YEAR ZERO – CHRISTMAS ONE

Beginning of the Gregorian calendar count

Cover: "The Circumcision of Christ" - painting by Guido Reni.

Illustrations by Pedro Castro colored by Matheus Dominguez.

Translation of the original:
Ano Zero-Natal Um

Carlos Fernando Castro
Décio Martins de Medeiros
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Presentation



One day, two old friends, instead of merely exchanging the customary polite words during their encounter – "let's schedule something sometime..." – actually agreed to meet up for a coffee. They then realized they had a lot to talk about. Why not set aside a weekly two-hour slot to continue their conversations and idea exchange over cups of coffee? So they decided, and so they established a new habit. A habit that bore fruit in various joint projects: the blog[1] "Prazer Compartilhar" (Pleasure to Share), monthly gatherings with an expanded group

[1] https://prazercompartilharblog.wordpress.com

of friends (the "peripatetics"), diverse collaborative research and studies, and even a classic literature reading laboratory.

It was during one of these coffee meetings that Décio proposed a challenge:

- Shall we write a book together?

Some explanation is in order here. Although initially both friends graduated in engineering and pursued technical and administrative activities throughout their professional lives, they maintained a few passions on the side: Carlos for music and literature, and Décio for genealogy research, theology, and historical events.

There you have it. The conditions for this book to come to life were set: Décio had conducted an extensive and innovative research[2] on the birth date of Jesus Christ, synchronizing the Gregorian calendar with the service schedule at the Temple revealed in the Qumran manuscripts, while Carlos continued to develop his writings.

[2] Research published on the blog "Prazer Compartilhar" and on the website academia.edu.

They thus decided to write a fictional story incorporating the trajectory and conclusions of the research on the chronology and birth date of Jesus and the first Christmas. The characters are young high school students dealing with the need to complete their year-end projects. The narrator is Gaspen, the educational coordinator, who follows the students' journey both in the progression of their research – guided by João Carlos, an elderly history professor and researcher on the subject – and in the inner growth of the young Enrico as he confronts his existential crisis.

Enjoy dear readers. And allow us an observation: cultivate friendships, whatever the "coffee" may be.

Preface

What was the challenge of the research on Year Zero - Christmas One?

In the Gregorian calendar, January 1 of the year zero was the day when Christ the Redeemer was circumcised and given the name Jesus. Since the Jewish custom was to circumcise boys on the eighth day from birth, Jesus Christ was born on December 25 of the year minus 1.

Nine months earlier, around March 25 of the year minus 1, Mary, the mother of Jesus, conceived him. At this time, Mary's relative Elizabeth, who was also pregnant with John the Baptist, was six months pregnant. Six months before that, around September 25 of the year minus 2, Elizabeth conceived a son by Zechariah, a priest of the Abijah division, who learned about this while serving in the Temple.

Was the Abijah division indeed serving in the Temple at the end of September of the year minus 2?

This was the challenge for the researcher! To find records that validate this chronology! As a byproduct, to correct the historians' error regarding the date of Herod's death. Therefore, the research is based on the tradition that has come down to us, withstanding attacks for over two thousand years, as well as on the records of sacred scriptures and ancient historians. The discovery of the Qumran manuscripts was also essential in confirming the correctness of the Gregorian calendar.

Thus, the focus of the research was to validate the accuracy of the calendar and the date of the celebration of Christ the Redeemer's Nativity. In this regard, it concentrated on seeking historical documents that prove Jesus was born on December 25 of the year minus 1 in the Gregorian calendar and that the first Christmas was on December 25 of the year zero.

1- Professor João Carlos and His Territory



On a bright and warm late March afternoon, I sought out João Carlos in his office at the University. The bookshelves and side tables were as expected, full and laden. Upon closer observation, I noticed that the populations of books and objects had changed. New specimens had emerged, others had changed partners or disappeared from one visit to the next. Books about the history of Mesopotamia

rested on an old radio phonograph. A large aerial photo of the pyramid region in Egypt vied for space with African masks and maps of the Jerusalem area. I must admit that the constant metamorphosis of that inner landscape held a certain enchantment for me.

He was fiddling with an old push-button telephone. One of the buttons was stuck. João Carlos was poking at it with a small screwdriver when suddenly, the internal spring dislodged, and the button went flying. Its trajectory passed closely by my head and headed towards the back of the room. In the next moment, both of us were kneeling, searching for the little piece amidst piles of books, shelves, and various devices. That's how our conversation began.

-"Well then, what brings you here, young one?"

-"Well, I don't want to disrupt your research, I know you always have..."

-"Hey, not sir! Please, you know I don't like that. Neither sir nor professor. Just call me 'you', João, or João Carlos. That's all. We're in the 21st century, we're all young, no need for titles and formalities, please."

While I swallowed the scolding, luckily I found the lost button. It was almost hidden under the old entrance mat. We could stand up again and resume our chat.

-"I'm sorry, João. It's nearly impossible to avoid some form of reverence every time I encounter you in this sacred environment."

-"Life is sacred, my dear. But tell me, young Gaspen, tell me what troubles you," the professor said, after stashing his tools in a drawer and turning his full attention to me.

I got straight to the point and presented the issue of my students' End-of-Year Research Project.

-"You know, João, we've introduced a research activity at the school that's been well-received by the students. The nickname has caught on: 'Eyrp', even the teachers use it, no one says 'End-of-Year Research Project' anymore."

-"Very good, young one. A good strategy to help them discover the joy of research, of discoveries. Very good."

-"That's right. And a group of second-year students approached me to help them define the

topic for their project. We've been studying the Roman Empire, they like the subject, but they're a bit lost with so many periods and dates. I thought maybe they could research the theme of year zero in our calendar, which falls within the Roman period."

-"Hmm, hmm..."

-"I thought of asking for your help and guidance to steer this group's work," I said, observing his expression change. He took off his glasses, revealing the twinkle in those blue eyes, stood up, and greeted me:

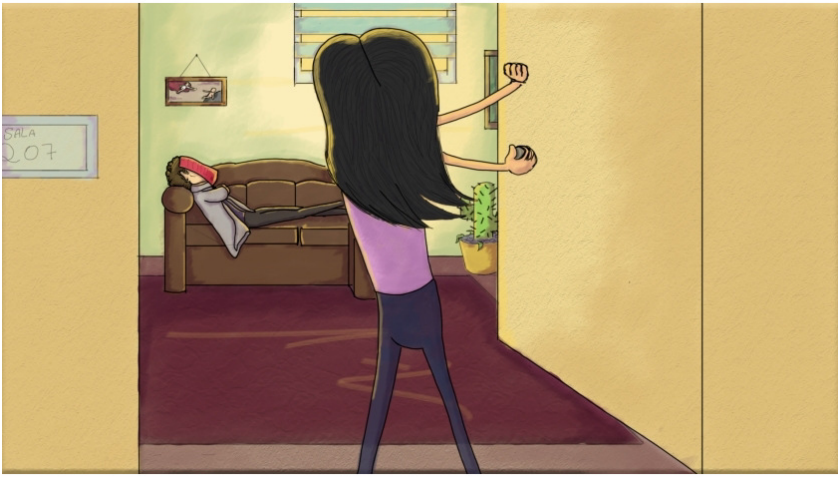
-"You're in luck, young Gaspen. I have material that goes beyond year zero. I've just conducted research on Year Zero and, what many people aren't aware of, the mystery of its connection to the birth date of Jesus. You know, don't you? That question that has caused so much controversy... And it's related to Roman emperors, the whole calendar confusion. It's going to be great, it's going to be great..."

Agreed: we would have several meetings throughout the year between him and the students. João Carlos was excited about the project. At the

same time, he expressed concern about his ability to communicate with 16- and 17-year-olds.

-"You know, Gaspen, you're going to have to help me with this communication part. These youngsters, I mean, overly young, sometimes they seem to only talk to their cellphones!" And he concluded with his familiar laughter.

2- Partial *siesta*



Perhaps it would be good to lead the curious reader following these notes to the background that led to my encounter with Professor João Carlos.

It was a calm Friday, I had just left the school cafeteria headed to my room. I was savoring that brief moment of peace during the post-lunch hours when the educational counselor can rest. The afternoon session staff wouldn't start arriving for another half hour, and the teachers were in the midst of their sacred coffee break. Perfect, I had