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JEREMIAH'S SEVENTY YEARS FOR BABYLON: A RE-ASSESSMENT
PART II: THE HISTORICAL DATA

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In my previous article on Jeremiah's seventy-year prophecy (*AUSS* 25 [1987]: 201-214) I sought to demonstrate that an analysis of Jer 25:11-12, Jer 29:10, 2 Chr 36:20b-21, and Dan 9:2 produces three items of significance for the interpretation of the seventy years. First, the seventy years dealt primarily with Babylon (especially in the MT of Jeremiah), and the return from exile was understood to be contingent on their fulfillment. Second, the seventy years in Jeremiah seem best interpreted as a literal period of time. And third, 2 Chr 36:20b-21 and Dan 9:2 do not require that there be a symbolic understanding of the seventy years.

In the present article, I follow up that earlier discussion by investigating whether my analysis given therein is verified and validated by historical data (or is at least fully compatible with such data). Since I have suggested on the basis of the biblical evidence that the period of domination of the Neo-Babylonian Empire is central to the question of the beginning and closing termini for Jeremiah's seventy-year prophecy, an appropriate starting point for the present essay is the question of just when Neo-Babylonia replaced the Assyrian Empire as the dominating force oppressing the people of Yahweh. Or put another way: When did the Assyrian Empire come to its end and thereby enhance the status of Neo-Babylonia to the extent that the latter came to be the dominating political power in Syro-Palestine?

1. *The End of the Assyrian Empire*

Scholars often point to the destruction of Nineveh in 612 B.C. as signifying the end of the Assyrian Empire. It is true that Assyria had been devastated by this time. But, as G. Roux remarks, "The

ghost of an Assyrian kingdom survived for three years."[1] One of Sin-shar-ishkun's officers took the name of Assur-uballit II and ruled what was left of Assyria (or rather, led the Assyrian resistance), causing problems for the Babylonians until 609 B.C. In the month of Duzu (June 25-July 23), Assur-uballit advanced on the city of Haran in order to recapture it. The Babylonian Chronicles imply that a large Egyptian army accompanied him[2]—undoubtedly the army of Necho II,[3] who had just killed Josiah in Josiah's attempt to stop the Egyptians from further advance (described in 2 Kgs 23:29-30 and 2 Chr 35:20-25).

The Assyrian king maintained the siege of Haran until the month of Ululu (August 23-September 20), when Nabopolassar arrived on the scene. The Babylonian text here contains several lacunae.[4] A battle may never have taken place, for Nabopolassar immediately turned northeast towards the area of Izalla. In any case, after this event Assur-uballit disappeared from history. Roux concludes that "thus ended miserably within the short space of three years the giant who, for three centuries, had caused the world to tremble with fear."[5] John Bright is even more succinct: "Assyria was finished."[6]

Although Assyrian resistance had thus ended, the Babylonians did not yet, however, have a free hand in Syria-Palestine, for Necho II effectively controlled this area until the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, the crown prince, triumphantly defeated the Egyptian forces at Carchemish in May-June of 605 B.C.[7] Nevertheless, the final defeat of Assyria in 609 B.C. certainly marked a significant turning point for Babylon.

[1]Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq* (London, 1964), p. 313.

[2]B.M. 21901, lines 66-67. See D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London, 1956), p. 63.

[3]Wiseman, p. 24.

[4]B.M. 21901, line 70; Wiseman, p. 70.

[5]Roux, p. 314.

[6]John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3d ed. (Philadelphia, 1981), p. 316. See also Siegfried Herrmann, *A History of Israel in Old Testament Times* (Philadelphia, 1975), pp. 264-265, 271-272, and 274; and J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI, 1980), p. 533.

[7]Roux, p. 315; Wiseman, p. 25.

2. *Jeremiah's Temple Sermon*

The Date of Jeremiah's Temple Sermon

Jeremiah's Temple Sermon (Jer 7:1-15; 26) clarifies the religious-political scene in Judah in 609 B.C.

Contrary to the arguments of C. F. Whitley, who dates Jeremiah's Temple Sermon to 605 B.C.,[8] recent scholarship maintains that its dating is 609 B.C.[9] Jer 26:1 states that this sermon began "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. . . ." There is general agreement that the phrase *rē'šît mamlᵉkût* ("beginning of the reign") corresponds to the Babylonian *rēš šarrûti*, a term which designates the accession year of a king.[10] There is sharp difference of opinion, however, concerning the questions of whether Jehoiakim's accession year began before or after Tishri 1 (September 21)[11] and of whether Judah employed a Nisan-to-Nisan or Tishri-to-Tishri regnal year.[12] These problems are incredibly complex,

[8]C. F. Whitley, "Carchemish and Jeremiah," *ZAW* 80 (1968):38-49; reprinted in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*, ed. Leo G. Perdue and Brian W. Kovacs (Winona Lake, IN, 1984), pp. 163-173.

[9]J. Philip Hyatt, "The Beginning of Jeremiah's Prophecy," *ZAW* 78 (1966):204-214; reprinted in Perdue and Kovacs, pp. 63-72 (see esp. pp. 65-67); William L. Holladay, "The Years of Jeremiah's Preaching," *Int* 37 (1983): 148-149; Francis Kenro Kumaki, "The Temple Sermon: Jeremiah's Polemic Against the Deuteronomists (Dtr (1))" (Ph.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary in New York, 1980), pp. 38-39; and Thompson, pp. 274, 523.

[10]Cf. Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Princeton, NJ, 1964), p. 95; and Hyatt, pp. 61-65.

[11]For those who maintain a pre-Tishri-1 accession, see Finegan, pp. 202-203, and Hyatt, p. 66. For those who maintain a post-Tishri-1 accession, see Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI, 1965), p. 165; A. Malamat, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem: A Historical-Chronological Study," *IEQ* 18 (1968):141; William L. Holladay, "A Coherent Chronology of Jeremiah's Early Career," in P.-M. Bogaert, ed., *Le Livre de Jérémie: Le prophète et son milieu, les oracles et leur transmission* (Leuven, 1981), p. 68; and William H. Shea, "Wrestling with the Prince of Persia: A Study in Daniel 10," *AUSS* 21 (1983):225-228.

[12]Those favoring Nisan include Thiele, p. 161 (for Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah); Holladay, "Coherent Chronology," p. 58; D. J. A. Clines, "Regnal Year Reckoning in the Last Years of the Kingdom of Judah," *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 2 (1972):9-34; and idem, "The Evidence for an Autumnal New Year in Pre-exilic Israel Reconsidered," *JBL* 93 (1974):22-40. For those who favor a Tishri-to-Tishri year, see Siegfried H. Horn, "The Babylonian Chronicle and the

and their solutions—if possible—are outside the scope of this article. Nevertheless, no matter how these problems are resolved, Jehoiakim's accession year would probably have fallen between the months of Elul (August 23-September 20) of 609 and Adar (February 15-March 16) of 608 (although with a post-Tishri-1 accession and a Tishri-to-Tishri regnal year, it could have extended up to September 10, 608).

Maintaining an early date for Jeremiah's Temple Sermon, J. P. Hyatt has conjectured that the phrase "We are delivered" in Jer 7:10 possibly refers to a view of the people that Jehoiakim's accession represented deliverance from the anti-Egyptian policies of Jehoahaz and his father Josiah.[13] Jehoiakim's younger brother Jehoahaz and his father Josiah certainly maintained an anti-Egyptian stance. One can demonstrate this from the fact that the "people of the land" made both Josiah (2 Kgs 21:24) and Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23:30) kings, but when Necho II deported Jehoahaz and installed Jehoiakim as king, Jehoiakim exacted a heavy tax from "the people of the land" (2 Kgs 23:35). Thus, the accession of Jehoiakim represented a reversal of the anti-Egyptian policies of Jehoahaz and Josiah.

Although C. F. Whitley has denied the plausibility of Hyatt's conjecture,[14] this suggestion does have merit, including considerations that Hyatt himself did not explore.

First, the word *nāṣal* ("to deliver") elsewhere in Jeremiah always refers to deliverances from evildoers, enemies, or oppressors (Jer 1:8, 19; 15:20, 21; 20:13; 21:12; 22:3; 39:17; 42:11). It never refers to deliverance from sins (as Whitley has argued).

Second, three major motifs in the Temple Sermon—the reference to Shiloh (7:12, 14; 26:6), the worship of foreign gods (7:6, 9), and the cry of deliverance (from *nāṣal*, 7:10)—all find parallels in the story of the Philistine capture of the ark of God during the early part of Samuel's judgeship of Israel (1 Sam 4-7). The capture of the ark brought an end to Shiloh as the locale of the sanctuary (1 Sam 4:3-4, 10-11, 22; 7:1-2). The main impediment to deliverance

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Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah," *AUSS* 5 (1967):12-27; Malamat, pp. 145-150; and Alberto R. Green, "The Chronology of the Last Days of Judah: Two Apparent Discrepancies," *JBL* 101 (1982):57-73.

[13]Hyatt, pp. 65-66.

[14]Whitley, pp. 165-166.

from the Philistines was the worship by the Israelites of foreign gods and the Ashtaroth (1 Sam 7:3).

Finally, cries for, concern about, and promises of "deliverance" (from *nāṣal* and *yāša'*, terms apparently used synonymously) occur five times in this particular narrative about the ark, all of them referring to political/military deliverance (as opposed to a cultic sense of salvation from sin): (1) the Israelites take the ark to insure deliverance (*yāša'*) in battle (4:3); (2) the Philistines wonder who will deliver (*nāṣal*) them from the Israelite "gods" (4:8); (3) Samuel promises deliverance (*nāṣal*) on condition of fidelity to God (7:3); (4) the Israelites plead for Samuel to continue to pray so they will be saved (*yāša'*) from the Philistines (7:8); and (5) Israelite territory is finally delivered (*nāṣal*) from Philistine rule (7:14).

These two observations—that Jeremiah (aside from 7:10) never uses *nāṣal* in the cultic sense of salvation from sin but in terms of deliverance from enemies, and that the Temple Sermon in Jer 7 contains parallel motifs with the ark narrative in 1 Sam 4-7 (with its strong military/political overtones)—indicate that the cry of deliverance by the Judeans to which Jeremiah referred also carried military/political overtones, as opposed to purely cultic connotations. With this probability, the Temple Sermon certainly fits well within events surrounding Jehoiakim's installation as king by Necho, thus supporting a 609-B.C. date for the Temple Sermon.

Not only have a number of OT scholars advocated a 609-B.C. date for Jeremiah's Temple Sermon, but W. L. Holladay has recently further argued that this sermon is the earliest utterance of Jeremiah's prophetic career.[15] This he maintains in spite of the fact that Jeremiah's call to ministry has been usually dated in the reign of Josiah (cf. Jer 1:1-3)[16] and that there are events mentioned in the book of Jeremiah which occurred prior to Jehoiakim's reign (cf. Jer 3:6-10; 22:10-12). If this argument could be maintained, it would lend considerable additional support to the significance of the sermon for Jeremiah.

The Desolator in the Sermon

The heart of Jeremiah's Temple Sermon was the threat that the temple would become like Shiloh (i.e., abandoned; cf. Ps 78:60)

[15]Holladay, "Years," p. 149; cf. also idem, "Coherent Chronology," p. 68.

[16]See the discussion in Thompson, pp. 50-56.

and that Jerusalem would become a curse to all the nations unless the Judeans listened to God's prophets and obeyed him (Jer 7:12-14; 26:4-6). Because of this sharp message, the priests, prophets, and people who heard Jeremiah speak these words in the temple complex demanded the death sentence for him (26:7-9). Upon Jeremiah's defense of his prophesying (26:12-15), however, and with the help of the elders of Judah, who cautioned against the death decree (26:17-19), and also with the help of Ahikam the son of Shaphan (26:24), the charge was dropped and Jeremiah's life was spared.

Although Jeremiah prophesied the abandonment of the temple and the (apparent) destruction of Jerusalem, he gave no evidence as to what force/nation/enemy would be the catalyst for this devastation. There are, nevertheless, several implicit pieces of evidence that I believe point in the direction of Babylon, rather than Egypt, as the understood cause of this prophesied devastation.

First, at this time Judah was a vassal to Egypt, clearly indicated by Necho II's installation of Jehoiakim as king (2 Kgs 23:34; 2 Chr 36:4). Thus, the pro-Egyptian party was in dominance in the Judean ruling circles at the time. To prophesy about imminent danger to Jerusalem from Egyptian quarters would have only played into the hands of Pharaoh, who desired to keep Judah in subjection.[17] On the other hand, imminent danger from Babylon would certainly have upset the political status quo in the capital and angered the pro-Egyptian party. Thus, Babylon appears to be the likeliest source of trouble.

Second, a certain Uriah, the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim, prophesied a message similar to that of Jeremiah (Jer 26:20-23); but this time, King Jehoiakim tried to put him to death. Although Uriah fled to Egypt, Jehoiakim's officers brought him back and Jehoiakim summarily executed him. If Uriah had prophesied about Egypt as bringing calamity upon Jerusalem, it seems odd that Pharaoh allowed him to be extradited.[18] A prophecy referring to Babylon as the source of trouble, on the other hand, would have almost assuredly caused Pharaoh to allow Jehoiakim to "take care" of this troublemaker.

Third, Ahikam the son of Shaphan was instrumental in protecting Jeremiah from the angry priests and prophets (26:24). It is

[17]See Whitley, p. 166.

[18]Ibid.

important to note that Ahikam came from a pro-Babylonian family.[19] What we know of his father Shaphan (2 Kgs 22:8-14) only indicates that he was a key figure at the beginning of Josiah's reform. But his son Gemariah was one of three officials who opposed Jehoiakim when he burned Jeremiah's scroll—a scroll which specifically mentioned that the king of Babylon would destroy Judah (Jer 36:10-12, 25, 29). Years later King Zedekiah, a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar, entrusted Elasah, another son of Shaphan, with carrying Jeremiah's basically pro-Babylonian letter to the exiles in Babylon (Jer 29:3). Finally, Ahikam's own son Gedaliah was entrusted by Nebuchadnezzar with guarding Jeremiah after the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (Jer 39:11-14); and eventually, Nebuchadnezzar appointed him governor of Judah (2 Kgs 25:22; Jer 40:5). Jeremiah's close relations with this family are evident in the fact that he stayed for some time with Gedaliah in Mizpah (Jer 40:6). Thus, two sons and a grandson of Shaphan were certainly favorable to Babylon. One can assume that the third son, Ahikam, had similar political leanings or sympathies. And Ahikam's assistance to Jeremiah, while certainly not conclusive evidence that Babylon lay behind the threat of calamity to Judah in Jer 26, seems to point in that direction.

Fourth, the prophecy by Micah of Moresheth about the ruination of Jerusalem (Jer 26:18), spoken by the elders of the land in defense of Jeremiah, most probably implies that the enemy would come from the North. During the reign of King Hezekiah, the time in which Micah spoke this prophecy, Assyria was a real threat, whereas Egypt was not.[20] Although Babylon was no threat to Judah either at this time, Isaiah prophesied (2 Kgs 20:17-18; Isa 39:5-7) that it would be. Thus, the most probably nemesis underlying Micah's prophecy was from the North (cf. Mic 3; 2 Kgs 18-19; 20:12-19).[21]

[19]For an analysis of Shaphan's family's political sympathies, see Thomas W. Overholt, *The Threat of Falsehood: A Study in the Theology of the Book of Jeremiah*, Studies in Biblical Theology, 2d ser., 16 (Naperville, IL, 1970), pp. 31-32. For an excellent discussion of politics during this time and the influence of Jehoahaz and Zedekiah's mother on their policies, see A. Malamat, "The Twilight of Judah: In the Egyptian-Babylonian Maelstrom," *Supp to VT* 28 (1975):125-127.

[20]Bright, pp. 278-288.

[21]For the historical context of Micah's prophecy and its relation to Hezekiah's reign, see Delbert R. Hillers, *Micah*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 5-6, 9, and 18. Cf. also Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*,

3. *Babylon as the New Threat*

The end of Assyria under Assur-uballit II at the hands of the Babylonians and Jeremiah's Temple Sermon (with its implicit understanding of the Babylonians as the real threat to Jerusalem) justify our considering 609 B.C. as a fitting *terminus a quo* for the seventy years. Of these two events, the defeat of Assyria is the obvious choice for the actual beginning of the seventy years. This is because of the fact that with Assyria out of the way, Babylon was truly the dominant power in the North. On the other hand, Jeremiah's Temple Sermon, while clarifying the religious and political situation in 609 B.C., does not mention Babylon by name or even allude specifically to forces from the North. The corroborative nature of Jeremiah's evidence is, nonetheless, more than merely an "argument from silence"; the reflection it gives of the situation is implicit. Indeed, the two events—the fall of Assyria and Jeremiah's sermon—seem to have been closely related, and thus it is easy to understand the force of M. B. Rowton's observation:

> News of the Assyrian king's downfall would have reached a people still bowed in grief over the death of their own beloved king. To Jeremiah it would have brought, not consolation, but the dawn of an appalling thought: Assyria was indeed no more, but Yahwe had chosen an avenger elsewhere.[22]

4. *Further Basic Questions Concerning the Seventy Years*

Two questions remain to be answered concerning the seventy years: First, how precisely can one determine the *terminus a quo* of the seventy years? And second, how is it possible for the seventy-year prophecy to be first given in 605 B.C. (Jer 25:1) when it supposedly went into effect in 609 B.C.—four years earlier?

Precision Regarding the Beginning Date

As for the first question, one must understand that neither biblical nor historical records give the precise dates for Josiah's death, Jehoahaz's accession, the Assyrian-Egyptian campaign

NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI, 1976), p. 321. Allen asserts that this prophecy spurred on Hezekiah's reform.

[22]M. B. Rowton, "Jeremiah and the Death of Josiah," *JNES* 10 (1951):130.

against Haran and that city's subsequent defeat, the accession of Jehoiakim, or the Temple Sermon of Jeremiah; the dates are approximate at best. The sharp differences of opinion concerning calendrical dating also complicate the issue.

Simple calculations would indicate, however, that the *terminus a quo* must be dated no earlier than October of 609 B.C., since Babylon fell on October 12, 539 B.C. This general date in 609 falls after Tishri 1 (September 21), thus automatically and absolutely excluding every event previously mentioned except the accession of Jehoiakim and Jeremiah's Temple Sermon. And the combination of an acceptance of a Tishri-to-Tishri regnal year and a pre-Tishri-1 accession for Jehoiakim[23] would exclude *all* of these events. Thus, by pushing these events back into the preceding year, the use of any of these events as a *terminus a quo* would indicate a term of seventy-one years instead of seventy years.

Such need not be the case, however, for there are at least two possible solutions to this problem. First, none of the events occurred earlier than Iyyar 1 (April 27) of 609 B.C.,[24] a date *less* than six months earlier than October of the same "year." It may be the case that rounding seventy years plus a time period of up to six months to an even seventy years was an acceptable practice.[25] For example, in 2 Chr 36:9 one reads that Jehoiachin ruled three months and ten days, whereas in 2 Kgs 24:8 the same time period is expressed as three months. If this were the case also with the seventy years, the problem of pre-October events would be solved. However, since recent scholarship has questioned the accuracy of 2 Chr 36:9,[26] it would seem desirable to look for a less problematic solution.

One finds, in fact, a better solution to this problem within the book of Jeremiah itself. In the fifth month of the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign (Jer 28:1), Jeremiah prophesied that the false prophet Hananiah would die in that very year (28:16). Hananiah promptly died in the seventh month of the *same* year (28:17). Jeremiah apparently considered some events preceding and following Tishri 1 to be within the same year. Thus, any of the events

[23]Finegan, pp. 202-203.

[24]See Malamat, "Last Kings," p. 139, and idem, "Twilight of Judah," p. 125.

[25]See the discussion in Clines, "Regnal Year Reckoning," pp. 9-34.

[26]Alberto R. Green, "The Fate of Jehoiakim," *AUSS* 20 (1982):103-109, especially p. 105.

(from Josiah's death on) could be considered as occurring within the same year as post-Tishri-1 events. Applied to the *terminus a quo* of the seventy-year prophecy, this would solve the problem that we have noted.[27]

"Retrospective" Prophecies

As for the second question raised above (i.e., how a future-sounding time prophecy spoken in 605 B.C. could have had its *terminus a quo* four years earlier in 609 B.C.), once again material within Jeremiah helps to clarify the issue. First of all, it must be recognized that Jeremiah referred to the seventy years for Babylon more than five years after he originally prophesied about it (cf. Jer 29:1-2, 10). It is important to note that Jeremiah did not refer to "*the*" seventy years but simply to "seventy years," thus indicating that this time period began, not when Jeremiah uttered the prophecy, but rather when some event (disassociated from the actual utterance) took place.[28]

A second consideration is that at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign (Jer 27:1) Jeremiah prophesied to the ambassadors of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon that all nations would serve Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuchadnezzar's son and grandson until the time of his own land would come (27:7). Jeremiah also spoke virtually the same thing to Zedekiah himself (27:12). The fact that these ambassadors were at Zedekiah's court to discuss plans for a revolt[29] shows that they were already vassals of Nebuchadnezzar.

[27]It is possible that when God spoke to Jeremiah (28:12), it was *already* the seventh month, i.e., the next year. Thus, this would disprove the argument. But this seems improbable. First, why would God wait almost two months to give Jeremiah this message? Second, why would God refer to "this very year" (vs. 16) when it would be, in actuality, more precise to refer to the *month* (if Jeremiah spoke in the seventh month)? Third, moving Jeremiah's response up to the seventh month destroys the two-year/two-month analogy. Fourth, the phrasing of 28:17 ("In that same year, in the seventh month, the prophet Hananiah died") indicates that Hananiah's death did not happen within the same month as Jeremiah's prophecy. And fifth, with the chronology so carefully laid out in this chapter (28:1, 16, 17), it is strange that vs. 12 does not clearly indicate that God spoke to Jeremiah in the seventh month if indeed such were the case.

[28]For agreement (but with a different time-frame in mind), see "Chronology of Exile and Restoration," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, rev. ed. (1976), 3:90.

[29]Cf. Bright, p. 329.

Judah itself had become a vassal at least as early as ca. 605 B.C.[30]

Here, then, we have what one might call a "retrospective prophecy"—one which, though future-oriented, related to events in the past and up to the present. An objection may be raised, of course, that Jer 27:7, which is of key importance to the designation of this prophecy as a "retrospective" one, is missing from the LXX. This objection is not unassailable, however, for there is reason to believe that the literalistic translators of the LXX dropped the verse because Nebuchadnezzar's son Amel-Marduk was not succeeded by his son but by his brother-in-law Nergal-shar-usur.[31] In short, then, the retrospective nature of Jeremiah's prophecy in chap. 27 can be considered as clarifying the date of the prophecy about the seventy years in chap. 25.

It is thus both logical and consistent with the historical evidence to fix the *terminus a quo* in 609 B.C. The *terminus ad quem* would then be the well-attested date of the fall of Babylon seventy years later, on October 12, 539 B.C.

5. *Conclusion*

This article and its predecessor have entailed a search for a better understanding of the seventy-year prophecy in Jeremiah. The evidence, I believe, demonstrates first of all that literal interpretation of the seventy years is not incompatible with an understanding of either the relevant biblical texts (Jer 25:11-12, Jer 29:10, 2 Chr 36:20b-21, and Dan 9:2) or the historical data. In the first article I showed that these biblical texts do not necessitate a symbolic application of the seventy years and that at the same time they allow for a primary reference to Babylon. In the present article I have set forth evidence suggesting that the defeat (or, withdrawal) of Assur-uballit II of Assyria and the Assyrian-Egyptian forces at Haran at the hands of the Babylonians constitutes a viable event for the *terminus a quo* of the seventy years in the summer of 609 B.C. This correlates well with a *terminus ad quem* for those seventy years in 539 B.C.

[30]Wiseman, p. 25. B.M. 21946 line 8 states that Nebuchadnezzar conquered all of what is known as Syria and Palestine soon after the Battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C.

[31]Thompson, p. 533, n. 19.