Examination of anachronisms in biblical and Neo-Assyrian chronologies over the period 1179-539 BCE

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The Assyrian chronology of the first millennium BCE is perfectly determined, as the succession of the kings is completely established for the period 1133-609 BCE and anchored on the total solar eclipse dated [30]/III/10 of Aššur-dān III (773-755), 15 June 763 BCE , which makes it possible to establish an absolute chronology from Aššur-rêš-iši I (1133-1115), Assyrian king no. 86, to Aššur-uballiṭ II (612-609), Assyrian king no. 116. The Assyrian King List (AKL) was drawn up by Babylonian scribes who transformed the number of eponyms during Assyrian reigns into the number of years of reign. Unlike Babylonian kings, who counted their reign in number of years, Assyrian kings counted their reign in number of military campaigns. As most Assyrian kings led military campaigns when they were crown princes, the dating of these campaigns was reported during their reign. This assimilation has led to chronological inconsistencies, particularly the synchronisms with the Judean and Israelite reigns. For example, Sennacherib was crown prince (715-705) with King Sargon II (722-705) and captured the city of Lachish during his 3rd military campaign. The dating of this campaign during the 3rd year of his reign (705-691) should be in 702 BCE (= 705 - 3), but this does not correspond to the eponyms which date it in 701 BCE. To resolve this paradox, Assyriologists assume that there were two similar campaigns in Judea, the first dated during the 10th campaign of Sargon II, in 712 BCE (= 722 - 10) and the second during the 3rd campaign of Sennacherib in 701 BCE (= 705 - 3 - 1), assuming that he led a first campaign during his accession (which is unlikely). On the other hand, if this 3rd campaign when he was crown prince (715-705), the capture of Lachish took place in 712 BCE (= 715 - 3) during the 10th campaign of Sargon II in Judea. In addition, this agrees exactly with the biblical account stating that all these events occurred during the 14th regnal year of Judean King Hezekiah (726-697) also dated 712 BCE (= 726 - 14). This explanation is not accepted because it implies that a crown prince was in fact a co-regent, but contrary to ideological claims on this subject, a chronological study of the Achaemenid reigns has shown that co-regencies did exist and were even frequent (Gertoux 2018: 179-206).

Preliminary remark. Historians should be prosecutors in the court of history, but unfortunately, as Champollion[2] already denounced in 1809, when he was appointed assistant professor of history at the University of Grenoble, the all too frequent complacency of historians towards political power. Very often university professors are more concerned with the advancement of their careers than with the advancement of the truth and therefore rarely risk questioning government propaganda. No field is spared. For example, Albert Einstein, who was one of the most respected scientists ever, wrote in his letter to Jost Winteler[3] (1901): "*Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth.*" Due to excessive deference to authority, as Milgram's experiments on obedience to authority figures have shown, university professors refrain from questioning national novels in order not to antagonise government authorities[4], and thus refrain from defending historical truth. Moreover, most readers, by giving unthinking respect to university professors, give up questioning their nationalist narratives. The best method to expose these historical lies is, as understood by Herodotus, "the Father of History", to use chronology as a criterion of truth to flush out the myths and lies: "Once upon a time in a faraway land…" Thus absolute "chronology is the backbone of history", and it is a powerful means of finding historical truth. The first to set out this historical principle was the religious archaeologist Edwin R. Thiele, but paradoxically he did not apply it to his biblical chronology because he arbitrarily added 9 co-regencies to bring it into line with his hypotheses (Thiele: 1944, 137-186). As Albert Einstein recognised, the search for scientific truth is a religious process, since it is assumed to exist and that we can approach it. The first scientist to seek a biblical chronology in line with astronomy was Isaac Newton (1642-1727) who wrote: *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, but to avoid being accused of apostasy and excommunicated he asked his friends not to publish it until posthumously (in 1728). It was for this reason that he publicly disavowed the French version published in 1725: Abrégé de la chronologie de M. le Chevalier Isaac Newton.

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[1] A short report of this paper was presented in Oxford, at Wolfson College, on Saturday 25 April 2015 in the Oxford Postgraduate Conference in Assyriology (https://oxfordassyriology.wordpress.com/opca-2015-programme/). An abstract has been published (https://oxfordassyriology.wordpress.com/gerard-gertoux-university-of-lyon-2/).

[2] Jean-François Champollion was a French philologist and orientalist, known primarily as the decipherer of Egyptian hieroglyphs and a founding figure in the field of Egyptology.

[3] In this letter, quoted in *The Private Lives of Albert Einstein* by Roger Highfield and Paul Carter (1993), p. 79, he wrote that he had been upset that Paul Drude, editor of the *Annalen der Physik*, had dismissed out of hand some of his criticisms of Drude's electron theory of metals.

[4] Disagreeing with a member of his government can have serious consequences for an academic: losing grants or permission to conduct excavations, being removed from his or her position and being transferred to a smaller university (see Crisis at the French Institute of Oriental Archeology https://www.osirisnet.net/news/n_12_04.htm?en). On the other hand, an academic with connections to influential politicians will benefit from career and publication promotion and research grants, provided, of course, that he or she implicitly endorses the political vision of the benefactor.

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For an in-depth research on astronomical events the reader can consult F. Richard STEPHENSON, *Historical Eclipses and Earth's Rotation* (1997); Noel M. SWERDLOW, *The Babylonian Theory of the Planets* (1998), Hermann HUNGER, Abraham SACHS, John M. STEELE, *Astronomical diaries and related texts from Babylonia* Volume 5 – Lunar and Planetary Texts (2001), Peter J. HUBER, *Babylonian Eclipse observations from 750 BC to 1 BC* (2004), John M. STEELE, *Calendars and Years. Astronomy and Time in the Ancient Near East* (2007) and *Explaining Babylonian Astronomy*, Isis Volume 110:2 (2019). The reader who wishes to verify the length of a reign can consult the following reference works for:

Mesopotamian reigns

- Fei CHEN, *Study on the Synchronistic King List from Ashur*, Cuneiform Monographs 51 (2020).
- Gérard GERTOUX, *Dating the Reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis Series Archaeologica 40 (2018); *Intercalations during the co-regency of Xerxes with Darius*, NABU 2020-4 note 130 (2020).
- Jean-Jacques GLASSNER, Mesopotamian Chronicles (2005).
- Regine PRUZSINSZKY, *Mesopotamian Chronology of the 2nd Millennium B.C. An Introduction to the Textual Evidence and Related Chronological Issues* (2009).
- Albert K. GRAYSON, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)*, The Royal inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian periods, Volume 2 (1991), *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (2000). *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858-745 BC)*, The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Assyrian Period 3 (2002).

Israelite reigns

- Jack FINEGAN, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (1998).
- Gershon GALIL, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (1996).
- M. Floyd Nolen JONES, *The Chronology of the Old Testament* (2007).
- Antti LAATO, *Guide to Biblical Chronology* (2015).
- M. Christine TETLEY, *The Reconstructed Chronology of the Divided Kingdom* (2005).

The Assyrian chronology of the first millennium BCE is perfectly determined, as the succession of the kings is completely established for the period 1133-609 BCE and anchored on the total solar eclipse dated [30]/III/**10** of Aššur-dān III (773-755), 15 June 763 BCE[5], which makes it possible to establish an absolute chronology from Aššur-rêš-iši I (1133-1115), Assyrian king no. 86, to Aššur-uballiṭ II (612-609), Assyrian king no. 116 (Pruzsinszky: 2009, 17,51-52). The Assyrian King List (AKL) was drawn up by Babylonian scribes who transformed the number of eponyms during Assyrian reigns into the number of years of reign. Unlike Babylonian kings, who counted their reign in number of years, Assyrian kings counted their reign in number of military campaigns. As most Assyrian kings led military campaigns when they were crown princes, the dating of these campaigns was reported during their reign. This assimilation has led to chronological inconsistencies, particularly the synchronisms with the Judean and Israelite reigns. For example, Sennacherib was crown prince (715-705) with King Sargon II (722-705) and captured the city of Lachish during his 3rd military campaign. The dating of this campaign during the 3rd year of his reign (705-691) should be in 702 BCE (= 705 - 3), but this does not correspond to the eponyms which date it in 701 BCE. To resolve this paradox, Assyriologists assume that there were two similar campaigns in Judea, the first dated during the 10th campaign of Sargon II, in 712 BCE (= 722 - 10) and the second during the 3rd campaign of Sennacherib in 701 BCE (= 705 - 3 - 1), assuming that he led a first campaign during his accession (which is unlikely). On the other hand, if this 3rd campaign when he was crown prince (715-705), the capture of Lachish took place in 712 BCE (= 715 - 3) during the 10th campaign of Sargon II in Judea. In addition, this agrees exactly with the biblical account stating that all these events occurred during the 14th regnal year of Judean King Hezekiah (726-697) also dated 712 BCE (= 726 - 14). This explanation is not accepted because it implies that a crown prince was in fact a co-regent. Pierre Briant[6] explains that Xerxes was crown prince (496-486) during the reign of Darius I (522-486), but that this prestigious status could not be equated with a role as co-regent:

> On the date of Xerxes' selection as crown prince by Darius: according to Calmeyer, Xerxes was "king and co-regent" for twelve years beginning in 498; but, aside from the fact that I am skeptical of the author's general thesis of "double kingship" (the king never shares power), the archaeological evidence offered is hardly probative: the Babylonian tablet to which he refers, and which he considers "very seductive" evidence, speaks only of a new palace at Babylon and it has not been directly related to the naming of a "co-regent" at this date; we may note further in passing that it dates to 496 (Dar. 26), not 498 (Briant: 2002, 958-959).

Pierre Briant's two main arguments to prove the absence of co-regency are ideological: "the king never shares power", this statement reflects Pierre Briant's conception of autocratic power, and: "it has not been directly related to the naming of a "co-regent" at this date", this is circular reasoning: since he was not named "co-regent" (this term does not exist in Assyrian), he deduces that the crown princes were not co-regents. Contrary to Pierre Briant's ideological assertions, a chronological study of the Achaemenid reigns has shown that co-regencies did exist and were even frequent (Gertoux 2018: 179-206). These lists of kings contain chronological inconsistencies, particularly at the beginning and end of the reign of Artaxerxes I. A study carried out on all the dated Babylonian contracts, as well as on all the astronomical tablets recorded, in order to reconstruct an absolute chronology of the Achaemenid period, gives the following results (the kings who reigned are highlighted in grey and the reigns anchored on astronomical dating are highlighted in sky blue. The period in the list of kings that is incorrect is highlighted in orange):

TABLE 1

King (in King list)	Date min.	Date max.	Death	King as	Reign	King List	
Cambyses II	12/VI/**00**	23/I/**08**	xx/I/**08**		530–522	530	-
Bardiya[7]	14/XII/**00**			co-regent	523		-
		20/VIII/**01**	10/VII/**01**	"usurper"	-522		
Nebuchadnezzar III	14/VII/**00**	2/X/**00**	xx/X/**00**	"usurper"	522–522		
Nebuchadnezzar IV	27/II/**01**	26/VII/**01**	xx/VIII/**01**	"usurper"	522–522		-522
Darius I	6/X/**00**	10+/IX/**36**	[10]/IX/**36**		522–486	522	-
Xerxes I	[-]/III/[**00**]	[10]/IX/**10**		co-regent	496		-486
Bel-shimanni	14+/V/**00**	04/VI/**00**	xx/VI/**00**	"usurper"	485–485		
Shamash-eriba	04/V[!]/**00**	11/VIII/**00**	xx/VIII/**00**	"usurper"	485–485		
Xerxes I		20/V/**21**	14/V/**21**		-475	486	-
Darius A	-	-	[14/V/**00**]	crown prince	475-475		

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[5] https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/5MCSEmap/-0799--0700/-762-06-15.gif
[6] Pierre Briant is a French Iranologist, Professor of History and Civilisation of the Achaemenid World and the Empire of Alexander the Great at the Collège de France (1999 onwards), Doctor Honoris Causa at the University of Chicago, and founder of the website achemenet.com.
[7] Bardiya (birth name) is called Gaumata by Darius I, Mardus by Aeschylus (472 BCE), Smerdis by Herodotus (450 BCE), Tanyoxarkes by Ctesias (400 BCE), Artaxerxes (maybe his throne name) by Esdras (Esd 4:4-24), Mergis by Justinus, etc.

King				status	reign	
Artaban			xx/XII/00	"usurper"	475-475	-465
Artaxerxes I	10/IX/00	20/XII/41			**475** -	**465** -
Darius B	14/IX/00	6/VII/08	xx/xx/08	co-regent	434–426	
Artaxerxes I		4/VI/50	xx/XI/50		**-425**	
Xerxes II	-	-	[xx/II/51]		**425–424**	
Sogdianus			[xx/IX/51]	"usurper"	424–424	-424
Darius II	14/IX/00	2/VI/19	xx/VIII/19		**424–405**	**424**–405

The Table 1 shows that the Babylonian king lists have been purged of all co-regencies: Bardiya (523-522), Xerxes I (496-486) and Darius B (434-426), as well as all usurpers including kings who were later considered illegitimate or "usurper" (Bardiya and Xerxes II). These changes forced the Babylonian scribes to rearrange the king lists and to modify certain reigns (Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I). Another recent study has shown that the succession between Aššur-nerari V and Tiglath-pileser III can only be explained by a co-regency between these two Assyrian kings:

> With the exception of the Eponym Chronicle, the co-regency which existed between Ashur-nerari V and Tiglath-pileser III during the final two years of Ashur-nerari V's reign was completely concealed from the official records. It is perhaps as a result of these unique circumstances that such importance was given to recording the date of Tiglath-pileser's first campaign in his annals: "At the beginning of my reign, in my first *palû*, in the fifth month after I sat in great ness on the throne of kingship..." where no mention is made of these unique political circumstances. Yet, the existence of a co-regency might help explain the contradictory reports we have of Tiglath-pileser's ancestry. If reports of the co-regency were stricken from the official records in Assyria, it is easy to see how this could give rise to a scribal error. A king's reign typically came to an end only upon his death, and it is logical to assume that his successor was his son. However, where a co-regency existed there was every chance that the natural succession had been broken and that the king's successor was not his son. In this case, a co-regency might ensure that the person appointed by a king to succeed him was later accepted as the legitimate ruler by his court (Davenport: 2016, 40-41).

The academic dogma of the absence of Assyrian co-regencies had consequences for the establishment of Mesopotamian chronologies from the 1st millennium BCE. The biblical chronology of the 1st millennium BCE of the kings of Israel and Judah is also perfectly determined but most of the synchronisms with the Assyrian chronology do not work, which led Edwin R. Thiele, in his 1943 thesis on this subject to invent nine artificial co-regencies between the kings of Israel and Judah to make all these synchronisms coincide (imperfectly). Several comprehensive studies of Thiele's biblical chronology have shown that his nine imaginary co-regencies destroy the great chronological coherence of the biblical (Masoretic) text without any reason, and furthermore that most of the biblical synchronisms with the Assyrian chronology were wrong, and thus that Thiele's biblical chronology was not reliable, it gives rise to several insoluble inconsistencies. This chronology, which is still used by scholars to calculate the chronology of the kings of Damascus, destroys the biblical synchronisms between the kings of Israel and Judah (Tetley: 2005, 91-185; Jones: 2007, 105-197); the numerous inconsistencies making it unusable in establishing a reliable chronology (Hughes: 1990, 182-232,264-266; Galil: 1996, 1-11, 46-51). The method for establishing the chronology of the kings of Tyre is also erroneous, but the current biblical chronology is still based on Thiele's (Laato: 2015, 5-13,63-69). It is therefore necessary to check whether the heir princes were co-regents and whether the synchronisms between the Assyrian reigns and the Israelite or Judean reigns are correctly dated.

ASSYRIAN CHRONOLOGY BASED ON THE LIST OF REIGNS (1179–609 BCE)

The chronology of the Assyrian kings for the period 1179-609 BCE is mainly based on three chronological data verifiable by astronomy (Chen: 2020, 197-201):
1) The duration (#) of all Assyrian reigns (from nos. 83-116) and Babylonian reigns (from nos. 33-56 and from nos. 72-96) is known exactly through the Assyrian and Babylonian king lists and
2) several synchronisms (highlighted in grey) between Assyrian and Babylonian reigns are mentioned in the royal Chronicles (Pruzsinszky: 2009, 17,51-52).
3) Several lunar eclipses, precisely dated in a few astronomical tablets (Stephenson: 1997, 540,544), have been back-calculated by astronomy (highlighted in sky blue).

TABLE 2

n°	ASSYRIAN KING	#	Reign	n°	BABYLONIAN KING	#	Reign	Eclipse ref.
83	Aššur-dân I	46	**1179** -	**33**	Meli-Šipak	15	1187-1172	
				34	Marduk-apla-iddina	13	1172-1159	
				35	Zababa-šuma-iddina	1	**1159**-1158	

Assyrian kings

#	Name	yrs	dates
			-1133
84	Ninurta-tukultî-Aššur	0	1133-1133
85	Mutakkil-Nusku	0	1133-**1133**
86	Aššur-rêš-iši I	18	**1133**-1115
87	Tiglath-pileser I	39	1115 -
	(Grayson: 2000, 189)		-1076
88	Ašared-apil-Ekur	2	1076-1074
89	Aššur-bêl-kala	18	1074-1056
90	Erîba-Adad II	2	1056-1054
91	Šamšî-Adad IV	4	1054-1050
92	Aššurnasirpal I	19	1050-1031
93	Shalmaneser II	12	1031-1019
94	Aššur-nêrârî IV	6	1019-1013
95	Aššur-rabi II	41	1013 -
			-972
96	Aššur-rêš-iši II	5	972-967
97	Tiglath-pileser II	32	967 -
			-935
98	Aššur-dân II	23	935-912
99	Adad-nêrârî II	21	**912**-891
100	Tukultî-Ninurta II	7	891-884
101	Aššurnasirpal II	25	884-859
102	Shalmaneser III	35	859-824
103	Šamšî-Adad V	13	824 -
			-811
104	Adad-nêrârî III	28	811 -
			-783
105	Shalmaneser IV	10	783-773
106	Aššur-dân III	18	773-755
107	Aššur-nêrârî V	10	755-745
108	Tiglath-pileser III	18	745 -
			-727
109	Shalmaneser V	5	727-722
110	Sargon II	17	722 -
			-705
111	Sennacherib	24	705 -
			-681
112	Esarhaddon	12	**681**-669
113	Aššurbanipal	42	669-627
114	Aššur-etel-ilâni	3	630-627
		1	627-626
115	Sin-šar-iškun	14	626-612
116	Aššur-uballiṭ II	3	612-**609**

Babylonian kings

#	Name	yrs	dates	reference
36	Enlil-nâdin-aḫi	3	1158-**1155**	
37	Marduk-kabit-aḫḫešu	18	**1159**-1141	
38	Itti-Marduk-balaṭu (ISIN II)	8	1141 -	
			-1133	
39	Ninurta-nâdin-šumi	6	**1133**-1127	
40	Nebuchadnezzar I	22	1127-1105	
41	Enlil-nâdin-apli	4	1105-1101	
42	Marduk-nâdin-aḫḫê	18	1101-1083	
43	Marduk-šapik-zêri	13	1083-1070	
44	Adad-apla-iddina	22	1070-1048	
45	Marduk-aḫḫê-erîba	1	1048-1047	
46	Marduk-zêr-[…]	12	1047-1035	
47	Nabû-šum-libur	8	1035-1027	
48	Simbar-šipak	18	1027-1009	
49	Ea-mukîn-zêri	1	1009-1008	
50	Kaššu-nâdin-ahi	2	1008-1006	
51	Eulmaš-šakin-šumi	17	1006-989	
52	Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur I	3	989-986	
53	Širiki-šuqamuna	1	986-985	
54	Mâr-bîti-apla-uṣur	5	985-980	
55	Nabû-mukîn-apli	36	980 -	
			-944	
56	Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur II	3	944-941	
57	Mâr-bîti-aḫḫê-iddin	20	941-*921*	
58	Šamaš-mudammiq	21	*921* -	
			-900	
59	Nabû-šum-ukîn I	12	900-888	
60	Nabû-apla-iddina	33	888-855	
61	Marduk-zâkir-šumi I	36	855-819	
62	Marduk-balâssu-iqbi	6	819-813	
63	Bâba-ah-iddina	-	813-812	
-	no kings	-	812-801	
	5 unknown kings	-	801-*800*	(nos. 64-68)
69	Ninurta-apla-[…]	*10*	*800-790*	
70	Marduk-bêl-zêri	*10*	*790-780*	
71	Marduk-apla-uṣur	*10*	*780-770*	
72	Erîba-Marduk	9	770-761	
73	Nabû-šum-iškun	13	761-748	
74	Nabû-naṣir	14	748-734	
75	Nabû-nâdin-zêri	2	734-732	
76	Nabû-šum-ukîn II	0	732-732	
77	Nabû-mukîn-zêri	3	732-729	BM 35789
78	Pûlu	2	729-727	
79	Ulûlaiu	5	727-722	
80	Merodachbaladan II	12	722-710	Almagest IV:6
81	Sargon II	5	710-705	
82	Sennacherib	2	705-703	
83	Marduk-zâkir-šumi II	0	703-703	
84	Bêl-ibni	3	703-700	
85	Aššur-nâdin-šumi	6	700-694	
86	Nergal-ušezib	1	694-693	
87	Mušezib-Marduk	4	693-689	
88	Sennacherib	8	689-681	
89	Esarhaddon	12	**681**-669	
90	Šamaš-šum-ukîn	20	668-648	BM 45640
91	Kandalanu	22	648-626	
	Sin-šum-lišir	-	627-626	
92	Nabopolassar	21	626 -	Almagest V:14
			-605	
93	Nebuchadnezzar II	43	605-562	VAT 4956
94	Amel-Marduk	2	562-560	
95	Neriglissar	4	560-556	
96	Nabonidus	17	556-**539**	

Consequently, the Assyrian chronology is well established for the period 1179-609 BCE (Chen: 2020, 197-201) was anchored in astronomical dates through synchronisms with Babylonian chronology[8], but it is difficult to determine whether there were overlapping reigns due to possible co-regencies[9] (Hagens: 2005, 23-41). Assyriologists have assumed that there were no co-regencies among the Assyrian reigns. Based on this assumption, Edwin R. Thiele, in his 1943 thesis (published in 1951), established a chronology of the Hebrew kings, relying on the numerous synchronisms with the Assyrian kings. However, he encountered a difficulty because several of the required synchronisms exhibited gaps ranging from 10 to 45 years. He solved this problem by arbitrarily assuming the existence of nine co-regencies among the Hebrew reigns (Thiele: 1983, 173-177). Despite this arbitrary choice, which destroys the chronological coherence of the Hebrew reigns (Hughes: 1990, 264-266), Thiele's chronology still serves as a reference for scholars. However, a careful examination of these synchronisms between Assyrian and biblical chronologies shows that there were several co-regencies among the Assyrian reigns, which they have been correctly dated in the biblical chronology, such as those of Sennacherib and Tiglath-Pileser III. These kings played a crucial role in Israel's history during their co-regencies, such as Sennacherib's campaign in Judah (his third) with the siege of Lachish and Jerusalem, which took place in 712 BCE during the 10th campaign of Sargon II (722-705) with whom he was co-regent during the years 715 to 705 BCE. This agrees exactly with the biblical account stating that all these events occurred during the 14th year of Judean King Hezekiah (726-697) also dated 712 BCE (2Ki 18:13-17; 2Ch 32:9; Is 20:1; 36:1). Similarly, the Israelite king Menahem (771-760) had to pay a tribute (in 765 BCE) to an Assyrian king Pul (2Ki 15:19-20). The Assyrian word *pulu*, from *apil/aplu*, means "the heir i.e., crown prince". King Pul(as) reigned 36 years, according to Josephus (Jewish Antiquities IX: 283-287), which corresponds exactly to the Assyrian king Pulu (co-regent) known by his Aramaic name Bar-Ga'yah "Son of the Majesty" who reigned from 782 to 746 BCE.

Co-regencies are ignored by Assyriologists because the word co-regent does not exist in Hebrew, the biblical text uses the word "king (*melekh*)", nor in Assyrian, the Assyrian inscriptions use the word "crown prince", literally "son of the king (DUMU LUGAL)", and sometimes (rarely) the word "[other] king (MAN)" next to the word "king (LUGAL)". In practice, however, the co-regent was easily recognised because as crown prince he could lead military campaigns, like the king, and he was represented identically to the king, except for the tiara. By having an equivalent role to the king, he was therefore a co-regent. Only a thorough study of the inscriptions makes it possible to determine whether a synchronism occurred during the reign or during the co-regency. The aim of this study is to identify these Assyrian co-regencies and to verify their role in historical synchronisms.

ASSYRIAN CHRONOLOGY BASED ON THE LIST OF EPONYMS (912–609 BCE)

The Assyrian King List (AKL) does not mention any co-regencies because they have been suppressed. For example, there was a 3-year co-regency between Aššurbanipal (669-627) and Aššur-etel-ilâni (630-626). Similarly, there was a 1-year co-regency (virtual?) between Kandalanu (648-626) and Sin-šum-lišir (627-626), considered a usurper. The absence of co-regencies among Assyrian reigns is therefore an erroneous academic dogma. Consequently, the presence of co-regencies modifies the dating of some synchronisms. For example, in the AKL there is a synchronism between Year 1 of Aššur-etel-ilâni and Year 22 of Kandalanu in 626 BCE, but in the list of eponyms this synchronism occurs between Year 1 of Aššur-etel-ilâni and Year 19 of Kandalanu in 629 BCE. The 3-year co-regency between Aššur-etel-ilâni and Aššurbanipal were thus deleted in the AKL (presumably because Aššurbanipal had become senile or had a stroke in 631 BCE?)[10], which modifies the dating of the synchronisms during this period.

The in-depth study of the reign of Aššur-etel-ilâni (Na'aman: 1991, 243-267) revealed two essential points, the AKL eliminated all usurpers and all co-regencies. A close examination of the Assyrian reigns, as well as the synchronisms with the Judean and Israelite reigns during the period of the divided monarchy, shows that co-regencies were almost the rule, not the exception, as Assyriologists believe.

The title "co-regent" does not exist in Assyrian, but Assyrian texts use the title: DUMU LUGAL (*mār šarri*), literally "[heir] son of the [titular] king", translated as "crown prince". Moreover, the crown prince is often represented on bas-reliefs identically to the king, except for the tiara, and facing him. The word LUGAL (*šarru* "king") is used for the titular king while the word MAN (*šarru[šanu]* "[other] king") is used for the king in office. The word MAN, written with two nail heads (《 "20" that is "god Shamash"), is read

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[8] For example, the astronomical journal BM 38462 lists some lunar eclipses in the years 1 to 27 of Nebuchadnezzar II which are dated from 604 to 578 BCE. Other dated lunar eclipses are these of year 1 and 2 of Merodachbaladan II (19/20 March 721 BCE, 8/9 March and 1/2 September 720 BCE); year 5 of Nabopolassar (21/22 April 621 BCE); year 2 of Šamaš-šuma-ukîn (10/11 April 666 BCE) and year 42 of Nebuchadnezzar (2/3 March 562 BCE).

[9] Although he is not mentioned in the Babylonian king lists, Belshazzar (553-539) was the co-regent of Nabonidus (556-539).

[10] Aššurbanipal did not die in 631 BCE (Year 38), as the accession of Aššur-etel-ilâni is dated in 630 BCE (Year 39).

šarru "king" in Neo-Assyrian. This word had a former meaning *šanû* "second/other" (Black, George, Postgate: 2000, 355-356), consequently this word MAN can also be understood as: king II, viceroy, or co-regent. The literal translation "son of the king" for "crown prince" is misleading because, as successor of the king, he was above the *tartānu* > *turtānu* "commander-in-chief" (De Ridder: 2020, 274-275), the second most important person in the state (*tardennu*). Paradoxically, his title and role rarely appear in Assyrian inscriptions. In fact, the Assyrian monumental art, which frequently depicts the crown prince, clearly indicates his role and power for all to see.

For example, in Sargon II's palace at Dur-Sharrukin (Fig. 1) he is easily identified by his tiara (*agû*). He appears facing his crown prince (Sennacherib) who has three characteristic royal attributes namely: he is depicted the same size as the king, he is depicted as a head above the other high officials and he wears the ornament/diadem (*tiqnu*) with rosette (arrow 3), also owned by the commander-in-chief, which indicated that he was the head of the armies and he wears the headband (*pitūtu*) with tassels (arrow 4), which symbolises royal filiation, the king being himself son of king (*mār šarru*), designated as heir (*apil/aplu*) to the throne (Kertai: 2017, 111–133). The crown prince was thus represented as identical to the king, but without the tiara. When Lachish was taken[11] (in 712 BCE), the label above the head of Sennacherib (who is facing Sargon), gives him the title of "[other] king (MAN)" (Russell: 1991, 206, 276–277), which corresponds to viceroy/co-regent, and does not name him "[titular] king (LUGAL)" because he has no tiara. From the time of king Aššurnasirpal II (884-859), Assyrian inscriptions (but not Babylonian inscriptions) used the Sumerian word MAN instead of LUGAL to designate kings in office (LUGAL was still used to designate Assyrian kings). In Hebrew, Assyrian king or Assyrian co-regent are referred to by the same word "king (*melekh*)". Although the words MAN and LUGAL both mean "king" they do not have exactly the same meaning. It is noted that among the 16 bronze weights from the time of Shalmaneser V (727-722) that bear inscriptions in Assyrian and Aramaic, the Assyrian expression: weight "of the king (*šá* MAN)" is translated into Aramaic as: weight "of the king (*zy mlk*)" while the expression: weight "of the King (*šá* LUGAL)" is translated as: weight "of the land (*zy 'rq'*)", which shows that the word LUGAL had the meaning of "King [of the land of Assyria]" (Tadmor, Yamada: 2011, 171-186).

Fig. 1

For the Assyrians, the crown prince was therefore a second king without a tiara. The narrative art from Tiglath-pileser's reign consists of the reliefs that were made for his new palace at Kalḫu as well as the royal frescoes in the palace of Til-Barsip. Both show groups of people approaching the king and his high officials.

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[11] The taking of Lachish by Sennacherib (2Ki 18:13-17) was parallel to the taking of Ashdod by Sargon (Is 20:1).

The crown prince, just in front of the beardless commander-in-chief (*turtānu*), is depicted in his typical role of presenting the groups to the king sitting on his throne. As co-regent, he monopolises this position on all known reliefs and wall paintings (Thomas: 2019, 37,120-122,143-149). To examine the synchronisms of the Assyrian reigns with the Judean and Israelite reigns, it is necessary to use a reliable biblical chronology.

CHRONOLOGY OF HEBREW REIGNS OVER THE PERIOD 1533–587 BCE

The biblical chronology was independently transmitted by five documents, those of the Septuagint (LXX), Flavius Josephus (FJ), Masoretic Text (MT), Theophilus of Antioch (TA) and the Seder Olam (SO), the first two (MT and LXX) being considered the most reliable. The numbers in brackets are durations obtained indirectly[12] and the numbers with an asterisk indicate an error. The reign lengths expressed as a subtraction (numbers 27 and 29) are calculated by subtracting from the reign length the period of co-regency with their successor. The totals that are given in the biblical text (300, 480 and 390) make it possible to compare them with the sum of the reigns. This biblical chronology is anchored on the death of Josiah which is precisely dated to July 609 BCE. It should be noted that Year 31 of Josiah coincided with Year 17 of Nabopolassar, Year 1 of Necho II and Year 3 of Aššur-uballiṭ II (Galil: 1996, 108-123). The biblical chronology (Table 3) obtained from the Masoretic Text (MT) is extremely coherent and is the only one that contains no errors (asterisk indicate an error).

TABLE 3

N°	Chronology from:	MT	LXX	FJ	TA	SO	Period	reference
	Moses (Exodus)	40	40	40	40	40	1533-1493	Exodus 16:35
1	Joshua	(30)	(30)	(30)	27*	28*	**1493**-1463	Joshua 14:10; 24:29
2	Without Judge	(11)	(11)	18*	-	0*	1463-1452	Joshua 24:31
3	Cushan-Rishataim	8	8	8	8	0*	1452-1444	Judges 3:8
4	Othniel	40	40/50*	40	40	40	1444-1404	Judges 3:11
5	Eglon	18	18	18	18	18	1404-1386	Judges 3:14
6	Ehud	80	80	(80)	8*	80	1386-1306	Judges 3:30
7	Madian	7	7	7	7	7	1306-1299	Judges 6:1
8	Gideon	40	40	40	40	40	1299-1259	Judges 8:28
9	Abimelech	3	3	3	3	3	1259-1256	Judges 9:22
10	Tola	23	23	(23)	23	23	1256-1233	Judges 10:2
11	Jair	22	22	22	22	22	1233-1211	Judges 10:3
12	Anarchy	18	18	18	18	18	1211-**1193**	Judges 10:8
	Total N° 1-12	300	300	307*	214*	287*		
	Biblical total	**300**	**300**	**300**	**300**	**300**	1493-1193	Judges 11:26,30
13	Jephthah	6	6/60*	6	6	6	1193-1187	Judges 12:7
14	Ibzan	7	7	7	7	7	1187-1180	Judges 12:9
15	Elon	10	10	10	10	10	1180-1170	Judges 12:11
16	Abdon	8	8	(8)	8	8	1170-1162	Judges 12:14
17	[Eli] Philistines	40	20*/40	40	40	40	1162-1122	1 Samuel 4:18
18	Samson	20	20	20	20	20	1122-1102	Judges 16:31
19	Samuel's sons	(5)	(5)	12*	12*	10*	1102-1097	1 Samuel 8:1-3
20	Saul	(40)	(40)	20*/40	20*	3*	1097-1057	Acts 13:21
21	David	40	40	40	40	40	1057-1017	1 Kings 2:11
22	Solomon (year 4)	4	4	4	4	4	1017-**1013**	1 Kings 6:1
	Total N° 1-22	480	480	467/487	467	448		
	Biblical total	**480**	**440***	**480**	**480**	**480**	1493-1013	1 Kings 6:1
23	Solomon	40	40	80*	40	40	1017 - 977	1 Kings 11:42
24	Rehoboam	17	17	17	17	17	**977**-960	1 Kings 14:21
25	Abiyam	3	6*	3	7*	3	960-957	1 Kings 15:2
26	Asa	41	41	41	41	41	957-916	1 Kings 15:10
27	Josaphat	25 - 2	25 - 2	25 - 2	25 - 2	25 - 2	916-893	1 Kings 22:42
28	Joram	8	10*	8	8	8	893-885	2 Kings 8:17
29	[Athaliah]	7 - 1	7 - 1	7 - 1	6	7+1*	885-879	2 Kings 11:4
30	Joash	40	40	40	40	40	879-839	2 Kings 12:2
31	Amasiah	29	29	29	39*	22*	839-810	2 Kings 14:2
32	Uzziah	52	52	52	52	52	810-758	2 Kings 15:2
33	Jotham	16	16	16	16	16	758-742	2 Kings 15:33
34	Ahaz	16	16	16	17*	16	742-726	2 Kings 16:2
35	Hezekiah	29	29	29	29	29	726-697	2 Kings 18:2

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[12] e.g. Joshua entered Canaan at the age of 80 and as he died at the age of 110 he therefore led the Israelites for 30 years.

36	Manasseh	55	55	55	55	55	697-642	2 Kings 21:1
37	Amon	2	2	2	2	2	642-640	2 Kings 21:19
38	**Josiah**	31	31	31	31	31	640-**609**	2 Kings 22:1
39	Joiaqim	11	11	11	11	11	609-598	2 Kings 23:36
40	Zedekiah	11	11	11	11	11	598-**587**	2 Kings 24:18
	Total N° 24-40	390	395	390	405	385		
	Biblical total	**390**	**190***	**390**	**390**	**390**	977-587	Ezekiel 4:5-6

Biblical chronology is based on a complex and highly sophisticated five-date system that allows for the immediate detection of possible copying errors. The five dating systems are as follows: 1) Judean reigns were counted with accession (year 0) from the death of the previous king, the first year beginning on the 1st Nisan, 2) Israelite reigns were counted (year 1) from the death of the previous king, the second year beginning on the 1st Tishri, 3) the beginnings of the Judean reigns were dated in the Israelite reigns and vice versa, 4) the biblical text gives the duration of several chronological periods (**300, 480, 390**), and 5) several precise synchronisms with Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian chronologies.

The transmission of many historical and chronological data (reigns, lifetimes, long periods, etc.) as well as many proper names, is necessarily flawed, unless one believes in an unlikely infallibility of scribes. The Bible, although it has been exceptionally well transmitted, is no exception. Certain ancient Near Eastern texts develop over time towards a reasonably stable state of transmission. However, the development towards a single 'stabilised' transmitted form that marks the biblical manuscripts between the 2nd century BCE and 2nd century CE is often considered to permit the Hebrew bible to have a unique position in the ancient Near Eastern textual corpus. A study compared the accuracy with which ancient texts of varying genres and languages were transmitted [13] (Hobson: 2009, 463-495). This study showed that the most stable texts surveyed are those containing ritual instructions, which led, for example, to the exact transmission of the Torah in the late Second Temple period. When one knows the difficulty of establishing a reliable chronology, this agreement proves that the chronological data transmission has been remarkable. However significant discrepancies are found regarding various lengths of reign of several kings during the period of the divided monarchy. The Greek variants came into being because the translator either failed to understand the meaning of the Hebrew or as was the usual occurrence from an effort to "correct" the supposed errors. A careful investigation of these variations reveals that they are not the result of scribal errors, but constitute editorial changes made with the object of correcting what were considered as "errors" in the original Hebrew Text. In no instance is a Greek variation an improvement over the Hebrew. The fallacious nature of the Greek innovations may be proved by the wide divergence of the patterns of reign that they call for from the years of contemporary chronology (Jones: 2007, 12). Three main chronological periods of **300, 480**, and **390** years in the biblical texts verify the biblical chronology, but the last two periods have been modified in the Septuagint. These changes are not old copyist errors but chronological "corrections" for theological reasons.

- Period of **300 years** from the departure from Egypt to the vow of Jephthah (Jg 11:26,30). The value of 300 years corresponds to the sum of all the reigns [14]. Caleb and Joshua were 40 years old at the beginning of the exodus and therefore 80 afterwards (Jos 14:7). As Joshua died at the age of 110 (Jos 24:29) he must have stayed 30 years in Canaan. The period that followed [11] is not specified but can be estimated. Indeed, the generation that came into Canaan with Joshua had to take possession of the land (Jg 2:6-10). But as the previous generation had lasted 40 years (Nb 32:13), this suggests that: [40] = 30 + x, x = 10. In fact the exact calculation gives x = 11.
- Period of **480 years** since the departure from Egypt to the 4th year of Solomon (1Ki 6:1). The Masoretic text has preserved the exact value of 480 years because the sum of all the reigns is 480 years [15] which is not the case of the 440 years indicated in the Septuagint. The value of Saul's reign in Acts 13:21, which appeared in 1Samuel 13:1 can be deduced from the biography of Ishbaal, a son of Saul, who was born at the beginning of the reign of his father (1Ch 8:33) since he was 40 years old after the death of Saul (2Sa 2:10). Josephus hesitated between 20 and 40 years (Jewish Antiquities VI:378, X:143) also in the sum of the reigns (Jewish Antiquities VIII:61, XX:230). The Sinai desert belonged to Egypt because it was in front the Wadi of Egypt, which marked the border (2Ki 24:7). The Israelites were out of Egypt when

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[13] Texts from the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian periods that range in date from the late 8th century BCE to the 3rd century BCE and Torah scrolls from the Dead Sea area that range in date from the 3rd century BCE to the 2nd century CE. Texts that have been preserved in more than one ancient copy have been compared to determine how much variation occurs between manuscripts of the same text. The accuracy with which the cuneiform texts were transmitted has been then compared with the biblical evidence.

[14] $300 = (110 - 80) + [11] + 8 + 40 + 18 + 80 + 7 + 40 + 3 + 23 + 22 + 18$.

[15] $480 = 300 + 6 + 7 + 10 + 8 + 40 + 20 + [5] + (40) + 40 + 4$.

they passed this wadi and therefore <u>after</u> 40 years in the desert[16]. According to this scheme, we obtain: y + 475 = 480, which gives y = 5 years. The translators of the Septuagint who knew this period of 480 years, beginning with the departure from Egypt after 40 years in the desert, subtracted it, instead of adding it, to obtain 440 years (= 480 - 40). According to the Talmud (Megilla 72cd), the duration of the conquest of Canaan would have been 7 years and the duration of the sanctuary of Shiloh 369 years, which gives: 480 = (7* + 369* + 20 + 40 + 40 + 4. In fact: 480 = 5 + 366 + 20 + 5 + 40 + 40 + 4)[17].

- Period of **390 years** (Ezk 4:4-6) from the 1st year of Rehoboam to the 11th of Zedekiah. The Masoretic text has preserved the exact total value (Barthélemy: 1992, 22-23) because the sum of all the reigns is 390 years[18] which is not the case of the 190 years indicated in the Septuagint. This period begins when the 40-year reign of Solomon (1Ki 11:42) ended by the schism of his kingdom into Israel and Judah. This rebellion (977 BCE) considered as a fault (1Ki 12:19) ended with the destruction of the Temple (587 BCE). Otherwise, the 190 years of the Septuagint would have begun when the northern kingdom disappeared (720 BCE) and would have ended at the beginning of the rebuilding of the Temple (537 BCE). But in this case the calculation is: 720 - 537 = 183 years, not 190 years. As a result, this duration has been changed in the Greek text for theological reasons. Similarly, the period from Abiyam to Athaliah which is complex because of two co-regencies was also recalculated (Jones: 2007, 12-13). As the books of Ezekiel and Kings were translated during the period 190-160 BCE (Harl, Munnich, Dorival: 1988, 111) this indicates that the Jews of that time were already producing chronological changes and not copy errors.
- Two chronological periods of **70 years** fix the duration of Babylonian dominion (Jr 25:11-12) and the duration of the desolation since the destruction of the temple (Dn 9:2, Zc 7:1-4).

The parallelism of all the reigns of the divided monarchy shows that all the synchronisms, without exception, between the Judaean and Israelite reigns are verified, which confirms the great consistency of the biblical chronological data. Furthermore, all the synchronisms of the kings of the Bible (names in bold) with the Assyrian and Babylonian chronologies (dates in bold) are also verified:

TABLE 4

King of Judah	Reign	#		King of Israel	Reign	#	Reference
David	1057-1017	40					2Sa 5:4
Solomon	1017-977	40					1Ki 11:42
Rehoboam	977-960	17	000	Jeroboam I	10/977 -		Ezk 4:5-6
Abiyam	960-957	3			-05/955	22	1Ki 14:20-21
Asa	957 -	41		Nadab	06/955-05/954	2	1Ki 15:10,25
				Baasha	06/954-04/931	24	1Ki 15:28,33
				Elah	05/931-04/930	2	1Ki 16:8
				Zimri	05/930	7 d	1Ki 16:10-16
				Omri/	06/930-05/919/	12	1Ki 16:21-23
	-916			[Tibni]	[06/930-01/925]	6	
Jehoshaphat	916 -	25		Ahab	06/919-01/898	22	1Ki 16:29
	-891			Ahaziah I	02/898-01/897	2	1Ki 22:51-52
Jehoram J.	893-885	8		Jehoram A.	02/897 -	12	2Ki 3:1
Ahaziah II	886-885	[1]			-08/885		
Athaliah (Jehoyada)	**885**-879	6		**Jehu**	10/**885** -	28	2Ki 10:36
Joash	879 -	40			-03/856		
				Jehoahaz	04/856-09/839	17	2Ki 10:35; 13:1
	-839			Jehoahaz/**Jehoash**	[01/841-09/839]	2	2Ki 13:10
Amasiah	839 -	29		Jehoash	09/839-01/823	16	2Ki 13:10
	-810			**Jeroboam II**	01/**823**-05/782	41	2Ki 14:23
Uzziah	810 -	52		[Zechariah]	06/782-02/771	[11]	2Ki 14:29
[Azariah]	[796 -			Zechariah	03/771-08/771	6 m	2Ki 15:8
				Shallum	09/771	1 m	2Ki 15:13
				Menahem	10/771-03/760	10	2Ki 15:17
	-758			Peqayah	04/760-03/758	2	2Ki 15:23
Jotham	758-742	16		**Peqah**	04/758-05/**738**	20	2Ki 15:27
Ahaz	742-726	16		**Hosea I**	06/**738**-01/729	9	2Ki 15:27-30
Hezekiah	726-697	29		**Hosea II**	02/729-09/**720**	9	2Ki 17:1,3
Manasseh	**697**-642	55					2Ki 21:1

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[16] The Israelites who died in the wilderness (Nb 26:65) had desired repeatedly to die in Egypt (Ex 14:11; 16:3). This paradoxical desire has been fulfilled.

[17] The conquest of Canaan lasted 5 years and the sanctuary of Shiloh 366 years (= 1488 - 1122) because it is installed just after the conquest of Canaan (Jos 18:1), in 1488 BCE, and disappeared at the death of the high priest Eli (1Sa 4:1-7:1) in 1122 BCE.

[18] 390 = 17 + 3 + 41 + (25 – 2) + 8 + (7 – 1) + 40 + 29 + 52 + 16 + 16 + 29 + 55 + 2 + 31 + 11 + 11.

				King of Babylon	King of Egypt	
Amon	642-640	2				2Ki 21:19
Josiah	640-**609**	31		(Nebuchadnezzar)	**Necho II**	2Ki 22:1
Jehoahaz	**609**-609	*3 m*				2Ch 36:2
Jehoiaqim	609-598	11				2Ch 36:5
Jehoiachin	598-598	*3 m*				2Ch 36:9
Zedekiah	598-**587**	11	390		reign	2Ch 36:11
Jehoiachin (exile)	598-**561**	37		**Evil-Merodach**	07/562-12/560	2Ki 25:27
Babylonian dominion	**609**-539	70				Jr 25:11-12
Temple desolation	**587**-517	70				Zc 7:1-4, Dn 9:2

The quadruple synchronism of Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian and Israelite chronologies in 609 BCE confirms the accuracy of all the dates. This quadruple synchronism is very well documented because it occurred at the end of the Assyrian Empire with the fall of Haran just after the battle of Megiddo and 4 years before the battle of Carchemish (in 605 BCE):

In his days Pharaoh Necho (II) the king of Egypt came to meet the king of Assyria (Aššur-uballiṭ II) by the Euphrates River, and King Josiah went out to confront him; but when Necho saw him, he put him to death at Megiddo. So his servants transported his dead body in a chariot from Megiddo and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his grave. Then the people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoachaz and anointed him and made him king in place of his father. Jehoachaz was 23 years old when he became king (...) Pharaoh Necho imprisoned him at Riblah in the land of Hamath, to keep him from reigning in Jerusalem, and then imposed on the land a fine of 100 silver talents and a gold talent. Furthermore, Pharaoh Necho made Josiah's son Eliakim king in place of his father Josiah and changed his name to Jehoiakim; but he took Jehoahaz and brought him to Egypt, where he eventually died (2Ki 23:29-34).

The end of Assyrian dominion replaced by the Babylonian dominion had to have occurred at that time: After all of this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, King Necho (II) of Egypt came up to fight at Carchemish by the Euphrates. Then Josiah went out against him. So he sent messengers to him, saying: What does this have to do with you, O king of Judah? I am not coming against you today, but my fight is against another house, and God says that I should hurry. For your own sake, refrain from opposing God, who is with me, or he will bring you to ruin. However, Josiah would not turn away from him, but he disguised himself to fight against him and would not listen to the words of Necho, which were from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Plain of Megiddo. And the archers shot King Josiah, and the king said to his servants: Get me out of here, for I am severely wounded. So his servants took him out of the chariot and had him ride in his second war chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. Thus he died and was buried in the tomb of his forefathers, and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned Josiah. And Jeremiah chanted over Josiah, and all the male and female singers keep singing about Josiah in their dirges (not Zedekiah) down to this day (Lm 4:18-20); and a decision was made that they should be sung in Israel, and they are written among the dirges (2Ch 35:20-25).

Herodotus recorded this famous battle and the Egyptian campaign in his writings (The Histories II:159), the Babylonian Chronicles give historical details from Year 10 to Year 21 of Nabopolassar, and Josephus quoted some extracts (Against Apion I:133-137)[19]. Combining all the data enables the reconstruction of the following chain of events: after the destruction of Nineveh (August 612 BCE) Nabopolassar appointed his young son Nebuchadnezzar (likely around 20 years old) as Crown Prince (at that same time the king of Assyria, Sin-šar-iškun, died); after the fall of Haran (October 609 BCE) the king of Assyria, Aššur-uballiṭ II, disappeared (and died shortly afterwards), Nabopolassar appointed the defeated Egyptian king (Necho II) as satrap of Egypt[20] but the latter rebelled a few years later (June 606 BCE); finally Nebuchadnezzar inflicted a defeat upon the Egyptians at Carchemish and defeated them completely (August 605 BCE).

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[19] I will quote Berosus' own words, which are as follows: His father Nabopalassar, hearing of the defection of the satrap in charge of Egypt, Coele-Syria and Phoenicia [Necho II], and being himself unequal to the fatigues of a campaign, committed part of his army to his son Nabuchodonosor, still in the prime of the life, and sent him against the rebel. Nabuchodonosor engaged and defeated the latter in a pitched battle and replaced the district under Babylonian rule. Meanwhile, as it happened, his father Nabopalassar sickened and died in the city of Babylon, after a reign of 21 years. Being informed ere long of his father's death, Nabuchodonosor settled the affairs of Egypt and the other countries. The prisoners —Jews, Phoenicians, Syrians, and those of Egyptian nationality— were consigned to some friends, with orders to conduct them to Babylonia, along with the heavy troops and the rest of the spoils; while he himself, with a small escort, pushed across the desert of Babylon.

[20] According to Flavius Josephus, Necho II had come to support Aššur-uballiṭ II, who was under attack from Nebuchadnezzar II, the crown prince of Nabopolassar, hoping to halt the Babylonian army's westward advance. The unexpected presence of the Egyptian army forced Nebuchadnezzar II to negotiate an agreement with Necho II, granting him Judea in compensation for his withdrawal. In wanting to ally himself with Necho II, Josiah was probably hoping to forge an alliance with him so as not to be attacked by the Babylonians (but this was a mistake).

TABLE 5

BCE	#	Mo	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	[F]	Notes
610	1	X		1	15	(0)	29		[A] **Psamtik I**, King of Egypt
	2	XI	54						[B] **Aššur-uballiṭ II**, King of Assyria
	3	XII							[C] **Nabopolassar**, King of Babylonia
	4	I		2	16	(1)	30		[D] **Nebuchadnezzar II**, Crown Prince
	5	II							[E] **Josiah**, King of Judah (2Ki 22:1)
	6	III							
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII							
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							
609	1	X							
	2	XI	1						[A] **Necho II**, King of Egypt
	3	XII							
	4	I		3	17	(2)	31		
	5	II							*Battle of Megiddo* (2Ki 23:29-30)
	6	III	***			***			
	7	IV					0		[E] **Jehoachaz** (2ki 23:31-32)
	8	V							
	9	VI							*End of Assyrian Empire*
	10	VII		***			0	*1*	[A] **Necho II**, Satrap of Egypt (by Nebuchadnezzar II)
	11	VIII							[E] **Jehoiakim** (2Ki 23:34-36) appointed by Necho II
	12	IX							[F] 70-year period (Jr 25:11-12; 29:10)
608	1	X							(70 = October 609 – October 539)
	2	XI	2						
	3	XII							
	4	I			18	(3)	1		
	5	II							
	6	III							
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII						*2*	
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							
607	1	X							
	2	XI	3						
	3	XII							
	4	I			19	(4)	2		
	5	II							
	6	III							
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII						*3*	
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							
606	1	X							
	2	XI	4						
	3	XII							
	4	I			20	(5)	3		
	5	II							
	6	III							
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII						*4*	
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							
605	1	X							
	2	XI	5						
	3	XII							
	4	I			21	(6)	4		
	5	II							
	6	III							
	7	IV							
	8	V							*Battle of Carchemish* (Jr 46:2)
	9	VI			0	1			[C] **Nebuchadnezzar II**, King of Babylonia
	10	VII						*5*	[D] *Egyptian reckoning* (2Ki 25:1)
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							

    This sequence of events has consequences on the Judean chronology because the Judean rulers fell under the authority of Babylon for 70 years (Jr 25:11-12, 29:10), first through the satrap of Egypt Necho

(609-605) and directly afterwards (605-539). Consequently, the accession of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylonian year 0, is reckoned as year 1 (Jr 25:1, 46:2) according to the Egyptian reckoning, which explains why Jerusalem was destroyed in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jr 52:12) which was in fact his 18th (Jr 52:29). The double counting system was used until the destruction of the temple, thus the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki 24:12), according to the Egyptian reckoning, was also his 7th year of reign (Jr 52:28) according to the Babylonian reckoning (in 598 BCE). There was no ambiguity because the 10th year of Zedekiah (in 588 BCE) was also the 18th year (Egyptian reckoning) of Nebuchadnezzar II (Jr 32:1).

TABLE 6

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	
588	1	X	6	16	17	9		[A] **Psamtik II**, King of Egypt
	2	XI	1				[389]	[A] **Hophra (Apries)**, King of Egypt (Jr 44:30)
	3	XII						
	4	I		17	18	10		[B] **Nebuchadnezzar II**, King of Babylonia
	5	II						[C] Nebuchadnezzar II (*Egyptian reckoning*)
	6	III						[D] **Zedekiah**, King of Judah (Jr 32:1)
	7	IV						
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII						
	11	VIII						
	12	IX					{39}	
587	1	X	2					
	2	XI					[390]	
	3	XII						
	4	I		18	19	11		[D] **Zedekiah**, King of Judah (Jr 39:2-7, 52:12)
	5	II						
	6	III						
	7	IV						[E] *The Temple is burnt*. 40-year period (Ezk 4:6)
	8	V						(40 = October 627 – October 587)
	9	VI					{40}	
	10	VII				***	[1]	[E] 70-year period of desolation (Dn 9:2; Zk 7:1-7)
	11	VIII						(70 = October 587 – October 517)
	12	IX						[D] Second deportation of the Jews to Babylon (Jr 52:29)
586	1	X	3					
	2	XI						
	3	XII						

The preceding chronological reconstruction of the Judean and Israelite reigns (from 977 to 561 BCE) is correct because there is no chronological contradiction between the Judean and Israelite reigns and there is no contradiction between the sum of Judean reigns going from n°24 to n°40, from the split of the Judean kingdom in October 977 BCE to the destruction of Jerusalem in October 587 BCE, and their total given in Ezekiel 4:4-6 of 390 years[21], from Year 1 of Rehoboam to Year 11 of Zedekiah, is indeed 390 years. This period began when the 40-year reign of Solomon (1Ki 11:42) broke apart in two rival entities: Israel and Judah. This revolt (in October 977 BCE), considered as a major fault (1Ki 12:19), ended after the destruction of the Temple when the Jews of the exile (Jr 25:8-12) arrived in Babylon c. October 587 BCE. Similarly, the Babylonian world domination of that era lasted exactly 70 years (Jr 25:11-12; 29:10; Is 23:13-17), started in the beginning of the kingdom of Jehoiakim (Jr 27:1-7), in October 609 BCE, and ended in October 539 BCE when Cyrus subdued all nations, including Babylon, and freed the Jews (Is 45:1-7). A 70-year period of desolation (Dn 9:6), without worship at the Temple (Mt 24:15), began in October 587 BCE and ended in October 517 BCE when the worship at the Temple restarted after the 4th year of Darius I (Zk 7:1-7).

TABLE 7

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	
977	1	X	4	35	2	39		[A] **Sheshonq I**, King of Egypt (1Ki 11:40)
	2	XI						[B] **Aššur-reš-iši II**, King of Assyria
	3	XII						[C] **Nabû-mukîn-apli**, King of Babylonia
	4	I		36	3	40		[D] **Solomon**, King of Judah and Israel (1Ki 11:42)
	5	II						
	6	III						
	7	IV						
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII				0	1	[D] **Rehoboam**, King of Judah (1Ki 14:20,25)
	11	VIII					[1]	[E] **Jeroboam I**, King of Israel (1Ki 14:20)
	12	IX						[E] 390-year period (Ezk 4:5-6)
976	1	X	5					(390 = October 977 – October 587)
	2	XI						
	3	XII						

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[21] The second period of 40 years is from Year 13 of Josiah (Jr 25:3,11), in 627 BCE, to the destruction of the Temple in 587 BCE.

		[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]
4	I		37	4	1	
5	II					
6	III					
7	IV					
8	V					
9	VI					
10	VII					2
11	VIII					[2]
12	IX					

The chronological data concerning all the synchronisms between the kings of Judah and Israel and those of Babylon are therefore perfectly coherent. On the other hand, the other synchronisms with the kings of Egypt and Assyria are controversial for the following two reasons: 1) the reign of Sheshonq I has been anchored to the reign of Rehoboam (930-913) on the basis of Thiele's biblical chronology (which is wrong by about 45 years); 2) Assyriologists assume that there were no co-regencies between Assyrian reigns, so that the military campaigns waged by crown princes are ignored and only counted and dated when they have become established kings. The ten or so precisely dated synchronisms between the Assyrian reigns and the Israelite or Judean reigns make it possible to verify the accuracy of the biblical chronology. Synchronisms with Assyrian reigns without co-regency are the easiest to verify.

TEN SYNCHRONISMS BETWEEN ASSYRIAN REIGNS AND JUDEAN OR ISRAELITE REIGNS

The siege of the city of Samaria and its final fall after 3 years are precisely dated both in the biblical text and in the Assyrian annals. The siege of Samaria began in the 4th year of King Hezekiah (726-697), which was the 7th year of Hosea II (729-720), when **Shalmaneser V** (727-722) the king of Assyria came against Samaria and began to lay siege to it, which lasted 3 years (2Ki 18:9-11).

TABLE 8

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	
722	1	X	4		4	3	7	
	2	XI					[16]	
	3	XII						
	4	I	5	*1*	5	4	***	[A] **Shalmaneser V**, King of Assyria
	5	II						[B] *Siege of Samaria*
	6	III						[C] **Ulûlaiu**, King of Babylonia
	7	IV						[D] **Hezekiah**, King of Judah (2Ki 18:9)
	8	V						[E] **Hosea II**, King of Israel (2Ki 17:3-4)
	9	VI						
	10	VII					8	
	11	VIII					[17]	
	12	IX						
721	1	X	0	***	0			[A] **Sargon II**, King of Assyria, *Samaria is annexed.*
	2	XI						[C] **Merodachbaladan II**, King of Babylonia
	3	XII						
	4	I	1	*2*	1	5		
	5	II						
	6	III						
	7	IV						
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII					9	
	11	VIII					[18]	
	12	IX						
720	1	X						
	2	XI						
	3	XII						
	4	I	2	*3*	2	6		
	5	II						
	6	III						
	7	IV						
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII						[D] **Hezekiah**, King of Judah (2KI 18:10-11)
	11	VIII					[19]	
	12	IX						
719	1	X						
	2	XI						
	3	XII		***		***		[B] *Samaria is captured*
	4	I	3		3	7		
	5	II						
	6	III						

This chronological reconstruction of the Judean and Israelite reigns fits in perfectly with the Assyrian reigns but is not accepted because it disagrees with the reign of Hosea (732-723) according to Thiele's biblical chronology. Assyriologists propose various chronological solutions, such as the following:

The sixth theory supposes that Samaria was conquered first by Shalmaneser, and a few years later by Sargon. This reconstruction appears to be the best way of understanding the data. Shalmaneser decided to subdue the rebellion of king Hoshea by besieging Samaria, his capital city, possibly over a three-year period (725, 724, 723) according to the Eponym Lists. The city fell in 722, possibly in autumn (Elul/Tishri) because he was not able to deport the people of Samaria in the very short span of time between the conquest and his death. Shalmaneser died shortly after the fall of Samaria in the month of Tebet 722. Sargon defeated the western coalition in 720, his second year of reign, and proceeded to recapture Samaria because this city had participated in Iaûbidî's coalition which "gathered together (the people of) Arpad and Samerina (Samaria) and brought them to his side" (Elayi: 2017, 45-50).

This chronological reconstruction contradicts both the Assyrian Chronicles and the biblical account, since the Eponym Lists do not mention the siege of the city of Samaria and the annals of Sargon clearly mention the final conquest of this city in 720 BCE. According to a Babylonian chronicle: *He ravaged Samaria. The fifth year (in 722 BCE): Shalmaneser (V) died in the month Tebet* (Grayson: 2000, 73). The annals of Sargon II describing his first two years of reign are very incomplete[22] (parts in italics), but they show that he annexed the city of Samaria at the beginning of his reign, took booty and deported 27,290 people. In the second year of his reign, he destroyed all the rebellious cities by fire.

At the be[ginning of my reign (January 721 BCE), *having ascended the royal throne and been crowned with the crown of lordship, ... (as for)* the peo]ple [of the city **Samar]ia** [*who had come to an agreement with a king hostile to me not to do obeisance (to me) or to bring tribute (to me) and (who) had offered battle, with the might of the god Aššur, my lord*, who ma]kes me triumph, [I fought them and brought about their defeat ... I] carried off as booty 27,290 people who lived there. [I conscripted] 50 chariot(s) from [among them] into my royal (military) contingent [*and (re)settled the remainder of them in Assyria ... I res]tored* [the city **Samaria**] and *made* (it) greater than before. [I brought there] people from the lands that [I had] conquer[ed. I set a eunuch of mine as provincial governor over them and imposed upon them (the same) tribute] (and) payment(s) as if (they were) Assyrians.

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In my second regnal year (April 720 BCE), Ilu-b[iʾdī of the land Hamath ...] assembled [*the troops of the]* wide *[land Amurru]* in the city Qarqar and *[transgressed against]* the oath [(sworn) by the great gods ...] he inc[ited the cities Arpad, Ṣimirra], Damascus, (and) **Samaria** [to rebel against me and ... *est]ablished* [...], he gave him Rēʾe, his field marshal, to he[l]p him, and he rose up against me to do war [and] battle. At the command of the god Aššur, my lord, I inflicted a defeat on them. [R]ēʾe then fled off by himself, like a shepherd whose flock had been stolen, and got away. I captured [Ḫ]anūnu (Ḫanno) and brought him in bondage to my city Aššur; I then destroyed, demolished, (and) burned down with fire [the city Rap]ḫia. I carried off as booty 9,033 people together with their numerous possessions.

According to the biblical account, Assyrian king Shalmaneser (V) began the siege of Samaria c. April 722 BCE and the city was captured c. March 720 BCE (by Sargon II) exactly 3 years later:

And it came about in the 4th year of King Hezekiah (April 722 BCE), that is, the 7th year of Hosea the son of Elah the king of Israel, that **Shalmaneser (V)** the king of Assyria came up against Samaria and began to lay siege to it. And they got to capture it at the end of 3 years; in the 6th year of Hezekiah (in 720 BCE), that is, the 9th year of Hosea the king of Israel, Samaria was captured. After that the king of Assyria (**Sargon II**) took Israel into exile in Assyria and set them down in Halah and in Habor at the river Gozan and in the cities of the Medes (2Ki 18:9-11).

These precisely dated synchronisms between the Assyrian kings (Shalmaneser V & Sargon II) and the Israelite and Judean kings (Hosea II & Hezekiah), concerning the siege and capture of the city of Samaria, mean that the Assyrian, Judean and Israelite chronologies are rigorously accurate. A second synchronism, precisely dated between the beginning of the reign of Jeroboam II (2Ki 14:23-25), in 823 BCE, and the king of Nineveh (Jon 3:6-7), once again confirms the accuracy of Assyrian and biblical chronologies.

According to the Assyrian King List, Shamshi-Adad V (824-811) was king of Assyria in 823 BCE, but according to the Assyrian Chronicles, this king was not officially recognised until 822 BCE because his elder brother, Aššur-danin-pal, who had been co-regent of Shalmaneser III (859-824) since 846 BCE, had been deposed in 826 BCE when he revolted against his father, leading Shalmaneser III to appoint his younger brother Shamshi-Adad (V) as the new crown prince. Consequently, when Shalmaneser III died, Shamshi-Adad (V) was unable to succeed him immediately as Aššur-danin-pal remained co-regent.

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[22] http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/rinap2/corpus/

When Aššur-da''in-apla (**Aššur-danin-pal**), at the time of Shalmaneser (III), his father, acted treacherously by inciting insurrection, uprising, and criminal acts, caused the land to rebel and prepared for battle; (at that time) the people of Assyria, above and below, he won over to his side, and made them take binding oaths. He caused the cities to revolt and made ready to wage battle and war. The cities **Nineveh**, Adia, Šibaniba, Imgur-Enlil, Iššabri, Bit-Šašširia, Šimu, Šibhiniš, Tamnuna, Kipšuna, Kurbail, Tīdu, Nabulu, Kahat, Aššur, Urakka, Sallat, Ḫuzirina, Dūr-balāti, Dariga, Zaban, Lubdu, Arrapha, (and) Arbail, together with the cities Amedu, Til-abni, (and) Ḫindānu, — altogether 27 towns with their fortresses which had rebelled against Shalmaneser (III), king of the four quarters, my father, sided with Aššur-da''in-apla. By the command of the great gods, my lords, I subdued (them) (Grayson: 2002, 183).

TABLE 9

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	[F]	
824	1	X	34	[21]	[1]	30	14	15	[A] **Shalmaneser III**, *King of Assyria*
	2	XI							[B] **Aššur-danin-pal**, Co-regent
	3	XII							[C] **Shamshi-Adad (V)**, new Crown prince
	4	I	35	[22]	[2]	31	15		[D] **Marduk-zākir-šumi I**, *King of Babylon*
	5	II							[E] **Amaziah**, King of Judah (2Ki 14:1-2)
	6	III							[F] **Jehoash**, King of Israel
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII	[0]					16	[B] **Aššur-danin-pal**, **King of Nineveh**
	11	VIII							[C] **Shamshi-Adad (V)**, Crown prince
	12	IX							
823	1	X					***	0	[F] **Jeroboam II**, King of Israel (2Ki 14:23-25)
	2	XI							
	3	XII							
	4	I	[1]	[23]	[3]	32	16		
	5	II							
	6	III							
	7	IV	***				***		[B] **King of Nineveh** (Jonah 3:6-7)
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII						1	
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							
822	1	X							
	2	XI							
	3	XII							
	4	I	2	[24]		33	17		[A] **Shamshi-Adad V**, *King of Assyria*
	5	II							
	6	III							
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII						2	
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							

The Eponyms List (Glassner: 1993, 161-170; Millard: 1994, 55-62) enables us to reconstruct the Assyrian reigns as well as the careers of the commanders-in-chief during the period 858-726 BCE. From the 9th century BCE, the conventional order of eponyms for a new reign was as follows: the king (*šarru*) was the eponym in the 2nd year of his reign, the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*) in the 3rd, the chief butler (*rab šaqê*) in the 4th and the palace herald (*nāgir ekalli*) in the 5th. This conventional order was abolished by Shalmaneser V. Aššurnasirpal II had moved the capital of the Assyrian empire to Kalhu (instead of Aššur) and Tel Barsip (north-eastern Syria) became the military capital, Nineveh remaining a religious capital where the worship of Ishtar, a warrior goddess, was celebrated. The transition in 824 BCE from Shalmaneser III to Šamsî-Adad V took place during the revolt of Aššur-danin-pal, king of Nineveh (826-820):

TABLE 10

Assyrian King (Kalhu)	Reign	Crown prince (Kalhu)	(Nineveh)	Commander-in-chief (Tel Barsip)	Period
Aššurnasirpal II	884-877			[Aššur-iddin]	883 -
	877-859	Shalmaneser III			-858
Shalmaneser III	859 -			Aššur-bēlu-ka''in	858-854
	-846			**Dayyān-Aššur**	854 -
	846-826	**Aššur-danin-pal (A)**	826 -		
	826-824	**Šamsî-Adad V. (B)**	-823		-823
Šamsî-Adad V	824-816		-821	Yaḫālu	823-815
	816-811	Adad-nîrârî III ?		Bēlu-lū-balāṭ	815-810

The compilation of Assyrian inscriptions makes it possible to complete the missing title of the eponyms in the fragmentary part of the Eponyms List (Table11). Several anomalies appear: the chief butler of 825 BCE is followed in 824 BCE by Yaḫālu another chief butler who is appointed, in 821 BCE, commander-in-chief and followed by a palace herald instead of a chief butler. There is almost no doubt that Aššur-danin-pal ("Aššur has strengthened the heir") was the heir (*aplu*) to the throne, the fact that this rebel prince was in charge of 27 cities, including Aššur, Arbail and Nineveh, is enough to conclude that the ancient Assyrian nobles joined Aššur-danin-pal's revolt and that he could be the heir to the throne can also be attested by a letter-report written by the scribe Kabtî : *The scribe Kabtî, servant of Aššur-danin-pal, son of Shalmaneser (III), who gave me the Aramaic letter which I delivered to the king, my lord*. Aššur-danin-pal, who had been crown prince since 846 BCE and had led at least one military campaign, was in fact the co-regent of Shalmaneser III and therefore his legitimate successor (A), so his revolt in 826 BCE, when his father was old and ill, was very surprising (Ferguson: 1996, 301-314).

TABLE 11

BCE		A	B	Eponym	Title of the Eponym[23]	Military campaign
828	31	(18)		Ilu-mukin-ahi	Governor of […]ha	to Ulluba/Habhu
827	32	(19)		**Shalmaneser (III)**	King of Assyria	to Mannai
826	33	(20)	(0)	**Dayyān-Aššur**	Commander-in-chief	to Parsua, Namri, revolt
825	34	(21)	(1)	Aššur-būnāya-uṣur	Chief butler	revolt
824	35	(22)	(2)	Yaḫalu	[Chief butler]	revolt
823	[1]	(23)	(3)	Bēl-būnāya	Palace herald	revolt
822	2	(24)		**Šamšî-Adad (V)**	King of Assyria	revolt
821	3	(25)		**Yaḫālu**	Commander-in-chief	revolt
820	4			Bēl-dān	Palace herald	revolt suppressed
819	5			Ninurta-ubla	Governor of […]	to Mannai

One key element explains the Aššur-danin-pal revolt. When Shalmaneser III again appointed Dayyān-Aššur his commander-in-chief as eponym in 826 BCE, as he had done in 854 BCE, this implicitly meant a new preparation for war to conquer the Levant and consequently involved new sacrifices in men and resources for the Assyrian provinces, which presumably caused much discontent among the Assyrian aristocracy who had to finance these major war efforts. Normally, the commander-in-chief was under the direct authority of the king or co-regent. Around 832 BCE Shalmaneser III, while remaining in the capital city of Kalhu, transferred the leadership of the Assyrian military invasions to the commander-in-chief Dāyyan-Aššur, who held this position from 854 BCE. Consequently, when Dayyān-Aššur began his military campaigns towards the Levant, he was under the authority of the co-regent Aššur-danin-pal who, in accordance with Assyrian aristocracy, was at odds with his father Shalmaneser III, who appointed his younger son Shamshi-Adad (V) as the new crown prince, in 826 BCE (B), to quell the revolt and continue the military campaigns. In accordance with protocol, Shalmaneser III established Aššur-būnāya-uṣur as chief butler in 825 BCE, but as co-regent, Aššur-danin-pal established Yaḫālu as chief butler in 824 BCE. On the death of Shalmaneser III, Šamšî-Adad (V), designated as crown prince, was unable to succeed him because the commander-in-chief Dayyān-Aššur remained under the authority of Aššur-danin-pal. In order to exercise his kingship, Šamšî-Adad (V) had to negotiate an alliance with the Babylonian king Marduk-zākir-šumi I in 823 BCE. In the treaty after the name of Marduk-zākir-šumi I the title "LUGAL" was put –the king, while the ruler of Assyria acted without the title of king. This reality of disproportionate relations in the sphere of diplomatic etiquette of the Ancient World clearly shows the subordinate status of Šamšī-Adad V in political and legal relations to Marduk-zākir-šumi I. And finally, its indirect expression can be seen in the final part of the treaty. It contains the traditional curse against crime: *[Whoever] sins [against this treaty and does not [carry out] his duty, may ...*, and the treaty oath is sworn by Babylonian gods alone. It can be concluded that Šamšī-Adad V has gained the support of Babylonia at a rather high price. Šamšî-Adad V, in addition to humiliating for him etiquette manifestations, apparently was forced to make some territorial concessions to Babylonia (Tsakanyan: 2020, 111-128). As a result of this alliance with the Babylonian king, Šamšî-Adad V was recognised as king of Assyria and consequently became eponym in 822 BCE. He was able to appoint Yaḫālu, the former chief butler, as the new commander-in-chief who became eponym in 821 BCE. It is not known how the Aššur-danin-pal revolt ended, but it is likely that when Bēl-dān was appointed palace herald in 820 BCE, the Assyrian aristocracy who had supported him agreed to support Šamšî-Adad V.

It is difficult to date Jonah's mission in 823 BCE exactly, but we can assume that it ended on the summer solstice (1 July at the time), as it is mentioned: *When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint* (Jon 4:8). The phrase "king of Nineveh" (Jon 3:6-7), which is unique in the Bible, the usual title being "king of Assyria" (92 times), designates a high

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[23] https://www.livius.org/articles/concept/limmu/limmu-list-858-699-bce/

representative of the King, as a co-regent (Ferguson: 1996, 301-314). The Biblical text is generally accurate with regard to titles: *All the princes [sarim] of the provinces, the satraps [ahshdarpenim], the governors [pahot] and the king's [melek] administrators [o'sim] helped the Jews* (Est 9:3). However, some Assyrian crown princes, not governors (2K 18:23-24), are also called kings (Is 10:8). For example, the king of Assyria and his crown prince are both described as "kings of Assyria" (Is 31:18). Consequently, the expression "king of Nineveh" correctly refers (in July 823 BCE) to the former co-regent Aššur-danin-pal, who remained king of Nineveh but was not Shalmaneser III's successor. On the other hand, Shamshi-Adad (V), who had been designated crown prince, was not yet recognised as king of Assyria. This period of crisis, in addition, was marked by a total solar eclipse (visible at Tel Barsip and Nineveh on 3 April 824 BCE)[24] just at the beginning (1st Nisan) of the final year of the reign of Shalmaneser III. It is understandable that in such a dramatic context: repeated insurrections, sinister total eclipse of the sun over Tel Barsip, the military capital, and Nineveh, the religious capital, death of King Shalmaneser III, a ferocious conqueror, Jonah's fateful prediction was taken seriously by the Assyrian kings (superstitious for the most part), including those of Nineveh, the religious capital of the empire (Na 3:1,4). The fact that a "national mourning" was decreed to ward off bad luck was not implausible, on the contrary. Even the strange "animals mourning" (Jon 3:8) is confirmed by Herodotus (The Histories IX:24). The repentance of the Ninevites has only delayed its fulfilment of around two centuries (Na 3:7-8). Jonah's mission was a success since Assyrian expansionism to the Mediterranean coast would cease, at least for 80 years. Indeed, it appears that large Mediterranean expeditions of earlier reign disappeared and that the Assyrian threat against Israel reappeared only with Tigtlat-pileser III. Consequently, the biblical description of Jonah's arrival in Assyria is extremely rigorous: in July 823 BCE, the crown prince Šamšî-Adad (V), who was staying at Kalhu, was not yet recognised as king of Assyria and the former co-regent Aššur-danin-pal, who had been deposed by Shalmaneser III in 826 BCE, remained king over 27 cities, including Nineveh, the religious capital of the empire.

Contrary to Thiele 's claim, most of the synchronisms between conventional Assyrian chronology and biblical chronology, unmodified by (nine) hypothetical co-regencies, are in perfect agreement. For example:

- King Jehoiachin (598-561) was released on day 25, month 12 of the 37th year of exile when Evil-Merodach became king (Jr 52:31). As the 12th year of exile (Ezk 33:21) corresponds to the 11th year of Zedekiah (Jer 39:2), so the 37th year of exile (2Ki 25:27) corresponds to the "36th year of Zedekiah". Consequently, the end of the 37th year of exile in March **561 BCE** corresponds exactly to the accession of Evil-Merodach (07/562-03/561), since his 1st regnal year began in April 561 BCE.

- The destruction of the temple of Jerusalem took place in Year 11 of Zedekiah (Jr 39:2) and in Year 18 of Nebuchadnezzar (Jr 52:5,29), in **587 BCE**.

- A 70-year period of desolation (Dn 9:6), without worship at the Temple (Mt 24:15), began in October **587 BCE** and ended in October 517 BCE when the worship at the Temple started anew after the 4th year of Darius I (Zk 7:1-7), in **517 BCE**.

- King Josiah (640-609) died during the battle of Megiddo just before the fall of the city of Harran which took place in the last year of King Aššur-uballiṭ II (2Ki 23:29-34; La 4:18-20; 2Ch 35:25) which is dated to the 17th of Nabopolassar, in **609 BCE**, the year marking the definitive end of the Assyrian empire. Babylon's world domination lasted exactly 70 years (Jr 25:11-12; 29:10; Is 23:13-17). It started in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiaqim (Jr 27:1-7), in October 609 BCE, and ended when Cyrus subdued all nations in October **539 BCE** and freed the Jews (Is 45:1-7).

- King Hosea II (729-720) died in the fall of Samaria in Year 2 of Sargon II in **720 BCE** (Briend, Seux: 1977, 105-111). Tiglath-pileser III overthrew Peqah, king of Israel, and replaced him by Hosea I, according to his annals when he annexed Hatarikka in **738 BCE** (Yamada: 2014, 31-50).

- King Esarhaddon (681-669) and his co-regent Aššurbanipal, came in 673 BCE to take into exile some foreigners to settle them in the cities of Samaria (Hasegawa, Levin, Radner: 2019, 105-117). They also brought back King Manasseh (697-642) to put him in jail, but they released him rapidly during the eponymy of Atarilu in **673 BCE** (Briend, Seux: 1977, 99-102,128-129), which marked the end of the 65-year period (**738 BCE** = **673 BCE** + **65**) of Assyrian persecution (Is 7:8-9).

- According to the account of Šamši-Adad V (823-811), his brother Aššur-danin-pal was King of Nineveh during a short period of rebellion (823-820) after the death of Shalmaneser III, in 824 BCE, exactly at the time when Jonah met the king of Nineveh (Jon 3:6) at the beginning of Jeroboam II's reign (823-782), in **823 BCE** as King of Israel (2Ki 14:23-25). The mention of "king of Nineveh", instead of "king of Assyria", is unique in the Bible as well as in Assyrian records.

- The 390-year period (390 = 977 - 587), mentioned in Ezekiel 4:5-6, began with the wrongful division of the kingdom of Solomon in October **977 BCE** and ended with the destruction of the kingdom of Zedekiah in October **587 BCE**.

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[24] https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas-1/SEatlas-0839.GIF

To make Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem during his 3rd campaign coincide with Sennacherib's 4th year (705-681) in 701 BCE (= 705 - 4), instead of his 3rd campaign during his co-regency (715-705), in 712 BCE (= 715 - 3), Thiele lowered King Hezekiah's reign by 11 years from 726-697 BCE to 715-688 BCE, thus destroying all the biblical synchronisms (Galil: 1996, 156-157). Thiele's chronological inconsistencies are obvious (highlighted in orange). For example, the conquest of Samaria is dated 720 BCE, not 723 BCE, Peqah's death is dated 738 BCE, not 732 BCE, Menachem (771-760) could not have paid tribute in 738 BCE even in Thiele's chronology (752-742), which shows the absurdity of this chronology. Finally, the tributes of Ahab and Jehu are not mentioned in the Bible (the tribute of Jehu mentioned by Shalmaneser III is anachronistic). Consequently, all these dates from Thiele are wrong.

TABLE 12

King of Judah	reign	Thiele	King of Israel	reign	Thiele	According to Thiele's chronology
Asa	957 -	910 -	Nadab	955-954	909-908	
			Baasha	954-931	908-886	
	-916	-869	Omri	930-919	885-874	
Jehoshaphat	916 -	872 -	**Ahab**	919-898	874-**853**	In 853 BCE, Shalmaneser III is said
	-891	-848	Ahaziah I	898-897	853-852	to have fought against Ahab.
Jehoram J.	893-885	853-841	Jehoram A.	897 -	852 -	
Ahaziah II	886-885	841-841		-885	-841	
Athaliah	**885**-879	**841**-835	**Jehu**	**885**-856	**841**-814	In 841 BCE, Jehu is said to have paid
Joash	879 -	835 -	Jehoahaz	856 -	814 -	tribute to Shalmaneser III.
	-839	-796		-839	-798	
Amasiah	839 -	796 -	Jehoash	841-823	798-782	
	-810	-767	**Jeroboam II**	**823**-782	**793-753**	In 793 BCE, Jonah met the "king of
Uzziah	810 -	792 -	[Zechariah]	782-771	753-752	Nineveh" (Adad-nêrârî III*)
[Azariah]	[796 -		**Menahem**	771-760	**752-742**	In 738 BCE Menahem is said to have
	-758	-740	Peqayah	760-758	742-740	paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III.
Jotham	758-742	**750-732**	**Peqah**	758-**738**	**752-732**	In 732 BCE Peqah is murdered.
Ahaz	742-726	735 -	**Hosea I**	**738**-729	732 -	
Hezekiah	726 -	-715	**Hosea II**	729-**720**	-**723**	In 723 BCE Samaria is captured
	697	**715-686**				In 701 BCE 3rd campaign of Sennacherib.
Manasseh	**697**-642	**697**-642				
Amon	642-640	642-640				
Josiah	640-**609**	640-**609**				
Jehoahaz	609-609	609-609				
Jehoiaqim	**609**-598	**609**-598				
Jehoiachin	598-598	598-597				
Zedekiah	598-**587**	597-**586**				

Despite its many errors, Thiele's work and those who followed in his steps has achieved acceptance across a wider spectrum than that of any comparable chronology, so that Assyriologist Donald J. Wiseman, biblical scholar and archaeologist (he was Professor of Assyriology at the University of London) wrote (in 1993): *The chronology most widely accepted today is one based on the meticulous study by Thiele*, and, more recently, Leslie McFall, former lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament and now researcher in Biblical Studies, wrote (in 2010): *Thiele's chronology is fast becoming the consensus view among Old Testament scholars, if it has not already reached that point*. In his book[25]: *Secrets of the Times. Myth and History in Biblical Chronology* (1990), biblical scholar Jeremy Hugues explained why:

> 841 BC (Nis.) is in fact the date of a key synchronism between Assyrian and Israelite chronology, corresponding to the 18th year of the reign of Shalmaneser III, when the latter conducted an inconclusive campaign against 'Hazael of Aram' and received tribute from various rulers including 'Jehu the Omrite'. Since Assyrian campaigns almost invariably began in the spring it is probable that Jehu's payment of tribute occurred in the late summer of 841 BC, in which case he must presumably have come to the throne either during or before the Israelite year 842 BC (...) A major part of this study has been concerned with the task of reconstructing the original pre-schematic chronology of the book of Kings and using this to construct a historical chronology of the Israelite and Judean kingdoms (...) the chronology of Kings is historically inaccurate, but it is not corrupt. The reason it is inaccurate is that the Biblical writers were more interested in chronological schematism than in historical accuracy. Biblical chronology is essentially mythical (...) The mythical purpose of chronological schematism is that it serves to express a belief that history is governed by a divine plan (...) There are fundamentalist groups which see history as a succession of 'dispensations' or ages, and there are others who believe that events

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[25] This book is a revised version of his doctoral thesis which was submitted to the Faculty of Oriental Studies of Oxford University.

are controlled by stars or planets, and that we are currently living in the age 'age of Aquarius'. These are fringe beliefs which are not taken seriously by most people (Hugues: 1990, 183-184,264-266).

Hugues' remarks are typical of academic inconsistencies on Thiele's biblical chronology, on one hand he wrote that "841 BC is the date of a key synchronism between Assyrian and Israelite chronology" and on the other "biblical chronology is essentially mythical". How did Thiele calculate this key date of 841 BC? Firstly, he noted that according to biblical chronology, the reigns of Jehu and Hazael began at the same time.

TABLE 13

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	[F]	
886	1	X	6		11	(34)		4	[A] **Joram (J)**, King of Judah (2Ki 8:16-17)
	2	XI							
	3	XII							[C] **Joram (A)**, King of Israel (2Ki 3:1)
	4	I	7					5	[D] **Ben-Hadad II**, King of Syria (1Ki 20:1-2)
	5	II							[E] **Hazael**, Commander-in-chief of Syria (1Ki 19:15-17)
	6	III							[F] **Tukultî-Ninurta II**, King of Assyria
	7	IV							[B] **Ahaziah**, King of Judah (2Ki 9:29)
	8	V		0					
	9	VI							
	10	VII			12	(35)			
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							
885	1	X							
	2	XI							
	3	XII							
	4	I	8	1		(0)		6	[D] **Hazael**, King of Syria (2Ki 8:15)
	5	II							
	6	III	1						[B] **Ahaziah**, King of Judah (2Ki 8:25-26)
	7	IV							
	8	V							[A] **Ahaziah**, [C] **Joram (J)** (2Ki 8:28-9:3)
	9	VI							
	10	VII	0		0	(1)			[A] **Athaliah**, reigning over the land (2Ki 11:1-3)
	11	VIII							[C] **Jehu**, King of Israel (2Ki 10:36)
	12	IX							
884	1	X							
	2	XI							
	3	XII							
	4	I	[1]					7	[A] [**Jehoiadah**] King of Judah (2Ch 23:1; 24:15,16)
	5	II							
	6	III							
	7	IV							
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII			1	(2)			
	11	VIII						0	[F] **Aššurnasirpal II**, King of Assyria
	12	IX							

Thiele assumed that this date of 885 BCE was wrong and should be replaced by 841 BCE for the following reasons: 1) according to the annals of Shalmaneser III, Hadad-ezer was the Syrian leader of the coalition that led the military operations against Assyria between 853 and 845 BCE; 2) then in 841 BCE Shalmaneser III destroyed Hazael's army and, 3) according to the Black Obelisk, King Jehu paid him tribute. Campaigns were usually led by kings, but in practice these military operations were actually led by army chiefs. For example, Naaman was a former army chief of Ben-Hadad II (2Ki 5:1). Hazael himself had been army chief of Bar-Hadad II (900-885) before becoming king. Army chiefs were as powerful as kings, some of them, like Omri (1Ki 16:16) or Hazael (2Ki 8:15), even murdering their king to rule in his place. If Hazael was appointed chief of Bar-Hadad II's armies c. 890 BCE, since he was probably at least 20 years old at the time, he was 57 years old in 853 BCE. This is perhaps what led him to choose his own army commander-in-chief: Hadad-ezer ("Hadad is my helper"). Hadad-ezer was considered king (in 853 BCE) by the Assyrians for the following reasons: he led military campaigns with other Aramaic kings and, in the Assyrian annals, Hazael (who was king) was called "son of nobody" at that time because he was considered a usurper. Since Hadad-ezer played no significant role in the history of Israel during this period (853-845), he is not mentioned. Although the coming to power of Hazael occurred in a very complex context (a king is murdered other dies and two are killed) all the chronological data coming from the Bible is absolutely consistent. Consequently, it is more logical to conclude that the destruction of Hazael's army in 841 BCE marked the end of his reign, not the beginning, and that the tribute paid by Jehu was in fact the plundering of Hazael's cities carried out by Shalmaneser III, which he transformed by propaganda into the tribute paid by Jehu. According to the Bible, in the latter part of Jehu's reign (885-856), Hazael began to cut Israel's territory piece by piece (2Ki 10:31-34) and amassed a rich booty. In conclusion, the Assyrian annals are historical facts that have been skilfully transformed by propaganda. It is therefore necessary to analyse them more precisely.

THE SIEGE OF LACHISH (& JERUSALEM) BY SENNACHERIB: 712 BCE OR 701 BCE?

The traditional date of 701 BCE for Sennacherib's campaign in Judea is accepted by all historians without any significant controversy. During this campaign, there was the siege of Lachish, depicted on the walls of his palace (now visible in the British Museum) as well as the siege of Jerusalem and the battle of Eltekeh, which are described in his annals and dated during his 3rd campaign, in 701 BCE because it is assumed that Sennacherib (705-681) did not campaign during his first year of reign, in 704 BCE (Villard: 2001, 767-769). However, this calculated date is hypothetical as it does not appear in any Assyrian document and the capture of Lachish is not even mentioned in the annals of Sennacherib. Moreover, this hypothetical date is contradicted by several documents that fix this famous campaign in 712 BCE: for example, in the chronicle of Sargon II (722-705) the capture of Ashdod and the battle of Eltekeh are dated during the 10th year of his reign, in 712 BCE. This campaign is described in the Bible. For example, the capture of Lachish by Sennacherib (during his 3rd campaign) and the siege of Jerusalem are both dated in the 14th year of Judean King Hezekiah (726-697), in 712 BCE (= 726 - 14). Similarly, the battle of Eltekeh led by Nubian co-regent Taharqa under the leadership of King Shabataka (712-689), with the probable disappearance of the Egyptian king Osorkon IV (Segor in the LXX), is dated during his 1st year of reign in 712 BCE. The biblical account states that all these events occurred during the 14th year of King Hezekiah dated 712 BCE (2Ki 18:13-17, 19:9; 2Ch 32:9; Is 20:1, 36:1, 37:9).

This paradox has been masked because Assyriologists use the biblical chronology of Edwin R. Thiele who shifted the reign of Hezekiah (715-686) to coincide with his 14th year occurring in 701 BCE (= 715 - 14). Although he was a competent religious man, Thiele believed that the biblical text was imbued with Babylonian myths and that its chronology needed to be revised on the Assyrian chronicles. To date the many synchronisms between the biblical and Assyrian chronologies he arbitrarily invented nine co-regencies among the Judean and Israelite reigns because he believed in the dogma of the absence of co-regencies in the Assyrian reigns (Thiele: 1983, 173-177). The calculated reign of Hezekiah (715-686), according to Thiele's biblical chronology, gives rise to several insoluble inconsistencies: this chronology destroys the biblical synchronisms between the kings of Israel and Judah (Tetley: 2005, 91-185); the numerous inconsistencies make it unusable to establish a reliable chronology (Hughes: 1990, 264-266).

The oldest letter from Sennacherib as crown prince is dated 715 BCE (accession year, he was probably 20 years old) when the Urartians were defeated by the Cimmerians (Reade: 2013, XXV). That means he reigned 10 years as co-regent (715–705), then 24 years as king (705–681), and consequently his 3rd campaign as co-regent must be dated 712 BCE (= 715 - 3) and his 3rd campaign as king should be dated 702 BCE (= 705 - 3). According to most scholars there were two campaigns to Judah (Goldberg: 1999, 360-390): one in 712 BCE led by Sargon II and a second led by Sennacherib dated 701 BCE (Ussishkin: 1977, 28-60). This assertion is illogical: first because the capture of Lachish can be dated 712 BCE according to the annals of Sargon —and, therefore, during the 3rd campaign of Sennacherib as co-regent— but especially because of the detailed representations of the capture of Lachish depicted in the palace of Sennacherib which clearly show that it was him that led this campaign as co-regent (shown as king but without tiara) of King Sargon II (shown with his tiara). According to Assyrian annals (Briend, Seux: 1977, 113-121), the city of Ahsdod was captured by Sargon II during his 10th campaign and Lachish was taken by Sennacherib during his 3rd campaign into Judea, but there is a paradox. Whereas Sennacherib gives many details of his 3rd campaign into Judea he never mentions Lachish (Grayson, Novotny: 2012, 114-116):

On my 3rd campaign, I marched to the land Ḫatti (Syria-Palestine). Fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed Lulî, the king of the city Sidon, and he fled afar into the midst of the sea. The awesome terror of the weapon of the god Aššur, my lord, overwhelmed the cities Great Sidon, Lesser Sidon, Bīt-Zitti, Ṣarepta, Maḫalliba, Ušû, Akzibu, (and) Acco, his fortified cities (and) fortresses, an area of pasture(s) and water-place(s), resources upon which he relied, and they bowed down at my feet. I placed Tu-Baʾlu on his royal throne over them and imposed upon him tribute (and) payment (in recognition) of my overlordship (to be delivered) yearly (and) without interruption. As for Minuḫimmu of the city Samsimuruna, Tu-Baʾlu of the city Sidon, Abdi-Liʾti of the city Arwad, Ūru-Milki of the city Byblos, Mitinti of the city Ashdod (...) and imposed upon him the payment of tribute (and) gifts (in recognition) of my overlordship so that he (now) pulls my yoke. In the course of my campaign, I surrounded, conquered, (and) plundered the cities Bīt-Daganna, Joppa, Banayabarqa, (and) Azuru, the cities of Ṣidqâ that had not submitted to me quickly. (As for) the governors, the nobles, and the people of the city Ekron who had thrown Padî, their king who was bound by treaty and oaths to Assyria, into iron fetters and who had handed him over to Hezekiah of the land Judah in a hostile manner, they became frightened on account of the villainous acts they had committed. They formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (and) the archers, chariots, (and) horses of the king of the land Meluḫḫa (Ethiopia),

forces without number, and they came to their aid. In the plain of the city Eltekeh, they sharpened their weapons while drawing up in battleline before me. With the support of (the god) Aššur, my lord, I fought with them and defeated them. In the thick of battle, I captured alive the Egyptian charioteers (and) crown princes, together with the charioteers of the king of the land Meluḫḫa. I surrounded, conquered, (and) plundered the cities Eltekeh (and) Tamnâ. I approached the city Ekron and I killed the governors (and) nobles who had committed crime(s) and hung their corpses on towers around the city; I counted the citizens who had committed the criminal acts as booty; (and) I commanded that the rest of them, (those) who were not guilty of crimes or wrongdoing, (to) whom no penalty was due, be allowed to go free. I brought out Padî, their king, from the city Jerusalem and placed (him) on the lordly throne over them, then I imposed upon him payment (in recognition) of my overlordship. (As for) Hezekiah of the land Judah, I surrounded (and) conquered 46 of his fortified walled cities and small(er) settlements in their environs, which were without number, by having ramps trodden down and battering rams brought up, the assault of foot soldiers, sapping, breaching, and siege engines. I brought out of them 200,150 people, young (and) old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, oxen, and sheep and goats, which were without number, and I counted (them) as booty. As for him (Hezekiah), I confined him inside the city Jerusalem, his royal city, like a bird in a cage. I set up blockades against him and made him dread exiting his city gate. I detached from his land the cities of his that I had plundered and I gave (them) to Mitinti, the king of the city Ashdod, and Padî, the king of the city Ekron, (and) Ṣilli-Bēl, the king of the land Gaza, (and thereby) made his land smaller. To the former tribute, their annual giving, I added the payment (of) gifts (in recognition) of my overlordship and imposed (it) upon them. As for him, Hezekiah, fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed him and, after my (departure), he had the auxiliary forces (and) his elite troops whom he had brought inside to strengthen the city Jerusalem, his royal city, thereby gaining reinforcements, (along with) 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, ...

Consequently, the 3rd campaign of Sennacherib thus coincided with the siege of Jerusalem, dated as the 14th year of Hezekiah (726-697), in 712 BCE, the conquest of Ashdod, dated as the 10th year of Sargon (722-705), in 712 BCE, and the Battle of Eltekeh (Jos 21:23) which can also be dated in 712 BCE. According to the two stelae of Kawa (Macadam, 1949, 14-32; Török: 1997, 169-171), after the death of Shabaka, his successor Shabataka immediately summoned an army which he placed under the command of his brother Taharqa, a young son of Piye age 20 to repel an Assyrian attack which was threatening. In addition, Taharqa states explicitly on these stelae that he was designated as heir by Shabataka even though Shabataka had his other brothers and all their children. The campaign of Sennacherib thus corresponds to the first year of Shabataka, which is anchored to Sennacherib's 3rd campaign in 712 BCE. The more usual dating of this campaign in 702/701 BCE leads to several contradictions (Gallagher: 1999, 2-14). The inscription of Sargon II, found at Tang-i Var, requires dating this campaign as 712 BCE and not as 702/701 BCE. One reads along the lines 16-36 (Frame: 1999, 31-60):

11)   Sargon (II), great king, mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, viceroy of Babylon, king of the land of [Sumer and Ak]kad, favourite of the great gods,

16)   I dispersed *the army* of the Elamite Ḫumbanigaš (*Ḫumba-nikaš*) (in 717 BCE). I destroyed the land of K[aral]la, the land of Šurda, the city of Ki[šes]im, the city of Ḫarḫar, [the Me]dian [land], (and) the land of Elli[pi (...)].

17)   I laid waste to the land of Urartu (in 714 BCE)[26], plundered the city of [Muṣaṣi]r (and) the Mannean land, crushed the land[s]..

18)   I conquered the rulers of the land of Amattu (Hamath), the city of Carche[mish, the city of Kummu]ḫi, (and) the land of Kammanu; over their lands [...] I se[t] *officials*.

19)   I plundered the city of **Ashdod** (in 712 BCE). **Iamani**, its king, feared [my weapons] and ... He fled to the region of the land of Meluḫḫa (Nubia) and lived (there) stealthfully (literally: like a thief).

20)   Šapataku' (**Shabataka**), king of the land of Meluḫḫa, heard of the mig[ht] of the gods Aššur, *Nabu*, (and) Marduk which *I had [demonstrated] over all lands*, ...

21)   He put (Iamani) in manacles and handcuffs ... he had him brought captive into my presence.

22)   [*I depopulated*] all the lands of Tabâlu, Kasku, (and) Ḫilakku; *I took away settlements belonging to* Metâ (Midas), king of the land of [Mu]sku, and reduced (the size of) *his* land.

23)   At the city of Rapiḫu (Raphia) *I defeated the vanguard* of the army *of Egypt* and counted as booty the king of the city of Ḫâzutu (Gaza) who had not submitted to my [yo]ke.

24)   I subdued seven kings of the land of Iâ', a region of the l[and of] Iadnâna (Cyprus) — whose home is situated at a distance of... [in the mid]dle of the Western Sea.

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[26] In one of his letters, Sargon II (722-705) mentions a total eclipse of the moon (24 October 714 BCE) during his 8th campaign in Urartu against King Rusa (733-714), which he interprets as a bad omen for Urartu (Oppenheim: 1960, 137-138).

25) Moreover, (in 710 BCE) I personally (literally: my great *hands*) defeated Marduk-apla-iddina (**Merodach-Baladan II**), king of the land of Chaldea, who dwelled on the shore of the sea (and) who *ex[erc]ised* kingship over Babylon against the wi[ll of the gods].

26) Moreover, all the land of Bît-Iakîn ... *I fixed* ...

27) Aḫundari, king of Dilmun [Upêri in the Annals], whose lair [*is situated*] at a distance of... *leagues [in the middle] of the sea like that of a fish*, heard of my [royal] mig[ht] and brought me (in 709 BCE) [his] gre[eting gift].

28) With the power and strength (granted me) by the great gods, (my) lords], who [raised up my weapons, I cut] down al[l my enemies].

29) From the land of Iadnâna (Cyprus), which is (situated) in the middle of the [Western] Sea, [as far as the border(s) of Egypt (and) the land of M]usk[u, the wide land of Amurru], the land of Ḫ[atti (in its entirety)],

30) all of the land of Gutium, the land of the distant Medes [by Mount Bikni, the land of El]lipi, (and) the land of Râši on the border [of the land of Elam,

31) those who (live) beside the Tigris river —the (tribes of) Itu'u, Ru[bu'u, Ḫatal]lu, labdudu, Ḫamranu, Ubulu, [Ru']ûa, (and) Li['tâu]—

32) those who (live) beside the the Surappu river (and) the Uqnû river —the (tribes of) Gam[bûlu], Ḫindaru, (and) Puqûdu— the Suteans, people of the steppe of the land of Iadburu, as many as [there are],

33) from the city of Sam'ûna as far as the city of Bubê (and) Til-Ḫumba(n), which are on the border of Elam,

34) the land of Karduniaš from the end to end, the land of Bît-Amukâni, Bît-Dakkûri, Bît-Šilani, Bît-Sa'alli,

35) all the land of Chaldea, as much as there is (of it), the land of Bît-Ia[k]în, which is situated on the shore of the sea, as far far as the territory of Dilmun,

36) I ruled (it) all. I s[et] eunuchs of mine as governors over them and I imposed my royal yoke *upon them* (in 709 BCE)

37) At that time the people of the land of Karalla … *who* … and were not used to respecting (any) rulership,

38) trusted in the steep mountains and … *a eunuch of mine, the governor* … all the land …

39) … they established and *prepared for battle ... became angry* and slew *their people*.

40) Horses, mules, … and … their presence … turned *and* ….

41) They made the *paths through* his land *desolate* and … blocked the *trails*.

42) My *rēdû*-soldiers … to inaccessible mountain clefts like eagles.

43) … they established … their warriors … mountains.

44) The *remainder* of them … and they (*sic*) counted them as booty.

45) I had a commemorative monument made and engraved upon it image(s) of the *great* gods, [my lords]. I placed before them (in 707 BCE) *my royal image [(in an attitude of) pr]aying* to their great divine majesties.

The last inscription (line 45) refers to gods having been installed in the new city and an eponym chronicles states that that took place in 707 BCE (Frame: 1999, 51). This inscription, written in chronological order (Luckenbill: 1927, 1-25), from 717 to 707 BCE, situates the battle against Shabataka during the capture of Ashdod in 712 BCE, thus confirming the coincidence of Sennacherib's 3rd campaign during his co-regency (715-705) and Sargon's 10th campaign during his reign (722-705). The two Assyrian kings thus campaigned together, but Sennacherib had his third campaign engraved only when he was king, after the death of his father, and not during his co-regency[27], which began in 715 BCE. Some authors have also noted an anomaly (underlined) in line 44 of the inscription: "<u>They</u> counted (them) as booty," although one would expect more logically from Sargon the sentence: "I have counted (them) as booty" (there is no anomaly with the co-regency). Consequently, the first campaign of Sennacherib was in 714 BCE.

On the carved relief (Fig. 2) representing the siege of Lachish in Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh (Russel: 1991, 3, 125, 143, 206-207), the central element is the king (Sargon II) seated on his throne clearly identified by his tiara and sceptre and facing the crown prince (Sennacherib), who is as tall as the king (Sargon II) and wearing a turban with two ribbons behind his head, facing the king wearing the tiara, who also bore the two ribbons behind the head.

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[27] As the co-regency between Sargon and Sennacherib is not considered, some Egyptologists have suggested the following explanation (Kahn: 2001, 1-18): the inscription ending with the installation of the gods in the new city, dated 707 BCE, owing to the eponym of Sargon's Chronicle, the attack against Egypt had to have been shifted by error and should be dated 707 BCE instead of 712 BCE. This amazing assumption is unlikely, because the chronological order of the inscription is obvious, moreover, the dating is in perfect agreement with the 10 years of co-regency of Sennacherib.
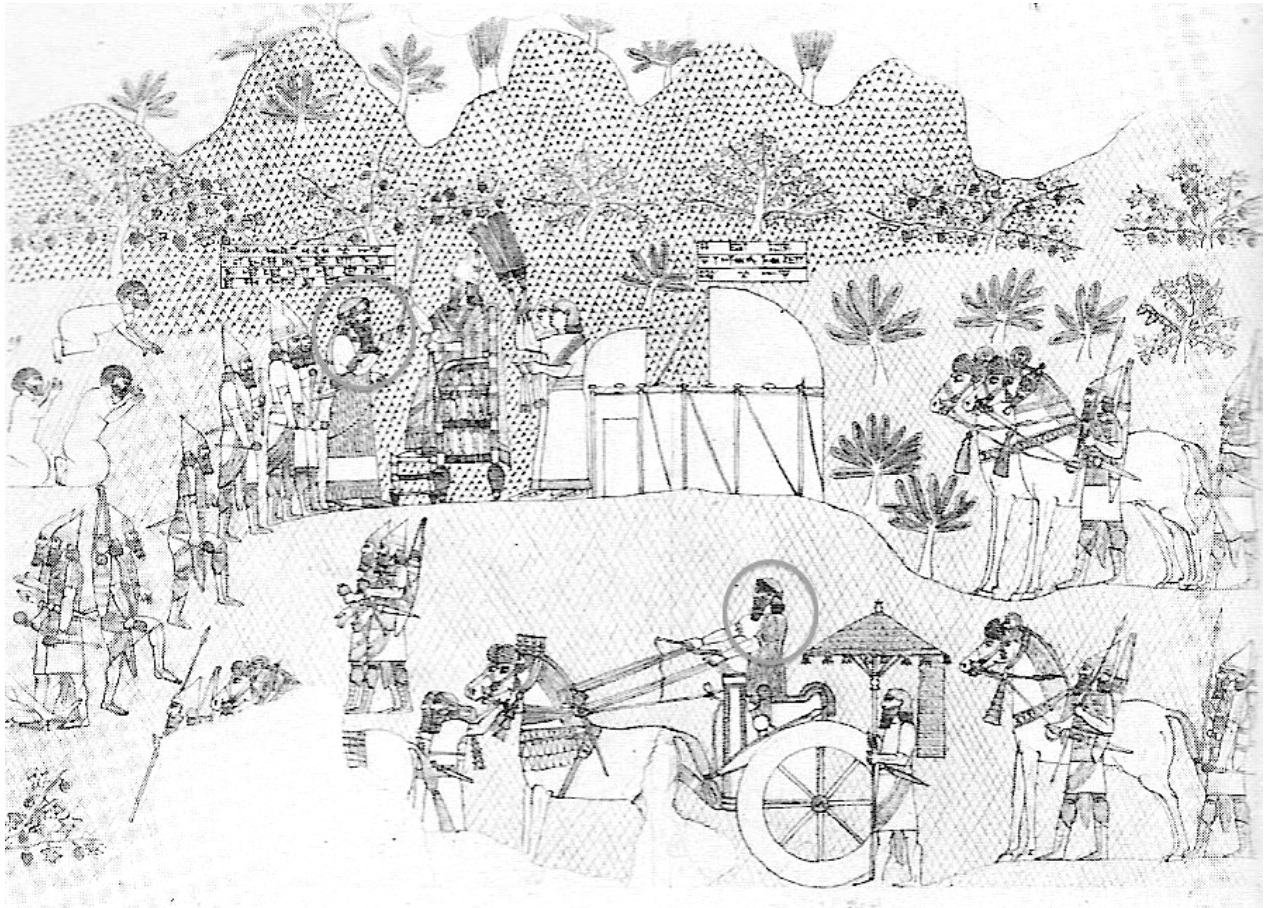
Fig. 2 The siege of Lachish, drawing of Slabs 11-12, Room XXXVI, Southwest Palace, Nineveh

The identification of the two main characters —king and co-regent— is denied (Goldberg: 1999, 360-390). In the lower part (bottom right), Sennacherib (surrounded by a circle on the drawing above) is depicted driving his chariot as commander-in-chief. He is wearing only a diadem/turban on his head, and in the upper part (Fig. 2 left) he is depicted facing the king and is wearing two ribbons behind his head as co-regent, in addition to the diadem. It is noteworthy that the siege of Lachish is depicted with great accuracy but with very little text (one above Sennacherib and another above a tent). Indeed, the scene which depicted Sennacherib's victory had to be understood by as many people as possible because at that time very few high officials (except scribes) were able to read inscriptions. On the other hand, it was easy to see that the king and his co-regent were the same height and that they were a head above the other characters in the scene.

Co-regent Sennacherib with his diadem of commander-in-chief

The main characters, king, co-regent, soldiers, and commandant-in-chief were easily recognizable by virtue of a conventional representation. The character mounted on a war chariot arriving at Lachish is Sennacherib as commander-in-chief (he has the army chief's diadem on his head). After conquering the city, he is represented in front of the king (Sargon II) to dedicate his victory to him and offer him the loot as indicated in the signpost above his head. The co-regent facing the king seated on the throne cannot be Ardu-Mulissu, because he was designated crown prince only from 699 BCE, three years after the third campaign of Sennacherib as king (not co-regent) in 702 BCE. The absence of a tiara upon Sennacherib's head is obviously not an oversight because in other scenes he wears a tiara (as king) when he is depicted as driving his chariot (Slab 2, Room XLV).

Co-regent Sennacherib (left) with royal two ribbons facing King Sargon II

On the throne the king wearing the tiara is Sargon II. In front of him stands the co-regent, represented with the same size, with on his head the diadem of the commander-in-chief of the armies as well as the two ribbons, symbol of royal power, this co-regent is therefore Sennacherib. Such representations are also found in the palace of Khorsabad (Caubet: 1995: 123, Fig.4, 15), where the co-regent Sennacherib is facing king Sargon. It is easy to see that this relief looks like the siege of Lachish. When Sargon took Ashdod (in 712 BCE) he was king and Sennacherib his son was his co-regent, whereas in 702/701 BCE Sennacherib was king but he had no co-regent. Consequently, the king sitting on the throne at Lachish is king Sargon facing Sennacherib. On the relief of the siege of Lachish, Sennacherib (as co-regent) is in front of Sargon (as king) as on the relief in the palace of Khorsabad[28] (André-Salvini: 2012, 62). The epigraph of four lines over Sennacherib (Russel: 1991, 206, 276-277), in a label, confirms this identification because he is presented as co-regent (MAN) and not as King (LUGAL) and the other epigraph of three lines over the tent of Sennacherib describes him as king:

Epigraph over Sennacherib	
md30-PAP.MEŠ-SU **MAN** ŠU₂ **MAN** KUR aš+šur	Sennacherib, **viceroy** of the world, **viceroy** of Assyria
ina GIŠ.GU.ZA ne₂-me-di u₂-šib-ma	Sat in a pedestal-throne and
sal-la-at URU la-ki-su	the booty of Lachish
ma-ha-ar-šu e-ti-iq	passed in review before him [i.e. King Sargon].

	Epigraph over the tent of Sennacherib
	za-ra-tum Tent
	ša md30-PAP.MEŠ-SU of Sennacherib
	LUGAL KUR aš+šur **King** of Assyria

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[28] On the relief of Khorsabad (British Museum ME 118822) the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*) is behind Sennacherib. The name of this commander-in-chief is not given but it could be Ninurta-ilāya (Yamada: 2014, 48 n. 49).

The word MAN is written on the label with two nail heads (« "20" that is "god Shamash"), is read *šarru* "king" in Neo-Assyrian. This word had a former meaning *šanû* "second/other" (Labat, Malbran-Labat: 1999, 211; Black, George, Postgate: 2000, 355-356), consequently the word MAN means "King II", Viceroy or Co-regent. The usual word used for titular king is not MAN but LUGAL, literally "man-big" in Sumerian (both terms are used in Sennacherib's inscriptions). Sennacherib could not bear the title of King (LUGAL) during Sargon's lifetime, because the latter was "without rival", but only the title of viceroy (double or replica of the king). In addition, the term *-ma* meaning "and" connects one who sits to the one passing booty reviewed (who was king Sargon). In the Biblical text the military campaigns of Sennacherib and Sargon are clearly identified as parallel and dated 712 BCE (2Ki 18:13-17; 2Ch 32:9, Is 20:1). When Sennacherib comes to Jerusalem, it is stated: "the kings (*malkhê*) of Assyria did to all the lands by devoting them to destruction" (2Ki 19:10-17), implying two kings: Sennacherib and Sargon. After Hezekiah had paid a tribute of 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold, Sennacherib sent his commander-in-chief (*turtānu*), chief officer (*rab-ša-reš*) and cupbearer (*rab-šaqu*) to accept his surrender. During the same time Sargon sent the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*) to Ashdod before seizing it.

According to the annals of Sargon (Frame: 2020, 367-368): In my 9th regnal year (*palû*) I marched to [the city Ashdod which is (situated) on the shore of the] great [s]ea. [... the city] Ashdod [...] Because of [the evil he (Azuri) had done ... I brought him out] from the city A[shdod], elevated Ahī-Mīti [...], his favorite brother, o[ver the people of the city Ashdod], and [set him on the throne of his father]. I established for him (the same) tribute, payment(s), [labor duty, (and) military service] as the kings, [my ancestors, had imposed]. However, [those] evil [Hittites] with/in ... [...] plotted evil [in their heart(s)] (so as) to no longer (have to) bring tribute (to me). [They made] an insurrection (and) up[rising against] their ruler, [and] drove him out [of the city Ashdod] as if he was one who had committed bloodshed. ... [... They made] king over them Iāmānī, a member of the low[er class who had no right to the throne], (and) they sat [him on the throne] of his lord. [...] their city ... [...] of batt[le ... in] its environs [its/their] moats [... they dug] twenty cubits deep [until] they reached groundwater. <They sent> mendacious messages (and) malicious words to the ki[ngs of the lands Philistia, Judah, Ed[om], (and) Moab, (as well as to) those who live on the sea(coast), (all) those who brought tribute [and] audience gift(s) to the god Aššur, my lord, in order to make (them) hostile to me. They took gift(s) to Pirʾû (Pharaoh), king of Egypt, a ruler who could not save them, and they repeatedly asked him for (military) aid.

According to the annals of Sennacherib (Grayson, Novotny: 2012, 114-116): On my 3rd campaign (*palû*), I marched to the land Ḫatti (Syria-Palestine) (...) who had handed him over to Hezekiah of the land Judah in a hostile manner, they became frightened on account of the villainous acts they had committed. They formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (...) As for) Hezekiah of the land Judah, I surrounded (and) conquered 46 of his fortified walled cities and small(er) settlements in their environs (...) As for him, Hezekiah, fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed him and, after my (departure), he had the auxiliary forces (and) his elite troops whom he had brought inside to strengthen the city Jerusalem, his royal city, thereby gaining reinforcements, (along with) 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver

The presence of "the kings of Egypt and king of Ethiopia" must be in 712 BCE, or before, when several pharaohs ruled in parallel with the Theban priests (Kitchen: 2004, 592-593). The tribute paid by Hezekiah during Sennacherib's 3rd campaign is almost identical to that of the Bible (2 Ki 18:14).

TABLE 14

EGYPT	Reign	JUDAH	Reign	ISRAËL	Reign	ASSYRIA	Reign	BABYLONIA	Reign
Shabaka	730 -	**Hezekiah**	726 -	Hosea II	729 -	Šalmaneser V	727-722	Ulûlaiu	727-722
					-720	**Sargon II**	722 -	**Merodach-**	722 -
	-712		712			/Sennacherib	715-712	**baladan II**	-710
Shabatak	712 -						-705	Sargon II	710-705
/Taharqa			-697			Sennacherib	705 -	Sennacherib	705-703
	-689	Manasseh	697 -						
Taharqa	689 -						-681	Sennacherib	689-681
	-663					Esarhaddon	681-669	Esarhaddon	681-669
Psamtik I	663-609		-642			Aššurbanipal	669-627	Šamašumaukīn	668-648

An inscription of Sargon mentions his campaign against Hezekiah, king of Judah, along with the capture of Ekron and Azeqah (Galil: 1995, 321-329) near Lachish (Jr 34:7), which are all dated in 712 BCE. But as the capture of Lachish and Jerusalem are currently dated in 701 BCE that would imply a hypothetical second campaign around 688 BCE (Evans: 2009, 15-18) which leads to a new chronological impossibility (Becking:

2000, 46-72; Ben Zvi: 2000, 168-200). Similarly, the attempted alliance between Merodach-baladan II (722-710) and Hezekiah (726-697) is plausible only in 712 BCE because in 700 or in 703 BCE the Babylonian king was in a position of weakness (the only support mentioned in neo-Babylonian chronicles is that of the king of Elam) and Hezekiah had no interest to ally with him, whereas in 712 BCE Merodach-baladan II was in a position of strength and the purpose of his alliance with Hezekiah, which miraculously repelled Sennacherib's army, was to counterbalance Assyrian influence. Sargon's Chronicle supports this reconstruction because the king was perpetually at war against Merodach-baladan II except in 712 BCE (because of his campaign to Judah), but for no apparent reason[29]:

> From the accession ye[ar of] Merodach-baladan until the 10th year [Assyria] was belligerent towards Merodach-baladan. The 10th year (in 712 BCE): Merodach-baladan ravaged Bit-[..]ri (and) plundered it. The 12th year of Merodach-baladan: Sargon went down [to Akkad] and did battle against [Merodach-bala]dan. Merodach-baladan [retreated] before [him] (and) fled to Elam. For 12 years [Merodach-balad]an ruled Babylon. Sargon ascended the throne in Babylon (...) The 2nd year [Sennacherib went down to Akkad and did battle against Merodach-baladan before him] Merodach-baladan retreated (and) fled to Guzummânu [...] he (Sennacherib) plundered his land [... and took] Larak and Sarrabanu. When he withdrew he (Sennacherib) put Bel-ibni on the throne in Babylon. The 1st year of Bel-ibni [702 BCE]: Sennacherib ravaged Hirimma and Hararatum. The 3rd year of Bel-ibni: Sennacherib went down to Akkad and plundered Akkad (Grayson: 2000, 73-77).

Amalgams between the three campaigns of Sennacherib during his co-regency with Sargon (714-712) and those carried out at the beginning of his reign (704-702) cause the sequence of events to become deeply confused. An accurate chronological reconstitution of the reign of Sargon is impossible because the equation "campaign = year" is not always true, because a campaign could take several years, and a year could be without a campaign. Tadmor noted, for example, that the dating of these campaigns in the annals of Khorsabad is inconsistent with the data from the Nineveh fragmentary prisms (Tadmor: 1958, 22-40). Similarly, the annals of Sennacherib date the campaign against Merodach-baladan II during the accession year of Sennacherib (705 BCE) whereas the first campaign of Sennacherib is dated the eponymy of Nabu-le'u (702 BCE). Tadmor concludes that historians of Sargon had to have recounted his campaigns in Palestine and Egypt in geographical terms rather than in chronological order. The reign of Ashurbanipal has the same problems of chronology (Grayson: 1980, 227-245), the arrangement of campaigns is more geographical than chronological and differs from years of reign. Given that Sennacherib's earliest accounts of his first campaigns, from 1st to 3rd, waged against Merodach-baladan II and his southern Babylonian allies occurred in 704-702 BCE, there is no room for a campaign to Judah which was in the far west during this period. To solve this puzzle, most scholars assume that the chronological inconsistencies of the first campaigns of Sennacherib could be explained by the fact that the main goal of Assyrian records was ideological (Frahm: 2003, 129-164) rather than chronological (Janse van Rensburg: 2004, 560-579), but this explanation is unacceptable. Merodach-baladan II, for example, was dethroned in 710 BCE, then would try to take back his throne in 703 BCE and again in 700 BCE, with a brief success. This unlikely event may have been distorted. It is possible that the vassal king Bel-ibni, who did not properly repulse Merodach-baladan's attacks for taking his throne back, was removed from office and replaced by his eldest son, Aššur-nadin-šumi II (Brinkman: 1973, 89-95). Anyway, the dating of the 2nd reign of Merodach-baladan creates an unsolvable problem (Levine: 1982, 28-58). In addition, the tribute brought by the Medes and received by Sennacherib during his 2nd campaign looked like the one received by Sargon during his 8th campaign. Concerning the failed capture of Jerusalem performed during the reign of his father and reported on briefly in his own annals (written during his reign) he only mentions the taking of a tribute. But the fact that Sennacherib did not capture Jerusalem remains incomprehensible and indirectly confirms the Biblical version. This chronological imbroglio comes from the mixing of Sennacherib's campaigns with those mentioned during the reign of Sargon. These first three campaigns of Sennacherib are placed before three other ones which are not detailed. Some reliefs of the first campaign recall details of the 4th campaign (Russel: 1991, 152-165). This mix up has been developed for the purpose of propaganda (Laato: 1995, 198-226).

Chronological reconstitution of the reigns of Sargon II and Sennacherib differ depending on official versions consulted. For example, according to a Neo-Babylonian chronicle (Glassner: 2004, 180-182), Sennacherib was king of Babylon during 704-703 BCE, then the following period 688-681 BCE it would have been without a king, but according to the Canon of Ptolemy (Depuydt: 1995, 98), these two periods were without a king. This contradiction is surprising since the Babylonian reign of Sargon has been considered in the Canon of Ptolemy and, in the case of Sennacherib, there are at least two contracts dated Years 3 and 4 of his Babylonian reign during the period 688-681 BCE (Brinkman, Kennedy: 1983, 14.).

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[29] If Sennacherib's troops were decimated in 712 BCE, as confirmed by Herodotus (The Histories II:137,141) and Josephus (Jewish Antiquities X:21), one can assume that the following year Sargon was busy reorganizing his army.

These disagreements show that the reigns of Sargon and Sennacherib were already subject to interpretations very early in the past. Moreover, some dating by eponyms differs from dating by years of reign. Levine tried to reconstruct the whole campaigns of Sennacherib while recognizing that the period 705-702 BCE was particularly confusing. Indeed, according to a King list, the period 704-703 BCE is assigned to Sennacherib, then Marduk-zakir-šumi II reigned one month, Merodach-baladan II reigned nine months (without regnal year) and the years 702 to 700 BCE are assigned to Bel-ibni (Levine: 1982, 28-58). The second rule of Merodach-baladan II is set during the first campaign, in 703 BCE, because the second campaign is dated in the eponymy of Nabu-le'i in 702 BCE[30].

TABLE 15

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	[F]	**King**
712	1	X	**9**	(2)	**9**	**13**	**1**	[26]	[A] **Sargon II**, King of Assyria (Is 20:1, 36:1)
	2	XI							[B] **Sennacherib**, Crown Prince (2Ki 18:13-17)
	3	XII							[C] **Merodachbaladan II**, King of Babylonia (Is 39:1)
	4	I	**10**	(3)	**10**	**14**			[D] **Hezekiah**, King of Judah
	5	II							[E] **Shabataka**, King of Egypt
	6	III							/**Taharqa**, Co-regent of Egypt (2Ki 19:8-9)
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII						[27]	[F] 65-year period (Is 7:8-9) from 738 BCE to 673 BCE
	11	VIII							
	12	IX							
711	1	X					**2**		
	2	XI							

Rezin (755-732), the powerful king of Damascus, formed a coalition to resist Tiglath-pileser III's attack, Peqah (758-738), the king of Israel, joined the coalition but not Jotham, the king of Judah:

Hosea the son of Elah formed a conspiracy against Peqah the son of Remaliah, and he struck him and put him to death; and he became king in his place in the 20th year of Jotham (in 738 BCE) the son of Uzziah (2Ki 15:30). Now in the days of Ahaz son of Jotham son of Uzziah, the king of Judah, King Rezin of Syria and Peqah son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, came up to wage war against Jerusalem, but he could not capture it (...) This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: It will not succeed, nor will it take place. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin. <u>Within just 65 years Ephraim will be completely shattered and cease to be a people</u>. The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah (Is 7:1,7-9).

Given that the head of Samaria (Ephraim/Israel) was Peqah who died in 738 BCE, the "shattering" of Ephraim (inhabitants of Samaria) had to have occurred in 673 BCE (= 738 - 65):

TABLE 16

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	[F]	
674	1	X	**6**		**6**		**22**		[A] **Esarhaddon**, King of Assyria
	2	XI						[64]	[C] **Esarhaddon**, King of Babylonia
	3	XII							
	4	I	**7**	(0)	**7**		**23**		[B] **Sin-nâdin-apli**, Crown Prince
	5	II							
	6	III							
	7	IV							
	8	V							
	9	VI							
	10	VII							
	11	VIII							
	12	IX						[65]	

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[30] According to a Babylonian chronicle, this campaign is assigned to the second year of Sennacherib (705-681) in 703 BCE, but the canon of eponyms mentions the capture of Larak and Sarabanu under the eponym of Nabu-dînî-epuš in 704 BCE. And finally, in his various inscriptions Sennacherib put his first campaign "at the beginning of his kingship". <u>All these facts are irreconcilable</u>. Levine chose to put the reigns of Marduk-zakir-šumi II and Merodach-baladan II in 703 BCE, but this solution is contradicted by the dates of economic contracts dated: 26/XI/**00**, 7/XII/**00**, 13/XII/**00**, 26/VI/**02**, 29/XI/**02**, 29/I/**03**. Contracts under Bel-ibni require placing the accession, not Year 1, of Bel-ibni in 703 BCE (at least on 26/XI/**00**) because he reigned 3 years. This new solution is contradicted once again by another contract (BM 17310) dated paradoxically [-]/III/**19** under Sargon II, which is a posthumous date referring to 703 BCE. Likewise, another contract dated posthumously 11/IX/**22** to Merodach-baladan II in 700 BCE. The first three campaigns mentioned at the beginning of the reign of Sennacherib, whose story was recorded in the palace of Khorsabad, during the eponyms dated 703 to 701 BCE, are regarded to be the first three years of his reign but this assumption leads to inconsistencies. The equivalence between the years of reign and number of campaigns is contradictory and the timeline of events is impossible to reconstruct exactly (Ford: 1969, 83-84). Several events occur identically. Moreover, information in letters is diametrically opposed to what one reads in royal inscriptions and the time required for the realization of all these events is impossible to enforce, mainly the duration between the first and second campaigns (Parpola: 2001, XIV,XXII,XXXVI,LI notes 5,41). Prosopography of important characters, such as scribes and governors, allows one to dissociate two seemingly identical events, but as the duration between these events is relatively short (10 years) it is impossible to decide because the same characters appear at the end of Sargon's reign and the beginning of Sennacherib's (Dietrich: 2003, XVI-XXI).

Year								Notes
673	1	X						
	2	XI						
	3	XII						[A] Defeat in Egypt dated 05/XII/**7** (ABC 1)
	4	I	8	(1)	8		24	[A] **Esarhaddon**, King of Assyria (Ezr 4:2)
	5	II						[B] **Aššurbanipal** Co-regent (Ezr 4:9,10)
	6	III						[E] **Manasseh**, King of Judah (2Ch 33:11)
	7	IV						
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII						*** [F] End of the 65-year period (Is 7:8-9)
	11	VIII						
	12	IX						
672	1	X						
	2	XI						
	3	XII						[A] **Ešarra-hamat**, *Esarhaddon's wife died* (05/XII/**8**)
	4	I	9	(0)	9	(0)	25	[B] **Aššurbanipal**, Crown Prince (Assyrian)
	5	II						[D] **Šamaš-šuma-ukīn**, Crown Prince (Babylonian)
	6	III						
	7	IV						
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII						
	11	VIII						
	12	IX						
671	1	X						
	2	XI						
	3	XII						
	4	I	10	(1)	10	(1)	26	
	5	II						

Sargon II destroyed Samaria, the capital of Israel, in 720 BCE, but the "shattering" of Israel occurred later when Assyrian kings took into exile some nations and settled them in Samaria:

They immediately approached Zerubbabel and the heads of the paternal houses and said to them (in 538 BCE): Let us build along with you; for like you, we worship your God and we have been sacrificing to him <u>since the days of King **Esarhaddon** of Assyria, who brought us here (...) and the rest of the nations that the great and honourable Asenappar (**Aššurbanipal**) took into exile and settled in the cities of Samaria, and the rest in the region Beyond the River</u> (Ezr 4:2,10). In addition, regarding King **Manasseh**: So, Jehovah brought against them **the (two) army chiefs of the king of Assyria**, and they captured **Manasseh** with hooks and bound him with two copper fetters and took him to Babylon. In his distress, he begged Jehovah his God for favour and kept humbling himself greatly before the God of his forefathers. He kept praying to Him, and He was moved by his entreaty and heard his request for favour, and He restored him to Jerusalem to his kingship (2Ch 33:11).

The harmonizing of all the information is consistent. Two Assyrian kings, King Esarhaddon (681-669) and his co-regent Aššurbanipal, came in 673 BCE to take into exile some foreigners to settle them in the cities of Samaria (Hasegawa, Levin, Radner: 2019, 105-117). They also brought back King Manasseh to put him in jail, but they released him rapidly. This version of events is confirmed by the annals of Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal. For example, the Prism B of Esarhaddon dated the eponym Atarilu, in 673 BCE (Briend, Seux: 1977, 99-102,128-129), which corresponds exactly to the biblical dating, reads:

I summoned the kings of Ḫatti (Syria-Palestine) and Across the River (Euphrates): <u>Ba'alu, king of Tyre, **Manasseh king of Judah** (*Me-na-si-i* LUGAL URU.*Ia-ú-di*), Qa'uš-gabri, king of Edom, Muṣurī, king of Moab, Ṣil-Bēl, king of Gaza, Mitinti, king of Ashkelon, Ikausu, king of Ekron, Milki-ašapa, king of Byblos, Mattan-ba'al, king of Arvad (...) in total, **22 kings of Ḫatti, the seashore and the islands**</u> (Leichty: 2011, 23)

The same events are dated the first campaign of Aššurbanipal (in 668 BCE) on the Rassam Cylinder:

<u>On my fir[st campaign, I marched] to Makan (Egypt) [and Meluḫḫa (Ethiopia)].</u> **Taharqa, the king of Eg[ypt** and Kush (Nubia)], whose defeat Esarhaddon — king of As[syria, the father who had engendered me] (...) He marched against the kings (and) off[icials], whom the father who had en[gendered me] had appointed inside Egypt, to kill (and) rob (them) and to take away Eg[ypt (from them)]. He entered and resided in the city Mem[phis] (...) <u>In the course of my campaign, Ba'alu, king of the land Tyre, **Manasseh, king of the land Judah** (*Mi-in-se-e* LUGAL KUR.*Ia-ú-di*), Qa'uš-gabri, king of the land Edom, Muṣurī, king of the land Moab, Ṣil-Bēl, king of the land Gaza, Mitinti, king of the land Ashkelon, Ikausu, king of the land Ekron, Milki-ašapa, king of the land Byblos, (...), Buṣusu, king of the land Nūria — in total, **22 kings of the seacoast, the midst of the sea**</u>, and dry land, [serva]nts who belonged to me, carried their substantial [audience] gift(s) [before me] and kissed my feet (Novotny, Jeffers: 2018, 25)

Given that the first campaign of Aššurbanipal (669-627) as King is dated 668 BCE, the events relate rather to his first campaign as a co-regent in 673 BCE. A cross-checking of all the documents concerning Aššurbanipal, Annals and Chronicles, shows that some have been modified. For example, an unknown son of Esarhaddon named Sin-nâdin-apli was appointed as crown prince in 674 BCE, then in 672 BCE two others were appointed as crown princes: Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, his eldest son, for Babylonia and Aššurbanipal for Assyria. On the other hand, Esarhaddon's Chronicles show that the campaign against Egypt is dated 3/VII/**10** (October 671 BCE), which corresponds to the first year of Aššurbanipal as co-regent but dated the 2nd year in his annals (Upper Egypt is dated to his 1st year). This 1-year discrepancy is troubling but could be explained by the fact that Sin-nâdin-apli "Sin has given the heir" and Aššur-bani-apli "Aššur has created the heir" were the same person. The former name represented the prince's original name (birth name) and the second the throne name[31], which could explain that Aššurbanipal was chosen twice, once in 674 BCE as crown prince and again in 672 BCE as crown prince but for Assyria only (Šamaš-šuma-ukīn for Babylonia). Unfortunately, Ashurbanipal's Chronicles for events of his Year 8 are broken at this location and his Year 9 was omitted (bad omen?). We just learned that Esarhaddon's first wife Ešarra-ḫamat died the 5/XII/**8** (March 672 BCE) and there were seven substitute kings[32] between 679 and 669 BCE. As a result, Year 8 of Esarhaddon, in 672 BCE, when Manasseh was released, was damaging for the Assyrians but they did not give any reason why. On the contrary Year 10 of Esarhaddon is better known because of the victory over Taharqa in 671 BCE, commemorated on the Nahr El Kelb Stele, near Beirut. Lines 31-35 of the fragmentary inscription read as follows: "Ashkelon ... which **Taharqa** to their fortress ... Tyre ... **22 kings**" (Mitchell: 1992, 375-377), exactly the same expression of the Prism B of Esarhaddon dated 673 BCE.

CROWN PRINCE OR CO-REGENT ?

The previous examples of Sennacherib and Aššurbanipal show that these crown princes functioned as kings to lead military campaigns but without the royal title. The title of crown prince, designating the approved successor of the king, is rarely mentioned in inscriptions and gives no indication of his role. On the other hand, iconographic representations on the occasion of the enthronement of the crown prince, or the presentation of the spoils of a campaign in honour of the king, clearly indicate his status as co-regent. For example, the text of an inscription from Calah (IM 65574) on various parts of the throne base above the scene (Fig. 5) describes several events and campaigns of Shalmaneser III, the last of which is dated to Year 13, 846 BCE (Yamada: 2000, 32-34).

Fig. 5 King Shalmaneser III (right) facing co-regent Aššur-danin-pal with royal two ribbons

The interpretation of this image is simple: the main character on the right of the scene (Fig. 5), who wears a two-tiered conical tiara, is the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (859-824). He also wears a diadem,

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[31] For example, the throne name of Esarhaddon (Aššur-aḫa-iddina "Aššur has given a brother") was Aššur-etel-ilâni-mukîn-apli "Aššur prince of the gods, is establishing an heir" but he never used it.
[32] A substitute king was a false king appointed to neutralize a bad omen.

symbol of his military authority, and two ribbons at back, the second symbol of his royalty. In front of him there is a very similar figure but only without the tiara who is thus the co-regent (Aššur-danin-pal in 846 BCE). Behind him there is a eunuch (his *turtānu* "commander-in-chief" Dayyān-Aššur, according to the list of eponyms) who is smaller than him (one head less) because his rank is just after him, but he wears a diadem, symbol of his military authority. Just behind the commander-in-chief, according to the protocol rank[33] (Yamada: 2018, 75-96), the first high official (bearded eunuch) is the chief cupbearer (*rab šāqê* Aššur-bunaya-uṣur) and the next one is the palace herald (*nāgir ekalli* Abi-ina-ekalli-lilbur). The four figures on the left each carry a sword at their side to show that they are dedicating a military campaign (in 846 BCE according to the inscription) to the king. As the annals of the 13th year of Shalmaneser III's reign does not mention any military campaigns, the purpose of the engraving was to show that his son Aššur-danin-pal had been enthroned as crown prince.

The official status of the crown prince: *mār šarri ša bēt rēdûti* "of the house of succession", is not defined in inscriptions, apart from the fact that he is the designated successor to the throne and can conduct campaigns under the auspices of the king, as it is sufficiently explicit in the depictions engraved on the walls of the royal palaces. Indeed, diplomatic visitors and royal court staff who were invited to the royal palaces immediately saw the co-regent in front of the king, as this figure was the same height as the king and had two ribbons at back. Even illiterate visitors (of which there were many at the time) could immediately see it and identify it as a co-regent. For example, in the Palace of Assurnasirpal II one can see the king (Fig. 6 left) with two servants wears a fez with conical top, and two ribbons at back and a crown prince (right) wearing diadem and two ribbons at back, followed by eunuch with diadem (commander-in-chief). All three also wear tassels as necklace counterweights (Reade: 2009, 249). As in 871 BCE the crown prince was Shalmaneser (III), the engraving represents his enthronement, and the commander-in-chief was *turtānu* Aššur-iddin.

Fig. 6   King Assurnasirpal II (left) facing co-regent Shalmaneser (III) with royal two ribbons

Assyriologists generally refuse to identify the crown princes with co-regents because no text explicitly says so, but this refusal is unreasonable because Assyrian and Babylonian representations were conventional so as to be understood by all: the gods were depicted first with an immense waist and wearing the divine tiara with horns, the kings were depicted second, one head below the gods and wearing the royal tiara, conical with two tiers for the Assyrian kings or conical and domed for the Babylonian kings, and finally the high court officials were depicted, one head below the kings. For example, the Babylonian king (Fig. 7 left) can be identified by his conical domed tiara and the Assyrian king by his conical two-tiered tiara. Both kings, wearing diadems, each with two ribbons at the back, are of the same height and are shown one head above their commander-in-chief.

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[33] From the beginning of the Neo-Assyrian period to the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (745-728).

Fig. 7 Babylonian King Marduk-zakir-šumi I (left) facing Assyrian King Shalmaneser III

Although the representation does not include an explanatory text, the two kings are immediately identifiable icon-graphically thanks to the two conventional criteria of royalty: the tiara and the two ribbons at the back. It is noticeable that the eunuch behind the Babylonian king, Marduk-zakir-šumi I (855-819), wears the diadem of the command of armies but not the one behind the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser III (859-824). The explanation is easy to see, the Assyrian king came to his aid, symbolised by the handshake with the Babylonian king, to support him against the revolt fomented by his brother, as the inscription on the Black Obelisk clearly explains (Black Obelisk, lines 73–84):

> In the 8th year of my reign (in 851 BCE), Marduk-bēl-ušati, the younger brother, revolted against Marduk-zâkir-šumi, king of Karduniaš (Babylon), and they divided the land in its entirety. In order to avenge Marduk-zâkir-šumi, I marched out and captured Mê-Turnat. In the 9th year of my reign (850 BCE), I marched against Akkad a second time. I besieged Ganannate. As for Marduk-bēl-ušati, the terrifying splendour of Aššur and Marduk overcame him and he went up into the mountains to save his life. I pursued him. I cut down with the sword Marduk-bēl-ušati and the rebel army officers who were with him.

The conventional representation of crown princes as kings, except for their tiara, proves that they had a royal status of co-regent, but not king. Since the term co-regent does not exist in Hebrew, the literal translation of the Assyrian expression *mār šarri* as "son of the king" would have been misleading (Hussein: 2020, 59-88), since only one son of the king inherited a status equivalent to that of the king. The translation of *mār šarri* as "king" therefore corresponds to the function of the character and not to his official title of crown prince [of the house of succession]. The translation or transcription of the Assyrian titles in the Bible is therefore remarkably accurate:

> In the 14th year of King Hezekiah (in 712 BCE), Sennacherib the king (*mār šarri*) of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. So King Hezekiah of Judah sent word to the king of Assyria at Lachish: I am at fault. Withdraw from against me, and I will give whatever you may impose on me. The king of Assyria imposed on King Hezekiah of Judah a fine of 300 silver talents and 30 gold talents (...) The king of Assyria then sent the Tartan (*turtānu*), the Rabsaris (*rab ša reš*), and the Rabshakeh (*rab šāqu*) with a vast army from Lachish to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem (2Ki 18:13-17). In the year that King (*šarru*) Sargon of Assyria sent the Tartan to Ashdod (in 712 BCE), he fought against Ashdod and captured it (Is 20:1).

The translation of the two Assyrian terms *mār šarri* (co-regent) and *šarru* (king) into a single Hebrew word 'king' creates an ambiguity which is easily removed since the Bible gives the precise date of the events, making it possible to know whether it is a king or a co-regent. For example, Nabonidus (556-539) was king of Babylon, but in 553 BCE established his son Belshazzar (553-539) as co-regent before moving to the Syrian city of Teima. Although all the contracts dated to this period are in the name of Nabonidus, it was Belshazzar, as the Bible says, who was in Babylon when Cyrus took the city and installed Darius the Mede, his co-regent, as king of Babylon (named Ugbaru in the Babylonian chronicles). For example:

> In the 3rd year of the kingship of King (*mār šarri*) Belshazzar (in 550 BCE), a vision appeared to me, Daniel (...) As I raised my eyes, look! there was a ram standing before the watercourse, and it had two horns. The two horns were tall, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up later (...)

The two-horned ram that you saw stands for the kings of Media (Astyages) and Persia (Cyrus II) (...) Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and placed a gold necklace around his neck; and they heralded concerning him that he was to become the third ruler (*turtānu*) in the kingdom. That very night (11 October 539 BCE) Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom; he was about 62 years old. It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the whole kingdom (...) In the 1st year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus —a descendant of the Medes who had been made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans— in the 1st year of his reign (in 538 BCE) I, Daniel (Dn 8:1-3,20; 5:29-6:1; 7:1; 9:1-2).

According to Herodotus, Astyages the king of Media was defeated by Cyrus who thus became the king of Persia and Media, Harpagus (550-539), the new king of Media, becoming his co-regent (The Histories I:127-130, 162, 177-178). He is called "Lieutenant of Cyrus" by Strabo (Geography VI:1) or "Commandant of Cyrus" by Diodorus Siculus (Historical Library IX:31:1). When Harpagus, Cyrus' commander-in-chief, took Babylon, Cyrus became for the Babylonians "King of the Lands (Persia and Media)" and appointed Harpagus King of Babylon. This appointment posed a problem to the Babylonians because Harpagus had not been enthroned by Marduk during the festival of Akitu. In the Nabonidus Chronicle (BM 35382), Harpagus is called: Ugbaru, governor of Gutium (former name of Media) and the troops of Cyrus. According to this Chronicle, he ruled Babylon from October 539 BCE until his death in November 538 BCE, and was succeeded in January 537 BCE, by Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, who was enthroned as "King of Babylon", Cyrus becoming "King of the Lands and Babylon". Ugbaru[34] was actually a king (co-regent), as he appointed the governors of the new kingdom, which was a royal prerogative. In addition, when his wife died in March 537 BCE, the Chronicle states that she was the king (*šarru*)'s wife. Finally, he was replaced by Cambyses, who had appointed king (*šarru*) of Babylon.

BIOGRAPHY OF KING TIGLATH-PILESER III (745-727) & CO-REGENT PULU (782-746)

The reign of Tiglath-pileser III marked the end of a period of turmoil (783-745 BCE) during the reigns of the three successors of Adad-nīrārī III (811-783). His accession to the throne coincided with a revolt in Kalhu, the Assyrian capital, and came about as a result of a coup (in 746 BCE) orchestrated by his predecessor's senior officials because they legitimately continued to serve the new king. At least three inscriptions show that Tiglath-pileser was crown prince (DUMU LUGAL) between 792 and 782 BCE and according to an inscribed brick from Aššur he was a son of Adad-nīrārī III, however, as the annals of the three successors of Adad-nīrārī III have not been found it is difficult to reconstruct his career as crown prince (Villard: 2001, 849-851). We only know that Tiglath-pileser was the co-regent of Aššur-nīrārī V before he took power (Davenport: 2016, 38-39) and the name Tiglath-pileser Pu'al (פאל) appears several times on a Phoenician stela dated 743-742 BCE (Na'aman: 2019, 79-82).

For chronological reasons, the mysterious Assyrian king, named Bar Ga'yah ("Son of Majesty" in Aramaic) king of KTK, can be identified with Tiglath-pileser while he was crown prince ("Son of the King" in Assyrian). The annals of Tiglath-pileser III are biased because they sometimes include ancient tributes of his predecessors, but they can be completed and corrected by means of the eponymous Chronicle. For example, Hatarikka was annexed in 738 BCE (Yamada: 2014, 31-50). The word *palû* (BAL) literally means "period of office" and could be translated by "(year of) reign" but as Tiglath-pileser's accession took place at the beginning of the year, this would have allowed him to conduct a military campaign. Thus, it is preferable to translate *palû* by "campaign (*gerru*)", because there is a difference of one year between the years of reign and the number of campaigns:

TABLE 17

BCE	year/ *palû*	Campaign according to:	
		Eponym Chronicle	Annals of Tiglath-pileser III
745	0/ *palû 1*	To Mesopotamia	Campaign in northern and eastern Babylonia; defeat of the Aramean tribes near Dûr-Kurigalzu.
744	1/ *palû 2*	Against the land of Namri	First Median Campaign: Parsua and Bît-Hamban are annexed; the submission of the Maneans.
743	2/ *palû 3*	Urartu defeated in Arpad	Sarduri (II), king of Urartu, and his Anatolian allies are defeated (**Pu'al** as Tiglath-pileser III).
742	3/ *palû 4*	Against Arpad	Arpad besieged.
741	4/ *palû 5*	Against Arpad	Arpad besieged.
740	5/ *palû 6*	Against Arpad	Fall and annexation of Arpad.

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[34] Ugbaru (≠ Gubaru "neck") was a nickname. UG-ba-ru or PIRIG₃-ba-ru can be read *šar-bārû* "king of the diviner (Daniel?)" (Labat, Malbran-Labat: 1999, 43,97). Darius was probably a Persian throne name given to Harpagus by Cyrus, but this name was not used by the Babylonians. Harpagus is called Oibaras by Ctesias (Persica §13,36,45) and by Tzetzes (Chiliades I:93).

739	6/ *palû 7*	Against the land of Ulluba	Campaign to Ulluba.
738	7/ *palû 8*	Kullani conquered	Unqi and Hatarikka annexed; tribute received from all vassal kings of the West, including **Rezin of Damascus** and **Menahem of Samaria**.
737	8/ *palû 9*	Against the Medes	Second Median campaign deep into Media. Territories around Parsua and Bît-Humban are annexed.
736	9/ *palû 10*	To the foot of Mount Nal	-
735	10/ *palû 11*	Against Urartu	Campaign into the heart of Urartu as far as Turušpa.
734	11/ *palû 12*	Against Philistia	Campaign to Philistia and the Egyptian border.
733	12/ *palû 13*	Against Damascus	Siege of Damascus. Campaigns against the Arabs and to Gilead and Galilee.
732	13/ *palû 14*	Against Damascus	Conquest and annexation of Damascus. Campaigns against the Arabs and to Gilead, Galilee, and Transjordan.
731	14/ *palû 15*	Against Šapia	Defeat of the Chaldean tribes of central and southern Babylonia; siege of Šapia.
730	15/ *palû 16*	The king stayed in the land	-
729	16/ *palû 17*	The king took hand's Bel	Defeat of (Nabû-)Mukîn-zêri, king of Babylon. Tiglath-pileser III ascends the Babylonian throne (**Pulu II**).
728	17/ *palû 18*	Hi[.. was conquered]	Tiglath-pileser III on the Babylonian throne
727	18/ *palû 19*	Against […]	Tiglath-pileser III dies in the month of Tebetu (X).

We notice that, during his 18-year reign, Tiglath-pileser III made many conquests and annexations and conducted many sieges, but that he received tributes only during his 8th campaign, in 738 BCE, including the one of Menahem, but this conclusion contradicts the rest of the inscription:

(In 738 BCE) I exercised authority over [..., ...] ..., which [...], the city Ḫatarikka, as far as Mount Sau[e, ...] (...) I annexed to Assyria [..., the city Kaš]pūna, which is on the shore of the Upper (text: "Lower") Sea, the cities [...]nite, Gil[ead, and] Abil-šiṭṭi, which are the border of the land Bīt-Ḫumri[a] (Israel), the extensive [land of Bīt-Ḫazaʾi]li (Damascus) in [its] en[tirety, (and) I pla]ced [... eunuch]s of mine as provincial governors [over them]. (As for) Ḫanūnu of the city Gaza, [who] fle[d before] my weapons [and] escaped [to] Egypt — [I conquered] the city Gaza, [his royal city, (and) I carried off] his property (and) [his] gods (...) (As for) the land Bīt-Ḫumria (Israel), I brought [to] Assyria [..., its "au]xiliary [army" ...] (and) all of its people, [...]. [I/they] killed Peqah, their king, and I placed Hosea [as king o]ver them. I received from them ten talents of gold, ... talents of silver, [together with] their [proper]ty, and [I brou]ght them [to Assyria][35].

Accordingly, Tiglath-pileser III overthrew King Peqah (758-738) in 738 BCE and placed Hosea (738-729) as king over the inhabitants of Samaria, which fits perfectly with the biblical text:

In the days of Peqah (758-738) the king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser (745-727) the king of Assyria came in and proceeded to take Ijon and Abel-beth-maacah and Janoah and Kedesh and Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and to carry them into exile in Assyria. Finally, Hosea (738-729) the son of Elah formed a conspiracy against Peqah the son of Remaliah and struck him and put him to death; and he began to reign in place of him in the 20th year of Jotham (in 738 BCE) the son of Uzziah (2Ki 15:27-30).

Furthermore, in 738 BCE, the king of Judah was indeed Ahaz (742-726), written *Ia-ú-ḫa-zi* in Tiglath-pileser's annals, and according to the biblical text (Jones: 2007, 173–181, 330):

It was then that King Rezin (750-732) of Syria and Peqah (758-738) son of Remalah the king of Israel came up to wage war against Jerusalem. They laid siege against Ahaz (742-726) but were not able to capture the city. At that time King Rezin of Syria restored Elath to Edom, after which he drove the Jews out of Elath. And the Edomites entered Elath, and they have occupied it down to this day. So, Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath-pileser (745-727) of Assyria, saying: I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Syria and the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me. Ahaz then took the silver and the gold that was to be found at the house of Jehovah and in the treasuries of the king's house and sent the king of Assyria a bribe. The king of Assyria responded to his request, and he went up to Damascus and captured it and led its people into exile to Kir, and he put Rezin to death (in 732 BCE). Then King Ahaz went to meet King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria at Damascus (2Ki 16:5-10).

The chronological agreement is perfect except for the tribute of Menahem (771-760), a former king of Israel who had been dead for 22 years. In fact, Menahem actually paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser, not during his reign, but when he was co-regent under the name Pulu, a hypocoristic use of the word *aplu* "heir" (Villard: 2001, 850). Tiglath-pileser reused this name when he was vice-regent of Babylon (729-727). The

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[35] http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/rinap1/Q003455/html (Tadmor: 2011, 105-106).

term vice-regent/co-regent (MAN)[36] in Assyrian is sometimes used to designate the crown prince, literally "son of the king (DUMU LUGAL, *mār šarri*)". In Hebrew, Assyrian king or Assyrian co-regent are referred to by the same word "king (*melekh*)".

Consequently, the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of <u>Pul the king of Assyria and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser (745-727) the king of Assyria</u> (1Ch 5:26). <u>Pul the king of Assyria came into the land. Consequently, Menahem (771-760) gave Pul 1000 talents of silver</u>, that his hand might prove to be with him to strengthen the kingdom in his own hand. So Menahem brought forth the silver at the expense of Israel, at the expense of all the valiant, mighty men, to give to the king of Assyria 50 silver shekels for each man. <u>At that the king of Assyria turned back, and he did not stay there in the land</u> (2Ki 15:19-20).

The Assyrian chronicles and the biblical account agree that in 712 BCE, Rezin (750-732), the powerful king of Damascus, whose reign is well documented (Na'aman: 1995, 105-117; Bryce: 2012, 302-309), formed a coalition to resist Tiglath-pileser III's attack, Peqah (758-738), the king of Israel, joined the coalition but not Jotham (758-742), the king of Judah. This led to a retaliation against Jotham who died at the end of the year (2Ki 15:37-38). In 740 BCE, the kingdom of Bit-Agusi (Arpad) was defeated by Tiglath-pileser III during his 6th campaign in Syria and was definitively annexed to the Assyrian empire. To defeat Peqah, Ahaz (742-726), the new king of Judah: "asked <u>the kings of Assyria (*malkhê aššur*)</u> for help" (2Ch 28:16 NIV). The Assyrian "king (*melekh*)" accompanying Tiglath-pileser III (2Ch 18:20) must have been Shalmaneser V as co-regent. Hosea I formed a conspiracy against Peqah. He put him to death and began to reign in place of him (2Ki 15:27-30). In 734 BCE, Tiglath-pileser III invaded and immediately conquered the Philistine territories. The reconstruction of this troubled period highlights several synchronisms among the Assyrian, Israelite (Samaria) and Judean reigns.

TABLE 18

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	
742	1 2 3	X XI XII	2	(1)	5	15	16	[A] **Tiglath-pileser III**, King of Assyria [B] **Shalmaneser (V)**, Crown prince/co-regent of Assyria
	4 5 6 7 8 9	I II III IV V VI	3	(2)	6	16		[C] **Nabû-nasir**, King of Babylonia [D] **Jotham**, King of Judah (2Ki 15:32-33) [E] **Peqah**, King of Israel (2Ki 15:27)
	10 11 12	VII VIII IX				***	17	[E] **Peqah** against **Jotham** (2Ki 15:37-38)
741	1 2 3	X XI XII				0	***	[D] **Ahaz**, King of Judah (2Ki 16:1)
	4 5 6 7 8 9	I II III IV V VI	4	(3)	7	1 [17]		
	10 11 12	VII VIII IX				18		
740	1 2 3	X XI XII						
	4 5 6 7 8 9	I II III IV V VI	5	(4)	8	2 [18]	***	[D] **Ahaz** sent to the kings of Assyria (**Tiglath-pileser III** and co-regent **Shalmaneser V**) for them to help him (2Ch 28:16-20) and asked to be a vassal of Tiglath-pileser III (2Ki 16:7).
	10 11 12	VII VIII IX				19		
739	1 2 3	X XI XII						
	4 5 6 7 8 9	I II III IV V VI	6	(5)	9	(3) [19]		

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[36] MAN sign, written with two nail heads (**<<**), later translated *šarru* "king" into Neo-Assyrian, literally means *šanû* "second/duplicate".

BCE								
	10	VII					20	[E] **Peqah**, King of Israel died (2Ki 15:27)
	11	VIII						
	12	IX						
738	1	X						
	2	XI						
	3	XII						
	4	I	7	(6)	10	(4) [20]		
	5	II						
	6	III						
	7	IV				***	0	[E] **Hosea I**, King of Israel (2Ki 15:30) vassal of Tiglath-pileser III
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII					1 [1]	[E] Beginning of the 65-year period (Is 7:8-9) until 673 BCE when Manasseh was freed (2Ch 33:13; Ezr 4:2).
	11	VIII						
	12	IX						

Consequently, Hosea II became king in the 12th year of Ahaz the king of Judah in 729 BCE, but he was already king from the 20th year of Jotham (2Ki 15:30) who only reigned 16 years (2Ki 15:32-33)! In fact, given that Hosea I was appointed by Tiglath-pileser III as his vassal in 738 BCE, consequently his reign became valid only after his anointing as king of Judah in 729 BCE. Similarly, Ahaz became the vassal of Tiglath-pileser III in 740 BCE until his departure in 732 BCE. Therefore, when Hosea I was appointed king in 738 BCE, which was the 4th year of Ahaz (742-726), the Hebrew scribe chose to count his reign from the 20th year of Jotham[37] (758-742) because Jotham had been a legitimate king, not a vassal, although he was dead at that time (not a co-regent). The oddity of these double reigns stems from the absence of the word "co-regent" in Hebrew[38], thus Hosea I became the vassal king (738-729) of Tiglath-pileser III before becoming legitimate king of Israel Hosea II (729-720).

The case is made that the biblical accounts are historically accurate (Siddall: 2006, 93-106) and agree with the Assyrian sources (Dubovský: 2006, 153-170).

TABLE 19

BCE			[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	
730	1	X	14	(13)	1	11	[8]	[A] **Tiglath-pileser III**, King of Assyria
	2	XI						[B] **Shalmaneser (V)**, Crown prince (co-regent)
	3	XII						[C] **Nabû-mukîn-zêri**, King of Babylonia
	4	I	15	(14)	2	12		[D] **Ahaz**, King of Judah
	5	II						[E] **Hosea I**, King of Israel (2Ki 15:30) vassal of **Tiglath-pileser III**
	6	III						
	7	IV						
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII					[9]	
	11	VIII						
	12	IX						
729	1	X						
	2	XI				***	0	[E] **Hosea II**, King of Israel (2Ki 17:1)
	3	XII						
	4	I	16	(15)	3	13		
	5	II						
	6	III			0			[C] **Pulu II**, King of Babylonia
	7	IV						
	8	V						
	9	VI						
	10	VII					1 [10]	
	11	VIII						
	12	IX						
728	1	X						
	2	XI						

Very often Assyrian kings chose their co-regent a few years after the beginning of their reign, but Tiglath-pileser III chose his son Shalmaneser V as co-regent from the first year of his reign. The wall panel (BM 118933) describes some of the campaigns of Tiglath Pileser III in Iran in 744 BCE (Fig. 8). The inscription on this slab deals with Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns against the provinces of Media. The Annals of the king report two campaigns against Media, one in his 2nd, the other in his 9th *palû* (Yamada: 2014, 31-50). The part of the inscription preserved on this slab belongs to Year 1, the campaign of the 2nd *palû* (Yamada: 2014, 36 n 18), in 744 BCE.

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[37] The 20th year of Jotham, in 738 BCE, did not exist since Jotham only reigned for 16 years.

[38] For example, High Priest Azariah (796-758) replaced King Uzziah (810-758) who had been afflicted with leprosy in the 14th year of his reign and was therefore no longer able to exercise his kingship. Similarly, Tibni (930-925) was king at the same time as Omri (930-919); Jehoash (941-939) was the co-regent of Jehoachaz (856-839) before becoming king of Israel (839-823); Jehoram (893-885) was the co-regent of Jehoshaphat for two years (916-891) before becoming king of Judah; Ahaziah (886-885) was the co-regent of Jehoram (893-885) in his last year of reign.

Fig. 8 King Tiglath-pileser III (right) facing his co-regent Shalmaneser (V)

This enthronement ceremony of Shalmaneser V is also shown in Til Barsip with two eunuchs behind Tiglath-pileser III (Villard: 2001, 312). It is interesting to note that this event took place shortly after he led a revolt (in 746 BCE) against his brother Aššur-nīrārī V (Siddall: 2013, 126). His reign is extremely unusual in many ways. He was the 4th and youngest son of Aššur-nīrārī III[39] (Tadmor, Yamaha: 2011, 148). At the death of King Adad-nīrārī III, in 783 BCE, his eldest son (Shalmaneser IV) succeeded him on the throne, but what is paradoxical is that his youngest son, Tiglath-pileser, who was nevertheless the crown prince did not begin to rule, probably because of his young age. As he was only c. 10 years old in 792 BCE, he was not invested with the command of the armies and therefore did not receive the ornament/diadem that the commander-in-chief already had. It is also worth noting that the commander-in-chief, Šamšī-ilu, who had been appointed by Adad-nīrārī III around 800 BCE[40] (Villard: 2001, 817-818), remained in place during the

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[39] However, the edition of the Assyrian King List from Sargon II's reign, known as the SDAS List, ascribes his parentage to Aššur-nīrārī V instead of Aššur-nīrārī III. One must give preference to the contemporary brick inscriptions from Aššur over the later composed text of the SDAS edition of the Assyrian King List. Sargon II, who was the second son of Tiglath-pileser III, not the son of the previous king (Shalmaneser V), wanted to legitimize the reign of his father who had overthrown his own brother, Aššur-nīrārī V, through a normal father/son succession.

[40] Before the reign of Sargon II (722-705) Assyrian kings chose their commander-in-chief in the first year of their reign and then appointed him to the eponymy in the third year. If the commander-in-chief was chosen during the reign, he was named the following year. Although Adad-nîrârî III appointed Šamšī-ilu commander-in-chief, around 800 BCE, he did not designate him as eponym. The previous commander-in-chief, Nergal-ilāya, had been appointed as eponym in 808 BCE. Paradoxically, Šamšī-ilu describes himself in his inscription as "the governor of Namri", not as "the conqueror of Namri", in 797 BCE (Younger: 2016, 355-362).

reigns of his three sons, while the privilege of appointing the commander-in-chief was a royal prerogative of the king in office. There are three inscriptions which show that Tiglath-pileser was crown prince at least from 792 BCE (Kataja, Whiting: 1995, XII,10-15), so from years before Adad-nīrārī III's death:

[Adad-nerari (III), overseer (PA-*lum* = *waklum*), [son of Šamš]î-Adad (V), [over]seer, [son of Sha]lmanes[er (III), likewise, overseer] An estate [.. of x] hectar[es of land … under the authority of] Bel-[ta]rsi-[ilum]ma, [pre]fect of Kalhu, Adad-nerari (III), king (LUGAL) of Assyria, exempted (from taxes) and gave to [Nabû-d]ur-beliya, his eunuch. The corn taxes of this field shall not be collected, the straw taxes shall not be gathered. [The gov]ernor (and) the pr[efe]ct [shall not] e[xercise authority] over [them …, eponymy of[41]].

Adad-nerari (III), king (LUGAL) of Assyria, overseer, son of Šamšî-Adad (V), king of Assyria, overseer, son of Shalmaneser (III), king of Assyria, overseer […] And Bel-[Harran …] from the king (LUGAL) and the crown prince (DUMU LUGAL) before the gods for […] as a good deed and favour [has received] for future da[ys]. By Aššur, Šamaš and [Enlil], the Assyrian Ištar, Adad, Nergal, Ninurta and the Sebetti (Pleiades), all these gods of Assyria, a future prince shall not cast aside the wording of this document. Month Ab, 26th day, eponymy of Mušalli-Inurta (in **792 BCE**).

Kid[… In the fu]ture, at any time, [neither] the descendents of Renti-[... nor] the men of the household of the crown prince (DUMU LUGAL) shall dispute anything with Abi-ul-idi, high priest, or his descendents. Future prince: do not cast aside the wording of this tablet. Month March[esvan (VIII) in **792-782 BCE**][42]

Adad-nerari (III), overseer, [son of Šamš]î-Adad (V), [over]seer, [son of Sha]lmanes[er (III), likewise, overseer …] [the cor]n taxes [of this village] shall not be collected, its [straw taxes] shall not be gathered. [… T]iglath-pileser (III) …] In the future, [of t]his vi[llage] and all of its possessions, nothing shall be taken away [f]rom Sabu son of Ahi-Nanaya and his [desc]endents. [By Aš[š]ur, Adad, Ber and the Assyrian [Ištar]: Future prince: do not cast aside the wording of this tablet [… eponym year of] Tab-Bel [the governor of Bi]t Zamani (in **762 BCE**).

These inscriptions mention the presence of a "son of the king" (DUMU LUGAL) in 792 BCE, whose name, Tiglath-pileser, appears in the inscription dated 762 BCE during Aššur-dân III's reign. In addition, the name of Tiglath-pileser is written TUKUL-ti-A-É.ŠÁR.RA *Tukulti-apil-éšarra* when he was crown prince, then TUKUL-ti-DUMU.UŠ-É.ŠÁR.RA *Tukulti-mār-éšarra* when he was king (LUGAL). The difference in meaning is minimal since -A- is read *apil* "heir" and DUMU is read *mār* "son". Since Tiglath-Pileser III died in 727 BC and was probably 70-75 years old, he must have been born around 800 BCE and must have been about 10 years old when he was appointed royal heir (in 792 BCE). He must have been less than 20 years old when his father died (in 783 BCE). It was his young age that prevented him from exercising royal authority because he had to be able to lead military campaigns, which were then entrusted to the commander-in-chief. This unusual situation had already occurred with his father (Adad-nīrārī III) who had exercised his royal authority under the regency of his mother, Queen Semiramis (Sammu-ramāt), who had held the co-regency function for 5 years (Siddall: 2013, 13-17,129-132). This complex situation created a paradox: the reigning king did not actually exercise royal authority. If Šamšî-Adad (V) was around 20 when he was appointed crown prince (827-824) his son Adad-nīrārī (III) had to have been around 17 in 810 BCE. Two objects —a carved container (Fig. 9), found at Tarbiṣu (near Nineveh), autographed by the commander-in-chief Bēlū-lū-balāṭ (815-810), and a cylinder seal found at Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), which belonged to a royal official of Adad-nīrārī III— shed light on the position of these two kings during this period (Reade: 2009, 252-254).
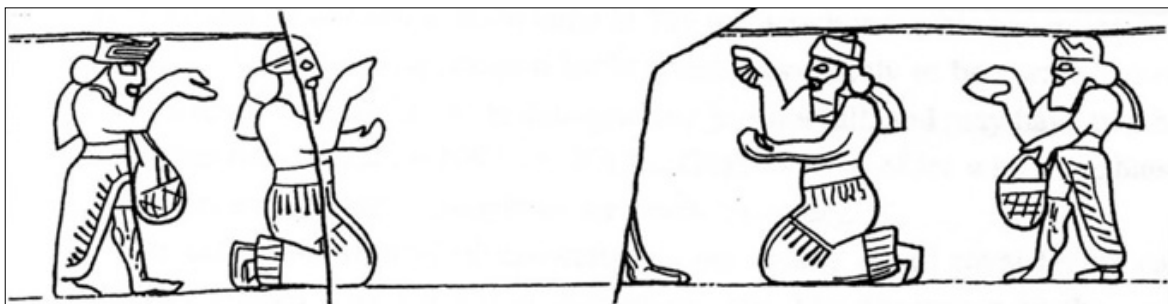
Fig. 9 King Šamšî-Adad V with a tiara (right) facing his co-regent Adad-nīrārī (III) without a tiara

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[41] Bel-tarṣi-ilumma, prefect of Kalhu, was eponym in 797 BCE.

[42] The eponym of this inscription is not legible, but as in 792 BCE, Tiglath-pileser is only mentioned by his title of crown prince while he is designated by his name in 762 BCE, it can be assumed that this inscription which designates him by his title of crown prince was written before he began his co-regency in 782 BCE after the death of Adad-nīrārī III.

Fig. 10 Queen Sammu-ramāt (left) facing the king before the co-regent (Adad-nīrārī III)

On the cylinder seal (Fig. 10) there is a king (who wears the tiara with two royal ribbons in his back) kneeling before his (young) co-regent (who wears a diadem with also two royal ribbons). As the object belonged to Bēlū-lū-balāṭ (815-810), the governor of Balīḫu, the anonymous king must be Šamšī-Adad V (who had just died) and crown prince Adad-nīrārī (III). The queen, with a 5-spike crown and two royal ribbons, faces the king (her husband), himself before the co-regent (beardless young man who wears the two royal ribbons). This representation (Reade: 2009, 252-254) is doubly outstanding because it is the only depiction of an Assyrian queen and the only depiction of a crown prince without a beard. However, it fits perfectly with the 5-year co-regency of Sammu-ramāt (811-806) with his son Adad-nīrārī III who was around 20 years old in 806 BCE at the end of his co-regency. Herodotus mentioned the existence of this exceptional queen (The Histories I:184). The representation of this queen being unique it is controversial (Gansell: 2018, 83), but as the seal belonged to Bēlū-lū-balaṭ (815-810), the governor of Balīḫu, it imposes the choice of Semiramis (811-807). Bēlū-lū-balaṭ, was commander-in-chief (turtānu) under Šamšî-Adad V (824-811) and was eponym in 814 BCE. The seal must be dated 811-810 BCE.

The Assyrian empire experienced several co-regencies that began at the same time as the king's reign, such as Sammu-ramāt/Adad-nīrārī III (811-806); Shalmaneser IV/Tiglath-pileser III (783-773); Tiglath-pileser III/ Shalmaneser V (745-727). Tiglath-pileser III did not become king at the death of Shalmaneser IV presumably because he had been appointed as co-regent by Adad-nīrārī III, next to his elder brother who was the natural successor to the throne. King Tiglath-pileser III's career is, therefore, in accordance with Middle Eastern protocol, which never gives the name of the co-regent in official royal inscriptions, but only his title of *mār šarri* ("son of the king"), which is different from *mār šarru* ("son of king"). The situation was different with vassal or foreign kingdoms since in this case the ruler had a royal status an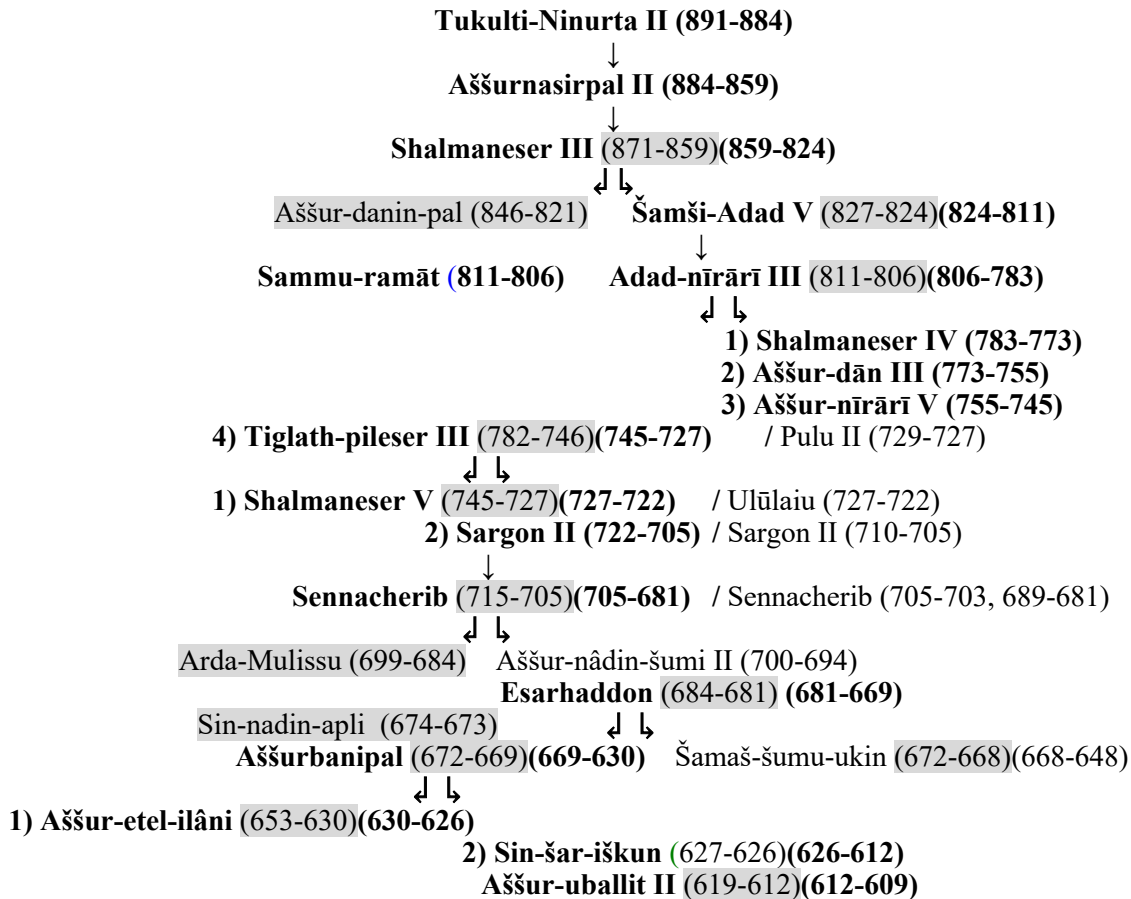d could use the title of king. The two-headed leadership of the Assyrian empire caused a problem for the commander-in-chief and other chiefs of staff who were leading military campaigns on behalf of the king. The problem was solved in a simple way: military campaigns in the name of the king were registered in his name, those in the co-regent's name were registered in the name of the commander-in-chief, or in the name of the chief of staff, who led the campaign (or who completed the construction of a temple) giving the impression that these high-ranking officials had granted themselves royal powers.

The office of the *turtānu* differed from the office of the other high officials in one very important respect: his role was primarily a military one, as he was the military commander of the Assyrian army for a long period, until the Assyrian kings divided the army into two: a provincial army commanded by the *turtānu*, and a central standing army (royal corps) commander by the *rab ša-rēšē* (Chief Eunuch). A *turtānu's* army might have been partly recruited from the armies of local governors, vassals, and local population. The military role of Šamšī-ilu (797-747) to the west of the empire was counterbalanced by the military role of Chief Eunuch to the east (Dezső: 2012, 218-227). As Šamšī-ilu had played a key role in the military campaigns to the west when Tiglath-pileser III was co-regent (782-746), not when he was designated as royal heir (792-782). His death[43], around 747 BCE, caused a policy change in the Assyrian empire, as it was only the king (Aššur-nīrārī V) who appointed this key figure to head the army. This death pushed Tiglath-pileser III, who was the co-regent of Aššur-nīrārī V (Davenport: 2016, 38-39), to take power to appoint a new *turtānu*. Such a complex situation was not exceptional as shown by the genealogy of Assyrian kings (Kalimi, Richardson: 2014, 173-181; May: 2017, 153; Chen: 2020, 199-201) given that it occurred (i.e. 2 successors ﻝ ﺏ) with Adad-nīrārī III, Tiglath-pileser III, Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal.

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[43] As Šamšī-ilu was governor of Namri in 797 BCE he must have been at least 20 years old at that date, so he must have been born around 820 BCE and must have been around 73 years old in 747 BCE.

> **King of Assyria**, Crown Prince/Co-regent, King of Babylon

Tukulti-Ninurta II (891-884)
↓
Aššurnasirpal II (884-859)
↓
Shalmaneser III (871-859)**(859-824)**
↓↓

Aššur-danin-pal (846-821)   **Šamši-Adad V** (827-824)**(824-811)**
↓

Sammu-ramāt (811-806)   **Adad-nīrārī III** (811-806)**(806-783)**
↓↓

1) Shalmaneser IV (783-773)
2) Aššur-dān III (773-755)
3) Aššur-nīrārī V (755-745)

4) Tiglath-pileser III (782-746)**(745-727)**   / Pulu II (729-727)
↓↓

1) Shalmaneser V (745-727)**(727-722)**   / Ulūlaiu (727-722)
2) Sargon II (722-705) / Sargon II (710-705)
↓

Sennacherib (715-705)**(705-681)**   / Sennacherib (705-703, 689-681)
↓↓

Arda-Mulissu (699-684)   Aššur-nâdin-šumi II (700-694)
Esarhaddon (684-681) **(681-669)**

Sin-nadin-apli (674-673)   ↓↓

Aššurbanipal (672-669)**(669-630)**   Šamaš-šumu-ukin (672-668)(668-648)
↓↓

1) Aššur-etel-ilâni (653-630)**(630-626)**
2) Sin-šar-iškun (627-626)**(626-612)**
Aššur-uballit II (619-612)**(612-609)**

Sennacherib appointed Aššur-nādin-šumi II (700-694) as king of Babylon, Arda-Mulissu (699-684) and later also Esarhaddon as Crown Prince (684-681). The succession of Ashurbanipal is poorly documented, but he seems to have appointed Aššur-etel-ilāni as crown prince in 653 BCE and the latter seized power in 630 BCE (Villard: 2001, 105-107). However, the crown prince was not named in 653 BCE and then never appeared on the sculptures (Reade: 1972, 93). That would explain why his short reign (630-626) is not mentioned in the Babylonian King lists because the legitimate king remained Ashurbanipal (669-626). The case of Shalmaneser V is simpler: because of his short reign (727-722) he had no time to appoint a crown prince; consequently, when he died, one of his two brothers, later called Sargon (*Šarru-kīn* "the legitimate king"), took over the kingship. All these examples show that crown princes acted as co-regents (when they were over 20 years old).

Previous chronological reconstructions show that all synchronisms between the Israelite and Assyrian reigns from Tiglath-pileser III to Sargon are in perfect agreement with absolute dates. According to the biblical text, Menahem (771-760) paid a tribute to Pûl (פול), the Assyrian king who preceded Tiglath-pileser III. An inscription of Awarikku, King of the Danunites, referred to the rebellion of western states led by Mati'-El against Tiglath-Pileser III in 743-742 BCE. It reads: *This frontier region is the gift of Tiglath-Pileser, Pu'al, King of Assyria (תכלתאפלסר פאל מלך אשר) to the king and dynasty of the king of the Danunites* (Kaufman: 2007, 7–26). This inscription shows that Tiglath-pileser III was previously known as Pulu. According to Menander of Ephesus (c. 200 BCE), the author of a book of Annals and translator of the Tyrian archives in Phoenician (destroyed in 146 BCE) into the Greek language, the Assyrian king named Pul(as) reigned 36 years:

> The king of Assyria invaded all Syria and Phoenicia in a hostile manner (in 773 BCE). The name of this king is also set down in the archives of Tyre, for he made an expedition against Tyre in the reign of Elulaios[44] (Luli I). This is also attested by Menander, the author of a book of Annals and translator of the Tyrian archives into the Greek language, who has given the following account: And Elulaios (?), to whom they gave the name of Pulas, reigned 36 years; this king, upon the revolt of the Kitieis (Cyprians), put out to sea and again reduced them to a submission (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284).

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[44] This king of Tyre cannot be Luli II (729-694) because according to Assyrian records he was king of Sidon during the 3rd Sennacherib campaign (702 BCE) and fled from Tyre to Cyprus where he "died" shortly afterwards. This information is incompatible with the length of his reign, implying that he was already king in 736 BCE at the time of Hiram III (739-730).

Given that Tiglath-pileser III revolted against his brother, Adad-nīrārī V, in 746 BCE, his effective co-regency must have begun 36 years earlier in 782 BCE, which fits exactly the time period (782-746). Since the Assyrian king who ruled during the reign of Menahem was Aššur-dān III, it was not this king, but an Assyrian co-regent named Pulu in Assyrian (or "Son of Majesty" in Aramaic), which is in excellent agreement with the period during which the first three sons of Adad-nīrārī III reigned:

TABLE 20

JUDAH	reign	ISRAEL	reign	KING OF ASSYRIA	reign	CO-REGENT	reign
Uzziah	810 -	Jeroboam II	823 -	Šamši-Adad V	824-811	Aššurdanin-pal	824-821
(Azariah)	[796 -		-782	Adad-nīrārī III	811-783	Sammu-ramāt	811-806
		Zechariah	782-771	Shalmaneser IV	783-773	**Pulu I**	782 -
	-758	**Menahem**	771-760	Aššur-dān III	773-755		
Jotham	758 -	**Peqah**	758 -	Aššur-nīrārī V	755-745		
	-742		**-738**	**Tiglath-pileser III**	745 -	Shalmaneser V	744 -
Ahaz	742 -	**Hosea I**	**738**-729				-729
	-726	**Hosea II**	729 -		-727	**(Pulu II)**	729-727
Hezekiah	726 -		**-720**	Shalmaneser V	727-722	(Ulûlaiu)	727-722
				Sargon II	722-705	Sennacherib	715-705
	-697			Sennacherib	705 -	Arda-Mulissu	699-684
Manasseh	697 -				-681	Esarhaddon	684-681
	-669			Esarhaddon	681-669	Aššurbanipal	672-669

As the Assyrian records before Tiglath-pileser III were lost, the events that took place during all this period (highlighted in grey) can only be reconstructed from the eponymous list and inscriptions. The period of time between the reigns of Adad-nīrārī III and Tiglath-pileser III is known only by the Eponym List (Millard: 1994, 70–71) and by some inscriptions.

TABLE 21

King (at Nineveh)	Reign	Co-regent (at Kalhu)		Commander-in-chief	Period
Aššurnasirpal II	884-871			[Aššur-iddin]	883 -
	871-859	Shalmaneser III	son 1		-858
Shalmaneser III	859 -			Aššur-bēlu-ka''in	858-854
	-846			Dayyān-Aššur	854 -
	846-821	Aššur-danin-pal	son 1		
	826-824	Šamšī-Adad V	son 2		-824
Šamšī-Adad V	824 -			Yaḫālu	824-815
	-811			Bēlu-lū-balāṭ	815-810
Adad-nīrārī III	811-806	Sammu-ramāt	mother	Nergal-ilāya	810-*797*
	806-792			**Šamšī-ilu**	*797* -
	792-783	**Pulu I** (heir)			
Shalmaneser IV	783-773	(crown prince)	son 1		
Aššur-dān III	**773-755**		son 2		
Aššur-nīrārī V	755 -		son 3		*-747*
	-745		**son 4**	-	*747-744*
Tiglath-pileser III	745-744			Nabū-da'inanni	744 -
	744-727	Shalmaneser V	son 1		-726
Shalmaneser V	727-722		-	Ninurta-ilaya	726 -
Sargon II (at Nineveh)	722-715		son 2		
	715-705	Sennacherib	son 1		-710
Sennacherib	705-699			Sennacherib	710-686
	699-684	Arda-Mulissu	son 1	Bēl-emuranni	686 -
	684-681	Esarhaddon	son 2	(*turtānu* of the East)	-680
Esarhaddon	681-674			(Esarhaddon?)	680 -
	674-672	Sin-nādin-apli	son 1		
	672-669	Aššurbanipal			-669
Aššurbanipal	669-653			Mār-larīm (*West*)	669-630
	653-627	Aššur-etel-ilāni	son 1	Ṣalam-šarru-iqbi (*West*)	630 -
Aššur-etel-ilāni	627-626	Sin-šar-iškun	son 2		
Sin-šar-iškun	626-619				-615
	619-612	Aššur-uballit II?	son 2	Šamaš-šarru-iqbi	615-612
Aššur-uballit II	612-609			Nabū-mār-šarri-uṣur	612-609

The co-regency of Tiglath-pileser III is, therefore, not exceptional, since 9 out of 16 Assyrian kings during the period 884-609 BCE had a period of co-regency before reigning. However, this time period (811-727 BCE) includes several oddities:

- Adad-nīrārī III started his reign with a 5-year co-regency with his mother, Semiramis (Sammu-ramāt "Heavens-beloved"). It was indeed a co-regency since Semiramis led a military campaign alongside her son (Siddall: 2013, 86-100). As the king had to be able to conduct military campaigns personally, as a soldier he had to be at least 20 years old (Herodotus I:136,209). As Adad-nīrārī III 's father was Šamši-Adad V (824-811), he was probably born around 825 BCE. When his father died in 811 BCE, Adad-nīrārī III was therefore 14 years old when he was enthroned, which obliged his mother, Semiramis, to assume the regency (811-806) until her son reached the age of 20, when he could personally lead military campaigns and found a dynasty.
- Instead of the usual transition father/son, four brothers succeeded one another on the throne of Assyria: 1) Shalmaneser IV, 2) Aššur-dān III, 3) Aššur-nīrārī V and 4) Tiglath-pileser III.
- Usually the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*) was chosen in the first year of the new Assyrian king, but Šamšī-ilu was appointed by Adad-nīrārī III around 797 BCE (presumably to replace Nergal-ilāya who must have died[45]), but without being named to eponymy (unique case). However, he was reappointed to office by the three successors of Adad-nīrārī III (in 780, 770 and 752 BCE).
- The eponym list for the reign of Aššur-dān III (773-755) is anomalous, as only the king himself and the commander-in-chief, 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 (Finkel, Reade: 1995, 167-172).

Kalhu (Nimrud) was one of the great neo-Assyrian capitals. The expansion of the city into becoming the capital was the result of the activity of Aššurnasirpal II (884-878) who started the works in 878 BCE. He began the construction of the 7.5 km long quadrangular defensive wall, probably completed by Shalmanaser III (859-824). The palace of Aššurnasirpal II remained an important royal building which was surpassed by the "Central Palace" built by Adad-nīrārī III (811-783). This royal palace, the residence of the Assyrian kings, was redesigned by Tiglath-pileser III. The governor of this city thus had a special relationship with the king, his superior next to the commander-in-chief. The archives of the governor's palace shed light on the relationship between all these high-ranking figures of the kingdom.

TABLE 22

King (at Nineveh)	Reign	Co-regent (at Kalhu)	Governor of Kalhu	Period
Aššurnasirpal II	884-871			
	871-859	Shalmaneser III	Nergal-āpil-kūmūa	**873** -
Shalmaneser III	859 -			-851
	-846		Šamaš-bēlu-uṣur	851 -
	846-821	Aššur-danin-pal		844
	826-824	Šamšī-Adad V		-?
Šamšī-Adad V	824 -		Mušēzib-ninurta	? -
	-811			817
Adad-nīrārī III	811-806	Sammu-ramāt		-808
	806-792		Bēl-tarṣi-iluma	808-791
	792-783	(Heir)	Aššur-bēlu-uṣur	**791** -
Shalmaneser IV	783-773			-772
Aššur-dān III	773-755	(The King my lord)	Šarru-dūrī	**772** -
Aššur-nīrārī V	755 -	(Governor of the land)		
	-745			-744
Tiglath-pileser III	745-744		Bēl-dān	**744** -
	744-727	Shalmaneser V		-728
Shalmaneser V	727-722		Marduk-rēmāni	728 -
Sargon II (at Nineveh)	722-715			-713
	715-705	Sennacherib	Aššur-bāni	**713**-705

Three important points should be noted: the governor of Kalhu often began his office in the year following the king's accession to the throne; he was an important figure because he is often eponym; among all these letters, Šamšī-ilu (797-747) is never cited by name but always by his title of *turtānu* commander-in-chief (Postgate: 1973, 8-11). When we place the co-regents in parallel with the kings, we notice that the reconstitution of the governors contains anomalies: either they seem to disappear, like those who officiated under Aššur-danin-pal and Šamšī-Adad V (846-824 BCE) or the letters are no longer precisely dated, like those under Shalmaneser IV, Aššur-dān III and Aššur-nīrārī V (783-745 BCE). The most surprising period is

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[45] As Nergal-ilāya had been appointed eponym in 830 and 817 BCE, as governor, he had a long career of 33 years in 797 BCE.

during the governorate of Šarru-dūrī (772-744) because he did not hold the eponymy office and among the six letters, written c. 750 BCE according to script and phraseology, that the king addressed to him as Governor (LÚ.EN.NAM) Šarru-dūrī, he never presents himself by name, contrary to protocol, but only by the title of "King, my lord (LUGAL EN-ia)" in four letters (No. 185 to 187) or by the title of "Governor of the land, my lord (LÚ.GAR.KUR EN-ia read: *šakin māti belia*)" in two letters (No. 188 and 189). The latter title was only used by governors of Assyria because provincial governors, or prefects, used the title *šakin ṭēmi*. In a letter (No. 201) Governor Bēl-dān mentions that "his family is from kings (*šar-e-e*) of Kalku" (Postgate: 1973, 11,22,199-200). These letters are difficult to decipher because according to official protocol there was only one king of Assyria wearing the tiara, but in practice there could be a co-regent, or vice-regent, who had the same power as the king without having either the title (LUGAL) or the tiara (MEN read: *agû*). So, the Assyrian scribes of Kalhu respected these contradictory requirements by mentioning an anonymous king (LUGAL) or by using a title reserved for the governor of Assyria (LÚ.GAR.KUR KUR AŠ), a sort of co-regent of the king of Assyria. The tomb of Queen Yabâ, who was the (favourite) wife of Tiglath-pileser, and who was buried in Kulhu, confirms that her husband was co-regent. Queen Yabâ probably died before 760 BCE[46] when Šarru-dūrī (772-744) was Governor of Kalhu. The name of Yabâ was inscribed on two gold bowls in the Tomb II. On two inscriptions and a stone funerary tablet read as follows:

ša$_2$ ^{f}**ia-ba-a MI$_2$.E$_2$.GAL** al-ti $^{m\ giš}$TUKUL-A-E$_2$.ŠAR$_2$.RA **MAN** KUR AŠ
Belonging to Queen Yabâ, wife of Tiglath-Pileser, Vice-regent of Assyria

ša$_2$ ^{f}**ia-ba-a MI$_2$.E$_2$.GAL** ša$_2$ ^{m}TUKUL-A-E$_2$.ŠAR$_2$.RA **MAN** KUR AŠ
Belonging to Yabâ, queen of Tiglath-Pileser, Vice-regent of Assyria

1. MU ^{d}UTU ^{d}ereš-ki-gal ^{d}a-nun-a-ki /2. DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ ša$_2$ KI-ti ^{f}**ia-ba-a** /3. **MI$_2$.E$_2$.GAL** ina mu-te NAM ZI-ti 4/- /14.
By the command of Šamaš, Ereškigal and Anunnaki, the great gods of the netherworld, mortal destiny caught up with Queen Yabâ in death

We notice that Tiglath-pileser's name is spelled with the word -A- (*aplu*) inside, when he was co-regent, not with the word -DUMU- (*māru*) when he was king (LUGAL), moreover, the title MAN "Co-regent" is used instead of LUGAL "king", as when Sennacherib was Co-regent (MAN) of king (LUGAL) Sargon II. The study of Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns enables us to understand the aim of his conquests and his strategy (Garelli: 1991, 46-51). Under Shalmaneser IV and Aššur-dan III, military expeditions were directed to Damascus, but without great consequences, and twice against Hazrak (Hatarikka), a strategic position on the way to the river Orontes. But the kingdoms continued to exist. Assyria was then threatened by Urartu, whose power was then on the ascent, and its own interest dictated a comparatively moderate attitude towards the Aramaean kingdoms. The solution was to maintain Assyrian control of Arpad, the close neighbour who dominated the whole area between the land of Euphrates and the river Orontes. The best thing for this purpose was to induce this neighbour to conclude agreements with Assyrian Ruler Bar Ga'yah ("Son of Majesty" in Aramaic), who was king of KTK, an unknown kingdom (Fitzmyer: 1995, 167-174). Paradoxically, this powerful Assyrian ruler, who dominated the Levant during the period 785-745 BCE from a region located near the kingdom of Hamath, has still not been identified despite nearly 90 years of research (Na'aman: 1978, 220-239). Since 1931, there have been 17 attempts to identify the mysterious Bar Ga'yah "king of KTK", all of which have failed. We only know that KTK must be a powerful Aramean entity in northern Syria that bordered Arpad and it was ruled by an Assyrian or "philo-Assyrian" ruler (Younger: 2016, 537-547).

In almost all the royal frescoes in the palace of Til-Barsip (Tell Ahmar), the anonymous Assyrian king is depicted facing his co-regent before the beardless commander-in-chief. The oldest representations were painted in the time of Tiglath-Pileser III but were probably commissioned by Šamšī-ilu (797-747), because this powerful commander-in-chief, who acted in the name of the co-regent Pulu (hypocoristic of Tiglath-Pileser), never mentions the names of the three kings of his time who had appointed him to his post. The only inscriptions from this period are those dated around 780 BCE, one of Ninurta-bēlu-uṣur, the governor of Til-Barsip (Younger: 2016, 362-365), and another of Šamšī-ilu (inscription engraved on a stone lion) which mentions his victory over Argišti I, the king of Urartu, without mentioning Shalmaneser IV because Šamšī-ilu usually operated for co-regent Pulu (Thomas: 2019, 120-122,143-149).

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[46] In the Northwest Palace of Nimrud (Kalhu), there were recovered graves and objects of the queens Yabâ (Tiglath-Pileser III), Banītu (Shalmaneser V) and Ataliya (Sargon II) in Tomb II. The skeletons of Yabâ and Atalia were found in the same sarcophagus. Paleopathological work on the skeletons indicates that both women died at approximately the same age, that of 30 to 35. But they were not buried at the same time, as there were 20 to 50 years between the interments: "Hamâ, Yabâ - Banītu, and Ataliya" (Yamada, Yamada: 2017, 389–396). If Tiglath-pileser was born around 802 BCE and married at the age of 20, c. 782 BCE to a princess aged c. 15, this woman must have been born c. 797 BCE and must have died c. 765-760 BCE.

A key chronological fact identifies the powerful Assyrian ruler, king of KTK, who imposed four treaties on Mati'-El, king of Arpad, during the period 783-754 BCE (Lemaire, Durand: 1984, 58). Assyrian domination depended on the respect of such treaties by independent sovereigns. The 746 coup changed the whole affair. Mati'-El was no longer bound by his oath of allegiance to Aššur-nīrārī V. Since the king had been eliminated and the commander-in-chief Šamšī-ilu (797-747) had disappeared, the attitude of the king of Arpad can be even better explained[47]. Until 738 BCE, Tiglath-Pileser III had adopted a flexible policy, like that of Shalmaneser III who had begun his Syrian campaigns in 858 BCE by annexing the territory of his closest neighbour, Bit-Adini, turning Til-Barsip into Kar-Shalmaneser, but he could not carry this annexation policy further because his opponents were too powerful, as the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE clearly showed. Tiglath-pileser III followed the same plans, but the balance of forces in his favour enabled him immediately to annex the territories adjoining Bit-Adini, where he posted permanent garrisons to launch faster counter strokes in case of need. This did not always prove possible because of the Medes and Urartu. That is why he unfolded his annexation plan of the Syro-Palestinian war: Rezin of Damascus, Peqah of Israel (2Ki 16:5-9) and the Philistine cities formed a coalition which Ahaz refused to join, calling Tiglath-pileser III to his aid (2Ch 28:16-20). While no Aramaic inscriptions mention the existence of an Assyrian king named Pul in the Bible (Tiglath-pileser as co-regent), to whom Menahem (771-760) paid tribute, Zukkur King of Hamath (810-785) made an alliance (in 805 BCE) with an anonymous Assyrian king named Ba(r) Gawah ("Son of Majesty" in Aramaic) and Mati'-El, King of Arpad (785-740), concluded four treaties of alliance over the period 783-754 BCE with another anonymous Assyrian king also named Bar Ga'yah ("Son of Majesty" in Aramaic). The chronology of the Aramaic kingdoms is based on the Assyrian chronology (Lipiński: 2000, 119-299). Synchronisms are highlighted in grey:

TABLE 23

King of Arpad (Bit Agusi)	reign	King of Hamath	reign	King of Syria (Damascus)	reign	King of Assyria	reign
Gūš	890-860	Parita	885-860	**Hazael**	885 -	Aššurnasirpal II	884-859
Hadrām	860-830	Urḫilina	860-835		-840	**Shalmaneser III**	859 -
Attaršumki I	830 -	Uratami	835 -	**Bar-Hadad III**	840 -		
			-810			Šamši-Adad V	824-811
	-800	**Zakkur**	810 -		-805	**Adad-nīrārī III**	811 -
Bar-Hadad	800-796			**Mari'**	805 -		
Attaršumki II	796-785		-785		-780		-783
Mati'-El	785 -	[unknown]	785 -	Heziōn II	780 -	/(Pulu I)	782 -
					-754		
			-745	**Rezīn**	754 -		-746
	-740	Eni-ilu	745 -			**Tiglath-pileser III**	745 -
			-732		-732		
						(Pulu II)	-727

King of Judah	reign	King of Israel	reign	King of Ya'udi /Sam'al	reign	King of Assyria	reign
Athaliah	885-879	**Jehu**	885 -			Aššurnasirpal II	884-859
Joash	879 -		-856	**Hayyānu**	860-855	**Shalmaneser III**	859 -
	-839	Jehoahaz	856-839	**Ahabbu**	855 -		
Amaziah	839 -	Jehoash	841-823		-825		-824
	-810	Jeroboam II	**823** -	Qarli	825 -	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
Uzziah	810 -				-790	**Adad-nīrārī III**	811 -
(Azariah)	[796 -		-782	Panamuwa I	790 -		-783
		Zechariah	782-771			/ Pulu I/Bar Ga'yah	782 -
	-758	**Menahem**	771-760		-750		-746
Jotham	758-742	**Peqah**	758 -	Bar-Ṣūr	750-745		
Ahaz	742 -		-738	**Azriau**	745-738	**Tiglath-pileser III**	745 -
		Hosea I	**738**-729	Panamuwa II	**738**-733		**738**
	-726	Hosea II	729 -	Bar-Rakib	733 -	(Pulu II)	729-727
Hezekiah	726 -					Shalmaneser V	727-722
	-697		-720		-712	Sargon II	722-705

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[47] He joined the coalition formed by Sarduri II (766-733) of Urartu. Practically, all Northern Syria, from Arpad to Melitene, adhered to the coalition. It was utterly defeated, but Sarduri II was able to escape. Tiglath-pileser III annexed the territories between Arpad and the coast near Antioch and Hamath. All the others, including Sama'al, Carchemish, Damascus, Samaria and the Phoenician cities were left independent, though forced to pay tribute. In short, he annexed the nearest conquered territories, thus enabling him to cut off possible future enemies, and he imposed his authority on more remote sovereigns without deposing them.

The reign of Zakkur (810-785), king of Hamath, provides additional confirmations (Na'aman: 2005, 21-23) which are mentioned in the Antakya Stela and in the Zakkur Stela. Title of Hameathite kings (Bryce: 2012, 134-138) according to Luwian and Assyrian inscriptions (Hawkins: 2016, 183-190):

TABLE 24

King of Hamath	Reign	Title (Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions)	Inscription
Parita	*885-860*	?	CHLI I: IX
Urḫilina (Irḫuleni)	*860-835*	I (am) Urhilina, son of Parita, Hamathite King	CHLI I: IX
Uratami (Rudamu)	*835-810*	I (am) Uratamis, Urhilina's son, Hamathite King	CHLI I: IX
Zakkur	*810 -*	Zakkur, the Hamathite	Antakya Stela
	-785	Zakkur, king of Hamath and Lu'ash (Luhuti)	Zakkur Stela
[unknown]	*785-745*	(**Bar Ga'yah** king of Kittika, *turtānu* Šamšī-ilu)	
Eni-ilu	745-732	vassal of Assyria (Tiglath-pileser III)	
Yaubîdi	732-720	vassal of Assyria	

According to this chronological reconstruction, the Assyrian ruler who imposed four oaths of loyalty on Mati'-El (c.785-740), king of Arpad, should also have imposed oaths of loyalty on the king of Hamath (c.785-745) because this kingdom was adjacent to the kingdom of Arpad, but there is no inscription mentioning Arpad during the period when Šamšī-ilu (797-747) came to that region. Some academics concluded that this powerful Assyrian ruler, who behaved like an Assyrian king, must have been Šamšī-ilu and must have reigned over the kingdom of Hamath, under the pseudonym Bar Ga'yah, king of KTK. They refused to identify Bar Ga'yah with an Assyrian king, despite the undeniable appearances, for the following two reasons: the treaties of the Assyrian kings are always written in their name, never under a pseudonym, and these treaties have always had a cuneiform counterpart (Lemaire, Durand: 1984, 37-58). This objection is correct for Assyrian kings, but not for co-regents, because if the inscriptions mention only one king, those mentioning the co-regent, or the commander-in-chief, always state that they acted under the authority of the king in title, but not in their own name. For this reason, the Assyrian co-regent named Pulu I (782-746), according to the biblical text and Tyrian records, is the same as the one called Bar Ga'yah in the four treaties with Mati'-El. So, the Assyrian king who presented himself under the pseudonym of Bar-Ga'yah ("son of majesty" in Aramaic) chose a noble name for the region he controlled, Bit-Adini and Hamath, the enigmatic kingdom of KTK[48] (in Aramaic). This practice was usual at that time because the Assyrians were calling Attar-šumki the king of Arpad: Bar-Guš ("son of Gush"), King of Bit-Agusi ("the house of Gush"). Similarly, the son of Hazael, was called Bar-Hadad (III) king of Aram ("Syria"), like Bar-Hadad, king of Bit (A)guši. It was thus usual to name a king by his filiation with the founder of his dynasty: Guš, Hadad or "Majesty". However: Til Barsip, which was the capital of Bit-Adini, or Beth-Eden (Am 1:5), was not anymore a vassal kingdom of Assyria but a part of the Empire.

Tiglath-pileser III mentioned his parentage to his father (Aššur-nīrārī III) just once but instead preferred using the Assyrian title *mār šarri* "son of the king (i.e. co-regent)" rather than his name with King Mati'-El. For example, the expression: *mār šarri šar kitti-ka* "The son of the king is your loyal king" in Assyrian, could be translated into Aramaic, *bar gayah melekh kittika* "The son of Majesty is king of Kittika". For the Assyrians, the royal notion of loyalty or legitimacy was essential and for them there was only one king[49]. The commander-in-chief, Šamšī-ilu (797-747), faithfully served the co-regent Tiglath-pileser III, as well as the others Assyrian kings, until his death around 747 BCE (this death probably pushed Tiglath-pileser to take power because it was only the king who could appoint the commanders-in-chief). For example, the Akkadian expression *zēr kittu* means "legitimate/loyal heir" and the name Sargon (*šar-kīnu*) means "legitimate king". The study of the reign of Zakkur makes it possible to confirm the existence of Bar Ga'yah. The following event during Zakkur's reign (c.810-785) is described in the Antakya Stela:

Adad-nīrārī (III), great king, mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, son of Šamši-Adad (V), mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, son of Shalmaneser (III), king of the four quarters. The boundary which Adad-nîrârî (III), king of Assyria, and Šamši-ilu, the commander-in-chief, established between Zakkur, the Hamathite, and Ataršumki (I) [in Arpad], son of Adramu: the city of Nahlasi together with all its fields, its orchards and its settlements is Ataršumki's property. They divided the Orontes River between them. This is the border. Adad-nīrārī, king of Assyria, and Šamši-ilu, the commander-in-chief, have released it from obligations free and clear to Ataršumki, son of Adramu, to his sons, and his subsequent grandsons. He established his city and its territories [...] to the border of his

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[48] It is noteworthy that the word *kitti-ka* (written *ki-it-ti-ka₄* in the El-Amarna letters EA 198 and 246) means "your loyalty" in Akkadian (and could be written KTK in Aramaic.

[49] In fact, the word MAN (read *šarru/šanû*) also meant king (LUGAL read *šarru*) but in the sense "duplicate king". In the palace of Til-Barsip, Tiglath-pileser, as anonymous co-regent (Pulu), monopolises this position on all wall paintings (Thomas: 2019, 37,120-122,143-149).

land. By the name of Aššur, Adad, and Ber, the Assyrian Enlil, the Assyrian Ninlil, and the name Sin, who dwells in Harran, the great gods of Assyria: whoever afterwards speaks ill of the terms of this stela, and takes away by force this border from the possession of Ataršumki, his sons, or his grandsons, and destroys the written name and writes another name: may Aššur, Adad, and Ber, Sin who dwells in Harran, the great gods of Assyria whose names are recorded on this stela, not listen to his prayers.

The inscription reveals a situation when both kings of Hamath and Arpad were loyal subjects of Assyria. The fact that this inscription was written on Ataršumki's behalf (c.830-800), identifying Arpad's border with Hamath, attests Arpad's alliance with Assyria at the time. The settlement of this dispute should be dated to before 805–804 BCE, that is, to a time when Arpad was still a loyal subject of Assyria. The eponym chronicle notes that an Assyrian campaign was conducted in the west beginning in 805–804 BCE, with Arpad, which had rebelled against Assyrian hegemony, as its main target. On the other hand, the Antakya Stela cannot be dated earlier than 808–807 BCE, since the *turtānu* (commander-in-chief) at that time was Nergal-ilāya (810-797). The border dispute between Arpad (which was in rebellion against Assyria by 805/804 BCE) and Hamath (which remained loyal) indicates the beginning of friction between western pro- and anti-Assyrian kingdoms. The stela is dated in 796 BCE because Šamšī-ilu was commander-in-chief (797-747) and King Adad-nīrārī III (811-783) visited the region in 796 BCE during the campaign against Mansuate. The Zakkur Stela has significant gaps, but the central part refers to a major attack which had been fomented by Bar-Hadad III (840-805), the son of Hazael:

> The stela that Zakkur, king of Hamath and Luash, set up for Iluwer, [his god.] <u>I am Zakkur, king of Hamath and Luash</u>. I was a man of low estate, but Baalshamên [designated] me and he stood with me and Baalshamên made me king [in] Hadrach (Hatarikka). Then <u>Bar-Hadad (III) the son of Hazael, the king of Aram, formed an alliance with sev[enteen] kings</u>: Bir-Hadad and his army, Bar-Gush and his army, the king of Kue and his army, the king of Umq and his army, the king of Gurgum and his army, the king of Sam'al and his army, the king of Miliz and his army, the king of] [... and his army, the king of ... and his army —that is, seve[nteen] of them with their armies. <u>All these kings set up a siege against Hadrach</u>. They raised a wall higher than the wall of Hadrach. They dug a moat deeper than its moat. But I lifted my hands to Baalshamên, and Baalshamên answered me, and Baalshamên [spoke] to me through seers and through visionaries, and <u>Baalshamaên [said]: "Fear not, for I have made [you] king, [and I who will st]and with [you], and I will deliver you from all [these kings who] have forced a siege against you</u>!" Then Baalshamên said to me [... "]all these kings who have forced [a siege against you ...] and …

The inscription's date is debated but it is usually placed between 800 and 775 BCE (Green: 2010, 157-174). Zakkur's account mentions providential help from Baalshamên ("Lord of the Heavens") who had successfully broken the siege. It is agreed that the siege was broken by means of some intervention, which occurred in 805 BCE when Adad-nīrārī III led a campaign against Arpad. So, this major event had to have occurred before Zakkur's enthronement as king of Hamath and Lu'ash. The primary purpose of this inscription is to prove that his reign was providential from the start and that he enjoyed the support of his deity and consequently of Assyria. Since the gods and kings are never anonymous in Semitic inscriptions (Margalit: 1994, 13-14), the name of the Assyrian king who helped or appointed Zakkur (810-785), must be named in the lacuna at the beginning of the inscription (Briquel-Chatonnet: 1992, 128). In fact, the name appears on the left of the stela:

> [c. 30 lines missing] Hazrak [...] for the chariotry [and] the cavalry [...] **its king in its midst**. I [rebuilt] Hazrak (Hatarikka), and [I] added [to it] the entire region of [Luash?] and [I] es[tablish]ed [my] reign [...] these strongholds throughout [my] territ[ory]. [Then I reb]uilt the temples of the gods in a[ll] my [territory], and I rebuilt [...] Apish and [...] the temple of [... And] I set up befo[re Iluwer] this stela, and [I] ins[cribed on] it the accomplishment of my hands. [Anyone at all] who removes the acc[omplishment of the hands of] <u>Zakkur, king of Hama[th and Lu]ash,</u> from this stela, and whoe[ver re]moves this stela from [befo]re Iluwer and takes it away fr[om] its [pla]ce, or whosoever sends [...] Baa]lshamayn and I[luwer ...] and Shamash and Shahar [...] and the go[ds] of heave[n and the god]s of the earth and Baal (Nissinen, Ritner, Seow: 2003, 204-207).

Although the text is not clear, Zakkur established his reign just after he had mentioned an anonymous king. In fact, the translation "*its king in its midst (mlkh bgwh)*" makes no sense. In contrast the translation: "*its king Bi-Gawah*" fits the context because during the years 796 to 755 BCE the Kingdom of Hamath-and-Luash was the ascending power in the West (Kahn: 2007, 66-89). The name Bi-Gawah (or Ba-Ga'yah) is a contracted form of Bar-Ga'wah[50] "son of majesty" (Fitzmyer: 1995, 59-60), in the same way as Bi-dqar (2Ki 9:25) is a contracted form[51] of Bar-Deqer (1Ki 4:9) "son of piercing". Consequently, Zakkur would owe to

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[50] The Hebrew word *ga'wah* means "majesty, pride" and the Aramaic word *gêwah* (Dn 4:34) means "pride".
[51] Other contracted forms: Birshah (Gn 14:2) instead of Bar-Resha "son of wickedness"; Bimhal (1Ch 7:33) for Bar-Mehal "son of circumcision"; Baalîs (Jr 40:14) for Bar-Alîs "son of exultation"; Bishlam (Ezr 4:7) for Bar-Shalam "son of peace".

the Assyrian king Bar-Ga'wah the rebuilding of his kingdom when Luash[52] was incorporated into it at then time that the Assyrians came to Cedar Mountain in 775 BCE. The war against the north Syrian alliance (including the kingdom of Hamath), in 805 BCE, is described in detail in the Pazarcik stela. In that text Sammu-ramât (Semiramis) is said to have gone on campaign with Adad-nīrārī III, but she is absent from the campaign account in the two other texts. The inscription of Saba'a begins with the following text: *"In the 5th year I solemnly ascended to the royal throne (Adad-nīrārī III) and mobilised the land. I commanded the extensive army of Assyria to march to Hatti*."

Adad-nīrārī III defeated the coalition of Syrian kings against Zakkur the king of Hamath and eliminated Bar-Hadad III, the son of Hazael, the instigator of this revolt, who was replaced by King Mari' (Siddall: 2013, 37-46). The military campaign to support Zakkur in 805 BCE was, therefore, led by Queen Sammu-ramât and Co-regent Adad-nīrārī III, the "son of Majesty (Šamši-Adad V)", who had just been inducted in the 5th year of her reign in 806 BCE.

TABLE 25

BCE	KING OF ASSYRIA			campaign	KING OF HAMATH		KING OF SYRIA	
813	**Šamši-Adad V**	11			Uratami	22	**Bar-Hadad III**	27
812		12		against Chaldea		23	(son of Hazael)	28
811	**Sammu-ramāt**	13	(0)	against Babylon		24		29
810	**/ Adad-nīrārī III**	1	(1)	no campaign		25		30
809		2	(2)		**Zakkur** (usurper)	1		31
808		3	(3)	against Guzana		2		32
807		4	(4)			3		33
806		5	(5)			4		34
805	**Adad-nīrārī III**	6		against Arpad	(the Hamathite,	5		35
804	(Bar-Ga'wah)	7			Assyrian vassal)	6	**Mari'**	1
803		8				7		2
802		9				8		3
801		10				9		4
800		11				10		5
799		12				11		6
798		13				12		7
797		14				13		8
796		15		against Mansuate	(KING OF LU'ASH/	14		9
795		16			LUHUTI)	15		10

Although Sammu-ramât had gone on campaign with Adad-nīrārī III, according to the Pazarcik stela, the Tell Sheikh Hamad stela ascribes to King Adad-nīrārī III the victory against the Syrian revolt.

[Adad-nīrārī (III), great king], strong [king], king of the universe, king of Assyria, son of Šamši-Adad (V), [strong king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, son] of Shalmaneser (III), king of the four quarter. I mustered [the chariots, the troops and] the camps. [I commanded them to march] to Hatti. I crossed the Euphrates as it was in flood. I went down to Paqiraḫubuna (Kummuh), Attar-šumki (I), [… and the kings] of Hatti who revolted, […] the terrifying splendour of Aššur, my lord, [overwhelmed them. In] a single year (in 805 BCE), the land of Hatti [in its entirety(?), with the help of Aššur] my lord, I conquered. [I went to the sea of the west.] I erected my [lordly image] in Arwad, which is in the middle of the sea. I went up Mount Lebanon. I logged mighty beams of cedar (Siddall: 2013, 194-197).

Since this inscription was written after the victory in 805 BCE, Adad-nīrārī III, who had just been enthroned, was still considered as co-regent since Queen Sammu-ramât (811-806) accompanied him during his military campaign in 805 BCE. The stela of Zakkur is, therefore, accurate when it mentions the co-regent rather than Queen Sammu-ramât, but it does not mention the name of the co-regent (Adad-nīrārī III), according to the royal protocol, only his Assyrian title of crown prince (*mār šarri*). The Aramaic translation of *mār šarri* "Son of the king", would have been *bar malka'*, which would have been incomprehensible and, therefore, been translated into Aramaic as *bar ga'wah* "Son of majesty". Consequently, the enigmatic Assyrian king called Bar-Ga'yah, in Mati'-El's treaties in Aramaic was the same Assyrian co-regent (crown prince): Tiglath-pileser at that time (782-746). Some scholars prefer to identify the Assyrian king called Bar-Ga'yah (783-746) as being the powerful commander-in-chief Šamšī-ilu (797-747). However, from a

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[52] Hamath's northernmost territory was the important land variously called Luash (Aramaic), Luhuti (Akkadian), Lugath (Luwian). It was located east of the Orontes River, and south of the kingdom of Patin, in the region formerly occupied by the Nuhashshi lands. Luash first appears in Assyrian records in 870 BCE, the year in which Ashurnasirpal II campaigned against the states of Syria and Palestine (Bryce: 2012, 211). After invading Patin and receiving submission of its king Lubarna, Ashurnasirpal used the Patinite city Aribua as his base for military operations against Luash, which lay to its south.

linguistic point of view this identification is unlikely (Crouch: 2014, 96-106) because the translation of the Aramaic name Bar-Ga'yah "Son of majesty" into Assyrian does not match[53] either Šamšī-ilu "My Sun is god", or Adad-nīrārī "Aššur is my help". Mati'-El, King of Arpad, made four treaties of loyalty or allegiance at the beginning of the reign of each new Assyrian king (Villard: 2001, 818), three in Aramaic and one in Akkadian with Aššur-nīrārī V (755-745). The treaty of loyalty with Aššur-dān III, written at the beginning of his reign (in 772 BCE), and that with Aššur-nīrārī V, written at the beginning of his reign (in 754 BCE), show that the king of Arpad was a vassal of the Assyrian king. The Assyrian treaty in Aramaic with Bar-Ga'yah which was written at the beginning of Bar-Ga'yah's reign, shows that the king of Arpad was acting as a vassal of the king of KTK in the same way as other kings mentioned in the treaty, such as those of Muṣri and Aram (Arnold, Beyer: 2002, 101-103). The other two loyalty treaties must have been concluded with Shalmaneser IV between 783 and 773 BCE (Lemaire, Durand: 1984, 56-58). Given that Bar-Ga'yah was King of KTK (instead of Assyria), this means that he was not the official king but only co-regent (thus he could lead military campaigns and ask for booty). The identification of the mysterious KTK has stirred up the imagination of linguists and epigraphists, whereas this city could only be Til Barsip, the military capital of the Assyrian kingdom of Bit-Adini (from 855 BCE) for their westward expansion. As Mati'-El was a vassal of Bar-Ga'yah the latter was more powerful than the king of Arpad and as in this treaty several deities from the Assyrian pantheon are invoked (Mulissu, Marduk, Nabu, Nergal and Shamash), Bar Ga'yah should be an Assyrian king (Rollston: 2010, 56-57). Some academics argued that Bar-Ga'yah should be understood as Šamšī-ilu, who would have usurped the title of king because of the weakness of the Assyrian kings. This assumption is contradicted by the following facts (Dion: 1986, 510-512):

- All the inscriptions of Šamšī-ilu mention his rank of commander-in-chief, never a title of king and the fact that he was reappointed as commander-in-chief by three successive Assyrian kings, as indicated by his three eponymies (780, 770, 752 BCE), proves that he was considered perfectly loyal.

- If Šamšī-ilu had usurped the title of king (only with the king of Arpad), it would have given him only an honorary rank because he was already conducting military campaigns and, as a eunuch, he was not able to start a dynasty. However, if that was the case why would he have changed his name to glorify an unknown "son of majesty" (*bar ga'yah*)?

Fig. 11 God Aššur   *turtānu* Šamšī-ilu

- Bar-Ga'yah began his treaty by this phrase: *The treaty of Bar-Ga'yah, King of KTK, with Mati'-El son of Attaršumki, the king of Arpad; and the treaty of the sons of Bar-ga'yah with the sons of Mati'-El.* According to this inscription, Šamšī-ilu could not be a eunuch. To solve this problem, some scholars argue that the title of eunuch was only honorary, but we have at least four stelas, on which he is depicted beardless as true eunuch (Taşyürek: 1975, 169-180; Reade: 1972, 89 n. 12). If Šamšī-ilu had been capable of growing a beard, why did he shave it off when the king of Assyria, his nominal superior or even rival, is always shown bearded (Lawrence: 1986, 121-132)? It should be noted that although Adad-it'i, governor (*šaknu*) of Guzāna (c.850-c.825) is called king (*mlk*) of Guzāna in the Aramaic version of the bilingual statue inscription from Tell Fekheriyeh, he is also shown bearded (Abou-Assaf, Bordreuil, Millard: 1982, 13, 23-plates). Šamšī-ilu (character on the right) is represented beardless and bare-headed, facing to a gigantic god who is wearing the cylindrical triple-horned helmet of divinity (Aššur). He is a typical Assyrian deity closely comparable with other well-known representations such as the god-glazed tile from Aššur or Khorsabad Palace painting, although the lotus in his hand (like the representations of the kings of Byblos) is unusual for a god. The beardless character on the bas-relief is Šamšī-ilu, not Tiglath-pileser III (Lemaire, Durand: 1984, 110-111). Usually, only kings were in front of gods, but as Šamšī-ilu was serving two Assyrian kings at the same time (a king and a co-regent) he would have to represent a dual king, which would have been incomprehensible for an Assyrian official (because an Assyrian king always has a tiara on his head). Last detail: if Šamšī-ilu was the Assyrian king Bar Ga'yah, he would have represented himself larger, identifying himself as king and not as a high-ranking official.

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[53] For example, Zakutu (701-668), a wife of Sennacherib, was the translation Akkadian of Naqia, "the pure" in Aramaic.

- Since the Kittika area was controlled by the Assyrian king, Bar Ga'yah, and was adjoining the kingdom of Bit-Agusi, it had to have included the kingdom of Hamath (Novák: 2010, 43). In addition, the city of Tillima (Tl'ym), which had belonged to the kingdom of Bit Agusi, had been restored in Kittika (Bryce: 2009, 708). Lemaire and Durand suggested that KTK could be an ancient name of Til Barsip, capital of Bit-Adini, because when Shalmaneser III in his first regnal year (858 BCE) attacked three towns of Ahuni, king of Bit-Adini, one of them was called Ki-[x]-qa. However this suggestion can be dismissed for two reasons (Yamada: 1995, 24-25): the name Til Barsip appears (URU.*Tíl*ʻ-ʻ*bur*ˀ¹-ˀ*si*ˀ¹-ˀ*ip*ˀ¹) in the inscription of Shalmaneser III (line 33 of the Kurkh Monolith) instead of Ki-[it-ti?]-qa and secondly, from around 1000 BCE, Til-Barsip (Aramaic) was called Masuwari by the Hittites, not Kittika (Hawkins: 1983, 131-134); then from 855 BCE it was called Kar-Shalmaneser by the Assyrians.

All these facts show that Šamšī-ilu (797-747) was a commander-in-chief in Til Barsip, not a king of KTK. However, some researchers have suggested that Bar Ga'yah may have been a pseudonym for the anonymous king of Hamath (785-745) who was an Assyrian vassal (Siddall: 2013, 120-121) but this is contradicted by the following facts:

- If Bar Ga'yah had been a king of Hamath, who was a vassal of Assyria like the king of Arpad, one may wonder what would have been the goal of such a treaty of loyalty, because this kind of treaty had to be concluded solely between a king and his vassal and not between two vassals. For example, as King of Arpad Mati'-El had concluded several treaties of loyalty with successive Assyrian kings. For example, Tiglath-pileser III wrote (Iran Stela):

In my third *palû* [in 743 BCE], <u>Matīʾ-il, [the son of A]ttar-šumqa (Attar-šumkī), fomented a rebellious insurrection against Assyria and violated (his loyalty oath).</u> [He sent] hostile messages about Assyria [to] the kings who ... of the land Ḫatti (Syria-Palestine) (and) ... the land Uraṛtu and (thus) caused en[mity] in all (of those) lands. Sarduri (II) of the land Uraṛtu, [Sulum]al of the land Me[lid], (and) Tarqularu (Tarḫularu) of the land Gurgum [came] to [his] aid. [Between] the lands Kištan and Ḫalpi, districts of the land Kummuḫu, [they] trusted in [one another's strength and] drew up a battle array.

- In Bar-Ga'yah's treaty several deities from the Assyrian pantheon are invoked (Mulissu, Marduk, Nabu, Nergal, Šamaš), which are significantly different (except Šamaš) from the Hamathite pantheon (Iluwer, Baalšamayn, Šamaš, Šahar and Baal) mentioned in the Zakkur inscription (Noegel: 2006, 307-311).

- Hamath's old name could not be Kittika (vocalized form of KTK). It is true that names of cities are different according to the languages, but the consonantal structure remains the same as can be seen in the names of the following cities: Hamath (Am 6:2), Hadrach (Zk 9:1) and the Cilician Plain:

Writing	Hamath	Hadrach	Cilician Plain
Aramaic /(Phoenician)	ḤMT	ḤZRK	(KW DNNYM)
Hittite	Amatuwana	?	Kizuwatna
Hebrew	ḤMṮ	ḤDRK	KLKYH?
Luwian hieroglyph	Imatu	Halpa	Katawatana
Assyrian/ Akkadian	Ḫamat	Ḫatarikka	Qawe Kisuatni/ Danuna

It is found that changes in the transcripts are of low amplitude (Woudhuizen: 2014, 112-114; Payne: 2010, 49-58): Hamat (Aramaic), Imatu (Luwian) or Amatuwana (Hittite). Consequently, the identification of Hamath with KTK is not possible. The anomalous career of Bēl-Ḫarran-bēlī-uṣur (Siddall: 2013, 126-128) is in line with the co-regency of Tiglath-pileser (Pulu) with Shalmaneser IV. Although Bēl-Ḫarran-bēlī-uṣur was a palace herald (*nāgir ekalli*) of Shalmaneser IV, he supported Tiglath-pileser against Aššur-nīrārī V during the revolt of 746 BCE and was appointed as eponym of Tiglath-pileser III (*Tukulti-mār-éšarra*) in 741 BCE. Curiously, Bēl-Ḫarran-bēlī-uṣur's name appears first in the text on a stone stela before the name of co-regent (MAN instead of LUGAL!) Shalmaneser (IV), which was changed to co-regent (MAN) *Tukulti-apil-éšarra* (Grayson: 2002, 239-244), in addition, he mentioned in the text that he had founded a new city and named it after himself, which was a royal prerogative. The most logical explanation is to admit Bēl-Ḫarran-bēlī-uṣur was an officer (governor) of Bar Ga'yah who was co-regent during the reign of Shalmaneser IV. Because the palace herald was Bēl-lēšer in Year 4 of Shalmaneser IV (in 778 BCE), Bēl-Ḫarran-bēlī-uṣur probably exchanged his title of governor (of Guzana) for the more prestigious title of palace herald granted by Tiglath-pileser III. Bēl-Ḫarran-bēlī-uṣur would therefore have been palace herald twice over a period of about 50 years (Yamada, Yamada: 2017, 426-428). The reign of Bar-Ga'yah is not easy to fix because only sporadic information is available about the Aramaean states during the period 800-750. Only a few prominent kings are known like Mati'-El (785-740) the king of Arpad, Heziôn II (780-750) the king of Syria and Menahem (771-760) the king of Israel (Samaria).

During this period the main features are as follows. The kingdom of Damascus, the most powerful of the time, resisted the Assyrian expansionism and encouraged several revolts. The kingdom of Hamath which

had joined at first the revolt became afterward, from Zakkur (810-785), a vassal of Assyria to strengthen its influence in Syria. The Kingdom of Arpad which was a vassal of Assyria was eventually annexed in 740 BCE. According to the Eponym Chronicle there were six campaigns in Syria during Bar-Ga'yah's reign (783-746). The campaign of 773 BCE was clearly a war against the kingdom of Syria which brought a considerable booty from Damascus. The three campaigns "to Hatarikka", which belonged to Mati'-El's kingdom (whose capital was Arpad) and was close to the border with the kingdom of Hamath, may have been directed against the king of Hamath or, on the contrary, have been aimed at helping a loyal vassal of Assyria against enemies. And finally, Aššur-nīrārī V's campaign to Arpad, in 754 BCE, is certainly related to the vassalage treaty imposed by the Assyrian to Mati'-El as is the same reason the same treaty during Aššur-dān III's campaign to Hatarikka (Hadrach), in 772 BCE (Lipiński: 2006, 220). The main difficulty over the period 785-745 BCE is to determine why the kingdom of Hamath, which was a vassal of the Assyrian empire, disappears from the inscriptions as well as from the Assyrian annals (Green: 2010, 157-174). The purpose of the first campaign in Syria in 775 BCE is unknown but it was led to conclude new treaties with some Aramaean kingdoms. Consequently, one can suppose that the treaty made by Aššur-nīrārī V with Mati'-El in 754 BCE was the fourth one.

Chronological reconstruction[54] of the period 785-745 BCE   TABLE 26

BCE	ASSYRIA (king)		campaign in SYRIA	BIT AGUSI	JUDAH	ISRAEL
786	25 **Adad-nīrārī III**			Attaršumki II	24 **Azariah**	37 **Jeroboam**
785	26				25 (**Uzziah**)	38
784	27			**Mati'-El**	26	39
783	28				27	40
782	1 **Shalmaneser IV**	(0)	*(Crown Prince)*		28	**41** (2Ki 14:23)
781	2	(1)	**Pulu I**		29 2Ki 14:29	1 **Zechariah I**
780	3	(2)	*(Tukulti-apil-éšarra)*		30	2
779	4	(3)			31	3
778	5	(4)			32	4
777	6	(5)			33	5
776	7	(6)	**Bar-Ga'yah**		34	6
775	8	(7)	*To the cedar Mountain*	1st Treaty	35	7
774	9	(8)			36	8
773	10	(9)	*To Damascus*	2nd Treaty	37	[9] (vassal)
772	1 **Aššur-dān III**	(10)	*To Hatarikka*	3rd Treaty	**38**	(2Ki 15:8-13)
771	2	(11)			**39** 2Ki 15:17	[11] **Shallum**
770	3	(12)			40	1 **Menahem**
769	4	(13)			41	2
768	5	(14)			42	3
767	6	(15)			43	4
766	7	(16)			44	5
765	8	(17)	*To Hatarikka*		45 2Ki 15:19	6 tribute to **Pûl**
764	9	(18)			46	7
763	**10**	(19)			47	8
762	11	(20)	*(Tukulti-apil-éšarra)*		48	9
761	12	(21)			49	7
760	13	(22)			**50** 2Ki 15:23	11 **Pekayah**
759	14	(23)			51	1 (2Ki 15:27)
758	15	(24)			**52 Jotham**	**2 Peqah**
757	16	(25)			1 (2Ki 15:32)	1
756	17	(26)			2	2
755	18	(27)	*To Hatarikka*		3	3
754	1 **Aššur-nīrārī V**	(28)	*To Arpad*	4th Treaty	4	4
753	2 *Assyrian army*	(29)	*defeated by Sarduri II*		5	5
752	3	(30)	*(Urartu)*		6	6
751	4	(31)			7	7
750	5	(32)			8	8
749	6	(33)			9	9
748	7	(34)			10	10
747	8 *(end of Šamšī-ilu?)*	(35)			11	11
746	9	(36)	*Revolt in Kalhu*		12	12
745	10	0	*(Tukulti-mār-éšarra)*		13	13
744	1 **Tiglath-pileser III**	(1)			14	14

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[54] The campaigns in Syria are dated according to their eponyms: 1) To the cedar Mountain in 775 BCE (Nergal-ereš), 2) to Damascus in 773 BCE (Mannu-ki-Adad), 3) to Hatarikka in 772 BCE (Aššur-bel-uṣur), 4) in 765 BCE (Ninurta-mukin-niši), in 755 BCE (Iqisu), 5) to Arpad in 754 BCE (Ninurta-šezibanni).

743	2	/Shalmaneser V	(2)	To Arpad Pu'al	Treaty broken	15	15
742	3		(3)	To Arpad		16	16
741	4		(4)	To Arpad		1 Ahaz 17	17 (2Ki 16:1)
740	5		(5)	To Arpad		2 18	18
739	6		(6)			[3] (vassal) 19	19
738	7		(7)	Hatarikka annexed		[4] (2Ki 15:30)	20 Hosea I
737	8		(8)			[5]	[1] (vassal)
736	9		(9)			[6]	[2]

Fig. 12 Aramaic kingdoms in the 9th century BCE (Bryce: 2012, 46)
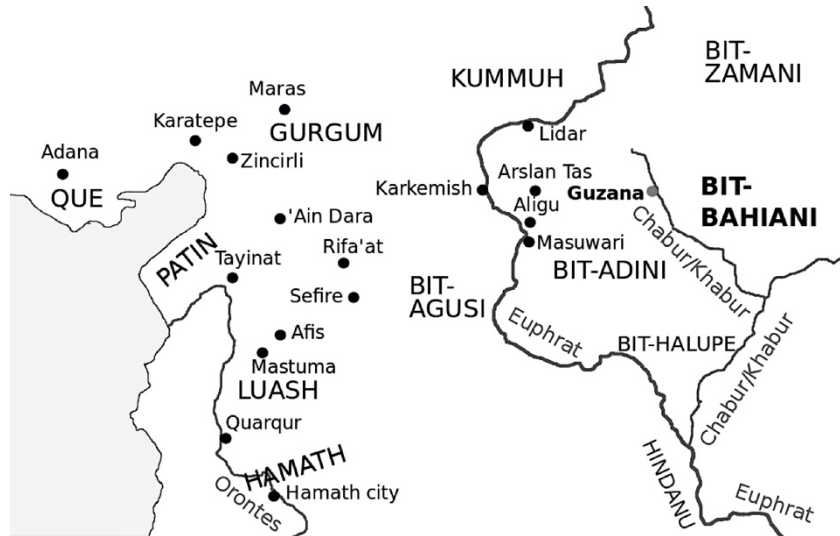
This chronological reconstruction shows that the annexation of the Aramean kingdoms by the powerful Assyrian kings began with Zakkur (810-785), the king of Hamath. Not so much is known about Zakkur. He is first mentioned in Assyrian sources in 808 BCE, at the time of Adad-nīrārī III (811-783). He appears to have been a native of 'Ana' (which may refer to the city of Hana/Terqa) on the Euphrates River, which was within the influence of Assyria. He was a usurper because, previously, Hamath was ruled by the kings with Luwian or neo-Hittite names and Zakkur, unlike his predecessors, never refers to his ancestors in his title. When Urutami (835-810) died, Zakkur seized power, but Bar-Hadad III (840-805), King of Syria, formed an alliance with 17 other kings of the region to oppose Assyrian vassalization, which prompted Zakkur to seek help from Adad-nīrārī III who, in 805 BCE, ordered his commander-in-chief, Nergal-ilâya (810-797), to quell the revolt. In his inscriptions, Zakkur thanks Baalshamêm "Lord of the Heavens" also King Bar Gawah ("Son of Majesty"), but not Adad-nīrārī III. This anomaly can be explained as follows: as Adad-nīrārī III 's father was Šamši-Adad V (824-811), he was probably born around 825 BCE. His father died in 811 BCE, Adad-nīrārī III was, therefore, 14 years old when he was enthroned, which obliged his mother, Semiramis, to assume the regency until the he reached the age of 20, when her son could personally lead military campaigns. Consequently, in 805 BCE, the campaign against Arpad, which should have been legally attributed to Semiramis, the regent (811-806), was given to the co-regent, son of the Majesty (Šamši-Adad V). Moreover, to attribute a war to a queen would have been a disgrace for Zakkur. As a result, in 805 BCE, Zakkur, the king of Hamath, became a vassal of Adad-nīrārī III. In 796 BCE, Adad-nīrārī III asked Šamšī-ilu (797-747), his new commander-in-chief, to intervene in support of Zakkur who was challenged by Bar-Hadad (800-796), king of Arpad (Bit Agusi). Following this military intervention, Zakkur became, in 796 BCE, king of Hamath and Luash (Luhati). Hadrach (Hatarikka for the Assyrians; modern Tell Afis) was the capital of Luash, a country with many cities and troops according to Assyrian inscriptions.

The regency exercised by Semiramis ceased when Adad-nīrārī III was able to found a dynasty by having children. Therefore, he probably had heirs from 805 BCE: Shalmaneser IV (c.805 BCE); Aššur-dan III (c.804 BCE); Aššur-nīrārī V (c.803 BCE) and Tiglath-pileser III (c.802 BCE). For some unknown reason, in 792 BCE, Adad-nīrārī III appointed his 10-year-old youngest son, Tiglath-pileser, as Crown Prince, rather than his eldest son, which was the usual custom (perhaps Adad-nīrārī III chose Tiglath-pileser because of his abilities or because of his mother's royal origins). This surprising choice was going to cause difficulties because when Adad-nīrārī III died in 783 BCE, Tiglath-pileser was less than 20 years old and was therefore not able to conduct military campaigns or found a dynasty. Shalmaneser IV, who was about 22 years old, will thus succeed his father, according to the custom, but Tiglath-pileser was declared co-regent of the western part of the Assyrian empire (because he was Crown Prince). To enable him to conduct military campaigns, Shalmaneser IV chose not to appoint a new commander-in-chief (turtānu), as was the tradition, but to rename Šamšī-ilu, who had been chosen by Adad-nīrārī III and to authorize him to put himself at the service of Pulu (Tiglath-pileser). The western part of the Assyrian empire was controlled by Šamšī-ilu who resided in Til Barsip (Masuwari), the capital of the Bit-Adini, of which Ninurta-bēlu-uṣur was governor (Younger: 2016, 362-365). Moreover, at the death of Zakkur, around 785 BCE, the kingdom of Hamath, which had become a vassal of the Assyrians, came under the authority of Pulu, who became the ruler of

Hamath. Consequently, when Pulu declared himself king of KTK, this region of loyalty included the kingdoms of Bit-Adini and Hamath. To extend his kingdom of loyalty (KTK), Tiglath-pileser (Pulu) concluded, in 775 BCE, a first loyalty oath, or covenant, with Mati'-El, the king of Arpad (Bit Agusi). Analysis of these alliances shows that their content was not really a treaty of vassalage, but a request for military support. For example, some of the stipulations, which have been preserved in the second covenant concluded in 773 BCE, when Šamšī-ilu came to Damascus, constrain Mati'-El to swear that he will not harbour Assyria's enemies, and will bring his entire army, "together with his magnates, his forces, and his chariotry" on campaign at Aššur-nīrārī's bidding (Beckman: 2017, 11-19). It is likely that Zechariah (782-771), the king of Israel, refused to sign this covenant and was deposed by Pulu. When Pulu returned in 772 BCE, as co-regent of Aššur-dān III, to campaign against Hatarikka and to conclude a new covenant (the third) with Mati'-El, Zechariah was again enthroned as king of Israel for six months before being assassinated by Shallum, who was himself assassinated by Mehahem (2Ki 15:8-17). When Pulu returned to campaign against Hatarikka, in 765 BCE, he presumably imposed an alliance on Menahem (771-760), who preferred to pay a heavy tribute in order to remain independent.

The city of Hatarikka (Hadrach) had a central position in the triangle formed by the three capitals: Til Barsip (Bit-Adini), Hama (Hamath) and Arpad (Bit Agusi). With the enthronement of Aššur-nīrārī V (755-745) and the appointment of Šamšī-ilu, for the third time as commander-in-chief, events took a new turn. The first campaign against Arpad, in 754 BCE, led to the signing of a new alliance with Mati'-El (the fourth), but the following year, in 753 BCE, the Assyrian army was defeated by Sarduri II (754-735), king of Urartu. The eponymous chronicles do not mention any other campaigns after this date. This old commander-in-chief was appointed to this prestigious post c. 800 BCE, so he must have been over 20 when he was appointed and must have been over 67 in 753 BCE (= 820 - 67). Since the appointment of a new commander-in-chief was a royal prerogative, Pulu must have easily convinced senior officials to overthrow Aššur-nīrārī V in 746 BCE and to make him king. In 745 BCE, Tiglath-pileser III appointed a new commander-in-chief, Nabû-da'inanni (744-726), and a new co-regent Shalmaneser V (744-727). After Zakkur's death, Pulu became, by default, the "governor (bēl pāḫiti)" of Hamath (781-745), a position he then entrusted to Eni-ilu (745-732), a vassal king. Tiglath-pileser III would quickly conquer the disputed territories: in 743 BCE, Saduri II, the king of Urartu was defeated, in 740 BCE, the kingdom of Arpad was annexed, and so on. After Tiglath-pileser III had defeated Sarduri II, the king of Urartu and his Anatolian allies, and after he had eliminated Mati'-El of Bīt-Agūsi/Arpad, he was forced to suppress a revolt in 738 BCE led by Tutamuwa of Patina/'Umq/Unqi. In his account concerning this revolt, Tiglath-pileser III mentions a leader whose name is Azriau (c.745-738), king of Ya'udi (Sam'al). We notice that among the 17 revolted kings, in 738 BCE, who must pay tribute to Tiglath-pileser III, mentioned in a detailed list (Iran Stela), the king of Hamath does not appear, but is added in a new updated list (Younger: 2016, 492-496). The absence of En-ilu in the first list (Iran Stela) and then its appearance in the updated list is difficult to explain (Kuan: 2016, 146-157). The chronology of the kings of Urartu is precisely determined (Chahin: 2001, 57).

TABLE 27

King of Urartu	reign	King of Tyre[55]	reign	King of Israel	reign	King of Assyria	reign
Arame	858-844	Pygmalion	877 -	Jehoahaz	856 -	Shalmaneser III	859 -
Lutipri	844-834				-839		
Sarduri I	834-828		**-830**	Jehoash	841-823		-824
Išpu'ini	828-810	Hiram II	830-*800*	Jeroboam II	**823** -	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
Menua	810-785	Milkiram	*800* -		-782	Adad-nīrārī III	811-783
Argišti I	785 -		*-775*	Zechariah I	782-771	**/Pulu I**	782 -
		Luli I	*775* -	**Menahem**	771-760	Aššur-dān III	773 -
	-754	(Elulaios)	*-755*	Pekayah	760-758		-755
Sarduri II	754 -	**Ithobaal II**	*755* -	Peqah	758 -	Aššur-nīrārī V	755-746
	740	(Tubail)	**-738**		**-738**	**Tiglath-pileser III**	745 -
	-735	**Hiram III**	**738**-730	**Hosea I**	**738**-729		-729
Rusa I	735 -	Mattan II	*730-729*	**Hosea II**	729 -	(Pulu II)	729-727
		Luli II	*729* -		**-720**	Shalmaneser V	727-722
	-714					Sargon II	722-705
Argišti II	714 -		*-695*			Sennacherib	705 -
	-680	Baal I	*695* -				-681
Rusa II	680 -		*-666*			Esarhaddon	681-669
	-639	Yahimilki ?	*666-640*			Aššurbanipal	669 -
Sarduri III	639-635	Abdastartus II?	*640-???*				-626

[55] The kings of Tyre: Hiram II (Lipiński: 2004, 46-48) and Milkiram (Lemaire: 1976, 83-93) come from epigraphy.
Luli I (Elulaios) was king of Tyre under Pulu (786-746), according to Josephus (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284). From Luli II (729-695) the succession of the kings of Tyre is uncertain.

TABLE 28

	Iran Stela (738 BCE)	reign	Layard 50a + 50b + 67a (737 BCE)	reign
1	Kuštašpi the Kummuḫite	c.750-730	Kuštašpi the Kummuḫite	
2	Raqyān the Ša-imērišu-ite (Rezīn)	c.754-732	Ra'yān the Ša-imērišu-ite (Damascus)	
3	**Menahem** the Samarian	**771-760**	**Menahem** the Samarian	
4	Tubail the Tyrian (Ithobaal II)	c.750-**738**	[Hiram the] Tyrian (Hiram III)	**738**-730
5	Sipatbail the Byblian (Shipitbaal II)	c.740-728	Sipittibi'li the Byblian	
6	Urik the Queite (Awariku)	c.738-709	Urikki the Queite	
7	Pisiris the Carchemishite (Pisiri)	c.738-717	Pisiris the Carchemishite	
	[-]	**c.745-732**	Enilu [the Hama]thian	
8	Panammu the Sama'lian [**Azriau**]	c.745-**738**	Pa[namm]u the Sama'lian (Panamuwa II)	**738**-733

These two lists of kings who paid tribute to Tiglath pileser III, in 738 BCE, are almost identical but have four anomalies:

1) Azriau (c.745-738), the leader of the revolt, is absent from the list because he was presumably killed by Tiglath-pileser III and was replaced by Panamuwa II (c.738-733). He was therefore unable to pay tribute, as was Peqah (758-738), the king of Israel, who was killed by Tiglath-pileser III and replaced by Hosea I (738-729).

2) Tubail, the king of Tyre, was Ithobaal II (c.755-738). He actually paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BCE, but as he died at the end of the year, the list of tributaries was updated and Tubail was replaced by Hiram III (c.738-730).

3) The absence of En-ilu (c.745-732) can be explained because he was a vassal king of Assyria who had obviously not participated in the revolt, and therefore, had not paid tribute. In the updated list he has been added (in addition to the 17!) as vassal king of Assyria.

4) Menahem (771-760), the king of Israel, had obviously not participated in the revolt of 738 BCE, but as he had paid a tribute to Pulu (Bar Ga'yah in Aramaic), in 765 BCE, while he was co-regent (2 Ki 15:19). The tribute paid by Menahem was therefore recorded in 738 BCE during Tiglath-pileser's reign (745-722) when he killed the king of Israel Peqah and replaced him with Hosea I who became his vassal probably paid him a bribe (Hosea thus became king but was not legally enthroned until nine years later). Consequently, Tiglath-pileser III included Menahem in the list of tributaries because, as co-regent, he had to attribute his victories and tributes to the king in power (Aššur-dān III), which he had not done.

The purpose of the tributary lists was not to provide an accurate accounting for future historians but was a propaganda tool (Laato: 1995, 198-226) to display the wealth and power of the Assyrian kings. Tiglath-pileser III (745-727) thus conformed to Assyrian ideology, which recognised only one king at a time, and thus brought back the tribute paid by King Menahem in 765 BCE when he annexed Hatarikka in 738 BCE. Moreover, the Assyrian annals often relate the facts in an exaggerated way. For example, when Sargon II took the city of Ashdod in his 10th campaign (in 712 BCE), he had it written:

Sargon, the great king (...) who conquered the city Samaria (URU.*Sa-mir-i-na*) and all of the land of Israel (*ù gi-mir* KUR.É-ḫu-um-ri-a); who plundered the city Ashdod (URU.*as-du-di*) (and) Šinuḫtu; who caught the Ionians who (live in) the middle of the sea... (Sargon II 013:31).

Similarly, when Sennacherib took 46 cities, including Lachish (not mentioned), from Hezekiah, king of Judah, in his 3rd campaign (in 712 BCE) and tried to take Jerusalem, he had it written:

On my 3rd campaign, I marched to the land Ḫatti (...) As for Menahem (of) the Samarian city (*Mi-nu-ḫi-im-mu* URU.*Sam-si-mu-ru-na-a-a*), Tu-Ba'lu (Ithobaal II) of the city Sidon, Abdi-Li'ti of the city Arwad, Ūru-Milki of the city Byblos, Mitinti of the city Ashdod (...) they brought extensive gifts, four times (the normal amount), as their substantial audience gift before me and kissed my feet (...) As for him, I confined him inside the city Jerusalem, his royal city (URU.*ur-sa-li-im-ma* URU LUGAL-*ti-šú*), like a bird in a cage (...) Hezekiah of the land Judah (*Ḫa-za-qi-a-ú* KUR.*ia-ú-da-a-a*), I surrounded (and) conquered 46 of his fortified walled cities.

Sennacherib thus appropriated several tributes paid to Tiglath-pileser III, such as that of Menahem the Samarian (in 765 BCE) *Me-ni-ḫi-im-me* URU.*Sa-me-ri-na-a-a* in Tiglath-pileser III's annals (in 738 BCE), which became in Sennacherib's annals: *Mi-nu-ḫi-im-mu* URU.*Sam-si-mu-ru-na-a-a* (in 712 BCE). Therefore, the tributes recorded in the annals of the Assyrian kings cannot reliably serve as synchronisms.
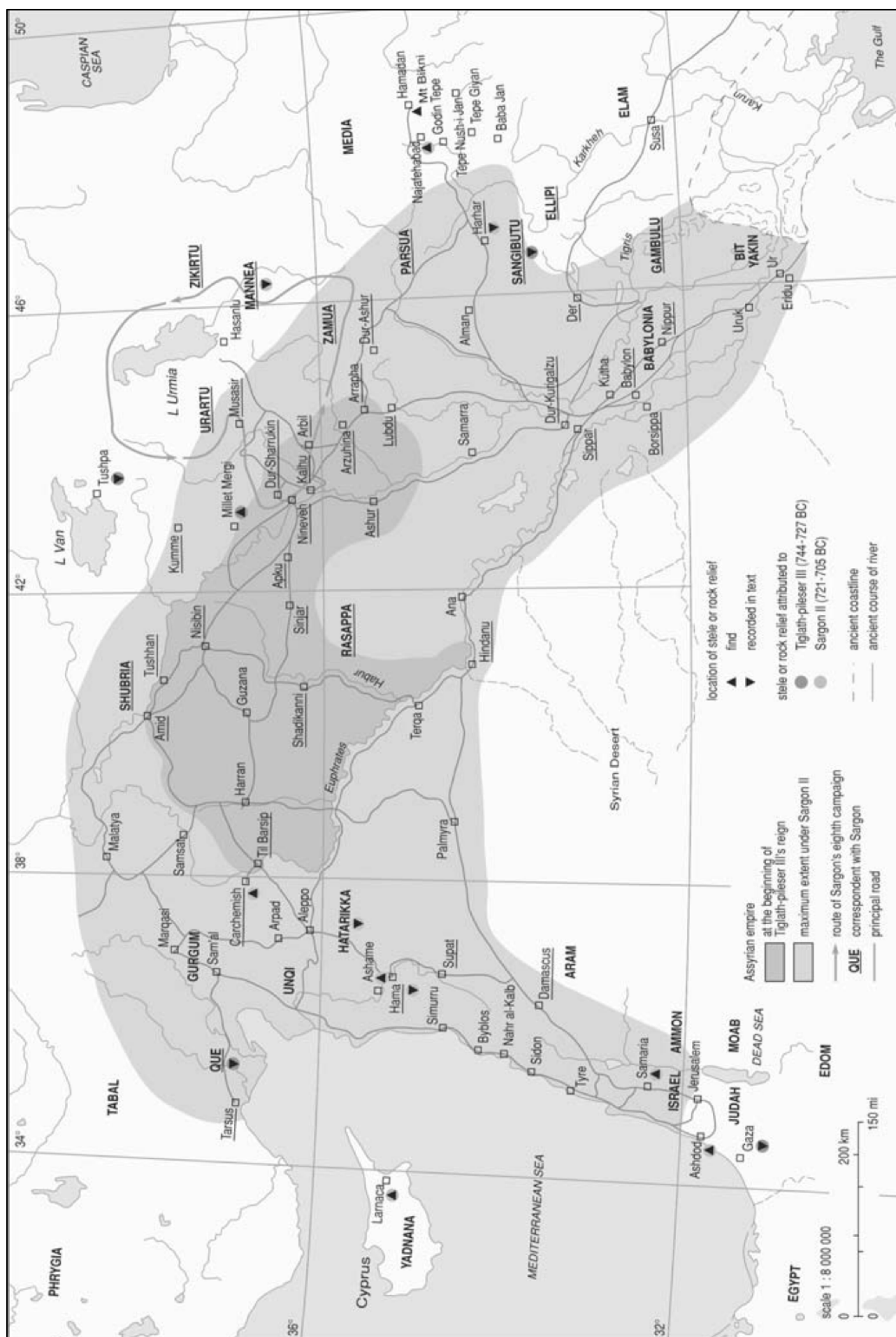
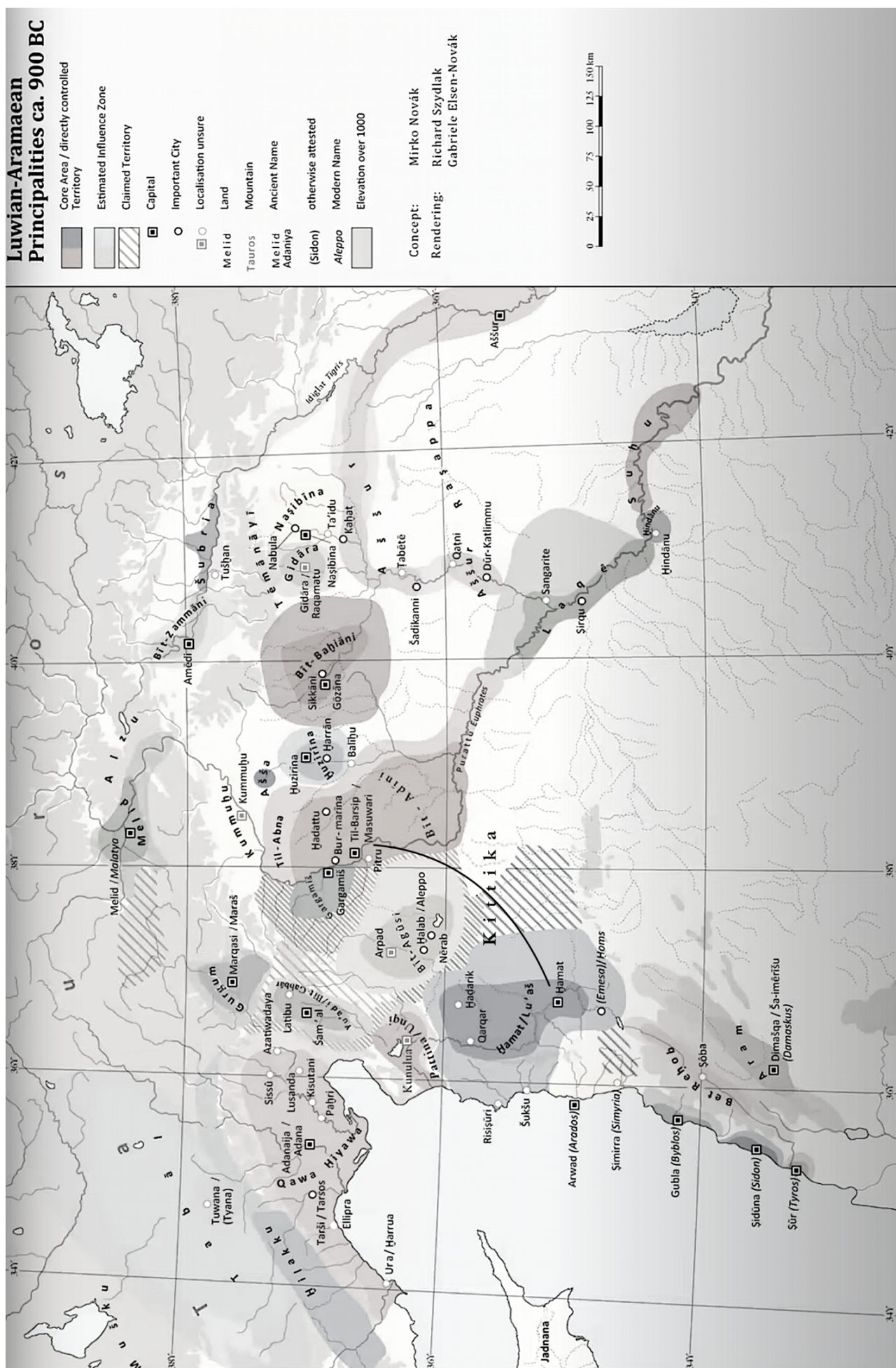Fig. 13 Assyrian empire from Tiglath-pileser III to Sargon II

Fig. 14 The Luwian-Aramaic princedoms ca. 900 B.C, after Wittke – Olshausen – Szydlak 2010: 43

LIST OF KINGS OF DAMASCUS ANCHORED ON HAZAEL'S REIGN (885-840)

The chronology of the kings of Damascus (Syria) is mainly based on the chronological data of the Bible (Lion: 2001, 218-220). The modern attitude of scepticism about the Aramean oppression of Israel in the reign of Jehu is not warranted by the evidence. More than one hundred years of research of extrabiblical sources provide sufficient corroboration of the accuracy of the biblical text, though the fragmentary nature of these sources provides significant latitude in interpretation. As a result, the biblical texts were written by contemporaries who had high ethical standards and a strong commitment to truth (Bolen: 2013, 9-39).

The biblical chronology used comes from the thesis of Edwin R. Thiele (in 1951), who assumed that the synchronism with King Hazael corresponded to the beginning of his reign, which obliged him to shift the reign (885-840), calculated from the biblical text (MT), by about 43 years and to arbitrarily assume nine co-regencies in the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah (Thiele: 1983, 61-138,217). However, the calculated reign of Hazael (842-800), according to Thiele's biblical chronology (Freedman, Myers: 2000, 84), gives rise to several insoluble inconsistencies: this chronology, which is used by scholars to calculate the chronology of the kings of Damascus[56], completely destroys the biblical synchronisms between the kings of Israel and Judah (Tetley: 2005, 91-185; Jones: 2007, 105-197); the numerous inconsistencies making it unusable in establishing a reliable chronology (Hughes: 1990, 182-232,264-266). Starting the reign of Hazael 43 years later obliges us to suppose that King Ben-Hadad III also reigned at the same time under the name of Mari' "my lord" (Younger: 2016, 584-590), which is implausible. Thiele's hypothesis is based on a dogma that assumes a total absence of co-regencies according to the Canon of Kings (by Claudius Ptolemy), but this dogma is false since Xerxes (496-475) had a co-regency of 10 years with Darius I (522-486), which modifies the Achaemenid chronology (Gertoux: 2018, 179-206). The method for establishing the chronology of the kings of Damascus is therefore erroneous, paradoxically, the current biblical chronology is still based on Thiele's (Laato: 2015, 5-8,63). To establish a reliable chronology, one must first use the unaltered biblical data[57] and then check whether this chronology agrees with Assyrian or Babylonian synchronisms anchored on absolute dates (obtained by astronomy), and finally to establish the Syrian chronology according to all the synchronisms with the Israelite, Judean, Assyrian and Babylonian kings.

The chronology of the kings of Damascus can be reconstructed using the many synchronisms with the chronologies of the kings of Israel, the kings of Judah and the kings of Assyria. As the inscriptions referring to kings and their constructions are written on stone, they are not datable by carbon-14, with some exceptions. For example, Taita[58] (1045-1000) was a king of Palastin, a Syrian land including Hamath and Aleppo (Bryce: 2012, 128-133) and according to the Bible, as King of Hamath, he congratulated King David when the latter defeated Hadad-ezer (in 1042 BCE) a king of Aram-Zobah (2Sa 8:5-10; 1Ch 18:9-10). Regarding the dating of Taita's reign, a beam of Aleppo temple attributed to Taita has been dated[59] 1045 BCE +/- 45 by carbon-14 dating (Kohlmeyer: 2009, 190-202).

According to the Bible, Rezon, a king of Damascus, became an enemy of Solomon (1017-977) in the last years of his reign (1Ki 11:23-25). After Rezon the Bible mentions three other kings of Damascus:

And warfare itself took place between Asa (957-916) and Baasha (954-931) the king of Israel all their days. So Baasha the king of Israel came up against Judah and began to build Ramah, to allow no one to go out or come in to Asa the king of Judah. At that Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of Jehovah and the treasures of the house of the king and put them in the hand of his servants; and King Asa now sent them to Ben-Hadad the son of Tabrimmon the son of Hezion, the king of Syria, who was dwelling in Damascus (1Ki 15:16-18).

The succession of these three kings of Damascus (Aram/Syria) is confirmed by a damaged stele (uncertain letters in square brackets): *The stele which Bir-ʾHʿadad, son of Ṭâˈb-Raˈ[m]ân [son of] ˈḤadyâˈ[n] (Hezion I), king of Aram, set up for his lord Milqart, (the stele) which he vowed to him when he hearkened to his voice* (Albright: 1942, 23-29). The succession of Syrian kings being from father to son, with an average reign of about 20 years, it seems unlikely that Ben-Hadad (I) had a reign of 60 years (945-885). A

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[56] Some scholars choose to date the reign of Hazael to the period 842-796 BCE, instead of 842-800 BCE, because they assume that his successor was Ben-Hadad III, 796-792 BCE, who is equated with King Mari' (a hypocoristic of Mari'-Hadad).

[57] Of the four Old Testament chronologies examined in theses (Thiele, 1951; Hughes, 1990; Tetley, 2005; Jones, 2007), only that of Floyd Nolen Jones uses the unmodified durations of the Masoretic text.

[58] "King Taita (I)" appears in the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription: *"I, King Taita, the Hero, the King of [the land] Palastin"* (written Pelešet "Philistine" in Egyptian). The name Taita is derived from the Hurrian word Taḫḫe.ta "of man", abbreviated as Taḫḫe which explains the T'Y vocalization in Hebrew (Taita is named either Toʿî, Toʿû or Thôa in the Bible). After the collapse of the Hittite empire (in 1185 BCE) several new kingdoms emerged (Emanuel: 2015, 11-40), including the kingdom of Melid where Kuzi-Teshub's grandsons ruled, and above all the kingdom of Palistin in central Syria which was the main Syro-Hittite state that emerged in Syria. When Palastin (Walastin in Aramaic) disintegrated around 1000 BCE it gave birth to the kingdoms of Pattin (shortened form of Palastin, called Unqi by Assyrians), Hamath (Hama, Qarqar), Bit Agusi (Aleppo, Arpad) and Bit Adini (Til Barsip).

[59] Taita I must have appeared after 1075 BCE as it is not mentioned in any of Tiglath-Pileser I's campaigns (1115-1076).

son of the name, Ben-Hadad II (920-885) must have succeeded him. The names in bold (Table 29) are those that appear in the Assyrian annals. Biblical synchronisms (highlighted in grey) make it possible to fix the reign of Hazael (885-840) to the nearest year (Jones: 2007, 197).

TABLE 29

King of Syria	Reign	King of Judah	Reign	King of Israel	Reign	reference
Hadad-ezer	*1045* -	David	1057 -			1Ch 18:3-9
/**Taita (To'i)**	*-1000*		-1017			2Sa 8:5-10
Rezon (Ezron)	*1000-975*	Solomon	1017-977			1K 11:23-25
Hezion I	*975-960*	Rehoboam	977-960	Jeroboam I	977 -	1Ki 15:18
Tabrimmon	*960* -	Abiyam	960-957		-955	1Ki 15:1-2
	-945	Asa	957 -	Baasha	954 -	2Ch 16:2,3
Ben-Hadad I	*945* -				-931	1Ki 15:16-18
	-920		-916	**Omri**	931-919	1Ki 16:23-29
Ben-Hadad II	*920* -	Jehosaphat	916-891	Ahab	919-899	1Ki 20:1-2,34
	-885	Jehoram son of J.	893-**885**	**Joram** son of A.	897-886	2Ki 3:1, 6:24
Hazael	**885** -	**Ahaziah II**	886-**885**	**Jehu**	**885** -	2Ki 8:8-16
		Joash	879 -		-856	2Ki 10:31-32
	-840		-839	Jehoahaz	856-839	2Ki 13:22
Ben-Hadad III	*840-805*	Amasiah	839-810	**Jehoash**	841-823	2Ki 13:23-25
Mari'	*805-780*	Uzziah	810 -	Jeroboam II	**823**-782	2Ki 14:17-25
Hezion II	*780* -	(Azariah)		Zechariah	782-771	(Jonah 3:6)
	-755		-758	Menahem	771-760	
Rezin	*755* -	**Jotham**	758-742	**Peqah**	758-**738**	
	-732	**Ahaz**	742-726	**Hosea I**	**738**-729	2Ki 16:5-9
		Hezekiah	726-697	**Hosea II**	729-**720**	
		Manasseh	697-642			
		Amon	642-640			
		Josiah	640-**609**			

TABLE 30

King of Judah		Reign	King of Syria	reference	Reign	King of Assyria	Reign
Asa		957 -	Tabrimmon	1Ki 15:18	*960-945*	Tiglath-pileser II	967 -
			Ben-Hadad I	1Ki 15:18-20	*945* -		-935
					-920	Aššur-dan II	935-912
		-916	Ben-Hadad II	1Ki 20:1-21	*920* -	Adad-nīrārī II	912 -
(Ahab) / Jehosaphat		916-891	/Naaman	2Ki 5:1	*910-890*		-891
Jehoram (J)		893-**885**	/Hazael	2Ki 8:7-13	*890-885*	Tukulti-Ninurta II	891-884
Athaliah		**885**-879	**Hazael**	2Ki 8:15	*885* -	Aššurnasirpal II	884 -
Joash		879 -	/Hadad-ezer		*870* -		-859
					-845	**Shalmaneser III**	859 -
		-839			*-840*		**841**
Amaziah		839 -	**Ben-Hadad III**	2Ki 13:3	*840* -		-824
		-810			*-805*	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
Uzziah		810 -	**Mari'**		*805-780*	Adad-nīrārī III	811-783
[Azariah]		[796 -	**Hezion II**		*780* -	Shalmaneser IV	783-773
		-758			*-754*	Aššur-dan III	**773-755**
Jotham		758-742	**Rezin**		*754* -	Aššur-nīrārī V	755-745
Ahaz		742 -		2Ki 16:5-6		**Tiglath-pileser III**	**745** -
	0	**738**		2Ki 16:7-9			**738**
		-726	-		**-732**		-727
Hezekiah		726 -				**Shalmaneser V**	727-722
		-697				**Sargon II**	722-705
Manasseh		697 -				**Sennacherib**	705-681
2Ch 33:13	65	**673**	Is 7:8-9	Ezr 4:2,10	674-669	**Esarhaddon**	681-669
		-642				Aššurbanipal	669 -
Amon		642-640					
Josiah		640 -					-626
						Sin-šar-iškun	626-612
2Ki 23:29		**-609**				Aššur-uballiṭ II	612-**609**

According to Thiele's chronology, there would have been the following succession: Hadad-ezer (880-844), Hazael (844-803), Ben-Hadad III = Mari' (803-775), Hezion II (775-750), Rezin (750-732), with one king having two different names (Younger: 2016, 653), which is absurd.

The period between Kings Ben-Hadad III (840-805) and Rezin (750-732) has synchronisms mainly with the Assyrian kings, some of which are precisely dated (dates in bold):

BCE	Events according to the biblical text	Events according to extra-biblical documents
950 - -930	King Asa (957-916) asked Ben-Hadad I the son of Tabrimmon (1Ki 15:18), to break his covenant with Baasha (954-931). Several cities of Israel were taken (2Ch 16:1-7).	We only know that, according to Shalmaneser III's Annals, there was already a powerful king of Aram (Syria) in Damascus at the time of Aššur-rabi II (1013-972).
920 - -885	Ben-Hadad II attacked Ahab (919-898) but was defeated (1Ki 20:1-34). Hazael was appointed as Army chief around 890 BCE (1Ki 19:15-17). In 885 BCE, he killed Ben-Hadad II and became King of Syria (2Ki 8:7-15), then he wounded Joram the son of Ahab (1Ki 8:25-29). Soon after Jehu slayed both Joram (897-886), and Ahaziah (886-885) to become King of Israel (1Ki 9:14-29). After Ahaziah's death Athaliah his mother ruled Judah during 6 years (2Ki 11:1-3).	According to the Tel Dan Stela (wrote by Hazael)[60]: *The king of I[s]rael penetrated into my father's land[. And] Hadad made me-myself-king. And Hadad went in front of me[, and] I departed from [...] of my kings. And I killed two [power]ful kin[gs], who harnessed two thou[sand cha]riots and two thousand horsemen. [I killed Jo]ram son of [Ahab] king of Israel, and I killed [Ahaz]yahu son of [Jehoram kin]g of the House of David. And I set [...] their land [...] other [... and Jehu ru]led over Is[rael]* (Lemaire: 1994, 87-93).
867 - -856	In the last part of the reign of Jehu (885-856), Hazael started to cut off all the territories of Israel (2Ki 10:31-34) as well as those of Joash (879-839), the king of Judah (2Ki 13:1-3). Hazael captured Gath, a capital of the Philistines and even went up against Jerusalem. After he received a heavy tribute in gold from Joash, in 856 BCE, he withdrew from Jerusalem (2Ki 12:17-19).	Two booty inscriptions read: *that which Hadad gave to our lord Hazael from 'Umq (Pattin) in the year that our lord crossed the River (Orontes?).* An inscription on an ivory plaque reads: *[that which H]adad of 'Imma [gave] to our lord Hazael in the year that Ḥa[lab? = Aleppo] was [cap]tured.* These campaigns in Syria show that Hazael was a powerful conqueror in this region (Lipiński: 2000, 388-389)
856 848 845	From the 23rd year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, in 856 BCE, Hazael, then his son Ben-Hadad III, oppressed again Israel all the days of Jehoahaz (856-839).	In **856/5** BCE, Shalmaneser annexed Bit-Adini. In **853** BCE: *Hadad-ezer (Adad-idri), the Damascene, (and) Irḫulēnu, the Ḥamatite, together with 12 kings on the shore of the sea, trusting in their united forces, attacked me to wage war and battle. I fought with them. I put to the sword 25,000 of their fighting men (and) captured from them their chariotry, cavalry, (and) military equipment. To save their lives they ran away.* In **848** BCE: *I fought with them (and) defeated them. I put to the sword 10,000 of their fighting men. I took from them their chariotry, cavalry, and military equipment.* In **845** BCE: *I defeated Hadad-ezer, the Damascene, together with 12 princes who were his allies. I laid low like sheep 29,000 of his brave warriors (and) threw the remnant of his troops into the Orontes. They fled to save their lives. Hadad-ezer passed away (and) Haza'el, son of a nobody (a former usurper), took the throne. He mustered his numerous troops (and) moved against me to wage war and battle. I fought with him (and) defeated him.* (Grayson: 2002, 36-38, 118).
841		*In my 18th regnal year I crossed the Euphrates for the 16th time. Hazael of Damascus, trusting in the might of his soldiers, carried out an extensive muster of his troops. He fortified Mount Saniru, the mountain peak, which is before Mount Lebanon. I fought with him (and) defeated him. I put to the sword 16,000 of his fighting men (and) took away from him 1,121 of his chariots (and) 470 of his cavalry with his military camp. To save his life he ran away, I pursued him. I imprisoned him in Damascus, his royal city, (and) cut down his gardens* (Grayson: 2002, 48).
840 839		Finally, Hazael the king of Syria died and Ben-Hadad III began to reign in place of him. Jehoash (839-823) proceeded to take back again from the hand of Ben-Hadad III the son of Hazael the cities that he had taken from the hand of Jehoahaz (856–839) his father (2Ki 13:1-9,22-25).
838		*[In] my [21st regnal year] I [crossed] the Euphrates for the 21st time (and) received tribute from all the kings [of the land Hat]ti. Moving on from [the land Hatti] I took to the slopes of Mount Lebanon. I crossed Mount Saniru (and) went down to the cities [of] Hazael of Damascus. [All] of the cities became frightened (and) took to the mountain for their protection* (Grayson: 2002, 78-79). The cities of Hazael were therefore protected by the mountain because he was dead.

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[60] Although this inscription is very fragmentary and Hazael's name does not appear, analysis of the historical and linguistic context shows that he is the author (Suriano, 2007, 163-176).

805 — Jehoash (839-823) the son of Jehoahaz took back again from Ben-Hadad III the cities that he had taken from Jehoahaz his father (2Ki 13:22-25). Likewise, Jeroboam II (823-782) recovered to Judah the land annexed to Damascus and Hamath (1Ki 14:28). The recovering of land from Hazael and Ben-Hadad III occurred a few years before 798 BCE (Am 1:1-5) because the quake in the days of Uzziah, the king of Judah, happened in the 27th year of Jeroboam II (2Ki 15:1-2), dated in 796 BCE, when King Uzziah had to be replaced by Azariah the high priest (2 Ch 26:1-23).	The Zakkur Stela: *Then Bar-Hadad the son of Hazael, the king of Aram, formed an alliance with sev[enteen] kings: Bir-Hadad and his army* (Nissinen, Ritner, Seow: 2003, 204-207). Zakkur's account mentions a providential help from Baalshamên who had successfully broken the siege. It is generally agreed that in reality the siege was broken by means of some intervention, which occurred in **805** BCE when Adad-nîrârî III led a campaign against Arpad. Consequently Bar-Hadad III formed his alliance in **806** (and was defeated) because Adad-nîrârî III received in **805** a tribute from Mari' the king of Damascus, according to the Saba'a Stela (Hasegawa: 2008, 89-98).

Synchronisms with the Assyrian kings make it possible to fix more precisely the reign of Hazael: he was army chief of Ben-Hadad II for a period of around 5 years (890-885), then after the assassination of the king (2Ki 8:15) he began to reign, in 885 BCE. He then appointed Hadadezer[61] as head of his army, around 870 BCE. Hadadezer was called king because Shalmaneser III considered Hazael to be a "Son of nobody (usurper)", but when Hadadezer was killed, in 845 BCE, Shalmaneser III called Hazael a king (a former usurper) when he destroyed his army in 841 BCE. Hazael must have been wounded during the battle since he had to flee and died shortly afterwards, in 840 BCE (probably aged 70).

TABLE 31

King of Syria	Reign	Army chief	period	King of Assyria	Reign	King of Babylon	Reign
Hezion I	*975-960*			Aššur-rêš-iši II	972-967	Nabû-mukîn-apli	980 -
Tabrimmon	*960-945*			Tiglath-pileser II	967 -		-944
Ben-Hadad I	*945 -*					Ninurta-kudurriuṣur II	944-941
	-920	??	*940-920*		-935	Mâr-bîti-aḫḫê-iddin	941-*921*
Ben-Hadad II	*920 -*			Aššur-dân II	935-912	Šamaš-mudammiq	*921 -*
		Naaman	*910 -*	Adad-nêrârî II	**912 -**		-900
			-890		-891	Nabû-šumukîn I	900-888
	-885	Hazael	*890-885*	Tukulti-Ninurta II	891-884	Nabû-apla-iddina	888 -
Hazael	**885 -**	**Hadadezer**	*870 -*	Aššurnasirpal II	884-859		-855
Ḫaza'ilu		*Hadad-idri*	*-845*	**Shalmaneser III**	859 -	Marduk-zâkir-šumi I	855 -
	-840				**841**		
Ben-Hadad III	840 -				-824		-819
Bar-Hadad	-805			Šamši-Adad V	824-811	Marduk-balâs-suiqbi	819-813
Mari'	805-780			Adad-nêrari III	811-783	Bâba-ah-iddina	813 ?
Hezion II	780 -			Shalmaneser IV	783-773	Marduk-apla-uṣur	? -770
Ḫadiānu	-755			Aššur-dan III	**773-755**	Erîba-Marduk	770-761
Rezin	755 -			Aššur-nêrari V	755-745	Nabû-šum-iškun	761-748
Raḫiānu				Tiglath-pileser III	745 -	Nabû-naṣir	748-734
	-732					Nabû-nâdin-zêri	734-732
						Nabû-šumukîn II	732-732
						Nabû-mukîn-zêri	**732-729**
					-727	Pulu II	729-**727**
				Shalmaneser V	727-722	Ululaiu	727-722

The reign of Hazael (885-840) can therefore be established precisely, based solely on the unmodified Masoretic text and the absolute dates of the Babylonian chronology. Those who use the chronology of Thiele for the reign of Hazael and who assume that Ahab (919-898), a king of Israel, was Ahabbu (855-825), a king of Sam'al, are forced to conclude that the "biblical chronology is essentially mythical" (Hughes: 1990, 264-266), but this conclusion is scientifically false because Hazael died around 840 BCE and Ahabbu was an Asrielite[62] (*Sir-'a-la-a-a*), not an Israelite (*mār Ḫu-um-ri-i*). Moreover, Ahabbu had joined the coalition led by the powerful Syrian ruler Hadadezer (870-845) against Shalmaneser III at the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE, while the Israelite king Ahab was attacked by the Syrian king Ben-Hadad II who once defeated returned the cities taken by Ben-Hadad I (1Ki 20:1-34).

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[61] Army chief Hadadezer (870-845) should not be confused with King Hadadezer (1045-1000) who had Shobak as his army chief in David's time (2Sa 10:16). Naaman was the army chief of Ben-Hadad II (2Ki 5:1) who preceded Hazael in this position (2Ki 8:7-15).
[62] Asriel was in north-eastern Samaria (Nb 26:31) and therefore not Israel (Lemaire: 1973, 239-243).

LIST OF KINGS OF TYRE ANCHORED ON BAAL-EZER II'S REIGN (912-906)

The chronology of the kings of Tyre is based mainly on the chronological data of Menander of Ephesus, a Greek historian (c. 200 BCE), which was transmitted by Flavius Josephus (Against Apion I:106-127; Jewish Antiquities VIII:141-149, 316-324). The biblical chronology used comes from the thesis of Edwin R. Thiele, who assumed that King Ba'li-ma-AN-zēri had to be identified with Baal-ezer II, a king of Tyre, who obliged him to shift his reign (912-906), calculated from the chronological data of Menander, by about 65 years (Thiele: 1983, 86 n. 3). This calculated reign of Baal-ezer II (847-841) gave rise to several inconsistencies (Briquel-Chatonnet: 1992, 103-109) and was thus (arbitrarily) modified again to 848-830 BCE (Elayi: 2013, 442) or 841-835 BCE (Khreich: 2020, 11-27). The calculated reign of Hazael (842-800)[63], according to Thiele's biblical chronology (Freedman, Myers: 2000, 84), gives rise to several insoluble inconsistencies: this chronology, which is used by scholars to calculate the chronology of the kings of Damascus, destroys the biblical synchronisms between the kings of Israel and Judah (Tetley: 2005, 91-185; Jones: 2007, 105-197); the numerous inconsistencies making it unusable in establishing a reliable chronology (Hughes: 1990, 182-232,264-266; Galil: 1996, 1-11, 46-51). The method for establishing the chronology of the kings of Tyre is therefore erroneous, paradoxically, the current biblical chronology is still based on Thiele's (Laato: 2015, 5-13,63-69). The date of 841 BCE is even considered a key synchronism between Assyrian and Israelite chronology (Hughes: 1990, 183). To establish a reliable chronology, one must first use the unaltered biblical data[64] and then check whether this chronology agrees with Assyrian or Babylonian synchronisms anchored on absolute dates (obtained by astronomy), and finally to establish the chronology of the kings of Tyre according to all the synchronisms with the Israelite, Judean, Assyrian and Babylonian kings.

The chronology of the kings of Tyre has been initially reconstructed from the chronological data of Menander of Ephesus transmitted by Flavius Josephus, mainly in the Laurentianus Codex, the oldest manuscript. This chronology is authentic as it gives both the life spans and reign lengths of the 10 kings of Tyre (whose names are written in Greek), from Hiram to Pygmalion (Barnes: 2018, 43). Three other historians: Cassiodorus, Eusebius of Caesarea and Theophilus of Antioch also transmitted this chronology of the kings of Tyre with some variations (Galil: 1996, 163):

TABLE 32

	King of Tyre		Laurentianus		Cassiodorus		Eusebius		Theophilus			
	Greek name	Phoenician name	year	age	year	age	year	age	year	age	year	age
1	Eirōmos	Hiram	**34**	53	**34**	53	**34**	53	**[34]**	53	**34**	53
2	Balbazeros	Ba'al-'ezer I	**7**	43	**7**	43	**17**	43	**7**	43	**17**	43
3	Abdasartos	'Abd-'Aštart	**9**	29	**9**	20	**9**	39	**[9]**	[39]	**9**	39
4	Delaiasartos	Delay-'Aštart	**12**	54	**12**	53	**12**	54	**12**	54	**12**	54
5	Astarumos	'Aštart-rōm	**9**	54	**9**	54	**9**	58	**9**	58	**9**	58
6	Phellēs	Pillēs	8 m.	50	8 m.	50	8 m.	50	8 m.	50	8 m.	50
7	Ithobalos	Itho-Ba'al	**32**	68	**32**	48	**32**	48	**12**	40	**32**	48
8	Balezeros	Ba'al-'ezer II	**6**	45	**6**	45	**8**	45	**7**	45	**6**	45
9	Mettēnos	Mattan	**9**	32	**9**	32	**29**	32	**29**	32	**29**	52*
10	Pygmaliōn	Pu'mmay-yaton	**47**	56	**40**	56	**47**	58	**7**	56	**47**	58
		Total	**165**		**158**		**197**		**126**		**195**	

These four historians all state that 155 years and 8 months elapsed between the beginning of Hiram's reign and Pygmalion's 7th year, which implies that the sum of the 10 reigns is 195 years and 8 months. The only list that gives a result is that of Eusebius (replacing the 8 years of the reign of Ba'al-'ezer II by the 6 years of Laurentianus and Cassiodorus). The 29-year reign of Mattan is confirmed by Theophilus of Antioch, but the age of 32 is obviously wrong, as this king would have taken the throne at the age of 3, which is implausible. As the average life span of the other 9 kings is 50 years, the 32 years of life must be replaced by 52 years. Furthermore, the chronological data from Menander of Ephesus adds a synchronism with the chronological data from the Bible since it states that the construction of the temple in Jerusalem began in the 12th year of the reign of Hiram (I). According to the Bible this construction began in the 4th year of the reign of Solomon (1Ki 6:1), in 1013 BCE.

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[63] Some scholars choose to date the reign of Hazael to 842-796 BCE, instead of 842-800 BCE, because they assume that his successor was Ben-Hadad III (796-792), likened to King Mari'. Starting the reign of Hazael 43 years later obliges them to suppose that King Ben-Hadad III also reigned at the same time under the name of Mari' "My lord [is Hadad]", which is implausible. Thiele's hypothesis is based on a dogma that assumes an absence of co-regencies in the Assyrian reigns, according to the Canon of Kings (by Claudius Ptolemy) but this dogma leads to chronological inconsistencies. To date Jehu's tribute to Shalmaneser III to 841 BCE, he invented 9 co-regencies among the Hebrew kings (Thiele: 1983, 103-217).

[64] Of the four Old Testament chronologies examined in theses (Thiele, 1951; Hughes, 1990; Tetley, 2005; Jones, 2007), only that of Floyd Nolen Jones uses the unmodified durations of the Masoretic text.

TABLE 33

King of Tyre	Phoenician name	age	length	reign		King of Israel	reign
	Abi-Ba'al	(50)	(20)	*1045*-1025		**David**	1057 -
Eirōmos	**Hiram (I)**		0	**1025** -	000	Year **40**	-1017
						Solomon	1017 -
Year **12**	*Building of the Temple*		12	**1013**		Year 4	**1013**
		53	34	-991		Year **11**	1006
Balbazeros	Ba'al-'ezer I	43	17	991-974		Year **40**	-977
Abdasartos	'Abd-'Aštart	39	9	974-965			
Delaiasartos	Delay-'Aštart	54	12	965-953			
Astarumos	'Aštart-rōm	58	9	953-944			
Phellēs	Pillēs	50	8 m.	944-944			
Ithobalos	**Itho-Ba'al**	68	32	**944** -		**Jezebel**	*940-920*
				-912		**Ahab** Year **1**	**919** -
Balezeros	Ba'al-'ezer II	45	6	912-906			
Mettēnos	Mattan	52*	29	906-877			-899
Pygmaliōn	Pu'mmay-yaton		0	877 -			
Year **7**	*Foundation of Carthage*		7	**870**	155		**814***
		58	47	-830			

This chronology of the kings of Tyre makes it possible to verify five additional synchronisms, three with the biblical chronology: 1) the 40th year of the reign of David (2Sa 5:11; 1Ch 14:1), in 1017 BCE, and 2) the 11th year of Solomon (1Ki 6:37-38), in 1006 BCE, must be included in the reign of Hiram (1025-991), and 3) Jezebel, the daughter of Ithobaal I (944-912), was married to King Ahab (1Ki 16:29-31) at the beginning of his reign, in 819 BCE (consequently, Jezebel must have been born around 940 BCE when Ithobaal I was 20 years old, as he was born in 960 BCE), 4) a synchronism with the Assyrian chronology: the tribute of Bali-man-zēri paid to Shalmaneser III in 841 BCE and 5) a synchronism with history: the foundation of Carthage in 814 BCE, according to the date proposed by Timaeus of Sicily (345-250). The present chronology of the kings of Tyre is based only on the last two synchronisms, using the chronology of Thiele, who likened "Ba'al-manzer" to Baal-ezer II and assumed a reign of 836-841 instead of 912-906 (Liver: 1953, 113-121; Lipiński: 2006, 166-190). This academic chronology is triply aberrant since 1) the first three synchronisms with the biblical chronology are no longer respected, 2) the gap of 36 years (= 29 + 7) between the reign of Ba'al-manzer (836-841) and the foundation of Carthage is equal to 27 years (= 841 - 814) and 3) the date of 814 BCE does not correspond to the 7th year of Pygmalion (832-785) which is dated in 825 BCE (= 832 - 7). In fact, Greek and Roman historians have given dates between 1218 and 729 BCE for the foundation of Carthage[65]. According to the most reliable historians this date oscillates around 870 BCE[66] +/- 15 years. The main reason why scholars have kept the date 814 BCE, despite conflicting historical evidence (Gras, Rouillard, Teixidor: 1989, 198-238), is the absence of Phoenician archaeological remains dated before 800 BCE. Ironically this "strong argument" is wrong because some recent discoveries have shown that the Phoenician oldest layer should be dated to the period 900-750 BCE (Horn: 2007, 60-69). In fact, the ^{14}C dating is extremely difficult as the remains of the fifth layer of Carthage (Tanit 0) are almost non-existent[67], but a few measures have recently traced back to a period of 835-800 BCE (Sagona: 2008, 247,379). The date of 870 BCE for the foundation of Carthage, instead of 814 BCE, is in better agreement with the historical data transmitted by Herodotus (485-425) and Thucydides (460-398), as well as with the most recent archaeological data (since 2008). The only disagreement comes from the tribute of Ba'al-

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[65] **1218 BCE** according to Philistus of Syracuse quoted by Eusebius (Year 798 of Abraham). **1213 BCE** according to Eudoxus of Cnidus (Scolie on Euripides, Trojans, 220), who dated it on Year 803 of Abraham. **1184 BCE** according to Virgil. At the epoch of the Trojan War (Eneid I). **846 BCE** according to Livy, 700 years before its destruction (Periochæ LI:3). **828 BCE** according to Cicero, 75 years before Rome (On the Republic II:23). **825 BCE** according to Pompeius Trogus quoted by Justinus, 72 years before Rome (History XVIII:6:9). **818 BCE** according to Velleius Paterculus, 65 years before Rome (Roman History I:6). **814 BCE** according to Timaeus of Sicily quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 38 years before the 1st Olympiad, (Roman Antiquities I:74:1). **752 BCE** according to Marcus Porcius Cato quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 432 years after the Trojan War (Roman Antiquities I:74:2). **748 BCE** according to Lucius Cincius quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 1st year of the 8th Olympiad (Roman Antiquities I:74:1). **746 BCE** according to Cicero, 600 years before its destruction (On the Republic I:3). **729 BCE** according to Quintus Fabius quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 4th year of the 12th Olympiad (Roman Antiquities I:74:1).

[66] After **884 BCE** according to Thucydides, when the Greeks arrived in Sicily, three centuries after the Trojan War, usually dated in 1184 BCE (The Peloponnesian War VI:2). Around **876 BCE** according to Velleius Paterculus, when Lycurgus lived (Roman History I:6) and according to Tatian, when he legislated 100 years before the Olympics (Discourses to Greeks XLI). Before **860 BCE** according to Herodotus, when the Phoenicians settled on the Mediterranean coast, 5 generations before the Greek colonization, which started c. 700 BCE (The Histories II:44; V:46; VI:47), and 3 generations equal 100 years (The Histories II:142). Before **850 BCE** according to Strabo, when Phoenicians occupied Libya before Homer died (Geography III:2:14). Homer lived 400 years before Herodotus (The Histories IV:53), who wrote his histories around 430 BCE.

[67] The oldest part of Carthage no longer exists since the Romans made it disappear when they razed it in depth.

manzer, equated with Baal-ezer II, which appears in only two (written Ba'ali-man-zēri or Ba'a'il-man-zi) of the six reports, however, this equation has the following anomalies (Grayson: 2002, 32-84,149):

1) A report of this record in the annals of Shalmaneser III, covering the period 858-842 BCE, does not mention any tribute from Jehu. The tribute received from Jehu is always dated in the 18th year.

2) A second report (bulls of Calah), covering the period 858-841 BCE, adds at the end: (In 841 BCE) In those days (*sic*), I received the tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians, and Jehu the son of Omri (*Ia-ú-a DUMU Ḫu-um-ri-i*).

3) A third report (marble slab), which covers the period 858-839 BCE: (in 841 BCE) I received the tribute of **Ba'ali-man-zēri** (*Ba-'a-li-ma-AN-NUMUN*), the Tyrian, and Jehu son of Omri (*Ia-a-ú DUMU Ḫu-um-ri-i*).

4) A fourth report (Kurba'il statue), covering the period 858-838 BCE: (in 841 BCE) I received the tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians, and Jehu of the house of Omri (*Ia-ú-a bīt Ḫu-um-ri-i*).

5) A fifth report (Black Obelisk), covering the period 858-828 BCE, does not mention any tribute in 841 BCE, but there are five epigraphs at the end of the inscription that mention what tribute was received. According to the epigraphs of 841 BCE: I received tribute from Jehu son of Omri (*Ia-ú-a DUMU Ḫu-um-ri-i*): silver, gold, a gold bowl, a gold tureen, gold vessels, gold pails, tin, the staffs of the king's hand, (and) spears.

6) A sixth report (statue of Calah), covering the period 859-828 BCE, adds (in 841 BCE): I received tribute from **Ba-'a-il-ma-AN-zi** [of Tyre (and) from Jehu son of Om]ri.

Assyrian inscriptions, before the 6th year of Sargon II in 716 BCE (May: 2015, 98-105), are not dated by reign years, unlike the Babylonian documents which systematically used this dating system, but they are sometimes dated by eponymous years (*limmu*), according to the name of a high-ranking official, but generally Assyrian kings dated their reigns according to their number of campaigns, in knowing that they were leading a campaign (*palû*) each year (*šattu*), consequently most of the time: *palû* x = Year x (the word *palû* literally means "period of office" and could be translated by "year of reign"). However, the equivalence between the number of campaigns (years of office) and years of reign is not always rigorous as shown by a reconstruction of the reign of Shalmaneser III (Yamada: 2000, 64-67). For example, there were two campaigns lasting two years instead of one year (*palû* 21 = Years 21 and 22; *palû* 25 = Years 26 and 27). The Eponymous Chronicle gives an amount of relevant chronological and historical information; it shows that the main purpose of the Assyrian empire was to get booty by conquering new countries, hence the crucial role of its military. The most important character after the king (*šarru*) was the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*)[68]. The governing body of Assyrian headquarters was called *ša-rēši* "one's head" and because the commander-in-chief was a true eunuch this word became a synonym of "high official (minister of the court)", but to avoid any ambiguities, such members of the court were also designated by the following titles: *ša-rēši ziqni* "bearded eunuch (!)" or *manzāz pâni* "those who are in front". Considering his crucial position in the kingdom, the commander in chief was always referred to, or shown on frescoes, just after the king up to Shalmaneser V (Finkel, Reade: 1995, 167-172). For example, Shalmaneser III is mentioned as eponym in Year 2 and his first commander-in-chief (Ashur-belu-ka'in) as eponym in Year 3; he is mentioned again in Year 32 and his second commander-in-chief (Dayyān-Aššur) in Year 33.

TABLE 34

BCE	year	Eponym	Main military target(s)	Dated campaigns
859	**0**	Tab-belu	Hubushkia, Urartu	*šurrât sarrûtîya*
858	1	Sharru-balti-nishi	Mediterranean Sea	*palû 1*
857	2	**Shalmaneser (III)**	Bit-Adini, Carchemish	*palû 2*
856	3	Ashur-belu-ka'in (*turtānu*)	Bit-Adini, Urartu	*palû 3*
855	4	Ashur-bunaya-uṣur (*rab šâqê*)	Bit-Adini, Mazamua	*palû 4*
854	5	Abi-ina-ekalli-lilbur	Shubria	*palû 5*
853	6	Dayyān-Aššur (*turtānu*)	Hamath	*palû 6*
852	7	Shamash-abua	Tib-abne, Tigris source	*palû 7*
851	8	Shamash-belu-uṣur	Babylonia	*palû 8*
850	9	Bel-bunaya	Babylonia	*palû 9*
849	10	Hadi-lipushu	Carchemish, Bit-Agusi	*palû 10*
848	11	Nergal-alik-pani	Hamath	*palû 11*
847	12	Bur-Ramman	Paqarhubuni	*palû 12*
846	13	Ninurta-mukin-nishi	Matyati	*palû 13*
845	14	Ninurta-nadin-shumi	Central Syria	*palû 14*

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[68] In the texts of Nuzi the word *tardennu* meant the second son in order of age. Because of his power, the commander-in-chief was a potential rival to the king and could oust him through a coup. To avoid this possibility, Assyrian kings chose this key character among the eunuchs of their headquarters. The fact that the commander-in-chief was a eunuch prevented him from founding a dynasty of his own and was, therefore, a deterrent from killing the king in order to take his place.

844	15	Ashur-bunaya	Nairi, Euphrates source	*palû 15*
843	16	Tab-Ninurta	Namri	*palû 16*
842	17	Taklak-ana-sharri	Mt. Amanus	*palû 17*
841	**18**	Adad-remanni	**Damascus**	*palû 18*
840	19	Shamash-abua	Cedar Mountain/Mt. Amanus	*palû 19*
839	20	Shulmu-beli-lamur	Que	*palû 20*
838	21	Ninurta-kibsi-uṣur	Malahi/Damascus	*palû 21*
837	22	Ninurta-ilaya	Danabi/Damascus	*palû 21*
836	23	Qurdi-Ashur	Tabal	*palû 22*
835	24	Shep-sharri	Melid	*palû 23*
834	25	Nergal-mudammiq	Namri	*palû 24*
833	26	Yahalu	Que	*palû [25]*
832	27	Ululaya	Que	*palû [25]*
831	28	Sharru-hatti-ipel	Que; Der(?)	*palû 26*
830	29	Nergal-ilaya	Urartu	*palû 27*
829	30	Hubayu	Unqi/Patin	*palû 28*
828	31	Ilu-mukin-ahi	Ulluba/Habhu	*palû 29*
827	32	**Shalmaneser (III)**	Mannai	*palû 30*
826	33	Dayyān-Aššur (*turtānu*)	Parsua, Namri; rebellion	*palû 31*
825	34	Ashur-bunaya-uṣur (*rab šâqê*)	Rebellion	--
824	35	Yahalu [*turtānu ?*]	Rebellion; (death of the king)	--

The six versions of the tributes paid to Shalmaneser III in his 18th year of reign contain several chronological anomalies. The tribute of Jehu (885-856), which appears for the first time in 841 BCE, when Shalmaneser III destroyed the army of Hazael (885-840) during his campaign against Damascus, is always placed at the end of the annals. The tribute of Byblos and Egypt, in 838 BCE, can only be related to the campaign of 853 BCE (Battle of Qarqar) as the tribute of Qalparunda (858-853). This tribute from Egypt probably comes from the King of Byblos, a client of Egypt, who received an Egyptian contingent (1000 soldiers) to defend himself against Assyria. The different versions of the same tributes paid to Shalmaneser III show that some versions of the annals have amalgamated earlier tributes.

1) The Assyrian transcription of Baal-ezer into Baʿali-ma-an-zēri (or Baʿa-il-ma-an-zi) is aberrant, and it is difficult to explain the meaning of this name, maybe as "Baal is a help" (Lipiński: 1970, 59-65). In general, Assyrian transcriptions of Phoenician names are quite close to Hebrew transcriptions:

Name	Greek (Josephus)	Greek (LXX)	Assyrian	Hebrew	meaning
Tyre	Tür	Tür	Ṣur	Ṣûr	*Rock*
Sidon	Sidon	Sidon	Ṣiduna	Ṣīdon	*Fishery ?*
Samaria	Samareia	Samareia	Samirina	Šomerôn	*Belonging [to a clan]*
Jerusalem	Ierousalem	Ierousalem	Ursalimu	Yerûšalaïm	*City of fullness*
Hiram	Eirom	Airam	Ḫirumu	Ḥīram	*Life is high ?*
Ithobaal	Ithobal	Iethebaal	[ʾ]Tuba'il	Ethba'al	*With him is Baal*
Baalezer	Balezor	Baalezer	Baʾali-man-zēri	Baʾal-ezer	*Baal is a helper*
Mattan	Metten	Maththan	Mitina	Mattan	*[Baal] has offered*

The name Baʿali-ma-an-zēri is clearly an anomaly (the expected form is Baʿali-zēri without ma-an), which could be explained by an erroneous comment on the tributaries. According to Menander, the king of Tyre at the time of Shalmaneser III (859-824) was Pygmalion (877-830), not Baal-ezer II (912-906). The reigns of the kings of Israel, such as Omri (931-919) and Jehu (885-856), are calculable according to the biblical chronology (not modified like Thiele's). Until today (2020), all academic studies on the kings of Tyre (Katzenstein: 1997, 349) date Ḥiram I (c.969–936) and Ḥiram II (c.736–729) in accordance with Thiele's biblical chronology (Lemaire: 2015, 22-35).

2) Up to Tiglath-pileser III (745-727), Assyrian kings never mentioned the name of the kings of Tyre, Sidon in their annals, except Baal-manzer (Tadmor, Yamada: 2011). The kings of Tyre mentioned in the Bible or in Phoenician inscriptions were added in parallel to the Assyrian kings:

TABLE 35

King of Assyria	BCE	Tribute paid by (according to Assyrian annals):
	c.1350	Abimilki Prince of Tyre, Zimredda mayor of Sidon (EA 144)
Tiglath-pileser I	c.1092	Sidon (Ṣi-du-ni)
(Wenamun I:10-29)	c.1085	Weret of Tyre, Merket of Sidon, Zakarbaal prince of Byblos
(1Ki 5:1; 11:1-13)	1025-991	Hiram king of Tyre, king of the Sidonians
(1Ki 16:31)	944-912	Ithobaal I king of the Sidonians

Aššurnasirpal II	**870**	The Tyrians (*ṣur-a-a-a*), the Sidonians (*ṣi-du-na-a-a*)
Shalmaneser III	**841**	The Tyrians, the Sidonians, Jehu son of Omri (*Ia-ú-a mâr Ḫu-um-ri-i*) Ba'al-manzer (*Ba'a'li-man-zēri*) the Tyrian, Jehu son of Omri The Tyrians, the Sidonians, the Byblians, Jehu of the House of Omri
	c.825	Hiram king of the Sidonians (Lipiński: 2004, 46-48)
Adad-nêrârī III	**805**	Tyre, Sidon, Land of Omri (*matḪu-um-ri*)
	c.800-775	Milkiram king of the Sidonians (Lemaire: 1976, 83-93)
(Pulu I)	**773**	Luli (Elulaios) king of Tyre (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284)
Tiglath- pileser III	**738**	Ithobaal II (*Tu-ba-il*) the Tyrian
	737	Hiram III [*Ḥi-ru-um-mu*] the Tyrian
Sargon II	**720**	Samaria (*Sa-mir-i-na*), House of Omri (*Bīt Ḫu-um-ri-a*), Juda (*Ia-ú-du*)
	712	[Luli] king of Tyre, merchants of Sidon (Is 20:1; 23:1-11; Ezk 27:1-3)
	709	Shilta ("ruler") of the city of the Tyrians (Na'aman: 1998, 239-247)
Sennacherib	**712**	Luli king of Sidon, Ethba'al (*Tu-ba-lu*), king of Sidon
Esarhaddon	**677**	Abdimilkutte king of Sidon, Ba'lu king of Tyre
Ashurbanipal	**666**	Ba'il king of Tyre
Nebuchadnezzar	**598**	The king of Tyre; The king of Sidon

According to the archives of El Amarna, Sidon had pre-eminence over its rivals Byblos and Tyre, however, Akhenaten, King of Egypt, sent letters (c. 1350 BCE) to Abimilki, Prince of Tyre, and Zimredda, Mayor of Sidon. The Egyptian title "prince" corresponded to the title "king" in Canaan. As early as the 11th century BCE, the prestigious role of Sidon began to be eclipsed by that of Tyre, presumably because of its flourishing trade on the Mediterranean. When Wenamun arrived in Phoenicia to negotiate (c. 1085 BCE), he started with Beder, the prince of the Tjekker, then with Weret of Tyre, Merket of Sidon, and Zakarbaal, the prince of Byblos (Report of Wenamun I:1-II:11). All the documents, up to Sennacherib, mention either the king of the Sidonians or the king of Tyre, but never the king of Sidon or the king of the Tyrians. The expression "the Tyrian" to designate a king of Tyre never appears in the Assyrian annals before 738 BCE. This coincidence is not fortuitous, since the same anomaly can be found in the biblical text: Ithobaal is "king of the Sidonians", not "king of Tyre", never "king of Sidon". In the Iliad and the Odyssey, as well as in the proverbs of Ahiqar, only the "Sidonians" are mentioned (Khreich: 2018, 373-376). Similarly, in an inscription, dated c. 800-750 BCE discovered in Cyprus, the "prefect of Carthage" is called "servant of Hiram, king of the Sidonians" (Lemaire: 1976, 83-93). The mention of Bali-ma-AN-zêri the Tyrian is therefore an anachronistic invention of an Assyrian engraver. This anomaly shows that the Assyrian annals are not as reliable as the eponymous chronicles. Indeed, the purpose of the annals was to disseminate Assyrian propaganda (Laato: 1995, 198-226) to foreign visitors, whereas the eponymous chronicles were used in the archives of the Assyrian kings. For example, if we cross-check Sennacherib's annals with other historical documents, we can see that this Assyrian king reinterpreted his campaign in 712 BCE with that of Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BCE. As the chronology of the kings of Tyre is mainly reconstructed from the synchronisms mentioned in the Assyrian annals and put in parallel with those mentioned in the biblical text (Aubet: 2001, 54-60), it is important to check whether the historical data from these annals, as well as those from the Bible, are accurate. For example, Sennacherib's annals give the following information (http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap/corpus/):

1) *According to the Prism of Sennacherib (Taylor Prism)*: On my 3rd campaign (in 712 BCE), I marched to the land Ḫatti. Fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed <u>Lulî, the king of the city Sidon, and he fled afar into the midst of the sea and disappeared</u>. The awesome terror of the weapon of the god Aššur, my lord, overwhelmed the cities Great Sidon, Lesser Sidon, Bīt-Zitti, Ṣarepta, Maḫalliba, Ušû (i.e. the mainland settlement of Tyre), Akzibu, (and) Acco, his fortified cities (and) fortresses, an area of pasture(s) and water-place(s), resources upon which he relied, and they bowed down at my feet. <u>I placed Tu-Ba'lu (Ethbaal) on the royal throne over them and imposed upon him tribute (and) payment (in recognition) of my overlordship (to be delivered) yearly (and) without interruption. As for Min(u)ḫimmu (Menahem) of the city Samsimuruna (Samaria), Tu-Ba'lu of the city Sidon</u>, Abdi-Li'ti of the city Arwad, Ūru-Milki of the city Byblos, Mitinti of the city Ashdod, Būdi-il of the land Bīt-Ammon, Kammūsu-nadbi of the land Moab, Aya-rāmu of the land Edom, all of the kings of the land Amurru, they brought extensive gifts, four times, as their substantial audience gift before me and kissed my feet (...) In the course of my campaign, I surrounded, conquered, (and) plundered the cities Bīt-Daganna, Joppa, Banayabarqa, (and) Azuru, the cities of Ṣidqâ that had not submitted to me quickly. (As for) the governors, the nobles, and the people of the city Ekron who had thrown Padî, their king who was bound by treaty and oaths to Assyria, into iron fetters and who had handed him over to Hezekiah of the land Judah in a hostile manner, they became frightened on account of the villainous acts they had committed. They formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (and) the archers, chariots,

(and) horses of the king of the land Meluḫḫa (Ethiopia), forces without number, and they came to their aid. In the plain of the city Eltekeh, they sharpened their weapons while drawing up in battleline before me (...) Moreover, (as for) <u>Hezekiah of the land Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke</u>, I surrounded (and) conquered 46 of his fortified cities, fortresses, and small(er) settlements in their environs, which were without number.

2) *According to the Bull Inscription:* Moreover, <u>Lulî, the king of the city Sidon, became frightened of doing battle with me, fled to Yadnana (Cyprus)</u>, which is in the midst of the sea, and took refuge (there). In that same land, he disappeared on account of the awesome terror of the weapon of the god Aššur, my lord. <u>I placed Tu-Baʾlu on his royal throne and imposed upon him payment (in recognition) of my overlordship.</u> I ruined the wide district of the recalcitrant (and) strong land Judah (and) <u>I made Hezekiah, its king, bow down at my feet.</u>

These annals contain several glaring anachronisms. Although Sennacherib did indeed lay siege to Jerusalem during his third campaign (in 712 BCE), when he was co-regent (715-705) of Sargon II (722-705), he failed in subduing King Hezekiah (726-697). He also claims to have replaced Luli, the king of Sidon, when he fled to Cyprus before dying, with Ethbaal. This remark contains two inconsistencies because, according to one of the present reconstructions (Elayi: 2013, 442), Ithobaal II (695-682), king of Tyre, would have succeeded Luli (729-695), who therefore did not die in 712 BCE and was not king of Sidon but of Tyre. To be credible a lie must contain some truth, we can assume that Sennacherib probably wanted to impose a tribute on Luli II, the king of Tyre, who fled by boat to Cyprus with his treasure in order not to pay. To turn failure into victory, Sennacherib copied part of the annals of Tiglath-pileser III, who in 738 BCE had imposed a tribute on Ithobaal II (c.755-738), the king of Tyre, but as this king died in that year, Tiglath-pileser III replaced him with Hiram III (738-730). However, to increase his prestige, Tiglath-pileser III had added to the list of tributaries the name of Menahem (771-760), King of Samaria, who had paid him a heavy tribute (2Ki 15:19-20) in 765 BCE when he was co-regent under the name Pulu (782-746). This Assyrian king, who had reigned for 36 years, had previously imposed, in 773 BCE, a tribute on Luli I (c.775-755), king of Tyre, according to Flavius Josephus (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284):

> <u>The king of Assyria invaded all Syria and Phoenicia in a hostile manner</u> (in 773 BCE). The name of this king is also set down in the archives of Tyre, for he made an expedition against Tyre in the reign of Elulaios[69] (Luli I). This is also attested by Menander, the author of a book of Annals and translator of the Tyrian archives into the Greek language, who has given the following account: And Elulaios (?), to whom they gave the name of <u>Pulas (Pulu), reigned 36 years (782-746); this king, upon the revolt</u> of the Kitieis (Cyprians), put out to sea and again reduced them to a submission.

Menahem actually paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser (Tiglath-pul-eser), not during his reign in 738 BCE, but when he was co-regent under the name Pul (Pulu I), a hypocoristic use of the word *aplu* "heir".

> Consequently, the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of <u>Pul the king of Assyria and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria</u> (1Ch 5:26). <u>Pul the king of Assyria came into the land. Consequently, Menahem (771-760) gave Pul 1000 talents of silver (in 765 BCE)</u>, that his hands might prove to be with him to strengthen the kingdom in his own hand. So Menahem brought forth the silver at the expense of Israel, at the expense of all the valiant, mighty men, to give to the king of Assyria 50 silver shekels for each man. <u>At that the king of Assyria turned back, and he did not stay there in the land</u> (2Ki 15:19-20).

We note that in the list of tributes paid to Tiglath-pileser III, in 738 BCE, that of Menahem (771-760), King of Samaria, was added to that paid by Ithobaal II (c.755-738), King of Tyre, whereas he had paid this tribute in 765 BCE. Sennacherib took over the tributes paid by these two former kings during his third campaign in 712 BCE, thus creating a new anachronism with the biblical chronology. According to the Bible, Luli II (c.729-694) was king of Tyre (Is 20:1; 23:1-11; Ezk 27:1-3) and not king of Sidon according to the annals of Sennacherib. However, the reconstruction of this chronological part of the kings of Tyre during Sennacherib's co-regency with Sargon (715-705) is still very hypothetical[70]. Considering the tributes paid to Tiglath-pileser III when he was co-regent under the name Pulu (782-746), makes it possible to remove many chronological inconsistencies with the kings of Israel and the kings of Tyre, and thus to obtain an excellent chronological agreement among the synchronisms (dates in bold in the parts highlighted in grey).

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[69] This king of Tyre cannot be Luli II (729-695) because according to Assyrian records he was king of Sidon during the 3rd Sennacherib campaign (702 BCE) and fled from Tyre to Cyprus where he "died" shortly afterwards. This information is incompatible with the length of his reign, implying that he was already king in 736 BCE at the time of Hiram III (739-730).

[70] The attack of Sennacherib against Tyre, in 712 BCE, then that of Sargon against Cyprus, in 709 BCE, and against the ruler (*šilṭa*) of the Tyrian (Na'aman: 1998, 239-247; Balogh: 2011, 124-125), led the inhabitants of Sidon to enthrone Abdimilkutte (Abd-Malqart), king of Sidon, after the death of Luli II (c.729-695), king of Tyre, <u>according to Assyrian propaganda</u> (Cannavò: 2011, 329-332). After Nebuchadnezzar II's attack, in 598 BCE, the double kingship over Tyre, Sidon ceased and that after the siege of Tyre, which lasted 13 years, there was again only one king of Tyre/Sidonians (Elayi: 2006, 13-43).

TABLE 36

King of Israel	Reign	King of Tyre	Reign	King of Assyria	Reign	
Jehoram A.	897-886	Mattan I	906 -	Tukulti-Ninurta II	891-884	
Jehu	**885** -		-877	Aššurnasirpal II	884 -	
		Pygmalion	877 -			
		(Nora Stone)	**870**		-859	**871**-859
	-856			**Shalmaneser III**	859 -	
Jehoahaz	856-839	(*Baal-manzer*)			**841**	
Jehoash	841-**823**		-830		-824	826-**823**
Jeroboam II	**823** -	Hiram II	*830-805*	Šamši-Adad V	824-811	
	-782	Milkiram	*805* -	Adad-nīrari III	811-783	
Zechariah	782-771		*-775*	**Pulu I**	782 -	783-773
Menahem	771-760	**Luli I** (Elulaios)	*775-755*		765	**773-755**
Peqah	758 -	**Ithobaal II**	*755* -		-746	755-745
	-**738**	(Tubail)	-**738**	**Tiglath-pileser III**	**745** -	
Hosea I	**738** -	Hiram III	**738**-730		**738**	
	-729	Mattan II	*730-729*		**729**	
Hosea II	729 -	**Luli II**	*729* -	(Pulu II)	-**727**	
	-**720**			Shalmaneser V	727-722	
		Shilṭa ("sultan")	715-709	Sargon II	722-705	715-705
King of Sidon	Reign		*-695*	**Sennacherib**	705 -	
Abdimilkutte	*695* -	**Baal I**	*695* -		-681	
(Abd-Malqart)	-**677**	(Ba'lu)		**Esarhaddon**	681-669	
?		(Ba'il)	-666	**Aššurbanipal**	669 -	
King of Judah	Reign	Yahimilki ?	*666-640*			
Josiah	640 -	Abdastartus II ?	*640* -		-626	
	-**609**			Sin-šar-iškun	626-612	
				Aššur-uballiṭ II	612-**609**	
Jehoiaqim	**609**-598	?	*-591*	Nebuchadnezzar II	**605** -	
Zedekiah	598-**587**	Ithobaal III	*591* -			
Jehoiachin (exile)	587 -		*-573*			
	-**561**	Baal II	*573-563*		-**562**	

We note that all the chronological synchronisms with the kings of Assyria, Israel and Tyre are excellent, with one important exception: the tribute paid to King Shalmaneser III in 841 BCE by Jehu (885-856) is not mentioned in the Bible and, more embarrassingly, is anachronistic by at least 15 years since Jehu had died on that date. The second embarrassing point concerns the dating of the Nora Stone, which is associated with the foundation of Carthage, in 870 BCE, according to Menander, but in 814 BCE according to the conventional chronology. Menander's chronological data being perfectly cross-referenced with biblical data (not Thiele's data), especially with kings Hiram I (1025-991) and Ithobaal I (944-912), are therefore very reliable, especially as the foundation of Carthage being a major event in Phoenician history, it must have been preserved in the annals of Tyre and Carthage. Unfortunately, the annals of Tyre were destroyed by the army of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, and the annals of Carthage were destroyed by the Roman armies in 146 BCE. Justinus (c. 300 CE) was the only historian who has transmitted a romanticized history of Carthage in his book: *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories*. Although this story has been adapted to Greek mythology, it contains several historical elements that are authentically Phoenician[71]:

> Meanwhile their king Mutto (Mattan I) died at Tyre, appointing his son Pygmalion and his daughter Elissa, a maiden of extraordinary beauty, his heirs. But the people gave the throne to Pygmalion, who was quite a boy (11 years old). Elissa married Acerbas (Zakarbaal), her uncle, who was priest of Hercules (Melqart), a dignity next to that of the king. Acerbas had great but concealed riches, having

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[71] Pompeius Trogus wrote his book in 9 CE, but he no longer had access to the annals of Carthage, which had been destroyed in 146 BCE, so he therefore took up the brief account of the foundation of Carthage written at the beginning of the third century BCE by Timaeus of Tauromenium (Haegemans: 2000, 277-292), but adapted it to Greek mythology. According to his account, Princess Elissa was the daughter of King Matten [Mattan I]. When he died, the throne was jointly bequeathed to her and her brother, Pygmalion. She married her uncle Acerbas High Priest of Melqart, a man with both authority and wealth comparable to the king. Pygmalion was a tyrant, lover of both gold and intrigue, and coveted the authority and fortune enjoyed by Acerbas. Pygmalion assassinated Acerbas in the temple and managed to keep the misdeed concealed from his sister for a long time, deceiving her with lies about her husband's death. At the same time, the people of Tyre called for a single Sovereign, causing dissent within the royal family. After learning the truth, Elissa fled Tyre with her husband's gold, and managed to trick the Tyrian ships sent in pursuit of her fleet. When her ship was overtaken by the Tyrian ships, she threatened to throw the gold overboard and let the would-be captors face the wrath of her brother for failing in their mission. They opted to join her, and the extended fleet sailed on towards the West. Elissa eventually sailed to Africa after a brief stop in Cyprus. She requested land to establish a new city from the king of the Libyan tribe living near Byrsa and called the place *Qart-hadasht* meaning "New city" in Phoenician.

laid up his gold, for fear of the king, not in his house, but in the earth; a fact of which, though people had no certain knowledge of it, report was not silent. Pygmalion, excited by the account, and forgetful of the laws of humanity, murdered his uncle, who was also his brother-in-law, without the least regard to natural affection. Elissa long entertained a hatred to her brother for his crime, but at last, dissembling her detestation, and assuming mild looks for the time, she secretly contrived a mode of flight, admitting into her confidence some of the leading men of the city, in whom she saw that there was a similar hatred of the king, and an equal desire to escape (Philippic Histories 18:4).

The account transmitted by Justinus (c. 200 CE?), despite its inaccuracies, remarkably confirms the chronological data transmitted by Menander: 1) the foundation of Carthage took place during the 9th century BCE; 2) when Elissa, Pygmalion's sister, married Acerbas (Zakarbaal). She was probably in her twenties, like her brother. According to Menander, Carthage was founded when Pygmalion was 18 years old; 3) Pygmalion had succeeded Mattan and had been enthroned when he was still a boy, at the age of 11 according to Menander. A confirmation of the chronological accuracy of the kings of Tyre, transmitted by Menander, comes from several archaeological finds. The Nora stone, considered the oldest Phoenician inscription ever found in southern Sardinia, currently dated by epigraphy to c.800 BCE, confirms the episode of Queen Elissa's flight to found Carthage, since we read (proper names are in bold type):

Fig. 15

		Translation	New translation[72]
1.	btršš	in **Tarshish**,	A house he beat down.
2.	wgrš h'	and he was driven	And he drove out.
3.	bšrdn š	in **Sardinia**.	In **Sardinia**,
4.	lm h' šl	He is safe. Safe	he is at peace;
5.	m ṣb' m	is the crew (army) of	his army is at peace. **Mi-**
6.	lkt nbn	the Queen. Structure	**-lkaton**, son
7.	š bn ngd	which the herald has built	of **Shubon**, [the] Commander (*nagid*).
8.	lpmy	for **Pumay**	For **Pummay**.

The translation of this text is debated (Lipiński: 2004, 234-260), but Tarshish and Sardinia were areas inside the Phoenicians' zone of influence. This text refers to the Phoenician god Pumay, found in the name Pumay-yaton "Pumay has given", as well as the presence of a Phoenician queen (Elisha is the only known Phoenician queen). It should be noted that Ruler (*nagid* without article) Milkaton never existed as the name would have been written Milk-yaton and proper names are never split in two (Mi-lkaton) in royal inscriptions. A king of Cyprus named Pumay-yaton (4th century BCE) is read Pygmalion in Diodorus' text (Historical Library XIX:79:4). The name Pygmalion written in Phoenician appears on a jewel called "Médaille de Carthage" (Gras, Rouillard, Teixidor: 1989, 158-165), We notice that the name Pygmalion in this inscription is written PGMLYN in Phoenician instead of the supposed PMY-YTN form. This medal is dated c. 650 BCE by epigraphy (proper names are in bold type):

Fig. 16

1.	l 'štr	For **Astar-**
2.	t lpgmlyn	**-te** For **Pygmalion**
3.	yd'mlk bn	**Yada'milk**, son of
4.	pdy ḥlṣ	**Paday**, saved,
5.	'š ḥlṣ	because she saved
6.	pgmlyn	**Pygmalion**

Another inscription dated to the 9th century BCE found in a necropolis in Carthage reads: *For Astarte; For Pygmalion! Yada'milk son of Pidiya, a soldier who was equipped by Pygmalion* (Pilkington: 2013, 141-142).

This text confirms the existence of a Phoenician king named Pygmalion (former Pumay-yaton) before 650 BCE. According to Justinus, King Pygmalion must have been in financial trouble because Elissa had gone to her new city (Carthage) with the whole temple treasury. One way to verify the date of the foundation of Carthage in 870 BCE is to use the epigraphic dating of the Nora Stone, as this inscription is contemporary of King Pygmalion. This dating is problematic because epigraphers use the inscriptions of the kings of Byblos to calibrate their dating of Phoenician inscriptions, yet the conventional chronology of the kings of

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[72] This conjectural translation was adopted from 2005 (Pilkington: 2012, 45-51).

Byblos is itself anchored on the Egyptian chronology of Dynasty 22, knowing that Abibaal was a contemporary of Shoshenq I and Elibaal was a contemporary of Osorkon I (Lemaire: 2006, 1697-1716), with an average reign of 20 years identical to that of Tyre at that time. The succession of the kings of Byblos is as follows: Ahiram (c. 1000 BCE), Ithobaal, Abibaal, Yehimilk, Elibaal and Shipitbaal (Moscati: 1968, 10-11; Elayi: 2013, 442). These synchronisms make it possible to establish a chronology of the kings of Byblos, but epigraphy obliges to move the reign of Yehimilk (c.970-945) before the reign of Abibaal (945-924), according to the conventional chronology, whereas according to historical evidence it should be situated between the reigns of Elibaal and Shipitbaal I (Abou-Abdallah: 2018, 25-46):

TABLE 37

Judah (Thiele)	Reign	#	Egypt (Grimal)	Reign	#	N°	Byblos (Elayi)	Reign	#
Solomon	971 -	40	Psusennes II	959-945	14	**3**	Yehimilk	*970-945*	*25*
	-931		**Shoshenq I**	**945 -**	21	**1**	**Abibaal**	*945 -*	*21*
Rehoboam	**931 -**	17		-924				*-924*	
	-913		**Osorkon I**	924 -	35	**2**	**Elibaal**	*924 -*	*24*
Abiyam	913-910	3						*-900*	
Asa	910 -	41		-889		**4**	**Shipitbaal I**	*900 -*	*20*
			Shoshenq II	890-889	1				
	-869		Takelot I	889-874	13			*-880*	

     This anachronism alone proves that the chronology of the 22nd Dynasty must be shifted back some 40 years[73]. This chronological anomaly is indicative of the methodological inconsistency of Egyptologists since they deny the historicity of the biblical account but at the same time use the reign of Rehoboam to chronologically anchor the 22nd Dynasty. This chronology is all the more paradoxical as it can be fully calculated because all the reign lengths of dynasties 22 to 26, except that of Osorkon IV, are known, and most of the dates of consecration and death of the Apis bulls, as well as their life spans, are also known (Dessoudeix: 2008, 450-463). Two chronological landmarks help to anchor this chronology: the year 6 of Cambyses II, after the year 2 of Psamtik III (in 525 BCE), is dated in 524 BCE by astronomy and the total number of years of reign between the last king of the 24th dynasty (Bakenrenef) and Psamtik III, the last king of the 26th dynasty, was 203 years (Payraudeau: 2020, 7-9) and the reign of Osorkon II was 44 years (Aston: 1989, 139-153). This count, which is rigorously accurate, since there are indeed 203 years between the end of the reign of Bakenrenef and the end of the reign of Psamtik III (203 = 729 – 526), shows that the Egyptian King List were regularly copied and contained few errors[74].

TABLE 38

BCE	Dy.	King		Burial of an Apis	Lifespan (in years)	Synchronism with:
980	22	Shoshenq I				Year 1 of Shoshenq I = Year 15 of Psusennes II
959	22	Osorkon I				Year 1 of Osorkon I = Year 22 of Shoshenq I
924	22	Takelot I				Year 1 of Takelot I = Year 36 of Osorkon I
922	22	Shoshenq II				Year 1 of Shoshenq II = Year 14 of Takelot I
909	22	Osorkon II				Year 1 of Osorkon II = [Year 3] of Shoshenq II
887				Year 23	?	
875						Year 35 of Osorkon II
870				[Year 40]	[17]	[uncertified burial]
865	22	Takelot II				Year 1 of Takelot II = [Year 45] of Osorkon II
852				Year 14	[18]	
851						Total lunar eclipse dated 29/XII/**15** (= 17 March)
840						Year 26 of Takelot II
837	22	Shoshenq III		Year 4	15	[unnamed king]
829						Year 12 of Shoshenq III = Year 5 of Pedubast I
818						Year 16 of Pedubast I = Year 2 of Iuput I

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[73] The usual chronology of the 22nd Dynasty comes from Kenneth Kitchen who assumed (arbitrarily) that Shoshenq I's attack on Jerusalem, dated 5th year of Rehoboam (1Ki 14:25), coincided with the one mentioned on a stele dated 21st and final year of his reign. Based on Thiele's biblical chronology, dating the reign of Rehoboam (930-913), Kitchen sets the 5th year of his reign in 925 BCE (= 930 - 5), if the campaign had to be conducted the year before Year 21 of Shoshenq I, which would date his accession in 945 BCE (= 925 + 20). Although this Egyptian chronology is based on an erroneous biblical chronology, it is accepted by Egyptologists to within 2 years (Hornung, Krauss, Warburton: 2006, 474; Broekman, Demarée, Kaper, 2009, 10).

[74] These king lists also show that the Egyptian dynasties (22 to 25) that ruled in parallel are listed in chronological order, which could explain why the kings after Shoshenq V and those before Shabaka were not registered to give the illusion of a single ruling dynasty. Moreover, although several kings reigned at the same time, only one Apis bull was dedicated to one king and not to the others. This suggests that the Apis bull consecrated in year 6 of Bakenrenef, in 729 BCE, was preceded by the Apis bull consecrated in year 37 of Shoshenq V, around 746 BCE, as the average lifespan of the Apis bulls was 16 years at that time. King Pedubast II, who reigned 5 years before Osorkon IV, the king who began his reign from the year 21 of Piye (in 741 BCE), fits perfectly into the previously calculated chronology.

813				Year 28	24	
800	22	Shoshenq IV				Year 1 of Shoshenq IV = Year 41 of Shoshenq III
787	22	Pamiu I		Year 2	26	
772	22	Shoshenq V		Year 11	15	
746				Year 37	26	
741	22	Osorkon IV				Year 1 of Osorkon IV = Year 21 of Piye
729	24	Bakenrenef	000	Year 6	[17]	Year 6 of Bakenrenef = Year 2 of Shabaka
722		Osorkon IV				Sô (2Ki 17:3-5)
717	25	Shabaka		Year 14	[12]	
715		Osorkon IV				Shilkani (Year 7 of Sargon II)
712						Year 30 of Osorkon IV = Year 1 of Shabataka
686	25	Taharqa		Year 4	[16]	
594	26	Nekau II		Year 16	16y. 7m.	
577	26	Apries		Year 12	17y. 6m.	
526	26		203			Year 44 of Amasis = Year 1 of Psamtik III
524	26	Cambyses II		Year 6	19	

Two dates based on astronomy confirm the accuracy of this chronology: Sargon II (722–705) faced Shabataka during his 10th campaign in 712 BCE, not in 702 BCE as previously believed (Payraudeau: 2020, 36–37), and a lunar eclipse, dated on 25 Shemu IV of the 15th year of Takelot II[75], mentioned in the *Osorkon Chronicle* can fix this reign by astronomy. Parker noticed that a lunar eclipse was described: *so that the sky will not swallow the moon the 16th lunar day [mspr] in the region of Heliopolis* and that the one dated IV Shemu 25 of the 15th year coincided with the total lunar eclipse of 13 March 851 BCE (Parker: 1953, 50). This total eclipse confirms the accession of Takelot II in 865 BCE. Amenemope's reign (highlighted in green) is dated to c. 1024 BCE +/- 30 by ^{14}C calibrated data (Hagens: 2014, 173).

TABLE 39

Israel	Reign	Judah	Reign	Egypt	Reign	#	Byblos	Reign	#
		Solomon	**1017** -	Amenemope	**1018-1009**	9	**Ahiram**	*1020* - *-1000*	20
				Osorkon A	1009-1003	6			
		(1Ki 9:16)	**993**	**Siamun**	1003-984	19	Ithobaal	*1000* - *-980*	20
				Psusennes II	994-980	14			
(1Ki 11:40)			**-977**	**Shoshenq I**	**980** - *-959*	21	**Abibaal**	*980* - *-960*	20
Jeroboam I	977-955	**Rehoboam**	**977**-960	(1Ki 14:25)					
Nadab	955-954			**Osorkon I**	959 -	35	Yehimilk	*960* - *-940*	20
Baasha	954-931								
Elah	931-930	King of Moab					**Elibaal**	*940* -	20
Omri	930 - -919	Kemoshyat	*930* -		*-924*			*-920*	
Ahab	919-898	(2Ki 3:4-5)	*-900*	Shoshenq II	924-922	2	**Shipitbaal I**	*920* - *-900*	20
				Takelot I	922-909	13			
Ahaziah	898-897	**Mesha**	*900* -	Osorkon II	909 -	44			
Jehoram (A)	897-886								
Ahaziah II	886-885								
Jehu	**885** - *-856*		*-870*		*-865*				
				Takelot II	**865** - **-840**	25			
Jehoachaz	856-839								
Jehoash	841-823	Amasiah	839-810	Shoshenq III	840 - *-800*	40			
Jeroboam II	**823** - *-782*	Uzziah [Azariah]	810 - [796 -	Shoshenq IV	800-788	12			
				Pamy	788-782	6			
Zechariah	782-771			Shoshenq V	782 - *-745*	38			
Menahem	771-760		*-758*						
Peqah	758 - **-738**	Jotham	758-742	Pedubast II	745-741	5			
		Ahaz	742 - *-726*	**Osorkon IV**	741 -	?	**Shipitbaal II**	*740* - *-720*	?
Hosea I	**738-729**								
Hosea II	**729-720**	**Hezekiah**	**726** -	(1Ki 17:1-4)					

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[75] Caminos published this chronicle, but he doubted that the sentence: *in the regnal year 15, 4th month of Shemu, day 25(or 29), under the Majesty of his august father, the god who rules Thebes [Takelot II], the sky has not swallowed the moon*, could be understood as a lunar eclipse, because the expression was in the negative form (Caminos: 1958, 88-90). In fact, out of superstition, the Egyptians never mentioned eclipses except in a negative way. As Parker noted, if the scribe precisely recorded the date of the revolt which was close to the total lunar eclipse it was to note a coincidence with this bad omen rather than a lack of coincidence. The revolt (13 March) preceded the eclipse (17 March) by a few days (which would have been the opposite if it had been a "normal" omen). Using the length of Osorkon II's reign of 44 years, instead of 24 years (Aston: 1989, 139-153), the accession of Shoshenq I must be fixed in 980 BCE.

			-712		**Uru-milki I**	*720 - -700*	?
(2Ki 19:9)	-697	**Shabataka**	**712 -**	23			
Manasseh	697 -	**/Taharqa**	-689				
		Taharqa	689-663	26	King of Persia	Reign	#
	-642	Psamtik I	663 -	54	[Cyrus 0] ?	*660 - -635*	25
Amon	642-640						
Josiah	640-**609**	(2Ki 23:29)	**-609**		Teispes	*635-610*	25
Jehoiaqim	**609**-598	**Necho II**	609-594	16	Cyrus I	*610 - -585*	25
Zedekiah	598-**587**	Psamtik II	594-588	6			
Jehoiachin	587 -	**Apries**	588-569	19	Cambyses I	585 - -559	26
(Jr 44:30)	**-561**	**Amasis**	569-566	44			
		(Ezk 29:12-17)	566-526		**Cyrus II**	559-530	29
		Psamtik III	**526-525**	2	Cambyses II	**530 - -522**	8

This Egyptian chronology, anchored on three dates calculated by astronomy: Psamtik III (526-525), Shabataka (712-689), Takelot II (865-840), and one date calculated by ^{14}C dating: Amenemope (1018-1009), is in perfect agreement with all the synchronisms of the chronologies of the kings of Byblos, Assyria, Judah, and Israel. King Solomon's famous copper mines, long considered legendary, actually existed and were located in the Timna Valley. The most important site is Site 34 ("Slaves' Hill"), one of the largest smelting camps, which has been dated by the CTV project to around 1000 BCE[76] , which corresponds exactly to the beginning of Solomon's reign (1017-977)[77] as well as to the beginning of Amenemope's reign (1018-1009), dated to around 1024 BCE by ^{14}C-calibrated data.

All these chronologies are used by epigraphers to accurately date Phoenician inscriptions. Seven biblical synchronisms with Egyptian chronology are of particularly remarkable accuracy:

- The city of Gezer was burned by **Siamun** (Kitchen: 2003, 108-110) 20 years after its construction (1Ki 9:10-17), which had begun in early Year 4 (1Ki 6:37-7:1), in Year 24 of Solomon, in **993 BCE**.
- Flight of Jeroboam into Pharaoh **Shoshenq I**'s country, in the last years of Solomon's reign (1Ki 11:40-42), or during the years 39 and 40 (**978-977 BCE**).
- **Shoshenq I** attacked Jerusalem in the 5th year of Rehoboam, in **972 BCE**, he is called Shishaq in the Hebrew Bible (1Ki 14:25,26; 2Ch 12:2-9) and Sousakim in the Septuagint.
- **Hosea II** negotiated in **723 BCE** with Assyrian King Shalmaneser V (727-722) and Egyptian King **Osorkon IV** (741-712), written So (2Ki 17:1-6) or Segor (LXX).
- **Taharqa**, the co-regent of Shabataka (712-689), tried to prevent Sennacherib from attacking Jerusalem (2Ki 19:8-9) in the 14th year of Hezekiah (726-697) dated to **712 BCE** (2Ki 18:13-17).
- Josiah (640-609) died at Megiddo (2Ki 23:29-34), in **609 BCE**, just as **Necho II** (609-594) arrived in that city to repel the Babylonian attack against Assyrian King Aššur-uballiṭ II (612-609).
- Hophra **(Apries)**, King of Egypt (Jr 44:30) in **588 BCE** who died in 566 BCE (Ladynin: 2006, 31-56).

According to the Mesha Stele, Moab was oppressed by Israel for 40 years since the reign of Omri, Kemoshyat reigned for 30 years, then Mesha (his son) liberated the country (Sprinkle: 1999, 247-270). This chronology put the 40 years from the reign of Omri in 930 BCE to the death of Jehoshaphat in 891 BCE. The revolt of Mesha (2Ki 3:4-7) was shortly after the death of Ahab in 898 BCE. If Mesha reigned 30 years like his father, his stone must have been erected after 898 BCE and before 870 BCE, at the end of his reign. The inscription of King Kilamuwa (835-825) must be dated from the end of the reign of Shalmaneser III (859-824). The Fekherye inscription mentions that of Hadad-yis'i, son of Shamash-Nuri, who was an eponymous governor of Guzan in 866 BCE under Aššurnasirpal II. It is likely that the king Hadad-yis'i [Adad-rêmanni] was also eponym in 841 BCE under Shalmaneser III, which would date the Fekherye stele inscriptions around that date (Lipiński: 2000,128-130,239-242). Consequently, the reigns of the kings of Byblos can be used by epigraphers to date inscriptions in Palaeo-Hebrew (Rollston: 2008, 57-93): Ahiram[78] (1020-1000); Abibaal (980-960); Yehimilk (960-940); Elibaal (940-920); Shipitbaal (920-900); Mesha (900-870); Fekherye (870-840); Hazael (885-845); Kilamuwa (840-825). Epigraphers use the inscriptions of these kings dated according to the conventional chronology (Sass: 2005, 22-40), it must therefore be set back at least 20 years for the reigns of the kings of Byblos and 45 years for the Mesha stele. These chronological changes in dates make it possible to refine the epigraphic dating:

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[76] https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/334274/reporting
[77] According to Thiele's biblical chronology, Solomon's reign (971-931) is moved forward by 46 years.
[78] Ahiram was a usurper who ascended the throne after the demise of Zakarbaal (c.1090-1070), the king of Byblos who had presumably been dethroned by Aššur-bêl-kala (1074-1056). As Ithobaal feared a new military invasion by the Assyrians, this shows that Ahiram reigned towards the end of the 11th century BCE (Elayi: 2013, 169-173,442).

-1150 **-1000** **[-900]** **-850**

	Ger-baal arrow-head	Ruwei-seh arrow-head	Kefar Veradim bowl	Tekke bowl	Eli-baal	Byblos spatula	Yahi-milk	Ahi-ram	Abi-baal	Šipit-baal	Abdo sherd	Bord-reuil inscrip-tion	Fekh-eryeh	Kula-muwa ortho-stat	Kula-muwa gold ferrule	Dan	Hazael bronzes	Hazael ivories	Mesha
alep																			
bet																			
gimel																			
dalet																			
he																			
waw																			
zayin																			
het																			
tet																			
yod																			
kap																			
lamed																			
mem																			
nun																			
samek																			
ʿayin																			
pe																			
sade																			
qop																			
resh																			
shin																			
taw																			

◤ 'Eccentric' ◢ Non-archaizing

TABLE 40

According to this epigraphical study, the Nora Stone can be dated. We notice that the letter W in the Mesha stele still looks like the archaic form of the sarcophagus of Ahiram[79] (1020-1000). The shape of the letter K (*kap* line 6) on the stele appears only from 890 BCE (Mesha), the letter M (*mem* lines 4, 5 and 8) is vertical before 840 BCE (Fekherye), then horizontal after that date. The letter M in the Dan stele (880-860) is horizontal, but sometimes vertical (line 8 fragment 1, lines 2 and 4 fragment 2). The letter L (*lamed* lines 4, 6 and 8) is rounded only after 890 BCE and angular before that date. According to these epigraphical criteria, the Nora Stone should be dated after 890 BCE and before 850 BCE (van Dommelen: 1998, 72-73). This epigraphic dating confirms two points: the foundation of Carthage took place before 850 BCE, the reign of Pygmalion given by Menander agrees perfectly with this date. This also confirms that the king of Tyre named Bali-ma-AN-zēri, mentioned in the tribute of 839 BCE, never existed.

The tribute paid to Shalmaneser III by Jehu, king of Bīt Omri (Israel), in 841 BCE, is attested in several Assyrian inscriptions and is even precisely represented on the famous Black Obelisk. The anachronism of this tribute, Jehu having died in 856 BCE, could be explained by a tribute received earlier when Shalmaneser III was co-regent (871-859) with Aššurnasirpal II. For example, Tiglath-pileser III mentioned in 738 BCE the tribute that King Menahem (771-760) had actually paid him (2Ki 15:19-20) in 765 BCE when he was co-regent under the name of Bar Ga'yah or Pulu (782-746). Similarly, Shalmaneser III's annals clearly have "arrangements" with the facts (Hallo, Younger: 2002, 261-272) and Aššurnasirpal II attributed to himself the actions of his predecessors (Grayson: 1980, 227-245). This explanation is problematic because the biblical text shows that the kingdom of Jehu was repeatedly attacked and plundered by Hazael, a powerful king of Damascus, but Assyria is never mentioned throughout this period. There are two possible solutions: either the biblical text has forgotten the tribute paid by Jehu to Shalmaneser when he was co-regent, or Shalmaneser III invented this famous tribute. Only a precise chronological reconstruction can provide an answer to this enigma. For a long time, the Assyrian annals were used as historical documents because of the many mentioned synchronisms with the Hittite and Aramaic kingdoms. However, the reconstruction of the chronology of these kingdoms from their own inscriptions has made it possible to compare it with the

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[79] The bas-relief carved panels of the Ahiram sarcophagus make it "the major artistic document of the Early Iron Age" in Phoenicia. Associated Late Bronze Age objects confirm that this tomb existed in the 13th century BCE and was reused in the 11th century BCE. A date around 1000 BCE for the inscription has been widely accepted.

information contained in the Assyrian annals. Two points emerged: first, the Assyrian annals have grouped victories or tributes not according to a chronological distribution but according to an ideological arrangement (Green: 2010, 83-88), and several names of Luwian kings were replaced by completely different Assyrian names; the comparison of some better documented reigns shows that some kings do not correspond to their chronological place (highlighted in light blue):

TABLE 41

Sidonians (Tyre)	reign	Bīt Agusi (Arpad)	reign	Hamath	reign	Assyria	reign
Mattan I	906-877	Gūš	*890 -*	Parita	*885 -*	Aššurnasirpal II	*884 -*
Pygmalion	877-**870**		*-860*		*-860*		**870**-859
(*Baal-manzer*)	-830	Hadrām	*860-830*	Urḫilina	*860-835*	**Shalmaneser III**	859-**841**
Hiram II	*830 -*	Attaršumki I	*830 -*	Uratami	*835 -*		841-824
					-810	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
	-805		*-800*	Zakkur	*810 -*	Adad-nīrārī III	*811 -*
Milkiram	*805 -*	Bar-Hadad	*800-796*				
		Attaršumki II	*796-785*		*-785*		*-783*
	-775	Mati'-El	*785 -*	[Bar Ga'yah]	*782 -*	/Pulu I	*782 -*
Luli I	*775-755*						
Ithobaal II	*755-738*		*-740*		*-746*		*-746*

Judah	reign	Bīt Ḥumri (Samaria)	reign	Aram (Damascus)	reign	Assyria	reign
Athaliah	**885**-879		**885 -**	**Hazael**	*885 -*	Aššurnasirpal II	884-859
Joash	879 -	**Jehu**	**-856**			**Shalmaneser III**	859 -
	-839	Jehoahaz	856-839		*-840*		**841**
Amaziah	839 -	**Jehoash**	**841**-823	**Bar-Hadad III**	*840 -*		-824
	-810	Jeroboam II	**823 -**			Šamši-Adad V	824-811
Uzziah	810 -				*-805*	Adad-nīrārī III	*811 -*
(Azariah)	[796-758		-782	**Mari'**	*805-780*		*-783*

Bīt Adini (Til Barsip)	reign	Bīt Gabbari (Y'adiya)	reign	Sam'al (Siri'laya)		Assyria	reign
Ḥamiyata	900 -	Gabbār	*900-880*			Aššurnasirpal II	*884 -*
(Aḫuni)	-870	Bamah	*880-870*				
Son of Ḥamiyata	870 -	Hayyā	*870 -*	**Hayyānu**	*870 -*		**870**-859
	-856				*-855*	**Shalmaneser III**	859 -
Son of Ariyahina	856-**853**		*-850*	**Ahabbu**	*855 -*		**853**
		Ša-īl	*850-840*				**841**
		Kilamuwa	*840-825*		*-825*		-824
				Qarli	*825 -*	Šamši-Adad V	824-811
					-790	Adad-nīrārī III	*811 -*
				Panamuwa I	*790 -*		*-783*
					-750	/Pulu I	*782 -*
				Bar-Ṣūr	*750-745*		*-746*

The conquest of Bīt-Adani by the Assyrians is emblematic of this ideological presentation of victories and tributes. According to the annals of Shalmaneser III (Grayson: 2002, 14-19):

At that time, in my accession year (and) in my first regnal year (in 858 BCE), after I nobly ascended the royal throne, I mustered my chariots and troops (...) On the 13th day of the month Iyyar I moved out from Nineveh, crossed the Tigris, traversed Mounts Ḫasamu and Diḫnunu, (and) approached the city La'la'tu, which belonged to Aḫuni, the man of Bīt-Adini. Overwhelmed by fear of the radiance of Aššur, my lord, they fled upstream/higher to save their lives. I razed, destroyed, (and) burned the city. Moving on from the city La'la'tu I approached the city Tīl-Barsip, the fortified city of Aḫuni, the man of Bīt-Adini. Trusting in the strength of his troops Aḫuni, the man of Bīt-Adini, advanced aggressively to make war and battle. With the support of Aššur and the great gods, my lords, I fought with him (and) defeated him. I confined him to his city (...) On the 13th day of the month Iyyar, in the eponymy of my own name (in 857 BCE), *idem* (...) On the 13th day of the month Iyyar, in the eponymy Aššur-bēla-ka''in (in 856 BCE), *idem*.

Although this annalistic report seems factual, it nevertheless contains several major contradictions (Younger: 2016, 139-140):

1) Ahuni's large army was defeated by Shalmaneser at the beginning of his campaign (in 858 BCE), but all the kings of the region then appealed to Ahuni to save their lives; 2) According to the royal lists of Bīt-Adini the king who reigned at that time was Hamiyata (900-870); the name Ahuni never appears. To explain this paradox, some scholars assume that this king was under Ahuni's control, but that the name of this ruler was not mentioned because he was a usurper (Bunnens: 2009, 67-82); 3) Shalmaneser had this victory over Ahuni engraved when he became co-regent of Aššurnasirpal II in 870 BCE, which contradicts the date of 858 BCE.

The historical context helps to clarify this apparent paradox. A wall panel relief in the British Museum (number 124537, dated 865-860 BC on their website), shows Aššurnasirpal II who has dismounted from his chariot to review a procession of prisoners of war (Fig. 17).

Fig. 17

The co-regent opposite Aššurnasirpal II can only be his son Shalmaneser (III) and the defeated king can only be Ahuni, the "man" of Bīt-Adini which was attacked from 877 to 867 BCE. Paradoxically, the name Aḫuni is not Luwian, but means "separately, individually" in Assyrian. It seems likely that the real name of this king was Hamiyata (900-870), which was changed to "separately, individually", the "man" (instead of king) of Bīt-Adini, to delegitimize him. From 866 to 859 BCE the following campaigns were directed against Urartu to the East. Some inscriptions prove that Ahuni had rendered tribute to Aššurnasirpal II (Holloway: 2002, 126-130,395). The annexation of Bīt-Adini is dated Year 4 of Shalmaneser III (in 855 BCE), but the defeat of Ahuni is dated in his 4th campaign, which is usually assimilated with his 4th year of reign, however Shalmaneser III's annals read:

> Ahuni, son of Adini (*sic*), who made obstinate resistance since the day of the fathers of Shalmaneser (...) <u>In the beginning of my reign</u>, the king confined him in his city, pulled up his harvest and cut down his orchards (...) Ahuni crossed the Euphrates to save his life (...) In another year (4th campaign), the king pursued Ahuni (...) The king carried off 17,500 soldiers of Ahuni, and brought Ahuni with his people, gods, chariots and horses into his presence (...) The king transferred them to the city of Ashur and counted them as the people of Assyria (Yamada: 2000, 133-135).

According to the annals of Aššurnasirpal II, Ahuni, the son (*sic*) of the Bīt-Adini, had to pay him a tribute, then was defeated, during several military campaigns which are dated between the eponyms: Dagan-bēla-uṣur, in 878 BCE, and Šamaš-nūrī, in 867 BCE (Grayson: 1991, 212-219), likely c. 870 BCE (Younger: 2016, 262,320). By crossing the annals of Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, the 4th campaign of Shalmaneser III should be dated during his co-regency; consequently, his first campaign was in 870 BCE and his 4th campaign in 867 BCE. This chronological reconstruction is paradoxical because the king (REX) of Masuwari (Bīt Adini) was Hamiyata (Hawkins: 2012, 224-248) whose reign is dated around 880-867 BCE, as the beginning of the reign of Hapatila is located around 910 BCE (Bryce: 2012, 117-121).

TABLE 42

Bīt-Adini (Masuwari)	reign	Assyria (at Nineveh)	reign	Co-regent (at Kalhu)	reign
Hapatila	910-900	Adad-nīrārī II	912 -		
Ariyahina	900-890		-891		
Hamiyata's father	890-880	Tukultî-Ninurta II	891-884		
Hamiyata	880 -	Aššurnasirpal II	884 -		
(Ahuni)	-867			Shalmaneser (III)	871 -
Hamiyata's son	867 -		-859		-859
	-856	**Shalmaneser III**	859 -		
Ariyahina's son	856-**853**				
(Til Barsip)			-824	Aššur-danin-pal	846-821

King Hamiyata was replaced by Ahuni in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III for the same reasons that King Hazael was replaced by Hadad-ezer, his army chief, who was considered a co-regent by the Assyrians. Among the kingdoms that opposed the Assyrian kings, some had a powerful army, such as the kingdoms of Bīt-Adini or Damascus (Aram/Syria). These mercenary armies were led by an army chief. The Assyrian inscriptions could have translated this title as *turtānu* ("commander-in-chief"), but the hierarchical position of this second person in the kingdom was different in Assyrian protocol, as the *turtānu* was not a co-regent while the army chief had a co-regent position. For example, Hazael had been army chief to King Bar-Hadad II before succeeding him (2Ki 8:7-8; 1Ki 19:15), similarly, Omri had been army chief to King Asa before succeeding him (1Ki 16:15-16). The word 'co-regent' does not exist, the Bible uses the word 'king' (*melekh*) as it only serves to convey the actual position of a royal person (Belshazzar, co-regent of Nabonidus, was called 'king of Babylon' and Aššur-danin-pal, the co-regent of Shamaneser III, was called 'king of Nineveh'). The Assyrian kingdom being an empire, the protocol of its hierarchy is much more complex. Tiglath-Pileser I was known for his "wide-ranging military campaigns, his enthusiasm for building projects, and his interest in cuneiform tablet collections". Under him, Assyria became the leading power of the Ancient Near East, he expanded Assyrian control into Anatolia and Syria, and to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The beginning of Tiglath-Pileser's reign, laid heavy involvement in military campaigns. The texts were believed to be "justification of war". Although little literary text is available from his time, there is evidence to show that his reign inspired the act of recording information, including that of his military campaigns. Toward the end of Tiglath-Pileser's reign literary texts took the form of "summary texts" which served as a vessel for as much information about his reign as possible, with the intent to be handed down to his successor. As the founder of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (1076–609 BCE) he inspired conventional representations of Assyrian royalty. For example, he was the first Assyrian king to be depicted wearing the two-tiered conical tiara with its two ribbons on the back[80] (Reade: 2009, 242), similar to the papal tiara (Fig. 18).
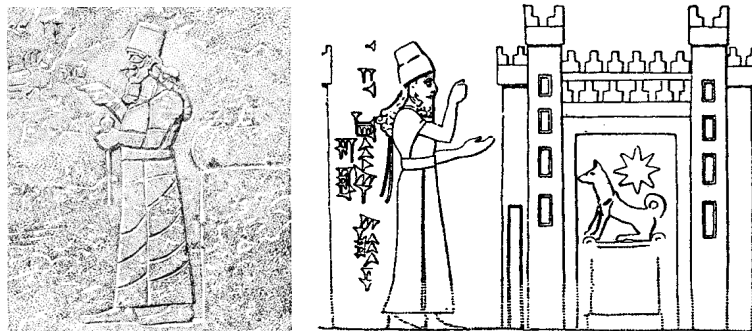

Fig. 18

Assyrian inscriptions always begin with a prestigious "curriculum vitae", which is instructive:
Tiglath-pileser, strong king (LUGAL), unrivalled king (LUGAL) of the universe, king (LUGAL) of the four quarters, king of all princes (LUGAL DÙ *mal-ki*.MEŠ), lord of lords (EN EN.MEŠ), chief herdsman, king of kings (MAN MAN.MEŠ), attentive purification priest (...) Son (A) of Aššur-rēša-iši (I), strong king (LUGAL), conqueror of enemy lands (...) Grandson (A A) of Mutakkil-Nusku (...) Legitimate heir (IBILA) of Aššur-dān (I), bearer of the holy sceptre (...) Aššurdān (I), king (LUGAL) of Assyria, son heir (DUMU) of Ninurta-apil-Ekur ... (Grayson: 1991, 13,27).

This curriculum vitae emphasises the legitimacy of the king. The word LUGAL (*šarru* "king") is used for the titular king while the word MAN (*šarru[šanu]* "[other] king") is used for the king in office. Tiglath-pileser I used the words LUGAL and MAN for kings, but his successors favoured the word MAN and no longer used the word LUGAL for foreign kings. The legitimacy of the king is expressed by the words: IBILA "legitimate heir", DUMU "son heir" and A "son". The rare expression DUMU LUGAL (*mār šarri*) "[heir] son of the [titular] king", without mentioning king's name, designated the successor chosen by the titular king. This expression translated as "crown prince" should rather be translated as "successor of the titular king". Iconographic representations of the "king's successor" clearly show that he had a co-regent position and could therefore be qualified as MAN (but not LUGAL). For example, at the capture of Lachish, Sennacherib appears as the king in office (MAN) before Sargon, the titular king (LUGAL) with his tiara. The Assyrian word *palû* (BALA) literally means "period of office" and could be translated as "period of reign/ regnal year" but it is preferable to translate *palû* as "campaign (*gerru*)", because regnal years as co-regent were not counted in the length of the reign as king. Moreover, there was not systematically a campaign (*gerru*) every year of the reign (*palû*), a campaign could last two years, or a year of reign could be without

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[80] These two ribbons do not appear on the representation of King Aššurnasirpal I (1050-1031) which was engraved on one side of the White Obelisk, but this engraving is not of good quality (Reade: 1975, 129-150).

campaign. Shalmaneser III conducted numerous and extensive military campaigns against Aramaic kingdoms in the first year of his reign, in 858 BCE, and their descriptions (Grayson: 2002, 8-12) indicate the hierarchical position of these rulers according to the Assyrian conception (Younger: 2016, 321-346).

TABLE 43

Name of the ruler	Kingdom	Title (in 858 BCE)	Title (in 857 BCE)
ᵐka-a-ki (Kāki)	Ḫubuškia	MAN URU ḫu-bu-uš-ki-a	
ᵐa-ḫu-ni (Aḫuni)	Til-Barsip (Bīt-Adini)	DUMU a-di-ni (in 870 BCE)	
ᵐsa-an-ga-ra (Sangara)	Carchemish	KUR/URU gar-ga-miš-a-a	URU gar-ga-miš-a-a
ᵐsa-pa-lu-ul-me	Patina (Unqi)	KUR pa-ta-na-a-a	KUR pa-ta-na-a-a
ᵐḫa-a-a-nu (Hayyānu)	Sam'al (Bīt Gabbāri)	KUR sa-am-'a-la-a-a	DUMU gab-ba-ri
ᵐka-te-a (Katiya)	Que (Adana)	KUR qa-ú-a-a	
ᵐpi-ḫi-ri-im (Piḫirim)	Ḫilukku (Cilicia)	KUR ḫi-lu-ka-ḫu-a-a	
ᵐbur-a-na-te (Bur-Anate)	Yasbuq	KUR ia-as-bu-qa-a-a	
ᵐa-da-a-nu (Adānu)	Yaḫanu	KUR ia-ḫa-na-a-a	
ᵐa-ra-me (Arame)	Bīt-Agūsi	DUMU ᵐgu-ú-si	DUMU ᵐa-gu-ú-si

This list of tributary kingdoms shows that they are mainly designated by their land (KUR) and sometimes by their city (URU). The title of the rulers is never mentioned, except for Kaki the first king (MAN) of the city Ḫubuškia, but only by their title of citizens of a land, like Sangara (from the) Carchemishian city (URU). Two rulers are designated by the title 'heir son of' (DUMU) and linked to the name of the founder of their dynasty. For example, Arame, called Hadrām (860-830), was indeed the heir son of Gūš (890-860), and Hayyānu (870-855) from the Sam'alian city is later called 'heir son' of Gabbār (900-880). In reality Hayyānu was the second son of Gabbār after Bānihu (Lipiński: 2000, 233-247). The title for Ahuni is an aberration because there is no king of Bit-Adani who was called Adani since the name of that land was a geographical place called Bēṯ-'Eden 'Luxurious house' (Am 1:5). This king should have been called Ahuni 'king of the city (MAN URU) Bīt-Adini', but in this case Ahuni should have been replaced by Hamiyata, the titular king. However, since Shalmaneser had defeated Ahuni, who was the co-regent of Hamiyata (880-867), in 870 BCE, he invented a genealogy for Ahuni using Assyrian terminology in order to designate him as co-regent (DUMU LUGAL mār šarri): Ahuni "heir son of the king (mār šarri)" Bīt-Adini, which has been simplified to: Ahuni "heir son (mār)" of Adini.

By crossing the annals of Aššurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III, the 4th campaign of Shalmaneser III should be dated in 867 BCE, during his co-regency; consequently, his first campaign was in 870 BCE. The purpose of Shalmaneser III's inscriptions, as well as those of other Assyrian kings, is not to provide historical records but above all to legitimize their wars and plunder by means of propaganda (Laato: 1995, 198-226). For example, it is written on the Kurkh Monolith that during his 856 BCE campaign, Shalmaneser III departed and marched to Til-Barsip, a city that he renamed, Kar-Shalmaneser. When he entered the city of Pitru[81], which he recaptured, renamed Ana-Aššur-utêr-asbat and restored to Assyrian control "because" the city was seized by the land of Aram (Syria) at the time of Aššur-rabi II (1013-972). Thus, the propagandistic value is significant (Block: 2008, 223-256) looting is presented as a voluntary tribute (offered to get protection). To justify their conquest of the West, Assyrian kings all proceeded in the same way: first establishing a protectorate by making alliances, or claiming tribute for those who refused, then making vassal kingdoms and finally annexing them to the Assyrian empire. For example, the seven tributary kings of "the land of Hatti" who paid their tribute to Shalmaneser III in 856 BCE became vassal kings after the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE. Shalmaneser III, therefore, included in his reign his victories and tributes received during his period of co-regency from 870 BCE to 859 BCE, which modified the mentioned synchronisms with the kings of Tyre and Israel. A chronological reconstruction of the Assyrian reigns over the period 885-824 BCE allows us to verify whether Kings Jehu (885-856) and Pygmalion (877-830) had anything to do with Shalmaneser III.

- **885 BCE**. Hazael killed Ben-Hadad II (920-885) and became king of Syria (Damascus). On the Tel Dan stele, he claims to have killed Jehoram (897-886), the king of Israel, and Ahaziah (886-885), the king of Judah (2Ch 22:5-6).
- **876 BCE**. Aššurnasirpal II (884-859) began a westward expansion to access the Mediterranean. Through his powerful army, he began to extort money from Syrian kingdoms such as those of Bīt-Adini and Bīt-Agusi. During the following years he continued his westward expansion and reached the Great Sea and received the tribute of the seacoast from the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon (King Pygmalion), Byblos, Amurru and Arvad.
- **870 BCE**. Aššurnasirpal II required Tyre to pay a heavy tribute. Pygmalion (877-830), the king of Tyre, accepted and then would have decided to empty the treasure of Milqart's temple, according to Justinus,

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[81] Pitru, the biblical Pethor (Nb 22:5), was under the control of King Hadadezer (1045-1000), according to 2Samuel 8:5-12.

but as the high priest Zakarbaal, who was the husband of Elissa (Pygmalion's sister), refused, Pygmalion eliminated him. After the murder of her husband, Elissa decided to go into exile accompanied by the opponents of the policy of submission to Aššurnasirpal II, carrying with her much of the temple treasury and founded Carthage. Against this background, it is unlikely that Co-regent Shalmaneser (870-859), was able to receive any tribute in 870 BCE.

- **867 BCE**. In the last part of the reign of Jehu (885-856), Hazael (885-840) started to cut off all the territories of Israel (2Ki 10:31-34) as well as those of Joash (879-839), the king of Judah (2Ki 13:1-3). Hazael captured Gath, a capital of the Philistines and even went up against Jerusalem. In 856 BCE he withdrew from Jerusalem after he received a heavy tribute in gold from Joash (2Ki 12:17-19).
- **855 BCE.** Bīt-Adini was annexed to Assyria by Shalmaneser III (Younger: 2016, 350-354).
- **853 BCE.** Dayyan-Aššur (854-824) the commander-in-chief was eponym. After the battle of Qarqar, among the 11 kings who revolted under the command of Hadad-ezer (870-845) the commander-in-chief of Hazael, seven tributary kings, who were paying their tribute to Shalmaneser III, became vassal kings. All these kingdoms were annexed later.
- **841 BCE.** Shalmaneser III defeated Hazael of Damascus, killed with the sword 16,000 of his experienced soldiers, and took away 1,121 chariots and 470 riding horses. Hazael disappeared to save his life and died soon after (likely in 840 BCE?).
- **732 BCE.** Damascus is captured, its people are driven into exile in Qir and Rezin is put to death (2Ki 16:7-9). The end of the kingdom of Damascus fulfilled a prophecy in Amos 1:1-5 (c. 800 BCE)[82]: *The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah (810-758) the king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam (823-782) the son of Joash, the king of Israel, two years before the earthquake (...) I will send a fire on the house of Hazael (885-840), and it shall devour the fortresses of Ben-Hadad (840-805). And I will break the (gate) bar of Damascus and I will cut off the one who reigns from the Valley of Trouble and the one who grasps the sceptre from Beth-Eden (Bīt-Adīni) and the people of Aram will be deported to Qir*[83]. The translation of this biblical text is controversial (Younger: 2016, 366-369).

The main action of Shalmaneser III, after the annexation of Bīt Adani, was to annex the Aramaic kingdoms federated by Hazael, the powerful Syrian king who had plundered the Israelite kingdom. The victory of Shalmaneser III and the annihilation of Hazael's army in 841 BCE as well as the looting of his capital could not be presented as a tribute paid by Hazael since this king had escaped from the battle. Shalmaneser therefore transformed a plunder of Hazael's capital, who had himself plundered the cities of Jehu, into a tribute paid indirectly by Jehu. The presentation of this tribute, at the end of the inscription, does not conform to protocol. The recension on the bulls of Calah, in 841 BCE, adds at the end: « In those days (*sic*), I received the tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians, and Jehu the son of Omri (*Iu-ú-a mâr Ḫu-um-ri-i*) ». Contrary to custom, the tribute has not been dated ("In those days"). Moreover, Jehu is not attached to his real dynasty, Bīt Dawid, according to the Tel Dan stele, but to an ancestor who had not been a king but a chief general who had become king (1Ki 16:16). In addition, Jehu was not the son of Omri, but of Jehoshaphat (2Ki 9:14), and there were four kings between Omri and Jehu: Ahab (1Ki 16:29), Ahaziah (1Ki 22:52), Jehoram (2Ki 3:1) and Ahaziah II (2Ki 8:25). The next recension (marble slab), in 840 BCE, adds at the end another fictitious tribute: *I received the tribute of Bali-ma-AN-zêri and Jehu son of Omri*. The fictitious tribute of Bali-ma-AN-zêri disappeared in the next recension of 838 BCE, but that of "Jehu son of Omri" became the tribute of "Jehu of Bīt Omri" and was depicted on the Black Obelisk. The events that took place during this year explain why the "tribute of Jehu" was magnified by the Assyrians.

In my 21st regnal year (in 838 BCE), I crossed the Euphrates for the 21st time (and) marched to the cities of Hazael of Damascus. I captured four cities (and) received tribute from the people of the lands Tyre, Sidon, (and) Byblos (...) Booty from the temple of the deity Šēru (Moon-god) of the city Malaḫa (Hazor), a royal city of Hazael of Damascus, which Shalmaneser, son of Ashurnasirpal, king of Assyria, brought back inside the wall of Inner City (Aššur) (Grayson: 2002, 67,151).

The booty (of the fourth city) had to be significant because Malaḫa, the Aramaic name of Hazor (Lipiński: 2000, 350-352), was very wealthy (Block: 2008, 251-252). The remark "I marched against the towns of Hazael" instead of "I marched against Hazael, the king of Aram", in the annals of Shalmaneser, shows that Hazael was dead and that his successor (Ben-Hadad III) had not manifested himself to defend his towns. This new plundering of the towns of Hazael (in 838 BCE) was again transformed by Dayyan-Aššur,

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[82] The prophecy must have been uttered shortly after the reign of Ben-Hadad in 805 BCE and before the end of the reign of Jeroboam in 782 BCE. According to stratigraphic dating there was an earthquake in stratum VI (800-750).

[83] The city of Ḫurra (Tall Mozan), which was the capital of a small Aramean kingdom (c. 1300 BCE), was read Qîr, instead of Qûra, in the Masoretic text and Ḫarran in the Septuagint. The one who grasps the sceptre from Bīt-Adīni (military capital of Assyria), and who was cut off, was Sennacherib who was murdered in 705 BCE by his own sons (Is 37:37-38).

the commander-in-chief of Shalmaneser III, and depicted on the Black Obelisk, into a tribute paid by Jehu of Bīt Omri (Israel). It appears that these reliefs were intended primarily to illustrate exotic scenes of tribute-bearing and to demonstrate Shalmaneser's power over distant lands, rather than to record recent historical events. For example, the scenes of tribute-bearing of Egypt and Suhu do not contain any reference to these cases of tribute-bearing in Shalmaneser's inscriptions, nor to the king's visits to these countries (Yamada: 2000, 251-258). It is likely that diplomatic gifts given to the king of Assyria were transformed into tributes paid by vassal kings. The best proof that the tribute of Jehu engraved on the Black Obelisk is fictitious is provided by the representation itself (Fig. 19).

First register

Fig. 19

The first register describes, according to the conventional Assyrian representation, the king wearing his tiara (on the left) just ahead of his commander-in-chief with a sword (*turtānu*) and in front of his co-regent of the same size (right) also just ahead of the chief officer with a command stick (*rab ša-rēšē*). This scene is also identical with Shalmaneser's victory over Ahuni in 870 BCE (Bryce: 2012, 211) when he became co-regent of Aššurnasirpal. For the Assyrians the first register represented King Aššurnasirpal (on the left) accompanied by his commander-in-chief (Aššur-iddin) receiving (on the right) the submission of a king "Sua[84] of Gilzanu" who had been defeated by the co-regent Shalmaneser, accompanied by his chief officer. As Aššur-iddin (883-858) had never been to this remote region and was mostly familiar with the kingdoms of the Levant that he had fought, he depicted this defeated king (Ahuni) in an outfit identical to that of the head of the cortege (Fig. 20), wearing a humped bonnet on his head (identical to that of the king's other servants) who paid tribute to Aššurnasirpal (in 870 BCE). This scene appears on the fourth and fifth (L4, L5) of eight metal bands of a Balawat gate commissioned by Aššurnasirpal II (Curtis, Tallis: 2008, 53,65,164-167). These two metal bands have no inscription, but the ships are Phoenician, and the fortified island (far left) can only be Tyre (Ezk 26:4; 27:3-4). A similar scene appears on the first band of another gate from Balawat (ancient Imgur-Enlil) commissioned by Shalmaneser III (Fales: 2017, 211-212,226), with an inscription in the field of the upper register reads: *The tribute of the ships of the men of Tyre and Sidon I received* (King: 1915, 23, pl. XIII-XIV).

Fig. 20

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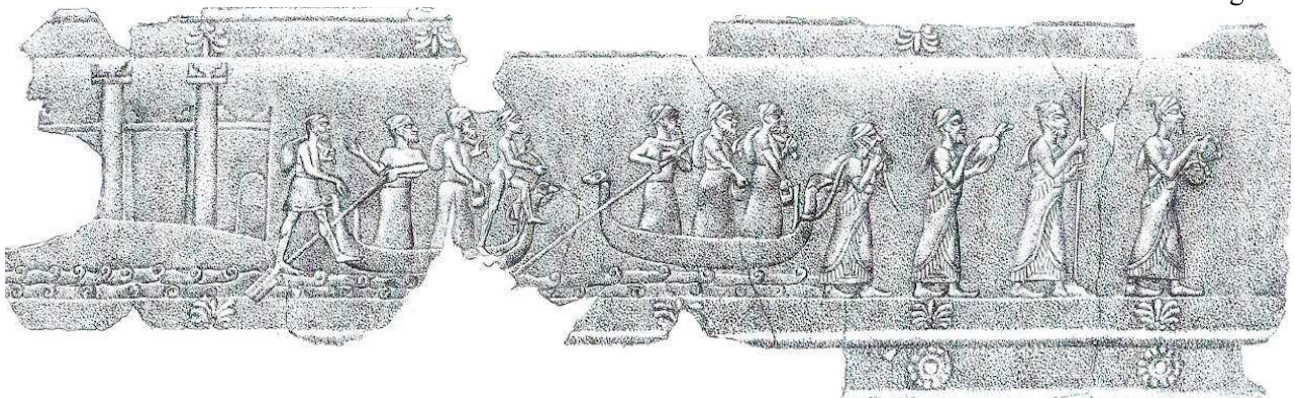
[84] It is evident that Asau/Asû of Gilzanu was deliberately selected for the annotated inscription and that his name was deliberately rendered Sua in order to form a pair with the name Jehu. Thus, the writing *su-ú-a* probably indicates that Jehu's name should be rendered *iu-ú-a*, rather than *ia-ú-a* (Na'aman: 1997, 19-20).

Second register

Fig. 21

The second register is modelled on the first register: the king with his tiara (on the left) just ahead of his commander-in-chief with a sword and in front of another commander-in-chief (right) also just ahead of the chief officer with a command stick. The king kneeling before the king is identical to the king in the first register but is named Jehu in the Assyrian text. For the Assyrians the second register represented King Shalmaneser III (on the left) accompanied by his commander-in-chief, Dayyan-Aššur, receiving the tribute of Jehu of the House of Omri. Three details from the scene show that Shalmaneser III never met Jehu: 1) unlike Hazael who had used a commander-in-chief (Hadad-ezer) to lead his battles, Jehu led them personally; 2) in Israel eunuchs could not hold official positions (Dt 23:1), unlike the Assyrian commanders-in-chief who were always true eunuchs (beardless); 3) in Israel only the priests wore bonnets (Lv 8:13) but not the other Israelites. The only representation of a king who lived in Israel comes from the excavation of an archaeological site at Abel-beth-maacah (1Ki 15:20). The head of this earthenware figure (opposite) has been stratigraphically dated to the 9th century BCE (Yahalom-Mack, Panitz-Cohen, Mullins: 2018, 153-155). Although there is still uncertainty as to the identification of this king, it confirms that he did not wear a bonnet on his head. The five tribute bearers on the Black Obelisk are therefore fictitious, they were mainly intended to serve the propaganda that systematically presented the Assyrian kings as dominant over the "four corners (regions) of the world". However, to be credible propaganda must be based on known historical facts. The Black Obelisk confirms the existence of Jehu, a king of Israel, from the "Bīt Dawid", according to the Tel Dan stele. In fact, the primary purpose of Shalmaneser III's campaigns was to accumulate as much loot as possible by conquering the wealthy kingdoms of Syria and Samaria. Therefore, the tribute paid by Ahabbu (855-825) from Asriel (a town in the north-east of Samaria) and the tribute paid by Jehu were in fact former lootings used to legitimise a future annexation of Samaria. These tributes were fictitious: evidence is found in an inscription written by Nergal-ereš, a powerful Assyrian governor (803-775), who replaced the tribute paid by "Jehu son of Omri (*Ia-a-ú mār Ḫu-um-ri-i*)" by "Jehoash the Samarian (*Ia-'a-su ^mātSa-me-ri-na-a-a*)":

> To Adad, the greatest lord, hero of the gods, mighty one?, first-born son of Anu, who alone is fiery, the lofty irrigator of heaven and earth, who provides the rain that brings abundance, who dwells in Zamaḫi, the great lord, his lord: I, Adad-nirari (III) the mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, heir of Shamshi-Adad (V) the king of the world, king of Assyria, heir of Shalmaneser (III) the king of the four regions, mobilised chariots, troops and camps, and ordered a campaign against the Hatti land. In first year (*ina ištēt šatti*) 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 2000 talents of silver, 1000 talents of copper, 2000 talents of iron, 3000 multi-coloured garments and (plain) linen garments as tribute from Mari' (*Ma-ri-'i*) of the land of Damascus. He received the tribute of Ia'asu the Samarian (*Ia-'a-su ^mātSa-me-ri-na-a-a*), of the Tyrian (ruler) and of the Sidonian (ruler). I marched to the great sea (Mediterranean) where the sun sets and erected a stela ("image") of my royal self in the city of Arvad which is in the middle of the sea. I went up the Lebanon mountains and cut down timbers: 100 mature cedars, material needed for my palace and temples. He (*sic*) received tributes from all the kings of the Nairi land. At that time, I ordered Nergal-ereš, the governor of Raṣapa, Lakê, Sirqu?, Anat, Suḫi and

(...) a total of 331 towns of subject peoples which Nergal-ereš founded and built in the name of his lord. Whoever shall blot out a single name from among these names, may the great gods fiercely destroy him (Page: 1968, 139-153).

This inscription, contrary to what one might think, was not written by Adad-ninari III but by Nergal-ereš on behalf of Adad-nirari, because it begins with "I" and afterward continues with "He". A chronological analysis shows that the tribute received by Adad-nirari III (811-783) from Mari', king of Damascus (805-780), is anachronistic. Adad-nirari III took tribute from Damascus in his 5th year, in 806 BCE, according to the Saba'a stela, but in his 1st year, in 810 BCE, according to the Rimah stela (Siddall: 2013, 120-121), the Calah slab gives no year. The reasons for thinking that each stela describes a different event seem trifling (that there are discrepancies in numerical quantities of tribute, and that the Rimah text mentions Ia'asu of Samaria whereas the Saba'a text does not), because Adad-nirari III stayed in the land (Assyria) in 810 BCE and led a campaign against Mannea in 806 BCE, according to the Eponymous Chronicle. Worse, Adad-nirari III never led any campaign against Damascus throughout his reign. One can assume: either the stelae relate fictitious campaigns or, more likely, they related the same celebrated event, which was the campaign of Shalmaneser III against Damascus in 841 BCE, mentioning the defeat of Hazael and the tribute from Jehu, in "making an update": Hazael (893-839) and Jehu (885-856) being replaced by Mari' (805-780) and Jehoash (841-823). Shalmaneser III's inscriptions unequivocally show that he was determined to conquer first Syria and then Samaria (Israel). His conquest of Syria was seriously hampered by a coalition of twelve kings led by Hadad-ezer (870-845), the commander-in-chief of Hazael, in 853 BCE, but he defeated and killed him in 845 BCE, then he defeated Hazael (885-840) and destroyed his army in 841 BCE. After this date, the whole of northern Syria was practically under Assyrian control (Freu, Mazoyer: 2012, 88-90), which continued to repress recalcitrant kingdoms during several campaigns from 838 to 829 BCE.

Consequently, the inscription on the Black Obelisk of Dayyan-Aššur, the powerful commander-in-chief of Shalmaneser III, as well as the inscription of Nergal-ereš, the powerful governor of Adad-nirari III, are above all tools of Assyrian propaganda (Laato: 1995, 198-226), and therefore, have little historical value apart from confirming the existence of the kings of Israel: Jehu and Jehoash. Likewise the Assyrian annals, which mention several times the tributes paid by the kings of Tyre during certain campaigns in the Levant, confirm the existence of the (anonymous) kings of Tyre, but it is difficult to identify them, as the first known name is that of Luli I (c.775-755) who had to pay tribute to Pulu (782-746) during the campaign of 773 BCE (Jewish Antiquities IX:283-284). Between Pygmalion (877-830) and Luli I (775-755), Phoenician inscriptions have revealed the existence of two kings of Tyre: Hiram II and Milkiram, which can be dated uniquely by epigraphy from the inscriptions (names of kings in bold type):

TABLE 44

Sidonians (Tyre)	reign	Bīt Agusi (Arpad)	reign	Hamath	reign	Bīt Gabbari (Y'adiya)	reign
Mattan I	906-877	Gūš	890 -	Parita	885 -	Gabbār	900-880
Pygmalion	877 -					Bamah	880-870
(Queen **Elissa**)	**870**		-860		-860	Hayyā	870-850
	-830	Hadrām	860-830	Urḫilina	860-835	Ša-īl	850-840
Hiram II	830 -	Attaršumki I	830 -	Uratami	835 -	**Kilamuwa**	840-825
					-810		
	-805		-800	**Zakkur**	810 -	Adad-nīrārī III	811 -
Milkiram	805 -	**Bar-Hadad**	800-796				
		Attaršumki II	796-785		-785		-783
	-775	**Mati'-El**	785 -	[Bar Ga'yah]	782 -	/(Pulu I)	782 -
Luli I	775-755						
Ithobaal II	755-738		-740		-746		-746
Hiram III	**738**-730			**Eni-ilu**	745-732	**Tiglath-pileser III**	745 -
Mattan II	730-729						
Luli II	729 -					(Pulu II)	-727
						Shalmaneser V	727-722
						Sargon II	722-705
	-695					Sennacherib	705 -
Baal I	695 -						-681
	-666					Esarhaddon	681-669
						Aššurbanipal	669-626

Carthage is mentioned for the first time on two fragments of copper bowls found in Cyprus (but this name, meaning 'new city' in Phoenician, could not refer to the City-Kingdom of Amathous, meaning 'sand' in ancient Greek and written in Cypriot syllabary) and the name of the king of Tyre was Hiram II:

['b/ḥ]ṭb skn qrthdšt 'bd ḥrm mlk sdnm 'z yth lb'l lbnn 'dny br'st nḥšt h[...]

[Ab/ḥ]tōb prefect of Carthage, servant of Ḥirōm, king of the Sidonians, gave this to Baal of Lebanon, his Lord, of the first field of copper from H[...] (Lemaire: 1976, 83-93).

According to palaeography, the writing shows no great development beyond that of the Kilamuwa (840-825) inscriptions. Especially, the shapes of *d* and *z* are typologically older than the corresponding letters of the Citium bowl, dated ca. 800 BCE (Lipiński: 2004, 46-48). After the death of Shalmaneser III and before the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, Tyre enjoyed a long period of prosperity and stability (Is 20:1; 23:1-11; Ezk 27:1-3), which must have allowed for a long duration of reigns. As there were eight kings between Ithobaal I (944-912) and Ithobaal II (755-738) the average duration of a reign was about 26 years (= [944 - 738]/8). Milkiram's reign is difficult to date because there are few Phoenician/Aramaic inscriptions from the period 800-750 BCE. Although it is difficult to date the ivory inscriptions found at Arslan Tash, comparison of the letters shows that the inscriptions of Zakkur, Hazael, Tel Dan and Tell Fekheriye belong to the same period (Puech: 1978, 163-169; Amadasi: 2018, 63-68). What is certain is that the four inscriptions, "(belonging) to Milkiram" and the one "(belonging) to Hilles, servant of Milkiram (*lḥls 'bd mlkrm*)", are all dated before 740 BCE (Lemaire: 1976, 83-93). As the writing of these five inscriptions is similar to that of Bar-Hadad (800-796) and Zakkur (810-785), it is likely that the reign of Milkiram belonged to this period 800-750 BCE because the divergence of the Aramaic script from the Phoenician begins roughly from 750 BCE (Naveh: 1982, 78-82). The large number of inscriptions attributed to Milkiram, at least five, suggests a fairly long reign of about 30 years (805-775).

In conclusion, the reign of Baal-ezer II (912-906), calculated according to the chronological data of Menander of Ephesus, is in accordance with all the Assyrian and Israelite synchronisms. The tribute paid to Shalmaneser III in 853 BCE by Ahabbu (855-825), the Asrielite, and that paid by Jehu (885-856), son of Omri (931-919), were in fact ancient plunders used to legitimise a future annexation of Samaria.

The purpose of Shalmaneser III's inscriptions, as well as those of other Assyrian kings, is not to provide historical records but above all to legitimize their wars and plunder by means of propaganda (Laato: 1995, 198-226). For example, it is written on the Kurkh Monolith that during his 856 BCE campaign, Shalmaneser III departed and marched to Til-Barsip, a city that he renamed, Kar-Shalmaneser. When he entered the city of Pitru[85], which he recaptured, renamed Ana-Aššur-utēr-asbat and restored to Assyrian control "because" the city was seized by the land of Aram (Syria) at the time of Aššur-rabi II (1013-972). Thus, the propagandistic value is significant (Block: 2008, 223-256), looting is presented as a voluntary tribute (offered to get protection). To justify their conquest of the West, Assyrian kings all proceeded in the same way: first establishing a protectorate by making alliances, or claiming tribute for those who refused, then making vassal kingdoms and finally annexing them to the Assyrian empire. For example, the seven tributary kings of "the land of Hatti" who paid their tribute to Shalmaneser III in 856 BCE became vassal kings after the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE. Shalmaneser III, therefore, included in his reign his victories and tributes received during his period of co-regency (871-859), particularly his first four campaigns (from 870 to 867 BCE) against the Bīt-Adani and against Tyre and Sidon. These four campaigns were not dated by eponyms during the reign of Aššurnasirpal II, unlike the other campaigns (Grayson: 1991, 191,200-219), because they were carried out by his co-regent Shalmaneser (871-859), which modified the mentioned synchronisms with the kings of Tyre and Israel.

The campaign against the king of Tyre and Sidon is very paradoxical, for the tribute paid is precisely described on the two large central bands of the Balawat gate (among the eight), which shows its importance, but despite this centrality in the middle of Aššurnasirpal's reign, there is no indication of it! According to his annals, this king campaigned 7 times during his first 6 years of reign (884-878 BCE), which are precisely dated by eponyms, and 4 times during the following 12 years (878-866 BCE), which are not dated by eponyms, except for the 18th in 866 BCE (Lambert: 1974, 103-109). Despite its importance, the tribute of the king of Tyre and Sidon (in 870 BCE) is not dated by an eponym! We know that Aššurnasirpal devoted 15 years (878-863 BCE) to transform the city of Kalhu into the capital, but we have no information on the last 7 years of his reign from 865 to 859 BCE (Joannès: 2001, 437-440).

The tribute paid at Aššurnasirpal in 870 BCE to the King of Tyre during the first campaign of his co-regent, Shalmaneser (871-859), corresponding exactly to the 7th year of Pygmalion's reign (877-830). This event, which led to the foundation of Carthage, took place 143 years after the start of construction of the Temple of Jerusalem, in 1013 BCE (= 870 + 143), which took place in the 4th year of Solomon's reign (1017-977) and the 12th year of Hiram I's reign (1025-991). It is interesting to note that Amenemope's reign (1018-1009) is dated to around 1024 BCE by ^{14}C calibrated data (Hagens: 2014, 173).

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[85] Pitru, the biblical Pethor (Nb 22:5), was under the control of King Hadadezer (1045-1000), according to 2Samuel 8:5-12.

All biblical and historical synchronisms over the period 1020-520 BCE

Year	ASSYRIA	SYRIA		SYRIA	Shobak	JUDEA	Tyre/ISRAEL	EGYPT	reference
1020	11 Shalmaneser II	44		Hadadezer	Shobak	37 David	5	Psusennes I	2Sa 10:16
1019	12	45		*26*	*Army chief*	38	6		
1018	1 Aššur-nêrârî IV	46		*27*		39	7		
1017	2	1		*28*		40	8	Amenemope	2Sa 5:4
1016	3	2		*29*		1 Solomon	9		1Ki 11:42
1015	4	3		*30*		2	10		
1014	5	4		*31*		3	TYRE 11		
1013	6	5		*32*		4	Hiram I 12		1Ki 6:1 0
1012	1 Aššur-rabi II	6		*33*		5	13		1
1011	2	7		*34*		6	14		2
1010	3	8		*35*		7	15		3
1009	4	9		*36*		8	16		
1008	5	1		*37*		9	17	Osorkon A	
1007	6	2		*38*		10	18		
1006	7	3		*39*		11	19		1Ki 6:38
1005	8	4		*40*		12			
1004	9	5		*41*		13			1Ch 18:3-9
1003	10	6		*42*		14			
1002	11	1		*43*		15		Siamun	
1001	12	2		*44*		16			
1000	13	3		*45*		17			
999	14	4		*1* Rezon (Ezrôn)		18			1Ki 11:23-25
998	15	5		*2*		19			
997	16	6		*3*		20			
996	17	7		*4*		21			
995	18	8		*5*		22			
994	19	9		*6*		23			
993	20	10	1	*7*		24 ***		Psusennes II	1Ki 9:10-17
992	21	11	2	*8*		25			
991	22	12	3	*9*		26			
990	23	13	4	*10*		27			
989	24	14	5	*11*		28			
988	25	15	6	*12*		29			
987	26	16	7	*13*		30			
986	27	17	8	*14*		31			
985	28	18	9	*15*		32			
984	29	19	10	*16*		33			
983	30	11		*17*		34			
982	31	12		*18*		35			
981	32	13		*19*		36			
980	33	14		*20*		37			
979	34	1		*21*		38	[1]	Shoshenq I	1Ki 11:40-42
978	35	2		*22*		39	[2]		
977	36	3		*23*		40	[3] ISRAEL		
976	37	4		*24*		1 Rehoboam	1 Jeroboam I		1Ki 14:20-21
975	38	5		*25*		2	2		
974	39	6		1 Hezion I		3	3		
973	40	7		*2*		4	4		
972	41	8		*3*		5	5 ***		2Ch 12:2-13
971	1 Aššur-rêš-iši II	9		*4*		6	6		
970	2	10		*5*		7	7		
969	3	11		*6*		8	8		
968	4	12		*7*		9	9		
967	5	13		*8*		10	10		
966	1 Tiglath-pileser II	14		*9*		11	11		
965	2	15		*10*		12	12		
964	3	16		*11*		13	13		
963	4	17		*12*		14	14		
962	5	18		*13*		15	15		
961	6	19		*14*		16	16		
960	7	20		*15*		17	17		
959	8	21		1 Tabrimmon		1 Abiya	18		1Ki 15:1-2

Year	Assyria	Aram	Naaman	Judah	Israel	Reference
958	9	2		2	19	
957	10	3		3 Asa	20	1Ki 15:9-10
956	11	4		1	21	
955	12	5		2	22 Nadab	1Ki 15:25
954	13	6		3	1 Baasha	1Ki 15:28-33
953	14	7		4	2	
952	15	8		5	3	
951	16	9		6	4	
950	17	10		7	5	
949	18	11		8	6	1Ki 15:18
948	19	12		9	7	
947	20	13		10	8	
946	21	14		11	9	
945	22	15		12	10	
944	23	1 Bar-Hadad I		13	11	
943	24	2		14	12	
942	25	3		15	13	2Ch 15:10
941	26	4		16	14	
940	27	5		17	15	
939	28	6		18	16	
938	29	7		19	17	
937	30	8		20	18	
936	31	9		21	19	
935	32	10		22	20	
934	1 Aššur-dân II	11		23	21	
933	2	12		24	22	
932	3	13		25	23	
931	4	14		26	24-1 Elah	1Ki 16:8
930	5	15		27	1- 2 Omri	1Ki 16:10-16
929	6	16		28	2 /Tibni	
928	7	17		29	3	
927	8	18		30	4	
926	9	19		31	5 Omri	1Ki 16:21-23
925	10	20		32	6	
924	11	21		33	7	
923	12	22		34	8	
922	13	23		35	9	
921	14	24		36	10	
920	15	25		37	11	
919	16	1 Bar-Hadad II		38	12-1 Ahab	1Ki 16:29
918	17	2		39	2	
917	18	3		40	3	
916	19	4		41 Josaphat	4	1Ki 22:41-42
915	20	5		1	5	
914	21	6		2	6	
913	22	7		3	7	
912	23	8		4	8	
911	1 Adad-nîrârî II	9		5	9	
910	2	10	Naaman	6	10	2Ki 5:1
909	3	11	Army chief	7	11	
908	4	12		8	12	
907	5	13		9	13	
906	6	14		10	14	
905	7	15		11	15	
904	8	16		12	16	
903	9	17		13	17	
902	10	18		14	18	
901	11	19		15	19	
900	12	20		16	20	
899	13	21		17	21 Ahaziah	1Ki 22:51
898	14	22		18	22 Joram (A)	2Ki 3:1
897	15	23		19	1	
896	16	24		20	2	
895	17	25		21	3	2Ki 5:1

Year	Assyria	Tyre	Tyre#	Aram	Aram ruler	Judah	Judah#	Israel	Israel#	Reference
894	18			26		22		4		(2Ch 20:22)
893	19			27		23	0	5		2Ki 8:16-17
892	20			28		24	1	6		
891	21			29		25	2	7		1Ki 22:50
890	1 Tukultî-Ninurta II			30	Hazael	3 Joram (J)		8		
889	2			31	Army chief	4		9		
888	3			32		5		10		
887	4			33		6		11		2Ch 21:12-20
886	5			34		7		12		
885	6			35/0		8 Athaliah		Jehu		2K 9:27,10:36
884	7			1 Hazael		1		1		2Ki 11:2-4
883	1 Aššurnasirpal II			2		2		2		
882	2			3		3		3		
881	3			4		4		4		
880	4			5		5		5		
879	5	TYRE		6		6		6		
878	6	Mattan I	28	7		1 Joash		7		2Ki 12:1
877	7		29	8		2		8		
876	8	Pygmalion	1	9		3		9		
875	9		2	10		4		10		
874	10		3	11		5		11		
873	11		4	12		6		12		
872	12		5	13		7		13		
871	13		6 (0)	14		8		14		142
870	14 (Baal-manzer)		7 (1)	15	Hadad-ezer	9		15		**143**
869	15		8 (2)	16	Army chief	10		16		
868	16		(3)	17		11		17		
867	17		(4)	18		12		18		2Ki 10:31-34
866	18		(5)	19		13		19		2Ki 12:17-19
865	19		(6)	20		14		20		
864	20		(7)	21		15		21		
863	21		(8)	22		16		22		
862	22		(9)	23		17		23		
861	23		(10)	24		18		23		
860	24		(11)	25		19		24		
859	25		(12) 0	26		20		25		
858	1 Shalmaneser III			27		21		26		
857	2			28		22		27		
856	3			29		23		28 Jehoahaz		2Ki 13:1
855	4			30		24		1		
854	5			31		25		2		
853	6 *Battle of Qarqar*			32	***	26		3		
852	7			33		27		4		
851	8			34		28		5		
850	9			35		29		6		
849	10			36		30		7		
848	11			37		31		8		
847	12			38		32		9		
846	13 Aššur-danin-pal		(0)	39		33		10		
845	14		(1)	40	***	34		11		
844	15		(2)	41		35		12		
843	16		(3)	42		36		13		
842	17		(4)	43		37		14 0		2Ki 13:10
841	18		(5)	44 ***		38		15 1		
840	19		(6)	45		39		16 2		
839	20		(7)	1 Bar-Hadad III		40 Amaziah		17 Jehoash		2Ki 14:1-2
838	21		(8)	2		1		1		
837	22		(9)	3		2		2		
836	23		(10)	4		3		3		
835	24		(11)	5		4		4		
834	25		(12)	6		5		5		
833	26		(13)	7		6		6		
832	27		(14)	8		7		7		
831	28		(15)	9		8		8		

830	29	(16)	*10*	9		9	
829	30	(17)	*11*	10		10	
828	31	(18)	*12*	11		11	
827	32 *Revolt*	(19)	*13*	12		12	
826	33	(20)(0)	*14*	13		13	
825	34	(21)(1)	*15*	14		14	
824	35	(22)(2)	*16*	15		15	
823	(1) Jonah 1:6	(23)(3)	*17*	16		**Jeroboam II**	2Ki 14:17-25
822	2 **Šamšî-Adad V**	(24)	*18*	17		1	
821	3	(25)	*19*	18		2	
820	4		*20*	19		3	
819	5		*21*	20		4	
818	6		*22*	21		5	
817	7		*23*	22		6	
816	8		*24*	23		7	
815	9		*25*	24		8	
814	10		*26*	25		9	
813	11		*27*	26		10	
812	12		*28*	27		11	
811	13 /**Sammu-ramât**	(0)	*29*	28		12	
810	1 **Adad-nîrârî III**	(1)	*30*	29 **Uzziah**		13	2Ch 26:1-3
809	2	(2)	*31*	1		14	
808	3	(3)	*32*	2		15	
807	4	(4)	*33*	3		16	
806	5		*34/0*	4		17	
805	6		*1* **Mari'**	5		18	
804	7		*2*	6		19	
803	8		*3*	7		20	
802	9		*4*	8		21	
801	10		*5*	9		22	
800	11		*6*	10		23	
799	12		*7*	11		24	
798	13		*8*	12 Zk 14:5	0	25	Am 1:1-5
797	14		*9*	13	1	26	
796	15		*10*	14 **Azariah**	2	**27**	2Ki 15:1-2
795	16		*11*	**15**		28	(2Ch 26:3)
794	17		*12*	16		29	
793	18		*13*	17		30	
792	19		*14*	18		31	
791	20		*15*	19		32	
790	21		*16*	20		33	
789	22		*17*	21		34	
788	23		*18*	22		35	
787	24		*19*	23		36	
786	25		*20*	24		37	
785	26		*21*	25		38	
784	27		*22*	26		39	
783	28		*23*	27		40	
782	1 **Shalmaneser IV**		*24*	28		41	
781	2 **Pulu I/Bar Ga'yah**	(1)	*25*	29		1 **Zekariah**	2Ki 14:29
780	3	(2)	*26*	30		[2]	
779	4	(3)	*1* **Hezion II**	31		[3]	
778	5	(4)	*2*	32		[4]	
777	6	(5)	*3*	33		[5]	
776	7	(6)	*4*	34		[6]	
775	8	(7)	*5*	35		[7]	
774	9	(8)	*6*	36		[8]	
773	10	(9)	*7*	37		[9]	
772	1 **Aššur-dân III**	(10)	*8*	38		[10]	2Ki 15:8
771	2	(11)	*9*	39		[11] **Shallum**	2Ki 15:13
770	3	(12)	*10*	40		1 **Menahem**	2Ki 15:17
769	4	(13)	*11*	41		1	
768	5	(14)	*12*	42		2	
767	6	(15)	*13*	43		3	

766	7	(16)	*14*	44	4	(Is 10:5-8)
765	8	(17)	*15*	45	5 (Pulu I)	2Ki 15:19-20
764	9	(18)	*16*	46	6	
763	10	(19)	*17*	47	7	Bur-Sagale
762	11	(20)	*18*	48	8	
761	12	(21)	*19*	49	9	
760	13	(22)	*20*	50	10 Pekayah	2Ki 15:22-23
759	14	(23)	*21*	51	1	
758	15	(24)	*22*	52 Jotham	2 Pekah	2Ki 15:27-33
757	16	(25)	*23*	1	1	
756	17	(26)	*24*	2	2	
755	18	(27)	*25*	3	3	
754	1 Aššur-nîrârî V	(28)	*1 Rezin*	4	4	
753	2	(29)	*2*	5	5	
752	3	(30)	*3*	6	6	
751	4	(31)	*4*	7	7	
750	5	(32)	*5*	8	8	
749	6	(33)	*6*	9	9	
748	7	(34)	*7*	10	10	
747	8	(35)	*8*	11	11	
746	9 *Revolt*	(36)	*9*	12	12	
745	10	0	*10*	13	13	
744	1 Tiglath-pileser III	(1)	*11*	14	14	
743	2	(2)	*12*	15	15	
742	3	(3)	*13*	16	16	
741	4	(4)	*14*	1 Ahaz *17*	17	2Ki 16:1,7-10
740	5	(5)	*15*	[2] *18*	18	2Chr 28:16
739	6	(6)	*16*	[3] *19*	19	2Ki 16:5,6
738	7	(7)	*17*	[4] *20*	20 Hosea I	2Ki 15:27-30
737	8	(8)	*18*	5	[1]	
736	9	(9)	*19*	6	[2]	
735	10	(10)	*20*	7	[3]	
734	11	(11)	*21*	8	[4]	2Ki 16:7-9
733	12	(12)	BABYLONIA	9	[5]	
732	13	(13)	Nabû-mukîn-zêri	10	[6]	
731	14	(14)	1	11	[7]	
730	15	(15)	2	12	[8]	
729	16	(16)	3	13	[9] Hosea II	2Ki 17:1
728	17	(17)	1 Pulu II	14	1 [10]	
727	18	(18)	2	15	2 [11]	
726	1 Shalmaneser V	[1]	1 Ulûlaiu	16 Hezekiah	3 [12]	2Ki 18:1
725	2	[2]	2	1	4 [13]	
724	3	[3]	3	2	5 [14]	
723	4	[4]	4	3	6 [15]	2Ki 17:2-5
722	5	[5]	5 Merodachbaladan II	4	7 [16]	2Ki 18:9
721	1 Sargon II		1	5	8 [17]	
720	2 *Fall of Samaria*		2	6	9 [18]	2Ki 18:10
719	3		3	7	[19]	
718	4		4	8	[20]	
717	5		5	9	[21]	
716	6		6	10	[22]	
715	7	(0)	7	11	[23]	
714	8	(1)	8	12	[24]	
713	9	(2)	9	13	[25]	
712	10 *Ashdod / Lachish*	(3)	10	14	[26]	Is 36:1;39:1
711	11	(4)	11	15	[27]	1
710	12	(5)	12	16	[28]	2
709	13	(6)	1 Sargon II	17	[29]	3
708	14	(7)	2	18	[30]	4
707	15	(8)	3	19	[31]	5
706	16	(9)	4	20	[32]	6
705	17	(10) 0	5	21	[33]	7
704	1 Sennacherib		1 Sennacherib	22	[34]	8
703	2		2	23	[35]	9

Year							
702	3		1 Bêl-ibni		24	[36]	10
701	4		2		25	[37]	11
700	5		3		26	[38]	12
699	6 /Arda-Mulissu	(0)	1 Aššur-nâdin-šumi II		27	[39]	13
698	7	(1)	2		28	[40]	14
697	8	(2)	3		29 Manasseh	[41]	15
696	9	(3)	4		1	[42]	2Ki 21:1
695	10	(4)	5		2	[43]	
694	11	(5)	6		3	[44]	
693	12	(6)	1 Nergal-ušezib		4	[45]	
692	13	(7)	1 Mušezib-Marduk		5	[46]	
691	14	(8)	2		6	[47]	
690	15	(9)	3		7	[48]	
689	16	(10)	4		8	[49]	
688	17	(11)	1 Sennacherib		9	[50]	
687	18	(12)	2		10	[51]	
686	19	(13)	3		11	[52]	
685	20	(14)	4		12	[53]	
684	21	(15)	5		13	[54]	
683	22	(1)	6		14	[55]	
682	23	(2)	7		15	[56]	
681	24	(3)0	8		16	[57]	2Ki 19:37
680	1 Esarhaddon		1 Esarhaddon		17	[58]	
679	2		2		18	[59]	
678	3		3		19	[60]	
677	4		4		20	[61]	
676	5		5		21	[62]	
675	6		6		22	[63]	
674	7 /Sin-nâdin-apli	(0)	7		23	[64]	
673	8 (Manasseh deported)	(1)	8 (2Ch 33:11)		24	[65]	Ezr 4:2,10
672	9	(0)	9	(0)	25	Isa 7:8,9	2Ch 33:11-13
671	10 Memphis attacked	(1)	10	(1)	26		
670	11	(2)	11	(2)	27		
669	12	(3) 0	12	(3)	28		
668	1 Aššurbanipal		1 Aššurbanipal	(4)	29		
667	2		1 Šamaš-šumu-ukin		30		
666	3		2		31		BM 45640
665	4		3		32	EGYPT	
664	5 Thebes sacked		4		33	26 Taharqa	(2Ki 19:9)
663	6 (Na 3:8)		5		34	1 Psamtik I	
662	7		6		35	2	
661	8		7		36	3	
660	9		8		37	4	
659	10		9		38	5	
658	11		10		39	6	
657	12		11		40	7	
656	13		12		41	8	
655	14		13		42	9	
654	15	(0)	14		43	10	
653	16	(1)	15		44	11	
652	17	(2)	16		45	12	
651	18	(3)	17		46	13	
650	19	(4)	18		47	14	
649	20	(5)	19		48	15	
648	21	(6)	20		49	16	
647	22	(7)	1 Kandalanu		50	17	
646	23	(8)	2		51	18	
645	24	(9)	3		52	19	
644	25	(10)	4		53	20	
643	26	(11)	5		54	21	
642	27	(12)	6		55 Amon	22	2Ki 21:1,19
641	28	(13)	7		1	23	
640	29	(14)	8		2 Josiah	24	2Ki 22:1
639	30	(15)	9		1	25	

Year								
638	31	(16)	10		2		26	
637	32	(17)	11		3		27	
636	33	(18)	12		4		28	
635	34	(19)	13		5		29	
634	35	(20)	14		6		30	
633	36	(21)	15		7		31	
632	37	(22)	16		8		32	
631	38	(23)	17		9		33	
630	[39]	0	18		10		34	
629	1 **Aššur-etel-ilâni**	[40]	19		11		35	
628	2	[41]	20		12		36	
627	3	[42]	(21) **Sin-šum-lišir**		13	[0]	37	Jr 25:3,11
626	4	0	(22) **Sin-šar-iškun**		14	[1]	38	Ezk 4:6
625	1 **Sin-šar-iškun**		1 **Nabopolassar**		15	[2]	39	
624	2		2		16	[3]	40	
623	3		3		17	[4]	41	
622	4		4		18	[5]	42	
621	5		5		19	[6]	43	Alm. V,14
620	6		6		20	[7]	44	
619	7	(0)	7		21	[8]	45	
618	8	(1)	8		22	[9]	46	
617	9	(2)	9		23	[10]	47	
616	10	(3)	10		24	[11]	48	
615	11	(4)	11		25	[12]	49	
614	12	(5)	12		26	[13]	50	
613	13	(6)	13		27	[14]	51	
612	14 *Nineveh destroyed*	(7) 0	14		28	[15]	52	Nah 3:15-19
611	1 **Aššur-uballit II**		15	(0)	29	[16]	53	
610	2		16	(1)	30	[17]	54	
609	3 *Battle of Harran*	[0]	17 *BM 21901*	(2)	31 **Joiaqim**		1 **Necho II**	2Ki 23:29,36
608		[1]	18	(3)	1	[19]	2	Jr 25:11-12
607		[2]	19 *BM 22047*	(4)	2	[20]	3	
606		[3]	20	(5)	3	[21]	4	
605	*Battle of Carchemish*	[4]	21	(6)	4	[22]	5	Jr 25:1; 46:2
604		[5]	1 **Nebuchadnezzar II**		5	[23]	6	
603		[6]	2		6	[24]	7	
602		[7]	3		7	[25]	8	
601		[8]	4		8	[26]	9	
600		[9]	5		9	[27]	10	
599		[10]	6		10	[28]	11	
598		[11]	7 *BM 21946*		11 **Zedekiah**		12	Jr 52:1,28
597		[12]	8		1	[30]	13	2Ki 24:12
596		[13]	9		2	[31]	14	
595		[14]	10		3	[32]	15	
594		[15]	11		4	[33]	16	
593		[16]	12		5	[34]	1 **Psamtik II**	
592		[17]	13		6	[35]	2	
591		[18]	14		7	[36]	3	
590		[19]	15		8	[37]	4	
589		[20]	16		9	[38]	5	
588		[21]	17		10	[39]	6/1 **Apries**	Ezk 29:1
587	[0]	[22]	18 ***		11	[40]	2	Jr 44:30
586	[1]	[23]	19		12 **Jehoiachin**		3	
585	[2]	[24]	20		13		4	
584	[3]	[25]	21		14		5	
583	[4]	[26]	22		15		6	
582	[5]	[27]	23		16		7	
581	[6]	[28]	24		17		8	
580	[7]	[29]	25		18		9	
579	[8]	[30]	26		19		10	
578	[9]	[31]	27		20		11	
577	[10]	[32]	28		21		12	
576	[11]	[33]	29		22		13	
575	[12]	[34]	30		23		14	

574		[13]	[35]	31	24			15		
573		[14]	[36]	32	25			16		
572		[15]	[37]	33	26			17		
571		[16]	[38]	34	**27**			18		Ezk 29:17-20
570		[17]	[39]	35	28			19		
569		[18]	[40]	36	29			1/20 **Amasis**		
568		[19]	[41]	37 *VT 4956*	30			2/21		Jr 43:10-13
567		[20]	[42]	38 *Egypt attacked*	31			3/22 [0]		Jr 44:30
566		[21]	[43]	39	32			**4** [1]		
565		[22]	[44]	40	33			5 [2]		
564		[23]	[45]	41	34			6 [3]		
563		[24]	[46]	42	35			7 [4]		
562		[25]	[47]	43	36			8 [5]		
561		[26]	[48]	1 **Amel-Marduk**	**37**			9 [6]		Jr 52:31
560		[27]	[49]	2				10 [7]		
559		[28]	[50]	1 **Neriglissar**		(0)		11 [8]		
558		[29]	[51]	2		(1)		**12 [9]**		Pap. E 7848
557		[30]	[52]	3		(2)		13 [10]		
556		[31]	[53]	4 **Labashi-Marduk**		(3)		14 [11]		
555		[32]	[54]	1 **Nabonidus**		(4)		15 [12]		
554		[33]	[55]	2		(5)		16 [13]		
553		[34]	[56]	3 **Belshazzar**	0	(6)		17 [14]		
552		[35]	[57]	4	1	(7)		18 [15]		
551		[36]	[58]	5	2	(8)		19 [16]		
550	**Harpagus** *Median king*		[59]	6	3 ***	(9)	(0)	20 [17]		Dn 8:1,20-21
549	*vassal of Cyrus II*	[38]	[60]	7	4	(10)	(1)	21 [18]		
548		[39]	[61]	8	5	(11)	(2)	22 [19		
547		[40]	[62]	9	6	(12)	(3)	23 [20]		
546		[41]	[63]	10	7	(13)	(4)	24 [21]		
545		[42]	[64]	11	8	(14)	(5)	25 [22]		
544		[43]	[65]	12	9	(15)	(6)	26 [23]		
543		[44]	[66]	13	10	(16)	(7)	27 [24]		
542		[45]	[67]	14	11	(17)	(8)	28 [25]		
541		[46]	[68]	15	12	(18)	(9)	29 [26]		
540		[47]	[69]	16	13	(19)	(10)	30 [27]		
539	*Fall of Babylon.*	[48]	[70]	17 ***	14	(20)	(11)	31 [28]		Jr 25:11-12
538	*(Darius the Mede)*	[49]		1 **Cyrus II**		**Ugbaru**	[1]	32 [29]		Is 45:1
537		[50]		2		1		33 [30]		
536		[51]		3		2		34 [31]		
535		[52]		4		**Gubaru**		35 [32]		
534		[53]		5				36 [33]		
533		[54]		6				37 [34]		
532		[55]		7				38 [35]		
531		[56]		8				39 [36]		
530		[57]		9				40 [37]		
529		[58]		1 **Cambyses II**				41 [38]		
528		[59]		2				42 [39]		
527		[60]		3				43 [40]		Ezk 29:12-16
526	**Psamtik III**	[61]	1	4		1		44/1		
525		[62]	2	5		2		2		
524		[63]		6		3				
523		[64]		7	0 **Bardiya**	4				
522	**Nebuchadnezzar III** 0			8	1 ***	5			Artaxerxes 0	Ezr 4:7
521	**Nebuchadnezzar IV** 1			1 **Darius I**		1				
520		[67]		2		2				Hg 1:1-9

The period of "devastation and desolation of the land[86]" of Israel (587-517) was to last 70 years (Dn 9:2) and that of the land of Egypt (566-526) was to last 40 years (Ezk 29:12). The prophecy of the 40-year desolation of the land of Egypt was uttered in 571 BCE against Apries/Hophra (Ezk 29:12-20), began to be fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar from 568 BCE (Jr 43:10-13) to 566 BCE (Jr 44:30). It ended with the death of Amasis in 526 BCE, not a "living god to worship" but an ungodly general (The Histories II:174).

[86] When we read: *my house is in ruins, while each of you runs around taking care of his own house* (Hg 1:1.9), a text written in Year 2 of Darius (in 520 BCE), we can understand that the temple was a desert of worshippers (as in Ezekiel 30:7,13), not of people. Apries reigned for 19 years but died in Year 4 of Amasis, in 566 BCE (Ladynin: 2006, 31-56).

FOUNDATION OF CARTHAGE IN 870 BCE

The date of 814 BC for the founding of Carthage is universally accepted, although it is based on several erroneous hypotheses. The only historian of the past to have had access to Tyre's archives is Menander of Ephesus (c. 200 BCE) who translated them into Greek. Flavius Josephus quoted them (c. 95 CE), in particular the chronology of the kings of Tyre, from Hiram I to Pygmalion, specifying that Carthage had been founded in the 7th year of Pygmalion's reign, 143 years and 8 months after the foundation of the temple which had begun in the 4th year of Solomon's reign. From 1951 onwards historians used the biblical chronology of Thiele, who had calculated the reign of Solomon (970-930), to fix his 4th year in 966 BCE (= 970 - 4), which made it possible to calculate the foundation of Carthage in 823 BCE (= 966 - 143). Some historians have considered that this date corresponds to that of Pompeius Trogus, quoted by Justinus, who fixed the foundation of Carthage 72 years before Rome, i.e. in 825 BCE (History XVIII:6:9). However, as archaeologists stratigraphically date the oldest stratum (Tanit I) of Carthage c. 730 BCE (Pilkington: 2013, 139) they prefer that of Timaeus of Sicily, quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who fixed the foundation of Carthage 38 years before the 1st Olympiad, i.e. in 814 BCE (Roman Antiquities I:74:1). The date of 814 BCE is thus obtained from the biblical chronology of Thiele, which is erroneous by about 50 years, and from calculations that respect neither the rigorous chronological data of Menander of Ephesus, nor those of the Bible. The main disagreement between historians and archaeologists in writing history concerns the dating methods used to establish a reliable chronology. Historians calculate dates from chronological information in historical texts, which can sometimes be verified by astronomical back-calculations, whereas archaeologists calculate dates from archaeological strata. Archaeological dating is approximate as it only provides a duration of one or two centuries to a stratigraphic layer. The main methods for refining dating are those that use: the written name of a known person (such as kings), the type of pottery, ^{14}C dating (when there is carbonaceous debris in the stratum) and the palaeographic style of the inscriptions. The discovery of late geometric Greek ceramics in the early occupation levels of Carthage, including, interestingly for their antiquity, proto-Corinthian *kotylai* of the type known as "Aetos 666" and Euboean cups decorated with metopes, allows the dating of the first built structures to 775-750 BCE. Other imports, such as Cypriot ceramics and a number of Andalusian-type amphorae, show that 8th-century Carthage was a highly organised city with regular trade contacts with Greece, Pithecusae and the Phoenician colonies in southern Spain (Aubet: 2001, 218-226). The stratigraphy of Carthage initially gave four layers (Pilkington: 2019, 79-83), but excavations from 2008 have shown that the Byrsa Hill would have been in a fifth layer (Tanit 0) when Kition was colonised by Tyre c. 900-850 BCE (Fales: 2017, 185). The Greek chronology of the First Iron Age has recently been re-evaluated (in 2020) and the Middle Geometric period (850-750), when Carthage was founded, has been shifted back 50 years to 900-800* (Gimatzidis, Weninger: 2020,1-28).

N°	Layer	BCE	Main objects in the layer	Attic Geometric pottery	BCE
1	Tanit III	200-146	Written steles in limestone		
2	Tanit IIb	400-200	Steles in limestone and stucco stoneware		
3	Tanit IIa	600-400	Urns and small thrones in stoneware		New dating
4	Tanit I	750-600	Urns and betyles in stoneware	Late Geometric	800-600*
5	Tanit 0	**850**-750	Foundation of Carthage (hill of Byrsa)	Middle Geometric	**900**-800*
		900-**850**		Late Protogeometric	950-**900***

Carbon-14 dating is extremely difficult because the remains of the fifth layer are almost non-existent, but some measurements have allowed us to date it to 835-800 BCE (Sagona: 2008, 247,379). These recent discoveries prove that the oldest stratigraphic layer (Tanit 0), in which the foundation of Carthage was located, must be dated between 900 and 750 BCE. The Phoenician settlements in southern Spain —which were dated to 770-760 BCE for the oldest (the time of the oldest layer of Carthage), until a few years ago— have been dated from 2011 to around 900 BCE (Demand: 2011, 221-223). Thanks to the radiometric sequences for the Phoenician-Punic world in the Peninsula, the beginnings of Phoenician colonisation in the Malaga-Algorrobo region date back to the period 895-835 BCE[87], when Carthage was founded, more precisely in **870 BCE** according to the chronology of Menander of Ephesus.

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[87] For example, a short Phoenician inscription (of four letters) on an amphora fragment, found in Huelva, dated to the 9th century BCE, and several Greek ceramics belonging to the Eubean III sub-prototype (850-750 BCE), imply (now) that the oldest layer in Huelva was dated to 900-750 BCE (Horn: 2007, 62-63). In Andalusia, an important characteristic must be highlighted: in many cremation burials in Almuñecar and in a burial found in Lagos, the ashes are placed in expensive alabaster or marble urns, made in Egypt (the time of their arrival in Spain is unknown, but it must have been shortly after their manufacture). The fact is that in Almuñecar some of them are decorated with inscriptions and emblems of the pharaohs of the 22nd dynasty, such as Osorkon II (909-865), Takelot II (865-840) and Shoshenq III (840-800). It is interesting to note that the oldest alabaster urn is dated before 865 BCE (Aubet: 2001, 329-337, 372-381).

The coincidence of the date of the foundation of Carthage, in 870 BCE, and the tribute paid by [the king of] Tyre and Sidon to King Aššurnasirpal cannot be accidental. According to his annals: *I marched to the Great Sea (Mediterranean Sea) of the land Amurru. [I received] the tribute of [the kings on the seashore], of the people [inhabitants] of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, [... I washed] my weapons in the Great Sea*. There is a distinction in this text between the "kings" of the seashore and the "inhabitant*s*" of Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos, three port cities that are systematically associated. In the annals of Shalmaneser III there is an additional precision: *Ba'al[-manzer?] the man of [T]yre, submitted to me (and) I received tribute from him. I erected my royal statue in the temple of the city Laruba, his fortified city. Now the tribute of the inhabitants of the lands Tyre, Sidon, (and) Byblos I received*. This text confirms two points: the king of Tyre is only qualified as a man of Tyre, in the sense of a representative of Tyre, but the tribute he paid is attributed to the cities of Tyre and Sidon. These oddities can be explained by the historical context of the city of Tyre[88], which did not play an important role in the Mediterranean from Hiram I onwards who sent ships to Tarshish (1Ki 10:22) in southern Spain. The king of Tyre was called king of the Sidonians because he ruled over both Tyre and Sidon, but his role was mainly commercial as he established trading posts around the Mediterranean or contracts, not alliances, with other kingdoms. The king of Tyre was thus a powerful merchant prince of the Mediterranean[89] (Ezk 27:1-33). It was the abundance of Tyre's wealth, which became proverbial in the 9th century BCE, that prompted King Aššurnasirpal II to conquer this Phoenician city. Several elements represented on the gates of Balawat show that Tyre (& Sidon) did not pay tribute but was plundered and that the booty must have been considerable. Although this important Mediterranean campaign was mentioned on all the inscriptions of the Northwest Palace of Kalhu[90], surprisingly it is never dated (Russell: 1999, 19,61), the date of 870 BCE is obtained only by cross-checking all the inscriptions (Younger: 2016, 262,320).

The most ancient representation of the city of Tyre that has been preserved is in the form of a bas-relief on the gates at Balawat, dated to the middle of the ninth century BCE, in which Tyre is shown on its rocky island, surrounded by a wall with five towers. Two gates in the wall, with arches, might represent access respectively to the two harbours of the city. As for the elevation of the wall of Tyre, it is reported that on its eastern side, it reached a height of 45 m (Aubet: 2001, 37). We know from the Aššurnasirpal II gates found by Rassam that the bronze bands (eight on the left-hand door leaf and eight on the right-hand door leaf) were not fixed randomly on the wooden door-leaves. Rather, they were fixed according to a carefully or predetermined arrangement in which prominence was given to certain scenes and others were arranged so that if possible, they mirrored or complemented the corresponding scenes on the other side of the gate. If this arrangement is correct[91], it is striking that the three representations of tribute (R4, L4 and L5 bands) being brought from Tyre are all clustered together in the centre of the gates (Curtis, Tallis: 2008, 52). Order of the bronze bands of the Mamu Temple gates:

TABLE 45

Left	Left bands of the Mamu Temple gates	Right bands of the Mamu Temple gates	Right
L1	Tribute from Carchemish	Tribute from Suḫu	R1
L2	Campaign to Mt Urina	Campaign against Bīt-Adini	R2
L3	Tribute scene	Tribute from Suḫu	R3
L4	Tribute scene [from Tyre]	Tribute scene [from Tyre]	R4
L5	Tribute scene [from Tyre]	Tribute from Amazu (north of Suḫu)	R5
L6	Tribute from Suḫu	Tribute scene	R6
L7	Campaign scene	Campaign against Bīt-Adini	R7
L8	Tribute of timber	Tribute scene	R8

This episodic and nonchronological series of representations (without any epigraphs) seems closer in spirit to the summary account of the king's achievements recorded in the Standard Inscription (carved across the middle of all the wall relief slabs) than it is to the annals (Russell: 1999, 60-61). Strangely, only three tributes have been preserved, Suḫu, [Tyre] and Amazu, presumably because they were seen as the most

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[88] The city of Tyre is mentioned from the 16th century BCE in Egyptian, Ugaritic, Assyrian-Babylonian texts and in the archives of El-Amarna, which shows its maritime power and commercial importance. During the attack of the Sea Peoples in 1185 BCE most of the port cities around the Mediterranean were destroyed, which would explain its disappearance in the maritime exchanges. For example, according to Wenamun's report (in 1085 BCE) Egyptian trade with Phoenicia and Cyprus had resumed through Tyre, Sidon and Byblos (Report of Wenamun I:1-II:11). It is likely that the fortification of the city of Tyre and the development of its port by Hiram I (1025-991) gave this city primacy over Sidon (Joannès: 2001, 865-866).
[89] For example, Zakarbaal (c.1090-1070) mentions a Council of State in the city of Byblos, which may have acted, among other things, as a board of commercial management, presided over by the king and by the 'princes of the sea' (Ezk 26:15-16). It is interesting to note that Zakarbaal mentions being able to consult a journal roll of his ancestors (Report of Wenamun II:9).
[90] On the backs of wall slabs, the faces of wall slabs, the throne base, doorway colossi, and thresholds.
[91] The reconstruction of the location of these eight bronze bands, some of which were badly damaged, was carried out on the following principle: It is assumed that the doorposts would have tapered towards the top while at the same time the flat part of the bands should gradually increase in length to compensate for this.

prestigious. The presentation of these tributes is misleading because the city of Tyre paid only one tribute, the one visible on the two central bands (R4 and L4), because the tribute on the 5th bronze band (L5) on the left side of the door is an exact replica of the tribute on the 4th bronze band (L4). This replica made the spectators believe that it was a tribute paid at intervals, like that of Suḫu, whereas in fact it was a plundering of the city. The comparison of the campaigns and tributes represented on the Balawat gates with those mentioned in the annals of Aššurnasirpal II (Table 46) is approximate because according to the annals there were several campaigns against Bīt-Adini from 877 to 867 BCE, which was finally defeated in 866 BCE, but the campaign mentioned on the Balawat gate (R2) should be dated to 883 BCE according to its location. The next campaigns (not mentioned in the annals), from 866 to 859 BCE, were directed against Urartu in the east. Events that can be dated have been highlighted in grey.

TABLE 46

BCE			Eponym	Annals	Left bronze bands	Right bronze bands
885	6		Naʾid-ilu			
884	7	0	Yarî	(Aššurnasirpal II)	Tr. from Carchemish (?	from Suḫu (R1)
883	1		Aššur-šēzibanni	Cm. to Mt Urinu	Cm. to Mt Urina (L2)	against Bīt-Adini (R2)
882	2		Aššur-nāṣir-apli (II)	Tr. from Suḫu	Tribute scene (L3)	from Suḫu (R3)
881	3		Aššur-iddin			
880	4		Miqti-adur			
879	5		Ša-ilima-damqa			
878	6		Dagan-bēlu-nāṣir	Tr. from Bīt-Adini		
877	7		Ninurta-pīya-uṣur			
876	8		Ninurta-bēlu-uṣur			
875	9		Iššiak-Aššur-lilbur			
874	10		Šamaš-upaḫḫir			
873	11		Nergal-āpil-kūmūa			
872	12		Qurdi-Aššur			
871	13	0	Aššur-lēʾi			
870	14	1	Aššur-natkil	Tr. from Tyre, Sidon	Tribute scene (L4)	from [Tyre] (R4)
869	15	2	Bēl-mudammiq			
868	16	3	Dayān-Ninurta			
867	17	4	Ištar-emūqāya			
866	18	5	Šamaš-nūrī	Cm. against Bīt-Adini	Campaign scene (L7)	against Bīt-Adini (R7)
865	19	6	Mannu-dān-ana-ili	Tribute of cedar logs	Tribute of timber (L8)	Tribute scene (R8)
864	20	7	Šamaš-bēlu-uṣur	-		
863	21	8	Ninurta-ilāya	(Kalhu inauguration)		
862	22	9	Ninurta-ēṭiranni	-		
861	23	10	Aššur/Nergal-ilāya	-		
860	24	11	Nergal-nīrka-daʾʾin	-		
859	25	0	Ṭāb-bēlu	(Shalmaneser III)		
858	1		Šarru-balti-nišī			
857	2		Shalmaneser (III)			

Unlike the annals, which give an exhaustive list of Aššurnasirpal's campaigns and tributes, the representations on the gates of Balawat of a few prestigious campaigns and tributes (without any epigraphs) were chosen mainly to magnify the king. The tribute, paid by Tyre and Sidon according to his annals, occupies a central place on the gate of Mamu's Temple (R4). It is noticeable that not all of these inscriptions refer directly to the subjects depicted on the slabs with them, but in the case of the historical reliefs at least, the annalistic text and the images tell the same general story, which they both present using the conventions of historical narrative. The comparison of these representations with the annals shows that they kept a summary of the campaigns and tributes by arranging them chronologically but also by grouping them geographically, which modified their dating. Dating the inscriptions is complicated because the Assyriologists who published and translated them reordered the final text to conform it to a chronological scheme that is not present in the original (Russell: 1999, 67-70,75,214). The tribute of Tyre has two incomprehensible elements: 1) although it was a central event in the reign of Aššurnasirpal, it is never dated, and 2) this exceptional tribute was not paid by a king, which is the usual case, but by the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon. Both of these anomalies can be resolved because in 870 BCE Shalmaneser (III) carried out his first campaign as co-regent of Aššurnasirpal II, so the tribute of Tyre was attributed to the king but without precision since it was Shalmaneser (III) who led the campaign. The king of Tyre is not mentioned because he probably refused to pay the tribute initially demanded, which forced Shalmaneser (III) to plunder the cities of Tyre and Sidon on behalf of Aššurnasirpal II.

The king on the far left (Fig. 22) with his Assyrian tiara is Aššurnasirpal II and the fortified city on an island on the far right, from which Phoenician ships sail, can only be Tyre. The numerous bearers probably carrying gold, silver and ivory (R4) as well as those delivering exotic objects or animals (L4/L5), illustrate the wealth of this tribute paid by the king of Tyre.

Fig. 22
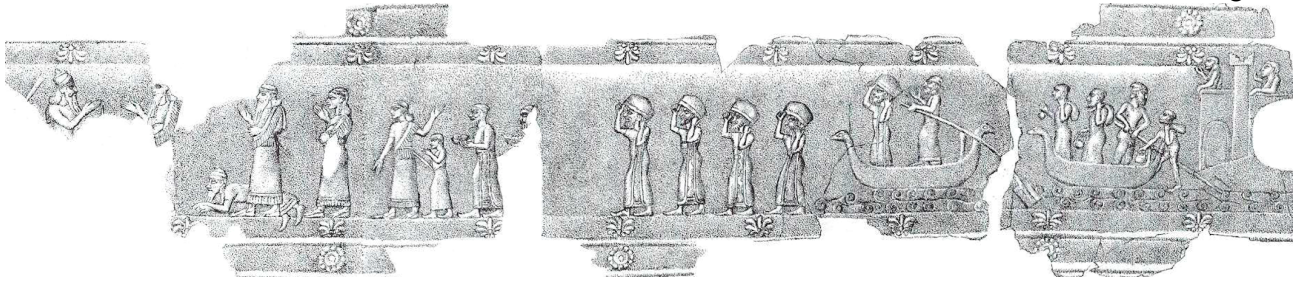
There is a major contradiction between the description of the tribute paid by the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, according to the annals, while on the bronze band (MM ASH II R4) Aššurnasirpal II is depicted facing a high Tyrian dignitary (Fig. 22 left), just in front of the king of Tyre (wearing a bonnet) and the queen. This representation is very unusual because according to Assyrian stylistic conventions the only high dignitary, of the same height as the king and facing him, can only be his co-regent (Shalmaneser), but as he is dressed in a typically Phoenician costume, he is a representative of the king of Tyre. The representation of the tribute of Tyre appearing on a slab (opposite) from the Palace of Aššurnasirpal at Kalhu (WA 124562) is even stranger since the high dignitary facing the king (not shown) is dressed in Phoenician costume but wears an Assyrian tiara and is followed by an offering bearer with two monkeys dressed in Syrian costume. The first figure is wearing Phoenician dress: a turban, long shirt, cloak over the shoulder and up-turned boots, cracking his thumbs showing submission to the king, the other is in Syrian dress: a bun of hair, a shorter shirt.
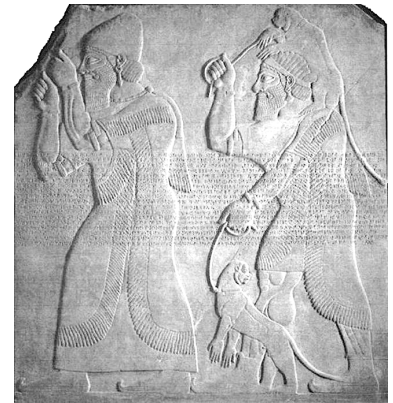
Fig. 24 (WA 124562)

Fig. 23 (MM ASH II R4)
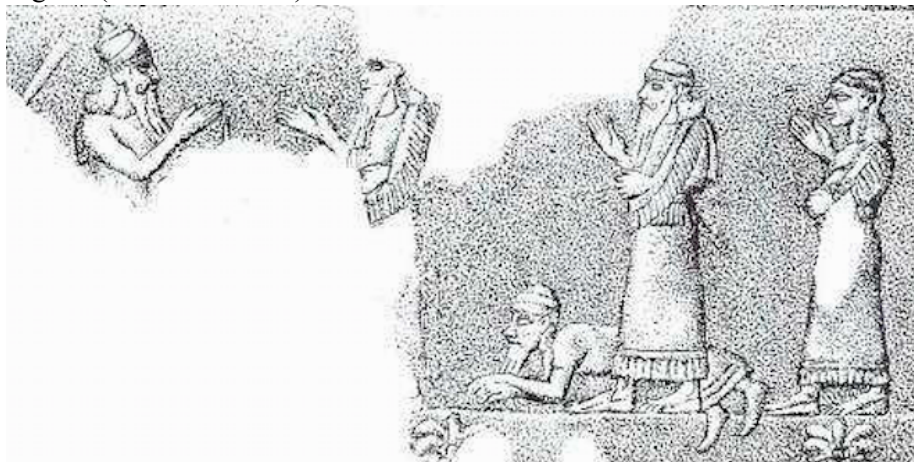
Aššurnasirpal II   Shalmaneser (III) Baal-manzer Pygmalion   Elissa[92]
(conventional depiction)

As these two scenes represent the tribute of the king of Tyre, paid in 870 BCE, they were done according to Assyrian conventions: Shalmaneser (III), Co-regent of King Aššurnasirpal II, presents the tribute as a representative of the king of Tyre and thus dressed in Phoenician costume. Since the annals of Aššurnasirpal II never mention the king of Tyre who paid the tribute, nor those of Shalmaneser III, and since the tribute was paid by the "inhabitants" (?) of Tyre and Sidon, the high Tyrian figure who parleyed with Aššurnasirpal II must have been a representative of the king of Tyre. The annals of Shalmaneser III give his name (in various forms): *Baʿaʾil[-?] the man of [T]yre, submitted to me (and) I received tribute from him; I received the tribute of Baʿali-man-zēri, the Tyrian; I received tribute from Baʿaʾil-man-zi [of Tyre].* Paradoxically, Baʿal-manzer/Baal-manzi who paid tribute, in 841 BCE according to the annals of

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[92] The English transcriptions of these four proper names from the 9th century BCE are approximate: Shalmaneser (Šulmānu-ašarēd), Baal-manzer (Baʿal-maʿzēr?), Pygmalion (Pumay-yaton), Elissa (Eliša).

Shalmaneser III (Grayson: 2002, 32-84,149), has disappeared from Shalmaneser III's representation of this tribute on the gates of Balawat (Fig. 25), on the other hand, the king of Tyre (Pygmalion) and the queen (Elissa) are this time present on their island as on the representation of the tribute of 870 BCE (Fales: 2017, 226). There are obvious chronological inconsistencies.

Fig. 25 (WA 124661)
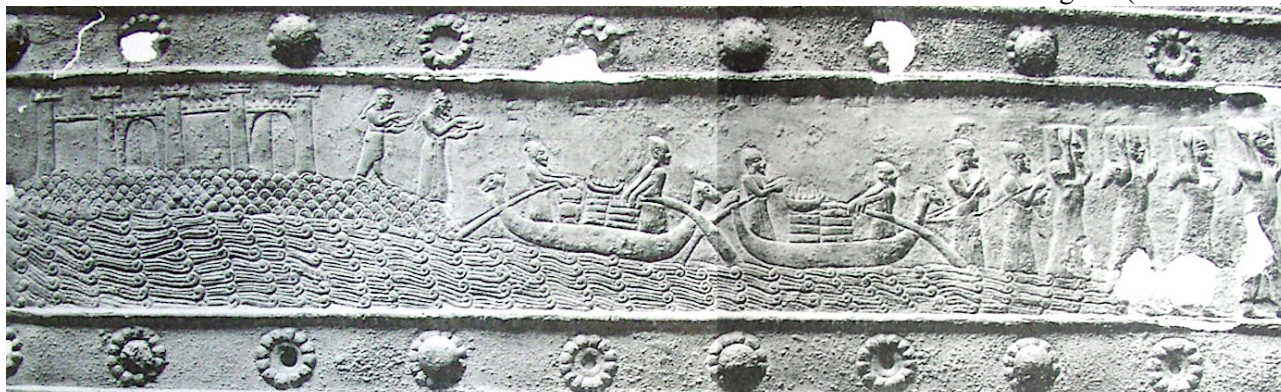
This tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians to Shalmaneser III (Fig. 25), engraved on the bronze bands of the gates of Balawat (Bands L2 and R3), is in fact impossible to date. Though no wall reliefs are known from the reign of Shalmaneser III, he did continue his predecessor's practice of labelling his small-scale reliefs with epigraphs. The largest collection known is on a pair of door leaves from the palace at Imgur-Enlil (Balawat), where similar doors of Aššurnasirpal were also found. The pair of doors comprised 16 bronze bands (L1-L8, R1-R8). Each was divided into two registers of relief, the subjects of which were mainly military conquest and the delivery of tribute. As with the Aššurnasirpal II doors, there were two types of inscriptions. On the vertical edge of each door leaf was a strip of bronze inscribed with an annalistic account of years 1, 3, 4, 8, and 9 (in 850 BCE). In addition, each of the bronze relief bands carried at least one epigraph; some had two and one had three. A total of 24 epigraphs are preserved. The two epigraphs of the tribute from Tyre and Sidon state:

> Tribute of the ships of the Tyrians (ṣu-ra-a-a) and Sidonians (ṣi-du-na-a-a), I received; Tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians: silver, gold, tin, bronze, wool, lapis lazuli (and) carnelian, I received (Russell: 1999, 79-81; Younger: 2016, 338).

It should be noted that Baal-manzer is not mentioned in the epigraphs. The events described in the epigraphs can be dated by comparing them with those in the annals. However, as many campaigns and tributes recur almost identically at different periods, it is difficult to identify the event mentioned in the epigraph and one of those mentioned in the annals. Since an annalistic account of years 1, 3, 4, 8 and 9 was inscribed (on the vertical edge of each door leaf), the events mentioned must have taken place before the year 9 of Shalmaneser III in 850 BCE (Curtis, Tallis: 2015, 59-79).

TABLE 47

	BCE	Left bands (Mamu Temple gates)	Right bands (Mamu Temple gates)	BCE	
L1	?	Campaign against Hamath	Attack on city of Baqanu in Babylonia	850	R1
L2	?	Tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians	Capture of city of Ubume in Shubria	854	R2
L3	857–853	Tribute from Unqu in North Syria	Tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians/ Attack on city of Ḫazazu	?	R3
L4	857–853	Tribute of Sangara of Carchemish	Attack on city of Dabigu in Bit-Adini	857	R4
L5	853	Capture of cities in Hamath/ Capture of Qarqar	Tribute of Bit-Dakuri in Babylonia/ Assyrian army on campaign	850	R5
L6	?	Expedition to source of Tigris/ Capture of city of Kulisi	Sacrifices by Sea of Nairi/ Capture of city of Sugunia in Urartu	859–856	R6
L7	859–856	Capture of an Urartian city/ Tribute of land of Gilzanu	Capture of cities in Hamath/ Submission to Shalmaneser	?	R7
L8	853 ?	Capture of cities belonging to Arame of Bit-Agusi	Attack on an Urartian city	859–856	R8

What can be deduced from this arrangement? Firstly, as is clear from the Table 47 the bands are clearly not arranged in a chronological order. In fact, from a chronological point of view they seem to be random. Given that the gates do not seem to be arranged chronologically or geographically (at least, certainly not rigorously), is there some other guiding principle? It is interesting —it cannot really be put more strongly than that— that in some cases a vaguely symmetrical arrangement can be noted. For example, campaigns

between 858 and 854 BCE (Bands R2–R4) are bracketed between bands showing a campaign or campaigns in Babylonia in 850 BCE (Bands R1, R5). So, is there a geographical arrangement? This does not seem to work either. Thus, we have campaigns in Babylonia on Bands R1 and R5, and campaigns in Hamath on Bands L1, L5, and R7. It is true that there does seem to be a preponderance of campaigns in the west in the upper part of the gates (Tyre and Sidon on Bands L2 and R3, Syria on Bands L1, L3, L4, R4 and L5), and a preponderance of campaigns in the north in the lower part of the gates (source of Tigris on Band L6, Urartu on Bands R6, L7, R8), but this can only have been a general principle and was not rigidly adhered to. So, we have Shubria (located north of the Upper Tigris) near the top of the gates and Bit-Agusi (in North Syria) at the bottom of the gates. Surprisingly, the bands are not even arranged in pairs. For example, one might have expected bands showing Tyre and Sidon and bands showing Urartu to be opposite each other but this is not the case. In any case there is a major contradiction between the tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians mentioned on the bronze bands (L2 and R3) which must be dated before 850 BCE and that of the annals which describe it precisely and date it to the 18th year of Shalmaneser III in 841 BCE. To resolve this contradiction the Assyriologists date this tribute to the first year of Shalmaneser III, in 858 BCE, because according to his annals he marched to the Mediterranean (Grayson: 2002, 74), but this hypothesis is false since no tribute is mentioned during this campaign, nor even the Tyrians and Sidonians:

> In my first regnal year [I crossed] the Euphrates in flood (and) marched to the western [sea. I washed] my weapons in the sea (and) made [sacrifices to my gods]. I climbed up the Amanus range (and) [cut] beams of [cedar (and) juniper]. I climbed up Mount Lallar (and) [erected] therein my royal statue. [In my second regnal year] I crossed [the Tigris] (and) approached the city Til-Barsip …

The tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians mentioned in the epigraph (R3) also mentions an attack on the city Ḫazazu which is not mentioned in the annals of Shalmaneser III but is associated with the tribute of the Tyrians and Sidonians paid in 870 BCE to Aššurnasirpal II (Younger: 2016, 338,503).

> I marched to Mount Lebanon. I went up to the Great Sea. I cleansed my weapons in the Great Sea (and) made sacrifices to my gods. At that time I received tribute from the kings of the sea-coast, from the lands of the people of Tyre, Sidon, Amurru, Byblos, Maḫallatu, Kaizu, Maizu, and the city Arvad which is (on an island) in the sea —silver, gold, tin, bronze, bronze casseroles, linen garments with multi-coloured trim, ivory of hippopotamuses (which are) sea creatures. At that time, I received from them with their tribute, large female monkeys (and) small female monkeys. I brought them (the monkeys) to my land Aššur (...) Moving on from the city Carchemish I took the way between Mounts Munzigānu (and) Hamurga. Leaving Mount Aḫānu on my left I approached the city Ḫazazu which (was ruled by) Lubarna, the Patinu. I received silver, gold, linen garments (Grayson: 2002, 226-227).

Consequently, Shalmaneser III reinterpreted the tribute he offered to Aššurnasirpal II, in 870 BCE, as co-regent (or his emissary who was able to speak Phoenician) under the name of Baal-manzer, eliminating Aššurnasirpal II and Baal-manzer and keeping only the king of Tyre (Pygmalion) and the queen (Elissa). These anomalies indirectly confirm the accounts of the founding of Carthage, well attested by Greek historians. According to a widespread tradition, Carthage was founded by Queen Elissa, also known as Dido "the wanderer" (Aubet: 2001, 216-218), who fled from Tyre after the murder of her husband by her younger brother Pygmalion, the king of Tyre. According to Justinus' account (History 18:4-6), Queen Elissa (Elisha in Phoenician) was the daughter of King Mattan I (906-877). On his death in 877 BCE, the throne was bequeathed to her jointly with her 11-year-old brother Pygmalion. To enable him to reign and have an heir, Elissa was married (probably at the age of 15) to his uncle Zakarbaal, high priest of Melqart, a man whose authority and wealth were comparable to that of the king[93]. However, the people of Tyre preferred to have Pygmalion as their king despite his young age. Therefore, when King Aššurnasirpal came to Phoenicia in 870 BCE (c. 49 years old at that time)[94], accompanied by his son Shalmaneser (c. 34 years old) who was on his first military campaign as co-regent, he met Pygmalion the king of Tyre (c. 18 years old) accompanied by Elissa (c. 22 years old) who was practically a co-regent. As he did not speak Assyrian, King Pygmalion must have addressed King Aššurnasirpal through an emissary (Ba'al-manzer), presumably a prince of his Tyrian royal court who spoke Assyrian. The four figures on the bronze band (R4) are therefore (from left to right): King Aššurnasirpal, Ba'almanzer, the Phoenician emissary of the co-regent Shalmaneser, King Pygmalion and Queen Elissa (the only Phoenician queen represented by the Assyrians).

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[93] In addition to becoming the tutelary deity of the great Tyrian maritime enterprises, the figure of Melqart was linked with exceedingly complex political and economic interests. In Carthage, for example, the cult of Melqart was introduced at the very origin of the city. Elissa, the foundress, had brought objects sacred to the god with her to northwest Africa. Her husband, Zakarbaal, had been the chief priest in the temple at Tyre, so he had ranked immediately after the king on the social scale. So, in one way or another, the royal family and the temple of Tyre are behind the myth of the founding of Carthage. The story goes that from then on the Carthaginians sent an annual offering or tribute to the god Melqart of Tyre, which consisted of a tenth of the public treasury. This custom continued until the Hellenistic period (Diodorus 20:14,2; Polybius 31,12; Arrianus 2:24,5).
[94] This age is calculated by assuming an average lifespan of 60 years for these Assyrian kings.

It is possible to reconstruct the sequence of this meeting between the two kings (in 870 BCE). King Pygmalion had to agree to pay a gigantic tribute, but Zakarbaal who managed the immense wealth of the temple of Melqart had to refuse to give it to the Assyrian king, which obliged Pygmalion to have him assassinated. His widow, Elissa, together with a group of Tyrians loyal to her husband, who were known as princes[95] (Is 23:8), fled secretly to Cyprus after paying homage to Melqart. The Tyrian diaspora was thus the immediate consequence of political tension in Tyre, which had brought a young monarch, supported by the people, face to face with part of the city aristocracy, led by the king's own uncle, Zakarbaal. Consequently, King Aššurnasirpal had his initial meeting with King Pygmalion and Elissa, his co-regent, represented on the gates of Balawat to negotiate the tribute to be paid through Ba'almanzer. However, after the murder of Zakarbaal, the priest of the temple of Melqart, and the flight of his wife, Queen Elissa, Aššurnasirpal was obliged to extort the originally planned tribute, which was supposed to be less because Elissa had taken with her a large part of the temple's wealth in order to safeguard it and build a new city called Carthage ('new city' in Phoenician) in order to preserve the Phoenician sovereignty. These events forced Shalmaneser III to modify several elements on the representation of this famous tribute, paid by the inhabitants of the city of Tyre, in 841 BCE according to his annals. There are several notable modifications: 1) as Shalmaneser III takes credit for this tribute, negotiated by his father, no Assyrian king appears on the bronze band, 2) the inhabitants of Tyre have been replaced by king Pygmalion and queen Elissa (to make it look as if this tribute had been paid voluntarily when it was an extortion), 3) Ba'almanzer, who had paid the tribute, according to the annals, disappeared from the scene, and finally, 4) the precious objects of the initial tribute were replaced by several piles of (silver) lingots.

Shalmaneser III appropriated the tribute of Tyre, paid in 870 BCE to Aššurnasirpal II, by falsifying it, as can be seen by comparing its representation on the gates of Balawat with its description in his annals, which mention it during his 18th year of reign, in 841 BCE, when he finally crushed Hazael's army. This coincidence is not fortuitous, because the Assyrian expansion towards the west (as far as the Mediterranean), initiated by Aššurnasirpal (from the beginning of his reign) was continued by Shalmaneser (from the beginning of his reign) but with an unforeseen obstacle. Indeed, during the heavy tribute extorted from the king of Tyre in 870 BCE, Hazael (885-840), the king of Syria (Damascus), understood that these Assyrian attacks were going to continue, so he organised a powerful army under the leadership of a commander-in-chief, Hadadezer (870-845) and made alliances with all the other Aramaic kings, except with Jehu (885-856) the king of Israel. Shalmaneser (859-824) first led several campaigns against the kingdom of Bit-Adini, from 859 to 856 BCE, before annexing it definitively after the capture of Ahuni, then against the kingdom of Syria, from 855 to 841 BCE, before definitively annihilating the army of Hazael (885-840?) but without being able to annex it. After having plundered the cities of Hazael, including the rich city of Hazor, Shalmaneser considered that this rich booty, part of which came from the cities of Jehu plundered by Hazael (2Ki 10:31-33), was somehow an indirect tribute paid by Jehu (rather than a plunder of the cities of Hazael) and to increase his prestige, Shalmaneser associated it with the one in which he had participated as co-regent during his first military campaign against Tyre.

The tragic events that led Queen Elissa to leave the city of Tyre, to travel the Mediterranean and to found a new Tyre, had a strong influence on her contemporaries, especially the Greeks living in the Mediterranean ports in contact with the Phoenicians. According to Strabo (Geography III:2:13-14):

> The expedition of Odysseus, as it seems to me, since it actually had been made to Iberia, and since Homer had learned about it through inquiry, gave him an historical pretext; and so he also transferred the Odyssey, just as he had already transferred the Iliad, from the domain of historical fact to that of creative art, and to that of mythical invention so familiar to the poets. The Phoenicians, I say, were the informants of Homer; and these people occupied the best of Iberia and Libya before the age of Homer and continued to be masters of those regions until the Romans broke up their empire.

According to the Parian Chronicle (dated 264 BCE) Homer was born in 907 BCE and lived at the time of Diognetus (892-864), an archon of Athens and according to Herodotus (485-425), who wrote his histories around 430 BCE, Homer lived 400 years before him (Histories IV:53), that is, around 830 BCE (?). According to this chronological information Homer wrote his two famous stories around 860-850 BCE, just

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[95] Bitias, the commander of the Tyrian fleet (Virgil, *Aen.* I:738) and Barcas, the ancestor of the Barcidas (Silius Italicus, *Punica* I:72-75), figured among the princes who accompanied Elissa in her flight. In Gadir and Carthage, the figure of Melqart finds its way even into the story of the foundation. This is probably a reflection of the firm intention to associate the origins of these western settlements with the city of Tyre and, by extension, with its temple and its king. Not only did the god appear in association with the oldest settlements in the west, but, occasionally, the building of a temple preceded the founding of the city. This seems to have been the case at Cadiz. Moreover, in certain foundations, the figure of Melqart had considerable weight, as, again, in Gadir. Only in Gadir and Tyre were the god and his relics worshipped and his resurrection commemorated annually (Silius Italicus 3:22). Two other very ancient temples were established in the west at the same time as the founding of the Tyrian colony: in Utica (Pliny N. Hist. 16:40) and in Lixus in Atlantic Morocco (Pliny 19:63).

after the flight of Queen Elissa to found Carthage. Velleius Paterculus states that the founding of Carthage coincided with Lycurgus (Roman History I:6), the legendary lawgiver of Sparta who reigned 130 years before King Theopompus (720-675), according to Plutarch (Life of Lycurgus §IX). According to Tatian, Lycurgus made his laws 100 years before the Olympics, or 876 BCE (Discourses to Greeks XLI). Lycurgus is credited with the formation of many Spartan institutions integral to the country's rise to power, which proves that Greek writing existed at that time[96]. The chronological indications of Homer's life (907-c.840) in the Parian Chronicle appear to be reliable[97]. According to these historians, Homer's work and Lycurgus' laws are dated over the period 870-850 BCE. All this historical information is consistent with the assumption that Queen Elissa's travels around the Mediterranean inspired the poet Homer to create the travels of Ulysses (Elissa also inspired the character of Penelope, the wise and faithful wife of Ulysses).

By virtue of the implicit archaeological principle that "the absence of evidence is the evidence of absence", archaeologists have claimed (before 2000) that Homer's stories could not have been written before 750 BCE, because the oldest Greek inscription ('Nestor's Cup')[98] was dated around 730 BCE. Since 2000, several Greek inscriptions dated to about 800 BCE have been discovered, as well as several groups of Phoenician letters dated to about 900 BCE, which do not form Phoenician words, have been found in Crete, leading scholars to believe that the Cypro-Minoan syllabary (inspired by Linear B used in Athens from 1450 to 1150 BCE), which was used in Cyprus until 1050 BCE, was gradually replaced from c. 1000 BCE by the Greek alphabet inspired by Phoenician alphabet (Bourogiannis, 2019, 151-180). Since Homer's dialect is mainly Ionic and includes many Aeolic forms, he must have lived in Euboea. By cross-checking all this information, some specialists believe now that Homer (907-c.840) may have lived in Lefkandi, a coastal village on the island of Euboea about 50 kilometres north of Athens. The historical information was therefore relatively reliable, despite its imperfect transmission.

CONCLUSION

The Assyrian chronology of the first millennium BCE is perfectly determined, but contrary to the belief of Assyriologists, co-regencies were frequent among Assyrian reigns, which consequently significantly alters the dating of the synchronisms with Israelite chronology. The biblical chronology of the divided kingdom, from Solomon (1017-997) to Zedekiah (598-587), calculated from the unmodified Masoretic text is impressively consistent and contains no errors either in the dating of the reigns or in the dating of the synchronisms with the Assyrian reigns, especially during the co-regencies. Edwin Thiele's hypothesis of an absence of Assyrian co-regencies and of his arbitrary addition of nine additional Hebrew co-regencies is doubly false. The synchronisms that Thiele has used to anchor his biblical chronology are all wrong. For example, the tribute paid by Jehu (885-856) to Shalmaneser III (859-824) in 841 BCE is a falsification of a plundering of Hazael's cities when his army was destroyed, which itself came from a plundering of Jehu's cities by Hazael (885-840). The tribute paid by Menahem (771-660), which Tiglath-pileser III (745-727) reports in 738 BCE, when he placed Hosea (738-729) on the throne, had been paid in 765 BCE when he was co-regent as Pulu "heir" (782-746), named Bar Ga'yah "Son of majesty" in Aramaic. Similarly, the tribute paid by Hezekiah (726-697) in 712 BCE corresponds exactly to the 3rd campaign of Sennacherib when he was co-regent (715-705) to Sargon II (722-705). Finally, Thiele confused Ahab, King of Israel, with Ahabbu, King of Sam'al, because of the similarity of their names. Ahabbu (855-825) was an Asrielite[99] (sir-'a-la-a-a), not an Israelite (mār Ḫu-um-ri-i), he had joined the coalition led by the powerful Syrian army chief Hadadezer (870-845) against King Shalmaneser III at the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE, while the Israelite king Ahab (919-898) was attacked by the Syrian king Ben-Hadad II (920-885) who once defeated returned the cities taken by Ben-Hadad I (1Ki 20:1-34).

The fact that there are no errors among the hundred or so biblical dates shows that the biblical writers were eyewitnesses to the events they described and that later copyists were extremely meticulous.

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[96] Similarly, the list of Athenian archons, which goes back to Medon (1068-1048), proves that Greek writing existed at the time of Medon to record him in the Athenian archives.

[97] The style of the Chronicle's entries suggests that the ultimate source of the information in the Parian Chronicle was the archives of the city of Athens. Authors Rodger Young and Andrew Steinmann base their views on three key inferences from the available evidence. 1) The naming of the reigning king or archon in Athens for each entry is consistent with an Athenian provenance of the material. 2) The source behind each entry must have provided a year-number from which the author of the Parian Chronicle was able to calculate the years to his own time, thus suggesting that the archives from which the information was taken were keeping track of the years since the founding of the kingship in Athens under Cecrops. Such framing chronicles are known to have been kept in Rome: the *Anno Urbis Conditae*, from which events were reckoned. 3) The annalistic style of the Chronicle is in keeping with the genre of annalistic records such as the Assyrian Eponym Canon, in which the purpose was not so much to describe events as to give an accurate record of when the events occurred, as related to the years since the founding of the kingship and also tying the event to the king or archon who was currently reigning (Young, Steinman: 2012, 223-248).

[98] If Nestor's cup (Iliad 11:632-641) was legendary in 730 BCE Homer's account must have been written a century earlier.

[99] Asriel was in north-eastern Samaria (Nb 26:31) and therefore not Israel (Lemaire: 1973, 239-243).

Annex –Are the first three kings of Israel historical or fictional?

The historicity of the first three kings of Israel, Saul, David and Solomon, was disputed from the 1980s onwards, especially by archaeologists who could find no archaeological evidence of the famous King Solomon. A controversy therefore began between the classical historians, who relied mainly on written sources and the synchronisms between the different chronologies, and the archaeologists, who relied more on archaeological finds and carbon-14 dating. From then on, the classical historians were called maximalists and the archaeologists minimalists (some prefer to be called 'critical archaeologists').

Maximalism and Minimalism are labels for two opinions about the relation between written evidence and archaeology, which sometimes are conflicting. The expressions are used when discussing the past of ancient Israel, but similar debates are known in Roman, Greek, and Iranian archaeology. These two categories of historians reflect two conceptions of historical truth: maximalists interpret uncertain archaeological evidence by relying on historical evidence that is considered more reliable, whereas minimalists interpret uncertain historical evidence by relying on archaeological evidence that is considered more reliable. These two conceptions of truth, the one based on texts versus the one based on observation, resemble the debate on heliocentricity that took place between the scientists of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Galileo. The former relied on the biblical texts, which say that the sun rises and sets, to conclude that the sun revolved around the earth, whereas the latter relied on astronomical observation to conclude that the earth revolved around the sun. Most people remembered that, even if Galileo had to disavow his scientific conclusions, religious truth had just been disproved for the first time and that scientific truth based on reason was now to be preferred to religious truth based on faith. The minimalists (the majority) believe that they are basing themselves on a scientific interpretation of the archaeological excavations, whereas the maximalists (a minority, mainly practising believers) are basing themselves on a religious interpretation of the texts. There are thus two truths: one based on reason (scientific truth) and one based on faith (religious truth). According to this binary conception, scientists defend historical truth while religious people defend myths. This simplistic choice was not Galileo's because he was both a great and honest scientist and a devout and honest Catholic, he did not oppose the biblical texts to his scientific observations but only the interpretation of the biblical texts by his Church to the interpretation of his astronomical observations. In fact, he explained to Pope Urban VIII, who was his friend, that there could not be two truths, a scientific truth and a religious truth. The pope pointed out to him that the unity of the Church rested on the uniqueness of the truth validated by the Church, not by science, which could be wrong. Galileo reluctantly accepted this conclusion only because the Catholic Church, even if it made mistakes, ensured his eternal salvation, which was not the case with science. Consequently, there cannot be two truths because interpretations, whether scientific or religious, can be criticised and therefore refuted. On the other hand, the historical truths of the maximalists, based on a critical edition of the texts, and the archaeological truths of the minimalists, based on a critical observation of the archaeological excavations, can only complement each other, and if they oppose each other, then one of them is false because there cannot be two truths.

Early Greek historians were confronted with the distinction between myths "historical events magnified by religious lies" and history "the truth distorted by errors of transmission". Greek historians were not gullible (any more or less than we are), they knew that Homer's accounts of the Trojan War were myths since no one ever saw the gods and demi-gods of mythology living with humans, but the difficult question to resolve was whether this war had really taken place and had a historical basis. Herodotus, the Father of (chronological) History, and Thucydides, the Father of historical accuracy, solved this difficult question[100]. The two means developed by Herodotus and Thucydides are the two scientific tools of the historian for separating myths from history. The historian, like the investigating judge, must have the skills to assess the veracity of written evidence and its consistency with physical evidence to establish the truth. The investigating judge must examine partial and sometimes contradictory testimony and compare it with the physical evidence. To resolve certain contradictions between all these elements, he or she proceeds to a chronological reconstruction of the presumed facts to confirm or invalidate the testimonies examined by the court and thus establish the truth and finally condemn the liars. The historian proceeds in the same way. The

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[100] Herodotus investigated (name of his book) to find out if this war had really happened. He found that the myths were not verifiable, as these stories did not give precise chronological and geographical information but were content with a vague presentation such as "once upon a time in a distant land, king so-and-so..." whereas a historical event could be precisely located in time and space. He understood that chronology must be the backbone of history and so he investigated the Egyptian priests who had records going back to the first pharaohs. With this information, Herodotus (485-425) was able to estimate that this war had taken place about 800 years before his time. The great Alexandrian scholar Eratosthenes even managed to calculate that the 10 years of the Trojan War lasted from 1194 to 1184 BCE. Herodotus concluded that, thanks to chronology, and despite the mythological elements of Homer's stories, there had been a war between Mycenae and Troy. Thucydides (460-398) proceeded in a different way, he noted that unfortunately there were no Greek texts left mentioning these past events, but the archaeological remains of Troy that still existed in his time (c. 400 BCE) proved that this famous city had suffered destruction several centuries in the distant past, these archaeological remains indirectly proving the existence of this war.

historian must examine partial and sometimes contradictory written testimonies and confront them with the elements uncovered by archaeological excavations. To resolve certain contradictions between all these elements, the (honest) historian proceeds to a chronological reconstruction of the presumed facts to confirm or refute the different testimonies and thus establish the truth and finally validate the historical truth and refute the myths[101].

From the 2000s onwards, archaeologists, notably Finkelstein and Silberman in their book: *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts*, began to argue that the divided monarchy, as presented in the Bible, was a founding myth of Israel comparable to the story of the Trojan War in the *Iliad and Odyssey*, the founding text of Greek history. In the following years, these two archaeologists went a step further by asserting in their book (in 2007): *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition*, that these kings of Israel were largely fictional, even though the name of the 'House of David (BYTDWD)' appears on the stelae of Tel Dan and Mesha (dating from about 850 BCE).

The denial of historical facts, despite the presence of clear evidence from historians, for racist or political purposes is called negationism, but this definition could be applied to archaeologists who deny certain historical facts from the Bible, despite the presence of clear evidence from historians, for religious purposes (to show that the Bible is historically false and was not inspired by God). The apparently scientific debate between archaeologists (most of whom are atheists) and maximalist historians (most of whom are believers) is an ideological debate between historians, who believe in their probable certainties, and archaeologists, who believe in their probable hypotheses (by being sure of their doubts (!), they are as fanatical as those who are sure of their truths). For example, David (1057-1017) and Solomon (1017-977) would be legendary kings according to archaeologists, but according to the Bible the king of Tyre, Hiram I (1025-991), collaborated with these two Israelite kings to build the Jerusalem temple from 1013 BCE. If they were logical, archaeologists would have to consider Hiram I as fictional as well as all the kings of Tyre before Hiram II (830-800) because there is no archaeological evidence for the existence of these kings. Secondly, how to explain the extraordinary coincidence in the precise chronology of the kings of Tyre transmitted by the Greek historian Menander of Ephesus (c. 200 BCE), which coincides perfectly with that of the Bible, with the astounding precision of the date of the beginning of the construction of the temple, dated 1013 BCE in both chronologies. The only rational explanation for this extraordinary coincidence is to admit that both accounts drew on official records that were written by contemporaries of the events. Archaeologists often use the scarcity of archaeological evidence to cast doubt on the existence of King Solomon. This seemingly logical argument may impress the ignorant, but it should be noted that the absence of archaeological evidence is the rule for the period after the attack on the lands of the Sea, known as the 'Dark Ages' dated approximately from 1150 to 850 BCE. For example, there are no inscriptions or buildings (absolutely none) mentioning the powerful kings of Elam (Joannès: 2001, 272-276) between the Elamite kings Humban-imena I (1080-1055?) and Humban-tahra I (770-756). The absence of evidence is therefore not evidence of absence.

Another means used by archaeologists to discredit maximalist historians is to minimize the archaeological evidence for the biblical account. For example, the reading of the word 'House of David', in the sense of 'dynasty of David', appearing in line 31 of the Mesha stele has long been disputed, but a high-resolution reading has confirmed the reading BT[D]WD (Langlois: 2019, 23-47). This reading poses a problem for archaeologists, for if David was only the head of a local chiefdom, as Finkelstein claims, how can one explain that Mesha (900-870), a powerful Moabite king, was defeated by Jehoram (897-885), the king of Israel, when he joined forces with Jehoshaphat (916-893), the king of Judah (1Ki 3:1-19) of the 'House of David' (BTDWD). At that time the 'house of David' (BTDWD) was therefore more powerful than the kings of Israel. We also note on the Mesha stele several elements identical to the biblical account, such as the "King of Israel" (line 5), the name "YHWH" (line 18) and the phrase "the sheep of the land. And he lived in Horonen, the House of David" (line 31). The Mesha stele thus confirms the biblical account, but of course it turns a defeat into a victory:

> As regards Mesha the king of Moab, he became a sheep raiser, and he paid to the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and a 100,000 unshorn male sheep. And it came about that as soon as Ahab died, the king of Moab began to revolt against the king of Israel. Consequently, King Jehoram went out on that day from

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[101] This method of historical validation makes it possible, for example, to classify the famous King Arthur among the mythical characters, not among the historical kings, because the oldest writings relating to his existence do not give any place that can be located, nor any name of a character that can be identified, nor any event that can be precisely dated. The Battle of Badon was credited as a major victory for the Britons, stopping the encroachment of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms for a period. The earliest references to the battle by the British cleric Gildas date to the 6th century. It is chiefly known today for the supposed involvement of King Arthur, a tradition that first clearly appeared in the 9th-century Historia Brittonum, possibly written by Nennius. Because of the limited number of sources, there is no certainty about the date, location, or details of the fighting.

Samaria and mustered all Israel (...) When the king of Moab saw that the battle had proved too strong for him, he at once took with him 700 men drawing sword to break through to the king of Edom; but they were not able to. Finally, he took his firstborn son who was going to reign in place of him and offered him up as a burnt sacrifice upon the wall. And there came to be great indignation against Israel, so that they pulled away from against him and returned to their land (2Ki 3:4-27).

Another example that proves that the 'House of David' was known in the 9th century BCE comes from the Tel Dan stele of which Hazael (885-840), the powerful king of Syria, is the author. In this stele he attributes the simultaneous execution of Jehoram (897-885) king of Israel and Ahazyahu (886-885) king of the 'House of David', who were killed by Jehu (885-856) according to the biblical text.

He went with Jehoram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael the king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead, but the Syrians struck down Jehoram. So Jehoram the king returned to get healed at Jezreel from the wounds that the Syrians got to inflict upon him at Ramah when he fought Hazael the king of Syria. As for Ahazyahu the son of Jehoram the king of Judah ('House of David'), he went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, for he was sick (...) Jehoram the king of Israel and Ahazyahu the king of Judah went out, each in his own war chariot. As they continued on out to meet Jehu, they got to find him in the tract of land of Naboth the Jezreelite (...) And Jehu himself filled his hand with a bow and proceeded to shoot Jehoram between the arms, so that the arrow came out at his heart, and he collapsed in his war chariot (2Ki 8:28-9:29).

The Tel Dan stele thus confirms the biblical text on the following points: 1) the name and title of the kings, [Jeho]ram king of Israel and [Ahaz]yahu king of the House of David, 2) simultaneous execution of these two kings in 885 BCE at the beginning of the reign of Hazael. It is remarkable that this powerful Syrian king (he had opposed Shalmaneser III on several occasions) refers to the king of Judah as king of the house of David, which proves that this expression was better known in his time and therefore that David was considered the founder of the dynasty. If David had only been the head of a local chiefdom, how could he have been known to Mesha, the king of Moab and Hazael, the king of Syria.

Whenever there is evidence pointing to a kingdom centred on Jerusalem before the late 9th century BCE, Israel Finkelstein is quick to dismiss that evidence to defend his model of the Northern Kingdom of Israel forming into a state first and Jerusalem continuing to be a small highland village well into the 9th century BCE. However, six clay seals from the 10th century BCE unearthed at Khirbet Summeily (Hardin, Rollston, Blakel: 2014: 299-301), an early Iron Age site in southern Israel, suggest that there was more political complexity in the region at that time than had been previously thought. The very existence of those six bullae (right) strongly supports the idea that Khirbet Summeily was a "governmental installation" across the transitional Iron Age I/IIA (c. 1000 BCE) landscape (Katz, Faust: 2014, 103-112). This has been acknowledged by many recent scholars who tend to dismiss

any emergence of political complexity occurring prior to the arrival of the Assyrians in the region in the later 8th century BCE. If the great empires such as Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia had no conflict with Israel during the reigns of David and Solomon (and therefore no supporting documents existed) this was not the case of many kingdoms around: Phoenicia and Syria in the north, Amon, Moab and Edom in the east, Philistia in the south, to mention only the most important. As these kingdoms have all disappeared after the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562), their records did not exist for a long time, however two kings (those of Syria and Moab) erected steles attesting that a Judean kingdom was widely known at the 9th century BCE as House-of-David. Another evidence, King Solomon's famous copper mines, long considered legendary, actually existed and were located in the Timna Valley. The most important site is Site 34 ("Slaves' Hill"), one of the largest smelting camps, which has been dated by the CTV project (^{14}C) to around 1000 BCE[102], which corresponds exactly to the beginning of Solomon's reign (1017-977)[103].

If nothing remains of the temple built by Solomon (in 1013 BCE), on the other hand, the biblical text gives an information which confirms its date:

In the meantime, Hiram sent to the king 120 talents of gold. Now this is the account of those conscripted for forced labour that King Solomon levied to build the house of Jehovah and his own house and the Mound and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer (1Ki 9:14-15).

Archaeological excavations have revealed that these three cities: Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer were indeed fortified and, moreover, at the same time (Mazar: 1990, 384). Indeed, the existence without known parallel of a "triple pincers" gate (Fig. 22) at the entrance of each city implies a simultaneous construction. Yadin had logically attributed all these constructions to Solomon, but Finkelstein showed that the dating of

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[102] https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/334274/reporting
[103] According to Thiele's biblical chronology, Solomon's reign (971-931) is moved forward by 46 years.

these buildings was not certain and could also be later, under the reign of Omri. According to the biblical text, Omri only built and fortified the city of Samaria (1Ki 16:23-27).
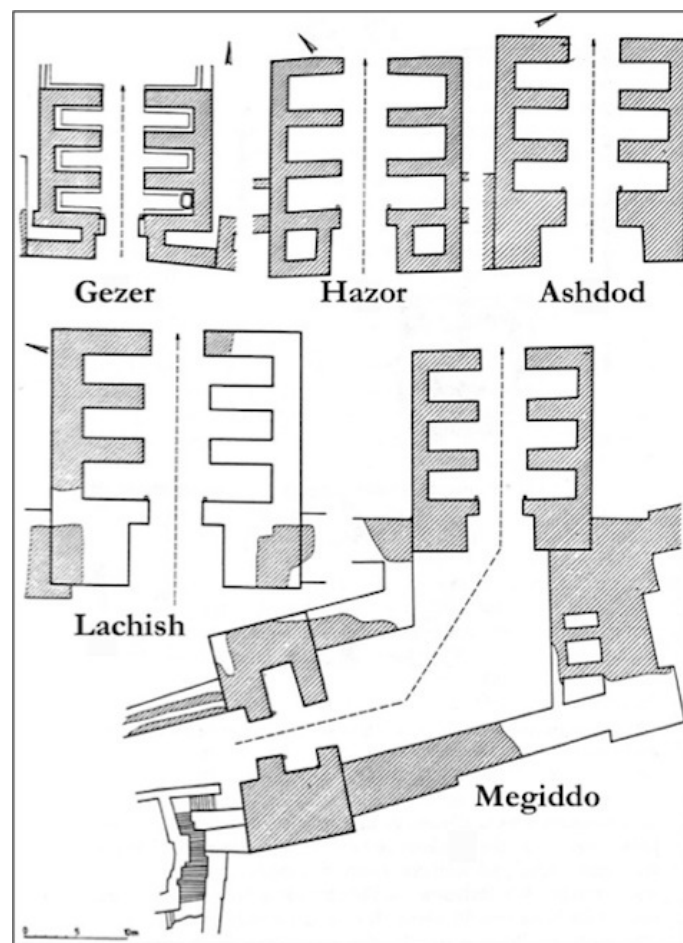

Fig. 22

The dating of these buildings is difficult to establish because these cities were rearranged several times by successive kings. Moreover, the dating of the stones by ^{14}C being impossible, all archaeological speculations are possible. The existence of the six-chamber gates at the entrance of each city is unparalleled outside Israel and requires a simultaneous construction. As these gates were restored by later kings the dating of original buildings is ambiguous, however because Hazor and Megiddo belonged to northern Israel (which became Samaria later) while Gezer, Ashdod and Lachish belonged to southern Israel (which became Judea later) this simultaneity in the building implies that it occurred only when the kingdom of Israel was united under Solomon's reign. Once again Finkelstein's argument is dishonest, for while it is true that it is indeed impossible to date these buildings by ^{14}C, but the very particular (and unique) shape of the gates of Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer, built by Solomon according to the biblical text, constitutes a coincidence that is reasonably difficult to deny. In fact, the main argument of Finkelstein is as follows: *if you trust in the Bible, you are a little bit naïve, not to say gullible.*

Minimalist archaeologists use three main techniques to discredit historians, who are called maximalists by these archaeologists: 1) to assert peremptorily and dogmatically that the Bible contains myths 2) and gross anachronisms, 3) when an archaeological discovery confirms the biblical account, minimalist archaeologists systematically attack both the dating and the translation of the inscription (they propose another possible but implausible translation).

1. According to Israel Finkelstein and Thomas Römer the Torah of Moses was not written in the 15th century BCE, as the text claims, but by unknown authors in the 6th century BCE (Finkelstein, Römer: 2019, 17-30) after the return from the Babylonian exile. To prove this implausible claim (Jewish scholars would have ignored these unknown authors) Finkelstein proposes the following explanation: during their stay in Babylon the Jews discovered the existence of the Tower of Babel (built by Marduk at the beginning of mankind according to Babylonian tradition) and integrated into their writings this Babylonian myth relating the end of a unique language (around 3000 BCE according to the Septuagint). For archaeologists, there was never a confusion of languages, because according to the theory of evolution, languages appeared gradually over several tens of thousands of years. This evolutionary dogma is contradicted by archaeological findings which have shown that the three oldest known written

languages, Sumerian, Egyptian and Proto-Elamite, appeared suddenly and simultaneously around 3000 BCE. Moreover, all three languages were complex from the start.

2. According to Israel Finkelstein, the story of Abraham, set at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE according to the Bible, mentions the use of camels (Gn 12:4-9) that would not have been domesticated until the end of the 2nd millennium BCE, a gross anachronism of one millennium. This claim is picked up on by most minimalist archaeologists because of Finkelstein's academic prestige but is never verified. If these archaeologists had verified this claim, which is the source of his media prestige, they would have discovered that Finkelstein was familiar with Professor Richard W Bulliet's book: *The camel and the wheel* (1975), in which he demonstrates that the camel was domesticated towards the end of the 3rd millennium BCE. Bulliet, who was a professor of history at Columbia University, received the Dexter Prize from the Society for the History of Technology (in 1977) for this book. Finkelstein is therefore an impostor who falsifies history (to the great joy of atheists). If these minimalist archaeologists were honest, they would have cited the numerous works that show that the camel was indeed domesticated towards the end of the 3rd millennium BCE[104], as Richard Bulliet had already demonstrated in 1975. Finkelstein refuses to cite these numerous works (Kitchen: 2003, 338-339,640) because they have not been published in peer-reviewed journals. Again, this is a gross lie, as several peer-reviewed journals[105] have validated Richard Bulliet's seminal work.

3. The few inscriptions discovered by archaeologists that confirm the biblical account, especially the period of the first three kings of Israel, are systematically discredited by minimalist archaeologists. For example, according to the Bible, Taita (1045-1000) as king of Hamath, congratulated King David when he defeated Hadadezer, in 1042 BCE, a king of Aram-Zobah (2Sa 8:5-10; 1Ch 18:9-10). Archaeologists had originally claimed that Taita (I) was a fictitious king invented to glorify David's power, but a hieroglyphic Luwian inscription was discovered in 2003 in the temple of Aleppo that belonged to a king of Palastin (a Syrian land including Hamath and Aleppo that was called Pelešet 'Philistine' in Egyptian) named Taita. Concerning the dating of Taita's reign, a temple beam attributed to Taita I was dated to 1045 BCE +/- 45 by ^{14}C dating (Kohlmeyer: 2009, 190-202). This discovery thus confirmed the name of the king mentioned in the Bible, the name of his capital (Hamath) and the period of his existence in the mid-11th century BCE (Dušek, Mynářová: 2019, 203-204). The dating of this inscription, which indirectly confirmed the reign of David (1057-1017) as well as the strength of his armed forces, was redated based on another inscription in the name of Taita found and dated by epigraphy to the mid-10th century BCE. As the two Taita are separated by a century, archaeologists concluded that the ^{14}C dating of the first one was wrong, and that the dating of the second Taita should be retained, but it is more logical to conclude that there was a Taita I (c.1045-1000) and a Taita II (c.980-950), grandson of Taita I (Hawkins: 2011, 35-54; Novák: 2019, 92-101).

The above examples show that when archaeological excavations confirm biblical events, minimalist archaeologists reject these interpretations not on scientific grounds but only because these interpretations contradict their prejudices. For example, Professor Mazar's claim that she had discovered the remains of David's palace[106] has provoked much discussion inside and outside academic circles. Some archaeologists rejected the claim that the foundation walls were the remains of David's palace only out of scepticism. These archaeologists claimed that the remains could not be linked to David and his kingdom because they were convinced that this famous figure was a myth. The discovery was also rejected by the Palestinians who claimed that the Jewish presence in Jerusalem was a religious myth created by the Israelis to justify Jewish historical claims to the city. Palestinians also claimed that the Israelis were trying to put the archaeological findings into a biblical context to justify Israel's occupation of an Islamic holy place. For many Palestinians, Mazar's claim was further evidence of Jewish colonialism. The dating of the archaeological finds is therefore contested not on scientific grounds, but because of religious prejudice. Interestingly, Finkelstein, who was

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[104] https://biblearchaeology.org/research/contemporary-issues/3832-the-date-of-camel-domestication-in-the-ancient-near-east?

[105] Abdullah al-SAUD, *The Domestication of Camels and Inland Trading Routes in Arabia*, Atlal. The Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology 14, 1996, 129-136. Edward LIPINSKI, *Itineraria Phoenicia*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 127, 2004, 205-212. Steven A. ROSEN, Benjamin A. SAIDEL, *The Camel and the Tent: An Exploration of Technological Change among Early Pastoralists*, Journal of Near Eastern Studies 69:1, 2010, 74-76.

[106] The archaeological remains of Solomon's temple are as weak as those of the City of David and pose the same dating difficulties. A 3,000-year-old defensive wall, probably built by King Solomon, was uncovered in Jerusalem (2010) by Dr. Eilat Mazar, who directed the excavation for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The 10th century BC wall is 70 metres long and about 6 metres high. It stands along what was then the boundary of Jerusalem, between the Temple Mount, which remains the city's main landmark, and the ancient City of David, now a modern Arab neighbourhood called Silwan. The stone barrier is part of a defensive complex comprising a gatehouse, an adjacent building and a watchtower, which has only been partially excavated. Comparison of the latest finds with city walls and gates from the First Temple period, as well as pottery found at the site, allow us to state with great certainty that the wall uncovered is the one built by King Solomon in Jerusalem in the 10th century BCE. The pottery shards found in the backfill of the lower floor of the royal building, near the gatehouse, also attest to the dating of the complex to the 10th century BCE.

not involved in the excavations, does admit the possibility that King Solomon built the wall (who else could have built this imposing wall?), but he cautions against interpreting the findings too biblically: *in David's time, Jerusalem was little more than a "mountain village", David himself was a ragged upstart similar to Pancho Villa, and his legion of followers looked more like 500 people, sticks in hand, shouting, swearing and spitting - nothing like the great chariot armies described in the text. Of course, we are not looking at David's palace*! Finkelstein howls with laughter at the mere mention of Mazar's discovery: *I mean, come on. I respect her efforts. I like her - a very nice lady. But this interpretation is - how shall I put it? -... a bit naive.*

Contrary to their claims, archaeologists do not have the means to write history, but only to confirm it, because history is written based on texts and the establishment of a reliable chronology. Archaeology can only be an auxiliary science of history, which is no longer accepted by archaeologists since the 1980s. To dispute the existence of kings David and Solomon is to deny historical facts. The only thing a historian can do about the kings of the past is to check whether the chronological information given in the king lists is accurate (which archaeologists cannot do with ^{14}C dating). For example, the historian can verify that the Assyrian king Aššur-dân III reigned 18 years from 773 to 755 BCE, thanks to the total eclipse of the sun that took place during the 10th year (in 763 BCE) and that the Assyrian king Aššur-dân I reigned 46 years from 1179 to 1133 BCE. Concerning the biographies of these kings, the historian is obliged to establish them by using the Chronicles of these kings, but he can detect errors, or lies, by cross-checking certain events with other chronicles, especially when there are synchronisms. For example, the Babylonian king Ninurta-nâdin-šumi (1133-1127) began to reign in the same year (in 1133 BCE) as the Assyrian king Aššur-rêš-iši I (1133-1115). If this method of verification is applied to the chronology of the king lists in the Bible, it can be seen that all synchronisms with other chronologies are met.

- Taita I (1045-1000) as king of Hamath, known in the Bible as To'i/To'u, congratulated David (1057-1017) when he defeated Hadadezer, in **1042 BCE**, a king of Aram-Zobah (2Sa 8:5-10; 1Ch 18:9-10).
- Year 40 of David (2Sa 5:11; 1Ch 14:1), in **1017 BCE**, and Year 11 of Solomon (1017-977), in **1006 BCE** (1Ki 6:37-38), must be included in the reign of Hiram I (1025-991).
- The temple was built in Year 12 of Hiram I or Year 4 of Solomon, exactly in **1013 BCE**
- The city of Gezer was burned by Siamun (1003-984), 20 years after its construction (1Ki 9:10-17), which had begun in early Year 4 (1Ki 6:37-7:1), or in Year 24 of Solomon, in **993 BCE**.
- Flight of Jeroboam I to Shoshenq I (980-959) in the last years of Solomon's reign (1Ki 11:40-42), or during Years 39 and 40 (**978-977 BCE**).
- Shoshenq I attacked Jerusalem in Year 5 of Rehoboam (977-960), in **972 BCE**, he is called Shishaq in the Hebrew Bible (1Ki 14:25,26; 2Ch 12:2-9) and Sousakim in the Septuagint.

These synchronism dates confirm the 40-year reigns of David (1057-1017) and Solomon (1017-977). Despite this remarkable chronological agreement, two elements are suspect: the fact that a king who reigned for 40 years has a son who succeeds him with a 40-year reign, which never happened in Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian chronologies, where a long reign is usually followed by a reign of half that length, and a succession of three 40-year reigns with Saul is an extraordinary coincidence that is difficult to believe, especially since this succession of three 40-year periods is found in the life of Moses, which implies symbolic periods. Solomon's unusual second reign of 40 years is explained by the fact that he was born when David was 52 years old, so he was a son of old age. On the other hand, the succession of three 40-year reigns is explained by the chronological context of certain messianic prophecies. These 40-year periods, although literal, had a providential duration. In contrast to the usual king lists, the Bible provides a lot of chronological information about the lives of the kings, especially the kings of Judah, for example it gives (from Rehoboam onwards) at what age they ascended the throne (X1 age of accession to the throne) and how long they reigned (X3 reign length) which makes it possible to determine at what age they died (X4 = X1 + X3) and at what age they gave birth to their successor (X2 = date of birth of the king — date of birth of his successor). The chronological data of King Saul (1Sa 13:1) has been lost (or eliminated)[107] but can be recovered using the chronological data of his sons, Jonathan and Ish-bosheth[108] (Jones: 2007, 97).

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[107] After meeting a medium at Endor, King Saul was rejected by God. After briefly and illegally seizing the throne, his son Ish-baal's name was changed to Ish-boshet "man of shame".

[108] The giving of Ish-bosheth's age as being 40 (2Sa 2:10) when his father died is a chronological key. Since he is not listed as one of Saul's sons when Saul began to reign (1Sa 14:49) but is included in the complete listings (1Ch 8:33; 9:39), he must be the youngest and been born after Saul became king, thereby indicating at least a 40-year reign for Saul. As David was 30 and Ish-bosheth 40 (2Sa 2:10) when Saul was slain, Ish-bosheth was 10 years older than David. The original heir to Saul's throne (1Sa 20:30-31), Jonathan was clearly eldest of the four brothers and thus at least 3 years older than Ish-bosheth. Upon the death of Saul (1Sa 31), 30-year-old David became King over Judah and ruled from the capital at Hebron for 7 years and 6 months (2Sa 2:1-11; 5:3-5). This allows us to fix the year of David's birth as being 10 years into Saul's reign and about 8 years after Jonathan's sortie against the Philistines. Therefore, Jonathan's age must exceed that of David's by at least 28 years. It is therefore possible to calculate the lifetimes of Jonathan (1115-1057) and Ish-boshet (1097-1050).

TABLE 48

	King of Judah	X1	X2	X3	reign	X4 (age)	lifespan	reference
1	Saul	34	16	40	1097-1057	74	1131-1057	Ac 13:21
2	David	30	52	40	1057-1017	70	1087-1017	2Sa 5:4
3	Salomon	18	17	40	1017-977	58	1035-977	1Ki 11:42
4	Rehoboam	41	?	17	977-960	58	1018-960	1Ki 14:21
10	Joash	7	23	40	879-839	47	886-839	2Ch 24:1
11	Amasiah	24	37	29	839-810	54	863-809	2Ch 25:1
12	Uzziah	16	44	52	810-758	68	826-758	2Ch 26:1
13	Jotham	25	21	16	758-742	41	782-741	2Ch 27:1
14	Ahaz	20	11	16	742-726	36	762-726	2Ch 28:1
15	Hezekiah	25	43	29	726-697	54	751-697	2Ch 29:1
16	Manasseh	12	45	55	697-642	67	709-642	2Ch 33:1
17	Amon	22	-	2	642-640	24	664-640	2Ki 21:19
	average	**23**	**32**	**34**		**57**		

There are no chronological inconsistencies or anomalies in this partial list of the kings of Judah. If we compare it to the list of kings of Israel and the list of kings of Egypt, we see that the average length of the reigns (34 years) is about 10 years longer than for the other two lists. This discrepancy is due to the following factor, the kingdom of Israel was very unstable (ten kings were assassinated while there were only two for the kingdom of Judah), the average duration of non-assassinated kings being 18 years. A second reason comes from the age of paternity, because the kings of Judah begat their successors at the age of 32 whereas the kings of Israel begat their successors at the beginning of their kingship at around 20 years old, which shortened their life and their reign by a dozen years. The kings of Egypt, who had an average reign of 22 years, also had to sire their successors at the beginning of their kingship at around 20 years. The high average length of reign for the kings of Judah (34 years) is therefore mainly explained by the high age of fatherhood (32 years), almost 10 years after (not before) the beginning of the reign (23 years). The kingdom of Judah in the south, although less powerful than the kingdom of Israel in the north, had a strategic advantage because of its geographical position, for the many Assyrian attacks were mainly aimed at the kingdom of Israel and the one time they targeted Jerusalem with Sennacherib, God intervened to protect the small kingdom of Judah (in 712 BCE).

The average lifespan of 57 years for the kings of Judah is consistent with the little information we have about this period. For example, historian Herodotus wrote: *Solon (638-558) who was an Athenian statesman (aged 80!) said: Croesus, you ask me about human affairs, and I know that the divine is entirely grudging and troublesome to us. In a long span of time it is possible to see many things that you do not want to, and to suffer them, too. I set the limit of a man's life at 70 years.* Herodotus also wrote: *When they came to Tartessus [South of Spain] they made friends with the king of the Tartessians, whose name was Arganthonius (690-570); he ruled Tartessus for 80 years and lived a 120* (The Histories I:32,163). Consequently, the average life expectancy rarely exceeds 70 years but can exceptionally reach 120 years. This conclusion is in line with what Moses wrote: *The span of our life is 70 years — 80 for those who are strong — but their whole extent is anxiety and trouble, they are over in a moment and we are gone* (Ps 90:10). However, these remarks only concern normal longevity, but God can modify it, as illustrated by the case of Moses himself. He could have lived longer[109], but because of his disobedience at Meribah, God restricted this extra time to 40 years (Dt 32:49-51). This 40-year period represents a testing period (Dt 29:5). It is noticeable that while Moses' longevity was increased, the life expectancy of his contemporaries was restricted to 60 years they all died after staying 40 years in the wilderness (Nb 32:11-13). All the generation of Moses, except Joshua and Caleb, was restricted strictly to 60 years. These examples show that God can sometimes increase the life expectancy of one of his servants, for example he added 15 years to Hezekiah (Is 38:5) and 140 years to Job (Job 42:16), but he can also decrease it as in the case of Solomon. At the beginning of his reign, God promised Solomon that he would have a reign of peace (1Ch 22:9) and long life if he obeyed (1Ki 3:14). He could therefore have had an exceptional reign of peace of 80 years, like Ehud (Jg 3:30), but because he condoned the idolatry of his many wives, God shortened his life to 58 years, whereas his father David, who had lived a hard life as a warrior, had lived 70 years. Compared to the average lifespan of 57 years for the kings of Judah, David lived 13 years longer, while Solomon, who was promised a long life by God, did not get it. The 40-year periods are therefore not a coincidence because they have been fixed by God. It is interesting to note a commonality between the 40-year reign of Moses over Lower Egypt, then the 40-year

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[109] The exceptional longevity of Moses (120 years), Aaron (123 years) and Miriam (130 years) was providential because all three died in the same year on the date set by God. Similarly, the high priest Jehoiada (986-856) who had a favourable effect on King Joash (879-839) enjoyed an exceptional longevity of 130 years (2Ch 24:15-16).

reign in Sinai, and the 40-year reigns of Saul, David and Solomon, for each time the one who ruled had been chosen by God and should have had a long reign which was restricted to only 40 years because of major disobedience[110]. The literal durations of 40 years were therefore providential. It may be shocking, especially to an atheist, that God can sometimes intervene in the lives of some humans, but these providential interventions are consistent with the general theme of the Bible of a God who has a purpose to fulfil[111], particularly the numerous chronological prophecies in the book of Daniel.

The Bible's perfect chronology for the Mesopotamian reigns of the 1st millennium BCE (Masoretic text), since it contains no date errors, is the guarantee of its historicity. By comparison, the Seder Olam Rabba was written, around 160 CE, by Yose ben Halafta, to provide a reliable chronology of events, Greek and Roman, that occurred recently. However, more than half of the names are distorted and almost all the chronological records and dates are wrong, which is paradoxical for a book on chronology. Even the most recent data (30 years earlier) is inaccurate because Koziba's real name was Kosba and his war actually lasted 3.5 years (from December 131 CE to April 135 CE) instead of 2.5 years (Guggenheimer, 2005, 260-263). These numerous errors in dates and names show that oral transmission is not reliable. On the contrary, an accurate recording of names and dates proves that the historical and chronological data come from eyewitnesses who were written down during their lifetime. The modern attitude of scepticism about the Aramean oppression of Israel in the reign of Jehu is not warranted by the evidence. More than one hundred years of research of extrabiblical sources provide sufficient corroboration of the accuracy of the biblical text, though the fragmentary nature of these sources provides significant latitude in interpretation. As a result, the biblical texts were written by contemporaries who had high ethical standards and a strong commitment to truth (Bolen: 2013, 9-39)[112]. Nelson Glueck[113] wrote in *Rivers in the Desert* « As a matter of fact, however, it may be categorically stated that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference » (Glueck: 1959, 31). In other words, archaeology didn't have to prove the Bible's account of history, but it did prove it, or at least never disproved it —and he himself, he wrote with pride, had discovered Solomon's copper mines of Timna (dated c. 1000 BCE by carbon-14)[114]. Whenever there is evidence pointing to a kingdom centred on Jerusalem before the late 9th century BCE, Israel Finkelstein is quick to dismiss that evidence to defend his hypothetical model of the Northern Kingdom of Israel forming into a state first and Jerusalem continuing to be a small highland village well into the 9th century BCE. However, six clay seals from the 10th century BCE unearthed at Khirbet Summeily (Hardin, Rollston, Blakel: 2014: 299-301), an early Iron Age site in southern Israel, suggest that there was more political complexity in the region at that time than had been previously thought. The very existence of those six bullae strongly supports the idea that Khirbet Summeily was a "governmental installation" across the transitional Iron Age I/IIA (c. 1000 BCE) landscape (Katz, Faust: 2014, 103-112). The city of Gezer was burnt down by Pharaoh Siamun (Kitchen: 2003, 108-110) 20 years after its construction (1Ki 9:10-17), which had begun at the beginning of year 4 (1Ki 6:37-7:1), i.e. in Solomon's Year 24, 993 BCE, which corresponds to Siamun's Year 10 (1003-984).

If the Bible had been written only in the 6th century BCE, as most current scholars ("biblical minimalism") would have us believe, it would have benefited from a "miraculous" oral transmission of hundreds of dates and proper names over half a millennium[115]. This academic dogma is therefore an intellectual swindle used to discredit the historicity of the biblical text.

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[110] Both Uzziah and Manasseh were seriously disobedient while ruling for over 50 years, but their reigns were not linked to a divine covenant.

[111] The 40-year prophetic period (Ezk 4:6) mentioned in 593 BCE (Ezk 1:2) extends from the year 13 of Josiah (Jr 25:3,11), in 627 BCE, to the destruction of the Temple in 587 BCE.

[112] Todd Bolen, PhD, Professor of Biblical Studies at The Master's University.

[113] Nelson Glueck was an American rabbi, academic and archaeologist. He served as president of Hebrew Union College from 1947 until his death in 1971, and his pioneering work in biblical archaeology resulted in the discovery of 1,500 ancient sites.

[114] In February 2013, Dr. Ben-Yosef and a team of researchers and students excavated a previously untouched site in the valley, known as the Slaves' Hill. The area is a massive smelting camp containing the remains of hundreds of furnaces and layers of copper slag, the waste created during the smelting process. The world-renowned Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit at the University of Oxford in England dated 11 of the items to the 10th century BCE. The findings from the Slaves' Hill confirm those of a 2009 dig Ben-Yosef helped to conduct at "Site 30," another of the largest ancient smelting camps in Timna Valley. Then a graduate student of Prof. Thomas E. Levy at the University of California, San Diego, he helped demonstrate that the copper mines in the valley dated from the 11th to 9th centuries BCE —the era of Kings David and Solomon (1017-977)— and were probably Edomite in origin. The new chronology enabled studying social and technological processes in high time resolution, based on the materials surveyed and excavated in various copper mining and smelting sites within the Timna Valley. The most important site, which was excavated in all of the field seasons and yielded the most substantial assemblages of material culture, is Site 34 ("Slaves' Hill"). This is one of the largest smelting camps in the Timna Valley; it was dated as part of the CTV Project to the late 11th – 10th centuries BCE (c. 1000 BCE), a key period in the history of the region as this is the time ascribed by the accounts in the Old Testament to the United Monarchy in Jerusalem (https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/334274/reporting).

[115] For example, Mesha had been king of Moab from 900 to 870 BCE (2Ki 3:1-4), similarly, Baalis (594-582) had been king of the "sons of Amon" (Jr 40:14), this surprising title is absolutely correct (Deutsch: 1999, 46-49).

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