

A Translation Guide to the Chronological Data in Kings and Chronicles

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The year 1991 marks the 40th anniversary of what one reviewer called a “breakthrough” in Hebrew chronology.¹ This breakthrough has deservedly won for its author—Edwin Richard Thiele—the praise of the scholarly world and has been described as “the most searching examination of the chronology of the Hebrew monarchies since the work of Begrich in 1929.”² The same reviewer went so far as to speculate: “Indeed, it is not impossible that Thiele may some day enjoy the position in the margin of the Bible which was held for several centuries by Ussher.”³ Driver described Thiele’s system as an “important work, which comes very near to, if it does not actually reach, a final solution of the problem of the dates of the kings of Israel and Judah.”⁴ Even a critic of Thiele’s system, who accused Thiele of manipulating variable factors to achieve his goal of fitting the biblical evidence into Near Eastern history and who described his work as “more a study in numerical ingenuity than in scholarly research,” had to admit that “Thiele’s assumption is validated by the results achieved: inner consistency and harmony and conformity with the fixed dates of ancient Near Eastern history.”⁵ Thiele could take confidence from the fact that the combination of interlocking synchronisms and lengths of reign ties the years of Israel and Judah so tightly together as to make impossible any arbitrary adjustment of as much as a single year in the reign of any king, without introducing widespread disruption

¹ Siegfried H. Horn, “The Chronology of King Hezekiah’s Reign,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 2 (1964): 47. Cf. idem, “Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 5(1967) 213-14; and Kenneth A. Strand, “Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 17 (1979): 227-28. This latter work by Thiele incorporated the results of his original work, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). A second edition appeared in 1965 and a third in 1983. Throughout this article Thiele’s third edition is referred to.

² John L. McKenzie, “Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 14 (1952): 299.

³ Ibid.

⁴ G. R. Driver, “Chronicles: 1. Old Testament,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 4 (1953): 305.

⁵ David N. Freedman, “Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” *Journal of Religion* 33 (1953): 311-12.

into an otherwise harmonious pattern.⁶

Yet this confidence in his detailed precision is regarded by Freedman as “a handicap rather than an asset,” and his “high regard for the massoretic [*sic*] figures is itself a witness against him.”⁷ Thiele did not hold to an accurate transmission of the original autographs of Kings and Chronicles in every detail. Indeed he argued that errors were made in the original composition of those autographs.⁸ Rowley, while having reservations about certain aspects of Thiele’s system, acknowledged its soundness with the words, “In such a theory there is nothing intrinsically unreasonable.”⁹

The purpose of this article is twofold. First, Thiele’s system is in need of modification. This study suggests modification in four major and nine minor ways. Second, there is the need to bring together in one view the various texts in Kings and Chronicles that require considerable caution in translation because of different systems of reckoning employed by the biblical writers. The proposed modifications and fresh presentation of Thiele’s work are necessary if Thiele’s breakthrough is to be appreciated by modern scholars and made available to translators who do not have the leisure to read through Thiele’s work.

The Use of Different Eras

The biblical writers have used different eras such as the Era of the Exodus, the Era of the Division of the Kingdom, the Era of Omri, and the Era of the Exile, but most extensive is the use of each king’s reign as an era in itself. This last mentioned series of eras is the main concern of this study due to four systems of reckoning which are employed by the biblical writers of Kings and Chronicles. The four methods of reckoning are as follows:

⁶ Edwin R. Thiele, “Coregencies and Overlapping Reigns among the Hebrew Kings,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974): 175. “All [the dates from 792-740 are one unit and] are closely bound together by biblical regnal data of synchronisms and lengths of reign that permit no change” (Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 123).

⁷ Freedman, “Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” p. 311.

⁸ McKenzie pointed out Thiele’s reservations on the accuracy of some Hebrew figures. McKenzie can criticize Thiele on this point: “with all his skill and ingenuity, Thiele is unable, as all others have been, to incorporate all the relevant numerical data into a single system” (“Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” p. 299). Thiele admits, “When the editors of Kings were bringing that book into its final shape, they did not understand dual dating for Pekah” (Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 134). He further describes the synchronisms of 2 Kings 17 and 18 as “late and artificial” (*ibid.*, pp. 136, 174), though “not of late calculation” (*ibid.*, p. 137). See pp. 198-204 for a summary of other difficulties Thiele had with a belief in the total inerrancy of the Hebrew numbers.

⁹ H. H. Rowley, “Review of E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” *Vetus Testamentum* 4 (1954): 446.

A-A pattern: The king's reign is calculated from the first year of his sole reign and the total reign excludes coregency years (e. g., Jehoram and Jehoiachin who both were made coregents before they were crowned as kings). This is the normal pattern where a king did not have a coregency.

A-B pattern: The king's reign is calculated from the first year of his sole reign but the total does include coregency years (e.g., Omri, Ahaziah of Judah, Jeroboam II, and Pekah).

Pattern B-A: The king's reign is calculated from the first year of his coregency and the total excludes his coregency years. (Jehoash of Israel, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Jehoiachin)

B-B pattern: The king's reign is calculated from the first year of his coregency and the total includes his coregency years (Jehoshaphat, Jotham, Azariah, and Manasseh).

The pattern used in the 11 cases—Thiele noted only 7—where a coregency can be shown to have existed has been included with citation of the text by the number of its presentation in this article (e.g., B-A, where A stands for kingship and B for coregency rule).¹⁰ The relationship of the coregent to the king is not spelled out in the Bible, though it notes that “Jotham the king’s son was over the household, judging the people of the land” (2 Kings 15:5). This probably became the responsibility of the son who was made coregent as in the case of Jotham.

Table Showing all known Coregencies and Overlapping Reigns for the Kings of Judah and Israel

Jehoram (no. 24)	Jehoiachin (no. 64)	Omri (no. 12)	Ahaziah [J] (no. 25)	Jeroboam II (no. 39)	Pekah (no. 45)	Jehoash [I] (no. 35)	Ahaz (no. 48)	Hezekiah (no. 51)	Jehoiachin (no. 63)	Jehoshaphat (no. 19)	Jotham (no. 48)	Azariah (no. 40)	Manasseh (no. 56)
A A	A A A A					B B B B			B B B B				
A A						A A A A							
	B B B B								B B B B				

Point from which each king's reign is calculated

Option A: From the first year of his sole reign

Option B: From the first year of his coregency

Total years recorded for each king's reign

Option A: The total excludes coregency years

Option B: The total includes coregency years

Four Controlling Factors

An important factor affecting the form of the biblical report is that two major source documents were used by the writer of Kings. His two sources were the “Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” and the “Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.” The most significant difference between these two documents was that they used two distinct calendars to record each

¹⁰ Discussion of the texts begins on page 11.

other's history. Neither side recognized the other's calendar and so each wrote up the other's history using its own calendar.¹¹ This is probably the most important factor affecting the reconciliation of the apparent discrepancies in the synchronisms of the Hebrew kings from the division of the kingdom to Jehoram (i.e., 931—848 B.C. = Period A).

Nothing in the syntax or vocabulary indicates which of the four patterns outlined above has been employed at any given place in the text.¹² Consequently in as many as 40 chronological texts a literal translation of the Hebrew could be highly misleading. The Revised Standard Version (RSV) has been used as the basis for a modified translation of the Hebrew text where it is vital that certain Hebrew words should be translated in two distinct ways if the English reader is not to be deceived or confused. For example the verb *ʾlm* must on occasions be translated as “he reigned as coregent” and on other occasions as “he reigned as king.” Also the term “year” must on occasions be translated as “accession year” and other times “nonaccession-year.”

The regnal year ran from Tishri to Tishri in Judah and from Nisan to Nisan in Israel. (Tishri approximates to September in the Julian calendar and Nisan approximates April. For the purposes of this article April [Ap or Apr] will stand for Nisan and September [Sp or Sep] for Tishri.) Judah used a Tishri-to-Tishri calendar year throughout its 344 years¹³ except for 51 years (from 848 to 797 B.C. during the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash) when it used a nonaccession-year system.¹⁴

The accession-year system distinguished a king's accession year (the incomplete calendar year in which he began to reign) and reckoned by the number of New Year days a king lived in his reign. In the nonaccession-year system the remainder of a previous king's

¹¹ McKenzie noted, “This principle has not been employed in any other chronological studies available to me” (“Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” p. 299). In fact Max Vogelstein had made this discovery in 1944 (*Biblical Chronology* [Cincinnati: 1944], pp. 17, 30). It should be noted, however, that the principle only impinges on, or interferes with, exact dating for Period A (i.e., from the division of the kingdom to 848 [see text no. 20 below]) but not for Periods B (848-798) and C (798-723) where both kingdoms use the same systems.

¹² The formula, “N was X years old when he began to reign (=wklmb)” introduces a coregency at numbers 19, 40, 47, 48, 56, and 63; and kingship at numbers 24, 25, 27, 31, 36, 51, 54, 57-65. The Suffix-form of the verb *ʾlm* can permit a past or perfect tense (see text no. 49).

¹³ The number 344 in Hebrew notation is *dmv*, which has the meaning “obliterate, exterminate, annihilate.” It is remarkable that the temple and nation were destroyed in the 344th year after the division of the kingdom. God warned the nation, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess; you will not live long upon it, but will be utterly destroyed [*wdmvt dmvh*]” (Deut. 4:26).

¹⁴ On the meagre evidence of Nehemiah 1:1, 2:1 Thiele assumed that the Hebrews used Tishri years for Persia, though Persia never used Tishri years (*The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 180). The 20th year of Nehemiah 1:1 is not the same as the 20th year mentioned in 2:1 (see text no. 10).

last year is counted as the first year of his successor, and then subsequent years are calculated from Nisan to Nisan in Israel, or Tishri to Tishri in Judah. This was the system used in Israel throughout its 207 years except from 797 to 723 B.C. when it used Judah's accession-year system.

In addition to these differences of meaning there are differences of interpretation of the totals given and the point from which the totals are calculated. Sometimes the number given is from the time a ruler became coregent; sometimes it is from the time he became king. Similarly the total years ruled may or may not include coregency years and unless this is written into the translation it is not possible to make sense of the figures. To convert an accession-year system into a nonaccession-year system one must add a year to the accession-year number. To convert a nonaccession-year system into an accession-year system one must subtract one year from the nonaccession-year number. The initial year of a coregency is termed its first year, never its accession year (see comment on text no. 18 below).

Because two major source documents formed the basis of the present Hebrew text of the books of Kings and each "converted" the other's calendar years of reign using its own system, it is necessary to distinguish four distinct periods (A, B, C, and D). (Period D covers the single kingdom of Judah after the fall of Samaria). During Periods B and C, Judah and Israel agreed on using the same system; for Period B both used the nonaccession-year system which was brought about by the friendship between Jehoshaphat and Ahab. Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. When Jehoram became king on the death of Jehoshaphat, he adopted his father-in-law's nonaccession-year system. This system was thrown out by Uzziah 50 years later and the Solomonic system reinstated. It was at this time that Jehoash in the north introduced the accession-year system into the Northern Kingdom for the first time in its breakaway history. Both kingdoms used the accession-year system until their respective captivities, though neither kingdom, it would seem, ever altered the date of their New Year's day, which was 1st Nisan in Israel and 1st Tishri in Judah.¹⁵

¹⁵ Thiele noted that both Jeremiah and Ezekiel used a Nisan-to-Nisan calendar, which was also the calendar used in Babylon (*ibid.*, 190).

Kings of Israel		
Jeroboam Madab Baasha Elah Zimri Omri Ahab Ahaziah Jehoram Jehu Jehoahaz Jehosh (coregent) Jehosh (king) Jeroboam II Zechariah Shallum Menahem Pekahiah Pekah Hoshea		
Nonaccession		Accession
Accession	Non-accession	Accession
Rehoboam Abijam Asa Jehoshaphat Jehoram Ahaziah Jehosh		Amaziah Azariah Jotham Ahaz Hezekiah
Kings of Judah		
PERIOD A (931-848 BC)	PERIOD B (848-798 BC)	PERIOD C (798-723 BC)

ISRAEL'S SYSTEMS
 JUDAH'S SYSTEMS

The period requiring special attention in synchronisms is Period A. Throughout this period the writer/compiler of the “Chronicles of the Kings of Israel” wrote up Judah’s history in nonaccession years, and similarly the writer/compiler of the “Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” wrote up the history of Israel in accession years. Both preferred to use their own dating system then in use during Period A.¹⁶ It is probable that the two sources continued to employ this method of dating throughout Periods B and C but because the same systems were common to both kingdoms the fact is immaterial (from the point of view of “converting” one system into the other) and so there is no need to add or subtract one year to obtain the correct system currently in use for each king.

Another helpful indication of the sequence of the Hebrew kings is given by the biblical writer who recorded each king’s reign in the sequence of their accessions.¹⁷ The use of two New Year days (1st Nisan and 1st Tishri) has been fortuitous in that it has enabled Bible scholars to date most synchronisms to within half a year of absolute dating as is apparent in the table on page 10. (The kings of Israel and their dates are underlined.)

The basis of the chronological scheme used here is that presented by Thiele in his third edition of his book and in particular the summary table of dates given on page 217.

It is important to note that the biblical material alone does not permit scholars (or Thiele, despite his statement on p. 16) to reconstruct an absolute chronology for the Hebrew kings. Only with the help of nonbiblical chronology was absolute dating obtained for events mentioned in the biblical record and it was around these fixed points that the

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 23, 43, 49, 79.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 88, 135. Thiele took this observation too strictly, which led him to think that “the editor [of Kings] regarded Pekah as having begun his reign after Pekahiah” (ibid., p. 135). For further discussion see the comment under Chart 18.

mass of Hebrew figures was made to fit by Thiele under the assumption that the figures had been transmitted accurately.

Absolute Dates in Near Eastern Chronology

The six absolute dates Thiele worked with were the following.

1. 853 B.C., when the Battle of Qarqar was fought (possibly in July/August of that year [Thiele, p. 95 n. 13]), which was the sixth year of Shalmaneser III, the year in which Ahab died.
2. 841 B.C., the 18th of Shalmaneser III, when Jehu paid tribute to him.
3. 723 B.C., the last year of both Shalmaneser V and Hoshea, when Samaria fell.
4. 701 B.C., the 14th year of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib came against Judah (Thiele, p. 122).
5. 2 Adar (15/16 March), 597 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and took Jehoiachin prisoner to Babylon (Thiele, p. 173).
6. 9 Tammuz (18 July), 586 B.C., the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jerusalem fell (Thiele, p. 189).

<u>Biblical sequence</u>	<u>Kings</u>	<u>Coregent</u>	<u>King</u>	<u>Died</u>	<u>Texts</u>
	Solomon			Sp 931-Ap 930	1
1 Kgs 12:1-14:20	<u>Jeroboam</u>		Sp 931-Ap 930	Sp 910-Ap 909	2-3
1 Kgs 14:21-31	Rehoboam		Apr-Sep 913	Apr-Sep 913	4
1 Kgs 15:1-8	Abijam		Sp 911-Ap 910	Sp 870-Ap 869	5, 9-11 17-18, 20
1 Kgs 15:9-24	Asa		Sp 910-Ap 909	Sp 909-Ap 908	6
1 Kgs 15:25-32	<u>Nadab</u>		Sp 909-Ap 908	Sp 886-Ap 885	7-8
1 Kgs 15:33-16:7	<u>Baasha</u>		Sp 886-Ap 885	Sp 885-Ap 884	12
1 Kgs 16:8-14	<u>Elah</u>		Sp 885-Ap 884	Sp 885-Ap 884	13-14
1 Kgs 16:15-20	Zimri			Ap 880-Sp 880	15
1 Kgs 16:21-22	<u>Tibni</u>	Sp 885-Ap 884			
1 Kgs 16:23-28	<u>Omri</u>	Sp 885-Ap 884			
	<u>Omri</u>		Ap 880-Sp 880	Sp 874-Ap 873	16
1 Kgs 16:29-22:40	<u>Ahab</u>		Sp 874-Ap 873	Apr-Sep 853	16
* 1 Kgs 22:41-51	Jehoshaphat	Sept 873--	Sp 870-Ap 869	Apr-Sep 848	19
1 Kgs 22:52-2 Kgs 2:25	<u>Ahaziah</u>		Apr-Sep 853	Apr-Sep 852	21
2 Kgs 3:1-8:15	<u>Joram</u>		Apr-Sep 852	Apr-Sep 841	22-23
* 2 Kgs 8:16-24	Jehoram	Sept 854--	Apr-Sep 848	Apr-Sep 841	24
** 2 Kgs 8:25-9:29	Ahaziah	Sept 842--	Apr-Sep 841	Apr-Sep 841	25-27
2 Kgs 9:30-10:36	<u>Jehu</u>		Apr-Sep 841	Sp 814-Ap 813	28
2 Kgs 11:1-21	Athaliah		Apr-Sep 841	Apr-Sep 835	29
2 Kgs 12:1-21	Joash		Apr-Sep 835	Apr-Sep 796	31-32
* 2 Kgs 13:1-10	<u>Jehoahaz</u>		Sp 814-Ap 813	Sp 798-Ap 797	33
** 2 Kgs 13:11-25	<u>Jehoash</u>	Apr 799--	Sp 798-Ap 797	Sp 782-Ap 781	35
2 Kgs 14:1-22	Amaziah		Apr-Sep 796	Apr-Sep 767	36-37
* 2 Kgs 14:23-29	<u>Jeroboam II</u>	Apr 793--	Sp 782-Ap 781	Aug/Sept 753	39
* 2 Kgs 15:1-7	Azariah	Sept 791--	Apr-Sep 767	Apr-Sep 739	38, 40
2 Kgs 15:8-12	<u>Zechariah</u>		Aug/Sept 753	March 752	41
2 Kgs 15:13-15	<u>Shallum</u>		March 752	late Apr 752	42
2 Kgs 15:16-22	<u>Mensahem</u>	late Apr 752--		Sp 742-Ap 741	43
2 Kgs 15:23-26	<u>Pekahiah</u>		Sp 742-Ap 741	Sp 740-Ap 739	44
2 Kgs 15:27-31	<u>Pekah</u>	late Apr 752 --	Sp 740-Ap 739	Sp 732-Ap 731	45
* 2 Kgs 15:32-38	Jotham	Apr-Sep 750--	Apr-Sep 739	Sp 732-Sp 731	47
	Jotham	Sp 735-Sp 731	to Sp 735		
* 2 Kgs 16:1-20	Ahaz	Sept 735--	Sp 732-Sp 731	c. Mar 715	48
* 2 Kgs 17:1-41	<u>Hoshea</u>		Sp 732-Ap 731	Apr-Sep 723	46, 49-50
** 2 Kgs 18:1-20:21	Hezekiah	Sept 729--	c. Mar 715	Sp 687-Sp 686	51-55
* 2 Kgs 21:1-18	Manasseh	Sept 697--	Sp 687-Sp 686	Sp 643-Sp 642	56
2 Kgs 21:19-26	Amon		Sp 643-Sp 642	Sp 641-Sp 640	57
2 Kgs 22:1-23:30	Josiah		Sp 641-Sp 640	c. July 609	58-60
2 Kgs 23:31-35	Jehoahaz		July 609	c. Oct 609	61
2 Kgs 23:36-24:7	Jehoiskim		Oct 609	9 Dec 598	62
** 2 Kgs 24:8-17	Jehoiachin	Sept 608--	Dec 598-Ap 597	after Apr 561	63-64, 68
2 Kgs 24:18-25:7	Zedekiah		Ap 597-Aug 586	c. Aug 586	65-67

* Minor alterations to Thiele's chronology
** Coregencies omitted in Thiele's chronology

Only if all of these dates together can be proved to be false can Thiele's chronology of Israel collapse. The establishment of any two of them virtually establishes his chronology of the Hebrew kings.

It has been necessary, however, to make a number of modifications to Thiele's chronology which are marked with asterisks in the table on page 10 and discussed under the relevant text number (noted in the margin of that table). The following is a summary of the main modifications being proposed.

The four major modifications are four coregencies that Thiele overlooked: (1) a coregency for Hezekiah from 729/728 to 715 B.C.;¹⁸ (2) a two-year coregency for Jehoash

¹⁸ See this writer's article, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 146 (October-December 1989): 393-404.

king of Israel from 799 to 798; (3) Ahaziah king of Judah (see text no. 26) probably became coregent in the 11th (nonaccession) year of Joram and in the 12th year became king (see text no. 25); and (4) a coregency for Jehoiachin from September 608 —December 597 B.C. In each case the researcher need only ask how would one word the existence of these four coregencies to discover that the present wording of the Hebrew text is adequate.

The nine minor alterations include the following. (1) Jehoshaphat became coregent in September 873, not 872/871. (2) Jehoram of Judah became coregent in September 854, not 853. (3) Jehoahaz died between September 798 and April 797 and Jehoash became king during this period; Thiele gives 798. (4) Jeroboam II became coregent in April 793, not 793/792 or 792 (Thiele, p. 96)(see text no. 17). (5) Azariah became coregent in September 791, not 792/791¹⁹; (6) Hoshea died between April and September 723; Thiele gives 723/722. (7) Uzziah/Azariah died between April and September 739 and Jotham became king during this period, not 740/739. (8) Ahaz died before Nisan 715 (probably in March) and Hezekiah succeeded him at this time, not in 716/715. (9) Manasseh became coregent in September 697, not 697/696.

These modifications do not interfere with or alter Thiele's basic chronology; they are merely a fine tuning of his system.

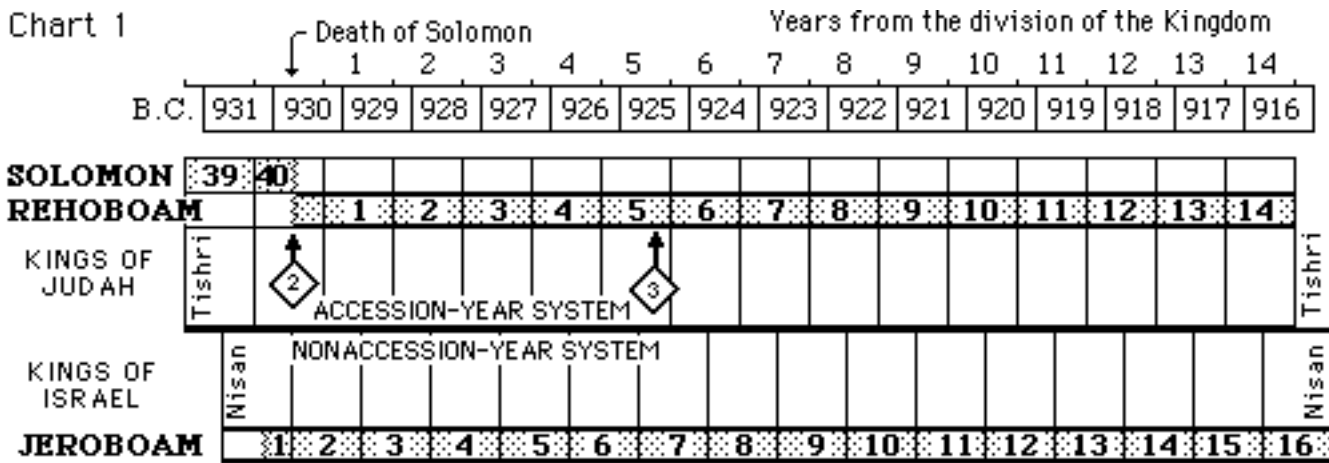
The Texts

In the following presentation of texts and charts the numbers in diamonds on the charts correspond to the numbered texts which appear below them. In general the literary sequence of Kings is given precedence over the literary sequence in Chronicles. It should be recognized, however, that literary sequence does not necessarily or always indicate chronological sequence. Hence the numbers on the charts will not always be in strict numerical order. It may be necessary to examine a nearby chart to find the number that corresponds to the text number as in the case of number 1 which will be found on Chart 2.

Coregency years have been put in parenthesis to distinguish them from regnal years.

¹⁹ Thiele gives an accession year to Azariah's coregency (*The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, pp. 97, 107). This was a lapse on his part, for he noted earlier, "The year that begins a coregency is the first official year of that coregency" (ibid., p. 85). Hence coregencies do not have an accession year (cf. text no. 18). Fortunately accession years do not count for strict chronological purposes and so there is no difference between the chronology being offered here and that of Thiele.

Chart 1



1. **1 Kings 14:20**, “And the time that Jeroboam reigned was 22 [nonaccession] years” (931/930 - 910/909 B.C.).

Jeroboam became king between September 931 and April 930, and died between September 910 and April 909 B.C. Solomon died sometime between September 931 and April 930 and David died between September 972 and September 971 B.C. David was then 70 years of age, which places his birth between September 1042 and September 1041 B.C. The fourth year of Solomon’s reign ran from September 968 to September 967 B.C. In that year the temple was begun. In Nisan of that year (April 967 B.C.) the Israelites marked the beginning of the 480th year since the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1), which took place in April 1446 B.C., according to the writer of Kings.

2. **1 Kings 14:21 (= 2 Chron.on. 12:13)**, “Rehoboam was 41 years old when he became king, and he reigned 17 [accession] years in Jerusalem” (931/930 - 913 B.C.).

Rehoboam became king between September 931 and April 930 B.C. and died between April and September 913 B.C. at the age of 58.

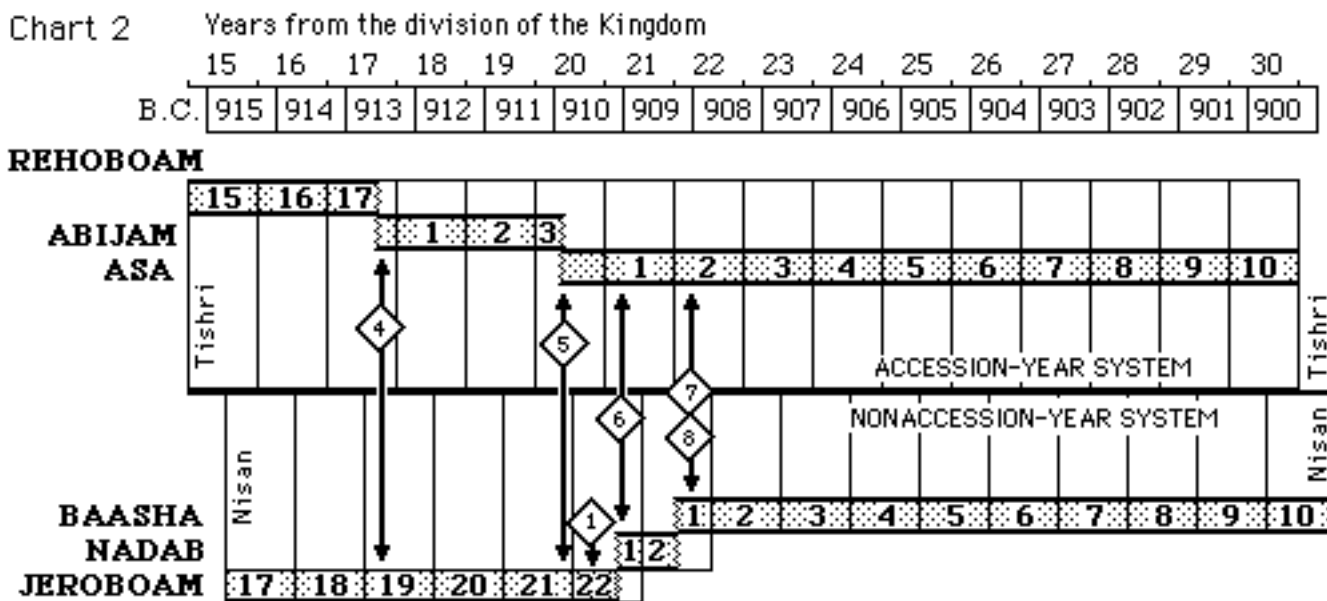
3. **1 Kings 14:25 (= 2 Chronicles 12:2)**, “In the fifth [accession] year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem” (September 92—September 925 B.C.).

The reckoning of events which are not synchronisms is given in the system in use in that kingdom. Here the fifth year of Rehoboam means his fifth year according to the accession system, which in numbering does not include the (partial) accession year (text no. 9 and 17 are further examples). For the first three years of his reign he followed David’s example, but over the next two years he fell away and this brought about the invasion of Shishak “probably about 926 B. C.” according to Breasted.²⁰

Kitchen dated the 21-year reign of Shishak to around 945-924 independently of the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 80.

Biblical data.²¹ This fact virtually rules out Albright's system of dates for the period of the Divided Monarchy.



4. **1 Kings 15:1** (= **2 Chronicles 13:1-2**), “Now in the 18th [accession] year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. He reigned for three [accession] years in Jerusalem” (913 — 911/910 B.C.).

Abijam became king between April and September 913 B.C. and died between September 911 and April 910 B.C. His age on becoming king is omitted. This is the only synchronism with Israel recorded by the Chronicler (Thiele, p. 81). The Chronicler preferred to call this king Abijah.

5. **1 Kings 15:9-10** (cf. **2 Chronicles 16:13**), “In the 20th [accession] year of Jeroboam king of Israel Asa became king over Judah, and he reigned 41 [accession] years in Jerusalem” (911/910 — 870/869 B.C.).

Asa became king between September 911 and April 910 B.C. and died between September 870 and April 869 B.C. His age on becoming king is omitted (cf. text no. 18).

6. **1 Kings 15:25**, “Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second [nonaccession] year of Asa king of Judah; and he reigned over Israel two [nonaccession] years” (910/919 — 909/908 B.C.).

Nadab became king between September 910 and April 909 B.C. and died between September 909 and April 908 B.C.

7. **1 Kings 15:28**, “So Baasha killed him in the third [nonaccession] year of Asa

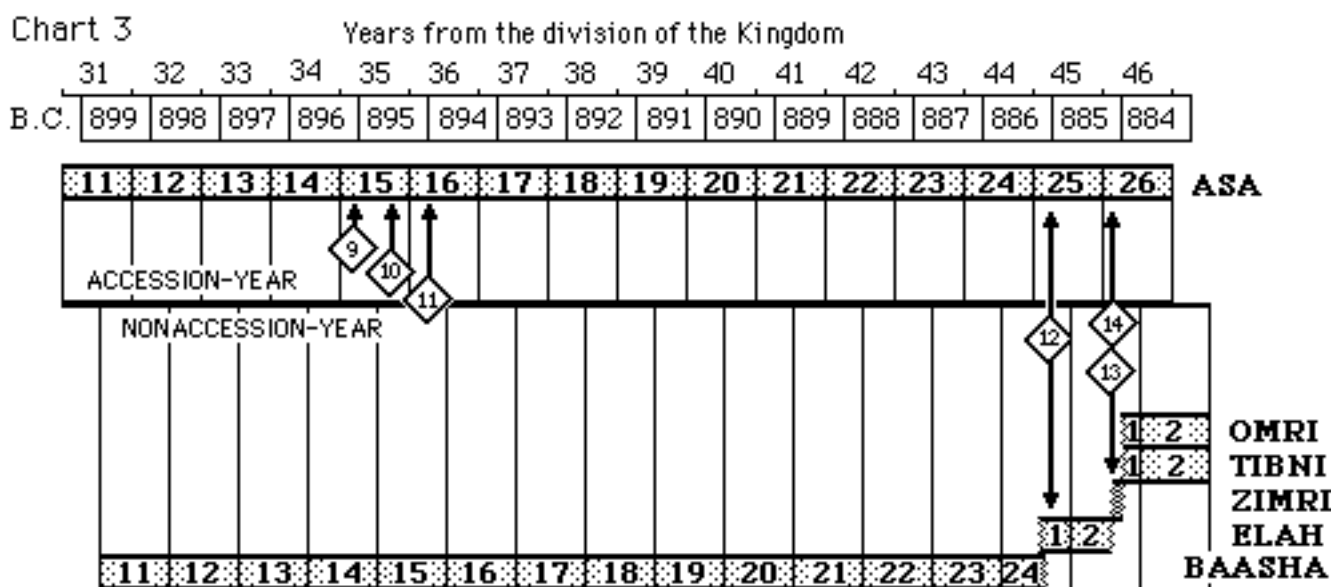
²¹ Kenneth A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt* (1100-650 B.C.), 2d ed. (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1986), pp. 544, 575.

king of Judah, and reigned in his stead. (909/908 B.C.).

This is not a standard synchronism but it follows the rules for the same. Baasha killed Nadab between September 909 and April 908 B.C. and became king at that time. He died between September 886 and April 885 B.C.

8. **1 Kings 15:33**, “In the third [nonaccession] year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel at Tirzah, and reigned 24 [nonaccession] years” (909/908 — 886/885 B.C.).

The clause “and reigned” is not in the Hebrew (cf. text no. 12).



9. **2 Chronicles 15:10**, “They were gathered at Jerusalem in the third month of the 15th [accession] year of the reign of Asa. (896/895 B.C.).

Where no synchronism is involved the biblical writer gives Judah’s own system—the accession-year system. (Cf. text no. 17 below for other examples.)

10. **2 Chronicles 15:19**, “And there was no more war until the 35th year [from the division of the kingdom] in the reign of Asa” (896/895 B.C.).

Albright understood “35th of Asa’s reign” and so obtained 922 B.C. for the division of Solomon’s kingdom.²² Thiele understood the words “of Asa” in numbers 9 and 10 to be “a late editorial addition.”²³ Given the Chronicler’s avoidance of synchronisms with the Northern Kingdom, the use of another era by which to date events may have been unavoidable. The phrase “of Asa” should not be deleted from the text even though it refers not to his personal rule but to the duration of the kingdom of which he was the

²² W. F. Albright, “The Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 100 (December 1945): 20.

²³ Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 84.

present incumbent. A parallel is the 20th year “of Artaxerxes” in Nehemiah 5:14, which does not refer to the 20th year of Artaxerxes’ personal rule but to the kingdom of Persia after it reached its height under Xerxes (i.e., the 20th year from the beginning of Xerxes’ reign, which is 465 B.C.). The “20th year of Artaxerxes” in Nehemiah 2:1, however, does refer to the personal rule of Artaxerxes (i.e., 445 B.C.).²⁴ It would seem that the Chronicler placed the incursion of Baasha in its correct chronological position. In 2 Chronicles 14:1 he noted that the land was quiet for the first 10 years of Asa’s rule (i.e., from 910 to 900 B.C.). Then there was the invasion of the Cushites and the Lubim (but no war with Israel as yet) just before the third month of Asa’s 15th year (see text no. 9), which marks the victory celebration of Judah. After this victory Israelites in the north began deserting Baasha and precipitated his action against Asa in order to halt it. The fact that Baasha’s “Berlin Wall” policy followed immediately on the victory over Zerah in Asa’s 15th year and this 15th year was also the 35th year from the Division settles the question satisfactorily. The Chronicler had access to an era from the division. It is probable that he used this era again to record the death of Jehoiada (text no. 34).

11. 2 Chronicles 16:1, “In the 36th year [from the division of the kingdom] in the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and built Ramah” (895/954 B.C.).

Thiele took the 36th year to be 894 B.C.²⁵ More precisely it was from September 895 to September 894.

12. 1 Kings 16:8, “In the 26th [nonaccession] year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel in Tirzah, and reigned two [non-accession] years” (886/885 — 885/884 B.C.).

Elah became king between September 886 and April 885 and died between September 885 and April 884. The clause “and reigned” is not in the Hebrew. If it ever was in the Hebrew text, numbers 21 and 42 show the syntax that would be required. Normally the Chronicler did not repeat the verb “he ruled” when dealing with the Northern kings.

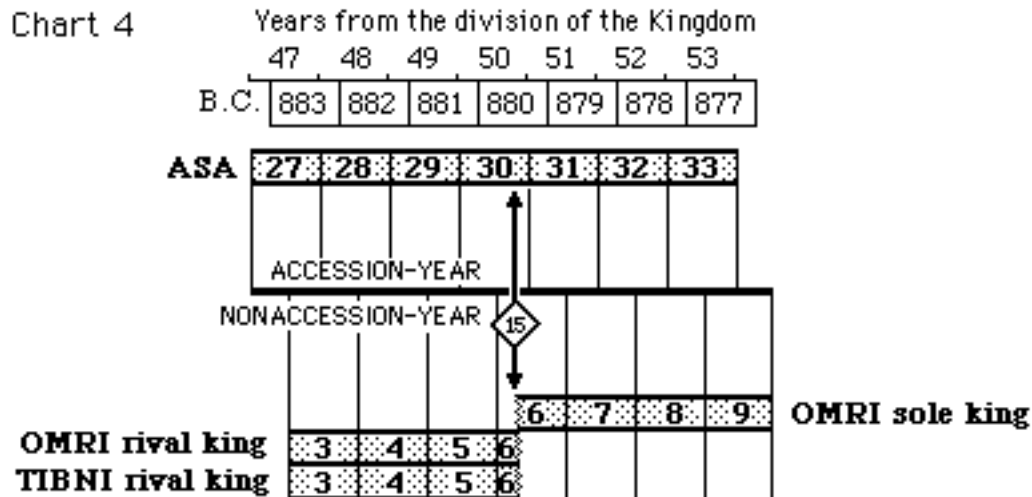
13. 1 Kings 16:10, “Zimri came in and struck him [Elah] down and killed him, in the 27th [nonaccession] year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead” (885/884 B.C.).

Zimri became king between September 885 and April 884 and died between September 885 and April 884 B.C.

14. 1 Kings 16:15, “In the 27th [nonaccession] year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri reigned seven days in Tirzah” (885/884 B.C.).

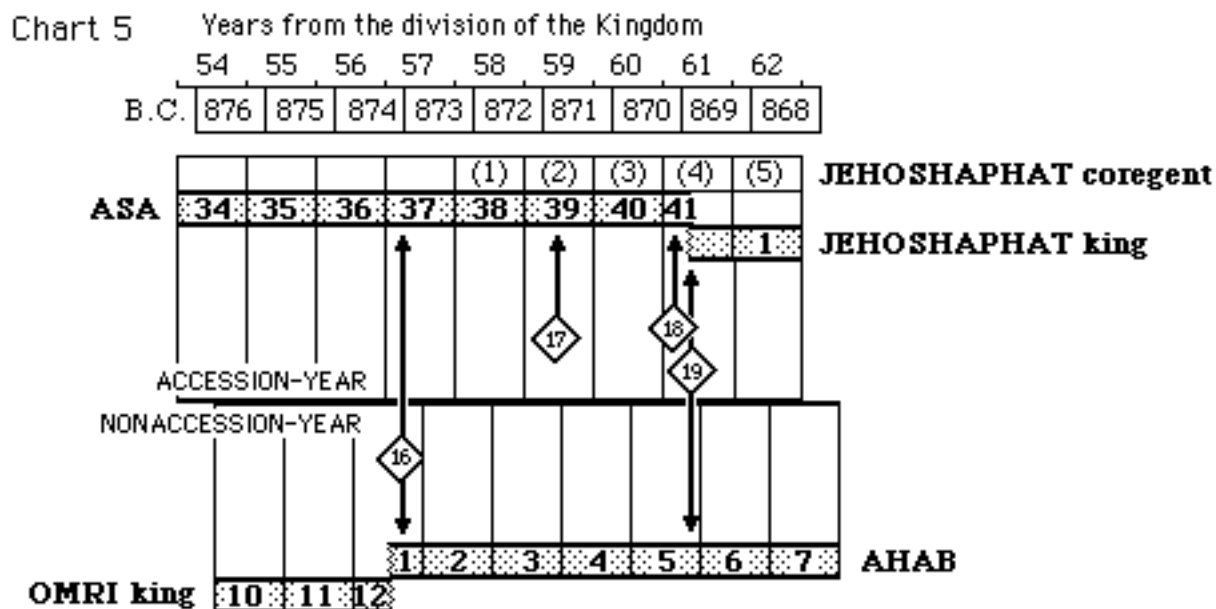
²⁴ For a fuller discussion of this debatable point see the author’s forthcoming article “Was Nehemiah Contemporary with Ezra in 458 BC?” *Westminster Theological Journal*.

²⁵ Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 88.



15. 1 Kings 16:23, “In the 31st [nonaccession] year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, and reigned for 12 [nonaccession] years [as rival and sole king]; six [nonaccession] years he reigned in Tirzah [and six (nonaccession) years he reigned in Samaria]” (A-B pattern).

Omri shared the government of Israel with his rival, Tibni. Tibni and Omri began their respective rules on the death of Zimri. This divided rule commenced sometime between September 885 and April 884 B.C. Omri became sole ruler of Israel after the death of Tibni, which was between April and September 880. Omri died between September 874 and April 873 B.C.²⁶ The clause “and reigned” is not in the Hebrew (cf. text no. 12).



16. 1 Kings 16:29, “In the 38th [nonaccession] year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the

²⁶ See Edwin R. Thiele, “Coregencies and Overlapping Reigns among the Hebrew Kings,” pp. 175-183, 191, for the treatment of Omri’s reign in the Septuagint, whose scheme is clearly inferior to the Hebrew.

son of Omri became king over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria 22 [nonaccession] years” (874/743 — 853 B.C.).

Ahab became king between September 874 and April 873, and he died between April and September 853 B.C. According to Thiele the Battle of Qarqar was fought in July/August 853 B.C.²⁷ Shalmaneser III fought at Qarqar in his sixth year (853) and in his 18th year (841) received tribute from Jehu. These 12 years accord exactly with Hebrew chronology and put the battle of Qarqar in Ahab’s last year²⁸ and Jehu’s tribute to Shalmaneser in his first year.

17. 2 Chronicles 16:12, “In the 39th [accession] year of his kingship Asa was diseased in his feet” (872/721 B.C.).

Thiele appears to have understood the 39th of Asa as a nonaccession-year reckoning²⁹ to account for the commencement of Jehoshaphat’s coregency in the 38th accession year of Asa. There is nothing definite in the record to link the two events, and consequently there is nothing to date the beginning of his coregency in this verse. A remarkable mix-up occurs in Thiele’s statement that:

When all the regnal data of Jehoshaphat are put together, it is found that the commencement of his reign comes in 872, which is the thirty-ninth year of Asa, although the synchronism for his accession is given as the fourth year of Ahab, which is 869. The reason for this seeming discrepancy is that dual-dating procedure was followed in recording the regnal data of Jehoshaphat.³⁰

Thiele has confused the beginning of Jehoshaphat’s coregency with the commencement of his kingship. His coregency began with Tishri 873 but his kingship began in 869. Thiele also failed to observe the practice that non-synchronistic dates (which text no. 17 is) are given according to the calendar in current use in the respective kingdom and therefore they are never given according to the calendar in use in the other kingdom. Compare texts numbers 9, 18, 20, 32, 54, 55, 59 and 60 for proof of this practice.

18. 2 Chronicles 16:13, “And Asa slept with his fathers, dying in the 41st [accession] year of his reign” (870/869 B.C.).

The 41st year must be an accession year (cf. text no. 5). If Thiele were consistent, he should have understood text no. 17 to be the same. Consequently his statement that the commencement of Jehoshaphat’s coregency of 25 years is in accord with dual-dating

²⁷ Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 95 n. 13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 104.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 96 (but cf. p. 83).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

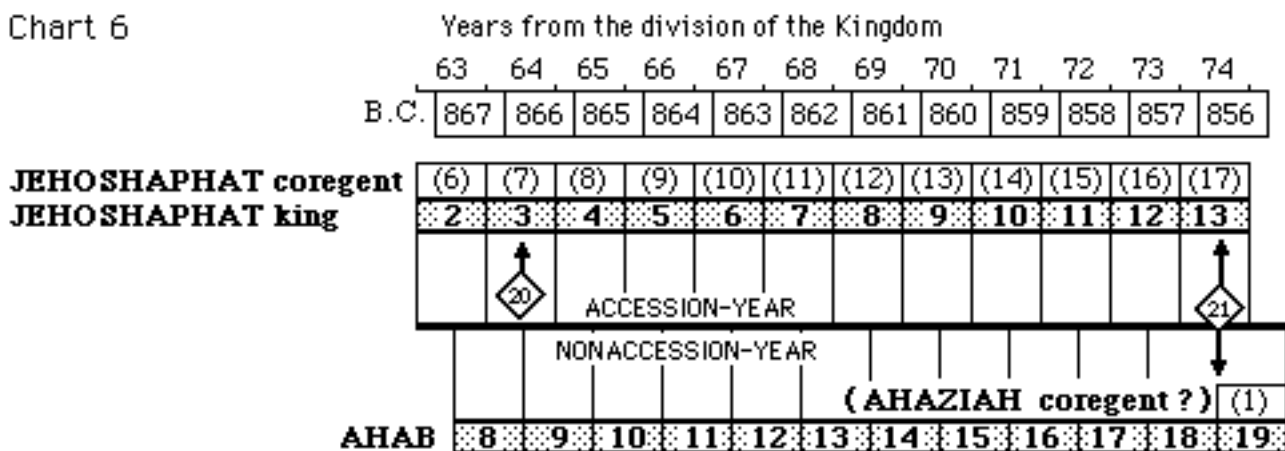
procedure³¹ is not only incorrect but is also inconsistent, for later on he noted, “The initial year of a coregency is termed its first year, not an accession year.”³² He uses imilar statements elsewhere,³³ yet he commences the coregencies of Azariah and Ahaz with accession years.³⁴

19. 1 Kings 22:41 (= 2 Chronicles 20:31, which omits the synchronism), “Jehoshaphat the son of Asa became king over Judah in the fourth [accession] year of Ahab king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became coregent and he reigned 25 [accession] years as coregent and king in Jerusalem” (coregency, 873 — 870/869 B.C; king, 870/869 — 849/848 B.C.; B-B pattern).

If the point from which the total is taken is the fourth year of Ahab, then the pattern would be A-B. But it seems that the writer is taking the total from the time he became coregent. A similar situation occurs with 2 Kings 15:1 (see text no. 40).

Jehoshaphat became coregent in September 873. (Thiele has 872/1. This would give 22 years as king instead of 21 years plus four years as coregent.) He became king between September 870 and April 869 B.C., which agrees with Thiele’s dates. He died between April and September 848 B.C. It is not clear whether Jehoshaphat was 35 years of age when he became coregent or when he became king. If the former, he was 59 when he died; if the latter, he was 56 when he died.

Chart 6



20. 2 Chronicles 17:7, “In the third [accession] year of his kingship he [Jehoshaphat] sent his princes . . . to teach in the cities of Judah” (867/866 B.C.).

See text numbers 9, 17 and 18 for nonsynchronistic dates.

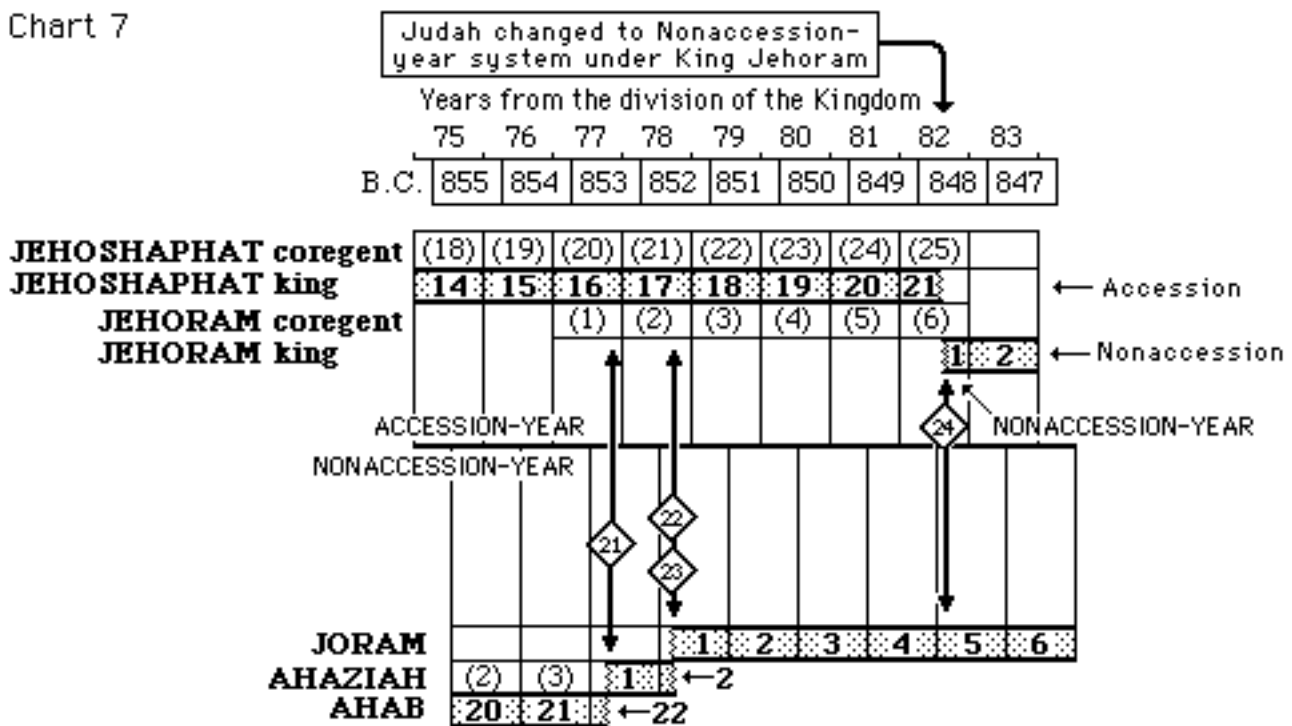
³¹ Ibid., p. 86.

³² Ibid., p. 96.

³³ Ibid., pp. 85, 106, 111, 116.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 109, 119.

Chart 7



21. 1 Kings 22:51, “Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the 17th [nonaccession] year of the kingship of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two [nonaccession] years over Israel” (853 — 852 B.C.).

It is possible to translate this verse as follows: “Ahaziah the son of Ahab became coregent over Israel in Samaria in the 17th year of the coregency of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two [nonaccession] years as king over Israel.” This would give Ahaziah a three-year coregency. The details would conform to the B-A pattern noted elsewhere. The balance of probability, however, is against this interpretation and so its existence has been ignored in this study.

Ahaziah became king between April and September 853, and he died between April and September 852 B.C. The words “and he reigned” are used here for the first time to record a period of rule.³⁵

22. 2 Kings 1:17, “Jehoram, his brother, became king in his stead in the second year from the coregency of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, because Ahaziah had no son” (852-841 B.C.).

Joram became king between April and September 852 B.C. and died between April and September 841 B.C.

23. 2 Kings 3:1, “In the 18th [nonaccession] year of the kingship of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria, and he

³⁵ Cf. number 42 for the only other occasion when the prefix form of the verb is used in this context. The suffix form is used in number 41 but in general the writer prefers to omit the verb in the case of the Northern kings.

reigned 12 [nonaccession] years” (852 — 841 B.C.).

24. 2 Kings 8:16-17³⁶ (= 2 Chronicles 21:5; cf. 21:20), “In the fifth [nonaccession] year of Joram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel (and Jehoshaphat was king of Judah), Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, became king. He was 32 years old when he became king, and he reigned eight [nonaccession] years as king in Jerusalem” (848 — 841 B.C.; A-A pattern). (Why the details of his age and length of reign are repeated in Chronicles is not clear.)

Here and at 2 Kings 24:8 and 24:18 the RSV has translated the verb °lm as “he became king” contrary (but not necessarily incorrect) to its usual practice of translating it as “he began to reign.”³⁷

Only when Jehoram became king—not coregent—did Judah begin using Israel’s nonaccession-year system. Thiele calculated correctly that Jehoram introduced the Northern nonaccession-year system into Judah at this point in Judah’s history.³⁸

Jehoram became coregent in September 854 B.C. Thiele has carelessly written 853, but his chart on page 97 makes it plain that it began in Tishri 854. He became king between April and September 848 and died between April and September 841. Jehoram of Israel died in the same period.

The RSV has relegated the words, “Israel, Jehoshaphat being king of Judah,” to the margin, which Thiele apparently approves of.³⁹ There is no need to resort to such drastic textual surgery. If Jotham could resign his kingship in favor of his son Ahaz (see chart 19) and remain on as joint-ruler for four more years until his death, why could the same thing not have happened in the case of Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram? The Septuagint evidence is in favor of the RSV because only manuscripts A B boc_2e_2 Eth retain the words, while manuscripts N defghijmnpqstuvwxyz Arm Lat SyroHex omit the words. The Hebrew evidence does not favor the RSV translation.

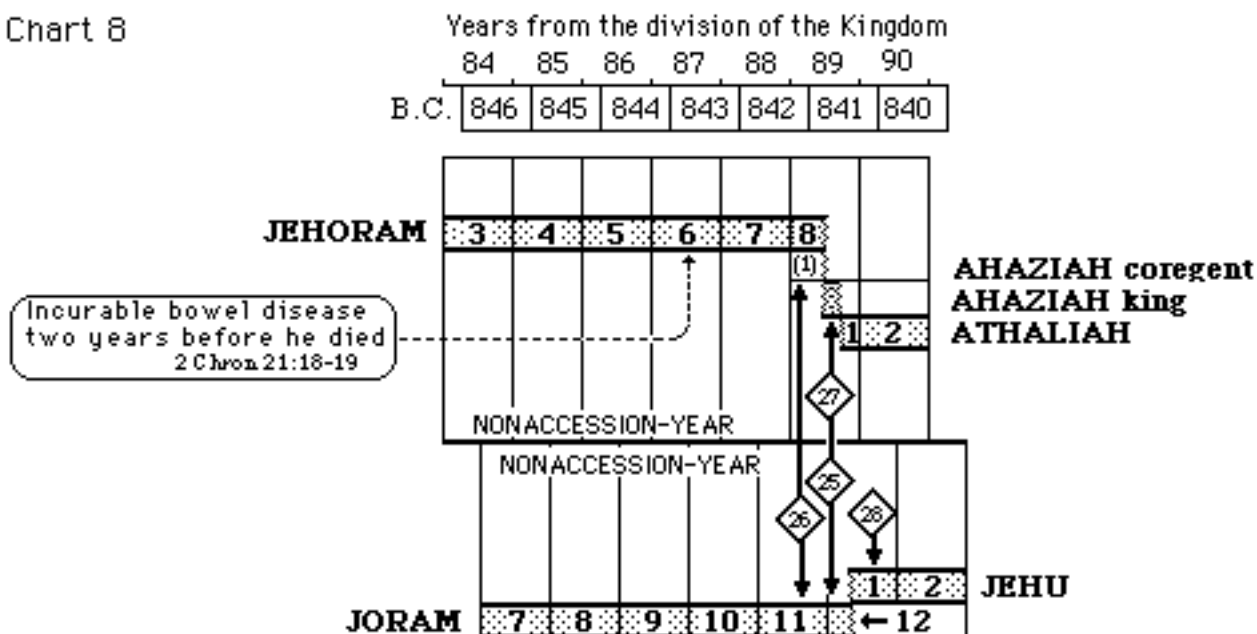
³⁶ It is equally possible to translate this text, “He [Jehoram] was 32 years old when he became coregent and he reigned eight years as king in Jerusalem.” In this case it would belong to the B-A pattern.

³⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 100 for a discussion of this translation.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 100.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

Chart 8



25. **2 Kings 8:25-26** (= **2 Chron. 22:2**), “In the 12th [nonaccession] year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, became king. Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became king, and he reigned one [nonaccession] year as coregent and king in Jerusalem” (841 B.C.; A-B pattern).

Ahaziah became coregent in September 842 and became king between April and September 841 B.C. and he died during this period. The 11th and 12th years of Jotham led Thiele to postulate that a scribe used two systems for dating Jehoram’s accession to the throne.⁴⁰

26. **2 Kings 9:29**, “In the 11th [nonaccession] year of Joram the son of Ahab, Ahaziah became coregent over Judah” (Tishri 842 B.C.).

Thiele regarded the 11th year as an exception to his observation that all synchronisms from Jehoram and Joash of Judah are according to the nonaccession-year system⁴¹ By regarding the 11th as an exception Thiele missed a one-year coregency for Ahaziah, which is supported by some Septuagint evidence.⁴²

Thiele confused the application of two of his variable factors in the case of the 11th and 12th years of Joram. One such variable is the practice of writing each kingdom’s record according to the system used in the other kingdom. Another is the need to observe the difference between nonaccession and accession years. What Thiele failed to notice is that the first variable applies only to Period A, whereas Joram and Ahaziah belong to Period B. Jehoram had already introduced Judah to the nonaccession-year system and this system was in use in Israel also; therefore there is no need to “convert” nonaccession years into

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 58.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 215.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 90, 94, 101, and Thiele, “Coregencies and Overlapping Reigns among the Hebrew Kings,” p. 183.

accession years or vice versa.

Two incidents suggest that Ahaziah did have a coregency period. In 2 Chronicles 21:19 Joram contracted a fatal bowel disease two years before he died, which undoubtedly prohibited him from officiating at religious functions. Obviously as it grew worse he was unable to carry out his royal functions. The second incident is the inhabitants of Jerusalem putting Ahaziah on the throne (2 Chron. 22:1) and not his father, Joram. This might suggest that Joram was still alive when this was done, for it was done for Uzziah when his father was captured by Jehoash (text no. 38). The people decided the accession in the case of Jehoahaz of Judah (2 Kings 23:30) when his older brother ought to have succeeded his father, and they also decided the accession of Josiah (2 Chron. 33:25). The interference of the people in the succession suggests impatience on their part with a “lame duck” king or their preference for a son who did not have the lawful entitlement to the throne; either way the natural order of events/succession was interfered with and some form of irregularity is indicated in such action.

27. 2 Chronicles 22:2, “Ahaziah became king forty-two years *from the time Omri became king over Israel*, and he reigned one [nonaccession] year [either as coregent and king, or as king] in Jerusalem” (841 B.C.).

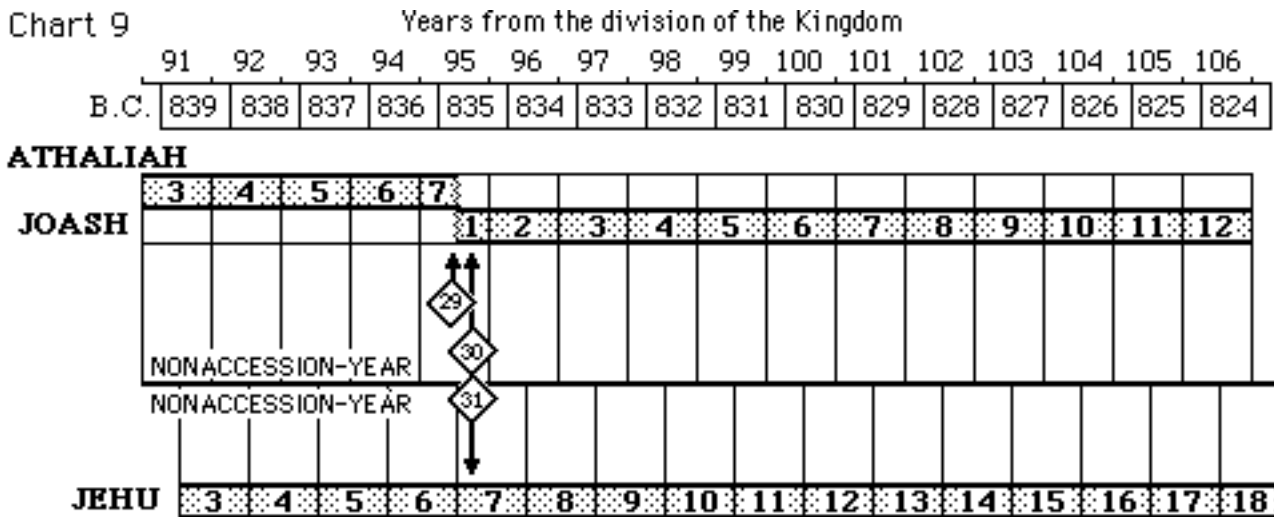
Literally this verse reads, “A son of forty and two years is Ahaziah in his reigning...”. The phrase “a son of...” does not necessarily or always indicate personal age. See text number 34 below for further notes. Ahaziah could not have been 42 years old because 2 Kings 8:26 (text no. 25) states that he was 22 years of age when he became king. If he was 42 years of age, he would have been two years older than his father.

The Chronicler arrived at the figure of 42 years by adding together the figures for Omri and each of the three kings following him: thus Omri had 6 years reign as sole king; Ahab had 22; Ahaziah had 2; and Joram had 12 years. The biblical writer apparently regarded Ahaziah’s period of rule as an extension of Omri’s dynasty and rule and not in the tradition of the Davidic kings.

28. 2 Kings 10:36, “The time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was 28 [nonaccession] years” (841 — 814/813 B.C.).

Jehu began his reign between April and September 841 and died between September 814 and April 813 B.C.

Chart 9



29. 2 Kings 11:3 (= 2 Chron. 22:12), “And he [Joash, the son of Ahaziah] remained with her [his aunt] six years, hid in the house of the Lord” (841 — 835 B.C.).

Queen Athaliah became sole ruler between April and September 841 B.C. and died between April and September 835 B.C.

30. 2 Kings 11:4 (= 2 Chron. 23:1), “But in the seventh [nonaccession] year [of Athaliah’s reign] Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of the Carites.”

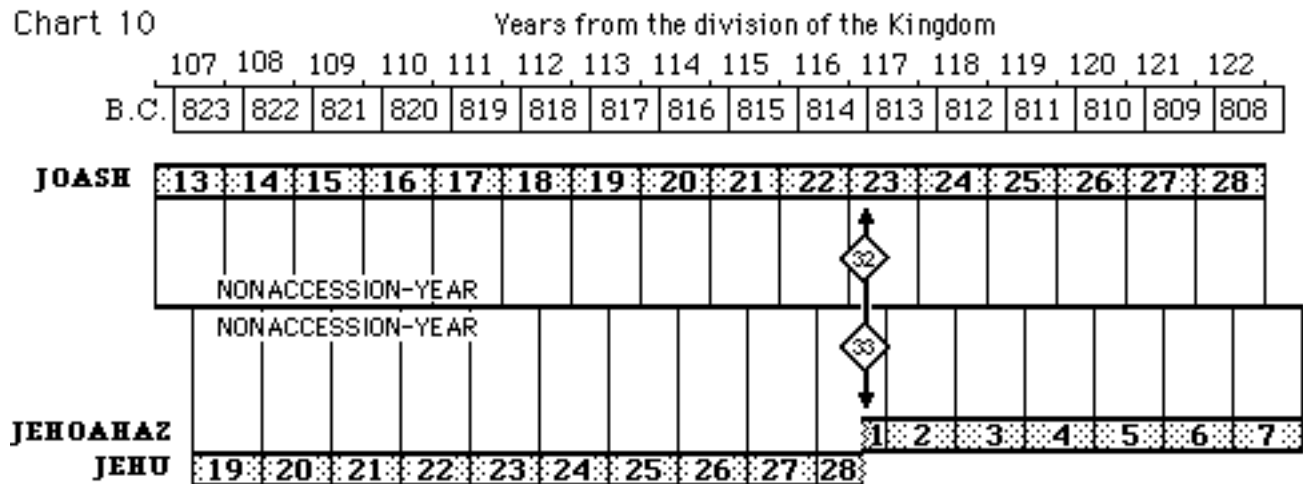
The synchronism could be with Jehu’s seventh year (as in text no. 31) or with Athaliah’s rule or more probably in the seventh year of his hiding, which seems the most natural reading of the text in the absence of any synchronism with Israel (the seventh year was September 836 to September 835).

31. 2 Kings 11:21-12:1 (= 2 Chron. 24:1 where the synchronism with Jehu is omitted; cf. 2 Kings 12:1), “Jehoash was seven years old when he became king. In the seventh [nonaccession] year of Jehu, Jehoash became king, and he reigned 40 [nonaccession] years in Jerusalem” (835 — 796 B.C.).

One would have expected Joash to have been crowned in Tishri, 836 B.C., the month for reckoning the regnal year. If he were, however, it would mean Athaliah ruled for five, not six, actual years.⁴³ It is certain, however, that he was crowned between April and September 835 B.C., because only these months can be part of the seventh year of Jehu. He died between April and September 796 B.C. See text number 47, which states that Jotham became coregent immediately after Uzziah became a leper, which was some time between April and September 750 B.C.

⁴³ Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 104.

Chart 10



32. 2 Kings 12:6, “But by the 23rd [nonaccession] year of King Jehoash the priests had made no repairs on the house” (814/813 B.C.).

33. 2 Kings 13:1, “In the 23rd [nonaccession] year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned 17 [nonaccession] years” (814/813 — 798/797 B.C.).

Jehoahaz became king between September 814 and April 813 B.C. and died between September 798 and April 797 B.C. The clause “and he reigned” is not in the Hebrew (cf. text no. 12).

Chart 11

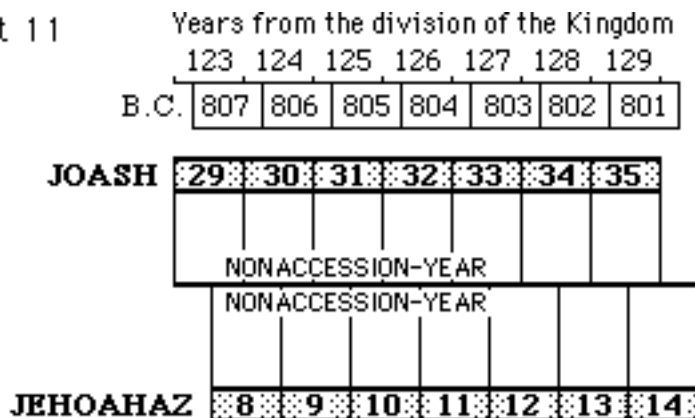
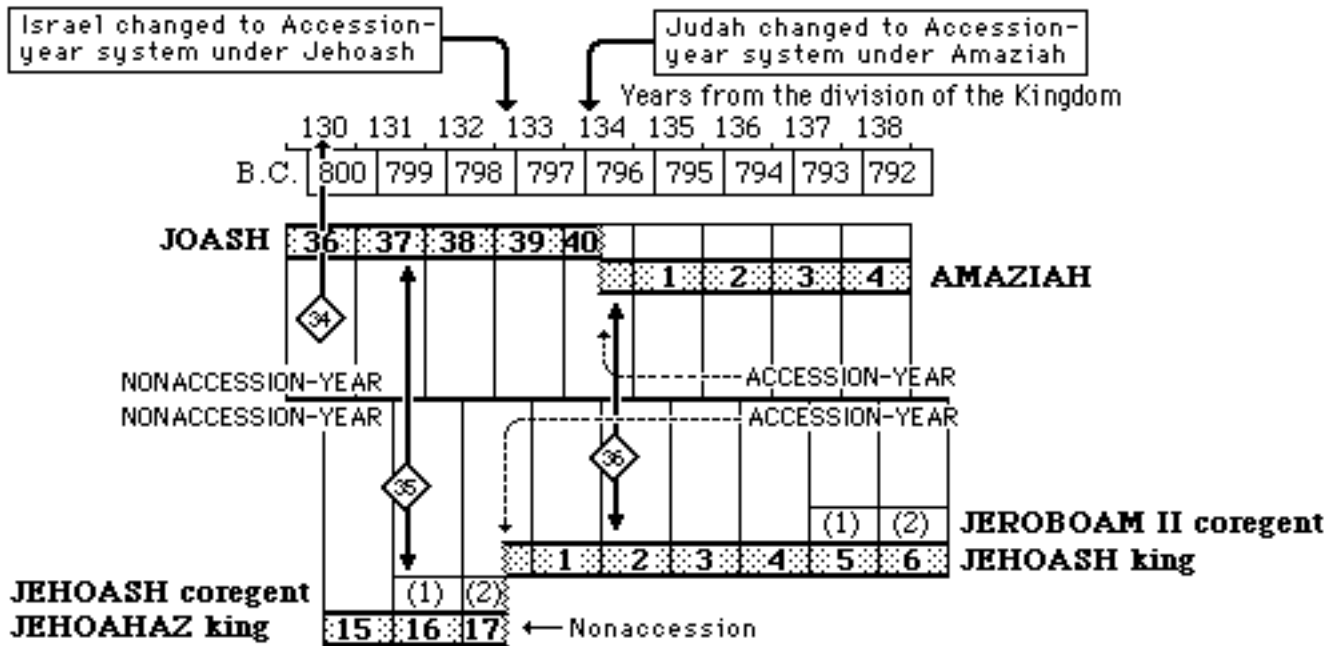


Chart 12



34. 2 Chronicles 24:15, “But Jehoiada grew old and full of days and he died in the 130th year from the division of the kingdom” (801/800 B.C.).

Literally this verse reads, “A son of one hundred and thirty in his death.”⁴⁴ Numbers 10 and 11 are also reckoned according to the era of division.

35. 2 Kings 13:10, “In the 37th [nonaccession] year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz became coregent over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned 16 [accession] years as king” (coregent, 799 — 798/797 B.C.; king, 798/797 — 782/781 B.C.; B-A pattern).

Jehoash of Israel became coregent in April 799 B.C. and then king between September 798 and April 797 B.C. and died between September 782 B.C. and April 781 B.C.

When Jehoash of Israel became king he introduced the accession-year system into the Northern Kingdom, where it remained in use until the capture of Samaria. However he retained the Nisan-Nisan regnal year.

Thiele understood the 37th year of Joash of Judah to be an accession year contrary to the nonaccession system in use in Judah at this time.⁴⁵ The solution is that since Judah was using the nonaccession year system (which Thiele admits) we must allow for a two-year coregency for Jehoash of Israel. When Jehoash became king he changed over to the accession-year system, which agrees with Thiele’s scheme. The clause “and he reigned” is not in the Hebrew (cf. text no. 12).

36. 2 Kings 14:1-2 (cf. 2 Chron. 25:1 which omits the synchronism), “In the second

⁴⁴ For a fuller comment see this writer’s article, “Was Nehemiah Contemporary with Ezra in 458 BC?” *Westminster Theological Journal*, forthcoming. {Published in *WTJ* 53 (1991) pp. 263-293.}

⁴⁵ Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 111.

[accession] year of the kingship of Joash the son of Joahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, became king. He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 29 [accession] years as king in Jerusalem” (the second year of Joash began in April 796 B.C.; Amaziah was king, 796 — 767 B.C.).

Amaziah became king between April and September 796 B.C. and died between April and September 767 B.C. He reverted to Judah’s original method of numbering regnal years when he reintroduced the accession-year system at the beginning of his kingship. He may have been influenced by the reform of Jehoash who had introduced the accession-year system for the first time into the annals of the Northern kings just two years earlier.

37. 2 Kings 14:17 (= 2 Chron. 25:25), “Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel” (782/781 — 767 B.C.).

See chart 14 for the relevant information.

Chart 13

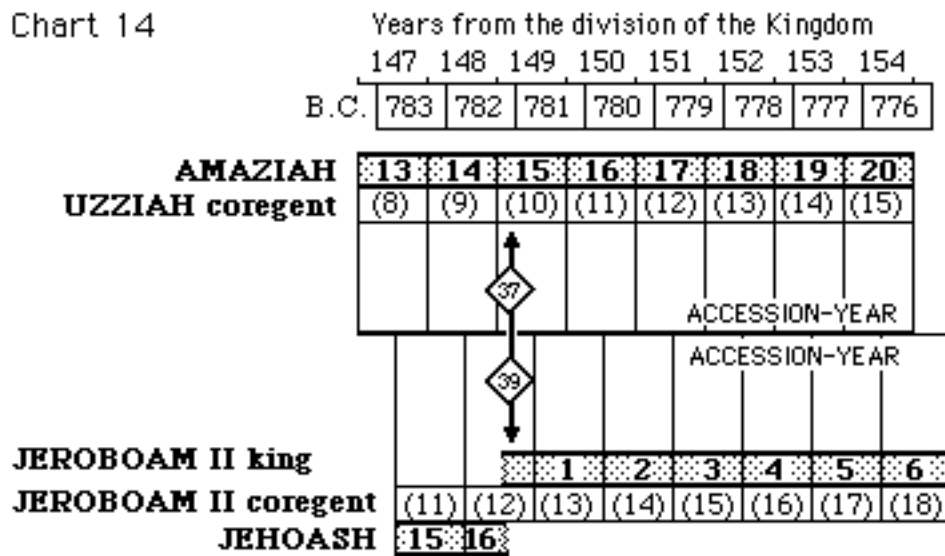
		Years from the division of the Kingdom							
		139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146
B.C.		791	790	789	788	787	786	785	784
AMAZIAH	UZZIAH coregent	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
			↑						
			38						
							ACCESSION-YEAR		
							ACCESSION-YEAR		
JEROBOAM II	coregent								
		(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
JEHOASH		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

38. 2 Kings 14:21 (= 2 Chron. 26:1), “And all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was 16 years old, and made him coregent instead of his father Amaziah” (coregent, 791/790 B.C.; B-B pattern; see text no. 39).

Azariah (=Uzziah) was made coregent in Amaziah’s sixth year as king of Judah. (Thiele makes it the fifth year, i.e. 792/791, which would make 53 years for Azariah’s reign.) Consequently 2 Kings 14:21 does not follow verse 20 chronologically. Verse 20 refers to events in 739 B.C., whereas verse 21 goes back to September 791 B.C. to record the date of Uzziah’s coregency. He became king between April and September 767 and died between April and September 739 B.C. Texts number 38 and 40 appear before number 37 because Uzziah was made coregent before Jeroboam was made king. It can be argued that number 37 could have been placed before number 40. The reason it was not put before number 40 is that similar subject matter has taken precedence over chronology, namely, the writer

recorded the death of Jehoash of Israel and so recorded how long Amaziah outlived him.⁴⁶

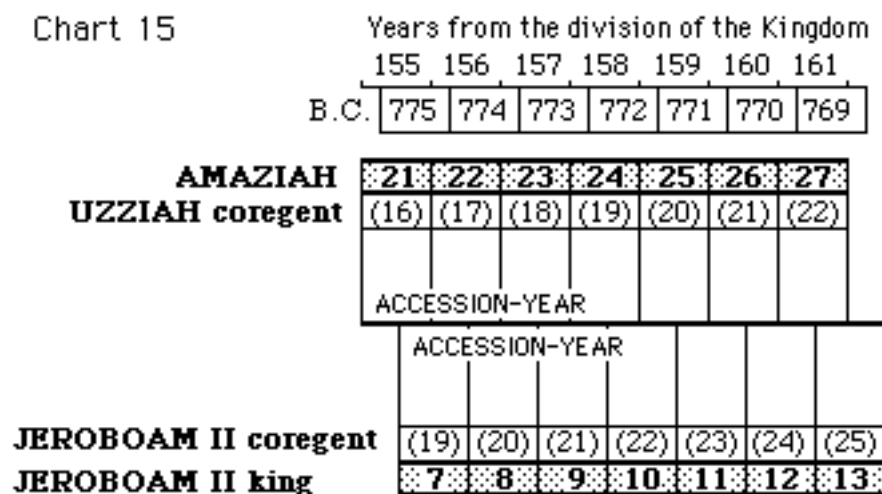
Chart 14



39. 2 Kings 14:23, “In the 15th [accession] year from the kingship of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, and he reigned 41 [accession] years as coregent and king” (coregent, 793 — 781 B.C.; king, 782/781 — 753 B.C.; A-B pattern).

Jeroboam II became coregent in April 793 B.C. and became king between September 782 and April 781. He died just before Tishri, 753 B.C. (see text no. 40 for the reason for this date). This coregency was first suggested in the work *Seder Olam* and by Kimchi.⁴⁷ The clause “and he reigned” is not in the Hebrew (cf. text no. 12).

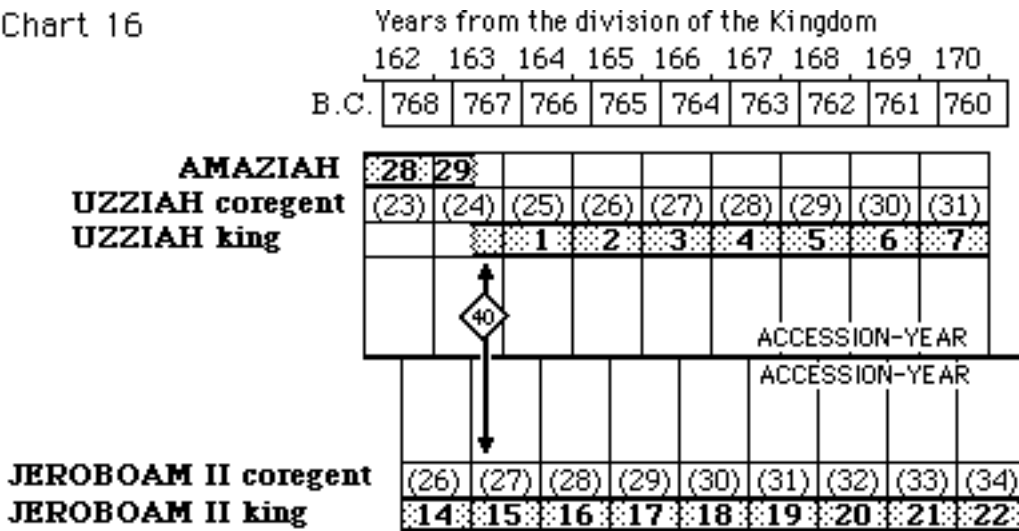
Chart 15



⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 110, 115.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

Chart 16



40. 2 Kings 15:1-2, (2 Chron. 26:3 omits v. 1), “In the 27th [accession] year from the coregency of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, became king. He was 16 years old when he became coregent and he reigned 52 [accession] years as coregent and king in Jerusalem” (coregent, 791 — 767 B.C.; king, 767 — 739 B.C.; B-B pattern).

Azariah (=Uzziah) was 68 years of age when he died. If the point from which the total is taken is the start of Uzziah’s sole reign in the 27th year of Jeroboam’s coregency, then the pattern would be A-B. But this pattern would add 25 years to the total of Judah’s years, which is clearly ruled out by the constraints of fixed absolute dates in the vicinity. It is clear from internal and external considerations that the writer took the total from the time Uzziah became coregent. Internal considerations clarify a similar situation in 1 Kings 22:41 (text no. 19). Jeroboam II died either in the sixth month (Elul, or August/September) or seventh month (Tishri, or September/October) of 753 B.C. He was followed by Zechariah’s six-month reign, which commenced in the 38th year of Uzziah and must have spilled over into Uzziah’s 39th year, or ended just a matter of days before the end of Uzziah’s 38th year, because Shallum reigned only one month and he is said to have become king in the 39th of Uzziah. Shallum must therefore have died toward the end of Nisan (March/April) of 752 B.C. For the date of Uzziah’s death see text number 47.

Chart 17

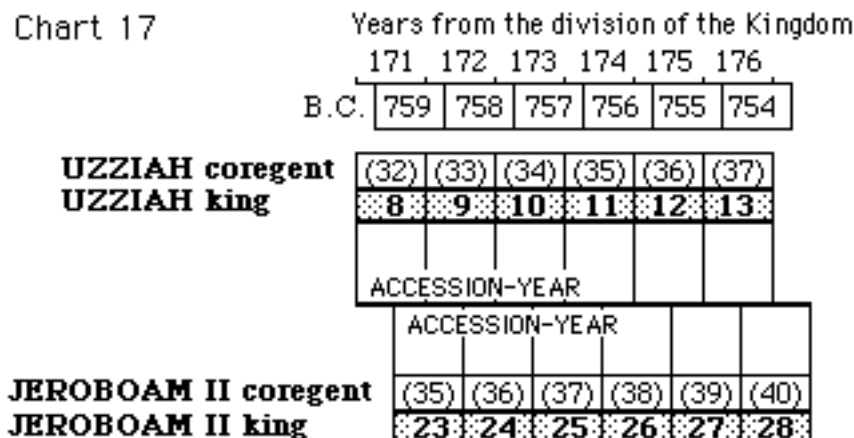
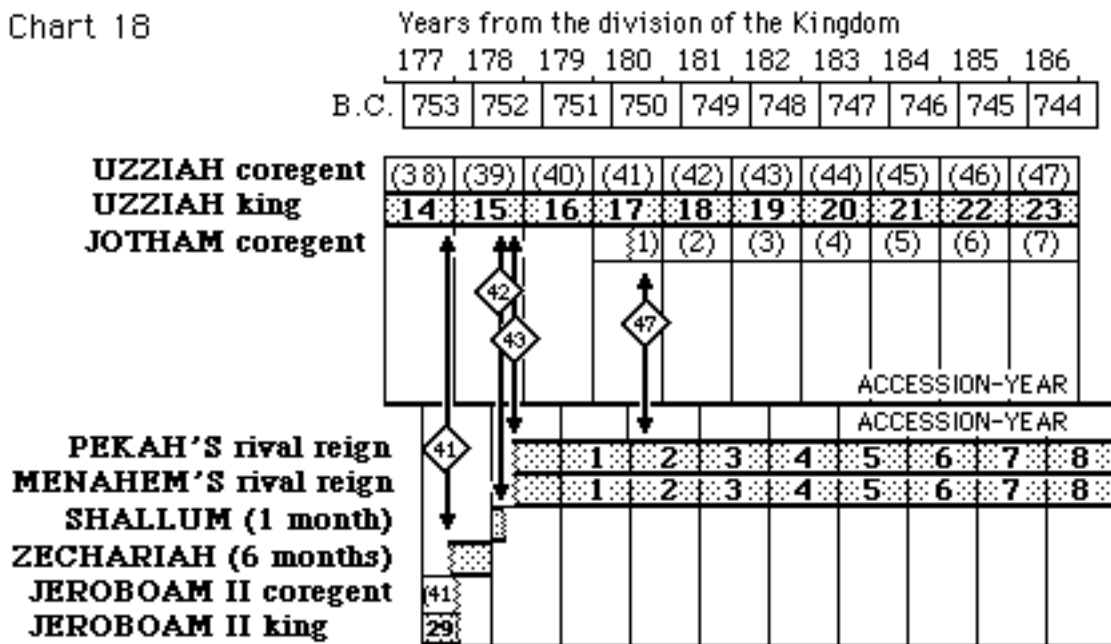


Chart 18



The reason for text numbers 44 and 45 being “displaced” may have been to allow the writer to pursue the split history of Israel until it became united again under Pekah. It was the failure to note the problem that two kingdoms in the North posed for the writer’s normal procedure in recording the accessions of kings chronologically that induced Thiele to place the accession of Pekah after the death of Pekahiah.⁴⁸ The writer appears to have overcome the problem by regarding the occupant of the royal palace in Samaria as the legitimate successor to the kings of the Northern kingdom. This meant that in the eyes of the biblical writer Pekah did not become king of Israel until he lived in Samaria. It was only natural, therefore, for the notice of his occupancy of the palace and throne in Samaria to follow the death of Pekahiah. Thiele rather mechanically took up a principle that governed the normal situation and applied it to an abnormal situation.

41. **2 Kings 15:8**, “In the 38th [accession] year from the coregency of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria six months” (753 B.C.).

Zechariah became king between April and September 753 B.C. and died between September 753 and April, 752 B.C. (but most probably he died shortly before 1 Nisan 752 B.C.). The words “and he reigned” are, unusually, in the Hebrew.

42. **2 Kings 15:13**, “Shallum the son of Jabesh became king in the 39th [accession] year from the coregency of Uzziah king of Judah, and he reigned one month in Samaria”

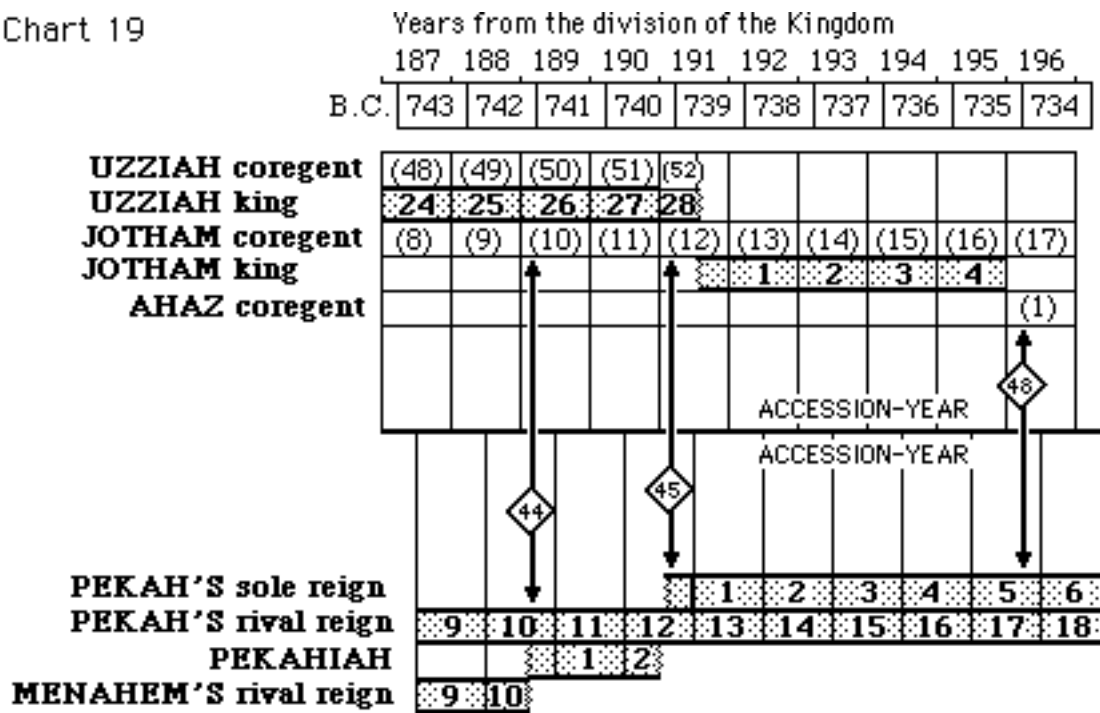
⁴⁸ (1983:135).

(752 B.C.).⁴⁹

43. **2 Kings 15:17**, “In the 39th [accession] year from the coregency of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi became king over Israel, and he reigned 10 [accession] years in Samaria” (752 - 742/741 B.C.).

Menahem became king in late April 752 and died between September 742 and April 741. There is no Hebrew text for “he reigned” (cf. text no. 12).

Chart 19



44. **2 Kings 15:23**, “In the 50th [accession] year from the coregency of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned two [accession] years. (742/741 - 740/739 B.C.).

Pekahiah became king between September 742 and April 741 and died between September 740 and April 739. There is no Hebrew text for “he reigned” (cf. text no. 12).

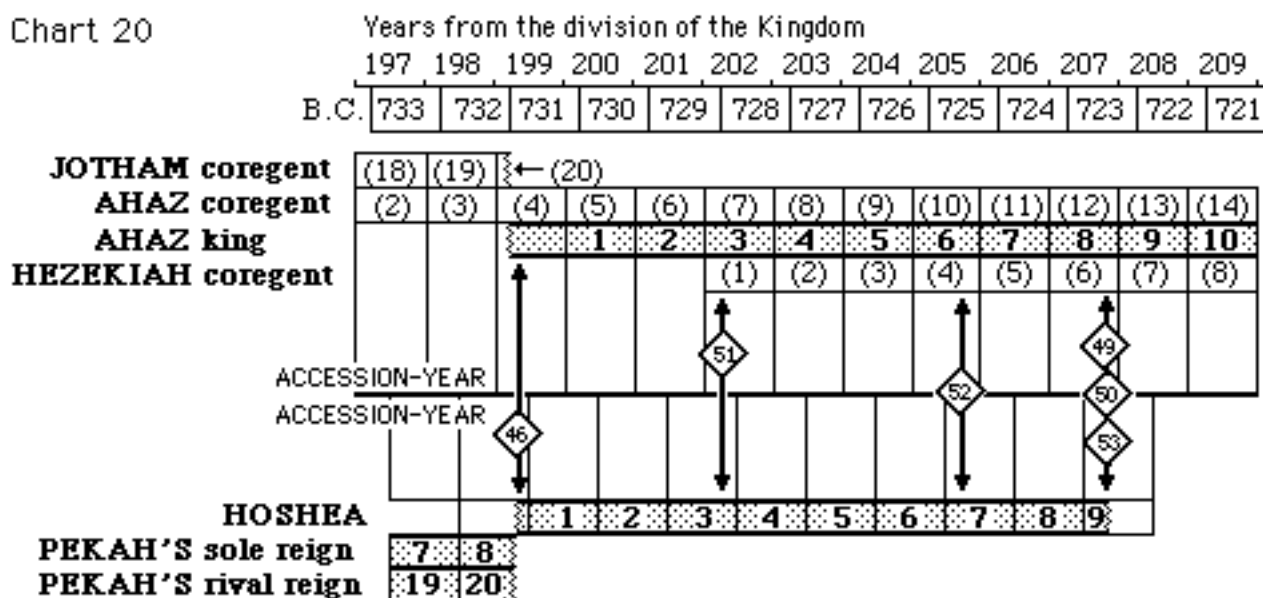
45. **2 Kings 15:27**, “In the 52nd [accession] year from the coregency of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned 20 [accession] years from his breakaway from Menahem” (752 — 732/1 B.C.; A-B pattern).

Though Pekah became sole king of Israel in the 52nd of Azariah, he had been “king” of a rival government opposed to Menahem from the 39th of Azariah (i.e., from late Nisan 752). Pekah was sole king of Israel for only eight years, from 740/739 to 732/731 B.C. He became sole ruler in Israel between September 740 and April 739. He died between

⁴⁹ The clause “and he reigned” is the consecutive prefix form (or emanative perception) and not the suffix form (or attributive perception, but see no. 63 which is in the suffix form). This is only the second time that the biblical writer has used the prefix form to record the length of reign of a Northern king (cf. no. 21).

September 732 and April 731. Jotham could have died after the murder of Pekah (i.e., between April and September 731 B.C.) because Hoshea's accession is synchronised with Jotham's 20th and last year as (co)regent, but it could be that the whole of Jotham's 20th year was attributed to him even though he had died early in that year. There is no Hebrew text for "he reigned" (cf. text no. 12).

Chart 20



46. **2 Kings 15:30**, "Then Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and struck him down, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the 20th [accession] year from the coregency of Jotham the son of Uzziah" (732/731 B.C.).

Hoshea became king between September 732 and April 731 and died between April and September 723 B.C. The writer avoided giving an official synchronism for Hoshea. His accession is tacked on to the end of Pekah's record. This explains why text number 47 is apparently out of chronological sequence. Ahaz became king before Hoshea (assuming that the biblical sequence represents the chronological order of accession), but the year is called the 20th of Jotham, though Jotham may have been dead before Hoshea became king (see text no. 45).

47. **2 Kings 15:32-33 (2 Chron. 27:1, 8 omit the synchronism of v. 32)**, "In the second [accession] year of the breakaway kingdom of Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, became coregent. He was 25 years old when he became coregent and he reigned 16 [accession] years as coregent and king, [until Ahaz, his son, was made coregent with him] in Jerusalem" (coregent, 750 — 739 B.C.; king, 739 — 735 B.C.; second period as coregent, September 735 — 732/731; B-B pattern).

Jotham became coregent about April 750 B.C. and became king after the death of Uzziah, which occurred between September 740 and September 739 B.C. (see chart 18). He resigned (abdicated?) as king in September 735 B.C., but stayed on in some capacity of rule until April 731 B.C. because his coregency years constitute the era by which the

synchronism of Hoshea was fixed. He died between September 732 and September 731 B.C. Uzziah died after the death of Pekahiah who died between September 740 and April, 739; hence he died between April and September 739 B.C., when Jotham became king. Thiele noted, “Jotham became regent [really coregent] when Azariah was smitten with leprosy (2 Kings 15:5). The year when he became regent [really coregent] was reckoned as his official first year, not as an accession year. This was in accord with the usual procedure in coregencies.”⁵⁰ However, the fact that Jotham’s coregency began in the second year of Pekah means that the month in which he began his coregency was not in accord with the usual procedure in coregencies. Jotham’s accession was probably unique (but see text no. 31) among Judah’s kings in that it began not in Tishri but sometime between Nisan and Tishri in 750 B.C.

48. 2 Kings 16:1-2 (cf. 2 Chron. 28:1, which omits the synchronism), “In the 17th [accession] year of the breakaway kingdom of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, became coregent. Ahaz was 20 years old when he became coregent, and he reigned 16 years as king in Jerusalem” (coregent, 735 — 732/731 B.C.; king, 732/731 — ca. March 715 B.C.; B-A pattern).

Ahaz became coregent in September 735 B.C. and became king between September 732 and September 731 B.C. He died a few weeks (or maybe days) just before Nisan 715 B.C. See chart 19 and text numbers 45 and 54 for further comments.

49. 2 Kings 17:1, “In the 12th [accession] year from the coregency of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah had reigned nine [accession] years in Samaria over Israel.” (Twelfth year = September 724—September 723 B.C; nine years = 732/731 — 723 B.C.).

The RSV and other modern English versions have translated the verb *ʾlm* as “began to reign,” as though the “12th year” were the *terminus a quo*, instead of which it is the *terminus ad quem*. Because Thiele failed to appreciate the range of functions of the Hebrew suffix form, he questioned the accuracy of 2 Kings 17—18.⁵¹ The RSV has the clause “and he reigned” which is not in the Hebrew (cf. text no. 12). The interpolation of this clause by some English versions has been unfortunate in that it has obscured the brevity of the Hebrew, which merely records a date—usually the date of accession—of Israel’s kings as one item of information and in paratactic fashion follows this with the length of reign so that the date given may or may not be the date from which or to which the length of reign relates. The syntax of the Hebrew is more flexible than the English

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 132.

⁵¹ See Leslie McFall, *The Enigma of the Hebrew Verbal System* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982), appendix 1, p. 186, for the range of translation equivalents that the suffix form may be given. Thiele’s use of the term *waw* conversive (Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 119) does not inspire confidence in his understanding of the Hebrew verbal system.

versions allow, for it permits either a *terminus a quo* or a *terminus ad quem* interpretation.

50. **2 Kings 17:6**, “In the ninth [accession] year of Hoshea the king of Assyria captured Samaria (i.e., between April and September 723 B.C.).

51. **2 Kings 18:1-2 (cf. 2 Chron. 29:1, which omits the synchronism)**, “In the third [accession] year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, became coregent. He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 29 [accession] years as king in Jerusalem” (coregent = September 729—ca. March 715; B.C.; king, ca. March 715 — 687/686 B.C.; B-A pattern).

Hezekiah became coregent in September 729 B.C. and became king just before 1st Nisan 715 B.C. (see text no. 48). He died between September 687 and September 686 B.C. Thiele overlooked this coregency and those of Ahaziah (text nos. 25, 26), Jehoash (text no. 35), and Jehoiachin (text no. 63). Thiele’s omission of Hezekiah’s coregency in the third edition of his book is inexcusable, given the number of reviews that were published following the appearance of his work in 1951 and 1965 challenging his treatment of 2 Kings 17-18. Several reviewers⁵² pointed Thiele in the right direction by suggesting a coregency for Hezekiah which made perfectly good sense of the text as it stood (except for Archer who suggested emending “14th” to “24th” in 2 Kings 18:13,⁵³ which was rightly rejected by Thiele) and which conformed to his own principles of interpreting similar data. Horn noted the fact that such a coregency was suggested as long ago as 1905 and 1911.⁵⁴ Horn had already come to the same conclusion and published his view in the article “Hezekiah” in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* (p. 465), and Julia Neuffer incorporated this views in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary II* (Washington, DC, 1954), p. 150. Thiele, as a Seventh-day Adventist scholar himself, could hardly have been unaware of Horn’s views.

The resistance shown by Thiele to Hezekiah’s coregency is apparent in his dismissive argument that “nowhere in the record of Hezekiah’s reign is mention made of any contact by him with Hoshea.”⁵⁵ He continued:

⁵² F. D. Kidner, “Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” *Churchman* 8 (1967) 68; Horn, “The Chronology of King Hezekiah’s Reign,” pp. 40-52; and Gleason L. Archer, Jr., “Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,” *Christianity Today*, April 15, 1966, pp. 34-36.

⁵³ Following H. H. Rowley, *Men of God* (Port Chester, NY: Nelson Publications, 1963), p. 111.

⁵⁴ Owen C. Whitehouse, *Isaiah I-XXXIX* The New Century Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1905), p. 23, and George W. Wade, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (London: Methuen & Co., 1911), p. xlii. These works were noted by Horn, “The Chronology of King Hezekiah’s reign,” p. 49 n. 15.

⁵⁵ Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 176.

In less serious times there was almost always a mention in the account of a king of Judah of some contact with the corresponding king of Israel, but none is found here. . . . The deafening silence in this regard is a clear indication that Hoshea and his kingdom were no more when Hezekiah began.⁵⁶

Yet earlier Thiele had admitted that there were two exceptions, namely, Joash and Azariah, and in any case his reviewers were agreed that by the time Hezekiah became king Hoshea was dead. Thiele completely missed the point the reviewers were making.

Kidner's suggestion that Hezekiah expressed his total break with Ahaz's régime by taking the year 716/715, rather than 729, as the year of his succession, has much to commend it. The two kings who have been given the A-A pattern by the biblical writer introduced a significant break with the past. Thus Jehoiachin (text no. 64) seems to have disowned his natural father, Jehoiakim, because of the curse on his family (Jer 36:30) and was grafted into the collateral family line of Neri going back to Nathan (Luke 3:27). Jehoram (text no. 24) broke with his father's practice of using the accession-year system and introduced the nonaccession-year system into Judah.

52. 2 Kings 18:9-10, "In the fourth [accession] year from the coregency of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh [accession] year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it and at the end of three years he took it."

This fourth year was September 726—September 725. The constraints of the Hebrew synchronism means that Shalmaneser III came up between April and September 725 B.C. The three years are from 725 to 723 B.C.

53. 2 Kings 18:10, "In the sixth [accession] year from the coregency of Hezekiah, which was the ninth [accession] year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken" (723 B.C.).

The sixth year is September 724—September 723 but Samaria was captured between Nisan and Tishri 723. Sargon II ascended the throne on 12 Tebeth (late Dec.) 722 which was 15 months after the latest date for the fall of Samaria;⁵⁷ so Sargon could not have been on the throne when Samaria was captured, though he may have been the commander of the army that captured Samaria..

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp.163-64.

Chart 21

	Years from the division of the Kingdom										
	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220
B.C.	720	719	718	717	716	715	714	713	712	711	710
AHAZ coregent	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)					
AHAZ king	11	12	13	14	15	16					
HEZEKIAH coregent	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)
HEZEKIAH king							1	2	3	4	5
ACCESSION-YEAR											

↑
54

54. **2 Chronicles 29:3**, “In the first [or accession] year of his kingship, in the first month, he [Hezekiah] opened the doors of the house of the Lord” (September 715—September 714 B.C.).

See text number 9 for comment. Certain incidents surrounding this first year suggest that it is the accession year itself (or the rest of the 20th year of Ahaz) and not Hezekiah’s first regnal year. First, Hezekiah is unlikely to have waited a number of months until the commencement of his first regnal year (which began with Tishri 715) before he opened the Temple doors. Second, he did not hesitate to announce that he was going to introduce the Passover festival again, but because of the short notice (“for the thing came about suddenly,” 29:36) he postponed its observation to the second month (30:2, 13-15). This suggests that Ahaz died a few weeks (or even days) before Nisan 715. In addition the Septuagint omits the words “In the first year” which might suggest an awareness of Hezekiah’s coregency which would also have commenced with a “first year”; hence the suppression of another “first year.”

Chart 22

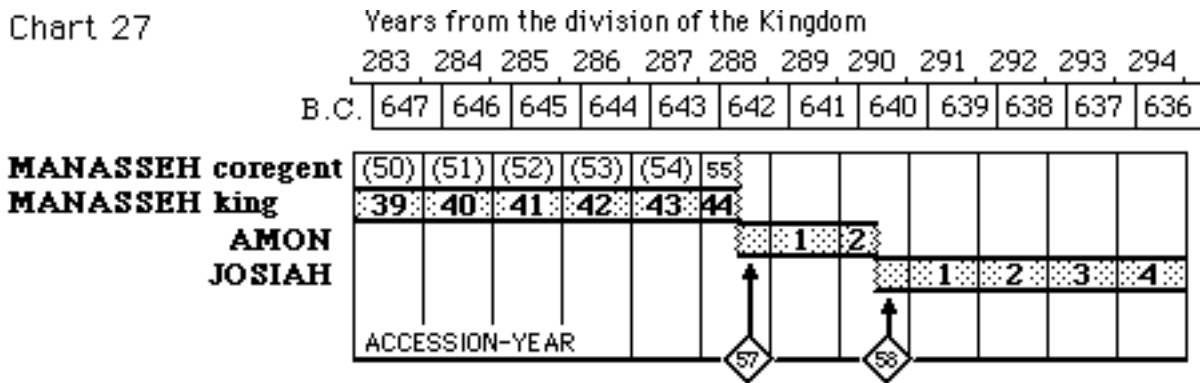
	Years from the division of the Kingdom										
	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231
B.C.	709	708	707	706	705	704	703	702	701	700	699
HEZEKIAH coregent	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)	(28)	(29)	(30)
HEZEKIAH king	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
ACCESSION-YEAR											

↑
55

55. **2 Kings 18:13**, “In the 14th [accession] year of the kingship of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them” (September 702—September 701 B.C.).

In this year Hezekiah was granted 15 additional years to his life (2 Kings 20:1-6; Isa 38:1-6).

Chart 27



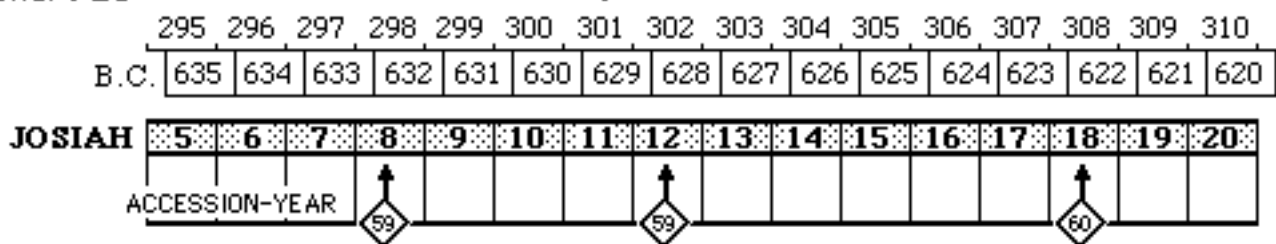
57. **2 Kings 21:19** (= **2 Chron. 33:21**), “Amon was 22 years old when he became king, and he reigned two [accession] years in Jerusalem” (643/642 — 641/640 B.C.).

Amon became king between September 643 and September 642 B.C. and died between September 641 and September 640 B.C.

58. **2 Kings 22:1** (= **2 Chron. 34:1**), “Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned 31 [accession] years in Jerusalem” (641 — 610/609 B.C.).

Josiah became king between September 641 and September 640 B.C. and died during Tammuz (25 June-23 July) 609 B.C.

Chart 28 Years from the division of the Kingdom

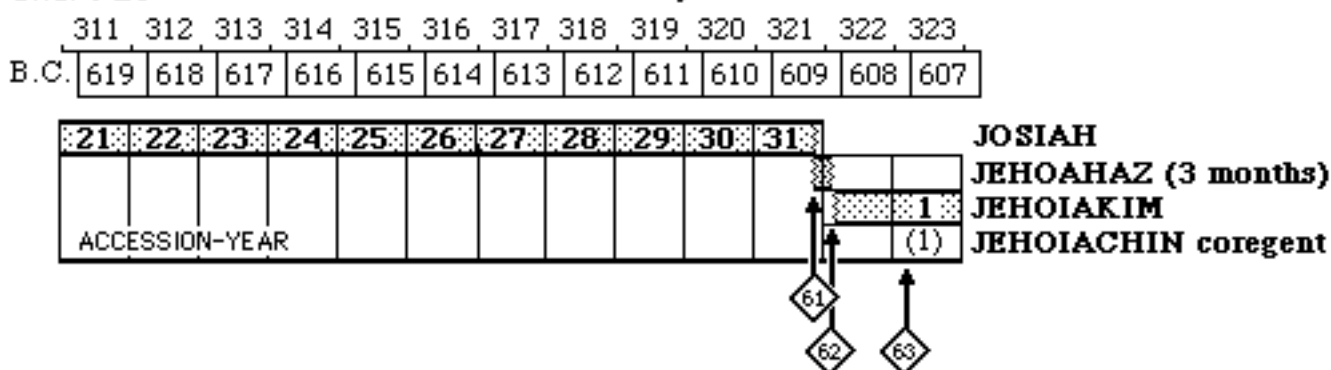


59. **2 Chronicles 34:3**, “For in the 8th [accession] year of his [Josiah’s] reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father; and in the 12th [accession] year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem.” (The 8th year was September 633—September 632 B.C.; 12th year was September 629 — September 628 B.C.).

See texts number 9 and 17 for comment.

60. **2 Kings 22:3** (= **2 Chron. 34:8**; cf. **35:19** and **2 Kings 23:23**), “In the 18th [accession] year of King Josiah” (September 623 — September 622 B.C.).

Chart 29 Years from the division of the Kingdom



61. 2 Kings 23:31 (= 2 Chron. 36:2), “Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem” (609 B.C.).

Thiele noted that the reign of Jehoahaz began in Tammuz (25 June — 23 July) of 609 and ended three months later in September/October.⁵⁸ Because Jehoahaz’s three months spilled over into the next new year, Jehoiakim had an accession year lasting about eleven months.

62. 2 Kings 23:36 (= 2 Chron. 36:5), “Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 [accession] years in Jerusalem” (609 — 598 B.C.).

Jehoiakim became king about October 609 and Thiele noted that Jehoiakim died on 9 December 598 B.C. (See comments on text no. 63.)

63. 2 Chronicles 36:9, “Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became coregent, and he reigned three months and ten days as king in Jerusalem” (598/597 B.C.; B-A pattern).

Jehoiachin became coregent in September 608 B.C. and was king from 21 Marcheswan to 10 Nisan (= 9th December 598 to 22 April 597 B.C.). Consequently Jehoiachin concluded his reign on 22 April 597 B.C. The exact date of Jehoiachin’s kingship can be given with some degree of accuracy because extra-biblical evidence indicates that Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem on 15/16 March, 597 B.C. Jehoiachin was deported to Babylon on 22 April 597 B.C.⁵⁹ and this day marked the end of Jehoiachin’s reign of three months and 10 days. Working back from this day places the commencement of Jehoiachin’s reign in the early days of December and consequently Jehoiakim must have died on or around 9 December 598 B.C. which confirms the prophecy of Jeremiah 36:30 that his dead body would be exposed to the frost of the night.⁶⁰

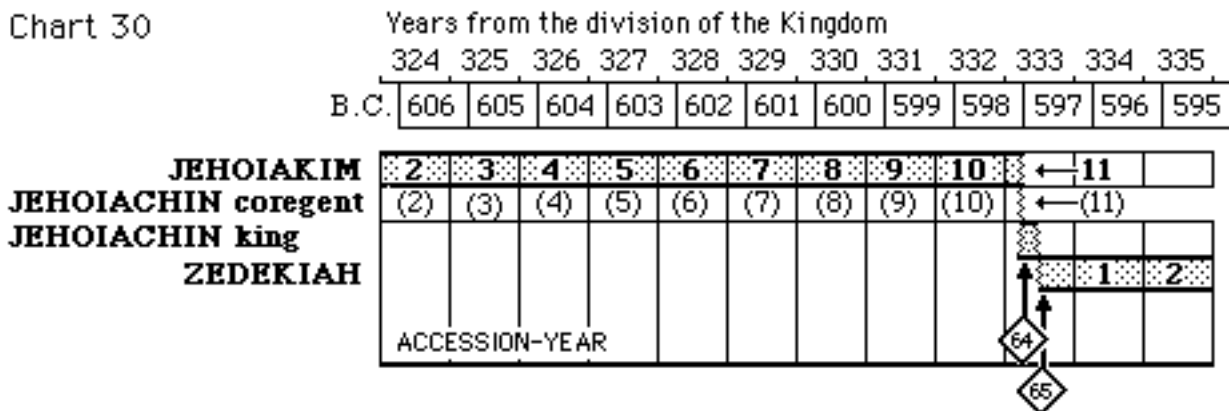
Jehoiachin was released from prison on 2nd April 561 B.C. (see text no. 68). Thiele

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 182.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 187.

⁶⁰ If Jehoiachin’s rule began on or around the 9 December, it must have terminated around March 18 and not April 22 as Thiele claims.

missed Jehoiachin’s coregency with the observation that “his age is given as eight in most manuscripts.”⁶¹ In text number 64, his age is given as 18; and so this must involve a coregency if the text is correct.

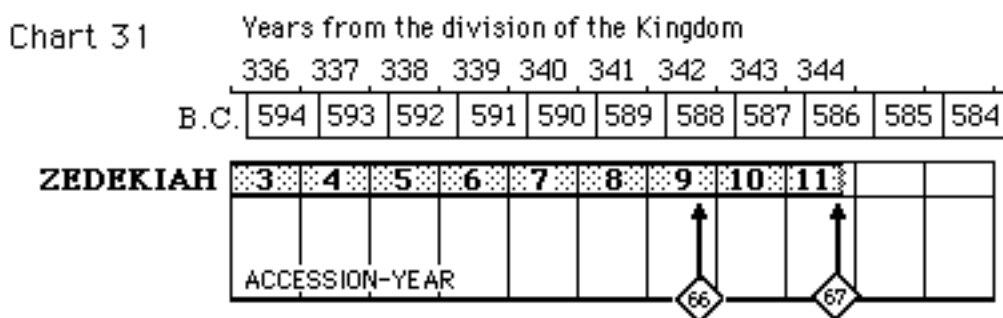


64. 2 Kings 24:8, “Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king, and he reigned three months as king in Jerusalem” (598/597 B.C.; A-A pattern).

Here and in 2 Kings 8:16 and 24:18 (text nos. 24, 65) the RSV translated the verb *ʾlm* as “he became king” contrary (but not necessarily incorrect) to its usual practice of translating it as “he began to reign” (see text no. 24).

65. 2 Kings 24:18 (=Jer 52:1 = 2 Chron. 36:11), “Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 [accession] years in Jerusalem” (597 — 586 B.C.).

See text no. 24. Zedekiah became king about April 597 B.C. and died about August 586 B.C. Thiele noted that Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar on 18 July 586 B.C. and its final destruction began on 14 August 586 B.C.⁶² Gedaliah was slain in the seventh month of 586 which began on 7th October that year.



66. 2 Kings 25:1, “And in the ninth [accession] year of his [Zedekiah’s] reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar . . . came . . . against Jerusalem” (=September 589 — September 588 B.C.).

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 189.

⁶² Ibid., p. 189.

67. **2 Kings 25:2**, “So the city [Jerusalem] was besieged till the 11th [accession] year of king Zedekiah. (the 11th year = September 587 — September 586 B.C.).

Jerusalem fell on Saturday, 18 July 586 B.C.

68. **2 Kings 25:27**, “And in the 37th [accession] year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the 12th month, . . . Evil-merodach . . . in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin” (561 B.C.).

Jehoiachin was released from prison on 2 April 561 B.C.⁶³

Some General Observations

Of a total of 68 texts 45 are synchronisms, the rest being dated events without reference to any other king or event that would help place them. There are five synchronisms with foreign nations and 40 between Israel and Judah. The 45 synchronisms are distributed as follows: Period A (=82 years) has 17 synchronisms (one of which is with a foreign king, text no. 3); Period B (=52 years) has 8 (none foreign); Period C (=73 years) has 18 (three foreign, text nos. 50, 52, 55), and Period D has 2 (i.e., after the fall of Samaria) (one foreign, text no. 66).

Of the 40 synchronisms between Israel and Judah 38 cover a period of only 207 years. There is not a single synchronism which does not interlock with the satisfying precision of a jigsaw puzzle.

Four distinct eras are used in Kings and Chronicles: the Era of the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1); the Era of Exile (text no. 68); the Era from the Division of the Davidic Kingdom (texts no. 10, 11, 34); and the Era of Omri (text no. 27).

Pattern	Coregencies in historical order	Length of coregency	Synchronisms as Coregent	Synchronisms as King
A-B	Omri	6 years	----	----
B-B	Jehoshaphat	3 "	----	nos. 21 23
A-A	Jehoram [J]	6 "	no. 22	----
A-B	Ahaziah [J]	6 mths(?)	----	----
B-A	Jehoash [I]	2 years	----	no. 36
A-B	Jeroboam II	12 "	no. 40	----
B-B	Uzziah	24 "	nos. 41-45	----
A-B	Pekah	12 "	nos. 47 48	----
B-B	Jotham	12 "	no. 46	----
B-A	Ahaz	3 "	no. 49	----
B-A	Hezekiah	14 "	nos. 52 53	no. 55
			Total: 13	Total: 4

⁶³ Ibid., p. 190.

Where events are dated during the life of a king or coregent (i.e., discounting all synchronisms with another king) it is a fact—which may not be significant—that these are dated according to his kingship (see texts no. 20 and 54). There are no instances of such events dated from the time the king's son became coregent. However, when synchronisms are made between Israel and Judah, predominantly the years of a king's coregency—and not his kingship years—are used. This phenomenon more than any other necessitates the existence of coregencies and overlapping reigns in Judah (eight) and Israel (five).

The biblical writer appears to have had a choice in stating the datum from which to date his synchronisms. The table above shows a preference to use a man's coregency rather than his years as king. Does this preference or manner of stating synchronisms bear any relation to the perceived influence of a coregent or reflect the concerns of the writer? For example, Hezekiah had little or no political influence while he was coregent. It was not until his father died that his influence on the nation began. This may account for the fact that Hezekiah's 14 years as coregent are not included in the total for his reign. Only his own years as sole ruler are counted.

Conclusion

Thiele's system of chronology has been well received over the past 40 years and is now accepted as the basis for Israel's chronology in a growing number of standard scholarly works.⁶⁴ The main unscholarly reaction had been that his solution was too complex.

Is the system too complex? How complex may it be? The applications are complex, although the conclusions are pellucid compared to Begrich's multiplication of "systems"; but the principles are simple, and not improbable, even if there is no evidence except that they are postulated by the chronology. If the evidence points to a complex method of reckoning, we shall have to accept it. Thiele's vindication of the Masoretic Text and of the method of reckoning which he attributes to the Hebrew scribes will not easily be overthrown. A coregency is a *deus ex machina*; but we shall wait a long time for a Hebrew chronology which does not make use of such devices.⁶⁵

The majority of reviewers have expressed admiration for Thiele's industry and method of approach to what is generally regarded as one of the most difficult subjects in Old Testament studies.

⁶⁴ See Walter R. Wifall, "Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (March 1979): 118-19.

⁶⁵ McKenzie, "Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*," p. 300.

The thoroughness with which Thiele has analyzed the data marks a new step in the study of Hebrew chronology. He stands, of course, upon the shoulders of his predecessors; almost all the elements of his system have been suggested in some form by earlier writers. Where he differs is in his insistence that the Masoretic text must be the basis of a scheme of chronology. One must concede that a pattern of the Masoretic text which can, if certain assumptions be made, be correlated with fixed dates and internally harmonized, can hardly be the result of coincidence. Thiele's system will stand or fall with these assumptions; if they are false, their falsehood will have been proved.⁶⁶

After 40 years Thiele's chronology has not been significantly altered or proved to be false in any major area except in the matter of Hezekiah's coregency. Increasingly his chronological scheme has come to dominate the majority of scholarly works and it is unlikely that his system can ever be overthrown without altering some well-established dates in Near Eastern history, for Thiele's chronology is now inextricably locked into the chronology of the Near East.

The latest scholar to scrutinize Thiele's system was William H. Barnes.⁶⁷ His main criticism of Thiele's scheme was that it works. But he is not impressed with this. "The pragmatic argument, however attractive it may be initially, is ultimately unconvincing."⁶⁸ Acknowledging the quality of Thiele's scholarship and competence, he describes his work as "the patient and ingenious work of a competent scholar."⁶⁹ Though he cannot share Thiele's confidence in the accurate transmission of the Hebrew numbers or the principles which have shaped his chronological scheme, Barnes acknowledges that "the results are indeed impressive."⁷⁰ The few criticisms of any substance that Barnes does make of Thiele's scheme carry little weight and could easily have been parried by Thiele. A more sympathetic understanding of Thiele's position would have led to the withdrawal of the majority of his criticisms.

One major contribution that Barnes makes is his date of 932 B.C. for the death of Solomon and the division of his kingdom. He arrived at this date through a study of the Tyrian King List and in so doing he has overthrown Albright's date of 922 B.C. for the division of the Davidic Kingdom. He also established—independently of the above study—that Shishak (Shoshenq I) ruled from 946 to 925 B.C. (K. A. Kitchen and Erik Hornung dated his accession to 945 B.C.). This, too, overthrows Albright's date of 935-914

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 303.

⁶⁷ William H. Barnes, "Studies in the Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel" (PhD diss., Harvard Divinity School, 1986).

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 38.

B.C. for Shishak's 21-year rule and his date of 918/917 B.C. for Shishak's invasion of Judah. Thus Barnes's work corroborates Thiele's results even though Barnes set out to establish his own rival chronology for the period of the Divided Monarchy.

One major effect of Thiele's work has been a changed attitude among Old Testament scholars toward the Hebrew text resulting in a greater appreciation for its transmission and accuracy. Thiele's confidence in the basic accuracy of the Hebrew numbers was probably the one factor that enabled him to travel further in his quest for order than any scholar who preceded him. Thiele's confidence in the Hebrew text had been noted by most reviewers as a major contributing factor in his successful quest. Freedman pointed to Thiele's impressive achievement in rehabilitating the numbers of the Hebrew text and remarked: "It will serve as a warning to other scholars not blithely to disregard the masoretic tradition."⁷¹ Kidner expressed his own view and that of other reviewers thus:

This quest [to bring order out of chaos] is an object lesson in the value of giving intractable scriptural data the benefit of the doubt, in the conviction that these difficulties are chiefly signs of our imperfect understanding. It also brings out the fact that a true solution of a technical problem will usually dovetail in an unforeseen way with some less noticeable features of the context.⁷²

If Thiele has displayed any weakness which has directly affected his scheme, it is his conviction that some of the Hebrew numbers have not been faithfully transmitted. On the other hand, if his chronology is to be modified, it must be done so using the principles he has used to establish it. The modifications proposed in this article are in conformity with those principles.

One major inconvenience in Thiele's work is that he has not translated his discoveries into a more accurate translation of the Hebrew text itself such as has been attempted in this article. His discoveries have exposed the weakness of every English translation that has ever been attempted for the chronological data in Kings and Chronicles. The time has come to produce an English translation which will incorporate his discoveries into the translation itself (or in footnotes) and thus draw attention to the meticulous care with which the Hebrew and Jewish scribes transmitted the Word of God. It would also curb the unseemly and inaccurate remarks concerning the transmission of some numbers in Kings and Chronicles that still appear in—and disfigure—some reputable commentaries and reference works.

After 40 years Thiele's chronological scheme still stands and is a monument both to him and to the accuracy of the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament.

⁷¹ Freedman, "Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*," p. 311.

⁷² Kidner, "Review of Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*," p. 68.

Appendix

Text No	Israel's Chronology			Differences with Thiele's Dates	
	Coregent	King	Died	Coregent	King
1 Jeroboam		Sp 931-Apr 930	Sp 910-Apr 909		
6 Nadab		Sp 910-Apr 909	Sp 909-Apr 908		
7 Baasha		Sp 909-Apr 908	Sp 886-Apr 885		
12 Elah		Sp 886-Apr 885	Sp 885-Apr 884		
13 Zimri		Sp 885-Apr 884	Sp 885-Apr 884		
Tibni	Sp 885-Apr 884		Ap 880-Sp 880		
15 Omri	Sp 885-Apr 884				
Omri		Ap 880-Sp 880	Sp 874-Apr 873		
16 Ahab		Sp 874-Apr 873	Apr-Sep 853		
21 Ahaziah		Apr-Sep 853	Apr-Sep 852		
22 Joram		Apr-Sep 852	Apr-Sep 841		
28 Jehu		Apr-Sep 841	Sp 814-Apr 813		
33 Jehoahaz		Sp 814-Apr 813	Sp 798-Apr 797		
34 Jehoash	Apr 799--	Sp 798-Apr 797	Sp 782-Apr 781	omitted	798 -- --798
39 Jeroboam II	Apr 793--	Sp 782-Apr 781	Aug/Sept 753	793/2--	
41 Zechariah		Aug/Sept 753	March 752		
42 Shallum		March 752	late Apr 752		
43 Menahem	late Apr 752--		Sp 742-Apr 741		
44 Pekahiah		Sp 742-Apr 741	Sp 740-Apr 739		
45 Pekah	late Apr 752 --	Sp 740-Apr 739	Sp 732-Apr 731		
46 Hoshea		Sp 732-Apr 731	Apr-Sept 723		--723 /22

Text No	Judah's Chronology			Differences with Thiele's Dates	
	Coregent	King	Died	Coregent	King
Solomon		Sp 931-Apr 930	Sp 931-Apr 930		
2 Rehoboam		Sp 931-Apr 930	Apr-Sep 913		
4 Abijam		Apr-Sep 913	Sp 911-Apr 910		
5 Asa		Sp 911-Apr 910	Sp 870-Apr 869		
19 Jehoshaphat	Sept 873--	Sp 870-Apr 869	Apr-Sep 848	872/1--	
24 Jehoram	Sept 854--	Apr-Sep 848	Apr-Sep 841	853--	
25 Ahaziah	Sept 842--	Apr-Sep 841	Apr-Sep 841	omitted	
29 Athaliah		Apr-Sep 841	Apr-Sep 835		
31 Joash		Apr-Sep 835	Apr-Sep 796		
36 Amaziah		Apr-Sep 796	Apr-Sep 767		
38 Azariah	Sept 791 --	Apr-Sep 767	Apr-Sept 739	792/1 --	--740/39
47 Jotham	Apr-Sep 750--	Apr-Sept 739	Sp 732-Sp 731		740/39--
Jotham	Sp 735-Sp 731	to Sp 735			
48 Ahaz	Sept 735--	Sp 732-Sp 731	c. March 715		--716/5
51 Hezekiah	Sept 729--	c. March 715	Sp 687-Sp 686	omitted	716/5 --
56 Manasseh	Sept 697--	Sp 687-Sp 686	Sp 643-Sp 642	697/6--	
57 Amon		Sp 643-Sp 642	Sp 641-Sp 640		
58 Josiah		Sp 641-Sp 640	c. July 609		
61 Jehoahaz		July 609	c. Oct 609		
62 Jehoiskim		Oct 609	9 Dec 598		
62 Jehoichin	Sept 608--	Dec 598-Apr 597	after Apr 561	omitted	
65 Zedekiah		Ap 597-Aug 586	c. Aug 586		

END