

REGNAL YEAR RECKONING IN THE LAST YEARS OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

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A long debated question in studies of the Israelite calendar and of pre-exilic chronology is: was the calendar year in Israel and Judah reckoned from the spring or the autumn? The majority verdict has come to be that throughout most of the monarchical period an autumnal calendar was employed for civil, religious, and royal purposes. Several variations on this view have been advanced. Some have thought that the spring reckoning which we find attested in the post-exilic period came into operation only during the exile,¹ but many have maintained that the usual autumnal calendar gave way in pre-exilic Judah to a spring calendar as used by Assyrians and Babylonians.² Some have

1. So e.g. J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (ET, Edinburgh, 1885, r.p. Cleveland, 1957), 108f.; K. Marti, 'Year', *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, iv (London, 1907), col. 5365; S. Mowinckel, 'Die Chronologie der israelitischen und jüdischen Könige', *Acta Orientalia* 10 (1932), 161-277 174ff.
2. (i) In the 8th century according to E. Kutsch, *Das Herbstfest in Israel* (Diss. Mainz, 1955), 68; *id.*, *RGG*,³ i (1957), col. 1812; followed by H.-J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel* (ET, Richmond, Va., 1966), 45; similarly W. F. Albright, *Bib* 37 (1956), 489; A. Jepsen, *Zur Chronologie der Könige von Israel und Juda*, in A. Jepsen and R. Hanhart, *Untersuchungen zur israelitisch-jüdischen Chronologie* (BZAW, 88) (Berlin, 1964), 28, 37.
 - (ii) In the reign of Manasseh: K. T. Andersen, 'Die Chronologie der Könige von Israel und Juda', *Studia Theologica* 23 (1969), 69-114 (108f.); and V. Pavlovsky and E. Vogt, 'Die Jahre der Könige von Juda und Israel', *Bib* 45 (1964), 321-47 (346), who believe that spring reckoning was also used in Judah in the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah (848-835 B.C.) (p. 327), and was again introduced in 604 B.C. (see (vi) below).
 - (iii) In the reign of Josiah: M. Vogelstein, *Biblical Chronology. I. The Chronology of Hezekiah and His Successors* (Cincinnati, 1944), 7, who believed that Hezekiah also had introduced a spring calendar, for which Manasseh substituted an autumn calendar.
 - (iv) Before 620 B.C.: J. Begrich, *Die Chronologie der Könige von Israel und Juda* (Tübingen, 1929), 69-90.
 - (v) In the reign of Jehoiakim: R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (ET, London, 21965), 192.
 - (vi) In 604 B.C.: E. Auerbach, 'Die babylonische Datierung im Pentateuch und das Alter des Priester Kodex', *VT* 2 (1952), 334-42 (336); 'Der Wechsel des Jahres-Anfangs in Juda im Lichte der neuge-

believed that even when a spring calendar was adopted in Judah for civil purposes, regnal years continued to be reckoned from the autumn.³ Several scholars have claimed that in any case it was only in Judah that the autumnal reckoning was employed, northern Israel having adopted a spring new year at the time of the division of the Solomonic kingdom.⁴ The minority view on the whole question has been that calendar and regnal years in both Israel and Judah were reckoned from the spring throughout the monarchy.⁵ In a paper to be published elsewhere⁶ I have examined the Biblical data usually advanced in favour of an autumnal new year, and have concluded that positive direct evidence for such a calendaric system in pre-exilic Israel and Judah is entirely lacking.

The purpose of the present article is to approach the problem rather more indirectly by subjecting to examination, not some isolated Biblical passages which have been thought to be relevant to the question, but a set of chronological data, both Biblical and extra-Biblical, relating to a comparatively brief span of pre-exilic history, in the hope that either the spring or the autumn reckoning may prove to satisfy the exigencies of the data. For this purpose the closing decades of the kingdom of Judah are among the most promising for investigation, since we

fundenen babylonischen Chronik', *VT* 9 (1959, 113-21; 'Die Umschaltung vom jüdischen auf den babylonischen Kalender', *VT* 10 (1960), 69f.; 'Wan eroberte Nebukadnezar Jerusalem?', *VT* 11 (1961), 128-36; followed by S. J. De Vries, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, i (Nashville, 1962), 584f.; J. Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Princeton, 1964), 202f. So also Pavlovsky and Yogt, *Bib* 45 (1964), 321-47 (346) (cf. (ii) above).
(vii) About 600 B.C.: E. König, 'Kalenderfragen in althebräischen Schrifttum', *ZDMG* 60 (1906), 605-44 (636).

3. E. g. A. Malamat, *IEJ* 6 (1956), 252 n. 19.

4. So principally E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings. A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah* (Chicago, 1951; ²Grand Rapids, 1965); largely followed by S. J. De Vries, 'Chronology of the O.T.', *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, i, 580-99; K. A. Kitchen, 'Chronology of the Old Testament', *New Bible Dictionary* (London, 1962), 212-23; S. H. Horn, *Andrews University Seminary Studies* (hereafter *AUSS* 5 1967), 16; R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London, 1970), 181-92. Some others, who postulate the adoption of a spring calendar in Judah late in the monarchy, hold with Thiele that Israel followed a spring calendar; so Pavlovsky and Vogt, and Vogelstein (see n. 2 above).

5. G. Schiaparelli, *Astronomy in the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1905), 115f.; F. A. Herzog, *Die Chronologie der beiden Königsbücher* (Münster i.W., 1909), 29-33; E. Mahler, *Handbuch der jüdischen Chronologie* (Frankfurt a.M., 1916; r.p. Hildesheim, 1967), 210-20; F. X. Kugler, *Von Moses bis Paulus* (Münster, 1922), 134-50; L. I. Pap, *Das israelitische Neujahrsfest* (Kampen, 1933), 18-23.

have for the period 609-587/6 B.C. not only several precise Biblical year and month dates, but also, for the greater part of that period, the neo-Babylonian chronicle texts⁷ containing many exact datings. The present study is thus a fragmentary contribution to exploring the relationship between archaeological discovery and the Biblical texts, and as such is presented to the recipient of this volume with the respect and appreciation of the author.

I

The arguments that may be advanced in favour of an *autumn* (i.e. *Tishri*)⁸ new year reckoning⁹ are these:

1. The dates given in 2 Kings 25:8 and Jer. 52:12 for the fall of Jerusalem may be synchronised, it is said, only if Judean regnal years are reckoned from Tishri 1.¹⁰ These passages date the destruction of the temple, the breaching of the walls, and the captivity to 7/10.V.11¹¹ of Zedekiah, which is also said to be the 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar. The 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar began in Nisan, 586, when Zedekiah's 11th year, reckoned from

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6. 'The Evidence for an Autumnal New Year in Pre-exilic Israel, *JBL*, Reconsidered' (Forthcoming).
 7. D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings* (626-556 B.C.) in the *British Museum* (London, 1956).
 8. It makes no difference to the argument if one believes with E. Auerbach (see n. 2 above) that the autumn new year began on Marḥešwan 1 rather than Tishri 1.
 9. שׁ E. R. Thiele, 'New Evidence on the Chronology of the Last Years of Judah', *BASOR* 143 (1956), 22-7; E. Vogt, 'Nova chronica babilonica de pugna apud Karkemiš et expugnatione Ierusalem', *Bib* 37 (1956), 389-97; A. Malamat, 'A New Record of Nebuchadrezzar's Palestinian Campaigns', *IEJ* 6 (1956), 246-56; *id.*, 'The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem. An Historical-Chronological Study', *IEJ* 18 (1968), 137-56; S. H. Horn, 'The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah', *AUSS* 5 (1967), 12-27; K. S. Freedman and D. B. Redford, 'The Dates in Ezekiel in Relation to Biblical, Babylonian and Egyptian Sources', *JAOS* 90 (1970), 462-85 (465).
 10. So Thiele, *BASOR* 143 (1956), 26. Thiele's total explanation of the discrepant synchronisms is rightly rejected by Malamat, *IEJ* 18 (1968), 146 n. 20 as unnecessarily complex: viz. that in Kings Nebuchadrezzar's years are reckoned from Tishri, and in Jeremiah Judean regnal years are reckoned from Nisan except in parallels with Kings. Horn's view (*AUSS* 5 (1967), 24ff.) that Nebuchadrezzar's years are always reckoned from his first Tishri (except in Jer. 52:28-30) is not open to the same objection, but it fails to explain Jer. 46:2 (see II. 1 below) and it offers no more solutions of the synchronisms than do the systems examined here.
 11. The day is 7th in 2 Kings 25:8, 10th in Jer. 52:12. For the year, see 2 Kings 25:2; Jer. 52:5.

Tishri, was still in progress, but when his 11th year if reckoned from Nisan was over (according to the most usual chronologies; see table, columns II and VIII).

There are, however, three possible methods of avoiding this inference short of supposing that 'nineteenth' in the parallel passages in 2 Kings 25 and Jer. 52 is a transmissional or computational error.

(a) Firstly, it is possible that while standard Babylonian reckoning of Nebuchadrezzar's regnal years began his year 1 with Nisan 604 B.C. (the 7 months from his accession on Elul 1 to Nisan 1 being reckoned, according to the normal practice, as his accession year), in the west Nebuchadrezzar's reign was reckoned as beginning with Nisan 605¹² since he had by that time already taken his father Nabopolassar's place as commander of the armed forces.¹³

According to this view, this was the system that was normally followed in the references to Nebuchadrezzar's regnal years in 2 Kings and Jeremiah; only in Jer. 52:28-30 was the standard Babylonian reckoning employed.¹⁴ Thus the 8th year of Nebuchadrezzar in 2 Kings 24:12 is the same as the 7th year in Jer. 52:28,

12. So Albright, *BASOR* 143 (1956), 32; followed by Thiele, *ibid.*, 24; Freedman, *BA* 19 (1956), 57; Noth, *ZDPV* 74 (1958), 155. Albright compares a similar 'difference of a year in two methods of reckoning the reign of Sennacherib' (see J. Lewy, 'The Chronology of Sennacherib's Accession', *Analecta Orientalia* 12 (1935), 225-31 (228f.)) Malamat, *IEJ* 18 (1968), 148 does not appear to represent Albright's view correctly when he describes it as 'a sort of antedating, non-accession-year method' (similarly Horn, *AUSS* (1967), 23). Albright's view seems rather to be that in the West Nebuchadrezzar was regarded as having assumed the kingship before Nisan 605, and that the year beginning in that month was regarded as Nebuchadrezzar's 1st on the regular Babylonian accession-year system. See further for this interpretation of Albright's view, Freedman, *BA* 19 (1956), 57, who also remarks that the reference in Jer. 46:2 to Nebuchadrezzar as 'king of Babylon' at the time of the battle of Carchemish may not be a minor anachronism but a reflection of a Western reckoning of Nebuchadrezzar's reign. Albright is followed by J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia, 1959), 305 n. 48.
13. 'In the twenty-first [sc. of Nabopolassar, beginning Nisan 605] the king of Akkad stayed in his own land. Nebuchadrezzar his eldest son, the crown prince, mustered (the Babylonian army) and . . . marched to Carchemish' (BM 21946, Obv. 1, 2; Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 66f.).
14. Jer. 52:28-30 is obviously derived from another source from the rest of Jer. 52 (cf. e.g. Thiele, *BASOR* 143 (1956), 25; Albright, *ibid.*, 32): it is missing in the Septuagint, it may have been added in Babylonia, and the precision of its figures (contrast the round numbers of 2 Kings 24:14ff.) perhaps point to a derivation from a Babylonian source (cf. Freedman, *BA* 19 (1956), 57 n. 29).

and the 19th year in 2 Kings 25:8 and Jer. 52:12 is the same as the 18th year in 52:29.¹⁵

(b) Secondly, it can be claimed that the captivity in the 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar is not identical with the captivity said elsewhere to have occurred in the 18th year of Nebuchadrezzar (Jer. 52:29),¹⁶ and that therefore the date of the burning of Jerusalem and the captivity by Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, 7/10.V.19 of Nebuchadrezzar (2 Kings 25:8 // Jer. 52:12), need not be synchronised with the 11th year of Zedekiah. On this view the destruction of the city by Nebuzaradan occurred 13 months later than the taking of the city on 9.IV.11 of Zedekiah, i.e. in the 18th year of Zedekiah.¹⁷

The difficulty with this view is that it conflicts with the natural sequence of events in Jer. 52: the walls are breached on 9.IV.11 of Zedekiah (vv.6f), and on 10.V, presumably of the same year, Nebuzaradan burned the city and took away captives (vv.12-15).

(c) Thirdly, the 11th year of Zedekiah (reckoned from Nisan) and the 19th of Nebuchadrezzar may be synchronised by postulating that Zedekiah acceded to the throne some time *after* Nisan 1, 597 B.C.¹⁸ In that case, his first regnal year would have begun in Nisan 596, and his 11th in Nisan 586, the beginning of Nebuchadrezzar's 19th year.

The more common view is that within days of the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians on Adar 2 (March 16), 597,

15. Other synchronisms with Nebuchadrezzar's reign also fit this pattern: 10th of Zedekiah = 18th of Nebuchadrezzar (Jer. 32:1), but 19th on Babylonian reckoning; 4th of Jehoiakim = 1st of Nebuchadrezzar (Jer. 25:1), but accession year on Babylonian reckoning (*haššānā hāri'sōnūt* need not mean 'accession year', as is commonly thought, but 'first regnal year'); Jehoiachin's captivity in Nebuchadrezzar's 8th year (2 Kings 24:12) = 7th year in Babylonian Chronicle (BM 21946, Rev. 11-12; Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 72f.).
16. Thiele, *BASOR* 143 (1956), 25, noting the discrepancy between the mere 832 said to have been taken captive in Nebuchadrezzar's 18th year (Jer. 52:29) and the 'rest of the people left in the city, fugitives, and the first of the multitude' said to have been taken captive in Nebuchadrezzar's 19th year (2 Kings 25:11). Similarly Horn, *AUSS* 5 (1967), 26f. A double deportation in 597, in Nebuchadrezzar's 7th and 8th years, also seems likely according to Malamet (*IEJ* 6 (1956), 253f.).
17. Malmat also posits captivities in both the 18th and 19th years of Nebuchadrezzar (*IEJ* 18 (1968), 154), but he does not adopt this dating of the destruction by Nebuzaradan since he adopts a Tishri reckoning, which fixes 9.IV.11 of Zedekiah in the 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar.
18. So Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 168; Tadmor, *JNES* 15 (1956), 230; Vogt, *VTS* 4 (1956); 95f.; Auerbach, *VT* 10 (1960), 69f.; 11 (1961), 129-33 (with many arguments of varying weight, other than those presented here); Schedl, *ZAW* 74 (1962), 210f.

Nebuchadrezzar personally installed Zedekiah as his own appointee, and that Zedekiah's first regnal year therefore begin in a few weeks' time, on Nisan 1, 597. This more usual view has rested on two supports: (i) that 2 Chron. 36:10, 'Nebuchadrezzar sent and brought Jehoiachin to Babylon', shows that Nebuchadrezzar was no longer in Judah at the time of Jehoiachin's deportation on Nisan 10,¹⁹ and that he must therefore have installed Zedekiah as king before the beginning of Nisan; (ii) that the appointment of Zedekiah is assigned to the 7th year of Nebuchadrezzar in the Babylonian Chronicle,²⁰ and thus occurred before Nisan 1, 597. These arguments are not strong. Against (i) it may be remarked that if inferences may be drawn from 2 Chron. 36:10, it may also be significant that the appointment of Zedekiah is mentioned *after* the exile of Jehoiachin to Babylon; and against (ii) it may be observed that if Zedekiah were actually appointed shortly after the beginning of Nebuchadrezzar's 8th year we might still expect the event to be recorded in the context of the king's dealings with Judah in his 7th year, since the appointment of Zedekiah was simply the last event of a series.²¹ Accordingly, the way is open for a reconsideration of the possibility that Zedekiah acceded after Nisan 1, 597 B.C.²²

In favour of dating the accession of Zedekiah after Nisan 1, 597 B.C. there are two points: (i) The synchronisms of Ezek. 40:1 are satisfied. Here the fall of Jerusalem, which we know occurred on 9.IV.11 of Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:2f.; Jer. 39:2; 52:5ff.) is apparently fixed in 586 B.C.; and 586 is Zedekiah's 11th Nisan year only if his first regnal year began in Nisan 596, i.e. if he acceded to the throne after Nisan 1, 597. (ii) Jeremiah's

19. So Malmat, *IEJ* 18 (1968), 145. Cf. Noth, *ZDPV* 74 (1958), 152, following Vogt, *VTS* 4 (1956), 94 in supposing that Nebuchadrezzar left Judah in time to celebrate the new year festival in Babylon in Nisan.

20. BM 21946, Rev. 12-13; Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 72f.

21. This argument is somewhat undermined by the suggestion of A. R. Millard, 'Another Babylonian Chronicle Text', *Iraq* 26 (1964), 14-35 (34), that in Assyria the chronicle for the past year was written up on Nisan 7 each year, a day of reckoning immediately before the festival of Nabu during which the fates for the coming year were decreed. If this were the case also in Babylonia, which is by no means clear, events later than Nisan 7 could hardly appear in the chronicle for the previous year.

22. Noth's argument (*ZDPV* 74 (1958), 152f.) is doubtless correct that the purpose of Nebuchadrezzar's expedition against Jerusalem was precisely to replace the pro-Egyptian Jehoiachim, and that consequently Jehoiachim's reign cannot have extended beyond the turn of the year (as e.g. Vogt, *VTS* 4 (1957), 94 thought). But Noth does not take sufficiently seriously the possibility that Nebuchadrezzar was not able to replace Jehoiachim immediately, i.e., that there was an interregnum.

oracle concerning Elam (49:34-9), dated 'in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah' (*b'ērē'šūt malkūt sidqiyā*), finds a more appropriate setting on this supposition. The Babylonian Chronicle for Nebuchadrezzar's 9th year (beginning in Nisan, 596) records a confrontation between Nebuchadrezzar and the king of Elam in that year, the king of Elam retreating in panic before Nebuchadrezzar had come within a day's march of him.²³ On the usual reckoning of Zedekiah's years, Nebuchadrezzar's 9th year paralleled Zedekiah's 2nd (reckoned from Nisan), so the prophecy may be presumed to have been uttered in Zedekiah's 1st year, or even early in his 2nd, which the phrase *b'ērē'šūt malkūt* can refer to only in a very general sense. But if Zedekiah's first regnal year did not begin until Nisan 596, then the prophecy against Elam could naturally fall in the accession year of Zedekiah, i.e. the *b'ērē'šūt malkūt sidqiyā* in a strict sense.²⁴

But against these two points it may be observed: (i) that another interpretation of Ezek. 40:1, which is expounded below (under I.2), does not lead to the date 586 for the fall of Jerusalem, and that it is therefore of no advantage to have Zedekiah's 11th year begin in 586; and (ii) that it is uncertain whether *b'ērē'šūt malkūt* is a technical term for 'accession year'; even if it is, it is far from impossible that Jeremiah's oracle against Elam should have been spoken in March, 597 (Zedekiah's accession year, on the usual reckoning) though Nebuchadrezzar did not conduct a campaign against Elam until a year later.

The arguments thus far considered are therefore rather inconclusive.

A more significant objection to the theory of an accession of Zedekiah after Nisan 1, 597 is the following: Ezek. 24.1 dates the beginning of the siege to 10.X.9 (*sc.* of the captivity of *Jehoiachin*), while 2 Kings 25:1; Jer. 39:1 (the day is lacking); 52:4 date it to 10.X.9 of *Zedekiah*.²⁵ We know that Jehoiachin's captivity began in Nisan, 597²⁶ (Ezek. 40:1 with 2 Kings 24:12).

23. BM 21946, Rev. 16-20 (Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 72f.). The name Elam is not fully preserved in either of its two occurrences in these lines, but Wiseman's restoration is generally accepted.

24. Noth, *ZDPV* 74 (1958), 153, denies that the Jeremianic date and the Babylonian Chronicle date can be synchronised in this way, but only because he apparently does not believe the Jeremiah oracle could be anything but a *valicinium ex eventu*.

25. No explanation of this objection to his theory can be offered by Vogt, *VTS* 4 (1957), 96 n. 2.

26. At least, that is agreed by almost all; Kutsch, *ZAW* 71 (1959), 273f. dates it to Nisan, 598, and Schedl, *ZAW* 74 (1962), 209-13 to Nisan, 596.

So it seems clear that Zedekiah's year 1 must also have begun in that year, and not in 596.²⁷

This difficulty may be met, however, by supposing that the years of Jehoiachin's captivity were reckoned on a post-dating principle like the accession year system, i.e., that year 1 of the captivity began only on Nisan 1 of the year following the captivity of Jehoiachin on Nisan 10, 597. The '14th year after the city was conquered' in Ezek. 40:1 must on this view also be calculated in the same way; that is, the '1st year after the fall of the city' begins on Nisan 1 of the year following its fall on 9.IV.11 of Zedekiah (=19 of Nebuchadrezzar), 586 B.C. This method of reckoning, though lacking any established parallels other than the regnal year system, cannot easily be dismissed. If it is natural to call the 'first year' of a king the first calendar year that begins during his reign, it is not unnatural to call the 'first year of the captivity' the first calendar year that begins after that event, and the 'first year after the fall of the city' the first year that begins after that event.

Finally, in order to test thoroughly this proposal to date Zedekiah's years from Nisan 596 rather than Nisan 597, it is necessary to examine the other dates in Ezekiel that are reckoned from the captivity of Jehoiachin; for it has just been argued that to date Zedekiah's years from 596 requires also the dating of the years of Jehoiachin's captivity from 596.

On the remaining dates in Ezekiel, 24:1 and 40:1 having already been considered, it is clear that some are not integrated with known historical events and are therefore irrelevant to the

27. That is, if Ezek. 24:1 is really a captivity year date, and not a Zedekiah regnal-year date later inserted into the Ezekiel passage from 2 Kings 25:1. The latter has been suggested by, for example, G. Hölscher, *Hesekiel. Der Dichter und sein Buch* (BZAW, 39) (Giessen, 1924), 11; J. W. Wevers, *Ezekiel* (New Century Bible) (London, 1969), 189; W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* (BKAT), ii (Neukirchen 1969), 995; and Freedy and Redford, *JAOS* 90 (1970), 468. These writers note that the form in which the date is written is unparalleled elsewhere in Ezekiel.

G. Fohrer, *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel* (BZAW, 72) (Berlin, 1952), 116-9; *Ezechiel* (HAT) (Tübingen, 1955), 139f., believes that the process occurred in the reverse direction: the date, originally the date of the fast-day in the 10th month (cf. Zech. 8:19), was transferred from its setting in Ezekiel to 2 Kings 25:1, thence to Jer. 52:4, and thence to Jer. 39:1. That is perhaps less likely in view of the deviation of the form of the date from the form usually found in Ezekiel.

If neither of these views is correct, the objection to an accession of Zedekiah after Nisan 1, 597 disappears, since the correlation of Zedekiah years with captivity years would be only factitious.

question of the base point for the years of the captivity. This is the case with the dates in 1:1ff.; 8:1; 20:1 and 32:1,17. But with regard to those dates which may be associated with known historical events, the following observations may be made:

(i) Ezek. 26:1 dates an oracle against Tyre, in which the fall of Jerusalem is presupposed (26:2), to the 11th year of the captivity. This date has seemed too early to many, since if the city fell in 586 B.C. the 12th year of the captivity had already begun. Accordingly some have claimed that the date of 26:1 is applicable not to the oracle of 26:2-6, but to the subsequent oracle about the siege of Tyre (26:7-14).²⁸ Others have attempted to solve the problem by reading with LXX^A 'in the twelfth year'.²⁹ But if the present proposal, that year 1 of the captivity began in Nisan, 596, is followed, the 11th year of the captivity began in 586, and the date of Ezekiel's oracle may be in order. The month is not given, but if it were later than the 10th month, in which Ezekiel received news of the fall of the city (33:21), it would make good sense.³⁰ It would also fit well with the received opinion, following Josephus,³¹ that Nebuchadrezzar's siege of Tyre began in 586 B.C.

(ii) Ezek. 29:1, from 12.X.10 (26 January, 586, on the present proposal),³² and 30:20, from 1.1.11 (20 April, 586), both threaten the defeat of Egypt, i.e. of Egyptian troops that had come to the relief of the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 37:5). The arrival of this Egyptian assistance has been recently dated to the early months of 587,³³ but there is no reason why it should not have come only a few months before the fall of the city in mid-July 586 (cf. also Jer. 32:1f.).

(iii) Ezek. 31:1, from 1.III.11 (11 June, 586), depicts the defeat of the Egyptian relief as already accomplished. This again makes good sense a month before the final fall of the city.

28. So Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 200; Freedy and Redford, *JAOS* 90 (1970), 469.

29. So G. A. Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel* (ICC) (Edinburgh, 1936), 288; Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, 149.

30. W. F. Albright, *JBL* 51 (1932), 93 proposed to supply '11th' or perhaps '12th' month in this date in 26:1.

31. *Ant.* X.11.1; *Against Apion* I.21.

32. Julian dates according to R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.-A.D.* 45 (Chicago,² 1946).

33. Freedy and Redford, *JAOS* 90 (1970), 471f.

(iv) Ezek. 29:17, from 1.I.27 (26 March, 570), presupposes the end of the siege of Tyre, which we know from Josephus concluded in 573 or perhaps 572 B.C.³⁴ The usual reckoning of the years of the captivity has year 27 beginning in 571; but if the oracle is dated a year later, that is neither here nor there. If in fact the recent suggestion is accepted, that 29:17 contains a reference to the preparations for a Babylonian offensive against Egypt in 568,³⁵ the slightly later date of 570 would provide an even more likely setting for the oracle than the usual dating.

Thus, since the usual arguments against the supposition that Zedekiah's reign began after Nisan 1, 597, can be shown to have little weight, and the most substantial objection to it can be met by a plausible suggestion, it may be concluded that the present proposal is worthy of serious consideration as a method of synchronising the 11th year of Zedekiah with the 19th of Nebuchadrezzar on a Nisan basis.

The evidence on this point may be summarised thus: three explanations of the discrepancies between the regnal years of Nebuchadrezzar and Zedekiah may be offered, making recourse to a Tishri system of reckoning unnecessary. The explanations are mutually exclusive, and it is hard to choose even between the two most plausible of them, the first and the third. But either of these provides a satisfactory account of the chronology in terms of a Nisan new year.

2. Some dates in Ezekiel appear to support the 586 B.C. dating of the fall of Jerusalem. The significance of that date for the fall of the city is that in the opinion of most scholars it would imply that Zedekiah's regnal years were reckoned on a Tishri basis, since the siege is said to have ended in the 4th month of his 11th year (2 Kings 25:2; Jer. 52:5), which would have fallen in 587 if a Nisan reckoning were employed. We have already considered an argument that would exclude the necessity for linking a 586 date with a Tishri new year,³⁶ but it is as well to consider the present evidence separately.

34. This date is accepted by most, e.g. Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, 148; but according to Jepsen, *Untersuchungen*, 23, the date was 572, following E. Unger, *ZAW* 44 (1926), 316. Albright, *JBL* 51 (1932), 94, n. 48 favoured the date 574/4.

35. Freedy and Redford, *JAOS* 90 (1970), 483.

36. See I.i (c) above.

Ezek. 40:1 dates a prophecy of Ezekiel's to the 25th anniversary of Jehoiachin's exile on the 10th day of the 1st month.³⁷ The date of that prophecy is also said to be in the 14th year after the destruction of the city. 'In accord with these data the fall of the city would have taken place in the twelfth year of Jehoiachin's exile, and that is the year when an escapee brought word to Babylon of the city's fall (Eze. 33:21).'³⁸

Ezekiel, it is generally agreed, used the Babylonian reckoning of the year from Nisan. Whether he reckoned 1 Nisan or 10 Nisan (the actual day of Jehoiachin's exile) as the first day of the year is of no consequence for the present argument.

Now, according to the dates in Ezekiel:

year 1 of captivity begins Nisan 597³⁹

so year 12 of captivity begins Nisan 586,

that is, in the year in which the fugitive arrived in the 10th month, bringing news of the fall of Jerusalem (Ezek. 33:21). It would be perverse not to agree that the city must have fallen in the same year (in the 4th month) as news reached Ezekiel in the 10th. Also, year 25 of captivity begins Nisan 573 which is the 14th year (Ezek. 40:1) after the fall of Jerusalem only when that event is dated in 586.

There thus seems to be a sound case for claiming that the dates in Ezekiel demand the date 586 for the fall of Jerusalem, which date in turn is said to demand a Tishri reckoning of Judean regnal years.

An alternative interpretation, yielding a 587 date for the fall of Jerusalem, must be considered, however. First, there is sufficient textual evidence for treating '11th year of our exile' in Ezek.

37. Not all have agreed that this is what Ezek. 40:1 means. Some have thought that 'the beginning of the year' (*rōš haššānā*) must be either a technical term for new year's day on 10.VII (in the autumn) or at least a reference to a beginning of the year in the autumn (so e.g. A. Bertholet, *Das Buch Hesekiel* (KHAT) (Freiburg i.B., 1897), 195; K. Gallinger in A. Bertholet, *Hesekiel* (HAT) (Tübingen, 1936), 135; Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 429; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, ii, 995. But it is difficult to see how this view can be maintained now that the Babylonian Chronicles has fixed the date of the fall of Jerusalem as 2.XII (Adar). 7 of Nebuchadrezzar (March 16, 597 B.C.). It is unlikely that Jehoiachin's captivity should have been delayed as long as the following Tishri, 7 months later. Most recent studies accept that a spring new year is reckoned with here; so e.g. K. Gallinger in Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, 222; Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 298; Freedy and Redford, *JAOS* 90 (1970), 469. LXX already took this view, translating *berōš haššānā* as *en tō prōtō meni*.

38. Thiele, *BASOR* 143 (1956), 26; similarly Malamut, *IEJ* 18 (1968), 149.

39. E. Kutsch's argument (*ZAW* 71 (1959), 273f.) that the first captivity must have occurred before Nisan 597 contradicts the plain sense of Ezek. 40:1.

33:21 as a serious alternative to the reading '12th year of our exile'.⁴⁰ A corruption from '11th' to '12th' could be accounted for as due to the appearance of '12th year' already in 32:1,17, so that it may have seemed to a scribe implausible that the next dated oracle should belong to the 11th year. The reason for the break in chronological sequence is not far to seek, however: oracles about Egypt, dating from 12.X.10 (29:1-16), 7.I.11 (30:20-26), 1.III.11 (31:1-18), 1.XII.12 (32:1-16), 15.1(?),12 (32-17-32), have been collected together; but the oracle of 33:21-33 has nothing to do with Egypt, and its date is consequently not in series with the dates of the Egyptian oracles. Secondly, it may be questioned whether 'in the 14th year after the city was conquered' (40:1) must refer to a calendar year beginning with Nisan (whether Nisan 1 or 10). It may well be that Ezekiel reckons the exact anniversaries of the fall of the city, just as he does the exact anniversaries of the captivity of Jehoiachin (and cf. 24:2 'this very day'). In fact, the 10.I.25 year of exile, Nisan 10 of 573 B.C., falls three months before the 15th anniversary of a fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., and so in the 14th year after that event. Reckoning of years from the fall of Jerusalem was not a normal method of expressing the date and in fact the only other occurrence of such a reckoning seems to be a literary reminiscence of this verse.⁴¹ This further suggests that the reference concerns the anniversary years after that famous event, and is not an alternative nomenclature for the calendar year.

In summarising the evidence on this point it may be said that although some dates in Ezekiel apparently point to the date 586 B.C. the fall of Jerusalem and are thus at first sight evidence for Tishri reckoning, closer examination of the evidence makes it equally possible that the dates in Ezekiel are consonant with a dating of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.

3. Dan. 1:1 refers to a siege of Jerusalem by "Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon" and the captivity of some of the people in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim. Only on a Tishri reckoning of

40. The written and oral difference between *bištê* and *bēašte* is slight. 8 Hebrew MSS, the Lucianic recension of LXX, and the Syriac read 'eleventh'. This is rather more than 'only dubious MS and Versional support', as Freedy and Redford describe it (*JAOS* 90 (1970), 466 n. 25). Among those who adopt this emendation may be mentioned: Fohrer, *Ezechiel*, 187; Eichrodt, *Hesekiel*, 317; Zimmerli, *Ezechiel*, 810; J. B. Taylor, *Ezekiel* (London, 1969), 216. It should be noted that Ezek. 26:2, apparently dated (see on n. 28 above) to the 11th year of the captivity, presupposes the fall of the city. One or other of these dates must be wrong.

41. 2 Esdras 1:1 (cf. R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, ii (Oxford, 1913), 561.

Jehoiakim's regnal years can a siege by Nebuchadrezzar have occurred in Jehoiakim's 3rd year (see table).

Some kind of an attack upon Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoiakim is demanded by the evidence of 2 Chr. 36:6f., which recounts that Nebuchadrezzar took Jehoiakim in fetters to Babylon, and also carried off some of the temple vessels. This cannot have happened at the time of the siege of Jerusalem in early 597 B.C., since Jehoiakim died on December 7, 598, just before the Babylonian troops set out for Jerusalem.⁴² So if the Biblical Chronicles tradition is sound, it is reasonable to suppose that at some time during his reign 'Jehoiakim took part of the temple treasure [to Babylon] as a *qatrē*-offering or as *biltu* ('tribute') to buy off the Babylonians'.⁴³ 2 Kings 24:1, 'Nebuchadnezzar came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years', may in turn be related to the same circumstances.

Now the Babylonian Chronicle makes no mention of a siege of Jerusalem before 598-7 B.C., but it may reasonably be asked whether such a siege could be fitted into the record of Nebuchadrezzar's campaigns in about the 3rd year of Jehoiakim.

Several dates have been suggested for such a siege of Jerusalem:

(a) In Nebuchadrezzar's 1st year, in Dec. 604-Jan. 603, between the sack of Ashkelon in Kislev (Dec.) 604 and Nebuchadrezzar's return to Babylon in Sebat (Feb.) 603.⁴⁴ If this was Jehoiakim's initial act of submission to the Babylonians, the 3 years of his vassaldom (2 Kings 24:1) will have run till Kislev 601 (Nebuchadrezzar's 4th year). That is exactly the date of the near defeat inflicted by the Egyptians upon the Babylonians⁴⁵—a setback severe enough to keep Nebuchadrezzar at home the next year (his 5th) 'gathering together his horses and chariots in great numbers'.⁴⁶ The apparent turning of the tide in favour of the Egyptians will then explain why at this moment Jehoiakim 'rebelled against' Nebuchadrezzar (2 Kings 24:1).⁴⁷

The objection to this view is that on no system of reckoning does Dec. 604-Jan. 603 fall in Jehoiakim's 3rd year.

42. Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 33.

43. D. J. Wiseman, 'Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel', in D. J. Wiseman *et al.*, *Notes on some problems in the Book of Daniel* (London, 1965), 9-18 (18).

44. So Vogt, *Bib* 37 (1956), 395; Malamat, *IEJ* 6 (1956), 251. The relevant passage in the Babylonian Chronicle is BM 21946, Obv. 18-20 (Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 68f.).

45. Cf. Freedman, *BA* 19 (1956), 54.

46. BM 21946, Rev. 8 (Wiseman, *Chronicles* 68f.).

47. Cf. J. P. Hyatt, 'New Light on Nebuchadrezzar and Judaeon History', *JBL* 75 (1956), 277-84 (280).

(b) In Nebuchadrezzar's 2nd year when, it is said, he set out for the Hatti-land with a 'powerful army' for a campaign in which he employed 'great siege-towers'.⁴⁸ The lacuna in the Chronicle of this year's events 'most likely contained a report of specific conquests, parallel to that for the campaign to Ashkelon in his first year. This may well have been the conquest of Jerusalem, and its date would then fall during the autumn or winter of 603 B.C.'⁴⁹ Such a date corresponds with the 6th year of Jehoiakim which may, it is suggested, be what is intended in Dan. 1:1; a slight emendation, of *šālôš* 'three to *šēš* 'six',⁵⁰ would yield the meaning: 'In the sixth year of the reign of Jehoiakim King of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.'

The objections to this suggestion are twofold: (i) If the events of Dan. 1:f. occur in Nebuchadrezzar's 2nd year, the events of Dan. 2, three years later, cannot also occur in his '2nd year' (2:1). Thus if the date in Dan. 1:1 (emended) is correct, the date in 2:1 is incorrect. (ii) There is no direct evidence that Nebuchadrezzar campaigned in the Hatti-land in his 2nd year. All indications of the locations of that year's campaign are missing from the Chronicle, and it is only by inference from the campaigns of other years that the editor has supplied a reference to the Hatti-land.⁵¹ It is true that in his accession year, 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 10th, and 11th years, Nebuchadrezzar campaigned in the Hatti-land, but it is perfectly possible that in his 2nd year his attention was directed elsewhere, as was the case in his 9th year (expedition against Elam).⁵²

(c) In Nebuchadrezzar's accession year (7 Sept. 605-1 Mar. 604), during which, we are told, he 'went back again to the Hatti-

48. BM 21946, Obv. 21-23 (Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 70f.).

49. Malamat, *IEJ* 18 (1968), 142, having abandoned his previous suggestion (n. 44 above). Vogt also changed his mind in favour of Nebuchadrezzar's 2nd year (*Bib* 45 (1964), 345f.). A similar conclusion was reached, before the publication of the Babylonian Chronicle, by J. T. Nehis, 'Note sur la date de la sujétion de Joiaqim par Nabuchodonosor', *RB* 61 (1954), 387-91.

50. So Malamat, *IEJ* 18 (1968), 142 n. 10.

51. Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 71, supplies in line 21 'marched to the land of Hatti', and in line 23 'he marched about unopposed in the land of Hatti' (on the basis of line 16 above).

52. Thus Malamat, *IEJ* 18 (1968), 142 is too incautious in taking it for granted that in his 2nd year Nebuchadrezzar set off 'to the west'.

land and until the month of Sebat [Feb.] marched unopposed⁵³ through the Hatti-land.⁵⁴ A siege of Jerusalem could have occurred during this period,⁵⁵ but it is impossible that it could have taken place before the end of Jehoiakim's 3rd year; for that ended (on a Tishri reckoning) merely a month after Nebuchadrezzar acceded to the throne in Babylon, which would not allow enough time for Nebuchadrezzar to reach Jerusalem, let alone reduce it, even if he had left Babylon on the day after his accession.

(d) Before Nebuchadrezzar's accession to the throne, between the battle of Carchemish (605 B.C., probably May-June)⁵⁶ and Nebuchadrezzar's return to Babylon shortly after news reached him of his father's death on Ab 8 (August -15).⁵⁷ The Babylonian Chronicle in fact records that after the battle of Carchemish 'Nebuchadrezzar conquered the whole area of the Hatti-country',⁵⁸ and 2 Kings 24:7 notes that 'the king of Babylon took all that belonged to the King of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates'.⁵⁹ But can this be in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim? Only if it can be assumed that (i) the '3rd year' in Dan. 1:1 was reckoned on a Tishri new year, accession year system, while (ii) the '4th year' of Jehoiakim which is said to be the year of the battle of Carchemish in Jer. 46:2 was reckoned on a non-accession year system.⁶⁰

Against this suggestion, the following objections can be made:

(i) It may be seriously doubted that a non-accession year system (in which the months between a king's accession and his first new year are counted as his year 1) was in operation at this time in Judah. The best attested evidence for non-accession year reckoning in Judah is associated with only a few decades in

53. Or 'victoriously', as *šaltāniš* is translated by Albright, *BASOR* 143 (1956), 31.

54. BM 21946, Obv. 12-13 (Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 68f.).

55. So G. Larsson, 'When did the Babylonian Captivity Begin?' *JTS* 18 (1967), 417-23, who finds an exact period of 70 lunar years between this captivity and the return of the exiles.

56. Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 25.

57. So Wiseman, in *Notes on . . . Daniel*, 17f.

58. BM 21946, Obv. 8 (Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 68f.).

59. Nebuchadrezzar can at this time (before Sept. 7, 605) be called 'king' only proleptically, but that is no serious objection to the hypothesis (cf. R. D. Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (New York, 1917), 87-95, for parallels).

60. Or that the '4th year' in Jer. 46:2 is erroneous (so Malamat, *IEJ* 6 (1956), 250).

the ninth century B.C.,⁶¹ and it is almost universally agreed that accession year reckoning must be presumed throughout the period under consideration here. A particular advantage of postulating accession year reckoning in Jeremiah is that it enables a plausible synchronism to be established between Jer. 36 and the Babylonian Chronicle. For Jer. 36:9 records a national fast in Judah in the 9th month of Jehoiakim's 5th year; on accession year reckoning that was the month (Kislev, 604 B.C.) in which the Babylonian army was proceeding to the sack of Ashkelon.⁶² A convincing historical setting is thus provided for the reading of the scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies, written (or at least ordered to be written) sometime between 9 and 21 months previously, and stored up for such an occasion as this.⁶³

(ii) It involves the interposition of a Babylonian march to Jerusalem from Hamath (no place further south is mentioned in the Babylonian Chronicle) and a siege of the city in the short interval between May-June (Carchemish) and c. August 25 (news of Nabopolassar's death). Very little time, if any, would be available for the siege itself, when the days spent in marching are reckoned up (see below, under II.2). We do not know where Nebuchadrezzar was when he received news of his father's death, but it must be recalled that only 3 weeks elapsed between Nabopolassar's death and Nebuchadrezzar's arrival in Babylon.

(iii) It requires the dating of Jeremiah's speech in Jer. 25 to a rather unsuitable time. For if the '4th year of Jehoiakim' (Jer. 25:1) is reckoned on a non-accession year system,⁶⁴ it overlaps

61. Wiseman, in *Notes on . . . Daniel*, 17, claims that the 'usual Palestinian-Jewish' system was an antedating one (i.e. ignoring accession years) but his source (Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 151 (error for 41?)), does not support this view; on the contrary, Thiele maintains that Judah employed an accession-year reckoning from the beginning of the eighth century to the end of the monarchy (p. 41). On the other hand, Hyatt (*JBL* 75 (1956), 278) supposed that the Jeremianic tradition used an accession-year system while 2 Kings used a non-accession-year system; this was to harmonise the 8th year of Nebuchadrezzar in 2 Kings 24:12 with his 7th year in Jer. 52:28. But more satisfactory explanations of this discrepancy have been offered above (under I.1). C. F. Whitley, 'Carchemish and Jeremiah', *ZAW* 80 (1968), 38-49 (39), thought that the Biblical sources reckoned the regnal years of both Judean and Babylonian kings directly from the date of accession; but such a system is unattested (cf. Freedy and Redford, *JAOS* 90 (1970), 465 n. 17).

62. BM 21946, Obv. 18-20 (Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 68f.).

63. A more thorough discussion of the chronology presupposed by Jer. 36 will be found in my forthcoming article, 'The Evidence for an Autumnal New Year in Pre-Exilic Israel and Judah Reconsidered'.

64. As Wiseman presumably argues, though the verse reference in *Notes on . . . Daniel*, 17, is incorrect.

Nebuchadrezzar's accession year by only one month (Elul)⁶⁵ (see table); therefore Jeremiah's speech must be dated only two months or less after a successful siege by Nebuchadrezzar. Yet in it Jeremiah makes no allusion to that catastrophic event of a few weeks earlier, nor to the king who must have been at this time still absent in Babylon whither he 'may have been personally required to go . . . to take part in the victory celebrations as a conquered and vassal king'⁶⁶ (in fetters, if 2 Chr. 36:6 is relevant here; and cf. Manasseh, 2 Chr. 33:11). Rather, Jeremiah speaks as if Jerusalem's encounter with Nebuchadrezzar lies still in the future (cf. 25:8f. especially). We may conclude that although the speech fits well into the months after Carchemish when Judah was growing complacent again, it would be a rather anomalous speech had Carchemish been swiftly followed by such a siege as that depicted in Dan. 1:167.

(iv) Likewise, if the '5th year of Jehoiakim' (Jer. 36:9) is reckoned on a non-accession year system (with Tishri new year), the reading of Baruch's scroll at the fast of the 9th month would have taken place in Kislev (Dec.) 605, less than 6 months after the siege of Jerusalem referred to in Dan. 1:1. Again, the narrative (Jer. 36) does not read as if such events had just taken place; the 'word of the Lord' to Jeremiah after Jehoiakim's burning of the scroll (36:28-31) makes no allusion to any recent humiliation of the king at the hands of the Babylonians, but, like ch. 25, speaks as if Jehoiakim has yet to encounter Nebuchadrezzar.

(v) Further, it may be urged that the dates in Daniel are not self-consistent, and that it is not worth attempting to justify the date in Dan. 1:1. If Daniel was taken to Babylon c. June-July 605, and immediately began his three-year education (1:5), he cannot have completed his education before the end of the '2nd year of Nebuchadrezzar' (ended 9 April, 602) in which the king had his dream (2:1) and Daniel, already graduated (1:18ff.), gave

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65. The 'first year' (*haššānâ hâri' šônû*) of *Nebuchadrezzar* (Jer. 25:1) must of course be understood as the accession year, since his first regnal year proper does not overlap with the 3rd year of Jehoiakim on any reckoning that has been proposed (it could theoretically overlap on the unlikely conjunction of assumptions that Albright is right about the reckoning of Nebuchadrezzar's years in the west (cf. under I.1 (a) above) and that Judah was still using a Tishri calendar; see table).
66. Wiseman, in *Notes on . . . Daniel*, 18. It is not however quite clear in Dan. 1:1 whether Jehoiakim himself, or only the temple booty, was transported to Babylon at this time (as Wiseman notes, 18 n. 58).
67. This argument is of course cogent only to the extent to which an essentially authentic content of the Jer. 25 speech is allowed; for a more negative view, cf. e.g., E. W. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles* (Oxford, 1970); E. Auerbach, *VT* 9 (1959), 115.

SYNCHRONISTIC TABLE

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
JULIAN January	BABYLONIAN Nisan	BAB. in WEST Nisan	JUDAEAN Tishri	JUDAEAN Maret, → Hs.	JUDAEAN Tish, → Nis.	JUDAEAN Nisan	JUDAEAN Nisan
	Wiseman	Albright	Malamat	Auerbach	Pavlovsky- Vogt	Tadmor	Noth, Kutsch, Jepsen
			Josiah 31	Josiah 31	Josiah 31		
609	Nabo- polassar 17	Nabo- polassar 17	Jehoahaz 0 Jehoiakim 0	Jehoahaz 0 Jehoiakim 0	Jehoahaz 0 Jehoiakim 0	Josiah 31 Jehoahaz 0 Jehoiakim 0	Josiah 31 Jehoahaz 0 Jehoiakim 0
608	18	18	Jehoiakim 0	1	1	Jehoiakim 0	Jehoiakim 0
			1	2	2	1	1
607	19	19	2	3	3	2	2
			2	3	3	3	3
606	20	20	2	4	4	3	3
	? Nebuch. 0	4	5	5	4	4
605	21	1	4	5	5	4	4
	Nabu- chadrezzar 0		5	6	6	5	5
604	1	2	6	7	7	6	6
			6	7	7	7	7
603	2	3	7	8	8	7	7
			7	8	8	8	8
602	3	4	8	9	9	8	8
			8	9	9	9	9
601	4	5	9	10	10	9	9
			9	10	10	10	10
600	5	6	10				
			10				
599	6	7					

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
JULIAN January	BABYLONIAN Nisan	BAB. in WEST Nisan	JUDAEAN Tishri	JUDAEAN Mehes. → Nis.	JUDAEAN Tishri → Nis.	JUDAEAN Nisan	JUDAEAN Nisan
	Wiseman	Albright	Malamat	Averbach	Revlovskij- Vagt	Tadmor	Noll, Kutsch, Jepsen
598	Nebu- chadnezzar 7	Nebu- chadnezzar 8	Jehoiakim 10 11	Jehoiakim 11	Jehoiakim 11	Jehoiakim 11	Jehoiakim 11
597	8	9	Jehoiachin 0 Zedekiah 0	Jehoiachin 0 Zedekiah 0	Jehoiachin 0 Zedekiah 0	Jehoiachin 0 Zedekiah 0	Jehoiachin 0 Zedekiah 0
596	9	10	1	1	1	1	2
595	10	11	2	2	2	2	3
594	11	12	3	3	3	3	4
593	12	13	4	4	4	4	5
592	13	14	5	5	5	5	6
591	14	15	6	6	6	6	7
590	15	16	7	7	7	7	8
589	16	17	8	8	8	8	9
588	17	18	9	9	9	9	10
587	18	19	10	10	10	10	11
586	19	20	11	11	11	11	

its interpretation. This conclusion could be avoided only if it were maintained that the '3 years' of 1:15 are counted inclusively; but against that must be set the evidence for a fixed period of 3 full years' education, at least in the Persian court.⁶⁸

The conclusion of our discussion of this point is this: Dan. 1:1 is the only piece of Biblical data that demands a Tishri reckoning of regnal years. But there are several difficulties and implausibilities involved in the acceptance of Dan. 1:1 at face value. Hence, while the event mentioned in Dan. 1:1 may be authenticated by other Biblical references, the date given must be viewed with reserve. The arguments in favour of a *spring* (i.e. *Nisan*) new year in Judah at this time⁶⁹ are these:

1. The battle of Carchemish is said in Jer. 46:2 to have taken place in the 4th year of Jehoiakim. The Babylonian Chronicle shows that the battle occurred before the death of Nabopolassar on Ab 8, which can be synchronised with Jehoiakim's 4th year only on a Nisan reckoning⁷⁰ (see table). On a Tishri new year basis the date in Jer. 46:2 must be corrected to 'third year of Jehoiakim'.⁷¹

The only means of evading this conclusion are: (a) To suppose that a non-accession reckoning is employed in Jer. 46:2. But the improbability of this supposition has been pointed out above (under I.3). (b) To suppose that Jehoiakim ascended the throne *before* Tishri 1, 609 B.C. But this view, when all the data are considered, rather supports a Nisan new year (see below, under II.2). Or (c) to suppose that the date 'in the 4th year'

68. See J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Edinburgh, 1927), 122.

69. In addition to those listed above in notes 2 and 5, advocates of a Nisan system of reckoning at this time include: W. F. Albright, 'The Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar Chronicles', *BASOR* 143 (1956), 28-33; D. N. Freedman, 'The Babylonian Chronicle', *BA* 19 (1956), 50-60 (53 n. 13) (in his 'Old Testament Chronology', in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Albright Festschrift), ed. G. E. Wright (London, 1961), 203-214 (208f., 212f.) he is not so certain of a Nisan system); H. Tadmor, 'Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah', *JNES* 15 (1956), 226-30; M. Noth, 'Die Einnahme von Jerusalem', *ZDPV* 74 (1958), 133-57 (150) (= *Aufsätze zur biblischen Landes- und Altertumskunde*, i, 126); S. Talmon, *VT* 8 (1958), 65; C. Schedl, 'Nochmals das Jahr der Zerstörung Jerusalems, 587 oder 586 v. Chr.', *ZAW* 74 (1962), 209-13.

70. So already Noth, *ZDPV* 74 (1958), 151f. The cogency of this argument is acknowledged by Thiele, *BASOR* 143 (1956), 24, who is unable to explain this date on a Tishri reckoning. His earlier view, that Carchemish occurred in 604 (*Mysterious Numbers*, 160f.), is of course abandoned by him in the light of the Babylonian Chronicle (*BASOR* 143, 24 n. 3, *Mysterious Numbers*² 161, 163.)

71. So, e.g., Malamet, *IEJ* 6 (1956), 250; *IEJ* 18 (1968), 147 n.21.

belongs to the prophecy and not to the battle.⁷² But this entails the postulation of a very large parenthesis in the text, contrary to the plain sense.⁷³

Jer. 46:2 provides in fact the clearest piece of chronological data relevant to this period, and its witness to a Nisan system of reckoning can hardly be challenged.

2. Examination of the date of Jehoiakim's accession to the throne makes it more likely than not that his regnal years were reckoned from Nisan, not Tishri. Most scholars agree that Jehoiakim came to the throne *after* Tishri 1, 609; if so, the eleven years of his reign (2 Kings 23:36; 2 Chr. 36:5) which ended on Marhešwan 22 (December 7), 598⁷⁴ may have been reckoned either on a Tishri or a Nisan basis.⁷⁵ But if it can be shown to be likely that he ascended the throne before Tishri 1, 609,⁷⁶ he reigned 11 years only on a Nisan reckoning (it would have been 12 on a Tishri reckoning).

In determining the date of his accession, the events which must be brought into relationship are:

1. Battle of Megiddo, death of Josiah, accession of Jehoahaz.
2. March of Egyptians from Megiddo to Euphrates.
3. Egyptian crossing of Euphrates for attack on Haran.⁷⁷
4. Capture of Jehoahaz and accession of Jehoiakim.

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72. So Horn, *AUSS* (1967), 25 n. 33, punctuating Jer. 46:1f. thus: 'The word of Yahweh which came to Jeremiah the prophet, against the nations; about Egypt: against the army of Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt (which had been at the river Euphrates at Carchemish and which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had defeated) in the 4th year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah'. This interpretation was already suggested by B. Alfrink, 'Die Gadd'sche Chronik und die Heilige Schrift', *Bib.* 8 (1927), 385-417 (398f.) (not mentioned by Horn).
 73. Malamat believes that this suggestion has 'possibly overcome' (*IEJ* 18 (1968), 147 n. 21) the difficulty of Jer. 46:2 for a Tishri system.
 74. Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 33.
 75. Malamat, *I.E.J.* 18 (1968), 141 rightly notes that Jehoiakim's accession after Tishri 1, 609 B.C. is essential to his system based on a Tishri new year.
 76. So Noth, *ZDPV* 74 (1958), 151, with brief argumentation; Pavlovsky and Vogt, *Bib* 45 (1964), 346 and Kutsch, *ZAW* 71 (1959), 272, without discussion. Similarly Auerbach, *VT* 9 (1959), 119; 10 (1960), 69f., though according to him Marhešwan 1 is the crucial date, and the implication of a pre-Marhešwan date is evaded by his theory of calendar change.
 77. I assume, as do most, that it was the same Egyptian force under Neco that defeated Josiah and that crossed the Euphrates. Horn (*AUSS* 5 (1967), 19f.) alone speculates that Neco was unable to reach his contingents permanently stationed at Carchemish before the Haran campaign began, and even that 'the late arrival of Neco and his army was the reason for the failure of the campaign against Haran'.

The chronological data are twofold:

- a. No. 3 occurred in Tammuz (25 June-23 July), 609 (BM 21901, Rev. 66-67).⁷⁸
- b. 'Three months' intervened between No. 1 and No. 4 (2 Kings 23:31; 2 Chr. 36:2).

The question is: is No. 4 likely to have occurred before Tishri 1 (21 September), 609?

Two major uncertainties are: (i) How long precisely were the '3 months' of the reign of Jehoahaz? And (ii) how long did the Egyptian march (No. 2) take?

On (i), we have solid evidence that a '3 months' reign could actually be significantly longer; Jehoiachim is said in 2 Kings 24:8 to have reigned 3 months, but in 2 Chr. 36:9 to have reigned 3 months and 10 days. We can presume that a period up to almost 3½ months could be rounded down to 3 months. On the other hand, it is equally possible that '3 months' could be a rounding up from 2½ months, or even, if we may postulate an inclusive system of reckoning, from 2 months 1 day. The last suggestion is unlikely; for inclusive reckoning was not usually employed in reckoning lengths of reign, since it complicated the computation of accurate totals. So it may be concluded that the '3 months' of Jehoahaz' could have been between 2½ and 3½ months.

On (ii), it may be estimated that the Egyptians' march from Megiddo to Carchemish on the Euphrates took about 4 weeks. According to A. Malamat,⁷⁹ the Egyptians would have travelled 35 km a day, 'or even more (remembering that this took place during the long summer days)' and so could have covered the 500+ km, as he reckons it, between Megiddo and Carchemish in about 2 weeks. But in fact the distance must be more like 650 km (400 miles).⁸⁰ And an average rate of 35 km (22 miles) a day

78. Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 62f.

79. *IEJ* 18 (1968), 139.

80. Vogt, *VTS* 4 (1957), 94 n. 2 states the distance as 504 km, and Horn, *AUSS* 5 (1967), 18 as c. 340 miles (c. 540 km). But the distance from Megiddo to Carchemish in a straight line is 520 km if measured on L. H. Grollenberg's *Atlas of the Bible* (ET, 1965), 29—or, remarkably, 540 km measured on Y. Oharoni and M. Avi-Yonah's *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (1969), map 9 (though 490 km according to map 159!). It would not seem excessive to reckon the actual distance on the ground as at least 650 km (406 miles), i.e., with an extra 25% allowance for the realities of winding roads. An illuminating calculation may be made on the basis of Map 2 in Wiseman's *Chronicles*, 22: from Damascus to Carchemish the direct distance is 250 miles, but by road (Damascus-Riblah-Hamath-Aleppo-Carchemish) it is 310 miles, an extra 24%; but the latter is still only a calculation on the basis of a small-scale map, and the actual distance must be considerably greater.

seems rather high, even assuming, as Malamat does, that the statement attributed to Neco in 2 Chr. 35:21, 'God has commanded me to make haste', can count as historical evidence for the speed of the Egyptian advance. References to rates of march in Assyrian and Egyptian texts suggest that rather lower averages, between 10 and 15 miles per day, were more usual.⁸¹ Even allowing the rate of 35 km a day to be reasonable, the distance would have required some 19 days, without taking account of rest days. Whether the 'long summer days' would improve or retard an army's performance is open to question, and it ought also to be recalled that with a force of any considerable size some hours per day are unavailable for marching because they are spent in getting the column moving,⁸² and in setting up the camp.⁸³ Forced marches were not of course unknown in antiquity, the most famous example in classical times being a march of 7 days and 7 nights by Antigonus I in 319 B.C., in which he moved an army of 50,000 men almost 300 miles at a speed of 40 miles a day.⁸⁴ But surprise was of the essence of Antigonus' march, and this does not seem to have been a factor in the advance of Neco's army. The fastest realistic speed we can assume for the Egyptian army over such a distance is about 15 miles a day; so we should allow at least 27 days for the 400 miles.⁸⁵

If we adopt mean figures for (i) the days occupied by the march from Megiddo to the Euphrates, (ii) the date in Tammuz on which the Egyptian army crossed the Euphrates, (iii) the length of reign of Jehoahaz, we can propose the following dates for the four key events:

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81. For a discussion, see the Appendix.
82. So for example on the day before the battle of Megiddo in 1468 B.C. the van of Thutmosis III's army reached the plain of Megiddo 7 hours before the rear of the army (so J. A. Wilson, *ANET*, 236 n. 30, 31). Cf. also Judson, *Caesar's Army*, 50ff. (See Appendix for details.)
83. Cf. the Abu Simbel reliefs of the camp of Rameses II at Kadesh (Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands* (London, 1963), 236f.).
84. Cf. F. E. Adcock, *The Greek and Macedonian Art of War* (Berkeley, 1957), 78. An Assyrian example of a surprise attack which followed a night march of 6 beru (c. 60 km, 37½ miles) by Ashurbanipal is plainly an exception; it presumably did not require the moving of any baggage (*ANET*, 299b; *ARAB*, ii, S 825). The 50 beru travelled in one day by Gilgamesh and the boatman Urshanabi (*Gilgamesh* XI. 301f.; *ANET*, 97a), is of course an element of saga.
85. Horn, *AUSS* 5 (1967), 18, similarly thinks the distance from Megiddo to Carchemish must have taken the Egyptian army nearly a month.

1. Death of Josiah	8 June	_____	
2. Egyptian March		4 weeks	
3. Crossing Euphrates	8 July	-	3 months
4. Accession of Jehoiakim	8 September	_____	

Now September 8, 609 B.C., is a fortnight earlier than Tishri 1 (September 21). The significance of using a mean figure is that it shows that an accession of Jehoiakim *before* Tishri 1 is more likely than not on the basis of our available evidence.⁸⁶ The reign of Jehoahaz need only have lasted 3 months and 1 week and the crossing of the Euphrates have taken place a week later in Tammuz, for the tables to be turned; but the likelihood of these being the case is no greater than that of the opposite possibilities: Jehoahaz may have reigned less than 3 months, the Euphrates may have been crossed earlier in Tammuz.

The point may be put another way: if Jehoiakim ascended the throne *after* Tishri 1, as is generally thought to have been the case, Jehoahaz more probably than not ascended the throne after Tammuz 1, 3 months earlier. Therefore the Egyptian army must have arrived at the Euphrates in the same month (Tammuz) in which they fought Josiah at Megiddo. That seems, in the light of the foregoing discussion, to be rather unlikely; equally unlikely therefore is the original hypothesis, that Jehoiakim ascended the throne after Tishri 1.

If Jehoiakim's accession occurred before Tishri 1, 609, how is a Tishri new year hypothesis affected? On an accession year system, the weeks between his accession and Tishri I would count as his accession year, and his year 1 would run from Tishri 1, 609. Thus by the time of his death in Marhešwan 598, he would be in his 12th regnal year, a conflict with the '11 years' of 2 Kings

86. Even Malamat, for whose chronology it is indispensable to date No. 4 *after* Tishri 1, will allow that the death of Josiah occurred 'sometime between early Sivan and early Tammuz' (*IEJ* 18 (1968), 139), which actually makes the accession of Jehoiakim *before* Tishri 1 more likely than not. There is no evidence for supposing, as does Malamat (p. 141) significant time-lapses between the reigns Josiah and Jehoahaz, and between those of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim.

23:36; 2 Chr. 36:5.⁸⁷ On a non-accession year system (improbable in Judah at this time in any case),⁸⁸ he would die in his 13th regnal year!

On the other hand, a Nisan new year reckoning would create no conflict with the Biblical data:⁸⁹ Jehoiakim's year 1 (accession year reckoning) would begin on Nisan 1, 608, Carchemish would occur in his 4th year (Jer. 46:2) = Nebuchadrezzar's 4th (605 B.C.), and Jehoiakim would die in his 11th regnal year (late 598 B.C.).

This argument does not provide conclusive evidence for a Nisan new year, since it rests upon an estimation of probabilities, but within its limitations it is a sound reason for claiming that Nisan reckoning was employed during this period in Judah.

The conclusion reached in this study is: the balance of evidence points towards the use of Nisan reckoning of regnal years in the closing decades of the Kingdom of Judah. Of the three arguments in favour of Tishri reckoning, two (I.1,2) have been shown to be inconclusive, since the date they rest upon is susceptible of reasonable explanation in a Nisan system; the third argument (I.3) uses a date which requires Tishri reckoning but which also carries with it several improbable corollaries. Of the two arguments in favour of Nisan reckoning, the first (II.1) is clear evidence for a Nisan system, and the second (II.2) suggests that a Nisan system is more probable than not. The whole argument therefore depends largely on the respective weight of the data in Dan. 1:1 and Jer. 46. 46:2. Most scholars would give more weight to Jer. 46:2 than to Dan. 1:1 even if Dan. 1:1 were free of problems, and the argument presented in II.2 (the accession of Jehoiakim) offers further support for the claim that Judean regnal years were reckoned from Nisan.

87. The only ways of evading this conclusion is to make the further supposition that at some point in the reign of Jehoiakim the calendar reckoning was changed from a year beginning with Tishri to one beginning with Nisan (So E. Auerbach, *VT* 9 (1959), 118 ff.; Pavlovsky and Vogt, *Bib* 45 (1964), 346, arguing that Jehoiakim's 4th year began in Tishri 604, his 7th in Nisan 602). There seems, however, to be no compelling reason why a change of calendar would necessitate one year of 18 months (17 on Auerbach's reckoning) rather than of 6 months (as, e.g., postulated by Andersen, *ST* 23 (1969), 108f., for a calendar change in 697/6 B.C.). Cf. also the criticisms of Jepson, *Untersuchungen*, 28.

88. See above, under I.3.

89. Except for Dan. 1:1, a problem in its own right which is discussed above (under I.3).

APPENDIX

Esarhaddon's army in an Egyptian campaign marched (they were not mounted on camels, as A. T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria* (New York, 1923), 382, thought!) 20 *beru* in 15 days, 4 *beru* in 2 days (3 times), 15 *beru* in 8 days (ANET, 292b = ARAB, ii, § 558). A *beru* is 'over 10 kms.' (CAD, B, 208), or more precisely, according to F. Thureau-Dangin, *Afo* 16 (1939), 20 n. 138), 10,692 km. Thutmosis III's army in Palestine is reckoned to have marched 'at the respectable rate of 150 miles in 9 to 10 days', and about 80 miles in 11 or 12 days (J. A. Wilson, ANET, 235, n. 16, 18). Rameses II marched the 400 miles from Sile on the Egyptian frontier to Kadesh on the Orontes in exactly one month (ANET, 255b-256a), i.e., at the rate of 13½ miles a day. See on the subject of the rate of march of Egyptian armies, E. Edel, 'Die Stelen Amenophis' III aus Karnak und Memphis mit dem Bericht über die asiatischen Feldzüge des Königs', ZDPV 69 (1953), 97-176 (152f.).

In Old Babylonian times a daily rate of travel of 25-30 km (as the crow flies) is attested, e.g., in the Larsa-Emar itinerary; cf. W. W. Hallo, 'The Road to Emar', JCS 18 (1964), 57-88 (63, 66, 72, 75, 77). But this figure does not take rest days into account, some of the journey appears to have been made by boat (cf. p. 69), and above all it is most unlikely that this itinerary relates to the large-scale movement of troops, since only one night was spent at the final destination (Emar) before the homeward journey was begun (cf. p. 85). An army would do remarkably well, judging by this standard, to march an average of 20 km a day, rest days included.

Another set of data, relating to the Babylonian advance to Jerusalem in 598/7 B.C., offers the possibility of a rough calculation of the rate of march, though the data is not precise enough to be really helpful. Malamat calculates that the army covered the 1600 km (c 1000 miles) from Babylon in about 2 months at an average daily rate of 30 km (18.6 miles) 'during the short and rainy winter days' (IEJ 18 (1968), 144; similarly Noth, ZDPV 74 (1958), 137). We know that the army was mustered and set out in Kislev (18 Dec. 598-15 Jan. 597), and that its siege of Jerusalem ended on Adar 2 (16 March), 597. If we make two quite possible assumptions, that they set out early in Kislev and that the siege of Jerusalem lasted only a few days (so Malamat; cf. Noth, ZDPV 74 (1958), 138), they had nearly 3 months for the journey and so need not have covered more than 12 miles a day. But it is in fact impossible to determine whether this speed or that given by Malamat is closer to the reality. Certainly it seems unlikely that the march could have been accomplished in a month (so Wiseman, *Chronicles*, 33), at a rate of 33 miles a day, or even in 6 weeks (Vogt, VTS 4 (1957), 93) at a rate of 24 miles a day. Any calculations are further complicated by the possibility that Nebuchadnezzar's troops were marched not from Babylon but from some garrison town near the borders of Hatti-land (cf. Noth, ZDPV 74 (1958), 137).

It has been calculated that the Roman army marched between 14.6 and 19.5 miles a day; but since a day of rest followed each 2 or 3 days of marching, an average of more than 15 miles a day over some weeks would have been exceptional see H.P. Judson, *Caesar's Army. A Study of the Military Art of the Romans in the Last Days of the Republic* (Boston, 1902), 52f.). It is true that the Roman army spent a great part of the day in constructing a camp, a practice that was perhaps not taken to such lengths during the route marches of ancient Near Eastern infantry, but against this waste of time must be set the fact that Roman soldiers covered their daily *inimera* on roads built especially for marching.