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## COREGENCIES AND OVERLAPPING REIGNS AMONG THE HEBREW KINGS

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AMONG the questions raised by the chronological data of the Hebrew kings probably no point is more disputed than that of coregencies and overlapping reigns. Certainly the arbitrary invention of a coregency that did not actually take place, just to sidestep some difficulty in the regnal data, would not constitute a defensible procedure in the endeavor to reconstruct Israel's past. But, on the other hand, the arbitrary rejection of a coregency that formed an integral part in the collocation of Hebrew kings, would hardly result in the accurate reconstruction of Hebrew history.

Whether we accept or reject coregencies and overlapping reigns among the rulers of Israel and Judah will not only make a considerable difference in the matter of chronology, but also in regard to certain interesting and important details of Hebrew history. It will be my purpose here to review again the grounds that exist for a number of coregencies and overlapping reigns mentioned in the text or suggested by the chronological data of the MT.<sup>1</sup>

That there were occasions when more than one ruler sat simultaneously on the throne of either Judah or Israel is specifically mentioned in the records of the Books of Kings. In 1 Kgs 16:21 we are told that Israel was "divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni . . . ; and half followed Omri." In 2 Kgs 8:16 it is stated that Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to rule while his father was king. And in 2 Kgs 15:5 we are told of Jotham's participation in the rulership of Judah when Azariah was incapacitated by leprosy.

Even if the overlappings in the above-mentioned instances had not been specifically recorded, the fact that they took place could be ascertained by a careful study of the chronological data. There are, however, a number of occasions where overlappings are not specifically mentioned, but where the data of synchronisms and lengths of reign clearly reveal their existence. When the years of overlappings thus revealed are introduced into the total chronological pattern, the result is not only harmony between the once seemingly discordant data, but the years of the Hebrew rulers harmonize with the years of contemporary chronology at every point where an exact correlation can be made.

<sup>1</sup>For my earlier studies, see "The Problem of Overlapping Reigns," *The Ministry* 23 (1960) 33-35; "The Question of Coregencies Among the Hebrew Kings," *A Stubborn Faith* (W. A. Irwin Festschrift; Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1956) 39-52.

The combination of interlocking synchronisms and lengths of reign ties the years of Israel and Judah so tightly together as to make impossible any arbitrary adjustment of as much as a single year in the reign of any king, without introducing widespread disruption into an otherwise harmonious pattern. So rigid is the pattern of interlocked reigns that the assignment of a specific date to any year of any king, provides the dates for all the kings of both nations, from the beginning to the end of the divided monarchies. Thus the assignment of the date 841 as the year of Jehu's accession in Israel—the year when contemporary Assyrian records mention his payment of tribute to Shalmaneser III—begins a chain of 118 years for the kings of Israel which carries us down to 723 as the ninth and last year of Hoshea and the year of Samaria's fall.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps no more severe test of the historicity of the coregencies involved could be required than is thus provided by the resulting complete agreement of Hebrew years with the years of contemporary Assyrian history.

That the specific coregencies called for by the details of the chronological data are not mere arbitrary adjustments resorted to in the endeavor to create an artificial harmony is further supported by the fact that in each coregency there is in the record of the ruler involved sufficient detail to clarify the grounds that called it into being.

### *Omri and Tibni*

The first overlapping reign recorded in the Books of Kings is that of Omri who was the rival of Tibni. In 1 Kgs 16:15-20 is the record of Zimri who seized the throne of Israel in the 27th year of Asa, whereupon the people proclaimed Omri king. Omri brought an end to the reign of Zimri within seven days. Then in 1 Kgs 16:21, 22 brief mention is made of Tibni's rule over half the land while Omri ruled the other half. Next follows the record of Omri, beginning with the regnal formula of his accession in the 31st year of Asa, and giving the length of his reign as 12 years (1 Kgs 16:23-28).

The question is, when did Omri's 12 years begin, in the 27th year of Asa when he eliminated Zimri, or in Asa's 31st year when the elimination of Tibni probably took place. Bible students have been divided on this point, from the most ancient times down to the present. This difference of opinion is reflected in a series of variant chronological data quite different in the Greek from those found in the Hebrew manuscripts of Kings. In Burney's list of the basic deviations that occur in the Greek texts from the data found in the Hebrew for the period involved are the variants in Table 1.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>For a comprehensive picture of this chain of dates, see the charts in my earlier studies, "The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel," *JNES* 3 (1944) 137-86, esp. p. 154; *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) p. 74 [hereinafter *MN*]; and *MN* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 56, 58, 63, 65, 67, 74, 75, 78, 80, 129, 149.

<sup>3</sup>C. F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903) xlii-xliv.

Table 1

## THE VARIANT FIGURES OF THE GREEK TEXTS

	MT	LXX	Luc.
1 Kgs 16:29 I Ahab	38th of Asa	2d of Jehoshaphat	2d of Jehoshaphat
1 Kgs 22:41 J Jehoshaphat	4th of Ahab	11th of Omri	11th of Omri
1 Kgs 22:52 I Ahaziah	17th of Jehoshaphat	17th of Jehoshaphat	24th of Jehoshaphat
2 Kgs 1:17 I Jehoram	2d of Jehoram J	18th of Jehoshaphat	2d of Jehoram J
2 Kgs 3:1 I Jehoram	18th of Jehoshaphat	18th of Jehoshaphat	.....
2 Kgs 8:25 J Ahaziah	12th of Jehoram I	12th of Jehoram I	11th of Jehoram I

*Variants in the Greek Manuscripts*

In an earlier study of the Greek variants I pointed out a definite chronological pattern based on the above divergencies which differed widely from the Hebrew pattern.<sup>4</sup> Since the Greek pattern calls for a delineation of Hebrew history differing materially in certain important details from that portrayed in the Hebrew pattern, it is a matter of some importance to determine whether the Hebrew or the Greek represents the most ancient and accurate picture of what actually took place.

My conclusion was that the Hebrew represents the earliest and soundest chronological pattern, and that the Greek<sup>5</sup> was a later development based upon an effort to correct what were regarded as errors in the Hebrew chronological data.

My conclusions have been challenged by J. D. Shenkel who in a detailed study of the numerous variations found in the many Greek MSS now extant<sup>6</sup> has on the basis of an elaborate text-critical analysis come to the conclusion that "the Old Greek chronology, far from being the artificial contrivance of late scribal activity, was the earliest chronology," and that "the Hebrew chronology was a secondary development."<sup>7</sup>

The determination as to whether the Hebrew or the Greek presents the earliest and the most sound chronological pattern depends upon the motivation

<sup>4</sup> Thiele, "The Variant Figures of the Greek Texts," *MN* (1st ed.) 167-203.

<sup>5</sup> In my earlier discussion of this subject I made it clear that the variants found in the Greek texts might have been present in an earlier Hebrew *Vorlage*, and that when I employed such symbols at the LXX or Luc. I did not "have in mind any single individual or specific manuscript, nor even a group of Greek translations containing variants, none of which had ever appeared in any previously existing Hebrew text. . . . It is entirely possible that some of the Greek variations from the present Hebrew text might already have been found in certain Hebrew manuscripts then used by the Greek translators." *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>6</sup> *Chronology and Recensional Development in the Greek Text of Kings* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1968) 4, 25, 26, 34 [hereinafter CRD].

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 110, 111.

behind the variations that were produced, of the agreement of the pattern with other biblical details, and its concord with contemporary chronology.

The many seeming contradictions in the chronological data of the Hebrew kings have long been regarded as evidence of certain error. Before, however, a final verdict can be pronounced against those data, it must be ascertained whether the data themselves are at fault, or whether our misapprehensions are based on our own failure to understand the basic chronological practices followed by the ancient Hebrew recorders.

*Methods of Chronological Reckoning*

What must be determined first is the method of chronological reckoning employed in each of the Hebrew kingdoms. Accession-year reckoning (post-dating) and nonaccession-year reckoning (antedating) were the systems commonly employed in the ancient Near East.

Next it must be determined whether a method once employed, continued to be employed throughout the history of each nation, or whether at some time a shift was introduced.

Still another item that must be determined is how each nation reported the years of its neighbor — whether in accord with its own system or in accord with that of its neighbor.

Yet again, the month which began the regnal year in each nation must be known. If the two nations commenced their regnal years at different times, many variations in the regnal data would be the inevitable result.

In my earlier studies I have shown that there were certain chronological practices which if understood, and certain coregencies which if recognized, would eliminate the seeming contradictions in the chronological data.<sup>8</sup>

These involved the employment in Israel, in the period immediately after the disruption, of nonaccession-year dating and of a shift to the accession-year method at the time of Jehoash. In Judah, immediately after the disruption, the accession-year method was used; but at the time of Jehoshaphat's rapprochement with Ahab, beginning with Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat and husband of Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Judah adopted Israel's system of non-accession-year reckoning. This system was followed in Judah through the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash, whereupon Judah shifted back to its earlier accession-year system at the time of Amaziah, contemporaneously with Israel's adoption of that system under Jehoash. Both Israel and Judah made use of their own systems when presenting the synchronisms and lengths of reign of the neighboring nation.

Israel began the regnal year with Nisan and Judah commenced its regnal year with Tishri.

<sup>8</sup> "The Fundamental Principles of Hebrew Chronology," *MN* (1st ed.) 14-41; *MN* (2d ed.) 16-38; see also *JNES* (1944) 141-44.





carefully examined, it reveals itself to be a late, artificial, and highly deceptive contrivance, based upon a misunderstanding of the original regnal data of the MT, and brought into being with the purpose of endeavoring to present a more harmonious arrangement of the years of the Hebrew rulers.

The methods employed for reckoning the regnal years should be noticed. At times the legitimate accession- and nonaccession-year systems were used, but there also was frequent use of a novel system that looks strangely like the accession-year method but is artificial and delusive. My term for this system was "inconsequent accession-year reckoning."<sup>17</sup> In this system the year when a king is set forth as having begun his reign is actually the year after his reign began. Thus in the Greek pattern the accession of Ahab is synchronized with the second year of Jehoshaphat, although it was in the first year of Jehoshaphat that Omri, according to the Greek arrangement, completed his 12th and last year, and that Ahab should have begun his reign. So also, the first year of Ahaziah is synchronized with the 24th year of Jehoshaphat, although it was in the previous year, the 23rd year of Jehoshaphat, that Ahab in this arrangement completed his 22 years and that Ahaziah should have come to the throne. This provides clear-cut evidence that this Greek chronological pattern is not original but is late and deceptive.

In my discussion of "The Variant Figures of the Greek Texts," I showed that this system was thrown in here and there with the legitimate chronological systems to give an outward semblance of harmony.<sup>18</sup> Shenkel has called attention to the Greek Lucianic manuscript *c*<sub>2</sub> which employs this system throughout, from Rehoboam and Jeroboam to Hezekiah and Hoshea—wherever necessary, changing the chronological data to accord with this admittedly late and arbitrary system of reckoning.<sup>19</sup> After a detailed presentation of the various modifications in the chronological data which this manuscript has made, Shenkel declares:

This excursus on the chronological system exhibited by the Lucianic manuscript *c*<sub>2</sub> has been necessary in order to make clear that the data of this manuscript are not to be accorded equal status with the chronological data of the other Lucianic manuscripts (*boe*<sub>2</sub>) that for the most part preserve the Old Greek chronology. The chronological data of *c*<sub>2</sub> contribute nothing in fact to the determination of the early development of the Greek text. Apart from its late and artificial systems, however, *c*<sub>2</sub> is ordinarily a reliable witness to the Lucianic text, especially where it agrees with *boe*<sub>2</sub>.<sup>20</sup>

The point of vital importance here is that the Greek manuscript *c*<sub>2</sub> makes it clear that the Lucianic redactors were under the impression that the regnal data of Kings were in need of revision and that they did not hesitate to make such

<sup>17</sup> *MN* (1st ed.) 172-76, 185, 185.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>19</sup> *CRD* 28-31.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

adjustments as would provide greater harmony. They did not perceive the fallaciousness of inconsequent accession-year reckoning and employed it with practically absolute consistency in MS *c*<sub>2</sub> in their alterations of the regnal data for all the rulers of the divided Hebrew monarchy. The only exception was the synchronism for the accession of Jehoram in Judah, which according to their system should have been the first year of Joram of Israel, but where the Hebrew synchronism of the fifth year of Joram was retained at 2 Kgs 8:16. Shenkel frankly admits the "late and artificial" character of inconsequent accession-year dating in this connection, but the point of paramount importance to our inquiry is the recognition of the lateness and artificiality of this system not only here but wherever else it was employed.

In more recent times modern chronologists in their attempts to reconstruct chronological systems in accord with the regnal data of the MT have frequently resorted to the use of the inconsequent accession-year dating. The details of Ussher and Anstey in this regard were discussed in an earlier presentation.<sup>21</sup>

Proceeding to the Greek patterns of reigns from Jehoram to Athaliah in Judah, and from Ahaziah to Jehu in Israel, we find a number of striking variations from the Hebrew arrangement which present a decidedly different picture of Hebrew history from that set forth by the regnal data of the MT. This pattern of years according to the Old Greek and proto-Lucianic texts, regarded by Shenkel as the earliest and most authentic arrangement, is set forth by him as in Diagram 3.<sup>22</sup>

Diagram 3

GREEK PATTERN FROM JEHORAM TO ATHALIAH

											Athaliah (ac) 1 2 3							
											Ahaziah (ac) 1							
											Jehoram [(ac) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11]							
Jehoshaphat	24	25																
	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	
	Ahaziah		Joram													Jehu		

In striking contrast with the Greek arrangement is the pattern set out in accordance with the data of the Hebrew text, as in Diagram 4.<sup>23</sup>

In the endeavor to determine whether the Greek or the Hebrew is the more reliable witness of what actually took place, the report of the campaign of Joram against Moab recorded in 2 Kgs 3:4-27 is of some importance. Ac-

<sup>21</sup> *MN* (1st ed.) 230, 231, 235.

<sup>22</sup> *CRD* 80. For my reconstruction of the Lucianic pattern for this period, see *MN* (1st ed.) 192.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

Diagram 4

## HEBREW PATTERN FROM JEHORAM TO ATHALIAH

Jehoshaphat — years reckoned from the beginning of his sole reign												
Jehoram coregent					Jehoram sole reign							
16 (17)	(18)	19	20	21	22							( 1) Ahaziah J
1	( 2)	3	4	5	(1)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ahab 22												1 Athaliah
Ahaziah ( 1)	2											1 Jehu
Joram ( 1)	2	3	4	(5)	6	7	8	9	10	11	(12)	

According to the Hebrew account Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah who accompanied Joram in this campaign, but according to the Greek Lucianic manuscripts it was Ahaziah.

Shenkel holds that the entire chronological pattern from Omri to Jehu, now found in the Hebrew text, is a late and artificial production coming from the hand of some redactor who desired to insert the name of Jehoshaphat into the account of the Moabite campaign of 2 Kings 3 and thus found it necessary to devise a chronological pattern which would make it possible for Jehoshaphat to appear as a contemporary of Joram. This, he maintains, resulted in the regnal data now found in the MT for the kings of the entire Omride dynasty.<sup>24</sup> Holding that the identification of Jehoshaphat as the king who was involved in this campaign is not compatible with certain biblical data, Shenkel maintains that "the Hebrew chronology, which was devised to effect this identification, is therefore secondary, and the Old Greek chronology . . . must be judged to be original."<sup>25</sup>

I shall briefly review some details of the Moabite campaign that may throw some light on the question whether it was Jehoshaphat or Ahaziah who accompanied Joram. The record of the brief reign of Ahab's successor Ahaziah opens with the statement that "Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab" (2 Kgs 1:1). In the Hebrew account of Joram we read that he "sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, 'The king of Moab has rebelled against me: will you go to battle with me against Moab?' And he said, 'I will go up; I am as you are, my people as your people, and my horses as your horses'" (2 Kgs 3:7). This is the same response that Jehoshaphat made to Ahab when he joined forces with him against Syria (1 Kgs 22:4). With the forceful ruler Ahab gone, Moab lost little time before engaging in revolt. When would the effort be put forth to bring Moab to terms — as soon as Joram could bring his forces together, without giving Moab the opportunity to rebuild its strength — or would Joram wait twelve years after the death of Ahab, when both Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram had disappeared from the scene, and Ahaziah had come to the throne in Judah?

<sup>24</sup> CRD 92-108.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 104.

As a contemporary of Ahab, Jehoshaphat had shown himself a strong ruler, and he had personally joined Ahab in the battle against Syria (1 Kgs 22:29-32). According to the Hebrew datum of 2 Kgs 3:1, and also according to the LXX of both 2 Kgs 3:1 and 2 Kgs 1:17, Jehoshaphat was also a contemporary of Joram, for the accession of Joram is there synchronized with the 18th year of Jehoshaphat. This Greek testimony disturbs Shenkel not a little, and he even resorts to a crude suggestion as to how it might be disposed of.<sup>26</sup> But contrary

<sup>26</sup> Not only is the synchronism of the 18th year of Jehoshaphat retained by the LXX in 2 Kgs 3:1, but it also appears there in 2 Kgs 1:18 (17), where the Hebrew has the second year of Jehoram. Shenkel recognizes the seriousness of the problem which these readings present as touching the point he is endeavoring to make concerning the impossibility of Joram and Jehoshaphat having been contemporaries.

And he likewise takes notice of "the puzzling absence of the regnal formula of Jehoram of Judah from its expected place" (ibid., 69). If Jehoram of Judah commenced his reign before that of Joram of Israel, the record of Jehoram in Kings should have preceded that of Joram, in accordance with the regular practice followed in Kings. But in the Greek texts the record of Jehoram follows that of Joram, as in the Hebrew, and this is true even in the Lucianic manuscripts. All this puts the case that Shenkel is endeavoring to make in an impossible position.

In an endeavor to deal with the problem Shenkel submits the verses involved to a detailed textual analysis and then declares: "In both Greek texts the synchronism is the same, the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, corresponding to the synchronism of the MT at 3:1. The Old Greek text here has the synchronism of the Hebrew chronology, which at first view is disconcerting. It is obvious, however, that only two words need be changed in order to convert the synchronism into the Old Greek chronology, and vice versa: *ὀκτωκαίδεκάτω* 'Ιωσαφάθ' (ibid., 71).

Shenkel's concern over the Greek testimony here is perfectly understandable, for this is testimony which for him must be put out of the way, for if it is allowed to stand, the case he is endeavoring to make falls completely to pieces. But is it possible for testimony so significant and revealing as this from the LXX to be set at naught by so hollow a suggestion? Can a modern attempt to tamper with the testimony borne by "the Old Greek text" actually change a fact to which it bears witness? Or will the situation be rendered any the less "disconcerting" or the conclusion arrived at any the more acceptable by the adoption of a suggestion to reverse the evidence?

It should be noticed that the 18th year of Jehoshaphat is the reading of the LXX in both 1 Kgs 3:1 and 1:17, and Jehoram does not enter into the picture. In L, however, the sole reading is the second year of Jehoram — Jehoshaphat is not mentioned. This is important from two standpoints. First is the fact that the witness held in such high esteem by Shenkel, as providing ancient testimony of the greatest authenticity, twice gives the synchronism of Joram's accession as the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, thus making Jehoshaphat a contemporary of Joram, but which Shenkel denies.

Secondly, and of much greater importance, is the evidence here provided that the concern of the Greek redactors was not the specific king of Judah involved in the synchronism of Joram's accession, whether Jehoram or Jehoshaphat. For them it could be either, but it could not be both. Thus it becomes clear that the testimony now found in the MT at 2 Kgs 1:17 of Joram having come to the throne in the second year of Jehoram, was regarded as contradicting the testimony of 2 Kgs 3:1, that he came to the throne in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, and that this supposed discrepancy was in need of correction. A choice had to be made as to which was right, Jehoshaphat or Jehoram. The LXX chose Jehoshaphat, but L chose Jehoram. Both were half right and half wrong.

to Shenkel's hypothesis, it was entirely possible according to this Greek and Hebrew evidence for Jehoshaphat to have been called on for immediate assistance in a campaign against Moab. Would Joram bypass this opportunity and wait until Jehoshaphat's grandson before taking measures against Moab?

In Ahaziah's brief reign of a portion of one year he was to participate in another major military operation—the war against Syria in which he joined forces with Joram—and in the aftermath of which both he and Joram lost their lives at the hands of Jehu (2 Kgs 8:28–9:28), and it is highly questionable whether Joram would have undertaken two such campaigns in a single season.

The most telling evidence, however, that it was Jehoshaphat and not Ahaziah who accompanied Joram in the Moabite campaign is the testimony of both the MT and the LXX in 2 Kgs 3:7, 11, 12, 14 that Jehoshaphat was the king involved. It would take more than a tangle of words to dismiss evidence so telling as this.

The two synchronisms in the MT for the accession of Joram in Israel—in the second year of Jehoram (J) according to 2 Kgs 1:17 and in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat according to 2 Kgs 3:1, which the late redactors regarded as self-contradictory and in need of correction, actually pointed to a coregency of Jehoram with Jehoshaphat, with the 18th year of Jehoshaphat marking the second year of Jehoram's coregency. In such a case the 17th year of Jehoshaphat would be the year when Jehoram's coregency began, and that is the year of Ahaziah's accession in Israel (1 Kgs 22:51), and the year of Ahab's death. Ahab met his death in a battle against Syria in which Jehoshaphat also was engaged and in which his life likewise was in mortal danger (1 Kgs 22:32). Before participating in such an encounter it would have been only a matter of prudence for Jehoshaphat to have named Jehoram as regent. That Jehoshaphat was king when Jehoram came to the throne is revealed in the misplaced phrase, "Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah," found in the synchronism of 2 Kgs 8:16 for Jehoram's accession.

The weight of evidence supports the testimony of the seemingly conflicting but actually harmonious synchronisms of 2 Kgs 1:17 and 3:1, and the late Greek attempts at correction were not called for.

The regnal data of Jehoram in 2 Kgs 8:16, 17 which give the fifth year of Joram in Israel as the year of his accession and assign to him a reign of eight years are concerned with the year when the death of Jehoshaphat took place and when Jehoram began his sole reign. The reign of Joram in Israel came to an end in the year in which Ahaziah in Judah had his short reign of only one

To be completely right, the testimony of the MT must be allowed to stand, for Jehoshaphat and Jehoram both sat on the throne of Judah when Joram came to the throne in Israel, with Jehoram serving as coregent with his father. Lacking either of these synchronisms, the exact situation here would be extremely confusing, and the complete reconstruction of the chronological pattern would be an impossibility.

The point of paramount importance here revealed is the evidence that the Hebrew preceded the Greek, and that the Greek variations came into being as the result of endeavors to correct what were regarded as discrepancies in the Hebrew chronological data.

official year, and when Joram and Ahaziah met their deaths at the hand of Jehu.

The Hebrew chronological pattern here is of considerable importance from the standpoint of absolute years, for here two precise contacts are made with the absolute chronology of Assyria that make it possible to assign fixed dates to the Hebrew kings. Since Ahab was a participant in the battle of Qarqar in the sixth year of Shalmaneser III (853), Ahab must have still been alive that year. And since Jehu paid tribute to Assyria in the 18th year of Shalmaneser III (841), he must by then have commenced his reign. This interesting interval of exactly twelve years from the death of Ahab to the accession of Jehu in the Hebrew chronological pattern, and of twelve years from the sixth to the 18th years of Shalmaneser III, enables us to assign 853 as the last year of Ahab, and 841 as the first year of Jehu. With these assignments, we are in a position, from the reconstructed chronological pattern of Hebrew kings, to assign absolute dates to all the kings of both Israel and Judah, all the way back to the accession of Rehoboam in 931, and to the ninth year of Hoshea and the fall of Samaria in 723.<sup>27</sup>

The synchronism of 2 Kgs 8:16, giving the accession of Jehoram in the fifth year of Joram, is of particular interest in that it provides the clue to a shift in Judah from accession- to nonaccession-year reckoning.<sup>28</sup> That such a shift had taken place is reflected in the dual synchronisms for the accession of Ahaziah (J) in the 11th year of Joram (2 Kgs 9:29), where the accession-year system is used, and the 12th year (2 Kgs 8:25), where the newly-introduced nonaccession-year method is employed. This shift is further authenticated by the fact that this is the system which is employed in the reckoning of the chronological data of four Judahite rulers of this period, viz., Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash.

As the Hebrew chronological pattern is compared with the Greek,<sup>29</sup> the question must be faced as to whether all the seeming complications in the Hebrew pattern would have been invented by some late redactor to take the place of the apparently simple Greek. Are the seemingly contradictory synchronisms for the accession of Joram in Israel and Ahaziah in Judah simply late inventions? Who at a later time would have given the synchronism of Ahaziah's accession in Judah as the 11th year of Joram at 2 Kgs 9:29 and the 12th year at 2 Kgs 8:25, precisely at this time when the shift from accession- to non-

<sup>27</sup> See n. 2 above for references to charts providing the full details.

<sup>28</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this shift, see *JNES* 3 (1944) 150, 151; *MN* (1st ed.) 36-40, 63-65; and *MN* (2d ed.) 33-36, 68-72.

<sup>29</sup> Because of the many variations and discrepancies present in the data of the numerous Greek MSS, it will be recognized that no single reconstruction can agree with all the variant data. Shenkel's reconstruction for this period, however, is almost identical with my earlier reconstruction, differing from it by only one year for the comparative dates of Jehoram of Judah as against those of Joram of Israel, and in his assigning eleven years as the length of Jehoram's reign, whereas in my diagram I have left that an open question. For Shenkel's reconstruction of the Old Greek chronology, given here as Diagram 3, the details should be compared with my earlier reconstruction in the diagram in *MN* (1st ed.) 192.

accession-year dating was coming into use in Judah? Would some late reviser have given Jehoram a coregency so subtly concealed that even now there is difficulty for many in recognizing its existence? Or would Jehoram have been given a synchronism for the commencement of his reign and a datum for the years of his rule, so seemingly completely out of keeping with all the other data involved? Would a late revisionist have introduced a shift in Judah from accession- to nonaccession-year reckoning precisely at this point, where it fits in so well with the new developments of concord between Judah and Israel, and where it clears up the seemingly discordant data not only here, but also those of six of the following rulers in Israel and Judah? And what late scribe would have been able to set forth a chronological pattern for the Hebrew kings so fully in accord with ancient contemporary chronology? When all these factors are carefully considered, the verdict for accuracy and authenticity must be accorded to the Hebrew as against the Greek.

*The Lucianic Pattern from Jehoram to Athaliah*

A survey of the Lucianic chronological pattern for the period from Jehoram in Judah and Ahaziah in Israel to the accessions of Athaliah and Jehu reveals a number of striking deficiencies in the arrangement which Shenkel regards as the early and authentic pattern of reigns for the Hebrew kings.<sup>80</sup>

One inadequacy of the Greek pattern lies in the fact that it has no place for the testimony of either the Hebrew or the Greek data of 2 Kgs 8:16, 17 as to the year of Jehoram's accession or the length of his reign. Concerning the witness of the Greek Lucianic manuscripts, some of which give Jehoram a reign of eight years and others which give him ten, Shenkel declares: "These divergent figures in the Greek reflect scribal confusion but not the Old Greek chronology."<sup>81</sup> For the commencement of Jehoram's reign, Shenkel has "by extrapolation from the other data of L" substituted the second year of Ahaziah (I) instead of the fifth year of Joram, and he has given him a reign of eleven years instead of eight or ten. In view of the fact that Shenkel maintains that "the Lucianic text has best preserved the Old Greek chronology," and that "far from being the artificial contrivance of late scribal activity," it was "the earliest chronology in the Greek textual tradition,"<sup>82</sup> his own acknowledgement of the inadequacies of the Greek at this particular point should be noticed.

In the Old Greek pattern for the accessions of both Joram and Jehu Shenkel

<sup>80</sup> The many hopeless incongruities present in the Greek pattern are in a number of instances brought strikingly into the open in Shenkel's often tortuous efforts to provide a logical explanation when no such explanation is possible. In one such attempt in the present area, involving "inconsequent accession-year dating," "accession-year dating," and "nonaccession-year dating," Shenkel concludes that "Joram can be said to have begun his reign in the second year of Jehoram, even though the two kings must have begun to reign in the same year" (*CRD* 79).

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

states that they are "reckoned according to inconsequent accession-year dating."<sup>83</sup> That this is the case in this arrangement may be seen in the fact that the second and last year of Ahaziah in Israel coincided with the 25th year of Jehoshaphat, and that is the year when Joram should have commenced his reign of 12 years. When, however, those years begin with the year after Ahaziah's death, that is in accord with the delusive inconsequent accession-year system of dating. Likewise the first year of Jehu should have been reckoned from the year in which Joram terminated his reign, not from the year after, as it is in this arrangement, so again this is in accord with inconsequent accession-year dating. But this method of reckoning is not something which was ever used, or could have been used, by contemporary recorders in setting forth the years of a king. It is a device which brings a king to the throne in the year after that in which he actually began to reign, and is only resorted to by revisionary chronologists in their endeavors to give their reconstructions the appearance of harmony where actual harmony does not exist. Of this system Shenkel himself declares, "The artificial character of the inconsequent accession-year method of dating is evident."<sup>84</sup> The fact that it occurs here in the Old Greek pattern for the reigns of Joram and Jehu can only be recognized as *prima facie* evidence of this being a late, artificial, and highly deceptive chronological arrangement.

Yet another fallacy in the Greek pattern lies in its beginning the reign of Jehoram in Judah before that of Joram in Israel, but of its not having the record of Jehoram in Judah before that of Joram in Israel, but of its having the record of Joram at 2 Kgs 3:1, before that of Jehoram at 2 Kgs 8:16. This is a violation of the principle of sequence that governs the arrangements of the accounts of the rulers in Kings. The Greek follows the basic biblical principle of sequence for Omri and Jehoshaphat, where the record of Jehoshaphat, whose accession in the Greek is synchronized with the 11th year of Omri, appears after the record of Omri at 1 Kgs 16:28. In the Hebrew, however, according to which Jehoshaphat came to the throne in the fourth year of Ahab, the record of Jehoshaphat does not appear until after the close of the record of Ahab, at 1 Kgs 22:41.

The fact that the Greek has failed to follow this principle in the cases of Joram and Jehoram, Shenkel recognizes as an "obvious difficulty," but one which he attempts to resolve on the grounds of a "perfect analogy" presented in the regnal formulae of Jehu and Athaliah.<sup>85</sup> The analogy to which Shenkel makes reference consists of another abnormality in the Greek texts, where at 2 Kgs 10:36 L synchronizes the accession of Jehu with the second year of Athaliah. Every student of the OT knows that Jehu seized the throne of Israel upon his slaying of Joram (I) and Ahaziah (J), and thus opened the way for Athaliah to take the throne in Judah. Thus the synchronism in L which places Jehu's accession in the second year of Athaliah must be recognized as the historical inaccuracy that it actually is. The "perfect analogy" between an aberration in L

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-80.

regarding Joram and Jehoram on the one hand, and another aberration regarding Jehu and Athaliah on the other, fails to provide justification for either; and both must be looked upon as additional examples of the bunglings that came from the hands of the late revisionists who were responsible for the many variations in the chronological data found in the Greek texts.

Putting all the facts together, I continue to hold to my earlier conclusion that the evidence points definitely to the Hebrew as possessing the earliest and most accurate figures for the kings of Israel and Judah, and that the indications are that the variations found in the Greek texts came into being at some early period—probably in the centuries immediately preceding the commencement of the Christian era—as the result of struggles with the complicated chronological data and seeming contradictions in the Hebrew text, and that the numbers found in the Greek manuscripts give evidence of efforts to produce a chronological pattern clearer and more consistent than that found in the Hebrew figures.<sup>36</sup>

#### *The Principle Employed in the Regnal Formulae of Omri*

The pattern of variant chronological data in the Greek manuscripts for the entire period of the Omride dynasty was due to a failure to understand the fact that in the regnal data of Omri, the synchronism for his accession was that of the commencement of his sole reign, whereas the datum for the length of his reign covered his total years as king, including his overlapping years with Tibni. An understanding of this principle is vital to a correct reconstruction of Hebrew history, for the same principle is found in the chronological data of four other overlapping reigns which will be discussed herewith.

As the regnal data of Omri have long provided a problem for students of biblical chronology, the same is true with the data of Jehoshaphat. But these also become clear when it is understood that the synchronism for his accession, the fourth year of Ahab (1 Kgs 22:41), marks the commencement of his sole reign, but the datum for the length of his reign, 25 years (1 Kgs 22:42), covers three years of coregency with Asa and his 22 succeeding years. The reason for Jehoshaphat's coregency with his aged father is in all probability found in 1 Kgs 15:23, where we are told concerning Asa that "in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet." The illness of the aged king in the closing years of his long reign of 41 years was no doubt the reason that prompted the appoint-

<sup>36</sup> *MN* (1st ed.) 203. One consideration that brought me to this conclusion was expressed as follows: "The chronological pattern of the Hebrew text has frequently been regarded as hopelessly confused. In regard to its method of reckoning the reigns of the kings, however, it will be found to be marvelously consistent. The Greek texts on the contrary reveal a rather bewildering array of inconsistencies, uncertainties, and irregularities. While the method of reckoning most usually employed—inconsequent accession-year reckoning—is of itself inconsistent, there is little of consistency even in manner of employing so inconsistent a method. . . . As we review the whole picture of the Greek variants, we believe that they give evidence of being late and inaccurate modifications of the earlier and more correct data of the Hebrew text" (*MN* [1st. ed.] 201-2).

ment of Jehoshaphat as regent, three years before Asa's death. Jehoshaphat completed his reign in the fifth year of Joram of Israel (2 Kgs 8:16), which is the year when Jehoram began his sole reign rather than his coregency. The phrase, "Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah," was misplaced here by a late editor, but it is an important verification of the coregency portrayed in the seemingly conflicting data of 2 Kgs 1:17 and 3:1 for the accession of Joram.

#### *Azariah and Amaziah, Jeroboam II and Jehoash*

A pair of overlapping reigns closely connected with each other, in which the same principle is followed, are those of Azariah with Amaziah in Judah, and of Jeroboam II with Jehoash in Israel. The chronological data of these kings have long constituted a grievous perplexity for biblical chronologists who have looked upon them as certain evidence of hopeless confusion. The solution of the problems involved for Judah, however, becomes comparatively simple when it is understood that the long reign of 52 years of Azariah (2 Kgs 15:2) overlapped 24 of the 29 years of Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:2), and that the 27th year of Jeroboam (2 Kgs 15:1) was the year when Amaziah died and Azariah began his sole reign. For Israel the problem is solved when it is seen that the 41 years of Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:23) included 12 years of coregency with Jehoash, and that the synchronism of his accession in the 15th year of Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:23) marked the year when Jehoash died and Jeroboam began his sole reign.

An understanding of these overlappings is vital to an understanding of an important episode in Hebrew history at this time and to a correct reconstruction of the absolute dates of the Hebrew kings.

The period to be covered began with a season of friendly relations between Judah and Israel. Joash (Jehoash) of Israel had the same name as the father of Amaziah, Joash (Jehoash).<sup>37</sup> Amaziah on a visit to Jehoash had evidently proposed a formal treaty to be sealed by a marriage alliance (2 Kgs 14:9). Amaziah and Jehoash undoubtedly cooperated in the shift which then took place in both nations from nonaccession- to accession-year dating. Amaziah in a campaign against Edom hired a large contingent of Israelite troops to accompany him (2 Chr 25:6-13).

On the march toward Edom, Amaziah, on the counsel of a "man of God," dismissed the Israelites, who on their way home vented their rage by attacks on the cities of Judah. On his return from his triumph in Edom, Amaziah sent a challenge of war to Jehoash. Jehoash declined and responded with an insulting reply. Amaziah, however, insisted on battle. In the resulting encounter Jehoash

<sup>37</sup> It will be recalled that in the period of rapprochement between Judah and Israel that began with Jehoshaphat and Ahab and resulted in the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, the two sons of Ahab who followed him on the throne were Ahaziah and Jehoram, while in Judah Jehoram was succeeded by his son Ahaziah. In a spirit of communal friendship the two royal families were naming their children after each other. That must likewise have been the case at this period.

on his invasion of Judah, defeated the Judahite army at Beth-shemesh, took Amaziah prisoner, and entered Jerusalem and pillaged the palace and temple (2 Chr 25:17-24).

It is this episode that explains the overlapping reigns. Before starting on his campaign against Judah, Jehoash as a measure of prudence placed Jeroboam on the throne as regent. Judah with its king prisoner in Israel, placed the young Azariah on the throne. The fact that the sixteen-year old Azariah was made king by the people is recorded as a postscript at the close of the account of Amaziah's reign (2 Kgs 14:21; 2 Chr 26:1). It was not, however, at the close of Amaziah's 29 years, but shortly after Amaziah had commenced his reign that the people made the young Azariah king, and this detail should properly have been recorded at 2 Kgs 14:14+ and at 2 Chr 25:24+. Amaziah in all probability was released at the death of Jehoash, and was permitted to return to Judah where he lived for another fifteen years (2 Kgs 14:17; 2 Chr 25:25).

The dates involved in the above period are obtained as follows: Jehu began his reign in 841 and ruled 28 official years (2 Kgs 10:36), which according to the nonaccession-year system of reckoning then employed in Israel were 27 actual years, 841-814. Jehoahaz began to rule in 814 and reigned 17 official years (2 Kgs 13:1), or 16 actual years, 814-798. Jehoash came to the throne in 798. The year of the campaign against Edom was 793, and it was the aftermath of that campaign which brought Jeroboam to the throne as regent, late in 793 or early in 792.

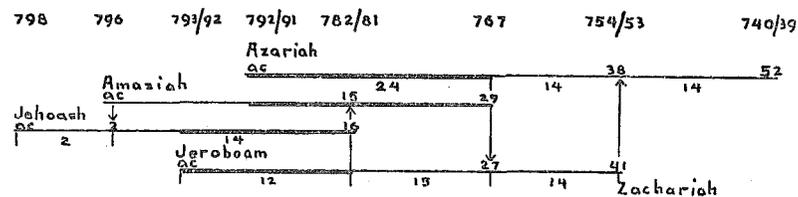
In Judah Athaliah reigned seven official years or six actual years, from 841 to 835. Joash ruled 40 official years (2 Kgs 12:1), or 39 actual years, from 835 to 796, at which time Amaziah began to reign. Azariah was raised to the throne in 792, the year when Jehoash invaded Judah and took Amaziah prisoner.

The accompanying Diagram 5 portrays the pattern of years for the overlapping reigns of Azariah with Amaziah and of Jeroboam with Jehoash, together with the dates involved.

The following details in this arrangement should be noticed:<sup>88</sup> Amaziah be-

Diagram 5

The Overlaps of Azariah with Amaziah, and of Jeroboam II with Jehoash

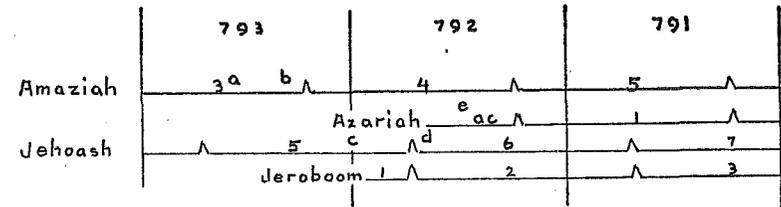


<sup>88</sup> For a fuller discussion of the details of this period, see MN (2d ed.) 72-87.

gan his reign in the second year of Jehoash (2 Kgs 14:1), 796. Jehoash reigned 16 years (2 Kgs 13:10), 798-782. The death of Amaziah took place in 767, after his 29 years (2 Kgs 14:2), and 15 years after the death of Jehoash (2 Kgs 14:17). The synchronism of the accession of Azariah in the 27th year of Jeroboam (2 Kgs 15:1), marks the year when his sole reign began in 767, at the death of Amaziah. Since Jeroboam had at that time been on the throne 27 years, but since Jehoash had died only 15 years before, Jeroboam must have been on the throne 12 years before his father's death. His coregency is reckoned as commencing with a first rather than an accession year, since this is the principle followed in the biblical chronological data concerning coregencies. After Jeroboam's reign of 41 years he was succeeded by Zechariah in the 38th year of Azariah (2 Kgs 15:8). This was 14 years after Jeroboam's 27th year, when Azariah had begun his sole reign. Azariah must thus have had a reign of 24 years before the death of Amaziah. These 24 years were not strictly a coregency, because Azariah was placed on the vacant throne of Judah by the people, not as regent by his father who was then a prisoner of Jehoash. Azariah's first year on the throne is thus reckoned as his official accession year.

A more detailed reconstruction of the years that brought Jeroboam and Azariah to their thrones is presented in Diagram 6.

Diagram 6  
793-791



Key

- a. Spring of 793 - Amaziah made attack on Edom
- b. Summer or autumn of 793 - Amaziah sent challenge to Jehoash
- c. Late 793 or early 792 - Jehoash appointed Jeroboam regent
- d. Spring of 792 - Jehoash invaded Judah and took Amaziah prisoner
- e. Spring or summer of 792 - People made Azariah king

The above dates are of considerable importance in the records of the kings of Israel and Judah, for on them hang a number of important dates in one of the most involved periods of Hebrew history — a time when there were frequent contacts with Assyria. With 792 as the year of Azariah's accession, 740 is secured as his 52nd and last year (2 Kgs 15:2). With 740 established as the 52nd year of Azariah, absolute dates are provided for both Israel and Judah to the close of the united monarchy.

*Pekah and Menahem, Jotham and Azariah*

Thus far I have discussed four instances in which the synchronism of a ruler's accession denoted the year when he commenced his sole reign, but where the datum for the length of his reign covered the total years that he was on the throne, including the years that overlapped those of another ruler. Here I shall discuss a fifth instance, that of Pekah and Menahem in Israel. Closely connected with these reigns is the coregency of Jotham with Azariah in Judah.

The data of 2 Kgs 15:27 give the 52nd year of Azariah (740), as the commencement of Pekah's reign, and twenty years as the length of his reign, which would seem to carry him down to 720 before Hoshea took the throne. These data have long been regarded as totally impossible, for they would carry the reign of Pekah beyond the point where it is known from contemporary Assyrian chronology that Hoshea had already met his doom and that the nation of Israel was no longer in existence. This was regarded as only another instance of the numerous errors found in the biblical chronological data of the Hebrew kings.

If, however, it had been understood that in this instance, as in those already discussed, the datum for Pekah's accession marked the year when he began his sole rule, but that the datum for the length of his reign covered the total years since he first took the throne, including the overlapping years with another king, the solution of this seemingly hopeless discrepancy would have been discovered.

A careful study of all the data reveals the fact that Pekah first took the throne as a rival of Menahem in 752, and that in 740, the 52nd year of Azariah, he replaced Pekahiah as ruler of all Israel. There are indications that Gilead was his base. Menahem took the throne in Samaria after overthrowing "Shallum the son of Jabesh" (2 Kgs 15:14). If this means Jabesh in Gilead, Pekah could be expected to have had the support of Gilead for his rival rule in Transjordan. That Menahem later felt his hold on the throne insecure is evidenced by the fact that he paid tribute to Pul (Tiglath-pileser III) "that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand" (2 Kgs 15:19). Pekah, on the other hand, is noted for his vigorous stand against Assyria. To broaden his base against Assyria, and with the possible plot in mind of taking over control of all Israel in Samaria, he accepted a high position under Pekahiah (2 Kgs 15:25). It was with the aid of a band of Gileadite conspirators (2 Kgs 15:25) that Pekah slew Pekahiah and reigned in his stead. While ruling in Gilead, Pekah no doubt pursued a policy of friendliness toward his northern neighbor Syria, a policy which he continued to pursue when he joined forces with Rezin to replace the pro-Assyrian Ahaz on the throne of Judah by a "son of Tabeel" (Isa 7:6). Albright has called attention to the fact that this is a name typical of the desert fringes of Palestine and Syria.<sup>89</sup>

That there were two Hebrew states in the north at this time is revealed in Hos 5:5 which states that "Israel and Ephraim" will "fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them." Pointing in the same direction are the two

diverse terms employed by Tiglath-pileser for the states of Menahem and Pekah. "Samaria" is the domain of Menahem when Tiglath-pileser reduced him, but "Bit Humri" is Pekah's domain when he was overthrown and replaced by Hoshea.<sup>40</sup>

The accuracy of the date 752 for the commencement of Pekah's 20 years is confirmed by the synchronisms for the accessions of Jotham and Ahaz in Judah which are contemporized with a reign of Pekah beginning in 752. According to 2 Kgs 15:32 Jotham began to reign in the second year of Pekah. This could only have been the commencement of his coregency with Azariah in 750, and not the beginning of a sole reign in 738, two years after the death of the aged and leprous Azariah in 740, and two years after the commencement of Pekah's sole reign in Samaria that year. A sixteen-year reign for Jotham (2 Kgs 15:33) which began as a coregency with Azariah (2 Kgs 15:5) in 750, would end in 735/34, at which time the reign of Ahaz would commence in the 17th year of Pekah (2 Kgs 16:1). With 735/34 as Pekah's 17th year, his 20th and last year, and also the 20th year of Jotham (2 Kgs 15:27, 30), would be 732/31. That date is confirmed by the Immanuel and Maher-shalal-hash-baz oracles of Isa 7:10-16 and 8:1-10. It was Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Plunder Speedeth, Spoil Hasteth), the second son of Isaiah, who was the child Immanuel whose birth was to portend the enemy's speedy doom.

The elimination of Pekah and Rezin would come "before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good" (Isa 7:16), and "the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria" would be taken away "before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father and my mother" (Isa 8:4) — within about two years. According to the biblical record, Ahaz faced a grave crisis from invasions by the Philistines in the south and west, and by Pekah and Rezin in the north and east (2 Chr 28:18, 19; 2 Kgs 16:5, 6; Isa 7:1-6). This prompted the desperate call of Ahaz to Tiglath-pileser for aid, with the result that Tiglath-pileser took Damascus and slew Rezin (2 Kgs 16:7-9). The dates involved are provided by the Assyrian Eponym Canon which gives Philistia as the center of operations in 734, and Damascus in 733 and 732.

The chronological pattern of a coregency of Jotham with Azariah in Judah from 750 to 740, which took place during a rival reign of Pekah from 752 to 740 while Menahem and Pekahiah held the throne in Samaria, clears up the seemingly impossible regnal data for Pekah in 2 Kgs 15:27. The failure to solve the problems involved has in the past been due in large measure to a failure to understand the principle involved in the regnal data for Omri at 1 Kgs 16:23; for Jehoshaphat at 1 Kgs 22:41, 42; for Jeroboam II at 2 Kgs 14:23; for Azariah at 2 Kgs 15:1, 2; and for Pekah at 2 Kgs 15:27. For all these kings the synchronism for the accession is that of the commencement of the sole reign, but the datum for the length of reign covers both the years of sole rule and also the overlapping years with another king.

<sup>40</sup> ANET, 283a, 284a.

<sup>89</sup> "The Son of Tabeel (Isaiah 7:6)," BASOR 140 (1955) 34-35.





regnal data, and provides a pattern of reigns which can only be recognized as constituting the original arrangement of years for the rulers of Israel and Judah at this period.

There is no good reason to doubt the accuracy of the chronological data in the Hebrew text that call for the overlappings here set forth, nor of the authenticity of the overlapping reigns thus called for in ancient Hebrew history.