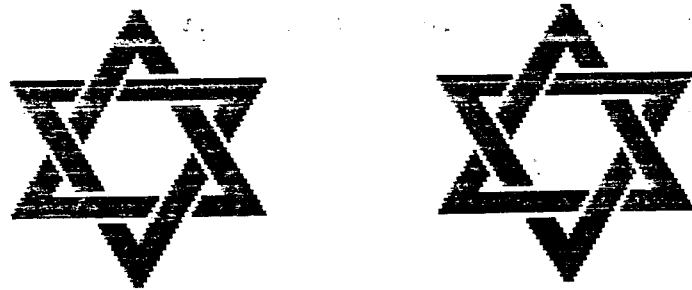


THE
JERUSALEM
CHRONOLOGY
OF THE
ISRAELITE
MONARCHIES



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Remember the days of old;
Understand the years of each generation . . .
- Deuteronomy 32:7

INTRODUCTION

Many attempts have been made to establish a chronology of the kings of Judah and North Israel. Some have required that the dates be internally consistent, while others have had extra-biblical synchronisms as their main priority. Very rarely have there been attempts to be true both to the biblical text and extra-biblical history.

Logic would seem to demand that this is the only valid procedure to follow. History *happened*. If two versions of history differ, one or the other (or both) *must* be wrong. Similarly, if two versions of history are both correct, they cannot contradict each other on matters of historical fact.

In general, only certain fundamentalist groups choose to completely disregard the conclusions drawn by historians working with ancient records. In contrast, the bulk of the scholarly community chooses *a priori* to downgrade the biblical histories to the status of myth and legend. This tendency is as narrow-minded and unscientific as that of the fundamentalists. Worse, since these same "scholars" profess to adhere to the scientific method.

One of the very few to try and reconcile the biblical dates both with themselves and with external evidence was Edwin Thiele, in *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. Thiele made a strong case for not taking the easy way out by casually emending the biblical text whenever it seems problematic. Instead, he approached the problem from the inside, trying to discover how exactly the Israelites dated their kings (even a casual reading reveals that there is more involved than meets the eye), basing his conclusions on the evidence in the text itself. Thiele's biggest mistake was in not listening to his own arguments. When faced, ultimately, with a conflict between the internally consistent Israelite chronology and the accepted Assyrian chronology, he automatically resorted to what he himself criticized at the outset: An assumption of ignorance on the part of the editor(s) of Kings and Chronicles. He created a *third* Israelite monarchy and switched the order in which kings reigned. He created lengthy coregencies where none were called for by the text. And all to avoid questioning the theoretical construction of Assyrian history which is treated by too many historians as infallable.

If the choice is between emending the biblical history and adjusting Assyrian history, there is only one way to decide the issue. That is to compare the proposed changes and judge which are more plausible. If an error in one of the conflicting histories can only be explained by assuming incompetence on the part of its writers/compilers/editors, and an inaccuracy in the other can be ascribed to an intentional alteration by its writers/compilers/editors with ample motive for the change, it may be legitimately argued that the former

history is more likely correct and that the latter should be adjusted. This is the only valid means for deciding between the two. And if it happens that the biblical history is the more plausible, Assyrian chronology may even be revised based on an Israelite framework. This would not be very pleasant to most historians and biblical scholars, but use of the scientific method means that there is no room for personal preferences of this sort. Just the facts.

What follows is an attempt to do what Thiele should have done. First, the finished reconstruction will be outlined. Afterwards, those elements of the reconstruction which require explanations and/or justifications will be discussed.

SECTION I

The following are the basic premises upon which this reconstruction is based. For a fuller explanation, see *Section V*.

PREMISES

- 1) The kings of Judah counted their regnal years from the first of Nisan. That is, on the first of Nisan, regardless of the actual date upon which the king began his reign, the current regnal year ended and a new one began.
- 2) The new regnal year for kings of North Israel began on the first of Marheshvan.
- 3) The kings of Judah used what is known as the accession year system, or postdating. That is, the fraction of a year preceding a king's first *full* regnal year was counted as "year zero", or the accession year, while only his first *full* year would be counted as his first year. The kings Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin were exceptions to this rule and used the non-accession year system, or antedating. That is, the fraction of a year preceding the first full regnal year was considered the first year and was followed by the king's second year.
- 4) The kings of North Israel from Jeroboam I through Joram, inclusive, used the non-accession year system, while the remaining kings, from Jehu through Hoshea, inclusive, used the accession year system.
- 5) In the case of a coregency, regnal years were sometimes counted from the beginning of the coregency and sometimes from the beginning of that king's sole rule.
- 6) The first fraction of a year of a coregency was considered the first year of that coregency, regardless of the system otherwise being used to reckon regnal years.
- 7) In the case of a king exercising sole rule during the lifetime of his father, regnal years were counted from the beginning of the king's sole rule and not from the death of his father.
- 8) In the case of usurpation, regnal years were counted sometimes from the death of the previous king and sometimes from consolidation of the usurper's rule. The general indication of an uncontested rule by a North Israelite usurper was ruling from Samaria.
- 9) A date given according to the "kingship" of a king ("le-malchut", as opposed to "limloch" or "le-melech") is in reference to an era which is *not* to be confused with the regnal years of that king.

The following is a guide to the notation used in the reconstruction and in the tables found at its end. For a fuller explanation, see *Section V*.

NOTATION

- 1) The name Judah refers to the southern Israelite kingdom (as is usually done), while the northern kingdom is called North Israel. Israel is reserved for the kingdom prior to its division and also in referring to the people of the two kingdoms and to their land.
- 2) The calendar used is the LM (Liytziyat Mitzrayim, or from the Exodus) calendar. The year 1 LM begins on the first of Nisan 1476 BCE. Each following year also begins on the first of Nisan.
- 3) The notation "1/607" means the period of time from the second of Nisan 607 through the first of Marheshvan 607, inclusive, while "8/607" means the period from the second of Marheshvan 607 through the first of Nisan 608, inclusive.
- 4) Beginning with the seventh year of Hezekiah (following the Exile of North Israel), "1/759" means that period of time from the second of Nisan 759 through the first of Nisan 760, inclusive.
- 5) Any month given other than "1" (Nisan) or "8" (Marheshvan) is an indication that the date can be narrowed down further than usual. Sometimes it merely decreases the span of time intended; other times it represents an precise date. For example, "3/707" may mean that period from the second of Sivan through the first of Marheshvan, inclusive, while "5/890" may be specifically Av 890.
- 6) "Amon ac" means the accession year of Amon. "Nadab 1" means the first year of Nadab. "Uzziah 1₁" means the first year of Uzziah using the first possible beginning point for his reign. "Uzziah ac₂" means Uzziah's accession year using the second potential beginning point for his reign. Any date such as "Uzziah 38₁" would be thirty-seven years after "Uzziah 1₁".
- 7) In the case of a name which is shared by a king of Judah and a king of North Israel, the longer form of the name has been reserved for the the king of Judah. Thus: Jehoram of Judah; Joram of North Israel - Ahaziah of Judah; Ahaziah of North Israel.

SECTION II

In absence of coregencies or other irregularities, the way the synchronisms of the two kingdoms fit together is simple. The first year of Jeroboam I was comprised of 8/516 and 1/517. Thus his eighteenth year was 8/533 - 1/534. Rehoboam's accession year was 516. Thus his seventeenth year, which was his last year¹ and his son Abijah's accession year, was 533. With the accession of Abijah given to us as the eighteenth year of Jeroboam I,² it can be narrowed down to 8/533. It should be noted that the kingdom of North Israel was established in Rehoboam's first year; not his accession year. It is stated twice that after the division of the kingdoms, Judah was strengthened for three years.³ The emphasis placed on this three year period is understandable if understood as the time between the schism and the Egyptian attack in Rehoboam's fifth year.⁴ And Jeroboam I's first year had to have begun in the first part of the year in order for his eighteenth year and Rehoboam's seventeenth year to have overlapped.

The first irregularity is the two ways of reckoning the regnal years of Omri. Omri succeeded Zimri, who had become king in the thirty-first year of Asa and had reigned one week.⁵ Omri's accession, which should then have taken place in the same year, is recorded as Asa's thirty-eighth year,⁶ or seven years later. The explanation is founded in the biblical note to the effect that Omri, who built the city of Samaria,⁷ which would become the capital of North Israel until its conquest in 758, reigned six years in Tirzah.⁸ The synchronism of Asa's thirty-eighth year refers to the beginning of his reign from Samaria, a usage that we will see repeated.

It is clear that the competition between Omri and Tibni for the throne, which began after the death of Zimri,⁹ did not last until the thirty-eighth year of Asa. Omri's reign in Samaria began in this year and was obviously preceded by the acquisition and building of Samaria. It is unlikely that Omri would have begun building a new capital while still contending with a rival for the throne. Jewish tradition relates Omri's victory over Tibni to an alliance made with Asa of Judah, forty-two years before the accession of Ahaziah (564).¹⁰ Tibni's bid for the throne, then, lasted only a year or so.

The coregency between Jehoshaphat and Jehoram is mentioned specifically in the text, but the fact that it occurred in two phases is revealed from the numerical data. Joram became king in the second year of Jehoram¹¹ (and the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat¹²), while Jehoram became king in the fifth

¹ Kings 14:21, II Chronicles 12:13

² Kings 15:9, II Chronicles 13:1

³ II Chronicles 11:17

⁵ Kings 16:15

⁷ Kings 16:24

⁹ Kings 16:21

¹⁰ Rashi on I Kings 16:22, Tosefta on Tractate Sota 12:3

¹¹ Kings 3:1

⁴ Kings 14:25, II Chronicles 12:2

⁶ Kings 16:23

⁸ Kings 16:23

¹² Kings 1:17

year of Joram (and of Jehoshaphat?)¹³ and, presumably, in the twenty-fifth and last year of his father Jehoshaphat.¹⁴ The scenario seems to be as follows: In 594 (Jehoshaphat's seventeenth year), Jehoshaphat went to North Israel, where he participated in the war against Ben-Hadad of Aram.¹⁵ Upon leaving Jerusalem, he made his son Jehoram coregent, so as not to leave Judah without a king. The synchronism of Jehoram's second year counts from the beginning of this coregency. Upon his return, Jehoshaphat resumed sole rule, possibly out of dissatisfaction at his performance. The biblical evaluation of Jehoshaphat as a righteous king¹⁶ and of Jehoram as a wicked one¹⁷ suggests this. In his twenty-second year (the fifth, counting from his return), Jehoshaphat gave Jehoram a second chance and reappointed him coregent. The occasion of this appointment may have been the campaign of Jehoshaphat, Joram and the king/governor of Edom against Mesha of Moab.¹⁸ Jehoram's coregency continued uninterrupted until the death of his father, when he began his sole rule of four years. The eight years attributed to him¹⁹ are counting from the beginning of his second coregency. In keeping with Premise #5, the beginning of each of Jehoram's coregencies, as well as that of Jehoshaphat's resumed sole rule, are numbered as first years rather than accession years.

The numbers show a reign of twenty-nine years for Jehu in apparent contradiction to the biblical twenty-eight.²⁰ This is because of the delay between Jehu's coup and his entry into Samaria.²¹ He reigned twenty-eight years *from Samaria*. Both of his accessions began with accession years.

The revolt against Athaliah was in the seventh year,²² while only six years passed from the death of Ahaziah until the accession of Jehoash.²³ Athaliah was never recognized as a legitimate ruler of Judah, and thus did not have *any* regnal years reckoned. The seventh year mentioned was the seventh year of Ahaziah, who, although dead, had not been succeeded by anyone officially and was therefore the only one by whom the year could be dated.

The following period is a confusing one due to the numerous coregencies both in Judah and in North Israel. Those in Judah will be dealt with first.

¹³|| Kings 8:16. The verse is phrased ambiguously. It can be translated, "And in the fifth year of Joram son of Ahab, king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah reigned", or, "And in the fifth year of Joram son of Ahab, king of Israel (Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah), Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah reigned." In this reconstruction, both translations are correct.

¹⁴|| Kings 22:42, II Chronicles 20:31

¹⁵|| Kings 22:2, II Chronicles 18:22

¹⁶|| Kings 22:43, II Chronicles 17:3

¹⁷|| Kings 8:18, II Chronicles 21:6

¹⁸|| Kings 3:9

¹⁹|| Kings 8:17, II Chronicles 21:5

²⁰|| Kings 11:16

²¹|| Kings 10:1-17

²²|| Kings 11:4, II Chronicles 23:1

²³|| Kings 11:3, II Chronicles 22:12

Jehoash appointed Amaziah coregent in his (Jehoash's) next to last year of reign. The reason for this coregency is given in the text. Jehoash was left with many diseases following the attack of the army of Aram and was subsequently assassinated in his sickbed.²⁴ He appointed his son as coregent either before going to war or after falling ill. The former seems more likely, as the previous coregency in Judah (that between Jehoshaphat and Jehoram) came about for the same reason. The date of Amaziah's appointment is given as 7/652, although the numbers only limit it to 1/652, because of the statement that the army of Aram came against Judah at a time of year referred to as *tekufat hashanah*.²⁵ This phrase is used only one other place in the Bible,²⁶ and is identified there as the time of the festival of Sukkot, on the fifteenth of Tishrei. Amaziah's twenty-nine years of reign²⁷ are counted from the beginning of his coregency.

Amaziah in turn made his son Uzziah coregent. The coregency began three years after the death of Joash of North Israel, and it is possible that, realizing the extent to which his ill-considered war against North Israel²⁸ had made him unpopular with his subjects, and perhaps even foreseeing the danger of assassination, which in fact was the eventual cause of his death, Amaziah arranged for his son to make the public appearances which were the duty of a king. This is lent credence by the fact that all Uzziah's regnal dates are reckoned from the beginning of his coregency.

In Amaziah's twenty-ninth year, fourteen years after the death of Joash of North Israel, a conspiracy arose to assassinate him. The king fled to Lachish, where he was subsequently caught and killed.²⁹ When Amaziah fled, Uzziah began exercising sole rule over Judah. The synchronism given for the beginning of his reign counts from the death of Amaziah in what would have been Amaziah's thirtieth year.

In North Israel there was also a string of coregencies. Joahaz appointed his son Joash coregent. There is a clue to this coregency in the text. During the reign of Joahaz, a "savior" was given to Israel, who freed them from Aram and made it possible for them to live in the cities which the kings of Aram had taken.³⁰ Joash is later identified as the one who accomplished this.³¹ His sixteen years of reign³² include the period of this coregency.

During this period, the kingdom of North Israel was under intense and continual pressure from Aram. Having seen how, in the past, coregents had been appointed in case of war, lest the king die in battle and there be a fight over the succession, it is unsurprising to find that Joash appointed his son Jeroboam II coregent. There is little to document this coregency other than the strange way in which Jeroboam

24|| Chronicles 24:25

25|| Chronicles 24:23

26|| Exodus 34:22

27|| Kings 14:2, || Chronicles 25:1

28|| Kings 14:8-14, || Chronicles 25:17-24

29|| Kings 14:18, || Chronicles 25:27

30|| Kings 13:5

31|| Kings 13:25

32|| Kings 13:10

II's succession is mentioned. We are told that Jeroboam II sat on the throne³³ after which the record of Joash's reign is completed. After this account, ending with the death of Joash, we are told again that Jeroboam II reigned in his father's stead.³⁴ Jeroboam II's forty-one years of reign³⁵ do not include his period as coregency. Interestingly, if the coregency is included, Jeroboam II reigned for fifty-two years, the same length as that of Uzziah of Judah. This could account for the tradition which states that Jeroboam II and Uzziah reigned simultaneously.³⁶ It is possible that the coregency was not counted due to its length; except for Uzziah, no other king was ever coregent for as long as Jeroboam II. And Uzziah's coregency was unusual, as we saw above, in that he was the most visible monarch during the years of his coregency.

The usurper Menahem of North Israel killed his predecessor, the short-reigned Shallum,³⁷ but did not begin his rule from Samaria until after a new regnal year had begun. His attack on the rebellious city of Tiphseh at this time is mentioned, as well as the fact that he was reigning from the old capital of North Israel, Tirzah, at the time he was dealing with this revolt.³⁸ Thus, his actual reign was eleven years. The ten ascribed to him³⁹ were his years of reign *from Samaria*.

Just as Uzziah had reigned solely during the lifetime of his father, so too did his son Jotham reign during his. Having been stricken with the disease *tzaraat*,⁴⁰ Uzziah was no longer allowed to live within the walls of Jerusalem.⁴¹ We are told, accordingly, that he moved to a house of retirement and that Jotham judged the people.⁴² The period from the abdication of Uzziah until his death was not included in his fifty-two years,⁴³ as he was no longer king. Jotham's sixteen official years⁴⁴ do include this time. Although Uzziah could presumably have resumed the kingship at any time, had his *tzaraat* been cured, in the end he did not, and Jotham was *de facto* ruler from the time of Uzziah's abdication.

The actual date of Uzziah's death cannot be pinned down except to the second year of Pekah of North Israel, which spans 8/721 - 1/722. The former date is the one given, for the sake of simplicity, in tables A and B, along with a note that the other is equally possible. One unfortunate aspect of this uncertainty is that the sixth chapter of Isaiah, which recounts the beginning of the prophet's career,⁴⁵ is dated to the year in which Uzziah died⁴⁶. Isaiah began pro-

33|| Kings 13:13

34|| Kings 14:16

35|| Kings 14:23

36Rashi on II Kings 15:1, Seder Olam Rabbah 19

37|| Kings 15:14

38|| Kings 15:16

39|| Kings 15:17

40|| Kings 15:5, II Chronicles 26:21

41Leviticus 13:46, Mishnah Tractate Kelim 1:7

42|| Kings 15:5, II Chronicles 26:21

43|| Kings 15:2, II Chronicles 26:3

44|| Kings 15:23, II Chronicles 27:1

45Rashi on Isaiah 6:1

46Isaiah 6:1

phesying in either 721 or 722, but until additional evidence turns up, we will not know which.

Hoshea, the last king of North Israel, was an usurper.⁴⁷ Like Jehu and Menahem before him, he was not immediately accepted as king in Samaria. In contrast, however, his nine year reign from Samaria⁴⁸ was the tail end of an eighteen year reign. Two synchronisms, in fact, are given for the beginning of his reign. The first of these is the twentieth year of Jotham.⁴⁹ This is a case of "wishful thinking". Jotham died after sixteen years of reign; the year in question is the fourth of Jotham's son, Ahaz. This was the year in which Hoshea killed Pekah and became king of North Israel. It was not until the twelfth year of Ahaz⁵⁰ that Hoshea finally managed to begin reigning *from Samaria*. The reason for two different synchronisms being given, in contrast to previous usurpers, may be due to the extraordinary length of time between his accession and his acceptance as king in Samaria.

Lastly, the exile of Jehoiachin is dated explicitly in the records of Nebuchadnezzar as falling in the month of Adar;⁵¹ hence, 12/879 rather than 4/879, and 9/879 rather than 1/879 for his accession.

47|| Kings 15:30

48|| Kings 17:1

49|| Kings 15:30

50|| Kings 17:1

51|| D.J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London 1961), pp.32-33

SECTION III

The following is a discription of the various systems of dating used during the period of the Israelite kingdoms other than the standard dating by regnal year. For a fuller discussion, see *Section V*.

In the cases of three kings, Asa, Jehoiakim and Josiah, an additional method of dating was used other than the simple counting of regnal years. These dates are given as "year X of the kingship (malchut) of King Y". This "kingship" dating was not used in the book of Kings. It was used in the books of Chronicles and Daniel, which often speak metaphorically.

The "kingship of Asa" counts from the birth of Asa, around the time of the conquest of Jerusalem by Shishak, King of Egypt.¹ "Asa" is an Aramaic word meaning "healing" or "remedy",² and had the connotation of one who would "make things right"; i. e., restore Judah to the independence which had been lost to Shishak. His victory over Zerah the Ethiopian,³ which was apparently seen as a reversal of the loss to Shishak, occurred in Asa's accession year - the fifteenth year of the "kingship of Asa" - and was followed by the celebration dated to that year.⁴ His war with Baasha of North Israel took place in the thirty-sixth year of this era (557),⁵ which was Asa's twenty-first year and the nineteenth or twentieth year of Baasha. The other dates given by this era, the thirty-fifth⁶ and thirty-ninth⁷ years of the "kingship of Asa", correspond to Asa's twentieth and twenty-fourth years respectively.

The beginning verses of the book of Daniel refer to Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Jehoiakim in the third year of the "kingship of Jehoiakim."⁸ We know, however, that this was at the end of his *eleventh year*.⁹ This dating refers to the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign as an independant sovereign. He had been appointed king by Necho, King of Egypt.¹⁰ After defeating the Egyptian army at Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and Judah, under Jehoiakim, became a Babylonian vassal. After three years of this; i. e., from his fifth to eighth years,¹¹ Jehoiakim rebelled. And from his eighth year to his eleventh, Judah was independant.

The use of the "kingship" method during the reign of Josiah differs from the other two cases in that it corresponds with Josiah's actual regnal years, while dates given simply as "Year X of Josiah" count from the accession of his father

¹ I Kings 14:25, II Chronicles 12:2

² Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York 1903), p.88. Why an Israelite king would bear an Aramaic name is uncertain. But that it is Aramaic is clear from its structure (the qamatz-aleph ending).

³ II Chronicles 14:8

⁴ II Chronicles 15:10

⁵ II Chronicles 16:1

⁶ II Chronicles 15:19

⁷ II Chronicles 16:12

⁸ Daniel 1:1-2

⁹ I Kings 23:26, II Chronicles 36:5

¹⁰ I Kings 23:34, II Chronicles 36:4

¹¹ I Kings 24:1

Amon, two years before his own. Thus, from the thirteenth year of Josiah (actually his eleventh) in 849 until the fourth year of Jehoiakim in 872 was twenty-three years, as the text in Jeremiah states.¹² His eighth,¹³ twelfth,¹⁴ and eighteenth¹⁵ years are actually his sixth, tenth, and sixteenth years (844, 848, and 854), respectively. The Temple renovation which culminated in the renaissance movement of Josiah began in Josiah's eighteenth (actually sixteenth) year. The Passover which was observed as the high point of this renaissance took place in Nisan of the eighteenth year of the "Kingship of Josiah" (856),¹⁶ two years after the renovations began.

The fact that Josiah's official regnal years were counted from the accession of his father seems to be the same sort of "derecognition" extended to Ahaz, whose fourth year was referred to as the twentieth year of his dead father, Jotham. The use of the "Kingship" dating for the Passover observance may be an attempt to give the impression that all of the reforms of Josiah were accomplished in "no time". In fact, the parallel account in the book of Kings dates both the beginning of Josiah's reforms and the Passover celebration to the eighteenth year of Josiah.¹⁷ That this is due to Josiah's regnal years sometimes being counted from his father's accession would not be known if not for the Chronicler's use of "Kingship" dating.

A chronological framework existed during the biblical period (and still exists) which, although it was never used intentionally for dating events absolutely, can be used by us for that purpose. This is the system of Sabbatical and Jubilee years. According to this system, every seventh year the fields were to lie fallow, debts were to be remitted, and several other legal processes went into effect.¹⁸ The year after every seventh such Sabbatical year was the Jubilee. In this year as well, the fields were not to be worked; hereditarily owned lands which had been leased returned to their original owners, and more.¹⁹ Although the Jubilee was the fiftieth year of the cycle, it was also the first year of the next cycle. Therefore, the time from one Jubilee year to the next was forty-nine years; not fifty. These agricultural years began on the tenth of Tishrei, the Day of Atonement.

With the invasion of Canaan under Joshua and the first year of the first Sabbatical cycle of the first Jubilee (1:1) equated, and setting the year 890 LM (the destruction of the Temple) equal to 587 BCE, every year of this system can be dated exactly, down to our own time. Thus, the Sabbatical year in Israel recently observed from Tishrei of 1986 CE to Tishrei of 1987 CE was the sixth Sabbatical year of the seventieth Jubilee (6:70).

¹²Jeremiah 25:3

¹⁴1| Chronicles 34:3

¹⁶1| Chronicles 35:19

¹⁸Leviticus 25:2-7, Deuteronomy 15:1-3

¹⁹Leviticus 25:8-16, 25-34, 39-54

¹³1| Chronicles 34:3

¹⁵1| Chronicles 34:8

¹⁷1| Kings 22:3, 23:23

In some cases, knowing when these fallow years occurred can explain events recorded in the Bible. For example, Solomon began building the Temple in Iyyar of his fourth year (480).²⁰ We know that in Tishrei of that same year, a Sabbatical year (7:9) began which was followed by a Jubilee year. This meant two full years at the beginning of the building during which the general populace was free from most agricultural responsibilities and could therefore work on the building of the Temple.

In one case, an event which is *not* otherwise dated can be determined by means of the Sabbatical/Jubilee system. This is the second campaign of Sennecherib against Jerusalem. The afternoon immediately preceding the annihilation of Sennecherib's army was the occasion of a prophecy by the prophet Isaiah. Sennecherib had just given a final ultimatum for the surrender of Jerusalem.²¹ A majority of the citizens favored surrender²² and it seemed that resistance would be not only useless, but suicidal. The prophet gave Hezekiah a sign for encouragement:

And this is the sign for you: "Eat the (one) year *safi'ah* (that which grows by itself), and in the second year that which springs forth from the same, and in the third year, sow and reap and plant vineyards and eat their fruit."²³

This "sign" is clearly a reference to the laws of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years:

And in the seventh year it shall be a Sabbath of rest for the land; a Sabbath for the L-rd. You shall not sow your field and you shall not prune your vineyard. You shall not harvest the *safi'ah* of your harvest . . . and if you say, "What will we eat in the seventh year? . . . I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year and it will bring forth produce for three years. And you shall sow in the eighth year . . . until the ninth year; until the coming of its produce you shall eat of the old store."²⁴

In the case of our "sign", sowing would not be begun until the *ninth* year, the situation arising when a Sabbatical year is followed by a Jubilee year.

Jewish tradition places the destruction of Sennecherib's army on the evening of the fifteenth of Nisan - the first night of the festival of Passover.²⁵ Isaiah's sign would have been given then on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan. This is a significant date in the Sabbatical/Jubilee system. Briefly, although normal harvesting is forbidden during the Sabbatical year, a certain type and amount of gathering is permitted for personal use. Produce so gathered

²⁰ Kings 6:1

²¹ Kings 18:29-35, Isaiah 37:10-13, II Chronicles 31:10-17

²² Babylonian Talmud Tractate Sanhedrin 26a

²³ Kings 19:29, Isaiah 37:30 ²⁴ Leviticus 25:4-5, 20-22

²⁵ Exodus Rabbah 18:5

has the status of *Kedushat shvi'it* (produce sanctified by the seventh year). Among the ramifications of this status is the requirement that *biyur*, either a formal declaration of ownerlessness or actual disposal, be performed on any and all produce which is still around when none of its kind remains in the fields from the fallow crop. And while this time differs for different products, certain major crops have fixed dates upon which *biyur* must be performed. One of the most important crops in the region of Judah is that of grapes and grape products (raisins, wine, grape juice, wine vinegar, etc.). *Biyur* must be performed on all grape products on the fourteenth of Nisan, just before the festival of Passover.²⁶

The sign given by Isaiah could be paraphrased as follows: "Today, all over Judah, the ritual of *biyur* has been observed. The very fact that there is any produce left upon which to perform this act after two consecutive fallow years is clearly the result of divine intervention. While it is foolhardy to rely on a miracle in day-to-day situations, there are times when such reliance is the will of G-d."

A Jubilee year *did* occur during the reign of Hezekiah; it was the sixteenth Jubilee and it began in Tishrei of 775. The defeat of Sennacherib can therefore be placed in Hezekiah's twenty-fifth year (777), eleven years after his first successful campaign against Jerusalem. That this campaign, Sennacherib's third as king, began in his fourth year and ended early in his fifth year provides additional support for dating this event at the very beginning of the year. In addition, that this campaign began in the previous year suggests that Isaiah's prophecy was not merely oracular, but was predictive as well. After two fallow years, the people of Judah were being prevented by the Assyrian military might from yet a third year of farming. Isaiah reassured Hezekiah that the people would indeed, "sow and reap and plant vineyards and eat their fruit."

Whether connected to the Sabbatical/Jubilee system or not, agricultural years; i. e., years beginning on the tenth of Tishrei, were used for dating purposes in the book of Ezekiel.²⁷ In most cases, dating is from the exile of King Jehoiachin, with the year of his exile counting as "Year One" in accordance with the non-accession year system which that king used. Thus, the fifth year mentioned in the first verse of the book of Ezekiel refers to the year beginning on the tenth of Tishrei 883. This year is also equated to the thirtieth year,²⁸ which is apparently counting from the beginning of the renaissance of Josiah in 854, which may therefore be dated more precisely to some time prior to the tenth of Tishrei 854.

The following full dates are given in Ezekiel: The fifth

²⁶Rabbi Moses Maimonides, *Mishnah Torah*, Hilchot Shmitta V'Yovel 7:11

²⁷Ezekiel 40:1. The only "new year" which begins on the tenth of the month is the Sabbatical/Jubilee year, which is proclaimed on the tenth of Tishrei; cf. Leviticus 25:9

²⁸Ezekiel 1:2

of Tammuz 884,²⁹ the fifth of Elul 885,³⁰ the tenth of Av 886,³¹ the twelfth of Tevet 888,³² the first of Nisan 906,³³ the seventh of Nisan 890,³⁴ the first of Sivan 890,³⁵ the first of Adar 890,³⁶ and the fifth of Tevet 890.³⁷ Three dates are given without mentioning a month. One refers to the first day of the month in the eleventh year,³⁸ which is either 889 or 890. The verses following this date imply that Jerusalem had already fallen, an event which occurred in Av 890. The date in question is therefore the first of either Elul or Tishrei 890. In the second case, the date is the fifteenth day of the month in the twelfth year.³⁹ This date appears in the middle of a chapter, the beginning of which is dated to the first of Adar 890; it is likely, therefore, that it refers to the fifteenth of Adar 890. The last such date is the tenth day of the month in the twenty-fifth year.⁴⁰ This date is also identified as New Year's day, and can be identified as the tenth of Tishrei 903, since the only year which begins on the tenth of the month is the year of the Sabbatical/Jubilee cycle.⁴¹ The only other date given by Ezekiel presents a problem. This is the tenth of Tevet in the ninth year,⁴² the day that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem for the final time. According to the dating used by Ezekiel, the year in question was 887. In the books of Kings⁴³ and Jeremiah,⁴⁴ the same event is dated as well to the tenth of Tevet, in the ninth year "of his reign." Apparently, either this refers to the ninth year of Jehoiachin's reign, and not that of Zedekiah, or it is a late usage of non-accession year dating for Zedekiah. The reason for this usage may be the fact that the tenth of Tevet of the ninth year had been widely publicized as the date of the siege. In fact, the tenth of Tevet is still a Jewish day of fasting and mourning in modern times. The latest date given in the book of Ezekiel is Tishri 903 and the latest date given in Kings is Adar 915, so it is likely that this date was well known before the book of Kings was completed. Rather than sow confusion, the date was recorded in harmony with the book of Ezekiel.

Two dates given by Ezekiel are potentially confusing. Ezekiel is told to perform signs relating to the destruction of the Temple, the "iniquity of the House of Israel", and the "iniquity of the House of Judah".⁴⁵ He is instructed to lay on his left side for three hundred and ninety days, corresponding to the three hundred and ninety years of the "iniquity of the House of Israel", and to lay on his right side for

²⁹Ezekiel 1:1,2
³¹Ezekiel 20:1
³³Ezekiel 29:17
³⁵Ezekiel 31:1
³⁷Ezekiel 33:21
³⁹Ezekiel 32:17
⁴¹Leviticus 25:9
⁴³1 Kings 25:1
⁴⁵Ezekiel 1:4-8

³⁰Ezekiel 8:1
³²Ezekiel 29:1
³⁴Ezekiel 30:20
³⁶Ezekiel 32:1
³⁸Ezekiel 26:1
⁴⁰Ezekiel 40:1
⁴²Ezekiel 24:1
⁴⁴Jeremiah 52:4

forty days, corresponding to the forty years of the "iniquity of the House of Judah".

The "House of Judah" and "House of Israel" seem at first glance to be obvious references to the Kingdoms of Judah and North Israel. The "iniquity of the House of Israel" could then be identified with the sins of Jeroboam I, founder of North Israel, and his sinning dated three hundred and ninety years before the destruction of the Temple (the reference point in Ezekiel's prophecy), which cannot be the case. In fact, the dates three hundred and ninety years and forty years before the destruction of the Temple have something in common. Three hundred and ninety years before the destruction of the Temple was the twenty-fourth year of Solomon, the year that the building of the Temple and palace were completed. At this time, Solomon was told in a prophecy that as long as the laws of G-d were followed, the Kingdom would survive, but that if they were transgressed, the Temple would be destroyed and the people exiled.⁴⁶ Forty-one years before the destruction of the Temple was the thirteenth (actually eleventh) year of Josiah, during which Jeremiah began prophesying.⁴⁷ In an early prophecy, during the reign of Josiah, Jeremiah declared that if the people of Judah would return to the ways of G-d they would be spared, but that if they did not, the Temple would be destroyed and the nation exiled.⁴⁸ The contrast between these two prophecies is that at the time of Solomon, the people were behaving themselves and needed to continue to do so. At the time of Jeremiah, the people were not behaving themselves, and needed to begin to do so. Thus, Ezekiel's "House of Israel" is the united Kingdom of Israel, and not merely North Israel; it has nothing to do with Jeroboam I.

The fact that Jeremiah's prophecy is dated forty years before the destruction of the Temple and not forty-one is due to the fact that Ezekiel used years beginning in Tishrei. Forty years before the destruction of the Temple is the year beginning in Tishrei of Josiah's thirteenth (actually eleventh) year. Jeremiah therefore began prophesying in 849, sometime after the tenth of Tishrei. Similarly, Solomon's prophecy occurred in the year 500, prior to the tenth of Tishrei.

Note that in general, even non-regnal dating is based on a system similar to the accession year system of regnal dating. In most cases this means that the year in which an event occurs is considered the year of that event, with its "Year One" beginning the following year. Since the first year after the conquest of Jerusalem began two months afterwards, in Tishrei 890, the "fourteenth year after the city was smitten" began in Tishrei 903, which is the twenty-fifth year from the exile of King Jehoiachin, as stated in Ezekiel.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Kings 9:1-9, II Chronicles 7:12-22

⁴⁷ Jeremiah 25:3

⁴⁸ Jeremiah 4:1-9

⁴⁹ Ezekiel 40:1

SECTION IV

The following is an overview of the contacts which occurred between Israel and the Mesopotamian kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia. For a fuller explanation and discussion of these contacts, see *Section VI*.

From the time of Ahab of North Israel onwards, there occurred many contacts between Assyria and Israel. Of these contacts, some are mentioned in Assyrian records, others in the biblical text, and still others in both. The existence of a chronological framework based on a single discrete historical document composed shortly after the actual events it reports; i. e., the books of Kings and Chronicles, as well as several of the prophetic books of the Bible, provides an opportunity to check the accuracy of the modern reconstruction of Assyrian chronology, based, as it is, on fragmentary evidence. Given five assumptions, every Israelite-Assyrian contact can either be dated to a specific year or at least pinned down to within a moderate span of years. The assumptions are these:

- 1) Every date in conventional Assyrian chronology until, and including, the death of Ashur-Nirari V must be set twenty-nine years earlier.
- 2) The eclipse during the eponymy of Bur-Sagale occurred twenty-eight years earlier than is generally accepted.
- 3) Many of the records attributed to Tiglath-Pileser III, which do not actually carry that king's name, belong to his immediate predecessor, Sardanapalus (Pul).
- 4) Sennecherib's record of his campaign against Jerusalem actually recounts, at least in part, his first, successful campaign against Jerusalem, which he led while coregent during the reign of his father, Sargon, and was substituted for his later, unsuccessful campaign.
- 5) Shalmaneser V actually reigned six years; not five. His sixth year was later counted as the first year of the usurper, Sargon.

The first contact we have a record of is between Shalmaneser III of Assyria and Ahab. In Shalmaneser's sixth year (595), he defeated a Syrian coalition at Karkar, one of the contingents of which was sent by Ahab¹. This was the year following Ahab's death. However, there is no evidence that Ahab actually participated in the battle; only that he sent troops. Nor is there any mention of Ben-Hadad's presence at the battle between Aram and North Israel in which Ahab was killed.² As one of the leaders of the Syrian coalition, he

¹D.D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, vol. 1, p. 223

²1 Kings 22:29-36, 11 Chronicles 18:28-34. The Aramean force was led by the captains of the chariots, under the instructions of Ben-Hadad. He

may have been preparing for the confrontation with Shalmaneser at the the time, along with the North Israelite troops, when Ahab seized the opportunity to recover Ramot-Gilead from his "ally" of circumstance. That Ahab died before the Battle of Karkar might easily have escaped the notice of the Assyrians, and even of the North Israelites, just as in American history, the Battle of New Orleans was fought weeks after the Civil War ended due to failure of news of the war's end to reach the battle's participants. And Ahab's death may have occurred very shortly before the first of Nisan 595.

Shalmaneser also received tribute from Jehu in his eighteenth year (607).³ This was Jehu's accession year or his first year, depending on the date of the tribute. The fact that the numerical data given for the Israelite monarchy shows a change at this point from the Egyptian method of reckoning regnal years to the Assyrian system is in harmony with Jehu's obviously pro-Assyrian leanings.

Adad-Nirari III's annals record tribute sent to him by Joash.⁴ While he did not record precisely in what year the tribute was sent, it has been shown that his fifteenth year (652) is the best candidate.⁵ This was the year of Joahaz's death and the beginning of Joash's sole rule.

Along the annals of Tiglath-Pileser III and his immediate predecessor, Sardanapallus, are references to several Israelite kings. One year, the Assyrian received tribute from Menahem of North Israel and Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah.⁶ Another year, he took tribute again from Menahem.⁷ Both of these are limited to the years 707-718 and therefore belong to the records of Sardanapalus. This accords with the fact that the Bible mentions that Menahem paid tribute to Pul⁸ (Sardanapalus) but nowhere mentions any contact at all between Menahem and Tiglath-Pileser III.

In one document, the Assyrian king boasted of having been responsible for deposing Pekah of North Israel and elevating his successor, Hoshea.⁹ As this occurred in 740, the king in question was Tiglath-Pileser III. This may have been the reason for the difficulty Hoshea had being accepted in Samaria. It was a known tactic of the Assyrians to replace native rulers with Assyrianized natives who would serve the interests of Assyria.¹⁰ The message sent by Hoshea to So of Egypt and

may have been informed of the Israelite attack by messenger, or he may have left orders in case of a sneak attack.

³Luckenbill, *ARAB*, vol.1, p.243

⁴E.R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings (3rd Edition)* (Grand Rapids 1983), p.112

⁵Thiele, p.112

⁶Luckenbill, *ARAB*, vol.1, pp.274-276

⁷Ibid., vol.1, p.293

⁸II Kings 15:19

⁹Luckenbill, *ARAB*, vol.1, p.293

¹⁰For example, Bel-ibni, who Sennacherib appointed as puppet king of Babylonia, was a Babylonian educated in Assyria; cf. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago 1924), p.10

which was considered a betrayal of Assyria¹¹ may have been just that. It may also have been the price of Hoshea's acceptance in Samaria. Jewish sources consider the second nine years of Hoshea's reign to be the years of his revolt against Assyria.¹²

The record of tribute from Ahaz of Judah,¹³ recorded as well in the Bible,¹⁴ belongs also to Tiglath-Pileser III and can be dated to within the years 736-750. Unfortunately, due to the poor condition of these annals, it is difficult to be more accurate.

Both Shalmaneser V and Sargon are given credit for the destruction of the Kingdom of North Israel.¹⁵ Both claims are true, depending on the definition being used. Some would say that capturing the last native king is tantamount to conquering a kingdom. Others would insist on actual control of the kingdom's capital, if not the entire country.

Shalmaneser V took Hoshea captive in the latter's seventh year (756),¹⁶ while his successor, Sargon, completed the conquest of Samaria, putting an end to the kingdom of North Israel, in Hoshea's ninth year (758).¹⁷ These correspond to the sixth and last year of Shalmaneser V and the second year of Sargon (counting from the death of Shalmaneser V), the year in which he first records the exile of the population of Samaria.¹⁸

As discussed earlier, Sennecherib's first campaign against Judah in Hezekiah's fourteenth year (766) occurred during his father's reign and was the year in which Sargon sent a force against Ashdod led by the *tartan*.¹⁹ It is doubtful that Sennecherib was himself this *tartan*, and more likely that he was given command of a part of the army. This would be important training experience for the proclaimed heir to the throne of the warrior empire of Assyria. His second, disastrous campaign against Judah began in 776 and ended in 777, his fifth year and Hezekiah's twenty-fifth.

Esarhaddon boasted that he captured kings of foreign lands and forced them to labor on his building projects, listing among them Menasseh of Judah.²⁰ We know that he campaigned against the area of Syria in his third²¹ and fourth²² years (800 and 801) and passed through Israel on his way to Egypt

¹¹II Kings 17:4

¹²Rashi on II Kings 17:1, Seder Olam Rabbah 22

¹³Luckenbill, *ARAB*, vol. I, p. 287

¹⁴II Kings 16:8

¹⁵Hayim Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study", in *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, vol. XII (New Haven 1958), p. 33

¹⁶II Kings 18:9

¹⁷II Kings 17:6, 18:10

¹⁸Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II", p. 94

¹⁹Isaiah 20:1

²⁰Luckenbill, *ARAB*, vol. II, pp. 265-266

²¹A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (New York 1975), p. 83

²²*ibid.*, p. 83

in his seventh²³ and tenth²⁴ years (803 and 806). The Bible relates that Menasseh was taken in bonds by Assyrian officers to Babylonia.²⁵ Although no mention is made of the specific year, the Midrash puts this event in Menasseh's twenty-second year²⁶ (803).

Esarhaddon is also mentioned in the book of Ezra as having exiled foreign populations to the province of Samaria.²⁷ This may have been referred to obliquely by Isaiah. During the reign of Ahaz, Pekah and the Aramean King Rezin attacked Judah.²⁸ This can be dated to between the years 736 and 740. At this time, Isaiah prophesied that a child would be born, and that before he was old enough to distinguish between good and evil, both Pekah and Rezin would be removed.²⁹ He also prophesied that in sixty-five years, North Israel would cease to be a nation.³⁰ This was sometime between 801 and 805, during which Esarhaddon campaigned in the area twice. Whether he exiled what remnant of North Israelites were left or simply imported enough foreigners that no North Israelite revival would ever again be possible is uncertain.

Ashurbanipal also recorded the taking of tribute from Menasseh just prior to his first campaign against Egypt, which is dated to 809.³¹ This is the last synchronism between Assyria and Judah. Further contacts are between Babylonia and Judah.

All but the first and last contacts between Babylonia and the kingdom of Judah occurred during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. The first was between Merodach-Baladan and Hezekiah. This took place shortly after Hezekiah's illness,³² which in turn took place fifteen years before his death;³³ i. e., in 766. As Merodach-Baladan only reigned until 768, this contact can be placed sometime between these two years.

The last contact gives the accession date of Evil-Merodach, son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. In the month of Adar in Evil-Merodach's accession year, Jehoiachin was released from prison, where he had been since his capture by Nebuchadnezzar.³⁴ This was the thirty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity. The first year of captivity being 879, this comes to 915, which is the accepted accession date for Evil-Merodach.³⁵

Nebuchadnezzar's accession occurred in 872, a fact which is confirmed by Babylonian records.³⁶ In most cases, the biblical dates for Nebuchadnezzar are based on the non-acces-

²³ *ibid.*, p.84

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.85

²⁵ II Chronicles 33:11

²⁶ Babylonian Talmud Tractate Sanhedrin 103a

²⁷ Ezra 4:2

²⁸ II Kings 16:5

²⁹ Isaiah 7:16

³⁰ Isaiah 7:8

³¹ Luckenbill, *ARAB*, vol. II, p.340

³² II Kings 20:12

³⁴ II Kings 25:27, Jeremiah 52:31

³³ II Kings 20:6

³⁶ Wiseman, p.27

³⁵ Thiele, p.189-190

sion year system, which was in use in Judah in 872. The year of the Battle of Carchemish³⁷ and Nebuchadnezzar's first year³⁸ are equated with the fourth year of Jehoiakim (872). The exile of Jehoiachin was in Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year (879).³⁹ And the fall of Jerusalem was in his nineteenth year (890).⁴⁰ In the last chapter of Jeremiah, these last two exiles are mentioned, along with a third. These exiles are dated according to the accession year system actually used by Nebuchadnezzar. The exile of Jehoiachin is placed in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year (879),⁴¹ a date confirmed by Babylonian records. The fall of Jerusalem is placed in his eighteenth year (890).⁴² The third exile, dated to his twenty-third year (895)⁴³, would seem to be in response to the murder of the Babylonian governor, Gedaliah,⁴⁴ and constitutes the true end of the First Commonwealth. It is worth noting that Jewish tradition holds that the First Commonwealth came to an end in a post-Sabbatical year.⁴⁵ The year beginning in Tishrei 894 and ending in Tishrei 895 followed immediately the third Sabbatical year of the eighteenth Jubilee. This third exile can therefore be dated more precisely to the first half of 895.

³⁷Jeremiah 46:2

³⁹II Kings 24:12

⁴¹Jeremiah 52:28

⁴³Jeremiah 52:30

⁴⁵Babylonian Talmud Tractate Taanit 29a

³⁸Jeremiah 25:1

⁴⁰II Kings 25:8

⁴²Jeremiah 52:29

⁴⁴II Kings 25:25, Jeremiah 41:2

SECTION V

An underlying premise of this reconstruction is that the numbers in the Masoretic Text (the Hebrew Bible) are the original and accurate figures. This is in spite of the fact that the oldest complete copy of the Septuagint Greek translation of the Bible is older than the oldest complete copy of the Masoretic Bible, and that the figures given in the Septuagint differ from those in the Hebrew Bible. Yet another set of numerical data for the reigns of the Israelite kings is given by the historian Josephus Flavius.

Edwin Thiele has demonstrated clearly that the numbers in the Septuagint and in Josephus were a late and artificial attempt to correct for what seemed to be a corrupt tradition, in ignorance of the actual system being used.¹ Archeological discoveries such as the Dead Sea Scrolls have consistently supported the integrity of the Masoretic Text.

REGARDING THE PREMISES

It is clear from the text of Kings and Chronicles that a) Judah and North Israel used different regnal years, and that b) North Israel changed its system of counting these years from non-accession year dating to accession year dating at the time of Jehu's revolution.

Zechariah of North Israel reigned six months.² If a new regnal year had begun in North Israel during this time, Zechariah's reign would have been given as one year (accession year system) or two years (non-accession year system). But a new regnal year *did* begin in Judah during the reign of Zechariah, which lasted from the thirty-eighth to the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah.³ While this does not give us any information about when the different regnal years began, it does establish that they were different.

Two verses are given which seem to contradict one another directly. The same event (the accession of Ahaziah) is given first as the twelfth year of Joram,⁴ and later as the eleventh year of Joram.⁵ The first of these synchronisms is of the usual pattern; i. e., it is followed by an account of Ahaziah's reign. The second, however, is very unusual. It follows the death of Ahaziah at the hands of Jehu. Assuming minimal intelligence on the part of the compiler(s) of Kings, this apparent contradiction must convey some information. And in fact, the one way in which both passages can be true is if at this time (the coup of Jehu) what was previously considered to be the twelfth year of Joram became his eleventh year. This is the same as Year One becoming Year Zero, the effect of a change from non-accession year dating to accession year dating.

As suggested in *Section IV*, this seems to have been related to Jehu's pro-Assyrian sympathies (Assyria used the accession year system⁶). Similarly, the previous use of non-ac-

¹Thiele, pp.89-94

²1 Kings 15:8

³1 Kings 15:8,13

⁴1 Kings 8:25

⁵1 Kings 9:29

⁶Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II", p.27

cession year dating can be tied in with the beginnings of the kingdom of North Israel. Jeroboam I, founder of North Israel, had taken refuge for some time at the end of Solomon's life in the court of the king of Egypt.⁷ The non-accession year system is known to have been used in Egypt,⁸ and seems to have been borrowed from there by Jeroboam I.

At this point, it seems relevant to discuss a suggestion of Thiele's which can only be described as silly. Thiele assumes that the scribes of Judah reckoned North Israelite regnal years according to the system then in use in Judah, and vice versa.⁹ It is difficult to imagine that scribes would waste their time keeping track of the years in the neighboring kingdom which *disagreed* with that kingdom's own reckoning, rather than simply asking when necessary (say, at the accession of a new king), "What year is it over there?" There is no reason to assume such an unwieldy situation and every reason to assume that scribes in each kingdom were well aware of the dating in use across the border.

The regnal year and counting system in use in Judah can be inferred from the text. The overwhelming evidence is in favor of a Nisan regnal year in Judah. First, Nisan is referred to throughout the Bible as "the first month."¹⁰ In the face of this alone, the burden of proof is on anyone wishing to demonstrate the existence of any non-Nisan year in Israel. The agricultural years of the Sabbatical/Jubilee system began in Tishrei,¹¹ as well as the fact that the Jewish holy day of Rosh Hashana (New Year) falls on the first of Tishrei. This holy day, however, is not referred to anywhere in the Bible as New Year's Day, but as Rememberance Day and the Day of Horn Blowing, and is dated to the first day of the seventh month.¹² It is clear that a Tishrei year was not in use as far back as the desert sojourn. The ages of Aaron and Moses are given at the beginning of their confrontation with the Egyptian Pharaoh as eighty-three and eighty, respectively.¹³ Aaron, who died on the first of Av in the fortieth year from the Exodus, lived to be one hundred and twenty-three.¹⁴ Sometime between the first of Shevat and the seventh of Adar of the fortieth year, Moses gave his age as one hundred and twenty.¹⁵ If a new year had begun in the seventh month, Mo-

⁷1 Kings 11:40, 11 Chronicles 10:2

⁸E. J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World* (London 1968), p. 66

⁹Thiele, p. 80

¹⁰Nisan is the month in which spring begins. "The month of spring" and "the first month" are used interchangeably; cf. Exodus 23:15, 34:18, Leviticus 23:5, Deuteronomy 16:1. In Jeremiah 36:22, the king is sitting in the winter house with a fire going in the fireplace, and it is the ninth month. With the first month at the beginning of spring, the ninth month does indeed fall in the dead of winter.

¹¹Leviticus 25:9

¹²Leviticus 23:24, Numbers 29:1

¹³Exodus 7:7

¹⁴Numbers 33:38

¹⁵Deuteronomy 31:2. The narrative of Deuteronomy begins on the first of Shevat (Deuteronomy 1:3) and ends with the thirty days of mourning fol-

ses would have been one hundred and twenty-one. It is therefore clear that no new year began between the fifth and eleventh months. And there is no evidence of a change in calendar until the division of the monarchies after the death of Solomon.

Thiele, however, brings evidence which he claims mitigates against the acceptance of a Nisan regnal year in Judah. He cites the account of the building of the Temple during the reign of Solomon.¹⁶ This building began in the second month of Solomon's fourth year¹⁷ and was finished in the eighth month of his eleventh year.¹⁸ We are told that the building lasted for seven years.¹⁹ Thiele claims that with a Nisan year, this period of time would have been given as eight years, since ". . . reckoning was according to the inclusive system, whereby the first and last units or fractions of units of a group were included as full units in the total of the group."²⁰ In other words, the Bible rounds up, and the building must have taken six years and six months, which can only be the case if the regnal year began between the second and eighth months. This would be a good argument if not for the fact that the Bible rounds down. The seven and a half years during which David reigned in Hebron²¹ is given also as seven years.²² Likewise, the seven and a half years during which the Temple was built are given as seven years. Thus, this passage is actually further proof that the regnal year in Judah did not begin between the second and seventh months. In conjunction with the example mentioned above, it can be seen that the only months in which a new year may have begun, up through the reign of Solomon, are Adar, Nisan and Iyyar.

Thiele also adduces as evidence against a Nisan regnal year in Judah the renaissance of Josiah.²³ Thiele notes that the renaissance began in Josiah's eighteenth year,²⁴ and that its culmination was on Passover (the fourteenth day of Nisan), also of his eighteenth year²⁵. We are informed that two weeks is not nearly enough time for all the events preceding the celebration of the Passover. This may very well be true. In fact, the six and a half months which is Thiele's maximum for this period seems hardly sufficient itself. However, as discussed in *Section III*, the renaissance began in Josiah's sixteenth year, leaving up to two years for all of the events leading up to the celebration of the Passover in his eighteenth year.

It is also apparent that the accession year system was in use at least through the reign of David. One of the most

lowing Moses' death (Deuteronomy 34:8). Three days after this (Joshua 1:11), on the tenth of Nisan (Joshua 4:19), the Israelites crossed the Jordan. The death of Moses fell, therefore, on the seventh of Adar.

¹⁶Thiele, pp.51-52

¹⁷1 Kings 6:1,37, 11 Chronicles 3:2

¹⁸1 Kings 6:38

¹⁹1 Kings 6:38

²⁰Thiele, p.52

²¹1 Samuel 2:11

²²1 Kings 2:11, 1 Chronicles 29:27

²³Thiele, pp.52-53

²⁴1 Kings 22:3, 11 Chronicles 34:8

²⁵1 Kings 23:23, 11 Chronicles 35:19

notable attributes of non-accession year dating is that it is not additive. That is to say, since the last year of one king is also the first year of the next king and is thus counted twice, when two reigns are added together under non-accession year dating, the result is always one year too low. In the case of David, we are told that he reigned seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem, for a total of forty years.²⁶ Under non-accession year dating, David's seventh year in Hebron and his first year in Jerusalem would have been the same year. His total reign would then have been given as thirty-nine years.

The point at which new calendars and counting systems were introduced seems to be the secession of North Israel under Jeroboam I. Up until this point, years began in Nisan and were reckoned on the basis of the accession year system. There is no reason to doubt that the kingdom of Judah continued this way. There is ample reason, on the other hand, to attribute these changes to Jeroboam I. We are told that Jeroboam was worried that the people would return to the Davidic dynasty.²⁷ To avoid this, he set out to put distance between the two kingdoms. He established sanctuaries in Dan and Beth-El as alternatives to the Temple in Jerusalem.²⁸ And we are told that he established an new festival:

And Jeroboam made a festival in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the festival which is in Judah
29

The festival of Passover is on the fifteenth of the first month³⁰ and the festival of Sukkot is on the fifteenth of the seventh month.³¹ But there is no holiday on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. Jeroboam's festival was most likely his version of Sukkot. The three pilgrimage festivals are tied to the seasons and have agricultural elements to them. Passover is Hag He-Aviv (the festival of budding),³² Shavuot is Hag Ha-Katzir (the festival of harvesting)³³ and Sukkot is Hag He-Asif (the festival of ingathering).³⁴ To move Sukkot from Tishrei to Marheshvan would not interfere with the agricultural elements of the festival. It is not unlikely that the beginning of the agricultural year would also have been moved to Marheshvan. In an agrarian society such as Israel, reckoning by the agricultural year would make much sense. The only reason for the use of a Nisan year seems to have been the tradition of the birth of the nation at the time of the Exodus, which took place in Nisan. The Egyptian-leaning Jeroboam would hardly have been enthusiastic about emphasizing

²⁶ Kings 2:11, I Chronicles 29:27

²⁷ Kings 12:26-27

²⁸ Kings 12:28-30

²⁹ Kings 12:32

³⁰ Leviticus 23:6, Numbers 28:17

³¹ Leviticus 23:24

³² Exodus 23:15, Deuteronomy 16:1. The word "aviv" has come to mean "spring", this being the time of budding.

³³ Exodus 23:16

³⁴ Exodus 23:16

the past enmity between Israel and Egypt.

One other small bit of evidence mitigating towards Marheshvan as opposed to Tishrei is the date of Amaziah's appointment as coregent. Amaziah's appointment as coregent fell in the second year of Joash,³⁵ and as mentioned above, his coregency most likely began in Tishrei, when Judah was attacked by Aram. If North Israel used a Tishrei year, this would have been the third year of Joash. It is, of course, possible that Jehoash appointed Amaziah earlier, in anticipation of the Aramean attack.

Thiele and others have assumed that the only months in which years could have begun in Israel are Nisan and Tishrei. The only reference to Tishrei being the beginning of a regnal year is in the Babylonian Talmud, where it is taught that non-Jewish kings count their years from Tishrei.³⁶ This passage, according to Edgar Frank, probably refers to the Seleucid Era calendar, which was used for centuries by the Jews, and which began in the autumn.³⁷ It is possible that the kingdom of North Israel used Tishrei years, but there is no evidence for this. The only evidence, slight as it is, points towards Marheshvan. However, with the exception of Amaziah's coregency, which could be dated earlier, no difference is made in this chronology if Tishrei is substituted for Marheshvan.

Thus far, we have Judah using Nisan years and accession year dating, and North Israel using Marheshvan years and non-accession year dating, until the coup of Jehu, at which point they switched to the accession year system. The only other evidence of a change in counting system is during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin. The reason for this change is clearly due to Jehoiakim's appointment by Pharaoh Necho.³⁸ The Egyptian would be likely to choose whomever of the royal house was the most sympathetic towards Egypt. He may even have referred to the year as the "first year" of Jehoiakim when installing him as king. As far as evidence that this did in fact happen, there are several points, none of which are proof in their own right, but which, when combined, result in reasonably strong circumstantial evidence.

- 1) If Jehoiakim used accession year dating, Jeremiah's "twenty-three years"³⁹ would be twenty-four.
- 2) If Jehoiakim used accession year dating, the traditional four hundred and ten years during which the Temple stood⁴⁰

³⁵|| Kings 14:1

³⁶Babylonian Talmud Tractate Rosh Hashanah 3a, 8a

³⁷Edgar Frank, *Talmudic and Rabbinic Chronology* (Jerusalem 1956), p.35

³⁸|| Kings 23:34, || Chronicles 36:4

³⁹Jeremiah 25:3. It should be kept in mind that the "thirteenth year" mentioned in this verse was actually Josiah's eleventh year.

⁴⁰Babylonian Talmud Tractate Yoma 9a

would be four hundred and eleven.

- 3) If Jehoiakim used accession year dating, the Sabbatical/Jubilee system would currently be one year out of sync with the count in the Bible.
- 4) The statement in Chronicles that Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign,⁴¹ in contradiction to the parallel passage in Kings, where his age was given as eighteen,⁴² may be, as are many passages in Chronicles, figurative, and may refer to the succession being transferred to Jehoiakim, which put Jehoichin in line to be king. If Jehoiakim used accession year dating, Jehoiachin would have been seven and not eight at the time of his father's appointment.
- 5) The system described in the beginning of Tractate Rosh Hashana of the Babylonian Talmud for Israelite kings is a Nisan regnal year and the non-accession year system.⁴³ If our conclusions have been right so far, this passage must be referring to Judah. And the only time when there is some rationale for a change in counting system is under Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin. Further, the Babylonian Exilarchs, contemporaries of the Talmudic sages, were descended from the Davidic dynasty - through Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin.⁴⁴ They may have been the source of this information.

The fact that all coregencies were reckoned without an accession year is based on two things. First, it is logical. The idea of an accession year of a coregency is pointless. The year belongs to the senior king in any case. The first year of a coregency might as well be called the first year of the coregency. The second reason is the more basic one, and that is the simple fact that it works. This might be added to all of the preceding discussion as an additional point. Other premises do not result in a consistent chronology. And until someone succeeds in developing an equally workable chronology based on different assumptions, which does not commit violence against the biblical text, the fact that this model does work must be seen as evidence in favor of its accuracy.

Lastly, regarding the four cases of North Israelite usurpers whose reign is counted both from their usurpation and from their acceptance in Samaria, these differences in time may be considered interregna by those who prefer to see it that way. The city elders of Samaria most probably did. Similarly, the "reign" of Athaliah in Judah may also be considered an interregnum.

⁴¹|| Chronicles 36:9

⁴²|| Kings 24:8

⁴³Babylonian Talmud Tractate Rosh Hashanah 2a-2b

⁴⁴Seder Olam Zuta

REGARDING THE NOTATION

The only thing in this section which might require some discussion is the calendar. There are several reasons for using years LM rather than BCE during this period. First of all, it counts forward, unlike the backwards BCE calendar, which is very awkward for working with detailed chronology. Secondly, it begins in Nisan. Judah counted years from Nisan. Most of the kingdoms of the ancient world used years beginning around the Spring Equinox. Even today, the zodiacal calendar used in astrology begins with Aries (the equivalent of Nisan). And the names of months used in the Gregorian calendar retain the memory of March as the first month of the year (*September, October, November and December* were originally the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth months of the year). It was the single most widely used calendar in the ancient world. The use of a calendar beginning in January may very well be unique in history, and insures that unless an exact date is known, years will be expressed as 587/6 BCE and the like, simply adding confusion to an already complex field. In addition, it may be useful in shaking off certain preconceived notions. Thiele writes that he originally completed his chronology without the use of absolute dates, in order to avoid being caught up in the fallacy of forcing the chronology to fit *a priori* dates.⁴⁵ Considering the revision of Assyrian chronology proposed herein, cutting loose from familiar BCE dates may simply prevent confusion.

The equation of 1 LM and 1476 BCE is derived as follows: The destruction of the Temple occurred in 587 BCE. From the internal chronology of the Israelite monarchies, we find that Solomon's fourth year (thirty-six years before his death) took place four hundred and ten years earlier, in 997 BCE. This was four hundred and seventy-nine years after the Exodus. The statement that it was the four hundred and eightieth year from the Exodus⁴⁶ is analogous to the second year from the Exodus, mentioned at the beginning of the book of Numbers,⁴⁷ which is clearly the year following the Exodus. The Exodus, then, occurred in 1476 BCE.

The date of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem is given variously as 586 BCE and 587 BCE. It seems possible that most partisans of one or the other date are not even aware of the reasons behind them. According to Babylonian records, Nebuchadnezzar exiled Jehoiachin and replaced him with Zedekiah in Adar of 597 BCE.⁴⁸ If Judah used a Tishrei year and accession year dating, the destruction of the Temple in Av of Zedekiah's eleventh year occurred in 586 BCE. If Judah used Tishrei years and non-accession year dating, the destruction was in 587 BCE. If Judah used Nisan years and non-accession year dating, the correct date is 588 BCE. And if, as seems to have been the case, Judah used Nisan years and accession year dating, the destruction of the Temple occurred in 587 BCE.

⁴⁵Thiele, pp.16-17

⁴⁷Numbers 1:1

⁴⁶1 Kings 6:1

⁴⁸Wiseman, pp.32-33

Some writers have placed the Exodus as late as 1270 BCE,⁴⁹ a phenomenon which deserves explanation. The clear statement setting Solomon's fourth year in the four hundred and eightieth year after the Exodus is often ignored, and just as often distorted. One prevalent view is that four hundred and eighty years means twelve generations of forty years each. Substituting a "more reasonable" generation of twenty-five years gives three hundred years between The Exodus and the building of the Temple.⁵⁰ This is patently ridiculous. Nowhere is this time period referred to as "twelve generations". And if, as it is sometimes pointed out, there were twelve generations from Aaron to Ahimaaz (inclusive),⁵¹ there were also seven generations from Nahshon (prince of Judah in the desert⁵²) to Solomon (inclusive).⁵³ Or, if it is generations of priests that count, Eleazar son of Aaron was already an adult at the time of the Exodus,⁵⁴ and Zadok father of Ahimaaz was high priest in the beginning of Solomon's reign.⁵⁵ Thus, there were only ten generations of priests from the Exodus to the building of the Temple.

Scholars seem to have an aversion to round numbers. Any number which is divisible by ten, twelve or forty is in chronic danger of being revised. For some reason, the idea that a period of forty years is no less likely to occur naturally than one of thirty-nine years escapes many such scholars. To use the present work as an example, the fact that the period from the building of the Temple to its destruction is four hundred and ten years is not an artificial construction. It's the way it came out. It is interesting to note that from David's conquest of Jerusalem in his seventh year until the reconquest of Jerusalem by the modern State of Israel in 1967 CE comes to exactly three thousand years. Those who wish to see this as seventy-five generations of forty years each are certainly entitled to do so.

The reason for the uncalled-for tampering with this verse is a desire to identify Ramses II as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The reasons behind this are very weak. The mention of the city of Raamses which was built by the Israelites during their bondage in Egypt⁵⁶ is thought to imply that the Pharaoh of the time was a Ramses. This does not follow at all. At the time of the Israelite descent into Egypt, the "land of Raamses" is mentioned as well.⁵⁷ Does this mean that the Pharaoh of that time was a Ramses? And why Ramses II? Why not Ramses III (c. 1150 BCE)? If we put the time in Egypt at four hundred and thirty years, as some scholars persist in doing (also in contradiction to the biblical information⁵⁸), we can get the Exodus down to c. 720 BCE and have Moses a con-

⁴⁹*Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem 1971), vol. VI, p. 1045

⁵⁰*ibid.* vol. VI, pp. 1044-1045

⁵²Numbers 7:12

⁵⁴Exodus 28:1

⁵⁶Exodus 1:11

⁵¹1 Chronicles 6:35-38

⁵³Ruth 4:20-22

⁵⁵1 Kings 2:35

⁵⁷Genesis 47:11

⁵⁸Kehath son of Levi was among those who came to Egypt with Jacob (Gene-

temporary of Hezekiah. This, of course, is ridiculous. But no more so than the games played with the synchronism of four hundred and eighty years. In any case, those who wish can simply ignore the meaning of "LM" and put the Exodus around 180 LM.

REGARDING DATING IRREGULARITIES

A large amount of chronological data is given regarding the reign of Asa. In order to analyse it properly, the meaning of years dated to a given year in the "kingship of Asa" must be understood. The one place where it is clear that this phrasing does not refer to Asa's regnal years is the attack of Baasha in the thirty-sixth year of this era.⁵⁹ In Asa's thirty-sixth regnal year, Baasha had been dead for ten years.⁶⁰ Thiele suggested that the reference was to thirty-six years from the division of the monarchies, twenty years before Asa's accession.⁶¹ The fact that most English translations make no distinction between "limloch Asa" and "le-malchut Asa", translating both as "of the reign of Asa", may be responsible for this error. Looking at the original Hebrew text, we find that four dates are given in the "kingship (malchut) of Asa", as opposed to "of the reign of Asa". These are the fifteenth,⁶² thirty-fifth,⁶³ thirty-sixth and thirty-ninth⁶⁴ years. Since the fifteenth year cannot be any earlier than Asa's accession year, the earliest starting point for the "Kingdom of Asa" is the fifth year of Rehoboam, eliminating Thiele's hypothesis. Likewise, the thirty-sixth year must be during Baasha's lifetime, so the latest starting point for the "Kingdom of Asa" is the tenth year of Rehoboam, thirty-six years before the death of Baasha in Asa's twenty-sixth year. The only event of importance which occurred between Rehoboam's fifth and tenth years was the sack of the Temple in his fifth year.⁶⁵ The fifteenth, thirty-fifth, thirty-sixth and thirty-ninth years of the "Kingdom of Asa" can therefore be identified as Asa's accession, twentieth, twenty-first and twenty-fourth years, respectively.

We are told that during Asa's reign "the land was quiet for ten years",⁶⁶ implying ten years without conflict. We are told that there was war between Asa and Baasha all of

sis 46:11). Kehath lived one hundred and thirty-three years (Exodus 6:18). His son Amram lived one hundred and thirty-seven years (Exodus 6:20). His son Moses was eighty years old when the confrontation with Pharaoh began (Exodus 7:7), and was therefore eighty-one at the time of the Exodus. The absolute maximum time this leaves for the Israelites in Egypt, assuming that Kehath was a newborn baby when he reached Egypt and that both Amram and Moses were born posthumously, is three hundred and fifty-three years. The actual span was two hundred and ten years. Four hundred and thirty years (Exodus 12:40-41) from the time Abraham left Ur, and four hundred years (Genesis 15:13) from the birth of Isaac.

59|| Chronicles 16:1

60|| Kings 16:8

61|| Thiele, p.84

62|| Chronicles 15:10

63|| Chronicles 15:19

64|| Chronicles 16:12

65|| Kings 14:25, || Chronicles 12:2

66|| Chronicles 13:23

their days.⁶⁷ We are also told that from Asa's victory over Zerah in his accession year until his twentieth year, when the confrontation with Baasha began, there was no war.⁶⁸ Clearly the fact that the statement regarding the ten years of quiet is inserted at the beginning of the Chronicler's account of Asa's reign is no indication that the war against Zerah took place after this ten years. The events of Asa's reign in Chronicles are not in strict chronological order. Thus, Asa's religious reforms are related before the war against Zerah,⁶⁹ and repeated after the victory.⁷⁰ This is simply a case of the Chronicler presenting the most impressive aspects of Asa's reign (according to the priorities of the book of Chronicles) as a preface to that reign. The reference to continual war between Asa and Baasha should be understood as meaning that from the outbreak of hostilities between the two kingdoms, they fought continuously.

The events of Asa's reign would seem to be as follows: In Asa's accession year, he defeated the vast attacking army of Zerah the Ethiopian. A victory celebration was held and reforms were instituted in gratitude to G-d. Asa's reputation following this victory was so great that for the next ten years, no one dared challenge him. But ten years is a long time to stay impressed, and at the end of this time things began to return to "normal", with minor conflicts, bedouin raids and the like resuming. We are told that many North Israelites were impressed enough by Asa's victory that they returned to the kingdom of David.⁷¹ It was not until Asa's twentieth year that Baasha was able to persuade his people to make war against Judah. The following year he almost managed to put Jerusalem under siege, and was only stopped by an Aramean attack in the north.

That the year of Shishak's attack and the beginning of the "Kingship of Asa" era corresponds to the year of Asa's birth, as suggested above, is purely conjectural. Accession ages are given for all of the kings of Judah barring only Abijah and Asa. Given the accession ages of Rehoboam (41)⁷² and Jehoshaphat (35),⁷³ the former would have been forty-six years when his grandson Asa was born, and Asa would have been twenty-one years old at the birth of Jehoshaphat. Both of these ages are well within reason.

It was suggested as well that the victory over Zerah was seen as a reversal of the defeat by Shishak. Some historians have actually identified Zerah's army as an Egyptian force.⁷⁴ Even if this is not the case, it was a victory over a huge army only fifteen years after a resounding and humiliating defeat, and it would not have been surprising for the two to have been compared.

67| Kings 15:16

69| Chronicles 14:1-6

71| Chronicles 15:9

73| Kings 22:42, II Chronicles 20:31

74| K.A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.)* (Warminster 1973), p.309

68| Chronicles 15:19

70| Chronicles 15:8

72| Kings 14:21, II Chronicles 12:13

The mechanics of the Sabbatical/Jubilee system have been a matter of debate for at least the last eighteen centuries. The debate has revolved around whether the Jubilee year is or is not the first year of the following Sabbatical cycle. Obviously, the answer to this question determines whether there are forty-nine or fifty years between Jubilee years. The dispute first appears in the Babylonian Talmud as a disagreement between Rabbi Judah and the Sages.⁷⁵ The position of Rabbi Judah, which has been adopted here, was preferred by the Geonim (heads of the Babylonian academies; c.700-1000 CE)⁷⁶ and the commentator Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki; c.1075 CE),⁷⁷ among others. The strongest voice in favor of the position of the Sages is Moses Maimonides (c.1150 CE).⁷⁸

The opinion of Rabbi Judah has been accepted for the simple reason that it fits *all* of the available information. A match is created with Sabbatical years observed in modern times, with those recorded as having been observed during the Second Temple period, and with biblical occurrences of Sabbatical and Jubilee years. After the destruction of the First Temple, Jubilee years were not observed, according to the law that the Jubilee is only in effect when "all of its [the land's] inhabitants are upon it";⁷⁹ i.e., when most of Israel is in the Land of Israel. They were, however, counted.⁸⁰

Josephus relates that Alexander the Great exempted Judea from tribute in Sabbatical years at the request of the high priest in 1145 LM (332 BCE).⁸¹ The fourth Sabbatical year of the twenty-third Jubilee began in Tishrei of 1145 which explains the timing of the request.

It is stated explicitly in First Maccabees that the year 150 of the Seleucid Era was a Sabbatical year.⁸² According to Edgar Frank, the Seleucid Era used by the author of First Maccabees had its Year One in the year beginning in autumn of 1164 (313 BCE).⁸³ Seleucid 150 began then in autumn 1313 LM, and was the seventh Sabbatical year of the twenty-sixth Jubilee.

Josephus mentions also that the third year of Herod the Great was a Sabbatical year.⁸⁴ This was 1440 LM (37 BCE), the first half of which was the second half of the fourth Sabbatical year of the twenty-ninth Jubilee.

The Talmud relates that both the First and Second Commonwealths ended in post-Sabbatical years.⁸⁵ As discussed earlier, the end of the First Commonwealth, five years after the destruction of the First Temple, occurred in the year following the third Sabbatical year of the eighteenth Jubilee. The

⁷⁵Babylonian Talmud Tractate Nedarim 61a

⁷⁶Rabbi Abraham ibn Daoud on Maimonides, Hilchot Shmitta V'Yovel 10:6

⁷⁷Rashi on Leviticus 25:8

⁷⁸Maimonides, Hilchot Shmitta V'Yovel 10:7

⁷⁹ibid. 10:9

⁸⁰ibid. 10:3

⁸¹Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XI:8, Paragraph 5

⁸²1 Maccabees 6:20,49,53

⁸³Frank, pp.30,32

⁸⁴Josephus, XIV:15, Paragraph 14 - XIV:16, Paragraph 2

⁸⁵Babylonian Talmud Tractate Arachin 11b

Second Commonwealth ended with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE (1546 LM), in the year following the fifth Sabbatical year of the thirty-first Jubilee. These correlations, along with the modern ones, are ample evidence of the accuracy of the Sabbatical/Jubilee framework as presented here.

One bit of regnal information given in the Bible but not yet discussed concerns King Saul. Although this King's reign lies outside the immediate scope of this reconstruction, the data given for his reign are often presented as evidence that biblical numerical data are corrupt and cannot be relied upon. Saul, we are told, was one year old when he began to reign, and reigned for two years.⁸⁶ It is maintained that two years is not nearly enough time for the events of Saul's reign. And it is obvious that Saul was not an infant. Difficulty with Saul's age at accession is the result of reading out of context. Prior to Saul's being proclaimed King, he was anointed privately by Samuel, who then informed him of what was to shortly happen to him:

And it will happen, when you come to the city, that you will meet up with a band of prophets . . . and they will prophesy. And the spirit of the L-rd will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be turned into another man.⁸⁷

This new Saul was one year old when he became King. All this tells us is that between Saul's encounter with the band of prophets and his proclamation as King a new year began. As far as the two years of his reign, these ended with Saul's rejection after the Amalekite war and the anointing of David.⁸⁸ From this point until Saul's death, Saul was still King in the eyes of the people, but David was King in the eyes of G-d. This period, consequently, is counted to neither of them.

As to how long this period was, it is unclear. From the death of Eli when the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines, until the seventh year of David's reign, when it was brought to Jerusalem, is a maximum of twenty years.⁸⁹ The judgeship of Samuel and kingship of Saul combined can therefore not exceed thirteen years. If Saul is given six years of actual reign, his rejection would fall in 432, the first half of which was a Sabbatical year and the second half of which was the eighth Jubilee year. A Sabbatical year would be the perfect time to launch a national war against the Amalekites, especially one followed by a Jubilee year, in case the war lasted longer than expected.

86| Samuel 13:1
88| Samuel 15:28

87| Samuel 10:5-6
89| Samuel 7:2

SECTION VI

It has been clear since the earliest attempts to reconcile the biblical and archeological material that the two are mutually contradictory. In order for the Assyrian chronology, as it has been reconstructed by scholars on the basis of documents unearthed in Mesopotamia, to be correct and complete, approximately thirty years need to be excised from the biblical chronology. This has been accomplished in countless ways. All of these ways include emending the biblical text; i. e., they are dependant upon the assumption that at least some of the biblical data is the result of confused or incompetent scribes. Why any of the biblical numerical data should be given any credence at all if this is the case is a riddle. Still, scholars abound who pick and choose among the biblical data in order to confirm what they believe *must* be true.

But is Israelite incompetence more plausible than Assyrian forgery? And if so, why? This question will be asked again after the evidence for such forgery has been presented.

The reign of Hezekiah in Jerusalem saw Israelite contacts with three different Assyrian kings, and provides a useful framework for dating these contacts. In Hezekiah's fourth year, Shalmaneser V captured Hoshea, the last king of North Israel, and placed Samaria under siege.¹ In Hezekiah's sixth year, Samaria fell at the hands of the (unnamed) Assyrian king.² In Hezekiah's fourteenth year, Sennecherib came again against Jerusalem and took tribute from Hezekiah.³ In Hezekiah's twenty-fourth year, Sennecherib returned to Judah, and at the end of this campaign, early in Hezekiah's twenty-fifth year, Sennecherib's army was annihilated before the walls of Jerusalem.⁴

The problem is that the twenty-one years from Shalmaneser's siege of Samaria until the end of Sennecherib's third campaign in his fifth year leave a maximum of sixteen years for Sargon, who has a well documented reign of seventeen years. It seems that Sargon was already king of Assyria when Shalmaneser V captured Hoshea.

It is known that Sargon was an usurper. Apparently, he rebelled against Shalmaneser V in that king's fifth year, and in Shalmaneser V's sixth year, before Sargon's rebellion got too out of hand, he led a last campaign against North Israel. The reality is that Shalmaneser V reigned six years; not five, and that Sargon reigned sixteen years; not seventeen. That Shalmaneser is given only five years in later king lists is unsurprising, as Sargon claimed Shalmaneser's sixth year as his first year. In fact, we find that some of Sargon's records seem to place his first year in 757, while others put it in 756. Prof. Hayim Tadmor has published an incisive analysis of Sargon's reign, trying to reconcile the contradictory information.⁵ He noted that Sargon's Prism inscriptions

¹ I Kings 18:9

² I Kings 18:10

³ I Kings 18:13, Isaiah 36:1

⁴ I Kings 19:35, Isaiah 36:37, II Chronicles 32:21

⁵ Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II", pp.22-40, 77-100

generally dated events one year earlier than his Annals, so that an event dated to Sargon's fifth year in the Annals might be dated to his fourth year in the Prisms.⁶ If Sargon began reigning in the year preceding Shalmaneser V's death, it would seem that, in general, the Prisms consider 756 to be the sixth year of Shalmaneser V and Sargon's accession year, while the Annals place Sargon's accession at the time of his rebellion in the fifth year of Shalmaneser V (755). There are, however, recognized inaccuracies in Sargon's records. The campaign against Ashdod, for example, is dated to Sargon's ninth year in the Prisms, which would be 765, and to his eleventh year in the Annals, which would be 766.⁷ Tadmor admits to an uncertainty regarding these two dates, and concedes that at least one of them is erroneous.⁸ The biblical material provides the information that 766 is the correct date, as will be shown further on.

Tadmor assumes that the different dating of the Annals and the Prisms is invariable. This is not necessarily the case. The fall of Samaria in 758 should be dated by the Annals to Sargon's third year. Instead, the conquest of the Samaritans is dated to Sargon's second year,⁹ indicating that the earlier parts of the Annals also placed Sargon's accession in 756. It may not have been until several years into his reign that Sargon began dating from his rebellion.

In Hezekiah's fourth year, Shalmaneser V captured Hoshea, the last king of North Israel, and placed Samaria under siege. In his sixth year, and the third year of the siege, Samaria fell and its population was exiled. The book of Kings does not attribute the fall of Samaria specifically to Shalmaneser V, but to an anonymous "they".¹⁰ As discussed above, both Shalmaneser V and Sargon claimed credit for the conquest of North Israel. Tadmor has pointed out that Sargon did not go against Samaria until his second year (from the death of Shalmaneser V), having been too busy up until then consolidating his rule in Mesopotamia.¹¹ In addition, it is significant that in the records of his second year, Sargon refers to "the king of Gaza" and "the king of Hamath" as rebelling, but instead of "the king of Samaria", mention is made of "the Samaritans".¹² Shalmaneser V apparently died in the same year in which he captured Hoshea, putting the fall of Samaria in the second year of Sargon. After the mass deportations of North Israelites by Tiglath-Pileser III not long before,¹³ maintaining a siege of Samaria while busy in Mesopotamia would not have required a major effort; when Sargon finally turned his attention to the city, its fall probably did not take long.

The Bible does not give Sargon credit for the conquest of North Israel, and would not be expected to. It is made clear

⁶ibid, p.22

⁷ibid, pp.95-96

⁸ibid, p.93

⁹ibid, p.94

¹⁰|| Kings 18:10

¹¹Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II", p.38

¹²ibid, p.37

¹³|| Kings 15:29

in the book of Kings that exile of the North Israelites was no more than what they deserved.¹⁴ Where Assyria is berated for attacking Judah,¹⁵ its conquest of North Israel is not criticized at all. The book of Kings is a didactic history; that is, its aim is to teach certain lessons. Had the death of Shalmaneser V been recorded immediately following his capture of a North Israelite king and besieging of the North Israelite capitol, the inevitable message would have been that Shalmaneser V was the victim of divine punishment. Shalmaneser was not given credit for the fall of Samaria, because that would have been factually untrue. Sargon was not given credit for the fall of Samaria, because that would have created a false impression. Omitting the king's name avoided both of these unacceptable alternatives.

Eight years after the fall of Samaria, in Hezekiah's fourteenth year, the Bible records that Sennecherib came against Jerusalem and took tribute. In Assyria, this was the tenth year of Sargon, counting from his rebellion. In his annals for this year, he records a campaign against the Philistine coast, and specifically against Ashdod.¹⁶ The *Eponym Canon*, however, relates that Sargon remained in Assyria this year.¹⁷ This campaign has therefore been identified as the "year that the *tartan* came against Ashdod, having been sent by Sargon, King of Assyria",¹⁸ mentioned in Isaiah.¹⁹ This year is identified in Jewish tradition as the fourteenth year of Hezekiah,²⁰ which has led to the statement in the Babylonian Talmud that Sargon was another name for Sennecherib.²¹ As if to add to the confusion, Sennecherib, in the records of his third campaign, which began in his fourth regnal year and ended early in his fifth year,²² records the same tribute exacted from Jerusalem that the Bible records in Hezekiah's fourteenth year, *eleven years earlier*.²³ And as discussed above, Sennecherib's fifth year is the year that, at his return to Jerusalem, his army was annihilated before the city walls.

Examination of all available information suggests the following situation: In the tenth year of Sargon, his son Sennecherib, as crown prince of Assyria, was given command of a part of the Assyrian force sent against Philistia and Israel

¹⁴|| Kings 17:7-23

¹⁵|| Kings 19:20-28, Isaiah 37:22-29

¹⁶Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II", pp.95-96

¹⁷ibid, p.97

¹⁸Isaiah 20:1

¹⁹Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II", p.79

²⁰Seder Olam Rabbah 23

²¹Babylonian Talmud Tractate Sanhedrin 94a

²²Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, p.10. Sennecherib's campaigns are not dated to regnal years. While it is accepted that his third campaign began in his fourth year, the fact that it ended in his fifth year is based on the traditional date of his army's destruction. For the campaign to have ended before the fifteenth of Nisan in his fourth year, the march from Assyria and the entire siege of Jerusalem would need to be compressed into a two week period.

²³Luckenbill, *ARAB*, vol.11, pp.142-143. Compare II Kings 18:14

under the *tartan* of Assyria (possibly the Zer-ibni who was the *limmu* in Sargon's fourth year²⁴), in order to gain experience in the field. During the course of the campaign, Sennecherib went against the city of Jerusalem and took tribute from its king, Hezekiah, who had been inciting to rebellion against Assyria. Just as the achievements of the *tartan* were attributed to Sargon, so too was this achievement of Sennecherib. Tadmor attributes a fragmentary text dealing with a defeat of Judah to the reign of Sargon.²⁵ This document probably belongs to Sargon's tenth year and relates Sennecherib's victory over Jerusalem. After the death of Sargon, in Sennecherib's third campaign, he returned to Jerusalem, whose king had continued in his anti-Assyrian activities, with the intent of exiling the population of the city. On this occasion, Sennecherib was less successful, to say the least, and left scores of thousands of troops dead before the walls of Jerusalem.

Sennecherib, in the remaining nineteen years of his reign, never again dared send an army to Philistia or Israel.²⁶

Historians are agreed that if the fate of the Assyrian army, as described in the books of Kings and Chronicles, is historically accurate, Sennecherib would not be expected to have recorded the debacle.²⁷ This much is clear. It has even been suggested that rather than merely omitting such a defeat, Sennecherib would have recorded a victory in its place.²⁸ And what better substitute than his successful campaign against Jerusalem, which would otherwise have gone unrecorded?

What is less certain is whether all of the events of this campaign took place in Sargon's tenth year, or if it is an amalgam of the two campaigns, with only the events involving Judah being replaced with their counterparts from the earlier campaign. Tadmor has remarked on the unusual phenomenon of Ashdod, which was reduced from vassal kingdom to Assyrian province in Sargon's tenth year, appearing again as a kingdom in the the records of Sennecherib's third campaign. "The reorganization of Ashdod - from a province back to a vassaldom - has no precedent."²⁹ Perhaps it never happened at all.

Mention of the visit of emissaries of Merodach-Baladan of Babylonia to Jerusalem shortly after Hezekiah's illness in

²⁴Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II", p.79, note 210

²⁵ibid, pp.80-83

²⁶There have been many arguments put forward for a campaign of Sennecherib against Jerusalem later in his reign; cf. John Bright, *A History of Israel* (2nd Edition, Philadelphia 1972), pp.296-308. Most of these arguments do indeed support the fact of two campaigns, however, the present reconstruction eliminates the need for such a campaign late in Sennecherib's reign.

²⁷Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, p.13

²⁸ibid.

²⁹Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II", p.84, note 247

his fourteenth year³⁰ has been explained away by historians, embarrassed by the fact that Merodach-Baladan lost his throne before Sennecherib became King, as a dethroned monarch conspiring with other enemies of Assyria in an attempt to regain his kingdom.³¹ As Merodach-Baladan was not dethroned until Hezekiah's sixteenth year, there is no need for this hypothesis.

The fact that Tirhaka, Ethiopian ruler of Egypt, seems from Egyptian sources not to have come to the throne until 787, ten years after Sennecherib's last visit to Israel, has been discussed by the Egyptologist, Kevin Kitchen. Based upon native Egyptian inscriptions, Kitchen states that:

. . . there is no reason whatever to doubt that Taharqa [Tirhaka] could have been present at Eltekeh in 701 B.C. [the fourth year of Sennecherib], and a slight presumption in favour of him and possibly some of his brothers actually being with their armies there, then . . . ? Taharqa could well have been titular head of the expedition . . . If in current speech one says that Queen Elizabeth was born in 1926, this is precisely like saying that King Tarhaqa was in Palestine in 701 B.C. . . .³²

In Assyria, there was an method of dating similar to the Roman consulship system. Each year was associated with an official who was that year's *limmu*, sometimes called "eponym". Lists were compiled of successive *limmus* and their positions. Several fragmentary copies of these lists were found by archeologists. A few of these lists, referred to collectively as *The Assyrian Eponym Canon*, contain mention of important events that occurred during each given year. As names of eponyms repeated, this may have been for greater accuracy.

In the eponymy of Bur-Sagale, in the reign of Ashur-Dan III, an eclipse was reported in the month of Sivan.³³ In conventional Assyrian chronology, this falls out in the year 714. To the great misfortune of Assyriology and of ancient history as a whole, calculations have shown that there was in fact an eclipse in Sivan 714, which was visible in Assyria.³⁴ Had it not been for this unfortunate coincidence, attention would have been called to the fact that there is a break in the *limmu* lists.

The biblical data calls for a break of close to thirty years somewhere between the reigns of Adad-Nirari III and Tiglath-Pileser III. Far from being mute in regard to this break, the Bible records an Assyrian king who is unmentioned in Assyrian records. The Bible calls this king "Pul",³⁵ and he appears to have been the immediate predecessor of Tiglath-

³⁰|| Kings 20:12

³¹Thiele, p.176

³²Kitchen, pp.158-160

³³George Smith, *The Assyrian Eponym Canon* (London 1875), pp.28, 42-55

³⁴T.R. von Oppolzer, *Canon of Eclipses* (translated by Owen Gingerich, New York 1962), p.53

³⁵|| Kings 15:19, | Chronicles 5:26

Pileser III.³⁶ When enough time is allotted to this king in order to synchronize Shalmaneser III with Ahab and Jehu of North Israel, we can check once more to see whether there was an eclipse in Sivan of the eponymy of Bur-Sagale. This now comes to 686 LM (791 BCE), and as expected, there was indeed an eclipse visible in Assyria in Sivan 686.³⁷

History is not ignorant of attempts to blot out the memory of disgraced monarchs. Egyptian King lists from the time of Ramses II skip over the last four Pharaohs of the XVIIIth Dynasty as if they never existed.³⁸ The question is *why* an Assyrian king would have become victim of such a *damnatio memoriae*. Probable answer to this question is found both in the Bible and in the *Philippian Histories* of Trogus Pompeius.

The book of Jonah is generally treated as a non-historical work, despite mention of Jonah ben Amittai in the book of Kings.³⁹ This is due primarily to the account of Jonah's being swallowed by a whale,⁴⁰ an event which, though having been repeated and documented in modern times, is felt to reduce the entire book to the status of fairy tale. Without going into the historicity of the whole of Jonah, the actions of the Assyrian king as recorded in this book might well be cause for his deposition and derecognition. For the warrior king of a warrior empire to institute puritanical reforms at the bidding of a prophet from the weak and despised kingdoms of Israel would surely have been seen as superstitious weakness, shaming all of Assyria. Jonah is mentioned as having prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II (655-706), and our dates for "Pul" are 702-733. Thus, "Pul" is a likely candidate for Jonah's Assyrian king.

In his *Philippian Histories*, Trogus Pompeius relates the story of the Assyrian king Sardanapalus.⁴¹ This king, according to Trogus, lived like a woman and, being considered unworthy of ruling the Empire, was killed by a governor of Media named Arbactus. As the only version we have of Trogus' work is one abridged by Justin, we can only date the story of Sardanapalus roughly. Sardanapalus is placed some time after Semiramis (Sammuramat, mother of Adad-Nirari III; 637-665),⁴² and some time before the Median king Astyges (892-927).⁴³

³⁶1 Chronicles 5:26

³⁷Oppolzer, p.53

³⁸W.W. Hallo and W.K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East - A History* (New York 1971), p.276

³⁹1 Kings 14:25

⁴⁰Jonah 2:1. The Hebrew "dag gadol" translates literally as "big fish." In modern terminology, whales are not fish, a fact which has no bearing on what swallowed Jonah. "Dag" may be better translated as "sea dweller." Insisting that the Bible conform to modern taxonomic conventions is fallacious. Whales have been known to swallow people. The only "big fish" known to do so is the shark, which does it a piece at a time.

⁴¹Trogus Pompeius, *Historiae Philippicae*, 1:3, in J.S. Watson, *Justin, Cornelius Nepos and Eutropius* (London 1902)

⁴²ibid., 1:2

⁴³ibid., 1:4

While the *Philipian Histories* are clearly not entirely accurate, they certainly relate folk traditions which, in turn, contain a kernel of truth. The story of Semiramis is an example of this. Trogus' tale of this queen, who took the throne upon the death of her husband owing to the youth of her son, was believed to be wholly fictitious until records were found attesting to Sammuramat, wife of Shamshi-Adad V, who served as regent during her son's first five regnal years, due to his youth. Of course, Trogus' Semiramis reigned for forty-two years, and not five, as was actually the case, but few historians would dispute the identity of Semiramis and Sammuramat. Similarly, although Trogus describes Sardanapalus as the last Assyrian King, he also describes the husband of Semiramis as the first. Neither claim need be taken literally any more than those of a forty-two year reign for Semiramis or a span of thirteen hundred years from Shamshi-Adad V (Trogus' Ninus) to Sardanapalus.

The available evidence suggests the following scenario: Ashur-Nirari V was succeeded by a king whose name appears to have been Ashur-danin-apli, or Sharru-danin-apli, or a similar name which was corrupted to Sardanapalus. In contrast to his successors, under whom Assyria had declined for the preceding century, he began a vigorous revival of Assyrian power, campaigning at least as far as Syria and Israel. At some point during the later part of his reign, the Israelite prophet Jonah arrived in Nineveh and declared its imminent destruction. For some reason, the identification of which is better left to psychologists than to historians, the king believed the warning and ordered a show of repentance throughout the city, in hopes of averting the disaster. It is uncertain how sincere this repentance was, although it may be significant that three years before the accession of Tiglath-Pileser III, a new era of independence was begun in Babylonia under Nabonasser, and that the latest biblical mention of Pul campaigning militarily is no later than 718, fifteen years before his removal.

When Nineveh was not destroyed, human nature took over and, rather than seeing the king's actions as having saved the city, it was doubted that there had ever been a danger. The king's credulity had allowed a simple Israelite to make fools of the Assyrian people. Shortly thereafter, Tiglath-Pileser III rebelled against the hapless monarch, killed him, and reigned in his place. Upon becoming king, Tiglath-Pileser III began the process of eliminating the memory of his predecessor, and with it, the shame he had brought upon Assyria. In the *limmu* lists, the entries from the reign of Sardanapalus were deleted, except for his accession year, which was also the last year of Ashur-Nirari V, and his last year, which was also the accession year of Tiglath-Pileser III. Records of military campaigns were not destroyed, as they were achievements of the Assyrian empire. Sardanapalus' name was simply removed from the beginning of these records, which is the condition in which they were found in modern times.

The annals of Tiglath-Pileser were engraved upon the slabs of the rebuilt central palace at Calah. These slabs were later removed by Esarhaddon to be used in his southwest palace of the same city. As a result of the removal and retrimming of the stone, the annals have come down to us in a fragmentary state. Without the aid of the eponym-list it would have been impossible to arrange the fragments in their chronological order, and even so, future discoveries are likely to show that the arrangement now generally accepted is wrong.⁴⁴

According to Thiele, Prof. Tadmor is working on a restoration of the annals of Tiglath-Pileser III.⁴⁵ Since these annals are actually the records of two different kings, Tadmor's reconstruction, based upon the conventional rendering of Assyrian history, cannot be accurate. What is needed is a reconstruction of these annals, based upon the realization that they belong to both Sardanapalus and Tiglath-Pileser III.

Tiglath-Pileser III may have realized eventually that his alteration of the *limmu* lists resulted in his accession year following the year of Ashur-Nirari V's death instead of being identical with it. This would explain why he differed from earlier Assyrian kings in his method of dating, counting his accession year as his first year, his first year as his second, and so on.⁴⁶

Questions such as the relationships of Sardanapalus and Tiglath-Pileser III (was Sardanapalus a son of Ashur-Nirari V? Was Tiglath-Pileser III?) and how much of Trogus' story of Sardanapalus is true (was Tiglath-Pileser III a governor of Media before he usurped the throne?) are of historical importance, but are outside the scope of this work.

The question to be asked is what is more plausible? Were scribes who revered the Bible as the central document of their national faith careless enough to allow the total corruption of the numerical data contained within, a hypothesis which is supported by a theoretical construction of fragmentary documents? Or is the above scenario, supported both by the Bible, whose transmitters have held it in the highest esteem, and the *Philippian Histories*, which have a proven track record of preserving traditions of otherwise poorly recorded historical events, more likely to reflect the true course of history?

Previous attempts have been made to identify the eclipse of Bur-Sagale with the eclipse known to have occurred in 686 as opposed to the generally accepted eclipse of 714. One of the major criticisms of these attempts has been the fact that the eclipse of 714 was far more spectacularly visible in Assyria than the earlier eclipse of 686. Why, it was asked,

⁴⁴Luckenbill, *ARAB*, vol. I, p. 269

⁴⁵Thiele, p. 143

⁴⁶Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II", p. 30

would a minor eclipse be recorded in the *Eponym Canon* and a major eclipse be omitted? In all likelihood, the eclipse of 714 was recorded. But 714 was the eleventh year of Sardanapalus, and was one of the entries deleted by Tiglath-Pileser III.

Thiele, following many Assyriologists, maintains that the biblical "Pul" was in fact Tiglath-Pileser III.⁴⁷ The non-identity of these two kings is supported by the fact that every mention of Pul in the Bible precedes chronologically every mention of Tiglath-Pileser III,⁴⁸ and that the two kings are even mentioned together in the same verse:

And G-d stirred up the spirit of Pul, King of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-Pilneser [Tiglath-Pileser], King of Assyria, and he exiled them . . .⁴⁹

Thiele maintains that the verse should be translated:

And G-d stirred up the spirit of Pul, King of Assyria; even the spirit of Tilgath-Pilneser [Tiglath-Pileser], King of Assyria, and he exiled them . . .

This translation, completely foreign to the clear meaning of the Hebrew text, has been adopted in several modern translations of the Bible, based upon the assurance of Assyriologists that the two kings were one and the same. Thiele also points out that the verb following these names is in the singular and cannot be referring to two kings. This is, of course, true. But who ever claimed otherwise? Tiglath-Pileser exiled North Israelites; this is recorded in the Bible.⁵⁰ No mention is made anywhere of Pul exiling populations. The verse clearly distinguishes between the two kings, both of whom had their spirits "stirred up", but only the second of whom exiled North Israelite populations.

Thiele brings, as presumably conclusive evidence, the fact that during his last two years, Tiglath-Pileser III was King also of Babylonia, under the name "Pulu".⁵¹ The fact is that "Tiglath-Pileser" is the biblical rendering of the Assyrian "Tukulti-apal-esharra". "Pulu", as a corruption of the element "apal", would have been a reasonable nickname. On the other hand, the name "Sardanapalus", whatever its original form, clearly contains the same or similar element. Sardanapalus being called "Pul" in Israel does not preclude the possibility of Tiglath-Pileser III being called "Pulu" in Babylonia years later. The use of such a nickname in Babylonia

⁴⁷Thiele, pp.139-141

⁴⁸pul is mentioned in II Kings 15:9, and Tiglath-Pileser III in II Kings 15:29, 16:7 and 16:10. In Chronicles, Pul is only mentioned in the genealogies (I Chronicles 5:26), but even there, he precedes Tiglath-Pileser III.

⁴⁹I Chronicles 5:26

⁵⁰II Kings 15:29, II Chronicles 5:6,26

⁵¹Thiele, p.125

may even have been a political ploy. If, as suggested above, the passivity of Sardanapalus, or even his support of Nabonassar, was responsible for the independence of Babylonia, the name Pul might have had very positive connotations in Babylonia; a bit of subliminal propaganda that would have been useful, given that Tiglath-Pileser III was a foreign conquerer.

The suggestion that ancient documents (other than the Bible) may not all be trustworthy is a disconcerting one to historians. If ancient records cannot be relied upon, the entire field of ancient history may be invalidated. These fears are unjustified. Ancient bureaucrats were as capable of error as their modern counterparts. Ancient rulers were as capable of altering the record as are modern ones. But just as benefit of the doubt is given to the accuracy of modern records, so too should ancient testimonies, in the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, carry an assumption of accuracy. If, as seems to be the case, the Assyrian record was altered in two instances, there is no reason for doubt to be cast upon the remainder of the Assyrian record, which remains the best working model available.

It should be mentioned that a variant exists in the *limmu* lists during the reign of Adad-Nirari III regarding the eponymies of Balatu and Nabu-shar-usur. Thiele defends the position that both eponymies belong to the same year.⁵² He makes no convincing arguments for this except that such an arrangement supports his Israelite chronology. Since his chronology falls in its stated aims, due to his treatment of the reign of Hezekiah (placing Hezekiah's accession *after* the fall of Samaria⁵³), and his creation of a mythical *third* Israelite kingdom of Ephraim⁵⁴, this argument speaks for itself. His assertion that such an arrangement is supported by the "fact" that the kings of Assyria during this period held the office of *limmu* in their second years is purely circular, as this "fact" is based upon the assumption that the eponymies of Balatu and Nabu-shar-usur were in the same year.

One last element of Assyrian-Israelite synchronisms is the fact that three Assyrian kings are mentioned in the Bible by names that do not appear in Assyrian records. They are Shalman,⁵⁵ Yareb⁵⁶ and Asnappar.⁵⁷ Shalman is obviously a Shalmaneser. Although only Shalmaneser V is mentioned elsewhere by name in the Bible, it is not impossible that Shalman refers to Shalmaneser III.

Yareb is clearly a hebraization of the Assyrian "erebu". The only Assyrian king during the entire period of the Israelite monarchies whose name includes this particle is Sennecherib (Sin-ahhe-erebu). However, the context in the book of Hoshea seems clearly to place Yareb before the dissolution of

⁵² *ibid*, pp.73-76

⁵⁴ *ibid*, p.63

⁵⁶ Hoshea 5:13, 10:6

⁵³ *ibid*, pp.168-171

⁵⁵ Hoshea 10:15

⁵⁷ Ezra 4:10

the kingdom of North Israel, this is unlikely. As Hoshea appears to be describing North Israel as a vassal of Yareb, Sardanapalus, Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V are the most likely candidates, although Shalmaneser III and Adad-Nirari III are also possibilities.

It is, of course, possible that neither Shalman nor Yareb actually refer to any particular Assyrian king, but rather, as common parts of Assyrian names, represent "generic" Assyrian kings.

Asnappar, credited in the book of Ezra with having settled foreigners in Samaria, sounds closest to Ashurnasirpal, the second and last of whom reigned before Shalmaneser III and obviously did not transplant foreign populations to North Israel. It has been suggested that reference is to Ashurbani-pal, who is better placed chronologically.⁵⁸ The only Assyrian kings who are known to have transported foreign populations to North Israel (then the province of Samaria) were Sargon and Esarhaddon. As Esarhaddon is mentioned shortly before Asnappar as the king held responsible for this action,⁵⁹ it is likely, if not certain, that he is Asnappar.

The Bible seems to recognize two accession dates for Nebuchadnezzar. One, in 872, is also the accession year used in Babylonian records.⁶⁰ The other, a year earlier, is the one used most commonly in the Bible. Thus, the exile of Jehoiachin is placed in Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year⁶¹ everywhere but the last chapter of Jeremiah, where it is put in his seventh year.⁶² Likewise, the fall of Jerusalem is placed in Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth year⁶³ everywhere but the last chapter of Jeremiah, where it is put, correspondingly, in his eighteenth year.⁶⁴ Thiele suggested that this was due to Jeremiah using a different calendar.⁶⁵ That this is not the case is clear first of all from the fact that Jeremiah used the later accession year elsewhere in his book. In addition, the exile of Jehoiachin occurred in Adar 879,⁶⁶ while the fall of Jerusalem occurred in Av 890.⁶⁷ In order for a different calendar to cause the seventh and eighteenth years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign to be called his eighth and nineteenth - given these dates - such a calendar would have to begin sometime between Nisan and Av, and Nebuchadnezzar's accession would have to be dated to some point between the first of Nisan and the beginning of this imaginary calendar. As Nebuchadnezzar took the throne on the first of Elul,⁶⁸ this is obviously untenable.

What is most likely is that Nebuchadnezzar's accession is placed in 872 in all cases. The common placement of Nebuchadnezzar's first year in 872 is due to the fact that at his accession, the non-accession year system was being used in

⁵⁸Hallo and Simpson, p.143 and note 22

⁵⁹Ezra 4:2

⁶⁰Wiseman, p.27

⁶¹|| Kings 24:12

⁶²Jeremiah 52:28

⁶³|| Kings 25:8, Jeremiah 52:12

⁶⁴Jeremiah 52:29

⁶⁵Thiele, p.180

⁶⁶Wiseman, pp.32-33

⁶⁷|| Kings 25:8, Jeremiah 52:12

⁶⁸Wiseman, p.27

Judah. When they switched back to the accession year system, they continued counting Nebuchadnezzar's years as they had begun, in order to avoid confusion. The dates of the three exiles given in the last chapter of Jeremiah are according to the accession year system and may have been included for the express purpose of preventing the placement of Nebuchadnezzar's accession in 871. The phrase "ha-shanah ha-rishonit"⁶⁹ does not, as argued by Tadmor,⁷⁰ mean "accession year"; the Hebrew rendition of "accession year" is "shenat malech"⁷¹ or "shenat malchut",⁷² a fact of which Tadmor is aware.⁷³ Although the year in question was Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, the correct translation is "first year". Although "ha-shanah ha-rishonah" would have been more correct, the form "rishonit" is a valid feminine form of the adjective "rishon" (first), and is simply parallel to the adjective "shevi'it" (seventh) in the first half of the verse.

⁶⁹Jeremiah 25:1

⁷⁰Hayim Tadmor, "Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah", in *Journal of Near East Studies*, vol.XV (Chicago 1956), p.227

⁷¹II Kings 25:27

⁷²Jeremiah 52:31

⁷³Tadmor, "Last Kings of Judah", p.228, note 11

CONCLUSIONS

In any reconstruction of historical events, many conclusions are bound to be conjectural. We cannot always know what motivated the people of ancient times. All we can do is make educated guesses, based upon the facts available to us. That the method of counting regnal years in North Israel changed at the time of Jehu's coup, for example, is clear from the biblical text. The assumption that this had anything to do with Jehu's payment of tribute to Assyria may be reasonable, but it is an assumption nonetheless.

The determination of what constitute "facts" is vital. Besides the Bible, two sources used in this reconstruction are generally dismissed by "serious" historians. The first of these is the Midrash, or non-canonical Jewish historical tradition. Even the most traditional Orthodox Jews (above a certain age) acknowledge that not all Midrashic material is to be taken as literal historical fact. Yet it is as clear that accurate historical material *is* found in the Midrash. On what basis can a distinction be made between the historical and non-historical material contained in the Midrash? To accept as historical only that information which is confirmed in more "orthodox" historical sources is to presume that we possess complete and perfect knowledge of past events, a claim made by no one. Acceptance of the possibility that a piece of otherwise undiscovered historical information may have been preserved in the Midrash suggests that the correct course of action is to accept, with reservations, any Midrashic information which is not contradicted by other sources. An example of this is the dating of Sennecherib's third campaign. The Midrashic claim that Sennecherib's forces were destroyed only two weeks into the new year clearly implies that the campaign ended in the year after it began. Despite the fact that this campaign is assumed to have begun and ended in same year, the absence of any Assyrian dates corroborating this assumption must lead to the acceptance of the Midrashic information.

The second "questionable" source used is Trogus' *Philippian Histories*. The classical Greek histories, based as they are upon folk traditions, present a problem similar to that of the Midrash. In the case in question, however, nothing was based upon Trogus' information. Rather, the existence of a "missing" Assyrian king, along with a name (or nickname) and approximate dating, was mandated by the biblical account of the period. Trogus' story of Sardanapalus was found to fit the bill. Certainly the story, as it has come down to us, is less than historically accurate. As the five year regency of the Assyrian Queen Sammuamat was expanded in folk memory to a forty-two year period of major battles and victorious conquests, so too the acts of Sardanapalus, considered at the time to be a sign of embarrassing weakness, grew to become the picture of an effeminate king who lived like a woman. Despite these distortions, the historicity of the monarchs preceding and following Sardanapalus in Trogus' account makes Sardanapalus' own historicity less than surprising.

At the conclusion of his reconstruction, Thiele declared that the vital question is "whether or not it [the reconstruction] is the true arrangement of reigns".¹ Upon what should an answer to this question be based? Of course, there is no way to *know*, in the sense of direct observation, whether or not history actually unfolded the way this chronology requires that it did. But given that limitation, the title of "best working model" should clearly be given to that model which accommodates more available data than any other and provides the most plausible explanation for whatever data might not be accommodated.

This chronology accommodates every piece of biblical data, bar none. It diverges from conventional Assyrian chronology on two points and from conventional Assyrian historiography on a third. Of these, two can be shown to have been well motivated alterations in the historical record, dating from ancient times, and the other amounts to a difference of a single year. This can be contrasted with Thiele's chronology, which maintains conventional Assyrian chronology in every particular, but abandons the biblical data for unlikely reasons. The reign of Hezekiah is placed *after* the fall of Samaria, and the "erronious" biblical information to the contrary is explained away as a result of a third Israelite monarchy having been forgotten.² The same scribes who, as Thiele so aptly argued, preserved a detailed chronology of reign after reign for centuries, in exacting detail, forgot the very existence of an entire kingdom.

The existence of this mythical "Kingdom of Ephraim" is based upon the use of this name by the prophet Hoshea.³ It is curious that Thiele neglected the creation of a "Kingdom of Jeshurun"⁴ or a "Kingdom of Jacob",⁵ which might have made a chronological reconstruction even easier, if less accurate. These are poetic synonyms for the Israelite kingdoms which *did* exist, and are sometimes used in parallel with their true names. Thiele further supported this strained hypothesis by pointing to the "unlikely" fact that Hezekiah was able, during the reign of Hoshea, to send messengers into North Israel and call upon the people to return to the service of G-d at the Temple in Jerusalem.⁶ Is it more likely that in the midst of his rebellion against the super-power of Assyria, Hoshea would have opened a second front in the south?

In addition to Thiele's highly implausible emendation of the reign of Hezekiah, he simply ignores chronological information provided in the biblical text. A prime example of this is his treatment of the reign of Asa. It is clear from even a cursory reading of Kings that Baasha could not have attacked Judah in Asa's thirty-sixth year of reign, and that this date of thirty-six years must count from some point earlier than Asa's accession. The fact that the Hebrew phrasing of this date differs from almost every other instance in the Bi-

¹Thiele, p.205

²ibid, pp.168-171

³ibid, p.63

⁴Isaiah 44:2

⁵Isaiah 43:28 and others too numerous to list

⁶Thiele, pp.169-170

ble was passed over in blissful ignorance, and the significance of this phrasing for the proper understanding of other dates was lost as a result.

Other reconstructions of this period have not been considered, as they rarely even attempt to understand the actual systems of dating used by the Israelites, and under the requirement of accomodating most of the available information, are not even in competition, due to their *a priori* assumption of the non-historicity of the Bible.

In Thiele's conclusion, he wrote:

There are four sets of chronological data for the period of the divided monarchy: (1) the lengths of reign of the kings of Judah, (2) the lengths of reign of the kings of Israel, (3) the Judean synchronisms with Israel, and (4) the Israelite synchronisms with Judah. These data provide four distinct chronological yardsticks so precise and so demanding as to call for an historical framework of exact dimensions - the original pattern of reigns of the Hebrew rulers.

In our work with these data we did not begin with the assumption that they were largely in error, whether because of mistakes in original recordings, scribal corruptions that crept in along the way, or editorial misjudgements of some late day. But we did begin on a quest to ascertain whether there might not be some basic chronological pattern into which these numbers would fit, a pattern not heretofore constructed because the true meaning of the data was not understood.⁷

Thiele failed in his quest. While this could have discredited his approach, the present reconstruction stands as testimony to its validity.

—Jerusalem, 3464 LM

⁷ibid, p.211

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

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NOTE: All dates given are *lytziyat mitzrayim*, or LM.
For BCE dates, use the formula $BCE = 1477 - LM$.
Remember that dates LM begin on the first of Nisan.

TABLE A: REGNAL DATES FOR ISRAEL

<u>Judah</u>		<u>North Israel</u>	
Rehoboam	1/516 - 8/533	Jeroboam I	1/517 - 1/538
Abijah	8/533 - 1/536	Nadab	1/538 - 1/539
Asa	1/536 - 1/577	Baasha	1/539 - 1/562
Jehoshaphat/a	1/577 - 1/594	Elah	1/562 - 1/563
Jehoshaphat & Jehoram/a	1/594 - 1/595	Zimri	1/563
Jehoshaphat/b	1/595 - 8/599	Omri & Tibni	1/563 - 1/564
Jehoshaphat & Jehoram/b	8/599 - 1/602	Omri/a	1/564 - 8/567
Jehoram	1/602 - 8/606	Omri/b	8/567 - 1/574
Ahaziah	8/606 - 1/607	Ahab	1/574 - 8/594
Athaliah	1/607 - 1/613	Ahaziah	8/594 - 8/595
Jehoash	1/613 - 7/652	Joram	8/595 - 8/606*
Jehoash & Amaziah	7/652 - 1/653	Jehu/a	8/606* - 8/607
Amaziah	1/653 - 1/669	Jehu/b	8/607 - 1/636
Amaziah & Uzziah/a	1/669 - 8/680	Joahaz	1/636 - 8/650
Amaziah & Uzziah/b	8/680 - 1/681	Joahaz & Joash	8/650 - 8/652
Uzziah	1/681 - 1/720	Joash	8/652 - 1/655
Uzziah & Jotham	1/720 - 8/721*	Joash & Jeroboam II	1/655 - 1/666
Jotham	8/721* - 8/736	Jeroboam II	1/666 - 8/706
Ahaz	8/736 - 1/752	Zechariah	8/706 - 2/707
Hezekiah	1/752 - 1/781	Shallum	2/707 - 3/707
Menasseh	1/781 - 1/836	Menahem/a	3/707 - 8/707
Amon	1/836 - 1/838	Menahem/b	8/707 - 1/718
Josiah	1/838 - 1/869	Pekahiah	1/718 - 1/720
Jehoahaz	1/869 - 4/869	Pekah	1/720 - 1/740
Jehoiakim	4/869 - 9/879	Hoshea/a	1/740 - 8/748
Jehoiachin	9/879 - 12/879	Hoshea/b	8/748 - 1/758
Zedekiah	4/879 - 5/890		

*possibly 1/722

*possibly 1/607

TABLE B: SOURCES FOR JUDAH

		<u>Judah</u>	<u>North Israel</u>
1) Rehoboam ac	1/516		
2) Abijah ac	8/533	aRehoboam 17	bJeroboam I 18
3) Asa ac	1/536	cAbijah 3	dJeroboam I 20
4) Jehoshaphat ac ₁	1/577	eAsa 41	fAhab 4
5) Jehoram 1 ₁	1/594		
6) Jehoshaphat 1 ₂	1/595		
7) Jehoram 1 ₂	8/599	gJehoshaphat 5 ₂	gJoram 5 ₁
8) Jehoram ac ₃	1/602	hJehoshaphat 25 ₁	
9) Ahaziah ac	8/606	iJehoram 8 ₂	JJoram 12 ₁ kJoram 11 ₂
10) Athaliah usurps	1/607	lAhaziah 1	
11) Jehoash ac	8/613	mAhaziah 7	nJehu 7 ₁ oJoash 2 ₁
12) Amaziah 1 ₁	7/652		
13) Amaziah ac ₂	1/653	nJehoash 40	
14) Uzziah 1 ₁	1/669		
15) Uzziah ac ₂	8/680	pAmaziah 29 ₁	qJeroboam II 27 ₁
16) Uzziah ac ₃	1/681	r15 years after Joash's death	
17) Jotham ac ₁	1/720	sUzziah 52 ₁	
18) Jotham ac ₂	8/721*		tPekah 2 vPekah 17 xHoshea 3 ₂
19) Ahaz ac	8/736	uJotham 16 ₁	
20) Hezekiah ac	1/752	wAhaz 16	
21) Menasseh ac	1/781	yHezekiah 29	
22) Amon ac	1/836	zMenasseh 55	
23) Josiah ac	1/838	aaAmon 2	
24) Jehoahaz ac	1/869	bbJosiah 31	
25) Jehoiakim 1	4/869	ccJehoahaz ac	
26) Jehoiachin 1	9/879	ddJehoikim 11	
27) Zedekiah ac	12/879	eeJehoiachin 1	
28) Exile	5/890	ffZedekiah 11	

aI Kings 14:21
dI Kings 15:9
gII Kings 8:16
jII Kings 8:25
mII Kings 11:4
pII Kings 14:2
sII Kings 15:2
vII Kings 16:1
yII Kings 18:2
bbII Kings 22:1
eeII Kings 24:8

bI Kings 15:1
eI Kings 15:10
hI Kings 22:42
kII Kings 9:29
nII Kings 12:2
qII Kings 15:1
tII Kings 15:32
wII Kings 16:2
zII Kings 21:1
ccII Kings 23:31
ffII Kings 24:18

cI Kings 15:2
fI Kings 22:41
iII Kings 8:17
lII Kings 8:26
oI Kings 14:1
rII Kings 14:17
uII Kings 15:33
xII Kings 18:1
aaII Kings 21:19
ddII Kings 23:36

*possibly 1/722

TABLE C: SOURCES FOR NORTH ISRAEL

		<u>North Israel</u>	<u>Judah</u>
1) Jeroboam I 1	1/517		
2) Nadab 1	1/538	^a Jeroboam I 22	^b Asa 2
3) Baasha 1	1/539	^b Nadab 2	^c Asa 3
4) Elah 1	1/562	^c Baasha 24	^d Asa 26
5) Zimri 1	1/563	^d Elah 1	^e Asa 27
6) Omri 1 ₁	1/563	^e Zimri 1	
7) Omri 1 ₂	8/567		^f Asa 31
8) Ahab 1	1/574	^f Omri 12 ₁	^g Asa 38
9) Ahaziah 1	8/594	^g Ahab 22	^h Jehoshaphat 17 ₁
10) Joram 1 ₁	8/595	^h Ahaziah 2	ⁱ Jehoshaphat 18 ₁
			^j Jehoram 2 ₁
11) Joram ac ₂	8/595	^h Ahaziah 2	ⁱ Jehoshaphat 18 ₁
			^j Jehoram 2 ₁
12) Jehu ac ₁	8/606	ⁱ Joram 12 ₁	
13) Jehu ac ₂	8/607		
14) Joahaz ac	1/636	^k Jehu 28 ₂	^l Jehoash 23
15) Joash 1 ₁	8/650		^m Jehoash 37
16) Joash ac ₂	8/652	^l Joahaz 17	
17) Jeroboam II 1 ₁	1/655		
18) Jeroboam II ac ₂	1/666	^m Joash 16 ₁	ⁿ Amaziah 15 ₁
19) Zechariah ac	8/706	ⁿ Jeroboam II 41 ₂	^o Uzziah 38 ₁
20) Shallum ac	2/707	^o Zechariah ac	^p Uzziah 39 ₁
21) Menahem ac ₁	3/707	^p Shallum ac	^q Uzziah 39 ₁
22) Menahem ac ₂	8/707		
23) Pekahiah ac	1/718	^q Menahem 10 ₂	^r Uzziah 50 ₁
24) Pekah ac	1/720	^r Pekahiah 2	^s Uzziah 52 ₁
25) Hoshea ac ₁	1/740	^s Pekah 20	^t Jotham 20 ₁
26) Hoshea ac ₂	8/748		^u Ahaz 12
27) Exile	1/758	^u Hoshea 9 ₂	^v Hezekiah 6

aI Kings 14:20
dI Kings 16:8
gI Kings 16:29
jII Kings 3:1
mII Kings 13:10
pII Kings 15:13
sII Kings 15:27
vII Kings 18:10

bI Kings 15:25
eI Kings 16:15
hI Kings 22:52
kII Kings 11:36
nII Kings 14:23
qII Kings 15:17
tII Kings 15:30

cI Kings 15:33
fI Kings 16:23
iII Kings 1:17
lII Kings 13:1
oII Kings 15:8
rII Kings 15:23
uII Kings 17:1

TABLE D: REGNAL DATES FOR ASSYRIA

<u>Assyrian Kings</u>	<u>Conventional Regnal Dates</u>	<u>Corrected Regnal Dates</u>
Shalmaneser III	618 - 653	589 - 624
Shamshi-Adad V	653 - 666	624 - 637
(Sammuramat)	666 - 671	637 - 642
Adad-Nirari III	666 - 694	637 - 665
Shalmaneser IV	694 - 704	665 - 675
Ashur-Dan III	704 - 722	675 - 693
Ashur-Nirari V	722 - 732	693 - 703
Sardanapalus	////////	703 - 732
Tiglath-Pileser III	732 - 750	732 - 750
Shalmaneser V	750 - 755	750 - 755
Shalmaneser V & Sargon	////////	755 - 756
Sargon	755 - 772	756 - 772
Sennecherib	772 - 796	772 - 796
Esarhaddon	796 - 808	796 - 808
Ashurbanipal	808 - 850	808 - 850
Ashur-etel-ilani	850 - 854*	850 - 854
Sin-shar-ishkun	854*- 865	854 - 865
Ashur-uballit II	865 - 867	865 - 867

*uncertain

TABLE E: REGNAL DATES FOR BABYLONIA

<u>Babylonian Kings</u>	<u>Regnal Dates</u>
Nabonassar	729 - 743
Nabu-nadinzir	743 - 745
Ukinzer	745 - 748
Tiglath-Pileser III	748 - 750
Shalmaneser V	750 - 755
Merodach-Baladan	755 - 767
Sargon	767 - 772
Sennecherib	772 - 774
Bel-ibni	774 - 777
Ashur-nadin-shum	777 - 783
Nergal-ushezib	783 - 784
Mushezib-Marduk	784 - 788
Sennecherib	788 - 796
Esarhaddon	796 - 808
Interregnum	808 - 809
Shamas-shum-ukin	809 - 829
Kandalanu	829 - 851
Nabopolassar	851 - 872
Nebuchadnezzar	872 - 915
Evil-Merodach	915 - 917
Nergal-shar-usur	917 - 921
Nabonidus	921 - 938

TABLE F: ASSYRIAN LIMMU LIST (CORRECTED)

(the name of each king is inserted immediately following his accession year)
(adapted from Thiele, pp.221-225)

556)shar.....	604) Ashur-bunua	652) Ashur-bel-usur
557) Urta-zarme	605) Tab-Urta	653) Marduk-shaddua
558) Tab-etir-Ashur	606) Taklak-ana-sharri	654) Kin-abua
559) Ashur la-Kinu	607) Adad-rimani	655) Mannu-ki-Ashur
560) Tukulti-Urta	608) Bel-abua	656) Mushallim-Urta
561) Tak-lak-ana-bel-ia	609) Shulmu-bel-lumur	657) Bel-ikishani
562) Abi-ili-a-a	610) Urta-kibsi-usur	658) Shepa-Shamash
563) Ilu-milki	611) Urta-ilia	669) Urta-mikin-ahi
564) Iari	612) Kurdi-Ashur	650) Adad-Mushammir
ASHURNASIRPAL II	613) Shepa-sharri	661) Sil-Ishtar
565) Ashur-shezibani	614) Nergal-mudammik	662) Balatu
566) Ashur-nasir-apli	615) Iahalu	663) Adad-uballit
567) Ashur-iddin	616) Ululaia	664) Marduk-shar-usur
568) Shumutti-adur	617) Nishpati Bel	665) Nabu-shar-usur
569) Sha-ilima-damka	618) Nergal-ilia	**SHALMANESER IV**
570) Dagan-bel-nasir	619) Hubaia	666) Ninurta-nasir
571) Urta-pia-usur	620) Ilu-mukin-ahi	667) Nabu-li'
572) Urta-bel-usur	621) Shulman-asharidu	668) Shulman-asharid
573) Shangu-Ashur-lilbur	622) Daian-Ashur	669) Shamshi-ilu
574) Shamash-upahir	623) Ashur-bunaia-usur	670) Marduk-rimani
575) Nergal-bel-kumua	624) Iahallu	671) Bel-lishir
576) Kurdi-Ashur	**SHAMSHI-ADAD V**	672) Nabu-ishid-ukin
577) Ashur-li'	625) Bel-bunaia	673) Pan-Ashur-lamur
578) Ashur-natkil	626) Shamshi-Adad	674) Nergal-eresh
579) Bel-mudammik	627) Iahalu	675) Ishtar d ^uri
580) Daian-Urta	628) Bel-dain	**ASHUR-DAN III**
581) Ishtar-emukaia	629) Urta-upahhir	676) Mannu-ki-Adad
582) Shamash-nuri	630) Shamsh-ilia	677) Ashur-bel-usur
583) Mannu-dan-ana-ili	631) Nergal-ilia	678) Ashur-dan
584) Shamash-bel-usur	632) Ashur-bana-usur	679) Shamshi-ilu
585) Urta-iliai	633) Nishpati-Bel	680) Bel-ilia
586) Urta-etiranni	634) Bel-balat	681) Apla
587) Urta-iliai	635) Mushiknish	682) Kurdi-Ashur
588) Nergal-iska-danin	636) Urta-asharid	683) Mushallim-Urta
589) Tab-bel	637) Shamash-kumua	684) Urta-mukin-nishe
SHALMANESER III	**ADAD-NIRARI III**	685) Sidki-ilu
590) Sharru-baltu-nishe	638) Bel-kata-sabat	686) Bur-Sagale
591) Shulman-asharid	639) Adad-nirari	687) Tab-bel
592) Ashur-bel-ukin	640) Nergal-ilia	688) Nabu-mukin-ahi
593) Ashur-bunaia-usur	641) Bel-daian	689) Lakipu
594) Abu-ina-ekalli-lilbur	642) Sil-bel	690) Pan-Ashur-lamur
595) Daian-Ashur	643) Ashur-taklak	691) Bel-taklak
596) Shamash-abua	644) Shamash-ilia	692) Urta-iddina
597) Shamash-bel-usur	645) Nergal-eresh	693) Bel-shadua
598) Bel-bunaia	646) Ashur-baltu-nishe	**ASHUR-NIRARI V**
599) Hadi-lipushu	647) Urta-ilia	694) Ikishu
600) Nergal-alik-pani	648) Shepa-Ishtar	695) Urta-shezibani
601) Bir-Ramana	649) Marduk-ishme-ani	696) Ashur-nirari
602) Urta-mukin-nishe	650) Mutakkil-Marduk	697) Shamshi-ilu
603) Urta-nadin-shum	651) Bel-tarsi-iluma	698) Marduk-shallimani

TABLE F (cont'd)

699) Bel-dan	744) Ashur-daninani	787) Nabu-mukin-ahi
700) Shamash-Ken-dugul	745) Nabu-bel-usur	788) Gilhilu
701) Adad-bel-ukin	746) Nergal-uballit	789) Nadin-ahe
702) Sin-shallimani	747) Bel-ludalri	790) Sennacherib
703) Nergal-nasir	748) Naphar-ilu	791) Bel-emuranni
SARDANAPALUS	749) Dur-Ashur	792) Ashur-daninanni
704) [expunged]	750) Bel-harran-bel-usur	793) Mannu-zirni
705) [expunged]	**SHALMANESER V**	794) Mannu-ki-Adad
706) [expunged]	751) Marduk-bel-usur	795) Nabu-shar-usur
707) [expunged]	752) Mahde	796) Nabu-ah-eresh
708) [expunged]	753) Ashur-ishmeani	**ESARHADDON**
709) [expunged]	754) Shalmaneser	797) Dananu
710) [expunged]	755) Urta-ilia	798) Iti-Adad-aninu
711) [expunged]	**SARGON (rebellion)**	799) Nergal-shar-usur
712) [expunged]	756) Nabutaris	800) Abi-rama
713) [expunged]	**SARGON**	801) Banba
714) [expunged]	757) Ashur-isKa-danin	802) Nabu-ahi-iddina
715) [expunged]	758) Sargon	803) Sharru-nuri
716) [expunged]	769) Zer-ibni	804) Atar-ilu
717) [expunged]	760) Tar-shar-Ashur	805) Nabu-bel-usur
718) [expunged]	761) Tab-sil-esharra	806) Kanunai
719) [expunged]	762) Taklak-ana-bel	807) Shulmul-bel-lashme
720) [expunged]	763) Ishtar-duri	808) Shamash-kashad-aibi
721) [expunged]	764) Ashur-bani	**ASHURBANIPAL**
722) [expunged]	765) Sharru-emurani	809) Mar-larim
723) [expunged]	766) Urta-alik-pani	810) Gabbar
724) [expunged]	767) Shamash-bel-usur	811) Kanunai
725) [expunged]	768) Mannu-ki-Ashur-ii'	812) Mannu-ki-sharri
726) [expunged]	779) Shamash-upahhir	813) Sharru-ludari
727) [expunged]	770) Sha-Ashur-dubbi	814) Bel-naid
728) [expunged]	771) Mutakkil-Ashur	815) Tab-shar-Sin
729) [expunged]	772) Nashir-Bel	816) Arbailai
730) [expunged]	**SENNECHERIB**	817) Gir-Zapuna
731) [expunged]	773) Nabu-din-epush	818) Simil-Ashur
732) Nabu-bel-usur	774) Kannunnai	819) Sha-Nabu-shu
TIGLATH-PILESER III	775) Nabu-ii'	820) Labasi
733) Bel-dan	776) Hananai	821) Milki-ramu
734) Tukulti-apal-esharra	777) Metunu	822) Amianu
735) Nabu-daninani	778) Bel-sharani	823) Ashur-nasir
736) Bel-harran-bel-usur	779) Shulmu-shar	824) Ashur-ilai
737) Nabu-etirani	780) Nabu-dur-usur	825) Ashur-dur-usur
738) Sin-taklak	781) Shulmu-bel	826) Sagabbu
739) Adad-bel-ukin	782) Ashur-bel-usur	827) Bel-harran-shadua
740) Bel-emurani	783) Ilu-ittia	828) Ahu-ilai
741) Urta-ilia	784) Nadin-ahe	829) Belshunu
742) Ashur-shallimani	785) Zazai	
743) Bel-dan	786) Bel-emurani	

TABLE G
SABBATICAL & JUBILEE YEARS DURING THE ISRAELITE MONARCHIES
(years beginning on the tenth of Tishrei)

Sabbatical 7:8	431/432	Sabbatical 7:13	676/677
Jubilee 8	432/433	Jubilee 13	677/678
Sabbatical 1:9	438/439	Sabbatical 1:14	683/684
Sabbatical 2:9	445/446	Sabbatical 2:14	690/691
Sabbatical 3:9	452/453	Sabbatical 3:14	697/698
Sabbatical 4:9	459/460	Sabbatical 4:14	704/705
Sabbatical 5:9	466/467	Sabbatical 5:14	711/712
Sabbatical 6:9	473/474	Sabbatical 6:14	718/719
Sabbatical 7:9	480/481	Sabbatical 7:14	725/726
Jubilee 9	481/482	Jubilee 14	726/727
Sabbatical 1:10	487/488	Sabbatical 1:15	732/733
Sabbatical 2:10	494/495	Sabbatical 2:15	739/740
Sabbatical 3:10	501/502	Sabbatical 3:15	746/747
Sabbatical 4:10	508/509	Sabbatical 4:15	753/754
Sabbatical 5:10	515/516	Sabbatical 5:15	760/761
Sabbatical 6:10	522/523	Sabbatical 6:15	767/768
Sabbatical 7:10	529/530	Sabbatical 7:15	774/775
Jubilee 10	530/531	Jubilee 15	775/776
Sabbatical 1:11	536/537	Sabbatical 1:16	781/782
Sabbatical 2:11	543/544	Sabbatical 2:16	788/789
Sabbatical 3:11	550/551	Sabbatical 3:16	795/796
Sabbatical 4:11	557/558	Sabbatical 4:16	802/803
Sabbatical 5:11	564/565	Sabbatical 5:16	809/810
Sabbatical 6:11	571/572	Sabbatical 6:16	816/817
Sabbatical 7:11	578/579	Sabbatical 7:16	823/824
Jubilee 11	579/580	Jubilee 16	824/825
Sabbatical 1:12	585/586	Sabbatical 1:17	830/831
Sabbatical 2:12	592/593	Sabbatical 2:17	837/838
Sabbatical 3:12	599/600	Sabbatical 3:17	844/845
Sabbatical 4:12	606/607	Sabbatical 4:17	851/852
Sabbatical 5:12	613/614	Sabbatical 5:17	858/859
Sabbatical 6:12	620/621	Sabbatical 6:17	865/866
Sabbatical 7:12	627/628	Sabbatical 7:17	872/873
Jubilee 12	628/629	Jubilee 17	873/874
Sabbatical 1:13	634/635	Sabbatical 1:18	879/880
Sabbatical 2:13	641/642	Sabbatical 2:18	886/887
Sabbatical 3:13	648/649	Sabbatical 3:18	893/894
Sabbatical 4:13	655/656	Sabbatical 4:18	900/901
Sabbatical 5:13	662/663	Sabbatical 5:18	907/908
Sabbatical 6:13	669/670	Sabbatical 6:18	914/915

TABLE H: MONTHS OF THE YEAR
(approximate equivalents)

1) Nisan	March/April	7) Tishrei	September/October
2) Iyyar	April/May	8) Marheshvan	October/November
3) Sivan	May/June	9) Kislev	November/December
4) Tammuz	June/July	10) Tevet	December/January
5) Av	July/August	11) Shevat	January/February
6) Elul	August/September	12) Adar	February/March

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ADDENDUM

TO THE JERUSALEM CHRONOLOGY
OF THE ISRAELITE MONARCHIES



On page 39 of *The Jerusalem Chronology of the Israelite Monarchies*, regarding the reaction of Sardanapalus of Assyria to the message of the prophet Jonah, it was stated, "For some reason, the identification of which is better left to psychologists than to historians, the king believed the warning and ordered a show of repentance throughout the city, in hopes of averting the disaster."

The reason may in fact be still better left to those, such as Immanuel Velikovsky, who have proposed a series of global catastrophes during this period. According to the biblical commentators Rashi and Rabbi David Kimhi on Amos 1:1, basing themselves upon the Midrashic record, one such catastrophe, the *raash* in the time of King Uzziah of Judah, was the cause of Uzziah's entrance into the Temple to offer incense, an act which resulted in his contracting *tzaraat* and retiring from the monarchy. This event can be dated to the year 720 LM (*JCIM*, p. 8). If this disturbance was felt as well in Assyria, new light may be thrown on the motivations of the Assyrian king. When Jonah entered the city of Nineveh, he began proclaiming, "In forty more days, Nineveh will be overturned" (Jonah 3:4). The word translated as "overturned", or sometimes as "overthrown", is the Hebrew word "nehepechet", which denotes a literal, and generally physical, inversion.

As pointed out on page 39, the latest biblical record of a military campaign by Sardanapalus is no later than the year 718. If the visit of Jonah to Nineveh occurred shortly after 720, the Assyrian king's behavior appears less superstitious than prudent.

The idea that astronomical disturbances may have occurred during historical times raises the possibility of an alternate dating for the Assyrian kings up until the time of Sardanapalus. All of the dates and lengths of reign discussed in the *Jerusalem Chronology* are based upon written records except for the length of reign of Sardanapalus. This is fixed by the retrocalculated date of the eclipse in the eponymy of Bur-Sagale (*JCIM*, pp. 37-38). These retrocalculations are based upon uniformitarian premises, and are rendered invalid if the orbits of the various bodies in the Solar System were disturbed significantly. In this event, the length of reign of Sardanapalus would have to be determined on purely historical grounds. As it happens, one of the two potential dates for the beginning of Sardanapalus' reign is 703 LM, the same as arrived at through uniformitarian retrocalculations. The other is 702, one year earlier.

If this alternate dating is accepted, all Assyrian dates up to and including the accession of Sardanapalus would be

shifted back by one year. This would result as well in the Assyrian contacts with Ahab, Jehu and Joash of North Israel being pushed back by one year. Thus, the descriptions of these contacts on pages 16 and 17 of the *Jerusalem Chronology* would differ somewhat.

The contact of Shalmaneser III and Ahab would have taken place in 594, the year of Ahab's death, and not posthumously. Ahab may therefore have actually been present at the battle of Karkar.

The tribute paid by Jehu to Shalmaneser III would have been received in 606. Although Jehu did not kill Ahaziah of Judah until early 607, his assassination of Joram may have occurred as early as late 606. That no significant time is mentioned between these events does not preclude the possibility of the passage of considerable time between them. The two campaigns of Sennecherib against Judah and his subsequent assassination are described in the same manner, and these three events occurred in 766, 777 and 796 - a thirty year span.

The tribute of Joash received by Adad-Nirari III would likely have occurred in the year 651. This would have been during Joash's period of coregency with his father, and not after his assumption of sole rule.

It is the opinion of the author that 702 is the correct date for the accession of Sardanapalus. Even if the disturbances of the eighth century BCE were wholly earthbound and not the result of astronomical disturbances, the earlier disturbances of the fifteenth century BCE, if astronomical in nature (the evidence for this being much stronger than that for like disturbances in the eighth century), would be sufficient to account for the inaccuracy of retrocalculations only seven centuries later, in the eighth century.