Luke at the Birth of the Gospels

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By

Sylvie Chabert d'Hyères

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PREFACE

Is it too soon or unrealistic to present Luke's Gospel as the first source of the New Testament, when so few have even considered the possibility, and when the concept itself may appear incoherent to many?

Such an endeavour would be risky if it did not respond to contemporary aspirations for a faith enlightened by historical truth. The Lukan text in its original state responds to such expectations with righteousness and is beyond reproach faced with the other Gospels. The Synoptics have in common a limited and fixed number of verses so that the problem posed by their order of drafting should have found a convincing conclusion. Instead, the reconstruction of hypothetical missing sources introduced subjectivity and innumerable possibilities and has turned the order of the Synoptics into a never-ending debate. Despite scientific analyses based on the outer form of the texts (so as to guard against personal motivations) the issue is still not resolved. Should we not attribute to the collective unconscious the lack of result and conclusion in this field?

On one hand, the Synoptics are so closely related and therefore have literary kinship, that deciding which one has priority is a critical issue. On the other hand, it would not have been necessary to harmonise the Lukan text so that it conforms with Mark and Matthew if the very profound differences between them had been fully appreciated.

Each Evangelist may have been motivated by the intention to stand close to Jesus, and no judgement could be made on the degree of motivation of each one. Nevertheless, pastiche, like plagiarism, is regularly preferred to the original, which it tends to embellish, improve and simplify, but also weaken and even contradict. Ultimately, while replications are praised, the original remains misunderstood. If Luke represents the original, it is necessary to highlight what was not understood by the other Synoptics who wrote long after him.

How can we assign an earlier date to the Lukan writings than that generally accepted, when they have been studied for generations by leading experts and religious authorities? Claiming to be right against all would be damaging without the intellectual certainty of having direct

access to the testimony of the protagonists "who became ministers of the Word" and to whom it is not unjustified to express particular gratitude.

The fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 provides the common chronological benchmark for the drafting of the Third Gospel; and as doubt has taken hold of its predictive character, the author is supposed to have written after the event that forms a leitmotif of twenty or so verses, scattered between chapters 11 to 23[1], from Jonah's sign "yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" to the interpellation of the "Daughters of Jerusalem". Its function of elegy, intense warning, imploration and call to repentance, evolves into imprecatory words and threats until the fulfilment of the days of justice. Its attribution to Luke does not fit with his personality as an Evangelist who always remained in the background and did not add any personal comment. The subject itself is difficult, even incomprehensible as it contradicts the purpose of the Gospel envisaged as the announcement of the good news of the Kingdom of God. This is why the violence of the theme was toned down by the two other Synoptics and ignored by John who wrote long after the fall of Jerusalem. What may have been the interest of the Evangelist Luke to ascribe to Jesus prophecies of doom that he never uttered? By discrediting the predictive nature of this leitmotif, literary criticism has alleviated the Gospel of a key theme in which the admonitions about castigation are seen as justice, if not as revenge, as the Greek word means both. However, if vengeance is a human and natural reflex, it is not certain that God is driven by such a desire, his warning and caveats having the pedagogical function of restraining bad tendencies and diverting from evil intentions. From this point of view, the argument put forward for delaying Luke's writing to after AD 70 does not offer sufficient consistency; furthermore, it does not fit with the preface to his Gospel.

Indeed, according to it, the author, together with others, had received the testimony of the first disciples. He himself had followed everything from the beginning "in parallel" since he was not one of the Twelve, but probably someone close to the "Word". As a contemporary of the events, he vouched for their fulfilment, that is, for their reality. He addressed Theophilus, a person of high rank, assuming that his God was none other than the God of the Hebrew people, his name meaning "beloved of God". Could anyone tolerate Apollo's sponsorship of the Gospel? The Evangelist offered Theophilus a thorough and chronological account so that he could verify what he had already learnt about. The oral narrative, which

a number of people had already seized upon, required adjustment. Asked to "recognise the solidity" of what was going to be communicated to him in writing, Theophilus had to verify the truth of what he had already been told. He was expected to make an act of recognition that would become impossible if the book was removed from its original context.

The traditional reading of Luke is problematic since it implies that the whole thing could be transposed into a context far removed from the facts, both in time and space. It suggested that not everything was to be taken literally and could be questioned. In fact, it mattered little to make a liar of the only New Testament author who had taken the trouble to commit himself to a truthful account. Instead of glimpsing Luke's involvement in the "events accomplished among us", the pronoun "us" was interpreted in a generic way and taken to mean events encompassing several generations. The formulation derived from Demosthenes—who asserted his presence by standing in the gap when he assiduously followed the events unfolding before his eyes—was interpreted as a search for information through imaginary sources and borrowings from Mark's controversial account. Even though the qualifier was not directly attributed to him, the author was considered to be an impostor. Having presented himself as a witness to the events through the "we" of Acts, he was suspected of having seized the travel diaries of one of Paul's companions in order to take credit for them. Drowned out by comments of varying degrees of praise or flattery, this serious accusation called into question the author's honesty and prevented trust from being established with the reader. In view of its application to the religious sphere, the indictment of the Evangelist is by no means innocuous.

In the 21st century, the drafting of Luke-Acts is delayed until the second half of the second century. The analysis of the previous centuries had been left aside and Luke became dependent not only on Mark, but also on Matthew and John! This has had the effect of releasing the Lukan works from contextual and geographical ties and moving them into the timeless, and out of the cradle of Judaism in which they were born. And yet, Luke's work maintains a very close relationship with the Hebrew language, Jewish customs and rabbinic thought of his time, as the analysis of the Uncial D05 has confirmed. Its transmission in Greek preserves the imprint of the original language, along with the liturgical terms and themes that accompany it, since Luke used the vocabulary of the Greek Pentateuch of the Septuagint to transcribe the Hebrew or the Judeo-Aramaic of Galilee. By contributing to the dialogue between these languages, he ensured the transmission of his account. The

arguments put forward in the following pages should bring evidence of the Lukan priority.

This book begins with an analysis of the role of the Roman legate Quirinius in the writings of historian Flavius Josephus. The long-standing assertion about his function in AD 6 does not refer to any of the terms used by the historian. The inexactness transmitted in this respect prevents recognition of the historicity of Luke's Gospel. Closer analysis leads to an affirmation of its complementarity with both Josephus and the Latin inscriptions.

A foray into the works of Mark and Matthew shows that both have their origins in Luke, even if exegetical research has always been motivated by the opposite conclusion. To the form (vocabulary, stylistic devices, grammar) it is necessary to add the sense of the events and the significance of the stories. The irregularities found in Mark are frequently interpretations of Luke's often concise writing. Their multiplication allows us to attest to this origin. Matthew's factual account of the didrachma incident exposes the Roman period during which he wrote, providing a clear identifier. Jesus' exhortation to dispossession and poverty, for instance, was diverted towards pearls, treasures, gold and talents. Disparities between the Synoptics manifested, through the specific orientations of one or the other, what had not been accepted, or even refused by the churches.

If Luke's priority is agreed, the historical context in which the book was written can be specified and dated. For instance, how the kerygma of the Resurrection was conveyed to the Thessalonians may constitute one further scriptural proof that Paul was cognizant of Luke's Gospel. Papias, who quoted the Acts of the Apostles in the first half of the second century, maintained silence about the name of Luke but not about that of Mark and Matthew. The reasons why no one spoke of the author before Irenaeus, have yet to be researched.

Long ignored, the Uncial D05, known as the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis[2], which preserves the oldest known text of the Gospels and Acts, has some variant readings that remain a challenge for exegetical research. That is why several themes are worth exploring, particularly Jesus' stance on remarriage, in which the Uncial D05 maintains the original structure for providing a more lenient viewpoint than the standard text. The Eucharistic communion in the Last Supper needs to be reviewed according to D05, since it sheds remarkably noteworthy light on Jesus' motivations. There, where the waters are muddied, certain stages of the Passion have to be reviewed by referring to D05 in

order to clarify the responsibilities exercised by the different powers. That Luke's writing is untouched by the redemptive theology diffused by Paul is an observation made long ago by scholars, but which has not been passed on. D05 supports this observation, which continues to remain unknown to believers and the general public.

By placing Luke's Gospel in third place, tradition has given priority to Matthew and John envisioned as apostles while Luke was considered a disciple of Paul, although he became a member of the Christian community before Paul did. Among a few dissenting voices, Photios I of Constantinople, in the ninth century, considered the Evangelist a disciple of Jesus[3].

Variations in the writing of Luke's Gospel between the preface and the main text have been observed for centuries, and finally, drawing on the inferences of the earlier chapters, the identification of the author of each one seems possible now that the context of the drafting has been restored.

Notes

[1] Predictions about the ruin of Jerusalem cf. Lk 11:29–30; 13:3–5, 34–35; 19:41–44; 21:5–6; 20–24; 23:28–31.

[2] This late 4th-century manuscript was named after Theodore Beza, who in the 16th century ensured that it was saved from flames during the French Wars of Religion. Its current location, Cambridge, was added to its name. Prior to that, it was in the city of Lyon, and the "ancestor" from which it was accurately copied may have already been in that city. The variant readings are consistent with each other, and they challenge the standard Greek text which results from a harmonisation of the other two Synoptics. This advice of Theodore Beza, still widely followed, that it is "a book to be kept rather than published" should be carried over to Mark's Gospel whose state is a draft, while there is no reason to conceal the way Luke's Gospel and Acts were written, close to their original context.

[3] Commentary of Photius of Constantinople on the preface of Luke: "St. Luke, being by nature of a noble and ardent mind, acquired in his youth the learning of the Greeks. He made himself perfectly acquainted with Grammar and Poetry, and was a complete master of the art of Rhetoric and the power of persuasion. Nor was he surpassed by anyone in the gifts of Philosophy; last of all, he learns Medicine. And now by his natural quickness having drunk deep enough of human wisdom, he takes flight to something higher. He hastens accordingly to Judea, and gains access to the presence and hearing of Christ. Being soon convinced of the truth, he becomes a true disciple of Christ, and has frequent intercourse with his Master." Catena Aurea, Commentary on the Four Gospels, collected out of the Works of the Fathers Vol. 3.1, (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1841), 2. Photius echoed an ancient tradition known to Gregory the Great (cf. Ch XII, Note 16).

CHAPTER I

THE CONSUL QUIRINIUS IN THE WORKS OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

It is a common belief that the consul Publius Sulpicius Quirinius would have been the governor of Syria when Judea became a Roman province in AD 6, according to the works of Flavius Josephus.[1] Supported by scholarly consensus, such an assertion nevertheless requires reappraisal and a fresh appreciation of the role of the consul. Nowhere indeed does the historian use for the legate one of the qualifiers he bestowed on a governor of a Roman province. However, he distinguished him with two unusual designations for a consular man, "juridicus of the province" dedicated to a lower rank and "censor" to a higher rank; they conferred on him power in matters of civil law, taxation and census, not on criminal justice. Did he, at the same time, exercise the governorship over Syria, holding the *imperium* granted to the commander of the army? This analysis will attempt to answer this question.

Already made long ago by specialists in epigraphy[2] these observations and questions have had no impact on the common understanding of the consul's career, and an abyss remains between scientists and the fabric of history. The subject is taken up afresh here because reading Josephus's text, while leaving open the real function of Quirinius, enables a more acute understanding of the Greek vocabulary. This first step might seem tedious to the reader, nevertheless, implications for other sources, particularly on the Gospels, promise to be invaluable in this regard.

In his work, Flavius Josephus mentions the *cognomen* Quirinius[3] six times. Chapter XVII of *Antiquitates Judaicae* ends with his arrival in Syria, following the removal of Archelaus from his ethnarchy, while chapter XVIII begins with a presentation of his career path and a description of his office in Judea. His name is quoted twice as a chronological reminder in *Bellum Judaicum*.

1. "The country of Archelaus was allotted as tributary to that of Syrians[4]; and Quirinius, one that had been a consular man, was sent by Caesar to **evaluate** those in Syria, and to retrieve the house of Archelaus." *AJ* 17. 355.
2. "Now Quirinius, a senator, and one who had gone through other magistracies, and had passed through them till he had been **consul**, and one who, on other accounts, was of great reputation, came at this time into Syria, with a few others, **detached** by Caesar to be the **juridicus** of the province, and to become **censor of the properties**." *AJ* 18. 1.
3. "Coponius, a man of the equestrian order, was **sent from above with** him, to govern the Jews with full powers. Quirinius also came into Judea, which had been **appended** to Syria, to **evaluate their properties**, and to **retrieve** Archelaus' **wealth**." *AJ* 18.2.
4. "When Quirinius had now **retrieved** Archelaus' **wealth**, and when the **valuation**s were come to a conclusion, which were made in the thirty-seventh year of Caesar's victory over Antony at Actium, having deprived Joazar of the **honour of his privilege**, him who had been ousted by the crowd, he appointed high priest Ananus, the son of Seth." *AJ* 18. 26.
5. "Manahem ... who was a very cunning sophister, and had formerly reproached the Jews under Quirinius, that after God they were subject to the Romans." BJ 2. 433.
6. "He [Eleazar] was a descendant from that Judas who had persuaded [an] abundance of the Jews, as we have formerly related, not to do the **registration** when Quirinius was sent as **censor** into Judea." BJ 7.253.[5]

Table 1-1 Mentions of the name Quirinius in the works of Flavius Josephus

The title of consul was enunciated twice, both times together with the area of his mandate (the imperial province of Syria). This hierarchical rank was highlighted to differentiate him from Coponius, the first procurator of the new Roman province of Judea, subjected to Syria. The "few others" who accompanied him were probably expert appraisers. His title of *iuridicus* indicated a function proper to managing the conflicts of interest that might arise in the valuation and sale of realms. An impressive recurrence of financial and fiscal words

served to introduce him as evaluator of the inheritance of Archelaus and land appraiser. Let us examine this emphasis on wealth.

Geographical Distribution of Archelaus' Wealth

Quirinius had to retrieve[6] Archelaus' wealth and return it to the emperor as he acted on Augustus's behalf. With the districts of Idumea, Judea and Samaria, "there were also certain of the cities which paid tribute to Archelaus: Strato's Tower and Sebaste, with Joppa and Jerusalem; for as to Gaza, and Gadara, and Hippos, they were Grecian cities, which Caesar separated from his government, and added them to the province of Syria." (AJ XVII 320). These districts and cities paying tribute would need to be completed by the countless royal possessions as Archelaus inherited the huge fortune in Judea from his father Herod the Great. How and with what resources did the king build so many towns and edifices? [7] Where did his wealth come from?[8] Did he receive a consideration[9] or revenues from the numerous edifices built outside the kingdom and especially those in Syria? Who acquired them after his death? As a client kingdom of Rome, Judea was not subjected to the tribute, thus enabling Herod's tyranny over Jewish people[10] to generate enormous profits.[11] The king had gained control over this prized area, and its important balsam perfume industries in Ein Gedi. He received half the revenue from the copper mine of Cyprus while being entrusted with the management of the other half whose legal owner was Augustus himself[12] whose example Herod followed. Be that as it may, these answers do not seem proportionate to the extent of the works undertaken by the king.

Accordingly, the valuations entrusted to Quirinius extended beyond Judea to the Herodian assets in Syria. The private properties of Archelaus reverted not only to the Roman province of Syria and to the new province of Judea, but above all to the emperor himself; their dissociation portended a serious challenge. By writing that "his wealth was *deposited inside* Caesar's treasuries" [13] was Josephus saying that one part was paid to the *fiscus* (the public imperial treasury), and the other directly to Augustus himself? Indeed, in the provinces where he personally possessed dominions (Chersonese, Egypt), Augustus charged special agents to collect his private revenues. These provincial officers called *procuratori Augusti* were generally freedmen when they did not belong to the equestrian or praetorian rank. The best example is

provided by Sabinus, a financial procurator in Syria at Herod's death, who is shown to have lusted after his wealth:

> Sabinus, procurator of Augustus for business affairs in Syria, met with Archelaus at Caesarea as he was making haste into Judea to preserve Herod's effects ... He used force in seizing the citadels, and zealously pressed on the search after the king's money, in order to seize upon it by force, on account of his love of gain and his extraordinary covetousness.[14]

As Sabinus' greed had largely triggered the insurgency of the Jews, Augustus could have feared that such events might recur and that Herod's wealth would elude him. To prevent this from happening, he would have searched for a more satisfactory alternative to sending a freedman. Which trusted man could be sent to oversee the subjection of Judea and ensure that Archelaus' wealth returned to the imperial domain? Did Quirinius promote himself as the trustworthy man Augustus was looking for? He knew the Roman provinces of the Middle East. According to Tacitus, he had been rector to Caius Caesar in Armenia about two years before; he could negotiate with the Jewish authorities of Judea who demanded autonomy from the time of Herod's death; their delegation in Rome had accused Herod of his iniquities and criticised the way he had amassed riches. In 6 AD they asked for the dismissal of Archelaus. To manage the inevitable conflicts, Augustus needed a high-level representative like Quirinius, and it seems that when faced with such wealth, Quirinius did not allow himself to be corrupted – although in his old age, this rich man was despicable and tyrannical.[15]

Appraiser - Valuator

According to The War of the Jews, when the procurator Coponius arrived to govern Judea, the ethnarchy of Archelaus had already been delineated as an "eparchy" (Lat. *provincia*).[16] This could mean that Quirinius had arrived several months earlier to trace the boundaries between the eparchy of Judea and Archelaus' dominion returning to the emperor.

He had to evaluate in Syria (Table 1-1, sentence No 1) "τὰ", a demonstrative pronoun signifying "those" or an article used for "things" or "affairs". So, "those", as in "those of Archelaus in Syria", if the

Tetrarch had inherited his father's properties in Syria. Otherwise, which things, which affairs? He may just have updated the census lists and. tax assessments in the example of the three consuls who served on a commission in Gaul (cf. Note 18). Like these *legati Augusti ad census accipiendos,*[17] there was no need for him to hold the *Imperium* nor to command the army

The Greek root *timê* (value) occurs five times for the valuation of properties (In Table 1-1, sentence No 1 – *apotimêsomenon,* No 2 – *timêtês,* No 3 – *apotimêsomenos,* No 4 – *apotimêseôn,* No 6 – *timêtês*).

As Augustus decided the inventory of the Empire, the functions of registration and census were awarded either to men of equestrian rank or praetors. Consular men, governors of the imperial provinces, assumed responsibility for a large number of administrative tasks that they entrusted to praetors and financial procurators.[18] Such tasks included cadastral revision, boundary marking and the census and were granted various times to consuls who operated regardless of the governor of the province:

> They do not, at the same time, exercise the government of the province as we have often believed, but their powers are superior to those of the governors, especially when the latter are praetorians. ... These men are all part of the senatorial elite and are close to the emperor. The importance of the function is emphasised by the fact that it is rarely fulfilled as the first consular function. They were necessarily helped in their task.... They usually chose auxiliaries from among the knights.[19]

This analysis of J.P. Martin has no lack of Latin examples that clearly show the specific nature of the census entrusted to a consular man who did not govern a province at the same time. Among the best-known examples,[20] that of Rutilius Gallicus is striking. As suffect consul, he received the mission of boundary marking and census in Africa twice, connected with Vespasian's project of increasing the contributions of the provinces. His name and that of the emperor are on three inscriptions in the years AD 74 and 75.[21] As legate of the emperor (*legatus Augusti pro praetore),* he received an extraordinary mission for the delineation of the province, linked to the census. He was not the proconsul of the senatorial province of Africa at the same time, otherwise, this function would appear on the inscriptions. Assuming the opposite is not justified.[22] The case of Rutilius Gallicus and Quirinius

are very similar and there is no statutory obstacle to envisioning an extraordinary mission in Judea comparable to the one in Africa.

In the eparchy, Coponius, with full powers, controlled the troops who registered Jewish properties, experiencing the Augustan tax reform.[23] In this new Roman province, on one hand, the census was an expression of the coercive powers of Rome, and Coponius had to quell the tax revolt sustained by Judas the Gaulonite while Quirinius' role as valuator, was probably to oversee the appraisal of large properties, domains and areas. On the other hand, in the Roman imperial province of Syria, annexed early to the Roman Republic (64 BC) nothing required the same measures. Syria paid to Rome the *tributum capitis*[24] and nothing justified at that time the implementation of the Augustan reform performed step by step in the provinces throughout the 1st century AD.[25]

Censor

Quirinius received the specific mandate of "censor" (τιμητὴς, *timêtês,* Table 1-1, Nos 2 and 6).

Under the Republic, the censor had to monitor the tax authorities and financial management. He was regarded as the highest rank in the *cursus honorum* of the Roman public career path;[26] the control of public morality with the authority to decide what was right or wrong was another duty of the censors, a very important responsibility. The censorship increasingly became a magistracy for former consuls. A censor did not hold the *imperium* and was not surrounded with lictors, but he was considered a highly respected *sanctus magistratus*. The last two censors were Plancus and Lepidus who, while presiding over the *Lustrum* in 22 BC, resigned after the podium collapsed.

Consequently, the census became one of Augustus' own imperial charges even though he did not include censorship in his titles. His successors added "censor" to their other imperial dignities; thereafter, praetors and consuls were called *censitors,*[27] found in epigraphy from the second century, this title had no Greek equivalent. As for Josephus, he translated the Latin *censor* as *timêtes* in the case of Quirinius; in so doing, he raised his rank to a level barely below that of the emperor.

δικαιοδότης / Iuridicus

Quite the opposite is the case with the Greek *dikaiodotes* (δικαιοδότης) equivalent to the Latin *iuridicus.*[28] From the mid-first-century BC to Quirinius' legation, which ended in AD 6, the first instance occurred in Latin literature,[29] while four Greek occurrences were found on two inscriptions of Caria,[30] on an inscription of Lycia[31] and in the work of Strabo for the officer who, with supreme authority over most of the lawsuits, assisted the Egyptian legate.[32]

These magistrates remained anonymous, even though they were magnified with honorific qualifiers such as *honoured* or *revered.* Nevertheless, they did not hold supreme authority which was in the hands of the prefect or the proconsul. Ensuring financial and fiscal justice was the main role entrusted to them. Afterwards, the title was not attested before Claudius[33] when *iuridicus* appeared in epigraphy.[34] The *dikaiodotes* and the *legatus iuridicus* were usually appointed in provinces that demanded them, but they remained under the direct supervision of the emperor himself. These officers had a military career before being appointed *propraetors* and being sent to a province for the settling of civil suits.[35]

In Egypt, during the third century AD, a few of them performed another function at the same time. Occasionally, they assumed the governing of the province instead of a prefect,[36] but more commonly they were financial procurators.[37]

> The *dikaiodotes* was a Roman equestrian nominated by the emperor and independent from the prefect. ... His competence was civil law, the *iurisdictio contentiosa* or *voluntaria*, while criminal law fell under the authority of the prefect. ... The post of *dikaiodotes* was filled by Roman citizens and often represented a stepping stone to a higher office, such as the prefecture of Egypt or a procuratorship elsewhere.[38]

In AD 53, a *senatus consultum* of the emperor Claudius gave the same judicial rights to the procurators of the provinces.[39] However, in epigraphy, the examples of this reformation are late (third century). In the province of Lycia-Pamphylia, legates were called *presbeutês kai antistratêgos Lukias kai Pamphulias,*[40] the Greek equivalent of the Latin *legato Augusti pro praetore provinciae Lyciae et Pamphyliae;* among the thirty names listed[41] eight were also called *dikaiodotes*; then, they were appointed suffect consul.[42] *Dikaiodotes* was awarded by citizens to the

legate who was coming to their city for judicial cases; it was a way to express their gratitude by granting an honorary title, as it has been suggested.[43]

The sixty *iuridici* identified in Latin epigraphy fall within the equestrian or praetorian rank. Two-thirds of them, after having satisfied the expectations of their civil judicial office in Spain, Italy or Britain, were promoted to suffect consul status shortly after they left the province where they had been *iuridicus.*[44]

Such titles did not suit a consular man, governor of an imperial province.[45] When Hadrian divided Italy into four judicial regions, he mandated a consul in each one. As the office of *iuridicus* was not entrusted to a consul but to a man of equestrian or praetor rank, he did not call these magistrates *iuridici* but *consulares.*[46] Josephus could not call Quirinius *consularis* which was not in use for this function at that time. However, he may have chosen the verb *dikaiodoteô* as he did for the proconsul of Asia.[47] In contrast to the substantive, the verb was not used restrictively[48] while using the substantive would downgrade the consular rank to a lower one. There is convincing evidence that his choice was deliberate and that he did not make a mistake. As no word accurately suited, he opted for the downgrading to the substantive *dikaiodotes* and restored the balance with the other title, "censor", as stated above. In so doing, he highlighted the specificity of Quirinius' mission which was not the governance of Syria. Otherwise, he would have used one of the ordinary qualifiers for a governor.

"Quirinius Detached by Caesar" and "Coponius Sent from Above with"

In the third quotation of Josephus, the Greek verb *apostellô* meaning send, detach, implies a relationship between whoever sends and who is sent (the word apostle comes from this root); there are 83 occurrences against 671 for the very common synonym *pempô*. The participle *apestalmenos,*[49] *detached by* in the passive voice and the perfect tense, occurs only four times in Josephus' works. While the active voice emphasises the action performed by the subject, the passive voice underscores the relationship between the subject and the agent. The Greek perfect tense signifies a continuing and achieved state, and the intensive perfect describes actions as ongoing processes and differs

from the present only in the intensity with which the events are depicted.[50]

Titus, with the perfect passive participle, was *detached by* Vespasianus to take refuge in Syria during the siege of Gamala; although he was thirty years old, Josephus called him a child (παῖς). For his father, he was a child who needed to be protected. In that case, the perfect passive participle ensured that the link was not broken between the father and the son as they were separated. In comparison, when on his departure for Rome, Vespasianus sent his "son" to seize Jerusalem, the verb is in the aorist active voice which emphasises the authority granted to the son.[51]

In the case of Quirinius *detached by* Caesar, the same expression would indicate a special link, based on trust between the legate and the emperor, since by comparison with the mission of other legates, Josephus preferred the active voice with the verb *pempô* meaning *send forward, nominate a person for a post.*[52]

For Varus *"who was at this time at Jerusalem, being detached to replace Saturninus as governor of Syria",*[53] the perfect passive participle is also used. Like Quirinius, Varus became a relative of Augustus through his two marriages. However, the name of the emperor, the agent, is missing in the sentence and is only implicit. Varus had distinguished himself in the disaster of the Teutoburg Forest and, long after his suicide, Augustus was crying over his three lost legions. Could it be that Josephus avoided associating Augustus' name with that of Varus?

One last occurrence of *apestalmenos* with the preposition *epi* meaning *sent against someone* is used when Josephus depicts the snaky and perfidious messenger *sent against* Herod by the Parthians to lure him into a trap.[54]

Each time, the perfect passive participle *apestalmenos* has been chosen to express a relationship suiting the context and tinged with great sensitivity. When referring to Quirinius, it would emphasise his commitment and trustworthiness. The consul had joined the officers who escorted Caius Caesar, the adopted son of Augustus who had received from his grandfather an *imperium proconsulare* of the eastern provinces. He became his rector to replace Marcus Lollius who, convicted of treason, would commit suicide in the spring of AD 2. Even he could not prevent the death of Caius in February AD 4, Quirinius married Emilia Lepida, the fiancee of Caius' brother, Lucius Caesar, who had died two years before. These events bear witness to the trust

placed in him by the emperor. In this way, he approached the *Domus Augusta*.[55]

Josephus added that Coponius was "sent from above together with" Quirinius (Table 1-1, No 3); with the hapax legomenon s*ugkatapempetai* he insisted on a mandate delivered by Augustus who ordered Coponius to work with Quirinius. This does not prevent us from thinking that Quirinius came first to demarcate the boundaries of the new eparchy of Judea, as noted above. If they had been sent at the same time, the common *sumpempetai* would have sufficed. The hapax indeed expressed a specific intent. The procurator took instructions directly from Augustus who, periodically, sent his *mandata*.[56] Full powers in Judea being in the hands of Coponius, if Quirinius held the *imperium*, the hapax was unnecessary; the procurator was under his command due to the hierarchical rank. However, if the consul performed an extraordinary mission without specified rules, it was necessary to detail the duties of each one. They had to work together, and it seems that the hierarchical rank was suspended.

Destitution and the Appointment of a High Priest

Joazar, having been deprived of the honour of his privilege, the appointment of his successor was also Quirinius' responsibility (Table 1-1, sentence No 4). The high priests were appointed by the political authorities and, on the death of his father, Archelaus removed Joazar from his office to appoint his brother Eleazar in his place and slightly later, Jesus son of Sie; yet Joazar was still officiating ten years later when Judea became a Roman province. As he enjoyed a huge authority, he could maintain himself as a high priest. He had a moderate position and with others, he tried to convince the people to declare their properties:

> He tried to pacify the malcontents by explaining that the census would not be the precursor of slavery or of the confiscation of property, but was simply necessary in order to control the arrangements for taxation. It was useless, and the census was regarded with such suspicion and dislike that every fine was now called census (kenas).[57]

Quirinius may have met him during one of his previous legations in the East. Why did he depose him while he was taking his side against the revolt led by Judas the Galilean who sought to overthrow him? In fact,

the decision had probably been taken in Rome by Augustus himself. Quirinius had to officially discharge Joazar from his function on behalf of the emperor. He withdrew from him "the honour of his privilege". The expression is pleonastic; "privilege", like a reward, referred to the divine election which was for life.[58] Joazar may have been anointed for life by the Sanhedrin after his investiture by Herod in 4 BC.

That is why he was still the high priest in AD 6 independently of the appointment of other high priests by Archelaus. The dignity of high priest once again was becoming for life and hereditary, as under the Hasmonean. If Herod the Great had broken with this custom, then upon his death, the Sanhedrin reestablished the long-standing tradition. The word "privilege", translating here the Greek *timên*, was the same as "valuation" or "estimate". The "privilege" was not only deeply spiritual but also financial, since religion and political power were bound together. As keeper of the temple treasury, the high priest belonged to one of the wealthiest Sadducean families. His successor appointed by Quirinius was Annas, son of Seth. He was deposed by the procurator Valerius Gratus in AD 15.

Nevertheless, according to Luke, he was still the high priest in AD 30, together with Caiaphas designated by Pilate.[59] Five of his sons and one grandson were entrusted with the role of high priest "on his behalf". Annas, like Joazar, may have received the investiture for life so that his dignity was hereditary.

Quirinius had been previously associated with the *Quindecemviri,*[60] one of the four major colleges of priests in Rome; his affiliation was directly requested as a representative of Augustus, the Pontifex Maximus of the Empire. On his behalf, he could depose Joazar so that he did not become a rival of the Roman authority. For all these reasons, Augustus may have judged it appropriate to confer such authority on Quirinius, rather than Coponius. Thereafter, the procurators dismissed the high priest and appointed a successor.

Which Solution for "Governor"?

Consuls and praetors governing the provinces of the Roman Empire were called in Latin *legati pro praetore;* such appellation had a Greek equivalent, but only for praetors: *presbeutes kai antistrategos*;[61] no title was officially reserved in Greek for the consuls governing a province.

Josephus documented at least 18 legates of consular rank who were sent to Syria between 50 BC and AD 70. Four of them were consuls

under the Republic,[62] fourteen under the Empire[63]. He called them strategists,[64] administers,[65] archon,[66] and governors.[67] Those who had no title specified[68] exercised authority, in particular over the army, and imposed the death penalty, the usual duties of the *imperium.*

The consular rank of Quirinius was specified twice, as a "consular man" (Table 1-1, No 1) and as "consul" (Table 1-1, No 2). Did Josephus regard "consul" and "governor" as equivalent or synonymous? "Consular man" referred to the function for life, "consul" to the year of the consulship, the highest elected position that a Roman dignitary could attain and a top spot in the *cursus honorum*. The Roman year was identified by saying which two men were consuls that year, and Josephus himself recorded significant moments with the names of the incumbent consuls: in some decrees on account of the Jews, the names of two consuls constitute a chronological landmark and the title *consul* is used especially for them.[69] Given that he applied it to Quirinius, it is clear that he considered him the same way, and in *Bellum Judaicum* (Table 1-1, Nos 5 and 6), he briefly referred to him as a chronological landmark. Quirinius' name was a historical datum.

Three other magistrates sent to Syria, Saturninus, Vitellius and Flaccus,[70] were also granted the same title. A common feature between them was their fame.[71] Like Quirinius,[72] Saturninus was awarded the triumphal ornaments when, serving under the command of Tiberius, he replaced Marcus Vicinius in Germania. Vitellius who had been consul three times was named seventeen times by Josephus (Saturninus six, Flaccus five); he had been appointed by Tiberius *"to direct all the operations in the East...His administration in the provinces was conducted in accordance with the best traditions of the past"*.[73] Flaccus, a friend of Tiberius[74] was the only one of the four not to have had a brilliant career as a consul. Along with the two others, but unlike Quirinius, he was introduced as having governed or run Syria[75].

Another common feature may have been their gentleness and leniency with regard to some Jewish people. When Herod the Great convened a council of 150 men at Berytus to rule on his own accusations of treason against his sons Aristobulus and Alexander, Saturninus suggested a merciful ruling; but he could not appease the anger of the father towards his sons. As for Vitellius:

> He released the inhabitants of Jerusalem from all the taxes upon the fruits that were bought and sold, and gave them leave to have the care of

> the high priest's vestments, with all their ornaments, and to have them under the custody of the priests in the temple. AJ XVIII 88.

Flaccus kindly received Agrippa who stood with him.[76] Was the attitude of Quirinius towards the Jewish people equally lenient? The question remains.

Josephus did not frequently record the legates' status of consular rank when naming those sent to govern Syria. The consulship was an indication of the high political (and moral) level of the legate. As noted above, providing the Roman hierarchic rank was necessary to distinguish the role of Quirinius from that of Coponius. If "consular man" had been synonymous with *governing*, Josephus would have used it more. As it is mentioned for only four legates, it is clear that he did not regard "consul" and "governor" as equivalent or synonymous.

Only Quirinius was entrusted with judicial and financial functions usually assigned to men of the equestrian or praetor rank. The deceased estate of Archelaus claimed by the emperor for his own patrimony was a very sensitive issue. The boundaries between Augustus' wealth and the possessions of the Empire were not clearly defined, and even in an imperial province, a governor could fear the control of the Senate.[77] The system of *clientela* (patronage, or patron-client relationships) between generals and their troops, provincial governors and their provinces created duties and commitments. This may have been a reason to detach Quirinius for a mission independent from the governorship of the province. Was L Volusius Saturninus still governing Syria at the time of Quirinius' arrival? Suffect consul in AD 3, during the two following years he governed Syria, and had coins struck in Antioch.[78] As successor to Caius Caesar, who died on 21 February in AD 4, he arrived in Syria the same year, probably in June.[79] As a legation usually lasted more than 2 years, he was still there during the first half of AD 6. Did he meet with Quirinius? The valuations came to an end in the 37th year of Actium (beginning in October AD 6); they had started at least a year earlier. Their meeting may be assumed but not ascertained. The next governor, whose name reached us, was Q C M Creticus Silanus who struck coins at Antioch in AD 13.

There are virtually no references, on one hand, to actions on Quirinius' part that suggest he held the *imperium,* commanding the army and exercising criminal justice. On the other, Josephus highlighted the two duties—financial tasks and financial justice—that a governor usually entrusted to a procurator. The historian did not only

emphasise them, but he bestowed upon Quirinius the special titles of "judicial officer" and "censor". The first, usually given to praetorians, depreciated the title of consul, while the second ranked him up to an imperial level. What need would there have been to specify such titles if they had been exercised together with the governorship which included similar tasks? If they did not differ, it would not have been necessary to clarify them through the use of unusual vocabulary.

In the current state of knowledge, the statement that Quirinius governed Syria in AD 6 is misleading since reasons for doubt are serious and it is wise to leave open his real function. To the question "did he hold the *imperium*?", the answer will remain negative as long as a solid argument providing evidence of his governorship has not been delivered.

Summary of the AD 6 Mandate

At the peak of his career, the consul Quirinius may have been granted a confidential and statesmanlike mission by the emperor. Several unusual words and hapax carefully chosen, provide subtle information on his role. If, on one hand, there is no mention of him supervising a registration of people in Syria—while Coponius had been entrusted with the census of people and properties in Judea—on the other hand he had to perform a new task, mainly to retrieve, for the emperor's own benefit, the house of Archelaus. His role had such a judicial, financial and fiscal impact that it is inappropriate to conceive that he governed Syria at the same time. Indeed, under Augustus, a magistrate in civil and financial affairs (*dikaiodotes)* did not govern the province to which he was sent. Though, from his headquarter in Syria, Quirinius oversaw the evaluation of Archelaus' wealth in Judea and other possessions which may have extended as far as Syria. He was engaged in the creation of the new imperial province of Judea where his diplomatic qualities were requested. His relationship to the procurator Coponius who detained full powers,[80] had been given special consideration by the Emperor: as his direct agent and as a priest, he was entrusted with authority over the high priest Joazar, to the extent that he deposed him. By doing so, he eliminated a Jewish rival of the Roman procurator.

Given the above, the command of the Army and a census—both mentioned 'under Quirinius' on the funeral inscription of Aemilius Secundus—cannot be associated with the mandate of AD 6. Under such circumstances, the Titulus Tiburtinus, attesting to two legations in