

MEGILLAT TAANIT AS A SOURCE FOR JEWISH CHRONOLOGY AND HISTORY IN THE HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PERIODS

BY SOLOMON ZEITLIN, Dropsie College.

CHAPTER VII

MEGILLAT TAANIT: TEXT AND TRANSLATION.¹⁴⁴

אלין יומיא די לא¹⁴⁵ להתענאה בהון ומקצתהון די לא למספר בהון:¹⁴⁶
I. מן ריש ירחא דניסן¹⁴⁷ [ועד תמניא] ביה¹⁴⁸ אתוקם תמידא די לא
למספר¹⁴⁹ [בהון]: ומתמניא ביה¹⁵⁰ [ג] עד סוף מועדא¹⁵¹ אתותב חנאי
¹⁵² [דשבועיא] דילא למספר:¹⁵³

¹⁴⁴ In editing the text of the 'Megillah', I consulted Neubauer, *Medieval Jewish Chronicles*, II, Oxford, 1895; G. Dalman, *Aramäische Dialektproben*, Leipzig, 1896; Derenbourg, *Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine, &c.*, Paris, 1867, p. 442; Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, III, 2, p. 559; M. Schwab, *Actes du onzième Congrès international des Orientalistes*, Paris, 1897, 4^e section, p. 199, and also some notes by Schwab, giving Dr. A. Marx's views, in the *Revue des Études Juives*, 1900, pp. 266-8; Şedah la-Derek by Menahem ibn Zerah, 247b-248, and also both the Talmud-Babli (in the Munich MS., and also photographs of MSS. of the British Museum and the Bodleian Library) and Talmud Jerushalmi. The Megillah is mentioned in Halakot Gedolot, p. 615 (ed. Hildesheimer), in the Siddur of Rab Amram Gaon (ed. Hildesheimer, p. 193), in Mahzor Vitry, p. 229 (ed. Hurvitz), and also in Kol Bo in its regulations concerning fasts. The 'Megillah' was first printed with the Seder 'Olam Rabba and the Seder 'Olam Zuta and Seder ha-Kabbalah Mantua, 1513. It was again printed—this time in Basle, by Ambroise Troben—in 1580, also in Amsterdam in 1711, and in Hamburg in 1757, with notes by Jacob Israel Emden; Joh. Meyer, *Tractatus de temporibus et festis diebus Hebraeorum*, etc. Accedit תענית מנולת, Volumen de ieiunio, Amstelaedami, 1724. Besides

- II. ¹⁵⁴ בשבעה באייר חנוכה שור ירושלם די לא למספד ; בארבעת עשר ביה ¹⁵⁵ [נכיסת] פסחא זעירא די לא ¹⁵⁶ למספד ; בעשרין וחלתא ביה נפקו בני חקרא ¹⁵⁷ מירושלם : בעשרין ושבעה ביה אתנטילו כלילאי ¹⁵⁸ [מיהודה ו] מירושלם :
- III. ¹⁵⁹ בארבעת עשר בסיון אחידת מגדל ¹⁶⁰ צור ; בהמשת ¹⁶¹ עשר ביה ובשתת עשר ביה גלו אנשי בית שאן ואנשי בקעתה : ¹⁶² בעשרין וחמשה ביה ¹⁶³ אתנטילו דימוסנאי ¹⁶⁴ מיהודה ומירושלם :
- IV ¹⁶⁵ בארבעת [עשר] בתמוז עדא ספר גזירתא ¹⁶⁶ [די לא למספד] :

this we have Warsaw and London editions. Scholars who have done most work in connexion with our Megillah are Derenbourg, Graetz, Schwab, as mentioned above; J. Schmilg, *Ueber Entstehung und historischen Werth des Siegeskalenders Megillath Taanith*, Leipzig, 1874; P. Cassel, *Messianische Stellen*. An English translation of this Megillah is given by Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus*, v. II, pp. 698-700. See Steinschneider's bibliography in *Geschichtsliteratur des Alten Testaments über Megillath Taanith*, Berlin, 1885. A full list of scholars whose opinions or views I cite I shall give wherever it is essential.

¹⁴⁵ Parma, i לאתענא.

¹⁴⁶ According to the Jerushalmi (Taanit 66 a): אילין יומיא די לא למספד בהון מקצתהון די לא להתענייא בהון.

¹⁴⁷ Not found in Jerushalmi Megillah 70 c; in Jerushalmi Taanit 66 a.

¹⁴⁸ דיתקן, Jerushalmi Megillah 70 c; Jerushalmi Taanit 66 a, ארתקם.

¹⁴⁹ Not found (in parallel) in Jerushalmi.

¹⁵⁰ Not found in Babli Taanit 17 b.

¹⁵¹ P. אתקון.

¹⁵² Not found in Parma MS.

¹⁵³ In M. MS. is דלא למספד משום דאיתותב חנא דשבועיא.

¹⁵⁴ In P. fifth of Iyyar; in Şedah la-Derek, On 17th of Iyyar.

¹⁵⁵ Not found in Babli Hüllin 129 b.

¹⁵⁶ M. adds להתנעה ודלא להתנעה.

¹⁵⁷ M. סיקרא; in Şedah la-Derek, הקראים.

¹⁵⁸ In M. not found; in Şedah la-Derek no mention of this day.

¹⁵⁹ P. בשבעה; M. בארביסר.

¹⁶⁰ P. צר; M. שר.

¹⁶¹ M. בתמיסר בה ובשיחסר ביה.

¹⁶² Babli Sanhedrin 91 a: On the twenty-fourth of Nisan; Şedah la-Derek: 21st (of Sivan).

¹⁶³ P. נטלו.

¹⁶⁴ P. מן ירושלים.

¹⁶⁵ P. בארבעה; Şedah la-Derek has בתמוז.

¹⁶⁶ In P. not found.

- V. בחמשת עשר באב זמן אעי כהניא די לא למספר: בעשרין
 167 וארבעה 168 ביה תבנא לדיננא:
- VI. 169 בשבעה באלול 170 [יום] חנכת שור ירושלם די לא למספר:
 בשבעת עשר ביה 171 [אתנטיליו] [נפקו] רומאי 172 [מיהודה ו] מירושלם:
 בעשרין ותרין ביה תבנא לקטלא רשיעיא:
- VII. בתלתא בתשרי 173 אתנטילת 174 אדרכתא מן שטריא:
- VIII. בעשרין ותלתא 175 במרחשון אסתתר סורינה מן עזרתא: בעשרין
 וחמשה ביה אחידת 176 [שורת] שמרון: בעשרין ושבעה ביה תבת סלתא
 למיסק על מדבחא:
- IX. בתלתא בבסלו 177 אתנטילו סימותא מן דרתא: בשבעה ביה 178 [יום]
 טב]: בעשרין 179 וחד ביה יום הר גריזים 180 [די לא למספר]: בעשרין
 וחמשה ביה יום 181 חנכת תמוניא יומין די לא למספר:
- X. בעשרין ותמוניא בטבת 182 יתיבת 183 [בי] כנישתא על דינא:
- XI. בתרין בשבט יום טב ודי לא למספר: בעשרין ותרין ביה בטילת
 עבירתא דאמר סנאה להיתאה להיבלא די לא למספר: בעשרין ותמוניא
 ביה אתנטיל אנטיוכום 184 [מלכא] מן ירושלם:
- XII. בתמוניא ובתשעה באדר יום תרועת מטרא: בתרין עשר ביה
 יום 185 טיריון: בתלת עשר ביה יום נקנור: בארבעת עשר ביה ובחמשת
 עשר ביה 186 [יומין] פוריא 187 [אינין] די לא למספר: בשתת 188 עשר ביה

167 Babli Baba batra 115 b; Munich MS. has ותמוניא.

168 Babli Baba batra 155 b, בטבת.

169 In P. בארבעה, likewise in Sedah la-Derek.

170 Not found in P.

171 P. נפקו.

172 Not found in P.

173 Babli R. ha-Shanah 18b, בטילת.

174 In some editions by mistake אדרכתא.

175 In Sedah la-Derek: 'On the 22nd'.

176 Not in P.

177 M. ערו.

178 Not in P.

179 Babli Yoma 69 a: 'On 25th' (of Tebet).

180 Not found in P., but it is in Babli Yoma 69 a.

181 Babli Shabbat 21 b, יומי רחוכה תמוניא אינון.

182 P. יתיבא.

183 So in P.

184 Not found in P.

185 So in Jerushalmi Megillah 70 c, Taanit 66 a; Babli Taanit 18 b,
 טוריניום; in Sedah la-Derek this day not mentioned. In B. MS. it reads
 בתריסר.

186 So in Babli Taanit 18 b, Megillah 5 b; not in Jerushalmi's parallels.

187 Not in Jerushalmi, *ibid.*

188 P. בשיחא.

שרייו ¹⁸⁹ למבנא שור ירושלם די לא למספר: בשבעת ¹⁹⁰ עשר ביה קמו עממיא על פלימת ספריא במדינא ¹⁹¹ כלקים ובית ¹⁹² וברין ¹⁹³ וזהו פרקן ¹⁹⁴ לבית ישראל]: בעשרין ביה צמו עמא למטרא ¹⁹⁵ ונחת להון]: בעשרין ותמניא ביה אתת בשורתא טבתא ליהודאי דלא יעדון ¹⁹⁶ מן אוריתא [די לא למספר: ¹⁹⁷ להן כל אנש דיהוי עלוהי ¹⁹⁸ מן קדמת דנא] ¹⁸⁹ אסר בצלו: ²⁰⁰

These are the days on which one is not allowed to fast, and on some of them it is not permitted to mourn.

I. (a) From the 1st until the 8th of Nisan was established the Daily offering,—mourning is forbidden.

(b) From the 8th thereof until the close of the festival (of Passover) a holiday (of one week) was declared during which it is forbidden to mourn.

II. (a) On the 7th of Iyyar was the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, and it is forbidden to mourn thereon.

(b) On the 14th thereof (was slaughtered) the Minor Passover, on which it is forbidden to mourn.

¹⁸⁹ So in Jerushalmi Taanit 66 a; J. Megillah 70 c.

¹⁹⁰ Not in Jerushalmi Taanit 66 a, but is so in J. Megillah 70 c.

¹⁹¹ So in Jerushalmi Megillah 70 c; P. כלבוס.

¹⁹² So in Jerushalmi 70 c.

¹⁹³ So in Jerushalmi Taanit 66 a and J. Megillah, *ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Not in P. nor in Jerushalmi. *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ It is found in Jerushalmi Taanit 66 d, and there we read צמון כל עמא.

¹⁹⁶ P. מפתגמי · אוריתא, so also Munich MS.

¹⁹⁷ Not found in B.

¹⁹⁸ Neither in J. Taanit 66 a nor in J. Megillah 70 c; see the whole passage there.

¹⁹⁹ So in Jerushalmi, *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Gaster, in his article, 'An unknown Hebrew Version of the History of Judith' (see *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, reprinted March, 1894), is of the opinion that the passage in Cod. Heb. Gaster, No. 82, fragment 172 a-173 a, מעשה, הנו רבנן: בשמונה עשר באדר יום, שעלה סליקים הוא . . . refers to one of the holidays mentioned in our Megillah. This is not, however, acceptable. The reference to this holiday is in Hebrew, whereas our Megillah is entirely in Aramaic.

(*c*) On the 23rd thereof the garrison departed from Jerusalem.

(*d*) On the 27th thereof was discontinued payment of the tribute (from Judah and Jerusalem).

III. (*a*) On the 14th of Sivan the tower of the Fort was captured (see No. XXI).

(*b*) On the 15th and 16th thereof the people of Bethshean and the valley were exiled.

(*c*) On the 25th thereof the publicans were removed from Judah and Jerusalem.

IV. On the 4th (10th) of Tammuz the book of decrees was removed (on which it is not allowed to mourn).

V. (*a*) On the 15th of Ab, the day of Xylophoria, it is forbidden to mourn.

(*b*) On the 24th thereof we returned to our Law.

VI. (*a*) On the 7th of Elul was the day of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, on which it is forbidden to mourn.

(*b*) On the 17th thereof the Romans evacuated Judah and Jerusalem.

(*c*) On the 22nd thereof we began to slay the wicked.

VII. On the 3rd of Tishri were removed the 'mentions' on documents.

VIII. (*a*) On the 23rd of Heshvan the Sorega was torn away from the 'Azarah.

(*b*) On the 25th thereof the wall of Samaria was captured.

(*c*) On the 27th thereof they began again to bring the offerings of fine flour upon the altar.

IX. (*a*) On the 3rd of Kislev the images were removed from the Court.

(*b*) On the 7th thereof (a holiday).

(*c*) On the 21st thereof was the day of Mt. Gerizim (on which it is not allowed to mourn).

(*d*) On the 25th thereof is the day of Hanukkah : eight days it is forbidden to mourn.

X. On the 28th of Tebeth the Sanhedrin sat in judgement.

XI. (*a*) On the 7th of Shebat is a holiday, whereon it is not allowed to mourn.

(*b*) On the 22nd thereof the work on what the enemy commanded to bring into the Temple was stopped ; not allowed to mourn.

(*c*) On the 28th thereof Antiochus (the king) departed from Jerusalem.

XII. (*a*) The 8th and 9th of Adar they supplicated and sounded blasts for rain.

(*b*) On the 12th thereof is the day of Tyrian ; see No. XXIX.

(*c*) On the 13th thereof is the day of Nicanor.

(*d*) On the 14th and 15th thereof (are the days of) Purim, on which it is not allowed to mourn.

(*e*) On the 16th thereof was begun the building of the wall of Jerusalem ; it is forbidden to mourn thereon.

(*f*) On the 17th thereof the Gentiles arose against the refugees of Sepphoris in the province of Chalcis and in Beth Zabdaim, but there came salvation (to the Jews) ; see No. XXX.

(*g*) On the 20th thereof the people fasted for rain (and it descended).

(*h*) On the 28th thereof the glad tidings reached the Jews that they were not to be restrained from the study of the Law. It is not permitted to mourn thereon.

It is obvious that the text of the Megillah is arranged

according to the sequence of the months and not in chronological order. To establish the historical relation between the events commemorated in the Megillah, and to interpret these, it is necessary to rearrange the various dates in a chronological setting. The following diagram is an outline of the events which underlie the celebrations described in the Megillah, and which fall into four main periods:

- A. The pre-Hasmonean Period.
- B. The Hasmonean Period.
- C. Roman Period till 65.
- D. The Great Revolt, 65–66.
- E. Miscellaneous.

CHAPTER VIII

A. THE PRE-HASMONEAN PERIOD.

I. FROM the New Moon of Nisan (until the 8th thereof) the Tamid was established.

According to the Scholiast this holiday commemorates the triumph of the Pharisees over the Sadducees when it was decided that the daily offering (Tamid) should be provided at the expense of the community (paid for out of the public treasury), in opposition to the view of the Sadducees who maintained that it should be paid for by individuals. This is also the generally accepted view.²⁰¹ It does not explain, however, why the fête should be protracted over seven days nor does it offer a reason for the particular selection of the week between the 1st and the 8th of Nisan to commemorate that Pharisaic victory. The Scholiast lightly passes over these difficulties by assuming *שאוותן הימים שדננום עשאוים יו"ט*, that the debates which ended in that victory continued for a week—the first in Nisan, but this explanation is without support or corroboration. Dalman²⁰² thinks that this holiday commemorated the setting up of the Tabernacle by Moses in the Wilderness. This is not acceptable since the Tabernacle is not mentioned at all in the Megillah.

In my opinion, this holiday was instituted in memory

²⁰¹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, III, 2, n. 1. See also Derenbourg, *Essai*, p. 444. Schwab, *Actes du XI^{me} Congrès International des Orientalistes*, Paris, 1897, Section 4, pp. 235-6.

²⁰² *Aramäische Dialektproben*, p. 32.

of the dedication of the Second Temple when the Jews returned from Babylon. The dedication is described in Ezra 6. 15: *וּשְׁצִיאָ בֵיתָהּ דְּנָה עַד תְּלִיתָהּ לַיְרַח אָדָר . . . וְעִבְרוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּהֵנָּה וְלֵוִיָּהּ וְשָׂאֵר בְּנֵי גִלְתָּא חֲנֻכַּת בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי דְנָה בַּחֲדוּהָ*. 'And this house was finished on the 3rd day of the month Adar, . . . And the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.' It is clear that the text must be emended, the correct reading being, not the 3rd, but the 23rd of Adar. The latter is found in the Septuagint and also agrees with 3 Ezra 7. 5, and *Antiq.*, XI, 4. 7.²⁰³ In accordance with the prescribed requirements of Exod. 29, the following seven days were *ימי מלואים*, days of Consecration. This is also the tradition of the Talmud, which further corroborates the reading of the 23rd of Adar in the biblical text. The Talmud Menahot 45a reads: *ר' יהודה אומר פרשה זו אליהו עתיד לרורשה אמר לו ר' יוסי : מלואים הקריבו בימי עזרא כדרך שהקריבו בימי משה :* R. Judah says: 'This passage is destined to be interpreted by Elijah. R. Jose said unto him: They observed the sacrifices of consecration in the days of Ezra even as they were observed in the days of Moses.' The passage referred to by R. Judah is Ezek. 45. 18, *בְּרֵאשׁוֹן בְּאַחַד לַחֲדָשׁ תִּקַּח פֶּרֶךְ בֶּן כֶּקֶר תָּמִים וְחֻטָּאת*, *הַמִּקְרֶשׁ*. What Rabbi Judah could not understand was the sacrificing of a sin-offering on the New Moon, when the burnt offering was really the New Moon offering (Num. 28. 11). To this R. Jose rejoined that Ezekiel's description of the sin-offering had no bearing on the character of the days as New Moon, but to the dedication of the Temple which was celebrated on that day, that is to say, just as in the days of Moses the seven days following the completion

²⁰³ Guthe, *Gesch.*, p. 248 and also D. C. Siegfried, ed. D. W. Nowack.

of the Tabernacle were days of consecration, after which the dedication proper was celebrated; so in the time of Ezra the seven days following the completion of the Temple on the 23rd of Adar were days of consecration, after which, on the 1st of Nisan, the Dedication of the Temple was duly observed by the sacrifice of the sin-offering (cp. Lev. 9. 2). It was on this day also that the Tamid was sacrificed for the first time, or in the words of the Megillah אהוקם תמיד, the Tamid was established, or re-established, and the following week, that is, until the 8th of Nisan, was observed as a holiday.

In this connexion, the following passage in *Seder Olam* (ch. VII) is significant: התחילו (ו' ימי) המלואים בב"ג באדר ובאחר: בניסן שלמו. One is naturally confronted with the question whence did R. Jose, the author of the *Seder Olam*, derive the notion that the Tabernacle was set up 'on the 23rd day of Adar', when in Exodus it is stated explicitly ביום החדש הראשון באחד לחדש תקים את משכן אהל מועד (cp. Exod. 40, 2) and the actual setting up of the Mishkan is described in Exod. 40. 17, ויהי בחדש הראשון בשנה השנית, ²⁰⁴ באחד לחדש הוקם המשכן. The view of R. Jose becomes even more perplexing when it is taken into account that Rabbi Akiba, who was R. Jose's teacher, was of the opinion that the ימי מלואים began with the 1st of Nisan, in other words, that the Tabernacle was completed then and not on the 23rd of Adar.²⁰⁵ If then R. Jose, his pupil, differed

²⁰⁴ Cp. Ibn Ezra on Exod. 40. 38; Lev. 9. 1.

²⁰⁵ Sire 68 ed. Friedmann: ויהי אנשים אשר היו טמאים לנפש אדם מי היו ר' עקיבא אומר מישאל ואלצפן שנטמאו לנרב ואביהו נמצינו למדין שחל שביעי שלהם להיות בערב פסח. This could only be if we consider the seven days of dedication as having commenced on the first of Nisan and continued to the eighth, and that on the eighth day Aaron and his sons began to offer their sacrifice while Nadab and Abihu were burned, and so

from his teacher, it is strange indeed that he nowhere mentioned the view of his teacher with which he was in conflict.²⁰⁶

It is my opinion that the passage of *Seder Olam* here alluded to was corrupted, and that the writer incorrectly substituted Mishkan for the Second Temple, for in the Talmud the terms Mishkan and Mikdash are frequently interchanged.²⁰⁷ The second Temple was really finished on the 23rd of Adar and the seven days of Milluim connected therewith ended by the first of Nisan. In *Seder Olam* this was confused with the Mishkan. This corruption early misled the Tannaim and Amoraim, who relied on the *Seder Olam*, in the view that the days of Milluim in the time of Moses began with the 23rd day of Adar.²⁰⁸

II. From the 8th thereof until the close of the festival (of Passover) a holiday (of one week) was declared during which it is forbidden to mourn.

The explanation of this holiday according to the Scholiast is that it marked the triumph of the Pharisees over the Sadducees, in the famous controversy regarding the date of Pentecost. The Scholiast does not explain, however, why this period of seven days before Passover should have been chosen as a memorial of that Pharisaic victory. It appears to me that these seven days were really an extension of the seventh day of the purification of Mishael and Elzaphan, who had defiled themselves for the burial of their two cousins, fell on the eve of Passover.

²⁰⁶ That the Sifra Leviticus 9 likewise experienced difficulty (Shemini, IX, 1) is shown from the passage *וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי*, where it says *זֶה אֶחָד מִן הַכֹּתֵבִים שְׁצָרִיךְ לָדַרְשׁ* for the apparent simple meaning of this *יּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי* is the eighth day of Nisan, but in *Seder Olam* this is made to refer to the eighth day of Milluim.

²⁰⁷ Shebu'ot 16 b; Erubin 2 a.

²⁰⁸ Comp. Sifre Numb. 44.

preceding week which is celebrated as a holiday following the dedication of the Second Temple, the motive being that as the time was close to Passover, the people could be induced to remain in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover by declaring the intervening period a holiday.²⁰⁹

III. On the 7th (5th) day of Iyyar was the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem and it is forbidden to mourn thereon :

The dedication of the wall of Jerusalem is mentioned twice in the Megillah as the cause of a holiday, viz. in connexion with the 7th of Iyyar and in connexion with the 7th of Elul. According to the Scholiast the holiday in Iyyar goes back to the dedication of the wall in the time of Nehemiah (Neh. 12. 27). Graetz²¹⁰ adopts the Scholiast's view, saying that even though the wall was finished by the 25th of Elul the dedication ceremonies were put off to the 7th of Iyyar when the city of Jerusalem was re-peopled.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Ezra 6. 19-22 ; Sefer Mišwot Gadol, Mišwah 224 ; Dalman, *ibid.*, p. 21. Dr. Louis Ginzberg suggested to me that this Yom Tob can be traced to the Hasmonean period : Before Judas Maccabeus's victory over Antiochus and Lysias the Jews were not able to keep the sabbaths and festivals. The first festival which they were in a position to keep after the victory and dedication in Kislev—Passover—found many of the Judeans unclean (through contact with a corpse), as battles continued to be fought. Being desirous to offer up the Paschal Lamb, they purified themselves in the seven days between the eighth and the fourteenth, and for this cause they made the whole seven days a Yom Tob—in remembrance of the seven days whereon they had purified themselves before the Passover in order to keep the festival—a thing that they had not been able to do while Antiochus ruled over the Jews. (See Maimonides, Korban Pesah) and Notes of Rabad and Semag.)

²¹⁰ Graetz, *Geschichte*, III, 2, n. 1.

²¹¹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, III, 2, n. 1, and II, 2, pp. 143-9.

CHAPTER IX

B. THE PERIOD OF THE HASMONEANS.

IV. On the 23rd (22nd) day of Ḥeshvan they tore away the Sorega from the 'Azarah.

By Sorega²¹² they meant the structure of stones, interspaced lattice-work, in the shape of an altar, which the Greeks built in the 'Azarah and on which they offered sacrifices. To this 1 Maccabees (4. 43-6) alludes when, after describing how Judas repulsed the Syrians (165 B. C.), it tells us that before they set about cleansing the Sanctuary in order to rededicate it, they first purified the 'Azarah and cast out the stones from the Sanctuary and also tore down the altar. The stones which they threw out from the Sanctuary were those which the Syrians had built up in the 'Azarah for sacrificial purposes. Although 1 Macc. does not specify the exact date, still what it does say in that connexion, shows that it was before the 25th of Kislev (the dedication) and is to that extent in agreement with this interpretation of the Megillah. To this the Scholiast doubtless refers when he says: מִפְּנֵי שֶׁבָנוּ יוֹנִים מְקוֹם בְּעוֹרָה וְהָיוּ מֵעֲמִידִים בְּתוֹכָהּ [עֲלִיּוֹן] הַזּוֹנוֹת וּכְשֶׁתִּקְפֶּה יָד הַשְּׂמוֹנָאִים נִמְלְאוּהוּ מֵהֶן [הוֹצִיאוּם מִשָּׁם].²¹³ וְהַיּוֹם שֶׁשֶׁתְּרוּהוּ עֲשָׂאוּהוּ יוֹם טוֹב

V. On the 27th of Ḥeshvan they began again to bring the offering of fine flour upon the altar.

According to the Scholiast this holiday commemorates

²¹² See 'Aruk, s. v. סוֹרֵג.

²¹³ See further Derenbourg, pp. 60-2; Schwab, *Actes du Onzième Congrès International des Orientalistes*, section 4, pp. 213-15.

the victory of the Pharisees over the Sadducees in a controversy concerning the disposition of flour that used to accompany the animal sacrifices, the latter contending that it should be burned with the sacrifice, the former holding the view that this meal-offering (מנחה) should be consumed by the priest. The explanations of the Scholiast, however, are not generally to be trusted, especially in his references to Pharisaic victories. He follows too freely a tendency to trace holidays to victories of the Pharisees when he has no other explanation at hand.²¹⁴ If the Pharisaic victories were celebrated in the manner described by the Scholiast it would be strange indeed that no holiday was instituted in honour of the decision with regard to the Water Libation,²¹⁵ or of other triumphs which were of far greater import than the point gained in the matter of the meal-offerings.²¹⁶ In no case have we in the Megillah a reminiscence of those debates. None of the holidays there enumerated commemorate the triumph of one faction over the other. All point to incidents that were a source of comfort and gladness to the whole nation. There must, therefore, be some other significance to the holiday of the 27th of Heshvan. From 1 Macc. 4. 42-3 we learn that after Judas cleansed the Temple he chose for the Temple service such priests as were qualified to officiate. According to Lev. 6. 13, the priests who were thus anointed had to offer the meal-offering of fine flour. The High Priest, in particular, had to offer up the meal-offering daily.²¹⁷ This, we may assume, was the cause of the holiday on the 27th of Heshvan.

²¹⁴ Cp. above, Nos. I and II, pp. 244-8.

²¹⁵ Sukkah 48.

²¹⁶ E. g. the decision in regard to the question 'טבול יום'; see S. Zeitlin, 'The tent Takkanaot Ezra', *JQR.*, N. S., vol. VIII, pp. 64-6.

²¹⁷ Josephtha Menahot VII, 14.

Although 1 Macc. makes no mention of the meal-offering of fine flour, it is possible that this is alluded to in the letters which 2 Macc. cites as having been written to the Jews of Egypt *καὶ προσηνέγκαμεν θυσίαν καὶ σεμίδαλιν, καὶ ἐξήψαμεν τοὺς λύχνους καὶ προεθήκαμεν τοὺς ἄρτους* (2 Macc. 1. 8).²¹⁸

VI. On the 25th day thereof (Kislev) is the day of Hanukkah: eight days and it is forbidden to mourn.

This is but a terse way of putting the information given in 1 and 2 Maccabees, that after the purification of the Sanctuary they celebrated the dedication of the Temple eight days²¹⁹ in the 149th year (Kislev 25, 165 B. C. E.), and made it an annual festival.²²⁰

VII. On the 28th day thereof (Adar) the good news reached the Jews that they were not to be restrained from the study of the Law. It is not permitted to mourn thereon.

The Scholiast interprets this passage as commemorating the end of the Hadrianic oppression through the successful efforts of Judah ben Shammua' and his colleagues to have the former harsh decrees annulled. Graetz²²¹ in this instance accepts the view of the Scholiast, and dates the event accordingly, 139/40 C. E. This, however, seems impossible; because such a holiday could not have been instituted so late if it was recorded in the Megillah. Thus in Rosh ha-Shanah 19 b, R. Meir and R. Jose dispute as to whether the festive days mentioned in the Megillah

²¹⁸ P. Cassel, *Messianische Stellen des Alten Testaments; Über Megillath Taanit*, p. 111.

²¹⁹ Josephus (*Antiq.* XII, 7. 7) calls this holiday Φῶτα (i. e. Feast of Lights). See, Geiger, *Urschrift*, p. 227; Derenbourg, *Essai*, pp. 62-3; Graetz, *Geschichte*. III, 2, notes 1 and 10; Schürer, *Gesch.*, p. 209.

²²⁰ For the establishment of this chronological date see above, pp. 57-9.

²²¹ Graetz, *ibid.*, n. 1, and IV, 185.

still enjoyed the same status after the destruction of the Temple. Furthermore, two generations earlier, in the days of R. Joshua and R. Eliezer, the provisions of the Megillah were no longer in force, as for instance in Lydda, where a fast was decreed on Hanukkah, מעשה וגמרו תענית בהנכה בלור, and it is therefore inconceivable that a new holiday should be added in the times of Judah ben Shammua', a disciple of R. Meir, to a calendar which appears to have already lost its sanctity. Derenbourg's²²² theory appears more plausible, that this holiday belongs to the Maccabean period when Antiochus V granted the Jews religious liberty. The epistle, which Antiochus addressed to the Jewish senate on this subject, was dated the 15th of Xanthicus of the 148th year. *χρησθαι τοὺς Ἰουδαίους τοῖς ἐαυτῶν δαπανήμασι καὶ νόμοις καθὰ καὶ τὸ πρότερον* (2 Macc. 11. 31). Derenbourg fails to explain the identification of Xanthicus with Adar. For, usually, Xanthicus corresponds to the Jewish month Nisan. If, however, we adopt the view of Usher, that at that time the Syro-Macedonians used the solar reckoning,²²³ it becomes possible that what is here called Xanthicus, the 15th, corresponded with the next to the last (i. e. 28th) day of Adar, the month before Nisan, the date on which in the words of the Megillah the glad tidings reached the Jews that they were not to be restrained from the study and observance of the 'Law'. This took place in the year 164 B. C. E.²²⁴

VIII. On the 28th thereof (Shebat) Antiochus departed from Jerusalem.

²²² Derenbourg, *Essai*, p. 59.

²²³ Usher, *De Macedonum et Asianorum anno solari*, London, 1648.

²²⁴ About this month Xanthicus, see Ideler, *Handbuch der Chron.*, I, p. 426; F. Hitzig, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, p. 410; Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, III, Appendix IV.

This fête day commemorated an incident recorded of Antiochus Eupator who had besieged the Temple-mountain.²²⁵ Judas and his army were no longer able to offer resistance. It was a sabbatic year, and their food supplies were exhausted. They would have been compelled to surrender to Antiochus. But Antiochus suddenly heard that Philippus was marching on Antioch to capture it. Then at the advice of Lysias he made peace with the Jews.²²⁶ This is what the Megillah alludes to when it says, 'On the 28th of Shebat, Antiochus withdrew from Jerusalem.'

Such is also the opinion of Herzfeld.²²⁷ Graetz²²⁸ refers it to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, and interprets the Scholiast's *במקומו והלך לו ונפל* to mean that Antiochus Epiphanes travelled into Persia and died there. I consider Herzfeld's view correct: that the day commemorates the peace made by Antiochus V with the Jews. For the text of the Megillah reads: *אנתחיל אנתחיל מן ירושלם*, and this fits in well with the fact of Antiochus's leaving Jerusalem after concluding a treaty. The Scholiast's observation as to the evil tidings is to be referred to the reports which reached Antiochus V concerning Philip's advance which threatened to result in the capture of Antioch. This fact impelled him to leave Jerusalem to hasten to the defence of his capital, where he was killed not long after by Demetrius I.²²⁹ The holiday dates, therefore, from Shebat 28th, 163 B. C. E., which was a sabbatical year.²³⁰

IX. On the 14th thereof (Iyyar) is the Minor Passover.

²²⁵ 1 Macc. 6. 28-62; 2 Macc. 13. 1-26.

²²⁶ See Derenbourg, *Essai*, p. 63. ²²⁷ Herzfeld, *Geschichte*, I, p. 280.

²²⁸ Graetz, *Geschichte*, III, 2, n 1.

²²⁹ 1 Macc. 7. 1-4.

²³⁰ See about the sabbatical years chap. IV.

The commentators all agree that this is identical with the Pesah̄ Sheni mentioned in Num. 9. 2, which was instituted for the benefit of those who were unclean or, being 'on a distant way', could not reach the holy city by the 14th of Nisan. They were directed to celebrate the Passover on the 14th day of the second month.²³¹ It seems to me that in this connexion Pesah̄ Ḳaṭan has an entirely different significance. It was a holiday for the nation, not merely for those individuals who were debarred through the above-mentioned exceptional circumstances. The celebration of the 14th of Iyyar is to be connected with the disturbances caused by the wars. Owing to the battles which they fought against the Syrians, the Hasmo-neans, who were the chief priests, were away from the Sanctuary during the Passover season (most battles were fought in the spring), and therefore the Paschal lamb could not be offered up in its season, and the Paschal sacrifices had therefore to be postponed to the 14th of Iyyar. On this account the 14th of the year became a holiday in commemoration of the victories over the Syrians.

X. On the 13th of Adar is the day of Nicanor.

The victory of Judas over Nicanor is mentioned in 1 Maccabees as the occasion for making the 13th of Adar a holiday: *καὶ ἔστησαν τοῦ ἄγειν κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην τὴν τρισκαιδέκατην τοῦ Ἀδάρ* (1 Macc. 7. 49; 2 Macc. 15. 36). According to the account of 1 Maccabees that victory was in the year 152 A. S., corresponding in the 162/1 B. C. E.; being in Adar, it must therefore have been in 161 B. C. E.²³²

²³¹ See Graetz, III, 2, n. 1; Derenbourg, *Essai*, p. 444.

²³² See about this above, p. 82, and note 27. See Derenbourg, p. 63; Schwab, pp. 219-20; Graetz, III, 2 (p. 565); Cassel, pp. 81-4.

XI. On the 14th^{232a} day of Tammuz the book of decrees was removed.

The origin of this also the Scholiast seeks in the controversies between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. I have shown above (No. V) that none of the holidays mentioned in the Megillah are to be traced to this cause. Cassel's view is acceptable, that the event hereby commemorated goes back to the time of Jonathan, and that the holiday was instituted because of the concessions which Alexander Balas and Demetrius granted to the Jews whereby all the decrees of the Greeks were annulled (1 Macc. 10).²³³

XII. On the 7th (4th) of Elul was the day of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem.

This gala-day very likely goes back to the time of Jonathan. See 1 Macc. 10. 45, where we are told that Demetrius gave his sanction to Jonathan for the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem, and even gave him money from his own treasury for this purpose. Another possibility is that it refers to a similar event in the administration of Simon, when he actually built the wall of Jerusalem, to which we find this reference in 1 Macc. 13. 10: *καὶ ἐτάχυνε τοῦ τελέσαι τὰ τείχη Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ ὠχύρωσεν αὐτὴν κυκλόθεν*.²³⁴

XIII. On the 27th of the month Iyyar the tribute from Judah and Jerusalem was discontinued.

The word כִּלְבַּן is the equivalent of 'crown-money' (*στῆφανος*), which according to 1 Maccabees was relinquished by Demetrius II in 170 A. S. (143 B. C. E.) to the Jews who

^{232a} See above, n. 165.

²³³ Cassel, *l. c.*, p. 107.

²³⁴ See further, P. Cassel, *l. c.*, p. 104.

had paid this tribute to the Syrians. By this act the Jews were raised to the status of an independent nation, and the yoke of the Gentiles was removed.²³⁵

XIV. On the 23rd thereof (Iyyar) the garrison departed from Jerusalem.

The year and the day in which the Greeks evacuated the fort are explicitly given in 1 Macc. (13, 51) in its account of Simon's activities. The 23rd day of the second month in the 171st year (142 B. C. E.).²³⁶

XV. On the 21st day thereof (Kislev) was the day of Mt. Gerizim.

Josephus speaks twice at least of the destruction of the Sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim—in *Bell. Iud.* I, 2, 6, and in *Antiq.* XIII, 9, 1. In Talmud Babli (Yoma 69a), and also in the Scholia to this Megillah the dismantling of the Temple on Mount Gerizim is attributed to Alexander of Macedon, but it is well known that the Temple on Gerizim

²³⁵ From this year, 170 A. S. (144-3 B. C. E.) they began to count the administration of Simon, but not the rule of the Hasmonean dynasty; this they began two years later, i. e. in the year 172, when in a public assembly it was resolved to confer upon Simon and his descendants the principality of Israel. This took place on the 18th of Elul in the year 172 (140 B. C. E.). *Καὶ ὅτι ἐδόξασαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς τοῦ εἶναι αὐτῶν Σίμωνα ἡγούμενον καὶ ἀρχιερέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἕως τοῦ ἀναστήναι προφήτην πιστόν* (1 Macc. 14, 41). This statement of 1 Maccabees that the Jews accepted Simon as a prince for ever until a prophet should come, means that they gave the office to Simon and his descendants. (Comp. Ezra 2, 63; Neh. 7, 65.) And from this year 140 B. C. E., they began to count the dominion of the Hasmonean dynasty. To this allusion is made by the editor of *Seder Olam* (XXX), when he says, מלכות חשמונאי מאה ושלש שנים, the kingdom of the house of the Hasmoneans lasted 103 years; from that public meeting in 140 B. C. E. until the execution of Antigonus, the last ruler of the Hasmonean dynasty in the beginning of the year 37 B. C. (see above, p. 77), was a period of 103 chronological years. See Marzbacher, *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, 1878, pp. 292-319. See also Graetz, III, 2, p. 565.

²³⁶ See Graetz, *l. c.*; Schwab, *l. c.*, p. 222.

remained intact until Hyrcanus destroyed it in the year 128 B. C. E.²³⁷

XVI. On the 15th and 16th day of Sivan the inhabitants of Beth-shean (Scythopolis) and of the valley (of Jezreel) were deported.

These two consecutive days commemorate the reign of John Hyrcanus, his children captured Scythopolis and devastated the valley of Jezreel as far west as the mountains of Carmel after a victory over Antiochus IX, *Bell. Iud.* I, 2. 7; *Antiq.* XIII, 10. 2-3.

Josephus in *Antiquities*, *ibid.* (282-3), tells of a miracle in connexion with this victory. While the sons of John Hyrcanus were carrying on the war with Antiochus IX, their father was officiating in the Temple; as he offered up incense, he heard a voice proceeding from the Holy of Holies, 'Thy sons have conquered Antiochus.' Leaving the Sanctuary he told it to the people; they took note of the time, and it proved to be true.²³⁸ This is similar to what the rabbinical sources tell us: מעשה ששמע יוחנן בהן: גדול בת קול יוצאת מקדש הקדשים [ואמרת], נצחו טליא ראולי לאהא קרבא באנטכיאי [באנטיוכוס] ²³⁹ וכתבו אתו היום ואותה השעה והיה כן,

²³⁷ Graetz, III, p. 566. According to Josephus the destruction of the Temple on Mount Gerizim took place two hundred years after it was built. Now Josephus states, *Ant.*, XIII, 9. 1 and XI, 8. 4, 6, that the Temple was built by Sanballat for the sake of his son-in-law Manasseh. And that was in the time when Alexander the Great was in Syria, i. e. 333-332 B. C. E., which is to 128 B. C. E. more than two hundred years.

²³⁸ Φασίν γάρ, ὅτι κατ' ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν, καθ' ἣν οἱ παῖδες αὐτοῦ τῷ Κυζικηνῷ συνέβαλον, αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ ναῷ θυμῶν μόνος ὢν ἀρχιερεὺς ἀκούσειε φωνῆς, ὡς οἱ παῖδες αὐτοῦ νενικήμασι ἀπρίως τὸν Ἀντίοχον. καὶ τοῦτο προελθὼν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ παντὶ τῷ πλήθει φανερὸν ἐποίησεν, καὶ συνέβη οὕτως γενέσθαι.

²³⁹ Here, no doubt, we should read באנטיכוס instead of באנטכיאי, Derenbourg, p. 74.

ובאותו היום נצח.²⁴⁰ There is hardly room for doubt that the days whereon the sons of John Hyrcanus won their victory over Antiochus and captured Scythopolis were, respectively, the 15th and 16th of Sivan, just as our Megillah states.

XVII. On the 25th thereof (Ḥeshvan) Samaria was captured.

After a year's siege, about 108 B.C.E., John Hyrcanus captured Samaria. According to Josephus (*Bell. Iud.* I, 2. 7, and *Antiq.* XIII, 10. 3) he destroyed it at the time and turned Samaria into a pond.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Midrash-rabba on Canticles 8. 10; also Babli Soṭah 33 a; Jer., *ibid.*, IX, 24 b; Tosefta, *ibid.*, 13.

²⁴¹ Schürer, I, p. 268, n. 22, and Graetz, II, 2, 566-7.

CHAPTER X

THE ROMAN PERIOD.

XVIII. ON the 3rd of Kislev the images were removed from the Temple-court.

שִׁמְשֵׁי is borrowed from the Greek *σημαῖαι*, meaning images. We see in this statement a reference to Tiberius's order to Pilate to set up his statues in the squares of Jerusalem. Περμφθεις δὲ εἰς Ἰουδαίαν ἐπίτροπος ὑπὸ Τιβερίου Πιλάτος νύκτωρ κεκαλυμμένας εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα εἰσκομίζει τὰς Καίσαρος εἰκόνας αἱ σημαῖαι καλοῦνται (*Bell. Iud.* II, 9. 2).

The events which led up to this demonstration are described by Josephus both in *Bell. Iud.*, *ibid.*, and *Antiq.* XVIII, 3. 1. When the Jews heard of the order of Tiberius they petitioned Pilate not to set up the images of Caesar, for according to the Jewish religion it is forbidden to set up any image. Pilate would not listen to them and a few days later he summoned the people, to ask them whether they would consent to the setting up of Caesar's statues in Jerusalem and the people decried the act. Then Pilate commanded the legionaries to fall upon the people with their swords, but when the Jews proclaimed once more that they preferred death by the sword to violating a command of their religion, Pilate weakened in his resolution and ordered the removal of the images from Jerusalem. ὑπερβαυμάσας δὲ ὁ Πιλάτος τὸ τῆς δευσιδαιμονίας ἄκρατον ἐκκομίσαι μὲν ἀντίκα τὰς σημαίας Ἱεροσολύμων κελεύει. (*Bell. Iud.*, *ibid.* 3; *Ant.*, *ibid.*) On that day the people

made a joyful demonstration, for, as the Megillah says, 'On the 3rd of Kislev the images were removed'.²⁴²

XIX. On the 22nd of Shebat the work ceased which the enemy commanded to bring into the Temple.

This refers to the report of Caligula's death which meant, among other things, annulment of the edict to put his statue in the Temple (*Bell. Iud.* II, 10. 5). The expression *בטילת עבירה* is applied to the attempted installation of that image which the Zidonian artists had with great pomp already brought to Sidon (see Philo, *Legatio ad Caium*, ed. Cahn et Reiter).

We know that Petronius, desiring to give Caligula opportunity to change his mind, put obstacles in the way of those who wished to set up the statue, and that the work was entirely abandoned when he received a letter announcing that Caligula was killed (the assassination took place on January 24, 41 C.E.).

The Scholiast, though differing slightly in details, substantially agrees with Josephus.²⁴³ He tells us it was the

²⁴² G. Dalman, *Aramäische Dialektproben*, p. 33.

²⁴³ יום ששלח גסקלנם את הצלמים להעמידם בהיכל ובאתה שמועה
 לירושלים ערב יום טוב הראשון של חג אמר להם שמעון הצדיק עשו מועדיכם
 בשמחה, שאין אחד מכל הדברים ששמעתם יקום כי מי ששבן שבינתו בבית
 הזה כשם שעשה נסים לאבותינו בכל דור ודור כך יעשה לנו נסים בזמן הזה
 שמע קול יבית קרשי הקדשים שהוא אומר בטילת עבירתא דאמר סנאה
 להיתא להיכלה אקטיל [גיוס נוליקס. ו] נסקלם ובטלו גורותיו. . . וכיון
 שראה שהיו ממשמשיין ובאין אמר להם צאו וקדמו לפניהם. . . כשנודע להם
 הדברים יצאו לפניו כל גדולי ירושלים אמרו נמות כלנו ולא תהא כזאת, והיו
 צועקים ומתחננין לשליח אמר להם עד שאתם צועקים ומתחננין (לשליח)
 [ליק] התחננו וצעקו לאלהיכם שבשמים להושיע אתכם. . . וכיון שנבנם
 לכרך ראה בני אדם שהיו מוטלין בשוקים על השק ועל האפר לא הגיע
 לאנטיפרם עד שבאת לו אגרת שנהרג גסקלנם ובטלו גורותיו מיד בטלו
 את הצלמים. . . ואותו היום. . . עשאוהו יום טוב

day whereon the images sent by נסגלם (evidently corruption of 'Caius Caligula') would have been set up in the Temple. Report (of the Emperor's purpose) came to Jerusalem on the eve of Succoth. Simon the Just, however, said to them, 'Celebrate your feasts joyfully, for none of these things which you have heard shall come to pass. He who caused his divine presence to dwell in this house, just as he brought to pass miracles for our ancestors in every generation, so will he do for us likewise.' He heard a voice from the Holy of Holies which said that the work was stopped which the enemy commanded to bring into the Temple; Gaskolas is killed and his decree is nullified. And when he saw that the Romans continued to come to the city he said to the Jews, 'Go out to meet them.' But when the Jews learned of the matter (of the images), they said, 'We will die, all of us, rather than allow Caesar's images to be set up.' They cried and supplicated the legate (Petronius). Said he (the legate) to them, 'Wherefore cry and pray ye (to the legate) (to me), pray ye unto your God to save you.' When the legate reached the city he saw the people covered in the streets in sackcloth and ashes. He had hardly reached Antipatris when a letter reached him announcing the death of Gaskolas (Caius Caligula) and his decrees were annulled. That day they made a holiday.²⁴⁴

XX. On the 16th of Adar they began to build the wall of Jerusalem.

The holidays of Iyyar 7th and Elul 7th commemorate dedicatory exercises in connexion with the walls of Jerusalem, while on this, the 16th of Adar, we are told

²⁴⁴ Graetz, III, 2, 573 and note 21; Derenbourg, p. 207, n. 1; Schwab, 244-6; Schürer, pp. 495-506.

‘they began to build the wall of Jerusalem’. Graetz sees therein a reference to the beginning which was made on the wall of Jerusalem and on the fortification of the suburb Parva by Agrippa I in 42–3 B.C.E.²⁴⁵ He did not complete these operations as the Emperor Claudius bade him to desist from the work. Hence the expression, ‘They commenced to build the wall’.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Comp. Shebu'oth 16a; Tosefta Sanhedrin, III : מפני שתורפה של ירושלים הייתה ונותה היא ליכבש משם.

²⁴⁶ See *Bell. Jud.*, II, 11, 6 ; Graetz, III, 2, p. 575.

CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT WAR AGAINST THE ROMANS.

XXI. ON the 14th of Sivan the tower of the fort was captured.

The Scholiast thus explains *זו קמרי בת אדום שהיא יושבת בין החולות והיא היתה לישראל יחד רעה בימי יונים . . . וכשנברה יד בני חשמונאים כבשום והוציאום משם והושיבו ישראל בתוכה ואותו היום שכבשוה עשאוהו יום טוב*. 'This is Caesarea, daughter of Edom, dwelling among the castles. It was a thorn in the side of Israel in the days of the Greeks, and when the Hasmoneans grew powerful they conquered it and deported its population and settled Jews in its midst. The day on which Caesarea was conquered they made a holiday.'

Graetz²⁴⁷ argues against the Scholiast's explanation showing that until the time of Herod, Caesarea continued to be inhabited entirely by Syrians and Greeks. It was Herod who settled Jews in that city. Graetz therefore suggests that this holiday indicated the period of Simon the Hasmonean. In this case, however, the text ought to read *מגדל צור* and not *אחירת בית צור*.

It appears to me that this holiday is connected with the Revolt, marking in fact, its outbreak, the first Jewish victory (over Florus). As Josephus (*Bell. Ind.* II, 15. 6) tells us, the priests and the people captured the towers of the fortress Antonia which joined that fortress with the Sanctuary; through their thus establishing themselves

²⁴⁷ Graetz, III, 2, pp. 574-5.

firmly there and thence controlling the whole city, Florus was compelled to give up Jerusalem.²⁴⁸ The Antonia was originally called the citadel or tower. Josephus often calls it Baris (*βάρης*),²⁴⁹ phonetically allied to its Hebrew designation *הבירה*,²⁵⁰ and only later when the tower was rebuilt by Herod, he named it Antonia in honour of his patron Antony. This citadel was situated on the north side of the Temple, and was originally built by the Hasmoneans.²⁵¹ The date of the Megillah, the 14th of Sivan, harmonizes with the date which Josephus assigns to the capture of Antonia, and thus significantly corroborates our interpretation. Josephus says that on the 16th and 17th of Artemisius there were riots in Jerusalem, and that the people swarmed about the army of Florus.²⁵² Not long after, the priests and the people succeeded in driving out the Romans, and taking possession of the environs of the Temple. They tore down the columns connecting the Temple and the Antonia. All this took place in the twelfth year of Emperor Nero, and, as we have proved, this was 65 C. E. In 65 C. E.

²⁴⁸ See *Bell. Iud.* II, 15. 5-6 Οἱ δὲ στασιασταὶ δέισαντες μὴ πάλιν ἐπελθῶν ὁ Φλώρος κρατήσῃ τοῦ ἱεροῦ διὰ τῆς Ἀντωνίας, ἀναβάντες εὐθὺς τὰς συνεχεῖς στοὰς τοῦ ἱεροῦ πρὸς τὴν Ἀντωνίαν διέκοψαν. τοῦτ' ἔψυξεν τὴν Φλώρου πλεονεξίαν τῶν γὰρ τοῦ θεοῦ θησαυρῶν ἐφιέμενος καὶ διὰ τοῦτο παρελθεῖν ἐπιθυμῶν εἰς τὴν Ἀντωνίαν, ὡς ἀπερράγησαν αἱ στοαί, τὴν ὄρμην ἀνετρόπη, καὶ μεταπεμφόμενος τοὺς τε ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ τὴν βουλὴν αὐτὸς μὲν ἐξίεναι τῆς πόλεως ἔφη, *Bell. Iud.* II, 330-2.

²⁴⁹ *Ant.* XV, II, 4; XVIII, 4, 3; *Bell. Iud.* I, 3, 3; 5, 4.

²⁵⁰ See Graetz, II, 2, p. 145.

²⁵¹ Κατὰ δὲ τὴν βόρειον πλευρὰν ἀκρόπολις ἐγγώνιος εὐρείης ἐτετείχιστο διάφορος ἐχυρότητι. ταύτην οἱ πρὸ Ἡρώδου τοῦ Ἀσσυριαίου γένους βασιλεῖς καὶ ἀρχιερεῖς ψυχοδόμησαν καὶ βάρην ἐκάλεσαν . . . τότε δ' οὖν ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης καὶ ταύτην τὴν βάρην ὀχυρωτέραν κατασκευάσας ἐπ' ἀσφαλείᾳ καὶ φυλακῇ τοῦ ἱεροῦ, χαριζόμενος Ἀντωνίῳ φίλῳ μὲν αὐτοῦ Ῥωμαίων δὲ ἀρχοντι προσηγόρευσεν Ἀντωνίαν (*Ant.* XV, II, 4).

²⁵² See *Bell. Iud.* II, 15. 1-2.

the 17th of Artemisius (4th of June) fell on the 10th of Sivan,²⁵³ and according to Josephus the dismantling of Antonia took place several days after the happenings of the 17th of Artemisius, which is quite in agreement with the 14th of Sivan in the Megillah.

XXII. On the 25th (21st) of Sivan the publicans were removed from Judah and Jerusalem.

The Scholiast explains this paragraph with an Alexandrian legend. When the Ishmaelites, the Canaanites, and the Egyptians made common cause against the Jews, and complained to the Macedonian conqueror that the birthright belonged to Ishmael, that the land belonged to Canaanites, &c., Gebiha ben Pesisa, with the counsel of the Sages, controverted them and, adducing proofs from the Torah that the birthright and the land belonged to Israel, won his case, and that day was immediately declared a Yom Tob.²⁵⁴ Graetz²⁵⁵ has rightly pointed out that the *דימוסנאי* were the Roman publicans or tax-farmers. The holiday is to be explained from the fact that after the defeat of Florus and his retreat from the city the people ceased to pay tribute to Caesar. This fact is mentioned by Josephus; namely, that when Agrippa spoke to the

²⁵³ Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, Tafel III. The beginning of the month was sometimes observed two days after the re-birth of the Moon, according to a statement in Rosh ha-Shanah 20-21 b; see also Wieseler, *Chronologische Synopse*, p. 444.

²⁵⁴ כשבאו בני ישמעאל לעורר על ישראל על הבכורה ובאו עמהם שתי משפחות רעות כנעניים ומצרים אמרו מי ילך וידון עמהם אמר להם (גביהא) בן פסיסא . . . לחכמים [תנו לי רשות] . . . וארון עמהם . . . הניחו (בתיהם כשהם מלאים) שרותיהם כשהם זרועות כרמיהם כשהם נטועות . . . וברחו . . . אותה שנה שביעית היתה ועשו אותו היום יום טוב . . .

²⁵⁵ Graetz, III, 2, pp. 573-4. See also Derenbourg, p. 46, n. 2; Schwab, pp. 246-7.

people in favour of peace he reproved them for having ceased to pay tribute to Caesar: ἀλλὰ τὰ ἔργα, ἔφη, 'Ρωμαίοις ἤδη πολεμούντων ἐστίν' οὔτε γὰρ Καίσαρι δεδώκατε τὸν φόρον καὶ τὰς στοὰς ἀπεκόψατε τῆς Ἀντωνίας (*Bell. Iud.* II, 16. 5). Comparing the two items in the Megillah, we see that it was only shortly after the defeat of Florus on the 14th of Sivan that the people ceased to pay tribute to Caesar, on the 25th day thereof.

XXIII. On the 17th of Elul the Romans evacuated Jerusalem.

Graetz²⁶⁶ rightly connects this celebration with the Great Revolt. But he errs in identifying this holiday with the request of the Roman army to the Jews to allow them peacefully to evacuate the forts (*Bell. Iud.* II, 17. 10). According to Josephus none of the Romans (excepting Metilius, who saved his life by becoming a Jew) left Jerusalem, for when they left the forts the Jews killed them.²⁶⁷ Our Megillah, however, says distinctly נפקו רומאי מירושלם, besides which the incident just cited (according to Josephus, *ibid.*, 8-10) did not take place until after Gorpiaeus 6th or September 24th, which this year fell on Tishri.²⁶⁸

Graetz fell into error through assuming that Loüs and Gorpiaeus were Jewish months clothed in Syro-Macedonian names, the former being Ab and the latter Elul. This view seemed to find support in Josephus's (*Bell. Iud.* II, 17. 6-7) relation of the Jews' triumph over Agrippa's army after the wood-festival of the 14th Loüs: τῆς τῶν ξυλοφορίων

²⁶⁶ Graetz, p. 574.

²⁶⁷ Οἱ μὲν οὖν οὕτως ἀμῶς ἀπεσφάγησαν ἅπαντες πλην Μετιλίου, τοῦτον γὰρ ἡκεύσαντα καὶ μέχρι περιτομῆς ἰουδαίσειν ὑποσχόμενον δέεωσαν μόνον.

²⁶⁸ See below, XXV, p. 269.

έορτης . . . τῆ δ' ἐξῆς, πεντεκαίδεκάτῃ δ' ἦν Λώου μηνός. This wood-festival is assumed to have been identical with that of the 15th of Ab, which is mentioned in the Mishnah (Taanit 26 a) and in the Megillah. Graetz even suggests that in our copies of Josephus, 15th of Louis should be read for the 14th.²⁵⁹ There is no valid proof for this identification, and there is even less justification for this forced emendation. In fact there were nine times appointed in the year which were known as wood-festivals. Thus Taanit 26 a, זמן עצי העם והבהנים תשעה. As I have demonstrated above, the months in *Bell. Jud.* were not Jewish months, but the months of Tyre, which were used in Syria (see above). The month of Louis therefore (in *Bell. Jud.*) might be either Ab or Elul, and the wood-festival mentioned in *Bell. Jud.* consequently need not at all be that of the 15th of Ab. We may, however, infer that in the year 65 B. C. E. the 14th of Louis fell on September 2,²⁶⁰ and this coincides significantly with the 10th of Elul, which is one of the wood-festivals mentioned in the Mishnah.²⁶¹ The event of the 17th of Elul, which is mentioned in the Megillah, therefore took place about a week after the 14th of Louis, which was none other than the defeat which the Jews inflicted on the army of Agrippa and the army of the Romans, according to Josephus, a few days after the 15th of Louis. On this occasion Agrippa's army was forced to capitulate in order to secure safe egress from the city, which the Jews allowed, and they departed (*Bell. Jud.*, *ibid.* 8): οἱ δὲ ἔνδοθεν πρὸς τε τὸν Μανάημον καὶ τοὺς

²⁵⁹ Graetz, pp. 460, 572; Derenbourg, pp. 109-10, n. 2. See Noris, *Annus et epochae Syro-Macedonum*, I, p. 51; Wieseler, *Chronol. Synopse*, p. 448; Schürer, I, p. 757.

²⁶⁰ See below, No. XXV, p. 269.

²⁶¹ According to Munich MS. and also British Museum MS.

ἐξάρχοντας τῆς στάσεως ἔπεμπον, ἀξιοῦντες ἐξελεῖν ὑπόσπονδοι, καὶ δοθὲν μόνοις τοῖς Βασιλικοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἐπιχωρίοις οἱ μὲν ἐξῆσαν. This, then, is what the Megillah refers to when it says, 'On the 17th of Elul the Romans evacuated Jerusalem' (Agrippa's troops).

XXIV. On the 22nd day thereof they began again to slay the wicked.

Graetz and Derenbourg²⁶² understand the Scholiast to refer the origin of this holiday to the Hasmonean era. It is doubtful, however, whether this was the meaning of the Scholiast. These are his words : מַפְנֵי שְׁהָיוּ יְיֹונִים [גֵּוִים] שְׂרִוּיִם²⁶³ בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא הָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל יְכוּלִין לְשַׁלֵּחַ יָד בְּרַשָּׁעִים שְׁבָהֶם עַד שִׁיצְאוּ מִשָּׁם, הַמַּתִּינִי לָהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים אִם יַעֲשׂוּ תְּשׁוּבָה וְלֹא עָשׂוּ . . . נִמְנָו עֲלֵיהֶם וְהָרְגוּם. 'While the Greeks (gentiles) were staying in Judea, the Jews could not punish the wicked among them. After they departed, however, the Jews waited three days for the wicked to show repentance. When they did not repent, judgement was passed upon them and they were executed.'

In any event this interpretation of the Scholiast is not acceptable. The incident here depicted happened less than a week after Agrippa's departure from Jerusalem. The refusal of the 'wicked' describes the attitude of the Roman soldiers who would not surrender and give up their weapons to the Jews. The Jews waited until the 22nd of Elul, but the Romans were still defiant and the Jews again attacked the stronghold and killed the Romans, *ἀθνμία δὲ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους καταλειφθέντας μόνοις ὑπέλαβεν οὔτε γὰρ βιάσασθαι τοσοῦτον πλῆθος ἐδύναντο καὶ τὸ δεξιὰν αἰτεῖν ὄνειδος ὑπελάμβανον, πρὸς τῷ [τὸ] μὴδὲ πιστεύειν εἰ διδοῖτο. καταλιπόντες δὴ τὸ στρατόπεδον ὡς εὐάλωτον ἐπὶ τοὺς*

²⁶² Graetz, *l. c.*, p. 566 ; Derenbourg, *l. c.*, p. 69.

²⁶³ According to Parma MS.

βασιλικὸς ἀνέφυγον πύργους, τὸν τε Ἴππικὸν καλούμενον καὶ τὸν Φασάηλον καὶ τὸν Μαριάμμην (*Bell. Iud.* II, 17. 8).

XXV. On the 3rd of Tishri was removed the 'mentioning' from documents.

According to the Scholiast this item belongs to the Hasmonean period. When the Hasmoneans conquered the Greeks they decreed that the Divine Name should be mentioned in public documents, that all documents should bear the formula 'in such and such a year of Johanan, high priest to the most high God', &c. Subsequently the sages annulled the decree on the ground that after the expiration of the deed the bill would be discarded and thus the name written thereon would be exposed to indignity.

Graetz²⁶⁴ thinks that this goes back to the time in Simon's administration when they abolished the Seleucid era and began to count the years from the date of the regained independence.

It is my belief, however, that this holiday can safely be assigned to the Revolutionary period. After the Judean victory over Agrippa's army on the 17th of Elul and after the incidents of Elul 22nd, when the Romans were compelled to flee and find refuge in the fortresses of the king, the Jews succeeded on the 3rd of Tishri in capturing and setting fire to the royal palaces and in exterminating the enemy. Thereby the Jews completely threw off the yoke of the Romans as well as their allegiance to King Agrippa. It then became natural to remove the names of Caesar and Agrippa from the public documents and coins. Until then it had been customary to write in all documents, 'in such and such a year of the imperium of such and such a Caesar

²⁶⁴ Graetz, III, 2, p. 572; Schwab, pp. 228-9; see also Geiger, *Urschrift*, p. 34, n. 1.

at Rome'. Now, however, when they had won a victory over the Romans and had burned Agrippa's palace, they ceased writing in documents the number of the year of the reigning emperor. It is quite likely that about the same time new coins were issued with the legend *השנה הראשונה לנאולת ישראל*. The symbol thereon was, in consonance with the character of the approaching festival, the four species in the Lulab, while on reverse was the representation of a Sukkah.²⁶⁵

That our identification is correct is seen from Josephus who dates the above event definitely on the 6th of Gorpiaeus (*Bell. Iud.* II, 17. 8). *οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Μανάημον εἰσπεσόντες ὄθεν οἱ στρατιῶται διέφυγον ὅσους τε αὐτῶν κατελάμβανον μὴ φθάσαντας ἐκδραμεῖν διέφθειραν, καὶ τὰς ἀποσκευὰς διαρπάσαντες ἐνέπρησαν τὸ στρατόπεδον. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἔκτη Γορπιαίου μηνὸς ἐπράχθη.* The 6th of Gorpiaeus (24th September) in 65 C. E. was the 3rd of Tishri.²⁶⁶

Thus, too, this paragraph of the Megillah harmonizes with what we have shown above independently, that the 14th of Loüs to the 6th of Gorpiaeus is 23 days (17 + 6), while from 10th of Elul to the 3rd of Tishri is also 23 days (20 + 3). In this connexion it may further be pointed out that all these victories were the work of Menahem,²⁶⁷ son

²⁶⁵ Graetz, III, pp. 469-70 and note 30.

²⁶⁶ The beginning of the month Tishri in the year 65 C. E. was 22nd of September, see F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, II, Tafel III-IV, Leipzig, 1911. See above, note 253.

²⁶⁷ It may have been due to the popularity of this man Menahem who threw off the yoke of Rome and the Herodian dynasty from the Jews that they gave the name Menahem to the Messiah, or it is even possible that they called him Messiah. The Talmud says the name of Messiah is Menahem, son of Hezekiah, *מנחם בן חזקיה שמו*, Sanhedrin 98 b, and in Midrash Rabba (to Lam. 1) also it is stated that his name is Menahem and the name of his father is Hezekiah. Comp. also Jer. Berakot 5.

of the well-known scribe Judas the Galilean, the σοφιστής δεινότατος whose party seceded from the Pharisees on one point, namely by refusing to recognize the rule of any person or king other than God. δυσνίκητος δὲ τοῦ ἑλευθέρου ἔρωσ ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς μόνον ἡγεμόνα καὶ δεσπότην τὸν θεὸν ὑπειληφόσιν . . . ἀνοία τε τῆ, ἐντεῦθεν ἤρξατο νοσεῖν τὸ ἔθνος Γεσσίου Φλώρου, ὃς ἡγεμὼν ἦν, τῆ ἔξουσία τοῦ ὑβρίξειν ἀπονοήσαντος αὐτοῦς ἀποστῆναι Ῥωμαίων (*Ant.* XVIII, 1. 6).

Judas had in time of Quirinus taunted the Jews because of their recognition of the authority of the Romans, whereas according to his view the Jews were of right subject to God alone (*Bell. Iud.* II, 8, 1). So now on the 3rd of Tishri (65 C.E.) the opportunity came to his son Menahem to put into practice his father's theory, i. e. to throw off the yoke of Rome and, consistently with the programme, to abolish the mention of the year of the Emperor or of the Herodian ruler on the documents. This issue which divided Judas and his party from the Pharisees is alluded to in an obscure Mishnah (*Yadaim*, IV, 8) which now becomes clear. אמר גלילי²⁶⁸ קובל אני עליכם פרושים שאתם כותבים המושל עם השם בגט²⁶⁹ אומרים פרושים קובלים אנו עליך גלילי

Menahem in Josephus's record was the son of Judas and grandson of Hezekiah. See more about Menahem, S. Zeitlin, 'The last days of Jerusalem', *Jewish Forum*, April, 1918.

²⁶⁸ In copies of the Talmud the reading varies, צרוקי and גלילי. Here, certainly, either it was Judah himself or one of his party that disputed with the Pharisees. See also Geiger, *Urschrift*, pp. 35, 146; Derenbourg, *Essai*, p. 161.

²⁶⁹ All editions of the Talmud now extant have המושל עם משה בגט, but that there were copies with המושל עם השם is borne out by the Tosafists (*Baba batra* 162 a), and this is the correct reading. If we read 'the ruler with Moses', then the answer of the Pharisees to their opponent becomes illogical, as he asked them why they write 'the ruler with Moses',

. . . שאתם כותבין את המושל עם השם ברף . . . Thus said [Judas] the Galilean, 'I protest against you, O Pharisees, because you inscribe in the documents the name of the ruler, together with the Divine Name, i. e. by dating the documents according to the reign of Caesar or the Herodian dynasty, you recognize the suzerainty of a power other than God.' The Pharisees replied, 'We protest against thee, O Judas, for ye, too, write the name of the ruler on the same page with the Divine Name, i. e. when in the scroll of the Law you write Pharaoh king of Egypt, by the side of the Divine Name.'

XXVI. The 7th day thereof (Kislev) is a holiday.

The Megillah in this instance does not indicate the reason for this holiday. The Scholiast explains that it commemorated the death of Herod (I). A critical examination shows this conjecture of the Scholiast to be untenable. For it can be proved clearly that the 7th of Kislev was not the date of King Herod's death.

From *Antiq.* XVII, 8. 3. 9. 3, and *Bell. Jud.* II, I. 1-3, it is plainly to be inferred that Herod died not long before Passover. It is stated there that Archelaus, after the seven days of mourning and seclusion, repaired to the Temple about the time when the people flocked to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. The 7th of Kislev is seventeen weeks before the Nisan festival. Graetz in defence of the Scholiast transfers the expression 'thereon died Herod' to the cor-

and they answer that in the Torah they have precedent for writing the ruler with the Divine Name. The original reading must have been 'the ruler with the Name', and the word גט led the compilers and others into an error, whereby they considered it equivalent to a writ of divorce, containing the formula ברת משה וישראל (see Tosaphot, *ibid.*), and therefore they thought the reading in the Mishnah Yadaim IV, 8 must be המושל עם משה. But here גט connotes any and every kind of document.

responding gloss for the second of Shebat²⁷⁰ which is also designated in the Megillah יום טב without other qualification, and he substitutes in our passage the gloss 'thereon died (Alexander) Jannai the king' which is found in the present scholia for the 2nd of Shebat. This substitution is not of much avail, for the 2nd of Shebat is fully ten weeks before Passover and therefore does not harmonize with the above cited passage of Josephus. Moreover from *Antiq.* XVII, 6. 4, we learn that not long before Herod's death there was an eclipse of the moon,²⁷¹ and we know that in 4 B. C. E. the moon's eclipse was on March 12-13.²⁷² In that year Passover fell on April 11th.²⁷³ This proves conclusively that Herod died in the end of Adar and not on the 7th of Kislev, or on the 2nd of Shebat.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Graetz, *l. c.*, p. 571.

²⁷¹ See Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 6. 4.

²⁷² Ginzel, *Spezieller Kanon der Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse*, Berlin, 1899, pp. 195-6.

²⁷³ Ginzel, *ibid.* See also Schürer, *Geschichte*, I, p. 416.

²⁷⁴ Fixing the date of Herod's death is not only important in itself, but has additional interest for those who believe in the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth, whom Matt. (2. 1) states to have been born in Herod's reign. As we have said, Herod died a short time after the eclipse of the moon witnessed in Jerusalem 12-13th March, 750 A. U. C. (4 B. C. E.) according to these scholars; consequently Jesus must have been born before Nisan 750 A. U. C., 4 C. E. This chronology reckoned from his birth is at least four years behind.

Some scholars perceive a difficulty arising from another statement of Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 8. 1, *Bell. Jud.* I, 33. 8, that Herod ruled thirty-four years *de facto* after his capture of Jerusalem; but from 37 B. C. to 4 B. C. would make only thirty-three years. Schürer expresses the opinion that Josephus habitually adds one year, and that he deduces from Josephus's statement that the interval between Pompey's capture of Jerusalem and by Herod's was twenty-seven years, whereas it was only twenty-six years (from 63 B. C. E. to 37 B. C. E.). But I have shown that Josephus counted not mathematical years, but chronological years—i. e. he counted fractions of a year as a whole. Thus the number of the years of Herod's reign will be thirty-four years—he having become king shortly after the capture of

To properly identify this holiday, it is necessary to consider first why in this and in one other instance, the chronicler of the Megillah refrained from making any explanation regarding the cause of the holiday. Undoubtedly the chronicler's silence in these instances is due to their being recently instituted holidays *pro tempore*. The incidents being well known to all, it was not necessary to add any explanations. The contemporaries, at the time when the Megillah was first drawn up, found it unnecessary to receive any explanations of these incidents. It certainly was not the purpose to present a historical survey for coming generations of Eleazar ben Hanina ben Hezekiah ben Garon and his associates. Now these men were connected with the Judean revolt against Rome.²⁷⁶ Their activity falls in the few years preceding the destruction of the Temple. We should naturally look to that uprising to find the important event that signalized the 7th of Kislev, and thus indeed the event may be readily identified.

Josephus, in *Bell. Iud.* II, 19, describes the victory of the Jews over Cestius which took place on the 8th of Dios in the 12th year of Emperor Nero.²⁷⁶ This was the year 65 C. E.²⁷⁷ Now the 8th of Dios corresponds to Nov. 25th which in that year was co-incident with the 7th of Kislev.²⁷⁸

Jerusalem—which fell on the 10th of Tebet, 37 B. C., and continued to reign until the end of Adar 4 B. C. See further above, chap. III, and also chap. VI. (About the chronology of Archelaus, see Appendix.)

²⁷⁶ About the activity of Eleazar see Derenbourg, *Essai*, chap. XVII.

²⁷⁶ Τάδε [Ταῦτα] μὲν οὖν ἐπράχθη Δίου μηνὸς ὀγδόη, δωδεκάτῃ τῆς Νέρωνος ἡγεμονίας ἔτει (*Bell. Iud.* II, 19. 9).

²⁷⁷ See above, chap. VI, p. 74.

²⁷⁸ Ginzel, *Handbuch*, Tafel III; see also note 253. From the sixth of Gorpiaeus—Sept. 24—to the eighth of Dios—Nov. 25—there are sixty-three days; while from the third of תשרי to the seventh of כסלו there are now sixty-four days. This discrepancy is explained by the circumstance

Thus, the apparently enigmatical reference of the chronicler to the holiday of the 7th of Kislev, is tantamount to saying, 'The victory over Cestius is quite fresh in your minds.'

The above explanation of the seventh of Kislev is the final link in the chain of evidence which we adduced from the Megillah to support the general thesis of Niese that virtually all of the dates regarding the events of the Great Revolt which occur in *Bell. Iud.* belong to the Tyrian calendar. This particular date which is the 8th of Dios, however, has been utilized by others to prove that the non-Hebrew names of the months in *Bel. Iud.* are only the Roman equivalents for the actual Hebrew calendar, and that the Jewish victory over Cestius on the 8th of Dios corresponded in fact to the 8th of Marḥeshvan. For in describing Cestius's arrival at Lydda, Josephus states that the city was denuded of men owing to their having gone to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Now the defeat of Cestius took place nine days after his arrival in Jerusalem. If the date of this event be accepted as the 7th of Kislev, then it is impossible to account for the long interval between the known period of Cestius's arrival in Lydda and the inferred date of his coming to Jerusalem.²⁷⁹ It is therefore argued that the Syro-Macedonian names of the months which occur in *Bel. Iud.* are really the equivalents of the corresponding months in the Jewish calendar, that the name Dios is employed to designate the Hebrew month Ḥeshvan, and that the 8th of Dios is therefore the 8th of Ḥeshvan.

that in those days both תשרי and חשון were defective months (תשרי was, then, always defective, comp. Jer. Sanh. 18 d).

²⁷⁹ Westberg, *Zur neutestamentlichen Chronologie*.

The chief argument on which this theory is based does not hold water. For Cestius's arrival in Lydda need not at all be fixed as prior to or during the Feast of Tabernacles. On the contrary, he may well have come to Lydda in the beginning of the last quarter of Heshvan and yet found the place empty of men. For the people who went to Jerusalem to celebrate Succoth, seeing that the war had begun, might and naturally would prefer to remain in Jerusalem in order to engage in defensive and offensive operations against the Romans. *Οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι κατιδόντες ἤδη πλησιάζοντα τῇ μητροπόλει τὸν πόλεμον, ἀφέμενοι τὴν ἐορτὴν ἐχώρουν ἐπὶ τὰ ὄπλα, καὶ μέγα τῶ πληθῆι θαρροῦντες ἄτακτοι καὶ μετὰ κραυγῆς ἐξεπήδων ἐπὶ τὴν μάχην μηδὲ τῆς ἀργῆς ἐβδομάδος ἔννοιαν λαβόντες* (*Bell. Iud.* II, 19. 2).²⁸⁰

Of the Jewish victories over Florus and Cestius we have a reminiscence in Aboth di R. Nathan, chap. IV. When Vespasian came to destroy Jerusalem, the Hagadah tells us, he said to the Jews, 'Ye are fools, why will ye bring about the destruction of this city and this sanctuary—what do I ask of you but a bow and arrow (evidently a sign of subjection and obedience); send it to me, and I shall go away from you.' The Jews replied to him, 'As we vanquished the two generals who preceded thee and killed them, so will we go out against thee and kill thee.' The two former generals were undoubtedly Florus and Cestius.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ As to the general support of our assumption of the Syrian character of the calendar in *Bel. Zed.*, see above, chap. V.

²⁸¹ וכשבא אספסינוס להחריב את ירושלים אמר להם, שומים מפנימה אתם מבקשים להחריב את העור ואזאת ואתם מבקשים לשרוף את בית המקדש וכי מה אני מבקש מכם אלא שתשגרו לי קשת אחת או חץ אחת ואלך לימכם; אמרו לו היהודים בשם שיצאנו על שנים הראשונים שהיו לפניך והרגנום כך נצא עליך ונהרגך. See also Derenbourg, *Essai*, p. 284.

XXVII. On the 28th of the month Tebet the Sanhedrin sat in judgement.

The word Kenishta, used in the Aramaic, applies to the Keneset-ha-gedolah, which came into being in the days of Ezra, or to the Sanhedrin (Beth-din ha-gadol) which met in the Chamber of Hewn Stones. This holiday serves to perpetuate an event that took place not long after that victory over Cestius on the 7th of Kislev. According to Josephus, leading men assembled in the Sanctuary to choose generals to conduct the war against the Romans, and we cannot doubt that at the same time they proceeded to set up a republican government in place of the régime that had ceased since the 3rd of Tishri (see above, No. XXV). *καὶ συναθροισθέντες εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν στρατηγοὺς ἀπεδείκνυσαν τοῦ πολέμου πλείονας* (*Bell. Iud.* II, 20. 3). There were at that time two men chosen (Joseph, son of Gorion, and Anan the high priest) as heads of the administration at Jerusalem. This official action is evidence that the Sanhedrin which, according to the Talmud, had been compelled to abandon the Chamber of Hewn Stones (Lishkat ha-Gazit) forty years before the destruction of the Temple, and to meet in a חנוּת,²⁸² was now able to take up its old abode after the victory over Cestius. And it is there whence Jewish law should proceed²⁸³ that we find them

²⁸² ארבעים שנה עד של חרב הבית גלתה סנהדרין וישבה בחניות
Shabbat 15 a, Abodah zarah 8 a.

²⁸³ מעשה וברק בן זבאי בעקצי תאנים (R. ha-Shanah 31 a); Derenbourg, *Essai*, pp. 277-8.

Now we can understand a certain Mishnah in Sanhedrin (chap. V, Mishnah 1) which states · מעשה וברק בן זבאי בעקצי תאנים. The Talmud goes to some length in explaining this Mishnah, to the effect that the great teacher was very careful in a case involving capital punishment, to examine the witnesses in all minuteness; when the fig-tree under which they testified the man had been killed was mentioned he asked whether the

in session again making provisions in all matters pertaining to the law and the people. There being no other authority or governing body besides them, the Sanhedrin had full power, and all things were done by their command.²⁸⁴

There seems to be another reference in the Megillah to the same event :

‘On the 24th day thereof (Ab) we again rendered judgements.’ It is more than probable that through a copyist’s error two dates are assigned for the celebration of this noteworthy event. This is suggested by a comparison of the Scholion to this passage with its parallel in the Talmud (Bab. bat. 115 b). In both sources, the holiday of the 24th of Ab is explained as commemorating a Pharisaic victory in the laws of inheritance. The manuscript readings of the Talmud, however, show a striking variant. MS. Munich reads the 28th of Ab in place of the 24th. The reading of the famous commentator R. Samuel b. Meir (RaShBaM) furthermore reads the 24th day thereof (בִּיחַ), and supplies the month of Tebet. Evidently, then, according to him, the event which in our text of the Megillah is connected with the 24th of Ab is to be ascribed

stems were fine or thick, white or black. The Amoraim were somewhat perplexed by this ; they could not help wondering how Rabban Johanan ben Zaccai could have presided in a session of the Sanhedrin when forty years before the destruction of the Temple the Sanhedrin is said to have been banished and deprived of its jurisdiction (see *ibid.* 41 a). But now as we realize that several years before the destruction of the Temple (i. e. in the beginning of 66 c. e.) the Sanhedrin again returned to the Hewn Stone Chamber and assumed jurisdiction, it is intelligible that Johanan ben Zaccai took part in the proceedings of the Sanhedrin. Indeed, after Vespasian captured Galilee, when the Zealots had wrested all power from the Sanhedrin, they had to gather a tribunal of seventy to judge and sentence a certain Zachariah ben Baruch to death (*Bell. Iud.*, IV, 5. 4).

²⁸⁴ *Bell. Iud.* II, 20, 3-4 ; see Derenbourg, *Essai*, 262-88.

to the 24th of Tebet. As the same event could not be celebrated on two days which are so far apart, it must be assumed that an error crept into the text of the Talmud which influenced the copyist to corrupt the talmudic passage and hence the Megillah. If our interpretation is correct then the original text of the Megillah did not contain any reference to the 24th of Ab. R. Samuel b. Meir evidently had the original text before him. Thus, too, we explain the fact that the Jerusalem Talmud which records the Pharisaic victory and the entire discussion connected therewith, does not assign any particular day to the event and makes no mention of any ensuing holiday.²⁸⁵

XXVIII. The 2nd of Shebat is Yom Tob.

As was suggested above (p. 274) the bareness of the

²⁸⁵ With reference to the word ביה Dr. Malter suggests the following: If the Rashbam had in his version of the Megillah, the reading 'on the 24th thereof' in connexion with the month of Ab, it is difficult to see what has forced him to interpret ביה in the Talmud as referring to Tebet. This is the more surprising as the word ביה can only be used when the month to which it is to refer had been mentioned before explicitly by name, e. g. in connexion with the 24th of Ab (where the name Ab is given in the immediately preceding 'on the 15th of Ab') but not in connexion with the event on the 24th or, as the case may be, 28th of Tebet, which is not preceded by any other incident credited to that month. We must therefore assume that in the Megillah of R. S. the incident was recorded only under the 28th of Tebet (not under Ab) and reading in the Talmud, like the Munich MS., בעשרים ותמויניא ביה, he felt it necessary to explain that the word ביה, right or wrong, must refer to Tebet as there was no other month in the Megillah to which the incident could be referred. It is true that R. S. quotes בארבעה וארבעה, but this reading may be due to copyists or editors, who wished to harmonize his text with that of the Talmud. Of course, all this does not remove the difficulty why the Talmud quotes ביה instead of בטבת. We must either say that it is an inaccuracy, or that in the Megillah of the Talmudists there was still another incident recorded under Tebet prior to the 28th thereof. See A. Schwarz, 'La Victoire des Pharisiens,' *RÉJ.*, v. 63, pp. 51-6.

statement is an indication that the cause of the holiday was so well known as to require no specification, and that it marked an event that was contemporary with the time when the Megillah was compiled, namely, the period of the great Revolt. It may be assumed that the event which was celebrated on the 2nd of Shebat took place within a few days after the public assembly (28th Tebet) above mentioned, which met to regulate matters and to dispel the chaos prevailing since the 3rd of Tishri (see above, No. XXV). No striking events are known to have occurred then. It may be conjectured, therefore, that the day marked possibly the inauguration of the new officers. It is also possible that the day commemorated the reaching a decision as to what books were Canonical (ספרי קדש) and what were extra-Canonical (ספרים היצוניים).²⁸⁶ Josephus's ignoring such incidents is quite in line with his tendency to disparage the leaders of the insurrection who figured therein. Here the Megillah supplies what he omits.

XXIX. On the 12th of Adar is the Day of Tyrion.

The Scholiast accounts for this holiday by the following narrative:— יום טריינום שתפס את לוליינום ואת פפום אחיו בלודקיא :— אמר אם מעמ" של הנניה מישאל ועזרה אתם יבא אלהיכם ויציל אתכם מידי בדרך שהציל לחנניה מישאל ועזריה מיד נבוכדנצר אמרו לו הנניה מישאל ועזריה צדיקין כשרין היו ונבוכדנצר מלך הגון היה וראוי היה לעשות נם על ידו, אבל אתה מלך רשע אתה ואין ראוי לעשות נם על ירך ואנו חייבין מיתה ואם אין אתה הורגנו הרבה הורגים יש למקום, הרבה דובים . . . שיפגעו בנו, ואם אתה הורגנו עתיד הקבה" לתבע

²⁸⁶ ברם זכור אותו האיש לטוב [ואלעזר בן] חנניה בן חזקיה שמו שאלמלא (Shabbat 13b); Derenbourg, p. 295. It is even possible that the decrees of the house of Shammai and the house of Hillel, known to us as ביום בו גזרו בו ביום, also belong to this season and to this tribunal. See S. Zeitlin, 'Les Dix-huit Mesures', *RÉJ.*, 1914, pp. 22-36.

דמינו מדרך אמרו לא נסע משם עד שבאת עלין דיופלה של רומי ופצעו את מוחי בגוזרין ובבקעיות. The Day of Tryanos; he captured Lulianus and his brother Pappus in Laodicea. Said he to them: 'If ye be of the people of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, your God will come and save you from my hands as he saved Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.' They replied: 'Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were righteous and pious men and Nebuchadnezzar a noble monarch who was worthy that a miracle should be wrought through him, whilst thou art a wicked king and not fit that a miracle be performed through thee. We deserve death, and if thou wilt not slay us, God hath many other agencies through which to kill us, many bears . . . but if thou killest us the Lord will demand our blood of thy hand.' The story is told that he had hardly moved from the spot when a rescript²⁸⁷ came from Rome and they killed him.

This story occurs also in the Talmud Babli, and Pesikta Zuṭarta to P. Emor (p. 62). In these parallels, however, the death of Lulianus and Pappus is recorded as having actually taken place prior to the arrival of the Roman rescript.^{287a} It is generally assumed that the Scholiast refers to Trajan who died in the year 117 C.E. and that this represents the proper historical interpretation of this holiday.²⁸⁸

The version of the Scholiast cannot be applied to Trajan²⁸⁹ for the latter, as is well known, died a natural death. Nor can the 12th of Adar in any event signalize the death of Trajan, for the event took place in the month

²⁸⁷ Or *διπλή* = *δίπλωμα*.

^{287a} See also Semahot, 8.

²⁸⁸ Graetz, IV, p. 411.

²⁸⁹ See Dalman, *Aramäische Dialektproben*, p. 34; also Schürer, p. 668.

of August, after Trajan's return from the Parthian War.²⁹⁰

The suggestion which has been made that it was the death of Trajan's general Quietus, which was celebrated on the 12th of Adar,²⁹¹ and that the name of Quietus was confused with that of his Emperor, is unacceptable. For while this confusion in names is possibly conceivable in the Scholium or in the Talmud where the motive was to explain a text which was no longer intelligible to them, there is no justification for assuming such a confusion in the text proper. The Scholiast puts in the mouths of Lulianus and Pappus the expression *אתה מלך רשע* 'Thou art a wicked king'. Quietus, of course, was not a king. Quietus was too well-known a name to be lightly confused with Trajan. Cp. *פולמוס של קיטום*. Finally, it is known that Quietus was killed late in the summer or early in the autumn of 118 C. E.²⁹²

P. Cassel²⁹³ thinks that *יום טירון* should be read *יום סירון*, and would see therein a reminder of Judas Maccabees' victory over Seron the Syrian commander. Were this so, however, then 2 Macc., one of whose objects is to indicate holidays that originated in the Hasmonean struggle against the Seleucids, would not have failed to record the day

²⁹⁰ Comp. Dio 68, 33. 3; *Chron. Pasch.*, p. 253; see Schiller, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*, I, 2, p. 502, and Clinton, *Fasti Romani*, I, p. 102.

²⁹¹ Graetz, IV, pp. 411-16. See also Volkmar, *Handbuch der Einleitung in die Apokryphen*, I, pp. 90-100.

²⁹² Hadrian, on hearing that Publius Celsus and Aoidius Nigrinus and others had formed a conspiracy to kill him, marched from Pannonia to Rome, and this was about the beginning of August 118 C. E. (Dürr, *Reisen des Kaisers Hadrian*, p. 21). At that time Lucius Quietus also was killed—this was in the beginning of autumn 118 according to Dio Cassius (Schiller, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*, I, 2, pp. 615-16).

²⁹³ P. Cassel, *Anmerkungen zu Megillath Taanit*, pp. 84-6.

commemorating the defeat of Seron.²⁹⁴ We must therefore seek for something more plausible.

This memorial day appears to have originated in the war against Rome. טירון in Aramaic means military recruit, as in Syriac ܣܘܪܝܢ, in Greek *τίρων*.²⁹⁵ When the government was organized and they prepared for war against the Romans, many of the Jewish youth quite naturally volunteered for military service,²⁹⁶—the drilling of these young men Josephus mentions in these words: *πρὸς ἀτάκτοις δὲ γυμνασίαις τὸ τῶν νέων πληθους ἦν* (*Bell. Iud.* II, 22. 1). This holiday of יום טירון was instituted, then, either in honour of the soldiers, somewhat as they had annual military festivities among the Romans,²⁹⁷ or, perhaps, in honour of those warriors who followed Josephus to Galilee; in the latter case it would furnish a near date for Josephus's setting out for northern Palestine.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ See also Ratner in ספר היובל of Sokolow, p. 500.

²⁹⁵ See *Thesaurus Syriacus*, p. 1517; Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, II, p. 265. טירון in the sense of a new and inexperienced man is found in the Midrash: בשעה בשעה על משה טירון היה משה בנבואה (Exod. 1. 1) 'When the Holy One revealed Himself to Moses, the latter was new in prophecy.'

²⁹⁶ See also Graetz, III, 2, p. 470.

²⁹⁷ J. Marquardt and T. Mommsen, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, V.

²⁹⁸ What I have said about this holiday originating in the great war against Rome is only a suggestion. It is indeed possible that the reading in the Babylonian Talmud is more correct, 'יום טוריינום', and that טוריינום, meaning 'king', is a transliteration of *τυραννίς* = *tyrannía*. In that case the holiday dates from the Roman period, from the reign of Herod the Great, the day on which he became *de facto* sovereign, and in an anniversary of which the Temple was dedicated by him. Josephus (*Antiq.* XV, 11. 6) states that the Temple was consecrated on the anniversary of the day on which Herod received the kingdom, and so the holiday became great: *συνεκπεπτάκει γὰρ τῇ προθεσίμῃ τοῦ περὶ τὸν ναὸν ἔργου καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν τῷ βασιλεῖ τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἣν ἐξ ἔθους ἐώρατ' αὐτὸν εἰς ταῦτ' ἐλθεῖν, καὶ περισημοτάτην ἐξ ἀμφοῖν τὴν ἑορτὴν γενέσθαι* (*Ant.* XV, 11. 6). As we have said above, he

XXX. On the 17th of Adar, the Gentiles arose against the refugees of Sepphoris in the province of Chalcis and in Beth Zabdai, but there came salvation (to the Jews).

All the critics who have commented on this Megillah have accepted the view of the Scholiast which is contained in the following: ²⁹⁹ בשירד ינאי המלך להרוג את החכמים ברחו מלפניו (קלי קום M. O.) ונכנסו והלכו להם לסוריא ושרו במדינת קוסליקום (קלי קום M. O.) ונכנסו האויבים עליהם שבאותו מקום וצרו עליהם להרגם והויעו בהם זיע גדול והכו בהם מכה רבה והשאירו בהם פליטה והלכו לבית זבדי וישבו שם עד שחשכה וברחו משם רבי יהודה אומר סום קשור היה להם בפתח וכל מי שהוא רואה אותו (את הסום) כמדומה שאין שם יהודי וישבו עד חשכה וברחו משם ובא ואתו היום שברחו משם עשאוהו יום טוב.

‘When Alexander Jannæus descended to kill the Sages, they fled from him, turned to Syria and dwelt in the province of Chalcis. Their enemies in that part of the country attacked them murderously, caused much deprecation among them and smote them grievously, and there was left of them a remnant. These went to Beth Zabdai and tarried there until dark, and then they fled.’ R. Judah says: ‘They had a horse tied at the front of their house and whosoever saw it inferred that there was no Jew within. (Obviously reference is had here to the sabbath when a Jew would have no occasion for a horse.) Thus they remained there until dark and then fled thence. That day on which they made their escape was declared a holiday.’

It has been suggested ³⁰⁰ that this incident is alluded to captured Jerusalem in the month of January (10th of Tebeth), which makes it quite possible that he assumed the functions of royalty on the 17th of Adar, and made that day a holiday. Some years later, to insure its being kept, he held the dedication exercises of the Temple on that day. The name טוריינום was given to this holiday, as the Jews were not fond of the name Herod. In *Ṣedah la-Derek*, by Menahem ben Zerah, this day of memorial is not found.

²⁹⁹ See Graetz, III, 2, n. 1, pp. 570-71.

³⁰⁰ See Graetz, *ibid.*

by Josephus (*Ant.*, XIII, 14. 2) when he narrates that eight thousand men of war fled from Judea in one night, by reason of their fear of Alexander Jannaeus, and remained in exile until he died. This view is not acceptable, for the Megillah itself specifies that the persecution was inaugurated by עמזיא (Gentiles) and no mention is made of a Jewish king. It is clear that the Scholiast was misled by the word ספריא which currently means the Scribes (i.e. Sages) and hence the writer associated the persecution of the ספריא with the persecution of the Sages by Alexander Jannaeus. I venture to suggest that ספריא in this instance is the name of the well-known city Sepphoris and פליטת ספריא indicates the refugees of Sepphoris. The name occurs in the Talmud as צפוריא,³⁰¹ in Syriac ܨܦܘܪܝܐ, and in Aramaic ספּוּרְיָא.³⁰²

נפר ספוריא in the Jerushalmi (Ḳiddushin 67 d) is taken by many geographers to be the city of Sepphoris.³⁰³ As for its being situated in the province of Chalcis,³⁰⁴ this is what the Romans knew as Chalcis ad Libanum, and from 44 C. E. Jewish princes reigned there. Claudius gave it as a present to Herod, brother of Agrippa I, whence he derived the name Herod of Chalcis.³⁰⁵ He was succeeded by Agrippa II.³⁰⁶ Bet Zabdanai was situated in the Lebanon

³⁰¹ Jerus and Terumah 48 b *passim*. ³⁰² *Thesaurus Syriacus*, p. 3436.

³⁰³ Neubauer, *La Géographie du Talmud*, p. 195; Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria*, 1894, p. 241.

³⁰⁴ Sepphoris, it is true, was in the province of Galilee, but owing to the fact that Agrippa the Second, who was king of a part of Galilee, which he received from Nero (*Antiq.* XX, 8. 4), was at the same time king of Chalcis, which he had from Claudius after the death of Herod, king of Chalcis (*Bell. Iud.*, II, 12. 1), the Megillah speaks of Sepphoris as a city in the kingdom of Chalcis.

³⁰⁵ *Antiq.* XIX, 8. 1; XX, 1. 3.

³⁰⁶ *Antiq.* XX, 8. 1; *Bell. Iud.* II, 12. 8.

on the road to Damascus north-east of the province of Chalcis.³⁰⁷

We are now in a position to identify this holiday. It clearly belongs to the period of the Great Revolt. In consequence of the Jewish victory over Cestius, the Gentiles throughout Syria, to prove their devotion to Rome, rose against the Jews (*Bell. Iud.*, II, XX, 2; *Vita*, 6). In all the cities of Galilee the Jews suffered greatly and especially in Sepphoris where most of the citizens belonged to the peace party, and where those who believed in war against Rome were killed or reduced to slavery. A change took place when Josephus came to Galilee; the Jews of Syria and Sepphoris escaped to the cities which Josephus controlled. Quite in harmony with this interpretation is the expression $\text{קָרַבַּת הַיָּמִין}$ which intimates safety rather than victory. This is quite in line with what Josephus himself says:

“Ὀρμησέ γε μὴν Ἰωσήπος ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν (Sepphoris) αἰρήσειν ἐλπίσας ἦν αὐτὸς πρὶν ἀποστήναι Γαλιλαίων ἐτείχισεν ὡς καὶ Ῥωμαίοις δυσάλωτον εἶναι. διδὲ καὶ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀφήμαρτεν τοῦ τε βιάζεσθαι καὶ τοῦ μεταπίθειν Σεπφορίτας ἀσθενέστερος εὐρεθείς. παρώξυνεν δὲ μᾶλλον τὸν πόλεμον ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν, καὶ οὔτε νύκτωρ οὔτε μεθ’ ἡμέραν ὄργῃ τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι διέλιπον δηοῦντες αὐτῶν τὰ πεδία καὶ διαρπάζοντες τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς χώρας κτήματα. καὶ κτείνοντες μὲν αἶε τὸ μάχιμον, ἀνδραποδιζόμενοι δὲ τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς. πυρὶ δὲ ἡ Γαλιλαία καὶ αἵματι πεπλήρωτο πᾶσα, πάθους τε οὐδενὸς ἢ συμφορᾶς ἀπείρατος ἦν· μία γὰρ καταφυγὴ διωκομένοις αἱ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰωσήπου τειχισθεῖσαι πόλεις ἦσαν (*Bell. Iud.* III, 4, 1).

³⁰⁷ *Bell. Iud.* VII, 7, 1; see Schürer, I, Beilage I, pp. 722-5, and Marquardt and Mommsen, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, IV, pp. 400-1; Neubauer, p. 295; Baedeker, p. 337.

The date of the 17th of Adar furthermore agrees with the period of Josephus's arrival in Galilee, which took place in the spring of 66 C. E. This was the last memorial day associated with the Judean war against the Romans. For this Josephus was the man to whom the eyes of all Israel turned with the hope that he would prove a great source of strength to the Jews in his conduct of the war in Galilee, but Galilee was lost to the Jews, and as a result the Sanhedrin lost prestige and power, and the Zealots, split into parties, were the source of destructive anarchy, and the outcome, a few years later, was loss of national independence.

CHAPTER XII

MISCELLANEOUS.

XXXI. On the 15th of Ab is the season of the wood of the priests (i. e. that the priests brought).

In the Mishnah (Taanit 26 a) we learn of nine periods during the year when the people and the priests brought wood for the altar of the Temples. In the Jerushalim (Megillah 70 c) 'any and every man who takes upon himself to bring wood for the altar is forbidden to mourn, to fast or to do any work on that day, which is to him a Yom Tob.' According to this version, therefore, the bringing of wood for the altar is made a general rule, and applies to any of these nine appointed times. It is therefore necessary to understand why the Megillah lays particular stress on the 15th of Ab—making it a general holiday. This is possibly to be explained by the supposition that the other dates were assigned to well-defined classes or shifts, who were to furnish fuel on dates especially assigned to them, but the 15th of Ab was the time when all those who had not joined the group to which they belonged, or who had neglected to bring their wood-offering to the altar, would atone for their remissness.³⁰⁸ In time it came to be recognized by all Jews as a great holiday, so that the Mishnah states in the name of Rabbi Simon ben Gamaliel that 'Israel enjoyed no holiday greater than the

³⁰⁸ Taanit, IV, 26 a.

15th of Ab and the Day of Atonement'.³⁰⁹ The answers given in the Talmud as to why the fifteenth of Ab became so distinguished a Yom Tob are of late origin, and possess no historical value.³¹⁰

XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV. The 8th and the 9th of Adar were days of solemn prayer for rain.

The Scholiast explains that these two days commemorate two distinct events of like character which occurred in different years. For to say that these two days commemorate one and the same event would be equivalent to stating that after praying and sounding the Shofar on the eighth day they confirmed or renewed these exercises on the following day. This would be making a fast of two days, which is not allowed. In the Scholiast's words, אַם הַתְּרִיעוּ בַשְּׁמִינִי לְמַה הַתְּרִיעוּ בַתְּשִׁיעִי אֲלֵא שְׁמִינִי מִשְׁנֵה אַחַת וְתִשְׁעִי מִשְׁנֵה אַחֶרֶת. This is indeed logical. The expression in the Megillah, יוֹם תְּרוּעַת מְטָרָא (and not יוֹמֵי), proves, too, that these two days belonged originally to different years.

The Megillah makes mention of another memorable day whereon they prayed for rain—the 20th of Adar. This is explained by the Scholiast as follows: there had been a famine and drought in Palestine for three years. As no rain appeared even in the third year the people begged Honi ha-m'aggel to intercede, and furthermore his prayer was answered by the downpour of rain. Cp. Taanit 23 a, שִׁפְעָם אַחַת יֵצֵא רֹב אֲדָר וְלֹא יִרְדּוּ גַשְׁמִים שְׁלַחוּ לְחוֹנֵי הַמַּעְגַּל. Similarly, Josephus (*Antiq.* XIV, 2. 1), states that once there was a famine in Judea, and Onias prayed to God and rain came.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ Taanit, IV, 26 b: לֹא הָיוּ יָמִים טוֹבִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל כַּחֲמֵשָׁה עָשָׂר בָּאָב: וְכַיּוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים.

³¹⁰ See Taanit 30 b.

³¹¹ Graetz, *ibid.* (See further Derenbourg, *ibid.*, pp. 112-13, and P. Cassel, *ibid.*, pp. 111-19.)

XXXV. On the 14th and 15th are the days of Purim.

In regard to these holidays there is extant the scroll of Esther. There (9. 17-19) we are told that the Jews of Susa kept the 15th day of Adar as a holiday, whereas the Jews in unfortified cities kept the 14th. In 2 Maccabees there is undoubted reference to the feast of Purim in the statement that the day of Nicanor is on the 13th of Adar, 'one day before the day of Mordecai' (*πρὸ μιᾶς ἡμέρας τῆς Μαρδοχαϊκῆς ἡμέρας*).³¹²

³¹² 1 Maccabees, when it speaks of the holiday, 13th of Adar, commemorating the victory of Nicanor, makes no allusion to Purim. This fact caused many hypotheses. Some think that 1 Maccabees was written in Palestine, and that in Palestine the festival was not thus observed, being introduced later from the Diaspora.

However, as I demonstrated above, Nicanor was killed in the 1st Adar in the year 152 A. S. (161 B. C. E.)—this year being leap year, and this explains why the day of Purim is not mentioned, as it was celebrated in Adar 2. In 2 Maccabees, where the material is drawn from the books of Jason of Cyrene, written in the Diaspora, the statement 'before the day of Mordecai' may be due to unconsciousness of the fact that Nicanor was killed in the 1st Adar. Confusion could have arisen from the fact that in short years these festivals fall on consecutive days.