

## II. 13 CHRONOLOGICAL LINKS BETWEEN THE CUNEIFORM WORLD OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND ANCIENT EGYPT

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The multiple sources available for the reconstruction of the chronological background of ancient Near Eastern history are a major factor distinguishing these cultures from Egypt, where ultimately there is but one single historical thread. By contrast, Mesopotamia and the neighbouring regions offer a series of at least partially independent sources. There are admittedly important differences in the distribution of these sources over time and space such that phases with abundant material contrast with others which are less satisfying. For certain periods, there is simply insufficient material to draw any conclusions, regardless of the number of different threads available.

The middle of the second millennium is such a period, and this has led to the conundrum of three parallel chronological systems, each based on the Venus tablet recording year 6 of Ammisaduqa of Babylon.<sup>1</sup> These Venus observations seem to have offered the basis for the astronomical calculations, since this observational event repeats itself every 56/64 years, and thus the date means that the year 6 of Ammisaduqa can be set on a spectrum ranging from 1641 to 1577 BC. This fix point became a pivot upon which the various chronologies turned,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The texts are part of the omnia series *Enūma Anu Enlil*; cf. esp. E. Reiner & D. Pingree, *Babylonian Planetary Omens. Part I: The Venus Tablet of Ammisaduqa* (Malibu, 1975). For an evaluation of the data, and the link with the lunar dates in particular, cf. also, V. G. Gurzadyan, "On the Astronomical Records and Babylonian Chronology", *Akkadica* 119–120 (2000), 180ff. and the literature listed there.

<sup>2</sup> Fundamental for establishing the chronological frameworks were the work of F. Cornelius, "Die Chronologie des Vorderen Orients im 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.", *AfO* 17 (1954–56), 294ff., with a short survey of the state of the chronological discussion up to that time, and a plea for the "Low Chronology", along with B. Landsberger, "Assyrische Königsliste und 'Dunkles Zeitalter'", *JCS* 8 (1954), 31–45, 47–73, 106–133 and A. Goetze, "On the Chronology of the Second Millennium BC", *JCS* 11 (1957), 53–61, 63–73, favouring the "Middle Chronology", along with the response from F. Cornelius, "Chronology. Eine Erwiderung", *JCS* 12 (1958), 101–104. A standard table with dates for Mesopotamian rulers following the Middle Chronology was prepared by J. A. Brinkman for A. L. Oppenheim & E. Reiner, *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago, 1977), 335–348.

with the later periods firmly anchored, and the earlier periods floating freely, the date for the fall of Babylon being 1595 (according to the Middle chronology) or 1531 BC (according to the Low chronology).<sup>3</sup> This point has now been lost since the observations are no longer viewed as reliable,<sup>4</sup> with the result that the long debate about the relative merits of the Middle or Low chronologies must now be abandoned, having become pointless as the various alternatives for an absolute date are no longer separated by intervals of 64 years. Instead, we now have a moving link separating a block of 500 years<sup>5</sup> from the later periods where the chronology is relatively reliable.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The conquest of Babylon by Murshili I is an important event in the Hittite versions, but cannot be used chronologically. The Babylonian records indicate that it took place at the "time of Samsuditana"; Agum (II?) recovered of the plundered statues only 24 years later. The relevant references have been collected by G. Wilhelm, "Murshili", *RIA* VIII: 434–435; on the chronological evaluation, cf. A. Goetze, *JCS* 11, 65–73, and for the difficulties of the Kassite kings named Agum, cf. esp. J. A. Brinkman, *Materials and Studies for Kassite History* (Chicago, 1976), I, 95, 97.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. most recently, L. Sassmannshausen, "Babylonian Chronology of the 2nd Half of the 2nd Millennium BC", in: H. Hunger & R. Pruzsinszky, eds., *Mesopotamian Dark Age Revisited. Proceedings of an International Conference of SCIEEM 2000, Vienna 8th–9th November 2002* (Vienna, 2004), 65.

On the evaluation of the dates, cf. P. J. Huber, "Astronomy and Ancient Chronology", *Akkadica* 119–120 (2000), 160–174, who still maintains that a statistical analysis of the possibly faulty dates is possible, and that the ensuing results which he considers to be compatible with a date for Ammisaduqa 1 are 1582 or 1516.

<sup>5</sup> The preservation of the very different strands from the beginning of the Ur III period (2111–2003 BC, Middle Chronology) to the end of the Old Babylonian period are so tightly woven that the relative chronology for the history of the first half of the second millennium can be viewed as certain; the prospective of either larger hiatus or a significant reduction can be excluded. For the Ur III period, with its rich harvest of chronological data, cf. W. Sallaberger "Ur III-Zeit", in: W. Sallaberger & A. Westenholz, *Mesopotamien: Akkade-Zeit und Ur III-Zeit* (Fribourg, 1999), esp. 123ff.

<sup>6</sup> Explicitly: the use of a date 1531 or 1595 BC for the Hittite conquest of Babylon, which is certainly relevant for the beginning of Hittite history, is today a mere convention; limiting it to a period of 10–20 years is possible. Cf. the basic observation by C. Kühne, "Imperial Mittani: An Attempt at Historical Reconstruction", *SCN/H* 10 (1999), 203 n. 1, who in the meantime assumes a decade between "1550 and 1540 as a transitional decade for the end of the Old Babylonian Dynasty". Referring to the running dendrochronological analyses by P. I. Kuniholm (cf. also S. W. Manning, B. Kromer, P. I. Kuniholm & M. W. Newton, "Anatolian Tree Rings and a New Chronology for the East Mediterranean Bronze-Iron Ages", *Science* 294 (2001), 2532–35; M. W. Newton & P. I. Kuniholm, "A Dendrochronological Framework for the Assyrian Colony Period in Asia Minor", *Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi Arkeoloji Dergisi* 7 (2004), 165ff. and the current reports of the Aegean Dendrochronology Project at <http://www.arts.cornell.edu/dendro/>), he proposes 1541 BC  $\pm$  37 years as a possible date for the Babylon campaign.

It was just a question of time until a new attempt would be made to revise the entire chronology of the period before the first millennium. The model proposed by Gasche et al. in 1998<sup>7</sup> thus gave momentum to a new and intense debate which endures up to the time of writing.<sup>8</sup> Whether a new chronological framework similar to that prevailing with the Middle Chronology will emerge remains to be seen. New sources are still not available, with the exception of the gradual clarification of the royal succession in the Middle Hittite period, which can at least offer some kind of orientation around the middle of the second millennium.<sup>9</sup> At present, the earlier chronological proposals are maintained as conventions.

The greatest lack in the cuneiform sources thus continues to be the lack of adequate data<sup>10</sup> combined with the absence of an overarching system of year names.<sup>11</sup>

In Assyria, the traditional principle of naming years and counting according to the holder of a certain office (*līmu*) was maintained, but the sequence of officials in the books of eponyms eliminated the need for naming the years. This system was already established in the first quarter of the second millennium, and became a standard dating method, as can be seen in the eponym dates in the thousands of Old Assyrian texts from the *kārum*-period in Anatolia, and as is confirmed by the recent discovery of two tablets with *līmu* lists.<sup>12</sup> With the overlap between

<sup>7</sup> Gasche et al., *Dating*.

<sup>8</sup> Thus a recent attempt at an ultra-long chronology, cf. C. Eder, "Assyrische Distanzangaben und die absolute Chronologie Vorderasiens", *AoF* 31 (2004), 191–236.

<sup>9</sup> There are a whole series of astronomical observations completely independent of these which are highly significant and could contribute to gaining a higher resolution for the Delta T (Deceleration of the rotation of the earth) factor which is so important and difficult in these calculations. In addition, there are specific cases where chronologically absolute dates can be checked or controlled using calculable dates. Here, we will merely refer to the detailed investigations by Stephenson, *Eclipses*. Specifically relevant for the Ancient Near East are chapters 4–7; cf. also below Locher, chapter III. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. A. Ungnad, "Datenlisten", *RIA* II: 131–194 and Oppenheim (n. 2), 145–146.

<sup>11</sup> An illustration of selection of such year names can be found in translation in W.H.Ph. Römer, in: *TUAT* I, Fasc. 4, (Gütersloh, 1984), 337ff. For the year names, cf., above all, the relevant article by A. Ungnad, "Eponymen", *RIA* II: 412–457, and the compilation of the literature with possible additions in Gasche et al., *Dating*, 47 n. 200 and the short survey in Sallaberger (n. 5), 231–237.

<sup>12</sup> On the discovery of the lists and an initial evaluation of their chronological relevance, cf. K. R. Veenhof, "Old Assyrian Chronology", *Akkadica* 119–120 (2000), 137–150; these are now published: K. R. Veenhof, *The Old Assyrian List of Year Eponyms from Karum Kanish and its Chronological Implications*, Atatürk Supreme Council for Culture, Language and History—Publications of the Turkish Historical Society Serial VI—No. 64 (Ankara, 2003). The discovery of additional texts of this genre has since been announced.

these lists and the eponym chronicle from Mari, a period of almost exactly 200 years is not absolutely precisely dated in relative terms. This allows the end of *kārum* Kanesh II to be placed into a relative chronological context, and this permits further deductions about the overall chronological framework of the whole period. If we allow that the eponym chronicle ends with the death of Shamshi-Adad I, and the final 20 or more names in the *kārum*-texts cannot be identified, the end of *kārum* II will have been roughly in year 11 or 12 of Shamshi-Adad I.<sup>13</sup> This means that the restoration of a few more fragmentary entries in the Assyrian king-lists contributes significantly to the second major source for the establishment of an Ancient Near Eastern chronology.<sup>14</sup> Yet here too, it must be conceded that the later periods are better documented and more reliable, than both the earlier era, and the neighbouring regions. These lists are the spine of all dates stretching back to the 12th century, complemented by eponym-lists (generally complete for the first half of the first millennium),<sup>15</sup> and themselves anchored absolutely with a solar eclipse, dated to 15 June 763 BC, recorded in the eponym-lists.<sup>16</sup> The general compatibility of the versions of the Assyrian king-lists thus leaves only small margins in dating the reigns of the Assyrian kings back to the 12th century.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For details, cf. Veenhof, *Akkadica* 119–120, esp. 139 and Veenhof (n. 12), 61–62. Veenhof dates the accession of Shamshi-Adad to the year 1833 BC, on the basis of the Middle Chronology. Important is also his observation that the *Distanzangaben* of the later Assyrian tradition relate to Irishum I and Shamshi-Adad I, meaning that these are therefore probably realistic, effectively negating the hypothesis that the *Distanzangaben* are not chronologically relevant. Following the traditional Middle Chronology, Veenhof specifies the following Old Assyrian dates: the accession of Irishum I in 1974 BC and the death of Shamshi-Adad I in 1776 BC.

<sup>14</sup> On the king-lists, cf. above all, the article by A. K. Grayson, “Königslisten und Chroniken. B. Akkadisch”, *RLA* VI: 86–135; by comparison, the Sumerian lists are less useful, cf. D. O. Edzard, “Königslisten und Chroniken. A. Sumerisch. 1.5. Historischer Wert”, *RLA* VI: 81–82.

<sup>15</sup> Fundamental for the Neo-Assyrian eponyms is A. Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910–612 BC* (Helsinki, 1994); for the Middle Assyrian period, H. Freydank, *Beiträge zur mittelassyrischen Chronologie und Geschichte* (Berlin, 1991) is indispensable. For the more recent eponym lists, cf. the literature cited by Gasche et al., *Dating*, 47 n. 204.

<sup>16</sup> The course of this total solar eclipse and other data is easily accessible on Espenak's NASA eclipse website: <http://sunearth.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse/>. For the specifications of this solar eclipse, cf. also Stephenson, *Eclipses*, 126–127.

<sup>17</sup> For this, cf. J. Boese & G. Wilhelm, “*Aššur-dān* I., *Ninurta-Apil-Ekur* und die mittelassyrische Chronologie”, *WZKM* 71 (1979), 19ff.; the error margin for Ashshur-resha-ishi I (1132–1115 BC) towards the end of the 12th century is  $\pm 2$  years.

In comparison with the Assyrian sources, the Babylonian material is far poorer. The Babylonians did indeed move relatively rapidly to a more elegant and relatively more accessible means of dating, namely simply counting the years sequentially according to the king's reign, which became the norm as early as the first half of the 14th century.<sup>18</sup> However, there is a comparative dearth of written sources,<sup>19</sup> so that the Babylonian chronology must be established by synchronisms with Assyrian history, where works such as the synchronic history are important—if partial<sup>20</sup>—witnesses.

The general situation is more or less comparable in all of the other areas, as a consistent sequential system of dates was not used anywhere, or is at least not preserved. This means that any attempt to establish a precise chronology for the history of the ancient Near East must rely initially on the Assyrian data, and only then on that of their neighbours, and their predecessors. Once these relative chronologies have been established, the second step is to identify the best possible synchronisms with the Assyrian chronology. Due to the multitude of sources, and especially the diplomatic correspondence of certain periods, it is possible to establish not merely one-to-one links, but actually to weave a fabric of relations which can actually be established without any internal contradictions.

Arriving at absolute dates depends upon a very different and diverse set of conditions. For the first millennium, people and events can be dated with near precision, as the uncertainty is highly constrained. For the earlier periods, some closed blocks can be isolated in which the relative chronology is certain, but anchoring these to the absolute dating of the first millennium leaves a considerable margin of error. There is a significant contrast with respect to the precise chronological synchronisations between Mesopotamia and Egypt for the first and second millennia. For the first millennium BC, where the Assyrian data is reliable and precise, the correlation difficulties lie with Egypt, whereas before this, the reverse is true.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Brinkman (n. 3), 402f.; probably during the reign of Kadeshman-Enlil II.

<sup>19</sup> A. K. Grayson, "Königslisten und Chroniken. 3. Kings Lists", *RIA* VI: 89ff. offers a survey of the Babylonian sources; along with the fragments of a synchronic list, 121ff.

<sup>20</sup> This covers the period from the middle of the 2nd millennium through Adad-nerari III in the 8th century; edited by A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley, 1975).

Despite the millennia during which these civilisations existed, documents confirming direct contacts and exchange between Mesopotamia and its neighbours on the one hand, and Egypt on the other, are rather rare and restricted to certain historical phases. Although one can assume that at all times there will have been people who were travelling back and forth or trading between these lands, this has left virtually no trace in the sources. We only have access to major state activities—diplomatic contacts or military engagements—which were generally exceptional.<sup>21</sup> The lucky find of the Amarna archive appears to be a period of particularly intensive contacts, but may actually have been repeated at very different times. The multi-faceted diplomatic archives from Hattusha can serve as a hint that *cum grano salis* the same continuity of epistolary exchange may have taken place with other powers, and even in times which appear to us quite obscure.<sup>22</sup>

Despite such obstacles, there is a general consensus among scholars on the basic framework of the chronological framework which can be established using the basis provided by the Assyrian records, including also the reduction of ca. one decade in the Assyrian chronology proposed some time ago.<sup>23</sup> Another constraint is the revised model proposed by H. Gasche et al., which would result in a significant reduction even with respect to the Low chronology. Affecting the ancient Near East up to the middle of the second millennium BC, it touches a period for which the Assyrian sources do not provide complete cover.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The seemingly comprehensive documentation in the Mari archives does not reveal one single direct link to Egypt, cf. A. Malamat, *Mari and The Early Israelite Experience* (Oxford, 1989), 61f. c. n. 125. An informative survey on the geographical horizon of international relations in the Amorite period will be found in B. Lafont, “Relations internationales, alliances et diplomatie au temps des royaumes amorrites”, *Amurru* 2 (2001), 213ff., where Egypt likewise fails to appear.

<sup>22</sup> The first fragment of a cuneiform letter, presumably from the diplomatic correspondence of Ramesses II, was found in 2003 in the excavations at Pi-Ramesses in the Delta, cf. E. B. Pusch & S. Jakob, “Der Zipfel des diplomatischen Archivs Ramses’ II.”, *A&L* 13 (2003), 145–153.

<sup>23</sup> Fundamental is the contribution by Boese & Wilhelm (n. 17) as well as the further and generally positive reception with the literature to be found by Freydank (n. 15), 11 n. 3. Freydank (n. 15; 34) confirms that although no definitive conclusions can be drawn from what is hitherto known from the Middle Assyrian eponyms, he tends to assign the two kings relatively short reigns.

<sup>24</sup> The arguments in Gasche et al., *Dating*, are supported not only by philological historical sources, but fundamentally based on archaeological criteria. For a critical evaluation, cf. G. Colbow, “Syrian Chronology in the Old and Early Middle Babylonian Periods”, *Akkadica* 119–120 (2000), 103–116.

For the period from the end of the 14th century, the dates of this new proposal do not differ significantly from those used hitherto, as a comparison between the Boese/Wilhelm shortened Assyrian chronology and the “ultra-low chronology” produced by Gasche et al. shows.<sup>25</sup> The only point up for discussion between Tiglathpileser I (1114–1076 BC) and Ashshur-nerari II (1414–1408 BC) is the reign of Ashshur-dan I, and his predecessor Ninurta-apil-Ekur, which has led to the proposed reduction of Assyrian chronology by 10 years, as mentioned.<sup>26</sup> The interpretation of the expression *tuppishu* is less significant, since it concerns only the insertion of an additional year.<sup>27</sup>

The further back in Assyrian history one goes, the greater the divergences and the greater the room for differing chronological assumptions so that Gasche et al. favour bringing the end of the First Dynasty of Babylon down to 1499, rather than 1531 or 1595 BC. At present, from the philological standpoint, only the statements of the periodic intervals (*Distanzangaben*) can serve as control mechanisms. Unfortunately, there is no consensus on their value and chronological relevance. Gasche et al. logically argue that the temporal intervals preserved as *Distanzangaben* are either incorrect or they try to provide a specific interpretation for the relevant interval.<sup>28</sup> An inscription of Shalmaneser I concerning his

<sup>25</sup> Compare the table in Boese & Wilhelm (n. 17), 38 with that of Gasche et al., *Dating*, 62. The work by Freydank (n. 15; 188–189), offers another survey of the reigns of the Middle Assyrian kings following the standard dates and the shortened Assyrian chronology. In the following, we follow the shortened chronology offered by Boese & Wilhelm, as this provides better data when compared with Egyptian chronology.

<sup>26</sup> For the details, cf. Boese & Wilhelm (n. 17), 23ff.; the shortening was not adopted by Gasche et al., *Dating*, 51 c. n. 223, probably because the collation of the relevant passage (cf. J. A. Brinkman, *Or* 42 [1973], 300 n. 15 and particularly on this, cf. Boese & Wilhelm (n. 17; 24) in the “Nassouhi-Kinglist” (= Copy A of King List No. 9, J. A. Brinkman, *RLA* VI: 101ff.; the passage is in III 41f., *RLA* VI: 111) was interpreted as a confirmation although the reading—“46”—there, which Gasche et al., *Dating*, 51, used their table is described as “expressively optimistic”, cited from Boese/Wilhelm and not the actual “26+[x]” originally published by Brinkman, and cited by him again in the *RLA* VI: 111.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. the references cited by J. A. Brinkman, *RLA* VI: 112, who translates “his tablet”, for Ninurta-tukulti-Ashshur and Mutakkil-Nusku; W.v. Soden, *AHW*, 1304b, assumes that the corresponding entries are “short reigns of less than a year”, while Freydank (n. 15), 33–34 assumes either a form of coregency or a distinction of the actual exercise of power during the formally still existing reign of Ashshur-dan I, whereby the corresponding entries in the king lists do not record an independent reigns. Gasche et al., *Dating*, 53–54, likewise reckon with 0 years.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Gasche et al., *Dating*, 57: “Our analysis of the *Distanzangaben* makes it apparent that no firm chronological conclusions can be drawn from them.” This statement only applies to the model they propose.

reconstruction of the Ekursagkurkurra specifies a period of 580 years separated his reign from that of Shamshi-Adad I. Understood in this fashion, this would be an obstacle to a major chronological change.<sup>29</sup> The authors therefore propose that the passage should be interpreted as meaning that the number “580” does not refer to the interval between Shamshi-Adad I and the author Shalmaneser I, but also that the preceding period of 159 years between the construction of the temple by Irishum I and its first renovation by Shamshi-Adad should be subtracted from the figure,<sup>30</sup> and therefore the 580 years thus represent the entire period between the construction and reconstruction. This necessarily leads to a substantial reduction in the chronology, a century and a half in fact.<sup>31</sup>

It must be stated that this significant reduction not only entails suggesting a reduction of the length of the Assyrian period of almost 200 years,<sup>32</sup> whereby roughly a quarter of a century will have passed since the end of the Third Dynasty of Ur,<sup>33</sup> but also that a close link between the dynasty ruling in Yamkhad probably allows a link between the Old Hittite Period and the earlier periods,<sup>34</sup> and that this simply cannot be reduced at will.<sup>35</sup> The links in the chronological system of the first half

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<sup>29</sup> Simply rejecting the *Distanzangaben* completely is apparently not appropriate as can be surmised from the analysis of the dates by Boese & Wilhelm (n. 17), 29ff.; indeed Veenhof’s demonstration, based on the recently discovered Old Assyrian *limu*-Lists, is highly significant (cf. Veenhof n. 12; 139, c. n. 7).

<sup>30</sup> It is precisely this source, the reliability of which can be assumed; cf. the last note.

<sup>31</sup> For an analysis of the data in a diametrically opposed sense, cf. now Eder (n. 8), 194ff.

<sup>32</sup> Veenhof (n. 12), 139f. indicates that the period from Irishum I, year 1, to the death of Shamshi-Adad I was exactly 199 years, resulting from the recently discovered *limu*-Lists allowing an overlap with the eponym-lists from Mari.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Veenhof (n. 12), 141.

<sup>34</sup> Based on the genealogy beginning with Samsuiluna of Babylon, who was at least partially contemporary with Abba’el and over the immediate descendants Yarim-Lim II—Niqmepa—Yarim-Lim III—Hammurapi, who will have a contemporary of Hattushili I or Murshili I.

<sup>35</sup> In addition there is a solar eclipse listed in the Mari chronicle for the year after the birth of Shamshi-Adad I, for which C. Michel & P. Rocher, “La chronologie du II<sup>e</sup> millénaire revue à l’ombre d’une éclipse de soleil,” *JÉOL* 35–36 (1997–2000), esp. 124 proposed that the most likely match would be the eclipse of 1795 BC. Taking the *Distanzangabe* separating Shalmaneser I and Shamshi-Adad I, it follows that 1234 BC + 580 years = 1814 BC, placing the accession at the age of 18, resulting in a birth around 1832–33 which matches quite well with the solar eclipse of 24 June 1832 BC. When revising her position to take account of the recent dedrochronological information, C. Michel (“Nouvelles données pour la chronologie”, *N.A.B.U.* 2002/1, 17–18)

of the second millennium between Assyria and Babylon, with the death of the Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad I during the second decade of the reign of the Babylonian king Hammurabi<sup>36</sup> ultimately allows the synchronisation of Hittite history with Mesopotamian history through the campaign of Murshili I leading to the end of the First Dynasty of Babylon in year 31 of Samsuditana. Dating this event to the year 1499 BC creates major problems for Hittite history.<sup>37</sup>

The question of the form of the Assyrian calendar is less serious than the differing evaluation of the *Distanzangaben*, but nevertheless important. The issue is whether it depended upon lunar months and whether or not intercalary months were used to match the solar year,<sup>38</sup> and thus whether or not calculations lead to a difference in the number of years in the chronology with respect to solar years. Fortunately, there is evidence favouring the use of solar years in Assyria during the second millennium and not just later.<sup>39</sup>

For the present purpose, these points do not have any significant impact since there are no direct synchronisms before the Amarna

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shifted her support to the identification of this eclipse. It is difficult to believe that the dates from such different sources could merely coincidentally converge into such a coherent chronology. It follows that a shortening of the chronology as proposed by Gasche et al., is excluded. Instead, this seems to suggest a chronological model slightly higher than the “Low Chronology” and slightly lower than the “Middle Chronology”. Michel (above) proposes shortening the “Middle Chronology” by 15 years, and some such variant would be entirely compatible with the Hittite royal succession, and particularly that of the Middle Hittite period.

<sup>36</sup> This applies although the precise year of the death of Shamshi-Adad I is still discussed, as it may have been in year 12, 13 or 17 of the reign of Hammurabi; cf. Gasche et al., *Dating*, 64 and the literature cited in n. 265, as well as D. Charpin, in: D. Charpin, D. O. Edzard & M. Stol, *Mesopotamien: Die Altbabylonische Zeit* (Fribourg: OBO 160/4, 2004), 155–156 (n. 713), 193.

<sup>37</sup> As is the new suggestion by Gasche et al., *Dating*, 64f., 77ff.; they did not attempt to integrate the difficulties of Hittite history between Murshili I and Tutkhaliya I (cf. Gasche et al., *Dating*, note 92). G. Beckman, “Hittite Chronology”, *Akkadica* 119–120 (2000), 19ff. discussed precisely these issues at length and came to the conclusion “that the Anatolian evidence does not favour the suggested downward revision of the date of the fall of Babylon”.

<sup>38</sup> The practice is known since the Ur III period, and letters from the Old Babylonian period record an intercalary month based on royal decrees, but the continuous usage of some rules cannot be documented, at least partially because of the lack of sources. In Assyria, the regular use of calibrating by using the lunar calendar is only known from the 1st millennium, cf. H. Hunger & E. Reiner, “A Scheme for Intercalary Months from Babylonia”, *WZKM* 67 (1975), 21ff. and H. Hunger, “Kalender”, *RLA* V: 297–303.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. the negative position taken by Veenhof (n. 12) 147, joining the arguments in Gasche et al., *Dating*.

period.<sup>40</sup> We can thus use the dates for the Assyrian kings as proposed by Boese/Wilhelm as the basis for the presentation of the synchronisms with Egyptian history.

The earliest contacts are recorded in the Amarna letters<sup>41</sup> which refer to earlier events, and specifically to the relations between Egypt and the Hurrian Mittani state, the most important major power in Western Asia in the 15th century. After intense diplomatic contacts under Amenhotep II a dynastic marriage was arranged during the reigns of Thutmose IV and Artatama (I), which should be dated to the first decades of the 14th century according to the Egyptian chronology. The tradition was maintained by Shuttarna II and Amenhotep III who married a Mittani princess in his year 10, and later a daughter of Tushratta, who had since become ruler. In Shuppiluliuma I of Hatti, Tushratta met a dangerous foe in the first decade of the second half of the 14th century. In light of the complete absence of any original Hurrian or Mittani state sources, not much more chronological information can be gleaned from the information of the Amarna letters.<sup>42</sup>

It is only with the 14th century<sup>43</sup> letters of the Assyrian king Ashshur-Uballit I to Amenhotep IV (EA 15 and 16) that a real synchronism can be won from the Amarna letters.<sup>44</sup> There would appear to be considerable room for debate since the Assyrian ruled for more than 30

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<sup>40</sup> The situation is different when considering the indirect relations which can be adduced from the interpretation of historical developments, as in, e.g., the question of whether the Hittite advance into northern Syria took place during a period of Mittani dominance or was in fact favoured by Egyptian advances; cf. J. Klinger, "Synchronismen in der Epoche vor Suppiluliuma I.—einige Bemerkungen zur Chronologie der mittel-hethitischen Geschichte", in: O. Carruba, Cl. Mora & M. Giorgeri, eds., *Atti del II. Congresso Internazionale di Hittitologia* (Pavia: Studia Mediterranea 9, 1995), 235ff. Ultimately, such reconstructions depend upon the chronology selected, and thus easily feed into circular logic.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln* (Leipzig, 1915) or W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore, 1992).

<sup>42</sup> For a summary, cf. Kühne (n. 6), and St. de Martino, "Il regno hurrita di Mittani: profilo storico-politico", in: *La Parola del Passato* LV (2000), 25ff. and with particular reference to the Amarna correspondence, B. M. Bryan, "The Egyptian Perspective on Mittani", in: R. Cohen & R. Westbrook, eds., *Amarna Diplomacy. The Beginnings of International Relations* (Baltimore, 2000), 71–84 and P. Artzi, "The Diplomatic Service in Action: The Mittani File", *idem*, 205–211.

<sup>43</sup> Assyria will have freed itself from Mittani hegemony shortly before the end of the 15th century, which allowed Ashshur-bel-nisheshu (1409–1400 BC) to renew the alliance with Babylon, under Kara-indash.

<sup>44</sup> Mentioning an exchange of letters between Ashshur-nadin-ahḫe II and Amenhotep III.

years,<sup>45</sup> but the contents of the first letter place it relatively near the start of his reign (1353 BC).<sup>46</sup> Thereafter follows a gap of several centuries in the historical record of direct contacts between the two powers.

For further links between the cuneiform-using states and Egypt, we can turn to Babylonian and Hittite sources. As preserved, the Amarna correspondence documents contacts over several generations—as in letters between the Babylonian king Kadashman-Enlil I and Amenhotep III, and their successors Burnaburiash II and Amenhotep IV where the Egyptian must have come to the throne during the reign of the second Babylonian king, as the latter is in touch with both of these pharaohs. The preserved letters contain indications that of the earlier Kassite kings, Kara-indash had contact with Thutmose IV, and Kurigalzu I with Amenhotep III.<sup>47</sup> Since the reigns of the Kassite Kings before Kadashman-Enlil are unknown these vague hints appear unpromising, yet one can actually create a chronological framework since we know that Kara-indash reigned at the same time as the Assyrian king Ashshurbel-nishu (1407–1399 BC), which puts some limits for the not particularly long reign of Thutmose IV.<sup>48</sup>

The sources are more precise for Kadashman-Enlil I<sup>49</sup> and Burnaburiash II,<sup>50</sup> as the reign of the latter is known, and the synchronic

<sup>45</sup> In the absence of detailed information about the temporal relationship between the predecessors of Eriba-Adad I and Amenhotep III and his successor Amenhotep IV, we can only deduce that the exchange must have taken place around 1381 BC.

<sup>46</sup> Beckerath, *Chronologie*, 61 places this “shortly after his accession to the throne”, which he dates to 1355 BC, and thus according to his chronology, dating the accession of Amenhotep IV to the end of 1351 BC, allowing an indirect synchronism, as EA 15 does not name the pharaoh. Quite apart from this, there is sufficient time in the reign of Amenhotep IV for the second letter to have been addressed to him, despite the uncertainties with respect to the reading of the name.

<sup>47</sup> Above all, Burnaburiash II to Amenhotep IV in EA 10, 8ff. The details of the Babylonian succession add to the uncertainty, but do not have any significant impact in this context, cf. Brinkman (n. 3), 169 and J. A. Brinkman, “Istanbul A. 1998, Middle Babylonian Chronology, and the Statistics of the Nippur Archives”, *ZA* 73 (1983), 67–74. For the beginnings of the correspondence with Babylon, cf. C. Kühne, *Die Chronologie der internationalen Korrespondenz von El-Amarna* (Neukirchen-Vllyn: AOAT 17, 1973), 52f. n. 244.

<sup>48</sup> Recently, J. A. Brinkman, “Nazi-Marruttas”, *RIA* 9: 190b, placed Kadashman-Harbe I ca. 1405, and Kurigalzu I ca. 1390 BC; cf. also the chronological table by Sassmannshausen (n. 4), esp. 67–69.

<sup>49</sup> The assumption of a 15-year reign is not, however, compelling, as Brinkman (n. 3), 142f. c. n. 27 specifically stresses.

<sup>50</sup> Following Brinkman, this would be 1359–33 BC, as recently in *RIA* 9: 190b, i.e., the same dates as those in his table published in Oppenheim & Reiner (n. 2), 338. It should be noted that Brinkman (n. 3), 32 n. 89 already observed the proposed dates

history links the end of his reign with the Assyrian chronology.<sup>51</sup> As he actually corresponded with Amenhotep III,<sup>52</sup> but the exchange of letters only began after his 30th year,<sup>53</sup> the entire reign of Amenhotep IV would thus parallel that of Burnaburiash II, who must have reigned until the accession to the throne of the successor of this pharaoh, and thus to the year 1323 BC according to the shortened chronology.<sup>54</sup> His accession to office must then have taken place in 1349 BC, when Amenhotep III would still have been reigning according to the synchronism of the Amarna letters. However, some of the numbers remain uncertain due to factors which have not yet been eliminated in the reigns of the Kassite rulers, and thus the figures cannot be taken as absolute limits. Discrepancies with Egyptian dates<sup>55</sup> can easily be explained as lying in the Babylonian sources. We must therefore confirm that the known synchronisms between Egypt and Babylon cannot provide an exact chronological fix points due to the imprecision inherent in the frame of reference, or in the uncertainties in the chronological framework itself, although they do place some further limits on the range of variation.<sup>56</sup>

According to sources in internal Hittite history, contacts between the Egyptian and Hittite kings were so intense that a treaty already clarified relations between the two in the 15th century. Fragments of this accord—known as the Kurushtama-treaty—are preserved,<sup>57</sup> and its significance

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ultimately depend upon the reigns of the Assyrian kings, and that aside from a few uncertain factors mentioned there that any reduction must be accompanied by a corresponding change there; however, there still remains a margin of  $\pm 5$  years.

<sup>51</sup> For the details cf. Brinkman (n. 3), 418ff.

<sup>52</sup> This is the most probable interpretation of EA 6 according to the collation by Kühne (n. 47), 129 c. n. 642.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. most recently, Beckerath, *Chronologie*, 66.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. also Brinkman (n. 3), 6 n. 1.

<sup>55</sup> The reduction in the Babylonian chronology in this case would stand in contradiction to the assumed accession of Amenhotep IV ca. 1351/50 BC, as Burnaburiash would only have ascended to the throne in the following year, and thus a synchronism with the older of the two pharaohs would be excluded, although precisely this is fact reliably attested. The margin of uncertainty in this phase remains the  $\pm 5$  years mentioned.

<sup>56</sup> A fragmentary economic text found during the excavations at Assur in 2001 (Ass. 2001.D-2217) documents a direct synchronism between Melishipak of Babylon (ca. 1186–1172 BC following J. A. Brinkman, “Meli-shipak”, *RIA* VIII: 52) and Ninurta-apil-Ekur of Assyria (for whom, cf. E. Cancik-Kirschbaum, *AoF* 26 [1999], 215ff.); cf. the preliminary report by E. Frahm, *MDOG* 134 (2002), 75.

<sup>57</sup> The few sources available are assembled under CTH 134. KUB 40.28 (= 134.C) is a fragmentary text preserved in a Middle Hittite copy. A. Ünal’s (*RIA* VI: 373)

recorded later in the context of the Deeds of Shuppiluliuma I,<sup>58</sup> yet the hints do not suffice to provide a precise context.<sup>59</sup> According to the sources, the only possible Hittite ruler would be Tutkhaliya I,<sup>60</sup> as otherwise the Hittite history of this period was dominated by internal conflict with a correspondingly weak foreign policy, and thus actions in Syria cannot be expected.<sup>61</sup> The pharaoh who was party to this treaty can only be traced through the Hittite sources,<sup>62</sup> and for the moment these are inadequate to define the period when Tutkhaliya I reigned,<sup>63</sup> beyond specifying that it might have been around the third

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speculation that these Kurushtama-fragments could merely be part of the Egyptian correspondence of Shuppiluliuma I is thus impossible.

<sup>58</sup> DŠ Frag. 28 (cf. H. G. Güterbock, "The Deeds of Shuppiluliuma as Told by his Son Murshili II", *JCS* 10 (1956), 41–68, 75–98, 107ff.). A great many details are still unresolved, and thus it is impossible to state with certainty that it merely a question of a single treaty and not possibly a series of international accords; for this issue, cf. D. Sürenhagen, *Paritätische Staatsverträge aus hethitischer Sicht* (Pavia: Studia Mediterranea, 1985), 22ff. Equally uncertain is the exact placement of those fragments 29 and 30 discussed by H. G. Güterbock of DŠ, which both mention Egypt.

<sup>59</sup> Likewise belonging to the Middle Hittite period in the draught letter in Hittite, where neither the name of the Hittite king nor that of the Pharaoh to whom it was addressed is preserved. Given its date, the text can be assigned to the period before Shuppiluliuma I. As preserved, it can be deduced that this letter followed another exchange and the Hittite kings complains of a deterioration in relations which has now been resolved. Tutkhaliya I is one possible author, but this remains pure speculation in the absence of further information. For the text itself, cf. E. Edel, "Bo 92/129, ein neues Brieffragment in hethitischer Sprache der Korrespondenz zwischen Ägypten und Hatti", *ZA* 86 (1996), 114–7; since published as KBo 31.40.

<sup>60</sup> There is still some doubt about the number of kings named Tutkhaliya who reigned in the period immediately before Shuppiluliuma I. In this case I assume the sequence: Tutkhaliya I—Arnuwanda I—Tutkhaliya II—Shuppiluliuma I; cf. also similarly, H. Klengel, *Geschichte des Hethitischen Reiches* (Leiden: HdO I. 34, 1999), 103.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. the literature cited by Klengel (n. 60), 106f. (on source [A8]) c.n. 93f., who likewise stresses this identification is purely hypothetical.

<sup>62</sup> W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden: ÄA 5, 1971<sup>2</sup>), 166 suggested either Thutmose III or Amenhotep II, but did not exclude Thutmose I. In any case, it should be evident that the events detailed here are incompatible with the proposed date of 1499 BC for the campaign of Murshili I to Babylon, as they took place more than a century later, and thus well into the 14th century. The synchronism between Idrimi and Murshili I recently proposed by W. van Soldt, "Syrian Chronology in the Old and Early Middle Babylonian Period", *Akkadica* 119–120 (2000), 111 or between Idrimi and Zidanta I, by Kühne (n. 6), 214 n. 67 are incompatible with the chronological scheme proposed here, as is the attempt to make a historical link between Murshili I and Thutmose I; for this, cf. F. Zeeb, "The History of Alalah as a Testcase for an Ultrashort Chronology of the Mid-2nd Millennium BCE", in: Hunger & Pruzsinszky (n. 4), 91f.

<sup>63</sup> The proposed reigns of some 20–25 years each for the three kings before Shuppiluliuma I in the chronological table of the exhibition catalogue, *Die Hethiter und ihr Reich* (Stuttgart, 2002), 312ff. are largely hypothetical or rely upon an historical

quarter of the 15th century.<sup>64</sup> We can, however, define the number of generations separating Tutkhaliya I and Shuppiluliuma I, since the latter was the son of the former's grandson (Tutkhaliya II).<sup>65</sup> Given the difficulties of counting generations, the interval between them should be more than 50 and less than 100 years.<sup>66</sup>

Similarly difficult is precisely delimiting the reign of Shuppiluliuma I,<sup>67</sup> whose long reign will have stretched from that of Amenhotep III until perhaps the reign of Aya.<sup>68</sup> It is only certain that he was in direct contact with Amenhotep IV. Whether he was also in touch with his father depends upon identifying the pharaoh concealed behind the apparently unreliable cuneiform transcription Hurija in EA 41 written by Shuppiluliuma I.<sup>69</sup> Any further attempts to establish a more exact

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image dependent upon the short chronology, which simply cannot be assumed given the very limited historical information at our disposal; this also necessarily applies to the proposed accession date ca. 1420 BC for Tutkhaliya I.

<sup>64</sup> Dating Thutmose I to the first decade of the 15th century means that he should be most probably understood as a contemporary of Tutkhaliya I, as the now reliable reconstruction of the royal succession in the Middle Hittite period tends to bring Tutkhaliya I closer to Shuppiluliuma I than was the case earlier. On the other hand, the land donation documents definitely attest that allowance must be made for more generations between the reign of Tutkhaliya I and the end of the Old Hittite period (or the beginning of the Middle Hittite period, with the reign of Telpinu as the threshold) than had been appreciated earlier.

<sup>65</sup> A detailed discussion of the Middle Hittite king lists is impossible here for obvious reasons.

<sup>66</sup> For a detailed account of the specific problem as concerns Hittite history, cf. G. Wilhelm, "Generation Count in Hittite Chronology", in: Hunger & Pruzsinszky (n. 4), 71–79; Eder (n. 8), 224ff. likewise reveals the great differences possible in the interpretation of the material.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Klengel (n. 60), 147: "The precise moment of the accession cannot be fixed;" the various possibilities were discussed by G. Wilhelm & J. Boese, "Absolute Chronologie und die hethitische Geschichte des 15. und 14. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.", in: Aström, *Acts*, 73–117, esp. 76ff. themselves pleading for a much later accession, possibly even after the accession of Amenhotep IV, whose reign they set at 1343–1322 or 1318 BC.

<sup>68</sup> Most recently discussed in detail by Wilhelm & Boese (n. 67) suggesting a significant reduction in the length of the reign rather than the 40 years traditionally accepted. This has not been accepted as the sources simply do not allow for a definitive conclusion, but the issue must remain open. Cf. also G. Wilhelm, "Probleme der hethitischen Chronologie", *OLZ* 86 (1991), cols. 471ff. The issue was most recently discussed by J. Freu, "La chronologie du règne de Suppiluliuma: Essai de mise au point," in: P. Taracha, ed., *Silva Anatolica* (Warsaw, 2002 = Fs Popko), 87ff. He opposes a drastic reduction in the reign of Shuppiluliuma I, and assumes a 30–40 year reign—dependent upon a coregency between Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV (esp. 107).

<sup>69</sup> A decision depends largely upon the author's historical interpretation, but there is a tendency to exclude Amenhotep III, probably following Wilhelm & Boese (n. 67), 96ff.: W. L. Moran (n. 41), 114f. and Klengel (n. 60), 139 (on source [A 10]).

chronological ordering of the historic events thus depends upon the interpretation of the Dakhamunza-affair, that is of who made the astonishing offer of a dynastic marriage to the unbelieving Hittite king—and a generally accepted solution has still not emerged.<sup>70</sup> The widow's name is not preserved in the Hittite version, and the throne name, Nibḫururija, of the dead pharaoh is recorded in the cuneiform version of the Deeds of Shuppiluliuma I, but this was only written down on the orders of his son Murshili II. The question is therefore identifying the name of the pharaoh whose widow sent the proposal to Shuppiluliuma I.<sup>71</sup> Can the cuneiform Nib at the beginning of the name be only an Egyptian nb, or is a nf(r) also possible?<sup>72</sup> According to my judgement, in the absence of a sufficient quantity of cuneiform attestations which could offer a corresponding orthographic principle to which one could refer, the linguistic and orthographic arguments simply cannot be resolved.<sup>73</sup> Quite apart from this, there is no means of knowing whether a Hittite copyist faced with an unfamiliar name written with what was at that time the quite alien sign /nap/ may not have chosen to divide the signs syllabically as NI-IB. Given that the quite adequate transcription of Nb-ḫprw-R<sup>c</sup> as <sup>m</sup>Ni-ib-ḫu-ru-ri-ja (KUB 34.24+ rev. IV 18)<sup>74</sup> is in principle correct, we can assume that the throne name of

<sup>70</sup> The literature here is almost endless, we cannot go into detail here, as for some time now the Hittite sources have simply not shed any new light on the matter. The most recent discussion of the question is that of M. Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon* (Lyon, 1998), to which we refer here. M. Gabolde offers a summary of his thesis: "Das Ende der Amarnazeit", in: A. Grimm & S. Schoske, eds., *Das Geheimnis des goldenen Sarges* (Munich, 2001), 9–42. Basing himself on new epigraphic finds and new interpretations of previously neglected (or differently interpreted) materials, he identifies the widow as Meritaten who replaced Nefertiti near the end of the reign of Amenhotep IV, and when he died, turned to Shuppiluliuma I. This compels him to identify Nibḫururij as Nfr-ḫprw-R<sup>c</sup> Amenhotep IV, and to assign the letter EA 9 to him. For this, cf. M. Eaton-Krauss & R. Krauss, [review of Gabolde], *BiOr* 58 (2001), col. 96 and furthermore W. J. Murnane, *OLZ* 96 (2001), 11ff.

<sup>71</sup> All of the preserved texts relevant to the remarkable episode were assembled by Th.P.J. van den Hout, "Der Falke und das Kücken", *ZA* 84 (1994), 60–88, esp. 61f.

<sup>72</sup> For a long time, a reading of nb- favoured Tut<sup>c</sup>ankhamun, but this changed when Krauss, *Amarnazeit*, 9ff. argued in favour of nfr-, and thus for Amenhotep IV.

<sup>73</sup> Definitely favouring the first possibility is most recently T. Bryce, "The Death of Niphururiya and its Aftermath", *JEA* 76 (1990), 97–105, whereby he shares what can be viewed as the Hittitological consensus, as argued by Wilhelm & Boese (n. 67), 100f.; cf. also van den Hout (n. 71), 84f.; E. Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache II* (Opladen, 1994), 23 n. 3; and G. Meyer, *GM* 126 (1992), 87–92.

<sup>74</sup> In contrast KBo 5.6 obv. III 7 has <sup>m</sup>Pi-ip-ḫu-ru-ri-ja-a; an error of PÍ for NE?

Tut'ankhamun was intended, as alternative readings are difficult to justify, and actually rely upon a further series of assumptions. Assuming this identification of the pharaoh, we can project a series of dates for the end of the reign of Shuppiluliuma I. After the victorious campaign with which the Hittites responded to the murder of the Hittite prince Zannanza,<sup>75</sup> Egyptian prisoners brought the plague to Hattusha, and Shuppiluliuma I himself died shortly thereafter, possibly due to the epidemic.<sup>76</sup> The death of Shuppiluliuma I—and the accession to the throne of his two sons Arnuwanda II and Murshili II—can thus be tied to the Egyptian chronology, and Shuppiluliuma I can only have lived for 2–4 years after the death of Tut'ankhamun. On the other hand, this also enables us to verify the veracity of the interpretations due to the solar eclipse dating to the reign of Murshili II, whose reign can thus be given absolute dates. This means that the two systems must be formed in a fashion which allows an accession to the throne for Murshili II in 1321,<sup>77</sup> since the death of Shuppiluliuma I must be limited to either 1323–1322 or 1326–1325 BC.<sup>78</sup> In contrast to the first mentioned contacts between Egypt and the Hittites, the Dakhamunzu episode might—with all due caution—provide a date relevant to the entire chronological discussion, allowing a link for the two independent chronological systems.

For the decades after the Amarna period, the sources on Hittite-Egyptian relations vary widely. Although the age of Murshili II is among the most productive in terms of overall Hittite historiography, there would appear to be few real openings for the study of relations with Egypt. In terms of their political calculations, the Hittites did not feel

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<sup>75</sup> The thesis argued by M. Gabolde, that Zannanza actually briefly reigned under the throne name of Smenkhkare is not probable; cf. the sceptical judgement of Eaton-Krauss & Krauss, *BiOr* 58 (2001), col. 96.

<sup>76</sup> As noted, what can be won from the Hittite sources was assembled by van den Hout (n. 71), 85ff.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. the detailed discussion by Wilhelm & Boese (n. 67), 105ff. Nevertheless, the assumption that the solar eclipse took place in the spring (*ibid.*, pp. 106f.) is not obligatory as it actually relies upon what is actually a rather dubious restoration of KUB 14.4 IV 25f. by E. Forrer, but cf. A. Götze, *KIF* 1, 1930, 405. Therefore, nothing stands in the way of the total eclipse of 24 June 1312 BC.

<sup>78</sup> Favouring the latter date is van den Hout (n. 71), 88, who arrives at 17 years from the death of Nibkhururija = Tut'ankhamun to the solar omen (with 6 years of the reign of Shuppiluliumas I + 1 year of Arnuwanda II + 10 years of the reign of Murshili II), and thus assumes a death in 1325 BC; his calculations are, however, based on the solar eclipse of 13 April 1308 BC.

either challenged or constrained by Egypt. This only changed significantly when Ramesses II came to the Egyptian throne, changing the political constellation during the reign of Muwatalli II, the son and successor of Murshili II.<sup>79</sup> The temporary removal of the Hittite capital from Hattusha to Tarkhantashsha had significant repercussions for the textual record such that the reign of Muwatalli is badly documented. The lack of relevant documents can be interpreted as meaning that some of the documentation was not returned when Hattusha became the capital again under Muwatalli's successor. This may be the reason why that period of increasing contact which culminated in the battle of Kadesh, so heavily stressed in the Egyptian tradition, appears to be marginal in the Hittite tradition. A further consequence of our limited understanding of this period in Hittite history is that at the pinnacle of the Hittite-Egyptian conflict, the battle of Kadesh in year 5 of Ramesses II, we can only specify that his opponent was Muwatalli II. The treaty signed in the wake of the conflict in year 21 of Ramesses II was negotiated and sealed by Hattushili III.<sup>80</sup> Nor are there any sources from the Hittite capital Hattusha which can allow this decisive event to be dated, despite the abundance of letters from both kingdoms dating to before and after the signing of the treaty, and despite the wealth of details we have for the internal history of the Hittites during this important age.

Nevertheless, the Egyptian sources do allow some key dates, throwing light on the transfer of power from Urkhi-Teshshup (= Murshili III), whose reign was ended by the usurpation of Hattushili III during these 16 years. It is unclear how long after year 5 of Ramesses II, that

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<sup>79</sup> The end of the reign of Murshili II can only be approximately delimited since for the later years of the reign the preservation of the annals is significantly worse than for the phase up to ca. regnal year 20. Nevertheless, we can be relatively certain that Murshili remained on the throne for some three decades. A. Ünal, "Muwatalli II", *RIA* VIII: 524–527, esp. 524 assigns Muwatalli II a reign of "ca. 1290–1265 BC", but postulates that he either fell (or was mortally wounded) at the battle of Kadesh, and therefore dying then or shortly thereafter, yet he likewise dates this to ca. 1274 BC (*ibid.*, 527)—which would be nearly a decade earlier. The source used by A. Ünal in this connection, linking the death of the Hittite king with this campaign (citing ABoT 57 obv. 8 is probably an error, as the passage, and as KBo 4.10+ obv. 40'ff. clearly confirms, relates to the removal of the capital and not to the death of the king), refer only to the death without placing this in any identifiable context.

<sup>80</sup> For the text of the treaty, cf. E. Edel, *Der Vertrag zwischen Ramses II. von Ägypten und Hattushili III. von Hatti* (Berlin: WVDOG 95, 1997) prefaced (p. 1) with a short account of the prehistory of the treaty.

Urghi-Teshshup, the direct and legitimate heir of Muwatalli II, came to the throne as Murshili III, and how long he reigned.<sup>81</sup> It was during his reign that the removal of the capital was cancelled, for reasons beyond our knowledge. The sources are silent about Murshili's other activities,<sup>82</sup> and direct synchronisms with other kings cannot be proved.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, a draught letter from the reign of Hattushili III to the Assyrian king—which could be either Adad-nerari I or Shalmaneser I<sup>84</sup>—mentions contacts between his predecessor and the Assyrian recipient of the royal letter, and the correspondence between Hattushili III and Ramesses II suggests that Murshili III was also in touch with this Egyptian king, although these cannot be documented either. Just how dependent the interpretations of the fragmentary letters are upon the assumed historical background is illustrated in exemplary fashion by the fragmentary draught of a letter (KUB 23.102). It is generally assumed that the intended recipient was Adad-nerari I, given the clear hints at a very tense relationship between Assur and Hatti, and the Hittite king dismisses any equality between the two. This suggests that the letter should be dated to a period of increasing Assyrian power, but a concrete

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<sup>81</sup> The immediate circumstances of the usurpation and its possibly not entirely unanimous acceptance have been frequently discussed, but the partial character of the sources available mean that the details still remain obscure. In view of the partial descriptions by one of the actors, namely the usurper Hattushili III, it is significant that there is a seal impression naming Muwatalli and the later king Murshili with his given name, which could potentially imply a relatively early attempt at securing the succession; for a detailed survey of the entire situation, cf. most recently, Ph. Houwink ten Cate, "Urhi-Tessub revisited", *BiOr* 51 (1994), 239ff.

<sup>82</sup> Summarized by Klengel (n. 60), 226ff.

<sup>83</sup> The reason for this may be that the lack of information forthcoming from the fragmentary sources available, e.g., the diplomatic correspondence cannot generally be assigned to or related to Murshili III. On the general tenor of the later sources on Murshili III, cf. also the literature cited Klengel (n. 60), 257 n. 501.

<sup>84</sup> This is the letter KBo 1.14; cf. A. Hagenbuchner, *Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter. 2. Teil: Die Briefe mit Transkription, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Heidelberg: THeth 16, 1989), No. 195 (obv. 15f.) and A. Harrak, *Assyria and Hattushili* (Hildesheim: TSO 4, 1987), 69ff., who pleads for Adad-nerari I while A. Ünal, *Hattushili III., Teil I, Hattushili bis zu seiner Thronbesteigung*, Bd 1: *Historischer Abriss* (Heidelberg: THeth 3, 1974), 6, favours Shalmaneser I. By contrast, following M. B. Rowton, "The Background of the Treaty between Ramesses II and Hattushili III", *JCS* 13 (1959), 1–11, or M. B. Rowton, "The Material from Western Asia and the Chronology of the Nineteenth Dynasty", *JNES* 25 (1966), 249–258, the only possible candidate would be Adad-nerari I. This proposal is, however, based exclusively on an interpretation of the material based upon the content, and a corresponding reconstruction of the historical context—which is by means the only possibility. The reference to Murshili III while avoiding the throne name Urhi-Teshshup only permits us to conclude that one of his successors wrote the letter.

synchronism does not follow. It is not irrelevant that we can hardly expect to find draught letters from the reign of Muwatalli II in the archives of Hattusha,<sup>85</sup> as this favours attributing the letter to Murshili III. An uncertain but possible synchronism of the latter with Adad-nerari I would follow, leading to a throne change before 1264 BC (the death of Adad-nerari I). Were one to date the letter to Hattushili III, the length of the reign of Murshili would shrink further.<sup>86</sup> It is certain that Murshili III came to the throne after 1275, and remained on it until perhaps 1263 BC, but a shorter reign is more probable. The (at least) “7 years” during which Hattushili III allegedly remained loyal<sup>87</sup> according to his “Apology” need not be taken as a real measure of time; although possible, it cannot be independently verified. This means that the accession to the throne of Hattushili III cannot be determined with precision. Neither the Egyptian chronology nor Egyptian sources, including the correspondence of Ramesses II, offer additional aid.<sup>88</sup> As the synchronism with Shalmaneser I can only offer a date after 1263, then the letter KBo 1.14 becomes interesting. If this letter is from Hattushili III and addressed to Adad-nerari I, then—and only then—would we be able to place the beginning of the reign of Hattushili III in the period after 1268 and before 1264/3 BC.<sup>89</sup>

Although generally viewed as a letter from Tutkhaliya IV to Tukulti-Ninurta I, which would provide another hook for the end of the reign

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<sup>85</sup> Following Hagenbuchner (n. 84), 263; for a discussion of the correct placing of the text, cf. Klengel (n. 60), 204 c. n. 304.

<sup>86</sup> A. Hagenbuchner, THeth 16, reads in obv. 16 [A-BI A-BI-J]A-ma' A-BI-JA-ja “my father and [m]y [grandfather], however”, yet the position of the *-ma* would be unusual, aside from the fact that a collation with the photo suggests that the sign should rather be read as BA, so that the point of departure should be A-BA A-BI-JA-ja, and thus exactly that expression used in KBo 6.28 obv. 16 by Hattushili III with reference to his grandfather Shuppiluliuma I, during whose reign, Assyria first attempted to free itself from Mittani hegemony. By contrast, in his 9th regnal years his successor Murshili II was forced to ward off an assault by Adad-nerari I which reached as far as the eastern bank of the Euphrates at Carchemish; the Assyrians managed to take Taide, Wasashatta’s capital, as mentioned in KUB 23.102 obv. I 1. Regardless, Urhi-Teššup was the grandson of Murshili II.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. H. Otten, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III. Das Bild der Überlieferung* (Mainz: StBoT 24, 1981), 20f.: “And given the estimation of my brother, I refrained from any actions, and was obedient for 7 years” (rev. III 62; on the verbal form in question, cf. Most recently J. Tischler, *HEG* III, 421).

<sup>88</sup> The peace treaty with Hattushili III was sealed in regnal year 21 (i.e., 21/XI/1259 BC) of Ramesses II, and was followed by a widely publicised dynastic marriage in regnal year 34.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Boese & Wilhelm (n. 67), 36 n. 65.

of Hattushili III, the fragmentary letter KUB 26.70 cannot really shed light on the matter. We must bear in mind that in terms of content, this would suggest an exchange of letters between Urkhi-Teshshup/Murshili III and Shalmaneser I, but this can nevertheless have taken place after the usurpation by Hattushili III.<sup>90</sup> Even using the fragments of the diplomatic correspondence with Assur, we simply lack the necessary cornerstones required to date the reigns of the Hittite kings of the 13th century.<sup>91</sup> Hattushili III and Tutkhaliya IV reigned during the times of Shalmaneser I, but we cannot tell whether his 30 year reign began before the fall of Murshili III, or only thereafter, although the latter possibility is more probable. Tutkhaliya IV definitely reigned in Hatti when Tukulti-Ninurta I came to the throne in Assur. Whether he was still in office when Shuppiluliuma II became king cannot be confirmed as nothing can delimit the length of the reign of the last king known from the archives of Hattusha, according to which the Hittite empire ended sometime shortly after 1200 BC.<sup>92</sup> Nor are there any hints at contacts to any of the rapidly disappearing kings during the uneasy period after the murder of Tukulti-Ninurta, i.e., Ashshurnadin-apli to Ninurta-apil-ekur and Ashshur-dan II.

The correspondence with the Babylonian kings is ever worse preserved than that with the Assyrians, who only allow a few additional points in a more precise temporal organization of the Hittite kings of

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<sup>90</sup> For this, cf. primarily, S. Heinhold-Krahmer, "Zu Salmanassars I. Eroberungen im Hurritergebiet", *AfO* 35 (1988), 94 n. 181, and now Beckerath, *Chronologie NR*, 26 c. n. 144 (following up on Hornung's earlier work).

<sup>91</sup> Little of value can be gained from the fragments (KBo 28.59–63) of a Middle Assyrian royal letter sent to Hattusha, but one can still appreciate that the subject is the behaviour of Šagarakti-Šuriaš, of Babylon which suggests that one can assume that it was composed between the later part of the reign of Shalmaneser I and the beginning of that of Tukulti-Ninurta I; for such a reading, cf. W. von Soden, "Weitere mittelassyrische Briefbruchstücke aus Hattusas", in: E. Neu & Ch. Rüster, eds., *Documentum Asiae minoris antiquae* (Mainz, Fs Otten, 1988), 346. The reference to Tutkhaliya does suggest dating the correspondence to his reign, yet this does not allow its chronological limits to be defined any further. Finally, it is unclear just what the reference to a period of "100 years" signifies (KBo 28.61 rev. 9').

<sup>92</sup> The date from Emar for year 2 of the Babylonian king Melishipak—which corresponds to the year 1187 BC, cannot be used for the abandonment of the Hittite capital Hattusha as it is by no means certain that the "Sea Peoples" were responsible for the end of Emar, cf. now Klengel (n. 60), 318 c. n. 35. The destruction of Ugarit thus remains the terminus ante quem, but this only allows an extension into the reign of Siptah, i.e., until 1197 BC (cf. the literature cited by Klengel (n. 60), 318, no. 33, as well as Ras Shamra-Ougarit XI, [1995] with the text published by S. Lackenbacher, RSO XI, 77ff.).

the 13th century, allowing for some synchronisms supported by the sources. There is a letter from Kadashman-Turgu I to Hattushili III (KUB 3.71),<sup>93</sup> and these two would appear to have signed a treaty with each other, as indicated by a draught letter prepared at the Hittite court (KBo 1.10+9), but apparently during the reign of Kadashman-Enlil II and to be assigned to Hattushili III who mentions the accession of the young Babylonian ruler in the text.<sup>94</sup> The change of power in the Kassite royal house is set at about 1264/63 BC, but from the Kadesh treaty it is clear that Hattushili III came to the throne before the year 21 of the reign of Ramesses II. Reducing this date by a decade, following the Assyrian regnal years, would appear to be difficult, but there nevertheless remains the margin of uncertainty, amounting to almost a decade for the Babylonian kings, to which repeated reference has been made, and which cannot be further reduced for the moment.

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<sup>93</sup> For this, the best discussion remains E. Edel, *Ägyptische Ärzte und ägyptische Medizin am hethitischen Königshof. Neue Funde von Keilschriftbriefen Ramses' II aus Boğazköy* (Opladen, 1976), 123ff.

<sup>94</sup> Above we mentioned the indirect references relating to Šagarakti-Šuriaš, from the later correspondence with Tukulti-ninurta I. Whether this Babylonian king's reign was contemporary with that of Tutkhaliya IV (the presumed recipient of the letter) is uncertain, as the relationship between the time the letter was written and the references to Tukulti-ninurta I who conquered Babylon during the reign of Kashtiliash IV (1232–1225 BC) is not clear. It depends upon whether the events mentioned in the text took place at that time, or whether the letter mentioned events which had taken place at some point in the past.