

# **An Analytical Review of the Campaigns of Sennacherib from a Biblical Perspective**



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# **An Analytical Review of the Campaigns of Sennacherib from a Biblical Perspective**

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Ever since the discovery of Sennacherib's monuments, there has been much scholarly debate over the record of a campaign against Hezekiah king of Judah in Sennacherib's third campaign, which campaign, as we shall proceed to demonstrate, would have occurred in the third year of Sennacherib's reign. Opinions are divided between whether there were in fact one or two campaigns against Jerusalem – one in Sennacherib's third year, the other in his final year. This topic was discussed in great detail by Siegfried H. Horn in his article "*Did Sennacherib Campaign Once or Twice Against Hezekiah?*",<sup>1</sup> but all arguments end up going round in circles. The simple answer is that there was only the one campaign.

Those who have studied Sennacherib's annals all seem to have abandoned the Biblical chronology in favour of the contrived chronology provided by the Assyrian and Babylonian King Lists and Chronicles. It appears that no one is prepared to question or challenge the accuracy of these extra-biblical records. Consequently, when any study is undertaken of the monumental evidence, it is always with the fervent adherence to that chronology whilst rejecting the one provided by the Bible.

Basically, what we shall find is that we have put far too much trust in these ancient records without challenging them, testing them or questioning why they were made. At best, it can be shown that these ancient scribes and chroniclers were none the wiser than we are concerning their own history. In fact, we can demonstrate that many of the monuments are in fact forgeries, dating to a late period (possibly the Persian Period), and, if not done deliberately to mislead us, are clearly of a propagandist nature. What we shall attempt to demonstrate here is that the majority of Sennacherib's inscriptions fall within this category of fraudulent.

Sennacherib's final campaign was a disaster. He suffered a heavy defeat 'at the hand of the Almighty'. We are told that the angel of the LORD smote the Assyrian host and Sennacherib was forced to return to Assyria where he was murdered in the house of his gods by his sons, and that Esarhaddon then reigned in his stead.<sup>2</sup> All the nations knew about his defeat. Knowing this, the scribes have cunningly moved his last campaign to fall in the third year of his reign.

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<sup>1</sup> Horn p.13.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings 19:37.

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A similar practice has been noted in Ashurbanipal's texts:

'...some of the events mentioned under the third expedition in Cylinder A (the revolt of Psammetichus, death of Gyges, and submission of Ardys), which are not in the earlier copies (Cylinders B and C), evidently belong to a much later period in the history. These events are out of place attached to the third campaign, because in the next campaign (the fourth expedition of Cylinder B) the conquered people were transported to Egypt, which shows that Psammetichus had not yet revolted.'<sup>3</sup>

And yet, no one questions why these contradictions exist.

Sennacherib's third campaign, which was supposedly against Jerusalem, occurs between numerous campaigns against Babylonia. His first campaign was against Babylon. His second campaign was against the Kassites (Kushites) who dwelt in Babylonia, and his fourth, fifth and sixth campaigns were likewise against the regions around Babylonia. It can be shown that his fourth campaign occurred in the fourth year of his reign. How likely is it then, that this third campaign, which would have been in the third year of his reign, would have been directed at Tyre, Sidon, all the lands of Judah, as well as the lands of Ammon, Moab and Edom? This, all in one year, is just too incredible to believe. Furthermore, we shall proceed to demonstrate that this third year of Sennacherib's reign is the very year when the compilers of the *Babylonian Chronicle* would have us believe that Sennacherib deposed Bêl-ibni from the throne of Babylon!

It is worth here quoting the words of Otto Weber:

"All official historical literature of the Assyrians culminates in the excessive praise of the king, and has as its only aim the transmission of this praise to posterity. It is clear that under these circumstances the credibility of royal inscriptions is subject to suspicion. Not one royal inscription admits a failure in clear words; instead we know of cases in which an obvious defeat has been converted into a brilliant victory by the accommodating historiographer. In most cases, however, it was common practice to pass in silence over any enterprises of which the king had little reason to boast. Even when the king was successful, one must not fail to deduce much from the enthusiastic battle reports, and one should not forget to remain critical toward unexpected transitions or sudden breaks in the narrative where the reader hoped to hear much more."<sup>4</sup>

According to the Bible, Sennacherib king of Assyria died in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah.<sup>5</sup> Esarhaddon became king in that self-same year.<sup>6</sup> We are told by the Babylonian chroniclers that Sennacherib reigned for 24 years, though I would stress that we only have their word for this. It would effectively mean that Sennacherib started reigning **ten years before** Hezekiah became king. Assuming that Hezekiah started reigning immediately after Ahaz, then Sennacherib's first year would have coincided with the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz. If we are to believe what we are told, this campaign against Judah in his third year would have occurred **before** that of Shalmaneser V and **seven years before** Hezekiah became king of Judah! It should once again be stressed, that according to the

<sup>3</sup> *History of Ashurbanipal Translated from the Cuneiform Inscriptions* p.322, George Smith, Williams and Norgate, London and Edinburgh 1871.

<sup>4</sup> Otto Weber, *Die Literatur der Babylonier und Assyrier* pp.227-8, Leipzig 1907 as quoted in Horn p.13.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Kings 18:13 & Isa. 36:1.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Kings 19:37 & Isa. 37:38.

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*Babylonian Chronicle*, Sennacherib's third campaign should have been directed against Bêl-ibni king of Babylon.

This also means that Sennacherib's first year of reign in Assyria roughly coincided with the sixth year of Tiglathpileser III, who was also king of Assyria, and his reign continued through that of Shalmaneser V and Sargon II! (In a moment it will be shown that there was a co-regency of around two years between Tiglathpileser III and Shalmaneser V, meaning that Sennacherib's reign more correctly began around the **fourth** year of Tiglathpileser!) To many scholars, this might seem somewhat radical and might even be considered by some purists to be preposterous, but we shall soon discover that the rewards of making such adjustments to the Assyrian and Babylonian chronologies will far outweigh any criticism. Difficulties over the blind acceptance of the Limmu Lists will also need to be addressed, but let us tackle one thing at a time!

### Sargon II and Esarhaddon

Following these arguments through to their logical conclusion, Sargon II, the father of Sennacherib, who, according to the Assyrian King Lists, reigned **before** Sennacherib, would have actually started his reign **towards the end** of Sennacherib's. This would then explain the reason why Sennacherib broke from tradition by not naming his father in his texts.<sup>7</sup>

Sargon II's first year saw the fall of Samaria at his hands.<sup>8</sup> Following this deportation of the House of Israel, he repopulated Samaria with Arabs from the tribes of Tamud (i.e. the Tamudic tribes from north-west Saudi Arabia), Ibâdid, Marsimani and Haiapâ, "distant Arabs, who inhabit the desert".<sup>9</sup> He could only have done this **after** Israel had been taken into captivity!

The first year of Sargon's reign therefore coincided with the **sixth year** of Hezekiah,<sup>10</sup> which means, that if Sennacherib ruled for 24 years and died in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year, as stated in the Bible, then Sargon II must have started his reign in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of his son's reign. If Sargon II reigned for 17 years (as suggested by the *Babylonian King List A*), then this means that he continued to reign until the **twenty-second year** of Hezekiah, which would also have been the **eighth year** of Esarhaddon's reign. This straight away reveals that there were a lot of co-regencies, something that is not made evident in the Assyrian and Babylonian records.

In the book of Isaiah, we read:

"In the year that **Tartan** came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it."

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<sup>7</sup> "Sennacherib was the son of Sargon the king of Assyria, but it is remarkable that in all these inscriptions he is silent as to his genealogy." *History of Sennacherib* p.8, George Smith, Williams and Norgate, London & Edinburgh, 1878.

<sup>8</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.2, §.4

<sup>9</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.7, §.17.

<sup>10</sup> 2 Kings 18:10.

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In the second book of Kings, we read:

“And the king of Assyria sent **Tartan** and Rabсарis and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem.”<sup>11</sup>

The king of Assyria being referred to in this second passage is Sennacherib. It is not clear when Tartan took Ashdod, but we learn from Sargon II that “Azuru, king of Ashdod, plotted in his heart to withhold (his) tribute”, following which Sargon conquered the city and set his official over them as governor.<sup>12</sup> This was in Sargon’s eleventh year, which equates to the sixteenth year of Hezekiah, which was two years after the death of Sennacherib. Tartan will have subdued Ashdod sometime before that date.

For the first twelve years of Sargon II’s reign, Marduk-apla-iddina (Merodach-baladan) ruled Babylon. This would have been that self-same Merodach-baladan (var. Berodach-baladan) who “sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick”.<sup>13</sup> According to the Bible, Merodach-baladan was a son of Baladan.<sup>14</sup> There was a Bêl-dân who was purportedly governor of Calah (Kalach) who held the position of Eponym in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Tiglathpileser III as well as the year prior to when Tiglathpileser purportedly took the throne.<sup>15</sup> He may also have been “chief cup-bearer” six years earlier still.<sup>16</sup> Whether or not this is the same Baladan who was deposed by Sennacherib in the first year of his reign is questionable, especially as we are now dating Sennacherib’s first year to the fourth year of Tiglathpileser III’s reign.

When Sargon II defeated Marduk-apla-iddina, we are told by the Babylonian Chronicles and King Lists that Sargon became **king** of Babylon for five years. According to this revised chronology, which follows the Biblical chronology rather than the pseudo-Babylonian chronology, Sargon II became ‘king’ of Babylon around the same time that Esarhaddon became ‘king’ of Babylon. I would here point out that we have **no monumental evidence** to show that Sargon II ever, at any time, claimed to be **king** of Babylon!

The titles typically used by these two kings are:

**Sargon II:** “Sargon, the great king, [the mighty king], king of the universe, king of Assyria, **viceroy of [Babylon]**, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the [four] regions (of the earth)...”.<sup>17</sup>

**Esarhaddon:** “Esarhaddon, the great king, the mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, **viceroy of Babylon**, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of Karduniash (Babylonia)...”.<sup>18</sup>

A viceroy is someone exercising authority on behalf of a sovereign. According to this reconstruction, Sargon was viceroy whilst Esarhaddon was king of Assyria. The fact that

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<sup>11</sup> 2 Kings 18:17.

<sup>12</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, pp.13-14, §.30.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Kings 20:12 & Isa. 39:1.

<sup>14</sup> Isa. 39:1.

<sup>15</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.436, §.1196 (see year entries 744 BC and 734 BC), Daniel David Luckenbill, Greenwood Press, 1968.

<sup>16</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.435, §.1196 (See year entry 750 BC)

<sup>17</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.101, §.181 (emphasis mine).

<sup>18</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.224, §.575, p.228, §.583 etc (emphasis mine).



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Esarhaddon was also a viceroy suggests that they were possibly joint rulers of Babylon. Only one inscription records Esarhaddon as being king of Babylon, and this dates from the end of Esarhaddon's reign,<sup>19</sup> which is after Sargon had died.

Knowing all of this, it is not difficult to see that there were a number of Assyrian kings all ruling at the same time. This would explain why the Bible records that, during the time of Tiglathpileser III: "At that time did Ahaz send unto the **kings** of Assyria to help him".<sup>20</sup> Note, 'kings' in the plural. Having established a chronological framework from the Bible, let us now put this revised understanding to the test.

### The Annals of Sennacherib

With these thoughts in mind, let us now start analysing what Sennacherib's monuments are actually telling us. We shall start with the overthrow of someone called Shuzubi, a person who is also variously called Shuzubu, Nergal-ushezib and Musheshib-Marduk. He was deposed during Sennacherib's fourth campaign, which we shall proceed to demonstrate occurred in Sennacherib's fourth year:

"In the course of my [fourth] campaign I accomplished the overthrow of Shuzubi, the Chaldean, – who sat **in the midst of the swamps**, – in the city of Bitûtu. That one, – the terror (*lit.*, ague, chills) of my battle fell upon him, and broke his courage (*lit.*, tore his heart); like a criminal(?) he fled alone, and **his place was seen no more**."<sup>21</sup>

This same person is mentioned in Sennacherib's sixth campaign. This time, Shuzubu did not escape:

"On my return march Shuzubu, the Babylonian, who during an uprising in the land had turned to himself the rule of Sumer and Akkad, – I accomplished his defeat in a battle of the plain (open battle). I seized him alive with my (own) hands, **I threw him into bonds and fetters of iron and brought him to Assyria**. The king of Elam, who had gone over to his side and had aided him, I defeated. His forces I scattered and I shattered his host."<sup>22</sup>

This, however, was purportedly not the complete story:

"In my eighth campaign, after Shuzubu had revolted, and the Babylonians, wicked devils, had closed the city gates, – their hearts planning resistance; Shuzubu, the Chaldean, a weakling hero, who had no knees, a slave, subject to the governor of the city of Lahiri, – about him there gathered the fugitive Arameans, the runaway, the murderer, the robber. **Into the marshes they descended** and made rebellion. But I surrounded him completely. I pressed him to the life. Through fear and hunger **he fled to Elam**. When plotting and treachery were (hatched) against him (there), he hastened from Elam and entered Shuanna [the sacred precinct of Babylon]. The Babylonians placed him on the throne, – for which he was not fitted, and intrusted to him the government of Sumer and Akkad..."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *The Black Stone of Esarhaddon* on p.168 of *The American Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Apr 1925), Daniel David Luckenbill,

<sup>20</sup> 2 Chron. 28:16-20.

<sup>21</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.121, §.241 (emphases mine).

<sup>22</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, pp.123-4, §.247.

<sup>23</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.125, §.252.

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Sennacherib as king  
(from Khorsabad)

It should be stressed that this passage incorporates the details of a number of campaigns in a form of a resumé or flash-back. The fleeing to the marshes by Shuzubu took place in Sennacherib's **fourth** campaign. After deposing Shuzubu, Sennacherib placed his son Ashur-nâdin-shumi on the throne. Shuzubu at that time escaped and "fled to Elam". The second resurgence took place **after** Ashur-nâdin-shumi's five to six year reign. According to this scenario, Sennacherib's **sixth** campaign must have taken place in the **fourteenth** year of his reign, that is, at the end of Ashur-nâdin-shumi's five to six year reign and after Ushezib-Marduk's four to five year reign.

This effectively means that Shuzubu reigned twice. As noticed by Albert Grayson, the names Nergal-**ushezib** and **Mushezib**-Marduk (var. Ushezib-Marduk in the Babylonian King List A) are both variations on the name Shuzubu.<sup>24</sup> The trouble is, their reigns are shown as successive, meaning that Mushezib-Marduk's five year reign is placed immediately after that of Nergal-Ushezib's one year reign. This means that, in all of the

Babylonian king lists and chronicles, Shuzubu's initial one year reign is wrongly placed **after** that of Ashur-nâdin-shumi. Amazingly, Grayson took his observations no further, whilst Brinkman, refusing to let go of what the Babylonian Chronicles and King Lists inform us, argues that there were in fact two kings by the name of Shuzubu, and assumes that Shuzubu alias Mushezib-Marduk immediately followed Shuzubu alias Nergal-Ushezib on the throne:

"Nergal-ušeēzib's career as supplanter of the Assyrian prince was brief. Within a few months he had been defeated and taken captive to Assyria. In view of the picturesque and unpleasant ends met by many anti-Assyrian rebels, Nergal-ušeēzib's fate is mercifully veiled in silence.

"Though the rebel king had been captured, Babylonia itself remained independent. Its next king was a Chaldean, Mušeēzib-Marduk, a minor opponent known from Sennacherib's campaign of 700. Mušeēzib-Marduk formed an alliance of Chaldeans, Babylonians, Arameans, Elamites, and other Iranians."<sup>25</sup>

In the *Synchronistic King List*, Nergal-ushezib is called "son of Gahul".<sup>26</sup> Shuzubu, the one Brinkman identifies as Mushezib-Marduk, is likewise called "son of Gahul" by Sennacherib.<sup>27</sup> In fact, we have a letter from the archives at Nineveh mentioning that

<sup>24</sup> This has already been noticed by Grayson, but he does not seem to have considered the consequences of this realization. See entry under Nergal-ushezib in ABC p.232.

<sup>25</sup> *Sennacherib's Babylonian Problem: An Interpretation*, p.92, John Anthony Brinkman, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Apr. 1973).

<sup>26</sup> ANET p.273.

<sup>27</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.155, §.351.



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Mushezib-Marduk (alias Shuzubu) retreated to Elam.<sup>28</sup> This can only refer to his retreat following Sennacherib's fourth campaign, as we are told that he was thrown "into bonds and fetters of iron" and taken to Assyria following Sennacherib's sixth campaign. There is therefore no question that the two names belong to one and the same person and that whoever was responsible for compiling the Babylonian King List A has made an error. As we shall proceed to demonstrate, this is not the only error they have made.

According to the Babylonian King List A (see insert right), Sennacherib ruled for **two years** before Mardukzakirshumi, who was then succeeded by Marduk-apla-iddina for 9 months and then by

Bêl-ibni, yet Sennacherib's annals clearly state that he deposed Marduk-apla-iddina in his first campaign and placed Bêl-ibni on the throne.<sup>29</sup> Sennacherib's first campaign against Marduk-apla-iddina occurred **in the beginning of his reign**,<sup>30</sup> and he is said to have set out from Assyria on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of *Shabâtu*,<sup>31</sup> which would have been around January/February time. This means that Bêl-ibni, who was placed on the throne that self-same year, immediately after Marduk-apla-iddina was deposed,<sup>32</sup> became king of Babylon in the **first year** of Sennacherib's reign! The suggestion that Sennacherib ruled for two years **previous** to Bêl-ibni is therefore shown to be false!

Eusebius, who starts by quoting an earlier writer by the name of Polyhistor, records:

"After the reign of the brother of Sennacherib, and after the reign of Akises over the Babylonians, before he had ruled thirty days, he was slain by Merodach-baladan. Merodach-baladan maintained himself as ruler six months, and he was slain by one, whose name was Elibos, and he became king. And in the third year of his reign, Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, levied an army against the Babylonians and appointed his son Asordanias as king over them; but he [i.e. Sennacherib] himself withdrew unto the land of the Assyrians...

"...And after enumerating the various exploits of Sennacherib (Sinecherim) he adds he reigned 18 years, and met his end in a conspiracy which was formed against him by his son, Ardumuzan.

	(iv)
	(destroyed)
[ ... ]	Nabushumishkun [his] s[on]
[ ... ]	Nabun[asir]
2 (years)	Nabunadinzeri, his son,
1 month 12 days	Nabushumukin, his son,
22	(years or kings?), dynasty of E.
3 (years)	Ukinzer, dynasty of Shashi
2	Pulu <sup>3</sup>
5	Ululaia, <sup>4</sup> dynasty of Bal-til <sup>5</sup>
12	Mardukaplaiddin, dynasty of the Sea Country,
5	Sargon
2	Sennacherib, dynasty of Habigal,
1 month	Mardukzakirshumi, son of Ardu,
9 months	Mardukaplaiddin, a native of Habi,
3 (years)	Belibni, dynasty of E,
6	Ashurnadinshumi, dynasty of Habigal,
1	Nergalushezib
5	Ushezib-Marduk, dynasty of E,
8	Sennacherib
[ ... ]	Esarhaddon
[ ... ]	Shamashshum <sup>6</sup>
[ ... ]	Kandal <sup>7</sup>
	(destroyed)

Extract from Babylonian King List A

<sup>28</sup> *Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib* Introduction p.xxxii, Manfred Dietrich, Helsinki University Press, 2003.

<sup>29</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.132, §.263 & p.134, §.273.

<sup>30</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.121, §.257.

<sup>31</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.129-130, §.258.

<sup>32</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.132, §.263.

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“So far Polyhistor.

“After Phul his brother Sennacherib reigned. He marched against Babylon with an army. He was victorious, captured Sarnelibos alive, and sent him to Assyria. After he had become master of Babylon, he set his son Asordanisos as king over Babylon, and himself returned to Assyria... ..He ruled 18 years, and was slain by his son. This one reigned 8 years, and after him Hamugios 21 years, and his brother 21.”<sup>33</sup>

Asordanias is clearly a phonetic variation of Ashur-nâdin-shumi. The suggestion above that Ashur-nâdin-shumi was placed on the Babylonian throne in the third year of Sennacherib’s reign is also clearly suspect as it does not allow for the one year reign of Shuzubu. Note that Sennacherib is here only credited with an 18 year reign. By the process of elimination, Akises must be the person otherwise known as Marduk-zakir-shumi who is here placed **before** the reign of Bêl-ibni. Notice that Pul is called ‘brother’ of Sennacherib. If Tiglathpileser III was the Biblical Pul king of Assyria, how do we explain, using the accepted chronology, the fact that Sennacherib was the brother of Tiglathpileser if he supposedly lived two generations later? Elibos, who is also called Sarnelibos, is clearly the person known from Sennacherib’s monuments as Bêl-ibni. (Note the metathesis.) The statement that Elibos killed Merodach-baladan is not supported by Sennacherib’s inscriptions which tell us that Marduk-apla-iddina fled to Elam and that Elibos (Bêl-ibni) was placed on the throne by Sennacherib himself.

None of these accounts lead us to believe that Sennacherib ruled for two years prior to establishing his son Ashur-nâdin-shumi (Asordanias) on the throne, which brings the entry in the *Synchronistic Chronicle* into question:

“[for two] years Sennacherib was king of Akkad; then the inhabitants of Akkad revolted and Ashurnadinshumi, the father [ceded] him the throne.”<sup>34</sup>

First of all, notice that this chronicle leads us to believe that Sennacherib ruled for two years immediately before placing his son Ashur-nadin-shumi on the throne. This simply does not accord with what we are told by the king lists which would have us believe that Sennacherib was king of Babylon prior to Bêl-ibni’s three year reign.

More importantly, we currently have no inscription to confirm that Sennacherib ever became king of Akkad (i.e. Babylon). He styled himself “Sennacherib, the great king, the mighty king of the universe, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters (of the world).”<sup>35</sup> No mention is made of Babylon or Akkad. Compare this with the titles used by Esarhaddon who styled himself “Esarhaddon, the great king, the mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, viceroy of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of Karduniash (Babylonia)...”<sup>36</sup>

It should be noted that Bêl-ibni is omitted from what is known as the *Synchronistic Chronicle*! A two year reign by Sennacherib immediately before Ashur-nâdin-shumi is simply untenable. The chroniclers have therefore clearly taken Bêl-ibni’s two to three

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<sup>33</sup> Annals of Sennacherib p.162.

<sup>34</sup> ANET p.273.

<sup>35</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.173, §.407, p.183, §.435 etc.

<sup>36</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.224, §.575, p.228, §.583 etc.

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year reign as belonging to Sennacherib and then added both to the list in an attempt at making us believe in a long Assyrian history.

According to the *Babylonian Chronicle*, Bêl-ibni was immediately succeeded by Sennacherib's son Ashur-nâdin-shumi:

"The third year of Bel-ibni: Sennacherib went down to Akkad. He led away to Assyria Bel-ibni and his officers. For three years Bel-ibni ruled Babylon. Sennacherib put Ashur-nadin-shumi, his son, on the throne in Babylon."<sup>37</sup>

This accords with what Eusebius recorded. A completely different story, however, is given in Sennacherib's records where we are told that Ashur-nâdin-shumi was placed on the throne of Babylon during Sennacherib's **fourth** (undated) campaign.<sup>38</sup> The insurgent was someone called Shuzubu – **not** Bel-ibni. In fact, this capture and transportation to Assyria of Bêl-ibni recorded in the *Babylonian Chronicle* is reminiscent of the story of Shuzubu's imprisonment as related by Sennacherib's texts. I would therefore suggest that the chroniclers have confused the two reports.

Furthermore, from Sennacherib's annals, we learn that Nabu-shum-ishkun was the son of Marduk-apla-iddina who was ruling Babylon towards the latter half of Sennacherib's reign and was defeated in his eighth campaign.

"The chieftains of the king of Elam, together with Nabû-shum-ishkun, son of Merodach-baladan, king of Babylonia, my hands took alive in that battle. As for the king of Elam and the king of Babylonia, the dread of my terrible onslaught overcame them, they forsook their chariots, and they fled from their lands to save their lives. And they did not come back."<sup>39</sup>

Remember that Shuzubu/Mushezib-Marduk was captured and taken in chains to Assyria during Sennacherib's earlier (sixth) campaign. This means that Nabu-shuma-ishkun, who is placed **before** Pul and Ululaia, around 50 years before Sennacherib even became king, is also misplaced in the King List!

The Babylonian King Lists also place a similarly named king Nabu-shuma-ukin (var. Shum-ukin) immediately before Nabu-mukin-zeri (var. Ukinzer, Kinzer and Mukin-zeri),

(iv)  
Sennacherib  
([Sin]ahhêriba), king  
of Assyria  
Nabuaplaiddin [his] vizier  
[and of Babylon]  
(anepigraph)  
[for two] years Sennacherib was king of Akkad; then the inhabitants of Akkad revolted and Ashurnadinshumi, the father [ceded] him the throne,<sup>2</sup>  
Sennacherib  
Nergalushezib, son of Gahul, Mushezib-Marduk, a native<sup>3</sup> of Bit-Dakkuri were the kings of [Ak]kad.  
Sennacherib, king of Assyria  
Belupahhir (and)  
and of Babylon, Kalbu, his viziers;

<sup>2</sup> cf. for this passage E. F. Weidner in *A/O*, III (1926), 75 f.  
<sup>3</sup> cf. below p. 308, n.9 for a possible different interpretation of the phrase *mâr Bit Dakkûri*.

Extract from Synchronistic Chronicle, as reproduced from *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*.

<sup>37</sup> ABC p.77, lines 26-31.

<sup>38</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.122, §.243 and p.144, §.315.

<sup>39</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.151, §.338. See also Vol. 2, p.127, §.254, p.156, §.352, p.158, §.357.

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calling him son of either Nabunaser or Nabu-nadin-zeri, depending on how you interpret what is written by the chroniclers.

Frederick Fales, quoting J. A. Brinkman, who likewise follows the *Babylonian Chronicle*, tells us that this Nabu-mukin-zeri, who ruled for three years, deposed Nabu-shuma-ukin (II).<sup>40</sup> We have absolutely no evidence, however, to support this assumption! To the contrary, in the autumn season of 1973, excavations at the ancient city of Nippur in Babylonia uncovered 113 Babylonian letters and 15 other tablets from the West Mound of the ancient city.<sup>41</sup> One of the main correspondents in the letters was a person called Mukīn-zēri, who is recognized as being the Nabu-mukin-zeri of the Babylonian King Lists and Chronicles, this being the person known as Kīnzêr in Tiglathpileser III's texts.

According to one letter, we learn the name of Nabu-mukin-zeri's son:

"Mukīn-zēri has been defeated/killed; his son Šum-ukīn has been defeated/killed; the whole city has been taken; may the king, my lord, rejoice. May the king, my lord, give audience to our messenger."<sup>42</sup>

As Fales points out, the verb *duāku/dāku* in the Assyrian "means 'to defeat' (especially with the internal object *diktu*, as used in the passage quoted above), but can also mean 'to kill,' with a certain indifference of use, both in Neo-Assyrian and in Standard Babylonian". This is why Fales cautiously translates as 'defeated/killed'. Just as Mukin-zeri is an abbreviation for Nabu-mukin-zeri, so Shum-ukin is an abbreviation for Nabu-shuma-ukin!<sup>43</sup> In other words, Nabu-shuma-ukin was a son of Nabu-mukin-zeri and was clearly co-ruling with him at the time of their deaths/defeat. Once again, the King Lists are shown to be misleading as they have placed Nabu-shuma-ukin immediately prior to Nabu-mukin-zeri whereas the documentary evidence shows that father and son were co-ruling.

Also, we are told:

"Mukīn-zēri is not called king in any of the letters of the Governor's Archive in which he appears. In fact, he is addressed as 'brother' in the single letter that is known to have been dispatched to him from Nippur."<sup>44</sup>

In actual fact, he is not called king in any surviving correspondence!<sup>45</sup> From this, it has been **assumed** that the letters date prior to his seizure of the throne. Likewise, Nabunaser, who is also called a king of Babylon by the chroniclers, is only called governor of Babylon in the correspondence from Nippur, from which it has once again been **assumed** that the letters in question date prior to his investiture on the throne:

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<sup>40</sup> Frederick M. Fales, *Moving Around Babylon: On the Aramean and Chaldean Presence in Southern Mesopotamia* p.98, in *Babylon: Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident*, Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, Margarete van Ess and Joachim Marzahn, TOPOI, Berlin Studies of the Ancient World, Germany 2011. (ISBN: 978-3-11-022211-1.)

<sup>41</sup> *Nippur IV: The Early Neo-Babylonian Governor's Archive from Nippur* p.1, Steven W. Cole, Oriental Institute Publications, Vol. 114, University of Chicago, Illinois 1996.

<sup>42</sup> Fales, *Moving Around Babylon op. cit.* p.109.

<sup>43</sup> "The full form of this royal name [i.e. Nabu-shuma-ukin II] appears only in Kinglist A; The Babylonian Chronicle gives the abbreviated form *Šuma-ukīn*" - *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia 1158-722 BC* p.60, J.A. Brinkman, Italy 1968.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p.3.

<sup>45</sup> Fales, *Moving Around Babylon op. cit.* p.106.

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“The content of the correspondence points to the identification of this man as Nabonassar, who ruled Babylon from 747 to 734. The fact that the *šandabakku* addressed him as ‘brother’, and not as ‘king,’ may indicate that Nabonassar did not occupy the throne at the time.”<sup>46</sup>

Yet some of the letters clearly date to when Mukinzeri was ‘king’ in his royal city Sapie!

That Nabu-mukin-zeri took control of Babylon is confirmed by correspondence from Kuyunjik (Nineveh), but the letters in our possession do not suggest the three to four years reign with which this king is usually accredited. Admittedly, one letter gives the number of years of his reign as “four years, three months, and twenty six days”,<sup>47</sup> but I would suggest that this includes the time he was ruling in Sapie (var. Sapia). The fact that he was king of Babylon at the time he was conquered by Tiglathpileser III is difficult to reconcile with the idea that he was ruling from Sapie in the south. We shall also shortly be challenging the suggestion that Nabu-mukin-zeri was defeated in Tiglathpileser III’s fifteenth year.

### Pul and Ululaia

It is often argued that Pul was an alternative name for Tiglathpileser III and Ululaia an alternative name for Shalmaneser V. This is despite the fact that Pul and Tiglathpileser III are mentioned in the Bible as two distinctly separate kings.<sup>48</sup> Now that we have moved Sennacherib to his rightful place in the chronological framework, we can more accurately state who Pul and Ululaia really were.

Sennacherib described Bêl-ibni as “son of a master-builder, a scion of Shuanna [Babylon], who had grown up in my palace like a young hound”.<sup>49</sup> Although he was of Babylonian extraction, having been brought up in the Assyrian palace, he could effectively be regarded as an Assyrian king. The name Bêl-ibni can also be read as Pul-ibni. The fact that Bêl-ibni is accredited with a reign of **three** years, whilst Pul is only accredited with a reign of **two** years, could be explained by the way the Babylonians counted regnal years:

“*Regnal Years and Accession Years.* The Eg[yp]tian[s] used a non-Accession Year system whereas the Babylonians always, and the Hebrew normally, employed an Accession-Year scheme, i.e. if a king came to the throne in the 11th month of Regnal Year *x*, the Egyptians could count that as his Regnal Year 1 so that the Accession Year and Regnal Year 1 coincide; the Babylonians always regarded such an incomplete year as the Accession Year and considered that Regnal Year 1 began on the first day of the following calendar year. i.e. the Accession Year and Regnal Year 1 are different; the Hebrews generally followed the Babylonian practice but *II Kings* and derivatives can be anomalous in that they also show clear traces of a non-Accession scheme of the

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<sup>46</sup> S. W. Cole, *The Early Neo-Babylonian Governor's Archive op. cit.* p.5.

<sup>47</sup> *Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpoint Morgan* Vol. 1, *Babylonian Business Transactions of the First Millenium B.C.* p.10, Albert T. Clay, Yale University Press New York, 1912.

<sup>48</sup> 1 Chron. 5:26

<sup>49</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.132, §.263 & p.134, §.273.



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Eg[yp]tian]. type. All systems, however, were agreed that the period of a king's reign after the penultimate year, however short, should be regarded as a complete year."<sup>50</sup>

This difference in dating systems is also remarked on by Grayson when he tells us that the four years of Humban-nimena's reign, "since he ascended the throne in Mushezib-Marduk's first year and died in Mushezib-Marduk's fourth year, he reigned only three years according to normal Babylonian reckoning."<sup>51</sup>

Following this argument to its natural conclusion, Sennacherib's son, Ashur-nâdin-shumi, must have been the king known as Ululaia. Again, the difference between the **six** years accredited to Ashur-nâdin-shumi and the **five** years assigned to Ululaia would be down to the way the Babylonians calculated the regnal years.

With this realisation, the following facts emerge:

- The compilers of the Chronicles and King Lists did not appreciate that Bêl-ibni and Ashur-nâdin-shumi were Pul and Ululaia, hence have included them twice in their lists.
- Bêl-ibni was considered to be of Babylonian royal blood, a "scion of Shuanna", who was brought up in the Assyrian royal household, hence was not a true Assyrian.
- Sennacherib's supposed two year reign of Babylon proposed by the *Babylonian King List A* is clearly an error, as this two year reign actually relates to the two to three year reign of Bêl-ibni. It seems that the chroniclers have treated Bêl-ibni's reign as belonging to Sennacherib, presumably because he was responsible for placing Bêl-ibni on the throne.
- The Chroniclers have confused the reports, attributing the capture and transportation in chains to Assyria of the insurgent Shuzubu to Bêl-ibni.
- As already pointed out, Sennacherib does not call himself king of Babylon and even Sargon II, whom the chroniclers claim ruled Babylon for five years, is only styled 'viceroy of Babylon' in his inscriptions.<sup>52</sup> In fact, immediately after deposing Merodach-baladan, we are told that Sargon II placed it "under the hand of my official, the viceroy of Babylon, and my official, the viceroy of Gambulu".<sup>53</sup> This viceroy is not mentioned in the Babylonian King List or the Chronicles! According to these revisions to the chronology, Sargon II and Esarhaddon became joint rulers of Babylon.
- Nabu-shum-ishkun, who is placed **before** Pul and Ululaia in the Babylonian King Lists, was the son of Marduk-apla-iddina who was ruling Babylonia during the time of Sennacherib.<sup>54</sup> This was during Sennacherib's eighth campaign,<sup>55</sup> hence was

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<sup>50</sup> Herodotus Book II Commentary 99-182, Appendix - *The Chronology of Egyptian and Near Eastern History During the Saite Period* on p.243, Alan B. Lloyd, E.J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands 1993. (ISBN: 90-04-04179-6.)

<sup>51</sup> ABC p.221, entry under Humban-nimena (Menanu) Elamite king.

<sup>52</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.67, §.126-7 and p.68, §.129.

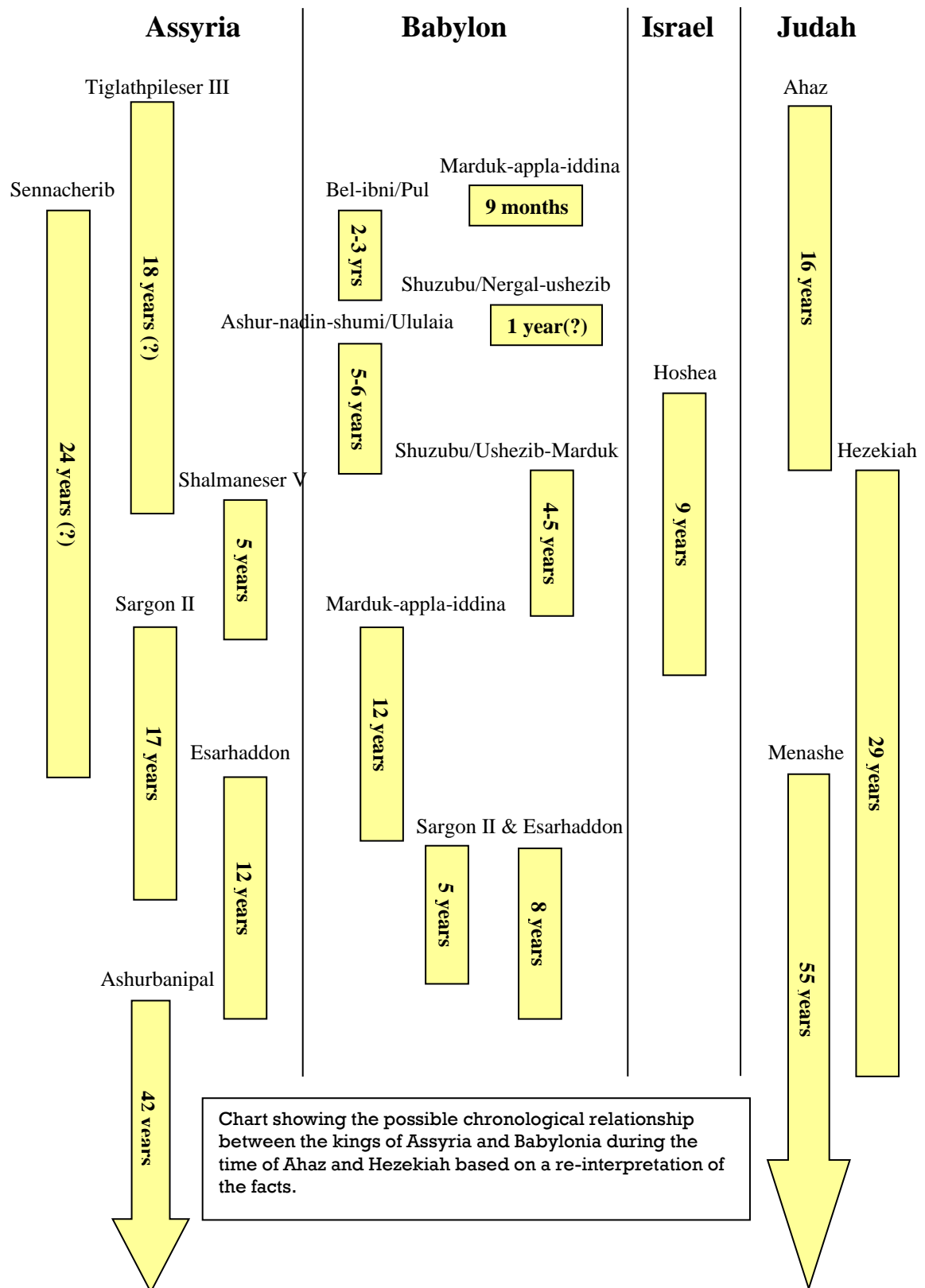
<sup>53</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.21, §.41.

<sup>54</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.151, §.338

<sup>55</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.127, §.254 and p.156, §.352.



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relatively late in his reign. This eighth campaign took place **after** “Shuzubu had revolted”.<sup>56</sup> This means that he was king of Babylon **after** Sennacherib deposed Mushezib-Marduk who in turn overthrew Sennacherib’s son Ashur-nâdin-shumi.

According to this reconstruction, Nabu-shum-ishkun was co-ruling with his father Marduk-apla-iddina, who, according to this reconstruction, became king of Babylon immediately after Shuzubu was deposed by Sennacherib and ruled for 12 years. This is the self-same Marduk-apla-iddina who is attested in the first year of Sargon II’s reign. Note that the Marduk-apla-iddina, who was defeated by Sennacherib in the first year of his reign, cannot possibly have been the king of Babylon who sent “letters and a present” to Hezekiah king of Judah.<sup>57</sup> This can only have been the Marduk-apla-iddina who was defeated by Sargon II.

As to whether this was the same Marduk-apla-iddina who was earlier defeated by Sennacherib during Sennacherib’s first year is difficult to say. Although Sennacherib claimed that he fled to Elam where he died,<sup>58</sup> another text records that **the same** Marduk-apla-iddina assisted Shuzubu during Sennacherib’s **fourth** campaign.<sup>59</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, it would probably be wise to refer to these two separate periods of reign as belonging to Marduk-apla-iddina I and II respectively, but to bear in mind that they were probably one and the same person. Note that it was Marduk-apla-iddina II who sent the letters and present to King Hezekiah.

- Nabu-shuma-ukin was the son of Nabu-mukin-zeri, yet the chroniclers have reversed the order of these two kings. They clearly did not appreciate the extent of co-regency which existed between any of the kings of this period.

All of this demonstrates how shaky the carefully constructed Assyrian and Babylonian chronologies actually are. The chart on the previous page is an attempt at a reconstruction so that we can more clearly see how things are supposed to roughly align.

### Tiglathpileser III

Although Tiglathpileser III called himself king of Babylon and records that he “entered Babylon” and offered “[holy (pure) sacrifices]”<sup>60</sup> before the Babylonian god Marduk, he never once mentions an assault on the city of Babylon itself. Many of the places he lists appear to be located in southern Babylonia. Nabu-mukin-zeri and his son were apparently ruling southern Babylonia, their royal city being Sapie (vars. Sapia or Sapiya) to the south of Babylon, though for some strange reason, Tiglathpileser only mentions Ukinzer (i.e. Nabu-mukin-zeri) and not his son Nabu-shuma-ukin. “Kînzêr, son of Amukkâni, I shut up in Sapie, his royal city”, he records,<sup>61</sup> the name Amukkâni being a

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<sup>56</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.125, §.252.

<sup>57</sup> 2 Kings 20:12 and Isa. 39:1. Called Merodachbaladan by Isaiah but Berodachbaladan in the second book of Kings.

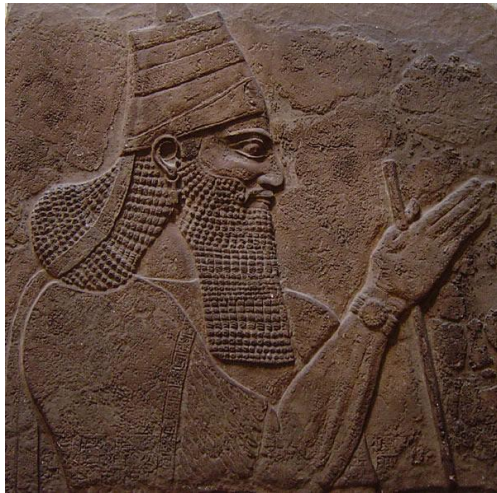
<sup>58</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.153, §.345.

<sup>59</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.121, §.242.

<sup>60</sup> ARAB p.291, §.810.

<sup>61</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.285, §.792.

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Tiglathpileser III

tribal name (i.e. Bît-Amukkâni) rather than the name of his actual father. If Nabu-mukin-zeri was king of Babylon, then why was his royal city in southern Babylonia rather than Babylon itself?

We are told by the Babylonian Chronicle that Tiglathpileser III became king of Assyria in the third year of Nabunaser king of Babylon.<sup>62</sup> Tiglathpileser records that in his first year:

“The [Babylonian] cities of Dûr-Kurigalzu, Sippar of Shamash... cities of Karduniash, as far as the Uknû-River, [on the shore of the lower sea], I brought under my sway. Within the Assyrian border I brought them. My official I [set over them as governor]”<sup>63</sup>

That this was in his first year is confirmed by the following inscription:

“Since the beginning of my rule I have brought under my sway, **beginning** with Dûr-Kurigalzu, Sippar of Shamash (and) Pasitu of the Dunanu, (and going) as far as Nippur, the Itu’ and the Rubu’ (tribes), all of the Arameans (living) on the banks of the Tigris and Surapi, as far as the Uknû, by the shore of the lower sea.”<sup>64</sup>

This shows that Tiglathpileser III was effectively king of Babylonia as early as the first year of his reign. It is therefore highly likely that the campaign against Nabu-mukin-zeri [Ukinzer] took place in this very year. Otherwise, how do we explain the fact that Nabunaser continued to rule Babylon unscathed by this invasion?

As J.A. Brinkman aptly puts it:

“Accordingly, Tiglath-Pileser’s first two campaigns, dating to his accession year (745) and to his first year (744), were directed against Babylonia and Namri.

“In his campaign which began in [the month of] Tashrit 745, Tiglath-Pileser did not come to subjugate Babylonia to the Assyrian yoke; and there is no record of hostilities with the Babylonian administration. Rather, he came chiefly to aid the Babylonian king, who was unable to keep order in his own land, in repressing the Aramean and Chaldean tribesmen. The Assyrian campaign attacked many areas in northern, southern, and eastern Babylonia.”<sup>65</sup>

Tiglathpileser III ‘came chiefly to aid the Babylonian king’. This was Brinkman’s **assumption**! He also **assumes** that Nabu-nasir (Nabonassar) must have been loyal to the Assyrian throne, an assumption which is not borne out by the documentary evidence from this period, as Brinkman himself admits:

“We have no explicit statement from either the Babylonian or the Assyrian side concerning Tiglath-Pileser’s relations with Nabonassar. It seems that the Assyrian king

<sup>62</sup> ABC p.70, col. i, line 1.

<sup>63</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.270, §.764.

<sup>64</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.280, §.782 (emphasis mine).

<sup>65</sup> *Political History of Post Kassite Babylonia (1158-722 B.C.)* pp.228-9, John A. Brinkman, Italy 1968. The month of Tashrit, a variant spelling of Tishri, falls around September-October.

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did not visit Babylon itself at this time, nor did he attempt to depose the Babylonian king. Yet, if we can believe the official Assyrian accounts of his campaign of 745, Tiglath-Pileser must have travelled through much territory that nominally belonged to Nabonassar. Furthermore, the Assyrian king claimed to have become master of the land of Karduniash and of all the Arameans who lived along the Tigris and Surappi rivers as far south as the Uknu and the Persian Gulf; and, shortly after his first campaign, he adopted the title 'King of Sumer and Akkad,' implying some claim to suzerainty over Babylonia."<sup>66</sup>

He continues by saying that "Nippur, mentioned as terminus of one of his thrusts into Babylonia, continued under at least nominal Babylonian administration".<sup>67</sup> He is able to say this because he **assumes** that correspondence dating to the time of Nabu-mukin-zeri is dated to the **fifteenth** year of Tiglathpileser's reign. This is when the Limmu Lists claim that Tiglathpileser conquered the city of Sapia. We should bear in mind, however, that just because someone has written something down on a clay tablet or other monument, it does not necessarily mean that what they have recorded is true! When Tiglathpileser III conquered the whole of Babylonia in his first year of reign, it is unlikely that the city of Sapia would have been unaffected by this invasion. It is much more likely that Nabu-mukin-zeri was defeated in this first campaign and that Tiglathpileser's entry into Babylon, as recorded in his inscriptions, including his rule over Babylon, should be more correctly dated to his first year rather than his fifteenth year when, according to these revisions, Ashur-nadin-shumi would have been king of Babylon. If Nabu-mukin-zeri was defeated in Tiglathpileser III's first year, then, bearing in mind that Nabu-mukin-zeri was considered king of Babylon, then Tiglathpileser III would have effectively become king of Babylon from that time on.

"My official I [set over them as governor]",<sup>68</sup> we are told following Tiglathpileser's first campaign, a statement which is repeated following his defeat of Ukinzer.<sup>69</sup> There is nothing to suggest that he made a second incursion into Babylonia later in his reign to reinstate his authority. In fact, in what has been called the *Nimrûd Tablet*, Tiglathpileser recounts his conquests from the **first** year of his reign right up to the **seventeenth** year of his reign.<sup>70</sup> In that tablet, there is only mention of **the one conquest** of Babylonia! This second incursion into Babylonia is an **assumption** based purely on the Limmu Lists which would have us believe that the subjugation of the city of Sapia occurred in the **fifteenth** year of the king's reign. Take that misleading piece of information away from the equation and you arrive at a more sensible solution to the problem. Basically, we have put far too much trust in these Chronicles, King Lists and Limmu Lists without challenging them.

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* p.231.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* pp.231-2.

<sup>68</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.270, §.764.

<sup>69</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.286, §.795, p.291, §.809.

<sup>70</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.283, §.788.

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## The Limmu or Eponym Lists

The *Limmu*, or Eponym [var. Eponymy] lists as they are also known, are supposed to be lists of people who held the position of chief magistrate or *Eponym* in Assyria for a period of one year. It is argued that the Assyrians dated their years by these eponyms, however, things are not as straightforward as we would like to believe. We do not yet know the role of the eponym or why he was chosen. Was it bestowed on certain high officials to give them some extra authority over and above their usual status, some religious function or what?

Quoting from Ernst F. Weidner and Emil Forrer, who both believed that the role was chosen by the throwing of dice, James B Pritchard informs us:

“In contradistinction to the Babylonian custom (attested from the time of the kings of Agade to that of the Kassite rulers) of naming each year after an important event, the Assyrians used the names of certain high officials for the same purpose. The first (full) year of the reign of a king is always named after himself, the following years have originally been named after that official who won when lots were thrown to determine the eponym. Later on, the position of the official within the hierarchy was decisive for the sequence, the highest official (*tartanu*) following the king immediately, while important palace officers (such as, e.g. the *nāgir ekalli* ‘overseer of the royal property,’ the chief cupbearer, etc.) and the governors of the foremost provinces took their turn in well-established order. After the exhaustion of all eligible candidates for the office of the *limu*, within the rule of one and the same king, the sequence of officials started anew, beginning with the king.”<sup>71</sup>

All of this, however, is pure conjecture on their part.

Most of the tablets from which the Limmu lists are taken are in such a poor condition that they have had to be reconstructed from comparison with other sources. Whilst archaeologists place so much trust in their reconstructed lists, I personally am not convinced that these attempts are any better or worse than the King Lists which have already been discussed and discredited above. In fact, by showing that Tiglathpileser III conquered Nabu-mukin-zeri in the first year of his reign, then it reveals just how unreliable the Limmu Lists actually are, as they would date this event to Tiglathpileser III’s *fifteenth* year.

This is not the only problem noted with these lists. J.E. Reade, for example, has noticed that, during the time of Ashurbanipal, the “basic problem is that there are too many eponyms recorded”.<sup>72</sup> There are also difficulties with the eponyms during the time of Nabu-nasir:

“E. Forrer suggested that Balaṭu [var. Balasu] was originally intended to be eponym in 786, but was replaced by Nabû-šarru-ušur. Alternatively Balaṭu could have been substituted as second eponym rather than first, but if so his name is misplaced on the list.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Intro to *Excerpts from the Lists of Assyrian Eponyms in Ancient Near Eastern Texts op. cit.* p.274.

<sup>72</sup> *Assyrian Eponyms, Kings and Pretenders 648-605 BC* by J.E. Reade on p.255, *Orientalia*, Nova Series, Vol. 67, Fasc. 2 (1998)

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p.250.

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Basically, the evidence shows that there could have been more than one eponym at any one time. The lists make no allowance for any co-regencies either.

According to Luckenbill's version of the Eponym list, Shalmaneser V came up against Samaria in 723 BCE<sup>74</sup> whilst Sennacherib is mentioned as king of Assyria *forty years later* in 687 BCE.<sup>75</sup> This simply is not tenable, yet the authenticity of the Eponym lists is accepted without question. We have also demonstrated that Sennacherib's final year occurred in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah, which is conventionally dated to around 710 BCE.

Year 1	Tiglathpileser took his seat on the throne. In the month of Tashritu he marched to the territory between the rivers (i.e. Mesopotamia)
Year 2	Against namri (i.e. Mesopotamia)
Year 3	In the city of Arpadda. A massacre took place in the land of Urartu (Armenia).
Year 4	Against Arpadda.
Year 5	Against Arpadda. After three years it was conquered.
Year 6	Against Arpadda.
Year 7	Against Ulluba. The fortress was taken.
Year 8	Kullani was captured.
Year 9	Against Madai.
Year 10	To the foot of Mount Nâl.
Year 11	Against Urarti.
Year 12	Against Philistia.
Year 13	Against the land of Damascus
Year 14	Against the land of Damascus
Year 15	Against Sapia
Year 16	in the land [of Assyria]
Year 17	The king took the hand of Bêl.
Year 18	The king took the hand of Bêl
Year 19	Against Damascus – Shalmaneser took his seat on the throne.
The eponyms of Tiglathpileser III.	

His reign therefore extends back through that of Shalmaneser V and well into the reign of Tiglathpileser III. Sargon II's first year of reign likewise coincided with Shalmaneser V's final year, which is equivalent to Hezekiah's sixth year of reign.<sup>76</sup> Sargon II is said to have ruled for 17 years,<sup>77</sup> which means that his last year coincided with Hezekiah's twenty-second year, Esarhaddon being at that time king of Assyria! All of this demonstrates that these *Eponym Lists* are as good as worthless for the purposes of determining a firm chronology, yet we have wrongly assumed that they are an accurate record of the Assyrian and Babylonian chronologies, even to the extent of rejecting the Biblical chronology in their favour.

Consider also the Eponyms during the time of Tiglathpileser III. This Assyrian king tells us in his monumental records that he went up against Rezin king of Syria and Azariah king of Judah in the third year of his reign.<sup>78</sup> He placed Hoshea on the throne of Israel sometime later in his reign.<sup>79</sup> We do not know what year this would have been, but according to the Eponym lists, in his third year, Tiglathpileser was "in the city of Arpadda. A massacre took place in the land of Urartu (Armenia)".<sup>80</sup> For the next three years, he was supposedly tied up sorting out the affairs of the city of Arpadda (Tell Rifaat) in north Syria. He did not purportedly attack Damascus until *his 13<sup>th</sup>*

*year*, which is not concordant with the facts as presented in his monuments.

<sup>74</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.437.

<sup>75</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.438.

<sup>76</sup> 2 Kings 18:10.

<sup>77</sup> ABC p.76 (Chronicle 1).

<sup>78</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, pp.272-3, §.769. (Rezin king of Syria is there called Rasunni [of Aram].)

<sup>79</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.293, §.816.

<sup>80</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.436.



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According to the same Limmu/Eponym lists, it was not until his 12<sup>th</sup> year that he went up against the land of Philistia, which is presumably when he assisted Ahaz king of Judah to recover the cities taken by the Philistines,<sup>81</sup> his campaigns previous to that being directed against the regions in Armenia. According to this scenario, Tiglathpileser could not have campaigned against the land of Israel prior to his 12<sup>th</sup> year.

Tiglathpileser tells us:

“The land of Bit-Humria [Omri-land or land of Israel] ... all of its people, together with their goods I carried off to Assyria. Pakaha [Pekah], their king they deposed and I placed Ausi’ (Hoshea) over them as king”.<sup>82</sup>

If we are to believe these Limmu Lists, Tiglathpileser III must have placed Hoshea on the throne in Samaria sometime during or after his 12<sup>th</sup> year. If we take the 12<sup>th</sup> year as the year Hoshea was invested on the throne of Samaria, it means that Hoshea’s 7<sup>th</sup> year, which is when Shalmaneser V laid siege to Samaria, would have occurred in the first year of Shalmaneser V’s five year reign, but we are told that the siege took three years.<sup>83</sup> If Shalmaneser V died at the end of those three years of besieging Samaria, then that would then mean that the siege of Samaria must have started in Shalmaneser’s **third year** of reign, which immediately reveals that there must have been a period of co-regency between him and Tiglathpileser III. A co-regency might be supported by a certain official by the name of Bêl-harran-bêl-usur who was high chamberlain under Shalmaneser V and Tiglathpileser III, though the name Tiglathpileser was actually written over an erasure, the erased name being Shalmaneser. It has been **assumed** that the Shalmaneser in question was Shalmaneser IV who supposedly reigned shortly before the time of Tiglathpileser,<sup>84</sup> but we can demonstrate that Shalmaneser IV of the King Lists is actually identifiable as Shalmaneser V. There was no Shalmaneser IV ruling immediately prior to Tiglathpileser III.

It is during the time of Tiglathpileser that Marduk-apla-iddina (Merodach-baladan) first makes an appearance:

Merodach-baladan, son of Iakina, king of the sea (land), who had not come before (*i.e.*, submitted to) any of the kings, my fathers, and had not kissed their feet, the terror of the awful splendor of Assur, my lord, overwhelmed him and he came to the city of Sapia, into my presence, and kissed my feet.”<sup>85</sup>

Note that Iakina was a family name rather than the name of his father. He was a Chaldean, a descendant of Bît-Iakin (*i.e.* House of Iakin) – better known to us as Iakin (יָאִקִּין Yaakin<sup>86</sup> var יֶאֱכָן Akan<sup>87</sup>) son of Etser son of Seir. The “sea (land)” here appears to be referring to that part of southern Babylonia on the Persian Gulf. Having

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<sup>81</sup> “At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him. For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowlands, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Aijalon, and Gederath, and Soco with the towns thereof; and they dwelt there.” 2 Chron. 28:16-18.

<sup>82</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.293, §.816.

<sup>83</sup> 2 Kings 18:10.

<sup>84</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.295, §.823-4.

<sup>85</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.285, §.794.

<sup>86</sup> 1 Chron. 1:42.

<sup>87</sup> Gen. 36:27.

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demonstrated that Tiglathpileser III conquered the city of Sapia in the first year of his reign, this event is clearly also to be dated to that point in time. This means that Sennacherib's first year, which I calculate to have occurred in the fourth year of Tiglathpileser III's reign, will have fallen shortly after this conquest of Babylonia by Tiglathpileser.

It has been assumed that this is the Marduk-apla-iddina who became king during the time of Sargon II. This reconstruction calls for this assumption to be overturned and actually makes the Marduk-apla-iddina in question, even though they are both called "son of Iakini [var. Iakinu]",<sup>88</sup> the one who ruled for nine months before being deposed by Sennacherib.

Quoting from Jewish sources, Ginzberg informs us that the Merodach-baladan of the time of Hezekiah had the same name as his father.

"Baladan, it should be said by the way, was not the real king of Babylon. The throne was occupied by his father, whose face had changed to that of a dog. Therefore the son had to administer the affairs of state, and he was known by his father's name as well as his own".<sup>89</sup>

Note particularly that father and son bore the same name and that this tradition relates that father and son were both ruling at the same time. As already stated, assuming that we can believe what we read, Sennacherib tells us that the first Merodach-baladan, when he fled to Elam, died there.<sup>90</sup> This was purportedly in Sennacherib's *first* campaign, which statement conflicts with another text which records Marduk-apla-iddina as assisting Shuzubu during Sennacherib's *fourth* campaign.

"That (same) Merodach-baladan, whose defeat I had brought about *in the course of my first campaign*, and whose forces I had shattered, – the roar of my mighty arms and the onset of my terrible battle he feared and he gathered together the gods of his whole land in their shrines, and loaded them into ships and fled like a bird to the city of Nagite-rakki, which is in the midst of the sea."<sup>91</sup>

Nagite-rakki is elsewhere called "Nagîtu which is in the midst of the sea."<sup>92</sup> Nagitu is also described as being one of the cities of Elam "on the other side of the Bitter Sea (Persian Gulf)."<sup>93</sup> This is where Marduk-apla-iddina is said to have fled to. Unless this is referring to Marduk-apla-iddina II, son of Marduk-apla-iddina I, who must have fled to Elam with his father, he therefore could not have died in Sennacherib's first campaign as we are led to believe.

Marduk-apla-iddina must have been invested on the throne of Babylon shortly after the time of Nabu-mukin-zeri. It is even possible that Marduk-apla-iddina was the Nabu-apla-iddina of the King Lists who lived during the time of Sennacherib, having been placed on the throne of Babylon as viceroy or *umman* (i.e. general) by Tiglathpileser

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<sup>88</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.14, §.31, p.33, §.66 etc.

<sup>89</sup> *Legends of the Jews: from Joshua to Esther* Vol. 4, p.275, Louis Ginzberg, translated by Boaz Cohen, Philadelphia 1913.

<sup>90</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.153, §.345.

<sup>91</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.121, §.242.

<sup>92</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.144, §.314.

<sup>93</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.145, §.318.

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himself. The fact that the *Babylonian King List A* places Pul and Ululaia immediately after Ukinzer (i.e. Nabu-mukin-zeri) suggests that something of this nature must have occurred. The revisions being presented here, however, show that Pul (aka Bêl-ibni) must have been placed on the throne of Babylon (depending on the extent of co-regency between Tiglathpileser III and his successor Shalmaneser V) around about the fourth year of Tiglathpileser, which means that there is a period of around three years between the deposing of Ukinzer in Tiglathpileser's first year and the accession of Pul. Those three years can be accounted for by the fact that Tiglathpileser ruled over Babylon for two years and he would then have been succeeded by Marduk-apla-iddina for 9 months. As to when the enigmatic Nabunaser ruled Babylon is, at this stage, uncertain.

These revisions show just how untrustworthy the King Lists are. We have put far too much trust in them for accuracy. The Limmu Lists, which purportedly provide a precise stable chronology for the kings of Assyria, fare no better. By pulling the King Lists apart, we have completely destroyed any credibility that the Limmu Lists may have had.

According to the King Lists, Marduk-zakir-shumi, who is called 'son of a slave',<sup>94</sup> has to fit, somewhere, into this period. The *Babylonian King List A* says that he ruled for **one month** immediately after Sennacherib's two year reign and before Merodach-baladan's nine month reign, which in turn was followed by Bêl-ibni's three year reign. It is possible, therefore, that Marduk-zakir-shumi ruled Babylon immediately after Tiglathpileser III and immediately before Marduk-apla-iddina. It is also possible that Marduk-zakir-shumi is to be identified as Shuzubu, alias Nergal-ushezib, alias Mushezib-Marduk! The following comment in Sennacherib's inscriptions needs no explanation:

"Shuzubu, the Chaldean, a weakling hero, who had no knees, **a slave**..."<sup>95</sup>

Shuzubu the slave might therefore be identifiable as Marduk-zakir-shumi the 'son of a slave'.

In actual fact, in correspondence from Nippur dating to the time of Tiglathpileser III, we learn that Mushezib (a variant spelling of Shuzubu) was actually a slave trader rather than slave.<sup>96</sup> Another of the letters refers to "Šūzubu [i.e. Shuzubu] at Bābdūri" with Steven Cole informing us:

"According to the inscriptions of Sargon II, Bābdūri was one of the strongholds in the chain of fortresses set up by Šutur-Nahhunte on the border between Elam and the trans-Tigris region of Babylonia that was called Yadburi".<sup>97</sup>

This reminds us of Shuzubu's involvement with Elam, having been established on the Babylonian throne by Kudur-nahundu,<sup>98</sup> a name which can also be written Kutur-Nahhunte. (There is the strong possibility that Shutur-Nahhunte of the time of Sargon II and Kudur-Nahundu of the time of Sennacherib were one and the same person!)

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<sup>94</sup> Annals p.10.

<sup>95</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.125, §.252.

<sup>96</sup> *Nippur IV: The Early Neo-Babylonian Governor's Archive from Nippur* p.70 (Text 17), Steven W. Cole, Oriental Institute Publications, Vol. 114, University of Chicago, Illinois 1996.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p.154 (Text 69). See especially the Comments in respect of line 8.

<sup>98</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.124, §.249.

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We consider the words of Donald J. Wiseman:

“The cuneiform texts belonging to the class known as Babylonian Chronicles are a unique and reliable source of knowledge of the history of Babylonia. Unfortunately, however, only a few of these compilations have survived, but these show that a chronicle of the principal national events was kept at Babylon from at least as early as the Kassite period (c. sixteenth to fourteenth centuries B.C.) until the end of the Seleucid era.”<sup>99</sup>

“The late Babylonians had a deep interest in their own past and a number of texts reveal knowledge of their early history, both secular and religious. It has been suggested that the ‘Babylonian Chronicle’ tablet was but the first chapter of an official history of which the remaining Chronicles are recognisable extracts. It is, however, evident that some chronicle tablets bear fuller details than the ‘Babylonian Chronicle’ which cannot therefore be regarded as a specimen of their original.”<sup>100</sup>

We have hopefully demonstrated that these assumptions are unfounded. They are neither ‘reliable’, nor do they show that the chroniclers had a good understanding of their history. We are faced with two possible scenarios: Either the chroniclers were ignorant of their history, or that they were deliberately misrepresenting the facts in an attempt to deceive the people of their time. I would suggest that it is a combination of both. Basically, archaeologists have abandoned the Biblical chronology in favour of contrived Babylonian and Assyrian king lists and chronicles!

### The Assyrian Annals Recorded on Prisms

We are told that Samaria was taken by Shalmaneser V in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah, king of Judah.<sup>101</sup> In the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah, Sennacherib came against the cities of Judah.<sup>102</sup> This final campaign of Sennacherib’s saw the destruction of his army – hence the record of the battle was destined never to be committed by him to stone. Sennacherib himself purportedly tells us that he also came against Jerusalem in his 3<sup>rd</sup> campaign,<sup>103</sup> though we have put forward valid arguments to show that this simply is not true. Nor does the Bible give any indication of any earlier invasion of Jerusalem or Judah by Sennacherib prior to Hezekiah’s 14<sup>th</sup> year, unless it formed part of the assault on the land of Israel by Shalmaneser V and Sargon II which took place in Hezekiah’s 4<sup>th</sup> year.<sup>104</sup> Whichever way you look at it, the suggestion that Hezekiah was king of Judah in Sennacherib’s third year, this being around seven years before Hezekiah actually became king, is simply not tenable!

I feel that mention should be made here of certain assumptions which are being made by scholars concerning the relationship between Sargon II and his son Sennacherib. We are told that letters from Sennacherib addressed to his father Sargon have been found at Kuyunjik. This, however, is not strictly true. The translators have **assumed** that the

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<sup>99</sup> *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, Introduction p. 1, Donald J. Wiseman, British Museum, London 1956.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* p.3.

<sup>101</sup> 2 Kings 18:10.

<sup>102</sup> 2 Kings 18:13.

<sup>103</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.143 §.312.

<sup>104</sup> 2 Kings 18:9.

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addressee is Sargon simply because they **assume** that Sargon II preceded Sennacherib on the throne and they **assume** that Merodach-baladan, who was defeated by Sargon II, was the same king who tried to recover the throne of Babylon in the beginning of Sennacherib's reign. The letters from Sennacherib take the form of, "To the king, my lord: your servant Sin-ahhe-riba. Good health to the king, my lord!",<sup>105</sup> which is not the way one would expect a son to address his father! The king of Assyria to whom he is writing is not actually recorded, and, with this reconstruction, is more likely to have been either Tiglathpileser III or Shalmaneser V.

The bulk of the correspondence was found at Nineveh. Manfred Dietrich **assumed** that Sennacherib moved his residence to Nineveh, including the transportation of a large collection of letters, **after** abandoning Dur-Sharrukin, Sargon's city at Khorsabad.<sup>106</sup> The evidence being presented here shows that Sennacherib actually dwelt at Nineveh from the **beginning** of his reign and that Dur-Sharrukin did not at that time exist for the simple reason that it had yet been built by Sargon. The inscriptions at Dur-Sharrukin depicting Sennacherib's campaigns against Judah were clearly done posthumously, possibly when Sargon II was king.

Another tablet which is worthy of mention is what has been called *The Sin of Sargon*, a neo-Assyrian tale wherein Sennacherib purportedly tries to find a divine explanation for the death of his father Sargon. This tablet has been translated independently by Haim Tadmor, Benno Landsberger and Simo Parpola. Each of the translators have **assumed** that Sennacherib was the son of Sargon II being referred to in the tablet and have restored the missing lines accordingly. The name Sennacherib only purportedly appears at the beginning of the text. I say purportedly because only the very last part of his name has been preserved and has been restored ideographically as "[Id30-PAB-M]EŠ!-rSU!"<sup>107</sup> (The ideographic values of the characters in square brackets are those which the translators have **assumed**.) This then is the only supposed appearance of the name of Sennacherib in the whole of that tablet. This is very flimsy evidence on which to claim that Sennacherib was the author.

Having demonstrated that Sennacherib died before his father, this text needs to be re-evaluated. Sennacherib could not possibly be mourning the death of his father who died sometime after him. There is the possibility that the text could belong to another of Sargon II's sons. We should not **assume** that Sennacherib was Sargon's one and only offspring. If, however, the name is to be restored as Sennacherib, then I am inclined to agree with Landsberger's assessment that it is a "*post-mortem* fake", with him adding that "the author, in spite of all his onslaughts on the credulity of his readers, had *šipir*

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<sup>105</sup> Letters SAA 01 029 & SAA 01 031 in the British Museum Collection - so labelled in *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West (State Archives of Assyria 1)* Simo Parpola, Helsinki 1987.

<sup>106</sup> *The Babylonian Correspondence of Sargon and Sennacherib* Introduction p.xix, Manfred Dietrich, Helsinki University Press 2003.

<sup>107</sup> *The Sin of Sargon and Sennacherib's Last Will* p.10, Hayim Tadmor, Benno Landsberger and Simo Parpola in *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* Vol. III, Part 1, 1989. Sennacherib's name is written ideographically as 30-PAB-MEŠ!-rSU!.

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*nikilti* [Assyrian words which roughly translate as ‘technical skill’] to imitate the style of Sennacherib”.<sup>108</sup>

We should bear in mind that the majority of the Assyrian texts are of a propagandist nature. As pointed out by Daniel David Luckenbill, Sennacherib’s battle at Halule against Elam is described by him as a victory, but the Babylonian chronicler recorded it as a defeat:

“The Babylonian chronicler’s report of the battle is brief: ‘In an unknown year [it was 691], Menanu mustered the armies of Elam and Akkad, made an attack upon Assyria at Halulê and defeated Assyria.’

“It was a drawn battle. The Elamites must have suffered frightful losses. Sennacherib boasts of the capture of an Elamite general and the son of Merodach-baladan. But Umman-menanu was still at large, and Mushêzib-Marduk still on the Babylonian throne, when Sennacherib returned to Nineveh.”<sup>109</sup>

We must not forget, however, that the inscriptions are mainly of a propagandist nature and one wonders just how much trust we should be placing in them.

“As for Hezekiah, the Jew, who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small cities in their neighborhood, which were without number, – by escalade and by bringing up siege engines(?), by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels and breaches(?), I besieged and took (those cities).”<sup>110</sup>

“As for Hezekiah, the Jew, who had not submitted to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities and the cities of their environs, which were numberless, I besieged, I captured, I plundered, as booty I counted them. Him, like a caged bird, in Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut up.”<sup>111</sup>

These events are clearly describing Sennacherib’s final campaign against Jerusalem. It was common knowledge amongst the various peoples of the time that, in this final campaign, Sennacherib suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of ‘the angel of the LORD’. The Greek writer Herodotus was even to record his defeat in his *Histories* more than a couple of centuries later. If the Assyrian or Babylonian scribes were to have placed the details concerning this final campaign in its rightful chronological place, then everyone would have recognised it as being a lie and a deception, so they cleverly promoted the campaign to become Sennacherib’s **third** campaign, thereby moving it to the third year of his reign.

As already demonstrated, Sennacherib’s first campaign was directed at Babylon, his second against the Kassites, who dwelt in Babylonia, his fourth, fifth and sixth campaigns were likewise against the regions around Babylonia. In his fourth campaign, he overthrew the Babylonian king Shuzubu,<sup>112</sup> whose reign of one year(?) succeeded the two to three years of Bêl-ibni’s. (Bear in mind that, if Sennacherib removed Bêl-ibni,

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* p.37.

<sup>109</sup> Annals of Sennacherib p.17.

<sup>110</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.120, §.240.

<sup>111</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.143, §.312. NB: Luckenbill incorrectly records that Sennacherib took 46 cities of Elam (Annals of Sennacherib p.15), but Sennacherib actually claims 34 cities (ARAB Vol. 2, p.124, §.248).

<sup>112</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.121, §.241.



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as argued by the Babylonian chroniclers,<sup>113</sup> then this must have occurred in the third year of his reign when we are told he was purportedly attacking the land of Judah!) All things considered, can we then honestly believe that Sennacherib dropped his campaigns against the lands of Babylonia to spend a year (his third campaign) attacking the lands of Israel and Judah? Such campaigns take a lot of planning and preparation. Bear in mind also that, if dated to Sennacherib's third year, this campaign must have occurred **before** Shalmaneser V's campaign against the House of Israel and seven years **before** Hezekiah even became king! We should also take into consideration that, included in this third campaign against Judah, Sennacherib first conquered Tyre and Sidon, placing Tuba'lu (Ethbaal) on the throne in place of its previous king, Lulî,<sup>114</sup> and then conquered the land of Amurru to the east of the River Jordan, including Ammon, Moab and Edom – all in the same year!<sup>115</sup> This is just not credible.

A similar discrepancy has been noted in connection with Sennacherib's campaign against Cilicia. Luckenbill wrote:

"So ended the fourth campaign. A period of comparative quiet now set in. But royal vanity demanded royal campaigns to be recorded in high-sounding phrases on dedicatory cylinders and prisms or on the walls of the steadily growing palace at Nineveh. So a raid against the villages on the slopes of Mount Nipur (the modern Jûdî Dâgh) northeast of Nineveh, becomes a fifth campaign (699[BCE]). But a real military undertaking conducted the following year by his generals against Kirua, governor of Kue (Cilicia), who had risen in revolt, though recorded on a recently discovered cylinder which was inscribed in 694[BCE], was later **passed over by the scribes who composed the royal annals.**"<sup>116</sup>

This campaign against Cilicia has been recorded by the Greeks, but is curiously 'overlooked' by the Assyrian scribes! The Greeks tell us that Sennacherib built the city of Tarsus in Cilicia,<sup>117</sup> which feat must surely have been one for the Assyrians to have gloated over. This in itself should be enough to bring the so-called annals into disrepute.

"Strangely enough, no annals have so far been found which contain a record of Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon, the most violent act of his reign, which is known only from a rock inscription at Bavian and from a foundation stela found at Assur. Furthermore, of the last seven years of Sennacherib (689-681) no historical records have come to light except a fragmentary report of an undated campaign against the Arabs mentioned on an alabaster slab in the Berlin Museum."<sup>118</sup>

The campaign against the Arabs mentioned here *is* recorded – but it has been promoted to Sennacherib's third campaign!

Because of this deception, scholars have been divided between whether Sennacherib conducted two separate campaigns against Jerusalem (in which case, the one in Sennacherib's third year has not been recorded in the Bible), or whether there was just

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<sup>113</sup> ABC p.77, col. ii, lines 26-29.

<sup>114</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, pp.118-9, §.239, p.142, §.309 & pp.147-8, §.326.

<sup>115</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.119, §.239.

<sup>116</sup> Annals of Sennacherib p.14 (emphasis mine).

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* p.162.

<sup>118</sup> Horn p.12.

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the one campaign. In either case, it is argued that the Bible is untrustworthy. No one has even considered the possibility that the Assyrian records might be at fault.

I should perhaps here add the following comments made by Siegfried Horn concerning the Ethiopian king Taharka:

“The connection between the first king of the 26th Dynasty and the Ethiopian King Tirhakah is made by the ‘First Serapeum Stela,’ known for more than a century. This stela, being the tombstone of a deceased Apis bull, is now in the Louvre, Paris (No. 190). It contains the valuable chronological information that the animal was born in the 26th regnal year of Tirhakah, and that after having lived for 21 years and 2 months, it died in its 22nd year on the 21st day of the 12th month in Psamtik’s 20th year. This means that Tirhakah’s 27th year was the year which preceded Psamtik’s first year. Since Psamtik I’s first year was 663/662, Tirhakah’s 27th regnal year was 664/663 B.C., which leads back to 690/689 as Tirhakah’s first regnal year.”<sup>119</sup>

Siegfried concludes from this that Taharka could not possibly have been king of Egypt in Sennacherib’s third year. Such argument is, however, unnecessary, because the campaign in question, which has been cleverly moved by the scribes to become his third year, actually occurred in Sennacherib’s final year, which is when Taharka is known to have been king of Ethiopia. Even when armed with this knowledge, Siegfried does not question or challenge the Assyrian chronology but rather assumes that Sennacherib must have encountered some other Ethiopian king!

Returning to the annals, one also wonders about the mention of a king of Samaria in Sennacherib’s third campaign by the name of Menahem who, according to what is known as the Taylor Prism, was a contemporary of both Sennacherib and Hezekiah.<sup>120</sup> According to the Bible, Menahem king of Israel “slept with his fathers” and Pekahiah his son took the throne.<sup>121</sup> This was said to have been around **thirty years before** Hezekiah took the throne. It is strange that both the Bible and other records are silent about this ‘later’ king Menahem. Having said that, Menahem is also mentioned in a **fragmentary text** assigned to Tiglathpileser III who purportedly encountered him sometime around the third year of the Assyrian king’s reign.<sup>122</sup> This was that Menahem who gave Pul king of Assyria “a thousand talents of silver”.<sup>123</sup> As we have identified Pul king of Assyria as Adad-nirari III aka Ashur-nasir-pal II and have identified him as the “father” of Shalmaneser V, it would suggest that there might be an error in the Bible. (Were Pekah and Pekahiah perhaps the same person? Was Pekah perhaps already co-ruling with Menahem and Pekahiah before claiming the throne for himself?) Due to the confusion exhibited in the Bible for this period (see the section *Biblical Chronology* later in this paper), there is no straightforward answer to this question.

Sennacherib’s inscriptions also make mention of the lands of Sidka king of Ashkelon:

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<sup>119</sup> Horn pp.4-5.

<sup>120</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.119, §.239. Hezekiah was encountered in the same campaign - *ibid.* §.240.

<sup>121</sup> 2 Kings 15:22.

<sup>122</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.293, §.815. (The city of Hatarikka mentioned therein was conquered in the third year of the king’s reign – Vol. 1, p.275, §.770.)

<sup>123</sup> 2 Kings 15:19.

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“But Sidka, king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted to my yoke, – the gods of his father’s house, himself, his wife, his sons, his daughters, his brother, the seed of his father’s house, I tore away and brought to Assyria. Sharru-lu-dâri, son of Rukibti, their former king, I set over the people of Ashkelon and I imposed upon him the payment of tribute (in the form of) presents to my majesty. He accepted (*lit.*, bore) my yoke. In the course of my campaign, Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Banaibarka, Asuru, cities of Sidka, who had not speedily bowed in submission at my feet, I besieged, I conquered, I carried off their spoil.”<sup>124</sup>

Sidka is the Assyrian spelling of the Hebrew name Tsidkiyahu (צִדְקִיָּהוּ), which is transliterated in the Authorised Version as Zedekiah and in the Septuagint as Σεδεκία Sedekia. The cities spoken of here all belonged to Judah and should, by rights, have at that time been under the control of Hezekiah king of Jerusalem. They were lands which were taken from Judah by the Philistines in the time of Hezekiah’s father Ahaz,<sup>125</sup> who paid Tiglathpileser III to assist him in recovering those lands. By contrast, the reliefs at Sennacherib’s Palace in Kuyunjik show him conquering Lachish, a city which is not mentioned in his so-called annals. Even the Bible confirms that Sennacherib conquered Lachish, albeit late in his reign,<sup>126</sup> but the prisms are once again curiously silent about the conquest of this important city. This also ought to be enough to throw doubt on the authenticity of these monuments. In my opinion, this is further evidence to show that these annals are late forgeries.

Hezekiah continued the assault on the Philistines and captured the cities of the south:

“And the LORD was with him [i.e. Hezekiah]: whithersoever he went forth he prospered; and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines unto Gaza and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city.”<sup>127</sup>

Admittedly, it is possible that Hezekiah placed a governor by the name of Zedekiah in charge of Ashkelon. This person could then later have been removed by Sennacherib, who proceeded to place Sharru-lu-dâri, son of the previous king, Rukibti, on the throne,<sup>128</sup> though whether or not this governor of Ashkelon would have had the authority to control all of the cities of Judah mentioned by Sennacherib is debatable. If, however, the lands of Zedekiah mentioned here in the Taylor Prism and in other related inscriptions relate to the time of Zedekiah king of Jerusalem, then it shows that they are all of late manufacture, which prompts us also to question the reason for them being made.

It should perhaps be mentioned that Sargon II also claimed to have conquered Hanno king of Gaza in his second year of reign,<sup>129</sup> which would have been when Hezekiah was king of Judah. This is despite the fact that a *fragmentary text* which has been ascribed

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<sup>124</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.119, §.239.

<sup>125</sup> 2 Chron. 28:18.

<sup>126</sup> 2 Kings 18:14-17 & 2 Chron. 32:9.

<sup>127</sup> 2 Kings 18:7-8.

<sup>128</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.142, §.310.

<sup>129</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.3, §.5, p.41, §.80, p.46, §.92, p.51, §.99 & p.61, §.118.

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to Tiglathpileser III (assuming that the inscription belongs to him!) states that, “Hanûnû (Hanno) of Gaza fled before my weapons and **escaped to Egypt**”.<sup>130</sup>

It should be noted that the capture of Ashkelon by Sennacherib echoes that related by the chroniclers concerning Nebuchadnezzar’s early years:

“The first year of Nebuchadnezzar (II): In the month Sivan he mustered his army and marched to Hattu. Until the month Kislev he marched about victoriously in Hattu. All the kings of Hattu came into his presence and he received their vast tribute. He marched to *Ashkelon* and in the month Kislev he captured it, seized its king, plundered [and sac]ked it. He turned the city into a ruin heap.”<sup>131</sup>

Is it perhaps just a coincidence, that according to Berosus, as recorded by Josephus, Ethbaal was the king of Tyre during the time of Nebuchadnezzar II?<sup>132</sup> Ethbaal was also purportedly the name of the king of Tyre during the time of Sennacherib.<sup>133</sup> This, and the mention of the ‘lands of Zedekiah’, suggest that the scribes have fabricated the evidence, drawing on information dating to the time of Nebuchadnezzar II.

There are similar problems inherent in the records of Sargon II. It should be noted that, in one inscription, Sargon II claimed to be “subduer of the land of Iaudi (Judah), which lies far away”.<sup>134</sup> It is strange how his other records are unusually silent about this campaign against the land of Judah! (NB: Sargon II seems only to have conquered the northern tribes of Israel.) Amazingly, the king of Judah is not named. If such a campaign occurred, it might have been the same one undertaken by Sennacherib, though Sennacherib records the name of the king of Gaza as Silli-bêl<sup>135</sup> rather than Hanûnû (Hanno).

Sargon II actually tells us:

“To the kings of the lands of Piliste (Philistia), Iaudi (Judah), Edom, Moab, who dwell by the sea, payers of tribute [and] tax to Assur, my lord, (they sent) numberless inflammatory and disdainful (messages) to set them at enmity with me, to Pir’u, king of Egypt, a prince who could not save them, they sent their presents (bribes) and attempted to gain him as an ally.”<sup>136</sup>

It is again the prisms which furnish us with this questionable information. Note that campaigns against Edom and Moab are recorded in Sennacherib’s annals. We have argued that these campaigns will have occurred towards the end of Sennacherib’s reign, which is when Sargon II will also have been king.

It is interesting to note that the king of Ashkelon during the time of Tiglathpileser III was Mitinti,<sup>137</sup> but Tiglathpileser placed his son Rukibtu on the throne in his place.<sup>138</sup> Rukibtu

<sup>130</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.292, §.815 (emphasis mine).

<sup>131</sup> ABC p.100, obverse lines 15-20.

<sup>132</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 10.11.1.

<sup>133</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.119, §.239. Sennacherib is said to have deposed Lulê (Elulæus) and placed Tuba’lu (Ethbaal) on the throne. Ethbaal might therefore be the king called both Ba’li and Ba’lu in Esarhaddon’s and Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions, thereby leading the scribes into error.

<sup>134</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.72, §.137.

<sup>135</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.120, §.240.

<sup>136</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.105, §.195.

<sup>137</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.287, §.801.

<sup>138</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.280, §.779.

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is the person Sennacherib refers to above as “former king” when he recorded that, “Sharru-lu-dâri, son of Rukibtî, their former king, I set over the people of Ashkelon”.<sup>139</sup> There was a Metinti (a variant spelling of Mitinti) ruling Ashkelon during the time of Esarhaddon<sup>140</sup> and continued to rule Ashkelon well into the reign of Ashurbanipal.<sup>141</sup> Admittedly, this could be a different Mitinti, a grandson of the one who lived during the time of Tiglathpileser III, but is nevertheless worth mentioning. If, as I suspect, Sennacherib’s annals are drawn from records dating to the time of Nebuchadnezzar II, then Sharru-lu-dâri may have been king of Ashkelon during the time of Nebuchadnezzar II, whilst Rukibtî would have been king during the time of Ashurbanipal and Metinti during the time of Esarhaddon.

It can be shown that the Rassam Cylinder, which records the campaigns of Ashurbanipal, dates no earlier than the time of Artaxerxes II king of Persia and is clearly also a forgery. (This would take too long to explain here, but is covered more fully in my book *Ancient History Reconsidered*.) Doubts should be expressed about the authenticity of all of these cylinders and prisms. They are all likely to be of late fabrication, though it should be stressed that the scribes could not afford to stray too far from the truth, hence must have relied to a great extent on actual monuments for their sources. What we do not know is to what extent the information contained in those original monuments has been tampered with.

Like the Rassam Cylinder, the Taylor Prism is a mere 38.5 cms high (just over



**Left:** Rassam Cylinder recording Ashurbanipal’s campaigns.

**Right:** Taylor Prism recording Sennacherib’s campaigns.



**Left:** Jerusalem Prism (Sennacherib’s campaigns).

**Right:** Oriental Institute Prism (Sennacherib’s campaigns).

<sup>139</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.142, §.310.

<sup>140</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, pp.265-6, §.690.

<sup>141</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.340, §.876.



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15 inches) and 16.5 cms wide (6.5 inches). The Oriental Institute Prism, which also contains a record of Sennacherib's campaigns, is likewise just 38 cms high and 14 cms wide. They are hardly the sorts of objects that a vainglorious egotistical king of Assyria would use to record his campaigns. Another similar prism, which has recently come to light, is the Jerusalem Prism.<sup>142</sup> Why then were so many prisms recording Sennacherib's annals made?

The British Museum describes the Taylor Prism as a foundation record. (A foundation record or deposit is an artefact which was buried in the foundation of a building, usually a temple, in honour of its dedication.<sup>143</sup>) This simply does not make sense, especially if it includes Sennacherib's final unsuccessful campaign against Jerusalem. Sennacherib himself would not have lived long enough to have recorded this last campaign, which means that the prisms, as well as his inscriptions at Dur-Sharrukin, would have been made posthumously. The fact that the lands of Judah were called lands of Zedekiah also suggests that the prisms might have been manufactured sometime during or after the time of Zedekiah king of Judah. The evidence suggests that they were all made either during the Chaldean Period or the Persian Achaemenid Period.

### Sargon II

There are also serious contradictions in the inscriptions of Sargon II, as the following extract from one of the Chronicles reveals:

“On the twelfth day of the month Tebet Sargon (II) ascended the throne in Assyria. In the month Nisan Merodach-baladan (II) ascended the throne in Babylon. The second year of Merodach-baladan (II): Humban-nikash (I), king of Elam, did battle against Sargon (II), king of Assyria, in the district of Der.....”.<sup>144</sup>

We should bear in mind that, “the best preserved copy (A) comes from Babylon **and is dated in the twenty-second year of Darius**”.<sup>145</sup> The late date of these chronicles also suggests that they are forgeries. At best, they are attempts by later generations to record that nation's history. They seem to have been none the wiser than we are today!

Sargon II confirms that Merodach-baladan ascended the throne of Babylon in his first year of reign.<sup>146</sup> According to the above passage, Humban-nikash would then have encountered Sargon II in his second year of reign. According to Sargon II's inscriptions at his palace in Dûr-Sharrukîn (Khorsabad), this battle against Humbanikash (var. Humanigash) is not mentioned in the accounts of the campaign which took place in his

<sup>142</sup> Bar-Ilan studies in Assyriology: Dedicated to Pinhas Artzi pp.213-47, article titled *The Sennacherib Prism in the Israel Museum - Jerusalem* by P. Ling-Israel, Bar-Ilan University Press 1990.

<sup>143</sup> “Formally, inscribed foundation deposits are considered a sub-category of the building inscription corpus. The event that occasioned the ceremonial interment of the foundation deposit was the building or rebuilding of a public structure, typically a temple. Here a ruler would inscribe some sort of ritually meaningful item in order to commemorate the building of the edifice at hand, and then he would install the item either into the soil beneath the temple or into the foundations themselves.” *The Deuteronomistic History and the Neam Theology: I'šakkên š'mô šām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* p.144, Sandra L. Richter, Walter de Gruyter, New York and Berlin 2002.

<sup>144</sup> ABC p.73, §.31-34

<sup>145</sup> ABC p.69.

<sup>146</sup> ARAB Vol.2, p.2, §.4



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second year. The battle at Der is recorded as occurring in the **first** year of his reign when he went up against Merodach-baladan, but Humbanikash is not mentioned until the **twelfth** year of his reign!

“In my twelfth year of reign, Marduk-apal-iddina (Merodach-baladan), son of Iakini, king of Kaldu (Chaldea), whose settlements are situated on the secluded (shore) of the sea of the east (the Persian Gulf), put his trust in the Bitter Sea and (its) mighty waves, and violated the oath and curse (invoked in the name of) the great gods, and withheld his tribute. Humbanigash, the Elamite, came to his aid.”<sup>147</sup>

The Bible tells us that it took three years for Shalmaneser V to take Samaria.<sup>148</sup> Sargon merely seems to have come in at the end of the work and claimed the victory as his own. It would seem that he was only a general in Shalmaneser’s army at the start of the siege.

Sargon does not name his father in any of his monuments. Although he claimed to be of the “stock (seed) of Ashur”,<sup>149</sup> he does not appear to have been of royal blood. The fact that he claimed to be “the rightful king”<sup>150</sup> suggests that he was a usurper. Esarhaddon, if we may believe what he tells us, claimed to be “(of) the eternal seed of priesthood, of (the line) of Bêl-bâni, son of Adasi, who established the kingdom of Assyria...”.<sup>151</sup> The use of the word ‘priesthood’ is interesting in so much that it suggests that his inheritance was through the priestly line rather than the official royal line. I would suggest, however, that this claim is false.

The above-mentioned chronicle tells us that Shalmaneser V died in the month Tebet in his fifth year of reign and that Sargon II took the throne on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of that same month.<sup>152</sup> The following comment by Sargon II is therefore extremely interesting:

“In the **second year of my reign**, when I had seated myself upon the royal throne and had been [crowned] with the lordly tiara, I shattered the might of Humbanigash, king of Elam, and defeated Ilu-bi’di of Hamath...”.<sup>153</sup>

This tells us that Sargon II was not actually crowned king of Assyria until his second year of reign. How did this work? Who was controlling the Assyrian throne in the meantime?

Note that he was crowned the year after taking the House of Israel into captivity. It is also interesting to note that, in this particular inscription, taken from a monument which is dated relatively late in the king’s reign, Sargon II’s war with Humbanigash has been promoted to become his second year. It should be stressed that, in the Khorsabad Inscriptions, he is recorded as campaigning in Hamath in northern Syria in his second year and campaigning against the land of Urartu (Ararat) in the west in his third year.<sup>154</sup> This being the case, there would have been no time to conduct a separate campaign

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<sup>147</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.14-15, §.31

<sup>148</sup> 2 Kings 18:9-10

<sup>149</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.80, §.153.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.225, §.576.

<sup>152</sup> ABC p.73, §.29-31

<sup>153</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.70, §.134. (Emphasis mine.)

<sup>154</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.3, §.5-6.

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Sargon II from his palace at Khorsabad.

against Humbanigash king of Elam and Merodachbaladan king of Chaldea at the Persian Gulf in the east.

Similarly, we know of a minor expedition in the accession year of Ashurbanipal's reign against Kirbit on the Elamite frontier by one of the Assyrian governors. In a later text, this became the king's "fourth campaign", with two campaigns against Egypt and one against Tyre preceding it.<sup>155</sup> With these sorts of irregularities, it is difficult to put any firm trust in the records of these Assyrian kings, and yet archaeologists are quick to criticise and refute the authority of the Bible whilst putting their full faith in these Assyrian monuments. At present, we do not know in which year of Shalmaneser V's reign his siege against Samaria started, but it is likely to have been his third, in which case Samaria would have been taken in his last (fifth)

year, this being Sargon II's 'first' year.

Max Mallowan tells us:

"Equally interesting were many other tablets, particularly historic, economic and administrative texts written in the reigns of Tiglathpileser III and Sargon... One of the most illuminating was a text vividly illustrating the difficulties which confronted His Assyrian Majesty's Commissioners of Inland Revenue in Tyre and Sidon, especially over the collection of timber and wine".<sup>156</sup>

It is probably significant that Mallowan does not make mention of any texts belonging to the reign of Shalmaneser V, especially as Josephus tells us that Tyre and Sidon rebelled against Assyria during his reign.<sup>157</sup> One would therefore expect any difficulties with Tyre and Sidon to have been greater during the reign of Shalmaneser. This strengthens the argument that Sargon was with Shalmaneser at the time of this campaign into northern Israel.

Both Sennacherib's and Sargon II's texts, as preserved in the prisms, have been written specially to give the impression that Sennacherib ruled after Sargon. Even the campaign against Marduk-apla-iddina and the assistance they each received from the king of Elam appear to be borrowed from the same sources, even down to the mention of

<sup>155</sup> ARAB Vol.2, p.290 §.762

<sup>156</sup> *Nimrud and its Remains* Vol. 2, p.606, Max E.L. Mallowan, Collins 1966.

<sup>157</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 9.14.2.

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Ispabâra king of Ellipi, who, according to Sargon II, after claiming the throne for himself, called upon the Assyrian king to help him against Shutur-Nahundu king of Elam.<sup>158</sup> Sennacherib purportedly conquered the land of Ellipi, and burnt Ispabâra's cities, Marubishti and Akkuddu, to the ground, with Ispabâra fleeing "to distant (parts)".<sup>159</sup> If Sennacherib succeeded Sargon II, then there is no logical explanation why Ispabâra, who is treated preferentially by Sargon II to whom the king of Ellipi looked for assistance, should have been turned upon by Sennacherib.

More importantly, Tiglathpileser III and Sargon II both claim to have conquered the very same lands,<sup>160</sup> namely, Itu', Rubu', Hamrani (var. Hamranu), Harilum (var. Harilu), Ubulum (var. Ubulu), Gambulum, Hindaru (var. Hindiru), Ru'ua (var. Ru'a), Litau (var. Li'tâu), Rapiku and Damunu. (NB: Sennacherib also claimed to have conquered many of these places.<sup>161</sup>) Admittedly, it is remotely possible that they both conquered the same territories, in which case, it could be argued that they also had to conquer the same cities, but it is extremely unlikely that they would have conquered **the exact same ones!** This correlation is unique in the Assyrian and Egyptian records. I know of only two similar examples where two kings have conquered the same cities; the one being Adad-nirari I and his son Shalmaneser I, the other being Adad-nirari II and his son Tukulti-Ninurta II. In both instances, it can be shown that father and son were co-ruling and that the places they conquered were part of the same campaign. This cannot be said of Sargon II who started his reign after Tiglathpileser III had died. In short, one of the texts (most likely that of Sargon II) is fabricated.

Something is therefore fundamentally wrong both with the King Lists and with the Chronicles. Considering all of these glaring anomalies being highlighted here, we have nonetheless put our unwavering trust in these texts without giving them sufficient scrutiny. The evidence also shows that these prisms were made posthumously and possibly many years (if not a century or more) after the events they purport to record. The scribes may have used actual monumental inscriptions as a basis for these prisms, but have clearly manipulated the information to suit their purposes.

### Adad-nirari & Ashur-nasir-pal

I am going to proceed by making the bold claim that Ashur-nasir-pal II was an alternative name for Adad-nirari III – hence a contemporary of Tiglathpileser III. By moving Ashur-nasir-pal II to such a late date means that he is now to be redated to a period much later than Shalmaneser III who was supposed to have been his son! It will therefore be necessary to explain the impact this has on the evidence that is being presenting here.

I would stress that there were two kings with the name Ashur-nasir-pal. The first *may* have been father (or maybe even father-in-law) of Shalmaneser III. The latter, according

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<sup>158</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.33, §.66.

<sup>159</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.118, §.237.

<sup>160</sup> Compare ARAB Vol. 1, p.283, §.788 (Tiglathpileser) with Vol. 2, p.52, §.99 (Sargon II).

<sup>161</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.116, §.234 & p.129, §.257.

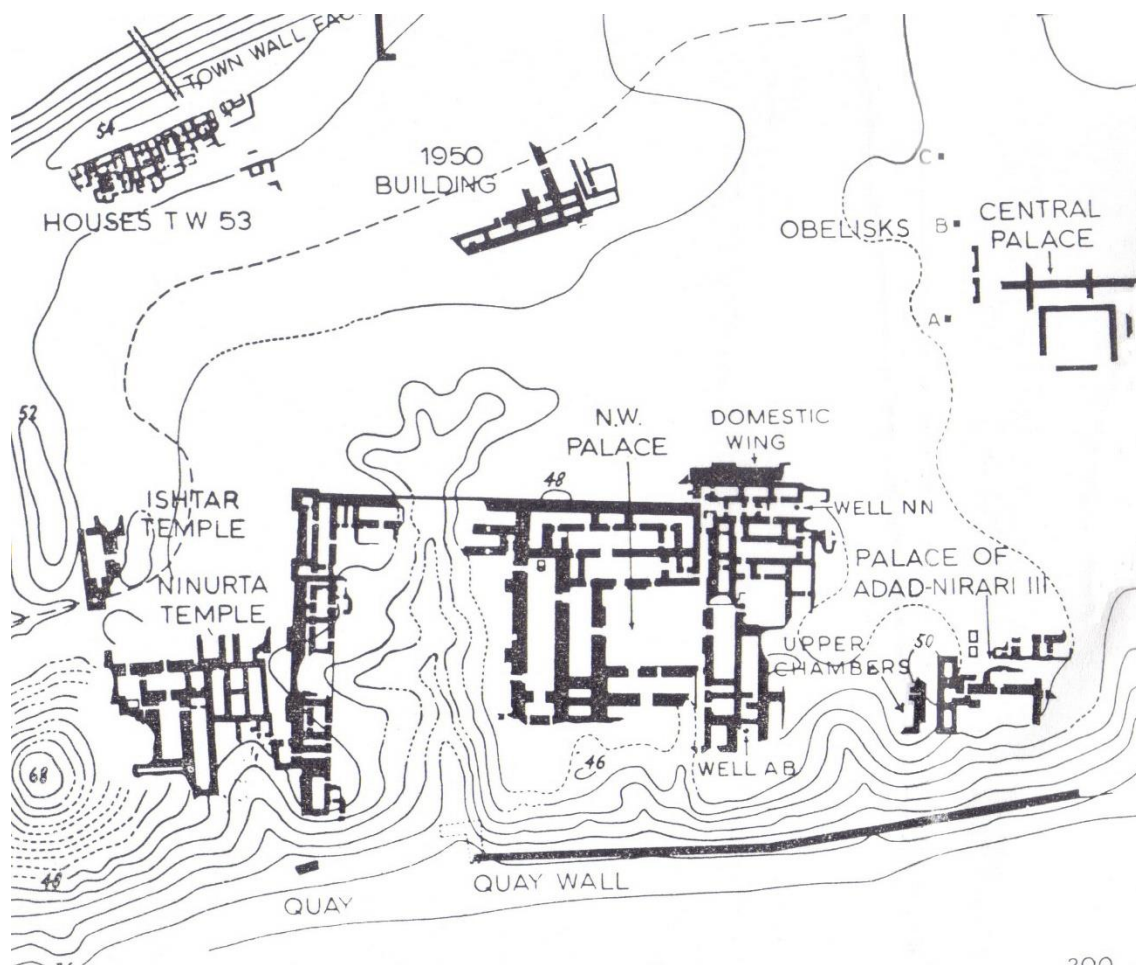
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to my calculations, would have been an alternative name for Adad-nirari III alias the “Pul king of Assyria” of the Bible. I would even go so far as to suggest that instead of Ashur-nasir-pal, we should read Ashur-nasir-**Pul**. Whether or not he is to be identified as Bêl-ibni is a separate matter. With the limited information at our disposal, it is not possible to categorically make this connection.

The latter Ashur-nasir-pal undertook extensive repairs to “the ancient city of Kalach which Shalmaneser built”:

“The ancient city of Kalach which Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, a prince who preceded me, had built - that city had become dilapidated; it lay dormant (and) had turned into ruin hills. I rebuilt that city. I dug out a canal from the Upper Zab (and) called it Babelat-hegalli. I *planted* orchards with all (kinds of) fruit trees in its environs. I pressed wine (and) gave the best to Ashur my lord and the temples of my land. I rebuilt the wall. I built (and) completed it from top to bottom. I founded therein a palace as my royal residence (and) for my lordly leisure for eternity.”<sup>162</sup>

It is commonly assumed that the Shalmaneser referred to by Ashur-nasir-pal in this



Map of Kalach showing the location of Adad-nirari III's palace in relation to Ashur-nasir-pal II's palace (marked N.W. Palace) - from *Nimrud and It's Remains* by Max E. L. Mallowan.

<sup>162</sup> ARI Vol. 2, p.154, §.619.

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inscription was Shalmaneser I, however, to date, nothing has been discovered at Kalach which can, with any certainty, be attributed to this 'earlier' Shalmaneser. Nor does Shalmaneser I lay any claim to undertaking any work at Kalach. I am suggesting that the works to which Ashur-nasir-pal was referring were in fact those undertaken by Shalmaneser III – **not** Shalmaneser I. Kalach was even known as Fort Shalmaneser after its founder, Shalmaneser III.

It has hereto been a mystery why Shalmaneser III only moved his throne from Nineveh to Kalach in his thirteenth year if his father had already completely rebuilt and restored the city. If, however, Shalmaneser III was the true founder of the city, a more satisfactory explanation is quickly and conveniently provided.

There is very little evidence of Ashur-nasir-pal's handiwork at Kalach which can with any certainty be ascribed to him apart from his palace, which is strange considering his claim that he rebuilt the city. Nevertheless, it is a known fact that Adad-nirari III **was** responsible for extensive repairs to Fort Shalmaneser.<sup>163</sup> It is therefore evident, when we take into consideration all the rest of the archaeological data, that Ashur-nasir-pal was another name for Adad-nirari III, and that the rebuilding work to the city "which Shalmaneser built" would have been to Fort Shalmaneser. It is perhaps also relevant that Adad-nirari III's palace at Kalach was built alongside, and may well have formed part of Ashur-nasir-pal's palace. (See map above on previous page.) We should ask ourselves, would Ashur-nasir-pal have built his palace before the city had been built?

Ashur-nasir-pal claimed to have built the Nabu temple at Kalach.<sup>164</sup> Adad-nirari III is also accredited with building this temple:

"Nonetheless, Nabu's position was one of unusual prominence and he enjoyed it as early as the reign of Ashur-nasir-pal II, who, as already noted, had erected a temple to him [in Kalach], of which, however, no remains have been recovered. In contrast, the architectural remains of Adad-nirari III's Nabu temple found at Calah [i.e. Kalach] are impressively preserved".<sup>165</sup>

It is strange that we again have no inscriptions belonging to Adad-nirari III which mention the building of the Nabu temple, neither do we have any evidence of any temple built by Ashur-nasir-pal II. I accept that it could reasonably be argued that Adad-nirari III may have demolished and removed any evidence of the earlier temple, however, these facts should be weighed in the light of all other evidence. I would argue that there is every indication that Ashur-nasir-pal II and Adad-nirari III were one and the same person.

In the *Synchronistic History*, which is described as a "concise narration of Assyro-Babylonian relations",<sup>166</sup> there appears an interesting entry concerning Adad-nirari who was supposedly a contemporary of Nabu-shuma-ukin, though in the Chronicle, it is

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<sup>163</sup> CAH Vol. 3, part 1, p.276.

<sup>164</sup> ARI Vol. 2, p.174, §.679 & CAH Vol. 3, part 1, p.258.

<sup>165</sup> CAH Vol. 3, part 1, p.275.

<sup>166</sup> ARI Vol.1, p.36, §.222.



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argued that he has been confused with his similarly named predecessor Nabu-shuma-ishkun:

“Nabu-shuma-ishkun(sic), son of [...], Adad-nirari, king of Assyria, fought [with] Nabu-shuma-ishkun(sic!), king of Kard[uniash], (and) defeated him. [...b]anbala, the city HUda[.....] ... his land, he enclosed [him.... he received] from him. They gave their daughters to one another (in marriage). Together they made an entente cordiale. The peoples of Assyria (and) Akkad were joined together. They established a boundary from the city **Til-Bit-Bari** which is upstream from the city **Za[ban]** to **Til-sha-Batani** and **Til-sha-Zabdani**”. [At the tim]e of Shalmaneser (III), king of Assyria, Nabu-apla-iddina (was) the king of Karduniash.<sup>167</sup>

Note that this Adad-nirari (usually identified as Adad-nirari II) appears in the above passage *immediately before* Shalmaneser III where one would have expected the name of Ashur-nasir-pal to appear. (NB: There is no room in the text for the insertion of Tukulti-Ninurta II or Ashur-nasir-pal II who supposedly ruled in the intervening period. According to this reconstruction, Nabu-apla-iddina must be the king also known to us as Marduk-apla-iddina.) Bear in mind also that Nabu-shuma-ishkun appears in the *Babylonian King List A* as a contemporary of Tiglathpileser III.

If we compare the above passage with texts belonging to Ashur-nasir-pal II:

“I brought within the boundaries of my land Gilzanu, from the opposite bank of the lower Zab to the city **Til-Bari** which is upstream from the land **Zaban**, from the city **Til-sha-Abtani** to the city **Til-sha-Zabtani**, (and) the cities Hirimu (and) Harutu (which are) fortresses of Karduniash”.<sup>168</sup>

This statement appears no less than four times in Ashur-nasir-pal’s various inscriptions. Til-Bari, Til-sha-Abtani and Til-sha-Zabtani are clearly the Til-Bit-Bari, Til-sha-Batani and Til-sha-Zabdani respectively of the *Synchronistic History*, but there, it is Adad-nirari who was the Assyrian king who conquered these cities! These three places are not mentioned together by any other king and were clearly of great importance to Ashur-nasir-pal. With our identification of Ashur-nasir-pal as Adad-nirari, these comments become even more relevant.

As mentioned in the above extract from the *Synchronistic History*, the king of Babylon (Karduniash) during the time of Adad-nirari is said to have been Nabu-shuma-ishkun, which is assumed to be an error for Nabu-shuma-ukin. According to the Assyrian King Lists, the Babylonian king during the time of Ashur-nasir-pal II is said to have been Nabu-apla-iddina. According to what is known as the *Eclectic Chronicle*, Nabu-shuma-ukin was purportedly the king of Babylon during the time of Ashur-nasir-pal’s father, Tukulti-Ninurta II.<sup>169</sup> More importantly for this reconstruction, the *Babylonian King List A* makes Nabu-shuma-ukin king of Babylon shortly prior to Pul and Ululaia kings of Assyria. It has already been demonstrated that this king was killed by Tiglathpileser III in the first year of that king’s reign. As for Nabu-shuma-ishkun, this is the name of the king who, according to the *Babylonian King List A*, ruled immediately before Nabunaser, likewise

<sup>167</sup> ABC, *Chronicle* 21, p.166-7, §.9-23 & ARI Vol.2, p.97, §.459. (Emphases mine.)

<sup>168</sup> ARI Vol.2, p.136, §.575, p.146, §.589, p.166, §.651, & p.172, §.676. (Emphases mine.)

<sup>169</sup> ARI Vol. 2, p.113, §.528.



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making him a contemporary of Tiglathpileser III. I would suggest, however, that the compilers of this King List have made the same mistake as those who compiled the *Synchronistic History* quoted above. Nabu-shuma-ishkun was a son of Marduk-apla-iddina who ruled Babylon during the time of Sennacherib,<sup>170</sup> which means that Nabu-apla-iddina is almost certainly an alternative name for Marduk-apla-iddina. This then shows further confusion by the compilers of these records and shows how unreliable they actually are.

It is interesting to note that, whilst the texts claim that Ashur-nasir-pal defeated the Babylonian king, he does not actually call himself king of Babylon. The reason why Ashur-nasir-pal, alias Adad-nirari, did not claim Babylon as being part of his conquered territory is now explained by the above extract from the *Synchronistic History* which tells us that he came to an arrangement with the king of Babylon over the boundaries, whether the king of Babylon be Nabu-apla-iddina, Nabu-shuma-ukin or whoever. This agreement was sealed by the marriage of their daughters. All of this means that the king who is called Adad-nirari in the above-quoted passage from the *Synchronistic History* is therefore to be identified as Adad-nirari III rather than Adad-nirari II and is to be further identified as Ashur-nasir-pal II. I would also add that Tiglathpileser III claimed to be a son of Adad-nirari [III].<sup>171</sup> This means that Shalmaneser IV son of Adad-nirari III was actually a son of Ashur-nasir-pal II aka Adad-nirari II/III and is more correctly identifiable as Shalmaneser V. (Ashur-nirari V, who is usually placed after Shalmaneser IV and **before** Tiglathpileser III in the various King Lists, is consequently to be identified as Sennacherib. This will be explained in a moment.)

It is just as enlightening to look at the conquests of Ashur-nasir-pal II and Adad-nirari III. For example:

- Adad-nirari III informs us that he marched to the Great Sea (the Mediterranean) and erected an 'image' of himself "in the city of Arvad which is in the middle of the sea".<sup>172</sup> He also received tribute from the kings of Tyre and Sidon. Ashur-nasir-pal II likewise received tribute from Tyre, Sidon and Arvad.<sup>173</sup>
- Adad-nirari went up to the mountains of Lebanon and cut down cedar trees which he used "for his palace and temples".<sup>174</sup> Ashur-nasir-pal likewise cut down cedar trees which he transported back to Assyria "and brought (them) to Eshara for/to my house... a joyful house, to the temple of the gods Sin and Shamash, the holy gods".<sup>175</sup>

The inset below on the next page shows a representation of Adad-nirari III alongside that of Ashur-nasir-pal II. Allowing for artistic variations, the two kings look very similar. The design on their 'wrist watches' (for want of a better description) are likewise very similar in style. If we compare these 'wrist-watches' with those of other kings, we

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<sup>170</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.151, §.338

<sup>171</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.294, §.822.

<sup>172</sup> Iraq (Journal) Vol. 30, London 1968, p.143.

<sup>173</sup> ARI Vol.2, p.143, §.586.

<sup>174</sup> Iraq (Journal) 30, p.143.

<sup>175</sup> ARI Vol.2, p.143, §.586.

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Adad-nirari III



Ashur-nasir-pal II

discover that we rarely find two so remotely alike. The only ‘wrist watch’ which closely resembles the design of those of Adad-nirari III and Ashur-nasir-pal is the one worn by Tiglathpileser III, who, according to this reconstruction, was the son of Adad-nirari.

Just as we find a similar accordance between the texts ascribed to Ashur-nasir-pal II and Adad-nirari III, we even find that the entry in the *Synchronistic History* concerning the achievements of a king by the name of Adad-nirari are reflected in the texts of Ashur-nasir-pal II. The only difference between each of the two sets of records is the names used by both the Assyrian and the Babylonian kings.

Furthermore, in one of his inscriptions, Adad-nirari III claimed to have subdued “Omriland” (i.e. Israel) as well as Edom and Philistia.<sup>176</sup> No invasion of Israel by Assyria is recorded in the Bible prior to the time of Pul. When the name Adad-nirari was first read by Sir Henry Rawlinson, he read the name as “Vulush” and consequently identified him as the Biblical “Pul king of Assyria” and even presented this king’s inscriptions in his *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* as “Inscriptions of Pul”. Seeing that I have come to the same conclusion but by different means, I would recommend that Rawlinson’s reading be reinstated.

By moving Adad-nirari III forward in time, we are now faced with a difficult question, namely, who was “Ia’asu of Samaria” of Adad-nirari’s stele discovered at Tell Al Rimah?

“In (my) first year I made the land of Amurru and the Hatti land in its entirety kneel at my feet; I imposed tribute and regular tax for future days upon them... ..He received the tribute of Ia’asu the Samaritan, of the Tyrian (ruler) and of the Sidonian (ruler). I marched to the great sea where the sun sets (i.e. the Mediterranean), and erected a stela (“image”) of my royal self in the city of Arvad which is in the middle of the sea.”<sup>177</sup>

<sup>176</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.262, §.739.

<sup>177</sup> A Stela of Adad-nirari III and Nergal-ereš from Tell al Rimah p.143, Stephanie Page, Iraq (Journal) 30, Vol. 2, Autumn 1968.

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It is only right that we first of all mention the difficulties which have been encountered by the archaeologists.

Notice, first of all, that the stele mentions the name la'asu king of Samaria but is unusually silent on the names of the rulers of Tyre and Sidon. Its find position also raises serious questions on the integrity of the information contained in this stela. Nevertheless, let us consider the evidence which is provided.

On the grounds of chronology, Adad-nirari III should have been a contemporary of Jehoahaz I son of Jehu king of Israel, in which case "la'asu of Samaria" ought to be identified as Jehoahaz. On the basis of the phonetic evidence, however, it is much more likely that la'asu of the Assyrian texts should be identified as Joash<sup>178</sup> son of Jehoahaz but this means moving Adad-nirari III forward in time by some 10 to 20 years, but not by enough to satisfy the revised chronology being proposed here. Likewise, the conventional dating does not allow such a move because it creates too big a gap between Shalmaneser III and Adad-nirari III.

According to the Bible, it was Menahem who paid tribute to Pul king of Assyria.<sup>179</sup> Moving Adad-nirari III forward to the time of Menahem, this would mean that la'asu was probably an alternative name for Menahem. Alternatively, Joash (la'asu) king of Israel might possibly still have been ruling during the time of Adad-nirari III. The Jewish scribes may have got the wrong king when they said that Menahem gave a present to Pul king of Assyria. It should be noted that Ashur-Dan II, who was actually a contemporary of Ashur-nasir-pal II, also makes mention of 'troops of la'asu' who were making incursions into the land of Assyria from Syria.<sup>180</sup> This Ashur-dan will have been the enigmatic Ashur-dan who is mentioned in the Eponym lists as ruling between Shalmaneser IV and Tiglathpileser III and is usually referred to as Ashur-dan III.<sup>181</sup>

Ashur-nasir-pal II records:

"I brought back the enfeebled Assyrians who, because of hunger (and) famine, had gone up to other lands to the land Shubru".<sup>182</sup>

Having declared that Ashur-dan (II/III) was a contemporary of Ashur-nasir-pal II, alias Adad-nirari III, it should therefore come as no surprise to find that this famine is also recorded in texts ascribed to Ashur-dan II:

"I brought back the exhausted [people] of Assyria [who] had abandoned [their cities (and) houses in the face of] want, hunger, (and) famine (and) [had gone up] to other lands. [I settled] them in cities (and) houses [which were suitable] (and) they dwelt in peace."<sup>183</sup>

The self-same famine according to the *Synchronistic History* seems to have occurred during the reign of Adad-nirari III:

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<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* p.153.

<sup>179</sup> 2 Kings 15:19.

<sup>180</sup> ARI Vol.2, p.75, §.361.

<sup>181</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.434 §.771.

<sup>182</sup> ARI Vol. 2, p.127, §.550.

<sup>183</sup> ARI Vol. 2, p.77, §.368.

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“Adad-nirari (III), king of Assyria, (and) [... king of Karduniash], ... [a number of lines are here missing] ... his *craftsmen* the gods [...]. He brought [back] the abducted peoples [and] laid upon them an income, a regular contribution (and) barley rations. The peoples of Assyria (and) Karduniash were joined together. They f[ixed] the boundary-line by mutual consent.”<sup>184</sup>

Although this particular text does not mention a famine, it nonetheless talks of bringing the people back from other lands and providing them with “a regular contribution” and “barley rations”.

One other candidate for Ia’asu of the Assyrian records is Hoshea who was called Ausi in Tiglathpileser III’s texts.<sup>185</sup> In those days, names were written as heard. We have already encountered variant spellings of names throughout this book. The lands of Nairi were, for example, sometimes called Namri (pronounced Nauri). The troops of Ia’asu could then refer to the army of Hoshea (*Ausi*) before he became king of Israel. This then means that Adad-nirari II/III alias Ashur-nasir-pal II was ruling alongside Tiglathpileser III, which fits nicely into the revised chronological framework being presented here. The only problem is that this would then date Ashur-nasir-pal II alias Adad-nirari III at far too late a period as it would mean that Pul king of Assyria would not have been a contemporary of Menahem king of Samaria. The only satisfactory solution I can offer is that either Ia’asu was an alternative name for Menahem or that the name Ia’asu has been added to the Assyrian monuments by some cunning scribe at some later date. The fact that the kings of Tyre and Sidon are not mentioned in the stela seems to support this latter hypothesis. Otherwise, how do we explain that Ia’asu is the only one who is mentioned by name?

Other objections which could be raised to these claims will be more appropriately dealt with in my main work entitled *Ancient History Reconsidered*.

### Shalmaneser III

It has consistently been demonstrated in this paper that the ancient scribes were guilty of misrepresenting the truth, even distorting the records of their ancestors in the process. We have already provided suitable evidence to show that restoration work undertaken by Ashur-nasir-pal II at “the city of Kalach which Shalmaneser built” was to the city built by Shalmaneser III. Kalach was even known as ‘Fort Shalmaneser’ because the city was **built** by him. The suggestion that Ashur-nasir-pal undertook work on repairing the city before the city was even constructed is one of those many anachronisms which we are forced to accept when we place our steadfast trust in these records and monuments.

Ashur-nasir-pal’s reference to ‘*Bit-Adini*’<sup>186</sup> – ‘House of Adini’ – must likewise be dated to a time **later** than Shalmaneser III for the simple reason that Shalmaneser

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<sup>184</sup> Chronicle 21, ABC p.169, §.15-22.

<sup>185</sup> ARAB Vol.1, p.293, §.816.

<sup>186</sup> ARI Vol. 1, p.147, §.590.

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encountered Adini, son of Dakkuri,<sup>187</sup> and his son, Ahuni,<sup>188</sup> during his campaigns. Is it therefore possible that the 'House of Adini' could have been established in the time of Ashur-nasir-pal *before* the time of Shalmaneser III? 'House of Adini' is clearly a later terminology in the same way that the 'House of Omri' mentioned in the Bible (called Bit-Humria in the Assyrian texts) was used after the time of Omri king of Israel.

Notice that the *Synchronistic King List* ends in Column III with:

Assur-nasir-pal and his Babylonian contemporary, Nabu-apal-iddin

his "umman", Gabbi-ilani-eresh

Shalmanu-asharidu and his Babylonian contemporary, Marduk-zakir-shumi

his "umman", Meluhha

'Shalmanu-asharidu' is here understood to be Shalmaneser III, but appears more correctly to be Shalmaneser V. It is not known how many lines are missing at the bottom of this column (III), nor how many lines are lost at the top of the next column (IV). The interesting thing to note, however, is that Column IV begins with Sennacherib and the name of his Babylonian contemporary has been restored by Daniel Luckenbill as Marduk-zakir-shumi, the very name of the king who was supposedly a contemporary of Shalmaneser III some few hundred years earlier! (Professor Pritchard, however, omits this king in his Assyrian King List, even though he is attested in the *Babylonian King List A*.)

Now admittedly this evidence is extremely thin and we are probably justified in calling these two Babylonian kings Marduk-zakir-shumi I and II respectively. Having made a case for dating Ashur-nasir-pal II to the time of Tiglathpileser III, however, this

COLUMN III			
1)	Eriba-Adad, king of 'Assyria' [Shimmashshipak, king of Babylon]		
2)	[ . . . . . his <i>umman</i> ]		
3)	Shamshi-Adad	" Ea-'mukin-shumi <sup>1</sup>	"
4)	Assur-nâsir-apli	" Kashshu-[nadin-ahi	"
5)	Shulmanu-asharidu	" Ulmash-[shakin-shumi	"
6)	Assur-nirâri	" Urta-'kudur-usur	"
7)	Assur-râbi	" Shiriktu-[Shukamuna	"
8)	Assur-rêsh-ishi	" Mâr-bîti-[apal-usur	"
9)	Tukulti-apal-esarra	" [Nabû-mukln]-apli	"
10)	"	" [Urta-kudur]-usur	"
11)	"	" Mâr-bîti-ahi <sup>1</sup> -iddin	"
12)		. . . . . his <i>umman</i>	
13)	Assur-dân	" Shamash-mudammik	"
14)	Adad-nirâri	" "	
15)		Kaliâai [his <i>umman</i>	]
16)	Tukulti-Urta	" Nabû-shum-[ukln	"
17)	'Gabbi'-ilâni-eresh	his <i>umman</i>	
18)	Assur-nâsir-apli	" Nabû-apal-iddin	"
19)	'Gabbi'-ilâni-eresh	" his <i>umman</i>	
20)	Shulmanu-asharidu	" [Marduk-zakir-shumi	"
21)	Meluhhâ	'his <i>umman</i> ]	

COLUMN IV			
1)	[Sin]-ahê-ertba, king of As- syria	[Marduk-zakir-shumi, king of Bab- ylon]	
2)	Nabû-apal-iddin, his <i>umman</i>	[Marduk-apal-iddin]	"
3)		Bêl-[ibni]	"

An extract from the Synchronistic King List showing that Nabû-shum-ukin was a contemporary of Tukulti-Ninurta (II) and how the bottom of Column III runs neatly into the top of Column IV without any requirement to insert a lot of missing names. (Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*.)

<sup>187</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.232, §.625.

<sup>188</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.216, §.601.



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‘coincidence’ is merely another in a long string of coincidences which provide sufficient reason for doubting the accuracy of the King Lists.

The point that needs to be made, however, is that the ancient chroniclers may well have believed that the texts appertaining to Shalmaneser III actually belonged to this later period of history. As demonstrated earlier in this paper, it is possible that Marduk-zakir-shumi was the person also known variously as Shuzubu, Nergal-ushezib and Mushezib-Marduk. This king was a contemporary of both Sennacherib and Shalmaneser V. We should keep this thought in mind for the next stage of the argument.

It was not just the scribes of later times who were responsible for these forgeries we are revealing here. The kings themselves were appropriating the monuments of their predecessors and claiming to themselves the exploits of former generations. The problem we have is that, the later the appropriation, the more skilled the work, so that it becomes difficult for us to disseminate the truth from the deceptions. Esarhaddon and his son Ashurbanipal were both aware of these practices and it is here worth quoting what these kings have said:

**Esarhaddon:** “But he who blots out my written name *by means of some clever device*, destroys my memorial, or changes its location, may Ishtar of Erech look upon him in anger, decree an evil destiny for him, blot out his name and seed in the land.”<sup>189</sup>

**Ashurbanipal:** “Whoever destroys the memorial on which my name is inscribed and the names of Esarhaddon, my father, blots out (those names) *through some clever trick...*”<sup>190</sup>

An erasure of a name does not constitute a “clever trick”, nor can it be called some “clever device” unless there is some form of deception involved. The erasure must therefore be because someone is intending to change the information contained therein.

Tiglathpileser I makes it even clearer when he warns against such practices:

“But whosoever shall break my memorial tablets and my prism, or shall deface them, or shall cast them into the water... *...or shall blot out my name which is written (thereon) and shall inscribe his own name (in place thereof)...*”<sup>191</sup>

Evidence of such erasures have been discovered in relation to one of Adad-nirari III’s inscriptions and has been commented on by Stephanie Page, but she has assumed that they were done as an act of vindictiveness; an attempt to obliterate “by a deliberate hand” the name of Nergal-ereš, one of Adad-nirari’s chief governors, from the monument.<sup>192</sup> This reconstruction shows that someone was in the course of changing the texts to suit their own purposes. The stela was discovered “in position inside the cella of a Late Assyrian shrine, set beside the podium, a placing that is unparalleled among the find spots of other royal stelae”.<sup>193</sup> It never occurred to her to question the authenticity of the monument, nor did the late dating of the erasures or find position

<sup>189</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p. 282-3, §.741. (Emphasis mine.)

<sup>190</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.339, §.872. (Emphasis mine.)

<sup>191</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.90, §.266. (Emphasis mine.)

<sup>192</sup> *A Stela of Adad-nirari III and Nergal-ereš from Tell al Rimah* p.140, Stephanie Page, Iraq (Journal) 30, Vol. 2, Autumn 1968.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, see p.152 for inconclusive discussion of erasures.



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ring any alarm bells. We have already mentioned the texts of Sargon II which purportedly tell us that he conquered the exact same cities as Tiglathpileser III. This is highly unlikely.

Bearing these comments in mind, let us consider the following facts:

### *Shalmaneser (III) tells us:*

“To the cities of Mutalli, the Gugumean, I drew near. The tribute of Mutalli, the Gurgumean, - silver, gold, cattle, wines, his daughter, with her costly (large) dowry, I received”.<sup>194</sup>

### *Sargon II tells us:*

“Tarhulara of Gurgum, whom his son, Mutallum, slew with the sword, and without my permission seated himself on the throne, and ruled his land”.<sup>195</sup>

Mutallum also appears in Sargon’s texts as Mutallu.<sup>196</sup> I accept that Mutallu/ Mutalli, which is equivalent to the Hittite Muwatillis, was a common enough name and that this could just be yet another coincidence. But...

### *Shalmaneser (III) tells us:*

“Marduk-mudammik, king of Namri [i.e. Nairi], went (up into the mountains) to save his life. His goods, his armies, his gods, I carried to Assyria. Ianzu, son of Hanban, I set up as king over them”.<sup>197</sup>

### *Sargon II tells us:*

“From Ianzu, king of the Nairi-land, I received tribute in Hubushkia, his strong city”.<sup>198</sup>

It is recognised that ‘Namri’ (pronounced Nauri?) and ‘Nairi’ are both variations of the same name. Again, we have Ianzu who is mentioned both by Shalmaneser III and by Sargon II who were supposedly separated by some 200 years!

According to the above text of Shalmaneser, the ruler of Nairi prior to Ianzu was someone called Marduk-mudammik, though this same king is called “Kakia, king of the Nairi-land” in Shalmaneser’s *Monolith Inscription*.<sup>199</sup> This alone suggests that the *Monolith Inscription* may have been tampered with by the later Shalmaneser. In another of Shalmaneser’s inscriptions Kakia is called “king of Hubushkia”,<sup>200</sup> the region over which Ianzu of the time of Sargon II is said to have ruled. There was also a king by the name of Kakî who was captured by Tiglathpileser III in his Nairi campaign<sup>201</sup> as well as a Kiakki who was king of Shinuhtu during the time of Sargon II.<sup>202</sup> Sargon also called him “king of Tabal”.<sup>203</sup> It is highly probable that Kakia of Shalmaneser’s texts was one and

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<sup>194</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.215, §.599.

<sup>195</sup> ARAB Vol.2, p.31, §.61.

<sup>196</sup> ARAB Vol. 2., p.13, §.29.

<sup>197</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.205, §.573.

<sup>198</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.9, §.21.

<sup>199</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.213, §.598.

<sup>200</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.220, §.607.

<sup>201</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.271, §.766.

<sup>202</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.4, §.7.

<sup>203</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.72, §.137.

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the same as the Kiakki of Sargon's texts. The exact location of Hubushkia is unknown, but the Assyrian records place it somewhere in the region of the Black Sea. According to Shalmaneser III, the land of Tabal was somewhere *en route* from Assyria to the Taurus mountains in Anatolia.<sup>204</sup> Both Hubushkia and Tabal were therefore located approximately in the same geographic region.

Shalmaneser also makes mention of an Armenian by the name of Arame:

"From Hubushkia I departed. To Sugunia, the royal city of Arame, the Urartian (Armenian), I drew near. The city I stormed (and) captured. Multitudes of his warriors I slew".<sup>205</sup>

Sargon II likewise makes mention of 'the lands of Arame'.<sup>206</sup> It seems strange that this appellation should exist some 200 years after first being mentioned by Shalmaneser III, and even stranger when one considers the other 'coincidences' mentioned above. The "land of Arame" is also mentioned by Adad-nirari II who tells us that Kadashman-Buriash (another name for Shalmaneser III) "during an expedition against the land of Arime, (in) the city of Pausa, which lies at the foot of Mount Kasiari(?), he fought (a battle)".<sup>207</sup>

Adad-nirari III mentions a certain Fortress (Dur) of king Sangari. Stephanie Page commented:

"If the reading Sangari is correct, this place appears to be named after Sangara, who was king of Carchemish during the reigns of Assur-nasir-pal II and Shalmaneser III. The name has no determinative, however; and it would be unusual for the Assyrians to continue using the name of a king who had resisted them; therefore this is a very tentative reading".<sup>208</sup>

It could not possibly have occurred to her that Sangara could have been a contemporary of Adad-nirari III because of the period of time which was supposed to have separated him from Ashur-nasir-pal and Shalmaneser III. This difficulty is removed when we realise that Ashur-nasir-pal II and Adad-nirari III were one and the same person and that the records ascribed to Shalmaneser III have been appropriated by Shalmaneser V.

The same problem is encountered with a text which Luckenbill accredited to Adad-nirari II but which Grayson accredited to Ashur-bel-kala:

"In that year, in the same month, [he plundered the Arame]ans opposite the city Sangaritu [which is on] the Euphrates".<sup>209</sup>

In this instance, the city which seems to be named *after* the king of Carchemish appears in a text currently dated (assuming the text is ascribed to Ashur-bel-kala) some two hundred years *previous* to Sangara! This anomaly no longer becomes problematic, however, if the text in question is reassigned to Adad-nirari III. As proposed above,

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<sup>204</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, §.580.

<sup>205</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.213, §.598.

<sup>206</sup> ARAB Vol.2, p.18, §.36.

<sup>207</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.120, §.390.

<sup>208</sup> Iraq (Journal) 30, London 1968.

<sup>209</sup> ARI Vol. 2, p.54, §.244 & ARAB Vol. 1, p.121, §.391.

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Adad-nirari III tried to style himself on Ashur-nasir-pal I, even naming himself Ashur-nasir-pal (II).

Dr Irving Finkel has recently commented that inscriptions on two bricks from Rabat in Iran mention the names Arzizu and Ata, and proceeds to explain that there was an Ata king of Arzizu mentioned in the annals of Ashur-nasir-pal II:

“Ashurnasirpal’s Ata belonged in the Iranian Iron Age II period. The excavations (Kargar – Binandeh 2009, 114 –115) identified what was probably a defensive wall at Rabat, and the site did have Iron Age II occupation. Either this Ata or another ruler of the same name, in the ninth or eighth century, could have been responsible for the brick inscription. Ashurnasirpal’s Ata, however, is too early to have been the ruler responsible for the mosaic pavement. Another ruler of Arzizu, who was a vassal of the Assyrian Sargon II, bore the name of *Da-da-a* (Lanfranchi – Parpola 1990, 175; Mattila 1999). Heidari (2010, 150) has pointed out that the kingdom of Ada, ruler of Shurda, was also somewhere in this general area of the Zagros; Ada, too, became a vassal of Sargon II (Fuchs 1998).”<sup>210</sup>

We have demonstrated that Ashur-nasir-pal II was king of Assyria a few years before Sargon II, so these comments by Dr Finkel provide further evidence to support the arguments being presented here. Yet again, evidence shows that two separate periods of history are in fact separated only by our misinterpretation of the archaeological evidence.

One further interesting point is the mention by Shalmaneser III of a city called ‘Nikku of the land of Tukliash’<sup>211</sup> which makes a reappearance during the time of Tiglathpileser III as ‘Niku of Tupliash’.<sup>212</sup> Apart from the fact that this demonstrates that our reading of the Assyrian characters is far from certain (it is difficult to explain how the *k* in Tukliash can change its form to the *p* in Tupliash<sup>213</sup>), Nikku of the land of Tukliash/Tupliash does not appear to be mentioned other than by these two kings. Tiglathpileser III lived just prior to Shalmaneser V hence the reoccurrence of this name is just another of those many ‘coincidences’ which we are confronted with.

It cannot be stressed strongly enough that we have very little archaeological information dating from Shalmaneser V’s reign. As J. A. Brinkman aptly put it:

“After Tiglath-pileser’s death in 727, his son Shalmaneser V succeeded to the dual monarchy and reigned for five years. His reign is poorly documented, and the only known major activity relating to Babylonia is his deportation of Chaldeans from Bit-Adini (probably a section of Bit-Dakkuri).”<sup>214</sup>

Note that Shalmaneser III likewise was engaged with the Chaldeans from Bit-Adini and Bit-Dakkuri. Shalmaneser V was obviously trying to re-enact the achievements of

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<sup>210</sup> *Between Carchemish and Pasargadae: Recent Iranian Discoveries at Rabat* p.593, Julian Reade and Irving Finkel in *From Source to History Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Worlds and Beyond*, edited by Salvatore Gaspa, Alessandro Greco, Daniele Morandi Bonacossi, Simonetta Ponchia and Robert Rollinger, Hubert und Co, Göttingen, Germany 2014. (ISBN: 978-3-86835-101-9)

<sup>211</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.235, §.637.

<sup>212</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.281, §.784.

<sup>213</sup> Compare the confusion which exists between the *p* and *k* in the so-called P-Celtic and Q-Keltic languages.

<sup>214</sup> CAH Vol. 3, Part 2, p.25.

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Shalmaneser III, though in respect of Tyre and Sidon, whilst Shalmaneser III may have succeeded in subjecting these cities, Shalmaneser V failed!

There are clearly a lot of coincidental similarities in names during these two periods. If we were to take each of these in isolation, then I admit that the evidence being presented here is somewhat thin. One could still argue that the repetition of names was a common occurrence and that it is not impossible that there were kings with the same names during both the periods in question. When we take all of the arguments together, however, and bearing in mind that there are so many of these 'coincidences', it does seem as though there is something seriously wrong with the texts. It has already been noted that the Assyrian's interest in history "was prompted by the belief in the periodic recurrence of historical events".<sup>215</sup> The reality of the situation is that the Assyrians were tampering with the archaeological record and feeding the world with their forgeries. The Greeks merely soaked it all up and spread these deceptions to an unsuspecting public. It is therefore my firm opinion that the texts ascribed to Shalmaneser III have been tampered with, either by Shalmaneser V or by the scribes of a later era, and are the combined efforts of both of these kings.

What we have revealed here is yet another deliberate attempt to distort history. It is difficult to see, however, from just reading the copies, how this deception has been achieved, as the texts are well and truly integrated. Unless a proper scientific investigation is undertaken, I cannot see how we are likely to get very far with disentangling the information between the various true periods. We will only be able to accomplish this by carefully examining the original monuments for erasures.



Israelite ambassadors bowing down before Shalmaneser III (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) during the time of Jehu king of Israel.

## Biblical Chronology

To provide a balanced view of the history of this period, it is necessary to discuss the Biblical chronology, which, it cannot be denied, is far from perfect. We cannot just bury our heads in the sand and pretend that the Bible does not contain any errors. It should not be ignored either. It is essential that we understand how and why these errors have

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<sup>215</sup> COD p.294.

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occurred in order to be objective in our evaluation of the Biblical record. We have to appreciate that what has been preserved is as accurate a record as the scribes could manage with the limited information and resources at their disposal, most of the records having been destroyed by fire following the destruction of Jerusalem, first at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar II, and then by the Romans at the hands of Titus. To reject the Bible completely, as many have done, especially as we have demonstrated the contrived nature of the Assyrian and Babylonian records in which archaeologists have placed such unwavering trust, can only be described as bigotry. Any scientist or researcher has to consider and weigh all available data – not ignore one set of data in preference for another.

Let us start by looking at some of these errors. Anyone undertaking a study of the number of years given in the Bible for the kings of Israel, up to the time they were taken captive by Shalmaneser V and Sargon II kings of Assyria, cannot fail to have noticed that there are a number of irreconcilable discrepancies. Most noticeable is the fact that the numbers of years of rule given for the House of Israel do not tie in with that given for the kings of Judah. In one particular verse of the Bible, for example, we are told that Hoshea son of Elah began to reign in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Jotham king of Judah.<sup>216</sup> This is despite the fact that Jotham supposedly only reigned for 16 years!<sup>217</sup>

In another verse we are told that this same Hoshea started to reign in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz king of Judah,<sup>218</sup> having slain his predecessor Pekah.<sup>219</sup> Bearing in mind that Hoshea purportedly started to rule immediately after Pekah, this means that Ahaz must have started to reign in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Pekah, who, we are told, ruled for 20 years (i.e. 20 – 12 = 8).<sup>220</sup> This would then be in contradiction to another passage where we are told that Ahaz started his rule “in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Pekah”.<sup>221</sup> This then means that Pekah, who ruled for 20 years, must have died in the third year of Ahaz, but Hoshea, who is said to have slain Pekah and ruled in his stead,<sup>222</sup> did not begin his rule until the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz, which is **nine years later!**

Similarly, we are told that Amaziah king of Judah was 25 years old when he began to reign and ruled for 29 years.<sup>223</sup> Jeroboam II purportedly started reigning in Amaziah’s 15<sup>th</sup> year and ruled for 41 years.<sup>224</sup> This being so, then Amaziah would have died in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam II. We are told, however, that Amaziah’s son Azariah started reigning in the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam II,<sup>225</sup> which introduces a 13 year gap between the death of Amaziah and the reign of his son Azariah. Even if we accept that Azariah started his reign immediately after his father, this means that Jeroboam’s reign would have

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<sup>216</sup> 2 Kings 15:30.

<sup>217</sup> 2 Kings 15:32.

<sup>218</sup> 2 Kings 17:1.

<sup>219</sup> 2 Kings 15:30.

<sup>220</sup> 2 Kings 15:27.

<sup>221</sup> 2 Kings 16:1.

<sup>222</sup> 2 Kings 15:30.

<sup>223</sup> 2 Kings 14:2.

<sup>224</sup> 2 Kings 14:23.

<sup>225</sup> 2 Kings 15:1. Josephus, however, says that he started ruling in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam – see *Antiquities* 9.216. (9.10.3 Whiston.)

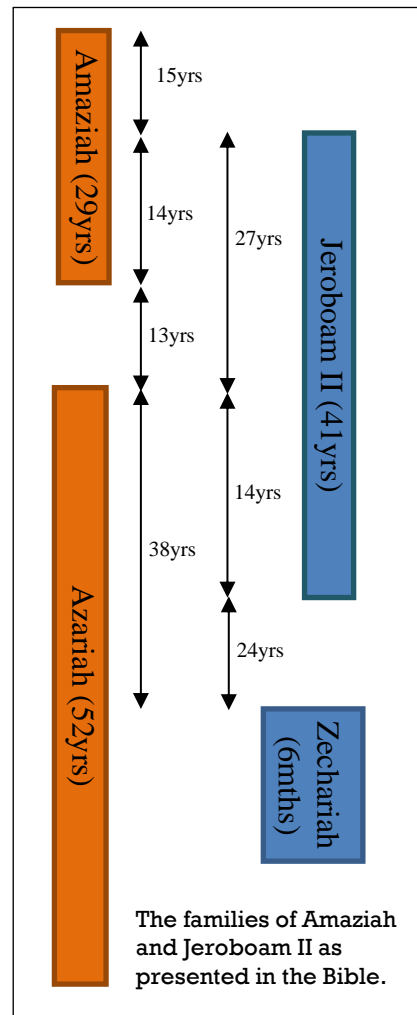
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ended in the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Amaziah's son. Jeroboam's son and successor, Zachariah, however, did not start reigning until the 38<sup>th</sup> year of Azariah,<sup>226</sup> which again leaves eleven years unaccounted for. If, however, Azariah did not start reigning until the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam II, then there is an even larger inexplicable gap of 24 years between the death of Jeroboam II and the start of the reign of his son Zechariah.

Azariah was purportedly 16 years old when he began to reign and ruled for 52 years.<sup>227</sup> If he began ruling immediately after his father, then Azariah, who was the firstborn son, must have been born when Amaziah was 38 years old, which, whilst not impossible, seems unlikely. (Amaziah would have been 49 when his son Azariah was born if we accept that there was a gap of 11 years between the death of Amaziah and the start of the reign of his son Azariah.) I would suggest, in this instance, that the first eleven years of Azariah's reign coincided with the last ten of Amaziah's in a co-regency, thereby filling the gap which currently exists between Jeroboam II and Zachariah. It would then mean that Azariah started his reign in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam II (as opposed to his 27<sup>th</sup> as stated in the Bible).

Azariah was 68 when he died. Jotham was 25 when he started to reign, which means that, if he started his reign immediately after Azariah's 52 year reign, then he must have been born when his father was 43 years old. Again, whilst not impossible, it nevertheless seems unlikely! Even more so if we bear in mind that Azariah was a leper!

Even more unlikely is the statement that Hezekiah was 25 when he started to reign, which means that he was born when his father Ahaz was 11 years old! (Ahaz was 20 years old when he began to reign and reigned for 16 years.<sup>228</sup>) It is argued by Jewish scholars that the prophecy given in Isaiah 7:14 concerning the alma who conceived a son and called his name Imanu-El refers to Ahaz's son Hezekiah. If Hezekiah truly was 25 years old when he began to reign, then he would have been born 9 years of age when Ahaz began to reign. The only way that this would work is if we correct Hezekiah's age to read 15 years of age. This would mean that the scribes have mistaken 𐤀𐤕 for 𐤀𐤔. It would certainly help rectify the age difficulty as now it means that Hezekiah was born when his father was 21 years old.



<sup>226</sup> 2 Kings 15:8.

<sup>227</sup> 2 Kings 15:2.

<sup>228</sup> 2 Kings 16:2 & 2 Chron. 28:1.



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The same problem exists with Jotham, who, we are specifically told, was judging the people whilst his father continued to live a life of seclusion due to his leprosy.<sup>229</sup> This means that he started reigning whilst his father was still alive. The scribes clearly did not appreciate this and have placed his 16 year reign immediately after that of Azariah. Because Pekah started to reign in the 52<sup>nd</sup> and final year of Azariah, so Jotham (they have assumed) must have started to reign in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Pekah. It is argued in Rabbinical sources that Solomon's temple lasted for 410 years.<sup>230</sup> This figure of 410 years is based on the years of reign provided in the Bible assuming that each reign was successive (i.e. no co-regencies), but falls short by 16 years. Did the Talmudists then believe that Jotham co-ruled with his father?

These are only a few of the chronological anomalies contained in the Bible. It is not restricted to the 'Old Testament' either. The New Testament writer Matthew interestingly makes great play on the fact that there were 14 generations from King David to Jehoiachin, who was taken into captivity during the time of Nebuchadnezzar II.<sup>231</sup> He has, however, omitted the names Jehoash (son of Jehoram)<sup>232</sup> and his son Amaziah,<sup>233</sup> both of whom should appear between his Joram and Ozias, as well as Jehoiakim, the father of Jehoiachin (Jechonias in Matthew's list). This means that his 14 generations were actually 17 generations! The sequence as preserved in the Hebrew Bible (see 1 Chron. 3:9-16) accords with what is shown in the Septuagint. One therefore wonders where Matthew obtained his information. Was this perhaps a late addition to the original gospel? Either way, the genealogy preserved in the New Testament is also flawed.

Further difficulties are encountered for the chronology subsequent to king Hezekiah, as it is a well-known fact that the Biblical chronology, when compared to the Assyrian and Egyptian chronologies, is shown to be far too long. We should therefore be looking for evidence for further reductions in the Biblical chronology. We are, for example, told that, after a reign of 55 years, Menashe was succeeded by his son Amon, who was

<b>Kings/Chronicles</b>	<b>Matthew</b>
David	David
Solomon	Solomon
Rehoboam	Roboam
Abijam	Abia
Asa	Asa
Jehoshaphat	Josaphat
Jehoram	Joram
<b>Jehoash</b>	<b>(missing)</b>
<b>Amaziah</b>	<b>(missing)</b>
Azariah/Uzziah	Ozias
Jotham	Joatham
Ahaz	Achaz
Hezekiah	Ezekias
Menasseh	Manasses
Amon	Amon
Josias (Josiah)	Josias
<b>Jehoaikim</b>	<b>(missing)</b>
Jehoiachin/Jechoniah/Coniah	Jechonias

The genealogy of the kings of Judah as preserved by the New Testament writer Matthew. Note that his 14 generations from David to Jechonias is actually 17 generations according to both the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint.

<sup>229</sup> 2 Kings 15:5.

<sup>230</sup> *The Babylonian Talmud Complete*, Sanhedrin 38a, fn. 21, Soncino English Translation.

<sup>231</sup> Matt. 1:8-9.

<sup>232</sup> 2 Kings 12:1-2.

<sup>233</sup> 2 Kings 14:1.

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22 years old when he began to reign and reigned for two years before being killed by his servants.<sup>234</sup> Menashe was 67 years old when he died, which means that Amon, if he ruled immediately after his father's death, must have been born when Menashe was 45 years old. Again, whilst this is not impossible, it nonetheless seems unlikely. There is, therefore, every likelihood that Amon was co-ruling with his father when he (i.e. Amon) was killed.

When Josiah challenged Pharaoh Necho, the Egyptian king was already on his way north to assist the Assyrian armies against the advances of the Chaldean king Nabopolassar who was starting to gain power in Babylonia. After defeating Josiah on the battlefield:

“And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead. Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.”<sup>235</sup>

After three months, Nebuchadnezzar removed Jehoahaz and placed Eliakim on the throne of Judah, renaming him Jehoiakim.<sup>236</sup> Is it logical to assume that Pharaoh Necho temporarily halted operations in the north so that he could return to Jerusalem three months later to collect Jehoahaz, taking him back north to Riblah in Syria, before recommencing his battle plans? It is far more logical to assume that Jehoahaz was already co-ruling with his father Josiah **before** Necho arrived. This is clearly what is meant when the above passage states that “the people of the land” made Jehoahaz king as opposed to Pharaoh Necho making him king. (NB: It was more usual for the conquering king to elect the new ruler.) After defeating Josiah, the Egyptian king would then have simply taken Jehoahaz northwards with him after sorting out the affairs of Jerusalem. Necho left him at Riblah on his way to Carchemish and then collected him on the way back. (We are told that Jehoahaz was subsequently taken to Egypt where he died.<sup>237</sup>)

The battle at Carchemish supposedly took place in the **fourth** year of King Jehoiakim,<sup>238</sup> but this would then mean that Necho's campaign lasted around four years, which length of time needs to be challenged. Was Jehoiakim perhaps already king of Jerusalem, co-ruling with his brother Jehoahaz, when Pharaoh Necho conquered the land?

The Book of Jeremiah informs us:

“Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who **reigned instead of Josiah his father**, and who went forth out of this place; He shall not return thither any more”.<sup>239</sup>

No king of Judah by the name of Shallum appears either in the book of Kings or the book of Chronicles. Shallum is clearly an alternative name for Jehoahaz, Josiah's firstborn son. The compilers of the Book of Chronicles were clearly not aware of this and have added Shallum as the fourth and youngest son of Josiah, making Jehoahaz, who they have

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<sup>234</sup> 2 Kings 21:19 & 2 Chron. 33:21.

<sup>235</sup> 2 Kings 23:31.

<sup>236</sup> 2 Kings 23:34.

<sup>237</sup> 2 Kings 23:34.

<sup>238</sup> Jer. 46:2.

<sup>239</sup> Jer. 22:11.

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called Johanan, the firstborn.<sup>240</sup> (The suggestion that the youngest son was made king of Judah in preference to his three elder brothers would otherwise require some explanation!)

The Hebrew word תַּחַת *takhat*, which is translated in the above passage as ‘instead’, more correctly means ‘under’, and could be interpreted in this instance as ‘acting in place of’. This could therefore be taken as proof that Josiah was still alive when Shallum was ruling. Admittedly, this word *takhat* is used throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles where it clearly, at times, can only be interpreted as meaning ruling afterwards and in place of the previous king. We are told, for example, that “Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned **in his stead** [i.e. *tachtav*]”.<sup>241</sup> In the aforesaid passage from the Book of Jeremiah, however, the statement that Shallum reigned “under/instead of his father” seems a little incongruous. Why did the prophet deem it necessary to state that he ruled instead of his father Josiah? This word is not used when the prophet talks about Jehoiakim or Zedekiah. It was probably inserted here to draw our attention to the fact that Shallum (i.e. Jehoahaz) was co-ruling with his father.

It should also be mentioned, that whoever compiled this Biblical chronology in the book of Chronicles could not decide whether Zedekiah was the son of Josiah or the son of Josiah’s son Jehoiakim, so they have added him twice! Once as son of Josiah and once as son of Jehoiakim.<sup>242</sup> Certainly, the Zedekiah who became king was called **brother** of Jehoiachin in the book of Chronicles,<sup>243</sup> but **brother** of Jehoiakim (hence **uncle** of Jehoiachin) in the book of Kings,<sup>244</sup> the latter agreeing with the **son** of Josiah which is recorded in the book of Jeremiah.<sup>245</sup> As already stated, the New Testament writer Matthew omits Jehoiakim and makes Zedekiah the son of Jechonias who he makes the immediate son of Josiah,<sup>246</sup> where Jechonias is Jeconiah, a variant spelling of the name Jehoiachin. Just to confuse matters further, Jeremiah called him “Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah”,<sup>247</sup> where Coniah (כְּנִיָּהוּ) is an abbreviated form of Jeconiah (יְהוֹנָדָּן), which is how his name appears in the later chapters of Jeremiah<sup>248</sup> as well as the book of Chronicles,<sup>249</sup> which in turn is a variant spelling of Jehoiachin (יְהוֹיָכִין) as it appears in various other parts of the Bible. Zedekiah, however, was the son of Josiah, hence could not possibly have been a son either of Jehoiachin or of his father Jehoiakim.

The second book of Kings tells us that Jehoiachin/Jeconiah was the son of Jehoiakim and that he was **eighteen** years old when he began to reign.<sup>250</sup> This would make Jehoiakim 18 years old when his son was born, which seems reasonably credible. By contrast, the

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<sup>240</sup> 1 Chron. 3:15.

<sup>241</sup> 2 Kings 15:30.

<sup>242</sup> 1 Chron. 3:16-17, Esth. 2:6 & Jer. 24:1, 27:20, 28:4 & 29:2.

<sup>243</sup> 2 Chron. 36:10.

<sup>244</sup> 2 Kings 24:17

<sup>245</sup> Jer. 1:3.

<sup>246</sup> Matt. 1:11.

<sup>247</sup> Jer. 22:24-30 and 37:1.

<sup>248</sup> Jer. 24:1, 27:20, 28:4 and 29:2.

<sup>249</sup> 1 Chron. 3:16-17.

<sup>250</sup> 2 Kings 24:8.

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book of Chronicles tells us that he was **eight** years old when he began to reign.<sup>251</sup> This error, however, can be easily explained. In Hebrew, the number 18 would be written **יח** (יח in modern Hebrew) whilst the number 8 would be written **ח** (ח in modern Hebrew). Somewhere in the transcribing process the letter yod (י or י in modern Hebrew) has been lost. Whether this was through the carelessness of the scribe or because of the poor state of the original documents from which the scribe was working is now impossible to say.

Another anomaly concerning Josiah's son Jehoahaz, who is called Johanan in the first book of Chronicles,<sup>252</sup> is that he is said to have been 23 years old when he started to reign and ruled for only three months.<sup>253</sup> His younger brother Jehoiaikim, who succeeded him, is said to have been 25 years old when he began to reign.<sup>254</sup> How is it that the **younger** brother was **two years older**? The book of Chronicles would clearly have us believe that Jehoahaz/Johanan was the **firstborn**!<sup>255</sup>

We should bear in mind that the books of Chronicles were compiled sometime during the Persian Period. The last chapter of the book of Chronicles, for example, tells us that they who had "escaped from the sword carried he [Nebuchadnezzar] away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia" and also records the decree given by Cyrus king of Persia.<sup>256</sup> This alone dates the book to sometime after the first year of Cyrus.

Throughout the books of the Kings, there is constant reference to some earlier records which the scribes were making use of. There are specific references to **two** different chronicles, but only what now appears in our official copies of the Bible have survived:

"Now the rest of the acts of ... which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the **kings of Israel**?"<sup>257</sup>

"And the rest of the acts ... and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the **kings of Judah**?"<sup>258</sup>

It would be logical to assume that, when Nebuzaradan burnt Jerusalem to the ground, many of the records would have been destroyed:

"And he [Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar's "captain of the guard"] burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every great man's house, burnt he with fire."<sup>259</sup>

Basically, the compilers of the books of Chronicles and Kings could only have been in possession of very limited information. Extensive use has been made of whatever materials they could lay their hands on, and this clearly involved making use of the

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<sup>251</sup> 2 Chron. 36:9.

<sup>252</sup> 1 Chron. 3:15.

<sup>253</sup> 2 Kings 23:31 & 2 Chron. 36:2.

<sup>254</sup> 2 Kings 23:36 & 2 Chron. 36:5.

<sup>255</sup> 1 Chron. 3:15.

<sup>256</sup> 2 Chron. 36 verses 20 and 22.

<sup>257</sup> 1 Kings 14:19, 15:31, 16:5, 16:14, 16:20, 16:27 & 22:39 and 2 Kings 1:8, 10:34, 13:8, 13:12, 14:15, 14:28, 15:11, 15:15, 15:21, 15:26 & 15:31.

<sup>258</sup> 1 Kings 14:29, 15:7, 15:23 & 22:45 and 2 Kings 8:23, 12:19, 14:18, 15:6, 15:36, 16:19, 20:20, 21:17, 21:25, 23:28 & 24:5.

<sup>259</sup> 2 Kings 25:9.

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writings of the Prophets, which information has sometimes been extracted verbatim. Consequently, the story of how the sun's shadow on the sun dial of Ahaz in the Book of Kings is practically taken straight from the Book of Isaiah. The story of how Nebuchadnezzar's captain of the guard Nebuzaradan conquered Jerusalem and took captive its inhabitants is likewise taken from the Book of Jeremiah. What has been preserved is clearly the best they could accomplish with the limited resources at their disposal.

The book of Numbers also refers to "the book of the wars of the LORD".<sup>260</sup> Again, this book has not survived. Any consideration of the historicity of the Biblical chronology must therefore take all of these factors into account.

Even co-regencies cannot explain all of these discrepancies. Matters become even worse when we look at the records of Tiglathpileser III. In his third year, he encountered Menahem king of Samaria and Azariah (also known as Uzziah) king of Judah.<sup>261</sup> (Although his monuments place this campaign in his third year, according to the Limmu or Eponym Lists, in his first year he was engaged in campaigns against the regions of Mesopotamia, described as "the territory between the rivers", in his second year against Namri or Nairi around the Black Sea in north Syria and for years three to six, he was occupied with campaigns against Arpadda in north Syria.<sup>262</sup>) Within the remaining 14-16 years, we are led to believe that Tiglathpileser encountered Pekah king of Samaria whom he deposed:

"The land of Bit-Humria [Omri-land or land of Israel] ... all of its people, together with their goods I carried off to Assyria. Pakaha [Pekah], their king they deposed and I placed Ausi' (Hoshea) over them as king".<sup>263</sup>

First and foremost, this inscription is taken from a fragmentary annals text<sup>264</sup> and might not even belong to Tiglathpileser's annals. It might belong to some other king. (It might even be part of another forgery!) The fact that Ahaz king of Judah is recorded on a large clay tablet from Nimrud,<sup>265</sup> however, helps to reinforce the argument that the Biblical chronology for this period is far too long. The Egyptian chronology also shows that the period between the time of Jehoshaphat king of Judah and Hezekiah king of Judah is currently far too long.

Menahem was supposedly succeeded by his son Pekahiah who is said to have ruled for two years.<sup>266</sup> Pekahiah is said to have been killed by Pekah son of Remaliah who then proceeded to rule for 20 years.<sup>267</sup> One does not need to be a mathematician to see that the 22 years ascribed to these two kings alone does not agree with the 14 years which remained from Tiglathpileser's third year, when he encountered Menahem and Azariah, to his seventeenth year of reign, in which the monument is purportedly dated. In short,

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<sup>260</sup> Num. 21:14.

<sup>261</sup> ARAB Vol.1, p.274, §.770 & p.276, §.772

<sup>262</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.436.

<sup>263</sup> ARAB Vol.1, p.293, §.816.

<sup>264</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.292, Section 4 - §.815.

<sup>265</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.287, §.801.

<sup>266</sup> 2 Kings 15:23.

<sup>267</sup> 2 Kings 15:27.

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Pekah could only have ruled for around six to ten years at the very most. It would then seem more likely that Ahaz king of Judah started his reign in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Pekah rather than the 17<sup>th</sup> year. When we encounter these sorts of problems, it does not fill us with much confidence as far as the rest of the Biblical chronology is concerned.

Chronology as presented in the Bible			Suggested possible revised chronology based on archaeological evidence		
King of Judah	Began to reign:	King of Israel	King of Judah	Began to reign:	King of Israel
Amaziah (25) 29yrs	← 15 <sup>th</sup> yr	Jeroboam II 41yrs	Amaziah (25) 29yrs	← 15 <sup>th</sup> yr	Jeroboam II 41yrs
Azariah (16) 52yrs	27 <sup>th</sup> yr →		Azariah (16) 52yrs <sup>a</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr →	
	← 27 <sup>th</sup> yr	Jeroboam dies (gap of 11yrs)	(First eleven years co-ruling with his father)		
	← 38 <sup>th</sup> yr	Zachariah 6mths	[Jotham (25?) 16yrs <sup>b</sup> ] (co-ruling with his father)	[39 <sup>th</sup> yr →]	
	← 39 <sup>th</sup> yr	Shallum 1mth	(Azariah)	← 38 <sup>th</sup> yr	Zachariah 6mths
	← 39 <sup>th</sup> yr	Menachem 10yrs		← 39 <sup>th</sup> yr	Shallum 1mth
	← 50 <sup>th</sup> yr	Pekahiah 2yrs		← 39 <sup>th</sup> yr	Menachem 10yrs
	← 52 <sup>nd</sup> yr	Pekah 20yrs		← 50 <sup>th</sup> yr	Pekahiah 2yrs
Jotham (25) 16yrs	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr →			← 52 <sup>nd</sup> yr	Pekah 12yrs <sup>d</sup>
Ahaz (20) 16yrs <sup>c</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup> yr →		Ahaz (20?) 16yrs <sup>c</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> yr →	
	← 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr	Pekah dies (gap of 10yrs)		← 12 <sup>th</sup> yr	Hoshea 9yrs
	← 12 <sup>th</sup> yr	Hoshea 9yrs	Hezekiah (25?) 29yrs <sup>e</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr →	
Hezekiah (25) 29yrs <sup>e</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr →				
<p><sup>a</sup> Amaziah would then have been 27 years old when Azariah was born, which is far more credible than the age of 38 which is what we would have to accept if Azariah ruled immediately after his father.</p> <p><sup>b</sup> Azariah would likewise then have been 27 when Jotham was born rather than the less credible age of 43 as suggested by the Bible.</p> <p><sup>c</sup> Jotham would have been 21 when Ahaz was born, which is more in line with what one would expect.</p> <p><sup>d</sup> The Assyrian records support a reign of no more than twelve years for Pekah. It might even be less than this! (Maybe Pekah was co-ruling with Menachem and Pekahiah?) Ahaz was probably ruling whilst Azariah was still alive.</p> <p><sup>e</sup> Ahaz would have been 11 when Hezekiah was born, which, I would suggest, cannot possibly be right!</p>					

It should perhaps be mentioned that Ahaz was called “Iauhazi of Judah” by Tiglathpileser III. Luckenbill transliterated this name as “Jehoahaz king of Judah”,<sup>268</sup> and Stephanie Page, in her discussion of consonantal changes that occur when a West Semitic name is written in cuneiform Akkadian,<sup>269</sup> has followed Luckenbill’s reading. In Hebrew,

<sup>268</sup> ARAB Vol.1, p.287, §.801.

<sup>269</sup> *A Stela of Adad-nirari III and Nergal-ereš from Tell al Rimah* pp.148-9, Stephanie Page, *Iraq (Journal)* 30, Vol. 2, Autumn 1968.



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Jehoahaz is more correctly Yehoachaz (יְהוֹאָחָז) and Ahaz more correctly Achaz (אֲחָז). Note that Achaz is an abbreviated form of Yehoachaz. Iauhazi of Judah of the Assyrian records is here clearly to be identified as Achaz (AV Ahaz), son of Azariah. Yehoachaz I, who was a king of Samaria, actually lived around 100 years earlier and Yehoachaz II king of Judah lived some 50 years later. Both the names Yehoachaz (יְהוֹאָחָז) and Achaz (אֲחָז) are, however, interchangeable in the same way that, for example, Azariah (אֶזְרִיָּה) and Uzziah (עֲזַרְיָה) are interchangeable. Yehoshua bin Nun (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נֹון AV Joshua son of Nun) likewise appears in the Book of Numbers as Hoshea bin Nun (הוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן-נֹון)<sup>270</sup> and in the Book of Nehemiah as Yeshua bin Nun (יֵשׁוּעַ בֶּן-נֹון AV Jeshua).<sup>271</sup> We have also already mentioned the many variations in the way the name Jeconiah/Jehoiachin was written.

Hoshea, the king who lived during the time of Tiglathpileser III, is said to have started ruling in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz.<sup>272</sup> Assuming that his first year fell during Tiglathpileser's 12<sup>th</sup> year, and bearing in mind that Hoshea is accredited with a 9 year reign,<sup>273</sup> and despite the reservations which we have mentioned above concerning the chronology of this period, Hoshea's 6<sup>th</sup> year would fall in Tiglathpileser III's 18<sup>th</sup> and final year. This then only allows another three years for Shalmaneser's siege, which must mean that Shalmaneser, who is understood to have ruled for 5 years, must have been co-ruling with Tiglathpileser III for the first two years, which is an argument already proposed earlier in this paper.

The Bible therefore seems to be unreliable for the chronology of this period of history, but when we understand the reasons for this, we can look at things more objectively. We can begin to appreciate the constraints the scribes were under and that what has been preserved is the best that they could accomplish with the tools and the materials at their disposal. The compilers of the books of Kings and Chronicles have clearly not taken the periods of co-regency into consideration, even when it is of their own kings of Judah. It should be stressed, however, that the Assyrian and Babylonian chronologies are in an even worse state! In my experience, scholars are quick to dismiss the Bible completely, arguing that, as a historical record, it cannot be trusted, but seem more than happy to accept and overlook all the errors and inconsistencies in the Assyrian and Babylonian King List and Chronicles which we have here shown to be highly contrived.

We should also bear in mind that the version of the 'Old Testament' we have today was assembled by a group of Jews, known as the Masoretes, between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. They did so by collating all the known copies of the Hebrew texts and amalgamating them into the one copy. It should be stressed that, prior to that time, there was no one single volume of the Hebrew Bible. The various books were contained in separate scrolls each of which would have been copied for use within the various synagogues throughout the land as well as those Jewish communities which were scattered abroad. When the temple was destroyed by the Romans, those documents in

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<sup>270</sup> Num. 13:8.

<sup>271</sup> Neh. 8:17.

<sup>272</sup> 2 Kings 17:1.

<sup>273</sup> 2 Kings 17:1.

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Jerusalem would have been damaged if not completely destroyed by fire. We are therefore heavily reliant on the accuracy of those copies which were made.

Consider, for example, the following passage:

“And Esau was **forty years old** when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite”<sup>274</sup>

This appears almost verbatim in the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch. Nevertheless, you can search high and low, but you will not find mention anywhere else of Judith, Beerli the Hittite or of Bashemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. One would naturally expect them to be mentioned in Genesis chapter 36 where all of Esau’s family members are listed. According to the Bible, Esau also married Bashemath daughter of Ishmael.<sup>275</sup> How likely is it even that Esau would have had two wives with the same name?

Josephus was clearly working from a **different** copy of the Hebrew Bible when he wrote:

“Now when Esau, one of the sons of Isaac, whom the father principally loved, was now **come to the age of forty years**, he married Adah, the daughter of Helon [Elon], and Aholibamah, the daughter of Esebeon [Zibeon]; which Helon and Esebeon were great lords among the Canaanites...”<sup>276</sup>

This makes far more sense than that preserved in our current copies of the Bible.

There are also a lot of anachronisms in the Bible. This is where some later sage or copyist amended the original text in order that we may know what city or place is being referred to. For example:

- The city of Dan is mentioned in the book of Genesis<sup>277</sup> **long before** Dan was born and therefore before he gave his name to the city.
- The country of the Amalekites is mentioned in the book of Genesis<sup>278</sup> **long before** Amalek son of Eliphaz, son of Esau was born.
- In the book of Judges, we are told that the Hittites were forced out of Luz and they built a further city by the name of Luz elsewhere. The original city of Luz was renamed Bethel.<sup>279</sup>

The book of Joshua, which is supposed to be earlier than the book of Judges, calls the original city of Luz, Bethel and talks of the tribe of Joseph’s border being “from Bethel to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth”.<sup>280</sup>

This new city of Luz did not exist at that time, which means that someone, at some later date, has updated the book of Joshua.

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<sup>274</sup> Gen. 26:34.

<sup>275</sup> Gen. 36:3.

<sup>276</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* i.xviii.4. (Emphasis mine.)

<sup>277</sup> Gen. 14:14.

<sup>278</sup> Gen. 14:7.

<sup>279</sup> Judg. 1:26.

<sup>280</sup> Josh. 16:2.

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- The city of Rameses (var. Raamses<sup>281</sup>) is also an anachronism. It can be shown that the city would at that time have been known as Hat-Nabu (var. At-Nabu) or Hatnub.

This is only a handful of the passages which could be quoted. It has been argued that these anachronisms and chronological errors show that the Bible was written at a relatively late date, thereby undermining the authenticity of the Bible and giving fuel to those who regard the Bible as an unreliable source.

It is easy to forget, that when Jerusalem was destroyed by fire, a lot of the records were lost in the fire. We should therefore be grateful for what has been preserved. There is ample evidence to show that the history preserved in the Bible is as accurate and reliable as could be achieved with the limited resources available to the Jewish historians. When this is borne in mind, the Bible can be studied objectively. Unfortunately, there are those who believe that, as the Bible is “the word of God”, it should not contain **any** errors. It is important, however, that we learn to differentiate between “the word of God” and that which man has had a hand in compiling. The books of Kings and Chronicles are prime examples of the latter.

Let us, for a moment, consider Bible prophecies. A lot of the prophecies in the Bible were specifically written for the last generation. Daniel, for example, was commanded:

“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”<sup>282</sup>

Daniel did not understand the vision and asked what it meant, to which he got the following reply:

“Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are **closed up and sealed** till the time of the end.”<sup>283</sup>

When reading the Bible, many make the mistake of trying to interpret according to our modern understanding. English is a ‘highly developed’ composite language. Thousands of our words are of foreign origin. The word ‘sphere’, for example, is ‘borrowed’ from the Greek word σφαῖρα *sphaira*, meaning ‘ball’. The words ‘globe’ and ‘circle’ are from the Latin ‘globus’ and ‘circus’ respectively. It is because we did not have suitable words in the English language that these words have become assimilated.

By contrast, Biblical Hebrew is a ‘pure’ language. It did not have a very large vocabulary, especially in the earlier books of the Bible. In English, the words ‘slave’ and ‘servant’ have different meanings. In Hebrew, the one word (עֶבֶד *eved*) was used for both. The same goes for אֶרֶץ *eretz*, which means both land and/or the whole world, depending on context. In Gen. 14:7, the word שָׂדֵה *sadeh*, which means ‘a field’, is translated as ‘country’ where it is clearly a reference to the ‘land’ occupied by the Amalekites. Similarly, the word שָׁמַיִם *shamaim* is variously translated as ‘heavens’, ‘skies’ or ‘sky’ and it is this latter reading which is clearly intended in Isa. 40:22 when the prophet talks about stretching out the heavens ‘as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to

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<sup>281</sup> Exod. 1:11.

<sup>282</sup> Dan. 12:4.

<sup>283</sup> Dan. 12:9.

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dwell in'. Isaiah clearly knew that there was an atmosphere enveloping the earth and which covered it 'like a tent'. This is only a small selection of examples which could be quoted.

With these thoughts in mind, let us consider the following words by the prophet Nahum:

“For the LORD hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches. The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.”<sup>284</sup>

The setting of this prophecy is the end days. If we are in the end days when “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”, then these ‘chariots’ the prophet is describing ought to be observable today. Bear in mind that the words *motor vehicle*, *engine*, *juggernaut* etc are modern. Such concepts did not exist at that time. The prophet had to rely on the vocabulary of his day to describe the vision which he saw.

There were only two main forms of transportation Nahum could have chosen: A wagon, which was not built for speed, or a chariot, which was built for speed and manoeuvrability. Whilst the Authorised Version has, “The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways”, the Hebrew can more correctly be translated as, “The chariots rush madly [יִתְהוֹלְלוּ] in the streets, they run to and fro [וַיִּשְׁתַּקְּצוּן]<sup>285</sup> in the broad ways [or freeways, or motorways]”. The word ‘jostle’ used in the AV is completely the wrong meaning. יִשְׁתַּקְּצוּן can also mean “To run or push forward violently, repeatedly, or in great numbers”,<sup>286</sup> or it can mean “To make a noise, cause an uproar ... rush along”.<sup>287</sup> All of these words aptly describe modern day traffic. Similarly, the Hebrew phrase translated as “they shall seem like torches”, is מְרֵאֲיָהֶן כְּלִפְיָדִים which more precisely means, “their appearance is like torches”.

In the time of Nahum, the brightest artificial light was produced by a ‘torch’. This was a flame on the end of a stick. Those who have watched films such as *Indiana Jones* or *National Treasure* will be familiar with such torches. Today, a torch is something which projects a beam of light. The headlamp of a car is just a large powerful torch. (NB: It should be noted that Americans refer to torches as flashlights.)

Even today, we talk of things being ‘lightning fast’ and sometimes use the expression ‘like greased lightning’. Bear in mind that, in Nahum’s day, chariots would not have had ‘torches’ attached to them, would not have been driven at night, and even if they were, they would not have travelled at any great speed because of limited visibility. (They would certainly not have been ‘jostling’ in the broad ways!)

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<sup>284</sup> Nah. 2:2-4.

<sup>285</sup> See entry on p.148, *A Hebrew and English Dictionary*, Rev. Joseph Samuel C.F. Frey, London 1839.

<sup>286</sup> *An Hebrew and English Lexicon*, entry under שִׁקְצָה on p.726, John Parkhurst, London 1823.

<sup>287</sup> *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English*, p.680, Ernest Klein, Jerusalem 1987.

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Sceptics would just dismiss this prophecy as religious mumbo jumbo, yet, when analysed objectively, it is actually an accurate description of motorway traffic using the operative terminology of that time. This is only one of many such passages which could be quoted where, when we make allowances for the lack of modern vocabulary, we can see that the prophets are describing events which pertain to their future but are relating what they see in the language of their day.

Many of the books of the prophets clearly state when something has been given by God. For example: “And the word of the LORD came unto me saying...”<sup>288</sup> We can be certain that those parts of the Bible have been accurately related. The rest relies heavily on what has survived the ravages of war and what has been salvaged by the Jewish sages.

### Esarhaddon and His Successors

We are told that Hezekiah was “sick unto death”, but the LORD allowed him an extra 15 years of rule.<sup>289</sup> This affliction occurred in Hezekiah’s 14<sup>th</sup> year, around the same time that Sennacherib’s army was smitten by the angel of the LORD. This key event provides us with a pivotal point in the Assyrian and Biblical histories where the two chronologies can be most firmly tied. In this very year, we are told that Sennacherib returned to Nineveh where he was killed and his son Esarhaddon reigned in his stead.<sup>290</sup>

The prophet Isaiah treated Hezekiah’s ‘boil’ with ‘cakes of figs’ and the king made a miraculous recovery.<sup>291</sup> As a sign that he would make a recovery, Hezekiah was told that the shadow on the sun-dial of Ahaz would go backwards by ten degrees.<sup>292</sup> This would have been the very moment when, Esarhaddon tells us, the planet *SAG-ME-GAR* stood still in the station of the sun:

“[In heaven and on earth] there appeared many [evil omens], (portending) **total destruction**. The Arahtu Canal, a raging torrent, an angry stream, (whose) floods were high, like unto the deluge, was brought up and [into the city of his abode] poured its waters and made it like a meadow.....”

“.....[At the beginning of my kingship, in my first year of reign], when I [Esarhaddon] seated myself on the throne of deity and put on my head the royal crown, there appeared [favourable signs in heaven and on earth], for the restoration of the city and temple, favourable (oracles) were disclosed to me. (The planet) Jupiter [*SAG-ME-GAR*] arose and in the month of *Simanu*, drew near and **approached the station of the sun. It stood still**. The appearance of **its countenance was ruddy**. It changed..... heavy rains and [great] floods of mountain water, ..... In the month *Pit-babi* it reached the place of its ‘watch’ and stood (still) in its station”.<sup>293</sup>

Luckenbill and others have taken *SAG-ME-GAR* to mean the planet Jupiter, but philologically, it is more likely to be the planet Mars, the *g* of *ME-GAR* being a gutteral,

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<sup>288</sup> Jer. 1:4.

<sup>289</sup> Isa. 38:1-5.

<sup>290</sup> 2 Kings 19:35-37.

<sup>291</sup> Isa. 38:21.

<sup>292</sup> Isa. 38:8.

<sup>293</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.250, §.659 (emphases mine).



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hence being pronounced as *ME-AR* – hence Mars. The fact that it appeared red and was in ‘the station of the sun’ shows that the planet itself must have been red. With the sun being positioned behind the planet, it could not have been the light of the sun which was giving the planet its ruddy appearance.

This first year of Esarhaddon’s reign, in which the planet ‘stood still’ in ‘the station of the sun’, coincided with the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah.<sup>294</sup> This was clearly that self-same moment when the sun’s shadow went backwards by ten degrees on the sun dial of Ahaz.<sup>295</sup> After this incident, the stars returned to their rightful place in the sky, or as Esarhaddon himself put it:

“The stars of heaven proceeded to their stations, ***took up their proper course*** and kept from (*lit.*, left) the improper path.”<sup>296</sup>

Esarhaddon informs us that the planet *SAG-ME-GAR* had been causing devastation and destruction for a period of eleven years, even calling it a period of desolation.<sup>297</sup>

One enlightening text (Mul.Apin I.i:36-38), which refers to the planet *SAG-ME-GAR* as Nibiru, records:

“When the stars of Enlil have been finished, one big star – although its light is dim – divides the sky in half and stands there: that is, the star of Marduk, Nibiru, Jupiter; it keeps changing its position and crosses the sky.”<sup>298</sup>

This text, which dates to the time of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, confirms that the planet Nibiru (*SAG-ME-GAR*) had ‘wandered’ out of orbit. No one, however, seems prepared to accept that a planet had moved out of orbit, let alone came into close contact with our own planet.

Astrological reports from this period make constant mention of a “red glow” in the sky. A group of Japanese students have ***assumed*** that the tablets are talking about solar activity:

“Auroral records found in historical archives and cosmogenic isotopes found in natural archives have served as sound proxies of coronal mass ejections and solar energetic particles (SEPs), respectively, for dates prior to the onset of telescopic sunspot observations in 1610. These space weather events constitute a significant threat to a modern civilization, because of its increasing dependency on an electronic infrastructure. Recent studies have identified multiple extreme space weather events derived from SEPs in natural archives, such as the event in 660 BCE. While the level of solar activity around 660 BCE is of great interest, this had not been within the coverage of the hitherto-known datable auroral records in historical documents that extend back to the 6th century BCE. Therefore, we have examined Assyrian astrological reports in the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, identified three observational reports of candidate aurorae, and dated these reports to approximately 680 BCE–650 BCE. The Assyrian

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<sup>294</sup> 2 Kings 19:37 & Isa. 37:38.

<sup>295</sup> 2 Kings 20:11 and Isa. 38:8. We are told that 15 years were added to Hezekiah’s life, thereby taking him to the 29<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, for we are told that Hezekiah reigned for 29 years. (2 kings 18:2.)

<sup>296</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.259, §.669 (emphasis mine).

<sup>297</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.245, §.650.

<sup>298</sup> Francesca Rochberg, “Astronomy and Calendars in Ancient Mesopotamia,” pp.1925 to 1940 in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. 3, ed. Jack Sasson, New York 2000. See also *Writing Science Before the Greeks: A Naturalistic Analysis of the Babylonian Astronomical Treatise MUL.APIN* p.67, Rita Watson and Wayne Horowitz, Koninklijke Brill NB, Leiden, Netherlands

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cuneiform tablets let us extend the history of auroral records and solar activity by a century. These cuneiform reports are considered to be the earliest datable records of candidate aurorae and they support the concept of enhanced solar activity suggested by the cosmogenic isotopes from natural archives.”<sup>299</sup>

In other words, they are applying their *interpretation* to one small part of the archaeological evidence without considering the wider picture. This ‘red glow’ in the sky must clearly have been related to the movement of the planet *Sag Ma’ar*. The red glow was more likely to have been as a result of the dust trail left behind by the planet Mars as it moved away from our planet.

The result of this near collision was felt across the globe, with the planet experiencing violent earthquakes and great disasters. This was when the flood known to the Greeks as the Flood of Deucalion (i.e. Duke Elon) occurred, when:

“heavy rain from heaven flooded the greater part of Greece, so that all men were destroyed, except a few who fled to the high mountains in the neighborhood. It was then **that the mountains in Thessaly parted**, and that **all the world outside the Isthmus and Peloponnese was overwhelmed**.”<sup>300</sup>

Notice that the “mountains in Thessaly parted”, a statement which can be easily overlooked. The writer seems to be referring to a phenomenon which can only be attributed to a shift in the tectonic plates. This being the case, the planet *SAG-ME-GAR* seems to have been responsible for this drifting of the continents, an event which is said by scientists to have occurred many millions of years ago. (NB: A separate incident involving a drifting of the continents also occurred during the time of Noah.)



A replica of the Victory Stele of Esarhaddon, The Semitic Museum of Harvard University.

Ovid describes this flood of Deucalion as follows:

“The sea in unchecked liberty has buried all the hills, and strange waves now beat upon the mountain peaks”.<sup>301</sup>

The Flood of Deucalion occurred during the time of Hezekiah, king of Judah. During the time of Ahaz, who ruled immediately prior to Hezekiah, Rezin king of Syria conquered the city of Elath on the Gulf of Akaba.<sup>302</sup> The Authorised Version records that “Syrians

<sup>299</sup> *The Earliest Candidates of Auroral observations in Assyrian Astrological Reports: Insights on Solar Activity around 660 BCE*, Abstract on p.1, Hisashi Hayakawa, Yasuyuki Mitsuma, Yusuke Ebihara and Fusa Miyake, *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*, 884:L18 (7pp), 10 Oct 2019.

<sup>300</sup> Apollodorus, *Library* i.vii.2 (emphases mine).

<sup>301</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphosis* i.309-310.

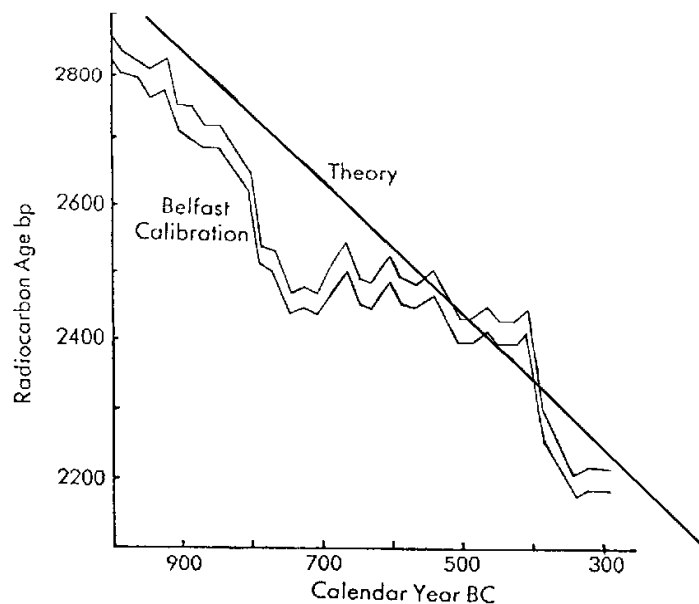
<sup>302</sup> 2 Kings 16:6.

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came to Elath and dwelt there unto this day". The Hebrew word translated as 'Syrians' is *Aramim* (אַרְמִים), but in the Hebrew Bible, there is a margin note against the word *Aramim* providing us with an alternative reading of *Edomim* (אֲדָמִים), that is, Edomites, the difference being in the reading of the one letter. (This suggests that there might have been two differing copies of the original texts and the Masoretes decided to insert the alternative reading as a margin entry.) In the Septuagint, the word in this Biblical passage is even translated as Idumaeans (Ἰδουμαῖοι).

This reading of Edomites finds support in the second book of Chronicles where we are told that, during the time of Ahaz, "**again** the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives",<sup>303</sup> the first time presumably being when Rezin king of Syria took Elath. From that time forward, the city of Elath was known as Elon or Aelana, named after the Edomite duke known as Elon the Hittite.<sup>304</sup> The flooding which occurred during the time of Esarhaddon became known to the Greeks as the Flood of Deucalion, where Deucalion is clearly a phonetic variation on the name Duke Elon (אֵילֹן).

It is no coincidence that all radiocarbon dating of artefacts from this period show a flat response, so that anything between 800 to 400 BCE give a radiocarbon date of around 500 BCE. This period is referred to in archaeological terms as the Hallstatt Plateau – also known as the "first millenium BC radiocarbon disaster period".<sup>305</sup> Recent scientific research being undertaken by Dr Andrew Snelling, Dr Steve Austin, D. R. Humphreys *et al* is showing that radioactive decay was accelerated dramatically in the recent past and that some radioactive decay acceleration event must have been the cause of the profusion of helium atoms that exist in zircon crystals associated with radioactive uranium.<sup>306</sup> In other words, whilst the radioactive decay rates suggested that the rock was millions of years old, the



A graph demonstrating the first millenium BCE disaster period.

<sup>303</sup> 2 Chron. 28:17 (emphasis mine).

<sup>304</sup> Gen. 36:2.

<sup>305</sup> "A notably complex period is the '1<sup>st</sup>-millenium BC radiocarbon disaster'. Between 400 and 800 bc the calibration curve is essentially flat with calendar dates within that range all equivalent to a radiocarbon date of around 500 bc." *Centuries of Darkness* p.325, Peter James, Pimlico, London 1992 – Uncalibrated dates are normally expressed as bc (i.e. small letters) and calibrated or calendar dates as BC.

<sup>306</sup> Humphreys, D. R. Young, *Helium Diffusion Age of Zircons Supports Accelerated Nuclear Decay*. In Vardiman, L., A. A. Snelling, and E. F. Chaffin (eds.). *Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth, Volume II*, pp.25-100, El Cajon, CA: Institute for Creation Research, and Chino Valley, AZ: Creation Research Society: 25.

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amount of helium present in the rock called for only a few thousand years. Dr Snelling and his team seem to be unaware of this radiocarbon disaster period being discussed here and which occurred around the time of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, which is when our planet was subjected to a huge blast of radiation.

I would also point out that Herodotus records that since Egypt became a kingdom:

“...four times in this period the sun rose contrary to his wont; twice he rose where he now sets, and twice he set where he now rises”.<sup>307</sup>

In 1906, a French geophysicist by the name of Bernard Brunhes discovered that “as a newly baked brick cools, iron-rich mineral particles align themselves parallel to the direction of the earth’s magnetic field so that the brick becomes slightly magnetised”.<sup>308</sup> He also discovered that cooling lava flows behave in a similar manner. Taking this further, he was astonished to find that some of the ancient lava flows were magnetised in a direction directly opposite to that of the present magnetic field. “At certain times in the past, he concluded, the earth’s magnetic field must have been reversed”.<sup>309</sup>

Very few of Brunhes’ contemporaries accepted his findings. However, around 20 years later, a Japanese geophysicist by the name of Motonori Matuyama found evidence to prove that Brunhes was right. Despite attempts by geologists to prove Brunhes and Matuyama wrong, further evidence was provided during the late 1950’s and 1960’s from geophysicists working in Russia, Iceland and Hawaii. Final confirmation was provided in 1963 by Allan Cox and Richard R. Doell of the U.S. Geological Survey, and by G. Brent Dalrymple of the University of California at Berkeley:

“Cox and his colleagues proved that the field-reversal theory was correct by showing that each reversal had been a globally synchronous event. They argued that it would be unreasonable to suppose that lava flows all over the world had undergone self-reversal simultaneously”.<sup>310</sup>

It took 60 years for geologists to accepted this evidence!

The planet Mars is roughly half the diameter of our planet Earth, is less dense, having around 15% of the Earth’s

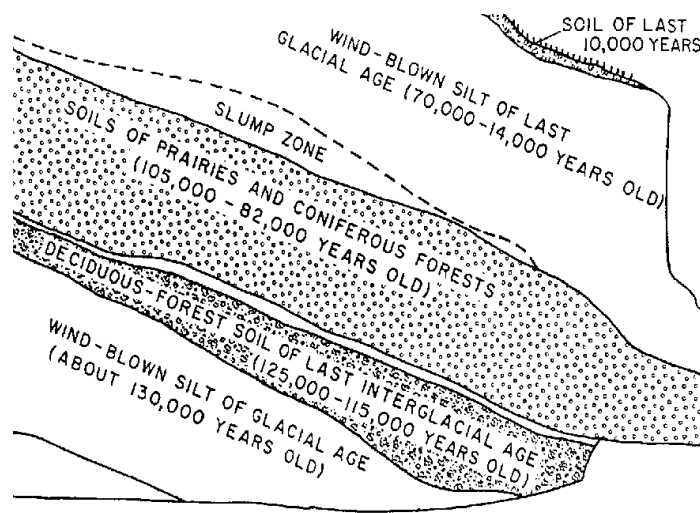


Diagram showing the sequence of soils and wind-blown silt as recorded at Nové Mesto in former Czechoslovakia (Courtesy of G. J. Kukla). Note that I do not agree with the dates shown, all of which are assumptions based on an evolutionary timescale.

<sup>307</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* 2.142.

<sup>308</sup> *Ice Ages, Solving the Mystery*, p.147, John Imbrie and Katherine Palmer Imbrie, The MacMillan Press Limited, London 1979

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.* p.147

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.* p.148

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volume, and is approximately eleven percent of its mass. They are the only two planets in our solar system which have a similar angle of tilt (25 degrees Mars compared to 23.5 degrees our planet) and number of hours in a day (24 hrs 37 mins compared to just under 23 hrs 56 mins for us).<sup>311</sup> Like our own planet, Mars also shows evidence of polarity reversals:

“Although Mars has no intrinsic magnetic field, observations show that parts of the planet’s crust have been magnetized and that alternating polarity reversals of its dipole field have occurred.”<sup>312</sup>

In 1968, another geologist by the name of George Kukla was examining a pit which he had dug in a quarry near the city of Brno in Czechoslovakia as it was then known. He and his colleagues at the Czechoslovakian Academy of Science examined each layer of soil and loess in the pit and found five magnetic reversals.

Kukla and his colleagues also discovered that:

“transitions from dusty, polar desert phases to deciduous forest phases were so abrupt that they appeared in the quarry walls as distinct lines”.<sup>313</sup>

This ‘abrupt’ change can only be explained in one way – the deciduous forest phase must be intrusive. In other words, the soil must have been conveyed from another place. The alternative is to assume that a deciduous forest suddenly appeared without throwing roots into the silt below it and without leaving any trace of how it could have formed so quickly. The site actually shows signs of the top and bottom layers having been “wind-blown” and if the earth was subjected to violent upheavals, then this would seem to provide reasonable geological evidence to show that whole regions must have been uprooted, moved from one place and rapidly deposited in another. In my opinion, the most likely cause of this type of deposition is the action of flood waters.

The geological evidence would seem to support what Herodotus recorded, albeit dated by geologists to some remote early period. Four of these magnetic reversals would have occurred during the period currently under discussion.

## Realignment of Calendars

As a result of this ‘close encounter’ with the planet *SAG-ME-GAR*, all the nations of the world had to realign their calendars. Numa king of Rome, who is said to have been a contemporary of Hezekiah king of Judah, is accredited with adding an extra five days to the calendar,<sup>314</sup> though I would suggest that this early date for Numa needs to be challenged. According to the Babylonian Talmud, an intercalary month was added

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<sup>311</sup> Details obtained from NASA. Viorel Badescu (see below) gives slightly different figures.

<sup>312</sup> *Mars: Prospective Energy and Material Resources* p.600, Viorel Badescu, Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2009. (ISBN 978-3-642-03628-6.)

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.* p.154.

<sup>314</sup> “First of all he divided the year into twelve months, corresponding to the moon’s revolutions. But as the moon does not complete thirty days in each month, and so there are fewer days in the lunar year than in that measured by the course of the sun, he interpolated intercalary months and so arranged them that every twentieth year the days should coincide with the same position of the sun as when they started, the whole twenty years being thus complete.” (Livy 1.19)



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during the time of Hezekiah.<sup>315</sup> In Greece, Thales of Miletus is accredited with adding 5¼ days to his calendar and his contemporary Solon did the same in mainland Greece, though both of these last named are usually dated around 100 years later. Herodotus makes them a contemporary of Amasis king of Egypt<sup>316</sup> and Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon who he called Labynetos.<sup>317</sup>

Up until the time of this recorded event, which occurred in the first year of Esarhaddon's reign, everyone was keeping a lunar calendar of twelve months of equal 30 day duration. There were once exactly 360 days in a year. Now, all of a sudden, there were 365¼ days in a year, a difference which, even in ten years, would cause the two calendars to drift by nearly two months. In fact, there is not one scrap of evidence, when interpreted correctly, to show that a 365 day calendar was kept prior to this date when the planet *SAG-ME-GAR* "stood still in the station of the sun".

Before anyone challenges me on this statement, it can be shown that the mention of a 365 day calendar in the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan in Egypt, this supposedly being the earliest mention of a 365 day calendar, was not contemporaneous with the rest of the tomb's reliefs and was in fact added at a much later date. The texts refer to "the feast of the long year, the feast of the short year" as well as "the feast of the five days added to the year".<sup>318</sup> This is correctly understood to be a reference to the contemporaneous observance of two different calendars, but the person responsible for this text lived centuries after the tomb was originally built.

The following text is ascribed to the tomb's architect:

"[So] when there came (?) the *ha*-prince Chnemhotep, then was made a monument within my city; I built a columnar chamber **which I found as a field(?)** I set up **on columns new(?)** written upon with my own name, I made to live the name of my father upon it, **I sculptured my deeds upon every monument of mine...**"<sup>319</sup>

By 'father', the 'architect' actually means 'forefather', this being the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty chieftain Khnumhotep II. In ancient middle eastern languages, the word 'son' could denote son, son-in-law or offspring. The word 'father' likewise could refer to father, father-in-law or ancestor. In this case, the architect lived centuries later.

The inscription ends by identifying the 'builder' of the tomb:

"Undertook the tomb, the superintendent of treasurers, Bakt",<sup>320</sup>

Percy Newberry encountered a number of difficulties when translating the texts in this tomb, commenting, in respect of what he called "The Great Inscription" (which is where we find mention of "the feast of the long year, the feast of the short year"), that "The inscription contains many unquestionable blunders of the scribe".<sup>321</sup> In addition, the

<sup>315</sup> "...he intercalated [the month of] Nisan in Nisan" Pesachim 56a and Berakhot 10b.

<sup>316</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* i.30.

<sup>317</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* i.74.

<sup>318</sup> *Beni Hasan* Vol. 1, pp.61-62, §.91-94, Percy E. Newberry, Archaeological Survey of Egypt, London 1893.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 1, p.65, §.193-200 (emphases mine).

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 1, p.66, §.222.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 1, p.56.

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expression “which I found as a field” could not be explained by conventional arguments, as it suggests that the tomb already existed but had fallen into disrepair. Also, to set something up on “columns new” (or more correctly on “columns anew”) likewise suggests a repair job. Also, what does it mean that the architect “sculptured” his deeds upon every monument? This can only mean that Bakt added his own inscriptions to those already in existence.

“I am distinguished in monuments, I taught every art **that had been neglected(?)** within this city in order that my name might be noble upon every monument **that I made(?)**”<sup>322</sup>

Even Newberry noticed a change in narrative in the above-quoted text which talks about the chamber which had been “found as a field”, commenting: “This is, of course, the autobiographer, who immediately resumes the narrative in the first person”.<sup>323</sup> Of course, Bakt did not ‘resume’ the narrative. He added his own inscriptions!

Bakt therefore seems to have made many additions to this tomb, but it has been assumed that the work all belongs to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, which is when the tomb was originally built. Bakt merely rebuilt and restored the monument, as he himself confesses: “I taught every art that had been neglected”. By his day, the art of building and restoring such monuments had clearly been forgotten other than by a select few. This comment simply does not make sense if assigned to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty when the art of writing in hieroglyphics and the building of tombs was commonplace. The notion that a 365 day year was being kept as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is therefore shown to be erroneous.

Even during the Persian War in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE (now amended to 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE!<sup>324</sup>), there appear to have been great catastrophes and a greater than average number of lunar eclipses as recorded by Thucydides:

“...And traditions which had often been current before, but rarely verified by fact, were now no longer doubted. Earthquakes were of the greatest extent and fury, and **eclipses of the sun more numerous than are recorded to have happened in any former age**; there were also, in some places, great droughts causing famines, and lastly the plague which did most harm and destroyed numbers of the people”.<sup>325</sup>

This strongly suggests a dramatic change to the frequency of lunar eclipses! When we understand what was happening, we can begin to understand why the Jews had to keep watch for the new moon. Today, we no longer need to do this. Because the lunar phases have remained constant for the past two thousand years, we can accurately calculate when the next new moon will occur. The same argument could also be applied to the Jews who returned from Babylon. Had the lunar phases remained constant, the new moon could have been accurately calculated, but the earth and the moon were still at that time adjusting to their new orbits and had not stabilised sufficiently for the people to make accurate recordings.

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<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 1, p.66, §.213-217 (emphases mine).

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. 1, p.65, fn.7.

<sup>324</sup> See the corrections made in my paper entitled *A Radical Review of the Chaldean and Achaemenid Periods*.

<sup>325</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.23 (emphasis mine).

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Esarhaddon records:

“Before my time the great lord Marduk became angry. He went in (to his temple), and his heart was enraged against Esagila and Babylon, he was furious. Through the anger of his heart and the fury of his soul, Esagila and Babylon became wasteland and were like the open country.”<sup>326</sup>

Note that the city of Babylon became “like wasteland”. “Marduk became angry”, we are told. Marduk was the god of thunder and lightning (i.e. thunderstorms).<sup>327</sup> Just as Mars was originally an agricultural god as “sacrifices were offered to him for the prosperity of the fields and flocks”,<sup>328</sup> so also Marduk “is the shelter of the land and protector of the people; as his due for being caretaker of the land”.<sup>329</sup> Morris Jastrow Jnr. informs us that Marduk is associated with the planet Jupiter, but judging from Esarhaddon’s texts, there appears to be some confusion between Mars and Jupiter:

“In regard to the planets, there are reasons for believing that Jupiter and Venus were the first to be clearly differentiated, Jupiter by virtue of its brilliant light, Venus through the striking fact that it appeared as an evening star during one part of the year, and as morning star during another. In the astrological system Jupiter was identified with Marduk, who, we have seen, became the chief god of the pantheon after the Hammurapi period; and Venus with the chief goddess Ishtar. As was pointed out in a previous lecture, Marduk appears to have been, originally, a solar deity. This identification with Jupiter is, therefore, artificial and entirely arbitrary; and shows that in this combination of planets with the chief gods and goddesses of the pantheon, the original character of the latter was entirely set aside. The same is true in the identification of Venus with Ishtar, for Ishtar is distinctly an earth goddess, the personification of mother-earth, viewed as the source of vegetation and of fertility in general.”<sup>330</sup>

It is extremely unlikely that the planet Jupiter, which is much further away from our planet, would have been given priority in the pantheon over Mars, which planet has seemingly been ignored by the ancient civilizations.

Whether we are talking about the planet Mars or the planet Jupiter, one thing is clear – a planet many millions of miles further away from the sun than our own could not be described as approaching the station of the sun. The sun regressing by 10 degrees as recorded by the Bible combined with wide-scale disasters connected with a planet visibly coming between the Earth and the Sun, which is effectively what Esarhaddon is telling us, cannot be taken lightly.

Esarhaddon also tells us that when these calamities befell Assyria:

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<sup>326</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.255, §.662

<sup>327</sup> “**Marduk**: chief god of Babylon; credited with the organization of the universe. He was originally a god of thunderstorms, but later became a fertility god. Marduk gained his power by slaying the monsters of chaos, Tiamut and Kingu.” *Gods, Goddesses and Mythology* p.1461, Marshall Cavendish, Marshall Cavendish Corporation 2005. ISBN 0-7614-7559-1.

<sup>328</sup> *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* Vol. 2, p.961, entry under Mars, William Smith, Boston 1870.

<sup>329</sup> *The Form and Meaning of a Babylonian Prayer to Marduk in Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 103, No. 1, p.8, article by I. Tzvi Abusch (Brandeis University), *Studies in Literature from the Ancient Near East*, by Members of the American Oriental Society 1983.

<sup>330</sup> *Aspects of Religious Beliefs and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria* p.217, Morris Jastrow Jnr., *American Lectures on the History of Religions* (Ninth Series 1910), G.P. Putnam’s Sons, New York and London 1911.

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“Seventy years as the period of its desolation he [i.e. the god Marduk] wrote (down in the Book of Fate). But the merciful Marduk - his anger lasted but a moment - turned (the book) upside down and ordered its (the city's) restoration in the eleventh year”.<sup>331</sup>

The word desolation is the strongest word Esarhaddon could have used. When he says desolation, he means desolation. As stated above, the cities of “Esagila and Babylon became wasteland and were like the open country”. As noticed by Luckenbill, the reference to turning the book ‘upside down’ refers to the fact that the Babylonian numeral 70 when turned upside down or reversed becomes 11.<sup>332</sup>

This “eleventh year” occurred in the first year of Esarhaddon’s reign which dates the start of the troubles to the time of his father, Sennacherib. We are told that Sennacherib came against Jerusalem in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah,<sup>333</sup> but this episode in Sennacherib’s wars, which marked the end of his reign, was destined never to be recorded by the Assyrian king himself.

The affliction which Hezekiah suffered seems to have occurred around the same time that Sennacherib’s army was smitten by the angel of the LORD. The prophet Isaiah treated Hezekiah’s ‘boil’ with ‘cakes of figs’ and the king made a miraculous recovery.<sup>334</sup> The Hebrew word בִּשְׂרָאֵן which is translated as ‘boil’ can also be translated as ‘an inflammation’. Bearing in mind the amount of radiation emitted by the planet Mars, as recorded by NASA, Hezekiah might therefore have been suffering from some sort of radiation sickness.

The following text discovered on the Bellino Cylinder is dated to the eponym of Nabu-liu<sup>335</sup> who is attested as *limmu* in Sennacherib’s **fourth** year:<sup>336</sup>

“the Tebiltu River, a raging, destructive stream, which, at its high water, had destroyed the mausoleums inside the city and had exposed to the sun their tiers of coffins (*lit.*, piled-up coffins), and, from days of old, had come up close to the palace and with its floods at high water had worked havoc with its foundation and destroyed its platform”.<sup>337</sup>

The very event which was described by Esarhaddon is here described by Sennacherib! The cylinder is probably dated to sometime after Sennacherib’s *fifth* campaign.<sup>338</sup> If these disasters started *eleven* years previous to Esarhaddon’s first year of reign, then these events cannot be dated any earlier than the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Sennacherib’s 24 year reign. The fact that it is dated to the eponym of Nabu-liu, who is supposed to have been eponymy in Sennacherib’s fourth year or reign, shows once again how the Limmu Lists are worthless for chronological considerations.

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<sup>331</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.245, §.650

<sup>332</sup> *The Black Stone of Esarhaddon*, p.166, Daniel David Luckenbill, *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Apr. 1925).

<sup>333</sup> 2 Kings 18:13.

<sup>334</sup> Isa. 38:21.

<sup>335</sup> ARAB Vol.2, p.133, §.268.

<sup>336</sup> Nabu-liu, who was called Nabu-liha by Smith, was purportedly eponymy in Sennacherib’s fourth year. *History of Sennacherib* p.8, George Smith, Williams & Norgate, London and Edinburgh, 1878.

<sup>337</sup> ARAB. p.163, §.372.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.* pp.16-7, §.385. See the opening comment over §.382 on p.165.

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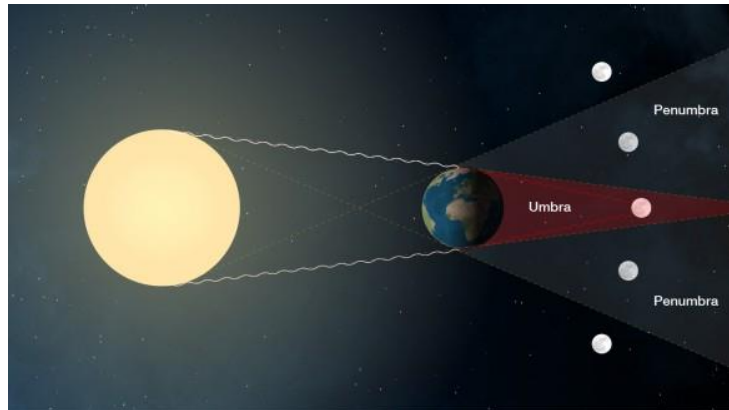
Note that, if we can trust the Babylonian Chronicles, there was a plague in Babylonia and Assyria in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Sargon II.<sup>339</sup> This 15<sup>th</sup> year of Sargon II coincided with the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Esarhaddon's reign. One wonders whether the close encounter with the planet *SAG-ME-GAR* had anything to do with that plague.

In the rest of his texts, Esarhaddon tells us that the people were "cast down" and "proceeded to other places"

and that "elsewhere, in a foreign (*lit.*, unknown) land, they found a hiding place (*lit.*, secret place)".<sup>340</sup> Whatever happened it must truly have been a spectacularly fearsome event.

The planet Mars is roughly half the diameter of our planet Earth, is less dense, having around 15% of the Earth's volume, and is approximately eleven percent of our planet's mass. They are the only two planets in our solar system which have a similar angle of tilt (25 degrees Mars compared to 23.5 degrees our planet) and number of hours in a day (24 hrs 37 mins compared to just under 23 hrs 56 mins for us).<sup>341</sup> Bear in mind that, when the two planets crossed paths, they were both travelling in the same direction at roughly the same speed. The actual speed of the side-on impact at the time their orbits crossed is unknown but could not have been great. It was nevertheless sufficient to cause extensive damage without wiping out all life on our planet.

It has recently been proposed that the collision actually involved a comet named Nibiru, a theory which seems to have become quite popular in recent years on the internet. The evidence quite clearly shows, however, that Nibiru was another name either for the planet Mars or for Jupiter. It has been pointed out that even the moon can, in certain conditions, turn red. This can certainly happen when the moon is in what is known as the apogee – where the moon is farthest away from the sun so that it falls in the Earth's shadow. In this position, the moon is no longer being illuminated directly by the sun, but the red light, being of a low frequency, in passing through the Earth's atmosphere is diffracted sufficiently so that it does reach the moon, and is thus reflected off its surface, giving it the appearance of being red. However, as *SAG-ME-GAR* was in ***the station of the sun***, this explanation can be dismissed.



The moon in apogee. Only the low frequency red light, because it travels at a slower speed than the other colours, is diffracted by the Earth's atmosphere and fall on the surface of the moon, giving it its unusual blood-red appearance. (Picture courtesy of NASA.)

<sup>339</sup> ABC, *Chronicle 1*, p.76, column ii, line 5.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid. p.250, §.659B.

<sup>341</sup> Details obtained from NASA. Viorel Badescu gives slightly different figures.



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Another reason for the moon appearing red is, if there is a build-up of dust particles in the air. A forest fire or volcanic eruption, for example, can fill the air with tiny particles that partially obscure light from the sun and moon. Once again, these particles tend to scatter blue and green light away, while permitting red light to pass through more easily. If you see a red moon, high up in the sky, it is probably because there is a large amount of dust in the atmosphere. However, the moon would still need to be illuminated by the sun to produce this effect, hence cannot, by necessity, be located in the station of the sun.

We are told that Hezekiah reigned for 29 years. From the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon ruled Assyria.<sup>342</sup> This means that Sargon II, whose reign is said to have lasted for 17 years,<sup>343</sup> must have been ruling from Hezekiah's fifth<sup>344</sup> to his twenty-second year, hence must have been co-ruling not only with Sennacherib for a short while (i.e. for 9 years), but also with Esarhaddon after him. Esarhaddon is understood to have ruled for 12 years,<sup>345</sup> his son Ashurbanipal then succeeding him on the throne of Assyria purportedly for 42 years.<sup>346</sup> Ashurbanipal may have started his reign in Esarhaddon's 12<sup>th</sup> year whilst his father was still alive, though this suggestion is rejected by Reade.<sup>347</sup> This means that Ashurbanipal would have begun his reign around the 25<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah's reign.

It should be noted that Ashurbanipal was a contemporary of Menashe (AV Manasseh) king of Judah.<sup>348</sup> More importantly, Esarhaddon was *also* a contemporary of Menashe king of Judah.<sup>349</sup> This means that, when Hezekiah was "sick unto death", his son must have been invested on the throne of Judah, which in turn means that at least the first fifteen years of Menashe's reign overlapped with the last fifteen of Hezekiah's. When we read the Bible, we naturally assume that Menashe/Manasseh started his reign immediately after that of Hezekiah,<sup>350</sup> but such assumption is shown to be false. If, as suggested earlier, Hezekiah was 15 years of age when he was born, then Menashe, who was 12 years of age when he began to reign, will have been born when Hezekiah was either 16 or 17 years old.

As we have hopefully demonstrated, it is only when we compare the Bible with the Assyrian and Babylonian records that we can begin to understand the true course of history. We cannot afford to reject either set of data.

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<sup>342</sup> 2 Kings 19:37.

<sup>343</sup> ABC p.76 (Chronicle 1).

<sup>344</sup> 2 Kings 18:9-10. Bear in mind that Sargon II's first year of reign seems to have coincided with Shalmaneser V's final year.

<sup>345</sup> Esarhaddon Chronicle - Chronicle 14 in ABC p.127, §.30-1. See also Akitu Chronicle, which seems to have used the first chronicle as a reference - ABC p.131, Chronicle 16, §.2.

<sup>346</sup> CAH Vol. 3, Part 2, p.167, article in Chapter 25 titled *The Fall of Assyria (635-609 BCE)* by John Oates, Cambridge University Press 2006. (ISBN: 0 521 22717 8)

<sup>347</sup> *Assyrian Eponyms, Kings and Pretenders, 648-605*, p.261, J.E. Reade on p.255, *Orientalia*, Nova Series, Vol. 67, Fasc. 2 (1998)

<sup>348</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.340, §.876.

<sup>349</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.265, §.690.

<sup>350</sup> "And Hezekiah slept with his fathers; and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead" 2 Kings 20:21.

"And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the ascent of the sepulchres of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead." 2 Chron. 32:33.

# An Analytical Review of the Campaigns of Sennacherib from a Biblical Perspective

## Sons and Daughters of Okeanus

According to the Greek writers, the Flood of Deucalion saw the eradication of all life in Greece. It was during this period that mass migrations of people from the Middle East started pouring into Europe. What I am about to demonstrate is that the repopulation of Greece dates no earlier than the time of Esarhaddon. The people we have come to know as Greeks – the Mycenaeans, the Hellenes, the Dorians and all the other people who we read about in the Greek classics, – could not therefore have arrived in Greece before this pivotal point in history.

According to a number of writers, amongst which we have Apollodorus, Pausanias and Pliny, the city of Corinth was originally known as Ephyra.<sup>351</sup> Note that Ephyra is a variant spelling of the name Ephraim, the final letter *m* having been dropped. This dropping or adding of the final *m* is well attested. In the *New Testament*, for example, Naphtali appears in three places as Nephthalim (Νεφθαλίμ); twice as the name of the land<sup>352</sup> and once as the name of one of the twelve tribes.<sup>353</sup> Abiyam (אַבִּיָּם AV Abijam)<sup>354</sup> son of Rehoboam king of Judah was also known as Abiyah (אַבִּיָּה AV Abijah).<sup>355</sup> The New Testament writer Matthew called him Abia.<sup>356</sup> Also, the Eritrean cities of Tamynae, Choereae, and Aegilia mentioned by Herodotus<sup>357</sup> take their names from three Edomite tribes – Timnah (or Teman), Korah (קֹרַח)<sup>358</sup> and Yagalam (יַעְלָם AV Jaalam). It is interesting to note that Korah and Yagalam were brothers, which means that these two tribes remained united until a relatively late date. Notice that the final letter *m* of Yagalam has been dropped to produce the name Aegilia.<sup>359</sup> The ancient region of Aegialea in southern Greece was also named after this same Edomite tribe.

Herodotus, who dates the arrival of the first settlers in Greece to the time of Cadmus,<sup>360</sup> called the original inhabitants Gephyraeans and I believe that it is no coincidence that Ptolemy places a city of Gephyra in northern Israel.<sup>361</sup> In the absence of any other candidate, this city of Gephyra in northern Israel must be the “city called Ephraim” mentioned in John 11:54 in the New Testament. (NB: In *The Forgotten Tribe of Naphtali & the Phoenicians*, we show that Cadmus left Phoenicia during the time of Shalmaneser V king of Assyria.)

If it were not for this reference by Ptolemy to a city in northern Israel, I would have said that Gephyra was more correctly a transliteration of עִפְרָה Gephra, a name which appears in the AV as Ophrah. It was both the name of a city of Benjamin, located

<sup>351</sup> Apollodorus, *Library* i.ix.3 & ii.vii.6, Pausanias, *Description of Greece* ii.i.1 and Pliny, *Natural History* iv.4 (11).

<sup>352</sup> Matt. 4:13 & 4:15.

<sup>353</sup> Rev. 7:6.

<sup>354</sup> 1 Kings 14:31 & 15:1-8.

<sup>355</sup> 2 Chron. 12:16 & 13:1-23.

<sup>356</sup> Matt. 1:7.

<sup>357</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* vi.101.

<sup>358</sup> Gen. 36:5.

<sup>359</sup> Gen. 36:5.

<sup>360</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* v.57. The suggestion by Alfred Denis Godley in fn.2 on p.62 of Vol. 3, Loeb Classical Library, London and Massachusetts, 1938, that Gephyra means “bridge or dam” is therefore shown to be contrived. These tribes were naming themselves after their families or places from where they emerged – not after some nondescript word which had some obscure meaning.

<sup>361</sup> Ptolemy, *Geography* Book 5, Chap. 15, §.15.

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somewhere near the city of Jordan,<sup>362</sup> as well as a city of Gideon of the tribe of Menashe, located somewhere close to Shechem.<sup>363</sup> The city of Gephyra mentioned by Ptolemy, however, was located much too far north to be identified as either of these places.

This city of Ephraim is probably mentioned in the second book of Chronicles where it appears in the Hebrew as גֶפְרוֹן *Gephron*, though there is a margin entry correcting this to גֶפְרַיִן *Gephraim*.<sup>364</sup> Despite the initial letter ג *ayyin* and the final letter ך *nun sofit*, the translators had no hesitation rendering the name as Ephraim in the Authorised Version, even though Ephraim is usually written אֶפְרַיִם with an *aleph* for the first letter. (NB: The name is transliterated as Ἐφρών *Ephron* in the Septuagint.)

These Gephyreans were also known as Tanagreans.<sup>365</sup> The name Tanagra is a transliteration of the Hebrew name טַנְגָרָא a name which can be transliterated as *Shinar*, *Shingar* or *Tingar*, the ט *shin* becoming a *t* and the ג *ayyin* becoming a *g*.<sup>366</sup> Targum Pseudo-Jonathan identifies Shinar as Pontus (the Black Sea) in Genesis 10:10, 14:1 and 14:14 (14:9 in the AV) but as Babel in Genesis 11:2. Fragmentary Targum VNL<sup>367</sup> also renders Shinar as Pontus (the Black Sea) in Genesis 14:9.<sup>368</sup> This is the region from where these Ephraimites emerged before arriving in Greece.

During the time of Kings David and Solomon, Ephraim and Menashe were dwelling in Jerusalem:

“And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh”.<sup>369</sup>

Josephus informs us that the roof to King Solomon’s palace was of **Corinthian** style.<sup>370</sup> He also likened the feet of the table, on which was placed the shewbread in the temple, to “those which the Dorians put to their bedsteads”.<sup>371</sup>

What we have taken to be ‘Doric-Greek’ actually turns out to be Doric-Israelite. Archaeologists excavating the ancient city of Dor in northern Israel, for example, have noticed that ‘Greek influences’ appeared in Dor long before the Greeks arrived!

“The first Greek imports to Dor date as early as the tenth century BCE. This trickle is greatly enhanced after Assyrian occupation, and, by the fourth century BCE, most of the table ware at Dor is imported from Greece. By the mid-fourth century, Hellenic-type wares are probably locally produced and distributed. Figurines of the Persian period show deities with Greek-type attributes alongside traditional Phoenician ‘fertility goddesses’ and types associated with the ruling Persian cosmology. Ostraca and graffiti show that the locally spoken language was changing from Phoenician to Greek decades

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<sup>362</sup> Josh. 18:23.

<sup>363</sup> Judg. 6:11 & 8:27. (See Judg. 6:15 for Gideon’s connection to Menashe.

<sup>364</sup> 2 Chron. 13:19.

<sup>365</sup> Strabo, *Geography* ix.ii.10.

<sup>366</sup> That the Hebrew letter ט *shin* can be transliterated as a *t* can be demonstrated by the fact that Josephus called the region of Bashan both Βασιανίαν (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* ix.159) and Βασιανίδι (ibid. iv.173). Other examples could be quoted.

<sup>367</sup> MSS Vatican Ebr. 440, Nürnberg and Leipzig B.H. Fol. 1.

<sup>368</sup> See *Targum and New Testament: Collected Essays* p.48, Martin McNamara, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, Germany 2011.

<sup>369</sup> 1 Chron. 9:3.

<sup>370</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* viii.v.2.

<sup>371</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* iii.vi.6.

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before the political fact of Alexander's occupation. On the other hand, some aspects of traditional Phoenician culture persist well into the Hellenistic period and even later, betraying the true nature of this 'Hellenized' society."<sup>372</sup>

Josephus even quotes a letter which the Jews had in their possession from Areus, king of the Lacedaemonians in Greece, who claimed to be related to the Jews.<sup>373</sup> These Lacedaemonians who wrote to the Jewish High Priest were Dorians:

"[Croesus] next turned his mind to investigating which was the most powerful Greek state, so that he could gain them as his allies. As a result of his enquiries, he discovered that Lacedaemon was populated by Dorians while Athens was populated by Ionians."<sup>374</sup>

The Dorians, who were supposedly named after Dorus (Δῶρος) 'son' of Hellen (this is allegory!),<sup>375</sup> came from Dor in northern Israel, a place called either Δῶροις Dorois<sup>376</sup> or Δῶρων Doron<sup>377</sup> by Josephus. The Dorians were famous for their impressive temples built of white stone with their characteristic Doric-style fluted columns as well as for inventing the Dorian Scale in music.

The city of Dor belonged specifically to the House of Joseph:

"and by the borders of the children of Manasseh, Beth-shean and the towns thereof, Taanach and the towns thereof, Megiddo and the towns thereof, Dor and the towns thereof. In these dwelt the children of Joseph the son of Israel."<sup>378</sup>

With all this evidence, we can only come to the inevitable conclusion that the original inhabitants of Corinth were Israelites of the house of Ephraim son of Joseph, yet archaeologists consistently date the foundation of the Greek states to some obscure early point in history. The Dorians, for example, supposedly arrived in Greece around 1200 BCE.

Ephyra, who is said by Pausanias to have been one of the earliest settlers in Greece and who is clearly the 'person' who gave 'her' name to the city of Corinth before it was renamed, was a 'daughter' of Okeanus.<sup>379</sup> Asopus 'son' of Okeanus, who gave his name to the ancient region of Asopia in Greece as well as the river Asopus, is likewise the tribe of Yoseph (AV Joseph). Sisyphus, who is said by Apollodorus to have founded the city of Ephyra now known as Corinth,<sup>380</sup> is another variant spelling of the name Yoseph/Joseph. (NB: We have no problem accepting that Josephus is a transliteration of the Hebrew name Yoseph. Sisyphus is just another form of the name Josephus.) Who or what then is Okeanus?

Homer records:

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<sup>372</sup> Dor – Hellenization of the East [http://dor.huji.ac.il/HL\\_east.html](http://dor.huji.ac.il/HL_east.html).

<sup>373</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* xii.iv.10 or xii.225-7. (Emphasis mine.)

<sup>374</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* i.56.

<sup>375</sup> Apollodorus, *Library* i.vii.3.

<sup>376</sup> Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* i.50.

<sup>377</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* v.83.

<sup>378</sup> 1 Chron. 7:29.

<sup>379</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece* ii.i.1.

<sup>380</sup> Apollodorus, *Library* i.ix.3.

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“...for Zeus went yesterday to Okeanus, to the blameless Ethiopians for a feast, and all the gods followed with him.”<sup>381</sup>

In referring to this passage, Pausanias commented that the Ethiopians did not live by a river.<sup>382</sup> This is because he was looking at the wrong Ethiopians! He was looking at the **western** Ethiopians who dwelt in Africa whilst Homer was referring to the **eastern** Ethiopians of Babylonia.

Pausanias clearly did not appreciate any of this. He did not realise that the Ethiopians who dwelt near the river Okeanus (a name which is usually transliterated as Ocean) were in fact the eastern Ethiopians discussed by Herodotus,<sup>383</sup> a people who, Josephus informs us, were descended from Nimrod son of Kush.<sup>384</sup> Archaeologists have called them *Kasi* or *Kassites*, a name which is also applied, in the El Amarna Letters, to the African Ethiopians.<sup>385</sup> These eastern and western Ethiopians are the people who are called Kushites in the Bible. By the time of Herodotus, these eastern Ethiopians were located somewhere in or near Beluchistan in what is known today as Pakistan.<sup>386</sup> They later emerged as Kushans to form the Kushan Empire and can today be traced to the Hindustani Indians who even today claim their holy mountain to be the Hindu Kush. They are black with straight black hair, precisely as described by Herodotus.



The Hindustani Indians are descendants of the Kassites who at one time dwelt in Babylonia.

The name Okeanus is derived from the tribe of Iakinu who at one time dwelt in southern Babylonia on and around the River Euphrates. In the Assyrian records, these people appear as Bît Iakin [i.e. House of Iakin],<sup>387</sup> a people who were also referred to as Chaldeans. We know these Iakinu as Iakan (var. Akan) son of Etzer (AV Ezer) son of Seir,<sup>388</sup> though Shalmaneser III (or, should I say, the records which have been assigned to Shalmaneser III), who informs us that these people dwelt in Mesopotamia (i.e. the sea-land), would have us believe that Iakinu was the name of their king.<sup>389</sup> Tiglathpileser

<sup>381</sup> Homer, *Iliad* Book 1, Lines 423-4.

<sup>382</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece* i.xxxiii.5.

<sup>383</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* vii.70

<sup>384</sup> Josephus – *Antiquities of the Jews* i.vi.2

<sup>385</sup> The Tell El Amarna Tablets - 2 Vols; Samuel A. B. Mercer, The MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd., Toronto 1939 - Vol. 2, Excursus 1 - *Babylonia in the Tell El-Amarna Tablets*, p.816

<sup>386</sup> See Herodotus, *Histories* Vol. 3, vii.70, fn. 1 on p.383, Alfred Denis Godley, Loeb Classical Library, William Heinemann Ltd, London and Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1938.

<sup>387</sup> See for example Luckenbill, *Ancient Records*, Vol. 1, p.283, §.787, Vol. 2, p.21, §.41, p.23, §. 45-46, p.26, §.54 etc.

<sup>388</sup> Akan (אֶקָן) in Gen. 36:27 and Yaakan (יָאָקָן) AV Jakan) in 1 Chron. 1:42 and Deut. 10:6.

<sup>389</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.232, §.625.

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III would also have us believe that Merodach-baladan (the Biblical Merodach-baladan) was a son of Iakina, king of the sea-land.<sup>390</sup> This is the same person Sargon II refers to as Marduk-apal-iddina “son of Iakini, king of Kaldu (Chaldea) whose settlements are situated in the secluded (shore) of the sea of the east (the Persian Gulf)...”.<sup>391</sup> Either way, the name Okeanus is clearly derived from these people who at one time dwelt on the Euphrates river.

By the time of Tiglathpileser III and Sargon II kings of Assyria, these people of the house of Iakin were located much further east around what the Assyrians called “The Bitter Sea”. Sargon II claimed to have conquered “Bīt-Iakin on the shore of the Bitter Sea as far as the border of Dilmun”.<sup>392</sup> He goes on to inform us that Dilmun was located somewhere “in the sea of the east”, meaning the Persian Gulf, and that the king of Dilmun’s abode “is situated in the midst of the sea”.<sup>393</sup> This is also described elsewhere as being “in the midst of the sea of the rising sun”<sup>394</sup> and is the land which is today known as Iran.

“...the provinces of the king of Elam which lie on the other side of the sea, where the people of Bīt-Iakin, gathering the gods of their lands in their shrines before my mighty arms, and crossing the sea, had settled, – in Hittite ships, which I built in Nineveh and Til-barsip, I crossed the sea. The cities of those provinces I captured and burned with fire. The people of Bīt-Iakin, and their gods, together with the men of the king of Elam, I carried off and brought them to Assyria.”<sup>395</sup>

Some of these captives from Bīt-Iakin who had settled in Elam (Iran) were settled in the city of Kalach in Assyria.<sup>396</sup> The important thing to bear in mind, is that by the time of Pausanias, any association of this people with the river Okeanus had been lost.

The River Okeanus was therefore an alternative name for the River Euphrates. According to Hesiod, Ocean (i.e. Okeanus) gave birth to around 3,000 ‘daughters’ and an innumerable number of ‘sons’.<sup>397</sup> No one seems to realise that this is allegory. These ‘sons’ and ‘daughters’ of Okeanus were tribes who emerged from this region through which the River Euphrates flows. It is in this region that the Ten Tribes were planted by the Assyrians after they were deported from their land. Many of those tribes ended up migrating to Europe.

### Land of the Medes

When Tiglathpileser III and Sargon II went up against the “mighty Medes”, their campaigns were against Urartu in the west – **not** against the land to the north of the Zagros mountains where the land of the Medes is generally placed. In the 8<sup>th</sup> year of his

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<sup>390</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.285, §.792.

<sup>391</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.14, §.31.

<sup>392</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.26, §.54.

<sup>393</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.22, §.43.

<sup>394</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.36, §.70.

<sup>395</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.154, §.350.

<sup>396</sup> ARAB Vol. 2, p.23, §.45-6.

<sup>397</sup> Hesiod. *Theogony* 360-370.



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reign, Sargon II claimed to have gone “up against the lands of the Mannans (and) Medes”.<sup>398</sup> This was again a campaign against Urartu (i.e. Ararat) in the west, which was in the opposite direction to the Medea of later times. Tiglathpileser III talks of a “city of Zakruti of the mighty Medes (*Madai*)”.<sup>399</sup> He enumerates this city among the places located in “the lands of Nairi”.<sup>400</sup> Zakruti is clearly a variant spelling of Zikirti or Zikirtu, a place which is generally located in the north-western part of the Zagros mountains somewhere around Lake Urmia. These Zakirtians were the people Herodotus called Sagartians.<sup>401</sup>

Nairi (var. Namri or Naharaim) means the “river lands” and clearly refers to Mesopotamia. Herodotus states that “the boundary between the Median and Lydian empires was the [river] Halys, which rises in the mountains of Armenia, flows through Cilicia, and then continues with Matiene to the north and Phrygia to the south”.<sup>402</sup> All of this means that “the land of the Medes” during the time of Tiglathpileser III included the whole of Mesopotamia all the way west to the River Halys and also included the region between the Caspian Sea and Black Sea and is much further west than most archaeologists are seemingly prepared to accept when considering the extent of Medean control. This then was the extent of territory taken into captivity. In fact, the region located between the Black Sea and the Caucasus took their names from Becher and Takhat, named after Calchol son of Zerach or *Calcheos* by Josephus.<sup>405</sup>



Bekhyria (named after Becher son of Ephraim), Iberia (i.e. Hebrew land – after the Hebrews who at one time dwelt there), Heniocheti (after Hanoch son of Reuben) and Colchis (after Calchol son of Zerah). Taokheti likewise would have been named after Tachat, one of the sons of Ephraim.

398 ARAB Vol. 2. §.19.

399 ARAB Vol. 1, §.784.

400 Ibid. §.795.

<sup>401</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* iii.93 (Called Sagartii in the online version.)

402 Herodotus, *Histories* i.72. (See also v.49.)

<sup>403</sup> Takhat (AV Tahat) appears in 1 Chron. 7:20, but in Num. 26:35 he is called Tahan where he appears alongside his brother Becher. Takhat/Takhan gave his name to the family of Takhani and Becher to the family of Bekhri. These phonetic variations were common.

404 Compare 1 Kings 4:31 with 1 Chron. 2:6.

405 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 8.43.

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Ashkenaz was the son of Gomer, son of Yaphet.<sup>406</sup> The land of Ashkenaz appears in the Assyrian records of Tiglathpileser III as either Ushkakkâna<sup>407</sup> or Ushkakan<sup>408</sup> and was located somewhere in Mesopotamia, in land which at that time belonged to the Medes, this also being where the Targum Yerushalmi places the land of Ashkenaz.<sup>409</sup> It appears to be identical to the Ushshukani mentioned by Adad-nirari I,<sup>410</sup> a land which was located somewhere between the Habur river and Carchemish on the Euphrates. The city of Sakané (Σακάνη or its variant metathesised form of Σανάκη *Sanaké*) in this region mentioned by Ptolemy<sup>411</sup> would seem to testify to this identification.

This was roughly the region where the prophet Ezekiel was located when he says:

“Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar...”<sup>412</sup>

“...the word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.”<sup>413</sup>

The river Chebar is the Habur of the Assyrian records. Note that Ezekiel called it “the land of the Chaldeans”, because by that time it was under Chaldean control. Ezekiel, who was of a priestly family, was therefore dwelling in the land of Ashkenaz, though the original inhabitants had already been deported by Tiglathpileser III around a century earlier.

Tiglathpileser III records:

“The lands of Namri... the land of Rû(a), as far as the alkali desert, the **lands of Ushkakkâna**, Shikraki, (the land) of gold, **provinces of the mighty Medes**, I overpowered (*lit.*, covered) as with a net, to their farthest border. I slew large numbers (of their inhabitants). 65,000 people, together with their possessions, their horses, their mules, their (Bactrian) camels, their cattle (and) their sheep, in countless numbers, **I carried off**. Their cities I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. Into mounds and ruins I turned them. The lands of Namri, Bît-Sangibuti, Bît-Hamban, Sumurzu, Bît-Barrua, Bît-Zualzash, Bît-Matti, the city of Niku of Tupliash, Bît-Taranzai, Parsua, Bît-Zatti, Bît-Abdadani, Bît-Kapsi, Bît-Sangi, Bît-Tazzaki, Bît-Ishtar, [the city of Zakruti<sup>1</sup>], of the mighty Medes, I brought inside the Assyrian border. **The cities in these (districts) I rebuilt**. The weapon of Assur, my lord, I established therein. **People of the lands my hands had conquered I settled therein**. My official I set over then as governor.”<sup>414</sup>

Notice that this land, which was located in Mesopotamia, at that time belonged to the Medes. When the House of Israel was transplanted in the “cities of the Medes”,<sup>415</sup> the people were settled in these very regions. To be more precise, the House of Israel was planted in territory which had been confiscated from the Medes by the Assyrians, who,

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<sup>406</sup> Gen. 10:3.

<sup>407</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.285, §.795.

<sup>408</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.291, §.811.

<sup>409</sup> *Jewish Encyclopedia* Vol. 2, article on Ashkenaz, pp.191-2, Isidore Singer et al, New York 1900.

<sup>410</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.27, §.73.

<sup>411</sup> Ptolemy, *Geography* Book 5, Chap. 18, §.10.

<sup>412</sup> Ezek. 1:1.

<sup>413</sup> Ezek. 1:3.

<sup>414</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, pp.285-6, §.795 (emphases mine).

<sup>415</sup> 2 Kings 17:6.

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in their numerous campaigns involving assaults on their land from the south, forced the Medes further north, up and around the northern extremities of the Zagros range, and on into the east into Bactria.

Bît-Abdadani mentioned in the above-quoted inscription from Tiglathpileser III's monuments is the land we know as Adiabene (note the metathesis), which land was located to the south of the Caspian Sea. For "city of Zakruti", I believe we should read "land of Zakruti", especially as the king refers to "the cities of Zakruti" in another text.<sup>416</sup> As already stated, these people will be the Sagartians mentioned by Herodotus; a people who dwelt between the Caspian Sea and Black Sea.<sup>417</sup> Again, note that the land of Zakruti was also under the control of the Medes. This kingdom of the Medes included most of Mesopotamia and north Syria up to the river Halys in Anatolia.<sup>418</sup> When we are told that Israel was planted "in the cities of the Medes",<sup>419</sup> they were planted in these very regions we are discussing here.

The Macrones, who also dwelt on the shores of the Black Sea, are clearly the people who appear in the Assyrian records as Mehrani or Mahirâni, a people who, in the time of Adad-nirari II, were dwelling to the south of the land of Harran:

"In that year, and in the month *Ululu*, during an expedition against the land of Arime [i.e. Syria], in the city of Murarir(?), which is in the land of Shuprê, he fought a battle. In that year and in the month ... from the land of Mahirâni to the city of Shuppâ(?), which is in the land of Harran, he raided."<sup>420</sup>

Other Assyrian kings called this land Mehri.<sup>421</sup> The names Mehri and Mahirâni are two variant spellings of the name Machir, this being one of the sons of Menashe. In the Bible, this land of Mehri is called the land of Gilead. These Mahirâni (i.e. Macrones) had been uprooted by the Assyrians and planted on the shore of the Black Sea in land which had previously belonged to the Medes. This also explains why, according to Herodotus, they practised circumcision.<sup>422</sup> Bear in mind that, despite what Herodotus tells us, circumcision relates to the covenant the LORD made with Abraham. It is **not** a practice which Israel inherited from the Egyptians.

Knowing this, these 'sons' and 'daughters' of Okeanus (i.e. the Euphrates river) were tribes whose migrations could not possibly have started prior to their deportation by the Assyrians! The founding of the city of Ephyra in Greece, which was supposedly one of the oldest cities in Greece, therefore dates no earlier than the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria.

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<sup>416</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.291, §.811.

<sup>417</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* vii.85.

<sup>418</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* i.72 & i.130.

<sup>419</sup> 2 Kings 17:6 & 18:11.

<sup>420</sup> ARAB Vol. 1, p.121, §.390.

<sup>421</sup> For the "Rûru River, (which is in the) land of Mehri" (ARAB Vol. 1, p.117, §.382), we should more correctly read "the river Aroer in the land of Machir". We know the river Aroer as the Arnon (Deut. 2:36, 3:12 & 4:48, Josh. 12:2, 13:9 etc.), the Assyrians having not only applied the name of the city (Aroer) to its river, but also included the regions belonging to Reuben and Gad within the designation of land of Machir.

<sup>422</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* ii.104

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It should not go without comment that the name Nemesis, one of the many ‘daughters’ of Okeanus, who was regarded as the ‘goddess’ of retribution, is a metathesis of the Hebrew name Menashe! (AV Manasseh.) ‘She’ was also called Rhamnusia or Rhamnusia,<sup>423</sup> a name which is again a variation on the name Menashe (i.e. *rho*-Manasseh). The addition of the letter *rho* at the beginning of the name can be attributed to the Dorian practice of adding this letter “unnecessarily” to words.<sup>424</sup>

Concerning Nemesis (i.e. Menashe):

“Nemesis is a personification of the moral reverence for law, of the natural fear of committing a culpable action, and hence of conscience, and for this reason she is mentioned along with Αἰδώς [*Aidos*], i. e. Shame...

“...She is frequently mentioned under the surnames Adrasteia and Rhamnusia or Rhamnusia, the latter of which she derived from the town of Rhamnus in Attica, where she had a celebrated sanctuary.”<sup>425</sup>

The name Adrasteia can also be explained, but for the sake of brevity, will not be touched on here. (For an explanation, see *The Forgotten Tribe of Naphtali & the Phoenicians*.)

It is interesting to note that the *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* gives the origin of *retribution* as being from the Latin *retribuere*, meaning ‘to repay’.<sup>426</sup> The word literally means to return tribute, where tribute is defined either as “a gift or statement made in acknowledgement, gratitude or admiration” or as “any tax levied for such payment”. The Hebrew root word נָשָׂה *nasha*, from which we get the name Menashe (AV Manasseh) means not only ‘to forget’ (which is the Biblical interpretation, when we are told that Joseph called the name of the firstborn son Manasseh because, “God, said he, hath made me *forget* all my toil, and all my father’s house”<sup>427</sup>), but also means ‘to loan’ or ‘lend on usury’.<sup>428</sup> The names Menashe and Nemesis therefore both fundamentally signify the same thing – a payback! Nowadays we interpret the word ‘retribution’ as meaning to avenge or to take vengeance, but this is not its original meaning.

Though considered by most writers to be a people unrelated to the Dorians, the Messenians who gave their name to Messene (var. Messenia) in Greece were also clearly related to the Dorians, with Pausanias informing us that they spoke a “Dorian dialect”.<sup>429</sup> It should be stressed that the original inhabitants of Corinth were Dorians, but were never referred to as such. The original Ephraimite inhabitants were of the same family group, but the people who became known specifically as Dorians arrived at a later date. Messene is a metathesis of the name Menashe, a name which is

<sup>423</sup> See the entry in *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* for Nemesis in Vol. 2, p. 1152, William Smith, Boston 1870.

<sup>424</sup> See Strabo, *Geography* x.i.10 by H.C. Hamilton, Esq., W. Falconer, M.A., Ed. – especially fn. 41 (fn. 4 in the online version) which states that it was “a common practice of the Dorians”.

<sup>425</sup> *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* Vol. 2, entry for Nemesis on p. 1152, William Smith, Boston 1870.

<sup>426</sup> Entry under **retribution** in *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*, London and Glasgow 1980.

<sup>427</sup> Gen. 41:51.

<sup>428</sup> See entry under נָשָׂה in the *Langenscheidt Pocket Hebrew Dictionary to the Old Testament*, Dr Karl Feyerabend, Hodder and Stoughton 1905.

<sup>429</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece* iv.xxvii.11.

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transliterated as Manasseh in the Authorised Version. A study of the Greek history shows that the cities and states in Greece were founded by Israelites using Edomite slaves, but due to the magnitude of the task, this discussion will be left for a separate paper. (See *The Forgotten Tribe of Naphtali & the Phoenicians*.)

The purpose of this digression is threefold. Firstly, we have demonstrated that the Bible provides us with a vital key to our understanding of ancient history, yet the Bible is being rejected by most scholars who consider it to be an unreliable source. Secondly, we have shown that archaeologists are putting their faith in false interpretations of archaeological data, which interpretations are based on highly contrived king lists and chronicles as well as the contrived reports left to us by the early Greek historians whose sources of information were generally unreliable. Thirdly, and more importantly, by demonstrating that the Greek history is relatively late, our whole understanding of ancient history is about to be completely overturned and 'rewritten'.

When we come to look at the movement of the Celtic tribes, we shall demonstrate that Livy is right when he informs us that the Celts crossed the Alps during the reign of Tarquinius Priscus,<sup>430</sup> which event is usually dated to ca. 390 BCE. (Even this date is probably too early!) Herodotus, however, informs us that the Celts had, in his day, already reached southern France:

“for the Ister traverses the whole of Europe, rising among the Celts, who are **the most westerly dwellers in Europe**, except for the Cynetes, and flowing thus clean across Europe it issues forth along the borders of Scythia.”<sup>431</sup>

As Herodotus is usually dated to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE, this passage seems to undermine the statement made by Livy that the Celts only arrived at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. In my paper entitled *A Radical Review of the Chaldean and Achaemenid Periods*, I demonstrate that the Persian Achaemenid Period is far too long and that it can be reduced by as much as 150 years. By so doing, we show that Herodotus was still alive in 320 BCE, thereby restoring integrity to the statement made by Livy. Basically, the greater part of Europe was uninhabited by man until the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The only regions which were occupied before that time were Spain, Greece, Italy, Thessaly, Illyria and Macedonia, but even many of these places did not exist until sometime after the Ten Tribes had been taken into captivity. It was these Ten Tribes who first established cities in these regions.

This understanding in turn has a knock-on effect on other areas of archaeological research. The Urnfield Culture of Europe, for example, is said to date to around 1300 BCE, which is now shown to be around 900-1,000 years too early. The subsequent Hallstatt and La Tène Cultures likewise need to be moved forward by centuries. This is a good example of how one error leads to another, leads to another. What I have started here is going to have a profound effect on our understanding of ancient history as well as our methods of dating! When we come to examine Manetho's dynastic list of kings, we shall find exactly the same problems inherent in the Egyptian chronology. (See my paper

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<sup>430</sup> Livy, *The History of Rome* Book 5, Chap. 34.

<sup>431</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* iv.49.

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entitled *Manetho on Trial*.) What we shall find is that those king lists are highly contrived and that the Egyptian chronology can be reduced by more than two thousand years. I can assure you that this is no idle boast.

### **Conclusion**

We have demonstrated that the Biblical chronology is by no means perfect. It makes no allowance for the periods of co-regency which occurred and has been subjected to a number of emendations over time. Some of it has had to be transcribed from incomplete or badly damaged original documents which have not survived the ravages of time and war. The fragmented state of the first eight chapters of the first book of Chronicles bears testimony to that.

We have also demonstrated that the Assyrian chronology is in an even worse state than the Biblical chronology, therefore to reject the Biblical chronology in favour of the Assyrian and Babylonian King Lists and Chronicles is a grave mistake. Seeing the number of discrepancies inherent in the Biblical texts, I can understand why people are reluctant to adopt the Biblical chronology, but by rejecting it, we are substituting it with an alternative chronology which is highly contrived and far less reliable. To adopt the proper scientific approach, we need to compare them both on an equal footing. Because we have failed to do this, we have ended up with a distorted picture of history.

Despite all the errors, the Bible still sets the benchmark for providing us with an accurate and reliable chronology as well as being the most comprehensive record of history that we possess! Unlike the Jewish monarchs, who can all trace their descent from King David, the Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian monarchies saw constant changes to the ruling families due to usurpation of the throne. This means that, although the co-regencies have not been taken into account in the Jewish chronology, there is a greater likelihood that the actual genealogical sequence presented in the Bible is going to be more reliable.

Today we have access to far more information than the scribes who compiled the original lists ever had, hence we are in a better position to evaluate the facts. The trouble is that we are putting far too much faith in the Assyrian and Babylonian records without giving them the close scrutiny that we ought to be giving them, without challenging and testing what we are being told.

Many examples have been provided in this paper to show that later kings were appropriating the monuments of earlier kings and claiming them as their own. We mentioned earlier that evidence of such erasures have been discovered in relation to one of Adad-nirari III's inscriptions and have been commented on by Stephanie Page, but she has assumed that they were done as an act of vindictiveness; an attempt to obliterate the name of Nergal-ereš, one of Adad-nirari's chief governors, from the monument. A reconsideration of the evidence more correctly shows that someone had got half way through changing the texts to suit their own purposes, but, for some



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unknown reason, had to abandon the task. It never occurred to her to question the find position of the monument, nor did the late dating of the erasures ring any alarm bells.

She wrote:

“Whatever reason [for the erasure], the Assyrians would not chisel away a record that could stand as an ideal programme, just as a defeat in battle was usually not omitted but described as a victory, to please the gods”.<sup>432</sup>

The truth of the matter is that they did do precisely that! She also commented on the fact that the Eponyms for this king do not tie in with the monuments, which should now come as no surprise to us. Moreover, the campaign against Damascus is dated to his fifth year according to the one (Saba’a) stela and his first year according to the other (Rimah) stela.<sup>433</sup> Time and again these contradictions and ‘discrepancies’ are brushed aside or glossed over as if they were immaterial!

These sorts of appropriations were rife both in Assyria and in Egypt, but archaeologists have been totally oblivious to them. On occasion, forgeries have been identified, but have still been accepted as historical fact. An inscription assigned to Ashur-uballit I, for example, is known to be of late manufacture:

“The script is Neo-Assyrian which means that the inscription is certainly not contemporary. Von Soden has pointed out that there are several grammatical and orthological peculiarities in the text which must stem from the Neo-Assyrian period. He concludes that the inscription is an ancient forgery composed to draw the king’s attention to the restoration of some ancient structure. Borger, however, thinks it is simply a poorly done, late copy.”<sup>434</sup>

No one has stopped to ask why it was made or provided any valid reason why a copy should be made at such a late date.

It is important that we do not overlook the fact that kings had more than the one name. In refuting the suggestion that Ashur-etil-ilani and Sin-shar-ishkun were two names for the same person, John Oates wrote:

“Ingenious though this idea is, there are a number of reasons for rejecting it. At no point in any of their Assyrian inscriptions is there any hint of such identity. **Nor does any other Assyrian king use two different names in his official Assyrian inscriptions.**”<sup>435</sup>

This sentiment is also upheld by Grant Frame:

“There is **no evidence** that alternate ‘throne names’ were ever used by Assyrian kings during their lifetimes...”<sup>436</sup>

They clearly had not done any proper research! By contrast, George Smith had this to say about the use of multiple names:

“I have long known that the later Assyrian monarchs sometimes bore two names, one instance of this custom is printed in Cuneif. Inscip. [*Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western*

<sup>432</sup> A Stela of Adad-nirari III and Nergal-ereš from Tell al Rimah pp.148-9, Stephanie Page, Iraq (Journal) 30, Vol. 2, Autumn 1968.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid. p.147.

<sup>434</sup> ARI Vol 1, p.44, §.279.

<sup>435</sup> Assyrian Chronology, 631-612 B.C. p.138, John Oates, Iraq (Journal) Vol. 27, No. 2 (Autumn 1965). (Emphasis mine).

<sup>436</sup> Babylonia 589-627: A Political History p.194, Grant Frame, R.A Leiden, Netherlands 2007. (Emphasis mine.)



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**hundred years later**, Ninurta-apil-Ekur also claimed to be son of Eriba-Adad I. Now, why would Ninurta-apil-Ekur claim to be a son of a king who supposedly lived two hundred years previously? It does not make sense!

A fragmentary text from Ashur records a gift of jewellery given by Ninurta-apil-Ekur to his daughter whose name is only partially preserved. The text reads:

“from the palace of Ninurta-apil-Eku, king of Assyria, son of Eriba-Adad (I), king of Assyria, given to Muballita[t ... lacuna], his daughter, the great high priestess”.<sup>444</sup>

David Wiseman, writing in *Cambridge Ancient History*, has suggested that this name be restored as Muballitat-Sherua,<sup>445</sup> but failed to make the connection with Ashur-uballit's daughter. Admittedly, the fact that she ostensibly bears the same name as Ashur-uballit's daughter could sceptically be regarded as coincidence, but this is not all.

The king of Babylon during the time of Ninurta-apil-Ekur was a certain Meli-Shipak or Meli-Shikhu, depending on which transliteration you use. This Meli-Shipak/Shikhu called himself “son of Kurigalzu (II)”.<sup>446</sup> Even Meli-Shipak's successor, Marduk-apla-iddina, called himself son of Kurigalzu.<sup>447</sup> This is despite the fact that Kurigalzu II was a contemporary of Ashur-uballit who is supposedly dated some two hundred years earlier.<sup>448</sup> We should also bear in mind that Ashur-uballit I does not appear in any extant king list. This is because he already appears in the King Lists under the alternative name of Ninurta-apil-Ekur! The chroniclers have therefore added Ashur-uballit and his family to the list of Assyrian kings in addition to Ninurta-apil-Ekur and his family, thereby over-inflating an already corrupt chronology.

It should also be pointed out that during these two periods (i.e. between Ashur-uballit I and Ninurta-apil-Ekur), there is what is termed a ‘Dark Age’ during which period there is a complete absence of archaeological evidence:

“Architectural remains which may belong to this time are usually minor repairs on older structures, with no inscription left to record the identity of the repairer. (In fact, no buildings have yet been excavated in Babylonia which can be dated with certainty to the time of any ruler between 1046 and 722 BC.)”.<sup>449</sup>

This ‘Dark Age’ disappears in part when we accept that Ninurta-apil-Ekur was an alternative name for Ashur-uballit I.

It can also be demonstrated that the texts assigned to Tukulti-Ninurta I are the combined efforts of Eriba-Adad I alias Tukulti-Ninurta and of Tiglathpileser I alias Tukulti-Ninurta, the latter having appropriated the texts of the former. It can also be shown that Eriba-Adad, alias Tukulti-Ninurta was also known as Puzur-Ashur, and that Ashur-uballit (I) alias Ninurta-Apil-Ekur was also known as Shamshi-Adad. We have already shown that Ashur-nasir-pal II, who was also known as Adad-nirari, was the

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<sup>444</sup> ARI Vol. 1, p.140, §.914.

<sup>445</sup> CAH Vol. 2, Part 2, p.451.

<sup>446</sup> CAH Vol. 2, Part 2, p.444.

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.* p.445.

<sup>448</sup> ARI Vol. 1, p.50, §.322 & 324.

<sup>449</sup> CAH Vol. 3, Part 1, p.284.

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father of Shalmaneser IV/V – **not** Shalmaneser III. The records ascribed to Shalmaneser III are the combined efforts of Shalmaneser III and V. The list goes on. Those who believe that the Assyrian chronology is ‘immovable’ are only fooling themselves.

The Assyrian chronology as it currently stands is in a mess. Basically, anyone who is putting his trust in the Assyrian and Babylonian Kings Lists is putting their faith in a house built on sand; a house which is ready to crumble around everyone’s feet!

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