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ARTICLE IV.

THE YEAR OF CHRIST'S BIRTH.[1]

BY REV. THEODORE D. WOOLSEY, D.D., PRESIDENT OF YALE COLLEGE.

WITHIN a few months two German scholars of note have written on the Chronology of the New Testament — the one, Professor Wieseler, of Greifswald, a theologian; the other, A. W. Zumpt, of Berlin, a classical scholar, eminent for his archaeological researches. Wieseler's work is a supplement to his well-known "Chronological Synopsis," and in regard to the date of our Lord's birth takes substantially the same ground with that work, and with an Essay of his on the Chronology of the New Testament, which appeared in the twenty-first, or third supplement, volume of Herzog's Encyclopedia, in 1866. We will go no further into his views at present than to say that he places the birth of Christ in the early months of 750 U.C., a short time before the death of Herod, and that he explains Luke ii. 2 as meaning that the taxing there indicated took place before Quirinius was legate in Syria. This explanation we hold to be entirely indefensible, as we have endeavored to show in another place. It is, indeed, a convenient solution of a serious difficulty; but we are compelled to reject it as philologically untenable.[2]

Zumpt's work (das Geburtsjahr Christi) is wholly devoted to the investigation of the year of our Lord's birth. He adopts the view which many have espoused, since San Clemente's work, *de vulgaris aerae emendatione*, appeared at Rome in 1793, that Christ was born in the year 747 of Rome, that is, between two and three years before the death of Herod. We propose in this Article to give a report of

[1] Das Geburtsjahr Christi. Geschichtlich-Chronologische Untersuchungen von A. W. Zumpt: Leipzig. 1869.

[2] See New Englander for October, 1869, pp. 677–680.

the arguments of this learned scholar, and to subject them in a few points to a critical examination.

The early Christian writers had no traditions touching the birth of Christ. Their statements rest on calculations made by themselves, or derived from their predecessors, which are overthrown, for the most part, by better ones; and even Tertullian, who has preserved a very important account of the date of the taxing, falls into error when he discusses the chronology of our Lord's birth for himself. But there is an independent tradition of the date of Christ's death, which, as we shall hereafter see, has a bearing on the question of the nativity.

The arguments thus all turn on the meaning and comparison of passages in the Gospels, and the main question is: How can they be synchronized with the known history of the times? One fact in particular, the death of Herod, may be said to have been determined beyond doubt. An eclipse of the moon and various other proofs evince that this event occurred in the spring of 750 U.C. = 4 B.C., before the passover. Thus we have the lowest possible limit of the nativity which can be made to harmonize with the narrative in Matt. ii. It is also certain that, at the death of Herod, P. Quintilius Varus was the emperor's legate in Syria, as he had been from some time in 747 U.C. Whatever explanation we give to passages in the Gospels, we must regard this presidency of Varus to be as well ascertained as almost anything in Roman history.[1]

One of the most important texts, Luke ii. 2, is chosen by Mr. Zumpt as the starting-point in his discussion. Christ was born at a time when a census required his parents to go to Bethlehem to be registered, and Quirinius, as *ἡγεμών* in Syria, had the oversight of the census. But Quirinius was legate in Syria upon the banishment of Archelaus, in the year 759 U.C., or 6 A.D., when a census attended with serious insurrections, to which Luke refers in Acts v. 37, was carried on. Here, then, instead of light we have a difficulty —

[1] Compare New Englander, u. s. pp. 683–686.

one of the most important difficulties in the chronology of the New Testament. Was Quirinius legate in Syria twice? Was there a transaction deserving the name of an *apographe* before that of 6 A.D? Or is the careful Luke, whose accuracy closer acquaintance with ancient times and places is making more and more evident, guilty of a very gross error in chronology, of a confusion of dates six or nine years distant from one another; nay more, of a confusion inconsistent with his own statements, that Christ was born in the days of Herod (Luke i. 5), and that he was about thirty years old in the fifteenth year of the emperor Tiberius?

In regard to the first point — to an earlier legation of Quirinius than that of 6 A.D. — it is unnecessary to review the arguments of Mr. Zumpt. They are substantially those which he first gave to the public in his *Commentationes Epigraphicae*, in 1854, and of which we have given a full account elsewhere.[1] The arguments are drawn from notices of this man which show that he was in the East at the right time to hold the office in question; that his subjugation of a restless tribe in or near Cilicia, with the triumphal *insignia* granted to him on that account, prove him to have been the emperor's legate, and to have held office in Syria, and in no other province, and that a gap occurs in the list of Syrian legates just at the right place, where his name can be inserted. He was also, as we learn from Tacitus, a *rector* of the young Caius Caesar, who went into the East to manage affairs in Armenia in the latter part, it is probable, of 753. Zumpt contends that, while holding this office of rector, Quirinius was also legate of Syria. This is by no means clear to us. We incline more to the opinion that he followed Quintilius Varus when he left Syria, in 750 or afterwards, and that he held the province when the emperor's grandson was sent to Armenia, upon which he became a rector of Caius, and that all other power ceased in those parts excepting that which was delegated by the young Caesar. But this point in no

[1] New Englander, u. s. pp. 686–697.

manner affects the main question, which may now be regarded as well established.

There is another argument, drawn from an inscription which Zumpt rejects, and which Mommsen, with a number of others, supports. A mutilated marble, belonging to the time just succeeding those of Augustus, records the honors of a person who had been that emperor's Syrian legate twice. Only two persons could have such a story told of them. Zumpt appropriates the inscription to C. Sentius Saturninus. But his argument is weak, as he has to assume, without the slightest support from facts, that Sentius was president of the province even before he was consul. Accepting, as we do, the reference of the inscription to Quirinius, we have a corroborative argument which adds strength to Zumpt's main proposition.

Quirinius is spoken of by a later Latin writer, Florus, as having gained victories worthy of a triumph over certain African nations. This Mr. Zumpt refers to a time after his consulship, when he could, according to Roman usage, receive the proconsulship of the Roman province of Africa. But if we explain his efficiency in Africa, as Mommsen does, of a time before his consulship, when, as a man of praetorian dignity, he might be intrusted with the province of Crete and Cyrene, every event recorded of him will be clear, the order observed by Tacitus in the leading passage concerning him (Annal. iii. 48) will be undisturbed, and the inscription will be brought into harmony with the words of the historian. Thus he was in Cyrenaica before 742 U.C.; he was made consul, on account of his vigor and military ability, in 742; he staid the prescribed time of five years in Rome, and served as proconsul of Asia (the Roman province so called) for one year, which was then the regular duration of office in a senatorial province; he succeeded Quintilius Varus in 750, or afterward, as emperor's legate; he became rector of Caius Caesar in 753 or 754, and, when Archelaus was deposed, in 6 A.D., or 759 U.C., was again deputed to the difficult office

of uniting Judaea with Syria, and bringing it more completely under Roman institutions.[1]

But, admitting such a double legation, what are we to think of a census before the census of 6 A.D.? And how could Quirinius have been concerned in a census contemporary with Christ's birth? The second part of Mr. Zumpt's work is devoted to the solution of these questions (pp. 90–207).

Here the terms in which Luke expresses himself are indefinite: "in those days," "a decree," "the whole world," "taxed." In the first lies a certain vagueness as to the time when the decree was issued, and the word "decree" does not disclose of itself whether Augustus acted on his own authority, or with the consent of the senate. But, as the expression "the whole world" denotes at least the Roman world outside of Italy, including both the senatorial and imperial provinces, there must have been a consent of the senate to the measure. Further, the word "taxing," or *apographe*, has no exact meaning. The word *ἀπογράφεσθαι*, *to get one's self enregistered*, to which the active corresponds, denoting the action of the registering officer, sometimes, as in Acts v. 37, includes an estimate of property, and sometimes not; sometimes, and properly, it includes only a part of what went to make up a Roman census; while correct writers more readily denote a Roman census by *τιμᾶν* or *ἀποτιμᾶν*, and other words derived from them. Thus *τιμᾶσθαι* is properly to present an estimate of one's property, and *τιμητής* is a censor, and *ἀποτίμησις* is the act of taking the census or the census itself.

Of the original census, and of the censor, the most remarkable of the Roman magistrates except the tribune, it is not our purpose to speak. It is enough here to say that, from the time when L. Aemilius Paulus, the conqueror of King Perseus of Macedonia, in 167 B.C. = 587 U.C., brought an enormous amount of booty to Rome, the citizens were exempt from paying tribute, and the census began to lose its

[1] Compare New Englander, u. s. pp. 692–698.

importance, to which result changes in the military system contributed. Sulla, in the interest of the oligarchy, abolished the censorship; but it was ere long restored. Although the ancient functions of the censors seem to have been continued, such as to hold the census, to review the equites, to institute the lustrum, together with the regimen morum, including the lectio senatus, and with the care of the budget, the censors cease to have any great influence toward the close of the republic; and in the civil strife the office fell nearly into disuse. It was never revived, although some of its essential powers went into the hands of Julius Caesar and of the emperors.[1]

Caesar seems to have contemplated a revival of the old census, and it is quite likely that he looked forward to a general system of taxation to be imposed, not on the provincials only, but on Roman citizens, and on Italy. Dion Cassius speaks of the *apographae*, "which he made as a censor" (xliii. 25) i.e., probably, which he commenced in his capacity of *praefectus morum*.[2] In his comprehensive mind there sprang up the thought of a survey of all the resources of the empire; but his death left this, with other great plans, incomplete.

It is now an admitted fact that, in the year of Caesar's assassination, measurements, or a general geographical survey of the whole empire, was undertaken, which took years for its

[1] After the year 70, B.C.=684 U.C., censors were chosen five times, but no lustrum was performed until the censuses of Augustus.

[2] In the Latin part of the Tables of Heraclea — which contain, according to A.W. Zumpt, the author of the work before us, an edict or law of Caesar, given out in virtue of his authority as *praefectus morum*, and according to Mommsen *a lex municipalis*, but according to earlier scholars, *a lex satura*, so called, or miscellaneous law,—the magistrates of the municipia and smaller places of Italy are told how to conduct the census within their respective jurisdictions. Compare Zumpt, p. 120; New Englander, u.s. p. 716, and p. 705, where Mommsen is cited. This law shows an intention, at least, as regards Italy, of carrying the census out everywhere in the communities which had received the rights of Roman citizenship. Zumpt says (p. 121), that "there is no doubt that the magistrates of the several communities inscribed strangers also in their censuses; but they were registered by themselves, for the uses of the communities where they resided, and the lists did not go to Rome."

completion, out of which grew the commentaries of Agrippa, which are often referred to by the naturalist Pliny, and after which a wall-map in the Vipsanian portico at Rome was constructed in the reign of Augustus. There is not the same evidence that a census of inhabitants went along with the surveys; nor dare we affirm that the ground-plots in the provinces outside of Italy were carefully registered and valued by the commissioners of the government. These surveys, though passed over in silence by all Roman historians, are now universally admitted to have taken place, on the authority of writers belonging to the fourth and fifth centuries.

The emperor Augustus made a census of the Roman citizens three times, as we learn from his own account of himself on the Ancyra marble, viz. 28 B.C. = 726 U.C.; 8 B.C. = 746 U.C.; 14 A.D. = 766 U.C. In mentioning his first census, he adds that he made a lustrum, after an intermission of that solemn sacrifice for forty-two years. When he comes to speak of the second census, and of the third, he says nothing of holding a census; but his words are: "Iterum lustrum feci," and "tertium lustrum feci." Upon this observable change of style Mommsen remarks, in his commentary on the marble in question, that Augustus, having fully indicated the fact in what he says of the first census, afterwards expresses himself more briefly. Zumpt, on the other hand, argues from the form of the words that no census of property was taken with the second and third lustra of Augustus, although on both occasions an enumeration was made of Roman citizens. And so much as this he establishes from Dion Cassius, that the censuses and the nominations into the senate mentioned by that historian are not connected in point of time with the lustra. But Augustus evidently considers the *census* and the *lustrum* to be parts of the same transaction, where he says on the marble: "Quo lustro censa sunt civium Romanorum capita," etc., or, "capitum ..... millia." [1]

[1] Zumpt's conjecture is, that as Augustus had now in effect a perpetual cen-

There is no evidence from any quarter — from the Ancyra marbles or from history—that these *censuses* extended beyond Italy, or included any besides Roman citizens. Huschke, who deserves great credit for his researches into the Roman census, and into the birth-year of our Lord, in vain attempts to turn these three occurrences into measures of the government extending through the provinces. And his attempts are equally fruitless to show the same from another passage of the marble, and from Dion Cassius. The first of these censuses ended so soon that it could not have been general over the empire. It is possible that the second of them was nearly the same in date with the first census under Quirinius in Judaea. But, supposing that there was a general census, we ought not to regard it as beginning or ending everywhere at the same time. It was general in this, that it was the carrying out of one system, and emanated from the counsels of one supreme authority; but many differences would characterize it in various parts of the world.

Further, the measures which Julius began, and Augustus pursued, for surveying the Roman world are not the "taxing of the whole world," of which Luke speaks. All that can fairly be said is, that they may have been parts of the same plans. The surveys, as Zumpt remarks, were finished in 19 B.C. = 735 U.C., and Agrippa's concern in the commentaries ceased in March, 12 B.C. = 742 U.C., when he died. Neither the time nor the purpose of the surveys, as far as we know it, establishes any immediate connection with the "taxing."

What can be intended, then, by the evangelist when he speaks of a decree ordering a general census of the empire to be taken? Not that the principle everywhere was the same; for in Italy there was no direct tax, whether land or capitation tax, while in the provinces the object of the census was to levy taxes. Not that the time was the same; in the

sorial bureau, and that he might have ascertained the number of the citizens when he made the second and third lustra through the officials of the communities in Italy.

three first centuries there was no general census including Italy. The times for taking the census of Roman citizens were not regular, as they once had been, nor was this necessary, as there was now a perpetual bureau; but there was a necessity to know what resources the empire could depend upon through the provinces. But, notwithstanding all this, there was, in matter of fact, a general census, extending through the Roman world, wherever money could be collected according to law and usage.

Such a general census is nowhere mentioned by early writers, but it is not on that account to be denied. The ancient historians, as Mr. Zumpt remarks, regarded not only victories and enlargements of territory, but games, the erection of buildings at Rome, honorary decrees, everything, in fact, connected with politics, as far more worthy of mention than measures of administration, which in perfect silence affected the welfare of the state more than many battles. Why else did they omit to speak, as has been already noticed, of the great measurements of Augustus, which it took so many years to complete?

But it is necessary to sift the evidence for such a general census, since many defenders of the narrative in Luke — especially Huschke — have used weak arguments.

1. Passages drawn from the extant remains of the scriptores gromatici, or Roman surveyors, cannot pass for proof of such a fact.[1] In several places mention is made of one Balbus, who, by orders of Augustus, as the leading passage in the *Liber Colonarium* has it, "Omnium provinciarum et formas civitatum et mensuras compertas in commentariis contulit," etc., or, as it is said by another writer, of a late age: "jubente Augusto Caesare Balbo mensori, qui omnium provinciarum mensuras distinxit et declaravit." This surveyor, otherwise unknown, is spoken of as living in the times

[1] Compare New Englander, u. s. 704. The passages cited are to be found in Lachmann's Gromatici veteres i. 239 and in Pseudo-Boeth. *Demonst. artis Geometricae*. Mommsen's opinion on this point, and on the passage of Cassiodorus soon to be cited, has, perhaps, too much weight given to it in New Englander, u. s. 705.

of Augustus and Tiberius, and it is a mere inference when Mommsen thrusts him down to the reigns of M. Aurelius and Commodus. But by the provinces these late writers must denote, according to the expressions of their times, the regions into which Italy was divided under the empire, and "which continually approached in their administration to the form of the provinces" proper.[1] In these latter, says Zumpt, "such a land survey was not yet possible under Augustus. It may even then have been set on foot, but finished it could not have been, until after a long time, and by painful labor. At all events, it is made out that no evidence of a census of the provinces, undertaken by Augustus, can be drawn from the writings of the Roman surveyors."

2. A passage in the Origines of Isidore of Seville (v. 36, 4) is to this effect: "Aera singulorum annorum constituta est a Caesare Augusto, quando primum censum exegit ac Romanum orbem descripsit. Dicta autem aera eo, quod omnis orbis aes reddere professus est reipublicae." This late writer, as Zumpt remarks, took his expression "primum censum" from Luke; but "Romanum orbem descripsit" is to be ascribed to another source. But his statement is a confused one, and only proves the belief of the learned man from whom he drew it, that Augustus instituted important measures in regard to a general census.

3. The *breviarum imperii*, which Augustus left, and which was read after his death in the senate, does not prove that a general census had been taken. In this inventory were contained the "publicae opes,—quantum civium sociorumque in armis, quot classes, regna, provinciae, tributa aut vectigalia, et necessitates ac largitiones" (Tac. Annal. i. § 11). It certainly is consistent with such a census, and shows that a careful estimate had been made of the resources of the empire, founded on actual examination through all its parts. But such an estimate might have been made without a census, at least without one in the subsidiary kingdoms, like the realm of Herod.

[1] So Marquardt in Bekker-Marq. iii. 1. 65.

4. There is a passage of the learned Cassiodorus, minister of Theodoric the Great (Cent. vi.), which Mr. Zumpt regards as affording proof of a general census. It runs as follows: "Augusti siquidem temporibus orbis Romanus agris divisus, censusque descriptus est, ut possessio sua nulli haberetur incerta, quam pro tributorum susceperat quantitate solvenda. Hoc auctor gromaticus redegit ad dogma conscriptum," etc. (Var. iii. 52). Here three things are mentioned: First, a careful survey of ground-plots, as for a land-tax; next, a census, and then a written description of these measurements. The information cannot have been drawn from the evangelist; for, while Luke speaks of an *apographe* of the parents of Christ, Cassiodorus speaks of a measurement of land, and states the reason for the measurement to be the regulation of tribute, of which Luke says nothing. It is, again, not suggested by the surveys which Julius Caesar planned, and with which Cassiodorus was acquainted, since these had nothing to do with the size of ground-plots, nor with a census, nor with the proportioning of tribute. It must be regarded as independent testimony, and is of great weight on account of the learning of the author. He was also in a situation to know what he affirms, — that the census-lists, much altered, no doubt, yet had come down in unbroken succession from the times of the first emperor. It would seem probable, then, that Cassiodorus had found in the work of some land-surveyor a statement like that which he makes; and the adverse opinion of Mommsen is to be rejected, which refers back this account to two sources — to the general census mentioned by Luke, and to a mistake of a late Christian writer in explaining the catalogues of divided lands in Italy as relating to the empire in general. Such is Mr. Zumpt's argument to show that this information is trustworthy. We confess, however, that we cannot receive it with full confidence.

5. Another evidence for a general census in the times of Augustus is found in a passage preserved by the lexicographer Suidas, under the word *ἀπογραφή*. We give it in

English: "The emperor Augustus, when he attained to supreme power, chose twenty men, excellent in life and morals, and sent them out over all the territory of his subjects, by whom he instituted censuses of persons and properties, requiring that a certain sufficient portion of the latter should be brought into the public treasury. This was the first census that was made, whereas his predecessors [the provincial governors of the republic] took all they could, so that the wealth of the affluent led to their public accusation." This account, says Zumpt, is definite, and, so far as we can test it, correct in the particulars. It separates the census described from that of the Roman citizens, assigns the system of taxation as the reason for it, confines the census to the provinces, and declares it to have been the first. It is not inconsistent with the statement of Cassiodorus, for the latter only notices the land-measurements, which were to serve as a basis of a land-tax; while Suidas speaks of the whole census, embracing land and persons.

This passage is received as testimony for what it contains by such archaeologists as Marquardt and Borghesi, and by other scholars.[1] It was, however, evidently written by one who was acquainted with the Gospel of Luke; for he uses the words *αὕτη ἡ ἀπογραφὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο*; and when mention is made of twenty men, the statement is questionable; for, although the senatorial provinces might be under the direction of this body of commissioners, the emperor's provinces, according to all analogy, would have the census taken in them by his legates.[2] The account, then, as we have it in the lexicographer, comes to us from a Christian writer of uncertain age, and not perfectly acquainted with Roman institutions. In the main, however, it must be regarded as historical.

Indirect proofs that such a general census was instituted by Augustus strengthen the somewhat doubtful evidence already given. If we go back to the times of the republic, we find that every province, as it fell under Roman control,

[1] Marquardt in Bekker-Marq. iii. 2, pp. 169–171. [2] Vide infra. p. 303.

retained its old manner of tribute, excepting that the taxes were in general somewhat reduced. Such was the case with Macedonia, Illyria, Africa, Syria, Cilicia, Asia, and Gaul. On the other hand, in the age of the Antonines, a land and capitation tax, according to similar rules of valuation, and after the Roman usage that the property-holder had to give in a statement of what he owned, prevailed through the Roman empire. When did the change begin? Not under the Antonines, for Trajan before that time introduced the Roman census into conquered Dacia; and under Tiberius, thirty-six years after Christ, the Clitae, a tribe near Cappadocia, were treated in the same manner (Tac. Annal. vi. 41). A general system must have begun, then, at an early date of the empire, and in accordance with the other changes of administration in the reign of Augustus.

Again, as an exception to the ordinary rules in the provinces, certain colonies enjoying Italic right (*jus Italicum*) were exempt from land and capitation taxes. The exemption, being a privilege, shows that the rest of the population was subject to those burdens. "The history of this *jus*," says Zumpt, "we can trace back as far as to Augustus, who, in transplanting Italians into provincial places, wished to preserve for them the immunity which they had enjoyed at home. Hence under Augustus there were land and poll-taxes, the introduction and collection of which presuppose a provincial census."

Such a census Dion Cassius makes us acquainted with in Gaul, under Caligula (lix. 22). That emperor, having discovered, while gambling in Gaul, that his money was gone, called for the "grand lists" (ἀπογραφάς) of the people, ordered the wealthiest persons to be killed, and, on returning to the gamblers, said that, while they were playing for a few denarii, he had collected one hundred and fifty millions of sesterces, equal to six million dollars. Here lists of properties were already in existence. And that this came from Augustus is shown by the notices of the censuses held in that province while he was emperor. In 727 U.C. = 27 B.C.,

he is stated to have remained some time in Gaul. "And he had a census made there," says Dion Cassius (liii. 22), "and he brought their civil and political state into order." Another census was held in the same country seventeen years later, in which Drusus was active, and still a third was going on in 14 A.D. = 768 U.C., when Germanicus was commanding in the province.

And, if we were without notices of a general provincial census under Augustus, the probability of such a measure might be derived from the development of the system of taxation. The beginning of the plan, as Zumpt thinks, is to be assigned to the year 27 B.C. = 727 U.C., when a division of provinces was made between the senate and the emperor, which was the basis of administration for the next centuries. It was natural, at such a time, to take steps for the influx of revenues into the *aerarium* and the *fiscus*. The laws regulating such a measure would proceed from the senate, both because Augustus consulted them on all important measures, and because the senate directly managed its own provinces. As the result of the consultations, Augustus, then consul, would issue an edict, which is the δόγμα of which Luke speaks. The senate would appoint its own officers to take the census in senatorial provinces; hence what Suidas says of twenty commissioners — a number common enough — although involving a misconception, might be true, as far as a part of the empire was concerned.[1] And, as the senate then controlled ten provinces, two commissioners, answering to the two censors of old who presided over the taking of the census, might be sent to each. These were the old and quiet provinces; but the emperor's share of the Roman world would require longer time and more delicate management. Finally, the census of Gaul, commenced in the same year, 727 U.C. = 27 B.C., seems to confirm

[1] That the senate did not have the direction of the census in the imperial provinces, is shown by the legate of the emperor in Gaul taking this office upon him, and by the prohibition to enter the territory of Egypt which lay against all senators.

the date which Zumpt's ingenious combinations render probable.

The holding of a census in the provinces assigned to the senate, where, with the exception of provincial Africa, quiet reigned, and the relations to Rome were well established, must have been an easy work. But in the newly subjugated, and often restless, imperial provinces, where the legions were for the most part permanently quartered, the transition from old to new usages would be extremely difficult. It would be a work of time, intermitted, perhaps, for political reasons, and then resumed. It would be politic to delay beginning in some of the provinces. For the task there were needed vigorous and discreet men, invested with military power, and of higher rank, it might be, than the usual provincial governor. Thus, in 62 A.D., a census in Gaul was held by three consular men; while the three provinces into which Gaul was then divided were ordinarily governed by legates of praetorian dignity. This office of *legatus ad census accipiendos* was quite an honorable one. In the time of Severus a special officer was sent out for this purpose, and the existing governor remained at his post; but before that time the ordinary governor seems to have been superseded.[1] The chief censors were aided by subordinates in the districts or counties. Thus Germanicus, in 16 A.D., deputed his legates on this errand, when busy with the affairs of Germany (Tac. Annal. ii. 6).

A census in the provinces needed to be repeated from time to time, on account of changes in the state of property, and relief could thus be afforded to proprietors whose lands had suffered from natural causes.[2] The intervals between two censuses were of indefinite length. The system required, according to Zumpt's view, a threefold bureau — one in each of the census-districts of a province, another at the

[1] Zumpt in the work before us gives a number of examples of such legates for taking the census. There is a collection of them in Marquardt (Bekker-Marq.), iii. 2. 172.

[2] Zumpt cites Ulpian in the Digest, l. 15, de cens. 1, 2, as saying, vitia priorum censuum editis novis professionibus evanescunt.

capital of the province, and a third in Rome, where all the lists of the empire were deposited. A person employed in the census bureau at Lyons is named on an inscription; and the head officer at Rome is often mentioned under the appellations of *magister a censibus*, or *a censibus* alone, with whom *adjutores ad census* were associated. That the lists were deposited in one place of each province appears from the story already given of Caligula. That copies were deposited also at Rome, in a central bureau, is stated by more than one of the Christian writers; and Tertullian, at least, as a learned lawyer, with opportunities to know what was the usage of the empire, must be believed in this particular.

As to the mode of taxation in the provinces, we must not argue back from the usages under the Christian emperors to those of the early empire. In the later times, all land was divided into *juga* or *capita*, i.e. into plots not of equal extent, but of equal value — productiveness being taken into account. Each of these *juga* paid a certain amount of tribute. But Ulpian, at the end of the second century, in speaking of the *forma censualis*, says (Digest. l. 15, de cens. 1. 4) that it requires the name of each owner of a piece of land, in what state and district it lies, who are the two nearest proprietors, the extent of land cultivated within ten years, etc. In short, the system follows the person; and we cannot suppose that such an inventory was in practice by the side of one founded on the division of lands into *juga*. And, as the jurists of Ulpian's age mention no other *forma censualis*, it must have come down from the times of the first emperors. The later mode of taking the census connected the taxes with the *capita* of land; the earlier, as in the proper Roman census, with *capita* of persons. In another respect, the earlier form resembled the original Roman one. The Roman citizens were required to meet at Rome, and give in their own estimates of their property, with other information touching themselves and their families; and exceptions to this were known only in the times of the later republic, when absentees were indulged to present their reports to

the governors of the provinces. In the provinces, also, "the tax-payers, gathered in appointed places, reported, first, their age and parentage, then made statements of their property, probably under the two heads of landed and movable property."

The taxes must be supposed to have been unequal for different kinds of property and in different parts of the empire. The direct taxes were divided into two classes — land-taxes and capitation-taxes. By the latter was intended a payment in proportion to an estimated income, or an income-tax. So Zumpt. Others make two kinds of capitation taxes — a levy on movable property, and a poll-tax. Appian states that this tax in Syria and Cilicia amounted to one per cent on the assessment, but was higher for the Jews, owing to their restlessness under the sway of Rome.

There yet remain to be considered important points respecting the subjection of the empire to a census: How far was it uniform, and was it extended to those subsidiary kingdoms, like the realm of Herod at Christ's birth, which were Roman dependencies, but not properly under provincial governors? In regard to the first point, we may remark that it took a long time before all the parts of the empire were brought under one common system, the recently subjugated or more restless territories being treated differently from others which would tamely submit to harsh or novel burdens. The Batavi thus furnished troops, without paying taxes, into the second century; and the Frisi paid a tribute of hides, which seems to have required the interference of no Roman official. At length, in 47 A.D. (Tac. Annal. xi. 19), on their being brought into complete subjection, their civil state was changed, preparatory, no doubt, to a fuller introduction of Roman usages.

In parts of the empire, as in Mauritania, Thrace, Asia Minor, and Syria, tributary kingdoms existed under Roman supremacy in the time of the first emperors. The most important of these princes was Herod the Great. The relation of such kings to Rome was not strictly that of vassals;

they were rather kings by sufferance, confirmed in their authority by the powers at Rome, endured until policy required their deposition, and forced, probably, in all cases to pay tribute. They were subjects, and were generally admitted to Roman citizenship. Archelaus, Herod's son, was deposed by Augustus; the king of Mauritania by Caligula. The kings of Cappadocia and Thrace were accused before the senate under Tiberius, and the king of Thrace banished. The relation of the Jews to Rome is shown by the oath of allegiance, which they were forced to take to Augustus, as well as to Herod (Joseph. Antiq. xvii. § 2, 4), about the year 747 U.C., and which six thousand refusing to take were mulcted in their goods, and in part lost their lives. Herod was placed under the supervision of the legate of Syria. Having obtained permission of the then legate Saturninus to go with troops outside of his country into Arabia, he incurred the wrath of the emperor, who wrote to him that he had treated him as a friend hitherto, but now would treat him as a subject (*ὑπηκόῳ*, Joseph. Antiq. xvi. § 9, 3). After the death of Herod, the legate of Syria, Quintilius Varus, considered it his official duty to quell disturbances in Judaea, and the same is true of other provincial governors. So that Judaea, in a certain sense, may be said to have pertained to the Syrian province, while yet the family of Herod reigned. Zumpt aptly compares the relation of these kings to the provincial governors with that of the *liberae civitates*, which enjoyed a certain self-government under local law, while yet they were parts of the several provinces.

If a census were held in such a subject kingdom, the Roman heads of the province, according to all analogy, would exercise control over the arrangements, would receive returns, and transmit them to Rome. Hence we have a right to say that Luke's words, "When Quirinius was governor of Syria," contain more than a definition of time; they denote that the census was taken by his authority; whether the subordinates were Romans or natives, whether he directly exercised control, or the territorial king took this duty on himself.

But is there any instance of a census held in such half-independent kingdoms by Roman authority? The instances which Huschke insists upon, and to which we have given weight in another place, are set aside as insufficient by Zumpt, and with good reason.[1] He, however, finds two examples to prove that a Roman census existed in such territory. One is drawn from Judaea, already brought under the Roman census, after the deposition of Archelaus. In 41 A.D. Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, united Judaea and Samaria to the rest of his kingdom. Three years afterwards he died. It is incredible that the obligations to pay tribute according to the earlier census ceased when he became king, and then revived at his death. Another similar instance he finds in Commagene where, P. Vitellius, legate of Syria, in 36 A.D., adjusted the relations to Rome, "and doubtless introduced the Roman census." Two years afterwards Caligula gave that territory to the former kings, with a part of the Cilician coast. But it is incredible that the Roman institution should have ceased on the accession of the new king; the more so, as maritime Cilicia must have been under the census before. Nor would the Romans have been willing to make the dependent kings popular by allowing them to lighten the tribute at will.

There is, however, a distinction to be made between a tax on Roman principles, and one conducted by order of the Roman government. When the emperor decided to make a census of the empire, there is no proof that there was a uniformity through the various countries in any respect. The inquiry, then, is open as to the mode of conducting the Jewish census. Here the census of Quirinius, in 6 A.D., may serve as our guide. He came, according to Josephus (Antiq. xvii. end; xviii. § 1, 1), to make a census in Syria, and appeared, also, in Judaea, which was now annexed to Syria, *ἀποτιμησόμενός τε αὐτῶν τὰς οὐσίας*, "and to sell the property of Archelaus," the banished king. The same cen-

[1] See New Englander, u. s. pp. 714, 715, and note on p. 715.

sus was now set on foot in Judaea and in the rest of Syria. The resistance made to it by Judas of Galilee shows that it was in some respects new, as well as that it was carried through in those parts of the old realm of Herod which were allowed to go to his sons. Judas and his followers, by their watchword, that God alone was Governor and Lord, and that the census was outright slavery, show that a new step was now taken by the Roman government. The same thing is indicated by the words of Josephus (u. s.), that the Jews in general could hardly endure, *τὴν ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀπογραφαῖς ἀκρόασιν*,[1] but were kept quiet by the persuasions of the high-priest Joazar, and that *ἀπετίμων τὰ χρήματα*.

What, now, was the innovation? It may have been that the census was forced through directly by the Romans, whereas their own rulers had the charge of it before. Or it may have been that only a poll-tax had been levied before, so that the new census meant a land-tax to the inhabitants of Judaea. The former is the view of Wieseler;[2] the latter of Zumpt. This learned antiquarian brings forward no direct arguments of weight to prove his point. The capitation-tax existed during Christ's ministry (Matt. xxii. 17), but could not have been founded on the census of Quirinius in 6 A.D.; for only landholders, or, at least, property-holders, were then registered, as the words of Josephus imply (Antiq. xviii. § 1, 1). We must go back, then, to the first census, which took place at the birth of Christ, to account for this tax. Such is one of his arguments. But what if such a tax had been in use long before?

Let us look here, for a moment, at the taxes in Judaea after Pompey's conquest. That general laid heavy burdens on the nation; but the rulers may have collected tribute in their own way, and paid it over to the proper Roman officers. And yet, soon after, when Gabinius had been in the East,

[1] The Latin version has "nomen descriptionis aegre audire voluerant," could hardly endure to hear the registration spoken of; but the sense must be that they found the hearing before a Roman magistrate on occasion of the registration, or returns of property, grievous.

[2] In his Beiträge, mentioned at the beginning of this Article.

Cicero speaks of his exempting *vectigales multos et stipendiarios*, i.e. persons obliged to pay direct and indirect taxes in Syria and Judaea (de Provinc. Consular. v. 10). Caesar, among other regulations touching the Jews, enacted, when dictator the second time (707 U.C. = 47 B.C.), that they should pay a tribute on behalf of Jerusalem — Joppa being exempted from the law — every year except the sabbatical one, and that they should pay in Sidon, every second year, one fourth part of what they had sown (the crops from seed sown, not the fruits from their trees). Besides which, the old tithes were to be paid to Hyrcanus and his sons. The first words are so understood by Marquardt and by Zumpt, as if but one tax, payable once in seven years, were intended. But they do not take *κατ' ἐνιαυτόν* into consideration, nor that two distinct acts are plainly denoted by *ὅπως τελῶσι* and *ἵνα ἀποδιδῶσι*. The sense can only be that which Wieseler gives (Beiträge, p. 77), that one tax, a poll-tax, it must be, was payable six years out of seven, and another, amounting to one quarter of the sown crops, once every seven years, in the second year of the sabbatical cycle. These taxes are said to be payable for Jerusalem, that is, Jerusalem was the political community with which all parts of the land were in union.

After Caesar, and while Antony controlled the East, there was much arbitrary exaction, and under Herod the payment of tribute to Rome seems to have been kept up. The taxes under Herod were much complained of, and after his death a Jewish embassy at Rome begged to be delivered from their sovereigns, and to be annexed to Syria, as if they expected milder treatment from the emperor's legates than from the family of Herod. The Jews, then, were used to poll-taxes, property-taxes, and tithes. It cannot be shown that the institutions of Julius Caesar, mentioned above, had been essentially altered.

There is another consideration against Zumpt's view, which is not without its weight. If the census was only a personal one, with no descriptions or lists of property, it could be taken in one place as well as in another. Why

subject a man in Galilee to the necessity of reporting himself in Judaea? We confess, then, that Zumpt's arguments at this point do not appear to us convincing. We conceive of the matter somewhat thus: A census was held in Judaea, as a part of a general system under native officers, and yet according to the orders of the legate of Syria. It did not respect real property, on which the Roman system of taxation chiefly rested, but persons and personal property. According to ancient Jewish usage, which, however, we cannot illustrate by examples, lists were handed in at the place of the origin of one's family. Hence the journey of Joseph to Bethlehem. If it should be said that this is mythical, the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem according to prophecy, when his parents were of Galilee, being to be accounted for, we can only reply, that the argument destroys itself; for myths run in the channels of well-known usages. Whether Christ, therefore, was born at Bethlehem, or not, the myth itself proves that the journey to Bethlehem for the purpose of being registered there, on which many stumble, is consistent with the customs of the age in which the myth is supposed to have its birth.

If it be said that the Jews, at the time when Christ was born, must have in a great measure lost the knowledge of their tribes, and other subordinate divisions, we answer, that this will seem more natural to us than to a nation which thought everything of descent. There are no facts, however, so far as we are informed, to guide our judgment. And yet, when we call to mind that the orders or courses of priests were kept up, that Anna in Luke belonged to the tribe of Asher, that Josephus in his autobiography refers to his family genealogy, and that the tradition of descent from David must have been received among Christ's relatives, as is shown by what Eusebius tells us of the grandsons of Judas, Christ's brother, and of Domitian's jealousy, on account of their being of David's line,[1] we may well accept the possibility that the family genealogies were general among the Jews.

[1] Euseb. Hist. Eccl., iii. § 20. From Hegesippus.

That Mary went with Joseph in order to be registered, is probably, but not certainly, the meaning of the evangelist. Her going may be illustrated by what Ulpian says in the Digest (l. 15; de Cens. 1. 3), that in Syria men from fourteen and women from twelve, and until sixty-five, were subject to a poll-tax.[1] In the census of 6 A.D., as Zumpt remarks, there was no need of any one besides the head of the family being present to give in the returns of property. No one else appeared before the censor at Rome.

The conclusions we have reached thus far may be expressed in the following summary: That the text in Luke denotes that a census was taken in Judaea when Quirinius was governor of Syria; that he was emperor's legate in that province twice — the first time in, or soon after, 750 U.C.; that the policy of the empire under Augustus, and a variety of facts, look towards a general provincial census and a common system in all quarters; that the later writers, who alone speak directly of such a census, and who are received as testimony by the best archaeologists of the day, are supported in what they say by various considerations, although if they stood alone we must confess that we should not have attached much weight to their authority; that censuses, differing in some respects from one another, were going on, soon after the time when we may suppose the policy to have been settled and expressed in an edict, in many lands; that the subject kingdoms paid tribute to Rome, and the subject kings were rulers by Roman appointment, under the inspection of legates; that Judaea had long been taxed, and some kind of census can have been nothing new there; that Zumpt fails to show to our satisfaction that the registration at this time was simply for the purpose of a capitation-tax; and that, as to Joseph's going to Bethlehem to be registered, the fact must rest mainly on the authority of Luke, for we

[1] Ulpian's words are aetatem in censendo significare necesse est, quia quibusdam aetas tribuit ne tributo onerentur; veluti in Syriis a quatuordecim annis masculi, a duodecim feminae usque ad sexajesimum quintum annum tributo capitis obligantur. Aetas autem spectatur censendi tempore.

possess scarcely any other materials from which to form a judgment.

These conclusions are always met by the suspicion that our authorities would have informed us of such a census had it been true. To this we have already replied. We only add, that Josephus is meagre through the ten years of Archelaus, and Dion Cassius deserts us at the epoch we are considering, through the deficiencies of his text; that the historians take little interest in measures of administration, especially in those which concerned the provinces; that Josephus, in the history of the Jewish war, makes no mention of so memorable event as the census of 6 A.D.; that, if the general measurements of the empire, a fact conceded by all scholars, are never spoken of by the historians, much more might a census, general in its plan, but extending through years and putting on new shapes in accordance with the nationalities affected by it, never appear among the recorded events of the age. Nor is this fact at all unique.[1]

We cannot omit adding that the position of some critics is an unjust one towards the evangelist Luke. He is not on the stand to be convicted of falsehood if others do not mention what he narrates, but he is an independent witness. And the tendency of criticism is ever to put in a clearer light his accuracy in details. That such a writer should, as some of the looser critics think, have confounded the census of 6 A.D., ten years after Herod's death, with an event which he attributes to the reign of Herod, and in the next chapter give dates of our Lord's entrance on his ministry and of his age which require us to carry his birth back to the life-time of Herod, seems, to say the least, highly improbable.

We must speak of one point more, before closing this part of our subject, which relates to the first two of the three divisions of Zumpt's work. In what sense is the expression "when Cyrenius was governor of Syria" to be taken? It would most naturally be understood of his being the emperor's ordinary legate in that province, or it might be

[1] Compare New Englander, u. s. pp. 716, 717.

explained as referring to a special legation to take the census. We have already seen that the most important men of the empire were so employed, and this solution is approved by Cardinal Norisius, by Dr. Edward Robinson, by Meyer in his commentary, and others.[1] But, on the other hand, if this were intended by the evangelist, and he had completely accurate knowledge as to the capacity in which Quirinius served, we should rather look for *ἡγεμονεύοντος ἐν Συρίᾳ*, than for the words as they stand. The other explanation, which meets with favor from Zumpt, and which we have preferred in another place, has more to commend it. For we have now the fact established, which was unknown to the earlier scholars, that Quirinius was governor of Syria, or imperial legate, soon after Herod's death. This increases the probability that no special legation was thought of. But further, no reason appears why the usual presiding officer in Syria could not superintend a census which did not touch landed property, as easily as an extraordinary appointee.

But here a new difficulty arises. Quirinius began his first legation in Syria after Herod's death, and our Lord, according to the narrative in Matthew, was born some time before Herod's death. We know also, from Tacitus and Josephus, that Quintilius Varus continued in his legation through part of the summer of 750 U.C. which followed the death of Herod. At first view, therefore, nothing is gained for the defense of the credibility of Luke ii. 2 by the new light on the relations of Quirinius. We can only reconcile this fact with what Luke states on the supposition that the census began some time before, but was not finished until in or after 750 U.C.

Evidence for an earlier commencement of this census is found in a passage of Tertullian's treatise against Marcion (iv. 19). In refuting the position of the Marcionites that Christ was not really born, he has occasion to refer to the proofs of his birth. Here he says: "sed et census constat actos sub Augusto tunc (nunc in the MSS.) in Judaea per

[1] Compare New Englander, pp. 698, 720.

Sentium Saturninum, apud quos genus ejus inquirere potuissent." In three other passages he speaks of this census. In one of them he has the words "de censu—quem testem fidelissimum dominicae nativitatis Romana archiva custodiunt" (adv. Marcion. iv. § 7). In the others (ib. iv. § 36, and adv. Judaeos, § 9) he has no doubt that the Jews were still divided into "tribus et populos et familias et domos," and that Mary was registered on the census books "apud Romanos." In these particulars, though he was a learned lawyer and lived in Rome part of his life, he might possibly be under a mistake. But when he appears to contradict the evangelist Luke, how could he be under any bias arising from his faith in the Gospel narrative? Nor can he have got at the date he assigns to the census by calculations, for he goes further back for the census than his own reckoning of the date of Christ's death would carry him. This information then is historical, and is justly regarded by the best modern scholars as of the highest importance. Its whole bearing will appear by and by. At present we content ourselves with remarking that, if Sentius left his presidency, as the coins of Quintilius Varus show, in 747 U.C. = 7 B.C. or in the earlier part of the next year, and if Quirinius is thrust down to 750 U.C., or even later, the only way of reconciling Tertullian and Luke is to suppose the census to have moved slowly, or to have been for some reason or other intermitted, and to have been continued and closed by the active, vigorous Quirinius. This pointed him out as the proper person for taking the census of 6 A.D., and with reference to this work the very unusual step was taken of appointing the same man the second time governor of the same province.

Christ, then, was born when Sentius was legate of Syria, at the latest, in 748 U.C. or six years, and possibly earlier, seven or eight years, before the Christian era. He was born at the time of a census then begun, afterwards completed under the presidency of Quirinius. This is the important starting point of Zumpt in the more immediate inquiry into the date of our Lord's birth. The result is not new with him, but

has obtained extensive currency since San Clemente advocated it in 1792. Ideler the astronomer and chronologist, Hoeck the historian of Rome, to mention no others, have given it their support. If it should be found to harmonize best with other passages of scripture which with more or less definiteness afford us dates in our Lord's life, it would commend itself as historically true; otherwise we must try to find some other date for the nativity, or confess that the record affords us no means for a satisfactory solution.

In the first chapter of the third part of his work, Mr. Zumpt examines the relations of the narrative of the murder of the innocents to the Saviour's birth, and in the sixth or last the astronomical evidence given by the star which sent the wise men into Judaea. We shall consider these together, as they belong together. We are aware of the objections which may be brought against the historical truth of this account, but it is not our part to defend its credibility. We believe that the events suggested the use of prophecy and that prophecy did not shape and create the narrative. And the substantial truth of the account will perhaps best appear when we find that real events lay at its foundation.

The evangelist Matthew, who says nothing of the census nor of Joseph's having lived in Nazareth, but regards him as having the intention even when in Egypt to return to Judaea and not to Galilee, agrees with Luke in placing the nativity at Bethlehem. After the birth of Jesus (γεννηθέντος) magi from the East come to Jerusalem with the story that they had seen the star of the king of the Jews, and desire to know where is his birth-place. Herod after consultation directs them to Bethlehem, as being the place foretold by the prophet Micah; and having obtained in private exact information from them as to the time of the star's appearance, requested them to report to him what they should learn, that he too might worship the king. The star led their way to where the child was. Instead of returning to Jerusalem after having seen and worshipped. they went home another way, and Herod, on being mocked by them, killed all the children

in the district of Bethlehem that were under two years of age. Meanwhile Joseph, warned in a dream, fled with Mary and the child into Egypt, where he remained until after the death of Herod. But on his divinely directed return he went into Galilee to settle, because there he would be beyond the jurisdiction of Archelaus whom he dreaded.

The star spoken of, in this narrative of a highly popular cast, might be a star properly so called, or a comet, or a special meteoric body. But the circumstance that the star προῆγεν αὐτούς, until it stood over the place where Jesus was, would not apply to a star or a comet so well as to a body nearer the earth. And yet, if it should be found that there were remarkable appearances in the heavens, at the time to which on other grounds we might refer the birth of Christ, it would be fair to use such phenomena in our argument; and perhaps the argument would be the stronger if there were minor differences between the calculations of exact science and the tradition proceeding from uninstructed minds.

Ideler, in his well-known manual of Mathematical and Technical Chronology (Berlin, 1826, vol. ii. 399–410), has given a careful and extensive account of this "star," which he explains as the conjunction, or repeated conjunctions, of Jupiter and Saturn. If our limits permitted we should be glad to give in English the whole of his remarks on this subject; but we must content ourselves with an abstract of moderate length.

Kepler in 1603 and 1604 noticed this conjunction. In the spring of the latter year Mars came near to the two other planets, and in the autumn he noticed a body like a fixed star associated with the two planets "near the eastern foot of Serpentarius," and which after reaching a considerable brightness disappeared without a trace. He was led by this to reflect on the "star in the east," and in 1606 published at Prague a treatise[1] in which he expressed the opinion that this star denoted the conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter, and

[1] De Stella nova in pede Serpentarii.

some other extraordinary star, in regard to whose nature he does not go into particulars. Making the best calculations he could with the tables of that day, he ascertained three conjunctions of the two planets in 747 U.C. = 7 B.C., within the constellation Pisces, near to Aries. This rare conjunction in so important a part of the zodiac would, he thought, naturally excite the wonder of astrologers, particularly if an extraordinary star accompanied them, and they could hardly fail to look for some remarkable event. He was induced in 1606 by his calculations to write a treatise *de Jesu Christi, servatoris nostri, vero anno natalitio*, in which he advocated 748 U.C. = 6 B.C. as the true birth-year; and when this was attacked by Seth Calvisius in 1613, he published a more extensive and exhaustive work in its defence.[1]

Kepler's views seem to have been almost forgotten, when Münter, bishop of Seeland in Denmark, revived them in 1821, having found a passage in Abarbanel's Commentary on Daniel which attaches great consequences to a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation Pisces. Schubert, of St. Petersburg, a little afterward, in his miscellaneous writings, says that he calculated the motions of the two planets, and found the results to be those mentioned by Münter in regard to a conjunction about the time of Christ's birth. Of these calculations nothing is known, and Schubert seems to regard Münter as the originator of the hypothesis. Ideler now looked into the matter, and we give his conclusions, reached with all care, according to Delambre's Tables of Jupiter and Saturn, in his own words: "The results are remarkable enough. The planets came in the year 747 U.C. into conjunction for the first time on the twenty-ninth of May in the twentieth degree of Pisces. They stood together at that time, in the morning sky, before sunrise, and were, as their ascending nodes lay in one and the same sign, only one degree distant from one

[1] De vero anno quo aeternus Dei filius humanam naturam in utero benedictae virginis assumpsit, Frankfort, 1613, of which Ideler says that in the main points of the investigation he left but small gleanings for his successors.

another. Jupiter passed by Saturn to the north; about the middle of September both came into opposition with the sun about midnight in the south, Saturn on the thirteenth, Jupiter on the fifteenth. Their difference of longitude was then one degree and a half. Both were retrograde, and were coming together anew. On the twenty-seventh of October a second conjunction took place, in the sixteenth degree of Pisces, and on the twelfth of November, when Jupiter was again moving eastward, there was a third conjunction, in the fifteenth degree of the same sign. In the two last conjunctions the difference of latitude amounted to only about one degree, so that for a weak eye the one planet came almost within the apparent disk (zerstreuungskreis) of the other, and hence the two might appear as a single star."

Thus wrote Ideler in his Handbuch, his principal work on Chronology, in 1826. Before his Lehrbuch appeared, in 1831, the calculations were revised, and the three conjunctions were determined to have fallen on May twenty-ninth, October first, and December fifth.

What adds interest to these remarkable results is the way in which Abarbanel speaks of this celestial phenomenon in its bearings on Jewish history. After saying that the most important of human events depend on the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, he adds that no such conjunction was more important than that which took place in the year 2365 of the creation, three years before the birth of Moses, in the sign of Pisces. This sign, he goes on to say, is the especial constellation of the Israelites. "Recently," he adds at the close of the passage [in the year 5224 of the creation, or 1463 of our era], "occurred one of the most momentous conjunctions of the two planets in Pisces, and it is not to be doubted that it will be equal [in importance] to that seen at the time of Moses, and will bring on the birth of the divine man, the Messiah."

We have no means of knowing how old this opinion was which Abarbanel expresses, nor is it likely that the Jews so interpreted the planets in Christ's time, for astrology was

discouraged and censured. Moreover the magi brought news to Jerusalem which disturbed the minds of men, so that they could not have attached much importance to such a conjunction before. But it is quite possible that in the home of astrology the appearance betokened a great event, and that the magi shared in an opinion pervading the East in regard to a king who should arise in Israel.

In applying this celestial phenomenon to the narrative of events, we may suppose the conjunction in May 747 = 7, to have startled the magi, and set them in motion. They arrive at Jerusalem in the autumn. About the time of the second conjunction they are on their way by night to Bethlehem, and the "star" seemed to go before them, until it stood over the place where Christ was born. The birth, according to this arrangement of particulars, would be betokened in May, and they saw the infant in October, or about two years before the commonly received date of the nativity.[1]

We are aware of the difficulties that attend this explanation. The text speaks of an ἀστήρ, not of an ἄστρον, in explanation of which Ideler's remark, that the planets were confounded in each other's rays, is scarcely satisfactory. Moreover, the explanation requires that the advance of the star before the wise men, until it stood over the place where the child was, be qualified very much to bring it down to scientific truth. In the narrative the impression on excited minds, rather than the real motion of the heavenly bodies, would thus be represented, — the subjective, rather than the objective.

An explanation given by Wieseler of these occurrences deserves brief mention here. The wise men were roused into expectation of some great event which was to happen in Judaea by the phenomena of 747. Still, for some reason, they did not go to Judaea until a few month before Herod's death. Then a comet, — the same that Pingré mentions as seen in China in the third or fourth year before our present

[1] We give here our own, and not Zumpt's or Ideler's, adjustment of the order of events.

era — guided them on their evening way to Bethlehem. Of comets described by the Chinese, Pingré mentions two, contemporaneous nearly with 750, the received date of our Lord's birth. One appeared about the vernal equinox in 4 B.C. = 750 U.C., in the head of Capricorn, and was visible seventy days. Another was seen in 4 B.C., or more probably in 3 B.C., in April or May. It appeared near Alpha of Aquila, to the north of a Chinese constellation which forms part of our Capricorn. "This comet," says Pingré, "if it appeared in the year 4 B.C. must have been the same with the first-mentioned comet assigned to the year preceding." [1]

The same difficulties press on this explanation which have been urged against the other, with the additional ones that the comet, considering the brief time of its appearance, could not well have been the star seen in the east; that if it appeared in 3 B.C. = 751 U.C., or even in the spring of 4 = 750, it was too late to be contemporaneous with an event occurring a number of weeks, at least, before the death of Herod; and that no reason can be assigned for the delay of the two years between the conjunction and the comet's appearance, before the wise men started on their journey.

The murder of the innocents, although not mentioned by Josephus, who doubtless has omitted to speak of many other crimes of Herod the Great, is supported by historical evidence, independent of the account in Matthew. The Latin writer Macrobius, of the fifth century, among other sayings of Augustus, gives us the following anecdote: "Cum audisset inter pueros, quos in Syria Herodes, rex Judaeorum, intra bimatum jussit interfici, filium quoque ejus occisum, ait; melius est Herodis porcum esse quam filium" (Saturnalia ii. 4). Macrobius was probably a pagan,[2] and the story shows no dependence on the account in Matthew. He says in Syria, not in Bethlehem. A particular is added on which the point of the speech turns, which is not in the Gospel, and yet *intra bimatum* clearly shows that the same fact lies at

[1] Cometographie, i. 281. Paris, 1783.

[2] See the proleg. iv. § 6, to the edition of Macrobius by L. Janus.

the base of both accounts. The speech is wholly in character for Augustus, and it is found in Macrobius in company with many other bon-mots of the emperor. We concede, of course, the possibility that a narrative in the Gospels in the course of time may have passed into general currency, and have coalesced with a joke of Augustus really uttered on another occasion. But such possibilities ought not to weigh against even a little historical evidence. We regard, therefore, the anecdote as confirmatory of the narrative. But we cannot go so far as Mr. Zumpt does, who, on the authority of the anecdote, believes that a young son of Herod was among the children slain at Bethlehem. We think it more natural to conceive of the anecdote as uniting together two events which had originally no connection, the death of a son of Herod and the slaughter at Bethlehem. And history here is impartial towards the claims of different years, for we have the death of Herod's son Antipater by Herod's orders, a little before his own death in 750, and that of his two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, by his procurement, not long before Sentius Saturninus left his office of legate in 747.

But be all this as it may, the only bearing of this part of Matthew's narrative on the time of the nativity is to show that some time must have elapsed between that event and the death of Herod. The magi arrive in Jerusalem after the nativity, then succeed their stay there, the flight into Egypt, and the residence in that country. But how long a time was occupied by these events it is idle to conjecture and impossible to discover.

Mr. Zumpt, in another chapter, examines the subject of a general peace through the world in the time of Augustus, and its bearing on the question of our Lord's birth. Such a general peace is referred to by later Christian Fathers, and a tradition of the Latin church declares that Christ was born *toto orbe in pace composito*. San Clemente, having assigned the nativity to the presidency of Sentius Saturninus, uses this argument in deciding on 7 B.C. = 747 U.C., as the true birth-year. His views are given by Ideler, in his larger

work on Chronology (ii. 397–398). But the whole argument is a very weak one. The tradition itself seems to depend on a misunderstanding of the words "peace on earth," in the Gospel of Luke. There were three occasions on which Janus was closed at Rome during the reign of Augustus, or, to use the exact expression of that emperor, on the Ancyra marbles, "three times in my principate did the senate decree that Janus Quirinius should be closed." The first closure was in 725 U.C. = 29 B.C., soon after the victory at Actium; the second in 729 = 25; for the third a decree was passed in 744 = 10, which did not take effect on account of a rebellion of the Dacians. Zumpt holds that soon after that rebellion, on the return of Augustus to Rome, in the year 9 B.C., there was an actual closure. Mommsen, in his commentary on the above-mentioned marbles,[1]—after remarking that if Augustus referred to this decree of the senate, which was hindered in its execution by the Dacian rebellion, he was not entirely honest in his statement, and thus deceives Suetonius, who repeats it,—says that he is inclined to believe the reference to be to a later decree. From the termination of the German wars of Drusus and Tiberius, down to the year 753 U.C. = 1 B.C., when C. Caesar went forth to the Armenian war, there was such a quiet of the Roman arms, that it seems as if Janus might reasonably have been closed. But the annals of Dion Cassius are deficient for 748–752, and the narration of the closure of Janus the third time may have fallen out of his text with other particulars. Add to this that Orosius cites Tacitus as saying that Janus was opened *sene Augusto*, which could not have been said, if Janus was opened a little after 729, and remained so until the death of Augustus. Perhaps Orosius is right when he says that Janus was closed the third time in the reign of Augustus in 752, etc. Thus far Mommsen. But this was after the death of Herod, and thus could by no possibility coincide with the year of the nativity.

The remainder of Zumpt's Essay is occupied with an

[1] Res gestae divi Augusti, comment, p. 32. Comp. Orosius, vi. 22, vii. 3.

examination of the dates in Luke iii. 1, 23 and John ii. 20, with an inquiry into the year of our Lord's death, and with an attempt to reconcile seeming contradictions in the chronology. In the chapter of Luke we have two dates — *the fifteenth year of Tiberius*, as the time when the "word of the Lord came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness," and in the words that "Jesus himself was ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν τριάκοντα ἀρχόμενος," etc., the statement that Jesus *was about thirty* when he began his public ministry. For the sake of completeness, two explanations of the first of these verses may be mentioned, not because of their intrinsic value, but on account of the standing of their authors. Difficulties of chronology force us, thinks San Clemente, to refer the fifteenth year of Tiberius, as several of the Fathers do, not to John's call into his prophetical office, but to Christ's suffering and death. Ideler justly calls this a paradoxical opinion, but leaves the decision of it to the interpreters of scripture.[1] It seems to us so impossible for any honest interpreter to hold this opinion that we will not spend time in refuting it. Wieseler, again (Synopse 196), refers the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and the thirtieth year of Christ's life, not to the beginning of John's ministry, but to his imprisonment by the tetrarch Herod. But this is in the highest degree arbitrary and unnatural. The sense, then, can only be that John began his ministry when Tiberius was in the fifteenth year of his reign; and the evangelist introduces John's imprisonment only to bring what he says of him to a fit close. The first year of Tiberius — taking it for granted, at present, that no other reckoning will stand — began at the death of Augustus, which occurred August 19, 767 U.C. = 14 A.D., and his fifteenth year began the same day of 781 = 28. If, then, Luke speaks with accuracy, John began to preach between August 19, A.D. 28, and August 19, A.D. 29.

[1] Handbuch, ii. 418, 419. Not having access to a copy of San Clemente's work, we get our notices from others. The arguments for this opinion are in a dissertation appended to his work *de vulgaris aerae emendatione*.

But what sense are we to attach to v. 23, which our translators render: "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age"? Clearly there is something absurd in saying that a person began to be *about* such an age; and there is great harshness in taking ἦν with ἀρχόμενος, — not to say that to join the participle ὤν with this clause, instead of the following one, as if the sense were, "Jesus was beginning to be about thirty," is almost unendurable. The explanation now commonly received — that ἀρχόμενος denotes when he began his ministry — although itself not entirely free from objection, as we should look for some limiting noun with the participle, is by far preferable to any other.[1]

Christ, then, was about thirty at his baptism. But how long this was after the beginning of John's ministry we have no means of ascertaining. From the narrative we may gather, with some confidence, that an interval of but a few months elapsed between the two events. It will be safe to say, that Christ was about thirty in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, or, at least, toward the latter part of it.

The passage in John ii. 20 we shall assume to mean, not that it took forty-six years to *finish* the Temple, from the time when Herod began its reconstruction — for it was not finished until years afterward — but that from the time when the reconstruction began until the date of Christ's visit to Jerusalem forty-six years had elapsed. As this is the received explanation, it will not be necessary to support it. Now, according to Josephus (Antiq. xv. 11, 1), Herod entered on this work in the eighteenth year of his reign. But there are two dates of the commencement of Herod's reign given by Josephus, who speaks of both in Antiq. xvii. 8, 1, where he says that Herod reigned "after he slew Antigonus thirty-four years, but after his appointment by the Romans thirty-seven years." The death of Antigonus, with the capture of

[1] Meyer's solution is, that the *office* of Christ, now having its commencement, is implied in the descent of the Spirit, and in the words, "thou art my beloved Son," in v. 20.

Jerusalem by Sossius, Antony's legate, occurred, according to the same author, when Marcus Agrippa and L. Caninius Gallus were consuls, 717 U.C. = 37 B.C. Clinton (Fasti Hellen. iii. 220) assigns the capture of Jerusalem to the end of 38 B.C.; but there is, we believe, no material disagreement among chronologists as to referring the real commencement of the reign to 37 B.C.[1] A difficulty is, indeed, presented by a passage of the Jewish War (i. 21, 1), where Josephus mentions the fifteenth year of Herod as the year when the rebuilding of the Temple was begun. No solution of the difficulty appears so probable as to suppose a mistake of the text, or of memory, in the last-mentioned work. This being admitted, the rebuilding began in 734 U.C. = 20 B.C., and forty-six full years from this time will reach into 780 U.C. = 27 A.D. But the narrative of Josephus (Antiq. xv. 10, 3) makes the emperor Augustus to have visited Syria "after the seventeenth year of Herod's reign had passed," and to have spent some time with Herod. Some time elapsed subsequent to his departure before Herod began the building of the Temple. Moreover, Augustus spent the winter of 734 = 20 in Samos, and could not have gone into Judaea before spring.[2] We may, then, place the commencement of the work on the new Temple, as Zumpt does, at the end of 20, or the beginning of 19 B.C. Forty-six years from this time will end in 27 or 28 A.D. If the Jews, when they said forty-six years, meant the forty-sixth, or forty-five and a part of another, the event could happen in 27 B.C., but not earlier.

We have here three vague expressions of time — the "fifteenth year of Tiberius," "about thirty years of age," "forty-six" years, or it may be the forty-sixth year, since Herod's Temple began, — not to speak of the uncertainty, as to the interval between Christ's baptism and his first subsequent passover at Jerusalem. But this is not the most

[1] Compare Clinton, u. s. under the year 4 B.C., Zumpt's work now reviewed, p. 252, Drumann's Röm. Gesch. i. 446.

[2] Compare Clinton, u. s., sub anno 20 B.C.

noteworthy point, when we compare the two evangelists. Luke places the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry after the nineteenth of August, 781 U.C. = 28 A.D., when the fifteenth year of Tiberius began, and John places the visit of our Lord at the passover, in the spring of the same year. But, if Christ was at Jerusalem, after his baptism, in the spring of 28 A.D., he must have been baptized in 27 A.D., and John the Baptist began his course still earlier in the same year. There is such a discrepance between these accounts that they are not easily reconciled. Especially is that mode of reconciliation to be rejected which assumes that at the time of Christ's conversation, recorded in John ii. 20, there had been an interruption in the building of the Temple, allowing us to add one or two years to our reckoning.

The imprisonment and death of John the Baptist are thought by some to furnish reliable dates for our Lord's life. Mr. Zumpt proceeds to examine this point. The argument from this source is the following: The marriage of Herod Antipas *must* have taken place not long before John declared it unlawful. Then followed his apprehension and murder. Next, Antipas was defeated by Aretas King of the Arabians, and this the people regarded as a retribution for his treatment of John. The retribution *must* have occurred soon after the crime. But the defeat was in 36 A.D., therefore John was beheaded not a great while before that year. The assumptions here are so palpable as to take away all chronological value from the argument. The marriage may have occurred, and Mr. Zumpt tries to prove that it did occur, long before John came into the hands of Herod Antipas. And the retribution may have followed the crime after a long interval. The only safe conclusion is that of Ewald and Zumpt, that the Baptist's life needs to be determined by our Lord's death, and of itself furnishes no date on which we can rely.[1]

[1] Among recent writers Keim uses and makes much of the argument spoken of in the text.

If the conclusions respecting the life and death of our Lord drawn from the story of John the Baptist are unsafe, we cannot regard as much safer one of Zumpt's arguments. It is drawn from the silence of the Gospels, especially that of Luke, in regard to legates of Syria during the public ministry of Christ. It is strange, he thinks, that Luke makes no mention of the provincial governor, when he speaks of princes in neighboring lands, and of the high priests in iii. 1; and there are other occasions when we might expect his name to be introduced. Now the fact is, that practically there was no president of Syria during a large part of the reign of Tiberius. Soon after 19 A.D. L. Aelius Lamia nominally held the office, but was detained in Rome, through the jealousy of Tiberius, until, in 32 A.D., L. Pomponius Flaccus took his place; he having been made praefect of the city. Pomponius died near the end of 33 A.D., when a new interregnum took place, until, in 35 A.D., L. Vitellius personally appeared as legate in the province. The Roman administration in the most important province of the empire was carried on through the interregna by the ordinary legates and helpers of the provincial governor. Now, Zumpt thinks that this absence of the governor of Syria will account for the silence respecting him, and will explain, for instance, why Pilate did not appeal to him when urged to condemn Christ. That event must have taken place, then, on or before 32 A.D. But all this is very unsatisfactory. The procurator had the *jus gladii;* what need was there of calling in or appealing to the governor or legate, who, although Judaea was now annexed to Syria, yet had little to do with its internal affairs, unless his military assistance was required? Felix and Festus did not appeal to the legate of Syria in the matter of Paul, nor is any legate of Syria spoken of in the Acts. In short, the argument from silence is peculiarly weak in this case, where we see no occasion for mentioning the Syrian governor, unless it be in Luke iii. 1; and if Zumpt's reason for his not being introduced there should be received, it would be little

to the point. If Lamia was then absent, the length of Christ's ministry and the time of his death remain uncertain.

All attempts to define the year of Christ's death from the number of passovers which he kept at Jerusalem, or from calculating in what year between 28 and 37 the day of passover fell on Friday, or on one of the last days of the week, Mr. Zumpt dismisses as leading to no certain result. There is, however, a tradition which, in common with many other writers, he regards as having a historical basis. The death of Christ was likely to be remembered, and to pass into tradition; for it was a great event to his disciples, and he had many of them. They might recollect when Pilate left his procuratorship, how many years had past since he condemned their Master. Some of them would be apt to remember in what year of the emperor it was, or in whose consulship; and some of them at an early date would be able to reduce it to chronological forms. It is all otherwise in respect to his birth, which, until he became known as a great teacher, few would inquire about, and the tradition of which would remain with his mother and with others unacquainted with history. They would know how old he was, but not in what year of Augustus he was born.

Now, there is such a tradition, or, at least, a mention of the year of Christ's death, found in many of the Christian writers, especially the Latin ones; the earliest of whom is Tertullian. In his treatise against the Jews (chap. 8) he is showing the fulfilment of the prophecy contained in the ninth chapter of Daniel, and has occasion, on this account, to enter into numerous chronological details. Of the death of our Lord he says: "Hujus [Tiberii] quinto decimo anno imperii passus est Christus, annos habens quasi triaginta cum pateretur." And again, a little after, he adds: "Quae passio hujus exterminii[1] intra tempor lxx. hebdomadarum

[1] This word alludes to the Latin translation of Daniel ix. 1, 2, 21–27, which precedes the passages quoted. Exterminii means, the cutting off, i.e. by which the Messiah was cut off, as well as to the words of Psalm xxii. 17, likewise cited, "exterminaverunt manus meas et pedes."

perfecta est sub Tiberio Caesare, Coss. Rubellio Gemino et Rufio [Fufio] Gemino, mense Martio, temporibus paschae, die viii. Calendarum Aprilium, die prima azymorum, quo agnum ut occiderent ad vesperam a Moyse fuerat praeceptum." This date is repeated by many Latin Christian writers, as Lactantius, Augustine, and Sulpicius Severus.[1] The Greek writers do not mention the consuls, the two Gemini, as they are often called; but Clement of Alexandria places the baptism and passion both in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and Origen reckons forty-two years from Christ's death to the destruction of Jerusalem, which gives the same date; or rather forty-one years and six months carry us back from the latter event to the passover of the fifteenth of Tiberius. Other opinions we have no leisure nor occasion to unfold.

Now, the question may be asked: Was the fifteenth of Tiberius the result of calculation? Or was it a tradition that Christ suffered in this year? And were the consuls inserted by some one who found by a chronological process that they belonged to the fifteenth year of Tiberius, or at least held office during the latter part of it. Zumpt contends that the tradition started from the names of the consuls, and that afterwards the year of Tiberius was added. He tries to show — strangely, as it appears to us — that, in the first cited passage from Tertullian, the words "hujus quinto decimo anno imperii passus est Christus" refer, not to his passion, but to his humiliation, or, to cite his own words: "In Tiberius 15 Regierungsjahre und selber ungefähr 30 Jahre alt habe er etwa am ende seines öffentlichen Lehramtes gestanden."[2] The fact that the date of the fifteenth year

[1] See Clinton Fasti Romani. i. 12, for copious citations.

[2] In another place, adv. Marcion, i. 15, Tertullian has these words, "at nunc quale est ut dominus anno XII Tiberii Caesaris revelatus sit," that is, entered on his public ministry as the Messiah. XII is in all the codices. Tertullian must have reckoned back three years from the 15th of Tiberius, his date for the crucifixion, and allowed three years for the length of the ministry of Christ. In the present passage he seems to be following another interpretation of Luke. In this place there are other errors of calculation, as that Christ was born in the

of Tiberius is common to both Western and Eastern writers, while the consuls are not much, if at all, mentioned by the latter, shows that this was the earliest form of the tradition, if such it may be called, and the consuls would easily be added by Western Christians. But was this a tradition, or was it somehow obtained by a false interpretation of Luke iii. 1: "Now in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar"? Without stopping to examine this question, we only say, that a tradition of such a year for Christ's death may have existed, that the tradition would encounter the date in Luke of the Baptist's entrance into his ministry, and make the duration of Christ's ministry very short; in fact, that there would thus be two dates for these two events falling within the same year — the one obtained from Luke, and the other from tradition — which clashed with one another, and subjected those who sought to reconcile them to most untenable explanations; such as the explanation, entirely contrary to the narrative of John, that Christ's work between his baptism and his passion only lasted one year. This will, at least, explain the perplexity of the church writers. Luke and the other evangelists should have taught them that, if John the Baptist began to preach in the fifteenth of Tiberius, and Christ was baptized some time afterward, and spent forty days in the wilderness before entering on his public ministry, he could by no possibility have suffered within the same year. Why, then, did they in great numbers assign this year to the passion? Clearly not because they found it in Luke iii. They would rather be led, on short reflection, to fix upon another year for that very reason. We conclude, then, that this date for the passion was a settled fact in their minds, which they derived from outside of the Gospel narrative, and attempted in vain to reconcile with the narrative itself. And it may be true that such a tradition respecting the year of the passion existed, while there was none touching

forty-first year after the year of Cleopatra's death. As she died in or near August 29, 724 U.C. = 30 B.C., forty full years extend to August 29, 764 U.C. The birth, then, is in 764 or 765 U.C. = 11 or 12 A.D.

the day; so that Tertullian may have drawn from calculation from some other source the wrong day, when he erroneously assigns that event to the eighth day before the Calends of April.

But, if Christ died at the passover in 29 A.D., and in the fifteenth of Tiberius, which ended August 19, 29 A.D. = 782, we fall into hopeless perplexity. According to Luke, Christ was baptized in that year, and thus his whole ministry could have lasted but a few months; at the most, about six. Clearly, therefore, the passion must be put forward, or Luke meant something else by the fifteenth of Tiberius than is usually derived from his words. So, also, if Christ was about thirty years old in 29 A.D., and was born, as is implied even in Luke's Gospel, during the life of Herod the Great, we have another, although a smaller, difficulty to meet. From the beginning of 750 U.C., when Herod died, to the beginning of 782 U.C. = 29 A.D., is thirty-two years; so that Luke ought to have said about thirty-two, rather than about thirty. And a third difficulty lies in the fact that, according to John's account, the first visit of Christ to Jerusalem is to be assigned to the spring of 27 or 28 A.D., that is, in either case before Luke makes even the public ministry of John the Baptist to have begun.

The solution of these difficulties Mr. Zumpt finds in a hypothesis first proposed by Nicholas Mann, Master of the Charter House, in London. He published his treatise first in 1733, in English, and then in Latin, in 1742, at London. The Latin title is: "De veris annis Jesu Christi natali et emortuali dissertationes duo chronologicae." The hypothesis is, that an epoch for the reign of Tiberius, prior to that ordinarily followed afterwards, was in vogue, more especially in the Orient; and the points to be supported are, that such different dates for the commencement of the reigns of the two first emperors grew out of the nature of their power, and were in actual use; that a date some three years earlier than August 19, 14 A.D. is justified by the events of the time; and that we thus completely reconcile the various chronological indications which are in our possession.

Differences in counting the years of the emperor Augustus naturally arise out of the nature of his powers, which were an aggregation of powers formerly imparted to different magistrates. Thus he was invested with imperatorial, general, proconsular, and tribunician power; he was princeps senatus, censor morum, and had the title of Augustus conferred on him. These attributes came to him, not all at once, but one by one, and gradually. Moreover, events in his life which secured his power became convenient eras. As many as eight such ways of computing his reign have been traced.[1]

There were the same reasons for variations in computing the reign of Tiberius. Power came to him, during the life of his step-father, by degrees; he succeeded to Augustus, by general consent, on his death, but was not confirmed in his government and honors until some weeks after that event. One such reckoning, departing from the ordinary date, is found on Egyptian coins, which count his years from 4 A.D., when he was adopted by Augustus and invested with the tribunician power for five years.[2] It must be admitted, however, that this is the only case of the kind known to us. If there were any others, they were soon abandoned for the reckoning which prevailed at Rome. There, as the government became established, and imperial power began to be looked on as a unity, the accession of an emperor on the death of his predecessor soon furnished a convenient and uniform date. Nor was it of much significance to the

[1] Clinton (Fasti Hellen. iii. 276) mentions five, and Marquardt (Bekker-Marq. ii. 3, 299), eight. These are, (1) from Julius Caesar's death; (2) from the first consulate of Augustus; (3) from his triumvirate; (4) from the battle of Actium; (5) from the conquest of Alexandria; (6) from Jan. 7, 711 U.C., when he took the title of propraetor, or from April 16, 711; (7) from the acquisition of tribunician power, June 27, 731; (8) from Jan. 17, 731, when he got the title of Augustus. The eras of Actium, and of his taking possession of Alexandria, rarely occur in Western documents, and the last naturally originated in Egypt.

[2] The coins which follow this way of reckoning do not call Tiberius Augustus, which title he did not receive until his step-father's death, and go no further than the tenth year, which was the year when he succeeded to the throne. Eckhel, iv. p. 50.

Romans that the man next to the emperor received an accession of dignity or authority. But in the provinces it was otherwise. Investment with proconsular power, for instance, might affect their welfare, and be a matter of interest to them, when it was not so in the central city. Hence such computations might readily spring up into use in the East, as we know it to have been true in regard to the reign of Augustus.

An occasion for such a computation was furnished in the latter years of Augustus, when by formal law Tiberius was made to have common control with the emperor over the provinces and the armies. He could have received without such a law, by mere action of the senate, tribunician power, and, as far as the senate's provinces were concerned, proconsular also; and the emperor could have made him his vicar in the provinces which he managed; but he now became, in fact, the emperor's colleague; not, indeed, as partaking in all the dignities and honors of the supreme head, but as fellow-regent with him over the provinces and armies. This did not affect Rome, but it exalted him in the provinces; and, if Egypt counted his years from the time of his adoption, and of his acquisition of tribunician power, with much more reason might this be an era to those who were deeply affected by it. But such a provincial computation might soon be thrust out of use by the date which prevailed at Rome.[1]

[1] Tac. (Annal. i. 3) groups together what took place in the life of Tiberius at various times: "filius, collega imperii, consors tribuniciae potestatis adsumitur, omnisque per exercitus ostentatur." He became filius 4 A.D., collega 12 A.D. See Nipperdey who remarks on Tac. Annal. i. § 10, that he received the tribunician power three times; first in 7 B.C., for five years, then in 4 A.D., for the same term, then in 9 A.D., as a perpetual dignity. Comp. Suet. Tib. 9, 16, and Velleius, ii. 103. Velleius, ii. 121, says, "et [cum] senatus populusque Romanus, postulante patre, ut aequum ei jus in omnibus provinciis exercitibusque esset — decreto complexus esset, — in urbem reversus — egit triumphum." Suet. Tib. 21 says, "ac non multo post, lege per consules lata ut provincias cum Augusto communiter administraret simulque censum ageret, condito lustro, in Illyricum profectus est. Et statim ex itinere revocatus jam quidem affectum sed tamen spirantem adhuc Augustum reperit." Suetonius either misconceived the order

The next inquiry is: When did Tiberius attain to this new dignity? The time is nowhere definitely stated, and must be ascertained by probable evidence. In the year after the defeat of Varus, or 10 A.D., he went to Germany, where he staid two years. Then he returned to Rome, and, after the passage of the law above mentioned, celebrated a triumph. Then he visited Illyricum, whence he was called, in the summer of 14 A.D. = 767, on account of the emperor's illness. He triumphed after the passage of the law, according to Velleius, and his triumph probably fell in the year 12 = 765; the day of it was January 16. Thus we may fix on the beginning of this year, as the starting-point for a mode of counting the years of Tiberius.[1]

Let us suppose, now, that such a date was in use in the East, and that Luke adopted it. How will it accord with the other dates, which are more or less fixed in our Saviour's life. In the first place, as the fifteenth year of Tiberius in Luke now becomes 26 A.D. = 779, the interval between this date and the latter part of 7 B.C. = 747 is thirty-one years and some months, which would answer to Luke's "about thirty years of age." Then, from 26 A.D. to the spring of 29 A.D., the probable date of the crucifixion, two years and parts of two others elapsed, which allows time for the active ministry of our Lord after his baptism. Add to this that the difficulty growing out of John ii. 20 now disappears. Forty-six years reckoned forward from 734 U.C. = 20 B.C. brings us to 780 U.C. = 27 A.D., and thus the passover when Christ first showed himself in Jerusalem after the commencement of his ministry is made to follow his baptism.

of events or does not follow it, while Velleius, a contemporary, is good authority for stating that Tiberius did not return to Rome until after the passage of the law. The law was passed, as Zumpt makes probable, in 12, if not in 11 A.D.

[1] This year of the regency of Tiberius, 12 A.D., is also considered by Wieseler as the time from which Luke reckoned. 26 A.D. = 779 U.C., is, then, with him, as in Zumpt's scheme, the time of John's beginning his public ministry. His other dates are 749–50 U.C., in the winter between middle of December and end of February the time of Christ's birth; 780 U.C. = 27 A.D., in the summer, the date of his baptism; 783 U.C. = 30 A.D., Nisan 15 = April 7, the date of his crucifixion. Comp. his Beiträge at the end.

A hypothesis in history which is probable in itself, which agrees with known facts, and explains and reconciles contradictions, has a good deal of claim upon our acceptance. At the same time this hypothesis does not free us from painful doubt. Had there been extant one coin of some eastern city, which gave proof that the years of Tiberius were there counted from the year 12 A.D., the hypothesis would gain a strong degree of probability. At present, the chronology of our Saviour's life must remain a matter on which nothing positive can be affirmed; the gain of such dissertations as that we have noticed being to allay the scepticism, in regard to facts otherwise verified, which difficulties altogether unexplained leave in the mind.

ARTICLE V.

THE SILENCE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCHES.

BY REV. A. HASTINGS ROSS, SPRINGFIELD, OHIO.

THE true sphere of women we hold to be indicated in the scriptures; and their place, both in the state and in the church, will ultimately be determined by the principles disclosed in those scriptures. For he who created man male and female, instituted the laws of their relationship, and indicated those laws in his revelation to us for our guidance. If, therefore, we can attain unto a just apprehension of these laws in some, or in all, of their bearings, we can determine so far forth the will of God respecting the relation of the sexes in those particulars.

We propose, therefore, to examine the scriptures — which we hold to be our only infallible rule of faith and practice in such matters — respecting the growing practice in the churches of our land of inviting women to take an active part in the public worship of God, and even of allowing them, in some instances, to become ministers of the gospel