Redating the Hebrew Kings

Bruno Kolberg

Dedicated to Heather and Roy

REDATING THE HEBREW KINGS

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Abbreviations

General

AASOR.....*Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
ABC .....*Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*—A. Kirk Grayson
ABD .....*Anchor Bible Dictionary*—David N. Freedman (ed.)
AJSL .....*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
ANET.....*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*—James B. Pritchard
AnSt .....*Anatolian Studies*
ARAB .....*Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*—Daniel D. Luckenbill
AUSS.....*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BA.....*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR.....*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR.....*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BJRL .....*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library*
BSac.....*Bibliotheca Sacra*
CAH^2III/1.....Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd ed., vol. III, pt. 1 (1982)
CAH^2III/2.....Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd ed., vol. III, pt. 2 (1991)
CAH^2V.....Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd ed., vol. V (1992)
CBQ.....*Catholic Bible Quarterly*
CH .....*Church History*
COS .....*The Context of Scripture*—W. W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (eds.)
CQ .....*The Classical Quarterly*
DOTT.....*Documents from Old Testament Times*—D. Winton Thomas (ed.)
EvQ.....*Evangelical Quarterly*
GraceTJ.....*Grace Theological Journal*
Historia.....*Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*
HTR .....*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA.....*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ITP.....*The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III King of Assyria*—Hayim Tadmor
(Summ. = Summary Inscription; Ann. = Annals)
JACF.....*Journal of the Ancient Chronology Forum*
JANES.....*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JAOS.....*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JARCE .....*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*
JASA .....*Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*
JBL .....*Journal of Biblical Literatur*e
JBR .....*Journal of Bible and Religion*
JCS .....*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEA .....*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JEH.....*Journal of Egyptian History*
JETS .....*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JNES.....*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR.....*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRS.....*Journal of Religion & Society*
JSOT.....Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup.....Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSS .....*Journal of Semitic Studies*

JTS.....*Journal of Theological Studies*
KJV.....King James Version of the Bible
LITV.....Literal Version of the Bible
LXX.....Septuagint
MKJV.....Modern King James Version of the Bible
MT.....Masoretic Text
NAS(B).....New American Standard Bible
NATCP.....The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project
NBD^{3}.....*New Bible Dictionary, 3rd ed.*
NICOT.....New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE .....*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*—Willem A. VanGemeren (ed.)
NIV.....New International Version of the Bible
NK.....Northern Kingdom (Israel)
NKJV.....New King James Version of the Bible
NT.....New Testament
OLP .....*Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*
Or .....*Orientalia*
OT.....Old Testament
PEQ .....*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
RB.....*Revue Biblique*
RIMA 3 .....The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods 3—A. Kirk Grayson
RlA.....*Reallexikon der Assyriologie*
RSV .....Revised Standard Version of the Bible
SAAB .....State Archives of Assyria Bulletin
SK.....Southern Kingdom (Judah)
ThIP-3.....*The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt*—Kenneth Kitchen (rev. 2nd ed., 1996)
TynBul .....*Tyndale Bulletin*
VT .....*Vetus Testamentum*
WorldArch .....*World Archaeology*
WTJ.....*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZÄS .....*Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*
ZAW.....*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

By Author (see Bibliography)

The author-date format is used for the following frequently cited works:

Becking 1992..... *The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological Study*
Galil 1996..... *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*
Gallagher 1999 ..... *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies*
Jones 2005..... *The Chronology of the Old Testament*
Kuan 1995 ..... *Neo-Assyrian Historical Inscriptions and Syria-Palestine*
Millard 1994..... *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910–612 BC*
Smith 1875 ..... *The Assyrian Eponym Canon*
Tadmor 1958 ..... "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study"
Thiele 1983..... *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (3rd ed.)

Other

ca. .....*circa* (approximately)
cf. .....*confer* (compare)
ch(s). .....chapter(s)
col(s). .....column(s)
ed(s). .....edition(s); editor(s)
e.g. .....*exempli gratia* (for example)
esp. .....especially
et al. .....*et alii* (and others)
etc. .....*et cetera* (and the rest)
f(f). .....and following page(s) or verse(s)
fn. / fnn. .....notes/s or footnote/s
ibid. .....*ibidem* (in the same place)
idem.....the same (author)
i.e. .....*id est* (that is)
l(l). .....line(s): pertaining to Near Eastern inscriptions
n(n). .....note(s) or footnote(s)
obv. .....obverse (the outward facing side of an inscription)
op. cit. .....*opere citato* (in the work previously cited)
p(p). .....page(s)
pl(s). .....plate(s)
pt(s). .....part(s)
rev. / r. .....reverse (the rear side of an inscription)
rev. .....revised
sec(s). .....section(s)
v(v). .....verse(s)
viz. .....*videlicet* (namely; precisely; that is to say)
vol(s). .....volume(s)
vs. .....versus
§(§) .....section(s) or paragraph number(s)

Preface

The divided monarchy era spans the time from the death of Solomon to the fall of Jerusalem. Until 2006, I believed that Solomon's death occurred in 931/30 B.C. This date was determined by Edwin Thiele in his paper, "The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel" (*JNES* 3 [1944]: 137–86). In 1951, he published *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, which elaborated on the earlier work. Thiele's conclusions have been influential ever since.

However, after reading the modern translation of *The Annals of the World* by Archbishop James Ussher along with *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Its Critics* by Professor Oswald T. Allis and *The Chronology of the Old Testament* by Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones, I had second thoughts about the reliability of the chronograph upon which Thiele based his 931/30 B.C. date, which is the Assyrian Eponym Canon.

Influenced and encouraged by Ussher, Allis, and Jones, I began to write a study in defence of the "long chronology" position for the divided monarchy era. In that scheme, the era began with the death of Solomon in the first half of the tenth century B.C. (975 B.C. by Ussher) and ended with the fall of Jerusalem around 587 B.C., giving a total duration of about 388 years. By contrast, "short chronologies" begin in the second half of the tenth century B.C. (931/30 B.C. by Thiele) and end with the fall of Jerusalem around 587 B.C. for a total of about 344 years.

For my study, the writing of which began in mid-2006, I constructed a spreadsheet for the Hebrew kings patterned after Ussher and Jones (Jones' chronology is similar to Ussher's but not identical). Two features of this chronology, however, began to trouble me:

- Long chronologies are characterized by one or more interregnal periods for the Northern Kingdom (Israel). No matter how much Biblicist authors try to defend interregna, the Scriptures do not specifically mention them for the Hebrew kings. Indeed, the plain reading of the Bible suggests that there were no significant breaks between any kings in either Judah or Israel.

- Long chronologies are further characterized by their disagreement with Assyrian history at key points of contact, especially the battle of Qarqar (853 B.C. by Thiele). Being of the firm belief that the Assyrian record is valuable but not inerrant, I was able to harmonize the Biblical record with the Assyrian, but only after admitting *three* gaps in the Assyrian Eponym Canon, which is unlikely.

The more I pursued this long chronology course, the more I doubted it. I then gave up the study as a lost cause (having worked on it for several months). This was disappointing because I was convinced, by the weak logic for some of Thiele's dates especially for the Israelite king Pekah, that an anomaly in the Assyrian Eponym Canon caused him to inaccurately date the division of the kingdom to 931/30 B.C.

Some weeks later, the thought occurred to shorten my chronology *but only enough to eliminate interregna for Israel*. As with the long chronology pattern, no adjustments were made to accommodate Assyrian dates. The result, in which *all* the Biblical notices were harmonized, showed that the division of the kingdom occurred in 942/41 B.C. This was encouraging because it occurred some 33 years later than Ussher, and was thus more in line with accepted Assyrian history. It also yielded an interval of 221 years between Solomon's death and the fall of Samaria,

which agreed with Thiele's original relative chronology before he adjusted it (as described in his preface to *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*).

Three more features, which unfolded quickly, gave me confidence in the validity of my approach. The first was how three long-dated time spans in the Bible—Exod 12:40, 1 Kgs 6:1, and Ezek 4:5—followed *consecutively*, like arches of time helping to anchor the framework of dates. The second was the ease with which the Sabbath-Jubilee year calendar fitted this new chronology. The third was the evidence of a gap in the Assyrian Eponym Canon at the same juncture in history where God commissioned Jonah to preach to the Ninevites.

I believe these three features are significant, and they will be explained as we progress in the study.

Bruno Kolberg
May 11, 2010

Introduction

The aim of this study is to show that Edwin Thiele's date of 931/30 B.C.[1] for the division of the Hebrew kingdom is doubtful for two reasons:

1. the Bible's internal chronology contradicts it, and
2. the Assyrian synchronism on which it is based—i.e., the battle of Qarqar believed to have occurred in 853 B.C.—is wrongly dated

Accordingly, all calendars that use Thiele's date to fix Biblical events before 931/30 B.C. are likewise doubtful. As this study proposes, an earlier date of 942/41 B.C. for the division of the kingdom, also called the *disruption* or *schism*, is more Biblically sound. This leads to the following milestone dates:

Jacob's entry into Egypt	1887 B.C.
The exodus	1457 B.C.
Solomon's fourth year (when the temple foundation was laid)	978 B.C.
The beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem	January, 588 B.C.
The fall of Jerusalem	July, 587 B.C.

A noteworthy outcome of the above chronology is that the following time-bridges in the Bible follow *consecutively*. They also span a total interval of 1,300 years:

Exod 12:40	The 430-year interval of Israel's stay in Egypt	1887–1457 B.C.
1 Kgs 6:1	Solomon's fourth year was the 480th year after the exodus	1457–978 B.C.
Ezek 4:5	The 390-year span of Israel's iniquity	978–588 B.C.
2 Kgs 25:1–3	The 19-month siege of Jerusalem	588–587 B.C.

In this study, the following principles for chronological reckoning will be upheld:

- The regnal notices for the Hebrew kings have been accurately recorded in the Masoretic Text (MT) as translated by the King James Version of the Bible (KJV). These notices have no scribal errors or emendations.

- Where the regnal data in the MT disagrees with the Greek manuscripts, the MT is to be preferred. Similarly, where the MT data disagrees with secular texts such as the Assyrian Eponym Canon (as presently dated), the MT is to be preferred.

Guided by these principles, the study will outline a calendar of milestone dates from Abraham to the fall of Jerusalem. Although particular attention will be paid to the kings of the divided monarchy era, their associations with extra-Biblical texts, especially Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, are a vital consideration in this work.

[1] In Thiele's scheme, Rehoboam came to the throne in Judah between Tishri 931 and Elul 930 B.C. while Jeroboam came to the throne in Israel between Nisan 931 and Adar 930 B.C. Hence, the designation "931/30."

Notes Pertaining to the Study

- Footnotes associated with quotes by other authors are numbered by my word processor and not the footnote's original number in the quoted author's work.

- Nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars such as George Smith and Robert William Rogers are quoted herein. Because they wrote when knowledge of Assyrian kings having the same name was incomplete, the roman numeral designator for some kings is lower. For example, Rogers refers to Shalmaneser IV as Shalmaneser III. In these instances, I have added within the quote the proper numeral for the king in square brackets; e.g., Shalmaneser III [IV].

- For the Neo-Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.), Shalmaneser V (727–722 B.C.), and Sargon II (722–705 B.C.), the roman numeral is normally omitted (e.g., Tiglath-pileser III is called Tiglath-pileser).[2] Likewise for the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 B.C.).

- Translations of Near Eastern inscriptions are quoted in this study. They typically use the following conventions:
  - *italics* are used for uncertain translations
  - text in square brackets [ ] denotes a restoration while ⌜ ⌝ denotes a partial restoration
  - missing text is indicated by dots within square brackets [...]
  - round brackets ( ) contain words, not in the original text, added by the translator for meaning
  - corrections by the translator of scribal omissions are in triangular brackets < >
  - x denotes an undeciphered sign

- For designating years, astronomers use "–" and "+" instead of "B.C." and "A.D." The minus/plus system includes the year zero, which makes it easy to calculate intervening years between minus and plus dates. By contrast, to calculate the interval between a B.C. and A.D. date, the two dates must be added together then one year subtracted from the total because there is no year zero in that system. Owing to this difference, astronomically expressed dates prior to A.D. 1 must be raised by a year to obtain the B.C. equivalent. Thus, the solar eclipse of "–762 June 15" equates to June 15, 763 B.C. Julian.

- In the chronology proposed here, the siege of Jerusalem lasted for 19 months (2 Kgs 25:1–4). This count is based on the Babylonian calendar, which has an intercalary month for the Nisan year 588/87 B.C. It is assumed that the Hebrews likewise intercalated that year.

- Appendices H and I refer to several publications printed before the 20th century. Generally, for these works (which are in the public domain), I have cited a version or edition that is freely available on the Internet.

[2] For Akkadian names, the modern convention is for the non-theophoric elements to be hyphenated and spelt in lower case letters. Hence, Tiglath-pileser is used rather than Tiglathpileser or Tiglath-Pileser.

Chapter 1: Assyriology and the Bible

A. Dating Biblical Events

In the Bible, no absolute dates (i.e., B.C. or A.D. dates) are given for any event. This is because the calendrical systems we use today were devised after its completion. Nevertheless, the Bible keeps its own chronology sufficient to establish an internal, or relative, calendar of events. To assign dates to the Bible's internal calendar, one must first locate an event in secular history that relates to the Bible and whose date is known. By this *synchronism*, the Bible's relative chronology can be converted to an absolute chronology.

A pivotal event to date absolutely is the schism, when the unified monarchy was divided after Solomon's death. With the schism secured, we can work back with the Bible's notices to date earlier events. For instance, working back from the schism enables us to fix Solomon's fourth year, which subsequently allows us to date the exodus by application of 1 Kgs 6:1. Events before the exodus can then be dated from the time notices recorded in the books of Exodus and Genesis.

Unfortunately, the schism cannot be dated directly because there are no reliable synchronisms between the Bible and the ancient Near East for that time (or earlier). Reliable synchronisms, or more correctly those *presumed* to be reliable, begin in the ninth century B.C. However, because they are dated several decades after the schism, one must negotiate the regnal data for the Hebrew kings (as recorded in the books of Kings and Chronicles) and work back to date the schism.[1] It is well-known, though, that this data is difficult to reconcile given its many seeming contradictions. Indeed, the variant figures in the Septuagint confirm that the topic has been a source of puzzlement for over two millennia.

Complicating the issue is the reliance by scholars on Assyrian chronographic and historical texts to modulate the Hebrew regnal data (and therefore the schism date). To better understand this point, and the tension it has caused between Assyriologists and Biblicists since the mid-19th century, let us begin with the work of James Ussher. His influence on Biblical chronology was unparalleled for over three hundred years, as attested by his dates being printed in the margin notes of many Bibles up until the mid-20th century.

B. Archbishop James Ussher

James Ussher (1581–1656) was born in Dublin. He was ordained a priest in the Anglican church in 1601. From 1607 to 1621, he served as Professor of Theological Controversies at the Trinity College in Dublin. In 1621 he became the Bishop of Meath. Four years later, in 1625, he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh, the highest position in the Irish Anglican church.

Ussher was a scholar of the highest order whose writings continually upheld the inerrancy of the Bible. His most famous work was the *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (Annals of the Old

[1] Some scholars maintain that the Tyrian king list as recorded by Josephus (*Against Apion* 1:116–26) is chronologically accurate. It therefore can be used to date the schism independently of the Hebrew monarchic data. However, as the discussion in Appendix I submits, the Tyrian king list is of questionable precision and hence unsuitable for dating Biblical events.

Testament), which was published from 1650–1654. An English edition (*The Annales of the World*) was published in London in 1658, two years after his death. The book is available today in a modern English version (see Bibliography).

Prior to the publication of the *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, chronological studies of the Old Testament were hampered by the many systems used for expressing dates. Ussher brought order to these differing systems by reconciling them under the B.C. / A.D. dating system, which arose from the founding of the *Anno Domini* era by Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century. In Ussher's chronology, the creation was dated to 4004 B.C.[2] While schemes such as Ussher's had been offered before, his was the first to gain wide acceptance. Its popularity was attributable not only to the stability inherent in Ussher's chronology but also to his esteemed reputation and usage of the best available sources.

Although Ussher's work is generally disregarded today by scholars (who rightly insist on integration with Near Eastern history, the records of which had yet to be unearthed in Ussher's day), many Biblicists still uphold his methodology for dating the creation. Our interest here, though, is not the creation but Ussher's schism date of 975 B.C. This date is 44 years earlier than the now widely accepted date of 931/30 B.C. The higher date is attributable to Ussher's favoring of the Judahite data to shape the overall chronology of the divided monarchy era. In this scheme, Judah's kings ruled consecutively without break, and without overlaps except where coregencies or viceregencies were specifically indicated. Although this method created interregna in Israel, Ussher treated the Judahite data as "controlling" probably because of the following reasons:

- Unlike Israel, Judah existed as a kingdom throughout the divided monarchy era.
- Judah's kings were of God's chosen line. That is, all the kings in Judah were of the dynasty of David; the same is not true for the kings of Israel.
- Judah was the more faithful kingdom, which is not surprising given that its capital, Jerusalem, was "the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there" (1 Kgs 14:21; cf. 11:36).
- The Bible cites the ages at which the Judahite kings began to reign, the names of their mothers and mothers' fathers; not so for the kings of Israel.

Another feature of Ussher's chronology was his application of Ezek 4:4–5, where God instructed the prophet:

> Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.

In this sign-act, Ezekiel was ordered to lie on his side for 390 days, which represented a 390-year period of Israel's iniquity. One may conclude that these were *actual years of iniquity*, in the same way that Israel's 40 years (= 40 days) of wilderness wanderings were actual years (Num 14:34).

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[2] By Ussher's reckoning, 4004 B.C. began a divine, schematic pattern in which Solomon's temple was completed in the world's 3,000th year (1005 B.C.) and Christ's birth occurred in the world's 4,000th year (5 B.C.).

Ussher treated this 390-year period as a valuable time-bridge that helped to verify the general duration of the divided monarchy era. By his reckoning, it spanned from 975 to 584 B.C., which was from Jeroboam's imitation Feast of Tabernacles in A.M. 3030a[3] (1 Kgs 12:32) to the Jewish deportation of Nebuchadnezzar's 23rd year in A.M. 3420[4] (Jer 52:30). Many Biblicist authors after Ussher have also treated Ezekiel's 390-year period as being historically accurate. Unfortunately, there is little consensus among them. This is because the boundaries of the 390-year period were not specified by Ezekiel. Consider the following examples:

1. Sir Isaac Newton counted the 390-year period from the schism (979 B.C.) to the ninth year of Zedekiah when Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of Jerusalem (589 B.C.). Newton further believed that this 390-year interval could be confirmed by tallying the years of the kings of Judah to that point.[5]

2. Sir Robert Anderson began the 390-year period two years before the schism (977 B.C.) when the covenant of blessing to the ten tribes was made with Jeroboam by the prophet Ahijah (1 Kgs 11:29–39). It ended with the fall of Jerusalem (587 B.C.).[6]

3. Martin Anstey considered that the 390-year period began with the schism (982 B.C.) and ended when Ezekiel received the prophecy (593 B.C.).[7]

4. Floyd Jones considers that the 390-year period should be counted years inclusively, beginning with the schism (975 B.C.) and ending with the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.). It therefore spans, exactly, the duration of the divided monarchy era.[8]

Interestingly, our chronology features a 390-year interval from the founding of the temple in Solomon's fourth year (978 B.C.) to the onset of the siege of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's ninth year (588 B.C.). Since the siege is the context of Ezekiel 4, it is a conclusion of this book that Ezek 4:4–5 refers to the period between the founding of the temple and the beginning of the siege (see ch. 5C).

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[3] The designation "A.M." (*anno mundi*) refers to a calendar era counting from the creation of the world. In Ussher's chronology, the world began on the evening preceding Oct. 23, 4004 B.C. (Julian), which was the first Sunday past the autumnal equinox. For Ussher, therefore, this was the year A.M. 1a (the letters a, b, c, d denote autumn, winter, spring and summer, respectively). From A.M. 3030a to A.M. 3420 is 390 years.

[4] Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, 68, 108. Ussher assumed a two-year coregency for Nebuchadnezzar, beginning in 607 B.C. He therefore counted 607 B.C. as Nebuchadnezzar's first year and Jehoiakim's fourth year (cf. Jer 25:1). However, from the Babylonian Chronicle Series (discovered well after Ussher's day), we know that Nebuchadnezzar was the *crown prince* until his sole rule began in 605 B.C. (see Grayson, *ABC*, 97–100). The years spent as crown prince were not counted by the Babylonians when tallying a king's length of reign. Also, they used the accession year dating system (ch. 4A3 refers). Thus, 605 B.C. was Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, and 604 B.C. was his first regnal year.

[5] Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, 298.

[6] Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, 26–27 fn.

[7] Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, 225.

[8] Jones 2005, 132–35.

C. The Influence of Assyriology

For nearly three centuries, Ussher's dates for the divided monarchy era were widely accepted. However, the seeds of dissatisfaction with his chronology were sown with the discovery during the 19th century of the Assyrian eponym lists (ch. 3B refers). These allowed scholars to date many of the recently discovered royal inscriptions. The chronology of the Assyrian kings that emerged was, disconcertingly, at odds with the traditionally accepted dates for the Hebrew kings.

The problem was that Ussher's dates prior to Hezekiah/Hoshea were too high. For instance, in Shalmaneser III's so-called *Kurkh Monolith* (which is a version of his annals engraved on a large stone stela found at Kurkh by J. E. Taylor in 1861), the Assyrian monarch revealed that he fought a coalition of twelve kings at Qarqar in his sixth year (Qarqar was located on the Orontes River in northern Syria). One of the more powerful kings in the coalition was *a-ḫa-ab-bu* KUR *sir-ʾa-la-a-a*, whom Assyriologists identified as *Ahab the Israelite*.[9] From the Eponym Canon, George Smith dated this battle to 854 B.C.[10] However, in Ussher's chronology, Ahab ruled from 918–897 B.C. Since Ahab's death according to Ussher occurred 43 years before the battle of Qarqar as dated by Smith, some scholars began to "compress" the Hebrew regnal data to align Ahab's reign with the battle of Qarqar. In other words, they reduced the ca. 388-year total for the Judahite kings (975–587/6 B.C.) to date Ahab's reign lower, so that it might comply with Assyrian chronology.

The same issue applied to Israel's king Jehu. Shalmaneser III's annals record a payment of tribute from Jehu in the Assyrian king's 18th year,[11] which was dated to 842 B.C. by Smith. In Ussher's scheme, though, Jehu died at least 14 years earlier, having ruled from 884 to 856 B.C. Again, compression of the Hebrew regnal data solved the problem.

Although shorter chronologies making Ahab and Jehu contemporary with Shalmaneser III began to be published, a number of Assyriologists attempted to harmonize the records without radical alteration of Ussher's dates. George Smith exemplified this approach:

> If we allow that the Ahab and Jehu mentioned in the Assyrian records may not be the Ahab and Jehu of the Bible, we are not under the necessity of altering the chronology of either nation in order to make the Assyrian notices fit the times of the Hebrew monarchs.[12]

It should be noted that the original Assyriologists such as Henry Rawlinson, Edward Hincks, George Smith, Eberhard Schrader, and Jules Oppert were Biblically engaged men who sought to harmonize the emerging Assyrian discoveries with the Old Testament.[13] Today, by contrast, many Assyriologists have only a passing interest in coordinating Assyrian history with the Bible. Equally, Old Testament scholars often favor theological investigation to the technicalities of Assyriology, which is one of the most demanding disciplines in the humanities.

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[9] See ch. 3, fn. 1.

[10] Smith 1875, 106. Although Smith dated the battle of Qarqar to 854 B.C., it is now commonly accepted that it took place one year later, in 853 B.C. (see Appendix B).

[11] See ch. 3, fn. 2.

[12] Smith 1875, 154 (also 189–90).

[13] Proving the Bible's historicity, however, was not the principal motivation for European interest in Mesopotamia. Rather, it was an extension of imperialism. France and Great Britain were seeking land routes to India, and this required a strong presence in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. Archaeology was a natural outcome of that presence (on this, see Chavalas, "Assyriology and Biblical Studies," 23).

The efforts of the pioneer Assyriologists were particularly appreciated in Victorian England—a predominantly Christian nation—where traditional religious authority was facing challenges from the industrial revolution (with its negative effects on social life), the natural sciences (epitomized by Darwin's theory of natural selection), and higher criticism of the Bible (imported from German and French scholars).[14] Nationalism was also a factor in British attention to archaeology, with Britain and France competing to be the chief discover of the ancient past (France was Britain's arch-enemy).

Another aim of the Assyriologists was to check the received chronology. Many considered Ussher's work to be useful but not inerrant. Therefore, his dates were subject to correction if key extra-Biblical texts, like the Assyrian Eponym Canon, disproved them. Accordingly, chronologies with a shortened time-line for the Hebrew kings began to appear. Most Biblically-minded scholars, however, held to a long chronology position, citing various reasons for the discrepancies with the Assyrian data. These included chronological breaks in the Eponym Canon owing to deleted or missing years.

By the middle of the 20th century, the situation had swung firmly in favor of the Assyrian school. With the advent of textual criticism, a new generation of Biblical scholars arose who regarded the secular record (particularly the Assyrian Eponym Canon and King List) as controlling with respect to the Hebrew kings.

Notable among these scholars was Edwin Thiele. In his 1944 paper, "The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel," Thiele outlined a short chronology that meshed firmly with the secular record. His compression of the data, by about four and a half decades relative to Ussher, was achieved primarily through the application of overlapping reigns (i.e., coregencies, etc.). In the process, however, he was compelled to disregard clear time notices in the Bible. Despite this, his chronology became widely accepted while Ussher's chronology, which had come under scrutiny ever since the rise of Assyriology, was considered outdated.

D. An Alternative Approach

Some Biblicists today continue to support Ussher's chronology (with minor variations) despite its significant misalignment with Assyrian history.[15] They usually reject coregencies unless clearly justified, which results in interregna for the Northern Kingdom. At the opposite end, proponents of the short chronology position have made peace with the Assyrian record but at the Bible's expense (witness Thiele's admission of errors in the Hebrew regnal data). As a generalization, therefore, Bible chronologers who adhere to the MT fall into one of two camps today, with the former predominating:

1. those who allow Judah's regnal data to be compressed (through use of coregencies and other techniques) in order to harmonize it with the Assyrian record

[14] On the effect upon Christian England of the Assyrian discoveries, see Holloway, "Biblical Assyria and Other Anxieties in the British Empire." Regarding the challenge to Biblical scholarship posed by those discoveries, see Chavalas, "Assyriology and Biblical Studies," 21–67; Frahm, "Images of Assyria in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Western Scholarship," 78–79. For Assyriology and Biblical scholarship today, see David B. Weisberg, "The Impact of Assyriology on Biblical Studies," *COS* 3, XLIII–XLVIII.

[15] So Floyd Jones (*The Chronology of the Old Testament*) and Larry Pierce (editor of Ussher's *The Annals of the World*).

2. those who uphold Judah's regnal continuity despite contradictions with the Assyrian record and interregna for Israel

It would seem that these are mutually exclusive positions. However, one wonders if there might be a middle ground. In other words, is it possible to construct a chronology of the divided monarchy era with the following outcomes?

- no claims of errors in the Hebrew regnal data
- no interregna for Israel
- harmony with the Assyrian record for the reigns of Ahab and Jehu

This study proposes such a chronology. Not only does it champion the veracity of the MT but it also values the Assyrian record, which must nevertheless be approached with caution owing to some shortcomings. The chronology is underpinned by the following principles:

1. Compression will be applied to the Hebrew regnal data but only enough to eliminate interregna for the Northern Kingdom. Any overlapping reigns revealed through this method will be deemed historically accurate.

2. The resulting pattern will not be adjusted to align with Assyrian chronology. Rather, it will be dated with respect to a Neo-Babylonian synchronism.

3. The Assyrian Eponym Canon contains one break, as confirmed by a disruption in the office-bearer titles between 770 and 769 B.C. When this gap is repaired, harmony is achieved between the Assyrian record and the reigns of Ahab and Jehu.

Let us begin by considering the steps involved in constructing a Biblical calendar of milestone dates from Abraham to the fall of Jerusalem. This will underscore the importance of the schism date, and how it governs earlier dates in Old Testament chronology.

Chapter 2: From Abraham to Zedekiah

A. Five Principal Steps

As noted in Chapter 1, the Bible incorporates its own internal time-keeping independent of any external calendar. To assign absolute dates to this internal pattern, a synchronism (or mutual point of contact) between the Bible and the records of another nation whose chronology is known must be found. Having done so, other Biblical events can be dated.

Accepting that we must begin with imperfect secular data, the process of constructing a Biblical calendar from Abraham's birth to the fall of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's eleventh year comprises five principal steps. These can be organized under the following headings: Synchronism, Schism, Exodus, Egypt, and Abraham.

1. SYNCHRONISM. A reliable synchronism (or synchronisms) with the secular record must be found. Only a limited number are available, and no useful ones exist before the ninth century B.C.[1] Not all scholars use the same synchronism. For example, Thiele used the annals of Shalmaneser III to date Ahab's death to 853 B.C. and the beginning of Jehu's reign to 841 B.C. He then worked back with the regnal data to fix the schism at 931/30 B.C.[2] By contrast, Ussher used the year of Nebuchadnezzar's death and Amel-Marduk's accession (562 B.C.) for his primary synchronism, and worked back to 975 B.C. for the schism.[3] Martin Anstey chose the fourth year of Jehoiakim, which was also the first year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:1), for his absolute date (604 B.C.); he arrived at 982 B.C. for the schism.[4] One is not

[1] Dates in ancient Near Eastern history prior to the ninth century B.C. have been determined primarily through king lists and astronomical data. The results are by no means trustworthy. For example, Egyptian chronology, which is arranged by dynasty, is based on king lists (themselves problematic), on the highest regnal years attested for various kings (some of whom may have ruled longer), and on correction and refinement by other relevant data found in the corpus of ancient Egyptian inscriptions (such as royal annals). From these sources, a relative chronology can be tentatively constructed. To date this chronology absolutely, Egyptologists rely on scientific and astronomical evidence. The scientific evidence (e.g., radiocarbon dating, luminescence dating, and dendrochronology) does not yield precise results. By contrast, the astronomical evidence appears promising . . . at first. While there are no solar or lunar eclipse reports from pharaonic Egypt before the first millennium B.C. (which would be valuable), we do have records of Sothic sightings and new moon dates. As a result, Sothic sightings (or observations of the heliacal rising of the star Sothis [= Sirius]) have become the backbone of Egyptian chronology. Once dynasties have been dated through Sothic cycle analysis, new moon dates for Egyptian kings can be assessed. For these dates, though, we do not know if the disappearance of the last crescent was judged and dated correctly. More critically, new moon dates are only as good as the ability of Sothic dating and/or other methods to fix the regnal year of the observation accurately to within half-a-century. Such accuracy is elusive because Sothic dating, while highly regarded in former decades, has its problems. One is the rarity of such dates. Another is that we do not know the location(s) where Sothic observations were made. (The calculated Sothic date varies with the observer's position, which itself may have shifted between sightings.) In summary, the problematic king lists, the uncertainty regarding the duration of rule of many kings, the possibility of omitted kings, and the questionable accuracy of astronomical observations, render impossible the precise dating of Egyptian chronology before the first millennium B.C.

[2] Thiele 1983, 67–78.

[3] Ussher, "The Epistle to the Reader," in *The Annals of the World*, 9.

[4] Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, 175.

limited, of course, to a single synchronism. Any number may be used to anchor the chronology provided they are reliable.

2. SCHISM. Having decided on the synchronism(s), one can work back using the regnal data for the Hebrew kings to date the schism (as above). The completed chronology should then be tested against known Near Eastern history, and any disagreements explained.

3. EXODUS. The Bible states that Solomon ruled for 40 years (1 Kgs 11:42). His fourth year was therefore 36 years before the schism. Knowing the date of Solomon's fourth year allows us to date the exodus through application of 1 Kgs 6:1:

   > And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel.

   In applying 1 Kgs 6:1, a common mistake is to add 480 years to Solomon's fourth year. The figure to be added is 479 years, because "480th" is an *ordinal* not cardinal term.[5] It should be noted that some scholars view the figure "480th" as allegorical, and therefore of limited chronological value.[6]

4. EGYPT. With the year of the exodus fixed, one must decide on the duration of Israel's sojourn in Egypt. This decision is crucial because it affects the dating of all events in the book of Genesis prior to it. There are three main positions: the "short sojourn" typically of 215 years, and the "long sojourn" of either 400 or 430 years. As Appendix A explains, our preferred choice is the 430-year sojourn. Working back from the exodus with one's chosen interval, the year of Jacob's entry into Egypt can be dated.

5. ABRAHAM (AND EARLIER). From Jacob's entry into Egypt, the Genesis data can be applied to secure earlier dates. The arithmetic is straightforward back to Abraham. However, when

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[5] In his paper, "When Did Solomon Die," Rodger Young points to Num 33:38 as a convincing example of how to interpret 1 Kgs 6:1. This verse states that Aaron died "in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month." Israel spent exactly 40 years (to the month) in the wilderness (Josh 4:19; 5:6). But Aaron died in the Nisan year preceding Israel's entry into Canaan (i.e., the "fortieth year"). Therefore, to calculate the year of the exodus from Aaron's death one must add 39 years and not 40 to that date. Hence, Young's conclusion: "The proper way to derive the date of the exodus from 1 Kgs 6:1 is therefore to add 479 years, not 480, to the year in which the foundation of the Temple was laid" (p. 602).

[6] The date of Israel's exodus from Egypt has been the subject of scholarly debate for decades, and there are two principal positions: the "early date" in the mid-15th century (typically 1446 B.C.), and the "late date" in the mid-13th century (ca. 1270–1260 B.C.). Those favoring the early date interpret 1 Kgs 6:1 literally while those favoring the late date normally interpret it allegorically. For discussion of the two positions, see Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, §§356–363, 390–419; Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest*. While literature on this subject is extensive, some recent articles are noteworthy. For a defence of the early date, see Bryant G. Wood, "The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory," *JETS* 48 (2005): 475–89. For rebuttal, see James K. Hoffmeier, "What is the Biblical Date for the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood," *JETS* 50 (2007): 225–47. Subsequent articles in defence of the early date include Bryant G. Wood, "Recent Research on the Date and Setting of the Exodus," *Bible and Spade* 21.4 (Fall 2008); Douglas Petrovich, "Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus Pharaoh," at http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/02/04/Amenhotep-II-and-the-Historicity-of-the-Exodus-Pharaoh.aspx.

considering the genealogical notices in Genesis 5 and 11—which cover the period from the creation to Abraham—inquiry must be made on how to interpret them. It is outside the scope of our book to discuss this issue.

With the above milestone dates secured, an important intervening section can be dated: the era of the Judges and the unified monarchy. It is well-known that the Judges data is difficult to reconcile, hence the number of different chronologies proposed for the era.[7] Although the Judges data will not be reviewed in this book, it should be noted that the various interpretations of its chronology do not affect the calendar presented in Chapter 12A.

At this point, I should mention my belief that no exhaustive calendar from creation to Christ (such as Ussher's) can be considered accurate throughout. This is so for two reasons. First, given that all Biblical calendars depend on the secular record for synchronisms, there is always the possibility of error. Second, a number of dates and time-periods are disputed, for example:

- As noted above, the duration of Israel's sojourn in Egypt is still debated, with 215 and 430 years being the main contenders. Strong arguments have been offered by scholars for both positions.

- Since Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great, the latest date for Jesus' birth is fixed by the year of Herod's death. While this has been traditionally dated to 4 B.C., it is possible that Herod died in 1 B.C., thus opening the prospect that Jesus was born in 3 or 2 B.C.[8]

Our study proposes a basic chronology from Abraham to the fall of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, in view of the aforementioned caveat, it is stressed that the dates nominated in this calendar—especially prior to the exodus—are by no means certain.

The proposed calendar will be patterned as follows:

1. SYNCHRONISM. The principal synchronism derives from Jer 46:2, which states that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the year in which Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh Necho and the Egyptian army at Carchemish on the Euphrates. According to the Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 21946, Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish in his accession year.[9] Since Nebuchadnezzar's reign has been reliably dated through independent sources, including Ptolemy's Royal Canon/*Almagest* and the astronomical diary tablet VAT 4956 (see ch. 4B), we know that his accession year was 605 B.C. This means that Jehoiakim's fourth year was also 605 B.C., as synchronized by Jer 46:2. There is one problem, though, with working back from 605 B.C. to date any Hebrew kings before Jehoiakim. It is the year of Josiah's death relative to the year of Jehoiakim's accession, which is fixed at 609/08 B.C.

[7] For an appreciation of the problems, see Jones 2005, 71–104. Paul J. Ray, Jr., "Another Look at the Period of the Judges," in *Beyond the Jordan* (ed. Glenn A. Carnagey, Sr.; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 93–104.

[8] On this, see Filmer, "The Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great," 283–98; Martin, "The Nativity and Herod's Death," 85–92; Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, §§512–18.

[9] See Grayson, *ABC*, 99–100 (Chron. 5:1–14).

assuming Nisan regnal years and accession year dating.[10] Given that Jehoahaz ruled for only three months (2 Kgs 23:29–34), two dates for Josiah's death are possible:

(1) Josiah's death, Jehoahaz's three-month reign, and Jehoiakim's accession all occurred in the same regnal year, 609/08 B.C. Support for this scenario is found in the Babylonian record.

(2) Josiah's death occurred in the regnal year *before* Jehoiakim's accession, that is, in 610/09 B.C. Such would be the case if Jehoahaz's three-month reign began toward the end of Josiah's final year. The Babylonian record does not contradict this scenario. In fact, as Chapter 9 argues, there are reasons to prefer that Josiah died in 610 B.C. (around November) and not in 609 B.C. (around June) as is commonly held.[11]

2. SCHISM. The regnal data for the Hebrew kings is worked back from Josiah's death in 610/09 B.C. to fix the schism at 942/41 B.C. The data is also worked forward from 605/04 B.C. (Jehoiakim's fourth year) to date the onset of Jerusalem's siege to January, 588 B.C. and its fall to July, 587 B.C. An achievement of the resultant chronology is that *all* the Bible's regnal notices are harmonized, especially for the complex period between Ahab's reign and the fall of Samaria. However, the chronology contradicts some Assyrian contacts such as the battle of Qarqar. Accordingly, a logical and warranted modification will be made to the Assyrian Eponym Canon to align it with our harmonized chronology (ch. 6A refers).

3. EXODUS. With the schism date secured, Solomon's fourth year can be dated to 978/77 B.C. (= 942/41 + 36). Since we know that Solomon's fourth year was the 480th year after the exodus (1 Kgs 6:1), we can apply this time-bridge backward to fix the exodus at 1457/56 B.C.

4. EGYPT. With the exodus dated to 1457/56 B.C., the long sojourn interval of 430 years can be applied to date Jacob's entry into Egypt to 1887/86 B.C.

5. ABRAHAM. The time notices in Genesis can be applied to date significant events back to Abraham's birth. Since Jacob was 130 years old when he arrived in Egypt (Gen 47:9), he would have been born in 2017/16 B.C. (1887/86 plus 130). Since Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Gen 25:26), Isaac's birth would have occurred in 2077/76 B.C. (2017/16 plus 60). Since Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born (Gen 21:5), Abraham's birth would have occurred in 2177/76 B.C. (2077/76 plus 100).

[10] The designation "XXX/XX" is standard in this study for a Nisan year. That is, 609/08 B.C. defines the spring-to-spring year that began on Nisan 1, 609 B.C. and ended on the last day of Adar, 608 B.C. We submit that Judah used Nisan regnal years and accession year dating for all its kings (see ch. 4A).

[11] If Jehoahaz had ruled for a year or more, there would be only one possible date in our chronology (not two) for Josiah's death after working back from 605 B.C. Note that Jehoahaz is the only king who ruled for less than a year between the fall of Samaria and Jehoiakim's accession. Prior to the fall of Samaria, short duration reigns (i.e., kings who ruled for less than a year) are not a problem because the synchronisms between the two kingdoms help to fix their position in the chronology.

B. The Distinctive Mark of Edwin Thiele

A popular Bible study aid is John Walton's *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. This book is not a reference work, simply a study tool.

Although Walton charts the various popular dating systems, it is evident that he favors the "Early Exodus (mid-fifteenth century) + Long Sojourn (430-year)" arrangement, which yields the following dates:

Abraham born	2166 B.C.
Isaac born	2066 B.C.
Jacob born	2006 B.C.
Jacob and family move to Egypt	1876 B.C.
The exodus	1446 B.C.
Entry into Canaan	1406 B.C.
Solomon's death (the schism)	931 B.C.

The above dates can be easily explained through our five-step process:

1. SYNCHRONISM. In his listing of Hebrew kings who appear in Assyrian royal inscriptions, Walton cites Shalmaneser III's mention of Ahab at the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. and Jehu's payment of tribute in 841 B.C. These dates are fundamental to Thiele's chronology, and Walton's citing of them shows his acceptance of Thiele's Qarqar/Jehu synchronism.

2. SCHISM. Walton lists a number of popular schism dates (e.g., Hayes and Hooker 1988 = 927 B.C.; Thiele 1983 = 931 B.C.; Cogan and Tadmor 1988 = 928 B.C.).[12] However, his favored chronology for earlier events shows that he used Thiele's 931 B.C. date.

3. EXODUS. For the unified monarchy, the Bible indicates a reign of 40 years each for Saul (Acts 13:21[13]), David (2 Sam 5:4; 1 Kgs 2:11), and Solomon (1 Kgs 11:42; 2 Chr 9:30). Regarding Solomon's reign, Walton evidently used 967 B.C. for his fourth year.[14] He then applied the time-bridge of 1 Kgs 6:1 to date the exodus to 1446 B.C. (= 967 B.C. + 479 years). Israel's entry into Canaan, which occurred 40 years later (Exod 16:35; Num 14:33–34), is thus dated to 1406 B.C.

4. EGYPT. With the exodus fixed at 1446 B.C., Walton chose the "long sojourn" position of 430 years in Egypt, to secure 1876 B.C. as the year in which Jacob and his family entered Egypt.

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[12] Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, 30–31.

[13] The 40-year reign of Saul can also be deduced from the Old Testament. Saul's son Ishbosheth was 40 years old when he was made king after Saul's death (2 Sam 2:10). Ishbosheth is not listed as a son of Saul when his father began to reign (1 Sam 14:49) but he is mentioned by the name Eshbaal in the later list of 1 Chr 8:33. Evidently, he was born shortly after Saul became king. Following Saul's death after his 40-year reign, Ishbosheth was then made king at the age of 40 (cf. Jones 2005, XIII fn. 2).

[14] Walton dates Saul's reign from 1050 to 1010 B.C. and the start of Solomon's reign to 971 B.C. Therefore, by his chronology, David must have ruled from 1010 to 970 B.C. and Solomon from 971 to 931 B.C. (= one-year coregency with David). In this scheme, Solomon's fourth year is 967 B.C., with 971 B.C. being his accession year, 970 B.C. his first regnal year, 969 B.C. his second regnal year, etc. (It is generally accepted that the kings of the unified monarchy used *accession year dating*, as did Judah after the schism.)

5. ABRAHAM. Since Jacob was 130 years old when he arrived in Egypt (Gen 47:9), he must have been born in 2006 B.C. (1876 plus 130). Since Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Gen 25:26), Isaac must have been born in 2066 B.C. (2006 plus 60). Since Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 (Gen 21:5), Abraham must have been born in 2166 B.C. (2066 plus 100).

Walton's dates are characteristic of those using 931/30 B.C. for the schism. Although minor variations exist (e.g., 1447 B.C. for the exodus rather than 1446 B.C.), the common denominator is Thiele's signature date, which is ubiquitous today.

C. Factors Governing the Ancient Biblical Calendar

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that only three factors determine the dating of milestone events prior to the divided monarchy era:

1. the year of the schism
2. the duration of Israel's sojourn in Egypt
3. how one interprets the genealogical notices in Genesis 5 and 11

Of these three factors, the schism is most pivotal because all earlier events depend on it for dating. It is therefore crucial that we examine Thiele's reckoning of 931/30 B.C. for the event.

Chapter 3: How 931/30 B.C. was Established

The Seventh-day Adventist scholar Edwin Richard Thiele (1895–1986) was a missionary, archaeologist, writer, and Old Testament professor. After the release of his 1944 article, "The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel" and his follow-up book in 1951, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, many scholars from academic and religious disciplines claimed that Thiele had solved the apparent tangle of chronological notices concerning the kings of Judah and Israel. They did so despite his assessment that some Biblical notices were in error.

Thiele's schism date of 931/30 B.C. is widely endorsed today. In this chapter, we will examine how he determined it, and why the Assyrian dates on which it is based are questionable.

A. The Qarqar Synchronism

To calculate an absolute date in Israel's history from which to begin his chronology, Thiele chose two unrelated events in the annals of Shalmaneser III that each mentioned a different king of Israel: Ahab and Jehu. The first was the battle of Qarqar on the Orontes River in northern Syria during the sixth year of Shalmaneser III.[1] In that battle, a formidable coalition of Syrian and Levantine kings, including *a-ḫa-ab-bu* KUR *sir-ʾa-la-a-a* (Ahab the Israelite), fought the Assyrians. The second event was recorded for Shalmaneser III's 18th year. This was when *ia-ú-a* DUMU *ḫu-um-ri-i* (Jehu of the house of Omri) paid tribute to Shalmaneser III and bowed before him.[2] Neither event is recounted in the Bible.

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[1] The battle of Qarqar is recorded in several inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, but most notably in the *Kurkh Monolith* (for English translations see *ARAB* I, §§610–11; *DOTT*, 47[a]; *ANET*, 278–79; Kuan 1995, 29–31; RIMA 3:22–24, ii 78b–102; *COS* 2.113A:263–64). The stela features a relief of the Assyrian king with details of his military activities up to the battle of Qarqar in his sixth year. In that battle, Shalmaneser III fought an alliance of twelve Syro-Palestinian kings, although only eleven are listed. The alliance formed because its nations felt threatened by Assyria's westward expansion. The ringleader of the coalition, and the target of Shalmaneser III's retaliation, was Irhuleni of Hamath. The stela records that the offensive began with the Assyrians subduing three of Irhuleni's royal cities then destroying a fourth, being Qarqar on the Orontes River. At that point, Shalmaneser III was stopped by the combined forces of the coalition that had come in support of Irhuleni. They were led by Hadadezer of Damascus, who was the most powerful of the Syro-Palestinian kings. One of his main deputies was "Ahab the Israelite." Although Shalmaneser III portrays the battle as a great victory, it was more likely a stalemate and therefore a setback for Assyrian imperialism.

[2] Jehu's payment of tribute is mentioned in a small number of inscriptions comprising Shalmaneser III's annals, but the event is most famously recorded, in relief, in the *Black Obelisk*. Discovered by Henry Layard at Calah in 1846, this black limestone monument—formed in the shape of a ziggurat—contains the longest annalistic account of Shalmaneser III's reign, from his accession to his 31st year (see *ARAB* I, §§553–93; RIMA 3:62–71, A.0.102.14). It has four sides with five relief panels on each side showing tribute being presented from five different kings. Each panel has an epigraph describing the scene, and the main text is found above and below the five panels on all four sides. Although the main text does not mention Jehu's tribute for Shalmaneser's 18th year (as in other inscriptions), Panel B depicts a figure with a short trimmed beard bowing down to the ground before the Assyrian monarch. The associated epigraph reads: "I received tribute from Jehu (*Iaua*) of the house of Omri (*Ḫumrî*): silver, gold, a gold bowl, a gold tureen, gold vessels, gold pails, tin, the staffs of the king's hand, (and) spears" (RIMA 3:149, A.0.102.88; see also *ARAB* I, §590; *DOTT*, 48[c]; *ANET*, 281; Kuan 1995, 63; *COS* 2.113F:270). Jehu, of course, was

In Shalmaneser III's annals, the battle of Qarqar (in his sixth year) and Jehu's tribute (in his 18th year) are separated by twelve years. By happenstance, Thiele's system for interpreting the regnal data also features a twelve-year interval between Ahab's death and Jehu's accession.[3] After synchronizing these equal intervals, Thiele concluded that the battle of Qarqar, which he dated to 853 B.C. according to the Assyrian Eponym Canon, was also the year in which Ahab died (not long after the battle).[4] Then, twelve years later in 841 B.C., Jehu came to the throne after the intervening reigns of Ahaziah and Joram, and he paid tribute to Shalmaneser III that same year. Because the Assyrian and Biblical twelve-year intervals mesh perfectly, the dates of 853 and 841 B.C. become securely fixed as a synchronism. They cannot be altered, not even by a year. (Consider, for example, if Ahab's death was dated to Shalmaneser III's seventh year and not his sixth year. Jehu's accession to the throne twelve years later would then have occurred in Shalmaneser III's 19th year. However, this contradicts the Assyrian record which indicates that Jehu was already ruling in Israel in Shalmaneser III's 18th year.)

Having established that Ahab died in 853 B.C., Thiele worked back with the regnal data to date the schism. However, he had to adjust for his conclusion that the Northern Kingdom was using non-accession year dating at the time. He did so by subtracting one-year from the reign of each king. This resulted in an interval of 78 years between Jeroboam's coronation and Ahab's death, as follows:[5]

NK KING	QUOTED REIGN	ACTUAL REIGN
Jeroboam I	22 yrs	21 yrs
Nadab	2 yrs	1 yr
Baasha	24 yrs	23 yrs
Elah	2 yrs	1 yr
Zimri	7 days	7 days
Omri	12 yrs	11 yrs
Ahab	22 yrs	21 yrs
TOTAL	84 yrs, 7 days	78 yrs, 7 days

not a descendant of Omri. The term "house of Omri" was an Assyrian geopolitical designation for Israel, owing to the lasting impact of the Omride dynasty in the region (see Kelle, "What's in a Name," 639–66). Note that the relief may actually be depicting Jehu's envoy rather than the king himself.

[3] Thiele 1983, 76–78. This twelve-year interval comprises the two-year reign of Ahaziah and the twelve-year reign of Joram. Their combined reigns span an interval of twelve years if one assumes *non-accession year dating* for Israel (using Nisan years) as Thiele did. However, if Israel was using *accession year dating* at the time, the reigns of Ahaziah and Joram would span an interval of fourteen years. (See ch. 4A3 for discussion of these two dating systems.)

[4] The Assyrian Eponym Canon is discussed below. See also Appendix B for details on the extra eponymy of Balatu (787 B.C. by Smith), which caused earlier scholars to date Dayan-Ashur's eponymy, in which the battle of Qarqar occurred, to 854 B.C. (Thiele 1983, 72–76). Today, it is widely accepted that Dayan-Ashur's eponymy, and therefore the battle of Qarqar, should be dated to 853 B.C. This is due to the one-year downward revision of all dates before Nabu-sharru-usur's original position of 784 B.C.

[5] Thiele 1983, 78.

Working back 78 years from the death of Ahab in 853 B.C., Thiele secured 931/30 B.C. as the year of Jeroboam's accession and of the schism between Judah and Israel.[6] Although this date has gained wide acceptance, it is still opposed by some Biblicists.[7]

Gershon Galil. Thiele's arguments in favor of 931/30 B.C. have influenced most modern scholars. One is Gershon Galil, whose 1996 book *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* is cited in this study. Like Thiele, Galil favors the Masoretic Text, and his work has garnered respect in academia. For example, the noted Bible scholar and Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen wrote concerning studies on the Hebrew kings:

> The two basic works of primary importance above all others on this are those of Thiele and Galil: E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); 2nd and 3rd eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965, 1986); and G. Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). They seek to apply the relevant Near Eastern principles of reckoning indispensable to such studies, in varying measure, and far more systematically than any of their predecessors or contemporaries. Their final results come out remarkably close overall.[8]

Like Thiele, Galil dates the schism to 931/30 B.C. Unfortunately, to achieve harmony in his chronology, he claims that a number of regnal figures were corrupted in transmission or emended. Hence, his statement:

> All that can be established with certainty in the study of the chronology of the period from the Schism to the Exile is that a number of Biblical data are clearly erroneous, and only a limited number of dates can be determined with any degree of confidence.[9]

Although Thiele and Galil present praiseworthy analyses of ancient Near Eastern history as it relates to the Hebrews, their acceptance of errors in the Masoretic Text is not endorsed by this author. Additionally, their confidence in the secular record must be questioned because extra-Biblical texts are not inerrant. This includes the crucial Eponym Lists by which Assyrian chronology from 910 to 649 B.C. has been "securely" fixed.

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[6] By Thiele's scheme, Rehoboam's accession occurred in the Tishri year 931/30 B.C. while Jeroboam's accession occurred in the Nisan year 931/30 B.C. For simplicity, Thiele used 930 B.C. for the schism rather than 931/30 B.C. Nevertheless, whether 930 or 931 B.C. is used, the subsequent dates are not affected.

[7] A common argument offered by long chronology proponents is that the Ahab and Jehu of Shalmaneser III's inscriptions are not the Ahab and/or Jehu of the Bible. Supporting this is the fact that neither the battle of Qarqar nor Jehu's tribute is mentioned in the Bible. Against this, it is clear that the Bible does not record every major war of regional note or every tribute offering. Therefore, its silence on Ahab at Qarqar or Jehu making his obeisance before Shalmaneser III does not disprove those events. One argument, though, does carry some weight. It is widely assumed that *a-ḫa-ab-bu* KUR *sir-ʾa-la-a-a* in the Kurkh Monolith refers to "Ahab the Israelite." This identification is based on the regional circumstances at the time and the similarity between *a-ḫa-ab-bu* and *Ahab*. Unfortunately, the location *sir-ʾa-la-a-a* appears only once in the corpus of Assyrian documents. Because Israel is normally referred to as *Bit-Ḫumrî* (the house of Omri) in Assyrian inscriptions, it is possible that *sir-ʾa-la-a-a* is not Israel but some other location in the west that happened to be ruled by an individual similarly named Ahab (see Allis, *The Old Testament*, 414–18; Jones 2005, 152–57). Countering this, it can be argued that *sir-ʾa-la-a-a* was an Assyrian geographical term that gave way to the ethnonym *Bit-Ḫumrî*. Nevertheless, whatever location *sir-ʾa-la-a-a* represents, the identification of *ia-ú-a* DUMU *ḫu-um-ri-i* with Jehu of the house of Omri (for Shalmaneser III's 18th year) is sound and remains an obstacle for long chronology proponents.

[8] Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 507 fn. 65.

[9] Galil 1996, 8.

B. Primary Sources for Determining Assyrian Chronology

The chronology of the Neo-Assyrian kings has been firmly established since the 1940's, and the primary chronographs relied on for the purpose were:

1. The Assyrian Eponym Canon
2. The Canon of Ptolemy
3. The Assyrian King List

1. The Assyrian Eponym Canon (AEC)

In the ancient Near East, three systems were used to tell years apart from each other. The earliest was the so-called *year name* system, in which years were named after a noteworthy event (e.g., "Year in which Hammu-rabi built for Nanna his temple in Babylon"). This was overtaken by the simpler method of *regnal years* (e.g., "it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam" [1 Kgs 14:25]). A third system, used mainly in Assyria but also later by the Greeks and Romans for certain documents, was to date by *eponyms*. On this, George Smith explained:

> In Assyria the practice of dating documents according to the regnal years of the reigning monarchs was seldom used: by far the greater number of inscriptions being dated by the names of certain officers called by the Assyrians *limu*; a word which, by general consent, is translated "eponym." The Assyrian *limu* or eponymes were appointed according to a general rotation; and each one in succession held office for a year, and gave name to that year; the usage of the Assyrians in this respect being similar to that of the Archons at Athens, and the Consuls at Rome. The Lord Mayors of London are also appointed for a year, and a parallel case would be presented, if we dated our documents according to the years when successive Lord Mayors held office calling the years after their names.[10]

The eponym system was used in Assyria from the 19th to the seventh centuries B.C. In this system, each year was named after a high officer of state, a provincial governor, or the king himself. The selected person then served as *līmu* for that year, and official documents were dated by month and day to him. This was not the only system, though, used by the Assyrians. Events were also dated by regnal year, and occasionally by both *līmu* and regnal year.

Thankfully, the Assyrians preserved their *līmu* lists, and a number have been found. They were first identified by Sir Henry Rawlinson among thousands of tablets and fragments recovered from Nineveh by Henry Austen Layard during his Mesopotamian explorations in the mid-19th century. It was a major discovery, as George Smith described:

> One of the most important historical documents ever discovered was found by Sir Henry Rawlinson, among the inscribed terra cotta tablets, which Mr. Layard, and other explorers, brought over from Nineveh. . . . Sir Henry Rawlinson distinguished four copies of the Assyrian canon, all imperfect, which he numbered I., II., III., IV.; but since his discovery of these several new fragments have been found belonging to canon I., and to three further copies, canons V., VI., VII.

[10] Smith 1875, 22. The word "eponym" derives from the Greek *eponymos* (*epi* = upon, *onyma* = name) and means one for whom or which something is named. In this case, the *līmu* (or eponym) gave his name to the year in which he held the eponymy.

All these documents, so far as they are preserved, closely agree. They consist of lists of the annual eponymes in their chronological order, and to those names, in canons V., VI., VII., there are added the titles of the eponymes, and short notices of the principal events, during their terms of office.

The four canons first distinguished by Sir Henry Rawlinson, are all in the same form, and differ only in certain glosses and divisional lines.[11]

Smith identified two types of lists, hereafter termed Classes A and B (see Appendix B for these designations by Alan Millard). Lists from Class A (to which Canons I, II, III, and IV belong) contain the names of *līmus* and sometimes their office titles. Lists from Class B (to which Canons V, VI, and VII belong) are chronicles that give not only the name of the *līmu* and his office but also a short historical notation pertaining to his year, usually of a military nature. Since Smith's day, more copies belonging to both classes have been found. Although the texts are broken in places, the missing data is often supplied from other copies. This has allowed Assyriologists to compile a single, reconstructed canon of *līmus* and chronicles called the Assyrian Eponym Canon (or List). A portion of this canon for the reign of Ashur-nirari V (755–745 B.C.) and the early part of Tiglath-pileser III's reign (745–727 B.C.) is shown below:[12]

B.C.	EPONYM	OFFICE	CHRONICLE ENTRY
755	Iqisu,	of Shibhinish,	to Hatarikka.
754	Ninurta-shezibanni,	of Talmusa,	to Arpad; return from Ashur.
753	Ashur-nerari (V),	king of Assyria,	in the land.
752	Shamshi-ilu,	commander,	in the land.
751	Marduk-shallimanni	palace herald,	in the land.
750	Bel-dan,	chief butler,	in the land.
749	Shamash-kenu-dugul,	chamberlain,	to Namri.
748	Adad-belu-ka''in,	governor of the land,	to Namri.
747	Sin-shallimanni,	of Rasappa,	in the land.
746	Nergal-nasir,	of Nisibin,	revolt in Kalah.
745	Nabu-belu-usur,	of Arrapha,	on 13th Ayar Tiglath-pileser took the throne; [in] Teshrit he went to Mesopotamia.
744	Bel-dan,	of Kalah,	to Namri.
		10 years [Ashur-nerari] king of Assyria	
743	Tiglath-pileser (III),	king of Assyria,	in Arpad; defeat of Urartu made.

The Eponym Canon covers the period from 910 to 649 B.C. (the eponym for 648 B.C. is post-canonical but may also be included with confidence). Of course, eponyms were used before 910 B.C. and after 649 B.C. but because they cannot be arranged in an unbroken sequence they are not included.

[11] Ibid., 27–28.

[12] From Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire*, 59; reproduced by permission of the NATCP. Observe the divisional lines above 753, 745, and 743 B.C. These were usually drawn to bring attention to a new king's eponymy or to the accession of a new king. In this case, the underline above 753 B.C. highlights the new king's eponymy. (Although Ashur-nirari V came to the throne in 755 B.C., he served as *līmu* in his second regnal year, 753 B.C.) The underline above 745 B.C. marks the accession of Tiglath-pileser III, whose own eponymy—in his second year—is highlighted for 743 B.C. It should be noted that the king served as *līmu* in his second year for all nine kings from Tukulti-Ninurta II (891–884 B.C. by traditional dating) to Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.).

The canon is widely regarded as being chronologically accurate. Some Biblicists, however, question this. For example, Jones cites numerous inconsistencies both within the canon and in relation to other texts.[13] Of greater consequence is the possibility of *missing eponyms* (or gaps), which scholars have proposed ever since publication of the canon.[14]

Although Assyriologists today assert that there are no gaps in the canon, there is strong evidence of one. Not obvious at first but conspicuous once seen, there is a notable disruption in the regular sequence of office-bearers. For the reigns of most kings during the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., this sequence was as follows:

REGNAL YEAR	OFFICE
accession	governor X (from previous king's eponym sequence)
1	governor Y (from previous king's eponym sequence)
2	new king
3	commander (of the military)
4	palace herald or chief butler/cupbearer
5	chief butler/cupbearer or palace herald
6	chamberlain
7, 8, 9 , etc.	governor A, governor B, governor C, etc.

This sequence repeats with minor variations for 132 years (= seven kings), from the accession of Shalmaneser III in 859 B.C. to the death of Tiglath-pileser III in 727 B.C., after which irregularities occur. But near the middle of the 132-year regular portion—where consistency is expected—there is a surprising anomaly in the *līmu* sequence for the reign of Ashur-dan III (773–755 B.C.):

REGNAL YEAR	DATE B.C.	EPONYM	OFFICE
accession	773	Mannu-ki-Adad	governor
1	772	Ashur-bel-usur	governor
2	771	Ashur-dan (III)	king
3	770	Shamshi-ilu	commander
4	769	Bel-ilia	governor
5	768	Aplia	governor
6	767	Kurdi-Ashur	governor
7	766	Mushallim-Urta	governor

A break in the normal pattern is evident between 770 and 769 B.C., where the palace herald, chief butler/cupbearer, and chamberlain should be included. This suggests a gap of at least three years, more if some governors are missing. Assyriologists have been aware of this anomaly from the beginning, as confirmed by Smith's remarks:

[13] Jones 2005, 146–50.

[14] For example, George Smith analyzed three suggested gaps, two by the Rev. Daniel H. Haigh and one by Professor Jules Oppert (1875, 72–77; cf. Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, 220). Modern authors advocating a gap include Tetley, *The Reconstructed Chronology of the Divided Kingdom*, 97–104, 165–76, and Jones 2005, 154–57.

> Another gap has been suggested in the canon, between B.C. 770 and B.C. 769, by the Rev. D. H. Haigh . . . it must be allowed that in this place, if anywhere, a gap should take place, as there is a break in the titles.[15]
>
> Whether the canon is correct in its earlier part I will not pretend to say, but in the period following B.C. 769 I am satisfied of its truth.[16]

A gap between 770 and 769 B.C. would cause all dates before that point, such as the battle of Qarqar, to be in error by the number of eponyms missing. Just the mere possibility of this occurring should be enough for academics to question the validity of eponym dates prior to 769 B.C. But generally they do not, and unconvincing explanations for the anomaly are offered instead (see ch. 6A, also p. 112).

The slightest hint of a gap is sufficient for this study to discount the Assyrian Eponym Canon as a primary chronograph for dating Biblical events earlier than 769 B.C., such as 853 B.C. = the battle of Qarqar = Ahab's death. Consequently, synchronisms from a later period will be used.

2. The Canon of Ptolemy

Ptolemy's full Latin name was Claudius Ptolemaeus (born ca. A.D. 100, died ca. 170). He was an Alexandrian scholar of Greek descent who excelled in fields of astronomy, mathematics, and geography. His masterful, 13-volume work *Megale mathematike syntaxis tes astronomias* ("Great mathematical construction of astronomy"), better known by its transliterated Arabic title *Almagest* ("the greatest"), is one of the most influential scientific works in history. It explained the seemingly odd paths of celestial bodies in terms of compounded circular motions,[17] and was the basic textbook of astronomy for some 1,400 years.

Ptolemy also wrote a later, supplementary treatise called the *Handy Tables*. Part of that work included a chronological table of 53 kings (with two interregna) from the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Ptolemaic (Egyptian), and Roman eras, commencing with Nabonassar (747 B.C.) and concluding with Antoninus (A.D. 137). Known as Ptolemy's Canon, or more correctly today the *Royal Canon*,[18] this table recorded the years of reign for each king as well as the number of years elapsed from the beginning of the canon to the end of each king's reign. Contrary to the belief of some, the canon was not compiled by Ptolemy. Rather, it was reproduced from a king list deriving originally from Babylonian sources and added to by later scholars, from one generation to the

[15] Smith 1875, 74–75.

[16] Smith, "The Annals of Tiglath Pileser II," 10.

[17] The Ptolemaic system was a geocentric model where the earth stood motionless at the center of the universe, with all celestial bodies revolving around the earth. Each body's motion was explained through two or more spheres: the deferent (centered on the earth) and the epicycle (embedded in the deferent). The deferent rotated around the earth while the epicycle rotated within the deferent. This system was replaced from the late 16th century onward by the heliocentric model of Copernicus, Brahe, Galileo, and Kepler (called the Copernicum system).

[18] In his introduction to the *Handy Tables*, Ptolemy refers to the canon by two names: προκανονιον or "little introductory canon" and βασιλεον χρονογραφια or "chronography of kings" (Leo Depuydt, "More Valuable than All Gold," 101).

next. A section of the canon, featuring the last five kings of Babylon and the first king of Persia, is shown below.[19]

RULER	YEARS OF REIGN [20]	TOTAL YEARS FROM NABONASSAR [21]
Nabopolassar	21	143
Nabokolassar (Nebuchadnezzar II)	43	186
Illoaroudam (Amel-Marduk)	2	188
Nerigasolassar (Neriglissar)	4	192
Nabonadi (Nabonidus)	17	209
Cyrus	9	218

Although the Royal Canon contains no absolute dates, its value lies in its inter-relationship with the *Almagest*, which records over 90 solar, lunar, and planetary positions, along with their dates. These are typically expressed in terms of Royal Canon years, Egyptian month and day, and local hour.

The events recorded in the *Almagest* have been verified by modern astronomers, and they confirm the accuracy of the Royal Canon at many points. For instance, when explaining how to find the apparent diameters of the sun and moon in Chapter V.14, Ptolemy used (for purposes of example) two lunar eclipses that occurred when the moon was at its greatest distance from the earth. The first was:

> In the fifth year of Nabopolassar, which is the 127th year from Nabonassar, Athyr 27/28 in the Egyptian calendar, at the end of the eleventh hour in Babylon, the moon began to be eclipsed.[22]

Ptolemy's subsequent description of this eclipse agrees with the partial eclipse of Apr. 22, 621 B.C. as determined by modern retro-calculation. This verifies that Nabopolassar's fifth year was the Nisan year 621/20 B.C. (Nisan 1 that year began on Mar. 11). By such observations in the *Almagest*, absolute dates may be confidently assigned to the kings of the Royal Canon.

Overlap of the Royal Canon and Eponym Canon. There is a period of overlap between the start of the Royal Canon in 747 B.C. and the end of the Eponym Canon in 648 B.C. Because of this overlap, these two chronographs are able to cross-check each other. However, the cross-check ability does not begin in 747 B.C. as one would expect. This is because the first sure point of

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[19] The Royal Canon can be viewed online at http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronology/canon.html.

[20] For accuracy in counting, kings who ruled for less than a year and whose reigns did not include New Year's Day were excluded from the canon. For the same reason, fractions of years were not counted. Although these features make the canon somewhat artificial, they ensure its purpose, which is to account for every year (rather than to name every king).

[21] Egyptian years, which are 365 days long, are used for both the "Years of Reign" and "Total Years from Nabonassar" columns. Since there are no leap years in the Egyptian civil calendar, it shifts in relation to the solar year. The Royal Canon is therefore based on a wandering year that starts on Feb. 26, 747 B.C. and begins one day earlier every four years thereafter. (The use of an unvarying 365-day year allowed Hellenistic astronomers to compute long intervals, necessary in astronomy, to the exact day. This could not be done with the Near Eastern lunisolar calendar of variable months and years.) The *Almagest* also used Egyptian years.

[22] *Ptolemy's Almagest*, Toomer's translation, 253.

contact between those two sources is Tiglath-pileser III's rule as king of Babylon (the Royal Canon calls him *Porus*).

According to the Eponym Canon, Tiglath-pileser ruled in Babylon from 729 to 727 B.C. The interval of his rule in the Royal Canon, however, is unclear because two names appear in the same line. They are *Chinzer* and *Porus*, and a single figure of five years is quoted for their combined reigns (from 731 to 727 B.C. inclusive). Nevertheless, the last year of Tiglath-pileser's rule in Babylon and Assyria is reliably dated to 727 B.C. (being the year of his death). Consequently, the Royal Canon and Eponym Canon are able to cross-check each other at a number of points between 727 and 648 B.C., which is a span of 79 years.

3. The Assyrian King List (AKL)

There are five known exemplars of the Assyrian King List plus two small fragments. Of the five exemplars, the three primary ones are:[23]

A The "Nassouhi List" (also called the "Ashur List"). The oldest version of the three, this list records all the Assyrian kings from their beginning (but many kings are missing due to several gaps) and ends at Tiglath-pileser II (935 B.C.). It was published by Essad Nassouhi in 1927. Although there is no colophon preserved in the tablet, it is clearly the oldest version of the three, given that it ends with Tiglath-pileser II.

B The "Khorsabad List." This names all the Assyrian kings from their beginning to Ashur-nirari V (745 B.C.). The colophon states: "Copy from Ashur; written by Kandalanu, the scribe of the temple inside of Arbela. Month Lulubu, the 20th day; eponym: Adad-bel-ukin, governor of the inner city of Ashur, in his second eponymy."[24] This version can therefore be dated to 738 B.C.

C The "SDAS List." The youngest of the three, this list records all the Assyrian kings from their beginning to Shalmaneser V, who died in 722 B.C. The colophon states: "Written and checked against its original. A tablet of the *masmasu*-priest, Bel-shum-iddin, a native of Ashur. May Shamash take away him who takes (this tablet) away."[25] Although no date is recorded, this version was probably written shortly after 722 B.C.

Only two lists are useful for the divided monarchy era: the Khorsabad and SDAS Lists. Fortunately, these are also the two best preserved exemplars. The Khorsabad List was found on the site of ancient Dur-Sarrukin in 1933 by an expedition from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. It was published and discussed by Arno Poebel in the early 1940's.[26] This list helped to finalize Neo-Assyrian chronology. The SDAS List was given to the Seventh-day Adventist

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[23] For the Akkadian text of the exemplars of the AKL, see A. Kirk Grayson, "Königslisten und Chroniken," *RlA* 6, 101–15. For the composite list in English, see *ANET*, 564–66. For a bibliography of editions, translations, studies, etc., see Grayson, *ABC*, 269–70. The AKL can also be viewed online at http://utenti.lycos.it/homegape/mesopot/histor/index.html.

[24] *ANET*, 566.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Poebel, "The Assyrian King List from Khorsabad," *JNES* 1 (1942): 247–306, 460–92; *JNES* 2 (1943): 56–90.

Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. in 1953, and is of unknown origin. It was published and compared with the Khorsabad List by Ignace J. Gelb in 1954.[27]

An excerpt from these two lists, derived from Gelb, is shown below for the reigns of six kings from Adad-nirari III to Shalmaneser V.[28] The first two columns show the line numbers of the original inscription. The third column provides a modern-day sequence number for each king. The fourth column gives the king's name and duration of rule. Note that the king's *cuneiform name* is given here. For example, king #108 is *Tukulti-apil-Ešarra,* whose throne name was Tiglath-pileser (III). In the fifth column, I have added the traditional dates of reign (with accession year included).

KHORS. LIST	SDAS LIST	KING NO.	DATA	DATING (B.C.)
25 26	19 19	104.	Adad-nîrārī (III) son of Šamšī-Adad (V) 28 years he ruled.	811–783
27 28	20 20	105.	Šulmānu-ašarid (IV) son of Adad-nîrārī (III) 10 years he ruled.	783–773
29 30	21 22	106.	Aššur-dan (III) brother of Šulmānu-ašarid (IV) 18 years he ruled.	773–755
31 32	23 23	107.	Aššur-nîrārī (V) son of Adad-nîrārī (III) 10 years he ruled.	755–745
– –	24 25	108.	Tukulti-apil-Ešarra (III) son of Aššur-nîrārī (V) 18 years he ruled.	745–727
– –	26 27	109.	Šulmānu-ašarid (V) son of Tukulti-apil-Ešarra (III) 5 years he ruled.	727–722

Eponym lists were undoubtedly used in the construction of the AKL, even for early kings.[29] This explains the substantial agreement between the AKL and AEC. Such agreement however, should not be construed as *historical accuracy*. This is an important point. Suppose that a Neo-Assyrian king deleted some eponyms—so creating a gap in the AEC—prior to Bur-Saggilê's eponymy in 763 B.C. (see below for the significance of this date). Additionally, he ensured that all earlier Eponym List copies were destroyed. Providing that he also altered the AKL along with destroying its earlier copies too, his tampering would remain undetected because of the agreement between the updated copies of the AKL and AEC. Nevertheless, the absolute dates for eponyms before the gap would be incorrect.

[27] Gelb, "Two Assyrian King Lists," 209–30.
[28] Ibid., 229.
[29] On this, see Millard 1994, 8–9.

C. The Solar Eclipse in Bur-Saggilê's Eponymy

In 1867, at the request of Sir Henry Rawlinson, George Smith—then aged 26—was appointed assistant in the Assyriology department of the British Museum.[30] As Smith narrates it, this was the year in which he discovered an eclipse reference in the inscriptions of Assyria:

> Rawlinson proposed that I should be engaged by the trustees of the British Museum to assist him in the work of preparing a new volume of "Cuneiform Inscriptions." Thus, in the beginning of 1867, I entered into official life, and regularly prosecuted the study of the cuneiform texts. I owed my first step to Sir Henry Rawlinson, whose assistance has been to me of the greatest value throughout my work.
>
> My next discovery related to the tablet printed in "Cuneiform Inscriptions," vol. ii. p. 52, and there called a tablet of distribution of officers. This tablet I found to be a canon of Assyrian history, and ascertained that the eclipse mentioned in it corresponded with the one in "L'Art de vérifier les dates," for 15th June, B.C. 763. On pointing out my evidence to Sir Henry Rawlinson, he remembered a historical fragment which corresponded with this tablet, and by fitting it into the tablet he completed and proved the discovery.[31]

What Smith found was the following notational entry for the eponymy of Bur-Saggilê:

> in month Sivan sun was eclipsed

Smith discovered this entry in Rawlinson's *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. II, plate 52, text no. 1 (i.e., II R 52, 1) which is tablet K 51 of the Kuyunjik (Nineveh) collection of the British Museum.[32] It is the only astronomical event mentioned in the Eponym Canon.

Exactly how Smith dated the eclipse to 763 B.C. is not disclosed. He simply says that he used a French reference work (which contained a table of eclipses) to verify the date. Rawlinson then used a corresponding historical text, undoubtedly Canon I of the Eponym Canon (= Ungnad C^{a}1 = Millard A1), to confirm the discovery.

Although Smith's explanation is short on detail, it is almost certain that 763 B.C. was established through the Royal Canon. We may speculate that Smith took the following steps:

1. Tablet K 51 covers the period 817–728 B.C. Although there are some lost entries, the tablet mentions Tiglath-pileser III's accession and includes a divisional line for his rule as well as

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[30] George Smith was born in London on Mar. 26, 1840. He died at the age of 36 on Aug. 19, 1876 at Aleppo, after contracting dysentery in a nearby village while on a mission to conduct excavations at Nineveh. Smith was an exceptionally gifted cuneiformist, and his untimely death was a great loss for Assyriology. His passing prompted colleague Archibald Henry Sayce to write: "Scholars can be reared and trained, but hardly more than once in a century can we expect a genius with the heaven-born gift of divining the meaning of a forgotten language and discovering the clue to an unknown alphabet. . . . His loss is an irreparable one to Assyriology, even beyond his powers as a decipherer, as his memory enabled him to remember the place and nature of each of the myriad clay fragments now in the museum, while his keenness of vision made his copies of the minute characters of the tablets exceptionally trustworthy" ("George Smith," in *Littell's Living Age*, Vol. 131 [Oct–Dec, 1876], Issue 1687 [Oct. 14]). See also Barry Hoberman, "BA Portrait: George Smith (1840-1876) Pioneer Assyriologist," *BA* 46 (1983): 41–42.

[31] Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, 11–12.

[32] This important tablet also became known as Canon V of the Eponym Canon (Smith 1875, 42–54, esp. 46) = Ungnad text C^{b}1 (Ungnad, "Eponymen," *RlA* 2:413, 430) = Millard B1 (Millard 1994, 19, 41, 58).

for Shalmaneser V. (The Eponym Canon features dividing lines mostly to indicate either the eponymy or accession of a new king.) Smith aligned these elements with the Royal Canon, in which Tiglath-pileser is listed as the Babylonian king *Porus* and Shalmaneser as *Iloulaios*. This allowed him to date Tiglath-pileser's accession to 745 B.C. From there, it was a simple matter to count back eponyms to date Bur-Saggilê's eponymy to 763 B.C. (Smith was certainly familiar with the Royal Canon, as evidenced by his later mention of it in *The Assyrian Eponym Canon*.[33])

2. But did a solar eclipse actually occur that year, viewable at Nineveh (the presumed observation point)? Smith consulted a table to check, and it must have delighted him to find that an eclipse did indeed occur in 763 B.C., on June 15. Interestingly, of the ten possible years in which a solar eclipse was visible at Nineveh between 809 to 723 B.C. (viz., 809, 803, 791, 778, 770, 763, 755, 751, 737, and 723 B.C.[34]), the 763 B.C. eclipse had the largest magnitude.

3. Smith pointed out his evidence to Rawlinson, who then remembered the more complete list of eponyms that was later called Smith Canon I. This text covers the period 909–659 B.C. It includes the royal eponyms and divisonal lines for Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, and Esarhaddon. After aligning those kings with their known dates in the Royal Canon then counting back the eponyms, 763 B.C. was proved as the date of Bur-Saggilê's eponymy.

It is difficult to argue against 763 B.C. as the correct year for Bur-Saggilê's eponymy, especially as it was dated through so dependable a document as the Royal Canon. However, some scholars believe that the early part of the Royal Canon is unreliable, which means that any dates fixed by that section are also unreliable.[35] Our study maintains the conventional view that the Royal Canon is trustworthy. Therefore, its dating of 763 B.C. for Bur-Saggilê's eponymy is also trustworthy. It must be assumed in this view, though, that there are no gaps in the Eponym Canon in the 36-year period between Bur-Saggilê (763 B.C.) and the first sure point of contact between the Royal Canon and the Eponym Canon, which is the death of Tiglath-pileser (727 B.C.). If such a gap existed, which is unlikely, it would raise the date of Bur-Saggilê's eponymy.[36]

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[33] Smith 1875, Ch. V, "The Eponym Canon and Canon of Ptolemy Compared," 101–05.

[34] See Wayne A. Mitchell, "Ancient Astronomical Observations and Near Eastern Chronology," *JACF* 3 (1989/90): 23. For the 763 B.C. eclipse, the path of totality passed just to the north of Nineveh.

[35] A well-known advocate of this view was Professor Robert Russell Newton (1918–1991). Newton spent much of his career at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory working on celestial mechanics and satellite tracking. He published a series of notable works on the accelerations of the moon and earth, and was an advisor to NASA. His research for those works required him to analyze hundreds of astronomical observations—dating back to around 700 B.C.—to determine the rate at which the earth was decelerating. In doing so, Newton found that Ptolemy's observations were not consistent with modern theories of motion but rather with Ptolemy's own theories. He therefore became disillusioned with Ptolemy, and concluded that he fabricated many of his observations in the *Almagest*. (This conclusion has been voiced before by astronomers.) Newton published a controversial book on the topic, *The Crimes of Claudius Ptolemy*. Opinion on that work is still divided, with the majority of astronomers believing that Newton was unfair in his evaluation of the bulk of Ptolemy's calculations. For Newton's opinion on the dating of Bur-Saggilê's eclipse (he considered the three most likely dates to be –790 June 24, –762 June 15, and –750 May 5), see *The Moon's Acceleration and Its Physical Origins, Vol. 1*, 49–52.

[36] For example, imagine that an Assyrian king removed 28 eponyms between 763 B.C. and the start of Tiglath-pileser III's reign in 745 B.C. (and made appropriate adjustments to the AKL to hide the gap). The date for Bur-Saggilê's eponymy would then be raised by 28 years to 791 B.C., which was also a year in which a solar eclipse occurred. However, the gap would remain undetected because it is outside the cross-

How important is Bur-Saggilê's eclipse? A popular misconception is that the solar eclipse of Bur-Saggilê's eponymy is the "anchor date" of the Assyrian Eponym Canon, and that all other eponyms were dated by reference to it. As we have noted, though, the Royal Canon was surely used by the pioneer Assyriologists to date this eclipse, which makes it the true and original anchor of the Eponym Canon. The eclipse notice is therefore superfluous for dating purposes but is nevertheless a valuable proof. In fact, today, even the Royal Canon is not needed to date the Eponym Canon (so removing Robert Newton's question mark over the year of Bur-Saggilê's eclipse). One can date the AEC by using independent texts such as the Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 92502 (*ABC*, 69–87), the Babylonian King List A (*ANET*, 272), and the Esarhaddon Chronicle BM 25091 (*ABC*, 125–28).[37] These texts agree with both the Royal Canon and the 763 B.C. eclipse date, thereby confirming the accuracy of Neo-Assyrian chronology for dates on or after 763 B.C.

The accuracy of the Eponym Canon before 763 B.C. Concerning chronological gaps in the Eponym Canon, Thiele maintained that there was no evidence of any.[38] Despite his stance, we noted earlier that there is evidence of a gap between 770 and 769 B.C. Even George Smith conceded "that in this place, if anywhere, a gap should take place, as there is a break in the titles" (1875, 74–75). He again mentioned this gap in relation to the identity of the Bible's King Pul:

> While I do not agree with the idea of a gap of forty-seven years in the canon, I must confess this difficulty cannot at present be solved; but it appears to me that there are three possible explanations . . . The second possible explanation is, that Pul was a monarch who followed Assur-daan II [III]., and whose name has been excluded from the eponym list between our present eponymes for B.C. 770 and 769; this would necessitate admitting Haigh's second gap in the canon, which might be from six to sixteen years.[39]

Our view is that a gap indeed exists between 770 and 769 B.C. (ch. 6BC refers). It occurred *not* because of an excluded king but because a number of years were stricken, posthumously, from the records of Ashur-dan III. This extraordinary step (by Tiglath-pileser III) was taken as a consequence of Jonah's mission to Nineveh. In light of this conclusion, the following summation by Thiele must be challenged:

> Now on the basis of Ptolemy's canon we are able to provide dates to all the other eponymies on the Assyrian lists, and we thus secure 763 for the eponymy of Bur-Sagale—the same date as was secured for that eponymy by the evidence of the solar eclipse that took place that year in the month Simanu. So the date 763 for the eponymy of Bur-Sagale has been established not only by the astronomical evidence of Assyria but also by that of Ptolemy's canon. We thus have complete assurance that 763 is the correct date for Bur-Sagale and that the other dates of the eponym lists, whether reckoned backward or forward from that date, are likewise correct.[40]

There are two misleading statements here, and an appreciation of the second one, in particular, is vital for later chapters in this study:

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checking range of the Royal Canon. (As mentioned above, the Royal Canon verifies dates in the AEC only between 727 and 648 B.C.)

[37] On the fact that the AEC can be dated without the Royal Canon and/or Bur-Saggilê's eclipse, see the excellent article by Carl Olof Jonsson, "The Foundations of the Assyro-Babylonian Chronology," *SIS Chronology & Catastrophism Review* 1987 (Vol IX): 14–23.

[38] Thiele 1983, 69 fn. 3.

[39] Smith 1875, 76.

[40] Thiele 1983, 71–72.

1. The astronomical evidence does not point to one date; there are other candidates such as 791 B.C. The reason for choosing 763 B.C. was its agreement with the Royal Canon.

2. Thiele said that one could work "backward or forward" from 763 B.C. to verify the years of other eponyms. Because the Royal Canon and other chronographs serve as a cross-check, one can certainly work forward from 763 B.C. to verify the dates of subsequent eponyms. However, working backward does not verify eponym dates before 763 B.C. This is because they precede both the Royal Canon and the reliable coverage range of all other independent chronographs. A gap could therefore exist before 763 B.C.—such as our proposed one between 770 and 769 B.C.—but evaluation against independent secular texts would not uncover it.[41] The gap, however, can be detected and even quantified by cross-checking the Eponym Canon against a harmonized chronology of the Hebrew kings that has been reliably dated through Neo-Babylonian synchronisms (chs. 4B & 6A refer). As we will find, this cross-check against the Biblical data points to a gap of eleven years in the canon. It logically falls between 770 and 769 B.C.

George Smith's view. The fact that one cannot prove any Eponym Canon date prior to 763 B.C. is rarely admitted today. By contrast, George Smith openly acknowledged the point in 1875, but was quick to qualify himself given his belief in the complete accuracy of the canon:

> Above the date B.C. 763 there is no positive proof of any Assyrian canon date, but there is some evidence in the agreement of the successive names in the eponym list with those in the contemporary annals of Assurnazirpal and Shalmaneser, and in the fragments of Sennacherib mentioning the date B.C. 794 in the reign of Vulnirari; while the names of functionaries who appear more than once in the list, such as Assur-banai-uzur, the chief of the palace in B.C. 856, 826, and 817; Dayan-assur in B.C. 854 and 827; Musalim-ninip governor of Bele in B.C. 793 and 766; Ninip-kin-uzur, governor of Nineveh in B.C. 790 and 761, and Samsi-il, the tartan, in B.C. 780, 770, and 752, show, that no lapse of years of any extent unrepresented in the canon, can have happened in this period.[42]

Here, Smith appealed to three lines of evidence that, for him, helped to confirm the accuracy of the Eponym Canon for dates before 763 B.C. However, as my rejoinder comments show, nothing in Smith's evidence disproves our proposed eleven-year gap between 770 and 769 B.C.:

a) the agreement of the successive names in the eponym list with those in the contemporary annals of Assurnazirpal and Shalmaneser

REPLY: This refers to the agreement between the dates of contemporary documents and the AEC,[43] especially for the ninth century B.C. where gaps had been proposed. For instance,

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[41] The Assyrian King List cannot be considered an independent text for purposes of verifying the continuity of the Eponym Canon prior to 763 B.C. This is because any Assyrian king who deleted eponyms prior to that date would undoubtedly modify the AKL as well, to keep the AEC and AKL in agreement.

[42] Smith 1875, 152–53. It should be noted that Smith was not aware of the existence of the AKL when he said "Above the date B.C. 763 there is no positive proof of any Assyrian canon date." Nevertheless, as the preceding footnote explains, the AKL was most likely kept in lockstep with the AEC. It therefore cannot, by itself, verify any AEC dates above 763 B.C. (or below it). Accordingly, Smith's comment is still valid today.

[43] On this, Smith wrote earlier in the book: "A considerable portion of the evidence in favour of the accuracy of the Assyrian canon consists of the dates on various contemporary documents, which contain the names of the contemporary eponymes, and these, although presenting some variations, correspond with

the annals of Assur-nazir-pal (= Ashur-nasir-pal II) identify Year 3 (882 B.C. by Smith) as the "eponymy of Assur-idin," which coincides with the AEC.[44] Although this method of verification helps to prove chronological continuity, it does not always apply. A crucial example is Ashur-dan III, in whose reign our proposed gap occurred. Only one small fragment of a royal inscription belonging to him has been recovered, and it concerns work on the temple in Ashur.[45] This means that there are no useful inscriptions for his reign that one can compare against the AEC/AKL to identify a gap.

b) *the fragments of Sennacherib mentioning the date B.C. 794 in the reign of Vulnirari [Adad-nirari III]*

REPLY: In short, this refers to an interval of 101 years recorded in an inscription of Sennacherib. Smith placed this interval between the eponymy of Mannukiassur (794 B.C.) and the discovery in Sennacherib's day of a lost tablet (693 B.C.)[46] However, in a postscript to the book, Smith said that he could not confirm his placement of this interval due to uncertainties raised by a recently discovered inscription.[47] For us, the issue is not the placement of the 101-year interval but the method of its calculation. Sennacherib's scribes almost certainly tallied it by reference to the AEC and AKL. Since they would have used copies of the AEC and AKL that were written *after* a span of eponyms had been removed (by Tiglath-pileser III), the 101-year interval cannot prove chronological continuity.

c) [My square brackets here show the modern dates; see fn. 4]: *the names of functionaries who appear more than once in the list, such as Assur-banai-uzur, the chief of the palace in B.C. 856 [855], 826 [825], and 817 [816]; Dayan-assur in B.C. 854 [853] and 827 [826]; Musalim-ninip governor of Bele in B.C. 793 [792] and 766; Ninip-kin-uzur, governor of Nineveh in B.C. 790 [789] and 761, and Samsi-il, the tartan, in B.C. 780, 770, and 752, show, that no lapse of years of any extent unrepresented in the canon, can have happened in this period*

REPLY: Only three functionaries named by Smith are affected by our proposed gap: Musalim-ninip, Ninip-kin-uzur, and Samsi-il. Regarding Musalim-ninip (= Mushallim-Ninurta), he was the governor of Tille and served as *līmu* in 792 and 766. If an eleven-year gap occurred between 770 and 769, then he actually served as *līmu* the first time in 803. This means that he held the office of governor for at least 37 years (from 803 to 766). For Ninip-kin-uzur, Millard's edition shows that a Ninurta-mukin-ahi (of Nineveh) served as *līmu* in 789 while a certain Nabu-mukin-ahi (of Nineveh) served as *līmu* in 761.[48] It appears that they were different men, but if they were the same person he served in public office for at least 39 years (from 800 [789 + 11] to 761). Regarding Samsi-il (= Shamshi-ilu), the AEC indicates that he was tartan for at least 39 years (from 791 [780 + 11] to 752). However, it is known from another inscription that he took up the office of tartan during the reign of Adad-nirari III.[49] The rule of Adad-nirari III is traditionally dated to 811–783 B.C. But with

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the proper names in the eponym canon" (1875, 78). Smith then presented a sizeable number of documents, including royal inscriptions, that referred to an eponymate (1875, 78–100).

[44] Smith 1875, 80 (cf. *ARAB* I, §448).

[45] RIMA 3:245, A.0.106. Very few royal inscriptions have been found for the three sons of Adad-nirari III (Shalmaneser IV, Ashur-dan III, and Ashur-nirari V). As Chapter 6C proposes, their inscriptions were probably destroyed by Tiglath-pileser III.

[46] Smith 1875, 77–78.

[47] Ibid., Appendix (p. 205).

[48] Millard 1994, 58.

[49] See Stefan Zawadzki, "The Question of the King's Eponymate," 384, esp. n. 12.

an eleven-year gap in the AEC, his reign redates to 822–794 B.C. In that case, Shamshi-ilu served as tartan for at least 42 years (from 794 [783 + 11] to 752).

Although lengthy, the aforementioned terms of office are not unreasonable for ancient Near Eastern kingdoms. For example, Ashur-bunaya-usur served as chief butler for at least 39 years, from 855 to 816 (or 866 to 827 if the eponym gap is accounted for). King Azariah of Judah, a contemporary of Shamshi-ilu, ruled for 52 years (2 Kgs 15:1–2).

As the engaged reader has probably deduced, this avenue of proof—of analyzing the elapsed years between the eponymates of *līmus* who served more than once—is only effective for dismissing *large* gaps in the AEC.

Too many eponyms. If more *līmu* names exist in contemporary documents than there are years from the start of the AEC (910 B.C.) to the fall of Nineveh (612 B.C.), one could argue that the AEC contains a gap in which some of those surplus *līmus* belong. This is in fact the case, that there is a surplus of eponyms.

Assyriologists divide Neo-Assyrian eponyms into two consecutive groups: (1) the canonical or known eponyms (= AEC) from 910 to 649 B.C., and (2) the post-canonical eponyms from 648 to 612 B.C., whose precise order is unknown. Since the eponyms of the AEC are all accounted for, any *līmu* mentioned in a Neo-Assyrian text who is not in the AEC is considered to be post-canonical. The problem is that while only 37 eponyms fit between 648 and 612 B.C., the number of post-canonical eponyms is about 50. Several theories have been put forward to explain the excess of ≈13 eponyms but there is no consensus solution.[50]

While most post-canonical eponyms have been identified as belonging to the period after 649, a handful may actually belong to the canonical period, possibly even to our proposed gap between 770 and 769 B.C. How many might belong to this gap? Because eponym-dated documents have not been found for every year in the AEC, it should not be assumed that an eleven-year gap can be filled by eleven post-canonical eponyms. Perhaps only two or three belong at the most.

Interestingly, at least one eponym is attested for the eighth century by its archival context (thus making it an *extra*-canonical rather than a post-canonical eponym). A text from Kalaḫ is dated to the eponymate of Paqaḫa, in the 22nd day of the first month of the year.[51] His office was *šá-kìn libbi-āli* (governor of Libbi-āli = Ashur), which Millard translates as "governor of the land."[52] Although the reason for Paqaḫa's omission from the AEC is unknown, it has been suggested that he was the original eponym for that year (748 B.C. fits best[53]). However, he died soon after taking

[50] See Robert Whiting, "The Post-Canonical and Extra-Canonical Eponyms," in Millard 1994, 72–78. Whiting suggests that the most likely solution for the bulk of the excess *līmus* is that a number of eponyms were in use simultaneously in different cities (p. 73). For a proposed eponym list between 648 and 612, see Reade, "Assyrian Eponyms, Kings and Pretenders, 648–605 BC," 256–57.

[51] Paqaḫa is named in the eponym-dated text ND679.r.12–14. For commentary, see Karlheinz Deller and Abdulilah Fadhil, "Neue Nimrud-Urkunden des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 24 (1993): 266, no. 7; Millard 1994, 72 fn. 3, 78, 112; Finkel and Reade, "Assyrian Eponyms, 873–649 BC," 251.

[52] Millard 1994, 57–59 ("The Eponym Lists in English").

[53] This is due to another attestation of the name of the first witness on the document (a contract) suggesting that Paqaḫa should be dated to near 744 B.C. See Finkel and Reade, "Assyrian Eponyms, 873–649 BC," 251.

office, which accords with the Kalaḫ text being dated to his first month.[54] He was then replaced by the presently-named eponym. If that year was 748 B.C., the replacement was *Adad-bēlu-kaʾin*. While the replacement theory fits well, there is an outside possibility that Paqaḫa belonged to the gap between 770 and 769 B.C. Specifically, he may have been the fourth of eleven deleted eponyms, the first four being:

1. palace herald or chief butler
2. chief butler or palace herald
3. chamberlain
4. Paqaḫa, governor of the land[55]

D. Assyrian Royal Inscriptions

Assyrian royal inscriptions include *summary* and *annalistic* texts. Summary texts review the achievements of a king generally in geographical rather than chronological order. Consequently, they are of limited use to chronologers but still of value to historians. Annalistic texts are royal chronicles of events usually listed by regnal year. They greatly help both chronologers and historians.

While beneficial, the information contained in both types of texts must be carefully evaluated. Concerning summary (or display) inscriptions, Albert Olmstead (1880–1945) observed:

> We may thus use the Display inscription to fill gaps in the Annals, but it has not the slightest authority when it disagrees with its original. . . . We must realize that their main purpose was not to give a connected history of the reign, but simply to list the various conquests for the greater glory of the monarch. Equally serious is it that they rarely have a chronological order. Instead, the survey generally follows a geographical sweep from east to west. That they are to be used with caution is obvious.[56]

Again, of annalistic inscriptions:

> We have here a regular chronology, and if errors, intentional or otherwise, can sometimes be found, the relative chronology at least is generally correct. The narrative is fuller and interesting details not found in other sources are often given. But it would be a great mistake to assume that the annals are always trustworthy. Earlier historians have too generally accepted their statements unless they had definite proof of inaccuracy. In the last few years, there has been discovered a mass of new material which we may use for the criticism of the Sargonide documents. . . . Add to this the references in foreign sources such as Hebrew or Babylonian, and we hardly need internal study to convince us that the annals are far from reliable.[57]

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[54] A similar situation has been postulated for Balatu in 786 B.C. (Appendix B refers).

[55] The *governor of the land* followed immediately after the *chamberlain* for the reigns of Adad-nirari III, Shalmaneser IV, Ashur-nirari V, and Tiglath-pileser III. Because Ashur-dan III ruled after Shalmaneser IV, one assumes that the *governor of the land* was likewise positioned after the *chamberlain* for the deleted eponyms of his reign.

[56] Olmstead, *Assyrian Historiography*, 7–8.

[57] Ibid., 8–9.

Similarly, the noted Orientalist Daniel Luckenbill wrote:

> One soon discovers that the accurate portrayal of events as they took place, year by year during the king's reign, was not the guiding motive of the royal scribes. At times the different campaigns seem to have been shifted about without any apparent reason, but more often it is clear that royal vanity demanded playing fast and loose with historical accuracy.[58]

These cautions regarding Assyrian inscriptions will be heeded in later chapters when we compare Biblical and Assyrian history. But now, our attention turns to the main objective of this book, which is to construct a harmonized chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel.

[58] *ARAB* I, §10.

Chapter 4: Chronology of the Hebrew Kings

A. Principles of Harmonization

The difficulties in harmonizing the contradictory regnal notices for the Hebrew kings are well-known. Simply put, there is no single harmonizing principle that can be applied to untangle the regnal knots. Rather, one must apply a *set of principles* to resolve the apparent contradictions.

The harmonizing principles used in this study derive from Edwin Thiele. I have modified them somewhat, but they nevertheless reflect Thiele's insightful work. They are:[1]

1. degree of data compression, particularly for Judah
2. start of the regnal year: Nisan or Tishri
3. accession or non-accession year dating
4. the reference kingdom for synchronisms
5. overlapping reigns and the synchronism of accession

There is much disagreement over the correct arrangement of these variables. Also, the validity of some of them is disputed (for example, advocates of the Greek texts often reject overlapping reigns unless they are specifically indicated in the Bible). The end result is an assortment of chronologies that usually contradict each other, adding to the reader's confusion. Additionally, few of these chronologies perfectly harmonize *all* the regnal data. Somewhere along the line, one or more Biblical notices will be deemed erroneous.

The chronology presented in this chapter is unusual in that the above variables will be used to harmonize the Masoretic Text data completely and without emendation. While doing so, contacts with Assyria (which I believe misled Thiele) will be ignored. After internal harmonization has been achieved, the Hebrew kings will be dated through a trustworthy Neo-Babylonian synchronism. Only then will the resulting chronology be analyzed for concordance with Assyrian history; any disagreements found will be examined and explained.

Let us begin by reviewing the five variables listed above, and the decisions that will be made respecting them.

1. Degree of Data Compression, Particularly for Judah

This variable has the greatest effect on the chronology of the Hebrew kings. Table 1 illustrates the problem. Observe that the totals of the reigns for Judah and Israel, from the schism to the fall of Samaria in Hoshea's ninth year (which was also Hezekiah's sixth year), differ by 19½ years (261 vs. 241½ years). Two options are available to manage this discrepancy: (1) Israel's data needs to be "stretched" to fit Judah's, or (2) Judah's data needs to be "compressed" to fit Israel's.

[1] A variable that has not been included in this list is the source used for the regnal data: MT (Hebrew) or the Greek texts (LXX and its recensions). Regnal figures differ between these sources, prompting scholars to prefer one over the other, or both in combination (refer sec. I below). Since our stance is that the MT preserves the original chronology, this factor has not been treated as a variable but as a given.

TABLE 1—YEARS OF REIGN UNTIL THE FALL OF SAMARIA

JUDAH	REIGN	ISRAEL	REIGN
Rehoboam	17	Jeroboam I	22
Abijah	3	Nadab	2
Asa	41	Baasha	24
Jehoshaphat	25	Elah	2
Jehoram	8	Zimri	7 days
Ahaziah	1	Omri	12
Athaliah	7	Ahab	22
Joash	40	Ahaziah	2
Amaziah	29	Joram	12
Azariah	52	Jehu	28
Jotham	16	Jehoahaz	17
Ahaz	16	Jehoash	16
Hezekiah	6	Jeroboam II	41
		Zachariah	6 mths
		Shallum	1 mth
		Menahem	10
		Pekahiah	2
		Pekah	20
		Hoshea	9
TOTAL	**261Y**	**TOTAL**	**241Y 7M 7D**

Israel's data needs to be stretched to fit Judah's. Since Judah's data spans the entire divided monarchy era, many Biblicists maintain that it has no interregnal breaks or unwarranted coregencies, hence the "long chronology" span of 380+ years for Judah's era (see ch. 1BC). To achieve this outcome, however, interregna must be included in Israel's chronology to stretch it to fit Judah's data.[2]

I believe that interregnal periods for the Hebrew kings (of, say, more than a few months) are not justified. For example, concerning Ussher's 11½-year gap between Jeroboam II and Zachariah, 2 Kgs 14:29 clearly shows that there was no significant break before Zachariah took the throne:

> And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

There is no hint in this statement of a significant gap in time between Jeroboam II's death and his son Zachariah's accession. The unlikelihood of such a gap is further supported by God's promise to Jehu that his sons would sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation. That fourth descendant was Zachariah (2 Kgs 10:30; 15:11–12).

Tellingly, the Bible itself does not mention any interregnal periods for Judah or Israel, even though it did for Edom: "There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king" (1 Kgs 22:47). If a neighbouring state merits such a comment, how much more should Judah or Israel?

[2] This was the approach adopted by Ussher, whose chronology featured two interregnal periods: an 11½-year gap between Jeroboam II and Zachariah, and a 9-year gap between Pekah and Hoshea (Ussher, *The Annals of the World,* 74, 79).

Judah's data needs to be compressed to fit Israel's. This is achieved mainly through coregencies.[3] The crucial issue, however, is how much compression should be applied. Should it be sufficient only to eliminate interregna for Israel, or increased further to make the data synchronize with some external contact?

This is precisely the issue faced by Thiele. When he began work on his chronology, he constructed a pattern from the schism to the end of the reigns of Hezekiah (SK) and Hoshea (NK) without reference to B.C. dates or external contacts.[4] Then, on its completion, he aligned his harmonized relative pattern—which contained no interregna—with the Ahab/Qarqar and Jehu/tribute synchronisms to secure an absolute chronology. To his surprise and dismay, Thiele found that Hezekiah's 14th year was 702 and not 701 B.C. as expected, and that the fall of Samaria occurred in 711 B.C. After he made an adjustment for the problematic eponymy of Balatu, which lowered the Qarqar date by one year from 854 to 853 B.C. (see Appendix B), the 14th year of Hezekiah was redated to 701 B.C. (as desired) and the fall of Samaria to 710 B.C. This latter date was incorrect because Assyrian records confirm that Samaria fell around 721 and not 710 B.C. (the typical range of quoted dates is 723–720 B.C.). To address this disagreement with Assyrian history, Thiele compressed his regnal pattern further within the segment bounded by Ahab's death (853 B.C.) and his date for the fall of Samaria (723/22 B.C.).

The important feature of Thiele's original chronology—before he adjusted it to align with Assyrian history—was the 221-year interval from the schism (931 B.C.) to the fall of Samaria (710 B.C.). One could call this the "interval of minimum compression." It is the period that results when the Hebrew regnal data is compressed only enough to eliminate interregna for the Northern Kingdom while maintaining harmony with the regnal notices.[5] Thiele found that this 221-year interval did not marry with accepted Assyrian chronology; it was too long. Because he preferred to accept the witness of the Assyrian record rather than the Bible, he shortened this interval further by 12 years, so that the fall of Samaria occurred in 723/22 and not 710 B.C. Had Thiele retained his original 221-year pattern, preferring instead to declare that the Assyrian record was in error, I believe that his chronology would have been more accurate.[6]

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[3] It might be argued that the ca. 20-year difference between the two totals in Table 1 is due to *accession year* versus *non-accession year* dating (refer #3 below). However, only a maximum of twelve years can be accounted for by this factor.

[4] Thiele 1983, 16–18.

[5] In Ussher's chronology, the interval between the schism (975 B.C.) and the fall of Samaria (721 B.C.) is 254 years. This incorporates two interregnal periods totaling almost 21 years (see fn. 2). However, due to the complex, interlocking nature of the regnal data, applying compression (i.e., overlapping reigns) to eliminate these interregna is not a linear step, and it requires more than 21 years of compression to achieve. This is why our schism date of 942/41 B.C. is 33 years and not 21 years later than Ussher's 975 B.C. date. Note also that our chronology features an interval of 221 years between the schism (942 B.C.) and the fall of Samaria (721 B.C.). This interval surprised and encouraged me because it is the same that Thiele found between those two events (931 and 710 B.C., respectively) before he compressed his relative chronology further to align it with Assyrian history.

[6] So, instead of compressing his 221-year pattern further at the lower end, Thiele should have trusted its duration and worked back 221 years from the fall of Samaria (between 723 and 720 B.C.) to fix the schism between 944 and 941 B.C. In this way, he would have found a 13 to 10-year discrepancy between the year of Ahab's death (between 866 and 863 B.C.) and the battle of Qarqar (dated today to 853 B.C.). This would have alerted him to a problem in Assyrian chronology, being a gap in the Eponym Canon (chs. 3BC and 6ABC refer).

It is difficult to compress the regnal data more than 221 years, and authors make interesting adjustments to achieve it. Thiele made the first twelve years of Pekah's reign overlap, in a rival reign, the ten years of Menahem plus two years of Pekahiah. Galil made Jotham's entire reign coregent with Azariah.[7]

For the chronology presented in this chapter, sufficient compression will be applied to the Hebrew data but only enough to eliminate interregna for the Northern Kingdom. No further compression will be applied even if the resulting chronology is found to disagree with the Assyrian record. Any overlapping reigns revealed through this method will be deemed historically accurate. (Although compression causes overlapping reigns mainly in Judah, there will also be some in Israel.)

A corollary of this approach is that, unless specifically indicated (such as for Jehoiachin—see #5 below), there can be no overlapping reigns for the Judahite kings *after* the fall of Samaria. This is because, with the Northern Kingdom ended, there were no Israelite kings by which to synchronize the Judahite data. By that principle, Thiele's Hezekiah–Manasseh coregency is unwarranted.

2. Start of the Regnal Year: Nisan or Tishri

With the compression issue decided, the beginning month of the regnal year should be considered. In times past, influential authors advocated Nisan years for both kingdoms (e.g., Archbishop Ussher, Sir Isaac Newton, Karl Friedrich Kiel, Franz Xaver Kugler, Julius Lewy, Sir Robert Anderson, Willis Judson Beecher, and Martin Anstey). They did so probably in recognition of God's command for the year to begin with Abib (Exod 12:2; 13:4). Also, it is taught in the

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[7] A novel solution that avoids extra compression is offered by Harold Camping (*The Perfect Harmony of the Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*). Echoing Thiele's original 221-year pattern, Camping's chronology features a 222-year interval from the schism (931 B.C.) to the fall of Samaria (709 B.C.). However, whereas Thiele compressed his pattern further to raise the fall of Samaria date from 710 to 723 B.C., Camping did not. Instead, he proposed that Sargon II's first year as ruler of Babylon (709 B.C.) was also his first year as *sole ruler* of Assyria, having reigned as coregent with his brother Shalmaneser V from 722 to 710 B.C. Because the annals for Sargon II indicate that he captured Samaria "at the beginning of my rule" (*ARAB* II, §4), Camping submitted that this referred to his first year as sole ruler of Assyria in 709 B.C. He then claimed this date to be a solid "fix" between the Biblical and secular records (pp. 75–79). A number of arguments may be advanced against Camping's fall of Samaria date but two will suffice here. First, the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, who ruled from 745 to 727 B.C., record that he placed Hoshea on the throne after Pekah's assassination (see *ARAB* I, §816; *ANET*, 284; Kuan 1995, 176–77; Tadmor, *ITP*, 140–41, Summ. 4.15′–19′; *COS* 2.117C:288). Tiglath-pileser III was therefore the ruling Assyrian monarch when Hoshea came to the throne. This means that the fall of Samaria in Hoshea's ninth year cannot be dated any later than nine years after Tiglath-pileser III's death (in 727 B.C.). In other words, *the fall of Samaria occurred in or before 718 B.C.* Second, the SDAS King List, which was written shortly after Shalmaneser V's death, states that Shalmaneser V ruled for only five years (Gelb, "Two Assyrian King Lists," 229 [King #109]). This is supported by the Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 92502, which records the dates of Shalmaneser V's accession, his death five years later, and Sargon II's accession (Grayson, *ABC*, 73 [Chron. 1 i 27–31]). The Royal Canon also confirms Shalmaneser V's five-year reign as do the horizontal rulings of the Assyrian Eponym Canon (ch. 6B refers) and the Babylonian King List A (*ANET*, 272). The agreement of these independent sources proves, overwhelmingly, that Shalmaneser V died in 722 B.C. after a reign of five years; he did not rule as coregent with Sargon II after then. Sargon II's accession year was therefore 722 B.C., his Year 1 when he claimed Samaria's capture (*ARAB* II, §4) was 721 B.C., his Year 12 when he conquered Babylon (*ARAB* II, §31–38) was 710 B.C., and his Year 13 (= first full year as king of Babylon) was 709 B.C.

Mishnah tract Rosh Hashana that Nisan 1 is the new year for kings.[8] These authors were undoubtedly motivated by a high view of the Scriptures.

The modern viewpoint is different. For instance, Thiele proposed that the *Mishna's* teaching may have been based on a later, incorrect tradition. He then ignored the argument concerning God's requirement for Abib to be the first month, and submitted that Judah used a Tishri new year while Israel used a Nisan new year.[9] Galil is dismissive of all attempts to prove either Nisan or Tishri years, whether for Israel or Judah. Nevertheless, in a reverse position to Thiele, he proposed a Nisan new year for Judah and a Tishri new year for Israel.[10]

In a similar approach to that of Galil, our chronology advocates Nisan years for Judah, being a continuation of the existing system used by Saul, David, and Solomon. However, in a rebellious move, Tishri years were instituted in Israel, the change being made to underscore the schism with Judah.[11]

New Year's Day. If one counts Tibni (Omri's NK rival) and the usurper Athaliah (SK), the divided monarchy era featured 40 rulers in total, 20 for Judah and 20 for Israel. With this number, one might expect a handful of reigns that began or ended close to New Year's Day, or were of short duration and straddled New Year's Day. Our chronology incorporates five such reigns:

1. Joash–Amaziah (SK, 806 B.C.): Joash was killed by his own servants near the end of the year, in Adar 806 B.C. His son Amaziah succeeded him in the same month.
2. Shallum (NK, 763 B.C.): his one-month rule straddled Tishri 1 (see fn. 15).
3. Pekah–Hoshea (NK, 731 B.C.): Hoshea slew Pekah before Tishri 1 and his rule began on or after Tishri 1 (ch. 7E refers).
4. Jehoahaz–Jehoiakim (SK, 609 B.C.): Jehoahaz's rule ended before Nisan 1 while his successor Jehoiakim began to rule on or after Nisan 1 (ch. 9C refers).
5. Zedekiah (SK, 597 B.C.): his accession most likely occurred in Adar rather than Nisan. The choice of month is crucial because it affects the date of the fall of Jerusalem (see sec. C below).

3. Accession and Non-Accession Year Dating

Having defined the regnal year by its start month, a decision must be made on how to count those years, and whether each kingdom retained the same method throughout its era.

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[8] Thiele 1983, 51.
[9] Ibid., 51–54.
[10] Galil 1996, 9–10, esp. fn. 23.
[11] The adoption of Tishri years for Israel is not only logical but it removes a number of minor synchronistic problems between the two kingdoms. Those problems remained for Thiele owing to his usage of Tishri years for Judah and Nisan years for Israel. To resolve them, he concluded—in what is a cumbersome method—that synchronisms to the other kingdom were reckoned by the home kingdom's system (see #5 below, "The Reference Kingdom for Synchronisms"). For a comparison of the harmonizing factors used by Thiele and Galil, see Leslie McFall, review of Gershon Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*, *VT* 49 (1999): 572–74.

In the ancient Near East, two common methods for counting a king's regnal years were the *accession year* system and the *non-accession year* system. In the accession year system, also called "postdating," the king's first official year began when he ruled through his first New Year's Day. Therefore, if his coronation occurred after New Year's Day, that initial year was not his Year 1. It was his *accession year*, and his Year 1 followed in the next regnal year (i.e., after the next New Year's Day). This system was used by the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians in Babylonian territory. In the non-accession year system, also called "antedating" or "predating," the king's Year 1 was the year in which he came to the throne. So, even if his coronation occurred just before New Year's Day, that whole year was counted as his Year 1. Kingdoms using non-accession year dating included Egypt (at times), Greece, and Rome.

Of the two systems, non-accession year dating is more difficult to work with because the last year of one king is the first year of his successor, causing that year to be counted twice. So, if a series of kings rule consecutively and quote their reigns using this system, the sum of those years exceeds the true total by the number of regnal changes. Consider the example of four kings using non-accession year dating, and ruling successively for four, five, six, and seven years. Although the sum of their reigns is 22 years, the true elapsed time is 19 years (22 minus three regnal successions).

The first six decades of the divided monarchy era provide a good example of these two systems at work. Observe Table 2, which shows the regnal counting for each kingdom from the schism to the 38th year of Asa and Omri's death that year (1 Kgs 16:28–29).

TABLE 2—ELAPSED YEARS FROM THE SCHISM TO ASA^{38TH} / OMRI^{12TH}

JUDAH	OFFICIAL YEARS	ISRAEL	OFFICIAL YEARS
Rehoboam	17	Jeroboam	22
Abijah	3	Nadab	2
Asa	38	Baasha	24
		Elah	2
		Omri	12
Total	58	Total	62

The totals for Judah and Israel should be identical.[12] However, they disagree by four years, at 58 and 62 years, respectively. The difference is resolved once accession year dating is ascribed to Judah and non-accession year dating to Israel. The totals for each kingdom then agree at 58 years because the actual years for each succeeding king in Israel are a year less (i.e., 22 + 1 + 23 + 1 + 11 = 58).[13]

These first 58 years of the divided monarchy appear easy to resolve because, in all likelihood, each kingdom retained its own system throughout that time. Evidence from the rest of the data, however, suggests that at least one kingdom changed to the other system in later years.

[12] Zimri (who ruled for seven days) and Tibni (who was Omri's rival) are not counted in Table 2 as their rules both began in the same year as Omri's.

[13] Another way to arrive at 58 years is to subtract the number of regnal changes in this list (4) from the total (62).

Dating system arrangements vary among scholars, as do the points at which they change (if at all). For instance, in Thiele's scheme, Israel began with non-accession year dating then, under Jehoash, a shift was made to accession-year dating which continued to the close of Israel's history. Judah began with accession year dating then changed to non-accession year dating from Jehoram to Joash, then reverted to accession-year dating until the close of the kingdom.[14]

An objective of this chapter is to harmonize the regnal notices with the simplest, most consistent application of principles. In pursuit of that, the following scheme has been determined:

- Judah used accession-year dating throughout with two logical exceptions. The first was Athaliah, wife of Jehoram and mother of Ahaziah. Her length of reign is not expressed by the usual formula probably because she was not a lawful successor to the throne of David. (The rightful heir, Joash, was hidden from Athaliah until her seventh year.) The second exception was Jehoahaz, who ruled for only three months.[15]

- Israel began with non-accession year dating. Then, under Jehu, Israel shifted to the accession-year system until the end of the kingdom (Section F discusses this shift). There were four exceptions. Three were the short reigns of Zimri (seven days), Zachariah (six months), and Shallum (one month). The fourth was the anti-Assyrian, anti-Judahite king Pekah. He reverted to non-accession year dating presumably in defiance of Menahem's and Pekahiah's pro-Assyrian policy.

4. The Reference Kingdom for Synchronisms

Some chronologies (Thiele's included) incorporate periods when accession year dating is used by one kingdom while non-accession year dating is being used by the other. In such cases, a choice presents itself with respect to regnal synchronisms: either they are based on the dating scheme of the home kingdom or on the dating scheme of the other kingdom.

Thiele chose the former. An example is the accession of Ahab. At the time, according to Thiele, Judah was using accession year dating while Israel was using non-accession year dating. So, when 1 Kgs 16:29 reports that Israel's king Ahab began to rule in the 38th year of Judah's king Asa, it was the 38th year of Asa as counted by Israel's non-accession year system. By Judah's official count, though, it was actually Asa's 37th year.[16]

This is a convoluted approach, and it makes one wonder if it was actually the case. Believing that the writer/editor of Kings—hereafter called the *Hebrew historian*—favored simplicity where possible, this study upholds that regnal synchronisms were based on the dating scheme of the other kingdom. So, when 1 Kgs 16:29 reports that Ahab began to rule in the 38th year of Asa, it was the 38th year of Asa as counted by Asa.

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[14] Thiele 1983, 60.

[15] For reigns of short duration, only the actual number of months (or days) that the king ruled are cited in the regnal notice, even if he ruled through New Year's Day. For example, by our chronology the one-month reign of Shallum straddled New Year's Day. By strict interpretation, then, his reign should be given as *one year* (postdated) or *two years* (antedated). But this is confusing, so we are not surprised that the Hebrew historian recorded the actual duration.

[16] Thiele 1983, 85, 94.

5. Overlapping Reigns and the Synchronism of Accession

It is indisputable that overlapping reigns occurred during the divided monarchy era (e.g., 1 Kgs 16:21; 2 Kgs 8:16). Most overlaps, however, are not mentioned directly in the Bible. They are usually found either while correlating the regnal data (the usual case) or through father-son age analysis.

To a high degree, the extent of any overlap for a Hebrew king depends on the chosen arrangement of the variables discussed above, especially the first (data compression). Also, there are different types of overlaps, but not all of them are used or accepted by scholars. The different types can be classified as follows:

1. RIVAL REIGN: This situation arose when opposing monarchs ruled at the same time in the same kingdom. There was only one true rival reign during the divided monarchy era. It occurred in the Northern Kingdom when the Israelites were divided in allegiance between Tibni and Omri (1 Kgs 16:21).

2. VICEREGENCY OR "PRO-REX" PERIOD (NOT COUNTED IN THE YEARS OF REIGN): This is where the senior king ruled but his son assisted as viceregent or "king-under-training." The main reason for a viceregency was to secure the line of succession. This was particularly important for Judah's monarchs, who were of a single dynasty, and explains the number of viceregencies that we will discover for that kingdom. Another reason for making a son viceregent was the father's ill-health.

   Ill-health and securing the line of succession were also reasons for a *coregency*, but if the son was considered too young and/or inexperienced he was accorded only a viceregency, the years of which did not count toward his official total. An example is Jehoiachin. Although both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles state that he ruled for only three months (and ten days), 2 Kings reports that he was 18 years old when he began to rule (24:8) while 2 Chronicles reports that he was only eight (36:9). Evidently, Jehoiakim placed Jehoiachin on the throne at the age of eight to secure the line of succession given the parlous circumstances in Judah at the time (with Babylon ascendant). However, Jehoiachin was too young to be considered a full coregent, so he served as viceregent until Jehoiakim's death. His sole rule then began at the age of 18. Because viceregency years are not counted, 2 Chr 36:9 reports only the duration of his sole regency.

   As will be discussed in later sections of this chapter, a son's viceregency began when the ruling king nominated him as the *heir apparent* or *crown prince*. For the Hebrews, the crown prince was entitled to be called king, even if he was the crown prince of another nation.[17]

   An important conclusion of this study is that all viceregencies in Judah, due to their prevalence in that kingdom, were omitted from the regnal data for the sake of brevity (after all, viceregency years were not counted). This omission has created problems such as the apparent disharmony of the regnal notices for Jehoram, and Ahaz's seemingly young age (eleven) at the birth of his son Hezekiah.

[17] Later chapters will show that the Hebrews referred to the following crown princes as king: Sennacherib son of Sargon king of Assyria (ch. 8C), Taharqa brother of Shebitku king of Ethiopia (ch. 8G), and Nebuchadnezzar son of Nabopolassar king of Babylon (ch. 5B).

3. COREGENCY OR "CO-REX" PERIOD (COUNTED IN THE YEARS OF REIGN): The coregent was a defacto king, and his coregency was counted in his official length of reign. Typically, a king established a coregency for one or more of the following reasons: (1) to secure the line of succession; (2) because he was going to war and wanted to ensure a smooth transition in the event of his death; (3) because of ill-health. Coregencies added stability to the kingdom during politically turbulent times, which is why they featured so conspicuously in Judah and Israel during times of regional conflict.

Opinions vary on which kings had overlapping reigns and the type of overlap involved. Not counting the special situation for Abijam and Asa (Section E discusses their omitted viceregencies), the chronology presented in this chapter features eleven overlaps, which can be divided by type as follows:

- RIVAL REIGN (ONE): Tibni–Omri (NK)
- VICEREGENCY (FOUR): Joash (SK), Jehoash (NK), Jotham (SK), and Jehoiachin (SK)
- COREGENCY (FOUR): Ahaziah (NK), Ahaziah (SK), Jeroboam II (NK), and Azariah (SK)
- VICEREGENCY + COREGENCY (TWO): Jehoram (SK) and Ahaz (SK)

Most overlaps in our chronology (seven out of eleven) occurred in Judah, which is not surprising given its single lineage.[18] By contrast, only three overlaps occurred in Israel apart from the Tibni–Omri rivalry. This was undoubtedly due to the unstable regnal climate in that kingdom, with its assassinations and short-lived dynasties.

The synchronism of accession. For reigns that do not involve an overlap, the synchronism of accession is straightforward: it denotes the start of a king's reign, which is the same point from which his regnal years are counted. For overlapping reigns, however, I believe that Thiele's *dual-dating* procedure should be used unless circumstances disqualify it.[19] It is described thus:

- a king's regnal total includes the counted years of overlap plus full duration of his sole rule
- the synchronism of accession points to the end of the overlap (i.e., the start of sole rule)

We see confirmation of this method in the rival-reign of Tibni and Omri, which is the first recorded overlap of the divided monarchy era. Regarding Omri, his synchronism of accession states:

> In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah. (1 Kgs 16:23)

At face value, this notice suggests that Omri began his twelve-year rule in the 31st year of Asa. However, an earlier passage shows that his rule began in the 27th year of Asa:

> In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. And the people that

[18] The example was set when David, before his death, made his son Solomon coregent. According to Edward Ball's thesis, David may have adopted the coregency idea from Egypt ("The Co-Regency of David and Solomon," 278).

[19] Thiele 1983, 231.

> were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. (1 Kgs 16:15–16)

These two passages harmonize once we view Omri's twelve-year reign as including the overlap with Tibni, but with the synchronism of accession (to Asa's 31st year) pointing to the start of his sole rule.

It is significant that the account of Omri's reign contains sufficient information to interpret his synchronism of accession correctly (1 Kgs 16:23). Evidently, the Hebrew historian did so to demonstrate the mechanics of dual-dating, which is a concise method of data transmission. Having established the method with the first overlapping reign of the era, he then applied it to subsequent overlapping reigns without further explanation.

Dual-dated notices occur only in the book of Kings. They cease after the fall of Samaria because there are no Israelite kings by which to synchronize the reigns of the Judahite kings.

Dual-dating applies to eight of the eleven overlaps indicated in our chronology: Omri–Tibni (NK), Ahaziah (NK), Ahaziah (SK), Joash (SK), Jeroboam II (NK), Azariah (SK), Jotham (SK) and Ahaz (SK). The other three overlaps—for Jehoram (SK), Jehoash (NK), and Jehoiachin (SK)—are not dual-dated owing to the following circumstances:

- JEHORAM (SK): The reign of Jehoram is complex given that his overlap with Jehoshaphat begins with a coregency that reverts to a viceregency then returns to a coregency. Such a situation cannot be adequately described by a dual-dated notice (sec. F refers).

- JEHOASH (NK): Although viceregency data was omitted for the Judahite kings (see later sections), our regnal patterning shows that a viceregency is indicated for Jehoash (i.e., his synchronism of accession denotes the start of an uncounted regnal overlap with Jehoahaz). We can only conclude that this was the Hebrew historian's decision, to dual-date the three coregencies for Israel (Omri, Ahaziah, and Jeroboam II) but not that kingdom's single, uncomplicated viceregency.

- JEHOIACHIN (SK): The accession formula for Jehoiachin's reign in 2 Kgs 24:8 is not dual-dated because he ruled after the fall of Samaria.

Concerning Jehoiachin, comparison of 2 Kgs 24:8 and 2 Chr 36:9 reveals that the latter notice *behaves* as if it were dual-dated. This is because the mention of Jehoiachin's age upon accession (eight years) confirms that the quoted duration of his reign (three months and ten days) incorporates both the period of viceregency (from ages eight to eighteen with years not counted) and sole regency (three months and ten days). This understanding of 2 Chr 36:9 is important because it applies to all the dual-dated notices that cite ages for the Judahite kings (ages for Israelite kings are not given). That is, in a dual-dated notice, the quoted age at which the king ascended the throne refers to the *start of the overlap* and not to the beginning of his sole regency. This principle will be used later to resolve the vexing problem of Ahaz's age at the birth of his successor Hezekiah (sec. D refers).

Viceregencies and accession year dating. All six viceregency segments constructed in Table 4 below—for Jehoram (SK), Joash (SK), Jehoash (NK), Jotham (SK), Ahaz (SK), and Jehoiachin (SK)—occurred under the accession year dating system. Accordingly, the initial year of viceregency for those kings is logged as an *accession year*, exactly as for coregencies under accession

year dating.[20] When the king attained his sole rule following a viceregency, that year of transition was then considered to be his first regnal year and not his accession year, which had already occurred.

Athaliah and Joash (SK). Technically speaking, a rival reign existed between these rulers inasmuch as Joash was the lawful "king-in-waiting" (albeit hidden) during Athaliah's time on the throne. Also, for Joash, the king-in-waiting circumstance effectively made him a viceregent. (He was clearly the heir apparent, being the only son of Ahaziah to escape Athaliah's slaughter of the royal heirs.) To emphasize both these characteristics (rival reign + viceregency), the overlap years for Joash are designated "r/v" in Table 4 below and in Appendix E.

The "r/v" treatment of Joash's overlap with Athaliah merits an accession year being assigned to him for the year of his father's death. An accession year at this point is further warranted by God's promise regarding the continuity of the Davidic dynasty (see Appendix F, "Joash"). The end result is that Joash's regnal notice (2 Kgs 12:1) is dual-dated, meaning that while his 40-year reign includes the overlap segment (not counted) plus period of sole rule (40 years), the synchronism of accession (to Jehu's seventh year) denotes the start of his sole reign.

Two other issues concerning the regnal notices for Athaliah and Joash are of note. First, no standard regnal notice is provided for Athaliah. Evidently, this is because she was not a rightful Davidic successor (the Hebrew historian did not wish to legitimize her rule by providing such a notice). Second, despite the statement in 2 Kgs 11:21 ("Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign"), the standard notice for Joash does not include his age (compare 2 Kgs 12:1 with, for example, 1 Kgs 22:41–42 and 2 Kgs 14:1–2). Therefore, the comments made above in relation to age and dual-dated notices do not apply to Joash, as the standard formula for his reign does not include his age. This was possibly due to him being less than one year old when his overlapping reign began (meaning that no whole number of years could be quoted for his age at accession).

B. A New Chronology Not Tied to 853 B.C.

The preceding discussion reviewed the principles by which the regnal data for the Hebrew kings can be reconciled. In summary, the arrangement of the variables is as follows:

- Compression of the regnal data for both kingdoms will be applied but only enough to eliminate interregna for Israel.
- For regnal reckoning, Judah used Nisan years while Israel used Tishri years.
- Judah used accession-year dating throughout. Israel began with non-accession year dating but changed to accession year dating with Jehu. Israel's kings retained this system until the end of the kingdom, with the exception of Pekah.
- Regnal synchronisms are based on the dating scheme of the other kingdom.
- Not counting Abijam and Asa (see sec. E), there are eleven overlaps, eight of which are in accordance with Thiele's dual-dating procedure. The other three are logical exceptions.

[20] 2 Chr 36:9 states that "Jehoiachin was eight years old **when he began to reign**." This confirms the validity of assigning an accession year for the beginning of Jehoiachin's viceregency (and so for all viceregencies under accession year dating).

From the above principles, a harmonized chronology for the Hebrew kings can be constructed. To assign Julian years to this completed pattern, thereby converting its relative chronology to an absolute chronology, a cardinal point of contact between Hebrew history and known secular history must be found. The battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. is often chosen for this purpose (so Thiele). However, we have found that dates prior to 769 B.C. in Assyrian chronology are questionable. Therefore, it would be prudent to use a later, more reliable synchronism. The most reliable synchronisms for the divided monarchy era are those associated with the Neo-Babylonian period. Of these, Nebuchadnezzar's victory against the Egyptians at Carchemish during his accession year can be easily correlated with the Bible.

Nebuchadnezzar's accession has been dated to 605 B.C. This date is trustworthy and is confirmed by independent sources, including Ptolemy's Royal Canon and the Berlin Museum tablet VAT 4956. Concerning the Royal Canon, we have found that it provides years of reign for its kings plus a running total, but no dates. However, when used in conjunction with Ptolemy's *Almagest*, which gives many astronomical fixes, absolute dates can be assigned to the canon (see Table 3 below). Regarding VAT 4956, this tablet is dated from Nisan 1 of Nebuchadnezzar's 37th year to Nisan 1 of his 38th year. It contains astronomical observations from five months of his 37th year. About 30 of those observations are so exactly described that astronomers are able to date them precisely. Consequently, the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar has been securely dated to 568/67 B.C., thereby fixing his accession year to 605/04 B.C.[21]

TABLE 3—REIGNS OF THE NEO-BABYLONIAN KINGS ACCORDING TO PTOLEMY

KING'S NAME	YEARS OF REIGN ACCORDING TO THE ROYAL CANON	REIGN DETERMINED FROM COMPARISON WITH THE *ALMAGEST* (B.C.)
Nabopolassar	21	625–605
Nebuchadnezzar	43	604–562
Amel-Marduk	2	561–560
Neriglissar	4	559–556
(Labashi-Marduk)	(not listed)	(556)
Nabonidus	17	555–539

Through such astronomically underpinned texts as the Royal Canon and VAT 4956, Nebuchadnezzar's rule can be confidently dated from 605/04 B.C. (his accession year) to 562/61 B.C. (his final, 43rd year). These known dates can now be correlated with the reign of Jehoiakim through Jer 46:1–2:

> The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles; Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah.

According to the Bible, Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho at Carchemish in Jehoiakim's fourth year. Nebuchadnezzar's victory over Egypt is a well-known date in history because the event is

[21] On the reliability of VAT 4956, see Jonsson, *The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, 157–64.

recorded in the Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 21946 for Nabopolassar's 21st year.[22] The inscription records that Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho in his *accession year*. From the Royal Canon and VAT 4956, we know that Nebuchadnezzar's accession year was 605/04 B.C. Consequently, by the synchronism of Jer 46:2, Jehoiakim's fourth year can also be dated to 605/04 B.C.[23]

With this synchronism secured, absolute dates can be assigned to our harmonized regnal pattern, so allowing a chronology of the Hebrew kings to be offered. I have taken the liberty, however, of presenting this chronology ahead of resolving the following issues:

1. the year of Josiah's death: 610 or 609 B.C.? (our study favors 610 B.C.—ch. 9 refers)
2. the fall of Jerusalem: 587 or 586 B.C.? (our study favors 587 B.C.—see sec. C below)
3. the viceregencies of Jotham and Ahaz (see sec. D below)
4. Asa's 35th and 36th years (see sec. E below)
5. the reign of Jehoram (see sec. F below)

The chronology in detail. Chronologies for the Hebrew kings are usually presented either in "brick wall" layout (with years shown horizontally) or "ladder" layout (with years shown vertically). The chronology in Table 4 below is shown in brick wall format. The bold section in each block depicts Julian years B.C. (i.e., Jan. to Dec.). The rows above are offset to Nisan; they show Judah's data plus the reign of the Babylonian kings. The rows below are offset to Tishri; they show Israel's data and Ezekiel's captivity dates (ch. 5A refers). Synchronisms are depicted by vertical arrows. The following legend applies:

AC ..... beginning of rule in accordance with accession year dating
$vice^{AC}$, $vice^{1}$, $vice^{2}$, etc. ..... viceregency
rival ..... rival reign
r/v^{AC}, r/v^{1}, r/v^{2}, etc. ..... rival/viceregency years for Joash
6m ..... "m" = months
7d ..... "d" = days

Some kings went by more than one name. The first name cited below (in bold) has been chosen for use throughout this study:

Abijam or Abijah (SK)
Joram or Jehoram (NK)
Jehoram or Joram (SK)
Ahaziah or Jehoahaz (SK)
Joash or Jehoash (SK)
Jehoash or Joash (NK)
Azariah or Uzziah (SK)
Jehoiachin or Jeconiah or Coniah (SK)

The following appendices to this book provide alternative layouts of the chronology and other supporting information:

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[22] Grayson, *ABC*, 99–100 (Chron. 5:1–14).

[23] Regarding the statement in Jer 25:1 that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the *first year* of Nebuchadnezzar and not his accession year, this is related to the same issue as Nebuchadnezzar's 19th vs. 18th years (2 Kgs 25:8 vs. Jer 52:29). It will be addressed in Chapter 5B.

- Appendix C presents the regnal data for the Hebrew kings.
- Appendix D provides a tabular layout of the chronology.
- Appendix E provides a graphical (vertical line) depiction of the chronology, which allows easier side-by-side comparison of the kings of Judah, Israel, Assyria, and Babylon. Although visually simpler, the graphical depiction is not as precise as the brick-wall layout below.
- Appendices F and G, read in conjunction with the chronology, provide guidance commentary for the kings of Judah and Israel, respectively.

TABLE 4—CHRONOLOGY OF THE HEBREW KINGS

Rehoboam	AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Solomon	40																
	942	**941**	**940**	**939**	**938**	**937**	**936**	**935**	**934**	**933**	**932**	**931**	**930**	**929**	**928**	**927**	
Jeroboam	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		

Asa					AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Abijam		AC	1	2	3												
Rehoboam	16	17															
	926	**925**	**924**	**923**	**922**	**921**	**920**	**919**	**918**	**917**	**916**	**915**	**914**	**913**	**912**	**911**	
Jeroboam	16	17	18	19	20	21	22										
Nadab							1	2									
Baasha								1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

Asa	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
	910	**909**	**908**	**907**	**906**	**905**	**904**	**903**	**902**	**901**	**900**	**899**	**898**	
Baasha	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	

Asa	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
	897	**896**	**895**	**894**	**893**	**892**	**891**	**890**	**889**	**888**	**887**	**886**	**885**	**884**	**883**	**882**	
Baasha	23	24															
Elah		1	2														
Zimri			7d														
Omri			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
Tibni			rival	rival	rival	rival	rival	rival?									
Ahab														1	2	3	

Jehoshaphat	AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Asa	41																
	881	**880**	**879**	**878**	**877**	**876**	**875**	**874**	**873**	**872**	**871**	**870**	**869**	**868**	**867**	**866**	
Ahab	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	

Joash														r/v^{AC}	r/v^{1}	r/v^{2}	
Athaliah														1	2	3	
Ahaziah													AC	1			
Jehoram	AC	1	2 / v^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	v^{4} /1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8				
Jehoshaphat	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25							
	865	**864**	**863**	**862**	**861**	**860**	**859**	**858**	**857**	**856**	**855**	**854**	**853**	**852**	**851**	**850**	
Ahab	20	21	22														
Ahaziah		1	2														
Joram			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
Jehu														AC	1	2	

Joash	r/v^{3}	r/v^{4}	r/v^{5}	r/v^{6} / 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Athaliah	4	5	6	7													
	849	**848**	**847**	**846**	**845**	**844**	**843**	**842**	**841**	**840**	**839**	**838**	**837**	**836**	**835**	**834**	
Jehu	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	

Joash	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
	833	**832**	**831**	**830**	**829**	**828**	**827**	**826**	**825**	**824**	**823**	**822**	**821**	**820**	**819**	**818**	
Jehu	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28							
Jehoahaz										AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Azariah																AC	
Amaziah											AC	1	2	3	4	5	
Joash	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40						
	817	**816**	**815**	**814**	**813**	**812**	**811**	**810**	**809**	**808**	**807**	**806**	**805**	**804**	**803**	**802**	
Jehoahaz	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17						
Jehoash								vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	v^{3} / 1	2	3	4	5	6	
Jeroboam II														AC	1	2	

Azariah	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
15 Years										1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Amaziah	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
	801	**800**	**799**	**798**	**797**	**796**	**795**	**794**	**793**	**792**	**791**	**790**	**789**	**788**	**787**	**786**	
Jehoash	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16							
Jeroboam II	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	

Azariah	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	
15 Years	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15									
Amaziah	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29									
	785	**784**	**783**	**782**	**781**	**780**	**779**	**778**	**777**	**776**	**775**	**774**	**773**	**772**	**771**	**770**	
Jeroboam II	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	

Jotham						vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	vice^{4}	vice^{5}	vice^{6}	vice^{7}	vice^{8}	vice^{9}	vice^{10}	
Azariah	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	
	769	**768**	**767**	**766**	**765**	**764**	**763**	**762**	**761**	**760**	**759**	**758**	**757**	**756**	**755**	**754**	
Jeroboam II	35	36	37	38	39	40	41										
Zachariah							6m										
Shallum							1m										
Menahem								AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

Ahaz							vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	vice^{4}	v^{5} / 1	2	3	4	5	6	
Jotham	vice^{11}	vice^{12}	vice^{13}	v^{14} / 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Azariah	49	50	51	52														
	753	**752**	**751**	**750**	**749**	**748**	**747**	**746**	**745**	**744**	**743**	**742**	**741**	**740**	**739**	**738**	**737**	
Menahem	9	10																
Pekahiah		AC	1	2														
Pekah				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	

Hezekiah										AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Ahaz	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16							
Jotham	15	16	17	18	19	20											
	736	**735**	**734**	**733**	**732**	**731**	**730**	**729**	**728**	**727**	**726**	**725**	**724**	**723**	**722**	**721**	
Pekah	15	16	17	18	19	20											
Hoshea							AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

Hezekiah	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	720	**719**	**718**	**717**	**716**	**715**	**714**	**713**	**712**	**711**	**710**	**709**	**708**	**707**	**706**	**705**

Manasseh							AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Hezekiah	23	24	25	26	27	28	29									
	704	**703**	**702**	**701**	**700**	**699**	**698**	**697**	**696**	**695**	**694**	**693**	**692**	**691**	**690**	**689**

Manasseh	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	688	**687**	**686**	**685**	**684**	**683**	**682**	**681**	**680**	**679**	**678**	**677**	**676**	**675**	**674**	**673**

Manasseh	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
	672	**671**	**670**	**669**	**668**	**667**	**666**	**665**	**664**	**663**	**662**	**661**	**660**	**659**	**658**	**657**

Josiah																AC
Amon														AC	1	2
Manasseh	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55		
	656	**655**	**654**	**653**	**652**	**651**	**650**	**649**	**648**	**647**	**646**	**645**	**644**	**643**	**642**	**641**

Nabopolassar															AC	1
Josiah	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	640	**639**	**638**	**637**	**636**	**635**	**634**	**633**	**632**	**631**	**630**	**629**	**628**	**627**	**626**	**625**

Nabopolassar	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Josiah	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	624	**623**	**622**	**621**	**620**	**619**	**618**	**617**	**616**	**615**	**614**	**613**	**612**

Nabopolassar	15	16	17	18	19	20	21									
Nebuchadnezzar							AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Zedekiah														AC	1	2
Jehoiachin				vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	vice^{4}	vice^{5}	vice^{6}	vice^{7}	vice^{8}	vice^{9}	v^{10}/3m		
Jehoiakim			AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Jehoahaz		3m														
Josiah	30	31														
	611	**610**	**609**	**608**	**607**	**606**	**605**	**604**	**603**	**602**	**601**	**600**	**599**	**598**	**597**	**596**
Captivity															1	2

Nebuchadnezzar	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Zedekiah	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11							
	595	**594**	**593**	**592**	**591**	**590**	**589**	**588**	**587**	**586**	**585**	**584**	**583**	**582**	**581**	**580**
Captivity	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

Nebuchadnezzar	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
	579	**578**	**577**	**576**	**575**	**574**	**573**	**572**	**571**	**570**	**569**	**568**	**567**	**566**	**565**	**564**
Captivity	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34

Neriglissar				AC	1	2	3	4								
Amel-Marduk		AC	1	2												
Nebuchadnezzar	42	43														
	563	**562**	**561**	**560**	**559**	**558**	**557**	**556**	**555**	**554**	**553**	**552**	**551**	**550**	**549**	**548**
Captivity	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50

C. The Fall of Jerusalem: 587 or 586 B.C.?

Unfortunately, there is no record of the fall of Jerusalem—as yet found—in any secular text. This includes the Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 21946, which does not extend beyond Nebuchadnezzar's 11th year (594/93 B.C.). BM 21946 does, however, provide a useful synchronism. It discloses that Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem on Adar 2 of his seventh year. He then seized its king (Jehoiachin) and appointed a king of his own choice (Zedekiah).[24] The event is also recorded in 2 Kgs 24:10–17 and 2 Chr 36:10.

In Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year, Adar 2 was Mar. 16, 597 B.C. While this may seem an excellent synchronism to help date Zedekiah's reign and therefore the fall of Jerusalem in his eleventh year (2 Kgs 25:2–3), three variables must first be reconciled:

1. Was Judah using Nisan or Tishri years then?
2. Did Zedekiah's accession occur in Adar or a few weeks later in Nisan?
3. Was Zedekiah using accession or non-accession year dating?

The table below, adapted from Rodger Young's "Decision Analysis" method,[25] shows the possible dates for the fall of Jerusalem based on the aforementioned variables for Zedekiah's reign (AYD = accession year dating, NAYD = non-accession year dating):

TABLE 5—ANALYSIS OF THE FALL OF JERUSALEM VARIABLES

Accession Month	Adar	Adar	Adar	Adar	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan
Nisan/Tishri Yr	T	T	N	N	T	T	N	N
AYD / NAYD	AYD	NAYD	AYD	NAYD	AYD	NAYD	AYD	NAYD
Fall of Jerusalem	586	587	587	588	586	587	586	587

The table shows three possible dates for the fall of Jerusalem: 588, 587 and 586 B.C. Since it is widely accepted that Judah used accession year dating at the time, we can eliminate 588 B.C. This leaves 587 and 586 B.C. as the remaining possibilities. It also reduces the number of variables to two:

- the regnal year (Nisan or Tishri)
- the month of Zedekiah's accession (Adar or Nisan)

This study upholds a Nisan new year for Judah's kings, which is gaining in acceptance today.[26] If we therefore choose Nisan as the beginning of Judah's regnal year, the only variable is the month of Zedekiah's accession: Adar or Nisan (see shaded columns above). The choice yields the following outcomes:

[24] Grayson, *ABC*, 102 (Chron. 5 r. 11–13).
[25] Young, "When Did Jerusalem Fall," 30–31.
[26] For example, see Clines, "The Evidence for an Autumnal New Year in Pre-Exilic Israel Reconsidered;" idem, "Regnal Year Reckoning in the Last Years of the Kingdom of Judah."

1. ADAR: If Zedekiah began his eleven-year rule when Jerusalem was seized on Adar 2 (that is, before the end of the Hebrew year) then his accession occurred in 598/97 B.C., his first year was 597/96 B.C. and his 11th year was 587/86 B.C. Since Jerusalem fell on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's 11th year (2 Kgs 25:2–3), the event can be dated to Jul. 29, 587 B.C.

2. NISAN: On the other hand, if Zedekiah was placed on the throne a few weeks later, early in the new year in the month of Nisan, then his accession year was 597/96 B.C., his first year 596/95 B.C. and his 11th year 586/85 B.C. The ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's 11th year (Jerusalem's fall) would then be dated to Jul. 18, 586 B.C.

Our study favors 587 B.C. for the fall of Jerusalem, hence Adar for Zedekiah's accession. This choice is based on four supporting factors, which will be amplified in later chapters:

- The Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 21946 is specific in dating the placement of a new king in Jerusalem (Zedekiah) to the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar. See Chapter 10C ("598/97").

- We uphold that the Hebrews counted 605 B.C. as Nebuchadnezzar's *first* year and not his accession year (see chs. 5B, 10C ["607/06"], and 11B16). This explains the synchronism in Jer 25:1 between Jehoiakim's fourth year (605 B.C.) and Nebuchadnezzar's first year (cf. Jer 46:2). By the same logic, the notice in 2 Kgs 25:8 that Jerusalem fell in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar (by Hebrew counting) means that it fell in his official 18th year, which was 587 B.C. This agrees with Jer 52:29: "In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons." As will be discussed in Chapter 5B, Jer 52:28–30 derives from Babylonian sources, not Hebrew ones.

- 587 B.C. fits well with the "captivity" time notices in Ezekiel, and also with the notices in Jeremiah (ch. 5AB refers).

- A solution to Ezek 4:4–6 is proposed in Chapter 5C. However, it only works if the siege of Jerusalem began in the latter part of 589/88 B.C. Our date for the start of the siege, January 588 B.C., satisfies this requirement. The city fell 19 Hebrew months later in July 587 B.C.

D. Jotham, Ahaz, and Viceregencies in General

The office of viceregent was not uncommon in ancient Near Eastern kingdoms. It was held by the nominated heir apparent, or crown prince. However, the years spent as viceregent did not count toward a king's official regnal total.

We have concluded that a crown prince in Judah or Israel was entitled to be called king. The evidence also suggests that the Hebrews called the crown prince of a neighbouring state king, even though he may not have been referred to as such by his own people.

In this section, the following issues will be examined:

1. the viceregency of Jotham
2. the assumed viceregency of Ahaz
3. the handling of viceregencies by the Hebrew historian

Discussion of viceregencies will also continue in Sections E, F, and G below.

1. The Viceregency of Jotham

According to our chronology, Jotham's 34+ years in office comprised (consecutively):

- a viceregency of 14+ years
- a 16-year sole regency (during which time Ahaz became coregent in Jotham's ninth year)
- a 4-year period when Ahaz reigned as senior king having seized the throne from Jotham

Although the Bible provides sufficient data to reconstruct the final 16 + 4 years of Jotham's reign, there are no regnal notices for his viceregency. How, then, was it determined?

Let us begin by examining if any overlap (viceregency or coregency) is justified between Azariah and Jotham. Many scholars agree that there was some type of overlap, given that Azariah was stricken with leprosy for attempting to burn incense in the temple, which was a priestly function (2 Chr 26:15–21). Following this, "Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land" (26:21). Since Jotham took on official duties, it is commonly accepted that he was elevated to royal office, so beginning a period of regnal overlap. However, there is no consensus on the nature or duration of that overlap.[27] To complicate matters, the modern view is that few (if any) overlaps existed for the Hebrew kings. Because most of them are *assumed* (i.e., the Bible does not specifically mention them), many scholars conclude that overlaps are an unwarranted harmonizing device.[28] Nevertheless, it is our view that viceregencies occurred in Judah and Israel, and Chart 1 shows the finalized pattern for Jotham's overlapping rule from Table 4 above (the shaded block indicates the year of Jotham's transition to sole rule).

CHART 1—JOTHAM'S REGNAL OVERLAP: FINALIZED PATTERN

Jotham		vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	vice^{4}	vice^{5}	vice^{6}	vice^{7}	vice^{8}	vice^{9}	vice^{10}	vice^{11}	vice^{12}	vice^{13}	v^{14} / 1	2		
Azariah	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52			
	765	**764**	**763**	**762**	**761**	**760**	**759**	**758**	**757**	**756**	**755**	**754**	**753**	**752**	**751**	**750**	**749**		
Jeroboam	39	40	41																
Zachariah			6m																
Shallum			1m																
Menahem				AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
Pekahiah														AC	1	2			
Pekah																1	2		

Our finalized chronology for Jotham shows a viceregency of 14 years. How was this figure determined? In my original pattern there was no viceregency, simply a short coregency as Chart 2 indicates.

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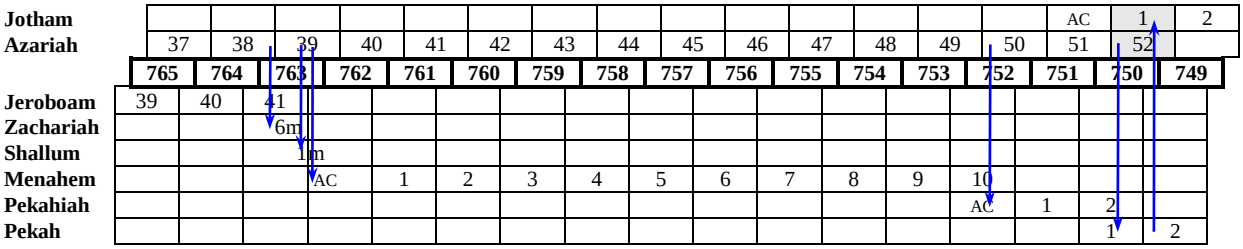
[27] Coregent durations for Jotham include: 8 years (Albright 1945), 12 years (Thiele 1983), 16 years (Cogan and Tadmor 1988), 16 years (Galil 1996). Jones, on the other hand, cites a 4-year viceregency (2005, Chart 5).

[28] So Hughes, *Secrets of the Times*, 97–107. The premise of Hughes' book is that the regnal data for the Hebrew kings is inaccurate because the editors were more interested in chronological schematism than in historical accuracy. Although I disagree with that notion, as well as the author's refutation of coregencies, his comments concerning the unlikelihood of a coregency for Jotham are sound (pp. 104–05). If anything, according to Hughes, he was a *viceregent*.

CHART 2—JOTHAM'S REGNAL OVERLAP: ORIGINAL PATTERN



Closer analysis of Jotham's rule showed this pattern to be problematic for the following reasons:

- In 1 Chr 5:17, we read about a census that was conducted for the Transjordan tribes: "All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel." This statement indicates that Jotham and Jeroboam II ruled at the same time. However, in my original pattern, Jotham's coregency began 13 years *after* Jeroboam II's death.

- In 2 Kings, the order of monarchs by regnal notice is Pekahiah (NK), Pekah (NK), and Jotham (SK). This contradicted my original order of Pekahiah (NK), Jotham (SK, dual-dated), and Pekah (NK). Since I believe that the order of regnal notices in 2 Kings reflects the actual historical order (see sec. H below), Jotham's reign was out of sequence.[29] It returns to sequence, though, when we begin Jotham's 16-year rule at Azariah's death.

- The account of Azariah in 2 Chr 26 reveals that he was stricken with leprosy after he became powerful. He then recruited Jotham to help him supervise royal affairs (i.e., Jotham was made viceregent). When did Azariah become powerful? The narrative in 2 Chr 26 suggests that it happened not near the end of his reign but much earlier, possibly within a decade of commencing his sole rule. Therefore, even if Azariah was stricken with leprosy 20 years after he began his sole rule, Jotham was assisting him for at least eight years, and not one or two years as in a short coregency.

- In the original pattern, Azariah would have been 42 years old when Jotham was born (see Table 6 below). Although possible, this is quite late for a Judahite king. By contrast, in the finalized pattern (featuring a 14-year viceregency), Azariah was 29 at Jotham's birth, which is more reasonable. It also means that Jotham was 54 (not 41) when Ahaz usurped the throne in Jotham's 16th year. Jotham's older age better suits the circumstances of an aggressive, pro-Assyrian coregent son usurping him.

- Hoshea's accession occurred in Jotham's 20th year which was also Ahaz's 12th year (2 Kgs 15:30; 17:1). This means that Ahaz's coregency began in Jotham's eighth year, assuming no viceregency for Ahaz.[30] In the original pattern, Jotham was 25 years old when he began his

[29] In Chart 2 above (short coregency), the order in which the kings began their counted years is Pekahiah, Jotham (starting from his accession year), and Pekah. This order disagrees with Table 7. By contrast, the order in which the kings began their counted years in Chart 1 (viceregency for Jotham) is Pekahiah, Pekah, and Jotham (starting from his sole regency). This order agrees with Table 7.

[30] A viceregency segment for Ahaz will cause his subsequent coregency to begin in Jotham's *ninth* not eighth year (compare Charts 3 and 4 below).

16-year reign (2 Kgs 15:33). He was therefore 33 years old eight years later when Ahaz began to rule at the age of 20 (2 Kgs 16:2). This means that Jotham was 13 when Ahaz was born, which is questionable. However, if we assume a 14-year viceregency for Jotham, then he was 25 when his viceregency began, and 46 when Ahaz's coregency began. In that case, Jotham was 26 (a more reasonable age) when Ahaz was born.

- Although Josephus' account of Azariah becoming leprous is probably a conflation of historical and prophetic events, his inclusion of a great earthquake is interesting:

> In the mean time, a great earthquake shook the ground, and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the king's face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately. And before the city, at a place called Eroge, half the mountain broke off from the rest on the west, and rolled itself four furlongs, and stood still at the east mountain, till the roads, as well as the king's gardens, were spoiled by the obstruction. Now, as soon as the priests saw that the king's face was infected with the leprosy, they told him of the calamity he was under, and commanded that he should go out of the city as a polluted person. Hereupon he was so confounded at the sad distemper, and sensible that he was not at liberty to contradict, that he did as he was commanded, and underwent this miserable and terrible punishment for an intention beyond what befitted a man to have, and for that impiety against God which was implied therein. So he abode out of the city for some time, and lived a private life, while his son Jonathan [*sic*] took the government.[31]

  Despite the implausibility of some aspects of this account, two points are noteworthy. First, Josephus was probably alluding to the great earthquake mentioned in Amos 1:1 (and Zech 14:5), which occurred "in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel." Even if the earthquake inclusion is wrong, there appears to be a strong historical memory that Uzziah was struck with leprosy while Jeroboam II was alive, probably within a few years of that earthquake. Second, Josephus mentioned that Uzziah was leprous "for some time." This supports the notion that Jotham supervised the kingdom for several years.

All the above problems, especially the census of 1 Chr 5:17, are resolved when we conclude that Jotham was made viceregent (i.e., an uncounted overlap began) during the reign of Jeroboam II. Since Jeroboam II died in the Nisan year 764/63 B.C., this is the latest date that Jotham could have been made viceregent. Accordingly, his viceregency must have lasted at least 14 years (from the death of Jeroboam II in 763 B.C. to the death of Azariah in 750/49 B.C.). In all likelihood it was longer, hence the 14+ superscript for Jotham in the tabular chart of Appendix D. Since there is no Biblical data by which to reckon its true duration, I have cited the minimum figure.[32]

2. The Assumed Viceregency of Ahaz

The apparent age of a Judahite king when his successor was born is shown in Table 6. Because the Bible does not give the month of birth, the father's age (in the right-hand column) is not exact; it may be one year less or more.

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[31] *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (trans. William Whiston; Cincinnati: H. S. & J. Applegate: 1850), 200. The modern reference is *Ant*. 9.225–27.

[32] The regnal notice of 2 Kgs 15:32–33 for Jotham is dual-dated, meaning that his age upon coming to the throne (25 years) refers to the start of his viceregency.

TABLE 6—AGE ANALYSIS OF THE JUDAHITE KINGS

MONARCH	AGE AT START OF RULE	AGE AT BIRTH OF SUCCESSOR
Rehoboam	41	–
Abijam	not given	–
Asa	not given	–
Jehoshaphat	35	19
Jehoram	32	22
Ahaziah	22	23
Athaliah	not given	–
Joash	7	21
Amaziah	25	14
Azariah	16	42
Jotham	25	13
Ahaz	20	11
Hezekiah	25	42
Manasseh	12	45
Amon	22	16
Josiah	8	15 (Jehoiakim) 17 (Jehoahaz) 30 (Zedekiah)
Jehoahaz	23	–
Jehoiakim	25	18
Jehoiachin	8/18	–
Zedekiah	21	–

Typically, men in the Ancient Near East married from age 18 onward. Circumstances were different, though, for the heir to the throne, who was usually the king's firstborn. The heir himself was under pressure to father a son to secure the line of succession. We are therefore not surprised that marriage and fatherhood occurred at younger ages for the Judahite kings.[33]

While one might accept Amaziah being 14 at the birth of his successor Azariah, it is highly unlikely that Ahaz became a father at eleven.[34] A viceregency solves the problem. Let us assume that Ahaz was 15 when Hezekiah was born (this age is a reasonable minimum). In that case, Ahaz's viceregency during Jotham's reign was of five years duration, with Jotham being 22 when Ahaz was born (by our chronology).

There were good reasons to make Ahaz viceregent. Judah was surrounded by hostile neighbors, which included Israel (ruled by the anti-Assyrian king Pekah). Jotham would have certainly wanted Ahaz to gain experience in this challenging environment. The threats only intensified after

[33] Witness Amaziah's request to Jehoash to establish a marriage alliance for his son, presumably Azariah, who was no older than 16 at the time (2 Kgs 14:9; 21).

[34] The regnal data indicates that Ahaz came to the throne at the age of 20 and that he ruled for 16 years (2 Kgs 16:2). This makes him 36 years old when Hezekiah succeeded him at the age of 25 (2 Kgs 18:2). It therefore appears that Ahaz was eleven when Hezekiah was born.

Tiglath-pileser began to rule in 745/44 B.C. Not surprisingly, Jotham made Ahaz a full coregent in 742/41 B.C.

Following standard practice, the regnal notice for Ahaz in 2 Kgs 16:1–2 is dual-dated:

> In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.

Although the synchronism of accession points to the start of Ahaz's usurpation ("In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah"), his age and length of reign refer to the start of his viceregency. Since viceregent years are not counted, Ahaz's 16-year reign begins with his coregency.

A viceregency for Ahaz does not affect the positioning of his first regnal year (742/41 B.C.) as the patterns below confirm:

CHART 3—NO VICEREGENCY FOR AHAZ

Ahaz											AC	1	2	3	4	5
Jotham	vice[11]	vice[12]	vice[13]	v[14] / 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Azariah	49	50	51	52												
	753	**752**	**751**	**750**	**749**	**748**	**747**	**746**	**745**	**744**	**743**	**742**	**741**	**740**	**739**	**738**
Menahem	9	10														
Pekahiah		AC	1	2												
Pekah				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

CHART 4—ASSUMED VICEREGENCY FOR AHAZ

Ahaz							vice[AC]	vice[1]	vice[2]	vice[3]	vice[4]	v[5] / 1	2	3	4	5
Jotham	vice[11]	vice[12]	vice[13]	v[14] / 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Azariah	49	50	51	52												
	753	**752**	**751**	**750**	**749**	**748**	**747**	**746**	**745**	**744**	**743**	**742**	**741**	**740**	**739**	**738**
Menahem	9	10														
Pekahiah		AC	1	2												
Pekah				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

3. The Handling of Viceregencies by the Hebrew Historian

The chronology of the Hebrew kings presented in Table 4 features six kings with viceregency segments. Five of them reigned in Judah (Jehoram, Joash, Jotham, Ahaz, and Jehoiachin) and one in Israel (Jehoash). The number of viceregencies in Judah is brought to eight with the omitted overlaps for Abijam and Asa (see sec. E below) and disconnected overlap for Zedekiah (see sec. G).

The high number of viceregencies in Judah is not surprising given the great attention in that kingdom to the continuation of the Davidic line (cf. 1 Kgs 2:4; 2 Chr 7:17–18). However, despite their number, it is still difficult to glean the existence of viceregencies from the regnal data. A simple explanation for this can be given. When the Hebrew historian was compiling the books of Kings, he undoubtedly had access to official documents that were replete with historical details and chronological notices. However, because of the great volume of data to be redacted, brevity was vital. Therefore, only the most essential details were to be recorded. So constrained, the

historian evidently ignored Judah's many viceregencies—the years of which were not counted—and patterned the regnal data around the counted years of its kings. The standout example is 2 Kgs 24:8, which reports that Jehoiachin was 18 when he began his three-month rule. Were it not for the fortuitous notice of 2 Chr 36:9, we would not know about Jehoiachin's viceregency, which began when he was eight years old. Again, were it not for 1 Chr 5:17, there would be no certainty about Jotham's viceregency.

The decision by the historian to exclude Judah's viceregencies was practical and literarily economic. (Similarly, the dual-dating procedure, which succinctly describes overlapping reigns in an economy of words and numbers, was driven by the need for brevity.) Although the omission of viceregency data creates problems (such as Ahaz's unfeasible age of eleven when Hezekiah was born), they are not insurmountable, and the primary reigns of each monarch can still be constructed.

Unlike for Judah whose viceregency data was excluded, the single viceregency in Israel (for Jehoash) was included in Kings. This is probably because it was the *only* viceregency for that kingdom. Also, its inclusion did not complicate the regnal data, which cannot be said for some of the Judahite viceregencies (such as Jehoram's).

The regnal data in Chronicles generally follows that of Kings.[35] However, the Chronicler added unique information. Of interest to chronologers are the following notices not found in Kings: 2 Chr 11:17; 15:10, 19; 16:1, 12–13; 17:7; 21:19; 24:15; 27:5; 29:3; 34:3; 36:21. A handful of these appear erroneous, prompting scholars to discount them (e.g., 15:19; 16:1; 36:9).

E. Asa's 35th and 36th Years

The chronology in Table 4 features six viceregencies, which have been determined through one of three methods:

1. correlation of the regnal data: Jehoram (SK), Joash (SK), Jehoash (NK), Jehoiachin (SK)
2. incidental Scriptural reference: Jotham (SK)
3. father-son age analysis: Ahaz (SK)[36]

Three more viceregencies in Judah are indicated. One is for Zedekiah, the Scriptural evidence for which is discussed in Section G. The other two are for Abijam and his successor Asa. While their viceregencies are based on circumstantial evidence, they help to explain some otherwise puzzling anomalies in the regnal data.

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[35] The books of Kings and Chronicles differ in their purposes. While Kings provides a comprehensive history of the monarchic era (it gives an account of the unified and divided monarchies from the death of David to the fall of Jerusalem), Chronicles retells the history of Israel from Adam to the exile concentrating on the Davidic line. The Chronicler writes from a more priestly perspective, and lays the theological groundwork for understanding the post-exilic restoration.

[36] Although this study accepts that Amaziah was around 14 years old when his successor Azariah was born (see Table 6), the possibility of a viceregency for Amaziah—which would raise his age at Azariah's birth—cannot be ruled out. For details on how this viceregency might be patterned, see Appendix F, "Amaziah."

The reign of Asa. In the 20th year of Jeroboam, Asa began his rule of 41 years (1 Kgs 15:9–10). By our chronology, his accession occurred sometime between Nisan and Elul, 922 B.C. The events of Asa's reign are narrated in 1 Kgs 15 and 2 Chr 14–16. Both sources record the details in chronological order but the latter account provides additional information. A summary of this account is shown below with the shaded events being those also recorded in 1 Kgs 15. Observe the decline in faithfulness during Asa's later years:

- Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Chr 14:2).
- He removed the symbols of idolatry from the land (14:3–5).
- Because of this, there was no war in the land for ten years (14:1, 6).
- During those ten years Asa strengthened Judah's cities and fortified the army (14:6–8).
- Zerah and his large Ethiopian army came against Judah but were defeated (14:9–15).
- In the third month of Asa's 15th year, Judah made a covenant to seek the Lord (15:1–14).
- In response, "the LORD gave them rest round about" (15:15, cf. 15:19).
- Asa deposed his (grand)mother, queen Maachah, and destroyed her idol (15:16).
- The high places were not removed (15:17).
- Asa placed votive items in the temple (15:18).
- There was no war until Asa's 35th year (15:19).
- Baasha came against Judah by blockading Jerusalem to the north at Ramah (16:1).
- Baasha's invasion occurred in Asa's 36th year (16:1).
- Asa bought a treaty with Ben-Hadad of Syria who then attacked Israel (16:2–6).
- Asa imprisoned Hanani who spoke against his seeking of help from Ben-Hadad (16:7–10).
- In his old age, Asa became diseased in his feet (16:12).
- This occurred in his 39th year but he did not seek the Lord's help (16:12).
- Asa died in his 41st year (16:13).

The Kings and Chronicles accounts present two problems. First, despite a ten-year period of peace in the land, 1 Kgs 15 reports that "there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days" (vv. 16, 32). This minor discrepancy is resolved if we view the term "all their days" as referring to ongoing border skirmishes rather than to sustained, all-out warfare between the two kingdoms (cf. 14:30; 15:6–7). The next problem is more difficult. Second Chronicles 15:19 reports that there was no war in the land until the 35th of Asa, while the following verse (16:1) discloses that Baasha came against Judah in the 36th year of Asa. Since Asa's 36th regnal year (886 B.C.) was some ten years *after* Baasha died (in 896 B.C.), the notices concerning the 35th and 36th years of Asa appear to be mistaken. Ussher's solution was to date those notices from the schism.[37] This solution is still popular today with Biblicists, and it yields the following sequence of events when applied to our chronology:

[37] Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, 69.

YEARS FROM THE SCHISM	YEARS OF ASA'S REIGN	DATE B.C.	EVENT
20–25	ac–5	922–917	Initial years of conflict with Baasha.
25–35	5–15	917–907	Ten years without war. This period ended when Zerah attacked Judah early in Asa's 15th = 35th year.[38] In the third month of that year, the people made a covenant to seek the Lord. Asa's actions secured peace in the land, which lasted until Baasha's attack the next year.
36	16	906	Baasha came against Judah and built Ramah. This was in the 16th = 36th year of Asa. Asa hired Ben-Hadad of Syria to stop Baasha.
59	39	883	Asa became diseased in his feet.
61	41	881	Asa died.

This solution raises at least six problems:

1. Second Chronicles 15:19 and 16:1 mention "the five and thirtieth year *of the reign of Asa*" and "the six and thirtieth year *of the reign of Asa*." Given this explicit language, the idea that the "reign of Asa" is equivalent to "years from the schism" is unconvincing.

2. There is no precedent in the Hebrew data to count regnal years this way.

3. After Judah made a covenant with the Lord in the third month of Asa's 15th year, 2 Chr 15:15 reports that "the LORD gave them rest round about." In the Bible, notices concerning rest in the land typically refer to periods of longer than a year (e.g., Judg 3:11, 30; 5:31; 2 Chr 14:6). If the Lord gave Judah rest in the 15th year of Asa, then it lasted for only one year in Ussher's scheme because Baasha attacked Judah in the 36th year of Asa (= 16th year).

4. The covenant that the people made in Asa's 15th year was a high point in Asa's and Judah's faithfulness, and would have encouraged them to trust the Lord for at least a few years. Indeed, the people swore on penalty of death to keep the covenant (2 Chr 15:12–13). If Baasha attacked Judah in the following year, then Asa's response in trusting Ben-Hadad and not the Lord to deliver Judah is incongruous given that the covenant was made, with fervor, only a year before.

5. In Ussher's scheme, 2 Chr 15:19 is out of sequence. It would be better placed *before* Zerah's attack (i.e., between 2 Chr 14:8 and 14:9).

6. Some Biblicists claim that Baasha invaded Judah in Asa's 36th = 16th year to stop the emigration of Israelites to Judah following Asa's resounding victory over the Ethiopians (2 Chr 15:9; cf. 16:1). Undoubtedly, there would have been an Israelite response to limit this emigration but it was probably part of the ongoing low-level skirmishes between the two

[38] Second Chronicles 15:19 reports that there was no (more) war in the land until the 35th year of Asa. By Ussher's scheme, this means that the ten-year period of peace was broken by Zerah's attack in Asa's 15th year. The attack must have occurred early that year. After Asa's victory over Zerah, the people of Judah offered some of the spoils of that victory in the third month of Asa's 15th year (15:10–11).

> kingdoms. Furthermore, 2 Chr 15:9 and 16:1 differ. Whereas the former verse describes a one-way migration (from Israel to Judah), the latter refers to a two-way traffic of people between the kingdoms. This suggests that Baasha occupied Ramah not only to prevent the emigration of Israelites but to control and block the northern trade routes into Jerusalem. Clearly, there was more to Baasha's occupation of Ramah than the migration of Israelites alone.

For the above reasons, I believe that Ussher's solution is unlikely. Instead, I propose that the notices concerning the 35th and 36th years of Asa are counted *from when he was nominated the heir apparent*. In fact, during the reign of Rehoboam, it appears that there were *two* heirs-apparent, Abijam and Asa.[39] Let us review the circumstantial evidence for this conclusion.

Regnal overlaps for Abijam and Asa. From 2 Chr 11:21–23, it can be reasonably inferred that Rehoboam made Abijam the heir apparent during his reign:

> And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.) **And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, to be ruler among his brethren: for he thought to make him king**. And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives.

Given his large family, which included 28 sons, Rehoboam nominated Abijam as his successor early in his reign. It was a wise move. Had a successor not been nominated, there surely would have been jostling for the throne among Rehoboam's sons, perhaps with violence. The move also helped to ensure a smooth transfer of power for Abijam after Rehoboam's death.
As the heir apparent, Abijam was considered to be a viceregent. But Abijam himself had 22 sons (2 Chr 13:21), and there would be in-fighting for the throne among them. For the stability of the recently divided kingdom, it is possible that at some point during Rehoboam's reign, Abijam nominated Asa to succeed him.[40] A fitting time would have been after Shishak's invasion (2 Chr 12:2–11). This was when Judah first experienced servitude to a foreign power, and thus national vulnerability.

Some support for this double viceregency scenario is found in Table 6 above ("Age Analysis of the Judahite Kings"). There, we find that the Bible omits the accession ages of three of Judah's 20 rulers: Abijam, Asa, and Athaliah. It is understandable why Athaliah's age is not mentioned; she was not a Davidic heir. But why were the accession ages for Abijam and Asa omitted?

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[39] Originally, I adopted Ussher's solution. However, my view changed after reading *Bible 7, History 0* by A. P. McIntyre, to whom I am indebted for the idea that Asa shared an overlapping reign with both Abijam and Rehoboam.

[40] The Bible presents two difficulties regarding the parentage of Abijam and Asa. The first concerns Abijam's mother. Whereas 1 Kgs 15:2 states that it was "Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom" (cf. 2 Chr 11:20–22), 2 Chr 13:2 reports that it was "Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah." In all likelihood, both notices refer to Maachah, who was the *granddaughter* of Absalom through his daughter Tamar (2 Sam 14:27) who married Uriel. The second difficulty concerns Asa's mother, who is reported in Kings as being "Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom" (1 Kgs 15:10; cf. 2 Chr 15:16). If Asa was Abijam's son as the Bible states (1 Kgs 15:8; 2 Chr 14:1), then how could they both have the same mother? Evidently, Maachah was Asa's *grandmother*. Perhaps she raised Asa after his natural mother died in childbirth, so she is credited in the Bible as being his mother.

The complicated regnal scenario for Rehoboam, Abijam, and Asa undoubtedly posed a problem for the Hebrew historian, who sought brevity in the regnal notices. Accordingly, both he and the Chronicler omitted reference to the accession ages of Abijam and Asa. This served a dual purpose: (1) to confirm that regnal overlaps did indeed occur for Abijam and Asa, and (2) to signal that the year of transition to sole rule for both kings should be treated as an *accession year* and not a first year (as is normally the case for viceregencies and coregencies).

Based on the preceding discussion, the following speculations regarding Asa's reign are offered.

942–937 B.C.

Rehoboam took steps to secure the stability of the kingdom following Israel's breakaway. One of those steps was to nominate Abijam (the son of his favored wife Maachah) as his successor. This occurred probably sometime between 942 and 939 B.C. Shishak invaded Judah (and Israel) in Rehoboam's fifth year, 937 B.C. (1 Kgs 14:25; 2 Chr 12:2–4). In the aftermath of this national shock, Rehoboam asked Abijam to nominate his own successor, who was Asa. This was viewed as a sensible move. Two viceregents ensured a planned succession even if Rehoboam and Abijam were both killed in battle (which was possible given the hostile intentions of Egypt, Israel, and neighboring states). Also, a second viceregent would make it more difficult for an ambitious, probably older brother—Abijam was not the eldest son—to secure the throne for himself after Rehoboam's death (i.e., the usurper would have to assassinate *two* successors).

922–917 B.C. (from Asa's accession to his 5th year)

Abijam died in 922 B.C. and was succeeded by Asa. For the first four or five years of his rule, the kingdom of Judah was engaged in conflicts with neighboring nations, including Israel.

917–907 B.C. (Asa's 5th to 15th years)

This was a ten-year period without war, although minor border skirmishes with Israel continued. The lull ended when a powerful Ethiopian force led by Zerah attacked Judah either late in Asa's 14th year or early in his 15th year. Asa sought the Lord's help and was victorious. In the third month of Asa's 15th year (907 B.C.), the people assembled at Jerusalem and made a covenant to seek the Lord. Asa's actions secured peace for the land such that "there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa" (2 Chr 15:19).

902 & 901 B.C. (Asa's 20th & 21st years)

In the 35th year of Asa's reign, Judah was at war again with an unspecified nation (2 Chr 15:19). Then, in Asa's 36th year, Baasha invaded Israel (16:1). As proposed above, the 35th and 36th years of Asa were counted from when he was nominated the heir apparent. But why the sudden change of datum for these two notices only?

Both notices involve warfare after a period of peace. Coincidentally, a running theme in the Chronicles account for Asa's reign is the nexus between obeying the Lord and rest from war. Such rest characterized the righteous first half of Asa's reign (14:1, 6–7; 15:15, 19). However, the latter half is assessed negatively by the Chronicler. It begins with Hanani's rebuke of Asa after he bought Ben-Hadad's help to deliver Judah from Baasha, then the subsequent punishment that "from henceforth thou shalt have wars" (16:7–9). If, as suggested earlier, Asa was nominated the

heir apparent in the year of Shishak's invasion (937 B.C.), the Chronicler may have used this coincidence of dates to underscore the link between the king's (= the nation's) disobedience and servitude to a foreign power (12:5). In that case, he counted Judah's return to warfare from when Asa was made the heir apparent in the year of Shishak's invasion. (We may speculate that Rehoboam's disobedience and the resultant servitude of Judah to a foreign overlord was of particular interest to the Chronicler because it foreshadowed the fall of Jerusalem [36:11–21].)

If this explanation is correct, then we can date events as follows. In Asa's "35th" year, which was 902 B.C., Judah was at war again with an unspecified nation, so ending five years of peace that had lasted from 907 to 902 B.C. The very next year, in Asa's "36th" year, which was 901 B.C., Baasha invaded Judah and took Ramah. But his plans were thwarted when Asa paid Ben-Hadad king of Syria to make a treaty with him. Ben-Hadad attacked Israel and Baasha retreated from Ramah.

883 & 881 B.C. (Asa's 39th & 41st years)

The Chronicler now returns to the original datum, which is Asa's accession to sole rule. Asa became diseased in his feet in his 39th year, 883 B.C. He died in his 41st year, 881 B.C.

F. The Reign of Jehoram

The regnal data for the Hebrew kings from Ahab's final years to Jehu's revolt is complicated, especially for Jehoram (SK). For example, the notice in 2 Kgs 1:17 stating that Joram (NK) came to the throne in the second year of Jehoram contradicts other notices such as 2 Kgs 8:16–17, which records that Jehoram began his eight-year reign in the fifth year of Joram.

Typically, Biblicists harmonize 2 Kgs 1:17 and 8:16–17 by beginning the overlapping portion of Jehoram's reign with a viceregency (to which 2 Kgs 1:17 refers) followed by a coregency (to which 8:16–17 refers). For example, in Ussher's chronology, the full duration of Jehoram's reign was 14 years, beginning with a six-year viceregency. This was followed by his quoted eight-year reign, comprising a four-year coregency and four-year sole regency.[41] Anstey/Jones have a viceregency of two/three years followed by a four/three-year interregnum before Jehoram's eight-year rule, comprising a four-year coregency and four-year sole regency.[42]

At first, I accepted Ussher's viceregency + coregency + sole regency solution. This resulted in two possible patterns for the period from Jehoram's accession to Jehu's revolt. They are shown in Charts 5 and 6.

[41] Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, 71–72.
[42] Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, Table 2, 24; Jones 2005, Chart 5.

CHART 5—ORIGINAL PATTERN #1: COREGENCY FOR AHAZIAH (NK)

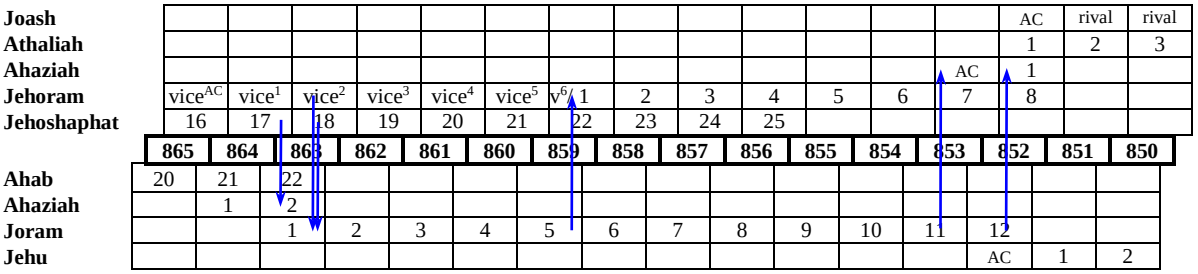
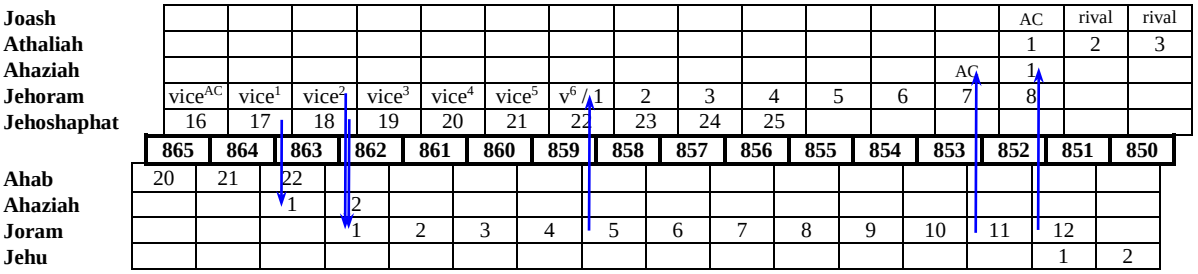
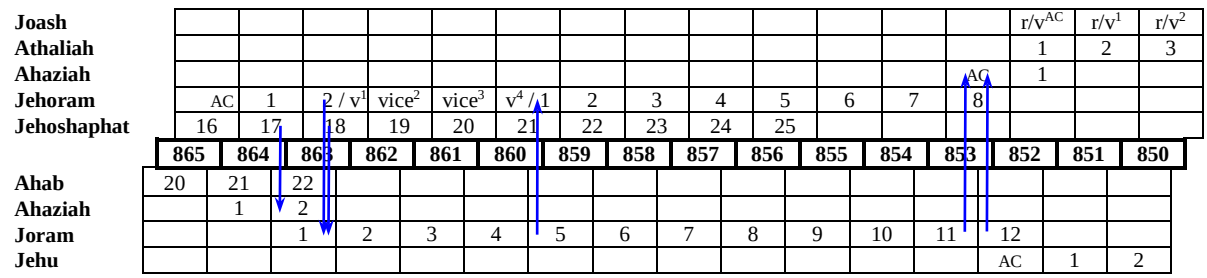


CHART 6—ORIGINAL PATTERN #2: NO COREGENCY FOR AHAZIAH (NK)



Although both these early attempts are harmonized, they disagree with my later conclusion that all viceregencies in Judah were excluded from the regnal data. Therefore, if 2 Kgs 1:17 referred to the second year of Jehoram's viceregency, it contravened the Hebrew historian's decision to exclude Judahite viceregencies. Furthermore, it is incongruous to have a synchronism refer to a specific viceregency year (i.e., Jehoram's second year) when viceregency years themselves were not counted. To address this, I modified the overlapping portion of Jehoram's reign to include two coregency segments separated by a viceregency interlude. (Thus, 2 Kgs 1:17 refers to the first coregency while 8:16–17 refers to the second.) Also, the coregency alternative for Ahaziah (NK) was chosen as being the more likely case. The resulting pattern is shown in Chart 7.

CHART 7—FINALIZED CHRONOLOGY



Analysis of the finalized pattern for Jehoram. We can speculate that Jehoshaphat made Jehoram coregent (the first time) due to the impending battle with Assyria. Although this was fought at Qarqar in 864 B.C.,[43] preparations for it by the coalition of Syro-Palestinian kings began earlier. Jehoshaphat probably played a behind-the-scenes role in this, which took him away from

[43] Refer to Chapter 6E for the revised dates of the Assyrian kings prior to 769 B.C.

Judah. Installing Jehoram as coregent assured the line of succession in the event of Jehoshaphat's death.

Not long after Joram came to the throne in Israel, Jehoshaphat discontinued his son Jehoram's coregency probably because of the decrease in regional tensions. Nevertheless, because he was the nominated heir-apparent (2 Chr 21:2–3), Jehoram continued as viceregent. In the fifth year of Joram (NK), Jehoram was made coregent again. The instigating reason may have been the vast coalition of forces from Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir that came against Judah (2 Chr 20:1–30). This time, however, Jehoram's coregency continued until he became sole ruler after his father's death.

The situation of a coregency interrupted by a viceregency would have been challenging for the Hebrew historian to narrate in his preferred, concise manner. Ordinarily, if Jehoram's coregency had not been interrupted, a dual-dated synchronism of accession could be given stating that Jehoram began to rule in the eighth or ninth year of Joram (when his sole rule began) and that he reigned for twelve years (counting from the start of his coregency in the Nisan year 865/64 B.C.). However, because of the viceregency interlude—the years of which were not counted—a dual-dated synchronism of accession could not be used because it requires that there be no break in the counted years of the regnal overlap.

Since it was the second coregency that transitioned to the all-important sole rule segment, the Hebrew historian aligned Jehoram's synchronism of accession with the start of his second coregency, and not the start of his sole rule as occurs in a dual-dated notice. To ensure that this synchronism would not be construed as being dual-dated, he specifically recorded that a coregency was in force when Jehoram began to rule:

> And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, **Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah**, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. (2 Kgs 8:16–17)

Thus, the first coregency segment was not counted in Jehoram's regnal total. But to indicate its existence, the historian included an extra synchronism for Joram in 2 Kgs 1:17. It was linked, uncharacteristically, to the junior ruler Jehoram:

> So he [Israel's Ahaziah] died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram [Israel's Joram] reigned in his stead **in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah**; because he had no son.

This synchronism was in addition to the standard accession notice for Joram in 2 Kgs 3:1, which was linked to the senior ruler Jehoshaphat:

> Now Jehoram [Israel's Joram] the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria **the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah**, and reigned twelve years.

It is the misunderstanding of the extra synchronism for Joram in 2 Kgs 1:17 that has caused some scholars to view it as erroneous.[44] The solution proposed in Chart 7 solves the problem.

[44] For example, Galil 1996, 38–40.

Narrative order and age. We have noted that the second coregency segment for Jehoram was of prime interest to the Hebrew historian because it transitioned to his sole regency. This is confirmed by the narrative order of monarchs in Kings (see Section H), where the account of Jehoram appears *after* that of Israel's Joram. It therefore follows that Jehoram's age when he began to rule (32 years) refers to the start of his second (and not first) coregency segment.

The battle of Qarqar. Before presenting a reconstruction of the regnal events affecting Judah and Israel from the closing years of Ahab's reign to Jehu's revolt, we should revisit the battle of Qarqar. Although not mentioned in the Bible, this battle was a milestone event in the ancient Near East (see ch. 3A, fn. 1). The showdown with Shalmaneser III was crucial to halting Assyria's westward advance into Syria-Palestine, and it explains the installation of Jehoram and Ahaziah as coregents in Judah and Israel. (Notably, they were the first coregents in each kingdom.) This freed their respective fathers to join their coalition partners in planning for the expected engagement against the Assyrians. While Jehoshaphat probably did not participate personally in the battle, he evidently supported the Syro-Palestinian coalition (as implied by Jehoram's elevation as coregent). We may also suppose that Jehoshaphat provided chariots and foot soldiers to Ahab for the offensive (cf. 2 Kgs 3:7).[45]

Outline of Events from 865 to 852 B.C.

The following is a reconstruction of the events associated with the finalized chronology depicted in Chart 7 above. It will be helpful to review this outline together with the notes for the relevant kings in Appendices F and G.

- Jehoshaphat made Jehoram coregent in the Nisan year 865/64 B.C., possibly in the first quarter of 864 B.C. (i.e., Jan.–Mar.). This was done as a precaution because Jehoshaphat would be absent from Judah in the lead-up to the battle of Qarqar, which occurred later that year. For the same reason, Ahab made his son Ahaziah coregent around the same time (i.e., Jan.–Mar., 864 B.C.). Jehoram was about 27 years of age then.

- The battle of Qarqar was fought in 864 B.C., probably in the summer gauging by the narrative references in Shalmaneser III's annals.

- A few months after the Qarqar engagement, Ahab died in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead between Tishri, 864 and Adar, 863 B.C. An earlier point in this range is preferred, say between November, 864 and January, 863 B.C. This allows more time for the events of Ahaziah's sole rule, which began in the 17th year of Jehoshaphat according to the dual-dated notice of 1 Kgs 22:51.

- Ahaziah died as a result of wounds received in a fall through a lattice pane in his upper chamber (2 Kgs 1:2). His death occurred possibly in the late summer (Aug.–Sep.) of 863

[45] According to Shalmaneser III's annals, Ahab assembled 2,000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers for the battle. Although the number of foot soldiers may have approached 10,000, it is highly unlikely that Ahab had a chariot force of 2,000, even accounting for the extra chariots provided by Jehoshaphat. For discussion, see Marco De Odorico, *The Use of Numbers and Quantifications in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 103–07; Nadav Na'aman, "Ahab's Chariot Force at the Battle of Qarqar," in *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors*, 1–12.

B.C. His sole rule therefore lasted around seven to ten months. Because he had no son, Ahaziah was succeeded by his brother Joram.

- Joram's accession occurred in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat (2 Kgs 3:1). This was also the second year of Jehoram's coregency, which would soon be stepped back to a viceregency owing to the return of political stability in the region. To indicate the existence of this first, short coregency segment for Jehoram, the Hebrew historian added a synchronism of accession for Joram that referred to it (2 Kgs 1:17). This notice was in addition to the standard, formulaic synchronism of 2 Kgs 3:1.

- As well as confirming the existence of a first coregency segment, 2 Kgs 1:17 may also be alluding to its duration. In other words, Jehoram's first coregency ended in its second year (i.e., later in the Nisan year 863/62).

- During Jehoshaphat's reign, a large military force comprising troops from Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir came against Judah (2 Chr 20:1–30). This could have been the event that triggered Jehoshaphat to elevate Jehoram again as coregent. In any case, his second coregency began in the fifth year of Joram, between Tishri, 860 and Adar, 859 B.C., at the age of 32 (2 Kgs 8:16–17). Because Jehoram's second coregency continued without break to the start of his sole rule, and also because of the complexity of the coregency + viceregency + coregency + sole regency situation, the Hebrew historian counted the duration of Jehoram's rule (eight years) from this point (i.e., Joram's fifth year).

- Jehoram's sole rule began after Jehoshaphat's death sometime in the Nisan year 856/55. No synchronism with Israel is given for Jehoram's sole rule but it began either in the eighth or ninth year of Joram.

- In his final two years, Jehoram was stricken with a terminal bowel disease (2 Chr 21:18–19). His health deteriorating, Jehoram made Ahaziah—his sole surviving heir—coregent in the eleventh year of Joram (2 Kgs 9:29). Our chronology therefore dates the start of Ahaziah's coregency (i.e., his accession year) to the final year of Jehoram, between Nisan and Elul, 853 B.C. Ahaziah's sole rule began later that Nisan year, in Joram's twelfth year (2 Kgs 8:25–26). Specifically, Ahaziah's sole rule began after Jehoram died between Tishri, 853 and Adar, 852 B.C. An earlier point in this range is preferred, say between October and December, 853 B.C., as it allows more time for the events of Ahaziah's sole rule.

- As the preceding paragraph indicates, the Hebrew historian recorded *two* synchronisms of accession for Ahaziah:

  > And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah. (2 Kgs 9:29)
  >
  > In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign. Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel. (8:25–26)

  Although the synchronism to Joram's eleventh year appears contradictory, I believe that the Hebrew historian included it to alert us to the unique situation of a son becoming coregent

then achieving sole rule *in the same regnal year*.[46] Thus, 2 Kgs 8:25–26 is a standard dual-dated synchronism showing that Ahaziah's sole rule began sometime in the latter half of the Nisan year 853/52 B.C., in Joram's twelfth year. However, 2 Kgs 9:29 points to the start of Ahaziah's coregency (at age 22) in the first half of the same Nisan year 853/52 B.C., in Joram's eleventh year.[47]

- The death of Joram (NK) and his nephew Ahaziah (SK) at the hand of Jehu occurred between Nisan and Elul, 852 B.C., possibly in the late summer (in which case, Ahaziah's sole rule lasted around eight to eleven months). In Judah, Ahaziah's mother Athaliah responded to her son's death by having the remainder of the royal family killed, so securing the throne for herself. However, unknown to Athaliah, one son of Ahaziah remained alive. He was the infant Joash, and he was rescued by Ahaziah's sister Jehosheba. She stole Joash away from the other brothers about to be murdered, and hid him in the temple precinct for six years.

- Our chronology treats the Nisan year in which Ahaziah died (852/51 B.C.) as the accession year of Joash, owing to God's promise that a light would always shine in Jerusalem through David's royal sons (1 Kgs 11:36; cf. 1 Kgs 2:4; 8:25; 9:5). His six-year overlap with Athaliah is therefore treated as a technical rival reign/viceregency.

- Jehu had done as the Lord instructed by destroying the house of Ahab (overzealously, by all accounts) and removing Baal worship from the land. Significantly, Israel changed to accession year dating with Jehu. This was the system used by the Judahite kings and also by the kings of the unified monarchy, which included righteous David and Solomon. We may speculate that Jehu aligned Israel's system with that of her southern neighbor to herald a new era in Israel's faithfulness. Regional politics, though, may have also influenced the change. Recall that Jehu paid tribute to the Assyrians in Shalmaneser III's 18th year (852/52 B.C.), which was Jehu's accession year (see ch. 3A, fn. 2). The Assyrians used accession year dating, and this may have been a contributing factor in Jehu's decision to change Israel's system (to appease the Assyrians).

G. Zedekiah's Short Viceregency

According to our chronology, king Josiah of Judah ruled from 641/40 to 610 B.C. (see ch. 9 for the year of his death). The four kings who succeeded him were:

1. Jehoahaz: birth name Shallum, son of Josiah, mother was Hamutal. He ruled for only three months (2 Kgs 23:31; 2 Chr 36:2).

2. Jehoiakim: birth name Eliakim, son of Josiah, mother was Zebudah. He ruled for eleven years (2 Kgs 23:36; 2 Chr 36:5).

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[46] Regarding the synchronisms for Ahaziah to the twelfth and eleventh years of Joram, Thiele concluded that the former was expressed in non-accession year terms and the latter in accession year terms (Thiele 1983, 101). However, as this is a unique occurrence in the regnal data (of two synchronisms to the same king differing by a year), we suspect a more extraordinary reason for the inclusion of the 2 Kgs 9:29 notice.

[47] For the apparent discrepancy in Ahaziah's age when he began to reign, 22 or 42 years (2 Kgs 8:26 vs. 2 Chr 22:2), see Appendix F, "Ahaziah."

3. Jehoiachin: birth name Jeconiah, son of Jehoiakim, mother was Nehushta. He ruled for three months and ten days (2 Kgs 24:8; 2 Chr 36:9).

4. Zedekiah: birth name Mattaniah, son of Josiah, mother was Hamutal. He ruled for eleven years (2 Kgs 24:18; 2 Chr 36:11).

The listing above suggests that Josiah had three sons: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah. However, according to 1 Chr 3:15, he had four:

> And the sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum [Jehoahaz].

This notice raises two problems: (1) As the eldest son, one would expect Johanan to have succeeded Josiah as king. However, since he is not mentioned elsewhere in Kings or Chronicles, one may assume that he died early in life, so leaving Jehoiakim as the eldest son; (2) Although 1 Chr 3:15 places Zedekiah before Jehoahaz in the birth order of Josiah's sons, the father-son age analysis in Table 6 above suggests that Zedekiah was born well after Jehoahaz. This second problem has long puzzled Biblicists, who admit error in the Bible only as a last resort. Consider the entry for Jehoahaz in the respected 19th century volume *The Imperial Bible-Dictionary*:

> 2. JEHOAHAZ. A son of Josiah, king of Judah, and also his immediate successor on the throne. It is said the people, on the death of his father, took him and anointed him, and made him king, 2 Ki. xxiii 30; although it is clear he was not the eldest son. For, after a brief reign of three months, he was deposed by Pharaoh-Necho, and another brother—Eliakim, called afterwards Jehoiakim—placed on the throne, who appears to have been two years older than Jehoahaz, ch. xxiii. 36. In the genealogical table of 1 Ch. iii. 15, Jehoahaz is even put fourth and last of the sons of Josiah; in which, however, there must be some mistake, if by fourth is meant fourth in the order of birth; for in 2 Ch. xxxvi. 11, the age assigned to Zedekiah, the brother who ranks third in 1 Ch. iii. 15, makes him several years younger than Jehoahaz. Some error must have crept into one of the passages, or in the genealogy the strict order of time is departed from in the case of the two last sons.[48]

I believe that 1 Chr 3:15 is accurate in reporting that Zedekiah was born before Jehoahaz. Although this appears to contradict their ages at accession recorded in Kings and Chronicles (which suggest that Zedekiah was born about 13 years after Jehoahaz), we have found that a vice-regency should be considered whenever age analysis raises a problem. In view of that, the following solution is offered:

- Josiah's first son Johanan was born around 634 B.C. when Josiah was about 15. Although his mother's name is not given, it was probably not Zebudah.

- Jehoiakim was born soon after Johanan in 634 B.C. His mother was Zebudah.

- Zedekiah was born around 633 B.C. when Josiah was about 16. His mother was Hamutal.

- Jehoahaz was born around 632 B.C. when Josiah was about 17. His mother was Hamutal.

- Johanan died before 612 B.C.

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[48] George Douglas, "Jehoa'haz," in *The Imperial Bible-Dictionary* (ed. Patrick Fairbairn; 2 vols.; London: Blackie and Son, 1866), 1:847.

- Zedekiah was made viceregent in 612 B.C. He was 21 years old. Possibly, Josiah made him viceregent as a precautionary measure following the fall of Nineveh that year. It is unknown why Jehoiakim (the eldest surviving son) was not made viceregent. Perhaps his disobedient nature troubled Josiah.

- Some two years after Zedekiah was made viceregent, Josiah's life ended tragically when he attempted to stop Pharaoh Necho from advancing to Carchemish (2 Kgs 23:29–31; 2 Chr 35:20–36:1). After Josiah was killed at Megiddo by the Egyptians, the "people of the land" anointed Jehoahaz as their next king. The fact that the general public intervened suggests that they rejected both Zedekiah (the heir-apparent) and Jehoiakim (the eldest). Perhaps Zedekiah was viewed as weak-minded (a trait that he later exhibited as king) and Jehoiakim as mean-spirited. By contrast, Jehoahaz (who appears to have been well-liked) may have been strongly anti-Egyptian. Because their beloved Josiah had just been killed by the Egyptians, the people made Jehoahaz king. This may have been at the urging of a pro-Assyrian faction in Jerusalem.

- The regnal notices for Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin are straightforward. By contrast, the Hebrew historian wanted to show that Zedekiah was made king (albeit a viceregent king) earlier than when Nebuchadnezzar placed him on the throne. He achieved this, in his preferred terse way, by simple mention of an age.[49] Perhaps he did so because Zedekiah's viceregency began on an historically and prophetically important date, being the year in which Nineveh fell.[50] Whatever the reason, the historian constructed Zedekiah's regnal formula in a manner similar to that of a dual-dated notice:

  > Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. (2 Kgs 24:18)

  Like all dual-dated notices where a viceregency precedes a sole regency, the statement that "Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign" refers to the start of his viceregency in 612 B.C. The next statement that he "reigned eleven years in Jerusalem" refers to his counted years of reign. However, because a 13-year disconnect existed between the end of Zedekiah's viceregency (610 B.C.) and the start of his sole reign (Adar, 597 B.C.), the Nisan year in which Zedekiah's sole rule began (598/97 B.C.) was counted by the historian as his accession year. (As a rule, the year in which a king's viceregency began was treated as his accession year because there was normally a seamless transition from the end of his viceregency to the start of his sole rule. But the situation here of a 13-year gap is unique.)

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[49] The Hebrew historian evidently assumed that his audience knew that Zedekiah was born before Jehoahaz (it would have certainly been common knowledge among the Hebrew exiles in Babylonia). This knowledge would have been lost to later generations were it not for the Chronicler.

[50] By our chronology, Zedekiah became king (as viceregent) when the Babylonians conquered Nineveh in 612 B.C., so ending (effectively) the kingdom of Assyria. Zedekiah was also ruling when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 587 B.C., so ending the kingdom of Judah. Intriguingly, these two dates involving Babylonian conquests bracket the beginning and end of Zedekiah's inglorious regnal career. Given this coincidence of dates, it is not surprising that the Hebrew historian may have wanted to draw attention to it in the regnal formula for Zedekiah's accession.

The solution above, which does not alter the primary regnal patterns for Josiah or any succeeding kings, is offered for the single reason that 1 Chr 3:15 indicates that Jehoahaz and not Zedekiah was the lastborn son.[51] Given its disconnected nature, I have not shown Zedekiah's viceregency on any graphical or tabular charts.

H. The Order of Regnal Notices in 1 & 2 Kings

The care with which the Hebrew historian wrote Kings suggests that the regnal notices therein follow the actual order in which the Hebrew monarchs began their counted years of reign. For those who uphold a high view of the Masoretic Text, this is a logical conclusion. Many chronologers, however, do not follow this principle, at least not strictly. For instance, in Galil's chronology, Jotham (SK) began to rule before Zachariah (NK) despite Jotham's regnal notice appearing after Pekah (15:8, 32).[52]

The order of rulers as they appear in 1 and 2 Kings is shown in the table below. Encouragingly, the chronology presented earlier in this chapter reflects the same order. This is seen in the fifth column of the table, which gives the year when the counted segment (coregent or sole regent) began for each king.

TABLE 7—THE HEBREW MONARCHS BY NARRATIVE ORDER

ORDER	KING	SK/ NK	BIBLICAL REF.	YEAR IN WHICH REGNAL COUNTING BEGAN (FROM TABLE 4)
1	Rehoboam	SK	1 Kgs 11:43; 14:21	942/41
2	Jeroboam	NK	1 Kgs 14:20	942/41
3	Abijam	SK	1 Kgs 15:1–2	925/24
4	Asa	SK	1 Kgs 15:9–10	922
5	Nadab	NK	1 Kgs 15:25	920
6	Baasha	NK	1 Kgs 15:28, 33	919
7	Elah	NK	1 Kgs 16:8	896
8	Zimri	NK	1 Kgs 16:10, 15	895
9	Tibni	NK	1 Kgs 16:21–22	895
10	Omri	NK	1 Kgs 16:23	895
11	Ahab	NK	1 Kgs 16:29	884
12	Jehoshaphat	SK	1 Kgs 22:41–42	881
13	Ahaziah	NK	1 Kgs 22:51	865/64
14	Joram	NK	2 Kgs 1:17; 3:1	863
15	Jehoram	SK	2 Kgs 8:16–17	860/59
16	Ahaziah	SK	2 Kgs 8:25–26	853
17	Jehu	NK	2 Kgs 9:6; 10:36	852
18	Athaliah	SK	2 Kgs 11:3–4	852
19	Joash	SK	2 Kgs 11:21–12:1	846/45
20	Jehoahaz	NK	2 Kgs 13:1	824

[51] Another benefit of this solution is that Hamutal gave birth to Zedekiah and Jehoahaz in successive years (633 and 632 B.C.) rather than 13 years apart, which is a curiously long interval.

[52] Galil 1996, Appendix A, p. 147.

21	Jehoash	NK	2 Kgs13:10	808/07
22	Amaziah	SK	2 Kgs 14:1–2	806
23	Jeroboam II	NK	2 Kgs 14:23	805/04
24	Azariah	SK	2 Kgs 15:1–2	802/01
25	Zachariah	NK	2 Kgs 15:8	763
26	Shallum	NK	2 Kgs 15:13	763
27	Menahem	NK	2 Kgs 15:17	763
28	Pekahiah	NK	2 Kgs 15:23	752
29	Pekah	NK	2 Kgs 15:27	750
30	Jotham	SK	2 Kgs 15:32–33	750/49
31	Ahaz	SK	2 Kgs 16:1–2	742/41
32	Hoshea	NK	2 Kgs 17:1	731
33	Hezekiah	SK	2 Kgs 18:1–2	727
34	Manasseh	SK	2 Kgs 21:1	698/97
35	Amon	SK	2 Kgs 21:19	643/42
36	Josiah	SK	2 Kgs 22:1	641/40
37	Jehoahaz	SK	2 Kgs 23:31	610
38	Jehoiakim	SK	2 Kgs 23:36	609
39	Jehoiachin	SK	2 Kgs 24:8	598
40	Zedekiah	SK	2 Kgs 24:18	597

I. The Masoretic Text vs. the Greek Texts

The regnal data in the MT differs from that contained in the Greek manuscripts of the OT, being the Septuagint (LXX) and its recensions. This is especially so for the period from Omri to Jehu. These discrepancies have attracted increasing attention in recent decades, particularly after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Qumran locale (northwest of the Dead Sea) between 1947 and 1956.

The discovery of this library (spread across eleven caves) is one of the greatest manuscript finds of the 20th century.[53] Tens of thousands of scroll fragments were found, representing over 900 manuscripts[54] written in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The library includes Biblical, apocryphal, and sectarian compositions. They have been dated—using historical, paleographic, and linguistic evidence, plus carbon-14 dating—from between ca. 250 B.C. to A.D. 68. The scrolls therefore predate the earliest MT manuscript by around a thousand years.[55]

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[53] For a comprehensive introduction to the Qumran scrolls, see James VanderKam & Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2002).

[54] This total includes multiple copies. The number of independent compositions (i.e., copies excluded) is around 350.

[55] The earliest two examples of the MT are the Aleppo Codex and the Leningrad (or St. Petersburg) Codex. The Aleppo Codex is the older manuscript, being copied about A.D. 925. Hebrew scholars consider this manuscript to be more authoritative, given its greater faithfulness to the principles used by the Masoretes. Although the Aleppo Codex at one time contained the full text of the OT, only 295 of its original 487 leaves now survive, owing to damage suffered during the riots against Jews in Aleppo in 1947. As a result, the Leningrad Codex, copied in A.D. 1008 or 1009, is now the earliest complete exemplar of the MT. Most modern English translations of the OT are therefore based on this manuscript. The main published edition of the Leningrad Codex is the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). The BHS is a

Prior to the Qumran discoveries, most scholars believed that the earliest Greek versions of the OT (known as the "Old Greek") were inferior, being late reinterpretations of the MT. However, among the Dead Sea Scrolls were Hebrew texts that corresponded to the Old Greek and not the MT. This suggested that the Old Greek derived from a *different* Hebrew text type, one that was possibly older than the ancestor of the MT (known as the "proto-MT," exemplars of which were also found at Qumran).

In examining the Dead Sea Scrolls, Frank Cross, a pioneer in Qumran research who studied under William Albright, identified at least three Hebrew text types. He proposed that they all originated from a fifth century B.C. archetype from Palestine. However, because this Hebrew manuscript was used by Jews in three regions—Egypt, Palestine, and Babylon—it changed with time, as hand-copied texts tend to do. But it changed differently for each region, resulting in variant texts.[56] According to Cross's "theory of local texts," it is possible that the Old Greek LXX (of Egyptian provenance) may have been a more faithful witness of the Hebrew archetype than the proto-MT (of Babylonian provenance).

Due to the work of Cross and scholars after him (some of whom propose even wider textual diversity), the Greek manuscripts of the OT have become essential today for textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. This includes the regnal data of the Hebrew kings, and there is ongoing debate over which texts should be relied on for constructing the chronology of the era. For example, Thiele (1983), Green (1983), Hayes & Hooker (1988), and Galil (1996) uphold the MT data, albeit with the admission of textual errors. On the other hand, scholars such as Miller (1967), Shenkel (1968), and Tetley (2005) assert that the Greek texts—whose regnal numbers differ from the MT for some kings—preserve the more original chronology.

Our position is that the MT data for the Hebrew kings is trustworthy. While space does not permit the rehearsal of arguments on this subject, the following literature in support of the MT data is recommended for further reading:

— David W. Gooding, review of James Donald Shenkel, *Chronology and Recensional Development in the Greek Text of Kings*, *JTS* 21 (1970): 118–31.

— Edwin R. Thiele, "Coregencies and Overlapping Reigns among the Hebrew Kings," *JBL* 93 (1974): 174–200.

— Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (1983), 90–94.

— Alberto R. Green, "Regnal Formulas in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of the Books of Kings," *JNES* 42 (1983): 167–80.

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revision of the third edition of the *Biblia Hebraica* (BHK), which was the first printed Bible based on the Leningrad Codex (edited by Rudolf Kittel). Work is presently underway on a fifth edition, known as the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ), with some sections having already been published. Although the BHS is widely used by scholars, it is not the only edition of the Leningrad Codex. There is also the *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia* (BHL), a separate work whose English version (published in 2001) is considered to be more accurate that the BHS.

[56] F. M. Cross, Jr., "The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judaean Desert," 297–98.

— Alan R. Millard, “Texts and Archaeology: Weighing The Evidence: The Case for King Solomon,” *PEQ* 123 (1991): 19–20.

— Leslie McFall, “Has the Chronology of the Hebrew Kings Been Finally Settled?” *Themelios* 17.1 (1991): 6–11.

— Pete J. Williams, “Some Remarks Preliminary to a Biblical Chronology,” *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 12.1 (1998): 98–106.

— Gershon Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (1996), 127–44.

— Gerhard Larsson, “Septuagint versus Massoretic Chronology,” *ZAW* 114 (2002): 511–21.[57]

— Floyd N. Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament* (2005), 9–17.

[57] The numerical examples quoted by Larsson against the Septuagint are persuasive. Nevertheless, he upholds the view of Knut Stenring (*The Enclosed Garden* [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1966]) that the chronological data of the Old Testament (MT) is patterned after a hidden system (see Larsson, *The Secret System: A Study in the Chronology of the Old Testament* [Leiden: Brill, 1973]). This necessitates a different approach to the regnal figures of the divided monarchy era. For instance, in Larsson’s view, the given years of Hebrew kings should be accepted as they stand without any assumptions of accession or non-accession year dating (“Septuagint versus Massoretic Chronology,” 512).

Chapter 5: The Dates in Ezekiel and Jeremiah

The books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel contain several dates especially for the closing decades of Judah. These will now be compared with the chronology set forth in the preceding chapter to test for correspondence.

A. Ezekiel's Captivity Dates

Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon with king Jehoiachin in the winter/spring of 597 B.C. (sec. B below refers). The event is sometimes called the *second* deportation.[1] Since three of the 13 dates in the book of Ezekiel refer specifically to this event (1:2, 33:21, and 40:1), scholars are widely agreed that most, if not all, of the other dates are likewise tied to the captivity. In our analysis, we will find that all but one of the 13 dates are based on the second deportation.

How were Ezekiel's captivity dates reckoned? There are a number of variables to consider:

- Were Nisan or Tishri years used?
- Was the fractional year portion from the captivity to the first New Year's Day (Tishri 1 or Nisan 1 as decided above) counted as year zero (i.e., postdating) or year one (antedating)?
- If Nisan years were used, in what month did the captivity begin: Adar or Nisan? (Although Jehoiachin was captured in Adar 2, 597 B.C., the actual deportation may have taken a month or so to organize, thereby occurring in the new year.)
- Neither Nisan nor Tishri years were chosen. Instead, anniversary years counting from either Adar or Nisan were used.

The simplest method, and one that works well with our chronology, is to use Tishri years with antedating. Thus, the first year of captivity was from Tishri 598 to Elul 597 B.C. The second year of captivity was from Tishri 597 to Elul 596 B.C., and so forth. A benefit of this scheme is that it eliminates the "Adar or Nisan" question for the second deportation. Additionally, as the next section posits, the 597 B.C. deportation was dispatched in two groups. The first group departed Jerusalem for Babylon before Nisan 1 (New Year's Day). The second group departed not long after Nisan 1. Captivity reckoning by Tishri years allows for the dispatching of both groups in the same year.

Our analysis proposes that Ezekiel reckoned all but one of his 13 dates using Tishri years. The exception is Ezek 24:1, which was based on Judah's official calendar because of its importance (it was the fulfillment of Ezek 4:4–6). Note that with Tishri years the months are still numbered from the first month, Nisan.

Apart from simplicity, two other reasons may have influenced Ezekiel's choice of Tishri years:

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[1] The first deportation was minor and occurred in 606 B.C. according to Dan 1:1 (see ch. 10A). The second deportation in 597 B.C. was the main one and was dispatched, as we will find below, in two groups. The third deportation occurred in 587 B.C. after the fall of Jerusalem, again in two groups. The fourth deportation occurred in 582/81 B.C. (Jer 52:30).

- to keep the exilic calendar separate from the Babylonian year, thereby emphasising that the Hebrews were *set apart* from the heathen, among whom they now lived
- to connect symbolically with the fallen Northern Kingdom (which rebelliously used Tishri years) as an ongoing reminder of God's anger against Judah's disobedience

We now turn to Ezekiel's 13 dates. Comment will also be made on 2 Kgs 25:27 given that it features a time notice based on captivity dating.

1] Ezek 1:1ff . . . The Inaugural Vision

> Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him. (1:1–3)

Ezekiel's prophecies began on the fifth day of the fourth month of the fifth year of their captivity, which was also "the thirtieth year." The fifth year of exile was 594/93 B.C. by Tishri reckoning, and the fifth day of the fourth month that year was Jul. 31, 593 B.C.[2] But what was "the thirtieth year?"

The datum here is unspecified and common explanations include Ezekiel's age, the 30th year of a Jubilee cycle, and the 30th year from the great Passover of Josiah's 18th year. The Jubilee option is questionable. By our chronology, the date of Ezekiel's visions (Jul. 31, 593 B.C.) fell in the 34th (not 30th) year of a Jubilee cycle (Appendix H refers). The other two options are more promising, and may even coincide. If "the thirtieth year" was Ezekiel's age, then he was 29 years old on Jul. 31, 593 B.C.[3] This places his birth sometime between Aug. 1, 623 B.C. and Jul. 31, 622 B.C. If he was born before Nisan 1, 622 B.C., then his birth occurred in the *latter half* of Josiah's momentous 18th year (when the book of the Law was found). Perhaps this is why Ezekiel says "the 30th year" and not "my 30th year" in his introduction. It allows for the connection to Josiah's 18th year.

2] Ezek 8:1ff . . . Vision of Temple Abominations

> And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me. (8:1)

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[2] As with all Hebrew dates in this study, Julian calendar conversions are from the standard reference, *Babylonian Chronology*, by Parker and Dubberstein. Their tables provide the Julian equivalent of any Babylonian date to within a day. Two caveats for these tables apply, though. First, the dates are Babylonian-to-Julian conversions, not Hebrew-to-Julian. Therefore, if the Hebrews intercalated differently for any given year, the Babylonian and Hebrew dates would misalign by a month. Second, to be precise, the dates should include the evening before, because the Babylonian day (like the Hebrew day) began in the evening after sunset. Thus, Ezekiel's first date of Jul. 31, 593 B.C. (the fifth day of the fourth month in the fifth year of their exile) is more correctly expressed as Jul. 30/31, 593 B.C. In other words, the fifth day of the fourth month began after sunset on Jul. 30 and ended at sunset on Jul. 31. For convenience, the daytime date quoted by Parker and Dubberstein will be used throughout this study because most events would have occurred during daylight hours.

[3] A person who is X years of age is in the (X + 1) year of their life. For instance, an infant who is not yet one year old is nevertheless in its first year of life.

The sixth year of captivity by Tishri reckoning was 593/92 B.C. The fifth day of the sixth month that year was Sep. 17, 592 B.C.

3] Ezek 20:1ff . . . Message Regarding Rebellious Israel

> And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me. (20:1)

The seventh year of captivity by Tishri reckoning was 592/91 B.C. The tenth day of the fifth month that year was Aug. 14, 591 B.C.

4] Ezek 24:1ff . . . The Beginning of the Siege: Ezek 4:4–6 Fulfilled

> Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day. (24:1)

On the very day that the siege of Jerusalem began, God instructed Ezekiel to record the date. Given the importance of this event and God's specific instruction, Ezekiel recorded it using Judah's official calendar, which was based on Zedekiah's reign using postdated Nisan years.[4] This is why Ezekiel's notice agrees with 2 Kgs 25:1: "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came." The ninth year of Zedekiah was the Nisan year 589/88 B.C. The tenth day of the tenth month that year was Jan. 15, 588 B.C.

Since the 390 and 40-year intervals of Ezekiel's prophecy (4:4–6) both end at the onset of the siege (using Nisan years), we are not surprised that the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel on the very day of its fulfilment.

5] Ezek 26:1ff . . . Oracle Against Tyre after Jerusalem's Fall

> And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. (26:1–3)

The oracle against Tyre is clearly set after the fall of Jerusalem ("she is broken . . . she is laid waste"). It is dated to the 11th year but no month is given, only the day of the month (the first day).

Actually, the month can be easily deduced. The 11th year of captivity by Tishri reckoning was 588/87 B.C. Jerusalem fell on the ninth day of the fourth month in 587 B.C. (2 Kgs 25:1). Then, on the seventh day of the fifth month, the temple and city were burned and the walls destroyed (2 Kgs 25:8–10). Because only the sixth month remains before the next Tishri year begins (587/86 B.C.), Ezekiel must have received his oracle then.[5]

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[4] The distinctiveness of this date relative to the other captivity dates is evident in the different wording pattern of the Hebrew text for this notice. See Freedy and Redford, "The Dates in Ezekiel," 468.

[5] The logic here in deducing the sixth month serves as circumstantial proof that Tishri years were used for Ezekiel's dates.

Thus, the word of the Lord concerning Tyre came to Ezekiel three and a half weeks after the sack of Jerusalem, on the first day of the sixth month, in the Tishri year 588/87 B.C. The Julian equivalent is Sep. 18, 587 B.C.

6] Ezek 29:1ff . . . Prediction Against Pharaoh

> In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt. (29:1)

This is the first of seven consecutive oracles directed against Egypt. All are dated except for one (30:1). Most are in chronological order.

The tenth year of captivity by Tishri reckoning was 589/88 B.C. The 12th day of the tenth month that year was Jan. 17, 588 B.C. This oracle therefore came two days after the Lord called Ezekiel's attention to the siege of Jerusalem (see date #4). The timing here adds weight to the message against Egypt. God purposed to use Nebuchadnezzar, now besieging Jerusalem, as His sword of judgment against the Egyptians (29:8; cf. 30:10).

7] Ezek 29:17ff . . . Egypt as Payment for Nebuchadnezzar

> And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. (29:17–19)

This second oracle against Egypt bears the latest date in the book. It is chronologically out of sequence probably because of thematic linking by the editor. The 27th year of captivity by Tishri reckoning was 572/71 B.C. The first day of the first month that year was Apr. 26, 571 B.C.

8] Ezek 30:20ff . . . Oracle Against Pharaoh

> And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword. (30:20–21)

By Tishri reckoning, the 11th year of captivity was 588/87 B.C. The seventh day of the first month that year was Apr. 29, 587 B.C., exactly four months before the sack of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25:8).

This is the fourth of seven oracles against Egypt. The third oracle (30:1–19) is undated, but it was possibly received between Jan. 17, 588 B.C. (29:1) and the date of this oracle (Apr. 29, 587 B.C.). Throughout that time, Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Jerusalem.

9] Ezek 31:1ff . . . Pharaoh to be "Felled"

> And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness? (31:1–2)

This is the fifth of seven oracles against Egypt. The 11th year of captivity by Tishri reckoning was 588/87 B.C. The first day of the third month that year was Jun. 21, 587 B.C.

10] Ezek 32:1ff . . . A Lament for Pharaoh

> And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers. (32:1–2)

This is the sixth oracle against Egypt. The twelfth year of captivity by Tishri reckoning was 587/86 B.C. The first day of the twelfth month that year was Mar. 15, 586 B.C.

11] Ezek 32:17ff . . . Wail for Egypt

> It came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit. (32:17–18)

This is the seventh and last oracle against Egypt. The twelfth year of captivity by Tishri reckoning was 587/86 B.C. Although no month is specified, it was probably the same month as the preceding oracle because the twelfth year remains in view. Therefore, this final oracle against Egypt was received on the fifteenth day of the twelfth month, which dates to Mar. 29, 586 B.C.

12] Ezek 33:21ff . . . News of Jerusalem's Fall Reaches Babylon

> And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten. (33:21)

The twelfth year of captivity by Tishri reckoning was 587/86 B.C. The fifth day of the tenth month that year was Jan. 19, 586 B.C. This was exactly 21 weeks after the sack of Jerusalem. The five-month gap here between Jerusalem being smitten and the personal report of it to Ezekiel is reasonable. Ezra 7:9 records that the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem took four months. We may therefore assume that the reverse journey took around the same time, if not longer in winter.

13] Ezek 40:1ff . . . Visions of the Temple

> In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither. (40:1)

This final date not only synchronizes Ezekiel's years of captivity with the fall of Jerusalem but reveals, in all likelihood, the anniversary date of the main (i.e., second) deportation. There are five chronological elements featured here:

- IN THE FIVE AND TWENTIETH YEAR OF OUR CAPTIVITY: By Tishri reckoning, the 25th year of captivity was 574/73 B.C.

- IN THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR: The beginning of the year points to the first month of the year, Nisan.

- IN THE TENTH DAY OF THE MONTH: The tenth day of Nisan in the Tishri year of 574/73 B.C. was Apr. 28, 573 B.C.

- IN THE FOURTEENTH YEAR AFTER THAT THE CITY WAS SMITTEN: Jerusalem was destroyed in August, 587 B.C. Therefore, the first year after the sack of Jerusalem was August, 587 to August, 586 B.C., the second year was August, 586 to August, 585 B.C., etc. By this counting, the 14th year was August, 574 to August, 573 B.C. The date of Apr. 28, 573 B.C. (Nisan 10 in the 25th year of Ezekiel's captivity) falls within this anniversary year.

- IN THE SELFSAME DAY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON ME: The term "in the selfsame day" suggests an anniversary (cf. Exod 12:17; 41). Accordingly, scholars have reasoned that Nisan 10, 597 B.C. was the date of the second deportation.[6] If so, then Ezekiel saw visions of the future temple on its 24th anniversary.[7]

2 Kgs 25:27

Having reviewed the 13 dates in Ezekiel, we should also examine the captivity date in 2 Kings:

> And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. (2 Kgs 25:27–29; cf. Jer 52:31)

The notice reveals that the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity coincided with the accession of Evil-Merodach (Amel-Marduk). But is this 37th year based on Tishri years (as used by Ezekiel) or Nisan years (as used in 1 and 2 Kings for the Judahite kings)?

While it is likely that Tishri years are being counted here, both systems work for this notice. By Tishri reckoning, the 37th year was from Oct. 13, 562 to Sep. 30, 561 B.C. By Nisan reckoning (antedated), it was from Apr. 17, 562 to Apr. 5, 561 B.C. In both cases, the 27th day of the 12th month was Apr. 2, 561 B.C. This date agrees with the secular record. Nebuchadnezzar died in early October, 562 B.C. and was succeeded by Amel-Marduk, whose accession year was the Nisan year

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[6] So Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, §439; Thiele 1983, 191. This would be the date that the *second* group was deported in 597 B.C. (sec. C below refers).

[7] If Nisan 10 was the anniversary of the second deportation, then the exit from the Promised Land occurred on the selfsame date that the Hebrews entered it (Josh 4:19).

562/61 B.C. Near the end of that year, Amel-Marduk released Jehoiachin from prison. (A king's accession year was an occasion for acts of favor.)

B. The Dates in Jeremiah

Several dates appear in the book of Jeremiah. In contrast to Ezekiel's Tishri notices, all but one of them are based on Nisan years, which were used in Judah. This stands to reason because Jeremiah remained in Judah unlike Ezekiel. The one exception not based on Nisan years is the captivity notice of Jer 52:31.

Two important dates in Jeremiah have already been reviewed: 46:2 (ch. 4B refers) and 1:1–2 (see sec. A3 above). Other dates will now be discussed under the following headings:

1. dates relating to Nebuchadnezzar's reign
2. other significant dates

1. Dates Relating to Nebuchadnezzar's Reign

Six verses in Jeremiah mention dates in Nebuchadnezzar's reign: 25:1; 32:1; 52:12, 28, 29, 30. The first, Jer 25:1, can be dated to 605 B.C. through comparison with Jer 46:2:

> The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. (Jer 25:1)
>
> The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles; Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah. (Jer 46:1–2)

As discussed in Chapter 4B, Jer 46:2 synchronizes Jehoiakim's fourth year with Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Egypt at Carchemish, which is reliably dated to 605 B.C. However, Jer 25:1 contains an anomaly. Although 605 B.C. was Nebuchadnezzar's accession year by the Babylonian system of postdating, Jer 25:1 counts it as his *first year*, which suggests that the notice is antedated. Indeed, it will be found that *all* the dates for Nebuchadnezzar's reign in 2 Kings and Jeremiah, save for the special inclusion of Jer 52:28–30, count his years so. Two possible explanations for this are:

1. Attentive Hebrews were aware that the nations would serve the king of Babylon for 70 years (25:11–12; 29:10). Antedating Nebuchadnezzar's reign assisted in tallying those years.[8]

[8] Although the Hebrews may have thought, at the time, that this 70-year period began with Nebuchadnezzar's reign, we know in hindsight that it did not. There were 66 years, not 70, between his accession (605 B.C.) and Babylon's demise (539 B.C.). Given this shortfall, scholarly opinion is divided on the exact chronological placement of these 70 years. We uphold Carl Jonsson's view that it spanned the time from Babylon's supremacy in 609 B.C. (after the collapse of Assyria) to her fall in 539 B.C. (Jonsson, *The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, 191–235). Also of significance is the fact that 609 B.C. was the year in which Judah lost her independence following Necho's elevation of Jehoiakim to the throne (see ch. 9C).

2. In the preceding chapter, it was submitted that the Hebrews viewed the crown prince of any Near Eastern nation as a *viceregent*, so they called him "king" in keeping with their own system. In the Babylonian Chronicle Series, Nebuchadnezzar's name is mentioned for the first time in the entry for Nabopolassar's 19th year (607/06 B.C.). He is called the "crown prince" and is reported to be in command of his own army, his first major military command.[9] The Hebrew historian therefore considered 607 B.C. to be Nebuchadnezzar's accession year. The arrangement is shown below, where the upper rows depict Babylonian counting and the lower rows depict Hebrew counting:

Nabopolassar	15	16	17	18	19	20	21									
Nebuchadnezzar							AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	611	**610**	**609**	**608**	**607**	**606**	**605**	**604**	**603**	**602**	**601**	**600**	**599**	**598**	**597**	
Nabopolassar	15	16	17	18	19	20	21									
Nebuchadnezzar					vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2} 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Josiah	30	31														
Jehoahaz		3m														
Jehoiakim			AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Jehoiachin				vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	vice^{4}	vice^{5}	vice^{6}	vice^{7}	vice^{8}	vice^{9}	v^{10} 3m		
Zedekiah														AC	1	

The second explanation is preferred for two main reasons: (1) it agrees with Daniel calling Nebuchadnezzar "king of Babylon" in Jehoiakim's third year (606 B.C.) even though he was only the crown prince then (Dan 1:1; cf. Jer 46:2), and (2) it agrees with our regnal reckoning for all Hebrew viceregents (ch. 4A5 refers). Accordingly, the next two notices in Jeremiah involving Nebuchadnezzar's regnal years should also be reckoned by the Hebrew datum:

> The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. (32:1)
>
> Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire. (52:12–13)

The first passage refers to the tenth year of Zedekiah, which was the Nisan year 588/87 B.C. This was the 17th year of Nebuchadnezzar by Babylonian dating and the 18th by Hebrew dating. The second passage refers to Zedekiah's 11th year (cf. 52:5), which was the Nisan year 587/86 B.C. This was the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar by Babylonian dating and the 19th by Hebrew dating (as also in 2 Kgs 25:8).

Jeremiah 25:1 is also of interest because it links Jehoiakim's fourth year to the 23rd year of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry, which began in Josiah's 13th year (25:3; cf. 1:2). In our chronology, Josiah's 13th year was 628 B.C. and Jehoiakim's fourth year was 605 B.C. Unfortunately, Jeremiah did not specify how he reckoned his years of ministry (anniversary years? postdated Nisan years? antedated Nisan years?). Nevertheless, by our dating for Josiah, 605 B.C. agrees with Jeremiah's 23rd year under two counting methods: (1) postdated Nisan years, and (2) anniversary

[9] Grayson, *ABC*, 97 (Chron. 4:5–7).

years. The latter method seems more likely, since postdating and antedating were normally used for regnal reckoning.[10]

Three deportation totals. Thus far, Jeremiah has been consistent in his reckoning of Nebuchadnezzar's regnal years (i.e., they are one year higher that the Babylonian count). However, for the deportation totals in the concluding section of the book, there appears to be a change in regnal datum:

> 52:28: This is the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty:
>
> 52:29: In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons:
>
> 52:30: In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadrezzar Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons were four thousand and six hundred.

It is commonly accepted that these verses, which do not appear in the LXX, were not written by Jeremiah.[11] Possibly, they were written in Babylon by Ezra after Jeremiah's death. Although the issue is still debated, it is logical to conclude that the first two dates refer to the second and third deportations respectively, and that both are dated by Babylonian reckoning (i.e., Mar.–Apr., 597 and Aug., 587 B.C.).[12] By the same logic, the fourth deportation in Nebuchadnezzar's 23rd year can be dated to 582/81 B.C.

Why did these three notices in Jer 52 revert to the Babylonian datum? As Rodger Young submits, it was because they derived from official Babylonian records:

> Jer 52:28–30 gives the number of captives taken by Nebuchadnezzar in his seventh, eighteenth, and twenty-third years. There is one thing certain about the counting of captives—the captives themselves are in no position to do it. Every king and pharaoh must have had an official assigned to this task, so that the number of those vanquished could be recorded on a stela or in the annals glorifying the king's exploits. Thus the list of captives in Jer 52:28–30 could not have originated in a Judean record—it came from the official records of Nebuchadnezzar. The years of the monarch would therefore be the Nisan, accession years used in Babylon.[13]

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[10] The following example shows how anniversary years satisfy Jer 25:1–3. Let us assume that Jeremiah was commissioned in the summer of his 13th year, 628 B.C. His first year of ministry would then have been from summer 628 to summer 627 B.C., his second year from summer 627 to summer 626 B.C., etc. By this counting, his 23rd year was from summer 606 to summer 605 B.C. In that case, the first few months of Jehoiakim's fourth year (605/04 B.C.) overlapped the last few months of Jeremiah's 23rd year. It is during this overlap that the prophecies in Jer 25 would have been received.

[11] The final chapter of Jeremiah (ch. 52) is generally considered to be an appendix to the book (cf. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 771–84). As such, it serves to confirm the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecies.

[12] Recall that the *first* deportation was that described in Dan 1:1–4 (see fn. 13).

[13] Young, "When Did Jerusalem Fall," 36. The specificity of the numbers in Jer 52:28–30 also argues for their documentary character, in contrast to the round numbers of 10,000 and 7,000 and 1,000 in 2 Kgs 24:14, 16.

Thus, the seventh year of Jer 52:28 (Babylonian dated) corresponds to the eighth year of 2 Kgs 24:12 (Hebrew dated). The 18th year of Jer 52:29 (Babylonian dated) corresponds to the 19th year of 2 Kgs 25:8 (Hebrew dated).

That a different source was used for Jer 52:28–30 is confirmed by the variation in totals between 2 Kings and Jeremiah for the second deportation. In 2 Kgs 24:14, the number of captives is at least 10,000 while the Jeremiah account reports only 3,023. The most likely reason for this difference is that the deportation occurred in *two groups*, hence the different totals. These groups were dispatched within weeks of each other, on either side of Nisan 1, 597 B.C. as it turned out.

Recall that Jerusalem was captured on Adar 2 of Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year. Nebuchadnezzar himself probably departed for home soon afterward (before Nisan 1), personally taking the first group of deportees. This group comprised all the leaders of the land and totalled 3,023. Deporting them before the populace served the following purposes:

- to accelerate the loss of national identity, which was a chief objective of deportations
- to quash the likelihood of uprisings or resistance instigated by the city's influential men
- to ensure the subservience of the second group of deportees (the general populace) as they prepared for departure

The figure of 3,023 from the Babylonian record was therefore an important total pertaining to the *conquered nation's elite*. Hence, its inclusion in Jer 52 by the Hebrew editor. This first group was dispatched personally with the king. Soon afterward, in the new year, the larger group (the general populace) was deported. Although their number was surely recorded by the Babylonians, it was not mentioned in Jer 52. (Possibly, the Hebrew editor was aware that 2 Kgs 24:14–16 had already provided that information.)

Jerusalem's deportation in two groups is implied in the Bible in three passages. One is the parable of the *Two Eagles and a Vine* in Ezek 17. In declaring the meaning of the first eagle breaking off the topmost shoot of a cedar in Lebanon, the Lord explained:

> Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon . . . he hath also taken the mighty of the land: That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up. (v. 12–14)

The statement "led them with him to Babylon" suggests that Nebuchadnezzar personally took Jehoiachin, his princes, and "the mighty of the land" (the nation's leaders) to Babylon.

The second passage supporting deportation in two groups is 2 Kgs 25, which describes the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. After the walls were breached, 25:7 reports that Zedekiah was taken to Babylon. However, the rest of the people in the city (save for the poorest) were not deported until the sack of Jerusalem a month later (25:11–12). Thus, the captured king was deported first, followed later by the general populace. The same arrangement likely applied a decade earlier.

The third passage supporting two deportee groups is found in the chapter describing the event itself, namely, 2 Kgs 24. Observe how 24:14 appears to be a summary statement, while 24:15–16 describes the first and second groups as summarized in 24:14 (the MKJV is quoted here):

10–14) At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants besieged it. And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother, and his servants, and his leaders, and his eunuchs. And the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the leaders, and all the mighty men of war, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest sort of the people of the land.

This summary statement describes the four groups comprising "all Jerusalem": (1) the nation's leaders (including the royal family), (2) the military troops, (3) the general public which numbered 10,000, and (4) the craftsmen and smiths. The poorest of the land were left behind (to work the vineyards and fields).

15) And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his eunuchs. And the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

These were the 3,023 reported in Jer 52:28, comprising the royal family plus the "mighty of the land," being the nation's elite (i.e., its political, military, and economic leaders). They accompanied Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon along with the city's treasures.

16) And the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon all the men of might, seven thousand of them, and a thousand craftsmen and smiths, all who were strong and able for war.

This verse discloses that 7,000 military troops and 1,000 artisans were in the second group. We can infer that this group also included the 10,000 captives mentioned in v. 14. However, they are not recalled here because the focus is on ***prized assets****. The 7,000 military troops would be integrated into Babylon's fighting forces. The 1,000 artisans would be employed as expert prisoner-of-war labour for Nebuchadnezzar's building projects. These 8,000 plus the 10,000 captives were prepared for deportation by the Babylonian commanders who remained in the land after Nebuchadnezzar's departure. However, it would have taken some weeks to organize this larger group. Undoubtedly, the Babylonians secured the assistance of the Judahite troops to marshal the Hebrews for the journey to Babylon, and to shepherd them along the way.*

If this interpretation is correct, then the total number of people deported from Jerusalem to Babylon in 597 B.C. was about 21,000, comprising:

all the leaders	ca. 3,000	(Jer 52:28)
all the mighty men of war	7,000	(v. 16)
all the craftsmen and smiths	1,000	(v. 16)
ten thousand captives	10,000	(v. 14)

It is important to note that Nebuchadnezzar carried away *all* Jerusalem, save for the poorest (2 Kgs 24:14). If 21,000 people were deported, this means that Jerusalem's population was probably in the range of 22,000 to 24,000. This agrees remarkably well with Magen Broshi's estimate of about 25,000 for Jerusalem at the time.[14] Let us assume, though, that it was about 24,000 (Broshi's

[14] Broshi, "Estimating the Population of Ancient Jerusalem," 10–15. From accumulated archaeological data, it has been determined that to estimate the population of an ancient city, only two factors need be known: (1) a reliable estimate of the city's size, and (2) its population density. Scholars have independently determined that the population density of ancient cities was about 160–200 persons per acre. Using the upper figure of 200 persons per acre, and an assumed area for Jerusalem during Hezekiah's reign of 125

figure is at the upper end of the estimate). If we subtract the 21,000 who were carried away, this leaves around 3,000 who remained behind. The poorest of the city therefore represented about 13% of the population.

The significant conclusion here is that the captivity of 597 B.C. constituted the main deportation of Hebrews to Babylon. This is why Ezekiel's dates are tied to that event, because it was *the* exile. By contrast, in recounting the destruction of Jerusalem and associated deportation ten years later, Ezekiel said: "in the fourteenth year *after that the city was smitten*" (Ezek 40:1). So, for Ezekiel (and probably for most Hebrews), 597 B.C. marked the main captivity while 587 B.C. marked the destruction of Jerusalem. This explains the Biblical attention to Jehoiachin well after Jerusalem fell (2 Kgs 25:27–30; Jer 52:31–34). For the exiled Hebrews, most of whom had been deported in 597 B.C., Jehoiachin was still their king (cf. Jer 28:4).

The third deportation. Jeremiah 52:29 records that 832 persons were deported from Jerusalem in Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year (587 B.C.). Like the total of 3,023 in the preceding verse, it undoubtedly comprised the conquered nation's elite. It therefore included Zedekiah and his family, the city's leaders, and other high officials. In what was the first of two deportations, Nebuchadnezzar brought this group personally to Babylon soon after Jerusalem's walls were breached on Jul. 29, 587 B.C. (2 Kgs 25:6–7). Their lower number (832 vs. 3,023) is easily explained. Not only had "all Jerusalem" been carried away in 597 B.C., but the city had less people in 587 B.C., with correspondingly fewer leaders.

If the first group totalled 823, how many were deported in the second group after Nebuzaradan sacked the city in August, 587 B.C. (2 Kgs 25:11–12)? This figure is difficult to estimate, especially given the high death toll prophesied in Ezek 5:12:

> A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

If this passage is to be understood literally (a point that scholars debate), the punishment of Jerusalem was exceedingly severe (cf. Ezek 8:17–9:11). That being so, we can crudely estimate the number of those deported in 587 B.C. as follows:

- The total population in Judah before the second deportation has been estimated at around 108,000.[15] Subtracting our 597 B.C. deportation figure of 21,000 from this estimate leaves around 87,000 people in Judah, of whom 3,000 were the remaining poor in Jerusalem. This means that the population in Judah outside of Jerusalem and its environs was about 84,000 after the 597 B.C. deportation.

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acres, Broshi estimated the city's population to be about 25,000 then (= 200 x 125). This figure did not change significantly until the deportations from Judah began during the Neo-Babylonian period. (It is believed that Jerusalem mushroomed in size during Hezekiah's reign, probably because of the Israelite refugees who fled south during the siege of Samaria.)

[15] While we do not know the population size of Judah with certainty, the figure of 108,000 seems reasonable. It was offered by Oded Lipschits, who used the increasingly accepted figure of 25 people per dunam for estimating the total population of specific regions (*The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 258–71). The dunam is a metric unit equal to 1,000 square metres (= 0.10 hectares). One dunam converts to about 0.247 acres. Therefore, 25 people per dunam equates to about 101 people per acre of national territory.

- We can speculate that Zedekiah, as soon as he could after the 597 B.C. deportation, sent throughout Judah for leaders, builders, craftsmen, able-bodied-persons, etc., to bolster the city and to resecure and strengthen its defences. Their number may have approached 10,000 over a nine-year period. Thus, around 12% of Judah's population (10,000 out of 84,000) migrated to Jerusalem. So, there may have been around 13,000 people in Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar besieged it in 588 B.C. (= 3,000 poor + 10,000 who migrated).

- If Ezek 5:12 is interpreted literally, then one third of Jerusalem's population died through plague and famine during the 19-month siege. This is about 4,300 people (being a third of 13,000). Another third of the population (ca. 4,300) was killed in the fall and sack of Jerusalem. The surviving third part (ca. 4,300) was subject to being scattered through deportation. Of those, the poorest were allowed to stay to tend the land (2 Kgs 25:12). Therefore, assuming 500 remained behind to tend the land, some 3,800 would have been deported to Babylon from Jerusalem in 587 B.C. This total comprised the 832 who went with Nebuchadnezzar in the first group plus about 3,000 who were deported in the second group. This brings the sum total of all those deported in 597 and 587 B.C. to about 24,800 (= 21,000 + 3,800).[16]

The 23rd year. In the final notice dated to Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Jer 52:30 reports that Nebuzaradan carried away 745 Jews in Nebuchadnezzar's 23rd year. Some scholars tie this deportation to the murder of Gedaliah, the Hebrew governor appointed by the Babylonians. Gedaliah was assassinated by a member of the royal family, Ishmael (Jer 41:1–3). This prompted many of the remaining Hebrews to flee to Egypt.

Although Gedaliah's tenure of office is not dated in the Bible, his assassination is reported as occurring "in the seventh month" (2 Kgs 25:25; Jer 41:1). Since no year is given, it is reasonable to conclude that it occurred in Zedekiah's 11th year, which is the context of the chronological notice. Gedaliah was therefore assassinated between Oct. 18 and Nov. 16, 587 B.C.

Concerning the deportation five years later in 582 B.C., the Bible is silent as to the instigating reason. Whether it was to quell a local rebellion in Jerusalem, or a more widespread revolt in Judah, we do not know. The latter, however, seems more likely given that Jerusalem was razed in 587 B.C. In this rebellion, 745 Jews were deported. Again, as for the companion totals of 3,023 and 832 (Jer 52:28–29), this number is probably a count of the Hebrew elite from the affected regional locations.

2. Other Significant Dates

Having examined the notices in Jeremiah associated with Nebuchadnezzar's reign, let us review the other major time notices in the book pertaining to the Hebrew kings. These are shown in the table below, which excludes Jer 1:1–2 and 46:2 because they have been previously discussed.

[16] This deportation estimate applies to Jerusalem only. It will need to be revised upward if people were deported from other localities in Judah during the Babylonian interventions of 597 and/or 587 B.C.

DATE B.C.	TIME NOTICE IN JEREMIAH	COMMENTS
Jan., 588 Jul. 29, 587	In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it. And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up. (39:1–2)	The same information is recorded in 2 Kgs 25:1–4, except the notice in 2 Kings adds that the siege began on the *tenth day* of the tenth month.
Jan. 15, 588 Jul. 29, 587	And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. (52:4–6)	The same information is recorded in 2 Kgs 25:1–4.
Aug. 28, 587	Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire. (52:12–13)	2 Kgs 25:8 reports that Nebuzaradan came to Jerusalem on the *seventh day* of the fifth month (Aug. 25). Evidently, he set fire to the city that day. The fires then burnt for four days, extinguishing on the tenth day of the month.
Mar. 31, 561	And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison. (52:31)	The "first" year of Amel-Marduk is a mistranslation. Literally, the verse reads: "in the year of his reign," which implies his *accession* year (562/61 B.C.). Second Kgs 25:27 records that Jehoiachin was freed on the 27th of the month (Apr. 2) not the 25th (Mar. 31). A possible explanation is that Jehoiachin was set free on the 25th, but did not stand before the king until the 27th. Both 2 Kgs 25:27 and Jer 52:31 are based on Tishri years, because the years of captivity after the 597 B.C. deportation were reckoned this way.

C. The 390 and 40-Year Periods of Ezek 4:4–6

In the fifth year of their exile, God instructed Ezekiel to perform a series of sign-acts that anticipated the coming siege and fall of Jerusalem (Ezek 4–5). Ezekiel was to perform them before the exiled Jews:

> Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and portray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about. Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel. Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. . . . Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. (Ezek 4:1–6, 9)

Ezekiel was to etch a likeness of Jerusalem on a clay tablet. Around it, he was to place model siege works, representing the impending attack. An iron griddle was also to be placed between himself and the inscribed city (evidently symbolizing the barrier between God and Jerusalem). Ezekiel was then instructed to symbolically bear the sins of both kingdoms. He was to lie on his left side (presumably with his face toward the model) for 390 days, corresponding to the 390 years of Israel's sins. He was then to lie on his right side for 40 days, corresponding to the 40 years of Judah's sins. During the first 390 days, Ezekiel was to eat a prescribed diet of rations (4:9–12).

It is likely that Ezekiel did not lie *continuously* for 430 days, but rather for several hours a day. One can only speculate on how Ezekiel's actions affected the exiles. It certainly would have aroused great curiosity.

We will now review this prophecy under the following headings:

1. the year-day relationship
2. the 390-year period
3. the 40-year period

1. The Year-Day Relationship

In Ezek 4, the 390 and 40-day intervals correspond to 390 and 40-year periods of iniquity in Israel and Judah. Although some interpret these periods symbolically, their historicity is underscored by the year-day association ("I have appointed thee each day for a year"), which recalls the calculation of Israel's 40-year period of wilderness wanderings in Numbers 14. In fact, the Ezekiel and Numbers passages are directly related through common use of the term "forty days, a day for a year . . . a day for a year":

> by the number of the days in which you spied out the land, **forty days, a day for a year, a day for a year**; you shall bear your iniquities forty years; you shall know My alienation from you. (Num 14:34 LITV)
> And when you complete them, even lie on your right side, the second. And you shall bear the house of Judah's iniquity **forty days; a day for a year**. I have set it for you, **a day for a year**. (Ezek 4:6 LITV)

The repetition of the Numbers pattern in Ezekiel confirms that both periods (390 and 40 years), like the 40 years in the wilderness, are historically accurate.

2. The 390-Year Period

Ezekiel was to lie on his left side for 390 days, which represented the 390 years of Israel's iniquity. Where, exactly, do we locate these years in Israel's history?

While Ezekiel does not explicitly nominate a start or finish date for this period, the context of Ezek 4 is clearly the siege of Jerusalem. Consequently, Biblicist scholars have tied the end of the 390-year period either to the onset of the siege or the fall of Jerusalem after it. For example, by Sir Isaac Newton's reckoning, the tally for all the Judahite kings was 391 years, from the schism (979 B.C.) to the fall of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's 11th year (588 B.C.). Newton then concluded that Ezekiel's 390-year interval spanned the time from the schism (979 B.C.) to the beginning of the siege in Zedekiah's ninth year (between Dec./Jan., 590/589 B.C.).[17] Sir Robert Anderson believed that Ezekiel's 390 years began with the covenant of blessing to the ten tribes made by the prophet Ahijah with Jeroboam in 977 B.C. (1 Kgs 11:29–39). It ended with the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.[18] Floyd Jones views the 390-year period as fitting inclusively between the schism (975 B.C.) and the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.).[19]

Let us assume, as Newton did, that the 390-year period ended at the onset of the siege. The siege began on the tenth day of the tenth month of Zedekiah's ninth year (2 Kgs 25:1). By our chronology, this dates to Jan. 15, 588 B.C., which is in the Nisan year 589/88 B.C. Counting back 390 years (inclusively) from 589/88 B.C. brings us to the Nisan year 978/77 B.C. *This is a milestone date in our calendar*. It is the fourth year of Solomon's reign, when the temple foundation was laid in the 480th year after the exodus:

> And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. . . . In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif. (1 Kgs 6:1, 37)

Observe that the temple was founded in the *second month* of 978/77 B.C. If we consider this to be the anniversary month for counting Ezekiel's 390 years, then the start of the second year was the second month of 977/76 B.C., the start of the third year was the second month of 976/75 B.C., and so forth. The start of the 390th year after the founding of the temple would then be the second month of 589/88 B.C. The siege of Jerusalem began in the latter part of this 390th year (on Jan. 15, 588 B.C.).[20]

While the above placement of Ezekiel's 390 years works well, and is believed by this author to be correct, it presents two points for inquiry:

1. At first glance, Ezekiel's prophecy appears to be limited to the divided monarchy era only, inasmuch as Israel and Judah are separately in view.
2. How can iniquity be counted for the reign of Solomon, who was a God-fearing ruler?

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[17] Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, 298.
[18] Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, 26–27 fn.
[19] Jones 2005, 132–35.
[20] Some scholars apply Ezekiel's 390 and 40-year intervals *forward* from either the siege or fall of Jerusalem. However, no meaningful dates are arrived at by this application.

The first point is valid given usage of the distinct terms, "house of Israel" (*bêt yiśrā'ēl*) and "house of Judah" (*bêt yĕhûdâ*). However, as Daniel Block explained, the term *bêt yiśrā'ēl* is not limited to the Northern Kingdom alone:[21]

> *bêt yiśrā'ēl* occurs three additional times in this series of sign-acts with the following denotations: v. 3, the Judeans; v. 13, the Judean exiles in Babylon; 5:4, the survivors of Jerusalem's collapse. Minimally, therefore, *bêt yiśrā'ēl* should include the Judeans. Moreover, whereas the name "Israel" occurs more than 180 times in the book, "Judah" appears only 15 times. In every instance where Judah is juxtaposed with "Israel," the names are used interchangeably.[22] Furthermore, whenever other sign-acts involve only "Israel," the southern kingdom as the remnant of the original larger entity is in view.[23] Finally, where the northern kingdom is contrasted with Judah, the name "Israel" is either avoided or defined more particularly.[24]

Given that Ezekiel used "Israel" and "Judah" interchangeability, Block concluded that *bêt yiśrā'ēl* should be understood similarly for Ezek 4:4–5. He also submitted that the 390-year period should be counted retrospectively (i.e., backwards not forwards) from the fall of Jerusalem to arrive at a beginning point during the reign of Solomon.[25] Our study concurs with Block's view that the 390-year period began during the reign of Solomon. However, whereas Block counted back from the *fall of Jerusalem* (586 B.C. by his dating), we are counting back from the *start of the siege* (588 B.C.), which takes us to Solomon's fourth year (978 B.C.). For 390 years thereafter, Hebrews in both the unified and divided monarchy eras (= "Israel") provoked God through disobedience.

This leads to the second point: How can iniquity be counted against Solomon, who was a God-fearing ruler?

It is true that God blessed Solomon with wisdom, riches, and honor. However, the account of his reign in 1 Kgs 3 is prefaced with an ominous statement:

> And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days. And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. (vv. 1–3)

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[21] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 176.

[22] The officials who are called "the elders of Judah" in 8:1 are referred to as "the elders of Israel" in 14:1 and 20:1; "house of Israel" in 8:6, 10, 11, 12 is replaced by "house of Judah" in 8:17; Israel and Judah are conjoined by epexegetical *waw* in 9:9; 25:3; 27:17.

[23] Cf. 6:11; 12:6, 9, 10, 19; 21:17, 30 (Eng. 12, 25); 24:21.

[24] As in ch. 23, where Oholah = Samaria = the northern kingdom, and Oholibah = Jerusalem = the southern kingdom, Judah. Cf. 37:16, 19, where the northern kingdom is identified as Joseph/Ephraim rather than Judah.

[25] Op. cit., 178–79. Block counted back 390 years from the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. to arrive at 976 B.C. as the starting point for Israel's iniquity. He observed that 976 B.C. was remarkably close to the date when the glory of Yahweh moved from the tabernacle to the Holy of Holies of the new temple (cf. 1 Kgs 8:10–11).

Two noteworthy sins may be identified in this passage:

1. Solomon married a woman from another nation. Although this was customary for Near Eastern kings, marrying a Gentile contravened the Mosaic law (cf. Deut 7:1–6).

2. He did not follow the Mosaic rules concerning legitimate places of worship.

The sins associated with marrying Gentile women increased for Solomon, and prompted the schism:

> But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. . . . And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. (1 Kgs 11:1–4, 9–12)

The seeds of Solomon's downfall were thus sown early in his reign, and although he loved the Lord, his besetting sins remained. As a result, the Lord stirred up foes against Solomon all his days (1 Kgs 11:14–25).

Significantly, the Lord linked the temple to Solomon's obedience. For example, we read in 1 Kgs 6:11–13:

> And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father: And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

Here, God assured Solomon of His continued presence (through the temple) and an enduring dynasty if he and his descendants remained obedient (cf. Lev 26:11–12). In a subsequent dream appearance, God again linked the temple to obedience, and declared the consequences of disobedience:

> . . . I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. **But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight**; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who

> brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil. (1 Kgs 9:3–9)

God vowed that the temple would be destroyed if Solomon or his descendants disobeyed His commandments. We know that Solomon *was* disobedient, especially in later years. Then, after his death and the subsequent division of the kingdom (which was a direct result of his disobedience), the iniquity was perpetuated by the Israelite kings and many of the Judahite kings (Solomon's own descendants).

Israel's iniquity therefore did not begin after Solomon's death. It began during his own reign, as attested by his marriage to pharaoh's daughter. It is logical to conclude, then, that God began the count of Israel's iniquity—which ultimately led to the destruction of the temple—from a conspicuous and appropriate starting point: the founding of the temple.

A theological perspective. God's linkage of the temple to the iniquity of His people is reflected in Stephen's negative evaluation of the temple:

> But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. (Acts 7:47–51)

By nature, all humans are "stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears." There is no temple built with hands, or system of sacrifices, that can improve this condition before God. It would require a different type of sacrifice entirely in the person of Jesus Christ:

> Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? **But he spake of the temple of his body**. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. (John 2:18–22)

So, as well as the chronological fit, it fits theologically that Ezekiel's 390-year interval should begin with the temple's founding in 978 B.C. The counting of national iniquity from this point emphasizes that sin can only be expiated through Jesus Christ, who is the temple that was destroyed but raised again.

3. The 40-Year Period

An important year in the countdown to the final siege of Jerusalem is the 13th year of Josiah, when Jeremiah began to prophesy:

> The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. (Jer 1:1–2)

The 13th year of Josiah was 628 B.C.[26] We favor the view of authors such as Robert Anderson, Martin Anstey, and Floyd Jones that Josiah's 13th year was the starting point of Ezekiel's second time-bridge.[27] Like the 390-year interval, it should be counted from the *time of year* when the event occurred (i.e., by anniversary). Although the Bible does not reveal the month or day when Jeremiah began to prophecy, let us assume that he was commissioned in the summer of 628 B.C. His 40th year of prophesying would then extend from summer 589 to summer 588 B.C. The siege of Jerusalem (Jan., 588 B.C.) falls within this 40th anniversary year.

Accepting the above placement to be correct, one must still explain why these 40 years are viewed as a period of iniquity. Recall that, when reviewing the term *bêt yiśrā'ēl* above, it was concluded that Israel's 390-year interval covered the iniquity of *both* kingdoms. Further support for this position is found in the prophecy itself, in the duration of Ezekiel's eating and drinking in scarcity:

> Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, **three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof**. And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it. Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink. And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight. And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. . . . Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: That they may want bread and water, and be astonied one with another, and consume away for their iniquity. (Ezek 4:9–13, 16–17)

Ezekiel ate and drank in scarcity for 390 days, not 430. In other words, no extra days were necessary for Judah, despite the Lord saying "I will break the staff of bread in *Jerusalem*." So why did Ezekiel have to lie on his right side an additional 40 days for Judah if its iniquity had already been accounted for?

I propose the following explanation. For the first 390 days, Ezekiel performed a sign-act associated with the repeated transgressions of all Israel, from Solomon's reign to Jerusalem's siege. However, in the subsequent 40-day period, it appears that a different aspect of iniquity was in view, being *testing and punishment*.

In the Bible, a period of 40 days or years is often associated with *trial* or *testing* (cf. Heb 3:8–9; Mark 1:13). A test was indeed underway during Jeremiah's 40 years of prophesying before the siege. Had the nation repented during that time, God would have spared them, as He promised the prophet:

> In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word from the LORD, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD'S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: **If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his**

[26] By our chronology, Josiah came to the throne in 641 B.C. He died in his 31st year of rule in 610 B.C. (and not 609 B.C. as is commonly held; ch. 9 refers). Therefore, his 13th year by Nisan accession year dating was 628 B.C.

[27] Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, 26 fn.; Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, 225; Jones 2005, 133 fn. 1.

> **evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings**. (Jer 26:1–3)

God was gracious in granting Judah such forewarning of impending catastrophe, and of the chance to escape it. Of course, He knew that Judah would fail the test and continue in iniquity. No less a step than *generational renewal*, as happened to the Israelites during the wilderness sojourn, was therefore required:

> And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: **in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die**. (Num 14:33–35)

Observe in Numbers 14 how the wilderness exile of 40 years would see out that evil generation. One may infer, therefore, that in the 40 days of Ezekiel's sign-act, God was announcing a similar intention to eliminate Judah's evil generation through exilic punishment (to Babylon). Accordingly, Ezekiel "bore the iniquity" for 40 days, in anticipation of this coming judgment.

In summary, therefore, Ezekiel's act of lying on his left side for 390 days then his right side for 40 days appears to signify the following:

- The 390-day/year period for the house of Israel encompasses the sins of all Hebrews during the Solomonic and divided monarchy eras. It began with the founding of the temple in Solomon's fourth year, in 978 B.C. It ended when Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonians in 588 B.C.

- The 40-day/year period for the house of Judah spans the duration of Jeremiah's prophesying, from 628 to 588 B.C. As well as being a testing program (would the nation heed the prophet's warnings during that time?), it focused on God's intention to eliminate that sinful generation—now the last viable part of Israel—and begin anew.

D. An Unconventional Approach

In the preceding chapter, a new chronology of the Hebrew kings was presented. In this chapter, its dates were tested for harmony, successfully, with other Biblical notices.

The absolute dates in this new chronology were assigned primarily through a Neo-Babylonian synchronism, being Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Egypt at Carchemish in 605 B.C. = Jehoiakim's fourth year (Jer 46:2). It is a trustworthy synchronism, given that it is underpinned by astronomical reckoning. Our method, though, is unusual because most chronologies of the Hebrew kings rely on synchronisms with known Assyrian history to help anchor the Hebrew regnal data for the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. Since our chronology was framed without reference to Assyrian history, it has yielded an unorthodox date of 942/41 B.C. for the schism.

As mentioned in Chapter 3B1, synchronisms with Assyria have not been used because of the likelihood of a gap in the Eponym Canon. Although Assyriologists argue against this, the next chapter submits that there are grounds for reconsideration.

Chapter 6: Assyrian Chronology Re-examined

A. Evidence of a Break in the Eponym Canon

In Chapter 3B, we discussed the likelihood of a break in the Assyrian Eponym Canon between 770 and 769 B.C. It was brought to our attention by a disruption in the regular cycle of *līmu* titles. Concerning this cycle, George Smith explained:[1]

> In the ordinary rotation of the eponymes, the series was commenced by the king, and he was followed by the *tartan*, who was commander-in-chief of the forces and represented the army.
>
> After the tartan generally came the *niru-ekali*, or chief of the palace, the great representative of the state; he was followed by the *rab-bitur* or head of the priesthood, who represented the national religion; while the *tukulu*, a military officer in attendance on the king, came next. These four officers, together with the king, formed the principal eponymes and representatives of the government of the country, and they were followed by the governors of various chief towns, the head of these being the general governor or head of the prefects. The official order of the eponymes sometimes varied; but the general succession of the titles will be shown by the following table . . .

B.C. 810–782	781–754	743–724	719–697
king	king	king	king
tartan	tartan	tartan	. . . . .
chief of palace	rab-bitur	chief of palace	
rab-bitur	chief of palace	rab-bitur	
tukulu	tukulu	tukulu	tukulu-rabu
governor	governor	governor	g. Assur
Rezeph	Rezeph	Rezeph	
Arbaha	Nisibin	Nisibin	Nisibin
Ahi-zuhina	Sallat	Arbaha	Arbaha
Nisibin	Calah	Calah	Calah
	(king)		
	(tartan)		
Amidi	Arbaha	Mazamua	Lullumu
the rabshakeh	Mazamua	Sihime	Sihime
Calah	Ahi-zuhina	Ahi-zuhina	Ahizuhina
Kirruri	Bele	Bele	Bele
Sallat	Kirruri	Kirruri	Kirruri
Tushan	Tushan	Tushan	Tushan
Gozan	Gozan	Gozan	Gozan
Bele	Amida	Amida	Amida
Siphinis	Nineveh	Nineveh	Nineveh
Isana	Kalzi	Kalzi	Kalzi
Nineveh	Arbela		Arbela
Kalzi	Isana		Isana
Arbela	Kurban		Kurban
Sibaniba	Dihnun		. . . . .
Rimusi	Siphinis		Dihnun
. . . . .	Rimusi		
Kurban			
Mazamua			
. . . ina			

[1] Smith 1875, 24–25. The order of the initial titles here was in use as early as the 11th century B.C.

Although Smith's table shows four eponym cycles—which can be compared alongside each other for sequencing changes—his table actually features *five* kings not four. Observe the two bracketed entries in the second column: (king) and (tartan). This king was Ashur-dan III, and if Smith had allowed him his own eponym cycle, the table would have appeared so:

Adad-nirari III	Shalmaneser IV	Ashur-dan III	Tiglath-pileser III	Sargon II
king	king	(king)	king	king
tartan	tartan	(tartan)	tartan	. . . . .
chief of palace	rab-bitur	?	chief of palace	
rab-bitur	chief of palace	?	rab-bitur	
tukulu	tukulu	?	tukulu	tukulu-rabu
governor	governor	?	governor	g. Assur
Rezeph	Rezeph	?	Rezeph	
Arbaha	Nisibin	?	Nisibin	Nisibin
Ahi-zuhina	Sallat		Arbaha	Arbaha
Nisibin	Calah	?	Calah	Calah
Amidi		Arbaha	Mazamua	Lullumu
rabshakeh		Mazamua	Sihime	Sihime
Calah		Ahi-zuhina	Ahi-zuhina	Ahizuhina
Kirruri		Bele	Bele	Bele
Sallat		Kirruri	Kirruri	Kirruri
Tushan		Tushan	Tushan	Tushan
Gozan		Gozan	Gozan	Gozan
Bele		Amida	Amida	Amida
Siphinis		Nineveh	Nineveh	Nineveh
Isana		Kalzi	Kalzi	Kalzi
Nineveh		Arbela		Arbela
Kalzi		Isana		. . . . .
Arbela		Kurban		Isana
Sibaniba		Dihnun		Kurban
Rimusi		Siphinis		. . . . .
. . . . .		Rimusi		Dihnun
Kurban				
Mazamua				
. . . ina				

When Ashur-dan III is accorded his own eponym cycle, comparison with earlier and later kings reveals a clear break in the pattern between the tartan and Arbaha. Missing are three officials (the palace chief, rab-bitur, tukulu), the governor of the land, and the governors of at least three provinces (Rezeph, Nisibin, and Calah). This is a total of at least seven missing eponyms.[2]

A comparison of all the *līmu* sequences from 810 to 697 B.C. highlights this gap (Smith did not show the sequences for Ashur-nirari V and Shalmaneser V). It is especially evident when

[2] Observe in Smith's original table that the eponyms for Sargon—in column four—show three spaces: (1) between the unreadable entry of line two and the *tukulu-rabu*, (2) between the governors of Ashur and Nisibin, and (3) between the governors of Calah and Lullumu (columns one and three also have spaces at this point). The spaces are not missing eponyms. They help to highlight the repetition of eponyms for different kings through side-by-side comparison. It should also be noted that I have used Smith's edition of the canon here rather than Millard's for titles and province names. Although Millard's is the most recent (refer Appendix B), the discussion concerning the 770–769 B.C. break is unaffected by which edition is used.

comparing Ashur-dan III's *līmu* sequence with that of the preceding king (Shalmaneser IV) and following two kings (Ashur-nirari V and Tiglath-pileser III). See shaded section below:

Adad-nirari III	Shalmaneser IV	Ashur-dan III	Ashur-nirari V	Tiglath-pileser III	Shalmaneser V	Sargon II
king	king	king	king	king	king	king
tartan	tartan	tartan	tartan	tartan	. . . . .	. . . . .
palace chief	rab-bitur	?	palace chief	palace chief	. . . . .	
rab-bitur	palace chief	?	rab-bitur	rab-bitur	. . . . .	
tukulu	tukulu	?	tukulu	tukulu		tukulu-rabu
governor	governor	?	governor	governor		g. Assur
Rezeph	Rezeph	?	Rezeph	Rezeph		
Arbaha	Nisibin	?	Nisibin	Nisibin		Nisibin
Ahi-zuhina	Sallat		Arbaha	Arbaha		Arbaha
Nisibin	Calah	?	Calah	Calah		Calah
Amidi		Arbaha		Mazamua		Lullumu
rabshakeh		Mazamua		Sihime		Sihime
Calah		Ahi-zuhina		Ahi-zuhina		Ahizuhina
Kirruri		Bele		Bele		Bele
Sallat		Kirruri		Kirruri		Kirruri
Tushan		Tushan		Tushan		Tushan
Gozan		Gozan		Gozan		Gozan
Bele		Amida		Amida		Amida
Siphinis		Nineveh		Nineveh		Nineveh
Isana		Kalzi		Kalzi		Kalzi
Nineveh		Arbela				Arbela
Kalzi		Isana				. . . . .
Arbela		Kurban				Isana
Sibaniba		Dihnun				Kurban
Rimusi		Siphinis				. . . . .
. . . . .		Rimusi				Dihnun
Kurban						
Mazamua						
. . . ina						

Undoubtedly, Smith presented the table the way he did because he was simply conveying what the Eponym Lists stated. As for the break in the titles, he suggested that the absent *līmus* were omitted because they had been used too recently:

> In the reign of Assur-daan [III] after the eponymy of the tartan, in B.C. 770, the titles which usually follow are absent, and the governor of Arbaha comes next in B.C. 769. It is conjectured that the reason of this omission lays in the fact that these officers had so recently held the office of eponym during the last reign that their names were passed over.[3]

Smith's conjecture is doubtful, especially given that the *līmu* sequence started anew for Tiglath-pileser after the short reign of Ashur-nirari V. Nevertheless, both the Assyrian King List and the Eponym Canon agree on the duration of Ashur-dan III's reign, being 18 years. Consequently, Assyriologists today are confident that there is no gap between 770 and 769 B.C. According to the modern view, the eponymates of Ashur-dan III and his tartan merely interrupt the sequence that began with the preceding king, Shalmaneser IV (see Section C3 below).

[3] Smith 1875, 82.

It seems unlikely, though, that Ashur-dan III would have used Shalmaneser IV's *līmu* sequence to underpin the chronicling of his reign. The Assyrian kings were exceptionally conscious of history and their mark in the world. It is hard to imagine, then, that Ashur-dan III did not restart the sequence upon his accession, as had every other king in the canon before him.[4] There is a strong case, therefore, for postulating a break in the Eponym Canon between 770 and 796 B.C., a possibility that George Smith reluctantly admitted:

> IN REFERENCE TO THE SECOND OF THREE GAPS THAT HAD BEEN SUGGESTED IN SMITH'S DAY:
>
> Another gap has been suggested in the canon, between B.C. 770 and B.C. 769, by the Rev. D. H. Haigh, as there appeared an interruption in the titles of the eponymes; but this theory was abandoned afterwards by its author as untenable. Excellent remarks in answer to it were given by Canon Rawlinson, in *Zeitschrift fur Agyptische Sprache*, April 1870; but it must be allowed that in this place, if anywhere, a gap should take place, as there is a break in the titles.[5]
>
> IN REFERENCE TO THE GAP OF 47 YEARS (BETWEEN 746–745 B.C.) PROPOSED BY PROFESSOR OPPERT TO ACCOUNT FOR THE REIGN OF KING PUL (WHOSE NAME IS NOT RECORDED IN ANY ASSYRIAN TEXTS):
>
> The fact that we are unable to identify the king called Pul in the Bible is a grave difficulty, and lends some support to the idea that he was a monarch whose name is not in the eponymous list. While I do not agree with the idea of a gap of forty-seven years in the canon, I must confess this difficulty cannot at present be solved; but it appears to me that there are three possible explanations . . . The second possible explanation is, that Pul was a monarch who followed Assur-daan II. [III.], and whose name has been excluded from the eponym list between our present eponymes for B.C. 770 and 769; this would necessitate admitting Haigh's second gap in the canon, which might be from six to sixteen years.[6]
>
> IN DEFENCE OF 763 B.C. AS THE DATE OF THE ECLIPSE IN BUR-SAGGILÊ'S EPONYMY:
>
> Whether the canon is correct in its earlier part I will not pretend to say, but in the period following B.C. 769 I am satisfied of its truth.[7]

We will find that the gap between 770 and 769 B.C. occurred not because of an excluded king, but because a span of years was posthumously removed from the record of Ashur-dan III. This action was probably ordered by Tiglath-pileser III (some three decades later) to erase all memory of Jonah's prophetic mission to Nineveh. The deletion of eponyms also required that the regnal total for Ashur-dan III be reduced in the king lists. This is feasible because all the extant copies of those lists were compiled *after* Ashur-dan III's reign, the oldest during the time of Tiglath-pileser III.

Redating the Qarqar synchronism. A break between 770 and 769 B.C. means that all dates before that point, such as the battle of Qarqar, are in error by the number of eponyms missing. The magnitude of this error, I believe, is revealed by our redated chronology of the Hebrew kings, which is not tied to any Assyrian synchronism.

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[4] Given that Shalmaneser IV was also his brother, one expects that Ashur-dan III would have been especially keen to stamp his own authority in the empire by restarting the *līmu* sequence. Against this, Allis supposes that the sons of Adad-nirari III shared a strong brotherly bond. He cites Olmstead's view that Shalmaneser IV and Ashur-dan III were so close "that the cursus of eponyms was broken only to insert the new king and the old turtan" (Allis, *The Old Testament*, 422).

[5] Smith 1875, 74–75.

[6] Ibid., 75–76.

[7] Smith, "The Annals of Tiglath Pileser II," 10.

Recall that the Qarqar synchronism involves the aligning of Shalmaneser III's sixth and 18th years with the end of Ahab's reign and the beginning of Jehu's reign. These events are normally dated to 853 and 841 B.C., respectively. By our chronology, however, they are dated to 864 and 852 B.C. In other words, there is an eleven-year difference between the Biblical and secular calendars at those points. When these eleven years are added to the Eponym Canon between 770 and 769 B.C., harmony is achieved between our chronology and the Eponym Canon with respect to the Qarqar synchronism (see Appendix E for a graphical depiction).

One can speculate on the deleted eponyms, and this is shown below using Smith's original location names. Of course, it does not matter which office-titles are chosen, so long as eleven are placed between 770 and 769 B.C. Scrutiny of the table also reveals that sufficient eponyms were deleted to allow the governors of Calah and Arbaha to be adjoining, as for the reign of Ashur-nirari V. No doubt this was done intentionally, to disguise the gap as much as possible. It also explains the seemingly arbitrary number of deleted eponyms (i.e., eleven).

Adad-nirari III	Shalmaneser IV	Ashur-dan III	Ashur-nirari V	Tiglath-pileser III	Shalmaneser V	Sargon
king	king	king	king	king	king	king
tartan	tartan	tartan	tartan	tartan	. . . . .	. . . . .
palace chief	rab-bitur	~~palace chief~~	palace chief	palace chief	. . . . .	
rab-bitur	palace chief	~~rab-bitur~~	rab-bitur	rab-bitur	. . . . .	
tukulu	tukulu	~~tukulu~~	tukulu	tukulu		tukulu-rabu
governor	governor	~~governor~~	governor	governor		g. Assur
Rezeph	Rezeph	~~Rezeph~~	Rezeph	Rezeph		
Arbaha	Nisibin	~~Nisibin~~	Nisibin	Nisibin		Nisibin
Ahi-zuhina	Sallat	~~Sallat~~	Arbaha	Arbaha		Arbaha
Nisibin	Calah	~~Calah~~	Calah	Calah		Calah
Amidi		~~rabshakeh~~		Mazamua		Lullumu
rabshakeh		~~Sihime~~		Sihime		Sihime
Calah		~~Sibaniba~~				
Kirruri		Arbaha				
Sallat		Mazamua				
Tushan		Ahi-zuhina		Ahi-zuhina		Ahizuhina
Gozan		Bele		Bele		Bele
Bele		Kirruri		Kirruri		Kirruri
Siphinis		Tushan		Tushan		Tushan
Isana		Gozan		Gozan		Gozan
Nineveh		Amida		Amida		Amida
Kalzi		Nineveh		Nineveh		Nineveh
Arbela		Kalzi		Kalzi		Kalzi
Sibaniba		Arbela				Arbela
Rimusi		Isana				. . . . .
. . . . .		Kurban				Isana
Kurban		Dihnun				Kurban
Mazamua		Siphinis				. . . . .
. . . ina		Rimusi				Dihnun

Smith determined that if a gap existed between 770 and 769 B.C. (in which king Pul was lost), it might be from six to sixteen years.[8] Although he did not explain his arithmetic, his range closely agrees with our analysis:

[8] Ibid., 76.

- MINIMUM DURATION: Based on the recurring sequences for other kings, it is clear that there are at least seven missing *līmus* for the reign of Ashur-dan III: the palace chief, rab-bitur, tukulu, governor (of the land), Rezeph, Nisibin, and Calah. The minimum duration of the gap between 770 and 769 B.C. would therefore be seven years.

- MAXIMUM DURATION: For the maximum number of missing *līmus* in the 770–769 B.C. gap, one must first know how many officials were eligible to hold the eponymate. Smith reckoned this number to be about 30 before the king took a second eponymy and restarted the sequence (as occurred during the reign of Shalmaneser III).[9] It is unclear whether Smith intended the king to be included in his figure of 30. Let us assume he did not, and that the corpus of available *līmus* at the time was 31. Since 18 eponyms are already listed for Ashur-dan III's reign, this leaves a maximum of 13 missing eponyms. Considering that Ashur-dan III would have ruled for around three decades if a gap is admitted for his reign, one should allow an extra position for a newly installed high office holder (see, for example, the different palace chiefs for Shalmaneser III's fifth and ninth years). An additional governor's position for a new location might also be included. This brings the total to fifteen.

Our figure of eleven missing eponyms is in the middle of both Smith's six to sixteen-year range and our seven to fifteen-year range above.

B. Jonah's Mission to Nineveh

We have found that a break in the Assyrian Eponym Canon is strongly indicated between 770 and 769 B.C., during the reign of Ashur-dan III. The magnitude of this break, eleven eponyms, was figured by raising the dates of all eponyms (and Assyrian kings) before 769 B.C. enough to establish the Qarqar synchronism between Shalmaneser III and our regnal dates for Ahab and Jehu. But why did the break occur at that particular point in time? We know that the Assyrians were mindful of history and their mark in the world, so the deletion of any eponyms was a serious step. A good reason is found in the Bible, in the account of Jonah's mission to Nineveh.[10]

Jonah's mission. Jonah, the son of Amittai, prophesied in the Northern Kingdom during the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II (805/04–763 B.C.). He was called by the Lord to proclaim judgment against the wicked city of Nineveh, one of Assyria's capitals. The empire was in a period of decline in those days, and this undoubtedly fostered a mood of national introspection, creating a favorable climate for Jonah's message.

Like other Syro-Palestinians, Jonah saw the Assyrians as a threat to the region. Not wishing to associate with them, nor wanting them to be spared God's wrath (cf. Jonah 4:1–2), he did not go to Nineveh as instructed. Instead, he fled to Joppa (a Philistine port city) where he boarded a ship for passage to Tarshish, an unidentified distant country that took Jonah in the opposite direction to Nineveh. But the Lord caused a great storm, and the crew threw Jonah overboard after he insisted that this was the only way to calm it. A great fish swallowed Jonah, and he miraculously spent three days and nights in its belly. During that time, Jonah prayed and repented of his

[9] Smith states that "There were altogether about thirty functionaries, officers and governors who held the right of being eponymes" (Smith 1875, 26).

[10] The idea of Assyrian records being tampered with as a result of Jonah's mission has been discussed before; e.g., Brad Aaronson, *The Jerusalem Chronology of the Israelite Monarchies* (1989), 38–41 at http://www.starways.net/lisa/essays/jcim.html; Jones 2005, 156–57.

disobedience. God then caused the fish to vomit him up on dry land, and he was recommissioned to preach to the Ninevites. What happened next was nothing short of astonishing:

> So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not. (Jonah 3:1–10)

This mass repentance by a Gentile city is of unprecedented dimension in history, as Hugh Martin observed:

> The repentance of Nineveh is one of the most singular events in history. A great and proud city suddenly smitten into the most profound humiliation, from the greatest of its inhabitants unto the least of them,—from the king on the throne to the meanest citizen,—is a spectacle to which, I suppose, history affords no parallel. Cities, and countries, and communities have oftentimes, with not a little unanimity, given themselves to humiliation and fasting. But there is no event on record that can at all be compared with the fast and the repentance of Nineveh. . . .
>
> Doubtless, the hand of God is to be traced in this, and His power and gracious influence on their hearts. And a very wondrous work it is of the grace of God, that a city such as Nineveh,—great, and violent, and proud, and of a haughty spirit,—should have been so greatly, so suddenly humbled to believe the message of God.[11]

Martin proposed that Jonah did not walk into Nineveh as a complete stranger; the Ninevites were aware of the background to his mission:

> Our Lord in the days of His flesh was solicited by the unbelieving Jews to show them a sign, and He answered—"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." And again—"As Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." Now it seems very clear, from these sayings of our Lord, that the respect in which Jonah was a sign, was in his being three days and three nights in the whale's belly; that in this respect he was a sign to the Ninevites; and, therefore, that the Ninevites must have been made aware of his history—the history of his original commission, his disobedience, his flight, his pursuit, his punishment, and forgiveness. Without their knowledge of his history, he could not have been to them in respect of that history, a sign. But the very story of what had befallen the very messenger whom God had sent them could not fail to impress them, not only with a deep sense of the terrors of God's wrath, but with a lively perception also of His mercy. The fact, also, that the Lord interposed to deliver His servant from the dreadful misery in which he was shut up, could hardly have been imparted to them without some intimation of the place which the prophet's lowly prayers held in the matter. And they could, therefore, scarcely avoid seeing that there is some influence which prayer and penitence exert in

[11] Martin, *The Prophet Jonah*, 222–23.

> averting the threatened wrath of the Almighty; and hence, perhaps, their wise and humble question,—"Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?"[12]

The degree of repentance and direct involvement of the king himself suggest that God's reprieve of Nineveh was recorded in the royal annals, with notational reference in the Eponym Chronicles. Yet no such entries have been recovered. Could it be that a later king found it detestable that a prophet from an inferior kingdom such as Israel caused the Assyrians to act in such a weak and gullible manner, effectively denying the protection of their own gods, especially the national god Ashur? This would be cause enough to delete those annals from posterity, to remove a span of eponyms, and to adjust the king lists accordingly.

This study submits that Tiglath-pileser III—a later, more aggressive king—expunged the record of the Assyrian reaction to Jonah's mission because it was an embarrassment and denial of their gods, as well as a blemish on the proud, warrior history of the empire. Hence, the evidence of a break in the Eponym Canon between 770 and 769 B.C., which is during the reign Ashur-dan III.

A date can also be suggested for Jonah's mission. Since comparison with Biblical chronology identifies eleven missing eponyms, the present eponym for 770 B.C. should to be redated to 781 B.C. (see table below). The first deleted eponym therefore belonged originally to 780 B.C., which we may assume was the year in which Nineveh repented.[13]

The Corrected Reign of Ashur-dan III

Year B.C.	Traditional Year of Reign	Corrected Year of Reign
(773) 784	(accession)	accession
(772) 783	(1)	1
(771) 782	(2)	2
(770) 781	(3)	3
780	X	4
779	X	5
778	X	6
777	X	7
776	X	8
775	X	9
774	X	10
773	X	11
772	X	12
771	X	13
770	X	14
769	4	15
768	5	16
767	6	17
766	7	18
765	8	19

[12] Ibid., 229–30.

[13] Jonah probably entered Nineveh in the *summer* of 780 B.C., given the heat of the easterly wind that he experienced while awaiting Nineveh's fate (Jonah 4:8).

764	9	20
763	10	21
762	11	22
761	12	23
760	13	24
759	14	25
758	15	26
757	16	27
756	17	28
755	18	29

Plague, eclipse, and revolt during the reign of Ashur-dan III. It was noted earlier that Assyria slid into decline after the death of Adad-nirari III (traditionally 783 B.C.). The nation was not ascendant again until the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.) During that time of weakness, three sons of Adad-nirari III ruled in succession: Shalmaneser IV, Ashur-dan III, and Ashur-nirari V. Robert Rogers writes concerning those faltering days after Adad-nirari III:

> After his reign there comes slowly but surely a period of strange, almost inexplicable, decline. Of the next three reigns we have no single royal inscription, and are confined to the brief notes of the Eponym Lists. From these we learn too little to enable us to follow the decline of Assyrian fortunes, but we gain here and there a glimpse of it, and see also not less vividly the growth of a strong northern power which should vex Assyrian kings for centuries.
>
> The successor of Adad-nirari III was Shalmaneser III [IV] (782–773), to whom the Eponym Lists ascribe ten campaigns. Some of these were of little consequence. . . .
>
> The next king was Asshur-dan III (772–755), in whose reign the decay of Assyrian power was rapid, in spite of strenuous efforts to maintain it, and in spite of success in its maintenance in certain places. . . . Asshur-dan III was plainly endeavoring to hold all that his fathers had won, but he had as yet undertaken no campaigns against any new territory. Whatever he may have planned or intended to do in that way was made impossible by a series of rebellions in Assyrian territory. The first of these began in 763 in the city of Asshur, the ancient political and religious center of the kingdom. We do not know its origin, but the general character of ancient oriental rebellions and the succession of events which immediately follow in this story make it seem probable that some pretender had attempted to seize the throne. The attempt failed for the present and the rebellion was put down in the same year.
>
> This was shortly followed by another rebellion, also of unknown cause, in the province of Arpakha, known to the Greeks as Arrapachitis, a territory on the waters of the Upper Zab. While a third at Guzanu, in the land of the Khabur, took place in 759 and 758. These rebellions were signs of the changes that were impending, and could not long be delayed.
>
> To the superstition of the Assyrians there were other omens than defeats and losses in war, which must have seemed to indicate the approach of troublous days. In 763 the Eponym List records an eclipse of the sun in the month of Sivan. To the Assyrians this was probably an event of doubt and concern. To modern students it has been of great importance, because the astronomical determination has given us a sure point of departure for Assyrian chronology. In 759 there was a pestilence, another omen of gloom.[14]

Rogers notes that a series of rebellions occurred during the reign of Ashur-dan III, which he attributed to a pretender's failed attempt to seize the throne. Although Assyrian cities rebelled from time to time, they occurred for *five consecutive years* during Ashur-dan III's reign. This was from the eponymy of Bur-Saggilê in 763 B.C. (the year of the eclipse) to the eponymy of Pan-Ashur-lamur in 759 B.C. The revolts occurred in three locations:

[14] Rogers, *A History of Babylonia and Assyria*, 2:100–03.

- in Ashur (the religious capital of Assyria from which the empire's name derived) for two consecutive years
- in Arrapha (about 80 miles east of Ashur) for two consecutive years
- in Guzana (probably the Biblical Gozan, which is some 200 miles northwest of Ashur)

At the very least, the revolts confirmed a mood of civil discontent among the Assyrians. It is significant, though, that they began in the religious capital of Ashur, and during the only year for which a solar eclipse was recorded in the Eponym Canon. For the Assyrians, total eclipses, earthquakes, famines, fires, floods, and plagues signified divine wrath and national disaster. Regarding total solar eclipses, Wiseman observes:

> The rarity of the total eclipse always portended something of special significance and pointed to a major public disaster. While affecting individuals the predictions were not aimed at them but at the country as a whole or at the royal family and nobles and at the overthrow of the dynasty and city.[15]

The solar eclipse of Jun. 15, 763 B.C. occurred shortly after 11:00 a.m. Astronomers today call this the "Nineveh eclipse" because the path of totality passed just to the north of Nineveh (the magnitude at Nineveh was 97%). To the south in Ashur (where the magnitude was 94%), people may have interpreted its near-totality at Nineveh as a portent of divine anger, due to the king's ongoing acceptance of the Hebrew God. They therefore initiated a revolt that continued through to the next year. The subsequent revolts in Arrapha and Guzana may have also been fuelled by the same religious discontent, and an attempt to seize the throne from Ashur-dan III may well have occurred then (as Rogers suggests).

The pervading mood of dread in Assyria at that time is reflected in the notations of "a plague" in the Eponym Canon during Ashur-dan III's reign, for the years 765 and 759 B.C. Considering that the canon contains only three plague entries in total—two for Ashur-dan III and one for the reign of Adad-nirari III (in 802 B.C. by traditional dating)—the two entries for Ashur-dan III's reign are ominous.

An irregular horizontal ruling. Many texts of the Eponym Canon feature horizontal rulings, or divisonal lines, drawn at noteworthy points. They were usually drawn before, and in some cases also after, the eponymy of a new king.[16] However, the text of B1 (= C^b1) is unique in that it features a ruling before Bur-Saggilê's eponymy of 763 B.C., which was the year of the total solar eclipse at Nineveh. The attention to this eclipse not only by its singular mention in the Eponym Chronicles but also by the divisional line confirms its impact on the Assyrian psyche. Two reasons may be offered for this irregular ruling:

1. Since total eclipses were omens of ill-portent, the scribe may have added the ruling—normally reserved for kings—to connect the eclipse to the reigning king. In other words, by using a regnal ruling to emphasize the eclipse (as well as the "revolt in Ashur" notation for that year), the scribe was effectively *blaming* Ashur-dan III for the national troubles of his day. Religious Assyrians (especially those in Ashur) no doubt viewed those troubles as the result of Jonah's mission to Nineveh and the city's embracement of a foreign God. The

[15] Wiseman, "Jonah's Nineveh," 45. In this article, Wiseman identifies Jonah as the prophet of Jeroboam II's day, and Ashur-dan III as the Assyrian monarch most predisposed to heed the warnings of a Hebrew prophet.

[16] For the distribution of these rulings in the extant texts, see Millard 1994, 12–13.

deities were thus angered, as confirmed to devout Assyrians by the near-total eclipse in Nineveh some years later.

2. Alternatively, the horizontal ruling before 763 B.C. may have been applied for its normal purpose, to point attention to a new king. In this case, to someone who seized the throne from Ashur-dan III for a short time before it was reclaimed by him.

C. The Problematic King Pul

The Bible makes mention of a certain King Pul of Assyria in two passages: 2 Kgs 15:19 and 1 Chr 5:26. The 2 Kgs 15 passage records that Menahem of Israel paid a substantial tribute to Pul to both stave off military intervention and secure his unsteady rule:

> In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. **And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand**. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land. (vv. 17–20)

Prior to the mid-19th century, the Bible was the governing source for matters concerning the kings of Assyria, and Pul was universally recognized as the predecessor of Tiglath-pileser owing to the KJV reading of 1 Chr 5:26:

> And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh . . .

However, after the discovery and decipherment of numerous Assyrian inscriptions, Pul's name could not be found in the records of the empire.[17] Compounding the issue was the inscription fragment Layard 50a, which recorded that *Me-ni-hi-im-me* ^{uru} *Sa-me-ri-na-a+a* (Menahem of Samaria) paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser.[18] This prompted Henry Rawlinson to suggest that Pul was

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[17] For an illuminating discussion on Pul, see Steven W. Holloway, "The Quest for Sargon, Pul and Tiglath-Pileser," 68–87.

[18] See Tadmor, *ITP*, 68–69, Ann. 13:10 (also *ARAB* I, §772; *DOTT*, 54–55; *ANET*, 283; Kuan 1995, 154–55; *COS* 2.117A:285). Layard 50a is part of an annalistic text that lists 18 southeast Anatolian and Syro-Palestinian kings who paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser, with Menahem being positioned third. Tadmor dated this list to 738 B.C. (*ITP*, 274–76; see also 265–68). It should be noted that there are other tribute list fragments belonging to the annals (e.g., Layard 45b) but all are in broken contexts and not one mentions Menahem. Another inscription that records Menahem's tribute is the *Iran Stela*, which came to scholarly attention in the 1960's. This is the only known stela of Tiglath-pileser and summarizes his achievements geographically. The portion of interest is Column III A, Lines 1–23 (see Levine, *Two Neo-Assyrian Stelae from Iran*, 18–19; Tadmor, *ITP*, 106–09, 260–64; Kuan 1995, 146–48; *COS* 2.117B:287). In an almost identical listing to that of the annalistic text, the Iran Stela places Menahem (*Mi-ni-hi-im-*ʳ*me*ʾ ^{kur} *Sa-*ʳ*me*ʾ*-ri-i-na-a+*ʳ*a*ʾ) third in a list of 17 kings who paid tribute. While there is uncertainty over the dating of this particular list, Tadmor favors 740 over 738 B.C. (*ITP*, 265–68, 274–76). Another inscription of Tiglath-pileser, III R 10, 2, is sometimes quoted as referring to Menahem. By Oppenheim's translation (*ANET*,

another name of Tiglath-pileser, especially as he was listed as the Babylonian king Porus (= Pul) in the Royal Canon.[19]

Rawlinson's suggestion gained support, but not among long-chronology proponents. According to Ussher, Menahem died in 761 B.C. However, from the Assyrian inscriptions and the Royal Canon, it was established that Tiglath-pileser began to rule 16 years later, in 745 B.C. If Ussher's chronology was correct—and it was hard to ignore having been the standard reference for over 200 years—then Menahem must have paid tribute to a predecessor of Tiglath-pileser. Yet Tiglath-pileser himself claimed Menahem's tribute in Layard 50a. The issue puzzled scholars, prompting George Smith to remark:

> It is evident from the Biblical account that Pul was a powerful monarch, who was then extending his dominion over Palestine; and it has been one of the greatest problems of Assyriologists to discover which king of Assyria is called Pul in the Bible. This question forms the key of the whole chronological problem.[20]

Today, the orthodox view is that Pul is another name of Tiglath-pileser. A proof of this is found in a comparison of the following two sources: (1) The Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 92502 records that Tiglath-pileser was the king of Babylon for the last two years of his reign,[21] and (2) when cross-referenced with the Babylonian King List A, those two years are ascribed to *Pulu*.[22] Accordingly, Tiglath-pileser and Pulu must be the same person.

Given the aforementioned evidence, it is not surprising that modern translations of 1 Chr 5:26 identify Pul as Tiglath-pileser. For instance, the NIV reads:

> So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria (that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria) . . .

Although this study readily accepts that Tiglath-pileser was called *Pulu* (being his less formal name; i.e., a hypocoristicon), it questions modern versions (like the NIV) which translate the Hebrew particle *waw* in an explicative sense ("that is") rather than as a simple conjunction ("and") as in the KJV. The difference is crucial. In the former rendering ("that is") Pul and Tiglath-pileser are the same person; in the latter ("and") they are separate individuals.

The use of *waw* as an explicative is well attested in the Bible,[23] and Thiele advocated it for 1 Chr 5:26.[24] He also asserted that because the verb "carried" is singular ("and he carried them away"),

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283–84) the relevant section reads: "[As for Menahem I ov]erwhelmed him [like a snowstorm] and he . . . fled like a bird, alone, [and bowed to my feet?]." Oppenheim's insertion of Menahem is conjectural, as is Luckenbill's in *ARAB* I, §815. Modern scholarship reconstructs the text to refer to the previously named king, Hanunu of Gaza (see Tadmor, *ITP*, 140–41, Summ. 4.12′; Kuan 1995, 176–77; *COS* 2.117C:288).

[19] Smith 1875, 76–77.

[20] Ibid., 183.

[21] Grayson, *ABC*, 72 (Chron. 1 i 23–24).

[22] *ANET*, 272.

[23] See David W. Baker, "Further Examples of the *Waw Explicativum*," *VT* 30 (1980): 129–36; Brian A. Mastin, "*Waw Explicativum* in 2 Kings VIII 9," *VT* 34 (1984): 353–55; Patrick Wilton, "More Cases of Waw Explicativum," *VT* 44 (1994): 125–28.

[24] Thiele 1983, 139–41.

it agrees with the singular pronoun "he" confirming that Pul and Tiglath-pileser were the same person. Countering Thiele, Jones upholds the KJV meaning of the verse:

> . . . even a casual glance at 1 Chron. 5:26 reveals the obvious truth that Pul and Tiglath-pileser (III) are not the same man but two different Assyrian monarchs; and with this Josephus completely concurs.[25] If they were one and the same ruler, why does the title "king of Assyria" follow after both: "And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria"...? Were they the same man, the verse would only have the title "king of Assyria" *once*, reading "And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, that is, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria." The redundancy, although not mentioned heretofore in the literature to our knowledge, is an unmistakable indication that we are dealing with two distinct monarchs – not one. As to "and he carried them away" that follows after "...Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria" in I Chronicles 5:26, the "he" contextually refers to Tiglath-pileser there and also back to verse six! (note: Reubenites in vv. 6 & 26, Gad vv. 11, & 26, & half tribe of Manasseh vv. 18 & 26).
>
> Furthermore, Eugene Faulstich asserts that the Hebrew language will not permit the association of Pul with Tiglath-pileser (III). He states that the phrases "the spirit of Pul" and "the spirit of Tiglath-pileser" in the text are followed by the Hebrew symbol for the direct object indicating "definiteness" and that the double use of that symbol demonstrates two definite spirits of two different kings.[26] Indeed, the context of this passage requires that the biblical "Pul," though not mentioned in any extant Assyrian document by that appellation, is a king prior to Tiglathpileser (III).[27]

In accordance with the KJV reading of 1 Chr 5:26, as reinforced by the arguments of Jones and Faulstich, this study concludes that Pul and Tiglath-pileser were separate Assyrian kings. This conclusion is supported by the following Biblical evidence:

- If Pul and Tiglath-pileser were the same person, why does the Bible use one name in 2 Kgs 15:19 then mention the other in a chronologically later segment within the same chapter (15:29)?
- Pul is mentioned before Tiglath-pileser in the two passages that refer to him.

Distinguishing Pul from Tiglath-pileser leaves us with the same two questions faced by the early Assyriologists: (1) Who was Pul? and (2) How do we reconcile Menahem's payment of tribute to Tiglath-pileser? These questions will be addressed under the following headings:

1. The identity of Pul
2. Tiglath-pileser's office during the reign of Ashur-nirari V
3. A proposed reconstruction

1. The Identity of Pul

Before discussing Pul, we should examine Tiglath-pileser's ancestry. If he was called Pul by the Babylonians, could this be a family name-element that was also used by one or more of his predecessors?

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[25] Josephus, *Antiquities*, *op. cit*., IX, 11, 1. All older English Bibles (Geneva, etc.) read as KJB.
[26] Faulstich, *History, Harmony and the Hebrew Kings*, *op. cit*., footnote 4, p. 139.
[27] Jones 2005, 172–73.

Uncertainty exists over Tiglath-pileser's parentage,[28] and scholarly opinion is divided as follows:

- he was a son of Ashur-nirari V, as recorded in the SDAS King List[29]
- he was a son of Adad-nirari III, as recorded on a brick inscription from the floor of the temple in Ashur[30]
- he was a usurper who was not in the direct royal line

This study accepts that Tiglath-pileser was the son of Ashur-nirari V, as recorded in the SDAS King List. However, because he was a warrior king who wanted to distance himself from Assyria's shameful decline during the reign of his father and two uncles—during which time the Jonah/Nineveh episode occurred—Tiglath-pileser called himself the "son of Adad-nirari, king of Assyria." This can only be his militarily successful grandfather Adad-nirari III, whom he saw as the more worthy predecessor with which to identify in lineage, especially in a temple inscription.[31] Tiglath-pileser's reluctance to identify himself with his father helps to explain why there is not a single royal inscription, apart from the aforementioned brick from Ashur, that records his father's (or mother's) name.

The report in the Eponym Chronicles of a rebellion in Calah in 746/45 B.C. has led scholars to conclude that Tiglath-pileser was a usurper who staged a *coup d'état* to seize the throne for himself. If this indeed occurred, then he staged the coup as a royal descendant. The reason is understandable. Frustrated by his father's lack of martial resolve—the Eponym Chronicles state that Ashur-nirari V stayed "in the land" in his second to fifth years—Tiglath-pileser (the highly ambitious son) engineered a rebellion late in 746/45 B.C. which resulted in his father's death early in 745/44 B.C. The rebirth of the Assyrian empire then began quickly as Tiglath-pileser waged vigorous campaigns throughout the region.

Accepting that Tiglath-pileser was the son of Ashur-nirari V, let us examine the family name-element "Pul." In our chronology, Menahem reigned from 763 to 752 B.C. From the Assyrian record, the kings who ruled during Menahem's reign were Ashur-dan III (773–755 B.C. by traditional dating) and Ashur-nirari V (755–745 B.C.). Both these kings therefore qualify as contenders for Pul, whom Eugene Faulstich believes was Ashur-dan III:

> The Hebrew name 'Pul' ('pal' is the Akkadian name) was a common dynasty name at this period in Assyrian history. The father of Shalmaneser III was 'Ashur-nasir-pal II' (884 B.C.-- 859 B.C.). The second son of Shalmaneser was 'Shamas-Vul' (Vul = Pul; for the letters v and p are interchangeable in Semitic languages). He is also known as Shamashi-adad V (824 B.C.- 811 B.C.). Adad-nirari III, the son of Shamas-Vul, was known as Vullush (Pullush) (811 B.C.- 783 B.C.). In the Nimrud Slab Inscriptions, he is called 'Ramman-nirari'. The son of Adad-nirari III who carried the 'Pul' dynasty

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[28] On this, see A. K. Grayson, "Assyria: Tiglath-Pileser III to Sargon II (744–705 B.C.)," CAH^2 III/2, 73–74.

[29] Gelb, "Two Assyrian King Lists," 229 (king #108).

[30] *ARAB* I, §822:1.

[31] Tiglath-pileser III's birth name was Tukulti-apil-Ešarra. He was a highly successful conqueror, and was responsible for the significant expansion of the Assyrian empire during his reign. That he took his throne name from one of the greatest of the early kings, Tiglath-pileser I (1115–1076 B.C.), confirms his expectation that Assyria should be ruled by powerful military leaders. One therefore understands why he called himself the son of Adad-nirari III (his successful warrior grandfather) rather than Ashur-nirari V (his militarily weak father).

> name was 'Ashur-dan III' (773 B.C.- 755 B.C.)-- also known as 'Ashur-danin-pal III'. The name 'Pul' is derived from the Assyrian god 'Vul', the god of the atmosphere. He would be identical to the Canaanite god, Baal (the letters v and b are the same letter in Semitic languages).[32]

Faulstich submits that the Akkadian name-element "Pal" (= Pul in Hebrew) was a family name—a dynastic moniker—used by other kings of the dynasty. Although he (like Jones) singles out Ashur-dan III as the son of Adad-nirari III who used the name-element "Pul," it may have also been used by Ashur-nirari V, whose own son Tiglath-pileser was called Pul. Interestingly, in 1869, George Smith identified Pul as Ashur-nirari V:

> Dr. Oppert supposes this eclipse [in the eponymate of Bur-Saggilê] to have taken place B.C. 809 instead of 763 when I believe it happened; then by lowering all the later eponomies one year he makes a break in the canon of 47 years immediately before the reign of Tiglath Pileser II [III], in this part he makes the assertion, that Sir Henry Rawlinson has suppressed the Biblical Pul king of Assyria, who took tribute from Menahem; but the fact is that no one has yet identified the name of Pul in the inscriptions and we have no notice of his expedition against Samaria. I suspect he may be the predecessor of Tiglath Pileser whose name (Assur-nirari in the list) I have some grounds for thinking ought to be Vul-nirari. The substitution of the name of Assur for Vul is one of the most common changes in Assyrian names, if this is so and if this king came to the throne as I suppose in B.C. 755; then the expedition in that year to χataraka (Hadrach) in the north of Palestine may possibly be the one in which Menahem paid tribute.[33]

In Smith's view, Vul- and Pul were interchangeable and satisfactorily accounted for the Biblical name. Nevertheless, Smith later abandoned the Pul = Ashur-nirari identification because he could not align his long chronology dating for Menahem's reign (772–761 B.C.) with Ashur-nirari V's reign (755–745 B.C.). Instead, he associated Pul with an earlier named Vul-nirari, being Adad-nirari III.[34]

Based on the arguments by Jones and Faulstich that 1 Chr 5:26 refers to two separate kings, coupled with Smith's 1869 identification of Ashur-narari [V] = Vul-nirari = Pul, our study concludes that the Biblical king Pul was Ashur-nirari V, the father and immediate predecessor of Tiglath-pileser.

2. Tiglath-pileser's Office During the Reign of Ashur-nirari V

There is unanimous agreement among scholars that Tiglath-pileser's 18-year rule began in 745 B.C. and continued until his death in 727 B.C. As noted above (fn. 18), two of Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions—Layard 50a and the Iran Stela—show that he received tribute from Menahem. If the Biblical data is held to be true, this poses a major chronological problem. According to 2 Kgs 15:23 and 15:27, Hoshea's rule began 20 to 22 years after Menahem's death, depending on the dating scheme(s) one chooses for Pekahiah and Pekah (who were the intervening kings between Menahem and Hoshea). Since Hoshea came to the throne between 733 and 731 B.C. (see ch. 7A for this date range), Menahem must have died between 755 and 750 B.C., which is at least five years before Tiglath-pileser's accession. The all-round solution to this and other discrepancies

[32] Faulstich, *History, Harmony & The Hebrew Kings*, 133. See also Jones 2005, 173.

[33] Smith, "The Annals of Tiglath Pileser II," 9–10. See also Holloway, "The Quest for Sargon, Pul and Tiglath-Pileser," 77 fn. 32.

[34] Smith 1875, 185–87.

between the Assyrian and Biblical data for the Northern Kingdom is to shorten Pekah's 20-year rule either by an overlapping reign[35] or outright emendation.[36]

Rather than faulting the Bible, I submit that the Assyrian record is misleading in this instance. As proposed below, Menahem did pay tribute to Tiglath-pileser. It was received before 745 B.C. but after Menahem's original tribute payment to his father, Pul (Ashur-nirari V). Tiglath-pileser added the tribute later in his annals, knowing that it was a postdated inclusion.

Contact between Menahem and Tiglath-pileser is feasible before 745 B.C. if one of the following scenarios is accepted:

1. Ashur-nirari V installed Tiglath-pileser as the commander-in-chief (tartan) of the army. Although Menahem paid tribute initially to Ashur-nirari V (as recorded in 2 Kgs 15:19–20), it was subsequently collected by his son, the tartan.

2. Ashur-nirari V installed Tiglath-pileser as coregent. Although Menahem paid tribute initially to Ashur-nirari V, it was subsequently collected by his coregent son.

3. Ashur-nirari V installed Tiglath-pileser as the crown prince (this is our favored option). Although Menahem paid tribute initially to Ashur-nirari V, it was subsequently collected by his viceregent son.

3. A Proposed Reconstruction

Based on the aforementioned discussion, a reconstruction of the history of this period can be presented. To begin, let us review the Eponym Chronicle entries for the 24-year segment spanning the last three years of Ashur-dan III, the ten-year reign of Ashur-nirari V, and the first eleven regnal years of Tiglath-pileser:

TRADITIONAL REGNAL YEAR / (REVISED REGNAL YEAR[37])	DATES	EPONYM CHRONICLES
16 (27)	757/56	in the land
17 (28)	756/55	in the land
18 (29) ac	755/54	at Hatarikka
1	754/53	at Arpad. Return from Ashur

[35] So Thiele, who posited that Pekah began his 20-year rule as a rival of Menahem, who also began to rule that year (752 B.C.). The first twelve years of Pekah overlapped the ten years of Menahem and two years of Pekahiah. In 740 B.C., Pekah killed Pekahiah and took the throne in Samaria, where he ruled as sole regent for eight years (from 740 to 732 B.C.). In 732 B.C., Hoshea assassinated Pekah and succeeded him (Thiele 1983, 129). Against this scheme, 2 Kgs 15:27 states that Pekah ruled for 20 years *in Samaria*, which confirms that he was not a rival king (because he ruled from the capital for the full duration of his reign).

[36] So Galil, who emends 2 Kgs 15:27 to five years, from Pekah's accession in the Tishri year 737/36 B.C. to his death in the Tishri year 732/31 B.C. (1996, 82).

[37] Refer to Section E below for the revised reign of Ashur-dan III, in which eleven years have been added to account for the gap in the Eponym Canon between 770 and 769 B.C.

2		753/52	in the land
3		752/51	in the land
4		751/50	in the land
5		750/49	in the land
6		749/48	at Namri
7		748/47	at Namri
8		747/46	in the land
9		746/45	revolt in Calah
10	ac	745/44	On the 13th of Ayar, Tiglath-pileser ascended the throne. In Teshrit, he marched to the territory between the rivers.
	1	744/43	at Namri
	2	743/42	in Arpad. Defeat of Urartu was inflicted
	3	742/41	at Arpad
	4	741/40	at Arpad, within three years it was conquered
	5	740/39	at Arpad
	6	739/38	at Ulluba, a fortress was captured
	7	738/37	Kullani captured
	8	737/36	at Media
	9	736/35	at the foot of Mount Nal
	10	735/34	at Urartu
	11	734/33	at Philistia

The Eponym Chronicle entry for the final year of Ashur-dan III (755/54 B.C.), being also the accession year of Ashur-nirari V, states "at Hatarikka" (= Hadrach, in northern Syria). It is unknown, though, which king led this campaign. Since the Eponym Chronicles reveal no military operations outside of Assyria for the final decade of Ashur-dan III's reign, the reconstruction below assumes that Ashur-nirari V was the one who led the campaign. This assumption is supported by the Tadmor-Millard proposal that locations in the Eponym Chronicles refer to the position of the army *at the end of the year* (see Appendix B). In other words, since the army was camped near Hatarikka at the end of 755/54 B.C. (because the campaign had not yet concluded) it was probably led by Ashur-nirari V after his accession earlier that year.

The proposed reconstruction is as follows:

- Ashur-nirari V, the Biblical king Pul, came to the throne in 755 B.C. possibly in the spring or early summer after the death of Ashur-dan III. Within a few months of his accession, he marched to northern Syria. Evidently, the campaign there continued into the next year because the army is noted as being near Hatarikka at the close of 755/54 B.C. The swiftness with which Ashur-nirari V embarked on military operations (in his accession year) suggests that he was keen to quell the many revolts which had broken out throughout the empire during the lackluster reign of Ashur-dan III (witness the Eponym Chronicle entries for the five-year period 763 to 759 B.C.). Beginning with Syria, he sought to reassert Assyrian authority over the rebellious vassal states. Improving the royal public image at home was undoubtedly a contributing factor behind Ashur-nirari V's initial military eagerness.

- In his first year (754 B.C.), and having concluded his operation against Hatarikka, Ashur-nirari V marched southward, quelling minor revolts while collecting tribute from states along the way. Then, in the Bible's first recorded advance of an Assyrian king against Israel, Ashur-nirari V (king Pul) came against Menahem (2 Kgs 15:19–20; cf. 1 Chr 5:26). To

appease the Assyrians and to entrench his own unsteady rule—he was probably an unpopular king owing to his cruelty (cf. 2 Kgs 15:16)—Menahem paid an enormous tribute: 1,000 talents of silver. It was recouped by a tax of 50 shekels of silver for every wealthy person in the land.[38] The surrender of Menahem would have pleased Ashur-nirari V. Israel had embarrassed the Assyrian empire through the Jonah episode, which caused disharmony in the land especially in Ashur. Now, with Menahem's submission, Ashur-nirari V had confirmed to the Assyrians the supremacy of their deities over the Israelite God.[39]

- Having completed his southward sweep, which took several months, Ashur-nirari V returned for operations in northern Syria, as witnessed by the army's location at Arpad at the end of 754/53 B.C. (Arpad was Urartu's ally[40]). Significantly, the Eponym Chronicle entry for that year includes: "Return from Assur." The return in view here may be the king's return to Nineveh for the *Akītu* festival but via Ashur. Recall that Ashur, the religious capital, had rebelled during the reign of Ashur-dan III, probably as a result of his deference to the Hebrew God. Ashur-nirari V therefore visited Ashur—having left his army at Arpad—where he placated the people by recounting details of his successful western campaign (thus far), especially against Israel.

- Early in Ashur-nirari V's second year (753 B.C.), the Assyrian army wrapped up the Arpad campaign and returned home. Because no further military engagements were undertaken that year, the king was reported as being "in the land."

- Ashur-nirari V was probably nearing 50 years of age (or older) upon his coronation.[41] The western campaign of his first year may have taxed his health, which would explain the Eponym Chronicle entries of "in the land" for four consecutive years (753 to 750 B.C.). Accordingly, he installed his son Tiglath-pileser as the crown prince, probably in 753 B.C.[42] To gain experience, Tiglath-pileser was initially charged with collecting tribute from vassal states, including Israel. Thus, in 753 and/or 752 B.C., Tiglath-pileser personally received tribute from Menahem.

- Menahem died in 752 B.C. and his son Pekahiah succeeded him. Pekahiah's short rule of two years ended in 750 B.C. when he was assassinated by Pekah, one of his military officers. It is likely that Pekah, an anti-Assyrian king, stopped paying tribute when Ashur-nirari V died.

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[38] This would total about 36,000 men (see Donald J. Wiseman, "Menahem," *NBD*[3], 749).

[39] Interestingly, whereas God's destructive intentions for Nineveh were reversed by the repentance of its people (Jonah 3:10), Pul's military intentions for Israel were reversed by a payment of silver.

[40] Urartu (in present day eastern Turkey) was located in the mountainous area to Assyria's north. A long-time opponent, Urartu struggled with Assyria for control of trade routes. It was at its height during the reign of Argishti I (ca. 785–763 B.C.), who conquered the northern part of Syria and made Urartu the most powerful state in the post-Hittite Near East. (During Ashur-dan III's reign, the mountain tribes of Urartu had pushed their border southward to within 100 miles of Nineveh.)

[41] Ashur-nirari V was a son of Adad-nirari III. Because he was the third in line of three sons to rule after their father, his minimum age upon accession would be 39 (his father died in 794 B.C. by our chronology). In all likelihood, he was several years older when he came to the throne.

[42] The graphical presentation of the Hebrew kings chronology in Appendix E shows the proposed vice-regency (in dotted lines) for Tiglath-pileser.

- Tiglath-pileser continued to lead the army in gathering tribute and putting down local rebellions through to the fifth year of Ashur-nirari V (750 B.C.). No expansion of the kingdom occurred during that time, which frustrated the crown prince.

- The two-year campaign against Namri (in southwest Media) during the sixth and seventh years of Ashur-nirari V (749–748 B.C.) was probably led by Tiglath-pileser (he campaigned there again in his first full year as sole ruler). Inspired by the experience, and despairing of his father's lack of resolve to strengthen and expand Assyria's borders, Tiglath-pileser engineered a rebellion late in 746/45 B.C. which resulted in his father's death early in 745/44 B.C. With the empire now under his control, Tiglath-pileser campaigned every year from his accession (745/44 B.C.) to his 14th year (731/30 B.C.). His campaigns were vigorous and disciplined, and greatly expanded the empire.[43]

- With each success, Tiglath-pileser cemented his position as one of Assyria's most powerful kings. Having reversed Assyria's decline during the half-century tenure of the three sons of Adad-nirari III, he decided to erase the stain of their memory forever, and had their official inscriptions destroyed.[44] Additionally, Tiglath-pileser ordered that any references to Jonah's mission and/or fealty to the Hebrew God were to be stricken from the records. This affected the Eponym Chronicles, which contained at least one reference to the Jonah event. Inopportunely, it was located in the *līmu* sequence of high officials at the beginning of Ashur-dan III's reign. But deleting only the involved official(s) would be too telling of a gap at that point. The scribes therefore disguised the break in the titles by deleting sufficient *līmus* (eleven as it turned out) to give the appearance that the eponymates of Ashur-dan III and his tartan simply interrupted the sequence of governors which began during the reign of the preceding king, Shalmaneser IV (Ashur-dan III's brother). This is the consensus view of modern Assyriology, that the anomaly in the *līmu* titles is simply an "interruption" rather than evidence of a gap. For example:

  > The eponymates of Aššur-dān III and his *turtānu* (771, 770 BC) merely interrupt the sequence which began with the eponymate of Shalmaneser IV, and so are not counted here.[45]
  >
  > The eponym list for the reign of Ashur-dan III (772-755) is anomalous, as only the king himself and the *turtānu*, in regnal years 2 and 3, are inserted to break the sequence of provincial governors, who otherwise continue on from the reign of the preceding king. Perhaps this may be associated with the political situation of the time, when Shamshi-ilu as *turtānu* dominated the empire.[46]

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[43] In a curious departure from convention, the annals of Tiglath-pileser number the years of his reign (*palû*) according to his campaigns, so that his first *palû* is actually his accession year. Perhaps he did this to underscore the *continuation* of his military leadership, given that he had led campaigns during the reign of his predecessor.

[44] Few inscriptions are available for the reigns of Shalmaneser IV, Ashur-dan III, and Ashur-nirari V, and we are reliant on the rather sketchy Eponym Chronicles for their activities. Although the lack of royal inscriptions may have been due to the troubled state of the kingdom then (so Grayson, "Ashur-dan II to Ashur-nirari V," CAH^2 III/1, 276), it appears more likely that Tiglath-pileser destroyed them.

[45] Millard 1994, 10, Note 3 to Table 2.

[46] Finkel and Reade, "Lots of Eponyms," 169. With reference to Shamshi-ilu the tartan, Stefan Zawadzki postulated that, being a very ambitious man, he caused conflicts with other high-ranking officials at the time of Ashur-dan III's accession to the throne. Those conflicts resulted in the relevant officials being deprived of the office of eponym, "or, even more probable, the loss of their lives" (Zawadzki, "The

As mentioned earlier, it is unlikely that any Assyrian king would treat his accession as a mere interruption in the order of eponyms established by a preceding king, especially an older brother. Moreover, every other king in the list from Shalmaneser III to Sargon (discounting the short reign of Shalmaneser V) restarted the eponym sequence upon their accession. There is strong precedent, therefore, to suggest a gap in the Eponym Canon at that point.

The removal of eponyms necessitated an adjustment to the king lists for Ashur-dan III's reign (reducing it by eleven years from 29 to 18). Recall that the two useful king lists for this period are the Khorsabad and SDAS King Lists (see ch. 3B3). The Khorsabad List is older, being inscribed in the second eponymy of Adad-bel-ukin, which was 738 B.C. By accession year dating, this was the seventh year of Tiglath-pileser, and therefore possibly the year in which the Assyrian records were deleted and/or altered. (Obviously, earlier copies of the Eponym Canon and King Lists were destroyed then too.)

Prior to Tiglath-pileser's deletion of eponyms, the *līmu* and kings lists had been dependable chronographs. We may even speculate that they had regional influence, especially in Babylon. Given its strong cultural links with Assyria, it is likely that Babylon had cross-dated some of its records to Assyria's kings. But because of Tiglath-pileser's tampering, the Assyrian *līmu* and kings lists were now inaccurate for years prior to 769 B.C. This meant that many Babylonian documents were now also inaccurate for years prior to that date. I propose that this had a marked effect on the Babylonians, especially given the possibility that future Assyrian kings might alter their history again. So, in their desire to secure a reliable chronological foundation for state, economic, and civil matters, the Babylonians turned to astronomy, with vigor it seems (Section D refers).

- Two inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser—Layard 50a and the Iran Stela—list a number of western kings who paid tribute to him including Menahem (see fn. 18). These tribute lists have been dated by Tadmor to 738 and 740 B.C., respectively, with the latter list possibly corresponding to the tribute payment recorded in 2 Kgs 15:19–20. Before examining those dates, we should briefly review Tiglath-pileser's western operations from his accession year to 734 B.C.

  The Eponym Canon shows that, by his second year (743 B.C.), Tiglath-pileser was already campaigning in the west. He fought mainly against the northwest Syrian city-state of Arpad (and its coalition partners from Urartu and neighboring states) for three years, finally conquering it in 741 B.C. Mop-up operations then took place in 740 B.C. at Arpad, which probably served as his headquarters for subsequent actions in the region throughout 740 B.C. The tribute of western kings as listed in the Iran Stela may have been given then. In 739 B.C. the Assyrians marched to the north and fought against Ulluba (in the Upper Tigris region). They returned to the west in 738 B.C. to suppress a widespread rebellion in northern and central Syria,[47] after which Tiglath-pileser annexed a number of states.[48] While in the region,

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Question of the King's Eponymate," 384–85). Against this, one finds it hard to believe that an Assyrian king could not exercise any control over his tartan or the eponym sequence.

[47] The coalition of rebellious states was apparently headed by Azriyau, whose country is unknown (see Tadmor, *ITP*, 58–63 [Ann. 19:1–12], 273–74). He may have been the king of Hamath or Hatarikka (on the possibility of Hatarikka, see Appendix F, "Azariah").

[48] It should be noted that Tiglath-pileser's annals were badly mutilated in antiquity, and the exact details (including chronology) of some of his campaigns are still uncertain.

he received tribute from the western kings listed in Layard 50a. He did not return to the west again until his eleventh year (734 B.C.) when he conquered Philistia.

By our chronology, Menahem died in 752 B.C. This date contradicts the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser which show that Menahem (and not Pekah) paid tribute in 740/738 B.C. As suggested above, I believe that Menahem originally paid tribute to Ashur-nirari V (Pul) in 754/53 B.C. then again to his crown prince son Tiglath-pileser in 753 and/or 752 B.C. Although it is likely that Israel's king Pekah stopped paying tribute after the death of Ashur-nirari V in 745 B.C., Tiglath-pileser nevertheless claimed Menahem's payment, but after the fact. The following reasons are suggested for this:

1. Jehoahaz and Jehoash had paid tribute to Adad-nirari III decades earlier (see ch. 11B3). Those payments were probably made voluntarily, meaning that Israel was not an outright vassal of Assyria then. But with Menahem's large payment to Ashur-nirari V to secure peace and security, Israelite submission to Assyria began in earnest. Certainly, Ashur-nirari V would have mentioned this event in his inscriptions, as it was a matter of prestige to secure a new vassal state. But the royal inscriptions of Ashur-nirari V and his two predecessors were destroyed by Tiglath-pileser, who was now free to claim Menahem's tribute for himself, even though it was postdated. (No doubt, he felt that the postdated inclusion was warranted. As the heir to the throne who also physically received tribute from Menahem, he had royal licence to record the event in his inscriptions.)

2. Tiglath-pileser added Menahem's name to the list of kings presenting tribute to make it appear as though he had retained Israel's submission. Because he knew that he would not be campaigning in the southern Levant soon, he thought it better to postdate Menahem's tribute rather than to omit Pekah from the lists. Such an omission would only confirm Israel's unpunished, long-standing rebellion of not paying tribute, which was an embarrassment for the Assyrian king. George Smith also conjectured this. In referring to Menahem's reign, which he supposed to be of twelve years duration (and not ten) based on the synchronisms to Uzziah, Smith suggested with regard to Tiglath-pileser's tribute list:

   > It is not likely that Menahem was reigning in the 8th year of Tiglath Pileser . . . I place his reign from B.C. 755 to 743 and as I think he reigned two years contemporary with Tiglath Pileser (who commenced in B.C. 745) he may have given him tribute and, if Pekah was in rebellion in Tiglath Pilesers 8th year he may have inserted the tribute which he formerly received from Menahem or even the scribe may have been ignorant at that time of the change of rulers that had taken place.[49]

   When Tiglath-pileser finally dealt with the rebellious Pekah in 733–732 B.C., the penalty was severe, with most of the Northern Kingdom being annexed (cf. 2 Kgs 15:29).

[49] Smith, "The Annals of Tiglath Pileser II," 16. The notion that Menahem's tribute was a postdated insertion (or less likely a scribal mistake) receives a measure of support from Tiglath-pileser's summary inscription K 3751. As Chapter 11B5 discusses, this text includes a list of western tribute-bearers. However, unlike Tiglath-pileser's annals, Israel has been omitted from that part of the list naming western kings who paid tribute in 738.

One should not be surprised that the chronology of Menahem according to the Masoretic Text disagrees with the Assyrian record of his tribute payment. Tiglath-pileser's rearranging of the truth is in keeping with his other historiographical transgressions:

- the deletion of *līmus* from the eponym records
- the downward adjustment of Ashur-dan III's regnal years in the king list
- the erasure of most of the royal inscriptions of his three predecessors

I submit that these transgressions affected not only Assyria but also her cultural *alma mater*, Babylon. In particular, the deletion of eponyms led Nabonassar, king of Babylon, to instigate a major change in calendrical policy.

D. The Nabonassar Era

It is believed that by the latter half of the eighth century B.C., during the reign of Nabonassar (748–734 B.C.), the Babylonians began to systematically study the sky.[50] Trained observers in various locations recorded the position and movements of the sun, moon, planets, and certain stars. Before long, Babylonian astronomers understood the cycles of the sun, moon, and visible planets enough to predict events such as lunar eclipses. By the Persian era, Babylonian astronomy had reached a level of sophistication unrivalled by any other civilization.

Celestial observations were recorded and kept in the astronomical archive in Babylon. Over 1,200 texts of observations, centering on astronomical diaries, plus other related texts such as almanacs, observations of specific planets, and lunar eclipses, have been uncovered (e.g., VAT 4956; see ch. 4B). Of these observational texts, the oldest known astronomical diary is BM 32312, which was recorded in 652/51 B.C.[51]

It is commonly believed that the Babylonians turned to astronomy mainly through their interest in *astrology*. Although true to a degree, this was not the prime motivation, as Otto Neugebauer explained:

> Few statements are more deeply rooted in the public mind or more often repeated than the assertion that the origin of astronomy is to be found in astrology. Not only is historical evidence lacking for this statement but all well-documented facts are in sharp contradiction to it. All the above-mentioned facts from Egypt and Babylonia (and, as we shall presently see, also from Greece) show that calendaric problems directed the first steps of astronomy. Determination of the season, measurement of time, lunar festivals—these are the problems which shaped astronomical development for many centuries; and we have seen that even the last phase of Mesopotamian astronomy, characterized by the mathematical ephemerides, was mainly devoted to problems of the lunar calendar.[52]

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[50] On this, see Asger Aaboe, "Babylonian Mathematics, Astrology, and Astronomy," CAH[2] III/2, 277–92; Jonsson, *The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, 153–90.

[51] Three principal classes of astronomical texts have been identified in Babylonian astronomy. First are texts that pertain to astronomical omens, many of which are very old and cannot be dated. Second are the observations (astronomical diaries and related texts), which are dated from about 750 B.C. to A.D. 75. Third are mathematical astronomy texts dated to the last three or four centuries B.C. (see Aaboe, "Babylonian Mathematics, Astrology, and Astronomy," 277–78).

[52] Neugebauer, "History of Ancient Astronomy," in *Astronomy and History*, 38–39.

Neugebauer pointed out that the Babylonians turned to astronomy *for the solving of calendar problems*. The question begs: Why did the calendar, and by corollary the keeping of Babylonian history, loom as an issue at that particular point in time (during the second half of the eighth century B.C.)? This question puzzles scholars, hence Grayson's remark, "No one has yet offered a satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon" (of the Babylonian decision to record details of astronomical and mundane events in a systematic manner).[53]

My speculation is that Tiglath-pileser's tampering with the Assyrian chronographs (ca. 738 B.C.) left the Babylonians without a reliable foundation on which to base their history. This was the catalyst for a new policy. With Assyrian chronology now compromised, and also desiring a better calendar to govern their own affairs of state, the Babylonians turned to the sun, moon, planets, and stars—which do not lie and cannot be edited—as the basis for future record-keeping.

This conjecture finds a measure of support in the *Ekloge chronographias*, a history of the world as compiled by the Byzantine chronicler Georgius Syncellus.

Syncellus and Berossus. Georgius Syncellus, also called George Synkellos, was a Byzantine monk who lived in the eighth and early ninth century A.D. Details of his life are sketchy, but it is known that he came to Constantinople to serve as the *Syncellus*, a high-office position reporting directly to the Patriarch, who at the time was Tarasius.[54] It would therefore be more accurate to call him "George the Syncellus."

Following the death of Tarasius, Syncellus retired to a monastery where he began to write (in Greek) his massive *Ekloge chronographias*, or *Extract of Chronography*. This work, which was commenced around A.D. 808, aimed to chronicle the history of the world from the creation to his day. Much like Ussher's later work, *The Annals of the World*, Syncellus' accounting of history was arranged chronologically, and focussed heavily on Biblical events. His death prevented him from finishing the work, but a fellow monk, Theophanes Confessor, later completed the history from the reign of Emperor Diocletian to his own day.[55]

Of interest in Syncellus' chronicle is a statement that he attributes to the Babylonian priest Berossus (also Berossos or Berosus), who wrote a Greek history of Babylonia—titled the *Babyloniaca*—in the third century B.C.[56] Unfortunately, this work was not highly valued in its

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[53] Grayson, "Assyria and Babylonia," 193 fn. 226.

[54] Tarasius served as the Patriarch of Constantinople from A.D. 784–806.

[55] The purpose of Syncellus' *Ekloge chronographias* was twofold: (1) to confirm Christ's incarnation at the beginning of A.M. 5501 (i.e., 5,500 years after the creation) and Christ's resurrection in A.M. 5534, with both events occurring on Mar. 25 (the same day as the creation), and (2) to compose a running history of the world up to his own day. Syncellus did this with great attention to detail, and on its publication his chronicle (including the continuation by Theophanes) was widely praised for its scope and accuracy. He quoted from a wide array of sources (both Christian and secular), including copious citations from Egyptian and ancient Near Eastern texts. Many of these citations are unattested elsewhere, hence their value to scholars.

[56] Berossus was born during the reign of Alexander the Great, probably between 330 and 323 B.C. He became a priest of Bel (i.e., of Marduk) at Babylon. Having direct access to archival records in the temple, he wrote the *Babyloniaca* (or *History of Babylonia*) most likely around 280 B.C. The work was a history of Babylon in three books dedicated to the Macedonian king Antiochus I, co-ruler of the Seleucid Empire (which included Babylonia). The first book (entitled "Genesis") contained an account of creation, while the actual historical material concerning Babylon was recorded in books two and three (book three is of

day. Berossus intended for it to change Greek ideas about Babylonian and Mesopotamian culture. However, owing to the mythical nature of the first book, which was viewed as uninformed by the Greeks, he failed in his objective.[57] Few copies of the *Babyloniaca* were therefore made. Consequently, nothing of the original work has survived to the present, and we only know of it through quotations and paraphrases by later authors.[58]

The following excerpt from Syncellus pertains to the chronological reliability of the era that began with Nabonassar. Quoting Berossus, Syncellus states that the era began with Nabonassar *because he destroyed the records of the kings who ruled before him*:

> From Nabonasar, the Chaldaeans have accurately reckoned dates on the basis of astronomical motion. From them, the Greek astronomers derived this knowledge. The reason for this, as Alexander and Berossos, the compilers of Chaldaean antiquities, say, was that Nabonasar, after compiling the acts of his royal predecessors, did away with these records, so that the numbering of the Chaldaean kings commences from him.
>
> [Footnote from the book's translators]:
>
> In the citations from Berossos and Alexander Polyhistor preserved by Eusebios, there is no mention of Nabonasar's destruction or removal of the *gesta* of his predecessors. Polyhistor does say, however, that in the second book of the *Babyloniaka*, Berossos claimed that he was unable to provide an exact record of the deeds of the Babylonian kings before the reign of Nabonasar (1.4.13–17). This, along with the fact that Ptolemy's κανων βασιλειων commenced with I Nabonasar, may have inspired Synk. (or one of his authorities) to claim that Berossos himself described Nabonasar's elimination of the records of his forerunners. Schnabel (*Berossos*, 163-4) suggests that Panodoros was the source of this notice. For a recent defence of its authenticity, see Burstein, *Babyloniaca*, 22 n. 66.[59]

As the footnote indicates, there is uncertainty over the validity of Berossus' claim concerning the royal records. But even if Nabonassar did not destroy them, and the truth is less radical as Polyhistor writes (that Berossus was simply unable to provide details for the kings before Nabonassar), there is nevertheless evidence for a *lack of records*. Certainly, this is unusual, given the importance of national history to the Babylonians.

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most interest to historians). In later years, Berossus left Babylon for the island of Cos off the coast of modern Turkey in the Mediterranean, where he founded a school of astrology. It is not known when he died.

[57] The Mesopotamian view was that the gods revealed the basics of civilization to man at a particular place (Babylon) at a particular time (432,000 years before the flood). It was revealed by the divine messenger Oannes, who had the body of a fish, a human head beneath his fish-head, human feet from his fish-tail, but spoke as a human. Before Oannes' revelation, man lived as an animal without law; after then, he was civilized. This account was not well received by Greek scholars, who denied the possibility of such bizarre creatures as Oannes. In a more sophisticated viewpoint, the Greeks believed that civilization was the product of human invention and activity over time (see Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus*, 7–11).

[58] For the transmission history of Berossus, see Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus*, 6, 10–11; Jonsson, *The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, 92–94. It is widely accepted that Syncellus quoted Berossus through the third century A.D. church historian Eusebius of Caesarea.

[59] *The Chronography of George Synkellos*, 301. See also Verbrugghe and Wickersham, *Berossos and Manetho*, 53.

Accepting Berossus' claim of destroyed texts as authentic,[60] I propose the following historical perspective:

- Sometime during the first half of his reign, Nabonassar—who ruled for 14 years, from 748 to 734 B.C.—began to compile the acts of his predecessors (from the royal archives). Where possible, they were written in chronicle form and cross-dated to the reigns of the Assyrian kings. No doubt, the Babylonians were impressed with the Assyrian *līmu* list as a chronograph.

- Around 738 B.C., Tiglath-pileser altered the chronology of the Assyrian kings by deleting eleven *līmus* from the reign of Ashur-dan III and adjusting the king lists accordingly. This left Nabonassar with incorrect dates for chronicle entries before 769 B.C. The Babylonians responded by turning to the sky. Recognising that astronomy was more dependable for chronological reckoning, and that future generations would be able to date their recorded observations accurately, the Babylonians increased their efforts to understand the motions of celestial objects. (Astronomy was already of national interest, but Tiglath-pileser's move acted as a catalyst to accelerate knowledge of it.)

- Along with the turn to astronomy, Nabonassar began to chronicle the events of his reign, a practice continued by succeeding Babylonian kings. The records of his predecessors were destroyed, partly because entries before 769 B.C. were now incorrectly dated relative to Assyria, and partly through vanity (in wanting to begin this new era with himself). The texts from Nabonassar onward comprise the *Babylonian Chronicle Series*, which begins with Nabonassar. Each chronicle is divided by horizontal lines into sections (of unequal length). Each section deals with the events of a single year of a Babylonian king's reign.

- The colophon at the end of the first Babylonian Chronicle identifies it as a copy (from an earlier original) made in the 22nd year of Darius (ca. 500 B.C.). The colophon also states that the text was the "first section, written according to the pattern-tablet, checked and collated."[61] The term "first section" implies the *first section of a series*, meaning that there were no earlier sections. This supports Berossus' claim that earlier records of Babylonian history were destroyed.

- Unlike Assyrian royal inscriptions, which are biased and propagandistic, Babylonian Chronicle entries are characterized by their objective, detached reporting. One might conjecture that this unbiased style was driven by Nabonassar's new-found loathing of Assyrian royal propaganda following Tiglath-pileser's shock deletion of eleven years of Mesopotamian history.

Given the reliability of the astronomical data preserved from Nabonassar onward, it is not surprising that Ptolemy chose to begin his calculations in the *Almagest* with the so-called Nabonassar era (A.N. = *Anno Nabonassari*). It began on Nabonassar 1, Thoth 1,[62] which

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[60] So Burstein, who defends the authenticity of Berossus' statement on the basis of the suddenly increased volume of information available to him from Nabonassar's reign onward (*The Babyloniaca of Berossus*, 22 fn. 66).

[61] Grayson, *ABC*, 87 (Chron. 1 iv 39).

[62] Ptolemy's chronological system was quite simple. He used the *Egyptian year* and the *era Nabonassar*. The Egyptian year began with the month of Thoth, hence Nabonassar 1, Thoth 1. (There is no Julian month

corresponds to Feb. 26, 747 B.C. by Julian dating. Astronomers ever since have used this era but it was not used as such by the Babylonians.

E. Redating the Assyrian Kings

In Section A, we concluded that there is a gap in the Assyrian Eponym Canon between 770 and 769 B.C., during the reign of Ashur-dan III. Comparison with our harmonized chronology of the Hebrew kings shows the magnitude of this gap to be eleven years. Returning these missing years to Assyrian history yields the following revised chronology for the Assyrian kings of the first millennium B.C. (the first regnal date for each king is his accession year):

Kings of Assyria in the First Millennium

KING	YEARS OF REIGN	ACCEPTED DATING B.C.	REVISED DATING B.C.
Ashur-rabi II	41	1013–972	1024–983
Ashur-resh-ishi II	5	972–967	983–978
Tiglath-pileser II	32	967–935	978–946
Ashur-dan II	23	935–912	946–923
Adad-nirari II	21	912–891	923–902
Tukulti-Ninurta II	7	891–884	902–895
Ashur-nasir-pal II	25	884–859	895–870
Shalmaneser III	35	859–824	870–835
Shamshi-Adad V	13	824–811	835–822
Adad-nirari III	28	811–783	822–794
Shalmaneser IV	10	783–773	794–784
Ashur-dan III	18 (29)	773–755	784–755
Ashur-nirari V	10	755–745	
Tiglath-pileser III	18	745–727	
Shalmaneser V	5	727–722	
Sargon II	17	722–705	
Sennacherib	24	705–681	
Esarhaddon	12	681–669	
Ashurbanipal	38	669–631	
Ashur-etil-ilani	–	631–627	
Sin-shumu-lishir	–	626	
Sin-shar-ishkun	–	627–612	
Ashur-uballit II	3	612–609	

equivalent for Thoth. Egyptian civil years, being 365 days long and having no leap year, “wandered” relative to the solar year by one day every four years [see also ch. 3, fn. 21].)

F. The Pre-eminence of the Bible

Having "repaired" Assyrian chronology, we can now test our dates for the Hebrew kings against Assyrian and other Near Eastern contacts. This will be done over the next five chapters, which will review the following topics:

- Ch. 7 ..... The fall of Samaria
- Ch. 8 ..... Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year
- Ch. 9 ..... The year of Josiah's death
- Ch. 10 ..... From Jehoiakim's accession (609 B.C.) to Zedekiah's accession (597 B.C.)
- Ch. 11 ..... Summary of ancient Near Eastern contacts

As we proceed in these chapters to address discrepancies between the Bible and secular texts, two common themes will emerge:

1. most modern scholars treat *all* historical sources, whether Biblical or secular, as being liable to error
2. the majority of those scholars consider the Bible to be more error-prone than related secular texts

In view of this, I assert once again my belief in the primacy of the Masoretic Text. Accordingly, if the KJV disagrees with a secular inscription (such as Menahem's payment of tribute to Tiglath-pileser in Layard 50a, discussed in Section C above), the Biblical position will be taken as correct. Reasons will be given, though, for why the secular inscription might record events as it does. Invariably, a logical and sometimes compelling reason will be found for the difference between the Biblical and extra-Biblical sources.

Chapter 7: Dating the Fall of Samaria

A. Hoshea's Accession

In this chapter, I will attempt to harmonize the Biblical and Mesopotamian records concerning the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians and its date.

Since Hoshea was the king of Israel in whose reign Samaria fell (2 Kgs 17:6; 18:10–11), the discussion should begin with his accession. By our chronology, Hoshea came to the throne in 731 B.C. Does this date agree with the Assyrian record?

Hoshea's accession occurred during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.). This is confirmed by the fragmentary inscription originally designated III R 10, 2 and first translated by George Smith in *Assyrian Discoveries* (pp. 284–85). In this inscription, Tiglath-pileser mentions Israel, the deportation of its inhabitants (cf. 2 Kgs 15:29), the assassination of Pekah, and the appointment of Hoshea to the throne with his payment of heavy tribute:

> I carried off [to] Assyria the land of Bīt-Ḫumria (Israel), [... its] "auxiliary [army,"] [...] all of its people, [...] [I/they killed] Pekah, their king, and I installed Hoshea [as king] over them. I received from them 10 talents of gold, x talents of silver, [with] their [possessions] and [I car]ried them [to Assyria].[1]

The accepted date range for the Assyrian actions against Israel is 734 to 732 B.C., during Tiglath-pileser's three-year campaign in Palestine first against Philistia (734 B.C.) then Damascus (733–732 B.C.).[2] Hoshea may have been appointed as king during the two-year Damascus campaign. Equally, though, he may have been appointed in a following year (i.e., after 732 B.C.). This could occur if Tiglath-pileser allowed Pekah to continue ruling after he withdrew from the region.[3] In fact, that very circumstance is suggested in two inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser. The first is Layard 66:

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[1] *COS* 2.117C:288 (translation by K. Lawson Younger, Jr.). See also *ARAB* I, §816; *DOTT*, 55(b); *ANET*, 284; Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis*, 64; Tadmor, *ITP*, 140–41, Summ. 4.15'–19'; Kuan 1995, 176–77. The assertion that Tiglath-pileser carried off *all* of Israel's people to Assyria is clearly an exaggeration because the text goes on to talk about Pekah's death and Hoshea's appointment as king. Perhaps the intention was that all the people in Bīt-Ḫumria were exiled (probably in stages) save for Samaria, which Tiglath-pileser spared according to Layard 66 (discussed next).

[2] See the Eponym Canon for these dates. Israel's coastal region was probably annexed during the campaign to Philistia in 734 B.C. while Galilee and the Transjordan were annexed during the two-year campaign directed primarily against Damascus in 733–732 B.C. (see Younger, "The Deportations of the Israelites," 201–14). This left Israel as a kingdom of greatly reduced area incorporating mainly the Ephraimite hill country around the capital, Samaria.

[3] Pekah was an anti-Assyrian king whose political support appears to have come from Gilead (cf. 2 Kgs 15:25). With that territory now annexed, and with Rezin king of Damascus (his ally and advisor) having been put to death by Tiglath-pileser, Pekah's position was greatly weakened. His continued rule was therefore not a threat to the Assyrians.

> [The land of Bīt-Ḫumria (Israel)], all [of whose] cities I leveled [to the ground] in my former campaigns, [...] I plundered its livestock, and I spared only (isolated) Samaria. [I/They overthrew Pek]ah, their king.[4]

The fact that Tiglath-pileser "spared" Samaria implies that he also spared its king Pekah, whose overthrow is noted as a subsequent event. Pekah's continuance is also suggested in ND 4301 + 4305, which are adjoining fragments of a large clay tablet found in excavations of the Nabu temple at Nimrud in 1955. The inscription belongs to Tiglath-pileser and shows that Hoshea or his representative made obeisance to him at Sarrabanu in southern Babylonia, where he was campaigning:

> [I captured the land of Bīt-Ḫumria (Israel)] to its fu[ll extent ...] [I carried off to Assyria] ... [together with] their possessions. [... [I placed Hoshea] as king over them. [...] before me to the city of Sarrabani [...] [5]

The Eponym Canon records that Tiglath-pileser campaigned in Babylonia in 731 B.C. Hoshea's coronation may have therefore occurred that year given the close relationship in time between his appointment as king and the embassy to Tiglath-pileser. Moreover, as Hayes and Kuan observe, the fact that Hoshea sent tribute to Tiglath-pileser when he was in southern Babylonia rather than delivering it personally when he was in Syria-Palestine (or else sending it to the Assyrian capital), indicates that Hoshea took the throne *after* Tiglath-pileser withdrew from Syria-Palestine in 732 B.C. It also shows that Hoshea paid the tribute in *haste*.[6] Tribute can only be paid when one has access to the state and royal treasuries. Paying tribute as soon as he could in 731 B.C. suggests that Hoshea did not control the treasuries (i.e., he did not usurp the throne) before that year.

Based on the aforementioned inscriptions and observations, we can set the allowable range for Hoshea's accession between 733 and 731 B.C. Our date of 731 B.C. (on or after Tishri 1, see Section D) falls within this three-year span and appears to be the most likely year.[7]

B. The Babylonian Chronicle Series vs. Sargon's Inscriptions

We have concluded from the Assyrian record that Hoshea came to the throne between 733 and 731 B.C. An absolute date range for the fall of Samaria can now be reckoned. The Bible states that Hoshea ruled for nine years (2 Kgs 17:6; 18:10). Allowing for the variables of accession vs. non-accession year dating and Nisan vs. Tishri regnal years for Hoshea, the city must have fallen

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[4] *COS* 2.117G:292 (translation by K. Lawson Younger, Jr.). See also Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, 286; *ARAB* I, §779; *ANET*, 283; Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis*, 38; Tadmor, *ITP*, 202–03, Summ. 13.17'–18'; Kuan 1995, 174. Observe that Tiglath-pileser mounted not one but several campaigns against Israel between 734 and 732 B.C. (cf. Tadmor, *ITP*, 281).

[5] *COS* 2.117F:291 (translation by K. Lawson Younger, Jr.). See also Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis*, 57; Tadmor, *ITP*, 188–89, Summ. 9: rev. 9–11; Kuan 1995, 183–84. The inscription was originally published with translation by Donald J. Wiseman in "A Fragmentary Inscription of Tiglath-pileser III from Nimrud," *IRAQ* 18 (1956): 117–29.

[6] Hayes and Kuan, "The Final Years of Samaria," 155.

[7] 731 B.C. is specifically favored by some scholars. For example, after comparing Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions and observing how Hoshea's accession and payment of tribute are always placed *subsequent* to the campaign against Israel, Nadav Na'aman concluded that 731/30 is a "safe chronological anchor point" for dating Hoshea's reign ("Historical and Chronological Notes," 74).

between Tishri 1, 726 B.C. and the end of Elul 721 B.C.[8] Our date of 721 B.C., probably in the spring, is located within this range.

How does the aforementioned date range for Samaria's fall compare with its dating in extra-Biblical texts? Normally, one would consult Shalmaneser's annals or the Eponym Canon for those details. Unfortunately, no useable royal inscriptions for Shalmaneser have survived, and there are no complete Eponym Chronicle entries extant for his reign. Two sources, however, mention the campaign against Samaria but they are contradictory inasmuch as they name different conquerors. The Babylonian Chronicle Series records that Samaria was ravaged during the reign of Shalmaneser V (727–722 B.C.) while the inscriptions of his successor Sargon II (722–705 B.C.) credit him as the conqueror. This discrepancy has been much debated.

Let us review the Assyrian data first. In seven different inscriptions, Sargon states that he conquered Samaria and/or Israel ("the land of Omri"). His claim is therefore hard to ignore:

1. Sargon's annals[9]
2. The Great Summary Inscription (*Prunkinschrift*)[10]
3. The Nimrud Prisms, D and E[11]
4. The Small Summary Inscription (*Kleine Prunkinschrift*)[12]
5. The Bull Inscription[13]

[8] The *terminus a quo* (in or after Tishri, 726 B.C.) is set by non-accession year dating using Tishri years with Hoshea's coronation occurring in or after Nisan, 733 but before Tishri, 733 B.C. The *terminus ad quem* (Elul, 721 B.C.) is set by accession year dating using Tishri years with Hoshea's coronation occurring in or after Tishri, 731 but before Nisan, 730 B.C.

[9] *ARAB* II, §4; Tadmor 1958, 34; *DOTT*, 59(a); *ANET*, 284; *COS* 2.118A:293. The annals of Sargon were recovered from the walls of his palace at Khorsabad. It is believed that they were written later in his reign, around 707 B.C. This is the only text that places the fall of Samaria chronologically.

[10] *ARAB* II, §55; *DOTT*, 60(c); *ANET*, 284–85; Becking 1992, 26; *COS* 2.118E:296. Four versions of this text were found at Khorsabad (standing on the wall slabs of four different rooms) with only minor differences between them. The text is ordered geographically with the siege and capture of Samaria being recounted.

[11] *DOTT*, 60(b); Becking 1992, 28–31; *COS* 2.118D:295–96. Fragments of inscribed clay prisms were unearthed at Nimrud (the Biblical Calah) in 1952–53. The fragments form two prisms which are incomplete versions of the one text (i.e., they are duplicates). Their contents mainly involve Sargon—his Samaria campaign is narrated—and are generally non-chronological. For the original translation, see Cyril J. Gadd, "Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud," *Iraq* 16 (1954): 173–201, esp. 180.

[12] *ARAB* II, §80; *ANET*, 285; Becking 1992, 27–28; *COS* 2.118F:297. This text was found in room 14 of Sargon's palace in Khorsabad. Among other conquests, Sargon briefly mentions that he plundered Samarina and the entire land of Omri. The text provides no clues for dating.

[13] *ARAB* II, §92; Becking 1992, 33. Pairs of bulls were excavated at Sargon's Khorsabad palace. All were inscribed with the same text celebrating his accomplishments, including a short statement about his conquering of Samaria and the whole land of Omri. The text provides no clues for dating.

6. The Pavement Inscription[14]
7. The Cylinder Inscription[15]

Of these seven texts,[16] only one—Sargon's annals—indicates a date:

> At the begi[nning of my royal rule, I . . . the town of the Sama]rians [I besieged, conquered] (2 lines destroyed) [for the god . . . who le]t me achieve (this) my triumph . . . I led away as prisoners [27,290 inhabitants of it (and) [equipped] from among [them (soldiers to man)] 50 chariots for my royal corps. . . . [The town I] re[built] better than (it was) before and [settled] therein people from countries which [I] myself [had con]quered. I placed an officer of mine as governor over them and imposed upon them tribute as (is customary) for Assyrian citizens.[17]

Until the publication of Tadmor's influential article in 1958 (see next section), many scholars accepted that Sargon's annals were historically accurate. Consequently, they dated the fall of Samaria to the beginning of his rule = first regnal year = 721 B.C.[18] They did so despite the claim in the Babylonian Chronicle Series (Chronicle 1) that Sargon's predecessor Shalmaneser (727–722 B.C.) was the king who besieged Samaria.[19] Interestingly, Chronicle 1 does not date Shalmaneser's conquest of Samaria, a curious departure that will be recalled later.

Scholars accepting Sargon's claim typically resolved the discrepancy between the Mesopotamian sources in one of two ways:

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[14] *ARAB* II, §99; *DOTT*, 60(d); *ANET*, 284; Becking 1992, 27; *COS* 2.118G:298. A pavement slab for the gates at the Khorsabad palace featured this inscribed text. Several of Sargon's accomplishments are mentioned, including brief mention of his conquering of Samaria and the entire land of Omri. The text provides no clues for dating.

[15] *ARAB* II, §118; Becking 1992, 32; *COS* 2.118H:298. Found at Khorsabad, this text is inscribed almost identically on four barrel cylinders. It briefly mentions Sargon's subjugation of the land of Omri. The text provides no clues for dating.

[16] It is commonly concluded that Sargon claimed the conquest of Samaria in *eight* different inscriptions (e.g., Becking 1992, 25–38; Younger, "The Fall of Samaria," 461, 468–70, esp. fn. 31; Kelle, "What's in a Name?" 663). However, one of those inscriptions is the Ashur Charter (see below), which records Sargon's victory over the king of Hamath, who incited other states to rebellion including Samaria. Importantly, in the Ashur Charter, Sargon does not use boastful or hyperbolic language with respect to Samaria. The narrative simply reads as if standard punitive measures were taken against it. This stands in contrast to the other seven inscriptions, in which Sargon boasts about his conquering of Samaria and/or the land of Omri. Consequently, I have treated the Ashur Charter as separate in character to the other seven texts.

[17] *ANET*, 284 (also *ARAB* II, §4; *DOTT*, 59[a]; *COS* 2.118A:293). Because the annals are fragmentary at this point, some scholars believe that Sargon is not describing the conquest of Samaria but some other location (e.g., Becking 1992, 39–45). Our study upholds the traditionally accepted view that the annals are referring to Samaria.

[18] For this date, see Tadmor 1958, 33–35, esp. fn. 108; Becking 1992, 33; Thiele 1983, 163 fn. 1. Note that line 10 of Sargon's annals requires restoration: "At the begin[ning of my royal rule." Therefore, it is unknown if the inscription originally stated "in the beginning of my reign [and] in my first year" as restored by Hugo Winckler in 1889 (cf. *ARAB* II, §4) or simply "in the beginning of my reign" (meaning Sargon's accession year) as restored by Tadmor (op. cit., 34). Our study accepts the former while admitting the possibility of the latter. Note that prior to Tadmor's 1958 article the majority of 20th century scholars, beginning with Winckler, believed that Samaria fell in Sargon's first year (721 B.C.) and not in his accession year.

[19] Grayson, *ABC*, 73 (Chron. 1 i 27–28).

1. The Babylonian Chronicle entry did not refer to *Šá-ma-ra-'-in* (Samaria) but to another location, *Šá-ba-ra-'-in* (Sibraim or Sefarvaim).[20]

2. The fall of Samaria occurred late in the reign of Shalmaneser but Sargon claimed the conquest.

During the twentieth century, more refined solutions were offered to resolve the dating issues associated with the fall of Samaria. Three of these, from the following authorities—Edwin Thiele, Hayim Tadmor, and Nadav Na'aman—will now be reviewed.

C. Modern Scholarly Solutions

1. Edwin Thiele (1944, 1951+)

In Thiele's chronology, which was first published in 1944,[21] Hoshea began to rule in 732/31 B.C. (Thiele assumed Nisan years for Israel with accession year dating at the time). By his reckoning, the siege of Samaria began in 725/24 B.C. (Hoshea's seventh year) and the city fell in 723/22 B.C. (Hoshea's ninth year).

According to Thiele's pattern, Samaria fell at least nine months before Sargon's rule began in Dec./Jan., 722/21 B.C. This led him to conclude, as Olmstead had in 1905,[22] that the Babylonian Chronicle Series and the Bible—being independent and unprejudiced sources—verified Shalmaneser's conquest of Samaria. As a result, Sargon's claims were judged to be false, despite the numerous inscriptions recording his capture of the city.[23]

In their favoring of Shalmaneser as the conqueror of Samaria, we can summarize Olmstead's and Thiele's arguments as follows:

- The Biblical account does not name Sargon only Shalmaneser.

- The Babylonian Chronicle Series specifically identifies Shalmaneser as the conqueror of Samaria.

- Although the Eponym Chronicle entries for Shalmaneser's reign are largely incomplete, there are enough cuneiform signs to show that he campaigned in 725, 724, and 723 B.C. This fits the Biblical report of Samaria being under siege for three years.

- Line 10 of Sargon's annals states "in the beginning of my reign." This refers to his accession year, which lasted only a short time, from Dec./Jan., 722/21 to Mar./Apr. 721 B.C. Being

[20] The cuneiform sign here can be read both *ma* and *ba* (see Tadmor 1958, 39–40; Becking 1992, 22–23). Modern scholarship widely accepts Samaria as the reported location.

[21] See Thiele, "The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel," *JNES* 3 (1944): 137–86. After 1944, Thiele's next major publication was *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). Second and third editions of this title were published in 1965 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) and 1983 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan).

[22] Olmstead, "The Fall of Samaria," 179–82.

[23] Thiele 1983, 163–68.

winter, this was the worst time of year in which to wage a campaign (in the rainy season). Sargon's capture of Samaria during that time, as he claimed, is therefore improbable.

- Sargon's claim is entirely absent from the inscriptions of his early years (apart from the mention of Samaria in the Ashur Charter; see Tadmor's viewpoint below). If Sargon had accomplished such an important feat as bringing to an end the kingdom of Israel, why did he not boast about its capture in documents from early in his reign?

- Sargon did eventually seek the glory for Samaria's fall, so his scribes carried over into his reign events that took place during the closing years of Shalmaneser.

2. Hayim Tadmor (1958)

Until around the first half of the twentieth century, few scholars doubted Sargon's claims (as Olmstead and Thiele had) with most accepting that Samaria fell in Sargon's first year, 721 B.C. However, in his landmark article "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study," Assyriologist Hayim Tadmor proposed that Samaria was actually conquered *twice*: first during Shalmaneser's reign then again during Sargon's reign. This proposal became a turning point in the direction of research on the topic, and has been influential ever since.

Accepting the authenticity of both the Babylonian Chronicle Series and the Bible, Tadmor posited that the first conquest of Samaria occurred in the late summer/early autumn of 722 B.C. It followed a siege of the city by Shalmaneser that lasted approximately two calendar years (724–722 B.C.), or three years if counting by regnal years inclusively. But Tadmor also accepted the authenticity of Sargon's claim over Samaria, which led him to conclude that Samaria must have been conquered a second time.

The second capture of Samaria, however, did not occur during Sargon's accession or first year, as his annals indicate. This is because he was occupied at home following internal opposition to his usurping of the throne. Instead, Tadmor nominated Sargon's *second* year, 720 B.C., for the event. He deduced this from an overlooked inscription, the Ashur Charter (K 1349), in which Sargon mentioned a campaign to the west that year:

> In my second regnal year, when I had settled on the royal throne and had been crowned with the crown of lordship,
> I smashed the forces of Humba(n)igaš, King of Elam; I defeated him. Ilu-bi'di
> the Hamathite, not the (rightful) throne-holder, unfitted for a palace, who in the shepherding of (his) people *did not consider their* destiny *but*
> for the god Aššur, his land (and) his people sought evil, not good, and treated (them) with insolence, gathered together Arpad (and) Samaria and turned (them) to his side ... [24]

[24] H. W. F. Saggs, "Historical Texts and Fragments of Sargon II of Assyria: 1. The "Aššur Charter," 14–15, ll. 16–20 (also *ARAB* II, §134; Becking 1992, 34–36; *COS* 2.118C:295). Since the last event referred to in this document is the conquest of Hamath, which occurred in 720 B.C., Tadmor proposed that the inscription can be dated to 720 or the beginning of 719 B.C. (Tadmor 1958, 31 fn. 78). This would make the Ashur Charter one of the earliest known inscriptions of Sargon (along with the Borowski Stela, see sec. D[i] below).

The text, which covers the initial years of Sargon's reign, indicates that he did not engage in any military actions in his accession or first year. This was due to major internal conflicts that arose after he seized the throne. Then, in his second year (720 B.C.), in his first military engagement, Sargon fought the Elamites at Der in Babylon (who were allied with the Babylonian king Merodach-Baladan II). He then marched to Syria to put down a revolt instigated by Yau-bi'di of Hamath, who had co-opted the support of states including Arpad and Samaria. From other inscriptions, we know that Sargon continued in that campaign to defeat Hanunu (Hanno) king of Gaza and the Egyptian commander Re'e who had come to help him.[25]

Viewing the Ashur Charter as being more trustworthy than the annals, Tadmor postulated that Samaria was conquered in Sargon's second year (720 B.C.) following the victory over Yau-bi'di and his allied forces (at Qarqar), and Hanno of Gaza and the Egyptian force (at Raphia). However, when Sargon's annals were compiled in later years, the conquest of Samaria was not placed in his second year but in his accession year, to glorify his rule with a military victory for that inactive year.[26] Likewise, the campaign against the Elamites at Der, which occurred in Sargon's second year according to the Ashur Charter and the Babylonian Chronicle Series,[27] was relocated to his inactive first year.[28]

In Tadmor's scheme, therefore, all the references in Sargon's inscriptions to conquering Samaria relate to the western campaign of 720 B.C. when the city was dealt with a second time. His reconstruction has been accepted by many scholars. It was defended in 1992, with minor variations, by Bob Becking in *The Fall of Samaria: An Historical & Archaeological Study*.

3. Nadav Na'aman (1990)

Another proposal for the final years of Samaria was put forward by Nadav Na'aman, Professor of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University. In his 1990 article, "The Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria (720)," he submitted that the Assyrians invaded Israel three times but there was only one conquest, which occurred in 720 B.C. (= Tadmor's date).

Since the Bible and the Assyrian inscriptions both imply that Samaria was captured only once, Na'aman rejected the idea of two conquests occurring within two or three years of each other by two Assyrian kings. Instead, he proposed the following scenario:

- The first invasion occurred in Shalmaneser's accession year (727 B.C.) in response to the unrest and perhaps even rebellion that occurred in the west following Tiglath-pileser's death. (Revolt by vassal states was common upon change of rule in Assyria.) Shalmaneser therefore

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[25] See *COS* 2.118A:293; 2.118C:295; 2.118E:296 (also *ARAB* II, §§5, 55, 134; *DOTT*, 61[e]; *ANET*, 285).

[26] Tadmor 1958, 31 fn. 83. It had become the practice in Assyria to presuppose the existence of yearly campaigns. Sargon's inactive accession and first years therefore needed to feature military activities beginning with a major victory.

[27] Grayson *ABC*, 73–74 (Chron. 1 i 31–37). The Assyrians fought the Elamites who had come in support of the new Babylonian king, Merodach-Baladan. While Sargon claimed a victory, Babylonian Chronicle 1 reports that the king of Elam inflicted a major defeat on the Assyrians. In all likelihood, the Babylonian report is accurate and Sargon suffered a setback. (This Babylonian Chronicle entry is the first reported military engagement for Sargon and supports the conclusion that he did not undertake any military expeditions until his second year.)

[28] Tadmor 1958, 25–26 (esp. fn.31), 30–31.

wasted no time in sending his army to the west—he may have personally led the campaign but this cannot be verified—and Israel was one of the states that the Assyrians invaded (2 Kgs 17:3). This conclusion is supported by Babylonian Chronicle 1, which mentions the ravaging of Samaria by Shalmaneser in the chronological unit associated with his accession. Na'aman also cited the account of Menander as related by Josephus (*Ant.*, 9.283–87) in support of a campaign to the west during Shalmaneser's accession year. This campaign, which was probably of short duration, was completely successful; the dissenting kings surrendered and paid tribute, including Hoshea.

- Babylonian Chronicle 1 reports that Samaria was "ravaged" then. This refers to the pacification of the region of Samaria, through plundering, rather than the conquest of the city itself.

- Around three and a half years later (ca. 724/23 B.C.), Hoshea sent envoys to So king of Egypt and withheld his yearly tribute. In response, the Assyrians invaded Israel (a second time) in 723/22 B.C., the army being led either by Shalmaneser or his general. Hoshea was summoned to appear before Shalmaneser. On finding him guilty of conspiring with the Egyptians, "the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison" (2 Kgs 17:4) for deportation to Assyria. Samaria remained without a king until its fall in 720. Whether the capital was subsequently besieged, or the countryside plundered as in Shalmaneser's accession year, cannot be established.

- Shalmaneser died shortly after the second invasion of Israel. Sargon succeeded him but was compelled to stay in Assyria during his accession and first years to quash rebellion and consolidate his rule. During that time, all military operations in the west ceased, allowing rebellion to spread under the leadership of Yau-bi'di of Hamath as supported by Egypt. The Samarians, whose king was in prison, joined the anti-Assyrian coalition.

- Only in his second year (720 B.C.) was Sargon able to conduct a campaign to the west. First, he defeated (at Qarqar) the allied forces of Yau-bi'di of Hamath. He then won a battle against Hanno of Gaza and the Egyptian force at Raphia that had come to his aid. With those victories achieved, Sargon was free to punish the Samarians who had helped Yau-bi'di. In the third Assyrian invasion of Samaria following Tiglath-pileser's death, Sargon besieged and conquered the city, as 2 Kgs 17:5–6 describes.[29] The siege apparently did not last long, given the archaeological evidence that Samaria did not suffer major damage.[30]

- Concerning the Biblical report that Samaria fell in Hoshea's ninth year after a three-year siege, Na'aman concluded that this statement is inaccurate. He submitted that the editor of Kings, who compiled the text from archival sources long after the fact, found a notice that Samaria was besieged and conquered by the Assyrians three years after its rebellion and the imprisonment of its king. He then mistakenly interpreted it to mean that Samaria fell in Hoshea's last year, after three years of siege. In actuality, according to Na'aman, the notice referred to the ca. three-year interval between the second and third invasions, between

[29] Thus, in Na'aman's scheme, the "king of Assyria" in 2 Kgs 17:4 is Shalmaneser but in vv. 5–6 it is his successor, Sargon.

[30] In fact, the city's walls remained in use for a long period of time. On Samaria in general and the archaeological evidence in particular, see Nahman Avigad, "Samaria," in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (ed. Ephraim Stern; 5 vols.; Jerusalem: Carta, 1993), 4:1300–1310.

723/22 B.C. (Shalmaneser's final year when Hoshea was imprisoned) and 720 B.C. (Sargon's second year). What transpired in Samaria during that interval cannot be established. Evidently, there was little military action then, given the limited destruction of the city uncovered by archaeology.

D. Suppositions and Observations

Amalgamating Biblical and extra-Biblical texts to recreate a unified history is challenging, as the preceding three solutions demonstrate. Unfortunately, these solutions—like many scholarly reconstructions—conflict with the Bible to varying degrees. Thiele denies that Hoshea and Hezekiah ruled at the same time, in clear contradiction of 2 Kgs 18:9–10. Tadmor's two-conquest hypothesis disagrees with the single capture narrative of 2 Kgs 17:5–6 and 18:9–11. Na'aman rejects that the three-year siege of Samaria occurred between Hoshea's seventh and ninth years, as 2 Kgs 18:9–10 plainly states.

Clearly, for the Biblicist, a different approach is called for. So, with the stance that the Bible should be our control source, this chapter will propose a reconstruction based on the following suppositions and observations:

a) While the Bible identifies Shalmaneser as the king who began the three-year siege of Samaria (2 Kgs 18:9), it does not explicitly name the king who was ruling in Assyria when Samaria fell.

b) According to the Biblical account, Samaria was conquered once not twice (2 Kgs 17:5–6; 18:9–11).

c) In the Eponym Canon, the idea that one should assign "against Samaria" to the years 725, 724, and 723 B.C. is conjectural.

d) It cannot be assumed that the Assyrian army retreated from the west following Sargon's accession, especially if a prolonged military operation, such as the one against Samaria, was still underway.

e) Our date for the fall of Samaria is spring 721 B.C., at the start of Hezekiah's sixth year and Sargon's first year. This agrees with Sargon's annals if Winckler's restoration of line 10 is accepted: "in the beginning of my reign [and] **in my first year**."[31] Nevertheless, it is possible that Tadmor's restoration ("in the beginning of my reign," see fn. 18) is correct, so placing Samaria's capture in Sargon's accession year. This can still be reconciled with our chronology provided one of the following situations is assumed:

   1. An intercalary month was added to the end of 722/21 B.C. in Assyria but not in Judah (see fn. 56). In that case, the first month of Hezekiah's sixth year coincided with the last month of Sargon's accession year.

   2. The fall of Samaria occurred early in Nisan before the conclusion of the *Akītu* (New Year) festival. While the regnal year in Judah began on Nisan 1, it is believed that the

[31] Similarly, Luckenbill's translation reads "[At the beginning of my rule, in my first year of reign]" (*ARAB* II, §4).

regnal year in Assyria began at the conclusion of the *Akītu* festival, near the middle of Nisan (see Appendix H, fnn. 12–14). This would allow the beginning of Hezekiah's sixth year to coincide with the closing days of Sargon's accession year.

f) As mentioned above, it appears that Samaria was not severely damaged during its blockade and capture by the Assyrians. That it suffered only partial damage agrees with Sargon's inscriptions, which do not mention destructive siege operations against the city. (Although the Assyrians preferred to take a city by assault rather than by blockade, Samaria's strong natural and man-made defences disallowed this.[32])

g) The conquest of Samaria is mentioned in the later inscriptions of Sargon but not his earlier ones (except for the mention of Samaria in the Ashur Charter; see next point). I submit that this occurred because of internal politics and sensitivities. The presumably well-liked king, Shalmaneser, had overseen much of the siege of Samaria. Although he died about three months before the city fell in the spring of 721 B.C. (by our chronology), he was the king most responsible for the campaign in the eyes of the Assyrians (and Hebrews and Babylonians). Recognizing this, the usurper Sargon did not inflame an already volatile situation by claiming responsibility for Samaria's fall.

h) Sargon finally did claim the conquest of Samaria, prominently and boastfully, in the inscriptions of later years. (By that time, he had established his military prowess and local opposition to his rule had virtually disappeared.) However, as Tadmor called attention to, Samaria is nevertheless mentioned in the earlier composed Ashur Charter. Importantly, this mention is unremarkable, with the narrative suggesting a standard punitive response to a rebellious vassal state rather than wholesale conquering. The plain reading of both texts, therefore, suggests two separate events involving Samaria during the reign of Sargon:

   1. The fall of the city either in Sargon's first or accession years (so the annals).

   2. Sargon's campaign against a rebellious Syro-Palestinian coalition in his second year (so the Ashur Charter). This included routine measures against Samaria, now an Assyrian province.

i) The internal difficulties faced by Sargon upon his accession are particularly evident in the *Borowski Stela*, which refers to his second year:

> I gathered from them 200 chariots, 600 cavalry, shield and lance (bearers), and added them to my royal contingent. I pardoned and showed mercy on 6,300 guilty Assyrians, settling them in Hamath. I imposed on them tax, tribute, corvée work and forced labour, as my royal fathers had imposed on Irhulena of Hamath.[33]

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[32] For an excellent overview of the military aspects of blockades in the ancient Near East, see Israel Eph'al, *The City Besieged*, 35–68.

[33] Wilfred G. Lambert, "Portion of Inscribed Stela of Sargon II, King of Assyria," in *Ladders to Heaven: Art Treasures from Lands of the Bible* (ed. Oscar White Muscarella; Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981), 125 (also *COS* 2.118B:294). It is called the Borowski Stela because it was part of the collected treasures of Dr. Elie Borowski, now entrusted to the Lands of the Bible Archaeology Foundation in Toronto. The text is inscribed on a broken stone stela of a type used to commemorate local events. It was probably inscribed soon after Sargon's successful campaign in Syria and Palestine in 720 B.C., making it one of his earliest known inscriptions.

Regarding the "guilty" Assyrians, Stephanie Dalley elaborated:

> When Sargon came to the throne as a usurper towards the end of 722 B.C. new information from the Borowski stela fragment shows that 6,300 Assyrians failed to support his accession. Eventually, two years later at least, they were deported to Hamath in Syria. That Sargon put down this massive and publicly admitted opposition only with the greatest difficulty is the deduction that we can draw from the time lapse between accession and the deportation of disloyal Assyrians.[34]

The Borowski Stela is also noteworthy for Sargon's mention of "my royal fathers." Uncertainty exists over Sargon's ancestry because, in all his inscriptions, he never mentions his father's name, except for a glazed plaque bearing a label in which he records that he is the son of Tiglath-pileser.[35] Coupled with the Borowski Stela, I believe this plaque provides sufficient evidence to conclude that Sargon was indeed a royal prince and son of Tiglath-pileser (and therefore brother or half-brother of Shalmaneser). This conclusion is supported by the prophecy of Isa 14:28–31, which implies that a descendant of Tiglath-pileser—a viper from the serpent's root—would triumph over Philistia. Since Shalmaneser did not accomplish this, the prophecy must refer to Sargon, who conquered Philistia in 720 B.C.

In light of the preceding evidence, this study accepts that Sargon was of royal lineage but he usurped the throne ahead of the rightful heir after Shalmaneser's death.

j) Commentators often point to the uncertain timing of Hoshea's imprisonment in 2 Kgs 17, and of the possibility that vv. 3–4 and vv. 5–6 are parallel accounts of the same event but from different archival sources.[36] Did Hoshea's imprisonment occur before, during, or at the end of the siege of Samaria? Assyrian records are unhelpful here owing to the paucity of information for Shalmaneser's reign. Nevertheless, the Bible provides some literary clues. As Na'aman observed, the narrative chain of events in 2 Kgs 17:3–6 is sensible with no stylistic or linguistic differences between the two assumed sources. Also, the passage is written in the same verbal pattern as many other passages in Kings, especially those dealing with Assyrian campaigns against Israel or Judah (2 Kgs 15:19–20, 29–30; 18:13–15).[37] This strongly suggests that the plain meaning should be accepted. In other words, the events of vv. 3–6 follow sequentially rather than vv. 3–4 occurring simultaneously with vv. 5–6. That being the case, we can conclude that Hoshea was imprisoned *before* the three-year siege began.[38]

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[34] Dalley, "Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry," 33.

[35] This faience plaque was discovered by Eckhard Unger in the Istanbul Museum. He published the inscription in *Sargon II von Assyrien, der Sohn Tiglatpilesers III* (Istanbul: Druck Universum Matbaasi, 1933), 16ff. On the filiation of Sargon, see Chamaza, "Sargon II's Ascent to the Throne," 32–33; Poebel, "The Assyrian King List from Khorsabad," *JNES* 2 (1943): 88 (King #110) and 89 fn. 26; Tadmor 1958, 37 fn. 138; Grayson, "Assyria: Tiglath-Pileser III to Sargon II," CAH^2 III/2, 87.

[36] See, for example, Na'aman, "Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria," 212–13; Hayes and Kuan, "The Final Years of Samaria," 160 fn. 17; Becking 1992, 47–53; Younger, "The Fall of Samaria," 477–79.

[37] Na'aman, "Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria," 213.

[38] So Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 196. Against this, Josephus writes that Hoshea ruled in Samaria throughout the siege and was not imprisoned until after the city fell (*Ant*. 9.277–78).

Although it seems extraordinary that Samaria held out for almost two calendar years without a king, the military leaders and/or city elders were no doubt up to the task. (With the Assyrians at their gates, one may assume than no contenders for the throne arose in Samaria knowing the unpleasant fate that awaited them.) Hoshea therefore remained king *in absentia*, and events continued to be referenced to his regnal years (cf. 2 Kgs 25:27).

k) The Babylonian Chronicle entry for Shalmaneser reads:

27 On the twenty-fifth day of the month Tebet Shalmaneser (V)
28 ascended the throne
27 in Assyria
28 <and Akkad>. He ravaged *Samaria*.

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29 The fifth year: Shalmaneser (V) died in the month Tebet.
30 For five years Shalmaneser (V) ruled Akkad and Assyria.
31 On the twelfth day of the month Tebet Sargon (II) ascended the throne in Assyria.[39]

Interpretation of this chronicle is affected by four significant factors:

1. The Akkadian determinative URU
2. The verb "ravaged"
3. The chronological dividing line
4. Why mention Samaria at all?

1. THE AKKADIAN DETERMINATIVE URU. Ordinarily, in both Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions, the determinative URU indicates the name of a city while KUR indicates the name of a land or country. The Babylonian Chronicle entry for Shalmaneser records ^{uru}*Šá-ma-ra-*'*-in*, which suggests that the conquest of the city rather than the land is intended. However, it is likely that the Assyrians changed the determinative for the land of Samaria from KUR to URU following the completion of Tiglath-pileser's Palestinian campaign of 734–732 B.C. to reflect the Northern Kingdom's diminished and isolated status. For example, in Layard 66 (see fn. 4), Tiglath-pileser mentions his conquest of Israel and how he had spared Samaria (^{uru}*Sa-me-ri-na*). Here, the determinative URU is used in apparent reference to the entire diminished state. Similarly, after Samaria's conquest, the land is referred to in an Assyrian list of provinces (K 152) as ^{uru}*Sa-mì-ri-na*.[40] Again, in his annals, Sargon mentions the deportation of some Arabian tribes to ^{uru}*Sa-me-ri-na* in his seventh year.[41] Given that the Assyrians employed the determinative URU for the rump state of Samaria after 734–732 B.C., the same meaning cannot be ruled out in the Babylonian Chronicles.

2. THE VERB "RAVAGED." This is the Akkadian verb *ḫapû* (or *ḫepû*), which has the following meanings:

> to break, crush; to crack, shatter, fracture, shiver; to ruin, destroy; to divide, halve; to be broken, break down, crash.[42]

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[39] Grayson, *ABC*, 73 (Chron. 1 i 27–31). Chronicle 1 is preserved in three copies: BM 92502, BM 75976, and BM 75977. Although it was written in the 22nd year of king Darius I of Persia (ca. 500 B.C.), it was most likely compiled from original documents that were written contemporary with the events.

[40] Becking 1992, 106.

[41] Younger, "The Deportations of the Israelites," 226.

[42] *Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary*, 35 (I have omitted the verb codes here).

Scholars are divided on the semantic intent of *ḫapû* in the Babylonian Chronicle entry for Shalmaneser. Na'aman submits that it describes the plundering of vast areas or groups of towns to pacify the region, rather than the breaking of a city's walls after a siege (for which other verbs were selected).[43] Becking concludes that it denotes the ruination of specific cities, and therefore refers to the actual conquest of Samaria's capital.[44] Younger offers that "From the parallels in the royal inscriptions, it becomes clear that the verb denotes the ruination of cities and, perhaps bombastically, of whole countries, not simply the pacification of a region."[45] Given this division of opinion, it may be prudent to accept that the semantic range of *ḫapû* includes all the aforementioned meanings.

3. THE CHRONOLOGICAL DIVIDING LINE. Horizontal lines in the Babylonian Chronicles are used to divide the text into chronological units. This led Hayes and Kuan to argue that the ravaging of Samaria must have started sometime between Shalmaneser's accession and fourth years, because the event is separated from his fifth year by a horizontal line.[46] While this agrees with our reconstruction (in which the land began to be ravaged in Shalmaneser's fourth year), the argument is debatable. As Younger observes, there are two basic narrative units in the Babylonian Chronicles: the "particular significant events" unit for a monarch's achievements and the "transferral of power" unit associated with his death. Younger noted that the narrative unit for Shalmaneser's fifth year is a "transferral of power" unit. Accordingly, because it records his death, it would be inappropriate to place the statement "he ruined Samaria" in this unit, hence its location *above* the line.[47]

With respect to the Babylonian Chronicle, Becking makes an interesting observation on the Samaria entry:

> As far as I can see the words *Šá-ma-ra-'-in iḫ-te-pi* form the only instance in the Babylonian Chronicle which is *not* introduced by the formula MU X "in the *x*th year: ...". Bab Chron I iv:34ff for instance introduces events in the accession-year of Shamash-shumu-ukin explicitly with MU.SAG "in the accession year". That leads me to suppose that the authors of the Babylonian Chronicle found in their sources an undated note on the capture of Samaria by Shalmaneser V. Bab Chron should be regarded as an important historical source for the conquest of Samaria at some period or other in the reign of Shalmaneser V. An exact date cannot be concluded from this chronicle.[48]

While Becking conjectures that the authors of the Babylonian Chronicles found an undated note on Samaria's capture, I propose that they *intentionally* did not associate a date with the event, despite knowing it. The Babylonians were more circumspect in their chronicling of events than the Assyrians. They also knew that Sargon, a usurper, had claimed the glory for Samaria's conquest. Although the claim was technically correct, it was neither morally nor militarily correct. Shalmaneser was the king most responsible for Samaria's fall; Sargon had done nothing to achieve its capture. The Babylonians may therefore have credited Shalmaneser with ravaging Samaria. However, no date could be assigned because the

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[43] Na'aman, "Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria," 211.

[44] Becking 1992, 24–25.

[45] Younger, "The Fall of Samaria," 465.

[46] Hayes & Kuan, "The Final Years of Samaria," 158–59. Na'aman pressed this argument further by proposing that Samaria was ravaged in Shalmaneser's accession year (see summary of Na'aman's reconstruction above in sec. C3).

[47] Younger, "The Fall of Samaria," 466–67.

[48] Becking 1992, 24 (cf. A. K. Grayson, "Assyria: Tiglath-pileser III to Sargon II," CAH^2 III/2, 86).

conquest occurred some three months after Shalmaneser's death, in Sargon's first year. (The Bible similarly redirects the credit for Samaria's fall to Shalmaneser by withholding the name of the ruling king at the time.) Therefore, the scribes wrote "he ravaged Samaria" for Shalmaneser in the text unit preceding Sargon's accession. It was written with no date, and used the determinative URU for Samaria. By this entry, the Babylonians may have been acknowledging Shalmaneser's military accomplishment in achieving not only the overthrow of the Samarian countryside but, posthumously, the capital itself.

4. WHY MENTION SAMARIA AT ALL? The Babylonian Chronicle Series reported events only of national import, so the entry concerning Samaria is unusual. On this, Na'aman recounted Winckler's observation that

> no western place is mentioned in the first part of the Chronicle, up to the time of Esarhaddon, with the exception of the land of Tabal, where Sargon was killed in battle. The chronicler described only the Assyrian-Babylonian-Elamite relations; the city of Samaria is an exception within this geographical region.[49]

Why was Samaria of such interest to the Babylonians? As Chapter 6D submits, the Babylonians revised their basis for chronological reckoning following Tiglath-pileser's removal of eleven eponyms as part of his Jonah deletions. Samaria and the God of the Hebrews had disrupted these two Mesopotamian kingdoms, so we are not surprised at the Babylonian interest in the capital's fate.

E. Proposed Reconstruction

Guided by the chronology presented in Chapter 4B, as well as the suppositions and observations mentioned above, I propose the following reconstruction of the main events affecting Samaria between 734 and 720 B.C.[50]

734/33 B.C.—During the Reign of Tiglath-pileser

Tiglath-pileser campaigned for three years in Palestine between 734 and 732. The first campaign, in 734, was directed against Philistia. It is possible that Israel's coastal strip was annexed then, with deportations occurring. Overall, it was a highly successful operation in which all Philistia was brought under Assyrian control.

After the Assyrians had withdrawn for the year (perhaps in late autumn), Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel attacked Judah with the intention of deposing Ahaz and replacing him with a puppet king (Isa 7:1–7). The war appears to have been fought over control of the Transjordan (see Appendix F, "Ahaz"). Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser appealing for help, along with a gift of expensive tribute (2 Kgs 16:5–9). Tiglath-pileser was persuaded to deliver Ahaz, and in the next year he set out to destroy the power of the Syro-Ephraimite league (i.e., the Rezin-Pekah alliance). That campaign lasted two years.

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[49] Na'aman, "Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria," 215 fn. 27.

[50] Source references for this reconstruction have been largely omitted. In general, though, Assyrian history derives from the Eponym Canon and annalistic texts (= *ARAB*, *ITP*, *COS*, etc.) while Babylonian history is from the Babylon Chronicle Series (= *ABC*).

Interestingly, Judah is mentioned for the first time in the Assyrian royal inscriptions during Tiglath-pileser's reign. The mention is found in a list of western kings paying tribute, one of whom is *Ia-ú-ha-zi* ^{kur} *Ia-ú-da-a+a* = Jehoahaz of Judah (Ahaz's full name).[51] The tribute list is usually dated to 734 or early 733, and Ahaz's offering at that time is presumably identical to the one recorded in 2 Kgs 16:8.

733/32–732/31 B.C.—During the Reign of Tiglath-pileser

During these two years, Tiglath-pileser fought against Damascus and Samaria. He annexed Galilee and the Transjordan (Gilead), with deportations occurring. The campaign ended with the fall of Damascus and Rezin's death in 732, by which time the Northern Kingdom (Samaria) was a vassal state of vastly reduced area.[52] As discussed in Section A, we uphold that Pekah was overthrown *after* the Northern Kingdom had been shorn of its territory.

731/30 B.C.—During the Reign of Tiglath-pileser

Following Assyria's annexation of large parts of Israel, Hoshea the son of Elah conspired against Pekah and slew him (2 Kgs 15:30). By our chronology, Pekah died between Nisan and Elul 731, and Hoshea began to rule between Tishri and Adar, 731. A gap in time spanning New Year's Day is therefore indicated between Pekah's death and Hoshea's accession, possibly of several weeks (i.e., Pekah died in Ab or Elul and Hoshea's rule began in Tishri or Heshvan).

I propose that the gap was due to protocol. In the fragmentary text III R 10, 2, Tiglath-pileser said that he "installed Hoshea" (see fn. 1). This shows that Hoshea was specifically appointed as king by Tiglath-pileser. He therefore did not occupy the throne immediately after he killed Pekah. Because Israel was a vassal state, Hoshea needed his overlord's approval to rule. From the Assyrian inscription ND 4301 + 4305 (see fn. 5), it appears that Hoshea promptly sent an embassy—undoubtedly bearing gifts and tribute—to Tiglath-pileser at Sarrabanu in southern Babylonia. After his rulership was approved, Hoshea officially became king in the autumn of 731. But the whole process had taken some weeks to complete.

730/29–728/27 B.C.—During the Reign of Tiglath-pileser

Hoshea dutifully paid tribute during these years, and probably every year until 724.

727/26 B.C.—Accession Year of Both Shalmaneser and Hezekiah

In Judah, Ahaz died and Hezekiah succeeded him between Nisan and Elul, 727. Later that year in Assyria, Tiglath-pileser died in Tebeth, and Shalmaneser's accession occurred on the 25th day of the same month (Jan., 726).[53]

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[51] See Chapter 11B5 for bibliography and further discussion.

[52] The Bible calls this rump-state "Ephraim" (e.g., Hos 9:11). Thiele viewed this term as distinct from Israel and concluded that Ephraim was a rival kingdom. In his scheme, Israel was ruled by Menahem followed by his son Pekahiah while, simultaneously, Pekah was ruling in Ephraim (Thiele 1983, 129–38).

[53] Grayson, *ABC*, 72–73 (Chron. 1 i 24–27).

Because there are no useable royal inscriptions for Shalmaneser, reconstructing the events of his reign is difficult. Nevertheless, we know from the Eponym Chronicles that the Assyrians campaigned in 727, and again in Shalmaneser's second, third, and fourth years. Unfortunately, the locations have not survived but we can theorize concerning some of them in light of the Biblical narrative.

A change of rulership in Assyria usually sparked regional unrest as vassal states sought to free themselves from the burden of paying tribute. The Levantine states were particularly energetic in this regard. Anticipating this, Shalmaneser proceeded to the west immediately after his coronation to reassert Assyrian hegemony (cf. 2 Kgs 17:3).[54] His quick reaction was successful and he probably renewed oaths of loyalty with vassal states then.

Some scholars rightly argue that there was insufficient time for Shalmaneser to complete a campaign to the west in his accession year, which only lasted about two months (Tebeth 25 to the start of the new regnal year in 726).[55] The problem is solved by one or both of the following solutions:

1. It is believed that the regnal year in Assyria did not begin on Nisan 1 but at the conclusion of the *Akītu* festival near the middle of Nisan. This allows about ten weeks for Shalmaneser's campaign. If an intercalary month was placed at the end of the Nisan year, for which there is a better than one-in-three chance, the span widens to about 14 weeks.[56]

2. The Eponym Chronicles indicate a campaign for 727 but the location is unknown. It is therefore possible that a western expedition was undertaken that year by Tiglath-pileser. But he was struck with illness, so he returned home while the army continued operations in the west led by the tartan. Soon after his return to Assyria, Tiglath-pileser died of natural causes (probably due to his worsening condition).[57] After Shalmaneser replaced him on the throne, he promptly set out to join the army to stamp his authority in the region. It was a speedy

[54] The fact that Shalmaneser could leave the country so soon after his accession—without having to spend time at home securing his rule—points to him being nominated the crown prince during Tiglath-pileser's reign. By contrast, the opposition to the accession of Sargon (Shalmaneser's successor) was such that he was unable to leave Assyria until his second year.

[55] For example, Younger maintains that it is mathematically impossible for Shalmaneser to have campaigned against Samaria in his accession year. His opinion is based on the marching rate of the Assyrian army (an average of 22 km per day) versus Shalmaneser's short accession year (Younger, "The Fall of Samaria," 467 fn. 25, also 472). See also Galil 1996, 90.

[56] For Mesopotamian nations that used the lunisolar calendar, intercalary months were added to the middle or end of the year when needed to keep the first month (Nisan) aligned with spring (a lunar year is about eleven days shorter than a solar year). The Babylonians discovered that seven lunar months must be intercalated over a 19-year period (19 solar years = 6,940 days = 235 lunations). Hence, there is an approximate one-in-three chance of a year featuring an intercalary month. If the Assyrians added an additional month in 727/26, then it is likely that they also did so in 722/21, the year of Shalmaneser's death and Sargon's accession. See Section D(e) for the possible significance of an intercalated month at the end of 722/21 in Assyria.

[57] Many scholars accept that Isa 14:29 is referring cryptically to Tiglath-pileser's death (see ch. 8B3). He is the "rod" (or oppressor) who "is broken" (had died). Some Biblicists might interpret this to mean that the Lord actually intervened to break Tiglath-pileser's rule by death.

outbound journey given Shalmaneser's small entourage. His journey home was equally fast, as it appears that he travelled ahead of the army.[58]

Another problem concerning Shalmaneser's subjection of Israel is raised by different translations of 2 Kgs 17:3:

> Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. [KJV]
>
> Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser's vassal and had paid him tribute. [NIV]

Did Hoshea become a servant as a result of Shalmaneser's coming against him (so the KJV) or was Hoshea *already* a servant before Shalmaneser came (so the NIV)? The latter seems more likely given that Hoshea had already established himself as a vassal with his earlier payment of tribute to Tiglath-pileser. Nevertheless, the KJV may be referring here to a new phase in the vassal-overlord relationship. Hoshea became Shalmaneser's servant in the sense that he swore a loyalty oath personally to the new king. There had been no break in his paying of tribute to the Assyrians, simply a change in the king to whom it was promised and submitted (hence the imposition of a fresh loyalty oath).

By the same logic, Shalmaneser's coming "against" Hoshea was not because of any outright defiance such as refusing to pay tribute, but as a preemptive move to secure his submission. That no major military encounter occurred is supported by the nominal language of 2 Kgs 17:3. Also, that Hoshea did not falter in paying tribute is suggested by the next verse (17:4), which stresses the *year by year continuity* of Hoshea's tribute (from 731 to his sending of messengers to Egypt in 724).

726/25 B.C.— First Year of Shalmaneser and Hezekiah

During this year, Shalmaneser stayed "in the land," meaning that he did not personally lead any military expeditions that year. This supports our view that he had reasserted Assyrian supremacy in the west during his accession year.

In Israel, Hoshea paid tribute. In Judah, Hezekiah presided over a great passover in the second month. Prior to it, Hezekiah had sent couriers throughout Judah and Israel with invitations to attend.[59] Many Israelites, including those who had escaped deportation from Galilee and Gilead (now Assyrian provinces), made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the event (2 Chr 30:1–31:1).

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[58] If we agree with Millard that Eponym Chronicle entries refer to the location of the army *at the turn of the year* (Millard 1994, 4–5; see also Appendix B), then the army was indeed away from Assyria (without their king) at the start of Shalmaneser's first year. Presumably, they were wrapping up the western campaign under direction of the tartan (because Shalmaneser had returned to Assyria for the *Akītu* festival). The army then marched back to Assyria early in Shalmaneser's first year.

[59] The invitation opened with: "Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria" (2 Chr 30:6). Undoubtedly, the escapees in view here are those who had evaded death and deportation when Tiglath-pileser annexed Galilee and Gilead in his western campaigns of 733–732 (cf. 2 Kgs 15:29).

725/24 B.C.—Second Year of Shalmaneser and Hezekiah

Hoshea paid tribute. For the Assyrians, a campaign is indicated in the Eponym Canon but the location is unknown. It may have been against Elulaios (or "Luli") king of Tyre, who took the opportunity of Shalmaneser being at home the previous year to stir revolt in the Phoenician city-states (Josephus, *Ant.* 9.283–87). According to Josephus, Tyre could not be subdued, so Shalmaneser began a blockade of the city that lasted for five years.[60]

724/23 B.C.—Third Year of Shalmaneser and Hezekiah

Shalmaneser campaigned this year but the location is unknown. Due to the heavy burden on Israel's economy, Hoshea stopped paying tribute in the expectation of support from Pharaoh So of Egypt, to whom he had sent messengers asking for assistance (2 Kgs 17:4).[61]

723/22 B.C.—Fourth Year of Shalmaneser and Hezekiah

Shalmaneser campaigned again this year but the location cannot be determined. We propose that he campaigned in the west. In the preceding year, Hoshea had withdrawn tribute and sent envoys to Egypt (and possibly to other vassal states). With the Assyrians in the region this year, Shalmaneser summoned Hoshea to his headquarters (located outside Samaria). He obeyed the summons because he saw this as an opportunity to make amends and resubmit to Assyrian authority. However, Hoshea had committed a grave offense in breaking his loyalty oath by seeking assistance from Egypt, Assyria's rival power in the region. Upon interview, Shalmaneser confirmed Hoshea's treachery and imprisoned him for later transferal to Assyria.

The punishment for Hoshea's breaking of his loyalty oath was severe: Samaria would be incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system. Shalmaneser therefore marched with his army at once (possibly in the summer of 723). His quick response was also designed to prevent Egypt from lending assistance. The Assyrians attacked many towns in Samaria, and instigated a blockade of the capital that lasted for almost two calendar years, or three years if counting by Nisan or Tishri years inclusively (from summer 723 to spring 721). The prolonged duration of the blockade was due mainly to the city's excellent strategic location combined with its strong defensive structures (as built by Omri and Ahab, and fortified by succeeding kings). A contributing factor, though, may have been sub-optimal military strength. The Assyrians were probably also besieging Tyre at the same time, and the consequent division of forces would have reduced the vigor of both operations.

Shalmaneser's Samaria offensive began in the seventh year of Hoshea, which was the fourth year of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:9–10).

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[60] For commentary on the siege of Tyre, see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 198–99; Na'aman, "Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria," 215; Hayes and Kuan, "The Final Years of Samaria," 160–62.

[61] The identity of So is still debated, with three main contenders: (1) So is the abbreviated name of the 22nd Dynasty king Osorkon IV, who ruled from Tanis in the eastern Delta; (2) So is the Hebrew transcription of the capital city *Sais* in the western Delta, ruled by the 24th Dynasty king Tefnakht 1; and (3) So is a title meaning "king" and is to be identified with Piye (also Piankhy) of the 25th (Nubian) Dynasty. (Literature on So has not been rehearsed here as his identity is not immediately relevant.)

722/21 B.C.—Accession Year of Sargon and Fifth Year of Hezekiah

Shalmaneser died in Tebeth (Dec.–Jan.) about three months before the Assyrian army finally captured Samaria (in the spring of 721). It is not known if Shalmaneser died at home or on campaign in Samaria. However, given that Sargon's rule began shortly afterward in the same month, on Tebeth 12 (see Section D[k]), it is likely that Shalmaneser died in Assyria.[62] Perhaps he had returned home earlier due to ill health.

As noted earlier, the evidence points to Sargon being a brother of Shalmaneser. It is unlikely, though, that he was the heir apparent. The known disquiet over Sargon's accession suggests that, following Shalmaneser's death, he took the throne ahead of the rightful heir, who was probably a son of Shalmaneser. This sparked a two-year period of domestic upheaval requiring Sargon's presence at home to quell rebellion and stabilize his rule. (Some of his problems may have been instigated by Shalmaneser's royal allies.)

Sargon wisely allowed the army, which had been loyal to Shalmaneser and his father Tiglath-pileser, to continue the siege of Samaria and manage the subsequent deportations. (It is doubtful that any Assyrian king would recall his army at the verge of incorporating a rebellious state into the empire's provincial system.)

In addition to the domestic conflicts that arose after Sargon seized the throne, two major revolts erupted in the empire. One occurred in Babylon under the leadership of Merodach-Baladan, who proclaimed himself king of Babylon three months after Sargon's accession. The other occurred in Syria-Palestine and was initiated by two kings: Yau-bi'di king of Hamath (in the north) and Hanno king of Gaza (in the south). Yau-bi'di's uprising, in particular, attracted regional support. But because Sargon was occupied domestically, he was unable to deal with the external revolts until his second year (720 B.C.).

721/20 B.C.—First Year of Sargon and Sixth Year of Hezekiah

Samaria was taken in the spring of Sargon's first year (721), which was the ninth year of Hoshea and the sixth year of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:10). However, because many Assyrians viewed Sargon with suspicion, and because they knew that Shalmaneser (a well-liked king) had orchestrated the siege, Sargon did not take credit for Samaria's fall just yet.[63] His domestic problems also continued this year.

Regarding the Biblical narrative, one might conclude that 2 Kgs 17:3–6 attributes the fall of Samaria to Shalmaneser.[64] However, the passage does not specifically name the ruling king at the time. Similarly, 2 Kgs 18:10 reports: "And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken." Again, no

[62] The wording used for Shalmaneser's death in Babylonian Chronicle 1 ("[to go] to one's destiny") implies the he died a natural death (Becking 1992, 22 fn. 6). It is unlikely, therefore, that he was killed in the battlefield or in a coup instigated by Sargon (as has been previously put forward).

[63] This is why early documents of Sargon such as the Nimrud Inscription (*ARAB* II, §137; *DOTT*, 62[i]; *ANET*, 287; *COS* 2.118I:298–99)—composed ca. 717—omit mention of the conquest of Samaria.

[64] So Thiele 1983, 164.

name is mentioned, simply an unspecified *they*.[65] Why did the editor of Kings go out of his way to withhold Sargon's name? I propose that the editors of both the Bible and the Babylonian Chronicle Series were driven by the same motivation: to credit Shalmaneser with the Samaria victory *by omission of Sargon's name* (Section D[k]3 refers). They viewed Sargon as undeserving of the credit because Shalmaneser was ultimately responsible for the campaign's success. We can therefore identify [in square brackets] the unnamed Assyrian kings as follows:

> In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. And the king of Assyria [Shalmaneser] found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria [Shalmaneser] shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria [Shalmaneser] came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria [Sargon] took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (2 Kgs 17:1–6)

> And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they [the Assyrian troops] took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. And the king of Assyria [Sargon] did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (2 Kgs 18:9–11)

After the commander of the army captured Samaria, Sargon followed the colonizing plans of Tiglath-pileser, and ordered that the Samarians be deported (2 Kgs 17:6; 18:11). Israel had ceased to be a kingdom and Sargon began to rebuild the capital as the center of a new province called *Samerina*. He also began a process of repopulation but this took several decades to complete.[66]

In later years when his stature had grown, and when local sensitivities had abated, Sargon took credit for the fall of Samaria in his inscriptions. Undoubtedly, it was a point of pride to be the conqueror of Samaria, land of rebellious kings and of the prophet Jonah (who had "troubled" Nineveh). But perhaps more importantly, it allowed him to fill the void of no military expeditions in his accession and first years. Strictly speaking, of course, Sargon *was* the conqueror of Samaria because he was the ruling king at the time. The credit, though, was underserved.

We can speculate that Sargon destroyed Shalmaneser's records without trace before claiming the Samaria victory in his own records (hence the paucity of inscriptions for Shalmaneser). This was done not only to suppress the facts but possibly as an act of vengeance against the royal faction

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[65] The MT, Lucianic (Greek) text, and Targum use the plural form ("they") while most other Greek texts use the singular ("he" = the king of Assyria). Accepting the MT as accurate, the antecedent of *they* is unknown but it probably refers to the Assyrian troops, now without Shalmaneser but still ably led by their commander(s). On the conspicuous change from Shalmaneser to "they" in 2 Kgs 18:9–10, Steven J. Robinson—who similarly upholds a 721 B.C. date for the fall of Samaria—observes that "The change of subject from 'Shalmaneser besieged Samaria' to 'they (i.e. the Assyrians) took it' is striking, for one might expect to read 'he took it'. The implication is clearly that Shalmaneser did not take it" (Robinson, "The Chronology of Israel Re-examined," 93).

[66] Sargon mentions the deportation of captured Arabians to the province of Samaria in his seventh year, i.e., 715 B.C. (see *ARAB* II, §17; *ANET*, 285–86; *COS* 2.118A:293). The repopulation program for Samaria continued during the reigns of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon (cf. Ezra 4:2), and Ashurbanipal.

that had resisted his usurpation and stirred thousands of Assyrians against him. (This may be one reason why Sargon's inscriptions hardly mention his royal lineage.)

The Bible does not record Hoshea's death. We presume that he died as a prisoner in Assyria sometime after 721.

720/19 B.C.—Second Year of Sargon and Seventh Year of Hezekiah

By his second year, Sargon had secured the throne, which freed him to begin military campaigns. They were waged almost every year thereafter until his shock death on the battlefield in 705.

The revolts in Babylon and Syria-Palestine needed to be dealt with promptly. Sargon therefore waged his first military campaign against Humbanigash of Elam at Der in neighboring Babylon (the Elamites had come to the aid of Merodach-Baladan). The battle probably resulted in an Assyrian defeat, although Sargon claimed it as a victory. Next to be addressed was the escalating revolt in the west (news of Assyria's setback against the Elamites undoubtedly encouraged the rebels). Sargon's initial engagement there was against Yau-bi'di king of Hamath, with whom Arpad, Simirra, Damascus, and Samaria (among others) were in league. He defeated their combined forces at Qarqar, and reasserted his authority over them, taking whatever steps were necessary for each locality. (For example, Yau-bi'di was flayed alive in public, the event being depicted in realistic detail in one of Sargon's reliefs.)

The fact that Samaria took part in a revolt this year does not preclude it being conquered the year before. It was a new province, and the city's left-over inhabitants and new arrivals were rebelling under Yau-bi'di's prompting and Sargon's initial setback at Der. If Sargon had actually conquered Samaria in his second year, one would expect more boastful language in the Ashur Charter concerning it. But there is no such boasting; Samaria is mentioned only in an ancillary way.[67]
Sargon completed his western campaign by turning south to conquer Philistia. In desperation, Hanno king of Gaza called to Egypt for help but the Egyptians were intercepted at Raphia (south of Gaza on the Egyptian border) and defeated by Sargon. The Egyptians fled, Gaza fell (Hanno was brought in chains to Ashur), and Raphia was destroyed with over 9,000 of its inhabitants being exiled.

The campaign to the west had been wide-ranging and successful. Sargon could return home knowing that Assyrian hegemony had been restored over the rebellious states. After an inauspicious start with his defeat at Der, the new king had stamped his authority, emphatically, over the region.

Conclusion

In the aforementioned reconstruction, the Babylonian Chronicle entry concerning the ravaging of Samaria was found to be referring, primarily, to Shalmaneser's campaign against the *land*. Also,

[67] Footnote 55 mentions the average distance that the Assyrian army might march in a day (22 km / 13.75 mi). Since Sargon fought the Elamites at Der in Babylon earlier that year, it must have been a swift campaign in the southern Levant if marching rate is accounted for. Recognizing this, Younger thought it doubtful that Sargon could have besieged and captured Samaria in such a short time, unless the city's defenses had been greatly weakened during an earlier siege ("The Fall of Samaria," 473). A short campaign against Samaria is more in line with punishing a province than with conquering a strongly defended city.

both Sargon's annals and the Ashur Charter were found to be trustworthy. The conquest of Samaria occurred either in Sargon's first year or his accession year, depending on the restoration of line 10 of his annals. The regional revolt that also included Samaria—now a province—was put down in Sargon's second year, as the Ashur Charter indicates.

Importantly, the dates proposed above for key events (e.g., Hoshea's accession in 731 B.C. and the fall of Samaria in the spring of 721 B.C.) agree reasonably well with both the Mesopotamian records and our chronology, which is based on the regnal data of the Masoretic Text.

Such harmony between the Biblical and extra-Biblical sources is, unfortunately, not possible for the next topic. It is perhaps the most vexing in Old Testament chronology: Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in the 14th year of Hezekiah.

Chapter 8: Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah

A. The Problem

The Bible records two invasions of Judah by the Assyrians. The first occurred during the reign of Hezekiah and was a major offensive led by Sennacherib. It is recounted in three books: 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37, Isa 36:1–37:38, and 2 Chr 32:1–23. The second occurred during the reign of Manasseh (2 Chr 33:11) and was probably a minor punitive action.

In this chapter we will review the major offensive, which occurred in Hezekiah's 14th year. The primary text describing this campaign is the Kings narrative. The Isaiah account is parallel to that of Kings but omits the episode of 2 Kgs 18:14–16. The Chronicles account—in keeping with the character of that book—omits, adds, and abbreviates details as follows:[1]

2 KGS	ACCOUNT OF THE INVASION OF JUDAH	2 CHR
18:13	Sennacherib invades Judah (loosely parallel in 2 Chr)	32:1
– – –	Hezekiah's preparations (added in 2 Chr)	32:2–8
18:14–16	Hezekiah buys peace but only temporarily (omitted in 2 Chr)	– – –
18:17–36	The Rabshakeh's speech (loosely parallel in 2 Chr)	32:9–19
18:37–19:34	Hezekiah's reaction and Sennacherib's letter (heavily abbreviated in 2 Chr)	32:20, 17
19:35–37	Divine intervention saves Jerusalem (loosely parallel in 2 Chr)	32:21–22
– – –	Hezekiah's exaltation (added in 2 Chr)	32:23

The invasion of Judah is also recorded in the annals of Sennacherib, the son and successor of Sargon.[2] The annals record that, in his third campaign, Sennacherib marched first to Phoenicia. He captured Sidon and its regional cities, and received gifts from eight western kings. Advancing to Philistia, he captured Ashkelon and its cities, and defeated the Egyptians who had come to the aid of Ekron. He subsequently killed the disloyal leaders of Ekron. The final episode was the invasion of Judah (see Section J for the text). According to Sennacherib's account, the invasion began with the conquering and plundering of 46 walled cities and numerous smaller towns. Jerusalem was then besieged with Hezekiah being trapped inside "like a bird in a cage." Additionally, Sennacherib distributed Judah's conquered territory among three loyal Philistine

[1] The comparison table is based on that of Richard Pratt, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 627.

[2] There are several exemplars of Sennacherib's annals. The best preserved is the *Chicago Prism*, written in 689 B.C. and located in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Another is the *Taylor Prism* located in the British Museum. Written in 691 B.C., it was discovered by Henry Austen Layard in Sennacherib's library at Nineveh. Until recently, these were the two copies usually relied on for the text of Sennacherib's third campaign. However, in 1997, Eckart Frahm published a full translation of the *Rassam Cylinder*, which is the earliest version of Sennacherib's annals. Written in 700 B.C. (within a year after the third campaign itself), it was recovered by an associate of Layard, Hormuzd Rassam, from the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh in 1853. The Rassam Cylinder contains reports of Sennacherib's first three campaigns. Though known about for over a century, it had not been critically reviewed until Frahm's publication (see fn. 55 for bibliography). For English translations of Sennacherib's third campaign, see Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, 302–06; Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, 29–34; *ARAB* II, §§239–40; *DOTT*, 66–67; *ANET*, 287–88; *COS* 2.119B:302–03.

kings, thereby reducing the nation's size. In the concluding section, Sennacherib claims that Hezekiah was so overwhelmed by the awesome splendor of his majesty that he sent much tribute to him after his return to Nineveh. This included Judah's elite troops and best soldiers, 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, and human ransom such as Hezekiah's daughters and harem. Contradicting this account, the Bible reveals that Sennacherib suffered a humiliating loss after 185,000 of his soldiers died overnight (2 Kgs 19:35). Compelled to retreat, he "returned with shame of face to his own land" (2 Chr 32:21).

Sennacherib ruled for 24 years, from 705 to 681 B.C. His third campaign has been dated to 701 B.C., presumably during the summer, which would place it in his fourth year.

Apart from the narrative discrepancies between the Biblical and Assyrian sources for Sennacherib's invasion, the key problem is its dating. The Hezekiah-Hoshea synchronisms in 2 Kgs 18:9–10 date the start of Hezekiah's reign to around 727 B.C. Therefore, the invasion of Judah recorded for his 14th year (2 Kgs 18:13) should be around 713 B.C. Not only is this date over a decade earlier than that dictated by Assyrian chronology (701 B.C.) but it falls within the reign of Sennacherib's father Sargon (722–705 B.C.).

This discrepancy in dates (and Assyrian kings) for Hezekiah's 14th year is one of the most troublesome in Old Testament chronology, and countless essays and papers have been devoted to it over the past 150 years. Invariably, scholars point to the Bible as the problematic source. They conclude that, of the two chronistic notices (the Hezekiah-Hoshea synchronisms and 2 Kgs 18:13) only one can be correct. This has led to the following two dating schemes:

1. The early reign scheme in which Hezekiah's accession occurred ca. 727 B.C. This scheme upholds the veracity of the Hezekiah-Hoshea synchronisms, and is typically favored by Biblicists and modern scholars.

2. The late reign scheme in which Hezekiah's accession occurred ca. 715 B.C., making his 14th year 701 B.C., so allowing 2 Kgs 18:13 to agree with Assyrian chronology. Although Thiele and earlier scholars advocated this scheme, it is falling from favor today.[3] Nevertheless, some modern scholars such as Nadav Na'aman still support it.[4]

Those choosing the early reign scheme, as is increasingly occurring, must resolve the discord between Hezekiah's 14th year (ca. 713 B.C.) and the Assyrian date for Judah's invasion (701 B.C.). The solutions vary.[5] Commonly, it is assumed that the 14th year in 2 Kgs 18:13 (and Isa 36:1)

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[3] The late reign scheme also requires that the 55-year reign of Manasseh be shortened by approximately eleven years. The two methods normally used to achieve this are: (1) emendation, such as Albright's 45-year total for Manasseh's reign ("The Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel," 22, esp. fn. 30), or (2) the assumption of a coregency between Hezekiah and Manasseh (so Thiele, et al.).

[4] To harmonize 2 Kgs 18:9–10 and 18:13, Na'aman upholds a previously offered solution in which Hezekiah reigned as coregent with Ahaz (beginning in 728 B.C.) but the invasion notice of 18:13 is counted from the start of his 29-year sole regency in 715 B.C. Thus, in Na'aman's scheme, Hezekiah ruled for a total of 42 years, from 728 to 686 B.C. ("Historical and Chronological Notes on the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the Eighth Century B.C.," 83–85). Our study views this situation as unlikely. The main objection is that although the coregency segment is not counted in the official total of Hezekiah's reign, there are synchronisms to numbered regnal years within that uncounted segment (e.g., 2 Kgs 18:9–10).

[5] For elaboration of the solutions mentioned only briefly in this paragraph, see Allis, *The Old Testament*, 407–12; Galil 1996, 98–104.

was a scribal error; it should have said 24th, 27th, or 29th year. Other solutions stretch credibility, such as the count of Hezekiah's reign being restarted in his 14th year when God added 15 years to his life (2 Kgs 20:6). This makes his reported 14th year actually his 28th or 29th. The most common explanation, however, is that there were two or more invasions of Judah by Sennacherib.[6]

Of all the solutions offered for coordinating 2 Kgs 18:9–10 and 18:13 with the Assyrian record, not one has gained wide scholarly assent. Perhaps it is time then for a different approach. Accordingly, in this chapter, a reconstruction will be offered that upholds the Bible as being correct throughout. In other words, the problematic source is the Assyrian record. The following suppositions will underpin the reconstruction:

a) Sennacherib's invasion began late in Hezekiah's 14th year (713/12 B.C.) and continued into the next Nisan year. It therefore occurred during the reign of Sargon.

b) Some years earlier (possibly 717 B.C.), Sargon nominated Sennacherib as the heir apparent (= crown prince = viceregent), which allowed him to lead the campaign against Judah in 713–12 B.C. Although he was never accorded a title higher than "crown prince" in Assyria during Sargon's reign, the Hebrews nevertheless called Sennacherib "king" in keeping with their own system for viceregents.

c) There was only one Assyrian invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.

d) The principal text describing the Assyrian campaign is 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37. Scholars normally divide this passage into two sections: 18:13–16 and 18:17–19:37. They are termed "source A" and "source B" owing to the evidence of different source texts.[7] It is widely held that the events described in A and B are inconsistent. Against this, I believe that the Hebrew historian was meticulous in narrating the events of 18:1–19:37 in their correct historical order, regardless of the texts on which he relied.[8] To explain the apparent incongruity between A and B, I propose that the following events between 18:16 and 18:17 were omitted:

    1. Sennacherib discontinued the Judah offensive following Hezekiah's payment of heavy tribute to buy peace.

    2. Sennacherib departed Judah for operations in Philistia and Phoenicia, with the intention of returning to Nineveh thereafter.

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[6] For example, in 1864, George Rawlinson (brother of Sir Henry Rawlinson) submitted that Sennacherib campaigned twice against Judah, in 700 then 698 B.C. Although he was familiar with Sennacherib's annals, he based this conclusion not on the Assyrian record but on the requirements of the Biblical text (see Grabbe, *Like a Bird in a Cage*, 20–21). For a summary of earlier literature for and against the two-campaign hypothesis, see Rowley, "Hezekiah's Reform and Rebellion," *Men of God*, 108 fnn. 1–2 (this article originally appeared in *BJRL* 44 [1962]: 395–431). Rowley presented strong arguments in defence of a single campaign.

[7] See, for example, Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 69–103; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 240–44.

[8] Because scholars believe that B is not consistent with A (Sennacherib's account agrees with A), they spend much time analyzing A and B to determine the true historical sequence, with some even concluding that B comprises two parallel accounts, B1 (18:17–19:9a, 36–37) and B2 (19:9b–35). Invariably, such efforts result in historical sequences that differ from the one arrived at when accepting 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37 as a linear narrative. For arguments against a B1–B2 division, see Gallagher 1999, 14–15, 145–59.

3. Once the Assyrians left Judah, Hezekiah sent to Egypt with a proposal. Sennacherib had imposed an onerous annual tribute that would stifle Judah's economy. Wanting to free the nation from this burden, he suggested that the Egyptians join with Judah's army (bolstered by external forces) to engage Sennacherib while he was still in the region. If they defeated the Assyrians, Hezekiah would pay tribute to Egypt and rally neighboring states to do so as well.

4. On hearing of Hezekiah's plans to join with Egypt against him (cf. 2 Kgs 18:19–21, 23–24), Sennacherib returned in anger to conquer Jerusalem and incorporate Judah as an Assyrian province.

For brevity and perhaps because it portrayed Hezekiah in an unduly negative light (compare 2 Kgs 18:5–6 with 2 Chr 32:25), the Hebrew historian either excluded these events outright or they were initially included but later deleted in the final redaction. Either way, it left an unannounced narrative gap between 2 Kgs 18:16 and 18:17.

e) Sennacherib's plans to conquer Jerusalem came to an abrupt end when, by divine intervention, 185,000 troops died overnight after a plague swept through the Assyrian camp. This humiliating loss affected Sargon to the degree that he made no mention of any campaign against Judah in his annals. By contrast, Sennacherib—who led the campaign and was proud of its successes—recorded the invasion as an achievement of his third campaign as sole ruler in 701 B.C. In other words, he relocated the 713–12 B.C. invasion to the report of his 701 B.C. campaign, thereby altering the chronology of the event. At fault then is the Assyrian source and not the Bible.

Many of the above statements require elaboration, and this will be done before presenting the reconstruction in Section H. To begin, let us examine why the late reign scheme is doubtful.

B. Arguments Against 701 B.C. as the 14th Year

In this section, seven arguments will be presented against the late reign scheme for Hezekiah:

1. Synchronisms with Hoshea
2. The duration of Ahaz's rule
3. Isaiah 14:28–31
4. Contact with Merodach-Baladan
5. Ahaz's offer of tribute to Tiglath-pileser
6. The Passover of Hezekiah's first year
7. The battle with Egypt at Eltekeh

1. Synchronisms with Hoshea

To align Hezekiah's 14th year with Sennacherib's campaign in 701 B.C., Thiele dated Hezekiah's accession to the Tishri year 716/15 B.C., which places it some seven years after the fall of Samaria in the Nisan year 723/22 B.C. (by Thiele). However, placing Hezekiah's accession *after* the fall of Samaria contradicts four synchronisms in the Bible between the Judahite kings Ahaz and Hezekiah and Israel's last king Hoshea:

- Hoshea began to rule in the 12th year of Ahaz (2 Kgs 17:1)
- Hezekiah began to rule in the third year of Hoshea (2 Kgs 18:1)

- 4th year of Hezekiah = 7th year of Hoshea = siege of Samaria begins (2 Kgs 18:9)
- 6th year of Hezekiah = 9th year of Hoshea = fall of Samaria (2 Kgs 18:10)

Despite these clear synchronisms, Thiele argued that they were erroneous.[9] The situation is different today. Because of the undeniable synchronisms with Hoshea, scholars now incline to a higher date, but with compromise. For example, Becking dates Hezekiah's 14th year to either Nisan 715/14 or Tishri 716/15 B.C. However, he assumes that there were two campaigns, in 715 and 701 B.C.[10] Galil dates the 14th year to 712/11 B.C. but assumes that 2 Kgs 18:13 was miscalculated by a later scribe.[11] Hayes and Hooker date the 14th year to Tishri 714/13 B.C. but, like Galil, they dismiss the accuracy of 2 Kgs 18:13.[12]

2. The Duration of Ahaz's Rule

Hoshea came to the throne in the twelfth year of Ahaz (2 Kgs 17:1), sometime between 733 and 731 B.C. (ch. 7A refers). This means that the counted segment of Ahaz's reign began, at the latest, by 742 B.C. If Ahaz's death and Hezekiah accession occurred around 715 B.C., then Ahaz ruled for at least 27 years (= 742 – 715), which contradicts the 16-year reign statement of 2 Kgs 16:2. This discrepancy is one of seven that Galil cites against 715 B.C. for Hezekiah's accession.[13]

3. Isaiah 14:28–31

The book of Isaiah features four verses that provide a chronological reference: 6:1 ("In the year that king Uzziah died"); 14:28 ("In the year that king Ahaz died"); 20:1 ("In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod"); 36:1 ("Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah"). Pertinent to our topic is the Isaiah 14 notice, which begins a short oracle against "Palestina," or Philistia:

> In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden. Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent. . . . Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times. (vv. 28–31)

In this oracle, God warned Philistia not to rejoice because "the rod of him that smote thee is broken." Who held the rod (of oppression) that smote Philistia? Isaiah 10:24 reveals his identity:

> Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

The Assyrian was the one who smote God's people with the rod. Thus, it was the *king of Assyria* who smote Philistia. Given the juncture of history in view here, this can only be Tiglath-pileser, who conquered all Philistia in 734 B.C.

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[9] Thiele 1983, 134–38, 168–71, 174–75.
[10] Becking 1992, 53–55.
[11] Galil 1996, 102–103.
[12] Hayes and Hooker, *A New Chronology for the Kings of Israel and Judah*, 74–78.
[13] Galil 1996, 100–01.

Isaiah reported that the rod was "broken," indicating that the rule of Tiglath-pileser—who is also likened here to a *serpent*—had ended; that is, he had died. Philistia was not to rejoice over this because out of the serpent's *root* (= lineage) would come forth a *cockatrice* (or viper, or poisonous snake) whose *fruit* (= immediate son) would be a *fiery flying serpent* (the word "flying" suggests swiftness of the serpent's attack, and "fiery" relates to the burning nature of its sting). In other words, two consecutive descendants of Tiglath-pileser would "bite" the Philistines just as viciously. History shows this to be the case. Upon his death, Tiglath-pileser was succeeded by his son Shalmaneser who ruled for five years but did not oppress Philistia (to our knowledge). However, Shalmaneser was succeeded by Sargon, another son of Tiglath-pileser and brother of Shalmaneser.[14] Sargon (the cockatrice) was a powerful ruler whose many aggressive campaigns included the conquering of Philistia in 720 B.C. His son Sennacherib (the fiery flying serpent) exercised strong authority over Philistia. This occurred not only during his 701 B.C. campaign as sole ruler, but beforehand as crown prince during Sargon's 712 B.C. campaign (as reconstructed in Section H).

Isaiah links the breaking of the rod with the year of Ahaz's death. Since the rod being broken refers to the end of Tiglath-pileser's rule when he died in 727 B.C., Ahaz's son Hezekiah must have come to the throne that year.

4. Contact with Merodach-Baladan

Second Kings 20:1 recounts that Hezekiah became "sick unto death" and that the Lord granted him an additional 15 years of life (20:6). Because he ruled for 29 years (18:2), it is commonly accepted that Hezekiah's recovery occurred in his 14th year (i.e., 14th year + 15 extra years = 29-year reign). On hearing about Hezekiah's return to health, the king of Babylon Berodach-baladan (= Merodach-Baladan) sent envoys and a gift in a gesture of goodwill (20:12).

Mesopotamian records indicate that Merodach-Baladan ruled as king of Babylon twice:

1. For twelve years from 722 to 710 B.C., which ended when Sargon drove him from the country.[15]

2. For nine months beginning in the mid to late spring of either 704 or 703 B.C., depending on the date one chooses for Sennacherib's first campaign.[16] During that campaign, Sennacherib drove Merodach-Baladan into hiding in the swamps of southern Babylonia. He died in exile (possibly in Elam) some years later.

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[14] For commentary on Sargon's ancestry see ch. 7D(i).

[15] For this twelve-year period, see the Babylonian Chronicle Series (Grayson, *ABC,* 73–75 [Chron. 1 i 31–ii 5]) and the Babylonian King List A (*ANET,* 272). For a comprehensive analysis of Merodach-Baladan's career, see John A. Brinkman, "Merodach-Baladan II," 6–53.

[16] For the date of Sennacherib's first campaign, Brinkman favors 703/02 B.C. ("Merodach-Baladan II," 22–24; idem, "Sennacherib's Babylonian Problem," 91) while Levine favors 704/03 B.C. ("Sennacherib's Southern Front," 29–34). Gallagher prefers Levine's date because it allows more time for Sennacherib's first campaign, which was a major undertaking (1999, 34 fn. 44).

Regarding the second occasion of Merodach-Baladan's reign, whichever date is chosen for his flight from Sennacherib (704 or 703 B.C.), he was not ruling to send envoys in 701 B.C. Hezekiah's 14th year could therefore not have been later than 703 B.C.[17]

5. Ahaz's Offer of Tribute to Tiglath-pileser

An inscription of Tiglath-pileser originally published as II R 67 (= K 3751) names several kings who paid tribute to Assyria, including Panammu of Sam'al, Mitinti of Ashkelon, and Jehoahaz (or Ahaz) of Judah.[18] The mention of Panammu and Mitinti indicates that the tribute was given in 734/33 B.C. or earlier because Panammu was killed during the siege of Damascus in 733 B.C. and Mitinti was deposed in 733 or 732 B.C.[19]

Hezekiah's father Ahaz ruled for 16 years (2 Kgs 16:2).[20] If Hezekiah began to rule in 715 B.C., then Ahab's accession would have occurred in 731 B.C. assuming no coregency with Hezekiah. However, Ahaz's payment of tribute recorded in II R 67 shows that he was ruling in 734 B.C. or earlier.[21] This means that Hezekiah's accession must have occurred before 715 B.C.

6. The Passover of Hezekiah's First Year

The book of Chronicles describes a great Passover which was celebrated in the second month of Hezekiah's first full year of reign (2 Chr 30:1–31:1). Attending this Passover were Israelites who had responded to Hezekiah's invitation sent by messengers throughout the Northern Kingdom and Judah. The early reign scheme dates this Passover to around 726 B.C. (before the fall of Samaria) while the late reign scheme dates it to around 714 B.C. (after the fall of Samaria).

Na'aman observed that such active involvement by Hezekiah's messengers in the Northern Kingdom could not have taken place after the fall of Samaria:

> So long as Sargon was supreme, Hezekiah obviously did not dare to maintain contact with the inhabitants of the province of Samaria. We must keep in mind that the first stages following annexation always involved stationing Assyrian troops and officials in the annexed territory to back up any measures adopted by the conqueror and, above all, to suppress uprisings, gather captives,

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[17] Brinkman posits that Merodach-Baladan sent envoys to Hezekiah *while he was in exile* (Brinkman, "Sennacherib's Babylonian Problem," 91). However, the Bible clearly calls him the "king of Babylon," confirming that he was ruling in Babylon then.

[18] See Tadmor, *ITP*, 170–71, Summ. 7: rev. 8′–11′ (also *ARAB* I, §801; *DOTT*, 55–56; *ANET*, 282; Kuan 1995, 161–62; *COS* 2.117D:289). This is the first mention of Judah in the Assyrian royal inscriptions (see also ch. 11B5).

[19] On this, see Tadmor, *ITP*, 268; Galil 1996, 67–68.

[20] The viceregency we have assumed for Ahaz in our chronology can be ignored for purposes of this discussion, which involves counted regnal years only.

[21] To compensate for the minimum three-year gap here between 734 and 731 B.C. (made larger by the assumption of a coregency between Hezekiah and Ahaz), some scholars add additional years to Ahaz's rule or argue for an interregnum between Ahaz and Hezekiah. Both proposals are unconvincing.

> exiles, and spoils from all over the province, occupy key sites, and prepare the ground for resettling deportees from other parts of the empire.[22]

Na'aman used the above argument (of the implausibility of Israelites attending a feast in Judah after the fall of Samaria) to dismiss the historical accuracy of 2 Chr 30:1–31:1.[23] Ironically, the same argument supports both the early reign scheme *and* the Chronicler's account. In other words, if 2 Chr 30:1–31:1 is accurate, and if Na'aman's argument is accepted, the Passover in Hezekiah's first year occurred before the Assyrians took Samaria (i.e., before ca. 721 B.C.).[24]

7. The Battle with Egypt at Eltekeh[25]

According to his annals, Sennacherib's third campaign was waged in Phoenicia, Philistia, and Judah. The Philistine phase involved engagements with two rebellious city-states: Ashkelon and Ekron. Sennacherib's annals narrate the Ekron episode as follows:

> The officials, nobles and people of Ekron, who had thrown Padi, their king, into iron fetters as one loyal to the treaty and obligations of (imposed on him by) Assyria, had given him up to Hezekiah, the Jew, as an enemy. On account of the offence they had committed, their heart took fright and they implored (help from) the kings of Egypt, (and) bowmen, chariots of the kings of Ethiopia (Meluhha), an innumerable host, and, indeed, they came to help them. In the plain of Eltekeh, their battle array being drawn up over against me, they prepared their weapons. On (the oracular promise of) the help of Ashur, my lord, I clashed and effected their defeat. Amid the battle, my own hands captured alive the Egyptian charioteers and princes, together with charioteers belonging to the Ethiopian king. I besieged and captured the town of Eltekeh and Timnah and carried off spoil from them. I drew near to Ekron and slew the officials and nobles who had committed the crime and hung their bodies on posts around the city. I counted as prisoners of war the citizens who had done hostile and abusive things. I ordered the release of the rest of them, who were not convicted of any crime or misbehaviour, against whom there was no charge. I caused Padi, their king, to come out of Jerusalem and sat him on the throne as lord over them, fixing upon him (the payment of) tribute to my lordship.[26]

Sennacherib boasts that he soundly defeated the huge Egypto-Ethiopian army that had come to help the Ekronites. (In reality, the battle was probably a stalemate; Section J refers.) After narrating the subsequent fate of Ekron, the annals go on to describe the invasion of Judah. By the Assyrian account, therefore, the battle with Egypt occurred *before* Judah was invaded. This sequence disagrees with the Bible, which reports that Sennacherib learnt of an impending attack by Egypt *after* the rab-shakeh's speech demanding Jerusalem's surrender:

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[22] Na'aman, "When and How Did Jerusalem Become a Great City?" 29. In Na'aman's scheme, Hezekiah ruled as coregent with Ahaz from 728 to 715 B.C., then as sole-regent from 715 to 686 B.C. (see fn. 4). His first year when the Passover occurred was therefore 714 B.C., which was after the fall of Samaria.

[23] Ibid., 29–30.

[24] It can be further argued that the Chronicler's account clearly portrays a condition in which the Northern Kingdom was still in existence (see Jones 2005, 162–64). This contradicts Thiele, who argued that Samaria had already fallen by the time of Hezekiah's Passover (1983, 169–71). Thiele's position is untenable in light of Na'aman's observations regarding Assyria's tight hold over the province of Samaria.

[25] Eltekeh is believed to be Tell esh-Shalaf (about 40 km northwest of Jerusalem) but the identification is uncertain. See John L. Peterson, "Eltekeh," *ABD* 2:483–84.

[26] *DOTT*, 66–67 (translation by D. J. Wiseman from the Taylor Prism).

> So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. **And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee**: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah . . . (2 Kgs 19:8–9)

How could Sennacherib defeat the Egypto-Ethiopian forces, invade Judah, then receive word that the king of Ethiopia was coming to fight him? One solution is that the battle at Eltekeh actually occurred while the Judah offensive was underway.[27] This solution, though, is problematic because the Bible indicates that no actual battle with Taharqa transpired; it was simply reported to Sennacherib that Taharqa was on his way. The difficulty is solved by our proposal that the invasion of Judah took place in 712 and not 701 B.C. (Judah was a compliant, vassal state in 701 B.C. so there was no reason to invade it.) This means that Sennacherib's third campaign probably ended after the battle with Egypt at Eltekeh. (Since this was an open-field battle employing chariot warfare, it is not unreasonable to assume that both sides suffered heavy losses, forcing their return home.)

Concerning the hearsay report in 2 Kgs 19:9 of an impending attack by Taharqa, our reconstruction proposes that the Egyptians were indeed marching to engage the Assyrians but turned back after hearing that Sennacherib had withdrawn from the region. As for the problems this causes in Egyptian chronology—of Taharqa leading an attack in 712 B.C. and being called a king before his coronation (690 B.C.)—see Section G.

The bruised reed. Another problem with Eltekeh and the 701 B.C. invasion date for Judah is raised by 2 Kgs 18:21, where the rab-shakeh declared to the inhabitants of Jerusalem:

> Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.

In the rab-shakeh's assessment, Egypt was like a splintered reed that would pierce the hand of the one who leant on it for support. In other words, those who trusted in pharaoh to help them would be hurt because he was an unreliable ally (cf. Ezek 29:6–7). The statement in 2 Kgs 18:21 is at odds with Sennacherib's annals, which report the defeat of a large Egypto-Ethiopian army at Eltekeh before the invasion of Judah. Given that Egypt had sent these forces in support of Ekron, it is incongruous that, a short time later, the rab-shakeh should portray pharaoh as not being able to support his allies. The problem is solved when we accept that the Judah offensive in Sennacherib's annals is a postdated inclusion.

* * *

Having presented arguments against 701 B.C. as the 14th year of Hezekiah, let us examine the problems associated with the early reign alternative. All of these center on Near Eastern contacts. We will begin with the obvious difficulty in the Bible of Sennacherib being called the "king of Assyria" during the reign of Sargon.

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[27] Gallagher cites André Parrot (*Nineveh and the Old Testament*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1955) and Gershon Galil ("Campaign to the West in 701 B.C.E.," *Zion* 53 [1988]: 1–12) as proponents of this position (Gallagher 1999, 123 fn. 54). He then lists five factors that argue against it (ibid., 123–25).

C. Sennacherib's Office During the Reign of Sargon

By our chronology, Hezekiah's accession occurred in 727 B.C. This means that the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib in Hezekiah's 14th year (713/12 B.C.) occurred during the reign of Sargon, who ruled from 722 to 705 B.C. Yet Sennacherib is called the "king of Assyria" in 2 Kgs 18:13. Three possible explanations for this are:

1. The Bible called Sennacherib "king" proleptically.
2. Sennacherib was coregent with Sargon and was officially called king by the Assyrians.
3. Sennacherib was the nominated heir apparent and therefore the official crown prince of Assyria. Because the Hebrews viewed the crown prince of any nation as a *viceregent*, they called him king in keeping with their own system (see chs. 4AD, 5B, 10A, 13C).

I believe that the crown prince option (#3) is the most likely. The reason is mainly because of the later situation whereby the Babylonians called Nebuchadnezzar crown prince before his accession while the Hebrews called him king (see ch. 5B1). Also, the crown prince option may be hinted at in the Eponym Canon. Ordinarily, during the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., a new king acted as eponym in his *second* year, as shown below:[28]

KING	REIGN B.C.	YEARS OF REIGN	YEAR(S) OF EPONYMY
Shalmaneser III	859–824	35	2nd (857) & 32nd (827)
Shamshi-Adad V	824–811	13	2nd (822)
Adad-nirari III	811–783	28	2nd (809)
Shalmaneser IV	783–773	10	2nd (781)
Ashur-dan III	773–755	18	2nd (771)
Ashur-nirari V	755–745	10	2nd (753)
Tiglath-pileser III	745–727	18	2nd (743)
Shalmaneser V	727–722	5	4th (723)
Sargon II	722–705	17	3rd (719)
Sennacherib	705–681	24	18th (687)

Although the eponymates for Shalmaneser V and Sargon II are variations to the rule (fourth and third years, respectively), there is a marked divergence for Sennacherib, who served as *līmu* in his 18th year. I believe that sense can made of this variation if one considers the reign of Shalmaneser III, and how he served as *līmu* again after 30 years in what may have been a structured cycle.[29] Sennacherib's eponymy in his 18th year (687 B.C.) mimics this 30-year cycle if he became crown prince in 717 B.C., which was Sargon's fifth year. Interestingly, this was the year in which Sargon founded a new capital in Assyria, Dur-Sharrukin (meaning "Sargon's fortress"), which is modern

[28] The dates quoted for the reigns of the Assyrian kings in this table are the traditionally accepted ones, not the revised dates (for Ashur-dan III and earlier) as proposed in Chapter 6E.

[29] On this, see Millard 1994, 14. Shalmaneser III's second eponymy was followed by the high-office holders, giving the appearance that his reign had begun again. The restarting of the eponym sequence after 30 years may have been dictated by the limited pool of *līmus*. It also makes a striking parallel with the Egyptian *heb-sed* festival, which celebrated the continued rule of a pharaoh after he had held the throne for 30 years.

Khorsabad. It was also the year in which he conquered the great Hittite city-state of Carchemish.[30] Both events are symbolic of Assyria's expansion and befit the installation of Sennacherib as crown prince that year.

When Sargon died in 705 B.C., Sennacherib did not restart the eponym cycle. Presumably, because he had already been involved in royal duties for some years, he used the previous cycle because there was no new, unheralded king. Nevertheless, the 30-year point from his investiture as crown prince could not pass without Sennacherib serving as eponym to confirm the longevity of his rule and to reassert his authority. Vanity may have also played a role in not restarting the eponym cycle in his second year. The subsequent anomaly it created may have been Sennacherib's way of showing that, as the crown prince son who had led several campaigns, he was the one who was actually responsible for a number of Assyrian victories attributed to Sargon.

D. Sennacherib's "Campaigns"

Although Sennacherib's annals record eight campaigns, there were at least twelve.[31] As far as we know, he campaigned in the southern Levant only once, in 701 B.C. Unlike other Assyrian kings who chronicled their campaigns by regnal year (e.g., "In my fifth year of reign"), Sennacherib broke with convention to report them by *number* (e.g., "In my second campaign"). Tadmor supposed that this was to conceal the fact that Sennacherib conducted no military campaigns in his accession year. The scribes therefore employed a term that had no chronological implications.[32] There may have been an additional reason, though, for Sennacherib to designate his campaigns by number and not year. Parts of Sennacherib's annals show a close correspondence to Sargon's. In fact, the similarities are so striking that Damien Mackey, who is associated with the UK historical revisionist group *Society for Interdisciplinary Studies*, has proposed that Sargon and Sennacherib were *one and the same person*.[33]

Our study maintains the conventional view that Sennacherib was Sargon's son. Nevertheless, Mackey's observation is insightful but can be explained by a less radical theory. During Sargon's reign, his viceregent son Sennacherib led a number of successful battles, which he could not claim for himself in official inscriptions. However, after Sargon died, Sennacherib devised a way to chronicle his achievements both before and after his father's death. When his campaign details were being compiled, his successes as sole regent were recorded together with earlier triumphs at that location as crown prince. The report was then made to read like a seamless military operation. Not chronologically truthful, but neither an outright lie, this format allowed him to maximize the details of his conquests in an economy of space while allowing him to boast of earlier accomplishments.

It is unknown to what extant Sennacherib's campaigns incorporated his earlier victories as crown prince.[34] We can, however, speculate on a specific episode, being the Judah campaign. Although

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[30] *ARAB* II, §8 (cf. Isa 10:9). For the importance of Carchemish in culture, commerce, and strategic location, see Irene J. Winter, "Carchemish ša kišad puratti," *AnSt* 33 (1983): 177–97.

[31] See A. K. Grayson, "Assyria: Sennacherib and Esarhaddon," CAH^2 III/2, 105.

[32] Tadmor 1958, 31–32.

[33] Mackey, "Sargon is Sennacherib," http://www.specialtyinterests.net/sargon.html.

[34] Similarly, it is unknown to what extent Sennacherib claimed victories achieved by Sargon himself. For a likely instance of this (the deportation of the people of Qwe and Hilakku), see Gallagher 1999, 97 fn. 46.

this was not recorded by Sargon in his annals (owing to the military setback there), Sennacherib included it, anachronistically, as an achievement of his first and only expedition to the southern Levant.

It was not unusual for Assyrian scribes to modify and/or reposition campaign details. On this, Grayson observes:

> It is a well known fact that in Assyrian royal inscriptions a serious military set-back is never openly admitted. This cardinal principle was engrained in the Assyrian scribes' thought and prevailed in all his work. A simple method of dealing with a set-back was to omit it but, in so far as one can tell (and by its nature this is difficult to control), this method was not commonly used. Another method was to garble the narration in such a way as to confuse the reader and hide the ignominious truth. This device was used by scribes of Sargon II in their treatment of the Assyrian set-back at the hands of Merodachbaladan II in 720 B.C. In a collection of annalistic accounts this first humiliating encounter has been woven into an account of a later battle (710 B.C.) in which the Assyrians were successful.[35]

We propose that the invasion of Judah, which began late in Sargon's ninth year (713/12 B.C.), was relocated to a position in Sennacherib's annals twelve years later (701 B.C.). It was then modified to be a victory in the manner of Sargon's campaign against Merodach-Baladan. (Hereafter, when the invasion of Judah is cited as occurring in 712 B.C., the Julian year and not Nisan year is meant.)

Reduction of Judah's territory. In the report of his third campaign, Sennacherib states that he ceded Judah's conquered cities (in western Judah) to three Philistine kings: Mitinti, king of Ashdod; Padi, king of Ekron; and Sillibel, king of Gaza.[36] This was done to reduce the nation's size and therefore Hezekiah's power and influence in the region. This poses a problem for our reconstruction. Although Mitinti was ruling in Ashdod in 701 B.C., he was not ruling there in 712 B.C., which is our date for Sennacherib's invasion of Judah. This problem is easily resolved. If Sennacherib took the radical step of relocating the details of his 712 B.C. Judah campaign to his own annals for 701 B.C., he would hardly name the kings ruling in 712 B.C. Rather, he named the kings ruling in 701 B.C. It was close enough to the truth because Ashdod, Ekron, Gaza (and Ashkelon) still controlled many of the Judahite cities annexed over a decade earlier.

E. The Inscriptions of Sargon

Not counting the fall of Samaria, Sargon's inscriptions show that he campaigned three times in the southern Levant, in 720, 716 (or 715), and 712 (or 711) B.C. Excluding the special case of the Azekah Inscription, discussed in Section F, no major military offensives against Judah are recorded for any of those campaigns. (See the end of this section for the two incidental references to Judah in Sargon's inscriptions.) Lack of mention, however, does not mean that no invasion took place; *it may have been omitted from the record*. Recall that the Judah offensive ended with the shock loss of 185,00 troops:

> And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold,

[35] Grayson, "Assyria and Babylonia," 171.

[36] One of the Bull Inscriptions adds Ashkelon as a fourth recipient of Judah's territory. See Section J for speculation on why Ashkelon was omitted from the annals.

> they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. (2 Kgs 19:35–36; also Isa 37:36–37 and 2 Chr 32:21)

The large number of slain troops, 185,000, is normally viewed with skepticism by scholars. Siegfried Horn observed that the Hebrew presentation of the figures can also be interpreted as 5,180.[37] Donald Wiseman suggests that it might be 185 who died.[38] Jeremy Goldberg asserts that the figure is historically impossible.[39] It is not unfeasible, though, that Sennacherib's army totaled 185,000 or more before it met its fateful end. On the estimated size of armies at the time, Richard Gabriel and Karen Meltz write:

> The Assyrian army of the 8th century B.C. was comprised of at least 150–200 thousand men and was the largest standing military force that the Middle East had witnessed to this time. An Assyrian combat field army numbered approximately 50,000 men with various mixes of infantry, chariots, and cavalry. In modern times the size of an Assyrian field army was equal to five modern heavy American divisions or almost eight Soviet field divisions. When arrayed for battle the army took up an area of 2,500 yards across the front and 100 yards deep. The Assyrian army was also the first army to be entirely equipped with iron weapons.[40]

On Assyrian troop numbers, Henry Saggs observes:

> When necessity demanded, the Assyrians could put into the field armies of well over a hundred thousand. Shalmaneser III specifically mentions crossing the Euphrates westwards with an army of 120,000 men in 845. Other statements of numbers tie in with this kind of figure. Numerically the greater part of the grand Assyrian army was composed of levies raised under provincial governors, and we find mention of the troops of one particular governor amounting to 1500 cavalry and 20,000 archers; as there were over a score of provinces, in a general call-up across the empire a muster running into hundreds of thousands would easily have been possible.[41]

Our later reconstruction will show that by the autumn of 713 B.C. Sargon was concerned with the following critical developments:

a) Ashdod's rebellion, probably in the spring of 713 B.C., in which Azuri sent anti-Assyrian letters to neighboring kings making it known that he would not pay tribute

b) Hezekiah's consequent withdrawal of tribute in 713 B.C. plus Judah's strength and influence in the region (as demonstrated by Hezekiah's re-annexation of the Philistine city-state of Gath)

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[37] Horn, "Did Sennacherib Campaign Once or Twice Against Hezekiah," 27–28.

[38] Wiseman, *1 & 2 Kings*, 284.

[39] Goldberg, "Two Assyrian Campaigns against Hezekiah," 360.

[40] Richard A. Gabriel and Karen S. Metz., *A Short History of War: The Evolution of Warfare and Weapons* (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College), Chapter 3, "The Military Revolution—Size of Armies," at http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/gabrmetz/gabr0000.htm.

[41] Saggs, *The Might that was Assyria*, 253. Saggs notes that Shalmaneser III (in his 14th year) crossed the Euphrates (at its flood) with 120,000 troops (see RIMA 3:39, iii 24–33; also *ARAB* I, §658). This number included additional soldiers called up from the provinces (i.e., the Assyrian standing army was actually smaller). Marco De Odorico considers that this figure of 120,000, while not impossible, reaches the limit of credibility and should be viewed with doubt (*The Use of Numbers and Quantifications in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 107–12). Our study assumes that Sennacherib departed with around 110,000 men but collected additional forces along the way (in two separate call-ups).

c) the rise of the Nubian dynasty with the possibility of an Egyptian advance into Palestine in the spring of 712 B.C. to capitalize on the growing anti-Assyrian sentiment there

In response, Sargon sent a large army of around 110,000 troops to Palestine in the winter of 713/12 B.C. The army was led by the crown prince Sennacherib. After collecting additional troops from provinces between Assyria and the northern Levant, Sennacherib invaded Judah late in Hezekiah's 14th year. Hezekiah sued for peace, and the Assyrians departed for operations in Philistia and Phoenicia. However, on learning that Hezekiah had conspired with Egypt against him after his departure, Sennacherib returned to conquer Jerusalem and annex Judah. For this intensive undertaking, he bolstered his already sizeable army with troops from Phoenicia and Philistia. His large army then invaded Judah but while attempting to secure Jerusalem's surrender, 185,000 in the Assyrian camp died overnight in a plague. This devastating loss deeply humiliated the Assyrians, who were famed for their military accomplishments. Indeed, the Bible reports that Sennacherib suffered "shame of face" on his return home (2 Chr 32:21). Sennacherib's shame was also Sargon's because he was the king in whose name the campaign was waged. The event was therefore never mentioned in Sargon's annals. Indeed, what king would record such a huge loss while fighting a smaller vassal state? Inscription of this fact would also be tantamount to saying that the Hebrew God was stronger than the national god of the Assyrians (Ashur).

Sargon's 9th, 10th, and 11th Years. The omission of the western campaign involving Judah created a gap in Sargon's annals, particularly for his tenth year (712/11 B.C.). The royal scribes (under direction of Sargon) therefore re-sequenced other campaigns of nearby years to fill that gap. To identify the original sequence, let us review the inscriptions that cover the period from Sargon's ninth to eleventh years. The three main historiographic sources for Sargon's campaigns are the Eponym Canon, the fragmentary Nineveh Prism found in Kuyunjik (Iraq), and the Annals from Khorsabad. The fragments of the Nineveh Prism, in particular, are difficult to collate. In his influential paper, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur," Hayim Tadmor suggested a reconstruction of the Prism (as well as the Eponym Canon) then catalogued the activities of Sargon according to the sources. The following activities for Years 9 to 11 are listed below (from Tadmor 1958, 95–96):

C^{b}4 = Eponym Canon / P = Reconstructed Nineveh Prism / A = Annals of Khorsabad

713 B.C.—Year 9

C^{b}4: Reconstructed: "[The king stayed in Assyria.] The Magnates (fought) in Ellipi. [The god x] entered a new temple. [The return of god Haldia t]o Musasir."

P: *palû* 8: Mention of Assur-le'i of Karalla, defeat of Ada of Surda; defeat of Amitassi, Karalla is organized as a province; against the land of Haphi; Ullusunu the Mannean pays tribute. Beginning of the "Dalta Episode": rebels of Ellipi drive Dalta out of his country; certain refugees (from Ellipi) are mentioned; the Assyrians reestablish Dalta over Ellipi. List of the cities in Media that paid tribute. The campaign to Tabal: Hulli of Tabal is mentioned. The army of the Assyrian governors in the Western provinces is assembled [for the war against Tabal]; Sargon, while in Sikris in Media, accepts the submission of Matti of Atuna (in Asia Minor) after the latter took fright at the defeat of Ambaris.

A: *palû* 9: Against Ellipi, Media, Karalla, [Su]rda. The affair with Dalta; Tabal conquered and turned into a province; its king, Ambaris of Bit-Buruttas, carried off to Assyria; Cilicia turned into a province.

712 B.C.—Year 10

C[b]4: "[The king stayed] in the land".

P: *palû* 9: The campaign against Ashdod.

A: *palû* 10: The fall of Melid (Kammanu). Fortification of Luhsu and other cities against Urartu, and founding of Usi and other two fortresses on the border of Muski. Accumulation of building stones and metals in Nineveh.

711 B.C.—Year 11

C[b]4: Against Marqasa.

P: [*palû* 10]: The campaign to Gurgum (Marqasa); Fortification of Luhsu; Usi and Muski are mentioned. Building activity: accumulation of building materials in Nineveh.

A: *palû* 11: The conquest of Gurgum. The conquest of Ashdod.

The following guidance notes and observations apply to the above listing:

- The primary source (i.e., most reliable) for the chronology of Sargon's reign is the Eponym Canon. Second to it is the Nineveh Prism then, thirdly, the Annals.

- The Nineveh Prism dates Sargon's campaigns one year earlier than the Annals due to the count of his yearly campaigns (i.e., *palû's*) beginning in 720 not 721 B.C. (i.e., 720 B.C. was his first *palû* in the Prism but his second *palû* in the Annals).

- The Nineveh Prism was probably completed in 710 B.C., four years before the completion of the Annals.

- There is a discrepancy between the Annals and the Nineveh Prism for 712 and 711 B.C. Tadmor submitted that the events of *palû* 10 in the Annals (712) actually occurred a year later, in 711 (= *palû* 10 of the Prism). This includes the war against Melid, which should be restored in a missing part of the Prism. In favoring the Prism over the Annals, Tadmor suggested that

  > all the events recorded under the 10th *palû* in the Annals (712), must have occurred in 711 (10th *palû* of the Prism). The shift from their original position in the Prism to the section where they are now found in the Annals would be due to the intention of the Khorsabad scribes to extend the brief narrative of the events of 712.[42]

  It is not surprising that the Khorsabad scribes wanted to extend the brief entry for 712 B.C. According to our reconstruction, the bulk of the Judah campaign occurred during that Nisan year. However, Sargon did not record any details of that campaign, not even its successes. The scribes therefore repositioned the fall of Melid and fortification of Luhsu, etc., from 711 to 712 B.C. (The conquest of Gurgum is still correctly dated to 711 B.C.)

[42] Tadmor 1958, 93.

- Although Tadmor understood why the scribes repositioned the fall of Melid, etc., from 711 to 712 B.C., he found it perplexing that, as part of those editorial changes, the Ashdod expedition was shifted from 712 B.C. in the Prism (Tadmor believed this to be the correct year for that campaign) to 711 B.C. in the Annals:

  > this shift of the affair with Ashdod seems to be entirely inexplicable and purposeless: had the Ashdod-campaign been recorded under 712 and had the Khorsabad scribes wanted to extend this brief section of 712, they would have added the war with Melid without causing major structural changes.[43]

  I believe the omission of the Judah campaign sheds light on Tadmor's puzzlement. Recall that the Prism was completed about four years earlier than the Annals. We can assume that, in the Prism, the Ashdod campaign was shifted from its true date of 711 B.C. to 712 B.C. This was to fill the gap left by the omission of the Judah campaign in 712 B.C. Later, when the Khorsabad scribes wrote the Annals, they sought to eliminate all reference to Palestine in 712 B.C. Therefore, they kept the Ashdod campaign in its true year (711 B.C.) while shifting the war against Melid, etc., from 711 to 712 B.C. to fill what would otherwise be a blank entry in the Annals for 712 B.C. without Ashdod. So, in my opinion, this "entirely inexplicable and purposeless" shift was actually to conceal, in the Annals, all Assyrian involvement in Palestine in 712 B.C.

From the preceding discussion, it appears that the following scribal activities occurred relative to Sargon's ninth to eleventh years:

1. The Judah campaign, which began late in the Nisan year 713/12 B.C. was omitted in the inscriptions of Sargon for his ninth and tenth years (713/12 and 712/11 B.C.). This left a large gap in military activities for 712/11 B.C.

2. In 711/10 B.C., the following campaigns occurred: Ashdod, Gurgum, the fall of Melid (Kammanu), fortification of Luhsu and other cities against Urartu, and the founding of Usi and other two fortresses on the border of Muski. When compiling the Nineveh Prism around 710 B.C. the scribes placed the Ashdod campaign in 712/11 B.C. to have at least one key military operation recorded for that year. (Even though an Assyrian king was "in the land" for a particular year, such as Sargon in 712/11 B.C., his tartan or alternatively the crown prince could lead military campaigns.)

3. When the Khorsabad scribes were compiling Sargon's Annals around 707 B.C., they took the opportunity to bolster his military achievements for 712/11 B.C. while at the same time deleting all reference to Palestine. They did so by simply shifting the fall of Melid, etc., from 711/10 to 712/11 B.C. The Gurgum and Ashdod expeditions were kept in their correct year (711/10 B.C.) but Gurgum was placed before Ashdod to further distance Palestine from 712/11 B.C. in the Annals.

4. In reality, therefore, only one major Assyrian offensive took place in 712/11 B.C., being the invasion of Judah (which began late in the preceding Nisan year). Although other events occurred during that campaign—such as Azuri of Ashdod being replaced on the throne, the quashing of minor rebellions in Philistia and Phoenicia, and tribute gathering from vassal states—they were not significant enough, militarily, to be included as campaign highlights.

[43] Ibid.

Andreas Fuchs. In his monograph *Die Annalen des Jahres 711 v. Chr. nach Prismenfragmenten aus Ninive und Assur*, German Assyriologist Dr. Andreas Fuchs critically analyzed Sargon's annals (i.e., the very fragmented Nineveh Prism and the Khorsabad Annals) for the year 711 B.C. He concluded that the Ashdod campaign occurred in 711 rather than 712 B.C.[44] The conflicting dates in the annalistic texts for that campaign arose because the royal scribes attempted to cover up the lack of military activity in 712 B.C. According to Fuchs, Sargon's campaigns should be ordered as follows (although he listed the main campaigns from 722 to 705 B.C., I have only shown the segment from 713 to 711 B.C.):[45]

Year	Regnal Year	Campaigns
713	9	Karalla, Ellipi Tabal/Bit-Buruttas
712	10	"In the Land"
711	11	Ashdod Gurgum/Marqasa Kammanu

The arrangement by Fuchs for these important years supports our analysis above. In particular, his conclusion that no military campaigns occurred in 712 B.C. lends weight to our hypothesis that the Judah campaign was undertaken that year but omitted from chronicle-type records because of the humiliating loss of troops.

Judah in the inscriptions of Sargon. Apart from the Azekah Inscription, which this study attributes to both Sargon and Sennacherib, the nation of Judah appears only twice in Sargon's inscriptions:

a) In the Nimrud Inscription, Sargon calls himself the "conqueror of Judah which lies far away."[46] This study upholds Tadmor's conclusion that Sargon subdued Judah in the sense that he exacted tribute from Hezekiah during his first campaign to the west in 720 B.C. (when he conquered Philistia).[47] It appears that Sargon advanced towards Jerusalem with his army in a show of force designed to intimidate its people and king. The extent of the military action against Judah on that occasion is unknown but it was probably minor (if any) given

[44] The Ashdod campaign is normally dated to 712 B.C. However, a handful of scholars such as Fuchs and Na'aman favor 711 B.C. (see Na'aman, "Ekron under the Assyrian and Egyptian Empires," 85). This study likewise upholds 711 B.C. for the Ashdod campaign. (Note that our reconstruction features an Assyrian action against Ashdod in 712 B.C., but it is of a minor nature: replacing rebellious Azuri with his brother Ahimetu. It should therefore not be confused with the major campaign of 711 B.C. in which Ashdod was conquered and made a province of Assyria.)

[45] Adapted from Fuchs, *Die Annalen des Jahres 711 v. Chr.*, 83 (my translation).

[46] *ARAB* II, §137; *DOTT*, 62(i); *ANET*, 287; *COS* 2.118I:298.

[47] Tadmor 1958, 38–39 fn. 146. See also Na'aman, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God,'" 32; Sweeny, "Sargon's Threat against Jerusalem in Isaiah 10,27–32," 457–70; Younger, "Sargon's Campaign against Jerusalem—A Further Note," 108–10; idem, "Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant," 237–40.

the low ranking of the event in Sargon's inscriptions. Hezekiah submitted and paid tribute.[48] His submission is hardly surprising given that Samaria fell a year earlier and that help from Egypt was not forthcoming. Regarding the statement in 2 Kgs 18:7 that Hezekiah "rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not" (implying that he did not pay tribute[49]), the context suggests that the Assyrian king at the time was Shalmaneser (cf. 18:9) and not Sennacherib as is widely held. The events comprising "Hezekiah's rebellion" (18:7–8) should therefore be dated to between 727 and 722 B.C. (Judah probably stopped paying tribute in 727 B.C. after Tiglath-pileser died). The rebellion ended, however, in 720 B.C. when Sargon made Hezekiah recommence his annual tribute payment, so "subduing" Judah.[50]

b) The other Assyrian mention of Judah is in the Nineveh Prism A (Fragment D).[51] It narrates how Yamani of Ashdod attempted to stir rebellion in the region after he was placed on the throne by an anti-Assyrian faction (which removed Ahimetu, whom the Assyrians had earlier installed after deposing his treacherous brother Azuri). Our reconstruction will show that Yamani's rebellion occurred in the wake of Sennacherib's withdrawal from Judah following the loss of 185,000 troops in 712 B.C. Spurred by Assyria's setback, Yamani tried to incite regional neighbors to rebellion, including Judah, and sought to buy Egypt's aid. Yamani was not successful because Sargon sent his tartan and veteran soldiers against Ashdod. They conquered it in 711 B.C. and it became a province of Assyria. As discussed in Section G, Yamani fled to Egypt then took refuge in Nubia (Ethiopia). However, he was extradited to Assyria by the Nubian king within a few years.

F. The Azekah Inscription

Pertinent to the Assyrian invasion of Judah in the late eighth century is the Azekah Inscription, named after the Judahite city involved. It describes the campaign of an unnamed Assyrian king on the Judean-Philistine border.

Azekah is believed to be modern day Tell Zakariyeh, about 16 miles northwest of Hebron. It was one of the "cities for defence" fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr 11:9), and was a major city defending Judah to the west.

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[48] A tribute gift from Judah to the Assyrian court is attested in an administrative document (ND 2765), which reports the arrival in Calah of emissaries from some western kingdoms bearing horses as gifts (see H. W. F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters, 1952—Part II," *Iraq* 17 [1955]: 134–35, 152–53). In part, the letter states: "I have received 45 horses of the [lan]d[?]. The emissaries of Egypt, Gaza, Judah, Moab, and Ban-Ammon entered Calah on the 12th, with their tribute in their hands." The event is most likely dated to the first decade of Sargon's reign, between 722 and 713 B.C. (for translation of ND 2765 and commentary, see Na'aman, "Ekron Under the Assyrian and Egyptian Empires," 83–84).

[49] Recall that Judah became a vassal of Assyria after Ahaz paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser in 734/33 B.C. to fend off Rezin and Pekah (2 Kgs 16:5–9). It was a bondage that was to continue for about a century.

[50] As our reconstruction proposes, Hezekiah rebelled again seven years later when he withdrew tribute, prompting the large-scale Assyrian invasion of his 14th year. The Assyrians invaded Judah again during the reign of Manasseh but this was evidently a minor operation gauging by the brief, single mention of it in the Bible (2 Chr 33:11) and none in the secular record. In total, therefore, the Biblical and Assyrian sources point to three invasions of Judah by the Assyrians: in Sargon's second year (720 B.C.), late in Hezekiah's 14th year (712 B.C.), and during the reign of Manasseh.

[51] *ARAB* II, §§193–95; *DOTT*, 61(f); *ANET*, 287.

The Azekah inscription is a composite of two fragments originally ascribed to two different kings: K 6205 to Tiglath-pileser (*ARAB* I, §770; *DOTT*, 54[a]; *ANET*, 282) and BM 82-3-23, 131 to Sargon (Tadmor 1958, 80–84). Both fragments, however, feature a distinctive literary style, of the uncommon text group called "Letters to God." This prompted Nadav Na'aman to posit that both fragments were from the same inscription and therefore the same Assyrian king, whom he concluded was Sennacherib. He joined the fragments—they were joined horizontally, so adding the text of K6205 to the right of that in BM 82-3-23, 131—and the united inscription was published in "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God' on his Campaign to Judah."[52]

The reference to Azekah and Hezekiah in this inscription positively identifies Judah as the theatre of warfare. The date of the inscription, however, is uncertain. Na'aman upholds 701 B.C. while other scholars date it earlier. For example, Galil dates it to 712 B.C.,[53] Becking to 715 B.C.,[54] and Frahm to 720 B.C.[55] A portion of the inscription from a recent translation is shown below:[56]

3 [Ashur, my lord, support]ed me and to the land of Ju[dah I marched. In] the course of my campaign, the tribute of the ki[ngs of ... I received].
4 [by the mig]ht (?) of Ashur, my lord, the district [of Hezek]iah of Judah, like [ ]
5 [ ] the city of Azekah his stronghold, which is between my [ ] and the land of Judah [ ]
6 [ ] located on a mountain peak, like countless pointed ir[on] daggers, reaching to high heaven
7 [ ] were strong and rivaled the highest mountains; at its sight, as if from the sky [ ]
8 [by packed-down ra]mps, and applying mighty (?) battering rams, infantry attacks by min[es]
9 [the approach of my cav]alry they saw, and heard the sound of Ashur's mighty troops and they were afraid [ ]
10 [I besieged (?)] I conquered, I carried off its spoil. I tore down, I destroyed [ ]
11 [the city X] a royal [city] of the Philistines, which He[zek]iah had taken and fortified for himself [ ]
12 [ ] (scattered signs) [ ] like a tree [ ]
13 [ ] surrounded by great t[o]wers, most difficult [ ]

Unfortunately, the obverse is broken off after line 20, and the reverse is not preserved. The text can be divided into two parts, both belonging to the same campaign. The first part (ll. 3–10) describes the conquest of Azekah, while the second (ll. 11–20) describes the conquest of a Philistine city that had been annexed by Judah, probably Gath or Ekron.

While Tadmor ascribed BM 82-3-23, 131 to Sargon's campaign against Philistia in 712 B.C., Na'aman presented a number of arguments for assigning the united tablet (K 6205 + BM 82-3-23, 131) to Sennacherib's third campaign in 701 B.C. His arguments, along with my rejoinders, include:

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[52] Na'aman, *BASOR* 214 (1974): 25–39. The article was reprinted with updates in 2005 in a volume of collected articles by Na'aman, *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors*, 135–52.

[53] Galil, "A New Look at the 'Azekah Inscription,'" 321.

[54] Becking 1992, 54 fn. 30; idem, "Chronology: A Skeleton Without Flesh? Sennacherib's Campaign as a Case-Study," in Lester L. Grabbe (ed.), *Like a Bird in a Cage*, 56–57, esp. fn. 47.

[55] Eckart Frahm, *Einleitung in die Sanherib-Inschriften* (Introduction to the Inscriptions of Sennacherib), *Archiv für Orientforschung (AfO)*, Beiheft 26 (Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik der Universität, 1997): 229–32. This reference work was not available to me. However, for commentary on Frahm's 920 B.C. date for the Azekah inscription, see Younger, "Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant," 239–40.

[56] From *COS* 2.119D:304–05 (translation by Mordechai Cogan).

- Stylistically and in lexicon, the text is very close to Sargon's Letter to God describing the Urartu campaign of his eighth year (714 B.C.).[57] However, a number of expressions are specific to Sennacherib's account of his 701 B.C. campaign. This weighs in favor of the Azekah tablet belonging to Sennacherib.

  REPLY: The witness of two personal styles attests to the *collaborative* nature of the inscription. Recall that Sennacherib (the crown prince) led the campaign against Judah on behalf of Sargon.

- Sargon's inscriptions do not mention any campaign against Judah. By contrast, Sennacherib's inscriptions make prominent mention of one. The Azekah tablet is therefore better ascribed to Sennacherib.

  REPLY: Although it occurred during his reign, Sargon did not mention the Judah campaign owing to the heavy loss of troops. By contrast, Sennacherib was proud of the successes of that campaign so he included it in his annals, thus creating an anachronism.

- The campaign to Philistia in 712 B.C.[58] was led by the tartan and not Sargon, who remained "in the land." Since a Letter to God was a personal report of the king to the god Ashur, it is unlikely that Sargon would write such a report, not having participated in the campaign.

  REPLY: According to our reconstruction, Sennacherib led the campaign against Judah in 712 B.C. However, Sargon and Sennacherib jointly contributed to the inscription (through their scribes). Sargon then read it publicly, partly to mollify sentiments at home concerning the loss of so many troops.

- In Na'aman's translation, line five reads: "the city of Azekah, his stronghold, which is between my [bo]rder and the land of Judah." Azekah is on the same latitude as Ashdod. Since Ashdod did not have an Assyrian border until it was made a province (either in 712 or 711 B.C.), Na'aman concluded that the Azekah campaign must have occurred in a later year because the border appears to be referred to in terms that suggest it had been long held.

  REPLY: Our reconstruction upholds that the Azekah offensive occurred in 712 B.C., which places it *before* the conquering of Ashdod in 711 B.C. Two reasons may be offered for the mention of an Assyrian border at a time when none existed:

  1. The Letter to God document, of which the Azekah text was part, was penned *after* Ashdod's defeat in 711 B.C. The border was consequently referred to in the present tense.

  2. The restored word "border" (in line five) may be mistaken, leading to Frahm's correction: "which is between my troop contingent and the land of Judah."[59]

Gath or Ekron? Typically, the second city in the Azekah Inscription is identified by scholars as either Gath (Tell es-Safi = Tel Zavit) or Ekron (Tell Muqanna = Tel Miqne). Both were royal cities of the Philistines (cf. 1 Sam 6:16–17).

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[57] For this campaign, see *ARAB* II, §§139–78.

[58] In his updated version of "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God' on his Campaign to Judah" (in *Ancient Israel and its Neighbors*, 135–52), Na'aman revised the date of Sargon's Philistia (= Ashdod) campaign to 711 B.C. Our reconstruction also favors 711 over 712 B.C. for that campaign.

[59] Younger, "Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant," 239 fn. 18.

In his original 1974 paper, Na'aman concluded that the second city was Gath. A large, fortified city, Gath was situated on a high hill, necessitating a water installation. This agrees with lines 12 to 15 of the inscription. Na'aman has since altered his stance in favor of Ekron.[60] Galil similarly favors Ekron.[61] Their arguments, however, are not conclusive, as evidenced by Younger's comment that if lines 12 to 20 describe the city mentioned in line 11, then it "does not seem to fit particularly well with Ekron."[62] Our study accepts Gath as the more likely alternative.

In view of the preceding discussion, it appears that the Azekah Inscription narrates the opening salvo of the Judah campaign in 712 B.C. It began with a simultaneous attack on the neighboring cities of Azekah and Gath (since Azekah is mentioned first, it probably fell first).[63] Having breached Judah's western defences, of which these two cities were key, the Assyrians then proceeded south to take the cities of the Shephelah. These initial successes must have been militarily and personally satisfying for Sennacherib. At the time, Judah was the strongest nation on the Assyrian-Egyptian frontier, and its cities did not capitulate without first offering great resistance (witness the siege of Lachish).

Letters to God. The Azekah Inscription features a superior literary style, characteristic of the text group known as "Letters to God." Only a few examples of such letters exist, suggesting that they were not routinely archived. The most complete example is Sargon's report of his eighth campaign. Grayson observes that this report, which is addressed to the god Ashur, "appears to be primarily a ceremonial document composed for oral presentation to a live audience upon a great state occasion, the completion of a major and profitable campaign."[64] Oral delivery explains the elevated language of the text, given that it was designed to hold the listener's attention. The report ends with a stylized mention of those fallen in battle.

Far less complete is the Azekah Inscription, which is the only surviving fragment of a larger tablet that undoubtedly recounted the successes of the Judah campaign in a city-by-city description. Being a Letter to God, it was read publicly to the priests and the populace.[65] This particular letter, though, was significant because of the campaign's disastrous outcome, which may be the reason it was penned.

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[60] Na'aman, "Hezekiah and the Kings of Assyria," *Tel Aviv* 21 (1994): 245–46; idem, "Ekron under the Assyrian and Egyptian Empires," 85; idem, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God'" (2005): 145–46.

[61] Galil, "A New Look at the 'Azekah Inscription,'" 325.

[62] Younger, "Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant," 239.

[63] Sargon's annals record that Gimtu, generally identified with Gath, was conquered during the Ashdod campaign of his 11th year (711/10 B.C.). However, if Gath is the royal city in view in the Azekah inscription, it was conquered by Sennacherib at the start of the Judah campaign in 712 B.C. In all likelihood, the entry in the annals is postdated. This served two purposes: (1) to distance Gath from 712 B.C. (Sargon did not wish to mention any events in Palestine that year owing to the loss of his army in Judah), and (2) to further glorify the Ashdod operation.

[64] Grayson, "Assyria and Babylonia," 157–58. See also A. Leo Oppenheim, "The City of Assur in 714 B.C.," 133–47; John Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 64–68.

[65] In his 1979 article, "Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah and the Date of the *LMLK* Stamps," Na'aman abandoned his Azekah "Letter to God" hypothesis on the basis of insufficient support from documentary evidence (p. 63 fn. 4). The text nevertheless remains noteworthy for its superior literary style (see Mordechai Cogan's preamble to the Azekah Inscription in *COS* 2.119D:304). Consequently, I believe that it cannot be discounted as a Letter to God.

Gauging by the mix of styles, the letter was written collaboratively by Sargon and Sennacherib (via their scribes) and read publicly by Sargon. It was obviously biased towards the campaign's successes, which served both to glorify the god Ashur and to embed the idea that it had been a worthwhile and necessary campaign. Nevertheless, at some point, probably near the end of the letter, Sargon had to explain the heavy loss of troops. We have no idea what reason he gave, and whether copies of the text were made for future keeping (probably not). At any rate, we can speculate that Sargon devoted time in Ashur and perhaps other cities soothing local reaction to the loss of so many men. Undoubtedly, he took center stage in the public eye at that time rather than his son. Recall that Sennacherib "returned with shame of face to his own land" (2 Chr 32:21).

G. The Nubian Dynasty in Egypt

Nubia, also known as Cush (Kush) or Ethiopia, was the region south of Egypt stretching from modern day Aswan (north of the first cataract on the Nile River) southward to present day Khartoum (beyond the sixth cataract). Nubia had been under Egypt's control throughout most of its dynasties. However, by the late eighth century B.C., the southern kingdom had taken advantage of Egypt's internal strife to rule Upper and Lower Egypt.[66] Its capital in those days was Napata, which lay between the third and fourth cataracts.

The Nubian kings comprised Egypt's 25th Dynasty, which was the last dynasty of the so-called *Third Intermediate Period*. This period is generally considered to span the interval from the death of Ramesses XI at the end of the 20th Dynasty (ca. 1069 B.C.) to the start of the 26th Dynasty with the Saite king Psammetichus I (in 664 B.C.). According to Kenneth Kitchen, the Nubian kings of the 25th Dynasty were:[67]

1. Alara
2. Kashta
3. Piankhy
4. Shabako
5. Shebitku
6. Taharqa
7. Tantamani

An "Intermediate Period" refers to a phase in Egyptian history when the central government was no longer cohesive, and competing hubs of power emerged. For the Third Intermediate Period, this state of disunity continued until Shabako conquered Lower Egypt and asserted Nubian rule throughout Egypt, which continued for about half a century. Crucially, Shabako's brother and predecessor Piankhy had conquered Memphis earlier (in his 20th year) but he did not settle there, preferring instead to return to Nubia. He subsequently lost control of Memphis and Lower Egypt, which was regained some twelve years later by Shabako.

[66] Ancient Egypt was divided into two kingdoms known as Upper Egypt to the south and Lower Egypt to the north (this confusing terminology derives from the northward flow of the Nile). After the unification of the two kingdoms (ca. 3100 B.C.), the pharaoh wore a double crown symbolizing the unity of the two lands.

[67] Kitchen, *ThIP-3*, §120.

Our interest is in the three kings Shabako, Shebitku, and Taharqa (these are the conventional name forms but other variants exist). Shabako was the younger brother of Piankhy, Shebitku was the son of either Piankhy or Shabako, and Taharqa was a son of Piankhy.[68] Unfortunately, the rules of succession practiced by the Nubian royal family have not been clearly identified.[69]

Although it is widely accepted that Taharqa ruled from 690 to 664 B.C., the dates for Shabako and Shebitku are inconclusive, with scholarly debate continuing over them. For instance, two proposed dates for Shabako's reign are 716–702 B.C.[70] and 712-11–697 B.C.[71] This study accepts the former (conventional) dating for the simple reason that it better fits our reconstruction of events involving Judah, Assyria, and Egypt in the important lead-up period to Hezekiah's 14th year.

It is known that Shabako gained control of Memphis by his second year, and Upper Egypt soon after.[72] If Shabako's first year was 716 B.C., then he gained control of Memphis in 715 B.C. By Kitchen's chronology, he ruled until his death in 702 B.C. and was succeeded by Shebitku, who ruled from 702 to 690 B.C.[73] Note that the Egyptians used *non-accession year dating* then, meaning that the year in which a king came to the throne was his Year 1.

A Shabako-Shebitku coregency? Kitchen's dates for Shabaka and Shebitku have been widely accepted for many years. However, they were called into question by Grant Frame's 1999 publication of an inscription of Sargon. It was from a rock relief discovered in 1968 in Iranian Kurdistan in a mountain pass near the village of Tang-i Var. The inscription mentions Sargon's conquest of Ashdod (in 711 B.C. by our chronology) and how Yamani fled in advance of it to *Meluhha* (= Nubia[74]):

19) I plundered the city of Ashdod. Iamani, its king, feared [my weapons] and ... He fled to the region of the land of Meluhha and lived (there) stealthfully (literally: like a thief).
20) Sapataku' (Shebitku), king of the land of Meluhha, heard of the mig[ht] of the gods Assur, *Nabu*, (and) Marduk which *I had* [*demonstrated*] over all *lands*, ...

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[68] The Kawa Stelae (see below) indicates that Shebitku and Taharqa were brothers, that is, they were both sons of Piankhy (the conventional view). However, on the basis of Manetho (Waddell, *Manetho*, 167), some scholars maintain that Shebitku was the son of Shabako (e.g., Török, *The Kingdom of Kush*, 134). In that case, the term "king's brother" in the Kawa Stelae would mean "king's cousin."

[69] On this, Derek A. Welsby writes: "The evidence we have indicates a rather ad hoc system, even within the very restricted time span of the XXVth Dynasty. It is neither the son of the reigning king nor the son of his queen who automatically assumes power. The system is, therefore, neither patrilineage nor matrilineage. However, the importance of the matrilineal line is stressed on a number of occasions, most notably by Aspelta, who traces his ancestors back through seven generations of the female line. On occasion it may have been more politic to claim descent from one particular monarch rather than from another, but, if so, the details behind this reasoning elude us" (*The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires*, 26).

[70] So Kitchen, *ThIP-3*, Table 4, p. 468; Török, *The Kingdom of Kush*, 166–71.

[71] So Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 348, 354.

[72] Kitchen, *ThIP-3*, §114.

[73] Ibid., Table 4, p. 468.

[74] The Assyrian toponym for Nubia, *Meluhha*, appears for the first time in the inscriptions of Sargon. In early Mesopotamian sources, *Meluhha* actually depicted an area in Iran and India. Gallagher suggests that the similarity in skin color between the people of this area and the Nubians prompted the application of *Meluhha* to Nubia (1999, 122).

21) He put (Iamani) in manacles and handcuffs ... he had him brought captive into my presence.[75]

The Tang-i Var text shows that Shebitku was ruling as king of Nubia during Sargon's reign. Since this inscription has been dated to 706 B.C. (a year before Sargon's death), Shebitku must have been made king in or before that year. This contradicts the received chronology, which dates the start of Shebitku's rule to 702 B.C. (i.e., three years after Sargon's death).

A simple solution that preserves the established dates is that Shabako made Shebitku coregent before Shebitku's sole rule began in 702 B.C. A coregency would also explain why the Tang-i Var text refers to Shebitku as the king of *Meluhha* (Nubia) and not *Musri* (Egypt). The Assyrians evidently distinguished between the rulers of those two lands.

Although a Shabako-Shebitku coregency has been previously debated but mostly rejected by scholars, the Tang-i Var discovery strengthens the case for one.[76] Nevertheless, despite the discovery, some scholars still object to coregencies among Nubia's rulers. For example, Dan'el Kahn asserts that "there is not one shred of concrete evidence that coregency was ever practiced in the Kushite kingdom."[77] On the other hand, Kitchen (and others) now readily accept a Shabako-Shebitku coregency:

> Thus, in 706, Shebitku should be regarded as Shabako's deputy, ruling in Kush, while the senior man – Shabako – was the real king ("pharaoh") in Egypt proper, from 715 BC, when he himself took over Egypt.[78]

In Kitchen's view, the division of rulership (albeit unequal) between Shabako and Shebitku occurred because of the vastness of the territory covered by Egypt and Kush (it is well over 2,000 miles along the Nile from the Mediterranean coast to Napata and the fourth cataract).[79] Earlier, Shabako's predecessor Piankhy had conquered Lower Egypt in his 20th year (ca. 728 B.C.). However, after capturing Memphis, he made no attempt to settle there and rule all Egypt. Instead, he sailed back to Nubia, his boats loaded with booty. Piankhy's withdrawal left a power vacuum that was filled by the Saite ruler Tefnakht I, founder of the relatively short 24th Dynasty. In line with Kitchen's reasoning, this study proposes that Shabako installed Shebitku as the king of Nubia

[75] Frame, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var," 40. A study of the relief was published in 1968 by the Iranian archaeologist Ali Akbar Sarfaraz. However, no translation of the inscription was offered because Sarfaraz was not a cuneiform specialist. Because the article was written in Farsi and published in a journal not commonly held by western libraries, it largely went unnoticed by the Assyriological community until the 1999 article by Frame, who translated the inscription based on photos taken by Dr. François Vallat in 1971 (ibid., 33–34).

[76] See, for example, Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role in the Events of 701 B.C. in Jerusalem," 227–28.

[77] Kahn, "Divided Kingdom, Co-regency, or Sole Rule in the Kingdom(s) of Egypt-and-Kush?" 282 (for an earlier article by Kahn on the matter, see "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25"). Egyptologist Karl Jansen-Winkeln similarly avows that no evidence exists for a coregency among the Nubian kings of the 25th Dynasty ("The Chronology of the Third Intermediate Period," 258–59). Against this, the Bible identifies two rulers in Egypt bearing different titles at the time of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah: "Pharaoh king of Egypt" (2 Kgs 18:21) and "Tirhakah king of Ethiopia" (2 Kgs 19:9).

[78] Kitchen, "The Strengths and Weaknesses of Egyptian Chronology," 293.

[79] Ibid., 293–94.

when he gained control of Memphis in his second year (715 B.C.).[80] Evidently, Shabako was mindful of Piankhy's failure to retain control of Lower Egypt, hence his willingness to share the rulership. However, unlike Kitchen, I do not believe that Shebitku ruled exclusively from Kush (i.e., Napata) during his 13-year shared rulership with Shabako. Instead, he ruled principally from *Thebes* (while Shabako ruled from Memphis). The basis for this conclusion is the Kawa Stelae, to which we now turn.

Shebitku, Taharqa, and the Kawa Stelae. It is widely accepted that Taharqa succeeded Shebitku as king in 690 B.C. It is also well-known that this date contradicts 2 Kgs 19:9, which is set during Sennacherib's invasion of Judah:

> And when he [Sennacherib] heard say of Tirhakah [Taharqa] king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah . . .

Taharqa was crowned King of Upper and Lower Egypt at Memphis following Shebitku's death in 690 B.C. Therefore, whether we date Sennacherib's invasion of Judah to 701 B.C. (traditional) or 712 B.C. (our chronology), the Bible calls Taharqa "king" before his sole rule began. Kitchen's solution to this apparent anachronism—he follows the traditional dating of 701 B.C. for Sennacherib's invasion—is that the term "king" was used proleptically.[81] An alternative view, however, is that Taharqa was already the crown prince of Nubia when Sennacherib invaded Judah. The Hebrews, in accordance with their own system for viceregencies, called him king, just as they did for the crown prince Sennacherib (and later Nebuchadnezzar). That Taharqa was not pharaoh at the time is confirmed in the Bible by the separate terms "Pharaoh king of Egypt" (2 Kgs 18:21) and "Tirhakah king of Ethiopia" (19:9). Earlier, we noted that the Assyrians likewise distinguished between the rulers of Egypt and Nubia.

We should introduce at this point the evidence of the *Kawa Stelae,* presently in the Cairo Museum. These Egyptian and Meroitic inscriptions were discovered during the excavations at Kawa (ancient Gematen) under direction of Francis L. Griffith in 1930–31 and Laurence P. Kirwan in 1935–36. They were published by the expedition's epigrapher M. F. Laming Macadam in 1949 (the delay being due to World War II). Of the five inscriptions found, the most important are stelae that belong to King Taharqa (Stelae III–VII). From Stelae IV and V, both of which are dated to his sixth regnal year (ca. 685 B.C.), we find that Taharqa was 20 years old when he was summoned north to Thebes by Shebitku to reside there with him:

> Now His Majesty had been in Nubia as a goodly youth, a king's brother, pleasant of love, and he came north to Thebes in the company of goodly youths whom His Majesty King Shebitku had sent to fetch from Nubia, in order that he might be there with him, since he loved him more than all his brethren. He passed to the nome of Amun of Gempaten that he might make obeisance at the temple door, with the army of His Majesty which had travelled north together with him.[82]

[80] Kitchen dates Shebitku's "adjoint rule" with Shabako from 715 to 702 B.C. Similarly, he upholds a Shebitku-Taharqa adjoint rule of Kush from 702 to 690 B.C. (op. cit., 308).

[81] Kitchen, *ThIP-3,* §129.

[82] Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa,* 15, Stela IV.7–10.

> [Now she was] in Nubia, namely the King's Sister, pleasant of love, the King's Mother, Abar, may she live. Now further I had departed from her as a youth of twenty years when I came with His Majesty to Lower Egypt.[83]

The inscriptions reveal that Taharqa was 20 years old when he and his royal brothers were summoned to Thebes, along with an army, by His Majesty King Shebitku. After their arrival in Thebes, they proceeded to Memphis in Lower Egypt. No reason is offered for Shebitku's directive to Taharqa save "that he might be there with him" (in Thebes). Nevertheless, given that the Nubian army accompanied him, it seems that the summons was prompted by a military motive. This led Kitchen to propose the following scenario:[84]

- Following appeals for help from Ekron, Judah, and other allies in 702/01 B.C., the new pharaoh Shebitku overturned Egypt's cooperative policy with Assyria. Now favoring aggression, he readied his forces for an expected engagement in Palestine with the Assyrians. He summoned his brothers from Nubia, among whom was Taharqa, together with an army. They met in Thebes to proceed to Lower Egypt.

- When Sennacherib invaded Palestine in 701 B.C., the Egyptian and Nubian forces marched to meet the Assyrians. Taharqa was nominally in command but due to his age and inexperience he relied on his generals for tactical advice. The Egypto-Nubian army joined up with the forces of Ekron, etc., but they were defeated by Sennacherib at Eltekeh.

- The Egyptians, however, did not suffer grave losses. They regrouped to attack the Assyrians after Sennacherib divided his forces between Libnah and Jerusalem. When rumour of Taharqa's impending advance reached Sennacherib, he reunited the Assyrian army and marched to Philistia. Taharqa and his forces withdrew and returned home.

Kitchen assigns Taharqa's advance in 2 Kgs 19:9 to Sennacherib's third campaign in 701 B.C.[85] This chapter argues, however, that Sennacherib's Judah campaign began in 713/12 B.C. With this earlier date in mind, together with the evidence of the Kawa Stelae and Tang-i Var text, I propose that there were *three* (not two) Nubian rulers in Egypt when the Assyrians invaded Judah:

1. Shabako (pharaoh of Egypt and senior king ruling from Memphis)
2. Shebitku (king of Nubia ruling mainly from Thebes)
3. Taharqa (crown prince of Nubia whom Shebitku had specifically summoned [Kawa IV.8])

Proposed chronology of events. Having discussed the parallel rules of Shabako, Shebitku, and Taharqa, a reconstruction of significant events in Egypt pertinent to Sennacherib's invasion of Judah can be proposed. It covers the period from 716 to 690 B.C. Although it includes a number of suppositions and conjectures (due to the paucity of Egyptian records), it does not contradict, to my knowledge, any Egyptian or Biblical sources. Also, Kitchen's scenario regarding the military

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[83] Ibid., 28, Stela V.15–17. (Unlike Stela IV which contains new information, the text of Stela V is known from duplications in other inscriptions.)

[84] Paraphrased from Kitchen, *ThIP-3*, §§127, 346.

[85] Not all scholars agree with the hypothesis that Taharqa and his brothers were summoned by Shebitku in preparation for war with the Assyrians in 701 B.C. For example, Donald Redford maintains that Shebitku sent for Taharqa after Shabaka's death in 697 B.C. Consequently, he considers 2 Kgs 19:9 to be untrustworthy (Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 353 n. 163).

motive behind Shebitku's call to Taharqa and the Nubian army has been adopted and modified. Quoted years are B.C.

- In 716, Sargon established an Assyrian fortress on the border of Egypt.[86] Owing to Assyria's strong position, Osorkon IV of Tanis (who was the Delta king closest to Egypt's Palestinian border) sought friendly relations with Sargon. He gifted to him "12 big horses of Egypt, their like not to be found in Assyria."[87] A trading treaty was also made between them. Osorkon IV ruled the eastern Delta until ca. 715.

- Shabako became the ruler of Nubia and Upper Egypt following the death of his brother Piankhy in 716. He set out to (re)conquer Lower Egypt, but unlike Piankhy who returned to Napata after doing so, he stayed in Memphis to ensure that the north remained in Nubian hands. Shabako conquered Memphis by his second year (715). He attainted rule over all Egypt either that year or the next, after defeating the Saite king Bakenranef (who ruled the western Delta) and securing the allegiance of the other Delta kings.

- Because of the initial difficulties in ruling all Egypt and Nubia single-handedly, Shabako elevated his nephew Shebitku to the throne as king of Nubia soon after he occupied Memphis in 715. Shabako ruled from Memphis as the senior king and pharaoh while Shebitku was pharaoh's representative in Upper Egypt ruling principally from Thebes. Also, following his defeat of Bakenranef, it appears that Shabako installed a governor of his own choosing—Ammeris the Ethiopian[88]—so securing control of the whole of northern Egypt. By these appointments (Ammeris as governor of Sais and Shebitku as king of Nubia), Shabako established an unbroken line of Nubian command and control from the Mediterranean to beyond the sixth cataract of the Nile.

- With Sargon campaigning for the third consecutive year along Assyria's northern and eastern borders, rebellion broke out in the west early in 713/12. The ringleader was king Azuri of Ashdod who sent letters to neighboring kings announcing his intention to withdraw tribute payments to Assyria; he invited them to join his revolt.[89] We can speculate that Azuri sent these letters only after having first secured Shabako's support. (Osorkon IV had been a pro-Assyrian pharaoh but Nubian policy toward Assyria was unknown until Azuri sent envoys to Shabako.) Supporting Ashdod made strategic sense to Shabako because it was possible that the Assyrians might invade Egypt during their next western campaign. A buffer

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[86] The exact year of Sargon's campaign to the Egyptian border is uncertain. The Khorsabad Annals date it to 715 B.C. but the Nineveh Prism dates it to 716 B.C. Since Tadmor treated the prism as being more reliable than the later-written annals, he favored 716 B.C. (Tadmor 1958, 77–78, 94–95). Younger is more circumspect, and quotes both dates as possibilities ("Recent Study on Sargon II," 312). For simplicity, Tadmor's date of 716 B.C. will be used although 715 B.C. could be equally cited with only minor changes to the sequence of the events leading up to Hezekiah's 14th year (713/12).

[87] From the clay-prism fragment VA 8428. For details, see Tadmor 1958, 77–78; idem, "Philistia Under Assyrian Rule," 92. The Egyptian ruler named in this inscription is "Silkanni, King of Musri." It is widely believed that this Shilkanni is (U)shilkan, Osorkon IV (Kitchen, *ThIP-3*, §463). If he was also the king named "So" in 2 Kgs 17:4—with So being an abbreviation for Osorkon (see ch. 7, fn. 60)—then he had even more reason to pacify Sargon.

[88] Waddell, *Manetho*, 170–73; Kitchen, *ThIP-3*, §116. By Kitchen's chronology, Ammeris ruled in Sais from 715 to 695 (ibid., Table 4, p. 468)

[89] See *COS* 2.118A:294 (also *COS* 2.118E:296; *ARAB* II, §62; *ANET*, 286).

zone of Egyptian-friendly states in the southern Levant was therefore desirable to resist Assyrian expansionism, especially near Egypt's border.

- Encouraged by Egypt's support, Hezekiah joined Azuri's rebellion and withheld his tribute payment to Assyria that year too. The inevitable response came quickly with Sargon dispatching a large army to the west in the winter of 713/12, led by Sennacherib. Judah, the first objective, was invaded around March, 712.

- As soon as the Assyrians invaded Judah, Hezekiah sent a delegation to Shabako requesting military support. Shabako agreed to help. He was concerned that, if the Assyrians conquered Judah and reasserted Assyrian hegemony in Philistia, Sennacherib would strike Egypt next in retaliation for its support of the rebelling states. Recognizing that a sizeable army was needed to counter the large Assyrian force, Shabako decided that the Nubian army should be called up and combined with the Egyptian army. Accordingly, he sailed to Thebes—with the Judean envoys probably in tow—to confer with Shebitku, the king of Nubia. At Thebes, plans were made to summon the Nubian army. The Judean envoys were informed of the arrangements, and of the fact that it would take a few months to assemble the Egypto-Nubian army due to the voyage times on the Nile (discussed below). In view of this delay, it is likely that the Judean delegation secured a promise from Shabako to liberate Jerusalem should it fall to the Assyrians while the Nubian army was being summoned. (Shabako would dispatch the Egypto-Nubian army to retake the capital once the Assyrians departed the region.) Hezekiah's envoys returned promptly to Jerusalem to inform Hezekiah of the delay. At Thebes, Shabako placed Shebitku in charge of logistics then returned to Memphis. In accordance with their plan, Shebitku summoned the royal princes from Nubia, which included his favored brother Taharqa, to escort the Nubian army northward. They would stage first to Thebes and then to Memphis.

- After the messengers told Hezekiah that help from Egypt was forthcoming but not for some months, he had no alternative but to sue for peace given the devastation already suffered by Judah. Sennacherib accepted his contrition and set heavy terms of payment, along with an increased annual tribute. Hezekiah accepted the terms and paid the stipulated amount (2 Kgs 18:14–16). However, not long after the Assyrians departed Judah for Philistia, Hezekiah sent to Egypt again with a proposition. The increased annual tribute was burdensome and would damage Judah's economy. Hezekiah suggested that the Egypto-Nubian army, once dispatched, should join with Judah's army to engage Sennacherib while he was still in the region, his soldiers being campaign-wearied by then. If Sennacherib's army was defeated, Judah would pay an affordable tribute to Egypt and Hezekiah would actively encourage other Syro-Palestinian states to do the same. Shabako agreed to this, and Shebitku was informed of the arrangement.

- The messengers who had departed Thebes for Nubia arrived in Napata in late spring or early summer, 712. After the Nubian regiments were amassed, Taharqa and the royal princes departed Napata (Taharqa was 20 years old then). On their arrival in Thebes, Shebitku greeted them, advised them of the new plan (to join with Judah's army), then escorted them to Memphis. There, they met Shabako who officially appointed Taharqa the crown price of

Nubia to secure the line of succession after Shebitku. As crown prince (or viceregent), Taharqa also became the titular head of the expeditionary force.[90]

- Not long after the arrival in Thebes of Taharqa and the Nubian army, Sennacherib received word of Hezekiah's league with Egypt to fight him (cf. 2 Kgs 18:19–21). He promptly broke off his operation in Phoenicia to return to Judah. Enraged by Hezekiah's actions, which he viewed as treacherous having recently allowed Hezekiah to sue for peace, Sennacherib purposed to conquer Judah and Jerusalem. He would then remove Hezekiah from the throne, deport much of the nation's population, and incorporate Judah into the Assyrian provincial system. For this task, and to strengthen his army in light of recent rumors concerning an Egyptian advance against him, Sennacherib conscripted additional forces from loyal vassal states in Phoenicia and Philistia before reentering Judah.

- The Egypto-Nubian army departed Memphis while the Assyrians were conscripting additional forces. Sennacherib received word of their advance against him not long after he reinvaded Judah (he was besieging Libnah when he heard the news).

- While Taharqa was marching to engage Sennacherib, the Assyrian army was destroyed by a plague. On hearing of the Assyrian setback and Sennacherib's subsequent retreat, Taharqa returned to Thebes and remained there with Shebitku. Since the Egyptians did not actually fight the Assyrians on that occasion, the military purpose for Shebitku's summoning of Taharqa and the Nubian army was not recorded in the Kawa Stelae.[91] Taharqa's seat in Thebes as crown prince freed Shebitku to travel when necessary to Memphis (to confer with Shabako) and probably to Napata for a few months each year (to fulfil home duties as the king of Nubia).

- Encouraged by Judah's success against Assyria, an anti-Assyrian faction in Ashdod removed the newly installed Ahimetu (Sennacherib had placed him on the throne after deposing his brother Azuri only a few months earlier). Ahimetu was replaced by the commoner Yamani, probably in the early autumn of 712. Yamani promptly capitalized on Assyria's loss by inciting regional neighbors (including Judah) to rebellion.[92] He even attempted to buy Egypt's help, knowing of Hezekiah's earlier arrangements with Shabako.

- When news of Yamani's revolt reached Nineveh, Sargon knew that he had to respond quickly. In the spring of 711, he sent the tartan and his own royal guard (comprising veteran troops) to conquer Ashdod.[93] It was a brutal, punitive campaign designed to inform the region, in terms it understood, that Assyria's power had not been weakened by the setback

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[90] With respect to Taharqa's promotion, we note in the Kawa Stelae that Shebitku summoned Taharqa to Thebes "that he might be there with him, since he loved him more than all his brethren" (Kawa IV.8–9; V.14). Török observes that this language of favor points to Taharqa being declared the heir apparent. That office then entitled him, in accordance with Egyptian custom, to be appointed as commander-in-chief of an expeditionary force (*The Kingdom of Kush*, 170, esp. fn. 300; cf. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, 17 n. 19).

[91] Nevertheless, it appears that the event was remembered in Egypt, and by the time of Herodotus (5th century B.C.) the story had become distorted to be a divinely engineered *Egyptian* rather than Judean victory against Sennacherib (see fn. 134).

[92] See *ANET*, 287 (also *ARAB* II, §195).

[93] See *COS* 2.118E:296–97 (also *ARAB* II, §62; *ANET*, 286).

in Judah. The message did not go unnoticed in Egypt. In fact, it affected Shabako to the degree that he no longer sought to contest Assyria's dominance in Palestine. Sargon's hold over the region was too strong, as confirmed by Ashdod being made a province of Assyria.

- On hearing that the Assyrians were approaching, Yamani fled to Egypt. Shabako agreed to give him asylum. However, because Egypt's stance with Assyria was now one of neutrality, it was politically too sensitive for Yamani to live in Egypt, and he was sent to Nubia. This was Shabako's way of placating Sargon, by treating Yamani as an outcast.

- Not long after the Assyrians conquered Ashdod in 711, Shabako made a treaty of peace with Sargon. (This explains the political stability in Palestine for the remainder of Sargon's reign.) A prerequisite of the treaty was the extradition of Yamani to Assyria. Shabako conveyed this requirement to Nubia's king, Shebitku.[94] Yamani was found in due course and extradited (he had gone into hiding after hearing about the peace treaty).[95] Although the year of his deportation to Assyria is unknown—it occurred sometime between 711 and 707—an earlier date is more likely.

- Shabako died in 702 and Shebitku became the new pharaoh. As for the status of Taharqa, a possible clue is found in the Assyrian record. Regarding Sennacherib's battle against Egypt at Eltekeh in 701, the Rassam Cylinder mentions the Ekronites collaborating with the "kings [rulers] of Egypt" (plural) and the forces of the "king of Meluhha [Nubia]" (singular).[96] Based on this statement, we can speculate that Shebitku summoned Taharqa to be with him in Memphis when his sole rule began in 702. Taharqa remained as crown prince but no longer of Nubia; he was now the heir to the throne of Egypt. Thus, Shebitku and Taharqa were the "rulers of Egypt" referred to in the Rassam Cylinder. A new king of Nubia was installed to replace Shebitku.

- The era of peace with Assyria ended when Shebitku became pharaoh. More aggressive than his predecessor, Shebitku had imperial designs for Egypt, as suggested by his royal titulary.[97] He therefore sought opportunity to destabilize Assyrian rule in Palestine following the revolts that spread throughout the empire in the wake of Sargon's unexpected death in 705. Ekron's rebellion and call to Egypt for help in 701 provided the opportunity that Shebitku was seeking, so leading to his open-field engagement with the Assyrians at Eltekeh. By our reconstruction, Judah was not involved at all in that campaign, save for Sennacherib's demand to Hezekiah that he return Padi to Ekron (Section J refers).

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[94] In arguing against a coregency between Shabako and Shebitku, Jansen-Winkeln pointed out that if such a coregency existed, the extradition of Yamani would have been Shabako's responsibility and, as the regent of Egypt and senior king, Sargon would have named him as the one extraditing Yamani rather than the distant viceroy Shebitku in Nubia ("The Chronology of the Third Intermediate Period," 259). Against this, I submit that king Shebitku, who by now was dividing his time between Thebes and Napata, was the royal figure responsible for Nubia. Sargon therefore correctly named him as the one who extradited Yamani.

[95] Although Shabako (who ruled as pharaoh from Memphis) established peace between Egypt and Assyria, it appears that there had never been any official contact between Nubia itself and Assyria until Shebitku's messengers brought Yamani to Sargon (see *ARAB* II, §63; *ANET*, 286; *COS* 2:118E:297).

[96] Gallagher 1999, 116.

[97] See Török, *The Kingdom of Kush*, 169; also Kitchen, *ThIP-3*, §345.

- In 690, Taharqa became pharaoh over all Egypt and Nubia. He was crowned in Memphis and resided there. Because Nubian rule was now well entrenched, he did not install a king of Nubia to help him govern the vast empire as Shabako and Shebitku had; he ruled it alone. Accordingly, the Assyrians referred to Taharqa either as the "king of Egypt and Ethiopia"[98] or simply the "king of Ethiopia."[99] Interestingly, as Kahn observes, he is never called "pharaoh" or the "king of Egypt" in Assyrian records.[100] This may have been to underscore that a Nubian rather than an Egyptian ruled the empire. Taharqa's successor Tantamani (664–656) likewise ruled all Egypt and Ethiopia alone.

Transit times on the Nile. One of the longest rivers in the world, the Nile not only watered Egypt but was its main transportation artery. The speed of travel along the Nile depended on several factors including direction of travel, wind, current, type of boat, expertise of crew, navigation obstacles (such as sandbanks), and the time of year (which affected the river's height). Fortuitously, the Nile flowed north while the prevailing winds blew south. This allowed travel in both directions, with northward passage being propelled by the current and southward passage by the wind.

The reconstruction proposed in Section H must allow for Nile transits between Memphis–Thebes–Napata and vice-versa. Although voyage times between these centers are not well attested in the ancient sources, Kahn's analysis of journey times from two Egyptian inscriptions are helpful.[101] Concerning Napata to Thebes, he referred to the Great Triumphal Stela of Piankhy, from which he deduced that the journey lasted 39 days at the most.[102] From Memphis (or possibly Tanis) to Thebes by boat, Khan referred to the Nitocris Adoption Stela to show that it took 16 days, or possibly even as little as nine days.[103]
Guided by Kahn's analysis, and allowing a margin for error, our reconstruction will use the following transit times:

- 60 days from Thebes to Napata (spring) and 45 days from Napata to Thebes (summer)
- 17 days from Memphis and Thebes and vice-versa

[98] E.g., *ARAB* II, §580 (Esarhaddon) and §770 (Ashurbanipal).
[99] E.g., *ARAB* II, §772 (Ashurbanipal).
[100] Kahn, "Divided Kingdom, Co-regency, or Sole Rule in the Kingdom(s) of Egypt-and-Kush?" 288.
[101] Ibid., 290.
[102] The inscription states that Piankhy left Napata by boat on the first month of the first season (I Akhet), day 9, and sailed to Thebes to celebrate the Opet Festival (Khan notes that this festival started, in all likelihood, on II Akhet 15 or 19). See "The Victory Stela of King Piye," in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume III: The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 71, l.29; also Lichtheim's translation in COS 2.7:45, l.29.
[103] Written in 656, the Nitocris Adoption Stela commemorates the appointment of Nitocris, daughter of Psammetichus I, as God's Wife of Amun Elect in his ninth year. (Psammetichus I was the founder of the 26th "Saite" Dynasty; he ruled from 664 to 610.) See Ricardo A. Caminos, "The Nitocris Adoption Stela," *JEA* 50 (1964): 74, 81, 84.

H. Reconstruction of Events from 713 to 711 B.C.

Having examined the relevant secular texts, a reconstruction of the events affecting Judah, Assyria, and Egypt from 713 to 711 can now be proposed. It is based on the following suppositions, as discussed in preceding sections:

- There was only one Assyrian invasion of Judah. The main Biblical passage describing this event is 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37. Although the Hebrew historian omitted the Philistia–Phoenicia phase of Sennacherib's campaign between 18:16 and 18:17, he nevertheless ensured that the events narrated in 18:1–19:37 were in chronological order.[104]

- Hezekiah's 14th year was 713/12. The Assyrian invasion of Judah began late that regnal year, around March, 712. It therefore occurred during the reign of Sargon.

- Sargon installed Sennacherib as the crown prince possibly in 717. As Sargon's representative, Sennacherib led the campaign against Judah early in 712.

- Sargon did not record the campaign against Judah in his annals because of the humiliating loss of his expeditionary force. One inscription, however, does preserve the opening phase of the Judah operation. It is the Azekah Inscription, which belongs to the category of texts known as "Letters to God." The letter was penned jointly by the royal scribes of Sargon and Sennacherib. It was composed, in part, to mollify public sentiment at home concerning the large number of troops lost.

- Although Sargon did not record the Judah campaign in his annals, Sennacherib did. He recounted the event as an achievement of his third campaign, which is the only known expedition by Sennacherib (as sole ruler) to the southern Levant.

- The ruler of Egypt at the time was the Nubian king Shabako. He ruled from Memphis as pharaoh while his nephew Shebitku, whom Shabako had appointed king of Nubia, ruled from Thebes. In 712, Shebitku nominated his brother Taharqa as the heir apparent.

Time-points of the year are mentioned throughout the reconstruction (e.g., "It was now mid to late April, and Hezekiah's envoys returned quickly to Judah, arriving there around mid-May"). It is stressed that these time-points are *speculative*. They have been included only to show the relative spacing of events that year.

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[104] In his frequently cited monograph, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, Brevard Childs analyzed the invasion of Judah as narrated in 2 Kgs 18–19. In regard to B2 (= 2 Kgs 19:9b–35), he concluded: "The effort [in B2] to picture Hezekiah as the type of the faithful king has emerged as a dominant concern. The understanding that there is a radical alteration of traditional material which serves a new function for the author should provide a warning against a simple-minded historical reading of the text" (p. 103). Against this, I submit that a simple-minded historical reading of 2 Kgs 18–19 is fundamental to determining the correct sequence of events associated with Sennacherib's invasion.

713/12 B.C.—Hezekiah's 14th Year (Sargon's 9th)

Hezekiah's illness. The first Biblically significant episode of Hezekiah's 14th year was not the Assyrian invasion but Hezekiah's illness. This event and the subsequent embassy from Babylon are recorded in 2 Kgs 20:1–19, Isa 38:1–39:8, and 2 Chr 32:24–26, 31.

Although Hezekiah's illness is always mentioned *after* the account of Sennacherib's invasion, it forms an independent narrative unit that is chronologically separated from the preceding text by the opening statement, "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death" (2 Kgs 20:1; Isa 38:1; 2 Chr 32:24). The term "in those days" is not specific and could mean that his illness occurred within a year or two (or more) before the Assyrian invasion (but not after it; cf. 2 Kgs 20:6). Nevertheless, we know that Hezekiah ruled for 29 years (2 Kgs 18:2), and since he was granted 15 years of life after his recovery (20:6) his illness must have occurred in his 14th year. As for the time of year, it was undoubtedly before the Assyrian invasion. This is confirmed by the fact that Hezekiah showed the Babylonian embassy all his riches (20:13). Showing his riches *after* Sennacherib's invasion is unlikely because Judah's treasuries were depleted once Hezekiah paid the heavy ransom for peace (18:14–16).

Hezekiah became ill possibly in the spring of 713. The outward manifestation of his illness was a boil.[105] Isaiah told the king to set his house in order because he was going to die. However, after Hezekiah prayed earnestly to the Lord, Isaiah told him that he would be healed; complete recovery would occur on the third day after a fig-cake poultice was applied (20:1–7). Nevertheless, Hezekiah was impatient to know the certainty of the promise, and requested a sign by which it could be confirmed:

> And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz. (2 Kgs 20:8–11)

The retrocession of the sun was a miraculous event that symbolized the heavenly-directed change in Hezekiah's destiny. Just as the shadow of the "sun-steps" had receded by ten steps,[106] so God had reversed Hezekiah's fate such that extra time of life was granted to him.

Coupled to the assurance of Hezekiah's recovery and continued rule was the Lord's guarantee of Jerusalem's deliverance from the Assyrians:

> Behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of

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[105] For the intriguing hypothesis that Hezekiah's illness was the bubonic plague, see Margaret Barker, "Hezekiah's Boil," *JSOT* 26 (2001): 31–42.

[106] The device involved here may not have been a sundial but a "sun-staircase." The literal translation is that the Lord would "bring back the shadow of the steps which has gone down in the steps of Ahaz with the sun, backward ten steps" (Isa 38:8 LITV). A model of an Egyptian sun-staircase, of the type alluded to here, is in the Cairo Museum. Unlike a sundial, it catches the shadow of the sun by two walls on two flights of steps (on this, see Hallo, "Jerusalem under Hezekiah," 41).

> Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. (2 Kgs 20:5–6)

We can assume from a comment made later that year to Isaiah (discussed shortly) that Hezekiah understood this prophecy to mean that God would protect *all Judah* (and not just Jerusalem) from the territorial ambitions of the Assyrians. Little did he know that Judah would soon be devastated by Sennacherib but Jerusalem would escape harm. This mistaken belief in Judah's safety may have been the driving factor behind Hezekiah's decision to join Ashdod's rebellion in withdrawing tribute payments to Assyria:

> Azuri, the king of Ashdod, plotted in his heart to withhold tribute, and he sent (messages) to the neighboring kings, hostile to Assyria.[107]

Azuri had undoubtedly secured a guarantee of military assistance from the new regime in Egypt before he publicized his revolt. Hezekiah rebelled as well,[108] possibly after receiving a similar guarantee of support from Egypt, or confirmation from Azuri that Shabako would come to his aid if the Assyrians attacked.

The embassy of Merodach-Baladan. The king of Babylon, Merodach-Baladan, had heard about Hezekiah's remarkable recovery from illness and the accompanying sign of the sun's retrocession. So he sent envoys to Jerusalem "to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land" (2 Chr 32:31).

The envoys may have travelled via the quicker Arabian desert route rather than through Syria. They arrived in Judah, possibly in the summer of 713, bearing letters and a gift. In response, Hezekiah showed them all the treasures of the city:

> At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not. (2 Kgs 20:12–13)

We can speculate that Hezekiah's overly hospitable response in showing the envoys his riches was driven partly by pride and partly by a mistaken belief that God would protect Judah from the Assyrians. (His pride may have been inflated by the knowledge that he would live for another 15 years.) However, and unknown to him at the time, Hezekiah's actions had angered the Lord, who was testing him (2 Chr 32:31). The outworking of His wrath was the Assyrian invasion of Judah (32:25). Mercifully, because Hezekiah and the Jerusalemites humbled themselves, the Lord delivered them (32:26) by destroying the Assyrian army.

Hezekiah's recovery was probably not the only matter that the Babylonians discussed with Judah's influential king. Both nations had a common enemy, Assyria, which made them natural allies. Furthermore, the Babylonians would have been aware of Azuri's rebellion and his plans to withdraw tribute, and of Hezekiah's intention to do the same. It may therefore have been an important objective of Merodach-Baladan's envoys to conscript Hezekiah in an anti-Assyrian

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[107] *COS* 2.118E:296 (translation by K. Lawson Younger, Jr.).

[108] That Hezekiah rebelled by withdrawing tribute is implied by his admission of guilt in 2 Kgs 18:14: "I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear."

coalition.[109] They were probably successful because such a move suited Hezekiah's plans for the region.

If Hezekiah saw Babylon as Judah's long-term ally, his view would have been challenged by Isaiah's response to his undue hospitality toward the envoys. Ultimately, Babylon would be Judah's destroyer and not deliverer:

> And he [Isaiah] said, What have they [the Babylonian envoys] seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them. And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. **Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon**. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days? (2 Kgs 20:15–19)[110]

Hezekiah's reply to Isaiah is telling of his mindset at the time. While he piously accepted the Lord's judgment ("Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken"), he was happy that he would personally escape it ("Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?"). Note Hezekiah's comment regarding "peace . . . in my days." Evidently, he had misinterpreted the deliverance prophecy of 2 Kgs 20:6 to mean peace in the land throughout the 15-year extension of his rule. He would soon learn that this prophecy did not imply peace for Judah.

Events in Assyria. For the Assyrians, the first part of the year was spent in a mopping up expedition to the east. As Louis Levine explains, this was the final in a series of campaigns waged in that region:

> Year nine, the last of the series of campaigns to the east, was a relatively minor operation, and was directed mainly against the central Zagros. One has the distinct impression that its purpose was a show of force, capping the efforts of the previous year. A revolt in Karalla was the excuse for this campaign, but again the size of the response was far beyond that called for by the stimulus. Even with this larger response, Sargon devoted only half of the campaign season to the east, a fact that points up how by that time, the situation in the Zagros was well under control.[111]

While the campaign to the east was underway with the standing army, a regional army drawn from the western provinces—"I mustered the armies of Assur" (*ARAB* II, §25)—assembled for war against Tabal and Cilicia in southeast Anatolia. These regions were conquered and turned into provinces.

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[109] Interestingly, when Isaiah asked concerning the Babylonian envoys, "What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee?" (2 Kgs 20:14), Hezekiah gave no response to the first question. He simply replied: "They are come from a far country, even from Babylon." Hezekiah knew that Isaiah was against Judah seeking help from other nations and not the Lord (cf. Isa 30:1–5; 31:1–3), hence his guarded reply.

[110] The reason why the Hebrew historian placed the illness-embassy episodes out of order (i.e., *after* Sennacherib's invasion) is now clear. Observe that 2 Kgs 20:17–18 is a prophecy pertaining to Hezekiah's descendants ("And of thy sons that shall issue from thee . . . they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon"). Placing the illness-embassy episodes last in Hezekiah's résumé acts as a linking device to coming events involving Babylon and Jerusalem.

[111] Levine, *Two Neo-Assyrian Stelae from Iran*, 9–10.

The campaign to the east in the first half of the year was led either by Sennacherib or the tartan (Sargon remained "in the land" that year). However, by the autumn of 713, it was clear to Sargon that a western campaign was urgently needed owing to the following developments:

- Assyria's military attention had been focused away from the west since late in Sargon's sixth year (716/15). This allowed time for anti-Assyrian sentiment to foster in Palestine, especially at the urging of Azuri, king of Ashdod. The rebellion came to a head early in 713/12 when Azuri sent letters to neighboring states announcing his intention to stop paying tribute, and encouraging them to join in his rebellion. Azuri's hopes for release from Assyrian vassalage were evidently spurred by a promise of military support from Egypt.

- Hezekiah had also stopped paying tribute, which he had dutifully done since Sargon's western campaign of 720.[112] Judah was the strongest state in the region and its rebellion would encourage weaker states to join the Ashdod-Judah axis. Also, as the Azekah Inscription confirms (line 11), Hezekiah had (re)annexed and fortified at least one Philistine city (Gath). Assyrian control of this and any other Philistine cities taken by Hezekiah needed to be reestablished. Less troubling, but with consequence for the future, was the embassy from Babylon to Judah. (As it transpired, Sargon defeated Merodach-Baladan some two and half years later in 710.)

- A regime change had recently occurred in Egypt, which was now a unified empire again. The new pharaoh almost certainly had imperial designs on the region. It was therefore likely that the Egyptians might shortly enter the southern Levant to capitalize on the growing anti-Assyrian sentiment there, and to gain control of Philistia's lucrative seaport trade. (Egypt had long viewed Philistia as being in its regional sphere of influence.)

Sargon responded decisively to these threats. Mindful of a possible Egyptian advance early in the new year, he dispatched a large army to arrive in Palestine *before the new year began*. The army was led by Sennacherib and comprised perhaps 110,000 men. They departed either in December, 713 or January, 712, having rested for about four months after their eastern expedition. This was a major campaign with a number of objectives:

a) — re-annex Gath and any other Philistine locations taken by Hezekiah
   — diminish Judah's territory and apportion the conquered cities to loyal neighboring rulers (Sargon's ultimate aim was to drastically reduce Judah's size and make Jerusalem and its environs a province of Assyria [cf. Isa 10:11[113]])

[112] Normally, tribute was delivered to Assyria by the vassal king's emissaries, arriving in late summer, autumn, or winter (cf. Gallagher 1999, 108 fn. 30; note here the instance of tribute arriving from the Ashdodites in Elul [Aug.–Sep.]). The Assyrian intelligence network was very capable and Sargon undoubtedly heard about Azuri's and Hezekiah's rebellious intentions by the summer of 713. Those reports were confirmed when Ashdod and Judah failed to pay tribute by around October, 713.

[113] Although the argument is not forceful, I submit that Isa 10:8–11 applies specifically to Sargon. This is suggested by verse 11, where the unnamed Assyrian king declares: "Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?" Sargon was the king in whose reign Samaria fell (in 721). It is logical to conclude, based on verse 11, that the same king (Sargon) also desired to conquer Jerusalem. This supports our premise that Judah was invaded during the reign of Sargon and not Sennacherib.

— replace Hezekiah with a more compliant king (Hezekiah and his supporters would be deported)

b) replace Azuri in Ashdod

c) gather tribute and reassert Assyrian authority in Philistia and Phoenicia (quashing revolts where necessary)

d) engage the Egyptians if they entered Palestine

Given the campaign's scope, it is likely that Sennacherib bolstered his army with additional forces from loyal vassal city-states during his march to Palestine. (Being alerted ahead of time, the extra troops were probably called up from provinces to the west of Assyria and in the northern Levant.) The large Assyrian force arrived in Judah, their first objective, near the end of winter 712, possibly in mid-March (i.e., late in Hezekiah's 14th year). The invasion began with a simultaneous attack on the neighboring cities of Azekah and Gath, which were key cities in Judah's line of defence to the west. Having breached this line, the Assyrians proceeded south (at the start of the next Nisan year) to conquer the cities of the Shephelah before advancing toward Jerusalem. A vital target in the southern Shephelah was Lachish, a heavily fortified, strategically located city that played a major role in Judah's western defence network.

A winter transit. The latest date for Sennacherib's invasion of Judah is the last day of Hezekiah's 14th year. We can date Nisan 1 in 712 (being the start of Hezekiah's 15th year) to approximately either Mar. 26 or Apr. 24.[114] The April date is possible but statistically less likely. Accordingly, this study assumes that Hezekiah's 15th year began on or about Mar. 26, 712. In that case, Sennacherib invaded Judah late in Hezekiah's 14th year, before late March but probably not earlier than February, 712 (our reconstruction assumes a mid-March invasion).

An arrival in February–March means that the Assyrians journeyed to Palestine in winter, which was uncommon given the cold, rain, wind, and storms that characterized the season. Nevertheless, winter campaigns were undertaken by the Assyrians. For example, in the tenth century, Adad-nirari II campaigned against Dur-Kurigalzu in Babylonia in the month of Shebat (Jan.–Feb.).[115] More significantly, Sennacherib's annals record at least two winter expeditions, the first being his initial campaign against Babylonia in Shebat (Jan.–Feb.).[116] Then, in his seventh campaign, Sennacherib attempted a transit to Elam in Tebeth (Dec.–Jan.) but was driven back by severe (cold) weather, with nonstop rain and snow.[117] Perhaps Sennacherib's willingness to campaign in winter was inspired by his earlier successful transit in 712.

The long, winter journey to Palestine by the Assyrians in 712 attested to the gravity of the western situation as assessed by Sargon. In particular, Jerusalem and its influential king needed to be dealt with.[118] History repeated 115 years later when the Babylonians likewise marched through winter

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[114] These dates have been calculated by adding 30 hours (being an average elapsed time to first crescent visibility) to the conjunction times catalogued at the *NASA Eclipse Web Site* (http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/phase/phases-0799.html).

[115] *ARAB* I, §390.

[116] *ARAB* II, §258.

[117] *ARAB* II, §351.

[118] The winter transit also allowed Sennacherib to cross the Euphrates before the early spring floods, which made the river difficult to cross, and cost time especially with a large army.

an even greater distance to Judah.[119] Leaving home in Kislev (between Dec. 18, 598 and Jan. 15, 597), they captured Jerusalem and seized its king (Jehoiachin) on Adar 2 of Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year (= Mar. 16, 597).[120] The main deportation of Hebrews to Babylon occurred soon after (ch. 5B refers). Interestingly, Nebuchadnezzar accomplished what Sennacherib set out to do in Jerusalem but never finished: replacing Judah's king and deporting the city's inhabitants.

Defensive measures. When Hezekiah heard that the Assyrians had invaded Judah with the intention of conquering Jerusalem, he ordered that the city be secured against attack:

> After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself. And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him. So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water? Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance. And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them . . . (2 Chr 32:1–6)

Strengthening Jerusalem's defences would take time. Nevertheless, manpower was abundant ("there was gathered much people together") and the city's inhabitants were undoubtedly comforted by the prophecy of Jerusalem's safety (2 Kgs 20:6).

Fortifying the capital was not the only defensive measure taken by Hezekiah. One may assume that he sent immediately to Shabako for help. Presumably, Hezekiah concluded that Isaiah's deliverance prophecy could only be fulfilled through the agency of a regional power, and Egypt was the only candidate.

712/11 B.C.—Hezekiah's 15th Year (Sargon's 10th)

The Judean envoys arrived in Memphis around the end of March, 712. When they told Shabako that a large Assyrian force had invaded Judah, he agreed to help. His primary concern, though, was not Hezekiah's predicament but the strategic intentions of the Assyrians. He feared that if Assyria conquered Judah and the rebel Philistine cities, Egypt would be attacked next in retribution for its support of them. Given Sargon's empire-minded intentions, such an attack would probably be more than just retribution; it would be the first step in an Assyrian program to conquer Egypt. A show of force against Assyria was therefore needed. However, Sennacherib's army was large with many experienced troops. To fight the Assyrians, the Egyptian and Nubian armies needed to be combined. Since the Nubian army would have to be called up from home, Shabako sailed to Thebes to confer with Nubia's king Shebitku (his nephew). He was accompanied, we presume, by the Judean delegation. At Thebes, plans were made to bring the Nubian army up to Memphis. The Judean delegation was informed of the voyage times involved, and that it would

[119] From Assyria, the marching distance to Jerusalem along the ancient travel route was about 800 miles while from Babylon it was about 1,000 miles. For an appreciation of the transit routes and distances involved, see Parpola and Porter, *The Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period*.

[120] Grayson, *ABC*, 102 (Chron. 5 r. 11–13).

be around five months before the expeditionary army reached Jerusalem.[121] Given this delay, it is likely that the Judean delegation secured a promise from Shabako to rescue Jerusalem should it fall to the Assyrians before the Egypto-Nubian force arrived. (In that case, Shabako would dispatch his troops to retake the capital once the Assyrians left the region.) It was now mid to late April, and Hezekiah's envoys returned quickly to Judah, arriving there around mid-May.

Preparations to secure Jerusalem, including the digging of "Hezekiah's tunnel" to reroute the waters of the Gihon Spring, began in mid-March.[122] Those works were still underway two months later when Hezekiah's envoys returned to explain that Egyptian help would not arrive before late summer. This was devastating news. Several cities and towns had already been conquered with their inhabitants being deported, and Jerusalem was still vulnerable (its fortification program not yet complete). Also, the massively fortified city of Lachish, which was the second capital of the nation, had just fallen or was about to fall. Although the Hebrew historian omitted the details, the archaeological evidence confirms that the siege of Lachish (modern day Tell ed-Duweir) was intense.[123]

Faced with Judah's certain defeat and his own removal from the throne, Hezekiah capitulated. He sent to Sennacherib at Lachish, who was deporting its inhabitants and taking the city's spoil. Through his envoys, Hezekiah admitted his offence of not paying tribute the preceding year and sued for peace. We can assume that by now, some nine weeks after the invasion began, Sennacherib's anger against Judah had abated somewhat. He had just demonstrated Assyria's military prowess and mastery over that nation, especially with his conquering of Lachish (which was a difficult but personally rewarding military operation).[124] Sennacherib was therefore receptive to accepting Hezekiah's surrender. But the terms were severe: peace would cost Judah dearly and its annual tribute would be raised. Left with no other option, Hezekiah paid the stipulated amount in mid to late May. Peace was indeed costly, requiring Hezekiah to strip the inlaid gold

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[121] Five months is an estimation, tallied as follows: Messengers from Thebes would take about 60 days to reach Napata + 10 days to amass the Nubian regiments and prepare the boats for departure + 45 days sailing to Thebes + 17 days sailing to Memphis + 2 days preparation + 21 days to reach Jerusalem. This is a total of 155 days = 5 months.

[122] Hezekiah built a 1,750ft (533m) long tunnel, cut through solid rock, to conduct water from the Gihon Spring on the east side of Jerusalem to the Pool of Siloam inside the city. This assured a supply of water for the city's inhabitants while denying it to a besieging army (2 Chr 32:30; cf. 2 Kgs 20:20; 2 Chr 32:3–4). Although 2 Chr 32:30 clearly states that Hezekiah diverted the waters of the Gihon Spring, John Rogerson and Philip R. Davies believe that the tunnel and its inscription are from the Hasmonean period ("Was the Siloam Tunnel Built by Hezekiah?" *BA* 59 [1996]: 138–49). While some scholars regard the issue as far from settled (so Grabbe, *Like a Bird in a Cage*, 10), it is highly likely that 2 Chr 32:30 is referring to the Siloam tunnel (see King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 219–23).

[123] See, for example, Philip J. King, "Why Lachish Matters: A Major Site Gets the Publication It Deserves" [Review of David Ussishkin, *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973–1994)*, Tel Aviv University, Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology 22, 5 vols., 2004], *BAR* 31.4 (2005): 42–43.

[124] It is not unreasonable to assume that the siege of Lachish lasted for some weeks. We gain some idea of its scope from the following commentary on Jer 32:24: "Evidence for the use of siege ramps in the mid-first millennium includes archaeology, reliefs and textual material. The ramp built by the Assyrians for the siege of Lachish in 701 is still visible today. It is estimated that its construction required about twenty-five thousand tons of soil and stone and would have taken a thousand workers three or four weeks to build. Sennacherib's depiction of the siege likewise shows the ramp being used for the battering rams and siege machines" ("32:24. siege ramps.," *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 667).

from the temple doors and pillars (ironically, Hezekiah had proudly displayed his royal treasures to the Babylonian embassy only months earlier):

> And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. (2 Kgs 18:13–16)

As well as gold and silver, the Rassam Cylinder records additional items of booty that may have been taken (Section J refers).

A three-month gap. The next event in 2 Kgs 18 is the amassing of Assyrian troops at Jerusalem and the rab-shakeh's speech, which included an ultimatum to the city's inhabitants to surrender for deportation or be killed (18:17–36). Notwithstanding his reputation for ruthlessness, it is improbable that Sennacherib accepted Hezekiah's heavy tribute then sent the rab-shakeh from Lachish to demand Jerusalem's surrender. Such a course of action—of accepting tribute from a vassal king then resuming hostilities against him—contradicts Assyrian international policy (cf. 2 Kgs 15:20). Moreover, it finds no parallels in the corpus of Neo-Assyrian texts.

A simple solution to this incongruity is that there was a short, unrecorded gap in time between 2 Kgs 18:16 and 18:17. We can speculate that it spanned from late May (after the Assyrians departed Judah with much booty) to late August. During these three months, Sennacherib undertook the second phase of his campaign, which involved visiting vassal states in Philistia then Phoenicia, and gathering their tribute for the year. Known rebellions were also quashed then. For example, at Ashdod (the northernmost of the five great Philistine cities), Sennacherib replaced the rebellious ruler Azuri with his younger brother Ahimiti.[125] This phase of Sennacherib's campaign was completely omitted by the Hebrew historian. He either did not record it or, more likely, it was deleted from the final redaction, resulting in a narrative gap between 2 Kgs 18:16 and 18:17.[126]

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[125] In his annals, Sargon does not say exactly how or when he abolished Azuri's rule. Although the episode is recalled for his 11th year (711), it is mentioned only as background to understand the Ashdod campaign that year, when Sargon invaded the city in response to the people's rejection of Ahimiti and elevation of Yamani (*ARAB* II, §§30, 62; *ANET*, 286; *COS* 2.118E:296). Azuri was therefore removed from the throne sometime *before* the Ashdod campaign of 711. It is telling that Sargon does not mention any details about this. According to our chronology, Sennacherib replaced Azuri with Ahimiti in 712 (Sargon's tenth year) not long after Hezekiah sued for peace. However, as Section E discusses, Sargon did not wish to record any Assyrian presence in Syria-Palestine for his tenth year, owing to the loss of Sennacherib's army. This explains the indefinite chronology in Sargon's annals concerning Azuri's removal from the throne.

[126] Evidently, the Hebrew historian judged that this aspect of the campaign was irrelevant to Judah so it was either omitted or deleted. The resulting disjoint it created in the text has led a number of Biblical scholars to conclude that 2 Kgs 18:13–16 and 18:17–19:36 are referring to two different campaigns. In support of their theory, they often point to the clear stylistic differences between 2 Kgs 18:13–16 and the text that follows. Against this, I believe that the stylistic differences simply reflect the different sources used by the historian in his retelling of the episode. One assumes, given that he was writing about events which occurred prior to his lifetime, that he used the words of the original sources as much as possible in his penning of the invasion narrative, which follows in chronological order.

Meantime, Judah had been devastated by the Assyrian attack for which Hezekiah had paid so dearly to stop. Cities were in ruins, the land had been stripped of its crops and food-producing trees,[127] and hundreds, possibly thousands, of Hebrews from the conquered cities and towns had been deported. The work of rebuilding the nation undoubtedly began as soon as Sennacherib departed for Philistia. Thankfully, he had left Lachish standing (there was no reason to destroy it because Hezekiah had yielded to Assyrian suzerainty).

With the Assyrians gone, it appears from the later accusation by the rab-shakeh in 2 Kgs 18:19–25 that Hezekiah sent messengers to Egypt (again) for help. But this time, he had a new proposition for Shabako. Hezekiah wanted to escape the crippling annual tribute levied upon him by Sennacherib. If he was successful, then the Lord's prophecy that "I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria" would be fulfilled in every respect (2 Kgs 20:6). He therefore suggested that when the Nubian and Egyptian forces finally assembled in Memphis, they should march to Palestine and join with Judah's army to engage Sennacherib. Their combined forces would be further bolstered by other willing regional armies and mercenaries. If the campaign-weary Assyrians were defeated, Judah would pay an affordable annual tribute to Egypt, and Hezekiah would be active in encouraging other Syro-Palestinian states to do the same. Recognizing the strategic and commercial value of this plan for Egypt, Shabako agreed. Back in Jerusalem, Hezekiah continued to fortify the capital as a pre-emptive measure.

Events in Egypt during this time were as follows. The royal messengers (who were sent to summon Taharqa and the Nubian army) departed Thebes in mid to late April and arrived in Napata in mid to late June. After the Nubian regiments were gathered from their various bases, Taharqa and the army departed around the start of July. They arrived in Thebes in mid-August then voyaged to Memphis, arriving there in early September to join the already gathered local Egyptian forces. After two or three days of preparation, Taharqa and the Egypto-Nubian army departed Memphis for Palestine in early to mid-September.

Sennacherib returns in anger. Matters changed for the worse when Sennacherib learnt of Hezekiah's duplicity in paying tribute to secure peace then plotting with Egypt to fight him. Enraged, Sennacherib broke off his operation in Phoenicia in late August to return to Judah, which he planned to incorporate as a province of Assyria given its repeated rebellion. (This meant that Hezekiah would be deposed and large-scale deportations of Judahites would occur—especially the nation's elite—their number being replaced by new ethnic groups from other conquered lands. In short, Judah would lose its identity as Samaria had.) For this labor-intensive undertaking, and to prepare for a possible advance by Egypt about which he had heard rumors, Sennacherib collected additional troops from Phoenicia and Philistia before reentering Judah in mid-September. At this point, he was not aware that Taharqa and the Nubian army had recently left Memphis for Palestine to engage him.

Sennacherib's first objective in Judah was the destruction of Lachish, a fortress city which an invading force (i.e., the Egyptians) could use to their advantage. Although it had been conquered earlier, it remained standing because Hezekiah sued for peace before actions to demolish the city

[127] On the tactic of cutting down fruit trees in connection with sieges, see Israel Eph'al, *The City Besieged*, 53–54; Steven W. Cole, "The Destruction of Orchards in Assyrian Warfare," 29–40 (cf. *ARAB* I, §§776, 792; also Deut 20:19–20; 2 Kgs 3:19, 25; Jer 5:17).

took place.[128] Approaching Lachish, which was being repaired and repopulated, Sennacherib split the army. One part, led by himself, carried out the destruction of remaining fortified cities, beginning with Lachish. (With a ferocity that perhaps echoed Sennacherib's mood, Lachish was burnt to the ground.) The other part of the army marched to Jerusalem to demand its surrender.

While Lachish was being razed, the other part of the army headed for Jerusalem, led by the tartan, the rab-saris, and the rab-shakeh.[129] By this time, Jerusalem had been heavily fortified and secured, the work taking some six months to complete. When the Assyrians arrived, "they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field" (2 Kgs 18:17). Although the location of this site is uncertain, it was outside the city walls and evidently wide and flat enough to accommodate the amassed troops. Significantly, this was also the very place where Isaiah had asked Ahaz to trust the Lord (and not Assyria) to deliver Jerusalem during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis (Isa 7:3).

The Assyrian officials called for Hezekiah but were met instead by a high-ranking delegation comprising "Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder" (2 Kgs 18:18). With the top officials of both sides now facing each other, the rab-shakeh delivered the first part of his speech. It began, tellingly, with a reference to trusting in Egypt for deliverance. Clearly, Hezekiah's rebellion in plotting with Egypt to fight the Assyrians had infuriated Sennacherib:

> And Rabshakeh[130] said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, **What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words), I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt**

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[128] The KJV translation of 2 Chr 32:9 suggests that the siege of Lachish began at this time, and not some months earlier as our reconstruction posits: "After this did Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem, (but he himself laid siege against Lachish, and all his power with him)." The LITV confirms, though, that the original Hebrew does not explicitly mention a siege: "After this Sennacherib the king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem, (and he was by Lachish, and all his power with him)." Two aspects of 2 Chr 32:9 are noteworthy. First, the word translated "power" here is *memshalah*. Used only 17 times in the Bible, it normally refers to authority, rulership, or dominion (e.g., Gen 1:16; 2 Chr 8:6; Ps 145:13; Isa 22:21). This is an unusual word to use in the context of Lachish (i.e., "he was by Lachish, and all his *authority* with him"). Presumably, the Chronicler chose this word to show that all Assyrian actions undertaken against Judah from Lachish onward were for the express purpose of conquering the nation and incorporating it as a province (= dominion) of Assyria. In other words, Judah stood at the brink of extinction by the authority of Sennacherib. Second, 2 Chr 32:9 begins with the expression "After this," which suggests a gap in time between 32:8 and 32:9. This agrees with our reconstruction.

[129] In the Assyrian royal court, the king and crown prince held the highest rank. Then, in descending order of office, came the *tartan* (chief military commander), the *rab-saris* (chief eunuch, also a military commander), and the *rab-shakeh* (the chief butler or cup-bearer). The rab-shaqeh was a high official who personally attended to the king; he never took part in military offensives (see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 229–30; also Gallagher 1999, 165–66). As to why the rab-shakeh and not a higher official spoke to the Jerusalemites, it was evidently because of his fluency in the language of Judah. Cogan and Tadmor suggest that he may have been from a noble Israelite family exiled to Assyria (op. cit., 230).

[130] The Hebrew historian treats Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh as personal names (2 Kgs 18:17), hence the omission of the definite article.

> **unto all that trust on him**.[131] But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem? Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. **How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?** Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it. (2 Kgs 18:19–25)

Knowing that the Jerusalemites were listening from the city's walls, the rab-shakeh spoke to the Judahite courtiers not in Aramaic but in Judean. (Aramaic was the language of the Assyrian Empire west of the Euphrates.) The courtiers entreated him to speak in Aramaic, for fear that his words would alarm the populace:

> Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall. But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? (18:26–27)

The rab-shakeh made it clear that his words were meant for the city's inhabitants, to whom he now turned directly. Although his message to them was simple—surrender for deportation or die—its delivery was a masterpiece of deception and intimidation designed to make the people question Hezekiah's ability to defend them:

> Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern: Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. (18:28–36)

Sennacherib hoped that the city would surrender. Although a blockade was presently in effect (Jerusalem was blockaded rather than stormed due to the city's near-impregnability), it would continue for several months if Hezekiah held out. The rab-shakeh's speech had therefore been crafted to achieve the expedient outcome of surrender (cf. 2 Chr 32:18). This was the first of two

[131] The rab-shakeh's reference to Egypt's unreliability as a military ally was based on recent performance, inasmuch as Shabako had failed to send troops to help Ashdod or Judah. Of course, while saying this, the rab-shakeh was unaware that a large army commanded by crown prince Taharqa had just departed Memphis for Palestine.

Assyrian ultimatums, both of which were characterized by the expert use of psychological warfare techniques.[132]

It is of interest that the rab-shakeh told the Jerusalemites to "hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us" (18:32). Again, in the second ultimatum, the messenger to Hezekiah said "Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria" (19:10). The Assyrians were evidently aware of the promise to Hezekiah, made when he was ill, that the Lord would "deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria" (20:6). This explains the repeated Assyrian refutation of that hope (18:30; 32–35; 19:10–13).

Having delivered Sennacherib's ultimatum, the Assyrian officials and most of the Assyrian troops departed to rejoin Sennacherib's camp. Jerusalem was left fully blockaded, with manned fortifications all around it.

Hezekiah's reaction. On hearing of the rab-shakeh's ultimatum, Hezekiah sent Eliakim, Shebna, and the leading priests to Isaiah the prophet for guidance (2 Kgs 18:37–19:7). Interestingly, Hezekiah did not visit Isaiah personally; he went to the temple instead. Perhaps he felt guilty. Not only had his actions caused the Assyrians to return but he was aware of Isaiah's stance against calling to Egypt for help. After being informed of the situation, Isaiah instructed Hezekiah's courtiers:

> Thus shall ye say to your master [Hezekiah], Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast [lit. *spirit*] upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. (2 Kgs 19:6–7)

In hindsight, we know that the Lord intended to destroy the Assyrian army. However, there is no suggestion in Isaiah's message of this intention yet (it may have been withheld to test Hezekiah; cf. 2 Chr 32:31). Isaiah simply said that the Lord would send a "spirit" upon Sennacherib—presumably a desire or impulse to alter his normal behavior—so that when he heard a rumour he would be motivated to return home, where he would fall by the sword (31 years later, in fact). As to what that rumour may have been, we do not know. Some scholars suggest that it was the subsequent report of an Egyptian advance, as reported in 2 Kgs 19:8–9:

> So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah . . .

However, Sennacherib did not withdraw after hearing this news. Instead, he sent again to Jerusalem demanding Hezekiah's surrender. It is more likely, then, that the rumour Sennacherib heard involved a matter closer to home. The matter was pressing enough, as heightened by the impulse that God had placed in him, for Sennacherib to be occupied with thoughts of returning home.

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[132] On this, see Dubovský, *Hezekiah and the Assyrian Spies*, 30.

The second ultimatum. With a desire to end the campaign sooner rather than later, and with information to hand that the Egyptians were advancing—which altered the military situation considerably[133]—Sennacherib sent messengers with a letter directed personally to Hezekiah:

> And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah? And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. (2 Kgs 19:9–14)

Sennacherib was pushing for a speedy resolution. Even if the current blockade was upgraded to a full-on siege, breaking Jerusalem's defences would take time, and Egyptian help—when it came—would only draw it out further while the Assyrians broke off to engage Taharqa. On the other hand, if Jerusalem could be taken and secured quickly, the Egyptians might realize the futility of trying to liberate the city (it would be a lost cause once mass deportations began). Their subsequent withdrawal would allow Sennacherib to depart for home sooner. With that hope in mind, he sent a second ultimatum. However, because the rab-shakeh had failed to convince the Jerusalemites to turn against their king, Sennacherib directed this ultimatum not at the masses but personally to Hezekiah, to intimidate him into surrender. Delivered by unnamed messengers, the letter reiterated a key point of the first ultimatum, that Jerusalem could not be delivered from the hand of the Assyrians; it would surely be taken. After the messengers departed, Hezekiah read the letter carefully. He knew that matters were coming to a head and that Judah faced becoming an Assyrian province as Samaria had. (Even if he was aware that the Egyptians were now marching to help him, Hezekiah probably doubted their ability to defeat the large army that Sennacherib had now amassed.) With the very survival of the nation at stake, Hezekiah prayed in the temple for deliverance (2 Kgs 19:14–19). The Lord's response came through Isaiah. To begin, the Lord condemned the Assyrians and their misguided pride (19:20–26). He then pronounced judgment against them:

> But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. (vv. 27–28)

These words of judgment were followed by a sign to Hezekiah:

> And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. (vv. 29–31)

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[133] We can speculate that the Egyptians were no more than about four weeks away. This is based on a much later occurrence. When the Crusaders besieged Jerusalem in 1099, they received word that an Egyptian army, still far off, was coming to help the city. About a month elapsed before the Egyptians finally arrived for battle (see Gallagher 1999, 18).

The Lord revealed a sign by which His people could know, as they rebuilt the nation over the coming years and reflected on its near-destruction by the Assyrians, that they owed their continued occupation of the land to His miraculous intervention. The sign was that the after-growth of the land would suffice until crops were harvested from the sowing done in the third year (710/09). The outworking of this was as follows. For the current year (712/11), the Hebrews were to eat "such things as grow of themselves." It was now late September, 712, and the Assyrians had devastated the countryside by destroying crops and orchards during both invasions (late winter/spring and presently). Consequently, plowing and sowing could not be done that fall because it would take time to return the land to a farmable state. Nevertheless, God would provide for his people by ensuring that enough food was available from the produce of the land that year. For the next (second) year, people were to eat again of what grew from the current year's remains ("that which springeth of the same"). This surprising requirement, to eat of the old produce in the second year (711/10) when the Hebrews would have been desperate to sow and reap after the devastation of the previous year, implies that it was a Sabbath year obligation. Then, in the third year (710/09), sowing could resume. The table below shows the concordance between God's instructions to Hezekiah and the Levitical requirements regarding the Sabbath year.

YEAR	GOD'S SIGN TO HEZEKIAH	LEVITICUS 25:21–22
712/11	Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves,	Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.
711/10	and in the second year that which springeth of the same;	[Sabbath year of rest in the land]
710/09	and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards,	And ye shall sow the eighth year and eat yet of old fruit
709/08	and eat the fruits thereof	until the ninth year; until her fruits come in

This sign would have encouraged Hezekiah greatly for a number of reasons:

- in it was the promise that the inhabitants of Judah would remain in the land to sow and harvest
- the Jerusalemites would not starve while the city was blockaded (2 Kgs 18:27), neither would they be killed nor be deported by the Assyrians
- the regrowth of crops signified the regrowth of the tattered nation, all by the Lord's providence
- the use of a ceremonial sign, being the Sabbath year observance, confirmed that the Law would continue in the land; that is, Judah would remain as God's set-apart nation
- The Davidic line through Hezekiah was secure

Again, Isaiah's response made no mention of any intent to destroy the Assyrian army. Recall that in Isaiah's first pronouncement the Lord simply said that He would give Sennacherib a compulsion to return home after hearing a rumour (2 Kgs 19:7). This indeed came true, as evidenced by Sennacherib's current actions to end the Judah campaign promptly. Now, in Isaiah's second pronouncement, the Lord had confirmed the regrowth of Judah both agriculturally and in population. To underscore its certainty, He repeated and expanded on His earlier promise to deliver Jerusalem:

> Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. (2 Kgs 19:32–34; cf. 20:6)

Although the Lord did not disclose exactly how He would prevent the Assyrians from taking Jerusalem, its deliverance occurred, unexpectedly, that very night:

> And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. (2 Kgs 19:35–36; cf. Isa 37:36–37)

> And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. (2 Chr 32:21)

In a surprising and utterly astonishing move, the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 soldiers. (They were possibly encamped at Libnah but the Bible is silent on their location.) Evidently, the angel caused a virulent plague to sweep through the camp (cf. Exod 11:1–5; Num 16:46–50; 2 Sam 24:15–17). Although scholars today are disbelieving of the number killed and manner of death, our study upholds the miraculous intervention of the Lord to deliver His people.[134]

With his army destroyed, Sennacherib returned home in shame. During the remainder of Sargon's rule, and throughout Sennacherib's sole rule, the Assyrians did not invade Judah again. Thirty-one years later, in the 24th year of his reign (681), Sennacherib was assassinated by two of his sons while worshipping in the temple (2 Kgs 19:35–37, cf. 2 Chr 32:21). As Jones observed, this was an ironic ending "as Hezekiah's God had defended him, but Sennacherib's was unable to deliver him even in its temple."[135]

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[134] Of interest here is Herodotus' account of Sennacherib's defeat while fighting against Egypt. Herodotus was a Greek historian of the fifth century B.C. He is renowned for his work *The Histories of Herodotus*, published between 430 and 424 B.C. It records the great and memorable deeds of Greeks and non-Greeks, and inquires as to the reasons for the Greco-Persian Wars of the early fifth century. For his research, Herodotus travelled widely, asking many questions and gathering stories. *The Histories* was ground-breaking in its presentation and earned Herodotus the title "the father of history." (This stands in contrast to his next generation counterpart Thucydides, whose more precise fact-finding and analyses earned him the title "the father of scientific history.") Later editors divided *The Histories* into nine books, named after the Muses. In the second book (*Euterpe*), Herodotus narrates—as reported to him by the Egyptians and their priests—how Sennacherib marched against King Sethos of Egypt with a "great host." When the two armies were camped opposite each other at Pelusium, "there swarmed by night upon their enemies [the Assyrians] mice of the fields, and ate up their quivers and their bows, and moreover the handles of their shields, so that on the next day they fled, and being without defence of arms great numbers fell" (*The History of Herodotus: Volume 1*, translated by George C. Macaulay [London and NY: Macmillan, 1890]: 2.141. Although fanciful, it is likely that this story grew out of an historical truth, being the loss of Sennacherib's large army through an unexpected nocturnal scourge. Herodotus adds that "at the present time this [victorious Egyptian] king stands in the temple of Hephaistos in stone, holding upon his hand a mouse, and by letters inscribed he says these words: 'Let him who looks upon me learn to fear the gods'" (op. cit., 2.141).

[135] Jones 2005, 169.

From the preceding reconstruction, we may speculate that Sennacherib's western campaign had lasted about six and a half months. It began in mid-March, 712 (late in Hezekiah's 14th year) and ended in late September, 712 (in Hezekiah's 15th year).

After hearing that the Assyrian army had been wiped out and that Sennacherib had retreated, Taharqa and the Egypto-Nubian army turned back for Egypt (they were possibly only a week away from entering Judah).[136] It had not been an entirely wasted effort for the Egyptians, though. The Nubian army would remain for the time being in Lower Egypt, allowing Shabako to amass a large force should he decide to attack the Assyrians (or defend against them) in a subsequent year.

News of Assyria's stunning loss spread quickly through the region. The Philistine kingdom of Ashdod, in particular, sought to gain advantage from it. Sennacherib had recently replaced the rebellious ruler Azuri with his younger brother Ahimiti. However, when news of the Assyrian setback in Judah reached Ashdod, the people revolted (under urging of an anti-Assyrian faction). They removed the pro-Assyrian king Ahimiti and enthroned a non-royal, Yamani, probably in the early autumn of 712. Anticipating an Assyrian attack the next year, Yamani fortified Ashdod against siege, which included the digging of a deep moat.[137]

711/10 B.C.—Hezekiah's 16th Year (Sargon's 11th)

With Ashdod in revolt, and knowing that Sennacherib's setback in Judah would encourage other nations to rebel, Sargon acted quickly to reassert Assyrian authority in the region. His *Great Summary Inscription* narrates the Ashdod episode as follows (the first part of this text describes earlier [undated] events to establish the background):

> Azuri, the king of Ashdod, plotted in his heart to withhold tribute, and he sent (messages) to the neighboring kings, hostile to Assyria. Because he committed crimes against the people of his coun[try], I abolished his rule. I placed Ahimiti, his favorite [brother], as king over them. The Hittites, who (always) speak treachery, hated his rule.
>
> Yamani, who had no claim to the throne, who was like them, and had no respect for rulership, they elevated over them. In the ebullience of my heart, I did not gather the masses of my troops, nor did I organize my camp. With my warriors—who never leave my side in (hostile or) friend[ly terri]tory—I marched to Ashdod. Now when this Yamani heard from afar the approach of my campaign, he fled to the border area of Egypt which is on the border with Meluhha, and his place was not found. I besieged (and) conquered Ashdod, Gimtu (Gath) and Ashdod-Yam.[138]

Our reconstruction proposes that Sennacherib removed Azuri from the throne and replaced him with Ahimetu in the late spring or early summer of 712. In turn, Ahimetu was deposed by his own people some three to four months later, after it became known throughout the region that the Hebrew God had destroyed Sennacherib's army (2 Chr 32:22–23). Ahimetu was replaced by a commoner named Yamani. Emboldened by Assyria's setback, Yamani tried to incite regional neighbors to rebellion, including Judah. He even sent bribes to Egypt to buy pharaoh's help, knowing that Shabako had recently sent an army in support of Hezekiah. On Yamani's attempts to incite rebellion, Sargon's inscriptions record:

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[136] Egyptian emissaries undoubtedly continued onward to Judah to discuss Hezekiah's intentions in light of Assyria's setback.

[137] See *ARAB* II, §§193–95; *DOTT*, 61(f); *ANET*, 287.

[138] *COS* 2.118E:296–97 (translation by K. Lawson Younger, Jr.). See also *ARAB* II, §62; *ANET*, 286.

> Then [to] the rulers of Palestine (*Pi-lis-te*), Judah (*Ia-u-di*), Ed[om], Moab (and) those who live (on islands) and bring tribute [and] *tamartu* -gifts to my lord Ashur—[he spread] countless evil lies to alienate (them) from me, and (also) sent bribes to Pir'u, king of Musru—a potentate, incapable to save them—and asked him to be an ally.[139]

In response to Ashdod's revolt, Sargon sent an invasion force as soon as he could. From the Nineveh Prism, we know that this force crossed the Tigris and the Euphrates "at the peak of the(ir) flood, the spring flood, as (if it be) dry ground."[140] The early spring flooding of the Euphrates made it difficult to cross. Yet Sargon says that his army crossed it like it was dry ground. Although this language is typical royal hyperbole, it nevertheless hints at the urgency of the campaign.

The spring flood began in March (with the melting of snow in the mountains to the north) and reached its full height around the start of May. The Assyrian force therefore would have reached northern Syria around early May, arriving in Ashdod some two and a half to three weeks later. Although Sargon says that he led the force personally, we know from the Bible (Isa 20:1) that he sent his tartan.

Significantly, Sargon's invasion force was not made up of the usual troops. Instead, it consisted of the Assyrian royal guard (comprising veteran troops):

> In the fury of my heart, I (did) not (stop) to gather the masses of my troops or to prepare the camp, but with my warriors, who do not leave the place of danger(?) at my side, I marched against Ashdod.[141]

Sargon's use of his own private guard agrees with our reconstruction. Undoubtedly, with the loss of so many men in Judah, Assyria's army required re-building.[142] Although this was surely done in prompt fashion (by calling conscripts from conquered countries and vassal states), it would take perhaps a year to reestablish the standing army. In the meantime, there were sufficient royal troops to handle the Ashdod revolt. On hearing that the Assyrians were approaching, Yamani fled for Egypt then took refuge in Nubia. However, he was extradited to Assyria by the Nubian king within a few years.

The Assyrians conquered Ashdod probably around June, 711. It was a violent, punitive campaign designed to inform the region that Assyria had not been weakened by the setback in Judah. The brutality of the conquest is attested by the archaeological evidence.[143] Not only was Ashdod

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[139] *ANET*, 287. Notice how Sargon denigrates pharaoh by saying that he was incapable of saving Ashdod. Egypt had failed once to arrive in time to help Judah and Ashdod (in 712). Now, with Judah unlikely to call on Shabako again, there was little chance that Egypt would come to the aid of this one rebellious Philistine city-state without help from powerful neighboring allies. Ultimately, Yamani was alone in his rebellion.

[140] Ibid.

[141] *ARAB* II, §62.

[142] This may be one reason why Sargon stayed in Assyria (dispatching his tartan to Ashdod instead), so that he could personally oversee the rebuilding of the army. Also, it would be prudent for the king to remain at home and be available to speak soothing words to the populace, given the shock setback in Judah. Additionally, the "Letter to God" may have been drafted then (Section F refers), being read publicly after the successful military operations of 711.

[143] See, for example, Moshe Dothan, "Ashdod," *ABD* 1:480; Freedman, "The Second Season at Ancient Ashdod," 138; Eph'al, *The City Besieged*, 31–32.

conquered, but it was incorporated as a province of the empire. By this measure, Assyrian authority was firmly re-established in the west. Just as importantly, Ashdod's becoming a province (= permanent Assyrian presence there) served as a warning to Egypt that Sargon would fiercely protect his empire's existing borders. Shabako presumably heeded the warning, and signed a treaty of peace with Assyria within a year or two after the Ashdod offensive.

Other conquests in 711. During the Ashdod campaign, Sargon mentions that he also besieged and conquered Gimtu (Gath) and Ashdod-Yam.[144] As our study proposes, the Azekah Inscription attributes Gath's capture to Sennacherib in 712 (the previous year). However, due to the shock setback in Judah, Sargon decided to make no mention of a western campaign that year. Nevertheless, the conquering of a Philistine city formerly held by Judah was a military accomplishment that deserved to be recorded, and would not be linked to hostilities against Judah itself. It was therefore added as a conquest of the western engagement of 711.[145]

From Philistia, the royal guard advanced to Gurgum (about 80 miles northwest of Carchemish) where Mutallum, son of the Assyrian appointed king Tarhulara, had earlier slain his father and seized the throne. The Assyrians removed Mutallum, pardoned the people of Gurgum, and placed a governor over the land.[146]

Next was the campaign against Melid (Kammanu), north of Gurgum. Although the Khorsabad Annals place the Melid campaign in Sargon's tenth year (712),[147] this study favors Tadmor's proposal that it occurred in his 11th year (711), as recorded in the Nineveh Prism. The Khorsabad scribes repositioned the fall of Melid and fortification of Luhsu, etc., from 711 to 712 "to extend the brief narrative of the events of 712."[148] Tadmor's observation fits our conclusion that the lack of military narrative for 712 occurred because of Sargon's decision not to record any details of the western campaign that year in his annals.

Since the Melid campaign was extensive, the royal guard probably staged in Gurgum to await reinforcements, possibly drawn from the regional army that had conquered Tabal and Cilicia the year before. From Melid, the now bolstered army fortified Luhsu and other cities against Urartu, and founded Usi and two other fortresses on the border of Muski.[149]

Aftermath of the invasion for Judah. The archaeological evidence confirms that Sennacherib's campaign had left Judah devastated.[150] Although the Assyrians destroyed many fortified towns in

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[144] *COS* 2.118E:297. Ashdod-Yam (in Assyrian *Asdudimmu* = Ashdod-on-Sea) was Ashdod's seaport.

[145] In the Azekah Inscription, the Judean controlled city described in lines 11–20, which we believe was Gath, was taken by a *sizeable* Assyrian force (see, for example, lines 8 and 18–20). This argues against Gath being taken by the limited mobilization of royal guards sent by Sargon to Ashdod.

[146] *ARAB* II, §61 (notice the mention of the royal guard again). In the annals for his 11th year, Sargon places the Gurgum campaign first and Ashdod second (*ARAB* II, §29–30). However, in the Prism Inscription, Sargon mentions that in marching to Ashdod, he crossed the Tigris and Euphrates during the spring flood (*ARAB* II, §195). This implication of urgency (i.e., not waiting for the floods to subside) suggests that Ashdod was, in fact, Sargon's first objective for the year, followed by Gurgum.

[147] *ARAB* II, §26.

[148] Tadmor 1958, 93.

[149] *ARAB* II, §27.

[150] This led archaeologist and professor of religion Dan P. Cole to observe: "It now seems clear that Sennacherib's devastation of Judah was so extensive that the map of Judah in the early seventh century, following Sennacherib's incursions, needs to be redrawn to present a considerably diminished territory"

the Shephelah and the northern hill country, some parts of the kingdom were left unconquered owing to Sennacherib's premature departure. This assisted Judah's recovery, which was gradual.

Given the general condition of peace prevailing in Palestine from 711 to Sargon's death in 705, it is reasonable to conclude that Judah remained subjugated to Assyria with Hezekiah paying tribute annually. Nevertheless, Judah enjoyed a reasonable degree of autonomy, as vassal states normally did. We can further speculate that Judah and Assyria reached an accord after the loss of Sennacherib's army. The deal was struck probably after the Ashdod campaign of 711 and went something along these lines. The Assyrians would leave Judah alone provided that Hezekiah did not rebel by withholding tribute, seeking help from Egypt, or inciting anti-Assyrian sentiment in the region. The tribute would be as in former years, not the higher amount that Sennacherib levied. The Assyrians required, however, that the deported Hebrews remain in exile. Also, the conquered cities of western Judah already given to neighboring kings were to remain under their control. Hezekiah accepted those terms, so securing peace in Judah for the remainder of Sargon's reign and throughout Sennacherib's reign (which suggests that a loyalty oath was imposed on Hezekiah).

Despite Judah's continued vassalage, Hezekiah nevertheless became famed in the region for the Lord's deliverance of Jerusalem:

> Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other, and guided them on every side. And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth. (2 Chr 32:22–23)

Interestingly, in all the cuneiform documents from Mesopotamia, Jerusalem is mentioned by name only for the reign of Hezekiah (in association with Sennacherib's invasion). The city is referred to again, but not by name, over a century later in the Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 21946 when, in his seventh year (598/97), Nebuchadnezzar reported that "he encamped against the city of Judah."[151]

I. Isaiah 20

Isaiah 20 is a short chapter of six verses that concludes the oracle against Egypt begun in the preceding chapter. It narrates Isaiah's performance of a symbolic act foretelling the impending fate of Egypt:

> In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it; At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and

("Archaeology and the Messiah Oracles of Isaiah 9 and 11," 61). For an assessment of the destruction based on the distribution of *LMLK* seal impressions on the handles of large storage jars—*LMLK* means "belonging to the king"—see Na'aman, "Hezekiah's Fortified Cities and the *LMLK* Stamps," 5–21. For an overview of the archaeological evidence associated with Sennacherib's invasion, see Grabbe, *Like a Bird in a Cage*, 1–20.

[151] Grayson, *ABC*, 102 (Chron. 5 r. 12). Despite not naming Jerusalem specifically, later Assyrian royal inscriptions still mention Judah, for example: "Manasseh, king of Judah" by Esarhaddon (*ANET*, 291) and also Ashurbanipal (*ANET*, 294).

> barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape? (Isa 20:1–6)

Isaiah's sign-act showed that Egypt, now under Nubian (Ethiopian) rule, would be defeated by the Assyrians just as Ashdod—who had sought Egypt's help—had been defeated. The sign-act also underscored that reliance on Egypt was futile, a warning which Isaiah had voiced on other occasions (Isa 30:1–2; 31:1). The message was clear: Judah should not rely on the new rulership in Egypt for relief from their obligations to Assyria.

According to our reconstruction, the tartan came to Ashdod in 711. Sargon had dispatched him to crush Yamani's revolt, so sending a message to the region that Assyria was still in control. Tellingly, Sennacherib played no part in this attack; he remained in Assyria, still humiliated by the loss of his army.

As discussed earlier, the events leading up to Assyria's invasion of Ashdod were:

1. SPRING 713: Azuri sends messages to neighboring kings to incite them to rebellion.
2. LATE SPRING 712: After Judah surrenders, Sennacherib invades Ashdod and replaces Azuri with his brother Ahimetu.
3. EARLY AUTUMN 712: After Sennacherib returns home in shame, Ahimetu is overthrown by his own people, who place Yamani on the throne. Yamani attempts to draft regional neighbors into his rebellion, and sends bribes to Shabako to buy Egypt's help.
4. SPRING–SUMMER: 711: The tartan conquers Ashdod (Yamani flees to Nubia before he arrives) and begins the process of incorporating it as an Assyrian province.

Isaiah walked naked and barefoot for three years, signifying the fate and shame of the Egyptian captives.[152] Although the beginning point of this period is unclear, I accept Oswalt's view that it began at least 14 months before Ashdod fell:

> The language here does not express the sequence of events very clearly. Evidently the Lord had spoken to Isaiah prior to the actual attack on and fall of Ashdod, since he had acted out his prophecy for at least fourteen months (parts of three years, v. 3). However, the interpretation of the activity was not given until the end of its duration. Thus it may be that the speaking *by the hand* of Isaiah (normally speech directed to others) was not the directions contained in v. 2 but the interpretation given in v. 3. In that case, the appropriate reading would be: "At that time the Lord spoke by the hand of Isaiah, son of Amoz—having said, 'Go . . . .' And he had done this. . . .—then the Lord said, etc."[153]

Oswalt notes that the duration of Isaiah's sign-act may not have been a full three years. Because the Hebrews counted partial years, it may have occurred over a period of as little as 14 months

[152] There is uncertainty over whether Isaiah appeared completely nude in public. It is possible that he retained a loin cloth. See Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 385.

[153] Ibid., 384.

(beginning near the close of one year and ending just after the start of the third year). Possibly, it began with Azuri's withdrawal of tribute to Assyria in 713, which led a short time later to Hezekiah doing the same in the expectation of support from Egypt.[154] If so, then the three-year period spanned the time from the start of Ashdod's revolt (713) to its violent conclusion (711).[155]

It is significant that the three-year period ended in a Sabbath year. During such a year, people were nourished by the regrowth of the land. The Sabbath year of 711 was noteworthy because the Lord specifically used it to signify that He would foster Judah's regrowth (2 Kgs 19:29–31). Isaiah's sign-act underscored a corollary truth: that Judah's continuance and prosperity as a nation were fostered by God, not Egypt. Hezekiah probably took this message to heart and abandoned his pro-Nubian policy. This would explain his lack of engagement with the anti-Assyrian revolts in the region following Sargon's death in 705.

The prophecy of Egypt's defeat was fulfilled, but not immediately. Forty years after the conclusion of Isaiah's sign-act, Esarhaddon king of Assyria defeated Taharqa (in 671). With its more disciplined army, the Assyrians conquered that once mighty empire, carrying off her inhabitants in shame.

J. The Assyrian Point of View

Section H above sets forth a reconstruction of the events associated with Sennacherib's invasion of Judah. Although it harmonizes the relevant Biblical passages, it disagrees in parts with Sennacherib's report of the event, to which we now turn.

The account of Sennacherib's third campaign is a standard royal inscription designed to glorify the king. Despite some exaggerations and distortions of truth with respect to Judah, it is well written and shows a sophisticated literary design.[156] The account divides into two phases. The first deals with two episodes in Phoenicia: (1) the Sidon offensive and (2) rendering of tribute from the eight kings of Amurru. The second phase deals with three rebel kings in the southern Levant: (1) Sidqa of Ashkelon, (2) the Ekronite rebellion and the encounter with the Egyptian army at Eltekeh, and (3) the invasion of Judah.

Although the scholarly approach would be to review Sennacherib's account of the Judah invasion in the context of the third campaign overall, it is a key conclusion of this chapter that Sennacherib relocated the details of the Judah offensive from 712 to 701 B.C. Accordingly, this section will focus only on the Judahite portion of that campaign. An English translation by Gallagher of the Judah episode is shown below. It derives from the Rassam Cylinder, which is the earliest known text of this event:

> [49-50](As for) Hezekiah, the Judaean (who had not submitted to my yoke,) I surrounded and conquered 46 of his strongly fortified walled cities and countless small towns in their vicinity by stamping down siege ramps, bringing up battering rams, the relentless attacks of footsoldiers, bored holes, breaches,

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[154] Isaiah's sign-act may have coincided not only with the start of Azuri's rebellion but with the worsening of Hezekiah's illness. This would explain why the prophet conducted his actions in public rather than addressing his concerns directly to the king, who was generally inaccessible due to his failing health.

[155] If Ashdod's revolt began in 713, then Nubian rule was established in Egypt by 713 at the latest. Recall that Isaiah walked naked and barefoot "for a sign and wonder upon Egypt **and upon Ethiopia**."

[156] For the literary structure of Sennacherib's third campaign, see Younger, "Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant," 248.

and picks. [51)]I brought out of their midst 200,150 people, small and big, male and female, horses, wild asses, donkeys, camels, oxen and sheep without number and I classified (them) as spoil.

[52)](As for) him, I enclosed him like a bird in a cage in the midst of Jerusalem, his royal city. I erected fortresses against him and made it unthinkable for him to go out of the gate of his city. [53)]His cities, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land and gave to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron; and Sil-Bel, king of Gaza. I (thus) reduced his land. [54)]To the earlier tax, their annual payment, I added tribute (and) gifts for my lordship and imposed (these) upon them (i.e. upon the kings of Ashdod, Ekron and Gaza).

[55-58)](As for) him, Hezekiah, the fear of the radiant splendor of my lordship overwhelmed him and he sent after me to Nineveh, my capital, ambushers and his select troops, whom he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, and whom he had acquired as auxiliary troops, (as well as) 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, choice antimony, large blocks of carnelian, beds (inlaid) with ivory, armchairs (inlaid) with ivory, elephant hide, ivory, ebony, boxwood, garments with multicolored trim, linen garments, blue-purple wool, red-purple wool, utensils of copper, iron, bronze, tin and iron, chariots, shields, lances, coats of mail, swords on belts, bows and arrows, tillu-equipment, instruments of war without number along with his daughters, his palace women, and male and female singers—and, in order to deliver the tribute and to carry out his servitude, he dispatched his messenger.[157]

Sennacherib's annals portray Hezekiah as being defeated, submitting to his overlord, and sending a substantial tribute payment to Nineveh after the completion of the campaign. This portrayal of victory contradicts the Biblical account, which describes the mass death by plague of the Assyrian army (2 Kgs 19:35). There are other discrepancies (discussed shortly) but enquiry should be made as to why Sennacherib felt compelled to record the campaign as an achievement of his own rule. The following reasons are offered:

1. While Sargon excluded the Judah offensive from his inscriptions, Sennacherib was proud of its major successes, particularly the fall of Lachish. He therefore chronicled them under his own name for future generations to esteem. (This may have also helped him to purge the shameful memory of the loss of Sargon's army.)

2. To that time, there was no official Assyrian account of the Judah campaign (as far as we know) except for the non-annalistic document of which the Azekah Inscription was a part. Sennacherib was aware that the Hebrews, like the Assyrians, kept detailed records. So they would surely mention the heavy loss of troops in their royal chronicles, as might neighboring nations. An Assyrian version in which Sennacherib was the victor was needed to counter the records of other nations, especially Judah. (Sennacherib led that invasion, so he wanted to ensure that an Assyrian version was preserved in antiquity against other accounts.)

3. It is likely that heavy losses were sustained by both sides in Sennacherib's engagement with Egypt at Eltekeh. Consequently, Sennacherib's third campaign probably ended soon after that point, owing to the army being weakened and demoralized. Adding the Judah episode after Eltekeh avoided closing the annals with what looked like a setback; that is, a battle against a large Egyptian army but with no follow-up pursuit, no statement of the number of prisoners taken, and no listing of the spoils of battle acquired (such details were normally boasted about for true Assyrian victories). The Judah inclusion also preserved the image of the empire's relentless military might as Sennacherib's army engaged in an open-field battle with Egypt, then moved to conquer Ekron, then waged a vigorous offensive against Judah.

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[157] Gallagher 1999, 129–30. Gallagher's translation follows the text and apparatus in Eckart Frahm, *Einleitung in die Sanherib-Inschriften*, 54–55 (see fn. 55).

For the above reasons, Sennacherib's version of the Judah invasion was added to conclude his account of the third campaign. Nevertheless, there are hints in the text that it was transplanted, but they are only evident once the Assyrian version is compared with the Bible.

The sources compared. Discussed below are the anomalies between the Biblical and Assyrian accounts of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, plus other relevant issues:

- Scholars typically date Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria in 2 Kgs 18:7 to the empire-wide time of rebellion that began after Sargon's death in 705 B.C. However, all the events of 2 Kgs 18:1–9 contextually fall within the reign of Shalmaneser. This agrees with our reconstruction, which upholds that Hezekiah did not stop paying tribute to Assyria after Sennacherib came to the throne in 705 B.C. Interestingly, this view finds a trace of support in a discrepancy between the copies of Sennacherib's annals, which introduce the Judah offensive thus:

  > (As for) Hezekiah, the Judaean (who had not submitted to my yoke,) I surrounded and conquered 46 of his strongly fortified walled cities . . .

  The statement in brackets by Gallagher that Hezekiah "had not submitted to my yoke" is absent in the first written account of the invasion, which is the Rassam Cylinder dated to 700 B.C. The statement appears, though, in later copies from 697 B.C. onward. The fact that the earliest record of the event, the Rassam Cylinder, offers no specific reason for Assyria's invasion of Judah probably reflects the true situation whereby Hezekiah remained loyal after Sennacherib came to the throne. No invasion of Judah was therefore necessary in 701 B.C. The later addition "had not submitted to my yoke" therefore appears to be an excuse to legitimize the fiction that Judah was invaded in 701 B.C. for disloyalty.

- Sennacherib claims to have conquered 46 of Hezekiah's fortified cities and countless small towns. It is unfortunate that the fortified cities were not named. Although one might argue that space prevented the scribes from doing so, the lines of text devoted to the booty from Judah suggest that space was available for at least a limited listing of the more important conquests such as Lachish. Nevertheless, we can speculate that because Jerusalem itself was not taken, there was no glory in naming the captured cities. To do so would only direct attention to Sennacherib's failure to overthrow the capital. As for the number of conquered fortified cities (46), this may be an inflated figure.

- Pictorially, Sennacherib displayed his mastery over Judah in a monumental stone relief in his "Palace without Rival," which he constructed at Nineveh.[158] There, in a series of panels occupying all four walls of a centrally located room (Room XXXVI), the battle of Lachish is portrayed.[159] Interestingly, the capture of Lachish is the only battle scene from Sennacherib's third campaign displayed in the Nineveh palace. Its unusual prominence suggests that Sennacherib considered the Lachish offensive to be a highlight of his military career.

- Sennacherib named the following Philistine kings as receiving Judah's conquered cities to the west: Mitinti (Ashdod), Padi (Ekron), and Sil-Bel (Gaza). Undoubtedly, they were the

[158] For an online presentation of this relief, see http://www.lmlk.com/research/lmlk_reliefs.htm.

[159] For a description of the prominent location of the Lachish relief in this palace, see John Malcolm Russell, *Sennacherib's Palace Without Rival at Nineveh*, 252, 254 (also 64, 160–64, 202–09, 252–57, 276).

kings who were ruling after Sennacherib's third campaign. (If Sennacherib went to the trouble of relocating the 712 B.C. Judah campaign to the annals of his third campaign in 701 B.C., he certainly would not name the kings ruling in 712 B.C.) As for who actually received Judah's cities in 712 B.C., we can speculate that they were Ahimetu (Ashdod), Padi (Ekron[160]), and the predecessor of Sil-Bel (Gaza).[161] This discrepancy in names probably did not trouble the Assyrian scribes because, after 701 B.C., Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza still controlled the Judahite cities annexed over a decade earlier. It was therefore still "truthful."

A greatly abbreviated account of the Judah offensive is given in the Bull Inscription 4. This inscription, originally on a pair of bulls facing back to back, was cut off and is now in the British Museum. It records the division of Hezekiah's land between *four* Philistine kings (all unnamed) and not three, the additional one being the king of Ashkelon.[162] Although scholars find this discrepancy problematic (that other variants omit Ashkelon), it is likely that Sennacherib indeed gave some of Hezekiah's territory to the loyal king of Ashkelon in 712 B.C. Nevertheless, because a succeeding king (Sidqa) was punished for disloyalty during Sennacherib's third campaign eleven years later, the scribes omitted to mention Ashkelon to avoid the negative example in the royal annals of punishment (Sidqa's removal from the throne) being followed too soon by reward (Ashkelon receiving some of Judah's conquered territory). As to why Ashkelon was mentioned in the Bull Inscription, we note that no kings were actually named in that inscription. Perhaps, without names to remind him to tailor the text otherwise, the writer accidentally included the correct information that Sennacherib gave some of Judah's territory to the king of Ashkelon.[163] If so, then the Bull Inscription features a scribal slip-up that hints at the postdated inclusion of the Judah offensive.

- The annals report that Sennacherib took captive 200,150 people from the conquered cities and towns of Judah. Scholars are divided on the veracity of this unusually high number.[164]

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[160] The sudden expansion of Ekron and massive growth of its olive oil industry near the end of the eighth century or beginning of the seventh century are attested in the archaeological evidence. Ekron's rapid growth was undoubtedly enabled by Sennacherib's ceding of Judah's territory to its king. On this, see Diana Edelman, "What if We Had No Accounts of Sennacherib's Third Campaign or the Palace Reliefs Depicting His Capture of Lachish?" *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches*, 8 (2000): 96–102.

[161] For an opinion on the rulers of Ekron and Gaza between 720 and 701 B.C., see Na'aman, "Ekron under the Assyrian and Egyptian Empires," 83.

[162] Gallagher 1999, 130 (see also 11–12, 135).

[163] Ashdod had been rebellious in 712 B.C. but was rewarded with some of Judah's territory shortly after Sennacherib replaced Azuri with Ahimetu. Although this was a clear case of punishment for disloyalty being followed by reward, it was disguised in the annals due to Sennacherib's repositioning of the Judah offensive from 712 B.C. to 701 B.C. Mitinti of Ashdod (who ruled in 701 B.C.) was therefore able to be named as receiving some of Judah's conquered territory in the account of Sennacherib's third campaign. (Although Ekron came under punishment during this campaign, king Padi nevertheless received some of Hezekiah's land. This is because Padi had been imprisoned in Judah during Ekron's revolt; in other words, he had remained a loyal vassal so we read that he was rewarded accordingly.)

[164] For literature on the different approaches to the number of captives, see Younger, "Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant," 254 fn. 65; also Marco De Odorico, *The Use of Numbers and Quantifications in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 114–15, 173. We agree with De Odorico's conclusion that 200,150 is unfeasible, with the actual number of deportees being lower, possibly as little as 2,150. As to the purpose of this figure, perhaps the scribes, who were aware that 185,000 of Sennacherib's troops had died in Judah, sought to disguise that figure by claiming an even greater number of captives.

In all likelihood it was far less, especially given that Judah's total population at the time has been estimated at only about 110,000 (which includes 7,500 in Jerusalem).[165] Whatever their total number was, we can assume that most of the captives were either deported outright or became subjects of the Philistine city-states to whom Sennacherib ceded some of Judah's conquered cities. (Thereafter, the Philistine city-states may have allowed a number of Judahites to return to their own land.)

- The report of the Ekron phase of Sennacherib's third campaign (which preceded the Judah phase) states that—at an earlier, unspecified time—the Ekronites rebelled against their pro-Assyrian king, Padi, and handed him over to Hezekiah (see Section B7 above). Although the annals mention Padi's liberation from Jerusalem *before* the invasion of Judah, scholars usually conclude that the event was placed topically rather than chronologically; i.e., Padi was actually released after the Assyrians encircled Jerusalem. One may reasonably conclude here that Sennacherib viewed the Ekronite rebellion, and not Hezekiah's acceptance of Padi, as the punishable act.

  How does the report of Padi's exile to Judah and subsequent rescue by Sennacherib relate to our historical reconstruction? It is likely that Padi was removed from the throne and handed over to Hezekiah in 705 or 704 B.C. This was a challenging time for the Assyrian empire, which had been weakened by the combined impact of three events:

  1. Sargon had died ingloriously on the battlefield in Anatolia in the summer of 705 B.C.
  2. a new king now ruled in Assyria (vassal states often rebelled at this point)
  3. Assyria lost control of Babylon in 704 B.C. (but regained it after the battle of Kish later that year)

  We can assume that, after his handover to Hezekiah in 705–04 B.C., Padi was well treated in Jerusalem. Hezekiah had promised in 711 B.C. not to rebel against Sargon or his successor Sennacherib. Also, Isaiah's earlier sign-act (2 Kgs 20:1–6) would have put an end to Hezekiah's pro-Egyptian stance. He therefore did not participate in any anti-Assyrian revolts or call on Egypt for help after Sargon's death. In 701 B.C., following the Assyrian encounter with the Egyptians at Eltekeh and the reestablishment of control over Ekron, Sennacherib ordered Hezekiah to release Padi, which he did, obediently. Because Padi had been given safe refuge by Hezekiah, and because he had not engaged in anti-Assyrian activity, Sennacherib found no reason to punish him. In light of this assessment, the Padi episode in the Assyrian account appears to be entirely truthful, and does not contradict our reconstruction.

- As mentioned in Section B7 above, it is unlikely that the invasion of Judah occurred after Sennacherib fought the Egyptians at Eltekeh (how could Sennacherib defeat the Egyptian and Ethiopian forces there, go on to invade Judah, then receive word in Judah that the king of Ethiopia was coming to fight him again?). This discrepancy between the Biblical and Assyrian sources points to the Judah offensive in Sennacherib's annals as being a postdated inclusion. A further inconsistency between the sources is the identity of who secured Egypt's

[165] See Magen Broshi and Israel Finkelstein, "The Population of Palestine in Iron Age II," *BASOR* 287 (1992): 51–54. These estimates apply up to the time of Sennacherib's invasion and not to the expansion that occurred in Judah and Jerusalem afterward.

support: Ekron or Judah, or both? The Assyrian annals suggest that it was Ekron alone, whose deposed king Padi had been under oath to Assyria.[166] There is no accusation there of Judah calling to Egypt for help. Yet the rab-shakeh was quick to accuse Hezekiah of doing so (2 Kgs 18:20–21). This incongruity points again to the invasion of Judah as occurring in a different year to the battle at Eltekeh.

- Most scholars recognize that the Eltekeh engagement was not the victory that Sennacherib claimed; it was more likely a stalemate. Undoubtedly, the action left the Assyrian army weakened both in vigor and number (recall that they fought a "countless force" of Egyptians there). If Sennacherib then invaded Judah, his troops had astonishing stamina given the number of fortified cities they conquered, especially Lachish. His army would have also begun the Eltekeh engagement with more than 185,000 troops (Eltekeh was a pitched, open-field battle, in which heavy losses were probably sustained given the indecisive outcome). It is difficult enough to explain a Neo-Assyrian army sized at 185,000 troops let alone 230,000 or more before the Eltekeh engagement. In light of these discrepancies and the other problems cited thus far for the Eltekeh episode, it is logical to conclude that Sennacherib's third campaign ended soon after that point, after he punished the Ekronites. In other words, the invasion of Judah occurred in a different year.[167]

- In response to Hezekiah's prayer after the second ultimatum by the Assyrians for Jerusalem to surrender, the Lord told Hezekiah through Isaiah that the king of Assyria "shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it" (2 Kgs 19:32). The Assyrian account does not contradict this statement. Sennacherib said that he "erected fortresses" against Hezekiah. This is not the same as casting siege banks. As Gallagher observes, the erecting of fortresses against Jerusalem resembles the description of blockades on Tyre from the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. Their goal was starve the city into submission.[168] Although this was the same tactic that Sennacherib employed against Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kgs 18:27), he was hoping that Hezekiah would capitulate well before the city reached the point of starvation.[169] We might add here that there is no archaeological evidence of Jerusalem being surrounded by an Assyrian siege mound or

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[166] Given that a loyalty oath had been imposed upon Padi (earlier by Sargon), the Ekronites' rebellion in removing Padi from the throne would have been viewed by the Assyrians as treachery. For literature on Akkadian treaties in the Ancient Near East, see ch. 10B, fn. 7.

[167] A setback for Sennacherib in 701 is also hinted at in the report of the following year's campaign against the Bit-Yakin tribe of Merodach-Baladan: "In my fourth campaign, Assur, my lord, gave me courage, and I mustered my numerous armies and gave the command to proceed against Bit-Yakin" (*ARAB* II, §241). Note the unusual statement "I mustered my numerous armies." This suggests a general call-up of troops from the provinces. Such would be the case if the standing army suffered a serious setback in the preceding year (as the report of the Eltekeh engagement suggests).

[168] Gallagher 1999, 133–35, 238–39. Like Nebuchadnezzar after him, Sennacherib knew that Jerusalem was a heavily fortified city whose defences could not be easily broken. The Assyrians therefore established a blockade. From their fortifications built at key points, they could deny access into or out of the city. This passive tactic (essentially a waiting game) stands in marked contrast to the usual Assyrian measure of storming a fortified city to capture it (such as Lachish). This was active warfare in which siege ramps were built so that battering rams could be brought up to breach the city walls.

[169] Second Chronicles 32:10 is sometimes quoted in support of the notion that the Assyrians built siege ramps against Jerusalem ("Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem?"). However, comparison with 2 Kgs 18–19 and the Assyrian record shows that the city was under siege in the sense that it was *blockaded*.

encampment of troops outside its walls. Presently, the nearest evidence of the Assyrian army is at Ramat Rahel, four kilometers south of the old city of Jerusalem.[170]

- Sennacherib's annals confirm that Hezekiah remained safe in Jerusalem throughout the offensive. This is unusual. Assyrian scribes typically presented an enemy's city as being vulnerable to attack. Ordinarily, we read that the Assyrians walked into an enemy city—having broken its defences if any—conquered it, then established a new government. By contrast, the only recorded military activity associated with Jerusalem was the setting up of fortresses to prevent anyone from escaping (or entering). The annals also state that Hezekiah sent a large tribute payment *after* Sennacherib left for Nineveh. This is a unique situation in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. Typically, a ruler overwhelmed by the might of an Assyrian king would meet him, kiss his feet, and present tribute there and then. Such abnormalities in the official record are telling of a setback. To disguise it, the scribes (over)emphasized other aspects of the campaign. Thus, we read about the conquest of cities and towns, the erection of fortresses around Jerusalem (Hezekiah was shut in "like a bird in a cage"[171]), the annexing of the occupied districts to neighboring submissive kings, and the payment of heavy tribute. But despite the volume of words, it is evident in the Assyrian account that Jerusalem was not conquered.

- Sennacherib claims that Hezekiah was so overwhelmed by the radiant splendor of his majesty that he sent numerous items of tribute after the Assyrian king's departure. Rather than being awestruck by Sennacherib, the Bible indicates that Hezekiah was concerned over Jerusalem's fate and sought the Lord in prayer (2 Kgs 19:14–19). Also, in the aftermath of the event, it was Hezekiah who was "magnified in the sight of all nations" (2 Chr 32:23); Sennacherib was no doubt derided in the Near East. To help reverse the memory of this situation, the Assyrian scribes ensured that the usual hyperbole of being awestruck by the Assyrian king's presence was amply applied to Hezekiah.[172]

- Our reconstruction posits that Hezekiah paid tribute (30 talents of gold and 300 talents of silver) after the first invasion. He may have also sent "peace-offering" gifts to Sargon several months later, after a deal was struck between Assyria and Judah in the wake of Sennacherib's setback. Whereas the Bible indicates that the core component of the tribute (the gold and silver) was paid *before* Sennacherib left Judah, the Assyrian account claims that Hezekiah sent all his tribute items (including the gold and silver) after Sennacherib left Judah. This booty list is one of the longest in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. Some of the items cataloged there may well have been given by Hezekiah because lesser tribute gifts were probably not recorded by the Hebrew historian. It is unknown, though, if they were part of Hezekiah's initial payment when he sued for peace or sent later to Nineveh after Sennacherib returned home. Other items in the list, however, are doubtful. For instance, it is unlikely that Hezekiah

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[170] Grabbe, *Like a Bird in a Cage*, 19–20.

[171] The "bird in a cage" simile was used by Tiglath-pileser III in relation to the siege of Damascus (733–732 B.C.), which shut in king Rezin: "Damascus his city I besieged, and like a caged bird I enclosed him" (Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, 282).

[172] Bull Inscriptions 2 and 3 even claim that Sennacherib, after overthrowing the vast district of Judah, made the strong and mighty Hezekiah submit at his feet (Gallagher 1999, 130). As Gallagher opined, though, the claim is wishful thinking (ibid., 141). Incidentally, it is noteworthy in the Bull Inscription that Hezekiah is called "strong and mighty." The normal practice for Assyrian scribes was to belittle their enemies, but they evidently had reason to think otherwise about Hezekiah.

gave away his daughters. Such a personal loss for a king of Judah would have surely rated mention in the Bible (cf. 1 Kgs 20:1–7). Also, while the gold payment of 30 talents agrees with the Bible if one ignores the timing of its payment, there is a discrepancy in the amount of silver paid: 800 versus 300 talents. Two explanations may be offered for this:[173]

1. While the Assyrian and Hebrew gold talents were the same, their silver talents differed.[174]

2. The higher Assyrian count was inflated by the royal scribes as part of their literary quest to deflect attention from Sennacherib's failure to conquer Jerusalem.

The deaths of Sargon and Sennacherib. An intriguing fact of history is that both Sargon and Sennacherib, who I submit were the joint architects of the invasion of Judah, died by the sword in humiliating circumstances.

Sargon was the first and only Assyrian king recorded as being killed in battle, in 705 B.C., against a certain "Qurdi the Kulummaean."[175] Although the details of this final battle are unsure, Sargon was probably warring against the Cimmerians in the land of Tabal in the Taurus Mountains (in present-day southern Turkey).[176] We know from an inscription commonly called the "Sin of Sargon" that his body was never recovered for a fitting burial at home; either it fell into enemy hands or was lost on the battlefield.[177] Sargon's manner of death and improper burial—a shameful fate, especially for a king—dismayed the royal family, who concluded that he had committed an offence against the gods.

Twenty four years later, in 681 B.C., Sennacherib fell by the sword when his own sons assassinated him (2 Kgs 19:37).

K. What if Jerusalem had been Conquered?

The Spring 1998 issue of *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* (Vol. 10, No. 3) featured an article titled "The Road Not Taken," in which 37 "what-if" scenarios were explored by noted military historians (pp. 65–80). For example, in "Alexander Dies Young," Josiah Ober recounted how Alexander the Great was nearly killed at the battle of the river Granicus, which was the first major engagement of Alexander's invasion of the Persian empire (in 334 B.C.). Alexander survived and was victorious at Granicus, and went on to conquer the Persian empire. However, had he died at Granicus (at the age of 22 instead of 32), Ober concluded that, with the

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[173] Some scholars suggest that this 500 talent discrepancy was due to the Bible not counting the weight of silver stripped from the temple doors (2 Kgs 18:16). However, the Bible never mentions silver in relation to temple doors, only gold (cf. 1 Kgs 7:50).

[174] On this proposal, see H. Rowley, "Hezekiah's Reform and Rebellion," in *Men of God*, 117, and n. 2.

[175] Millard 1994, 48, 60.

[176] See Tadmor 1958, 97, esp. n. 311; Grayson, *ABC*, 76 (Chron. 1 ii 6′); A. K. Grayson, "Assyria: Tiglath-Pileser III to Sargon II," CAH^2 III/2, 92–93.

[177] We possess only two fragments of the complete "Sin of Sargon" tablet: K.4730 and Sm.1876. For critical analysis of the text, see Hayim Tadmor, Benno Landsberger, and Simo Parpola, "The Sin of Sargon and Sennacherib's Last Will," *SAAB* (1989): 3–51. For general commentary on the text, see Tremper Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1991), 117–18; Clifford Mark McCormick, *Palace and Temple: A Study of Architectural and Verbal Icons* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 165–66.

Persian empire unconquered by the Greeks, "there would have been no brilliant Hellenistic period, no integration of a wider world into a Greek political-cultural sphere . . . we would inhabit a world almost unimaginably different from our own in terms of geopolitics and culture" (p. 75).

Ober's contribution demonstrates the value of counterfactual articles in that they can define true turning points in history. The final what-if scenario in "The Road Not Taken" concerns Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (its placement as the final piece suggests its importance to the editor). Titled "Infectious Alternatives" and written by William H. McNeill (world historian and former professor emeritus of history at the University of Chicago), it speculated on what might have been had the Assyrian army remained healthy. To begin, McNeill recalled two military campaigns whose outcomes were considerably affected by outbreaks of infectious diseases. The first was when the French army abandoned a siege of Naples in 1494 then, as it dispersed, spread syphilis (a new disease) throughout Europe. The second was when influenza in the Prussian army in 1792 caused them to withdraw from French soil after an indecisive engagement at Valmy, so giving revolutionary France a reprieve. McNeill submitted that the consequences of those and many other disruptions of military operations by sudden outbreaks of disease paled in comparison to the consequences of Sennacherib's misfortune. Unlike the Babylonian deportation of Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C., in which the Hebrews survived as a cohesive ethnic group while in exile, deportations under Sennacherib would have ushered the end of the Southern Kingdom. (Recall that the Northern Kingdom was effectively wiped out through ethnic mixing following Sargon's mass two-way deportations.) By McNeill's reckoning, this would have altered the future course of the world enormously:

> Had the Assyrian army remained healthy in 701, Jerusalem would probably have been captured and its people dispersed, as had happened to Samaria only twenty years before. Think of what that would mean! For without Judaism, both Christianity and Islam become inconceivable. And without these faiths, the world as we know it becomes unrecognizable: profoundly, utterly different. Surely, there is no greater might-have-been in all recorded history.[178]

[178] Op. cit., 80. McNeill expanded on this article in *What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* by Robert Cowley (ed.); New York: Berkley, 2000. Drawn in part from "The Road Not Taken," this book is a collection of 20 essays and 14 sidebar articles dealing with counterfactual history. McNeill's updated article is titled "Infectious Alternatives: The Plague that Saved Jerusalem, 701 B.C." (pp. 1–12).

Chapter 9: The Year of Josiah's Death

According to our chronology, Josiah's death—in the 31st year of his reign—occurred in 610/09 B.C. (around November by the reconstruction below). This disagrees with the widely held view that Josiah died in the next Nisan year, 609/08 B.C. (around June). This chapter will show that the earlier date is not contradicted by the secular data. Moreover, it should be preferred.[1]

A. The Prevailing View

After the death of Ashurbanipal in 627 B.C., Assyria's hold over its empire began to diminish rapidly as a result of ongoing wars with Babylon. Not surprisingly, Egypt moved to fill the power vacuum left in the west by Assyria's decline. In Judah, Josiah was the ruling king having come to the throne in 641/40 B.C. Although the relationship between Judah and Egypt then is unclear, it is likely that Judah became, at least nominally, a vassal of Egypt. Its inland location probably made it of secondary importance to Egypt, which sought to control the lucrative trade routes and seaports of the eastern Mediterranean coast. With minimal intervention in Judah's affairs by either Assyria or Egypt, the kingdom enjoyed considerable freedom.

The Assyrian empire was dealt a mortal blow in the summer of 612 B.C. when Nineveh fell to the Babylonians and Medes after a three-month siege. Although Nineveh was completely destroyed, some Assyrians escaped westwards to Harran, which became the new Assyrian capital. Just over two years later, and despite the support of an Egyptian force (believed to be a regionally based unit), Harran was taken by the Babylonians and Medes without a fight around December, 610 B.C. (The Egyptians and Assyrians abandoned the city before the invasion force arrived.) According to the conventional view, Egypt's new pharaoh, Necho II, responded to the capture of Harran by sending a large army from Egypt (in haste) to help the Assyrians recapture it. For reasons not explained in the Bible, Josiah tried to stop him at Megiddo but was killed in the attempt. It is believed that Josiah died sometime between late May and early July, 609 B.C. based on the following reasoning:

- The Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 21901 records that the Assyrians, presumably together with the Egyptians, crossed the Euphrates in Tammuz of Nabopolassar's 17th year to retake Harran. Nabopolassar's 17th year was 609/08 B.C., and Tammuz that year began on June 25 and ended on July 23.

[1] The earlier date has been offered before. For example, Hayes and Hooker place the death of Josiah in the latter half of 610 B.C. (*A New Chronology for the Kings of Judah and Israel*, 88–90; idem, "The Year of Josiah's Death: 609 or 610 BCE?," 96–103). However, in their opinion, there was an interregnal period in Judah between Necho deposing Jehoahaz (before Nisan 1, 609 B.C.) and Jehoiakim's accession (after Elul, 609 B.C.). Jones likewise favors 610/09 B.C. for Josiah's death but with no interregnum after Jehoahaz (Jones 2005, 184–88; see also fn. 26 below).

- The distance from Megiddo (where Josiah fought Necho) to Carchemish is around 400 miles by road.[2] If the average rate of advance of the Egyptian army was 18.6 miles a day,[3] the journey would have taken 22 days. If the rate of advance was the more typical 15 miles a day,[4] then it would have taken 27 days. Working back 22 to 27 days from Tammuz places Josiah's death sometime between May 29 (Sivan 4) and July 1 (Tammuz 7), 609 B.C.

Although the above date range appears sound, the following two factors are often overlooked when coordinating Josiah's death with the Babylonian record:

1. BM 21901 shows that the Egyptians were present in the Upper Euphrates region both in 610/09 and 609/08 B.C. Unfortunately, there are missing sections in the chronicle, and they occur in the very lines that mention Egypt in both years:[5]

   610/09: "Fear of the enemy overcame Ashur-uballit (II) and the army of Eg[ypt *which*] had come [*to help him*] and they aban[doned] the city [. . .] they crossed."[6]

   609/08: "In the month Tammuz Ashur-uballit (II), king of Assyria, the large army of Egypt [. . .] crossed the river (Euphrates) and marched against Harran to conquer (it)."[7]

   For 610/09 B.C., BM 21901 records that Harran was abandoned by the Assyrians and Egyptians on receiving news that a combined Medo-Babylonian force was advancing to attack the city. The fact that they withdrew without a fight leads some to conclude that the Egyptian military presence in Harran at the time was not large; it was either a regionally-based unit or auxiliary troops sent to help the Assyrians. The main Egyptian army, led by Necho, would not arrive for some months. Nevertheless, BM 21901 calls this supposedly undersized force "the army of Egypt." It is possible, then, that this earlier 610 B.C. force was the very army that Necho led in haste from Egypt to Carchemish, prompting Josiah's attack.[8] If so, then it is undoubtedly the same force referred to in the Babylonian Chronicle entry for the next year (609/08 B.C.).

2. Formal translations of 2 Kgs 23:29 such as the KJV state that Necho went to *fight* the Assyrians, not to help them.

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[2] For this estimate, see Clines, "Regnal Year Reckoning," in *On the Way to Postmodern*, 416–17, esp. fn. 80.

[3] Assyrian armies at their fastest could cover 30 km (18.6 mi) per day and at their slowest 12 km (7.5 mi) per day (see Younger, "The Fall of Samaria," 472). The fast rate for Assyria is assumed for Egypt in our reconstruction below. For marching times needed by expeditionary forces, see also Eph'al, "On Warfare and Military Control," 99. Eph'al's analysis is based on two average marching rates: 25 km (15.5 mi) and 30 km (18.6 mi) daily.

[4] So Clines, "Regnal Year Reckoning," 418.

[5] Known as the "Fall of Nineveh Chronicle," BM 21901 is a medium sized tablet of cuneiform text (132 mm x 69 mm) that at one time was broken into four pieces. Although the fragments have been joined, there are still several breaks in the tablet, requiring scholars to restore the missing words through critical analysis and some conjecture. The chronicle covers the time from the 10th to the 17th years of Nabopolassar (616–609 B.C.). Like others in the series, it is divided into short paragraphs each covering a regnal year. The entries mainly concern political and military events pertaining to Babylon and its king. As always, the narration is dry, objective, and concise.

[6] Grayson, *ABC*, 95 (Chron. 3:61f).

[7] Ibid., 96 (Chron. 3:66–67).

[8] So Hayes and Hooker (see fn. 1).

We will now examine the Biblical and secular texts to determine, exactly, the details they record (and do not record). As we progress, an alternative scheme of events will be proposed, one that agrees with our chronology, with the KJV translation of 2 Kgs 23:29, and with BM 21901.

B. The Biblical Account

Two passages in the Bible describe Josiah's fateful encounter with the Egyptians:

> In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead. (2 Kgs 23:29–30)

> After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. (2 Chr 35:20–24)

Josiah was mortally wounded when he fought the Egyptians at Megiddo while attempting to block Necho's advance to Carchemish.[9] Although the Bible is silent on the motive for Josiah's attack, scholars have offered a variety of reasons, including:

- Josiah saw Egypt as a threat to his own kingdom[10]
- possible internal reasons or Josiah was pressured by the Babylonians[11]
- Josiah did not want Necho to help the Assyrians, whose decline was welcomed in Judah[12]

In my view, these reasons inadequately explain Josiah's clash with Necho. However, if we accept that the Egyptians were marching to *fight* Assyria, a more compelling reason for Josiah's actions can be offered.

But first, we should review 2 Kgs 23:29. Formal translations such as the KJV state that Necho "went up **against** the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates." Unfortunately, modern versions have been influenced by the secular record, which takes for granted an alliance between Egypt and Assyria at the time. Hence, the NIV translation:

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[9] The Kings and Chronicles passages appear to disagree on whether Josiah died in Megiddo or Jerusalem. A possible explanation is that he was placed, severely wounded, in a chariot for return to Jerusalem but died before exiting Megiddo.

[10] David W. Baker, "Josiah," *NBD*[3], 615.

[11] Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 542.

[12] Terence C. Mitchell, "Judah Until the Fall of Jerusalem," CAH[2] III/2, 391.

> While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the Euphrates River **to help** the king of Assyria.

This translation is doubtful. The word in contention here is the Hebrew preposition "al" (= ayin-lamedh = על). As Jones argues, no precedent exists to translate "al" in the sense of helping:

> It is a preposition which occurs 1896 times in Scripture and has a wide variety of meanings depending upon syntax and context. According to computer analysis, the 47 King James translators rendered "al" as "against" 542 times, "over" 409, "on" 292, "at" 83, "concerning" 78, and "above" 68 times. Further, in descending order of usage it was translated as "off," "into," "thereon," "because," "according," "after," "toward," "beside," "about," "before," "therein," "under," "thereto," "within," "among," "than," "through," and the word "forward" bringing the study down to being so referenced but 3 times with quite a few other less frequent meanings having been recovered as well. However, *not one time* was it rendered "to the aid of" or even "together with" as the NKJV margin suggests (and never as "to" as in the NAS version).
>
> In fact, not once was a word found which bore any resemblance whatsoever to that meaning and neither Strong, Gesenius, nor Jay P. Green offers any support to such a translation. Keil and Delitzsch accepted unreservedly that the "against" rendering was correct.[13]

Although the Bible reports that Necho was marching to fight the Assyrians, BM 21901 indicates that the Egyptians were helping them in 610/09 B.C. and, it is believed, again in 609/08 B.C. The existence of an Assyro-Egyptian alliance at this time seems incontestable. Only six years earlier (616 B.C.), Pharaoh Psammetichus I joined with Assyria to fight the king of Babylon in the Tigris-Euphrates valley:

> In the month Tishri the army of Egypt and the army of Assyria went after the king of Akkad as far as Gablini but they did not overtake the king of Akkad (so) they withdrew.[14]

But was the Assyro-Egyptian alliance still in place six years later? Alliances in the Near East could shift quickly, especially after a new king came to power. Such is probably the case here. Psammetichus died in 610 B.C., most likely in March, and was succeeded by his son Necho II (610–595 B.C.).[15] Although Psammetichus supported Assyria against Babylon in 616 B.C., Necho came to the throne after Ashur-uballit II established Harran as Assyria's capital in 612 B.C. having escaped the destruction of Nineveh by the Babylonians and Medes. The westward repositioning of the diminished Assyrian empire would have troubled Necho. Although Ashur-uballit was presently in Harran, the continued campaigns against him by the Babylonians could well cause him to retreat further west to the Assyrian stronghold at Carchemish, which was the gateway to Syria-Palestine. Before long, the Babylonians would take the city, allowing them to move

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[13] Jones 2005, 184.

[14] Grayson, *ABC*, 91 (Chron. 3:10–11).

[15] Psammetichus I died sometime between Jan. 23, 610 (the start of his 55th year) and Aug. 31, 610 B.C. (the earliest attested date in the reign of Necho II). This seven-month range can be narrowed considerably because a celestial omen—"the sky swallowed the disk" (an eclipse)—was observed at the time of Psammetichus' death. (The event is recorded in the demotic papyrus P. Berlin 13588.) It is commonly assumed that this was the solar eclipse of Sep. 30, 610 B.C. (see, for example, Freedy and Redford, "The Dates in Ezekiel," 474 fn. 48). However, Egyptologist Mark Smith has submitted, with convincing arguments, that it was a *lunar* eclipse, and that the circumstances fit the partial lunar eclipse of 22 Mar., 610 B.C. (Mark J. Smith, "Did Psammetichus I Die Abroad?" 101–09; see also Hooker and Hayes, "The Year of Josiah's Death," 99). In all likelihood, then, Psammetichus' death and Necho's accession occurred in late March, 610 B.C.

southward to expand their empire. Since Egypt viewed Syria-Palestine as its possession, it was vital not to have Carchemish fall to the Babylonians.

In Donald Redford's assessment, Necho was a king of action, foresight, and judgment:

> Among the members of the 26th Dynasty, Necho II has received the worst press. A man of action from the start, and endowed with an imagination perhaps beyond that of his contemporaries, Necho had the ill luck to foster the impression of being a failure: in hindsight his bent to action was perceived as impetuosity, his imagination unrealistic dreaming. If a certain authoritarian tendency in his makeup (coupled with a temper?) is discernible in the scant records, this must be balanced by the brief glimpse of him in folk literature, which reveals a fair and generous adjudicator.[16]

Necho understood the titanic power shifts that were occurring in Mesopotamia, and he would have been eager to preserve Egypt's domination of the Syro-Palestinian corridor. Given his "bent to action," we can speculate that after securing his new rule (achieved by the autumn of 610 B.C.), Necho marched—in a pre-emptive move—to take Carchemish before the spring campaign season of 609 B.C. Control of this strategically important city would prevent the Assyrians from making it their new capital and the next target for the Babylonians. Accordingly, the Egyptian army marched hurriedly to Carchemish, to clear the Assyrian presence there and to establish it as an Egyptian stronghold.

Necho's northward march was interrupted by Josiah at Megiddo. I propose that Josiah did this in the national interest. He was surely aware, from various prophetic sources, that Judah would suffer at the hand of the Babylonians. One earlier source was Isaiah's prediction to Hezekiah:

> Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. (Isa 39:6–7)

At the time, this was a remarkable prophecy because Assyria was the dominant power in the region. But Assyria was now in decline and Babylon was ascendant. With Jeremiah prophesying that the Hebrews would serve strangers in another land (Jer 5:14–19), the conclusion was inevitable: Babylon would be Judah's destroyer. Huldah's prophecy, made in Josiah's 18th year, would have also driven this point home:

> And she [Huldah] said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me [Josiah], Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. (2 Kgs 22:15–20)

[16] Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 447–48.

For Josiah, this was a hugely bittersweet message. He knew that Judah would be desolated in the near future (undoubtedly by the Babylonians) but Huldah said that it would not occur during his lifetime. In view of these prophecies and the geo-political situation, we can speculate on Josiah's thoughts at the time:

- The Babylonians were not the only ones campaigning against Assyria now; the Egyptians were marching against them as well. Repeated attacks by both armies would surely hasten Assyria's fall. Josiah therefore faced two choices: (1) let Assyria fall then trust that Egypt could defend the southern Levant against ongoing Babylonian advances, or (2) stop Egypt from attacking Assyria so that it faced only one enemy (the Babylonians). The latter option probably seemed best to Josiah for the following reasons:

  - He and his generals doubted Egypt's ability to stop the Babylonians from conquering Syria-Palestine if Assyria fell.

  - Because of the Lord's prophecy through Huldah—"thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place"—Josiah suspected that Assyria would be able to withstand Babylonian aggression at least until he died (and hopefully for several years after).

  - Huldah had told Josiah that he would be "gathered into thy grave in peace." The king may have interpreted this to mean that he would *not die in battle*.

Accordingly, Josiah decided to stop the Egyptians and so preserve Assyria as a foil against Babylonian imperialism. Evidently, he thought that God would give him the victory given both his righteous intentions and the prophecy that he would die in peace. But tragically, and very unexpectedly, he died in his attempt to forestall the inevitable.[17]

Having fought off the Hebrews at Megiddo, Necho continued in haste to Carchemish to capture it from the Assyrians (he would deal with Judah's revolt on the return journey). However, as proposed below, Necho altered his plans on appeal from Ashur-uballit before his arrival there.

C. Integrating the Babylonian and Biblical Accounts

In this section, we will recount the Babylonian Chronicle entries for Nabopolassar's 14th to 17th years (612/11 to 609/08 B.C.). A reconstruction will then be offered for the latter two years, 610/09 and 609/08 B.C. It will be based on both the Babylonian and Biblical accounts.

Nabopolassar's 14th Year (612/11 B.C.)

BM 21901

After marching out from their respective homelands, the Babylonians and Medes joined forces to conquer Nineveh (the Medes had the stronger army). They marched together along the Tigris and encamped against Nineveh. After an intense three-month siege lasting from Sivan to Ab (ca. Jun.

[17] For the apparent contradiction between Huldah's prophecy and the violent nature of Josiah's death, see Appendix F, "Josiah."

to Aug., 612), Nineveh fell to the invading force. The city was taken, looted, and turned into mounds of ruin. The king of Assyria, Sin-sharishkun, probably died then (the text describing his fate is damaged). Despite Nineveh's utter destruction, a number of Assyrians escaped westwards, presumably led by Ashur-uballit (the name is lost). The Medes left Nineveh for home on Elul 20 (Sep. 14, 612). Following their departure, Nabopolassar dispatched Babylonian troops to Nisibin, where they ravaged and looted the countryside. Evidently, the show of force in this area persuaded the people of Rusapu to bring tribute to Nabopolassar at Nineveh. Later that year (the date is lost but it was probably in the autumn), Ashur-uballit ascended the throne to rule Assyria, which was now a much diminished territory centered around the provincial capital of Harran. The text becomes quite fragmented at this point but it appears that dates are given for Nabopolassar's stay in Nineveh and his departure for home.

COMMENTARY: Two years earlier, the Medes had destroyed Ashur, Assyria's religious capital. (It was meant to be a joint operation with the Babylonians but Nabopolassar and his army did not reach Ashur until after it had fallen.[18]) This year, the objective was the civil capital Nineveh, which the Medo-Babylonian forces utterly destroyed. Nineveh's fall effectively spelt the end of the Assyrian empire. Nevertheless, Ashur-uballit attempted to rule the diminished kingdom from Harran, Assyria's new capital, but he disappeared from history in 609.

Nabopolassar's 15th Year (611/10 B.C.)

BM 21901

Nabopolassar departed Babylon in Tammuz (Jun.–Jul., 611) for a long summer campaign against Assyria, being the province of Harran and surrounding territory. (This involved mainly border raids between the Euphrates and Izalla but not Harran directly.) After this, in Heshvan (Nov.–Dec., 611), Nabopolassar personally commanded an assault on Rugguliti, near Til-Barsip, east of the Euphrates. He captured the city on Heshvan 28 (Dec. 8, 611), boasting that he did not leave a single man alive. He then departed for home.

COMMENTARY: All the operations this year were probably in preparation for a forthcoming attack on Harran. Perhaps the Babylonians did not attack it this year because they were unable and unwilling to do so alone, their attack coming in the following year in coalition with the Medes. In any case, Nabopolassar's reluctance to attack Harran suggests that the Assyrians still held a position of strength in the area.

Nabopolassar's 16th Year (610/09 B.C.)

BM 21901

58 The sixteenth year: In the month Iyyar the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Assyria. From [the month . . .] until the month Marchesvan
59 he marched about victoriously in Assyria. In the month Marchesvan the Umman-manda, [*who*] had come [*to hel*]*p* the king of Akkad,
60 put their armies together and
61 marched

[18] Grayson, *ABC*, 93 (Chron. 3:24–30).

60 to Harran [against Ashur-uball]it (II) who had ascended the throne in Assyria.
61f. Fear of the enemy overcame Ashur-uballit (II) and the army of Eg[ypt *which*] had come [*to help him*] and they aban[doned] the city [. . .] they crossed.
63 The king of Akkad reached Harran and [. . .] he captured the city.
64 He carried off the vast booty of the city and the temple. In the month Adar the king of Akkad left their [. . .]
65 He went home. The Umman-manda, who had come to help the king of Akkad, withdrew.[19]

In his 16th year, Nabopolassar and his army left Babylon in Iyyar (May–June, 610) for what was to be a successful campaign against Assyria which continued for about half a year, but again without attacking Harran. The attack finally came after the Medes (the Umman-manda) joined the Babylonians in Heshvan (Nov., 610). Their combined force was imposing, prompting Ashur-uballit and the Egyptians to retreat westward across the Euphrates. Undefended, Harran was overtaken and plundered (and garrisoned). Nabopolassar departed for home in Adar (Feb.–Mar., 609). The Medes also withdrew (for home).

RECONSTRUCTION

This is a crucial year with respect to Josiah because the Egyptians were reported as being in the area: "Ashur-uballit (II) and the army of Eg[ypt *which*] had come [*to help him*]." Significantly, BM 21901 refers to the "army" of Egypt, and not to a smaller force such as a garrison unit. We submit that this was the main Egyptian army led by Necho, whose arrival is normally attributed to the next year. The following reconstruction is therefore based on the assumption that Josiah fought Necho in Nabopolassar's 16th and not 17th year:

- In Iyyar (May–June, 610), Nabopolassar mustered his army to campaign against Assyria until Heshvan (Nov., 610). During that time, which involved at least five months of warfare, he did not attack Harran.

- Necho was a new pharaoh who came to the throne probably in late March. Seeking to reinforce Egypt's domination of Syria-Palestine all the way to the Euphrates, he departed Egypt with his army in mid to late October to wrest control from the Assyrians of the strategically important city of Carchemish. Necho was acting quickly—he had only been ruling for seven months—because this was a race against both the westward repositioning of Assyria's power base (from Nineveh to Harran) and Babylonian imperialism.

- Necho reached the Egyptian outpost of Megiddo in mid-November, where he was met to his surprise by Josiah and the army of Judah. (Josiah had probably learnt of Necho's intentions from intelligence messengers.) Josiah believed that an Egyptian advance against Carchemish would hasten Assyria's demise, and he wished to preserve Assyria as a foil against Babylonian expansion into Syria-Palestine (he was distrusting of Egypt's ability to prevent this). Persuaded that the Lord would grant him victory, Josiah engaged Necho at Megiddo but he was fatally wounded. After his body was taken to Jerusalem, a period of national mourning was declared (2 Chr 35:24), lasting possibly two weeks. Following this, the people of the land intervened in the normal succession process by making Jehoahaz king (2 Kgs 23:30) instead of either Zedekiah (the heir-apparent[20]) or Jehoiakim (the eldest surviving son). Evidently, they favored Jehoahaz because of his pro-Assyrian, anti-Egyptian stance (as

[19] Ibid., 95–96 (Chron. 3:58–65).
[20] For the proposition that Zedekiah was the heir-apparent at this time, see ch. 4G.

held also by Josiah). Their decision was undoubtedly driven by the fact that the Egyptians had just killed their well-loved king, but it may have been further influenced by the urging of a powerful pro-Assyrian faction in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz was made king around the start of December.

- Necho left Megiddo in mid-November for Carchemish, still in haste (he would punish Judah's revolt on his return). However, while approaching Carchemish in early December, he was met by an advance Assyrian delegation. Aware of his intentions, the Assyrians entreated Necho to help them defend Harran, which they feared would soon be attacked. Undoubtedly, they reminded Necho of his father's earlier collaboration with them. We can speculate that the Assyrians offered Carchemish to Necho in trade for his support (which was not a great loss for Ashur-uballit in the present circumstances). This suited Necho and he agreed to help the Assyrians as it was an opportunity to score a victory against the Babylonians, who had displayed weakness in the preceding year by not attacking Harran. Whatever the outcome, though, Necho would control Carchemish, which was his objective from the outset. The Egyptians arrived in Harran in early to mid-December (it was about a three-day march from Carchemish eastward to Harran).

- In Heshvan (late Nov., 610), Nabopolassar joined up with the Medes who had come to help him conquer Harran. They would reach the city in about two weeks (i.e., mid-Dec.). Initially, neither the Assyrians nor Egyptians were aware that the Medes and Babylonians had combined their forces, which was a surprise tactic by Nabopolassar. However, shortly after the Egyptians arrived in Harran, word came that this formidable joint-army, which had overthrown Nineveh in 612, was approaching to attack. Necho was unwilling to engage such a powerful force so he departed Harran for Carchemish, spending some two months thereafter securing it. Once the Egyptians withdrew, Ashur-uballit was compelled to abandon Harran knowing that the Assyrian army, by itself, could not withstand the sizeable joint-army coming against him. He withdrew to a location west of the Euphrates but probably not to Carchemish.

- Facing no opposition, the Babylonians and Medes easily took Harran in mid-December. Nabopolassar knew that Necho had staged in Carchemish but his fight with Egypt was for another day (in 605 at Carchemish, as it turned out). The Babylonians and Medes remained in Harran until Adar (Feb.–Mar., 609), which is about three months in total. This is a surprisingly long time to invade, plunder, and garrison an undefended city. Evidently, Nabopolassar was unwilling to depart Harran (so reducing its defences) until the large army of Egypt had left Carchemish, which occurred around early February. Having confirmed Necho's exit from the region, the Babylonians and Medes departed Harran some three to four weeks later in Adar (late Feb. or early Mar.). Nabopolassar left behind a strong garrison unit to repel the first wave of any Assyrian counter-attack.

- In Judah, Jehoahaz ruled as king while Necho and the Egyptians were occupied in the north. His reign, however, was short-lived as the Bible recounts:

> And his servants carried him [Josiah] in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead. Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the

> land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there. (2 Kgs 23:30–34)
>
> Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem, and condemned the land in an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt. (2 Chr 36:1–4)

Departing Carchemish in early February, Necho was free to turn his attention to Judah, whose king (Josiah) had attacked him some three months earlier. Punishment and a show of force were necessary, so Necho marched by way of the Egyptian outpost of Riblah (about 65 miles north of Damascus), arriving there in late February. Apparently, Necho had summoned Jehoahaz earlier to meet him there, perhaps under threat of attacking Judah if he did not show. At Riblah, Necho placed Jehoahaz in chains, possibly after quizzing him as to the circumstances of his accession.[21] Thus ended Jehoahaz's three-month reign, which had lasted from the start of Dec., 610 to the end of Feb., 609.[22]

- On departing Riblah with Jehoahaz prisoner, Necho continued southward to Jerusalem. He made stops along the way to resecure the loyalty of various Syro-Palestinian kings (this would be expected of a new, ambitious pharaoh). The journey from Riblah to Jerusalem (ca. 200 mi) with stops took about four weeks. During this time, Judah had no king. Necho arrived in Jerusalem at the start of Nisan (in late Mar. or early Apr., 609), where he officially deposed Jehoahaz and placed Judah under heavy tribute. He then installed Josiah's eldest son Eliakim on the throne and changed his name to *Jehoiakim*. (The name change was probably connected with a pledge of loyalty that was required of him.) With Jehoahaz still his prisoner, Necho returned to Egypt with possible stops in Philistia.[23]

- Jehoiakim's installation as king by Necho in Nisan 609 marked the beginning of the end of Judah's monarchy. Ironically, the very thing that Josiah feared—loss of Judah's comparative freedom—had occurred as a result of his actions to prevent it.

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[21] Viewed in isolation, 2 Chr 36:3 implies that Jehoahaz was deposed by Necho in Jerusalem. However, 2 Kgs 23:33–34 indicates that his three-month rule in Jerusalem was terminated at Riblah. It is not stated why Jehoahaz went to Riblah. Perhaps Necho summoned him to ascertain the circumstances of his coronation. Alternatively, Jehoahaz may have gone to Riblah voluntarily to seek confirmation of his rule. The former reason seems more likely given that Jehoahaz was probably anti-Egyptian. It appears that Necho then departed Riblah for Jerusalem, where he made an official show of deposing Jehoahaz (who accompanied him, bound) before installing Jehoiakim as king.

[22] The reign of Jehoahaz is quoted as three months in both 2 Kgs 23:31 and 2 Chr 36:2. Was this *exactly* three months, or perhaps five or ten days longer or shorter? We note that Jehoiachin's rule is likewise quoted as three months in 2 Kgs 24:8 but *three months and ten days* in 2 Chr 36:9. Since both Kings and Chronicles mention the same figure for Jehoahaz, we can assume that the duration of his rule was close to exactly three months.

[23] Although the death of Josiah was a shock for Judah, the prophet Jeremiah regarded Jehoahaz's deportation as more tragic (Jer 22:10–12). He therefore instructed the people to transfer their mourning from Josiah (a now dead king) to Jehoahaz (who was alive, but would never see Judah again).

Nabopolassar's 17th Year (609/08 B.C.)

BM 21901

66 <The seventeenth year>: In the month Tammuz Ashur-uballit (II), king of Assyria, the large army of Egypt [. . .]
67 crossed the river (Euphrates) and marched against Harran to conquer (it). [. . .] they [*capture*]*d* (*it*).
68 They defeated the garrison which the king of Akkad had stationed inside. When they had defeated (it) they encamped against Harran.
69 Until the month Elul they did battle against the city but *achieved nothing*. (However) they did not withdraw.
70 The king of Akkad went to help his army and . . . [. . .] he went up [to] Izalla and
71 the numerous cities in the mountains . . . [. . .] he set fire to their [. . .]
72 At that time the army of [. . .]
73 [ma]rched
72 as far as the district of Urartu.
73 In the land . . . [. . .] they plundered their [. . .]
74 The garrison which the king of [. . . had stationed in it *set*] *out*.
75 They went up to [. . .] The king of Akkad went home.[24]

In the 17th year of Nabopolassar, in Tammuz (Jun.–Jul.), the Assyrians—supposedly supported by a large Egyptian force—re-crossed the Euphrates and launched a counter-offensive to reclaim Harran. Although they defeated the Babylonian garrison force there (probably outside the city gates), they could not take the city itself despite a two-month siege. Nevertheless, Ashur-uballit did not retreat. Meanwhile, Nabopolassar was marching to help his troops in Harran. Presumably on hearing that enemy reinforcements were on the way, Ashur-uballit finally left the area. Receiving word that the Assyrians had withdrawn, Nabopolassar discontinued his advance to Harran and turned his attention to the hilly districts of Izalla to the north-east of the city. Possibly, this was the direction in which Ashur-uballit had retreated (towards Urartu). After placing garrisons in a few of the larger hill towns, Nabopolassar returned home.

RECONSTRUCTION

By our analysis, the Egyptians (save for a strong garrison force at Carchemish) were homeward bound via Jerusalem at the start of Nabopolassar's 17th year, and not assisting the Assyrians in their counter-attack on Harran. There is no conflict here with BM 21901 if one accepts the restoration proposed by Jones:

> In the month Tammuz Ashur-uballit (II), king of Assyria, the large army of Egypt [having withdrawn,] crossed the river (Euphrates) and marched against Harran to conquer (it).[25]

[24] Grayson, *ABC*, 96 (Chron. 3:66–75).

[25] Jones 2005, 186. Jones used Grayson's translation here, which is formal, as is Wiseman's 1956 translation: "In the month of Tammuz Assur-uballit, king of Assyria, a great Egyptian army . . . crossed the river marched against the city of Harran to conquer it" (Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings*, 63). By contrast, the translation by Jean-Jacques Glassner is more dynamic, and in this instance is misleading (note his inclusion of the word "and," which is not in the original text): "in the month of Dumuzi, Assur-uballit, king of Assyria, and a large Egyptian army [...] crossed the river (= the Euphrates) and marched on Harran in order to take posses[sion] of it" (Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 222–25).

By Jones' rendering, there was no Egyptian presence in or near Harran in the summer of 609 because their army had withdrawn.[26] Actually, this is the more logical scenario. While it is understandable that an Assyrian force by itself might find it troublesome to retake Harran, it stretches belief that they could not do so within two months aided by "the large army of Egypt." Furthermore, if the Egyptians did march with the Assyrians to retake Harran, one would expect BM 21901 to specifically mention Egypt's failure in that undertaking and their subsequent retreat. (A Babylonian success against Egypt, the dominant superpower in the region, would have rated an entry in their chronicles.)

Ashur-uballit's eventual departure from Harran is lost in the text (it may have been toward Urartu, to the northeast). In any case, it seems unlikely that the Assyrians withdrew to Carchemish. Such a move would have surely been noted in BM 21901 given the strategic importance of that city. The lack of such mention supports our conclusion (admittedly in an argument from silence) that the Assyrians were not welcome in that newly established Egyptian stronghold.

Significantly, neither Ashur-uballit nor the Assyrians are mentioned again in the Babylonian Chronicle Series. Their departure from Harran—Assyria's last, short-lived capital city—closed the chapter of history that was the Neo-Assyrian empire.

[26] While Jones likewise upholds that Josiah died in 610/09, our scenarios differ. In the reconstruction suggested herein, the Egyptians initially marched to attack the Assyrians (so the Bible) but ended up helping them (so BM 21901). By contrast, Jones submits that Necho came to help Ashur-uballit in 610/09. To explain the contradictory statement that he came "**against** the king of Assyria" (2 Kgs 23:29), Jones adopts the solution of Josephus and Ussher. They submitted that the *king of Assyria* was actually the *king of Babylon*. He had taken upon himself the title *king of Assyria* because he had effectively conquered that empire (Jones 2005, 185–88; cf. Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, 93–94; Josephus, *Ant*. 10.74).

Chapter 10: Judah from 609 to 597 B.C.

In this chapter, a reconstruction of the main events affecting Judah from Jehoiakim's accession (609 B.C.) to Zedekiah's accession (597 B.C.) will be proposed. This is not an easy undertaking. The Biblical details are sketchy and spread across four books: 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Jeremiah, and Daniel. Some details are still debated, for example, the dating of the first deportation to Babylon (Dan 1:1), and the circumstances of Jehoiakim's death and burial (compare 2 Kgs 24:5–6 with Jer 22:18–19 + 36:30). Complicating the task is the requirement for the Biblical narrative to be coordinated with the Babylonian Chronicle tablets BM 21901, BM 22047 and BM 21946.[1]

Before proceeding with the reconstruction, two issues must be addressed:

1. When did the first deportation occur?
2. The chronological placement of 2 Kgs 24:1

All dates quoted hereafter are years B.C.

A. When did the First Deportation Occur?

According to the Bible, Nebuchadnezzar deported Hebrews on four occasions. The second, third, and fourth deportations occurred in 597, 587, and 582, respectively (refer ch. 5B). The first deportation, which was minor in comparison to those of 597 and 587, occurred in the third year of Jehoiakim. The event is recorded in Daniel 1:

> In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. (vv. 1–4)

Second Chronicles 36 also recounts the first deportation:

> Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. (vv. 5–7)

[1] BM 21901 (Grayson's "Chronicle 3") covers the period from the 10th to 17th years of Nabopolassar (616–609 B.C.). BM 22047 ("Chronicle 4") covers from the 18th to 20th years of Nabopolassar (608–606 B.C.). BM 21946 ("Chronicle 5") covers from Nabopolassar's 21st year, being also the accession year of his crown prince son Nebuchadnezzar II, to the 10th year of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–595 B.C.).

Combining these passages yields the following sequence of events:

- Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim
- the Lord gave Jehoiakim into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, who bound him in fetters to take him to Babylon
- also carried to Babylon were part of the vessels of the house of God, which were placed in the royal temple

By our chronology, the third year of Jehoiakim was the Nisan year 606/05. However, the first deportation is normally dated to 605/04 at the earliest, which is Jehoiakim's fourth year. To reconcile this with Dan 1:1, Edwin Thiele concluded that the notices in Kings and Daniel were based on postdated Tishri years while the notices in Jeremiah and Ezekiel used postdated Nisan years.[2] This solution of differently reckoned years is still popular. Another is to dismiss Dan 1:1 as erroneous.

The solution offered here is to accept Dan 1:1 as correct, and that the third year of Jehoiakim was the Nisan year 606/05. The following arguments are offered in support of this conclusion:

- Although Nebuchadnezzar was crowned king of Babylon in Jehoiakim's fourth year (605/04), Daniel reports that he was already a king when he invaded Jerusalem in the preceding year (Jehoiakim's third). A key proposal of this book is that the Hebrews viewed the crown prince of any Near Eastern nation as a *viceregent*, so they called him king in keeping with their own system. BM 22047 identifies Nebuchadnezzar as the crown prince in 607/06, hence his being called "king" by Daniel in 606/05.

- Daniel 1 reports that the deported Hebrew youths were trained for three years (1:5). After this, they appeared personally before Nebuchadnezzar, who tested them. He found them to be exceptionally qualified (1:18–20), and they were presumably commissioned for royal service then. The events of Daniel 1 therefore span three years.[3] The next chapter in Daniel is set in Nebuchadnezzar's second year (2:1). This chapter narrates the account of the king's dream of a great statue, and how no one could interpret it save for Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar rewarded him by making him ruler over the province of Babylon and chief of the wise men (2:48). Since it is unlikely that Daniel had to stand before Nebuchadnezzar and prove himself *after* his promotion to high office (cf. 1:18–20), we can conclude that the events of Daniel 2 follow chronologically after those of Daniel 1. What must be checked, though, is the timing of the three-year training period (1:5). If it began in Jehoiakim's third year (606/05), does it end during the second year of Nebuchadnezzar? Encouragingly, it does, assuming that Daniel was counting Nebuchadnezzar's reign using the Babylonian accession-year system

[2] Thiele 1983, 183.

[3] One could argue that the three-year training period was as little as 14 months if partial years were counted (i.e., Adar of the first year to Nisan of the third year). This is unlikely here. Training involves the completion of courses whose timing is fixed. Moreover, Dan 1:5 states "And the king appointed them a daily provision . . . so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king." The phrase "at the end thereof" is more suited to the completion of a three-year curriculum than to the end of a 14-month (plus) period that began in the latter part of the first year and finished at some point in the third year. For these reasons, it seems more likely that the training period lasted for around 36 months.

(by which his second year was 603/02).[4] By contrast, if we add three years to 605—the earliest conventional date for the first deportation—it ends in Nebuchadnezzar's third year and not his second as required by Dan 2:1.

- Daniel 1:1 states that Nebuchadnezzar *besieged* Jerusalem. The Babylonian Chronicle Series makes no mention of a siege of Jerusalem until Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year. This suggests that the first deportation was not significant enough, militarily, for the Babylonians to mention it. Also, according to BM 22047, the Babylonians did not wage any campaigns in 606/05 until Nabopolassar set out in Tishri (Sep.–Oct.). The Babylonian record therefore does not disallow a Palestine campaign by Nebuchadnezzar in the first half of 606/05.

- The BM 21946 narrative for 605/04, being Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, can be summarized as follows (see Section C for the full text):

    1. Nabopolassar stayed at home while Nebuchadnezzar, his eldest son and the crown prince, led the army to Carchemish where he fought and defeated the Egyptians. He then chased the remnant of the Egyptian army which had escaped southward, and routed them in the province of Hamath. He also conquered Hamath then.

    2. Nabopolassar died that year on Ab 8 (Aug. 15). On hearing of his death, Nebuchadnezzar returned quickly to Babylon, evidently leaving his army behind. He was crowned king on Elul 1 (Sep. 7).

    3. Nebuchadnezzar then returned to Hattu, which is a general term for the territory west of the Euphrates. He marched about victoriously there until Shebat (Feb.–Mar., 604). He then returned home with a vast amount of booty.

    On his return to Hattu soon after his coronation, BM 21946 states that Nebuchadnezzar "marched about victoriously" there. According to Wiseman, this expression "usually implies an unopposed martial progress through territory already subservient."[5] When did Nebuchadnezzar make Hattu subservient (this included Judah because Hattu was a general term for the west)? It is unlikely that he did so in the apparently short interval between conquering Hamath in 605 and learning of his father's death. It is also unlikely that Nebuchadnezzar's army conquered Hattu without him while he was away in Babylon (for what might have been as little as five weeks absence). Based on these reasonable assumptions, I submit that on his return to Hattu after his coronation, Nebuchadnezzar "marched about victoriously" because he had already made southern Hattu subservient *in the preceding year* (i.e., Jehoiakim's third year).

B. The Chronological Placement of 2 Kings 24:1

Commentators normally associate Nebuchadnezzar's coming to Judah in 2 Kgs 24:1 with the invasion of Dan 1:1, which is typically dated to 605 or 604:

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[4] It is logical that Daniel, who held office under both Babylonian and Persian kings, would record the regnal years of those kings (viz., 1:21; 2:1; 7:1; 8:1; 9:1–2; 10:1; 11:1) according to the official Babylo-Persian system. Nevertheless, he still followed the Hebrew custom for viceregents when he called the crown prince Nebuchadnezzar "king" in Dan 1:1.

[5] Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings*, 18.

> In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

The following considerations suggest, however, that this particular visit by Nebuchadnezzar occurred a few years after the first deportation, that is, later than 604:

1. The verse does not say that Nebuchadnezzar came *against* Jehoiakim as it does in 2 Chr 36:6 (cf. 2 Kgs 17:3; 18:9; 23:29).[6] It is therefore possible that 2 Kgs 24:1 and 2 Chr 36:6 are describing different events.

2. Jehoiakim's rebellion after three years of loyalty prompted strong punitive measures by the Babylonians, which culminated in his death, his son Jehoiachin's capture by Nebuchadnezzar, and the deportation of Jehoiachin and most of Jerusalem's inhabitants (2 Kgs 24:1–16). The unfolding of these events logically places Jehoiakim's rebellion in the closing years of his eleven-year rule. This means that his three-year period of loyalty most likely began after 604.

3. The fact that 2 Kgs 24:1 quotes the actual duration of Jehoiakim's loyalty before he rebelled (three years) indicates that his becoming a servant was more than just a personal acceptance of the normal servitude relationship between overlord and vassal (which began in his third year). Rather, it suggests that Jehoiakim had a *loyalty oath* (= vassal treaty) imposed on him by Nebuchadnezzar. Such oaths played a key role in Assyria's territorial expansion during the eighth and seventh centuries, and the Babylonians used them too, as attested by the oath imposed on Zedekiah (Ezek 17:12–13; cf. 2 Chr 36:13). In his article on Neo-Assyrian treaties, Simo Parpola wrote concerning Assyria's imperialist strategy and the role of vassal treaties:

   > From the Middle Assyrian period on, the annexation of new territories to Assyria followed a fixed three-step pattern: (1) political surrender brought about by persuasion, intimidation, or military measures; (2) imposition of a treaty of "eternal vassalage"; (3) total annexation usually complemented by large-scale deportations and harsh military measures. The rigor by which this pattern was observed—step (3) was never taken without step (2)—shows it was a carefully considered strategy essentially built upon step (2), which was pivotal to the process in three respects: First, it harnessed the vassal's economic and military resources to Assyrian imperial use; second, it subjected the defeated nation to a process of gradual and ever-increasing Assyrianization; and third, whenever necessary, it provided a convenient ideological excuse for the extreme measures required by step (3).[7]

   The evidence suggests that Jehoiakim accepted Babylonian suzerainty (Step 1) after the first deportation. However, given that 2 Kgs 24:1 counts Jehoiakim's years of fealty before he rebelled, it is likely that a loyalty oath (Step 2) was also imposed on him at some point. But

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[6] Cogan and Tadmor argue that "against him" was originally intended for 2 Kgs 24:1 but was accidentally omitted in the process of copying (Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 306). In our view, 2 Kgs 24:1 has been accurately transmitted and "against him" was specifically *not* used by the Hebrew historian because Nebuchadnezzar's coming to Jerusalem at that time was not for purposes of invasion.

[7] Parpola, "Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives of Nineveh," 161 fn. 3. See also Grayson, "Akkadian Treaties of the Seventh Century B.C.," 127–60; Wiseman, "'Is It Peace?' – Covenant and Diplomacy," 311–26; Tadmor, "Treaty and Oath in the Ancient Near East, 127–52 (some sections of this article have since been challenged, particularly Tadmor's analysis of *adê* documents).

for what reason? It would be understandable if it occurred during the first deportation (in 606) because Jehoiakim had been placed on the throne by Necho, who almost certainly made him swear loyalty to Egypt. However, as #1 and #2 above indicate, it is more likely that Jehoiakim's three years of servitude began later in his reign. The question remains: Why did Nebuchadnezzar impose on Jehoiakim—sometime after 604—the stricter servitude requirements intrinsic in a loyalty oath, the reneging of which incurred severe penalties? A likely answer is found in the account of Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

> Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. . . . Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king. (Dan 2:25, 46–49).

Because of Daniel's astonishing ability to reveal and interpret the king's dream (through divine revelation), Nebuchadnezzar accorded him two positions of power: "ruler over the whole province of Babylon" (= *satrap*, a position of high responsibility) and "chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon" (= chief overseer of the wise men). Also, upon Daniel's request, Nebuchadnezzar permitted Daniel's expatriate friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to assist him in his position as *satrap*. These remarkable appointments of Hebrews to high office happened in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar (603/02), which was the sixth year of Jehoiakim. I propose that in the next year during his campaign to Hattu (see below for 602/01), Nebuchadnezzar visited Judah not only to gather tribute but to impose a loyalty oath on the nation whose expatriate sons now held positions of authority in Babylon. One of the driving factors behind this step may have been Nebuchadnezzar's own pride. If Judah rebelled, it would embarrass the king, who had personally placed Hebrews in high office in the empire's capital. Additionally, their promotion would have prompted bitterness and envy among the Babylonian officials now subordinate to them. Nebuchadnezzar would have been aware of these palace jealousies, and of the fact that rebellion by Judah would only inflame them, and have his judgment called into question.

With the aforementioned points in mind, let us review the Babylonian and Biblical texts to identify the regional and domestic events that affected Judah from Jehoiakim's accession to Zedekiah's accession.

C. History of Judah from 609 to 597 B.C.

609/08—Jehoiakim's Accession Year

BM 21901

The 17th year of Nabopolassar: In this year, the Babylonians campaigned against the Assyrians, and in the area northeast of Harran. The operation marked the end of the Assyrian empire and the effective beginning of the Babylonian empire (ch. 9C refers).

COMMENTARY

Jehoiakim's eleven-year rule began early in 609/08 after Necho removed his brother Jehoahaz from the throne (2 Kgs 23:34–36).

The events of Jer 26, which included Jeremiah being threatened with death for prophesying about Jerusalem's imminent destruction, happened in the "beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim" (26:1). This expression, judging by its usage in Jer 28:1, encompasses anything up to Jehoiakim's fourth year. But since Jer 26:20–23 indicates that Jehoiakim had not been deported to Babylon yet, the events of Jer 26 can be dated to between Jehoiakim's accession (609) and his deportation in his third year (606).

608/07—Jehoiakim's First Year

BM 22047

The 18th year of Nabopolassar: In Elul (Aug.–Sep.), Nabopolassar departed for an autumn campaign in southern Urartu. He set fire to the cities and plundered them extensively. He returned home in Tebeth (Dec.–Jan., 608–607).

COMMENTARY

By our chronology, Jehoiakim made his eight-year old son viceregent this year (compare 2 Kgs 24:8 and 2 Chr 36:9). It was a prudent move, given the monumental power struggle that was developing between Egypt and Babylon for control of Syria-Palestine. Presumably, as a vassal of Necho, Jehoiakim paid tribute to the Egyptians this year (cf. 2 Kgs 23:35).

607/06—Jehoiakim's Second Year

BM 22047

The 19th year of Nabopolassar: In Sivan (May–June), Nabopolassar and his army, together with the crown-prince Nebuchadnezzar and his army (each commanded their own, separate army), marched to a mountainous area (possibly Zamua to the north) to control the mountain tribes that had encroached southward. Nabopolassar returned home the next month (in Tammuz) while Nebuchadnezzar continued on a personally led four-month campaign throughout the region. It was highly successful and he returned to Babylon in Elul (Aug). With the crown-prince back in the capital, Nabopolassar marched out again with his own army in Tishri (Sep.–Oct.) to Kimuhu

(on the Euphrates north of Carchemish).[8] He captured the city in Kislev (Nov.–Dec.), sacked it, and stationed a garrison force there (Kimuhu was an important control-point). He returned home in Shebat (Jan.–Feb.).

COMMENTARY

The campaigns this year ended up being waged by alternate home armies. On this, Wiseman observed: "It was Nabopolassar's later custom to remain in Babylon while Nebuchadrezzar was absent with the army, and to go far afield himself only when the crown-prince had returned."[9] This "tag-team" approach will be recalled in our review of 606/05.

The fact that Nebuchadnezzar is called "crown prince" here for the first time, and that he was given command of his own army, attests to his elevation as viceregent in Babylon this year. By Hebrew reckoning, therefore, 607/06 was Nebuchadnezzar's accession year (ch. 5B refers).[10] However, because his two-year period as viceregent was not counted (607/06 to 605/04), his first regnal year by Hebrew reckoning was 605/04. The dating schemes are shown below, where the upper rows depict Babylonian reckoning and the lower rows depict Hebrew reckoning:

Nabopolassar	15	16	17	18	19	20	21								
Nebuchadnezzar							AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	611	**610**	**609**	**608**	**607**	**606**	**605**	**604**	**603**	**602**	**601**	**600**	**599**	**598**	**597**
Nabopolassar	15	16	17	18	19	20	21								
Nebuchadnezzar					vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2} 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Josiah	30	31													
Jehoahaz		3m													
Jehoiakim			AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Jehoiachin				vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	vice^{4}	vice^{5}	vice^{6}	vice^{7}	vice^{8}	vice^{9}	v^{10} 3m	
Zedekiah														AC	1

Accordingly, all the chronological notices relating to Nebuchadnezzar in the books of Kings and Jeremiah (save for the special case of Jer 52:28–30, which was sourced directly from Babylonian records) are based on his first regnal year being counted as 605 not 604.[11] By contrast, all the regnal dates in Daniel (i.e., 1:1; 1:21; 2:1; 7:1; 8:1; 9:1–2; 10:1; 11:1) follow the official reckoning of the relevant Near Eastern king when citing his dates. Thus, the "third year of the reign of Jehoiakim" in Dan 1:1 is the Nisan year 606/05, "the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar" in Dan 2:1 is the Nisan year 603/02, etc.

There are no details in the Bible specifically associated with Jehoiakim's second year. Again, as in his first year, we assume that he paid tribute to the Egyptians.

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[8] Although Wiseman was uncertain of the location of Kimuhu in 1956 (he tentatively placed it south of Carchemish; see *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings,* 22, Map 2), evidence from scholars such as Albright allowed him to subsequently identify the location as the Assyrian town *āl Kum* (*m*)*uḫi* (= *Kummuh*, or modern Samsat). It was *north* of Carchemish (see Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon,* 13–14).

[9] Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings,* 20–21.

[10] The statement in 2 Chr 36:9 that "Jehoiachin was eight years old **when he began to reign**" confirms that the accession year for a viceregent in Judah (or Israel) was the year in which his viceregency began (rather than the beginning of his sole regency).

[11] See Chapter 5AB for details on the time notices in Kings, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel relating to Nebuchadnezzar.

606/05—Jehoiakim's Third Year

BM 22047

The 20th year of Nabopolassar: Following Nabopolassar's return to Babylon (in Jan.–Feb., 606), the Egyptians marched against the Babylonian garrison at Kimuhu. The Egyptians captured it after a four-month siege. In Tishri (Sep.–Oct.), Nabopolassar marched to pitch camp at Quramati (on the east bank of the Euphrates south of Carchemish). After crossing the Euphrates, the Babylonians captured three nearby villages west of the river: Sunadiri, Elammu and Dahammu. Nabopolassar then returned to Babylon in Shebat (Jan.–Feb., 605) after garrisoning Quramati. Soon after, the Egyptian army marched from Carchemish towards Quramati but the garrison force withdrew.[12]

COMMENTARY

Interestingly, the chronicle does not record any military activities in the first half of the year (Nisan to Elul). This is somewhat unexpected at this point for Babylon, especially given the "tag-team" approach of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar in the preceding year. It is possible, then, that Nebuchadnezzar marched with his own army early in the year to Hattu, via routes that avoided Carchemish and Hamath (and so Egyptian contact). Circumstantial support for this campaign is found in the Babylonian Chronicle entry for the next year, in which Nebuchadnezzar reports that he "marched about victoriously in Hattu." As noted above, this terminology suggests that southern Hattu, comprising states in southern Syria and Palestine, was already subservient by 605. Thus, it appears likely that Nebuchadnezzar marched to Hattu in 606. However, that campaign was not recorded by the Babylonians probably for two reasons: (1) at the time, the Babylonian Chronicle Series, which was concise in its reporting of events, was focussed on the main military concern, Egypt; and (2) states in southern Syria and Palestine offered little resistance to Nebuchadnezzar when he marched to secure their servitude.

With these assumptions in mind, I propose the following reconstruction for Nabopolassar's 20th year:

- In the late winter or early spring of 606, the Egyptians marched from Carchemish to Kimuhu for what was to be a four-month siege. Knowing that the Egyptians were occupied north of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar set out with his army to establish Babylonian authority in southern Hattu. To avoid the Egyptians, he crossed the Euphrates on a more southerly route. During this campaign, which lasted around half a year, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem (Dan 1:1). In addition to deporting Jehoiakim, he took some of the sacred vessels from the temple as prized booty. He also left instructions for Ashpenaz (an important official who remained behind) to select talented young men from the royal family and nobility—among whom was Daniel—for deportation to Babylon.

[12] On the events of this year, Wiseman comments: "The long four month operation [to recapture Kimuhu] may attest the Egyptian use of near-by Carchemish as their base. Nabopolassar sought to counter this move by forming another strong point further south on the Euphrates at Quramati, protected by three villages (Sunadiri, Elammu and Dahammu) captured in Ebir-Nāri territory, that is west of the river. Once again on the Babylonian king's withdrawal the new garrison was attacked by the Egyptians who had crossed the Euphrates at Carchemish, which was now firmly in their hands. The men from Quramati made a strategic withdrawal southwards" (*Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 13–14).

- In Tishri (Sep.–Oct.), Nabopolassar marched with his army to Quramati. He had two objectives: (1) to secure the area as a strongpoint, and (2) to safeguard Nebuchadnezzar's return to Babylon. After those objectives were achieved, Nabopolassar left Quramati and returned to Babylon in Shebat (Jan.–Feb., 605). Following his departure, the Egyptians marched from Carchemish to Quramati but the garrison force there withdrew.

- Although Jehoiakim had been deported, Jer 36:9–23 confirms that he was back in Jerusalem by the ninth month of his fifth year. He probably returned sooner, after Nebuchadnezzar's accession (see below for 605/04). During his absence, his young viceregent son Jehoiachin supervised the kingdom, presumably aided by the court officials, etc. From this year onward, Judah paid tribute to the Babylonians and not to the Egyptians.

605/04—Jehoiakim's Fourth Year

BM 21946

1 [The twenty-first year]: the king of Akkad stayed home (while) Nebuchadnezzar (II) his eldest son (and) the crown-prince,
2 mustered [the army of Akkad]. He took his army's lead and marched to Carchemish which is on the bank of the Euphrates.
3 He crossed the river [*to encounter the army of Egypt*] which was encamped at Carchemish.
4 [. . .] They did battle together. The army of Egypt retreated before him.
5 He inflicted a [defeat] upon them (and) finished them off completely.
6 In the district of Hamath
7 the army of Akkad overtook
5 the remainder of the army of [Egypt
6 which] managed to escape [from] the defeat and which was not overcome.
7 They (the army of Akkad) inflicted a defeat upon them (so that) a single (Egyptian) man [did not return] home.
8 At that time Nebuchadnezzar (II) conquered all of Ha[ma]th.
9 For twenty-one years Nabopolassar ruled Babylon.
10 On the eighth day of the month Ab he died. In the month Elul Nebuchadnezzar (II) returned to Babylon and
11 on the first day of the month Elul he ascended the royal throne in Babylon.
12 In (his) accession year Nebuchadnezzar (II) returned to Hattu. Until the month Shebat
13 he marched about victoriously
12 in Hattu.
13 In the month of Shebat he took the vast booty of Hattu to Babylon.
14 In the month Nisan he took the hand of Bel and the son of Bel (and) celebrated the Akitu festival.[13]

In his 21st year, Nabopolassar stayed at home while his eldest son, the crown prince Nebuchadnezzar, led the army to Carchemish where he fought and defeated the Egyptians. He then chased the remnant of the Egyptian army that had escaped, and overtook them in Hamath, which he also conquered. Nabopolassar died on Ab 8 (Aug. 15). On hearing of his death, Nebuchadnezzar returned quickly to Babylon and was crowned king on Elul 1 (Sep. 7). He then went back to Hattu where he "marched about victoriously" until Shebat (Feb.–Mar., 604), when he returned home with much booty.

[13] Grayson, *ABC*, 99–100 (Chron. 5:1–14).

COMMENTARY

A number of significant events occurred this year affecting Babylon, Egypt, and Judah:

- Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho at Carchemish (see Jer 46:1–28), which enabled Babylon to control all of Syria-Palestine within the next few years. It therefore ranks as one of history's decisive battles, ending Egypt's long-standing claims for the region.

- Jehoiakim may have been released to return home after Nebuchadnezzar's accession. Not only was this an ideal time for acts of royal clemency, but the Babylonian king may have been feeling particularly generous following his recent defeat of Egypt. If Jehoiakim was released at that time, which seems likely, he was back in Jerusalem by mid-autumn.

- Jeremiah received prophecies concerning 70 years of captivity for Judah, the judgment of surrounding nations, and the eventual judgment of Babylon (Jer 25:1–38). Also this year, Jeremiah began to dictate a scroll of his prophecies to Baruch, his faithful attendant (Jer 36:1–4). While the scroll was being written, a process that appears to have taken some months (cf. Jer 36:9–10), Baruch was in despair and grieving over the weighty judgments pronounced therein. The Lord subsequently revealed to Jeremiah His own thoughts on the matter. Caution and consolation were then offered to Baruch (Jer 45:1–5).

604/03—Jehoiakim's Fifth Year

BM 21946

This was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar by Babylonian reckoning and his second year by Hebrew reckoning. Nebuchadnezzar departed Babylon in Sivan (May–June) for Hattu, where he "marched about victoriously" until Kislev (Nov.–Dec.). All the kings of Hattu came before him and he received their vast tribute. He then marched to Ashkelon, which he captured in Kislev (Nov.–Dec.). He seized its king, then plundered and sacked the city, turning it into a ruin heap. He departed for home in Shebat (Jan.–Feb.).

COMMENTARY

Jeremiah 36:9 reveals that a fast was proclaimed in the ninth month (= Kislev) of Jehoiakim's fifth year. This harmonizes with BM 21946, which states that Nebuchadnezzar attacked the nearby Philistine city of Ashkelon that month, with the city being reduced to rubble by Shebat (the 11th month). The length of this campaign, two months, implies strong resistance by the Ashkelonites. (They may have been emboldened by an expectation of help from Egypt, which never came.) The destruction of Ashkelon undoubtedly prompted the calling of a fast in Judah (fasts were called in times of national emergency). Jeremiah's prophecies were then read before the people by Baruch. The prophet's hope was that the Hebrews would "present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people" (36:7). In other words, what was happening to Ashkelon would happen to Jerusalem unless they repented. In a move telling of his impious and defiant nature, Jehoiakim destroyed the book from which Baruch read (36:23). The scroll was rewritten (36:27–28), and probably became the nucleus of the book of Jeremiah.

603/02—Jehoiakim's Sixth Year

BM 21946

This was the second year of Nebuchadnezzar by Babylonian reckoning and his third year by Hebrew reckoning. Unfortunately, the Babylonian objective for this year is unknown, because the tablet is damaged with lines missing. All we know is that in Iyyar (Apr.–May), Nebuchadnezzar strengthened his army for an intensive campaign that involved the transportation of large siege towers. Given that Nebuchadnezzar marched to Hattu in the preceding and following years, scholars have assumed that the objective for this year was, once again, Hattu.[14] Hence, Grayson's reconstruction:

21 The sec[ond year]: In the month Iyyar the king of Akkad strengthened his large army and [*marched to Hattu*].
22 He encamped [. . .] . . . large siege towers he moved acr[oss . . .
23 . . . from the month] Iyyar until the month [. . . *he marched about victoriously in Hattu*].[15]

Against this, Na'aman has presented sound arguments in favor of an objective closer to Babylon, one not yet conquered, such as the land of Kimuhu in southeastern Anatolia.[16]

COMMENTARY

This is also the year in which Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue (Dan 2:1–49). In appreciation, Nebuchadnezzar "made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon" (v. 48). If this took place after Nebuchadnezzar's return from his intensive but successful campaign in previously unconquered territory, it would have made Daniel's interpretation all the more significant for the king.

602/01—Jehoiakim's Seventh Year

BM 21946

This was the third year of Nebuchadnezzar by Babylonian reckoning and his fourth year by Hebrew reckoning. Although the month-names are lost, BM 21946 identifies Hattu as the objective this year. Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon with much booty.

COMMENTARY

In Section B, it was proposed that Nebuchadnezzar visited Judah during this year's western campaign to not only collect tribute but also to impose a loyalty oath on Jehoiakim. Recall that four Hebrews (Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) now held positions of power and influence in Babylon (especially Daniel). For reasons explained earlier, it was in Nebuchadnezzar's interest to ensure that their home nation remained steadfastly loyal. But Jehoiakim's fealty was short-lived, lasting only three years:

[14] So Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings*, 29.
[15] Grayson, *ABC*, 100 (Chron. 5:21–23).
[16] See Na'aman, "Nebuchadrezzar's Campaign in the Year 603 BCE," in *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors*, 399–402 (originally published in *Biblische Notizen* 62 [1992]: 41–44).

> In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. (2 Kgs 24:1)

As discussed below, the Babylonian setbacks over the next two years caused Jehoiakim to reconsider his loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar. This was probably done at the urging of Jehoiakim's original overlord, Pharaoh Necho, who had elevated him to kingship.

601/00—Jehoiakim's Eighth Year

BM 21946

This was the fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar by Babylonian reckoning and his fifth year by Hebrew reckoning. In this year, the Babylonian army departed again for Hattu. In Kislev (Nov.–Dec.), Nebuchadnezzar personally took command of the army and marched to Egypt. When the king of Egypt heard of his approach, he mustered his army and "They fought one another in the battlefield and both sides suffered severe losses."[17] Nebuchadnezzar and his army (or what remained of it) returned to Babylon.

COMMENTARY

Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Egypt late this year may have been instigated by Egypt's increasing attempts to undermine Babylonian rule in Syria-Palestine. Undoubtedly, the Babylonian setback on the border of Egypt made Jehoiakim question his loyalty to the empire, whose aura of invincibility had been significantly dented. This was Jehoiakim's second year as Nebuchadnezzar's servant.

600/599—Jehoiakim's Ninth Year

BM 21946

This was the fifth year of Nebuchadnezzar by Babylonian reckoning and his sixth year by Hebrew reckoning. The Babylonian Chronicle entry for this year is quite short: "The fifth year: The king of Akkad stayed home (and) refitted his numerous horses and chariotry."[18] After the heavy losses inflicted by the Egyptians, Nebuchadnezzar stayed in Babylon to rebuild his military forces. It was a time-consuming undertaking.[19]

COMMENTARY

This was Jehoiakim's third year as Nebuchadnezzar's servant. Although he paid tribute this year (probably in the summer), we can speculate that he began to rebel in the winter after learning that Nebuchadnezzar was not campaigning that year. Jehoiakim's rebellion involved two offenses: (1) seeking a guarantee of help from the Egyptians (who appeared to be a match for the Babylonians),

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[17] Grayson, *ABC*, 101 (Chron. 5 r. 7). Observe the frankness with which the chronicler records Babylon's setback. This stands in contrast to Assyrian royal inscriptions, where defeats were often rewritten as victories. A case in point is Sennacherib's battle with Egypt at Eltekeh in 701 (see ch. 8J).

[18] Grayson, *ABC*, 101 (Chron. 5 r. 8).

[19] From the dates in BM 21946, one can deduce that Nebuchadnezzar spent about 21 months refurbishing his army (from ca. Feb., 600 to ca. Nov., 599).

and (2) the withdrawal of tribute (effective the next year). He was probably not alone in seeking to cast off his people's vassalage to Babylon. Judah may have been part of a Syro-Palestinian alliance that sought Egypt's aid in this common desire.

599/98—Jehoiakim's Tenth Year

BM 21946

This was the sixth year of Nebuchadnezzar by Babylonian reckoning and his seventh year by Hebrew reckoning. In Kislev (Nov.–Dec.), Nebuchadnezzar marched to Hattu for a short campaign against the Arab tribes of the western Syrian desert (to both conquer that territory and to safeguard the Syrian cities he already held). Having "plundered extensively the possessions, animals, and gods of the numerous Arabs,"[20] he departed for home in Adar (Feb.–Mar., 598).

COMMENTARY

Nebuchadnezzar probably received intelligence reports earlier in the year that Jehoiakim had rebelled by seeking help from Egypt. This would have been confirmed when Judah's tribute did not arrive in Babylon by late autumn. Enraged, Nebuchadnezzar resolved to invade Jerusalem, replace Jehoiakim, and deport most of the cities inhabitants. (Recall that harsh penalties were called for when a king reneged on his loyalty oath.) However, because of the many novice troops in his refurbished army, Nebuchadnezzar instead launched a winter campaign against the Arab tribes of the western Syrian desert (a less strenuous operation). In the interim, until he arrived personally in Jerusalem to deal with Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar directed loyal vassal states in the region to take punitive action against Judah:

> In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets. Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight. (2 Kgs 24:1–3a)

Raiders from frontier states, as well as Chaldean (Babylonian) troops stationed in the west, mounted sporadic attacks against Judah for just over a year (from the winter of 599–98 until Nebuchadnezzar's arrival in February or March, 597).[21] Hundreds throughout Judah were likely killed in these attacks, which marked the beginning of the end of the nation.

598/97—Jehoiakim's Eleventh Year / Jehoiachin's Three-Month Reign

BM 21946

This was the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar by Babylonian reckoning and his eighth year by Hebrew reckoning. The Babylonian Chronicle entry for this year states:

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[20] Grayson, *ABC*, 101 (Chron. 5 r. 10).

[21] On the nature of this type of warfare, especially in relation to 2 Kgs 24:2, see Eph'al, "On Warfare and Military Control," 95.

11 The seventh year: In the month Kislev the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Hattu.
12 He encamped against the city of Judah and on the second day of the month Adar he captured the city (and) seized (its) king.
13 A king of his own choice he appointed in the city (and) taking the vast tribute he brought it into Babylon.[22]

Nebuchadnezzar marched from Babylon in Kislev (Dec.–Jan., 598–97) to besiege Jerusalem. He captured the city on Adar 2 (Mar. 16, 597), took its king (Jehoiachin) captive, and placed a king of his own choosing (Zedekiah) on the throne. He returned to Babylon with much tribute.

COMMENTARY

Although scholars are divided on the issue, we submit that Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem occurred *after* Jehoiakim's death. Unfortunately, the Bible does not reveal precisely how he died save for the following details:

> Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead . . . At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. (2 Kgs 24:5–6, 10–11)

> Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. (2 Chr 36:5–8)

> Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem. (Jer 22:18–19)

> Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. (Jer 36:30)

Based on these passages as well as BM 21946, the following reconstruction of the final months of Jehoiakim's rule and short reign of Jehoiachin is offered:

- The raids against Judah by frontier states continued throughout the spring, summer, and autumn of 598. Attacks also occurred in Jerusalem outside its walls but the city itself was secure because the raiders were not equipped to breach its defences.[23]

[22] Grayson, *ABC*, 102 (Chron. 5 r. 11–13).

[23] Apart from its strong natural defences, Jerusalem's walls could not be breached without proper equipment and substantial time and effort (witness Nebuchadnezzar's 19-month siege ten years later).

- Given Jeremiah's pro-Babylonian sympathies, we can speculate that there was a strong pro-Babylonian faction in Jerusalem. Possibly, on the eve of yet another attack in the city's outskirts, this faction (without Jeremiah's approval) organized Jehoiakim's assassination.[24] He was killed on or about Dec. 9, 598,[25] and his body was dragged and thrown outside the city gates to appease the raiders (an unsuccessful tactic).[26] Jehoiakim's body lay exposed to the elements for one or more days before it was buried ignobly, presumably by the raiders.[27] His viceregent son Jehoiachin stepped to the throne in his place (his rule therefore began on or about Dec. 9, 598).[28]

- Knowing that he would reach Judah in the late winter (Feb.–Mar., 597), Nebuchadnezzar sent messengers ahead of his departure to the raiding armies. They were instructed to discontinue the attacks on Judah and to besiege Jerusalem instead (cf. 2 Kgs 24:10). The Babylonian king did not want anyone from the city to escape before his arrival (the Jerusalemites would have certainly received advance warning of his approach). The siege of the capital by the raiding armies probably began about January, 597.

- Not long after Jehoiachin's accession (ca. Dec. 9, 598), Nebuchadnezzar set out from Babylon with the main army in Kislev (i.e., between Dec. 18, 598 and Jan. 15, 597). He joined the raiding armies in their siege of Jerusalem around late February or early March. Soon afterward, Jehoiachin walked out in voluntary surrender on Mar. 16 (Adar 2), 597. Evidently, with the large army of Babylon now encamped against the capital, Jehoiachin did not wish to see further harm come to Judah or Jerusalem, hence his early capitulation. Nebuchadnezzar then appointed Zedekiah to the throne. (See Chapter 5B for details about Jehoiachin's surrender, Zedekiah's accession, and the two-step deportation of most of Jerusalem's inhabitants in 597.)

  The recording of an exact date for Jerusalem's capture in BM 21946 (Adar 2) is unusual, and confirms its importance to the Babylonians. This is underscored by the fact that it constitutes the only entry in BM 21946 for Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year (i.e., Judah was

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[24] Cf. Green, "The Fate of Jehoiakim," 107–08; Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 480.

[25] This date was determined by counting back three months and ten days (being the duration of Jehoiachin's rule) from Mar. 16, 597. Specifically, it was calculated by counting back ten days from Adar 2 (Mar. 16, 597) to arrive at the three-month anniversary point of Shebat 21 (Mar. 6, 597), then the two-month anniversary point of Tebeth 21 (Feb. 5, 597), the one-month anniversary point of Kislev 21 (Jan. 7, 597), and finally Jehoiachin's accession on Heshvan 21 (Dec. 9, 598). This yields a total of 98 days for Jehoiachin's rule.

[26] As our reconstruction proposes, Jehoiakim had sworn a loyalty oath before Nebuchadnezzar. Such oaths were effective as long as the vassal king was alive. Jehoiakim was killed, apparently, by his own people, who threw his body outside the city gates. This may have been done as a sign to the raiders that the Judahites had meted out the ultimate punishment to their oath-breaking king. But it was a futile gesture because Nebuchadnezzar had already decided to invade Judah and deport most of Jerusalem's inhabitants.

[27] According to 2 Kgs 24:6, Jehoiakim "slept with his fathers," which seems to contradict the prophecy of Jer 22:19 concerning his shameful burial beyond the gates of Jerusalem. It is contended, though, that the term "slept with his fathers" in the Bible is a euphemism for dying (see Appendix F, fn. 11).

[28] Jeremiah prophesied that Jehoiakim would have "none to sit upon the throne of David" (Jer 36:30). Yet his son Jehoiachin was already viceregent at the time of that prophecy, and he sat on the throne as sole ruler (albeit briefly). The prophecy remains valid, though, if it is accepted for its intent: that the royal line through Jehoiakim would not continue (cf. Jer 22:28–30). This indeed occurred when Nebuchadnezzar replaced Jehoiachin with Zedekiah, the son of Josiah.

the primary objective for that year). Perhaps the entry was important because Judah was the first vassal state to break a loyalty oath imposed by the Babylonians. An example therefore had to be made of Judah as a warning to neighboring states. Whether or not this was the case, reneging on a loyalty oath was always a serious sin. Its gravity is attested by the powerful curses against the transgressor in ancient Near Eastern loyalty documents. For example, we read in the vassal treaty imposed by the Assyrian king Ashur-nirari V on Mati'ilu of Arpad (ca. 754):

> If Mati'ilu sins against this treaty with Ashurnirari, king of Assyria, may Mati'ilu become a prostitute, his soldiers women, may they receive [*a gift*] in the square of their cities (i.e. publicly) like any prostitute, may one country . . . them to the next; may Mati'ilu's (seed) be that of a mule, his wives *barren*, may Ishtar, the goddess of men, the lady of women, take away their "bow," cause their [steri]lity, . . . may they say, "Woe, we have sinned against the treaty with Ashurnirari, king of Assyria."
>
> (break)
>
> May [*locusts*] appear and devour his land, may [. . .] blind their eyes; let one thousand houses decrease to one house, let one thousand tents decrease to one tent, let only one man be spared in the city to tell about my feats.[29]

For breaking his oath, Zedekiah was treated harshly by Nebuchadnezzar. His sons were killed before him, and he was blinded then imprisoned till the day of his death (Jer 52:10–11). By contrast, Jehoiachin—who never swore a loyalty oath—appears to have been well-treated in Babylon, at least until the destruction of Jerusalem.[30] Later, in 561, Amel-Marduk showed favor to Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 25:27–30), possibly in remembrance of his voluntary surrender.

[29] Translation by Erica Reiner, *ANET* 533. The curse here of being blinded is interesting because that very fate befell Zedekiah (2 Kgs 25:7; cf. Ezek 17:12–15; 2 Chr 36:13).

[30] Cf. Terence C. Mitchell, "The Babylonian Exile and the Restoration of the Jews in Palestine (586–c. 500 B.C.)," CAH[2] III/2, 418–19.

Chapter 11: Ancient Near Eastern Contacts

A. Summary of Contacts

The table below shows the significant points of contact between the Hebrews and their Near Eastern neighbors. Some contacts are considered to be precise and therefore useable as synchronisms (e.g., the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. and Jehu's tribute in 841 B.C.). Some can be dated to within two or three years (e.g., Pekah's death, the fall of Samaria, the conquering of Ashdod, and the fall of Jerusalem). Those contacts commonly viewed as synchronisms are highlighted by shading. Cited years are B.C. The superscript ^{J} denotes Julian years.

	TRADITIONAL DATE (OUR DATE)	EVENT	BIBLICAL REFS
1	853 (864)	Ahab king of Israel participates in the battle of Qarqar in the sixth year of Shalmaneser III king of Assyria.	—
2	841 (852)	Jehu king of Israel pays tribute in the 18th year of Shalmaneser III.	—
3	806–802, 796? (807/06)	Joash king of Israel (Jehoash) pays tribute to Adad-nirari III king of Assyria.	—
4	740 and 738 (754)	Menahem king of Israel pays tribute to Pul king of Assyria, believed to be Tiglath-pileser III.	2 Kgs 15:19–20
5	734/33	Tiglath-pileser campaigns in Philistia. Ahaz king of Judah (Jehoahaz) pays tribute to him.	2 Kgs 16:7–9
6	734–732	Tiglath-pileser conquers Israel's coastal strip, Galilee, and the Transjordan, and deports their inhabitants.	2 Kgs 15:29
7	733–731? (731)	Pekah king of Israel is killed by Hoshea.	2 Kgs 15:30
8	731	Tiglath-pileser receives tribute from Hoshea while campaigning in southern Babylon.	—
9	(727)	Tiglath-pileser dies in the same year as Ahaz.	Isa 14:28–29
10	723–720? (721)	Fall of Samaria after a three-year siege.	2 Kgs 17:5–6; 18:9–10
11	712 or 711? (711)	Sargon king of Assyria conquers Ashdod in his 10th or 11th year.	Isa 20:1
12	701 (712^{J})	In the 14th year of Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria invades Judah during his third campaign (in the fourth year of his reign).	2 Kgs 18:13ff.
13	609 (610^{J})	Josiah king of Judah dies at Megiddo in his 31st year while fighting Necho king of Egypt.	2 Kgs 23:29
14	605	Crown prince Nebuchadnezzar defeats Egypt at Carchemish in the 21st year of Nabopolassar king of Babylon. This is the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar and the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah.	Jer 46:2

15	(a) Adar 2, 597 (b) Adar or Nisan, 597^{J}? (Adar, 597^{J})	(a) Conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in the seventh year of his reign. (b) Nebuchadnezzar removes Jehoiachin from the throne and installs Zedekiah in his place.	2 Kgs 24:11ff. 2 Kgs 24:12+17 2 Chr 36:10
16	Jul. 29, 587 or Jul. 18, 586? (Jul. 29, 587)	Fall of Jerusalem on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year = the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar (as counted by the Hebrews).	2 Kgs 25:2+8 Jer 52:5+12
17	Adar 27, 561	Jehoiachin is released from prison in the 37th year of his captivity in the accession year of Evil-merodach.	2 Kgs 25:27 Jer 52:31

Despite claims to the contrary, we have found that some Assyrian chronology dates—such as the battle of Qarqar (853) and Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (701)—are open to revision. By contrast, dates in the Neo-Babylonian era are dependable because they can be verified by secular texts that have been fixed astronomically (see ch 4B).

The above contacts will now be reviewed.[1] For those previously dealt with, only a short discussion will follow.

B. Analysis of Contacts

1. The Battle of Qarqar [previously reviewed—refer chs. 3ABC and 6A]

Although recorded in the annals for the sixth year of Shalmaneser III, this battle—which names *a-ḫa-ab-bu* KUR *sir-ʾa-la-a-a* (Ahab the Israelite) as one of the participants—is not mentioned in the Bible. The traditional dating is 853. However, this study has presented evidence showing that Assyrian chronology prior to 769 is incorrect owing to an eleven-year gap in the Eponym Canon between 770 and 769. The 853 date for the battle of Qarqar is therefore considered to be unreliable. According to our Hebrew kings chronology for Ahab and Jehu, it should be redated to 864 (= 853 + 11 missing eponyms).

2. Jehu's Payment of Tribute [previously reviewed—refer chs. 3ABC and 6A]

The annals for Shalmaneser III record the payment of tribute by *ia-ú-a* DUMU *ḫu-um-ri-i* (Jehu of the house of Omri) in the Assyrian king's 18th year. The traditional dating is 841. Using the same correction applied to the Battle of Qarqar, Jehu's payment of tribute should be redated to 852 (= 841 + 11).

3. Joash (= Jehoash) Pays Tribute to Adad-nirari III

There is an absence of annalistic texts for the reign of Adad-nirari III, and the surviving texts are

[1] While Manasseh is named in the inscriptions of both Esarhaddon (*DOTT*, 74; *ANET*, 291) and Ashur-banipal (*ARAB* II, §876; *ANET*, 294), the reports are of limited chronological value. Therefore, they will not be discussed here.

summary inscriptions that provide few clues for dating. One such text names an Israelite king. It is the *al-Rimah Stela*, found in 1967 at Tell al-Rimah in Iraq. It contains 21 lines engraved in stone beneath a portrait of the king in relief. The text was first published by Stephanie Page in 1968.[2] A portion of the text refers to a western campaign by Adad-nirari III in which four Syro-Palestinian states paid tribute: Aram-Damascus, Samaria, Tyre, and Sidon:

> In (my) first year I made the land of Amurru and the Hatti land in its entirety kneel at my feet; I imposed tribute and regular tax for future days upon them. He (sic) received two thousand talents of silver, one thousand talents of copper, two thousand talents of iron, three thousand multi-coloured garments and (plain) linen garments as tribute from Mari' of the land of Damascus. He received the tribute of Ia'asu the Samaritan, of the Tyrian (ruler) and of the Sidonian (ruler).[3]

Of interest is the paying of tribute by *iu-ʾa-su* KUR *sa-me-ri-na-a-a* (Joash, the Samaritan). Although scholars are divided on the exact year, Joash's tribute is typically dated either to within the range 806–802 or 796.[4] This converts to 817–813 or 807 in our revised Assyrian chronology. The latter choice (807) is noteworthy. Chapter 4B shows that Joash (or Jehoash) began his sole rule in the Tishri year 808/07. Since Adad-nirari III's 15th year (807/06) is the only possible time when an Assyrian western campaign coincides with Jehoash's sole rule, he must have paid tribute at the beginning of his reign, between Nisan 807 and Adar 806. (Jehoash's grandfather Jehu likewise paid tribute at the beginning of his reign.)

Israel's subservience to Assyria during the reign of Adad-nirari III is also attested in the so-called *Calah* (or *Nimrud*) *Slab*. This text describes the extent of Adad-nirari III's conquests geographically from east to west. The relevant portion reads:

> I subdued (the territory stretching) from the bank of the Euphrates, the land Ḫatti, the land Amurru in its entirety, Tyre, Sidon, Samaria (Ḫumri), Edom, (and) Palastu, as far as the great sea in the west. I imposed tax (and) tribute upon them.[5]

It is likely that Israel began paying tribute to Adad-nirari III during the reign of Jehoash's father, Jehoahaz, when Israel was oppressed by the Syrians. Jehoahaz appealed to the Lord who then provided a "deliverer" (2 Kgs 13:5), widely believed to be Adad-nirari III (see Appendix F, "Jehoahaz"). Jehoash probably stopped paying tribute to the Assyrians after Adad-nirari's death in 794. However, Israel recommenced annual payments 40 years later with Menahem's offering.

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[2] Stephanie Page, "A Stela of Adad-nirari III and Nergal-eres from Tell al Rimah," *IRAQ* 30 (1968): 139–153.

[3] S. Page, "A Stela of Adad-nirari III," 142–43 (also Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 335; Kuan 1995, 78–81; RIMA 3:211, ll. 4–8; *COS* 2.114F:276). The inscription features an unusual interchange between the first and third person singular pronouns. Evidently, the author used two different sources to compile the text but failed to unify the grammar. (For analysis of the alternative transliterations *ia-ʾa-su* [S. Page] and *iu-ʾa-su* [A. Malamat] see Page, "A Stela of Adad-nirari III," 144, 148–49; Abraham Malamat, "On the Akkadian Transcription of the Name of King Joash," *BASOR* 204 [1971]: 37–39.)

[4] See Kuan 1995, 93–106. Of these dates, 796 (= Adad-nirari III's 15th year) is favored by Hayim Tadmor, Alan Millard, James Miller & John Hayes, and Wayne Pitard (ibid., 95–96).

[5] RIMA 3:213, ll. 11–14 (also *ARAB* I, §739; *DOTT*, 51[a]; *ANET*, 281; Kuan 1995, 81–84; *COS* 2.114G:276).

4. Menahem Pays Tribute to Pul [previously reviewed—refer ch. 6C]

In the Bible's first naming of an Assyrian monarch, 2 Kgs 15:19 records that "Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver." Although there is no king specifically named "Pul" in the corpus of Neo-Assyrian documents, the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser record, in two different texts, payments of tribute by Menahem. One is Layard 50a, which is a fragment of an annalistic text listing 18 kings who paid tribute. The other is the Iran Stela, which lists 17 kings who paid tribute.[6]

While it is generally accepted that the kings listed in Layard 50a paid tribute in 738, there is some debate over the dating of the Iran Stela list, for which Tadmor favors 740. Consequently, in accordance with the accepted view that Pul and Tiglath-pileser were the same person, Tadmor proposed that the tribute of Menahem mentioned in 2 Kgs 15:19–20 was either that recorded in the Iran Stela (for 740) or an earlier payment. Menahem's tribute in Layard 50a (for 738) would then be a subsequent "standard" payment.[7]

In our view, Menahem did not pay tribute to Tiglath-pileser either in 740 or 738. We submit that Pul was not Tiglath-pileser but his father, Ashur-nirari V. Therefore, it was Ashur-nirari V who came against Israel (in 754) and received Menahem's initial tribute. (The crown price son Tiglath-pileser also received payment from Menahem but in a subsequent year.) Note that if the regnal data of the Masoretic Text is held to be true, then Menahem could not have paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser after he became king. This is because Pekah's 20-year reign places Menahem's death at least five years before Tiglath-pileser's accession in 745.[8]

The Menahem discrepancy is not surprising. In fact, it is one of four chronological anomalies in Mesopotamian history for that time. Each can be attributed to Tiglath-pileser's tampering with official records:

1. the interruption in office-bearer titles in the Eponym Lists between 770 and 769 (Tiglath-pileser deleted eleven *līmus* to erase memory of the Jonah episode)

2. the lack of royal inscriptions for the reigns of Shalmaneser IV, Ashur-dan III, and Ashur-nirari V (Tiglath-pileser destroyed most of their records because he blamed them for the half-century decline of the empire under their weak leadership)

3. the new-found attention by the Babylonians to astronomy (caused by their dismay at Tiglath-pileser altering one of their chronological bases, being the Eponym Lists)

4. Menahem's postdated tribute payments of 740/738 (Tiglath-pileser claimed Menahem's tribute in his inscriptions to receive the glory for placing Israel under vassalage, and also to conceal Pekah's continued rebellion in not paying tribute)

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[6] See ch. 6C, fn. 18 for bibliography.

[7] Tadmor, *ITP*, 276.

[8] According to 2 Kgs 15:23 and 15:27, Hoshea's rule began 20 to 22 years after Menahem's death, depending on the dating scheme(s) one chooses for Pekahiah and Pekah (who were the intervening kings between Menahem and Hoshea). Since Hoshea came to the throne between 733 and 731 B.C. (ch. 7A refers), Menahem must have died between 755 and 750 B.C. This is at least five years before Tiglath-pileser's accession.

5. Ahaz Pays Tribute to Tiglath-pileser [discussed briefly in chs. 7E ("734/33") and 8B5]

Ahaz of Judah is named in one of Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions.[9] It is a building inscription on clay, and although it bears a Kouyunjik number (K 3751), it was most likely discovered at Nimrud. The tablet is a surviving fragment (probably about half) of a long summary inscription that was composed for the building of the royal palace in Nimrud (Calah). Written on both sides, it is the most detailed of Tiglath-pileser's display inscriptions. It narrates the king's achievements from his accession to his 16th regnal year (729)—thus covering seventeen years in total—and ends with a report on the construction of Tiglath-pileser's palace at Nimrud. The document was written probably in or after 729. It is of particular interest because it contains the first Assyrian mention of a Judahite king (*Ia-ú-ha-zi* ^{kur} *Ia-ú-da-a+a*) being Jehoahaz of Judah (Jehoahaz was Ahaz's full name).

Because the list is broken off, there is some uncertainty over the exact number of tribute-bearers (at least 26 are indicated). The list consists of two parts: those kings who submitted in 738 (see #4) followed by those *new* kings who submitted in 734, including Ahaz.[10] Although there is some dispute over the dating of the list, many scholars uphold that its composition reflects the situation in Syria-Palestine in 734 or early in 733.[11] One can therefore date Ahaz's payment of tribute to that time. While it is uncertain if this payment is identical to the "bribe" of 2 Kgs 16:8, it fits the historical circumstances well (see Appendix F, "Ahaz"). Significantly, Ahaz's call to Tiglath-pileser for help against Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel caused Judah to become a vassal state of the Assyrian empire (with the requirement to pay tribute annually) for almost a century.

The K 3751 tribute list is notable not only for its inclusions (such as Ahaz) but also its omissions. Whereas Damascus and Samaria are listed as tribute-bearers in the annals and the Iran Stela for 738/740, they are conspicuously absent from their expected positions in the first part of the K 3751 list. This omission does not trouble scholars. It is known that Damascus and Samaria were in rebellion against Assyria in 733–732. Therefore, in K 3751, the first part of the tribute list—which names those kings who submitted in 738—was evidently updated to reflect the situation during Tiglath-pileser's western campaigns of 733–732.[12] Although this is a plausible explanation, the question must be asked: Might the K 3751 tribute list actually be telling the truth about 738/740 insofar as Pekah is concerned?

It is conjectured in Chapter 6C3 that Pekah's rebellion began after the death of Ashur-nirari V in 745, and that he subsequently made no tribute payments until 733–732. Tiglath-pileser may have therefore concealed Pekah's revolt by using Menahem's name in his annals and the Iran Stela. However, in K 3751, which was written ca. 729, there was no need to conceal Pekah's rebellion. He had already been punished with much loss of territory some three years earlier, so Israel was no longer an embarrassment for the Assyrian king.

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[9] See Tadmor, *ITP*, 170–71, Summ. 7: rev. 11′ (also *ARAB* I, §801; *DOTT*, 55–56; *ANET*, 282; Kuan 1995, 161–62; *COS* 2.117D:289).

[10] Although some might view the lateness of Judah's mention in Assyrian records as evidence of the nation's low stature in the region, a more plausible reason is that Judah had been beyond Assyrian interest before 734 B.C. (so Younger, "Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant," 236–37).

[11] See, for example, Hayes and Hooker, *A New Chronology for the Kings of Judah and Israel*, 63; Irvine, *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis*, 40–43; Tadmor, *ITP*, 265–68, 277; Kuan 1995, 162–64; Galil 1996, 67–68; Kelle, "What's in a Name," 657.

[12] So Tadmor, *ITP*, 268.

6. Tiglath-pileser Conquers Israel's Coastal Strip, Galilee, and the Transjordan, and Deports Their Inhabitants [previously reviewed—refer ch. 7AE]

The Eponym Canon shows that Tiglath-pileser campaigned in the west for three consecutive years beginning in 734 with a campaign centered on Philistia. The following two years (733–732) were centered on Damascus. Because the surviving texts for Tiglath-pileser are mainly summary inscriptions, it is difficult to reconstruct the exact order of operations for each of these years. (The few extant annalistic passages relating to these events are of minor help only.) Nevertheless, there is wide agreement on the main events:

1. Philistia was conquered in 734. It is possible that Israel's coastal strip was annexed at this time and its population deported.[13]
2. The Assyrian campaign against Damascus (recorded in 2 Kgs 16:7–9) took two years to accomplish. It began with the siege of the city in 733 and ended with the death of Rezin and annexation of the kingdom in 732.[14]
3. During the two-year Damascus campaign, the conquest of Galilee and the Transjordan and the exiling of their inhabitants occurred, as reported in 2 Kgs 15:29 and in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser (see next entry).

7. Pekah is Killed by Hoshea [previously reviewed—refer ch. 7AE]

Tiglath-pileser's campaign against Israel and the assassination of Pekah by Hoshea are recorded in 2 Kgs 15:29–30:

> In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

The Israel campaign and change of king are also recorded in three summary inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser.[15] It is commonly accepted that the Israel campaign took place during Tiglath-pileser's three-year western expedition of 734–732, and that Hoshea's appointment as king after he killed Pekah occurred in 733 or 732. However, it seems more likely that Hoshea killed Pekah in the following year (731). Three reasons suggest this: (1) Tiglath-pileser states that he "spared" Samaria, implying a continuation of Pekah's rule, (2) Pekah's death is mentioned as a *subsequent* event, and (3) Hoshea paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser, evidently in haste, in 731 (see next entry).

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[13] See Younger, "The Deportations of the Israelites," 204–05.

[14] Due to the mutilated state of many of Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions, the fall of Damascus and death of Rezin are not found in the surviving texts. Nevertheless, some details of the siege are preserved, such as Rezin being shut up "like a bird in a cage" and all the orchards around Damascus being cut down (Tadmor, *ITP*, 78–79, Ann. 23.11′–12′).

[15] Tadmor, *ITP*, Summ. 4.15′–19′; Summ. 13.17′–18′; Summ. 9: rev. 9–11 (see ch. 7A for text). It is possible that the Israel campaign is mentioned in a fourth inscription (*ITP*, 176–77, Summ. 8.10′–13′). However, a considerable part of the text is missing, and the name of the country is lost. Tadmor suggests that it may be Israel or Tyre (*ITP*, 282) while Irvine discounts Israel is a candidate (*Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Ephraimitic Crisis*, 50).

8. Tiglath-pileser Receives Hoshea's Tribute [previously reviewed—refer ch. 7AE]

An inscription of Tiglath-pileser records that Hoshea or his representative made obeisance to him at Sarrabanu in southern Babylonia.[16] Tiglath-pileser is known to have campaigned in that area in 731/30 (so the Eponym Chronicles) and also in 729/28 (so the Babylonian Chronicle Series). The earlier date is more likely given the apparent haste with which this tribute payment was made (i.e., Hoshea wanted Tiglath-pileser to accept his tribute as soon as possible, thereby confirming the empire's recognition of his rulership of Israel). This agrees with our chronology, which dates Pekah's assassination and Hoshea's accession to 731 (as opposed to 733 or 732).

9. Tiglath-pileser Dies in the Same Year as Ahaz [previously reviewed—refer ch. 8B3]

A short oracle against Philistia is pronounced in Isa 14:28–29:

> In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden. Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.

In Chapter 8B3, the one with the rod who smote Philistia was identified as Tiglath-pileser. His being "broken" referred to his death, which is reliably dated to 727. According to Isa 14:28, this was also the year in which Ahaz died (i.e., the Nisan year 727/26). While this is a helpful synchronism between the Biblical and Assyrian records, it cannot be used with confidence because it does not specifically name the oppressing king.

10. The Fall of Samaria [previously reviewed—refer ch. 7]

Scholars differ on the dates and circumstances associated with the siege and fall of Samaria. Nevertheless, they are almost unanimous in dating the fall of Samaria to between 723 and 720. Our study upholds 721 as the correct date.

11. Sargon Conquers Ashdod [previously reviewed—refer ch. 8EHI]

Both the Bible and the inscriptions of Sargon mention the conquest of Ashdod. The event is commonly dated to 712 but some scholars favor 711, which is our preferred date.

12. Sennacherib Invades Judah [previously reviewed—refer ch. 8]

It is almost universally accepted that the Assyrian royal inscriptions are correct in dating Sennacherib's invasion of Judah to 701. In fact, Thiele believed this date to be as reliable as 853 and 841.[17] Our study challenges the 701 date and submits that Sennacherib's invasion of Judah began late in Hezekiah's 14th year (713/12) during the reign of Sargon.

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[16] Ibid., 188–89, Summ. 9: rev. 9–11.
[17] Thiele 1983, 78, 174.

13. Josiah Dies while Fighting the Egyptians at Megiddo [previously reviewed—refer ch. 9]

Although it is commonly accepted that Josiah's untimely death at the battle of Megiddo occurred in 609, our study dates the event to 610. This date does not contradict the secular data.

14. Nebuchadnezzar Defeats the Egyptians at Carchemish [previously reviewed—refer chs. 4B and 10C]

This event has been reliably dated to 605. Since the Bible also mentions it as occurring in Jehoiakim's fourth year (Jer 46:2), it is an excellent synchronism between the Biblical and extra-Biblical records. Furthermore, it is the earliest synchronism that should be used (in our opinion) given the questions raised over some Assyrian dates mentioned above.

15. Conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar on Adar 2, 597 and Removal of Jehoiachin from the Throne [previously reviewed—refer chs. 4C and 10C]

The Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 21946 records that Nebuchadnezzar besieged the "city of Judah" in his seventh year (598/97). He subsequently captured it and seized its king (Jehoiachin) on the second day of Adar (= Mar. 16, 597). He then placed a king of his own choosing (Zedekiah) on the throne.[18]

While this appears to be a solid synchronism (i.e., Zedekiah's accession can be dated by a reliable Babylonian document), there is debate over whether Zedekiah was placed on the throne in Adar (at the end of 598/97) or Nisan (at the start of 597/96). Our study accepts Adar, 597 for Zedekiah's accession (see #16 below). That being said, one must address the following arguments in favor of Nisan, 597:

- Second Kings 24:12 states that "the king of Babylon took him [Jehoiachin] in the eighth year of his reign" (as opposed to his seventh year in BM 21946).

  REPLY: By Hebrew reckoning, the year in which Nebuchadnezzar became viceregent (or crown prince) was his accession year, i.e., 607. His viceregency, the years of which were not counted by the Hebrews, ended when he came to the throne as sole ruler in 605. This was his first year by Hebrew reckoning and his accession year by Babylonian reckoning. Thus, 598/97 was the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar by the Hebrews and his seventh year by the Babylonians.

- Second Chronicles 36:10 states that "when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him [Jehoiachin] to Babylon."

  REPLY: The term, "when the year was expired" in this verse can also be translated "in the spring of the year" (RSV) or "at the turn of the year" (LITV). While this term naturally fits the beginning of a new year (cf. 2 Sam 11:1; 1 Kgs 20:22+26; 1 Chr 20:1), it might also include the end-of-year intercalary month (called Adar II today). The logic is as follows. In the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nisan 1 was March 27, 598. This date was probably also Nisan 1 in the Hebrew calendar that year rather than February 25 (a month earlier) or April 25 (a month later). It appears that the Hebrews, in those days, intercalated at the end

[18] Grayson, *ABC*, 102 (Chron. 5 r. 11–13).

of the year primarily by observation (of crop maturity and temperature trend, among other factors). Given that the Babylonians added a mid-year intercalary month in 598/97 (= Ululu II[19]), it is possible that the Hebrews did so too but with an end-of-year (13th) month. One assumes that this 13th month, when used, always saw the turn to spring. Accordingly, the term "turn of the year" in Judah may have included this end-of-year intercalary month. In that case, it is possible that Jehoiachin's deportation to Babylon "in the spring of the year" occurred in Judah's Adar II (= Babylon's Adar).

- It would have taken some weeks for the Babylonians to secure their position, gather booty, and prepare the city's inhabitants for deportation. Jehoiachin may therefore have remained on the throne until his deportation.

  REPLY: It is likely that the people of Jerusalem were deported in two consecutive groups. The first group—comprising Jehoiachin, the royal family, and the city's elite—was deported just before the end of the year. Their number is reflected in the deportation total of Jer 52:28: "in the seventh year [of Nebuchadnezzar] three thousand Jews and three and twenty." The second group, comprising the general populace, etc., left some weeks later.

16. Fall of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's 11th Year = The 19th Year of Nebuchadnezzar [previously reviewed— refer chs. 4C and 10C]

As discussed in Chapter 4C, three variables affect the dating of the fall of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's eleventh year:

1. Was Judah using Nisan or Tishri years at the time?
2. Did Zedekiah's accession occur in Adar or Nisan, 597
3. Was Zedekiah using accession or non-accession year dating?

Our chronology upholds that Judah was using Nisan regnal years with accession year dating. Therefore, by that reckoning, the only remaining variable is the month of Zedekiah's accession in 597: Nisan or Adar. If Adar is chosen, then Zedekiah's accession year was 598/97 and his eleventh year was 587/86. Since Jerusalem fell on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year (2 Kgs 25:2–3), the event can be dated to Jul. 29, 587. On the other hand, if Zedekiah was placed on the throne in Nisan, then his accession year was 597/96 and his eleventh year was 586/85. The ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's 11th year would then be dated to July 18, 586.
Our study favors 587 for the fall of Jerusalem, hence Adar for Zedekiah's accession. This choice is based on the following supporting factors:

- BM 21946 is specific in dating the placement of a new king in Jerusalem (Zedekiah) to Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year (see ch. 10C ["598/97"]). This agrees with Jer 52:28.

[19] It is believed that by the mid-eighth century, Babylonian astronomers had established, through centuries of observation, that 235 lunar months yielded almost exactly the same number of days as 19 solar years. Therefore, to keep the nation's lunisolar calendar in order, seven lunar months needed to be intercalated in each 19-year period. Until the fall of the Neo-Babylonian empire to the Persians, the king issued the order for an intercalary month after consultation with the astronomers. The extra month was added either to the middle of the year (Ululu II) or to its end (Addaru II). By the fourth century, during the Persian era, intercalations followed a standardized formula.

- The captivity dates in Ezekiel harmonize completely with 587 (see ch. 5A).
- The time intervals in Ezek 4:4–6 correlate with 587 (see ch. 5C).

Also, when one understands that the Hebrews reckoned 605 as Nebuchadnezzar's first year and not his accession year (see chs. 5B and 10C ["607/06"]), then the following Biblical notices also support the fall of Jerusalem occurring in 587:

	REGNAL YEARS BY HEBREW RECKONING	BABYLONIAN RECKONING	NISAN YEAR
2 Kgs 24:12	Jehoiachin deported in the eighth year of Nebuch.	Nebuch. 7	598/97
2 Kgs 25:2+8	Zedekiah 11 = Nebuch. 19	Nebuch. 18	587/86
Jer 25:1	Jehoiakim 4 = Nebuch. 1	Nebuch. acc.	605/04
Jer 32:1	Zedekiah 10 = Nebuch. 18	Nebuch. 17	588/87
Jer 46:2	Jehoiakim 4 = Battle of Carchemish	Nebuch. acc.	605/04
Jer 52:5+12	Zedekiah 11 = Nebuch. 19	Nebuch. 18	587/86

Furthermore, if one accepts that the deportation notices in Jer 52:28–30 are copied directly from official Babylonian records, then verse 29 (dated to Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year) likewise supports 587 as the year in which Jerusalem fell.

17. Jehoiachin is Released from Prison in the 37th Year of His Captivity [previously reviewed—refer ch. 5AB]

This event is recorded in 2 Kgs 25:27 and Jer 52:31. These passages show that the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity coincided with the accession of Evil-Merodach (Amel-Marduk). Nebuchadnezzar died in early October, 562 and was succeeded by Amel-Marduk, whose accession year was therefore 562/61. In the final month of that year (Adar, 561), Amel-Marduk released Jehoiachin from prison.

Chapter 12: The Basic Calendar

A. From Abraham to Zedekiah

Having constructed a harmonized pattern for the Hebrew kings in Chapter 4B, a calendar of major dates from Abraham's birth to the fall of Jerusalem can be presented. To begin, let us review the foundational elements of this calendar in terms of the five-step process outlined in Chapter 2A (all dates are B.C.):

1. SYNCHRONISM. A reliable synchronism (or synchronisms) with the secular record must be found. Normally, scholars use the Assyrian record for such a synchronism. However, there is credible evidence of a gap in the Eponym Canon between 770 and 769. Since this is a primary chronograph for Assyrian history, events dated from this source prior to 769 have been deemed unreliable for purposes of securing a synchronism for the Hebrew kings. Consequently, a later synchronism, one underpinned by astronomy, has been used. This is the battle of Carchemish in Nebuchadnezzar's accession year of 605, which was also the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jer 46:2).

2. SCHISM. With a primary synchronism established, and having chosen 610 rather than 609 as the year of Josiah's death (see chs. 2A and 9), absolute dates were assigned to the relative chronology of the Hebrew kings as constructed in accordance with the principles set forth in Chapter 4A. The resulting chronology dated the schism, a pivotal event in Old Testament history, to 942/41.

3. EXODUS. Knowing that Solomon ruled for 40 years (1 Kgs 11:42), and with the schism in his 40th year dated to 942/41, we can date his fourth year (when the temple foundation was laid) to 978/77. Since Solomon's fourth year was the 480th year after the exodus (1 Kgs 6:1), we can apply this time-bridge to fix the exodus at 1457/56. (Recall that the "480th" year means an applied interval of 479 years.) Additionally, as Chapter 5C discusses, a second time-bridge associated with Solomon's fourth year is the 390-year period of Israel's iniquity (Ezek 4:5). This can be applied forward from Solomon's fourth year to confirm the onset of Jerusalem's siege in 588.

4. EGYPT. With the exodus dated to 1457/56, and applying the long sojourn interval of 430 years in preference to the short sojourn alternative of 215 years (Appendix A refers), Jacob's entry into Egypt can be dated to 1887/86.

5. ABRAHAM. Since Jacob was 130 years old when he arrived in Egypt (Gen 47:9), he would have been born in 2017/16 (1887/86 plus 130). Since Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Gen 25:26), Isaac's birth can be dated to 2077/76 (2017/16 plus 60). Since Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 (Gen 21:5), Abraham's birth can be dated to 2177/76 (2077/76 plus 100).

From the above dates and the chronology of the Hebrew kings detailed in Chapter 4B (Table 4), the following calendar is offered.

MAJOR DATES FROM ABRAHAM TO ZEDEKIAH

Single-year figures (e.g., 713) represent Nisan years (i.e., 713/12) while the superscript ^{J} denotes a Julian year (i.e., Jan. to Dec.).

Abraham born	2177
Isaac born	2077
Jacob born	2017
Jacob's entry into Egypt	1887
The exodus	Abib, 1457
Entry into Canaan	Abib, 1417
Founding of the temple in Jerusalem (in Solomon's fourth year)	Zif, 978
Solomon's death and subsequent division of the kingdom	942
Jehu's revolt	852^{J}
Sennacherib's invasion of Judah late in Hezekiah's 14th year	712^{J}
Fall of Samaria	721^{J}
Main deportation of Jerusalemites	597^{J}
Beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's final siege of Jerusalem	Jan. 15, 588
Fall of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's eleventh year	Jul. 29, 587

B. Consecutive Time Spans Revealed

The above calendar incorporates the following three long-dated time spans:

> Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. (Exod 12:40–41)

> And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. (1 Kgs 6:1)

> Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. (Ezek 4:4–5)

These notices are particularly helpful because of the substantial period of time that each covers (by their length they serve as epoch-bridging anchor points in Old Testament chronology). In our calendrical pattern, these three time spans reveal a surprising characteristic: they follow consecutively! Additionally, when the 19-month siege of Jerusalem is added, the total period covered by the four spans—a period that effectively represents Israel's existence as a set-apart nation—is exactly 1,300 years (from 1887 to 587):

1.	Exod 12:40	The 430-year duration of Israel's stay in Egypt	1887–1457
2.	1 Kgs 6:1	Solomon's fourth year was the 480th year after the exodus	1457–978
3.	Ezek 4:5	The 390-year span of Israel's iniquity	978–588
4.	2 Kgs 25:1–3	The 19-month siege preceding the fall of Jerusalem	588–587

Chapter 13: Conclusion

In this final chapter, I would like to summarize (and so reemphasize) a number of important conclusions made in this book regarding Biblical chronology and the secular record. They will be reviewed under the following headings:

A. Assyria and the Hebrew God
B. The Redated Chronology of the Hebrew Kings
C. Viceregencies

A. Assyria and the Hebrew God

Two significant Biblical events that many commentators diminish in importance, or even gloss over as fables, are the account of Jonah's mission to Nineveh and the loss of 185,000 Assyrian troops following Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year. I believe these events are responsible for two of the most vexing problems in Old Testament chronology: reconstructing the reigns of the last kings of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and dating Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (the Southern Kingdom). In both cases, an Assyrian king altered and/or deleted official records to hide the humiliation caused by an extraordinary, divinely effected event. The modern-day consequences of those actions have been profound.

Jonah and Tiglath-pileser. Our study submits that Jonah's mission to Nineveh occurred during the reign of Ashur-dan III in Assyria. It was an astounding occurrence in Nineveh to have its king and citizens don sackcloth, abstain from food and drink, and to cry out to God for mercy. It would have surely rated mention in official documents that the Hebrew God heard their pleas and spared the city. However, no such reports exist. Royal inscriptions are strangely lacking for this period. More strangely, the Eponym Canon features a break in the sequence of office-bearers between 770 and 769 B.C. This is at the very time when Jonah was active as a prophet.

We propose that a later king, Tiglath-pileser III, removed all record of the Jonah visit because it was an affront to the Assyrian deities and to national pride. However, he could not remove just one or two *līmus* from the Eponym Lists; that would be too obvious given the point where editing was required (in the midst of the introductory high officials). He therefore made it appear as if the eponym sequence had not restarted with the new king's reign (Ashur-dan III) but simply continued from the previous king's sequence of governors. This required the removal of eleven *līmus*. The King Lists were also adjusted to agree with the Eponym Lists.

In our view, this intervention by Tiglath-pileser is the true source of the problems associated with dating the last kings of Israel. Because the battle of Qarqar synchronism fixes Ahab's death to 853 B.C., there is insufficient space for the interlocking arrangement of later Judahite and Israelite kings to allow a 20-year reign for Pekah *and* have the fall of Samaria occur around 721 B.C. Hence, the high number of chronologies that shorten Pekah's reign, or assign him as a rival to Menahem and Pekahiah (see B2 below).

The problem vanishes when the eleven-year gap in the Eponym Canon is repaired. Ahab's death is raised to 864 B.C., allowing sufficient space to construct a pattern for the Hebrew kings that agrees both with the Bible (i.e., Pekah ruling for 20 years between Pekahiah and Hoshea) and a fall of Samaria date of around 721 B.C.

Hezekiah and Sennacherib. Sennacherib's invasion of Judah is dated by the Bible to Hezekiah's 14th year and by Assyrian royal inscriptions to Sennacherib's third campaign in 701 B.C. Unfortunately, most scholars favor the Assyrian record over the Bible when conflicts arise between the two. As a result, they are unable to construct a chronology that allows Hezekiah's 14th year and Sennacherib's third campaign to coincide without concluding that the Biblical account is in error at some point.

Our stance is that the problem lies squarely with the Assyrian record, which was tampered with to conceal an astounding setback. When Sennacherib, the crown prince son of Sargon, came to demand Jerusalem's surrender in 712 B.C. (he led the army on that particular campaign), the Lord caused a plague that killed 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night. This was an enormous shock for the Assyrians who were famed for their military prowess, and it caused loss of face for Sennacherib on his return home. Not surprisingly, Sargon did not mention the Judah campaign in his inscriptions despite otherwise triumphant actions against several important cities (such as Lachish). However, following Sargon's death, Sennacherib—who was proud of the successes of that campaign—corrected this omission by adding the Judah offensive of 712 B.C. to the record of his first and only known expedition to the southern Levant in 701 B.C. Naturally, Sennacherib's account was biased, portraying the Assyrian actions in a victorious light.

Once Hezekiah's 14th year of 713/12 B.C. is recognized as the year in which Sennacherib invaded Judah (late that Nisan year), then the regnal data of the Masoretic Text resolves easily for the kings of that era.

B. The Redated Chronology of the Hebrew Kings

This study sets forth a chronology of the Hebrew kings featuring three desirable outcomes: (1) complete harmonization of the regnal data of the Masoretic Text as recorded in the KJV, (2) no interregna for Israel, and (3) literal application of Ezekiel's 390-year period. The chronology was patterned in accordance with the following principles:

- For the beginning of the regnal year, Judah used Nisan while Israel used Tishri.
- Judah used accession-year dating throughout. Israel began with non-accession year dating but changed to accession year dating with the reign of the "reformer" Jehu. There were logical exceptions.
- For the period from the schism (Rehoboam–Jeroboam) to the fall of Samaria (Hezekiah–Hoshea), compression of the regnal data for both kingdoms was applied but only enough to eliminate interregna for Israel. The overlapping reigns revealed through this method were deemed to be historically accurate. Eleven overlaps were found, and the synchronisms for the majority of them were interpreted by Thiele's dual-dating procedure.
- Synchronisms were based on the dating scheme of the other kingdom.

The resulting chronology was not adjusted to align with Assyrian history. Rather, it was dated absolutely with respect to Neo-Babylonian history. The primary synchronism was Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Egypt at Carchemish in 605 B.C. = Jehoiakim's fourth year (Jer 46:2). When the chronology was dated and placed alongside established Assyrian chronology, an eleven-year difference was noted for the battle of Qarqar (864 B.C. by our chronology vs. 853 B.C. by the Assyrian Eponym Canon). On further analysis, it was found that the Eponym Canon contains evidence of a gap, as confirmed by a disruption in the office-bearer titles between 770 and 769

B.C. In our opinion, this gap is the reason for the eleven-year difference between Biblical and Assyrian chronology before 769 B.C.

This gets to the crux of the matter: do we trust that the Bible's regnal data is sufficient by itself to construct a true relative pattern, or must it be "corrected" by secular texts, which are not divinely inspired? Two examples from Thiele's chronology will illustrate the importance of this decision.

1. Hezekiah to Zedekiah. From the Bible, we find that the interval between Hezekiah's 14th year (when Sennacherib invaded Judah) and Jehoiakim's fourth year (when Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt at Carchemish) is 107 years and 3 months:

KING	REIGN	REFERENCE
After Hezekiah's 14th year	15 yrs	2 Kgs 18:1–2,13; 2 Chr 29:1
Manasseh	55 yrs	2 Kgs 21:1; 2 Chr 33:1
Amon	2 yrs	2 Kgs 21:19; 2 Chr 33:21
Josiah	31 yrs	2 Kgs 22:1; 2 Chr 34:1
Jehoahaz	3 m	2 Kgs 23:31; 2 Chr 36:2
Jehoiakim's fourth year	4 yrs	2 Kgs 23:36; 2 Chr 36:5
Total Time	107 yrs, 3m	

Therefore, if one were to date Hezekiah's 14th year using only the Bible and the 605 B.C. synchronism, it would be 712/11 B.C.[1] This clearly contradicts the Assyrian record, which dates Sennacherib's invasion of Judah to 701 B.C. To align Sennacherib's annals with Hezekiah's 14th year while retaining the 605 B.C. synchronism to Jehoiakim's fourth year, Thiele made the following adjustments to the Hebrew data:

1. He denied four clear synchronisms between the kings of Judah and Israel (2 Kgs 17:1; 18:1; 18:9–10). This enabled him to date Hezekiah's accession to the Tishri year 716/15 B.C. and his 14th year to 701 B.C.

2. However, there are only 96 years between Hezekiah's 14th year by Thiele (701 B.C.) and Jehoiakim's fourth year (605 B.C.). Since the Biblical tally is ca. 107 years (see above), Thiele invoked a coregency between Manasseh and Hezekiah to compress this interval. No such coregency is attested or implied in the Biblical data.

It is obvious that, in Thiele's chronology, the dates of Hezekiah and Manasseh are controlled by the Assyrian record. By contrast, if the Biblical data is accepted at face value (i.e., the interval between Hezekiah's 14th year and Jehoiakim's fourth year was about 107 years), one must conclude that Sennacherib's invasion of Judah did not occur in 701 B.C. but some eleven years earlier (ch. 8 refers).

[1] Our finalized chronology dates Hezekiah's fourteenth year to the preceding year 713/12 B.C. This is due to our belief (see chs. 2A and 9) that Josiah's death occurred not in the same regnal year as Jehoiakim's accession (609/08 B.C.) but in the preceding year (610/09 B.C.). Additional support for the earlier date is found in our understanding of Ezek 4:4–6 (see ch. 5C). If Josiah died in 609/08 B.C., then all dates before that point in our chronology must be lowered by a year. This means that Solomon's fourth year would be 977 B.C. and not 978 B.C. The 390 and 40-year intervals of Ezek 4:4–6 do not work with 977 B.C. But they work well with 978 B.C. Thus, in our view, Ezek 4:4–6 supports Josiah's death as occurring in 610/09 B.C.

2. The schism to the fall of Samaria. In his preface to the first edition of *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings,* Thiele explained that he began his chronology by constructing a pattern for the Hebrew kings from the schism to the reigns of Hoshea and Hezekiah. To ensure that this pattern was controlled only by the regnal data of the Masoretic Text, Thiele made no attempt to compare it against known history while it was being developed (i.e., no B.C. dates were assigned to it). In his completed relative pattern, the reigns of the kings were almost fully in harmony with the Biblical data except for two anomalies: (1) Jotham came to the throne in the same year as did Pekah rather than in Pekah's second year (as called for by 2 Kgs 15:32), and (2) Ahaz began his reign in the eighth and not seventeenth year of Pekah (as called for by 2 Kgs 16:1). The defining moment came when Thiele dated his relative pattern absolutely. He did this by working backwards and forwards from the earliest known contacts between Hebrew and Assyrian history, being the battle of Qarqar in Shalmaneser's sixth year and Jehu's payment of tribute in Shalmaneser's 18th year. The results were not as expected:

> To my surprise and dismay the fourteenth year of Hezekiah on this pattern turned out to be 702 instead of 701, as should have been the case by a comparison with Assyrian chronology. The last year of Hoshea and the fall of Samaria was 711. A careful review of the pattern from beginning to end indicated that if the data then followed were to remain the basis of the arrangement of reigns, no adjustment for the reign of any king of either Judah or Israel was possible. A careful investigation into the exact dates of Assyrian history, however, revealed the unexpected evidence that 853 rather than 854 was the correct date for Qarqar and that 841 rather than 842 was the true date for the eighteenth year of Shalmaneser III. With such an adjustment for the dates of Ahab and Jehu, the fourteenth year of Hezekiah was found to be 701 instead of 702, a date that was absolutely correct as evidenced by Assyrian chronology. But the date for the fall of Samaria then became 710, some twelve years after the city fell according to Sargon's claims.[2]

A noteworthy outcome here, and one that most scholars overlook, is that Thiele's original, harmonized pattern between Ahab's death (in 853 B.C. after the battle of Qarqar) and the fall of Samaria (710 B.C.) was about twelve years too long. (The fall of Samaria is typically dated to between 723 and 720 B.C.) Thiele was now at a crossroad in his methodology for handling the regnal data for the Hebrew kings. Would he trust his original pattern or would he modulate it to comply with accepted Assyrian history? He chose the latter and compressed his pattern enough to eliminate the unwanted ca. twelve-year excess from Ahab's death to the fall of Samaria. This was achieved by the assumption for the Northern Kingdom that Pekah ruled concurrently, in a rival reign, with Menahem and Pekahiah. By this unwarranted (and unconvincing) harmonizing device, Thiele raised the dates of Hoshea's reign enough to obtain an acceptable date for the fall of Samaria (which for him was the Nisan year 723/22 B.C.). However, in raising Pekah's and Hoshea's dates relative to their original positions, the patterns for three Judahite kings—Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah—fell out of alignment with the new positioning of the Israelite kings. Thiele repaired this with a twelve-year coregency for Jotham and Azariah. However, he did not raise the dates for Hezekiah, whose 14th year he had locked (understandably) to 701 B.C. This created a seven-year gap between the end of Hoshea's reign (723/22 B.C.) and the start of Hezekiah's reign (716 B.C.), forcing Thiele to conclude that the synchronisms between those two kings were in error.

From the vantage point of our chronology, we can see that Thiele was wrestling with two problems inherent in the Assyrian record about which he was unaware. Both problems superimpose to compound the puzzle. The first is a gap in the Eponym Canon. Had Thiele retained his original, harmonized pattern and simply raised *all of its dates* from the schism to the fall of Samaria by

[2] Thiele 1983, 17–18.

about twelve years, he would have found a ca. twelve-year difference between his date for Ahab's death and the accepted date for the battle of Qarqar. This would have alerted him to a problem in Assyrian chronology, being a gap in the Eponym Canon, clear evidence of which he would have found between 770 and 769 B.C. Second, in that original pattern (raised by ca. twelve years), Thiele would have found that Hezekiah's 14th year was ca. 712 and not 701 B.C. Since ca. 712 B.C. marries with the 107-year interval between Jehoiakim's fourth year (605 B.C.) and Hezekiah's 14th year (see #1 above), it would have confirmed for Thiele a second problem in Assyrian chronology. This is the date of the invasion of Judah according to Sennacherib's annals.

The point of this discussion, and indeed of our entire study, is that if one constructs a harmonized relative pattern of the Hebrew kings then dates it solely by reference to 605 B.C. (= Jehoiakim's fourth year), two crucial problems in Assyrian chronology become evident:

1. A gap in the Eponym Canon between 770 and 769 B.C.
2. An incorrect date for Sennacherib's invasion of Judah

Both problems are the direct result of astonishing interventions by the Hebrew God in the affairs of Assyria (i.e., Jonah's mission to Nineveh and the loss of Sennacherib's army). Not surprisingly, the Assyrians acted to cover up the humiliating after-effects of those interventions, so creating errors in their recorded history. By contrast, the writers of the Bible had no reason to propagate chronological errors. Accordingly, I believe that we should not allow the regnal data of the Hebrew kings to be governed by conventional Assyrian chronology, given its untrustworthy elements.

C. Viceregencies

A key conclusion of this book, and one that helps resolve many seeming contradictions in the regnal data for the Hebrew kings, is that viceregencies occurred in addition to coregencies in Judah and Israel. The difference between the two is that whereas coregency years were counted when tallying the duration of a king's reign, viceregency years were not.

A viceregency began when the reigning king designated his son as the *heir-apparent* (or crown prince). The main reason for doing so was to secure the line of succession. Although this was also a reason for establishing a coregency, the father may have considered his son too young and/or inexperienced, so he made him a viceregent instead.

The standout example of a viceregency in the Bible is Jehoiachin. Although he ruled for only three months (and ten days), 2 Kgs 24:8 reports that he was 18 years old when he began to rule while 2 Chr 36:9 reports that he was only eight. These notices harmonize once we accept that Jehoiakim placed Jehoiachin on the throne at the age of eight to secure the line of succession. However, because Jehoiachin was too young to be made a coregent, he served as viceregent until Jehoiakim's untimely death. His sole rule then began at the age of 18. Because viceregency years were not counted, 2 Chr 36:9 reports only the duration of his sole regency (three months and ten days). Additionally, because 2 Chr 36:9 reports that Jehoiachin "began to reign" when he was eight, we know that he was entitled to be called king from then on, and that the year in which he became a viceregent was considered to be his *accession year*. The pattern below shows the reckoning of Jehoiachin's reign:

Zedekiah														AC	1	2
Jehoiachin				vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	vice^{4}	vice^{5}	vice^{6}	vice^{7}	vice^{8}	vice^{9}	v^{10}/3m		
Jehoiakim			AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Jehoahaz		3m														
Josiah	30	31														
	611	**610**	**609**	**608**	**607**	**606**	**605**	**604**	**603**	**602**	**601**	**600**	**599**	**598**	**597**	**596**

The acceptance of viceregencies solves the following problems in Old Testament chronology, some of which are otherwise irreconcilable:

- The chronological placement of Asa's 35th and 36th years—2 Chr 15:19; 16:1
- The contradictory synchronisms for the reign of Jehoram—2 Kgs 1:17 vs. 8:16
- Jotham being called king during the reign of Jeroboam—1 Chr 5:17
- Ahaz's apparent age of eleven when Hezekiah was born—2 Kgs 16:2 + 18:2
- Zedekiah being born before Jehoahaz—1 Chr 3:15 vs. 2 Kgs 23:31 + 24:18
- The contradictory accession ages for Jehoiachin—2 Kgs 24:8 vs. 2 Chr 36:9

The chronology of the Hebrew kings presented earlier in Chapter 4B features six kings with viceregency segments. Five of them reigned in Judah (Jehoram, Joash, Jotham, Ahaz, and Jehoiachin) [3] and one reigned in Israel (Jehoash). All six are reckoned in accordance with accession year dating. Thus, as depicted for Jehoiachin above, the year in which a king's viceregency began was treated as his *accession year* (exactly as for coregencies under accession year dating). When the king began his sole rule, that year of transition from viceregency to sole regency was then considered to be his *first regnal year* and not his accession year, which had already occurred. The pattern below for Jotham shows this reckoning:

Jotham		vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	vice^{4}	vice^{5}	vice^{6}	vice^{7}	vice^{8}	vice^{9}	vice^{10}	vice^{11}	vice^{12}	vice^{13}	v^{14} / 1	2		
Azariah	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52			
	765	**764**	**763**	**762**	**761**	**760**	**759**	**758**	**757**	**756**	**755**	**754**	**753**	**752**	**751**	**750**	**749**		
Jeroboam	39	40	41																
Zachariah			6m																
Shallum			1m																
Menahem				AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
Pekahiah														AC	1	2			
Pekah																1	2		

Foreign viceregents. The Hebrews not only conferred the title of "king" to their own viceregents *but also to the crown princes of other nations*, even if that nation did not do so itself. An example is found in Jer 46:2, which refers to Nebuchadnezzar as the "king of Babylon" before he officially became king. By contrast, at home, Nebuchadnezzar was called "the crown prince" until his coronation.

Accepting that the Hebrews conferred the title of "king" to the crown princes of other nations solves the following problems in Old Testament chronology:

[3] The number of viceregencies in Judah is brought to eight with the omitted overlaps for Abijam and Asa (ch. 4E refers) and disconnected overlap for Zedekiah (ch. 4G refers). The total for Judah becomes nine if a viceregency is assumed for Amaziah (see Appendix F, "Amaziah"). For simplicity, none of these additional viceregencies is shown on the various charts and tables of our chronology.

- The crown prince Sennacherib being called “king of Assyria” in the Biblical account of the invasion of Judah (2 Kgs 18:13ff).
- The reference to Taharqa as “king of Ethiopia” in 2 Kgs 19:9 (several years before he became king of Egypt)
- Nebuchadnezzar being called “king of Babylon” in Jehoiakim’s third year (Dan 1:1)

Furthermore, the Hebrews reckoned the reigns of foreign crown princes exactly as they did for their own viceregents. So, in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the year in which he became crown prince (607/06 B.C.) was considered by the Hebrews to be his accession year. The counting of his regnal years, though, did not begin until the year in which his sole rule began, which was considered to be his first year. The pattern below shows the Babylonian and Hebrew reckoning (top and bottom rows, respectively) for Nebuchadnezzar:

Nabopolassar	15	16	17	18	19	20	21								
Nebuchadnezzar							AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	611	**610**	**609**	**608**	**607**	**606**	**605**	**604**	**603**	**602**	**601**	**600**	**599**	**598**	**597**
Nabopolassar	15	16	17	18	19	20	21								
Nebuchadnezzar					vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2} 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Josiah	30	31													
Jehoahaz		3m													
Jehoiakim			AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Jehoiachin				vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	vice^{4}	vice^{5}	vice^{6}	vice^{7}	vice^{8}	vice^{9}	v^{10} 3m	
Zedekiah														AC	1

This distinctive Hebrew reckoning explains why the chronological notices relating to Nebuchadnezzar in the books of Kings and Jeremiah (2 Kgs 24:12; 25:2+8; Jer 25:1; 32:1; 46:2; 52:5+12) are all *one year higher* than the Babylonian count. By contrast, the cited regnal years of all the kings mentioned in Daniel (i.e., 1:1; 1:21; 2:1; 7:1; 8:1; 9:1–2; 10:1; 11:1) follow the official reckoning for that king. This is to be expected of Daniel given his office in the empire. Likewise, the regnal years of Nebuchadnezzar cited in Jer 52:28–30, which is sourced from Babylonian records, follow the Babylonian reckoning.

The above arrangements are logical, and clarify the seemingly contradictory dates for Nebuchadnezzar in the books of Kings, Jeremiah, and Daniel.

Appendix A – The Duration of Israel's Sojourn in Egypt

The KJV translation of Exod 12:40–41, which is based on the MT, indicates that the duration of Israel's sojourn in Egypt was 430 years:

> Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

Genesis 15:13–16, cited by Stephen in Acts 7:6–7, supports this translation by its prophecy that Abraham's seed would spend 400 years—a figure that is viewed as an approximation—in a land not their own:

> And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. (Gen 15:13–16)

> And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. (Acts 7:6–7)

However, the idea of a 430-year sojourn in Egypt appears to be contradicted by other Scripture on two counts. First, the genealogies in Exod 6:16–20 and Num 26:57–59 suggest that Aaron and Moses were the biological sons of Amram and Jochebed. If the Egyptian sojourn was 400 years or more, then Jochebed was over 200 years old when Moses was born (80 years before the Exodus), which is untenable:

> And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi were an hundred thirty and seven years. The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: and the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and three years. And the sons of Merari; Mahali and Mushi: these are the families of Levi according to their generations. And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years. (Exod 6:16–20)

> And these are they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites. These are the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begat Amram. And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister. (Num 26:57–59)

Second, in Gal 3:16–17, Paul states that 430 years elapsed from the covenant made in Canaan (originally with Abraham) to the giving of Law (shortly after the Exodus):

> Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

All the above passages are harmonized, though, if one accepts the following readings of Exod 12:40 from the LXX (Greek) and Samaritan Pentateuch (Hebrew; hereafter, SP), in which the 430 years of Israelite sojourning are divided between Canaan and Egypt:

> And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years. [LXX]

> Now the sojourning of the children of Israel and their fathers who dwelt in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. [SP]

Many scholars, though, view these variant readings with caution. Reasons for not relying on them include:[1]

1. The inclusion of Canaan in Exod 12:40 is found in at least two codices of the Septuagint (LXX^{B} and LXX^{h}), in all known manuscripts of the SP, and in an obelus of the Syro-Hexapla. While this appears to confirm that the Israelites also sojourned in Canaan, the SP and LXX^{Bh} texts do not agree exactly. (For variant verses, scholars usually prefer the SP and LXX to the MT but only if the SP and LXX agree exactly, showing that they reflect the same original source.) The problem is the ordering of Egypt and Canaan. Whereas LXX^{B} reads "in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan," LXX^{h} reads "in the land of Canaan and Egypt." (All known manuscripts of the SP follow the LXX^{h} sequence but with a second "in the land of.") This reverse ordering counts against using the SP and LXX^{Bh} renderings of Exod 12:40 as firm proof that the Israelites also sojourned in Canaan.

2. While the addition of "and their fathers" in the SP is supported by a number of manuscripts, the placement of the phrase in two different locations within the verse in various LXX texts suggests its secondary character.

3. The majority of the ancient manuscripts cite a sojourn in Egypt alone, so supporting the MT.[2] As for the inclusion of Canaan in the SP and LXX^{Bh}, it has been conjectured that this was done to "correct" the MT in light of the contradictions between Exod 12:40–41 and Gen 15:13–16 (on the one hand) and Exod 6:16–20 and Gal 3:16–17 (on the other).[3]

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[1] The following analysis of the textual data for Exod 12:40 derives mainly from Paul J. Ray Jr., "The Duration of the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt," 233–34.

[2] For example, the Peshitta (Syriac) and Vulgate (Latin) versions, which are Hebrew-based and primary in value, both follow the MT.

[3] On the hypothesis that alterations in the LXX are at points where the MT is problematic, see Gerhard Larsson, "The Chronology of the Pentateuch: A Comparison of the MT and LXX," *JBL* 102 (1983): 401–09, esp. 406.

As a result of the variant texts for Exod 12:40, the duration of Israel's sojourn in Egypt has been debated probably since the early days of the LXX (ca. 250–150 B.C.).[4] Even today, there is no scholarly consensus on the matter.

In this appendix, we will review the three most common solutions for the length of Israel's stay in Egypt: 215, 430, and 400 years. While other intervals have been proposed, discussion of these three will cover most other cases.[5]

1. A 215-Year Sojourn (also called the "short sojourn")

Statement of the View.[6] The 430 years of Gal 3:17 began with the call of Abraham when he was 75 years old and ended with the giving of the Law to Moses shortly after the Exodus. Since an interval of 215 years existed between the call of Abraham and Jacob's entry into Egypt (Gen 12:4 + 21:5 + 25:26 + 47:9), the duration of the sojourn in Egypt was 430 minus 215 = 215 years. To accommodate this view, Gen 15:13, Acts 7:6, and Exod 12:40 are taken as incorporating the sojourns in both Canaan and Egypt, as supported by the LXX^{Bh} and SP translations of Exod 12:40. Accordingly, Exod 12:40 harmonizes with Gal 3:17 in that both refer to a sojourn of 215 years in Canaan followed by 215 years in Egypt. Regarding the 400-year intervals of Gen 15:13 and Acts 7:6, they are viewed as comprising 185 years in Canaan and 215 years in Egypt. The 185-year period is from the *weaning of Isaac* until Jacob's entry into Egypt. Isaac's weaning, assumed to have occurred when he was five years old, is an important chronological marker because he was confirmed then as the rightful "seed" following Abraham's casting out of his firstborn son Ishmael and mother Hagar (Gen 21:8–21). This is noteworthy because Gen 15:13 and Acts 7:6 specifically refer to the sojourning of Abraham's *seed* ("Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years").

A 215-year sojourn in Egypt harmonizes completely with the Levite genealogy of Exod 6:16–20 and Num 26:57–59. It allows for Jochebed to be the actual mother of Moses, while enabling Moses

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[4] The division of opinion in ancient times over this issue is evident in the contradictory statements of Josephus, the first century A.D. historian. In two instances he cites a 400-year sojourn (*Ant*. 2.9.1; *Wars* 5.9.4) while in another he cites a 215-year sojourn (*Ant*. 2.15.2).

[5] In matters of ancient chronology, it is always instructive to consult Jack Finegan's *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (rev. ed., 1998). There, he discusses three sojourn possibilities, being 215, 314, and 430 years (§§356–63). The 314-year solution is Finegan's own proposal and his favored choice. Coupled to an Exodus date of 1250 B.C., a 314-year sojourn allows for no missing generations between Kohath, Amram, and Moses (by Finegan's arithmetic) while being congruent with the chronology indicated in the *Book of Sothis* for Pharaoh Apophis (§361, §389, Tables 108 [p. 206] and 114 [p. 213]). Because the *Book of Sothis* is generally regarded as being of little value to Egyptology (see, for example, Verbrugghe and Wickersham, *Berossos and Manetho*, 102), Finegan's 314-year option will not be discussed here.

[6] The 215-year view is the most popular and its advocates include: James Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, 25, 31, 39; Donald MacDonald, "Chronology," in *The Imperial Bible-Dictionary* (ed. Patrick Fairbairn; 2 vols.; London: Blackie and Son, 1866), 1:323–24; John Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1869), 259–61; Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (2 vols.; New York: S. S. Scranton, 1873), 1:57 [contrary to Jamieson in 1:57, Fausset upholds a 430-year Egyptian sojourn in 2:330]; Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, 114–31; David L. Cooper, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled* (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1939), Ch. 4.IIA; Jones 2005, 53–60.

to be the direct fourth generation son of Jacob who led his people to the threshold of the promised land (Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses). This is a major strength of the 215-year view.

The relevant 400 and 430-year calculations in the 215-year Egyptian sojourn scheme are shown below:

The call of Abraham at 75 years of age (Gen 12:4)	0		0
Isaac born when Abraham was 100 years old (Gen 21:5)	+ 25		25
Isaac weaned and Ishmael cast out when Isaac was five (Gen 21:8–12). This begins the 400-year period of Gen 15:13 and Acts 7:6.	+ 5	0	30
Jacob and Esau born when Isaac was 60 (Gen 25:26)	+ 55	55	85
Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt (Gen 47:9, 28)	+ 130	185	215
Exodus after a 215-year sojourn in Egypt	+ 215	400	430

Additional Details

- In Exod 12:40, the "sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt" is interpreted as referring to the particular branch of Abraham's lineage that, at some point during their sojourning (which began in Canaan), emigrated to and dwelt in Egypt. In other words, the verse is describing *which* children of Abraham are in view.[7] Note that unlike the 430-year position, the words *sojourning* and *dwelt* here refer to different periods of time.

- In Gen 15:13, the phrase "a land that is not theirs" can also apply to Canaan because it was never possessed by Abraham's seed before its conquest by Joshua. As for the 400 years of affliction, it need not apply to Canaan if one views the construction of Gen 15:13 as an *introversion*, thus:

  Know of a surety that
  A. thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs,
  B. and shall serve them;
  B. and they shall afflict them
  A. four hundred years.

  Here, the two A clauses correspond to the same event, which is the 400 years of sojourning in Canaan and Egypt. The two B clauses are parenthetical and relate specifically to the servitude and affliction in Egypt (215 years).[8]

- While the total of those entering Egypt was 75 according to Stephen (Acts 7:14), the number of males aged 20 and over in the year after the exodus (excluding the tribe of Levi) was 603,550 (Num 1:1–47; cf. 11:21). This suggests that the Israelite population on leaving Egypt (i.e., men, women, and children) was at least two million. Although this is a phenomenal growth rate for a 215-year period, it is theoretically possible and can be explained by either very large families and/or divine blessing. Moreover, a high growth rate is in keeping with the remark that "the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them" (Exod 1:7).

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[7] So Jones 2005, 56.

[8] On the introversion formula for Gen 15:13, see Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, 22; Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, 127–28; Jones 2005, 59.

2. A 430-Year Sojourn (also called the "long sojourn")

Statement of the View.[9] The Egyptian bondage lasted for 430 years beginning with Jacob's entry into Egypt and ending with the Exodus. This view is based on a straightforward reading of Exod 12:40, where the words "sojourn" and "dwell" refer to the same 430-year period (the LXX^{Bh} and SP readings have been discounted here). This interpretation is supported by Gal 3:17. There, the 430-year interval is viewed as beginning with the last recorded confirmation of the covenant made just before Jacob entered Egypt (Gen 46:1–7); it ends with the receipt of the Law by Moses at Mt. Sinai two months after the Exodus. Regarding the figure of 400 years in Gen 15:13–16 and Acts 7:6, this is an approximation made to agree with the "fourth generation" reference in Gen 15:16 (more on this in f] below).

Additional Details

- The genealogical record of Exod 6:16-20, while fitting a 215-year sojourn, does not harmonize with either the 400 or 430-year view. (As mentioned above, it would require Jochebed to be over 200 years old when Moses was born.) Comparison with other Scripture, however, shows the likelihood that the genealogies for Levi given in Exod 6:16–20 and parallel passages such as Num 26:57–59 are incomplete. In other words, there were more than four generations between Jacob and Moses. Evidence for this includes:

  a) Ephraim was the second of two sons born to Joseph (son of Jacob) in Egypt (Gen 41:50–52). In the listing of Ephraim's descendants in 1 Chr 7:20–29, if it is assumed that Rephah (v. 25) was the grandson of Ephraim, then there were no less than nine generations from Jacob to Elishama, head of the house of Ephraim in Moses' day (Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, Beriah, Rephah, Telah, Tahan, Laadan, Ammihud, Elishama).[10] The other son of Joseph was Manasseh. According to Num 26:28–33 (also Num 27:1 and Josh 17:3), there were at least seven generations from Jacob to the daughters of Zelophehad—descendants of Manasseh—who were contemporary with Moses (Jacob, Joseph, Manasseh, Machir, Gilead, Hepher, Zelophehad, daughters of Zelophehad). Note that before Joseph died at the age of 110 (which was 71 years after Jacob's entry into Egypt), he saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. Also, Machir the son of Manasseh sat on his knees (Gen 50:23).

  b) In 1 Chr 2:3–10 (also Ruth 4:18–20), six generations are listed from Jacob to Nahshon, who was a tribal prince in Moses' day (Jacob, Judah, Pharez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab,

[9] The 430-year position is the second most popular and its advocates include: Hermann Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on St Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1851), 59–60; Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (trans. James Martin et al.; 25 vols.; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1857–1878), 1:216; Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (New York: S. S. Scranton, 1873), 2:330; Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*: 53–56; idem, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 355–58; Jack R. Riggs, "The Length of Israel's Sojourn in Egypt," 18–35; Paul J. Ray. Jr., "The Duration of the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt," 231–48; Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (rev. and exp. ed.; Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 237–39.

[10] My counting of generations here follows the divided monarchy method whereby the first generation commences with the first son (cf. 2 Kgs 10:30: Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, Zachariah).

Nahshon).[11] Similarly, 1 Chr 2:3–21 lists seven generations from Jacob to Bezabel, who was an artisan in the time of Moses (Jacob, Judah, Pharez, Hezron, Caleb,[12] Hur, Uri, Bezaleel).

c) The genealogy of Korah provides evidence of missing generations in the recorded data for the era. Korah was a descendant of Levi who rebelled against Moses in the wilderness (Num 16:1–40). From Num 16:1 and 1 Chr 6:22, it appears that Korah was a fifth generation descendant of Jacob (Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Izhar, Amminadab, Korah).[13] For the sake of argument, let us assume "best case" conditions that (1) Kohath was a newborn when he entered Egypt with Levi and Jacob (Gen 46:11), (2) Kohath, Izhar, and Amminadab each fathered their sons at the age of 30 (the actual age was probably younger given the rapid growth rate implied by Exod 1:7), and (3) the Egyptian sojourn lasted only 215 years. Under those assumptions, Korah was at least 125 years of age at the time of the Exodus, which seems too old given the vigor of his rebellion. The most likely solution is that the genealogy of Korah is not continuous, and some generations were not recorded. (On this point, observe how Exod 6:21 omits Amminadab between Izhar and Korah.)

d) In Num 3:27–28, which is set in the second year after the Exodus, the combined total of the four family groups of Kohath—being the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites—is given as 8,600 male descendants from a month old and upward. Clearly, this large number implies that Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel were the biological sons of Kohath whose names became the family groups by which Kohath's descendants were classed (cf. Exod 6:18; Num 3:19, 27–28; 1 Chr 6:2, 18; 23:12). Concerning the family of the Amramites, let us assume that they numbered 2,150 males after the Exodus (i.e., a quarter of 8,600). Moses himself had only two sons (Exod 18:3–4). If he was the biological son of Amram as Exod 6:20 and Num 26:59 appear to indicate, he would have had 2,147 brothers and sons of brothers, which is implausible. Amram must therefore be considered as having lived much earlier than Moses (i.e., there were a number of unrecorded generations between them).

e) The evidence in a) to d) above suggests that the Egyptian sojourn spanned several generations. Concerning the four generations mentioned in Exod 6:16–20 (Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, Aaron + Moses), they should be viewed as a listing that focuses on *tribes, clans, and major family groups*.[14] Crucially, Exod 6:14 introduces the genealogies with the statement: "These be the heads of their fathers' houses." Exodus 6:16–20 is therefore not a full genealogy. Rather, it lists the figureheads for the descendancy of

[11] Exodus 6:23 reports that Aaron married Nahshon's sister Elisheba. Aaron's tribal father Levi was probably born one year earlier than Elisheba's tribal father Judah (Gen 29:34–35). If Levi and Judah married around the same time, which is a reasonable assumption, one would expect some parallelism in the accounts of their generations. Yet Aaron, who is a fourth generation son of Jacob in Exod 6:16–20, married a wife of the sixth generation after Jacob. The discrepancy is resolved if missing generations in Exod 6:16–20 are assumed for Levi.

[12] On the difference between Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Caleb the son of Hezron, see Mark J. Fretz and Raphael I. Panitz, "Caleb," *ABD* 1:808–10.

[13] Numbers 16:1 omits Amminadab while 1 Chr 6:22 omits Izhar (see also Exod 6:18, 21; 1 Chr 6:37–38).

[14] So Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, 54.

Aaron and Moses, who belonged to the tribe of Levi, the clan of Kohath, and the family of the Amramites through Jochebed.[15] This is an important conclusion. It means that Amram and Jochebed were not the biological parents of Aaron and Moses. (Significantly, Moses' actual parents are left nameless in Exod 2:1–10.) As for the statement in Exod 6:20 that Amram married Jochebed who "bare him Aaron and Moses," this does not automatically imply biological birth. In Gen 46:16–18, the children that Zilpah "bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls" include the sons and grandsons of Gad and Asher, Zilpah's only two sons (Gen 35:26). Therefore, the passages which suggest that Aaron and Moses were the only sons of Amram (Exod 6:20; Num 26:59; 1 Chr 6:3; 23:13) are referring not to biological descendancy, but to a genealogical line stylized after the tribe–clan–family categorization.

f) In Gen 15:16, it was prophesied to Abraham that his descendants would return to Canaan "in the fourth generation." The word translated generation in this verse is *dôr*, which can be interpreted as a "cycle of time" or "lifetime."[16] It stands in contrast to *tôlēdôt*, which is also translated "generation" but refers to genealogy as in Exod 6:16.[17] Because the four generations (*dôr*) span 400 years in Gen 15:16, it is apparent that in earlier times a generation was roughly equivalent to a century. (Appropriately, Abraham was precisely one hundred years old when he became the father of Isaac.) At least four centuries, then, would mark the Israelite sojourn before their departure from the foreign land.[18]

- In Gen 15:7, the Lord deeded Canaan to Abraham ("I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it"). He then told Abraham that his seed would be a stranger in a land that was not theirs, and that they would be afflicted there for 400 hundred years (v. 13). After that, they would "come again hither," meaning that they would return to Canaan, their deeded possession (v. 16). Based on the promises "give thee this land to inherit it" and "come again hither," it is clear that the Lord viewed Canaan not only as Abraham's possession but also as a *safe haven* for his posterity (cf. Gen 13:17; 15:1, 15; 23:1–20; 25:11; 26:3; 35:5). This stands in contrast to Egypt, the foreign land in which Abraham's seed would be oppressed. Accordingly, any time spent in Canaan should not be counted as years under oppression, which occurs in the 215 and 400-year views. This is only logical. Before Jacob entered Egypt, the children of Abraham were not in bondage to any Canaanite nations nor were they afflicted by them. It is only in Egypt that they were oppressed and abhorred as strangers (Gen 43:32; Exod 8:25–27; 22:21; 23:9; cf. Isa 52:4).

- Even though the Israelites were not oppressed for the full duration of their sojourn, Gen 15:13 implies that they were. This is not fatal to the long sojourn view. Because life in Egypt for the Hebrews became synonymous with oppression (Exod 20:2; Josh 24:17; Acts 7:6),

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[15] The notion that Levi, his biological son Kohath, and Kohath's biological son Amram were figureheads (i.e., tribe, clan, and family group, respectively) is underscored by the recording of their lifespans in Exod 6:16–20. That lifespans are not cited for the figureheads of other tribes confirms the pre-eminence of Moses, Aaron, and the priestly line. Note that Jochebed is still considered to be the biological daughter of Levi in this view (Num 26:59).

[16] On this, see William F. Albright, "Abram the Hebrew: A New Archaeological Interpretation," *BASOR* 163 (1961): 50–51; also *NIDOTTE*, 1:930–31, G/K 1887.

[17] *NIDOTTE*, 2:459, G/K 3528.

[18] So Keil and Delitzsch, 1:216. Additionally, as Kitchen observed, "The 400 years is a round figure in prospect, while the 430 years is more precise in retrospect" (Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, 53).

any time spent in that land was considered, especially after the fact, to be time spent in the "house of bondage."

- Both the 430 and 400-year views harmonize with the LITV translation of Acts 13:20. By that translation, the 450-year period begins with the Egyptian sojourn and ends with the conquest of Canaan:

> And rising up, and signaling with his hand, Paul said, Men, Israelites, and the ones fearing God, listen. The God of this people Israel chose out our fathers, and exalted the people in their stay in the land of Egypt. And with a high arm, He led them out of it. And as forty years time passed, He tenderly bore them in the wilderness. And He pulled down seven nations in Canaan land, and gave their land to them as an inheritance. And after these things, as four hundred and fifty years passed, He gave judges until Samuel the prophet. (Acts 13:16–20 LITV)

  If one assumes that Paul, like Stephen in Acts 7:6, was referring to the sojourn figure of 400 years in Gen 15:13, then the subsequent 40 years in the wilderness plus seven years for the conquest of Canaan yields a total of 447 years, which rounds up to 450 years as quoted.[19] Note that the KJV places the 450-year period *after* the conquest of Canaan, thereby making it the duration of the Judges era. Our study accepts the LITV reading.

- Galatians 3:17 appears to suggest that the time from the covenant with Abraham to Sinai was 430 years. However, because the Lord reiterated the promise to all three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—Gen 50:24; Exod 2:24; 6:3–8), it is equally likely, and indeed more logical, that the 430-year period should be bracketed by the following epochal events: (1) the final confirmation of the covenant made just before Jacob entered Egypt (recorded in Gen 46:1–7; cf. Psalms 105:10), and (2) the giving of the Law at Sinai soon after leaving Egypt, which established how the Israelites were to live once in Canaan (Exod 19:1ff).

3. A 400-Year Sojourn (also considered to be a "long sojourn")

Statement of the View.[20] The Egyptian bondage lasted for 400 years as plainly stated in Gen 15:13–16 and Acts 7:6.[21] Like the 215-year view, the 430 years of Exod 12:40–41 and Gal 3:17

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[19] Why would Paul use 400 years for the Egyptian sojourn in tallying his 450-year total here but then quote the exact interval of 430 years in Gal 3:17? I propose that Paul was influenced by the composition of the audience to whom he spoke. His figure of 450 years was cited in a synagogue in Pisidian Antioch—during his first missionary journey—after the Law and the Prophets had been read to the congregation. The synagogue comprised mainly Jews (Acts 13:16). Both Paul and the educated listeners there were undoubtedly aware of the contradiction between the Greek and Hebrew texts for Exod 12:40 (see above, esp. fn. 4). Accordingly, Paul used the well-known but less distracting figure of 400 years from Gen 15:13. On the other hand, the churches in Galatia comprised mainly Gentiles who had limited knowledge of Old Testament writings (the Law and the Prophets). Therefore, to the Galatians, Paul cited the exact figure of 430 years for the Egyptian sojourn, as he could do so without controversy or further elaboration.

[20] The 400-year position is the least popular of the three. Although its most well-known advocate is Harold W. Hoehner ("The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage"), the view was previously put forward by John Rae in an unpublished doctoral dissertation, *The Historical Setting of the Exodus and the Conquest* (Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1958). Excerpts from Rae's work are cited by Riggs in "The Length of Israel's Sojourn in Egypt," 26–27.

[21] Whereas Hoehner holds to an exact 400-year interval for the Egyptian sojourn, Rae calculates it to be 396 years, with 34 years being spent in Canaan. Rae sees the figure of 400 years in Gen 15:13 and Acts 7:6 as an approximation.

are interpreted as referring to the sojourning both in Canaan and Egypt, as supported by the LXX^{Bh} and SP readings of Exod 12:40. However, the 430-year period does not start with the call of Abraham. Because Gal 3:17 specifically states that it began with the *confirmation* of the covenant, the start of the 430-year period in Exod 12:40 and Gal 3:17 is taken as being the last recorded confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant before Jacob entered Egypt (Gen 35:9–15). During this final confirmation, which is assumed to have occurred 30 years before the Egyptian sojourn began (after Jacob's "exodus" from Haran to Canaan with his family), God changed Jacob's name to Israel. The name change is significant because Exod 12:40 refers to the sojourning of the children of *Israel* and not of Jacob. The 430-year period therefore cannot begin before Jacob's name was changed to Israel.

Additional Details

- As discussed above in detail for the 430-year view, the genealogies for Levi given in Exod 6:16–20 and parallel passages such as Num 26:57–59 are incomplete. In other words, the Egyptian sojourn spanned more than four generations.

- Also as discussed above, the 400-year view harmonizes with certain translations of Acts 13:20, in which the 450-year period begins with the Egyptian sojourn and ends with the conquest of Canaan (= 400 + 40 + 7 years).

Reasons for Preferring the 430-Year Egyptian Sojourn

Our study prefers the 430-year view for the following reasons:

1. The 430 years of sojourning in Exod 12:40 was made by the "children of Israel," which is a term that refers specifically to *Jacob's descendants*. This agrees with passages such as Exod 3:15–16, which contrasts the patriarchal fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) against the children of Israel suffering in Egypt:

   > And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you . . . saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt.

   The term "children of Israel" unmistakably refers to Jacob's descendants throughout the Bible. Nevertheless, in the short sojourn view, one is forced to accept that Abraham and Isaac are included in that term.[22]

2. The majority of manuscripts support the MT reading of Exod 12:40, which plainly states that the Egyptian sojourn lasted for 430 years. Allowing for the inclusion of a Canaan sojourn in this figure seems contrary to the intent of Exod 12:40–41, which is to give the years spent in Egypt at the time of their termination.

[22] Perhaps this is why the editors of manuscripts such as the Samaritan Pentateuch added "and their fathers" to Exod 12:40 ("Now the sojourning of the children of Israel **and their fathers** who dwelt in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt" [SP]). By this emendation, they believed that they were amplifying the text correctly.

3. As submitted above in the section for the 430-year view, the Egyptian sojourn clearly spanned more than the four generations indicated in Exod 6:16–20.

4. In the detailed accounting of Moses' early life in Exod 2:1–10, Moses' father, but more particularly his mother (who features prominently in the account), are left unnamed. Together with #3 above, one can reasonably conclude that Amram and Jochebed were not his actual parents. On this, see the excerpt below from William Henry Green's influential 1890 article, "Primeval Chronology."

5. Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 state that Abraham's seed would be in a *land* that was not theirs. Both verses, in tenor and logic, refer to a single place (i.e., *land* = Egypt, not *lands* = Canaan and Egypt). This is reinforced by the statement in Gen 15:16 that Abraham's seed would dwell in a foreign land (i.e., be away from Canaan) for 400 years because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." That is, the wickedness of the Canaanites, represented by the Amorites, would take some time to reach its full measure, after which the Lord would judge them. As we know, the Lord judged them by the hand of His own people. With great power and mighty wonders, He removed the Israelites from the *land of oppression* (Egypt) and returned them to the *land of promise* (Canaan), where they conquered its inhabitants within seven years.

6. Assuming a mid-15th century exodus date and a 430-year Egyptian sojourn, Jacob entered Egypt sometime during the first third of the 19th century. This places the events of Abraham's first year in Canaan (at age 75), his visit to Egypt, and the events of Gen 15 late in the 22nd or in the early 21st century. As Paul Ray explains, these dates marry well with the historical and archaeological evidence:

> Both Ur and Haran were flourishing at the time. Shechem and Bethel were uninhabited,[23] but the Jordan valley was well populated.[24] In the Negev, there was settlement from the twenty-first to the nineteenth centuries B.C., but not before or afterwards (cf. Gen 20:1, 24:62; 28:20).[25] However, in the central hill country there was apparently a sparseness of population, reflected by the fact that Abraham could move freely between Shechem and Beersheba,[26] where he could pitch his tent and graze his flock as he pleased, as did Isaac and Jacob. Archaeological findings

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[23] On Shechem, see G. Ernest Wright, *Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City* (New York, 1964), pp. 110–112; and William H. Shea, "Famines in the Early History of Egypt and Syro-Palestine" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976), pp. 151–152. On Bethel, see W. F. Albright and James L. Kelso, "The Excavation of Bethel (1934–1960)," *AASOR* 39 (1968): 10, 21, 45. The conclusion is valid if indeed Bethel is Beitin: cf. David Livingston, "Location of Biblical Bethel and Ai Reconsidered," *WTJ* 33 (1970): 20–44, and "Traditional Site of Bethel Questioned," *WTJ* 34 (1971): 39–50.

[24] M. Ibrahim, James A. Sauer, K. Yassine, "The East Jordan Valley Survey, 1975," *BASOR*, no. 222 (1976): 51–54.

[25] Nelson Glueck, "The Age of Abraham in the Negeb," *BA* 18 (1955): 6–9; "Exploring Southern Palestine (The Negev)," *BAR* 1 (1959): 4–5; and *Rivers in the Desert* (New York, 1959), pp. 60–101. Cf. William G. Dever, "The EB IV-MB I Horizon in Transjordan and Southern Palestine," *BASOR*, no. 210 (1973), pp. 37–63; also R. Cohen and W. G. Dever, "Preliminary Report of the Second Season of the 'Central Negev Highlands Project,'" *BASOR*, no. 236 (1979), pp. 42, 57–58; and "Preliminary Report of the Third and Final Season of the 'Central Negev Highlands Project,'" *BASOR*, no. 243 (1981), p. 61.

[26] Both Gen 12:6 and 21:31 use the term *māqôm* ("place") rather than *ʿîr* ("city") for these sites, as does Gen 28:19 for Bethel at the time Jacob went through on his way to Haran. This terminology indicates that there was no inhabited city at these sites at those particular times (i.e., MBI for the former, and MBIIA for the latter).

> reveal the same condition, particularly in the interior of Canaan, and further indicate that during the nineteenth century the cities west of the Jordan were again occupied.[27] It is interesting, moreover, that Asiatics during Egypt's First Intermediate Period (ca. 2181–2022 B.C.) entered the Delta region with relative ease.[28] Thus, it would not have been difficult for Abraham to enter the unguarded borders of Egypt at that time. ("The Duration of the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt," 240–41.)

Ray also submits that a long sojourn places Joseph and Jacob in Egypt during the 12th Dynasty (ca. 1991–1782 B.C.), and not during the Hyksos Period as occurs in the short sojourn scheme. He offers strong arguments on this point, and shows how Joseph's career agrees remarkably well with the 12th Dynasty circumstances in Egypt. He further proposes that while the Hebrews may have been afflicted to varying degrees beforehand by some Egyptian rulers, the main oppression began around 1730 B.C. under the Hyksos regime, and was continued by Egyptian rulers thereafter.[29]

Further to the above, the following objections are raised against the 215 and 400-year views:

215: Isaac being weaned at the age of five is guesswork made to fit the offered chronology.

215: The astronomical growth rate in Egypt for Jacob's family is questionable (from 75 to over two million).

215: While the KJV uses the word "sojourn" for the time that Abraham and his descendants dwelt in Canaan (Gen 21:34; 26:3; Heb 11:8–9), there is no record of their being oppressed by the Canaanites or being their servants. In fact, the Psalmist writes that the Lord specially protected the patriarchs in their various travels before Jacob entered Egypt:

> O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. **When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes; Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm**. Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant. (Psalms 105:6–17)

Clearly, the patriarchs did not suffer under the Canaanites at any time before the Egyptian sojourn.[30]

400: The start point of the 430-year period in Gal 3:17 is understood to be the last recorded confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant before Jacob entered Egypt, as reported in Gen 35:9–15. There is no reason, however, why the final confirmation cannot be that given in

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[27] G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 47, and Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, trans. A. F. Rainey (Philadelphia, 1979), pp. 144–147.

[28] Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 109–110.

[29] Ray, "The Duration of the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt," 241–46.

[30] Moreover, part of the promise to Abraham was that he would die in peace at a good old age (Gen 15:15; 25:7). This happened when he was 175 (Jacob and Esau were 15 years old then).

Gen 46:1–7 when Jacob was enroute from Canaan to Egypt. This is a far more appropriate start point and harmonizes completely with Exod 12:40.

Further literature. When modern scholars commit to a particular view on this topic (which is not always the case), they tend to favor the 430-year position. Examples in addition to the references cited in fn. 9 include:

> John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1983), 55, 105, 117, 129, 247; Leon J. Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History*, 20–21, 65–69; Michael L. Hoover, *The Length of Israel's Sojourn in Egypt* (Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1988); Merrill F. Unger, "Chronology, Old Testament," in *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (rev. ed.; Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 233; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 435; idem, *Handbook on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 150–51; Mordecai Cogan, "Chronology," *ABD* 1:1004; John H Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, 15, 78; Peter E. Enns, *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 177, 251; Glen S. Martin, *Holman Old Testament Commentary: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2002), 58; K. A. Kitchen and T. C. Mitchell, "Chronology of the Old Testament," *NBD*^{3}, 190–91; Douglas K. Stuart, *The New American Commentary: Volume 2: Exodus* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 176, 296; James K. Bruckner, *New International Biblical Commentary: Exodus* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008), 10, 21; Norman L. Geisler and Thomas Howe, *Making Sense of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation* (abrdg. and rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 220.

Excerpt from William H. Green, "Primeval Chronology," *BSac* 47 (1890): 292–94

The names which are found without deviation in all the genealogies are Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses (Ex. vi. 16–20; Num. iii. 17–19; xxvi. 57–59; I Chron. vi. 1–3, 16–18; xxiii. 6, 12, 13). Now unquestionably Levi was Jacob's own son. So likewise Kohath was the son of Levi (Gen. xlvi. 11) and born before the descent into Egypt. Amram also was the immediate descendant of Kohath. It does not seem possible, as Kurtz proposed, to insert the missing links between them. For, in the first place, according to Num. xxvi. 59, "The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt," this Jochebed being (Ex. vi. 20) Amram's aunt, or his father's sister. Now, it is true, that "a daughter of Levi" might have the general sense of a descendant of Levi, as the woman healed by our Lord (Luke xiii. 16) is called "a daughter of Abraham;" and her being born to Levi might simply mean that she sprang from him (comp. Gen. xlvi. 25).

But these expressions must here be taken in a strict sense, and Jochebed accordingly must have been Levi's own daughter and the sister of Kohath, who must in consequence have been Amram's own father. This appears from a second consideration, viz., that Amram was (Num. iii. 27) the father of one of the subdivisions of the Kohathites, these subdivisions springing from Kohath's own children and comprising together 8,600 male descendants. Moses' father surely could not have been the ancestor of one-fourth of this number in Moses' own days.

To avoid this difficulty Tiele and Keil assume that there were two Amrams, one the son of Kohath, another the father of Moses, who was a more remote descendant but bore the same name with his ancestor. This relieves the embarrassment created by the Amramites (Num. iii. 27) but is still liable to that which arises from making Jochebed the mother of Moses. And further, the structure of the genealogy in Ex. vi. is such as to make this hypothesis unnatural and improbable. Verse 16 names the three sons of Levi, Gershom, Kohath, and Merari; ver. 17–19, the sons of

each in their order; ver. 20–22, the children of Kohath's sons; ver. 23, 24, contain descendants of the next generation, and ver. 25 the generation next following. Now, according to the view of Tiele and Keil, we must either suppose that the Amram, Izhar, and Uzziel of ver. 20–22 are all different from the Amram, Izhar, and Uzziel of ver. 18, or else that Amram, though belonging to a later generation than Izhar and Uzziel, is introduced before them, which the regular structure of the genealogy forbids; and besides, the sons of Izhar and the sons of Uzziel, who are here named, were the contemporaries of Moses and Aaron the sons of Amram (Num. xvi. 1; Lev. x. 4).

This subject may be relieved from all perplexity, however, by observing that Amram and Jochebed were not the immediate parents, but the ancestors of Aaron and Moses. How many generations may have intervened, we cannot tell. It is indeed said (Ex. vi. 20; Num. xxvi. 59), that Jochebed bare them to Amram. But in the language of the genealogies this simply means that they were descended from her and from Amram. Thus, in Gen. xlvi. 18, after recording the sons of Zilpah, her grandsons, and her great-grandsons, the writer adds, "These are the sons of Zilpah . . . and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls." The same thing recurs in the case of Bilhah (ver. 25): "She bare these unto Jacob; all the souls were seven." (Comp. also ver. 15, 22.) No one can pretend here that the author of this register did not use the terms understandingly of descendants beyond the first generation. In like manner, according to Matt. i. 11, Josias begat his grandson Jechonias, and ver. 8, Joram begat his great-great-grandson Ozias. And in Gen. x. 15–18 Canaan, the grandson of Noah, is said to have begotten several whole nations, the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgasite, the Hivite, etc. (Comp. also Gen. xxv. 23; Deut. iv. 25; 2 Kings xx. 18; Isa, li, 2.) Nothing can be plainer, therefore, than that, in the usage of the Bible, "to bear" and "to beget" are used in a wide sense to indicate descent, without restriction to the immediate offspring.*

It is no serious objection to this view of the case that in Lev. x. 4 Uzziel, Amram's brother, is called "the uncle of Aaron." The Hebrew word here rendered "uncle," though often specifically applied to a definite degree of relationship, has, both from etymology and usage, a much wider sense. A great-great-grand-uncle is still an uncle, and would properly be described by the term here used. It may also be observed that in the actual history of the birth of Moses his parents are not called Amram and Jochebed. It is simply said (Ex. ii. I), "and there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi."

* In Ruth iv, 17 Ruth's child is called "a son born to Naomi," who was Ruth's mother-in-law and not even an ancestor of the child in the strict sense. Zerubbahel is called familiarly the son of Shealtiel (Ezr. iii. 2; Hag. i. 1), and is so stated to be in the genealogies of both Matt. i. 12 and Luke iii. 27, though in reality he was his nephew (1 Chron. iii. 17-19). That descent as reckoned in genealogies is not always that of actual parentage appears from the comparison of the ancestry of our Lord as given by Matthew and by Luke.

Appendix B – Notes on the Assyrian Eponym Canon

Although numerous translations of the Assyrian Eponym Canon have been published since the 19th century, the following three incorporate not only the known lists of eponyms but references to them in the date-lines of various Assyrian texts:

1. George Smith's 1875 monograph, *The Assyrian Eponym Canon*.

2. Arthur Ungnad's article "Eponymen" in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, Vol. 2 (1938). Ungnad's compilation was the standard reference for over half a century. Access to it, though, is inconvenient given its placement in a specialist multi-volume encyclopaedia.

3. Alan Millard's 1994 monograph, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910–612 BC*. This is the first complete edition of the Eponym Lists and Chronicles since Ungnad. The work is not only conveniently accessed but takes account of the most recent findings.

The eponym manuscripts on which the above editions are based fall into two classes:

1. Eponym Lists (= Ungnad C^a class = Millard's Class A), and
2. Eponym Chronicles (i.e., eponym lists with short historical notes = Ungnad C^b class = Millard's Class B)

Ungnad's article featured 20 manuscripts, which he designated: C^a1–6, C^b1–10, C^c, C^d, C^e and C^f. Since then, two tablets from Sultantepe in southern Turkey have been discovered (in 1952).[1] One was a simple list of eponyms (Class A), the other was an Eponym Chronicle (Class B). Therefore, 22 manuscripts are available today. Millard discounted three of these: C^e and C^f because they relate to the second millennium, and C^b9 which is largely illegible (but see below). The 19 remaining manuscripts originate from three locations: Nineveh (Kuyunjik), Ashur, and Sultantepe. Apparently most, if not all, of the manuscripts were copied in the seventh century.[2] Millard designated the 19 useable manuscripts as follows (dates hereafter are B.C.):

Class A Manuscripts (Eponym Lists)

A1 (Smith Canon I / Ungnad C^a1) from Kuyunjik. Begins 910, ends 659.
A2 (Smith Canon II / Ungnad C^a2) from Kuyunjik. Begins 910, ends 690–670.
A3 (Smith Canon III / Ungnad C^a3) from Kuyunjik. Begins ca. 810, ends 649.
A4 (Smith Canon IV / Ungnad C^a4) from Kuyunjik. Covers 753–744, 718–702.
A5 (Ungnad C^a5) from Kuyunjik. Covers 743–737, 722–713, 691–682.
A6 (Ungnad C^a6) from Kuyunjik. Covers 855–840, 798–782, 710–697.
A7 (Ungnad C^c) from Ashur. Begins ca. 1200 with areas of coverage to 659.
A8 from Sultantepe (STT 1 47). Begins 910, ends 750.

[1] Gurney, "The Sultantepe Tablets," 15–25.
[2] Although one of the Sultantepe tablets (STT 1 47 = Millard A8) ends at 750 B.C., it is believed that it was copied half a century later, as for the other tablets found with it.

A9 (Ungnad C^{d}) from Ashur. Begins 719, ends 662.

Class B Manuscripts (Eponym Chronicles)

B1 (Smith Canon V / Ungnad $C^{b}1$) from Kuyunjik. Covers 817–727.
B2 (Ungnad $C^{b}2$) from Kuyunjik. Covers 810–746.
B3 (Smith Canon VIII / Ungnad $C^{b}3$) from Kuyunjik. Covers 732–722.
B4 (Ungnad $C^{b}4$) from Kuyunjik. Covers 841–815, 721–706.
B5 (Ungnad $C^{b}5$) from Kuyunjik. Begins 858, ends 847.
B6 (Smith Canon VI / Ungnad $C^{b}6$) from Kuyunjik. Covers 818–803, 708–703.
B7 (Ungnad $C^{b}7$) from Kuyunjik. Covers 701–699.
B8 (Smith Canon VII / Ungnad $C^{b}8$) from Kuyunjik. Covers 828–821.
B9 (Ungnad $C^{b}10$) from Kuyunjik. Possibly covers 786–776. Not used by Millard.
B10 (STT 1 46 + 2 348) from Sultantepe. Covers 840–765

The following notes and observations apply to the Eponym Lists and Chronicles:

- Because $C^{b}9$ (= DT 142) has a small legible portion in the upper left-hand corner, Finkel and Reade classified it as B11. They also classified a further fragment—a small flake acquired from a private collection and baked in modern times—as B12.[3]

- The origin of the office of *līmu* and his duties are obscure. Arno Poebel suggested that the basis of the institution was care for the sanctuary and the cult of the deity Ashur. Consequently, the main duties of the *līmu* were to supervise state cultic functions in the religious capital of Ashur, and to tend to the temples of Ashur and other deities.[4]

- It is believed that, originally, the sequencing of *līmus* was determined by lot. Later, it was determined by rank and tradition, as evidenced by the more structured sequence of eponyms in the ninth and early eighth centuries.[5]

- The *līmu* was evidently selected ahead of time, probably during the New Year (*Akītu*) festival of the preceding year. Two or more *līmus* may have been chosen at once to serve successively over a short span of years.

- Although the *līmu* was selected a year ahead of time (or earlier), the chronicle entry for his eponymate was probably made afterward, during the *Akītu* festival. It is likely that regnal years, and so *līmu* years, began and ended with the conclusion of successive *Akītu* festivals (near the middle of Nisan) and not on Nisan 1.[6]

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[3] Finkel and Reade, "Assyrian Eponyms, 873–649 BC," 248. This article analyzes several eponyms in light of Millard's edition.

[4] Poebel, "The Assyrian King List from Khorsabad," *JNES* 1, 280; *JNES* 2, 76. See also Saggs, *The Might that was Assyria*, 273; Kuan 1995, 7.

[5] See Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 99–100; Saggs, *The Might that was Assyria*, 273; Finkel and Reade, "Lots of Eponyms," 167–72; John A. Brinkman, review of Alan Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910–612 B.C.*, *JNES* 58 (1999): 53–54.

[6] On the beginning of the regnal year for Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian kings, see Appendix H, "Evidence of a Sabbath Year Date in Scripture," #5 (Reading of the Law in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah).

- Eponym Chronicle entries were made for every king from Shalmaneser III to Sennacherib, with more extensive entries recorded for Sargon and Sennacherib. It is not known why chronicle entries covered only this span of kings, or the reason for their variation in length.

- Some chronicle entries do not favor the king (e.g., "revolt in Arrapha" for 761 and 760). This stands in contrast to the royal texts (annals and summary inscriptions), which typically glorify the king's achievements. To a degree, therefore, the Class B texts are impartial, in the manner of the later Babylonian Chronicle Series.

- Military entries in the chronicles mention locations either generally (e.g., "to Urartu," meaning the land itself) or specifically ("to Arpad," which is a city in northwestern Syria). Opinion varies on the meaning of these entries, which occur frequently throughout the chronicles. One view is that they refer to the most important event of the year, generally a military campaign.[7] Alternatively, Tadmor argued that specific entries refer not to the main military area or city conquered that year but to the actual location of the king and his camp at the turn of the year, when the report of their location was sent home. However, if the report was delayed or not dispatched, the location was given generally rather than specifically.[8] Millard has since refined this view by suggesting that general entries refer to the situation of the royal army when not led personally by the king but by a high officer instead.[9] Kuan upholds that the location names refer to the whereabouts of the main army, without the king, at the time of the *Akītu* festival.[10] (The king invariably returned home to preside over this festival.) Our study favors Kuan's view.

- Concerning the entry "in the land," Kuan submits that it refers to the situation of the main army being at home when the eponym notation was made (at the end of the *Akītu* festival).[11] We uphold Tadmor's view that "in the land" means "the king stayed in the land" that year but the army may not have.[12]

- Smith's edition of the Eponym Canon dates Shalmaneser III's sixth year, and therefore the battle of Qarqar, to 854. The accepted date today, however, is 853. The reason for the difference is as follows.[13] Smith's Canon III (= C^a3) named Baladu (= Balatu) as the eponym for 787 and Nabu-sar-uzur (= Nabu-sharru-usur) for 784. Following publication of Smith's edition, three additional manuscripts were discovered (C^a6, C^b2, C^c) but Balatu did not appear in any of them (see listings below). The discrepancy prompted two schools of thought. One held that the longer list (C^a3) was the more original source and that Balatu had been inadvertently removed from the other lists due to scribal error. In this case, the battle of Qarqar occurred in 854. The other school held that Balatu was the designated eponym for 786 but he died before assuming office and was replaced by Nabu-sharru-usur, as recorded by the other lists (C^a6, C^b2, C^c). Nabu-sharru-usur should therefore be transferred from his incorrect position in C^a3 to occupy the same eponym year as Balatu. This lowers the date of

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[7] So Olmstead, *Assyrian Historiography*, 86–87.
[8] Millard and Tadmor, "Adad-nirari III in Syria," 62.
[9] Millard 1994, 4–5.
[10] Kuan 1995, 10–11.
[11] Ibid., 16.
[12] Tadmor 1958, 95, see C^b4 entries for 713 and 712; Millard and Tadmor, "Adad-nirari III in Syria," 62 fn. 19.
[13] For a detailed discussion of the 853 vs. 854 issue (plus reference literature), see Thiele 1983, 72–76.

every eponym before Nabu-sharru-usur's original position (784) by one year, thereby redating the battle of Qarqar to 853. Although the balance of probabilities lies in favor of 853, not all scholars agree.[14] Confusing the issue are the two Sultantepe tablets. Although neither mentions Balatu, both have names between 786–784 different from each other and from the other two versions. But this is really a problem of conflicting names and not of chronology (i.e., there is no extra eponym to cause dates to be raised by one year as for C^a3).[15] In that respect, then, the Sultantepe tablets support 853.

C^a3	**C^a6, C^b2, C^c**	**STT 1 47**	**STT 1 46 + 2 348**
Adad-mushammer			
Sil-Ishtar	Adad-mushammer	Adad-mushammer	Adad-mushammer
Balatu	Sil-Ishtar	Sil-Ishtar	Sil-Ishtar
Adad-uballit	Nabu-sharru-usur	Nabu-sharru-usur	Adad-uballit
Marduk-sharru-usur	Adad-uballit	Nergal-uballit	Marduk-sharru-usur
Nabu-sharru-usur	Marduk-sharru-usur	Nergal-sharru-usur	Adad-mushammer
Ninurta-nasir	Ninurta/Marduk-nasir	Ninurta-nasir	Ninurta-nasir

- The so-called "Nineveh eclipse," which occurred in the eponymate of Bur-Saggilê, is mentioned in antiquity only in two texts: B1 (= Smith Canon V / C^b1) and B2 (= C^b2).

- Millard does not include the eponym for 648 in his list because it is post-canonical.[16] Nevertheless, it has been reliably identified as *Belshunu*.

- The Ungnad and Millard editions of the canon are essentially in agreement except for eponyms prior to 884 (Yari). These need to be raised by a year in Ungnad's compilation owing to the insertion of an additional eponym, Na'id-ilu, for 885 (after Ilu-milku and before Yari).[17]

On reliability. While of inestimable value, the Eponym Canon is not a faultless chronograph. Consider, for example, John Brinkman's comments in his review of Millard's *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire*:

> This presentation of basic source material should stimulate further historical research both into the texts themselves and into the Neo-Assyrian dating system, which is still imperfectly understood. It would be helpful, for instance, to investigate further into the reliability of the eponym lists and chronicles, most of which seem to be seventh-century copies. For example, there are obvious discrepancies between the names of eponyms preserved for the reign of Adad-nirari II in the eponym lists and the names preserved in the contemporary annals of the king; there are conflicts between the

[14] For example, see Shea, "A Note on the Date of the Battle of Qarqar" (which favors 854) and Brinkman's reply in "A Further Note on the Date of the Battle of Qarqar and Neo-Assyrian Chronology" (which favors 853).

[15] Although Millard follows the names as given in C^a6 and C^b2 (C^c has Marduk-nasir instead of Ninurta-nasir for 783), one cannot be certain—assuming Ca3 is discounted—of the correct *līmu* names for the years 786–784. It may be that one or more names from either of the Sultantepe tablets are correct.

[16] Millard 1994, 72.

[17] The insertion of Na'id-ilu is required by the Sultantepe manuscript STT 1 47. Prior to its discovery, the only readable copy of this section of the canon (C^a2) omitted Na'id-ilu. Poebel argued that his omission was due to a scribal error ("The Assyrian King List from Khorsabad," *JNES* 2, 73–74). The Sultantepe manuscript has since confirmed Poebel's hypothesis.

> campaign data for Shalmaneser III in his own inscriptions and the listing of campaigns in the eponym chronicles; and there are variations within the eponym tradition itself . . . Some of these questions, especially those concerning reliability, will have relevance for ancient chronology, since the date given for the solar eclipse in the eponymate of Bur-Sagale, which forms the cornerstone of Neo-Assyrian absolute chronology (and other systems which ultimately depend on it), is mentioned in antiquity only in the eponym chronicles B1 and B2.[18]

Our study upholds that the Eponym Canon is reliable from 769 B.C. onward. However, before that year, one should not rely on the canon for chronology owing to the evidence of a gap between 770 and 769 B.C. (being an unexpected break in the office-bearer titles).

[18] J. A. Brinkman, review of Alan Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910–612 B.C.*, *JNES* 58 (1999): 53–54.

Appendix C – Regnal Data for the Hebrew Kings

THE KINGS OF JUDAH

KING	SYNCHRONISM	YEARS OF REIGN	AGE	REFERENCE	
Rehoboam		17	41	1 Kgs 11:43; 14:21	2 Chr 12:13
Abijam	18th of Jeroboam	3		1 Kgs 15:1–2	2 Chr 13:1–2
Asa	20th of Jeroboam	41		1 Kgs 15:9–10	2 Chr 16:13
Jehoshaphat	4th of Ahab	25	35	1 Kgs 22:41–42	2 Chr 20:31
Jehoram	5th of Joram	8	32	2 Kgs 8:16–17	2 Chr 21:5, 20
Ahaziah	12th of Joram	1	22/42	2 Kgs 8:25–26	2 Chr 22:2
Ahaziah	11th of Joram			2 Kgs 9:29	
Athaliah		(7)		2 Kgs 11:3–4	2 Chr 22:12–23:1
Joash	7th of Jehu	40	7	2 Kgs 11:21–12:1	2 Chr 24:1
Amaziah	2nd of Jehoash	29	25	2 Kgs 14:1–2	2 Chr 25:1
Azariah	27th of Jeroboam II	52	16	2 Kgs 15:1–2	2 Chr 26:3
Jotham	2nd of Pekah	16	25	2 Kgs 15:32–33	2 Chr 27:1, 8
Ahaz	17th of Pekah	16	20	2 Kgs 16:1–2	2 Chr 28:1
Hezekiah	3rd of Hoshea	29	25	2 Kgs 18:1–2	2 Chr 29:1
Manasseh		55	12	2 Kgs 21:1	2 Chr 33:1
Amon		2	22	2 Kgs 21:19	2 Chr 33:21
Josiah		31	8	2 Kgs 22:1	2 Chr 34:1
Jehoahaz		3m	23	2 Kgs 23:31	2 Chr 36:2
Jehoiakim		11	25	2 Kgs 23:36	2 Chr 36:5
Jehoiachin		3m	18	2 Kgs 24:8	
Jehoiachin		3m, 10d	8		2 Chr. 36:9
Zedekiah		11	21	2 Kgs 24:18	2 Chr. 36:11

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

KING	SYNCHRONISM	YEARS OF REIGN	REFERENCE
Jeroboam I		22	1 Kgs 14:20
Nadab	2nd of Asa	2	1 Kgs 15:25
Baasha	3rd of Asa	24	1 Kgs 15:28, 33
Elah	26th of Asa	2	1 Kgs 16:8
Zimri	27th of Asa	7d	1 Kgs 16:10, 15
Tibni			1 Kgs 16:21–22
Omri	27th of Asa		1 Kgs 16:15–16
	31st of Asa	12	1 Kgs 16:23
Ahab	38th of Asa	22	1 Kgs 16:29
Ahaziah	17th of Jehoshaphat	2	1 Kgs 22:51
Joram	2nd of Jehoram		2 Kgs 1:17
Joram	18th of Jehoshaphat	12	2 Kgs 3:1
Jehu		28	2 Kgs 10:36
Jehoahaz	23rd of Joash	17	2 Kgs 13:1
Jehoash	37th of Joash	16	2 Kgs13:10
Jeroboam II	15th of Amaziah	41	2 Kgs 14:23
Zachariah	38th of Azariah	6m	2 Kgs 15:8
Shallum	39th of Azariah	1m	2 Kgs 15:13
Menahem	39th of Azariah	10	2 Kgs 15:17
Pekahiah	50th of Azariah	2	2 Kgs 15:23
Pekah	52nd of Azariah	20	2 Kgs 15:27
Hoshea	20th of Jotham		2 Kgs 15:30
Hoshea	12th of Ahaz	9	2 Kgs 17:1
Hoshea 7th	4th of Hezekiah		2 Kgs 18:9
Hoshea 9th	6th of Hezekiah		2 Kgs 18:10

Appendix D – Tabular Chart of the Chronology

The chart below tabulates the chronology of the Hebrew kings presented in detail in Chapter 4B. All dates refer to the counted years of reign. The following legend applies:

- A superscripted figure *before* the king's name indicates viceregent years, which are not counted. The figure is in accordance with accession year dating because all kings who served as viceregent used that system. The year of transition from viceregency to sole regency is counted as the first year of reign.
- A superscripted figure *after* the king's name indicates coregent years, which are counted in accordance with the dating system used by that kingdom at the time.
- A = accession year dating
- N = non-accession year dating
- A dash (–) denotes exclusions from A or N (e.g., short duration reigns).

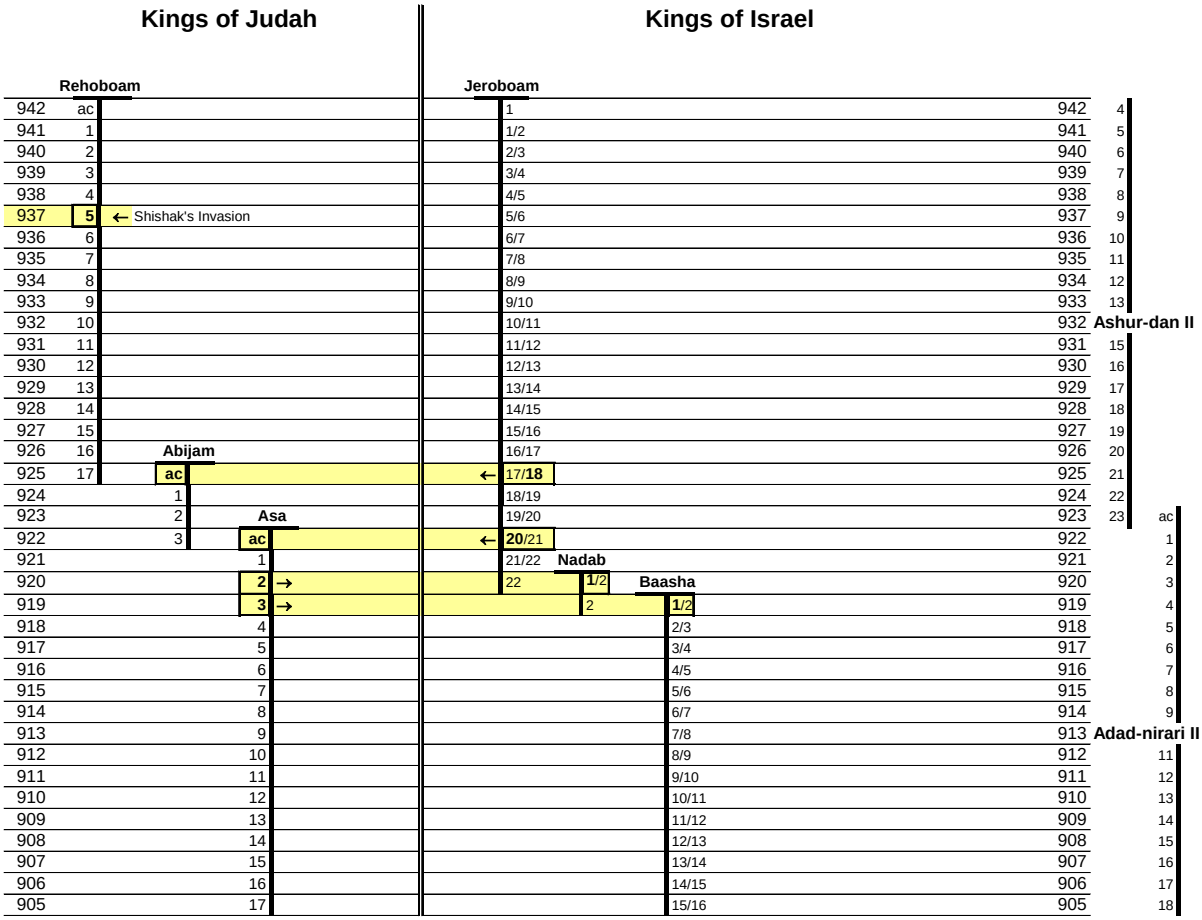
KINGS OF JUDAH (B.C.)			KINGS OF ISRAEL (B.C.)		
Rehoboam	A	942/41–925/24	Jeroboam I	N	942/41–920
$^{?}$Abijam	A	925/24–922	Nadab	N	920–919
$^{?}$Asa	A	922–881	Baasha	N	919–896
Jehoshaphat	A	881–856/55	Elah	N	896–895
^{3}Jehoram$^{2? + 5}$	A	860/59–853/52	Zimri	–	895
Ahaziah^{½}	A	853–852	Tibni (rival)	N	895–891/90
Athaliah	–	852–846/45	Omri (rival)	N	895–884
^{6}Joash	A	846/45–806	Ahab	N	884–864/63
$^{?}$Amaziah	A	806–778/77	Ahaziah^{1}	N	865/64–863
Azariah^{24}	A	802/01–750/49	Joram	N	863–852
$^{14+}$Jotham	A	750/49–731/30+	Jehu	A	852–824
$^{5?}$Ahaz^{8}	A	742/41–727	Jehoahaz	A	824–808/07
Hezekiah	A	727–698/97	^{3}Jehoash	A	808/07–792
Manasseh	A	698/97–643/42	Jeroboam II^{12}	A	805/04–763
Amon	A	643/42–641/40	Zachariah	–	763
Josiah	A	641/40–610	Shallum	–	763
Jehoahaz	–	610–609	Menahem	A	763–752
Jehoiakim	A	609–598	Pekahiah	A	752–750
^{10}Jehoiachin	A	598–597	Pekah	N	750–731
Zedekiah	A	597–587	Hoshea	A	731–721

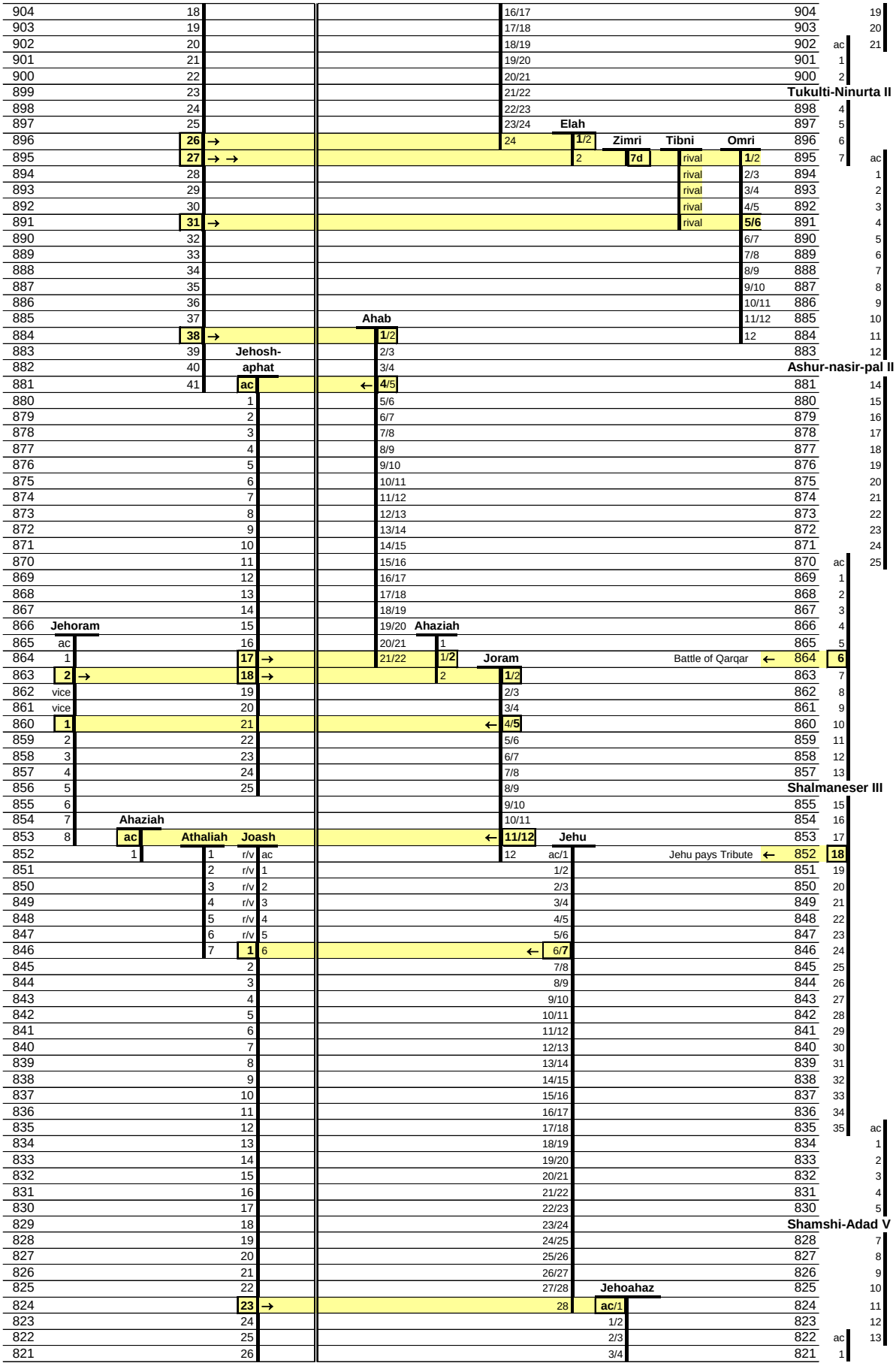
Appendix E – Graphical Chart of the Chronology

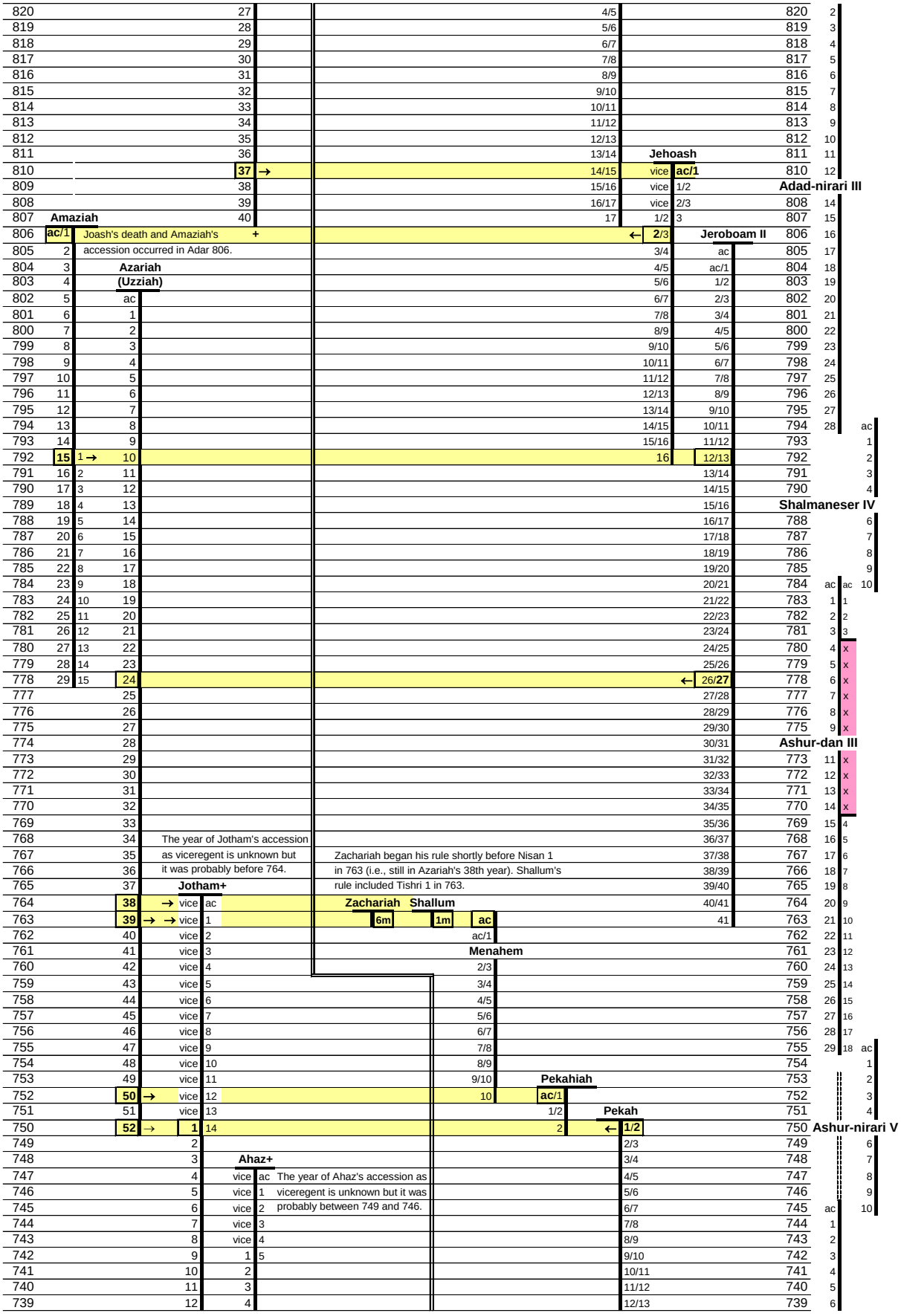
Below is a graphical (vertical line) depiction of the Hebrew kings chronology presented in Chapter 4B. It allows for easy side-by-side comparison of the rulers of Judah, Israel, Assyria, and Babylon. (The idea for this layout came from Harold Camping's booklet, *The Perfect Harmony of the Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*.)

Although visually simpler, the graphical depiction is not as precise as the brick-wall layout presented in Chapter 4. This is because it uses Julian years, which begin with January, to describe both Nisan and Tishri years on the same line. (Judah's Nisan years begin in Mar.–Apr. while Israel's Tishri years begin in Sep.–Oct.) Because a Nisan regnal year begins in and occupies the bulk of the same Julian year (ca. nine months), I have shown a single figure only for Judah's rulers. For example, the Julian year 918 for Judah shows "4" for Asa because his fourth year began in March–April of the same Julian year and occupied the bulk of it (from Mar.–Apr. to Dec.). By contrast, the Tishri regnal year that occupies the bulk of any Julian year (from Jan. to Sep.–Oct.) begins in the *preceding* Julian year. This is why the year 918 for Israel shows "2/3" for Baasha, to emphasize that his second year began in September–October of the preceding Julian year.

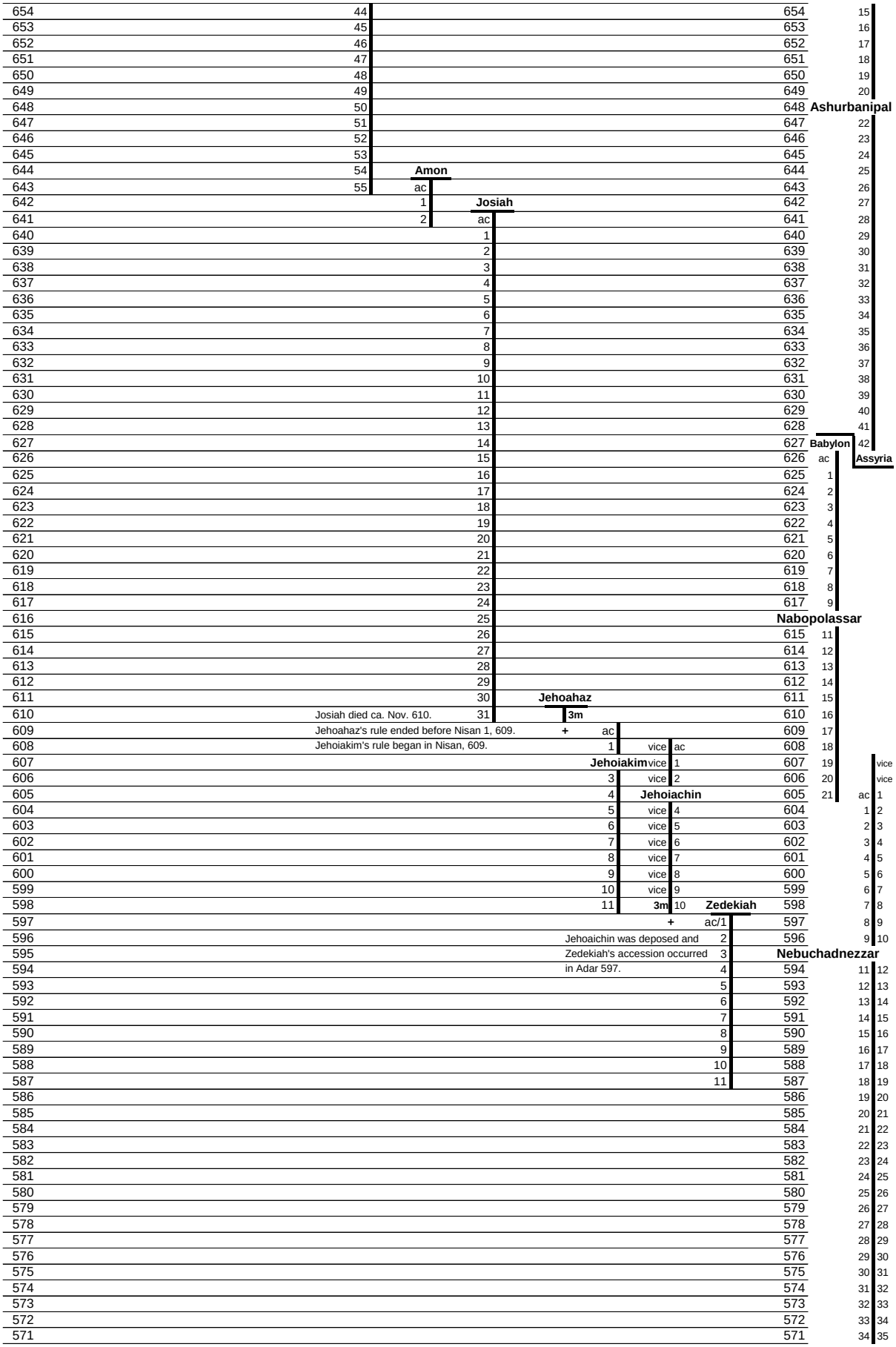
Due to the restrictions in this form of presentation, guidance notes have been added for regnal accessions that are not readily apparent.




Elah
Zimri
Tibni
Omri
Ahab
Jehosh-
aphat
Ahaziah
Joram
Battle of Qarqar
Jehoram
Ahaziah
Athaliah
Joash
Jehu
Jehu pays Tribute
Jehoahaz
Tukulti-Ninurta II
Ashur-nasir-pal II
Shalmaneser III
Shamshi-Adad V


Amaziah
ac/1
Joash's death and Amaziah's
accession occurred in Adar 806.
Azariah
(Uzziah)
Jotham+
The year of Jotham's accession
as viceregent is unknown but
it was probably before 764.
Ahaz+
The year of Ahaz's accession as
viceregent is unknown but it was
probably between 749 and 746.
Zachariah
6m
Shallum
1m
ac
Menahem
Pekahiah
ac/1
Pekah
1/2
Jehoash
ac/1
Jeroboam II
Zachariah began his rule shortly before Nisan 1
in 763 (i.e., still in Azariah's 38th year). Shallum's
rule included Tishri 1 in 763.
Adad-nirari III
Shalmaneser IV
Ashur-dan III
Ashur-nirari V

| | | |


Amon
Josiah
Jehoahaz
Jehoiakim
Jehoiachin
Zedekiah
Ashurbanipal
Babylon
Assyria
Nabopolassar
Nebuchadnezzar
Josiah died ca. Nov. 610.
Jehoahaz's rule ended before Nisan 1, 609.
Jehoiakim's rule began in Nisan, 609.
Jehoaichin was deposed and
Zedekiah's accession occurred
in Adar 597.

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37 38
38 39
39 40
40 41
41 42
42 43
ac 43 44
Amel-Marduk
2 ac
1
Neriglissar
3

Appendix F – Notes on the Judahite Kings

The following notes assist in explaining the chronology of the Hebrew kings as presented in Chapter 4B. This appendix reviews the kings of Judah while Appendix G reviews the kings of Israel. All years are Julian B.C.

1. Rehoboam (son of Solomon; mother was Naamah)

- Rehoboam was 41 years old when he began to reign, and he ruled for 17 years (1 Kgs 14:21). His accession occurred in the Nisan year 942/41. Unlike Jeroboam, his Northern Kingdom counterpart, Rehoboam retained the accession year dating system as well as the spring (Nisan) new year. Jeroboam rebelled by instituting a fall (Tishri) new year with non-accession year dating.

- In the fifth year of Rehoboam (937/36), Shishak king of Egypt (believed to be Shoshenq I, founder of the 22nd Dynasty) came up against Judah (and Israel). He plundered Jerusalem, taking treasures from the temple and the king's house (1 Kgs 14:25–26; 2 Chr 12:2–9).[1]

- There was continual conflict between Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1 Kgs 14:30). This undoubtedly included border skirmishes as the two kingdoms wrestled over ownership of territory. The friction continued until the rise of the Omride dynasty in Israel when peace was made between the kingdoms.

2. Abijam (son of Rehoboam; mother was Maachah)

- In the 18th year of Jeroboam, Abijam began his rule of three years (1 Kgs 15:1–2). His accession occurred between Tishri, 925 and Adar, 924.

- Although not apparent in the regnal data, the circumstantial evidence suggests that Abijam was made viceregent by Rehoboam (ch. 4E refers).

- The conflict between the house of Rehoboam and the house of Jeroboam continued during Abijam's rule (1 Kgs 15:6).[2] In fact, Abijam escalated it into outright warfare and was victorious (2 Chr 13:3–19).

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[1] Records for Shoshenq I show that he waged a successful campaign in Palestine, conquering at least 150 cities. The invasion of Judah undoubtedly occurred during this campaign. For commentary, see *ANET*, 263–64; Bright, *A History of Israel*, 233–34; Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 10, 32–34, 607–09; idem, *ThIP-3*, §§252–58, 398–415.

[2] While 1 Kgs 15:6 is undoubtedly referring to the *house* of Rehoboam and not to Rehoboam himself (who had died), the statement "all the days of his life" for the duration of Abijam's friction with Jeroboam suggests that it includes his days as viceregent, and not just his short sole rule of three years.

3. Asa (son of Abijam; grandmother was Maachah)

- In the 20th year of Jeroboam, Asa began his rule of 41 years (1 Kgs 15:9–10). His accession occurred between Nisan and Elul, 922. He was the first religiously good king of Judah (1 Kgs 15:11).[3]

- The circumstantial evidence suggests that Asa was made viceregent by Abijam. See Chapter 4E for a review of Asa's reign, particularly the chronological difficulties raised by 2 Chr 15:19 and 16:1.

- There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days (1 Kgs 15:16).

4. Jehoshaphat (son of Asa; mother was Azubah)

- In the fourth year of Ahab, Jehoshaphat began his rule of 25 years at the age of 35 (1 Kgs 22:41–42). His accession occurred between Nisan and Elul, 881. He was a king who followed the Lord, consequently enjoying wealth, success, power, and honor (2 Chr 17:3–5).

- During Jehoshaphat's reign, Judah and Israel—now ruled by Ahab—made an alliance of peace (1 Kgs 22:44; 2 Chr 18:1).[4] Evidently, the alliance was sealed with the gift of Ahab's daughter Athaliah (granddaughter of Omri) to Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram (2 Kgs 8:18). While economically and militarily beneficial for Judah, the alliance was religiously counterproductive.

- It is likely that Jehoshaphat provided military assistance to Ahab for the battle of Qarqar in 864. (Ahab was one of the leading kings in the coalition of Syro-Palestinian states that fought Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria at Qarqar.) In preparation for that battle, Jehoshaphat made Jehoram coregent while Ahab made Ahaziah coregent, probably early in 864 for both sons. The battle of Qarqar was waged later that year in the summer. By our chronology, Jehoram and Ahaziah were the first coregents of the divided monarchy era in their respective kingdoms.

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[3] Eight of Judah's 20 rulers are said to have done right in the eyes of the Lord, although to varying degrees: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. By contrast, 18 of Israel's 20 rulers are said to have acted wickedly (no assessments are given for Tibni or Shallum). Note that of the eight good kings in Judah, Joash "did that which was right" but only while Jehoiada the priest was alive (2 Chr 24:2). After Jehoiada's death, Joash sanctioned idolatry (24:17–18). He also had Jehoiada's son Zechariah killed for reprimanding the people (24:19–22). After being injured in battle with the Syrians, Joash was assassinated by his own servants (24:23–25). He was buried in Jerusalem but like Jehoram before him and Ahaz after him (both wicked men), he was not interred in the special burial vaults reserved for kings (2 Chr 21:20; 24:25; 28:27; see also fn. 10 below). Given his later behavior, we have discounted Joash as a religiously good king. This leaves only seven Judahite kings who can be considered faithful.

[4] Relations between the two kingdoms probably began to improve during the reign of Omri, Ahab's father.

- Soon after the Qarqar engagement, which was a tactical loss for the Assyrians, Jehoshaphat joined forces with Ahab to help him reclaim Ramoth-Gilead from Ben-Hadad of Syria. Ahab was killed in this campaign, his death occurring between Tishri, 864 and Adar, 863. On his return home, Jehoshaphat was rebuked by the prophet Jehu for having helped Ahab, who was a wicked king (2 Chr 18:1–19:3).

- Ahab was succeeded by his coregent son Ahaziah. His sole regency began possibly as early as November, 864 and may have lasted as long as ten months (ch. 4F refers). Jehoshaphat joined Ahaziah in an economic alliance that involved the building of a fleet of trading ships at Ezion-geber on the Red Sea.[5] However, Eliezer the prophet rebuked Jehoshaphat—the alliance angered the Lord—and the ships were "broken" and never set sail (2 Chr 20:35–37; 1 Kgs 22:48). No information is given on how the ships were broken and to what degree they were damaged. In concluding the episode, 1 Kgs 22:49 reports: "Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not." Evidently, after the ships were disabled, Jehoshaphat quickly secured other ships. Ahaziah sought to maintain the trade alliance but was refused by Jehoshaphat, who did not wish to incur God's displeasure (and resulting economic set-back) again.[6]

- Ahaziah died of complications resulting from injuries sustained in a fall. His death occurred possibly in the late summer of 863. Because he had no son, Ahaziah was succeeded by his brother Joram. One of Joram's first military acts was to mobilize Israel's army against Mesha king of Moab, who had withheld his annual tribute payment to Israel after Ahab died (i.e., he withheld the tribute that should have been paid in 863). Joram sought Jehoshaphat's help against Moab. Jehoshaphat agreed, despite having been condemned earlier by the prophets for helping Ahab and Ahaziah (2 Chr 19:2; 20:37). Joram and Jehoshaphat, along with the king of Edom, set out against Mesha and defeated him (2 Kgs 3:4–27). The attack may have occurred in the autumn of 863.

- We can speculate that on his return from the engagement with Moab, Jehoshaphat stood Jehoram down as coregent. While this may have been done because stability had returned to the region, a contributing factor could have been religious friction between father and son. Jehoram was undoubtedly influenced by his wicked wife, Athaliah. His demotion may have been a disciplinary measure by Jehoshaphat to remind his son, who would be the next king of Judah, of his accountability to the Lord as monarch. Nevertheless, Jehoram remained the heir apparent (i.e., viceregent).

- The Chronicler records that a vast coalition of forces from Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir came against Judah (2 Chr 20:1ff). Although no date is given for the event, it possibly occurred in the fifth year of Joram of Israel. This would explain Jehoram's elevation to coregency a second time (ch. 4F refers). Jehoshaphat earnestly pleaded with the Lord, who subsequently provided a great deliverance by causing Israel's foes to destroy each other in the confusion of battle. The fear of God came upon all the neighboring kingdoms when they

[5] The Philistines evidently controlled the southern coast of Palestine, thus cutting Judah off from the Mediterranean, so forcing Jehoshaphat to secure sea trade via the Red Sea.

[6] In the Chronicler's account, the maritime venture with Ahaziah appears in the closing formula for Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Chr 20:31–37). The event is therefore out of chronological sequence with the main narrative (17:1–20:30). Evidently, the Chronicler did this for thematic reasons, possibly to emphasize that Jehoshaphat's reign was tarnished by his cordiality with the Israelite kings.

heard that the Lord had fought against Jehoshaphat's enemies (2 Chr 20:29). Judah had rest from war thereafter until Jehoshaphat's death in the Nisan year 856/55. Although the kingdom was at peace after this engagement, Jehoram retained his coregency.

5. Jehoram (son of Jehoshaphat)

- The structure of Jehoram's reign is complex in that the overlapping portion with Jehoshaphat comprises a coregency (865/64–863/62), a viceregency (863/62–860/59), a second coregency (860/59–856/55), then his sole regency (856/55–853/52). See Chapter 4F for details.

- The Bible does not name Jehoram's mother, which is unexpected for a king of Judah. Either she died before he came to the throne or the omission of her name was in response to Jehoram's wickedness. (See notes below for Ahaz, a wicked king whose mother's name was also omitted.)

- Jehoram walked in the evil ways of the Israelite kings because his wife, Athaliah, was the daughter of Ahab (and sister of Joram of Israel). Owing to his wickedness, which included the murdering of all his brothers and causing Judah to worship idols (2 Chr 21:4, 11),[7] the Lord afflicted Jehoram thus:

    - Edom and Libnah threw off their vassal status (21:8–10).
    - Judah was attacked by the Philistines and Arabians, who plundered the kingdom, taking all of Jehoram's sons and wives save for his youngest son Jehoahaz = Ahaziah (21:16–17). All the sons of Jehoram taken captive were later killed (2 Chr 22:1).
    - Jehoram was stricken with a painful, terminal bowel disease (21:18).

- Knowing that his health was deteriorating—he died within two years of the onset of the disease—Jehoram made Ahaziah coregent in the 11th year of Joram (2 Kgs 9:29) between Nisan and Elul, 853. He died to no one's regret in the twelfth year of Joram (2 Chr 21:19–20; 2 Kgs 8:25) between Tishri, 853 and Adar, 852.

6. Ahaziah (son of Jehoram; mother was Athaliah, Ahab's daughter)

- In an apparent contradiction, Ahaziah's accession is synchronized to both the eleventh and twelfth years of Joram (2 Kgs 9:29; 8:25–26). As discussed in Chapter 4F, there is a straightforward solution to this unique situation in the regnal data. Second Kings 8:25–26 is a standard, dual-dated notice. It shows that Ahaziah's sole rule began in Joram's twelfth year

[7] After Jehoram murdered his brothers (evidently to secure his own rule), the king received a letter of rebuke from Elijah the prophet (2 Chr 21:12–15). This letter poses chronological problems because 2 Kings indicates that Elijah was taken up to heaven during the reign of Jehoshaphat sometime after Ahab's death (cf. 1:1–3:11). One solution is that Elijah, having received a prophecy from the Lord about Jehoram's future actions, penned the letter *before* being taken to heaven. Elijah then sealed the letter and left instructions for it to be delivered to Jehoram only after a certain event transpired (possibly the revolt of the Edomites when they installed a king [2 Chr 21:8]). One can only imagine the effect that Elijah's letter, written years earlier but accurate in its foretelling of his evil deeds, had on Jehoram.

(between Tishri, 853 and Adar, 852), and that he was 22 years old when his coregency began in response to his father's deteriorating health. Regarding 2 Kgs 9:29, which is synchronized to Joram's eleventh year, we can infer from it that Ahaziah's coregency began between Nisan and Elul, 853. Evidently, this synchronism was included to alert us to the unique situation of a son becoming coregent then achieving sole rule *in the same regnal year*. This was the Nisan year 853/52, which spanned the latter half of Joram's eleventh year and first half of Joram's twelfth year. (Ahaziah was also called Jehoahaz; 2 Chr 21:17.)

- Another difficulty with the regnal notices for Ahaziah is 2 Chr 22:2:

  > Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.

  Concerning the apparent disagreement of Ahaziah's age at accession (42 by the Chronicler versus 22 by the Hebrew historian), both figures are correct if we view 2 Chr 22:2 as being Ahaziah's *dynastic age* relative to the Omride era, which began in 895 (between Nisan and Elul). This link to the Omride dynasty is important because Ahaziah's mother Athaliah was the (grand)daughter of Omri (2 Kgs 8:26). Both Ahaziah and his Northern Kingdom uncle Joram were slain during Jehu's purge of the house of Ahab, thereby ending Omri's dynasty. So, relative to the start of the Omride era in 895, Ahaziah was 42 dynastic years old when he became coregent between Nisan and Elul, 853 (in the 11th year of Joram).[8]

- Ahaziah's mother was Athaliah, daughter of Ahab, which made Ahaziah a "son in law of the house of Ahab" (2 Kgs 8:27). Athaliah and her relatives greatly corrupted the king through their wicked counsel (2 Chr 22:3–4).

- While Israel and Judah were campaigning together against Hazael of Syria at Ramoth-Gilead, a prophet serving Elisha anointed Jehu, commander of the Israelite army, as Israel's new king. The prophet then instructed Jehu to eliminate the whole house of Ahab (2 Kgs 9:1–13), which included Judah's Ahaziah and Israel's Joram. (Joram was Ahab's son and Ahaziah's uncle.) After being wounded by the Syrians, Joram returned to convalesce in Jezreel, and Ahaziah came to visit him. Jehu rode there in his chariot and killed Joram (9:14–24). Ahaziah escaped after witnessing Joram's death but he was killed soon after (9:27–28). Both kings died between Nisan and Elul, 852.

- Kings and Chronicles differ in their reporting of Ahaziah's death and burial, leading some commentators to conclude that one of the accounts must be wrong. In Kings, Ahaziah is mortally wounded while fleeing from Jehu. He makes it to Megiddo but dies there, and is brought back by his servants to Jerusalem for burial (2 Kgs 9:27–28). In Chronicles, Ahaziah is hiding from Jehu in Samaria. He is brought to Jehu, executed, then given a proper burial because he was the grandson of the well-respected king, Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 22:8–9).

  Although these accounts differ, they are not necessarily contradictory. It is likely that the circumstances of Ahaziah's final days were complicated and therefore lengthy to narrate. As a result, the Hebrew historian and Chronicler kept their accounts brief. However, each author

[8] This resolution of the 42 years in 2 Chr 22:2 is standard among Biblicists (e.g., Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, 900; see also the MKJV translation). It is a useful notice, as it provides a gross error check between the two kingdoms for that regnally complicated period. The Omride era ended with the slaying of Ahaziah and Joram in the next year, so ending its 43-year, four-king dynasty (from 895 to 852).

described different aspects of the same story to serve their own literary purposes. By amalgamating the two versions, one can speculate on the fuller account:

a) After Jehu killed Joram, Ahaziah fled and hid in Samaria. (This detail from the Chronicler emphasizes Ahaziah's affinities with the Northern Kingdom in preference to Judah.)

b) Jehu's men caught Ahaziah and brought him to Jehu.

c) Just as Jehu killed Joram while he tried to flee in his chariot (2 Kgs 9:23–24), so Jehu wanted Ahaziah to flee and be killed in what amounted to a cold-blooded manhunt.

d) While fleeing, Jehu's archers shot Ahaziah "at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam" (9:27). The wound was grave, and one of Ahaziah's servants may have taken control of the chariot to continue their escape.

e) Pursued by Jehu's men, Ahaziah made it to Megiddo but died there.

f) In recognition of his grandfather being Jehoshaphat, Jehu's men allowed Ahaziah's servants to take his body to Jerusalem for burial. (This link to Jehoshaphat by the Chronicler suggests that Ahaziah, judged on his own merits as king, did not deserve a dignified burial.)

7. Athaliah (Ahab's daughter, mother of Ahaziah)

- When Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah, saw that her son was dead, she ordered the remainder of the royal family to be killed to secure the throne for herself. (The royal family had already been reduced by Jehoram's slaying of his brothers and Jehu's killing of 42 visiting members of Ahaziah's family.) But Ahaziah's sister Jehosheba, wife of Jehoiada the priest, took Ahaziah's son Joash and hid him for six years in the temple precincts. During that time, Athaliah reigned over Judah. Her rule began between Nisan and Elul, 852. In the seventh year of Joash's hiding, Jehoiada the priest organized a coup in which he presented the king as the rightful heir. Athaliah was then slain with the sword (2 Kgs 11:1–20). She died between Tishri, 846 and Adar, 845.

- Athaliah's rule is not fixed by any synchronism in the Bible, nor is any official notice given for its duration. Undoubtedly, this is because she was a usurper rather than a legitimate successor to the throne (i.e., she was not of the Davidic line). As a result, the narrative simply mentions her years of rule, implying that no proper accession was accorded to her by the Hebrew historian.

- Our chronology views the situation between Athaliah and Joash as a *rival reign* with Joash's years in hiding being treated as a *viceregency* for purposes of regnal counting. In other words, Joash's accession occurred immediately after his father's death. However, because "the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom" (2 Chr 22:9), Joash's overlap years with Athaliah were not counted.

8. Joash (son of Ahaziah; mother was Zibiah)

- In the seventh year of Jehu, Joash began his rule of 40 years (2 Kgs 12:1). He was seven years old when Jehoiada the priest proclaimed him king (11:21; 2 Chr 24:1). This occurred between Tishri, 846 and Adar, 845. While Jehoiada remained alive to guide him, Joash acted righteously (2 Kgs 12:2; 2 Chr 23:2). However, his sinful nature came to the fore after Jehoiada's death.

- Our chronology treats the Nisan year of Ahaziah's death (852/51) as the accession year of Joash. The alternative is to make the year of his public coronation (in Jehu's seventh year) his accession year (846/45). However, this is tantamount to saying that, during Athaliah's reign, there was a six-year break in the continuity of the Davidic dynasty. Such a break is at odds with 1 Kgs 11:36 where God promised that a light would always shine in Jerusalem through David's royal sons (cf. 1 Kgs 2:4; 8:25; 9:5). Consequently, I believe that the Hebrew historian treated the year of Ahaziah's death as the accession year of Joash (observe in 2 Kgs 11:8 how Jehoiada the priest called Joash "king" before his official anointing). The accession notice for Joash (2 Kgs 12:1) is therefore dual-dated, with the Athaliah overlap being treated as a viceregency.

- Despite the statement in 2 Kgs 11:21 that Joash was seven years old when he began to reign, the introductory regnal formula in 2 Kgs 12:1 uncharacteristically omits his age (cf. 2 Kgs 8:25–26; 15:1–2). Evidently, Joash was less than one year old when his father died, so no whole number of years could be quoted for his age at accession, hence the omission.[9]

- Through age and damage by Athaliah, the temple in Jerusalem had fallen into disrepair. In his 23rd year (824/23), Joash took steps to effect repairs, which had not been carried out despite an earlier directive (2 Kgs 12:4–16).

- After this, Hazael king of Syria conquered Gath, which was a Philistine city controlled by Judah since Rehoboam's reign (2 Chr 11:8). Hazael also intended to invade Jerusalem at that time. However, Joash paid him off with temple treasures thereby averting the attack (2 Kgs 12:17–18).

- Jehoiada the priest died at 130 years of age. With Jehoiada gone, Joash and the people of Judah turned away from the Lord. Despite warnings from the prophets, they did not repent. The Lord then sent Zechariah the prophet, son of Jehoiada (who had been loyal to Joash), to admonish the people. However, Joash ordered that Zechariah be stoned to death (2 Chr 24:15–21).

- In punishment for Judah's continuing wickedness, the Lord brought the Syrians against the land at the end of the year in which Zechariah had been stoned. They plundered Judah and Jerusalem, killed their elite, and left Joash severely injured. When the Syrians departed,

[9] Unlike the Hebrew historian who separated Joash's age (2 Kgs 11:21) from the introductory regnal formula (12:1), the Chronicler combined them ("Joash was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem" [2 Chr 24:1]). He probably did so for brevity. Therefore, one should not assume that 2 Chr 24:1 is a dual-dated notice (i.e. Joash was not seven years of age when his father died).

Joash was killed in his bed after his own servants conspired against him in payback for his order to kill Zechariah (2 Chr 24:22–26). Because this occurred "at the end of the year" (2 Chr 24:23; cf. 36:10), it is likely that Joash died in the final month (Adar) of the Nisan year 807/06 (i.e., in Feb.–Mar., 806). Although he was buried in Jerusalem, he was not interred in the burial vaults specifically reserved for Judah's kings (2 Chr 24:25).[10]

9. Amaziah (son of Joash; mother was Jehoaddan)

- In the second year of Jehoash of Israel, Amaziah began his rule of 29 years; he was 25 years old (2 Kgs 14:1–2). Assuming that he did not hold office as viceregent (see below), his coronation most likely occurred in Adar, 806 following Joash's death. He was the third good king of Judah

- Early in his rule, after defeating the Edomites, Amaziah challenged Jehoash of Israel to battle (2 Kgs 14:7–8). One or more of the following factors may have driven this unusual action: (1) his elation over the comprehensive defeat of Edom, (2) the reprisal against Judah by the spurned Israelite soldiers whom Amaziah had hired to fight against Edom but then released to return home (2 Chr 25:5–13), and (3) Jehoash's refusal to enter into a marriage alliance with him (2 Kgs 14:9). Jehoash tried to dissuade him from war but Amaziah persisted. Judah lost the battle and Amaziah was taken prisoner.[11] After witnessing Jerusalem's ransacking by Jehoash, Amaziah (along with other hostages) was taken to Israel (14:10–14). He was imprisoned there possibly until Jehoash's death, which would explain the unusual notice that he outlived him by 15 years (2 Kgs 14:17).

- With their king in exile, the Judahites took Amaziah's son Azariah (or Uzziah) and enthroned him at the age of 16 (see entry below for Azariah regarding the problem with 2 Kgs 14:21). This occurred sometime in the Nisan year 802/01. A substantial coregency of 24 years therefore existed between Amaziah and Azariah. For a portion of that time, perhaps ten years (from 802/01 to 792), Amaziah was a prisoner of Israel. His captivity was a punishment from God because, after defeating the Edomites, he brought their gods back to Jerusalem for worship (2 Chr 25:14–20).

- 2 Kgs 14:17 reports that Amaziah lived for 15 years after the death of Jehoash. This is reflected in our chronology. Jehoash died between Nisan and Elul, 792, probably early in that period (say spring). Amaziah died between Tishri, 778 and Adar, 777, probably late in

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[10] While 2 Chr 24:25 states that they buried Joash "in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings," 2 Kgs 12:21 reports that "they buried him with his fathers in the city of David." These verses appear contradictory because 2 Kgs 12:21 suggests that Joash was buried in the sepulchres of the kings *together* with his fathers (see also 2 Chr 21:20 vs. 2 Kgs 8:24 for Jehoram, and 2 Chr 28:27 vs. 2 Kgs 16:20 for Ahaz). However, analysis of the death and burial formulas in Kings and Chronicles shows that a king being buried with his fathers does not necessarily mean that he was buried in the special section reserved for kings (it may have been a nearby plot). The death and burial phrases can therefore be understood as follows:

"slept with his fathers" = he died (cf. 1 Kgs 1:21; 11:21)

"buried with his fathers in the city of David" = he was buried in his home city of Jerusalem

"but not in the sepulchres of the kings" = he was not interred in the vaults reserved for kings

[11] Amaziah possibly miscalculated Israel's strength, thinking that it had been greatly weakened after years of Syrian domination.

that period (say winter). From spring 792 to winter 777 is about 14 years and 9 months, which rounds up to 15 years.

- In the closing years of Amaziah's reign, an unidentified group in Jerusalem plotted against him. He fled to Lachish but they pursued him and killed him there. This happened because Amaziah had turned away from the Lord (2 Kgs 14:19–20; 2 Chr 25:27–28). The details of the conspiracy are not given, so we do not know if his coregent son Azariah was an accomplice. (There is no report in the Bible that Azariah killed his father's slayers, as Amaziah had done in retribution for his own father's death [2 Kgs 14:5–6].)

- **A viceregency for Amaziah?** According to father-son age analysis, Amaziah was around 14 years old when Azariah was born (see Chapter 4, Table 6). Although our chronology accepts this situation, the possibility of a viceregency for Amaziah—which would raise his age at Azariah's birth—cannot be ruled out. Assuming that Amaziah and Jehoash were made viceregents around the same time, then Amaziah would have been 17 years old at Azariah's birth. The regnal pattern is as follows:

Azariah																AC
Amaziah								vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	vice^{3}	1	2	3	4	5
Joash	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40					
	817	**816**	**815**	**814**	**813**	**812**	**811**	**810**	**809**	**808**	**807**	**806**	**805**	**804**	**803**	**802**
Jehoahaz	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17					
Jehoash								vice^{AC}	vice^{1}	vice^{2}	v^{3} / 1	2	3	4	5	6
Jeroboam														AC	1	2

In the above pattern, 2 Kgs 14:1–2 is dual-dated. That is, the synchronism of accession points to the start of Amaziah's sole rule ("In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel"). However, his age (25) and length of reign (29 years) refer to the start of his regnal overlap, which was a viceregency, the years of which were not counted.[12] It should be noted that the above pattern only harmonizes with the rest of the chronology if Amaziah's sole rule begins in the next Nisan year (i.e., early in 806/05). In that case, there was a brief gap between Joash's death in Adar, 806 and Amaziah's elevation to sole rule on or after Nisan 1, 806. This gap may have been as little as one day (if Joash died on the last day of Adar) or slightly longer (if Joash died earlier in Adar but Amaziah wanted his sole rule to begin on the symbolically important date of Nisan 1). Observe that a viceregency does not affect the patterning of Amaziah's sole regency. His "Year 1" is 806/05 in both cases.

10. Azariah = Uzziah (son of Amaziah; mother was Jecholiah)

- Azariah, the fourth good king of Judah, began to rule in the 27th year of Jeroboam II. He was 16 years old when he began to reign and he ruled for 52 years (2 Kgs 15:1–2). This is a dual-dated notice where the synchronism of accession refers to the start of Azariah's sole rule in Jeroboam II's 27th year but his age and length of reign refer to the start of his coregency when his father was exiled to Samaria in 802/01. Azariah therefore ruled for 24 years as coregent—with his father absent for several years—until his sole rule began

[12] In the pattern suggested above, Amaziah was 33 when Azariah's coregency began at the age of 16 in 802/01. Amaziah was therefore 17 years old when Azariah was born. Of course, Amaziah may have been older at his son's birth, in which case his viceregency began earlier than 810/09.

following Amaziah's death between Tishri, 778 and Adar, 777. A later point in this range is preferred (see notes for Amaziah concerning the 15-year period that he outlived Jehoash).

- Proponents of long chronology schemes for the divided monarchy era normally uphold that there was no coregency between Amaziah and Azariah. They base this conclusion on the straightforward reading of the account of Azariah's accession:

> And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. (2 Kgs 14:18–21)[13]

Although this passage seems clear in saying that Azariah was placed on the throne *after* Amaziah's death, the following factors should be considered:

a) If Azariah began his 52-year rule after Amaziah's death, then the subsequent regnal data for Judah and Israel cannot be harmonized without the assumption of an interregnal period in Israel between Jeroboam II's death and Zachariah's coronation. However, there is no supporting evidence in the Bible of an interregnum at that point (see 2 Kgs 14:29; 15:8; cf. 10:30; 15:12).

b) Second Kings 14:22 records that "He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers."[14] The context implies that the antecedent of "he" is Azariah. But the statement that Azariah built Elath "after that the king slept with his fathers" is redundant if no coregency occurred.

c) Second Kings 14:21 states that "all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah." Under normal circumstances, the crown prince succeeded his father. However, Azariah was made king by *popular election*. Apparently, an unusual circumstance had arisen, which fits the imprisonment of Amaziah in Samaria.

d) Second Kings 14:17 and 2 Chr 25:25 report that "Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years." This is a unique notice in the Hebrew regnal data. As such, it suggests a relationship between these two kings experienced by no other NK–SK kings during the divided monarchy era. Amaziah's ten-year imprisonment in Israel until Jehoash's death would explain this unique linkage.[15]

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[13] The Chronicler's account (2 Chr 25:26–26:2) is similar to that of 2 Kings, showing that his source for that section was most likely the Hebrew historian's account.

[14] Elath, or Eloth, was a city of Edom (cf. 1 Kgs 9:26).

[15] If this was the case, that Amaziah was released after Jehoash's death, then the 15-year "extension" of Amaziah's reign thereafter in Judah (as coregent with Azariah) parallels the 15-year extension of life (= reign) that God granted Hezekiah when he freed him from sickness (2 Kgs 20:6). Adding to this coincidence, Amaziah and Hezekiah both began to rule at the age of 25, and both ruled for 29 years.

In light of these points, I believe that 2 Kgs 14:21–22 can be explained as follows. In his customary naming of the king's successor at the close of the account of Amaziah's reign, the Hebrew historian added two important details so tersely reported that they are ambiguous: (1) the unusual circumstance of Azariah's accession by popular election (during Amaziah's reign), and (2) Azariah continued Judah's success over Edom after his father died.[16] Having named Azariah as the successor in the closing formula for Amaziah, the Hebrew historian begins the account of Azariah's own reign in 2 Kgs 15:1. The issue with 2 Kgs 14:21–22 is therefore one of interpretation, with the balance of probabilities lying in favor of a coregency.

- Azariah extended Judah's borders, campaigning successfully against the Philistines, Arabs, and Meunites. He strengthened Jerusalem's defences, and established an impressive army of 307,500 men (2 Chr 26:6–15). However, pride overcame him after he became powerful. He entered the temple and burnt incense on the altar, which was a priestly function (26:16–18). In punishment, the Lord afflicted Azariah with leprosy until the day he died (26:19–21). He lived in a separate house (cf. Lev 13:46) but made his son Jotham viceregent to look after the palace and govern the people.

- Azariah's leprosy and Jotham's subsequent elevation as viceregent occurred during the reign of Israel's Jeroboam II. We deduce this from 1 Chr 5:17, which refers to a census that was conducted for the Transjordan tribes: "All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel." Clearly, Jotham and Jeroboam II ruled as contemporaries (ch. 4D refers). Since Jeroboam II died in 763, Jotham's viceregency lasted at least 14 years.

- Additionally, the census of 1 Chr 5:17 suggests that good relations existed between Judah and Israel during Jeroboam II's sole reign. This stands in contrast to the earlier adversarial relationship between Azariah's father Amaziah and Jeroboam II's father Jehoash. Relations between the sister kingdoms undoubtedly took a turn for the worse after Jeroboam II's death, when Israel became considerably weakened following a series of mostly violent regnal successions. It appears that Judah benefited from Israel's decline and expanded her borders at Israel's expense, notably in the Transjordan, during the final decade or so of Azariah's reign.

- Along with other scholars of his time, Edwin Thiele upheld that Azariah of Judah (*Azriyau* of *Yaudi*) figured prominently in the records of Tiglath-pileser.[17] However, Nadav Na'aman has since shown that K 6205, originally thought to be part of Tiglath-pileser's annals and which contained the word *Yaudi*, was actually an adjoining fragment of a "Letter to God" (the Azekah Inscription) penned by a later king (see ch. 8F). The removal of K 6205 from Tiglath-pileser's annals left Azriyau without a country.[18] Na'aman's subsequent proposal that he was an otherwise unattested king of Hatarikka has been favorably received but not

[16] The report of Azariah's success against Elath is unusual in that a king's military successes are normally included in the account of that king's *own* reign rather than in the account of his predecessor. However, relations between Edom and Judah are an important inclusion in 2 Kgs 14, so the statement of continued success against Edom by Amaziah's successor brings the narration to a neat thematic conclusion.

[17] Thiele 1983, 120, 139–62.

[18] For the original translation that includes K 6205, see *ARAB* I, §770; *DOTT*, 54(a); *ANET*, 282. For the modern translation that omits K 6205, see Tadmor, *ITP*, 58–63, Ann. 19.2, 10; *COS* 2.117A:285.

unanimously accepted.[19] Our chronology confirms that Azariah and Azriyau were not the same person because Azariah died between Tishri, 750 and Adar, 749, some five years before Tiglath-pileser's rule began (in 745).

11. Jotham (son of Azariah; mother was Jerusha)

- Jotham's reign divides into three consecutive segments:

  1. a 14+ year viceregency (there is no specific regnal data for this segment)
  2. his official 16-year rule (during which time he made Ahaz viceregent then coregent)
  3. a period of at least four years after Ahaz usurped him

  The 14+ year viceregency derives from 1 Chr 5:17 and other circumstantial evidence (ch. 4D refers). The 20 or more counted years (16 plus 4+) can be constructed from the regnal data. From 2 Kgs 15:32–33, we find that Jotham began to rule in the second year of Pekah (between Tishri, 750 and Adar, 749). Also, he was 25 years old at the beginning of his reign and he ruled for 16 years. In this dual-dated notice, the quoted age (25) and length of reign (16 years) refer to the start of his regnal overlap, which was a viceregency, the years of which were not counted.

- While 2 Kgs 15:33 states that Jotham ruled for 16 years, 2 Kgs 15:30 synchronizes Hoshea's accession to Jotham's 20th year. How did Jotham have a 20th year if he ruled for only 16? Evidently, in his 16th year, Jotham's wicked son Ahaz seized the throne.[20] Although the Bible does not reveal how or why this occurred, we know that Ahaz was pro-Assyrian, which suggests that Jotham was anti-Assyrian. (Jotham may have adopted this stance from his father Azariah after king Pul [Ashur-nirari V] came against neighboring Israel.[21]) Ahaz seized control of the kingdom between Tishri, 735 and Adar, 734, which was in Pekah's 17th year (2 Kgs 16:1).[22] One reason for this drastic step could have been to ensure that Judah did not confront Tiglath-pileser during his imminent campaign to the west. Jotham was spared in his son's takeover, and he lived for at least another four years.

- Despite the brevity of the notices in the Bible concerning Jotham, he was one of the great God-fearing kings. (He was the fifth religiously good king of Judah, and third in a succession of good kings.) During his 16-year reign, he built the high gate of the temple, fortified the land, and defeated the Ammonites, exacting a heavy tribute from them for three years (2 Chr 27:3–6).[23]

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[19] Na'aman, "Looking for KTK," *Die Welt des Orients* 9 (1978): 229–39. For further discussion, see Tadmor, *ITP*, 273–74; *COS* 2.117A:285 fn. 10.

[20] So Thiele 1983, 132–33.

[21] Judah was spared when Pul came against Israel (in 754 by our chronology; ch. 6C3 refers). Evidently, the Assyrians were not interested in Judah at that time. An influencing factor may have been its strong defences and powerful military forces, wisely built by Azariah (2 Chr 26:8–15).

[22] Jotham's viceregency began when he was 25 years old. If it lasted 14+ years, then he was 54+ when Ahaz usurped the throne. Jotham's older age suits the circumstances of an aggressive pro-Assyrian son deposing him.

[23] The discontinuation of Ammon's tribute after only three years probably coincided with Jotham's removal from the throne by Ahaz in the autumn–winter of 735–734. If so, then Jotham fought the Ammonites in 737 and received their tribute annually until 735.

- On a negative note, the high places were not removed during the reigns of Azariah and Jotham, so the people still sacrificed and burnt incense on them (2 Kgs 15:4, 35). This explains Isaiah's observation in the year of Azariah's death that "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isa 6:5), plus the Chronicler's remark that "the people did yet corruptly" during the reign of Jotham (2 Chr 27:2). Undoubtedly, this religious neglect was fostered by the material prosperity enjoyed by Judah in those days. Perhaps because of the nation's transgressions, we read that during Jotham's reign "the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah" (2 Kgs 15:37). This was the beginning of the so-called *Syro-Ephraimite crisis*, which came to a head early in the sole rule of Ahaz.

12. Ahaz (son of Jotham)

- Ahaz began to rule in the 17th year of Pekah; he was 20 years old and he ruled for 16 years (2 Kgs 16:1–2). This notice is problematic. If Ahaz came to the throne at the age of 20 and ruled for 16 years, then he was 36 when his son Hezekiah succeeded him at the age of 25 (18:2). By those figures, Ahaz was eleven years old when Hezekiah was born, which is unlikely. A viceregency solves the problem (ch. 4D refers). If we assume that Ahaz was 15 when Hezekiah was born (this is an arbitrarily chosen age that does not affect the primary regnal pattern), Ahaz's viceregency during Jotham's reign would have lasted for five years, from 747 to 742.

- Like Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, Ahaz's rule comprises more than two regnal segments: a viceregency (747?–742), then coregency (742–735), then sole regency after deposing his father (735–727). Coincidentally, both Jehoram and Ahaz were exceptionally wicked kings. Neither is ascribed with redeeming qualities, and neither has their mother's name recorded. Moreover, both kings were compared in wickedness to the kings of Israel by the Hebrew historian and Chronicler (2 Kgs 8:18; 16:3 + 2 Chr 21:6, 13; 28:2). Also, like Joash, both kings were buried in Jerusalem but not in the tombs of the kings (see fnn. 3, 10).

- The regnal notice for Ahaz is dual-dated. So, although the synchronism of accession (the 17th year of Pekah) points to the start of Ahaz's sole rule after seizing the throne, his age (20) and length of reign (16) refer to the start of his viceregency (747?). Since viceregency years are not counted, Ahaz's reign of 16 years begins with his coregency in the Nisan year 742/41 (in the ninth year of Jotham's rule).

- There were good reasons to make Ahaz viceregent. These included threats to Judah from neighboring states as well as Jotham's desire for Ahaz to gain experience. The threats only escalated after Tiglath-pileser came to the throne in 745. Tiglath-pileser was a powerful king with imperial designs on Syria-Palestine, as evidenced by his three-year campaign against Arpad in north-western Syria beginning in 743. Presumably, this was a contributing factor in Jotham promoting Ahaz to a coregency in 742/41.

- Ahaz ousted his father from the throne in the 17th year of Pekah, between Tishri, 735 and Adar, 734. Soon after that, in the Nisan year 734/33, Tiglath-pileser began a campaign to the west which was to last for three seasons, from 734 to 732. The 734 campaign centered on Philistia. Presumably later that year (once Assyrian operations in the area for that season had ceased), Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel attacked Judah with the intention of

deposing Ahaz (Isa 7:1ff.).[24] Because the Bible does not reveal the reason for the attack, many theories have been advanced concerning it. A popular one is that the Syro-Ephraimite attack was designed to force Ahaz (a pro-Assyrian king) into joining the anti-Assyrian alliance of Rezin and Pekah, so creating a unified front against the Assyrian empire from Egypt to southern Syria. Alternatively, Bustanay Oded has shown, with convincing arguments, that the attack occurred because Rezin and Pekah *sought control of the Trans-jordan*.[25] (Many areas of the Transjordan had been taken by Azariah during the decline of the Northern Kingdom after Jeroboam II's death.)

- Judah suffered greatly at the hands of Rezin and Pekah. Pekah's attack was particularly vengeful. In one day, his army killed 120,000 men (2 Chr 28:6). Ahaz's son Maaseiah, possibly his second oldest, was also killed about this time (28:7). Besides the high death toll, the Israelites carried away 200,000 Judahites along with their spoil to Samaria. However, they were later released by intervention of a prophet (28:8–15). Edom and the Philistines took advantage of Judah's weakened state and also attacked (28:17–18). As the Chronicler explains, these woes came upon Judah because of Ahaz's wickedness (28:19).

- Telling of Ahaz's character is his appeal to Tiglath-pileser rather than to the Lord for help against Rezin and Pekah. He sent messengers to the Assyrian king along with a payment of tribute to secure his assistance (2 Kgs 16:7–8). This probably occurred in the winter of 734–733. It suited Tiglath-pileser to deliver Ahaz, and he campaigned against Damascus for two years (733 and 732) before conquering it and killing Rezin (in 732).

- The Biblical record indicates that Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser met personally twice. The first occasion was most likely in 733/32, during the first year of Tiglath-pileser's two-year Damascus campaign. Having earlier accepted Ahaz's "bribe" for help (in 734/33), Tiglath-pileser personally journeyed to Jerusalem to collect Ahaz's next tribute payment:

  > And Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not. For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the LORD, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not. (2 Chr 28:20–21)

  Drawn in part from the temple treasures, Ahaz's tribute for 733/32 was Judah's first regular payment as a vassal state of Assyria, a bondage that lasted for almost a century. So, although Tiglath-pileser's short-term rescue of Ahaz had spared Judah from Rezin and Pekah's attempted takeover, it was ultimately detrimental for the kingdom. Hence, the Chronicler's assessment that Tiglath-pileser "distressed" Ahaz, and "helped him not." Ahaz's first annual tribute payment brought home the long-term consequences of his actions, especially the ongoing drain on the nation's economy.

  The second meeting between Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser occurred in 732/31 after the Assyrians conquered Damascus:

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[24] Although Rezin and Pekah began to trouble Judah during Jotham's reign (2 Kgs 15:37), the conflict erupted into outright warfare probably in the autumn of 734, which was not long after Ahaz seized the throne. Evidently, Rezin and Pekah took advantage of the political and military turmoil in Judah caused by Ahaz's usurpation.

[25] B. Oded, "The Historical Background of the Syro-Ephraimite War Reconsidered," 153–65. See also P. Dubovský, "Tiglath-pileser III's Campaigns in 734–732 B.C.," 153–70.

> for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin. And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser king of Assyria (2 Kgs 16:9–10)

After Tiglath-pileser killed Rezin, Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser. He did so presumably for two reasons: (1) to express his gratitude for removing the Syro-Ephraimite threat, and (2) to present the tribute due for 732/31.

- While in Damascus, Ahaz saw an altar and sent a pattern of it to Urijah the priest to build for him in Jerusalem. Upon his return, Ahaz instituted physical and liturgical changes in the temple, in esteem of the gods of Damascus (2 Kgs 16:10–18; 2 Chr 28:22–23). After this, he "shut up the doors of the house of the LORD" (having cut to pieces its furnishings), so forcing people to worship at the high places that he had set up throughout Judah (2 Chr 28:24–25). By these actions, Ahaz turned the nation over to idolatry.

- Ahaz died between Nisan and Elul, 727. He was succeeded by his son Hezekiah.

13. Hezekiah (son of Ahaz; mother was Abi)

- Hezekiah, the sixth good king of Judah, began to rule in the third year of Hoshea, between Nisan and Elul, 727. He was 25 years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for 29 years (2 Kgs 18:1–2).

- Some chronologies incorporate a coregency between Hezekiah and Ahaz. This is doubtful. Hezekiah was the opposite of Ahaz in that "He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him" (2 Kgs 18:5). In addition, he was anti-Assyrian (18:7). Both traits would have caused enormous friction in a coregency with Ahaz.[26] Consider, for example, Hezekiah's religious reforms, which began in the first month of his first counted year (2 Chr 29:1ff). These reforms would hardly be possible in a coregency with his wicked father.

- It is a conclusion of this study that 2 Kgs 18:1–19:37 is written in chronological order (ch. 8A refers). Hence, the following events associated with Hezekiah's reign occurred in sequence (though #2 and #3 probably occurred simultaneously):

  1. Hezekiah's accession (2 Kgs 18:1–2)
  2. his sweeping religious reforms (2 Kgs 18:3–6)
  3. his rebellion against Assyria, presumably by withdrawal of tribute payments after Tiglath-pileser's death (18:7)
  4. his conquering of the Philistines (18:8)
  5. the three-year siege of Samaria begun by Shalmaneser V in Hezekiah's fourth year (18:9)
  6. the fall of Samaria in Hezekiah's sixth year (18:10–12)
  7. Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year (18:13–19:37)

[26] For the same reasons, an unreported viceregency is unlikely.

In the above sequence, Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria occurred *before* the fall of Samaria. Despite this, commentators normally place it after Sargon's death and not during the reign of Shalmaneser V where the Hebrew historian placed it.

- The invasion of Judah is one of the most vexing issues in Near Eastern chronology. Sennacherib's annals report that he invaded Judah in his third campaign, which has been dated to 701. By contrast, the fall of Samaria in Hezekiah's sixth year is normally dated to around 721. This means that Hezekiah's 14th year, when Judah was invaded, should be ca. 713 not 701. Countless articles and commentaries have been written on this problem, and our Chapter 8—the longest in the book—is devoted entirely to it. In that chapter, we submit that the invasion of Judah began late in the Nisan year 713/12. It was led by Sennacherib, the crown prince (i.e., viceregent) son of the ruling king, Sargon. Initially successful, the Judah campaign ended in disaster following the loss of 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night (2 Kgs 19:35). Sargon understandably made no mention of this campaign in his annals. But Sennacherib wanted to boast about his successes against Judah, so he transplanted the 713/12 invasion into the record of his 701 campaign. The resulting discrepancy with the Bible has puzzled scholars since the mid-19th century.

14. Manasseh (son of Hezekiah; mother was Hephzibah)

- Manasseh was twelve years old when he began his 55-year reign (2 Kgs 21:1), which is the longest of any Judahite or Israelite king. His rule began in the Nisan year 698/97.

- By father-son age analysis (ch. 4D refers), Hezekiah was 42 years old when Manasseh was born. Hezekiah's older age here suggests that Manasseh was not his firstborn son, and that an older son died before Manasseh's accession. If so, that older son probably died *before* the severe illness that befell Hezekiah in his 14th year (at ca. 39 years of age). When Hezekiah learned that his illness was terminal, he was overcome with inordinate grief (2 Kgs 20:1–3). His reaction can be explained by his being childless at the time, with no heir to succeed him as Josephus reports (*Ant.* 10.25). Mercifully, the Lord granted him an additional 15 years of life (20:4–7) during which time Manasseh was born (ca. 710). Interestingly, the name Manasseh derives from a root which means "causing to forget" (cf. Gen 41:51), which may refer to the death of an older son.

- Manasseh was a wicked king who encouraged idolatry, spiritism, and divination. This prompted the Lord to pronounce judgment on the nation, which occurred later by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 21:10–15; cf. 24:1–3). Because of his sinfulness, the Lord caused Manasseh to be taken captive to Babylon by the king of Assyria. But Manasseh appealed to the Lord who heard his prayer and returned him to Jerusalem. This harrowing episode caused Manasseh to recognize the Lord's authority, and he began to remove the idols from Jerusalem (2 Chr 33:11–19).

15. Amon (son of Manasseh; mother was Meshullemeth)

- Amon was 22 years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for two years (2 Kgs 21:19). His rule began in the Nisan year 643/42. By age analysis, Manasseh was 45 years old when Amon was born. It is therefore likely that Amon was not Manasseh's firstborn, and that an older son destined for the throne died before his father.

- Whatever reforms Manasseh made were swept away by Amon, who practiced idolatry as his father had before being taken captive by the Assyrians.

- Amon was assassinated in his own house by his own servants, who had conspired against him (the Bible does not reveal their motive). He died in 641/40. The people of the land avenged Amon's death, and killed all the conspirators. They then made Amon's son Josiah king in his place (2 Kgs 21:23–24).

16. Josiah (son of Amon; mother was Jedidah)

- Josiah was eight years old when he was enthroned by the people of the land in 641/40 following his father's assassination; he ruled for 31 years (2 Kgs 22:1). By age analysis, Amon was 16 years old when Josiah was born.

- Josiah was the seventh (and last) good king of Judah. In his eighth year (633/32, aged about 16), he began to earnestly seek the Lord. In his twelfth year (629/28, aged about 20), he began to purge Judah, Jerusalem, and even Israel of their high places, etc. (2 Chr 34:3–7).[27] These reforms fulfilled an ancient prophecy made by an unnamed man of God against Jeroboam's altars (1 Kgs 13:1–3, 32).

- The Hebrew historian's account of the early stage of Josiah's reforms (2 Kgs 23:4–20) is positioned out of sequence, perhaps for theological effect. The reforms all appear to take place in Josiah's 18th year after the Book of the Law was found (see below). However, 2 Chr 34:3–8 specifically records that the reforms began in Josiah's 12th year and were completed by his 18th year. Evidently, the Chronicler did this to clarify the Hebrew historian's narrative.[28]

- In Josiah's 13th year (628/27), Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry (Jer 1:2). This year also marked the beginning of the 40-year time-bridge of Ezek 4:6 (ch. 5C refers).

- In Josiah's 18th year (623/22), the "book of the law" (presumably Deuteronomy) was found during the course of temple repairs (2 Kgs 22:3–20; 2 Chr 34:8–28). This prompted renewed reform, beginning with the making of a covenant before the Lord (2 Kgs 23:1–3; 2 Chr 34:29–32). It was followed by a demonstration of obedience through celebrating the Passover, the observance of which was unlike any other since the days of Samuel (2 Kgs 23:21–23; 2 Chr 35:1–19).

- In a surprising development for such a faithful king, Josiah was mortally wounded in an unnecessary confrontation with Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo (2 Kgs 23:29–30; 2 Chr 35:20–

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[27] During Josiah's reign, Assyria was in terminal decline and the empire's hold over Judah and the provinces of the former Northern Kingdom (now under Josiah's control) was considerably weakened. Notwithstanding Egypt's interest in the region, Judah's liberation from Assyrian bondage would have allowed Josiah's reforms to be carried out at home and to the north without external interference. The religious revival during Josiah's reign was also accompanied by economic prosperity for Judah.

[28] Having discussed the reforms undertaken between Josiah's 12th to 18th years, the Chronicler then followed and expanded on the narrative of 2 Kgs 22:3–23:23 except that 2 Kgs 23:4–20 was replaced by a short summary statement of reform in 2 Chr 34:33. This shows that the Chronicler was aware of the sequencing problem caused by 2 Kgs 23:4–20.

36:2). He was placed in a chariot for return to Jerusalem but died before exiting Megiddo. The commonly held date for his death is 609 but our study prefers 610 (ch. 9 refers).

- Josiah's violent death appears to disagree with a prophecy made 13 years earlier in his 18th year. This is when Huldah the prophetess foretold that he would "be gathered into thy grave in peace" (2 Kgs 22:20; 2 Chr 34:28). Since Josiah did not die peacefully (he was mortally wounded by Necho's archers), Huldah's prophecy appears to be false. But is this the correct meaning, that Josiah would not die in battle? It is crucial to recognize that Huldah's prophecy deals with the impending destruction of Jerusalem and overthrow of Judah (2 Kgs 22:15–17; 2 Chr 34:23–25). However, because Josiah was righteous, the Lord would not bring about this devastation during his days. This interpretation, that God would not subject the land to judgment while Josiah lived, is confirmed by Huldah's statement: "thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; **and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place**" (2 Kgs 22:20). Ironically, Huldah's prophecy may have contributed to Josiah's death. If he mistook her words to mean that he would not die in battle, his decision to halt Necho's advance to Carchemish may have been driven, in part, by a false sense of invulnerability.

- Following Josiah's death late in 610 (ca. Nov.), the people placed his son Jehoahaz on the throne after an appropriate period of mourning (2 Chr 35:24–25).

17. Jehoahaz (birth name Shallum, son of Josiah; mother was Hamutal)

- Jehoahaz, also called Shallum (Jer 22:11), was 23 years old when he was enthroned by the people of the land following the death of Josiah (2 Kgs 23:31). His rule began in 610, probably in December, after an official period of mourning for his father (refer to the reconstruction in ch. 9C). It was a short-lived reign. Jehoahaz was deposed after only three months by Necho at Riblah. His rule ended before Nisan 1, 609.

- Although the regnal data in Kings suggests that Jehoahaz was older than Zedekiah by about 13 years (compare 2 Kgs 23:31 and 24:18), the Chronicler in 1 Chr 3:15 states that Jehoahaz was the lastborn son of Josiah. This discrepancy can be explained by a viceregency for Zedekiah in the final two years of Josiah's reign (ch. 4G refers). In that case, Zedekiah was the designated heir apparent and should have succeeded Josiah. However, the people of the land thought otherwise, and they intervened to make Jehoahaz king instead.

18. Jehoiakim (birth name Eliakim, son of Josiah; mother was Zebudah)

- Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he was placed on the throne by Necho, and he ruled for eleven years (2 Kgs 23:36). His rule began early in the Nisan year 609/08 not long after Necho terminated the reign of his brother Jehoahaz. Necho's intervention in the regnal affairs of Judah marked the end of the nation's independence, which was now a vassal state of Egypt (and would become a vassal state of Babylon in 606).

- By father-son age analysis, Josiah was 15 years old when Jehoiakim was born. Assuming that Josiah's firstborn son Johanan died when young, Jehoiakim was the eldest of Josiah's three surviving sons: Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Jehoahaz.[29]

- Due to external military threats, particularly from the Babylonians who had destroyed the remaining remnants of the Assyrian empire in 609/08, Jehoiakim made his son Jehoiachin viceregent in 608/07 (in his first year of reign). Jehoiachin was eight years old then.

- Many details of Jehoiakim's reign (such as the circumstances of his death) are unclear. For a proposed reconstruction, see Chapter 10C.

- Jehoiakim was assassinated on or about Dec. 9, 598. His viceregent son Jehoiachin stepped to the throne in his place.

19. Jehoiachin (birth name Jeconiah, son of Jehoiakim; mother was Nehushta)

- Second Kgs 24:8 states that Jehoiachin was 18 when he began to reign while 2 Chr 36:9 states that he was eight. This discrepancy is resolved when we understand that Jehoiachin served as viceregent for ten years, from 608/07 (at age eight) until his sole rule began (at 18) on or about Dec. 9, 598.

- Jehoiachin's rule was short-lived, lasting only three months and ten days (viceregent years were not counted). It ended after Jerusalem was besieged and Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar on Adar 2 (Mar. 16), 597.[30] Nebuchadnezzar then placed Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, on the throne.[31] See Chapter 10C for a reconstruction of the main events in Judah from 609 to 597.

- The subsequent exiling of Jehoiachin and most of Jerusalem's inhabitants (including Ezekiel) was the main deportation of Hebrews to Babylon (ch. 5B refers). By contrast, the extradition ten years later in 587 was smaller but the outcome for Jerusalem was catastrophic.

- Jehoiachin was released from prison in Babylon during the 37th year of his captivity, on the 27th day of the 12th month, in the accession year of Amel-Marduk (2 Kgs 25:27). This was

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[29] Josiah being 15 years old at the birth of his second son Jehoiakim (in 634, ch. 4G refers) suggests that he was 14 or 13 when Johanan, his firstborn, was conceived. While possible, this is quite young for fatherhood. It is more likely, therefore, that Johanan was born to a different mother (i.e., not Zebudah) earlier that same year.

[30] This date is known from the Babylonian Chronicle tablet BM 21946 (see Grayson *ABC*, 102 [Chron. 5 r. 11–13]). Working back three months and ten days from this date allows us to fix Jehoiachin's accession (and therefore Jehoiakim's death) to on or about Dec. 9, 598 (see also ch. 10, fn. 25).

[31] Although Zedekiah was Jehoiachin's uncle (2 Kgs 24:17), 2 Chr 36:10 states that Zedekiah was Jehoiachin's brother. Although "brother" in the sense of *family member* may be the intention here (cf. 2 Chr 22:8), it is possible that Jehoiachin was actually a brother by marriage (i.e., brother-in-law). This could occur if Jehoiachin had a sister (by the same mother Nehushta) who married his uncle Zedekiah. Recall that Zedekiah and Jehoiakim were half-brothers, having different mothers (Hamutal and Zebudah) but the same father (Josiah).

Apr. 2, 561 (see ch. 5A for the reckoning of Ezekiel's captivity dates). Contrarily, Jer 52:31 reports that Jehoiachin was freed on the 25th day of the 12th month, or two days earlier (Mar. 31, 561).[32] A possible explanation is that Jehoiachin was freed on the 25th but did not stand before the king to officially receive his pardon (and other favors) until the 27th.

20. Zedekiah (birth name Mattaniah, son of Josiah; mother was Hamutal)

- After Jehoiachin's removal from the throne, Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah king in his place on or soon after Mar. 16, 597 and changed his name to Zedekiah (the name change emphasized the Babylonian king's authority over him). Zedekiah was also required to swear an oath of loyalty in the Lord's name before Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 2 Chr 36:13; Ezek 17:13). His reign lasted for eleven years (2 Kgs 24:18; 2 Chr 36:11).

- Although the regnal notices in 2 Kgs 23:31 and 24:18 suggest that Zedekiah was born well after Jehoahaz, 1 Chr 3:15 states that Jehoahaz was Josiah's lastborn son. The discrepancy is resolved if a viceregency is assumed for Zedekiah, from 612 to 610 (ch. 4G refers). In that case, the notice that he was 21 "when he began to reign" (2 Kgs 24:18) refers to the start of his viceregency in 612.

- There is debate over whether Zedekiah was made king late in the Nisan year 598/97 (Adar, 597) or early in the next Nisan year 597/96 (Nisan, 597). Chapters 4C and 11B discuss why the former date is preferred. Therefore, by our chronology, Zedekiah's accession occurred in 598/97, his first year was 597/96, and his 11th year when Jerusalem fell was 587/86.

- In his fourth year (594/93), Zedekiah went with Jeremiah to Babylon (Jer 51:59) possibly to be interrogated by Nebuchadnezzar to confirm his loyalty following reports of anti-Babylonian sentiment in Judah and regionally (cf. Jer 27 & 28). Zedekiah and Jeremiah may have also visited some of the captives then (cf. Jer 29:1–10).

- Zedekiah appeared to be weak leader who vacillated between obedience (when seeking Jeremiah's guidance) and rebellion (when listening to the false predictions of Babylon's imminent demise). Possibly influenced by Egyptian envoys and his own inferior advisors (the experienced counselors had been deported with Jehoiachin; 2 Kgs 24:14–16), he finally broke his oath of loyalty and turned to Egypt for help, thus rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24:20; 2 Chr 36:13; Ezek 17:13–15). Consequently, on the tenth day of the tenth month of Zedekiah's ninth year (Jan. 15, 588), the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem. It seems that, initially, they allowed those who wished to leave to do so (Jer 38:19; 39:9; 2 Kgs 25:11). The siege intensified and the wall was finally breached on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's 11th year, being Jul. 29, 587 (2 Kgs 25:1–4; Jer 39:1–2; 52:4–6).

- The siege lasted for 19 months, which is a long time even allowing for Jerusalem's natural defences and the weakened state of its inhabitants through pestilence and famine (cf. Ezek 5:12; Jer 21:9–10). Part of the siege's prolongation was the intervention by Egypt (Jer 37:5–11).

[32] Both 2 Kgs 25:27 and Jer 52:31 are based on Tishri years, because the years of captivity after the 597 B.C. deportation were counted this way (ch. 5AB refers).

- When the wall was breached, Zedekiah and all the soldiers fled by night but Zedekiah was captured and taken to Nebuchadnezzar's base at Riblah. For breaking his oath of loyalty, which was a grave transgression, Zedekiah's sons were executed before his eyes. He was then blinded (cf. Ezek 12:13) and led in chains to Babylon where he remained until his death (2 Kgs 25:4–7; Jer 39:4–7; 52:7–11; cf. Jer 34:2–5; Ezek 12:13). Nebuchadnezzar also ordered that the city and its temple be destroyed. (Clearly, for Zedekiah's disloyalty, Jerusalem was being made an example of before the surrounding nations.) So the captain of the guard, Nebuzaradan, set fire to the city on the seventh day of the fifth month, being Aug. 25, 587 (2 Kgs 25:8–9).[33] Those left alive in Jerusalem were exiled to Babylon but some of the poor remained to tend the land (2 Kgs 25:12). Jeremiah's numerous prophecies concerning the Lord's punishment were thus fulfilled (e.g., Jer 24:8–9; 29:16–19).

- In the closing sections of 2 Kings, the Hebrew historian gives a detailed list of temple treasures carried away to Babylon (vv. 13–17). Although this listing seems pedantic and even inappropriate when compared to the shock destruction of the city, we should remember the importance of the Solomonic temple in God's economy for the Old Testament Hebrews. Significantly, the new era ushered by Ezra was heralded by a return of the temple treasures (Ezra 1:7–11).

[33] Jer 52:12–13 records that this occurred on the tenth day of the fifth month, which was three days later. One explanation is that the fires were started on the seventh day (Aug. 25) and burnt for four days, so that the city was completely ruined by the tenth day of the fifth month (Aug. 28).

Appendix G – Notes on the Israelite Kings

The following notes assist in explaining the chronology of the Hebrew kings as presented in Chapter 4B. This appendix reviews the kings of the Israel while Appendix F reviews the kings of Judah. All years are Julian B.C.

1. Jeroboam I (son of Nebat and Zeruah)

- Jeroboam I reigned for 22 years (1 Kgs 14:20). His rule began in the Tishri year 942/41. No synchronism of accession with Judah is given for Jeroboam, but he became king shortly after Rehoboam.

- Wanting to distinguish Israel from Judah, Jeroboam instituted a regnal year that began in the fall (Tishri). He also introduced non-accession year dating as was the practice in Egypt then (Jeroboam was in Egypt until the death of Solomon [1 Kgs 11:40]).

- Jeroboam was the instigator of Israel's national wickedness because he established an independent religious system with idols and non-Levitic priests (1 Kgs 12:26–33). This counterfeit system was perpetuated by the kings who followed him until, eventually, "the LORD removed Israel out of his sight" by allowing the kingdom to fall to the Assyrians (2 Kgs 17:22–23).

- Second Chronicles 13:20–21 appears to say that Jeroboam died during the reign of Abijah (Abijam) in Judah:

  > Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah: and the LORD struck him, and he died. But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives.

  Jeroboam actually died during the reign of Asa not Abijam. But there is no contradiction if 2 Chr 13:20-21 is interpreted as follows: (1) Jeroboam did not recover Israel's military strength during the reign of Abijam; (2) for the Chronicler, nothing of significance in Jeroboam's reign happened thereafter until the Lord "struck him," so causing his death; (3) in contrast to the waning fortunes of Jeroboam's remaining years, Abijam's reign was associated with prosperity.

2. Nadab (son of Jeroboam)

- In the second year of Asa, Nadab began his rule of two years (1 Kgs 15:25). It began between Nisan and Elul, 920. He followed in the wicked footsteps of his father (15:26).

- In the third year of Asa, Baasha killed Nadab during the Israelite siege of the Philistine town of Gibbethon (1 Kgs 15:27–28). Thus ended Israel's first dynasty (Jeroboam + Nadab).

3. Baasha (son of Ahijah)

- In the third year of Asa, Baasha began his rule of 24 years based in Tirzah (1 Kgs 15:28, 33). It began between Nisan and Elul, 919.

- During his reign, Baasha destroyed the entire house of Jeroboam, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Ahijah (1 Kgs 15:29; cf. 14:10–11). In turn, Jehu prophesied that the house of Baasha would be eliminated because he perpetuated the religious practices of Jeroboam (16:1–4).

- There was friction between Baasha and Asa throughout Baasha's reign (1 Kgs 15:16). Chapter 4E refers.

- Baasha died in the 24th year of his reign and his son Elah reigned in his place.

4. Elah (son of Baasha)

- In the 26th year of Asa, Elah began his rule of 2 years based in Tirzah (1 Kgs 16:8). It began between Nisan and Elul, 896.

- In the second year of Elah's rule, while Israel's army was encamped at Gibbethon, Zimri (a military leader) killed Elah, who was "drinking himself drunk" in his home city of Tirzah, rather than being with his army at Gibbethon (1 Kgs 16:9, 15–16). So ended Israel's second dynasty (Baasha + Elah).

5. Zimri

- In the 27th year of Asa, Zimri began his rule of seven days after he assassinated Elah (1 Kgs 16:10, 15). He began to rule between Nisan and Elul, 895.

- As soon as he sat on the throne, Zimri destroyed the entire house of Baasha, as prophesied by Jehu the son of Hanani (1 Kgs 16:11–13; cf. 16:1–4).

- Zimri was evidently not a popular person. On hearing that he had killed Elah, the Israelites made Omri, the commander of the army (and higher in rank than Zimri), king over Israel. Omri went from Gibbethon to Tirzah and besieged it. On recognizing his hopeless position, Zimri went to the royal palace, set it on fire, and killed himself (1 Kgs 16:15–18). He had ruled for only a week.

6 & 7. Omri & Tibni

- Omri began to rule in the 27th year of Asa (1 Kgs 16:15–16) between Nisan and Elul, 895. However, Israel's allegiance was divided between Omri and Tibni the son of Ginath (1 Kgs 16:21). A rival reign condition therefore existed. It appears, however, that Omri's reign had stronger backing. Tibni died in Asa's 31st year, though it is unclear whether he died of natural causes or through military struggle with Omri.

- Although Omri began to rule in Asa's 27th year, 1 Kgs 16:23 reports that he began his twelve-year rule over Israel in the 31st year of Asa, spending six years in Tirzah. This is a dual-dated notice in which the synchronism of accession denotes the start of Omri's sole rule in Asa's 31st year (following Tibni's death) but the regnal duration of twelve years is counted from Omri's coronation in Asa's 27th year.

- The 31st year of Asa is the Nisan year 891/90. Tibni therefore ruled for either five or six years, depending on whether his death occurred before or after Tishri 1, 891. Five years seems more likely because, after Tibni's death, Omri began to build a new capital in Samaria. Omri would have therefore stayed in Tirzah for another year after Tibni's death while the essential buildings were being constructed in Samaria (Tirzah had been the capital since the time of Jeroboam). Omri then moved to the new capital for the final six years of his rule, during which time Samaria was further developed.[1]

- Omri's rule began Israel's third dynasty, which spanned 43 years and involved four kings: Omri, his son Ahab, Ahab's son Ahaziah, and Ahaziah's brother Joram (or Jehoram). This dynasty became powerful and prosperous. In fact, it was so influential in the region that the Assyrians used Omri's name (*Bīt-Ḫumrî* = "land of Omri") to designate the Northern Kingdom well after the end of the Omride dynasty.

- While the Hebrew historian makes no comment on Tibni's religious behavior, he notes that "Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him" (1 Kgs 16:25). Omri's foreign policy apparently included the making of peace treaties with surrounding nations. These typically involved diplomatic marriages, which would have opened the door to Canaanite religious practices in Israel (as probably encouraged by the king).

8. Ahab (son of Omri)

- After Omri's death, his son Ahab began to rule in the 38th year of Asa (1 Kgs 16:29), which places his coronation between Nisan and Elul, 884. He ruled for 22 years from the new capital of Samaria.

- Ahab was the most infamous of the Omride kings. Although under his rule Israel continued to enjoy economic and military prosperity, Ahab perpetuated the nation's spiritual corruption (as fostered by Omri) especially through the urging of his evil wife, Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal king of Sidon (16:31).[2] Hence, the sharp assessment by the Hebrew historian that "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him" (16:33). The outstanding prophet in those days was Elijah. He condemned the worship of false gods and killed 450 prophets of Baal after proving that the Lord was the true God, and not Baal (1 Kgs 18:17–40).

- From the Assyrian record, we know that Shalmaneser III, in his sixth year, fought a coalition of Syro-Palestinian nations at Qarqar on the Orontes river in northwestern Syria. This was Shalmaneser III's first campaign against Syria, and the coalition was determined to halt Assyria's westward expansion. Although the Assyrians claimed a great victory in that battle, it was more likely a failure for them. From our revised dates for the Assyrian kings (see ch.

[1] Samaria was strategically located, both militarily and economically, and served as the capital until its capture by the Assyrians in 721.

[2] Jezebel was probably given in marriage to Ahab early in Omri's reign to seal an alliance between Omri and Ethbaal. Although this alliance was mutually beneficial, Jezebel brought Phoenician Baal worship with her to Israel. Apparently, Baal worship did not completely replace worship of the Lord in Israel but was mixed with it in a syncretistic way.

6E), the battle of Qarqar can be dated to 864, probably in July or early August.[3] Ahab subsequently died in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead a few months later, between Tishri, 864 and Adar, 863. Although his death in that battle had been prophesied to him by Micaiah, he ignored the warning (1 Kgs 22:2–39).

- Our chronology shows that Ahab made his son Ahaziah coregent in the Tishri year 865/64 while Jehoshaphat made his son Jehoram coregent in the Nisan year 865/64. It is likely that both kings made their respective sons coregent as a precautionary step in the lead up to the region's impending confrontation with Assyria. Presumably, both kings made their sons coregent around the same time, possibly in the first quarter of 864 (i.e., Jan.–Mar.).

- Israel and Syria were allies in the battle of Qarqar. This agrees with the Biblical notice that there was no war between Syria and Israel for three years preceding the battle of Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kgs 22:1). This peace undoubtedly extended region-wide to allow for its many political and military leaders to meet and discuss tactics against Shalmaneser III. Although it appears to be a turnaround that Israel fought Syria only a few months after their coalition against the Assyrians, it should be noted that Ramoth-Gilead had not been returned to Israel, despite Ben-Hadad's earlier promise at the treaty of Aphek to do so (1 Kgs 20:34). Therefore, the object of the battle—which was fought with the help of Judah's king Jehoshaphat—was not all-out war, but to enforce the terms of the treaty and so reclaim an historically important Israelite city (1 Kgs 22:3; cf. Deut 4:41–43; Josh 21:38).

9. Ahaziah (son of Ahab)

- Ahaziah began to reign over Israel in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat, and he ruled for two years (1 Kgs 22:51). This is a dual-dated notice in which the synchronism of accession denotes the start of Ahaziah's sole rule in Jehoshaphat's 17th year following Ahab's death between Tishri, 864 and Adar, 863. However, the two-year length of reign is counted from Ahaziah's elevation as coregent in the Tishri year 865/64.

- After Ahab's death, the vassal state of Moab, under king Mesha, rebelled against Israel (2 Kgs 1:1). Because Ahaziah's sole rule lasted less than a year, the rebellion was dealt with by his successor, Joram.

- Ahaziah and Jehoshaphat entered into a trading alliance to revive Solomon's shipyard at Ezion-geber on the Red Sea (cf. 1 Kgs 9:26). The venture failed because the ships were broken as a result of God's displeasure with Jehoshaphat over being in league with a wicked Israelite king (2 Chr 20:35–37; 1 Kgs 22:48, 52–53).

- Ahaziah's sole rule lasted around seven to ten months (ch. 4F refers). Presumably in the closing month(s) of his sole regency, Ahaziah fell through a lattice pane, which left him bedridden (2 Kgs 1:2–17).[4] Wanting to know if he would recover, he sent messengers to consult Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron. But Elijah intercepted the messengers and told them that Ahaziah "shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely

[3] On the time of year that the battle of Qarqar was fought, see Thiele 1983, 95 fn. 13.

[4] Jezebel, the queen mother, undoubtedly shouldered some of Ahaziah's responsibilities at this time. It is likely that Jezebel wielded significant power in Israel during the reigns of both her sons, Ahaziah and Joram.

die" (1:4). The messengers returned without consulting Baal-zebub, and on hearing Elijah's prophecy of his fate, Ahaziah ordered a captain and fifty men to capture Elijah (presumably to force him to retract his statement or be killed). Elijah called down fire from heaven and all 51 men were consumed. Ahaziah sent another captain with his 50 men but they too were consumed by miraculous fire from heaven. A third captain with his 50 men were dispatched but the captain begged Elijah for mercy. The group was spared, and Elijah went with the captain to Ahaziah to personally declare the king's fate, which was decreed because he had turned to Baal-zebub (a pagan deity) rather than to the Lord. Ahaziah died between Nisan and Elul, 863. However, because he had no son, his brother Joram (or Jehoram) ruled in his place.

10. Joram (son of Ahab)

- Joram ruled for twelve years in Samaria following his brother's death. His rule began in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat (2 Kgs 3:1), which was also the second year of Jehoram's first coregency segment (1:17).[5] This places the beginning of Joram's rule between Nisan and Elul, 863.

- Although Joram "wrought evil in the sight of the LORD," his wickedness fell short of that practiced by his father Ahab and mother Jezebel (2 Kgs 3:1–3).

- Moab had been a vassal state of Israel. However, after Ahab's death, Mesha king of Moab rebelled, prompting a united action against him by Joram, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom. They fought Mesha and won a great but not conclusive victory (2 Kgs 3:4–27). However, it was short-lived. From the Moabite stone, we know that Mesha ultimately triumphed over Israel (but not Judah) halfway during the reign of Joram.[6]

- Some twelve years after Ahab and Jehoshaphat attempted to recover Ramoth-Gilead from Syria, Joram likewise attempted to recover it with the help of Ahaziah king of Judah, his nephew. While this operation was taking place, a representative of Elisha anointed Jehu, commander of the Israelite army, as the nation's new king. Jehu was instructed to eliminate the entire house of Ahab (2 Kgs 9:1–13), which included Judah's king Ahaziah (whose

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[5] See ch. 4F for an analysis of the complicated regnal patterning for the kings of Judah and Israel in the period from Jehoram's accession (SK) to Jehu's revolt (NK).

[6] *ANET*, 320–21. The Moabite Stone was discovered intact in 1868 but was subsequently broken by the Arabs and taken to the Louvre in 1873. In this black basalt commemorative inscription, Mesha reports that Moab had been under Israel's suzerainty for 40 years. This interval encompassed the reign of Omri plus "half the time of his son." The son in view here is evidently Joram, Omri's grandson. By our chronology, the interval from the beginning of Omri's reign (895) to the exact halfway point of Joram's rule (857) is 39 years inclusive. Mesha's figure of 40 years therefore agrees with our chronology if we assume it to be a rounded up figure or if the statement "half the time of his son" is a close approximation. Alternatively, Mesha's figure may have been *exactly* 40 years if the counting started from a year or two before Omri came to the throne, while he was commander of the army and responsible for operations such as the subjection of Moab. After the mid-point of Joram's rule, Mesha broke free from vassalage to Israel. In his commemoration of the event in the Moabite stone, he stated, "I have triumphed over him and over his house, while Israel hath perished forever." The reference to Israel *perishing* is probably to the slaying of Joram and the entire house of Ahab (= house of Omri) by the hand of Jehu. That Israel had perished *forever* may refer to Mesha's assessment that Israel would never again attain the stature it achieved during the reign of the Omrides.

mother was Athaliah, daughter of Ahab) and Israel's Joram (Ahab's son and Ahaziah's uncle). After being wounded by the Syrians, Joram returned to convalesce in Jezreel where Ahaziah came to visit him. Jehu rode there in his chariot and killed Joram. Ahaziah was killed soon after (9:14–28; see also Appendix F, "Ahaziah"). Jehu also had Ahab's wife Jezebel thrown out of a window (9:30–37).

- Joram died between Nisan and Elul, 852. His death ended the Omride dynasty, as prophesied (1 Kgs 21:17–29). It had lasted for 43 years (895–852) and comprised four kings: Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Joram.

11. Jehu (son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi)

- Jehu had been appointed king by one of Elisha's prophets between Nisan and Elul, 852. He was specifically instructed to slay the house of Ahab, which he did with vigor in what became the most bloodthirsty revolution in the history of the Northern Kingdom. His dynastic cleansing saw the kings of both Judah and Israel killed (Ahaziah and Joram), as well as Ahab's wife Jezebel, 70 sons of Ahab's house (2 Kgs 10:1–10), leaders, friends, and priests of Ahab (10:11), and 42 visiting brothers of Ahaziah (10:13–14). He also invited all the prophets, priests, and servants of Baal to Samaria under the pretext of a great sacrificial feast in honor of Baal. After the worshippers had gathered, he dispatched 80 of his men with swords into their temple—which was "full from one end to another"—to kill every last one (10:18–28).

- For his efforts in destroying the Omrides and removing Baal worship from the land, the Lord promised Jehu that his sons would sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation (10:30). This occurred, and Jehu's dynasty of five kings (Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Zachariah) was the longest running in Israel, ruling for some 90 years. Jehu himself ruled for 28 years (2 Kgs 10:36).[7]

- Beginning with Jehu's reign, the Israelites changed to accession year dating. Jehu presumably instituted this change, which aligned it with Judah's system, to herald a new era of faithfulness in Israel. The change may have also been driven by another factor. Although the Bible does not mention the event, the annals for Shalmaneser III show that *ia-ú-a* DUMU *ḫu-um-ri-i* = Jehu of the house of Omri (see ch. 3A, fn. 2) paid tribute to the Assyrians in Shalmaneser III's 18th year (which was 852/51 by our redated Assyrian chronology). Jehu therefore paid this tribute either in his accession year (between Nisan and Elul, 852) or in his first year (between Tishri, 852 and Adar, 851). The context of his payment was Shalmaneser III's fourth campaign against Syria. Although Damascus was not captured, the campaign succeeded in giving the Assyrians a foothold in the region, even to the border of Israel.[8] Accordingly, Tyre, Sidon, and Israel were compelled to pay tribute to Shalmaneser III. Jehu's acceptance of Assyrian supremacy, which he probably welcomed because it would curtail Syria's aggression against Israel, may have helped his decision to change to accession year dating, which the Assyrians used.

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[7] The families of Omri and Jehu were the only ones who actually established proper dynasties in the Northern Kingdom. The other three families did not rule past the first generation (i.e., Jeroboam–Nadab, Baasha–Elah, and Menahem–Pekahiah).

[8] For this campaign, see *ARAB* I, §672; *ANET*, 280; RIMA 3:48, ll. 1″–27″.

- In Shalmaneser III's 21st year, the Assyrians campaigned against Syria yet again, but without conquering Damascus.[9] Thereafter, Assyria suffered a period of decline during which time its vassal states in Palestine would have ceased paying tribute. Free from the Assyrian threat, Hazael king of Syria grew to become Israel's most powerful regional enemy.

- Despite a promising start, Jehu failed to follow the Lord "for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin" (2 Kgs 10:31). In other words, he perpetuated Jeroboam's counterfeit religious practices, which had existed side-by-side with Baal worship during the rule of the Omrides. In response, the Lord punished him by allowing Hazael to annex parts of Israel's territory (being all of Transjordan; 10:32–33).

12. Jehoahaz (son of Jehu)

- In the 23rd year of Joash, Jehoahaz began his rule of 17 years based in Samaria (2 Kgs 13:1). His rule began between Nisan and Elul, 824.

- Jehoahaz continued in the sins of Jeroboam by allowing idolatrous practices to flourish. This incurred the Lord's anger such that he gave Israel into the hand of the Syrians—ruled then by Hazael followed by his son Ben-hadad—who oppressed the nation and weakened their military forces considerably. In desperation, Jehoahaz sought help from the Lord, who provided a "deliverer" (2 Kgs 13:2–5). In all likelihood, this was the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III, whose campaigns to the west began in his sixth regnal year, dated to 816 by our chronology.[10] This first campaign lasted about three or four years due to longstanding rebellion in the region. Damascus and its king were probably dealt with during this time (ca. 814–13).

- It is likely that Jehoahaz began paying tribute to Adad-nirari III when he neutralized the Syrian threat. His son Jehoash also paid tribute, probably until Adad-nirari's death.

- Although delivered from the Syrians, Israel's military forces had been depleted, especially the mobile units (the chariots and cavalry) whose number usually decided the victor. To help him manage secondary matters while he concentrated on rebuilding Israel's forces, Jehoahaz made his son Jehoash viceregent in the 37th year of Joash (2 Kgs 13:10) sometime in the Nisan year 810/09. Jehoahaz died in the Tishri year 808/07.

13. Jehoash (son of Jehoahaz)

- In the 37th year of Joash, Jehoash (who is also called Joash, confusingly, in 2 Kings) began his rule of 16 years based in Samaria (2 Kgs 13:10). The synchronism to Joash's 37th year points to the start of his viceregency sometime during the Nisan year 810/09. It therefore began either in the latter half of the Tishri year 811/10 or the first half of the Tishri year

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[9] See RIMA 3:78–79, ll. 152´–162´a.

[10] On Assyria's presence in the west at that time, see Millard and Tadmor, "Adad-nirari III in Syria," *IRAQ* 35 (1973): 57–64; Tadmor, "The Historical Inscriptions of Adad-nirari III," *IRAQ* 35 (1973): 141–50; Kuan 1995, 69–106. (The dates quoted in these articles are based on conventional Assyrian chronology and are therefore eleven years lower than the revised chronology proposed in this study.)

810/09. Because viceregent years are not counted, the 16 years refer to his sole rule, which began in the Tishri year 808/07.

- Contrary to the standard practice for overlapping reigns, the synchronism of accession for Jehoash points to the start of his viceregency, and not to the start of his sole rule. Presumably, the Hebrew historian decided to include Israel's one and only uncomplicated viceregency. This contrasts with his understandable decision to omit Judah's numerous and sometimes complicated viceregencies for the sake of brevity (see ch. 4ADEFG).

- Jehoash continued Israel's pro-Assyrian stance, and he is mentioned in an Assyrian inscription as having paid tribute to Adad-nirari III. Our study dates this tribute to between Nisan 807 and Adar 806, near the beginning of Jehoash's sole rule (ch. 11B3 refers). Undoubtedly, the new Israelite king wanted to maintain good relations with Assyria. With Damascus a constant threat, it was important to have a powerful ally like Adad-nirari III, who had delivered Jehoash's father Jehoahaz from the Syrians.

- In the Tishri year 805/04, around two years after Amaziah's accession in Judah, Jehoash placed his son (Jeroboam II) on the throne alongside him. However, unlike his father who installed him as viceregent, Jehoash placed Jeroboam II on the throne as coregent. The following factors probably dictated this move:

    1. Judah's new king Amaziah appeared to be more hostile than his predecessor Joash. Making Jeroboam II coregent ensured the dynastic succession should Judah make an aggressive move, which indeed occurred. In the Nisan year 802/01, Jehoash was challenged to battle by Amaziah (see notes for Amaziah in Appendix F). Jehoash defeated him and took him prisoner for several years, prompting the Judahites to enthrone Amaziah's son (Azariah) in his place.

    2. With Jeroboam II as coregent, Jehoash could spend more time away from Samaria, particularly to deal with Syria. This is confirmed by the three battles—prophesied beforehand by Elisha as all being victories—that he fought against Ben-hadad to recapture the territory lost by his father (2 Kgs 13:14–19, 25). Having contained Syria to a degree, the Northern Kingdom began to prosper during Jehoash's reign, and especially during the reign of Jeroboam II.

14. Jeroboam II (son of Jehoash)

- Jeroboam II began to rule in the 15th year of Amaziah, and he ruled for 41 years based in Samaria (2 Kgs 14:23). This is a dual-dated notice in which the synchronism of accession denotes the start of Jeroboam II's sole rule (in Amaziah's 15th year) while the 41 years of his reign are counted from the start of his coregency in the Tishri year 805/04.

- Jeroboam II began to rule as sole regent between Nisan and Elul, 792. An earlier point in this half-year range is preferred (see notes for Amaziah's rule concerning the 15-year period that he outlived Jehoash).

- Jeroboam II was one of Israel's most illustrious rulers, and the kingdom prospered under his 29-year sole regency (from 792 to 763). He freed the Northern Kingdom from its oppression under Syria, whose power had been weakened by Adad-nirari III. With Assyria now in decline after the death of Adad-nirari III, Jeroboam II was able to restore Israel's border as

prophesied by Jonah (2 Kgs 14:25). According to the Hebrew historian, this territorial expansion was due to God's compassion on the nation (14:26–27). We can conclude that the Lord's favor here was driven not by any sudden improvement in Israel's religious conduct but by His desire to preserve the Northern Kingdom at that time. Actually, Israel's prosperity caused a *worsening* in her spiritual behavior. The kingdom's successes fostered hedonism and unprecedented social and moral decay, as attested in the prophecies of Amos and Hosea (e.g., Amos 2:6–8; 5:11–12; 6:1–8; Hos 4:1–6, 13–19; 7:1–4).

- A key conclusion of this study is that during Jeroboam II's reign (in 780), Jonah carried out his prophetic mission to the great Assyrian city of Nineveh to warn of its impending destruction. Nineveh and its king (Ashur-dan III) repented and God spared the city. This event had a profound effect on the Ninevites, and it was surely written about by the Assyrian royal scribes in complimentary terms for Israel's God. However, as this was tantamount to being a denial of their own gods, a succeeding king (Tiglath-pileser III) expunged the record of the event from Assyrian history. This included the following radical steps (ch. 6ABC refers):

  a) deletion of eleven eponyms (the break in the Eponym Canon at this point—between 770 and 769—is conspicuous)

  b) amending of king lists to show a reduced reign for Ashur-dan III

  c) destruction of royal inscriptions pertaining to that time

- Jeroboam II died in 763, in Adar by our patterning.

15. Zachariah (son of Jeroboam II)

- Zachariah began his six-month rule in the 38th year of Azariah (2 Kgs 15:8). The king who followed him was Shallum, whose one-month rule began in Azariah's 39th year (15:13). These synchronisms harmonize with the remainder of our chronology if we accept that Zachariah began to rule (following Jeroboam II's death) in the final month of Azariah's 38th year (i.e., Adar, 763). Shallum's one-month rule then began in Elul, 763 of Azariah's 39th year and ended in Tishri, 763 (being the first month of the next regnal year in Israel). Menahem's accession occurred in the same month (in Tishri, 763).

- Zachariah died after "Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead" (15:10). So ended Jehu's dynasty, which had continued to the fourth generation as prophesied (2 Kgs 10:30; 15:12). Lasting 89 years (from 852 to 763), it was Israel's longest running. Zachariah's death also ended Israel's period of power and prosperity. After then, the kingdom declined rapidly, ending with the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians 42 years later (in 721).

- The violent end of the house of Jeroboam II (by the slaying of Zachariah) was revealed to the prophet Amos by the Lord: "I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword" (Amos 7:9). However, in his report of Amos' prophecy to the king, Amaziah the priest of Bethel mistakenly thought that the killing of Jeroboam II himself was intended: "For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword" (Amos 7:11).

16. Shallum (son of Jabesh)

- In the 39th year of Azariah, Shallum conspired against Zachariah and assassinated him in public view (2 Kgs 15:10). Shallum ruled for one month before being slain, in turn, by Menahem (15:13–14).

- Shallum's rule began in Elul, 763 and straddled Tishri 1, 763. He was succeeded by Menahem in Tishri, 763. It is possible that Menahem was a military leader under Jeroboam II and Zachariah, and that he killed Shallum in retaliation for his slaying of Zachariah.

- Shallum and Tibni are the only two kings of Israel about whom the Hebrew historian makes no comment regarding their religious conduct (he judges every other Israelite king as being wicked). Nevertheless, he concludes his account of Shallum's reign on a negative note by referring to "his conspiracy which he made" in killing Zachariah (2 Kgs 15:15).

17. Menahem (son of Gadi)

- In the 39th year of Azariah, in Tishri, 763, Menahem began his rule of ten years (2 Kgs 15:17). His slaying of Shallum and seizure of the throne began Israel's fifth and final dynasty.

- In Menahem's day, "Pul the king of Assyria came against the land" (2 Kgs 15:19–20; 1 Chr 5:26). This is the first mention in the Bible of an Assyrian king's name. As proposed in Chapter 6C, Pul was Ashur-nirari V, and he came against Israel during his western campaign of 754 (in his first regnal year). Menahem was undoubtedly disliked at home not only because he was a usurper but also because of his cruelty (2 Kgs 15:16). When Ashur-nirari V came against him, Menahem paid him a huge tribute (1,000 talents of silver), which served two purposes: (1) to buy peace, and (2) to legitimize his unsteady rule. The tribute was repaid by taxing the wealthy (15:20), a move that would have incited anti-Assyrian sentiment among influential Israelites. Thereafter, on at least one occasion, Menahem paid tribute to Ashur-nirari V's crown prince son, Tiglath-pileser.

- With Menahem's first tribute payment to Pul, Israel became a full-fledged vassal state of Assyria until it was incorporated as a province of the empire.

18. Pekahiah (son of Menahem)

- In the 50th year of Azariah, Pekahiah began his rule of two years (2 Kgs 15:23). It began between Nisan and Elul, 752. Presumably, he continued Israel's tribute payments to Assyria, as well as the increased taxes on the nation's wealthy to help pay for it.

- One of Pekahiah's chief military commanders, Pekah, conspired against him and slew him in Samaria with the aid of 50 troops from Gilead (15:25). It seems likely that Pekah resented the king's pro-Assyrian stance and the economic burden it imposed on Israel.

- Pekahiah was assassinated between Nisan and Elul, 750. His death ended Israel's fifth and final dynasty (Menahem + Pekahiah). It had lasted for 13 years.

19. Pekah (son of Remaliah)

- Pekah began to rule over Israel in the 52nd year of Azariah, between Nisan and Elul, 750. The notice in 2 Kgs 15:27 that he ruled for 20 years contradicts the Assyrian record (see chs. 6C, 11B4). Our stance is that the Biblical figure for Pekah's reign is correct.

- Prior to Pekah's rule, Israel had been using accession year dating for 102 years after its adoption by Jehu in 852. However, our patterning of the regnal data indicates that Pekah reverted to non-accession year dating, which was Israel's system before Jehu changed it. Pekah may have done this to mark his anti-Assyrian stance, so gaining public support for his rule (the Israelites would have abhorred their annual payments to Assyria). In fact, it is likely that Pekah stopped paying tribute when Ashur-nirari V died, or possibly earlier.

- Tiglath-pileser campaigned for three years in Palestine between 734 and 732. Although the first campaign in 734 was directed primarily against Philistia, Israel's coastal strip may have been annexed then, with deportations occurring. Probably in the latter half of 734/33 after Assyrian operations for the year had ceased, Pekah and Syria's king Rezin attacked Judah to remove Ahaz and replace him with the son of Tabeal (2 Kgs 16:5; Isa 7:1–7). Their attack was motivated, it appears, by their desire to control the Transjordan. But rather than turning to the Lord for help, Ahaz turned to Assyria and paid a substantial tribute to Tiglath-pileser to buy protection (2 Kgs 16:7–8). Being advantageous for Assyria, Tiglath-pileser obliged by invading Syria and killing Rezin (2 Kgs 16:9), whose death occurred in 732 after a two-year siege of Damascus.

- Whereas the Assyrians killed Rezin, they allowed Pekah to continue as king over Israel. This reflects the fact that Damascus, not Samaria, was the primary object of Tiglath-pileser's western campaigns in 733 and 732 (as confirmed by the notational entries in the Eponym Canon for those years). Nevertheless, it was not without huge cost to Pekah. Much of Israel was annexed during the two-year Damascus campaign, with deportations occurring (2 Kgs 15:29).[11] Stripped of the Galilee and the Gilead, which became Assyrian provinces, the once mighty Northern Kingdom was now nothing more than a small vassal state in the hill country of Ephraim.

- Following the loss of more than half of Israel, Hoshea the son of Elah conspired against Pekah and slew him (2 Kgs 15:30). Pekah died between Nisan and Elul, 731, probably in Elul or possibly Ab (because Hoshea's rule began on or after Tishri 1, 731 by our chronology).

20. Hoshea (son of Elah)

- Two synchronisms of accession are given for Hoshea: the 20th year of Jotham (2 Kgs 15:30) and the 12th year of Ahaz (2 Kgs 17:1). It will be recalled that, in Jotham's 16th year, Ahaz ousted him from the throne (see notes for Jotham and Ahaz in Appendix F). However,

[11] The deportation of Israelites was in accordance with the Assyrian practice of population transfer. However, it was conducted in an unprecedented way during the reign of Tiglath-pileser, who oversaw mass population *exchanges*. These two-way transfers were designed to make the uprooted people totally reliant on the central government. The policy was extraordinarily effective, and it helped to create the new Assyrian empire (see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 177).

Jotham lived for at least four more years, as the mention of his 20th year confirms. Hoshea's rule began on or after Tishri 1, 731, and his regnal years were postdated (he overturned Pekah's rebellious reversion to antedating).

- Hoshea continued Israel's evil religious practices but to a lesser degree than his predecessors (2 Kgs 17:2).

- For a year-by-year accounting of the events of Hoshea's reign culminating in the fall of Samaria in his ninth year, see Chapter 7E. No mention is made of Hoshea's death. We presume that he died as a prisoner in Assyria sometime after 721.

Appendix H – Sabbath and Jubilee Years

The Sabbath Year

Just as the Israelites were to rest on the seventh day (Exod 31:15), so their land was to rest in the seventh year:

> And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, and for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat. (Lev 25:1–7)

During the Sabbath year, the growth of the land was not to be reaped, neither was sowing to be carried out. Instead, the children of Israel were to enjoy the fruits of the land free of the labors required to produce it. The poor were particularly in mind as benefiting from it. What remained thereafter was food for the animals:

> And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard. (Exod 23:10–11)

To calm fears that food shortages might occur in the Sabbath year or, more crucially, in the year after (i.e., the “eighth” year when sowing was to resume), the Lord gave the following assurance:

> And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store. (Lev 25:20–22)

Leviticus 25:21 appears to say that the Lord would provide an unusually bountiful harvest in the sixth year, enough for three years. By that interpretation, there would be no need for sowing in the sixth year and, obviously, no sowing would be done in the seventh year (Sabbath years beginning in Nisan are assumed here). This situation of two years without sowing is unlikely. A more practical interpretation is that the sixth year would be successful both in terms of harvesting and sowing. That is, God would ensure a good harvest during the sixth year, enough to feed the nation during that year with perhaps some surplus for storage. The sowing then done later that sixth year would be blessed such that it continued to provide for the seventh and eighth years. (The produce of the seventh year could not be harvested; it was to be eaten from the fields and allowed to self-grow for the eighth year.)

An additional observance for the seventh year was the cancellation of debts owed by fellow Hebrews:

> At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD'S release. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release. (Deut 15:1–3)

A third observance for Sabbath years (i.e., in addition to land rest and debt release) was the reading of the Law during the Feast of Tabernacles:

> And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. (Deut 31:10–11)

The Bible confirms that Israel disregarded several Sabbath years in the pre-exilic period (2 Chr 36:21; cf. Lev 26:34–35). In the post-exilic restoration, distinct attention was paid to their observance (Neh 10:31). However, during the Intertestamental Period, it appears that the observance of Sabbath years fell away in the third century B.C. during the reign of the Seleucids, who ruled the Levant. Sabbath years began to be observed again during the second century B.C., as attested in I Maccabees (e.g., 6:49).

There are, of course, theological aspects of the Sabbath year, and they include:

- trust in the Lord (that He would provide)
- rest in the Lord (through Jesus Christ)
- debts (of sin) cancelled through rest in the Lord
- the earth itself is subject to God's laws

Sabbath year reckoning. When did septennial counting begin, and did the Sabbath year start in spring (Nisan) or fall (Tishri)? Concerning the first question, Lev 25:2–3 suggests that septennial counting was to commence as soon as Israel entered the Promised Land:

> Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field . . .

According to our chronology, the children of Israel entered Canaan in 1417 B.C. (on Nisan 10). However, it is doubtful that they began septennial counting that year. This is because it took seven years to conquer the land.[1] During those seven years, the Hebrews lived off the crops of the Canaanites (cf. Josh 24:13). With Canaan conquered sometime in 1411/10 B.C., the tillage of the land by the Hebrews—and therefore septennial counting—could began. But did it begin in 1411 or 1410 B.C.? The answer depends on the s*tart month* for Sabbath years.

There are two possibilities for the start month of the Sabbath year: Nisan and Tishri. In favor of the latter, the Mishnah tractate *Rosh Hashanah* (1.1) instructs that the first day of Tishri should begin not only the calendar year but also Sabbath and Jubilee years. Indeed, it is known that the

[1] Joshua 14:7–10 reports that Caleb was 85 years old when Canaan was conquered, which was 45 years after he went out from Kadesh-Barnea to explore Canaan. Since Canaan was explored in the second year after the exodus (Num 10:11–14:34; cf. Deut 1:3; 2:14), its conquest must have been completed in the 47th year after the exodus (= 2 + 45). This was the seventh year of Israel's occupation of the land, i.e., 1411/10 B.C.

Jews of the early New Testament era began the Sabbath year in autumn (as they do today). The following arguments, however, favor a Nisan year observance:

a) Leviticus 25:22 states: "And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store." This situation of sowing in the eighth year (around Nov.–Dec.) and reaping in the ninth year—beginning with the firstfruit observances of the first month (cf. Lev 23:10–11)—only makes sense if Nisan years are used. A Tishri year would hold both sowing and reaping in the same year.

b) With a Nisan Sabbath year, crops sown in the preceding (sixth) year would be available as food for the start of the seventh year, but not to harvest. Being unreaped, the grain could "grow of itself" to be harvested in the spring of the eighth year. Planting would then resume in the autumn of the eighth year to be harvested in the spring of the ninth year. This scheme is practical and avoids food shortages. By contrast, with a Tishri Sabbath year, the crops would have already been harvested and there would be no ability to sow (in late autumn) because it was the Sabbath year. This would lead to deprivation.

Which day in Nisan did the Sabbath year begin? While Nisan 1 is plausible (it commences the Hebrew year), there is a more likely day. Israel entered Canaan on *Nisan 10* (Josh 4:19). This date befits the commencement of Sabbath years given that it is the anniversary of Israel's entrance into the land whose rest would be achieved in Sabbath years thereafter (cf. Lev 25:2). Interestingly, Nisan 10 is an exact Hebrew half-year from Tishri 10, the start date for Jubilee years (see below).

Assuming Canaan was conquered in 1411/10 B.C., then septennial counting began in the next full Nisan year, 1410/09 B.C. (i.e., from Nisan 10, 1410 to Nisan 9, 1409 B.C.).

Despite the arguments for Nisan, a Tishri Sabbath year is widely advocated (see below), beginning either on Tishri 1 or 10. Relative to our chronology, Tishri septennial counting would have begun either in Tishri 1411 or Tishri 1410 B.C., depending on whether the conquest of Canaan ended before or after Tishri 1411 B.C.

Advocates for a Tishri year often cite Deuteronomy 31:10–11 in support of their case:

> And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

The appeal to this passage is faulty. If the statement "At the end of every seven years" is taken to mean the end of a Tishri Sabbath year, then the interpretation of the passage is confusing. The Law was to be read during the Feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated between Tishri 15 and 22. However, if the seventh year ended on Tishri 1 or 10, the Law would have been read *after* the Sabbath year was over and not "in the solemnity of the year of release" as the passage requires. The more likely meaning is that the term "end of the year" refers to the *agricultural year*, which ended and began anew in the fall (cf. Exod 23:16). Applying this understanding to Deut 31:10–11, one may paraphrase it to read:

> And Moses commanded them, saying, when you come to the end of the agricultural year of the seventh year, during the solemnity of the year of release [which continues until the next spring], in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

Another argument sometimes quoted in support of a Tishri year for both Sabbath and Jubilee years is that sowing is always mentioned before reaping in verses dealing with those years (e.g., Exod 23:10; Lev 25:11, 20; 2 Kgs 19:29). Since it is only in a Tishri year when sowing (of barley and wheat crops in winter) occurs before reaping (in spring), Sabbath and Jubilee years must be Tishri years. This is not a forceful argument. The Old Testament always places sowing before reaping in a sentence, save for Amos 9:13 (a non-related passage). The order may therefore be a convention.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, we conclude that the Hebrews originally observed a Nisan Sabbath year. However, extra-Biblical sources show that it became a Tishri year at some point, probably in the Intertestamental Period.

The Jubilee Year

After seven Sabbaths had passed, which was a span of 49 years, the Lord required a further observance in the next (50th) year. This was the "Jubilee" of liberty throughout the land:

> And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. (Lev 25:8–12)

Unlike the Sabbath year which began in the spring, the Jubilee year began in the autumn. Specifically, it began with a herald of trumpets on Tishri 10, which was the Day of Atonement. The following were the major observances of that year:

- REST FOR THE LAND. As in the Sabbath year, the land was to rest. The assurance of no food deprivation in Lev 25:20–22 applied to both Sabbath and Jubilee years.

- RESTITUTION OF PROPERTY. All land sold during the preceding 49 years was to be returned to the original owners or their descendants (Lev 25:10, 13; cf. Num 36:4). In this way, the initial arrangements regarding division of the land would be re-established. Underpinning this law was the Lord's ownership of the land (Lev 25:23).

- PERSONAL LIBERTY. Every Hebrew who had sold himself due to poverty to another Hebrew or foreigner living in the land was to be freed (along with his children) if he had not been redeemed before then (Lev 25:39–41; 47–54). This law of manumission was in addition to the requirement that all Hebrew servants, irrespective of why they had sold themselves (poverty or otherwise), were to be freed after six consecutive years of service; that is, in their seventh year (Exod 21:2; Deut 15:12). Underpinning these laws was the Lord's ownership of the Israelites as His servants (Lev 25:55). They therefore could not belong permanently to anyone else, whether Jew or foreigner.

The Jubilee year focused on rest, return to original possessions, and redemption from bondage. Accordingly, it anticipated the spiritual rest, "homecoming," and freedom from the penalty of sin that would be found in our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Did the Jubilee recur every 49 or 50 years? Because the Bible does not record the observance of any Jubilee years such that we can date them,[2] a long-debated question is whether they recurred in a 49 or 50-year cycle.[3] Although the issue remains unresolved, we note that the *Book of Jubilees* (a pseudepigraphical book dated to the second century B.C.) used a 49-year cycle. This study likewise upholds a 49-year repetition. Further reasons in support of it include:

- God created the world in six days and a Sabbath rest was instituted for the seventh day (Exod 20:8–11). Weeks are therefore meant to have seven days; there are no eight-day weeks. The Sabbath year rest parallels the Sabbath day pattern. After six years of work, the land was to rest in the seventh year (Lev 25:2–4). This agreement with the weekly pattern confirms that no eight-year segments are intended at any point. However, in the 50-year cycle, the 49th year is followed by a separate 50th year (= the "eighth" year). Just as an eighth day would interrupt the continuously repeating cycles of seven days in the week, so a 50th year would interrupt the continuously repeating cycles of seven years. (Note that the 50-day pattern [49 + 1] for the Feast of Weeks outlined in Lev 23:15–16 does not apply here as it occurs *once a year* and not in a continuous cycle.)

- The prophecy of the 70 weeks in Dan 9:24–27 is widely regarded as referring to 70 weeks of years, or 490 years. The context of the prophecy is the recent 70 years of judgment in the land (Dan 9:2), a judgment related to the non-observance of Sabbath years (2 Chr 36:21; Lev 26:34–35). Given this connection, one may assume that Sabbath year counting is involved in Daniel's prophecy. If the Jubilee cycle is 50 years, then the 70 weeks contain ten Jubilee years, which are additional to the 490 years. Therefore, with a 50-year cycle, Daniel's 70 weeks actually refer to an interval of 500 years, not 490 years.

- The extra-Biblical evidence shows that the observance of Sabbath years in the Intertestamental Period was in accordance with a continuously repeating seven-year pattern. This is seen in the calendars of Zuckermann and Wacholder (see fn. 6), as well as the *Book of Jubilees*. Circumstantial proof is also found in the Qumran documents (i.e., the Dead Sea Scrolls). For example, the *Melchizedek Scroll* (11Q13), which is an eschatological document written around 100 years before Jesus, connects ten Jubilee cycles to Daniel's 70 weeks. This connection only makes sense if the author had in mind ten Jubilee cycles of 49 years each.[4] The accumulated evidence therefore shows that Jews from at least the third century B.C. onwards were using a 49-year Jubilee cycle.

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[2] Lack of such records, however, does not prove non-observance. It is possible that some Jubilee years were observed, particularly by God-fearing judges and kings, but perhaps not to their fullest extent. The Jubilee called for radical changes, many of which may have been unpopular.

[3] For an article favoring the 50-year cycle, see Robert S. Kawashima, "The Jubilee, Every 49 or 50 years?" *VT* 53 (2003): 117–20. For a response in favor of the 49-year cycle, see John S. Bergsma, "Once Again, the Jubilee, Every 49 or 50 Years?" *VT* 55 (2005): 121–25. For further literature in support of the 49-year cycle, see Lee W. Casperson, "Sabbatical, Jubilee, and the Temple of Solomon," *VT* 53 (2003): 287 fn. 13. This is only a small sample (from a single journal) of the extensive material on this topic.

[4] See Klaus Koch, "Stages in the Canonization of the Book of Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (eds. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2:430.

Sabbath and Jubilee Year Calendars

Although the Bible does not explicitly identify any Sabbath or Jubilee years (see below for *inferred* Sabbath year possibilities), some occurrences are noted in extra-Biblical texts.[5] Scholars have constructed calendars based on such reports.[6] There is no guarantee, however, that any date mentioned in a non-Biblical source is in phase with the true cycle. In fact, desynchronization during the Intertestamental Period is probable for at least two reasons: (1) the corrupting influence of Hellenism on Judaism, and (2) the likelihood that less faithful religious leaders changed the first month of the Sabbath year from Nisan to Tishri (possibly during the reign of Herod the Great, who had many rabbis put to death). One should therefore not assume that septennial cycles can be counted back from the Intertestamental Period to construct the true Sabbath-Jubilee calendar from its beginning, as some do.

For this reason, our Sabbath-Jubilee calendar will *count forward* from Israel's conquest of Canaan. However, the patterning of this calendar will be unconventional. Unlike the popular calendars of Zuckermann and Wacholder, which are wholly based on Tishri years, our calendar must accommodate a Tishri Jubilee year within a recurring 49-year, Nisan-year framework. There is only one arrangement that fits this scheme. It is where the 50th (Jubilee) year *overlaps* the last half of the 49th year and the first half of the new septennial cycle's first year. This is not an unheard-of arrangement; it has been offered before by other authors. For example, Catholic apologist Ron Conte writes concerning it:

> The Sabbatical years were meant to be counted from Nisan in the spring. But the Jubilee year was clearly meant to be counted from Tishri in the autumn. Sacred Scripture plainly states that the start of the Jubilee year is in the seventh month, the month containing the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9). The preceding verse describes the counting of 49 years (7 sets of Sabbatical years). Thus the Jubilee year begins in the seventh month, Tishri, during the 49th year. The Jubilee year is not the same year as the 49th year, nor is it a separate 50th year. The Jubilee year overlaps the 49th and 50th years, with the 50th year being also the first year of the next cycle of 49 years. The Jubilee year sanctifies

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[5] References to Jubilee years are sparse. Two well-known instances are those recorded in the Talmud: (1) the 18th year of Josiah, and (2) the 10th day of the "beginning of the year" (assumed to be Tishri) in Ezek 40:1. Regarding Sabbath years, a number are indicated for the Intertestamental Period. For example, the non-canonical book of 1 Maccabees records a Sabbath year for the 150th year of the Seleucid era (6:20, 49, 53), which would be ca. 162 B.C. Josephus reports a Sabbath year for when Herod and Sossius took Jerusalem by force in 37 B.C. (*Ant.* 14.475).

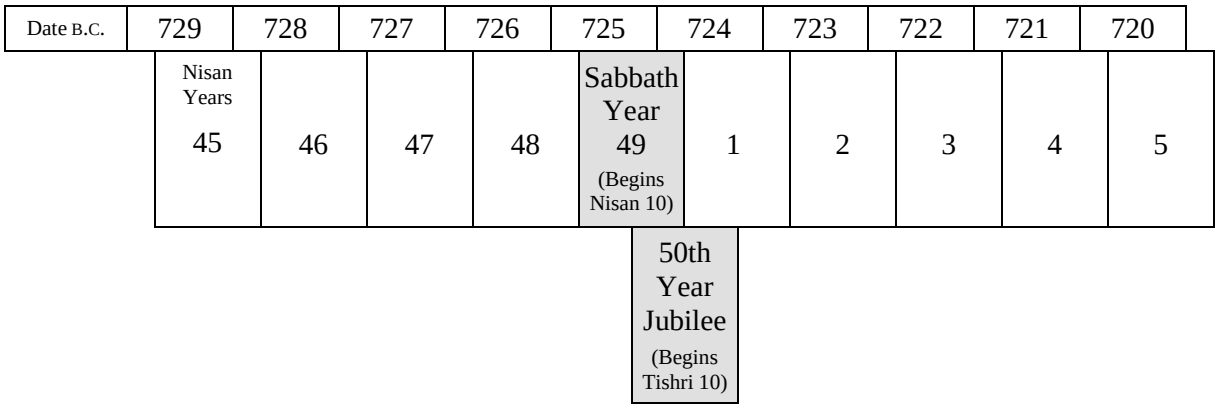
[6] See, for example, the well-known but differing calendars of Zuckermann and Wacholder. The earlier is by Benedict Zuckermann, *A Treatise on the Sabbatical Cycle and the Jubilee: A Contribution to the Archaeology and Chronology of the Time Anterior and Subsequent to the Captivity* (translated by A. Löwy from the original 1857 work; London: Chronological Institute, 1866; repr., New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1974). The later is by Ben Zion Wacholder, "The Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles During the Second Temple and the Early Rabbinic Period," *HUCA* 44 (1973): 153–96; repr., *Essays on Jewish Chronology and Chronography* (New York: Ktav, 1976), 1–44. Zuckermann's Sabbath year tables begin at 535/34 B.C. (itself a Sabbath year) while Wacholder's begins at 519/18 B.C. (the first year of the cycle). Wacholder's dates are therefore one year later. For instance, Zuckermann has a Sabbath year in 514/13 B.C. while the corresponding one for Wacholder is 513/12 B.C. Both Zuckermann and Wacholder use a 49-year Jubilee cycle, as confirmed by their Sabbath dates repeating every seven years without interruption. Although Zuckermann did not speculate on which Sabbath years may have also been Jubilee years, Wacholder proposed a reconstruction of fifteen 49-year Jubilee cycles beginning with the first cycle of 603/02–555/54 B.C. to the fifteenth cycle of A.D. 84/85–132/33. On both calendars, see Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, §§225, 235.

both the end of one cycle of 7 weeks of years and the start of the next cycle of 7 weeks of years. Jubilee years therefore occur every 49 years.

Since the Jubilee year overlaps with the 49th year, at such times there would be a period of about 1½ year[s] when the Israelites could neither reap nor sow. The Sabbatical year would begin in the spring (7th year), the Jubilee year would begin in the autumn of that same year. Though the Sabbatical year would end in spring with the start of the 8th year, the Jubilee year would not end until the autumn of the 8th year. After [the] month of Tishri in the 8th year, crops could again be planted. Those crops would then come in and be harvested in the spring of the 9th year. This situation is specifically described in Sacred Scripture (Lev 25:22). The 8th year is the first year of the next cycle of 49 years; the 9th year is the second year of the next cycle of 49 years.[7]

The diagram below depicts the Jubilee year overlap as described by Conte. It has been adapted from a helpful diagram in *The Chronology of the Old Testament* by Floyd Jones.[8]

The Sabbath-Jubilee Cycle



Our Sabbath-Jubilee calendar is shown on the next page. It spans the time from the first observed Sabbath year to the end of the Jubilee cycle associated with Jesus' ministry. Regarding the first observed Sabbath year (1404 B.C.), recall that it was calculated as follows:

Israel entered Canaan	1417
Israel's Conquest of Canaan	1411/10
Septennial Counting Begins	1410/09
First Observed Sabbath Year	1404/03

[7] Ronald L. Conte Jr., *Important Dates in the Lives of Jesus and Mary*, 316.

[8] Jones 2005, 288. Jones upholds a similar method of Sabbath-Jubilee reckoning to ours but, like Conte, his nominated years are different from those proposed herein. Also, while Jones cites a start date in Tishri for the Jubilee year (Tishri 10), he does not nominate one in Nisan for the Sabbath year (ours is Nisan 10). One assumes, then, that he intends Nisan 1.

Calendar of Sabbath and Jubilee Years

Years are B.C. except for those in the shaded area, which are A.D. Bold figures depict both Sabbath and Jubilee years. For example, 725 denotes the Nisan Sabbath year 725/24 B.C. as well as the Tishri Jubilee year 725/24 B.C. Sabbath years begin on Nisan 10. Jubilee years begin a half-year later on Tishri 10. The calendar assumes that the first year of septennial counting was 1410/09 B.C. following the conquest of Canaan. The conquest took seven years to accomplish, from 1417 to 1411/10 B.C.

1404	1257	1110	963	816	669	522	375	228	81
1397	1250	1103	956	809	662	515	368	221	74
1390	1243	1096	949	802	655	508	361	214	67
1383	1236	1089	942	795	648	501	354	207	60
1376	1229	1082	935	788	641	494	347	200	53
1369	1222	1075	928	781	634	487	340	193	46
1362	**1215**	**1068**	**921**	**774**	**627**	**480**	**333**	**186**	**39**
1355	1208	1061	914	767	620	473	326	179	32
1348	1201	1054	907	760	613	466	319	172	25
1341	1194	1047	900	753	606	459	312	165	18
1334	1187	1040	893	746	599	452	305	158	11
1327	1180	1033	886	739	592	445	298	151	4
1320	1173	1026	879	732	585	438	291	144	4
1313	**1166**	**1019**	**872**	**725**	**578**	**431**	**284**	**137**	**11**
1306	1159	1012	865	718	571	424	277	130	18
1299	1152	1005	858	711	564	417	270	123	25
1292	1145	998	851	704	557	410	263	116	32
1285	1138	991	844	697	550	403	256	109	39
1278	1131	984	837	690	543	396	249	102	46
1271	1124	977	830	683	536	389	242	95	53
1264	**1117**	**970**	**823**	**676**	**529**	**382**	**235**	**88**	**60**

Evidence of a Sabbath Year Date in Scripture

While extra-Biblical references to Sabbath years exist, we have concluded that they cannot be used to confirm the true calendar. This is due to the likelihood of desynchronization during the Intertestamental Period. By contrast, the Bible contains eight passages that appear to be linked to the original Sabbath-Jubilee calendar:

1. Reading of the Law in the third year of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:7–9)
2. A year of neither sowing nor reaping during the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:29)
3. Reading of the Law in the 18th year of Josiah (2 Kgs 22:3–23:3)
4. Freeing of slaves during the reign of Zedekiah (Jer 34:8–9)
5. Reading of the Law in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh 8:1–8)
6. The “acceptable year” of the Lord (Luke 4:16–21; cf. Isa 61:1–2)
7. The dedication of Solomon’s temple
8. Daniel’s prophecy of the 70 weeks (Dan 9:24–27)

Although it is outside the scope of this study to review Daniel’s 70 weeks in depth, some speculations on it will be offered below.

1. During the Reign of Jehoshaphat

A Sabbath year requirement was for the Law to be read before all Israel during the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 31:10–11). Therefore, any passages mentioning a public reading of the Law should be analyzed for the possibility that it took place in a Sabbath year.

A public reading of the Law occurred in Jehoshaphat's third year:

> Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests. And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people. (2 Chr 17:7–9)

By our chronology, Jehoshaphat's third year was the Nisan year 878/77 B.C. Interestingly, a Sabbath year is indicated for the preceding year 879/78 B.C., with the next Sabbath year of 872/71 B.C. also hosting a Jubilee year. Why was the Law not read, as prescribed, during the Feast of Tabernacles in 879 B.C. (Jehoshaphat's second year)?

Although the sabbatical requirement was for all Israel to "appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose" (Deut 31:11), this did not occur here; the people did not gather in one place. Rather, Jehoshaphat sent his princes throughout the land, along with the Levites, to teach the Law in the cities of Judah. The fact that this step was taken suggests apathy on the part of the Judahites with respect to observing the requirements of Sabbath years. This apathy probably developed during the closing two decades of Jehoshaphat's predecessor, Asa. A notable decline in Asa's faithfulness occurred then (ch. 4E refers). We may therefore speculate that because not enough people came to Jerusalem to hear the Law and to celebrate the tenth Sabbath year of the divided monarchy era, Jehoshaphat sent to the people to (re)instruct them.

2. During the Reign of Hezekiah

In the 14th year of Hezekiah (late in the Nisan year 713/12 BC), Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded Judah and conquered several cities. During that campaign, which lasted several months, the Assyrian army marched to Jerusalem and called for the city's surrender on two occasions (2 Kgs 18:13–19:13). After Hezekiah prayed in anguish to the Lord, the prophet Isaiah declared that Jerusalem would be delivered from the Assyrian menace (19:14–34). Additionally, the Lord instructed Hezekiah through Isaiah:

> And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. (2 Kgs 19:29)

The Lord revealed a sign by which His people could know, especially afterward as they rebuilt the nation and reflected on their escape from the Assyrians, that it was by divine intervention that Judah had not become a province of the empire as Samaria had. It was now the autumn of 712 B.C. (ch. 8H refers) and the Assyrians had depleted the land of its crops and fruits by eating and/or destroying them. Sowing for that autumn had also been disrupted. As a result, people were to eat whatever grew of itself for the remainder of that Nisan year (712/11 B.C.). Naturally, the Judahites would have been eager to sow all types of produce in the next year (711/10 B.C.). But surprisingly,

God disallowed this. For that year, they were to eat what grew from the first year's remains. The planting and harvesting of crops and fruits could then recommence in the third year (710/09 B.C.).

God's disallowance of sowing in the second year suggests, in what is the clearest dating reference to a Sabbath year in the Bible, that 711/10 BC was a Sabbath year. Encouragingly, this year is listed in our Sabbath-Jubilee calendar.

3. During the Reign of Josiah

A public reading of the Law occurred in the 18th year of Josiah, which our chronology dates to 623 B.C. (2 Kgs 22:3–23:3). Although this year does not align with a Sabbath year in our calendar (Josiah's 18th year falls midway between the Sabbath years of 627 and 620 B.C.), there is no expectation that it should. The reading of the Law was a special circumstance brought about by its discovery in the temple. Concerned that the people of Judah had not heard the Law for such a long time, Josiah caused it to be read publicly as soon as possible.

4. During the Reign of Zedekiah

The freeing of slaves in Jerusalem, as reported in Jeremiah 34, is often cited as evidence that it took place in a Sabbath year:

> This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother. (Jer 34:8–9)

This event happened early during Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem, which began in January, 588 B.C. While our calendar does not show a Sabbath year then, it must be emphasized that the manumission law for the seventh year was not tied to the Sabbath year but to the service of each slave (Exod 21:2; Deut 15:12). After six years of serving his master, a slave was to be freed in his seventh year unless he voluntarily chose to stay (Exod 21:5–6). Floyd Jones explains this often misunderstood law:

> The freeing of Hebrew slaves had to do with the seventh year from the time when they were purchased – the seventh year of their servitude (Ex. 21:2; Deut. 15:12–15). These passages uniformly refer merely to a "seventh" year without using the term "Sabbatical" and thus should not be confused as though they are addressing the Sabbatical year. The only other mention of a Hebrew servant regaining their freedom was every 50th year during Jubilee (Lev. 25:8–24).
>
> The proper understanding of the above clarifies what should have previously been an enigma. Were the Hebrew servants released every Sabbatical year, after the seventh Sabbatic year who would have been set free in the Jubilee that immediately followed? All the Hebrews would already have been freed the prior year. Such would greatly diminish the anticipation and significance attendant with the Jubilee. Thus resolved, the apparently inconsistency of the two laws ceases.[9]

The covenant made to free slaves in 588 B.C. was initiated by Zedekiah not because the Law required it that year but because of the crisis in which the people now found themselves: besieged by the Babylonians. Through their covenant, the king and his subjects were attempting to appease God to gain deliverance. (In effect, their actions were saying, "we have repented and liberated our

[9] Jones 2005, 292.

slaves, so now Lord do likewise and liberate your people from the Babylonians.") But freeing slaves was also a practical step. It would encourage them to defend the city while removing the burden on their masters to feed them (sieges led to food shortages). This suggests that those who entered into the covenant did so partly for selfish reasons.[10]

As it turned out, the freedom was short-lived. When the Babylonian siege was temporarily lifted due to Egyptian intervention (Jer 37:4–10), the people changed their minds and took back their slaves because they thought the Babylonians would not return. But they were mistaken. By their unjust reversal, the Jews were confirming what the prophets had said about them time and time again, that they were *covenant breakers*. This led Jeremiah to declare certain judgment on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah by the hand of the Babylonians, who would return to finish what they had begun earlier (Jer 34:11–22).

5. In the Days of Ezra and Nehemiah

A public reading of the Law by Ezra took place in the seventh month of the Hebrew year in which Artaxerxes I (hereafter Artaxerxes) issued a decree to rebuild Jerusalem (Neh 2:1–8; 8:1–18). Although it was read because of special circumstances, we note that Ezra read the Law *during every day of the Feast of Tabernacles* that month (Neh 8:18). This suggests that he was following, precisely, the instructions of Deut 31:10–11.

It is normally concluded that both events (the reading of the Law as well as the decree issued earlier that year) occurred in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which was 445/44 B.C. While this happens to be a Sabbath year in our calendar, there are two factors that must be considered before accepting this date. The first is the possibility that Artaxerxes was coregent with his father Xerxes I (hereafter Xerxes), in which case the Hebrews would have counted his coregency years as well. (This idea is developed below in "Some Thoughts on Daniel's 70 Weeks.") The second factor concerns the well-known discrepancy between Neh 1:1 and 2:1:

> The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass **in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year**, as I was in Shushan the palace, That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. (1:1–3)

> And it came to pass **in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes** the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? (2:1–3)

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[10] The year 588 B.C. was probably the correct time to free most slaves in Jerusalem, and this may have been a factor in Zedekiah's choice of law by which to appease God through public covenant. Recall that most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem had been exiled to Babylon in the deportation of 597 B.C. (ch. 5B refers). Over the next few years, Zedekiah repopulated the capital with people from throughout Judah. So, in the first one or two years after 597 B.C., it is logical to assume that there were not many slaves. By the third year after the deportation, i.e., 595/94 B.C., the increase in slave numbers must have become significant. The seventh year after 595/94 B.C. incorporated the late winter of 588 B.C. when the covenant was probably made.

While Neh 1:1 does not specifically mention that it was the 20th year of *Artaxerxes*, Neh 2:1 does, so it is reasonable to conclude that Neh 1:1 also refers to his reign. Accordingly, Nehemiah learnt of Jerusalem's sorry condition in the ninth month of Artaxerxes' 20th year (Chisleu = Kislev) then subsequently spoke about it to the king in the first month of his 20th year (Nisan). The question begs: how can Nisan occur after Kislev in the same regnal year?

A common solution is that Nehemiah was counting Artaxerxes' regnal years by Judah's Tishri-year calendar rather than by the Persian Nisan-year system. This solution is unconvincing on at least three counts. First, it is likely that Nehemiah, as an official in the king's service, used Persian regnal reckoning as his calendrical basis. Second, the evidence that Judah was using an autumnal calendar after the exile is not compelling.[11] Third, there is no other occasion in the Bible where the normal Nisan-year counting of a foreign king is converted to a Tishri-year figure.

It seems more likely, therefore, that Nehemiah was counting by Nisan regnal years. That being so, there are only two ways in which Nisan can follow Kislev in the same spring-to-spring year:

1. The Hebrews began the new year one month sooner than the Persians because of an unusually early spring in the southern Levant. By that reckoning, the final month of Artaxerxes' official 20th year (Adar in Babylon) coincided with the first month of the Hebrew new year (Nisan).

2. The Persian regnal year did not begin on Nisan 1 but some days later. This is our preferred solution because there is evidence that that Persians, like the Babylonians and Assyrians before them, began the new regnal year during the *Akītu* (New Year) festival, which occupied the first twelve days of Nisan.[12] We can speculate that Artaxerxes travelled to Babylon to celebrate this festival, in which the king of Babylon's participation was vital (Artaxerxes was king of both Persia *and* Babylon). The setting of Neh 2:1–8 would therefore be Artaxerxes' palace in Babylon during the *Akītu*. While the exact date for the start of the new regnal year is not known, many scholars believe that it was at the conclusion of the *Akītu*,[13] probably on Nisan 11 or 12.[14] Irrespective of the exact date, we can assume that it was observed not only by the Assyrians and Babylonians but also by the Persians. This means that if Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah was given in the first few days of Nisan, it was given late in the king's 20th year.

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[11] For further discussion against a Tishri-year solution to Neh 1:2/2:1 see Clines, "The Evidence for an Autumnal New Year in Pre-exilic Israel Reconsidered," 387–89.

[12] On the evidence (albeit scant) that the Persian kings celebrated the *Akītu* in Babylon, see Julye Bidmead, *The Akītu Festival*, 139–42. Bidmead also discusses the crucial role that the king played during the *Akītu* (pp. 163–64) and reconstructs the daily activities of this 12-day festival, from Nisan 1 to Nisan 12 (pp. 45–106). It should be noted that not all scholars believe that the *Akītu* began on Nisan 1. Some maintain that it began on Nisan 4 after the sighting of the heliacal rising of Pegasus (see, for example, Karel van der Toorn, "The Babylonian New Year Festival: New Insights from the Cuneiform Texts and Their Bearing on Old Testament Study," in *Congress Volume Leuven 1989*, Vetus Testamentum, *Supplements* 43 [ed. J. A. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1991], 331–344, esp. 332 fn. 7). On the *Akītu* festival in general, see Jacob Klein, "Akitu," *ABD* 1:138–40.

[13] See, for example, Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings*, 27; Kuan 1995, 13–17; John Hayes, "The Beginning of the Regnal Year in Israel and Judah," 92–94.

[14] The eleventh day was the last day of the festival proper while the twelfth day was the "day of departures" when the gods returned to their respective cities. Either day is feasible as the first day of the new regnal year.

If Neh 2:1 is set before the turn of the regnal year at the conclusion of the *Akītu*, then the reading of the Law by Ezra in the seventh month would have taken place in Artaxerxes' 21st year, and not his 20th year as is commonly supposed. This means that the Law was read by Ezra in Tishri, 444 B.C. (being Artaxerxes 21st year by the Royal Canon). While this was *not* a Sabbath year in our calendar, it is possible that Artaxerxes was coregent with Xerxes for twelve years, from 473 B.C. to Xerxes's death in 465 B.C. (discussed below). If so, then Artaxerxes' 21st year, as counted by the Hebrews, was actually the Sabbath year 452/51 B.C.

6. The "Acceptable Year" of the Lord

Early in His ministry, after entering the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath day, Jesus read from the book of Isaiah:

> And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. (Luke 4:16–21)

The passage in question is Isa 61:1–2, and it alludes to the Jubilee year when slaves were freed and debts were cancelled. On this basis, some commentators conclude that the year when Jesus' ministry began (A.D. 29 by our reckoning) was either a Sabbath or Jubilee year. It is more likely, though, that the "acceptable year" does not refer to a civil or religious year of any type. Rather, it represents the Messianic age when salvation would be proclaimed. In short, Jesus was declaring Himself to be the personification of the Jubilee liberty.

7. The Dedication of Solomon's Temple

By our chronology, the dedication of the First Temple probably occurred in 970 B.C. Remarkably, this was a Sabbath-Jubilee year. The following outline of events is proposed:

- Work on the temple began in the fourth year of Solomon's reign (978 B.C.), on the second day of the second month (2 Chr 3:2; 1 Kgs 6:1, 37). It was completed in his eleventh year (971 B.C.), in the eighth month. It had therefore taken about seven and a half years to build.[15]

- After work on the temple was completed, Solomon placed various items that David had dedicated (gold, silver, and furnishings) into its treasuries (1 Kgs 7:51; 2 Chr 5:1). Presumably, this was done on or after the eighth month of Solomon's eleventh year.

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[15] First Kings 6:38 reports that the temple took seven years to build. This anomaly between the reported duration (seven years) and the apparent actual duration (seven and a half years) has been used to prove that Tishri years were in force then (so Thiele 1983, 51–52). However, it is also possible that the Hebrew historian was influenced by the religious significance of the number seven. He therefore reported that the temple was built in the suitably sacred period of seven years (so Clines, "The Evidence for an Autumnal New Year in Pre-Exilic Israel Reconsidered," 373–74, 382–84). Note that the number seven is particularly relevant to the dedication ceremony of 970 B.C. (i.e., seventh month, seventh year, seventh sabbatical year).

- It can be inferred from 1 Kgs 8:1–2 (also 2 Chr 5:2–3) that Solomon sent messengers throughout his dominion to summon to Jerusalem the elders, leaders, and men of all the tribes of Israel to arrive in the seventh month (= Feast of Tabernacles) for the temple dedication ceremony. In all likelihood, this was the seventh month of Solomon's *twelfth* year, some eleven months after the temple was finished. The postponement was understandable. Sending messengers throughout the dominion would have taken time (see 1 Kgs 8:65 for the geographical extent of this mission). Therefore, a delay between the completion of the temple and its dedication is more logical than Solomon sending out messengers to summon leaders to arrive *before* the temple was finished. (Some commentators maintain that the dedication ceremony took place in his eleventh year.)

- Solomon could have chosen any of the three pilgrimage festivals (Ex 23:14–17) to coincide with the assembling of the Israelites for the dedication ceremony. But he chose the Feast of Tabernacles for this landmark event in the nation's history. Reasons for his choice may have included:

    - The Feast of Tabernacles, which continued for eight days from Tishri 15 to 22, was the most multifaceted in meaning of the three pilgrimage festivals. (It was also called the *Feast of Ingathering* and *Feast of Booths*.)

    - Being a Sabbath year, the Law would also be read before all Israel during the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 31:10–11).

    - Coincidentally (or not), the Sabbath year of 970 B.C. was the *seventh* Sabbath year of the cycle. A Jubilee year was therefore expected to begin on Tishri 10, five days before the start of the Feast of Tabernacles.

  The result was momentous, with the temple's dedication occurring in the seventh month of a seventh Sabbath year. Clearly, Solomon had designed the ceremony to have enormous liturgical, theological, and symbolic import. This is attested by the lengthy narratives of 1 Kgs 8:1–66 and 2 Chr 5:2–7:10.

Some Thoughts on Daniel's 70 weeks (Dan 9:24–27)

If one accepts Friday, Nisan 14 (April 3), A.D. 33 as the date of Jesus' crucifixion as many scholars have,[16] then it is possible that our Sabbath year of A.D. 32/33 was the *terminus ad quem* of the

[16] See, for example, Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, 817–19; Fotheringham, "The Evidence of Astronomy and Technical Chronology for the Date of the Crucifixion," 146–62; Ogg, *The Chronology of the Public Ministry of Jesus*, 243–77; Maier, "Sejanus, Pilate, and the Date of the Crucifixion," 3–13; idem, "The Date of the Nativity and the Chronology of Jesus' Life," 113–30; Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, 95–114; Humphreys and Waddington, "Dating the Crucifixion," 743–46; idem, "The Date of the Crucifixion," 2–10; idem, "Astronomy and the Date of the Crucifixion," 165–81; Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, §620. For a discussion of other possible dates apart from the commonly cited ones of A.D. 30 and A.D. 33, see Beckwith, "The Date of the Crucifixion: The Misuse of Calendars and Astronomy to Determine the Chronology of the Passion," Chapter 9 in *Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian*, 276–96. For arguments specifically in favor of March 18, A.D. 29, see Depuydt, "The Date of Death of Jesus of Nazareth," 466–80.

first 69 weeks of Daniel's prophecy (Dan 9:25). A new septennial cycle would have therefore commenced four days earlier on Monday, Nisan 10. The makes the first seven days of that final, 70th prophetic week the most important in Christianity. It began with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem when he was publicly declared King by His followers on Monday, Nisan 10, A.D. 33. It ended with Jesus' resurrection on Sunday, Nisan 16, A.D. 33.

If the *terminus ad quem* of the first 69 weeks was the Sabbath year A.D. 32/33, its *terminus a quo* would be the Sabbath year that began 69 x 7 (= 483) years earlier in 452/51 B.C. However, if the decree of Artaxerxes in his 20th year is the correct starting point for this prophecy as many contend (there are four possibilities[17]), an immediate problem arises. By the Royal Canon, 452/51 B.C. was the 13th year of Artaxerxes, which is some seven years too early for our desired *terminus a quo*.

This problem occupied earlier scholars, who sought a rational starting point for Daniel's first 69 weeks. Chief among them was Archbishop James Ussher, who turned to ancient Greek history for an answer. Ussher submitted, based on Thucydides' account of the flight of Themistocles as dated by Eusebius, that Xerxes made his son Artaxerxes coregent in 474 B.C. For this date, Ussher relied on the following historical evidence:[18]

1. Thucydides reported that during Themistocles' flight to Persia, he passed the Athenian fleet besieging Naxos (Thucydides, 1.135.2–1.137.2).[19] The next reported military event was the victory over the Persians by the Athenian general Cimon at the river Eurymedon (Thucydides, 1.98.4–1.100.1; cf. Diodorus, 11.60.5–11.61.7). Therefore, according to Thucydides, the flight of Themistocles took place between the siege of Naxos and the battle of the Eurymedon. [It is assumed here that Thucydides reported events in their correct historical order, and that his recounting of place-names is accurate.[20]]

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[17] The four possibilities for the *terminus a quo* of Daniel's 70 weeks are:
1. The decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chr 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4).
2. The decree of Darius confirming Cyrus' original decree for the temple (Ezra 5:3–6:12).
3. The decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra. This encouraged the return of the exiles, allowed substantial funds for the temple, and permitted the appointment of magistrates and judges (Ezra 7:11–26).
4. The decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah (Neh 2:1–8). Scholars normally favor this decree because it is the only one that mentions the rebuilding of Jerusalem as required by Dan 9:25.

[18] See Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, 146–49. Ussher's ancient sources on this matter included:
– Thucydides, a Greek historian of the fifth century B.C.
– Diodorus Siculus, a Greek historian of the first century B.C.
– Plutarch, a Greek biographer of the first century A.D. (46 – ca. 122)
– Eusebius of Caesarea, a third century A.D. historian (ca. 260 – ca. 340)

[19] Themistocles was an Athenian general and celebrated war hero who was ostracized from Athens, presumably because of his perceived arrogance and demanding nature. (Ostracism was a procedure under Athenian democracy whereby a citizen could be "honorably banished" for ten years, after which he was free to return without loss of property or citizenship.) Themistocles went into exile to Argos, but after charges of complicity in treason were laid against him—at the instigation of the Spartans—he fled for his life from Greece to Persia via Asia Minor. On the story of Themistocles from the ancient sources, see Thucydides, 1.135.2–1.138.6; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 11.54.1–11.59.4; Plutarch, "Themistocles," in *Plutarch's Lives* (Dryden Translation, 5 vols.; ed. Arthur Hugh Clough; Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1910), 1:231–68. For modern assessments, see Anthony J. Podlecki, *The Life of Themistocles: A Critical Survey of the Literary and Archaeological Evidence*; Robert J. Lenardon, *The Saga of Themistocles*; Frank J. Frost, *Plutarch's Themistocles: A Historical Commentary* (rev. ed.).

[20] The reliability of Thucydides' Naxos–Themistocles synchronism has been called into question. For instance, John Davies notes that if Thucydides is to be believed when he places the flight of Themistocles

2. Ussher dated the battle of the Eurymedon to the third year of the 77th Olympiad = 470 B.C.[21] Consequently, the flight of Themistocles must have taken place before 470 B.C. [Although there is no consensus today on the precise date of the battle of the Eurymedon, it is generally accepted that it took place between 470 and 466 B.C., typically either in 469 or 466 B.C.]

3. Ussher noted that Eusebius placed Themistocles' flight to the Persians in the fourth year of the 76th Olympiad = 473 B.C. Crucially, Thucydides said that Artaxerxes "had just come to the throne" when Themistocles wrote to him requesting asylum after his arrival at Ephesus (Thucydides, 1.137.3). Ussher therefore concluded that Xerxes installed Artaxerxes as coregent in the autumn of the preceding Julian year = 474 B.C., with Xerxes' well-documented assassination by Artabanus occurring later that year. [Ussher could have equally chosen 473 B.C. for the start of Artaxerxes' coregency. Instead, he chose 474 B.C., probably because it better suited his scheme for Daniel's first 69 weeks (see fn. 23).]

4. So, based on the authority of Thucydides and dating by Eusebius for Themistocles' flight, Ussher submitted that Artaxerxes was the Persian king to whom Themistocles presented himself rather than to Xerxes.[22] In that case, Artaxerxes came to the throne almost nine years earlier than indicated by the Royal Canon.

Having determined that Artaxerxes began to reign in 474 B.C., Ussher dated his 20th year to 454 B.C. This enabled him to explain Daniel's first 69 weeks in a satisfactory manner.[23]

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coincident with the siege of Naxos (1.137.2) then problems in chronology arise. He points, for example, to Thucydides' statement that the Helot revolt ended in its tenth year (1.103.1), which is too long in relation to other events (J. K. Davies, "Sources, Chronology, Method," in CAH^2 V, 14). Against this, it is thought by many that Thucydides actually wrote "four" and not "ten" years with respect to the surrender of the Helots (see *The Landmark Thucydides*, 56 fn. 1.103.1a). Another negative view on Thucydides' account of Themistocles is expressed by Peter Rhodes, who questions, among other details, whether Naxos was the correct island (P. J. Rhodes, "Thucydides on Pausanias and Themistocles," *Historia* 19 [1970]: 387–400). Such skeptical assessments are countered by the number of scholars who accept that the relative order of events in Thucydides' Pausanias–Themistocles excursus is accurate, as are place-names such as Naxos.

[21] Olympiads were four-yearly intervals used during the Greek era as a calendar epoch. They spanned the time between Olympic games, which were held every four years at the height of summer, hence Olympiadic years beginning in the middle of a Julian year. The first year of the Olympiadic era is generally accepted to be 776/775 B.C. (meaning from ≈ July 1, 776 B.C. to ≈ June 30, 775 B.C.)

[22] Diodorus and other later historians wrote that Themistocles stood before Xerxes. However, as the first century B.C. Roman historian Cornelius Nepos observed, Thucydides was closest in time to the event: "I know most historians have related that Themistocles went over into Asia in the reign of Xerxes, but I give credence to Thucydides in preference to others, because he, of all who have left records of that period, was nearest in point of time to Themistocles, and was of the same city [Athens]. Thucydides says that he went to Artaxerxes" (Cornelius Nepos, "Themistocles," §9, in *Lives of Eminent Commanders*).

Thucydides was not the only near-contemporary voice who wrote that Themistocles stood before Artaxerxes. According to Plutarch, Charon of Lampsacus—a Greek logographer who probably wrote in the first half of the fifth century B.C.—also reported the same: "Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus say that Xerxes was dead, and that Themistocles had an interview with his son; but Ephorus, Dinon, Clitarchus, Heraclides, and many others, write that he came to Xerxes. The chronological tables better agree with the account of Thucydides, and yet neither can their statements be said to be quite set at rest" (Plutarch, "Themistocles," in *Plutarch's Lives, Volume 1*, 260).

[23] Ussher believed that Daniel's first 69 weeks (= 483 years) spanned the time from Artaxerxes 20th year (454 B.C.) to just before Jesus' first Passover (A.D. 30). Thereafter, the four consecutive Passovers of

Ussher's dating of Artaxerxes' accession was hugely influential. For instance, French historian Charles Rollin (1661–1741) followed Ussher in concluding that Themistocles stood before Artaxerxes and not Xerxes. He therefore dated Xerxes' death and Artaxerxes' accession to 473 B.C., Themistocles' audience with Artaxerxes also to 473 B.C., Cimon's victory at the Eurymedon to 470 B.C., and Artaxerxes' 20th year to 454 B.C.[24] German theologian Ernst Hengstenberg (1802–1869) dated Xerxes' death and Artaxerxes' accession to 474 B.C., the flight of Themistocles to 473 B.C., the Eurymedon campaign to 470 B.C., and Artaxerxes' 20th year to 455 B.C.[25] In support of his view, Hengstenberg referred to the works of Dutch Protestant theologian Campegius Vitringa (1659–1722) and philologist Karl Wilhelm Krüger (1796–1874). Both men held that Xerxes died in 474 or 473 B.C., with the flight of Themistocles occurring a year later. Hengstenberg's detailed analysis was cited in bulk by Presbyterian minister and scholar Albert Barnes (1798–1870).[26] In the respected volume, *The Companion Bible*, Artaxerxes' 20th year is given as 454 B.C.[27]

Interestingly, when Ussher's dates began to appear in the margins of many Bibles, the 20th year of Artaxerxes was quoted as 446 B.C. and not Ussher's date of 454 B.C. In an illuminating footnote in his *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel*, English theologian Samuel Tregelles (1813–1875) explained this alteration as well as the background to Ussher's dating of Artaxerxes' reign [square brackets here contain my clarifications]:

> *On the 20th of Artaxerxes*.—Some have found a difficulty in making out the chronology of the seventy weeks, because they have thought that the time from the 20th of Artaxerxes to the crucifixion of our Lord would not fully accord with that marked out in the prophecy. If it had been so, it need have surprised no one; whatever be the result of the chronological calculations, the word of God is the same; we know that it is certain, and everything else must bend to it.
>
> But here I believe the difficulty to be wholly imaginary. It is true that we may find some from the date printed in the margin of our Bibles; but the history of this date, as it there stands, is rather curious. Archbishop Ussher drew up a scheme of Chronology which is commonly followed, rather from convenience than from its absolute correctness being supposed. About a hundred and fifty years ago, Bishop Lloyd undertook to affix Archbishop Ussher's dates to our English Bibles; but, *in this instance*, he made a considerable alteration, and substituted another date of his own, so as to adapt the reign of Artaxerxes to his own theory.
>
> The date which stands in our Bibles for the 20th of Artaxerxes, is B.C. 446;—this makes the commencement of his reign, B.C. 465:—but the authority of the best and most nearly contemporary historian will put the matter in a very different light. Thucydides mentions that the accession of Artaxerxes had taken place before the flight of Themistocles; this authorises us to adopt Ussher's date, and to place the commencement of the reign 473 or 474 B.C. This would give the date of 454 or 455 B.C. [as his 20th year] . . .

Jesus' ministry (in A.D. 30, 31, 32, and 33) began the first, second, third, and fourth (= middle) years of Daniel's final seventieth week (*The Annals of the World*, 152, 804–15).

[24] Charles Rollin, *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Grecians, and Macedonians: Including a History of the Arts and Sciences of the Ancients* (First American Edition [2 Vol.]; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1860), 1:238–43, 245. (Originally published as *Histoire Ancienne des Egyptiens* . . ., Paris, 1730–1738.)

[25] Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Predictions of the Messiah by the Prophets: Vol. II, Containing the Messianic Prophecies of Zechariah and Daniel* (translated from the German by Reuel Keith; Washington: William M. Morrison, 1839), 394–408.

[26] Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Explanatory and Practical, Daniel Vol. II* (repr., Michigan: Baker, 1950), 165–74.

[27] Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, 653, 1198.

> It is a great pity that Archbishop Ussher's date should in this particular have been misrepresented: it was a point to which he had paid particular attention. About the year 1613 he lectured on the subject at Trinity College, Dublin, resting on the testimony of Thucydides. He then discussed difficulties connected with the supposed length of the reigns of Darius and Xerxes so as to adapt other events to this certain date. From October 1615, he corresponded at various times on the point with Thomas Lydiat, (the scholar most familiar with such subjects of any in England,) until 1643; and, in 1650, after thirty-seven years of minute consideration, he published the result in his "Annales Veteris Testamenti"; where the date is 3531. This answers in Ussher's "Collatio Annorum," to B.C. 474, or the third year of the seventy-*sixth* Olympiad. His judgment in 1613 seems to have been doubtful; but in 1617 he says, "These things being laid together do show, that the expulsion of Themistocles from Athens fell no later than the beginning of the fourth year of the seventy-sixth Olympiad [473 B.C.]; to which time you (i.e. Lydiat) doubtfully refer the beginning of his troubles; how much sooner soever, my opinion is, that at that time Themistocles fled into Persia, as Eusebius noteth, whose testimony I have no reason to discredit, unless I have some better testimony or reason to oppose against it. The year before that, which is the third of the seventy-sixth Olympiad [474 B.C.], I suppose Artaxerxes Longimanus to have begun his reign: to whom as yet νεωστι βασιλευοντα [*neosti basileuonta* = new king], Themistocles fled, as Thucydides sufficiently proveth." (Works, xv., p. 111.) [28]

Development of the coregency hypothesis. In Ussher's scheme, Xerxes ruled from 485 to 474 B.C. In the final, twelfth year of his reign (474 B.C.), Xerxes made Artaxerxes coregent. Later that year, Artabanus and his seven sons killed Xerxes while he was sleeping. Ussher's view, of course, contradicts the Royal Canon, which cites a duration of 21 years for Xerxes. In a hypothesis that reconciled the canon with Thucydides, French Jesuit scholar Dionysius Petavius (1583–1652)—a disciple of philologist and historian Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540–1609)—posited that a nine-year coregency existed between Xerxes and Artaxerxes. Petavius' view is here quoted by Giles Strauchius (1632–1682),[29] who disagreed with him:

> We do (*says he*) agree for the most part with those who begin these 70 Weeks with the 20[th] Year of the Reign of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*: But we differ from them in the Computation of these 20 Years, which we begin, not from the Time of the Death of *Xerxes*, but from the Time he was made his Consort in the Empire. So that the Beginning of the Reign of *Artaxerxes* admits of a twofold Explication; one to be fixed in the 12th Year of the Reign of *Xerxes*, in the Year of the *Julian* Period 4240 [474 B.C.]; the other immediately after his Death, in the Year of the *Julian* Period 4249 [465 B.C.]; *Artaxerxes* having reigned as a Consort with his Father near 10 years, or at least enjoyed the Title of King. [This quote by Dionysius Petavius, also known as Denys Petau, is from his *Opus de doctrina temporum* (Paris: Sebasian Cramoisy, 1627), bk. 12, ch. 32.] [30]

Strauchius countered with several arguments against Petavius' assessment of Daniel's 70 weeks.[31] Among them were the following objections to the idea of a coregency:

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[28] Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel. With Notes on Prophetic Interpretation in Connection with Popery, and a Defence of the Authenticity of the Book of Daniel* (5th ed.; London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1864), 99–100.

[29] Giles Strauchius was a Professor of Mathematics at the University of Wittenberg who later became a Professor of Theology at the Gymnasium in Danzig. He is also known by the names Aegidius Strauchius, Aegidius Strauch, and Giles Strauch.

[30] Giles Strauchius, *Breviarium Chronologicum: Or, a Treatise Describing the Terms and Most Celebrated Characters, Periods, and Epocha's used in Chronology* (2nd ed., translated from the third Latin edition by Richard Sault; London: for J. Knapton and R. Wilkin, 1722), 332. (The first English edition of *Breviarium Chronologicum*, a volume of nearly 500 pages, was published in 1699.)

[31] Ibid., 333–35.

- The establishment of a shared reign between Xerxes and Artaxerxes is not mentioned by any ancient historians. But supposing that Xerxes did nominate Artaxerxes as his successor in his 12th year, it is incongruous that seven years later, in the 18th year of Xerxes, Artaxerxes should issue a royal edict (cf. Ezra 7:7–26) while his father was still ruling. Furthermore, in that edict, Artaxerxes called himself "king of kings" (7:12), which suggests that there was no other monarch in Persia then.

- According to the testimony of historians such as Diodorus and Ctesias, after the death of Xerxes there was a contest for the throne between the eldest son Darius and younger son Artaxerxes, who by the assistance of Artabanus obtained the crown.[32] That being so, it follows that Artaxerxes could not have been made king several years before his father's death.

While there is no doubting that Xerxes was murdered, it is important to note that all the accounts of his death are by later authors. The earliest of these was Ctesias, a Greek physician and historian at the court of Artaxerxes II. He wrote his *Persica* between 398 and 390 B.C., but he is considered unreliable. The only reasonably trustworthy and near-contemporary first-hand voice on the flight of Themistocles is Thucydides, who was born around 460 B.C. Unfortunately, he did not write about Xerxes' death. So, for its circumstances, later authors may have relied on other, less accurate records. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore Thucydides' statements that Themistocles sought asylum from Artaxerxes soon after he came to the throne, and that this event preceded Cimon's victory at the Eurymedon. (The Eurymedon campaign is usually dated either to 469[33] or 466 B.C.[34])

The coregency view was advanced again by William Whiston (1667–1752), who was an English theologian, historian, and mathematician (he succeeded Sir Isaac Newton as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge). Whiston is best known for his translations of the works of Josephus. His view on the Xerxes-Artaxerxes coregency is here paraphrased and summarized by the 19th century scholar Bourchier Wrey Savile (who is discussed next):

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[32] Although the ancient historians differ in their accounts of Xerxes' death, the broad outline is as follows: Artabanus and other conspirators killed Xerxes in his bedroom. Artabanus then convinced Artaxerxes that his older brother Darius had killed their father (Xerxes had three son: Darius [the eldest], Hystaspes, and Artaxerxes [the youngest]). For his act of patricide, and despite his protestations of innocence, Darius was put to death by Artaxerxes, who subsequently took the throne. Artabanus continued his attempts to take the throne but after it was revealed to Artaxerxes that his father was killed by the hand of Artabanus and not Darius, the king had Artabanus put to death. For a summary of the events associated with the assassination of Xerxes according to the historical sources, see Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 565–67.

[33] The argument for 469 B.C. was advanced by Felix Jacoby in "Some Remarks on Ion of Chios," *CQ* 41 (1947): 3 fn. 1. See also Raphael Sealey, *A History of the Greek City States, 700–338 B.C.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 248–50, 265–66 n. 5; Donald Kagan, *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 46–47; George Cawkwell, *The Greek Wars: The Failure of Persia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 127, 135, 226.

[34] Advocates for 466 B.C. include: John V. A. Fine, *The Ancient Greeks: A Critical History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), 345; Andrew R. Burn, "Persia and the Greeks," in *The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 2: The Median and Achaemenian Periods* (ed. Ilya Gershevitch; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 334; Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 249; Tom Holland, *Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 363, 376.

about the twelfth year of Xerxes, he made his youngest son Artaxerxes king-regent, under the direction of his prime-minister, Artaphanes [Artabanus]. Nine years later, Artaphanes sought to set up for himself, having a sort of regent-power, for seven months; was slain by Artaxerxes, who thereby had a second beginning of his reign, as he would have a third at the time of his father's death: Thucydides, with Charon of Lampsacus, taking the first, as reckoned at Greece; the Astronomical Canon of Ptolemy taking the second, as reckoned at Babylon; Nehemiah and Josephus taking the third, as reckoned in Judea, for Josephus mentions the twenty-fifth year of Xerxes, and adds to it two years and four months.[35]

Whiston's coregency hypothesis was accepted by Bourchier Savile (1817–1888), a Church of England clergyman and theologian. Savile strengthened Whiston's arguments by citing the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the Persian functionary Atiyawahy (also Atauhi, Adeues, and Adenes) found in the stone quarries of Wadi Hammamat:

That Whiston's suggestion is the true one we can scarcely doubt; and we now propose to adduce some evidence from the hieroglyphic inscriptions in support of the same. . . . At Hammamet, on the Cosseyr road from Persia to Egypt by the Red Sea, Egyptologers have discovered some of the rare monumental records of the Persian rule in that country, where a series of proscynemata [statements of adoration or religious tribute] have been engraved to the local divinity Khem, Lord of Coptus. The first of these is one of Adenes, a saris of Persia, who inscribes on shields, following each other, "the sixth year of Cambyses, the thirty-sixth year of Darius, and *the twelfth year of Xerxes*," and which evidently denote the length of time which each king reigned in Egypt, though as Xerxes is last in order it may only show the year of his reign when the record was made. There are also other inscriptions of the second, sixth, tenth, and twelfth years of Xerxes, but none beyond that last-mentioned year of his reign, save one, which is very remarkable, where the thirty-sixth year of Darius and the thirteenth of Xerxes the son of Darius are mentioned, apparently as synchronous years, the inscription under each cartouche or oval being "Living like the sun for ever." *

From this we may conclude that the Persian sovereigns were accustomed to associate their sons in the regal power, and that occasionally historians were in the habit of dating the commencement of the reign from such associated authority; and that Xerxes's sole reign, after the death of his father Darius, was no more than eleven or twelve years, when he took his son Artaxerxes into partnership with him, which agrees with the length of years allotted to that sovereign in the "Excerpta Latino-Barbara," as edited by the learned Scaliger.

Nehemiah, then, having computed the commencement of Artaxerxes' reign from the time when he was associated with his father in the kingdom in the twelfth year of the latter's sole reign, which was B.C. 474, "the twentieth year," when the commission to rebuild Jerusalem was given, would fall B.C. 455.[36]

* Birch's Note in Loftus' Chaldæa and Susiana, p. 411. Burton's Excerpta Hieroglyplica, pl. viii. and xiv. Lepsius, Denkm. iii. 283.

As the brief review above shows, the start of Artaxerxes' reign can only be dated before 465 B.C. if one of following assumptions is made:

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[35] Bourchier Wrey Savile, *The First and Second Advent: or, The Past and the Future with Reference to the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God* (London: Wertheim, Macintosh, & Hunt, 1858), 27–28. Savile here paraphrases Whiston from *A Supplement to the Literal Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies* (London: Printed for J. Senex, W. and J. Innys, J. Osborn, and T. Longman, 1725), 73.

[36] Savile, *The Introduction of Christianity into Britain: An Argument on the Evidence in Favour of St. Paul Having Visited the Extreme Boundary of the West* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861), 24–26. See also by Savile, "Revelation and Science" in *The Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record*, Vol. 3, New Series (London: Williams and Norgate, April–July 1863): 156; idem, *The First and Second Advent*, 22–28.

1. the Royal Canon is incorrect
2. there was a Xerxes–Artaxerxes regnal overlap

Today, we know that the former option is untenable based on astronomical data contained in a number of inscriptions, including:

- BM 32234: This tablet is dated to the 21st year of Xerxes and states that in the fifth month of that year "Xerxes' son killed him." It also contains lunar eclipse data enabling Xerxes' final, 21st year to be dated to 465/64 B.C.[37]

- VAT 5047: This astronomical diary tablet is dated to the 11th year of Artaxerxes and contains lunar and planetary data fixing that year to 454/53 B.C.[38]

These documents confirm the accuracy of the Royal Canon with respect to the reigns of Xerxes (21 years, from 486 to 465 B.C.) and Artaxerxes (41 years, from 465 to 424 B.C.). The coregency option is therefore the only avenue of pursuit for those who believe that Daniel's first 69 weeks can be sensibly placed between Artaxerxes' 20th year and some notable point during Jesus' public ministry. Such a view is held by Floyd Jones, who has recently rekindled the overlapping reign theory. As with Petavius and Whiston before him, he accepts the veracity of both the Royal Canon and Thucydides (and Charon):

> The solution proposed by this author is that, as many writers have heretofore stated, following Xerxes' humiliations at the hands of the Greeks in battles such as Thermopylae, Salamis, etc., his spirit was crushed resulting in the giving of himself over to a life of indolent ease, drink, and the sensual enjoyment of the harem. Further, that after some time of this debauched living, his desire and/or abilities to govern were diminished or impaired to the extent that he placed Artaxerxes Longimanus on the throne as his pro-regent some years before his death in his 21st year of rule, leaving the affairs of state in his son's hands.
>
> Thus when Themistocles' flight ended, he arrived with Artaxerxes I Longimanus' having just come to the throne as Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus reported. Most scholars have assumed from their histories that with Artaxerxes in power, his father was dead. Yet in point of fact, at no place in his narrative does Thucydides make mention of Xerxes' actually being dead at this time![39] This allows the possibility that Ephorus, Dinon, Clitarchus, Heracleides, Diodorus Siculus and others were also correct in part in maintaining that Xerxes was alive at the time the fleeing Athenian arrived at the Persian court and was the monarch with whom the interview was conducted rather than Artaxerxes. Xerxes was alive, but it was Artaxerxes with whom Themistocles spoke.
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> This solution differs from Ussher, Vitringa, Kruger, and Hengstenberg who interpreted Thucydides, etc. as meaning that Themistocles arrived at the onset of the *sole* reign of Artaxerxes I; hence they rejected Ptolemy's giving 21 years for Xerxes' kingship, ceding only some 11 or 12 years to him. The above resolution completely maintains the integrity of the Canon.
>
> Although, as previously stated, there is some discrepancy as to the exact date for this event with Diodorus Siculus setting the year as 471, Cicero placing it as 472, and Eusebius along with Ussher

[37] See Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 306–07.

[38] See Abraham J. Sachs and Hermann Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia, Vol. 1: Diaries from 652 B.C. to 262 B.C.* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1988), 56–59.

[39] Thucydides, *History of* [the] *Peloponnesian War*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, Book I, Ch. 137–138.

> opting for 473 BC, it seems certain to this author that it should be placed somewhere between 473–470.[40]

I submit that Jones' hypothesis cannot be *disproved*, especially as dates for this period are uncertain.[41] Accordingly, if the following time factors are accepted as correct (so Ussher, et al.) then Artaxerxes came to the throne *before* 465 B.C.:

- Jesus' public ministry lasted from A.D. 29 to 33
- Daniel's 70 weeks began with the decree of Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign
- the first 69 weeks of Daniel's 70 weeks comprise ordinary solar years and not "prophetic years" of 360 days per year[42]

Given the above to be true, and on the basis of Jones' hypothesis that Xerxes made his son the *senior* ruler, I propose that Artaxerxes came to the throne in 473 B.C. This would place his interview with Themistocles in 472 or 471 B.C. Although the Persians did not count coregency years, the Hebrews did, so they counted 473 B.C. as Artaxerxes' accession year. His edict to Nehemiah was therefore issued early in Nisan 452 B.C., during the last days of his 20th year just before the end of the *Akītu* festival (see "5. In the Days of Ezra and Nehemiah" above). This allows the following chronology, albeit speculative, for the prophecy of Daniel's 70 weeks:

- *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most*

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[40] Jones 2005, 236. In support of his position, Jones refers to the work of Edwin Yamauchi, an acclaimed professor of history. In *Persia and the Bible*, Yamauchi dates Themistocles' ostracism from Athens to 471/470 B.C. (p. 225). He also observes that Thucydides is most likely correct in reporting that he stood before Artaxerxes (p. 226). But the question must be asked: How long was the interval between Themistocles' ostracism, which entailed banishment for ten years, and his interview with Artaxerxes? Thucydides reports that Themistocles lived in Argos after his ostracism, but when Spartan ambassadors sought to condemn him he fled for his life. After a series of harrowing escapes he finally ended up in the Persian court (Thuc. 1.135.2–1.138.2). Although Yamauchi does not venture a figure, it is implied in his analysis that there was an interval of at least six years from Themistocles' ostracism to his appearing before Artaxerxes (from 471/470 to not before 465 B.C.). By contrast, it is evident that Jones assumes a much shorter interval between those two events. Note that Yamauchi is one of many modern scholars who, like Nepos and possibly Plutarch (fn. 25), favor Thucydides' report that Themistocles met Artaxerxes and not Xerxes (cf. Robert Lenardon, *The Saga of Themistocles*, 136–138; Peter J. Rhodes, "The Athenian Revolution," in CAH^2 V, 66–67). Of course, these same scholars have no reason to accept a coregency between Xerxes and Artaxerxes, so their dating of Themistocles' interview with Artaxerxes is never before 465 B.C.

[41] The flight of Themistocles is located within the chronologically difficult period between the withdrawal of the Persians from Greece in 479 B.C. (so ending the Greco-Persian Wars) and the start of the Peloponnesian War in 431 B.C. (Thucydides, 1.89–1.117). Scholars call this period of almost fifty years the *Pentecontaetia*, which is the latinized version of the Greek *Pentekontaetea*, meaning "the fifty years." Thucydides is our richest source of information for this period. But he is selective, and the events he describes for that time are often reported in a manner that prevents them from being dated precisely.

[42] This is the well-known solution proposed by Sir Robert Anderson. He calculated that there were exactly 173,880 days from the issuing of Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild Jerusalem on Nisan 1 of his 20th year (= March 14, 445 B.C.) to Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Nisan 10 of the Passion Week (= April 6, A.D. 32). Dividing 173,880 days by 360 yields precisely 483 prophetic years (= 69 x 7), so fulfilling the first 69 weeks of Gabriel's prophecy to the day. See Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, 67–75, 121–28.

Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. (Dan 9:24–25)

The decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued by Artaxerxes early in Nisan, 452 B.C., in the final days of his 20th year (Neh 2:1–8). The decree may have even been issued on Nisan 10 itself, the first day of the Sabbath year 452/51 B.C. Later that year—now Artaxerxes' 21st year—a public reading of the Law by Ezra took place (Neh 8:18) as prescribed for the septennial year (Deut 31:10–11). Seven weeks (or 49 years) later, and despite difficult conditions, the physical rebuilding of Jerusalem was completed in the Sabbath year 403/02 B.C.

- *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. (Dan 9:26)*

  Counting 62 septennial cycles from 403/02 B.C. brings us to the Sabbath year of A.D. 32/33. Five days after that Sabbath year ended, Jesus the prince, our spiritual city and sanctuary (cf. John 2:19), was "cut off"—or crucified—by choice of his own people on Friday, Nisan 14 (April 3), A.D. 33. The 7 + 62 weeks therefore take us to the *conclusion* of His ministry rather than its beginning, which is in line with Sir Robert Anderson's view:

  > If the beginning of His public ministry be fixed upon, difficulties of another kind present themselves. When the Lord began to preach, the kingdom was not presented as a fact accomplished in His advent, but as a hope the realization of which, though at the very door, was still to be fulfilled. He took up the Baptist's testimony, "The kingdom of heaven is *at hand*." His ministry was a preparation for the kingdom, leading up to the time when in fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures He should publicly declare Himself as the Son of David, the King of Israel, and claim the homage of the nation. It was the nation's guilt that the cross and not the throne was the climax of His life on earth.
  >
  > No student of the Gospel narrative can fail to see that the Lord's last visit to Jerusalem was not only in fact, but in the purpose of it, the crisis of His ministry, the goal towards which it had been directed. After the first tokens had been given that the nation would reject His Messianic claims, He had shunned all public recognition of them. But now the twofold testimony of His words and His works had been fully rendered, and His entry into the Holy City was to proclaim His Messiahship and to receive His doom. Again and again His apostles even had been charged that they should not make Him known. But now He accepted the acclamations of "the whole multitude of the disciples," and silenced the remonstrance of the Pharisees with the indignant rebuke, "I tell you if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." [Luke 19:39, 40]
  >
  > The full significance of the words which follow in the Gospel of St. Luke is concealed by a slight interpolation in the text. As the shouts broke forth from His disciples, "Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord!" He looked off toward the Holy City and exclaimed, "If *thou* also hadst known, even *on this day*, the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes!" The time of Jerusalem's visitation had come, and she knew it not. Long ere then the nation had rejected Him, but this was the predestined day when their choice must be irrevocable,—the day so distinctly signalized in Scripture as the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold *thy King cometh unto thee!"* [Zech 9:9] Of all the days of the

ministry of Christ on earth, no other will satisfy so well the angel's words, "unto Messiah the Prince."[43]

The Sabbath year of A.D. 32/33 fits well as the *terminus ad quem* of Daniel's 69 weeks. After it ended, on the first day of the new sabbatical cycle (Nisan 10), Jesus was publicly heralded by His followers as King. On the fifth day of the new cycle (Nisan 14), Messiah was "cut-off" at the cross. On the seventh day of the new cycle (Nisan 16), Messiah was resurrected.[44]

- *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Dan 9:27)*

  Because Jesus delivered us from the Law through His death at the cross (Rom 7:4–6; Gal 3:24–25), we no longer need to observe Sabbath or Jubilee years (or any other Old Testament liturgical requirements). Daniel's final, 70th week is therefore *symbolic*. Since the Messiah "shall confirm the covenant with many" during this week, we can conclude that it represents the era of the new covenant in Jesus Christ, our Sabbath rest (i.e., the New Testament era). Concerning this final septennial cycle, Dan 9:27 states: "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." If the final week of seven years represents the New Testament era—which spans from A.D. 33 to the last day—then its having a "midst" divides that week into two periods of 3½ symbolic years, the latter of which will be characterized by an "overspreading of abominations." Based on this assumption, I propose that the first 3½ years (or 1,260 days or 3½ "times") refer symbolically to the bulk of the New Testament era (cf. Rev 11:3; 12:6, 14). The second 3½ years (or 42 months or 3½ "times") refer to the overspreading of apostasy indicated for the end-times (cf. 2 Th 2:1–3; Dan 12:7; Rev 11:2, 13:5). This period of desolation will continue "even until the consummation." The consummation (or end) is undoubtedly the last day, when Jesus' return will usher the completion of all prophecy. When the overspreading of apostasy ends that day, the great desolator himself, Satan, will be defeated. The 70 weeks for Daniel's people, who ultimately comprise all believers (Gal 3:7), will then be completed.

[43] Ibid., 124–27.

[44] These first seven days of the new septennial cycle in A.D. 33 make an interesting parallel with the first seven days that Israel spent in Canaan. Just as the Israelites entered the Promised Land on Nisan 10, 1417 B.C. (Josh 4:19), which was the first day of the first year of the first septennial cycle, so Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Nisan 10, A.D. 33, which was the first day of the first year of the 208th septennial cycle. On Nisan 14, 1417 B.C., the Israelites celebrated the first Passover in their own land (Josh 5:10). On Nisan 14, A.D. 33, the last Passover that God sanctioned for the land was celebrated on the day that Jesus was crucified as the Passover lamb (John 19:14–19; 1 Cor 5:7). On Nisan 16, 1417 B.C., the heavenly manna—which had miraculously fallen from the sky six days a week unceasingly for 40 years to feed the people (Exod 16:12–35)—finally stopped, and they ate of the food of the new land (Josh 5:10–12). When Jesus was resurrected on Nisan 16, A.D. 33, He became the true bread from heaven by which we should be nourished (John 6:31–58; Rev 2:17).

Appendix I – The Tyrian King List of Josephus

LITERATURE: Josephus, *Flavii Iosephi opera, edidit et apparatu critico instruxit* (ed. Benedictus **Niese**; 7 vols; Berlin: Weidmann, 1887–1895 [vol. 5 = 1889]) [1]; Franz **Rühl**, "Die Tyrische Königsliste des Menander von Ephesos," in *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* (Frankfurt: J. D. Sauerländer, 1893), 565–78; Eduard **Meyer**, *Geschichte des Altertums* (5 vols.; Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1884–1902; repr. [rev. ed.]; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1953); Alfred von **Gutschmid**, *Kleine Schriften* (ed. Franz Rühl; 5 vols.; Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1889–1894 [vol. 4 = 1893]); Franz Xaver **Kugler**, *Von Moses bis Paulus: Forschungen zur Geschichte Israels* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1922), 172–79; Josephus, *Against Apion*; trans. Henry St. John **Thackeray** (The Loeb Classical Library, Vol. 1; London: William Heinemann, 1926); Fuad **Safar**, "A Further Text of Shalmaneser III from Assur," *Sumer* 7 (1951): 3–21 and Plates I–III; Jacob **Liver**, "The Chronology of Tyre at the Beginning of the First Millennium B.C.," *IEJ* 3 (1953): 113–20; Joaquin M. **Peñuela**, "La Inscripción Asiria IM 55644 y la Cronolgía de los reyes de Tiro" [in two parts]: *Sefarad* 13 (1953): 217–37 and Plate I; 14 (1954): 3–42; William F. **Albright**, "The New Assyro-Tyrian Synchronism and the Chronology of Tyre," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 13 (1953): 1–9; Gilbert Charles **Picard** and Colette **Picard**, *The Life and Death of Carthage: A Survey of Punic History and Culture from its Birth to the Final Tragedy* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1968); Nina **Jidejian**, *Tyre Through the Ages* (Beirut: Dar el-Mashreq, 1969); Edward **Lipiński**, "Ba'li-Ma'zer II and the Chronology of Tyre," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 45 (1970): 59–65; idem, *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographical Researches* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 153; Leuven: Peeters, 2006); Frank M. **Cross**, "An Interpretation of the Nora Stone," *BASOR* 208 (1972): 13–19; H. Jacob **Katzenstein**, "Is There Any Synchronism between the Reigns of Hiram and Solomon?" *JNES* 24 (1965): 116–17; idem, *The History of Tyre* (Jerusalem: Schocken Institute for Jewish Research, 1973; repr. [rev. ed.]; Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University Press, 1997); Alberto R. **Green**, "David's Relations with Hiram: Biblical and Josephan Evidence for Tyrian Chronology," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth* (eds. Carol L. Meyers and Michael P. O'Connor; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 373–97; William H. **Barnes**, "The Tyrian King List: An External Synchronism from Phoenicia," in *Studies in the Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 48; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 29–55; Rodger C. **Young**, "Three Verifications of Thiele's Date for the Beginning of the Divided Kingdom," *AUSS* 45 (2007): 163–89; Josephus, *Against Apion*; trans. John M. G. **Barclay** (Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, vol. 10; ed. Steve Mason; Leiden: Brill, 2007 [2]).

In this appendix, references to the above bibliography will be given in author–date format.

Introduction

In Chapter 1A, it was stated that the year of Solomon's death and division of the kingdom (the schism) cannot be dated directly because there are no reliable external synchronisms prior to the ninth century B.C. Instead, one must use a synchronism from a later era, then work back with the complex data for the Hebrew kings to date Solomon's death. Against this, some scholars advocate

[1] Benedictus Niese (1849–1910) was a German classical scholar who made a detailed study of the extant manuscripts of the works of Josephus. The result was this critical edition, which surpassed all former editions, and remains influential today. Niese's numbering system is still the most commonly used when citing Josephus.

[2] The Tyrian king list is found in Josephus' apologetic treatise, *Against Apion* (*Contra Apionem*), which is in two books. Barclay's volume is the first comprehensive commentary of this work in English. It is part of the Brill Josephus Project, and features a new critical edition of the text (see fn. 5).

that the Tyrian king list, transmitted to us by Josephus in *Against Apion* (1.116–26), provides the much sought after synchronism that enables one to date the founding of the temple in Jerusalem—and therefore Solomon's reign—independently of the Bible.[3] The list contains monarchic data for the kings of Tyre from Hirom (= Hiram, the contemporary of Solomon) to Pygmalion. According to Josephus, the data was sourced from Tyrian national records as collated by a certain Menander of Ephesus, a Hellenistic historian scarcely known outside of Josephus' writings.[4] The relevant portion reads:

> [116] And now I shall add Menander the Ephesian, as an additional witness. This Menander wrote the acts that were done both by the Greeks and Barbarians under every one of the Tyrian kings, and had taken much pains to learn their history out of their own records. [117] Now, when he was writing about those kings that had reigned at Tyre, he came to Hirom, and says thus:
>
> > "Upon the death of Abibalus, his son Hirom took the kingdom; he lived fifty-three years, and reigned thirty-four. [118] He raised a bank on that called the Broad Place, and dedicated that golden pillar which is in Jupiter's temple; he also went and cut down timber from the mountain called Libanus, and got timber of cedar for the roofs of the temples. He also pulled down the old temples, and built new ones: besides this, he consecrated the temples of Hercules and of Astarte. [119] He first built Hercules's temple in the month Peritius, and that of Astarte, when he made his expedition against the Tityans who would not pay him their tribute; and when he had subdued them to himself, he returned home. [120] Under this king there was a younger son of Abdemon, who mastered the problems which Solomon, king of Jerusalem, had recommended to be solved."
>
> [121] Now the time from this king to the building of Carthage is thus calculated:
>
> > "Upon the death of Hirom, Baleazarus his son took the kingdom; he lived forty-three years, and reigned seven years: [122] after him succeeded his son Abdastartus; he lived twenty-nine years and reigned nine years. Now four sons of his nurse plotted against him, and slew him, the eldest of whom reigned twelve years: after them came Astartus, the son of Deleastartus; he lived fifty-four years, and reigned twelve years; [123] after him came his brother Aserymus, he lived fifty-four years, and reigned nine years; he was slain by his brother Pheles, who took the kingdom, and reigned but eight months, though he lived fifty years; he was slain by Ithobalus, the priest of Astarte, who reigned thirty-two years, and lived sixty-eight years: [124] he was succeeded by his son Badezorus, who lived forty-five years, and reigned six years; [125] he was succeeded by Matgenus, his son; he lived thirty-two years, and reigned nine years; Pygmalion succeeded him; he lived fifty-six years, and reigned forty-seven years. Now, in the seventh year of his reign his sister fled away from him, and built the city of Carthage, in Libya."
>
> [126] So the whole time from the reign of Hirom, till the building of Carthage, amounts to the sum of one hundred fifty-five years and eight months. Since then the temple was built at Jerusalem, in the twelfth year of the reign of Hirom, there were from the building of the temple until the building of Carthage, one hundred forty-three years and eight months.[5]

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[3] So Liver 1953, 114; Barnes 1991, 29–30, 53–55.

[4] Menander wrote on Phoenician history. While details of his life are unknown, he probably wrote no earlier than the second century B.C. The other references to him by Josephus are: *Ant*. 8.144 (cf. 8.55); 8.324; 9.283. It is possible that Josephus quoted Menander indirectly through the first century B.C. historian Alexander Polyhistor (so Gutschmid 1893, 4:470; Katzenstein 1973, 80). On the sparse references to Menander outside of Josephus, see Barclay 2007, 72 n. 394.

[5] *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (trans. William Whiston; Cincinnati: H. S. & J. Applegate: 1850), 585 (I have added Niese's divisional numbers, and reformatted the text for easier reading). Whiston's English translation first appeared in 1737. It was based on the first printed Greek version—the 1544 *editio*

Table 1 summarizes the names and regnal data reported above:

TABLE 1—THE TYRIAN KING LIST

	Name	*Suggested Original Greek Name (Barnes 1991, 43)*	*Length of Life*	*Length of Reign*
1.	Hirom	Eirōmos	53	34
2.	Baleazarus	Balbazeros	43	7
3.	Abdastartus	Abdastartos	29	9
4.	Eldest Usurper	-	-	12
5.	Astartus	Astartos	54	12
6.	Aserymus	Astarumos	54	9
7.	Pheles	Phellēs	50	8m
8.	Ithobalus	Ithobalos	68	32
9.	Badezorus	Balezeros	45	6
10.	Matgenus	Mattēnos	32	9
11.	Pygmalion	Pygmaliōn	56	47

After citing Menander's data, Josephus mentioned two chronological notices that appear to be of value in providing an external synchronism by which to date Solomon's reign and therefore the schism:

1. an interval of 155 years and 8 months elapsed between Hiram's accession and the founding of Carthage (in Pygmalion's seventh year)

2. the temple in Jerusalem was built in the twelfth year of Hiram (therefore yielding an interval of 143 years and 8 months from the founding of Solomon's temple to the founding of Carthage)

Of course, before these notices can be used, one must date the founding of Carthage.

Elissa's Flight and the Founding of Carthage

Carthage (or in Phoenician *Qartihadasht* = "New Town") was located near present-day Tunis in North Africa. It was founded by Phoenician colonists no later than the second half of the eighth

princeps—of the works of Josephus (*Flavii Iosephi*; ed. Arnoldus Arlenius [Basel: Froben & Episcopius, 1544]). Whiston's Josephus was the definitive English translation for two centuries. It was overtaken in importance by the multi-volume Loeb Classical Library (LCL) series, which became the standard edition in English for scholarly study of Josephus, and owed much to Niese. More recently, the Brill Josephus Project—launched and edited by Steve Mason of York University, Toronto—has succeeded in publishing ten volumes that comprise the first comprehensive literary-historical commentary on the works of Josephus in English. They feature more extensive analysis than the LCL series, and incorporate the most recent scholarship. However, unlike the LCL volumes, the Greek text has not been included in the Brill series.

century B.C.[6] The city grew rapidly and became the Phoenician metropolis of the west. Unfortunately, because no primary records from Carthage have survived (the city was totally destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. at the end of the Third Punic War), we are reliant on Greek and Roman accounts for the story of its founding. Those accounts, however, are problematic. Carthage was famed for its wealth, prompting legends concerning the city and its beginnings. It is therefore difficult to separate myth and fact in the classical sources regarding it. Furthermore, the sources disagree with each other and with the archaeological data, prompting Gilbert and Colette Picard to remark that "the founding of Carthage is one of the most difficult problems of history" (1968, 29).

Although the classical sources give different dates for the founding of Carthage, modern scholarship favors two dates: those of *Timaeus of Tauromenium* and *Pompeius Trogus*.

Timaeus was a Sicilian Greek historian born in the fourth century B.C. He reported that Elissa, the sister of Pygmalion king of Tyre, fled after the king murdered her husband.[7] Following her escape by sea with some other Tyrians, she arrived at the site that was to become Carthage. Regarding its founding, Dionysius of Halicarnassus cites Timaeus' date for the event, which is 38 years before the first Olympiad in 776 B.C., that is, in 814 B.C.[8]

The story of Elissa, though, could be mythical. Also, Timaeus' dating of the founding of Carthage may be referring to the first arrival of Phoenician colonists in the area (led by Elissa) to set up a trading station. Some years or decades later, the city which emerged from the success of that outpost was founded.[9]

Timaeus' account of the flight of Elissa—called Dido by the Libyans—was embellished by the Roman author Justin, who flourished in the third century (his extra details of Elissa's flight were most likely invented). Justin wrote an abridgment of the *Historia Philippica*, a history in 44 books by Pompeius Trogus, a first century B.C. Roman historian whose work has not survived. According to Trogus, the city was founded 72 years before Rome.[10] Since the traditional date for the founding of Rome is April 21, 753 B.C., one can apply Trogus' notice to date the founding of Carthage to 825 B.C.[11]

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[6] No archaeological finds in Carthage have been dated *earlier* than the second half of the eighth century B.C. On this, see Picard and Picard 1968, 3, 33–35; William Culican, "Phoenicia and Phoenician Colonization," CAH^2 III/2, 490–98.

[7] *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* (ed. Carolus Müller; 5 vols.; Paris: A. F. Didot: 1841–1870), 1:197, Timaeus Fragment 23.

[8] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 1.74.1. (For the first English translation of this work—on which Earnest Cary's later seven-volume LCL series was based—see *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus* [trans. Edward Spelman; 4 vols; London, 1758], 1:168–69.) A friend of Plato, Timaeus introduced the practice of dating important events by Olympiadic years (see Appendix H, fn. 21). This was a better datum for recording history than the local dignitary lists used by the Greek city-states. Note that 38 years before the first Olympiad can be dated either to 814/13 B.C. (exclusively) or 813/12 B.C. (inclusively).

[9] Cf. Picard and Picard 1968, 34–35.

[10] Justin, *Epitoma historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi*, 18.6.9. For an English translation of Elissa's flight as told by Justin, see John Selby Watson, *Justin, Cornelius Nepos, and Eutropius* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), 157–60.

[11] On the various dates for the founding of Rome, see Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, §§188–90.

Of all the possible dates in the classical sources for the founding of Carthage, 814 B.C. is the one most commonly attested.[12] On the other hand, Pompeius Trogus was the only writer in antiquity who dated the founding of Carthage to 825 B.C. (the source of his date is unknown). Given the weight of support for 814 B.C., it has been traditionally favored by historians. However, attitudes changed with the publication of an Assyro-Tyrian synchronism in 1951 (discussed below). The result was increased support for 825 B.C.[13]

Agreement with Thiele? If 825 B.C. is chosen for the founding of Carthage, one may use the chronological notices in *Against Apion* 1.126 to date the schism to ca. 933 B.C. as follows:

- Josephus stated that Pygmalion's sister fled from him and founded Carthage in the seventh year of his reign. He then quoted an interval of 155 years and 8 months from Hiram's accession to the founding of Carthage. Therefore, if Carthage was founded in 825 B.C., Hiram's accession can be dated to *about* 981 B.C. (The inexactness of the date is due to our ignorance of Phoenician dating practices, and whether Phellēs' eight-month reign crossed into the next regnal year.)

- Since Josephus said that Solomon's temple was built in Hiram's twelfth year, we can date its founding and therefore Solomon's fourth year (1 Kgs 6:1) to ca. 969 B.C. (= ca. 981 B.C. minus 12). Since Solomon ruled for 40 years (1 Kgs 11:42), the schism can be dated to ca. 933 B.C. (= ca. 969 B.C. minus 36). Observe that these simple calculations completely bypass the Hebrew monarchic data except for the duration of Solomon's reign.

Circa 933 B.C. is close to Thiele's schism date of 931/30 B.C. This near-agreement is enough for some scholars to conclude that it verifies Thiele's chronology.[14] Against this, one must ask: is the Tyrian king list reliable enough to reconstruct or verify Biblical chronology?

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[12] For the classical sources that corroborate 814 B.C., see Katzenstein 1973, 120 n. 27; Green 1983, 379 n. 15, 393. For an overview of the various dates for the founding of Carthage, see Picard and Picard 1968, 28–35.

[13] Modern studies of Josephus' Tyrian king list have been prompted by two influential publications. The first was Niese's fifth volume of his critical edition of Josephus in 1889, which analyzed *Against Apion*. Scholars who subsequently wrote on the Tyrian king list included Franz Rühl (1893, 565–78), Eduard Meyer (1893, II/2, 123ff), Alfred von Gutschmid (1893, 4:470–90), and Franz Xaver Kugler (1922, 172–79). Following this burst of academic attention, interest in the king list waned owing to the lack of external evidence. The situation changed, though, after the publication of Fuad Safar's 1951 article, "A Further Text of Shalmaneser III from Assur," which revealed a new Assyro-Tyrian synchronism. This prompted a series of noteworthy studies on the Tyrian king list (see fn. 32), many of which adopted 825 B.C. for the founding of Carthage, beginning with Jacob Liver's paper.

[14] For example, Young submits that the Tyrian-derived dates for Solomon by Liver, Cross, and Barnes confirm Thiele's schism date (2007, 179–87). Note that Liver's date of 931/30 B.C. for Solomon's death agrees exactly with Thiele (1953, 120), while Cross and Barnes hold to 932 B.C. (Cross 1972, 17 n. 11; Barnes 1991, 53).

Problems with the Tyrian King List

The following problems, anomalies, and reservations are noted for the Tyrian king list:

- Given the intrinsic problems in the king list (as discussed below) as well as Josephus' track record of chronological mistakes, scholars have questioned the trustworthiness of the Tyrian regnal data and/or Josephus' calculations.[15]

- Concerning the intervals of 155 years and 8 months and 143 years and 8 months (*Ag.Ap.* 1.126), it is unknown if Josephus was still relying on Menander or if he computed them secondarily. The latter seems more likely despite Josephus' assertion that the interval of 143 years and 8 months derived from Tyrian records (*Ag.Ap*. 1.108; cf. *Ag.Ap*. 2.18). If the Tyrians did record when Solomon's temple was founded, it would have surely been in terms of Hiram's regnal years and not by reference to the founding of Carthage, which is an anachronistic datum.

- The intervals of 155 years and 8 months and 143 years and 8 months are only meaningful if one assumes that the flight of Pygmalion's sister and her founding of Carthage both occurred in Pygmalion's seventh year, as Josephus indicates (*Ag.Ap*. 1.125). However, the archaeological evidence suggests that Carthage did not exist before 750–720 B.C. (see fn. 6). This leaves a gap of over half a century between the classical dates for its founding (814 or 825 B.C.) and the first archaeological record of its existence. As suggested above, it is possible that the classical dates for the founding of Carthage might actually refer to the first arrival of Phoenician colonists in the area.

- Assuming that Carthage was founded in the seventh year of Pygmalion's reign, one must decide on the date from the classical sources that Josephus used. The two prime candidates are 814 B.C. (Timaeus) and 825 B.C. (Pompeius Trogus). Of the two, Timaeus' date is more likely. Timaeus was born in Sicily in the second half of the fourth century B.C. when a large part of the island was under Carthaginian rule. It is believed that he had access to reliable information on Punic history. Also, his date is well attested in the classical sources, which further supports its reliability.[16] By contrast, Pompeius Trogus has three points against him: (1) he lived in Rome nearly three centuries after Timaeus, (2) his date for the founding of Carthage is advanced by no other classical author, and (3) the source of his date is unknown.

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[15] See, for example, Edwin R. Thiele, "A Comparison of the Chronological Data of Israel and Judah," *VT* 4 (1954): 188–91; Picard and Picard 1968, 32–33; John Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 195–99; Green 1983, 378–82; Kenneth Kitchen, review of W. H. Barnes, *Studies in the Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel*, *EvQ* 65 (1993): 249; Diana Edelman, review of W. H. Barnes, *Studies in the Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel*, *JNES* 54 (1995): 157–58; Galil 1996, 15–16 fn. 8; Lowell K. Handy from two articles in *The Age of Solomon*, "On the Dating and Dates of Solomon's Reign," 96–98, and "Phoenicians in the Tenth Century BCE: A Sketch of an Outline," 157; David P. Henige, *Historical Evidence and Argument* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 50–53; Lipiński 2006, 169; Barclay 2007, 69 nn. 369–70.

[16] Modern authorities who favor Timaeus' date include: Albright (1953, 5 n. 3), Picard and Picard (1968, 5, 30–35), Jidejian (1969, 246); Katzenstein (1973, 120), William Culican ("Phoenicia and Phoenician Colonization," CAH^2 III/2, 491), and Lipiński (2006, 167–68, 183).

- Josephus dated the founding of Solomon's temple to Hiram's twelfth year (*Ag.Ap*. 1.126) and also, in another work, to his eleventh year (*Ant*. 8.62). Some scholars accept the synchronism to Hiram's eleventh year but not to his twelfth year, which is viewed as a mistake or a stylized number (so Meyer 1893, II/2, 79 n. 2; Liver 1953, 115 n. 6; Lipiński 1970, 64–65). Other scholars doubt both synchronisms, proposing that Josephus found, in the annals of Tyre, that the temples of Heracles and Astarte (*Ag.Ap*. 1.118 + *Ant*. 8.146) were built in the eleventh and twelfth years of Hiram. Josephus then assigned those dates to the construction of Solomon's temple (so Gutschmid 1893, 4:488–89; Green 1983, 380–82). Alternatively, Josephus may have transferred to Hiram's reign the notices concerning the temple's completion in Solomon's eleventh year (1 Kgs 6:38) and the temple's dedication in Solomon's twelfth year[17] (so Katzenstein 1973, 82–83; Barclay 2007, 76 n. 419).

- The regnal figures for a number of kings differ in the extant sources of Josephus' king list (the sources being Josephus himself and later writers who quoted him). The variations are shown in Table 2. The first figure given for each king (for length of life and length of reign) is from the earliest Greek manuscript of *Against Apion*, the *Codex Laurentianus 69.22* (hereafter, L),[18] which dates to the eleventh century.[19] The adjacent figures derive from the following parallel sources:

    - the "old Latin version" of Josephus prepared in the sixth century for Cassiodorus (LAT)[20]

    - Eusebius' *Chronicle*: a Latin version of the Armenian translation (E-A)[21]

[17] For the dating of the dedication of Solomon's temple, see Appendix H, "Evidence of a Sabbath Year Date in Scripture," #7.

[18] While all subsequent Greek manuscripts of *Against Apion* appear to depend directly or indirectly on L (so being of limited value for textual analysis), it is possible that one or more later manuscripts draw on a partially different tradition that predates L. For the textual history of *Against Apion* and current assessments of the manuscripts, see Barclay 2007, LXI–LXIV (cf. Niese 1889, 5: IV–XXIV; Thackeray 1926, XVIII–XIX).

[19] The L figures in Table 2 have been taken from Eusebii Pamphili, *Chronicon bipartitum* (ed. Johannes Baptistae Aucher; 2 vols.; Venice, 1818), 1:173–81. This is the first prepared edition of Eusebius in Armenian, though it was not the first published. It features the Armenian text with parallel Latin translation, and Greek text that follows the *Codex Laurentianus* for the Tyrian king list.

[20] Our LAT figures are taken from *Flavii Josephi opera, ex versione latina antiqua* (ed. Carolus Boysen; Pars 6; *De Judaeorum Vetustate sive Contra Apionem libri 2* [which is vol. 37 of the ongoing series *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 1866–present]; Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1898; repr., New York: Johnson, 1964), 24–28. By the Middle Ages, the old Latin version had been widely read and copied. However, interest in this translation waned after discovery of the original Greek text and subsequent first printing in 1544 (the *editio princeps*) of the works of Josephus in Greek (see fn. 5).

[21] Although the original Greek text of Eusebius' *Chronicle* has not survived, we are fortunate to have an Armenian version, which probably dated originally to the fifth century. Latin translations of this version began to be published in 1818. Our figures come from Aucher's edition (fn. 19), and have been cross-checked against the Schoene-Petermann translation in *Eusebi Chronicorum Libri Duo* (ed. Alfred Schoene; 2 vols.; Berlin: Weidmann, 1866–1875; repr., Dublin: Weidmann, 1967), 1:113–19. Note that Eusebius is of primary importance in restoring the text of Josephus (for *Against Apion*, he cites almost one sixth of the work).

- Eusebius' *Chronicle*: Greek excerpts by Syncellus in his *Ekloge chronographias* (E-S)[22]
- Greek extracts in the *Ekloge historion* that appear to be based on Eusebius' *Chronicle* (EK)[23]
- Theophilus of Antioch (second century A.D. bishop) in his only surviving work *To Autolycus* (TH)[24]

TABLE 2—THE TYRIAN KING LIST: VARIANT FIGURES[25]

Name	*Length of Life*	*Length of Reign*
1. Eirōmos	**53**	**34**
2. Balbazeros	**43**	**7** LAT, EK / **17** E-A, E-S, TH
3. Abdastartos	**29** / **20** LAT / **39** E-A, EK	**9**
4. Eldest Usurper	-	**12** (only in L)
5. Astartos	**54** E-A, EK, TH / **44** LAT[26]	**12**
6. Astarumos	**54** LAT / **58** E-A, EK, TH	**9**
7. Phellēs	**50**	**8 months** / **18 months** EK
8. Ithobalos	**68** / **40** TH / **48** LAT, E-A, EK	**32** LAT, E-A, E-S, EK / **12** TH
9. Balezeros	**45**	**6** LAT / **7** TH / **8** E-A, E-S / **18** EK
10. Mattēnos	**32**	**9** LAT / **25** E-S, EK / **29** E-A, TH
11. Pygmaliōn	**56** LAT, TH / **58** E-A, EK	**47** E-A, E-S, EK / **7** TH / **40** LAT

Table 2 focuses on variant regnal figures only; it ignores the understandable differences between the sources in the spelling of names. Other regnal data variations include:

- (LAT): Hiram's length of life is mistakenly given as 34 years, while no figure is given for his length of reign.

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[22] Syncellus, *Chronographiae, ab Adamo usque ad Diocletianum*, in *Georgius Syncellus et Nicephorus Cp.* (ed. Guilielmi Dindorfi; 2 vols. [from the 50 vol. series *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 1828–1897]; Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1829), 1:343 [line 1] to 1:345 [line 19]. For a recent English translation, see *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (trans. William Adler and Paul Tuffin; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 265–67.

[23] *Against Apion* 1.106–27 can be found (in Greek) in the anonymous ninth century work, the *ʾEklogē historiōn*, in *Anecdota Graeca* (ed. J. A. Cramer; 4 vols.; Paris, 1839–1841), 2:184 [line 7] to 2:187 [line 13]. This was reprinted by Schoene (fn. 21) in 1:114–20. (Schoene printed the Latin version of the Armenian translation [E-A] and the *ʾEklogē historiōn* excerpt [EK] in parallel columns.)

[24] Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum*, 3.22 (this was a three-volume work). For an English translation, see *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325* (eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; 24 vols.; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1867–1872), 3:124–25.

[25] For other tabulated listings of the Tyrian regnal data from all six sources (L, LAT, E-A, E-S, EK, and TH), see Rühl 1893, 566; Barnes 1991, 38–45.

[26] For this king's length of life, Niese has 43 years for LAT (1889, 5:22), a figure also cited by Rühl (1893, 566). However, Boysen's critical edition—which was published after Niese's Josephus—records *annis quadraginta quattuor*, or 44 years (1898, 27), which is also cited by Gutschmid (1893, 4:482). Note that while Barnes followed Niese's figures for LAT, he twice writes 53 and not 43 years for this king (1991, 43–44).

- (E-S): No years of life are given for any kings except Hiram. The total of 155 years and 8 months is omitted but the total of 143 years and 8 months is included (as is the synchronism to Hiram's 12th year for the founding of Solomon's temple).
- (TH): No length of reign is given for Hiram.

- As the following excerpts show, the sources differ with regard to Abdastartus' successor (except for TH below, the original language wording for Astartus and his patronymic—corresponding to the underlined text in English—has been added in brackets):

  (L): The four sons of his [Abdastartus'] nurse plotted against him and killed him. The elder of these reigned twelve years. After them Astartos, son of Delaiastartou (μεθ' οὓς Ἄσταρτος ὁ Δελαιαστάρτου), who lived 54 years, reigned 12 years.

  (LAT): The four sons of his nurse killed him, of which the elder Metusastartus the son of Leastarti ruled (*quorum senior Metusastartus filius Leastarti regnauit*). He lived 44 years and reigned 12 years.

  (E-A): The four sons of his nurse killed him; the elder of them ruled. After whom Astartus the son of Eleastarti (*Post quem Astartus Eleastarti filius*). He lived 54 years, reigned 12 years.

  (E-S): The three [sic] sons of his nurse killed him. The elder of them became king. After him Astartos [the son of] Eleastartou 12 years (μεθ' ὃν Ἄσταρτος Ἐλεαστάρτου ιβ΄).

  (EK): The four sons of his nurse killed him, of whom the elder became king. After him Astartos [the son of] Elestartos (μεθ' ὃν Ἄσταρτος Ελεστάρτος). He lived 54 years and reigned 12 years.

  (TH): *In Theophilus' version, the reign of Abdastartos and the account of his nurse's four sons who killed him are completely omitted.*[27] *Instead, Bazorus was succeeded by "Methuastartus, who lived 54 years, and reigned 12." No patronymic or family relation to Bazorus is given for Methuastartus.*

  The following points are noted for these differing accounts:

  1) Curiously, all the versions except TH say that the "elder" (Gk. πρεσβύτερος) of the four sons ruled rather than the "eldest" (πρεσβύτατος). Niese conjectured that the latter was the better reading (1889, 5:22). Barclay adds that something is probably missing from Menander's version here (2007, 74–75 n. 409).

  2) It is generally accepted today that the figure of twelve years in L for the reign of the elder brother is not original, and was added by a later hand. This explains its absence in LAT and all three Eusebian sources (E-A, E-S, EK). It also explains the two different words for "twelve" in the same passage: δεκαδύο for the usurper's length of reign, and the older word δώδεκα for Astartos (see Lipiński 2006, 172). Not surprisingly, Barclay completely ignores the

[27] This may be due to a copyist's error known as *homoeoarkton*, which is the omission of a sentence that has a similar beginning to a preceding or following sentence.

usurper's length of reign in his commentary, asserting that L gives no name or reign date for the elder brother (2007, 75 n. 410).

3) The plural reading μεθ' οὓς Ἄσταρτος (after *them* Astartus) is considered by some to be a copyist's mistake in L. Therefore, the singular form in E-S and EK μεθ' ὃν Ἄσταρτος (after *him* Astartus) should be preferred (e.g., Albright 1953, 6 n. 2). E-A also follows the Eusebian tradition by using the singular *Post quem* rather than the plural *Post quos*.

4) In L, E-A, E-S, and EK, Astartos the son of Delaiastartou (= Eleastarti, etc.) ruled after the usurper, who is not named.[28] By contrast, LAT names the usurper as being Metusastartus the son of Leastarti. These variations are understandable because μεθ' οὓς Ἄσταρτος (*meth ous Astartos*) in L can also be read as Μεθουσάσταρτος (*Methousastartos*). As to which arrangement reflects the original, we do not know. Nevertheless, Niese accepted Μεθουσάσταρτος (1889, 5:22). Most later authors followed him, including Thackeray:

> The four sons of his nurse conspired against him and slew him. The eldest of these, Methusastartus, son of Deleastartus, mounted the throne and lived fifty-four years and reigned twelve.[29]

Not all scholars, though, hold to this view. For instance, Lipiński considers Niese's Μεθουσάσταρτος to be an "inexistent and incomprehensible" Semitic name (2006, 171). Albright similarly considered it to be "very improbable" (1953, 6 n. 2)

- In not one individual source do the regnal figures from the accession of Hiram to the founding of Carthage add up to 155 years and 8 months, but the Eusebian totals come close.[30] In Niese's edition, though, the individual reigns add up to exactly 155 years and 8 months. He achieved this by amending L as follows:
  - Balbazeros reigned 17 not 7 years
  - As in LAT, Astartos (Methousastartos) was the eldest usurper who ruled for 12 years, so eliminating the two consecutive 12-year periods
  - Mattēnos reigned 29 not 9 years [which means that he came to the throne at the age of three]

  Thus, 34 + 17 + 9 + 12 + 9 + 8 months + 32 + 6 + 29 + first 7 years of Pygmalion = 155 years and 8 months. Despite his mixing of variant figures, many commentators followed Niese's arrangement until a new Assyro-Tyrian synchronism was published in 1951. This synchronism disallowed the 29-year figure for Mattēnos' reign (see below).

- EK is unique in reading 18 months instead of 8 months for the reign of Phellēs, with a subsequent total of 155 years and 18 months.

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[28] Albright proposed that the eldest of the brothers ruled so briefly that his name was not recorded. His length of reign was copied by mistake from the next brother's reign (1953, 6 n. 1).

[29] Thackeray 1926, 210–11. This reading is also favored by Barclay, who supposes that both the plural and singular forms μεθ' οὓς Ἄσταρτος and μεθ' ὃν Ἄσταρτος are misreadings of the unfamiliar name Μεθουσάσταρτος (2007, 75 n. 410).

[30] The regnal totals (from Hiram's accession to the seventh year of Pygmalion) for the various sources are: L = 137⅔; LAT = 125⅔; E-A = 157⅔; E-S = 153⅔; EK = 154⅔; TH =136⅔.

- Whereas L indicates that Abdastartos lived for 29 years, the Eusebian tradition records 39 years (E-A, EK). If this higher figure is accepted—the Eusebian texts are well regarded—then Abdastartos was born when his father Balbazeros was 13.

- Whereas L indicates that Ithobalos lived for 68 years, the Latin and Eusebian texts support 48 years. If this lower figure is accepted, and if Balezeros ruled for six years (LAT) or eight years (E-A, E-S), then Ithobalus became a father at the age of either nine or eleven.

While the above problems have long been recognized, they came under increased scrutiny after the publication of a valuable Near Eastern synchronism in the mid-20th century.

The Assyro-Tyrian Synchronism. In 1951, Fuad Safar published a previously unknown copy of Shalmaneser III's annals discovered in the remains of the city of Ashur in 1950. The marble slab inscription, designated IM 55644, records the first 20 campaigns of Shalmaneser III. In his 18th year (= 841 B.C. by traditional dating), mention is made of a certain *Baʾali-manzēri of Tyre* giving tribute along with Jehu of Israel.[31] Subsequent to this article, most scholars agreed that *Baʾali-manzēri* was Balezeros. However, the synchronism raised a problem. In Niese's widely upheld scheme, Mattēnos ruled for 29 years. Therefore, regardless of whether one chose 825 or 814 B.C. for the founding of Carthage, 841 B.C. fell within the reign of Mattēnos if he was accorded a rule of either 29 years (E-A, TH) or 25 years (E-S, EK). This was not a major difficulty. The year of 841 B.C. could be located within Balezeros' reign if either of the following options was accepted:

1. Carthage founded 825 B.C. + Mattēnos 9 (L, LAT) + any figure for Balezeros
2. Carthage founded 814 B.C. + Mattēnos 9 (L, LAT) + any figure for Balezeros ≥ 11

Most scholars who wrote about the Tyrian king list after Safar's article chose the first option, although not always for the same reasons (compare Lipiński 1970, 62–63 n. 5 with Liver 1953, 116–19).[32] Less common, but nevertheless still proposed, were chronologies based on 814 B.C. (the second option). Table 3 displays the contrast, with Cross' chronology based on 825 B.C. for the founding of Carthage (1972: 17 n. 11) and Lipiński's on 814 B.C. (2006: 174). The table shows the suggested regnal order, reconstructed Phoenician names, durations of reign, and dates proposed by each author.

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[31] Safar 1951, col. iv (rev.), ll. 10–11, in pp. 11–12, p. 19, and pl. II; his transliteration is *ba-,-li-ma-AN-zēri*. Later English translations of the relevant passage include: Albright 1953, 2 n. 4; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 334; Kuan 1995, 61–62; RIMA 3:54, iv 10–11 (A.0.102.10). This appendix uses the RIMA name *Baʾali-manzēri*.

[32] Safar's article gave rise to the following noteworthy studies on the Tyrian king list: Liver 1953; Peñuela 1953 + 1954; Albright 1953; Lipiński 1970; Cross 1972; Katzenstein 1973. Four of these authors—Liver, Peñuela, Lipiński, and Cross—chose 825 B.C. for the founding of Carthage. By contrast, Albright argued that the Assyrian name *Baʾali-manzēri* cannot be identified with Balezeros on linguistic grounds. Rather, he was a king whose name had fallen out of the list because it too closely resembled that of his precursor (or successor), Balezeros. Albright therefore used the traditional date of 814/813 B.C. for the founding of Carthage. He also assigned 9 years for Mattēnos and a presumed figure of 20 years for Balbazeros II, being the king who was supposedly dropped from the list after Balezeros (Albright 1953, 5–7, also Table 5A below). Katzenstein likewise preferred 814 B.C. for the founding of Carthage but, unlike Albright, he accepted that *Baʾali-manzēri* and Balezeros were the same king. He assigned 9 years for Mattēnos and a presumed reign of 26 years for Balezeros (Katzenstein 1973, 349, also Table 5B below). Note that Albright's linguistic arguments against *Baʾali-manzēri* being identified with Balezeros were ably countered by Lipiński (1970, 59–62).

TABLE 3—THE TYRIAN KING LIST: TWO CONTRASTING PROPOSALS

	CROSS 1972			LIPIŃSKI 2006		
	Kings	Years	Dates	Kings	Years	Dates
1.	Ḥīrōm	34	980–947	Ḥīrōm I	34	*ca*. 950–917
2.	Ba‘l-mazzer	17	946–930	Ba‘al-ma‘zer I	7	*ca*. 916–910
3.	‘Abd-‘Aštart	9	929–921	‘Abd-‘Aštart	9	*ca*. 909–901
4.	Aštart	[20]	920–901	Anonymous usurper	[12]	*ca*. 900–889
5.	Dalay-‘Aštart	12	900–889	’Iš-‘Aštart	12	*ca*. 900–889
6.	‘Aštar-rōm	9	888–880	‘Aštar(t)-’im(m)	9	*ca*. 888–880
7.	Pillēs	8m	879	Pillēs	8m	*ca*. 880/879
8.	’Itto-ba‘l	32	878–847	’Ittō-Ba‘al I	32	*ca*. 879–848
9.	Ba‘l-mazzer [II]	6	846–841	Ba‘al-ma‘zer II	18	*ca*. 847–830
10.	Mattin	9	840–832	Mattān I	9	*ca*. 829–821
11.	Pummay	47	831–785	Pummayōn	47	*ca*. 820–774

Notes on Cross’ Chronology

- Because Astartos, Astarumos, and Phellēs are all identified as brothers, Cross believed them to be three of the four brothers who plotted to kill Abdastartos. He therefore viewed the unexpected patronymic, Astartus *the son of Deleastartus*, as a corruption of the name of the second brother (1972, 17 n. 11). Hence, the four brothers ruling in turn were: Astartos, Deleastartus, Astarumos, and Phellēs. This arrangement was championed by Barnes (1991, 54), and is preferred by Galil (1996, 15–16 fn. 8, 165). One reason for its appeal is that all four usurper-brothers are named.

- Cross’ suggested reign of 20 years for the first usurper (Aštart) is hypothetical, the figure being chosen to achieve the desired total of 155 years and 8 months from Hiram’s accession to the founding of Carthage in Pygmalion’s seventh year. Otherwise, Cross accepts the regnal totals in L for all other kings except Ba‘l-mazzer, who is assigned 17 years instead of 7.

- Cross dated the founding of Solomon’s temple to 968 B.C. (in Hiram’s twelfth year), thereby fixing Solomon’s reign to 971–932 B.C. But there is an anomaly in his calculation. Cross’ dates are clearly based on accession year reckoning for the Tyrian kings. For Hiram, this means that he came to the throne in 981 B.C., as confirmed by the interval of 155 years and 8 months between 981 B.C. and Pygmalion’s seventh year, 825 B.C. However, it is apparent that Cross counted Hiram’s twelfth year (= Solomon’s fourth year) from Hiram’s *first* year (980 B.C.) and not his accession year (981 B.C.).[33] His dates for Solomon should therefore be one year earlier. That is, the temple was founded in 969 B.C. and Solomon died 36 years later in 933 B.C.

[33] Which is understandable because Cross tabulated the reigns of the Tyrian kings from their *first* year to their last year (being the accession year of next king). By contrast, Jidejian’s chronology (Table 5B) tabulates reigns from the king’s *accession* year to his last year. This is simply a style choice for the author (i.e., showing either first-to-last-year or accession-to-last-year for successive kings in a list); it does not affect the relative chronology.

Notes on Lipiński's Chronology (see Lipiński 2006, 170–76)

- In a stance that accepts Cross' rejected patronymic, Lipiński proposes that the eldest of the four sons seized the throne. However, his name is not given in L (or the Eusebian texts) because he was a usurper and therefore subject to the *damnatio memoriae*. Instead, the text mentions the patronymic of the lawful king, Astartus the son of Deleastartus (= Iš-Aštart, son of Daliy-Aštart), who ruled somewhere on the Tyrian mainland as a rival to the usurper.[34] (In this scenario, the usurper could have ruled longer or shorter than twelve years with no affect on the chronology.) Although Astartus was not a son of Abdastartus, he was nevertheless the son of Deleastartus. This similarity suggests that Deleastartus and Astartus still belonged to the lineage of Hiram.

- Lipiński's proposal updates his 1970 chronology with four main differences (see Table 4 below). In his earlier paper:

  1. Carthage was founded in 825 and not 814 B.C.
  2. the anonymous usurper and Astartos ruled consecutively and not concurrently
  3. the eight-month rule of Phellēs crossed into the next regnal year
  4. Balezeros ruled for 6 years and not 18

  Accordingly, the date range for Lipiński's Tyrian chronology has changed from spanning ca. 962–785 B.C. to ca. 950–774 B.C.[35]

Other Recent Proposals

For purposes of comparison, Tables 4 and 5A/5B show some other proposals for the Tyrian kings written after 1951. For simplicity, these tables use the generalized Greek names for the kings of Tyre and not the names determined by each author.

TABLE 4—TYRIAN CHRONOLOGIES BASED ON 825 B.C. FOR THE FOUNDING OF CARTHAGE

	PEÑUELA 1953		LIPIŃSKI 1970	
Kings	Years	Dates	Years	Dates
Eirōmos	34	980–947	34	ca. 962–929
Balbazeros	17	946–930	7	ca. 928–922
Abdastartos	9	929–921	9	ca. 921–913

[34] The idea of a simultaneous rule between the usurper and Astartos has been offered before. For instance, Gutschmid proposed that Menander deliberately suppressed the name of the usurper, and that Astartos ruled concurrently with him for 12 years. However, opposite to Lipiński, Gutschmid viewed Astartos as a *Schattenkönig* (a sham or puppet king), *während die wirkliche Regierung bei dem Usurpator war* = while the real government was with the usurper (1893, 4:481–82).

[35] In both Tyrian chronologies by Lipiński, the total of the individual regnal years from the accession of Hiram to the founding of Carthage is 136 years and 8 months. This is due to his belief that Josephus mistakenly used the duration of Hiram's life—53 years—for his reign, which is 19 years too much. Hence Josephus' figure of 155 years and 8 months, which is 136 years and 8 months plus the 19-year difference (1970, 64; 2006, 169). Also, for both chronologies, Lipiński considers that the 40-year reign of Solomon cited in 1 Kgs 11:42 is symbolic and excessive; the true figure was lower (1970, 65; 2006, 98–99).

1st usurper	12	920–909	12	ca. 912–901
Astartos	12	908–897	12	ca. 900–889
Astarumos	9	896–888	9	ca. 888–880
Phellēs	8m	887	8m	ca. 879
Ithobalos	32	886–855	32	ca. 878–847
Balezeros	[14]	854–841	6	ca. 846–841
Mattēnos	9	840–832	9	ca. 840–832
Pygmaliōn	47	831–785	47	ca. 831–785

TABLE 5A—TYRIAN CHRONOLOGIES BASED ON 814 B.C. FOR THE FOUNDING OF CARTHAGE

ALBRIGHT 1953

Kings	Years	Dates
Eirōmos	34	ca. 969–936
Balbazeros	17	ca. 935–919
Abdastartos	9	ca. 918–910
1st usurper[36]	–	–
Astartos	12	ca. 909–898
Astarumos	9	ca. 897–889
Phellēs	8m	ca. 888
Ithobalos	32	ca. 887–856
Balezeros	6	ca. 855–850
< Balbazeros II[37]	[20]	ca. 849–830 >
Mattēnos	9	ca. 829–821
Pygmaliōn	47	ca. 820–774

TABLE 5B—TYRIAN CHRONOLOGIES BASED ON 814 B.C. FOR THE FOUNDING OF CARTHAGE

	JIDEJIAN 1969[38]		KATZENSTEIN 1973	
Kings	Years	Dates	Years	Dates
Eirōmos	34	970–936	34	969–936
Balbazeros	17	936–919	17	935–919

[36] In Albright's scheme, the four usurpers were all brothers. However, the rule of the eldest was so short that his name was not recorded, and the length of his reign in L (12 years) was copied by mistake from the reign of the next brother (Albright 1953, 6 n. 1).

[37] Albright submitted that this king was dropped from the list (see fn. 32).

[38] Jidejian follows Niese's figures, which means that her regnal durations add up to exactly 155 years and 8 months without using unattested (i.e., emended) figures. However, because she used 29 years for the reign of Mattēnos, her dates for Balezeros' reign (856–850 B.C.) disallow the Assyro-Tyrian synchronism for Shalmaneser III's 18th year (traditionally 841 B.C.). While Jidejian's chronology has been mostly ignored probably for this reason, it is noteworthy from our viewpoint. By our redated Assyrian chronology (see ch. 6E), Shalmaneser III's 18th year was 852 B.C., which fits Jidejian's dates for Balezeros.

Abdastartos	9	919–910	9	918–910
Methusastartus	12	910–898	12	909–898
Astarumos	9	898–889	9	897–889
Phellēs	8m	889–888	8m	888
Ithobalos	32	888–856	32	887–856
Balezeros	6	856–850	[26]	855–830
Mattēnos	29	850–821	9	829–821
Pygmaliōn	47	821–774	47	820–774

David and Hiram

A number of problems associated with the Tyrian king list have been noted. These have made the list elastic to a degree, enabling authors to mold it around their own ideas (as the contrasts in the above chronologies show). There is one problem, however, that I believe eclipses all the others. It is the duration of Hiram's reign as indicated in the Bible. The key verse is 2 Sam 5:11 (also 1 Chr 14:1), which is the only Biblical statement pertaining to David's relations with Hiram:

> David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah. And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land . . . So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him. **And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house**. And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake. And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David. (2 Sam 5:4–13; see also Josephus, *Ant*. 7.66)

The context of 2 Sam 5:11 suggests that Hiram sent messengers to Jerusalem *early* in David's occupation of the city. Hiram's rule was therefore long-lasting because he was still on the throne in the third decade of Solomon's reign:

> And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house, (Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day. And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold. (1 Kgs 9:10–14)[39]

The transfer of 20 Galilean cities to Hiram occurred around Solomon's 24th regnal year (i.e., 20 years after his fourth regnal year). This undoubtedly involved the same Hiram who befriended David (1 Kgs 5:1 + 2 Chr 2:3). Therefore, assuming—conservatively—that Hiram established contact with David by his tenth year in Jerusalem (i.e., his 17th regnal year), and assuming a

[39] 2 Chr 8:2 records that Hiram gave the cities to Solomon, which is the reverse of 1 Kgs 9:11. Rather than being a contradiction, it is possible that 2 Chr 8:2 is the sequel to the story (i.e., Hiram *gave back* the cities to Solomon, who then set about to "build" = improve them).

maximum coregency between David and Solomon of four years,[40] the minimum duration of Hiram's reign as indicated by the Bible would be 23 + 20 = 43 years. This contradicts Josephus' king list, every source of which records that Hiram ruled for 34 years. Persuaded by the constancy of this figure across the Josephan sources, some scholars argue that 2 Sam 5:11 is either chronologically misplaced (see below) or it was a later, inauthentic addition to the text.[41] However, the context clearly suggests that Hiram established contact with David early in his occupancy of Jerusalem.[42] Moreover, the economic windfall for Tyre in having good relations with David argue strongly for an early alliance between the two kings.[43]

On the basis that the Bible is correct and Hiram met David early in his reign in Jerusalem, Green proposed that Hiram's regnal total should be emended. He suggested that the king list originally had 53 years for the duration of his reign but the figure mistakenly became his age at some point (1983, 391).

The founding of Carthage and 2 Sam 5:11. It was noted above that after publication of the Assyro-Tyrian synchronism in 1951, most scholars who subsequently wrote about the Tyrian king list chose Pompeius Trogus' date of 825 B.C. for the founding of Carthage. This was despite the fact that the classical sources favor Timaeus' date of 814 B.C.

Jacob Liver's paper led to increasing acceptance of 825 B.C. (1953, 113–20).[44] He submitted that most chronological systems—with slight variations—show that Solomon ruled from 970 to 930 B.C. (p. 116 n. 10). However, if 814 B.C. is chosen for the founding of Carthage, then Hiram began to rule 155 years earlier in 969 B.C. (give or take a year or two), which is around the time that Solomon began to rule. This raises two problems:

1. If Hiram came to the throne about the same time as Solomon, then the Biblical and Josephan statements concerning the founding of Solomon's temple cannot be reconciled; i.e., the fourth year of Solomon (1 Kgs 6:1) vs. the eleventh or twelfth year of Hiram (*Ant*. 8.62, *Ag.Ap*. 1.126).

2. If Carthage was founded in 814 B.C., then Hiram's rule overlapped, at the most, the last year of David's reign. This contradicts 2 Sam 5:11, which suggests an overlap of several years.

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[40] On the existence of this coregency, see Edward Ball, "The Co-Regency of David and Solomon (1 Kings I)," 268–79; William H. Shea, "Nabonidus, Belshazzar, and the Book of Daniel: An Update," *AUSS* 20 (1982): 147–49; Gösta W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine* (1993), 500–01; Galil 1996, 7; Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 278. While the length of the coregency between David and Solomon is uncertain, it most likely did not exceed four years given that the Lord told David, "Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood" (1 Chr 28:3; cf. 1 Kgs 6:1).

[41] See, for example, Herbert Donner, "The Interdependence of Internal Affairs and Foreign Policy during the Davidic-Solomonic Period (with Special Regard to the Phoenician Coast)," in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* (ed. Tomoo Ishida; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1982), 212–14.

[42] For an overview of the different positions on the dating of Hiram's embassy to David, see Green 1983, 373–78. Green offers convincing arguments in support of Hiram contacting David early in his reign in Jerusalem rather than later.

[43] On the economic benefits, see Katzenstein 1973, 94–98.

[44] In his paper, Liver does not date all the kings in Josephus' king list. He merely shows that the total of 155 years and 8 months can be used to date Solomon's reign independently of the Hebrew monarchic data.

For Liver, those problems were resolved by choosing an earlier date for the founding of Carthage (i.e., 825 B.C.), so placing Hiram's accession in the last decade of David's reign.[45] But this still posed a problem. The context suggests that 2 Sam 5:11 is set *early* in David's occupation of Jerusalem, not in its final decade. To address this, Liver submitted that 2 Sam 5:11 was "an incidental passage which does not stand in proper chronological sequence" (1953, 116–17).[46] Our study rejects that view, and accepts a long overlap between the reigns of David and Hiram, as convincingly argued by Green (1983, 373–78).

Conclusion

This appendix has shown that Josephus' Tyrian king list is beset with problems, the major ones being:

1. the Biblical indication of a long-standing friendship between David and Hiram, which contradicts the 34-year reign of Hiram by Menander/Josephus

2. there is good reason to doubt Josephus' Tyrian synchronisms (the 11th and/or 12th year of Hiram) as well as his tallied intervals (155 years and 8 months, and related calculation of 143 years and 8 months)

In view of this, we conclude that the Tyrian king list is of questionable precision. It is therefore unsuitable for reconstructing or verifying Biblical chronology. This agrees with Lowell Handy's assessment that the use of Josephus' Tyrian data to date Solomon's reign, despite once enjoying a period of popularity, is generally not accepted in modern scholarship.[47]

[45] Liver dated Hiram's accession to 979/78 B.C. This was due to his belief that the 155 years was reckoned by the Babylonian method of *inclusive counting* (he ignored the eight-month rule of Phellēs). The total of 155 years should therefore be reduced by one year. Thus, 825 B.C. plus 154 years = 979/78 B.C. for Hiram's accession (1953, 119–20). Since the temple in Jerusalem was founded in Hiram's eleventh year (1953, 115 n. 6), the event can be dated to 968/67 B.C. Because this was also Solomon's fourth year, Solomon's reign can be dated from 971/70 to 931/30 B.C.

[46] For a similar view of the "Hiram problem," see Eugene H. Merrill, "The 'Accession Year' and Davidic Chronology," *JANES* 19 (1989): 101–12, esp. 102–04.

[47] Lowell K. Handy, "On the Dating and Dates of Solomon's Reign," in *The Age of Solomon*, 97–98.

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Revision History

VERSION 1.001 (19 MAY, 2010)

– Initial e-book release.

VERSION 1.002 (31 OCT, 2010)

– Text relating to Ezek 4:4–6 reworded to clarify that it supports the chronology; it is not central to it.
– Expansion on how the chronology depends not only on 605 B.C. but also the year of Josiah's death.
– Various sections and paragraphs rearranged and/or rewritten for a more logical flow.
– Extraneous paragraphs and sentences removed.
– Several minor grammatical changes.
– Some recent literature references added.
– Typos corrected where found.

VERSION 1.003 (17 DEC, 2011)

– Several minor grammatical changes.

VERSION 1.004 (30 MAY, 2015)

– The Sabbath-Jubilee calendar in Appendix H has been amended. The first Sabbath year is now 1404, which is seven years later than my original date of 1411. This is to allow for the Hebrews not being able to till the land until they conquered Canaan, which took seven years to achieve.

– Previously, this e-book contained blank pages to facilitate duplex printing as a bound volume, with all chapters starting on the right hand page, and always with odd numbers. To simplify handling the document file, all blank pages have been removed.