

## Article

# Assyrian Chronology and Ideology of Kingship: The Impact on Biblical Historiography and Religion

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**Abstract:** Studies since 2005 have raised doubts about the Assyrian King List's (AKL) intention and ability to measure absolute time. If telescoping of time occurred, it would be difficult to detect during periods when royal annals were scant. The best way to detect discontinuity in the AKL is by comparison with contemporary king lists, such as one constructed from 1–2 Kings regnal formulas. If the AKL conflates time, an assessment of the plausibility of historical scenarios resulting from different timeframes allows for discrimination between one timeline or another. Israel and Judah's interlocking chronological systems make a comparison with the Neo-Assyrian timeline possible but contain 44 more years than the timeline implied by the AKL and Assyrian Eponym Canon. By narrowing the window of time within which a deficit in the Neo-Assyrian canons may have occurred, possible reasons for missing years in the consensus chronology present themselves. This investigation concludes that Assyria sought to maintain the legitimacy of the institution of kingship during a protracted period of unacceptable or anomalous authority. Concerns surrounding the continuity of kingship would have dictated the final form of the Assyrian King List/Assyrian Eponym Canon. Using Divided Kingdom regnal data, a revision of the historical timeline is proposed that aligns archaeological, radiocarbon, biblical, and Assyrian data.

**Keywords:** divided kingdom; chronology; Assyrian eponym canon; Assyrian king list; neo-Assyrian; Shalmaneser III; Adad-nirari III; coregency; biblical timeline; ancient Israel



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## 1. Introduction

The religions of Judaism and Christianity are undergirded by a web of narratives about events and personages from the second millennium BC through the first century AD. Questions linger about whether these are grounded in real time and space. Over the past century, the chronology of the Divided Kingdom, as well Israelite chronology back to the Exodus, has been made dependent on a timeline based on the Assyrian King List (AKL) (Grayson 1980–1983) and the Assyrian Eponym Canon (AEC) (Millard 1994).<sup>1</sup> This shifting of authority in chronological matters over to the AKL/AEC remains significant because historical and archaeological interpretation are, to a large extent, dependent on chronology. The Eponym Lists are widely assumed to be an accurate record of the expiration of the years from 910 to 649 BC (Millard 1994, pp. 4, 55–61). Tetley (2005, p. 97, insertion mine) challenges this assumption: “The king lists cannot be used as definite confirmation [of the AEC] since they may incorporate whatever faults their *Vorlage*(n) contained”. Furthermore, she states the following (p. 99):

The very possibility of names missing [or discontinuity] from one area of the collated AEC means that the years afforded to the AEC prior to 763 B.C.E. [the solar eclipse of the eponym Bur-Sagale; Millard 1994, p. 57] cannot be confirmed as correct. The credibility of the Assyrian, Hebrew, and Egyptian chronologies dependent on the accuracy of AEC dates before 763 B.C.E. cannot, therefore, be unequivocally upheld while the accuracy of the AEC remains suspect. If eponyms have dropped from the lists ... any number of years could be missing in this

section of eponyms. If so, their number needs to be determined, and new Julian dates reassigned to the AEC. (Insertions mine)

The reliability of the AEC, “a composite list collated from fragments” has been questioned by Tetley (2005, pp. 97–99, 102–3, 173–74) in two places, each of them contiguous with the reign of Adad-nirari III. This investigation will demonstrate that the biblical and Assyrian timelines agree from 782 BC to the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC but diverge widely and quickly from each other prior to 782 BC. I will show that a 44-year discrepancy with contemporary Israelite regnal data lies between the death of Shamshi-Adad V and the accession of Shalmaneser IV in 782 BC, and I will explore possible reasons for the variance.

In order to reconcile the Hebrew and Neo-Assyrian chronologies, many historians have either discredited or compressed the biblical timeline. The marginalization of biblical regnal data has led to the setting aside of a valuable instrument for validating—or invalidating—the transpiration of time implied by the AKL/AEC. It is axiomatic that “the omission of regnal years in the Assyrian chronology may be detected only against a framework of contemporary kings” (Tetley 2005, p. 165; cf. Henige 1986, p. 64). Such omissions are known as telescoping, defined as “the accidental or structured forgetting of part of the past” (Henige 1986, p. 64). A telescoped timeline is “unusually difficult to identify . . . [and] detected only with the aid of external data”. The 1–2 Kings synchronistic system is an ideal contemporary source for testing the temporal reliability of Neo-Assyrian chronological canons. Biblical regnal data are accepted here as accurate in order to highlight the different historical alignments resulting from the higher biblical vs. lower (implied) Assyrian timelines. In doing so, it is not necessary to reject the most important Israelite–Assyrian relative synchronisms—Shalmaneser III’s 6th and 18th years (Ahab and Jehu), the death of Tiglath-pileser and Ahaz in 726 BC (cf. Isa 14:28–29),<sup>2</sup> and Josiah’s death in 609 BC, the same year the last king of Assyria was killed at the Battle of Haran (each discussed below).

The initial method employed in this study to discriminate between the competing timelines is simple arithmetic analysis. This was useful for narrowing the timeframe within which the two timelines diverge and for quantifying the discrepancy (44 years), the same number of years deduced by Tadmor (1979, p. 57) during the same period. However, this does not suffice to validate the biblical chronology. While space does not permit a chronological analysis of the entirety of ancient Israelite history, much clarity can be achieved within the confines of this study. High-resolution radiocarbon data are another means of ruling out a lower or higher timeline (Section 7.8). Excellent <sup>14</sup>C data are available from destruction levels at archaeological sites in Palestine from the tenth and ninth centuries BC. Iron Age IIB destruction levels are assigned to Hazael of Damascus by the majority of archaeologists, and it can be demonstrated that radiometric data consistently favor the higher biblical timeline rather than the lower AKL-based consensus timeline (Section 8.1).

The method of choice lending itself to precise confirmation of a timeline is astronomical dating (see Section 7.2). Krauss and Warburton (2009, p. 126), maintain that “absolute chronologies can only be established using astronomical data . . . monthly lunar dates and Sothic dates”. While the solar eclipse of 763 BC and Ptolemy’s lunar eclipses anchor the lower end of the Divided Kingdom and Neo-Babylonian period, Egyptian lunar dates (e.g., high priest inductions, etc.) are the only means of anchoring the upper end of the Divided Kingdom. This possibility would be dependent on 1 Kings 14:25—Year 5 Rehoboam = Year 20/21 of Shoshenq I, but chronologers already acknowledge their dependence on this crucial synchronism (Section 7.2). This lies near the inception of Israel’s Divided Kingdom. While this is an indirect means of fixing the upper end of the Divided Kingdom, any precise correlations supporting the 970 BC claim for Rehoboam’s fifth year would be noteworthy, since the regnal timeline of the House of Judah supports this very year (Ash 1999, p. 30; see Sections 8.1–8.3).

Lastly, this study will compare alternative historical scenarios resulting from the two competing timelines in order to understand which is more plausible. Section 8 explores why the truncated consensus timeline forces Jeroboam II and the powerful Assyrian regional

field marshal Shamshi-ilu to compete in the same geo-political space in Syria during the first half of the eighth century.

## 2. Previous Approaches to the Chronology of the Divided Kingdom

The number of books on the chronology of the Divided Kingdom (DK) is a fraction of the works devoted to biblical history, highlighting the need for further analysis. This study necessarily involves a critique of the dominant model of the chronology of the Hebrew kings developed by (Thiele 1944, [1951] 1983).<sup>3</sup> In order to situate Thiele's work—as well as the present study—among previous attempts, prominent chronological works are categorized, compared, and critiqued. The works are grouped here according to their author's apparent estimation of the historicity of the biblical narrative and their methodological approach. Whether stated or not, all must grapple with the quandary of a 40-some year discrepancy between timelines derived from Hebrew and Assyrian canons in the late ninth century BC.

### 2.1. First Category

Into the first group may be placed those who view Israel's chronology as late, having few early sources, and using biblical regnal numbers erected around some overall scheme.<sup>4</sup> Since it is impossible for these theorists to recover the criteria used to assign regnal numbers, those taking this approach often consign regnal lengths and synchronisms to the realm of speculation. The schematic theorists include Wellhausen (1875, [1885] 1973), Hughes (1990), Barnes (1991, p. 20), Larsson (2008), and Miano (2010). Miano (2010, p. 3) uses the standard Documentary Hypothesis as his point of departure (likewise Hughes and Larsson<sup>5</sup>). But Mowinckel (1932, pp. 170–71), though a schematist, saw the importance of synchronistic formulas; since these were less susceptible to alteration than regnal lengths, he believed they preserved evidence of a pre-schematic form of DK chronology (cf. Hughes 1990, p. 118; cf. Laato 2015, chap. 7). Mowinckel (1932), following Wellhausen's ([1885] 1973, p. 430, n. 1) lead, regarded an estimated 480 years from the building of the first temple to the end of the exile as a “Deuteronomistic construct”. Wellhausen labelled the Hebrew Bible's 960 years ( $2 \times 480$ ) from the Exodus to the end of the exilic period as “schematised”, yet he perceived these numbers as relatively “trustworthy”. The correctness of this estimation may be seen in the fact that Wellhausen's two schematic periods of 480 years yield the same date for the Exodus, 1496 BC, that Redford (1992, p. 258) arrived at, which he linked to a tally of DK regnal lengths “of the kings of Judah from Solomon's fourth year [1 Ki 6:1] . . . to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC . . .”<sup>6</sup> Wellhausen (1927, pp. 270–71; cf. Laato 2015, pp. 98–99) was adamant that the Dtr's First Temple period lasted 430 years, which equates to the 429-year period from Solomon (40 years), Divided Kingdom (255 years), and Judah (134 years, from 720 BC down to 586 BC).

Traditional historicists such as Herrmann (1973), Gray (1970, pp. 3–5), Donner (1984) Miller and Hayes (1986),<sup>7</sup> and Soggin ([1984] 1999) see the inception of Israel's history as the product of Late Period redactors. Yet for Noth (1991, p. 120),<sup>8</sup> the Deuteronomist is the author of a comprehensive history painstakingly citing and arranging a pre-existing tradition, one which included ancient chronicles and annals. Similarly, Jepsen (1956, pp. 41–76; 1964) saw the compiler of Israel's Divided Kingdom history as using a ‘Synchronistic Chronicle’ and annals similar to those in Mesopotamia.

### 2.2. Second Category

This group includes scholars who have concluded that harmony for DK regnal data can only be achieved by altering some of the regnal lengths. Because regnal data are viewed as contradictory, Kugler (1922, pp. 34–89), Lewy (1927), Albright (1940; 1945, pp. 16–21), Tadmor (1979), Bright (1981), Anderson (1986), Barnes (1991), and Galil (1996) adjust regnal data using unattested numbers. Miller (1967, p. 278) believed Lewy (1927) had argued “convincingly for the essential authenticity of the synchronisms recorded in the books of Kings”. Albright (1945, p. 17) also praised Lewy (1927) for his important work emphasizing “the value of the synchronisms for any chronological reconstruction”

and objected to those who “mostly discarded the biblical synchronisms . . . as worthless additions of later redactors”. The present study indicates that, when they are accorded a sufficient timeline, the synchronisms justify the regnal lengths and vice versa, so it is disappointing that this group invariably places little confidence in DK regnal length information. Albright (1945, p. 17) found it “incredible that all these numbers can have been handed down through so many editors and copyists without often becoming corrupt”. According to Thiele (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 114), Albright discarded the biblical numbers and supplied figures of his own devising—8 out of 20 regnal lengths for the rulers of Judah, and 6 out of 19 for Israel—each, of course, being revised downward (by 24 years total). Thiele failed to note the most improbable aspect of Albright’s proposal, the idea that, in all 14 cases, the Jewish scribes erred too high, either in their estimations or in transcription of the numbers.<sup>9</sup> Albright represented the first major break with prior biblical historians such as Ussher (2003), Clark ([1817] 1977), Goodenow (1896),<sup>10</sup> Keil and Delitzsch (Keil and Delitzsch [1866] 1996), Beecher (1907), Anstey (1913), and Bullinger (1922) who adhered to the Hebrew Bible’s higher chronology.<sup>11</sup> Denying the possibility of accurate scribal transmission, Albright refrained from any attempt at squaring the burgeoning corpus of archaeological finds with the Bible’s higher timeline. Hayes and Hooker (Hayes and Hooker [1988] 2007, pp. 14–15) likewise respect only synchronistic data and believe the Masoretic Text (MT) and Greek recension preserve no authentic data for reconstructing an absolute timeline. They criticize Thiele’s methodology and reject the possibility of coregencies (Hayes and Hooker [1988] 2007, p. 12), as do Mowinckel (1932) and Gray (1970, pp. 56–57).

### 2.3. Third Category

Into a third category may be placed Thiele ([1951] 1983), Gray (1970, p. 57), Kitchen ([1973] 1986), Steinmann (2011, pp. 129–30), Finegan (1998, p. 249), Kaiser (1998, pp. 292–300), and Tadmor (1979). These scholars assume that Israel and Judah experienced a concomitant truncation in regnal history via coregency, despite textual silence. They consider the regnal lengths and synchronisms reasonably trustworthy.<sup>12</sup> Tadmor (1979), just as Thiele, posited hypothetical coregencies while admitting the author of 1–2 Kings gave little or no indication of the practice. No issue of historiography is more dependent on contemporaneous documentation than coregency. Thus, de Vaux (1961, p. 101) rejects Israelite co-regencies, seeing them as a desperate means of reconciling perceived discrepancies in the data.

Barnes (1991, p. 15) realizes that Thiele’s coregencies are basically unprovable, even while admitting dependence on Thiele’s reconstruction. Like Wellhausen (1927, pp. 270–71) and Laato (2015, p. 99), he believes “Judahite regnal totals as extant tend to correspond . . . quite well with the actual historical situation” (Barnes 1991, p. 147; cf. Weingart 2018, p. 275) but views the accession synchronisms as secondary calculations (Barnes 1991, p. 148), since they (supposedly) cannot be reconciled with Tadmor’s (1979, pp. 53–55) Assyrian synchronisms, which Barnes (1991, pp. 2–3) deems fixed “anchor points”.

Galil (1996, pp. 4–5) is highly critical of the vicissitudes in Thiele’s assumptions, wherein regnal systems changed every few decades. Commenting on Thiele’s dismissal of 2 Kings (17; 18; 1, 9–10), Galil (1996, pp. 91–92, 99–101, 104) doubts that a Jewish historian would have assigned, as Thiele supposes, the wrong king of Judah at the time Samaria fell to Sargon. Thiele proposed periodic changes in regnal reckoning, calendar reconstruction, and coregencies in his effort to justify the biblical data. But Childs (1979, p. 296) is chagrined at Thiele’s “innumerable coregencies”, the “complex interchange of calendars”, and “unique patterns of calculation”.

Thiele (Thiele [1951] 1983, pp. 106, 119–20, 231) thought Judah applied its own post-dated accession system to the kings of Israel, while the latter applied their antedating system to Judah (Horn 1980, p. 49). He called this “dual dating”. Galil realizes the tendentious nature of dual dating. Despite this, Horn (1980, pp. 37–38, 48) called Thiele’s work “magisterial”, an “achievement” that “solved, once and for all, the major chrono-



logical problems connected with the period of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel” and as surpassing “the combined wisdom of the ablest scholars for centuries”. However, other DK chronologers (e.g., [Shenkel 1968](#), p. 25; [Galil 1996](#), pp. 8–9) describe Thiele’s argumentation as circular and arbitrary.

#### 2.4. Fourth Category

The fourth and final group of biblical chronologers view Israelite and Judahite regnal data as harmonious and mathematically coherent and serving the important function of marking time since God’s covenant with Israel at Sinai (1 Ki 6:1) down to the deportations of 597 and 586 BC. They do not feel compelled to force these data onto an Assyrian timeline based on the AEC/AKL. This group includes [Ussher \(2003\)](#); [Clark \(\[1817\] 1977\)](#); [Keil and Delitzsch \(Keil and Delitzsch \[1866\] 1996\)](#); [Goodenow \(1896\)](#); [Bullinger \(1922\)](#); [Anstey \(1913\)](#); [Faulstich \(1986\)](#); [Jones \(2005\)](#); and [Tetley \(2005\)](#).

My study shares this group’s reluctance to bring the chronology of the DK into conformity with a timeline implied by the Assyrian canons. My study is distinct, however, in that it engages a number of disciplines that are ignored in their work. Thus, it goes well beyond the realm of mere numerical abstraction. Ergo, my approach is to first construct a timeline—a working model—for the Divided Kingdom based on “Judahite regnal totals”, which [Barnes \(1991, p. 147\)](#) saw “correspond. . . quite well with the actual historical situation” ([Barnes 1991, p. 147](#)). Using straightforward arithmetic means, this study pinpoints the narrow window of time within which the regnal lengths of both Israel and Judah exhibit 72 years of regnal history, 44 more years than the Assyrian kings between the death of Shamshi-Adad V and the accession of Shalmaneser IV. This finding compels us to test the 44-year higher timeline for possible correlations and historical scenarios that do not present themselves when one considers only the implied Assyrian timeline. Implausible scenarios created by Thiele’s AKL-based shorter system of chronology have been ignored far too long but are brought into sharp relief by this comparative study. High-quality radiometric data and archaeology work together to determine the most realistic timeline.

While Thiele was right to dismiss the variant readings produced by the chronological system of the Old Greek and LXX<sup>L</sup> recensions of the Hebrew Bible, he has been criticized for his “exclusive reliance upon the chronological data of the MT for his reconstruction” ([Barnes 1991, p. 25](#); cf. [Cogan 1992, p. 1006](#)). A text-critical approach is taken here toward the MT. [Hendel’s \(2012\)](#) priceless text-critical study on the secondary derivation of OG/L Omride-period variant readings is invaluable for dispensing with them—22 in all for the early DK. A total of 2 out of these 22 (2 Ki 1:17 and 9:29) were retained by the Masoretes, despite the impossibility of fitting them into the MT system ([Spinoza \[1670\] 1862, §9.11](#); cf. [Hendel 2012, p. 107](#)).

While it is precarious placing too great a reliance on Josephus in chronological matters, his accession synchronisms for Jehoash-J ([Josephus 1987, A.J. 9.173](#)) and Azariah ([Josephus 1987, A.J. 9.216](#)) harmonize nicely with all nearby Masoretic regnal data, whereas the MT at 2 Ki 13:1 and 15:1 are impossible to reconcile with surrounding data. Therefore, one may allow for the possibility that Josephus used a more accurate proto-Masoretic Vorlage. For instance, in the case of the synchronic deficiency at the death of Jeroboam II, which is 11 years lower than the expected synchronism for the accession of his son, Zachariah, the LXX (Rahlfs) indicates an interregnum by giving a regency to Azariah of Judah, which ended when Zachariah finally ascended the throne in Year 38 of Azariah (2 Ki 15:8). Given the failure of any northern king to measure up to the Davidic standard, the author of 1–2 Kings shows no interest in conveying the whys and wherefores of interregna; he simply used synchronisms to delimit them.

### 3. Israel and Judah’s Royal Accession Formulas as Primary Source Material

In 1993, when the Tel Dan Stele was discovered, it became evident that David, or rather, the House of David, was a bona fide political entity ([Biran and Naveh 1993; 1995](#)). For many scholars, the Tel Dan Stele “ended the first phase of the debate regarding the

historicity of the Hebrew Bible, clarifying that the mythological paradigm was nothing but a modern myth in itself” (Garfinkel et al. 2017, p. 156; cf. Halpern 2001, pp. 1–72; Moore and Kelle 2011, pp. 217–18; Provan et al. 2003, pp. 216–17). When the existence of an early Solomonic kingdom is granted, a more intriguing hypothesis presents itself, in that king lists and royal archives—beginning with the “Book of the Chronicles of King David” (1 Chr 27:24) and the “Book of the Chronicles of Solomon” (1 Ki 11:41)—as well as records maintained by certain prophets, such as the acts of Solomon written in “the matters concerning [על־דָּבָרִים] the prophet Nathan and the prophecies of Ahijah the Shilonite” (2 Chr 9:29)—may have preserved important accounts at temple and palace libraries (Mazar 2010, p. 29; Parker 2000; Green 1983). Noth (1991, pp. 100–1; cf. Galil 1996, pp. 10–11) believed the 31 references to “the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel” (e.g., 1 Ki 14:19) and “the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” (e.g., 1 Ki 14:29) during the Divided Kingdom period were “derived from the official annals of the Israelite and Judean kings”, which the Deuteronomist used as a primary source. These royal documents were consulted in an effort “to provide his whole history with a firm chronological structure, the lengths of reigns and dates of events in both kingdoms forming the only means of establishing an unbroken, continuous connection between the dynasties of Israel and Judah”.

Ancient Near Eastern chronography, according to Weingart (2023, p. 6, insertion mine), “is a written genre; the density of number, names, and details does not lend easily to oral tradition. Its primary institutional contexts [whether Assyrian or Israelite] are administrative . . . and courtly (e.g., the legitimatory functions of king lists, annals, etc.), both of which are connected to scribal culture and education”. Kittel (1900, pp. x–xiii) regarded synchronisms and duration of reigns as derived from annalistic sources. This is confirmed by the way in which Israel and Judah’s accession formulas distinguish themselves with different protocols (Bin-Nun 1968, p. 419; Parker 2000, pp. 371–72; Tadmor 1979, pp. 44–45). Noth (1966, p. 270) believed: “The lists of royal regnal years and the synchronisms in both cases in all probability are derived from official sources and not one from the other”. For instance, the scribes of northern Israel place the reign length close to the end of the formula, unlike Judah’s formulas (Bin-Nun 1968, pp. 418–20).<sup>13</sup> Disparate formulas and demonstrable arithmetic accuracy and harmony in the numerical data over the course of the Divided Kingdom (Table 1) do not support the late editorial insertion of accession formulas (contra Bin-Nun 1968, pp. 419, 424–27 and Barnes 1991, p. 8).<sup>14</sup>

Anstey (1913, p. 190) states: “The history of the Kingdom of Israel is so closely locked and interlocked with that of the Kingdom of Judah, that it is next to impossible for any error to have crept into it. . . . to alter any one text by one single year, is to throw the chronology of the whole into hopeless confusion”. Weingart’s (2018, pp. 271, 275, Figures 1 and 2) analysis of eighth-century DK chronology (2 Kgs 15–18) concluded that regnal year totals and accession synchronisms for the kings of Israel and Judah were “internally coherent”, i.e., “the reign lengths given fit the intervals indicated by the synchronisms” . . . [so that] “changing them would cause a series of new problems and is equally unfounded” (Weingart 2018, p. 276, my bracket).<sup>15</sup> She also found the harmonious interplay of regnal year totals and synchronisms in 1–2 Kings, together with exceptional shifts from postdating to antedating, is indicative of “continually kept records” rather than an artificial construction (Weingart 2018, p. 278). This “interlocked representation” makes the work a unique composition in the ANE (Weingart 2023, p. 8). Significantly, she also believed that Israel and Judah’s oldest king lists already included “synchronistic accession dates” (cf. Bin-Nun 1968, p. 278).

Albright (1921) was the first prominent American scholar to prefer the AEC and AKL as the basis for assigning absolute dates to the Divided Kingdom timeline, but credit for dignifying the shift to Assyrian authority (however flawed) goes to Thiele, whose first publication on DK chronology (1944) proposed multiple coregencies in the eighth century and a rival kingdom of Pekah in the Transjordan as the means of reconciling DK regnal data with the Assyrian timeline. Albright’s qualified endorsement led to widespread acceptance of Thiele’s ([1951] 1983) pivotal study, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. Wiener

(2010, p. 382, n. 137) states that all analyses of DK chronology to some extent rely on Thiele's work.<sup>16</sup> Thiele ([1951] 1983, pp. 76–78) used Ahab's defeat at the Battle of Qarqar, in Shalmaneser III's sixth year, and Jehu's payment of tribute in his 18th year as plausible synchronisms for his Assyrian-based DK chronology.<sup>17</sup> The 12-year spacing between the two leads to the inexorable conclusions that Ahab died in the same year as the Battle of Qarqar and the year Jehu paid tribute was his accession year (Weippert 1978, p. 116). With the Bur-Sagale solar eclipse being fixed at 763 BC in Aššur-dan III's reign, it seemed to Thiele ([1951] 1983, p. 223) to be a matter of simple mathematical tabulation of eponyms between Shalmaneser's years and 763 BC, yielding 853 and 841 BC as "anchor dates", to which the biblical chronology must conform. Reviews of Thiele's *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, however, reveal that his reconstruction, though influential, raises more questions than it answers (Galil 1996, pp. 4, 8–9, 99–101; Barnes 1991, pp. 16–17; Hobbs 1985, pp. 184–85).

The 12 years between the Battle of Qarqar and Jehu's tribute led Thiele ([1951] 1983, pp. 94–95; cf. Weippert 1978, p. 116) to place the latter event in Jehu's accession year. However, the value of relative synchronisms does not suffice to substantiate the assignment of Julian years. Thus, his chronology, which has become the consensus, places the entire weight of its Julian dates of 853 BC for the death of Ahab (in Shalmaneser's sixth year) and Jehu's accession in 841 BC (Jehu's tribute in Shalmaneser III's 18th year) on the presumed continuity of the AEC/AKL. The tally of regnal lengths of the House of David between the accession of Athaliah and Jehu and the death of King Ahaz of Judah in 726 BC is 159 years, whereas AKL/AEC has only 115 years between 841 and 726 BC. We will now see what can be learned by narrowing the window of time within which the two timelines diverge.

#### 4. Confining the Period within which the AKL/AEC Diverge from Israelite Timelines

Before Albright and Thiele, the majority of biblical historians still relied on biblical (rather than Assyrian) regnal data for assigning absolute dates (e.g., Goodenow 1896, p. 198; Ussher 2003; Clark [1817] 1977; Keil and Delitzsch [1866] 1996; Beecher 1907; Anstey 1913; Bullinger 1922). Since Jeroboam II came to power in the 15th year of Amaziah, and since the reigns of the House of David total 97 years ( $16 + 15 + 52 + 14 = 97$ ) from the death of Ahaz in 726 BC back to the accession of Jeroboam II, the latter came to power on or about 823 BC ( $726 + 97 = 823$ ). This date is 30 years higher than Thiele's 793 BC date for Jeroboam's accession (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 116). The divergence widens quickly to 44 years by the end of Shamshi-Adad V.

The period in which the Assyrian and Israelite timelines diverge can be shown to be a narrow window of time, having taken place no earlier than the death of Shamshi-Adad V (Year 13) and no later than the accession of Shalmaneser IV in 782 BC. From 782 BC down to 726 BC, the AEC has 56 eponyms and the AKL contains a total of 56 regnal years,<sup>18</sup> which is mirrored by Judah's timeline over this same span of time ( $25 + 15 + 16 = 56$ ).<sup>19</sup> The importance of this agreement cannot be overemphasized, since it is during this period that modern chronologists stumble over the 18-year discrepancy between Israel and Judah (cf. Weingart 2018, p. 272).<sup>20</sup> Between 782 and 726 BC, the timeline of Judah and Assyria agree against Thiele (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 217), whose timeline from Azariah's 27th year down to 726 is only 38 years ( $764 - 726 = 38$ ), 18 fewer years ( $56 - 38 = 18$ ). When this is combined with Weingart's finding of "perfectly consistent" Israelite chronological data for this period (Weingart 2018, pp. 271–76), it becomes apparent that the Judahite timeline cannot be truncated without affecting Assyria's timeline and its synchronisms.

Thiele places King Ahaz of Judah's death in 715 BC, even though this forces him to reject all eight references to the conquest of Samaria in Sargon's inscriptions, which place this event in 720 BC (see Galil 1996, pp. 85–86; Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 166). Thiele cites Tadmor's painstaking research and the many display inscriptions in the rooms of Sargon's Khorsabad palace attesting to Sargon's feat, yet Thiele rejects all of Sargon's claims as spurious because they are found only after Year 15 of Sargon.

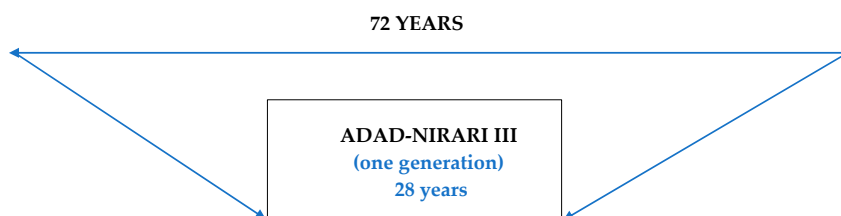
But Cogan and Tadmor (1988, p. 228) and Galil (1996, p. 99) rightly regard Isaiah 14:28–29 as a “dateline” placing Hezekiah’s accession not long after the death of Tiglath-pileser III in the winter of 727/726 BC: “In the year that Ahaz died, this oracle came from God, ‘Let none of you rejoice, you Philistines, because the rod that chastised you [a reference to Tiglath-pileser’s campaign to Philistia in 734 BC] is broken.’”<sup>21</sup> Since Hezekiah’s accession year is virtually the same as Shalmaneser V’s first year, it is evident that Assyrian and Judahite temporal histories both mark off 117 years from Hezekiah’s accession in 726 down to the fall of Asshur-uballit II at the Battle of Haran, in 609 BC, when Pharaoh Necho killed Josiah en route to helping his beleaguered Assyrian ally.<sup>22</sup> Thielean chronologers have failed to inform us that manipulation of Judah’s regnal history requires a commensurate adjustment of the Assyrian timeline between 782 and 609 BC, neither of which is justified by history.

The upper boundary of Neo-Assyrian divergence from the Israelite timeline can also be defined. In Shalmaneser III’s 18th year, Jehu, in his accession year, paid tribute to him. Shamshi-Adad’s death was 30 years later ( $17 + 13 = 30$ ). Since there is no reason to question the 30 eponyms from Year 18 of Shalmaneser III to Year 13 of Shamshi-Adad V ( $[35 - 18] + 13 = 30$ ),<sup>23</sup> the year of his death, the entire discrepancy between these canons and the two harmonious records of Israel and Judah lies between the death of Shamshi-Adad V (father of Adad-nirari III) and the first year of Shalmaneser IV (782 BC).<sup>24</sup>

From the end of Shamshi-Adad V to the end of Jeroboam II’s reign, the regnal lengths of the House of Israel total 72 years ( $15 + 16 + 41 = 72$ ).<sup>25</sup> The regnal tally of the kings of the House of David for this same period is also 72 years ( $17 + 29 + 26$  [Azariah] = 72).<sup>26</sup> Given this agreement, it should seem rather odd that, according to the AKL/AEC, there are only 28 years between the death of Shamshi-Adad V and Shalmaneser IV, the floruit of only one king, Adad-nirari III. Thus, we may compare the latter’s solitary rule of 28 years with the reign of three kings in both Judah and Israel within the same timeframe, whose separate records agree in assigning 72 years of regnal history. That is a difference of 44 years ( $72 - 28 = 44$ ). The Assyrian canons are thus, remarkably, 61% shorter than Israel and Judah’s synchronistic history; in other words, the Israelite royal timeline is 257% longer. Moreover, the separate records of Israel and Judah each have a portion of, or the entire reigns of, three monarchs, vis-à-vis but one counterpart in Assyria, Adad-nirari III. Critical scholars must tell us how and why both Israelite royal records should suddenly diverge so drastically (by 44 years) within such a short period of time (between Shamshi-Adad V and Shalmaneser IV). (see Figure 1).

JUDAH = 17 years of Jehoash of Judah + 29 years of Amaziah + 26 years of Azariah

ISRAEL = 15 years of Jehoahaz + 16 years of Joash of Israel + 41 years of Jeroboam II



**Israelite regnal history is 257% longer during the reign of Adad-nirari III**

**Figure 1.** The regnal totals of Judah and Israel during Adad-nirari III.

We learn from 2 Kings 10:30 (cf. 2 Ki 15:12) that Jehu was rewarded with a four-generation dynasty (2 Ki 10:30; 15:12). Three of the four generations stand opposite Adad-nirari III, so that biblical historians and Assyriologists must now ask themselves which is more likely: (a) the author of 2 Kings made up two and a half generations of kings; or (b) the Assyrians experienced internal political troubles that led to an unacceptable rule



by a queen-mother prior to Adad-nirari, followed by a defunct central monarchy during the latter part of, and after, her son's rule. These phenomena thus weakened the position of Adad-nirari III as a source of legitimation for the four eighth-century kings who traced their lineage back through him, which likely affected the editing of the AKL/AEC.

Equally important is the following remarkable fact: Thiele (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 217) only contested 11 of Israel and Judah's 44 'excess' regnal years—from 793 to 782 BC—the coregency of Joash of Israel and Jeroboam II. In other words, Thiele did not contest 33 of 44 Israelite years from the death of Shamshi-Adad V to 782 BC, probably due to the fact it never occurred to him that this is the only span wherein the two timelines diverge. This glaring oversight has led consensus chronologers to presume they are at liberty to absorb 75% (33 years) of Israel/Judah's 'extra' years *after* 782 BC. This is an undeniable flaw in argumentation. The discrepancy in the timelines only exists prior to 782 BC, the year of Shalmaneser IV's accession.

The implausibility of two independent Israelite polities fabricating 44 years of coeval excess regnal history during the reign of one Neo-Assyrian king invalidates Albright's (1945, p. 17) belief that the Assyrian tablets "compelled scholars to revise Israelite chronology downward", since it is much more likely the Assyrians omitted years and references to anomalous authority, as argued below. The disparate and synchronistic records of Israel and Judah constitute two harmonious witnesses to the transpiration of 72 regnal years during a span where the lone testimony of the AKL/AEC suggests only 28 years had elapsed. Since the House of David is presented (in 2 Sm 7:16, 19; 1 Ki 2:4; 2 Chr 6:16, 7:18; Ps 89:29, 33, 36) as having undergone a continuous patrilinear succession from David to Zedekiah—a span of over 450 years—its timeline will be used as the plumbline.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 1.** Assyrian and Biblical synchronisms during the Divided Kingdom period. The table presents Julian dates for the House of Israel (black font), the House of Judah (red font), and Assyrian kings (blue italics) from Shalmaneser III down to Shalmaneser V and compares Thiele's (Thiele [1951] 1983, pp. 217, 222–23) generally accepted dates with the revised dates proposed by the author as required by Judahite data. A capital 'N' refers to the first Hebrew month, Nisan, whereas a miniscule 'n' refers to the Assyrian month, Nisanu. Northern Israel used non-accession reckoning from the outset of the Divided Kingdom through the Omrides, switching to an accession-year system during Jehu's dynasty (cf. Thiele [1951] 1983, pp. 111–12).

Event or Regnal Year	King of Judah, Israel, or Assyria	Revised Timeline	Thiele Dates	Source or Explanation
Death accession year	Solomon 40th yr Rehoboam	after 975 N 975 N–974 N	930 930	Jeroboam I, new dynasty Accession-year Nisan reckoning
1st regnal year 1st regnal year	Jeroboam I Rehoboam	975 T/974 T 974 N–973 N	930–909	N. Israel non-accession year/Tishri reckoning
17th regnal year 18th regnal year accession	Rehoboam Jeroboam I Abijam	958 N–957 N 958 T–957 T 958 T–957 N	913 913	Accession of Abijam-J, 2 Chr 13:1 1 Ki 15:1
1st regnal year	Abijam	957 N–956 N	912	1 Ki 15:2, three-year reign
20th regnal year death accession	Jeroboam I Abijam Asa (41)	956 T/955 T 955 N–955 T 955 N–955 T	910	1 Ki 15:29; 1 Chr 15:9
1st regnal year	Asa	954 N–953 N	910	1 Ki 15:10, 41-yr reign
2nd regnal year 22nd regnal year accession	Asa Death—Jeroboam Nadab	953 N–952 N 954 T–953 T 953 N–953 T	909	1 Ki 15:25 1 Ki 14:20 1 Ki 15:25, 2-yr reign

Table 1. Cont.

Event or Regnal Year	King of Judah, Israel, or Assyria	Revised Timeline	Thiele Dates	Source or Explanation
1st regnal year	Nadab	953 N–953 T	909	Use of antedating
2nd regnal year	Death—Nadab	953 T–952 T	908	1 Ki 15:28, Nadab killed by Baasha 1 Ki 15:33, 24-yr reign
3rd regnal year accession	Asa Baasha	952 N–951 N 952 N–952 T	908	
1st regnal year	Baasha	953 T–952 T	908	Use of antedating
26th regnal year	Asa	929 N–928 N	886	1 Ki 16:8
24th regnal year	Death—Baasha	930 T–929 T	886	1 Ki 16:8, 2-yr reign Use of antedating
accession	Elah	929 N–929 T	886	
2nd regnal year	Elah	929 T–928 T	885	1 Ki 16:10. Zimri kills Elah, rules 7 days (1 Ki 16:15).
27th year accession	Asa Zimri	928 N–927 N 928 N–928 T	885	
5 year faction	Omri vs. Tibni	928 N–924 N		1 Ki 16:21 Omri rules in Tirzah
Years 5–6	Omri	925 T–923 T		1 Ki 16:23b–24, Omri builds Samaria
accession	Ashurnasirpal II	928	883	
38th regnal year	Asa	917N–916N	874	Ahab's accession, 1 Ki 16:29 Omri buried in Samaria, 1 Ki 16:28
12th regnal year	Death of Omri	918T–917T	874	
accession	Ahab	917N–917T	874	
1st regnal year	Ahab	918 T–917 T	874	1 Ki 16:29, 22 yr reign
4th regnal year	Ahab	915 T–914 T	869	1 Ki 22:41, accession of Jehoshaphat
41st regnal year accession	Death of Asa Jehoshaphat	914 N–913 N 914 N–914 T	869 872	
1st regnal yr	Jehoshaphat	913 N–912 N	872	
accession	Shalmaneser III	902 n	859	
6th regnal year	Shalmaneser III	896 n		Battle of Qarqar, Kurkh Monolith (BM 118884, Grayson 1996, A.O.102.2, p. 23, ll. ii 89b–102). Ahab's final year
22nd regnal yr	Death of Ahab	897 T–896 T	853	
17th regnal yr	Jehoshaphat	897 N–896 N		
1st regnal year	Ahaziah-I	897 T–896 T		Use of antedating
2nd regnal year	Ahaziah-I	896 T–895 T	852	Death of Ahaziah-I (2 Ki 1:2–17) 12-year reign (2 Ki 3:1); antedating 2 Ki 3:1
accession	Joram-I	896 T–895 T		
18th year	Jehoshaphat	896 N–895 N		
5th regnal year	Joram-I	892 T/891 T	848	2 Ki 8:16, accession of Jehoram-J (four-year coregency)
1st regnal year	Jehoram co-rex	892 N–891 N		
25th regnal year	Jehoshaphat	889 N/888 N	848	Jehoram-J becomes sole-rex
8th regnal year	Jehoram-J	885 N–884 N		Accession of Ahaziah-J in 12th year of Joram-I (2 Ki 8:25) 2 Ki 8:26, 1-year reign
12th regnal year	Joram-I	885 T–884 T		
accession	Ahaziah-J	885 T–884 N		
18th regnal year	Shalmaneser III	884 n	841	Jehu's tribute payment: Black Obelisk (see note 14 and Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 76).
one-year reign accession	Ahaziah-J Queen Athaliah	884 N–884 T 884 N–884 T	841	2 Ki 8:26 Athaliah, daughter of Omri (see Appendix B), mother of Ahaziah
Jehu kills Ahaziah of Judah and Joram-I between 884 N and 884 T = Jehu's accession-year				
1st regnal year	Jehu	884 T–883 T	841	Adoption of accession-yr. reckoning
1st regnal year	Athaliah	883 N–882 N		

Table 1. Cont.

Event or Regnal Year	King of Judah, Israel, or Assyria	Revised Timeline	Thiele Dates	Source or Explanation
7th regnal year 7th regnal year accession	Athaliah Jehu Jehoash-J	877 N–876 N 878 T–877 T 877 N–877 T	835	2 Ki 11:3–16 plot by priests kills Athaliah  2 Ki 12:1–2
1st regnal year	Jehoash-J	876 N–875 N		Accession-year reckoning
35th regnal year accession	Shalmaneser III Shamshi-Adad V	867 n 867 n	824 823	Six-year struggle for succession between Shamshi-Adad and his brother (870–864) listed as ‘revolt’ Ep. Chron.
1st regnal year	Shamshi-Adad V	866 n		13-year reign. Shamshi-Adad V is assigned 823–811 BC by Grayson (1996, p. vii) and Kuhrt (1995, p. 479)
21st regnal year 28th regnal year accession	Jehoash-J Jehu Jehoahaz	856 N–855 N 857 T–856 T 856 N–856 T	814	Accession of Jehoahaz, (Josephus 1987, A.J. IX.173) vs. 2 Ki 13:1 Masoretic Text has “23rd year” Jehu’s 28-year rule (2 Ki 10:36)
1st regnal year	Jehoahaz	856 T–855 T		Accession-year reckoning
Hazeal captures Gath and attacks Jerusalem soon after Jehoash-J’s 23rd year, 855 N (2 Ki 12:6, 17)				
Shamshi-Adad V deposes kings of Babylon in 856–855, his 11th–12th year. It is probable the kingless years began in 853, the year after his final regnal year, 854 (Brinkman 1968, pp. 52–59, 213, n. 1327).			813/812	Tetley (2005, pp. 102–3); Grayson (1975, p. 182)
Sudden death	Shamshi-Adad V	854 n	811	Grayson (1996, p. vii) provides 823–811
22 (or 12-) year interregnum	Sammu-ramat	854 n–832 n		Bab. Kinglist A and Bab. Chr. 24 indicate 12- or 22-year kingless period.
17th regnal year 37th regnal year accession	Jehoahaz Jehoash-J Joash-I	840 T–839 T 840 N–839 N 840 T–839 N	798	2 Ki 13:10 = Josephus (1987, A.J. IX. 177). Israel oppressed by Hazeal all of Jehoahaz’s 17 years (2 Ki 13:22).
At the end of Jehoahaz’ reign, Israel had only 50 horsemen, 10 chariots, and 10,000 infantry. By Joash-I’s 15th year, 825/824 BC, he was able to hire out 100,000 men to Amaziah for his war against Edom, which came at a time when Assyria had just defeated Ben-Hadad III, in Years 5–7 of Adad-nirari.				
40th regnal year 2nd regnal year accession	Jehoash-J Joash-I Amaziah	837N–836N 838T–837T 837N–837T	796 793	Accession of Amaziah (2 Ki 14:1–2)
Hazeal succeeded by Ben-Hadad III (=Mari’ of Damascus)				Aramean oppression continues under Joash-I (2 Ki 13:3).
1st regnal year	Adad-nirari III	831 n	809 n	Reigned 28 years. Grayson (1996, p. vii) provides 810–783.
5th regnal year	Adad-nirari III	827 n	805 n	Siege of Damascus, receipt of tribute of Joash-I, Edom, Tyre, Sidon; Saba’a Stele (Grayson 1996, A.0.104.6, pp. 207–209, lines 14–15)
In his 5th–7th years (827 N–825 N = years 12–14), Adad-nirari defeated a Syro–Hittite coalition led by Ben-Hadad III and Attar-šumki of Arpad (Grayson 1996, A.0.104.3, pp. 204–5). This enabled Joash-I, in his last years, 826–824 BC, to recover cities of Israel taken by Hazeal from his father (2 Ki 13:25).				
In Adad-nirari’s 8th year (824), Eponym Chronicle has “a plague”.				

Table 1. Cont.

Event or Regnal Year	King of Judah, Israel, or Assyria	Revised Timeline	Thiele Dates	Source or Explanation
16th regnal year Year 15 accession 1st regnal year	Joash-I Amaziah Jeroboam II Jeroboam II	824T-823T 823N-822N 823N-823T 823 T–822 T	796 793	2 Ki 13:10 2 Ki 14:23, accession of Jeroboam II
After the plague of Adad-nirari's eighth year (ca 824), the central monarchy recedes, favoring powerful regional governors throughout the Assyrian empire. In 823 BC, Joash-I defeated Amaziah-J at Beth-Shemesh and plundered the treasures of Jerusalem (2 Ki 14:13–14), providing capital for Jeroboam II's military ventures into Syria (2 Ki 14:25–28).				
"in the 14th year" 29th regnal year accession	Jeroboam II Amaziah Amaziah	810 T–809 T 809 N–808 N 809 N–809 T	780 767 792	Josephus (1987, A.J. IX. 216) vs. 2 Ki 15:1 (Masoretic Text has "in the 27th year"). Execution of Amaziah. Azariah made king at father's death.
1st regnal year	Azariah	808 N–807 N		
28th regnal year	Adad-nirari III	804 n	783	
22-year hypothetical interregnum		c. 804–782		No central monarch at Calah. Regional governors exercise kingly authority.
Year 1	Shalmaneser IV	782 n	782	Grayson (1996) provides 782–773.
From 782 to 726, the regnal history of the AKL/AEC and of Judah agree, each ascribing 56 years of kingship. Thus, the chronology of Judah, Israel, and Assyria agree on the number of years from Shalmaneser IV to the death of Tiglath-pileser III				
41st regnal year	Jeroboam II	783 T–782 T	753	2 Ki 14:29, Rahlfs's (1965) LXX indicates Azariah succeeded Jeroboam II
27th regnal year	Azariah	782 N–781 N		
Death	Shalmaneser IV	773	773	10-year reign
Year 1	Aššur-dan III	772	772	Grayson (1996, p. vii) provides 772–755.
In his 27th year, Azariah of Judah succeeds Jeroboam II as interim regent "for Judah in Israel" (2 Ki 14:28, LXX). Zachariah reigned 6 months from Adar-Elul, 770, bridging Azariah's 38th and 39th years (2 Ki 15:13). His death in Elul 770 BC at the hands of Shallum ended Jehu's dynasty. The fact he was not accorded a regnal year indicates Tishri was N. Israel's regnal New Year, since his time of rule never crossed that threshold.				
Azariah's 38th	Shallum	Elul, 770	752	Reigned 1 month (2 Ki 15:13)
Menahem's accession year was Tishri 770 to Elul 769; thus, accession-year reckoning continued after Jehu's dynasty ended (cf. Weingart 2018, p. 271). Menahem's 11-month accession year accounts for his synchronisms spanning Years 39–50 Azariah (2 Ki 15:17, 23), even though he reigned only 10 years (see Weingart 2018, p. 272).				
39th regnal year accession year	Azariah Menahem	770 N–769 N 770 T–769 T	752	2 Ki 15:17, accession-year reckoning; 10-year reign
1st regnal year	"	769 T–768 T		
4th regnal year	"	766 T–765 T		2 Ki 15:19; AEC, Millard (1994, p. 59)
Menahem pays tribute to biblical Pul (2 Ki 15:19)—perhaps Tiglath-pileser III prior to his kingship. See Appendix B.				
10th year	Ashur-dan III	15 June 763	763	Solar eclipse: limmu of Bur-Sagale
10th regnal year 50th regnal year accession	Menahem Azariah Pekahiah	760 T–759 T 759 N–758 N 759 N–759 T	742 742 742	Accession of Pekahiah (2 Ki 15:23)
2nd regnal year 52nd regnal year accession	Pekahiah Azariah Pekah	758 T–757 T 757 N–756 N 757 N–757 T	740 752	Accession of Pekah (2 Ki 15:27) Pekahiah's assassination



Table 1. Cont.

Event or Regnal Year	King of Judah, Israel, or Assyria	Revised Timeline	Thiele Dates	Source or Explanation
1st regnal year	Pekah	758 T–757 T		Non-accession-year reckoning
2nd regnal year accession accession	Pekah Jotham	757 T–756 T 757 N–756 N 757 T–756 N	750	Jotham's accession, 2 Ki 15:32
1st regnal year	Jotham	757 N–756 N		Non-accession reckoning
Death	Ashur-dan III	755	755	
Year 1	Aššur-nirari V	754	754	Grayson (1996, p. vii) provides 754–745. Compare Fuchs (2012, pp. 153–154) accession date of 755 or 753.
Year 1	Tiglath-pileser III	744 (d. 727)	744	Grayson (1996, p. 3) provides 744–727.
16th regnal year	Jotham	742 N–741 N	735	
17th regnal year accession	Pekah Ahaz	742T–741T 742T–741N	735 735	Ahaz's accession (2 Ki 16:1)
Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria attack Judah/Ahaz ca. 741 (2 Ki 16:5) Ahaz's first appeal and bribe (not tribute) to Tiglath-Pileser III for help (2 Ki 16:7–8)				
1st regnal year	Ahaz	741 N–740 N		
20th regnal year	Pekah	739 T–738 T	732	2 Ki 15:27
Tiglath-pileser ravages all of Northern Israel except Samaria ca. 739–738, leading to the overthrow of Pekah by Hoshea. Hoshea rules over Samaria alone, 738–730 (Summary Inscription 13:18').				2 Ki 15:29 Annals 18:1'–7'; Annals 24:1'–11' Summary Inscription 13:17'
20th year	Jotham	738 N–737 N	732/731	Time-marker (2 Ki 15:30)
12th regnal year accession	Ahaz Hoshea	730 N–729 N 730 T–729 N	732	Hoshea, "king of Israel in Samaria" (2 Ki 17:1)
1st regnal year	Hoshea	729 T–728 T		
accession	Shalmaneser V	late 727 (January 726)	726	Death of Tiglath-pileser III in January 726
1st regnal year	Shalmaneser V	Nisanu 726		
16th regnal year 3rd regnal year accession	Ahaz Hoshea Hezekiah	726 N–725 N 727 T–726 T 726 N–726 T		2 Ki 18:1–2

## 5. The Invalid Use of Coregencies to Reconcile the Biblical and Assyrian Timelines

Tetley (2005, p. 118) understands that: "The result of shortening the biblical chronology to fit the AEC is seen toward the end of the Divided Kingdom when the reigns of the last kings will not fit into the years remaining". As suggested by the foregoing material, Thiele should have suspected some sort of anomalous period(s) of authority before or after Adad-nirari III. While Thiele (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 38) recognized this increase in discrepancy, he failed to circumscribe its borders or confine his efforts at absorbing the Bible's 'extra' years to the period where the two timelines diverge. Instead, he thought he could distribute the difference across the balance of the eighth century. At the same time, he categorically rejected the possibility of interregna: "In the history of nations there are few records of states passing through periods when they were without rulers" (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 47). This presumes that royal scribes were authorized to provide accounts of interregna when it is more than likely that scribal responsibilities were limited almost entirely to narrating the high points of political and military affairs of particular kings. Thiele lacked Valk's (2019)

perspective that the AKL presents a narrative of Assyrian history inextricably dependent on the institution of kingship in a concerted effort to tell a story of continuity (see Section 6).

The chronological difficulties of Neo-Assyria's Dark Period are analogous to those of Egypt's Third Intermediate Period; in Egypt, you have multiple coeval centers of power at Tanis, Bubastis, and Thebes, whereas in Assyria you have evidence of regional magnates acting as kings as though there were no central monarchy.<sup>28</sup> Thiele's response to this problem was to brush aside the possibility of chronological uncertainty. His argument is that the political weakness of Assyria's Dark Period resulted "in a multiplication of rulers rather than a cessation of rulership" (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 47). Yet in the case of Dynasty 22–25 of Egypt's Third Intermediate Period, chronologies vary widely because it is nearly impossible to determine which rulers are sequential and which are contemporaneous.<sup>29</sup> Thus a multiplication of rulers does not produce chronological certainty.

Coregency and overlapping of reigns are the chief means Thiele ([1951] 1983, pp. 54–55, 61ff) used to compress the Israelite timeline in the eighth century. Thiele regularly disagrees with the arrangement and interpretation of narrative material of "the Dtr editors" (Barnes 1991, p. 20). Cogan (1992, p. 1006) believes Thiele's "many shifts in the basis of reckoning dates . . . were unlikely in actual practice" and criticized his predilection for positing "an undocumented event in order to save a biblical datum" (e.g., the circumstances surrounding the appointment of Jeroboam II and Azariah as coregents (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 109). Ever more creative means of absorbing large segments of regnal time are needed to accommodate the truncated timeline resulting from his 841 BC date for Jehu's accession.

No issue of historiography is more dependent on contemporaneous documentation than coregency. If it is assumed that a king was coregent, "the assumption must be justified. It is not enough justification that coregencies enable chronological problems to be solved" (Laato 1986, p. 212). Obviously, any problem of chronology can be resolved dozens of ways by arbitrarily positing, and then adjusting the termini of, undocumented coregencies (cf. Laato 1986, p. 211). Even Albright (1952, p. 102) states: "It is risky assuming them when the biblical text offers no warrant for the assumption". Hayes and Hooker ([1988] 2007, p. 12), drawing on parallels to Mesopotamian king lists, flatly rejected Thiele's imposition of coregencies upon the narrative of 1–2 Kings. Miller and Hayes (1986, p. 228), in a clear allusion to Thiele's methodology, chose to adjust DK regnal data "rather than force an artificial harmony by proposing coregencies, shifting in midstream to another reckoning system, or the like". In the Mesopotamian king lists, the entirety of a king's regnal length belongs solely to that king. Only when this rule is adhered to does the accuracy of the DK synchronistic and regnal length data become apparent, as demonstrated in Table 1. Perhaps this explains why the author of 1–2 Kings is largely silent regarding coregencies.<sup>30</sup>

Ambivalence toward coregency as a means of solving chronological problems is best illustrated by Tadmor (1979, p. 53, 57), who tells us that the 1–2 Kings redactor was probably ignorant of coregencies, having provided us little or no indication of the practice. Later, in the same work, he says they are "logical and clearly alluded to" because they do "much to solve a few of the more serious contradictions".<sup>31</sup> Such statements reveal the ambivalence of someone committed to a truncated biblical chronology dictated by Assyriology.

Thiele's first lengthy coregency is that of Jeroboam with his father, Joash-I, where a remarkable 75% of the reign (12 out of 16 years) is devoted to co-rule (Thiele [1951] 1983, pp. 107–11, 116–17). This left Joash-I with a sole reign of only four years.<sup>32</sup> As if this approach were not radical enough, Thiele then adjusts the years for Joash-I's contemporary, Amaziah, in order to swallow up 83% of his tenure—24 of 29 years—with coregency.<sup>33</sup> In the end, Thiele leaves only 17 of Azariah's 52 years to sole rule in the process of doing unwarranted "violence to the Dtr editing" of the biblical narrative (Barnes 1991, p. 137).<sup>34</sup> Had the serial reigns of Amaziah, Azariah, and Jotham been found on a Mesopotamian cuneiform tablet, they would have been accorded 97 years, yet because they are part of the biblical text, scholarship does not hesitate to reduce this amount by 35 years. The textual evidence supporting Azariah's succession at his father's death (2 Ki 14:19–21) suffices to invalidate Thiele's shorter timeline (cf. Hobbs 1985, p. 185). Importantly, Hobbs (1985,

p. 185), like many other biblical historians, found Thiele's evidence for coregency between Amaziah and Azariah "lacking". He shows from the instance of Azariah and Jotham that where a son governs on behalf of his father, the carefully chosen language of the author avoids designating him king. Hayes and Hooker (Hayes and Hooker [1988] 2007, p. 12) reflect the biblical narrative when they state: "Jotham . . . functioned for a time in a prominent role as one 'over the household, governing the people of the land' (2 Kings 15:5), during the reign of Azariah, but his office during this brief period until he became king is clearly specified and did not constitute monarchical rule". Without this coregency, more time is needed than the AKL affords.

There is also no biblical warrant for Thiele's (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 121, 136) absorption of 12 years of Samarian regnal history by starting the reign of Pekah in Azariah's 39th year instead of his 52nd year. From the time of his accession, Pekah is called "king of Israel in Samaria" (2 Ki 15:27), not in Gilead. The Hebrew text presents Pekah as part of an in-palace coup in Samaria (2 Ki 15:25), not as a "rival" Transjordanian kingdom. Pekah is called Pekahiah's שְׁלִישׁוֹ (his adjutant), from שְׁלֹשׁ (three), or third, in command at Pekahiah's court (Na'aman 1986, p. 76), which hardly comports with the role of a rival king. Thiele fails to explain why the author of Kings explicitly documented four years of schism between Tibni and Omri in 1 Kings 16:21–22 but managed to gloss over a schism three-times longer between Menahem, Pekah, and Pekahiah (Na'aman 1986, p. 75). Na'aman (1986, p. 75–76) correctly sees the rival-kingdoms theory as being driven strictly by chronological matters.

Hobbs (1985, p. 184) described the chronological problems of 2 Kings 13–15 as "most complicated", so much so that, in his commentary on 2 Kings, he made no attempt to resolve them. Alluding to Thiele's "persuasive theories" regarding the synchronisms of these three chapters, he made it clear he regarded his solutions as "containing serious deficiencies". Hobbs seemed to realize that attempting to reconcile the reign lengths and synchronisms of the kings of Jehu's dynasty (and their contemporaries in Judah) with a presumed Assyrian timeline that is 44 years shorter is a fool's errand. He prudently left that task to others.

## 6. Exploring Possible Reasons for a Chronological Shortfall in the Assyrian Canons

The Neo-Assyrian timeline begins to diverge from Israel's at a time when "a weakening of Assyrian power in the west [came about] due to dynastic troubles at home" (Rainey and Notley 2006, p. 214). These included the following: (a) six years of revolt bridging the reigns of Shalmaneser III and his sons, (b) Shamshi-Adad V's untimely death, which led to Sammu-ramat's queen regency, and (c) a plague in Year 8 of Adad-nirari III. Regional autonomy ensued from the middle of Adad-nirari III's reign, beginning with the career of field marshal Nergal-ereš (eponym in Adad-nirari's seventh regnal year; AEC Millard 1994, p. 58).<sup>35</sup>

Abeyance in the central monarchy during the Neo-Assyrian Dark Period is inferred from the extraordinary king-like authority displayed by Shamshi-ilu, who boasts that no "previous king" (*šarri mahre*) had ever dared to make war on a certain foe (Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936, p. 146). Shamshi-ilu waged war by the command of Aššur, the national god (not by the king's authority), tantamount to a declaration of kingship, since going to war in the name of Aššur was strictly a royal prerogative (Ferguson 1996, p. 312, n 41; cf. Oded 1991, p. 232). The text of the Gate Lions at Til Barsib<sup>36</sup> features the traditional royal motifs of conquering hero and builder of his lordly city with no word of any king (Younger 2016, p. 362). The text features a complete list of his titles, including *turtānu* (Page 1968, p. 151; Ferguson 1996, p. 312; Hallo and Younger 2000), yet there is no mention of the name of a reigning monarch, indicating "the weakness of Shamshi-ilu's royal master" (Malamat 1953, p. 26). In short, powerful regional officials exercised authority over large swaths of territory without regard for any king (cf. Siddall 2013, p. 119; Kennedy 2018, p. 98). Finally, beginning in 745 BC, Tiglath-pileser III dismantled this decentralized power structure and restored the central monarchy (Frahm 2023, p. 131; Rainey and Notley 2006, p. 225).

It is not possible to leave this subject without discussing the Antakya Stele (A.O.104.2, Grayson 1996, pp. 203–4), where Shamshi-ilu first emerges on the geopolitical landscape. In it, the turtānu is featured arbitrating a border dispute between Arpad and Hamath. It is difficult to place Antakya much before 780 BC, when Shamshi-ilu first appears as an eponym (Younger 2016, pp. 357, 485–86; Siddall 2013, p. 69). Kuan (1995, p. 77) is confident that Shamshi-ilu erected the stela, not Adad-nirari, “since Hamath and Arpad fell under the sphere of Shamshi-ilu’s influence and jurisdiction”. If Adad-nirari had already passed from the scene, this would explain the glaring omission of the invocation to the gods as witnesses. It is easy to imagine that Shamshi-ilu would draw upon the authority and status of Adad-nirari III to establish not just a boundary but his own prestige at this early stage of his career.<sup>37</sup> The Antakya Stele suggests that Assyria’s internal condition had allowed Shamshi-ilu to become the key official representing Assyria in this dispute.

Despite these indications, Thiele dismissed the idea of an interruption of normal central authority, claiming (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 55) that “when there was no king there was no nation”. A more prudent assessment of dynastic weakness suggests that “the idea of contemporaneous rulers and competing centers of power” was deemed “anathema by those interested in legitimation” (Henige 1986, p. 63). Overcommitted as he was to the implied number of years between 853 and 841 BC and the solar eclipse of 763 BC, Thiele saw no need for a mathematical or comparative-historical approach that might suggest missing years. Henige (1986, p. 64) sees a general lack of skepticism with regard to undocumented time stemming from historians’ tendency “to become exceedingly anxious at the thought of telescoping. . . . The notion that unmeasurable and possible rather large chunks of the past are irretrievably lost is distressing to historians”.

In my view, some connection exists between the extraordinary power wielded by Assyria’s regional magnates and scribal confusion over the names and sequence of *limmu* officials starting around Year 25 of Adad-nirari III. The various recensions of the AEC for this time period are C<sup>a</sup>6, C<sup>b</sup>2, C<sup>a</sup>3, Sultantepe 150 (STT 1 47), and Sultantepe 18 (STT 1 46 + 2 348) (see Tetley 2005, p. 98). The eponymous confusion in the various recensions of the AEC between the names “Nabu-šarru-usur” and “Balatu” (eponym of Year 25 in C<sup>a</sup>3) suggests strongly that the primary sources of their seventh century compilers did not agree,<sup>38</sup> i.e., the recensions differed in their efforts to smooth over a period of discontinuity. Brinkman (1978, pp. 174–75, italics mine) states the following:

The variations in the texts are much more complex than five versus six names . . . there are several name distortions, at least one omission, and also some juggling in the sequence. Thus there is not just a simple opposition of two uniform recensions; there is clear evidence of textual confusion or corruption . . . the textual corruption should make us wary about accepting names, order, and number of eponyms without paying much closer attention to outside evidence.

While most historians understand that the authority of the central monarchy was eclipsed in some manner, few have been willing to consider the possibility that time may have been lost or, in effect, telescoped. Tetley (2005, pp. 97–99, 173–74) discusses the possibility of 22 missing eponyms, extending Adad-nirari’s reign by this amount; but it is more likely that Assyria, due to the strength of regional governors during this period, had no functional central monarchy. The length of this interregnum is discussed in Section 6.3.

Shifting the discussion to the AKL, we see polemical aspects that likewise render it suspect as a seamless measure of time. Valk’s 2019 study shows that appreciation of the Assyrian view of kingship is essential for understanding interregna and queen regency as antithetical to the institution of kingship. Valk (2019, p. 10) states the following:

AKL tells a story. It invents a genealogical fiction to weave together its disparate parts, it dispenses with the complexities of Assyria’s political history in favor of a smooth progression of kings, and it manufactures a narrative of Assyrian history that is inextricably dependent on the institution of kingship. . . . AKL represents a concerted effort not only to tell a story of continuity, but to assert it in the face of discordant sources and much more complicated historical realities.



This situation is not unprecedented, since it is clear the king lists of Manetho and the Sumerians also did not always mark absolute time but came about in order to “demonstrate exemplary social and political unity, genealogical legitimacy, and . . . incomparable antiquity” (Henige 1986, p. 63).

Valk (2019, pp. 1, 12–14) argues from the AKL’s historical, linguistic, and institutional features that the AKL originated under the transformative reign of Aššur-uballit I in the fourteenth century BC. The text of the AKL is consistent with this period’s “vigorous and innovative textual production”, with its “political emphasis on kingship”, and with “a desire to establish an institutional pedigree fit for a polity claiming parity with the Great Powers” (Valk 2019, p. 14). Unlike those who came before and after him, who record only two or three generations, Aššur-uballit I presents six generations of his genealogy. The transparent motive for this is to convey both the antiquity and the continuity of Assyrian kingship (Valk 2019, p. 14). Though Valk did not do so, parallels may be drawn from Aššur-uballit I’s extraordinary efforts at self-legitimation to Tiglath-pileser III’s, who “was by all appearances a usurper” with “dubious lineage” (Faulstich 1986, p. 23; cf. Grayson 1991, pp. 71–74). This would explain Tiglath-pileser’s claim that he was the son of Adad-nirari III, which Luckenbill (1968, sct. 822.294) suspected was “a bit of a fiction”. It may be the case that the suspension of normal authority during the Neo-Assyrian Dark Period led to four successive kings seeking genealogical legitimation via Adad-nirari III.<sup>39</sup> Thus, Tiglath-pileser III, like Aššur-uballit, was a usurper who would have sought to legitimate his own lineage via fictive kinship to the quasi-legendary Adad-nirari II, the first king of the Neo-Assyrian period.<sup>40</sup> As Valk (2019, p. 15) notes: “It is precisely when things are most in flux that the strongest claims to continuity are advanced”.

That there was cultic significance attributed to the AKL is supported by the fact that the tablets of the AKL were used for apotropaic purposes. It is believed that copies of the lists were manufactured for domestic cultic as well as official temple purposes. This would help explain why house amulets exhibit identical size, markings, holes for hanging, and rectangular projection to the Khorsabad King List tablet (Poebel 1942, p. 218; Reiner 1960, p. 155; Pruzsinszky 2009, p. 46, Figures 1 and 2). It appears that king list amulets were hung in houses for talismanic effect—to ward off plague or invoke a blessing (Reiner 1960, pp. 150, 154). Dodson (2012, p. 183) speaks of the “amuletic purpose of the AKL”, whose blessing depended on “purportedly demonstrating an unbroken line of succession from the earliest times to the current king”. This implies that periods of weakness, parochial autonomy, interrupted succession, or queen regency may have been elided, since they reflected poorly on the legitimacy of kingship.

It may be argued that at no time was the continuity of kingship in the Neo-Assyrian period (955–612 BC) more in jeopardy than before, during, and after Adad-nirari III. Prior to his father’s accession, there were, according to the Eponym Chronicle, six successive years of revolt, from 828 to 823 BC (see Table 1). When Shamshi-Adad V met an untimely death, it is generally acknowledged that Adad-nirari III was quite young (Siddall 2013, pp. 94–96). It is odd that so few Assyriologists have allowed for the possibility of an unrecorded period when his mother, Sammu-ramat, acted as a dynastic placeholder. Nevertheless, there is a marked “interest in the past” in Adad-nirari’s extant inscriptions “in terms of the idea of unbroken continuity of the Assyrian rulers” (Siddall 2013, p. 185). Like Aššur-uballit I before him, Adad-nirari sought legitimation via an “extensive genealogy . . . connecting himself to the earliest and most remarkable rulers in Assyrian history” on the Calab Slab (Siddall 2013, p. 186; Wilson 1977, p. 69–71; cf. Valk 2019, p. 14). Despite this, neither Siddall nor any other Assyriologist explores a possible nexus between the issue of legitimacy and the length of the period of his mother’s queen-regency during his minority.

Postgate (1991, p. 245) voiced a pervasive assumption about the AEC/AKL: “The Assyrian evidence remains an insurmountable obstacle composed of precise data, one which cannot be removed by vague assertions. . . .” However, regarding the Neo-Assyrian Dark Period, he states that “we still do not understand what was going on during these periods of recession” in political cohesion that “coincide with a reduction in written docu-

mentation and in archaeological remains . . . [there is] “a general lack of understanding of events or how literary and cultural continuity was maintained . . . it is a problem well worth studying. . .”. (Postgate 1991, p. 246). Circumstances being what they are, neither Postgate nor any other Assyriologist can positively affirm the regnal continuity of the Dark Period.

Valk (2019, p. 8) realized that “omission of select rulers . . . allows AKL to elide the messiness of a historical record of protracted turbulence and discontinuity”. Such tidying-up of the record of royal succession may be seen with Shalmaneser III’s other son, Aššur-da’in-apla, brother to Shamshi-Adad V, who likely was able to maintain himself as the ruler of the city of Aššur for about six years, but “shows up only under the rubric ‘revolt’ in the Eponym Chronicle. Though ignored in the king list, Aššur-danin-apla was doubtless mentioned in the original annals. . .” (Poebel 1943, p. 79). In short, due to its composite nature, it should be admitted that the authors of the AKL sought to maintain the illusion of continuity and perpetuity, which should raise concerns about its status as an absolute arbiter of time.

There is a tendency among scholars, whether Assyriologists or biblical historians, to ignore the possibility that interregna—anomalous periods of authority or recession in central authority—have led to undocumented years. Room must be left for religious and ideological concerns that influenced both the initial and final content of the AEC and AKL. There can be little doubt that the ascendance of the queen Sammu-ramat would have presented later Assyrian kings and scribes with an editorial conundrum.

#### 6.1. The Prominence of Sammu-ramat

It is well-known that upon the death of Sami-Adad V, Sammu-ramat attained extraordinary authority inseparable from her essential role in preserving the continuity of the dynasty. The Pazarcik Stele (obv.) (Grayson 1996, A.0.104.3, pp. 204–5) features both Adad-nirari and Sammu-ramat crossing the Euphrates to defeat a coalition led by Arpad and settle a border dispute. Portrayal of a female in a military campaign is unique in Assyrian royal inscriptions (Siddall 2013, p. 89; Baker 2023, p. 280). The stele is ambiguous about who is actually in charge, since it “uses the first-person singular ‘I’ for Adad-nirari as well as names him in the third person, refers to his mother by name, and also uses ‘they’ . . . for both of them” (Frahm 2023, p. 116).<sup>41</sup> This odd fluidity in gender pronouns is seen by Frahm (2023, p. 117) as manifesting “a certain unease about the situation” wherein “Sammu-ramat wielded enormous power during Adad-nirari’s early years”. The utter uniqueness of the respect accorded her suggests that, prior to her son’s age of majority, she held this status over a much longer period of time than Assyriologists have been willing to grant.

Siddall (2013, p. 53) also notes the missing “invocation of the gods”, a glaring omission for a border settlement.<sup>42</sup> This may indicate that (a) Adad-nirari was quite young; (b) Sammu-ramat was the only royal adult on the campaign; and (c) gender prejudice prevented her representation before the gods in the obligatory imprecatory oath of a boundary agreement. The relevance of this omission can be extrapolated to her exclusion from the AKL for whatever period she acted as regent. The Pazarcik stele’s location west of the Upper Euphrates is seen as an indicator of her presence “beyond the Assyria court” (Siddall 2013, p. 91), from which Siddall infers that Sammu-ramat was recognized throughout the empire, including Babylonia. Her prominence was “contrary to the patriarchal standards of Assyrian public life” (Frahm 2023, p. 117). Last but not least, the votive statues of the god Nabû indicate to Siddall (2013, p. 91) that the central administration recognized Sammu-ramat: “The inscription on the statues is unique in that it is a dedication for both Adad-nirari’s and Sammu-ramat’s lives. A dedication made to two members of the royal family is without parallel. . .”.

#### 6.2. Adad-Nirari’s Young Age When His Father Died

Siddall (2013, p. 57; cf. Fuchs 2008, pp. 74–75) admits it is unclear how long Sammu-ramat’s regency continued. However, some texts support the possibility that Adad-nirari

was very young when his father died (Tadmor 1973, p. 147; cf. Frahm 2023, p. 116): “still a minor”. Given the social and religious attitudes toward female rulership, it unlikely that Sammu-ramat could have attained her unprecedented status if Adad-nirari were an adult at his accession (Siddall 2013, p. 95). Since she needed her son to legitimize her dynastic role, we should not expect to find her name alone, no matter how young her son was at the time of these inscriptions. Thus, there is the real possibility that the monuments cited above signify her son’s minority status and a substantial interregnum. Siddall (2013, p. 99) adds that “due to Adad-nirari’s probable inexperience . . . it is plausible to view Sammu-ramat’s position as something akin to a regent” (cf. Frahm 2023, p. 116).

Sammu-ramat held the highest titles available to Assyrian royal women; but since there was no precedent for a female regent, there was no title she could have claimed to adequately express her authority and influence (Siddall 2013, p. 92). However, according to Kuhrt (1995, p. 528), “in situations of political uncertainty occasioned by the sudden death of the king or the occasion of a very young ruler, they could function to defend and protect the existing régime, and ensure that arrangements for the succession worked smoothly”.<sup>43</sup> These insights prevent us from ruling out an ideologically driven omission of her regency from the AKL/AEC: “Sammu-ramat’s actions ensured the continuation of the dynasty teetering on the verge of collapse. Thus, the later omission of Sammu-ramat should be understood as a result of Assyrian royal ideology . . . [which] could not accommodate the presence of an authoritative female figure” (Siddall 2013, pp. 99–100; my bracket).

Despite the abundance of evidence testifying to her prominence, Sammu-ramat was never granted official status, probably due to the aforementioned editorial conundrum. As Frahm (2023, p. 240) puts it, the AKL “is called a ‘King List’ for a reason—[it] does not include any women among the more than one hundred Assyrian rulers it names”. Siddall (2013, p. 98), drawing social and historiographic parallels to damnatio in Egypt and Hatshepsut, sees gender as the basis of Sammu-ramat’s later omission from Assyrian royal history.<sup>44</sup> In this instance, damnatio memoriae took place when an ideologically and culturally unacceptable reign aggravated successors. Omission of her name suggests the period during which she exercised authority was probably longer than historians have contemplated and lay outside official canons.

### 6.3. The Kingless Period in Babylon Which Followed Shamshi-Adad’s Death

Though it is widely accepted that Sammu-ramat governed on behalf of a young Adad-nirari, it is almost impossible to find a historian willing to assign years to her rule that lie outside the AEC/AKL. A regency, or coregency, of around six years has been proposed, but they are always assumed to be part of Adad-nirari’s 28 years (e.g., Siddall 2013, p. 57; cf. Baker 2023, p. 279). Credit goes to Tetley (2005, pp. 102–3) for drawing attention to a “kingless” period in Babylonia after the 13 years allotted to Shamshi-Adad V.<sup>45</sup> In his 11th and 12th years—856–855 BC (revised date; conventional date is 813–812)—Shamshi-Adad V removed two successive kings, Marduk-balatsu-iqbi and Baba-aha-iddina, from the throne of Babylon. This precedes indications in Babylonian Kinglist A and the Babylonian Chronicle that there was a kingless period of either 12 or 22 years (Tetley 2005, pp. 102–3, 170; Grayson 1975, p. 182; Brinkman 1968, pp. 52–59, 213, n. 1327). Grayson (1975, p. 217; cf. Tetley 2005, p. 170) believed the Assyrians likely controlled Babylon during the “kingless period”.<sup>46</sup>

A case can be made that the “kingless period” over Babylon belonged to Sammu-ramat; by extension, there would have been a concurrent kingless period at Calah. According to Siddall (2013, p. 77), the “Babylonian chronicle indicates that Shamshi-Adad did control Babylon” during the period after Baba-aha-iddina, claiming “for himself the title ‘King of Sumer and Akkad’ . . . understandable as an assertion of suzerainty over Babylonia” (Brinkman 1982, pp. 307–9). Siddall (2013, p. 78) has Adad-nirari inheriting this authority. But, if so, it probably did not come to him directly, but via his mother after an unknown period of minority. Thus, Assyrian control of Babylonia during the 12- or 22-year kingless period would belong to Sammu-ramat, not her son. Poebel’s (1943, p. 84, insertion mine)

inquiry concluded that, in “her role as regent of Assyria [due to her son’s age], Sammu-ramat could well have taken a hand in the political affairs of Babylonia”. When combined with Poebel’s finding that the Babylonian temples sent their sacrificial meals to Adad-nirari III—a privilege accorded only to Babylonian kings (Tadmor 1973, p. 150)—it is doubtful the Babylonians designated his authority “kingless” while sending him priestly food.<sup>47</sup> Kuhrt (1995, p. 491, italics and bracketed insertions are mine), based on the Synchronistic History, paints the following picture of Adad-nirari’s kingship over Babylonia:

[Adad-nirari’s] mother did occupy an unusual position, being named with her son in a stele . . . The curious chronicle known as the *Synchronistic History* (ABC no. 21), . . . present[s Adad-nirari] as trying to restore some measure of normality to devastated Babylonia, by returning deportees from Assyria. At the same time he seems to have been treated as king of Babylonia himself: he received the ‘remnants’ of the divine meals offered to the gods at Babylon, Borsippa and Cutha, and imposed regular Assyrian taxes on the local population.

This contrasts with Shalmaneser III, who brought gifts to the main Babylonian temples, yet never received ritual meal leftovers.<sup>48</sup> It seems rather more likely that the “kingless period” did not apply to Adad-nirari’s suzerainty over Babylonia but rather to his mother’s years that preceded his. Her term would have ended when Adad-nirari reached the age of majority. Yet there was no female Assyrian title for the role Sammu-ramat filled (Baker 2023, p. 281).<sup>49</sup> Frahm (2023, p. 117) thinks Adad-nirari became embarrassed by the prominence his mother had achieved, so that he omits mention of her in later inscriptions. While the exigencies of her husband’s early death would have resulted in more or less tolerance of Sammu-ramat’s gender, it did not prevent her exclusion by subsequent monarchs seeking genealogical legitimacy via Adad-nirari III. Whenever the AKL and AEC were compiled, exclusion of her rule was inevitable.

Two blocks of years may be missing in the AEC / AKL that may account for the 44-year shortfall. The regency of Sammu-ramat likely comprised 12 or 22 years, which preceded the majority of Adad-nirari III. If one chooses a queen-regency of 12 years, then an interregnum of 32 years ( $44 - 12 = 32$ ) would need to be inserted between the end of Adad-nirari and the start of Shalmaneser IV, wherein there is evidence of eponymous confusion. If one chooses a regency for Sammu-ramat of 22 years, as per Tetley (2005, p. 170), then the interregnum after Adad-nirari would also be 22 years long.

## 7. The Search for Divided Kingdom Anchor Points

### 7.1. Lunar Anchor Points toward the Lower End of Judah’s Timeline

Ptolemy’s (1952) *Almagest* lists at least five lunar eclipses—721, 720, 621, and 568 BC (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 229)—that can be correlated with the lower end of Judah’s timeline. Three of them, in 721 and 720 BC, are coterminous with Years 1 and 2 of both Sargon II of Assyria and Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon.<sup>50</sup> Based on the 726 BC anchor point established by Isaiah 14:28–32 (the synchronism of the death of Ahaz with the death of Tiglath-pileser III, Section 4.0), Samaria fell in 720 BC, Year 6 of Hezekiah (2 Ki 18:9–10), after a three-year siege that began under Shalmaneser V.<sup>51</sup> The lower end of the Divided Kingdom timeline is thus firmly anchored by astronomical data.

### 7.2. Lunar Anchor Points near the Upper End of the Divided Kingdom

Table 1 shows how the regnal formulas of 1–2 Kings can be tabulated in order to take us back to the date its author likely understood as the inception of the Divided Kingdom. Integration of all Masoretic regnal length data and the vast majority of its synchronistic data necessitates a longer timeline.<sup>52</sup> The upper end implied by this synthesis is subject to indirect verification via an Egyptian timeline delimited by text-based lunar dates. To my knowledge, no scholar has ever thought of—much less found a means of—anchoring the upper end of the DK timeline using lunar astronomy. While there do not seem to be any lunar-datable texts in ancient Israel during the early Divided Kingdom, that does not end the matter of astronomical support, as there is the possibility of supporting Year 5



of Rehoboam indirectly via Egyptian lunar dates. [Astour \(1989, p. 1\)](#) approximates the approach taken here:

Our only way of obtaining firm proceeding points for absolute datings is the utilization of preserved written references to astronomical phenomena; then the relative chronologies of ancient kingdoms, as many as are available, must be synchronized and correlated. If a system thus constructed works well, without evident contradictions and without the necessity of recurring to too many auxiliary hypotheses, this is an empirical proof of its basic soundness.

Our starting point for verifying the upper end of the Divided Kingdom is 1 Kings 14:25, where we find the following synchronism:

In the fifth year of king Rehoboam . . . Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of Yahweh and . . . the king's house [including] all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

The equivalence of Shishak and Shoshenq I, the first king of Dynasty 22, is taken for granted by most historians (e.g., [Mazar 1957](#); [Wilson 2005](#)). It would be difficult to overstate the significance of this datum point in reconstructions of the chronology of not just Israel and Egypt but the entire ancient Near East. Its importance to Iron Age archaeologists and biblical historians alike has caused the dating of this event to become a crux due to its implications for the inception of state formation during Israel's United Monarchy ([Levy and Higham 2005](#), p. 12). In addition, there are over 430 years between the reigns of Ramses IV (1190–1183 BC/Ramses VI (1180–1172 BC) and Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BC), within which secondary anchor points are sorely needed ([Mazar 2005](#), p. 19). The AKL's lack of synchronisms in the tenth century makes it a poor means of anchoring Egypt's and Israel's timelines.

Shoshenq I's campaign to Palestine is typically dated 926/925 BC based on 78 years of early Divided Kingdom regnal data tied to the presumed 853 date for Shalmaneser III's sixth year ( $853 + 78 = 931/930 - 5 = 926/925$ ; [Kitchen \[1973\] 1986](#), p. 72; [2006](#), pp. 295–96; [Jansen-Winkel 2006b](#), p. 264; [Thiele \[1951\] 1983](#), p. 80).<sup>53</sup> [Kitchen \(\[1973\] 1986, pp. 73–75\)](#) explains how his timeline for the Third Intermediate Period was largely circumscribed by [Thiele's \(1944, \[1951\] 1983\)](#) work. However, [Shortland \(2005, p. 44; cf. Finkelstein and Silberman 2006, pp. 75–76\)](#) notes that 926/925 BC “has been used as a calendrical pin to reconstruct Egyptian chronology in the past, Egyptian chronology being manipulated, consciously or unconsciously, to fit this date. Obviously, using Egyptian chronology to support the biblical date for the attack of Shoshenq I, forms a very tight circular argument to the benefit of neither Egyptian nor Israelite chronologies”.

We should not be surprised to learn that the 926/925 BC date for Shoshenq's incursion agrees poorly with radiocarbon data at archaeological sites likely destroyed by this Libyan pharaoh. For instance, excavators of Khirbet Qeiyafa ([Garfinkel et al. 2016](#)) proffer no agent of destruction while rejecting Shoshenq I due to their Thielean timeline for Rehoboam, which is 40 years below the  $^{14}\text{C}$  date range. The Hebrew Bible's 970 BC date for Shoshenq I's Palestinian campaign may be the only way to align radiocarbon, lunar dating, and textual data with a plausible date for the campaign. While the impressive Davidic fortress cannot be positively identified on Shoshenq's lacuna-riddled and lengthy list of defeated cities, we may be fairly confident that Shoshenq—patron to Solomon's corvée superintendent, Jeroboam I (2 Sa 8:7–11; 1 Ki 10:1–17; 12:2)—had learned from him about the tremendous quantities of precious metals and brass accumulated by David and Solomon during the latter part of the eleventh century. Thus, Shoshenq would have understood the necessity of neutralizing ‘Fort Qeiyafah’ on his way to plundering the gold and silver in Jerusalem. Radiocarbon data from seeds stored in sealed jars at Khirbet Qeiyafa indicate that occupation ended there around 980/970 BC ([Garfinkel et al. 2016](#), pp. 152, 154),<sup>54</sup> exactly where the present chronological reconstruction will place Rehoboam's fifth year (Table 1). Radiocarbon analysis of short-lived samples from Gezer (discussed below) also supports a 970 BC destruction by Shoshenq I.

### 7.3. The Text-Based Date for the Start of the Divided Kingdom

The unbroken series of kings (and one queen) of the Davidic dynasty comprise a single hereditary line of kings whose adherence to Mosaic law stands in stark relief against the series of usurpers and assassins that ruled in Samaria. Moreover, Judah's use of accession-year reckoning makes its regnal lengths ideal for measuring the transpiration of time (Goodenow 1896, p. 141).<sup>55</sup> The total of these reign lengths from the sixth year of Hezekiah in 720 BC—when Samaria fell to Sargon II—back to the accession of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, is 261 years (Jones 2005, p. 110). From this must be deducted the final four years of Jehoshaphat during which his son Jehoram of Judah was made coregent (“in the fifth year of Joram” of Israel; 2 Ki 8:16; Table 1). In the unusual case of Jotham, son of Azariah, who judged the people from the time his father became leprous (2 Ki 15:5), it appears from the synchronisms of Azariah's 52nd and final year (2 Ki 15:27, 32; Table 1) that Jotham had no accession year (Rainey and Notley 2006, p. 227). The same seems to have occurred at the accession of Amaziah, which appears to have overlapped his father's final year, at which time the latter was assassinated after he gave the temple treasures to Hazael (2 Ki 12:18–20). Thus, there are six years in all ( $4 + 1 + 1 = 6$ ) that must be deducted from 261 in order to arrive at the 255-year regnal history of the Divided Kingdom Judah. While Ussher placed the death of Solomon prior to Nisan 975 BC, Goodenow (1896, p. 140) realized that Ussher was one year too early for the reign of Solomon. With 974 N being Year 1 Rehoboam, Year 255 is 720 N. Rehoboam's fifth year is then 970 BC.

### 7.4. The Gebel Silsila 100 Rock Stela

Most scholars believe Shoshenq I's campaign took place not long before construction work at Gebel Silsila began in Shoshenq I's 21st year (Jansen-Winkel 2006a, p. 232; Kitchen [1973] 1986, p. 73). The first lunar date supporting 970 BC as Rehoboam's fifth year is the dedication date on the rock stela at Gebel Silsila. When Shoshenq returned from his victories in Palestine, he ordered sandstone cut for his monument, the Bubastite Portal at Karnak,<sup>56</sup> the walls of which bear the names of scores of sites in Palestine plundered by the Libyan pharaoh in the previous year. The rock stela is dated II Shemu 1, Year 21 (Kitchen [1973] 1986, p. 301). It so happens that this date coincides with an evening of first visible crescent (henceforth “New Moon”) on 18 January 969 BC (see Gautschi 2011a; cf. 2011b).<sup>57</sup> Using the middle chronology of Dynasty 18, Derstine (2016, 2017, 2024) demonstrated that a preponderance of monument and temple ground-breaking events and coronation-dates took place on the date of the first visible crescent (see also Krauss 1988, p. 44).<sup>58</sup>

### 7.5. Tepi Shemu/High Priest of Amun Induction Dates

The accession of Rehoboam in 975 BC is consistent with various *Tepi Shemu* festival dates for this time period (Table 2). According to the Medinet Habu Calendar, this feast occupied lunar days 1–5, and revolved around the induction of a new High Priest of Amun (HPA) (Broekman 2009, p. 91; Krauss 2006, p. 409; Vernus 1975, p. 24, n. 45; Kruchten 1989, p. 244, n. 3).<sup>59</sup> Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 255)—based on Thiele's 853 BC date for the death of Ahab and dead reckoning of the reign lengths of seven pharaohs of Dynasty 21—assigned 1069 BC to the accession of Smendes I, the first king of Dynasty 21. A 44-year higher date, however, yields 1113 BC. This date is supported by the induction of High Priest of Amun Menkheperre on I Akhet 4–5, Year 25 of Smendes, which was lunar day 3–4 in 1089 BC (=25–26 May 1089). Various priest induction dates in Table 2 and Kitchen's Twenty-first Dynasty regnal lengths carry us down to 990 BC for the death of Psusennes II, which yields a total duration of 123 years for Dynasty 21 ( $1113 - 990 = 123$ ). This comports with the 130-year period found in all versions of Manetho for the seven kings of this dynasty (Jansen-Winkel 2006a, p. 231), since Egyptian antedating reduces 130 down to 123 actual years.

### 7.6. The Wrš Feast of Shoshenq I's Fifth Year

With Shoshenq's 21st year having fallen in early 969 BC, this implies an accession date in 990 BC. Support for Year 5 of Rehoboam and Year 21 of Shoshenq coinciding in 970 BC comes from a correct understanding of Shoshenq I's year 5 *wrš* date, IV *Peret* 25, as recorded on the Larger Dakhleh Stela (Krauss 2005; 2006, p. 411; Aston 2009, p. 8). The *wrš* is a lunar-based event (contra Kitchen 2009, p. 167 and Leahy 2010, p. 52); priest service contracts and Demotic papyri during the Ptolemaic and Roman period indicate the *wrš* feast was held on the last day of the lunar month (Bennett 2008<sup>60</sup>; Quack 2007; Derstine 2024, pp. 26–27).<sup>61</sup> The House of Judah's regnal timeline suggests Quack and Bennett are correct, for if Feb–May 970–Jan–May 969 BC was in Shoshenq's 21st year, then Year 5 Shoshenq was between Jan–May of 986–Jan–May 985 BC, with IV *Peret* 25 being LD 30 on 17 December 986 BC. This synchronism results from a year date pre-determined by the chronological data recorded in 1–2 Kings.

### 7.7. High Priest Inductions under Psusennes II and Osorkon I

There were no High Priest of Amun inductions during Shoshenq I's reign. Five years before Shoshenq I's accession, in Year 11 Psusennes II, 995 BC, the Karnak Priestly Annals record the induction of Nesankhefenmaat as high priest of Amun.<sup>62</sup> The High Priest of Amun induction date was I *šmw* 13 of Year 11, which is lunar day 1 on 6 January 995 BC.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, we may have confidence in assigning this year as Year 11 Psusennes II and join Kitchen (2000, p. 50) in raising his reign length by one or two years as a result of this discovery.

The next High Priest of Amun induction was 27½ years later, in 968 BC. In Year 2 of Osorkon I (son of Shoshenq I), Hor, (son of Nesankhefenmaat) was invested on II *3ht* 14 (Payraudeau 2008, p. 294), which is lunar day 2 (4 June 968).<sup>64</sup> This Year 2 date dovetails nicely with the 18 January 969 (above) dedication date on the Gebel Silsila Stela 100. This sequence of events requires that Shoshenq I died within four-to-five months of 18 January 969 BC. In other words, the anniversary date for Osorkon's Year 2 had to come prior to Hor's priest induction date on 4 June 968 BC.

### 7.8. The High Priest of Amun Inductions under Siamun and Osorchor

Working backward from the High Priest of Amun induction in Year 11 of Psusennes II in 995 BC, the next previous induction was Hori, HPA under Siamun. This induction date is I *šmw* 1?, Year 17 Siamun (Kitchen [1973] 1986, pp. 7–8, 423). In 1009 BC, I *šmw* 14 was the date of the first visible crescent, making I *šmw* 15–19 = lunar day 1–5 (12–16 January 1009). This year comports with the start of Hori's priesthood, which lasted 14 years, 1009–995 BC. His predecessor, HPA Nespaneferhor, was inducted on I *šmw* 20, Year 2 Osorchor the Elder (fragment 3B, ll.1–3; Kitchen [1973] 1986, p. 422).<sup>65</sup> This date is a New Moon (first visible crescent) in 1029 BC (=22 January 1029; Gautschi 2011a; cf. 2011b). Thus, Nespaneferhor was high priest for 20 years, from 1029–1009 BC. If Osorchor the Elder reigned six years, as per Manetho (Kitchen [1973] 1986, pp. 7, 466), then his final year was 1025 BC, Siamun's accession year (1025–1005 BC).

There is presently a discrepancy between the traditional dates for Siamun's reign, 978–959 BC,<sup>66</sup> and the <sup>14</sup>C-based date range for the site-wide destruction of Gezer Stratum IX (=Tandy Stratum 10A, 1080–1021 BC at 68.3%, highest probability density [henceforth, hpd]; Webster et al. 2023, p. 24). The 43-year gap (1021 – 978 = 43) has led Webster et al. (2023, p. 24) to discount Siamun as the cause of this major destruction. However, based on the Hebrew Bible's higher timeline and the lunar dates of Table 2, Siamun's accession date would be 1025 BC, which then puts Hebrew Union College's association of Stratum IX's destruction with Siamun (Webster et al. 2023, p. 11) back on the table.

Some archaeologists (e.g., Gilboa et al. 2004, p. 51) are doubtful Siamun campaigned in western Canaan by way of destroying Tell Qasile X, Gezer IX, Ashdod, and other sites.<sup>67</sup> Skepticism stems from lack of a specific reference to such a campaign in Egyptian records (Ben-Dor 2011, pp. 95–96). Dever (1993, p. 504) correctly links the violent, complete

destruction of “post-Philistine/pre-Solomonic” Stratum IX to the pharaoh mentioned in 1 Kings 9:16, even if he is uncertain whether it is Siamun. Further analysis shows the following: (a) Gezer is only 11 km from Tell Qasile; (b) both experienced coeval conflagrations; and (c) the next occupation at Tell Qasile (Str. IX) is Israelite (Mazar 1993, p. 1205), just as Stratum VIII Gezer is Israelite (Dever 1993, p. 504). Moreover, Green (1978, p. 362) has demonstrated that “chronological considerations” are key to “any attempt to find a solution” to the conundrum of the pharaoh of 1 Kings 3:1 and 9:16, pointing out that if this marriage took place early in Solomon’s reign prior to work on the Temple, “this would most likely make Siamun the pharaoh who gave his daughter to Solomon”. That Solomon already controlled Gezer when construction on the Temple began in his fourth year (1 Ki 6:1), 1011 BC, is implied by the delivery of Hiram’s cedar from Tyre to Joppa (2 Chr 2:16), since Gezer and the Ajalon Valley lay between Joppa and Jerusalem. Thus, the problem of identifying the pharaoh of 1 Kings 9:16 comes down to “which king occupied the Egyptian throne in the first four years of Solomon” (Green 1978, p. 360). Simple math indicates Siamun was ruling 10 years before and 10 years after Solomon’s accession. Siamun’s reign began about 55 years prior to Shoshenq I’s 20th year ( $20 + 15$  [Psusennes II] +  $20$  [Siamun] = 55), which, when added to 970, yields 1025 BC (see Table 2). Solomon’s reign began ca. 1015 BC, 45 years ( $40 + 5 = 45$ ) prior to Rehoboam’s fifth year. Thankfully, 1 Kings 3:1 tells us that this pharaoh’s daughter was brought to Jerusalem while Yahweh’s house was being built. Thus, when 1 Kings 9:16 speaks of this pharaoh having already taken Gezer and burned it, it is an all-but-certain reference to Siamun (Kitchen 2003, p. 109; Montet 1959, pp. 39–40; Malamat 1963, pp. 10–17; Aharoni 1979, p. 307; Millard 1997, p. 26). This dovetails with the Tandy expedition’s discovery of complete Iron IB vessels in Str. IX’s destruction layer, including mushroom-shaped clay stoppers (Webster et al. 2023, p. 11).

A plausible historical scenario places Siamun’s conquest of Gezer Stratum IX (Tandy Stratum 10A) early in his reign, ca. 1025–1020 BC. Not long after his campaign to Philistia—perhaps at Solomon’s accession (1015 BC)—Siamun gave the city as a dowry, along with his daughter, to Solomon (1 Kgs 9:16). Stratum 8’s monumental architecture then reflects “a shift in political alignment” and “a major transformation at Gezer” that consisted of monumental architecture and a six-chamber gate like the ones at Iron IIA levels of Hazor (X) and Megiddo (Str. VA–IVB; Webster et al. 2023, pp. 11, 14).

The Stratum 8 monumental city was short-lived due to Shoshenq’s campaign of 970 BC. The advantage of my 970 BC date over Kitchen’s 925 date for Shoshenq’s campaign (deemed a poor fit for  $^{14}\text{C}$  data by Webster et al. 2023, p. 26) is evident, since it allows a convergence of biblical and radiocarbon data. The year 970 BC comports with  $^{14}\text{C}$  estimates for the end of Stratum 8 (969–940 BC at 68.3% hpd or 991–930 BC at 95.4% hpd, Webster et al. 2023, p. 26). Webster et al. (2023, p. 26) allow for a date “as high as 970 BC”, citing Ash (1999, p. 30). Based on regnal data in 1–2 Kings, Ash provides 970 BC as the upper end of possible dates for Year 5 Rehoboam. The present study follows the realization of Schneider (2010)<sup>68</sup> and Wiener (2014, p. 53) that Van Dijk’s downward revision of Haremheb’s reign based on Year 14 wine jar dockets (Van Dijk 2008) exerts upward pressure on the entire Ramesside period. Wiener (2010, p. 384) saw that (a) the accession years of Ramesses II and also Shoshenq I would need to be raised in order to fill the “14-year Haremheb gap”, and this (b) “would require a change in Biblical chronology”. Yet, to date, no scholar has made it clear: this cannot be accomplished without untethering the biblical timeline from the AEC/AKL.



Table 2. Dynasty 21–22 Lunar Date Support for 970 BC as Year 5 Rehoboam.

Pharaoh/Years of Reign (Julian Year BC)	Regnal Year/Civil Date of Event	Explanation	Text or Reference
Smendes I 1113–1088	26-year reign	Highest date Year 25. Kitchen provides 26 years.	Kitchen ([1973] 1986, pp. 420, 465); Krauss (2015, p. 373)
	I 3 <sup>h</sup> t 4–5 Year 25 (1089)	High Priest of Amun Menkheperre inducted on I 3 <sup>h</sup> t 4–5 = 25–26 May 1089 = LD 3–4; NM = I 3 <sup>h</sup> t 1.	Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 420)
Amenemnisu 1088–1084		Years 1–5 of ‘Banishment Stela’.	Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 465, 531)
Psusennes I 1084–1036		48-year reign.	Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 465)
Amenemope 1038–1030		Named alongside Psusennes I. Two-year coregency.	Kitchen ([1973] 1986, pp. 531–32)
	I šmw 10 Year 3 (1036)	I šmw 10 in 1036 = LD 5 of <i>Tepi Shemu</i> Feast. I šmw 5 in 1036 = NM = 8 January 1036.	Oracle 6 (Krauss 2015, p. 344)
	Year 9 (1030)	Death of Amenemope—9-year reign.	Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 531)
Osorchor 1030–1024	Year 1 (1030)	Kitchen provides six years, citing Manetho.	Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 465)
	I šmw 20 Year 2 (1029)	Induction of HPA Nespaneferhor I šmw 20 = NM = 22 January 1029.	KPA frag 3B, ll. 1–3; Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 422)
Siamun (Psinaches) 1025–1006/1005		Manetho’s 9 years requires emendation to ‘19’ or possibly 20. Year 17 is highest attested date.	Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 532)
	ca. 1020–1014	Campaign to Canaan destroys Tell Qasile Str. X and Gezer Str. IX. Gezer was later given as dowry for his daughter’s marriage to Solomon.	Mazar (1985, p. 123) Dever (1993, p. 504)
	ca. 1014–1011	Siamun forges alliance with Solomon (ca. 1015–1011; Table 1) via intermarriage.	1 Ki 3:1; 9:16b; 11:42 Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 282)
	I šmw (1?) Year 17 (1009)	HPA induction of Hori; I šmw 14 = NM, I šmw 15–19 = LD 1–5 = 12–16 January 1009.	KPA frag. 3B, ll. 3–5 Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 423)
Psusennes II 1006–990		Reigned 15 years, x months.	Kitchen (1996, p. 531; 2000, p. 50)
	IV 3 <sup>h</sup> t 23 Year 2 (1005)	Bark of Amun left its sanctuary for Opet festival IV 3 <sup>h</sup> t 23 = LD 1 = 21 August 1005.	Kruchten (1991, pp. 182–84)
	I šmw 13 Year 11	Induction of HPA Nesankhefenmaat I šmw 13, Year 11 = LD 1 = 6 January 995.	Karnak Block 94; Payraudeau (2008, p. 294)

Table 2. Cont.

Pharaoh/Years of Reign (Julian Year BC)	Regnal Year/Civil Date of Event	Explanation	Text or Reference
Dynasty 22 Shoshenq I 990–969	21-year reign	Solomon’s apostasy after his 24th year (991). Jeroboam goes into exile in an Egypt already ruled by Shoshenq I.	<a href="#">Kitchen (2009, p. 202)</a> 1 Ki 11:1–33, 40
	IV prt 25 Year 5 (986)	wrš feast on IV prt 25 = NM, 17 Dec. 986; wrš = last day of lunar month ( <a href="#">Quack 2007</a> ).	Larger Dakhla Stele ( <a href="#">Leahy 2010</a> ; <a href="#">Bennett 2008</a> )
	Year 16 (975)	Death of Solomon/acc. Rehoboam after 975N. Jeroboam I returns from Egypt.	See Table 1 1 Ki 14:21
	Year 20/21	Shoshenq’s campaign to Negev, Judah, and Israel.	1 Ki 14:25
	II šmw 1 Year 21	Dedication date (II šmw 1) for rock-stela at Gebel Silsila, commemorating start of stonework. II šmw 1 = NM = 18 January 969.	Gebel Silsila Stela 100 <a href="#">Kitchen ([1973] 1986, p. 73, n. 358)</a>
Osorkon I 969–934	II 3Ht 14 Year 2 (968)	Induction of Priest Hor on II 3Ht 14 = LD 2 = 4 June 968. NM = II 3Ht 12.	Karnak Block 94; <a href="#">Payraudeau (2008, p. 294)</a>

## 8. Comparing the Geopolitical Situation in Syria Using a Conventional vs. Biblical Timeline

Having narrowed the divergence between the joint Israelite timelines and the AEC/AKI to the general time period of one Assyrian king, Adad-nirari III, we are now prepared to examine the advantages of a historical reconstruction that aligns with the Hebrew Bible’s higher timeline. Analysis will be confined to the post-Omride period—from the ninth century through the first half of the eighth century—when the shortfall in Assyrian years occurs. After considering the problems created by a constricted Thieleman chronology, we will ask how the Hebrew Bible’s longer system might better accommodate Israel’s transition from oppression at the hands of Hazael and Ben-Hadad III of Damascus to a nation enjoying dominion over a good portion of the Levant, from Elath to Hamath.<sup>69</sup>

Hazael is considered by many to be the “most dominant protagonist” in the southern Palestine during the second half of the ninth century ([Maeir 2004, p. 323](#)). His expansion into lands belonging to Israel is well documented in the biblical record (2 Kings 10, 12, 13:3) and in the Tel Dan inscription ([Finkelstein 1999, p. 61](#); cf. [Biran and Naveh 1995](#)). [Herzog and Singer-Avitz \(2006, p. 167\)](#) reflect a consensus of advocates of both low and high chronologies for Iron Ib and Iron IIa who see Hazael’s perennial assaults on southern Canaan as “sound and valid bases for dating the archaeological material associated with these destruction layers, since the historical reconstruction is based on “matching biblical and extra-biblical data”.<sup>70</sup> It can be shown, however, that the extra-biblical data make much better sense when pegged to the higher biblical timeline.

In the ensuing discussion, the reader will need to bear in mind two competing dates—the consensus vs. higher revised date—for (a) the death of Ahab in Shalmaneser III’s sixth year, 853 (revised to 897 BC), (b) Jehu’s conspiracy against Jehoram of Israel (Joram-I) (2 Ki 9:14) 12 years later, 841 (revised to 884 BC), in the 18th year of Shalmaneser III, to whom Jehu paid tribute in the same year, and (c) the floruit of Hazael, king of Aram-Damascus, dated by most scholars ca. 842–800 BC, but revised here, based on Judahite

regnal data, to 885–840 BC. Thus, Hazael's defeat of Joram-I would be in 884 BC (2 Ki 8:28), the same year Jehu replaced him via regicide. See Table 1 for a year-by-year comparison of consensus (Thieleman) dates and revised dates.

The confrontation between Joram-I and Hazael at Ramoth-Gilead (2 Ki 8:28) was prompted by Israel's perception of Aramean weakness (Younger 2016, p. 622), which came about in the aftermath of Hazael's usurpation of the throne, ca. 843/842 BC (revised to 886–885). The usurpation led to Hamath and Arpad dissolving their coalition with Damascus, one that had previously helped Ben-Hadad II, a leader of this coalition, to stave off the Assyrian threats of Shalmaneser III's 6th, 10th, 11th, and 14th years (Yamada 2000, p. 311, 314). This may explain the timing of Joram-I's move to reclaim Gilead in Shalmaneser's Year 17/18. As a result of the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, Jehu was probably able to control the region, since it is generally understood that Shalmaneser's attack on Aram-Damascus in 841 BC forced Hazael to withdraw from Ramoth-Gilead in order to defend the homeland (Rainey and Notley 2006, p. 208).<sup>71</sup> Thus, Damascus did not retain control over Gilead in 841 BC.

How long did Jehu's Israel benefit from Assyria's presence in northern Syria? In 2 Kings 10:32–33 we learn that it is later in Jehu's reign before Hazael "began to" (Heb *hēhēl*) defeat Israel in all their outlying territories, the Bashan and the Gilead, east of the Jordan (Hobbs 1985, p. 131; Cogan and Tadmor 1988, p. 149). Younger (2016, p. 622) cites these verses in support of the realization that Hazael did not have a second opportunity to attack the Transjordan until the latter years of Shalmaneser III, when Assyria was weakened by six years of internal revolt.<sup>72</sup> Since it is unlikely Hazael sought to reduce cis-Jordan before he had stabilized the Transjordan, time must be allotted for Hazael's initial efforts east of the Jordan before his destruction of the cities in the Beth-shean and Jezreel Valleys. In addition, it may be assumed that the populous and militant tribe of Manasseh (1 Chr 5:24; Jos 17:5, 14–15), which lived in Bashan (1 Chr 5:22), would have delayed Hazael's takeover of the Transjordan. Therefore, the balance of Jehu's reign must be allotted for this initial phase of Hazael's encroachments, which only involved the borderlands of N. Israel (2 Ki 10:32). Below we will consider <sup>14</sup>C data for other urban destruction layers—generally attributed to Hazael—that are incompatible with consensus dates for this Aramean king.

Recent scholarship has failed to incorporate the foregoing considerations. For instance, using the 842–800 BC dates for Hazael, Ben-Yosef and Sergi (2018, p. 462) take 835 BC (revised to 875)—a mere two years after Shalmaneser III's last attack on Damascus—as "the earliest possible date for Hazael's assault on southern Canaan" and place the destruction of Gath, mentioned in 2 Kings 12:17, around 830 BC (revised date 870). For Ben-Ami and Wazana (2013, p. 376), "the Assyrian threat in the days of Shalmaneser III" lasted only eight years (853–845 BC; revised to 896–888) and "did not change the balance of power". A more sober assessment sees an ongoing Assyrian threat to Damascus after the attack of 838/837 BC, as it would have taken Hazael anywhere from 5 to 10 years to recover (Halpern 1994, p. 70; Hobbs 1985, p. 131). It is difficult to assume Hazael resumed his attack on Gilead any earlier than the year after the first revolt of Year 31 Shalmaneser III (828 BC, revised to 871; cf. Galil 1996, p. 49). These revolts would have forced Assyria to pull back from west of the Euphrates. Prudence suggests Shalmaneser did not relinquish dominion over Syria until the final years of his reign (Yamada 2000, p. 224, 308; Younger 2016, p. 620, 622).

According to Shalmaneser's records, in his 18th year he confiscated 1121 chariots, 470 cavalry horses, and all of Hazael's supplies, killing 16,000 experienced soldiers (Pritchard 1950, p. 280; Yamada 2000, p. 190, n 388). A delay of at least 10 years after 838/837 (revised to 882/881) is not unreasonable before Hazael was again in a position to attack the Transjordan. Moreover, Jehu's submission in Shalmaneser's 18th year must be factored into his short-term protection from Hazael. So long as Assyrian field marshals patrolled northern and central Syria, it would have been hazardous for Hazael to campaign southward and leave Damascus vulnerable to attack.<sup>73</sup> The Saba'a Stele inscription (Grayson 1996, A.0.104.6, pp. 207–9, ll. 14–15) and the Scheil-Millard fragment (Millard

and Tadmor 1973, ll. 2'–3') imply that Assyrian rule in the west collapsed in the time of his father, Shamshi-Adad V (Kuan 1995, pp. 84–85, 88–89).

With the foregoing perspective indicating Hazael's Transjordanian conquests took place in the second half of Jehu's reign (Galil 1996, p. 48), then 828 BC (revised to 871) becomes a terminus post quem for Hazael's Transjordanian victories. This suggests that the destructions at Rehov and the Beth-shean Valley, Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley, and Gath were delayed until the time of Jehu's son, Jehoahaz (2 Ki 13:3, 22). Thiele's (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 105) AKL-based dates for Jehoahaz, 814–798 BC, are irreconcilable with the calibrated  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates for Tell es-Safi/Gath and Tel Rehov.

### 8.1. Radiocarbon Dates for Tell es-Safi/Gath and Tel Rehov Point to a Higher Time Frame

It can be demonstrated that the higher biblical time frame aligns with radiocarbon data and accommodates historical considerations better than generally accepted dates. The chief excavator of Tell es-Safi/Gath, Aren Maeir, is certain Hazael destroyed the Iron IIA city (Stratum IV = A3) in the ninth century BC but struggles to securely date the event (Maeir 2012, p. 47). He believes historical considerations favor 835/832 BC (Maeir 2012, p. 49; cf. Lehmann and Niemann 2014, p. 88; Katz and Faust 2014, p. 121). Maeir (2012, p. 47) must defend this dating against other scholars (e.g., Galil 1996, p. 49; Lipinski 2000, p. 387) who seek to place it around 820–810 BC; in order to do this, he turns to radiocarbon dating, which he says provides absolute dating “in the third quarter of the 9th century (ca. 850–830 BCE; Sharon et al. 2007, p. 44, Table 8)”. He finally settled on 830 BC on the basis of  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates and a “robust historical assessment” (Maeir 2017, p. 227). Relying on the same  $^{14}\text{C}$  data as Maeir from Sharon et al. (2007), Finkelstein and Piasetzky (2007a, pp. 73–75, 78) show a calibrated date-range of 895–820 BC for Gath, but state that “historical and archaeological constraints were used to limit the range” to 842–820 BC. Ben-Yosef and Sergi (2018, p. 462) also use “historical considerations” to justify ignoring radiocarbon data before 835 BC. Thus, Maeir, Finkelstein, and Piasetzky, and Ben-Yosef and Sergi discriminate against 70% of the  $^{14}\text{C}$  date-range, shackled by the putative inviolability of the Assyrian timeline.

Ben-Yosef and Sergi (2018) built on Fantalkin's (2006, pp. 30–32) hypothesis that the destruction of Gath led to the end of copper production in the Arabah. They compiled  $^{14}\text{C}$  data from the latest context of four copper-smelting sites in the Arabah (19 samples minus one outlier). Their Bayesian-modeled date for the end of copper production “falls within the range of 853–803 BC” (Ben-Yosef and Sergi 2018, p. 464, Table 1, Figure 2). However, the Arabah's unmodeled calibrated dates (Ben-Yosef and Sergi 2018, p. 463, Table 1, Figure 1), 913–782 BC with a mean of 847 BC, cohere with higher dates proposed here for the destruction of Gath.<sup>74</sup>

The radiocarbon dating of Gath is buttressed by dates from Tel Rehov, Stratum IV, which was also destroyed by Hazael (Ben-Yosef and Sergi 2018, p. 472), perhaps only a few years earlier. The destruction of Rehov IV is radiocarbon-dated to 877–840 BC (highest probability, 40%, 1  $\sigma$ , Mazar et al. 2005, p. 254). Only by using the lowest end of the 1 $\sigma$  range does Tel Rehov's  $^{14}\text{C}$  data overlap conventional dates for Hazael's destruction (Mazar et al. 2005, p. 254). Finkelstein and Piasetzky (2007b, p. 272) have a similar problem, because, by their own admission, the 68% range for Rehov “does not reach the accession of Hazael in 842 BCE”. Ceramic assemblages also indicate an earlier date for the destruction of Rehov IV. Mazar et al. (2005, p. 254) point out that the “resemblance of the pottery in Strata V and IV may allude to an even earlier date during the 9th century BC for the destruction of Stratum IV”; the higher biblical chronology accommodates this nicely. Acceptance of the higher dates for Hazael proposed in this study would allow archaeologists to utilize the full range of the calibrated, unmodeled radiocarbon dates from destruction layers at two important sites—Gath and Rehov IV.

### 8.2. The 23rd Year of Joash of Judah

Many scholars assume the biblical narrative provides no clear dating of Hazael's campaign to Gath. Maeir (2012, p. 47) states that “it is placed within the narrative of the

reign of King Jehoash of Judah, but without clearly stating during which year of his reign". (Maeir 2012, p. 47). Yet a cursory examination of the Hebrew exposes the weakness of this view. The sentence begins with  $\text{בְּשָׁנָה}$ . The use of this temporal adverb in Hebrew is demonstrative and "emphatic, occurring in many important contexts" (Gleason et al. 1980), and thus should be translated "at that time". This suggests  $\text{בְּשָׁנָה}$  was employed in 2 Kings 12:17 specifically to link Hazael's attack on Gath with the next previous time notation, Jehoash-J's 23rd year (in verse 6), the same year that the Judahite king compelled the priests to repair damages to the house of Yahweh.

The conventional dating for the 23rd year of Jehoash-J is ca. 813/812 BC (cf. Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 106), at least three to four decades too low to accommodate high resolution  $^{14}\text{C}$  date ranges. Using stable royal father-to-son succession of the House of David, Jehoash-J's 23rd year falls in 855 BC.<sup>75</sup> Thus, using the Judahite timeline of 870 BC for the start of revolts under Shalmaneser III (Table 1), Hazael's conquest of the Transjordan probably transpired ca. 864–860 BC, leaving the burning of Rehov, the cities of the Jezreel and Bethshean Valleys, and Gath for ca. 860–855 BC. Gath was most likely destroyed around 855–853 BC. The year 855 BC is nearly synchronous with the mid-point of the calibrated  $^{14}\text{C}$  date ranges at Tel Rehov and Tell es-Safi.

### 8.3. Ben-Hadad III and the Reigns of Joash-I and Jeroboam II of Israel

It is clear from 2 Kings 13:22 that the final two decades of Hazael's oppression continued through Jehoahaz, who reigned until 798 BC (compare my higher biblical date, 839 BC, Table 1), and into the beginning of Joash-I, after which the baton of terror was handed to his son Ben-Hadad III. Two things reversed this dire situation. An unnamed non-Israelite deliverer (2 Ki 13:4) defeated the two most powerful Aramean rulers of the period—Attar-šumki I of Arpad and Mari of Damascus (=Ben-Hadad III). This did not occur until Years 5–7 of Adad-nirari III, widely regarded as the "deliverer" of 2 Kings 13:4. If Adad-nirari's Years 5–7 are dated to 828–826 BC by the higher timeline of the House of David, they situate Adad-nirari's siege of Damascus in Years 11–13 of Joash-I, after Israel had more than a decade to rebuild its military.<sup>76</sup>

The expectation of Israelite victories over Ben-Hadad III, mentioned in 2 Kings 13:24–25, cannot be placed early in the reign of Joash-I, because Yahweh gave Israel repeatedly into the hands of Ben-Hadad, not just Hazael (2 Ki 13:3), suggesting a substantial portion of Joash-I's reign elapsed before the promised relief of 2 Kings 13:4 was forthcoming.<sup>77</sup> The Saba'a Stele explicitly mentions that, in his fifth year, Adad-nirari III shut up Mari' "in Damascus"—the same phrase used for this siege on the Calah slab.<sup>78</sup> Both texts are linked to the submission of *Bit-Humri* (Joash-I's payment of tribute), which occurred in the same campaign in which Edom, Philistia, Tyre, and Sidon also brought tribute. However, according to the AEC/AKL-based date of 805 BC for Adad-nirari's fifth year, Joash-I had not yet come to the throne.

In the last year of Jehoahaz (799/798, revised to 840/839 BC), Israel could muster only 10,000 men, 50 horsemen, and 10 chariots (2 Ki 13:7). Yet late in his son Joash-I's reign, Israel hired out 100,000 soldiers to Amaziah for his war against Edom (2 Chr 25:6–13), indicating the situation with Damascus was by then well in hand (Cody 1970, p. 335). In other words, Years 5–7 of Adad-nirari and Joash-I's tri-fold victories over Ben-Hadad III (2 Ki 13:25) must have preceded Amaziah's war on Edom. The problems such realities create for conventional chronologies—ones that put Joash-I's accession around 801–798 BC—have not gone unnoticed. Pitard (1987, p. 165), Miller and Hayes (1986, pp. 292–93), Thiele (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 113), and Millard and Tadmor (1973, pp. 61–64) delay Adad-nirari's siege of Damascus until 796 BC ("to Manṣuate" in the AEC) so that Joash-I is on the scene. However, Kuan (1995, p. 98) and Lipinski (2000, pp. 263, 304–9) question whether Manṣuate was anywhere near Damascus.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, Adad-nirari could easily have moved on Damascus in any one of the several years (805, 804, 803, and possibly 802 BC) when he campaigned west of the Euphrates. Lipinski (2000, p. 391) points out that if the aforementioned tribute-payers in the Southwest, including Damascus, submitted to Assyria in 803 BC (though



most assume 805 BC), there would have been no need for a campaign to Damascus in 796 BC. Cody (1970, pp. 327–32, 337), who recognized “the chronological problem”, posited a five-year coregency of Joash-I with Jehoahaz in order to bring about synchronicity. For the same reason, Shea (1978) deleted Athaliah’s six-years of regnal history. Kuan (1995, p. 99, citing Hayes and Hooker [1988] 2007, p. 12) delivers this devastating blow to Cody and Thiele’s resort to coregency: “To posit a coregency between Joash and his father Jehoahaz in order to date Joash’s payment of tribute in 805 BCE is a serious weakness. In addition to the lack of biblical data to support such a theory, as Cody himself admits, there are no coregencies in either Israel and Judah that can be convincingly proposed and sustained, contrary to what Thiele has argued”. The chorus of rejection against Thiele’s, Shea’s, and Cody’s artificial coregencies make this a very poor option for reducing years in order to meet the illusory demands of the AKL/AEC timeline.

Under the present reconstruction, the momentum of the three victories over Ben-Hadad in Joash-I’s 12th–14th years, 827–825 BC, carried over into the early years of his son, Jeroboam II, who “restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah” (2 Ki 14:25) and “fought and recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah” (under King David), as recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel (2 Ki 14:28).<sup>80</sup>

Israel’s sudden expansion under Jeroboam II was likely achieved within his first five years, dated here to 823–819 BC (cf. Thiele’s 793–752 dates). The result was a formidable nation whose wealth and preeminent status in the Levant went to the heads of Samaria’s elite (Amos 6:1). Israel’s hegemony in Syria lasted a bit less than 40 years, extending to the death of Jeroboam II in 782 BC, when he probably died defending his dominion in Syria (Amos 7:9, 11, 17). Note that this reconstruction places all four decades of Jeroboam’s hegemony in Syria prior to 780 BC, when Shamshi-ilu’s first appears as field marshal on the AEC.

Siddall (2013, p. 118) considers Shamshi-ilu the most powerful non-royal official of the Neo-Assyrian period. In the first seven years of Shalmaneser IV (782–775 BC), Shamshi-ilu was pre-occupied with distant Urartu, allowing Hadianu of Damascus to march an army all the way to Kummuh (400 km north), remove the Pazarcik boundary stele, and house it in Damascus.<sup>81</sup> By 773 BC, however, the situation was reversed and, according to the Eponym Chronicle, the Assyrian army was in Damascus. There is a broad consensus that, based on the Pazarcik Stele, rev., it was Shamshi-ilu who retrieved the stele from Damascus in 773 BC (Grayson 1996, A.0.105.1, p. 240, ll. 11–13a).<sup>82</sup> Shamshi-ilu remained a daunting presence west of the Euphrates in the period from 770 to 752 BC, during which years he appears once again as field marshal in the AEC. Using Thiele’s chronology (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 116), the years from 773 to 752 BC are coterminous with the last half of Jeroboam’s reign. It is unlikely in the extreme that the armies of northern Israel and Assyria operated concurrently in the same geopolitical space.

During the floruit of Shamshi-ilu, the Eponym Chronicles of 772, 765, and 755 BC list Assyrian campaigns to Hatarika (Millard 1994, p. 58), a border town of Hamath (cf. Hadrach of Zec 9:1–2). These campaigns were probably conducted by Shamshi-ilu himself, and indicate that Assyria was making an effort to regain lost ground in Syria (Anstey 1913, p. 40). These periodic indicators of Assyrian military presence in Syria led Tadmor (1961, p. 240) to posit the idea that Jeroboam received “the assent of the Assyrian kings” in order for him to expand into Syria. Likewise, Lipinski (2000, p. 312) imagines “repeated Assyrian interventions in the Aramean states of central and southern Syria” as giving Israel “opportunity for expansion in Jeroboam’s reign” and that this fit with some scheme of Assyrian policy toward Damascus and Hamath between 773 and 755 BC. We are told that Shamshi-ilu allied himself with Israel, allowing Jeroboam a free hand to subjugate Damascus and Hamath (Lipinski 2000, p. 312). Haran (1967, p. 278) takes a more sober view: “Jeroboam could bend Damascus and Hamath to his will only when the Assyrian pressure was no longer felt in southern and central Syria. No serious cognizance need be taken of the suggestion that some kind of ‘agreement’ existed on the part of Assyria to the

conquests of Jeroboam in Syria". In the absence of textual evidence, biblical or otherwise, it cannot reasonably be maintained that Shamshi-ilu consented to Jeroboam's takeover of southern and central Syria. The present reconstruction is preferable, since it places the death of Jeroboam II and the termination of his Syrian hegemony in 782 BC, two years before Shamshi-ilu's debut as field marshal in the AEC.

The unlikelihood of Assyrian soldiers doing battle in Hatarika in 772 BC or retrieving the Pazarcik Stele in 773 BC while Israel controlled Damascus and Hamath led Haran (1967, p. 279) to place Jeroboam's rule in Syria even later, in 754 to 748 BC, hardly a period of ascendancy that the elite of Israel-Zion would profit from or boast about (cf. Amos 6:1). Thus, Haran leaves the book of Amos without a realistic historical context.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, the prophets Amos and Hosea describe Israelite society as chaotic during Jeroboam's latter years (Cogan and Tadmor 1988, p. 164), making late hegemony implausible. However, Vogelstein (1945, pp. 3–7), Hayes (1988, pp. 26–27) and Cogan and Tadmor (1988, p. 164) all realized it was in Jeroboam's early and middle years that Israel prospered, not later.

Apart from Thiele's (Thiele [1951] 1983, pp. 112–13) a priori placement of Adad-nirari III near Damascus in 796 BC (AEC, "to Manṣuate"), he makes no attempt to synchronize the history of Damascus, Assyria, and Joash-I/Jeroboam II for this critical period. Had he done so, he could not have failed to note the undue time constraints and lack of synchronicity afforded by his timeframe. It is improbable that Jeroboam's Syrian exploits began while he was coregent with his father, conventionally dated to 793–782 BC (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 217), since credit for these achievements would have been assigned to Joash-I. Thus, Thiele leaves no more than eight years (782–774 BC) for Jeroboam's hegemony in Syria. Cogan and Tadmor (1988, p. 164) realized that "the internal political and social developments in Israel which grew out of the expansion 'beyond Damascus' (cf. Am 5:27) require positing a much longer period". Israel's multi-decade control of commerce and trade routes traversing the region from Elath to Hamath led to the "notable persons" of "Mount Samaria" coming to regard Israel-Zion of Amos 6:1 as "chief among the nations" while indulging in a grievous nonchalance toward their covenantal obligations and Amos' ominous warnings of judgment. Amos condemned Israel's nobility basking in luxury which a century earlier only the king could afford (Vogelstein 1957, p. 28). Surely the stages of Israel's expansion, prosperity, and moral decline under Jeroboam II would have taken multiple decades.

Only a chronology unabbreviated by coregencies leaves enough time for Israel's transformation from Syria's victim to Syria's subjugator. This calls to mind Tadmor's (1979, p. 53) realization that the author of 1–2 Kings thought "there were no co-regencies . . . during the entire period of the Israelite Monarchy", so that it can safely be assumed that 2 Kings' timeframe for the reign of Jeroboam II was substantially higher than that which Albright and Thiele bequeathed to us. In addition to the 12 or 22 years likely omitted during Sammuramat's governance (based on the restoration of the summary number in Babylonian Kinglist A), the Judahite timeline indicates that 22 or 32 years ( $44 - 12/22 = 22/32$ ) need to be restored after Adad-nirari III's 28 years in order contemporize Jehoash's tribute payment. A timeframe mediated by Judah's stable regnal history, which is 44 years higher in the ninth century, allows for a realistic period of time for Israel's transformation out of perennial foreign domination and curtailed borders, to the Israel's return to "the ideal borders of the Promised Land and the farthest limits of the United Monarchy" (Cogan and Tadmor 1988, p. 162).

## 9. Conclusions

Using several methods of analysis suited for discriminating between the chronologies of Assyria and Israel in the late ninth and early eighth centuries, this study finds ample reasons for giving credence to the Hebrew Bible's 44-year higher timeline that is based on the data found in the interlinked accession formulas of the House of Israel and the House of Judah. By narrowing the timeframe within which the chronology of Assyria diverges from Israel's, the sudden deflation of time in the AKL/AEC between the death of Shamshi-Adad

V and the accession of Adad-nirari III's son (Shalmaneser IV), entailing only one reign of 28 years, becomes suspect in the face of Israel's records, which document 72 years of regnal history and two and a half reigns during Adad-nirari III.

When Judah and Israel's interwoven chronology is provisionally accepted as authoritative, it becomes expedient to explore Tetley's allegation of temporal discontinuity in the AEC/AKL before and after Adad-nirari III. The identification of two possible gaps in Assyrian records warrants positing the insertion of 12 or 22 years into the Assyrian timeline after the death of Shamshi-Adad V and 22 or 32 years after the death of Adad-nirari III, the combined total being no more than 44 years. The 'extra' years supply the requisite time for the transformation of Israel's geopolitical fortunes under Joash-I and Jeroboam II. These years help resolve the ongoing debate between scholars who wish to place Hazael's destructions around the perimeter of Israel's central hill country very early in his reign (based on <sup>14</sup>C data and various historical considerations) and those who realize his opportunity to push southward into Israel was delayed by the substantial losses sustained at the hands of Shalmaneser III between the Assyrian king's repeated attacks in Years 10, 11, 18, and 21. The 'extra' years are also needed to chronicle Israel's emergence from more than a generation under Aramean oppression to the military success and region-wide hegemony which came about under Jeroboam II. Thus, the higher timeline is able to integrate information from a wide array of sources into a coherent historical reconstruction fitting the geopolitics of Aram–Damascus, 2 Kings 13–14:25–28, the Eponym Chronicle, and the prophetic settings of Amos and Jonah. Ironically, this reconstruction affords maximum respect for the historical notations of the Eponym Chronicles of 773, 772, 765, and 755/754 BC, which place Shamshi-ilu in the same region at the same time as Thiele's floruit for Jeroboam. In short, until Assyriologists can (a) clarify the uncertainty surrounding Sammu-ramat's coregency, (b) demonstrate that Adad-nirari III's 28 years are contiguous with his father and Shalmaneser IV, and (c) show that the 71 years for Jehu and David's dynasties are somehow less valid and historical than Adad-nirari's 28 years, the biblical historian is under no scientific or historical obligation to defer to the AEC, the AKL, or their implied absolute dates prior to 781 BC.

The plausibility of the historical picture drawn using the Hebrew Bible's longer time-frame also helps resolve another important ongoing debate. While some scholars see no problem with Thiele's arbitrary overlapping of reigns which the author of 2 Kings saw as successive, others deny the existence of coregencies, except where explicitly documented (e.g., 2 Ki 8:16). When we apply to the Israelite data the same principles accorded Mesopotamian king lists—ergo, reign length is synonymous with sole reign, and heirs to the throne are never accorded credit for the years of their predecessors—it becomes apparent that Israel's royal records were based on the longer timeline.

Finally, the history writing in 1–2 Kings is qualitatively different than the AEC/AKL, since Israel's prophets and biblical writers ensured that the harrowing details of Israel's apostasy from Yahweh, especially its kings, were thoroughly chronicled. While this does not prove the inerrancy of the Hebrew records, it does highlight the fact that those who assessed and recorded Israel's history were less interested in the institution of kingship than documenting the fact that authority centralized in apostate rulers had corrupted Israel and Judah absolutely, to the point of rejection and exile. The same cannot be said for the monolithic Assyrian institutions, with their built-in bias toward kingship as Aššur's representative on earth, which is inseparable from the ongoing need to maintain the illusion of continuity with Assyria's glorious past.

This study suggests the time has come to apply Valk's doubts regarding the continuity of the AKL in the second millennium to the Neo-Assyrian Dark Period. For those undaunted by the "insurmountable obstacle" of the AEC/AKL, the higher timeline shows potential for resolving the perennial debates surrounding the dating and historicity of the United Monarchy, the Hebrews' sojourn and departure from Egypt, Israel's entry into Canaan, and the Judges period. The foregoing fresh application of various methodologies to the study of ANE history and chronology comes with an invitation to specialists in these

fields to enter the scientific debate in order to see what new light may be shed on periods ancient Israelite history has not covered in the present investigation.

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## Appendix A The Mesha Stele: Confirmation of Omride Regnal Data

Toward the end of the second decade of the ninth century, the Moabite Stone/Mesha Stele—the inscription of Mesha, king of Moab ([Hallo and Younger 2000](#), pp. 137–38)—relates the fact that “Omri had taken possession of the whole la[n]d of Medeba, and he dwelt in it (during) his days and (during) half of my days, his sons, forty years, but Chemosh restored it during my days” (translated by [Lemaire 2022](#), pp. 22–23). This indicates the 40 years were “the sum of” both Omri and his sons. Line 6 of Mesha text indicates Israel’s oppression of Moab began in earnest under Ahab, Omri’s son. 2 Kings 3:4–5 indicates the same thing, that Mesha was unable to rebel against Israel until after Ahab died. Thus, for no less than 28 years (7 + 21) Moab paid regular tribute to the kings of Israel, until Joram of Israel. This revolt (2 Kings 3) was unsuccessful.

According to [Niehr \(1995, p. 57\)](#): “The Mesha Inscription . . . clearly states that YHWH was the supreme god of Israel and the Transjordanian territory occupied by Israel under the Omrides”. We know from 2 Kings 9:14 that “all Israel” was defending Ramoth-Gilead, just north of Moab, until the final days of the Omride dynasty, when Hazael, the new king of Damascus, attacked the Gilead. At the same time, Edom, which is south of Moab, was under Judah’s control only until the days of Jehoram of Judah, Joram-I’s contemporary (2 Ki 8:20–22). This infers Israel and Judah controlled the Transjordan from Edom to Gilead, including Mesha’s Moab, until the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, in which both Joram-I and his ally, Ahaziah of Judah, died at the same time.<sup>84</sup> It would appear from the Mesha inscription’s specification of 40 years that Mesha finally succeeded, after this double regicide, in taking back various land and towns that had belonged to Moab.

Since Omri was pre-occupied with his rival Tibni until Year 6 (1 Ki 16:23, five actual years; [Thiele \(Thiele \[1951\] 1983, p. 89\)](#), it is doubtful whether Omri conquered Moab prior to this time. This leaves Omri’s last seven years as the maximum time during which Omri made Moab tributary. The remaining regnal lengths of the Omrides down to the fall of the dynasty under Joram-I are 22 (Ahab), 2 (Ahaziah), and 12 (Joram-I). Each of these must be reduced by one year due to Israel’s use of antedating ([Thiele \[1951\] 1983, p. 92](#); [Jones 2005, p. 130](#)). This reduces the regnal total of 43 years (7 + 22 + 2 + 12 = 43) to 40 years. Thus the 40-year domination of Moab by the Omrides in the Mesha text is not a rounded number but appears to be specific and accurate.

This precision is also bolstered by the tally of Judahite regnal data between Year 31 of Asa—when Omri subjugated Moab—and the final Omride reign, Ahaziah-J, in 884 BC. Analysis indicates that [Tetley’s \(2005, pp. 121–22, Table 7.1\)](#) denial of the explicit coregency of 2 Kings 8:16, between Jehoshaphat and his son, was unwarranted. Moreover, 4 of the 44 years of regnal length need to be reduced due to this coregency, as shown in Table 1. The 44 regnal years are as follows: 10 (Year 31–41 of Asa) + 25 (Jehoshaphat) + 8 (Jehoram-J) + 1 (Ahaziah-J) = 44 years. Table 1 assigns 924 N as Year 31 of Asa, and places Jehu’s killing of Ahaziah-J in 884 N, precisely 40 years later. The 44 may be reconciled with 40 by realizing that Jehoram-J really did become Jehoshaphat’s coregent in Joram of Israel’s fifth regnal year (2 Ki 8:16), which leads to the four-year coregency seen in Table 1. This coregency, the only explicit coregency anywhere in 1–2 Kings for the DK period, absorbs four of Judah’s ‘excess’ years, providing further confirmation that there were precisely 40 years between Year 6 of Omri, when he was free to subjugate Moab, and the end of the Omride dynasty. This conclusion suggests that modern scholars should not be too quick in assuming round numbers such as 40 are imprecise.

Two scribal emendations of the LXX<sup>L</sup> recension survived in the MT at 2 Kings 1:17 and 9:29 (Tetley 2005, pp. 36–37). Both synchronisms are impossible in the MT system (cf. Hendel 2012, p. 107).<sup>85</sup> Hendel demonstrates that the problems surrounding these two conflicting systems of chronology may be resolved via text-critical inquiry; then, theories of redaction applied to 2 Kings 3, which are highly speculative and contradictory, appear to be unnecessary. Unfortunately, Hendel's text-critical resolution of the problem was unavailable when Shenkel, Barnes (1991, pp. 23–25), and Tetley (2005, pp. 54–63) argued their support for the OG/L regnal system.<sup>86</sup>

## Appendix B Menahem and Pul

Since Menahem's name is found at the head of Sennacherib's list of tributes taken (Goodenow 1896, p. 180; Luckenbill 1968, pp. 118–19), we may agree with Rainey and Notley (2006, pp. 226–27) that these lists were archival, being used by much later scribes.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, it can be precarious using them as historical sources. Chronologers adhering to the higher biblical timeline usually align the Pul of 2 Kings 15:19 with Ashur-Dan III and one of his two expeditions “to Hadrach” in 772 or 765 BC (Goodenow 1896, p. 170; Faulstich 1986; Jones 2005, p. 173). The Pul of 2 Kings 15:19, who collected 1000 talents of silver from Menahem, probably refers to Tiglath-pileser while acting as a general under Ashur-dan III, since all of this king's 18 years (772–755) encompass Menahem's tenure, 769–759 (Table 1).<sup>88</sup> The campaigns to Damascus and Hadrach in 773 and 772 (AEC; Millard 1994, p. 58), at the time of Ashur-dan III's accession, likely led to Menahem's perception of the necessity of placating a very real Assyrian threat at the start of his rule in 770. The behavior of Pul, who “stayed in the land no longer” once Menahem delivered a 1000-talent tribute (2 Ki 15:19–20) is consistent with Tiglath-pileser III's *modus operandi* where deportations from the Levant were usually reserved for polities who rebelled or no longer paid tribute (Valk 2020, pp. 19–20).

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The *Assyrian Eponym Canon* (AEC) was first published by Rawlinson in 1866 (the second volume of his five-volume work, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* Rawlinson [Rawlinson 1861–1875]). After Rawlinson's publication of the AEC, others followed, e.g., Smith's (1875) English translation and Ungnad's (1938) compilation, in transliteration. Millard's English translation of the *Assyrian Eponym Canon* will be referenced in this study. In his “Eponym Lists in English”, Millard (1994, pp. 55–61) combines information from the *Eponym Lists* and *Eponym Chronicles*. The AEC is an annual registry, each year of which was “named after a high officer of state” (Akkadian *limmu*) (Millard 1994, p. 1).
- <sup>2</sup> The precision of 726 BC is confirmed by the fact that Sargon (Lie 1929, pp. 4–7, II.2–3, ll. 10–17) and 2 Kings 18:10 place the fall of Samaria after 720 N (= Nisan), in the sixth year of Hezekiah. Thus, Galil (1996, pp. 88, 99) realizes the siege of Samaria began in 722 BC, Shalmaneser V's final year (726–722), Hezekiah's fourth year (2 Ki 18:9), and ended after three years in 720 BC, wherein Sargon speaks of suppressing a region-wide revolt that included Samaria. Postdating in Judah makes 725 N Year 1 of Hezekiah and 720 N his Year 6. In addition, the date for Hoshea's ninth year (721 T–720 T) overlaps Hezekiah's sixth year, since Hoshea's accession year over Israel (730 T–729 T) overlapped Ahaz' 12th year (2 Ki 17:10), 730 N–729 N (see Table 1).
- <sup>3</sup> Between 1944 and 1956, Thiele published several influential articles (e.g., Thiele 1944, 1954, 1956a, 1956b) related to Divided Kingdom chronology.
- <sup>4</sup> Wellhausen (Wellhausen [1885] 1973, p. 278) alleged that the biblical chronology of the kings of Israel was a literary invention, stating, “That a process of alteration and improvement of the chronology was busily carried on in later times we see from the added synchronisms of the kings of Israel and Judah”. Had Wellhausen studied the synchronistic and accession formulae in Mesopotamia (Lewy 1927), he may have hesitated to assign them to a post-exilic priestly source.
- <sup>5</sup> Hughes (1990, p. 121) thinks the chronological data were devised to support 480 years from the foundation of Solomon's Temple to the laying of the foundation of Zerubbabel's temple in 520 BC. Hughes offers no proof for this hypothesis. Ussher (2003, pp. 26, 67) has 492 years for this same period. Hughes accepts the reality of most regnal lengths and rightly rejects the prevalent assumption of frequent coregencies in the two kingdoms. Larsson (2008, pp. 9–12, 82) believes the numbers of 1–2 Kings were an esoteric, schematic concoction of third century BC scribal redactors.
- <sup>6</sup> Using DK regnal data, J. M. Miller (1977, p. 65) also saw the author of 1–2 Kings as placing the Exodus very early in the fifteenth century BC, not unlike Redford and Wellhausen.



- The usefulness of Miller and Hayes for discussion of Israelite chronology of the Exodus and Conquest is also limited because it is their opinion that “the main story line of Genesis-Joshua . . . is an artificial and theologically influenced literary construct” (Miller and Hayes 1986, p. 78).
- Noth begins his treatment of the history of Israel with the tribal league (Noth 1958, p. 5; cf. Hayes 1990, p. 68) and does not concern himself with chronological placement of the Exodus and Conquest.
- Thiele no doubt reflected the sentiments of many conservatives when he said that Albright’s “revised estimates . . . cannot be viewed as the original chronological and historical pattern of the Hebrew rulers of that time” (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 114). Van Seters (2006) raised valid questions about the validity of redaction and editing as an ancient means of composition.
- Goodenow’s accession date for Rehoboam was the same as mine and Ussher’s.
- Much of this list is cited by Anstey (1913, p. 162).
- Laato’s (1986, 2015) chronological work is eclectic. Like others in the third group, he considers regnal lengths and synchronisms as deriving from early archival sources, and thus relatively trustworthy. However, he believes that the Dtr placed them within his own chronological frame, not unlike Wellhausen.
- Parker (2000, pp. 370–71) sees Israelite formulas as conforming closely to the Mesha Stele inscription (Hallo and Younger 2000, pp. 137–38), suggesting their antiquity. See Appendix A.
- If the data are merely systematized (per Wellhausen [1885] 1973, pp. 229–30, 430) or are a late schematic system from the sixth or fifth century (Hughes 1990, p. 121; Larsson 2008, pp. 9–12, 82), then one would expect the regnal formulas to be nearly identical.
- According to Weingart (2018, p. 275), the sole exception to this “perfectly consistent” chronological data is Menahem, which involves only one year. This exception disappears when one realizes that Menahem’s accession year was 11 months long (Table 1), making for a reign that traversed the 39th to the 50th year of Azariah (2 Ki 15:17, 23), i.e., nearly 11 full years.
- For example, Albright (1945), Wood (1986, pp. 276, 280, 298), McFall (1991; 1992, p. 36), Wiseman (1993, p. 27), Lasor et al. (1996, pp. 637–38), and Arnold and Hess (2014, pp. 20, 354) endorse Thiele’s system. Tetley (2005) and Jones (2005) questioned the authenticity of Thiele’s Assyrian-based ‘biblical’ timeline. See also Faulstich (1986).
- The transliteration of the inscription on Shalmaneser III’s Kurkh Monolith (BM 118884, Grayson 1996, A.0.102.2, p. 23, ll. ii 89b–102) lists one of the 12 kings at Qarqar as *A-ha-ab-bu (mat) Sir-i-la-a-a*, generally accepted as Ahab of Israel (Pritchard 1950, p. 279). Shalmaneser III’s Black Obelisk (BM 118885, Grayson 1996, A.0.102.14, pp. 62–71) portrays Jehu bowing before Shalmaneser III. The epigraph lists tribute brought to Shalmaneser III. “This epigraph on the Black Obelisk (see A.0. 102.87) concerns the receipt of tribute from Jehu, king of Israel (“house of Omri”) . . . (eighteenth regnal year), as recorded in the annals: A.0.102.8 ll. 26–27”, A.0.102.10 iv 10–12, and A.0.102.12 ll. 29–30” (Grayson 1996, A.0.102.88, p. 149). Grayson’s translation (p. 149) reads as follows: “I received tribute from Jehu (laua) of the house of Omri (Humri). . .”. Compare (Yamada 2000, p. 193, n. 402). For analysis of both inscriptions, see Kelle (2002, pp. 641–51). *Bit-Humri* is the “house of Omri”.
- The four Assyrian kings between Shalmaneser IV and Tiglath-pileser had reigns of 10 + 18 + 10 + 18 = 56 years.
- The number 25 is derived from the fact there are 27 years from Azariah’s accession in Jeroboam’s 14th year (Josephus 1987, A.J. IX.216, 227) to his death in Year 41, leaving 25 years more until Azariah’s death in Year 52. Since Jotham was already governing on behalf of his leprous father, antedating is usually applied in such circumstances (Weingart 2018, p. 281), leaving a sole rule of 15 years. Thus Ahaz’s reign carries Judah’s timeline forward another 16 years, for a total of 56 years from 782 BC down to 726 BC (25 + 15 + 16 = 56).
- Weingart (2018, pp. 272, 283) fails to consider the pre-Albright view that accession synchronism of Zachariah (2 Ki 15:8), as well as the double synchronism for the accession of Hoshea (2 Ki 15:30; 17:1), set the boundaries of 11-year and 8-year interregna, respectively. The vicissitudes of Israel’s regnal history are no topic of concern to the DtrH, and no foundation on which to build a chronology. In contrast, the accession-year reckoning of Judah and its uninterrupted stable dynasty of mostly righteous kings made it an ideal instrument for marking covenant time (see Section 7.3).
- Bracketed insertion is mine. The prophecy goes on to warn of a fiery flying viper coming forth out of the serpent’s roots (Isa 14:29), which is either Sargon II or Shalmaneser V. The Eponym Chronicle for 727 BC says “Shalmaneser [V] took his seat on the throne”. The Babylonian Chronicle (I, l. 27) says his ascension to power took place on the 25th day of the 11th month (24 February 726). Notice that there are 117 total regnal years (31 + 2 + 55 + 29 = 117) from the end of Josiah back to Ahaz’s death in 726 BC (609 + 117 = 726).
- The tally of Assyrian kings from Shalmaneser V down to Asshur-uballit II is 5 + 17 + 23 + 12 + 42 + 5 + 10 + 3 = 117. This study, Thiele (Thiele [1951] 1983, pp. 43, 46), Grayson (1982, p. 245), and Tetley (2005, p. 158) understand Judah and Assyria as having used an accession-reckoning system, in which regnal years are cumulative, being an excellent measure of time.
- Shalmaneser III reigned a total of 35 years.
- In the present reconstruction, Shalmaneser IV comes to power after an interregnum; thus, his term began with Year 1.
- The kings’ reigns totalling 72 years are as follows (15 + 16 + 41 = 72): Years 2–17 Jehoahaz (=15 years, counted from Year 13 Shamshi-Adad V) + Joash-I (16) + Jeroboam II (41). Note that the synchronisms with Judah indicate every king of Jehu’s dynasty used accession-year reckoning (cf. Thiele [1951] 1983, pp. 111ff). The number 15 for Jehoahaz-I was calculated as follows: Shalmaneser III died in the 17th year of Jehu. Thirteen more years would take us to the death of Shamshi-Adad, but only 11 of

these belong to Jehu. Thus, Shamshi-Adad V died in the second year of Jehu's son Jehoahaz. But since Jehoahaz reigned 17 years, 15 of his years belong to a post-Shamshi-Adad period. These 15 years overlapped the queen-regency of Adad-nirari's mother.

The number 17 has to do with the remainder of years in Jehoash-J's reign after his 23rd year, which is when Shamshi-Adad died ( $40 - 23 = 17$ ). This coincided with the second year of Jehoahaz. Athaliah reigned 7 years, so Year 23 of Jehoash-J's 40-year reign takes one to the death of Shamshi-Adad V.

Queen Athaliah is the sole exception to continuous patrilinear succession; yet her seven-year usurpation is well-documented (2 Ki 11:3–4). Mazar (1990, p. 369) states that Judah had "one of the longest surviving royal houses in world history, lasting for over four hundred years", a far more stable father-to-son monarchy than Assyria's. Moreover, Barnes (1991, p. 147) concluded that the extant regnal totals of Judah "tend to correspond . . . quite well with the actual historical situation".

The Neo-Assyrian Dark Period extended from the time of Shamshi-Adad V down to the end of Ashur-nirari V (ca. 825–745, cf. Rainey and Notley 2006, p. 214). Ninety-five percent of the period—also known as "the Eighth Century Crisis" (Siddall 2013, xi)—left few extant annals, suggesting a suspension of central authority from the time of the regional magnate Nergal-ereš down to the start of Shalmaneser IV, when the central monarchy still shows signs of great weakness. The protracted struggle over dynastic succession goes back to the final years of Shalmaneser III (Millard 1994, p. 57).

Thus, the problem of assigning dates to Dynasty 22–25 has yet to be unravelled by specialists. Dynasty 20 was also a time of weakness, and the lack of records makes chronological certainty elusive.

2 Kings 8:16—Jehoshaphat and his son—is the one notably explicit exception, which begs the question why the author of Kings provides no information supporting coregencies during the eighth century reigns.

Cogan and Tadmor (1988, p. 341) expose the folly of their own reconstruction by placing the death of Azariah in 733 BC, 10 years beyond their date for the death of his son Jotham.

Given the documentation for Joash-I's reign, it may be surmised that four years alone is needed for his successful encounters with Ben-Hadad III and with Amaziah at Beth-Shemesh (2 Ki 14:11–14). "The rest of the acts of Joash" suggest his sole rule was most, if not all, of 16 years.

Thus, only five of Amaziah's 29 years are of sole rule. Barnes (1991, p. 15) states the following: "Surely the Dtr editors give us no hint that they envisioned only a 5 year de facto reign for King Amaziah". Barnes grasps the fact that Thiele's coregencies are basically unprovable.

Thiele (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 119) alleged that the editors of 2 Kings 14:19–21 and 2 Chronicles 25:28–26:1–3 improperly placed Azariah's accession at the time of his father's burial.

Insertion of a 22-year interregnum between the death of Adad-nirari III and 782 extends the career of Nergal-ereš to 50 years—between the seventh year of Adad-nirari and 775 BC (AEC)—in which years he shows up on the AEC as governor of Rasappa. Bel-Harran-beli-usur, however, served even longer—55 years—from 782 to 727 BC (Grayson 1993, p. 3), during which Judean and Assyrian regnal time is identical and there are no interregna extending the careers of either Bel-Harran-beli-usur or Shamshi-ilu, who first appears as an eponym in 780 BC. Frahm (2023, p. 115) states that in "the 'Age of the Magnates' . . . many higher officials kept their positions longer now than they had before".

Younger (2016, p. 357, n 216) follows Schramm (1973, pp. 120–21) in stating that Grayson mistakenly assigned two of Shamshi-ilu's inscriptions—the Gate Lions of Til-Barsip, (Grayson 1996, A.O.104.2010, pp. 231–33) and the Black Stone Statue (Grayson 1996, A.O.104.2011, pp. 233–34)—to the period of Adad-nirari III, when they may in fact belong to the time of Shalmaneser IV.

As Antakya is the only text linking the two, I believe Shamshi-ilu used Adad-nirari's name as a means of legitimizing his own authority to act on behalf of Assyria. Both Shamshi-ilu and Tiglath-pileser III reveal the need to establish legitimacy via association with Adad-nirari III. Shamshi-ilu was the first of five Assyrian rulers during this period who would do the same.

Valk (2019, p. 2) states that after the genesis of the AKL in the fourteenth century, it "was then updated with the passing of successive kings at least through to the second half of the eighth century BCE, and very likely through to the demise of the Assyrian state at the end of the seventh century BCE". This may account for the unreliability of the AKL for the period from Shamshi-Adad I down to Ashur-uballit I (1365–1330 BC), a period of three and a half centuries (Frahm 2023, pp. 58–61).

Shalmaneser IV, Ashur-dan III, Ashur-nirari V, and Tiglath-pileser III. Only the latter lies outside the Neo-Assyrian Dark Period, which began with Shamshi-Adad V.

Tiglath-pileser sought to erase the memory of Nergal-eriš because his monuments reflected the weakness of the central monarchy. However, this does not stem from evidence he threatened the central monarchy (Siddall 2013, pp. 111–12).

Thus, Frahm (2023, p. 117) sees the Pazarcik Stele as unequivocal indication "that Sammu-ramat wielded enormous power during Adad-nirari's early years". But it is doubtful whether Adad-nirari was of age at the time of the Pazarcik campaign.

Millard and Tadmor (1973, p. 58) point out that "there is no room for a divine name and titles before the king's name in the missing portion of the first line" of the Sheikh Hammad fragment, which describes this initial battle against Attar-šumki.

Kuhrt applies this to both Sammu-ramat and the mother of Esarhaddon.

The "remarkable conservatism" of Assyrian culture and social norms (Siddall 2013, pp. 94–95) and the low status of women in that society would have prohibited inclusion of a female ruler such as Sammu-ramat on the AKL.

- It is unnecessary to extend Shamši-Adad V's reign by 22 years to 34 or 35 years, as Tetley (2005, pp. 102–3) does. A short reign comports with indications Adad-nirari was quite young at Shamshi-Adad's death. Lewy (1952, pp. 269–70) cites the detailed accounts of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus indicating that Babylon was ruled by a woman twice, separated by five generations. There are, in fact, five generations between Sammu-ramat and Nitokris-Naqî'a, one of Sennacherib's harem women, who ruled Babylonia.
- Five interregna occurred in Babylon between 729 and 680 BC—involving the absence of a local Babylonian king—during the reigns of Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser, Sargon, and Sennacherib, where Assyria took a direct hand in the affairs of Babylon.
- For this reason, Brinkman (1968, p. 217) saw Adad-nirari III as exercising suzerainty over Babylonia. Shalmaneser III brought gifts to the main Babylonian temples, yet never received the ritual meal leftovers (Grayson 1996, A.O.102.5, pp. 30–31, ll. v 3b–vi 5a).
- Grayson (1996, A.O.102.5, pp. 30–31, ll. v 3b–vi 5a).
- Even the term translated as “queen-mother” is not found before 692 BC (Kertai 2013, p. 112).
- The three lunar eclipses of years 1 and 2 of Merodach-Baladan of Babylon—8 Mar. 720 BC, 1 Sep. 720 BC, and 19 Mar. 721 BC (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 229; Millard 1994, p. 2)—fix the accession year of Merodach-Baladan and Sargon II to 722 BC.
- For thorough-going arguments in support of 722–720 BC as Years 4–6 Hezekiah and coeval with the final siege of Samaria, see Galil (1996, pp. 84–91).
- The reader is reminded of Hendel's 2011 study (Section 2.4 and Appendix A), in which his application of text-critical principles enabled him to identify a small number of outlier synchronisms during the Omride period that were incorporated into the MT from OG/L recensions. These synchronisms are impossible to reconcile with surrounding MT data.
- The irony of the situation lies in scholars with varying levels of confidence in the biblical data being forced to depend on the biblical synchronism of 1 Kings 14:25. Since 931 BC is dependent on 44-year deficient Assyrian canons, as arithmetically demonstrated above, we must add 44 years to it, yielding 975 BC as the date of Rehoboam's accession.
- This 10-year discrepancy is insignificant for quality radiocarbon samples collected at Khirbet Qeiyafa.
- It seems clear that Thiele took advantage of the anarchy of Samaria in order to truncate Israel's timeline, to the benefit of neither Israelite chronology nor history.
- A translation of the Bubastite Portal is published online by the Oriental Institute. <https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/oiop74.pdf> (accessed on 27 February 2024).
- In this study, all Egyptian–Julian date equivalents and first visible crescent dates are taken from Gautschy (2011a; cf. 1913). The latest refinements in first and last crescent visibility parameters are reflected in her tables.
- Krauss (1988, p. 44) places temple dedication ceremonies on the evening of the New Moon (first visible crescent).
- While high priest induction dates can fall on lunar day 1–5, the exact lunar day is seldom specified.
- Bennett (2008, p. 548) cites Quack (2007, p. 354, note 'a'), who argues the ʿš festival at the end of the lunar month is in fact the *wrš* feast. Phyle contracts from the Demotic Chronicle also indicate the *wrš* feast was on LD 29 or 30 in the Late Period (the Late Period being 664–323 BC).
- Krauss, on the other hand (Krauss 2015, pp. 366–67), makes the *wrš* feast LD 1 and places Shoshenq I's Year 5 in 939 BC, when 25/IV/*pri* did fall on LD 1. Since the *wrš* feast was the last day of the lunar month during the Middle Kingdom, and during the Ptolemaic Period, Bennett is undoubtedly correct that it did not change during the Libyan period.
- The record was found on a fragmentary text (Sheik Labib Block 94 CL 2149) of the Karnak Priestly Annals (Payraudeau 2008, pp. 293–94, note 2). The reference must be to Psusennes II, since the preceding line of the text has the induction of Nesamun, Nesankhe-fenmaat's father as high priest of Amun during Psusennes II's predecessor, Siamun. For lunar date match, see Table 2.
- The New Moon was visible on 5 January 995 BC (I šmw 12) (Gautschy 2011a; cf. 2011b).
- The New Moon was visible on 2 June 968 (Gautschy 2011a; cf. 2011b).
- For the definitive work identifying Osorkor the Elder with Akheperre Setepenre, see Young (1963, pp. 100–1).
- There is, however, some overlap with Schneider's (2010, p. 403) higher estimate for Siamun, 995–976 BC.
- The fiery destruction of Gezer IX in Iron IB is contemporary with the conflagration at Tell Qasile Stratum X (Mazar 1993, p. 1205)—25 km northwest of Gezer—and at Tel Migne (Ekron)—only 11 km southwest of Gezer. Both Tell Qasile and Ekron were Philistine sites. The <sup>14</sup>C data at Tell Qasile X indicate the site was destroyed between 1039 and 979 BC (68.2% probability, Mazar and Ramsey 2008, p. 159). Mazar (1985, pp. 123, 128) credits Siamun with Tell Qasile's destruction. If Siamun's campaign took place between 1023 and 1015 (Table 2), this lies near the middle of this <sup>14</sup>C date range. Its Iron IB ceramic culture parallels that at Gezer. All this recalls Dothan's view (1971, p. 20) that Philistine Ashdod was destroyed at this time by Siamun. The next occupation, at Tell Qasile Stratum IX, was an Israelite settlement, as was Stratum VIII Gezer. The ruin of Tell Qasile Stratum X marks the end of Iron Age I (Mazar and Ramsey 2008, p. 159).
- Schneider's chronological reconstruction accepts the validity of Julius Africanus's version of Manetho, wherein the three kings, numbered 3, 4, and 5, follow Shoshenq I and Osorkon I (Number 1 and 2). These three kings, dubbed Shoshenq Ila-c, are given a total of 25 years and lie between Osorkon I and Takelot I.

- 69 On the Assur Basalt Statue (Grayson 1996, A.0.102.40, p. 118), Hazael is called a “son of a nobody”, from which he is understood to be a usurper. For detailed histories of Hazael king of Aram-Damascus, see Younger (2016, pp. 591–639) and Lipinski (2000, pp. 347–407). Ben-hadad III is “Māri, king of Damascus” on several inscriptions (Grayson 1996, A.0.104.6, p. 209; A.0.104.7, p. 211; A.0.104.8, p. 213).
- 70 The destruction of Jezreel and other towns in the Bethshean Valley cannot be assigned to Jehu, who is unlikely to have razed the fortified towns of his own realm (Lipinski 2000, pp. 382–83). While there is consensus on the important role played by Hazael, there is sometimes disagreement about which strata were destroyed by him. Hazor is illustrative of the debate: “Advocates of the ‘low chronology’ attribute the construction of the city of Strata X–IX to the Omrides and Stratum VIII to the conquest of the city by the Kingdom of Aram Damascus in the second half of the 9th century BCE” (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2006, p. 178, citing Finkelstein 1999). Lemaire (2011, p. 10) calls the low chronology an “alternative chronology [that] has been severely criticized and rejected”.
- 71 In his Tel Dan victory stele (Biran and Naveh 1993, 1995), Hazael takes credit for defeating both Joram-I and Ahaziah-J. (See Yamada 2000, pp. 318–19 for his philological reconciliation of the Tel Dan and the biblical tradition). The Tel Dan Stele, for obvious reasons, does not relate the fact that, in the same year, the annals of Shalmaneser III place him on the outskirts of Damascus and (later) in the Hauran south of Damascus.
- 72 Younger (2016, p. 622) states the following: “It was not until the Assyrian pressure upon Hazael was abated that he was able to defeat them ‘throughout the territory of Israel: from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead . . . from the Wadi Arnon. . . .’”
- 73 Israelite Transjordan is the natural geographic link south of Damascus (Younger 2016, p. 621).
- 74 Bayesian modeling for archaeological dating purposes typically combines radiocarbon measurements with historical and/or archaeological information. Ben-Yosef and Sergi’s modeling of the <sup>14</sup>C dates is based on the idea of a single phase to the disruption of the copper industry in the Arabah. However, since copper could still be shipped from Elath and from Gaza, it cannot be assumed that the destruction of Gath abruptly ended production. Moreover, since Moab controlled the territory north of Edom at this time, it is unlikely that Hazael sent an army to the Arabah.
- 75 855 BC = 726 BC (death of Ahaz) plus 129, the total of reign lengths back to Jehoash-J’s 23rd year (16 + 15 + 52 + 29 + 17 = 129).
- 76 The very fact of the savior of 2 Kings 13:4 being unnamed suggests a non-Israelite entity in a position to defeat Hazael or his son. This leaves little doubt it is an Assyrian king. But since Shamshi-Adad V did not campaign in the west, this means the savior must be Adad-nirari. Richter (2014, p. 322), Vogelstein (1957, p. 23), and Rainey and Notley (2006, p. 214), inter alios, posit Adad-nirari III as the predicted deliverer of 2 Kings 13:3–5, 22–25, who paved the way for Joash-I’s three victories and the repatriation of the Gadites and Reubenites of the Transjordan, and the curtailing of Aramean access to lower Galilee, Jezreel, and the Sharon plain.
- 77 Albright places Joash-I’s accession in 801 BC, Cogan and Tadmor (1988, p. 341) in 800 BC, and Thiele (Thiele [1951] 1983, pp. 110–11) in 798 BC.
- 78 Tadmor tendentiously argues that the Saba’a Stele is not annalistic since the reference to “fifth year” uses *šattu* instead of *palû*. Yet the two words are used interchangeably (Kuan 1995, p. 97, n 100). Pitard’s (1987, pp. 164–65) statement that “the fifth year has little or no chronological value” is unfounded (Kuan 1995, p. 98).
- 79 Bryce (2009, p. 445) finds unconvincing the theories locating Manṣuate near Damascus in the Biqa Valley and supports Lipinski’s (2000, pp. 263, 304–10, 391) conclusion that Manṣuate was at Masyaf, 200 km north of Damascus and 44 km west of Hamath.
- 80 The mention of Elath (cf. 2 Ki 14:22) and the Arabah suggests that Jeroboam’s victories over the Arameans paved the way for Uzziah’s occupation of, and port-building at, Elath (2 Chr 26:2; cf. 2 Ki 16:6). For justification of this translation, see Haran (1967, pp. 296–97), Jones (1984, pp. 516–17), Montgomery (1951, p. 483), and Cogan and Tadmor (1988, pp. 161–62).
- 81 The Pazarcik boundary stele had been established in Kummuh by the joint effort of Queen Sammu-ramat and Adad-nirari III, in the latter’s fifth year (828 BC, Table 1).
- 82 Besides Grayson, Hallo and Younger (2000, pp. 283–84) and Lipinski (2000, p. 284) are certain that the reverse side of the Pazarcik Stele was written in the very year of the Damascus campaign which it narrates—773 BC—at which time it was recovered there by Šamši-ilu when he took tribute from “Ḫadiyāni, the Damascene”.
- 83 Haran was using Cogan and Tadmor’s chronology (Cogan and Tadmor 1988, p. 341), which is five years lower than Thiele’s (Thiele [1951] 1983, p. 116).
- 84 In the first half of the DK, Ammon, Moab, and Edom were the only nations east of the Dead Sea and Jordan River (2 Chr 20:10).
- 85 Joram-I’s accession does not coincide with Jehoram-J’s second year if the latter’s accession took place in the fifth year of Joram-I (2 Ki 8:16).
- 86 Unfortunately, Shenkel, while arguing for primacy of OG/LXX readings, never attempted any chronology.
- 87 Cylinder C, Col. III. (Smith 1875, p. 132). Goodenow (1896, p. 180) states that those discussing the subject of Menahem’s contemporaneity with Tiglath-pileser seemed unaware that he is mentioned also on Sennacherib’s tribute lists. Thus, if Menahem “was living in the time of Tiglath-pileser, by the same logic we must conclude he was living still later in the time of Sennacherib”. Smith, the author of the Assyrian Eponym Canon, cited several examples of careless compilation of names on tribute lists.



- <sup>88</sup> Ozanne (2009, p. 130) suggested that Pul was Tiglath-pileser III's pre-dynastic name while he was actively serving Ashur-dan III. Fales (2014, pp. 206–8, 220) and Frahm (2023, p. 127) also equate Pul (Pūlu) with Tiglath-pileser III. There are, however, a number of caveats to this understanding: (a) Pūlu, while well attested in Neo-Assyrian texts, is never applied to Tiglath-pileser III in these texts or in any eighth-seventh century BC Aramaic sources and occurs only one time in Bab. Kinglist A as a reference to Tiglath-pileser III (Fales 2014, p. 220 and note 94). Moreover, the grammatical construction in 2 Chronicles 5:26 suggests the biblical author did not consider Pūlu and Tiglath-pileser the same person.

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