

JESUS AND THE “EGYPTIAN PROPHET”

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ABSTRACT

Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John 18:3 and 18:12 state that Jesus on the Mount of Olives was confronted by a *speira* – a Roman cohort of 500 to 1,000 soldiers. This suggestion of a battle preceding Jesus’ arrest is reminiscent of an event described by Josephus in the 50s (*A.J.* 20.169-172; *B.J.* 2.261-263), involving the so called ‘Egyptian Prophet’ (or simply ‘the Egyptian’). This messianic leader – who had previously spent time “in the wilderness” – had “advised the multitude ... to go along with him to the Mount of Olives”, where he “would show them from hence how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down”. Procurator Felix, however, sent a cohort of soldiers to the Mount of Olives, where they defeated ‘the Egyptian’.

Although the twenty-year time difference would seem to make all comparisons futile, there are other coinciding aspects: The preceding messianic leader named by Josephus, Theudas (*A.J.* 20.97-99), shares distinct characteristics with John the Baptist: Like John, Theudas gathered his followers by the river Jordan, and, like John, he was arrested by the authorities, and they “cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem”. Curiously, although the names of dignitaries may differ, comparing the New Testament accounts with Josephus’ accounts of the mid-40s to early 50s in several respects appears to be more productive than a comparison with his accounts of the 30s: It is in this later period, not the 30s, that Josephus describes the activity and crucifixion of robbers (absent between 6 and 44 C.E.), a conflict between Samaritans and Jews, two co-reigning high priests, a procurator killing Galileans, an attack on someone named Stephanos outside Jerusalem, and at least ten more seemingly parallel events. Importantly, these are parallels that, judging by Josephus, appear to be absent in the 30s. The significance of this will be discussed.

INTRODUCTION

One of the limitations facing historical Jesus studies has been that the New Testament is the only source of first century texts in which Jesus unequivocally is described. This is in spite of the fact that the period in other respects is fairly well documented. Flavius Josephus wrote *De bello Judaico* and *Antiquitates Judaicae* in the 70s and the 90s C.E., respectively. Both works describe personalities mentioned in the Gospels: Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, Quirinius, etc. Josephus also describes several Jewish messianic leaders of the first century: Simon, Athronges, Judas the Galilean, Theudas, ‘The Egyptian’, Menahem, etc. But excepting *Testimonium Flavianum* (A.J. 18.63-64) – by most scholars considered at least a partial later Christian interpolation – Jesus from Nazareth is not visible in the works of Josephus. Nor was he, according to Photius, described in the now lost works of another first century local historian, Justus of Tiberias.¹ Only from the second century do we begin to see more unequivocal extra-biblical references to Jesus.²

The fact that the Gospels describe Jesus as someone with a large following, and one whose trial involved two high priests, the tetrarch of Galilee, and the prefect of *Iudaea*, heightens the discrepancy between sources.

This discrepancy has led to the common view that although Jesus from Nazareth most likely existed, he was probably less significant in his own time than the gospel accounts suggest.³ A minority view holds that Jesus was an entirely mythological character.⁴

However, in the course of comparing the NT narratives with other historical sources, primarily the works of Josephus, this author came upon a number of hitherto neglected parallels, that in Josephus’ writings occur with a consistent delay of fifteen to twenty years, i.e. in the mid-40s to early 50s.

It will be discussed whether these delayed parallels really are depictions of the same events, and, if so, if the delay is the result of errors, or if the parallels could be suggestions of a deliberate time shift in the New Testament narratives.

THE TIMING OF EVENTS DEPICTED IN THE GOSPELS

We base our timing of the events in the life of Jesus entirely on the presence of certain dignitaries in the NT narratives. Since we know from other sources that Pilate was prefect of *Iudaea* between 26 and 36 (or 37) C.E., and that Caiaphas was high priest between 18 and 36 (or 37) C.E., we may conclude that the crucifixion of Jesus could not have taken place before 26 or after 37 C.E.⁵ The information that John the Baptist began his ministry “in the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius”, narrows this gap further (Luke 3:1 NRSV).

All the same, some of the accounts presented in the New Testament do not fit within that timeframe, at least not when compared with the information we can gather from Josephus. Although the reliability of Josephus has been questioned, the consistency of these discrepancies makes it unlikely that they can be ascribed to a consistent error on his part.⁶ In addition, there are a number of known internal chronological inconsistencies in the NT narrative.

These chronological discrepancies form the basis for the hypothesis presented here.

THE DEATH OF THEUDAS

Acts 5:26-40 depicts how the Apostles are brought to the Sanhedrin. At one point, rabbi Gamaliel says: “Fellow-Israelites, consider carefully what you propose to do to these men. For

some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and disappeared.”

If we assume that Acts is written somewhat chronologically, this interrogation at the Sanhedrin would have happened soon after the crucifixion of Jesus, and in any event in the 30s C.E., since it precedes Saul’s arrival in Damascus.⁷ Judging by Josephus, however (*A.J.* 20.97-99), Theudas was a messianic leader active and killed under Fadus (44 to 46 C.E.). So if this is correct, Theudas could not already be dead in the 30s. This is an inconsistency between the NT narrative and that of Josephus which is generally noted.⁸

The most common assumption has been that the author of Luke-Acts confused the order of the messianic leaders, especially since Acts 5:37 subsequently relates Gamaliel’s statement that Judas the Galilean came after Theudas.⁹ According to Josephus, Judas the Galilean was active several decades before Theudas (*B.J.* 2.56,118,433; *A.J.* 18.1-10,23).

An alternative suggestion has been that there were two different men named Theudas.¹⁰ It has also been proposed that Luke refers to Judas the Galilean by mistake, when in fact he means the sons of Judas, who, according to *A.J.* 20.100-104, were killed soon after Theudas.¹¹ Although a definite point of disagreement, some scholars, having compared their writings, have concluded that Luke had probably read *Antiquitates Judaicae*.¹² Thus, it is suggested that he may have misread Josephus in this instance.

In conclusion, Josephus places the death of Theudas in the mid-40s, at least fifteen years later than Acts. This is most often attributed to a mistake by the author of Luke-Acts.

There are, however, other chronological inconsistencies in the NT narrative, most of them rarely addressed.

”ROBBERS”

The word ”robbers” (λησται, sing. ληστής) is prevalent in the Gospels. Jesus was crucified with two λησται; Barabbas is in John 18:40 described as a ληστής; and when he is arrested, Jesus says: ὡς ἐπὶ ληστήν ἐξήλθατε μετὰ μαχαιρῶν καὶ ξύλων συλλαβεῖν με;¹³

λησται are mentioned frequently also by Josephus. And in his writings, the term usually refers to Jewish rebels (“Zealots”, in the wider meaning of the term).¹⁴ That this is the intended meaning also in the Gospels is suggested by Mark 15:7: “Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection.”

When Josephus writes about λησται, however, he does so during two distinct periods: from 63 B.C.E., when Roman occupation begins, until the census revolt under Judas the Galilean was crushed, ca. 6 C.E. And then again with great frequency after 48 C.E., when “all Judea was overrun with robberies”.¹⁵ This second eruption would eventually lead to the Jewish War.

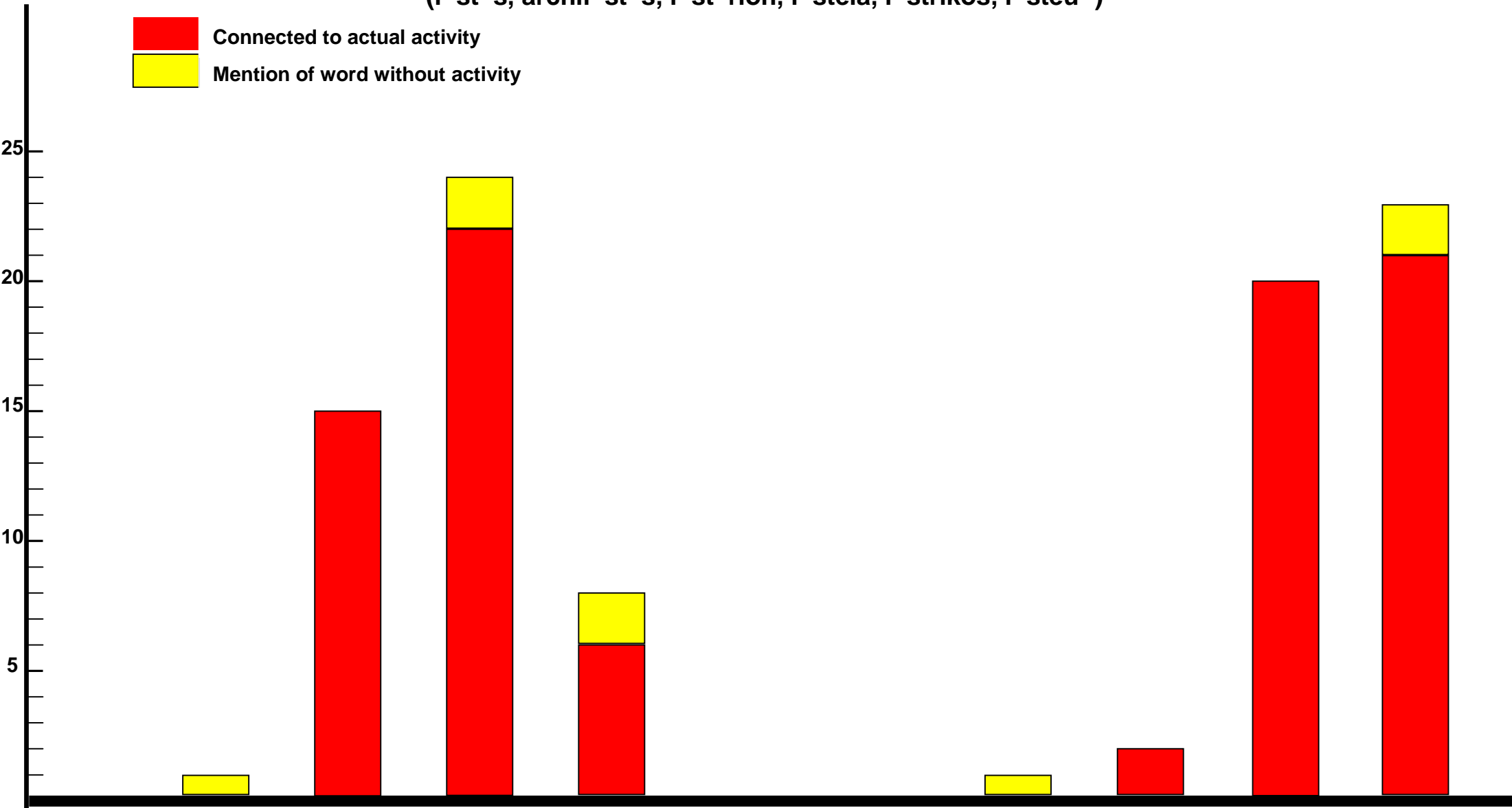
Importantly, however, Josephus never once records the presence of ”robbers” during the time Jesus was active. In fact, there are no mentions of their activity between 6 C.E. and 44 C.E. (see Figure 1). In contrast, after 44 C.E. we find some form of the word ληστής on sixty-two occasions in *De bello Judaico*, twenty-one times in *Antiquitates Judaicae* and ten times in *Vita*.¹⁶ The only hint about activity during Jesus’ time, is that *B.J.* 2.253 states that “Eleazar the arch-robber”, active in the 50s, had “ravaged the country for twenty years together”. *A.J.* 20.121, however, only states that Eleazar “had many years made his abode in the mountains”.

Figure 1

Mention of “robbers” or “robbery” in the works of Josephus (until arrival of Vespasian)
(*l st s, archil st s, l st rion, l steia, l strikos, l steu*)

No. of references

- Connected to actual activity
- Mention of word without activity



323-160 B.C.E. *A.J.*,Book 12
160-63 B.C.E. *A.J.*13.1-14.53
63-37 B.C.E. *A.J.*14.54-491
37-4 B.C.E. *A.J.*15.1-17.192
4 B.C.E.-6 C.E. *A.J.*17.193-18.25
6-26 C.E. *A.J.*18.26-35
26-37 C.E. *A.J.*18.36-89
37-44 C.E. *A.J.*18.90-19.353
44-48 C.E. *A.J.*20.1-104
48-59 C.E. *A.J.*20.105-181
59-66 C.E. *A.J.*20.182-258
*B.J.*1.31-47
*B.J.*1.48-140
*B.J.*1.141-363
*B.J.*1.364-673
*B.J.*2.1-166
*B.J.*2.167-168
*B.J.*2.169-180
*B.J.*2.181-219
*B.J.*2.220-222
*B.J.*2.223-270
*B.J.*2.271-654

To underline that the failure of Josephus to mention the activity of “robbers” between 6 and 44 C.E. is no coincidence, Tacitus in *Hist.* 5.9-10 writes: “Under Tiberius all was quiet.” Josephus does describe two occasions of Jewish mass protests under Pilate. But judging from his narratives (and supported by Philo), these protests were entirely non-violent. On the second occasion, the protests against the use of funds from the Temple treasury to build an aqueduct, it ended in Jews being trampled and beaten to death. But, as Josephus states, “the people were unarmed” (*A.J.* 18.55-59,60-62; Philo, *Legat.* 299-305). There are no signs of armed rebellion.

Under Caligula (37-41 C.E.) the tension, and protests, increased, when the emperor wanted to erect a statue of himself in the Temple. The danger was averted, however, by the death of Caligula (*A.J.* 18.257-309; *B.J.* 2.184-203).

Prolonged tension was probably what ultimately led to armed insurrection. But the time of the re-emergence of the “robbers” is not therefore random. The fact that they reappear in the chronicles of Josephus in 44 C.E. may be connected to the sudden death of Herod Agrippa I, who, with considerable success and appreciation from his people, had ruled all of Palestine from 41 to 44 C.E. When, after this, the areas returned to provincial status, the disappointment among the Jews was immense. To quote Menahem Stern (1976: 258): “The twenty-two years from [Agrippa’s death] until the outbreak of the Great Revolt may be summed up as a period that marked the decline of that rule and the progressive deterioration of the relations between the Roman authorities and the general Jewish population.” Finally, it is noteworthy that the presence of λησταιί in Josephus’ narrative appears to coincide with the appearance and disappearance of the family of Judas the Galilean. The first band of “robbers” is led by Judas’ father Hezekiah (*B.J.* 1.204; *A.J.* 14.159). The discontinued mentioning of λησταιί after 6 C.E. coincides with the crushing of the census revolt, led by Judas (*B.J.* 2.117-118; *A.J.* 18.7). The reappearance of references to λησταιί, during Fadus, is followed by the slaying of Judas’ sons (*A.J.* 20.102). In the intervening almost forty years, we have not heard about this family (or of “robbers”). Also the messianic rebel leader Menahem is referred to as “son of Judas, that was called the Galilean”, and his appearance coincides with the beginning of the Jewish War (*B.J.* 2.433).

In conclusion, not only is there a reintroduction of λησταιί in Josephus’ narratives after 44 C.E., and then a dramatic increase from 48 C.E. This pattern fits with the actual state of relations between the Jews and the Romans in the decades leading up to the Jewish War.

It is therefore difficult to explain how Jesus could be crucified with λησταιί, “rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection”, if this took place in the 30s. The name of the disciple Simon the Zealot also would seem more appropriate in a different era. As would the pronouncement in Matthew 11:12: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.”¹⁷

CRUCIFIXIONS

In addition to this, Josephus makes no note of crucifixions of Jews between 4 B.C.E. and 46 C.E., except in *Testimonium Flavianum*. He mentions them, however, under Varus (4 B.C.E.), Tiberius Alexander (46 to 48 C.E.), Cumanus (48 to 52 C.E.), Felix (52 to ca. 59 C.E.), and Florus (64 to 66 C.E.), as well as during the Jewish War (66 to 73 C.E.).¹⁸

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN JEWS AND SAMARITANS

According to the chronicles of Josephus, there are in 48 C.E. three distinct events signalling the drastic increase in the activity of the “robbers”. One of these events is the Galilean-Samaritan war, starting in 48 C.E., under Cumanus, and ending in 52 C.E., when Felix comes to power (*A.J.* 20.118-136; *B.J.* 2.232-246). It is a war with a distinct beginning and end, to a significant extent involving Jewish $\lambda\eta\sigma\tau\alpha\acute{\iota}$. According to *A.J.* 20.118-121, the war begins in the following, seemingly banal, way:

It was the custom of the Galileans, when they came to the holy city at the festivals, to take their journeys through the country of the Samaritans; and at this time there lay, in the road they took, a village that was called Ginea, which was situated in the limits of Samaria and the great plain, where certain persons thereto belonging fought with the Galileans, and killed a great many of them.

This leads to Jewish $\lambda\eta\sigma\tau\alpha\acute{\iota}$ in turn attacking the Samaritans, and they “set the villages on fire” (*B.J.* 2.232-235).

Although the question of how the relationship between Samaritans and Jews evolved at different times is a matter of debate, this war is the only period of outright conflict between them described by Josephus in the first century.¹⁹ Consequently, Josephus makes no mention of any hostilities between Jews and Samaritans during Pilate’s times – despite the fact that he discusses their respective reactions against Roman rule.²⁰

Also the New Testament provides evidence of hostilities between Jews and Samaritans, but in this case in the times of Pilate.²¹ This in itself would perhaps not be significant, if it were not for the fact that later, in Acts, such evidence is not only absent, but Samaria and Samaritans are mentioned on several occasions, without any suggestions of hostility.²² A pattern of abating conflict between Jews and Samaritans can thus possibly be discerned also in the New Testament, but in a different period than that described by Josephus (see Figure 2).

The pattern seen in Figure 2 may or may not be significant. There is, however, one additional element in Josephus’ narrative of the Galilean-Samaritan war which warrants attention: The triggering event bears some similarities to an episode involving Samaritans in the New Testament:

<p style="text-align: center;">A.J. 20.118-121</p> <p>“It was the custom of the Galileans, when they came to the holy city at the festivals, to take their journeys through the country of the Samaritans; and at this time there lay, in the road they took, a village that was called Ginea, which was situated in the limits of Samaria and the great plain, where certain persons thereto belonging fought with the Galileans, and killed a great many of them.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">B.J. 2.232-235</p> <p>[In response, Jewish $\lambda\eta\sigma\tau\alpha\acute{\iota}$] “set the villages on fire”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Luke 9:51-56</p> <p>“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, ‘Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?’ But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.”</p>
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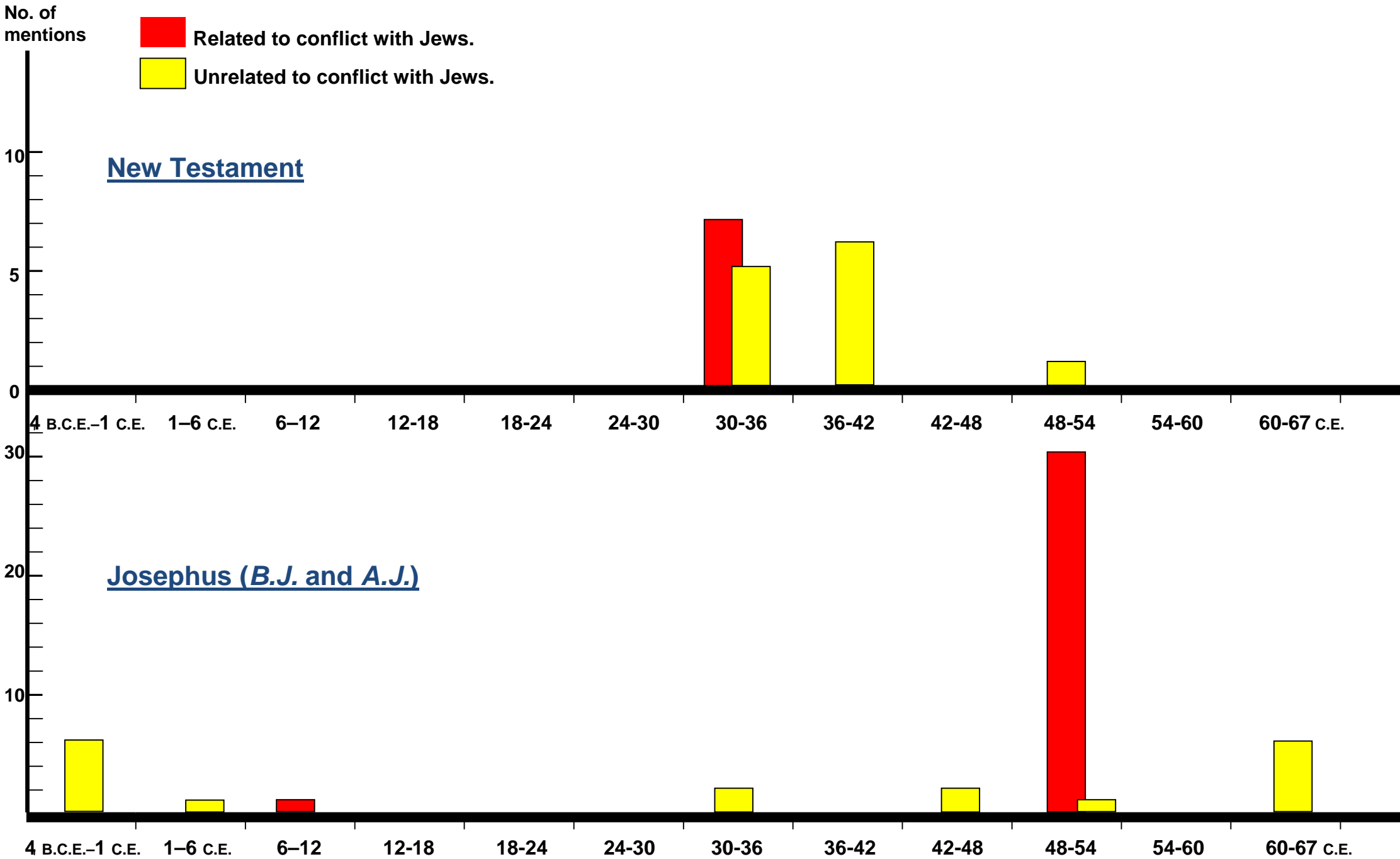
A village “along the borders of Samaria and Galilee” is mentioned also in Luke 17:11-12.

The similarities between *A.J.* 20.118-121, *B.J.* 2.232-235 and Luke 9:51-56 – down to the mentioning of “fire” – have previously been noted,²³ but the accounts have not been viewed as depictions of the same event, presumably due to the fact that the event described by Josephus occurs in 48 C.E., about fifteen years later than that described by Luke.

This very delay, however, seems to fit the pattern seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Mention of the words Samaria or Samaritans in the works of Josephus and in the New Testament



STEPHANOS

As mentioned, it is in the year 48 that the mentioning of *λησταί* in the works of Josephus increases dramatically, because of three rebellion-triggering events. Immediately preceding the Galilean-Samaritan war, Josephus mentions another of these events. It starts with an attack on a man by the name of Stephanos, or Stephen (*A.J.* 20.113-114; *B.J.* 2.228-229). This name is unusual, at least in Judea and Galilee, as Josephus only mentions one single Stephanos in his entire works. It is therefore noteworthy that a Stephanos is described also in Acts 6:5–8:2. Thus, there is a single Stephanos in each source, although they appear ten to twenty years apart.

Additionally, the two Stephanos narratives display some conspicuous similarities: Both accounts center around Stephanos being attacked by a mob; and in both cases the attack occurs on a road outside Jerusalem. According to one interpretation of Josephus' text, Stephanos is identical to the man subsequently tearing the Torah to pieces ("and this was done with reproachful language"), something for which he is killed.²⁴ There, however, the similarities end, for the Stephanos described by Josephus is a Roman. And those who attack him outside Jerusalem are *λησταί* – something which leads to retaliation by the Roman authorities, and the resulting threat of a Jewish rebellion. Thus, both of these attacks on a man named Stephanos on a road outside Jerusalem constitute significant starting points: In Josephus' narrative, it is the starting point for the violent activity of the Jewish rebels, in 48 C.E. In Acts, it is the starting point for Saul's violent persecution of the early Christian movement.

This might seem like a clear distinction, if it were not for the fact that Josephus nowhere in his works describes a Christian movement. It is not only Jesus who, with the exception of *Testimonium Flavianum*, is absent in his narratives. Equally absent are the Apostles, their conflicts with the Sanhedrin, the stoning of Stephanos, and Paul. And yet Josephus wrote as late as the 90s C.E.

The question, then, is if that which the New Testament describes as the early Christian movement, originally, and in other sources, was depicted as something else – a rebel movement. Ever since Reimarus began his quest for the Historical Jesus, one recurring interpretation of the gospel narratives of the complex, multifaceted trial of Jesus has been that Jesus, in fact, may have been a spiritual revolutionary leader not only against the Jewish establishment, but also against Rome.²⁵ Other proponents of variations of this idea have been Robert Eisler, Joel Carmichael, Samuel G.F. Brandon, and Hyam Maccoby.²⁶ Their suggestions range from Jesus and the disciples themselves being political rebels to them merely expressing sympathy with the ideals and aims of the anti-Roman resistance movement. And the authors base their conclusion, not least, on the many suggestions in the New Testament narrative itself. The more confrontational pronouncements made by Jesus – such as Matt. 10:34 or Mark 13:7-8 – although usually interpreted in an eschatological light, could often as easily be understood as insurrectionary in a political sense. Jesus was, after all, eventually sentenced by the worldly authorities, the Romans. He was executed by the means they used for rebels. On the cross, he was surrounded, on each side, by "robbers". One of his disciples was even called Simon the Zealot. Noteworthy are also disciple names Simon Bariona, Boanerges and Judas Iscariot (Scarioth in Latin, and possibly derived from *Sicarios*).²⁷ And the *titulus* on the cross described Jesus as "King of the Jews" (see also, e.g., John 11:47-50; Acts 1:6; Luke 22:36; Luke 23:1-2 vs. Mark 12:17).

The view on Jesus as a possible rebel leader is nevertheless countered by his many pronouncements of an opposite, pacifist, nature. And the prevailing sentiment is that Brandon and his colleagues overinterpreted the words implying that Jesus could have been a political revolutionary.²⁸ We shall come back to this later.

PEOPLE IN POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY

The chronological inconsistencies mentioned so far have all concerned major events in the period leading up to the Jewish war – usually involving Jewish rebels. There are, however, also inconsistencies involving the very elements which provide us with the tools to create a New Testament chronology, namely people in positions of authority. The NT narrative presents us with the names of various high priests, tetrarchs, prefects/procurators, etc. – individuals also described in the chronicles of Josephus. As a rule, however, these descriptions do not match; i.e. the names match, but not their circumstances.

TWO HIGH PRIESTS

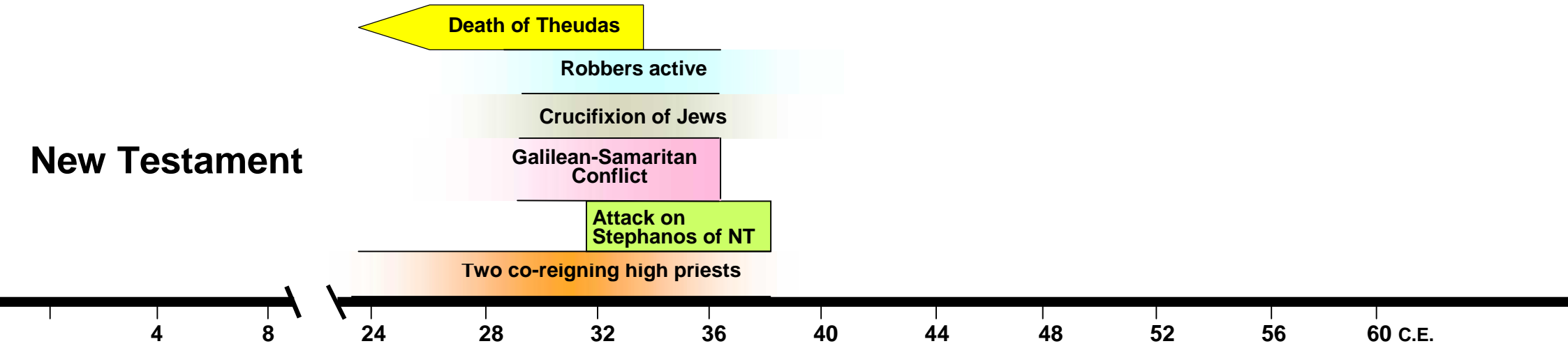
One such example concerns high priests Annas and Caiaphas. According to the Gospels, the two high priests hold their positions in tandem.²⁹ Josephus, however, makes no record of this. Judging by *A.J.* 18.34-35, Annas ruled from 6 C.E. and was deposed in 15 C.E. Josephus subsequently mentions three high priests (Ishmael ben Fabus, Eleazar ben Annas, and Simon ben Camithus) before Caiaphas assumes the position, in 18 C.E. And Annas is never mentioned again. Thus, judging from Josephus' narrative, Caiaphas ruled alone.

Curiously, however, Josephus does name two other co-reigning high priests a couple of decades later: The joint high priesthood of Jonathan, son of Annas, and Ananias, son of Nebedaios commences between 48 and 52 C.E., and Josephus refers to them as “Jonathan and Ananias, the high priests” (*B.J.* 2.243). When he is killed by the *Sicarii*, under Felix, Jonathan is still, according to *A.J.* 20.162 and *B.J.* 2.256, “the high priest”, and Ananias remains in office. Again, at least on the surface, a better fit appears to be seen when comparing the NT narrative with events Josephus places in the late 40s or 50s (Figure 3).

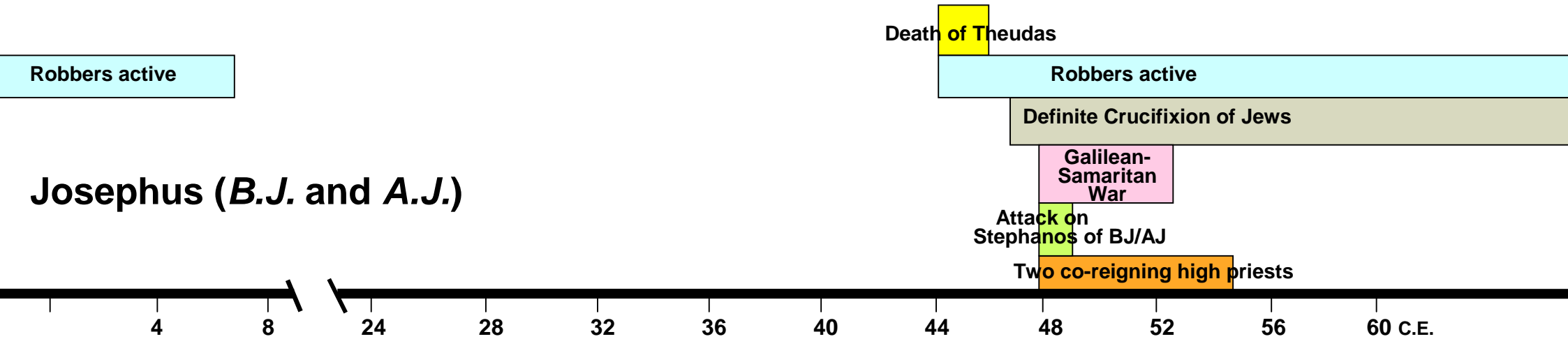
Were one to surmise, however, that this is a true parallel, and that the high priests of the Gospels in reality were active in the 40s and 50s rather than the 30s, the shift would be more difficult to ascribe to a chronological mistake on the part of a gospel writer. Because in this case it would entail a change of names. The question, then, is if a pattern like this – one dignitary in the Gospels better fitting the characteristics and life circumstances of another dignitary in extra-biblical sources – repeats itself.

Figure 3

New Testament



Josephus (*B.J.* and *A.J.*)



PONTIUS PILATE

Changing the names of authority figures in the gospel texts, in order to detect (or disguise) parallels in the historical sources, would at the same time be a simple and a radical intervention. It would with one stroke of the pen move the narrative to a different era, but it would also likely bestow upon these authority figures characteristics and circumstances which are not in reality theirs. When comparing the gospel descriptions of various dignitaries with those from Josephus, not only does such a pattern indeed seem to emerge; in addition, there is some consistency with regard to which dignitaries would change names, and when they are active. Procurator Felix (52-ca. 59 C.E.), as he is depicted in Josephus' texts, in several ways appears to bear stronger similarities to the Pilate described in the Gospels, than Pilate himself. As noted above, in Josephus' accounts of Pilate's reign we find no descriptions of robbers, nor of crucifixions of Jews, or co-reigning high priests, or open conflict between Galileans and Samaritans. Under Felix, and under Cumanus, we do.

There are other examples. Luke 13:1 reads: "At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." This statement fits poorly with Pilate. To begin with, Pilate was not the ruler of Galilee, Herod Antipas was. Secondly, the only registered violent encounter between Pilate and the Jews occurred in Jerusalem – thus in Judea – when non-violent protests against the aqueduct prompted Pilate to instruct his soldiers "with their staves to beat those that made the clamour" (*B.J.* 2.175-177).

This stands in stark contrast to what occurred under Felix, in particular. Felix, unlike Pilate, was the ruler not only of Judea, but also of "Samaria, Galilee, and Peraea" (*B.J.* 2.247; the western part of Galilee after 54 C.E.). At this point, "the country was again filled with robbers and impostors", a disproportionate amount of whom were Galileans,³⁰ and Felix was exceptionally cruel in dealing with these insurgents. As Josephus writes: "But as to the number of the robbers whom he caused to be crucified, and of those who were caught among them, and whom he brought to punishment, they were a multitude not to be enumerated" (*B.J.* 2.253).

Tacitus, in turn, puts much of the blame for the emerging rebellion on Felix and Cumanus (*Ann.* 12.54).

There are other, more personal, examples: the Gospels attribute great influence to Pilate's wife (Matt. 27:19: "While he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man ...'"). The Gospels also mention a feud between Pilate and the Jewish king (Luke 23:12: "That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies.")

In contrast, Josephus does not mention Pilate's wife, and, more significantly, fails to mention any animosity between Pilate and Herod Antipas (Philo does mention one possible occasion of disagreement – when "the four sons of the king" [Herod] are asked by the people to implore Pilate to remove the guilt shields, or ensigns, from Jerusalem).³¹

Josephus does, however, describe a significant – and very personal – disagreement between Felix and Herod Agrippa II. The conflict concerns the procurator's wife. Felix had fallen in love with Agrippa's sister, princess Drusilla (*A.J.* 20.141-144). But Drusilla was not only married; Agrippa had forced her first husband, king Azizus, to convert to Judaism. Now Felix "endeavored to persuade her to forsake her present husband, and marry him", which Drusilla did, thus "transgressing the laws of her forefathers" (*A.J.* 20.137-144; cf. Acts 24:24).

Hence, a prominent wife, and a personal disagreement with a Jewish ruler, are aspects of Felix' life; not, as far as is known, of Pilate's.

Yet another example: the text in Luke 23:6-7 does, if it pertains to Pilate and Herod Antipas, contain a curious tautology: “When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod ...” Since Pilate ruled Judea, and Herod Antipas ruled Galilee, the words “under Herod’s jurisdiction” seem superfluous. A more logical sentence would have read: “When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was, he sent him off to Herod ...”

With Felix and Herod Agrippa II, however, the sentence makes perfect sense. From 54 C.E., jurisdiction over Galilee was divided between them – with Felix ruling over western Galilee, and Herod Agrippa II ruling over the eastern parts. Thus, the information that Jesus is a Galilean would not automatically put him under Herod’s jurisdiction.

In conclusion, there are in the Gospels a number of characteristics and events ascribed to Pilate or his times which, judging by Josephus, fit better with later procurators, principally Felix, procurator in the 50s (Table 1).

Table 1
Rulers associated with various events in the New Testament and in works of Josephus

<u>Event</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	<u>A.J. and B.J. (1-66 C.E.)</u>
<i>“Robbers” active</i>	Pilate	Archelaus, Fadus, Alexander, Cumanus, Felix, Festus, Albinus, Florus
<i>Definite crucifixions of Jews</i>	Pilate	Alexander, Cumanus, Felix, Florus
<i>Two named co-reigning High Priests</i>	Pilate	Cumanus, Felix
<i>Prefect/Procurator slaughtering Galileans</i>	Pilate	Cumanus, Felix (Festus, Albinus, Florus)
<i>Conflict between Prefect/Procurator and Jewish King</i>	Pilate and Herod Antipas	Felix and Agrippa II (Pilate and Herod Antipas)
<i>Prefect/Procurator known to have an influential wife</i>	Pilate	Felix, Florus
<i>Conflict between Galileans and Samaritans</i>	Pilate	Cumanus, Felix
<i>Messianic Jewish leaders mentioned</i>	Pilate (Archelaus, Fadus, Felix)	Archelaus, Fadus, Felix, Festus
<i>Attack on a man named Stephanos outside Jerusalem</i>	Pilate, Marcellus or Marullus	Cumanus
<i>Theudas killed</i>	Pilate, or earlier	Fadus
<i>Census</i>	Quirinius	Quirinius

THE RETURN FROM EGYPT

Perhaps the most widely noted chronological inconsistency in the New Testament concerns the nativity stories. Matt. 2:13-20 states that Jesus was brought to Egypt as an infant, and returned “when Herod died”. Luke 2:2, however, puts Jesus birth at the time of the census, “while Quirinius was governor of Syria”. We know from Josephus (*A.J.* 18.1) that Quirinius became governor of Syria about 6 C.E. Thus, Jesus could not have been born both when Herod the Great was king (42-4 B.C.E.) and when Quirinius was governor.

This discrepancy is generally noted. It is, however, not the only inconsistency in Matthew’s narrative. Right after we are told of Jesus returning from Egypt (Matt. 2:21-23), the narrative says: “In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea proclaiming, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near’” (Matt. 3:1-2). There is no indication of time passing between Matt. 2:23 and 3:1. In fact, the words ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις (“in those days”) tie the two verses together, and the sentence places the beginning of John’s ministry in the same period as Jesus’ return from Egypt. This is difficult to reconcile with Matthew’s statement that Jesus returned as a “child”, since, judging by Luke 1:36, John the Baptist is only six months older than Jesus. Furthermore, Luke 3:1 places the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry “in the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius”, thus about 33 years after the death of Herod the Great. Even accounting for the fact that the return from Egypt may not have occurred immediately after Herod’s death, Matt. 2:22 definitely places it in the reign of Archelaus, i.e. in 6 C.E. at the latest. Thus, there seems to be a paradoxical gap of at least 23 years between Matt. 2:23 and 3:1, a gap which is contradicted by the words ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις.

One must ask if Jesus really returned from Egypt as a child.

Interestingly, there are two early non-Christian sources which state that Jesus spent years as a young adult in Egypt. With regard to the later one, the Talmud, it has only been assumed that the person who “brought magic spells out of Egypt” – a man named *ben Pantera* or *ben Stada* – was indeed Jesus.³² The earlier source, however, Celsus’ *Alethes logos* (175-180 C.E.), cited by Origen in *Contra Celsum*, clearly states that Jesus spent his youth in Egypt:

Jesus, an illegitimate child, who having hired himself out as a servant in Egypt on account of his poverty, and having there acquired some miraculous powers, on which the Egyptians greatly pride themselves, returned to his own country, highly elated on account of them, and by means of these proclaimed himself a God.

Celsus adds that Jesus was the son of a soldier named Pantera, thus strengthening the assumption that also the Talmud excerpts, on the man bringing magic from Egypt, refer to Jesus (*Cels.* 1.28,32).

It is a fact that also in the Gospels, Jesus reappears when he is “about thirty years old” (Luke 3:23). Nothing is said about where he had been previously. In addition, the synoptic Gospels all describe how he is at first not recognized in Nazareth, and is then remembered in relation to his parents and siblings, thus presumably as a child or youth.³³ The Gospels do not address where he has been in the interim.

Thus, there are at least three pieces of information which indicate that Jesus spent time in Egypt as an adult:

- The Talmud excerpts mentioning *ben Pantera* as someone who had come as an adult out of Egypt.
- Celsus’ statement that Jesus returned from Egypt as an adult (and his identification of *ben Pantera* as Jesus).

- The absence of information about Jesus' adulthood before age thirty, and the gospel descriptions of Jesus' return to his hometown Nazareth, apparently after a long absence.

In addition, there is one piece of information from the Gospels indicating that this adult return from Egypt is identical to that described in Matt. 2:21-23, namely the simultaneous appearance of John the Baptist as a preacher (Matt. 3:1).

Is there a way to reconcile an adult return from Egypt with the information from Matthew that Jesus returned "when Herod died"? Possibly, but it would require adjusting the name of the Jewish king, with a resulting shift in time of fifteen to twenty years.

If the ruler whose death preceded the return of Jesus from Egypt was Herod Antipas (tetrarch of Galilee, 4 B.C.E.–39 C.E.), or more likely Herod Agrippa I (39-44 C.E.), and not Herod the Great (42–4 B.C.E.), there would be no inconsistency in the statements that Jesus returned both "when Herod died" and when "John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea" (assuming that the fifteen to twenty year time shift applies also to John the Baptist).³⁴ In that case, Jesus would not have been a child when he returned from Egypt, but an adult, just like Celsus and the Talmud state.

With regard to the nativity story in Luke, which refers to the census, one may note that the only historically significant result of this census was that it was the starting shot for "the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy", the anti-Roman resistance movement, under Judas the Galilean (*A.J.* 18.23-25).

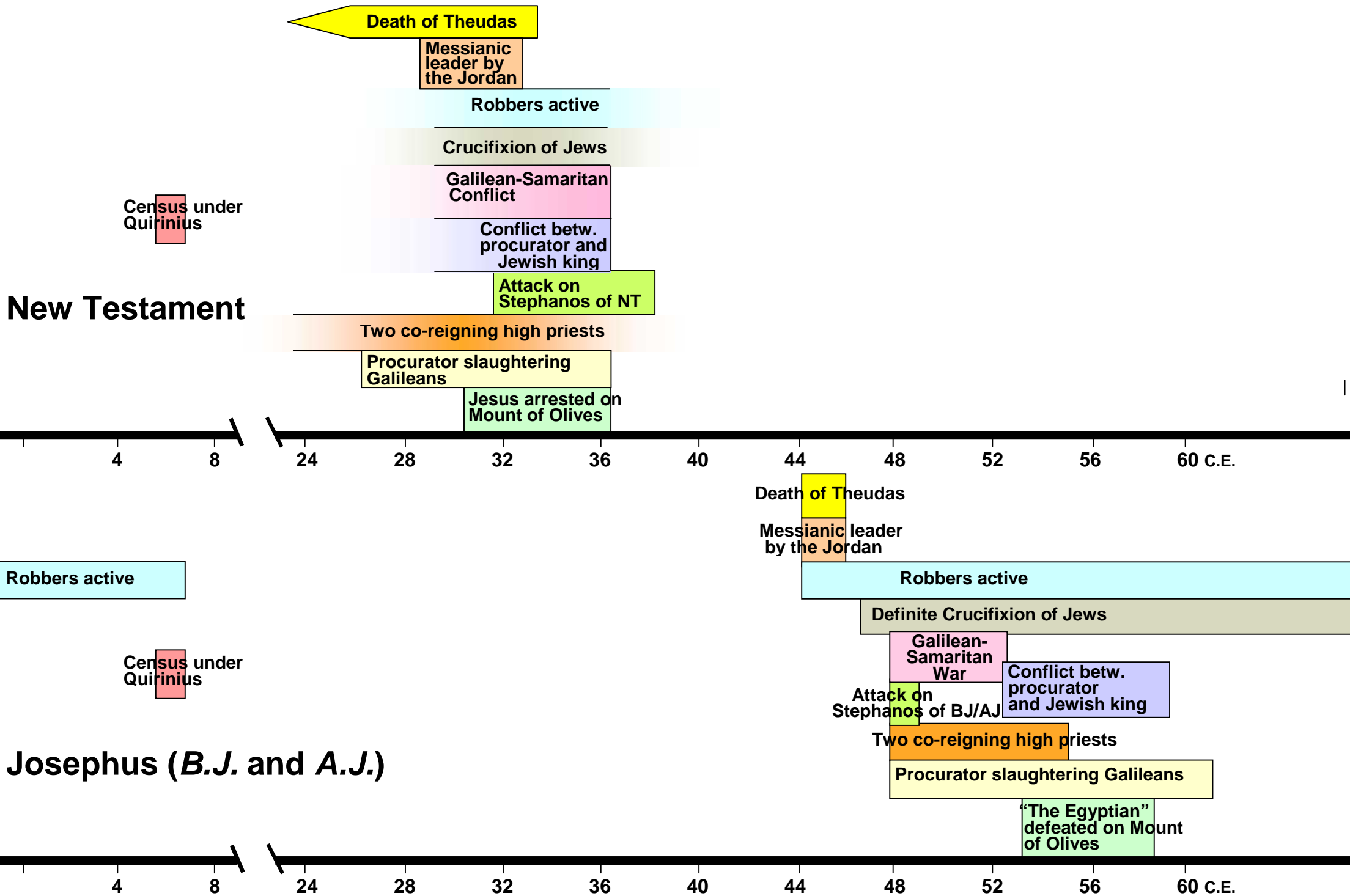
Whether, and if so why, a deliberate shift of events from one era to another could have been implemented will be discussed below. But if, at some point in the writing or editing of the gospel texts, there was an impetus to create such a shift, the easiest way to accomplish this would have been to change the names of authority figures. If, however, a number of other adjustments were not made, this might create internal inconsistencies in the text. In the example above, describing Herod the Great as the king whose death preceded Jesus return from Egypt creates such a significant problem with chronology that the text fails to be fully logical. Thus, if a change of names was performed, this modification most likely would have occurred after the initial text was written, and would have been fairly minimal.

Alternatively, the discrepancies could be interpreted as deliberate traces of another story. This, in particular, could be argued in the case of Luke (see below).

THE EGYPTIAN

In conclusion, there seems to be a pattern, where a number of episodes described in the New Testament display significant similarities to events described by Josephus, but with a fairly consistent delay of fifteen to twenty years. This pattern is summarized in Figure 4 (see also Table 1).

Figure 4



Perhaps the most significant aspect of Felix's procuratorship, however, is that if the 30s are devoid of strong Jewish messianic leaders, the 50s are not.³⁵ And the most important of them is one that Josephus describes at length, in both his major works (*A.J.* 20.169-172; *B.J.* 2.261-263; cf. Acts 21:38):

There came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives, as it was called, which lay over against the city, and at the distance of five furlongs. He said further, that he would show them from hence how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down; and he promised them that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls, when they were fallen down. Now when Felix was informed of these things, he ordered his soldiers to take their weapons, and came against them with a great number of horsemen and footmen from Jerusalem, and attacked the Egyptian and the people that were with him. He also slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred alive. But the Egyptian himself escaped out of the fight, but did not appear any more (*A.J.* 20.169-172).

The description in *B.J.* 2.261-263 is similar, but more negative. And it adds the information that this messianic leader "got together thirty thousand men" that he "led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives". The ensuing battle is described in a similar way.

There are significant differences, but had the Egyptian been active in the 30s, instead of in the 50s, historians would undoubtedly have made comparisons with Jesus from Nazareth. The reasons are manifold:

- Like Jesus, the Egyptian had lingered in "the wilderness" or "desert" (ἐρημία).
- Both speak of tearing down the walls of Jerusalem (cf. Luke 19:43-44).
- Both had lived in Egypt.
- Both are described as messianic leaders with a great following.
- Both are perceived as major threats by the authorities.
- "The Egyptian" is defeated on the Mount of Olives, where Jesus was arrested.

Aside from chronology, the one thing which most clearly distinguishes Jesus and the Egyptian are the circumstances surrounding their defeat: Jesus is arrested on the Mount of Olives, crucified, resurrected, and then vanishes. The Egyptian is defeated in a battle on the Mount of Olives, and then vanishes.

Let us, however, look more closely at the events surrounding Jesus' arrest, as they are depicted in the Gospels.

THE EVENTS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

Mark 15:7 states that "a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection". The author uses the definite form, as if we should already know which insurrection is intended. The fact is, however, that Mark describes no insurrection, nor do the other gospel authors. The only reported disturbances are the ones occurring when Jesus is arrested on the Mount of Olives (meeting his adversaries with the words: "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a robber?").³⁶ But the conflict seems predominately religious, and it is the Sanhedrin which sends out people to arrest Jesus, as indeed Mark, Matthew and Luke all write.³⁷

One Gospel, however, differs. In John 18:12, we read that “the Jewish police” are accompanied by “the soldiers” and “their officer” (NRSV). But it is when we go to the Greek original of John that we get the full picture: The word for “soldiers” is *σπεῖρα*, *speira*. A *σπεῖρα* is a Roman cohort with a paper strength of one thousand soldiers. So as to confirm that this is indeed what John describes, he uses the word *χιλίαρχος* for their commander (“the commander of one thousand”).

If John’s account is correct, then what occurred on the Mount of Olives must have been some sort of battle. It is difficult to imagine that the Romans would send out hundreds of soldiers to arrest one resting man. It is also worth noting that prior to the departure for the Mount of Olives, Luke 22:36 has Jesus admonishing his disciples that “the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one”. Thus, judging by John, the events preceding the arrest of Jesus bear distinct similarities to the events surrounding the defeat of the Egyptian. And the location is the same.

Assuming that John is correct, and that Josephus’ narrative on the fate of the Egyptian is accurate, the one clear remaining difference between the Egyptian and Jesus is the crucifixion. Although this may be a decisive distinction, one event in the gospel accounts deserves to be mentioned in this context: the release of Barabbas. Unlike Jesus, Barabbas (or, as he is called in Matt. 27:16-17, Jesus Barabbas, meaning “Jesus, Son of the Father”) escapes crucifixion. That Jesus from Nazareth and Jesus Barabbas could be one and the same person is a proposition that has been made previously, by scholars as well as in fictional accounts.³⁸ The peculiar resemblance of the names, as well as a failure to find either a biblical or an extra-biblical precedent for the described custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast, are generally cited as reasons for the hypothesis.³⁹

Although not necessarily the answer, the hypothesis that Jesus and Barabbas could be the same deserves to be taken into account when one evaluates the one decisive non-chronological difference between the New Testament descriptions of Jesus and Josephus’ description of the Egyptian.

As it is, the Egyptian has, before the publication of an earlier work by this author, been virtually completely neglected by scholars attempting to find evidence for Jesus’ presence in the historical narratives.⁴⁰ R. Travers Herford, in his 1903 work *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, does touch upon the Egyptian, in an attempt to separate *ben Stada* from *ben Pantera*. Herford suggests that perhaps only *ben Pantera* is Jesus, and that *ben Stada* is someone else. Then he adds: “I venture to suggest, as worth consideration, the hypothesis that *ben Stada* originally denoted ‘that Egyptian’ ... who gave himself out as a prophet, led a crowd of followers to the Mount of Olives, and was routed there by the Procurator Felix. This man is called a sorcerer ... This verdict is more appropriate to the Jewish-Egyptian impostor than to the much more dangerous Jeshu ha-Notzri.”⁴¹ In other words, Herford does note the similarities between the Egyptian and *ben Stada* (thought to be Jesus), but he does so in an attempt to find an alternative identity for *ben Stada*, other than Jesus. Despite their clear similarities, Herford never considers Jesus and the Egyptian to be the same man. One may assume that the reason is that the Egyptian appeared twenty years later than Jesus.

Postulating that Jesus could be identical to the Egyptian would require us to also assume the radical idea that the events, as they occurred, have been shifted from the 50s to the 30s when depicted in the Gospels. It would, however, offer us a plausible explanation for the paradoxical fact that a person, Jesus, who according to the New Testament arouses such attention in his time, and is perceived as such a threat by the authorities, nevertheless appears to be invisible in other contemporary sources. The additional fact that a better general

concordance between the gospel texts and those of Flavius Josephus would be achieved by such a shift is cause enough to consider this possibility.

Curiously, this identification between Jesus and the Egyptian may actually have travelled through history, at least oral history. Although the source of his information is unclear (possibly an early version of *Sepher Toldoth Yeshu*),⁴² Amulo, Bishop of Lyons, in the ninth century (ca. 847) wrote a book called *Letter, or Book, Against the Jews to King Charles*, where he stated that the following was the name that the Jews gave to Jesus:

In their own language they call him *Ussum Hamizri*, which is to say in Latin *Dissipator Ægyptius* [the Egyptian Destroyer].⁴³

And in the Huldrich version of the *Sepher Toldoth Yeshu*, from 1705, the name of Jesus' father is said to be "the Egyptian", because "he did the work of the Egyptians".⁴⁴

THE NEW TESTAMENT AND "THE EGYPTIAN"

Although the Egyptian vanishes, his name nevertheless appears again, toward the end of Felix' reign. It is in Acts 21:38 that we read: "Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand *Sicarii* out into the wilderness?" The person the question is directed to is Paul, who has just been discovered in the Temple.

The question of Paul's relationship to the Egyptian, and to Jesus, thus comes into focus. As does Paul's possible early connection with the Jewish rebels.⁴⁵

JOHN THE BAPTIST

The forerunner of Jesus was John the Baptist. The last major messianic leader to be named by Josephus before the emergence of the Egyptian was Theudas. And Josephus describes him in the following way:

Now it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them; who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem (A.J. 20.97-99).

In the chronicles of Flavius Josephus, there are three passages that refer to either Jesus or those close to him: A.J. 18.63-64 (*Testimonium Flavianum*) refers to Jesus himself, A.J. 20.200 refers to Jesus' brother James, and A.J. 18.116-119 refers to John the Baptist. All three are thus found in *Antiquitates Judaicae*, none of them in *De bello Judaico*. Although a matter of much discussion, *Testimonium Flavianum* is by the majority of scholars regarded as not wholly authentic, i.e. at least partially a later Christian interpolation, on account of its confessional nature, and on account of the fact that Origen makes no reference to it (*Cels.* 1.47; *Comm. Matt.* 10.17).⁴⁶

With regard to the other two references, scholars tend to be more favorably inclined towards them being authentic.⁴⁷ One of the reasons is that Origen mentions these references (or in the case of A.J. 20.200 a reference similar to it).⁴⁸

Nevertheless, there are arguments also against Josephus' reference to John being authentic:

- John the Baptist is not at all mentioned in *De bello Judaico*, although when it was written in the 70s, John had been dead for several decades.
- The appearance of John the Baptist is very sudden, considering his implied importance. He is mentioned in one single paragraph, where it is stated that some Jews hold the opinion that God's displeasure with the killing of John the Baptist is the cause of Herod Antipas losing a war.
- The paragraph disturbs the flow of the narrative. It is fitted in between the description of how Tiberius orders Vitellius to punish Aretas (*A.J.* 18.115), and that of how Vitellius prepares this punishment (*A.J.* 18.120). In other words, the text would flow considerably better if the paragraph on John the Baptist was not in the middle.
- In the paragraph on John the Baptist, it says that Herod Antipas sent John to the castle of Macherus to have him put to death. But in the previous paragraph, Josephus writes that Macherus is controlled not by Herod Antipas, but by Aretas, the man with whom Herod Antipas is at war.⁴⁹
- In this paragraph, Josephus shows an atypical reverence toward John the Baptist, considering the contempt with which he treats other messianic leaders.
- If we were to rely on the information supplied in this paragraph, John the Baptist would have been killed later than Jesus is assumed to have been killed.

On the other hand, there are undoubtedly elements in the gospel texts themselves which strengthen the conclusion that John the Baptist was an authentic, and important, person. He is one of the best examples of the so called "criterion of embarrassment" for authenticity.⁵⁰ John's presence in the gospel narratives is a complication; he must be deferred to, and at the same time he must be diminished ("I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.")⁵¹ He obviously can not be ignored. This, in fact, increases the likelihood that John has existed, and been of great importance.⁵²

This author would suggest that just as the Egyptian displays significant similarities with Jesus, albeit twenty years too late, so does his forerunner Theudas display significant similarities with John the Baptist, again, about fifteen to twenty years too late:

- Just like John the Baptist, Theudas is a spiritual leader who brings his followers to the Jordan river.
- Just like John the Baptist, Theudas is killed by the authorities, and in the same manner: they sever his head.
- The New Testament describes John the Baptist as the forerunner of Jesus. Similarly, Theudas is the last major messianic claimant to be named by Josephus before the emergence of "the Egyptian".
- Just as the New Testament describes John the Baptist and Jesus in similar terms, so does Josephus describe Theudas and the Egyptian in similar terms. Josephus, however, uses negative terms: he talks about them as aspiring prophets (in the case of the Egyptian, "false prophet"), and he calls them both "magician" or "sorcerer" (γόης). This negative portrayal is something to factor in when evaluating the logic behind a possible time shift in the writing of the Gospels.

If John the Baptist of the New Testament is identical to the messianic leader called Theudas in *Antiquitates Judaicae*, then, of course, *A.J.* 18.116-119 would be a later Christian interpolation. And the mentioning of Theudas in Acts would be part of what one might call the Lukan subtext, further discussed below.

WRITING ON TWO LEVELS

The author of Acts thus manages to mention three of the major messianic rebel leaders of the first century: Judas the Galilean, Theudas and the Egyptian. In all three instances, the person is thrown into the NT narrative, without much context.⁵³ And in all three instances the name is mentioned only once. This random dropping of names seems inexplicable, when the names are taken one by one. Taken all together, they may form a pattern. Adding to this, Luke 2:2 defines the time of Jesus' birth by an event – the census – that in the chronicles of Josephus is significant only for one reason: it heralds the birth of the organized anti-Roman resistance movement (*A.J.* 18.1-10). As Steve Mason points out: “Josephus places great emphasis on this early rebellion as a prototype of the later revolt [...] the census is not mentioned in passing by Josephus; it is for him a watershed event in recent Jewish history.”⁵⁴ That Luke mentions the census without mentioning the rebellion thus seems conspicuous. Instead of linking the census to the birth of the anti-Roman resistance movement he links it to the birth of Jesus.

Once again, the rebels seem to be present in the NT narrative, but only as a subtext. Interestingly, the one Gospel which refrains from defining either Barabbas or the two men crucified with Jesus as ἀηστανί is Luke (he calls them κακοῦργοι, “malefactors”).⁵⁵ It would appear that when Luke brings up Zealotry, he consistently does so as a subtext, never overtly.

The century before the fall of Jerusalem was a time of intense scriptural interpretation, not least seen in the *pesharim* of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The writers of *pesharim* believed that scripture was written on two levels: one obvious, one concealed. From the Gospels – particularly Matthew 13, Mark 8, and Luke 8 – we see that also Jesus admonishes his disciples to look at the deeper level of his parables, for the hidden story: “Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear?” (Mark 8:17-18)

It is perhaps not a far-fetched idea that also the narrative describing the life of Jesus, the master of parables, would utilize this technique of writing on two levels: one obvious, one hidden, to be interpreted. It is noteworthy, that when we do see parallels between Josephus' accounts and the New Testament, almost every word in the NT narrative seems to bear significance. But the action is sometimes modified – or even completely reversed. On at least two occasions, a pacifist action in the Gospels closely corresponds to a more violent one in Josephus' accounts: When the Galileans react to the hostility in the Samaritan village (“Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village”; Luke 9:51-56); and when Jesus meets his adversaries on the Mount of Olives (“Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword’”; Matt. 26:51-52).

One may further speculate that yet another, unveiling, level is introduced when the word “robber” is thrown into the gospel narrative (“Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a robber?”; Matt. 26:55), and in Jesus' admonition to the disciples that “the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one” (Luke 22:36). If indeed the NT narrative is written on different levels, it would appear that whenever the story is disguised on one level, it is opened up on another. Another example may be the reversal of the order of Theudas and Judas the Galilean in Acts 5:36-37. The mentioning of Theudas could be interpreted as a disclosing subtext, and the following mention of Judas as his successor, rather than predecessor, as a disguise, aimed at hiding the previous disclosure.

Finally, there may be parallels within the New Testament itself, that become visible only after a time shift has been assumed: Note, for instance, that Acts 21:38 mentions the Egyptian leading “four thousand” into the “wilderness”, whereas Matthew 15 and Mark 8

mention Jesus leading “four thousand” into the “wilderness”.

The NT narratives by themselves do not provide the reader with enough information to elucidate anything but the obvious story. Occasional oddities, such as the naming of rebel leaders, or Jesus’ admonition to his disciples to buy swords, remain unexplained. It is only when we put the accounts of Josephus next to those of the New Testament that certain similarities, and possible underlying patterns of storytelling, can be discerned. The relevance of these similarities is of course open to interpretation.

LATER PARALLELS

Curiously, some accounts in Acts 5, concerning the later work of the Apostles, seem to share certain elements with events described by Josephus at the beginning of the Jewish War. The time interval is thus different than what we have hitherto seen, and the possible parallels are not only puzzling but also less explicit. Nevertheless, placing Acts 5:1-33 next to *A.J.* 20.204-210 and *B.J.* 2.441-446, as is done below, is thought-provoking, not least in light of the names given to Jesus’ chief apostle in Matthew 16:17-18 – Simon Bariona and Simon Peter:

Acts of the Apostles	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>	<i>De bello Judaico</i>
<p>Acts 5:1-4 But a man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property; with his wife's knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. "Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to God!"</p>	<p><i>A.J.</i> 20.204-207 Now as soon as Albinus was come to the city of Jerusalem, he used all his endeavors and care that the country might be kept in peace, and this by destroying many of the Sicarii. But as for the High Priest, Ananias he increased in glory every day, and this to a great degree, and had obtained the favor and esteem of the citizens in a signal manner; for he was a great hoarder up of money; he therefore cultivated the friendship of Albinus, and of the high priest [Jesus], by making them presents. He also had servants who were very wicked, who joined themselves to the boldest sort of the people, and went to the thrashing-floors, and took away the tithes that belonged to the priests by violence, and did not refrain from beating such as would not give these tithes to them.</p>	

Acts 5:5-11

Now when **Ananias** heard these words, he **fell down and died**.

And great fear seized all who heard of it. The young men came and wrapped up his body, then carried him out and buried him. After an interval of about three hours **his wife came in**, not knowing what had happened. Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price." And she said, "Yes, that was the price."

Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." **Immediately she fell down at his feet and died**. When the young men came in they found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

And great fear seized the whole church and all who heard of these things.

Acts 5:12-16

Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.

B.J. 2.441-442

But on the next day **the High Priest [Ananias]** was caught where he had concealed himself in an aqueduct; he **was slain**, together **with Hezekiah his brother**, by the robbers: hereupon the seditious besieged the towers, and kept them guarded, lest any one of the soldiers should escape. Now the overthrow of the places of strength, and the death of the High Priest Ananias, so puffed up Menahem, that he became barbarously cruel

Acts 5:17-23

Then **the High Priest** took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy, **arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison**. But during the night an angel of **the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out**, and said, "Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life." When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and went on with their teaching. **When the High Priest and those with him arrived**, they called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the temple police went there, **they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported, "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside."**

Acts 5:24-33

Now when **the captain of the temple and the chief priests** heard these words, they were perplexed about them, wondering what might be going on. Then someone arrived and announced, "**Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!**" **Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them**, but without violence, **for they were afraid of being stoned by the people**. When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The High Priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled

A.J. 20.208-210

But now the Sicarii went into the city by night, just before the festival, which was now at hand, and took the scribe belonging to the captain of the temple, whose name was Eleazar, who was the son of Ananias, the High Priest, and bound him, and carried him away with them; after which they sent to **Ananias**, and said that they would send the scribe to him, if he would persuade Albinus to release **ten of those prisoners which he had caught of their party**; so Ananias was plainly forced to persuade Albinus, and gained his request of him. This was the beginning of greater calamities; for **the robbers perpetually contrived to catch some of Ananias's servants; and when they had taken them alive, they would not let them go, till they thereby recovered some of their own** Sicarii. And as they were again become no small number, they grew bold, and were a great affliction to the whole country.

B.J. 2.443-447

And as he [Menahem] thought he had no antagonist to dispute the management of affairs with him, he was no better than an insupportable tyrant; but **Eleazar [the captain of the temple] and his party, when words had passed between them**, how it was not proper when they revolted from the Romans, out of the desire of liberty, to betray that liberty to any of their own people, and to bear a lord, who, though he should be guilty of no violence, was yet meaner than themselves; as also, that in case they were obliged to set some one over their public affairs, it was fitter they should give that privilege to any one rather than

<p>Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him." When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.</p>		<p>to him; they made an assault upon him in the temple; for he went up thither to worship in a pompous manner, and adorned with royal garments, and had his followers with him in their armor. But Eleazar and his party fell violently upon him, as did also the rest of the people; and taking up stones to attack him withal, they threw them at the sophister, and thought, that if he were once ruined, the entire sedition would fall to the ground. Now Menahem and his party made resistance for a while; but when they perceived that the whole multitude were falling upon them, they fled which way every one was able; those that were caught were slain, and those that hid themselves were searched for. A few there were of them who privately escaped to Masada, among whom was Eleazar, the son of Jairus, who was of kin to Menahem, and acted the part of a tyrant at Masada afterward.</p>
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Note that although the passages by Josephus are broken up, they are, just like the passage from Acts, shown in their entirety (Acts 5:1-33; *A.J.* 20.204-210; *B.J.* 2.441-446).

The parallels are considerably more ambiguous in this last example. Nevertheless, the analogies between Peter and Menahem that would emerge if one were to attribute relevance to this comparison not only would lend significance to Peter's names (*Bariona* being an Aramaic term for a rebel, possibly directly synonymous to *Sicarios*⁵⁶; Peter, and Cephas, in the form of a very concrete rock or crag on which to build a community – cf. Matt. 16:18), but also to that of Menahem, a name which means “paraclete”, “comforter” (cf. John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7).

But even if one were to accept that there are certain similarities between Acts and Josephus in this last example, the time interval is entirely different than that seen for previous parallels. This is something which will be discussed in the following section.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST A TIME SHIFT

There are elements in the NT narrative, and in other sources, that would seem to argue against a time shift having occurred:

Tacitus

One argument against a time shift is that Tacitus in *Ann.* 15.44 writes that “Christ had been executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate”. It would thus seem that there is a Roman source placing the crucifixion of Jesus in the time of Pilate. On the other hand, Tacitus wrote this passage around 116 C.E., thus well after Luke, and the assumed implementation of the time shift (see below). Furthermore, since Tacitus refers to Jesus as “Christ”, rather than “Jesus”, or any other proper name, it is thought that he received his information from the Christian community in Rome, rather than from official Roman records. Although not a majority opinion, the authenticity of the passage has been called into question, not least because early Christian writers do not refer to it.⁵⁷

The Census

If we go to the Gospels, one point possibly arguing against a time shift is the description of the census under Quirinius. The information in Luke fits well with the description of this census (ca. 6 C.E.) as related by Josephus – and it is the only social or political event in the Gospels which does fit Josephus’ description. One could argue that if Jesus was active in the late 40s and 50s, he would not have been born as early as 6 C.E. (although the only argument against it is Luke 3:23, and John 8:57 actually suggests that he may have been older).

The question is, however, if the time-point Luke provides for Jesus’ birth is not a symbolical one: The census marks the birth of the organized anti-Roman resistance movement. In a similar vein, one could argue that the attack on Stephanos of *B./A.J.*, as well as the conflict after Galileans enter a Samaritan village, and the death of Herod Agrippa I (which appears to be depicted in Acts 12:20-23), constitute milestones in the re-emergence of the anti-Roman resistance movement. All four events – or events markedly similar to those – are mentioned by the author of Luke-Acts, but not by the other gospel authors.⁵⁸ In each case, Luke mentions these rebellion-related events in a different context than Josephus does, and thus they fill a different purpose for Luke. Presumably, they function as a subtext. One might here even find an explanation for the puzzling “Lysanias ruler of Abilene” reference, used in Luke 3:1 to define the time when John the Baptist began his ministry. The only Lysanias known to have exercised authority in this area was Lysanias tetrarch of Chalcis, executed by Marc Antony in 36 B.C.E. (*A.J.* 15.92).⁵⁹ However, Josephus, in *A.J.* 19.275, does mention that Claudius in 41 C.E. bestows upon Agrippa I “Abila of Lysanias” (the town retained its surname after its former ruler). If this, again, is an example of the Lukan subtext, the interpretation might be that John the Baptist actually started his ministry in the time of Agrippa I, 41-44 C.E.

As mentioned, it is a fairly common opinion (n. 12) that Luke had read *Antiquitates Judaicae*. Irrespective of whether he had, Luke is the historian among the gospel writers, and he has been “investigating everything carefully from the very first” (Luke 1:3). One could speculate that if a time shift was performed, then Luke might have been active in accomplishing this, as well as more deliberate when making veiled references to rebel activity. Looking at his writing through the glasses of a time shift, one can discern a definite pattern. This is less the case with Mark and Matthew (which were presumably written earlier). Perhaps, thus, changes in these two Gospels were made retroactively, and through more simple means. It will be argued below that possibly the same could be postulated with regard to the Pauline Letters, in relation to Acts.

Acts

Acts is considered one of the most problematic of the New Testament texts. And also in relation to the time shift hypothesis it constitutes a particular case.

There are some features of Acts which, on the surface, would appear to argue against a time shift: First, Acts describes a couple of events that – also judging by Josephus' narrative – clearly occur before the times of both Felix and Cumanus. One example concerns Acts 12:20-23. The description closely resembles that in *A.J.* 19.344-350, of the death of Herod Agrippa I, estimated to have occurred in 44 C.E. In most instances, we expect Acts to describe events occurring *after* the events in the Gospels. Thus, if Acts in this case details an event *preceding* the defeat of the Egyptian (which happened in the 50s), it would seem to argue against him being identical to Jesus. In addition, if Stephanos of Acts is identical to the Stephanos of *B.J./A.J.*, then the stoning of Stephanos occurred ca. 48 C.E., also prior to the defeat of the Egyptian. So could there be instances when events portrayed in Acts *precede* those described in the Gospels? Interestingly, when it comes to the chronology in Acts, there are other indications that it may be jumbled, both when compared to Josephus, and, perhaps more significantly, when compared to the Letters of Paul.

If we begin by comparing Acts with Josephus, we do find a number of seeming parallels. But whereas the parallels between the Gospels and Josephus consistently appear with a fifteen to twenty year delay in Josephus, the situation with Acts appears much less consistent: While Acts 5 bears certain similarities to events referred by Josephus to the mid 60s, chapters 6 and 7 bear certain similarities to an event in the late 40s, Acts 8:18-24 (concerning Peter's opinion of Simon the magician) possibly to an event in the 50s (*A.J.* 20.141-144), and Acts 12:20-23 appears to refer to something in the mid-40s. One explanation could of course be that these parallels are weaker, and possibly not relevant.

What is important to take into account, however, is that this chaotic structure is not unexpected when it comes to Acts. It is often stated that the chronology of Acts is not always linear, especially when compared to the Letters of Paul. At least, the two sources are difficult to reconcile.⁶⁰ For instance, Gal. 1:18 and Gal. 2:1 provide Saint Paul's post-conversion life with seventeen years where no activity is recorded. This long string of inactive years is not apparent in Acts. What is described in Acts, on the other hand, is at least two visits to Jerusalem, as well as the first missionary journey, that are not visible in Galatians, at least not if Gal. 2:1-10 corresponds to Acts 15:2-29 (which is the majority opinion). Paul's involvement in collecting money for the poor in Jerusalem is described in both Acts and Letters, but the timing appears to be different, etc.⁶¹

The differences between the two sources are so extensive, and incompatible, that many scholars choose to rely on only one of them. But the question is why such significant chronological discrepancies are there. Acts and the Letters manage to describe a similar time span, and yet fill the time with very different activity (or, in the case of Galatians, lack of activity). In this paper it will be suggested that perhaps this discrepancy is due to the time shift, more specifically to a dissimilar implementation of the time shift in the two sources. Just as the internal inconsistencies seen in the Gospels could be explained by an elaborate time shift in Luke, and a retroactive, and not fully implemented, time shift in Mark and Matthew, so could the incompatibilities between Letters and Acts possibly be explained by the same phenomenon: a more elaborate time shift in Acts (presumably written by the same author as Luke), a more rudimentary, retroactive, one in the earlier source, the Pauline Letters.

It will be suggested that the time shift in the particular case of Paul accomplishes a very specific task: to adjust the narrative back to real time, perhaps in time for Paul's arrival in Rome. And that the requisite artificial prolongation of Paul's pre-imprisonment activity is handled differently by the two sources, Acts and Letters, leading to two very different stories.

The proposition is thus that the actual period between conversion and imprisonment is considerably shorter than presented; that both events could even fit within Felix' reign (52-ca.59 C.E.), and that the time given for Paul's arrival in Rome is the factual one, i.e. we are brought back to real time.

In the Letters, the artificial lengthening of this period from perhaps less than five to more than twenty years would have been accomplished simply by inserting seventeen empty years (Galatians), and occasional names of authority figures. The seventeen inactive years presented in Galatians are not only out of character when it comes to Paul, they are absent in Acts. In Acts, on the other hand, these seventeen inactive years seem to be replaced by activities not reported in the Letters, or reported at a later date. One possibility is that later missionary journeys were moved to earlier dates in Acts. This would have accomplished more activity between conversion and arrest. But it would also jumble the chronology in Acts, leading to the general problem of reconciling Acts and the Letters.

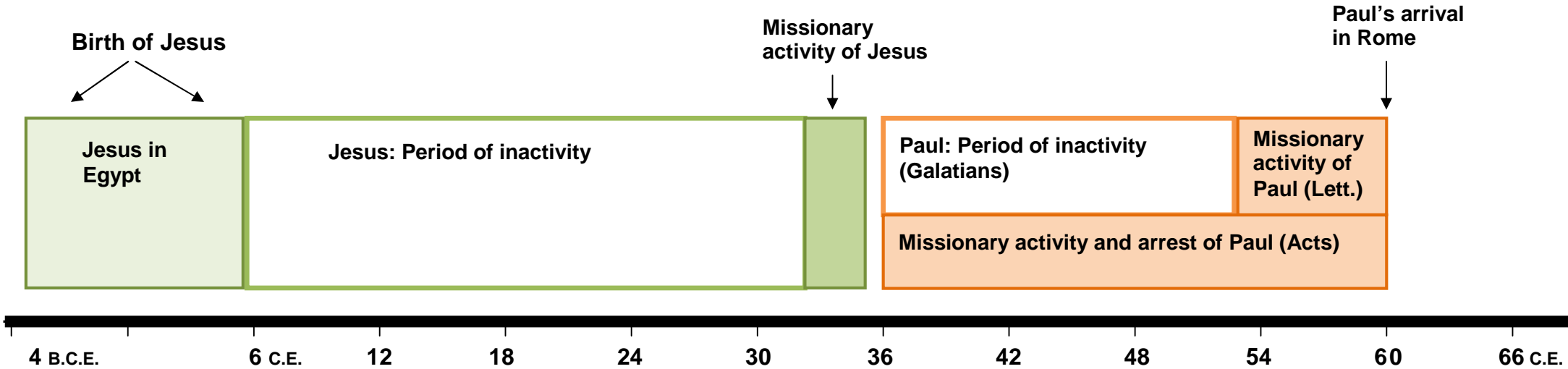
Possibly, Paul was known in Rome, and a re-adjustment of the narrative back to real time by the time of his arrival in Rome would have had to be accomplished in order to make the story hold together. Thus, the time between Paul's conversion and his arrival in Rome would have had to be stretched out. And events occurring between the late 40s and the early 60s would have been presented as occurring between the early 30s and the early 60s (see Figure 5). It is worth noting, that those historical people presented by Acts in connection with Paul's arrest and imprisonment – Felix and Drusilla, Agrippa II and Bernice, Ananias, son of Nebedaios, Festus, the recently disappearing Egyptian, etc. – are portrayed in ways which meld well with the descriptions by Josephus of those same people. Which makes sense, if we are at this stage back to real time.

Although it is the most complicated aspect of the time shift hypothesis, this proposition would not only allow us to fit Paul into the modified chronology, it would also provide an eventual adjustment back to real time, as well as, and perhaps most importantly, an explanation for the puzzling, extensive, and seemingly inexplicable chronological incompatibilities between Acts and the Letters.

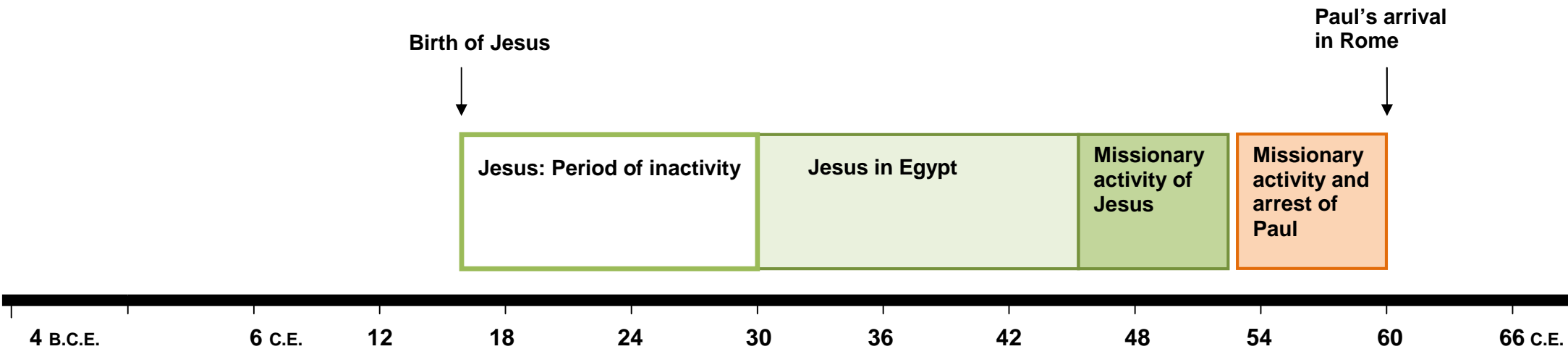
Figure 5

New Testament chronology vs. Hypothesized actual chronology

New Testament



Hypothesized actual chronology



NATURE OF THE PARALLELS

The parallels presented here have all involved commonly reported events or individuals in the New Testament and in the works of Josephus. The study has not concerned itself with similarities in vocabulary or thought processes. Nor has any evaluation of the relationship between the sources been made. Although this author agrees that much of the evidence is in favor of Luke having read Josephus, their knowledge of events could be independent of each other. In this study, Josephus mainly functions as a historical reference, being the main source of knowledge of Judea and Galilee in the decades leading up to the Jewish War.⁶²

What is fundamental when assessing the relevance of these parallels, is the fact that the NT narrative so poorly matches the **concurrent** descriptions in *De bello Judaico* and *Antiquitates Judaicae*. In fact, of all the historical events presented in the Gospels, only one seems to fit the description by Josephus, chronologically as well as content-wise: the census under Quirinius. In Acts, we find a few more (e.g. the death of Herod Agrippa I, or the famine under Claudius⁶³). None of them are, however, earlier than 44 C.E. It could be argued that the circumstances surrounding the arrest and beheading of John the Baptist are somewhat historical, since Josephus confirms that Herod Antipas married his brother's wife, and that this stirred up controversy (*A.J.* 18.109-129). But in fact, not much else in the gospel story matches Josephus' description. In his narrative, it is the father of the first wife, Aretas, who is angered on account of the new marriage. And it is Aretas who is threatened with decapitation.

As a rule, when people in authority are introduced in the Gospels, their names match with those of people active during Pilate. Their actions, however, do not.

This stands in sharp contrast to what would materialize if we were to move the accounts from the Gospels (and some from Acts) fifteen to twenty years forward in time, and change the names of people in authority accordingly. The number of matches would increase significantly (fifteen are presented in this study, including some internal NT inconsistencies which would be resolved), and although the matches are separate, not inter-dependent, they form a pattern with regard to the subject matter. In addition, a person with significant similarities to Jesus would appear in both *De bello Judaico* and in *Antiquitates Judaicae*. This person, however, was not, as far as is known, tried or crucified.

Barring this last fact, no new obvious historical inconsistencies are produced with the time shift.

There are at least a couple of noteworthy statements from early Church Fathers – statements traditionally seen as paradoxical, but in this context seemingly corroborating. One is the curious suggestion by Irenaeus, that Jesus lived and worked into his fifties.⁶⁴ Another is from Victorinus of Pettau, who, according to a surviving ninth century fragment in the monastery in Bobbio, wrote that Jesus was born in the consulate of Sulpicius Camerinus and Poppaeus Sabinus, i.e. in 9 C.E., that he was baptised in the second consulate of Valerius Asiaticus, i.e. in 46 C.E., and that he died in the third consulate of Nero, with Valerius Messala, i.e. in 58 C.E. Victorinus, according to this fragment, claimed to have found this information “among the parchments of Alexander”, bishop of Jerusalem and founder of the Theological Library there, who died ca. 250 C.E. Alexander, in turn, had relied on “apostolic documents”.

Whether this information holds any truth is impossible to say. Nevertheless, it is interesting if a bishop of the Church, Victorinus, would come up with this kind of deviating information, information which, in itself, ought to live up to the “criterion of embarrassment”.

Alexander's predecessor as Bishop of Jerusalem was Narcissus, who presided over the great council in Jerusalem ca. 198 C.E. One of the burning questions at this council was to settle the alleged “disagreement between the Gospels” with regard to chronology.⁶⁵

CONCLUSIONS

A number of parallels between the New Testament and the works of Josephus have been described, where the events appear to occur with a consistent delay of fifteen to twenty years in the works of Josephus (Fig. 4). Although the reliability of Flavius Josephus as a historian has been questioned, the length and consistency of these delays make it hard to ascribe them to a consistent error on his part (see n. 6). Whether the parallels are true parallels, and refer to identical events or people, is another matter. In some cases (the death of Theudas, but also the presence of "robbers") the individuals undoubtedly are historical, and the activity evidently placed in the wrong period in the New Testament. Even so, the question remains if this is due to an error on the part of the gospel writers, or if the time shift is deliberate.

The fact that Josephus describes two messianic claimants in the 40s and 50s, Theudas and the Egyptian, with significant similarities to John the Baptist and Jesus, and that he does so using distinctly negative terms, could be an argument for the time shift being deliberate. Those who put together the Gospels may have wanted to avoid an unfavorable comparison with established historical sources, and may have preferred to eliminate, or at least greatly diminish, Jesus as a historical person.

It must be remembered that when these historical accounts were written, the nation which they portrayed had been destroyed, and its people either killed or dispersed. The gospel writers wrote in exile, for an audience largely removed from Palestine. The availability of testimonies was limited after the war, which is also the reason why the Mishna was set down in writing soon thereafter. Thus, the chances for a competing account of the life of Jesus was limited, but it was not non-existent. Just like the gospel writers, Josephus, while in exile, endeavoured to rescue to posterity a history he feared would otherwise be lost. He was successful at it. Eusebius called Josephus 'the most famous Jew of his time', a statue of him was erected in Rome, and his books were deposited in the Public Library of Rome (*Hist. eccl.*, 3.9.2; *Vir. ill.*, 13). In addition, although his works have now been lost, there was at least one other contemporary Jewish historian, Justus of Tiberias, who wrote about the events preceding the Jewish war. If Luke, as is often suggested, had read *Antiquitates Judaicae*, he would have known how Josephus depicted the period. If he did not know of Josephus, or Justus, then certainly at some later point, these competing historical accounts would have become known. This, one could hypothesize, could be a reason for Luke, or a later editor, to try to minimize the chances for competing narratives. Shifting the story of Jesus to a different time would have been one way to accomplish this.

In particular, those who put together and edited the Gospels may have wanted to remove Jesus from the political setting in which he, according to this hypothesis, was active: the beginning uprising of "robbers", of Zealot rebels, often with a messianic leader at the helm. It was a violent uprising targeted primarily against the Romans, but also against the established Jewish leadership, the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Whatever its roots, by the time Christianity spread around the Mediterranean, it was a religion that advocated non-violence, a view that permeated its approach to the demands and decisions of human existence. Likely, this attitude to life was present also during the formative years. But perhaps the persistent strain put upon the masses living under on-again-off-again foreign occupation in Judea and Galilee, and the recurring disappointments when periods of hope invariably ended in despair, ultimately led to violent rebellion. As Josephus laments, "God ... brought the Romans upon us, and threw a fire upon the city to purge it; and brought upon us, our wives, and children, slavery, as desirous to make us wiser by our calamities". (*A.J.* 20.166)

The scattered sprinkling of references to "robbers" and uprisings still found in the Gospels could perhaps be the remnants of a story that could not be told, at least not overtly.

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¹ Justus of Tiberias, *A Chronicle of the Kings of the Jews in the form of a genealogy*; Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Cod. 33

² e.g. Pliny, *Ep. Tra.* 10.96-97; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44

³ see, e.g., Sanders (1993: 49-51).

⁴ Volney (1791); Dupuis (1794); Durant (1944); Wells (1986); Doherty (1999); Ellegård (1999); Price (2003).

⁵ *A.J.* 18.35, 55-64, 85-89, 177; *B.J.* 2.169-177; Philo, *Legat.* 299-305; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44

⁶ for discussions on Josephus, and on his reliability as a historian, see, e.g., Cohen (1979); Rajak (1983); Feldman (1984); Bilde (1988); Mason (2009).

⁷ 2 Cor. 11:32 mentions Aretas, king of the Nabataeans ca.9 B.C.E. to ca. 40 C.E.

⁸ Krenkel (1894: 162-174); Bruce (1981 (1943): 106-107); Williamson (1964: 129); Barnett (1986: 149); Mason (1992: 208-211); Goldberg (1995); Witherington (1998: 238-239).

⁹ e.g. Mason (1992: 211).

¹⁰ Bruce (1981: 106-107); Bruce (1990: 32, 176); Williamson (1964: 129); Lewis (1971: 170); Barnett (1986: 149); Hemer (1989: 162).

¹¹ Krenkel (1894: 162-174).

¹² Keim (1872:134); Krenkel (1894); Burkitt (1911); Smith (1913); Schreckenberg (1980); Mason (1992: 185–229); Goldberg (1995); Pervo (2006). For a critical view, see, e.g., Bruce (1990: 43-44); Sterling (1992: 365-369); Klauck (2000: 41-43).

¹³ Matt 26:55; 27:38; 27:44; Mark 14:48; 15:27; Luke 22:52; John 18:40.

¹⁴ Kohler (1906b); Appelbaum (1971: 159); Hengel (1976 (1961): 42-47); Horsley (1979); Kittel et al. (1985: 532); Price (1992: 17-24); Brighton (2009: 7).

¹⁵ *A.J.* 14.142 to 18.7; *B.J.* 1.204 to 2.65; *A.J.* 20.124, Whiston.

¹⁶ from *A.J.* 20.5, *B.J.* 2.228, and *Vita* 21, respectively; words scanned for (lemmas): *l ist s*, *archil ist s*, *l ist rion*, *l isteia*, *l istrikos*, *l isteu* .

¹⁷ Klausner (1925:206)

¹⁸ *B.J.* 2.75, 241, 253, 306; *B.J.* 3.321; *B.J.* 4.317; *B.J.* 5.289, 449, 451; *A.J.* 17.295; *A.J.* 18.79; *A.J.* 19.94; *A.J.* 20.102, 129; *Vita* 420

¹⁹ Crown (1991); Hjelm (2004).

²⁰ *A.J.* 18.55-62; 18.85-89

²¹ Most clearly in John 4:9; see also Matt 10:5; Luke 9:51-56; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 17:11-19; John 8:48

²² Acts 1:8; Acts 8:5, 14, 25; Acts 9:31; Acts 15:3

²³ see, e.g., Barnett (2005: 100); Hogeterp (2006: 157); Zangenberg (2006: 394).

²⁴ *A.J.* 20.115-117; Derenbourg (1867: 58); Schwarz (1852: 279); Kohler et al. (1906a).

²⁵ Reimarus, (1879: 27).

²⁶ Eisler (1929-30); Carmichael (1963); Brandon (1967); Maccoby (1973)

²⁷ Mark 3:17; Matt. 16:17; see, e.g., Schulthess (1917: 54); Hirschberg (1942); Eisenman (1997:179). For other interpretations of the name Iscariot, see, e.g., Bauckham (2006: 106); Taylor (2010:367-383)

²⁸ Hengel(1971: 9); see also Cullman (1970)

²⁹ Luke 3:2; John 18:13, 24; Acts 4:6.

³⁰ *A.J.* 20.160, 119-124; Zeitlin (1974); Horsley (1995: 258-259).

³¹ Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius* 299-305

³² *bShab.* 104b; Dalman (1891); Laible (1891); Krauss (1907); Travers (1903); Meyer (1904); Strack (1910); Zeitlin (1924); Klausner (1925: 18-54); Travers (1942); Goldstein (1950: 57-81); Lauterbach (1951); Bammel (1967); Catchpole (1971: 1-71); Maier (1978); Meier (1991: 94-98); Evans (1992); Schäfer (2007).

³³ Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3; Luke 4:22.

³⁴ *A.J.* 18.240-252; *B.J.* 2.181-183; *A.J.* 19.345-350.

³⁵ *A.J.* 20.167-168; *B.J.* 2.258-260.

³⁶ Matt 26:55

³⁷ Matt 26:47; Mark 14:43; Luke 22:52.

³⁸ Söderberg (1928); Söderberg (1932); Rigg (1945); Maccoby (1969); Maccoby (1980); Davies (1981).

³⁹ Rigg (1945: 421); Matt 27:15; Mark 15:6; John 18:39

- ⁴⁰ Einhorn (2007: 190-194)
- ⁴¹ Herford (1903: 345, n.1).
- ⁴² the earliest unequivocal reference to a text reminiscent of *Toldoth Yeshu* comes from Amulo's predecessor as Archbishop of Lyons. Agobard, ca. 826, in *De Judaicis Superstitionibus*.
- ⁴³ Amulo, *Epistola, seu Liber contra Judaeos, ad Carolum Regem*, #39; for references and discussions, see e.g. Samuel Krauss: *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Georg Olms, 1994 (1902)), p. 13; Hugh J. Schonfield, *According to the Hebrews* (London: Duckworth, 1937), pp. 128-129; Bat-Sheva Albert: "Adversus Judaeos in the Carolingian Empire", in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics Between Christians and Jews*, eds. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), p. 139; Frank R. Zindler: *The Jesus the Jews Never Knew: Sepher Toldoth Yeshu and the Quest of the Historical Jesus in Jewish Sources* (Cranford, NJ: Am. Atheist Press, 2003), pp. 277-278; G. R. S. Mead: *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?* (New York: Cosimo, 2005), pp. 292-293
- ⁴⁴ Johann Jacob Huldreich: *Sepher Toldoth Yeshua haNotzri* (1705), pp. 20, 24, 26. Digital version at Bayerische Staatsbibliothek
- ⁴⁵ Fairchild (1999); Taylor (1998); Einhorn (2007: 173-240).
- ⁴⁶ see, e.g. Pines (1971); Winter (1973); Feldman (1982); Birdsall (1985); Baras (1987); Feldman (1989); Meier (1990); Crossan (1991: 373); Mason (1992: 151-184); Paget (2001); Whealey (2003); Whealey (2007).
- ⁴⁷ Dibelius (1911:123-129); Goguel (1928); Lohmeyer (1932: 31-36); Kraeling (1951); Scobie (1964: 17-22); Schütz (1967: 13-27); Wink (1968); Nodet (1985); Ernst (1989: 253-263); Webb (1991: 31-43); Backhaus (1991: 288-274); Meier (1992); Mason (1992:151-184); Rothschild (2011).
- ⁴⁸ Origen, *Cels.* 1.47; Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 10.17.
- ⁴⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities* 18:112
- ⁵⁰ Meier (1991: 168).
- ⁵¹ Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; Matt 3:11; John 1:27.
- ⁵² see, e.g., Sanders (1993: 94).
- ⁵³ Acts 5:36; Acts 5:37; Acts 21:38.
- ⁵⁴ Mason (1992: 205-206).
- ⁵⁵ Luke 23:32, 33, 39.
- ⁵⁶ bGittin 56a; for an analysis of the name "Bariona", and the alternative suggestion that it means "son of Jonah", see, e.g. Hirschberg (1942); Bockmuehl (2004)
- ⁵⁷ Taylor (1829: 394-397); Drews (1909-1911: 179); Büchner (1957); Rougé (1974). Ross (1878) calls into question the authenticity of *Annals* itself, as does Hochart (1890). For reviews, see Van Voorst (2000: 39-53); Cutner (2000: 110-128).
- ⁵⁸ Luke 2:1-3; Acts 12:20-23; Acts 7:54-60; Luke 9:51-56.
- ⁵⁹ an inscription found at Suk Wadi Barada, near Damascus, could possibly be interpreted to support the existence of a younger Lysanias, but there is no historical narrative supporting it; see Schürer (1901: 712); Bruce (1990: 44, n.15).
- ⁶⁰ Riesner (2011) provides a survey of scholarship on Pauline Chronology. See also Riesner (1998: 3-28).
- ⁶¹ Acts 11:27-30; Gal 2:9-10; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8:1-4; 9:1-2; Rom 15:25-26.
- ⁶² for discussions on Josephus, and on his reliability as a historian, see , e.g., Cohen (1979); Rajak (1983); Feldman (1984); Bilde (1988); Mason (2009).
- ⁶³ Acts 11:27-28; Josephus, *A.J.* 20.49-53.
- ⁶⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.22.5
- ⁶⁵ *Bibl. Ambros. H 150f*, fo. 137v-38r; See, e.g. Benjamin Wisner Bacon: *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate*. (New York: Moffat, Yard and company, 1910), pp. 398-402; see also Johann van Bebbber: *Zur Chronologie des Lebens Jesu*, (H. Schöningh, 1898) p. 122; Charles E. Hill, *J. Theol. Studies* 49 (1998), pp. 634-839; a parallel fifteenth century manuscript was found in Padua (Padoue, *Bibl. Univ.* 1473, fo. 164).