

**Part V**

***The Bar Kochba Period***

Figure 3

MUR 24E



Chapter XXVI

## Dating the Contracts

*Part I of the Sabbath Years  
of 133/134 and 140/141 C.E.*

The last pre-Seder Olam records presently in our possession, which can date a sabbath year, are rental contracts composed during the Bar Kochba revolt (133 to 135 C.E.). These contracts, found among the papers of the archives in the caves of Wadi Murabba'at near Bethlehem, are dated to the 20th of Shebat (Jan./Feb.) in the second year of the revolt and speak of a sabbath year five years hence.

Wacholder makes the claim that these rental agreements substantiate his system "C" sabbath cycle.<sup>1</sup> Wacholder also writes:

Since each of these twelve contracts, written in Hebrew, apparently contained both the same date of issuance and the clause relating to the Sabbatical year, they are crucial for this study.<sup>2</sup>

Wacholder then reproduces the document labeled "Mur 24E," partly but plausibly restored on the basis of the parallel fragments of papyri, as transcribed by J. T. Milik in his book entitled *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*.<sup>3</sup> This study agrees with the overall translation offered by Milik and Wacholder (the small differences are minor points which have no bearing on the conclusions).<sup>4</sup> Our translation is as follows:

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. [On the twentieth of She]bat of Year tw[o] for the Redemption of | 1. ]בעשרין לשבט שנת שתים לגאלת      |
| 2. [I]srael by Simeon ben K[osi]ba, (Bar Kochba) the prince of      | 2. ]זשראל על יד שמעון בן קוסבא נסיא |
| 3. [Is]rael. In the camp which is located in Herodium.              | 3. ]ישראל במחנה שיושב בהרודים       |

<sup>1</sup> HUCA, 44, pp. 176–179.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 176f.

<sup>3</sup> DTJD, no. 24, pp. 122–134, esp. p. 131, D, and 2, pt. 2, Plate XXXVI. Also see Fig. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Wacholder's translation is as follows:

1. [On the twentieth of She]vat of the year tw[o] of the Redemption of
2. [I]srael by Shimeon ben K[os]ba, the prince of
3. [Is]rael. In the camp which is located in Herodium,
4. [Ye]hudah ben Raba' said to Hillel ben Gry:s
5. "I of my free will have [re]nted from you today the
6. land which is my re[n]tal in 'Ir
7. Naḥash which I hold as a tenant from Shimeon, the Prince of Israel,
8. This land I have rented from you today

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 4. [Ya]hudah ben Rabah said to Hillel ben Geryis:                        | 4. [ן]הודה בן רבא אמר להלל בן גריס    |
| 5. "I of my own free will have [re]nted from you this day                | 5. אני מרצוני [ח]כרתת המך היום את     |
| 6. the field which is my re[n]tal in Ayr                                 | 6. העפר שהוא שלי בח:כרתתי בעיר        |
| 7. Nakhash which I hold as a tenant from Simeon, the Prince of Israel.   | 7. נחש שחכרתת משמעון נסיא ישראל       |
| 8. This field I have rented from you this day                            | 8. [א]את עפר הלז חכרתתי המך מן היום   |
| 9. until the end of this side of the shemitah, producing years           | 9. עד סוף ערב השמטה שהם שנים          |
| 10. complete, years of evaluation, five of tenancy;                      | 10. שלמות שני [מ]כסה חמש תחכיר        |
| 11. [that I wi]ll deliver to you in [Her]odium: wheat,                   | 11. [ש]אה [א] מודד לך ב [ה]ודיס חנשין |
| 12. [of good and pure quality,] th[ree kor]s and a lethekh,              | 12. [י]פות ונקיות [ש]לשת כורין ולתך   |
| 13. [from which a tenth part of the tithe] of these                      | 13. [מ]עסרת מעסרתן ת אלה              |
| 14. [you will deliver to the silo of the treasury.] And [I am obli]gated | 14. [ש]תהא שוקל על גג האוצרן [ת]קיים  |
| 15. [in regard of this matter thusly . . . .]."                          | 15. [עלי לעמת ככה ]                   |
| 16. [Yahudah ben Rabah, in person.]                                      | 16. [י]הודה בן רבא על נפשחן           |
| 17. [Simeon ben Kosiba, by dicta- tion.]                                 | 17. [ש]מעון בן כוסבא מן מאמרהן        |

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9. until the end of the eve of Shemitah, which are years

10. full, [fi]scal years, five, of tenancy;

11. [that I wi]ll deliver to you in [Her]odium: wheat,

12. [of good and pure quality,] th[ree kor]s and a lethekh,

13. [of which a tenth part of the tithe] of these

14. [you will deliver to the silo of the treasury.] And [I am obli]gated

15. [in regard of this matter thusly ]

16. [Yehudah ben Raba', in person]

17. [Shim'on ben Kosba', by dictation.]

Lines 8–10 can more flowingly be translated as, “This field I have rented from you this day until this side of the shemitah (year of release, i.e. the seventh year),<sup>5</sup> an evaluation of five complete producing years of tenancy.” Combined with this statement is the opening remark that the document was published, “On the twentieth of Shebat (Jan./Feb.) in Year 2 of the Redemption of Israel by Simeon ben Kosiba.”

Wacholder calculates that, contrary to what is stated, these documents point to “five years, six months, and ten days” and not to “five full years.”<sup>6</sup> Wacholder arrives at this conclusion because he has presumed that the sabbath year started with the first of Tishri. His conclusion is inaccurate for several reasons.

To begin with, the contract clearly spells out the fact that the rental was to last only “five complete producing years of tenancy,” not five and one half years. Also, coins from this period prove that during the Bar Kochba revolt the Jews used the first of Nisan as the beginning of their year, not Tishri.<sup>7</sup>

The Bar Kochba revolt was predicated upon the ideal of bringing back lost Jewish glory. Not only had the Jews intended on rebuilding the Temple, but they brought back into use the ancient palaeo-Hebrew alphabet, the first of Nisan as the beginning of their year, and the practice of keeping the sabbath years—all apparently stripped away from them by the Romans upon the collapse of the First Revolt in 70 C.E.

The leader of this Judaeen revolt against the Roman empire was a man called Simeon ben Kosiba (Kosibah, Koziba, etc.), also known as Simeon bar Kochba (Kokhbah, Kokhba, Kochebas, etc.). It makes little sense that those involved in the Second Revolt (which the men participating in the rental contracts, including Simeon ben Kosiba himself, certainly were)—whose effort was to bring back lost Jewish glory—would determine their contracts by anything less than a first of Abib (Nisan) year as commanded by the Torah.

The contract can only be understood in one of two ways: it either began on the twentieth of Shebat in the second year of the redemption of Israel and was to continue until the twentieth of Shebat five years later; or it was understood that the first of the year was at hand and that the contract, concluded on the twentieth of Shebat, was to take effect on the first of Nisan and end five years later on the eve of that date.<sup>8</sup>

Regardless of which way one understands the five complete years, the contract points to a Nisan 1 beginning for the year. Shebat 20, five years later, would also lay just “on this side” of (or about 40 days away from) the beginning of the next sabbath year. What is important for our study is the fact that the beginning of the next sabbath year in these contracts was just five complete years after “Year 2 of the Redemption of Israel.” The key to dating the sabbath year of these contracts is to correctly pinpoint which year represents

<sup>5</sup> See above Chap. XI, p. 159, ns. 2 and 3.

<sup>6</sup> HUCA, 44, p. 179.

<sup>7</sup> IEJ, 21, pp. 39–46.

<sup>8</sup> Since the 20th of Shebat was only about 40 days away from the first of the year, a first of Nisan understanding is most probable. All that could have been accomplished before the end of the present year, anyway, was some late planting which would have been of little significance for a wheat crop. As we shall later show, the present year was in fact a Jubilee (Chap. XXVII, pp. 333f).

“Year 2 of the Redemption of Israel.” To accomplish this task we must closely examine the chronology of the Second Revolt.

### **The Second Revolt**

Those who adhere to system “B” give two different views about when the Bar Kochba revolt started. Milik, who correctly reads the document but tries to make it conform to a Tishri (Sept./Oct.) year, starts the revolt in the year of 131/132 C.E., Tishri reckoning.<sup>9</sup> But Milik’s view is now generally set aside. Those after Milik, like Baruch Kanael, who recognize that the year during the Second Revolt actually began with the first of Nisan (April), date the first year to 132/133 C.E., Nisan reckoning, yet insist on a Tishri beginning for the sabbath year itself.<sup>10</sup>

Those holding to system “B,” as a result, conclude that the year 133/134 C.E., Nisan (March/April) reckoning, was the second year of the revolt of all Judaea. Yet, the sabbath year mentioned by the documents from Wadi Murabba’at belongs to 138/139 C.E., Tishri (Oct.) reckoning, as found on Zuckermann’s chart.<sup>11</sup>

Wacholder, who professes system “C,” also makes the first year of the revolt 132/133 C.E., Nisan reckoning, and as with the others begins the sabbath year with Tishri.<sup>12</sup> But unlike those of system “B,” Wacholder makes Shebat 20 fall at the end of the Nisan year 133/134 C.E. (i.e. in Feb. of 134). He concludes that the five years time mentioned in the contract points to Tishri 1, 139 C.E. as the beginning of the expected sabbath year.

System “A” demands that the sabbath year mentioned in these contracts begins on the first of Nisan in 140 C.E. Therefore, the second year of the redemption of Israel would equal 134/135 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

Next, we must examine the two most important historical notices of this war (during which time the contracts in question were composed): those from Eusebius and Dio. Eusebius reports the war and its conclusion as follows:

The rebellion of the Jews once more progressed in character and extent, and Rufus, the governor of Judaea, when military aid had been sent him by the Emperor, moved out against them, treating their madness without mercy. He destroyed in heaps thousands of men, women, and children, and, under the law of war, enslaved their land. The Jews were at that time led by a certain Bar Kochebas, which means “star,” a man who was murderous and a bandit, but relied on his name, as if dealing with slaves, and claimed to be a luminary who had come down to them from heaven and was magically enlightening those who were in misery. The war reached its

<sup>9</sup> DTJD, p. 125.

<sup>10</sup> IEJ, 21, pp. 39–46.

<sup>11</sup> TSCJ, p. 61.

<sup>12</sup> HUCA, 44, pp. 176–179.

height in the EIGHTEENTH YEAR of the reign of Hadrian in Beth Thera, which was a strong citadel not very far from Jerusalem; the siege lasted a long time before the rebels were driven to final destruction by famine and thirst and the instigator of their madness paid the penalty he deserved. Hadrian then commanded that by a legal decree and ordinances the whole nation should be absolutely prevented from entering from thenceforth even the district round Jerusalem, so that not even from a distance could it see its ancestral home. Ariston of Pella tells the story. Thus when the city came to be bereft of the nation of the Jews, and its ancient inhabitants had completely perished, it was colonized by foreigners, and the Roman city which afterwards arose changed its name, and in honour of the reigning emperor Aelius Hadrian was called Aelia. (Eusebius, *H.E.*, 4:6)

Dio's *Roman History* tells this story:

At Jerusalem he (Hadrian) founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground (i.e. in 70 C.E.), naming it Aelia Capitolina, and on the site of the Temple of the deity (Yahweh) he raised a new temple to Dios (Jupiter/Zeus).<sup>13</sup> This brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration, for the Jews deemed it intolerable that alien nations should be settled in their city and alien religious rites planted there. So long, indeed, as Hadrian was close by in Egypt and again in Syria, they remained quiet, save in so far as they purposely made of poor quality such weapons as they were called upon to furnish, in order that the Romans might reject them and they themselves might thus have the use of them; but WHEN HE WENT AWAY, THEY OPENLY REVOLTED. To be sure, they did not dare try conclusions with the Romans in the open field, but they occupied the advantageous positions in the country and strengthened them with mines and walls, in order that they should be hard pressed, and might meet together unobserved under ground; and they pierced these subterranean passages from above at intervals to let in air and light. AT FIRST, THE ROMANS TOOK NO ACCOUNT OF THEM. SOON, HOWEVER, ALL JUDAEA HAD BEEN STIRRED

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<sup>13</sup> That Hadrian began to build the city of Aelia Capitolina prior to the outbreak of the Bar Kochba revolt is demonstrated by an Aelia Capitolina coin of Hadrian's found among a hoard of Bar Kochba coins from the northern region of the Judaeian desert (JCST, pp. 92f).

UP, AND THE JEWS EVERYWHERE WERE SHOWING SIGNS OF DISTURBANCE, WERE GATHERING TOGETHER, AND GIVING EVIDENCE OF GREAT HOSTILITY TO THE ROMANS, partly by secret and partly by overt acts; many outside nations, too, were joining them through eagerness for gain, and the whole earth, one might almost say, was being stirred up over the matter. Then, indeed, Hadrian sent against them his best generals. First of these was Julius Severus, who was dispatched from Britain, where he was governor, against the Jews. Severus did not venture to attack his opponents in the open at any one point, in view of their numbers and their desperation, but by intercepting small groups, thanks to the number of his soldiers and his under-officers, and by depriving them of food and shutting them up, he was able, RATHER SLOWLY, to be sure, but with comparatively little danger, to crush, exhaust and exterminate them. Very few of them in fact survived. 50 of their most important outposts and 985 of their most famous villages were razed to the ground. 580,000 men were slain in the various raids and battles, and the number of those that perished by famine, disease and fire was past finding out. Thus nearly the whole of Judaea was made desolate, a result of which people had forewarning before the war. For the tomb of Solomon, which the Jews regard as an object of veneration, fell to pieces of itself and collapsed, and many wolves and hyenas rushed howling into their cities. Many Romans, moreover, perished in this war. Therefore, Hadrian in writing to the senate did not employ the opening phrase commonly affected by the emperors, "If you and your children are in health, it is well; I and the legions are in health." (Dio, 69:12-14)

### Dating the Second Revolt

When did the first year of the revolt by "all Judaea" actually begin? Only by this date would the Jews begin publishing coins by the revolt. For systems "B," "C," or "D" to work, the revolt by all Judaea must have begun in the spring of 132 C.E.; but system "A" demands its commencement with the spring of 133 C.E. To solve this dispute, the records for the Second Revolt must be closely examined.

The beginning and ending years for the second Jewish revolt are found in the works of Eusebius. In Jerome's version of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, the beginning of the revolt is dated to the sixteenth year of Hadrian.<sup>14</sup> He

<sup>14</sup> DCDH, p. 200; Jerome, *Euseb. Chron.*, 282F:17-24.

further dates the end of the revolt to the eighteenth year of Hadrian.<sup>15</sup> In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius writes that “up to the siege of the Jews by Hadrian the successions of the bishops (of Jerusalem) were 15 in number.” After naming these 15 bishops, he adds that, “The war reached its height in the eighteenth year of the reign of Hadrian in Beth Thera, which is a strong citadel not very far from Jerusalem.”<sup>16</sup>

Hadrian came to power on August 10, 117 C.E.<sup>17</sup> Yet, we do not know which year system was utilized by Ariston of Pella, the source of Eusebius. Pella was a Jewish region located in Peraea, on the east side of the Jordan, opposite Beth-Shean. But just before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., thousands of Jewish Christians left Jerusalem and settled in Pella.<sup>18</sup> That Eusebius, a devout Christian born in Palestine, would have used a Jewish Christian source would be quite in keeping with his methods. If that were the case, it is very likely that Hadrian’s year was judged by the ancient Judaeen method, from Nisan to Nisan.

Only three possible dating systems are applicable for dating Hadrian’s sixteenth and eighteenth years if any of our four possible sabbath cycle systems are to work.

- If the Roman *dies imperii* was used, then Hadrian’s first year would extend from August 10, 117 until August 10, 118 C.E.

The sixteenth year would extend from August 10, 132 until August 10, 133 C.E.

The eighteenth year would run from August 10, 134 until August 10, 135 C.E.

- If the Macedonian Seleucid year system was used then Hadrian’s first year would run from October, 117 until October, 118 C.E.

The sixteenth year would extend from October, 132 until October, 133 C.E.

The eighteenth year would run from October, 134 until October, 135 C.E.

- If Ariston of Pella was a Judaeen or Judaeen Christian and used the old Judaeen system, then Hadrian’s first year was from Nisan of 118 until Nisan of 119 C.E.

The sixteenth year of Hadrian would be Nisan, 133 until Nisan, 134 C.E.

The eighteenth year, therefore, would be from Nisan, 135 until Nisan, 136 C.E.

Our next source of evidence for dating the Bar Kochba revolt comes from the Seder Olam. This text, written only a few decades after the revolt, gives us the following information:

From the conflict with As-varus until the conflict  
with Vespasian: 80 years, while the Temple existed.  
From the conflict with Vespasian until . . . the conflict

<sup>15</sup> DCDH, p. 201; Jerome, *Euseb. Chron.*, 283F:9–14.

<sup>16</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.*, 4:5–6.

<sup>17</sup> Spartianus, *Hadr.*, 4:6–7; cf. Theon, in AF, pp. 83ff.

<sup>18</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.*, 3:5.

with Quietus: 52 years. From the conflict with Quietus until the war of Ben Kozibah (Kochba): 16 years.<sup>19</sup>

The Judaeian conflict, which caused the Roman general Vespasian to become involved, began with the First Revolt of the Jews against Rome. This conflict flared up during the month of Artemisius (Iyyar; i.e. April/May), in the twelfth year of Nero, being the spring of 66 C.E.<sup>20</sup> Technically, Vespasian did not actually invade Judaea until the spring of the following year, i.e. 67 C.E.<sup>21</sup> But it is clear that the war itself is what the Seder Olam refers to.

From the beginning of the conflict which came to involve Vespasian until the end of the conflict with Quietus was 52 years, i.e. the years 66/67 to 117/118 C.E., Nisan reckoning. This date is correct. Towards the end of the reign of Trajan, the Emperor suspected that the Jews in Mesopotamia would attack the inhabitants there and ordered Lusius Quietus to clean them out of the province. Quietus organized a force and murdered a great multitude of the Jews, and "for this reform was appointed governor of Judaea."<sup>22</sup> These events are said by Eusebius to have taken place in the eighteenth year of Trajan (116 C.E.).<sup>23</sup> In turn, his appointment as governor of Judaea brought about unrest in Judaea. Spartianus, the biographer of emperor Hadrian, points out that upon Hadrian's succession to the Roman throne (Aug., 117 C.E.) the Jews of Palestine were in a state of revolt.<sup>24</sup>

The trouble in Palestine, therefore, occurred after the calamity which took place in Mesopotamia. As the result of the oppression of the Jews in Judaea by Quietus, emperor Hadrian recalled Quietus and later executed him.<sup>25</sup> The conflict with Quietus, accordingly, ended shortly after Hadrian came to the throne in August of the Jewish year 117/118 C.E., Nisan reckoning.

From the end of the conflict with Quietus until the beginning of the Bar Kochba war was 16 years: i.e. from the year 118/119 C.E. to the year 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning. It is of no little consequence that the 16 years mentioned in the Seder Olam would equal the sixteenth year of Hadrian, which thereby confirms the date given by Ariston of Pella, as recorded by Eusebius, for the beginning of the Bar Kochba revolt. Once again the year 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning, is indicated as the beginning of the Second Revolt.

Finally, in all the best manuscripts of the Seder Olam "the war of Ben Kozibah (Bar Kochba) was two and one half years" in length.<sup>26</sup> Since the war began within the sixteenth year after the conflict with Quietus, two and one half years more brings us to the eighteenth year. The dates reported by Eusebius (from Ariston of Pella), which begins the war in the sixteenth year of Hadrian and ends it in his eighteenth year, are thereby confirmed.

<sup>19</sup> S.O., 30; and see App. D. Also see the Hebrew text of the סדר עולם in MJC, 2, p. 66; SORC, 2, p. 547, 3, pp. 441f; also given in HJP, 1, p. 534, n. 92.

<sup>20</sup> Jos., Wars, 2:14:4.

<sup>21</sup> See Chap. XXIV, pp. 304–308.

<sup>22</sup> Eusebius, H.E., 4:2.

<sup>23</sup> DCDH, p. 196; Jerome, Euseb. Chron., 278F:17–26.

<sup>24</sup> Spartianus, Hadr., 5:2.

<sup>25</sup> Spartianus, Hadr., 5:8, 7:2.

<sup>26</sup> SORC, 2, p. 547, 30:81.

The Bar Kochba war began in the spring of the year. This fact is proven by a document from this period dated: “On the first of Iyyar, Year 1 of the Redemption of Israel by Simeon Bar Kosiba, נָשִׂיא (Nasia; Prince)<sup>27</sup> of Israel.”<sup>28</sup> Since Iyyar (April/May) is only the second month of the Jewish year, it is clear that this document was composed very shortly after, if not immediately after, the formal beginning of hostilities for all Judaea.

Evidence also exists for the month in which the rebel fortress at Beth Thera and the city of Jerusalem fell to the Romans, which marks the end of the two and one half years of conflict. The Mishnah informs us that “Beth Thor (Beth Thera) was captured and the City (Jerusalem) was ploughed up” on the ninth of Ab (July/Aug.).<sup>29</sup>

It is now known that Emperor Hadrian’s second acclamation as imperator took place sometime between April and December of 135 C.E.<sup>30</sup> This acclamation was as a direct result of his victory in Judaea.<sup>31</sup> This detail fits very well with the Mishnah’s report that Beth Thera was overthrown in the month of Ab, the fifth month of the Jewish year.

This information confirms that, regardless of which year system is used, the fall of Beth Thera and Jerusalem occurred in the month of Ab in the year 135 C.E. This much all can agree on. Since the war ended near the middle of the year of 135/136 C.E., the beginning of the war, two and one half years earlier, must be dated on or very near the beginning of the year 133/134 C.E.

## Conclusion

Based upon all the possible ways of dating the reign of Hadrian, the beginning of the revolt, which took place in the sixteenth year of Hadrian, could not have occurred before August 10 of 132 C.E., the Roman *dies imperii* for his sixteenth year.

Further, the war did not officially start for all of Judaea until the spring, confirmed by a document mentioning the first of Iyyar (April/May) in “Year 1 of the Redemption of Israel.” Therefore the first year of the revolt of all Judaea was 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning. As shall be demonstrated as we proceed in this examination of the Bar Kochba war, there was an earlier local conflict that had begun in late 131/132 C.E. but it did not spread to all Judaea until the beginning of the sabbath year of 133/134 C.E., Nisan reckoning. The evidence will also leave little room for doubt that Bar Kochba was officially recognized and the war was officially declared for all Judaea against Rome on, or very shortly after, Nisan (March/April) 1, 133 C.E.

The Judaeans would not consider it Hadrian’s sixteenth year until Nisan 1 of 133 C.E., which further supports this year as the beginning of the revolt. Even if we use the Roman system and date the years of Hadrian’s reign from August to August, the first of Iyyar—which represents roughly the beginning of the revolt, in the first year of the era of the Redemption of Israel—still must

<sup>27</sup> For נָשִׂיא or נָסִיא (Nasia, Nasi) see SEC, Heb. #5387, “an exalted one, i.e. a king or sheik”; HEL, p. 174, “chief . . . chief of a tribe among the Israelites . . . prince.”

<sup>28</sup> IEJ, 21, p. 41, n. 15.

<sup>29</sup> Taan., 4:6.

<sup>30</sup> JQR, 34, pp. 61–63.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

fall in the spring of 133 C.E. Since the Jews used a Nisan year at that time, there is no other conclusion except that the year 133/134 C.E. was for them the beginning of the war (Chart K).<sup>32</sup>

Based upon this data, it is clear that the year 134/135 C.E., Nisan reckoning, would be the second year of the revolt by all Judaea. That being the case, the twentieth day of the month of Shebat, on which day the rental contracts mentioning the sabbath year were composed, would belong to the latter part of that year (Feb., 135 C.E.).

The "five complete producing years of tenancy," therefore, could not end before Shebat 20 of the year 139/140 C.E., Nisan reckoning, or about February, 140 C.E. The sabbath year which shortly followed, as a result, would start with the first of Nisan in 140 C.E. A sabbath year for 140/141 C.E., Nisan reckoning, conforms perfectly with the system "A" cycle (see Chart B). We therefore have one more confirmation that system "A" is the true and correct sabbath cycle.

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<sup>32</sup> Joseph Jacobs correctly regards the year 133 C.E. as the official beginning of the revolt and 135 C.E. as the fall of Beth Thera (Bethar) (JE, 4, p. 71).