Translation by R. C. Young of the article entitled "Biblical Chronology" by V. Coucke, in Louis Pirot, ed., *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1928, cols. 1245–1279).

Col. 1245: (*Coucke's writing below is preceded by several paragraphs by L. Pirot dealing with the biblical chronology before the time of Solomon.*)

III. From the construction of Solomon's Temple until its destruction by the Chaldeans. — The history of Judah and Israel is intimately connected to the history of the two great powers of this epoch, Assyria and Egypt. Before looking at the chronology of the period we are concerned with, we must say a word about the system of dating that was in force for these great nations. See in the *Supplément*, Vol. 1, cols. 744-782.

METHOD OF DATING OF THE ASSYRIANS AND THE EGYPTIANS. — In Assyria, the year consisted of 354 days; the first of Nisan was the first day of the year. Occasionally a thirteenth month was intercalated, in order to

[col. 1246]

keep this day near the spring equinox.

In Egypt, the year was always 365 days. If, for four consecutive years, it began on the 19th of July according to our Gregorian calendar, on the four following years it began on July 18, then four years later on the 17th, and so on . . . After 1512 years, the first day of the Egyptian month Thoth would fall again on the 19th of July according to our Gregorian year: This is the Sothic Period.[1]

The Assyrians and the Egyptians dated the years in accordance with the years of reign of their monarchs.

Among the Assyrians, the first year of a monarch began only in the new year which followed his accession: this is the method of postdating [accession reckoning].[2] They called the *resh sharruti* (head, beginning the reign) the period of time that fell between the accession of a king and his first year.

In this system, the total years of reign for a series of kings represents, within a fraction of a year, the actual duration of this historical period.

In Egypt, the year during which a king died was both the last year of the deceased king and the first year of his successor. When the following new year came, this would already be his second year: this is the nonaccession method, which was in effect until the Persian era.[3]

In this system, when the years of x successive kings are added, x-1 years must be subtracted from the sum, that is, the number of years equal to the number of successions. If this subtraction is forgotten, the year during which one king succeeded another will be counted two times: first as the last year of the deceased king, then as the first year of the successor. X years must be subtracted from the sum in question if it is desired to obtain, as a fraction of the next year, the *actual* duration of consecutive reigns, since it is

[1] Note from translator: The Sothic period was really 1460 years (4 x 365), not 1512.
[2] From here on, I will use 'accession' for Coucke's 'postdater' and 'nonaccession' for his 'antidater'
[3] Although this was the system in the time of the Ptolemies, during the New Kingdom at least, the regnal year began on the actual day of accession of the pharaoh (Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 70)

necessary to take into consideration the fact that the first king of the list only reigned part of his first year and the last king a part of the last year.

II. DATE AND DURATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE. — In the time of Solomon the civil year began around the time of the autumnal equinox.

According to the testimony of Flavius Josephus, (*Antiq.* I.iii.3), the new year began in the fall. Moses introduced the religious year that began in the spring, but he kept the autumnal new year for secular matters.

The Jubilee year had the character of a civil year (Lev. 25:1 ff.). It began on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri), that is to say, around the time of the autumnal equinox.

We cannot deduce anything from the expression “at the return of the year” (2 Sam 11:1; 1 Kgs 20:22,26; 2 Kgs 13:20; 1 Chr 20:1; 2 Chr 36:10). It seems to designate the spring, the return of the natural year as the expression “at the end of the year” (Ex. 23:16, 34:22) refers to the end of the natural year.

The years of reign were by the accession method at this time. The chronology of David, Solomon’s father, provides the proof of this: Sometimes the Jews deviated, in order to be more exact, from the official manner of computing the years (cf. Jer. 28:3; Is. 16:14; 21:16; Deut. 15:18; Job 7:1; 14:6). Thus the sacred author reports that David reigned in Hebron 7 years and 6 months (2 Sam 5:5; 1 Chr. 3:4-5). Others give him the official figure and say that this king

[cols. 1247 and 1248 (one page) have the table for the reigns of the kings of Judah. Cols. 1249 and 1250 have the kings of Israel. Below is my version of the tables. I replaced Coucke's annotation with mine, and also omitted the various comments (links to Assyrian records, etc.). I have also simplified the formatting.]

Chronology of the Kings of Judah

King	*Years reigned*	*Began coregency*	*Began sole reign*	*Ended*	*Official start and end*
Solomon	40 (39)		972t*	932t	972t* - 932t
Rehoboam	17		932t	914n/914t	932t - 915t
Abijah	3		914n/914t	912t/911n	915t - 912t
Asa	41		912t/911n	871t/870n	912t - 871t
Jehoshaphat	25(24) [23]	**	871t/870n	848t**	871t* - 848t**
Jehoram	8 (7)	855t**	848t**	846n/846t**	855t - 847t**
Ahaziah	1 (0)		846n/846t**	846t/845n**	847t - 846t**
Athaliah	7 (6)		846t/845n**	840n/840t**	846t?- 841t**
Jehoash	40 (39)		840n/840t**	802t**	841t - 802t**
Amaziah	29	803t/802n**	802t**	775t/774n**	803t - 775t**
Amaziah, alternate	[17]	803t/802n**	802t**	787t**	803t - 787t**
Uzziah	52 (51) [40]		775t/774n**	735n/735t**	775t - 736t**
Uzziah, alt.	52 (51)		787t**	736t/735n**	787t - 736t**
Jotham	16 (15) [4]		735n/735t**	732t/731n*	736t - 732t**
Ahaz	16 [4]		732t/731n*	728t/727n**	732t - 728t**
Ahaz , alt.	16		732t731n*	716t*	732t - 716t
Hezekiah	29		728t/727n**	699t**	728t - 699t**
Hezekiah, alt.	[17]		716t*	699t**	716t - 699t**
Manasseh	55 (54)		699t**	644t*	699t - 644t**
Amon	2		644t*	642t*	644t - 642t**
Josiah	31		642t*	610 BC*	642t - 611t**
Jehoahaz	3 mo.		610 BC*	610t*	610 BC*
Jehoiakim	11		610t*	Dec599/Jan598*	610t - 599t*
Jehoiachin	3 mo. 10 d.		Dec599/Jan598*	Nisan 598*	599t*
Zedekiah	11 (10)		Nisan 598*	588t	599t* - 588t

* means slight difference between my figures and Coucke's. ** means a significant difference. In "Years reigned", square brackets indicate Coucke attempted to emend the text here. Round parentheses means this is the 'actual' number of years because the preceding figure, in my chronology (="modified Thiele"), is by nonaccession reckoning.

Coucke assumes nonaccession reckoning for Athaliah, Joash, Amaziah, and Uzziah.
He has the following coregencies: Jehoshaphat/Jehoram, Jehoash/Amaziah.
He misses these coregencies: Asa/Jehoshaphat, Uzziah/Jotham, Jotham/Ahaz, Ahaz/Hezekiah, and Hezekiah/Manasseh.
He emends the following reign lengths: Jehoshaphat, Amaziah alt., Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah alt.

Cols. 1249 and 1250. Chronology of the Kings of Israel

King	*Years reigned*	*Overlapping reigns*	*Began sole reign*	*Ended*	*Official start and end*
Jeroboam I	22 (21)		931t/930n*	910n*	931n - 910n
Nadab	2 (1)		910n*	909n*	910n - 909n
Baasha	24 (23)		909n*	886n*	909n - 886n
Elah	2 (1)		886n*	885n*	886n - 885n
Zimri	7 days			885n*	885n
Tibni	(not stated)		--	--	--
Omri	12 (11)		885n*	874n*	885n - 874n
Ahab	22 (21)		874n*	853n/853t	874n - 853n
Ahaziah	2 (1)		853n/853t	852n*	853n - 852n
Joram	12 (11) [7]		852n*	846t/845n**	852n - 846n**
Jehu	28 (27)		846t/845n**	819n**	846n - 819n**
Jehoahaz	17 (16)	820n**	819n**	805n**	820n - 805n**
Joash	16		805n**	789n**	805n - 789n**
Jeroboam II	41 (40)		789n**	749n**	789n - 749n**
Zechariah	6 mo.		749n**	749n**	749n**
Shallum	1 mo.		749n or 748n**	same	same
Menahem	10		748n/748t**	738t/737n**	748n - 738n**
Pekahiah	2		738t/737n**	736t/735n**	738n - 736n**
Pekah	20 [6]		736t/735n**	731n/737t**	736n - 731n**
Hoshea	9		731n/731t**	722t/721n**	731n - 722n**

* means slight difference between my figures (i.e. Thiele's, basically) and Coucke's. ** means a significant difference. In "Years reigned", square brackets indicate Coucke attempted to emend the text here. Round parentheses means this is the 'actual' number of years because the preceding figure, in Thiele's chronology, is by nonaccession reckoning.

Coucke assumes nonaccession reckoning for all kings except Menahem, Pekahiah, and Hoshea.
He has the following coregencies: Jehu/Jehoahaz; Joash/Jeroboam II (in text, col. 1254, but not in table).
He emends the following reign lengths: Joram, Pekah.
Inconsistencies in the table: Coucke's starting and ending dates for Jehoahaz, 820n and 805n both in the text and in the table, are not consistent with 17 nonaccession years given him in 2 Kgs 13:1. Joash's 16 years are by acc. reckoning in the table, but in col. 1256 Coucke says all of Jehu's dynasty was by non-acc. reckoning.

[col. 1251]

reigned 7 years in Hebron (1 Kgs. 2:11; 2 Chr. 29:27). These years are therefore accession years; if they were nonaccession years, it would be necessary to say that he reigned 8 years. Moreover in these same passages, it is related that David reigned 7 years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem, for a total of 40 years. This total supposes accession reckoning. If the years were by nonaccession reckoning, the sum would be 7 + 33 – 1 = 39 years.

The construction of Solomon's Temple, which began in the fourth year, in the month of *Ziv*, and was completed in the month of *Bul* of the 11th year (1 Kgs 6:1 ff., 2 Chr. 3:2) took only six and one-half years, instead of 7 years and six months, as is generally stated. The 5th year [of Solomon] began 5 months (*Ethanim*) after the first works.

The first year of the construction of this edifice [Solomon's Temple] is determined as follows: According to the marble tablet from Paros, the capture of Troy was in the month of May 1207 BC;[4] Tyre was founded a year earlier, that is, in the summer of 1208 BC (cf. M. Junian Justin, *Epitome Historium Philippicarum Pompeii Trogi*, 18:3.5). The first year after the foundation began in the fall of 1208 BC.[5] Now according to Josephus, the 11th or 12th year of Hiram was the first year of the construction of the temple and the 240th or 241st year of Tyre (*Antiq.* VIII:3.1; *Contra Apionem* 1:18), that is, the year 969 or 968 (Tishri 968 - Tishri 967).[6]

We can verify this date.

Carthage was founded, according to Josephus (*Contra Apionem* 1:17), in the 143nd year of the construction of the Temple. If it is true that this construction began in 969 or 968, the foundation of Carthage must be dated to 826 or 825 (t. 825-t. 824). But Justinius (18:6.9) establishes this event at 72 years before the foundation of Rome, in the year (753 + 72) = 825 or (752 + 72) = 824 BC, March 824 to March 823. It follows from these considerations that the first works of construction of the Temple date from 969 or 968 BC. The biblical chronology shows that the work began in the year 968 (t. 968–t. 967).[7]

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[4]The Parian Marble (or Parian Chronicle) dates events relative to 264/263 BC, i.e. 264t. It says that Troy was taken 925 years before that date, i.e. in 264t + 925 = 1209t. The fall of Troy was then in May of 1208. Coucke either thought the Parian Marble dates to 263t, not 264t, or he used inclusive numbering for the 945 years. His years therefore start off one year too low.

[5]It would be in 1210t according to the correction in the preceding footnote. 240 years later would be 970t.

[6]*Antiq.* VIII.iii.1 gives 11th year of Hiram and 240th year of Tyre; *Contra Apionem* 1:18 gives 12th year of Hiram and does not give the years since the founding of Tyre. Coucke uses the one-year disparity in order to suggest that maybe it was 241 years from the founding of Tyre until construction of the Temple. This all assumes Tishri-based years for everyone's reckoning, including Tyre, which is open to question. If Pompeius Trogus was measuring by the earlier Roman calendar, which began the year on March 1, then the March-based year before the fall of Troy in May of 1208 BC would have overlapped two Tishri-based years, 1210t and 1209t, and the resulting calculation subtraction of 240 or 241 years from both these figures would allow the possibilities of 970t, 969t, or 968t for the year in which the foundation of the Temple was laid, instead of just 969t or 968t calculated by Coucke.

[7]Coucke here uses the 2nd way of calculating the date, the calculation that starts from the founding of Rome and measuring back to the date of Carthage's founding, to show that 968 BC for the founding of the Temple agrees with both the measurement from above (destruction of Troy and founding of Tyre) and from below (foundation of Rome, 72 years before founding of Carthage). Dionysius of Halicarnassus placed the founding of Rome on April 21 of 752 BC, but Varro and other writes placed it a year earlier, April 21 of

III. FIRST PERIOD OF THE DIVISION, FROM THE ACCESSION OF REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM UNTIL THE ACCESSION OF ATHALIAH OF JUDAH. — We think that during this first period of the division the civil New Year began in *Israel* around the spring equinox, which was the first of Nisan (between March 10 and April 6).

The nonaccession method of dating was here introduced in the official acts of Jeroboam, its first king, who had come from the Egyptian court (1 Kgs. 12:2).

In Judah, the year began, we believe, in the fall, like the year of the Phoenicians[8] and of the kings before the schism, in the 7th month (Tishri), probably on the tenth of the month. The civil year and the cycle of the months began consequently at a different time from the solar year, but the course of the civil year depended on the cycle of the months, the date of the New Year being fixed as the 10th of the seventh month.[9] We should not be surprised at this, since in our day the cycle of the weeks is independent of the cycles of the year and the months.

A. *The means of counting the years*.

When the years of the kings are added since the division of the tribes until the death of Ahaziah of Israel, the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah (2 Kgs. 3:1), we obtain:

In Judah: 17 (Rehoboam) + 3 (Abijam) + 41 (Asa) + 18 (Jehoshaphat) = 79 years.

In Israel: 22 (Jeroboam) + 2 (Nadab) + 24 (Baasha) + 2 (Elah) + 12 (Omri) + 22 (Ahab) + 2 (Ahaziah) = 86 years.

The difference is only apparent. Judah was using accession reckoning, and Israel nonaccession reckoning. It is necessary to subtract from

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753 BC (Finegan, *Handbook* 98–99). Varro's date was commonly accepted from the middle of the first century BC and onwards, and this was probably the date used by Pompeius Trogus.

Regarding his use of March in his measurement from the founding of Rome to the founding of Carthage, it was probably because the Roman year started on March 15 before 153 BC, and on January 1 after that date (Finegan, *Handbook* p. 66). Since all sources agree in giving the traditional date of the founding of Rome as April 21, whatever the year, measuring back 72 years from 753 BC would give the year starting in March of 825 BC for the flight of Dido to found Carthage, following Pompeius Trogus, and the founding of the Temple, 143 years earlier, in 825 + 143 = 968 BC, i.e. the year starting in March of 968 BC, assuming a consistent use of the early Roman calendar. Coucke combines this with the earlier result when measuring down from the founding of Tyre (969t or 968t) and thereby rules out both 969t and 967t; 968t is the date that satisfies both methods.

Coucke's method of determining the year of the founding of the Temple is an interesting—and as it turns out, valid—way to proceed. But few scholars would have surmised that the date of the Parian Chronicle for the destruction of Troy, or Josephus's record of what year of Tyre it was in which construction of Solomon's Temple began, were correct. One problem is the several mentions of Tyre in the El-Amarna correspondence, customarily dated to the 14th century BC. These problems are examined in Rodger C. Young and Andrew E. Steinmann, "The Parian Marble, the Tyrian King List, and the Date of Construction of Solomon's Temple," forthcoming.

[8] Coucke explains why he assumes Tishri-based years for Tyre in his article "Chronologie des rois de Juda et d'Israël," *Revue bénedictine* 37 (1925), p. 327. He used the same texts later used by Thiele (1 Kgs 6:37,38 and 2 Kgs 22:3–23:23) to show that Judah had a Tishri-based calendar. Coucke remarks that three month-names used in the times of Solomon, Ziv (1 Kgs 6:1,37), Bul (1 Kgs 6:38), and Ethanim (1 Kgs 8:2) are found in Phoenician inscriptions, and so these are Phoenician month-names. He then infers that since the two kingdoms had the same month-names, Tyre's calendar would have the same starting month as was used in Judah.

[9] Coucke is following Wellhausen here, always a dubious source. The New Year began on the first of Tisrhi, as is the custom among Jewish people to the present day. Only in a Jubilee year did the New Year began on the 10th of Tishri.

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the latter sum seven years, in keeping with the principle of nonaccession reckoning (see above, col. 1246). Once the subtraction is made, it is noticed that the two sums are in perfect agreement, since they give, within a fraction of a year, the real length of the same period of history.

B. *Date of the new year.*

In order to explain all the synchronisms of this period, it is necessary to assume that the civil year in the two countries began at a different time than the solar year.

We think that Judah, which remained faithful to the house of David, and which kept within its official acts the accession system that was in force before the division, kept also the traditional New Year. The house of Israel, which adopted in its official acts the nonaccession system of the Egyptians, chose as the New Year's date the first of Nisan, or perhaps the first of Thoth. This hypothesis, which is *a priori* the most reasonable, is also the only one that allows keeping, during all the monarchic period, the New Year in the autumn in Judah and in the spring in Israel.

C. *Length of the reigns of Jehoshaphat of Judah and Joram of Israel, who reigned at the same time as Jehoram of Judah, as synchronized with the accession of Ahaziah of Judah.* 1. — If Jehoshaphat reigned 25 years after the death of his father, he would have outlived Ahaziah of Judah, the son of Jehoram.[10] (We will use Jehoram for the name of the king of Judah, in order to distinguish him from Joram of Israel, his contemporary.) The biblical narrative implies that Jehoshaphat died before Jehoram. One could assume that Asa made him his associate on the throne, perhaps in the 39th year of his reign (2 Chron. 16:12).[11] In this case, the accession of the sons of Ahab would be expressed in relation to the years of Jehoshaphat's sole reign.[12] However, this is hardly probable. We prefer to suppose that a copyist read 25 in place of 23, which is an easy and frequent error (because of the evolution of the Hebrew alphabet); compare the different readings of 1 Kgs 15:33 [?] and 2 Kgs 18:1).

2. In the Bible, there are two synchronisms for the accession of Joram of Israel. He mounted the throne in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat (2 Kgs 3:1), and in the 2nd year of Jehoram (2 Kgs 1:17). These two synchronisms do not necessarily mean a corruption of the sacred text; but they indicate that Jehoram was associated on the throne with his predecessor. One could in fact understand these texts in two different ways:

a) Perhaps the sacred author wanted to indicate that Joram was at first associated on the throne by his father, in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, and that he reigned alone later at the death of his brother, in the second year of Jehoram. This first hypothesis is not probable because Ahaziah, the brother of Joram, died in this same 18th year of Jehoshaphat. Therefore, Joram's sole reign began at this time.

b) Perhaps the author wanted to signify that the 18th year of Jehoshaphat was also the 2nd year of Jehoram, that is, that Jehoshaphat made his son his associate on the throne. 2 Kgs 8:16 confirms this hypothesis. In the 5th year of Joram, son of Ahab of Israel, Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat of Judah, began to reign. If Joram took the throne in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, the 23rd and last year of Jehoshaphat could begin in the fifth

[10] This does not make sense.
[11] I agree with this.
[12] This also is correct; Coucke is wrong in rejecting it.

year of Joram; (*See the table on the following page* [Table not given in this translation]). Then Jehoram began his sole reign in the 5th year of Joram, after the 10th of Tishri.

The Hebrew text continues, "In the fifth year of Joram, *Jehoshaphat still being king*, Jehoram began to reign . . ." The italicized words are missing in many manuscripts and ancient versions. They should be rejected as a copyist's addition.

[col. 1253]

3. The number of years of reign for Joram is excessive. a) Joram and Jehoram reigned close to the same number of years. Joram began to reign in the 2nd year of Jehoram (2 Kgs 1:17), more than one year after this king; he died in the year following the death of this king, in fact, a few months after him (2 Kgs 8:25, 9:29). However, Joram of Israel reigned 12 years whereas Jehoram of Judah only had a reign of eight years (2 Kgs 3:1; 8:17). Unless we suppose that on the death of Jehoram the throne was vacant for several years (a hypothesis that hardly seems possible), we must reduce the years of Joram of Israel by 4 or 5 years.[13]

b) According to Assyrian documents, Jehu was already king of Israel in 842,[14] and Ahab was still king during the summer of 854 (Battle of Qarqar). Between these two dates, there must be put, according to the Bible, the expedition of Ramoth, which cost Ahab his life, the reigns of Ahaziah (2 years) and Joram (12 years), the sons of Ahab, and the accession of Jehu. However, the chronology of the following period shows that the accession of Jehu dates from Tishri of 846-Nisan 845. From this it must be concluded that Joram of Israel reigned 7 years (instead of 12): the first year of Joram was probably the year 852, and his seventh year began on the first of Nisan or Thoth, 846 BC.

c) The synchronisms for the accession of Joram of Israel require a reduction in the reign of this king of exactly 5 years. This actually derives from the table above, which is based on the two synchronisms, that the sixth year of Joram of Israel began on the first of Nisan or Thoth in the 7th year of Jehoram of Judah. Since Ahaziah of Judah only reigned one year and died after Joram of Israel (2 Kgs 8:25; 9:17–28), Joram must have reigned 7 years: [*diagram is presented showing this, but it is not given in this translation*]

d) In 1856, there was discovered near Dibban, and ancient city of the Moabites, a stele of the king Mesa, having a long inscription. Here is that translation of a passage that is of interest to us:

"Omri, king of Israel, was the oppressor of Moab for a long time, because Chemosh was angry with his country; and his son succeeded him and he also said "I will oppress Moab!" It was in my time that he spoke like this. And I triumphed over him and the house of Israel has perished forever. However, Omri had taken possession of the region of Madaba and (Israel) dwelt there during his days and the term of days of his sons, for 40 years, and Chemosh gave it back (to us) in my time."

[col 1254]

This inscription gives the impression that Omri took possession of Madaba at the beginning of his reign, and that his dynasty was in power for only 40 years. However,

[13] Thiele explains this by a coregency of Jehoram of Judah with his father Jehoshaphat, so that the length of his reign, as measured from the coregency, was 12 years, but as measured from the sole reign it was only 8 years, the number given in 2 Kgs 8:17.

[14] Should be 841 when the correct date for the Battle of Qarqar, 853 instead of Coucke's 854, is given.

Omri reigned 12 years, Ahab 22, Ahaziah 2, and Joram, the last king of the house of Omri, 12 years (1 Kgs 16:23,29; 22:52; 2 Kgs 3:1). Since the years of reign are by nonaccession reckoning, according to the Bible the dynasty of Omri would have lasted 12 + 22 + 2 + 12 – 3 = 45 years. It seems therefore that there was a lengthening of reign of 5 years for one of these kings. The biblical synchronisms show that this was the reign of Joram.

4. It follows from these considerations that the synchronisms for the accession of Ahaziah of Judah (2 Kgs 8:25; 9:29) are not authentic. It is required to correct the early text so as to date this accession to the 7th year of Joram of Israel.

IV. THE SECOND PERIOD OF THE DIVISION, FROM THE ACCESSION OF ATHALIAH AND JEHU UNTIL THE DESTRUCTION OF SAMARIA. — We shall examine, regarding the second period of the division, just what the New Year and the manner of dating was in Judah and in Israel. We shall demonstrate that Jehu and Joash[15] associated their sons on the throne in the next-to-last year of their reign, and finally we shall attempt to resolve the chronological difficulties of chapters 15 and 16 of 2 Kings.

A. *A new year and manner of dating in Judah*. — Athaliah, the princess from Israel, mounted the throne of Judah shortly after the accession of Jehu (2 Kgs 9:27, 11:3). She died during the sixth year of her reign, the seventh year of Jehu (2 Kgs 11:3, 12:1). If this princess introduced into the official acts of Judah the nonaccession method of dating that was in effect in her native country, but kept the autumnal new year, we can put forth the following chronology (*see table on the following page* [table is not given in this translation]).

The chronology of Athaliah's successor requires the same hypothesis: his reign is by nonaccession reckoning and the New Year began in the two kingdoms at a different time. Here is the proof:

Jehoash took the throne of Judah during the 7th year of Jehu (2 Kgs 12:1), who reigned 28 years (2 Kgs 10:36). There are therefore 21 years between the accession of Jehoash and the death of Jehu. Then Jehoahaz succeeded Jehu in the 23rd year of Jehoash (2 Kgs 13:1). In order to explain this synchronism, it is not enough to assume that the years of Jehoash are by nonaccession reckoning. In fact if the New Year fell on the same date in the two countries, the 8th year of Jehu

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coincided with the 2nd year of Jehoash, and his 28th year with the 22nd year of this Judean king. Since the 23rd year of Jehoash coincides, at least in part, with the 28th year of Jehu it is necessary to assume, in addition to nonaccession reckoning, a difference in the time for the New Year. We assume once again that the year began in Judah during the autumn and in Israel in the spring. With this hypothesis, Jehoash could have already begun his 11th year (by nonacession reckoning) during the 7th year of Jehu and his 23rd year in Jehu's 28th year.

[15] Coucke's table for the kings of Israel does not show any coregency between Joash and Jeroboam II, nor could I find any other mention of it in his text. The table has Joash dying in 789n and the 41- (40-) year reign of Jeroboam II as 789n – 749n.

We maintain therefore that at the beginning of this period, the date of the New Year differed between the two kingdoms, and that the reigns of Judah were by nonaccession reckoning.

This double affirmation is confirmed by the following. Thus, regarding nonaccession reckoning: on the death of Joash, king of Israel, Amaziah, king of Judah, began the 15th year of his reign (2 Kgs 14:23); he reigned 29 years (2 Kgs 14:20) and lived 15 more years (2 Kgs 14:17) after the death of Joash. Therefore, according to accession reckoning, from the 15th to the 29th year of the reign of Amaziah, we must count 14 years, instead of 15. It is therefore necessary to see in these calculations an application of the nonaccession system of reckoning: according to this procedure, the 15th year of Amaziah was already the first year of Joash, and his 29th was the 15th after the death of Joash.

Nonaccession reckoning was no longer officially used by the time of Ahaz. In fact, while Pekah outlived Jotham (2 Kgs 15:37),[16] his death is dated in the reign of this king (2 Kgs 15:30). The reign of Ahaz, successor to Jotham, must therefore be by accession reckoning. This usage was later kept by the succeeding kings on the throne of Judah.

As for the differing times for the New Year, we shall have occasion to establish it and the end of this period, when we look at the chronology of Menahem and his successors.

In summary: the official usage of accession reckoning, which was in usage in the time of David and Solomon, was maintained in Judah during the first period of the division. Athaliah, the princess from Israel, introduced the nonaccession system that was in official use in Israel, her country of birth. This convention was maintained during the reign of Jehoash. The

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regnal years of Ahaz went back to accession reckoning, we shall see because of such circumstances.

Judah remained faithful to a New Year in the autumn.

B. *The New Year and method of dating in Israel.* — As long as the dynasty of Jehu endured, nothing would indicate a change in the manner of dating and in the time of the New Year. It is therefore probable that that the nonaccession method continued in Israel and that the New Year fell in the spring.[17]

Zechariah, the last king of this dynasty, was overthrown by Shallum, son of Jabesh. The reign of the usurper only lasted one month; he was in his turn overthrown by Menahem, son of Gadi, who took the throne in the 39th year of Uzziah of Judah (2 Kgs 14:17). Menahem reigned ten years. His son, Pekahiah, succeeded him in the 50th year of Uzziah and occupied the throne for 2 years (2 Kgs 25:23). He was killed as the result of a conspiracy and replaced by Pekah, the instigator of the revolt, in the 52nd year of Uzziah (2 Kgs 15:27).

Menahem and his son introduced in Israel the accession method. If he had used nonaccession reckoning, the last year of Menahem would date from the month of Nisan (or Thoth) from the 50th year of Uzziah:
[*diagram showing Menahem dying in 50th year of Uzziah is not given in this translation*]

[16] This verse does not say that Pekah outlived Jotham, but 2 Kgs 16:1 implies that he did.

[17] However, the date Coucke gives for Joash, grandson of Jehu, implies accession reckoning. The table has Jehoahaz dying in 805n and Joash dying in 789n—a 16 year difference. Second Kings 13:10 gives Joash 16 years.

On the one hand, according to the sacred author (2 Kgs 15:27), the accession of Menahem, father of Pekahiah, should be reported as the 39th year of Uzziah. It follows, from this synchronism that Menahem, if he had used nonaccession reckoning, would have had a reign of 12 or 13 years. But the Bible (2 Kgs 15:17) establishes the length of Menahem's reign at only ten years.

On the other hand, if we assume that Menahem introduced the accession method of dating, it is not necessary to change the length of his reign. It is then possible, as is shown in the following table, that Pekahiah mounted the throne before the month of Nisan or Thoth of this 50th year. Menahem could therefore date his 10th year (accession reckoning) (*see table on the following page* [table not given in this translation]) from the month of Nisan in the 49th year of Uzziah, his first year in Uzziah's 40th year, and his *resh sharruti* from the end (Nisan-Tishri) of the 39th year of this king (2 Kgs. 15:17).

Historical circumstances explain the appearance of the accession method. Menahem paid tribute

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to Assyria. The discourse of Hosea 7-9, which dates from the first years of his reign, denounces the abandonment of national traditions. The preferences went now to Assyria, now to Egypt.

Josephus attributes to Menahem a reign of 12 years. If this is a valid reading, Hosea is the only king of Israel who used accession reckoning. The reading of the actual text is easily explained by the omission of one word.

The reign of Pekah, successor to Pekahiah, but who did not belong to the preceding dynasty, was once again by nonaccession reckoning.

Having mounted the throne in the last year of Uzziah (2 Kgs 15:27), Pekah had already begun the second year of his reign when Jotham succeeded his father (2 Kgs 15:32). The different epoch of the New Year in the two kingdoms, and the reintroduction in Israel of the nonaccession method of reckoning, explain both of these apparently irreconcilable synchronisms.

[*Diagram omitted in this translation: it shows Pekah beginning between Tishri and Nisan of Uzziah's last year, and Uzziah dying between Nisan and Tishri of that year.*]

This change in the system of dating once again is explained by the historical circumstances.

Under Pekah, the Egyptian party triumphed. Israel entered into a war against Judah, which implored the help of Assyria (2 Kgs 16:17).

Herzog maintained that the reign of Hoshea, Israel's last king, was once again by accession reckoning. It should not be surprising that this king, a creature of Tiglath-Pileser, had adopted the Assyrian manner of reckoning dates. It would have moreover made it easier since Menahem provided an example for this, and that the accession method of dating already existed in Judah.

It is generally thought that the datum (2 Kgs 17:1) that attributes to the last king of Samaria a reign of nine years is in error. However, if the accession system was in effect in Israel, Hoshea reigned exactly nine years. Here is the proof:

According to Assyrian and Babylonian documents, Samaria fell during the *resh sharruti* of Sargon. Shalmaneser V died in the fifth year of his reign, on the 12th of Tebeth. Sharru-ukin (Sargon) who succeeded him mounted the throne on the 25th of the same month, that is, the second or

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third of January, 721 BC. His *resh sharruti* finished on the second or third of April in the same year (Kugler, *Von Moses bis Paulus*, Münster, 1922, p. 181). The Bible dates the capture of Samaria to the 9th year of Hoshea (2 Kgs 17:6). It therefore must be that the last (9th) year of this king began in the month of Nisan or Thoth 722; the first, 8 years earlier, in the spring of 730. With the sole hypothesis that accession reckoning was in effect, Hoshea could mount the throne (and commence his *resh sharruti*) a little after the first of Nisan or the first of Thoth, 731 BC.

However, the Eponym List dates the year 733-732 as a campaign against Damascus. Toward the end of this expedition, A-u-s-i (Hoshea) succeeded Pa-qa-ha (Pekah). It seems evident to us that we can only conclude from the data of this list of *limmus* that the accession of the last king of Samaria ought to be taken exactly within the limits of the Assyrian year 732. On the other hand, even if it is necessary to conclude that all the events that are indicated in this campaign against Damascus and Samaria took place before the end of this year, it would still be necessary that the accession of Hoshea, falling at the end of the Assyrian year, belongs already to the beginning of the year that was in effect within Israel: the first of Nisan of the Jews could precede the first of Nisan of the Assyrians and the first of Thoth fell, in 731, on the 15th of February.[18]

We believe therefore that Hoshea reigned 9 years and that his reign went by accession reckoning. Moreover, we have another argument proving that this king's reign is by accession reckoning, while also showing that the year began at a different time in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel:

Ahaz died and Hezekiah succeeded him in the third year of Hoshea (2 Kgs 18:1).

However the accession of Hoshea is dated from the 12th year of Ahaz, who reigned 16 years. This is all explained if the last king of Israel used accession reckoning and if the date of the New Year differed in the two countries. In this case the *resh sharruti* of Hoshea began in the 22nd year of Ahaz, his third year finished on the first of Nisan or Thoth of the 16th year of that king. Ahaz would have died before the first of Nisan of his 16th year of reign.

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In summary: The New Year, for the entire period of the division, fell at the beginning of spring in Israel, and at the approach of autumn in Judah.

The nonaccession method, which was in effect in Egypt, was planted in Israel by Jeroboam, its first king, who had lived at the court of the pharaohs. This system was kept, in official acts, until the last years of the kingdom. The dynasty of Menahem, which consisted of only two kings, and Hoshea, the last king of Israel, introduced the accession reckoning that existed in Assyria.

The same change was operative around the same time in Judah. This country, which under Athaliah the princess from Israel had abandoned the longtime official reckoning by accession years, took again its original custom during a time of great Assyrian influence.

[18] The first of Nisan never falls as early as February (see Parker and Dubberstein). Coucke's problems here are because he accepts the claim of Sargon that he conquered Samaria in his accession year. Samaria actually fell in 723n/723t, during the final year of Shalmaneser V.

C. Coregencies. — Before looking at chapters 15-16 of 2 Kings, we notice the existence of two coregencies: Jehoahaz reigned from the 23rd to the 37th year of Jehoash, king of Judah (we spell his name this way to distinguish him from Joash, king of Israel), 2 Kgs 13:1-10. But according to the sacred author, he reigned 17 years. This is all explained if we allow that Jehoahaz was associated on the throne in the next-to-last year of Jehu, the 21st year of Jehoash.[19]

Amaziah, the successor to Jehoash of Judah, became king in the second year of Joash (2 Kgs 14:1). But Joash mounted the throne of Israel in the 37th year of Jehoash, who reigned 40 years (2 Kgs 12:1). According to these synchronisms, Amaziah was associated on the throne in the next-to-last year of Jehoash.

D. *The chronological difficulties of 2 Kgs 15 and 16.* — The chronology of chapters 15 and 16 is called by Tiele (*Babylonisch-Assyrische Geschichte*, Gotha, 1886, p. 136-137) "inextricable"; by Maspero (*Histoire ancienne des peoples de le'Orient classique*, Paris, 1908, III, p. 156) "inexact throughout" and by Herzog (*op. cit.*, p. 122) "the home of confusions." In order to facilitate the account, we first consider the contemporaneous and parallel reigns of Pekah and Hoshea on the one side, and of Jotham and Ahaz on the other side. Then the reign of their predecessors, Amaziah and Uzziah, kings of Judah; Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, and Pekahiah, kings of Israel.

1. *Chronology of Pekah*. — This king reigned at the most for six years. In 738, the 8th year of Tiglath-Pileser III, Menahem paid tribute to Assyria.[20] Let us suppose that he died in this same year. For the reign of Pekahiah (2 years, 2 Kgs 15:23), since it was by accession reckoning, his 2nd and last year dates from the spring of 736. As a result, the 2nd year of Pekah (see the next-to-last table) begins at the very earliest on the first of Nisan or Thoth 735. On the other hand, the Eponym List dates the year 733-732 for the campaign "*ana Dimashqa*" ["against Damscus"]. Toward the end of this campaign Pekah was killed and replaced by Hoshea. We have shown above that the accession of Hoshea was at the beginning of the year 731,[21] a little after the first of Nisan or the first of Thoth. From this we concluded, at the same time assuming that

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Menahem died in the same year [? *mourût déjà l'anné*] that he is mentioned among the tributaries of Tiglath-Pileser, and that Pekah could have reigned all of the six years by

[19] An interesting idea. Thiele, followed by McFall and myself, explains the 17 years by assuming the following. The 23rd year of Jehoash was measured by nonaccession reckoning; it was 836t – 22 (acc) = 814t. The 37th year of Jehoash, however, was by accession reckoning, because of the switch back to accession reckoning in Judah about this time: 836t – 37 = 799t. Jehoahaz began in the first of 814t, i.e. 814t/813n, so that by Israel's reckoning his accession year was 814n. He died in the latter half of 799t, i.e. in 798n/798t, so that by Israel's Nisan-based calendar his last year was 798n, which gives 814n – 798n = 16 years, or 17 nonaccession years, for his reign.

[20] The year was 743 or 742. See Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers* 121; T. C. Mitchell in *Cambridge Ancient History* Vol. 3, Part 2, 326; Rodger Young, "Inductive and Deductive Methods As Applied to OT Chronology" *TMSJ* 18 (2007), pp. 113-115.

[21] As mentioned above, Coucke's accession year for Hoshea is a few months too late (Hoshea's reign actually began in 732/731n) because he did not realize that Sargon was lying when he claimed he took Samaria in his accession year. Sargon may have been in Shalmaneser's army in early 723, when Samaria fell, but after he became king (Dec. 722 or Jan. 721), he had no campaigns in the west for his first two years (Hayim Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 12 (1958):22-42, cited in Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, p. 167.)

nonaccession reckoning (n. 736-n. 731). The present text of the Bible attributes to him a reign of 20 years (2 Kgs 15:27)!

2. *The chronology of Jotham.* — This king reigned at least 3 years (2 Chr 27:5). His reign lasted, after the death of his father Uzziah, at the very most 4 years by accession reckoning, 5 if by nonaccession reckoning. In fact, he mounted the throne in the second year of Pekah, that is, at the earliest after the first of Nisan or Thoth 735. The next-to-last table than we have given shows that Uzziah had already died before the autumn. Hence the first the first year by accession reckoning, or the second by nonaccession reckoning, could begin in Tishri of 735. On the other hand, the last year dates to the autumn of 732. We shall demonstrate this shortly. He reigned, consequently, at the maximum of 4 accession years or 5 nonaccession years. The Bible (2 Kgs 15:33) gives him a reign of 16 years!

The sacred author reports that the expedition of the kings of Damascus and Samaria began in the time of Jotham (2 Kgs 15:37). From this it seems that this king did not see the end of the hostilities. These ended at the beginning of 731, at the end of the Assyrian campaign against Damascus (733-732). Hence Jotham died before 731. On the other hand, the death of Pekah is also dated in terms of his reign (2 Kgs 15:30). We have seen that this king was assassinated by Hoshea, who succeeded him at the beginning of spring in 731. From this it follows that Jotham began his last year in the autumn of 732.

3. *The chronology of Ahaz.* — According to the present text of the Bible, this monarch reigned 16 years (2 Kgs 16:2), of which 12 were as coregent with his father (2 Kgs 15:30; 17:1), since the accession of Hoshea is reported from the 12th year of Ahaz and the last, his 20th (2 Kgs 15:35), or instead the 16th of Jotham. The 16 years of this king are those which he reigned *after the death of Uzziah*, from the 2nd to the 17th year of Pekah (2 Kgs 15:32; 16:1). Therefore, we have seen above that Jotham reigned, after the death of his father, at the most 4 years by accession reckoning or 5 by nonaccession reckoning, that is, that he added the (maximum) length of his reign 11 or 12 years. We therefore ascertain a mistake introduced in the biblical chronology. It gives the solution of these chronological difficulties: Jotham reigned (16 – 12 =) 4 or (16 – 11 =) 5 years. The coregency did not exist or was increased by 11 years.

From this, the accession of Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:1) dates from the (17 – 11 =) 6th of (17 – 12 =) 5th year of Pekah. But this accession cannot be dated from the 6th year, since we have shown above that Jotham died and left the accession to his son *before* the first of Thoth or Nisan 731, the commencement of the 6th year of Pekah. From this, a coregency of 12 years has been introduced. Jotham reigned (16 – 12 =) 4 years, and his son also reigned (16 – 12 =) 4 years.

The accession of Ahaz dates to the (17 – 12 =) 5th and next-to-last year of Pekah.

If Jotham reigned 4 years, his reign is by accession reckoning. The following table proves it: [*table not given in this translation*]

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We have every reason to believe that the forger [*faussaire*] increased the years for Pekah in the same proportion as those for Jotham and Ahaz. We believe even that the coregency that we have mentioned was introduced into the chronology in order to increase the years of Pekah and so cut back by [? *reculer ainsi de*] 12 years the reign of Hoshea and the end of the kingdom of Israel. But the existing text (2 Kgs 15:27) attributes to Pekah a reign of (8+12=) 20 years instead of (6 + 12 =) 18! Two

suppositions are possible, either the forger read 8 instead of 6, or 18 was changed later to 20. The latter hypothesis is the more reasonable. There are numerous variants: 18, 8, 28, and 20 years. The three last can come from the first.

Pekah's death (2 Kgs 15:30: the 20th year of Jotham) is dated to the fourth and last year of Jotham. Perhaps the original text indicated the (20-12=) 8th year. In this case the sacred author would have expressed in this manner that Jotham was associated on the throne of his father for four years, this coregency would be indicated in the Bible: 2 Kgs 15:5, and the forger would have changed to 8 in (8+12=) 20.

4. *Chronology of Hoshea*. — The length of his reign (9 years, 2 Kgs 17:1) is exact. He mounted the throne in the 4th and last year of Jotham, during the *resh sharruti* of Ahaz, a little after the first of Thoth or Nisan, 731 BC. His reign is by accession reckoning. The death of Ahaz and the accession of Hezekiah are dated to his 3rd year, the beginning of the siege of Samaria to his 7th year, which was the 4th of Hezekiah, and the capture of the city to his 9th and last year, which was the 6th of Hezekiah, January-March 721 (2 Kgs 18:1, 9-16).

The beginning of the siege of Samaria is dated to the winter of 724-723. It lasted 2 years.

We recall from the solution of the first part of the chronological difficulties of 2 Kgs 15-16 that the last year of Uzziah is dated from Tishri of 736,

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and the last year of Menahem is dated from the first of Nisan or Thoth, 738, seeing that Pekah reigned 6 years by accession reckoning (736-731) and that Pekahiah reigned 2 years by accession reckoning (737-736).

5. *Chronology of Amaziah and Uzziah*. — The last year of Uzziah is dated from the autumn of 736. On one hand, Shalmaneser III relates that in the 14th year of his reign (846), he went to war against Bir-idri (Benhadad) of Damascus. Hazael, the successor to Bir-idri, had not yet mounted the throne. However Ahaziah of Judah undertook an expedition against Hazael (2 Kgs 8:28). Athaliah, who succeeded Ahaziah, did not reign therefore before the last months of the year 846.

As a result, we must count from the 1st year of Athaliah to the last year of Uzziah a maximum (846-736=) 110 years. However, Athaliah reigned at least 6 years (2 Kgs 11:1-4), Jehoash 40 (2 Kgs 12:1), of which two years were as coregent with his son, Amaziah 29 (2 Kgs 12:2), and Uzziah 52 years (2 Kgs 15:2).

Even if these reigns were by nonaccession reckoning, we would obtain 6+39+29+52 – 4 = 122 years, instead of 110. Consequently it is necessary to reduce by 12 years the reign of one of the three last kings. This conclusion results from the examination of the kings of Judah.

As for the chronology of Israel, the Bible places at the death of Jeroboam II an interregnum that lasted precisely 12 years; Jeroboam took the throne in the 15th year of Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:23). If he began his 2nd year in the month of Nisan of this 15th year, he would enter into his 16th year during the 29th year of Amaziah, the first of Uzziah; and in the 16th and last year during the 27th of Uzziah. However, according to the existing text of the Bible, Zechariah would have succeeded Jeroboam in the 38th year of Uzziah (2 Kgs 15:8), after an interregnum of 12 years!

This interregnum did not exist. This is proven by the chronology of the kings of Israel. Jehu mounted the throne

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a few weeks before Athaliah (2 Kgs 9:27; 11:1), therefore, at the most, toward the end of 846. Zechariah began to reign in 49, 11 years (2 Kgs 15:8-17) before the death of Menahem (738).

Between the accession of Jehu and that of Zechariah, there were therefore at most (846-749=) 97 years. Between these two dates, we must place 28 years of Jehu (2 Kgs 10:36), 17 of Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 12:1), of which 2 were as coregent, 16 of Joash (2 Kgs 13:10), 41 of Jeroboam and an interregnum of 12 years, making in total (and taking into account the coregency and the method of nonaccession reckoning) 28 + 16 + 16 + 41 + 41 – 4 + 12 = 109 years, instead of 97. There is no doubt: it is necessary to do away with the interregnum.

Consequently, the synchronism, 2 Kgs 15:1, instead of reporting the accession of Uzziah to the 27th year of Jeroboam, should be dated to the 15th year; we thus eliminate this interregnum. As a result, we must change in the same proportion the synchronisms of the accession of Zechariah and his four successors; we find therefore that Uzziah reigned 40 years (52-12). We could also assume that Amaziah only reigned 17 years. In this case it would be necessary to reject the authenticity of 2 Kgs 14:17, and to date the accession (2 Kgs 15:1) of Uzziah to the 3rd or 4th year of Jeroboam. It cannot be a question of a coregency (2 Kgs 14:19-21).

Conclusion: The second period of the schism has been increased by 24 years. The date of the destruction of Samaria is put back the same number of years. An interregnum of 12 years at the death of Jeroboam II has been introduced, and the reign of Pekah has been prolonged by 12 years. As a result the length of the reigns of the kings of Judah have been stretched and the synchronisms have been changed in the same ratio.

V. CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AFTER THE FALL OF SAMARIA. — From the fall of Samaria until the destruction of Jerusalem, the last period of the history of the kings, Judah remained faithful to the method of accession reckoning and an autumnal New Year.

A. *The accession method.* — A characteristic of the accession method is to use of the *resh sharruti*. Thus, Jeremiah (26:1; 27:1; 40:34 [*sic*-should be 49:34]) dates the acts of the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. This expression seems to be the literal translation of the technical Assyrian term *resh sharruti* (*Der Katholik,* 1906, vol. 2, p. 31).

It could be objected that Jeremiah (28:1) writes: “He arrived at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, the fourth year, the fifth month . . .”, which would seem to indicate that this Hebrew expression does not have the characteristic meaning of the Assyrian term. But the Greek version does not have this expression, which seems to have been taken from Jer. 27:1.[22]

[22] Nahum Sarna says “the fourth year” refers to the fourth year of a Sabbatical cycle, which, according to my chronology of Sabbatical years, it was. See Nahum Sarna, “Zedekiah’s Emancipation of Slaves and the Sabbatical Year,” in *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday*,” ed. Harry A. Hoffner Jr. (Neukirchen: Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1973) p. 149.

A vision of Ezekiel is dated to the 25th year of our captivity, a New Year's Day, the tenth day of the month, 14 years since the ruin of the city (Ezek. 40:1). The capture of Jerusalem is dated to the 11th year of the captivity (Ezek 26:1), according to the usage of nonaccession reckoning, the 25th year of the captivity is not the 14th but the 15th since the ruin of the city. Ezekiel is therefore using accession reckoning, since he dates the destruction of Jerusalem from the 14th year.[23]

We have remarked that Jeremiah and the author of 2 Kings followed the same system: the dates of the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of this city show that these authors dated as Ezekiel did (Ezek 24:1-2; 26:1; Jer. 39:1-2; 52:4-12; 2 Kgs 25:1-8).

The sum of the years of reign from the fall of Samaria provides a third proof in favor of the use of accession reckoning.

Two preliminary remarks: The reign of Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23:31) and Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:8)

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lasted three months. According to accession reckoning, no New Year occurred in these reigns, since no whole year is dated according to them. On the other hand, it is necessary to date a New Year from the vacancy of the throne that preceded or which followed the reign of Jehoahaz. A calculation from Jeremiah proves this: "In the 4th year of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, Jeremiah addressed the people in this way: Since the 13th year of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, until this day, these 23 years that the word of the Lord came to me . . ." (Jer 25:1-3). This calculation is exact if we date a New Year from the vacancy of the throne that precedes or that follows the reign of Jehoahaz. In this sole hypothesis we can calculate 23 years from the 13th year of Josiah until the fourth year of Jehoiakim.

Here now is the third argument in favor of the accession method of reckoning: According to the Bible, the fall of Samaria is dated in the 6th Year of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:10), and the captivity of Jehoiachin ended in the 37th year (the 27th day of the 12th month: 2 Kgs 25:27). If the years of reign are by accession reckoning, 160 years elapsed between these two events. In fact, it is necessary to compute in this interval:

Hezekiah, who reigned 29 years (2 Kgs 18:8); from his 6th year:	23 years
Manasseh, 55 years (2 Kgs 21:1):	55 years
Amon, 2 years (2 Kgs 21:9):	2 years
Josiah, 31 years (2 Kgs 22:1):	31 years
Jehoahaz, 3 months	0 years
A New Year is dated to the vacancy of the throne that preceded or followed the reign of Jehoahaz:	1 year
Jehoiakim, who reigned 11 years (2 Kgs 23:36):	11 years
Jehoiachin, who reigned three months (2 Kgs 24:8):	0 years

[23]Coucke is not careful here with the wording. It was 14 years after the city fell that he had his vision; the word "after" (*ahar*) implies accession reckoning, because a full 14 years had passed. This puts the fall of the city in the 11th year of exile, consistent with 26:1. The verse (Ezek. 26:1) does not name the month, but it was almost certainly the sixth month (Elul, 587 BC), after the destruction of the city by Nebuzaradan's troops in the fifth month (Jer. 52:2). See Rodger C. Young, "The Parian Marble and Other Surprises from Chronologist V. Coucke," *AUSS* 58:2 (2010).

The captivity of Jehoiachin lasted 37 years (2 Kgs 25:27): 37 years[24]

Total: 160 years

If the nonaccession method had been in force during this epoch, it would be necessary to increase this total of 160 by 2 units, since because of the vacancy of the throne, which is discussed above [? *dont il est question plus haut*] it would be necessary to compute two years instead of only one, and it would be necessary to count 24 years under Hezekiah; then, according to the rules given above, it would be necessary to reduce the total (162) by 7 units; we would then obtain 162 – 7 = 155 years.

But, according to the Assyrian documents, only 160 years can be computed:

The destruction of Samaria dates from the *resh sharruti* of Sargon who began the 12th of Tebeth, December 20th, 722 or January 18 of 721, and finished the 2nd or 3rd of April in the next year (Kugler, *op. cit.*, p. 181).

The captivity of Jehoiachin ended the 25th (Jer. 52:31) or the 27th of the 12th month (2 Kgs 25:27), in the accession year of Evil-Merodach. Now the first year of Evil-Merodach, according to Ptolemy's *Canon*, is dated to the first of Nisan, 561 BC. The liberation of Jehoiachin dates then from the 31st of March or the 2nd of April, 561 BC (Kugler, *op. cit*., 189).

Therefore there are, according to the above-mentioned Assyrian documents, a little more exactly (721 – 561 =) 160 years. This is the proof that the years of reign of the kings of Judah after the fall of Samaria were by accession reckoning.[25]

B. *The autumnal New Year*. — Here are the indications in favor of an autumnal New Year: It seems that the book of the Law of Yahweh, about which there is a question, 2 Chron 34:8 ff. and 2 Kgs 22:3 ff., was found before the month of Nisan in the 18th year of Josiah. Different codices date these acts from the 7th or 8th month. However, the Passover which followed was celebrated in the same 18th year (2 Kgs 23:23; 2 Chron

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34:19). This year therefore began in the month of Tisrhi.

Baruch wrote (Jer. 36:1-4) the prophecies of Jeremiah in the 4th year of Jehoiakim. On this occasion, he was ordered to read them before the people on a day of fasting. Jeremiah meant to designate a known date (Jer. 36:6). Therefore Baruch read these words in the 9th month of the 5th year of Jehoiakim. The text by no means is intended to suggest that this pertains to a second reading. On the contrary everything seems to

[24] The captivity of Jehoiachin lasted not 37 years, but 35 years plus part of a 36th year. His first year of captivity was 598t, his last 562t. "Years of captivity" are always to be measured in a nonaccession sense. It is only for years of reign that the first partial year was sometimes counted as "year 0" instead of as the first year. The sum of years then should be 159. This is measured from the 6th year of Hezekiah, the year in which Samaria fell, i.e. 722t in Coucke's system. 159 years later will be 722 – 159 = 563t. This is one year too early for the release of Jehoaichin from prison.

The proper calculation starts from the fall of Samaria in 723n/723t, which was 724t for calculation purposes. Hezekiah reigned 37 years more (724t to 687t); his 29 years are measured from the beginning of his sole reign in 716t, not from 728t as Coucke has it. Then 44 years for the sole reign of Manasseh, 2 years for Amon, 31 years for Josiah, one year because the reign of Jehoahaz crossed the Tishri boundary, 11 years for Jehoiakim, and then the 36 years until the 37th year of the captivity of Jehoiachin. The total is (37 + 44 + 2 + 31 + 1 + 11 + 36) = 162 years, from 724t to 562t.

[25] Yes they were, except for Zedekiah. Also there was a coregency between Hezekiah and Manasseh.

indicate that the day of the fast of the ninth month was the day designated by Jeremiah (Jer 36:9-10). How are we to assume that this special fast was fixed more than 9 months in advance: the difficulty disappears if the year finished when the 7th month came.

The 12th year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, in the 10th month, a fugitive brought the news of the fall of Jerusalem (Ezek 33:21). Everything seems to indicate that we are in the presence of a historic event (Ezek 33:22; 25:26-27). However, as we have said above, the first year of the captivity corresponds to the first year of Zedekiah. As a result, according to Ezekiel, as for the author of the Books of Kings, Jerusalem was plundered in the 11th year, the 5th month (2 Kgs 25:8). If this is so, how can we assume that the community of the exiles learned of the capture of Jerusalem only 16 or 17 months after the event? This consideration caused some critics to follow here the Syriac version and the text of some Hebrew manuscripts that dated this news to the 11th year of captivity. In fact, nothing requires us to depart from the most ancient and most authoritative manuscript tradition: the 12th year began in the 7th month, and Ezekiel received the news 5 months after the event.

Some authors find a confirmation of this thesis in another passage of the same book. The prophet (Ezek 40:1) here describes the new Jerusalem at the beginning of the year, the 10th of the month, which especially brings to mind the 10th day of the seventh month, which in the terminology of Leviticus, is the great Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32), and in our opinion, the beginning of the civil year (cf. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschicthe Israels*, Berlin, 1899, p. 108; Eerdmans, *De groote verzoendag*, in the *Theolgische Tydschrit*, 1904, bl. 17). Kugler, *op. cit.* p. 194, maintains that this refers her to the *resh shatti*, the Babylonian New Year, celebrated from the 8th to the 11th of of Nisan, mainly on the10th.

We can at present examine the chronological difficulties of the reigns of Hezekiah and Zedekiah.

C. *Chronology of Hezekiah*. — Against the authenticity of the actual chronology of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:1-2, 9-10), we could emphasize the following considerations:

2 Chron. 23-30 deal with the first year of Hezekiah. This king wrote some letters to Ephraim and Manasseh and sent couriers throughout all Israel and Judah. According to his order they said: “People of Israel: return to Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel and he will return to you who are left, who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria (2 Chr 30:6). “If you return to Yahweh, your brothers and your children will find compassion by their captors and God will not turn his face from you, if you return to Him” (2 Chr 30:9).

From this text, we deduce that the first year of Hezekiah fell after the destruction of Samaria: his manner of speaking seems to indicate that there no longer was a king in Israel, the conquering Assyrian having taken away the mass of the people into exile, and there only remained a remnant who escaped.

Here is a second argument against the existing chronology for Hezekiah. In 701 Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem and forced Hezekiah (Ha-za-ki-a-u ja-u-da-ai) to pay him tribute. According to the Bible (2 Kgs 18:13)

[col. 1266]

this event dates to the 14th year of Hezekiah. If this is so, the first year of this king dates to the autumn of 715, several years after the fall of Samaria.[26]

M. Van Hoonacker (*Mélanges d'histoire offert à Ch. Moeller*, Vol. 1, p. 7, Louvain 1914*)* answers this argument: The origin of this chronological notice of 2 Kgs 18:13 is explained perfectly as being the result of an artificial combination of two ideas in which the report is perverted by an inversion of the texts. The narrative (2 Kgs 18:13; 18:17-19) is a composition of the prophetic type that is found in Isaiah, chapters 36-37. In the book of Kings as here in Isaiah, this narrative followed immediately by a piece of the same genre and from the same origin, where the sickness of Hezekiah is related (2 Kgs 20; Isaiah 36-39). It is noted here that at the time of his sickness, Hezekiah received from the mouth of Isaiah the promise that his life would be prolonged by 15 years (2 Kgs 20:6; Isaiah 38:5). In comparing this account with that of 2 Kgs 18:2, we see that Hezekiah at the time of his illness had come to the 14th year of his reign . . . Consequently, however the fact of the illness was perceived [? *Par voie de consequence, comme le fait de la maladie était censé*], according to the arrangement of the texts, as being produced immediately after the Assyrian invasion, it was doubtless assigned, by means of a modification provided to the text, to the 14th year [? *Celle-ci fut rapportée, sans doute, moyennant une modification apportée au texte, à la XIV^e^ année*]. In fact the account of the illness shows many pointers that oblige us to put it back chronologically before the Assyrian invasion. The author then gives three proofs of this last assertion.

Without doubt, one could respond that this inversion of texts could produce two different combinations: With the supposition that the passage 2 Kgs 18:1-2, 9-10 is authentic and that the text 2 Kgs 18:13 is not, we arrive at the conclusion of M. Van Hoonacker; but, with the contrary hypothesis, the inversion produces a totally different revision. The forger, knowing that Sennacherib's expedition took place in the 14th year of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:13) would have believed, wrongly, that the illness followed 15 years of reign (2 Kgs 20:6; Isaiah 38:5), coming after the campaign of the conquering Assyrian, at would have concluded from these considerations that the king of Judah reigned (14 + 15 =) 29 years (1 Kgs 18:2). He would have changed 17 into 29, making an error of 12 years. Since these numbers have a similar appearance in Hebrew, both in hearing and visually, it would be believed quite naturally [to be] a copyist's error.

Be that as it may, it has been established that we can explain the origin of the chronological data of 2 Kgs 18:13. We have moreover several arguments which seem to prove the authenticity of the synchronisms of 2 Kgs 18:1, 9-10, and of the real number of the years of Hezekiah. Here they are:

In the year of the death of king Ahaz, this oracle was proclaimed: "Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken; from the root of that snake will spring up a viper, its fruit will be a flying, venomous serpent . . . Wail, o gate! Howl, o city! A cloud of smoke comes from the north, and there is not a straggler in its ranks." (Isaiah 14:28-29 [,31]). Some think that the rod that smote the Philistines, and the serpent from which came the flying serpent, is Ahaz. We know that his successor fought the Philistines as far as Gaza and ravaged their territory, from the Tower of the Gardens to fortified cities (2 Kgs 18:8). M. Van Hoonacker, (*op. cit.* p. 7) maintains that it is the

[26] Coucke's problems throughout this section are resolved when we realize that Hezekiah became coregent with his father Ahaz in 735n/735t, and then Ahaz died in 716t/715n. By establishing a coregency with his son, Ahaz was following the usual practice of the kings of Judah. To not establish a coregency would show a marked lack of political wisdom.

death of Tiglath-Pileser that is referred to here. We can wonder why the death of Ahaz could be such a great subject of joy for the Philistines.

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This king, in place of having been a rod that beat them, was on the contrary someone who suffered from them (2 Chron 18:18 [*sic*; should be 28:18]). It was Tiglath-Pileser who fought them in 734, during the campaign *ana Pilishta* and probably also in 733-732, during the campaing *ana Dimashqa*. It is true that the king of Judah had appealed to the conquering Assyrian, but the Assyrian treated him with harshness and did not strengthen him (2 Chron 18:20-21 [28:20-21]). As for the flying dragon that will cause the bad future, the prophet seems to see him already in a vision: he comes from the North with a strong army: this is the king of Assyria.

We think that the rod that Isaiah is talking about is Tiglath-Pileser. The Philistines had learned that the forces of this king are broken and his end is near. They rejoice in this. Shalmaneser V succeeded Tiglath-Pileser on the 25th of Tebeth (January 726), three months after the last year of Ahaz. By this we explain why the prophet has dated the year of the death of Ahaz. If the manifestations of joy had broken out in Philistia on the occasion of the *death* of the Assyrian monarch, it would have been natural to date the prophecy in the year of the death of *Tiglath-Pileser*.

Here is a second argument: If we add the years (by accession reckoning) of the successors of Hezekiah until the last year of Zedekiah (588), we find that the first year of Manasseh began in Tishri 698, a date which is in perfect harmony with the actual number (29) of years of Hezekiah, and with the synchronism of his accession (3rd year of Hoshea) and his 6th year (capture of Samaria, 9th year of Hoshea):

Manasseh reigned	55 yrs	(2 Kgs 21:1)	698-644
Amon	" 2 yrs	(2 Kgs 21:9)	643-642
Josiah	" 31 yrs	(2 Kgs 22:1)	641-611
Jehoahaz	" 3 months	(2 Kgs 23:31)	. . . . .
A new year (610) must be computed during the vacancy on the throne that preceded or followed the reign of Jehoahaz.			610
Jehoaikim	" 11 yrs	(2 Kgs 23:36)	609-599
Jehoiachin	" 3 months	(2 Kgs 24:8)	. . . . .
Zedekiah	" 11 yrs	(2 Kgs 24:18)	598-588

If the number (29) or the years of Hezekiah are authentic, his first year is dated from Tishri of 727. As a result, his *resh sharruti* could have begun after Tishri of 728 and before Nisan of 727, during the 3rd year of Hoshea,, which finished on the first of Nisan or Thoth 727, and the capture of Samaria, January-March 721 in the ninth year of Hoshea, dates from his 6th year (t. 722-t. 721). We will recall that the test of the chronology of Hezekiah's predecessors produced the same result.

Finally, M. Van Hoonacker (*Les douze petits prophètes*, Paris, 1908, p. 340-341) has shown that the three first chapters of Micah were part of the same discourse that dates from before the fall of Samaria. The city was perhaps already under siege. However, the last words of chapter 3: "Because of you, Zion will become a plowed field, Jerusalem a pile of stones, and the mountain of the temple a timbered height!" were pronounced, according to Jeremiah 26:18, in the time of Hezekiah. Consequently, Samaria was not

destroyed before the accession of this king, as is supposed by those who reject the authenticity of the synchronisms of 2 Kgs 18:1, 9-10.[27]

Conclusion: We believe that the existing chronology of Hezekiah is authentic. We are however not willing to affirm that the contrary opinion has no possibility of being true. Here is how we can reconstruct the chronology under this hypothesis:

The forger of whom we spoke above, having put back by 12 years the accession of Hoshea (from the *resh sharruti* to the 12th year of Ahaz) increased in the same proportion the length of the reigns of Jotham and

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Pekah. The number (16) of the years of Ahaz is authentic. The beginning of the siege of the capture of Samaria will be dated from the 8th and 10th years, 7th and 9th of Hoshea. In putting back by 12 years the accession of the last king of Israel, the forger had to put back by the same number of years the dates of the siege and capture of Samaria: from the 8th and 10th years of Ahaz, to the 4th and 6th years of Hezekiah. Hezekiah then would have begun to reign after Tishri of 716, his first year dating from the autumn of 715. He would have reigned (29 – 12 =) 17 years. The synchronism, 2 Kgs 18:13, would be authentic.

Riessler (*Zur chronologie des Alten Test.*, in the *Theol. Quartalschrift*, 1923, p. 1 ff.) assumes that the fall of Samaria does not date to the year 721. This city would have been taken according to the Assyrian documents around the year 708. Likewise these documents would not say that Pekah died in 732. If this thesis is confirmed, we could not reject the coregencies of Jotham and Ahaz. On the contrary, Hezekiah would only have reigned 17 (29-12) years, and the expedition of Sennacherib would be dated to the 14th year of the king of Judah. In this case, a corrector, knowing that Sennacherib's expedition fell in the 14th year of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:13) would have believed, mistakenly, that his illness came after the campaign of the Assyrian monarch, and would have deduced from these considerations that the king of Judah reigned (14 + 15 =) 29 years. He would have changed 17 into 29, committing an error of 12 years. As a consequence, the first year of Hezekiah would be dated to the autumn of 715, and the capture of Samaria, in the 6th year of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:19) to 709. Jotham would have reigned from 736 to 720, Ahaz from 732 to 716, Hezekiah from 716 to 699, Pekah from 736 to 719, and Hoshea from 719 to 710.

D. *Chronology of Zedekiah*. — The chronology of Zedekiah presents equally difficult questions. We have seen above that Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 2nd book of Kings follow the same calendar: the dates of the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem and of the fall of the city are the proof of this. The years were by accession reckoning and began around the time of the autumnal equinox. However the 12th month of the 37th year of the captivity of Jehoiachin is dated as the *resh sharruti* of Evil-Merodach (2 Kgs 25:27), the 43rd year of Nebuchadnezzar (Nisan 562-Nisan 561). Then the 37th year of this captivity began around the autumnal equinox of 562 BC; the first year, which is also the first year

[27] This was a good point I don't recall seeing before. It is one further evidence that Hezekiah had a coregency with his father Ahaz from 729t/728n to 716t/715n. Hezekiah's reign of 29 years, as measured from the death of Ahaz, ended in 687t.

of Zedekiah, in the autumn of 598,[28] which was the 7th year of Nebuchadnezzar. The deportation of Jehoiachin and the accession of Zedekiah date to the preceding spring (2 Chron 36:10), from the first days of the 7th year of the king of Babylon (Jer 52:28).[29]

The siege of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25:1; Ezek. 24:1; Jer. 39:1) began in the 15th year of Nebuchadnezzar, on the tenth day of the 10th month of the 9th year of Zedekiah (January 589); this 9th year began around the time of the autumnal equinox, 590 BC. The city was taken on the ninth day of the 4th month of the 11th year (588t) of Zedekiah (2 Kgs 25:1-3; Jer. 39:2; 52:6-7), in the month of June 587, the 18th year (Jer. 52:29) of Nebuchadnezzar, after a siege of two and one-half years.

Except for the synchronisms of Jer. 52:28-29 (which are missing in the Greek and which correspond entirely to the data of Babylonian documents), all the other synchronisms establish the first year of Nebuchadnezzar as [the year beginning] the first of Nisan, 605 BC.

Josephus (*Contra Apionem* I)[30] quotes the words of the historian Berosus, who informs us that Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, unable to endure the hardships of war, put his son at the head of a part of his armies and sent him

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against king Necho. He explains also that his father had associated him on the throne before his death. The Jews took into account this coregency in the calculation of the years of Nebuchanezzar, but the Babylonians did not.[31] The synchronisms of Jer. 52:28-20 are the only ones which conform to the official chronology. These are the last of the book of Jeremiah. They were added when the official numbers from the annals of Nebuchadnezzar were already known.[32]

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[28] Coucke's error here is that he has 598t as the first year of Zedekiah, when he should have calculated it as his accession year, i.e. the year he came to the throne. In the following pages he calculates, correctly, that the fall of Jerusalem was in 588t, which means that the 11 years given to Zedekiah (2 Kgs. 24:18, 2 Chr. 36:11, Jer. Jer. 52:5-9) are measured by nonaccession reckoning: it was only 10 full years from 598t to 588t. All texts in 2 Kgs., 2 Chr., Jer., and Ezek. are consistent with this nonaccession reckoning for Zedekiah. Zedekiah was put on the throne at the same time as Jehoiachin became a captive, in 598t. This was the first year of Jehoiachin's captivity and also the first year of Zedekiah. There was no preceding "accession year" for either the captivity or Zedekiah's reign. See the chart in col. 1264, where Coucke improperly assigns 37 full years for the captivity, instead of 36. Coucke has Zedekiah starting to reign in Nisan of 598 BC; the correct date, as shown from the Babylonian Chronicle published in 1956, is Adar of 597.

[29] Jer. 52:28 is a count of captives taken by the Babylonians. Captives do not count; they get counted. This record therefore must have come from a Babylonian source, not a Judean source. As such it would have used Babylon's Nisan years and accession reckoning, for which Nebuchadnezzar's 7th year was (605n – 7) = 598n. In Adar of that year (16 March 597 BC), he captured Jerusalem and Jehoiachin.

[30] Coucke does not give the chapter. He seems to be referring to 1:19, which has the phrase that Nabopolassar, not being able to endure the hardships any further, put his son Nebuchadnezzar over the army and sent him against Egypt. But there is nothing in this chapter about a coregency.

[31] There is no need to consider a coregency in Jewish reckonings of his reign. The problem is resolved by realizing that Zedekiah's reign is counted by nonaccession years in 2 Kgs, 2 Chronicles, and Jeremiah. See Rodger C. Young, "When Did Jerusalem Fall?" *JETS* 47 (2004), pp. 21–38. See also my notes above about Coucke's error in his attempted demonstration that all of the last kings of Judah used accession reckoning.

[32] This is similar to what I pointed out in "When Did Jerusalem Fall?" These verses, relating the number of captives, must have come from a Babylonian original, on the principle that captives don't count, they get counted.

IV. From the Babylonian captivity until the birth of Christ (*see table on following page* [table not given in this translation]). — I. THE CHRONOLOGY OF NEHEMIAH AND EZRA. — The chronological difficulties of this period primarily come down to the solution of two problems: It is necessary to determine the relation that exists first between Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar, and second, between Nehemiah and Ezra.

A. *Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar are the same person*. — Someone has presumed that Zerubbabel arrived at Jerusalem in the reign of Darius I or II, several years after Sheshbazzar, who rebuilt the temple under the reign of Cyrus. This opinion is contrary to the text of the Bible (Ezra chs. 1-4:5).

Not only were Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar contemporary, but they were the same person.[33]

- Zerubbabel is a prince of Judah, son of Shealtiel, son of Jehoiachin, king of Judah (Ezra 3:2, 5:2, Neh. 12:1). Sheshbazzar is also a prince of Judah (Ezra 1:8).
- Zerubbabel bore the title of *pechah* (Haggai 1:1), a title that Sheshbazzar received from King Cyrus (Ezra 5:14).
- Zerubbabel is at the head of the caravan of immigrants and chief of those taken into exile (Ezra 2:1, 63 ff., 3:2 ff., 4:2 ff.). Sheshbazzar is the chief of the immigrants (Ezra 1:5 ff.).
- Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3; Zech. 4:9), as did Sheshbazzar (Ezra 5:16).

B. *The sequence Nehemiah – Ezra*. — Chapters 7-10 of Ezra, which speak of the expedition of Ezra, are placed within the canon of the Old Testament before the book of Nehemiah. Those authors who consider the arrangement to be chronological support the sequence Ezra-Nehemiah. They date the expedition of Ezra, from the seventh year (Ezra 7:1 ff.) in the reign of Artaxerxes I, that is, in the year 458 BC. Nehemiah's mission, in the 20th year of Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:1 ff.) is assigned to the reign of Artaxerxes I (to the year 445 BC)[34] or II (to the year 385 BC).

However there exists in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah more than one textual dislocation. Many arguments favor the sequence Nehemiah-Ezra, and the circumstance that Ezra Chapters 7-10 deal with the seventh year, and Nehemiah the 20th year of Artaxerxes, can be explained by a dislocation of the sacred text. Hence, a second group of authors place the expedition of Nehemiah, which took place in the 20th year of

[33] Andrew Steinmann, "A Chronological Note: The Return of the Exiles under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel (Ezra 1–2)," *JETS* 51 (2008), p. 516: "Medieval rabbis simply equated Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, claiming that these were two names for the same person, but this view has few, if any, more recent advocates." Steinmann names Judah Slotki as one such advocate in the last century. To this we should now add Coucke. Steinmann's own view, as expressed in his article, is that Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel came to Jerusalem at the same time; Sheshbazzar was the governor at first, but he was old, and his position was taken over by Zerubbabel. Sheshbazzar began the laying of the foundation of the Temple, and Zerubbabel continued this work.

[34] The years of Artaxerxes I are 465n to 424n, so his 20th year was 445n.

Artaxerxes, in the reign of Artaxerxes I (in 445) or in the reign of Artaxerxes II (in 398)[35] or III (in 352).[36]

We believe it is necessary to put Nehemiah's mission first. This is recommended by various considerations that M. Van Hoonacker reviews in the *Rev. bibliq.*, 1924, p. 44 ff.;

1. Ezra and his companions are not listed in the number of Jews repatriated before Nehemiah (Neh. 7).[37] When Nehemiah arrived and during the rebuilding of the walls, he is not seen.
2. He is present in the great assembly presided over by Nehemiah, and the occasion of the dedication of the walls organized by Nehemiah (Neh. I; 12:27 ff.). At this time he is not yet the great man, but is at the beginning of his career. He is moreover a contemporary of Jehohanan, the grandson [sic[38]] of Eliashib (Ezra 10:6), who was high priest in the time of Nehemiah. Furthermore, [col. 1270] we understand that Ezra is named after Nehemiah (Neh. 12:26).
3. In the 20th year of Artaxerxes the temple was rebuilt, but the walls of the city were still in ruins; there are few inhabitants and the houses were not yet rebuilt (Neh. 2, 7:4). This is the situation left by Zerubbabel. At the time of Ezra, the city is fortified and populated (Ezra 7-10).
4. In the 20th year of Artaxerxes, as in the time of Zerubbabel, some foreigners attempted to become involved in the public affairs. In the time of Ezra, all trace of these pretensions has disappeared (Ezra 7-10).
5. Nehemiah (10:33 ff.) had to once again institute the revenues needed for the religious service. In the time of Ezra (ch. 7), the satraps obtained the glorifying of the house of God. A commission established by Nehemiah existed when Ezra arrived (Neh. 18:10; Ezra 8:33). The Talmud affirms that Ezra stripped the Levites of the right to participate in the receipt of tithes. Under Nehemiah the rights of the Levites were again recognized, whatever other injustices there were.
6. In the 20th year of Artaxerxes, mixed marriages were tolerated: Nehemiah spoke of them in a tone that does not allow us to think that they were considered as positively forbidden (6:17-19). Later, the community promised to prohibit them in the future (10:30). After Nehemiah left the promise was broken. On his return, Nehemiah was strict with the guilty ones (13:23-29). Finally, when Ezra returned to Jerusalem, recourse was taken to the extreme remedy of expelling the foreign wives and their children (Ezra chs. 9, 10). The gradualness by which these phases of the struggle were observed determines their order of succession.
7. The situation of the empire, in the 20th year of Artaxerxes I, and in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II, which were years of peace, were favorable to the mission of Nehemiah and to the return of Ezra. On the contrary, in the seventh year of his

[35] Artaxerxes II: 405n to 359n (P&D, p. 19). Here Coucke is reckoning Nehemiah's coming as occurring in the 7th year, rather than the 20th year. Is this just an oversight? He used 20th year for Artaxerxes I.
[36] Artaxerxes III: 359n to 338n (21 years, Parker and Dubberstein, p.19). Nehemiah could not have come to Jerusalem in his reign, because Neh. 13:6 refers to the 32nd year of Artaxerxes.
[37] But the census in Neh. 7 is of those who returned with Zerubbabel in 533 BC, which was long before the time of Ezra.
[38] Jehohanan was the son, not grandson, of Eliashib. Coucke may be confusing Jehohanan with Jonathan, the grandson of Eliashib as listed in Neh. 12:10,11.

reign Artaxerxes I needed all his money in order to repair the disasters of the war.[39]

Kugler, *op. cit.*, p. 215 ff., provides some new arguments in favor of the sequence Ezra-Nehemiah. He desires to prove that the year 458 BC, the 7th year of Artaxerxes I, is the only one that fits in with the dates of different events. Van Hoonacker (*Rev. bibliq.*, 1923-1924) has shown the weakness of these arguments. Moreover, is it not well established that Ezra and Nehemiah observed the Babylonian calendar? If any doubt remains on this subject, what are the arguments brought forth by Kugler worth?

We notice that the mission of Nehemiah dates to 445 BC, the 20th year of Artaxerxes I. We have said that Eliashib was high priest in the time of Nehemiah. However Jehohanan, the grandson [sic[40]] of Eliashib, was already installed as the high priest in 410 BC, before the accession of Artaxerxes II. This fact is established by the Elephantine papyri, discovered by Rubensohn and published by Sachau in 1907.

It follows from these same documents the return of Ezra, in the time of Jehohanan, cannot be assigned to the reign of Artaxerxes III. Ezra returned in 398, the seventh year of Artaxerxes II.[41] See in the *Supplément* under the words ÉLÉPHANTINE and NÉHÉMIE.

C. *The date of the new year*. — The foundation of the temple was laid in the 24th of the sixth month of the second year of Darius (Haggai 1:15). In the 24th of the ninth month of the same year, Haggai (2:10) delivered a discourse: "Now give careful thought to this from this day on, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month when the foundation of the Temple of the Lord was laid!" It follows from these words that the sixth month of the second year of Darius preceded the ninth month of the same year. This is proof that the prophecies of Haggai

[cols. 1271 and 1272 have a table that is not reproduced in this translation. It shows Nehemiah coming to Jerusalem in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, 445 BC, and then the first appearance (*débuts*) of Ezra being at that time, so that he was there at the dedication of the wall. Then "Nehemiah returns to Susa. Ezra accompanies him, perhaps. Toward the end of the reign of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem." Coucke then says that in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II (reigned 405n to 359n), Ezra comes to Jerusalem. Most commentators put this in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I. The text resumes in col. 1273]

are dated in keeping with the Babylonian year, which began in the spring.

Nehemiah knew that the year began in the autumn: the ninth month of the 20th year of Artaxerxes (Neh 1:1) preceded the first month of the same year (Neh 2:1). Nehemiah followed the calendar that was in effect before the Exile.

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[39] Which war? I think Coucke here confuses Artaxerxes with Xerxes, who was defeated at the Battle of Salamis in 480 BC, in his sixth year of reign.

[40] He was the son of Eliashib, not grandson, as noted in a previous footnote. There is no difficulty with Eliashib being high priest in 445 BC, the time of Nehemiah's coming to Jerusalem, and his son being high priest 35 years later in 410 BC.

[41] This is contradicted by Ezra's presence with Nehemiah at the dedication of the wall (Neh. 8:2,9). Andrew Steinmann, *Ezra-Nehemiah* in the Concordia commentary series (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, forthcoming in 2010) says that this idea of van Hoonacher that Ezra came to Jerusalem in the reign of Artaxerxes II has been largely abandoned since the 1960s.

The texts are however too few to allow determining with certainty the calendar followed.

D. *Manner of computing the years*. — There is no doubt that the community of the Exile used accession reckoning. This was the usage in effect before the captivity in Judah and during the captivity in Babylon. The Persians used accession reckoning. We have in addition a calculation of Nehemiah (5:14) based on the principles of this usage: the governor said that he spent 12 years in Jerusalem, from the 20th to the 23rd year of Artaxerxes. If this had been by nonaccession reckoning, he would have said that he was there 13 years.

E. *Date of the completion of the Temple*. — According to the existing text (Ezra 6:15), the Temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar in the sixth year of Darius. III Esdras 7:5 and Josephus (*Ant*. XI.4.7) read "23rd Adar." Moreover, in Jerusalem as in Babylon, the third of Adar in the sixth year of Darius was a Saturday,[42] and the 23rd was a Friday. But work was not to be done on the Sabbath day (Kugler, *op. cit.*, p. 215).

II. THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE MACCABEES. — (*See tables on following pages.* – [Tables are not given in this translation.]) — The two books of the Maccabees date events in terms of the Seleucid era. This era did not begin at the same time in every country. The Syrians had it begin on the first of Tishri, 312 BC, and the Babylonians on the first of Nisan, 311 BC (Kugler, *op. cit.* p. 303). We therefore need to examine which date it is

[42] I checked this statement, and it seems to be correct. Here is how I calculated it. I used http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/JulianDate.html to calculate the Julian date number of October 4, AD 1582. This is the day before the Gregorian calendar adjustment. The result was Julian date number as 2299159. I then used Parker and Dubberstein to get the Julian date of Adar 3 in the sixth year of Darius. I assumed Nisan years and accession reckoning, so that Darius's 6th year was 522n – 6 = 516n, and 3 Adar, according to P & D, was then March 12, 515 BC. The Navy Web site gave the Julian date number for this as 1533389. The difference (2,299,159 – 1,533,389) is 765,770 days (note: I also checked this arithmetic by putting it through a worksheet that I had devised for calculating the elapsed days between two Julian dates). This number, MOD 7, is 5—i.e. it has 5 more days than an integral multiple of 7. Since October 4, AD 1582 was a Thursday, this implies that March 12, 515 BC was a Saturday, five days earlier than the Thursday that would be an integral multiple of seven days before Oct. 4, AD 1582.

The implication that the work of construction was completed on a Sabbath, however, is not necessary. The grammatical construction of the sentence seems to allow a different interpretation. For the first consideration, the verb used here, *yatsa*, is found only in this one instance in the Aramaic portions of the OT, although it's Hebrew cognate is quite common. It is in the *Shaphel* form, which Andrew Steinmann (personal communication) says is often used instead of the normal *Haphel* as the equivalent of the Hebrew *Hiphil* when the verb is derived from Akkadian. Gesenius and Keil and Delitzsch disagree on whether it is passive or active, but the general sense seems to be "was finished." The main issue though, in my estimation, is the preposition used: the construction was finished "*ad* the third day of the month Adar." Most translations give "*on* the third day of the month Adar," which represents a translation of *ad* that is inconsistent with the meaning of this preposition. Assuming that the preposition has the same basic meaning in Aramaic as it does in Hebrew, the meaning of *ad* is "up to," "until," "unto," etc. The meaning therefore would be that construction continued up to the third of Adar of the sixth year of Darius. Lange's commentary, *loc. cit.*: "By the third day of the month Adar, that is the last month of the year, was the temple finished." If that day really was a Sabbath, then presumably a dedication could have been performed on the Sabbath day to mark completion of the work.

It is also possible that the Babylonian and Judean month reckonings were off by a day at this time, so that the third of Adar in the Judean calendar was a day earlier or later than the third of Adar in the Babylonian calendar—the calendar from which Julian date conversions are made by Parker and Dubberstein. If this were the case, then the third of Adar in Judea would be either a Friday or a Sunday.

that serves as the point of departure for the era employed by the two authors of the books of Maccabees.

A. *Determination of the Seleucid ear in the First and Second Books of the Maccabees.* — I. In the first book of Maccabees, this era begins on the first of Nisan, 312 BC.[43]

The Babylonians allowed their country to come under the domination of Arsace, king of the Persians and Medes, at the beginning of July in the 171st year of the Seleucids (141 BC).[44] However, 1 Macc. 14:1 dates this event to the year 172.

The era of this book is therefore one year or one and one-half years ahead of the era adopted in Babylonia. In the first case, the year 172 of the First Book of Maccabees began on the first of Nisan, 141 BC, the year 151 the first of Nisan 162 BC; in the other case, the year 172 began on the first of Tishri 142 BC, and the year 151, the first of Tishri 163 BC.

However, the year 151 of the Seleucid era (1 Macc. 7:1 ff.) began the first of Nisan, 162 BC.[45]

Here are the proofs: according to the Babylonian documents (Kugler, *op. cit*., p. 330), the accession of Demetrius 1 fell in the year 150 of the Seleucids, *after the month of September 162 BC*. According to 1 Macc. 7:1 ff., this act dates to the year 151. However, on the 13th of Adar (February-March) of this year, Nicanor, a general of Demetrius, was defeated at Bethhoron (1 Macc. 7:39, 50). This battle was fought after the accession of Demetrius. Therefore the year 151 did not began on the first of Tishri of 163 BC, but six months later, on the first of Nisan, 162 BC.

II. The era of the Second Book begins in the month of Tishri, 312 BC.

The military operations for which Judea was the theatre from the first of Nisan to the first of Tishri of the year 163 BC, are dated in the first book from the 150th, and in the second book from the 149th year of the Seleucids. This proves that the era followed in the First Book begins, according to months, six months before the era of the Second Book.

On the other hand, the events that transpire from the month of Tishri, 162 BC, to the First of Nisan

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[43] This is ambiguous. Is the year that begins on Nisan 1 of 312 BC to be considered as year 0 (accession counting) or year 1 (nonaccession counting) of the Seleucid era? In what follows, Coucke's arithmetic seems to usually follow the former option, which is incorrect. Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (rev. ed., 1998), pp. 103-149, says that year one of the Seleucid era was, in the Macedonian system, the year that begin on Tishri 1 of 312 BC (312t), or, in the Babylonian system, the year that began on Nisan 1 of 311 BC (311n). Calculation of dates in the Seleucid era should therefore use these dates as the starting place, and subtract one year from the stated year of the Seleucid era in order to get the year of the event. In my "When Did Jerusalem Fall?" paper, I introduced the convention that, when doing nonaccession calculations like this, one year should be subtracted from the years being subtracted and then "(acc)" should be put after this to show that the one-year reduction in the subtrahend is because the elapsed time given is by nonaccession counting. When determining the 150th year of the Seleucid era, then, this could either be 312t – 149 (acc) = 163t in the Macedonian system or 311n – 149 (acc) = 162n in the Babylonian system. This kind of notation will avoid the frequent confusion found in chronological discussions regarding whether the years being reckoned are by nonaccession or accession counting.

[44] The correct year is either 312t – 170 (acc) = 140t or 311n – 170 (acc) = 139n.

[45] The correct year is either 312t – 150 (acc) = 162t or 311n – 150 (acc) = 161n. Getting this right is important in the discussion of Sabbatical years that follows.

[col. 1274]

following are reported by the two authors in the same 151st year of the Seleucids. This proves that the two different eras differ *only* by six months. Here are the facts:

a. According to 1 Macc. 6:18, in year 150 of the Seleucids, Judas Maccabee placed a siege before the citadel of Jerusalem. On hearing of this, Antiochus Eupator mustered an army and came to besiege Bethsur, and defeated Judah at Beth-Zacharia. The Syrians showed some of their elephants some grape juice and mulberry juice in order to excite them to combat. This circumstance allows us to date the battle in the summer, probably in the month of July, 150. However, according to 2 Macc. 13:1 ff., it was in the year 149 that Judas and his companions learned that Antiochus was marching against Judea. We therefore maintain also that the era followed in the first book begins, *by monthly reckoning*, six months before the era of the second book.

b. In the year 151 of the Seleucids (the Vulgate gives the year 150, which is a copyist's mistake), three years (149-151) having elapsed from the events related in 2 Macc. 13:1 ff., Judas learned that Demetrius, the son of Seleucus IV, had escaped from his captivity and was restored on the throne, after having put to death Antiochus and his guardian Lysias (2 Macc. 14:4 ff.). The same facts are related in the first book and reported for the same year 151 (1 Macc. 7:1-4). However, the 18th of Tishri, 150[46] of the Seleucid era (Babylonian era: 17 October, 162 BC[47]) is also dated in terms of the reign of Antiochus. Kugler (*op. cit.*, p. 330) shows that this king was put to death during this month. It follows from this that the era followed in the first book coincides with the era of the second book, for the part of the year that goes from the month of Tishri to the following first of Nisan. The era of the second book is delayed therefore six months over the era of the first book.

The cycle of Sabbatical years confirms our conclusions. According to Josephus (*Ant.* XIV.16.2; XV.1.2), the year 38 (38t: Tishri 38 to Tishri 37) was a Sabbatical year for the land.[48] Therefore the year 164 (164t) was also a Sabbatical year.[49] As a result, since the era of the first book of Maccabees begins on the first of Nisan, 312 BC, and precedes by six months the era of the second book, the following identity holds: the summer of the year 150 of 1 Maccabees = the summer of the year 149 of 2 Maccabees =

[46] I'm puzzled by this. Since both 1 and 2 Maccabees relate this event to the 151st Seleucid year, why does Coucke use 150 here?

[47] Consistent with what is said in the preceding footnotes, Parker and Dubberstein (p. 41) start year 151 of the Seleucid era on Nisan 1 (March 25) of 161 BC, and the 18th of Tishri in that year was November 3, 161 BC.

[48] The two passages cited in Josephus seem to be contradictory. The first definitely says that the siege was in a Sabbatical year, but the second passage seems to put it in the following year. Coucke's identification of 38t as a Sabbatical year is consistent with the chronology of Zuckermann, but Wacholder's calendar of Sabbatical cycles puts the Sabbatical year as 37t. For recent studies that favor Wacholder's calendar, see R. C. Young, "Seder Olam and the Sabbaticals Associated with the Two Destructions of Jerusalem, Part I" *JBQ* 34:3 (2006), pp. 173-179, and Andrew E. Steinmann, "When Did Herod the Great Reign?" *NovT* 50 (2009), pp. 1-29, with citations given there. The Sabbatical year of the siege of Bethsur was 163t.

[49] According to 1 Macc. 6:20, Judas Maccabee besieged the tower of Bethsur in the 150th Seleucid year, 312t – 149 (acc) = 163t or 311n – 149 (acc) = 162n (Finegan, top of p. 104, thinks the 150 is a mistake, but that is because he accepts Zuckermann's calendar of post-exilic Sabbatical years rather than Wacholder's). The besieged there, and later in Jerusalem, were in distress because it was a Sabbatical year (1 Macc. 6:49, 53). This shows that 163t, not Coucke's 164t, was a Sabbatical year.

the end of the Sabbatical year 164t.[50] Therefore these three points are verified: the siege of Bethsur (summer of 163 BC)[51] fell at the end of a Sabbatical year and is date, as we have seen, to the year 150 in the first book of Maccabees and the year 149 in the second (1 Macc. 6:18 ff.; 2 Macc. 13:1 ff.).

B. *Method of computing the years*. — We have seen that the author of 2 Maccabees (14:1 ff.; cf. 13:1 ff.) reckons three years from the 149th to the 151st year of the Seleucids. A change therefore happened in the manner of computing after the time of Nehemiah, who still reckoned as did the Jews in the time of the Judean kings.

C. *Chronological difficulties*. — 1. *The reign of Ptolemy Philometor, king of Egypt (181-146).* — Ptolemy Philometor reigned 36 years. His last year began on the 29th of September 146 BC. However, according to 2 Macc. 4:7-22, the enthronement of this king had not taken place until after the death of Seleucus IV Philopater, who died in the first months of the year 175.

This fact is explained because the mother of Ptolemy was regent until 175.

Another difficulty has to do with the date of Ptolemy's death. A papyrus is dated from the 18th of Pharmuti of the 36th year (14 May 145 BC). However, according to 1 Macc. 11:1-19, Ptolemy died in the year 167 of the Seleucids, that is, *after* the ninth of March, (1 Nisan) of 146 BC, and *before* the 27th of March (1 Nisan) of 145 BC.

The historical circumstances explain this difficulty.

[cols. 1275-1278 (two pages) have the tables showing the chronology of the time of the Maccabees. These tables are not presented in this translation. The text resumes in col. 1279.]

Ptolemy Eupator should have succeeded Philometor. Eurgetus, the uncle of Eupator, contested the throne with him and succeeded after some difficulties in seizing power. Ptolemy Philometor probably died in the month of March, with the 14th of May falling during the vacancy of the throne, a vacancy prolonged by the difficulties created related to the succession. Meanwhile the dating continued from the last year of Philometor, a year which otherwise did not finish until the 27th of September, 145 BC.

2. *Desecration and purification of the temple*. — 1 Macc. 2:1 ff., 4:37 ff. relate that the temple was desecrated on the 15th of Kislev in the year 145 of the Seleucids (168 BC) and that it was purified on the 25th of Kislev of the year 148 (24 December 165 BC).

The 15th of Kislev is a copyist's error. Second Maccabees says expressly that the temple was profaned on the 25th of Kislev and that it was later purified on the same day (2 Macc. 10:5).

The temple was purified four years (according to the manner of reckoning of the Jews of this time) after its defilement; 2 Macc. 10:3 reckons an interval of only two years. This is a copyist's error.

3. A simple reconciliation, established between 2 Macc. 8:30-32 and 10:24-38 on the one hand, and 2 Macc. 12:10-31 on the other hand, shows that there were two generals named

[50] Corrected: 163t.
[51] Summer of 162 BC.

Timothy. Both of them fought against Judas during the year 148 (from Tishri 165 to Nisan 164 BC), the one in Judea — he died at Gazara — the other in the country of the Ammonites, where he was defeated by Judas, who captured the town of Gazara.

[There follows a small table showing dates in the Hasmonean period, followed by the Roman period. Rulers given are Simon, 143-136 BC, Hyrcanus I, 136-105, Aristobulus I, 105, Alexander Janneus, 104-77, Alexandra 77-68, Aristobulus II, 68-64. Taking of the Temple mount by Pompey, 10 Tishri = 24 September 63 BC. Then, under Roman dominion, Hyrcanus II, 64-40 BC. Antigonus, 40-37, Herod the Great, 40 to 5 or 4 BC. Archaelaus, 4 BC to AD 6. Capture of Jerusalem by Herod and Sosius, 10 Tishri = 6 October, 37 BC.]

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V. Coucke [end of article]