archives (Chart E). The kings of Kush and the Kushite kings ruling Egypt, therefore, would have been in confederation, part of a family system wherein certain members of the royal clan held power as pharaohs in Egypt while others handled the affairs at home (though these too held some authority over parts of Egypt, especially Thebes).

According to the Ethiopian archive list, Shabako ruled Kush for 12 years and held the throne there before Tsawi Tirhakah came to power.[49] Herodotus similarly writes that Shabako was the king of Ethiopia when he conquered Egypt.[50] References to "Year 1" of Shabako in Egypt are wholly missing, though there are several for years "2" and "3."[51] This fact indicates that it was late in Shabako's first year as a king of Kush that he conquered Lower Egypt. During Shabako's second year as pharaoh (713/712 B.C.E.), he took full control over Lower Egypt by killing Bekenrinef (Bocchoris), the last king of Dynasty XXIV.[52] In that same year Tsawi Tirhakah started his rule in Kush. Likewise, Shabako's fifty years of dominance over Egypt ended the same year that Tsawi Tirhakah ended his rule over Kush (665/664 B.C.E.).

Shabako's connection with Tsawi Tirhakah is demonstrated in yet another way. In the Ethiopian archive list Shabako is given 12 years. The last three years of his 15 year pharaohship of Egypt is not considered. The dates for Shabako and Tsawi Tirhakah, meanwhile, are both firmly grounded. When we lay their chronologies alongside one another, we find that Shabako is no longer considered a king of Kush in the year 702/701 B.C.E., autumn reckoning (Charts C & E). This was the year that Shabako suffered his humiliating defeat at the hands of Sennacherib in the battle at Eltekeh. It was the same year that Tirhakah of Kush came out against Sennacherib, forcing the Assyrian king to flee. The combination of Shabako's defeat and Tirhakah's victory is therefore reflected by Tsawi Tirhakah becoming the sole monarch of Kush.

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48 ARAB, 2, #554–559, 563f, 575, 580, 582–585, 710, 770–778, 844–846, 875, 892, 900–907, 939, 944, 1117. When Assurbanipal sacked Thebes in 663 B.C.E., Nefertem Tirhakah is said to have fled to Kipkipi (ARAB, 2, #777; ANET, p. 295), a city in Nubia (CAH, 3, p. 185), and very probably the Assyrian name for Napata, the capital of Kush proper.

49 CBN, p. 266, #xi–xiii.

50 Herodotus, 2:137.

51 TIP, p. 142.

52 Manetho, Frag. 66–67; TIP, pp. 141f; CAH, 3, pt. 1, p. 575.

We must now consider Queen Nicaute Kandake, mentioned in the Ethiopian archive list between Shabako and Tsawi Tirhakah. She most certainly represents the daughter of Kashta, a queen named Amenirdis (Amonortais, Amenardus, etc.), who became a "deity's wife," and was "to all intents and purposes the equal of the king her father."[53] Though in the Ethiopian archives she is listed as ruling Kush after Shabako, in reality, she was at first the contemporary of her father Kashta.[54] Her ten year rule in Kush (723/722 to 714/713 B.C.E.) exactly fills the gap between Aksumay (Alara) and Tsawi Tirhakah. Her rule over Kush ended the same year that Shabako conquered Lower Egypt. At that time, Nicauta (Amenirdis) obtained authority in the Theban principality, appointed there by her brother, Snefer-Ra Piankhi. There she came to live and later died.[55]

These details indicate that Amenirdis set aside her Kushite throne in order to concentrate on her duties in the Thebaid province when Snefer-Ra came to power. According to the Ethiopian king list, this circumstance left Tsawi Tirhakah to rule Kush proper, though for his first eleven years Shabako technically shared the title with him. We also know that Shebitku, Amenirdis and Piankhi all reigned together.[56] These records demonstrate that all three were contemporaries at the time that Shebitku held authority in Lower and Middle Egypt.

At the same time, Shabako's eldest son, Harmakhet, never became king, though he did serve in various high offices under Nefertem Tirhakah and Ta-Nuat-Amun.[57] Yet later, after the death of Nefertem Tirhakah in 666/665, Urdamane, another son of Shabako, came to the throne.[58] Nefertem Tirhakah, being the son of Snefer-Ra Piankhi, therefore, belonged to the next generation after Shabako and Tsawi Tirhakah.

This evidence would indicate that Tsawi Tirhakah was not only from the same generation as Shabako but that he was connected in some way with Shabako and Amenirdis. Snefer-Ra Piankhi was the brother of Shabako and Amenirdis and was the contemporary of both, as well as the with the reign of his son Shebitku.[59] When we combine these circumstances with the fact that, according to the information from the Ethiopian list, Tsawi Tirhakah ruled Kush during the same period as Shabako and Shebitku in Egypt, we have another strong indication that Tsawi Tirhakah was Snefer-Ra Piankhi.

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53 EP, p. 343; AHOE, 3, pp. 288f.

54 Ibid.; AUSS, 4, p. 3.

55 Kitchen correctly concludes that, just because Amenirdis names her father (Kashta) in her inscriptions, it does not prove that Kashta installed her in Thebes. He believes this act was carried out by her brother Snefer-Ra Piankhi (TIP, p. 151 and n. 289). In fact, both details are correct. Amenirdis at first ruled with her father in Kush. Therefore, most Egyptologists are correct in assuming that the inscriptions of Amenirdis, which mention Kashta, demonstrate some sort of co-regency. No doubt Kashta continued to live for a time after his 13 years of official rule. But it also seems correct that it was Snefer-Ra Piankhi who installed her at Thebes after he came to power. Kitchen's view, therefore, would seem supported by the Ethiopian king list. Neither should we ignore the possibility that both Kashta and Snefer-Ra supported her at Thebes.

56 E.g. see AHOE, 3, pp. 287–291.

57 TK, 1, p. 124.

58 ANET, p. 295 (ii).

59 JEA, 35, p. 146, #61, 149; EP, p. 450; TIP, p. 478; and see Chart D.

The Empire of Tsawi Tirhakah

No one has considered the ramifications arising from the fact that Sennacherib retreated from his war against Egypt when he heard that Tirhakah of Kush was coming out. No battle was ever fought. With such a powerful army at Tirhakah's disposal and with the Assyrian army of Sennacherib in full retreat, the King Tirhakah of Kush who came against Sennacherib would have been presented with an excellent opportunity for conquest. Yet, the records of Nefertem Tirhakah of Dynasty XXV make no mention of any great or important conquest outside of Egypt. Nefertem Tirhakah, whose records demonstrate that he sought the most insignificant events in his reign to brag about, would certainly not have missed the opportunity to mention such a great victory in these records.

Nevertheless, a record of great military conquest of northern Africa and western Asia was left to us by an Ethiopian king named Tirhakah. At Medinet-Habu (the Pylon of the Ethiopians) we read that a king named Tirhakah claimed to have conquered Tamit (Egypt), Tesher (the desert), and Tepa.[60] Why would Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah claim conquest of Egypt? He was the designated heir to the Egyptian throne of his brother Shebitku. But the record does make sense for an Ethiopian king who came to control Egypt as the result of the failure of Pharaoh Shabako to defend that country against the Assyrian army of Sennacherib.

Next, Egyptologists were amazed to find a long list of captured cities written on the base of a statue found at Karnak which belonged to a king named Tirhakah.[61] Each city represents the greater region under the control of this king. This record not only states that a king named Tirhakah controlled Ethiopia, Egypt, and northern Africa, but it claims that he had some sort of sovereignty over Tunip (Upper Syria, west of the Euphrates),[62] Qadesh (Lower Syria/Palestine),[63] and the Shasu (region of Edom and the

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60 MH, p. 9.

61 KETA, Plate 45a; ETL, p. 187, List xxxvi. Mariette-Bey (KETA, pp. 66f), followed by Petrie (AHOE, 3, p. 297) and others, thought this list from Tirhakah was copied from an identical one found on a colossus which they believed belonged to Ramesses the Great (cf. KETA, Plate 38f). This colossus was identified with Ramesses II because his name was found inscribed upon it. Yet the style and the execution of the colossus "are rather different from those of the period of Ramses II" (ETL, p. 52). Simons concludes from this evidence that the colossus, together with the pylon itself, was originally built by Haremhab and first inscribed by him. A later inscription was added by Ramesses II (ETL, p. 52, cf. p. 135). Because the above inscription, which is identical to the one belonging to Tirhakah, bears no resemblance to any produced by either Ramesses II or Haremhab, it is highly probable that this secondary inscription was composed by Tsawi Tirhakah, who viewed himself as a great conqueror like Ramesses II. He simply emulated his predecessor, placing his own record of conquest on a monument alongside that of Ramesses II.

62 For the location of the city of Tunip, located north of Aleppo, see AEO, 1, pp. 179f.

63 Since all of the regions are named after important capital cities and regional names, there are at least four possibilities for Qadesh (Sacred Place). Besides Qadesh on the Orontes, there is a Qadesh in northern Israel, called Qadesh of Naphtali (Judges, 4:6; Josh, 19:37, 20:7, 21:32; 1 Chron., 6:76), and another city of Qadesh (Kadutis) named in Herodotus, 2:159. The city mentioned in Herodotus is identified by modern day historians with either Gaza or Jerusalem.

The Qadesh (Sacred Place) at question may not be Qadesh on the Orontes, for it might conflict with the context of the geographical statement given by Tirhakah (Qadesh on the Orontes also lying in Upper Syria, south of Tunip). Qadesh of Naphtali is also eliminated because it ceased to be an important city after the deportation of the Israelites from that region several years before Tsawi Tirhakah came to power. These details bring us to the Qadesh mentioned by Herodotus.

THE NEAR EAST: 701 B.C.E.

Trans-Jordan),[64] as far north as Arzawa (western Asia Minor),[65] Khatti (eastern Asia Minor),[66] and Naharin (western Mesopotamia),[67] and as far east as Assur (Assyria)[68] and Sinagar (Babylonia).[69]

These conquests clearly do not reflect the political history of Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah of Dynasty XXV.[70] Because these conquests were unhistorical for Nefertem Tirhakah, the inscription was branded by the noted Egyptologist E. A. Wallis Budge as an "example of the worthlessness, historically, of such lists."[71] Petrie concludes that "Taharqa was as much ruler of Qedesh and

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The Qadesh of Herodotus is identified by several present-day historians as Gaza, based upon a similar form of the name used by Herodotus (e.g. Godley, *Herodotus*, i, p. 473, n. 2; HH, 1, p. 411, n. 2, 2, p. 208, n. 2, p. 334, n. 7). But a closer look indicates that this Qadesh is Jerusalem, the main center of political power in Lower Syria during the time of Sennacherib's third campaign. Not only is Jerusalem referred to as Qadesh (Sacred) in Scriptures (e.g. Neh., 11:1, 18; Isa., 52:1, 66:20; Ezek., 45:1–4; Dan., 9:16, 24), and Judah called the Qadesh land (e.g. Zech., 2:12), but, as Rennel accurately concluded some years ago (GSH, 1, p. 324, 2, p. 362), the records of Herodotus show that he also called the region of Judaea and its capital city Qadesh. Herodotus states that the city and country of Kadutis (Qadesh, see GSH, 1, p. 324) was located south of Phoenicia, that it belonged to the "Syrians of Palestine," and that it was about the size of the city of Sardis (Herodotus, 3:5). At the same time, he elsewhere refers to the Jews, who practice circumcision, as "the Syrians of Palestine" (Ibid., 2:104). The size of the city by itself clearly points to Jerusalem, the only major city of any size during the time of Herodotus. (Those who hold that Gaza is meant, on the basis that the word Kadutis in Herodotus is similar to the Egyptian word *G'-d'-y* [i.e. Gaza] seem not to have considered these factors).

Herodotus further states that the main road to Egypt ran from Phoenicia as far as "the borders of the city of Kadutis (Qadesh)," after which it passed to the city of Ienysus and the seaports belonging to the Arabians (Herodotus, 3:6). The region of Qadesh (Jerusalem) was named after its chief city, as the regions of Samaria, Babylonia, and Damascus were named after their capitals (i.e. city-states). The description of this road to Egypt is accurate. The main highway (the Palestim road) made its way south along the coast, passing along the coastal borders of Judaea before continuing through Palestia and then on into Egypt.

Herodotus also tells the story of how Pharaoh Nekao of Egypt defeated the Syrians (Jews of Syria) at Magdolus (Megiddo) and then obtained the "great Syrian city of Kadutis (Qadesh)" (Herodotus, 2:159). In Scriptures Nekao's victory at Megiddo was followed by the submission of Jerusalem (2 Kings, 23:29–35; 2 Chron., 35:20–36:4), which once again confirms the identity of Kadutis (Qadesh) with Jerusalem. Neither should we forget that the Ethiopian ruling house believed that they were connected by bloodline from King Solomon of Jerusalem (Kebra Nagast). At the same time, during the days of Tirhakah, Judah was a close ally of the Ethiopians. There would be a natural tendency of the Kushite leaders to allow the Judahite definition of their city and country as Qadesh, the Sacred Place.

In either case, whether the Qadesh of Tirhakah's inscription stands for Qadesh on the Orontes, Jerusalem, or Gaza, it represents Syria-Palestine.

64 The Shasu were Edomites (ARE, 3, #636–638, "the tribes of the Shasu of Edom"). They dominated Arabia Petraea, the Trans-Jordan, and they were themselves positioned southeast of the Dead Sea. The Shasu, therefore, represented the southernmost of the Asiatic conquest.

65 For the location of the Arzawa lands see GHE, pp. 83–100, and map 1.

66 For the location of the Khatti lands see GHE, pp. 1–31, and map 1.

67 For the location of Naharin country see AEO, 1, pp. 171–180.

68 That Assur is Assyria, east of Naharin, see AEO, 1, pp. 191–194.

69 That Sinagar is Babylonia see AEO, 1, pp. 209–212.

70 Nefertem Tirhakah's career largely consisted of fighting with Assyria over possession of Lower Egypt and then Upper Egypt. There is a record demonstrating an alliance between a "Tirhakah of Kush" with the king of Tyre during the tenth year of Esarhaddon (ARAB, 2, #554–556). Yet the very fact that this Tirhakah is only called the king of Kush (the Assyrian definition of Upper Egypt) at a time when Nefertem Tirhakah was also pharaoh of Lower Egypt suggests that this might well be Tsawi Tirhakah. Nefertem Tirhakah's role in neighboring Syria and Palestine was almost negligible, as demonstrated by those inscriptions which can clearly be identified with him. As Gardiner points out, "Tahark\a was nothing loath to publicize his fortunes and his achievements" (EP, p. 344). Nevertheless, these important inscriptions say nothing of any conquests or alliances outside of Egypt (e.g. TK, 1, 4–44).

71 HE, 6, p. 157.

Naharaina as George II. was king of France, though officially so called."[72]

Despite the fact that these inscriptions are presently shunned, the ancient Greek records actually confirm them. Strabo speaks of a great king named "Tearko the Ethiopian,"[73] Tearko being the Greek form of the name Tirhakah.[74] Tearko, he states, had led one of the great expeditions of the ancient world which were not "matters of off-hand knowledge to everybody."[75] He lists the great kings of such expeditions as "Madys the Scythian, Tearko the Ethiopian, Cobus the Treran, Sesostris and Psammethichus the Egyptians, and the Persians from Cyrus to Xerxes."[76] In another place, Strabo, citing Megasthenes, defines how far Tearko conquered:

> However, Sesostris, the Egyptian, he (Megasthenes) adds, and Tearko (Tirhakah) the Ethiopian advanced as far as Europe; and Nabocodroser (Nebuchadnezzar), who enjoyed greater repute among the Chaldaeans than Heracles, led an army even as far as the Pillars (Gibraltar and Jebel Musa). Thus far, he says, also Tearko went; and Sesostris also led his army from Iberia to Thrace and the Pontus.[77]

Unable to distinguish between the two Tirhakahs, many historians have become puzzled by this evidence. Budge comments:

> Curiously enough, Tirhakah obtained the reputation of being a great traveller and conqueror, and Strabo, under the name of 'Tearko the Ethiopian,' mentions him . . . as one whose expeditions were not generally known.[78]

Once we recognize that we are dealing with two different kings, both named Tirhakah, all the facts fit into place. The Tirhakah who came against Sennacherib and from whom Sennacherib retreated in fear was a powerful king of Kush whose resulting empire claimed to have authority that extended across north Africa, Asia Minor as far as the Aegean Sea (therefore, bordering upon Europe), all of Palestine-Syria, Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Babylonia.

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72 AHOE, 3, p. 297.
73 Strabo, 1:3:21, 15:1:6.
74 HE, 6, p. 157.
75 Strabo, 1:3:21.
76 Ibid.
77 Strabo, 15:1:6.
78 HE, 6, p. 157. Budge denies the testimony that Tirhakah conquered as far west as the Pillars of Hercules because it is tied in with the statement that Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did likewise. Based upon the idea that there are no records claiming that Nebuchadnezzar went this far, he concludes that neither did Tirhakah. Budge is in error. First, there is supportive evidence that Nebuchadnezzar (by utilizing the Phocaeian navy) did conquer regions along the Mediterranean Sea as far west as Spain. Josephus (*Antiq.*, 10:11:1), for example, citing Megasthenes, states that Nebuchadnezzar "subdued the greater part of Libya (Africa) and Iberia (Spain)." Old records further testify that Nebuchadnezzar ruled Spain for 9 years (RG, p. 697; UH, 18, p. 512). Second, the records of Tsawi Tirhakah accommodate the fact that his domain stretched across northern Africa to tribes who would have extended to the Pillars on the African side (KETA, Plate 45a; ETL, p. 187, List XXXVI). There is no reason, therefore, not to accept the record provided by Strabo.

Tsawi Tirhakah's rule in Kush began many years prior to that of Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt's Dynasty XXV. His vast empire was very likely short-lived—the Assyrians, for example, having quickly regrouped and reconquered Babylonia the next year (700/699 B.C.E.). Nonetheless, it was notable and still recognized by ancient writers centuries later. Nefertem Tirhakah, meanwhile, appears not to have extended his realm beyond Egypt.

Tirhakah Piankhi

All the evidence so far points to the probability that Tsawi Tirhakah of the Ethiopian list of Kushite kings is the same person as Snefer-Ra Piankhi. It certainly explains why Snefer-Ra Piankhi's name is not found in the Ethiopian list and why in his place is given Tsawi Tirhakah. Tsawi's long reign of 49 years over Kush also establishes him as a different king from Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt. Snefer-Ra Piankhi's "30 plus x years" over Thebes[79] fits well with the fact that the Tirhakah of Scriptures brought Egypt under his sway in 701 B.C.E. and that Tsawi Tirhakah's last year of rulership was in 664 B.C.E., i.e. a total of 38 years of domination over Upper Egypt.

Tsawi's dates, likewise, place him in the same generation as Shabako and Amenirdis. Further, Tsawi Tirhakah ruled Kush, just as the Tirhakah of Scriptures and Snefer-Ra Piankhi did. Both Tsawi and Piankhi also ruled at the time of Sennacherib's third campaign. Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt, on the other hand, is never counted as the king of Kush proper and his Egyptian rule took place years after Sennacherib's attack on Judah.

Fortunately, we have verification of this identity. It is found on a unique scarab located in the collection of John Ward (see Fig. 1). This scarab has been a source of puzzlement for Egyptologists for only one reason: they refused to recognize that Snefer-Ra Piankhi was also known as Tirhakah. The inscription with a double cartouch reads:

> King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Tirhakah, Son of Ra, Piankhi.[80]

Unable to believe the inscription, Petrie concluded that it must indicate the co-regency of Nefertem Tirhakah and Snefer-Ra Piankhi.[81] But the inscription cannot mean this, for in that case Piankhi would also be designated as "king." Another view, expressed by Ward himself, suggested that Tirhakah had placed "his wife's family title beside his own."[82] Ward based this idea on the belief that Nefertem Tirhakah

Fig. 1. Scarab of Tirhakah Piankhi

79 British Museum no. 6640; TIP, p. 152 and n. 292. Also see above Chap. VIII, pp. 94f.
80 PSBA, 22, pp. 386–401, pl. vii, #54.
81 AHOE, 3, p. 290.
82 PSBA, 23, p. 27; cf. above n. 80.

was not of royal blood. Ward's premise is now known to be incorrect. Further, it is discredited by the fact that nowhere else can one find an example of an Egyptian or Kushite king placing the cartouch belonging to either his wife's or his own family alongside that of his own.

On the other hand, we have numerous examples of a Kushite king referring to himself by both his *seten byt* (King of Upper and Lower Egypt) name and his *sa Ra* (Son of Ra) name. The following are important examples of this combination:

> King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Neferke-Ra, Son of Ra, [Shabako].[83]
>
> King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Beke-Re, Son of Ra, Ta-Nuat-Amun.[84]
>
> King of Upper and Lower Egypt, 'Nkh-ka-Ra, Son of Ra, Anlamani.[85]
>
> King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nefer-ib-Re, Son of Ra, Aman-Nete-Yerike.[86]
>
> King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khu-Re' Nefertem, Son of Ra, Tirhakah.[87]

The above example from Nefertem Tirhakah should now be compared with that from Tirhakah Piankhi:

> King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Tirhakah, Son of Ra, Piankhi.

Notice that the Son of Ra name for Nefertem Tirhakah is Tirhakah, while the Son of Ra name for Tirhakah Piankhi is Piankhi. They represent two different kings.

It can be no coincidence that in the Nile Level texts we find an inscription belonging to Shebitku claiming that in his "Year 3" he was "crowned as king in the house of Amon."[88] Therefore, during Shebitku's third year of coregency in Egypt, he obtained a position above that of Shabako. According to the transmitters of Manetho, Shebitku is given two years with Shabako. In this arrangement, year three of Shebitku would equal the fifteenth and last year of Shabako as pharaoh. Year one of Shebitku, as a result, is 702/701 B.C.E., autumn reckoning, the year that Tirhakah, king of Kush, caused Sennacherib to flee from the borders of Egypt; it was this year that Shabako was no longer considered the king of Kush.

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83 ARE, 4, #886.
84 ARE, 4, #921.
85 TK, 1, p. 46, *l.* 1.
86 TK, 1, p. 51, *l.* 1.
87 TK, 1, pp. 5, 15, *l.* 1, p. 23, *l.* 1, p. 33, *l.* 1, p. 42, *l.* 1; ARE, 4, #888. Tirhakah is also called "King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Tirhakah" (e.g. ARE, 4, #895; TK, 1, p. 6, *l.* 7, p. 7, *l.* 10, 11, p. 8, *l.* 15), but this title is only found when the Son of Ra name is not used. When the Son of Ra title is utilized, Nefertem always makes it Tirhakah.
88 ARE, 4, #887. See TK, 1, p. 19; CAW, p. 82.

This evidence proves that Shebitku came to full power in Egypt the very year that his father, Snefer-Ra Tirhakah Piankhi, came to the aid of his brother Shabako and took possession of Egypt. Tirhakah Piankhi, taking advantage of the Assyrian retreat of Sennacherib in the spring of 701 B.C.E., then created his own empire for Ethiopia. Herein lies the reason that Shabako surrendered the Egyptian throne to the sons of Snefer-Ra Piankhi. It also explains why Shebitku and Nefertem Tirhakah only assumed the mantle as pharaoh of Egypt. Their father, Snefer-Ra, tightly retained control over Kush proper until his death. In turn, when Snefer-Ra Tirhakah Piankhi and his son Khu-Re' Nefertem Tirhakah both died, Shabako overcame his brother's power and placed his own son, Urdamane, over the throne of Kush.

Here, then, lies the solution to the identity of the mysterious Tirhakah who opposed Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E. The Tirhakah who came out of Kush to attack Sennacherib is found under the name Tsawi Tirhakah in the Ethiopian king list. Tsawi Tirhakah, in turn, was known as Snefer-Ra Piankhi, the powerful Ethiopian monarch of Napata during the time that his brother, Shabako, ruled Egypt. Because Snefer-Ra Tirhakah Piankhi was able to seize power over Egypt after his brother's failure to stop Sennacherib, he enforced his own political will over that country by placing his son, Shebitku, on the throne of Egypt as pharaoh. Two years later, Shebitku completely usurped the pharaohship from his uncle Shabako. Nevertheless, Shabako was able to continue in the capacity as a lesser king over parts of Egypt until he accomplished 50 years of rule. Afterwards, he returned to Kush.

Conclusion

The evidence compels us to the conclusion that we are dealing with two different kings named Tirhakah: one who ruled Kush and the other a Kushite who only ruled Egypt. The fact that Tsawi Tirhakah, also known as Snefer-Ra Piankhi, was the king of Kush and ruled during the early years of Sennacherib readily establishes him as the Tirhakah of Scriptures. Kashta had placed his sons Shabako over Egypt and Tsawi Tirhakah (Snefer-Ra Piankhi) over Kush. To assure Ethiopian political dominance in Egypt, Tirhakah Piankhi later assigned his sons Shebitku and Nefertem Tirhakah to govern Egypt as pharaohs. These men, being descendants of Usimare Piankhi, Pharaoh of Egypt, were legitimate heirs to the Egyptian throne and acceptable to the Egyptian masses. But more importantly, they represented the superior power of Snefer-Ra Piankhi over his brother Shabako after the defeat of the latter's army by Sennacherib at Eltekeh.

The recognition that the king named Tirhakah, who commanded the army of Kush that came against Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E., was a different king than the Tirhakah who later ruled Egypt as pharaoh removes the unnecessary obstacle placed as an interpretation upon the history found in Scriptures. The existence of an earlier Tirhakah, the evidence of which until now has been generally ignored, dismantles the heart of the two invasion hypothesis and once again confirms that there was only one invasion against Judah by Sennacherib. Our dates of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E. for the Sabbath and Jubilee years during the reign of Hezekiah, thereby, stand unshaken.

Chapter X

The Issues of Chronology

Part VIII of the Sabbath and Jubilee of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

The last argument advanced to support the two-invasion hypothesis is the charge that the Assyrian records and the Scriptures, as well as the other ancient versions of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, are incompatible, contradicting each other with regard to their chronology. Fullerton, for example, came to the "very serious conclusion" that the Assyrian records and the biblical narrative "are in irreconcilable contradiction."[1] These supposed contradictions are then held up as a basis for disassociating Sennacherib's third campaign of 701 B.C.E. from the ill-fated part of the invasion reported by Scriptures. As a result, it is then claimed that the Scriptures and other non-Assyrian sources are either confused or they deliberately merged two separate invasions into one legendary story.

This charge of inconsistency is simply untrue. It arose chiefly because of the misidentification of the Tirhakah in Scriptures with the Kushite pharaoh of Egypt, Nefertem Tirhakah, and the chronology such an association involves. Now that we have eliminated this problem, it is merely a matter of allowing the internal evidence from the relevant ancient texts to determine their respective chronological arrangement and place. The most reliable course is to admit the basic validity of all our ancient texts: Scriptures, Assyrian, and secondary sources. Laying these sources alongside one another we find that each tells its own part of the drama and that each is clearly interrelated with the others.

To demonstrate the fidelity and harmony of only one invasion, Chart F has been provided at the end of this chapter. This chart places the Assyrian and secondary sources in parallel with the three important versions found in Scriptures. The reader will readily see that the story they tell is complete and uncontradictory, allowing for only one attack on Judah by King Sennacherib. In turn, this evidence will seal our dating of the sabbath and Jubilee years during the reign of King Hezekiah as 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E., Abib reckoning.

Background for the Parallel Stories

To understand the chronology of these parallel stories we must first reiterate several points already established by our research. To begin with, all ancient sources confess to only one invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.[2] The records also show that this campaign was aimed primarily against Egypt.[3] The attack on Judah, the ally of Egypt and Kush, was merely part of that greater war.

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1 BS, 63, p. 587.
2 Chap. V.
3 Chap. VI, pp. 67–71, and p. 70, n. 45.

At the same time, each of our sources approach the story from a different perspective. They included only those portions of the history believed by their authors to be necessary. The Assyrians, for example, felt the need to report victories. To accommodate this political and propaganda goal, the Assyrian scribes often left out negative details and readjusted the order of events to create an allusion of success when failure had actually occurred.[4] What they did report was accurate in its details, but they often circumvented the truth by omission and by interpretation. This method is apparent with the Assyrian records from Sennacherib's third campaign. Not only does the internal data reveal an altered chronology and a hollow claim of victory, but, when we compare its history with that found in Scriptures, one finds the order of events tactfully switched around.[5] The basic information of each event, though chronologically rearranged, is nevertheless valid.

The Assyrian records of Sennacherib's third campaign also deal with its subject matter based upon geographical considerations: discussing the occurrences in Phoenicia first, Palestia second, and Judah last, regardless of the fact that many of the events reported in the Palestim and Judahite parts of the conflict were parallel.[6] The battle at Eltekeh and the conquest of Ekron, for instance, followed the payment of tribute by Hezekiah and did not precede it.[7] Also, Padi was returned to the throne of Ekron after having been freed from his captivity in Jerusalem, not before.[8]

Scriptures, meanwhile, emphasized those aspects of the campaign which encompassed deliverance: the deliverance of the city of Jerusalem (a type of the future deliverance of the city from Gog and Magog)[9] and the personal deliverance of King Hezekiah (representative of the king messiah).[10] Its author did not see the necessity of dealing with the Phoenician, Palestim, and Egyptian portions of the history. The version found in 2 Chronicles, meanwhile, is an abridgement of those found in Isaiah and 2 Kings. Yet it also provides parts of the history not included by the others.[11]

Secondary sources had their own agenda. Josephus was more interested in reporting the history of his nation. To help convince his readers, he brought in details from other sources. The later Talmudic writers cared about the prophetic significance of the story as it related to Jewish culture (for example, pointing out the importance of the destruction of the Assyrian army on Passover). The Egyptian version, told by Herodotus, was only concerned with the miraculous deliverance of the Egyptians, while Berosus, the Chaldaean historian, saw the war in historical terms as a great defeat of the Assyrians.

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4 Chap. VI, pp. 64–67.

5 For example, the Assyrians list the payment of Hezekiah's tribute after the blockade of Jerusalem while Scriptures and Josephus both report that Hezekiah paid tribute before Rabshakeh was even sent to Jerusalem to begin the blockade (see Chart F, pp. 135–138).

6 For example, the battle at Eltekeh occurred during the initial stages of the blockade of Jerusalem, not before that blockade began, as listed in the Assyrian records (cf. Chart F, pp. 138–146).

7 Chart F, pp. 137–145.

8 Ibid.

9 Cf. the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib and his army with Ezek., 38:1–39:29, and Rev., 20:7–9.

10 For the personal deliverance of Hezekiah see Chart F, pp. 148–151, 156.

11 I.e. 2 Chron., 32:2–8, 32:11, 32:14f, 32:16–19, 32:22–23.

Some of these accounts give extended quotes while others only quote in part. Some go to great lengths to discuss certain aspects of the war while others avoid those details altogether. But none of these preferences justify discrediting any of our sources. It is merely a matter of laying out every version in parallel, as we have done in Chart F. Then, by simply allowing the sources to define their history for us, the harmony is readily seen. In reality, these ancient accounts, when used in conjunction with one another, agree perfectly. As one reads through these parallel versions, considering all of the evidence heretofore presented, he finds the following complete and well-balanced history:

The Invasion of Western Asia

In the winter of 702/701 B.C.E. (no later than mid-February of 701 B.C.E.), in the 14th year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib made a surprise offensive against western Asia and the Egyptian empire. With an armed force of roughly half a million men,[12] he first attacked the rebel Phoenician city-states led by Luli, king of Sidon.[13]

After securing Phoenicia, many of the rebellious kings of that region, as well as the Trans-Jordan states of Ammon, Moab, and Edom, and the northernmost of the coastal Palestim (Philistine) city-state, Ashdod (which had not survived the earlier revolt of 712 B.C.E. with Judah and the remaining parts of Palestia),[14] met Sennacherib at *Ushû* to submit.[15] King Hezekiah of Judah and the rest of the Palestim states, who were allied with each other and with Egypt, on the other hand, continued to resist. They laid their hope in the promise of assistance from Egypt and its Kushite pharaoh, Shabako.[16]

Marching southwards along the coast (Map 1), Sennacherib next struck at some tributary cities belonging to the Palestim city-state of Ashkelon (Joppa, Beth-Dagon, etc.).[17] These cities were located north of Palestia (Philistia) proper. Carrying off their spoils, the Assyrian king then moved south against Ashkelon, the next major city along the coast after Ashdod. He quickly conquered Ashkelon and deported its king and his family to Assyria.[18] Sennacherib's eyes now turned to King Hezekiah, the chief figure a few years earlier in the revolt of the Palestim and Judahite states from the Assyrian empire.[19]

There can be little doubt that, while Sennacherib himself was taking the coastal road towards Ashkelon, a great part of his army was simultaneously

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12 Chap. VII, pp. 78–81.

13 Chart F, p. 134b.

14 Ashdod was part of the revolt of 712 B.C.E. against King Sargon of Assyria, along with Israel, Judah, Palestia, and the Trans-Jordan states (ARAB, 2, #29f, 195). Sargon claims only to have retaken Ashdod (ibid.). Therefore, the quick surrender of Ashdod, which had been under Assyrian control until Ashdod's more recent revolt in 702 B.C.E., reflects its different status from the other Palestim states, who were allied with Judah during their successful revolt in 712 B.C.E. (see Chap. IV, pp. 41f, n. 18).

15 Chart F, pp. 134b. The city of *Ushû* was located on the mainland opposite Tyre.

16 2 Kings, 18:19–21; Isa., 36:4–6; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:2. That Shabako was the pharaoh of Egypt at this time see Chap. VIII, p. 95 & n. 86, and Chart C.

17 Chart F, p. 135b.

18 Ibid.

19 Chart F, pp. 135–136. That Hezekiah was the ringleader in the revolt see Chap. IV, p. 43, and ns. 25 & 27; Chap. V, p. 57, n. 37.

marching southwards, most likely upon the road from Joppa,[20] to make their initial strike at Judah. As a good portion of the Assyrian army began overwhelming the fortified cities of Judah from the north, Sennacherib himself took his main force, turned eastward from Ashkelon, and began laying siege to the important Judahite fortress-city of Lachish.[21]

Hearing of the initial Assyrian advance against Palestia and Judah, Hezekiah quickly began re-enforcing his fortifications at Jerusalem and making other preparations to resist a siege.[22] But when he heard how rapidly his defense cities fell, Hezekiah realized it was fruitless to continue his resistance. He sent to Sennacherib, now besieging Lachish, for conditions of peace.[23]

Sennacherib made terms and Hezekiah, in response, sent the required tribute to the Assyrian king at Lachish. He also sent other gifts to Nineveh.[24] Hezekiah, as well, brought King Padi of Ekron out of prison and handed him over to Sennacherib.[25] He believed that the Assyrian king would now retire from Judah, leaving Hezekiah to peacefully govern his greatly reduced kingdom. But the Assyrian king had no intention of honoring this agreement. It was merely a ruse to financially weaken his Judahite foe. His true purpose was to deport the rebellious people of Judah to another distant land.[26] With this in mind, Sennacherib reneged on his treaty and, after Lachish surrendered, he sent a large force of men from Lachish under Rabshakeh to persuade the Judahites to open their capital city to be spoiled and to surrender themselves for deportation.[27]

Rabshakeh gave Sennacherib's message to Hezekiah's chief men. When Hezekiah received these words from his officials, he tore his garments, put on sackcloth, and entered into the house of Yahweh. He also sent messengers to the prophet Isaiah seeking advice from Yahweh. Isaiah sent back to the king, foretelling him, among other things, that the Assyrian king would hear a report and turn back to his own land.[28] Relying upon the instructions from the prophet, Hezekiah sent word to the Assyrian representative that he refused to surrender. The Assyrian response was to shut up Jerusalem, throwing earthworks against the city gates, blockading the city so that no one could either enter or leave.[29]

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20 CIOT, p. 302.

21 Chart F, pp. 135–138. Sennacherib, himself, began laying siege to Lachish, as noted in 2 Kings, 18:14.

22 See 2 Chron., 32:2–8. Chart F, pp. 136–137.

23 Chart F, pp. 137–138.

24 Chart F, pp. 137–138. Also see our discussion above Chap. VII, pp. 77f.

25 Padi had been imprisoned by Hezekiah in Jerusalem prior to the Assyrian attack on that city (Chart F, pp. 145–146; cf. 2 Kings, 18:7f). Yet after the blockade of Jerusalem began, when no one was allowed to enter or leave Jerusalem, Sennacherib was able to place Padi on the throne at Ekron (Chart F, pp. 144–146). Sennacherib states in the Taylor Prism (3:14ff), "Padi, their king, I brought out of Jerusalem. I set him on the royal throne over them (the people of Ekron)." This data proves that Padi was brought out of Jerusalem before the blockade of that city began. Therefore, he was given into the hands of the king of Assyria at the time that Hezekiah paid tribute.

26 This intention is directly stated by Rabshakeh as quoted in 2 Kings, 18:31f; Isa., 36:16f; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:2.

27 Chart F, pp. 138–142.

28 Chart F, pp. 143–144.

29 Chart F, p. 144.

The Egyptian Counterattack

In the next phase of the war the Assyrian king prepared to oppose the Egyptian and Kushite counterattack. A report that an Egyptian and Kushite army was marching to the aid of their Palestim (and Judahite) allies reached Sennacherib while he was still at Lachish. Rabshakeh, for example, while arguing against Hezekiah, speaks of the expected arrival of the forces of the king of Egypt (i.e. the Ethiopian, Pharaoh Shabako) upon whom Hezekiah was relying.[30]

Josephus, likewise, reports that Sennacherib took the field against an Ethiopian and Egyptian force—an event which he distinguishes from the later arrival of Tirhakah[31]—at the same time that Rabshakeh was sent to spoil Jerusalem.[32] A day or two later, when Rabshakeh returned to Lachish, he found that Sennacherib had already moved against Libnah.[33] Libnah was very near the region of Altakû (Eltekeh), the scene of the battle between Sennacherib and the combined Egyptian and Ethiopian forces during Sennacherib's third campaign (see Map 1).[34] Libnah was most likely Sennacherib's camp during this conflict with the "countless host" of Egyptians and Kushites. After winning the battle, the Assyrian king seized the cities of Altakû (Eltekeh), Tamnah, and Ekron.[35] He also killed the governors and nobles of Ekron who had rebelled and then returned the Assyrian loyalist Padi to that city's throne.[36]

After reporting the Assyrian victories—i.e. the defeat of the Ethiopian and Egyptian forces, the conquest of Palestia, the overthrow of the walled cities of Judah, and the reception of tribute from King Hezekiah—the Assyrian records break off their discussion of the war. Their silence is a reflection of the disaster that followed.

The Invasion of Egypt

After his great victory over the Egyptian and Ethiopian hosts sent by Shabako, Sennacherib sent a large expeditionary force against the fortress-city of Pelusium, the gateway city on the northeastern border of Egypt. Thus began the ill-fated part of his campaign. About three weeks later, after settling the affairs in Phoenicia and Palestia, the Assyrian king divided his army, leaving part of them at Jerusalem while he marched with the rest to Pelusium.[37] By the time of his arrival, the siege-force had already spent a great deal of time raising earthworks to great heights against Pelusium. An army of Egyptians under King Sethos had also arrived on the scene.[38]

In the night before Sennacherib intended to begin his assault upon the city of Pelusium (i.e. the night of Abib 10),[39] his army was afflicted by an outbreak

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30 2 Kings, 18:20–24; Isa., 36:5–10.

31 The initial war with the Egyptians and Ethiopians is reported by Josephus in *Antiq.*, 10:1:1(4). The arrival of Tirhakah, after this first battle, is explained in Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:2:1(17).

32 Chart F, p. 138, cf. p. 144.

33 Chart F, p. 144.

34 Chart F, pp. 145. For the locations of Eltekeh, Libnah and Lachish see Chap. III, p. 30, n. 8.

35 Chart F, p. 145.

36 Chart F, pp. 145–146.

37 See our discussion in Chap. VII, pp. 79f.

38 Chart F, pp. 146–147.

39 For the date Abib 10, see Chart F, p. 147, n. 33.

of plague (apparently brought to them by a great horde of mice).[40] No sooner had this plague struck when Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah (Tsawi Tirhakah, Snefer-Ra Piankhi), the king of Kush, was coming out of his country to fight against him.[41] The Kushite king was coming to the aid of his Ethiopian and Egyptian allies in Egypt by making a spring offensive against their Assyrian foe.

The outbreak of a plague at Pelusium made it impossible for Sennacherib to meet the superior forces of Tirhakah. Accordingly, the Assyrian king was compelled to quickly retreat and fall back to Jerusalem. There he expected to join up with the rest of his army. Because of these desperate circumstances, a great number of the implements of war were left behind at Pelusium, along with the dead Assyrian soldiers. When the Egyptians later entered what remained of the Assyrian camp, they found mice chewing at the bow strings of these abandoned weapons.[42]

The Retreat

As Sennacherib began his retreat, he made one last ditch effort to intimidate Hezekiah into submission. He sent Hezekiah letters warning him to surrender, reminding him that it was still the intention of the Assyrians to capture Jerusalem.[43] That same day (Abib 10),[44] Hezekiah became ill and was near death. He prayed to Yahweh to spare his life and to allow him a legitimate successor, since he was without a legal male heir. He was told by the prophet that Yahweh would add fifteen years to his life. As a sign that this was true, it was explained to Hezekiah that, on the third day after, the sun's shadow would move backwards ten steps (hours) on the sundial at the house of Ahaz and, on that same day, he would both recover from his sickness and go up into the Temple.[45]

On Abib 13, both the sun's shadow returned ten steps and the messengers from Sennacherib arrived.[46] Having recovered from his illness and upon receiving the words sent by the Assyrian king, Hezekiah, as foretold, went to the Temple.[47] Here he once again pleaded with Yahweh to save Jerusalem and its people. In response, Yahweh informed Hezekiah that the Assyrians would

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40 Chart F, p. 147. For a discussion of the plague see Chap. III, p. 33, n. 35.

41 Chart F, pp. 147–148. This report of the coming of Tirhakah is a fulfillment of the prophecy earlier given to Hezekiah that Sennacherib would hear a report and return to his own land (Chart F, pp. 143–144).

42 Chart F, 147–148. The explanation of the Egyptians, that the defeat of the Assyrians was as the result of a host of mice eating through the bows and other weapons of the enemy, is readily explained. After coming into contact with these rodents and suffering from the illness they carried, the Assyrians fled the scene leaving many of their weapons behind. The mice, left to despoil the camp, were found by the Egyptians the next day gnawing at these weapons. The explanation of Josephus, that the mice were the instrument of a plague, brings the true cause of the destruction of the Assyrian army at Pelusium into focus. It may well be that the messengers sent regularly by Sennacherib to the troops at Jerusalem carried a pneumonic plague with them, which may account for its subsequent and massive outbreak outside the walls of Jerusalem.

43 Chart F, p. 148.

44 That Hezekiah's illness occurred on the same day as the plague at Pelusium see Chart F, p. 147, n. 33.

45 Chart F, pp. 148–151.

46 Chart F, pp. 151–152.

47 Chart F, p. 152; cf. Chap. V, pp. 53–55.

turn back on the road upon which they came. As a sign that the people of Jerusalem would remain in their land, this year they would eat from the field that which grows of itself (a sabbath year), and the next year eat of the same (a Jubilee year), and in the third year they would once again sow and harvest their own land.[48] Hezekiah was also told by the prophet Isaiah that the Assyrian king would neither take the city, put up siege mounds, nor shoot an arrow against it.[49]

That night, being Passover (Abib 14), 185,000 men in the "camp of the king of Assyria" were, like their associates at Pelusium, destroyed by a plague.[50] When Sennacherib arrived at the scene a few days later (Abib 20),[51] he found his forces at Jerusalem decimated and those left to him likewise "in danger from a plague."[52] With such huge losses, all hopes for a military victory in the West vanished. Thrown into a state of alarm and terrible anxiety, and fearful for what remained of his army, Sennacherib fled home to Nineveh.[53] All that the Assyrian king could do was to record on his inscriptions those parts of the campaign that could be construed as a victory. Having fled from the Kushite king and unable to take the city of Jerusalem, the seal of Sennacherib's campaign now became the fabulous tribute paid earlier by King Hezekiah.[54]

Remaining Questions and Issues

Our attention must now turn to the last vestiges of what are believed to be questions and issues of chronology claimed as impediments to the smoothness and harmony of the one invasion history. A close examination shows that these assumed problems are in reality built upon misconstructed and premanufactured history. They are intended to cast doubt where none should exist. The following are the most important of these challenges and their rebuttal:

- "Why did Hezekiah both surrender and refuse to surrender?"[55] That is, "Why did Hezekiah surrender and pay tribute, only later to fail to surrender when Sennacherib demanded that the city be open to him?" Because Hezekiah came to terms in one part of the story and refused submission in another, it is believed that these represent two different invasions by Sennacherib.

This question glosses over the entire thrust of the history. In the first instance, Hezekiah believed that if he agreed to pay tribute his throne would be saved and his people would be allowed to retain their land. There was no demand in the first agreement to open the city to the invaders. Yet, when Sennacherib reneged on his treaty, new conditions were drawn up:

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48 For our discussion of this issue see Chap. III, pp. 30–32.
49 Chart F, pp. 152–155.
50 Chart F, p. 155.
51 That Sennacherib would have arrived at Jerusalem on Abib 20 see Chart F, p. 147, n. 33.
52 Jos., Antiq., 10:1:5.
53 Chart F, p. 156.
54 See Chap. V, pp. 56–59.
55 AUSS, 4, p. 22.

surrender the city and prepare its people for deportation.[56] Trusting in Yahweh, Hezekiah refused these new and destructive conditions.

• "Would Hezekiah have continued to rely on Egypt after the battle of Eltekeh?"[57]

There is no record that he did. After the Assyrian victory at Eltekeh, Hezekiah relied on Yahweh.[58] The Egyptian contribution to Judah was moot at this point. Indeed, there was every incentive not to surrender the city. It meant certain death for Hezekiah and his nobles, deportation of the remaining Judahites, and the spoiling of the city and its people. It was already clear that Sennacherib's word was worthless. Why should they trust him even if the Assyrians guaranteed the safety of Hezekiah and his nobles? If the Judahites resisted, they at least had a chance that Yahweh would deliver them.

• "Why was Hezekiah treated so leniently in spite of the fact that Hezekiah was the leading spirit of the revolt?"[59]

There was no leniency. If Sennacherib could have broke open the city of Jerusalem he certainly would have killed Hezekiah and the Judahite nobles, just as he had done to the nobles of Ekron.[60] No doubt this is why Hezekiah agreed to pay an enormous tribute in the first place, fearing personal reprisal if he surrendered and opened the city gates to the Assyrians. The allusion of leniency comes in the Assyrian records only because the Assyrian king was unable to conquer Jerusalem and, to save face, made it appear that the reception of tribute was the seal of his campaign.

• "Why was Jerusalem only blockaded and not besieged, captured and destroyed?"[61]

It was only blockaded because a major effort would have been required to break open the city (it took a year and a half for Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia to perform the same task). Furthermore, Pelusium had to be taken first because of its strategic location. Once Pelusium was secured and the Assyrian front with Egypt fixed, attention could turn towards a massive attack on and a long siege of Jerusalem.

• "What gave Hezekiah courage to continue resistance, after all his allies had been crushingly defeated?"[62]

First, Josephus describes Hezekiah as a coward, fearing even to come out to meet with the Assyrian representatives.[63] This incident demonstrates that, at the beginning, it may not have been courage that pushed Hezekiah to resist but fear for his life. Second, the walls of Jerusalem were heavily fortified

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56 2 Kings, 18:27–32; Isa., 36:12–17; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:2.
57 AUSS, 4, p. 22.
58 Chart F, pp. 145–155.
59 SIP, p. 18.
60 Chart F, pp. 145–146.
61 SIP, p. 18.
62 SIP, p. 31, n. 64.
63 Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:2.

and he could have resisted an Assyrian onslaught and siege for several months. Third, and most importantly, he trusted in Yahweh, who promised to deliver him.

- "Why did Rabshakeh tell the Judahites not to trust in Yahweh but also claim that Yahweh had sent him to take the city?"[64]

This question is based upon the belief in some quarters that different parts of Rabshakeh's speech could represent two different campaigns. This conclusion is far too extreme and unwarranted. The speech was merely Assyrian rhetoric meant to justify the Assyrian attack on Judah and their demand for surrender. Rabshakeh was calling attention to the fact that the previous Judahite king, Ahaz, had pledged loyalty to the Assyrians when he became their vassal.[65] In effect, the Judahites were obligated by a vassal treaty, a treaty broken by Hezekiah when he revolted.[66]

A unique feature of these vassal and alliance treaties was the fact that they were pledged by an oath in the name of the vassal's or ally's own deity.[67] Because the Judahites rebelled and broke their oath, Yahweh, Rabshakeh argued, was on the side of Assyria in this dispute. On this account Hezekiah should surrender the city.[68] At the same time, holding that the Assyrian deities were superior to Yahweh, Rabshakeh advised the Judahites not to rely upon either Yahweh or Hezekiah to deliver them out of the hand of the more powerful king of Assyria and the more powerful Assyrian deities.

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64 This is a summarization of the question posed in IAC, pp. 82f.

65 The alliance between Assyria and Judah was formed by King Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, when Ahaz was troubled by the nations of Aram (Syria) and Israel (2 Kings, 16:7–9; 2 Chron., 28:16–21).

66 2 Kings, 18:7.

67 JBL, 78, pp. 199–204; BA, 17, p. 60; TC, pp. 29–153. E.g. 2 Chron., 36:11–13. Also see, as examples of these vassal and alliance treaties and the oaths required, ANET, pp. 199–201, a Khatti (Hatti, Khitti, etc.) and Egyptian treaty sworn to by "a thousand gods of the male gods and female gods of them of the land of Hatti, together with a thousand gods of the male gods and of the female gods of them of the land of Egypt"; pp. 203–205, a Khatti and Amurru treaty sworn to by "gods and goddesses of the Hatti land and the gods and goddesses of Amurru land"; pp. 205f, a Khatti and Mitanni treaty sworn to by "the gods of the contracting parties," followed by a list of Mitanni and Khatti deities; pp. 532, a treaty between Idrimi and Pillya, sworn to by their gods; pp. 532f, a treaty between Assyria and Arpad, sworn to by the deities of each country; pp. 533f, Assyria and Tyre, sworn to by the deities of Assyria and the Baal deities of Phoenicia.

Childs (IAC, pp. 84f) takes an opposing stand based upon two points: First, he believes that it is a debatable question whether the Assyrians did require their vassals to swear by the vassal's own deities as well as by the Assyrian. He then cites Mendenhall (BA, 17, p. 60) as denying they did (when in fact Mendenhall supports the fact that they did). Neither does Childs offer proof that it is debatable. All evidence heretofore, as the authors and sources cited above demonstrate, proves that the vassals were commonly made to swear by their own deities. Second, Childs holds that Hezekiah's sin was not in profaning the name of Yahweh and breaking the oath in the treaty but by his removing the altars of Yahweh. This view is definitely incorrect. When Rabshakeh brought up the issue of Hezekiah removing the altars it was as an accusation that Hezekiah was abandoning Yahweh and causing the Judahites to forgo their true worship. Of course, Ahaz had actually adopted pagan Baal worship in the guise of Yahweh worship. Hezekiah had removed these altars built on high places in the name of Yahweh in order to purge the country from these pagan practices (see 2 Kings, 16:3–4, 10–18, cf. 17:7–18; 2 Kings, 18:1–6; 2 Chron., 28:1–4, 20–25; 2 Chron., 29:1–19, 31:1). Rabshakeh was trying to lure the Judahites back into Baal worship, encouraging the old Israelite error of identifying Yahweh with Baal. If he could convince the Judahites of this argument, they would accept the treaty of Ahaz and surrender.

68 Chart F, pp. 139–142.

• "Did the expedition of Rabshakeh recounted in 2 Kings, 18:17ff., occur before or after the battle of Altaku recounted in T [the Assyrian text]."[69] And with it, "When did Hezekiah pay his tribute, before or after the battle of Eltekeh?"[70]

Both the payment of tribute by Hezekiah and Rabshakeh's expedition happened before the battle of Altaku (Eltekeh). This point is established in three ways. First, according to the accounts in Scriptures and Josephus, Rabshakeh's arrival at Jerusalem occurred shortly after Hezekiah had paid the tribute and Sennacherib, in turn, reneged on the treaty.[71] Second, Rabshakeh's words to Hezekiah show an expectation of an impending Egyptian counterattack.[72] Third, Josephus notes that, when Sennacherib set out to meet the Egyptian and Kushite army, he had already left behind Rabshakeh with a large army to plunder Jerusalem.[73]

• "Why did Sennacherib remove from Lachish to Libnah?"[74] That is, why move northwest and away from Jerusalem to confront Hezekiah?

Libnah lay near the plain of Eltekeh where the Assyrian forces battled the Egyptian and Kushite army. The Egyptians and Kushites came to Ekron on the Palestim road and were moving southeast to oppose the Assyrian king.[75] The only logical move for the Assyrian king was to march northwest to oppose this threat (Map 1).

• "Why did Sennacherib not take advantage of his victory at Eltekeh and invade Egypt?"[76]

The records prove that he did.[77]

• It is assumed by some that Tirhakah led an Egyptian army against Sennacherib,[78] presupposing that the reference in Scriptures was to the pharaoh named Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt.

This view is given despite the fact that there are no ancient sources making such a claim. This unsupported statement has merely added confusion to the issue of chronology by equating the Tirhakah of Scriptures with the Egyptian monarch of that name. As we have demonstrated in our study, it was Tsawi Tirhakah, the king of Kush, who opposed Sennacherib, not Nefertem Tirhakah. Tsawi came out of his own country with a large army to the assistance of his Egyptian allies.[79] He therefore was at the head of an Ethiopian, not Egyptian, army.

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69 BS, 63, 594.
70 SIP, p. 22.
71 Chart F, pp. 137–139.
72 2 Kings, 18:19–25; Isa., 36:4–10; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:2(6f).
73 Jos., *Antiq*., 10:1:1.
74 BS, 63, p. 613.
75 See discussion in Chap. VI, pp. 69f.
76 SIP, p. 16.
77 Chart F, pp. 146–147.
78 E.g., AHI, pp. 301, 302.
79 Thus the words of Josephus in *Antiq*., 10:2:1, to the effect that Tirhakah was coming to the aid of his Egyptian allies.

• Some conclude that Sennacherib fought with the Tirhakah mentioned in Scriptures at Eltekeh.[80] Yet this view presents problems. According to Scriptures, Sennacherib retreated from Tirhakah; yet in the Assyrian inscriptions Sennacherib was victorious over the Egyptian and Kushite forces, going on to overthrow other cities. Because of this contradiction, it is determined that the Scriptures and other sources have been wrong and have confused two different conflicts. Along with this assertion comes a second dispute. Advocates of two invasions charge that the attack route recorded in Sennacherib's records of his third campaign is incompatible with an attack against Egypt and Tirhakah.

The confusion represented by these conclusions and assertions are eliminated once it is admitted that there were two separate incidents: one at Eltekeh and another occurring later at Pelusium. The Assyrian king does mention "the kings of Muzri (Lower Egypt), the bowmen, chariots and horses of the king of Meluḫḫa (Upper Egypt)" and "the Muzri charioteers and princes, together with the charioteers of Meluḫḫa" which he captured at the battle of Eltekeh.[81] But nowhere does he give the name of the monarch of Upper Egypt, nor does he imply that the pharaoh of Meluḫḫa, let alone the king of Kush proper, was anywhere near the scene of the battle. The Tirhakah mentioned in Scriptures, on the other hand, personally led his army.[82] Therefore, if such a confrontation with Tirhakah had occurred at Eltekeh, a victory over this Kushite king would most definitely have been the object of much boasting in Sennacherib's annals. Tirhakah's name, as a result, would have been prominently mentioned by the Assyrian king.

More importantly, it is evident from the parallel accounts of our ancient sources, as shown in Chart F, that the threat of Tirhakah's advance happened at some point after the Eltekeh conflict. Josephus notes that Sennacherib went out to meet the Egyptian and Ethiopian forces when Rabshakeh was sent against Jerusalem to blockade the city.[83] This was an expected battle and, accordingly, points directly to the conflict at Eltekeh. Later, when Sennacherib heard that Tirhakah and his army were coming out to fight, he was surprised and forced to retreat without offering battle.[84]

Next, Josephus and Herodotus point out that Sennacherib retreated from Tirhakah while he was at Pelusium, Egypt.[85] These authors, we might note, have the only record of Sennacherib's location at the time of his retreat.[86] Eltekeh, on the other hand, was near Ekron in Palestia.[87] The victory of Assyria at Eltekeh, therefore, must not be confused with their defeat at Pelusium. It was while Sennacherib besieged Pelusium that word of Tirhakah's advancing army arrived.[88]

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80 E.g. NOT, p. 60.

81 Chart F, p. 145.

82 2 Kings, 19:9 and Isa., 37:9, both relate that the report given to Sennacherib stated that "he (Tirhakah) has come out to fight with you." Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4, states that Tirhakah "was coming to the aid of the Egyptians with a large force."

83 Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:1(4).

84 Chart F, pp. 147–148.

85 Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4(17f); Herodotus, 2:141; and see Chart F, pp. 146–148.

86 2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9; Targ. Jon., *2 Kings*, 19:9, *Isa.*, 37:9, all tell of the retreat of the Assyrians from Tirhakah but say nothing of Sennacherib's location at the time.

87 See Chap. III, p. 30, n. 8.

88 Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:2:1.

Finally, ancient accounts testify that Sennacherib retreated and never fought with Tirhakah.[89] Yet the Assyrian records not only claim a battle at Eltekeh but reveal further military activity by the Assyrians immediately after that battle, at which time they besieged Eltekeh, Tamnah, and Ekron.[90] Therefore, the battle on the plain of Eltekeh could not have been a conflict with Tirhakah. In fact, as we have already demonstrated, the king of Meluḫḫa who provided troops at Eltekeh and is alluded to in the inscriptions of Sennacherib was Shabako, the first Kushite Pharaoh of Egypt's Dynasty XXV (714/713–700/699 B.C.E.). He was directly allied with the petty Egyptian dynasts during this period.

Conclusion

Our examination of the evidence demonstrates that there are no chronological conflicts between any of our ancient sources. Therefore, with no remaining obstacles, we are compelled to the conclusion that there was only one invasion of Judah by King Sennacherib. This single invasion is represented in the Assyrian records by Sennacherib's third campaign and is said to have started during the 14th year of King Hezekiah of Judah (702/701 B.C.E.). Accordingly, since the Assyrian army at Jerusalem was struck by a plague shortly after the beginning of the next year, on the 14th of Abib, the sabbath and Jubilee years are confirmed as the fifteenth and sixteenth years of King Hezekiah, the years 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

The sabbath year and Jubilee year of the fifteenth and sixteenth years of King Hezekiah, we must add, are not just assured to us by the evidence for Sennacherib's campaign against Judah. As we proceed through our study, it shall be demonstrated time and again that the sabbath cycle represented by these above years are reaffirmed by the evidence for other sabbath years. Together, the information for all the various known sabbath years will prove that the system "A" cycle is unimpeachable.

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89 2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4.
90 Chart F, pp. 144–145.

CHART F

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E. (Parallel Accounts)

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	**Josephus,** ***Antiquities***
			10:1:4(20b) **[Berosus]** (20b) But Berosus, who wrote the *History of Chaldaea*, also mentions King Senacheirimos and tells how he ruled over the Assyrians and how he made an expedition against all Asia[1] and Egypt;

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1 By Asia is meant Syria, Phoenicia, Palestia, Judah, the Trans-Jordan and neighbouring countries.
2 AS, pp. 29-34, 2:37-3:49; ARAB, 2, #239-240.
3 AS, pp. 68-70, ℓ.18-32; ARAB, 2, #309-312.
4 AS, p. 77, ℓ.17-22a; ARAB, 2, #326-327.

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

Taylor Prism[2]	(F1) Bull Inscription[3]	(F2) Bull Inscription[4]	Nebi Yunis Inscription[5]
2:37-49 (37) In my third campaign I went against the Khatti-land.[6] (38) Luli (Elulæus), king of Sidon,—the terrifying splendor (lit., terrors of the splendors) (39) of my sovereignty overcame him and far off (40) into the midst of the sea he fled. (There) he died. (41) Great Sidon, Little Sidon, (42) Bit-Zitti, Zaribtu, Mahalliba, (43) Ushû, Akzib, Akkû, (44) his strong, walled cities, where there were supplies (lit., fodder and drinking-places) (45) for his garrisons,—the terrors of the weapon of Assur, (46) my lord, overpowered them and they bowed in submission at my feet. (47) Tuba'lu (Ethbaal, Ithobalus) I seated on the royal throne (48) over them, and tribute, gift(s) for my majesty, (49) I imposed upon him for all time, without ceasing.	ℓ.**18-19a** (18) In my third campaign I went against the Khatti-land. Luli, king of Sidon,—my terrifying splendor overcame him, and from Tyre he fled to Iadnana (Cyprus) (19a) in the midst of the sea, and died. Tuba'lu I placed on his royal throne, (and) imposed my kingly tribute upon him.	ℓ.**17-20a** (17) And Luli, king of Sidon, was afraid to fight me (lit., feared my battle) and fled to Iadnana (Cyprus), (18) which is in the midst of the sea, and (there) sought a refuge. In that land, (19) in terror of the weapons of Assur, my lord, he died. Tuba'lu I placed on (20a) the throne of his kingdom, and imposed upon him my royal tribute.	ℓ.**13b-14** (13b) I deprived Luli, king of Sidon, of his kingdom. (14) Tuba'lu I set on his throne and imposed my royal tribute upon him.
2:50-60a (50) From Minhimmu (Menahem), the Shamsimuruni, (51) Tuba'lu the Sidoni, (52) Abdi-liti, the Arvadi, (53) Uru-milki, the Gubli, (54) Mitinti, the Ashdodi, (55) Budu-ilu, the Beth-Ammoni, (56) Kammusu-nadbi, the Moabi, (57) Malik-rammu, the Edomi,—(58) kings of Amurru, all of them, numerous presents, (59) as their heavy tribute, (60) they brought before me for the fourth time, and kissed my feet.	ℓ.**19b-20a** (19b) The kings of Amurru,[7] all of them, (20a) brought their heavy tribute before me in the neighborhood of the city of Ushû,[8]		

5 AS, p. 86, ℓ.13b-15; ARAB, 2, #347.
6 Khatti-land: the name of the West countries from Khatti in Asia Minor southward to Palestia.
7 Amurru represents Syria, Phoenicia, Samaria, Judah, Palestia and the Trans-Jordan states.
8 Ushû was located on the Phoenician mainland opposite the island city of Tyre.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
18:13 (13) And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiyahu, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came against all the fortified cities of Judah, and he captured them.	**36:1** (1) And it was, in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiyahu, Sennacherib king of Assyria came against all the fortified cities of Judah, and he captured them.	**32:1** (1) After these things and this faithfulness, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came; and he came to Judah and camped against the fortified cities, and commanded to break them open to himself.	**10:1:1(1)** [Josephus] (1) Now Hezekiah, the king of the two tribes, had occupied the throne for fourteen years when the king of Assyria, named Senacheirimos, marched against him with a great armament and took by storm all the cities of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

9 The position of these cities, located near the coast between Ushû and Ashkelon, and the statement, "In the course of my campaign" against Ashkelon, prove that this verse belongs chronologically before the mentioning of the overthrow of Ashkelon and the exile of King Sidka.

10 Ibid.

11 In both the Taylor and F1 Bull inscriptions, the details of the war against Judah and King Hezekiah are found in the latter part of Sennacherib's discussion of his third campaign. Nevertheless, the internal data from these records and the words of Josephus reveal that this expedition belongs chronologically between the victory over Ashkelon and the battle of Eltekeh (which was followed by the conquest of Ekron). First, Padi was returned to the throne of Ekron after Sennacherib took that city. Yet Padi had been held by Hezekiah in Jerusalem and was not released until after Hezekiah had submitted to the Assyrian king. Second, the expression "as for Hezekiah," which begins the report of the victory over Judah, reflects that Sennacherib merely wrote of the Palestim region first and then backtracked to the discussion of Judah. Third, the route

Taylor Prism	(F1) Bull Inscription	(F2) Bull Inscription	Nebi Yunis Inscription
2:68b-72[9] (68b) In the course of my campaign, (69) Beth-Dagon, Joppa, (70) Banaibarka, Asuru, cities (71) of Sidka, who had not speedily bowed in (72) submission at my feet, I conquered, I carried off their spoil.	ℓ.**22a**[10] (22a) In the course of my campaign I captured his (Sidka's) cities, which had not submitted at my feet, I carried off their spoil.		
2:60b-68a (60b) But Sidka, (61) king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted (62) to my yoke,—the gods of his father's house, himself, his wife, (63) his sons his daughters, his brothers, the seed of his father's house, (64) I tore away and brought to Assyria. (65) Sharru-lu-dâri, son of Rukibti, their former king, (66) I set over the people of Ashkelon and (67) I imposed upon him the payment of tribute (in the form of) presents to my majesty. (68a) He accepted (lit., bore) my yoke.	ℓ.**20b-21** (20b) And Sidka, king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted to my yoke,—the gods of his father's house, himself, together with [his] family, (21) I tore up and carried away to Assyria. Sharru-lu-dâri, son of Rukibti, their [former] king, I placed [over the people of] Ashkelon, and imposed my royal tribute upon him.		
3:18-27a[11] (18) As for Hezekiyahu, the Yahudahi (Judahite), (19) who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities, and (20) the small cities in their neighborhood, (21) which were without number,—by leveling with battering-rams (?) (22) and by bringing up siege en-	ℓ.**27b-28a**[12] (27b) As for Hezekiyahu, the Yahudahi (Judahite), who did not submit (28a) to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities and the small cities in their neighborhood, which were without number, I besieged, I captured. I plundered, as booty I counted them.	ℓ.**20b-21a** (20b) I devastated (21a) the wide province of Judah,	ℓ.**15a** (15a) I devastated the wide province of Judah.

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of the campaign shows that Sennacherib first attacked the coastal regions, striking at the Phoenicians cities, moving south to the region around Joppa, and then invading the Palestim town of Ashkelon. He next turned inland, invading Judah, making his own camp at the Judahite city of Lachish while other divisions moved against a number of other fortified cities in Judah. After sending troops to Jerusalem to blockade that city, Sennacherib turned north to Libnah (near Eltekeh) in the direction towards Ekron. Here he could take up a well-suited position for meeting the approaching Egyptian and Ethiopian forces who had been summoned by the people of Ekron. (The march of the Egyptian and Ethiopian forces would have been upon the Palestim Road along the coast, turning inland to Ekron and then towards the Assyrian army at Libnah. See Map 1). Fourth, Josephus reports that Sennacherib set out to meet this Egyptian and Ethiopian army at the same time that he sent a large force under Rabshakeh to sack Jerusalem.

12 Ibid.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
		32:2-8 (2) And Hezekiyahu saw that Sennacherib had come, and his face for battle against Jerusalem; (3) and he took counsel with his leaders and his mighty ones, to stop the waters of the springs that were on the outside of the city; and they helped him. (4) And many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs, and the brook that was rushing through the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water? (5) And he made himself strong and built all the wall that was broken, and raised up on (it) the towers, and outside another wall, and strengthened Millo, the city of David, and made darts in abundance, and shields. (6) And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them to him, to the street of the gate of the city, and spoke to their heart, saying, (7) Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor be cast down before the face of the king of Assyria, and before the face of all the multitude	

Taylor Prism	(F1) Bull Inscription	(F2) Bull Inscription	Nebi Yunis Inscription
gines (?), by attacking and storming on foot, (23) by mines, tunnels and breaches (?), I besieged and took (those cities). (24) 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, (25) horses, mules, asses, camels, (26) cattle and sheep, without number, I brought away from them (27) and counted as spoil.			

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
		that is with him. (8) With him is an arm of flesh, and with us is Yahweh our eloahi to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people were supported by the words of Hezekiyahu the king of Judah.	
18:14a (14a) And Hezekiyah the king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria, **to Lachish**, saying, I have offended, turn back from me; that which you put on me I will bear.			**10:1:1(2a)** (2a) And he was about to lead his force against Jerusalem also, but, before he could do so, Hezekiah sent envoys to him and promised to submit to him and pay whatever tribute he should impose.
18:14b-16 (14b) And the king of Assyria laid on Hezekiyah the king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold; (15) and Hezekiyah gave **all the silver that was found in the house of Yahweh**,[13] and in the treasures of the house of the king — (16) at that time Hezekiyah cut off the doors of the temple of Yahweh, and the pillars that Hezekiyah the king of Judah had overlaid, and gave them to the king of Assyria.			**10:1:1(2b-3)** (2b) When Senacheirimos heard what the envoys had to say, he decided not to continue with the war, but acceded to the request and, on receiving three hundred talents of silver and thirty of gold, agreed to withdraw amicably, and gave sworn pledges to the envoys that he would do him no harm at all but would retire under these terms. (3) So Hezekiah, being persuaded by this offer emptied his treasuries and sent the money in the belief that he would be rid of the war and the struggle for his throne.

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13 The 300 talents of silver (2 Kings, 18:14b) plus all the silver found in the house of Yahweh (2 Kings, 18:15) represent the 800 talents of silver reported in the parallel Assyrian accounts.

14 That *urbi* is an Aramaic and Hebrew term for shock troops see AHJP, p. 142.

15 Ibid.

Taylor Prism	(F1) Bull Inscription	(F2) Bull Inscription	Nebi Yunis Inscription
3:37-41a (37) As for Hezekiyahu, (38) the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and (39) the *Urbi* (shock troops)[14] and his mercenary (?) troops which he had brought in to strengthen (40) Jerusalem, his royal city, (41a) deserted him (lit., took leave).	ℓ.**30b-31a** (30b) That Hezekiyahu,—the terrifying splendor of my royalty (31a) overcame him, and the *Urbi* (shock troops)[15] and his picked troops whom he had brought into Jerusalem, his royal city, ran away (took leave).	ℓ.**21b-22a** (21b) the strong, proud Hezekiyahia, its king, I brought in submission (22a) to my feet.	
		Rassam Cylinder[16]	
3:41b-49 (41b) In addition to 30 talents of gold and (41) 800 talents of silver,[17] (there were) gems, antimony, (43) jewels (?), large *sandu*-stones, couches of ivory, (44) house chairs of ivory, elephant's hide, ivory (lit., elephant's "teeth"), (45) ebony (?), boxwood (?), all kinds of valuable (heavy) treasures, (46) as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female (47) musicians, (which) he had (them) bring after me (48) to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute (49) and to accept (lit., do) servitude, he dispatched his messengers.	ℓ.**31b-32** (31b) With 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver[18] (32) and all kinds of treasure from his palace, he sent his daughters, his palace women, his male and female singers, to Nineveh, and he dispatched his messengers to pay the tribute.	ℓ.**56-60** (56) (in addition to the) 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver,[19] (there were) gems (precious stones), antimony, jewels (?), great *sandu*-stones (carnelian?), ivory beds, house chairs of ivory, elephant's hides, ivory (elephant's tusks, teeth), maple, boxwood, colored (woolen) garments, garments of linen, violet and purple wool, (57) vessels of copper, iron, bronze and lead, iron chariots, shields, lances, armor, girdle daggers of iron, bows and arrows, spears, countless implements of war, (58) together with his daughters, his palace women, his male and female musicians (which)	ℓ.**15b** (15b) On Hezekiyahu, its king, I laid my yoke.

16 AS, pp. 60-61, ℓ.56-60; ARAB, 2, #284-284a.
17 See above n. 13.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
			10:1:1(4a) (4a) But, when the Assyrian received the money, he paid no regard to the agreement he had made;[20]
18:17a (17a) And the king of Assyria sent the tartan (*turtānu*), and the chief of the eunuchs, and Rabshakeh (the chief cupbearer) FROM LACHISH, to King Hezekiyahu, with a numerous army, to Jerusalem.	**36:2a** (2a) And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh FROM LACHISH to Jerusalem to King Hezekiyahu with a numerous army.	**32:9a** (9a) After this Sennacherib the king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem— and he was BY LACHISH, and all his power with him— against Hezekiyahu the king of Judah, and against all Judah who were in Jerusalem,	**10:1:1(4b)** (4b) instead, while he himself took the field against the Egyptians and Ethiopians,[21] he left behind his general Rapsakēs with a large force, and also two other commanding officers, to sack Jerusalem. The names of these men were Tharata and Archaris.

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20 With this verse, Josephus provides us with the important transition missing in our other texts. Here we easily see that we are not dealing with two invasions but with one. Sennacherib merely found it to his benefit to make Hezekiah believe that the war would be over. After bleeding Hezekiah of his wealth, the Assyrian monarch merely ignored his promise of peace and continued with his original plans: to sack the city of Jerusalem and to deport all of its rebellious inhabitants to another distant country.

21 Josephus disregards the victories of Sennacherib at Lachish and Libnah and goes directly to the next and more important historical event, the upcoming battle against the Egyptian and Ethiopian forces which occurred at Eltekeh, located near Libnah. His cursory statement is quite appropriate since it took

Taylor Prism	(F1) Bull Inscription	Rassam Cylinder	Palace Inscription[22]
		he had (them) bring after me to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute and to render servitude, he dispatched his messenger(s). (59) From the booty of those lands which I plundered, 10,000 bows, 10,000 shields I took therefrom and added them to my royal equipment. (60) The rest, the heavy spoil of the enemy (captives), I divided like sheep among my whole camp (army) as well as my governors and the inhabitants of my large cities.	ℓ.**1-4** (1) Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, (2) sat upon a *nîmedu*-throne (lit. standing-chair) (3) (while) the booty (taken) from Lachish (*La-ki-su*) (4) passed in review.

only one day for Rabshakeh, sent from Lachish to nearby Jerusalem, to deliver his message to Hezekiah. Yet when he returned to Sennacherib a few days later, the Assyrian king was already fighting against Libnah, obviously to clear the region where he was to take his stand in preparation for his upcoming battle with the Egyptian and Kushite forces. This evidence shows that Sennacherib had already seized Lachish prior to receiving the tribute from Hezekiah. As Sennacherib was finishing with Lachish, he sent Rabshakeh with a large force against Jerusalem to sack the city and exile the population.

22 AS, p. 156, no. xxv, ℓ.1–4; ANET, p. 288 (4).

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
18:17b-18a (17b) And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And they went up and came in and he stood by the conduit of the upper pool that was on the highway of the Fuller's field. (18a) And they called to the king	**36:2b** (2b) And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway of the Fuller's field.		**10:1:2(5a)** (5a) When they arrived, they encamped before the walls and sent to Hezekiah and asked him to parley with them.
18:18b (18b) and Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph the recorder, came out to them.	**36:3** (3) and Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph the recorder, came out to him.		**10:1:2(5b-6a)** (5b) He, however, out of cowardice did not himself come out but sent out three of the friends who were closest to him, the steward of the kingdom, named Eliakias, and Sūbanaios and Jōachos, who was in charge of the records. (6a) So these three came forward and stood facing the commanders of the Assyrian army;
18:19-25[23] (19) And Rabshakeh said to them, Now say to Hezekiyahu, This says the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this trust which you have trusted? (20) Are you saying only a word of the lips is counsel and valor for war? Now, upon whom have you trusted that you have rebelled against me? (21) Now, behold, you trust for yourself upon the staff of this broken reed, upon Egypt which, if a man leans upon it, it goes into his palm and pierces it! So is Pharaoh the king of Egypt to all those who trust upon him.	**36:4-10**[24] (4) And Rabshakeh said to them, Now say to Hezekiyahu, This says the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this trust which you have trusted? (5) Are you saying to me only a word of the lips is counsel and valor for war? Now, upon whom have you trusted that you have rebelled against me? (6) Behold, you trust upon the staff of this broken reed, upon Egypt, which, if a man leans upon it, it goes into his palm and pierces it! So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all those who trust upon him.	**32:9b-12** (9b) saying, (10) Thus says Sennacherib the king of Assyria, Upon what are you trusting that you sit under siege in Jerusalem?	**10:1:2(6b-7b)** (6b) and, when the general Rapsakēs saw them, he told them (6c) to go back to Hezekiah and say that the great king Senacheirimos was inquiring of him on what he so confidently relied that he avoided his master and was unwilling to listen to him and would not admit his army into the city. (6d) Was it perhaps, he asked, because of the Egyptians, and in the hope that the Assyrian army had been beaten by them? (7a) If this was what he expected, they should, he said, make clear to him that he was very foolish and like a man who leans upon a broken reed and not only falls but also has his hand pierced, and feels the hurt.

[23] The form of delivery in this letter is very near parallel to that of The Nimrud Letter I (Iraq, 17, pp. 23ff, 26ff; IAC, pp. 80-82).

Taylor Prism	(F1) Bull Inscription

24 Ibid.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
		(11) Is not Hezekiyahu misleading you, to give you up to die by famine, and by thirst, saying, Yahweh our eloahi will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria? (12) Has not Hezekiyahu himself removed his high places, and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Before one altar you shall bow down, and upon it you shall burn incense?	
(22) And when you say to me, We trust to Yahweh our eloahi, is it not he whose high places and his altars Hezekiyahu has removed, and he has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Before this altar you shall bow down in Jerusalem? (23) And, now, exchange pledges, I beg, with my sovereign, the king of Assyria, and I will give to you two thousand horses, if you are able to give for yourself riders upon them. (24) And how will you turn back the face of one governor of the least of the servants of my sovereign, and trust for yourself upon Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Now, without Yahweh have I come upon this place to destroy it? Yahweh said to me, Go upon this land and destroy it.	(7) And when you say to me, We trust to Yahweh our eloahi, is it not he whose high places and his altars Hezekiyahu has removed, and he has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Before this altar you shall bow down? (8) And, now, exchange pledges with my sovereign, the king of Assyria, and I will give to you two thousand horses, if you are able to give for yourself riders upon them. (9) And how will you turn back the face of one governor of the least of the servants of my sovereign, and trust for yourself upon Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? (10) And now, without Yahweh have I come upon this land to destroy it? Yahweh said to me, Go upon this land and destroy it.		(7b) They should know, he said, that by the will of the deity, who had granted him to overthrow the kingdom of the Israelites also, he had made this expedition against Hezekiah in order that he might in the same way destroy those ruled by him.
18:26 (26) And Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, Please speak Aramaic to your servants, for we understand; and do not speak Judahite with us in the ears of the people who are upon the wall.	**36:11** (11) Then Eliakim and Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, Please speak Aramaic to your servants, for we understand; and do not speak Judahite to us in the ears of the people upon the wall.		**10:1:2(8a)** (8a) As Rapsakēs spoke these words in Hebrew, with which language he was familiar, Eliakias was afraid that the people might overhear them and be thrown into consternation, and so asked him to speak in Syrian (Aramaic).
18:27-32a (27) And Rabshakeh said to them, Has my sovereign sent me to speak these words to your sovereign	**36:12-17** (12) And Rabshakeh said, Has my sovereign sent me to speak these words to your sovereign		**10:1:2(8b-10)** (8b) But the general, perceiving what was in the back of his mind and the fear that held him, spoke in a very

Taylor Prism	**(F1) Bull Inscription**

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
and to you? Is it not upon the males who sit upon the walls, for (those) eating their own dung and drinking their own urine with you? (28) And Rabshakeh stood and called with a loud Judahite voice, and he spoke and he said, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria.	and to you? Is it not upon the males who sit upon the walls, for (those) eating their own dung and drinking their own urine with you? (13) And Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud Judahite voice, and he said, Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.		loud and clear voice and replied that he was speaking to him in Hebrew in order that all may hear the king's commands and choose a course to their advantage by surrendering to us.
(29) Thus says the king, Do not let Hezekiyahu deceive you, for he is not able to deliver you out of his hand. (30) And do not let Hezekiyahu put your trust to Yahweh, saying, "Yahweh shall deliver us" and, "This city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."	(14) Thus says the king, Do not let Hezekiyahu deceive you, for he is not able to deliver you. (15) And do not let Hezekiyahu put your trust to Yahweh, saying, "Yahweh shall deliver us. This city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."		(9a) For it is clear that both you and the king are beguiling the people with vain hopes in persuading them to resist.
			(9b)[25] If, however, you are confident and think you can repulse our force, I am ready to furnish you with two thousand of the horses that are with me, in order that you may mount on them the same number of riders and so show your strength. But you cannot furnish riders whom you do not have.
(31) Do not listen to Hezekiyahu, for thus says the king of Assyria, Make with me a blessing, and come out to me; and the male eat of his vine, and the male of his fig tree, and the male of the waters of his well, (32a) until I come and take you to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive oil, and honey; and live, and do not die.	(16) Do not listen to Hezekiyahu, for thus says the king of Assyria, Make with me a blessing, and come out to me; and the male eat of his vine, and the male of his fig tree, and the male of the waters of his well, (17) until I come and take you to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.		(10) Why, then, do you hesitate to surrender to those who are stronger than yourselves and will take you whether you like it or not? Nevertheless a voluntary surrender means safety for you, while an involuntary one after your defeat will prove to be dangerous and the cause of misfortunes.

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25 Josephus informs us (sect. 9b) that, after refusing to speak to the Judahites in Aramaic, Rabshakeh once again offered the challenge of providing the Judahites with 2,000 horses if they could provide riders

Taylor Prism	(F1) Bull Inscription	Targ. Jon. *2 Kings*	Targ. Jon. *Isaiah*
		18:31–32a (31) Do not accept from Hezekiyah, for thus says the king of Assyria, Make peace with me, and come out to me; and the male eat of the fruits of his vines, and the male the fruits of his fig trees, and the male of the waters of his well, (32a) until I come and take you to a good land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of farms and vineyards, a land whose olive trees make oil, and it makes honey; and live, and do not die.	**36:16–17** (16) Do not listen to Hezekiyah, for thus says the king of Assyria, Make peace with me, and come out to me; and eat everyone the fruit of his own vine, and everyone the fruit of his fig trees, and everyone drink the waters of his own well, (17) until I come and lead you to a good land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of fields and vineyards.

for them to do battle with the Assyrian army (cf. 2 Kings, 18:23; Isa., 36:9).

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
18:32b-35	**36:18-20**	**32:13-15**	
(32b) And do not listen to Hezekiyahu, when he persuades you, saying Yahweh shall deliver us.	(18a) Lest Hezekiyahu persuade you, by saying, Yahweh will deliver us.		
(33) Have the eloahi of the nations at all delivered a male his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? (34) Where are the eloahi of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the eloahi of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Auah? When did they deliver Samaria from my hand?	(18b) Have the eloahi of the nations delivered a male his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? (19) Where are the eloahi of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the eloahi of Sepharvaim? And, when did they deliver Samaria from my hand?	(13) Do you not know what I have done, my fathers and I, to all the people of the lands? Were the eloahi of the nations of the lands at all able to deliver their land out of my hand?	
(35) Who among all the eloahi of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?	(20) Who among all the eloahi of these lands has delivered his land from my hand, that Yahweh should keep Jerusalem from my hand?	(14) Who among all the eloahi of these nations who my fathers utterly destroyed has been able to deliver his people out of my hand, that your eloahi will be able to deliver you out of my hand? (15) And now, do not let Hezekiyahu deceive you, nor mislead you like this, nor trust him, for no eloah of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand and the hand of my fathers. Truly, without a doubt, your eloahi shall not deliver you from my hand.	
18:36-37	**36:21-22**		**10:1:3(11a-b)**
(36) And the people were quiet and did not answer him a word, for a command of the king it was, saying, Do not answer him.	(21) And they were quiet and did not answer him a word, for a command of the king it was, saying, Do not answer him.		(11a) When the people and the envoys had heard these words of the Assyrian general,
(37) And came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiyahu, having torn (their) garments; and they reported to him the words of Rabshakeh.	(22) And came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiyahu, having torn (their) garments; and they reported to him the words of Rabshakeh.		(11b) they reported them to Hezekiah.

Taylor Prism	**(F1) Bull Inscription**

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
19:1 (1) And it was, when King Hezekiyahu heard, he tore his garments and he covered himself with sackcloth, and he entered the house of Yahweh.	**36:1** (1) And it was, when King Hezekiyahu heard, he tore his garments and he covered himself with sackcloth, and he entered the house of Yahweh.		**10:1:3(11c)** (11c) And he thereupon took off his royal garments, put on sackcloth and assumed an attitude of humility; then, falling on his face in the manner of his country, he supplicated the deity and entreated him to help one who had no other hope of salvation.
19:2-5 (2) And he sent Eliakim, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covering them with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. (3) And they said to him, Thus says Hezekiyahu, A day of trouble and reproach and contempt is this day! For the sons have come to the pains of childbirth, and there is no strength to bring forth. (4) Perhaps Yahweh your eloahi will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom his sovereign, the king of Assyria, has sent to reproach the living eloahim, and (Yahweh) will rebuke against the words which Yahweh your elaohi has heard, and you shall lift up a prayer for the remnant that is found. (5) And the servants of King Hezekiyahu came to Isaiah.	**36:2-5** (2) And he sent Eliakim, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covering them with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. (3) And they said to him, Thus says Hezekiyahu, A day of trouble and reproach and contempt is this day! For the sons have come to the the pains of childbirth, and there is no strength to bring forth. (4) Perhaps Yahweh your eloahi will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom his sovereign, the king of Assyria, has sent to reproach the living eloahim, and (Yahweh) will rebuke against the words which Yahweh your elaohi has heard, and you shall lift up a prayer for the remnant that is found. (5) And the servants of King Hezekiyahu came to Isaiah.		**10:1:3(12)** (12) He also sent some of his friends and some of the priests to the prophet Isaiah and asked him to pray to the deity and, when he had offered sacrifices for the common safety, to exhort him (Yahweh) to show his wrath at the hopes of the enemy, but to take pity upon his own people.
18:6-7 (6) And Isaiah said to them, Thus you shall say to your sovereign, Thus says Yahweh, Do not be afraid from the face of the words which you have heard, which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. (7) Behold,	**36:6-7** (6) And Isaiah said to them, Thus you shall say to your sovereign, Thus says Yahweh, Do not be afraid from the face of the words which you have heard, which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. (7) Behold,		**10:1:3(13-14)** (13) And, when the prophet had done these things and received an oracle from the deity (Yahweh), he encouraged both the king himself and the friends who were with him by foretelling that the enemy would be defeated without a battle

Taylor Prism	**(F1) Bull Inscription**

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
I will put in him a spirit, and (he) shall hear a report and turn back to his land. And I will cause him to fall by the sword in his land.	I will put in him a spirit, and (he) shall hear a report and turn back to his land. And I will cause him to fall by the sword in his land.		and retire ignominiously, with none of the self-confidence which they now showed, (14) for the deity would see to it that they should be destroyed; and he also foretold that Senacheirimos, the king of Assyria, would himself fail in his attempt against Egypt and returning to his own land would perish by the sword.[26]
			10:1:1(4)[27] (4) instead, while he (Sennacherib) himself took the field against the Egyptians and Ethiopians, he left behind his general Rapsakēs with a large force, and also two other commanding officers, to sack Jerusalem. The names of these men were Tharata and Aracharis.
19:8 (8) And Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he had set out from Lachish.[28]	**37:8** (8) So Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he had set out from Lachish.[29]		

26 Josephus here testifies once again that the primary objective of Sennacherib was Egypt.

27 We repeat this verse from Josephus to remind our reader that the battle at Eltekeh was imminent and occurred shortly after the forces under Rabshakeh began their blockade of Jerusalem.

28 See above ns. 21 and 27.

29 Ibid.

Taylor Prism	(F1) Bull Inscription
3:27b-36[30] (27b) Himself (Hezekiyahu), like a caged bird, (28) in Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut up. (29) Earthworks I threw up against him,—(30) the one coming out of his city gate I turned back to his misery. (31) The cities of his, which I had spoiled, I cut off from his land and (32) to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, (33) Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-bel, (34) king of Gaza, I gave (them). I diminished his land. (35) I added to the former tribute, (36) and laid upon him (var. them) the giving (up) of their land, (as well as) imposts—gifts for my majesty.	ℓ.**28b-30a**[31] (28b) Himself (Hezekiyahu), like a caged bird, in (29) Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut up. Earthworks I threw up about it. His cities which I plundered, I cut off from his land and gave to (30) the kings of Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron and Gaza; I diminished his land. To the former tribute, I imposed and laid upon him the giving up of his land as a gift.
2:73-3:5 (73) The governors, nobles and people of Amkaruna (Ekron), (74) who had thrown Padi,	ℓ.**22a-25a** (22a) The governors and people of Amkaruna (Ekron), who had thrown Padi, their king,

30 The Assyrian record at this point confirms the account from 2 Kings, 19:32-34, and Isa., 37:33-35, that the Assyrians never entered the city of Jerusalem, never built any siege mounds against it, nor made any assault upon it. Also see Chap. V, p. 56, n. 32.

31 Ibid.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*

Taylor Prism

their king, bound by (lit. lord of) oath and curse (i.e. treaty) to Assyria, (75) into fetters of iron and (76-77) had given him over to Hezekiyahu, the Yahudahi (Judahite),—he kept him in confinement like an enemy,—(78) they (lit., their heart) became afraid (79) and appealed (for aid) to the kings of Muzri (Lower Egypt), the bowmen, chariots and horses (80) of the king of Meluḫḫa (Upper Egypt), a countless host, and (81) these came to their aid. (82) In the neighborhood of the city of Altakû (Eltekeh), (83) their ranks being drawn up before me, (3:1) they offered battle. (Trusting) in the aid of Assur, (2) my lord, I fought with them and (3) brought about their defeat. The charioteers and Muzri princes, (4) together with the charioteers of the Meluḫḫa (Upper Egypt) king, (5) my hands took alive in the midst of the battle.

3:6-7

(6) Altakû (Eltekeh) (and) Tamnah (7) I besieged, I captured and took away their spoil.

3:8-17

(8) I drew near to Amkaruna (Ekron) and slew the governors and nobles (9) who had committed sin (that is, rebelled), and (10) hung their bodies on stakes (or, pillars) around the city. The citizens (11) who had rebelled (sinned) and treated (Assyria) lightly, I counted as spoil. (12) The rest of them, who were not guilty (carriers) of sin

(F1) Bull Inscription

(23) bound by (lit. lord of) oath (i.e. treaty) to Assyria, into fetters of iron, and had given him over to Hezekiyahu, the Yahudahi (Judahite)—he kept him in confinement like an enemy,—they (lit., their heart) became afraid, and appealed (for aid) to the kings of Muzri (Lower Egypt), the bowmen, (24) the chariots and horses of the king of Meluḫḫa (Upper Egypt), a countless host. In the plain of Altakû (Eltekeh) I fought with them, I defeated them. The charioteers (25a) and Muzri princes, together with the charioteers of the Meluḫḫa (Upper Egypt) king, I captured alive with my (own) hand.

ℓ.**25b-27a**

(25b) I drew near to Amkaruna (Ekron). The governors who had rebelled (committed sin) (26) I slew with the sword. The citizens who had rebelled (sinned) I counted as spoil. The rest of them, who were not guilty (carriers) of sin, I pardoned. Padi, their king, (27a) I brought out of Jerusalem and placed on the throne over them. My royal

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*

10:1:4-5(20b)[32]
[Berosus]

(20b) But Berosus, who wrote the *History of Chaldaea*, also mentions King Senacheirimos and tells how he ruled over the Assyrians and how he made an expedition against all Asia and Egypt;

[32] We repeat this passage dealing with the history from Berosus to remind our reader that the second

Taylor Prism | **(F1) Bull Inscription**

(13) and contempt, who were without sin (blame, i.e. for whom there was no punishment),—(14) I spoke their pardon. Padi, their king, (15) I brought out of Jerusalem. (16) I set him on the royal throne over them and (17) imposed upon him my kingly tribute.

tribute I imposed upon him.

THE END OF THE RECORDS OF SENNACHERIB

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Josephus *Antiquities*

10:1:4(18a) [Herodotus]

(18a) Concerning this Senacheirimos, Herodotus also tells us, in the second book of his History, that this king came against the king of Egypt, who was a priest of Hephaestus, and besieged Pelusium,

10:1:4(18b)

(18b) but he abandoned the siege for the following reason. The king of Egypt prayed to the deity, and the deity hearkened to his prayer

Herodotus

2:141a

(141a) The next king was the priest of Hephaestus, whose name was Sethos. He despised and took no account of the warrior Egyptians, thinking he would never need them; besides otherwise dishonouring them, he took away the chosen lands which had been given to them, twelve fields to each man, in the reign of former kings. So presently came king Sanacherib against Egypt, with a great host of Arabians and Assyrians; and the warrior Egyptians would not march against him.

2:141b

(141b) The priest, in this quandary, went into the temple shrine and there bewailed to the deity's image the peril which threatened him. In his lamentation he fell asleep, and bidding him take courage, for he should suffer no ill by encountering the host of Arabia: "Myself," said the deity, "will send you champions."

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part of Sennacherib's third campaign, his attack upon Egypt, begins now.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*

EVENTS OF ABIB 10[33]

10:1:4(17a)
(17a) A little while after this the king of Assyria failed in his attack upon the Egyptians and returned home without accomplishing anything for the following reason. After he had spent a great deal of time on the siege of Pelusium, and the earthworks which he was raising against the walls on the point of attacking,

19:9a
(9a) And he (Sennacherib) heard about Tirhakah the king of Kush, saying, Behold, he has come out to fight with you,

37:9a
(9a) And he (Sennacherib) heard about Tirhakah the king of Kush, saying, He has come out to fight with you.

10:1:4(17b)
(17b) he heard that Tharsikēn, the king of Ethiopia, was coming to the aid of the Egyptians with a large force and decided to make the journey through the

33 The plague that struck the Assyrian army at Pelusium during the night was followed by the news that Tirhakah the king of Kush was coming, the abandonment of the siege of Pelusium, and the messengers being sent by Sennacherib to Jerusalem. All these events occurred on Abib 10 of 701 B.C.E. (the same day Hezekiah became ill). We uncover this date when we consider that the messengers sent by Sennacherib arrived at Jerusalem during the daylight hours of Abib 13, the Assyrian army outside of Jerusalem being struck by a plague that night (Abib 14, Passover). The approximately 220-mile trip from

Josephus *Antiquities*	**Herodotus**	**Targ. Jon.** *2 Kings*	**Targ. Jon.** *Isaiah*
	2:141c (141c) So he trusted the vision, and encamped at Pelusium with such Egyptians as would follow him, for here is the road into Egypt; and none of the warriors would go with him, but only hucksters and artificers and traders. Their enemies too came here.		

EVENTS OF ABIB 10

10:1:4(18c-19a) (18c) and visited a plague upon the Arab— (19a) at just this point he (Herodotus) is in error, calling him king of the Arabs instead of king of the Assyrians—for, he says, in one night a host of mice ate through the bows and other weapons of the Assyrians,	**2:141d** (141d) And one night a multitude of fieldmice swarmed over the Assyrian camp and devoured their quivers and their bows and the handles of their shields likewise,		
10:1:4(19b-20a) (19b) and, as the king on that account had no bows, he withdrew his army from Pelusium. (20a) This, then, is the account which Herodotus gives.	**2:141e** (141e) insomuch that they fled the next day unarmed and many fell. And at this day a stone statue of the Egyptian king stands in Hephaestus' temple, with a	**19:9a** (9a) And he (Sennacherib) heard about Tirhak (Tirhakah) the king of Kush, saying, Behold, he has come out to wage battle with you,	**37:9a** (9a) And he (Sennacherib) heard about Tirhak the king of Kush, saying, He has set out to wage war against you.

Pelusium to Jerusalem for the messengers (riding day and night, pony-express style) would have traveled this route within four days (the 10th through the 13th), averaging about 50–55 miles per day and arriving at Jerusalem in the afternoon of the 13th. Sennacherib's army, on the other hand, would move at a much slower pace, averaging only about 20 miles a day (see Chap. III, pp. 33f, n. 36). They would have packed up and left Pelusium in the daylight hours of Abib 10. Sennacherib would have arrived at Jerusalem sometime during the eleventh day of travel (i.e. on Abib 20), being the last day of Passover.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
			desert and fall upon the Assyrians suddenly. And so, being alarmed at this news, King Senacheirimos left Pelusium and withdrew, as I said, without accomplishing anything.
19:9b-13 (9b) and he (Sennacherib) turned back, and he sent messengers to Hezekiyahu, saying, (10) Thus shall you speak to Hezekiyahu the king of Judah, saying, Do not let your eloahi, in whom you trust deceive you, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. (11) Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? (12) Have the eloahi of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed: Gozan and Harran and Rezeph, and the sons of Eden who were in Telassar? (13) Where is the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena and Auah?	**37:9b-13** (9b) And he (Sennacherib) heard,[34] and he sent messengers to Hezekiyahu, saying, (10) Thus shall you speak to Hezekiyahu the king of Judah, saying, Do not let your eloahi, in whom you trust, deceive you, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. (11) Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? (12) Have the eloahi of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed: Gozan and Harran and Rezeph, and the sons of Eden who were in Telassar? (13) Where is the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena and Auah?		**10:1:4(15)** (15) Now it happened that about this time the king of Assyria had written a letter to Hezekiah, in which he said that he was foolish to suppose that he would escape being made his servant, since he had subdued many great nations, and he threatened to destroy him utterly and completely after capturing him, unless he opened the gates and willingly admitted his army into Jerusalem.
20:1 (1) In those days Hezekiyahu was sick towards death,[35] and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him, Thus says Yahweh, command your house,	**38:1** (1) In those days Hezekiyahu was sick towards death,[36] and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him, Thus says Yahweh, command your house,	**32:24a** (24a) In those days Hezekiyahu was sick as far as towards death,[37]	**10:2:1(25)** (25) But, though he showed all zeal and devotion in the worship of the deity, he was smitten by a severe illness,[38] and all hope for him was given up by the physicians, nor did his friends

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34 The LXX has, "καὶ ἀκουύσας ἀπέστρεψε (and hearing, turned aside)." The Qumran Isaiah scroll reads, "and he heard and he turned back" (1QIsa.[a]). These texts, when used in conjunction with our main sources, reveal that, at the time that Sennacherib heard of the advance of Tirhakah, he turned his army around and abandoned his war against Pelusium and the Egyptians. When he turned back he was still intent upon taking Jerusalem. Accordingly, he sent messengers to Hezekiah ahead of his returning army hoping to intimidate the Jewish king into submission.

Josephus *Antiquities*	**Herodotus**	**Seder Olam**
mouse in his hand, and an inscription to this effect: "Look on me, and fear the deities."		
		23 (ℓ**. 42)** (42) Three days before Sennacherib's downfall Hezekiyahu became ill.

35 It is hard to disassociate the illness of Hezekiah with the plague that struck the Assyrian army outside his city gates. Cf. Chap. III, pp. 34–36, p. 33, n. 35.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
for you are dying, and you shall not live.	for you are dying, and you shall not live.		have any expectation of a change for the better in his condition. And the illness was aggravated by the dreadful despair of the king himself when he considered his childlessness and that he was about to die leaving his house and his realm unprovided with a legitimate successor.
20:2-3 (2) And he turned his face to the wall, and he prayed to Yahweh, saying, (3) I beg you Yahweh, remember now that I have walked before you in truth and with a whole heart, and I have done good in your eyes. And Hezekiyahu cried a great crying.	**38:2-3** (2) And Hezekiyahu turned his face to the wall and he prayed to Yahweh, and he said, (3) I beg you Yahweh, remember now that I have walked before you in truth and with a whole heart, and I have done good in your eyes. And Hezekiyahu cried a great crying.	**32:24b** (24b) and he prayed to Yahweh,	**10:2:1(26)** (26) And so, suffering chiefly from this thought and lamenting it, he supplicated the deity to give him a little longer time to live, until he should beget children, and not let him depart this life before becoming a father.
			10:2:1(27a) (27a) Then the deity took pity on him and granted his request, since he bewailed the death of which he had a presentiment, and had prayed to him to give him yet a little while to live, not because he was about to be deprived of the benefits of the kingship, but because he wished sons to be born to him who should succeed to his royal power;
20:4-6 (4) And it came to pass, Isaiah had not gone out of the middle court and the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, (5a) Return and you shall say to Hezekiyahu, the leader of my people, Thus says Yahweh the eloahi of your father David, I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears;	**38:4-6** (4) And the word of Yahweh was to Isaiah, saying, (5a) Go and say to Hezekiyahu, Thus says Yahweh the eloahi of your father David, I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears.	**32:24b** (24c) and he spoke to him,	**10:2:1(27b-d)** (27b) and so he sent the prophet Isaiah

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
(5b) Behold, I will heal you; On the third day you shall go up to the house of Yahweh.	(5b) Behold,		(27c) and told him to inform the king that within the third day after he should be rid of his illness
(6) And I will add to your days fifteen years. And from the hand of the king of Assyria I shall deliver you and the city. And I shall defend over this city for my own sake, and for the sake of David, my servant.	(5c) I will add to your days fifteen years. (6) And from the hand of the king of Assyria I shall deliver you and this the city. And I shall defend over this city.		(27d) and should live another fifteen years, and that sons would be born to him.
20:7 (7) And Isaiah said, Take a cake of figs; and they took and laid it upon the boil; and he lived.	**38:21** (21) And Isaiah said, Let them bear a cake of figs and rub it upon the boil, and he lived.		
			10:2:1(28a) (28a) When the prophet at the deity's command told him these things, he would not believe him because of the severity of his illness and because the news brought to him surpassed belief,
20:8 (8) And Hezekiyahu said to Isaiah, What is the sign that Yahweh will heal me and that I will go up to the house of Yahweh on the third day?	**38:22** (22) And Hezekiyahu said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of Yahweh?		**10:2:1(28b)** (28b) and so he asked Isaiah to perform some sign or miracle in order that he might believe in him when he said these things, as in one who came from the deity. For, he said, things that are beyond belief and surpass our hopes are made credible by acts of a like nature.
20:9 (9) And Isaiah said, This is to you the sign from Yahweh, that Yahweh will do the word that he has spoken: Shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or shall it turn back ten steps?			**10:2:1(29a)** (29a) When the prophet inquired what sign he wished to have performed,

Targ. Jon.
2 Kings

20:5b–6

(5b) Behold, I will heal you; On the third day you shall go up to the sacred house of Yahweh.

(6) And I will add to your days fifteen years. And from the hand of the king of Assyria I shall deliver you and this city. And I shall protect this city on account of my memra (essence) and on account of David my servant.

20:8

(8) And Hezekiyah said to Isaiah, What is the sign that Yahweh will heal me and that I will go up to the sacred house of Yahweh on the third day?

20:9

(9) And Isaiah said, This is to you the sign from before Yahweh, that Yahweh will do the word that he has spoken: Shall the shadow go forward ten hours, or shall it turn back ten steps?

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
20:10 (10) And Hezekiyahu said, It would be easy for the shadow to extend ten steps; no, without a doubt, return the shadow back ten steps.			**10:2:1(29b)** (29b) he asked him to cause the sun, which in declining had already cast a shadow of ten steps in the house, to return to the same place and again cast one there.
	38:7-8a (7) And this shall be the sign to you from Yahweh that Yahweh will do this word which he has spoken: (8a) Behold I will bring back the shadow of the steps, which has gone down on the steps of Ahaz with the sun, back ten steps.		
20:11 (11) And Isaiah the prophet cried to Yahweh; and he turned back the shadow on the steps which had gone down on the steps of Ahaz, back ten steps.	**38:8b** (8b) And the sun went back ten steps on the steps which it had gone down.	**32:24c** (24c) and a sign he gave to him.	**10:2:1(29c)** (29c) And, when the prophet exhorted the deity (Yahweh) to show this sign to the king, he saw what he wished and was at once freed from his illness;
		32:16-19 (16) And again his (Sennacherib's) servants spoke against Yahweh, the eloahim, and against Hezekiyahu his servant. (17) And he had written letters to reproach Yahweh eloahi of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, As the eloahi of the nations of the lands who have not delivered their people from my hand, so the eloahi of Hezekiyahu shall not deliver his people from my hand. (18) And they called in a great Judahite voice, against	

EVENTS OF ABIB 13

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

Ecclesiasticus	Seder Olam	Targ. Jon. *2 Kings*	Targ. Jon. *Isaiah*
		20:10 (10) And Hezekiyah said, It would be easy for the shadow to extend ten hours; but a miracle that the shadow should return the shadow on the stone figure of the hours, on which the sun went down on the stairs of Ahaz, back ten hours.	
			38:7-8a (7) And this shall be the sign to you from Yahweh that Yahweh will do this word which he has spoken: (8a) Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the stone hours, on the steps of Ahaz, turn back ten hours.

EVENTS OF ABIB 13

48:23 (23) In his (Isaiah's) time the sun went backward, and he (Yahweh) lengthened the king's (Hezekiah's) life.	**23 (ℓ. 42-44)** (42) Rabbi Yose says: (43) The third day of Hezekiyahu's illness was (the time of) Sennacherib's downfall. (44) The sun, which had descended for Ahaz his father, stood still for him, as it says, "behold, I will turn back ten steps the shadow."	**20:11** (11) And Isaiah the prophet prayed before Yahweh; and he turned back the shadow on the stone figure of the hours, on which the sun went down on the stairs of Ahaz, backward ten hours.	**38:8b** (8b) So the sun went back ten hours on the stone hours by the marking of the stone hours where it had declined.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
		the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten them and to terrify them, that they might capture the city. (19) And they spoke against the eloahi of Jerusalem as against the eloahi of the peoples of the earth, the work of the hands of man.	
19:14-19 (14) And Hezekiyahu received the letters from the hand of the messengers, and he read them, and he went up to the house of Yahweh; and Hezekiyahu spread it before Yahweh. (15) And Hezekiyahu prayed before Yahweh, and he said, Yahweh, the eloahi of Israel, dwelling above the cherubim. You are he. You alone are the eloahim. For all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made the heavens and the earth. (16) Yahweh, incline your ear and hear. Yahweh, open your eyes and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib who has sent it to reproach the living eloahim. (17) Truly, Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations, and lands; (18) and have given their eloahi into the fire—because they are not eloahim, therefore only the work of men's hands, wood and stone; and they destroy them. (19) And now, Yahweh our eloahi, deliver us, we beg, from his hand, and all the kingdoms of the earth shall know that you alone are Yahweh eloahim.	**37:14-20** (14) And Hezekiyahu received the letters from the hand of the messengers, and he read them, and he went up to the house of Yahweh; and Hezekiyahu spread it before Yahweh. (15) And Hezekiyahu prayed to Yahweh, saying, (16) Yahweh of hosts, eloahi of Israel, dwelling above the cherubim, You are he. You alone are the eloahim. For all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made the heavens and the earth. (17) Yahweh, incline your ear and hear. Yahweh, open your eye and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib who has sent (it) to reproach the living eloahim. (18) Truly, Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the countries and lands, (19) and have given their eloahi into the fire—because they are not eloahim, therefore only the work of men's hands, wood and stone; and they destroy them. (20) And now, Yahweh our eloahi, deliver us from his hand, and all the kingdoms of the earth shall know that you alone are Yahweh, .	**32:20** (20) And Hezekiyahu the king, and Isaiah the son of Amoz, the prophet, prayed about this, and he cried to heaven.	**10:1:4(16a)** (16a) When Hezekiah read these words, he made light of them because of his confidence inspired by the deity, but he folded up the letter and laid it away within the temple. And, when he offered a second prayer to the deity on behalf of the city and the safety of all,
19:20-34 (20) And Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to	**37:21-35** (21) And Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to		**10:1:4(16b-c)** (16b) the prophet Isaiah told him that he

Josephus,
Antiquities

10:2:1(29d)
(29d) then he went up to the temple and did obeisance to the deity (Yahweh) and offered prayers to him.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
Hezekiyahu, saying, Thus says Yahweh, the eloahi of Israel, The prayer which was to me, as to Sennacherib the king of Assyria, I have heard.	Hezekiyahu, saying, Thus says Yahweh the eloahi of Israel, The prayer which was to me, as to Sennacherib the king of Assyria.		(Yahweh) had hearkened to his prayer,
(21) This is the word that Yahweh spoke against him: The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and mocked you; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind you. (22) Whom have you reproached and reviled? And against whom have you lifted up a voice? And you have lifted up your eyes on high against the sacred one of Israel!	(22) This is the word that Yahweh spoke against him: The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and mocked you; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind you. (22) Whom have you reproached and reviled? And against whom have you lifted up a voice? And you have lifted up your eyes on high against the sacred one of Israel!		
(23) By the hand of your messengers you have reproached the adonai, and you said, With the multitude of my chariots I will be upon the sides of the spacious mountains of Lebanon, and I will cut down its tall cedars, from the best of its fir trees, and I will enter towards the furthest habitation, its densest forest.	(24) By the hand of your servants you have reproached the adonai, and you said, With the multitude of my chariots I will be upon the sides of the spacious mountains of Lebanon, and I will cut down its tall cedars, from the best of its fir trees, and I will enter towards the furthest habitation, its densest forest.		
(24) I shall dig and I shall drink foreign waters, and shall dry up with the sole of my feet all the rivers of Egypt.[39]	(25) I shall dig and I shall drink waters and shall dry up with the sole of my feet all the rivers of Egypt.[40]		
(25) Have you not heard from a distance? These are my design from ancient days, and I imagined them. Now I have caused it to come, and you are a crashing storm, waves ruining fortified cities. (26) And their inhabitants were deficient of hand, afraid and ashamed. They were as the herbs of the field and shoots of the new blades of grass. Grass of	(26) Have you not heard from a distance? These are my design from ancient days, and I imagined them. Now I have caused it to come, and you are a crashing storm, waves ruining fortified cities. (27) And their inhabitants were deficient of hand, afraid and ashamed. They were as the herbs of the field and shoots of the new blades of grass. Grass of		

[39] Here the verb is pointed to read future tense by the Massoretic text, "I shall dry up," not "I have dried up" (HPM, 2, p. 301). Fullerton thinks that a future reading is against the context (BS, 63, p. 627, n. 62). Yet, there is no sound reason for this conclusion. Yahweh is merely informing Hezekiah of the

attitude of the king of Assyria: he had already conquered many nations and was next intending to overthrow Egypt. This passage demonstrates that the defeat of Egypt was Sennacherib's original and ultimate goal.

40 Ibid.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
the roof tops, and scorched before being a stalk.	the roof tops, and blighted before being a stalk.		
(27) And your sitting down and your going out and your coming in I know, and your rage towards me. (28) Paying attention, your rage towards me and your pride have come up in my ears. And I will put my hook in your nose and my bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the road on which you came in.	(28) And your sitting down and your going out and your coming in I know, and your rage towards me. (29) Paying attention, your rage towards me and your pride have come up in my ears. And I will put my hook in your nose and my bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the road on which you came in.		
(29) And this shall be a sign for you: eat this year that which is sown of itself, and in the second year that which grows of the same, and in the third year you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (30) And the escaped of the house of Judah remaining shall accumulate, taking root downward, producing fruit upward. (31) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and the escaped out of Mount Zion. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts shall do this.	(30) And this shall be a sign for you: eat this year that which is sown of itself, and in the second year that which grows of the same, and in the third year you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (31) And the escaped of the house of Judah remaining shall accumulate, taking root downward, producing fruit upward. (32) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and the escaped out of Mount Zion. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts shall do this.		(16c) and that at the present time he would not be besieged by the Assyrian, while in the future his subjects, relieved of all apprehension, would till their land in peace and look after their own possessions without fear of anything.
(32) Therefore, thus says Yahweh to the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor shall he build up a siege mound against it.[41] (33) On the road which he came on, he shall return, and he shall not come into this	(33) Therefore, thus says Yahweh to the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor shall he build up a siege mound against it.[42] (34) On the road which he came on, he shall return, and he shall not come into this		

41 The assault ramparts or siege mounds mentioned here must not be confused with the "earthworks" thrown up against Hezekiah which are reported in Sennacherib's records (see above n. 30). In the Assyrian account, Hezekiah is shut up in Jerusalem like "a caged bird." The earthworks are not thrown against the walls of the city but against the gates so that "the one coming out of the city gate" was "turned back to his misery." The Assyrian account only discusses the blockade and never mentions either assault ramparts or an assault on Jerusalem, which is in full accord with the report from Scriptures.

42 Ibid.

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

Seder Olam	Targ. Jon. *2 Kings*	Targ. Jon. *Isaiah*
23 (ℓ.**50-51**) (50) Thus it was said, "And this shall be a sign for you: eat this year that which is sown of itself," because (the Assyrians) came up (51) in the time before Passover, and they were not able to plant,[43] and so they ate what grows of itself.	**19:29–31** (29) And this shall be a sign for you: eat in one year that which is sown of itself, and in the second year the third crop, and in the third year you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (30) And the escaped of the house of Judah shall continue like a tree that sends forth its roots below and raises up its branch above. (31) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant of the just ones, and the escaped of those upholding the law out of Mount Zion. By the memra (essence) of Yahweh of hosts this shall be done.	**37:30–32** (30) And this shall be a sign for you: in this year eat that which is sown of itself, and in the second year that which grows of that sown of itself, and in the third year you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (31) And the escaped of the house of Judah remaining shall continue, and will be left as a tree which sends its roots downward, and raises its top upward. (32) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant of the righteous, and the escaped of those upholding the law out of Mount Zion. By the memra (essence) of Yahweh of hosts this shall be done.

43 Planting time in Judah began at the end of November and continued until mid-January. Late planting occurred in February and March (HBC, pp. 33f). Under ancient Scriptural Law, one was only forbidden to harvest crops during the sabbath year itself. Meanwhile, the Assyrians would have destroyed or taken the early planting while the winter offensive would have prevented the Judahites from having any late planting. Therefore, since the sabbath year had begun, the true sign was established by the fact that the Judahites remained in their land to enjoy the sabbath year, eating directly out of the field from that which grows of itself.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
city, declares Yahweh. (34) For I shall defend over this city, for its deliverance, for my sake and for the sake of David, my servant.	city, declares Yahweh. (35) For I shall defend over this city, for its deliverance, for my sake and for the sake of David, my servant.		

EVENTS OF ABIB 14[44]

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
19:35a (35a) And it was in that night, and the angel of Yahweh went out and struck in the camp of Assyria a hundred and eighty-five thousand.	**37:36a** (36a) And the angel of Yahweh went out and struck in the camp of Assyria a hundred and eighty-five thousand.	**32:21a** (21a) And Yahweh sent an angel, and cut off all the mighty ones of valor, both the leader and the head, in the camp of the king of Assyria.	
19:35b (35b) And they rose up early in the morning, and behold, all of them were dead corpses.	**37:36b** (36b) And they rose up early in the morning, and behold, all of them were dead corpses.		

EVENTS OF ABIB 20[45]

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
			10:1:4-5(20c-21) [Berosus] (20c) he (Berosus) writes as follows: (21) When Senacheirimos returned to Jerusalem from his war with Egypt, he found there the force under Rapsakēs in danger from a plague, for the deity had visited a pestilential sickness upon his army, and on the first night of the siege one hundred and eighty-five thousand men had perished with their commanders and officers.

44 That the Assyrian army was destroyed on the first night of Passover also see Tosef.-Targum, 2 Kings, 19:35-37; J. Pes., 9:36d.

Mid. Rab.
Exodus

Mid. Rab.
Song

EVENTS OF ABIB 14

18:5a

(5a) Israel and Hezekiyah sat that night and recited the Hallel, for it was Passover, yet were in terror lest at any moment Jerusalem might fall into his (Sennacherib's) hand.

18:5b

(5b) When they arose early in the morning to recite the *shema'* and pray, they found their enemies' dead corpses.

1:12:3

(3) Rabbi Judan said: While Hezekiyah and his followers were still eating their paschal lambs in Jerusalem, eloahim had already wrought (their deliverance) in that night, as it says, And it was in that night, and the angel of Yahweh went out and struck in the camp of Assyria.

45 See above n. 33.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, *Antiquities*
19:36 (36) And Sennacherib the king of Assyria set out, and went and returned, and he dwelt in Nineveh.	**37:37** (37) And Sennacherib the king of Assyria set out, and went and returned, and he dwelt in Nineveh.	**32:21b** (21b) and he returned with shame of face to his land.	**10:1:5(22)** (22) By this calamity he was thrown into a state of alarm and terrible anxiety, and, fearing for his entire army, he fled with the rest of his force to his own realm,[46] called the kingdom of Ninos.
CONCLUSION			
		32:22-23 (22) And Yahweh delivered Hezekiyahu and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all; and he guided them on every side. (23) And many brought an offering to Yahweh, to Jerusalem, and precious gifts to Hezekiyahu the king of Judah; and he was exalted for the eyes of all the nations after this.	**10:2:1(24)** (24) Having been thus wonderfully delivered from the fate which he feared, King Hezekiah together with all the people offered sacrifices of thanksgiving to the deity, for the destruction of some of the enemy and the removal of the rest from Jerusalem[47] had had no other cause than the aid given by their ally the deity (Yahweh).

46 This statement shows that the 185,000 destroyed at Jerusalem and the others destroyed at Pelusium were only a portion of the total army, and that the rest returned to Nineveh with Sennacherib.

47 Ibid.

Section II

The Post-Exile Period

Chapter XI

The Sabbath Year of 456/455 B.C.E.

The next datable sabbath year is overlooked by almost everyone dealing with the subject. In Nehemiah, 7:73–8:18, we find the story of how Ezra, the priest and scribe of Yahweh, during the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh Israelite month, "day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read aloud in the book of the laws of the eloahim; and they kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth (day) was the assembly, as from the judgment."[1] This passage takes on important significance once we consider it in context with the commandment recorded in Deuteronomy:

> In the last part of the seven years, in the appointed time of the YEAR OF שמטה (RELEASE),[2] in the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes in to see the face of Yahweh your eloahi in the place which he chooses, you shall proclaim this Torah before all Israel in their ears. Assemble the people, men and women and the little ones, and the aliens who are within your gates, so that they may hear and so that they may learn, and may respect Yahweh your eloahi, and be careful to do all the words of this Torah.[3]

Ezra and the Levite priests performed this duty just as prescribed by the judgment of the Torah (Law). The book of Nehemiah informs us that the people of Judah began by gathering "themselves together as one man before the Water Gate" and requested that Ezra "bring the book of the laws of Moses." Ezra then read the Torah "before the assembly, from men and to women, and all having sense for the hearing, on the first day of the seventh month." He "read aloud" the Torah from a pulpit in the street.[4]

Afterwards, the Levite priests continued the teaching, "and they gave the sense and caused (them) to understand the reading."[5] The next day Ezra taught the chief of the fathers of all the people and the Levites so that they also could correctly "understand the words of the Torah."[6] Ezra's teaching

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1 Neh., 8:18.

2 The Hebrew term שמטה (shemitah) means, "*remission* (of debt) or *suspension* of (labor)," "*release, acquittal*" (SEC, Heb. #8059; HEL, p. 270). This release is ordained in the seventh year of the sabbath cycle and is thereby equated with the sabbath year itself (see below n. 3).

3 Deut., 31:10–13; cf. Jos., *Antiq.*, 4:8:12; Deut., 15:1–9.

4 Neh., 8:2–4.

5 Neh., 8:8.

6 Neh., 8:13.

was continued "day by day" throughout the entire Feast of Tabernacles,[7] as prescribed by the Law for the "year of release" (i.e. the sabbath year).

Dating this particular sabbath year is a bit tricky, which is probably the main reason no one has yet dared to accomplish the task. Nevertheless, it is datable (and easily so once all the available data is considered). We begin to piece the evidence together when we compare the different ancient accounts reporting Ezra's arrival and subsequent reading of the Torah to the people. This reading took place during the reign of the Persian monarch ארתחשסתא (*Arthkhshastha*), called by the Greeks "Arta-xerxes (I) Longimanus."[8] Our main sources are the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Josephus, and 1 Esdras.

The Versions of Josephus and 1 Esdras

The key to these events is found with Josephus and 1 Esdras. According to Josephus and 1 Esdras, Ezra set out from Babylonia and the Euphrates river to go to Jerusalem "on the twelfth day of the first month in the seventh year of the reign of Xerxes (Arta-xerxes) and arrived at Jerusalem in the fifth month of the same year."[9]

A little while after arriving at the city, the issue of the numerous marriages between Jews and alien (i.e. pagan) women was brought to Ezra's attention. After praying about this situation, Ezra called a meeting of the elders, which was held "on the twentieth day of the ninth month."[10]

Upon hearing Ezra's condemnation of these marriages, the elders agreed to solve the problem. They needed time, however, for the numbers of these marriages were great "and it was the wintry season of the year."[11] They resolved that they would begin to search and examine all such marriages "on the new moon of the tenth month" and that they would continue their inquiry until the new moon of a month to follow."[12] According to Ezra's own account, and that of 1 Esdras, this following month was the "first day of the first month" of the next year.[13] Therefore, we have now reached the eighth year of Arta-xerxes. After this problem was rectified, Josephus continues:

> In the seventh month they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles and, when almost all the people had gathered for it, they went up to the open court of the Temple near the gate, which faced east, and asked Ezra to read to them the laws of Moses. So he stood in the midst of the multitude and read them, talking from early morning until noon.[14]

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7 Neh., 8:18.

8 That Arthkhshastha is Arta-xerxes (I) Longimanus is confirmed by the Greek text of the LXX, which translates the Heb. name Arthkhshastha as Arta-xerxes in Neh., Ezra, and 1 Esdras. Eusebius comments under the name "Arta-xerxes, who is also called Longimanus," that it was during his reign that Ezra and Nehemiah brought out the Hebrews (Eusebius, *Chron*., 1, p. 69; also see Jerome's version in DCDH, pp. 110f). For a discussion see DECJ; also see NBD, p. 89.

9 Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:2; cf. 1 Esdras, 8:6, 61. Josephus uses the short form "Xerxes" for Arta-xerxes but clearly distinguishes him from Arta-xerxes (II) Mnemon (404–359 B.C.E.), see Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:7:1.

10 Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:2–4; 1 Esdras, 9:5. Also see Chap. XVIII, p. 240, n. 17.

11 Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:4; 1 Esdras, 9:6–13.

12 Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:4; cf. 1 Esdras, 9:16f.

13 Ezra, 10:16–17; 1 Esdras, 9:17.

14 Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:5.

1 Esdras gives the same sequence of events as Josephus. After mentioning the removal of foreign wives on "the first day of the tenth month,"[15] 1 Esdras adds:

> And the priests and Levites, and they that were of Israel, dwelt in Jerusalem, and in the country, on the first day of the seventh month: so the children of Israel were in their habitations.[16]

The text then continues by noting that it was at this time that Ezra began to read the Torah to the multitude from the broad court before the sacred porch.[17]

Josephus and 1 Esdras make it clear that Ezra arrived in the fifth month of the seventh year of Xerxes (Arta-xerxes) and that the events of the ninth month and following were themselves succeeded by the reading of the Law in the seventh month of the next year, being the eighth year of Arta-xerxes.

Ezra's Version

The book of Ezra reports much the same thing as Josephus. It states that Ezra left Babylon "in the seventh year of Arta-xerxes the king. And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. For on the first (day) of the first month he began to go up from Babylon, and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem."[18]

After discussing details about who came with him and what items were brought, Ezra adds:

> And we departed from the river of Ahaua on the twelfth of the first month to go (to) Jerusalem. (Ezra, 8:31)

Josephus and 1 Esdras, as already noticed, agree with this date of departure from Babylon.[19] When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, he offered sacrifices and turned over various items for the Temple. "And at the end of these things, the leaders came near" and advised Ezra of the problem with the numerous marriages between Jews and aliens (i.e. those of alien religions)."[20] Ezra then prayed about the matter, after which he requested a meeting of the council of the elders in three days.[21] On the ninth month, the twentieth day, during a "heavy rain," the elders met and agreed with Ezra, resolving to solve this problem.[22]

These people sat down and began judging these cases "on the first day of the tenth month" and finished their workload "by the first day of the first month."[23] When we arrive at the first month, the new year had begun, being the eighth year of King Arta-xerxes.

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15 1 Esdras, 9:16–36.
16 1 Esdras, 9:37.
17 1 Esdras, 9:38–53.
18 Ezra, 7:7–9.
19 Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:2; 1 Esdras, 8:6.
20 Ezra, 9:1–15.
21 Ibid., 10:8.
22 Ibid., 10:9–15.
23 Ibid., 10:16–17.

At this point the account in Ezra leaves off. Yet, as Josephus and 1 Esdras show us, this new year was the one in which Ezra publicly read the Law at the Feast of Tabernacles, indicating that this year was a year of release. One of the motives of Ezra and the Jewish elders would seem to be, therefore, the resolution of the problem of wives practicing pagan religions BEFORE the beginning of a sacred sabbath year. Indeed, based upon the Jubilee of Hezekiah's sixteenth year (700/699 B.C.E.), the ninth year of Arta-xerxes (455/454 B.C.E.) would also be a Jubilee year. The arrival of this Jubilee year would have raised even more concerns over religious issues for the devout Jews.

Nehemiah's Version

We pick up the story of Ezra in the book of Nehemiah. The book of Nehemiah compliments Ezra, Josephus, and 1 Esdras by beginning where the book of Ezra leaves off. What has puzzled historians about this version is that Nehemiah places the events surrounding Ezra's reading of the Law in the twentieth year of Arta-xerxes rather than his eighth. This puzzle shall be solved as we proceed.

In this version of the story, Nehemiah, the cup-bearer of King Arta-xerxes, hears of the desperate need for repair of the walls of Jerusalem. The news came to him in the month of Khisleu (Nov./Dec.).[24] Later on, Nehemiah writes, "in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of Arta-xerxes the king," he, for the first time, appeared sad before the king while serving the wine.[25] When questioned why Nehemiah was so troubled, Nehemiah told Arta-xerxes of the need for the repairs to Jerusalem. As a result, the king gave letters to Nehemiah ordering the neighboring regions to assist in this rebuilding effort and sent Nehemiah to the Holy City.[26]

At this time, Nehemiah was also made governor of Judaea, as he confirms when he writes:

> And from the time I was chosen to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year and until the thirty-second year of Arta-xerxes—twelve years—I and my brothers did not eat the bread of the governor. (Neh., 5:14)

Josephus notes that Nehemiah was sent on his expedition to Judaea by the Persian monarch on the very next day.[27] This detail accords with the other known facts, since it took nearly four months to make the journey from nearby Babylon,[28] and according to Nehemiah, the walls were subsequently repaired in 52 days, being finished on the twenty-fifth of Elul (Aug./Sept.), the sixth month of that year.[29]

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24 Neh., 1:1–11. See Chart G.
25 Neh., 2:1.
26 Neh., 2:2–8.
27 Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:7.
28 Ezra, 8:31.
29 Neh., 6:15. See Chart G.

Important to our investigation is what is said to have happened next. After the wall was built, the doors set up, the gatekeepers and singers and Levites chosen, and Nehemiah's brother, Hanani, was placed as ruler over the palace at Jerusalem, Nehemiah found the registry of genealogy of those who had returned from the Babylonian exile and who had resettled in Jerusalem. From this registry he counted the people.[30]

At this time contributions were made by the Jews to support the Temple:[31]

> So the priests, and the Levites, and the gatekeepers, and the singers, and [some] of the people, and the temple-slaves, and all the Israelites (Jews of Judaea) lived in their cities. AND WHEN THE SEVENTH MONTH CAME, THE SONS OF ISRAEL WERE IN THEIR CITIES. (Neh., 7:73)

As a result, we have now arrived at the seventh month of the twentieth year of Arta-xerxes. It was at this moment, we are told, when all the people had gathered themselves together, that Ezra read aloud to them the Law, "day by day (of the Feast of Tabernacles), from the first day until the last day, he read in the book of the Law of the eloahim."[32] This evidence conclusively shows that Ezra read the Law in the seventh month of the twentieth year of Arta-xerxes.

The book of Nehemiah has caused much consternation and confusion because it dates Ezra's reading of the Law to the twentieth year of King Arta-xerxes (amenable to system "B" if the accession-year method is used). Yet, according to Josephus and 1 Esdras (cf. Ezra), Ezra's reading should have taken place in Arta-xerxes' eighth year, not his twentieth. Seeing no way out of the dilemma, historians throw their hands into the air and forget the entire proposition. Yet there is no contradiction. The eighth year of Arta-xerxes was simply the same as his twentieth year. The entire problem is easily rectified once we take into consideration the particular details and the history of this period. In doing so we must deal with the accounts of Ezra and Nehemiah separately, each man within his own context.

The Reckoning of Ezra

To understand the reckoning of Ezra we must first consider his circumstance. Ezra was a Jew among the exiles living in Babylon.[33] The Babylonians used the regnal year (or accession-year) system, i.e. the first year was counted not from the time the king came to the throne but from the first day of the first month of Nisan (March/April) after he began ruling.[34] The period from when the king mounted the throne until the first of Nisan was the king's "accession year." That time was not officially accredited to the new king because it was already allotted to the king who preceded him.

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30 Neh., 7:1–69.
31 Neh., 7:70–72.
32 Neh., 8:18.
33 Ezra, 7:1–10.
34 HBC, pp. 85ff; MNHK, p. 43; CAW, p. 7.

Xerxes the Great, the father of Arta-xerxes, was murdered on December 16, 465 B.C.E. by a usurper named Artabanus.[35] In this insurrection Arta-xerxes barely escaped with his life. Artabanus, we are told, subsequently enjoyed the throne of Persia for seven months.[36] This detail means that Artabanus ruled from December 17, 465 to about June, 464 B.C.E. This fact is confirmed by archaeological evidence which shows that Arta-xerxes began to reign on or about June 12, 464 B.C.E.[37] Therefore, Artabanus would be considered king of Babylon, then under the power of Persia, for the year 464 B.C.E., having held the throne on the first of Nisan of that year. In June of 464 B.C.E., Arta-xerxes defeated Artabanus and regained the throne of the Persian empire for himself. On the first of Nisan in the year 463 B.C.E., Arta-xerxes would have been officially recognized as king of Babylon.

This evidence shows that under the Babylonian reckoning, with which Ezra was familiar and had been living under, Arta-xerxes' first year began on the first of Nisan, 463 B.C.E. As such, his seventh year was 457 B.C.E., the year Ezra arrived at Jerusalem; the eighth year, the sabbath year, began with Nisan 1, of 456 B.C.E. This date is correct and matches the cycle established in the records dealing with Hezekiah's fifteenth year.

The Reckoning of Nehemiah

Nehemiah's situation was far different from that of Ezra. To begin with, Nehemiah was the cup-bearer of King Arta-xerxes and lived, not in Babylon, but in Shushan (Susan, Susa), the capital of Persia.[38] In calculating Arta-xerxes' reign, Nehemiah would have used an entirely different interpretation.

According to ancient records, Arta-xerxes ruled as co-regent with his father, Xerxes the Great, for a number of years. To demonstrate, in Greek histories we read about their famous general named Themistocles. During the Persian invasion by Xerxes the Great in 480 B.C.E., Themistocles forced the Greeks to make a stand at Salamis and fight it out with the Persian fleet. A few years later Themistocles fell into disrepute among his countrymen and was ostracized. In fear for his life he fled to Asia Minor.[39] At that time Themistocles made contact with the Persian king seeking political asylum.

What has confused later historians is the fact that two different versions of this contact with the Persian king are given. Plutarch writes:

> Now Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus relate that Xerxes was dead, and that it was his son Arta-xerxes with whom Themistocles had his interview; but Ephorus and Dinon and Clitarchus and Heracleides and yet more besides have it that it was Xerxes to whom he came. With the chronological data Thucydides seems to me more in accord, although these are by no means securely established.[40]

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35 Diodorus, 11:69.

36 E.g. Hiero. Codices, pp. 28f; Manetho, frag. 70; etc.

37 BC, p. 15. No record of an acc. year is found for Arta-xerxes I in either Persia or Babylonia, only in south Egypt at Assuan (dated XI/18 = Jan. 3) where Artabanus was not recognized.

38 Neh., 1:1; Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:6.

39 Diodorus, 11:55–56.

40 Plutarch, *Them.*, 27.

Nepos, the first century B.C.E. Roman historian, supports Thucydides in this dispute, writing:

> I know that most historians have related that Themistocles went over into Asia in the reign of Xerxes, but I give credence to Thucydides in preference to others, because he, of all who have left records of that period, was nearest in point of time to Themistocles, and was of the same city. Thucydides says that he went to Arta-xerxes.[41]

This confusion is easily resolved once we recognize that both Xerxes the Great and his son Arta-xerxes shared the throne of Persia, or more precisely, Arta-xerxes was co-regent. When Themistocles made contact he did so with both kings.

Themistocles arrived in Asia Minor in 473 B.C.E. Diodorus, for example, who reports that Themistocles was granted an interview with Xerxes, refers to the death of this Greek general as part of his discussions about events of the year 471 B.C.E.[42] Prior to his death, Themistocles enjoyed a period of friendship with the Persian king. Yet before this friendship began the Greek general had to face opposition among certain nobles in Persia. Faced with this opposition, the king of Persia granted Themistocles "one year" to prepare for the trial, during which time Themistocles learned the Persian language in an effort to personally defend himself. At the trial Themistocles was acquitted and became friends with the monarch.[43] He then "came to the king," i.e. visited Persia, as an advisor.[44]

Adding to this information is a notation found in Jerome's edition of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius. Under the first year of the 77th Olympiad, being the 14th year of King Xerxes the Great (i.e. 472 B.C.E.), it states, "*Themistocles in Persas fugit* (Themistocles was a fugitive in Persia)."[45] Themistocles did not leave Asia Minor for his visit to Persia until after his trial. Counting one year back for his trial preparation brings us to 473 B.C.E., the year for his arrival in Asia Minor. Those writers who held records reporting that this contact was made with Arta-xerxes, therefore, have merely assumed that Xerxes the Great had died. In reality, Xerxes the Great did not die until 465 B.C.E.

Thucydides importantly notes that when Themistocles came to Asia Minor, "he sent a letter to King Arta-xerxes, son of Xerxes, who had lately come to the throne."[46] This notice places Arta-xerxes on the throne of Persia not long before 473 B.C.E., which was already a full nine years before he recovered the throne from the usurper Artabanus. Since his father Xerxes the Great was not slain until December, 465 B.C.E., the evidence concludes that Arta-xerxes had ruled as co-regent with his father for at least eleven years.

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41 Nepos, *Them*., 9.
42 Diodorus, 11:58, cf. 11:54–59.
43 Diodorus, 11:57; Thucydides, 1:138; Plutarch, *Them*., 29.
44 Thucydides, 1:138.
45 DCDH, p. 109 (191F:20).
46 Thucydides, 1:137.

Our arrangement would prove that his first regnal year as co-regent would have been in 475 B.C.E., which accords with the statement in Thucydides.

Confirmation of the date 475 B.C.E. for the first regnal year of Arta-xerxes on the Persian throne is also found in the records of Nehemiah. In Nehemiah we read the otherwise mystifying statement:

> The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month of Khisleu in the twentieth year, and I was in the palace at Shushan (etc.). (Neh., 1:1)

The chapter goes on to tell of how Nehemiah received the report of the desperate condition of the city of Jerusalem and how the Jews living in Judaea were under great afflictions. The question stands, "The twentieth year of what?" It cannot mean the twentieth regnal year of Arta-xerxes, for a little later on, AFTER Nehemiah had already received this dire report about the Jews, we read the following:

> And it happened, in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of Arta-xerxes, that wine was before him. And I took the wine and gave to the king. And I had never been sad in his presence. And the king said to me, "Why is your face so sad, since you are not sick." (Neh., 2:1)

The story goes on to tell how Nehemiah related to the king the desperate conditions of the Jews in Judaea and how the king granted him leave to go to them. The Persians, like the Babylonians and Jews, counted their year from the month of Nisan. Therefore, the month of Khisleu (the ninth month of the year) in the twentieth year, when Nehemiah first heard of the problems in Jerusalem, was not the same as the twentieth year during which Arta-xerxes questioned Nehemiah in the month of Nisan (the first month).

Meanwhile, Nehemiah, following Persian custom, counted years by the accession-year system (see for example Nehemiah's statement about his own rule as governor over Judaea, "from the twentieth year and until the thirty-second year of Arta-xerxes the king—twelve years,"[47] where thirteen years of rule are indicated but only twelve regnal years claimed).

Therefore, when at the beginning of his book Nehemiah makes mention of "the month of Khisleu (the ninth month), in the twentieth year," he was making reference not to the king's reign but his own service in the palace. Twenty years ago would be equal to Arta-xerxes accession year. As a result, the subsequent events which happened "in the month of Nisan (the first month), in the twentieth year of Arta-xerxes the king" refer to the twentieth regnal year of the king, counted from the year after his accession year.

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[47] Neh., 5:14. That the Persians of this period used the accession-year method see BC, pp. 6–17; JNES, 13, pp. 4–20.

The Reckoning of Josephus

In the story of Nehemiah, as given by Josephus, we have yet another set of numbers. Specifically, Josephus makes Nehemiah leave Persia in the twenty-fifth year of Xerxes (Arta-xerxes).[48] As Ralph Marcus, in his translation of Josephus, correctly comments:

> Josephus' account of Nehemiah's history differs in so many details from the Scriptures that most scholars assume, with some reason, that he had before him a text differing considerably from the extant Heb. and Gr. texts.[49]

A different text, nevertheless, does not mean that the figures of Josephus are in error or corrupt. With our reconstruction of the chronology from Ezra and Nehemiah, we find that Josephus' source makes perfect sense. The twenty-fifth year of Arta-xerxes is indeed equivalent to his twentieth year.

Counting back five years from 475 B.C.E., when Arta-xerxes began his official reign, we reach the year 480 B.C.E. This was the year that Xerxes the Great set out on his famous expedition against Greece. It would be quite natural for Xerxes the Great to somehow associate his son with the throne at this important occasion. If Xerxes would have been killed during his campaign, the association of his son with the throne would have assured a proper transfer of power. The usual procedure was to give the heir a realm of his own within the kingdom and to designate him as heir apparent. Later on, in 476 B.C.E., Arta-xerxes was made co-regent—476 B.C.E. being the year of his accession.

The Opposing Views

Though this investigation would seem to have correctly uncovered the dating systems used by Ezra and Nehemiah, those who adhere to systems "B," "C," and "D" will still assert exceptions. Systems "C" and "D" will simply claim that Ezra's dating for Arta-xerxes should begin, not with his first regnal year in 463 B.C.E., but with his accession year in 464 B.C.E. System "B" will insist that some of the evidence should be dismissed as errors or mistakes. They will accept only the evidence that dates Ezra's reading of the Torah to the twentieth year of Arta-xerxes I.

All three of these theories face severe difficulties. Systems "B" and "C," for example, have no contemporary evidence whatsoever which would demonstrate the use of a Tishri year by the Jews during this early period. Indeed, the relevant Jewish records from Judaea actually confirm a Nisan (Abib) year.[50] Furthermore, as we have previously shown, every source prior to the mid-second century C.E. declares only a Nisan (Abib) year in official use by the Jews of Judaea.

System "B" and "D," meanwhile, are also faced with the difficulty that their sabbath cycle calculations will not work for the sabbath year occurring at the time of Sennacherib's third campaign. If it will not work for that period how can it work in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah?

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48 Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:6–7.

49 Marcus, *Jos.*, vi, p. 390, n. f, and also see pp. 400f, n. b.

50 E.g. Zech., 1:7, 7:1; Esther, 2:16, 3:7, 8:12; and see below n. 51; cf. Chart G.

The view espoused by the advocates of systems "C" and "D," that the records dealing with the dates for Arta-xerxes I should be understood by the nonaccession-year system, is also without support. In fact, it is much more plausible that Ezra, a Babylonian Jew, would have used the Babylonian accession-year system. In turn, use of the accession-year system for Arta-xerxes results in a precise fit for the calculations of the sabbath and Jubilee cycle established in the records dealing with the destruction of Sennacherib's army at Jerusalem in 701 B.C.E. (Chart B).

System "B" has several other problems as well. It is true that—if we ignore any co-regency of the Persian monarchs, disregard the evidence that Ezra read the Torah in Arta-xerxes' eighth year, but use the accession-year system—the 20th year of Arta-xerxes (Abib reckoning) would overlap with the first part of a sabbath year as determined by system "B" (i.e. 444/443 B.C.E., Tishri reckoning). Yet, even if we did set aside the evidence, both for a co-regency of the Persian kings and for Ezra's reading of the Torah in Arta-xerxes' eighth year, we are still faced with the fact that all of our sources declare that Ezra publicly read the Torah during the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month.[51] Not one of these writers qualifies his statement by indicating that this seventh month was the beginning of any Jewish year system. The numbering of this month, therefore, proves that the year was determined by the Abib (Nisan) reckoning and not by a Tishri reckoning—as would be required if either system "B" or "C" are to work.

Conclusion

Simply put, Nehemiah's reference point for King Arta-xerxes was a Persian one. It started from the time when this king began to reign as co-regent with his father, Xerxes the Great—a term of office for which Nehemiah had served as cup-bearer from the accession year. The short interlude during the usurpation by Artabanus would not play any role in this calculation.

Ezra, on the other hand, came from Babylon. At Babylon the accession-year system was utilized and only one king at a time was recognized. At first, this honor would belong to Xerxes the Great until his death in 465 B.C.E. Next it would go to Artabanus, who was in control of the empire on Nisan 1, 464 B.C.E.; and finally to Arta-xerxes I who retook the throne in June of 464 B.C.E. Arta-xerxes I would have been recognized on the first of Nisan, 463 B.C.E., when for the first time he actually "took the hand of Bel" and ruled as sole monarch.

As a result, the book of Nehemiah places Ezra's public reading of the Law during the Feast of Tabernacles, thereby signifying a sabbath year, in the seventh month of the twentieth Persian year of Arta-xerxes I, while Josephus, 1 Esdras, and the book of Ezra place it in his eighth Babylonian year. Nevertheless, both dates represent the same year, 456/455 B.C.E. The next year, 455/454 B.C.E., was a Jubilee. As we proceed with the evidence for subsequent sabbath years, it will become quite apparent that these above dates are correct and represent the original sabbath and Jubilee cycle.

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51 Neh., 7:73–8:18; LXX Neh., 7:73–8:18; Jos., *Antiq.*, 11:5:5; 1 Esdras, 9:37–53.

Chapter XII

The Seleucid Era in Judaea

Part I of the Sabbath Year of 162/161 B.C.E.

Our next datable sabbath year is revealed in the Maccabean books and the works of Josephus, with the story of the siege of Bethzura and Jerusalem by Antiochus Eupator (Antiochus V). According to these records, the 150th year of the Seleucid era was a sabbath year (162/161 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning). This claim will not fit system "B," which would make the 149th Seleucid year (Tishri, 164 until Tishri, 163 B.C.E.) a sabbath and must determine the first Seleucid year as beginning in October (Tishri 1), 312 B.C.E. Neither does it reconcile with system "C," as proposed by Wacholder and others, which would also have the Seleucid year 149 be the sabbath year but would instead begin the Seleucid calendar with October of the year 311 B.C.E., making the 149th year October, 163 until October, 162 B.C.E.

The relevant ancient records are considered by present-day scholars to be confused and unreliable. The irony is that these records are among the most reliable and provide a solid foundation for the reconstruction of the sabbath and Jubilee cycle. The problem is not with the evidence, which clearly sets forth the correct sabbath cycle, but with the attempt by those interpreting these records to make them conform to system "B"—or, as in the case of Wacholder and those accepting his views, system "C." Both cycles are based upon the false premise that the ancient Jewish year began with the month of Tishri (Sept./Oct.). In reality, as all the evidence demonstrates, the Jews of this early period began their year with the month of Abib (later called Nisan; i.e. March/April) 1, as commanded in the Torah.[1]

The conclusions of systems "B" and "C," therefore, entirely miss the mark, in that their proponents try to rearrange the evidence to fit their preconceived cycles. Evidence from the works of Josephus and 1 and 2 Maccabees prove that their authors calculated the Seleucid year based upon a Nisan 1 beginning. At no time do these records even suggest that the sabbath year began on the first of Tishri.

The Seleucid Era Used in Judaea

To understand the evidence from the Maccabean books and Josephus we must first grapple with the issue of the Seleucid era. Here we find two different reckonings anciently in use: one based upon the Babylonian calendar, which was dominate throughout the Middle East, and a second based upon the Macedonian calendar, which was in practice among the Greeks. When the Seleucid era was adopted within the Greek empire in Asia, the Babylonian system was used. But later on, when the Seleucid ruling house transferred its

1 As Abib see Exod., 12:1–20, 13:4, 23:15, 34:18; Deut., 16:1. As Nisan see Esther, 3:7.

base of power to Syria, the Greeks of Syria adopted the Macedonian method. The choice between methods thereafter varied from place to place.

The Seleucid era was named after Seleucus Nicator (321–281 B.C.E.), one of the generals of Alexander the Great who after the latter's death was part of the Diadochi (successors). He ruled as satrap of Babylon. The Seleucid era was not only one of the most widely used calendar systems in the ancient world but it also was among those that remained in use the longest. It continued as a system with the exiled Jews for a long time, being called "the Greek era" and "the era of contracts" because legal documents were dated by it.[2]

In the long struggle for power that ensued, Seleucus fled to Egypt where he allied himself with Ptolemy Soter. Later, Seleucus and Ptolemy together defeated Demetrius Poliorcetes in a decisive battle at Gaza. Castor mentions the battle near Gaza between Ptolemy and Demetrius, stating that it "was fought after eleven years (after the year) of Alexander's death, in the 117th Olympiad," Macedonian reckoning, Alexander dying "in the 114th Olympiad."[3] Alexander's death took place on June 13, 323 B.C.E., which indeed was in the first year of the 114th Olympiad (Oct., 324 to Oct., 323 B.C.E.). "After eleven years" brings us to the first year of the 117th Macedonian Olympiad (Oct., 312 to Oct., 311 B.C.E.), the war being fought early in the twelfth year.

Diodorus comments that Demetrius had "summoned his soldiers to Old Gaza from their winter quarters on all sides" and "awaited the approach of his opponents."[4] In this battle Demetrius was defeated, "and Cassander, who had lost many soldiers," returned to Macedonia because he "saw that winter was at hand."[5] This major battle, therefore, took place in the wintertime and must be dated to the early half of the winter of 312/311 B.C.E.

After the battle, Seleucus "set out for Babylon."[6] In Jerome's translation of the *Eusebius Chronicon*, the beginning of the reign of Seleucus is placed in the first year of the 117th Olympiad, a Greek era which began on July 1, 312 and continued to June 30, 311 B.C.E.[7] Jack Finegan writes:

> The victory and triumphant return to Babylon were evidently considered to mark the real beginning of his reign; the first regnal year of Seleucus was dated accordingly as beginning with the ensuing New Year's day in Babylon, namely the following Nisanu 1, which was Apr. 3, 311 B.C.E.[8]

Later on, when Seleucid rule was centered in Syria, the Greek kings living there adopted the Macedonian calendar, which began with the month of Dios (equivalent to the Jewish month of Tishri in the earlier correlation; but becoming the Macedonian month of Hyperberetaeus in the later correlation).[9]

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2 HBC, p. 123.
3 Jos., *Apion*, 1:22, par. 184–186. For Castor and the Macedonian Oly. see JQR, 10, pp. 58f.
4 Diodorus, 19:80:5
5 Ibid., 19:89:2.
6 Ibid., 19:90:1.
7 DCDH, p. 126 (208F:15–21); HBC, p. 123.
8 HBC, p. 120.
9 HBC, pp. 72–73. Also see Chart G.

Under this determination the first year of the Seleucid era began with Dios 1 (i.e. Oct. 7) of 312 B.C.E., the Macedonian year in which the battle at Gaza was won.

Since both calendars were observed in the area around Judaea, the question arises, "Which one of these calendars was utilized by the authors of Maccabees and Josephus?" To this equation Wacholder has recently added yet another possible twist. Allying himself with the idea that the Judaeans followed the Babylonian regnal year system, but unwilling to acknowledge a first of Nisan beginning for the sabbath year, he calculates that the Seleucid era for Judaea began with Tishri of the following year: i.e., Tishri 1, 311 B.C.E.

The Year Begins with Abib (Nisan)

In an effort to force the records to accommodate a sabbath year in the 149th Seleucid, chronologists, whether from the Zuckermann-Schürer school (system "B") or the Marcus-Wacholder interpretation (system "C"), boldly claim that the ancient post-exile sabbath years began on the first of Tishri (the seventh month) of the sixth year in the scripturally designated cycle.

Yet they do so entirely on the basis of one comment made in one of the books of the Mishnah,[10] their earliest source, written at the end of the second century C.E., centuries after the fact. Indeed, the Rosh ha-Shanah is very weak evidence that the sabbath year began with the month of Tishri before the second century C.E. The Mishnah was part of the developing traditions of the Talmud and as such the most that anyone can infer is that its Tishri New Year had only been part of those more recent developments.

As we have already stated, there is not one shred of evidence before the end of the second century C.E., when the Mishnah was composed, that suggests that the sabbath year officially began with Tishri.[11] More important to our discussion, the evidence from the books of Maccabees and Josephus clearly proves that they calculated the Seleucid year by the so-called Babylonian method, which began the year in the month of Nisânu (Jewish "Nisan"). At no time do any of these texts even suggest an exception for the sabbath year. If such an unusual starting date did exist these writers surely would have been compelled to say something. What we find is just the opposite. They clearly demonstrate that the sabbath year began with the month of Abib (Nisan).

The Two Books of Maccabees

The year system followed in the two books of Maccabees (early and mid-first century B.C.E.) begins with Nisan. This fact is first indicated by the obvious; the Jews, since the Exodus, had practiced a Nisan (Abib) beginning for their year. Further, the Judaeans of the post-exile period were descendants of the exiles who had lived in Babylonia, a region where they also utilized the Nisan calendar. It was from the Babylonians that the Jews acquired their individual month names.[12] Furthermore, the Jews who resettled Judaea were taught by such noted biblical scholars as Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah, as well as the scribe Ezra—all prophets of Yahweh who would have closely

10 R.Sh., 1:1.
11 Chap. II.
12 HBC, pp. 38ff.

adhered to the sound scriptural teaching and doctrine which began the year with Abib (later called Nisan from the Babylonian month-name "Nisânu").

With the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek generals who served under him carved up the empire and set up monarchies of their own. Among these royal families, the Seleucid line was established in Syria and the Ptolemies laid hold of Egypt. At first, Judaea fell under Egyptian authority and remained an Egyptian vassal until 198 B.C.E. In that year it was rent away by the Syrian Seleucid empire.

Even more important for our concerns, the writers of the Maccabean books basked in the glory of the Judaean victory over the Greek king of Syria, Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes (175–163 B.C.E.), and his ruling house. This victory was especially important to the Jews of this period because Antiochus Epiphanes tried to Hellenize Judaea by force. In this effort, Epiphanes was very brutal and vicious to the Jews, not only denying them their ancestral laws but enforcing the death penalty if any Jew dared practice them. He even defiled the Temple at Jerusalem. Why, subsequently, these Jewish patriots would endear themselves to a native Greek form of the calendar, especially one rooted in Greek-dominated Syria, the hated enemy of the Jews,[13] is hard to reconcile.

Undeniable proof that the writers of the Maccabean books followed a Nisan Seleucid year comes from the internal data of the texts. In 1 and 2 Maccabees we have the following statements:[14]

> Now on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is called Khasleu (Khisleu), in the 148th year (i.e. of the Seleucid era). (1 Macc., 4:52)

> So in the seventh month of the 160th year, at the Feast of Tabernacles, Jonathan put on the sacred robe. (1 Macc., 10:21)

> Now Simon was visiting the cities that were in the country, and taking care for the good ordering of them; at which time he came down himself to Jericho with his sons, Mattathias and Judas, in the 177th year, in the eleventh month, called Shebat. (1 Macc., 16:14)

> And they ordained all with a common decree in no case to let the day pass without solemnity, but to celebrate the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which in the Syrian tongue is called Adar, the day before Mardocheus' day. (2 Macc., 15:36)

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13 Josephus points out that in the time of the Jewish ruler Alexander Jannaeus (103/102–77/76 B.C.E.), the Jewish king did not allow Syrians into his mercenary army—even to help quell a revolt by the Jewish people against him. This prohibition was "on account of their (the Syrian-Greek) innate hatred of his nation" (Jos., *Wars*, 1:4:3). The Syrian-Greeks, therefore, hated the Jews as much as the Jews hated the Syrian-Greeks.

14 Siwan is the third month (Esther, 8:9); Khisleu is the ninth month (Zech., 7:1); Tebeth is the tenth month (Esther, 2:16); Shebat is the eleventh month (Zech., 1:7); Adar is the twelfth month (Esther, 3:7, 8:12). For a complete month equivalency list see Chart G.

These passages leave the chronologists in a quandary because they clearly spell out that the Seleucid year is reckoned by the Nisan or Babylonian system. Finegan, for example, concludes: "Here (in Maccabees) where both number and name are cited it is evident that the months are numbered from the spring and it may be supposed that the year references in the same verse are also reckoned from spring, i.e., are years of the Seleucid era according to the Babylonian-Jewish calendar."[15] Wacholder (system "C") also admits the discrepancy:

> A number of scholars have maintained that the festival now known as Rosh Hashanah, which falls on the first of Tishri (September-October) was regarded then as the beginning of the year. But the Maccabean books, like all other biblical sources, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, take it for granted that Nisan was the first month.[16]

Wacholder, like most other chronologists, then overrides all this evidence by citing Leviticus, 25:9, (which, as we have already shown, has nothing to do with the regular sabbath year but only with the year of Jubilee—and then only with the seventh month of the 50th year itself) and the early third century C.E. Mishnah text called Rosh ha-Shanah,[17] the latter being far removed from the events under consideration! With this illusion of evidence in hand, Wacholder makes the following non sequitur: "There is no doubt, however, that the season of Shemitah [sabbath] commenced on the first of Tishri and ended on the last day of Elul."[18]

In reality, there is no evidence at all that a Tishri reckoning ever officially occurred before the end of the second century C.E. Indeed, the evidence only proves that their year began with Abib (Nisan).

Chronologists, in a vain attempt to "interpret" the evidence in order to have some grounds for their proposed systems, then look for dates in the Maccabean books that can be construed as belonging to the Greek method of the Seleucid year (i.e. an Oct. until Oct. reckoning). Finegan's *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*,[19] as an example, presents this popular approach.

In the first class he gives a long list of various citations which clearly prove a Nisan reckoning in the book of 1 Maccabees (namely: 1:29, 54, 59; 2:70; 4:52; 9:3, 54; 10:21; 13:41, 51; 14:27; 16:14).

In the second class he lists, "Dates which MAY come" from a source using the October year (i.e., 1:10; 3:37; 6:16; 7:1; 10:1, 57, 67; 11:19; 14:1; 15:10). A close examination of these citations proves there is no justification for such a conclusion. Not one citation even remotely demonstrates that it was based upon a Tishri beginning for the year. The fact that these verses by themselves

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15 HBC, pp. 121f.
16 HUCA, 44, pp. 161f.
17 R. Sh., 1:1.
18 HUCA, p. 162.
19 HBC, p. 122.

lack definition and are inconclusive for any year system does not automatically mean that an October year "may" be justified, as Finegan and others conjecture. In fact, to suggest that these sources would indiscriminately jump back and forth between different year systems without explanation is not only illogical but mischaracterizes the high quality of the literary work they represent.

In the third class are four citations (namely: 1:20; 4:28; 6:20; 9:58) that "COULD fall in either class," a meaningless statement and merely a duplicate of the second class; and finally, "one (6:20) is regarded as erroneous in either case." 1 Maccabees, 6:20, is the passage which claims that the 150th Seleucid year was a sabbath year! For systems "B" and "C" to work the sabbath year must be in the 149th Seleucid year. Therefore, based upon their own construction, they presume that the year 150 is an error and dismiss the historical record.

The Book of Josephus

In the book entitled *Antiquities of the Jews* by Josephus, in that section which discusses the events surrounding the siege of Bethzura and Jerusalem, we also find a Nisan reckoning for the Seleucid year.

To preface this data we should point out that Josephus was himself a Jewish "priest and of priestly ancestry," who considered himself "well versed in the philosophy" of the "sacred books."[20] His book, *Antiquities of the Jews*, was translated into Greek from an account that he had "previously composed" in his own "vernacular tongue (Hebrew) and sent to the barbarians in the interior."[21] These barbarians are then defined as the "Parthians and Babylonians and the most remote tribes of Arabia with our countrymen beyond the Euphrates and the inhabitants of Adiabene."[22] The people beyond the Euphrates, in Parthia, Babylon, Adiabene, etc., utilized a Nisan year. Our initial indications, therefore, are that Josephus would have based his original report on this same year system.

Next, when one compares the account of the Syrian and Judaean conflict as given by Josephus with that from the first book of Maccabees, it becomes apparent that, for the events surrounding the siege of Bethzura and Jerusalem in the 149th through 150th Seleucid years, Josephus used 1 Maccabees as his major source. It is also clear by amplifications and other details in the story that Josephus relied heavily upon other Jewish sources as well. The story is basically a Jewish one, told from a Jewish perspective.

It is not hard to conclude that a Jewish priest relying on Jewish sources would reflect a calendar system then popular among the Jews. As we have already seen, the Maccabean books adhere to a Nisan year. Josephus does likewise.

Proof that Josephus used a Nisan based calendar is demonstrated by the following citations (compare Chart G):

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20 Jos., *Apion*, 1:10.
21 Jos., *Wars*, Pref.:1.
22 Jos., *Wars*, 1:2.

• The month of Nisan is specifically called "the first month" of the year and Josephus says it "begins the year." It is equated with the Macedonian Greek month of Xanthicus (March/April).[23]

• The month of Tishri is explicitly called "the seventh month," the month in which the Feast of Tabernacles is held. Josephus equates Tishri with the equivalent month in the Macedonian calendar of Hyperberetaeus (Sept./Oct.).[24] At no time does Josephus ever state that Tishri or the seventh month began any Jewish year (sabbath or not).

• The month of Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.) is made equivalent to the Macedonian month of Dius (Dios), and Josephus specifically states that it "was ONCE the second month," but this system was altered when Moses "appointed Nisan, that is to say Xanthicus, as the first month for the festivals,"[25] thereafter making Marheshuan the eighth month.

• The month of Adar (Feb./March) is referred to as "the last month of the year" and "the twelfth month." It is equated with the Macedonian month of Dystros (Feb./March).[26]

An important detail is that even though Josephus uses Macedonian month-names he clearly makes them equivalent to the Jewish lunar months. The days of the month are also the same. For example, the first of Xanthicus is the same as the first of Abib (Nisan).[27] The tenth and fourteenth of Xanthicus are the same as the tenth and fourteenth of Abib.[28] The tenth and fifteenth day of Hyperberetaeus are equivalent to the tenth and fifteenth day of Tishri.[29] These facts led Jack Finegan to conclude, "In Josephus, therefore, the Macedonian months may be taken as fully and exactly equivalent to the Jewish months."[30]

Josephus also dates years in the Seleucid era by Olympiads:

• *Antiquities*, 12:5:4, states, "in the 145th year, on the twenty-fifth day of the month which by us is called Khasleu (Khisleu; Nov./Dec.), and by the Macedonians Apellaios, in the 153rd Olympiad."

• *Antiquities*, 12:7:6, reports, "it was in the 145th year that these things befell the Temple, on the twenty-fifth of the month of Apellaios (Nov./Dec.), in the 153rd Olympiad. And the Temple was renovated on the same day, the twenty-fifth of the month Apellaios, in the 148th year, in the 154th Olympiad."

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23 Jos., *Antiq*., 1:3:3, 2:14:6, 3:8:4, 3:10:5, 11:4:8. (Josephus uses the "Later Correlation" of Macedonian and Hebrew months. See HBC, pp. 59–68).
24 Jos., *Antiq*., 3:10:2, 8:4:1.
25 Ibid., 1:3:3.
26 Ibid., 4:8:49, 11:4:7, 11:6:2,12, 12:10:5.
27 Jos., *Antiq*., 3:8:4; cf. Exod., 40:17.
28 Jos., *Antiq*., 3:10:5, 2:14:6; cf. Exod., 12:1–6.
29 Jos., *Antiq*., 3:10:2–4; cf. Lev., 23:26–36.
30 HBC, p. 73.

The Macedonian reckoning (Oct. year) for the 145th Seleucid year extended from the fall of 168 to the fall of 167 B.C.E. The Babylonian reckoning would have it extend from the spring of 167 to the spring of 166 B.C.E. Therefore, the twenty-fifth of Khasleu (Apellaios; Nov./Dec.) would fall in the winter of 167 B.C.E. by the Macedonian reckoning, but in the winter of 166 B.C.E. with that of the Babylonian. The 153rd Attic-Olympiad began with July of 168 B.C.E.

Yet, a comparison of the various dates utilized by Josephus indicates that Josephus used what Solomon Zeitlin refers to as the "Olympian year of the Macedonian calendar."[31] The Macedonian Olympic year began in November. The 153rd year of this calendar would range from November, 168 to November, 167 B.C.E. If the Attic-Olympiad was used, then either system might work.

If, instead, the Macedonian-Olympiad was used (which the records of Josephus clearly indicate),[32] then only the Babylonian reckoning will work for the Seleucid year named.

Our second date is quite another matter. The Seleucid year 148, by Macedonian reckoning, extended from the fall of 165 to the fall of 164 B.C.E., by Babylonian reckoning, from the spring of 164 to the spring of 163 B.C.E. As a result, Khasleu (Khisleu) 25 in the Macedonian system is in December of 165, while in the Babylonian it is in December of 164 B.C.E.

The 154th Attic-Olympiad did not begin until July of 164 B.C.E. and the Macedonian-Olympiad started in November of 164 B.C.E. The December, 165 date is thereby eliminated under both systems. Therefore, Josephus' statement is only correct by using the Babylonian reckoning, and once we grant that he used such a reckoning, he is correct in both synchronisms.

There is yet one other proof that conclusively shows that the sabbath year itself was determined to have begun on the first of Nisan by Josephus. This evidence has to do with events in the 177th and 178th Seleucid year. In this story, Simon the Hasmonaean is murdered by his son-in-law, Ptolemy, "in the eleventh month, which is called Shebat, of the 177th year."[33] His son, John Hyrcanus, escaped the assassin's hands and, as Josephus informs us, tried to avenge the crime. Soon after the assassination John besieged Ptolemy who was in the fortress of Dagon. Shortly after the siege started, "there came round the year in which the Jews are wont to remain inactive, for they observe the custom every seventh year, just as on the seventh day."[34]

This record shows that the sabbath year, being the 178th Seleucid year, shortly followed the month of Shebat (Jan./Feb.), the eleventh month of the year. There will be more said on this subject in the chapter dealing with this particular sabbath year (Chapter XIV). For now this detail is mentioned only to prove that both the writers of Maccabees and Josephus calculated the first of Nisan as the beginning of the Judaean year (including the sabbath year).

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31 JQR, 10, pp. 58f.

32 Our study will have more to say about the Macedonian-Olympian calendar of Josephus in Chap. XIX, pp. 255f.

33 1 Macc., 16:14.

34 Jos., *Antiq*., 13:8:1, *Wars*, 1:2:4.

Did They Count from Nisan, 312 B.C.E.?

Finally, we must ask ourselves, "Is it possible that the Jews used a non-accession-year method and counted the first year of the Seleucid era from Nisan 312 B.C.E., since the victory of Seleucus over Demetrius would have occurred within that year?" This theory conforms to the construction we have labeled system "D."

The evidence strongly opposes this reconstruction. To begin with, old Jewish sources affirm that the destruction of the second Temple, known from Josephus and other writings to have occurred in the fifth month, called Ab (July/Aug.) of 70 C.E., took place in the 381st Seleucid year.[35] Finegan correctly notes the 381st Seleucid year corresponds "to the year from the spring of A.D. 70, to the spring of A.D. 71 according to the Babylonian calendar."[36]

Second, the Jewish priest and historian Josephus—who relied on important Jewish sources such as the Maccabean books, using their dates for the Seleucid era—informs us that the Hasmonaean priesthood "came to an end after 126 years" with the death of Antigonus. Antigonus died shortly after Herod conquered Jerusalem and became the Jewish king.[37] Josephus also informs us that there were 107 years from the year that Herod captured Jerusalem and became king until the Roman general named Titus took the same city (70 C.E.).[38] Therefore, Herod became king in the year 37/36 B.C.E.

Counting back 126 years from 37/36 B.C.E. brings us to 162/161 B.C.E. That year is equivalent to the 150th Seleucid year, Nisan reckoning. It was in that year that Antiochus Eupator besieged Judas Maccabaeus at Jerusalem, and after a long siege made peace with him, recognizing him as the legitimate ruler of Judaea.[39] The 150th Seleucid year, therefore, is indeed the first year of the fully recognized government of the Hasmonaeans. It was from Judas that the Hasmonaean line also came to be called the "Maccabees."

Later on, Josephus reports that the Hasmonaeans ruled 125 years.[40] In this case, though, the dynasty is being compared with its successor Herod (37/36 B.C.E.). The one year's difference from the "126 years" figure, which we mentioned above, was allotted to Herod's reign. Once again we are brought back to the year 162/161 B.C.E. As a result, these calculations confirm our construction of the Seleucid era as used both by Josephus and by the other Jews of the pre-second century C.E. period.

We also have evidence of the correct length of the Seleucid year from the Talmudic work entitled Abodah Zarah.[41] In this work we are told that for 206 years the Jews were under the dominion of the Romans: 103 years of this period the Hasmonaeans ruled; and for 103 years the house of Herod ruled. The house of Herod ended its authority over the Jews in 66 C.E., when the Jews revolted from Rome and discontinued the authority of Agrippa, son of Herod Agrippa. Counting 103 years back from 66 C.E. places the first year of the house of Herod

35 TSCJ, p. 48.
36 HBC, p. 124.
37 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:4.
38 Jos., *Antiq*., 20:10:5.
39 Jos., *Antiq*., 12:9:3–7; 1 Mac., 6:19–63.
40 Jos., *Antiq*., 17:6:3.
41 B. A. Zar., 8b–9a

in 37/36 B.C.E., which is correct. Therefore, another 103 years prior to Herod brings us to the date 140/139 B.C.E.

Meanwhile, in 1 Maccabees, 14:16–29, we read that in the Seleucid year 172, being the third year of Simon the high priest, the Jews came into an alliance with the Romans. The equation between these two sets of figures proves that the year 140/139 B.C.E. (Nisan reckoning) is the same as the Seleucid year 172. In turn, the beginning of the Seleucid era would be 311 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning.

Conclusion

The evidence that the authors of Maccabees and Josephus utilized the Abib (Nisan) year in calculating the Seleucid era is clear. Indeed, since these writers were Jewish, descendants from a people with a long history of observing a Nisan year, and offspring of Jewish exiles who sojourned in Babylon where the Nisan year was also observed, it would be far-fetched to claim otherwise.

Neither is there any evidence that the authors of Maccabees or Josephus used records which utilized the Macedonian (Oct.) or Tishri reckoning for the Seleucid era. Josephus reserved a Macedonian reckoning only for his choice of the Greek Olympian calendar, and this particular reckoning began in November. Further, he always notifies his reader when he is using this system. The "divergent calendar" theory, often presented to justify mixing Tishri Seleucid years with Nisan ones in these early records, has never been proven and is unwarranted by the evidence.

It is also an interesting leap in logic which concludes that because the Jews living in the days of the Rosh ha-Shanah text (i.e. at the end of the second century C.E.) began the sabbath year on the first of Tishri of the sixth year in the scriptural cycle, that every year from post-exile times on (i.e. from 538 B.C.E.) should, therefore, also be calculated as beginning with Tishri. Yet this mind-set is still held by numerous chronologists.

CHART G

Month Equivalency Chart

No. of Month	Known Ancient Israelite Month-names	Jewish (Babylonian–Assyrian) Month-names	Equivalent Macedonian Month-names in Josephus	Approx. Modern Day Equivalent
1st	Abib	Nisan (Nisânu)	Xanthicus (Xanthikos)	March/April
2nd	Ziu	Iyyar (Aiaru)	Artemisius (Artemisios)	April/May
3rd		Siwan (Simânu)	Daesius (Daisios)	May/June
4th		Tammuz (Duzu)	Panemos (Panemus)	June/July
5th	Tsach (?)	Ab (Abu)	Lous (Loos)	July/Aug.
6th		Elul (Ululu)	Gorpiaeus (Gorpiaios)	Aug./Sept.
7th	Ethanim (Tashritu)	Tishri (Hyperberetaios)	Hyperberetaeus	Sept./Oct.
8th	Bul	Marheshuan (Heshuan Arahsamnu)	Dius (Dios)	Oct./Nov.
9th		Khisleu (Kislimu)	Apellaios (Apellaeus)	Nov./Dec.
10th		Tebeth (Tebetu)	Audynaios (Audyneus)	Dec./Jan.
11th		Shebat (Shabatu)	Peritios (Peritus)	Jan./Feb.
12th		Adar (Addaru)	Dystros (Dystrus)	Feb./March

(13th): Every few years an intercalary month was required. This extra month was labeled "Be-Adar" or the "Second Adar."

Chapter XIII

The Siege of Bethzura and Jerusalem

Part II of the Sabbath Year of 162/161 B.C.E.

The Seleucid year 150 will simply not fit the proposed sabbath cycles offered by systems "B" and "C." As a result, the first effort of the advocates of these systems has been to claim that the records dealing with the events surrounding the siege of Bethzura and Jerusalem by Antiochus (V) Eupator and associated with the 150th Seleucid year are in conflict with one another, are misinformed, or are just plain wrong. Wacholder, for example, argues:

> First and Second Maccabees differ, however, as to the date of Antiochus V's march into Judaea. II Macc. 13:1 dates the march in the 149th year of the Seleucid era, I Macc. 6:20, repeated by Josephus, in the 150th year.[1]

Wacholder then declares 1 Maccabees and Josephus to be in error and that the 149th Seleucid year was the real sabbath year. Zuckermann goes as far as to retranslate 1 Maccabees, 6:53, so that it implies, "There had been a Sabbatical year in the preceding 149th Seleucian year" rather than in the stated 150th year.[2] North reads 1 Maccabees, 6:53, to mean "because the effects of the sabbath year were then being felt,"[3] and concludes that the dates found in Josephus "are either palpably incommensurate or else insolubly obscure."[4]

Based upon the inability of these chronologists to make all the evidence fit their desired sabbath cycle systems, they extrapolate that the 149th Seleucid year is the correct figure and that the year 150 somehow must have been introduced as a mistake, is misunderstood, or simply reflects a poor form of Greek grammar used in the source texts (theorizing that the true intent of these authors was to express that the 149th year was a sabbath year).

Contrary to these opinions, close examination of these records proves that the relevant accounts found in 1 Maccabees, the *Antiquities* of Josephus, and 2 Maccabees are all very much in harmony and that the Greek of these texts is quite precise in its meaning. The belief that the sources are in conflict is a forced interpretation, based upon a spurious claim that the Jewish year in this early period began with the month of Tishri (Sept./Oct.). It is built upon a longing to have some justification to make the 149th Seleucid year encompass the sabbath year intended by the story rather than the 150th year.

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1 HUCA, 44, p. 161.
2 TSCJ, pp. 47f.
3 Bib., 34, p. 507.
4 Ibid., p. 511.

The Sources in Harmony

To demonstrate the accuracy of our three primary sources—1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus, *Antiquities*—we have provided Chart H at the end of this chapter, which places the relevant passages in parallel columns. As a preface to reading these accounts, one must point out that in the verses immediately preceding them we read that during the ninth month—specifically defined as Khasleu (Nov./Dec.) of the 148th Seleucid—the Temple and altar were renovated. These versions then go on to mention a long series of battles carried on by the Jews after this Temple renovation.[5] It is clear by these records that we are brought well within the 149th Seleucid year (Nisan reckoning).

The following is a summary of the parallel passages as laid out in Chart H. They follow in order the series of battles mentioned above and go on to discuss the events surrounding the siege of Bethzura and Jerusalem:

- After the Feast of Pentecost (which occurrence was in early June, and therefore brings us clearly within the 149th Seleucid year), a war between the Jews, led by Judas (Maccabaeus), and Gorgias, the Syrian-Greek governor of Idumaea, was fought. The Jews invaded Hebron, Marisa, Azotus (Ashdod) in Palestia, and other places before they returned to Judaea.[6]

- "About that time" King Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes heard of the wealth of the Persian city named Elam and set about to invade Persia. He was defeated in this war and returned to Babylon, where he became despondent.[7]

- While at Babylon, Antiochus IV heard of the victories in Judaea by the Jews. In his despondency the king became ill. As his illness lingered on for "many days," and his suffering increased, Epiphanes perceived that he was about to die.[8]

- Antiochus Epiphanes made his friend Philip regent and designated his own son Antiochus (V) Eupator—who was at this time living in Syria under the guardianship of Lysias—as the next king. Epiphanes then died in the 149th Seleucid year.[9] The *Seleucid King-list* reports that Antiochus IV died in the Babylonian month of Kislimu (Nov./Dec.).[10]

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5 1 Macc., 4:42–5:64; 2 Macc., 11:34–12:31; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:7:7–12:8:6, cf. 12:5:4.

6 1 Macc., 5:65–68; 2 Macc., 12:32–45; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:8:6.

7 1 Macc., 6:1–5; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:1.

8 1 Macc., 6:5–13; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:1.

9 1 Macc., 6:14–17; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:2, *Wars*, 1:1:4(40).

10 ANET, p. 567, "[149], month Kislimu: It was heard that K[ing] Antiochus [died]." Pritchard incorrectly writes "148" in the lacuna instead of "149." His error results from the failure to consider that King Antiochus IV at first reigned jointly with his brother's son, also called Antiochus, whom he adopted as his own. Antiochus IV had this son murdered in the 142 Sel. (Diodorus, 30:7:2–3; cf. CAH, 8, pp. 497, 503f, 713f). The king's own son, Antiochus V Eupator succeeded as sole monarch in 149 Sel. upon his father's death. The relevant part of the text reads as follows:

> Year 137, month Elulu, 10th day: Seleucus (IV, Philopator), the king, died. . . . In the same month, his son Antiochus (IV, Epiphanes) ascended the throne. He ruled for 11 years. In the same year, month Arahsamnu, Antiochus (IV, Epiphanes) and his son Antiochus were kings.

• Lysias, after receiving word of the king's death (most probably in or about early January), placed Antiochus V on the throne. "At this time" the Greek garrison at Jerusalem and some renegade Jews began doing much harm to the people coming to the Temple.[11] Also, according to 2 Maccabees, 13:1–2, "In the hundred forty and ninth year Judas and his colleagues received the news that Antiochus Eupator παραγενέσθαι with a great multitude ἐπὶ (against)[12] Judaea, and with him Lysias his protector."[13] This comment serves as the basis for the arguments offered by systems "B" and "C."

The Greek term παραγενέσθαι (*paragenesthai*) is the aorist infinitive form of παραγίγνομαι (*paragignomai*), meaning "*to be beside, by* or *near . . . to be at hand, accrue* to one . . . *arrive, come up*" and "t*o come to, arrive at*."[14] Eupator, therefore, was in some form of the act of being "near," or "coming to," or "at hand" against Judaea. As a general rule, the aorist infinitive παραγενέσθαι, in indirect discourse, refers to an event or action prior to the main verb.[15] Jonathan Goldstein's translation of 2 Maccabees, accordingly, renders the term in question to read that Eupator "had come" against Judaea.[16]

Using this understanding, the above statement from 2 Maccabees, 13:1–2, is interpreted by those following systems "B" and "C" to mean that Eupator marched against Judaea in the 149th year. The mentioning by Josephus and 1 Maccabees of the sabbath year and the accompanying shortages, which took place at the time of this invasion (but dated by Josephus and 2 Maccabees to the 150th year), are in turn placed by the advocates of systems "B" and "C" within the context of the 149th year.

Nevertheless, this particular translation of the word παραγενέσθαι, with regard to 2 Maccabees, 13:1–2, is out of context with the flow of the discussion in that text. The passage in 2 Maccabees, 13:1–2, is followed in verse 9 with the statement that the king "ἤρχετο (*ērcheto*; was coming)"[17] on his campaign.[18] When Judas was informed of this movement, he and his followers spent the next three days in prayer, after which Judas devised a plan to attack

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> [Year 1]42, month Abu: Antiochus, the king, was put to death upon the command of his father, King Antiochus (IV, Epiphanes).
> [Year 14]3, Antiochus (V, Eupator) became king.
> [Year 149], month Kislimu: It was heard that the K[ing] Antiochus (IV, Epiphanes) [died].

11 1 Macc., 6:18; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:3.

12 GEL, 1968, pp. 621ff. The translation of ἐπὶ (*epi*) in 1 Macc., 13:1, as "upon or against" is better than "into," as some translations have rendered it. This point was confirmed by Professor Placid Csizmazia of the University of Dallas in a letter to the author dated 08–08–1991. See below n. 24.

13 2 Macc., 13:1.

14 GEL, 1968, p. 1306; CGD, p. 520.

15 See for example SMT, p. 42.

16 Goldstein, *II Macc.*, p. 452.

17 The Greek term ἤρχετο is a form of the word ἔρχομαι (*erchomai*), meaning to "*come* or *go*." GEL, 1968, pp. 694f. The context of its use in 2 Macc, 13:9, is determined by v. 12f, where it mentions that Judas heard the report that the king "ἔρχομαι" and then three days after this news he planned to strike this enemy force "before" it entered Judaea. This evidence proves that the Syrian king was in the process of coming and had not yet arrived in the country of the Jews. Confirmation that "was coming" is the proper translation of ἤρχετο in 2 Macc., 13:9, is provided by Professor Juan Gamez of East Texas State University in a taped interview with the author dated 09–01–91. For Professor Gamez see Chap. XVI, p. 220, n. 7.

18 2 Macc., 13:9; cf. Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:4.

King Antiochus Eupator "πρὶν (*prin*; before)[19] the king's host should enter into Judaea and take the city (Jerusalem)."[20]

These statements show that Antiochus V had not yet departed on his Judaean campaign when Judas had received the first mentioned report—where the term παραγενέσθαι is used—of the impending invasion. Further, Eupator had not yet entered Judaea as late as three days after Judas heard the second report, notifying the Jews that, "Now the king "ἤρχετο (was coming)" to attack Judaea. Therefore, we must look for a better understanding of the Greek term παραγενέσθαι when used in the context of 2 Maccabees, 13:1.

There is yet another important way in which the term παραγενέσθαι can be understood. "The aorist infinitive, by itself, does not have a past time meaning, only the single event meaning."[21] Indeed, there are several instances known where the aorist infinitive refers to a "single future, intended event."[22] Goodwin's *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb* points out that examples of this anomaly are found "even in the best authors."[23] The well-respected authority in Classical Greek, Professor Placid Csizmazia of the University of Dallas,[24] likewise observes that, though such usage is exceptional, it is "not without precedents."[25] If we apply this legitimate future usage of παραγενέσθαι to 2 Maccabees, 13:1—coordinating its meaning with the context and flow of the entire discussion of that text, and using 1 Maccabees and Josephus as further support—it would mean that Eupator "was near to coming" or "was about to come" against Judaea.

It is important to add that in none of our ancient sources does it actually say that Antiochus Eupator arrived in Judaea during the 149th Seleucid year. Even in 2 Maccabees, 13:1, where the term παραγενέσθαι is used, it is later stated that Judas decided to make a raid upon the forces of Antiochus V "before the king's host should enter into Judaea." Josephus, on the other hand, specifically states that Eupator "ἐξώρμησεν (*exormesen*; set out)"[26] from Antioch, his capital city, "in the 150th year of the Seleucid reign."[27]

The verse in question from 2 Maccabees, therefore, should be translated to read, "In the hundred forty and ninth year Judas and his colleagues received the news that Antiochus Eupator was about to come with a great multitude against Judaea," i.e. Eupator had not yet left on this expedition but was in the process of making final preparations for such a campaign. Professor Csizmazia confirms this translation as being "grammatically acceptable and fitting

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19 GEL, 1968, pp. 1463f; SMT, pp. 240f.

20 2 Macc., 13:10–12.

21 Letter to the author from Professor Csizmazia dated 08–08–91. See below n. 24.

22 Letters to the author from Professor Csizmazia dated 08–08–91 and 08–31–91. See below n. 24.

23 SMT, pp. 42f.

24 Professor Placid Csizmazia received his degrees from the University of Budapest, Hungary. The Hungarian equivalency of an M.A. in Classics and German was received in 1940 and his Ph.D. in Classics in 1942. He now teaches at the University of Dallas in Irving, Texas. Professor Csizmazia has been of great assistance to the author on numerous occasions for which we extend to him much gratitude.

25 Letter to the author from Professor Csizmazia dated 08–31–91.

26 A form of ὁρμάω (*ormaho*), GEL, 1968, pp. 1252f.

27 Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:3–4; cf. 1 Macc., 6:19–31.

into the context."[28] This explains why, later, when Judas heard the second report that "the king was coming," he devised a plan to attack the Syrian king "before" Eupator entered the territory of Judaea.[29] As it turned out, Judas was unable to make his strike until just after the king crossed the border. His raid was executed upon Eupator's camp at Modin, located about eight miles inside the boundary of Judaea and about 17 miles northwest of Jerusalem.[30]

This understanding of 2 Maccabees is supported by other details as well. In the previous year, the 148th Seleucid (164/163 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning), Lysias, the general of Antiochus IV, led a large army into Judaea but was sorely defeated.[31] Finding his foe resolute and strong, Lysias took the remainder of his force and "returned to Antioch, where he remained to enlist mercenaries and make preparations to invade Judaea with a greater army."[32] This ongoing preparation, therefore, was underway during the 149th year.

Meanwhile, after learning of his father's death (which news he would have received by early January, 162 B.C.E.), the new king, Antiochus V, joined with Lysias in the planning, preparation, and execution of this new Judaean campaign. The fact that the young king had picked up the cause of his deceased father appears to have been the news that reached Judas in the latter part of the 149th year. Furthermore, the words from 2 Maccabees show no sense of immediacy. The flow of the story merely expresses the idea that the new Greek king of Syria was finishing his preparations for an invasion force against Judaea during the 149th year (163/162 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning), an activity started earlier by his general Lysias after his defeat in the 148th year.

Actually, the new king delayed in his endeavor to attack Judaea. This point is amply demonstrated by the story of the men who escaped from the Akra ("the citadel" in Jerusalem where the Greeks were garrisoned) in the 150th Seleucid year. When they arrived in Antioch, they made an impassioned plea to Antiochus Eupator to end his delay and to make quick intervention.[33] Furthermore, the most appropriate time after the death of Antiochus IV for an invasion would have been in the approaching spring, at the very beginning of the 150th year. Eupator, no doubt, waited until this more advantageous season.

- In reaction to the attacks by the Greek garrison at Jerusalem upon the Jews going to the Temple—which assaults had been occurring since the death of Antiochus IV—Judas called the people together "in the 150th year" of the Seleucid era and began the siege of the Akra (the citadel), where the garrison was located.[34] The Jews also fortified Bethzura.[35] We have now arrived at the spring of the new year.

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28 Letter to the author from Professor Csizmazia dated 08–31–91.

29 2 Macc., 13:9–13.

30 2 Macc., 13:13–17. Modin, modern *el-Medieh*, is located about 7 miles southeast of Lydda and about 17 miles northwest of Jerusalem (Marcus, *Jos*., vii, p. 137, n. e).

31 Jos., *Antiq*., 12:7:5.

32 Ibid.

33 2 Macc., 6:21–27; Jos., *Antiq*., 12:9:3.

34 1 Macc., 6:19–24; Jos., *Antiq*., 12:9:3.

35 1 Macc., 6:26.

• Some of those besieged in the Akra (i.e. during the 150th year) escaped and came to Antiochus to report the events occurring in Judaea.[36]

That Antiochus was in Antioch, Syria when they arrived is confirmed by Josephus when he states that, after these renegades from the Akra met with Antiochus V, the king "set out from Antioch" to invade Judaea;[37] then later, after making peace with the Jews, the king "returned to Antioch,"[38] i.e. returned from whence he came.

• Antiochus Eupator, angered by the report from the Akra, "set out from Antioch" to go against Judaea.[39] We are told, "Now the king was coming with a barbarous and haughty mind to do far worse to the Jews than had been done in his father's time."[40] Judas, receiving the report of these things, commanded the multitude to call upon Yahweh.[41] After three days of prayer, Judas left off his attack of the Akra and made a foray against the Syrian army near Modin, located a few miles northwest of Jerusalem.[42]

• Antiochus Eupator then passed through Judaea and made an attack on the Jewish fortified city of Bethzura, located just northwest of Hebron.[43]

• Antiochus and Judas battled near the Jewish camp at Bethzacharias.[44]

This evidence proves that the sources are in harmony. Word of the impending invasion reached Judas during the latter part of the 149th year but the actual march of Antiochus (V) Eupator against Judaea did not start until after the beginning of the 150th Seleucid year. When Judas heard in the second report that Antiochus was now coming, he prepared his people for the imminent conflict with three days of prayer and made plans to attack the enemy before they could enter the territory of Judaea.

The Siege during the Sabbath Year

In the second part of the story of Antiochus V's invasion of Judaea we are confronted with the evidence of which year was a sabbath. We begin by noting that 2 Maccabees, in which the term παραγενέσθαι is coupled with the 149th Seleucid year, there is no discussion at all of the sabbath year or its shortages. This connection is only made by chronologists who support systems "B" and "C." The parallel stories found in Chart H continue with the events of the 150th Seleucid year as follows:

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36 1 Macc., 6:19–27; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:3.
37 Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:4.
38 Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:7.
39 Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:4.
40 2 Macc., 13:9.
41 2 Macc., 13:10–12.
42 Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:4; 2 Macc., 13:13–17; 1 Macc., 6:32. Also see above n. 30.
43 1 Macc., 6:31; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:4, Wars, 1:1:5; 2 Macc., 13:18–21. Bethzura (Bethsura), modern *Khirbet et-Tubeiqah*, is located a few miles northwest of Hebron (Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, p. 162f, n. d).
44 1 Macc., 6:32–47; 2 Macc., 13:13–22; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:4. Bethzacharias, modern *Beit Skaria*, is located about 10 miles southwest of Jerusalem and 6 miles northeast of Bethzura (Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, p. 191, n. c).

• Judas retreated to Jerusalem. Antiochus Eupator besieged Bethzura. After a time of siege, he took the city and placed a garrison there. Antiochus V also laid siege to Jerusalem. This year was a sabbath year.[45]

The book of 1 Maccabees informs us that Antiochus V was able to take Bethzura by making peace with its inhabitants, "for they came out of the city, because they had no victuals there to endure the siege, ὅτι σάββατον ἦν τῇ γῇ (BECAUSE IT WAS A SABBATH OF THE LAND)."[46] There is no suggestion by these Greek words that the sabbath year had already passed, as Zuckermann and others conjecture by rephrasing the sentence. The Greek clearly states that a sabbath year was presently in the land—it being the 150th Seleucid year, a year that began on the first of Nisan (March / April) in 162 B.C.E.

The Temple and Jerusalem, meanwhile, underwent a longer siege. Here we are told in 1 Maccabees that Antiochus besieged the Temple "many days" and that the Jews held the enemy in "battle a long season."[47] Josephus likewise observed, "But the siege of the Temple in Jerusalem kept him (Antiochus V) there a long time, for those within stoutly resisted."[48] This evidence shows that we have moved well into the 150th Seleucid year. As a result of this long siege, those at Jerusalem also suffered from the lack of food for the same reasons as the people at Bethzura.

> Yet at the last, their vessels being without victuals—διά τὸ ἕβδομον ἔτοςε ἶναι (BY REASON OF IT BEING THE SEVENTH YEAR), and they in Judaea, that were delivered from the nations, had eaten up the residue of the store. There were but a few left in the sanctuary, because famine did so prevail against them, that they fain to disperse themselves, every man to his own place. (1 Macc., 6:53f)

> Their supply of food, however, had begun to give out, for the καρποῦ (stored produce)[49] had been consumed, and THE GROUND HAD NOT BEEN TILLED THAT YEAR, BUT HAD REMAINED UNSOWN ἀλλὰ διά τὸ εἶναι τὸ ἕβδομον ἔτος (BECAUSE IT WAS THE SEVENTH YEAR), DURING WHICH OUR LAW OBLIGES US TO LET IT LIE UNCULTIVATED. Many of the besieged, therefore, ran away because of the lack of necessities, so that only a few were left in the Temple. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:5)

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45 1 Macc., 6:48–54; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:5, *Wars*, 1:1:5; 2 Macc., 13:22.

46 1 Macc., 6:49.

47 1 Macc., 6:51, 52.

48 Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:5.

49 The Greek word καρποῦ (*karpou*) is sorely mistranslated by Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, p. 195, as "present crop." The word "present" does not appear in the Greek, and the word means, "profits," "fruit," and "produce," by implication stored crops (GEL, p. 401). Whiston's translation is much more appropriate, i.e. "what fruits of the ground they had laid up were spent" (Whiston, *Jos.*, p. 263).

This data is unequivocal. The land had not been cultivated in that very year of the siege, the 150th Seleucid year, because it was a year of rest. Therefore, the 150th Seleucid year was THE SEVENTH YEAR, a sabbath year.

• "At that time," i.e. after the many days of siege, word came that Philip—who had been appointed regent by Antiochus, the father of Antiochus Eupator—was coming from Persia and Media seeking to take sole control of the government. This political turn of events forced Antiochus to make peace, allowing the Jews to live after their own laws, as they had done before.[50]

• Peace was made with the Jews. At this point the Hasmonaean family was formally recognized as the ruling entity in Judaea. Antiochus, after staying in Jerusalem only "a few days,"[51] then pulled down the city's walls and returned to Antioch, finding that Philip had already seized the government there. During that period Antiochus sent Menelaus to Beroea in Syria and had him executed.[52] He then made war on Philip and killed him.[53]

The peace treaty between the Jews and Antiochus Eupator was made towards the end of the 150th Seleucid year. This point is verified by the Megillath Taanith, as the noted historians Zeitlin and Herzfeld both agree, when it records, "On the 28th thereof (Shebat) Antiochus withdrew from Jerusalem."[54] This comment reveals that the siege ended in about February of 161 B.C.E. Therefore, it had lasted about ten months during that sabbath year. The time of year is supported by Josephus, who gives the cursory statement in his book on *Jewish Wars* that Antiochus V withdrew his army from Jerusalem "to winter quarters in Syria."[55]

• Our texts now bring us to the 151st Seleucid year, with the escape of Demetrius from Rome and his landing at Tripolis, Syria. Josephus importantly observes that this event took place "about the same time" that Antiochus had battled with and killed Philip.[56]

This evidence further verifies that the Jewish Seleucid year began in the spring. Antiochus V left Judaea with his fully equipped army near the end of the month of Shebat (Jan./Feb.), joined in battle with and killed Philip, and then placed his own troops in winter quarters. "About the same time," described as the 151st Seleucid year, Demetrius escaped from Rome and came

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50 1 Macc., 6:56–59; 2 Macc., 13:23; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:6.

51 Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5.

52 The story of Menelaus, how he was brought to Antiochus V at Berea (Beroea in Syria) and slain, which is found at this point in 2 Macc., 13:4–8, is a digression. As Josephus shows, this event actually took place after the siege of Jerusalem was over (Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:7). The digression of 2 Macc., 13:4–8, therefore, has been placed in its proper time frame on Chart H, p. 202.

53 1 Macc., 6:60–63; 2 Macc., 13:3–8, 23–26; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:7. 2 Macc., 13:9–12.

54 Meg. Taan., 11; MTS, pp. 67, 80f; JQR, 10, pp. 252f.

55 Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5.

56 1 Macc., 7:1–7; 2 Macc., 14:1–6; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:10:1. The statement in Josephus that the arrival of Demetrius from Rome occurred "about the same time" as the defeat of Philip by Antiochus V further supports the date of Shebat 28 for the peace treaty between Antiochus V and the Jews. There remained only about 32 days from that treaty until the first of Nisan in the 151st Seleucid year. By the time that Antiochus V had concluded peace with the Jews, tore down the walls at Jerusalem, marched to Syria, and prepared for and did battle with Philip, it was well beyond the first of the year.

to Tripolis. Since it is clear that Antiochus Eupator would have attacked Philip almost immediately (i.e. by March), this being the last month of winter, "about the same time" can only refer to the month of Nisan (March / April) as the beginning of the 151st year. Eight or more months later, to accomodate a Tishri (Sept. / Oct.) beginning, would be far too great a time for this expression to be relevant. The beginning of the 151st year, therefore, ends the previous 150th year, which was counted as a sabbath year.

Conclusion

A line by line analysis proves that 1 and 2 Maccabees and the book of *Antiquities* by Josephus are in perfect harmony. When 2 Maccabees, 13:1–2, takes notice of the fact that Judas was told during the 149th year "that Antiochus Eupator παραγενέσθαι with a great multitude against Judaea," the statement must be understood within the context that, upon the death of Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) in December, 163 B.C.E., his son Antiochus V (Eupator) had taken charge of the army's preparations for the impending war against Judaea. This undertaking had been in progress ever since the defeat of Lysias in the 148th year (164 / 165 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning). It was the news of this renewed effort by the new king, Antiochus V, that reached the ears of Judas and his men during the latter part of the 149th year (163 / 162 B.C.E.).

When the Jews laid siege to the Greek garrison in Jerusalem during the early part of the 150th year (spring of 162 B.C.E.), it was as a result of Greek harassment of the Jews, which had continued since the death of Eupator's father in the latter part of the 149th year (Dec. of 163 B.C.E.). It is also important to notice that the Jewish siege of this garrison occurred in the 150th year, at the same time that the Jews "fortified Bethzura."[57] The Jews fortified Bethzura in response to the first report received by Judas that Eupator "was about to come" against Judaea. Indeed, after hearing of the fortification of Bethzura, Antiochus V made this city the target of his attack.[58]

Further, when these initial events of the 150th year took place, Antiochus V was still in Antioch, Syria—as demonstrated by the story of the men who fled from the besieged Greek garrison at Jerusalem in the 150th year to come to Antioch to see the king, report their troubles in Judaea, and to urge his intervention. These details prove that Antiochus V did not strike at Judaea until sometime after the beginning of the 150th year.

At no time do any of our sources conflict. The claim that 1 Maccabees places the march and siege within the 150th year while 2 Maccabees dates it to the 149th is groundless. Judas only heard the news that Eupator "was about to come" against Judaea during the 149th Seleucid year. Not until later did Judas receive the second report that the march was actually underway. At word of this second report, Judas made plans to meet his foe "before" the enemy could enter Judaea.

The second major issue, which has caused a great deal of confusion, is the belief that the 150th Seleucid year conflicts with any possible sabbath cycle and, as a result, our ancient sources must be reworked to make them agree

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57 1 Macc., 6:19–27; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:3.
58 1 Macc., 6:21–27; cf. 1 Macc., 6:28–31; Jos., *Antiq.*, 12:9:3–4.

with a cycle prejudged as correct. This hypothesis is the underlying force compelling chronologists to find alternative interpretations for the words of Josephus and the Maccabean books, and for their redating the sabbath year of the 150th Seleucid—the year when Antiochus left Syria and came against Jerusalem—to the 149th Seleucid year.

There is no legitimate reason or justification for this assault on the original words of these Greek texts. To begin with, 2 Maccabees never describes the 149th Seleucid year as a sabbath year. Furthermore, the 150th Seleucid year exactly fits the sabbath cycle established by the fifteenth year of Hezekiah and the eighth year of Arta-xerxes (see Chart B). Next, the Greek words used are clear and concise. They positively state that the 150th year was the seventh year of the cycle, a sabbath for the land, and a time when the fields remained uncultivated. But the Greek words only make sense if we allow the Maccabean books and Josephus to use a Nisan beginning for their year system as well as for the sabbath years. Once we permit these source materials to use the very year system they themselves proclaim, all inconsistencies disappear.

What then of system "D"? System "D" is possible only if we alter the Seleucid year system used by our sources so as to begin it with Nisan of the Julian year 312 B.C.E. But this scheme fails on two counts.

First, there is no evidence at all that any ancient nation using the Seleucid calendar, especially Judaea, ever counted their Seleucid year in this fashion. In fact, the Jews themselves pronounced that the 381st Seleucid year occurred with the year that the second Temple was destroyed (i.e. in Ab [July/Aug.] of 70/71 C.E., Nisan reckoning).[59] This and other details, as we have already demonstrated in our last chapter, prove that the Jews of this period counted the Seleucid era from 311/310 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning.[60]

Second, for this method to work the invasion of Judah by King Sennacherib and the sabbath year which occurred in the fifteenth year of Hezekiah would have to be pushed back one year, i.e. to 702/701 B.C.E. As we have already demonstrated in Chapters III and IV, such is impossible. One would have to conclude that the Israelites formally changed their sabbath year cycle sometime between the reign of King Hezekiah and that of the high priest Judah Maccabee (Judas Maccabaeus), in whose time Antiochus Eupator laid siege to Jerusalem— an illogical proposal that can only be considered by cynics.

Finally, the data that shall be offered in the remainder of our work will further prove that the system "A" cycle is accurate and, as a result, the 150th Seleucid year in Judaea, being equivalent to 162/161 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, was a sabbath year.

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59 TSCJ, p. 48; HBC, p. 124.

60 See above Chap. XII, pp. 177f.

CHART H

149–150 Seleucid: Parallel Accounts

CHART H

149–150 Seleucid: Parallel Accounts

1 Maccabees

149 Seleucid
5:65

65AFTERWARDS went Judas forth with his brethren and fought against the children of Esau in the land toward the south, where he smote Hebron, and the towns thereof, and pulled down the fortress of it, and burned the towers thereof round about.

2 Maccabees

149 Seleucid
12:32–35

32AND AFTER THE (FEAST) CALLED PENTECOST, they went forth against Gorgias the governor of Idumaea, 33who came out with three thousand men of foot and four hundred horsemen. 34And it happened that in their fighting together a few of the Jews were slain. 35At which time Dositheus, one of Bacenor's company, who was on horseback, and a strong man, was still upon Gorgias, and taking hold of his coat drew him by force; and when he would have taken that cursed man alive, a horseman of Thracia coming upon him smote off his shoulder, so that Gorgias fled unto Marisa.

12:36–38

36Now when they that were with Gorgias had fought long, and were weary, Judas called upon the sovereign (Yahweh), that he would shew himself to be their helper and leader of the battle. 37And with that he began in his own language, and sung psalms with a loud voice, and rushing unawares upon Gorgias' men, he put them to flight. 38So Judas gathered his host, and came into the city of Odollam. And when the seventh day came, they purified themselves, as the custom was, and kept the sabbath in the same place.

12:39–45

39And upon the day following, as the use had been, Judas and his company came to take up the bodies of them that were slain, and to bury them with their kinsmen in their fathers' graves. 40Now under the coats of every one that was slain they found things consecrated to the idols to the Jamnites, which is forbidden the Jews by the law. Then every man saw that this was the cause wherefore they

Jewish Antiquities

149 Seleucid
12:8:6b

(6b) MEANWHILE Judas and his brothers were warring on the Idumaeans without ceasing, and pressed them closely on all sides; and after taking the city of Hebron, they destroyed all its fortifications and burned its towers;

1 Maccabees	2 Maccabees	Jewish Antiquities
	were slain. [41]All men therefore praising the sovereign (Yahweh), the righteous Judge, who had opened the things that were hid, [42]betook themselves unto prayer, and besought him that the sin committed might wholly be put out of remembrance. Besides, that noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forsomuch as they saw before their eyes the things that came to pass for the sins of those that were slain. [43]And when he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachmas of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection: [44]for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. [45]And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died piously, it was a holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.	
5:66 [66]From there he removed to go into the land of the Philistines, and passed through Sa-Mar(s)eia.		**12:8:6c** (6c) and they ravaged the foreign territory, including the city of Marisa,
5:67 [67]AT THAT TIME certain priests, desirous to shew their valor, were slain in battle, for that they went out to fight unadvisedly.		
5:68 [68]So Judas turned to Azotus in the land of the Philistines, and when he had pulled down their altars, and burned their carved images with fire, and spoiled their cities, he re-		**12:8:6c** (6d) and coming to Azotus, they took this city and sacked it. Then they returned to Judaea, carrying much spoil and booty.

1 Maccabees

turned into the land of Judaea.

6:1–4

[1]ABOUT THAT TIME King Antiochus travelling through the high countries heard say, that Elymais in the country of Persia was a city greatly renowned for riches, silver, and gold; [2]and that there was in it a very rich temple, wherein were coverings of gold, and breastplates, and shields, which Alexander, *son* of Philip, the Macedonian king, who reigned first among the Grecians, had left there: [3]wherefore he came and sought to take the city, and to spoil it; but he was not able, because they of the city, having had warning thereof, [4]rose up against him in battle: so he fled, and departed from there with great heaviness, and returned to Babylon.

6:5–7

[5]Moreover there came one who brought him tidings into Persia, that the armies, which went against the land of Judaea, were put to flight: [6]and that Lysias, who went forth first with a great power, was driven away of the Jews; and that they were made strong by the armor, and power, and store of spoils, which they had gotten of the armies, whom they had destroyed: [7]also that they had pulled down the abomination, which he had set up upon the altar in Jerusalem, and that they had compassed about the sanctuary with high walls, as before, and his city Bethzura.

6:8–13

[8]Now when the king heard these words, he was astonished and sore moved: whereupon he laid him down upon his bed, and fell sick for grief, because it had not befallen him as he looked for. [9]AND THERE HE CONTINUED MANY DAYS: for his grief was ever more and more, and he made account that he should die. [10]Wherefore he called for all his friends, and said unto them, The sleep is gone from my eyes, and my heart fails from anxieties. [11]And I thought with myself, Into what tribulation have I

2 Maccabees

Jewish Antiquities

12:9:1a

(1a) ABOUT THE SAME TIME King Antiochus, as he was entering the upper country, heard of a city in Persia of surpassing wealth, named Elymais, and that there was in it a rich temple of Artemis, which was full of all kinds of dedicatory offerings, as well as of arms and breastplates which he learned had been left behind by Alexander, the son of Philip, king of Macedon. And so, being excited by these reports, he set out for Elymais, and assaulted it and began a siege. As those within the city, however, were not dismayed either by his attack or by the siege, but stoutly held out against him, his hopes were dashed; for they drove him off from the city, and went out against him in pursuit, so that he had to come to Babylon as a fugitive, and lost many of his army.

12:9:1b

(1b) And as he was grieving over this failure, some men brought him news also of the defeat of the generals whom he had left to make war on the Jews, and of the strength which the Jews now had.

12:9:1c

(1c) And so, with the anxiety over these events added to his former anxiety, he was overwhelmed, and in his despondency fell ill; and as his illness lingered on, and his sufferings increased, he perceived that he was about to die; he therefore called together his friends and told them that his illness was severe, and confessed that he was suffering these afflictions because he had harmed the Jewish nation by despoiling their Temple and treating the deity with contempt; and with these words he expired. Accordingly, I am surprised that Polybius of Meg-

1 Maccabees

come, and how great a flood *of misery* is it wherein now I am! for I was bountiful and beloved in my power. [12]But now I remember the evils that I did at Jerusalem, and that I took all the vessels of gold and silver that were therein, and sent to destroy the inhabitants of Judaea without a cause. [13]I perceive therefore that for this cause these troubles are come upon me, and, behold, I perish through great grief in a strange land.

6:14–15

[14]Then he called for Philip, one of his friends, whom he made ruler over all his realm. [15]And he gave him the crown, and his robe, and his signet, to the end he should bring up his son Antiochus, and nourish him up for the kingdom.

6:16

[16]SO KING ANTIOCHUS DIED THERE IN THE HUNDRED FORTY AND NINTH YEAR

6:17

[17]Now when Lysias knew that the king was dead, he set up Antiochus his son, whom he had brought up being young, to reign in his stead, and his name he called Eupator.

6:18

[18]ABOUT THIS TIME they that were in the tower shut up the Israelites round about the sanctuary, and sought always their hurt, and the strengthening of the heathen.

2 Maccabees

Seleucid King-list

[Year 149], month Kislimu: It was heard that K[ing] Antiochus [died].

Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:4b

(4b) The city (Jerusalem) was just recovering its sacred character when Antiochus died, leaving his son Antiochus heir, alike to his kingdom, and to his detestation of the Jews.

13:1–3

[1]IN THE HUNDRED FORTY AND NINTH YEAR Judas and his colleagues received the news that Antiochus Eupator παραγενέσθαι (WAS ABOUT TO COME)* with a great multitude against Judaea, [2]and with him Lysias his protector, and

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alopolis, who is an honest man, says that Antiochus died because he wished to despoil the temple of Artemis in Persia; for merely to wish a thing without actually doing it is not deserving of punishment. But although Polybius may think that more probable that the king died because of sacrilegiously despoiling the Temple in Jerusalem. Concerning this matter, however, I shall not dispute with those who believe that the cause given by the Megalopolitan is nearer the truth than that given by us.

12:9:2a

(2a) NOW BEFORE HE DIED, Antiochus summoned Philip, one of his companions, and appointed him regent of his kingdom, and giving him his diadem and robe and seal-ring, ordered him to take these and give them to his son Antiochus; and he requested Philip to look after his son's education and to guard the kingdom for him.

12:9:2b

(2b) AND ANTIOCHUS DIED IN THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINTH YEAR.

12:9:2c

(2c) Then Lysias, after informing the people of his death, appointed his son Antiochus king—for he had charge of him—and called him Eupator.

12:9:3a

(3a) AT THIS TIME the garrison in the Akra of Jerusalem and the Jewish renegades did much harm to the Jews; for when they went up to the Temple with the intention of sacrificing, the garrison would sally out and kill them—for the Akra commanded the Temple.

Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5a

(5a) The latter (Antiochus V), accordingly, having collected 50,000 infantry, some 5000 horse and 80 elephants,

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* For the explanation of this translation see above Chap. XIII, pp. 183–185.

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	ruler of his affairs, having both of them a Grecian power of footmen, an hundred and ten thousand, and horsemen five thousand and three hundred, and twenty-two elephants, and three hundred chariots armed with hooks. 3Menelaus also joined himself with them, and with great dissimulation encouraged Antiochus, not for the safeguard of the country, but because he thought to have been made governor.	
150 Seleucid **6:19–24**	**150 Seleucid**	**150 Seleucid** **12:9:3b**
19Wherefore Judas, purposing to destroy them (in the tower), allied all the people together to besiege them. 20So they came together, AND BESIEGED THEM IN THE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH YEAR, and he made mounts for shot against them, and *other* engines.		(3b) And so, as a result of these experiences, Judas determined to drive out the garrison, and gathering together all the people, he stoutly besieged those in the Akra. THIS WAS IN THE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH YEAR OF THE SELEUCID REIGN. Accordingly, he constructed siege-engines, and erected earthworks, and assiduously applied himself to the capture of the Akra.
6:25–27		**12:9:3c**
21Howbeit certain of them that were besieged got forth, unto whom some unpious men of Israel joined themselves: 22and they went unto the king, and said, How long will it be before you execute judgment, and avenge our brethren? 23We have been willing to serve your father, and to do as he would have us, and to obey his commandments; 24for which cause they of our nation besiege the tower, and are alienated from us: moreover as many of us as they could light on they slew, and spoiled our inheritance. 25Neither have they stretched out their hand against us only, but also against all their borders. 26And behold, this day are they besieging the tower at Jerusalem, to take it: the sanctuary also AND BETHZURA HAVE THEY FORTIFIED. 27Wherefore if you do not prevent them quickly, they will do greater things than these, neither shall you be able to rule them.		(3c) But many of the renegades within the Akra went out by night into the country, and having gathered together some of the irreligious men like themselves, came to King Antiochus and said that they did not deserve to be left to suffer these hardships at the hands of their countrymen, especially as they were enduring them for the sake of his father, for they had broken with their ancestral religion and had adopted that which he had commanded them to follow; and now, they continued, the citadel was in danger of being taken by Judas and his men, as well as the garrison stationed there by the king, unless some assistance were sent by him.
6:28–30		**12:9:3d**
28Now when the king heard this, he was angry, and gathered together all his friends, and the		(3d) When the young Antiochus heard this, he became angry, and sending for his officers and friends, ordered them to collect mercenaries and those

1 Maccabees	2 Maccabees	Jewish Antiquities
captains of his army, and those that had charge of the horse. [29]There came also unto him from other kingdoms, and from isles of the sea, bands of hired soldiers. [30]So that the number of his army was an hundred thousand footmen, and twenty thousand horsemen, and thirty-two elephants exercised in battle		in his kingdom who were of military age. And so an army was collected, which consisted of about a hundred thousand foot-soldiers and twenty thousand horsemen and thirty-two elephants.
		12:9:4a
		(4a) THEREUPON he took this force and SET OUT FROM ANTIOCH, with Lysias, who was in command of the entire army,
	13:9	
	[9]NOW THE KING WAS COMING with a barbarous and haughty mind to do far worse to the Jews than had been done in his father's time.	
	13:10–12	**12:9:4c**
	[10] WHEN JUDAS WAS INFORMED OF THESE THINGS, he commanded the multitude to call upon the sovereign (Yahweh) night and day, that if ever at any other time, he would now also help them, being at the point to be put from their law, from their country, and from the holy Temple: [11]and that he would not suffer the people, that had even now been but a little refreshed, to be in subjection to the blasphemous nations. [12]So when they had all done this together, and besought the merciful sovereign (Yahweh) with weeping and fasting, and lying flat upon the ground THREE DAYS LONG, Judas, having exhorted them, commanded they should be in a readiness.	(4c) AND WHEN JUDAS HEARD OF THE KING'S ADVANCE,
6:32a	**13:13–17**	**12:9:4d**
[32a]UPON THIS Judas removed from the tower,	[13]And (Judas), being apart with the elders, determined, before the king's host should enter into Judaea and get the city, to go forth and try the matter *in fight* by the help of the sovereign (Yahweh). [14]So when he had committed *all* to the Creator of the world, and exhorted his soldiers to fight manfully, even unto death, for the laws, the Temple, the city, the country, and the commonwealth, he camped by Modin: [15]and having given the watchword to them that were about him, Victory is of the deity (Yahweh) with the most val-	(4d) he left off besieging the Akra, and went to meet the king,

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	iant and choice young men he went into the king's tent by night, and slew in the camp about four thousand men, and the chiefest of the elephants, with all that were upon him. [16]And at last they filled the camp with fear and tumult, and departed with good success. [17]This was because the protection of the sovereign (Yahweh) did help him.	
	13:18–21	
	[18]Now when the king had taken a taste of the manliness of the Jews, he went about to take hold by policy, [19]and marched toward Bethzura, which was a stronghold of the Jews: but he was put to flight, failed, and lost of his men: [20]for Judas had conveyed unto them that were in it such things as were necessary.	
	[21]But Rhodocus, who was in the Jew's host, disclosed the secrets to the enemies; therefore he was sought out, and when they had gotten him, they put him in prison.	
	Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5b	
	(5b) (Antiochus V) pushed through Judaea into the hill country.	
6:31		**12:9:4b**
[31]These went through Idumaea, and pitched against Bethzura, which they assaulted many days, making engines; but they *of Bethzura* came out, and burned them with fire, and fought valiantly.		(4b) and after coming to Idumaea, he went up from there to Bethzura, a very strong city and one difficult to take, and he invested the city and besieged it. However, as the people of Bethzura strongly resisted and burned his supply of siege-engines—for they sallied out against him,—much time was consumed in the siege.
6:32b		**12:9:4e**
[32b]and pitched in Bethzacharias, over against the king's camp.		(4e) pitching his (Judas') camp near the mountain passes, at a place called Bethzacharias, which was seventy stades away from the enemy.
6:33–41	**Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5d**	**12:9:4f**
[33]THEN THE KING RISING VERY EARLY marched fiercely with his host toward Bethzacharias, where his armies made them ready to battle, and sounded the trumpets.	(5d) he (Antiochus V) was met at a spot called Bethzacharias, where there is a narrow defile, by Judas at the head of his forces.	(4f) THEREUPON the king set out from Bethzura and led his army to the passes and Judas' camp; and at daybreak he drew up his army for battle. And he made his elephants follow one another, since they could not be placed side by side in an extended line because of the narrow space.
[34]And to the end they		

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might the elephants to fight, they shewed them the blood of grapes and mulberries. [35]Moreover they divided the beasts among the armies, and for every elephant they appointed a thousand men, armed with coats of mail, and with helmets of brass on their heads; and beside this, for every beast were ordained five hundred horsemen of the best. [36]These were ready at every occasion: wheresoever the beast was, and whithersoever the beast went, they went also, neither departed they from him. [37]And upon the beasts were there strong towers of weed, which covered every one of them, and were girt fast unto them with devices: there were also upon every one two and thirty strong men, that fought upon them, beside the Indian that ruled him.

[38]As for the remnant of the horsemen, they set them on this side and that side at the two parts of the host, giving them signs what to do, and being harnessed all over amidst the ranks. [39]Now when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and brass, the mountains glittered therewith, and shined like lamps of fire. [40]So part of the king's army being spread upon the high mountains, and part on the valleys below, they marched on safely and in order. [41]Wherefore all that heard the noise of their multitude, and the marching of the company, and the rattling of the harness, were moved: for the army was very great and mighty.

6:42

[42]And Judas and his host drew near, and entered into battle, and there were slain of the king's army six hundred men.

6:43–47

[43]Eleazar also, (surnamed) Savaran, perceiving that one of the beasts, armed with royal harness, was higher than all the rest, and supposing that the king was upon him, [44]put himself in jeopardy, to the end he might deliver his people, and get him a perpetual name: [45]wherefore he ran upon him courageously through the midst of the battle, slaying on the

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Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5e

(5e) Before the opposing armies came into action, Eleazar, brother of Judas, observing the tallest of the elephants, surmounted by a huge howdah and an array of gilded battlements, and concluding that it bore Antiochus, rushed out far beyond his own lines and, cutting through the enemy's ranks, made his way to the elephant. Being unable to reach the supposed monarch because of his height from the ground, he

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Round each elephant there advanced together a thousand foot soldiers and five hundred horsemen; and the elephants carried high towers and archers. He also made the rest of his force ascend the mountains on either side, putting his light-armed troops in front of them. Then he ordered his army to raise the battle-cry, and set upon the enemy, uncovering his shields of gold and bronze so that a brilliant light was given off by them, while the mountains re-echoed the shouts of his men.

12:9:4g

(4g) Judas saw this, and yet was not terrified, but valiantly met the enemy's charge, and slew some six hundred of their skirmishers.

12:9:4h

(4h) And his brother Eleazar, whom they called Auran, on seeing that the tallest of the elephants was armed with breastplates like those of the king, and supposing that the king was mounted on it, risked his life by rushing upon it boldly, and killing many of the men round the elephant and scattering the others, he slipped under the elephant's belly and killed it with a thrust. But the animal came down upon Eleazar and crushed the hero under its

1 Maccabees	2 Maccabees	Jewish Antiquities
right hand and on the left, so that they were divided from him on both sides. [46]Which done, he crept under the elephant, and thrust him under, and slew him: whereupon the elephant fell down upon him, and there he died. [47]Howbeit (the rest of the Jews) seeing the strength of the king, and the violence of his forces, turned away from them.	struck the beast below the belly, brought its whole weight down upon himself, and was crushed to death; having achieved nothing more than to attempt great things, holding life cheaper than renown. The elephant-rider was, in fact, a commoner; yet, even had he happened to be Antiochus, his daring assailant would have gained but the reputation of courting death in the bare expectation of a brilliant exploit. To Eleazar's brother the incident proved an omen of the issue of the engagement. For, long and stubborn as was the resistance of the Jews, the king's forces, with superior numbers and favoured by fortune, were victorious;	weight. And so, after bravely destroying many of the foe, Eleazar met his end in this manner.
	Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5f (5f) and, after the loss of many of his men, Judas fled with the remainder to the province of Gophna. Antiochus proceeded to Jerusalem,	
6:48 [48]Then the king's army went up to Jerusalem to meet them, and the king pitched his tents against Judaea, and against mount Zion.	**13:22a** [22a]The king treated with them IN BETHZURA THE SECOND TIME, gave his hand, took their's, departed,	**12:9:5a** (5a) THEREUPON Judas, seeing how strong the enemy was, retired to Jerusalem and prepared himself for a siege.
6:49 [49]But with them that were in Bethzura he (Antiochus) made peace: for they came out of the city, BECAUSE THEY HAD NO VICTUALS THERE TO ENDURE THE SIEGE, BECAUSE IT WAS A SABBATH OF THE LAND. [50]So the king took Bethzura, and set a garrison there to keep it.	**Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5c** (5c) While capturing the small town of Bethzura,	**12:9:5b** (5b) And Antiochus sent a part of his army to Bethzura to assault it, while he himself with the rest of his force came to Jerusalem. Now the inhabitants of Bethzura, being overawed by his strength, and seeing how scarce their provisions were, surrendered to him, after receiving sworn assurances that they should suffer no harm at the hands of the king. Then Antiochus took the city and did nothing to them beyond expelling them unarmed; and he stationed his own garrison in the city.
6:51–54 [51]As for the sanctuary, he besieged it many days: and set there artillery with engines and instruments to cast fire and stones, and pieces to cast darts and slings. [52]Whereupon they also made engines against their engines, and held them battle a long season. [53]Yet at the last, their vessels being without vict-	**13:22b** [22b]fought with Judas, was overcome:	**12:9:5c** (5c) But the siege of the Temple in Jerusalem kept him there a long time, for those within stoutly resisted; and every siege-engine which the king set up against them, they, in turn, countered with another engine. THEIR SUPPLY OF FOOD, HOWEVER, HAD BEGUN TO GIVE OUT, FOR THE STORED PRODUCE HAD BEEN CONSUMED, AND THE GROUND HAD

1 Maccabees	2 Maccabees	Jewish Antiquities
uals—BY REASON OF IT BEING THE SEVENTH YEAR, AND THEY IN JUDAEA, THAT WERE DELIVERED FROM THE NATIONS, HAD EATEN UP THE RESIDUE OF THE STORE—[54]there were but a few left in the sanctuary, because the famine did so prevail against them, that they were fain to disperse themselves, every man to his own place.		NOT BEEN TILLED THAT YEAR, BUT HAD REMAINED UNSOWN BECAUSE IT WAS THE SEVENTH YEAR, DURING WHICH OUR LAW OBLIGES US TO LET IT LIE UNCULTIVATED. Many of the besieged, therefore, ran away because of the lack of necessities, so that only a few were left in the Temple.
6:55–59	**13:23a**	**12:9:6**
[55]AT THAT TIME Lysias heard say that Philip, whom Antiochus the king, while he was alive, had appointed to bring up his son Antiochus, that he might be king, [56]was returned out of Persia and Media, and the king's host also that went with him, and that he sought to take unto him the ruling of affairs. [57]Wherefore he went in all haste, and said to the king and the captains of the host and the company, We decay daily, and our victuals are but small, and the place we lay siege unto is strong, and the affairs of the kingdom lie upon us: [58]now therefore let us be friends with these men, and make peace with them, and with all their nation; [59]and covenant with them, that they shall live after their laws, as they did before: for they are therefore displeased, and have done all these things, because we abolished their laws.	[23]heard that Philip, who was left over the affairs in Antioch, was desperately bent, confounded,	(6) Such were the circumstances of those who were besieged in the Temple. But when Lysias, the commander, and the king were informed that Philip was coming against them from Persia to secure the government for himself, they were ready to abandon the siege and set out against Philip; they decided, however, not to reveal their plan to the soldiers and their officers, but, instead, the king ordered Lysias to address him and the officers publicly and say nothing of the trouble with Philip, but merely show that the siege would take a very long time, and the place was very strong, and explain that their supply of food had already begun to fail, and that it was necessary to put in order many of the affairs of the kingdom, and that it seemed much better to make a treaty with the besieged and seek the friendship of their whole nation by permitting them to observe their fathers' laws, the loss of which had caused them to begin the present war; and that then they should return home. Lysias spoke in this manner, and both the army and their officers were pleased with his advice.
6:60–62	**13:23b–24**	**12:9:7a**
[60]So the king and the princes were content wherefore he sent unto them to make peace; and they accepted thereof. [61]Also the king and the princes made an oath unto them: whereupon they went out of the stronghold. [62]Then the king entered onto mount Zion: but when he saw the strength of the place, he broke his oath that he had made, and gave command-	[23b]entreated the Jews, submitted himself, and swore to all equal conditions, agreed with them, and offered sacrifice, honoured the Temple, and dealt kindly with the place, [24]and accepted well of Maccabaeus, made him principal governor from Ptolemais unto the Gerrhenians;	(7a) And so the king sent to Judas and those who were being besieged with him, and offered to make peace with them and allow them to live in accordance with their fathers' laws. Thereupon the Jews gladly accepted his proposals, and after receiving sworn assurances of his good faith, went out from the Temple. But when Antiochus entered it and saw how strong the place was, he violated his oaths, and ordered his force to go round and pull down the wall to the ground.

1 Maccabees	2 Maccabees	Jewish Antiquities
ment to pull down the wall round about.	**Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5g** (5g) And he (Antiochus V) stayed in it (Jerusalem) only a few days, owing to a shortage of supplies; he then left what he considered a sufficient garrison,	
6:63a [63a]AFTERWARD he (Antiochus V) departed in all haste,	**Megillath Taanith** (11) ON THE 28TH THEREOF (SHEBAT) Antiochus withdrew from Jerusalem. **Jos., *Wars*, 1:1:5h** (5h) and (Antiochus V) withdrew the rest of his army to WINTER QUARTERS in Syria.	**12:9:7b** (7b) After doing this,
	13:25–26a [25](and) came to Ptolemais: the people there were grieved for the covenants; for they stormed, because they would make their covenants void. [26]Lysias went up to the judgment seat, said as much as could be in defence of the cause, persuaded, pacified, made them well affected.	
6:63b [63b]and RETURNED UNTO ANTIOCHIA,	**13:26b** (26b) (and) RETURNED TO ANTIOCH. Thus it went touching the king's coming and departing.	**12:9:7c** (7c) he RETURNED TO ANTIOCH,
	13:4–8 [4]But the king of kings (Yahweh) moved Antiochus' mind against this wicked wretch (Menelaus), and Lysias informed the king that this man was the cause of all mischief, so that the king commanded to bring him unto Beroea, and to put him to death, as the manner is in that place. [5]Now there was in that place a tower of fifty cubits high, full of ashes, and it had a round instrument, which on every side hanged down into the ashes. [6]And whosoever was condemned of sacrilege, or had committed any other grievous crime, there did all men thrust him unto death. [7]Such a death it happened that wicked man to die, not having so much as burial in the earth; and that most justly: [8]for inasmuch as he had committed many sins about the altar, whose fire and ashes were holy, he received his	**12:9:7d** (7d) taking with him the high priest Onias, who was also called Menelaus. For Lysias had advised the king to slay Menelaus, if he wished the Jews to remain quiet and not give him any trouble; it was this man, he said, who had been the cause of the mischief by persuading the king's father to compel the Jews to abandon their fathers' religion. Accordingly, the king sent Menelaus to Beroea in Syria, and there had him put to death; he had served as high priest for ten years, and had been a wicked and impious man, who in order to have sole authority for himself and compelled his nation to violate their own laws. The high priest chosen after the death of Menelaus was Alcimus, also called Jakeimos.

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	death in ashes.	
6:63c		**12:9:7e**
[63c]where he found Philip to be master of the city: so he fought against him, and took the city by force.		(7e) Now when King Antiochus found that Philip had already seized control of the government, he made war on him, and after getting him into his power, killed him. Then Onias, the son of the high priest, who, as we said before, had been left a mere child when his father died, seeing that the king had slain his uncle Menelaus and had given the high priesthood to Alcimus, although he was not of the family of high priests, because he had been persuaded by Lysias to transfer the office from this house to another, fled to Ptolemy, the king of Egypt. And being treated with honour by him and his wife Cleopatra, he received a place in the nome of Heliopolis, where he built a temple similar to that in Jerusalem. Of this, however, we shall give an account on a more fitting occasion.
151 Seleucid **7:1a**	**151 Seleucid**	**151 Seleucid** **12:10:1a**
[1a]IN THE HUNDRED AND ONE AND FIFTIETH YEAR Demetrius the *son* of Seleucus departed from Rome,		(1a) ABOUT THE SAME TIME Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, escaped from Rome,
7:1b–4a	**14:1–2**	**12:10:1b**
[1b]and came up with a few men unto a city of the sea coast, and reigned there. [2]And as he entered into the palace of his ancestors, so it was, that his forces had taken Antiochus and Lysias, to bring them unto him. [3]Wherefore, when he knew it, he said, Let me not see their faces. [4a]So his host slew them.	[1]THREE YEARS AFTER (retaking Jerusalem) Judas was informed that Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, having entered by the haven of Tripolis with a great power and navy, [2]had taken the country, and killed Antiochus, and Lysias his protector.	(1b) and occupying Tripolis in Syria, placed the diadem on his own head; then he gathered round him a number of mercenaries, and entered the kingdom, where all the people received him gladly and submitted to him. They also seized King Antiochus and Lysias, and brought them to him alive. And by order of Demetrius these two were immediately put to death, ANTIOCHUS HAVING REIGNED TWO YEARS, as has already been related elsewhere.
7:4b–7	**14:3–6**	**12:10:1c**
[4b]Now when Demetrius was set upon the throne of his kingdom, [5]there came unto him all the wicked and unpious men of Israel, having Alcimus, who was desirous to be high priest,	[3]Now one Alcimus, who had been high priest, and had defiled himself wilfully in the times of their mingling (with the nations), seeing that by no means he could save himself, nor have any more access to the holy altar, [4]came to king	(1c) Then there came to him in a body many of the wicked and renegade Jews, among whom was the high priest Alcimus, and they accused their whole nation, especially Judas and his brothers, saying that they had killed all

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for their captain: [6]and they accused the people to the king, saying, Judas and his brethren have slain all your friends, and driven us out of our own land. [7]Now therefore send some man whom you trust, and let him go and see what havoc he has made among us and in the king's land, and let him punish them with all them that aid them.

2 Maccabees

Demetrius IN THE HUNDRED AND ONE AND FIFTIETH YEAR, presenting unto him a crown of gold, and a palm, and also of the boughs which were used solemnly in the Temple: and so that day he held his peace. [5]Howbeit having gotten opportunity to further his foolish enterprise, *and* being called into council by Demetrius, and asked how the Jews stood affected, and what they intended, he answered thereunto: [6]Those of the Jews that be called Assideans, whose captain is Judas Maccabaeus, nourish war, and are seditious, and will not let the realm be in peace.

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the king's friends, and had destroyed all those in the kingdom who were of his party and awaited his coming, and had driven the present speakers out of their country and made them aliens in a strange land; and now they requested him to send one of his own friends and learn from him what bold crimes had been committed by Judas and his men.

Chapter XIV

The Sabbath Year of 134/133 B.C.E.

The sabbath year which extended from Abib, i.e. Nisan (March / April), of 134 to the beginning of the Jewish year in 133 B.C.E. can also be dated from 1 Maccabees and the works of Josephus by a Seleucid year: the year 178. Once again the dating by 1 Maccabees and Josephus perfectly fits the sabbath year cycle already demonstrated by the fifteenth year of Hezekiah, the eighth year of Arta-xerxes, and the 150th Seleucid year. The evidence relating to the sabbath year of 134 / 133 B.C.E. is built around the story of the murder of the high priest Simon and the subsequent rise to power of his son John Hyrcanus, who attempts to avenge his father's death.

The Chronology of Simon

The high priest Simon came to power after the capture and death of his brother Jonathan by the Syrian Greek empire. Simon then won freedom for the Judaeans in the 170th Seleucid year.

> Thus the yoke of the heathen was taken away from Israel in the 170th year. Then the people of Israel began to write in their instruments and contracts, "In the first year of Simon the high priest, the governor and leader of the Jews." (1 Macc., 13:41–42)

> Having, further, posted numerous ambuscades in different parts of the hills, he was successful in all the engagements, and after a brilliant victory was appointed high priest and liberated the Jews from the Macedonian supremacy which lasted for 170 years. (Jos., *Wars*, 1:2:2)

> This liberation and exemption from tribute came to the Jews in the 170th year of the Syrian kingdom, reckoned from the time when Seleucus, surnamed Nicator, occupied Syria. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:6:7)

At the end of Simon's government, Simon and his two sons, Mattathias and Judas, were visiting Simon's son-in-law, Ptolemy, in Dok, near Jericho. Ptolemy then treacherously murdered Simon. 1 Maccabees dates Simon's murder "in the 177th year, in the eleventh month called Sebat (Shebat; i.e. Jan. / Feb.)."[1] Josephus adds that Simon died having "ruled over the Jews for

[1] 1 Macc., 16:14. That Shebat is the eleventh month see Zech., 1:7, and Chart G.

eight years in all."[2] The year 177, therefore equals the eighth year of Simon. This fact is confirmed by other statements in these texts dating the regnal years of Simon.

- 1 Maccabees, 13:41–42, states that the 170th year was dated in contracts as "the first year of Simon."

- Josephus, *Antiquities*, 13:6:7, reports that "in the first year of his high-priesthood," Simon "liberated the people from servitude to the Macedonians," which Josephus then dates as "the 170th year of the Syrian kingdom."

- 1 Maccabees, 14:27, makes the following statement: "The eighteenth day of Elul (Aug./Sept.), in the 172nd year, being the third year of Simon the high priest," etc. This comment equates the 172nd year with Simon's third year, thereby agreeing with the fact that the 177th year would have been Simon's eighth year.

John and the Approaching Sabbath Year

After killing Simon, Ptolemy imprisoned Simon's wife and two sons, Mattathias and Judas, and then sent men to kill his third son, John Hyrcanus. John, fortunately, escaped the assassins' hands.[3] Ptolemy then withdrew to the fortress of Dagon, located above Jericho, while John, assuming "the high-priestly office of his father, first propitiated the deity (Yahweh) with sacrifices, and then marched out against Ptolemy and attacked his stronghold."[4]

Though John Hyrcanus was superior to Ptolemy in his forces, he was at an emotional disadvantage, for Ptolemy had brought John's mother and brothers up to the city walls and tortured them in the sight of all. John, seeing his family treated in this way, "slackened his efforts to capture the place." But John's mother helped change his mind when she yelled to him that it would be pleasant for her to die in torment if the enemy paid the penalty. After hearing these words, "Hyrcanus was seized with a powerful desire to capture the fortress, but when he saw her being beaten and torn apart, he became unnerved and was overcome with compassion at the way in which his mother was being treated."[5]

These events occurred in the eleventh and twelfth months, i.e. Shebat and Adar, of the 177th year, since they immediately followed Simon's murder in the eleventh month of that year.[6] Abruptly, Hyrcanus was forced to withdraw his troops because the sabbath year was arriving (i.e. the 178th year):

> But while the siege was being protracted in this manner, there came around the year in which the Jews are wont to remain inactive, for they observe this custom every seventh year, just as on the seventh day. And Ptolemy, being relieved from the war

2 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:7:4.
3 1 Macc., 16:18–23; Jos., *Wars*, 1:2:3, *Antiq.*, 13:7:4.
4 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:8:1, cf. *Wars*, 1:2:3.
5 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:8:1, cf. *Wars*, 1:2:4.
6 1 Macc., 16:14.

> for this reason, killed the brothers and mother of Hyrcanus, and after doing so, fled to Zenon, surnamed Cotylas, who was tyrant of the city of Philadelphia. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:8:1)

> The siege consequently dragged on until the year of ἀργὸν (not working the ground)[7] came round, which is kept septennially by the Jews as a period of inaction, like the seventh day of the week. Ptolemy, now relieved of the siege, put John's brethren and their mother to death and fled to Zenon, surnamed Cotylas, the tyrant of Philadelphia. (Jos., *Wars*, 1:2:4)

It is extremely unlikely that anyone could have endured torture in this horrible manner for seven months, which would have been required if the sabbath year had begun with Tishri (Sept./Oct.) instead of Nisan. Neither does it seem plausible that Hyrcanus would have been unable to take the small fortress at Dagon within that amount of time, especially under these circumstances. The evidence, therefore, clearly indicates that the sabbath year was near. That fact, in turn, demonstrates that the sabbath year at that time began with Nisan, which was only about a month or so away from the time that the siege began.

War and the Sabbath

The practice of not warring on the sabbath (whether the sabbath day or sabbath year) was the law of the Jews during the days of John Hyrcanus. For example, the *War Scroll* states, "But in the year of release they shall mobilize no man to go into the army, for it is a sabbath of rest for the sovereign (Yahweh)."[8] The words of Josephus, in this regard, are very important, for he points out that the army of Hyrcanus remained "inactive" during the sabbath year, "the year of not working the ground," because "they observe this custom every seventh year, JUST AS ON THE SEVENTH DAY."[9]

The book of Jubilees, composed about 100 B.C.E., argues that anyone "who makes war on the sabbaths" is condemned.[10] Josephus remarks that the Jews were not even permitted to "march out" either "on the sabbath or on a festival."[11] In a letter sent by the Imperator Dolabella on January 24, 43 B.C.E. to the people of Ephesus, we read:

> Alexander, son of Theodorous, the envoy of Hyrcanus, son of Alexander, the high priest and ethnarch of the Jews, has explained to me that his co-religionists cannot undertake military service because they may

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7 The term ἀργὸν (*argon*) means, "*not working the ground, living without labour*," see GEL, p. 114.
8 1QM, 2:6–10.
9 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:8:1.
10 Jub., 50:12,
11 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:8:4.

> not bear arms or march on the days of the sabbath; nor can they obtain the native foods to which they are accustomed. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:10:12)

Up until the invasion of Judaea by Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jews would neither go to war or defend themselves on the sabbath. But after the outrage committed by Antiochus Epiphanes against the Jews at Jerusalem in 167 B.C.E., after the Jews refused to defend themselves on the sabbath day and were needlessly slaughtered because of it, a decree was issued by the priest Mattathias and his friends,[12] stating:

> Whosoever shall come to make battle with us on the sabbath day, we will fight against him: neither will we all die, as our brethren that were murdered in the secret places. (1 Macc., 2:41)

This decree clearly remained in effect well into the first century C.E. To demonstrate, Josephus refers back to the time when the Roman general Pompey took advantage of this custom in late 64 B.C.E. by building earthworks against the city of Jerusalem on the sabbath day while the Jews rested. He then goes on to state:

> But if it were not our national custom to rest on the seventh day, the earthworks would not have been finished, because the Jews would have prevented this; for the Law permits us TO DEFEND OURSELVES AGAINST THOSE WHO BEGIN A BATTLE AND STRIKE US, BUT IT DOES NOT ALLOW US TO FIGHT AGAINST AN ENEMY THAT DOES ANYTHING ELSE. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:4:2; cf. Jos., *Wars*, 1:7:3)

The words of Josephus are spoken in the present tense, thereby confirming that this same Law was still practiced by the Jews during the latter part of the first century C.E., at the time when Josephus wrote. Indeed, at the time of the First Revolt (66–70 C.E.) it was still the Jewish practice. Josephus writes that a Jewish citizen named John requested that the Roman general Titus have "deference to the Jewish law" and "allow them that day, being the seventh (i.e. sabbath), on which they were forbidden alike to have resort to arms and to conclude a treaty of peace."[13]

Josephus, who commanded a force of Jewish soldiers himself during this period, remarks that late on the sixth day of the week he was reluctant to recall his disbanded force, "because the day was already far spent; and even had they come, it would have been impossible for them to bear arms on the morrow (sabbath), such action being forbidden by our laws, however urgent the apparent necessity."[14]

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12 1 Macc., 2:27–41.
13 Jos., *Wars*, 4:2:3.
14 Jos., *Life*, 32.

The fact that the Jews of this period avoided military aggression during the sabbath year as they did on the sabbath day explains why Hyrcanus was unable to pursue his war against Ptolemy even though by doing so he might save the lives of his mother and brothers.

"Year 1" of Hyrcanus, a Sabbath Year

After Hyrcanus' retreat from Dagon, "Antiochus Sidetes," the Greek Syrian king, "being resentful of the injuries he had received from Simon, invaded Judaea in the fourth year of his reign and the first year of Hyrcanus' rule, in the 16[1] Olympiad. And after ravaging the country, he shut Hyrcanus up in the city (Jerusalem) itself, which he surrounded with seven camps."[15] Since Hyrcanus did not return to Jerusalem until the very beginning of the sabbath year (the 178th Seleucid), this is our first indication that "Year 1" of Hyrcanus was calculated by the accession-year method—undoubtledly because the Jews of this period began to date contracts and public documents by the year of the high priest's reign.[16] "Year 8" of Simon on these Jewish contracts represented the 177th Seleucid (Simon having died near the end of that year); "Year 1," of Hyrcanus, therefore, would belong to the 178th Seleucid.

As the siege of Jerusalem in the 178th year became protracted, there arose a lack of water. This drought was relieved by "the great downpour of rains which came with the setting of the Pleiades," being the rains of Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.).[17] This detail once again confirms that the beginning of the sabbath year could not have been Tishri 1. One month of siege would hardly have been long enough to affect the people of Jerusalem with a lack of water. But a siege lasting through the summer months until Marheshuan would. After the rains, the siege continued even further, until the next year (the 179th Seleucid), when at the Feast of Tabernacles (in the month of Tishri, i.e. Sept./Oct.) a treaty of peace was signed.[18]

Next, as we have said above, Josephus dates the fourth year of Antiochus (VII) Sidetes, being the first year of Hyrcanus, as a sabbath year. The book of 1 Maccabees, 15:10f, reports that Antiochus VII came to Syria in the 174th year, at which time he went to war against King Tryphon in an effort to seize the Syrian kingdom. After besieging Tryphon at Dora, Tryphon fled. The question is, "Did Josephus determine the reign of Antiochus VII by the accession-year or the nonaccession-year system?"

Syncellus, Jerome, Eusebius and Porphyry provide our first clue. They give Antiochus VII nine years of reign.[19] Eusebius and Porphyry date it from Olympiad 160, year 4 (i.e. 138/137 B.C.E., Oct. reckoning), until Olympiad 162, year 4 (i.e. 130/129 B.C.E., Oct. reckoning).[20] Diodorus reports that Antiochus VII died during his eastern campaign just when spring began to melt the snow and the crops were appearing.[21] Justin adds that the army of Antiochus VII

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15 Jos., *Antiq.*,13:8:2.

16 Jos., *Antiq.*,13:6:7.

17 Jos., *Antiq.*,13:8:2; cf. S.O., 4:12–15.

18 Jos., *Antiq.*,13:8:2.

19 Syncellus, 1, p. 552, 2, p. 271; Eusebius, *Chron.*, 1, pp. 255, 263, app. 1, pp. 16, 56, 91f; Jerome, *Euseb. Chron.*, 226F–228F; HJP, 1, p. 127.

20 Eusebius, *Chron.*, 1, pp. 255, 263; HJP, 1, p. 132. See JQR, 10, pp. 58f, for the use of the Oct. or Macedonian Olympiad system by Porphyry and Eusebius.

21 Diodorus, 34/35:15–17.

was still in winter quarters in Persia when the Parthians surprised him with the attack in which he lost his life.[22]

This evidence places the death of Antiochus VII in Persia during the early spring, not long after the beginning of the new year, 129/128 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. His last year, therefore, is Seleucid 183, Macedonian reckoning, which is confirmed by his coins.[23] It proves that the first of his nine years was the 175th Seleucid year (137/136 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning). "Year 4" of Antiochus VII, therefore, was the 178th Seleucid (134/133 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning) and his reign was determined by the accession-year system.

Next, a comparison of Seleucid coins with the works of Josephus demonstrates that Josephus used the accession-year method for determining the reigns of the Seleucid kings Antiochus VI and Tryphon, both men ruling just prior to Antiochus VII.[24] When we combine this data with the fact that ancient chronographers allowed only nine years for Antiochus VII, it indicates that "Year 4" in Josephus for Antiochus VII, being "Year 1" of Hyrcanus, was the Seleucid year 178 (134/133 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning) and that this year was a sabbath.

The mentioning of the 162nd Olympiad in the texts of Josephus, meanwhile, is clearly a scribal error. The original has to be the 161st. The 162nd Olympiad does not work with any sabbath cycle system. It did not begin until July, 132 B.C.E. (Attic reckoning) or November, 132 B.C.E. (Macedonian reckoning), far too removed to be considered. The four years of the 161st Olympiad, on the other hand, began in July, 136 B.C.E. (Attic reckoning) or November, 136 B.C.E. (Macedonian reckoning). The 178th Seleucid year extended from Nisan, 134 until Nisan, 133 B.C.E. Therefore, the 178th Seleucid year was in the 161st Olympiad, not the 162nd.

This error is also picked up in the works of Porphyry, who is cited by Eusebius.[25] He places the siege of Jerusalem by Antiochus in the third year of the 162nd Olympiad (Attic reckoning). As our other records reveal, the third year is correct, but not of the 162nd Olympiad; rather, it was the third year of the 161st Olympiad. The third year of the 161st Olympiad extends from July, 134 until July of 133 B.C.E. (Attic). As such, it stands in full agreement with the events of the 178th Seleucid year.

Conclusion

The records from Josephus and 1 Maccabees are clear. Simon was murdered in the eleventh month of the 177th year. To avenge his father's death, John Hyrcanus tried to take Ptolemy at his fortress at Dagon before the arrival of the sabbath year. He failed to do so, and due to the Jewish law forbidding military expeditions in the sabbath year (as they were forbidden on a sabbath day) John Hyrcanus had to retreat as the month of Nisan and the 178th year

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22 Justin, 38:10, 39:1, which reports that Antiochus and his army were cut off in Persia.

23 Macedonian Seleucid 183 = Oct., 130 to Oct., 129. For the coins of Antiochus VII see below n. 24.

24 Josephus gives Antiochus VI four years of reign (*Antiq.*, 13:7:1). Coins bear the dates for five Seleucid years: 167–171 (HJP, 1, p. 131). Josephus gives Tryphon a reign of three years (*Antiq.*, 13:7:1). Tryphon's coins bear the dates for four Seleucid years (HJP, 1, p. 131). Similarly, though the coins of Antiochus VII bear the Seleucid dates for ten years, i.e. 174–183 of the era (HJP, 1, p. 132), Eusebius and Porphyry only allow him nine years (see above pp. 209f, and ns. 19, 20).

25 Eusebius, *Chron.*, 1, p. 255.

(the sabbath year) arrived. Therefore, the 178th year (134/133 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning) was a sabbath year.

The fact that Josephus dates the beginning of the Hasmonaean dynasty to 162/161 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, making that year the 150th Seleucid year,[26] clearly demonstrates that system "B," which would have the sabbath year in question equal the 177th Seleucid (Tishri of 136 until Tishri of 135 B.C.E.) is not workable. System "C" (Tishri, 135 until Tishri, 134 B.C.E.) is also untenable, since the sabbath year clearly began with Nisan (March/April).

System "D" (Nisan, 135 until Nisan, 134 B.C.E.) alone has possible merit if it can be proven that the Seleucid system utilized by Josephus and the Maccabean books began one year earlier (i.e. 312 rather than 311 B.C.E.). Yet, as demonstrated in the last section of Chapter XII, the evidence from Josephus and even the later Talmudic writers prove that such was definitely not the case.

This much is also clear. There is no indication that the siege against Ptolemy by John Hyrcanus could have lasted seven months, a figure required if the sabbath year that was arriving at the time of the siege began in October. With that much time Hyrcanus could have easily taken Dagon. Indeed, if that arriving sabbath year did wait until Tishri of 133 B.C.E. it would be beyond any possible sabbath cycle system.

All things considered, system "A" is the only viable solution to the problem. Not only does it agree with the evidence that the 178th Seleucid year (Nisan reckoning) was a sabbath but it is in complete harmony with the sabbath years that fell in the fifteenth year of Hezekiah, the eighth year of Arta-xerxes, and the 150th Seleucid year.[27]

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26 See above Chap. XII, pp. 177f.
27 See Chart B.

Chapter XV

The Sabbath Year of 43/42 B.C.E.

Confirmation that a sabbath year occurred in 43/42 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, is found in a decree issued by Gaius Julius Caesar and published by Josephus in his work entitled, *The Antiquities of the Jews*. The decree reads as follows:

> Gaius Caesar, Consul for the fifth time, has decreed that these men shall receive and fortify the city of Jerusalem, and that Hyrcanus, son of Alexander, the high priest and ethnarch of the Jews, shall occupy it as he himself may choose. And that IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE RENT-TERM one kor shall be deducted from the tax paid by the Jews, and no one shall make profit out of them, nor shall they pay the same tribute. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:10:5)

This decree is dated to the fifth consul term of Gaius Caesar, i.e. the year 44 B.C.E.,[1] and is most assuredly to be associated with the Roman Senate decree of that same year, which is specifically dated "three days before the Ides of April" (April 11, 44 B.C.E.).[2] The Senate decree also deals with privileges to be granted to the Jews in the empire and reads well in the context of the Roman recognition of Jewish rights under Caesar. During that same year Caesar made a speech concerning the rights of the high priest Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, expressing the thanks of the Roman government towards the Jews for their loyalty and benefits conferred on the Romans.[3]

The decrees of Caesar and the Senate, along with Caesar's speech, all dated to 44 B.C.E., strongly indicate that all were part of one episode. They are explained as an effort on the part of the Roman government in the spring of 44 B.C.E. to solidify the alliance with their Judaean vassal.

The reduction in taxes during the "second year of the rent-term," as well as the statement that "no one shall make profit out of them, nor shall they pay the same tribute," is nothing less than a reference to the Jewish observance of the sabbath year. This fact is made even clearer when we take into account the prior and formal recognition and consent of the Roman government,

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1 Dio, 43:49; Senator, 385; MGH, p. 134; and see the list of Roman Consuls in HBC, p. 96, and in CD, s.v. *Consul*.

2 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:10:10.

3 Ibid., 14:10:7.

allowing the Jews to observe the sabbath year. A decree from Gaius Caesar, dated to the year 47 B.C.E., for example, reveals this consent:

> Gaius Caesar, Imperator for the second time, has ruled that they (the Jews) shall pay a tax for the city of Jerusalem, Joppa excluded, every year except in the seventh year, which they call the σαββατικὸν (*sabbatikon*; sabbath) year, because in this time they neither take fruit from the trees nor do they sow. And that in the second year they shall pay the tribute at Sidon, consisting of one fourth of the produce sown, and in addition, they shall also pay tithes to Hyrcanus and his sons, just as they paid to their forefathers. . . . It is also our pleasure that the city of Joppa, which the Jews had held from ancient times when they made a treaty of friendship with the Romans, shall belong to them as at first; and for this city Hyrcanus, son of Alexander, and his sons shall pay tribute, collected from those who inhabit the territory, as a tax on the land, the harbour and exports, payable at Sidon in the amount of 20,675 modii every year EXCEPT IN THE SEVENTH YEAR, WHICH THEY CALL THE SABBATH YEAR, wherein they neither plough nor take fruit from the trees. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:10:6)

The "second year of the rent-term" mentioned in the decree of Caesar dated to his fifth consul term clearly spells out that during this period there would be a reduction in the tax paid by the Jews and that "no one should make a profit of them, nor shall they pay the same tribute."[4]

Taken in context with Roman recognition of the Jewish observance of the sabbath year, this decree serves as an important piece of evidence for the sabbath year cycle. The first year of the rent-term has to be the year of the decree: the year the rights and privileges were formally granted, in the year Caesar served as Consul for the fifth time. The sabbath year, therefore, fell in the following year.

The evidence from the speech of Caesar and the Senate decree strongly indicates that these above arrangements were agreed upon in April of 44 B.C.E. As a result, the year 44/43 B.C.E. (Nisan reckoning) would be the first year of the rent-term, while 43/42 B.C.E. (Nisan reckoning) would represent the second year, the sabbath year. Adding more force to this evidence, the year 43/42 B.C.E. exactly fits the cycle of sabbaths thus far demonstrated: from the fifteenth year of King Hezekiah to the 178th Seleucid year.

Ralph Marcus (system "C"), in his translation of Josephus, recognized this connection between the words of Caesar's decree and the sabbath year. He writes:

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4 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:10:5.

> If the "second year of the rent-term" here coincides with a sabbatical year (as one naturally supposes), it confirms the dating of the document in 44 B.C., as the sabbatical year would be that which extended from Oct. 44 to Oct. 43.[5]

Though Marcus agrees that the second year of the rent-term is a sabbath, he erroneously concludes that the Jewish year during this period should be counted from the seventh month, Tishri. As this study has already adequately demonstrated, this is simply not true. Since the sabbath year was counted from Nisan (Abib), this sabbath year of the "second year of the rent-term" would not begin until the spring of 43 B.C.E., ending in the spring of 42 B.C.E. Further, for the view of Marcus (who adheres to system "C") to be correct, Caesar and the Senate would have made their statements halfway through a year that began with Tishri. The first year of the rent-term, accordingly, would already have been half over. This circumstance would hardly make sense. A decree discussing the conditions of the "rent-term" would not be issued halfway through the first rent-term but, rather, at its beginning.

Those advocating system "B" also will find no support from Caesar's proclamation. According to that system, the sabbath year must be Tishri, 45 until Tishri, 44 B.C.E. If such were the case, the sabbath year of the second rent-term would have already been half over when the decree was issued. Since the normal time for Judaea to pay tribute was in Tishri,[6] the time for tribute had also already passed. Caesar would have been too late for his decree to have made any impact. These details dismiss system "B" as a viable possibility.

System "D" is also frustrated. Since Caesar was proclaiming Judaean rights in April of 44 B.C.E., it is clear that the first year of the rent-term was in 44 B.C.E. It hardly makes sense that Caesar would proclaim the year of his decree as the second year of the rent-term.

Conclusion

When all the details are considered, the decree issued by Caesar in the spring of 44 B.C.E.—which limited his tax base but solidified a close alliance with the Jews—only makes legal and practical sense if the second year of the rent-term, being the sabbath year, was 43/42 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. It, therefore, fully supports the system "A" arrangement (see Chart B).

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5 Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, p. 555, n. d.

6 A Tishri year was retained "for selling and buying and other ordinary affairs" among the Jews of this period (Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:3:3). Among these ordinary affairs would be included the payment of taxes.

Section III

The Period of Herod

Chapter XVI

The Siege of Jerusalem

Part I of the Sabbath Year of 36/35 B.C.E.

Now we come to the evidence which, according to the advocates of systems "B" and "D," is the heart of the matter. The entire case for systems "B" and "D" rests upon the popular interpretation and translation of Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14:16:2, par. 475, which is part of his discussion about Herod's conquest of Jerusalem in 37 B.C.E. Josephus, as common translations would have it, writes:

> And acting in desperation rather than with foresight, they (the people of Jerusalem) persevered in the war to the very end—this in spite of the fact that a great army surrounded them and that they were distressed by famine and the lack of necessities, for a ἑβδοματικὸν (*hebdomatikon*, i.e. seventh) year happened to fall at that time. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:16:2)

As observed by Professor Placid Csizmazia,[1] a noted expert in the ancient Greek language at the University of Dallas, the term ἑβδοματικὸν (meaning "seventh"), which is utilized in this passage, means more than "the seventh year" in the general sense. If simply the "seventh" year was intended, the term ἕβδομον would be used. Rather, it is "a formal, specific expression" denoting "the ritual, legal sense."[2] Josephus' use of the Greek term ἑβδοματικὸν, therefore, is a specific reference to a "sabbatical" year. This term, as a result, is often simply rendered "sabbatical" by translators.[3]

The advocates of systems "B" and "D," arguing from this premise, then concluded that at the time of Herod's siege of Jerusalem a sabbath year was in progress. Since the capture of the city is variously dated by these chronologists anywhere from the summer to the early fall of 37 B.C.E., this evidence, it is claimed, proves system "B," which would date this sabbath year from Tishri, 38 until Tishri, 37 B.C.E., or system "D," from Nisan of 37 until Nisan of 36 B.C.E.

A Contradiction?

All would seem well for the above interpretations except for the fact that shortly thereafter in *Antiquities*, 15:1:1–2, Josephus openly contradicts it.

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1 For Professor Placid Csizmazia see above Chap. XIII, p. 184, n. 24.
2 Letter to the author dated 09–08–87.
3 E.g. Whiston, *Jos.*, p. 313; Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, p. 689; etc.

While discussing the time shortly AFTER Herod the Great took the city, he makes the following comment:

> And there was no end to their troubles, for on the one hand their greedy master (Herod), who was in need (of money), was plundering them, and on the other hand the seventh year, WHICH CAME AROUND AT THAT TIME, forced them to leave the land unworked, since we are forbidden to sow the earth in that year. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:1:2)

Though Ben Zion Wacholder, who advocates system "C,"[4] and Don Blosser, who advocates system "B,"[5] disagree with each other as to which year represents the shemitah (year of rest), both do agree that this above passage from Josephus presents historians with a contradiction.

The Greek phrase "ἐνειστήκει γὰρ τότε," translated to mean, "which came around at that time," refers to the arrival of a sabbath year after Herod took the city. Wacholder writes that the sentence "seems to suggest that the Shemitah fell not during the siege but after it had ended, i.e., while Herod was master of Jerusalem."[6]

A fairer translation of this passage from Josephus is confirmed by experts in ancient Greek. Professor Juan Gamez of East Texas State University,[7] after analyzing this verse, concluded that the meaning of the Greek phrase "ἐνειστήκει γὰρ τότε" is much stronger than what Marcus and others would lead us to believe. Gamez states that Josephus used "the imperfect and not the aorist" and that the intent of the passage is to say that the Jews were "forced" or "compelled" to leave their fields unworked because "the seventh year was coming" or "was approaching." In his mind there is no doubt that Josephus was announcing the arrival of a sabbath year "after" Herod had mastered Jerusalem.[8] Professor Csizmazia of Dallas University likewise concurred that this was the most obvious meaning of the phrase.[9]

Jerusalem Captured during a Non-Sabbath Year

If the popular view of *Antiquities*, 14:16:2, is correct, that a sabbath year was in process BEFORE Herod took Jerusalem, then Josephus has contradicted himself on the subject within just a few pages: on the one hand saying that during the siege the Jews were observing a sabbath year, while on the other saying that at sometime AFTER Herod took the city a sabbath year approached. Neither can there be two sabbath years (i.e. a sabbath followed by a Jubilee). Not only did the Jews abandon the observance of the Jubilee years by this date but the nearest Jubilee, based upon Hezekiah's observance of a

4 HUCA, 44, pp. 166f.
5 HUCA, 52, p. 135.
6 HUCA, 44, p. 166.
7 Professor Gamez holds a Ph.D. in Spanish Languages and Literature, with M.A.s in Theology and Philosophy, a second major in Latin and Greek, and B.A.s in English and Italian with minors in German and French. Professor Gamez is now retired from the University. He has been of great assistance to the author on a number of occasions for which we offer him our thanks.
8 Taped interview with Professor Gamez, dated 09–06–1987.
9 Letters to the author from Professor Csizmazia dated 09–26–1987 and 10–04–1987.

Jubilee in his sixteenth year, occurred around 15 or 14 B.C.E., depending upon which sabbath cycle system one advocates.

But does Josephus really contradict himself? A close examination of the evidence proves that he did not. The error is actually made by the popular interpretation of *Antiquities*, 14:16:2, par. 475, not Josephus. What the chronologists have mistakenly assumed to have been a sabbath year in progress was in truth only a statement that a sabbath year was close at hand. In fact, the evidence from Josephus proves that a sabbath year was not possible in the year that Herod captured Jerusalem.

First, the Jews harvested crops in Judaea during the year of Herod's siege. This fact is expressly stated in Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14:16:2, shortly before the mentioning of the disputed "seventh year":

> And everything on the land outside the city had been carried off, so that nothing was left that might serve as food for men or beasts; and by secret raids also they caused a lack of provisions.

During a sabbath year the Jews are forbidden to plant or harvest their crops and they would not have done so under any circumstance. If it had been a matter of simply denying the enemy a source of food, the Jews of Jerusalem would not have carried it off (presumably to the city) but would have burned or otherwise destroyed it.

Yet the clear impression left by Josephus is that crops were being produced in the fields and raids had to be made to gather this food or otherwise it would be used by Herod's forces to continue the siege. That crops would be in the field in Judaea during a sabbath year within this period of Judaean history strains credulity.

Second, and most importantly, Josephus confirms the fact that there were many Jews in the army of Herod who were actively involved in the siege of Jerusalem—clearly an aggressive act and one that was forbidden under Jewish law during a sabbath year.[10] Herod himself, though Edomite by family, had married several Jewish women and also belonged to the Jewish faith.[11] If this had been a sabbath year the Jews in Herod's army would not have taken part in the siege. As the *War Scroll* confirms: "But in the year of release (sabbath) they shall mobilize no man to go into the army, for it is a sabbath of rest to the sovereign (Yahweh)."[12]

From the time that Herod arrived in Palestine in the spring of 39 B.C.E., after being rewarded with the kingship of Judaea by the Romans, great numbers of Jews had joined his army. Josephus writes:

> By this time Herod had sailed from Italy to Ptolemais and had collected a not inconsiderable force of both foreigners AND HIS COUNTRYMEN, and was

10 See above Chap. XIV, pp. 207ff.
11 See Chap. XXV, pp. 315f, and n. 56.
12 1QM, 2:8–9.

> marching through Galilee against Antigonus. . . . Nevertheless, Herod's strength increased day by day as he went forward, and all Galilee, except for a few of its inhabitants, came over to his side. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:15:1)

After taking Masada "the local inhabitants joined him."[13] When he marched against Jericho he took "ten companies, five Roman and five Jewish, and a mixed mercenary force."[14] In 37 B.C.E., just before Herod laid siege to Jerusalem, we are told that "many people streamed to him from Jericho and the rest of Judaea" and "multitudes of Jews now joined him daily from Jericho and elsewhere."[15]

That the Jews in Herod's army participated in the siege of Jerusalem is expressly stated by Josephus. He remarks that Herod took the city by storm and that, "soon every quarter was filled with the blood of the slain, for the Romans were furious at the length of the siege, while THE JEWS ON HEROD'S SIDE were anxious not to leave a single adversary alive."[16] Their participation is simply unthinkable if this had been a sabbath year (cf. Chapter XIV). In the year following the siege, meanwhile, we hear of no aggressive military activity by Herod or his army— indicative of a sabbath year.

The Solution

All of this evidence, plus the fact that the year 36/35 B.C.E. fits precisely in the sabbath cycle sequence established since the fifteenth year of Hezekiah, dismantles the popular interpretation of Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14:16:2, par. 475, which would have Herod's siege occur during a sabbath year. How then can these two seemingly contradictory statements of Josephus both be true at the same time?

The solution to the problem lies in the period of Jewish history when there was a gradual shifting of the beginning date for the sabbath year from the first of Nisan—its original starting point—to the first of Tishri. Wacholder and others, for example, speak of "the gradual shifting of the New Year from Nisan to Tishri, which has been formalized into our Rosh Hashanah."[17] But the exact period during which this shift took place remains obscure. As we shall demonstrate later on in our investigation, it was not formally adopted until the second century C.E. Nevertheless, the roots for this change extend backwards for several centuries.

To begin with, Josephus informs us that Nisan "was the first month for the festivals" and was reckoned "as the commencement of the year for everything relating to divine worship,"[18] which surely would include the sacred sabbath year. Even as late as the time of the Rosh ha-Shanah (written near the start of the third century C.E.), "the first of Nisan is the New Year for

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13 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:15:1.
14 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:15:2.
15 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:15:12, *Wars*, 1:17:6.
16 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:16:2, par. 479, *Wars*, 1:18:2, par. 351.
17 HUCA, 44, p. 155.
18 Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:3:3.

kings and feasts."[19] But in the days of the Rosh ha-Shanah a change had been officially established. Now "the first of Tishri" was not only "the New Year" of foreign kings (i.e. the Greek or Seleucid era) but was extended to include the Jewish "Year of Release (sabbath year) and Jubilee years."[20]

This late second century C.E. Jewish Talmudic interpretation, nevertheless, is replete with errors. The rabbis of this late period misread Leviticus, 25:8–10, to mean that the trumpet of "liberty" was to be sounded in the seventh month of the 49th year in the Jubilee cycle, when in reality it was to be in the seventh month of the 50th year. The conclusion of this late rabbinic view naturally followed that the seventh month of the 49th year was thought to be the first month of the Jubilee celebration.[21]

To this initial error the rabbis added yet another. In an effort to "build a fence around the Law" they extended their interpretation for the Jubilee rituals to the regular sabbath years as well, thereby making the seventh month of the sixth year in the sabbath cycle the beginning of the sabbath year. There is no authority in Scriptures for this understanding.

In effect, at the time this ever expanding interpretation of building "a fence around the Law" was first adhered to, the sabbath year ritual was extended so that it would last one and one half years: from the seventh month of the sixth year until the end of the twelfth month of the seventh year. Later, when the first of Tishri became the official New Year's day even for regular non-sabbath years, the ritual was again reduced to only a year, but this time it began and ended with Tishri.

Important for our discussion is the fact that, prior to the second century C.E., the first of every year, including the sabbath year, began with the first of Nisan (a fact to which every Jewish document concerned with the subject prior to the second century C.E. testifies). Another tradition existed, however, which is highly germane to the issue of the sabbath year in Herod's reign. The Mishnah, in the part called the *Shebiith*, written about 200 C.E., asked:

> Until what time may a tree-planted field be ploughed in the year before the seventh year? The School of Shammai says: So long as this benefits the produce (of the sixth year). The School of Hillel says: Until Pentecost. And the opinion of the one is not far from the opinion of the other.[22]
>
> Until when may a white (unshadowed by trees)[23] field be ploughed in the year before the seventh year? Until the ground has dried (about May or June), [or] such time as the ground is still ploughed for planting out beds of cucumbers and gourds. Rabbi Simeon said:

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19 R.Sh., 1:1.

20 Ibid.

21 See our comments in Chap. II.

22 Shebi., 1:1.

23 The expression "white fields" refers to fields unshaded by trees, see Danby, *Mishnah*, p. 40, n. 5.

> You put the law for each man into his own hand!—but, rather, a white field may be ploughed until Passover and a tree-planted field until Pentecost. Beds of cucumbers or gourds may be dunged and hoed until New Year;[24] so, too, irrigated fields . . . (etc.).[25]

The school of Hillel existed in the first century C.E. at the time of Josephus and Philo. Therefore, we can conclude that, despite the fact that the first of Nisan was the beginning of the sabbath year, the Jews had by this time established the custom of observing the sabbath year ritual of not sowing or harvesting their fields during the last half of the sixth year. The entire ritual, therefore, was actually one and one half years long!

It must be remembered that when the sabbath years were first implemented there was no requirement to stop planting and harvesting crops at any time before the first of Abib (Nisan). But from the latter part of the second century B.C.E., the Pharisees built up interpretations around the Law that went far beyond scriptural commands.[26] These interpretations included added rules and regulations for both the sabbath day and the sabbath year. As Zion Wacholder observes:

> The Pharisaic halakha required that the observance of the seventh year, like that of the seventh day, begin during the sixth year, in order to build a fence around the law.[27]

In effect, they had "built a fence" around the sabbath year by beginning the observance of not planting the fields during the several months before the seventh year actually got underway. The theory was that it was unnecessary to plant crops during the latter part of the sixth year which were intended to be harvested in the first part of the sabbath year. The intent, no doubt, was to prevent someone from crossing the sabbath year line, something one might be tempted to do if they were allowed to plant and harvest right up until the eve of the sabbath year.

An example of this theory is pronounced in the Babylonian Rosh ha-Shanah. It asked the question, "And how do we know (from the Scriptures) that we add from the profane on to the holy,"[28] i.e., add from the ordinary week-day or year on to the holy sabbath day or sabbath year. It answers by stating:

> As it has been taught: In ploughing time and in harvest time you shall rest. Rabbi Akiba said: There was no need (for Scriptures) to specify the ploughing and

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24 The R.Sh., 1:1, defines the New Year for vegetables (e.g. cucumbers) as beginning on the first of Tishri (Oct.).

25 Shebi., 2:1.

26 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:10:6.

27 HUCA, 54, p. 128.

28 B. R.Sh., 9a.

> harvest of the Sabbatical year, since this has already been mentioned [in] "your field you shall not sow," etc. What must be meant therefore is the ploughing OF THE YEAR BEFORE THE SEVENTH which is passing into the seventh, and the harvest of the seventh year which is continuing into the period after the seventh year.[29]

The effort to readjust the starting point of the sabbath year was in full harmony with their new interpretation for the observance of the sabbath day, which the rabbis of the Talmudic era also altered to include the latter part of the sixth day of the week. In the *Damascus Document*, for instance, which was found among the Dead Sea scrolls, we read:

> Concerning the sabbath, to observe it according to its ordinance: Let not a man do work on the sixth day (of the week) from the time when the sun's disk is its full width away from the gate, for that is what it says: "Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy."[30]

In short, as one would discontinue work in the late afternoon of the day before the weekly sabbath, the Pharisees—who were the dominant sect among the Jews and to whose formulas the others would submit[31]—established that one must also discontinue planting and harvesting crops of the field in the latter part of the sixth year before the sabbath year actually began. Only later, in the mid to late second century C.E., was this interpretation transformed into an official change of the New Year's day for the sabbath year, altering it from the first of Nisan back to the previous first of Tishri.

Now these circumstances return us to the events of the year 37/36 B.C.E. when Herod captured Jerusalem. In *Antiquities*, 14:16:2, par. 475, Josephus is discussing the period just before the capture of Jerusalem by Herod. It is true that the term ἑβδοματικὸν, used in this passage, is to be understood in a "ritual, legal sense" and implies a sabbath year. But what has seemingly gone unnoticed is the fact that the term κατὰ ταῦτ', also used here, has been commonly translated to mean, "to fall at that time."

Κατὰ ταῦτ', as Professor Csizmazia points out, is "a vague, approximative formula of time: 'about the time of these events.' So it can be rightly assumed that Josephus did not say explicitly that the year of the siege was the sabbatical year but it was 'about'; and so the thought of it added to the misery and mad desperation of the citizens, namely that the hardships of the siege would be followed by the restrictions of the sabbatical year."[32]

Ralph Marcus also allowed that Josephus could have been "referring, rather vaguely, to a sabbatical year that began soon after the fall of Jerusalem."[33]

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29 Ibid.
30 DR, 13.
31 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:1:3–4.
32 Letter to the author dated 09–26–87.
33 Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, p. 695, n. a.

Marcus, an advocate of system "C," nevertheless, assumes that Jerusalem fell in the summer and that this approaching sabbath year arrived with Tishri of 37 B.C.E. Jerusalem actually fell into Herod's hands well after October, as we shall see in Chapter XIX. Nevertheless, Marcus makes the proper point that, "If the inhabitants of Jerusalem were distressed by famine" during the siege, "they would not be able to lay in an extra supply of provisions for the latter part of the sabbatical year."[34]

Even more to the point, as this study shall demonstrate in Chapters XIX and XX, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were suffering from shortages and famine because Herod's army had come against the city towards the end of the winter of 38/37 B.C.E., which circumstance kept the Jews of the city from harvesting their spring and summer crops. This plight was further aggravated because the arrival of Herod's army was followed by a long siege. The fact that the Jews of the city were unable to plant any crops both during the war and after the close of the war added severely to their distress.

Our problem is solved once we understand that Josephus was trying to convey the idea that the Jewish custom of not planting their fields in the latter part of the sixth year was now in effect because the sabbath year was close at hand. The sabbath year which fell "about the time of these events" was to arrive in the next few months. Regardless of their inability to resupply themselves—even though a great army surrounded them and they were in distress because of the famine and lack of necessities created by the long siege—they persevered in the war. The passage in question, therefore, should actually be translated as follows:

> And acting in desperation rather than with foresight, they persevered in the war to the very end—this in spite of the fact that a great army surrounded them and they were distressed by famine and lack of necessities, for there was a seventh (sabbatical) year about the time of these events. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:16:2)

Support for this interpretation is actually found in the other important passage of *Antiquities*, 15:1:2, par. 7, which discusses the plight of the Jews in a period AFTER Herod took the city.

> And there was no end to their troubles, for on the one hand their greedy master, who was in need (of money), was plundering them, and on the other hand the seventh (sabbatical) year was approaching, forcing them to leave the land unworked, since we are forbidden to sow the earth in that year.

This passage clearly demonstrates that planting season had arrived. Planting season occurred during the months of Khisleu (Nov./Dec.) through Adar

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34 Ibid.

(Feb./March),[35] which shows that Herod was in control of the city during those months just prior to the arrival of the new year. Therefore, because of Jewish Talmudic laws, the Jews did not even have the benefit of their crops before the sabbath year began, for they were "forbidden to sow the earth" in the last months of the year prior to the approaching sabbath year.

Conclusion

When placed in historical context, we find that both passages from Josephus, dealing with the sabbath year at the time of Herod's conquest of Jerusalem, are true. The ritualistic practices of the sabbath year that were associated with the latter part of the sixth year were in effect during Herod's siege of Jerusalem (37/36 B.C.E.). As we shall see in Chapter XIX, Herod actually conquered Jerusalem on the tenth of Tebeth (Jan. 2), 36 B.C.E. This detail speaks to the desperate fanaticism of the defenders of Jerusalem who continued in spite of their inability to harvest their crops after the army of Herod arrived outside the walls of the city or to plant crops during the latter part of the siege.[36] Nevertheless, the sabbath year of 36/35 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, was still rapidly approaching after Herod took the city.

This conclusion is supported by the fact that the Jews were harvesting crops in the summer of 37/36 B.C.E. (before the month of Tishri [Sept./Oct.]) in the early stages of the siege against Jerusalem. The events of Herod's thirteenth through seventeenth years will also verify that the year 36/35 C.E., Nisan reckoning, was a sabbath year (Chapter XXI).

It is clear from this evidence that there is no contradiction between *Antiquities*, 14:16:2 and 15:1:2.[37] The year that Herod besieged Jerusalem was not a sabbath year, but the sixth year in the sabbath cycle. In the latter part of this sixth year, as part of an effort to build a fence around the sabbath law, the Jews observed the custom of not planting or harvesting any crops. Then, after Herod captured Jerusalem, a sabbath year did arrive. This sabbath year began on the first of Nisan, 36 B.C.E., in full accord with the system "A" cycle established by our other documented sabbath years (Chart B).

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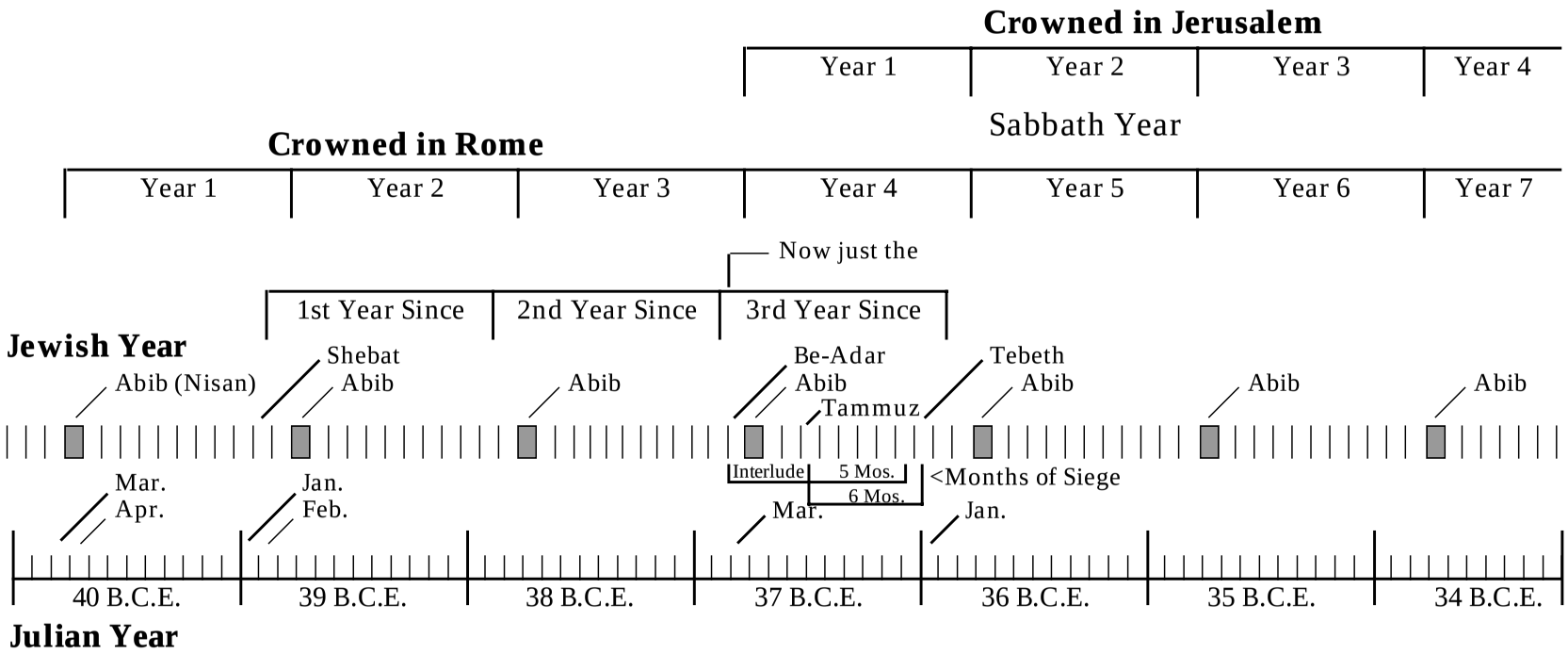
35 HBC, pp. 33f.
36 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:16:2.
37 See App. C.

CHART I

The Chronology of Herod's Reign



Chapter XVII

The Chronology of Herod

Part II of the Sabbath Year of 36/35 B.C.E.

The evidence is conclusive. The year that Herod besieged and conquered Jerusalem was not a sabbath year, but the following year was. The only response left to those advocating systems "B" and "D" is to claim that Herod's siege of Jerusalem actually took place in the year 38/37 B.C.E. This claim is not without some construing of the evidence. It is assumed by many that the Roman historian Cassius Dio dates the fall of Jerusalem to the consulship of Claudius and Norbanus, i.e. 38 B.C.E.[1] Based upon this date several historians have rejected the testimony of Josephus and have dated the conquest of Jerusalem by Herod to the latter part of the year 38/37 B.C.E.[2] It is crucial to our study, therefore, to establish beyond any doubt the chronology of Herod.

Dio's Contribution

Our first consideration is the assumed dating of the fall of Jerusalem by Dio,[3] which is commonly held to be in the consul year of Claudius and Norbanus (Jan. 1, 38 until Jan. 1, 37 B.C.E., late Roman reckoning). A close examination of Dio's history reveals that Dio does not say this at all and his words are taken entirely out of context. The section of Dio's Roman history which mentions the siege against Jerusalem is more precisely concerned with the wars of Augustus (Octavian) Caesar and Mark Antony in the divided empire of Rome.

- Chapter 48:29–42 deals with the origin of the divided empire and the events of Caesar and Antony during the consul years 40 and 39 B.C.E.

- Chapters 48:43 through 49:18 relate the history of the wars and events of Caesar during the consul years of 38 until the beginning of 35 B.C.E., primarily concentrating on his war efforts against Sextus.

- In chapter 49:19–34 Dio changes the discussion to Antony and his wars in the east, wars which occurred during the same period as those previously mentioned for Caesar (from 38 to the beginning of 35 B.C.E.). It was within this discussion that the conquest of Jerusalem was mentioned.

Dio begins this history of Antony's wars by directing his readers' attention away from Caesar and towards Antony: "This was what Caesar was doing; as for Antony and the barbarians, their warfare was as follows." He goes on

1 Dio, 49:22.
2 E.g. FH, 3, p. 220; JQR, 9, pp. 92ff.
3 Dio, 49:22.

to document Antony's Syrian wars, explaining how he won victories in Cyrrhestica and other regions in Syria. Finally, Antony besieged his enemy in Samosata, Commagene, a country located in northern Syria on the western bank of the Euphrates river.

After a period of time, and seeing that he was getting nowhere with his siege, Antony opened up negotiations and secured an agreement with the enemy.[4] "After doing this he set out for Italy, and Gaius Sosius received from him the governorship of Syria and Cilicia." Dio adds that Antony spent the entire year of 37 B.C.E. going to Italy and returning again to the province of Syria.[5]

With the introduction that Sosius (Sossius) had received the governorship of Syria and Cilicia, Dio continues with a digression about Sosius. This digression begins with the words, "This officer subdued the Aradii,"[6] and continues until the end of passage.[7] Dio remarks that after becoming governor and subduing the Aradii, who had been besieged up until this time, Sosius "also conquered in battle Antigonus, who had put to death the Roman guards that were with him, and reduced him by siege when he took refuge in Jerusalem."[8] At no time does Dio say that Sosius subdued Jerusalem in the same year that Antony left off from the siege against Samosata. Dio does observe that Herod had been made governor of Judaea by Antony, but Antigonus he bound and flogged, and afterwards he slew him.[9]

In chapter 49:23, Dio resumes his discussion of Antony's wars in the east by stating, "this was the course of events in the consulship of Claudius and Norbanus; during the following year the Romans accomplished nothing worthy of note in Syria." The primary discussion was about Antony and his war efforts against the Parthians and in Syria, not Sosius or his aid to Herod in conquering Judaea, which was a digression. When Dio says that the Romans accomplished nothing worthy of note in Syria in 37 B.C.E., he was bringing the reader's attention back to Antony's eastern campaigns. Sosius' assistance to Herod, on the other hand, was a war effort to aid Herod in Judaea, not a Syrian matter or a concern of Antony's wars.

Dio's statement, that Antony spent the year 37 B.C.E. "reaching Italy and returning again,"[10] shows that Antony was back in the east towards the end of that year. This fact is further supported when Dio writes in 49:24 that a general of Antony's, named Crassus, made a successful campaign against the Iberians and Albanians in Asia during the first part of the consulship of Gellius and Nerva (36 B.C.E.), in the last part of winter. This victory was followed up by a campaign of Antony's against the Parthian empire.

Dio's words do not prove that Herod's victory over Antigonus and the city of Jerusalem took place in 38 B.C.E. Rather, his comments are part of a digression meant to explain the subsequent victories of Sosius, whom Antony

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4 Dio., 49:22.
5 Dio., 49:23.
6 Dio., 49:22:3.
7 Until Dio., 49:22:6.
8 Dio, 49:22.
9 Ibid.
10 Dio, 49:23.

had appointed as governor of Syria and Cilicia as he left Asia to return to Italy. The evidence shows that Antony must have left Syria for Italy early in the year 37 B.C.E., for Dio notes that Antony spent the entire year of 37 B.C.E. "in reaching Italy and returning again," via Athens.[11] Such would leave very little time for Sosius to conquer the Aradii and then assist Herod in a siege of Jerusalem, which Josephus notes began in the summertime[12] and took six months to accomplish.[13]

The Length of Herod's Reign

Our most important source for dating the year that Herod conquered Jerusalem is Josephus. From his historical works we glean the following facts:

> Herod survived the execution of his son but five days. He expired after a reign of 34 years, reckoning from the date when, after putting Antigonus to death, he assumed control of the state; of 37 years, from the date when he was proclaimed king by the Romans. (Jos., *Wars*, 1:33:8)

> Having done this he died, on the fifth day after having his son Antipater killed. He had reigned for 34 years from the time when he had put Antigonus to death, and for 37 years from the time when he had been appointed king by the Romans. (Jos., *Antiq*., 17:8:1)

These statements demonstrate that Herod ruled a total of 37 years from the time he was appointed king by the Romans, and 34 years from the time he conquered Jerusalem and had his rival Antigonus put to death.

The End of Herod's Reign

Josephus notes that not long before the death of Herod the Great there was an "eclipse of the moon."[14] Only on the night of March 12/13 of the year 4 B.C.E. was there an eclipse of the moon in this part of the Middle East, no such phenomenon taking place in either 3 or 2 B.C.E.[15] Shortly after this eclipse Herod died. His son Archelaus assumed the royal mantle and then seven days later observed the Passover Feast (beginning on Abib 14).[16]

In determining the reign of kings, the Jewish custom was that if a man reigned beyond the first of Nisan (Abib) it was counted as a year to him. Also, "If a king ascends the throne on the twenty-ninth of Adar, as soon as the first of Nisan arrives he is reckoned to have reigned a year."[17]

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11 Plutarch, *Antony*., 34f.
12 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:2.
13 Jos., *Wars*, 5:9:4.
14 Jos., *Antiq*., 17:6:4 through 17:8:1.
15 HJP, 1, p. 377, n. 1; HBC, p. 231.
16 Jos., *Wars*, 1:17:8 through 2:1:3, *Antiq*., 17:8:1–17:9:3.
17 HBC, p. 90.

This data leaves us two options. If Herod died BEFORE the first of Abib (i.e. March/April) in 4 B.C.E., we must reckon to him his thirty-seventh Roman year and his thirty-fourth year of ruling Jerusalem only from the year beginning Abib 1 of 5 B.C.E. until Abib 1 of 4 B.C.E. If, on the other hand, Herod lived BEYOND the first of Abib, then we must reckon to him his last year as beginning with Abib 1 of 4 B.C.E. until Abib 1 of 3 B.C.E.

When Herod died, his heir Archelaus gave him a funeral and the nation of Judaea observed a mourning period of seven days. On the last day of the mourning period Archelaus gave a feast for the crowds.[18] After the feast, Archelaus went up to the Temple where he was received with varied acclamations. "Towards evening, however, a large number of those who were bent on revolution assembled on the same spot, and, now that the public mourning for the king was ended, began a lamentation on their own account." They began to mourn the death of Judas and Matthias, interpreters of the law who had died at the command of Herod.[19]

Archelaus tried to pacify the crowd but was unable.[20] While commenting on this clamor that was going on at the Temple, Josephus provides us with a vital clue as to the date that Herod died. He writes:

> At this time there came around the festival during which it is the ancestral custom of the Jews to serve unleavened bread. It is called Passover, being a commemoration of their departure from Egypt.[21]

Josephus goes on to say:

> Now the fomenters of disorder, who were mourning for Judas and Matthias, the interpreters of the laws, stood together in the Temple and provided the dissidents with plenty of food, for they were not ashamed to beg for it.[22]

In another place Josephus affirms his date for this disturbance against Archelaus at the Temple when he notes that it was at this time that "the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which the Jews call Passover, came round".[23]

This evidence proves that Herod died on Abib 7, 4 B.C.E., seven days before Passover: the seven days of mourning, beginning with Herod's death, followed by Abib 14, the day that Archelaus went up to the Temple—actually being the first day of Passover[24]—in turn followed by Abib 15, the day when the Jews of this period celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover.[25]

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18 Jos., *Antiq*., 17:8:1–4, *Wars*, 1:33:8–2:1:1.
19 Jos., *Wars*, 2:1:1–2, *Antiq*., 17:8:4–17:9:1.
20 Jos., *Antiq*., 17:9:1–2, *Wars*, 2:1:2–3.
21 Jos., *Antiq*., 17:9:3.
22 Ibid.
23 Jos., *Wars*, 2:1:3.
24 Exod., 12:5–42; Lev., 23:5–8; Num., 28:16–25.
25 Jub., 49:1; Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 2:28.

Therefore, based upon Jewish custom, Josephus reckoned to Herod as his last year Abib 1 of 4 B.C.E. to Abib 1 of 3 B.C.E.[26]

The Beginning of Herod's Reign

The beginning of Herod's reign can be determined by the following facts: Josephus reports that Herod, fleeing from the Parthians who had seized Judaea (spring of 40 B.C.E.), came to the port at Alexandria, Egypt. Even the Queen of Egypt could not persuade him to remain, "for he was eager to get to Rome although there was a χειμῶνος (winter-storm)[27] and Italy was reported to be disturbed and in great disorder."[28] He immediately set sail from Egypt at "τὴν ἀκμὴν τοῦ χειμῶνος (the height of a winter-storm)."[29] Winter for Josephus came with the setting of Pleiades,[30] a time when one might expect "a great downpour of rain."[31] The Roman writer Pliny, likewise, observed that winter arrived with the setting of the Pleiades, which occurred about 44 days after the autumnal equinox. He adds that it was customary to date winter's beginning "on November 11."[32] Herod, accordingly, left Egypt sometime after November 11.

Josephus continues by reporting that Herod was nearly shipwrecked off Pamphylia but came safely to Rhodes. This event caused a small delay but Herod was in a hurry to get to Rome. He remained in Rhodes just long enough for a trireme he had commissioned to be built.[33] Apparently, Herod was unable to buy passage aboard a ship to Rome because few ships dared to challenge the winter storms at sea. A trireme, meanwhile, was a fast sailing vessel that took only about three weeks to build.[34] While staying in Rhodes, Herod spent some time assisting the city in recovering from its damages in the war against Gaius Cassius.[35]

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26 See the discussion in HBC, pp. 230f, and HJP, 1, pp. 326–328, n. 165.

27 The Greek term ἀκμν (*akmen*) means, "*the highest point* of anything" (GEL, p. 27); and χειμῶνος (*kheimonos*) means either, "*winter… in winter time*" or "*wintry weather, a winter-storm*, and generally *a storm*" (GEL, p. 884). Whiston, *Jos.*, correctly understands both Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:14:2, and *Wars*, 1:14:2, as a reference to a winter-storm, for it was not merely the perils of winter that threatened Herod but a severe storm which later caused him to become nearly shipwrecked off the coast of Pamphylia.

28 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:14:2.

29 See above n. 27.

30 See Chap. XVIII, pp. 239ff.

31 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:8:2.

32 Pliny, 2:47(125); Nov. 10 in Pliny, 18:60(225), but cf. 11:15(42).

33 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:14:3, Wars, 1:14:3.

34 The length of time it took to build a trireme (a ship with three banks of oars, one above the other) is demonstrated from the story of the decree of Themistocles that 20 new triremes should be built each year from the produce of the mines of Laurium (DGRA, pp. 781f). Since each ship was built in turn, as the products of the mines were coming in, it shows that one trireme was created every two and one half weeks. Another example is found in the story of how the Romans first built quinqueremes (ships with five banks of oars, one above the other). Unfamiliar with the construction of such a ship, the Romans were able to capture a Carthaginian quinquereme warship that had been driven on shore. Using this ship as a model, the Romans were capable of gathering the materials needed and building 100 quinqueremes, placing them into battle in just six weeks (HDCL, p. 1081; cf. Polybius, 1:20–23). Triremes were less complicated than quinqueremes and, in the hands of experienced shipbuilders, as one would find on the island of Rhodes, known for its shipping port, a trireme would easily be constructed within three weeks.

35 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:14:3, *Wars*, 1:14:3.

When Herod's trireme was finished, he set sail from Rhodes and came to Brundisium, from whence he "sped to Rome." Upon arriving, Herod told Antony of his family's misfortunes and how he had left his nearest relatives besieged in a fortress and had "crossed the sea in the depths of a winter-storm to implore his aid."[36]

Both Antony and Caesar immediately convened the Senate and after hearing the matter the Senate unanimously voted Herod king of Judaea. Antony, we are told, "made it possible for Herod in only seven days altogether to obtain these unexpected grants and leave Italy." As Herod left the Senate he was accompanied by both Antony and Caesar; "Then Antony entertained him on the first day of his reign."[37]

Josephus and Africanus specifically date the accession of Herod to the throne of Judaea by the acclamation of the Roman Senate in the "185th Olympiad," the consuls being Gnaeus Domiticus Calvinus, for the second time, and Gaius Asinius Pollio."[38]

The consuls named were elected to office on January 1, 40 B.C.E., based upon a Roman system which had begun in 153 B.C.E.[39] Their term of office, though, started with March 1 and ended with March 1 of the following year.[40] The first of March, according to Varro (45 B.C.E.), was still the beginning of the Roman year during this period.[41] He confirms this again when he writes that "the twelfth month was February, and when the extra month is inserted the last five days are taken off the twelfth month."[42] As we shall see, Josephus used a consul year system that extended from March 1 until the next March 1.

The text of Josephus gives the 184th Olympiad as the period in which Herod came to the throne under Roman orders. If the Attic reckoning for the Olympiad is used, the 184th Olympiad ended on July 1, 40 B.C.E.; if the Macedonian, it ended on November 1, 40 B.C.E. This dating, of course, is impossible, since Herod came to Rome in late winter of 40 B.C.E. and left within seven days, shortly to be followed by the events of the year 39 B.C.E. As Finegan notes,"the date was actually in Olympiad 185, 1,"[43] of the Attic period. Josephus uses the Macedonian November to November reckoning, as we shall demonstrate in Chapter XIX. In either case, the evidence clearly shows that in this one instance, the 184th Olympiad is a scribal error for the 185th Olympiad.

We are faced with two different possibilities. First, Herod's reception of royal power from the Roman Senate could have taken place in early 40 B.C.E., if the 184th Olympiad is correct and Josephus used a January 1 date for the beginning of his consul years. Second, if the 184th Olympiad date is a scribal error and should read 185th, then Herod received power in the winter of

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36 Jos., *Wars*, 1:14:2–3, *Antiq*., 14:14:2–3.
37 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:14:4–5, *Wars*, 1:14:4.
38 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:14:5.
39 Senator, 384; MGH, p. 130.
40 JQR, 9, p. 92.
41 Varro, 6:33.
42 Varro, 6:13.
43 HBC, p. 230; HJP, 1, p. 281, n. 3, also concludes that the use of the 184 Olympiad by Josephus at this point "is strictly incorrect."

40/39 B.C.E., prior to the first of Nisan (Abib) and the new year. To judge which date is correct we must retrace the events and compare the works of Josephus with that of Dio.

• In *Wars*, 1:12:1–7, and *Antiquities*, 14:11:7–14:13:2, Josephus discusses the events of the year that Cassius died in his war with Antony and Caesar. Dio, 47:15–48:4, places this war and death of Cassius in the consul year of Marcus Lepidus and Lucius Plancus (i.e. 42 B.C.E.).

• In *Wars*, 1:13:1–5, and *Antiquities*, 14:13:3–5, Josephus states that, "Two years later (i.e. after the death of Cassius) Syria was occupied by Pacorus, the son of the Parthian king, and Barzaphranes, the Parthian satrap." In this same year the Parthians invaded Judaea, deposed Hyrcanus as the high priest, and placed Antigonus in power. The Parthian expedition against Judaea, Josephus states, took place at the time when the Jews were observing the Feast of Pentecost (early June).

• Dio, 48:15–34, also reports the history of the invasion of Syria and Judaea by Pacorus, during which the Parthians deposed Hyrcanus and placed into power Aristobulus (Antigonus). Dio dates this event to the consul year of Gnaeus Calvinus, serving as consul for the second time, and Asinius Pollio (i.e. 40 B.C.E.). As a result, based upon the above information from Josephus, the invasion occurred at the time of the Feast of Pentecost (June) in 40 B.C.E. Dio, therefore, agrees with Josephus when he dates the invasion of Judaea by Pacorus two years after the death of Cassius.

• In *Wars*, 1:13:6–1:14:3, and *Antiquities*, 14:13:6–14:14:3, Josephus tells us how the Parthians plotted against Herod and how a suspicious Herod fled from them. Leaving Judaea, Herod went to Idumaea and then to Masada where he took refuge. Herod next tried to go to Arabia to seek the aid of King Malichus but was turned away. He then retired to Egypt. "Eager to get to Rome," Herod left Egypt at "the height of a winter-storm." He sailed to Pamphylia, where he was nearly shipwrecked because of this violent storm, and barely reached Rhodes. While waiting for a trireme to be constructed, he spent some time in that city helping repair damages caused by the war against Cassius. When the trireme was finished, he set sail and "sped to Rome."

Conclusion

It is clear from this evidence that Herod set sail from Egypt to go to Rome in the winter of 40/39 B.C.E., since he fled from the Parthians who had taken control of Judaea around Pentecost (early June) of 40 B.C.E. Josephus specifically states that Herod had left Egypt at "the height of a winter-storm,"[44] and that Herod also told Antony that he had "crossed the sea in the depths of a winter-storm to implore his aid."[45]

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44 Jos., *Wars*, 1:14:2.
45 Jos., *Wars*, 1:14:3.

If a four season year is used, the three winter months would approximately be Tebeth (Dec./Jan.), Shebat (Jan./Feb.), and Adar (Feb./March), the tenth through twelfth Hebrew months. But it is clear from the evidence in the works of Josephus (since he includes the month of Khisleu [Nov./Dec.] in his winter and only speaks of spring, summer, and winter and never of the fall), that he more precisely recognized the setting of Pleiades, customarily dated to November 11, as the beginning of winter.[46] His winter, accordingly, would include the last half of Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.). It would continue with the months of Khisleu, Tebeth, Shebat, and Adar (the ninth through twelfth months). The harsh weather that comes to this part of the world in mid-November and early December also fits well with the conditions met by Herod when he left Egypt. We cannot be far from the truth if we date his departure from Egypt as occurring on or about December 1, during a period replete with severe winter storms.

We also know from ancient records that it took at least 53 days in winter to reach Rome from Alexandria.[47] With Herod's near shipwreck and subsequent three week stay in Rhodes, it is fair to estimate that he spent about eleven weeks on his journey to Rome from Egypt: eight weeks at sea and three weeks at Rhodes. Schürer also places the beginning of this voyage in "late autumn" and "fairly near the end of the year."[48] Estimating that he left Egypt on or about December 1, he could not have arrived in Rome much before mid-February, 39 B.C.E. These details prove—since Josephus reports that Herod was made king when the consuls for 40 B.C.E. still served—that he used the March 1 beginning for his consul years. These facts also demonstrate that the 184th Olympiad, found in Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14:16:4, in reference to Herod's reception of royal power from the Romans, is a scribal error and, as generally agreed by historians, should read "the 185th Olympiad."

Combining all of the data about the beginning and ending of Herod's reign, we find that Herod was appointed king by the Romans in or about mid-February of 39 B.C.E., in the last months of the year 40/39 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning (Chart I). Josephus counted this year to Herod as his first under the authority of Rome. The thirty-seventh year of his Roman reign, counting 40/39 B.C.E. as year one, accordingly, was 4/3 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. This date is confirmed by the fact that Herod died not long after the eclipse in mid-March of 4 B.C.E. and only seven days before Passover, i.e. a few days after the first of Nisan (Abib), the beginning of the new year of 4/3 B.C.E. Herod's thirty-four year reign, which was counted from the year he conquered Jerusalem and had Antigonus executed, therefore, would start in the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, and would also end in 4/3 B.C.E.

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46 See Chap. XVIII, pp. 239ff.
47 APA, pp. 136–148.
48 HJP, 1, p. 281, n. 3.

Chapter XVIII

The Year Herod Conquered Jerusalem

Part III of the Sabbath Year of 36/35 B.C.E.

In what year did Herod the Great take Jerusalem? The answer reveals exactly which year was a sabbath. As we have demonstrated in our last chapter, Josephus indicates that Herod captured Jerusalem in the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. Nevertheless, because this issue is so crucial to our investigation, it behooves us to completely verify this date. The year Herod conquered Jerusalem is uncovered in the sequence of historical events that began with the time that Herod left Rome for Judaea (see Chart I).

As we have already shown, it took only seven days for Herod to receive his Judaean crown from the Romans and then leave Rome to return to Judaea. He obtained this crown in the consulship for the year 40/39 B.C.E. (March reckoning), approximately between late January and mid-February. Further proof that Herod was crowned by the Romans in 40/39 B.C.E. and subsequently conquered Jerusalem in the year 37/36 B.C.E. is found in the history of Herod which followed his coronation by the Romans.

Herod at Samosata: 38 B.C.E.

Confirmation that Herod was appointed by the Romans to the kingship of Judaea in about February of 39 B.C.E. is uncovered in the details concerning his subsequent involvement in the war against Samosata.

- In *Antiquities*, 14:15:1–2, and *Wars*, 1:15:1–5, Josephus continues his story of King Herod by relating how Herod returned to Palestine, conquered Galilee, then Joppa, came to Masada, and Rhesa, and then marched on to Jerusalem. Here he was joined by his Roman ally Silo. Since during winter it would take at least a month to six weeks to return to Palestine and then a considerable time to raise an army and perform several conquests, these events take us well into the year 39/38 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning.

- In *Antiquities*, 14:15:3–4, and *Wars*, 1:15:6– 1:16:3, Josephus reports that Herod's move against Jerusalem was broken by winter. At that time, Silo took his Roman troops to winter quarters. Herod, meanwhile, continued military pursuits but he reached Sepphoris "in a snow storm." He finally ordered his own men into their winter quarters. This evidence shows that a new winter had arrived, different from the mid-winter during which Herod came to Rome. We have now arrived at the winter of 39/38 B.C.E.

- In *Antiquities*, 14:15:5–11, and *Wars*, 1:16:4–1:17:3, Josephus discusses the campaigns and events of Herod that occurred in the year that Ventidius defeated the Parthians and killed Pacorus. This was also the year that Antony besieged Samosata and afterwards appointed Sossius (Sosius) governor of Syria.

Pacorus and the Parthians were defeated on June 9, 38 B.C.E.[1] Ventidius then focused his efforts on the subjugation of Syria. Once rid of the opposition, he turned his attention towards punishing Antiochus of Commagene who had aided the Parthians. Ventidius besieged Antiochus in his capital city of Samosata until he offered to obey the Romans and to pay 1,000 talents.[2]

It would be quite fair to estimate that, from the conquest of the Parthians in early June until King Antiochus had been brought to a point of bargaining with Ventidius at the siege of Commagene, at least six to eight weeks had passed, if not much more. It would have taken Ventidius at least this long to set up his siege works, which were certainly a contributing factor in intimidating Antiochus into making an agreement. The proposed treaty, therefore, could not have been offered any earlier than about August or September. To this information we add the following:

- During the siege of Samosata, Antony arrived. Filled with a desire to reap the glory of defeating Antiochus, he refused the treaty and relieved Ventidius of his command. Yet things did not progress as well as Antony had hoped. Instead of a quick victory, "the siege was protracted, and the besieged, since they despaired of coming to terms, betook themselves to a vigorous defense. Antony could therefore accomplish nothing, and feeling ashamed and repentant, was glad to make peace with Antiochus on his payment of 300 talents."[3]

- Herod, we are told, after settling some affairs at home, marched out to assist Antony with his siege of Samosata. On the way there he defeated a band of barbarians and then joined Antony. "Not long afterwards," and with Herod's assistance, an agreement for the surrender of Samosata was reached.[4]

Dio, 49:19–23, dates these events to the consul year of Claudius and Norbanus (i.e. 38 B.C.E.). Since Herod's troops had to come out of winter quarters for these campaigns and Herod had served with Antony in mid-summer, we find that the flow of events, as told by Dio, exactly match those as given by Josephus. We are now in the year 38/37 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning.

The Summer Corn-crop

An important detail from these stories comes with the death of Joseph, the brother of Herod, whom Herod had left in charge of the realm while he marched out to assist Antony. Joseph was killed when he marched on Jericho "with the object of carrying off the corn-crop ἐν ἀκμῇ τοῦ θέρους (in the height of heat [i.e. summer])."[5]

This mid-summer corn-crop (wheat crop) must not be confused with the spring corn (barley) harvest. Philo, for example, places the Feast of Weeks,

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1 Eutrop., 7:5, cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, 6:465 (under the heading of 6:249). Also see HJP, 1, p. 283.
2 PHP, p. 119.
3 Plutarch, *Antony*, 34:4.
4 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:8–9, *Wars*, 1:16:7.
5 Jos., *Wars*, 1:17:1; that θέρους (*therous*) means "heat," and therefore by extension "summer" see SEC, Gk. #2330; GEL, p. 363.

which is held in early June, "in the middle of spring," at which time, he adds, "comes the corn (barley) harvest."[6] Josephus, on the other hand, speaks of Samson setting fire to "the crops already ripening for harvest" during the "summer."[7] In another place he records that the ark of the covenant was returned to the Israelites in "the summer season when all were out in the corn fields to gather the crops."[8]

That there was a corn crop (wheat crop) in the midst of summer is also verified by the story found in 1 Samuel, 12, where Yahweh sent forth a storm during the time of the harvest so unusual that it was perceived as a sign by those who observed it.[9] Josephus describes this storm as "θέρους ἀκμῆ χειῶνα (a winter-storm at the height of summer)."[10] The mid-summer corn-crop, therefore, refers to a crop that came to fruitage sometime AFTER the spring harvest of June and at the height of summer heat.

Since the corn-crop Joseph attempted to plunder belonged to the height of summer heat and not to mid-spring (the mid-spring crop, as demonstrated above by Philo, coming in June), it shows that we are dealing with the month of Ab (July/Aug.), the hottest part of year, and no later than Elul (Aug./Sept.). These two months come before Tishri (Sept./Oct.), the month of ingathering for the late harvest—the Feast of Tabernacles, which fell at that time, also being dubbed the "Feast of Ingathering" on that account.[11] As William Smith notes, "The time of the festival fell in the autumn, when the whole of the chief fruits of the ground, the corn, the wine and the oil, were gathered in."[12] Jericho was blessed with water and was able to irrigate crops in the summer, unlike some other regions of Judaea. This evidence proves that Herod was on his way to assist Antony in the month of Ab or Elul.

The "Winter" of Josephus

Josephus uses a three season year consisting of spring, summer, and winter, the only seasons he mentions. The summer months, according to this scheme, are roughly from Tammuz (June/July) to Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.)—or more nearly from late June, beginning with the summer solstice (on or about June 21), to mid-November—a concept of the seasons which is somewhat different than what we are presently accustomed to.

Josephus never counts autumn as a season.[13] Rather, his construction extends summer to the rains of mid-November (late fall in a four season arrangement), at which time he begins winter. Josephus defines this arrange-

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6 Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 1:35(183).
7 Jos., *Antiq*., 5:8:7(295), the summer wheat harvest; cf. Judg., 15:1–5.
8 Jos., *Antiq*., 6:1:3(14); cf. 1 Sam., 6:11–14.
9 1 Sam., 12:17–18.
10 Jos., *Antiq*., 6:5:5.
11 Exod., 23:16, 34:22.
12 DB, p. 667.
13 The closest thing that we can find in Josephus is the term ὀπώρας (*oporas*), meaning "*the part of the year between the rising of Sirius and of Arcturus* (i.e. the end of July, all Aug., and part of Sept.), *the end of summer*" and "since it was the *fruit-time*, it came to mean *the fruit itself*" (GEL, p. 564). It is in reference to "fruits," sometimes rendered "autumn fruits," that this term is used by Josephus (Jos., *Wars*, 3:3:4, 3:10:8, *Antiq*., 4:8:21; 19:1:13). Yet the very meaning of the word itself points to the end of summer and not to the fall. Further, Josephus does not even mention φθινόπωρον or μετόπωρον, the proper terms for autumn.

ment of the seasons when he writes that when the fifteenth day of the month of Tishri arrives, "hereafter, the time was τρεπομένου (*trepo-menou*) the winter season."[14] Trepo-menou means, "to turn or direct towards a thing," "to turn one's steps, turn in a certain direction."[15] Therefore, even though the autumnal equinox had just passed (about Sept. 22), the season is now "turning in the direction towards" winter; i.e. winter was coming near but had not yet arrived. If there had been an autumn in the scheme used by Josephus, and it had just arrived, there would have been no reason to make such a statement; but if winter came in mid-Marheshuan, at the setting of Pleiades (i.e. Nov., 11), his reasoning is in harmony.

Josephus also adds definition to his concept of winter while discussing the events surrounding the issue of alien wives in Judaea and how it was resolved by Ezra and the council. The meeting took place on the 20th day of the ninth month (Khisleu; Nov./Dec.), in year seven of Arta-xerxes (457 B.C.E.).[16] Josephus adds that this meeting occurred in "the wintry season of the year."[17] Likewise, the LXX of Ezra, 10:9, uses the term χειμῶνος (*kheimonos*), and 1 Esdras, 9:6, uses χειμῶνα (*kheimona*), terms which refer to a winter-storm.[18] Khisleu 20 fell on December 8 of the Julian calendar during that year; therefore, well before the winter solstice (on or about Dec. 21).

Josephus' view of the seasons was not unique. It was held by other people, including many Jews. In the book of Jeremiah, for example, we read that during the fifth year of Yahuyaqim (Jehoiakim), king of Judah, the ninth month, Khisleu, was considered "winter."[19] The Roman writer Pliny writes:

> About 44 days after the autumnal equinox the setting of Pleiades marks the beginning of winter, which it is customary to date on November 11.[20]

This information makes it certain that for Josephus the rainy, wintry season that came with the "setting of the Pleiades—the time of rainfall," which occurred in the month of Marheshuan,[21] was the true starting point of winter.

There was an excellent reason why many of the Judaean Jews of this period did not utilize the winter solstice (about Dec. 21) as the beginning of their winter, as most other nations of the world, and even later Jews, did. The winter solstice marked one of the greatest festival periods of the pagan

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14 Jos., *Antiq*., 3:10:4.
15 GEL, pp. 815f.
16 Ezra, 10:9; 1 Esdras, 9:5. Also see the discussion above in Chap. XI, pp. 160ff.
17 Jos., *Antiq*., 11:5:2–4. There is a scribal error at this point in Josephus. Josephus correctly calls this the "ninth month" and states that the Macedonian's name is "Apellaios," elsewhere explained by Josephus as the same as the Hebrew month of Khisleu (Jos., *Antiq*., 12:5:4, 12:17:1). On both counts these are equivalent to the Hebrew month of Khisleu (see Chart G). Nevertheless, some texts of Josephus render the Hebrew name at this point "Tebethos," which does not agree with the rest of the passage. Some other Greek and Latin manuscripts give "Kselios" and "Sileos" (Marcus, *Jos*., vi, pp. 384–385, ns. 2 and e). Marcus and others correct the word at this point back to Khisleu, which is certainly the originally intended month-name.
18 See Chap. XVII, p. 233, n. 27.
19 Jer., 36:9, 22.
20 Pliny, 2:47(125). Also see above Chap. XVII, p. 233, n. 32.
21 S.O., 4; cf. Jos., *Antiq*., 13:8:2.

world, which saw this time as the rebirth of the sun. In Rome, for example, the celebration of the Paganalia feasts occurred, which were called the Brumalia and Saturnalia. The tendency of the devout Jew would have been to disassociate himself as much as possible from such idolatrous practices. To start the Jewish winter at the time of these events would draw undue association with them.

The Winter of 38/37 B.C.E.

In *Antiquities*, 15:1:11–14, and *Wars*, 1:17:4–9, Josephus relates the events that occurred after Herod had returned from Samosata and heard of the death of his brother Joseph.

Antony's expeditionary force against Samosata did not return to Antioch, Syria until late 38 B.C.E., and there seems little doubt that it was the onset of winter that forced Antony to give up the siege. Antony, "after settling some trivial matters in Syria, returned to Athens, and sent Ventidius home, with becoming honors, to enjoy his triumph."[22] Antony is then said to have taken the entire year of 37 B.C.E. in going to Rome and returning to Syria.[23] These details reveal that the "protracted" siege of Samosata must have continued beyond Tishri (Sept./Oct.), shortly following the time when Joseph, the brother of Herod, was killed and at the time that Herod was absent from Judaea. The siege lasted until at least November of that year as winter was settling in. Also, while Herod was off with Antony at Samosata, the region of Galilee revolted from him. The rebels went so far as to drown some of the followers of Herod in Lake Gennesaret (the Sea of Galilee).[24]

When the story of Herod opens after the Samosata expedition, Herod was at Daphne, near Antioch, having returned with Antony from the war. Antony shortly thereafter left for Athens at the beginning of the Roman year 37 B.C.E. (Jan. reckoning).[25] Therefore, Herod would have returned with Antony to Daphne in late 38 B.C.E. Hearing of his brother's demise at the hands of Antigonus and of the Galilean revolt, Herod immediately set out against his enemies. In a forced march he came to Lebanon, where he received reinforcements of about 800 men from that region as well as a Roman legion. These traveled with him to Ptolemais. He then invaded Galilee.[26]

In Galilee Herod fought with the rebels. After making repeated attacks on their fortress he was faced with a "severe storm" which halted his progress for a time.[27] In both *Antiquities* and *Wars*, the terms translated as "storm" are in Greek χειμῶνι (*kheimoni*) and χειμῶνος (*kheimonos*), which literally mean "a winter-storm."[28] This winter-storm reveals that we have reached the winter of 38/37 B.C.E. A few days later Herod was joined by another of Antony's legions.[29]

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22 Plutarch, *Antony*, 34.
23 Dio, 49:22–23.
24 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:10, *Wars*, 1:17:1–2.
25 Dio, 49:22–23.
26 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:11, *Wars*, 1:17:3.
27 Ibid.
28 GEL, p. 884.
29 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:11, *Wars*, 1:17:3.

Regaining control over Galilee, Herod moved south and marched on Jericho where he captured the place. After he found quarters he entertained a large company of magistrates. No sooner had the banquet ended when the roof of the house fell in, but everyone miraculously escaped death. The next morning 6,000 enemy troops descended from the summits of the hills to fight him. Though Herod won a victory, he was wounded in the battle.[30]

Leaving Jericho, and being joined by many Jews from Judaea, Herod now "ravaged the enemy's territory, subdued five small towns, slew 2,000 of their inhabitants, set fire to their houses, and returned to camp. His present headquarters were in the neighborhood of a village called Kana."[31]

Meanwhile, Antigonus had sent his general named Pappus with a large force to Isana in Samaria. After Herod had finished ravaging the enemies' territory he turned his attention to the army of Pappus. Here a great battle was fought and Herod proved victorious. He defeated the enemy in open battle and also killed those who fled to the city.[32] Herod would have immediately tried to march on the city of Jerusalem, but was detained by yet another "storm of exceptional severity."[33] Once again Josephus uses the term χειμῶνι (winter-storm).

After the winter-storm abated, Herod moved against Jerusalem:

> When the χειμῶνος (winter-storm) abated, he advanced upon Jerusalem and marched his army up to the walls, IT BEING JUST NOW THE THIRD YEAR SINCE HE HAD BEEN PROCLAIMED KING IN ROME. (Jos., *Wars*, 1:17:8)

> When the χειμῶνος (winter-storm) subsided, he removed from there (Jericho) and came near to Jerusalem, encamping close to the city. THIS WAS IN THE THIRD YEAR SINCE HE HAD BEEN MADE KING AT ROME. (Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:14)

These statements are important for dating Herod's accession to the crown under Roman authority. It was "just now the third year since" Herod had been made king, and it was in the winter. That is, Herod was just now beginning his third year since being elected to the crown. Herod had left for Rome in mid-winter of 40/39 B.C.E. and, as we have already demonstrated, he obtained the kingship in or about mid-February of 39 B.C.E. His second year, therefore, would begin in or about mid-February of 38 B.C.E. and his third year in or about mid-February of 37 B.C.E. (Chart I).[34]

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30 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:11–12, Wars, 1:17:4.
31 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:12, Wars, 1:17:5–6.
32 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:12–13, Wars, 1:17:5–8.
33 Jos., *Wars*, 1:17:6.
34 Josephus uses the same method for counting the years of the First Revolt. The revolt started in Iyyar (April/May) of 66 C.E. (Jos., *Wars*, 2:14:4). Nevertheless, Josephus places the month of Nisan (March/April) of 69 C.E., i.e. in the fourth Jewish year of the war (Nisan reckoning), "in the third year of the war"(Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:12), counting the years of this revolt from Iyyar to Iyyar.

"Year 1" of Herod's Reign at Jerusalem

Herod reigned 37 Jewish regnal years from the time that he obtained the Judaean crown from the Roman Senate and 34 Jewish regnal years from the year he took Jerusalem and killed Antigonus.[35] This dating requires that Herod be given three Jewish years prior to the year that he took the Holy City.

This evidence proves that, when Herod arrived outside Jerusalem in or about early March of the year 37 B.C.E., it was the beginning of the third year SINCE Herod had been appointed king of Judaea by the Romans, but it was towards the end of his third year as king of Judaea based upon the Jewish Nisan (Abib) reckoning. The fourth year of Herod, being his first year at Jerusalem, based upon Judaean reckoning, began with Nisan 1 of 37 B.C.E.:

Year 1 = 40/39 B.C.E. (Nisan) Reign recognized at Rome this year
39/38 B.C.E. First year begins mid-Feb., 39 B.C.E.

Year 2 = 39/38 B.C.E. (Nisan) Second year recognized at Rome
38/37 B.C.E. Second year begins mid-Feb., 40 B.C.E.

Year 3 = 38/37 B.C.E. (Nisan) Third year recognized at Rome
37/36 B.C.E. Third year begins mid-Feb., 37 B.C.E.

Year 4 = 37/36 B.C.E. = **Year 1** from Jerusalem (Nisan)

Beginning with Nisan 1 of the year 37/36 B.C.E., Herod entered into his fourth Jewish year of being appointed king by the Romans (see Chart I). In turn, "Year 4" from Rome equals "Year 1" at Jerusalem.

The date 37/36 B.C.E., therefore, is supported by the sequence of events. Herod had initially left Syria for Palestine at the beginning of winter (in or about early Dec., 38 B.C.E.). Nevertheless, the numerous events and conflicts which took place before he marched on Jerusalem must have taken several months to accomplish. These episodes would bring us at least into March of 37 B.C.E.

The siege works against Jerusalem were built by Herod and the Romans in the "summer."[36] The actual siege of Jerusalem lasted five months before Herod's army and the Romans were able to breach the first wall,[37] on the fortieth day after making an attack.[38] The battle continued another fifteen days before the second wall was breached,[39] in the sixth month of the siege.[40]

Further, in *Antiquities*, 14:16:4, Josephus tells us that the city of Jerusalem was conquered by Herod, "during the consulship of Rome of Marcus Agrippa and Caninius Gallus." The consul date is for 37/36 B.C.E., March reckoning. This evidence proves that the siege and capture of Jerusalem lasted well into the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, making that year the first year of Herod, as calculated from the time he conquered Jerusalem.

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35 Jos., *Wars*, 1:33:8, *Antiq*., 17:8:1.
36 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:2.
37 Jos., *Wars*, 1:18:1.
38 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:2.
39 Ibid.
40 Jos., *Wars*, 5:9:4.

Other Evidence for "Year 1" at Jerusalem

More evidence that the first year of Herod's reign at Jerusalem began with the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, comes from the following details:

Josephus tells us that the 34 year reign of Herod was reckoned "from the date when, after putting Antigonus to death, he assumed control of the state,"[41] and "from the time when he had put Antigonus to death."[42] Antigonus was put to death shortly after the fall of Jerusalem. Though Antigonus had surrendered to the Romans, Herod sent him off to Antony, who had him scourged and then beheaded.[43] As we have already demonstrated,[44] Herod's last year was 4/3 B.C.E. "Year 1" of his 34 year reign from Jerusalem, therefore, is 37/36 B.C.E.

Josephus notes that Antony had Antigonus beheaded in Antioch, Syria.[45] This information fits well with the statement of Dio's which reports that Antony spent the consul year we describe as 37 B.C.E. (Jan. 1 to Jan. 1 reckoning) going to Italy and then returning to Syria.[46] Therefore, Antony was back in Syria before the first of January, 36 B.C.E. Antigonus was sent to Antony in about February, 36 B.C.E., towards the end of the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, as we shall prove in our next chapter.

Next, the seventh year of Herod equals the year that Caesar defeated Antony at the battle of Actium. The war between these two monarchs for control of the Roman empire began in the winter of 32/31 B.C.E.[47] and came to a conclusion with the battle of Actium on September 2 of 31 B.C.E.[48]

> Meanwhile, the battle of Actium took place between Caesar and Antony, in the seventh year of Herod's reign, and there was an earthquake in Judaea, such as had not been seen before, which caused great destruction of the cattle throughout the country. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:5:2).

> But while he (Herod) was punishing his foes, he was visited by another calamity—an act of the deity (Yahweh) which occurred in the seventh year of his reign, when the war of Actium was at its height. IN EARLY SPRING an earthquake destroyed cattle innumerable and 30,000 lives; but the army being quartered in the open, escaped injury. (Jos., *Wars*, 1:19:3).

In the early spring (i.e. in the month of Abib [Nisan]) of Herod's seventh year a great earthquake occurred. It happened when the "war of Actium" was

41 Jos., *Wars*, 1:33:8.
42 Jos., *Antiq.*, 17:8:1.
43 Dio, 49:22; Plutarch, *Antony*, 36; Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:16:2–4, 15:1:2, *Wars*, 1:18:3.
44 See above Chap. XVII.
45 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:1:2.
46 Dio, 49:23.
47 Dio, 50:1–51:4.
48 Dio, 51:1.

at its height and in the year that the "battle of Actium" took place. Since the battle of Actium was fought in September of 31 B.C.E., the seventh year of Herod equals the year 31/30, Nisan (Abib) reckoning. Therefore, "Year 1" of Herod is the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning.

Further, the end of Herod's seventeenth year and the beginning of his eighteenth year occurred at the time when Caesar came to Syria.

> And when Herod had completed the seventeenth year of his reign, Caesar came to Syria. (Jos., *Antiq*., 15:10:3)

The Roman historian Cassius Dio writes:

> Augustus (Caesar), now, after transacting what business he had in Greece, sailed to Samos, where he passed the winter; and in the spring of the year when Marcus Apuleius and Publius Silius were consuls, he went on into Asia, and settled everything there and in Bithynia. . . . He reduced the people of Cyzicus to slavery because during a factious quarrel they had flogged and put to death some Romans. And when he reached Syria, he took the same action in the case of the people of Tyre and Sidon on account of their factious quarreling. (Dio, 54:7)

The consul year mentioned by Dio is 20 B.C.E. (Jan. 1 to Jan. 1, late Roman reckoning). Therefore, Caesar came to Syria in the spring of 20 B.C.E., which was at the end of the seventeenth year (the twelfth month of the Israelite year being Adar [Feb./March]) and at the beginning of the eighteenth year of Herod (the first Jewish month being Nisan [March/April]). The end of Herod's seventeenth year and beginning of his eighteenth year, as a result, had to take place in the spring of 20 B.C.E. This fact makes Herod's seventeenth year 21/20 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, and his eighteenth year 20/19 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. His first year of rule at Jerusalem, therefore, is 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning.

Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20:10:5, also makes this following report:

> Now those who held the high priesthood FROM THE TIME OF HEROD UP TO THE DAY ON WHICH TITUS CAPTURED AND SET FIRE TO THE TEMPLE AND THE CITY numbered 28 in all, covering a period of 107 years.

Titus set the Temple and city on fire in the "second year of Vespasian on the eighth of the month of Gorpiaeus,"[49] i.e. September, 70 C.E. The year 70/71 C.E., Nisan reckoning, therefore, is the 107th year from the time that Herod

49 Jos., *Wars*, 6:10:1–7:1:1.

began to appoint the high priest (which he did immediately after ascending to the throne at Jerusalem).[50] "Year 1," accordingly, equals the year 37/36 B.C.E.

These facts are further upheld by the Talmudic work Abodah Zarah, which claims that the dynasty of Herod lasted 103 years.[51] This dynasty ended with the revolt of the Jews against Agrippa in the month of Artemisius (Iyyar; April/May), 66 B.C.E.[52] The year 66/67 C.E., Nisan reckoning, being the 103rd year, makes the year 37/36 B.C.E. Herod's first year.

Conclusion

The evidence is clear and concise. Herod received authority as king from the Romans in or about February of 39 B.C.E. (the year 40/39 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning). Near the beginning of the third year since receiving this authority from the Roman Senate, i.e. in early March, 37 B.C.E., Herod and his Jewish army came against Jerusalem. He was later joined by Sossius (Sosius) and his Roman legions. Together they laid siege and took Jerusalem in the latter part of the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. This same year also represents Herod's first year as king of Judaea at Jerusalem. From this time the events of his reign were numbered. On or about Abib 7, in the year 4/3 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, Herod died—his 37th year as king from his appointment by the Romans and his 34th from his capture of Jerusalem.

In this chapter we also noticed that crops were being grown in Jericho in mid-summer of the year 38/37 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. This fact reveals that the year 38/37 B.C.E. was most definitely not a sabbath year. More importantly, the fact that crops were still being grown AFTER Pentecost (early June) of 38 B.C.E., forbidden in the pre-sabbath year under oral Talmudic Law of the Pharisees and in legal force since the latter part of the second century B.C.E.,[53] also indicates that the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, was not a sabbath year.

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50 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:2:1–4.
51 B. A.Zar., 8b.
52 Jos., *Wars*, 2:14:4, *Antiq.*, 20:11:1, 20:12:1; cf. *Wars*, 1:5:2, *Antiq.*, 13:16:1–3.
53 Shebi., 1:1, 2:1.

Chapter XIX

The Month Herod Conquered Jerusalem

Part IV of the Sabbath Year of 36/35 B.C.E.

The events that transpired between the time that Herod conquered Jerusalem until the arrival of the new sabbath year were of short duration. In order to completely verify that the year 36/35 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, was the approaching sabbath year to which Josephus refers to in *Antiquities*, 15:1:2, we must next deal with the specific month in which Herod mastered the city.

Conquest on a Fast Day

According to *Antiquities*, 14:16:4, the city of Jerusalem fell to Herod, "in the 185th Olympiad, the third month, on the DAY OF THE FAST, as if it were a recurrence of the misfortune which came upon the Jews in the time of Pompey, for they were captured by Sosius ON THE VERY SAME DAY, 27 YEARS LATER."

It has been argued that Josephus was using a pagan source which confused the weekly sabbath day with a fast day.[1] This theory is advanced on the basis that Dio refers to the day that Pompey conquered Jerusalem as "on the day of Kronus (Saturn),"[2] the day generally identified by pagans with the Jewish sabbath. Meanwhile, Strabo states, "Pompey seized the city, it is said, after watching for the day of fasting, when the Judaeans were abstaining from all work."[3] The combination of the statement "the day of Kronus" with the idea of "abstaining from all work," so the theory goes, means that the day in question was really a weekly sabbath which the pagans had confused with a fast day.

In the first place, sacred fast days, such as the Day of Atonement, were days dedicated to Yahweh. The Day of Atonement was a special fast in that it too was a high sabbath, and like any weekly sabbath, the observer was required to abstain from work.[4] Other fast days, meanwhile, were special days but not required sabbaths. Nevertheless, when such fasting was done on a national level, abstaining from work was the natural result.

In pagan Greek and Latin works Yahweh was identified with Kronus (Saturn), this chiefly because the Jews refused to give out the almighty's sacred name, but also because the seventh day of the week was known to Greeks and Romans as the day of Kronus/Saturn. Even today we call the sabbath day Satur-day from Saturn.[5] It was on the seventh day that the Jews

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1 E.g. HJP, 1, pp. 239f, n. 23.
2 Dio, 37:16.
3 Strabo, 16:2:40.
4 Lev., 16:29–34, 23:27–32; Num., 29:7.
5 RHCD, p. 1171.

worshiped and honored their deity; thus, in the minds of the pagans, Kronus/Saturn was the deity of the seventh day.[6]

But the Scriptures sanctified other days as well, including the two high sabbaths of Passover, the Feast of Weeks, two high sabbaths of the Feast of Tabernacles, and so forth, as well as the fast day called the Day of Atonement. All of these (except for the Feast of Weeks) were sabbath days which could fall on any day of the week.[7] Likewise, a national fast day dedicated to Yahweh by the Jews could fall on any day of the week. Though these fast days did not require a sabbath, one would naturally abstain from working to attend prayer services and participate in other dedication ceremonies.

Since national fast days were dedicated to Yahweh, it is obvious that these days would also be considered days of Kronus/Saturn in the eyes of the pagans, i.e. days dedicated to the Jewish deity. That Dio would refer to a fast day of the Jews as a day of Kronus, therefore, does not mean that he thought it was the seventh day of the week (sabbath).

Further, it would seem impossible that Josephus, a Jewish priest himself, would not have known the difference between a weekly sabbath and a fast day. That Josephus would have misidentified both the day that Pompey and the day that Herod took Jerusalem, calling them fast days rather than weekly sabbaths, is just too incredulous. His association of these two great defeats of Jerusalem "on the same day" shows that he clearly knew what day he was talking about.

The very fact that even the pagan Strabo notes that the Jews were fasting on the day Pompey took the city is evidence enough that we are dealing with a fast and not a weekly sabbath, or even a high sabbath (which, except for the Feast of Weeks, could fall on any day of the week).

The fast day on which Pompey took Jerusalem could not have been a sabbath day because Pompey purposely restrained from combat with the Jews on the sabbath. Pompey knew quite well that the Jews would only perform combat on a sabbath if attacked. By not attacking them on the sabbath day Pompey found he could create a lull in the war which allowed him to build his siege works.[8] On the other hand, there was no Jewish restriction against going to war on a fast day (except for the Day of Atonement, which is a high sabbath). Pompey could expect to find the Jews in a physically weakened condition and less able to fight.

Herod and his Jewish army, likewise, would not have pressed against Jerusalem on a sabbath day, for the simple reason that they were Jews. Jews did not commit themselves to battle on the sabbath unless attacked. Yet even the most pious of the Jews could attack an enemy on almost any one of their fast days. Though it is true that the Jews supporting Herod might have been somewhat weakened themselves from fasting, it is also a fact that the Jews who had been living behind the walls of Jerusalem had been, for several months, in want of food. A morning attack by Herod's forces would have found his army in excellent physical condition, having been well-fed during

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6 E.g. Dio, 49:22; Tacitus, *Hist*., 5:4.

7 That the Feast of Weeks always fell upon the first day of the week see our forthcoming book entitled *Yahweh's Sacred Calendar*.

8 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:4:2f, *Wars*, 1:7:3.

the siege. Those defending Jerusalem, on the other hand, would have been near total fatigue.

Which Fast Day?

There were six fixed fast days in ancient Judaea during this post-exile period: one, the Day of Atonement, is found in the Pentateuch from the days of Moses and is the only fast that is also a sabbath. Four others arose after the destruction of the first Temple in 587 B.C.E. These are described in the book of Zechariah as "the fast of the fourth (month), and the fast of the fifth (month), and the fast of the seventh (month), and the fast of the tenth (month)."[9] The sixth and final one is called the Fast of Esther. It was at first only a day of celebration and did not become a fast until post-Talmudic times. These last five fasts were observed as national days of dedication in remembrance of great calamities that surrounded important events in Jewish history. More specific dates for these six fasts are as follows:

• "The fast of the fourth (month)"[10] commemorated the overthrow of the city of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.[11] This event occurred on the ninth day, in the fourth month of the year.[12] The fourth month is called Tammuz (June/July).

• "The fast of the fifth (month)"[13] was observed because on the tenth day of the fifth month Nebuchadnezzar's army destroyed and burned the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.[14] The fifth month is called Ab (July/Aug.).

• "The fast of the seventh (month),"[15] also called "Zom Gedalyah (the Fast of Gedaliah)," was celebrated on the third day of that month in the memory of the slaying of Gedaliah, the governor of Judah, and his associates after the destruction of the city.[16] The seventh month is called Tishri (Sept./Oct.).

• The Day of Atonement occurred on the tenth day of the seventh month.[17] This fast is the only one of the six post-exile fast days which is ordained in the Pentateuch. Unlike the others, it is also a commanded sabbath. Since Herod's Jewish forces would not attack on a sabbath, the Day of Atonement must be eliminated from consideration.

• "The fast of the tenth (month)."[18] This fast was held on the tenth day of the tenth month in memory of the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.[19] The tenth month is called Tebeth (Dec./Jan.).

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9 Zech., 8:19.
10 Ibid.
11 EJ, 6, p. 1195.
12 Jer., 39:1–2, 52:6–7; 2 Kings, 25:1–4; Jos., *Antiq*., 10:8:2.
13 Zech., 7:3–5, 8:19.
14 Jer., 52:1–14; EJ, 6, p. 1195. Cf. Chap. XXVIII, p. 339, n. 7.
15 Zech., 8:19.
16 EJ, 6, p. 1195.
17 Lev., 16:29, 31, 23:27–32; Num., 29:7.
18 Zech., 8:19.
19 2 Kings, 25:1–2; Jer., 52:4ff; Ezek., 24:1–2; EJ, 6, p. 1195.

• The Fast of Esther, celebrated on the thirteenth of Adar (Feb./March), the day before Purim.[20] Adar is the twelfth Jewish month.

To more precisely pinpoint which fast day and month that Herod took the city we next need to examine the sequence of events for Herod during this siege.

When Herod first arrived, he encamped with his army before the wall of the Temple at the same place where Pompey had attacked before. It was "just now the third year since he had been proclaimed king in Rome," i.e. shortly after mid-February or early March of 37 B.C.E.[21]

Herod then appointed several tasks for his army, including the cutting down of trees and shrubs, the raising of three lines of earthworks, and the erection of towers on them. Leaving his lieutenants in charge, Herod next left Judaea and went to Samaria where, making "his wedding an interlude of the πολεμίους (*polemious*, i.e. war),"[22] he married the daughter of Alexander.[23] We are not directly told how long this interlude lasted but, as we shall prove, Herod did not return to Jerusalem until July of 37 B.C.E.

After the interlude and the wedding, the Roman general Sossius (Sosius) arrived at Jerusalem with an army to assist Herod's forces. At the same time, Herod also returned from Samaria with "a larger force" than he had formerly stationed at the city, numbering about 30,000 troops. Both Herod's army and the army of Sossius then assembled before the walls of Jerusalem and took up their positions.[24]

The arrival of the Roman army at Jerusalem to assist Herod begins the five months of περικαθεζομένης (*perikathezomenes*; i.e. "to sit all round," "to blockade," or siege)[25] spoken of in Josephus, *Wars*, 1:18:2. It was at this point, after Herod's interlude in the war, that the siege seriously got underway. This five month period ended when "some of Herod's picked men ventured to scale the wall and leapt into the city, followed by Sossius's centurions." In Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14:16:2, we are told that, "The first wall was taken in 40 days" of battle. Therefore, the first three and one half months of this five month siege (being a joint effort of both Herod's forces and the Romans) were spent in building the siege works before the actual battle began.

The end of the interlude also represents the beginning of the six month period described by Josephus in *Wars*, 5:9:4. He writes, "Herod, son of Antipater, BROUGHT UP SOSSIUS, and Sossius a Roman army, BY WHOM THEY (the Jews of Jerusalem) WERE FOR SIX MONTHS INVESTED AND BESIEGED, until in retribution for their sins they were captured and the city was sacked by the enemy." The end of this period represents the preparation

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20 Esther, 4:16; EJ, 6, p. 1195.
21 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:14, *Wars*, 1:17:8.
22 GEL, p. 653.
23 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:15:14, *Wars*, 1:17:8.
24 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:1, *Wars*, 1:17:9.
25 GEL, p. 627.
26 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:2.

time and the additional fifteen days of battle beyond the five months it took for Herod's forces to scale the second wall.[26]

Take special note of the fact that the six months of siege are specifically said to have begun only when Herod "BROUGHT UP SOSSIUS," not when Herod first arrived!

Raids were made by the Jews defending Jerusalem against the construction of the siege works and against food supplies used by the aggressors. Herod took steps to stop the raiders. Meanwhile, "the three lines of earthworks had been raised with ease, for there were a great number of hands now continuously at work, and IT BEING SUMMER (when the construction was taking place), there was no hindrance to their erection either from the weather or from workmen."[27] It is important to notice that the "great number of hands" working on the earthworks refers to the large number of troops now present—the force Herod originally left in front of the wall at this time being reinforced by the Roman army and the 30,000 new soldiers brought in by Herod following the interlude in the war.

With the siege works made, Herod's army "brought up their engines and battered the wall, trying every expedient." Those inside the city, though, devised good counter devices and even fought well underground where they met their enemy in the mines that were being dug. Five months after the Romans joined the siege, on the 40th day after making an attack, the first wall was breached.[28] The second wall was taken after another fifteen days of battle, in the sixth month of the siege.[29] The "environs of the Temple" were first secured, and "when the outer precincts of the Temple and the Lower City had been captured, the Jews (defending the city) fled into the inner precinct of the Temple and the Upper City."[30]

At this point a great slaughter took place. The Romans were "infuriated by the length of the siege" and the Jews of Herod's army were determined to leave none of their opponents alive. Antigonus surrendered. Herod then brought the rampaging Roman soldiers under control and saved the Temple.[31]

After mastering the city, Herod rewarded those who had espoused his cause, murdered the partisans of Antigonus, and stationed guards at the gates and walls of the city. Valuables were stripped from the dead bodies found in the city and Sossius, after dedicating a crown of gold to Yahweh and after Herod had paid the Roman soldiers, withdrew from Jerusalem. At this point, Herod, who was in desperate need of money, began plundering:

> And there was no end to their (the Jews of Jerusalem) troubles, for on the one hand their greedy master (Herod), who was in need (of money), was plundering them, and on the other hand the seventh (sabbatical) year, which was approaching, forced them to leave the land unworked, since we are forbidden to

27 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:2, *Wars*, 1:18:1–2.
28 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:2, cf. *Wars*, 1:18:2.
29 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:2, cf. *Wars*, 5:9:4.
30 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:2, *Wars*, 1:18:2–3.
31 Ibid.

> sow the earth in that year. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:1:1–2; cf. Jos., *Wars*, 1:18:3)

If we apply four seasons to the year, the three months of summer in the Jewish calendar are roughly Tammuz (June/July), Ab (July/Aug.), and Elul (Aug./Sept.). In reality, as already demonstrated, throughout the works of Josephus the year was divided into three unequal seasons: spring, summer, and winter; which are the only seasons he mentions. In this latter case the summer months would be roughly Tammuz, Ab, Elul, Tishri (Sept./Oct.), and part of Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.). It is very probable that Josephus determined the beginning of summer with the summer solstice (about June 21), though his winter did not begin until mid-November. To be on the conservative side, allowing for every possibility, we shall assume that Josephus began his summer with the summer solstice (about June 21). The month of Tammuz (July), the fourth Hebrew month, began in that year on June 30. Using either the first of Tammuz or the summer solstice as the start of Josephus' summer will allow for the earliest possible date for Herod to begin his siege.

In Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14:16:2, it took 40 days to take the first wall and fifteen more to take the second; a total of 55 days (disregarding any preparation time in between the two battles). Therefore, the entirety of the last two months of the siege were spent in direct battle. This means that the earthworks and siege works took the first three to four months of the siege to construct (counting from the time that the Romans arrived outside the walls of Jerusalem).

In one of the four months of summer the building of siege works began. This point is clear when Josephus, in a direct reference to the arrival of the Roman army and Herod's new troops, states that "the three lines of earthworks had been raised with ease, for there were a great number of hands now continuously at work, and IT BEING SUMMER, there was no hindrance to their erection either from the weather or from the workmen."[32]

To allow room for all possibilities, if we assume, in an effort to push the starting date as far back as possible, that the earthworks project began on the first day of the first full month of summer, i.e. Tammuz 1, the fourth month of the Jewish year, then the end of six months (at least five months, fifteen days) from this point would be about the fifteenth of Khisleu (Nov./Dec.), the ninth month of the Jewish year. If we count from the summer solstice, that year Siwan 22 (June 21), five months and fifteen days brings us to Marheshuan 22 (Nov. 16).

Going even so far as to consider that by the phrase "six months" Josephus meant five months and one day total siege time, from the first day of the summer solstice (June 21)—counting the entire month of Siwan (May/June), the third Hebrew month, which for the most part falls in spring, as the first month of the siege—until the end of this five month, one day period, it would bring us from the first day of Siwan to the first day of the eighth month (Marheshuan; Oct./Nov.), which in that year fell on October 26.

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32 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:16:2.

It is clear from this evidence that the fast days observed in the fourth (Tammuz) and fifth (Ab) months are impossible as the fast day upon which the city of Jerusalem fell to Herod. These details also eliminate the two fast days of the seventh month, Tishri, since the siege could not have ceased until after the beginning of the eighth month. It most definitely did not fall on the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, since that day was a Jewish High Sabbath and the Jews in Herod's army would not have participated in the battle.

Further, there is another good reason that the city could not have fallen in Tammuz (June/July) or Ab (July/Aug.) as some scholars argue.[33] If the city would have fallen either in Tammuz or Ab the siege works would have been built in the spring, not in the summer as testified to by Josephus.

This data also reveals that the sabbath year did not officially begin with the first of Tishri of 37 B.C.E., as those adhering to systems "B" and "C" contend. The sabbath year was still approaching after Herod took the city and there is no way he could have possessed the city until after the month of Tishri was over.

Neither could the city have been taken on one of the two fast days of the seventh month, as many others conclude,[34] and still have the New Year begin with the first of Tishri. If Herod had taken the city on the fast day of either Tishri 3 or 10, after the supposed New Year began, how could the sabbath year still be rapidly approaching, as Josephus tells us?[35] The Day of Atonement, which falls on Tishri 10, is eliminated anyway, since it is also a sabbath day. Herod would not have led a Jewish army to battle on this day.

The Fast of Esther in the twelfth month, the month of Adar (Feb./March), meanwhile, is far too late in the year. For this date to be correct the siege works would have been built in the winter, not the summer. More importantly, though it was celebrated in the first century as a festival, it was not observed as a fast until the post-Talmudic period.[36] That leaves us with the fast of the tenth month, the month of Tebeth (Dec./Jan.).

The Interlude

We now must factor into this equation Herod's "interlude of the war," at which time he went to Samaria to gather a larger army and to marry the daughter of Alexander. The question naturally arises, "Why did Herod allow for an interlude?"

Dio resolves our problem for us. Dio comments that Sossius, Herod's Roman ally, had been appointed governor of Syria and Cilicia at the same time that Herod returned to Syria with Antony. Sossius then had to subdue "the Aradii, who had been besieged up to this time and had been reduced to hard straits by famine and disease." Only after his victory over the Aradii did he conquer "in battle Antigonus, who had put to death the Roman guards that

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33 MGWJ, 1855, pp. 109–115; Marcus, *Jos*., vii, pp. 700f, n. d; etc.
34 E.g., V. Lewin, T. Gardthausen, G. F. Unger, etc.; see the bibliography in HJP, 1, pp. 284f, n.11.
35 Jos., *Antiq*., 15:1:2.
36 Marcus, *Jos*., vi, p. 454f, n. c.
37 Dio, 49:22.

were with him, and reduced him by siege when he took refuge in Jerusalem."[37] Therefore, Herod had to wait for Sossius to establish himself in Syria and to solve the Aradii problem before he could expect Roman assistance. This detail explains why Herod set some soldiers to work outside the walls of Jerusalem while he made an "interlude in the war" against Antigonus. After he finished this interlude, Herod marched back to Jerusalem bringing with him an even greater army. It was at this very moment that Sossius and his Roman military force made their appearance. It is clear that Herod had no intention of pressing the siege of Jerusalem until the Roman reinforcements were available. He merely bade his time until their arrival.

The Reign of Antigonus

Another historical detail that guides us in our understanding of when Herod and Sossius actually began their siege of Jerusalem comes with the length given for the reign of Antigonus, the rival of Herod for control of the Judaean state. Josephus writes:

> Then Barzabanes and Pacorus, the rulers of Parthia, crossing the Euphrates, made war on Hyrcanus, captured him alive, and appointed Antigonus son of Aristobulus, king; and when he had reigned three years and three months Sossius and Herod besieged him, and took him. When he had been taken to Antioch, he was slain by Antony.[38]

This passage, when read closely in the Greek, indicates that Antigonus reigned three years and three months until Sossius and Herod began to besiege him (not until he was captured by them). His first year started when Barzabanes and Pacorus defeated Hyrcanus. Josephus places this event at the time when the Jews were observing the Feast of Pentecost (early June).[39] The Roman historian Dio places this war during the consul year of Gnaeus Calvinus, serving for the second time, and Asinius Pollio, i.e. 40 B.C.E. (Jan. reckoning). The years accredited to Antigonus, as a result, are as follows:

40/39 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning = **Year 1**

39/38 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning = **Year 2**

38/37 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning = **Year 3**

37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning = **Year 4**

Nisan (March/April), Iyyar (April/May), and Siwan (May/June) of 37 B.C.E., therefore, represent the three months of Antigonus' reign (during

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38 Jos., *Antiq.*, 20:10:4.
39 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:13:3–4, *Wars*, 1:13:1–11.

the first part of his fourth year) counted to him before Sossius and Herod began the siege which eventually brought Antigonus down. This detail in turn means that Sossius and Herod started their siege in the fourth month, i.e. in Tammuz (June/July) of 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning (see Chart I).

The Third Month of the Olympiad

One of the most puzzling things said by Josephus in relationship to the conquest of Jerusalem—first of Pompey's and then later of Herod's—is the statement that both victories occurred on the same day, the Fast day in the "third month."

• Pompey's conquest: "And indeed when the city was taken, IN THE THIRD MONTH, on the Fast Day, in the 179th Olympiad, in the consulship of Gaius Antonius and Marcus Tullius Cicero (etc.)."[40]

The first year of the 179th Olympiad was 64/63 B.C.E., July reckoning (Attic system), or 64/63 B.C.E., November reckoning (Macedonian system). The consul year is 63 B.C.E.

• Herod's conquest: "This calamity befell the city of Jerusalem during the consulship at Rome of Marcus Agrippa and Caninius Gallus, in the 185th Olympiad, IN THE THIRD MONTH, on the day of the Fast, as if it were a recurrence of the misfortune which came upon the Jews in the time of Pompey, for they were captured by Sossius on the VERY SAME DAY, 27 years later."[41]

The last year of the 185th Olympiad was July 1, 37 until July 1, 36 B.C.E. (Attic reckoning) or Dius (Nov.) 1, 37 B.C.E. until Dius 1, 36 B.C.E. (Macedonian reckoning). The consul year is 37 B.C.E.

Josephus points out that the siege itself lasted six months,[42] five months in duration just from the time that Herod returned from his wedding until the first wall was taken.[43] Further, Josephus reports that the building of siege works was not undertaken until "summer." After that they took 40 days to take the first wall and 15 days to take the second.[44] A four season year for the Jewish calendar would consist roughly of the three months of Tammuz, Ab, and Elul. Even if we start the five months of siege with the first of Tammuz (June/July), we are brought to a date beyond the first of Khisleu (Nov./Dec.).

The statements of Josephus are considered by many present-day chronologists as making absolutely no sense. In the first place, the third month cannot refer to the length of Herod's siege, for the siege lasted at least five months and some days. Second, it is clear by both statements that the third month has to do with the Olympiad in which the siege took place: i.e. in the 179th Olympiad of Pompey's conquest and in the 185th Olympiad of Herod's conquest.

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40 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:4:3.
41 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:4.
42 Jos., *Wars*, 5:9:4.
43 Jos., *Wars*, 1:18:1–2.
44 Jos., *Antiq*., 14:16:2.

Solomon Zeitlin long ago came to this same realization. He writes:

> The third month cannot mean the third month of the siege, as Josephus states elsewhere that the city fell after a siege of five to six months. It cannot refer to the third month of the Hebrew calendar, as it is placed together with the Olympian year. It can therefore only mean in the third month of the Olympian year of the 185th Olympiad, and it must furthermore be the Olympian year of the Macedonian calendar.[45]

Though Zeitlin errs by misplacing the siege of Herod in January of 37 B.C.E. (he fails to consider the mentioning of a passing summer in Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14:16:2), his direction is correct. The third month cannot refer to the Hebrew third month, Siwan (May/June), or the Attic-Olympiad third month, Boedromion (Aug./Sept.), because these dates are far too early in the year and there are no fast days in them. The Attic-Olympiad, for example, which starts in July, would make the siege of Herod and Sossius begin with spring and would also place the three months of siege work building almost wholly in the spring.

Furthermore, Josephus uses the month-names from the Macedonian calendar throughout his works and not the Attic Greek, indicating that he must have been correlating his views with a Macedonian perspective in mind.

Years ago G. F. Unger proved that there existed two systems of the Olympiad calendar, the Attic and the Macedonian.[46] Solomon Zeitlin writes of the Macedonian system:

> The Macedonian Olympiad calendar, on the other hand, is a modified form of the original Olympiad calendar which was adopted in the Macedonian period, and was adopted by them in accordance with their established system of dating the new year. These peoples being accustomed to date the beginning of their year in autumn, that is, in THE MONTH OF DIUS (NOVEMBER), they also fixed the new year of their adopted Olympiad calendar according to their traditional custom. Local divergences then ensued.[47]

In short, beginning with Dius, the third month in the Macedonian Olympiad calendar is Audyneus (Dec./Jan.). It is equivalent to the Hebrew month of Tebeth.[48] Though we find fault with the year given as Zeitlin's final conclusion, he nonetheless correctly saw that Josephus had used the Macedonian Olympiad calendar. He writes:

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45 JQR, 9, p. 93.
46 SPP, pp. 300–316; JQR, 10, p. 58.
47 JQR, 10, p. 58.
48 See Chart G.

> The third month is thus the month of Audyneus, which corresponds to December and January, i.e. the Hebrew month Tebet.[49]

That Josephus used a November Olympiad reckoning is further verified by his dating of the battle of Actium, which took place on Sept. 2, 31 B.C.E.[50] Josephus places this event within the 187th Olympiad.[51] Attic reckoning for the 187th Olympiad would place this event between July of 32 and July of 31 B.C.E., which is impossible. The Macedonian Olympiad, on the other hand, places the event between Nov. of 32 and Nov. of 31 B.C. E. and agrees with the known evidence.

Conclusion

Based upon the evidence, we must conclude that the conquest of Jerusalem by both Pompey and Herod the Great took place on the tenth day of the Hebrew month of Tebeth (or Tebet), a national fast day for the Jews of that period. The chronology of the siege can be reconstructed as follows:

- On or about Be-Adar 1 (March 4), 37 B.C.E.:[52] Herod arrived outside the walls of Jerusalem after his winter campaign against Galilee, his conquest of Jericho, and his victory over Pappus at the battle of Isana. Assigning different tasks to his troops, Herod left Jerusalem to go to Samaria to celebrate his marriage with Mariamme.

- From about Be-Adar 1 (March 4), until about the eighteenth of Tammuz (July 17): Herod allows an interlude in the war while he waits for the arrival of the Roman army, which is busy at the time settling affairs in Syria. He uses this interlude to marry Mariamme and to collect an even larger military force.

- About the eighteenth of Tammuz (July 17), the first full month of summer: Herod returns from Samaria and the Roman troops under Sossius arrive to assist in the siege. The five and six month periods of the siege mentioned by Josephus now begin.

- From about the eighteenth of Tammuz (July 17) until the seventh of Marheshuan (Nov. 1): Herod's Jewish army and the Roman Legions under Sossius raise three lines of siege works in the "summer."

- From about the eighth of Marheshuan (Nov. 2), Sunday, until about the eighteenth of Khisleu (Dec. 11), Thursday: In 40 days Herod and Sossius attack and then take the first wall. The eighteenth of Khisleu also ends the five month siege spoken of in Josephus, *Wars*, 1:18:2.

We begin this 40 day period with the first day of the week, the most probable time to begin a siege by Jewish soldiers after a period of preparation. It

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49 JQR, 9, pp. 93f.
50 Dio, 51:1.
51 Jos., Antiq., 15:5:1. Also see our discussion above in Chap. XII, p.176.
52 The year 38/37 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, ended with an intercalary month (Be-Adar); see Chart G.

would be highly unlikely that Herod would have started the siege a day or two prior to a sabbath, since the Jewish soldiers would not fight on a sabbath and this would disrupt the flow of the battle.

After Herod took the first wall, one can estimate about a week of preparation time before he attacked the second wall: From about the nineteenth of Khisleu (Dec. 12), Thursday, until Khisleu 25 (Dec. 18), Wednesday.

- From the twenty-sixth of Khisleu (Dec. 19th), Thursday, until the tenth of Tebeth (Jan. 2), Thursday: In fifteen days Herod and Sossius attack and then take the second wall.

- The tenth of Tebeth (Jan. 2), Thursday, 36 B.C.E., a fast day: Jerusalem falls into the hands of Herod after a long siege lasting six months.[53]

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52 Jos., *Wars*, 5:9:4.

Chapter XX

The 27 Years

Part V of the Sabbath Year of 36/35 B.C.E.

It is often argued that Josephus made a gross error when he stated that Herod conquered Jerusalem "on the very same day" as Pompey "27 years later."[1] Ralph Marcus, for example, tries to correct Josephus by saying that this period was actually, "More nearly 26 years."[2] Yet, it can be proven that Josephus was correct, and in doing so the month that Herod conquered Jerusalem becomes even more firmly established.

Dating the 27 Years

Josephus dates the fall of Jerusalem into Herod's hands in the consul year of Marcus Agrippa and Caninius Gallus (i.e. 37 B.C.E., Jan. 1, Late Roman Reckoning, or 37/36 B.C.E., March 1, Early Roman Reckoning). The tenth day of the Hebrew month of Tebeth in the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, meanwhile, fell on January 2, 36 B.C.E. But since, as we have already demonstrated, Josephus uses the March 1 consul system, this date is easily accounted for as part of the consul year of 37 B.C.E. (March 1, 37 to March 1, 36 B.C.E.).

Josephus dates the fall of Jerusalem into the hands of Pompey "in the 179th Olympiad, in the consulship of Gaius Antonius and Marcus Tullius Cicero."[3] The consul year named is good for the year 63 B.C.E., Jan. 1 reckoning (the Senator system), or March 1 reckoning (the Varro system). The 179th Olympiad (first year) extended from July, 64 until July, 63 B.C.E., Attic system; or from November, 64 until November, 63 B.C.E., Macedonian system.

Ralph Marcus, who recognizes only the Attic-Olympiad, states:

> . . . the combination of the two dates gives us the first half of 63 B.C. for the capture of the city.[4]

It is argued that Josephus was wrong on two counts: first, Josephus dates the capture of the city to the period after June, and therefore it could not have been in the first half of the consul year for 63 B.C.E.; and second, there are no fast days in the spring of that year. Accordingly, the theory goes, Josephus meant that Pompey's victory took place in the latter half of 63 B.C.E. Deeming this as the true answer, they conclude that only 26 years transpired between Pompey's and Herod's respective victories.

This study begs to differ with the commonly held view that Josephus has erred. What has been ignored in the rush to raise a dispute with Josephus is

1 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:16:4.
2 Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, p. 700, n. d.
3 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:4:3.
4 Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, p. 480, n. c.

that there was a major reformation of the Roman calendar in 46 B.C.E. This transition between the two Roman calendar systems must be taken into account when considering Josephus' use of the March 1 consul year and his Jewish method of counting the years between the two defeats of the city.

The early Roman calendar consisted of twelve months totaling 355 (or 354)[5] days—with an intercalary month of 22 or 23 days alternately thrown in every two years, and 24 days omitted in the last eight years of a 24-year cycle—this to keep the Roman year fairly even with the solar year.[6] The Roman year began with the month of *Martio* (March).[7] Varro, writing in about 45 B.C.E.,[8] proves that this was still the case in his day when he writes:

> The names of the months are in general obvious, if you count from *Martio* (March), as the ancients arranged them; for the first month is from Mars.[9]

In 153 B.C.E. the consuls began to be elected for one year terms on January 1.[10] Under this influence the beginning of the year was eventually moved back from *Martio* (*Martius*) to *Januarius* (January); but not until the time of Augustus Caesar (27 B.C.E. to 14 C.E.). Varro, writing in 45 B.C.E. and publishing before 43 B.C.E.,[11] as shown above, reveals that the March 1 system was still in effect after the calendar reform of Julius Caesar in 46 B.C.E.

The Roman calendar was far from perfect. Macrobius informs us that in the period prior to the reformations of Julius Caesar, "religious scruples at times led to the omission of all intercalations." He adds:

> And sometimes indeed the number of days in a year was increased or reduced through the influence of the priests, who deliberately lengthened or shortened the year in the interest of the tax collectors, with the result that a pretence of exactly observing the calendar in fact added to the confusion in it.[12]

Jack Finegan writes:

> By the end of the Roman republic the calendar had come into a state of confusion, particularly due to difficulties and inaccuracies in the system and practice of intercalation.[13]

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5 Macrobius, 1:13:1–2, 11; notes that at first the Romans followed the Greek method of 354 days but later added one day "out of respect for the odd number." See HBC, pp. 74f, for the days for each ancient Roman month.

6 Macrobius, 1:13:8–21; Schlesinger, *Livy*, xiii, pp. 87f.

7 Ovid, *Fasti*, 1:39; and Macrobius, 1:12:5, who comments that, "March was the first month of the year" on the ancient Roman calendar. The order of the Roman months is also demonstrated by their names: *Septembris* (seventh), *Octobris* (eighth), *Novembris* (ninth), and *Decembris* (tenth). July and August were orginally known as *Quintilis* (fifth) and *Sextilis* (sixth). See HBC, pp. 74f.

8 Kent, *Varro*, i, p. ix.

9 Varro, 6:33.

10 Senator, 384; MGH, p. 130.

11 Kent, *Varro*, i, p. ix.

12 Macrobius, 1:14:1.

13 HBC, p. 76.

Answering complaints to this issue, Julius Caesar undertook a major reform of the calendar in 46 B.C.E. In order to bring the calendar into the so-called Julian form, Caesar took drastic measures:

> He added 23 days of an intercalary month after Februarius, and he added two months of 34 and 33 days between November and December, so that the year contained 445 days and was called the year of confusion.[14]

The next year, 45 B.C.E., the present normal length of a 365 day calendar year began, with a leap year allowed so that the solar year could more accurately be followed. Augustus Caesar later made minor corrections and it was in his day that the official beginning of the Roman year was altered from March 1 to January 1.[15]

To bring the calendar nearer to its current status Caesar added 90 days to one Roman year of 355 days. This fact alone shows that, prior to the calendar reforms of 46 B.C.E., the first of January (the day on which the consuls were elected) and the first of March (the beginning of the year and the day that the consuls officially took office) did not occur during the same time of the solar year as the first of January or the first of March after the year 46 B.C.E. Furthermore, when Pompey had invaded Judaea in 64/63 B.C.E., it was but 18 years before the calendar was reformed, at a time when this great discrepancy had already developed in the system.

It is certain that, in the time of Pompey's invasion, the first of January actually fell at least some 67 (33 + 34) days—if not 90 or more days (if this year lacked an intercalary month)—prior to what the Julian calendar later considered to be the first of the year. This detail is forcefully supported in the Roman records of Livy. Livy reports that, in the consul year of Lucius Cornelius Scipio and Gaius Laelius (i.e. Julian year 190 B.C.E.), there was an eclipse of the sun seen at Rome in the morning on "the fifth day before the Ides of *Quinctiles*," i.e. July 11.[16] This eclipse, if we anachronistically apply the Julian reckoning, would have taken place on March 14, 190 B.C.E.[17]

Accordingly, the Roman date of July (*Quintilis, Quinctiles*) 11, 190 B.C.E. was actually March 14 by later calculation! This means that the first of March in the consul year commonly held as 190 B.C.E. occurred 117 days

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14 CE, 5, p.138. Also see Macrobius, 1:14:2–12.

15 CE, 5, p.138. Cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, 1:11f. Macrobius, 1:14:13–15, discusses the reasons that Augustus became involved in calendar reforms. Dio, 55:6:1–6, cf. 55:5:1, informs us that during the consul year of Asinius Gallus and Gaius Marcius (8 B.C.E.), Augustus, his second period of ten years having expired, "once more accepted the supreme power." He adds that it was during this year, among many other things, that Augustus "changed the name of the month called Sextilis to August." This item of evidence indicates that it was in this year that Augustus was involved in calendar reforms. It is supported by the fact that Augustus initiated the 14 year tax census as a regular calendar feature of the Roman empire during this same year (AATB, pp. 553–558; Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:2:1; Tertullian, *Ag. Mar.*, 4:19; Expositor, ser. 8, iv, p. 25). The year 8 B.C.E., therefore, was the starting point of a new calendar era.

16 Livy, 37:4:4.

17 Sage, *Livy*, x, pp. 300f, n. 4.

prior to what was later considered the first of March.[18] The first of January previous to that March, likewise, actually took place 117 days earlier, i.e. in early October of 191 B.C.E.

If we calculate back 27 Hebrew years from the date that Herod took Jerusalem (i.e. Tebeth 10 of the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, being January 2 of 36 B.C.E. on the Julian calendar) we arrive at the date of Tebeth 10 in the year 64/63 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, or January 1 (the anachronistic Julian date) of what we call 63 B.C.E. This day, accordingly, was the date that Pompey conquered Jerusalem.

But a Julian beginning for the year we call 63 B.C.E., as we have seen, was not in effect during this period. Because of the calendar problems, the first of January actually began at about the end of what the later Julian calendar called *Octobris* (October), in the year we now call 64 B.C.E. The beginning of their year, being the first of March, occurred in the last days of what was later called December, 64 B.C.E.

Therefore, the consuls for 63 B.C.E. actually were elected at the end of October, 64 B.C.E. and officially took office at the end of December, 64 B.C.E. As a result, Pompey conquered Jerusalem exactly 27 Hebrew years before Herod, on January 1 of 63 B.C.E. (Julian reckoning), but the consuls then in office were the consuls for the year we call 63 B.C.E., having come to office on their March 1 (a Julian date of late Dec.), some 67 days or so prior to what was later labeled March 1.

Finally, the first year of the 179th Olympiad was 64/63 B.C.E., November reckoning (Macedonian system). The last year of the 185th Olympiad was 37/36 B.C.E., November reckoning. These are the Olympiads given by Josephus for the overthrow of Jerusalem by Pompey and then Herod. These Olympiads are correct since there does exist 27 complete Hebrew years between Tebeth 10 of the 179th Olympiad, year 1 (Jan. 1, 63 B.C.E.), and Tebeth 10 of the 185th Olympiad, year 4 (Jan. 2, 36 B.C.E.).

The Death of Mithridates

Confirmation that Pompey conquered Jerusalem on January 1, 63 B.C.E.—i.e. in the early part of the March 1 consul year of 63 B.C.E. (late Dec., 64 to late Dec., 63 B.C.E., Julian dates)—is found in the records dealing with the death of Mithridates, king of Pontus on the Black Sea.

As Pompey was marching south through Syria and Palestine in an effort to come against the Arabs of Petra, the Jews backed out of an agreement they had reached to pay tribute. Pompey, as a result, decided to divert his war effort and come against the Jews first. At the same time, word came to him of the death of Mithridates.

> A further impetus to his (Pompey's) pace was given by the death of Mithridates, news of which reached him near Jericho. . . . At this spot (Jericho) Pompey encamped for an evening only and at daybreak pressed on to Jerusalem. (Jos., *Wars*, 1:6:6)

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18 See calendar days in HBC, pp. 74f.

> . . . Pompey was angry and took the army that he had prepared against the Nabataeans, and the auxiliaries from Damascus and the rest of Syria, as well as the Roman legions already at his disposal, and marched against Aristobulus (high priest of Judaea). . . . And not long afterward Pompey led his army against him; and on the way there came to him messengers from Pontus, who informed him of the death of Mithridates at the hands of his son Pharnaces. He then encamped near Jericho . . . and at dawn set out for Jerusalem. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:3:4–14:4:1)

To begin with, we should note that the Nabataean Arabs of Petra lived in an area that is extremely hot during the summer months. The weather is most pleasant there only during the fall and winter time. There seems little doubt, due to the difficulty of the weather and the terrain, that Pompey's expedition against these people would have been scheduled for the fall or winter.[19] We also know that Pompey's original intent was not to attack Jerusalem but the Arabs of Petra. It was only as the result of the refusal of the partisans of Aristobulus to pay the promised tribute that Pompey turned his forces aside and struck at Jerusalem first.[20] This detail indicates that Pompey came against Jerusalem in the autumn or winter.

Dio also helps us to date the death of Mithridates. He remarks:

> For, when Marcus Cicero had become consul with Gaius Antonius, Mithridates no longer caused any injury to the Romans, but had destroyed himself, Catiline undertook to set up a new government, and by banding together the allies against the state threw the people into fear of a mighty conflict. (Dio, 37:10.)

Dio (c. 150–235 C.E.), following the custom of his day, marked the more ancient consul years from the time of their elections on the first of January. The consul year named, therefore, is for 63 B.C.E., January 1 reckoning, but the months he uses belong to the pre-Julian reformations to the calendar.

In this statement of Dio's, we are informed that "when" Cicero and Antonius "had become" the consuls for 63 B.C.E., "Mithridates no longer caused any injury to the Romans, but had destroyed himself." This statement reveals that at the beginning of this consul year—which as we have already shown actually started in late October, 64 B.C.E., of the Julian calendar—the final days of Mithridates had already occurred.

Dio's words also indicate that it was AFTER the death of Mithridates that the Catiline conspiracy was set in motion. Sallust meanwhile writes:

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19 Nebuchadnezzar's, for example, warred against these same Arab tribes from Kislimu (Nov./Dec.) until Addaru (Feb/March) during his sixth year, see ABC, p. 101, ℓ. 9–10.

20 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:3:2–14:4:1, *Wars*, 1:6:1–1:7:1.

> Accordingly, when the elections (for consul) had been held Marcus Tullius (Cicero) and Gaius Antonius were proclaimed consuls, and this at first filled the conspirators with consternation. And yet Catiline's frenzy did not abate. On the contrary, he increased his activities every day, made collections of arms at strategic points in Italy, and borrowed money on his own credit or that of his friends, sending it to Faesulae to a certain Manlius, who afterwards was the first to take the field (in battle). (Sallust, 24)

Sallust proves that the conspiracy of Catiline to form a new government by being elected consul for the year we call 63 B.C.E. had failed.[21] Upon losing the election, Catiline immediately transferred his method to fomenting an armed uprising. After various intrigues throughout that year, Catiline again tried to gain the office of consul, but he "perished at the very opening of the year in which Junius Silanus and Lucius Licinius held office," (i.e. the consul year of 62 B.C.E.).[22]

It is clear from this evidence that the Catiline conspiracy came into being shortly after Catiline lost the election for consul at the beginning of the year 63 B.C.E. (those consuls being elected in late Oct. of 64 B.C.E., Julian reckoning). Yet the death of Mithridates occurred prior to that conspiracy. Further, Catiline was dead and the conspiracy was well over when the consuls of the next year were elected to office, i.e. in late October, 63 B.C.E., Julian reckoning. The death of Mithridates, therefore, could not have taken place towards the end of 63 B.C.E. but rather in the last months of 64 B.C.E., Julian reckoning.

Pompey received word of the death of Mithridates just before he attacked Jerusalem. His siege of Jerusalem was in its third month when he took the city (Jan. 1; Tebeth 10): "τρίτῳ γὰρ μηνὶ τῆς πολιορκίαν (Because of three months of the siege);"[23] "τρισὶ γοῦν μησὶ πολιορκηθέντες (Yet, three months of siege) they surrendered."[24] Accordingly, the siege must have begun late in the Hebrew month of Tishri (Sept./Oct.). We can conclude that Pompey received word of Mithridates' death in late October of 64 B.C.E., just before he began the siege.

Since this news was deemed as vital for Pompey, it is also safe to assume that the death of Mithridates took place no more than about 10 to 15 days before Pompey heard of it, i.e. mid-October. Word would have reached Rome about three or four weeks after the fact and would have been reported to the new consuls. Therefore, the details agree quite well with a conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey on the tenth day of the month of Tebeth (Jan. 1, 63 B.C.E. Julian reckoning), in the year 64/63 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, 27 Jewish years to the day before Herod captured the same city.

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21 Sallust, 16.
22 Dio, 37:11–39.
23 Jos., *Wars*, 1:7:4.
24 Ibid., 5:9:4.

The Reign of Aristobulus

Further confirmation for the date that Pompey took the city of Jerusalem, and therefore for the date that Herod accomplished the same feat, is found in the records dealing with the length of the reign of Aristobulus, the Jewish high priest at the time of Pompey's invasion. Josephus informs us that Aristobulus fell into the hands of Pompey and was arrested JUST BEFORE the siege of Jerusalem was started.[25] In another place, Josephus writes:

> And having met with such ill fortune, Aristobulus was sent to Rome a second time; and there he was kept in chains, after being king and high priest three years and six months. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:6:1)

This data shows that Aristobulus had completed six months of reign during his fourth year before Pompey arrested him and began to lay siege to the city of Jerusalem. It is therefore indicated that the siege began sometime during the seventh month of that year, i.e. the month of Tishri (Sept./Oct.). The three months of siege, accordingly, were Tishri, Marheshuan, and Khisleu. Just ten days into the next month (Tebeth) the city was captured.

A different length for the reign of Aristobulus is found in a summary list located at the end of Josephus' work. In this account we read:

> For after her (Alexandra's) death, Hyrcanus' brother Aristobulus made war upon him, defeated him, deprived him of his office and himself became both king and high priest of the nation. When he had reigned three years and as many months,[26] Pompey came, and took the city of Jerusalem by storm, and sent him with his children to Rome in bonds. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 20:10:4)

Both Schürer and Bloch have recognized that Josephus has utilized another handbook of chronology or official list to compose this summary.[27] Nevertheless, its calculation is easily understood. Hyrcanus, the brother of Aristobulus, held the high priest's office while their mother, Alexandra, sat on the throne. Hyrcanus and Alexandra are said to have reigned "an equal period," namely nine years.[28] Yet Hyrcanus did not give up his position without a fight. Upon his mother's death he also took the throne and "held it for three months, but was driven from it by his brother Aristobulus."[29]

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25 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:4:1–2.

26 Feldman's translation of the phrase "ἔτει δὲ τρίτῳ τῆς Βασιλείαςκα ὶ πρὸςμησ ὶν τοῖ ἴσοις" as, "When he had reigned two years and three months," or, "In the third year of his reign and after as many months," is clearly an error (Feldman, *Jos.*, x, p. 130, n. d, and p. 131). The phrase literally means "Year three of the reign and forward months the same." Therefore, Whiston's translation, "and when he had reigned three years and three months" (Whiston, *Jos.*, p. 425), which is also the understanding of Marcus (*Jos.*, vii, pp. 450f, n. c), is superior.

27 GJV, 1, p. 256, n. 1; DQFJ, pp. 149f.

28 Jos., *Antiq.*, 20:10:4.

29 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:6:4.

An analysis of this evidence shows that Alexandra died in the last month of the ninth year of her reign. Hyrcanus succeeded her but was immediately thrown into a civil war with his brother, Aristobulus. This war lasted three months before Hyrcanus surrendered his power. The above passage from *Antiquities*, 20:10:4, agrees with this presentation, and thereby determines the reign of Aristobulus without including the three months of civil war. Each year of his reign was counted from the month that Aristobulus came to power (i.e. in Tammuz; June/July). The three remaining months represent the time from his third anniversary on the throne until the month that he was arrested by Pompey (i.e. Tishri; Sept./Oct.). When we add these three months of civil war back into this calculation we arrive at a reign that lasted three years and six months, which is in perfect agreement with *Antiquities*, 14:6:1. Since all of these figures are provided to us by Josephus, it is also apparent that he saw no contradiction and understood them in the same way.

The Planting Season

All of the evidence points to the fact that Herod conquered Jerusalem on Tebeth 10 of the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. Yet there is one more detail that not only proves that our dating is correct but that the sabbath year of 36/35 B.C.E. began with the first of Nisan. This evidence comes when we compare the words of Josephus, about the planting season, with the information on the ancient Gezer calendar discovered at Tell Jezer in Palestine.

As we have already demonstrated above, the events that occurred after Herod captured Jerusalem prove that it was but a short time until the sabbath year arrived. More importantly, according to Josephus, it was also that time of year when the Jews normally planted their fields, but were unable to do so this time because of the approaching sabbath year.

Josephus makes this following statement in the framework of Herod now being in charge of the city and the Roman soldiers of Sossius having already departed:

> And there was no end to their troubles, for on the one hand their greedy master, who was in need (of money), was plundering them, and on the other hand the seventh year, which was approaching, FORCED THEM TO LEAVE THE LAND UNWORKED, since we are forbidden to sow the earth in that year. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:1:2)

This evidence from Josephus proves that a time normally set aside for planting was now unavailable to the Jews because of the approaching sabbath year. Since one was not able to harvest in the sabbath year, it also meant that he would not sow just prior to the beginning of that year, for such efforts were considered to be in vain. The question is, “When would this pre-sabbath sowing normally take place.”

Our answer is found on the Gezer calendar. According to the information

on this calendar, there are two months of planting: Khisleu (Nov./Dec.) and Tebeth (Dec./Jan.); and two months of "late planting," which in the sequence of the calendar prove to be the months of Shebat (Jan./Feb.) and Adar (Feb./March).[30] From the late planting of the last two months, one would harvest barley in the second month of the next year, Iyyar (April/May).[31]

There seems little question that it would take Herod about 30 days to fully master the city of Jerusalem after its capture, enabling him to pay off and send the Roman troops of Sossius away. Since Herod conquered Jerusalem on the tenth of Tebeth (Jan. 2), the tenth Hebrew month, the words of Josephus are only appropriate about 30 days later, i.e. in the eleventh month, Shebat (Jan./Feb.). In full confirmation of Josephus, we find that the month of Shebat is the time when the Jews would have normally been sowing their "late planting" for the spring harvest. In any regular year it would have been their last chance to plant before the new year.

The first month of the sabbath year, therefore, had to be Abib (Nisan). It could not have been the month of Tishri because the planting season was already at hand. The rapidly approaching sabbath year mentioned during the planting season compels us to place the overthrow of Jerusalem in the period that followed the first of Khisleu, when the planting season began, and not before that date.

Conclusion

The evidence demonstrates that Herod conquered Jerusalem on the tenth of Tebeth, a national Jewish fast day, in the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning (i.e. Jan. 2, 36 B.C.E.)—27 years to the day after Pompey accomplished the same feat. After mastering the city and sending the troops of Sossius away (in Shebat of that year), Antigonus being sent off to Antony at the same time, the Jews of the city found themselves not only suffering from Herod's plundering but forced to abandon their "late planting" because of the approach of the sabbath year, now only about 45 days away. The sabbath year, accordingly, was the year 36/35 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, which is in perfect agreement with the system "A" cycle.

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30 HBC, pp. 33f.
31 Ibid.
32 See Chart B.

Chapter XXI

The Sabbath Year of 22/21 B.C.E.

Our next item of evidence strikes a fatal blow at sabbath cycle systems "B" and "D," while remaining highly supportive of system "A." It is by far one of the most important pieces of information for this entire subject. It has been consistently overlooked because of its ramifications. While on the one hand it completely disassembles the two other possible sabbath cycle systems, it firmly establishes the year 21/22 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, as a sabbath year. This evidence comes from Josephus, *Antiquities*, 15:9:1–15:10:4, and it deals with the thirteenth through seventeenth years of King Herod the Great. Josephus tells us:

> Now in this year, which was THE THIRTEENTH OF HEROD'S REIGN, the greatest hardships came upon the country, whether from the deity (Yahweh) being angry or because misfortune occurs in such cycles. For in the first place, there were continual droughts, and as a result the earth WAS UNPRODUCTIVE EVEN OF SUCH FRUITS AS IT USUALLY BROUGHT FORTH OF ITSELF. In the second place, because of the change of diet brought about by the lack of cereals, bodily illnesses and eventually the plague prevailed, and misfortunes continually assailed them. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:9:1)

In this passage we are plainly told that the crops that had been planted by the Jews in the thirteenth year of Herod were destroyed by drought. Even fruits that normally grew of themselves were unproductive. This year, therefore, was not a sabbath year.

Josephus continues his report by showing that these bad conditions were carried over into the next year:

> And since, too, the fruits of that year (year 13) were destroyed and those which had been stored up had been consumed, there was no hope of relief left, for their bad situation gradually became worse than they had expected. And it was not only for that year that they had nothing left, but THE SEED OF THE CROPS THAT SURVIVED WERE ALSO LOST WHEN THE EARTH YIELDED NOTHING THE SECOND YEAR.

> So their necessity made them find many new ways of sustaining themselves. (Jos., *Antiq*., 15:9:1)

This statement again confirms that there was a crop failure in "Year 13" of Herod, for not only were the fruits of that year destroyed but also the things stored up were consumed.

This passage adds that there was a crop failure the next year, i.e. "Year 14" of Herod, "when the earth yielded nothing the second year" as well. Therefore, "Year 14" of Herod could not be a sabbath year because the Jews were again planting crops and trying to produce a harvest.

The story continues with the observation that King Herod was in no better shape than the rest of the Jews, "for he was deprived of the revenue which he received from the (products of the) earth, and had used up his money in the lavish reconstruction of cities."[1] Further, the neighboring peoples could not offer help by selling the Jews grain because they had "suffered no less themselves" and Herod did not have the money to buy the grain anyway.[2]

Herod, in order to obtain grain, cut up into coinage all the ornaments of gold and silver in his palace and bought grain from Egypt. Herod then distributed the grain to his people:

> . . . to those who were able to provide food for themselves BY THEIR OWN LABOR he distributed grain in very exact proportions. Then, since there were many who because of old age or some other attendant infirmity were unable to prepare the grain for themselves, he provided for them by putting bakers to work and furnishing them food already prepared. He also took care that they should GO THROUGH THE WINTER without danger (to health). (Jos., *Antiq*., 15:9:2)

The first thing we notice is that during this year (the fourteenth of Herod) it was permissible for the Jews who were able to "provide food for themselves," and to do so "by their own labor." Since the subject is the distribution of grain, we have here yet another proof that crops were being sown and harvested during this year.

Next, Herod made preparations for enduring the winter. That the crops failed in the first place shows that we have passed by the spring and summer harvest. Our story has now brought us to the throes of winter in the fourteenth year of Herod, which began in the middle of Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.).

But Josephus does not stop here. His next words are vitally important for our study of the sabbath year cycle. He writes:

> And when these things had been provided for his subjects, he also applied himself to aiding the

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1 Jos., *Antiq*., 15:9:1.
2 Jos., *Antiq*., 15:9:2.

> neighboring cities, and gave seeds to the inhabitants of Syria. And this brought him not a little profit, for his generosity was so well timed as to bring a good harvest, SO THAT ENOUGH FOOD WAS PRODUCED FOR THEM ALL. IN SUM, WHEN THE TIME DREW NEAR FOR HARVESTING THE LAND, HE SENT INTO THE COUNTRY NO FEWER THAN 50,000 MEN, WHO HE HIMSELF FED AND CARED FOR, AND IN THIS WAY, WHEN HE HAD HELPED HIS DAMAGED REALM RECOVER BY HIS UNFAILING MUNIFICENCE AND ZEAL, he also did not a little to relieve the neighboring peoples, who were in the same difficulties. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:9:2)

In this passage Herod has already provided for the winter provisions of his own people before he attempts to come to the assistance of the neighboring lands. Since Herod had already made provisions for the winter, the grain that he was providing to the Syrians had to be for the winter and late planting (i.e. from Dec. through March).

The "good harvest" mentioned by Josephus as following upon Herod's generosity to the neighboring countries refers to the harvest of both the Jews and their neighbors. Therefore, it is a reference to the next spring harvest of May and June. As a result, we have now come to the harvest of Herod's fifteenth year!

Since we are now in Herod's fifteenth year, it is all important for our study to notice that during this harvest period Herod sent "into the country (of Judaea) no fewer than 50,000 men" to help in the harvest, and that this assistance "helped his damaged realm recover." In short, Herod's fifteenth year, like his thirteenth and fourteenth, could not be a sabbath year because the Jews were harvesting crops! This fact proves that the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth years of Herod were not sabbath years.

No information is provided by Josephus for Herod's sixteenth year that would indicate whether or not it was a sabbath. Nevertheless, this fact is in itself noteworthy since there is nothing that stands against this possibility and according to system "A," Herod's sixteenth year was a sabbath. Yet Josephus does give us evidence for Herod's seventeenth year. Josephus writes that "after Herod had completed the seventeenth year of his reign, Caesar came to Syria."[3] Josephus follows this statement with a discussion of Caesar's visit with Herod, i.e. in Herod's early eighteenth year.[4] He then adds:

> It was at this time also that Herod remitted to the people of his kingdom a third part of their taxes, under the pretext of letting them recover from a period of LACK OF CROPS, but really for the more important

3 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:10:3

4 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:10:3–4, 15:11:1.

> purpose of getting back the goodwill of those who were disaffected. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:10:4)

Tax collection was normally carried out in the seventh month of the year, Tishri, when the harvest was gathered in and people could afford to pay their taxes. But the crops for that period were planted in the last half of the previous year (i.e. beginning in December). The report given by Josephus demonstrates that crops had been planted but that once again there had been a bad harvest. This data shows that the Jews were sowing crops in the seventeenth year of Herod, proving that "Year 17" was not a sabbath year.

Dating the Thirteenth through Seventeenth Years of Herod

As we have already demonstrated in our earlier chapters, Herod began his reign at Jerusalem in the year 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. This represents his first year as ruler from Jerusalem and the year from which events in his reign were numbered.

- Herod's seventh year was the same year that the battle of Actium was fought (Sept. 2, 31 B.C.E.).[5] Therefore, Herod's seventh year was 31/30 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. This date is in perfect agreement with "Year 1" of Herod being 37/36 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning.

- The end of Herod's seventeenth year and the beginning of his eighteenth occurred when Augustus Caesar came to Syria.[6] According to Dio, Caesar arrived in Syria during the spring of the consul year of Marcus Apuleius and Publius Silius (i.e. 20 B.C.E.).[7] As a result, Herod's seventeenth year equals 21/20 B.C.E., and his eighteenth year represents 20/19 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning. These dates are also perfectly in tune with Herod's first year as 37/36 B.C.E. and his seventh year as 31/30 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning.

Based upon these firmly established dates for Herod's first, seventh, seventeenth, and eighteenth years, Herod's thirteenth through seventeenth years are easily dated as follows (all use a Nisan reckoning):

Year 13 = 25/24 B.C.E., crops planted.

Year 14 = 24/23 B.C.E., crops planted.

Year 15 = 23/22 B.C.E., crops planted.

Year 16 = 22/21 B.C.E., no information.

Year 17 = 21/20 B.C.E., crops planted.

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5 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:5:1–2, *Wars*, 1:19:1–3; cf. Dio, 50:10–51:1.
6 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:10:3.
7 Dio, 54:7.

Comparing Sabbath Cycle Systems

Our effort now is to compare these above dates with the four possible sabbath cycle systems:

System "B" requires that there is a sabbath year from Tishri (Sept./Oct.) of 24 until Tishri of 23 B.C.E. This date falls within Herod's fourteenth and fifteenth years, when crops were being sown and harvested, and therefore must be eliminated from consideration. It simply will not work.

System "D" requires that there is a sabbath year from Nisan (March/April) of 23 until Nisan of 22 B.C.E. Since this represents the fifteenth year of Herod, it too must be eliminated.

System "C" requires a sabbath year extending from Tishri, 23 until Tishri, 22 B.C.E. This system may escape the fact that the last mentioned harvest of the fifteenth year of Herod (23/22 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning) is said to be the first harvest after winter (i.e. the spring harvest of May and June), but it fails the test when we compare the fifteenth year of Herod with his second year.

As demonstrated in Chapter XIX, Herod conquered Jerusalem on the tenth of Tebeth, the tenth month of the Hebrew year. System "C" would have the sabbath of that period extend from Tishri of 37 until Tishri of 36 B.C.E. But this arrangement is impossible since after Herod conquered Jerusalem the sabbath year was still "approaching," and therefore was arriving in the spring and not in the fall.

For system "C" to work, Herod would have had to conquer Jerusalem before the first of the Hebrew seventh month, Tishri, in 37 B.C.E. Contrary to this, the siege is described as one of great length, the result of which had made the Roman soldiers "furious."[8] Not only had the siege taken six months from the time that the Romans had joined Herod,[9] but the siege works were not built until the summertime.[10] Therefore, the earliest that one can date the conquest of Jerusalem—even if we assume that the conquest did not happen after six months but five months and one day—would be on the first day of the Hebrew eighth month, the month of Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.). Since system "C" does not work for the beginning of the second year of Herod, it certainly will not work for the beginning of his sixteenth year either.

System "A," on the other hand, meets every requirement. Not only does it ideally fit the description of a Nisan beginning for the year, fully demonstrated by such things as the oncoming sabbath year after Herod conquered Jerusalem, but its cycle makes the year 22/21 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, the sixteenth year of Herod, a sabbath year. Therefore, it is not eliminated as a possibility by the events of Herod's thirteenth through seventeenth years; yet it agrees with the cycle established by the records from the fifteenth year of Hezekiah (Chart B). System "A" remains the only viable option.

Other Relevant Details

Most historians accept the fact that Herod conquered Jerusalem within the year 37/36 B.C.E. But some then argue that events mentioned by Josephus,

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8 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:6:2, *Wars*, 1:18:2.
9 Jos., *Wars*, 1:18:2, 5:9:4.
10 Jos., *Antiq.*,14:16:2.

which they date to the year 43/42 B.C.E., preclude that year from being a sabbath, which in turn would eliminate the years 36/35 and 22/21 B.C.E. from being sabbaths as well. Supposedly, it was during this year that Herod was placed in charge of an army by Cassius and Murcus, that Antipater collected his own army, and because of the death of Antipater a civil war almost began (all unlikely possibilities during a sabbath year).

In response, the dating of these events to 43/42 B.C.E. is wholly without substance. To begin with, these events occurred in the year that Antipater, the father of Herod, was murdered. Josephus places the story of the death of Herod's father in the year that Cassius was preparing to fight Mark Antony, i.e. the first half of 42/41 B.C.E.[11]

The ἑορτῆς (*heortēs*, i.e. feast) held "not long afterwards"[12] is hypothesized by some to be the Festival of Tabernacles which occurred in October of 43 B.C.E. This conclusion is based solely on the merits that in some of the Rabbinic Hebrew literature the term החג (*he-hag*; the feast) was used to indicate the Feast of Tabernacles, the festival par excellence.[13]

This conclusion is discredited by the fact that Josephus often refers to the "Feast of Tabernacles" by name.[14] In the *Ancient Table of Contents* attached to Josephus' book of *Jewish Antiquities*, we find ἑορτῇ (feast) used by itself as a reference to the Feast of Passover.[15] Further, the Greek term ἑορτῆς (feast) is also used for the Feast of Passover in the New Testament,[16] which is contemporaneous with the time of Josephus. In John, 7:2, the Feast of Tabernacles is called "the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles" and not simply "the feast." Josephus, as another example, tells us of "the celebration of Pentecost, as it is called, which is a ἑορτὴ (feast)" and "at the ἑορτήν (feast), which is called Pentecost."[17] The expression, "the feast," therefore, is an inexact one and can apply to any of the three major festivals practiced by the Jews in the period of Josephus: Passover, Pentecost, or Tabernacles.[18]

The "feast" referred to by Josephus in *Antiquities*, 14:11:5, is the Feast of Pentecost, for it is associated with the event of Cassius coming to Judaea and then marching against Antony.[19] Josephus thereby places it sometime after the first month of the Jewish year, when the Passover occurred, yet before the seventh month, at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was also the time when Cassius was defeated by Antony and Augustus Caesar.[20]

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11 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:11:4.

12 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:11:5, *Wars*, 1:11:6.

13 E.g. Marcus, *Jos.* vii, pp. 413, n. d, 601, n. c.

14 E.g. Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:2:3, 13:8:2, 13:13:5, 15:3:2, 15:3:3.

15 Jos., *Table*, 17:15.

16 E.g. Luke, 2:42 (cf. 2:41); Matt., 26:5 (cf. 26:2); Mark, 14:2 (cf. 14:1); Luke, 23:17 (cf. 22:1); John, 4:45, referring to John, 2:13–3:36; John, 5:1, where the Passover is defined as "the feast of the Jews."

17 Jos. *Antiq.*, 14:13:4, *Wars*, 6:5:3.

18 Josephus mentions all three feasts as occurring in Judaea during this period: The Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread (e.g. Jos., *Antiq.*,17:9:3, 18:2:2, 18:4:3, 20:5:3, *Wars*, 2:1:3, 2:12:1, 7, 2:14:3), Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost (e.g. Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:8:4, 14:13:4, 17:10:2, *Wars*, 2:3:1, 6:5:3), and the Feast of Tabernacles (e.g. Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:2:3, 13:8:2, 13:13:5, 15:3:3, *Wars*, 1:3:2, 2:19:1, 6:5:3).

19 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:11:1–7.

20 See below n. 25.

According to Dio, Cassius secured possession of Syria and then set out for Judaea, where he came into alliance with the Jews, in the consul year of 42 B.C.E. (Jan. reckoning).[21] The most likely time for Cassius to leave winter quarters and come to Judaea would be at the beginning of spring, i.e. around Abib of 42/41 B.C.E.

The appointment of Herod as governor of Coele-Syria, placing Herod in charge of an army, and the promise to make Herod the king of Judaea after the war—a war which Cassius had just begun with Antony and Caesar—therefore, occurred after the first part of the Jewish year of 42/41 B.C.E. (the promise being made while Cassius and Murcus were still in Judaea).[22] We should also comment that Herod was made ruler of Coele-Syria not Judaea. The army he commanded was most probably Syrian and not Jewish. Therefore, the whole issue of his being appointed over an army is probably moot to begin with, since the Syrians did not observe the sabbath year.

It was after Cassius had left Judaea that Malichus plotted against Antipater, the father of Herod.[23] Therefore, the statement that Antipater "moved across the Jordan and collected an army of Arabs as well as natives" shortly after Cassius left Judaea does not conflict with a sabbath year in 43/42 B.C.E.,[24] for it was done after the first of the Jewish year of 42/41 B.C.E. and shortly before Pentecost (early June).

Antipater's death, Herod's resolve to avoid a civil war, the Pentecost festival that followed "not long afterwards," the murder of Malichus, Cassius leaving Syria to fight Antony in Macedonia, the disturbances which subsequently arose in Judaea, and Herod's war with Antigonus all follow in order. "Meanwhile," Cassius marched against Antony and Caesar and met his defeat in Macedonia during October of 42 B.C.E.[25]

What of the ninth year of Herod (29/28 B.C.E.), which according to system "A" is a sabbath year, or later dates in Herod's reign? Josephus tells us that Herod was secure in his kingdom after his seventh year. Only building projects and other political, non-military subjects are mentioned after that point.[26] Except for the discussion of crops during Herod's thirteenth through fifteenth and seventeenth years, there is nothing useful for us one way or the other with regard to the issue of a sabbath year.

Conclusion.

There is no evidence whatsoever for the years both before and after Herod's conquest of Jerusalem that disqualifies the system "A" sabbath cycle. On the other hand, several valuable points of evidence demonstrate that the Jews did not celebrate a sabbath year during Herod's thirteenth through fifteenth and his seventeenth years. These facts assure us that the years 36/35 and 22/21 B.C.E., Nisan reckoning, were sabbath years.

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21 Dio, 47:28; cf. 47:16.
22 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:11:4, *Wars*, 1:11:4.
23 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:11:3.
24 Ibid.
25 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:11:5–14:12:2, *Wars*, 1:11:4–1:12:4; Dio, 47:32–48:2; Marcus, *Jos.*, vii, p. 609, n. g.
26 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:5:1–15:11:1, *Wars*, 1:19:1–1:23:1.

Section IV

The Post-Herod Period

Chapter XXII

The Sabbath Year of 42/43 C.E.

Our next item of evidence only indirectly points to the year 42/43 C.E., Nisan reckoning, as a sabbath year. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, this information demonstrates that systems "B" and "D" are wholly inadequate as an explanation for the sabbath cycle. Our documentation has to do with the events surrounding the Jewish protest against the Roman emperor Gaius Caligula Caesar, when Caligula tried to place a statue of himself inside the Temple at Jerusalem. It proves that both harvesting and planting took place in the year 40/41 C.E., thereby confirming that the years 40/41 and 41/42 C.E. were not sabbath years.

The Harvest of 40 C.E.

As the result of civil strife in Alexandria between the Jewish and Greek inhabitants, delegates from each faction were selected to appear before Gaius Caligula Caesar at Rome. In that hearing, one of the Greek representatives, named Apion, harshly accused the Jews of being the only people in the empire who "scorned to honour" Caesar "with statues and to swear by his name." Believing himself to be a god and indignant at being slighted by the Jews, Caligula "ordered a colossal statue to be set up within the inner sanctuary (of the Temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem) dedicated to himself under the name of Dios (Zeus)."[1]

Gaius Caligula next sent orders to Petronius, his legate in Syria, to bring a statue to Judaea under the conduct of half of his army quartered on the Euphrates river. Petronius was also instructed to kill anyone who opposed this action.[2]

After reading the letter, Petronius "was in great difficulties." He knew that Gaius would have him executed if the orders were not obeyed; he also recognized that the Jews would not permit the pagan image to be placed in their Temple. On the one hand, he faced a danger by removing such a large number of troops from the eastern front and, on the other, it was dangerous to "draw these myriads (of Jews) into war against him" as well.[3]

Following this line of reasoning, as Philo tells us, Petronius "was slow to set to work" and "shrank from action."[4] He was also left with an excuse for delay by Caligula. Caesar had not sent a statue but had left its construction up to Petronius. Petronius knew that if he obtained a finished statue in Syria the speed by which he would then be forced to execute Caesar's orders

1 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:1–2, *Wars*, 2:10:1; Philo, *Gaius*, 18–30; Tacitus, *Hist.*, 5:9.
2 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:2, *Wars*, 2:10:1; Philo, *Gaius*, 31.
3 Philo, *Gaius*, 31.
4 Ibid.

would lead "to a speedy outburst of war." So the legate cunningly commissioned the construction of a statue at Sidon, Phoenicia.[5]

Petronius then sent for the magnates of the Jews, their priests, and magistrates so that he could explain to them Caesar's orders and the dire consequences forthcoming if the Jews resisted them.[6] With these matters underway, Petronius left Antioch, Syria with a large army and marched towards Judaea. He next arrived at the Phoenician port city of Ptolemais, where he intended "to spend the winter" and engage in a war during the "spring."[7]

"The army having already reached Ptolemais," and upon hearing of the intentions of Petronius, tens of thousands of Jews, with their wives and children, left Judaea and Galilee and proceeded to the plain of Ptolemais. There they implored Petronius to have regard for their Law and for themselves and not to place the image in the holy Temple.[8]

Petronius, quite taken by such a sight, retired to deliberate the problem with his fellow-councilors. He then promised the Jews that he would not press the craftsmen to finish their work but he would urge them to perfect the statue (which would take a "long time"). Petronius more importantly promised to send a letter to Caesar, giving him all of the circumstances, to see whether he might change his mind. He would then delay things until a response was received.[9]

In time Petronius wrote to Caesar. In his letter one of the major justifications Petronius gave to the emperor for stalling was his concern that the crops in Judaea would not be harvested if there was an outbreak of trouble:

> For the σίτου (*sitou*; grain) crop was just ripe and so were the other cereals, and he feared that the Jews in despair for their ancestral rites and in scorn of life might lay waste the arable land or set fire to the cornlands on the hills and the plain. He needed a guard to insure more vigilance in gathering the fruits not only of the cornfields but also those provided by the orchards. (Philo, *Gaius*, 33)

The context of the ripe σίτου (*sitou*; grain), barley or wheat crop,[10] and the expected ingathering of fruits, shows that the winter had passed and we are now in late spring or early summer, between late Iyyar (April/May) and Tammuz (June/July).[11]

When Caesar received the letter from Petronius he was furious that Petronius had not carried out his orders. "After waiting a short time he gave one of his secretaries instructions about answering Petronius." In this letter Caligula ordered Petronius to continue on his assignment, "since the harvest

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5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:2, *Wars*, 2:10:1.

8 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:2, *Wars*, 2:10:1–3; Philo, *Gaius*, 31–33.

9 Philo, *Gaius*, 33.

10 The Greek word σίτου (*sitou*) refers to "*corn, grain*," and encompasses both barley and wheat (GEL, p. 730). Barley is harvested in the spring while wheat is harvested in late summer.

11 HBC, pp. 33f.

which he alleged as an excuse, whether truly or plausibly, could already have been carried out."[12]

It took about 30 to 45 days for a letter to travel from Syria or Palestine to Rome, or vice versa.[13] Caesar's response shows that by the time he decided to write to Petronius, and with the knowledge of how long it would take for the letter to arrive in Syria, the harvest should have already been accomplished.

Since Petronius must have written his letter to Caesar in or about June, Caesar would have received it in August. Caesar then waited "a short time" before making his response. By the time Petronius received a letter back from Caesar, it would have been the month of Tishri (Sept./Oct.), when the Feast of Ingathering (Feast of Tabernacles) was held.

Planting Time: Winter of 40 C.E.

After receiving his new orders to continue, Petronius left Ptolemais "and advanced into Galilee, where he summoned the people, with all persons of distinction, to Tiberias."[14] As before, he was met by tens of thousands of Jews. They again "besought him by no means to put them under such constraint nor to pollute the city by setting up a statue."[15]

Petronius, meanwhile, tried to convince the Jews of the recklessness of their request. The Jews told Petronius that before he could put the statue in the Temple he would have to "first sacrifice the entire Jewish nation." The Jews then presented themselves with their wives and children, "and falling on their faces and baring their throats, they declared that they were ready to be slain."[16]

After hearing this, Petronius "for the time" dismissed them, nothing being decided.[17] "During the ensuing days Petronius held crowded private conferences with the aristocracy, and public meetings with the people."[18] The Jews were quite willing to die and, even worse in the eyes of Petronius, while the Jews were waiting on him for the last 40 to 50 days for an answer, they "had left their fields to sit protesting."

> They (the Jews) continued to make these supplications for 40 days. Furthermore, they neglected their fields, and that, too, though it was TIME TO SOW THE SEED. For they showed a stubborn determination and readiness to die rather than to see the image erected. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:3).

Seeing this situation, Petronius called the Jews to him at Tiberias and told them that he was canceling the project and was returning to Antioch. He

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12 Philo, *Gaius*, 34.

13 The 30 to 45 day period is based upon an average unimpeded voyage during the summer months. During the winter months, because of winds out of the N.W. and stormy sea, a fortunate journey took about 50 to 70 days (APA, pp. 136–148; cf. Jos., *Wars*, 2:10:5; and cf. our comments below pp. 284f).

14 Jos., *Wars*, 2:10:3.

15 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:3.

16 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:3, *Wars*, 2:10:3–4.

17 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:3, *Wars*, 2:10:3–4.

18 Jos., *Wars*, 2:10:5.

agreed to write a letter to Caesar telling him of his actions in the hope that Caesar would relent and not have him slain for disobeying his orders.[19]

> As, however, none of these efforts would induce them (the Jews) to yield, and as he (Petronius) saw the country was in danger of remaining unsown—for IT WAS SEED-TIME and the people had spent 50 days idly waiting upon him—he finally called them together and said: "It is better that I should take the risk. Either, the deity aiding me, I shall prevail with Caesar and have the satisfaction of saving myself as well as you, or, if his indignation is roused, I am ready on behalf of the lives of so many to surrender my own." With that he dismissed the multitude, who rained blessings on his head, and collecting his troops left Ptolemais and returned to Antioch. (Jos., *Wars*, 2:10:5)

This evidence shows that we have arrived at the month of Khisleu (Nov./Dec.), the regular planting time for grains in Judaea.[20] Petronius considered that, "since the land was unsown, there would be a harvest of banditry, because the requirement of tribute could not be met."[21]

This second episode of Petronius writing a letter to Caesar, under the guise of his unwillingness to sacrifice the Judaean food supply, has often been confused with the first letter.[22] Nevertheless, when we compare the records from Josephus and Philo, and lay those stories alongside one another, it is clear that the first letter was sent in the spring, during the early harvest, while the second letter was sent during planting time in the winter. Further, the story in Philo shows that the first letter was received before Agrippa visited Gaius;[23] the second letter was received after Agrippa's visit.[24]

From Antioch, Syria, Petronius sent his second letter to Caesar telling him of all the things that had transpired, noting that the Jews would not give up without a war and that Caesar would further be deprived of his revenue. He also suggested that Caesar ought to respect the Law of the Jews and return order to the region.[25]

Meanwhile, Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great of Judaea, who Caesar had made king of Philip's old tetrarchy, came to visit Caligula. On hearing of the events that had taken place, Agrippa petitioned Caesar to relent in his efforts and not to place a statue in the Temple at Judaea. Caesar agreed and ordered letters to be drawn up and sent to Petronius for that purpose.[26]

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19 Jos., *Wars*, 2:10:5, *Antiq.*, 18:8:6.

20 HBC, pp. 33f.

21 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:4.

22 E.g. Blosser, HUCA, 52, pp. 136f; and Wacholder, HUCA, 44, pp. 167ff, HUCA, 54, pp. 128ff; and others. Two letters, one sent at planting season and one at harvest, eliminate the problem, voiced by Balsdon (JRS, 24, p. 20), that it would have taken the unreasonable time of one year from Gaius' original order until a letter arrived from Petronius and Agrippa's intervention.

23 Philo, *Gaius*, 33–35, see esp. Philo's comments in 35(261).

24 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:7–9.

25 Jos., *Wars*, 2:10:5, *Antiq.*, 18:8:5–6.

26 Philo, *Gaius*, 35–47; Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:6:10, 18:8:7–8.

Unfortunately, after composing his orders to Petronius in response to his first letter, Caesar received the second letter from Petronius. Upon reading this second letter Caligula became angry, believing that what Petronius was reporting was a revolt by the Jews. Thereupon, Caligula, instead of sending the proposed orders to quit the statue project, sent another letter threatening Petronius with death for his tardiness in carrying out the original command.[27]

Shortly after Caesar wrote his response to Petronius' second letter, Caesar Caligula was murdered. Meanwhile, Caligula's letter was delayed in coming to Petronius. Petronius actually received word of Caligula's death before the orders to pursue the war with the Jews over the issue of the statue had arrived. Accordingly, Petronius ignored the letter from Caligula and did nothing against the Jews.[28]

> However, it so happened that the bearers of this message were weather-bound for three months at sea, while others, who brought the news of the death of Gaius (Caligula), had a fortunate passage. So Petronius received the last information 27 days earlier than the letter conveying his own death-warrant. (Jos., *Wars*, 2:10:5)

> But Petronius did not receive it (the letter) while Gaius (Caligula) was alive since the voyage of those who brought the message was so delayed that before it arrived Petronius had received a letter with news of the death of Gaius. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:9)

The Chronology

In this order of events an important chronology unfolds. Prefacing our entire account is the fact that from the time that Petronius received his initial orders to place the statue in the Temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem, he looked for opportunities to stall for time.

- Before his departure to Gaul and the Rhine in September, 39 C.E., Gaius sent orders to Petronius to place a statue of himself at Jerusalem.

- In late 39 C.E. Petronius took his army to Ptolemais to spend the winter.[29] Tens of thousands of Jews met Petronius at Ptolemais and protested the venture. Petronius retired for a time to deliberate the problem.

- The deliberations continued until it was time to consider harvesting the spring crops and summer fruits, bringing us to at least the late spring of 40 C.E. At that time Petronius sent a letter to Caesar begging him to reconsider.[30]

- About a month to six weeks later, Caesar, now back from Gaul, received the first letter from Petronius. He then waited "a short time" before

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27 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:8, *Wars*, 2:10:5.
28 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:9, *Wars*, 2:10:5.
29 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:2, *Wars*, 2:10:1.
30 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:2, *Wars*, 2:10:1–3; Philo, *Gaius*, 31–33.

drafting his response. The spring harvest season was now over. These events bring us to approximately mid-August. It took about a month to six weeks for the response from Caesar to travel between Rome and Ptolemais. Therefore, Petronius would have received Caesar's negative response in about October of 40 C.E.[31]

- After receiving Caesar's response, Petronius took part of his army and marched to Tiberias in Galilee. Here they were once more met by tens of thousands of Jews showing that they were willing to die rather than let Caesar put his image in the Temple. After hearing their adamant objections Petronius "for a time" did nothing.[32]

- During the period that followed, Petronius began to hold private and public meetings trying to resolve the matter. The Jews then sat in protest for 40 to 50 days awaiting a response from Petronius. As they were sitting, planting season arrived.[33] This detail brings us to the month of Khisleu of 40 C.E., the beginning of the Jewish planting season for grains.

Dating the Planting Season

That the planting season mentioned by Josephus belongs to December of 40 C.E. is verified in yet another important way. We are told that Petronius received notice of Caligula's death 27 days before the second response from Caligula arrived in Syria ordering Petronius to continue the operation against the Jews. Caligula's second letter to Petronius was "bound for three months at sea" due to bad weather conditions.[34]

Caligula was assassinated "on the ninth day before the Kalends of February (i.e. Jan. 24)" in the year 41 C.E., after reigning three years and ten months.[35] According to Josephus, Caligula "died not long after having written to Petronius this letter consigning him to death."[36] His statement indicates that the letter at question was composed in early to mid-January of 41 C.E.

Those who brought word of Caligula's death "had a fortunate passage" and as such would have arrived in Antioch about 30 to 45 days after his demise, i.e. roughly between March 1 and 15, 41 B.C.E. Those who were carrying the letter from Caesar Caligula, on the other hand, "were weather-bound for three months at sea." The severe weather is further indication that their travel took place during the winter months. Petronius received this letter "27 days" after obtaining notification of Caesar's death. Therefore, he received it approximately between March 27 and April 10, 41 C.E.

Caligula must have written his letter to Petronius shortly before the three month period at sea began. Therefore, three months prior to March 27 through April 10 brings us back to the time from about December 27, 40 C.E. to January 10, 41 B.C.E. This detail agrees well with the statement that the

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31 Philo, *Gaius*, 34. Gaius returned to Rome by May 29 of 40 C.E. (JRS, 24, p. 21).

32 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:3, *Wars*, 2:10:3–4.

33 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:3.

34 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:9, *Wars*, 2:10:5.

35 Suetonius, 4:58–59; Dio, 49:29–30. Cf. Jos., *Wars*, 2:11:1, who counts Caligula's reign differently, making him rule only three years and eight months.

36 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:9.

letter was written shortly before Caligula's death (i.e. Jan. 24, 41 C.E.).[37]

From this above mailing date we must subtract another 30 to 45 days travel time to allow for the second letter from Petronius to Caligula, written while Petronius was at Antioch, to arrive at Rome. As a result, Petronius must have written his letter to Caesar in late November or early December, 40 C.E.; and it was at this very time that the Jews had refused to begin planting their crops. In the year 40 C.E. the month of Khisleu began on November 24. Therefore, our records are all in complete accord with one another.

Conclusion

The ramifications of this evidence are very important for our study. It is clear from these records that the year 40/41 C.E., Nisan reckoning, was not a sabbath year, for not only did the Jews harvest their crops in the spring and summer of that year, but they planted crops towards the end.

What has completely gone unnoticed is the fact that the only reason one would plant grain crops in December of 40 C.E. is so that these grains would be harvested in the spring of 41 C.E. Under Talmudic law sowing of crops was forbidden in the last months of the year prior to a sabbath year.

That their intent was to harvest is further evidenced by Petronius' fear that the failure to plant these crops would deprive the empire of its revenue and tribute.[38] This revenue would come to fruition after the beginning of the next Hebrew year (i.e. after Nisan 1 of 41 C.E.). That fact, in turn, means that the year 41/42 C.E., Nisan reckoning, was NOT a sabbath year.

When we compare these facts and details with the four possible sabbath cycle systems, the following conclusions are reached:

System "B" is disqualified by this evidence since it would demand a sabbath year for Tishri (Sept./Oct.), 40 to Tishri, 41 C.E., during which time the Jews were planting and harvesting crops.

System "C," as we have explained before, cannot work either, since the sabbath year actually began with the month of Nisan (March/April) and system "C" would require a sabbath year from Tishri of 41 to Tishri of 42 C.E.

System "D" is also disqualified, since it would require a sabbath from Nisan, 41 to Nisan, 42 C.E. The Jews of this period avoided planting a winter crop that was to be harvested in the spring of a sabbath year. For the year 40/41 C.E., Nisan reckoning, to be a sabbath year, therefore, there would have been no crops planted after October of 40 C.E. Yet in the above story crops were planted in the winter of 40/41 C.E. There seems little doubt that the rabbinical interpretation which forbade the sowing of crops at least six months prior to the beginning of a sabbath year was in force during the first century C.E. There is also no doubt that this practice was another impetus towards the rabbinical view of the second century C.E. which formally started the sabbath year with the first of Tishri.

System "A," on the other hand, demands a sabbath year from Nisan (Abib) 1, 42 to Nisan 1, 43 C.E. As a result it stands in perfect harmony with the evidence, both from this period and previous sabbath years (See Chart B).

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37 Jos., *Wars*, 2:10:5.

38 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:8:4, 6.

Figure 2

NOTE OF INDEBTEDNESS, "YEAR 2" OF NERO

Chapter XXIII

A Note of Indebtedness in Nero's Time

Part I of the Sabbath Year of 56/57 C.E.

Confirmation that system "A" is the correct sabbath cycle is also demonstrated by a Note of Indebtedness found in one of the caves of Wadi Murabba'at near Bethlehem in the Judaean desert.[1] A copy of the Hebrew is also published by Zion Wacholder.[2] Wacholder's translation is basically correct, though we shall read the Hebrew with some minor differences, none of which shall effect the conclusions.[3] Our translation is as follows:

1.	..... [ye]ar two of Nero Caesar	1. [.....] [...שנ] ת תרתין לנרון קסר [....]
2.	in Tzyah; declared by Abshalom bar Khanin of Tzyah,	2. בעויה איתודי אבשלום בר חנין מן צויה
3.	in his presence, of my own free will, that I, Zachariah bar Yahukhanan bar Kh.....	3. בנפי מניה עמי אנה זכריה בר יהוחנן בר ה[....]
4.	dwelling in Keslon, silver money pieces tw[en]ty ..... acquir[ing] ...	4. יתב בכסלון כסף זוזין עסר[ין] [וכספא] משׁ[לם]
5.	I .....[x] .... not sell until the ti[me]	5. אנה [.....]ן [.....] [....] לא די זבינת עד זמ[נא]
6.	this, I will pay you in five and possibly in its enti[rety]	6. דנה אפרוענך בחמש ואפשר בתמ[ימותא]
7.	this year of shemitah, and if not so, I will make a paym[ent]	7. ושנת שמטה דה והן כן לא אעבד תשלומ[תא]
8.	to you from my properties, and those (things) that I will buy later will be pledged to you as mortgage.	8. לך מנכסי ודי אקנה לקובליך

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1 DTJD, no. 18, pp. 100–104, and 2, pt. 2, Plate XXIX. Also see Fig. 2.

2 HUCA, 44, pp. 169f.

3 Wacholder's translation is as follows:

1. [of yea]r two of Nero Caesar [ ]
2. in *Swya*; declared by Abshalom bar Ḥanin, of *Swyah.*
3. in his presence, of my own accord, that I Zachariah bar Yehoḥanan bar Ḥ [ ]

9.	[Zacha]riah bar Yahukh[anan, i]n person	9. [זכ]ריה בר יהוח[נן ע]ל נפשה
10.	[writt]en (for) Yahuseph ba[r....] by dictation	10. [כת]ב יהוסף בנ[ר.....] שהד
11.	Yahunatan bar Yahukhanna, witness	11. יהונתן בר יהוחנא שהד
12.	Yahuseph ba[r] [Ya]hudan, witness.	12. יהוסף בנ[ר י]הודן עד

There can be little doubt that the phrase "year two of Nero" in line 1 represents the year in which this contract was agreed. This study must concur with Milik and Wacholder that line 1 is also equivalent to the phrase, "this year of shemitah," found in line 7.[4] To firmly establish the year of this shemitah, or "year of release" (sabbath year),[5] one must correctly date the second year of Nero from the view of the Jews living in Judaea at the time.

The date that Nero began to rule the Roman empire can be established beyond any doubt. According to Suetonius, emperor Claudius, who Nero followed on the throne, "died on the third day before the Ides of October in the consulship of Asinius Marcellus and Acilius Aviola in the 64th year of his age and the 14th year of his reign."[6] This consul year stands for 54 C.E. (Jan. reckoning). Since Nero immediately ascended to the throne upon the death of Claudius, his reign began on October 13, 54 C.E.

Suetonius published his work on the Caesars in 120 C.E. He is considered extremely reliable not only because of his nearness in time but because he was the private secretary to Emperor Hadrian and had access to all the official Roman records.[7]

Chronology of the Early Roman Emperors

That Suetonius provides us with the correct date for the death of Claudius and the accession to the throne of Nero is verified by a great number of ancient writers. It is fully supported, for example, by the length of the reign for each Roman king and by the correlation of those reigns with other established dates. The following is a demonstration of that evidence:[8]

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4. dwelling in Keslon, silver denars twen[t]y
5. I [ ] not sell until the ti[me]
6. of this, I will pay you in five and possibly in the enti[rety];
7. in this year of Release; and if not so, I will make a paym[ent]
8. to you from my properties, even those that I will buy later, will be pledged to you as mortgage.
9. [Zacha]riah bar Yeho[ḥanan, i]n person
10. [writt]en (for) Yehosef ba[r], by dictation
11. Yehonatan bar Yehoḥanna, witness
12. Yehosef ba[r Ye]hudan, witness.

4 DTJD, pp. 100–103; HUCA, 44, pp. 170f.

5 See above Chap. XI, p. 159, ns. 2 and 3.

6 Suetonius, 5:45.

7 Rolfe, *Suet*., i, pp. ix–xiv.

8 The small variance of a few days between some of our sources is due to the way in

Augustus Caesar reigned:

- 56 years, 4 months, 1 day.[9]

Josephus reports that Augustus "ruled for 57 years, 6 months, and 2 days" and observes that "Antony had shared authority with him for 14 years of this period."[10] Augustus Caesar died, according to Suetonius, "in the consulship of the two Sextuses, Pompeius and Appuleius, on the 14th day before the Kalends of September at the ninth hour, just 35 days before his 76th birthday";[11] i.e. on August 19, 14 C.E. (see Chart J for the list of Consuls).

Dio writes that Augustus died "when Sextus Apuleius and Sextus Pompeius were consuls" and that, "on the 19th day of August, the day on which he had first become consul, he passed away, having lived 75 years, 10 months, and 26 days (he had been born on the 23rd of September), and having been sole ruler, from the time of his victory at Actium, 44 years, lacking 13 days."[12]

This evidence proves that Augustus' reign of 56 years and 4 months (43 years, 11 months, 17 days sole reign) ended on August 19, 14 C.E. This date serves as our primordium, and from this firmly established date we shall examine the reigns of the following Roman kings. Augustus was followed by Tiberius.

Tiberius reigned:

- 22 years, 6 months, 26 days.[13]
- 22 years, 5 months (var. 6 mon.), 3 days.[14]
- 22 years, 6 months, 28 days.[15]

Suetonius tells us that Tiberius died "in the 78th year of his age and the 23rd of his reign, on the 17th day before the Kalends of April, in the consulship of Gnaeus Acerronius Proculus and Gaius Pontius Nigrinus,"[16] i.e. on March 16, 37 C.E.

Dio states that Tiberius died "on the (1)6th day of March.[17] He had lived

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which a particular historian calculated the rise to power of each monarch. Some considered the reign to start at the demise of his predecessor; some counted from the day he was recognized by the Senate; and a few when he was actually crowned or some other such event. In none of these cases does it change the basic result that Nero came to power in October of 54 C.E.

9 Theophilus, 3:27.

10 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:2:2, and *Wars*, 2:9:1. Josephus is including a short overlap with the reign allotted to Julius Caesar as part of his total reign for Augustus, reckoning as his beginning the date when Julius Caesar became dictator *perpetuus* on Feb. 17, 44 B.C.E.

11 Suetonius, 2:100.

12 Dio, 56:29, 30. The battle of Actium was won on Sept. 2, 31 B.C.E. Therefore, we again arrive at the date Aug. 19, 14 C.E. for the death of Augustus.

13 Theophilus, 3:27.

14 Jos., *Antiq.*, 18:6:10, *Wars*, 2:9:5.

15 Feldman, *Jos.*, ix, pp. 136f, n. b. Tacitus, *Dial.*, 17, gives the round figure of "twenty-three years for Tiberius." Tacitus, *Ann.*, 6:51, states, "virtually twenty-three years."

16 Suetonius, 3:73. Cf. Chart J. Tacitus, *Ann.*, 6:51, likewise places the death of Tiberius on March 16th, when the emperor was 78 years old.

17 The "26th day of March" in Dio's text is most certainly a scribal error for the "16th day of March," the date given by most ancient writers.

77 years, 4 months, and 9 days, of which time he had been emperor 22 years, 7 months, and 7 days."[18]

This evidence proves that Tiberius died in March of 37 C.E. He was followed by Gaius Caligula.

Gaius Caligula reigned:

- 3 years, 10 months, 7 days.[19]
- 3 years, 10 months, 8 days.[20]
- "After a reign of 3 years and 8 months" and "for 4 years lacking 4 months."[21]
- "3 years, 9 months., 28 days."[22]

Suetonius reports that Gaius Caligula died "on the ninth day before the Kalends of February at about the seventh hour,"[23] i.e. January 24, 41 C.E. Suetonius also adds that Caligula was assassinated during the celebration of the *Ludi Palatini*, established by Livia in honor of Augustus just after his death in 14 C.E.[24] This event started on January 17 and culminated with theatrical exhibitions from the twenty-first to twenty-third of January.[25] In the year that Caligula was assassinated, Caligula added extra days to the exhibitions.[26] Josephus places the assassination on the third day of these exhibitions, apparently not counting the opening day but the second day as its real beginning.[27]

This evidence proves that Caligula died on January 24 of 41 C.E. He was succeeded by Claudius.

Claudius reigned:

- 13 years, 8 months, 20 days.[28]
- 13 years, 8 months.[29]

Suetonius informs us:

> He died on the third day before the Ides of October in the consulship of Asinius Marcellus and Acilius Aviola, in the 64th year of his age and the 14th of his reign (i.e. Oct. 13, 54 C.E.).[30]

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18 Dio, 58:28.
19 Theophilus, 3:27.
20 Suetonius, 4:59.
21 Jos., *Wars*, 2:11:1, *Antiq.*, 19:2:5.
22 Dio, 59:30.
23 Suetonius, 4:58.
24 Suetonius, 4:56.
25 Dio, 56:46:5, 59:16:10; Tacitus, *Ann.*, 1:73.
26 Dio, 49:29:5.
27 Jos., *Antiq.*, 19:1:11–16.
28 Theophilus, 3:27; Jos., *Antiq.*, 20:8:1, *Wars*, 2:12:8.
29 Eusebius, *H.E.*, 2:19.
30 Suetonius, 5:45. Cf. Chart J.

Dio confirms Suetonius, reporting:

> It was the 13th of October, and he had lived 63 years, 2 months, and 13 days, having been emperor 13 years, 8 months, and 20 days.[31]

These facts prove that emperor Claudius died on October 13, 54 C.E. He was succeeded by Nero.

Nero reigned:

- 13 years, 7 months, 27 days.[32]
- 13 years, 7 months, 28 days.[33]

Suetonius writes that, "Nero was born at Antium nine months after the death of Tiberius, on the 18th day before the Kalends of January" (i.e. Dec. 15, 37 C.E.). He became emperor when he was "17 years old" (i.e. in 54 C.E.), and, "He met his death in the thirty-second year of his age, on the anniversary of the murder of Octavia."[34] Therefore, he died in the year 68 C.E.

Dio also reports that Nero was "17 years of age when he began to rule."[35] "He had lived 30 years and 9 months, out of which he had ruled 13 years and 8 months."[36]

Tacitus states that Nero succeeded to the throne in "the consulate of Marcus Asinius and Manius Acilius" (i.e. 54 C.E.), "on the 13th of October."[37]

Zonaras reports:

> So he died in this manner in the month of July (June?),[38] having lived 30 years, 5 months and 20 days, out of which he had ruled 13 years and 8 months, lacking 2 days.[39]

This evidence reveals that Nero died in June of 68 C.E. He was succeeded by Galba.

Galba reigned:

- 7 months, 6 days.[40]
- 7 months, 7 days.[41]

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31 Dio, 60:34.

32 Theophilus, 3:27.

33 Jerome, *Euseb. Chron*., 263F. This figure is probable meant in a corrupt passage from Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:2, i.e. 13 yrs., [7 mons., 2]8 days (but see comments in Thackery, *Jos*., iii, p. 146, n. a).

34 Suetonius, 6:6, 8, 57, cf. 6:35. Octavia, the daughter of Emperor Claudius and the wife of Nero, was murdered by Nero.

35 Dio, 61:3.

36 Dio, 63:29.

37 Tacitus, *Ann*., 12:64–69. Cf. Chart J.

38 Nero was born Dec. 15, 37 C.E., and perished about June 9th, 68 C.E. Zonaras' estimate of the length of his reign will then be correct, counting (inclusively) from Oct. 13, 54.

39 Zonaras, 11, 13, p. 43, 1–6D.

40 Theophilus, 3:27.

41 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:2.

Galba, according to Suetonius, "was born in the consulship of Marcus Valerius Messala and Gnaeus Lentulus, on the ninth day before the Kalends of January" (i.e. Dec. 24, 3 B.C.E.) and, "He met his end in the 73rd year of his age and the seventh month of his reign,"[42] i.e. he died in the year 69 C.E.

Tacitus states that Galba died shortly after Otho was declared king on January 15, in the "second consulship of Servius Galva, when Titus Vinius was his colleague" (i.e. 69 C.E.).[43]

Dio reports, "Galba had lived 72 years and 23 days, out of which he ruled 9 months and 13 days."[44]

This evidence proves that Galba lost power in mid-January of 69 C.E. He was succeeded by Otho.

Otho reigned:

- 3 months, 5 days.[45]
- 3 months, 2 days.[46]

Otho "was born on the fourth day before the Kalends of May in the consulate of Camillus Arruntius and Domintius Ahenobarbus" (i.e. April 28, 32 C.E.) and he died "in the 38th year of his age and on the 95th day of his reign."[47]

Tacitus reports that an election for emperor was held on January 10;[48] he then states that Otho was declared emperor on January 15 and Galba was executed shortly thereafter.[49] Tacitus also notes that Otho died during the festival of Ceres (April 12–19).[50]

Dio says that Otho died "after he had lived 37 years, lacking 11 days, and had reigned 90 days."[51]

This evidence shows that Otho lost power in mid-April of 69 C.E. He was succeeded by Vitellius.

Vitellius reigned:

- 8 months, 2 days.[52]
- Eusebius counts the whole period from Galba to Vitellius as "a year and six months."[53]

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42 Suetonius, 7:4, 23. Cf. Chart J.
43 Tacitus, *Hist.*, 1:17–49. Cf. Chart J.
44 Dio, 63:6. Dio's dates for Galba overlap partially with his predecessor and his successor. This was due to the civil war that was raging in those years which allowed different kings to be reigning at the same time.
45 Theophilus, 3:27.
46 Jos., *Wars*. 4:9:9.
47 Suetonius, 7:2, 11. Cf. Chart J.
48 Tacitus, *Hist.*, 1:18.
49 Tacitus, *Hist*., 1:12–49.
50 Tacitus, *Hist*., 2:47–55.
51 Dio, 63:15.
52 Theophilus, 3:27.
53 Eusebius, *H.E.*, 3:5.

Vitellius "was born on the eighth day before the Kalends of October, or according to some, on the seventh day before the Ides of September, in the consulship of Drusus Caesar and Norbanus Flaccus" (i.e. Sept. 24 or 7, 15 C.E.) but after "8 months" he "withdrew" from the kingship and later died "in the 57th year of his age."[54]

Dio remarks that Vitellius "had lived 54 years and 89 days, and had reigned for a year lacking 10 days."[55]

Josephus importantly writes that Vitellius "reigned 8 months and 5 days" and was killed "on the third of the month of Apellaios,"[56] i.e. on December 20 of 69 C.E.

This evidence reveals that Vitellius ruled until mid-December of 69 C.E. The statement given by Eusebius, that from Galba to the end of the reign of Vitellius was "a year and six months," is thereby confirmed. Galba began in June of 68 C.E. and ruled 7 months; Otho reigned 3 months, and Vitellius was leader for 8 months: a total of 18 months, ending in December of 69 C.E. Vitellius was succeeded by Vespasian.

Vespasian reigned:

- 9 years, 11 months, 22 days.[57]

Vespasian was born "on the evening of the fifteenth day before the Kalends of December, in the consulate of Quintus Sulpicius Camerinus and Gaius Poppaeus Sabinus, five years before the death of Augustus" (i.e. on Nov. 17, 9 C.E.) and he died "in his ninth consulship" on the "ninth day before the Kalends of July, at the age of 69 years, 1 month and 7 days."[58] Therefore, Vespasian died on June 23, 79 C.E.

The 9 years, 11 months, and 22 days of reign reported by Theophilus, accordingly, began on the second of July, 69 C.E., which is about the date that Vespasian would have first heard of the death of Otho. Dio further clarifies this issue, stating:

> He (Vespasian) had lived 69 years and 8 months, and had reigned 10 years lacking 6 days. From this it results that FROM THE DEATH OF NERO TO THE BEGINNING OF VESPASIAN'S RULE ONE YEAR AND 22 DAYS ELAPSED. I make this statement in order to prevent any misapprehension on the part of such as might estimate the time with reference to the men who held the sovereignty. For they did not succeed one another legitimately, but each of them,

54 Suetonius, 7:3, 15, 18. Cf. Chart J.

55 Dio, 64:22. Dio includes as part of the reign of Vitellius some of the time before Galba died, while the civil war was still in progress.

56 Jos., *Wars*, 4:11:4.

57 Theophilus, 3:27.

58 Suetonius, 8:2, 24. Cf. Chart J.

> even while his rival was alive and still ruling, believed himself to be emperor from the moment that he even got a glimpse of the throne. Hence one must not add together all the days of their several reigns as if those periods had followed one another in orderly succession, but must reckon once for all with the exact time that actually elapsed, as I have stated it. (Dio, 66:17.)

Nero died on June 9, 68 C.E. One year and 22 days later brings us to July 1, 69 C.E. Dio also makes the important observation that following the death of Vitellius, Vespasian "was declared emperor by the Senate also, and Titus and Domitian were given the title of Caesars. The consular office was assumed by Vespasian and Titus while the former was in Egypt and the latter in Palestine."[59] The consul year named is for 70 C.E., showing that Vespasian was recognized as emperor by the Senate on the first of the year, at which time Vespasian also assumed the role of consul.

Tacitus supports Dio and adds that after the first of January, "At the beginning of that same year," Titus was sent to "complete the subjugation of Judaea."[60]

The accession to power of Vespasian in mid-69 C.E. and then becoming consul on January 1, 70 C.E., therefore, becomes our coupling point to which all the succeeding dates up until our present time are attached and which are well-established.

Finally, when we consult the ancient Roman Consul lists we find that there were exactly 57 consul years from the year Augustus Caesar died (when Sextus Apuleius and Sextus Pompeius were consuls) until the year that Jerusalem fell (when Vespasian and Titus were consuls).[61] This number of years fits exactly with the calculations we have presented.

The simple addition of the lengths of all these various reigns, supported by the consul lists, proves that Nero began to govern in October of 54 C.E. Milik's speculation that it was in October of 53 C.E.[62] is based upon his "need" to make the Note of Indebtedness on the papyrus of Wadi Murabba'at 18, as cited at the beginning of this chapter, conform with system "B." But his speculation is totally unfounded.

"Year 12" of Nero in Judaea

Our next problem must be to determine how the Judaeans correlated Nero's reign with events in Judaea. Our first indications come from the first century C.E. Jewish priest Josephus and the early Christian historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 265–c. 340 C.E.), who like Josephus was born in Palestine.

Josephus dates the beginning of the First Revolt of the Jews against Rome to the 12th year of Nero.

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59 Dio, 65:1.
60 Tacitus, *Hist.*, 4:39–5:1.
61 Senator, 386–387; MGH, pp. 136–138; HBC, pp. 96f. Also see Chart J.
62 DTJD, pp. 102, 103.

> The war in fact began in the second year of the procuratorship of Florus and in THE TWELFTH YEAR OF NERO'S REIGN. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 20:11:1)
>
> The present work contains the recorded history, from man's creation up to the TWELFTH YEAR OF NERO, of the events that befell us Jews in Egypt, in Syria, and in Palestine. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 20:12:1)
>
> . . . and it was now that the war opened, in the TWELFTH YEAR OF THE PRINCIPATE OF NERO, and the SEVENTEENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF AGRIPPA, in the month of Artemisius. (Jos., *Wars*, 2:14:4)

The Macedonian month "Artemisius" is by Josephus made equivalent to the second Hebrew month, the month of Iyyar (April/May).[63]

The equation that year 12 of Nero is the same as year 17 of Agrippa is verified by Agrippa's coins, bearing the imperial effigy, which begin with one that gives the name and likeness of Nero, dated year 6 = year 11.[64]

Eusebius agrees with Josephus, summarizing him by stating how Josephus "explains exactly how many thousand Jews of high rank in Jerusalem itself were outraged, scourged, and crucified by Florus, and that he was procurator of Judaea when it happened that the beginning of the war blazed up in the TWELFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF NERO."[65] Josephus, therefore, is Eusebius' primary source but Eusebius is supporting his determination.

Conclusion

In our search to discover the date for "year two of Nero Caesar" in the Judaean Note of Indebtedness found in one of the caves of Wadi Murabba'at, we have confirmed two vital points. First, the reign of Nero lasted from October 13, 54 until June 9, 68 C.E. Second, Josephus, supported by Eusebius, reports that the twelfth year of Nero was in progress during the first year of the Judaean revolt against Rome, which began in the second Jewish month (Iyyar) of that year. It now behooves us to coordinate these two facts and uncover the reckoning of Nero's reign by the Judaeans.

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63 Jos., *Antiq.*, 8:3:1.
64 IEJ, 12, p. 34.
65 Eusebius, *H.E.*, 2:26.

CHART J

Consuls from Tiberius to Vespasian

CHART J

Consuls from Tiberius to Vespasian

Note: Different lists will provide different consul names during various years. This occurence is due to the fact that some consuls were replaced either because they died in office or were, for some other reason, removed and did not serve out their terms. Others were chosen by competing Caesars. Therefore, the report of consuls is made at the discretion of each writer.

	Cassiodorus Senator	**List in HBC, pp. 96f**
	Consuls	*Consuls*
C.E.		
14	Sex. Pompeius et Sex. Apuleius (Dio, 56:29-31, Tiberius Caesar succeeds Augustus)	duobus Sextis (the two Sextis)
15	Drusus Caesar et. E. Norbanus	Druso Caesare et Flacco
16	Sisenna Statilius et L. Scribonius	Tauro et Libone
17	L. Pomponius et C. Caecilius	Flacco et Rufo
18	Tib. Caesar et Germanicus Caesar	Tito Caesare III et Germanico Caesare II
19	M. Silanus et C. Norbanus	Silano et Balbo
20	M. Valerius et M. Aurelius	Messala et Cotta
21	Tib. Caesar et Drusus Caesar	Tito Caesare IIII et Druso Caesare II
22	D. Haterius et C. Sulpicius	Agrippa et Galba
23	C. Asinius et C. Antistius	Pollione et Vetere
24	Ser. Cornelius et L. Visellius	Caethego et Varro
25	M. Asinius et Cossus Cornelius	Agrippa et Lentulo
26	C. Calvisius et Cn. Getulicus	Getulico et Sabino
27	L. Piso et M. Crassus	Grasso et Pisone
28	Ap. Silanus et P. Silius	Silano et Nerva
29	C. Rubellius et C. Fusius	Gemino et Gemino
30	M. Vinicius et L. Cassius	Vinicio et Longino
31	Tib. Caesar V conss.	Tiberio Caesare V solo
32	Vinicius et Longinus	Arruntio et Ahenobarbo
33	Sulpicius et Silla	Galba et Sulla
34	Persicus et Vitellius	Vitello et Persico
35	Gallus et Nonianus	Camerino et Noniano
36	Galienus et Plautianus	Allieno et Plautino
37	Proculus et Nigrinus (Dio, 58:26-28, Gaius Caligula Caesar succeeds)	Proculo et Nigrino
38	Julianus et Asprenas	Iuliano et Asprenate

40	Caesar et Julianus	C. Caesare III solo
41	Caesar II et Saturninus (Dio, 59:29f, Pomponius Secundus and Sentius also consuls; Claudius succeeds)	C. Caesare IIII et Saturnino
42	Saturninus II et Venustus	Tito Claudio II et Longo
43	Tiberius et Gallius	Tito Claudio III et Vitellio
44	Crispinus et Taurus	Crispo II et Tauro
45	Vinicius et Cornelius[1]	Vinicio et Corvino
46	Asiaticus et Cornelius	Asiatico II et Silano
47	Tiberius II et Vitellius	Tito Claudio IIII et Vitellio III
48	Vitellius II et Publicola	Vitellio et Publicula
49	Verannius et Gallus	Verannio et Gallo
50	Vetus et Nervilanus	Vetere et Nerviliano
51	Claudius et Orfitus	Tito Claudio V et Orfito
52	Silvanus et Silvius	Sulla et Othone
53	Tiberius III et Antoninus	Silano et Antonino
54	Silanus et Otho	Marcello et Aviola (Suetonius, 5:45, Nero Succeeds; Tacitus, *Ann*., 12:64-69, in consulship of Marcus Asinius and Manius Acilius)
55	Silanus II et Antoninus II	Nerone Caesare et Vetere
56	Marcellinus et Aviola	Saturnino et Scipione
57	Nero et Vetus	Nerone II et Pisone
58	Nero II et Piso	Nerone III et Messala
59	Nero III et Messalla	Capitone et Aproniano
60	Nero IV et Cornelius	Nerone IIII et Lentulo
61	Pius et Turpilianus	Turpillino et Peto
62	Macrinus et Gallus	Mario et Gallo
63	Crassus et Bassuss	Regulo et Rufo
64	Sylvanus et Paullinus	Grasso et Basso
65	Telesinus et Appuleius	Nerva et Vestino
66	Capito et Rufus	Telesino et Paulo
67	Italicus et Turpilianus	Capitone et Rufo
68	Silvanus et Otho	Trachala et Italico
69	Vespasianus et Titus (Dio, 65:1, Consuls assumed by Vespasian and Titus while the former was in Egypt and the latter in Palestine)	Galva II et Vinio (Tacitus, Hist., 1:17-49; Otho succeeds in consulship of Servius Galva II and Titus Vinius)
70	Vespasianus II et Titus II	Vespasiano II et Tito
71	Vespasianus III et Nerva	Vespasiano III et Nerva

[1] Dio reports that an eclipse of the sun occurred on August 1 of this consul year (Dio, 60:25:1, 60:26:1, 60:5:3), which astronomically verifies this year as 45 C.E.

Chapter XXIV

Nero's "Year 2" in Judaea

Part II of the Sabbath Year of 56/57 C.E.

According to the advocates of systems "B" and "C," there are four ways other than a Nisan (March/April) year by which Nero's second year could have been judged in Josephus and Eusebius.

• The reign of Nero could have been reckoned by the Roman *dies imperii* which calculates the regnal year from the day the king achieved power to his anniversary date in the next year: i.e. from October 13 until October 13 of each year for Nero. His first year, therefore, would be from October 13, 54 to October 12, 55 C.E., his second from October 13, 55 to October 12, 56 C.E.

• The reign of Nero could have been counted by the Macedonian Seleucid method, from the first of Tishri, which again gives us roughly an October to October year.

• His reign could have been determined on the basis of the Greek Macedonian Olympiad calendar, which would have begun on Dius 1. The result would be the first of Dius (Oct./Nov.), 54 until the first of Dius, 55 C.E. for Nero's first year. His second year would be Dius 1, 55 until Dius 1, 56 C.E.

• Nero's reign could have been dated from January first, the beginning of the Roman year since 8 B.C.E.,[1] the year Augustus Caesar changed the starting point of the Roman calendar. Year one would be January 1, 55 until January 1, 56 C.E.; year two would be January 1, 56 until January 1, 57 C.E.

The Nisan 1 Regnal Years in Josephus for Nero

These theories must be rejected on the grounds that there is not one shred of evidence that during this period the Jews of Judaea ever utilized any of these methods to register the reign of a king over the land of Judaea.

Both Josephus and Philo observe that the year in Judaea began with Nisan and the spring.[2] At no time does any writer from this period say that a king's reign listed on Judaean documents and contracts written between Jews was normally dated from an era used by foreign kings.

Even as late as the beginning of the third century C.E. the Mishnah tells us that "on the first of Nisan is the New Year for kings."[3]

If a Jew of Judaea during the period of Nero was dating a contract by the

1 See above Chap. XX, p. 261, n. 15.
2 Jos., *Antiq*., 1:3:3, 2:14:6, 3:8:4, 3:10:5, 11:4:8; Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 1:35(181), 2:27–28.
3 R.Sh., 1:1.

name and year of a king it would seem only logical that he would do so by the traditional Jewish method.

This Judaean method would begin to change after the Jews lost their homeland with the collapse of the First Revolt, thereby forfeiting their right to make such determinations. Yet even as late as the Bar Kochba revolt (133–135 B.C.E.), the Jews were still known to be using a Nisan beginning for their year.[4] After the Bar Kochba revolt, the Jews were scattered about the world and under the total dominance of foreign kings. A foreign reckoning would naturally follow. But in the time of Nero (October, 54–June, 68 C.E.) Judaea still existed as a country with its own Jewish rulers, an established Jewish priesthood, and Jewish customs. Its people had no reason to use a foreign reckoning on internal Jewish documents.

The works of Josephus are reflective of this custom. Josephus, writing to a Greek-speaking audience, never dated events by the Macedonian Olympiad system or by Roman consulships unless he specifically stated that he was doing so. In the relevant passages about Nero's reign, Josephus never referred to an Olympiad or consul year. That Josephus would date Nero by the Macedonian Olympiad or a consulship beginning on the first of January, yet not define it as such, is highly implausible.

Another important factor in this investigation is that Josephus—the primary source for the history of the First Revolt—was a Judaean who lived in his homeland at the time of Nero; and his work reflects that the first of the year for Nero's reign began sometime after Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.) 1, yet before Iyyar (April/May) 1. This fact is demonstrated by his dating of events in the First Revolt. Josephus' sequence is as follows (cf. Chart G):

- The "war opened, in the twelfth year of the principate of Nero, and the seventeenth of the reign of Agrippa, in the month of Artemisius (Iyyar; April/May)" (Jos., *Wars*, 2:14:4).

This statement shows that Nero's twelfth year was in progress during this second Jewish month. Agrippa, by the way, was a Jewish ruler. Josephus would naturally date Agrippa's reign based upon the Jewish method. In this passage Josephus importantly equates Agrippa's seventeenth year in Judaea with the twelfth year of Nero, strongly indicating that the same method of dating was used for both.

- Riots broke out in Jerusalem "on the sixteenth of the month Artemisius" (Iyyar)" (Jos., *Wars*, 2:15:2).

- On the "fifteenth of the month Lous (Ab; July/Aug.)" an assault was made upon Antonia and the garrison was besieged (Jos., *Wars*, 2:17:7).

- On the "sixth of the month Gorpiaeus (Elul; Aug./Sept.)" the king's palaces were captured (Jos., *Wars*, 2:17:8).

- On the "thirtieth of the month Hyperberetaeus (Tishri; Sept./Oct.)" Cestius made an assault upon Jerusalem (Jos., *Wars*, 2:19:4).

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4 IEJ, 21, pp. 39–46.

• On "the eighth of the month of Dius (Marheshuan; Oct./Nov.), in the twelfth year of Nero's principate," the defeat of Cestius took place (Jos., *Wars*, 2:19:9).

We have now passed by the months of August and October, as well as beyond the first day of Dius (Marheshuan), yet it is still the twelfth year of Nero. This detail proves that Josephus did not use the Roman *dies imperii* for Nero, which would start his year in October; nor did he use the October Seleucid year or the Macedonian Olympiad year, which started with the first of Dius, in determining the regnal years of Nero.

• On the "twenty-first of the month Artemisius (Iyyar; April/May)" Josephus came from Tiberias and went to Jotapata (Jos., *Wars*, 3:7:3).

This detail reveals that we have now passed by the month of Nisan (Abib) and have entered into a new Jewish year.

• On the "20th of the month Daesius (Siwan; May/June)" the first assault was made upon Jotapata, also called Japha (Jos., *Wars*, 3:7:29).

• On the "25th of the month Daesius" Japha was captured (Jos., *Wars*, 3:7:31).

• On the "27th of the month Daesius" Gerizim was captured (Jos., *Wars*, 3:7:32).

• The city of Jotapata was taken by the Romans "in the thirteenth year of the principate of Nero, on the new moon of Panemus (Tammuz; June/July)" (Jos., *Wars*, 3:7:36).

We have now arrived at the first day of the fourth Jewish month, and we find ourselves in "Year 13" of Nero.

Since it was still "Year 12" of Nero on the eighth of Dius (Marheshuan; Oct./Nov.) of the previous year, it is clear that a year change occurred between the month of Dius (Marheshuan, the eighth Jewish month) and the following Panemus (Tammuz, the fourth Jewish month; June/July).

Josephus' dating of Nero is further narrowed by the fact that the twelfth year of Nero was still in progress during the month of Artemisius (Iyyar), the second Jewish month.[5] The thirteenth year, therefore, had to be in effect during Artemisius (Iyyar; April/May) of the following year. This fact, in turn, shows that there was a change in year between the end of Marheshuan, the eighth month, and the beginning of Iyyar, the second month (Chart G).

This information demonstrates that Josephus must have been using a Nisan year for the Roman emperors. It is true that a January first year is also possible; but, since Josephus does not label Nero's reign by a consulship or refer to a Roman year, this supposition is weak. Further, Josephus determined the consul years by the first of March and not by the first of January.[6]

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5 Jos., *Wars*, 2:14:4.

6 See Chap. XVII, pp. 233–236, and cf. Chaps. XVIII–XX.

The last time Josephus uses an Olympiad to date any event was for the year that Herod completed his building of Caesarea Sebaste, which took place in the 192nd Olympiad, being the 28th year of Herod (i.e. 10/9 B.C.E., Nisan Jewish reckoning; 11/10 B.C.E., Dius [Oct./Nov.] Macedonian reckoning). The last consulship used for dating an event was that of Marcus Agrippa and Caninius Gallus (37/36 B.C.E., March 1 to March 1 reckoning). These dates importantly all fall prior to the changes made for the beginning month of the Roman calendar by Augustus Caesar, who in 8 B.C.E. altered the first of the year from March first to January first.

Nowhere else in the works of Josephus can it be demonstrated that he used a January 1 year to date anything, which casts a dark shadow of doubt that he did so with Nero (or for that matter any of the other Roman emperors).

It is also known from ancient coins that during the First Revolt (66–70 C.E.) the Jewish year began with the month of Nisan.[7] This detail adds even more weight to the fact that the Jews of Nero's time observed a first of Nisan beginning for their regnal years, and counted from this month on their internal documents. Further we have two sources (the coins of the First Revolt and the early third century C.E. Mishnah) proving that the Jews of Judaea during the period of Nero and for some time afterwards determined the beginning of the year for their kings by the month of Nisan.

Therefore, we must conclude that in the entire body of the works of Josephus, unless he specifically labels it as not applying, he used a Nisan beginning for his year. In the list of events during the twelfth and thirteenth years of Nero, Josephus does not label the years as an exception to his normal Nisan reckoning. He shows that a year of Nero included the second through eighth Jewish months (Iyyar through Marheshuan; roughly May through November). Indeed, the very fact that Josephus couples the twelfth and thirteenth years of Nero with Macedonian month-names, which he clearly equates throughout his work with the Jewish months, is a strong indication that he has reckoned Nero's reign based upon a first of Nisan New Year.

The weight of the evidence, as a result, points to the fact that the other Jews of Judaea, during the days of Nero, would have also dated Nero's reign by a Nisan year. We will not overlook the remote possibility that Josephus used a January 1 reckoning for Nero; but, as we shall demonstrate, it will not change the final result.

Dating the First Revolt

Our attention must now turn towards determining which year represents the second year of Nero in Judaea. This detail is gleaned from the information dealing with the length of the First Revolt and which year it started.

Historical evidence proves that the First Revolt, which began in the twelfth year of Nero, raged for five years. Jewish coins produced during this revolt, for example, bear only the dates from "Year 1" to "Year 5."[8] In Josephus' history about the First Revolt, he clearly sets forth that the war lasted until the fifth year (using a Nisan 1 regnal reckoning but counting the length

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7 IEJ, 21, p. 40 and n. 11, p. 42; BA, 26, pp. 57–59.

8 AJ, pp. 28–33, 57–59; AJC, pp. 259–263.

of the war from the time it started in Iyyar [April/May]). The flow of events in his history of the war with Rome is as follows (cf. Chart G):

Year 1 (66 C.E.)

• The war began in the 12th year of Nero in the month of Artemisius (Iyyar; April/May) (Jos., *Wars*, 2:14:4, 2:15:2).

• The Feast of Tabernacles observed (Tishri; Sept./Oct.) (Jos., *Wars*, 2:19:1).

• Events in the "month of Dius (Marheshuan; Oct./Nov.) in the twelfth year of Nero's principate" (Jos., *Wars*, 2:19:9).

Year 2 (67 C.E.)

• Events in the month of Artemisius (April/May) (Jos., *Wars*, 3:7:3).

• Events in the month of Daesius (May/June) (Jos., *Wars*, 3:7:29).

• Events in the month of Gorpiaeus (Aug./Sept.) (Jos., *Wars*, 3:10:10).

• Events in the month of Hyperberetaeus (Sept./Oct.) (Jos., *Wars*, 4:1:9–10).

• Events in the month of Dystrus (Feb./March) (Jos., *Wars*, 4:7:3).

Year 3 (68 C.E.)

• Events in the month of Daesius (May/June) (Jos., *Wars*, 4:8:1, 4:9:9).

Year 4 (69 C.E.)

• Simon became master of Jerusalem "in the third year of the war, in the month of Xanthicus (March/April)" (Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:12).

Counting the years from the month the war began, i.e. from the month of Artemisius (April/May) of 66 C.E., the fourth year of the war began in Iyyar (April/May) of 69 C.E.

• Events in the month of Apellaios (Nov./Dec.) (Jos., *Wars*, 4:11:4).

• Winter (Jos., *Wars*, 4:11:5).

Year 4 (69 C.E.)

• Events of the month of Xanthicus (March/April) (*Wars*, 5:3:1).

• Events of the month of Artemisius (April/May) (Jos., *Wars*, 5:7:2, 5:11:4).

• The destruction of the Temple by Titus on the 10th day of Lous (July/Aug., i.e. the Hebrew month of Ab) "in the second year of Vespasian's reign" (Jos., *Wars*, 6:4:5, 8).

Tacitus also reveals that the Judaean revolt lasted five years.[9] He writes that in the first year of the revolt Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, tried to stop it, but "he suffered varied fortunes and met defeat more often than he gained victory."[10] Cestius endured a great defeat at the hands of the Jews "on the eighth of the month Dius (Nov.) in the twelfth year of Nero's principate." On the death of Gallus, Tacitus continues:

> . . . Nero sent out Vespasian, who aided by his good fortune and reputation as well by his excellent subordinates, within TWO SUMMERS occupied with his victorious army the whole of the level country and all the cities except Jerusalem. THE NEXT YEAR was taken up with the civil war, and thus was passed in inactivity so far as the Jews were concerned. When peace had been secured throughout Italy, foreign troubles began again; and the fact that the Jews alone had failed to surrender increased our resentment; at the same time, having regard to all the possibilities and hazards of a new reign, it seemed expedient for Titus to remain with the army. Therefore, as I have said above, Titus pitched his camp before the walls of Jerusalem and displayed his legions in battle array. (Tacitus, *Hist*., 5:9–10)

When Tacitus states, "as I have said above," he is making reference to the fact that after "the first of January"[11] of the year that Vespasian assumed the consular office,[12] i.e. 70 C.E., "At the beginning of that same year," Titus, the son of Vespasian, was "selected by his father to complete the subjugation of Judaea."[13] Later that same year, Jerusalem fell into his hands. The words of Tacitus reveal the following:

Year 2

The revolt (which started in May) found success for the Jews in November of that year when they defeated Cestius.

Years 2 & 3

After the defeat of Cestius, Nero appoints Vespasian to the war, who "within two summers" occupies all the cities of Judaea except Jerusalem. This sequence perfectly matches what Josephus says on the matter.[14] Vespasian makes his first attack on the Jewish rebels at the city of Jotapata a few days after "the twenty-first of the month of Artemisius (Iyyar; May)" and takes the city "on the thirteenth year of the principate of Nero, on the new moon of Panemus (Tammuz; June/July)."[15]

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9 Tacitus, *Hist*., 4:39–5:13.
10 Tacitus, *Hist*., 5:10.
11 Tacitus, *Hist*., 4:39.
12 Cf. Dio, 66:1.
13 Tacitus, *Hist*., 5:1.
14 Jos., *Wars*, 2:19:9–3:1:3.
15 Jos., *Wars*, 3:7:3–36.

Year 4

This year was taken up with the civil war at Rome, which saw the quick succession of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. As has been demonstrated in our last chapter, this civil war consumed the year 69 C.E. The Judaean war was inactive as far as Roman involvement was concerned.

Year 5

In the year after the civil war at Rome, after the first of January, Titus was sent to capture the city of Jerusalem.

The first year of the revolt is determined by the following facts:

• The war ended in the second year of Vespasian,[16] with the destruction of the Temple on the tenth of Lous (Ab; July/Aug.).[17] As shown above in our section on the reign of Vespasian, Vespasian became emperor in the latter half of 69 C.E., recognizing himself as emperor in July of that year while he was in Judaea. The second year of Vespasian, the fifth year of the war, therefore, is the year 70 C.E., the year Vespasian was first elected consular and the year he sent Titus to capture Jerusalem.

• The revolt began in the twelfth year of Nero, in the month of Artemisius (Iyyar; April/May), the second month of the Jewish year.[18]

• Since the year 70/71 C.E., Nisan reckoning, was the final year of the war, we must count back to the first year from this point. Therefore, the revolt began in the second Jewish month, Iyyar, of the year 66/67 C.E., being the twelfth year of Nero. Further, the twelfth year of Nero was still in progress during the eighth Jewish month of Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.) of that same year.[19]

This evidence compels us to equate the twelfth year of Nero, as recorded by the Jewish priest Josephus and supported by Eusebius, with the year 66/67 C.E., Nisan reckoning. In the second Jewish month of that year (Iyyar; April/May) the revolt in Judaea began.

Dating "Year 2" of Nero

The second year of Nero, counted by the Judaeans of the first century C.E., is derived as follows:

Counting backwards from this 66/67 C.E., Nisan reckoning, "Year 1" of Nero in Josephus is equal to the year 55/56 C.E., Nisan reckoning. "Year 2," as a result, is 56/57 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

This dating is also confirmed by the aforementioned coins of Agrippa, governor of Judaea when the First Revolt broke out. His coins bear the imperial effigy. They begin with one that gives the name and likeness of Nero and is

16 Jos., *Wars*, 6:10:1; Eusebius, *H.E.*, 3:7.
17 Jos., *Wars*, 6:4:5.
18 Jos., *Wars*, 2:14:4, *Antiq.*, 20:11:1, 20:12:1, *Wars*, 2:14:4.
19 Jos., *Wars*, 2:19:9.

dated "Year 6" = "Year 11,"[20] i.e. the sixth year of Nero = the eleventh year of Agrippa. These coins, being Judaean, are therefore based upon a first of Nisan year. Josephus, meanwhile, specifically tells us that the twelfth year of Nero was the same as the seventeenth year of Agrippa, and that in turn this year was the year that the First Revolt began,[21] i.e. 66/67 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

"Year 2" of Nero in Judaea, therefore, is the year 56/57 C.E., Nisan reckoning. This date perfectly matches the sabbath cycle sequence of system "A." Yet for the sake of argument, let us also grant the possibility of an October, November, or January system for the Note of Indebtedness at question. The first year of Nero, accordingly, would either be October, 54 until October, 55 C.E.; November, 54 until November, 55 C.E.; or a January 1, 55 until January 1, 56 C.E. year.

With any of these systems the last six or more months of a year belonging to Nero would fall within the first six or more months of the Jewish year. The Jewish revolt would still fall in the month of Iyyar in the twelfth year of Nero, i.e. the spring of 66 C.E., and for the Jews of Judaea, like Josephus, this twelfth year continued beyond Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.) of this same year.

The Jewish year would still begin with the spring and a king's year in Judaea would still have been counted from that time. The greater part of Nero's second year would include the sabbath year of 56/57 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

Conclusion

It is clear from this evidence that the second year of Nero, mentioned in the Judaean Note of Indebtedness found in the cave at Wadi Murabba'at, must have begun with the month of Nisan in the year 56/57 C.E. This year, according to that same document, was a sabbath year.

Even using the variant arrangements of an October, November, or January year, system "B" is eliminated from consideration because it requires a sabbath year from Tishri (Sept./Oct.) of 54 until Tishri of 55 C.E. This year would have been the first for Nero not his second.

System "C," which demands a sabbath year from Tishri, 55 until Tishri, 56 C.E., is still faced with the evidence that the sabbath years during this period began with the month of Abib (Nisan). For this reason it also falls out of consideration.

System "D," which would have a sabbath year from Nisan, 55 until Nisan, 56 C.E., is lacking since it would place the second year of Nero in the year before its proper Jewish reckoning. It must likewise deal with the problem that previous years in its cycle have already been eliminated as possibilities.

The only viable solution is the system "A" sabbath cycle. The sabbath year represented by Nero's second year over Judaea has provided us with one more item of proof confirming the cycle already demonstrated by the known sabbath years from the fifteenth year of Hezekiah until the second year of King Herod over Jerusalem (see Chart B).

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20 IEJ, 12, p. 34.
21 Jos., *Wars*, 2:14:4.

Chapter XXV

The Sabbath Year of 70/71 C.E.

It is unfortunate, indeed, that we possess no direct testimony by any contemporary historian or other such record that can testify directly as to whether or not a sabbath year was in progress during the period that Jerusalem was captured by the Romans (i.e. in the summer of 70 C.E.). Such a document would end all speculation on the issue and would settle the question once and for all.

Nevertheless, Josephus, who was contemporary with that event, goes a long way towards doing just that. In his history of the First Revolt, Josephus mentions an invasion of Judaean Idumaea by Simon ben Gioras in the winter of 68/69 C.E. The fields of Idumaea, we are told, were cultivated. This detail is important because the Idumaeans in this region and of that period were Jewish by religion and would not have cultivated their fields in the few months prior to a sabbath year or during a sabbath year. Therefore, the evidence from Josephus strongly indicates that the sabbath year could not have taken place until the next year (70/71 C.E., Nisan reckoning).

The Chronology of Simon's Invasion

The sequence of events for Simon's invasion of Idumaea are as follows: Vespasian, the Roman general, was in Caesarea preparing to march against Jerusalem when word arrived of the death of Emperor Nero.[1] Nero died on or about June 9, 68 C.E. Since it was early summer, it would have taken approximately three weeks for news to arrive from Rome to Palestine (this being a reasonable estimate due to the urgency of the message of the emperor's death). Vespasian must have heard of Nero's death on or about the beginning of July, which is supported by comparing the statements of Theophilus and Dio.[2]

Vespasian, after hearing of Nero's death and the civil war that ensued, deferred his expedition against Jerusalem, "anxiously waiting to see upon whom the empire would devolve after Nero's death; nor when he subsequently heard that Galba was emperor would he undertake anything, until he had received further instructions from him concerning the war."[3]

In response, Vespasian sent his son Titus to the new emperor for instructions. Yet before Titus could arrive in Rome, while he was still sailing in vessels of war around Achaea, it being "the winter" season, Galba was assassinated" and Otho succeeded to the crown.[4]

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1 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:2.
2 Theophilus, 3:27; Dio, 65:1, 66:17; also see above Chap. XXIII, pp. 293f.
3 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:2.
4 Ibid.

Titus then sailed back from Greece to Syria and hastened to rejoin his father at Caesarea. "The two (Vespasian and Titus), being in suspense on these momentous matters, when the Roman empire itself was reeling, neglected the invasion of Judaea, regarding an attack on a foreign country as unseasonable, while in such anxiety concerning their own."[5]

Otho had ascended to the throne on January 15, 69 C.E. It would have taken about 14 to 21 days for news of Galba's death to reach Greece where Titus was. Therefore, Titus must have started back for Syria in mid-February and rejoined his father at Caesarea in late February or early March of 69 C.E.

"But another war WAS NOW IMPENDING over Jerusalem."[6] At this point Josephus backs up a little to tell the story of how the Jewish factional leader Simon ben Gioras came to lay siege against Jerusalem. The context of his discussion is that the siege of Simon ben Gioras against Jerusalem was about to occur at the same time that Titus made his return trip from Greece.

In the months before the siege Simon had collected a strong force and had overrun not only the province of Acrabetene but the whole district extending to the border of Idumaea. He then fortified himself in a city called Nain where "he laid up his spoils of corn" and "where most of his troops were quartered." Here he began training his men "for an attack upon Jerusalem."[7]

The Jewish Zealots, who were allied with and had many members from the Idumaeans, fearing an attack by Simon, made an expedition against him (unthinkable in a sabbath year), but they lost the contest. In turn, Simon "resolved first to subdue Idumaea" and forthwith marched to the borders of that country. A battle was fought but no one was the victor. Each side returned home.[8] "Not long after," Simon invaded that country again with a larger force. This time he took control of the fortress at Herodion (Herodium). Through a bit of trickery, Simon was able to convince the Idumaeans that he possessed a force far too great for them to thwart. The Idumaeans unexpectedly broke ranks and fled.[9]

Simon, thus, "marched into Idumaea without bloodshed," captured Hebron, "where he gained abundant booty and laid hands on vast supplies of corn," and then "pursued his march through the whole of Idumaea."[10] On his march through Idumaea, Simon made "havoc also of the country, since provisions proved insufficient for such a multitude; for, exclusive of his troops, he had 40,000 followers." His cruelty and animosity against the nation "contributed to complete the devastation of Idumaea."[11]

> Just as a forest in the wake of locusts may be seen stripped quite bare, so in the rear of Simon's army nothing remained but a desert. Some places they burnt, others they razed to the ground; ALL VEGETATION throughout the country vanished, either

5 Ibid.
6 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:3.
7 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:3–4, cf. 2:22:2.
8 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:5.
9 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:5–6.
10 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:7.
11 Ibid.

> trodden under foot or consumed; while the tramp of their march rendered ἐνεργὸν (CULTIVATED LAND) harder than the barren soil. In short, nothing touched by their ravages left any sign of its having ever existed. (Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:7)

The land was ἐνεργὸν (*energon*), i.e. "cultivated," "productive," "active."[12] This evidence proves that the land in Idumaea was at the time planted with crops. It also places Simon's invasion in the months after Khisleu (Nov./Dec.), when the fields are first sown. The Jews under Simon were also harvesting all consumable vegetation, something not done during a sabbath year.

In turn the Zealots captured Simon's wife and triumphantly entered the city of Jerusalem as if Simon himself had been captured. In response Simon laid siege to Jerusalem (which he would not have done in a sabbath year), causing a great terror among the people there. Out of fear the citizens allowed Simon to recover his wife,[13] but he was not yet able to take the city.

Josephus then backtracks to report the events occurring in Rome at that time. Galba was murdered (Jan., 69 C.E.), Otho succeeded to power, and Vitellius was elected emperor by his soldiers. The contest between Otho and Vitellius ensued, after which Otho died, having ruled 3 months and 2 days.[14] Otho's death took place in April of 69 C.E.[15]

This evidence demonstrates, since agressive war was committed and crops were in production during the winter of 68/69 C.E., that system "B," which would have the sabbath year begin in Tishri of 68 C.E., is eliminated as a possibility. Also, since the Jews by custom did not plant crops during the six months prior to the beginning of a sabbath year, system "D," which would begin a sabbath year in the spring of 69 C.E., must also be dismissed.

The Edomite Jews

Those who hold to systems "B" and "D" object to our conclusion. They cannot deny the clear statements of Josephus. Instead, they argue, as Solomon Zeitlin does, that "the laws of the sabbatical year affected only the lands of Palestine, and had no application in Edom or in any other country that was annexed to Palestine."[16] Though this interpretation may at first seem reasonable, the attempt by the advocates of systems "B" and "D" to circumvent the words of Josephus about the events during the winter of 68/69 C.E. cannot bear up against close scrutiny.

First, one must not confuse the original country of Edom (Greek "Idumaea") with the country of Idumaea of the first century C.E. The Edomites had originally settled in the Khorite country of Seir, located southeast of the Dead Sea.[17] The people of Edom are descendants of Esau, who was later called Edom (Red) because he sold his birthright to his brother, Jacob Israel,

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12 GEL, p. 261; SEC, Gk. #1753–1756.
13 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:8.
14 Jos., *Wars*, 4:9:9.
15 Tacitus, *Hist*., 2:47–55.
16 JQR, 9, pp. 90, 101.
17 Deut., 2:5, 12, 22; Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:20:3, 2:1:1; Yashar, 28:20, 29:12–13, 36:15–37, 47:1, 30–32, 56:46f, 57:4–38, 84:5; cf. Gen., 36:20.

for a bowl of red soup.[18] Before the death of Isaak, the father of both Israel and Edom, Edom migrated and settled in the Kanaani land of Seir the Khorite, located in the mountains southeast of the Dead Sea. Edom made this settlement permanent after Isaak's death. Later, the Edomite nation killed off the Seiri and became the dominant tribe in that land.[19]

In the days of Moses the country bordering south of Edom was Qadesh Barnea,[20] properly identified by Josephus,[21] Jerome, and Eusebius with the district near Petra.[22] On Edom's north side lay Moab,[23] their borders touching at the Zered river: the modern Wadi el-Hasa.[24] Through Edom's territory ran the famous King's Highway, the main highway that today extends from the Gulf of Aqabah to Al Karak.[25] The ancient capital city of Edom was Bozrah.[26] It was located about 30 miles southeast of the Dead Sea in the mountains east of the Arabah (the long valley located south of the Dead Sea and on the west side of the Seir mountains).[27]

At the time the Israelites divided up their shares of the Promised Land, Judah's portion included the Arabah. Judah's lot also retained Qadesh Barnea, which bordered on the south of Edom and extended southward towards the Gulf of Aqabah (Red Sea).[28] Importantly, the Israelites were not permitted to take any part of the land of Edom in their conquest.[29] After the Exodus, when the Israelites left the southern border of Edom in an effort to encompass that land so that they might gain access to the King's Highway without having to pass through Edom's territory, they went by way of the Arabah south of the Dead Sea.[30]

On their way north from the Gulf of Aqabah, the Israelites stopped off at Punon,[31] identified with modern Feinan, an Edomite border district on Edom's western side, located on the east side of the Arabah about 25 miles south of the Dead Sea.[32] This evidence proves that the original country of Edom proper laid north of Petra, east of the Arabah, and south of the Zered river (Wadi el-Hasa).

The Edomite families remaining in their original homeland were, by the beginning of the reign of King Darius of Persia (521 B.C.E.), driven out of their country by the Nabataean Arabs. These exiled Edomites, in turn, resettled in southern Palestine (cf. 1 Esdras, 4:45–50). The historian Strabo writes:

> The Idumaeans (Edomites) are Nabataeans, but owing to sedition they were banished from there, (and) joined the Judaeans. (Strabo, 16:1:34)

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18 Gen., 25:19–34, 36:1–43.
19 Gen., 32:3; Num., 24:18; Deut., 2:12, 22; Yashar, 47:1, 57:13–38.
20 Num., 20:16.
21 Jos., *Antiq.*, 4:4:7.
22 *Onomastica*, pp. 108, 233.
23 Deut., 2:1–5, 8–18; cf. Num., 21:10–12; Judg., 11:16–18.
24 DB, p. 763; NBD, p. 1359; WHAB, p. 39a.
25 Num., 20:14–21; cf. 21:21f; also see MBA, maps 9, 10, 52, 104, 126, 208; WHAB, p. 41, 65b; NBD, p. 700.
26 Gen., 36:33; Isa., 34:6, 63:1; Jer., 49:13, 22; Amos, 1:12; Mic., 2:12.
27 NBD, p. 165; MBA, maps 52, 104, 155.
28 Josh., 10:16, 15:1–3, 18:18; Num., 34:3–4.
29 Deut., 2:4–5.
30 Deut., 2:8; cf. Num. 21:21ff; Yashar, 85:14.
31 Num., 21:4–11; cf. 33:42ff.
32 *Onomastica*, pp. 123, 299; MBA, p. 182, map. 52; ATB, p. 160.

The Nabataeans were an Arab tribe named after Nebaioth, the son of Ishmael, the brother-in-law of Edom.[33] In the post-exile period this tribe came to dominate the ancient Edomite country on the southeast side of the Dead Sea. They made their capital the ancient city of Petra.[34]

The Edomi were not Nabataeans; but, after they and their original homeland came to be dominated by the Nabataeans in the late Babylonian period, the Greeks identified these Edomi with the latter. Strabo, accordingly, identified the Idumaeans with their kinsmen tribe because they had once dwelt with the Nabataeans in part of the land presently known to him as Nabataea.

The territory occupied by the Edomites in the first century C.E., on the other hand, was located in the southern half of Judaea and was part of the Holy Land. Josephus states that the land of Idumaea that existed from the second century B.C.E. until the first century C.E. laid in "the latitude of Gaza" and was "conterminous with" the territory then held by the Jews.[35] Its cities included Hebron (formally an important Jewish city in the inheritance of Judah);[36] Adora (located 5 miles southwest of Hebron); Rhesa (8 miles south of Hebron); Marisa (1 mile south of Bit Jibrin); Thekoue (5 miles south of Bethlehem); Herodion (3 miles northeast of Thekoue); and Alurus (4 miles north of Hebron).[37]

Josephus makes Idumaea one of the 11 districts of Judaea.[38] In his book on the *Jewish Wars*, Josephus reports the defection "in many parts of Idumaea, where Machaeras was rebuilding the walls of the fortress called Gittha."[39] In another version of this story, Josephus states it was "a good part of Judaea" that revolted when Machaeras fortified the place called Gittha.[40] Therefore, the first century C.E. country of Idumaea is interchangeably used as part of Judaea.

In pointing out how the Holy Land was divided up amongst the 12 tribes of Israel in the days of Joshua the son of Nun (1394 B.C.E.), Josephus uses the place names of cities and regions in his own day (the first century C.E.). In the allotments that came to the Israelite tribes of Judah and Simeon (Simeon obtaining a share of Judah's territory),[41] Josephus gives the following description:

> When, then, he had cast lots, that of Judah obtained for its lot the WHOLE OF UPPER IDUMAEA, extending (in length) to Jerusalem and in breadth reaching over to the lake of Sodom (Dead Sea); within this allotment were the cities of Ashkelon and Gaza. That of Simeon, being the second, obtained the portion OF IDUMAEA bordering on Egypt and Arabia. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 5:1:22)

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33 Gen., 25:13, 28:9; Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:12:4.
34 Strabo, 16:4:21.
35 Jos., *Apion.*, 2:9.
36 E.g. see Josh., 21:9–11, 11:21, 15:1–14, 14:6–15.
37 Jos., *Wars*, 1:2:6, 1:13:8, 4:9:4–7, *Antiq.*, 13:9:1, 14:13:9; and so forth.
38 Jos., *Wars*, 3:3:5.
39 Jos., *Wars*, 1:17:2.
40 Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:15:11.
41 For the location of the inheritance of Judah and Simeon see Josh., 15:1–63, 19:1–9. The tribe of Simeon took its portion out of the land allotted to Judah, see Josh., 19:1.

Diodorus states that the Dead Sea extends along the middle of the satrapy of Idumaea[42] (i.e. the Dead Sea laid on the eastern side of Idumaea). Pliny points out that "Idumaea and Judaea" were part of the "seacoast of Syria,"[43] i.e. they both border upon the Mediterranean Sea. He adds that Palestine begins with the region of Idumaea "at the point where the Serbonian Lake comes into view."[44] The Serbonian Lake is located along the Mediterranean Sea, forming the northeastern sector of the Sinai Peninsula. Pliny also makes Judaea proper lie between Idumaea and Samaria.[45]

Strabo notes, "As for Judaea, its western extremities towards Casius are occupied by the Idumaeans and by the lake (Serbonia)."[46] The famous second century C.E. geographer Ptolemy makes Idumaea one of the districts of greater "Palestina or Judaea." He writes that "all" of Idumaea lies "west of the Jordan river." Ptolemy describes and defines Idumaea and its cities as that district lying immediately south of Judaea proper.[47]

This geographical data proves beyond any doubt that the country of Idumaea which existed in the first century C.E. occupied a portion of the Promised Land that had formally been given by allotment to the Israelite tribes of Judah and Simeon. The land they possessed, therefore, was part of the Holy Land; more specifically, part of greater Judah (Simeon's portion being extracted out of Judah's share). It stands to reason that if part of the Holy Land is occupied by those professing the Jewish faith, in the eyes of the Jews, it certainly would be subject to the Laws of Moses.

What then of the Idumaean religious beliefs? In the reign of John Hyrcanus (134 / 133–105 / 104 B.C.E.), the Jews conquered the country of Idumaea.[48]

> Hyrcanus also captured the Idumaean cities of Adora and Marisa, and after subduing all the Idumaeans, PERMITTED THEM TO REMAIN in the country SO LONG AS they had themselves circumcised and WERE WILLING TO OBSERVE THE LAWS OF THE JEWS. And so, out of attachment to the land of their fathers, they submitted to circumcision and to making their manner of life conform in all other respects to that of the Jews. AND FROM THAT TIME ON THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO BE JEWS. (Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:9:1)

No other neighboring countries located outside of the lands anciently inhabited by the Israelites and conquered by the Jews in the second and first centuries B.C.E. were forced to meet the requirements of either becoming Jewish by religion and practice or suffer under the threat of being forced to vacate their land. Nevertheless, there are two extremely important questions that have not been asked in reference to this above cited passage: "Is this exemption true for those

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42 Diodorus, 19:98.
43 Pliny, 5:13.
44 Pliny, 5:14.
45 Pliny, 5:15.
46 Strabo, 16:2:34.
47 Ptolemy, 5:15, and *Map of Asia Four*.
48 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:9:1, *Wars*, 1:2:6.

people living on territories anciently inhabited by the Israelites?" and, "Why would the Jews demand compliance from these Idumaeans?

The answers are easily unveiled. When the Jews dominated Samaria and the Trans-Jordan districts, once inhabited by the House of Israel, Jewish customs were also demanded. The Samaritans, for instance, had long practiced a form of Judaism and, for the Jews, were not an issue.[49] But the Ituraean Arabs give us an excellent example. A tribe of Ituraeans lived in a Trans-Jordan district once inhabited by the Israelite tribe of Manasseh. When a portion of them were conquered by the Jewish king Aristobulus (104 / 103 B.C.E.), and their territory annexed, they were joined to the Jews "by the bond of circumcision."[50]

The Idumaeans, meanwhile, were living in that part of the Holy Land which historically belonged to the Jews, who had occupied it centuries before the Jewish exile to Babylonia during the sixth century B.C.E. The Jews identified themselves with their own heritage in Judah yet they still saw reasons to require the conversion of the foreign nations now occupying the territory that had once belonged to the House of Israel. This requirement was even more stringent within territory traditionally considered Judahite. In the Torah, aliens dwelling with the Israelites were required to observe the sabbath year.[51] As a result, either the Edomites, who were living in Judah proper and not just greater Israelite territory, had to conform to Jewish law or they had to leave. The Idumaeans chose to stay in the land, "And from that time on they have continued to be Jews!"

In the days of King Herod the Great of Judaea an Idumaean named Costobarus was appointed governor of Idumaea and Gaza. Costobarus held the belief that the Idumaeans should not have adopted the customs of the Jews, so he sent to Cleopatra of Egypt in an attempt to have Idumaea stripped from Judaea as a possession. The attempt failed, but in discussing this issue Josephus also comments that in earlier times the Jewish priest "Hyrcanus had altered their (the Idumaeans') way of life and made them adopt THE CUSTOMS AND LAWS OF THE JEWS."[52] Strabo writes:

> The Idumaeans are Nabataeans, but owing to a sedition they were banished from there, joined the Judaeans, and SHARED IN THE SAME CUSTOMS WITH THEM.[53]

Antipater, the father of the Judaean king Herod (37–4 B.C.E.), was an Idumaean held in high esteem among the Idumaean people.[54] Though Herod's father was Edomite, the Jews themselves proclaimed that he "was a Jew."[55] Four of Herod's wives (Doris, Mariamme the daughter of Alexander, Mariamme the daughter of Simon, and Cleopatra) are know to be Jewish.[56] In fact, Mariamme the daughter of Alexander was the granddaughter of the Jewish

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49 Cf. 2 Kings, 17:24–28; Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:14:1–3.

50 Jos., *Antiq.*, 13:11:3.

51 E.g. Lev., 25:2–7.

52 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:7:9.

53 Strabo 16:2:34

54 Jos., *Wars*, 1:6:2, 1:13:7, 2:4:1, *Antiq.*, 14:1:3, 14:7:3, 14:15:2.

55 Jos., *Wars*, 2:13:7.

56 Doris was of Herod's "own nation," i.e. an Edomite (Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:12:1), yet is said to be "a native of Jerusalem" (Jos., *Wars*, 1:22:1) and "a Jewess of some standing" (Jos., *Wars*, 12:3). Mariamme, the daughter of Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, was the granddaughter of the

high priest named Hyrcanus and the other Mariamme was the daughter of the high priest named Simon.[57]

It would not have been possible for Herod to have retained the Judaean crown if he had not himself been Jewish by religion. Therefore, the king of Judaea, at the time that the messiah was born, though Edomite by descent was Jewish by religion. This fact symbolizes the general merger of the Judahites and Edomites of Idumaea during this and subsequent periods. Though up until the first century C.E. the Judahites and Edomites could distinguish between themselves, foreigners classed them all as Jews. In time even their own ability to distinguish one from the other had passed away.

In religious matters the Idumaeans were generally in alliance with the Zealots, one of the strictest religious sects in ancient Judaism.[58] The Idumaean Jews attended the major religious feasts at Jerusalem and were also a bulwark in the First Revolt against the Romans (66–70 C.E.).[59]

Conclusion

There can be no doubt. The Idumaeans of the first century C.E. were not only Jews by religion but were living in the Holy Land—and not in just any part of the Holy Land but in that portion which had historically belonged to the tribe of Judah. Under Jewish domination they were required to adhere to the Jewish faith or else be forced to abandon the country. At the same time, the Idumaeans were in close alliance with the Zealots, a strict Jewish sect, and demonstrated their loyalty to their faith in the Jewish war against Rome.

With these details we are compelled to the conclusion that the Edomites living in southern Judaea were strict adherents to Jewish law. If they had not been, an alliance with the Zealots would have been impossible and the other Jews would have found grounds to expel them from the country.

These facts force us to conclude that when Simon invaded the country of Idumaea in the winter of 68/69 C.E.—an act itself not committed in a sabbath year—there was no possible way that these Idumaean Jews would have avoided the sabbath year laws. But since they did cultivate their fields, we are presented with clear evidence that the winter of 68/69 B.C.E. was not part of a sabbath year. Further, since the crops of this planting season would normally be harvested after the beginning of the next year (69/70 C.E., Nisan reckoning), we have evidence that this next year was also not a sabbath.

The attack on Jerusalem by the Jewish factional leader Simon ben Gioras and the crops grown in Idumaea during the winter of 68/69 C.E. eliminates the cycles of both systems "B" and "D" from consideration (see Chart A). System "C" retains the problem of beginning with a Tishri year. Therefore, by default, the sabbath year cycle once again conforms to system "A." We are left with the conclusion that 70/71 C.E., Nisan reckoning, the year that Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, was a sabbath year (see Charts A & B).

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high priest Hyrcanus (Jos., *Wars*, 1:12:3, 1:17:8, *Antiq.*, 14:12:1, 14:15:14). The second Mariamme was the "daughter of Simon the high priest" (Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:9:3, 18:5:4). Cleopatra is also called "a native of Jerusalem." On the ten wives of Herod the Great see Jos., *Antiq.*, 17:1:1–3; *Wars*, 1:24:2, 1:28:4; HJP, 1, pp. 320f.

57 Ibid.

58 E.g. Jos., *Antiq.*, 4:4:1–4:5:2.

59 E.g. Jos., *Antiq.*, 17:10:2, *Wars*, 2:3:2, 5:6:1, 6:8:2.

Part V

The Bar Kochba Period

Figure 3

Mur 24E

Chapter XXVI

Dating the Contracts

Part I of the Sabbath Years of 133/134 and 140/141 C.E.

The last pre-Seder Olam records presently in our possession, which can date a sabbath year, are rental contracts composed during the Bar Kochba revolt (133 to 135 C.E.). These contracts, found among the papers of the archives in the caves of Wadi Murabba'at near Bethlehem, are dated to the 20th of Shebat (Jan./Feb.) in the second year of the revolt and speak of a sabbath year five years hence.

Wacholder makes the claim that these rental agreements substantiate his system "C" sabbath cycle.[1] Wacholder also writes:

> Since each of these twelve contracts, written in Hebrew, apparently contained both the same date of issuance and the clause relating to the Sabbatical year, they are crucial for this study.[2]

Wacholder then reproduces the document labeled "Mur 24E," partly but plausibly restored on the basis of the parallel fragments of papyri, as transcribed by J. T. Milik in his book entitled *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*.[3] This study agrees with the overall translation offered by Milik and Wacholder (the small differences are minor points which have no bearing on the conclusions).[4] Our translation is as follows:

1.	[On the twentieth of She]bat of Year tw[o] for the Redemption of	1. [בעשרין לשׁ]בט שנת שתּ[ים לגאלת
2.	[I]srael by Simeon ben K[osi]ba, (Bar Kochba) the prince of	2. [י]שׂראל על יד שמעון בן כּוס[בא נסיא
3.	[Is]rael. In the camp which is located in Herodium.	3. [ישׂר]אל במחנה שיושב בהרודיס

1 HUCA, 44, pp. 176–179.
2 Ibid., pp. 176f.
3 DTJD, no. 24, pp. 122–134, esp. p. 131, D, and 2, pt. 2, Plate XXXVI. Also see Fig. 3.
4 Wacholder's translation is as follows:
1. [On the twentieth of She]vat of the year tw[o] of the Redemption of
2. [I]srael by Shimeon ben K[os]ba, the prince of
3. [Is]rael. In the camp which is located in Herodium,
4. [Ye]hudah ben Raba' said to Hillel ben *Grys*:
5. "I of my free will have [re]nted from you today the
6. land which is my re[n]tal in 'Ir
7. Naḥash which I hold as a tenant from Shimeon, the Prince of Israel,
8. This land I have rented from you today

4.	[Ya]hudah ben Rabah said to Hillel ben Geryis:	4. [י]הודה בן רבא אמר להלל בן גריס
5.	"I of my own free will have [re]nted from you this day	5. אני מרצוני [ח]כרת המך היום את
6.	the field which is my re[n]tal in Ayr	6. העפר שהוא שלי בח:כֶרתי בעיר
7.	Nakhash which I hold as a tenant from Simeon, the Prince of Israel.	7. נחש שחכרת משמעון נסיא ישראל
8.	This field I have rented from you this day	8. [א]ת עפר הלז חכרתי המך מן היום
9.	until the end of this side of the shemitah, producing years	9. עד סוף ערב השמטה שהם שנים
10.	complete, years of evaluation, five of tenancy;	10. שלמות שני [מ]כסה חמש תחכיר
11.	[that I wi]ll deliver to you in [Her]odium: wheat,	11. [שא]ן א מודד לך ב [הר]ודיס חנטין
12.	[of good and pure quality,] th[ree kor]s and a lethekh,	12. [יפות ונקיות] שלו[שת כור]ין ולתך
13.	[from which a tenth part of the tithe] of these	13. [מעסרת מעסר]ת אלה
14.	[you will deliver to the silo of the treasury.] And [I am obli]gated	14. [שתהא שוקל על גג האוצר] [קים]
15.	[in regard of this matter thusly . . . . .]."	15. [עלי לעמת ככה]
16.	[Yahudah ben Rabah, in person.]	16. [יהודה בן רבא על נפשה]
17.	[Simeon ben Kosiba, by dictation.]	17. [שמעון בן כוסבא מן מאמרה]

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9. until the end of the eve of Shemitah, which are years
10. full, [fi]scal years, five, of tenancy;
11. [that I wi]ll deliver to you in [Her]odium: wheat,
12. [of good and pure quality,] th[ree *kor*]s and a *lethekh*,
13. [of which a tenth part of the tithe] of these
14. [you will deliver to the silo of the treasury.] And [I am obli]gated
15. [in regard of this matter thusly]
16. [Yehudah ben Raba', in person]
17. [Shim'on ben Kosba', by dictation.]

Lines 8–10 can more flowingly be translated as, "This field I have rented from you this day until this side of the shemitah (year of release, i.e. the seventh year),[5] an evaluation of five complete producing years of tenancy." Combined with this statement is the opening remark that the document was published, "On the twentieth of Shebat (Jan./Feb.) in Year 2 of the Redemption of Israel by Simeon ben Kosiba."

Wacholder calculates that, contrary to what is stated, these documents point to "five years, six months, and ten days" and not to "five full years."[6] Wacholder arrives at this conclusion because he has presumed that the sabbath year started with the first of Tishri. His conclusion is inaccurate for several reasons.

To begin with, the contract clearly spells out the fact that the rental was to last only "five complete producing years of tenancy," not five and one half years. Also, coins from this period prove that during the Bar Kochba revolt the Jews used the first of Nisan as the beginning of their year, not Tishri.[7]

The Bar Kochba revolt was predicated upon the ideal of bringing back lost Jewish glory. Not only had the Jews intended on rebuilding the Temple, but they brought back into use the ancient palaeo-Hebrew alphabet, the first of Nisan as the beginning of their year, and the practice of keeping the sabbath years—all apparently stripped away from them by the Romans upon the collapse of the First Revolt in 70 C.E.

The leader of this Judaean revolt against the Roman empire was a man called Simeon ben Kosiba (Kosibah, Koziba, etc.), also known as Simeon bar Kochba (Kokhbah, Kokhba, Kochebas, etc.). It makes little sense that those involved in the Second Revolt (which the men participating in the rental contracts, including Simeon ben Kosiba himself, certainly were)—whose effort was to bring back lost Jewish glory—would determine their contracts by anything less than a first of Abib (Nisan) year as commanded by the Torah.

The contract can only be understood in one of two ways: it either began on the twentieth of Shebat in the second year of the redemption of Israel and was to continue until the twentieth of Shebat five years later; or it was understood that the first of the year was at hand and that the contract, concluded on the twentieth of Shebat, was to take effect on the first of Nisan and end five years later on the eve of that date.[8]

Regardless of which way one understands the five complete years, the contract points to a Nisan 1 beginning for the year. Shebat 20, five years later, would also lay just "on this side" of (or about 40 days away from) the beginning of the next sabbath year. What is important for our study is the fact that the beginning of the next sabbath year in these contracts was just five complete years after "Year 2 of the Redemption of Israel." The key to dating the sabbath year of these contracts is to correctly pinpoint which year represents

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5 See above Chap. XI, p. 159, ns. 2 and 3.

6 HUCA, 44, p. 179.

7 IEJ, 21, pp. 39–46.

8 Since the 20th of Shebat was only about 40 days away from the first of the year, a first of Nisan understanding is most probable. All that could have been accomplished before the end of the present year, anyway, was some late planting which would have been of little significance for a wheat crop. As we shall later show, the present year was in fact a Jubilee (Chap. XXVII, pp. 333f).

"Year 2 of the Redemption of Israel." To accomplish this task we must closely examine the chronology of the Second Revolt.

The Second Revolt

Those who adhere to system "B" give two different views about when the Bar Kochba revolt started. Milik, who correctly reads the document but tries to make it conform to a Tishri (Sept./Oct.) year, starts the revolt in the year of 131/132 C.E., Tishri reckoning.[9] But Milik's view is now generally set aside. Those after Milik, like Baruch Kanael, who recognize that the year during the Second Revolt actually began with the first of Nisan (April), date the first year to 132/133 C.E., Nisan reckoning, yet insist on a Tishri beginning for the sabbath year itself.[10]

Those holding to system "B," as a result, conclude that the year 133/134 C.E., Nisan (March/April) reckoning, was the second year of the revolt of all Judaea. Yet, the sabbath year mentioned by the documents from Wadi Murabba'at belongs to 138/139 C.E., Tishri (Oct.) reckoning, as found on Zuckermann's chart.[11]

Wacholder, who professes system "C," also makes the first year of the revolt 132/133 C.E., Nisan reckoning, and as with the others begins the sabbath year with Tishri.[12] But unlike those of system "B," Wacholder makes Shebat 20 fall at the end of the Nisan year 133/134 C.E. (i.e. in Feb. of 134). He concludes that the five years time mentioned in the contract points to Tishri 1, 139 C.E. as the beginning of the expected sabbath year.

System "A" demands that the sabbath year mentioned in these contracts begins on the first of Nisan in 140 C.E. Therefore, the second year of the redemption of Israel would equal 134/135 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

Next, we must examine the two most important historical notices of this war (during which time the contracts in question were composed): those from Eusebius and Dio. Eusebius reports the war and its conclusion as follows:

> The rebellion of the Jews once more progressed in character and extent, and Rufus, the governor of Judaea, when military aid had been sent him by the Emperor, moved out against them, treating their madness without mercy. He destroyed in heaps thousands of men, women, and children, and, under the law of war, enslaved their land. The Jews were at that time led by a certain Bar Kochebas, which means "star," a man who was murderous and a bandit, but relied on his name, as if dealing with slaves, and claimed to be a luminary who had come down to them from heaven and was magically enlightening those who were in misery. The war reached its

9 DTJD, p. 125.
10 IEJ, 21, pp. 39–46.
11 TSCJ, p. 61.
12 HUCA, 44, pp. 176–179.

> height in the EIGHTEENTH YEAR of the reign of Hadrian in Beth Thera, which was a strong citadel not very far from Jerusalem; the siege lasted a long time before the rebels were driven to final destruction by famine and thirst and the instigator of their madness paid the penalty he deserved. Hadrian then commanded that by a legal decree and ordinances the whole nation should be absolutely prevented from entering from thenceforth even the district round Jerusalem, so that not even from a distance could it see its ancestral home. Ariston of Pella tells the story. Thus when the city came to be bereft of the nation of the Jews, and its ancient inhabitants had completely perished, it was colonized by foreigners, and the Roman city which afterwards arose changed its name, and in honour of the reigning emperor Aelius Hadrian was called Aelia. (Eusebius, *H.E.*, 4:6)

Dio's *Roman History* tells this story:

> At Jerusalem he (Hadrian) founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground (i.e. in 70 C.E.), naming it Aelia Capitolina, and on the site of the Temple of the deity (Yahweh) he raised a new temple to Dios (Jupiter/Zeus).[13] This brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration, for the Jews deemed it intolerable that alien nations should be settled in their city and alien religious rites planted there. So long, indeed, as Hadrian was close by in Egypt and again in Syria, they remained quiet, save in so far as they purposely made of poor quality such weapons as they were called upon to furnish, in order that the Romans might reject them and they themselves might thus have the use of them; but WHEN HE WENT AWAY, THEY OPENLY REVOLTED. To be sure, they did not dare try conclusions with the Romans in the open field, but they occupied the advantageous positions in the country and strengthened them with mines and walls, in order that they should be hard pressed, and might meet together unobserved under ground; and they pierced these subterranean passages from above at intervals to let in air and light. AT FIRST, THE ROMANS TOOK NO ACCOUNT OF THEM. SOON, HOWEVER, ALL JUDAEA HAD BEEN STIRRED

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13 That Hadrian began to build the city of Aelia Capitolina prior to the outbreak of the Bar Kochba revolt is demonstrated by an Aelia Capitolina coin of Hadrian's found among a hoard of Bar Kochba coins from the northern region of the Judaean desert (JCST, pp. 92f).

> UP, AND THE JEWS EVERYWHERE WERE SHOWING SIGNS OF DISTURBANCE, WERE GATHERING TOGETHER, AND GIVING EVIDENCE OF GREAT HOSTILITY TO THE ROMANS, partly by secret and partly by overt acts; many outside nations, too, were joining them through eagerness for gain, and the whole earth, one might almost say, was being stirred up over the matter. Then, indeed, Hadrian sent against them his best generals. First of these was Julius Severus, who was dispatched from Britain, where he was governor, against the Jews. Severus did not venture to attack his opponents in the open at any one point, in view of their numbers and their desperation, but by intercepting small groups, thanks to the number of his soldiers and his under-officers, and by depriving them of food and shutting them up, he was able, RATHER SLOWLY, to be sure, but with comparatively little danger, to crush, exhaust and exterminate them. Very few of them in fact survived. 50 of their most important outposts and 985 of their most famous villages were razed to the ground. 580,000 men were slain in the various raids and battles, and the number of those that perished by famine, disease and fire was past finding out. Thus nearly the whole of Judaea was made desolate, a result of which people had forewarning before the war. For the tomb of Solomon, which the Jews regard as an object of veneration, fell to pieces of itself and collapsed, and many wolves and hyenas rushed howling into their cities. Many Romans, moreover, perished in this war. Therefore, Hadrian in writing to the senate did not employ the opening phrase commonly affected by the emperors, "If you and your children are in health, it is well; I and the legions are in health." (Dio, 69:12–14)

Dating the Second Revolt

When did the first year of the revolt by "all Judaea" actually begin? Only by this date would the Jews begin publishing coins by the revolt. For systems "B," "C," or "D" to work, the revolt by all Judaea must have begun in the spring of 132 C.E.; but system "A" demands its commencement with the spring of 133 C.E. To solve this dispute, the records for the Second Revolt must be closely examined.

The beginning and ending years for the second Jewish revolt are found in the works of Eusebius. In Jerome's version of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, the beginning of the revolt is dated to the sixteenth year of Hadrian.[14] He

14 DCDH, p. 200; Jerome, *Euseb. Chron.*, 282F:17–24.

further dates the end of the revolt to the eighteenth year of Hadrian.[15] In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius writes that "up to the siege of the Jews by Hadrian the successions of the bishops (of Jerusalem) were 15 in number." After naming these 15 bishops, he adds that, "The war reached its height in the eighteenth year of the reign of Hadrian in Beth Thera, which is a strong citadel not very far from Jerusalem."[16]

Hadrian came to power on August 10, 117 C.E.[17] Yet, we do not know which year system was utilized by Ariston of Pella, the source of Eusebius. Pella was a Jewish region located in Peraea, on the east side of the Jordan, opposite Beth-Shean. But just before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., thousands of Jewish Christians left Jerusalem and settled in Pella.[18] That Eusebius, a devout Christian born in Palestine, would have used a Jewish Christian source would be quite in keeping with his methods. If that were the case, it is very likely that Hadrian's year was judged by the ancient Judaean method, from Nisan to Nisan.

Only three possible dating systems are applicable for dating Hadrian's sixteenth and eighteenth years if any of our four possible sabbath cycle systems are to work.

• If the Roman *dies imperii* was used, then Hadrian's first year would extend from August 10, 117 until August 10, 118 C.E.

The sixteenth year would extend from August 10, 132 until August 10, 133 C.E.

The eighteenth year would run from August 10, 134 until August 10, 135 C.E.

• If the Macedonian Seleucid year system was used then Hadrian's first year would run from October, 117 until October, 118 C.E.

The sixteenth year would extend from October, 132 until October, 133 C.E.

The eighteenth year would run from October, 134 until October, 135 C.E.

• If Ariston of Pella was a Judaean or Judaean Christian and used the old Judaean system, then Hadrian's first year was from Nisan of 118 until Nisan of 119 C.E.

The sixteenth year of Hadrian would be Nisan, 133 until Nisan, 134 C.E.

The eighteenth year, therefore, would be from Nisan, 135 until Nisan, 136 C.E.

Our next source of evidence for dating the Bar Kochba revolt comes from the Seder Olam. This text, written only a few decades after the revolt, gives us the following information:

> From the conflict with As-varus until the conflict with Vespasian: 80 years, while the Temple existed. From the conflict with Vespasian until . . . the conflict

15 DCDH, p. 201; Jerome, *Euseb. Chron.*, 283F:9–14.
16 Eusebius, *H.E.*, 4:5–6.
17 Spartianus, *Hadr.*, 4:6–7; cf. Theon, in AF, pp. 83ff.
18 Eusebius, *H.E.*, 3:5.

> with Quietus: 52 years. From the conflict with Quietus until the war of Ben Kozibah (Kochba): 16 years.[19]

The Judaean conflict, which caused the Roman general Vespasian to become involved, began with the First Revolt of the Jews against Rome. This conflict flared up during the month of Artemisius (Iyyar; i.e. April/May), in the twelfth year of Nero, being the spring of 66 C.E.[20] Technically, Vespasian did not actually invade Judaea until the spring of the following year, i.e. 67 C.E.[21] But it is clear that the war itself is what the Seder Olam refers to.

From the beginning of the conflict which came to involve Vespasian until the end of the conflict with Quietus was 52 years, i.e. the years 66/67 to 117/118 C.E., Nisan reckoning. This date is correct. Towards the end of the reign of Trajan, the Emperor suspected that the Jews in Mesopotamia would attack the inhabitants there and ordered Lusius Quietus to clean them out of the province. Quietus organized a force and murdered a great multitude of the Jews, and "for this reform was appointed governor of Judaea."[22] These events are said by Eusebius to have taken place in the eighteenth year of Trajan (116 C.E.).[23] In turn, his appointment as governor of Judaea brought about unrest in Judaea. Spartianus, the biographer of emperor Hadrian, points out that upon Hadrian's succession to the Roman throne (Aug., 117 C.E.) the Jews of Palestine were in a state of revolt.[24]

The trouble in Palestine, therefore, occurred after the calamity which took place in Mesopotamia. As the result of the oppression of the Jews in Judaea by Quietus, emperor Hadrian recalled Quietus and later executed him.[25] The conflict with Quietus, accordingly, ended shortly after Hadrian came to the throne in August of the Jewish year 117/118 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

From the end of the conflict with Quietus until the beginning of the Bar Kochba war was 16 years: i.e. from the year 118/119 C.E. to the year 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning. It is of no little consequence that the 16 years mentioned in the Seder Olam would equal the sixteenth year of Hadrian, which thereby confirms the date given by Ariston of Pella, as recorded by Eusebius, for the beginning of the Bar Kochba revolt. Once again the year 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning, is indicated as the beginning of the Second Revolt.

Finally, in all the best manuscripts of the Seder Olam "the war of Ben Kozibah (Bar Kochba) was two and one half years" in length.[26] Since the war began within the sixteenth year after the conflict with Quietus, two and one half years more brings us to the eighteenth year. The dates reported by Eusebius (from Ariston of Pella), which begins the war in the sixteenth year of Hadrian and ends it in his eighteenth year, are thereby confirmed.

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19 S.O., 30; and see App. D. Also see the Hebrew text of the סדר עולם in MJC, 2, p. 66; SORC, 2, p. 547, 3, pp. 441f; also given in HJP, 1, p. 534, n. 92.

20 Jos., *Wars*, 2:14:4.

21 See Chap. XXIV, pp. 304–308.

22 Eusebius, *H.E.*, 4:2.

23 DCDH, p. 196; Jerome, *Euseb. Chron.*, 278F:17–26.

24 Spartianus, *Hadr.*, 5:2.

25 Spartianus, *Hadr.*, 5:8, 7:2.

26 SORC, 2, p. 547, 30:81.

The Bar Kochba war began in the spring of the year. This fact is proven by a document from this period dated: "On the first of Iyyar, Year 1 of the Redemption of Israel by Simeon Bar Kosiba, נשיא (*Nasia*; Prince)[27] of Israel."[28] Since Iyyar (April/May) is only the second month of the Jewish year, it is clear that this document was composed very shortly after, if not immediately after, the formal beginning of hostilities for all Judaea.

Evidence also exists for the month in which the rebel fortress at Beth Thera and the city of Jerusalem fell to the Romans, which marks the end of the two and one half years of conflict. The Mishnah informs us that "Beth Thor (Beth Thera) was captured and the City (Jerusalem) was ploughed up" on the ninth of Ab (July/Aug.).[29]

It is now known that Emperor Hadrian's second acclamation as imperator took place sometime between April and December of 135 C.E.[30] This acclamation was as a direct result of his victory in Judaea.[31] This detail fits very well with the Mishnah's report that Beth Thera was overthrown in the month of Ab, the fifth month of the Jewish year.

This information confirms that, regardless of which year system is used, the fall of Beth Thera and Jerusalem occurred in the month of Ab in the year 135 C.E. This much all can agree on. Since the war ended near the middle of the year of 135/136 C.E., the beginning of the war, two and one half years earlier, must be dated on or very near the beginning of the year 133/134 C.E.

Conclusion

Based upon all the possible ways of dating the reign of Hadrian, the beginning of the revolt, which took place in the sixteenth year of Hadrian, could not have occurred before August 10 of 132 C.E., the Roman *dies imperii* for his sixteenth year.

Further, the war did not officially start for all of Judaea until the spring, confirmed by a document mentioning the first of Iyyar (April/May) in "Year 1 of the Redemption of Israel." Therefore the first year of the revolt of all Judaea was 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning. As shall be demonstrated as we proceed in this examination of the Bar Kochba war, there was an earlier local conflict that had begun in late 131/132 C.E. but it did not spread to all Judaea until the beginning of the sabbath year of 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning. The evidence will also leave little room for doubt that Bar Kochba was officially recognized and the war was officially declared for all Judaea against Rome on, or very shortly after, Nisan (March/April) 1, 133 C.E.

The Judaeans would not consider it Hadrian's sixteenth year until Nisan 1 of 133 C.E., which further supports this year as the beginning of the revolt. Even if we use the Roman system and date the years of Hadrian's reign from August to August, the first of Iyyar—which represents roughly the beginning of the revolt, in the first year of the era of the Redemption of Israel—still must

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27 For נשיא or נסיא (Nasia, Nasi) see SEC, Heb. #5387, "an *exalted* one, i.e. a *king* or *sheik*"; HEL, p. 174, "*chief . . . chief of a tribe* among the Israelites . . . *prince*."

28 IEJ, 21, p. 41, n. 15.

29 Taan., 4:6.

30 JQR, 34, pp. 61–63.

31 Ibid.

fall in the spring of 133 C.E. Since the Jews used a Nisan year at that time, there is no other conclusion except that the year 133/134 C.E. was for them the beginning of the war (Chart K).[32]

Based upon this data, it is clear that the year 134/135 C.E., Nisan reckoning, would be the second year of the revolt by all Judaea. That being the case, the twentieth day of the month of Shebat, on which day the rental contracts mentioning the sabbath year were composed, would belong to the latter part of that year (Feb., 135 C.E.).

The "five complete producing years of tenancy," therefore, could not end before Shebat 20 of the year 139/140 C.E., Nisan reckoning, or about February, 140 C.E. The sabbath year which shortly followed, as a result, would start with the first of Nisan in 140 C.E. A sabbath year for 140/141 C.E., Nisan reckoning, conforms perfectly with the system "A" cycle (see Chart B). We therefore have one more confirmation that system "A" is the true and correct sabbath cycle.

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32 Joseph Jacobs correctly regards the year 133 C.E. as the official beginning of the revolt and 135 C.E. as the fall of Beth Thera (Bethar) (JE, 4, p. 71).

Chapter XXVII

Addressing the Opposing View

Part II of the Sabbath Years of 133/134 and 140/141 C.E.

Despite strong proof that the first year of the Bar Kochba revolt was 133/134 C.E., those adhering to systems "B," "C," and "D" object. To support their views, they point to the following items of evidence and interpretation:

• The Palestinian Talmud, in *Taanith*, 68d; some variant texts of Seder Olam Rabbah, 30; and *Lamentations Rabbah* report that the Jewish rebellion lasted three and one half years before the fall of Beth Thera rather than two and one half years. The advocates of systems "B," "C," and "D" merely claim, as Wacholder does, that "the reading of 'two and a half' is erroneous."[1]

• Using Ab (July/Aug.) of 135 C.E. as the date that Beth Thera fell, the advocates of systems "B,""C," and "D" then count back three and one half years, which brings them to the spring of 132 C.E. This date conforms with a revolt which would have started just before Iyyar (April/May) of that year. The second year of the revolt, therefore, would be 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

• In response to Eusebius' claim that the revolt began in the sixteenth year of Hadrian, which at its earliest reckoning began on August 10 of 132 C.E., they conjecture, as Kanael does, that the line in the *Chronicle* dating the beginning of the revolt "has been transposed, and should have been registered with the events of Hadrian's 15th year."[2]

• Coins produced during the Second Revolt show that Jerusalem was occupied by the rebels long enough to strike coins for three separate years.[3] Since the records remaining to us show that the main resistance held out at Beth Thera, the theory is advanced that Jerusalem fell a year earlier and that no further coins were struck thereafter.

• A document from this period has been found which dates the Second Revolt as late as the month of Tishri in "Year 4."[4] This record, they argue, conforms with the evidence that the revolt must have lasted at least three and one half years, i.e. until October, 135 C.E.

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1 HUCA, 44, p. 179.
2 IEJ, 21, p. 40, n. 7.
3 CGCP, pp. civ–cviii, 284–316; CP, pp. 40–41, 120–128; AJ, pp. 33–38, 60–66.
4 IEJ, 21, p. 45.

• By placing the first year of the revolt in the spring of 132 C.E., those favoring systems "B," "C," and "D" feel that the evidence supports their respective conclusions for the sabbath cycle. The "corrected" date for the first year of the revolt, altered from the sixteenth to the fifteenth year of Hadrian, using Hadrian's *dies imperii*, becomes August 10, 131 until August 10, 132 C.E.

System "B" calculates that the second Jewish year of the revolt was Tishri (Sept./Oct.), 132 until Tishri, 133 C.E. The five years mentioned in the rental contracts, then, extended from 133/134 to 137/138 C.E., Tishri reckoning. The sabbath year would become 138/139 C.E., Tishri reckoning.

System "C" recognizes that the Jews of this period used a Nisan first year. The second year of the revolt, therefore, would be 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning. The five years of the rental contracts would be 134/135 to 138/139 C.E., Nisan reckoning. The sabbath years, on the other hand, are calculated by a Tishri 1 year. As a result, the next sabbath year after the five years of harvest becomes 139/140 C.E., Tishri reckoning.

System "D" supports a Nisan first year as the correct Jewish reckoning. In this arrangement the second year of the revolt would be 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning. The five years of the contracts are 134/135 to 138/139 C.E., Nisan reckoning. The sabbath year is calculated as 139/140 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

The Flaws in the Popular Theory

On the face of it, the popular reconstruction for dating the beginning of the Second Revolt to the spring of 132 C.E. may seem plausible. Nevertheless, it is substantially flawed and built largely upon conjecture. These flaws are discovered in the following areas:

• The conclusion that the revolt began in the spring of 132 C.E. is based upon the assumption that the sabbath year during this period must have been either 138/139 C.E., Tishri reckoning, system "B"; 139/140 C.E., Tishri reckoning, system "C"; or 139/140 C.E., Nisan reckoning, system "D." The evidence then becomes subject to selectivity, the chronologist picking and choosing which piece of evidence he wishes to utilize without full consideration of its source or usefulness. In short, the preconceived system becomes the judge of the evidence rather than the evidence being allowed to first build its own case, then comparing that result with the various sabbath cycle systems.

• There has been a failure to recognize the motive of the rabbis who originated the chronology system upon which popular rabbinical chronology is built. These rabbis were supporters of Bar Kochba, a man who claimed to be the promised messiah and who had a large following among the masses. Bar Kochba's supporters read into the Second Revolt a fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel, 9:24–27, which states that the messiah would come AFTER 483 weeks (incorrectly interpreted to mean 483 years), i.e. in the 484th year of the building of the second Temple. In their calculations, the destruction of Jerusalem (70 C.E.) took place in the 421st year of this era.[5]

[5] B. Arak., 12b; TSCJ, pp. 39–43; etc. Also see Chart B.

Since the 421st year of this period equals 70 C.E., the rabbis began this era in 351 B.C.E. (see Chart B). In reality, this construction is impossible. The era starts when the command went forth to build the second Temple; yet the first stages of the second Temple were already completed in the sixth year of King Darius of Persia (515 B.C.E.).[6] Therefore, the early construction of the second Temple was actually completed some 164 years before the rabbis calculated that the work to build it had started. Neither can the rabbinical understanding be a reference to a later building phase, for the second Temple was not enlarged until the eighteenth year of King Herod (20/19 B.C.E.).[7]

The clear intent of the contrived chronology from this period is to prove that Bar Kochba was the promised messiah. The 484th year of this era, the year in which the messiah was to appear, becomes 133/134 C.E. This date, therefore, proves that the Second Revolt would have actually begun in 133 C.E. not 132 C.E. (133 C.E. being the year in which the messiah's appearance was expected). Other contemporary rabbis and later rabbis dismissed the Bar Kochba messianic attachment to the chronology but inaccurately continued use of it as if it was a factual framework for the past.

- The claim of three and one half years for the length of the revolt—as found in some variant texts of the Seder Olam Rabbah and a couple of Talmudic writings—is, in fact, of much later origin than either the earliest copies of Seder Olam or Eusebius. The figure of three and one half years is actually derived from still another attempt to read into the Second Revolt some of the prophecy of Daniel, 9:24–27; i.e. the statement that in the "middle of the week" (interpreted to mean three and one half years) the evil one shall "cause the sacrifices and offerings to cease." As a result, these writings superimposed their own chronological interpretation on that event.

- The belief that somehow the coins and documents from the Bar Kochba revolt support a theory that the war lasted three and one half years is based upon negative proof, dismissal of sound testimony, and a selective interpretation of the evidence. The evidence only proves that Jerusalem fell in the third year of the revolt. It is then merely assumed that there was a year's time between the fall of Jerusalem and the fall of Beth Thera. The extra year is required only because it is needed to fill in the gap created by the assumption that the war had to last three and one half years. These coins and documents will be fully analyzed in Chapters XXVIII and XXIX.

- As we have shown in our previous chapter, both Eusebius and the best manuscripts of the Seder Olam point to the sixteenth year of Hadrian as the specific year that the Jewish revolt began. Furthermore, these records only allow for two and a half years until Beth Thera was overthrown in Ab (July/Aug.) of 135 C.E., which event effectively broke the back of the resistance. The dates given by Eusebius and the best manuscripts of the Seder Olam are simply rejected by the advocates of systems "B," "C," and "D" without due consideration. In their place is substituted a formula built upon the assumption

6 See Ezra, 6:14–16.
7 Jos., *Antiq.*, 15:11:1.

that for their respective sabbath cycle system to work it requires a sabbath year in 138/139 C.E., Tishri reckoning, system "B"; or 139/140 C.E., Tishri reckoning, system "C"; or 139/140 C.E., Nisan reckoning, system "D."

To demonstrate, Schürer points to the rental contracts that report a sabbatical year after five years of harvest and simply concludes with M. R. Lehmann and others that, "The first year [of the revolt] will therefore be A.D. 132/3."[8] The five years are simply adjusted to fit the assumed date of the sabbath year.

Wacholder, system "C," makes the same kind of assumption. He concludes, based upon his own calculations, that the last shemitah prior to the rental contracts of the Bar Kochba period "took place not in 131/32, as Zuckermann says, but in 132/33."[9] From this date he calculates the next sabbath year by shaping the five year period of the rental contracts to support that conclusion.

In short, the chronologists start from the premise that their own particular sabbath cycle system is accurate and then set out to correct the evidence so that it will conform.

The Bar Kochba Chronology

Let us first examine in more depth the origin of the Bar Kochba Chronology. A major error of the advocates of systems "B," "C," and "D" has been their failure to take into account the source of the chronology used by the authors of the Seder Olam and other Talmudic works. This chronology originated from the supporters of Bar Kochba who read into the Bar Kochba revolt the prophecy of Daniel, 9:24–27, which foretold of the appearance of the messiah.

First, it can be no mere coincidence that the year 133 C.E., year 16 of Hadrian, is the 484th year of the era of building the second Temple—the year 351 B.C.E. being the date determined by the rabbis as the time when the building of the second Temple began.[10]

Why did these rabbis calculate a date so far from the truth (i.e. over 164 years) if it had not arisen for some religious and political purpose?

The very fact that the chronology agreed upon by the rabbis from the time of Rabbi Jose (about 160 C.E.) was based upon the prophecy of Daniel, 9:24–27—and then finding that his chronology fulfills the messianic expectation at the time of Bar Kochba's insurrection—clearly indicates its original source and intent. In fact, Rabbi Jose, who wrote the Seder Olam (the text upon which Talmudic chronology is built) only about 25 years after the end of that revolt, also lived at the time of the Second Revolt. Nevertheless, he was not the originator of the chronology but only its transmitter.

Rabbi Yahanan, who lived in the next century after Jose, and the Babylonian Talmudic works *Yebamot* (82b) and *Niddah* (46b) report that Rabbi Jose "taught" Seder Olam.[11] Rabbi Jose (Yose) is himself cited nine times in the Seder Olam,[12] while other Rabbis, all of them Tannaim, appear altogether ten times.[13] Milikowsky concludes from this evidence:

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8 HJP, 1, pp. 542f, n. 126.
9 HUCA, 44, p. 179.
10 Also see Chap. I, pp. 10f.
11 SORC, 1, pp. 12–24.
12 S.O., 1:16, 11:13, 11:15, 17:39, 23:42, 27:38, 28:53, 30:38, 30:50.
13 See SORC, 1, p. 14, and p. 20, n. 12.

> With SO [Seder Olam], there is good reason to believe that R. Yose's central role was that of a transmitter who edited (revised?) and added his own comments to the text. Only in this way can we explain the statements attributed to R. Yose in SO: a later editor when re-editing the chronography of R. Yose transmitted added R. Yose's name to those comments which the latter had added (in the first person?) to the text. Not only does this solve our problem, i.e. how is it possible for R. Yose to be cited in SO if it is his work, but it is also the only way to explain why R. Yose is cited in SO almost as much as all other Sages together: since he transmitted SO, his notes and comments were more numerous than the statements of other Sages which were attached to the text.[14]

It is clear from this evidence that Rabbi Jose transmitted a chronology that had been in vogue during the Bar Kochba period only 30 years before. It was a chronology that he "taught," not originated. The political and messianic attachments made during the Bar Kochba revolt were dropped but the scheme of things was continued as if this chronology represented the true chronology of the ancient Jewish people.

Bar Kochba represented himself as the messiah. His appearance in Jewish history at the precise time that the Jewish chronology of the rabbis would indicate the appearance of the messiah cannot be a mere coincidence. His official title was "נשיא (Nasia or Nasi)," denoting chief, prince, or king. The name Kochba, meaning "star," was a reference to the messianic prophecy in Numbers, 24:17.[15] Rabbi Akiba specifically calls him the "King Messiah."[16] Bar Kochba is often considered one of the "gibborim" or "mighty warriors" of Jewish history in later Talmudic works. He is described as catching stones flung from Roman catapults and hurling them back with deadly results.[17] According to this legend, it was for that reason that Rabbi Akiba declared him to be the messiah.[18]

The majority of coins from the first year of the revolt bear Bar Kochba's name and his title "Nasia of Israel."[19] These coins clearly reflect the messianic aspirations of Bar Kochba. The "star which appears above the Temple facade on the obverse of most tetradrachms of the second and third years [of the revolt-coins] again alludes to the messianic aspirations of Ben Kosiba [Bar Kochba]."[20] This star is still held up among the Jews today as the star of David.

The belief that Bar Kochba was the messiah and that he fulfilled the requirements of Daniel, 9:24–27 (rabbinical interpretation) necessitates that his appearance after 483 years must occur on a sabbath year, i.e. in the 484th

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14 SORC, 1, pp.15f.
15 J. Taan., 68d; HJP, 1, pp. 543f.
16 J. Taan., 68d; HUCA, 46, p. 217.
17 HUCA, 54, pp. 183, 185.
18 J. Taan., 4:8; Mid. 'Ek. Rab., 2:5, on *'Ekhah*, 2:2.
19 IEJ, 21, p. 42.
20 IEJ, 21, p. 44, and n. 37.

year.[21] Wacholder, in his study on *Chronomessianism*, for example, presents an outline of the ancient evidence proving that "at one time" there existed among the Jews a "widespread belief, that the inevitable coming of the messiah would take place during the season when Israel celebrated the sabbatical year."[22] And indeed, this circumstance is exactly what the records from the Bar Kochba period indicate.

The rental contracts found at Murabba'at were written towards the end of the month of Shebat (the eleventh month of the Jewish year) of the second year of the redemption. They reveal that the eve of a sabbath year was to follow after five coming, complete harvest years. Therefore, the first year of the revolt (133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning) was in fact a sabbath year!

Just as important to our study is another overlooked fact. Based upon the date for Hezekiah's sixteenth year, the second year of the Bar Kochba revolt (134/135 C.E., Nisan reckoning) was a Jubilee year (Chart B). What better time for someone claiming to be the messiah to exert his claim? Even though during this period the rabbis claimed that the Jubilee was abolished by "rabbinic"—though definitely not by "scriptural"—ordinances,[23] the Jubilee was still calculated and its prophetic connection with the messiah clearly understood.

This detail also explains why no rental contracts were found that showed a harvest during the first and second years of the Second Revolt. The 12 contracts under discussion for this period merely point to the fact that in the coming five years there would be five harvests before the next sabbath year.

These facts demonstrate that these 12 contracts, written on the twentieth day of Shebat (Jan./Feb.), must be understood to mean that the five producing years referred to would actually commence with the first of Nisan, which was only 40 days away. These five years were to end on the eve of the next sabbath year.

Finally, we must account for the fact that Bar Kochba seized Jerusalem and other Roman outposts during his first year, even though this year was undoubtedly a sabbath year and despite the fact that military expeditions were forbidden under Jewish law in that season. Again we must return to the fact that Bar Kochba's followers saw Bar Kochba as the messiah. The messiah was to war against the enemies of Israel. In the eyes of the rabbis, when the messiah came to war for the freedom of Israel, it was expected that he would do so during a sabbath year. Therefore, normally forbidden aggressive military activity during a sabbath year was under this exceptional circumstance permissible.

The Three and One Half Years

Next, let us examine the evidence used to support a three and one half year period for the war. To begin with, the figure "שלש שנים ומחעה (three years and one half)" found in some of the variant texts of the Seder Olam Rabbah instead of "בי שנים ומחעה (two years and one half)," as footnoted in Neubauer's translation,[24] does not change the beginning year for the revolt, as the advocates of systems "B," "C," and "D" would have us believe.

21 See Chap. I, pp. 10f.
22 HUCA, 46, p. 201.
23 HUCA, 44, p. 154, n. 4.
24 MJC, 2, p. 66.

Even in the variant texts referred to by Neubauer we still find 80 years from the conflict of As-varus to the conflict of Vespasian; 52 years more to the conflict of Quietus; and 16 years more to the war of Bar Kochba. These figures bring us to the spring 133 C.E. as the outbreak of the war. The ending figure, on the other hand, is changed to the middle of the year 136 C.E., not 135 C.E.![25]

When the chronologists supporting systems "B," "C," and "D" use the three and one half years from some of the variant texts of the Seder Olam Rabbah, they misuse it by subtracting that number from the confirmed date for the fall of Beth Thera in late summer of 135 C.E. If this figure is correct and original, as claimed, then they should appropriately begin counting from the sixteenth year after the conflict with Quietus as directed in the text.

Neubauer's edition of the Seder Olam and his citations of variant texts, found in his *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*,[26] are cited by Schürer and others as proof of a three and one half year war. Yet this text is described by Milikowsky's more recent edition of that work as falling short because of its "selectivity in citing variants, the insufficient care in copying editions and manuscripts, and the method used in the text and apparatus." These details, he continues "preclude its being considered an adequate utilization of the materials he had available. Additionally, there are many manuscripts of SO [Seder Olam] to which he had no access, and others to which he had only limited access."[27]

Milikowsky's edition of the Seder Olam, which far better utilizes all the variants, declares that two and one half years for the Second Revolt is the true and earliest figure supplied by the best texts.[28] More important, even Neubauer's edition leaves the figure of two and one half years in his main text, showing that he too found this number to be from the earliest and best manuscripts to which he was familiar.

In the Talmudic texts entitled *Lamentations Rabbah*, "three and one half years" is given for the siege of Beth Thera by Hadrian. What usually goes unnoticed is the fact that three and one half years is also given in this text for the length of the siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian. But Vespasian did not besiege Jerusalem for three and a half years. His son Titus did not begin laying siege against Jerusalem until the spring of 70 C.E.,[29] and the war was over in Elul (Gorpiaeus; Aug./Sept.) of that same year.[30]

Neither can the three and one half years represent the duration of the entire war, since the First Revolt began in the spring of 66 C.E. and lasted until late summer of 70 C.E., a span of four and one half years. Three and one half years can only work as an approximate time for the period of Vespasian's and his son Titus' involvement in the entire Judaean war, which for them actually got under way in May of 67 C.E.

Jerome (early fifth century C.E.) gives the view of some of the Jewish scholars in his day that the last septennium of Daniel, 9:27, is to be divided between the siege of Vespasian and the siege of Hadrian.[31] That is, three and

25 For a reconstruction and analysis of the variants in this chronology see App. D.
26 MJC, 2, pp. 26–67.
27 SORC, 1, p. 87.
28 SORC, 2, p. 547.
29 Jos., *Wars*, 4:10:12–4:11:5.
30 Jos., *Wars*, 6:8:4.
31 Jerome, *Com. in Dan.*, 9:24 (PL 552–553); CCL, ccl, lxxva, p. 888.

one half years are to be allotted to each event. It is clear from Jerome that the underlying idea of some of the Jews in the Talmudic period was to apply the calculations of the end time prophecy of Daniel to the two destructions of Jerusalem, which occurred during the First and Second Revolts.

The figure of three and one half years, therefore, is a chronographical interpretation. One can no more trust this calculation for the length of the Bar Kochba revolt until the fall of Beth Thera than he can for the supposed length of the siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian given in the same text. The rabbis may well have included the year before the formal declaration of war by all of Judaea as part of their calculation (i.e. the time when Bar Kochba had established his own power but prior to the major outbreak of hostilities in 133 C.E.).[32] Then again, it may have arisen as pure speculation in an attempt to read prophecy into that important defeat in Jewish history.

It is also certain, by the fact that some of the variations of the Seder Olam Rabbah substituted three and one half years for two and one half years, that the rabbinic interpretation (of three and one half years) was used to replace the original calculation. At the same time, when faced with the credibility of the figure of three and one half years from the Palestinian Talmud (Taan., 68d) and the Lamentations Rabbah, even Schürer was forced to admit that "these sources are not of great weight." Yet after making this admission he then concludes:

> . . . it is in fact correct that the war lasted about three and a half years (the late sources confuse the duration of the war with that of the siege of Bether).[33]

The truth of the matter is that Schürer and those following systems "B," "C," and "D" have only "assumed" that the duration of the war for all Judaea until the collapse of Beth Thera was three and one half years. This assumption is necessary only because it is required if their respective calculations are to be upheld.

Conclusion

It is necessary for the proponents of systems "B," "C," and "D," in order to accommodate their arrangements of the sabbath cycle, to overlook the strong evidence for a two and one half year conflict for all Judaea during the Second Revolt. For their systems to work, they require that the war for all Judaea begin one year earlier than stated by Eusebius and the best editions of the Seder Olam. In an effort to find support for this view, they are forced to fall back on a late Talmudic interpretation, which tries to frame both the First and Second Revolt in such a way as to fulfill a prophecy found in Daniel, 9:24–27. System "A," on the other hand, relies on the best and most reliable of the ancient sources. These sources prove that the Second Revolt lasted only two and one half years for all of Judaea, from the spring of 133 until Ab (July / Aug.) of 135 C.E.

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32 We shall have more to say about this earlier period in Chap. XXIX.

33 HJP, 1, p. 552, n. 172.

Chapter XXVIII

Coins and Documents

Part III of the Sabbath Years of 133/134 and 140/141 C.E

Coins and documents from the period of the Second Revolt actually confirm that the revolt only lasted two and a half years from the time that Bar Kochba became leader of all Judaea until the fall of Jerusalem and Beth Thera. The notion that these items of evidence conform to a chronology of three and a half years for this same period has no substantive merit.

Coins and the Fall of Jerusalem

Coins from the Second Revolt, minted from the time that all Judaea nominated Bar Kochba as their leader, prove that the war only lasted two and one half years. Among the first Jewish coins produced in the revolt are those bearing the inscription "ירושלם (Jerusalem)," symbols partly related to the Feast of Tabernacles, and the legend, "Year 1 of the Redemption of Israel."[1]

This detail shows that the city of Jerusalem, which at the time was no more than a Roman camp and not heavily fortified,[2] had been seized by the rebels in the first year of the revolt, sometime prior to the seventh month (Tishri; Sept./Oct.) when the Feast of Tabernacles was held. Under Roman hands, "The city was degraded to a small market-town, that mainly served the soldiers living there."[3] The Jews, of course, immediately fortified the city. Based upon Eusebius and the best manuscripts of the Seder Olam, these coins would belong to 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

Coins of the second year were dated "Year 2 of the Freedom of Israel" and were struck in honour of the New Year, which began with Nisan (March/April).[4] This first of Nisan belongs to the year 134/133, not 133/132 C.E. as the advocates of systems "B," "C," and "D" would have it.

Coins and documents from the third year of the revolt bear the legend "Of the Freedom of Jerusalem" and "Year 3 of the Freedom of Jerusalem."[5] These coins and documents are important for they represent the last time that the phrase "the Freedom of Jerusalem" is mentioned. It is clear from this evidence that the rebels held Jerusalem only until the third year of the war. Even Kanael admits, "Bar Kokhba seems to have occupied Jerusalem for only about two years";[6] that is, from about mid-summer of the first year of the revolt until mid-summer of the third year of the revolt.

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1 IEJ, 21, p. 41, and n. 17, and n. 18, "It is rather unlikely that Jerusalem was captured by Bar Kokhba prior to the Passover of 132"; JCST, pp. 159–161; Cf. Fig. 4.

2 HJP, 1, p. 545.

3 NSR, 2, p. 62.

4 IEJ, 21, pp. 44f. Cf. Fig. 4.

5 IEJ, 21, p. 45. Cf. Fig. 4.

6 IEJ, 21, p. 45.

Figure 4

EXAMPLES OF COINS FROM THE SECOND REVOLT

YEAR 1

Obverse: Facade of the Temple at Jerusalem; inscr. ירושלם (ירושלם; Jerusalem).
Reverse: Lulav; inscr. שנת אחת לגאלת ישראל (שנת אחת לגאלת ישראל; Year 1 of the redemption of Israel).

YEAR 1

Obverse: Amphora with two handles; inscr. אחת לגאלת ישראל (אחת לגאלת ישראל שנת; Year 1 of the redemption of Israel).
Reverse: Wreath; inscr. שמעון נשיא ישראל (שמעון נשיא ישראל; Simeon, Nasia

YEAR 2

Obverse: Grapes; inscr. שמעון (שמעון; Simeon).
Reverse: Lyre; inscr. שבלחר ישראל (שבלחר ישראל; Year 2 of the Freedom of Israel).

YEAR 2

Obverse: Palm branch and wreath; inscr. שמעון נשיא ישראל (שמעון נשיא ישראל; Simeon, Nasia [Prince] of Israel).
Reverse: Lyre; inscr. שבלחר יש[ר]אל (שבלחר יש[ר]אל; Year 2 of the Freedom of Israel). Note: On some coins Israel (ישראל) is abbreviated to Is-el (ישאל)

YEAR 3

Obverse: Facade of the Temple at Jerusalem; inscr. שמעון (שמעון; Simeon).
Reverse: Lyre; inscr. לחרות ירושלם (לחרות ירושלם; For the Freedom of Jerusalem).

That Jerusalem and Beth Thera both fell to the Romans at about the same time (on the ninth of Ab [July/Aug.]), and therefore in the third year of the revolt, we have the record from the Mishnah:

> On the ninth of Ab it was decreed against our fathers that they should not enter into the Land, and the Temple was destroyed the first and second time, and Beth-Thor (Beth Thera) was captured and the City (Jerusalem) was ploughed up.[7]

Notice especially that the ploughing up of Jerusalem is listed chronologically after the capture of Beth Thera. Eusebius provides us the added information that the decree forbidding the Jews from entering the country around Jerusalem was also issued by Hadrian AFTER the fall of Beth Thera.[8] If Hadrian had taken Jerusalem a year or so before Beth Thera fell, since all of the rebels would have supposedly been locked up in Beth Thera and unable to enter Jerusalem, why did Hadrian wait to issue this decree until the time that Beth Thera fell? This detail makes no sense unless Jerusalem came into possession of the Romans only a short time before Beth Thera was conquered.

The ploughing up of Jerusalem, meanwhile, refers to Hadrian's orders to tear down what had remained of the city after its destruction under Titus in 70 C.E. and his own preparations for rebuilding the pagan city and Temple to Zeus (the issue over which the war had originally broken out).[9] If Jerusalem had been taken a year before Beth Thera, as the advocates of systems "B," "C," and "D" would have it, why did the Romans wait until the day Beth Thera fell before they ploughed up the city? Again, the details make no sense unless Jerusalem fell only a little before Beth Thera.

The evidence shows that Hadrian's orders to tear down what had remained of Jerusalem and to ban the Jews from their sacred city happened upon the fall of nearby Beth Thera on the ninth of Ab. It is further substantiated by the fact that the Mishnah couples together the destruction of Beth Thera and the ploughing up of Jerusalem in the same sentence, as part of the same thought: "and Beth-Thor was captured and the City was ploughed up" on the ninth of Ab.

Therefore, that the command to plough up Jerusalem would occur upon the same date as the demise of Beth Thera (the ninth of Ab) points to the fact that Jerusalem fell to the Romans a little prior to the time that Beth Thera collapsed. The nearby fortress of Beth Thera may have offered some limited protection to the area around Jerusalem. The flow of events would even suggest that the Romans were forced to take Beth Thera before they could gain absolute control of this area. Nevertheless, it is hard to reconcile any real or long term dominance over Jerusalem by the Jewish rebels even if nearby Beth Thera was in their

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7 Taan., 4:6. Ab 9 was actually the date that the first Temple was set on fire. Jos., *Wars*, 6:4:5, and Jer., 52:12f, date the burning of the first Temple to Ab (Lous), i.e. July/Aug., 10. This was the date that the second Temple completely burnt down. 2 Kings, 25:8, gives Ab 7 as the date that Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard of Nebuchadnezzar, entered the city prior to his burning down the first Temple.

8 Eusebius, *H.E.*, 4:6.

9 HJP, 1, p. 550 and n. 162.

hands.

The coins dated to the third year of the revolt, therefore, were minted in the spring and summer of 135 C.E., prior to the fall of Jerusalem and Beth Thera in Ab (July / Aug.) of that year.

The advocates of systems "B," "C," and "D" totally overlook this evidence and instead theorize a year or more spread between the fall of Jerusalem and the fall of Beth Thera. To demonstrate, Kanael writes:

> Thus, the insurgents would have held Jerusalem from the spring (or summer) of 132 till the spring (or summer) of 134. In the spring (or summer) of 134 the Romans retook Jerusalem and Bar Kokhba retreated to Bethther.[10]

Yet there is no evidence whatsoever that the fall of Beth Thera occurred a year or more after the fall of Jerusalem. Rather, as demonstrated, the evidence indicates that one event shortly followed the other, by just weeks if not days.

The effort to place a year between the fall of Jerusalem and the fall of Beth Thera is an attempt to force the evidence to fit a three and a half year war from the beginning of the first year of redemption until the destruction of Beth Thera.

It is very important to notice that there are no coins dated to "Year 4" of the revolt, this despite the fact that, "The outstanding feature of the Bar-Kokhba coinage is the LARGE QUANTITY of coin-types issued in the relatively short period."[11] If the war effort under Bar Kochba had continued for a year beyond the fall of Jerusalem, as the speculation of those advocating systems "B," "C," and "D" demand, then there would have been more than ample time for them to strike coins for the fourth year "Of the Redemption of Israel" or "For the Freedom of Israel."

To merely excuse this absence of "Year 4" coins by claiming that the rebels were simply too busy with the war begs the question.[12] For if the rebels found time to strike numerous types of coins during the siege of Jerusalem they would have certainly found time during a year long siege of Beth Thera. Indeed, these coins were mainly overstruck older coins.[13] It was not as if they needed to mint new coins. Moreover, there was no reason to stop the production of coinage merely because Jerusalem fell. Since overstriking already existing coins was a rather easy process, the absence of coins dated to "Year 4" of the revolt is not only glaring but gives us insight into the events of this period.

Under identical circumstances during the First Revolt, as a comparison, the Jews, under heavy siege by the Roman army of Titus and in distress by plague and famine, found time to strike coins in the last desperate months of the fifth year of that war.[14]

Further, Bar Kochba believed himself to be the messiah. It is only natural that he would have continued to encourage his followers with such demon-

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10 IEJ, 21, p. 45.
11 NSR, 2, p. 63.
12 E.g. Kanael in IEJ, 21, p. 45.
13 NSR, 2, pp. 64–80.
14 BA, 26, p. 59.

strations of independence as the issuance of coins—as he had done for the claimed first three years of the war. Therefore, that a movement that had created such a great quantity of coins for three years of a revolt would suddenly produce nothing for a fourth year strongly indicates that the war did not continue beyond the third year.

The Contract Dated "Iyyar 1"

Our next evidence comes from a document which is dated, "On Iyyar 1, in Year 1 of the Redemption of Israel by Simeon bar Kosiba, נשיא (*Nasia*; Prince) of Israel."[15] According to systems "B," "C," and "D," this document should be dated to the year 132 C.E. What all have failed to notice is the fact that the first of Iyyar in the year 132 C.E. fell on a sabbath day. Based upon the business nature of its contents, this circumstance is impossible and proves that the first year of the Redemption of Israel WAS NOT THE YEAR 132 C.E.! They may have been permitted to fight in a sabbath year under their messiah but would never have broken the weekly sabbath, especially for business concerns.

The Jews of the first few centuries of the common era continued the ancient practice of determining their months by the appearance of the new moon, which for them presented itself with the first glimpse of crescent moonlight in the first phase of the moon.[16] (It did not start with a completely dark moon as a new moon is often misconstrued today.) The first moon of the year was the moon of Abib,[17] meaning "to be tender," "green, i.e. a young ear of grain," "green ears of corn."[18] The moon was called Abib (greening) because it was the first moon of spring. Its Babylonian name, which was adopted by the Jews who returned from the Babylonian exile, was Nisânu.[19]

The first month of the Jewish year during this period was reckoned with the first full moon AFTER the vernal or spring equinox (i.e. when the sun passed into Aries), the equinox taking place on or about March 20. Josephus, for example, states:

> In the month of Xanthicus, which is with us (Jews) called Nisan and begins the year, on the fourteenth day by lunar reckoning, THE SUN BEING IN ARIES, our lawgiver (Moses), seeing that in this month we were delivered from bondage to the Egyptians, ordained that we should year by year offer the same sacrifice which, as I have already said, we offered then on departure from Egypt—the sacrifice called Pascha (Passover). (Jos., *Antiq.*, 3:10:5)[20]

In another place, Josephus refers to the first day of the first month of the year as the moon of "Nisan" and "on the new moon."[21] Philo supports Jose-

15 IEJ, 12, p. 249.
16 HBC, pp. 40–42.
17 Exod., 13:3–4, 23:14–17, 34:18; Deut., 16:1.
18 SEC, Heb. #24.
19 HBC, pp. 33–40.
20 Also see Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:3:3.
21 Jos., *Antiq.*, 3:8:4; cf. Exod., 40:17.

phus, noting, "At the first season, which name (i.e. Abib) he (Moses) gives TO THE SPRINGTIME AND ITS EQUINOX, he ordained that what is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread should be kept for seven days."[22] He also defines "the New Moon, or beginning of the lunar month, namely the period between one conjunction and the next, the length of which has been accurately calculated in the astronomical schools," as beginning when the moon "resumes its natural brightness." For "it is just then," he continues, "that the sun begins to illumine the moon, with the light which we perceive, and the moon reveals its own beauty to the eye."[23] In short, the first thin crescent of light shown in the first stage of the moon's phases is the New Moon.

In another place, Philo (writing about 45 C.E.) describes the first month of the year as the time of the Passover festival, which began on the fourteenth day of Abib. He calls Passover "the spring-time feast"[24] and reasons that it was placed at this time of year because with "the spring equinox we have a kind of likeness and portraiture of that first epoch in which this world was created." He adds, "So every year the deity (Yahweh) reminds us of the creation of the world by setting before our eyes the spring when everything blooms and flowers. And therefore, there is good reason for describing it (Abib; Nisan) as the first month because in a sense it is an image of primal origin reproduced from it like the imprint from an archetypal seal."[25]

By the third century C.E. another school arose that determined the first month of the year as being the moon in which the vernal equinox arrived. Under this new system, Passover, which was celebrated on the full moon of the fourteenth day, could be observed before the equinox. In response, Anatolius (third century C.E.) points out that those who followed this method erred because they were placing the Passover in the last of the twelve zodiac signs and not the first:

> Therefore we say that they who place the first month in it (the twelfth sign), and determine the fourteenth day of the Pascha (Passover) accordingly, are guilty of no small or ordinary mistake. And this is not our own statement, but the fact was known to the Jews, those of old time even before the messiah, and it was carefully observed by them. (Cited by Eusebius, *H.E.*, 7:32:14–16)

Proof that the Jews considered the fourteenth of the moon to be the beginning of the full moon comes from the ancient first century B.C.E. Jewish work entitled *1 Enoch*. This text notes:

> When the moon (begins its cycle), it appears in the sky one half of a seventh part; it will become fully

22 Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 1:35, par. 181.
23 Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 2:26.
24 Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 2:28, par. 159f.
25 Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 2:28, par. 152.

> illumined from the fourteenth (day); it completes its illumination the fifteenth, becoming fulfilled according to the sign of the year and becoming fifteen parts. (1 Enoch, 78:6f)

Anatolius lists several important ancient authorities for this position and then adds:

> These writers, when they resolve the questions relative to the Exodus, say that all equally ought to sacrifice the passover AFTER the vernal equinox, at the middle of the first month; and that this is found to occur when the sun is passing through the first sign of the solar, or, as some have named it, the zodiacal cycle. And Aristobulus adds that at the Feast of the Passover it is necessary that not only the sun should be passing through an equinoctial sign, but the moon also. For as the equinoctial signs are two, the one vernal, the other autumnal, diametrically opposite each to the other, and as the fourteenth of the month, at evening, is assigned as the day of the Passover, the moon will have its place in the station that is diametrically opposed to the sun, will be in the sign of the vernal equinox, while the other, the moon, will of necessity be in that of the autumnal. I know many other statements of theirs, some of them probable, others advanced as absolute proofs, by which they attempt to establish that the Feast of the Passover and of Unleavened Bread ought WITHOUT EXCEPTION TO BE HELD AFTER THE EQUINOX. (Eusebius, *H.E.*, 7:32:17)

Even as late as Bede, writing in the early part of the eighth century C.E., this method was acknowledged:

> Now the time when the days and nights are equal (i.e. the equinox) after the opinion of those in the orient (Middle East), and especially the Egyptians which bear the prize for computation before all other teachers, customably comes on the 12th day before the first of April, as also we ourselves prove by inspection of the means of measuring time. Whatsoever moon, therefore, is at full before the day and night be of one length, being to wit 14 or 15 days old, that moon pertains to the last month the year before, and therefore is not meet for keeping Passover. But the moon which is at full after the day and night be of

> equal length or in the very point of that equality, in that doubtless (because it is the full moon of the first month) we must understand both that the ancients were wont to keep the Passover. . . . Therefore as first the sun coming forth from the midst of the east made by that his rising the equality of day and night in the spring; and after, the moon (the sun going down at evening) followed itself also at the full from the midst of the east; so every year the same first month of the moon must be observed after the same order, so that she should be at the full not before the day and night be of one length, but either on the very day of that equality, as was done in the beginning, or when it is past. But if the full moon go but one day before the day and night be of one length, the aforesaid reason proves that this moon must be assigned not to the first month of the year beginning, but rather to the last month of the year that is past; and for that consideration is not meet for the celebration of the Paschal Festival. (Bede, 5:21, *Letter to Naitan*)

Calculating the lunar months from the spring or vernal equinox of the year 132 C.E., the first of Abib (Nisan) fell on the evening of April 4 and the daylight hours of April 5 (Thursday night and Friday day). The fourteenth day of the previous moon would have fallen prior to the vernal equinox and, therefore, is clearly eliminated as the Passover of the first month. The first day of the second month, Iyyar, was the evening of May 3 and the day of May 4 (the Israelites counting the beginning of their day from sunset).[26] May 3/4 (the first of Iyyar) of the year 132 C.E. was on Friday night and Saturday daylight, i.e. the sacred sabbath day.

The document dated, "On Iyyar 1, in Year 1 of the Redemption of Israel by Simeon bar Kosiba, Nasia of Israel," is a "simple deed written in Aramaic."[27] In it, two of Bar Kochba's local administrators lease out a section of land for 650 zuzim, an amount which not only covers everything on the plot of land but includes irrigation rights.[28]

The contents of this agreement reveal that the participants were Jews conducting personal business, something which is expressly forbidden by the Scriptures on a sabbath day.[29] The nature of the contract and its participants, being associates of a man whom they believed to be the Jewish messiah, clearly prove that this deed could not have been produced on a sabbath day. Therefore, we are forced to conclude that the first of Iyyar in the year 132 C.E. could not be equivalent to the first of Iyyar in the first year of the Re-

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26 DB, p. 140; cf. Lev., 15:5, 22:4–9, 23:32; Mark, 1:40. Also see our forthcoming book entitled *Yahweh's Sacred Calendar*.

27 IEJ, 12, p. 249.

28 Ibid.

29 E.g. Exod., 16:4–5, 20:8–11, 23:12, 31:12–17, 34:21; Isa., 58:13–14; Amos, 8:4–6.

demption of Israel by Bar Kochba as mentioned on the deed in question.

In the year 133 C.E., on the other hand, which would be the first year of the revolt for all of Judaea based upon the two and one half years of war designated by the Seder Olam and confirmed by Eusebius, the first of Iyyar falls on April 23/24, which is Wednesday night and Thursday daylight. This date is not a sabbath. Since the first of Iyyar of 132 C.E. is impossible as the date of the deed, we are left with the clear and undeniable fact that the first of Iyyar of 133 C.E. must be correct. The year 133/134 C.E., Nisan (Abib) reckoning, therefore, was the first year of the redemption of Israel in the deed and the first year of the revolt by Bar Kochba as ruler of all Judaea.[30]

Other Documents

In order to bolster their claim for a three and one half year revolt of all Judaea, a few documents are held up as proof that the war continued beyond the month of Ab (July/Aug.) of the third year of the era of the war.

One document, often represented as being produced in the month of Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.) of the third year of the Second Revolt,[31] was found in the caves at Murabba'at. Nevertheless, this manuscript is extremely fragmented. The only thing it actually proves is that it was composed in "Year 3 of the Freedom of Jerusalem."[32] The piece where the month is supposed to have been located is not attached.

Fragment #3, upon which the name of the month of "Marheshuan" is found, does not fit with the piece from the document where the year is given. Not only is the piece incompatible but the letter size is larger (see Fig. 5).[33] The month written on this piece has been applied at the beginning of the document only because historians are assuming that it might go there. It just as easily and, based upon the shape of the piece and the letter size, more probably belongs within the context of the document: a reference, for example, to a certain condition of the contract that was to be carried out in that month.

There is no justifiable reason to represent this fragment as the month in which the document was composed (indeed, it may not even belong to this document). To claim that it overthrows the evidence of a two and one half year war is completely inappropriate.

Two other documents, land deeds, are also often held up as proving that the revolt continued past Ab of the third year of the revolt of Judaea. One is dated, "On Marheshuan 28, in Year 3 of Simeon ben Kosiba, Nasia (Prince) of Israel, at En-gedi" and the other reads, "On Khisleu (Nov./Dec.) 2, in Year 3 of Simeon ben Kosiba, Nasia of Israel, at En-gedi."[34]

These deeds are NOT dated by the era used for the third year of the Judaean revolt, i.e. "of the Freedom of Jerusalem." They are only dated by the reign of Kosiba (Kochba) AT EN-GEDI.[35] On coins and other documents Bar Kochba

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30 None of the other documents from this period, regardless of which year is used, conflicts with a sabbath day and are, therefore, of no value in this regard.

31 E.g. by HJP, 1, p. 546.

32 DTJD, 2, no. 25, pp. 134–137, and 2, pt. 2, Plate XXXVIII.

33 See DTJD, 2, pt. 2, Plate XXXVIII.

34 IEJ, 12, pp. 250, 255. But this claim misrepresents the documents.

35 Yadin's theory (IEJ, 12, p. 250) that En-gedi should be separated in thought from Simeon ben Kosiba, Prince of Israel, and punctuated accordingly, is pure conjecture.

Figure 5

FRAGMENTED DOCUMENT FOR "YEAR 3"

is called "Nasia of Israel," indicating his rule over the whole of Judaea. In the deeds in question, on the other hand, only a local neighborhood is mentioned: En-gedi. The distinct mentioning of a local region proves that the date provided on the documents refers only to Bar Kochba's reign in this district and not to the entirety of Judaea.

Simeon Bar Kochba certainly did not just appear one day and cause the whole of Judaea to revolt with the support of various rabbis and the masses, suddenly convincing them to break their centuries old law against aggressive military activity during a sabbath year. He most certainly held a position as a local ruler who through his exploits won fame and renown, and very probably autonomy from the Romans for the Jews of his own district. Rabbinical tradition has it that Rabbi Akiba saw Simeon performing great exploits against the Romans and because of these feats of bravery and strength declared Simeon Bar Kochba to be the messiah.[36]

Dio's report on the war also supports this conclusion. He notes that while Hadrian remained in Egypt, and later Syria, the Jews remained quiet, but "when he went away they openly revolted."[37] Coins, papyri and inscriptions attest that Hadrian was in Syria in 129/130 C.E., in Egypt by August of 130 C.E., and in Syria again in 131 C.E., after which he left the area.[38] Since the revolt broke into the open upon Hadrian leaving Syria, the evidence points to Bar Kochba's initial uprising in En-gedi and the adjoining territories during the latter part of 131 C.E.

The key to these events lies in the fact that the local revolt broke out BEFORE all Judaea joined in the war. Dio continues, "At first, the Romans took no account of them. SOON, HOWEVER, ALL JUDAEA HAD BEEN STIRRED UP, and the Jews everywhere were showing signs of disturbance, were gathering together, and giving evidence of great hostility to the Romans, partly by secret AND PARTLY BY OVERT ACTS."[39] This detail shows that it was as the result of Bar Kochba's local victories that the whole of Judaea became encouraged and that many Jews from other districts of Judaea began to recognize Bar Kochba as Nasia (Nasi) and as the messiah. As a result, in the spring of 133 C.E., they made him leader of the revolt for all of Judaea.

It is no surprise that all of the identifiable places held as major camps by Bar Kochba laid in Bar Kochba's home territory in the Judaean desert, southeast of Jerusalem: Herodium, Tekoa, En-gedi, etc.[40] According to Josephus, both En-gedi and Herodium were toparchies of Judaea, and therefore held their own regional authority.[41] It is clear from this data that this region served as the place for Bar Kochba's rise to power before he became ruler of all Judaea.

The only thing that these two documents in question inform us, since there is no mention of the era of the revolt, is the fact that they were composed in the third year of Kochba's rule over En-gedi. It is interesting that the

36 HUCA, 54, p. 185.
37 Dio, 59:13.
38 HJP, 1, pp. 541f.
39 Dio, 69:13.
40 HJP, 1, p. 547, and n. 146.
41 Jos., *Wars*, 3:3:5.

title "Nasia" was relinquished by Bar Kochba at the end of the second year of the revolt and is not found on the coins of the third year.[42] Yet contrary to this fact the En-gedi documents in question associate the term "Nasia" with the third year of Bar Kochba's rule, which indicates that they were written prior to the third year of the era of the revolt for all Judaea. The year 131/132 C.E., as a result, fits extremely well as "Year 1" in context with the documents dated to "Year 3" of his reign at En-gedi. The third year of Kochba's local reign would be equivalent to the first year of his reign over all Judaea, i.e. 133/134 C.E. (see Chart K).

That more than one method was used on documents to date the reign of a Near East monarch is no surprise. As we have already demonstrated by the records of other kings, such as Herod, Arta-xerxes, etc., a king's reign can be determined by any number of means, depending upon who is reporting the date and where. Bar Kochba's reign is no exception.

It is also true that Bar Kochba probably did not receive the title of "Nasia" until he was declared the messiah in the first year of the Revolt. Therefore, this evidence indicates that "Year 3" of Kochba's rule over En-gedi, as reported in the two above documents, must represent either the first or second year of the era of the Revolt of all Judaea, when Simeon was still using the title "Nasia."

Conclusion

Our close examination of the coins and documents from the period of the Second Revolt—far from demonstrating support for a three and one half years conflict, as the supporters of systems "B," "C," and "D" would lead us to believe—only serves to reinforce the period of the two and one half years of war for all Judaea as reported by Eusebius and the Seder Olam.

The business contract dated to Iyyar 1 of the Redemption of Israel, i.e. the first year of the revolt for all Judaea, cannot belong to the year 132 C.E., for in that case it would fall on a sabbath day. Such is not the case for the year 133 C.E.

The fragment carrying the month-name "Marheshuan" and associated with the third year of the revolt for all Judaea, meanwhile, because of the size of its lettering, cannot be the date of the contract, as often construed. At most it is only a reference to some condition of the contract that was to be fulfilled at a later time.

Finally, the documents dated to the third year of ben Kosiba "at En-gedi" do not follow the formula used for dating the years of the Second Revolt by all Judaea. They are merely dated by the rule of Kosiba at En-gedi. Since it is clear that Kosiba held some kind of local authority before he became the leading figure of the Second Revolt for all Judaea, the "Year 3" documents "at En-gedi" should more properly be associated with the first year of the revolt by all of Judaea.

42 IEJ, 21, pp. 42–44.

Chapter XXIX

"Year 4" of the Redemption of Israel

Part IV of the Sabbath Years of 133/134 and 140/141 C.E.

Our last item of evidence comes from a document found at Murabba'at and dated "Tishri 21, Year 4 of the Redemption of Israel."[1] This land deed has caused much confusion because the advocates of systems "B," "C," and "D" contend that, since it is dated by an era of the war, it proves that the war for all Judaea must have lasted well into the fourth year, thereby confirming that the war had been three and one half years long.

Rather than providing evidence for systems "B" through "D," this document actually serves as a paradox and a contradiction.

All agree, for example, that Beth Thera fell on Ab (July/Aug.) 9 of 135 C.E. and that this date was, for all intents and purposes, the end of the war. Yet, Tishri (Nov./Oct.) 21 of that year would be two and one half months beyond the fall of Beth Thera even if the war lasted three and one half years. That the Jews would continue to date by an era of a war that had disastrously failed as if it was "business as usual" makes no sense. Recognizing this flaw, the advocates for a three and one half year war are left with explaining away the ramifications of the very document they cling to as proof.

Kanael (system "B"), for example, tries to rationalize the implications of this document by holding out the possibility that "the scribe erred," mistakenly beginning a new year with Tishri of "Year 3" of the revolt.[2] But if the scribe erred with this it would have been just as possible for him to have incorrectly written "Year 4" instead of, let us surmise, "Year 2." Another possibility, Kanael argues, is that, "After the fall of Bethther, some of the insurgents retreated finally to caves, including those in which the above mentioned documents were found." He adds, "in such out of the way spots, the use of the era Of the Redemption of Israel appears to have continued, even though the war essentially was over."[3]

Wacholder (system "C"), who does not believe that the scribe erred, likewise holds that this document "may have been composed in a provincial town, whose scribe continued to date according [to] the era of 'the Redemption of Israel in Jerusalem' even after the fall of the Holy City."[4]

But logically speaking, it would make no sense even for remnants from the conflict to continue to date documents by an era of a failed revolt now months passed. Further, the document deals with a man and his wife and their ownership of a piece of property. This hardly seems a topic for men hiding out in caves wishing to continue an effort in a lost war whose messiah

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1 DTJD, 2, no. 30, pp. 144f; IEJ, 21, p. 45.
2 IEJ, 21, p. 45, n. 42.
3 Ibid., p. 45.
4 HUCA, 44, p. 179, n. 96.

was already dead. Further, the caves of Murabba'at, where the "year 4" deed was found, is near Bethlehem, not exactly as "out of the way" as Kanael and Wacholder would lead us to believe. This region would most certainly have been under Roman control after the fall of Beth Thera. Neither should we doubt that among the first places to come under the iron boot of the Romans would have been the home territory of Bar Kochba, no doubt the region where this deed was relevant.

The Year of Redemption

The inconsistency of interpreting this document as belonging to the fourth year of the era of the revolt for all Judaea is further buttressed by a close examination of the caption, "Year 4 of the Redemption of Israel." This heading is clearly not appropriate for the final period of the Second Revolt. Even Kanael was forced to admit, "The fact that the document of the Year Four revived the era Of the Redemption of Israel, even after Bar Kokhba's faction had abandoned it in the Year Three, is quite surprising."[5] It not only is surprising, it is totally inconsistent with the facts.

The era "of the Redemption of Israel" is only in accord with the coins and documents from the first two years of the Second Revolt for all Judaea. Proof is provided by comparing the records of the First Revolt (66–70 C.E.) with those of the Second Revolt. For example, Kanael discusses the change in the coin inscriptions from "Year Three....Freedom of Zion" in the third year of the First Revolt (68/69 C.E.) to "Year Four....Redemption of Zion" in the fourth year of the First Revolt (69/70 C.E.). He writes:

> The date "year four of the *redemption* of Zion" seems to form a contrast with the former era dated to the "freedom of Zion." Redemption seems to infer Messianic hopes current among the adherents of Bar Gioras, inspired by the fact that after the assassination of Nero several Emperors (Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian) followed each other in rapid succession. The feeling was strong in Judea that the Roman Empire was crumbling to pieces as divine punishment for its assault on Judea. The era "Freedom of Zion" had probably implied only political freedom.[6]
>
> In the opinion of the present writer, Bar Gioras succeeded in seizing the reins of government in that year [69 C.E.], because his movement was messianic, riding the crest of a wave of messianic enthusiasm which had swept the Jews in the year 69. . . . The era of reckoning used on his coins "Year Four....of the redemption of Zion" in place of the preceding "Year Three....freedom of Zion," throws light on the differences between Simon and John; John strove only for

5 IEJ, 21, pp. 44f, n. 38.
6 B.A., 26, p. 59.

> political freedom, while Bar Gioras stood at the head of a Messianic movement; hence his coins bear the inscription "redemption of Zion." We need not emphasize that *redemption* in this context means vastly more than *freedom*, the former being religious and Messianic while the latter mainly political.[7]

Meanwhile, during the Second Revolt, coins and documents also underwent a similar change. During the first year the legend "Year 1 of the Redemption of Israel" appears on both coins and documents. Towards the end of that year, we also find a document dated, "On the tenth of Shebat, Year 1 of the Freedom of Israel."[8] In the second year we find, "Year 2 of the Redemption of Israel" on documents written by the supporters of Bar Kochba but on the coins published by the Sages and other officials, "Year 2 of the Freedom of Israel."[9] In the third year, on the other hand, the legend on the coins became "of the Freedom of Jerusalem" and corresponded with the phrase "Year 3 of the Freedom of Jerusalem" on documents.[10] The phrase "of the Redemption of" no longer appeared.

Kanael concludes, and correctly so, that sometime during "Year 2" of the revolt, in order for Bar Kochba to maintain political power, he was forced to compromise with those rabbis and other Jews who, from the latter part of the first year of the revolt for all Judaea, did not recognize him as the messiah but whose support he needed:

> It would follow that at the time of the great assembly in Jerusalem, Bar Kokhba agreed formally to relinquish the title of *Nasi* and Eleazar that of (*High*) *Priest*. Consequently, the supporters of Bar Kokhba abandoned the era *Of the Redemption of Israel*, which clearly had messianic connotations. The Bar Kokhba faction agreed to the formal changes reflected in the coins of the second and third years of the revolt in order to preserve national unity.[11]

The term "Redemption," therefore, is only properly used in relationship with a messianic movement. Bar Kochba's people had abandoned this label at some point during the second year of the revolt by all Judaea and the movement became one built upon a political rather than messianic intent. If the document in question belonged to "Year 4" of the Second Revolt over all of Judaea, why would the phrase "Redemption of Israel" reappear over two months after Bar Kochba had been executed and some two years after the term "Redemption" had been dropped and the movement had been altered from a messianic into a political quest for freedom?

That this document could not belong to a fourth year of the revolt of all Judaea is also supported by the fact that there are no other documents or

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7 BASOR, 129, pp. 19 and 20.
8 DTJD, 2, no. 23, p. 122
9 AJ, pp. 60f; IEJ, 21, pp. 41.
10 AJ, pp. 62f; IEJ, 21, p. 45.
11 IEJ, 21, p. 44, cf. pp. 41-44.

coins known which are also dated to the fourth year of such an era. Indeed, as we have already seen, and despite the claims to the contrary, neither are there any known documents dated beyond the month of Ab in the third year of the era of the Second Revolt by all Judaea. In fact, the key to separating these two methods of dating Bar Kochba rests with the coins, which reflect only the dating of the revolt as it pertains to all of Judaea (i.e. beginning with the sabbath year of 133/134 C.E.).

If, for the sake of argument, one were to accept the construed evidence that some documents were dated beyond the month of Ab (July/Aug.) in the third year of the revolt for all Judaea, then he must contend with the fact that the land deed of "Tishri 21, Year 4 of the Redemption of Israel" was composed several months beyond the latest known of these, i.e. the document suggested as belonging to the month of Marheshuan (Oct./Nov.) of "Year 3 of the Freedom of Jerusalem."[12] This would still leave a gap of some eleven months unaccounted for in which no documents or coins were published. This fact alone makes the document in question an anomaly and should have immediately thrown suspicion upon the theory that it belonged to the late stages of the Bar Kochba period.

This evidence forces us to conclude that the document in question was not referring to the fourth year of the era of the revolt of all Judaea, since the term "Redemption" is improper after the second year of that era.

The Two Eras for Bar Kochba (Kosiba)

There is only one proper solution to this problem: the document dated to the twenty-first day of Tishri in "Year 4" of the Redemption of Israel actually belongs to a different era than the documents and coins counted from the time when all of Judaea joined the revolt in 133 C.E. It is in fact based upon the same reckoning as the land deeds discussed in our last chapter,[13] which counted into the third year of Bar Kochba (Kosiba) at En-gedi. This alternate era began when Bar Kochba won independence from the Romans for his local district in late 131 C.E. The fourth year of this era is equal to the second year of the era of the revolt for all of Judaea (i.e. 134 C.E.), when the term "Redemption" was still relevant (see Chart K).

The "Year 4" date, therefore, does not reflect a scribal error. As we have already seen, documents dated to the third year of Bar Kochba's local rule over En-gedi mention his title as Nasia (Nasi), a title which was dropped after the second year of the era of the revolt by all Judaea. If Bar Kochba was beginning his third year as a local king when he was nominated as leader of all Judaea—i.e. at the start of the first year of the era of the revolt by all Judaea—all of the details come together.

One must not become confused by the fact that "Year 4" is associated with the term "Redemption." This coupling does not mean that "Year 4 of the Redemption" must follow those coins and documents dated to "Year 1" and "Year 2 of the Redemption."

The coins and documents of the First Revolt demonstrate this principle for us. In the First Revolt "Year 1" through "Year 3" were referred to as the

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12 See above Chap. XXVIII, pp. 345–348.

13 Ibid.

"Freedom of Zion," to be followed by "Year 4" and the "Redemption of Zion." The term Redemption was applicable because only in "Year 4" of that era did the Jews believe that the revolt was messiah inspired. "Year 4" means only the year of the revolt.

The same is true in the Second Revolt. Years 1 through 3 of the local revolt were simply labeled, "of Simeon ben Kosiba, Nasia of Israel, at En-gedi." The fourth year of this era also used the "Redemption of Israel" because in that year, being the second year of the revolt for all of Judaea, Bar Kochba was still officially recognized as the messiah by his followers. Therefore, it is perfectly natural that "Year 4" of one era is equal to "Year 2" of another and that both would be labeled "the Redemption of Israel."

In the document mentioning "Year 4" of the Redemption of Israel, loyal followers of Bar Kochba from his home district, who saw Bar Kochba both as their messiah as well as their ruler, dated a deed to the fourth year of their king's local rule, which also happened to be the second year of the Redemption as counted from the time when Bar Kochba became the acknowledged leader over all Judaea.

Bar Kochba had first won local autonomy from the Romans before he became "the messiah" for all of Judaea. His victories and his military prowess convinced men like Rabbi Akiba to proclaim him the messiah and soon "all Judaea had been stirred up" against the Romans in a revolt under his leadership.

From this perspective, the fourth year was counted from the year 131/132 C.E. by many in Bar Kochba's home regions, which was the first to openly revolt and win independence. But for all of Judaea, which did not openly revolt until Nisan of 133 C.E., the "Redemption of Israel" was not appropriate until Bar Kochba was recognized as leader of the entire nation.

A probable scenario for this unusual document is suggested by its date, Tishri 21. The twenty-first of Tishri (Sept./Oct.) was the last non-sabbath day for the Feast of Tabernacles of the year 134 C.E., falling on a Sunday night, Monday day (Sept. 27/28).

This feast in 134 C.E., lasting from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of Tishri,[14] would represent the last "great assembly" of the Jewish people at Jerusalem before the Roman onslaught took its heaviest toll. Though the spring festivals of Passover and Pentecost in the year 135 C.E. were yet to occur, they fell in the last four months of the war when the Jews suffered their worst losses. In the year 134 C.E. the great assembly spoken of by Kanael was held. It was then that the agreement was reached between the supporters of Bar Kochba and the other Jews who did not support him as the messiah that Bar Kochba would remain leader of the revolt but would relinquish his title as Nasia.[15]

Late in this same year (134/133 C.E., Nisan reckoning) the messianic term "Redemption" was also dropped by the supporters of Bar Kochba and the political expression "Freedom" was everywhere adopted. Tishri 21, therefore, would have been the last time that the term "Redemption" would have been officially used in contracts by Bar Kochba's supporters, and this during a high feast celebration. Die-hard supporters, in a last expression of

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14 Lev., 23:34–44; Num., 29:12–40.

15 IEJ, 21, p. 44.

their faith, tied together the fourth year of Bar Kochba's local rule with the messianic expression "Redemption."

The lack of documents dated to "Year 5" of the local uprising is not surprising. There seems little reason to doubt that by the early spring of 135 C.E. Hadrian's army had recaptured most of the outlying districts surrounding the toparchy of Jerusalem. The massacre of hundreds of thousands of Jews by this time destroyed many of the followers of Bar Kochba, those believing he was the messiah being the first to sacrifice themselves against the Romans. Few were left in Bar Kochba's home district to resist, let alone carry on normal business practices and to continue dating documents by an era of a king now confined to his fortress at Beth Thera and the Jerusalem district.

Meanwhile, most Jews did not recognize Bar Kochba as the leader of all Judaea or as the messiah until the revolt broke out and gained popular support in the sabbath year of 133/134 C.E., being the third year of Bar Kochba's local rule. At that time, the Judaean nation began to date documents and coins by the era of the war for all of Judaea. Only in this way is "Year 4" on the document in question accounted for as well as the use of the messianic expression "the Redemption of Israel," which was abandoned, along with the title "Nasia," after "Year 2" of the era of the revolt of all Judaea. The following is an accounting of these two eras (cf. Chart K):

- 131/132 C.E. (Nisan reckoning), beginning in or about February of 132 C.E.: "Year 1" of Simeon Bar Kochba at En-gedi.

- 132/133 C.E. (Nisan reckoning): "Year 2" of Simeon Bar Kochba at En-gedi.

- 133/134 C.E. (Nisan reckoning): "Year 3" of Simeon Bar Kochba at En-gedi = "Year 1" of the Redemption of Israel (over all Judaea) and, by Shebat (Jan./Feb.) of this year, "Year 1" of the Freedom of Israel over all Judaea.

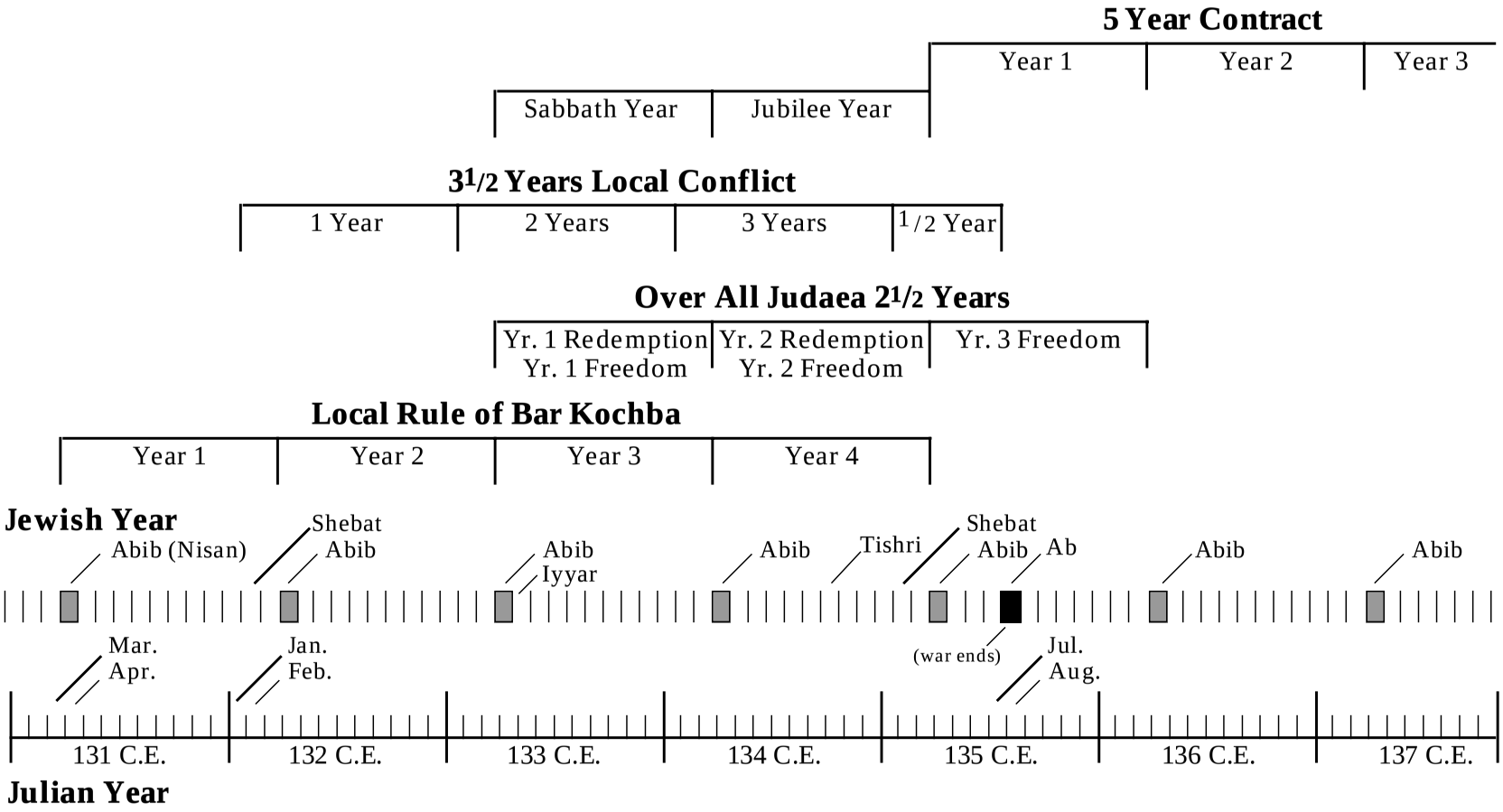
- 134/135 C.E. (Nisan reckoning): "Year 4" of the Redemption of Israel (at En-gedi and Herodium) = "Year 2" of the Freedom of Israel (over all Judaea) and "Year 2" of the Redemption of Israel (over all Judaea until the great assembly in Jerusalem, when Bar Kochba relinquished his title as Nasia).

- 135/136 C.E. (Nisan reckoning, until the ninth of Ab, 135 C.E., when Beth Thera falls): "Year 3" of the Freedom of Jerusalem.

The assumption made by the proponents of systems "B" through "D," that the deed in question belongs to the fourth year of the era of the Second Revolt of all Judaea, is without any sound foundation. The main reason that this false construction has remained alive is the need for some kind of evidence that would allow for the Second Revolt to have continued into the fourth year of the revolt of all Judaea in an effort to push the sabbath year back one year. Yet without any such evidence it behooves us to drop the theory of a three and one half year war for all Judaea and return to the

CHART K

The Chronology of the Bar Kochba Revolt



strong testimony that the length of the conflict for all Judaea actually lasted only about two and one half years.

Considering these details, it is very possible that the earliest source for the claim that the Bar Kochba revolt lasted three and one half years for all of Judaea may have been based upon his original revolt in his home district. This figure was then misapplied as the period for the revolt of all Judaea.

Counting back from Ab (July/Aug.) 9 of 135 C.E., we find that he would have achieved independence in about Shebat (Jan./Feb.) of the year 131/132 C.E. (Nisan reckoning), which fits the time frame mentioned by Dio for the first phase of the revolt shortly after Hadrian left Syria. Confusing the two different eras used in the war, some of the later rabbis forced their interpretation of Daniel, 9:27, about the messiah being cut off in the middle of the week (i.e. three and one half days = three and one half years), on the events of the Second Revolt.

The two and one half year period, on the other hand, only counted the years of the revolt of all Judaea, which began with the opening of the sabbath year of 133/134 C.E. The coins were dated in accordance with this method.

Conclusion

A detailed analysis of the evidence has shown that Bar Kochba, as a local ruler, openly revolted from the Romans in or about February of 132 C.E., successfully winning local autonomy. Stirred up by his valor and success, all Judaea joined Bar Kochba in the spring of the sabbath year 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

Bar Kochba, acclaimed by many as the Jewish messiah, then held Jerusalem and the fortress at Beth Thera during these two and a half years. In the first two years of the revolt of all Judaea (133/134 and 134/135 C.E.), Bar Kochba was able to retain his title as Nasia and the era was counted by years of the redemption because of his messiah status. Yet, with losses mounting and the Romans gradually gaining the upper hand, in the latter part of the second year of his rule over all Judaea, and in an effort to maintain support, Bar Kochba gave up his title of Nasia and lost his official status as the messiah. The movement was altered from a redemption to solely a political quest for freedom. On the ninth of Ab in the year 135 C.E., in the third year of the revolt for all Judaea, the Romans successfully took Beth Thera and executed Bar Kochba, effectively ending the war and any Jewish hopes for freedom.

The rental contracts from the end of the second year of the Bar Kochba revolt for all Judaea (134/135 C.E.)[16] confirm that five years hence was the eve of a new sabbath year. Therefore, the next sabbath year was 140/141 C.E., Nisan reckoning. This fact being established, it is also true that the first year of the revolt (133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning) was a sabbath year and the second year (134/135 C.E., Nisan reckoning) was a Jubilee, which is in perfect accord with the system "A" sabbath and Jubilee cycle (see Chart B). This important moment was chosen by Bar Kochba and his followers as the prophesied time that the messiah would deliver Jerusalem from the hands of its pagan enemies.

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16 Discussed in Chap. XXVI.

Summation

In our study we have considered and analyzed the evidence surrounding twelve different sabbath years and compared that evidence with four sabbath cycle systems. The results of this examination prove the following:

The ancient sabbath year began in the spring with the Hebrew month called Abib (Nisan), roughly April of the Gregorian calendar year. This fact is not only testified to in Scriptures but acknowledged by the first century C.E. Jewish writers Philo and Josephus. It is supported by the episode of John Hyrcanus, who shortly after the death of his father in the month of Shebat (Jan./Feb.) was forced to break off the siege of Dagon because of the arrival of a sabbath year. It is also supported with the history of the siege of Jerusalem by Herod, who after taking control of the city on the tenth of Tebeth (Dec./Jan.) was faced with the circumstance that, due to Jewish custom, the land had to remain unplanted because the sabbath year "was approaching."

The evidence also shows that the ancient Israelite practice of beginning the year with Abib (Nisan) 1 continued with the Jews up until the time of the Bar Kochba revolt (133–135 C.E.), as demonstrated by the coins and documents from both the first and second Jewish revolts against Rome. Only after that time did the rabbis shift the formal beginning of their year from Abib in the spring to Tishri in the fall. These facts confirm that systems "B" and "C," which demand that the sabbath year begin with the first of Tishri (Sept./Oct.) in the fall, are inaccurate from their conception.

Our investigation directly confirms the dates for nine sabbath years (see Chart B). Every year is based upon an Abib (Nisan) reckoning:

- 701/700 B.C.E. (Jubilee 700/699 B.C.E.)
- 456/455 B.C.E. (Jubilee 455/454 B.C.E.)
- 162/161 B.C.E.
- 134/133 B.C.E.
- 43/42 B.C.E.
- 36/35 B.C.E.
- 56/57 C.E.
- 133/134 C.E. (Jubilee 134/135 C.E.)
- 140/141 C.E.

Three more sabbath years are indirectly established:

- 22/21 B.C.E.
- 42/43 C.E.
- 70/71 C.E.

Systems "B" and "D" are clearly proven to be in error, not only because the dates for nine of the sabbath years can be firmly placed within another cycle but because four of the years required by those systems to be sabbaths are disqualified by the evidence. The Jews planted or harvested crops either within that year or within the six month period just prior to the Abib (Nisan) 1 beginning of the year—strictly forbidden under Jewish Talmudic law.

Namely, crops were harvested in the summer of 37 B.C.E., while Herod laid siege to Jerusalem, and in the spring of 23 B.C.E.—during the 15th year of Herod—when Herod sent his own men into the fields to help with the harvest. In the winter of 40/41 C.E., meanwhile, during the six month period forbidden by Jewish Talmudic law to plant crops, the Jews not only are found planting but were expected to bring forth a bountiful crop in the next spring for the Roman empire. Similarly, in the winter of 68/69 B.C.E. the Idumaeans, devout Jews by religion and custom, had cultivated their fields.

The attack upon the Jewish factional leader Simon ben Gioras by the Zealots, followed "not long after" by Simon's own invasion of Idumaea and his assault upon Jerusalem during the winter of 68/69 C.E., also eliminate system "B." It was not until the year 69/70 C.E., Nisan reckoning, that Simon seized the reigns of government in Jerusalem and began dating coins by "the Redemption of Zion." Only then did his movement become recognized as messianic.[1] In 68/69 C.E., the year before Simon seized power, it would have been impossible for either Simon or his Jewish Zealot opponents to muster support among the people of Judaea if they willingly broke the sabbath year laws against offensive military activity. The year 68/69 C.E., Tishri reckoning, therefore, could not have been a sabbath year.

Our research also established the harmony and the reliability of the ancient accounts. The exercise by the advocates of systems "B," "C," and "D" to find fault with and to discredit the relevant pre-second century C.E. sources proves to be an empty attempt to force those records to conform with their preconceived sabbath cycle systems.

System "A" also provides a strong background for understanding numerous historical episodes in Israelite history. It explains why the Israelites did not go to war in certain years or why there were some famines which were of particular severity. As one example, Josephus informs us that towards the end of the eighteen month siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar—which occurred during the reign of King Zedekiah and lasted from Tebeth (Dec./Jan.) 10 of 589/588 B.C.E. until Tammuz (June/July) 9 of 587/586 B.C.E.[2]—the city was exhausted by famine.[3] At first there would seem to be no logical reason for Judah to suffer such a harsh famine in only eighteen months of siege. Samaria, the capital of Israel, as a comparison, had earlier endured a three year siege by the Assyrian empire before they were defeated,[4] and the records make no mention of a famine.

The severe famine at the time of the siege of Jerusalem, accordingly, is better understood by the fact that the year 589/588 B.C.E. was a sabbath

1 See above Chap. XXIX, pp. 350f.
2 2 Kings, 25:1–3; Jer., 52:1–6; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:7:4–10:8:2.
3 Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:7:4, 10:8:1; cf. Jer., 38:2, 52:6; 2 Kings, 25:3.
4 2 Kings, 18:9–10; Jos., *Antiq.*, 9:14:1.

year. By the start of the siege in the tenth month of that year, the food supply in Jerusalem had already been greatly reduced due to the fact that the Judahites had not planted or harvested any crops during the nine previous months. The reason for the harshness of the famine in only eighteen months of siege now becomes apparent.

Another example comes with the record of a "very great famine" in Judaea during the 151st Seleucid year (161/160 B.C.E.).[5] As demonstrated in our text, the 150th Seleucid was a sabbath year. But this would not explain the famine during the next year, when crops could be planted and harvested. Yet it is explained by a Jubilee year, which according to our Jubilee cycle would have occurred in the 151st Seleucid year. This Jubilee was the last one celebrated by the Jews, since the Pharisees became politically dominant by the arrival of the next Jubilee year and had suspended the practice.[6]

Based upon the strong evidence presented in this study, it is our recommendation that the three sabbath cycle systems popularly proposed today, which we have labeled systems "B," "C," and "D," be set aside, and system "A" be formally adopted as the correct and proven sabbath cycle. Under this construction the next sabbath year, as of this writing, will begin in the spring (Abib) of 1995 C.E., and then a Jubilee year in the spring (Abib) of 1996 C.E. This oncoming Jubilee year is also the beginning of the seventieth complete Jubilee cycle since the entrance of the Israelites into the Promised Land under Yahushua (Joshua) the son of Nun. It will end with the Jubilee year of 2045/2046 C.E. (Abib reckoning).[7]

𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄 be with you[8]

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5 1 Macc., 9:23f, cf. 9:1–18.

6 See above Chap. I, p. 15, n. 29.

7 The first complete Jubilee cycle observed by the Israelites after their conquest and settlement of the land of Kanaan (the Promised Land) began with the year 1386/1385 B.C.E. and ended with the Jubilee year of 1337/1336 B.C.E. (Abib reckoning). For a detailed presentation of the evidence verifying these dates see our forthcoming text entitled *Israelite Chronology*.

8 𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄 is the ancient palaeo-Hebrew form of the sacred name Yahweh.

Appendix A

Nefertem Tirhakah's Rise to Power

The following are exerpts from the "Year 6" inscriptions of Nefertem Tirhakah referring to the history of his rise to power:

"Year 6" stele, Temple T (Merowe Museum, No. 52). TK, 1, pp. 15f, ℓ. 7–18.

> Now his majesty had been in Nubia as a goodly youth, a king's brother, pleasant of love, and he came north to Thebes in the company of goodly youths whom his majesty King Shebitku had sent to fetch from Nubia, in order that he might be there with him, since he loved him more than all his brothers. He passed to the nome of Amun of Gempaten that he might make obeisance at the temple door, with the army of his majesty (Shebitku)[1] which had traveled north together with him. He found that this temple had been built in brick, but that its sand-hill had reached to its roof, it having been covered over with earth at a time of year when one feared the occurrence of rainfall. And his majesty's heart grew sad at it until his majesty appeared as king, crowned as king of Upper and Lower Egypt, (and) when the Double Diadem was established upon his head and his name became Horus Lofty-of-Diadems, he called to mind this temple, which he had beheld as a youth, in the first year of his reign.
>
> Then his majesty said to his courtiers, "Lo, I desire to rebuild the temple of my father Amon-Rēʿ of Gempaten, since it was built of brick and covered over with soil, a thing not pleasant in the opinion of men." The god was in this place, yet it was not known what the rain had done. But he it was who preserved this temple until it befell that I was crowned king. For he knew that his son, namely I, whom he begat, had made a monument for him. For the 'mothers' of my mother were committed to him by their brother, the chieftain, the son of Ra, Alara.

[1] "The army of his majesty" is here a reference to the army of King Shebitku. This detail is confirmed above when we are told that Pharaoh Shebitku "had sent to fetch from Nubia" Nefertem and his brothers, "that he might be there with him (Shebitku)."

"Year 6" stele, Temple T (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek). TK, 1, p. 28, ℓ. 13–19.

> I came from Nubia in the company of the king's brothers, whom his majesty had summoned, that I might be there with him, since he loved me more than all his brethren and all his children, and I was preferred to them by his majesty, for the hearts of the people turned toward me and the love of me was with all men. I received the crown in Memphis after the Hawk (Shebitku) had soared to heaven (died), and my father Amun commanded me to place every land and country beneath my feet, southward to Retekhu-Qabet, northward to Qebkh-Khor, and eastward to the rising of the sun and westward to the setting.
>
> [Now she was] in Nubia, namely the king's sister, pleasant of love, the king's mother, Abar, may she live. Now further I had departed from her as a youth of twenty years when I came with his majesty to Lower Egypt.[2] Thereupon she came north to see me after an interval of years. She found me crowned upon the Throne of Horus, having received the Diadems of Ra, the Two Serpents having united with my head, and all the gods protecting my body.

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2 This passage, showing that Pharaoh Shebitku accompanied Nefertem from Thebes to Memphis in Lower Egypt, demonstrates that the story found in Eusebius (CM, p. 251) cannot refer to Nefertem's first arrival in Egypt at the age of 20. In Eusebius, Nefertem marched north with his own army and killed Shebitku. In the above texts, Nefertem came north with the army of Shebitku to Thebes and then accompanied Shebitku to Lower Egypt.

Appendix B

The Chronology of Tsawi Tirhakah

The chronology of Tsawi Tirhakah is recovered in the Ethiopian archive list.[1] This list (see Chart E) suffers from some minor problems with dynasty stacking but these instances are easily recognized. Tsawi Tirhakah is adjusted to his proper dates with the rule of Nastossanan (Nastesenen, Nastesen, etc.). In the Ethiopian list Nastossanan's 14 year reign ended in 535 B.C.E. (542 Before Christ, Ethiopian dating).[2] This date is manifestly incorrect. Nastossanan was the ruler of Meroe in 525 B.C.E., the year that King Cambyses of Persia invaded Egypt and then Nubia.[3]

Nastossanan's reign ended within three years after Cambyses conquered Egypt. This detail is evident for the following reasons: First, Cambyses continued in Egypt until just before his death,[4] which occurred in late December, 522 B.C.E. After conquering Egypt in the spring of 525 B.C.E., Cambyses attacked Lower Kush but suffered misfortune in Upper or South Kush. Because of this setback Nastossanan claimed he defeated Cambyses in the area north of Meroe.[5]

Despite this loss, Cambyses' army was later able to conquer Upper Kush and its capital city of Saba (Meroe) before the death of Cambyses. We know this because the city of Saba was renamed Meroe by Cambyses in honor of his sister/wife who died there.[6] This data demonstrates that Cambyses eventually did win South Ethiopia before his death. Nastossanan would undoubtedly have been removed from power by Cambyses, as Cambyses had earlier removed the king of Egypt—a common political practice utilized by this Persian monarch.

Persian occupation of southern Kush was, nevertheless, short-lived. This point is demonstrated by the fact that only North Ethiopia was counted as a part of the Persian empire by Cambyses' successor Darius.[7] There was not enough time between autumn of 522 B.C.E. and the death of Cambyses in late December of that year to conduct an Ethiopian campaign, establish Persian power over Meroe, and return to Egypt to prepare for his campaign against Smerdis (upon which journey he died).[8] The first year of Cambyses

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1 CBN, app. A, pp. 266.
2 Ibid., pp. 263, 266.
3 CAH, 3, pp. 312f; AHE, p. 561; PW, 10.2, pp. 1816f.
4 Herodotus, 3:14–27, 37, 61–67.
5 PW, 10.2, s.v. Kambyses, pp. 1816f; CAH, 3, pp. 312f; CAH, 4, p. 21, n. 1; cf. Herodotus, 3:17–25.
6 Jos., *Antiq.*, 2:10:2; Strabo, 17:1:5.
7 Herodotus, 3:97.
8 Herodotus, 3:61–67.

over Meroe, therefore, could be no later than 523/522 B.C.E., autumn reckoning. The earliest year would be 525/524 B.C.E., the year after his defeat.

The Ethiopian list calculates reigns by the nonaccession-year method, counting a king's accession year as his first. Therefore, Handu Wuha Abra, who followed Nastossanan, would begin his reign with the year that Cambyses captured South Kush. The last year attributed to Nastossanan, therefore, could be no earlier than 526/525 B.C.E., the year he was victorious against the Persians. The latest possible date for this Ethiopian monarch would be 524/523 B.C.E., the year 523/522 B.C.E., being the last possible year before Cambyses could have conquered South Kush.

Next, in the third year of Psamtik II, Pharaoh of Egypt (592/591 B.C.E., autumn reckoning), he invaded and conquered Kush.[9] The Ethiopian kings during this period were Piankhi IV and Aspurta. Psamtik II's great defeat of Kush would signal the humiliation of Piankhi IV and the accession of Aspurta. When we place the first year of Aspurta in 592/591 B.C.E., we find that the last year of Nastossanan was in 526/525 B.C.E., and therefore Cambyses' victory over South Kush occurred in 524 B.C.E.

Using this alignment, Urdamane began his reign over Kush in 664/663 B.C.E. This detail accurately reflects the political situation of that time. In the year 663 B.C.E. Urdamane was forced out of Egypt. It was also the year that his father Shabako gave up Egypt and returned to Kush.[10] According to the Ethiopian list, the death of Tsawi Tirhakah took place that same year (being the first year of Urdamane). With the death of Tsawi Tirhakah, Shabako placed his own son, Urdamane, upon the Ethiopian throne in Kush. Therefore, the dates for Urdamane's accession to the throne of Kush Proper agree with the year Shabako and Urdamane abandoned Egypt to return to Kush.

After the reign of Urdamane, (Ta)-Nuat-Meawn (i.e. Ta-Nuat-Amun) took the throne. The highest date found for Ta-Nuat-Amun in Egypt is "Year 8."[11] We also know that he had a short co-regency with Nefertem Tirhakah the year Nefertem died,[12] i.e. early in Nefertem's 27th year (665/664 B.C.E.). This year would be Ta-Nuat-Amun's first. His last year in Egypt, as a result, was 658/657 B.C.E. Remarkably, this was the same year that the above arrangement from the Ethiopian list would have Ta-Nuat-Amun begin his reign in Kush. Therefore, Ta-Nuat-Amun, like his uncle Urdamane, came to power in Kush the same year he vacated Egypt.

The harmony of the various dates found in the Ethiopian king list with known political events of that time adds further assurance that they are accurate. These details confirm that the reign of Tsawi Tirhakah, according to the dates found in the Ethiopian archive list, extended from 713/712 to 665/664 B.C.E., autumn reckoning.

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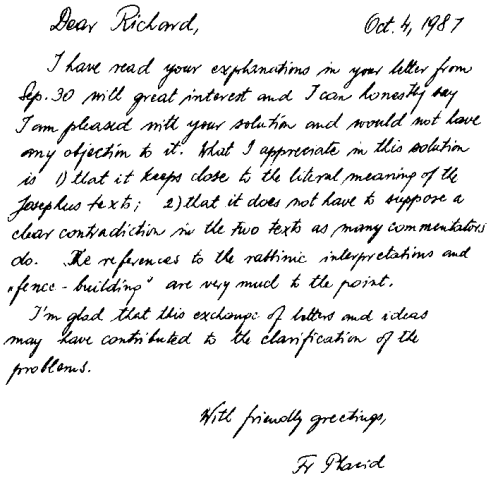
9 Herodotus, 2:161; CAH, 3, pt. 3, p. 50; TIP, p. 406.
10 Herodotus, 2:152; ANET, p. 295; and see Chap. VIII, pp. 87f, p. 88, n. 26, p. 95.
11 EP, p. 349; LR, 4, p. 43, iii.
12 CAH, 3, p. 284; ARE, 4, #920.

Appendix C

Letter from Placid Csizmazia

The following is a copy of a letter composed by Placid Csizmazia, an Associate Professor of Classics at the University of Dallas. This letter represents his conclusions about the author's analysis of the issues involved in Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14:16:2 and 15:1:2, with regard to the sabbath year at the time that Herod the Great captured the city of Jerusalem. Csizmazia addresses the author's solution that Herod captured the city of Jerusalem during the period just prior to a sabbath year, but at a time when the practice of the Jews was to begin their observance of the sabbath year six months prior to its actual start. After examining the Greek in the above passages from Josephus, studying the presentation of the facts, and considering our conclusion, he writes:



Dear Richard, Oct. 4, 1987

I have read your explanations in your letter from Sep. 30 with great interest and I can honestly say I am pleased with your solution and would not have any objection to it. What I appreciate in this solution is 1) that it keeps close to the literal meaning of the Josephus texts; 2) that it does not have to suppose a clear contradiction in the two texts as many commentators do. The references to the rabbinic interpretations and "fence-building" are very much to the point.

I'm glad that this exchange of letters and ideas may have contributed to the clarification of the problems.

With friendly greetings,

Fr Placid

Placid has been of great assistance to the author on a number of issues dealing with the ancient Greek and Latin languages, for which we render a great deal of appreciation and give him much thanks.

Appendix D

Seder Olam's Date for the Bar Kochba Revolt

The various versions of the Seder Olam present us with some textual problems for the passage in chapter 30, which deals with the chronology of the Bar Kochba revolt. These texts in general suffer from interpolations, missing words, wanting sections, and interposing. It is no different when we come to the passage under consideration. Based upon the best versions, Milikowsky's edition gives the following translation:

> From the war of Asverus until the war of Vespasian was 80 years, these were during the time of the Temple; from the war of Vespasian until the war of Qitos was twenty four years; from the war of Qitos until the war of Ben Kozibah was sixteen years; and the war of Ben Kozibah was two and a half years, fifty-two years after the destruction of the Temple.[1]

This arrangement, nevertheless, reflects an inadequacy, since it would place the Bar Kochba revolt a mere 40 years (24 plus 16) after the destruction of the Temple (70 C.E.); and then it allows for a contradiction by saying that the Bar Kochba revolt took place 52 years after the destruction of the Temple. Another construction, based upon variant texts, is provided by Schürer:

> From the war of Asverus to the war of Vespasian: 80 years whilst the Temple existed. From the war of Vespasian to the war of Quietus: fifty two years. And from the war of Quietus to the war of Ben Koziba: 16 years. And the war of Ben Koziba: three and a half years.[2]

In this reconstruction, based upon several variant texts, the 52 year period is correct, since it is the actual time between Vespasian and Quietus; and we must agree that this was obviously what the original text said. In a number of editions, but not all, it came to be transposed. Nevertheless, this construction does not explain the 24 years given in various accounts associated with the period up to Quietus; and the three and a half years favored by Schürer, as we have demonstrated in our study, is clearly a later interpretation inserted in

1 SORC, 2, p. 547.
2 HJP, 1, p. 534, n. 92.

some variant and less reliable texts as a replacement for the two and one half years found in the best manuscripts.

Based upon all the evidence from the variant manuscripts it is certain that the original text contained a more detailed definition of the chronology, which over time was constricted and partly transposed. Combining the variants with known historical facts the following reconstruction best reflects what the original text said:

> From the conflict with As-varus until the conflict with Vespasian: 80 years, while the Temple existed. From the conflict with Vespasian until (*the persecutions began under Domitian: 24 years after the destruction of the Temple. From the beginning of the persecutions by Domitian until*) the conflict with Quietus: 24 years. From the conflict with Vespasian until the conflict with Quietus: 52 years (total). From the conflict with Quietus until the war of Ben Koziba: 16 years. And the war of Ben Kosiba: 2 years and a half.

It would be an easy matter for a scribe to by-pass the entire section relating to Domitian and simply state, "the conflict with Vespasian . . . until the conflict with Quietus." This deletion would explain the retention of the "24 years" until Quietus, since it was both 24 years after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. until the Jewish persecutions began under Domitian in 94 C.E. and 24 years from the beginning of the persecutions until the dismissal of Quietus. Yet the "52 years" applied as a total from the beginning of the Jewish Revolt of 66 C.E. until the end of the conflict with Quietus would also be retained in numerous copies. The absence of Domitian in this chronology of troubles for the Jews is glaring; but since the figure of 24 years is still reflected in copies, it can hardly be doubted that the original texts contained a reference to it.

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Journals

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AUSS *Andrews University Seminary Studies.*
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BA *The Biblical Archaeologist.*
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Bib. *Biblica, Commentarii Editi Cura Pontificii Instituti Biblici.*
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BS *Bibliotheca Sacra.*
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Expositor *The Expositor.*
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MIO *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften Zu Berlin.*
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ABC Grayson, A. K. *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles.* Charles Scribner's Sons. New York, 2nd ed. revised, 1909.

AEO — Gardiner, Alan H. *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica.* 2 vols. Oxford University Press. London, 1947.

AF — Cory, Isaac Preston. *Ancient Fragments of the Phœnician, Chaldœan, Egyptian, Tyrian, Carthaginian, Indian, Persian, and Other Writers.* London: William Pickering, 2nd. ed., 1832.

AHE — Breasted, James Henry. *A History of Egypt, from the Earliest of Times to the Persian Conquest.* Charles Scribner's Sons. New York, 2nd ed. revised, 1909.

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ANETP — *Ancient Near Eastern Texts in Pictures, Relating to the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. with Supplement. Ed. by James B. Pritchard. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1969.

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CBN — Rey, C. F. *In the Country of the Blue Nile.* Camelot Press, London, 1927.

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CM — Unger, Georg Friedrich. *Chronologie des Manetho.* Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, Berlin, 1867.

CP — Narkiss, Mordecai. *Coins of Palestine.* Part I: *Jewish Coins.* Library of Palestinology of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, I/II. Published by "The Bialik Foundation" of the Jewish Agency For Palestine. Jerusalem, 1936.

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EP — Gardiner, Alan. *Egypt of the Pharaohs.* Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1961.

ESJ Wacholder, Ben Zion. *Eupolemus, A Study of Judaeo-Greek Literature*. Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion. Jerusalem, 1974.

ETL Simons, J. *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists Relating to Western Asia*. E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1937.

FH Clinton, Henry Fynes. *Fasti Hellenici, The Civil and Literary Chronology of Greece From the Earliest Accounts to the Death of Augustus*. 3 vols. Oxford, At the University Press, 1834.

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HJP Schürer, Emil. *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.—A.D. 135)*. 2 vols. English version revised and edited by Geza Vermes & Fergus Millar. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark LTD, 1973.

HP Weigall, Arthur. *A History of the Pharaohs*. 2 vols. E. P. Dutton & Company, New York, 1925.

HPM McCurdy, James Frederick. *History, Prophecy and the Monuments or Israel and the Nations*. 2 vols. 2nd. ed. The Macmillan Company, London, 1897.

IAC Childs, Brevard S. *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*. Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series – 3. Alec R. Allenson, Inc., Illinois, 1967. Printed in Great Britain by Robert Cunningham and Sons, LTD, ALVA.

JCST Meshorer, Ya'akov. *Jewish Coins of the Second Temple Period*. Translated from the Hebrew by I. H. Levine. Am Hassefer, Tel-Aviv, 1967.

JTEH	Smith, George Adam. *Jerusalem, the Topography, Economics and History from the Earliest Times to A.D. 70.* 2 vols. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1908.
KETA	Mariette-Bey, Auguste. *Karnak, Étude Topographique et Archéologique.* Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs, 1875. Plates in oversized second vol.
LAP	Finegan, Jack. *Light from the Ancient Past, the Archeological Background of the Hebrew-Christian Religion.* Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1946.
LJ	Ginzberg, Louis. *The Legends of the Jews.* 7 vols. Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968.
LR	Gauthier, M. Henri. *Le Livre des Rois D'Égypte.* 4 vols. Le Caire, Imprimerie de L'institut Francais, Mémoires publiés Par les Membres de L'institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1907–1916.
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MNHK	Thiele, Edwin R. *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings.* Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983.
MTCE	Horton, Fred L. *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews.* Cambridge University Press, 1976.
MTS	Zeitlin, Solomon. *Megillat Taanit as a Source for Jewish Chronology and History in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods,* printed in England at the Oxford University Press by Frederick Hall, Philadelphia, 1922.
NB	Layard, Austen H. *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon.* John Murray, London, 1853.
NOT	Parrot, André. *Nineveh and the Old Testament.* Studies in Biblical Archaeology no. 3. Translated from the French by B. E. Hooke. Philosophical Library, Inc., New York, 2nd ed., 1955.
NSR	*Numismatic Studies and Researches,* Vol. 2, *The Dating and Meaning of Ancient Jewish Coins and Symbols. Six Essays in Jewish Numismatics.* Publications of the Israel Numismatic Society. Schocken Publishing House, Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, 1958.
OOGA	*Occident and Orient: Gaster Anniversary Volume.* "The New Year for Kings" by Julian Morgenstern. London, 1936.
PCC	*Patrologiæ Cursus Completus.* Accurante J. P. Migne, Bibliothecæ Cleri Universæ, Excudebatur et Venit Apud Editorem, in via Dicta D'Ambroise, Prope Portam Lutetiæ Parisiorum Vulgo D'Enfer Nominatam, Seu Petit Montrouge, 1848.

PHAI Wellhausen, Julius. *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel.* Peter Smith, Glouchester, Mass., 1973. A Meridian Books Library Edition first published in August, 1957.

PHP Debevoise, Neilson Carel, *A Political History of Parthia.* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1937.

RG Anderson, James. *Royal Genealogies: or, the Genealogical Tables of Emperors, Kings and Princes, From ADAM to these Times, in Two Parts.* The second Edition. James Bettenham, for Charles Davis in *Pater-Noster Row*, 1736.

SHJ Goldschmidt, Lazarus. *Sepher hajaschar*. Berlin, Berlag von Benjamin Harz, 1923.

SIJ Regier, Delbert. *Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah,* Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary. Dallas, May, 1970.

SIP Honor, Leo. L. *Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine, a Critical Source Study*. AMS Press Inc., New York, 1966.

SNY Clover, R. *The Sacred Name* יהוה, Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Garden Grove, Ca., 1989.

SORC Milikowsky, Chaim Joseph. *Seder Olam*. 2 vols. A dissertation, Yale University. University Microfilms International, Michigan, 1987.

TC McCarthy, Dennis J. *Treaty and Covenant*. Analecta Biblica, 21A. New Edition. Biblical Institute Press. Rome, 1978.

THP Segal, J. B. *The Hebrew Passover, From the Earliest Times to A.D. 70*. London: Oxford University Press. New York, Toronto, 1963.

TIP Kitchen, K.A. *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 B.C.).* 2nd. ed. Aris & Phillips LTD. England, 1986.

TK Macadam, M. F. Laming. *The Temples of Kawa.* 2 vols., each with 2 parts. Published on behalf of The Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, by Geogfrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, London, 1949 & 1955.

TNTB Barrett, C. K. *The New Testament Background*. Harper Torch-books, The Clositer Library, Harper & Row, New York, 1961.

TRC Frank, Edgar. *Talmudic and Rabbinical Chronology*. Philipp Feldheim, Inc., New York, 1956.

TSCJ Zuckermann, D. *A Treatise on the Sabbatical Cycle and the Jubilee*. Translated from the German by A. Löwy. London, 1866. Reprint by Sepher-Hermon Press, Inc., New York, 1974.

UH *An Universal History, from the Earliest Account of Time.* vol. 18. Printed for T. Osborne, ain *Gray's-Inn*; A. Millar, in the *Strand*; and J. Osborn, in *Pater-noster Row*. London, 1748.

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Danby, *Mishnah.* *Mishnah.* Translated by Danby, Herbert. Oxford University Press, 1974.

Feldman, *Jos*.	*Josephus. Jewish Antiquities.* Translated by L. H. Feldman. Vols. ix and x, Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, London, William Heinemann LTD, 1981.
Godley, *Herodotus*.	*Herodotus*. 4 vols. Translated by A. D. Godley. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, London, William Heinemann LTD, revised and reprinted 1981.
Goldstein, *II Macc*.	*II Maccabees*. Translated by Jonathan A. Goldstein. *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 41A. Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, 1983.
Kent, *Varro*.	*Varro, on the Latin Language*. 2 vols. Translated by Roland G. Kent. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, London, William Heinemann LTD, 1967.
Marcus, *Jos*.	*Josephus*. Translated by Ralph Marcus. Thackerary, H. St. J., and Marcus, R., vol. v (1934); Marcus, R., vols. vi (1937) and vii (1933); Marcus, R., and Wilkgren, vol. viii (1963). Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, London.
OTP	*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, 1985.
Rolfe, *Suet*.	*Suetonius*. 2 vols. Translated by J. C. Rolfe. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, London, William Heinemann LTD, 1979.
Sage, *Livy*.	*Livy*. Translated by Evan T. Sage. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, London, William Heinemann LTD, 1984.
Schlesinger, *Livy*.	*Livy*. Translated by Alfred C. Schlesinger. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, London, William Heinemann LTD, 1967.
Thackeray, *Jos*.	*Josephus*. Translated by Thackerary, H. St. J., vol. iii. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, London, William Heinemann LTD, 1979.
Waddell, *Manetho*.	*Manetho*. Translated by W. G. Waddell. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, London, William Heinemann LTD, 1964.
Whiston, *Flav. Jos*.	*The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus*. Translated by William Whiston. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York. (no date)
Whiston, *Jos*.	*Josephus, Complete Works*. Translated by W. Whiston. Kregel Publications, Michigan, 1960.

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ATB — Grollenberg, L. H. *Atlas of the Bible.* Originally published as *Atlas Van de Bijbel,* Amsterdam, Elsevier. Tr. & ed. by Joyce M. H. Reid and H. H. Rowley, Thomas Nelson and Sons LTD, London, 1956.

BJK — Ausubel, Nathan. *The Book of Jewish Knowledge.* Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, 1964.

CD — Lempriere, J. *Classical Dictionary*. 3rd ed. James Crissy, Philadelphia, 1822.

CE — *Collier's Encyclopedia, with Bibliography and Index* . 24 vols. Ed. Dir. William D. Halsey. The Crowell-Collier Publish Co., 1963.

CGD — *The Classic Greek Dictionary* . Prepared by George Ricker Berry. Follett Publishing Company, Chicago, 1962.

DB — Smith, William, ed. *A Dictionary of the Bible.* Zondervan Publishing House, Michigan, 1948.

DGRA — Smith, William, ed. *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities.* John Murray, London, 1878.

EBD — Myers, Allen C., rev. ed.,*The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary.* William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from Bijbelse Encyclopedie, Revised Edition, 1975.

EJ — *Encyclopaedia Judaica.* Encyclopaedia Judaica Jerusalem. 16 vols. Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem, Israel, The Macmillian Company, Jerusalem, 1972.

GEL — *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon.* Founded upon the seventh ed. of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon. At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1961.

GEL, 1968 — *A Greek-English Lexicon.* Compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968.

HBD — Achtemeier, Paul J., ed. *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. Harper & Row, Publishers, San Francisco, 1985.

HDCL — Peck, Harry Thurston, ed. *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities.* Cooper Square Publishers, Inc. New York, 1962.

HEL — *Hebrew-English Lexicon.* Zondervan Edition, 1970. Catalog Number: 6264. Samuel Bagster & Sons, LTD., London. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

ILT — Berry, George Ricker. *The Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament.* Zondervan Publishing House, Michigan, 1958.

Lex. = *Greek–English Lexicon to the New Testament.* Located in the back of the text.

MBA — *The Macmillan Bible Atlas.* Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, prepared by Carta, Jerusalem. The Macmillian Company, New York. Collier-Macmillian Limited, London. Carta, Jerusalem, 1968.

NBD Doublas, J. D., ed. *The New Bible Dictionary*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971.

NIV New York International Bible Society. *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Zondervan Publishing House, Michigan, 1979.

PW *Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Neue Bearbeitung Begonnen von Georg Wissowa. Alfred Druckenmüller Verlag München, 1919.

RHCD Stien, Jess, ed. *The Random House College Dictionary*. Revised Edition. New York, 1975.

SEC Strong, James. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, together with Dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words*. Riverside Book and Bible House, Iowa.

Heb. = A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible.

Gk. = A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament.

SMT Goodwin, William Watson. *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb*. Rewritten and Enlarged. Macmillan, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1966.

WHAB The *Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible*. Ed. by George Ernest Wright and Floyd Vivian Filson. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, The Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelley and Sons Company, Chicago, Illinois and Crawfordsville, Indiana, 1945.

Forthcoming Works

The Golden Age of Empires. Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Garden Grove.
Israelite Chronology. Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Garden Grove
Old World Chronologies. Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Garden Grove.
Yahweh's Sacred Calendar. Qadesh La Yahweh Press, Garden Grove.

Bible (Old and New Testaments)

Acts	Acts of the Apostles	Ezra	Ezra
Amos	Amos	Gal.	Galatians
1 Chron.	1 Chronicles	Gen.	Genesis
2 Chron.	2 Chronicles	Hab.	Habakkuk
Col.	Colossians	Hag.	Haggai
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	Heb.	Hebrews
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians	Hos.	Hosea
Dan.	Daniel	Isa.	Isaiah
Deut.	Deuteronomy	James	James
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes	Jer.	Jeremiah
Eph.	Ephesians	Job	Job
Esther	Esther	Joel	Joel
Exod.	Exodus	John	John
Ezek.	Ezekiel	1 John	1 John

2 John	2 John	1 Pet.	1 Peter
3 John	3 John	2 Pet.	2 Peter
Jon.	Jonah	Phil.	Philippians
Josh.	Joshua	Philem.	Philemon
Jude	Jude	Prov.	Proverbs
Judg.	Judges	Ps. (pl. Pss.)	Psalm (Psalms)
1 Kings	1 Kings	Rev.	Revelation
2 Kings	2 Kings	Rom.	Romans
Lam.	Lamentations	Ruth	Ruth
Lev.	Leviticus	1 Sam.	1 Samuel
Luke	Luke	2 Sam.	2 Samuel
Mal.	Malachi	Song	Song of Solomon
Mark	Mark	1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians
Matt.	Matthew	2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians
Mic.	Micah	1 Tim.	1 Timothy
Nah.	Nahum	2 Tim.	2 Timothy
Neh.	Nehemiah	Titus	Titus
Num.	Numbers	Zech.	Zechariah
Obad.	Obadiah	Zeph.	Zephaniah

Ancient (Non-Rabbinical) Authors and Works Cited in the Text

Amm. Mar.	Ammianus Marcellinus (ca. 325–395 C.E.) *Rerum Gestarum Libri Qui Supersunt*
Arrian	Flavius Arrianus (ca. 95–175 C.E.) *History of Alexander*
Bede	Venerabilis Baedae (673–ca. 735 C.E.) *Opera Historica* *(Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum)*
Curtius	Quintus Curtius (wrote between 41–54 C.E.) *History of Alexander*
Dio	Cassius Dio Cocceianus (ca. 150–235 C.E.) *Roman History*
Diodorus	Diodorus Siculus (wrote ca. 60–30 B.C.E.) *Bibliotheke (Library of History)*
Eusebius	Eusebius Pamphii of Caesarea (265–340 C.E.)
Chron.	*Chronicorum* (numbers cited from *Evsebi Chronicorvm*, 2 vols., Edidit Alfred Schoene, Berolini, Apvd Weidmannos, 1875).
H.E.	*Historia Ecclesiastica*
Inter. Arm.	*Interpretem Armenum* (numbers cited from *Evsebi Chronicorvm*, vol. 1, Edidit Alfred Schoene, Berolini. Apvd Weidmannos, 1875, app. 1, A, pp. 5–18).

Eutrop.	Eutropius (fl. 364 C.E.) *Breviarium Historiae Romanae* *(Abridgment of Roman History)*
Gregory	Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330–395 C.E.)
In Cont. Hom.	*In Canticum Canticorum Homilia*
Herodotus	Herodotus of Halicarnassus (484–430 B.C.E.) *History*
Hiero. Codices	*Secundum Hieronymi Codices* (see Jerome) (cited from *Evsebi Chronoicorvm*, vol. 1, Edidit Alfred Schoene. Berolini, Apvd Weidmannos, 1875, app. 1, B, pp. 25–39).
Jerome	Eusebius Hieronymus (ca. 348–420 C.E.)
Com. in Dan.	*Commentary in Daniel III*
Euseb. Chron.	*Eusebius Chronicon ,* also called *Hieronymi Chroniconi*
Jos.	Flavius Josephus (37– ca. 100 C.E.)
Wars	*History of the Jewish Wars Against the Romans*
Life	*The Life of Josephus*
Antiq.	*Jewish Antiquities*
Apion	*Against Apion*
Table	*Ancient Table of Contents*
Kebra Nagast	Glory of the Kings (ca. sixth century C.E.)
Livy	Titus Livius (59 B.C.E.—17 C.E.) *Ab Urbe Condita* (From the Founding of the City)
Macrobius	Macrobius Ambroisius Theodosius (ca. 399–422 C.E.) *The Saturnalia*
Manetho	Manetho (fl. 280 B.C.E.) *Aegyptiaca* frag. and app. references from Waddell, *Manetho*
Nepos	Cornelius Nepos (c. 99–24 B.C.E.) *De Vitae Excellentium Imperatorum (*or *Twenty lives)*
Them.	*Themistocles*
Onomastica	*Onomastica Sacra* (Jerome, ca. 348–420 C.E.) Latin of Hieronymi (Jerome); Greek of Eusebius. (page numbers cited from *Onomastica Sacra*, edited by Paulus de Lagarde, Gottingae, 1870.)
Ovid	Publius Ovidius Naso (43 B.C.E.–17 C.E.)
Fasti	*Fasti*

Philo	Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 B.C.E. – ca. 45 C.E.)
Spec. Laws	*De Specialibus Legibus (On the Special Laws)*
Gaius	*De Legatione ad Gaium (On the Embassy to Gaius)*
Leg. All.	*Legum Allegoria (Allegorical Interpretations of Genesis II., III.)*
Gen.	*Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin et Exodum (Questions and Answers in Genesis and Exodus)*
Pliny	Gaius Plinius Secundus (Pliny the elder) (23–79 C.E.) *Natural History*
Plutarch	Plutarchus (ca. 45–120 C.E.)
Parallel Lives	*Parallel Lives*
Them.	*Themistocles*
Antony	*Antony*
Isis	*De Iside et Osiride (Isis and Osiris)*
Polyaenus	(fl. 162 C.E.) *Stratagems*
Polybius	Polybius of Megalopolis (ca. 208–126 B.C.E.) *The Histories*
Ptolemy	Claudius Ptolemaeus of Alexandria (observations from 121–151 C.E.) *Geography*
Sallust	Gaius Sallustius Crispus (86–34 B.C.E.) *The War With Catiline*
Senator	Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator (ca. 490–ca. 585 C.E.) *Chronicon* (published in 519 C.E.) (numbers cited from text in PCC, LXIX)
Spartianus	Aelius Spartianus (early fourth century C.E.)
Hadr.	*Hadrian* (in *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*)
Strabo	Strabonos (ca. 63 B.C.E.– ca. 21 C.E.) *Geographicon (Geography)*
Suetonius	Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (ca. 75–140 C.E.) *The Lives of the Caesars*
Syncellus	Georgius Syncellus (died ca. 810 C.E.) *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* Citations from ed. by B. G. Niebuhrii.
Tacitus	P. Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 56–120 C.E.)
Dial.	*Dialogus de Oratoribus (A Dialogue on Oratory)*
Ann.	*Ab Excessu Divi Augusti (the Annals)*
Hist.	*Historiarum (Histories)*

Tertullian	Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (ca. 160–ca. 230 C.E.)
Ad. Mar.	*Adversus Marcionem*
Theon	Theon of Alexandria (fourth century C.E.) *Ptolemæus' Canon*
Theophilus	Theophilus of Antiochus (latter second century C.E.) *Ad Autolycus (To Autolycus)*
Thucydides	Thucydides of Athens (ca. 471– ca. 396 B.C.E.) *History*
Varro	Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 B.C.E.) *De Lingua Latina (On the Latin Language)*
Xenophon	Xenophon of Athens (ca. 430–354 B.C.E.)
Anab.	*Anabasis*
Hell.	*Hellenica*
Zonaras	Johannes Zonaras (mid-twelfth century C.E.) *Epitome of Histories*

Mishnah, Titles of Tractates and Other Qumran and Rabbinical Works.

Works In The Mishnah

B.	in front of the following:	Babylonian Talmud
J.	in front of the following:	Jerusalem (Yerusalemi) Talmud
Tosef.	in front of the following:	Tosepfta

A.Zar.	Abodah Zarah	**Ket.**	Ketuboth
Ab.	Aboth	**Kidd.**	Kiddushin
Arak.	Arakhin	**Kil.**	Kilaim
B.B.	Baba Bathra	**Kinn.**	Kinnim
B.M.	Baba Metzia	**M.Kat.**	Moed Katan
B.Q.	Baba Qamma (Baba Kama)	**M.Sh.**	Maaser Sheni
		Maas.	Maaseroth
Bekh.	Bekhoroth	**Makk.**	Makkoth
Ber.	Berakhoth	**Maksh.**	Makshirin
Betz.	Betzah (or 'Yom Tob')	**Meg.**	Megillah
Bikk.	Bikkurim	**Meil.**	Meilah
Dem.	Demai	**Men.**	Menahoth
Eduy.	Eduyoth	**Midd.**	Middoth
Erub.	Erubin	**Mikw.**	Mikwaoth
Gitt.	Gittin	**Naz.**	Nazir
Hag.	Hagigah	**Ned.**	Nedarim
Hall.	Hallah	**Neg.**	Negaim
Hor.	Horayoth	**Nidd.**	Niddah
Hul.	Hullin	**Ohol.**	Oholoth
Kel.	Kelim	**Orl.**	Orlah
Ker.	Kerithoth	**Par.**	Parah

Peah	Peah	**Tam.**	Tamid
Pes.	Pesahim	**Teb.Y.**	Tebul Yom
R.Sh.	Rosh ha-Shanah	**Tem.**	Temurah
Sanh.	Sanhedrin	**Ter.**	Terumoth
Shab.	Shabbath	**Toh.**	Tohoroth
Shebi.	Shebiith	**Uktz.**	Uktzin
Shebu.	Shebuoth	**Yad.**	Yadaim
Shek.	Shekalim	**Yeb.**	Yebamoth
Sot.	Sotah	**Yom.**	Yoma
Sukk.	Sukkah	**Zab.**	Zabim
Taan.	Taanith	**Zeb.**	Zebahim

Other Works

CR	Community Rule (Manual of Discipline)
DR	Damascus Rule (Damascus Document)
Eccles. Rab.	Ecclesiastes Rabbah
Gen. Apoc.	Genesis Apocryphon
Meg. Taan.	Megillath Taanith
Mid. ‘Ek. Rab.	Midrash ‘Ekhah Rabbah
Mid. Hag.	Midrash Haggadah
Mid. Hal.	Midrash Halachah
Mid. Rab.	Midrash Rabbah
Mid. Teh.	Midrash Telillim (The Midrash on Psalms)
1QM	War Scroll
1QIsa.[a]	Qumran Isaiah Scroll
S.O.	Seder Olam
Targ. Jon.	Targum Jonathan
Yashar	Sepher ha-Yashar

Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

1 Enoch	1 Enoch
1 Esdras	1 Esdras
Jub.	Jubilees
1 Macc.	1 Maccabees
2 Macc.	2 Maccabees
3 Macc.	3 Maccabees
4 Macc.	4 Maccabees

Other Abbreviations

A.D.	*Anno Domini* (Year of the Lord). Also called C.E.
app.	appendix (App. = appendix in our text)
B.C.	Before Christ (also called B.C.E.)
B.C.E.	Before Common Era (also called B.C.)
ca.	*circa*, about, approximately
C.E.	Common Era (also called A.D.)
cf.	compare with
chap.	chapter (Chap. = chapter in our text)
chaps.	chapters (Chaps. = chapters in our text)
D.	Dynasty
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example

esp. (espec.)	especially
et al	*et alii,* and others
etc.	*et cetera,* and so forth
extens.	extension
f	(after a number) and the following page
fem.	feminine
ff	(after a number) and the following pages
fig.	figuratively, figure, illustration (Fig. = Figure in our text)
fl.	flourished
frag.	fragment
frags.	fragments
Gk.	Greek
Heb.	Hebrew
i.e.	*id est,* that is
impl.	implication, implied
inscr.	inscription, inscribed
intro.	introduction
lit.	literally
l.	line, lines
loc. cit.	*loco citato,* in the place cited
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
n.	note, footnote
no.	number
nos.	numbers
ns.	notes
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
par.	paragraph
plur.	plural
pl.	plate
pls.	plates
pref.	preface
ref.	reference
reg.	regular, regularly
rev.	reverse
s.v.	*sub verbo, sub voce,* under the word
subj.	subject, subjective, subjectively
v.	verse or verses
var. lect.	*varia lectio,* different reading
vol.	volume (Vol. = volume belonging to our works)
vols.	volumes (Vols. = volumes belonging to our works)
vv.	verses

[ ]	brackets denote restorations, circumscribes, comments, or clarifications added by us to other modern works.
( )	parentheses circumscribe words added by the translator in ancient documents to provide clarification. “Ancient languages,” as J. H. Charlesworth correctly notes, “are cryptic; verbs, nouns, and pronouns are often omitted.”

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