

How do we know that Quirinius's mission to Armenia occurred in 754 A.U.C. (A.D. 1)?

This date is not in fact certain. It is not accepted by all scholars. But all, I think, would agree that Quirinius in A.D. 1 was in Syria with Gaius Cæsar, and that the two went to Armenia either in that same year or in the next one. The opinions of historians are divided between 1 and A.D. 2, but the choice is limited to those two years.

The statement that it must have been either A.D. 1 or 2 is a conclusion from a mass of evidence too complicated to be stated briefly. I can only give a few items. Tacitus says Quirinius was with Gaius Cæsar in Armenia (*Annales* iii, 48), Gaius could not have entered Armenia before A.D. 1 for he was Consul in that year, and no consul could perform the ceremonies of entering on his office except on Roman territory. On the other hand one of the old consular lists says expressly that Gaius was wounded in Armenia in September A.D. 3, and died in the following February. Now everybody is agreed that the war in Armenia could have begun as late as A.D. 3 So there must have been at least two campaigns in Armenia, possibly three. These are just some of the chief reasons leading to the above conclusion.

See account of the war in my article on Quirinius in *SCRIPTURE* of July 1948, pp. 79-80.

W. REES

What times had the author of Ecclesiastes in mind when he wrote that there is 'a time to scatter stones and a time to gather' (iii, 5)?

First, as regards the translation, it is of interest to compare the succinct and rhythmical phrasing of the Douay Version quoted in the query with the Authorized Version: 'a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together'. This translation is preserved unaltered in the Revised Version. The idea of contrary action, which is characteristic of the pairs mentioned in this chapter of Ecclesiastes, is better brought out by 'scattering' than by 'casting away', as unwanted stones may be and sometimes are cast away into a heap. When this is done, the stones remain gathered in one place. The root meaning of the Hebrew verb is simply 'to throw'. Whether the sense is merely that of 'throwing' or of 'throwing away' or 'throwing down' or 'throwing about', that is of 'scattering', can only be decided by the context.

Secondly, as regards the meaning, some curious views have been proposed. The words have been explained of destroying and erecting buildings. This is clearly erroneous as the idea has already been expressed two verses earlier, 'a time to break down and a time to build up'. To limit the meaning to precious stones is to give an arbitrary interpretation with no warrant in the text. And the same verdict is called for by the

suggestion that there is a time to practise commerce and a time to give it up. This suggestion is based on the unfounded assumption that the stones in question are those used as weights by merchants and referred to in Prov. xvi, 11.

The mind of biblical writers is often manifested by comparison of other texts, and the scattering of stones recalls the passage of Lam. iv, 1, 'the stones of the sanctuary are scattered at the top of every street', a reference to the destruction wrought by the Babylonians at the capture of Jerusalem in 587. But this cannot have been the passage our author had in mind. The word used for 'scatter' is different. And he would not consider the sacrilege committed in the overthrow of the Temple to warrant the statement that there is a due and proper time for scattering stones. These various suggestions were, no doubt, prompted by the difficulty of saying what would be such a time.

A suitable answer is provided, however, by the conditions of agriculture and horticulture in the Holy Land. The land is very stony, as indicated by our Lord in the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii, 5. In preparing a garden or vineyard the stones were gathered from the ground, Isaias v, 2, and used to make a dry wall around it, as is still done in Palestine. Such was a time for gathering stones. A hostile army, on the other hand, wishing to devastate the enemy's country, would cut down the fruit trees and scatter stones over the more fertile land. So the Israelites acted in war against Moab: 'You shall cut down every fruitful tree, and shall stop up all the springs of water, and every goodly field you shall spoil with stones. . . . And they filled every goodly field, every man casting his stone, and they stopt up all the springs of water, and cut down all the trees that bore fruit' (IV Kings iii, 19, 25). Note that the same word is used here of casting stones as in the passage of Ecclesiastes under discussion. Such was a time for scattering stones.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Dead Sea Scrolls. A Preliminary Survey by A. Dupont-Sommer.

Translated from the French by E. Margaret Rowley. Pp. 100 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1952) 7s. 6d.

This book is a translation, by Miss Margaret Rowley, daughter of the well-known professor of Manchester University, of the much-discussed work of M. Dupont-Sommer, Professor at the Sorbonne—*Aperçus préliminaires sur les Manuscrits de la Mer Morte*, published in 1950. A criticism of the theories it contains has already appeared in SCRIPTURE, from the pen of Père Tamisier (Vol. V, 1952, p. 35). However,