

Paper #5 Argument that the later kings of the Babylonian “dynasty of E” were vassals of the 8th century 3rd Dynasty Kassite kings

In the previous two papers of this Chronology section (papers #3 and #4) we made the following discoveries:

1) In the Babylonian document entitled the *Chronicle P* we finally found a long sought reference to an Assyrian king named Ashuruballit, in a context which conclusively identifies him as the king by this name who authored two letters in the Amarna archives. This king appears to have governed the western regions of the Assyrian Empire in the last quarter of the 10th century B.C., and the early decades of the 9th century, precisely where and when our revision of dynastic Egypt conjectured his existence. As a result, the discovery removed the only tangible objection to our claim to have successfully established the true chronological dates for Egyptian dynasties 18 through 26.

2) The document that provided the dates for Ashuruballit also linked this king with the Babylonian king Burnaburiash II, the 19th king of the 3rd (Kassite) Dynasty of Babylon, like Ashuruballit a communicant in the Amarna letters. In total five Kassite kings (the 19th through to the 23rd) are named in the document, including kings Kurigalzu II and Nazi-Maruttash. Thus began our resolve to flesh out the chronology of the country known to the world as Babylonia, and to the Kassites themselves as Karduniash. We were immediately able to extend the list of Kassite kings backward in time to include the father and grandfather of Burnaburiash II, kings Kadashman Enlil I (his father) and Kurigalzu I (his grandfather). And with the assistance of a document entitled *The Babylonian King List A*, we were able to cite the names and dates of the two 9th century successors of Nazi-Maruttash, specifically, Kadashman-Turgu and Kadashman-Enlil II.

3) Having determined fairly precise dates for nine of the Kassite kings [king #17 (Kurigalzu I) through to king #25 (Kadashman-Enlil II)] all of whom reigned between the middle of the 10th century and the end of the 9th, we proceeded to verify that the assigned dates were correct by confirming the existence of up to a dozen synchronisms between these kings and the kings of Assyria, Egypt, and Hatti. For the latter process we used the established dates for the late 10th and 9th century Assyrian kings and the *Revised History* dates for the Egyptian and Hittite kings in this same time span. The dates for Egypt and Hatti had been determined with precision many years earlier and are published in volumes 1-3 of our Displaced Dynasties Series.

At this stage in our research we had established, with little possibility of error, that the dates for the named Kassite kings were approximately 440 years more recent than the dates assigned these same kings by the *Traditional History*.

All of the research referred to above is confined to our 3rd paper.

4) The dating of king Ashuruballit in the *Chronicle P* was determined initially via our analysis of the 4th column cuneiform text of that document. Consequently, we decided to begin our 4th paper with an appraisal of the interpretation of that same 4th column text by the academic community which supports the traditional Babylonian history. The analysis occupied the first dozen pages of the paper. Needless to say we found the traditional interpretation of that 4th chapter to be entirely lacking credibility. And since we had begun confirming the accuracy of our interpretation by verifying multiple synchronisms for the nine Kassite kings belonging to the 10th/9th centuries, we decided to extend that analysis to the remaining eleven kings of the 3rd Kassite Dynasty (the 26th through to the 36th kings), all of whom ruled in the 8th century B.C. The names and reign lengths of most of these eleven kings were listed precisely as documented in the aforementioned *Babylonian King List A*, augmented by the research of J.A. Brinkman compiled in his *“Materials and Studies for Kassite History”* (1976).

5) Our analysis of the final eleven Kassite kings confirmed beyond question that our 8th century dating of these kings was extremely accurate. Over a dozen synchronisms for these Kassite kings are recorded in our 4th paper, not only with kings of Assyria, Egypt and Hatti, but also with three kings of Elam (Kidin-Hutran, Shutruk-Nahhunte and his son Kutir-Nahhunte) and with king Hezekiah of Israel. The analysis occupied another two dozen pages.

6) According to the *Babylonian King List A* the Kassite dynasty was composed of 36 kings who ruled a combined 576 years. Since we had by this stage determined that the final Kassite king was deposed or died in 714 B.C., it followed that the dynasty began in the year 1290 B.C. (=714 + 576). This allowed us to roughly position the first half dozen kings of the 3rd dynasty based on the names and reign lengths of these kings as documented in the *Babylonian King List A*.

7) The terminal pages of our 4th paper also served to explain the mechanism by which the traditional history had incorrectly dated the 3rd dynasty kings. In the traditional history the Kassite dynasty kings ruled from 1730-1154 B.C. followed successively by the kings of dynasties 4 through 9, who governed Babylonia until late in the 8th century. In the revised history we reasoned that the Kassite kings conquered Babylonia in 1290 B.C. and ruled until 714 B.C., with the kings of dynasties 4 through 9 serving as their vassals, governing the day to day operations of the country. Thus resulted the 440 year error in dating the Kassite kings.

Here our 4th paper ended, with the comment that it would be followed by further argument in defense of our hypothesis of overlapping dynasties. This 5th paper begins that process.

Our argument in this paper is restricted to proving that the later 9th dynasty (vassal) “kings of Babylon” occupied the same 8th century context as the final eleven (overlord) Kassite kings of the 3rd dynasty. In the next paper the process will be repeated for the kings of both the 3rd and 9th dynasties who ruled Babylonia from the mid-10th through to the end of the 9th century.

Four strands of argument will suffice to prove our case for the 8th century. They are:

- A. Argument based on the historical prevalence of overlapping dynasties both in Babylonia itself and in the A.N.E. generally.
- B. Argument based on the remarkable “coincidence” of an abundance of “synchronism” proving that the later Kassite kings did, in fact, occupy Babylonia/Karduniash from the mid-10th through to the late 8th centuries B.C.
- C. Argument based on the relative absence of 9th dynasty versus the abundance of 3rd dynasty documentation.
- D. Argument that the mid-8th century sequence of Babylonian natural disasters, and “mass migrations” of marauding foreigners, agrees perfectly with our placement of the Egyptian and Hittite timelines, and is at least consistent with our thesis that the 3rd dynasty king Adad-shuma-user (775-746 B.C.) and the 9th dynasty kings Ariba-Marduk (769-761 B.C.) and Nabu-shuma-ishkun (761-748 B.C.) were contemporaries.

We proceed in that order. The first three points will occupy the next eight pages. The final point will fill the balance of the paper, approximately 26 pages.

A. Argument based on the prevalence of overlapping dynasties both in Babylonia itself and in the A.N.E. generally.

We begin by mentioning once again our contention that the failure to overlap dynasty 3 and dynasties 4-9 is the cause of the 440 year error in the dating of the Kassite Dynasty kings. Our historical positioning of the last twenty Kassite kings in papers #3 and #4 was not contrived in order to bring that dynasty of kings into alignment with the kings of Egypt and Hatti, as independently determined by ourselves in the third book of our Displaced Dynasties Series. That 440 year reduction followed naturally from our interpretation of the text of the Chronicle P. We had no choice in the matter. In figurative terms, it was the hand we were dealt.

At the conclusion of our paper #4 we argued that the Assyrians scribes, by the time of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (ca 668-627), thus less than a century after the end of the Kassite dynasty, were already misinterpreting the *Babylonian King List A* and associated documents. On the *King List A* tablets the Kassite kings of the 3rd dynasty are followed immediately by the names of approximately 40 kings, divided into six additional dynasties (actually five considering that the King List includes the single dynasty 8 king with the multiple dynasty 9 kings under the single rubric “dynasty of E”) which the ancient Assyrian scribes mistakenly interpreted as dynasties which ruled in *succession following* the demise of the Kassites. And since Babylonian history was actually written by Assyrian scholars, not by the Babylonians themselves, this opinion has prevailed up to the present. Without exception the whole of the academic community today believes that the Kassite dynasty of kings existed for 576 years, only to be succeeded in Babylonia by six dynasties of “kings of Babylon” who ruled for an additional four and a half centuries. Contemporary scholarship has been able to assign approximate absolute dates to these 4th-9th dynasty kings, based on the fact that at approximately seventeen of them can be synchronized with Assyrian kings, whose dates are well established. Thus, according to

the traditional history, dynasties 4 through 9 ruled Babylon during the approximate time frame 1154-732 B.C., i.e. for 422 years.

We are in complete agreement with scholars regarding the dates 1154-732 assigned to the kings of dynasties 4 through 9. We are in complete disagreement with their positioning of the 3rd (Kassite) dynasty in the 576 years preceding 1154. King lists such as the *Babylonian King List* routinely date overlapping dynasties of kings as if they ruled sequentially, with no clear indication in the text that such is the case. In fact, scholars have determined during the last century that this overlapping of dynasties was precisely the situation that prevailed in Babylonia with the first two numbered Babylonian dynasties cited in the *King List A*. In the 19th century scholars assumed that dynasties 1, 2 and 3 ruled successively. Only in the 20th century was it determined conclusively that they did not. It was in fact determined that dynasty 1 overlapped dynasty 2 through most of its length, and more to the point, these two dynasties overlapped the first 150 years of the Kassite dynasty. A glance at the upper section of our Figure 1 on the following page illustrates this traditional historical situation. This scenario proved to be intolerable to twentieth century scholars, it being difficult to imagine three dynasties ruling the same territory simultaneously. There resulted the opinion that the Kassite dynasty of kings did not actually invade and conquer Babylonia until several centuries after the dynasty began. During that time the Kassites remained in their homeland in the Zagros region of northern Iran. Instead, dynasties one and two jointly ruled Babylonia as absolute monarchs, contemporary with these neighboring Kassite kings, the 1st (Amorite) dynasty governing the north of the country, and the 2nd (Sealand) dynasty governing the south. When the Kassites did invade and conquer Babylonia, around the year 1507 according to scholars, they quickly assumed total control of the country, totally displacing dynasties one and two. Thereafter, until the year 732 B.C., Babylonia was ruled by a single dynasty, first by the Kassites, then in succession by the “kings of Babylon” belonging to dynasties 4 through 9. We wonder at the fact that Babylonia, ruled jointly by two powerful dynasties for upwards of 150 years, would suddenly revert to being governed by a single dynasty for upwards of 770 years (1507-732 B.C), particularly when some of these later dynastic kings were so weak as to leave hardly a memory of their existence, so much so that scholars scarcely know how to spell their names. We wonder also how long it will take modern scholarship to recognize that these later “kings of Babylon” were merely puppet kings, some weak rulers, some strong, but all governing under the supervision of their overlord Kassite rulers.

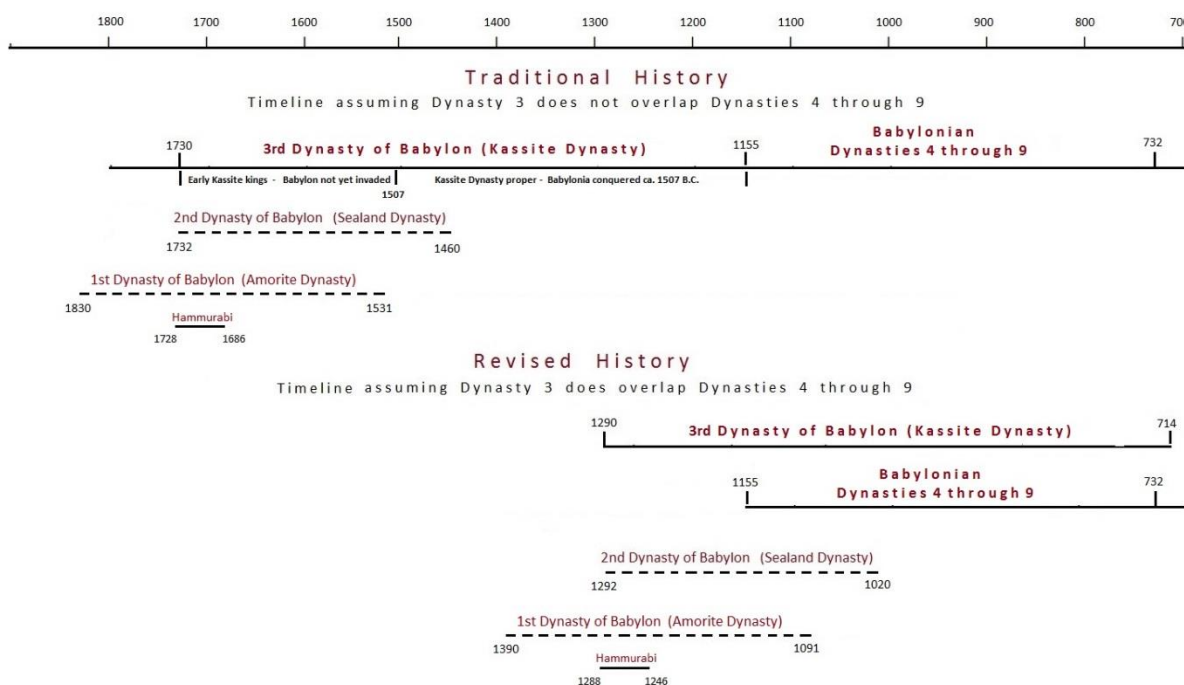
In our 4th paper we argued that it is likely that none of the 36 Kassite kings ever called Babylonia/Karduniash their home, though they were, throughout the 576 years of their existence, cited in *King List A* as the *de lecto* rulers of the country. As was typically the case in the Ancient Near East, following the subjugation of one country by another, the conquerors left the existing rulers of the conquered territory in place as vassals, filled key governmental positions with men of their own choosing, in this instance likely ethnic Kassites, and very possibly left a small occupational military presence, to maintain order, collect tribute, and generally represent their interests in the country. Then they left the land under the leadership

of the vassal kings, who in the case of Babylonia, self-styled themselves as “kings of Babylon”. And the Babylonian King List A dutifully preserved the names of all of these vassal kings following its citation of the names of the overlords of the country.

It is possible, though unlikely, that the Kassite invasion of Babylonia took place over two hundred years after the beginning of the reign of the first named 3rd dynasty ruler in the *King List A*. But we cannot fathom why a list of kings purporting to rule Babylon (*the King List A*) would include upwards of a dozen names of kings who had no dealings whatsoever with the country. That theory of a delayed invasion appears to be a construct, created by modern scholars in order to reconcile conflicting data which is of their own creation, resulting from their failure to extend their theory of overlapping dynasties to its rightful conclusion, namely, the realization that Babylonia throughout the Kassite period always had at least two rulers, a Kassite overlord and either a single Babylonian vassal king or multiple kings (probably no more than two).

In our 4th paper we diagrammed the situation that prevailed in Babylonia according to the understanding of 21st century scholars (see Figure 7 on page 38 of the 4th paper), and the approximate situation that prevailed in Babylonia as understood by ourselves. That diagram is reproduced below as our Figure 1.

Figure 1: Timelines showing the sequencing of Babylonian Dynasties
in the Traditional versus the Revised history



One qualification needs to be made regarding the Revised History timeline in Figure 1. Since we are a long way from researching the specifics of the second millennium Kassite history, at this time we do not know precisely where to position the 1st and 2nd dynasties. It is likely, but not certain, that further research will show that the timelines for both dynasties should be moved backward approximately 135 years, this in order to avoid any overlap between these dynasties and the 4th dynasty kings. In the meanwhile we have left the relative positioning of dynasties 1, 2 and 3 precisely as depicted in the Traditional History section, even though we are certain that it is not correct. This positioning will change over time. Only one thing is certain. The infamous Hammurabi, one of the most powerful kings of the 1st (Amorite) dynasty, dated c.a. 1728-1686 B.C. by the traditional history, and purported to be the author of the first detailed “law code” in history, will have his dates reduced by at least three hundred years in the revised history. In the Figure 1 revised timeline he is assigned dates (1288-1246 B.C.), derived simply by reducing his traditional dates by 440 years. Assuming the Amorite dynasty is moved back in time by 135 years, as suggested above, Hammurabi’s dates would necessarily be adjusted to 1423-1381. His creation of a law-code probably fell around the middle of his lengthy reign, post-dating the Israeli law code by at least a half century. There is no doubt that the idea of a “code of law” governing the daily life of a nation was inherited by Hammurabi from Moses, not the reverse as is commonly argued.

One final comment before we move on to our second point. Thus far we have remarked on the fact that Babylon was governed by kings of dynasties one and two during the tenure of the early Kassite kings, establishing a precedent that would strongly suggest that it was governed by yet other dynasties of “kings of Babylon” for the remainder of Kassite rule. We have also noted that the phenomenon of vassal kings ruling conquered territory on behalf of conquering kings was commonplace in the Ancient Near East. What we failed to mention was the fact that the misinterpretation of the *Babylonian King List A* by the ancients and by modern scholars also has historical precedent. In fact, the entirety of Book 1 of our Displaced Dynasties series was written in order to correct the identical error in interpreting an Egyptian king list. In that instance the king list of Manetho, which listed the 26th and 27th Egyptian dynasties sequentially, has universally been understood as confirming that the 27th (Persian) dynasty followed on the heels of the 26th (Saite) dynasty, where in fact the 392 page argument of Book 1 proved conclusively that the two dynasties overlapped for much of their length. In the Egyptian scenario the first mentioned dynasty (the 26th) consisted of the vassal kings and the second list of names (the 27th) consisted of the Persian overlords. The reader should perhaps read again the initial chapters of Book 1 of that series.

B. Argument based on the remarkable “coincidence” of an abundance of “synchronous” material proving that the later Kassite kings did, in fact, occupy Babylonia/Karduniash from the mid-10th through to the late 8th centuries B.C.

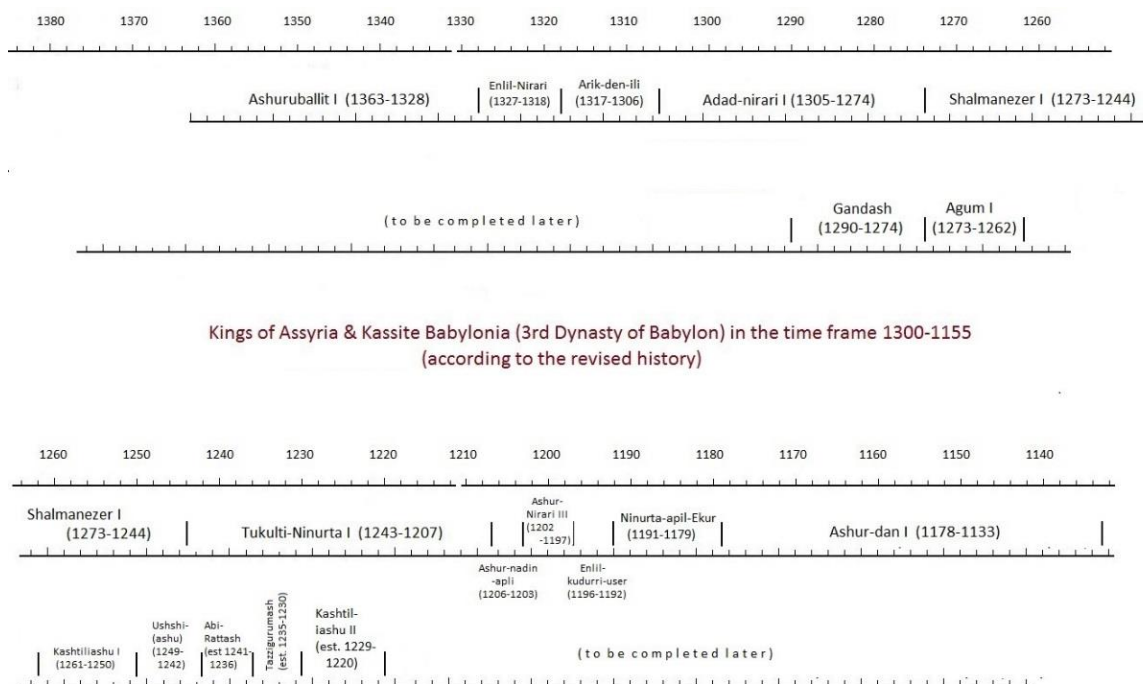
When we analyzed the text of the Chronicle P in our third paper, we were compelled to assign specific late 10th - early 9th century dates to the Kassite kings Burnaburiash II and Kurigalzu II. This in turn allowed us to assign extremely precise dates to all twenty of the last kings of the Kassite dynasty, using names and reign lengths provided by the King List A, augmented by other inscriptional material. At this point we were able to demonstrate a remarkable sequence of synchronisms between these kings and the kings of Egypt, Hatti, Assyria, Elam and Israel. It goes without saying that, had the text of the Chronicle P compelled us to date these kings as little as twenty years earlier or twenty years later than it did, these synchronisms would not exist and our argument would fail. Not only would we not be able to confirm the accuracy of our revised Babylonian history as it now stands, but the lack of synchronisms would tend to discredit the arguments in books 1, 2, and 3 of our Displaced Dynasties series, arguments that resulted in the revised Egyptian and Hittite timelines on which we relied. The reader will surely agree that *either* the agreement between the dates provided by the Chronicle P and our revised timelines for the other named nations is purely “coincidental” and we have been *extraordinarily fortunate* in consequence, *or* they confirm the accuracy of the revised Egyptian, Hittite and Babylonian timelines because they are correct. Let the reader decide.

The “coincidence of dates” does not end there. We have already noted the fact that the dates for the last twenty Kassite kings determined absolutely that the 3rd dynasty ended in the year 714 B.C., and that, since the regnal year total for the dynasty began 576 years earlier (according to the *Babylonian King List A*), it followed that the dynasty began around the year 1290 B.C. We did not adjust our numbers in order to fit some preconceived schema. We had absolutely no choice in the matter. But once it was determined that the Kassite dynasty began around 1290 B.C. two further synchronisms appeared, again “coincidentally”, one of which was mentioned at the conclusion of our previous paper. On the one hand there appeared, opposite the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta 1, a Kassite king named Kashtiliashu. These two kings are known to have engaged in a prolonged battle with one another, as recorded in the Assyrian Tukulti-Ninurta Epic (see Figure 2 below).

On the other hand, since the Kassite dynasty began around 1290 B.C., the conquest of Babylonia must have taken place during the reign of the Assyrian king Adad-nirari I (1305-1274 B.C.), as also diagrammed in our Figure 2. Again, merely by chance (?), there is evidence that enables us to synchronize the two kings. A glance at the [Wikipedia article on the reign of Adad-nirari I](#) informs us that this monarch “is the earliest Assyrian king whose annals survive in any detail”. That is most fortunate, because these annals, combined with the few extant records related to the rule of his father Arik-den-ili (1317-1306 B.C.), inform us quite clearly that not

only did the Kassites *not inhabit* Babylonia during the reign of Arik-den-ili, but that they were present in Babylonia during Adad-nirari's time in office, threatening to extend their dominance into Assyria. We restrict our comments on this circumstance to a few quotes. In a later paper we will investigate the matter further.

Figure 2: Timeline of the earliest Kings of the Kassite Dynasty
(a copy of Figure 9 on page 46 of our 4th paper)



The first of these details regarding the Kassites is forthcoming from the poorly attested annals of Arik-den-ili and from a chronicle related to his reign. From these sources it is determined that

Arik-den-ili fought many battles against his eastern neighbours (the *Pre-Iranic* inhabitants of what was to become Persia), Turukku and Nigimhi, and all the chiefs of the (Zagros) mountains and highlands in the broad tracts of the Gutians, to subdue the nomadic tribes on Assyria's northern and eastern frontiers. The Gutians had been vassals of the Kassites who ruled in Babylon and may have acted as their agents.

The reader should ignore the final comment in the above paragraph, supplied by a contributor to the [Wikipedia article on Arik-den-ili](#), who assumes that the Kassites were ruling Babylonia all the while that Arik-den-ili was battling Elamite tribes in the Zagros region east of Babylonia. That contributor needs to explain to this writer precisely what military strategy is being

employed by the Assyrian king, leading his armies hundreds of miles into the Zagros mountain region to battle Gutians, allies of the Kassites, while the warlike Kassites themselves supposedly inhabit Babylonia, only a few dozen miles south of the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. Only one conclusion can reasonably follow from the details regarding the Assyrian raids into the Zagros region. The Gutians and the Kassites have yet to leave their homeland. Though the Kassites are not mentioned by name as opponents of Arik-den-ili in his Zagros raids, he apparently did encounter them, and suffered extensive losses as a consequence, this according to his son. In that same Wikipedia article quoted above we learn that Adad-nirari (I) lamented in a later epic that his father “could not rectify the calamities inflicted by the army of the king of the Kassite land”. Under no circumstance can the “king of the **Kassite land**” in this quote be a reference to the Kassites as overlords of Karduniash.

By the time of Adad-nirari however, the situation has changed. Numerous inscriptions exist describing Adad-nirari I as victorious over the Kassites, from which we conclude that the Kassites have recently invaded, conquered, and are presently occupying Karduniash and had also attempted to overrun Assyria. Apart from these few inscriptions, however, we are not supplied details either related to the Kassite invasion and conquest of Babylonia, nor of the conflict between the Assyrian king Adad-nirari I and the Kassite king Gandash, his likely opponent.

Traditional scholars will vehemently disagree with our identification of the Babylonian opponent of Adad-nirari I, citing “proof” from the *Synchronistic History*, the *Adad-nirari Epic*, and the *Tukulti-Ninurta Epic*, that Adad-Nirari I defended Assyria against a Babylonian army led by Nazi-Maruttash, the Kassite king who was his contemporary in the traditional timetable (see Figure 1 on page 2 of our 4th paper). We caution the reader to be extremely careful when reading details concerning this conflict. In our 3rd paper we commented on the unreliability of the *Synchronistic History* generally, and the Adad-nirari reference was cited as an alteration to the text made by Assyrian scribes in the days of Ashurbanipal. The *Adad-nirari epic* exists in four extremely badly damaged tablets and though it does mention both an Assyrian king Adad-nirari and a Babylonian king Nazi-Maruttash, it dates almost certainly from the 9th century and appears to condemn the military aspirations of Nazi-Maruttash (868-843 B.C.) as being in conflict with a preexisting treaty between Assyria and Babylonia forged by Adad-nirari II (912-891 B.C.). And the reference to a conflict between Adad-nirari and Nazi-Maruttash in the *Tukulti-Ninurta epic* is an anomaly, no matter whether the explanation is provided by ourselves, or by the traditional history. The epic itself describes a conflict between Tukulti-ninurta I (1243-1207 B.C.) and a king named Kashtiliashu, the conflict supposedly caused by Kashtiliashu violating the terms of a treaty between Assyria and Babylonia. The reference to a battle involving an Assyrian king Adad-Nirari and Nazi-Maruttash, also involving a violated treaty, is apparently being used as an illustration. In the *traditional history* the Adad-nirari I / Nazi-Maruttash incident must be dated approximately 75 years earlier than the Tukulti-ninurta I/Kashtiliashu conflict. In the revised history it must involve Adad-nirari II, and be identified as

precisely the same incident described in the Adad-nirari epic mentioned above, which took place almost four hundred years later. We assume that this reference was added to an existing copy of the Tukulti-ninurta epic as that document was being edited five hundred years after it was originally composed. Support for that assumption comes from the document itself, since this copy of the Tukulti-Ninurta epic bears the imprint of the library of the 7th century Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, and is clearly a copy of the epic as edited by 7th century scribes. These scribes would be well aware of the Nazi-Maruttash treaty violation mentioned in the Adad-nirari epic, which we have argued described an event that took place less than 200 years prior. Indeed, the scribes of Ashurbanipal's time were also editors of the Adad-nirari epic, which bears the identical imprint of the Ashurbanipal library. The interested reader can find a brief discussion of all three of the documents discussed above in sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 on pages 194-197 of the recent [monograph by Mary Frazer](#).

C. Argument based on the “paucity of 9th dynasty” and “abundance of 3rd dynasty” documentation.

In spite of the evidence brought forward thus far, proving beyond question that the Kassite dynasty must be dated in the time frame 1290-714 B.C., we anticipate hearing the following retort. “If two dynasties of kings are ruling/governing the same country at precisely the same time, surely there must exist a multitude of documents that demonstrate conclusively their co-existence”. To which we reply – not so. It should be understood at the outset that we do not anticipate finding many direct synchronisms between the Kassite kings and their vassals in Babylonia, this for several reasons.

1) In the first place there exist only a handful of Babylonian documents which actually contain the names of the vassal kings. As we will note momentarily, the vast majority of the business affairs of the country were conducted exclusively in the name of the Kassite overlords, who maintained throughout this time frame a governmental base in Nippur, and from the time of Kurigalzu II through to the end of the dynasty, a military base in Dur-Kurigalzu. The names of the vassal “kings of Babylon” were never added to economic texts, and almost never to legal documents, with the sole exception of the infrequent kudurrus (boundary stones) bearing their names. Only exceptionally were they ever named in connection with military operations. This is not a surprising development for the revised history. A similar situation prevailed in Egypt, where, as mentioned earlier, the 26th Saite dynasty vassal kings governed Egypt for 138 years on behalf of the absentee Persian overlords. In close to four hundred pages of argument we proved their coexistence, but not once did we encounter a document that clearly referenced contemporary kings of the two nations in the same breath. We would have expected nothing else in the Babylonian situation, though in theory this should make it all but impossible to prove, based on native documentation, our contention that the Kassite kings ruled Babylonia in the years 1290-714. Or does it?

Upon reflection, the prevailing situation actually argues strongly that we are correct, not directly by arguing that the Kassite kings flourished in the years 1290-714 B.C., but indirectly by arguing that their floruit was not in the years 1731-1155 as claimed by the traditional history. The preponderance of documentation attesting the activity of the Kassites kings versus the few documents produced by the 4th to 9th dynasty “kings of Babylon”, who flourished in the years 1155-732, is so overwhelming that any objective scholar will have difficulty arguing the case that both of these groups of kings were the sole, independent rulers of Babylonia, and more so considering that the Kassites ruled in the earlier of the time periods. A priori, should we not expect native documentation to decrease the further back in time we reach.

We have one question to ask devotees of the traditional Babylonian history. How is it that the 2nd millennium Kassite kingdom is literally flooded with signed documents, whereas its successor, the 4th -9th dynasty “kings of Babylon”, who flourished in the 1st millennium, a time when civilization was emerging from centuries of darkness in all other Near Eastern countries, is apparently just beginning to endure a “dark age”? We underscore this argument by pointing out more precisely the disparity that exists between the documentation attesting the activity of the hypothetical 2nd millennium Kassites versus that which informs the actions of the 1st millennium, dynasty 4-9, “kings of Babylon”. For this we turn to J.A. Brinkman, one of the most informed 20th/21st century authorities on the source materials for Babylonian history. In the preface to his massive “*Materials and Studies for Kassite History*” (1976), which he completed a decade after publishing his epic “[*A political history of post-Kassite Babylonia, 1158-722 B.C.*](#)” (1968), he states:

In an earlier work I dealt at length with the political history of Babylonia between the fall of the Kassite dynasty (middle of the twelfth century B.C. and the death of Shalmaneser V (722 B.C.). Because there were few written sources available for reconstructing the history of those four centuries, the materials could be gathered and discussed in relatively comprehensive fashion within a few hundred pages.

The period of the Kassite dynasty, though it covers a comparable span of time, presents different problems. Most formidable is the bulk of contemporary native documentation, which is **seventy-five times larger** than that for the succeeding period. Less than 10 percent of this enormous corpus has been published, and publications in various stages of preparation will not alter this figure appreciably. (emphasis added) (p. vii)

To convert that statistic from a percentage into actual numbers we quote from Brinkman’s footnote to the “seventy-five times larger” statement.

In round numbers, the Kassite period offers more than 12,000 known primary documents from Babylonia, as opposed to approximately 160 for the Post-Kassite era (including documents published or discovered since PKB was published. (p. vii, note 3)

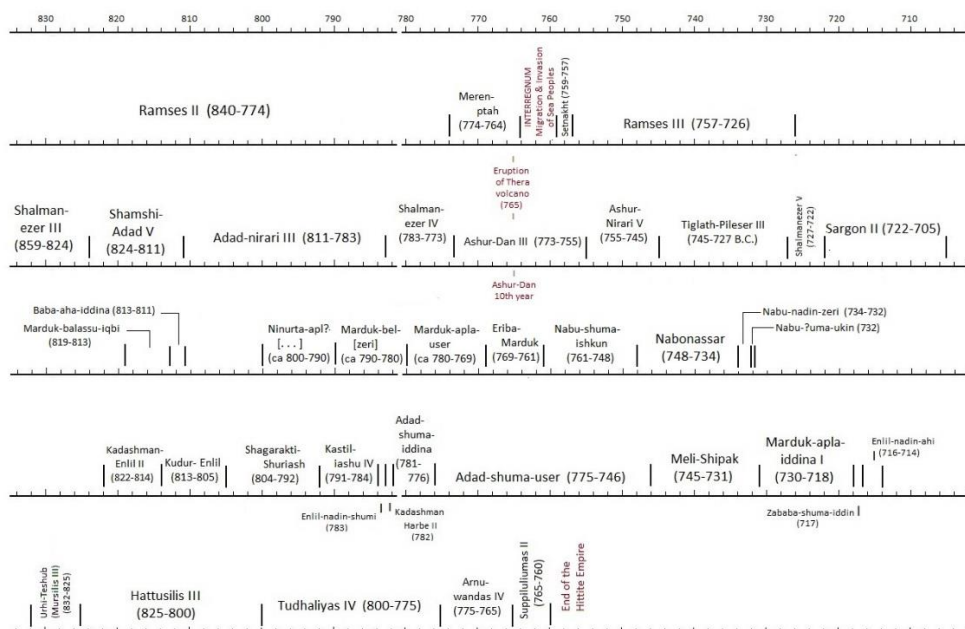
Of the 12,000 primary documents only about fifteen hundred had been published by the year 1976.

We dare to venture here an opinion, namely, that this scenario is not just unlikely, it is impossible. No impartial scholar would dare argue that excavated documentation attesting the activity of 2nd millennium occupants in any country on earth could possibly outnumber those of 1st millennium occupants, much less in the ratio of 75:1. On the contrary, assuming the accuracy of our thesis that the Kassite overlords ruled Babylonia primarily in the 1st millennium, leaving the day-to-day governing of the country to native kings, we have absolutely no problem with Brinkman's data. What else but a dark age should result when 75 out of every group of 76 1st millennium documents is removed from its rightful context and assigned to the 2nd millennium? And finally:

D. Argument that the mid-8th century sequence of Babylonian natural disasters, and “mass migrations” of marauding foreigners, agrees perfectly with our placement of the Egyptian and Hittite timelines, and is at least consistent with our thesis that the 3rd dynasty king Adad-shuma-user (775-746 B.C.) and the 9th dynasty kings Ariba-Marduk (769-761 B.C.) and Nabu-shuma-ishkun (761-748 B.C.) were contemporaries.

At long last we are ready to begin adding the dynasty 4-9 kings to our timelines, beginning in this paper with the 8th century, 9th dynasty kings. The result is shown in our Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Revised History Timeline showing the kings of Egypt, Assyria, Hatti, and Kassite Babylonia in the time frame 814-714 B.C. (with the addition of the vassal “kings of Babylon” of the 9th dynasty added) [adapted from Figure 6 on page 13 of paper #4]



It needs to be mentioned again at the outset of this discussion that the positioning of the late 9th dynasty vassal kings in the 8th century is not in question. Brinkman has scrupulously analyzed the 4th - 9th dynasty kings and itemized all the evidence firmly linking fourteen of them with eight different Assyrian kings in the 11th through the 8th centuries. The approximate dates for the others can be interpolated with reasonable precision. In his "[*A political history of post-Kassite Babylonia, 1158-722 B.C.*](#)" (1968)" he outlines his approach to dating these kings.

Our first step in establishing an absolute chronology for Post-Kassite Babylonia will be to collect and analyze all the direct synchronisms between Assyrian and Babylonian rulers of the period. These synchronisms are furnished by a variety of sources: (1) letters or treaties between the kings of the two countries, (2) annals of Assyrian kings which mention contemporary Babylonian rulers, and (3) later chronicles, both Babylonian and Assyrian, describing events in Mesopotamia as taking place during the reigns of two identified, contemporary kings. Synchronistic kinglists, for reason of style discussed in the first chapter, are not sufficiently accurate to be used in exact calculations of this type. (p. 69)

Conspicuous by its absence is Brinkman's use of many, if any, contemporary Babylonian documents. As described in our previous point, they simply do not exist.

The dates in our Figure 3 for the 8th dynasty "kings of Babylon" are provisional, and vary slightly among the various sources. To be consistent we have employed the dates provided in the Wikipedia "[List of kings of Babylon](#)", though we will argue that at minimum the dates for one king (Eriba-Marduk) need to be altered slightly. We have also included in our Figure 3 the names and dates for two 9th century kings, Marduk-balassu-iqbi and Baba-aha-iddina, only because the chart we adapted to produce Figure 3 began in the year 830, spanning the years when they reigned. Those two kings will be discussed in our next paper, which will document the "kings of Babylon" who ruled from the mid-10th through to the end of the 9th century. The two 9th century kings in turn are followed by a gap of approximately a dozen years, generally referred to as an interregnum, during which five nameless ephemeral kings supposedly governed the country, following a brief "kingless" period. Then follow three "kings of Babylon" whose reigns, though substantial in length, produced almost nothing in terms of documentation - [Ninurta-apla-X](#) (800-790), [Marduk-bel-zeri](#) (790-780), and [Marduk-apla-usur](#) (780-769). We leave it to the reader to peruse the extremely brief Wikipedia articles related to these kings.

It goes without saying that, if nothing else, this chaotic time strengthens our claim that the Kassites are still firmly in control of Babylonia. As we will see in our next paper, Babylonia in the 9th century was in almost constant conflict with their Assyrian neighbors to the north. Assyrian aggression continued unabated through the 8th century. Which leads us to ask two pertinent questions: (1) What prevented the Assyrian kings, those who ruled during the "interregnum" which ended the 9th century, and during the first three decades of the 8th century, when Babylonia was governed by what appears to be three weak "kings of Babylon" in succession, from simply overrunning their southern neighbor? And (2) Where is the

documentation that ought to inform these forty years? We have already answered the second question. An overwhelming abundance of documentation, all in the name of the Kassite overlords, has been wrongly credited by modern scholars to a fictional 2nd millennium Kassite Dynasty. And our answer to the first question is equally apparent. Seven strong Kassite kings, from the later years of Kudur-Enlil to the early years of the reign of Adad-shuma-usur, overlap the time frame under consideration, as the reader can see in our Figure 3 chart. A Kassite garrison was likely quartered in Dur-Kurigalzu throughout this time frame, keeping the Assyrians at bay.

Circumstances changed for Babylon in the middle years of the 8th century as three strong kings in succession ruled the country. The kings of both countries were occupied instead with dealing with a series of natural disasters, including mass starvation, disease, revolt, and the infiltration of warlike migrants, which combined to provide a reprieve from the threat of military aggression on the part of both countries. In a moment we will examine the reigns of Eriba-Marduk, Nabu-shuma-ishkun, and Nabu-Nasir (better known as Nabonassar, the Anglicized form of his name). But we should first dispense with the final two kings of the 9th dynasty, and then briefly turn our attention to Assyria in order to provide some context for our discussion of the three remaining Babylonian kings.

Again we leave it to the reader to examine the Wikipedia summaries of the brief reigns of [Nabu-nadin-zeri](#) (734-732) and [Nabu-shuma-ukin II](#) (732), the penultimate and ultimate 9th dynasty Babylonian kings respectively. Those articles inform us that immediately following the death of Nabonassar Babylonia was overrun by the powerful Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III, and later again by Shalmaneser V, both of whom claimed the title “king of Babylon”, and are recorded as such by modern scholars, though we doubt that they actually governed the country. And since several native Babylonians claim to have ruled Babylonia through to the conclusion of the Kassite period in 714 B.C., including Nabu-mukin-zeri, (729) and Marduk-apla-iddina II (722-710), we assume that at no time was Babylon lacking a native Babylonian governor/king during the Kassite period. The reign of the latter king, better known by his biblical title “Merodach-Baladan, son of Baladan”, we have already discussed. His reign in Babylon spanned the 714 B.C. end of the Kassite period, and the consequent removal of the Kassite occupation force. This in turn gave the Assyrians ready access to invade, conquer, and rule their southern neighbor, save for a brief rebellion by Marduk-apla-iddina II in 703 and a brief four year coup-d’etat by the Elamite usurpers Nergal-ushezib and Mushezib-Marduk in the years 694-689 B.C. Babylon thereafter became a province of Assyria until reconquered in 626 B.C. by Nabopolassar, the founder of the powerful, though short-lived neo-Babylonian Empire.

Our intent in the balance of this paper is to provide the argument promised in the heading of this 4th section, namely, “Argument that the mid-8th century sequence of Babylonian natural disasters, and “mass migrations” of marauding foreigners, agrees perfectly with our placement of the Egyptian and Hittite timelines, and is at least consistent with our thesis that the 3rd dynasty Kassite king Adad-shuma-user (775-746 B.C.), and the 9th dynasty “kings of Babylon”

Ariba-Marduk (769-761 B.C.) and Nabu-shuma-ishkun (761-748 B.C.), were contemporaries. But the argument will be meaningless unless we first explain the significance of the 765 B.C. date highlighted at the top of our Figure 3 chart. Those readers who have read the 3rd Book of our Series will hardly need an explanation, but for the sake of others we need to provide a brief review. And the best way to do that is to describe briefly how that date relates to the Assyrian king Ashur-Dan III, whose reign (773-755 B.C.) overlaps that 765 B.C. date, just as does the reign of Eriba-Marduk (769-761 B.C.) in Babylon.

The Situation in Assyria

In chapters 5 & 6 of the 3rd Book in our Displaced Dynasties Series we argued at length that the date 765 B.C. is highly significant. In that year the volcanic island of Santorini/Thera, north of Crete, blew apart, an explosion that filled the atmosphere with thousands of tons of molten ash which fell indiscriminately on population centers within hundreds of miles of the island location, with predictable results, including not only the mass destruction of human life but the widespread decimation of livestock and crops. Massive tidal waves were spawned which reached as far as Syria, hundreds of miles to the east, where, according to the book of Amos, 90% of the population died. The atmosphere, choked by ash, obliterated the sun, turning day into night. For years following, the atmospheric pollution, which gave rise to acidic rains and diffused sunlight did not diminish sufficiently to allow crops to mature. Mass starvation was the result, and hordes of migrants roamed the Mediterranean coast in search of food. In scholarly circles these migrants are referred to as “Sea Peoples”, though the cause of their wanderings has remained a mystery for scholars to this day. In some locales the infiltration of these starving masses could hardly be distinguished from a military invasion. Local populations were ruthlessly massacred as starving migrants foraged for food, no doubt accompanied by a criminal element seeking pillage. The Mycenaean Greeks invaded Troy. The Hittites succumbed to invading masses from the Mediterranean, possibly Cyprus. The 19th dynasty of Egypt ended with the arrival in the Egyptian delta of a veritable armada of “Sea Peoples”, as wave after wave of sea-borne migrants arrived over a period of a half dozen years.

The date of the Santorini event, as described in our Book 3, was a necessary consequence of the hundreds of pages of research that led up to it in the first two books of the Series and the preceding hundred pages of book 3. Our revised timelines for Egypt and Hatti are entirely dependent on the accuracy of the dating of this unprecedented eruption. ***It follows that every strand of evidence we can produce to substantiate the accuracy of our portrayal of the Santorini eruption, serves to argue for the accuracy of our revised timelines. The reliability of these timelines, in turn, are essential in arguing our case that the Kassites belong to the 1st millennium, not the 2nd. For that reason alone we want to include Babylonia, and to a lesser extent Assyria, in our discussion of the Santorini eruption and its attendant consequences.*** In our 3rd Book, in a section entitled “Endless Night in Assyria” (pages 128-132) we have already touched on the situation in Assyria. But that discussion was brief, and was primarily concerned

with the mention of a supposed eclipse of the sun that took place in the 10th year of the Assyrian king Ashur-Dan. In Book 3 we were concerned only with the dating of the eruption and the obstruction of sunlight that followed, but here we will say a few words concerning the ensuing famine and consequent social unrest.

Prior to looking at what transpired in Assyria we need to remind the reader of several technical issues. 1) In the first place we note the fact that the dates we have assigned to the Assyrian kings in our Figure 3 were adopted from the Wikipedia article entitled [“List of Assyrian Kings”](#). If they are marginally incorrect then at minimum we need to point out that fact. 2) We remind the reader that the Assyrian civil year began in the Spring, with the arrival of the month Nissan (March/April) and it ended just prior to the beginning of Nissan in the following calendar year. 3) We also need to explain briefly, for readers unfamiliar with the Assyrian and Babylonian calendars, that both nations followed what is termed an “accession year” or “post-dating” system. According to this system, if an Assyrian king died after the beginning of the Assyrian year, that entire year was credited to him as his last, and his successor’s 1st official year did not begin until the full year had run its course. The intervening months were referred to in official documents as the new king’s “accession year”. Thus, assuming that Shalmanezar IV died in the fall of 772 B.C., as many scholars believe, his last year would be recorded as 772-771 in scholarly literature, and the 1st official year of Ashur-Dan III, his successor, would run from Nissan 771 - Nissan 770, his second year from Nissan 770 - Nissan 769, and so on. In this scenario the 9th official year of Ashur-Dan III would span the time frame Nissan 763 to Nissan 762 (or 763/762). The situation just described is depicted in our Table 1 on the following page. And finally, 4) The Assyrians assigned the name of a different government official to each year in their civil calendar for reference purposes. This unique name, or eponym, is known for most of the years in the neo-Assyrian time frame, and lists of these names were compiled by the ancients and have been published by 20th and 21st century scholars. Some of these Eponym Lists merely provide the name associated with the year, while others also add a few words describing a single event, or multiple significant events, that took place during that year. Below, in our Table 1, we list one such Eponym List, and note that in the 9th year of Ashur-Dan III, in the eponymy of Bur-Saggale, in the month of Simanu (May/June), an obstruction of the sun took place in Assyria and a “plague” also occurred. And since astronomers are able to determine that on June 15 in the year 763 B.C. a partial eclipse of the sun took place in Assyria, that eclipse seems to correspond to the “obstruction of the sun” in the eponymy of Bur-Saggale, the governor of the Assyrian province of Guzana. Based solely on that information the 9th official year of Ashur-Dan is dated in the calendar year 763-762 B.C. and the entire Assyrian pantheon of kings is thereby assigned absolute dates. The above comments clearly describe the viewpoint of the scholar (or scholars) who added the calendar dates (green print) to the Eponym List being duplicated in Figure 1.

Table 1: The Neo-Assyrian Eponym List: Sun obstructed in 763 B.C.

(necessary dating if the Bur-Saggale eponym year is the ninth official year of Ashur-Dan III and the “obstruction of the sun” in that year refers to the June 15, 763 eclipse)

[772/771] During the eponymy of Aššur-bela-usur, governor of Kalhu, campaign against Hatarikka.

Ten years, Šalmaneser, king of Assyria. [who died in 772 B.C.]

[771/770] During the eponymy of Aššur-dan [III], king of Assyria, campaign against Gananati.
[770/769] During the eponymy of Šamši-ilu, the commander in chief, campaign against Marad.
[769/768] During the eponymy of B ⁺ il-ila, governor of Arrapha, campaign against Itu'a.
[768/767] During the eponymy of Aplaya, governor of Mazamua, the king stayed in the land.
[767/766] During the eponymy of Qurdi-Aššur, governor of Ahizuhina, campaign against Gananati.
[766/765] During the eponymy of Mušallim-Inurta, governor of Tille, campaign against Media.
[765/764] During the eponymy of Inurta-mukin-niši, governor of Habruri, campaign against Hatarikka; plague.
[764/763] During the eponymy of Sidqi-ilu, governor of Tušhan, the king stayed in the land.

[763/762] During the eponymy of Bur-Saggale, governor of Guzana, revolt in Libbi-ali; in Simanu eclipse of the sun [15 June 763].
[762/761] During the eponymy of Tab-b ⁺ lu, governor of Amedi, revolt in Libbi-ali.
[761/760] During the eponymy of Nab ⁺ -mukin-apli, governor of Nineveh, revolt in Arrapha.
[760/759] During the eponymy of La-qipu, governor of Kalizi, revolt in Arrapha.
[759/758] During the eponymy of Pan-Aššur-lamur, governor of Arbela, revolt in Guzana; plague.

We should add a few remarks concerning our Table 1 as it relates to our Figure 3 chart. Table 1 is clearly referencing an Eponym List in which the eponymy of Bur-Saggale is preceded by eight other eponym years in the reign of Ashur-Dan III. That scenario demands that 1) the supposed “eclipse of the sun” should be referenced as taking place during the 9th year of Ashur-Dan, and that 2) the death of Shalmanezer IV and the beginning of the reign of Ashur-Dan III should be dated to the year 772 B.C. The observant reader will already have noted that in our Figure 3 we use the alternate figures “773 B.C.” for the death of Shalmanezer IV and “10th year” for the eponymy of Bur-Saggale. We employ those numbers simply because they are the ones most frequently encountered in scholarly literature. The only possible explanation for the discrepancy is that the alternative numbers are derived from an Eponym List (or Lists) that includes an additional eponym year following the eponymy of Ashur-Dan III (the first official year) and preceding the eponymy of Bur-Saggale, which would then be the 10th official year of Ashur-Dan. We confess that the matter has not been investigated further, largely because, in the final analysis, we do not believe that Shalmanezer IV died either in 772 B.C. or in 773 B.C., but rather in 774 B.C. Clearly an explanation is in order. And for that reason we have duplicated our Table 1, increased all of the dates by two years, and included the revised Eponym List as our Table 2, shown on the following page.

A brief explanation is necessary to explain our addition of two years to our Table 1 chart, lest the critics needlessly cry foul. We do not believe for a moment that the Bur-Saggale event was an eclipse of the sun, and we do not believe it took place in 763 B.C., this for several reasons, namely,

- 1) the Assyrian text does not state that there was an eclipse of the sun, a relatively commonplace event that would typically be described differently in Assyrian documents. Here the text says only that “the sun was obscured”;
- 2) in recent years it has been determined that the June 763 B.C. eclipse was only partial, at maximum obscuring 85% of the sun, which would merely dim the daytime sky, hardly an event worth mentioning as significant, much less as one of the most noteworthy events of the year. More recently still it has been determined that the limits of visibility of this eclipse ended hundreds of miles north of Assyria. The eclipse path was restricted to Scandinavia and northern Russia. Thank God for technology. If the reader wishes, he can link to the [map drawn by Xavier M. Jubier and published on the NASA Eclipse Web Site](#). Simply move the cursor over top of northern Iraq and click, to discover that the eclipse of June 16, 763 B.C. was not even visible in Assyria!
- 3) in the cuneiform text a line is drawn preceding the mention of the Bur-Saggale eponym year, an otherwise unprecedented occurrence, since lines were typically used in the text to separate the death of one king from the beginning of the reign of his successor, the beginning of a new era, so to speak;

Table 2: The Neo-Assyrian Eponym List: Sun obstructed in 765 B.C.

(necessary dating if the Bur-Saggale eponym year is the ninth official year of Ashur-Dan III and the “obstruction” of the sun in that year refers to the blockage of sunlight caused by ash from the 765 B.C. Santorini eruption)

[774/773] During the eponymy of Aššur-bela-usur, governor of Kalhu, campaign against Hatarikka.

Ten years, Šalmaneser, king of Assyria. [who died in 774 B.C.]

[773/772] During the eponymy of Aššur-dan [III], king of Assyria, campaign against Gananati.
[772/771] During the eponymy of Šamši-ilu, the commander in chief, campaign against Marad.
[771/770] During the eponymy of B ¹ il-ila, governor of Arrapha, campaign against Itu'a.
[770/769] During the eponymy of Aplaya, governor of Mazamua, the king stayed in the land.
[769/768] During the eponymy of Qurdi-Aššur, governor of Ahizuhina, campaign against Gananati.
[768/767] During the eponymy of Mušallim-Inurta, governor of Tille, campaign against Media.
[767/766] During the eponymy of Inurta-mukin-niši, governor of Habruri, campaign against Hatarikka; plague.
[766/765] During the eponymy of Sidqi-ilu, governor of Tušhan, the king stayed in the land.

[765/764] During the eponymy of Bur-Saggale, governor of Guzana, revolt in Libbi-ali; in <u>Simanu</u> (May/June) obstruction of the sun.
[764/763] During the eponymy of Tab-b ¹ lu, governor of Amedi, revolt in Libbi-ali.
[763/762] During the eponymy of Nab ¹ -mukin-apli, governor of Nineveh, revolt in Arrapha.
[762/761] During the eponymy of La-qipu, governor of Kalizi, revolt in Arrapha.
[761/760] During the eponymy of Pan-Aššur-lamur, governor of Arbela, revolt in Guzana; plague.

4) And finally, the mention of an “obscured sun” is accompanied by the mention of a revolt in the district of Libbi-ali, leaving open the possibility that the events are somehow related. It is also significant that in six of the eight years preceding this pivotal year Ashur-Dan had conducted his routine yearly military campaign, giving the impression that all was well in the land. The only hint of possible trouble was the fact that in his 4th and 8th official years the campaign was postponed and in his year 7 there was a “plague”. On the other hand, the Bur-Saggale year initiated a string of years in which the land experienced either “revolt” or “plague” or both, suggesting, if it doesn’t prove, that the obscured sun somehow caused the following chaos. While we are in danger of being accused of either the “*cum hoc ergo propter hoc*” or “*post hoc ergo propter hoc*” fallacies, there are other reasons for arguing here that the obscured sun was the likely “cause” of the following turmoil. Some of these reasons will become evident as we proceed.

We are also informed from other sources that not only “revolt” and “plague” followed the Bur-Saggale event. The renowned biblical scholar Donald J. Wiseman, in his *Tyndall Biblical Archaeology Lecture* of 1977 entitled [Jonah’s Nineveh](#), has remarked on the fact that famine also followed the obstructed sun that occurred that year. On page 50 of that published lecture, speaking about Jonah’s visit to Nineveh and his attempt to secure the repentance of that country, he states:

Famine and epidemics were another sign of divine wrath which could lead to mass repentance and mourning to avert them... It may be no coincidence that *among the references to the reign of Aššur-dān III of Assyria in the eponym lists are several to famine (mutanu) whether at the beginning and end of, or throughout, a period of seven years.* These notices are in addition to those indicating the total solar eclipse and other upheavals and revolts. (italics added)

Later on that same page Wiseman adds:

As has been shown, in the reign of ... Aššur-dān III there was famine in 765, recurring in, or lasting to, 759 B.C. In 763 there occurred the ominous solar eclipse. All this gave rise to rebellions in various cities until 758 B.C. when the king went to Guzana (Gozan) and thereafter stayed for two years quietly in his land. It may be that the 'calamity and violence' of Jonah 3:8 could refer to such a time, for his initial call had been to 'Go to Nineveh and make a proclamation about it, for their calamity has come to my notice' (1:2).

Wiseman does not reference the documents from which he derives the famine references, but since dates are provided it is likely he is alluding to one or more of the seven other major eponym lists that are known to exist, to which this author does not have ready access. As for those dates, it goes without saying that all dates mentioned by Wiseman need to be increased by two years, just as we have done in our Table 2. The famine began in 767 and continued for seven years, to 761. And since the references to famine are in the same years as the references to revolts we can at least suggest the possibility, if not the probability, that the famine was a major contributor to the “revolts”.

If, for the reasons stated, the Bur-Saggale event has nothing to do with an eclipse, but is instead an event far more ominous and forboding, then what is happening. In our Book 3 discussion of the event we stated our opinion. In 765 B.C. the island of Santorini exploded, literally vaporizing the entire mountain island, filling the troposphere and very likely the stratosphere with molten ash. This ash would quickly be transported by the prevailing winds for thousands of miles. Ash from volcanic explosions is known to trigger violent rains which are toxic/acidic, and over months much of the ash in lower levels (the troposphere) would fall to the earth. In association with the acidic rain the falling ash would destroy crops, poison livestock, and cause widespread starvation. Disease would be rampant in the human population, and rebels seeking food (and plunder generally) would be commonplace. Let the reader do a google search of the documented aftermath of even mild eruptions in the 21st century, and multiply the effects ten or a hundred fold to account for the fact that the Santorini explosion was, without doubt, one of the most violent eruptions in human history.

Ash in the stratosphere, depending in part on the size and density of the particles, might well remain in place for years, perhaps for decades, at least partially obscuring the sun. In Assyria, in the days immediately following the Santorini explosion, we believe day turned to night in the span of hours, the beginning of an era of obstructed sunlight and social chaos, warranting mention of the event in the annals of the eponym year of Bur-Saggale, and prompting the drawing of a line preceding that date in the Assyrian Eponym list.

The critic will no doubt comment on the fact that plague is recorded in the eponym list in Ashur-Dan's 7th year and the absence of campaigns in his 4th and 8th years, suggesting that some civil unrest must have preceded the Santorini eruption by a number of years. But in our Book 3 discussion we point out the fact that less severe eruptions of Santorini almost certainly occurred years and perhaps decades before the 765 B.C. explosion. These would have lent credence to the preaching of [the prophet Jonah](#), sent by the God of Israel to warn Nineveh concerning the coming storm. Jonah's ministry overlapped the reign of Jereboam II (ca 786-746) and his visit to Nineveh may tentatively be dated around 770 B.C., though it may well have been later, perhaps even after the 1st wave of ash arrived to do its damage. It is no doubt significant that the message from the prophet anticipated the almost immediate arrival of disaster. "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4) And what was the disaster threatened by Jonah. The text of the prophetic book suggests that the lives of tens of thousands of innocent Ninevites were at stake, and were subsequently spared. Based on what transpired in Babylonia, where famine, disease/plague and revolt also took place, but on an increased scale, accompanied by the influx of the Mesopotamian equivalent of the Mediterranean "Sea Peoples", we suggest that Assyria was simply spared the intensity of the named disasters. In Babylonia, as we shall see, a significant portion of the population did perish.

The Situation in Babylonia

Our interest in the balance of this section is with the final three 8th century “kings of Babylon” - [Eriba-Marduk](#) (769-761), [Nabu-shuma-ishkun](#) (761-748), and [Nabonassar](#) (748-734). And since absolutely no inscriptional material from their reigns links them directly to the Kassites, our argument is largely circumstantial, and is related entirely to the eruption of the volcanic mountain of Santorini/Thera in 765 B.C. and its disastrous consequences for the Babylonians.

Eriba-Marduk:

From the [Wikipedia article related to Eriba-Marduk](#) we learn three facts, namely, 1) that the highest attested date for his reign is his 9th year, 2) that early in his reign he was already occupied suppressing “incursions of nomads around Babylon and [Borsippa](#), restoring fields and orchards to their former owners,” and 3) though there are legal documents bearing his name, his only royal inscriptions are contained on two duck weights of little significance. Later tradition, however, credits this king with significant accomplishments and he is generally well regarded by posterity. We are interested in this king for a single reason. His dates (769-761 B.C.), though highly provisional, overlap the 765 B.C. date highlighted at the top of our Figure 3 chart, suggesting that his reign must have witnessed some of the chaos and trauma that was manifest in the Mediterranean arena, and it must also have shared in the famine, revolt, and “plague” that are documented in Assyria.

Already we have seen that in Assyria the famine and disease, with associated rebellion, began in 767 B.C. and continued almost unabated for seven years, ending in 761 B.C. or shortly thereafter. But Nineveh is only a few hundred miles from Babylon. There appears to be no good reason to distinguish the initial effects of the Santorini eruption on the two countries. Assuming that to be the case, the troubles for Eriba-Marduk likely also began around 767 B.C., his second official regnal year assuming his reign began in 769. But in view of his accomplishments, those on which his good reputation is based, it is likely that his reign began earlier than 769. Assuming it began only four year earlier (ca 773 B.C.), precisely where his reign began according to some scholars, and that the Santorini effects did not appear until 767 B.C. (his seventh year) we can readily explain why no inscription exists dated higher than his ninth year (765 B.C.), the date of the Santorini explosion. None were written. The turmoil in Babylon from that point on was so intense that all business ceased and the king was constantly in damage control.

Tentatively we leave the end of his reign as is (761 B.C.), though this date is cited as “speculative” in the Wikipedia article related to his successor Nabu-shuma-ishkun. If the date 761 B.C. remains as is, then all of the seven years of suffering endured by Assyria was experienced in Babylonia during the reign of Eriba-Marduk. But in Babylonia the trauma lasted longer, at least another half-dozen years, largely because Babylonia was more vulnerable to invasion by foreigners. For decades prior to 765 B.C. the Arameans / Suteans, semi-nomadic warlike migrants who inhabited the desert regions east of the Tigris and west of the Euphrates,

had been the nemesis of the “kings of Babylon”. With Babylonia weakened by seven years of famine, disease, and internal revolt, the time was ripe for these opportunistic groups, and other related tribes on the fringes of Babylonia, to further infiltrate the fertile crescent, ostensibly in search of food, but also intent on plunder. Though the famine was perhaps ending in Babylonia in 761 B.C., it was certainly not ended on the fringes of the desert. And so the rebellion, accompanied by the infiltration of foreigners, continued into the reign of Nabu-shuma-ishkun. But here we are getting ahead of ourselves. Contemporary documentation related to the seven years of famine, disease, and revolt is wanting in Babylonia, but fortunately one document composed in the aftermath of the devastation does survive, and it deserves extensive analysis. It is known to modern scholars as the Erra Epic (or the Epic of Erra and Ishum), and it paints a grim picture of the happenings in Babylonia.

The Erra Epic:

The [Wikipedia article related to this document](#) contains a summary of the Epic, brief, but adequate for our purposes here.

Erra (sometimes called **Irra**) is an Akkadian plague god known from an 'epos' [epic] of the eighth century BCE. Erra is the god of mayhem and pestilence who is responsible for periods of political confusion. In the epic that is given the modern title *Erra*, the writer Kabti-ilani-Marduk, a descendant, he says, of Dabibi, presents himself in a colophon following the text as simply the transcriber of a visionary dream in which Erra himself revealed the text.

The poem opens with an invocation. The god Erra is sleeping fitfully ... but is roused by his advisor Ishum and the Seven (*Sibitti* or *Sebetti*), who are the sons of heaven and earth—"champions without peer" is the repeated formula—and are each assigned a destructive destiny by Anu. Machinist and Sasson (1983) call them "personified weapons". The Sibitti call on Erra to lead the destruction of mankind. Išum tries to mollify Erra's wakened violence, to no avail. Foreign peoples invade Babylonia, but are struck down by plague. Even Marduk, the patron of Babylon, relinquishes his throne to Erra for a time. Tablets II and III are occupied with a debate between Erra and Išum. Erra goes to battle in Babylon, Sippar, Uruk, Dur-Kurigalzu and Der. The world is turned upside down: righteous and unrighteous are killed alike. Erra orders Išum to complete the work by defeating Babylon's enemies. Then the god withdraws to his own seat in Emeslam with the terrifying Seven, and mankind is saved. A propitiatory prayer ends the work.

The poem must have been central to Babylonian culture: at least thirty-six copies have been recovered from five first-millennium sites—Ashur, Babylon, Nineveh, Sultantepe and Ur—more, even, as L. Cagni points out, than have been recovered of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

The Epic is sometimes referred to as a *Vaticinium ex eventu* or *post eventu* (= *prophecy after the fact*). The writer Kabti-ilani-Marduk tells his story through the lips of the gods Erra, Ishum, and Marduk, who, in the first 3 tablets, speak about what they intend to do, as if they are predicting the future, only to itemize in the 4th tablet what has been accomplished. Though we will summarize some of its main points, and quote a few relevant passages, it is recommended that the reader peruse the entire document, which unfortunately is quite lengthy, close to 700 lines. A reading copy is provided online [here](#), and an annotated copy of select passages can be read

[here](#) (see chapter 2, entitled “The Poem of Erra and Ishum, a Babylonian Poet’s View of War” by A.R. George (pp 39-72)

The Epic appears to have been written shortly after the events described, though, as expected, scholars disagree. They also disagree on when the events themselves took place. One of the better discussions of the subject, part of a review of the entire content of the Epic, can be read in Daniel Bodi’s book entitled “The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra” (pp. 52-68). A google book preview copy is available online [here](#), though unfortunately select pages are blocked out. In a section entitled “The Date and Historical Background of the Poem of Erra” (pp. 54-56) Bodi mentions what we consider to be the correct answer to the first problem. He summarizes very briefly the analysis of the Erra Epic by the Akkadian scholar W. Von Soden, published in 1971 in the 3rd volume of the journal *Ugarit Forschungen*. Von Soden was concerned only with the question of when the Epic was written, and his conclusion was undoubtedly close to being correct. His conclusion is summarized by Bodi on pages 55-56, where he states,

He (Von Soden) placed the date of its composition between the end of 765 and the beginning of 763 BCE, during the reign of Eriba-Marduk (769-761 BCE)”.

According to Bodi, Von Soden’s opinion was based on a blending of “precise historical, archaeological, and astronomical data.

From time to time in the pages that follow we will contrast this epic with its nearest counterpart in the corpus of Near Eastern Literature, the prophetic book of Amos in the Hebrew Bible. As it turns out, both compositions deal with the aftermath of the Santorini volcanic eruption, Amos describing the situation in Syria, Kabti-ilani-Marduk describing what happened in Babylonia. In neither case is the eruption mentioned, and we suspect that the immediate cause of the resulting devastation was unknown to both authors. In their opinion all that matters is that the devastation results from the will of the god or gods, Yahweh (in the case of Amos) or Erra and Marduk (in the case of Kabti-ilani-Marduk).

While Von Soden identifies the time of composition of the epic poem as 765-763 B.C., and fails to say much regarding when the actions described in the narrative took place, nor whether they are real or imaginary, we can be more specific. We have already observed earlier, in our Figure 2, that in the years 767-761 B.C., the seventh through the 13th years of Ashur-Dan in Assyria, that plague, famine and revolt dominated life in Assyria. We expect that these same calamities were experienced in Babylonia during the same years, the final seven years of the reign of Eriba-Marduk. The Erra Epic was not written in the middle of this time frame as Von-Soden claims. It was probably written years later. The seven years from 767-761 are rather the years during which the events recorded in the Epic took place. Kabti-ilani-Marduk may well have been a spectator, witness to many of the events as they transpired. But events in that time frame were too traumatic to afford the leisure time to record them in narrative form.

One task remains for us in order to prove this dating hypothesis. If we are correct we ought to find reference in the Erra Epic to many, if not all of the hypothetical features of life in Assyria (and by extension to Babylonia) in the few years preceding and the five years following the explosion of the Thera volcano, north of Crete, in the year 765 B.C.

Obscured Sun

If we are correct, and the Erra epic describes the situation that prevailed in Babylonia in 765 B.C., in the immediate aftermath of the Santorini volcanic explosion, there should be a darkening of the sky, as ash, some of it perhaps still red hot, creeps over the land and begins its deadly indiscriminant assault on crops, livestock, and people alike. We do not have to look far in the epic to find reference to it. Near the middle of the first tablet Erra, the god of plague and pestilence, awakened to his task at the urging of the Seven, the warrior gods given him by Ea to assist in the destruction of Babylonia, seeks audience with and the assistance of Marduk, “king of the gods” in Babylon. Marduk, after a lengthy soliloquy in which he boastfully reviews his past achievements, says,

(When) I rise from my dwelling, the regulation of heaven and earth will disintegrate,
The waters will rise and sweep over the land,
Bright day will turn to darkness, whirlwind will rise and the stars of heaven will be [hidden?]

Over a dozen lines later, at the very beginning of the second tablet, Marduk leaves his dwelling and enters an assembly of the Annuna gods. There, according to the epic

Shamash [the Sun god] looked upon him and let his protective radiance fall ... [i.e. the sunlight diminished in intensity]
Sin looked everywhere, and did not leave the Netherworld.
Ill winds rose and the bright daylight was turned to gloom.
The clamor of the peoples throughout the land was stilled

The diminished sunlight in both of these sections cannot, under any circumstances, be interpreted as a reference to either an eclipse or a partial-eclipse. In the first quote it is also recorded that something almost simultaneously happened to the stars of heaven, leading us to supply the word “hidden” to the obscured section of text. In the second quote not only does the sun god Shamash lose her radiance, but the moon god Sin remains in the Underworld. In Babylonian mythology, once every lunar month, when the moon disappears from the sky [the so-called time of the “new moon”] Sin briefly visits the Netherworld where his function is to judge the dead, a task which is quickly followed by his return to his heavenly journey. Here it is claimed he did not return on schedule. We interpret that to mean that he could not be viewed in the “ash polluted” sky. How long that situation prevailed we are not told, but in our concluding section we will argue that the stars could not be clearly seen for upwards of seventeen years; the moon (or at least its reflected light) likely nowhere near that number.

Violent Tremors and Tsunamis

This is perhaps an appropriate place to comment on the reference, in the first Erra Epic section quoted above, to waters rising and sweeping over the land. This elicited memories in the mind of this author of the tidal waves created in the Eastern Mediterranean in the aftermath of the Santorini explosion [see the section entitled “Raash in Syria” on pages 124-127 in chapter 6 of our Book 3]. Those tidal waves, as described in the book of Amos in the Hebrew Bible, were enormous, carrying thousands of bodies high up the slope of Mount Herman, a hundred miles

inland. Those waves, of course, dissipated on the shores of the Mediterranean. But we wonder whether an earthquake might have been created in the Persian gulf by the upheaval of the earth in the Mediterranean. Five hundred miles from Santorini the land in Syria not only suffered from incoming tidal waves. It also shook violently, a shaking interpreted by all who experienced it as an earthquake, though the word employed in the early verses of the book of Amos, the Hebrew term *raash*, is best translated “shaking” (see [raash](#)). The shaking of the earth in Syria may well have triggered an accompanying earthquake, but the violent shaking was much more intense than that created by an underground tectonic event. The Syrian *raash* was so intense it was remembered vividly centuries later. Tentatively we might assume that a similar sequence of events may have played out in the northern reaches of the Persian gulf. The violent shaking of the earth triggered an earthquake, and that earthquake created the tidal waves that engulfed the Babylonian Sealand. The fact that the earth shook violently in Babylonia in 765 B.C. is not in question. At least according to the Erra Epic. Early in the 1st tablet it is recorded that when Anu was delegating tasks to the Seven “unrivalled” divine warriors assisting Erra, the fourth warrior is given his assignment:

Let a mountain collapse when you present your fierce arms.

The collapse of a mountain suggests a violent shaking of the earth, either a direct result of the exploding Mediterranean island, or of a secondary earthquake in Mesopotamia resulting from such. In either case, there is also documentary evidence that such a “shaking” took place during the reign of Ashur-Dan. Wiseman, in the essay entitled [Jonah’s Nineveh](#) that we quoted from earlier, notes the fact that

Earthquakes are recorded at Nineveh in the time of Shalmaneser I, Aššur-rēša-iši, and for the month Siwan in the reign of Aššur-dan. (p. 48)

If the earth shook violently in Babylonia, it would certainly be felt in Nineveh, and interpreted as an earthquake, whether or not this was the cause. And if the event took place around the ninth year of Ashur-Dan in Assyria, that would date it to the year 765 B.C. Unfortunately Wiseman provides the month when it took place, not the year, and fails to note the source.

We should perhaps mention, in passing, the more remote possibility that a tsunami might have been triggered in some location closer to the Mediterranean volcanic eruption, whence it travelled hundreds, or even well over a thousand miles, until reaching the northern extremity of the Persian gulf, whence it overran the Sealand of Babylonia. A quick search of the internet [here](#) informs us that a tsunami created by even a relatively minor seismic event can travel enormous distances very rapidly. Predicting the results of one of the most powerful explosions the earth has ever experienced is unfortunately not possible.

Death of Livestock and Humans

In the book of Amos it is stated that 90% of the population of Syria died. In Babylonia the results may have been similar. Early in the Erra Epic it is stated that the task of the “terrible Seven” was to “massacre the black-headed folk”, i.e. the Mesopotamians. Ea’s instruction to the sixth of the seven gods was to “Go out everywhere (like the deluge) and spare no one” and the seventh, whom he charged with viperous venom, was ordered to “Slay whatever lives”. To

Erra these seven are given as helpers, and Erra himself is directed “to **massacre the black-headed folk** and **fell the livestock**”. This theme of human death caused by the actions of the god Erra and his Seven helpers runs throughout the narrative and does not need special mention, though some specific instances are described in the context of our discussion of “plague and famine” in the following section.

As for the livestock we note that the seventh and last of the Seven helpers was equipped with viperous venom in order to slay *whatever lives*. This task apparently included the killing of the livestock, which died, in our estimation, drinking the toxic rainwater, and eating the diseased and dying grasses and grains. The death of livestock is not mentioned often in the narrative, but the few accounts leave little doubt that they died in massive numbers, since the felling of livestock is singled out as one of the only two tasks specifically assigned to Erra.

The only other verses specifically focused on the death of livestock are located in the first tablet, where it is remarked that

Lion and wolf are felling the livestock.
The shepherd who cannot sleep day and night for the sake of his flocks, is calling upon you

There is, of course, an irony in these verses. Those who tended the dying livestock were calling out to Erra for help. But elsewhere, toward the end of the first tablet, Erra declares

“I invade the range and take up my dwelling in the fold.”

And his role within the fold is the destruction of the very livestock the shepherds are calling on him to heal. The attribution of the “felling of the livestock” to the “lion and wolf” is clearly a metaphor. Only a few verses prior Erra boasts, “I am the lion on earth.”

Crops destroyed

Early in the initial tablet we are informed, albeit obliquely, that something is happening to the crops. As we might expect, Kabti-ilani-Marduk is unaware of the cause. There has certainly been sufficient rain, else its shortage should have been mentioned, and no observer would perceive that the (toxic) downpour might actually be causing the blight. Erra, the god responsible for disease, is invoked to heal the crops. The “beasts and creatures” that are taking over the land reserved for crops, are cited as evidence that Erra is not listening.

Warrior Erra, why do you neglect the field for the city?
The very beasts and creatures hold us in contempt.
...
Beasts are overrunning the meadows, life of the land,
The farmer sobs bitterly for his field.

Plague and Famine

The critic may argue, correctly as it turns out, that in the Erra Epic there is no mention of plague, nor any mention of famine, key features in the Assyrian Eponym Lists in the years 767-

761 B.C., and because of the close proximity of the two countries, probably two of the most dominant features of the final seven years of the reign of Eriba-Marduk in Babylonia. But there are literally dozens of verses in which Erra himself claims responsibility for causing specific deaths, and Erra is known uniquely, according to the majority of scholars, as the god of “[pestilence and plague](#)”. Others would claim that he is the “[god of famine](#)”. What else would we expect as the agency of death forthcoming from the “plague god”/ “famine god” but plague and famine. Thus we interpret such verses as the following, placed in the lips of Erra toward the end of the fourth tablet, as references to those dying of starvation or disease:

He who begot a son, saying.
 This is my son, when I have reared him, he will requite my pains.
 I will put that son to death, his father must bury him,
 Afterwards I will put that father to death, but he will have none to bury him.
 He who built a house saying
 This is my house, I built it for myself, I shall spend my leisure in it,
 On the day fate claims me, I shall fall asleep inside.
 I will put him to death and wreck his home,
 Afterwards though it be wreckage, I will give it to another.
 O warrior Erra, you have put the righteous man to death,
 You have put the unrighteous man to death,
 He who sinned against you, you put him to death
 He who did not sin against you, you put him to death,
 The high priest, assiduous with divine offerings, you put to death,
 The functionary who served the king you put to death,
 The old man on the doorstep you put to death,
 The young girls in the bedrooms you put to death,
 Even then you found no appeasement whatsoever!

To be sure, Erra is also a god of war, and in some instances in the Epic he is portrayed as the instigator of revolt. But in the majority of situations where Erra causes the death of humans, and warfare is not specifically named as the immediate cause, we can assume that disease or starvation are operative.

Revolt and the Incursion of Foreigners

Revolt was a constant theme during a seven year period in Assyria, beginning two years before the 765 B.C. “darkening of the sun” and ending five years later, this according to our Table 2. In Babylon those dates are identical to the last seven years of the reign of Eriba-Marduk. We suspect that the Erra Epic will mention “revolt” in Babylonia, though as we will observe in a moment, the Babylonian situation differs from that of Assyria in one key aspect. In the southern extremities of Mesopotamia the warfare is largely restricted attacks on Babylonian cities by Chaldean and other ethnic groups originating in the extreme south, and by semi-nomadic Aramean tribes bordering Babylonia, specifically the Sutean branch of that ethnic group. Revolt in Babylonia is mentioned specifically only once in the Erra Epic, though it is

implied elsewhere. At the beginning of tablet 4 we see Erra entering Babylon with the specific intent of stirring up trouble. We quote only a small portion of the relevant section of the Epic.

O warrior Erra ...
 You girded on your weaponry and entered Babylon.
 Inside Babylon, you spoke like a rabble-rouser, as if to take over the city,
 The citizenry of Babylon, like reeds in a thicket, had no one in charge, so they rallied around you
 He who knew nothing of weapons – his sword was drawn,
 He who knew nothing of archery – his bow was taut,
 He who knew nothing of fighting – set to the fray,
 He who knew nothing of wings – flew off like a bird.
 The cripple could surpass the fleet of foot, the weakling could overpower the strong.
 They give voice to gross insolence against the governor who provides for their holy places,
 With their own hands they blockaded the gate of Babylon, their lifeline,
 They have torched the sanctuaries of Babylon like marauders of the land,
 You [Erra] the vanguard, took their lead

And the theme continues for another forty or so verses

There follows a description of attacks on the cities of Babylon, Sippar, Uruk, and Der by the semi-nomadic Suteans, apparently motivated by the lack of food in their desert surroundings. And if famine and disease was the immediate cause of these incursions, then Erra, the god of plague and famine, was the ultimate cause. Indeed, in the case of Der, Erra is specifically singled out for rebuke by Ishtar, the goddess of the city.

Ishtar responded thus,
 You[Erra] turned the city Der into a wasteland,
 You fractured her populace like reeds,
 You extinguished their clamor like the dying hiss of foam on the water's face!
 And as for me, you did not spare me, but have [given] me over to the Sutean nomads

It is the opinion of 21st century that not only the 4th tablet, but the entire Erra Epic, was composed to describe and explain the invasion of Babylonia by the nomads surrounding the country, primarily the Suteans, an Aramean tribe who are mentioned four times in the combined 4th and 5th tablets. The four cities specifically named as succumbing to these invading hordes – Babylon, which only recently has experienced a civil war, Sippar, Uruk and Der – have led scholars to the conclusion that the Erra Epic, though probably composed around 750 B.C., is not describing incidents that took place in that time frame. Rather, the author is looking back in time over three hundred years, and summarizing another Sutean invasion that took place in the reign of a 4th dynasty “king of Babylon” named Adad-apla-iddina. Since the readers of this essay may well encounter this viewpoint, and be persuaded by it, we take a moment to explain the error in this opinion. First let us hear from two sources where this “scholarly” understanding of the Erra Epic is presented, beginning with the influential *Cambridge Ancient History* III Part 1, where, on page 292 we read, following a discussion of a mid-8th century event:

There is only one major work of literature whose composition may be dated with reasonable probability to this period: the Erra Epic. This piece, originally some seven hundred lines long, describes in theological terms one of the major historical themes of this ‘dark age’: the Sutean

invasions in the late second and early first millennia. To explain the divine causality which permitted the Sutean tribesmen to irrupt into settled areas and to cause havoc in major cities such as Babylon, Sippar, **Dur-Kurigalzu**, Uruk, and Der, the author of the epic weaves the drama of the warrior-god Erra, his henchman Ishum, and the divine Sibitte (the 'Seven'). Erra persuades Marduk to leave his temple and have some of the paraphernalia of his statue cleaned. With Marduk's protective power no longer present, Erra and his warrior gods (and the Suteans, their earthly counterparts) decimate Babylonia. Eventually, with the land desolate, Erra is persuaded to relent, and the Sutean invasions draw to a close. Babylonia is promised a great future: the return of her scattered people, the prosperity of the fertile land, and the rise of a great king who will rule over all nations. (emphasis added)

And on page 211 of Lowell K. Handy, *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, we read:

During the reign of Adad-apla-iddina (1069-1048), the former Kassite capital **Dur-Kurigalzu**, Der, Sippar and the southern Babylonian cities of Uruk and Nippur were plundered by Aramaean marauders. During the following century, famine, crop failure, repeated semi-nomadic incursions and the closing of the western Euphrates trade routes resulted in turbulent and even anarchic conditions within Babylonian cities, especially to the northwest. Grain prices are recorded at seven and one-half times the normal rate of exchange in the Bit-Abi-Rattash kudurru (986-954). In the same document, indications of irregular gathering of taxes signal a weak central authority, together with the protracted financial embarrassment of Arad-Sibitti, who was no less a personage than a Babylonian governor. The Babylonian New Year's Festival, a vital public legitimization of the king's authority and the attendant prosperity of the country, went unobserved fourteen times in the first half of the 10th century, several instances of which were attributed to Aramaean hostilities. Although the text of the Erra Epic was probably composed in the 8th century, the horrific disasters of the 11th and 10th centuries, such as the nomadic plundering of the cities and temples of Sippar and Der, are evoked as literary foils in the construction of a cosmic order that dissolves into chaos through the ambitions of a Babylonian god of warfare and pestilence. (emphasis added)

These comments hardly deserve to be addressed, since a perusal of the Erra Epic should tell the reader that an obscured sun during the day, obstructed moon and stars at night, tidal waves, quaking mountains, diseased and dying crops and livestock, not to speak of the decimation via a variety of sources (famine, disease/plague, civil war, invading marauders) of a large segment of the population of the country, have nothing in common with the events of the 11th and 10th centuries described by these two sources. We admit that Sutean raids occurred earlier in history, and famine is not unique to the 8th century, whether in Assyria or Babylonia. But what does that prove? And what would inspire an 8th century author to create an inordinately lengthy epic "to explain the divine causality" of the earlier times, or to evoke such times as "literary foils in the construction of a cosmic order that dissolves into chaos", whatever that means? And we wonder how Kabti-ilani-Marduk would even know about these earlier incidents, dated from two to three hundred years before he was born.

The reader will note that we have highlighted the name Dur-Kurigalzu in both quotations listed above, this for an obvious reason. It is assumed by both sources that late in the 2nd millennium

and early in the 1st millennium, the Suteans invaded Babylonia, and ravaged multiple cities, including Babylon, Der, Uruk, Sippar, Nippur, and Dur-Kurigalzu, the first four also named in the Erra Epic as cities invaded by the Suteans. The commonality of names is hardly surprising. Whatever would prompt the Suteans to invade the four named cities, plus two others, in the reign of Adad-apla-iddina (1069-1048) is probably the same reason they also chose to invade those four named cities in 765 or shortly thereafter. What is surprising is the mention of Dur-Kurigalzu, which according to our revised chronology did not even exist in the earlier time frame. Not only is it surprising, it is annoying, since it is not accurate. Scholars should be more careful in their statements. If Dur-Kurigalzu was invaded by Suteans in the reign of Adad-apla-iddina then the 3rd (Kassite) dynasty of Babylon did not overlap the 4th-9th dynasties, our dating of the reigns of the two kings named Kurigalzu is off by 440 years, our long sought for, late 10th century king Ashurbanipal, did not exist, and we should delete the entirety of our 3rd and 4th papers.

We draw attention to the problem lest our readers be confused by these faulty references. A glance at the [Wikipedia article on the reign of Adad-apla-iddina](#) immediately clears up the problem. There we read the following:

His reign was apparently marked by an invasion of Arameans led by a usurper. “Der, Dur-Anki (Nippur). [Sippar](#), Parsa (Dur-Kurigalzu) they demolished. The Suteans attacked and the booty of Sumer and Akkad they took home.” These attacks were confirmed in an inscription of a later king of the following dynasty, Simbar-šihu, which relates

The throne of Ellil in the E-kur-igi-gal which Nabū-kudurri-ušur, a former king, had fashioned – during the reign of Adad-apla-iddina, king of Bābil, hostile Arameans and Suteans, enemies of the E-kur and of Nippur, they who laid hands on the Duranki, (who) upset in Sippar, the pristine town, the seat of the high judge of the gods, their rites, (who) sacked the land of the Sumerians and the Akkadians, leveled all temples – the goods and the property of Ellil which the Arameans carried off and which the Suteans had appropriated...^[7] —Simbar-šihu, *Inscription*

Clearly the name Dur-Kurigalzu does not occur in the 11th century B.C. document that describes the Aramean invasion referenced by our two “scholarly” quotations. Nor will the reader ever come across the name Dur-Kurigalzu in any inscription dated prior to the mid-10th century construction of that city by king Kurigalzu I. Instead the relevant document specifically states that the Arameans/Suteans invaded a town named Parsa. And the fact that the Wikipedia contributor has supplied the name Dur-Kurigalzu following the mention of Parsa informs us unambiguously that the city of Dur-Kurigalzu was founded on the site of an earlier settlement named Parsa, a fact that can be verified from many sources. Kudos to the Wikipedia author, whose scholarship in this matter is commendable. Not only does the reference permit us to fend off criticism, it actually serves as proof positive that our revision is correct. If the small town of Parsa, a hundred miles north (and slightly west) of Babylon, was adopted by Kurigalzu I in the middle of the 14th century B.C. as the site of his new city complex, and the newly founded and enlarged city of Dur-Kurigalzu, several kilometers in diameter, complete with city walls and ziggurat, existed on the site for over two hundred years, before being burned and ransacked by

the Elamites early in the 12th century, then how is it that the city, once again bearing the name of Parsa, and apparently functioning as a vibrant city, can be invaded by the Suteans in the 11th century, this according to the traditional history. Let the reader decide.

Nabu-shuma-ishkun:

From the Wikipedia article related to [Nabu-shuma-ishkun](#) we learn the following. 1) This king “ruled during a time of great civil unrest”. 2) He was unrelated to Eriba-Marduk (revised dates 773-761) and arguably came to power during the chaos which we believe was on-going during the last year of the life of his predecessor. 3) An inscription of the governor of [Borsippa](#), Nabû-šuma-imbi, “records the struggle over the control of their fields [i.e. fields owned by the inhabitants of Borsippa] in the face of the incursions of marauders from Babylon and Dilbat; also Chaldeans and Arameans. At night, the city streets and its temple area were transformed into a battleground. During the fifth and sixth years of the king, the strife was so great that the cultic idol of Nabu was prevented from participating in the Akitu, or new year’s festival in Babylon”. 4) At least [one document portrays this king as a madman](#), highlighting his barbarism and his “violation of all moral and legal principles”. 5) It is known for certain that his reign ended in 748, the year his successor Nabonassar came to power. And since there exist documents dated to his 13th year, his reign began at the latest in 761 B.C.

This king’s reign adds little to our argument. The slaughter in Babylonia may not have completely ended, but the worst is probably over. The cylinder inscription of Nabu-shuma-imbi informs us that some rebellion persists, and the Chaldeans from the south of the country, and Arameans from the north-western Euphrates valley, and the desert regions bordering the Tigris-Euphrates valley in the central region of the country, still roam the land. In Assyria the Eponym lists suggest that the yearly military campaigns have resumed. We can only assume that some semblance of normalcy has also returned to Babylonia, though the country is without doubt still traumatized by the enormous loss of life, and the shortage of foodstuffs. Civil unrest remains. The ash in the atmosphere is gradually dissipating and the resulting toxicity in the rains has apparently ended. Fields are beginning to produce grain sufficient for the drastically reduced population. Recovery is underway, though ash does continue to obstruct the fullness of the sun, and obscure the starlight at night. We have no evidence that these assumption are correct, at least in the meagre documentation of the tyrant who has usurped the throne. But we do know from documents belonging to his successor that a new pollutant free era does begin in 748 with the advent of Nabonassar.

Nabonassar:

From the Wikipedia article related to [Nabonassar](#) (747-734) we learn multiple interesting facts, but only three which are directly relevant to the subject at hand, namely 1) “His reign saw the beginning of a new era characterized by the systematic maintenance of chronologically precise

historical records; 2) Berossus, a priest and astronomer who lived at the beginning of the 3rd century B.C., wrote in his exemplar entitled *Babyloniaca* that "He [Nabonassar] gathered the records of his predecessors and destroyed them, thus ensuring that the history of the Chaldean kings began with him"; and 3) In Nabonassar's third year the powerful Neo-Assyrian king Tiglath-Pilezer III came to power in Assyria, and in his 1st campaign, a razzia through Babylonia to secure his southern border, it is said that "His forces skirted the metropolitan areas of Dur-Kurigalzu and Sippar and may have reached as far as the region of Nippur." Each of these three items adds a piece to the puzzle, as it were. We discuss them in the order listed.

1) The New Era of Nabonidus. In 765 B.C. a new era began in Assyria, denoted in the Assyrian eponym lists by a line drawn before the ninth year of the king Ashur-Dan. The fact that a new era is said to have begun in the year 747 B.C., the first year of the reign of Nabonassar, an era characterized by new and precise chronological data that could only be obtained by observation of the stars, informs us clearly that the first era has ended by this date. The night skies over Assyria and Babylonia at long last permit astronomers to make their observations and perform their calculations. And the fact that Babylonia, during the 18 years of obscured vision of the stars and the moon, has been overrun by foreigners, including the Chaldeans, renowned in years to come for their mastery of astronomical data, helps to explain the revolution that began in 747 B.C.

Immanuel Velikovsky, in his classic volume *World's in Collision* (1950) makes the following informative comment:

In -747 a new calendar was introduced in the Middle East, and that year is known as "the beginning of the era of Nabonassar." It is asserted that some astronomical event gave birth to this new calendar, but the nature of the event is not known. The beginning of the era of Nabonassar, otherwise an obscure Babylonian king, was an astronomical date used as late as the second Christian century by the great mathematician and astronomer of the Alexandrian school, Ptolemy, and also by other scholars. It was employed as a point of departure of ancient astronomical tables. *World's in Collision* p. 210

Quoting from Cumont's *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans*, Velikovsky added:

This was not a political or religious era ... Farther back there was no certainty in regard to the calculation of time. It is from that moment that the records of eclipses begin which Ptolemy used." (Cumont, pp 8-9)

Velikovsky asks the question paramount in the minds of the current generation of scholars. What was the astronomical event that gave birth to the era of Nabonassar? Velikovsky correctly concludes that the great raash of Uzziah's day (= the raash in the book of Amos) must have had something to do with the renaissance of night time study by the ancients. But for him it was the immediate cause, since for him the era of Nabonassar was preceded by a period of quite mundane, routine social life in Babylonia. For him there was only one "new era" and that era began in 747 B.C. Thus Velikovsky assumed that the raash of Uzziah's day took place in 747

B.C. We know differently. It happened in 765 B.C. and its effect was precisely the opposite of what Velikovsky envisaged – obstructed starlight, not increased clarity of nighttime vision. And Velikovsky in this respect at least, is typical of modern researchers. Scholars will have great difficulty coming to grips with the fact that two unique era's took place back to back in Assyria and Babylonia, one running from 765-747 B.C., and one never ending era beginning in 747 B.C.

Our inclusion of this discussion serves two purposes. On the one hand it serves to confirm our argument that the 765 B.C. event was not an eclipse, nor some other obstruction of the sun that lasted only for hours or days. Pollution of the atmosphere that possibly lasted for 18 years demands a cause as catastrophic as the eruption we describe. And the discussion serves also to explain the increased importance of the Chaldeans within Babylonia, leading to the advancements in the field of astronomy that characterized the “era of Nabonidus”.

We have said, early in this paper, that any knowledge that serves to verify the accuracy of our explanation of the date 765 B.C., helps to confirm the accuracy of the Egyptian and Hittite time lines that hinge upon that date. These timelines, in turn, served in papers #3 and #4 to provide synchronisms that established the accuracy of our developing timeline for Babylonia, including arguing that the 3rd (Kassite) dynasty did not end until the year 714 B.C.

2) Destruction of Babylonian records. The reader might well ask what possible connection exists between Nabonassar gathering up official records and destroying them, and our claim that the Kassites were still ruling Babylonia in the 8th century B.C. We answer this hypothetical question with a single name – Adad-shuma-usur. It surely has not escaped the notice of our readers that this Kassite king, whose dates are 775-746 B.C. in the revised chronology, ruled Babylonia through the entirety of the reigns of Eriba-Marduk and Nabu-shuma-ishkun, and possibly a year or two into the reign of Nabonidus, depending on the accuracy of his revised dates. In our paper #4 we examined the [Wikipedia article related to his reign](#), urging the reader to be cautious and critical when reading it, since the traditional history dates his reign to the late 13th and early 12th centuries B.C., and interprets all documents bearing his name as if they are composed in that era. We will not repeat the argument here. Our interest in this king here has to do with only one thing – the extreme lack of documentation attesting his reign. It follows that there is only one comment from the Wikipedia article of interest in this regard. It is said concerning Adad-shuma-usur that “There is surprisingly little contemporary evidence for this king considering the purported length of his reign, which was the longest recorded in the Kassite dynasty.” And what specifically does the Wikipedia contributor mean by “surprisingly little contemporary evidence”? For an answer we turn to J.A. Brinkman, *Materials and Studies for Kassite History, Vol. I* (1976) in which this widely recognized scholar itemizes all the known *contemporary* inscriptions of Adad-shuma-usur on pages 90-94. The complete list includes

1) Seven bricks, all duplicates, bearing a ten-line Sumerian building inscription recording work by Adad-shuma-usur on the Ekur in Nippur.

- 2) Two Luristan bronze daggers bearing the name of this king, both part of the Foroughi Collection in Teheran, and probably found during excavations in modern day Iran.
- 3) A late copy of a royal inscription, the original contained on a bronze statue no longer extant.
- 4) A neo-Assyrian copy of a letter sent from Adad-shuma-usur to the Assyrian kings Ashur-Nirari V (Ashur-Nirari III according to Brinkman) and Ili-ihadda. We have already commented on this letter in our paper #4.
- 5) A fragmentary stone kudurru recording a land grant by Adad-shuma-usur, found at Susa.
- 6) Sixteen economic texts, nine bearing dates ranging from year 3 to year 13. No provenance for these texts is given by Brinkman, though it is very likely that the majority originate from Nippur, the city which served as the main base of governmental activity during the tenure of the Kassite kings. According to Brinkman

Nippur has yielded about twelve thousand inscriptions and inscribed fragments, of which more than fourteen hundred are catalogued below. About 95 percent of the catalogued texts - and a somewhat larger percentage of the uncatalogued - are economic, among which administrative documents far outnumber legal inscriptions. Many of these texts come from archives, both private and official, covering the generations between the fourth year of Burna-Buriash II (1356) and the reign of Kadashman-Harbe II (1223). Nippur has likewise been an important source for royal building inscriptions (all on bricks and written in Sumerian) and votive texts; the dates of these texts range from at least Burna-Buriash II to Meli-Shipak. Op. cit. p. 41

Assuming that our items 1) and 6) originate from Nippur, a reasonable guess, only seven bricks and sixteen economic texts, out of “about twelve thousand inscriptions and inscribed fragments” are attributable to Adad-shuma-usur”. Small wonder that scholars are perplexed.

Add to those statistics the fact that at Dur-Kurigalzu, Ur, and Babylon, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th principal sources of documentation from the Kassite period, not a single inscription of Adad-shuma-usur is known. This is particularly surprising in the case of Dur-Kurigalzu, where 225 inscribed objects from the Kassite period have been discovered, though we must admit that as yet only a small fraction of the enormous walled city has been excavated. Most of these name one or the other of the two kings Kurigalzu, though two name Kudur-Enlil, one or two name Shagarakti-Shuriash, and fourteen name Kashtiliashu IV, these three being kings numbered 26, 27, and 28 in the Kassite dynasty. There also are four dated to Marduk-apla-iddina I, the 34th king. Absent is any document from the reign of Adad-shuma-usur, the 32nd Kassite king, though his 30 year reign is only slightly less than the 38 combined years of the other four kings.

It should be noted that in our list of inscribed items from the reign of Adad-shuma-usur, items 2), 4) and 6) were contemporary artifacts, but were discovered outside of Babylonia, and the seven bricks mentioned in item 1) should rather be reckoned as a single artifact, since all were part of the same refurbished section of the temple complex at Nippur known as the Ekur. In the days of Adad-shuma-usur this structure was intact, and the inscriptions on the bricks would

not have been visible. Even item 3) needs to be qualified, since while the statue does date to the time of Adad-shuma-usur, the copy does not. This leaves the sixteen economic texts as the only surviving, easily accessible documents from Babylonia dated securely to the reign of Adad-shuma-usur. And these all date between the years 775-763 B.C., leaving open the question, “What happened to the massive corpus of documents that must have been created bearing the name of this king in this thirteen year period, and more to the point, where are the documents and artifacts associated with this king’s reign in the seventeen year period following, i.e. from 762 to 746 B.C.

While Brinkman states on p. 41 of his *Materials and Studies for Kassite History* that “twelve thousand inscriptions and inscribed fragments” have been excavated from Nippur alone, he also states in the preface to this same book that in the whole of Babylonia that same number of “primary documents” exists from the Kassite period, a fact we quoted in our previous section. We would expect that the number of “primary documents” for each Kassite king would increase with the passage of time, as reign of the later kings emerged from the “dark ages” of the Ancient Near East. We would expect therefore that a king whose reign lasted for thirty years, and whose reign took place in the 8th century B.C., contemporary with the kings of the well documented neo-Assyrian empire, would leave behind thousands of documents for posterity. What happened to them? Scholars are perplexed. Thus the quote from our Wikipedia article.

The revised history has a ready answer. In fact it has two.

On the one hand we note that the reign of Adad-shuma-usur overlapped a very troubled period of Babylonia history, where the last five years of the reign of the vassal king Eriba-Marduk (765-761 B.C.) witnessed a series of natural disasters, disease, famine, civil strife, and the invasion of Aramean semi-nomads. The following reign was perhaps not quite so troubled, but civil strife, bordering on civil war, persisted for at least a half dozen years, roughly 761-755. Through this entire period, and for an unknown number of years beyond, the sunlight and clarity of the night sky was dimmed, less so as the years passed, but still ominous. We do not believe Adad-shuma-usur ventured far from his home in the Zagros region, where some of the same natural disasters may also have been experienced, though his officials in Nippur probably continued to conduct business as usual, as best they could, but on a drastically reduced scale. The production of documents was minimal, in part due to the massive reduction in the size of the population. And who knows what damage was done to the documents and artifacts that were produced, considering the severity of the revolts and invasions. Apparently very few documents, most written on fragile clay tablets, survived the first twenty years of the reign of the Kassite king.

On the other hand, the production of economic documents and inscribed artifacts almost certainly increased over time, and for the last decade of the life of this king (ca 757-747 B.C.) should not have been subject to the warfare that characterized his early regnal years. Literally thousands of inscribed documents should have survived his death in 746 B.C. But assuming the accuracy of the claim of Berossus that Nabonassar “gathered the records of his predecessors

and destroyed them” these documents did not long survive the death of Adad-shuma-usur. There should be no doubt that animosity would have existed between Nabonassar, the native Babylonian vassal, and Adad-shuma-usur, the Kassite overlord. Besides, apparently the Kassite king had done little to prevent the carnage in the Babylonian vassal state, allowing the slaughter of the Babylonian population to continue for years unabated, reducing Karduniash to a shadow of its former glory. How best to wreak vengeance following the death of the Kassite king than to erase every visible sign of his existence.

One final section and this paper will end.

3) Dur-Kurigalzu Once Again.

Two years after the beginning of the reign of Nabonassar (747-734), and one year after the death of Adad-shuma-usur (775-746) and the ascendancy of Meli-Shipak, his successor, Tiglath-Pilezer III, succeeded the weak king Ashur-Nirari V (755-745) in Assyria. The next year, in his 1st year, Tiglath-Pilezer initiated a whirlwind campaign through Babylonia, a razzia to secure his southern border. According to our Wikipedia source “His forces skirted the metropolitan areas of Dur-Kurigalzu and Sippar, and may have reached as far as the region of Nippur.” Other sources suggest that he actually conquered Dur-Kurigalzu and Sippar of Shamash [a suburb of Sippar. Thus we read in the [Wikipedia article concerning Tiglath-Pileser III](#) that

Upon ascending the throne, he claimed (in Annal 9, which dates to 745 BCE, his first regnal year) to have annexed Babylonia, from "Dur-(Kuri)galzu, Sippar of Shamash, ... the cities [of Ba]bylonia up to the Uqnu river [by the shore of the Lo]wer [Sea].

Again, this time in the CAH III Part 2, on page 81

The territory invaded was that traditionally disputed between the two powers, the extreme north of Babylonia and the east Tigris area. In the latter region a number of places were taken as the Assyrian invasion pushed east and south as far as the Ulaya River and the Persian Gulf. This advance brought under Assyrian control numerous cities over which the Babylonians had hegemony, and Aramaean tribes, which were transported to various areas. The conquered domains were divided up and apportioned to neighbouring provinces in the Zagros, such as (Ma)zamua. A new city called Kar-Ashur was built, a canal dredged to provide irrigation, and people settled there.

Concerning the activities of the Assyrians between the Tigris and Euphrates on this campaign, there is a problem: it is uncertain which Babylonian cities were conquered by Tiglath-pileser on his first campaign and which on his later campaigns. In the display texts the place names are all listed together and the annals, which could solve the problem, are badly broken in the relevant sections. There is no doubt that he captured important centres in the extreme north, such as Dur-Kurigalzu and a suburb of Sippar called Sippar of Shamash, but how far beyond this did Tiglath-pileser go? The generally accepted view is that he achieved little between the two rivers beyond the conquests in the extreme north just named. In the annals for 745 he boasts of capturing a suburb of Nippur,

Qin-Nippur, but none of the major cities south of Dur-Kurigalzu is mentioned in the preserved narrative, and it seems as though he merely made a quick raid into the heart of Babylonia. The purpose of this raid is of special interest. There is reason to believe that it was intended to make secure the position of the Babylonian king Nabonassar, in fulfilment of a treaty obligation.

Surprisingly, we really don't care if Dur-Kurigalzu was skirted [avoided] or conquered by Tiglath-Pileser III in 745 B.C. We are concerned only with the fact that the city was correctly named in his annals. In the revised history the city of Dur-Kurigalzu was built in the middle of the 10th century and remained the Kassites home base in Karduniash/Babylonia until destroyed in the Elamite invasion that brought the 3rd dynasty to a close in 714. If conquered by Tiglath-Pileser III in 745 - unlikely, but certainly possible considering the times – it did not remain in Assyrian hands for long, since, as noted in the preceding section, several documents dated to the reign of Meli-Shipak were excavated within that city, and four documents of the later Kassite king Marduk-apla-iddina were also discovered.

Assuming that we are not correct, and the 3rd (Kassite) dynasty of Babylon did not overlap dynasties 4-9, then why is the city still vibrant, four hundred years after being destroyed in the middle of the 12th century, still surrounded by enormous enclosure walls, still housing its ziggurat and temple complex. On page 31 above, after correcting an earlier CAH article which said, mistakenly, that the city of Dur-Kurigalzu was invaded in the middle of the 11th century, when the text actually said that a city named Parsa had been attacked, we penned these words.

If the small town of Parsa, a hundred miles north (and slightly west) of Babylon, was adopted by Kurigalzu I in the middle of the 14th century B.C. as the site of his new city complex, and the newly founded and enlarged city of Dur-Kurigalzu, several kilometers in diameter, complete with city walls and ziggurat, existed on the site for over two hundred years, before being burned and ransacked by the Elamites early in the 12th century, then how is it that the city, once again bearing the name of Parsa, and apparently functioning as a vibrant city, can be invaded by the Suteans in the 11th century, this according to the traditional history.

This time, however, the CAH article has the name right. Are we now to believe that for a third time the city name has changed, from Parsa, to Dur-Kurigalzu, to Parsa, to Dur-Kurigalzu again. Or can we finally accept the fact that the site of the city, originally Parsa, was used by Kurigalzu I in the middle of the 10th century to construct a namesake city, still functioning in 745 B.C. when Tiglath-Pileser III came to pay a visit?

And with that, at long last, we conclude this 5th paper.