12. Generation

"Die kurze Chronologie beruht auf astronomischen Daten und mit Jahreszahlen versehenen Königslisten, die längere Chronologie beruht auf unsicheren Generations-schätzungen in ebenso unsicheren Chronologien."

CORNELIUS (1958) 104

Sources

→ Genealogy

Further studies

Mesopotamia: BRINKMAN, MSKH 27–28 and (1993–1997) 6–10; MALAMAT (1968) 185–195; PALLIS (1956) 478–479 (mostly outdated; presentation of discussion up to 1955); ROWTON, *JNES* 17 (1958) 100–102 and (1970) 193–239; STEIN, *ZA* 79 (1989) 36–60; STEINER, *High* ... 3, 170–195 and (1988) 131; UNGNAD (1921) 15–17; WILHELM, in: *FS Moran* (1990) 523[97] and MDAR 71–79; ZEEB, MDAR 83–84.

Alalaḫ: EDER (2003) 227–289; GATES, *High* ... 2, 60–86 and (2000) 77–79; HEINZ (1992) 198–212; LANDSBERGER (1954) 52–53; NAʾAMAN (1979) 103–113; VON DASSOW (2008) 1–67; VAN SOLDT (2000) 103–115; ZEEB (2001) 76

Ugarit: ARNAUD (1998) 153–173; VAN SOLDT, AOAT 40 (1991).

Terqa: CHARPIN (2004) 391; COLBOW (2000) 122–136; EDER (2004) 221–223; PODANY (2002); ROUAULT, MDAR 51–59.

Hittite chronology: BECKMAN (2000) 19–32; CORNELIUS (1954–1956) 294–309 and (1958) 101–104; DE MARTINO (1993) 224–229; GOETZE (1957) 53–73; GURNEY (1974) 108–109; HOFFNER (1993) 50; KLINGER (1995) 235–248; OTTEN (1968) 116–126; WILHELM (1991) 470–476 and MDAR 71–79; WILHELM – BOESE (1987) 74–117.

Kaniš: HECKER (1998) 297–308; TEISSIER (1994) 69–75; VEENHOF (1985) 191–218, (1987) 421–450, (1998) 426, (2000) 137–151, (2003) and (2008); WHITING (1990) 167–218 → **Eponyms** sub **10.5.**

Elam: STEVE – VALLAT (1989) 223–238; VALLAT (1990) 119–127, (1995) 1023–1033 and (1996) 297–319.

General Features

Whenever the issue of generations is brought up within chronological discussions, one usually refers to generations of rulers. As previous studies have shown, there is a distinction between the length of generations within a royal line (not to be confused with the average throne-tenure within a dynasty, although the distinction is not always clear) and that of "private" family. In general dynastic generations are shorter than family generations.[861] The average length of private family generations is mainly determined from prosopographical studies (archives), while the generation lengths of ruling dynasties are mainly known from KLs, inscriptions, chronicles, and historical or historiographical documents. Varying proposals on the lengths of generations have led to very different results concerning Mesopotamian absolute chronology. The basis of any calculation of generation intervals is, however, sufficient and reliable information on the **genealogy** within a family. A period of more than 200 years is necessary for the calculation of average generation lengths, in order to smooth out irregularities. According to WILHELM, MDAR 74–75, there are two ways of defining a generation interval: (1) natural conditions (interval between the birth of a man's eldest surviving son and the birth of this son's eldest surviving son), and (2) cultural conditions (ranking, succession of heirs, etc.[862]). These two approaches result in different generation lengths.

Historical Relevance and Value for Absolute Chronology

The lack of the exact reign length for many rulers poses a serious problem in Mesopotamian chronology. This is especially true for Hittite chronology and the chronology of Syria and the Levant, from where no KLs (with the kings' reign lengths) have been found and in the texts of which reign lengths are usually omitted or lost (→ **Genealogy**). Because there are a great many more documents from **Syria** and **Anatolia** than from Mesopotamia itself that date from the latter's Dark Age, it is important that we reconstruct Hittite, Syrian, and Anatolian royal chronologies. In the absence of true KLs (note for

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[861] A different view was held by STEINER (1988) 131, who proposed 40 years for one generation of rulers. See id., *High* ... 3, 170–195.

[862] See for example HAGENBUCHNER, *SMEA* 29 (1992) 116, citing the fact that children could marry at the age of ten according to Middle Assyrian laws.

instance the HiKL or the UKL),[863] generation counts can help. For one thing, a generation count may clarify whether or not several members of a certain royal family belonged to the same generation (genealogical information).[864] Since the reign lengths of most Syrian and Anatolian kings from this period are unknown, generation counts often provide us with the only way of establishing approximate synchronisms with Mesopotamian rulers.

The question of how long generations last is still very much up in the air.[865] Both, biological and cultural factors, contribute to generation intervals. Modern anthropological studies generally find the length of a generation is to be about 15 to 30 years (rarely 40 years). But this should not be confused with average length of reigns. Average reign lengths should be used only when no better genealogical data is available – as in the beginning parts of the AKL and the UKL.[866]

GURNEY (1974) 108–109 pointed out the eldest child usually is not born before the father has reached at least age 18 and suggested that the same interval should be true for royal successions. However, for the British royal family, Gurney calculated that the interval of one generation to another was 29–30 years. The inference is that "over a number of reigns, generational tenure will average out to reflect the underlying biological realities" (BECKMAN [2000] 25 and WILHELM, MDAR 74). ROWTON, *JNES* 17 (1958) 100–102, on the basis of Ancient Near Eastern dynasties that covered a period of seven generations, obtained generation intervals between 21.1 and 31.7 years. On the basis of his studies on the Šilwa-Teššup archive from Nuzi Wilhelm (priv. comm.) found that for economic and hereditary reasons a generation was dependent on the point of time when a son was born to the first wife of a man: Wilhelm calculated roughly 21.5 years (using the Ottoman dynasty as a model; see now MDAR 75). Much higher numbers for generation lengths were lately presented by ZEEB, MDAR 84, who demonstrated that a generation interval could be 30–40 years, comparable to the suggestion by STEINER (1989) 170ff. However, like Gurney, Zeeb proposed an average generation length of 28 to

30 years for the Ancient Near Eastern dynasties. Of course, he based his arguments mainly on the average reign lengths of specific dynasties (such as the Babylon I and the Habsburg dynasties). The same average generation length was proposed by EDER (2004) 221–227 based on his study on the Kassite and Hittite kings and the rulers of Terqa resulted in a chronology higher than the HC (as well as Eder's interpretation of the Assyrian **Distanzangaben**).

According to ROWTON, *BASOR* 126 (1952) 20–21 the average length of a generation in the Ancient Near East was 25 years (later, in 1970, he reduced this to 20 years – i.e. the average reign length). ASTOUR (1992) 23–24 followed Rowton's reconsideration, calculating 20 years per generation for the late 3rd millennium kings of **Ebla** in TM 74.G120, where there had been an uninterrupted continuity of political power until the destruction of palace G.[867] The archives lasted approximately three generations (= 60 years for the kings of this period: Igriš-Ḫalam, Irkab-Damu and Iš'ar-Damu), which is in accordance with the known synchronisms with the contemporary rulers from Mari, Emar and Lagaš.[868] However, ARCHI (1996) reckoned an average of only 15 years per reign. NA'AMAN (1984) computed 16.5 years as the average throne tenure for the 516-year Kassite dynasty. READE (2001) 4 proposed 16 years for an "*average reign or generation*" on the basis of his evaluation of **Distanzangaben,** the **BKL** (on the **Kassites**) and the **AKL** (see below). This number accords with Eder's proposal for the average reign lengths of the Hittite kings during the Dark Age after the end of the Babylon I dynasty. Even though both scholars employed 16 years for the average length of a reign, they obtained different results for absolute Mesopotamian chronology due to differing historical interpretations of various periods. This fact shows that a simple calculation of generation intervals or average regnal years has less relevance for reconstructing chronology than historical interpretation.

Generations of the upper part of the **AKL** and in the **GHD**, which were the subject of MALAMAT's 1968 article (→ **Genealogy**), do not offer any specific information towards absolute Mesopotamian

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[863] Note also that this is the case for the beginning parts of the **AKL**, which show resemblances with the **GHD**: sequence of generations spanning a period of many centuries (FINKEL-STEIN [1966] 95–118).

[864] LANDSBERGER (1954) 44 warned about the "*System der Bruderfolge*", which has a considerable impact on the counting of generations (note the comments in fn. 860). See below

for the problem of the succession of sons-in-law and its implication for generation intervals.

[865] See WILHELM, MDAR 74 for more details and various views.
[866] ARNAUD (1998) 162 apropos the **UKL** reckoned five kings per century, an average reign length of 20 years.
[867] On the KL of Ebla see ARCHI (2001) 1–13.
[868] See ARCHI (1996) 28 (table).

chronology since several inconsistencies are observed (p. 195)[869] and the generations involved precede the period relevant for 2nd millennium chronology. Furthermore, no useful genealogical ties are reported since filiations are missing.

The reign of the Assyrian ruler Išme-Dagān I, which is synchronous with the reign of Hammu-rāpi', is of great importance, since the details of the reigns of his successors remain uncertain (→ **AKL**). In connection with the period starting with Išme-Dagān I, which is insufficiently documented in the AKL (note the expression *bāb* **DUB**-*pi-šu* for the six rulers starting with Aššur-apla-idi, who are said to have ruled *ina tarṣi* of Aššur-dugul), READE (2001) 4 proposed on the basis of his evaluation of **Distanzangaben** that "*an average reign or generation*" lasted 16 years.[870] To be precise, Reade was referring to *reign length*, not generation length, since nothing about the family ties of these rulers is known. It is essential to be clear about the difference between those two fundamentally different terms, especially in the primarily generation-based Hittite chronology.[871]

As BRINKMAN, MSKH, pp. 27[77] and 203–204 pointed out apropos the **Kassite dynasty**, some genealogies require too many generations for too few years and thus require closer studies.[872] This is true for **Elamite chronology** which is partly reconstructed via Kassite synchronisms: about 12 Elamite rulers are known from the 14th to the 12th cent., which leaves us with an average throne tenure of about 25 years per king. Synchronisms with the Kassite kings Kurigalzu I and Burna-Buriaš II attest to the fact that the first four generations (represented by eight rulers) of the Elamite dynasty ruled within one century (see STEVE – VALLAT [1989] 223–238). So far, no satisfying results were achieved for the **Early Kassite period** (→ **Babylonia**) with the help of generation count. As has been pointed out, a time span of more than 200 years is needed for a reliable calculation of the average length of generations or reigns.

Because the reign lengths of the individual Hittite kings are unknown, the only way we have of reconstructing Hittite chronology is through average generation length. This approach to Hittite chronology (and that of Alalaḫ[873]) had been taken as early as CORNELIUS (1954–1956) and (1958). Since then the information about Hittite history has increased considerably,[874] and the work by Cornelius (who favoured the LC on the basis of the **astronomical data**) is outdated. In 1958 (p. 104) he objected to GOETZES' 1957 HC, which was mainly based on Hittite history and generation counts.[875]

BECKMAN (2000) 24–26 discussed GASCHE *et al.*'s *Dating ...* and re-calculated the known Hittite generations with respect to the proposed NC, in which Hittite royal generation lengths would be only 15.36 years. Beckman found more likely the generation lengths of the MC, 24.01 years and HC, 29.18 years. WILHELM, MDAR 75 pointed out that family ties change the calculations of Beckman (only 10–11 generations between Muršili I and Šuppiluliuma I covering the **Dark Age** after the fall of Babylon). Only half a generation should be counted when a son-in-law succeeds to the throne and brother-in-law successions and usurpers should not counted as generations at all. Thus for the period between Muršili I and Zidanta I as well as for the one between Telipinu and Alluwamma only half a generation is to be calculated. Wilhelm reached a "maximum" calculation of eleven generations for the time span in question, whereas the "minimum" calculation gives only six generations.[876]

WILHELM (1991) 470 pointed out in his review of ASTOUR (1989) that generation counts have been often used by those in favor of a "longer" chronology – as in BECKMAN's contribution in *Akkadica* 119–120 (2000). Also EDER (2004) 191–236 showed

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[869] Malamat hypothesized that the ancestors of the dynastic founders were based on a constant ten-generation depth. Malamat's views were criticized by WILCKE (2001).

[870] LANDSBERGER (1954) 38–39 refused to apply generation counts to this period.

[871] BECKMAN (2000) 19ff.

[872] See EDER (2004) 218–221. → **Babylonia**

[873] On the discussion of how many generations are attested at Alalaḫ see HEINZ (1992), ZEEB (2001) and BERGOFFEN (2003) 395–410. Note that three generations at Alalaḫ correspond to four generations at Ḫalab/ Iamḫad. EDER (2003) 227–289 postulated a very high chronology based on an average of 28 years for six generations of Iamḫad-rulers.

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[874] For an updated discussion see OTTEN (1968) 116–126; id. (1983) 13–21, DE MARTINO (1993) 218–240 and BECKMAN's latest summary in 2000, pp. 19–32.

[875] Goetze criticized Albright, Cornelius, Laroche, and others for treating chronology solely on the basis of the KLs and astronomical dates, neglecting most of the historical and archaeological evidence. He urged that archaeology and history work hand in hand. See also ZEEB (2001) 67ff.

[876] The minimal calculation excludes Zidanta I, Alluwamna, and Ḫantili I to Arnuwanda I, i.e. a son-in-law, a brother-in-law, an adopted son and unclear family relationships: see WILHELM, MDAR 75. Earlier discussions on Hittite chronology based on the royal line have to be checked with newer evidence concerning the identification and genealogy of Hittite kings.

that a very high chronology for the fall of Babylon, 1665 BC, can be confirmed by Hittite generation count (though his results were mainly based on Assyrian **Distanzangaben**). For the period between Muršili I and Šuppiluliuma I (total of eleven generations) the average generation length therefore would be ca. 28 years. The average reign of the Hittite kings is estimated to have been ca. 19 years. According to Eder's very high chronology, and counting ca. 26 years for one generation the Dark Age (Muršili I – Zidanta II) lasted 150–160 years.[877] However WILHELM, MDAR 77 concluded that the generation intervals of the Hittite kings cannot solve the problems of absolute chronology; according to his calculations, Hittite royal generations can eliminate only the ULC (fall of Babylon in 1467).

Regarding the Old Hittite Kingdom problems remain with the corresponding generations of Alalaḫ VII and Iamḫad. Ḫattušili I can be synchronized with the end of Alalaḫ VII on the basis of his annals (CTH 4 = KBo 10, 1–3).[878] (LANDSBERGER [1954] 52–53 incorrectly attributed the destruction of Alalaḫ VII to Muršili I.) A recent reassessment of Old Babylonian Alalaḫ has been presented by VAN SOLDT (2000) 103–116, who summarizes (pp. 107–112) the discussion in the 1970s between Na'aman and Collon concerning the number of generations and kings in the Old Babylonian period. According to VAN SOLDT, the NC proposed by GASCHE *et al.* could also be applied to the textual material from Alalaḫ. ZEEB (2001) discussed past views on Alalaḫ chronology, favoring a very low chronology (NC) as well.[879] However, both scholars approached the subject from premises,

other than generation lengths.[880] Alalaḫ's importance for chronology is (1) that it can be historically linked with the **Babylon I dynasty**, and (2) it has remains from the **Dark Age** (i.e. the transition from the MBA II to the LBA I: levels VII, VI and V = from the mid 17th cent. to the mid 15th cent. BC). GATES (2000) 78 states that three generations for Alalaḫ VII are contemporary with four generations in Iamḫad and that roughly four generations separate the destruction of Alalaḫ VII from Ḫammu-rāpi' (assuming approximately 30 years per generation).[881] Still, as van Soldt pointed out, the textual and archaeological material from Alalaḫ does not provide us with conclusive evidence for absolute dates (p. 113)[882], since too little is known from the historical point of view about levels VI (in which the rulers Šarra-El and Abba-AN/Abba-El II are only known from seal impressions), level V, and the transition to level IV, which is documented by the well-known historical figure and ruler Idrimi. A rather sceptical view on the usefulness of generation lengths in the test case of Alalaḫ was put forward by ZEEB, MDAR 83–84.

For the Middle Hittite Kingdom synchronisms exist with rulers, such as from Kizzuwatna, Alalaḫ IV, Mittani, and elsewhere. For the period between Muršili I (fall of Babylon) and Šuppiluliuma I (beginning of the Hittite empire period)[883] Cornelius and ALBRIGHT, who both favored the (U)LC, counted for nine generations over 150 years, which comes to less than 20 years per generation. GOETZE (1957) and LANDSBERGER (1954), opting for a higher chronology (including the Alalaḫ material) suggested up to 270 years for the period in question. ALBRIGHT (*BASOR*

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[877] Zidanta II can be synchronized via Pilliya of Kizzuwatna with Idrimi of Alalaḫ. See also DE MARTINO, MDAR 36. Idrimi is generally dated to ca. 1510/1500 BC.

[878] In its second year of report (which does not automatically correspond with the second regnal year) CTH 4 says that Ḫattušili I fought Iamḫad and destroyed Alalaḫ. One assumes that this event took place in the early reign of Ḫattušili, whose length of reign remains unknown. DE MARTINO (1993) 270 points out, that it is unknown whether this report corresponds with the archaeological destruction layer. It is also unknown, when Muršili's campaign against Babylon took place during his reign (its length is also unknown). The name of the military commander is Zukraši (mentioned in CTH 15 and AlT 6 and assumed to be contemporary with Ḫattušili I: see also ASTOUR, *UF* 29 [1997] 24; this connection must be used with caution as BUNNENS [1994] 96–97 warned). But, it is not certain that the excavated destruction layer actually corresponds with this specific event. The distance between Alalaḫ's destruction by Ḫattušili I and and the fall of Baby-

lon due to Muršili I remains unknown: for a summary see VAN SOLDT (2000) 108 (15–35 years) and note ZEEB (2001) 104 (40–50 years).

[879] Excavations at Kinet Höyük (Issos) conducted by Gates may provide more secure dating for the archaeological remains (especially the imported Aegean and Cypriot pottery) found at Alalaḫ: GATES (2000) 77–102. New research on the Cypriot pottery from Alalaḫ (VI-II) was done by C. BERGOFFEN within SCIEM 2000 and published in CChEM 5 (2005).

[880] A short presentation of her work on Alalaḫ can be found in BERGOFFEN (2003) 395–410.

[881] See for a different opinion OLIVA (1999–2000) 229–239 (following Na'aman concerning the discussion of the homonym Iarim-Lim mentioned on a seal originally published by Collon).

[882] See also GATES, *High* ... 2, 75 on the correlation between Ḫattušili I and Alalaḫ VII and its connection with the Babylon I dynasty (only a relative sequence).

[883] See DE MARTINO (1993) 229.

139 [1955] 22) rebutted Landsberger with strati-
graphic evidence from Palestine, Syria and Alalaḫ
(*BASOR* 144 [1956] 26–30). Cornelius also reaf-
firmed his position (150 years for nine generations)
in 1956 based on the astronomical evidence.
LAROCHE (*Anadolu* 2 [1955] 1–22) accepted the LC,
basing his arguments on Hittite chronology. Goetze,
who favored the HC, credited the 9 generations
between Muršili I and Šuppululiuma I with 210 years
or more. OTTEN (1968) 117–118 eliminated the HC
by assuming parallel royal lines, but later changed his
mind.[884] Even though most Hittitologists have been in
favor of a LC for the past few years (de Martino, Wil-
helm), some, such as KLINGER (1995) 235–248 (espe-
cially for the Hittite Middle Kingdom) and BECKMAN
(2000) have argued for the MC, based on Hittite
sources and synchronisms. EDER (2004) 224–227, as
has been mentioned, proposed a very high chronolo-
gy with an average of ca. 28 years for each of the
eleven generations of the Middle Hittite Kingdom.
He also tried to show that the Kassite and Terqa
dynasties also conformed to this average generation
length. But Eder's arguments are based on poor evi-
dence – in particular the **Agum-kakrime inscription**.
Moreover both dynasties are poorly documented. But
further information from Terqa is to be published
soon and may help overcome this gap of information.

WILHELM [1991] 470–471 criticized ASTOUR (1989)
for eliminating several Hittite rulers to get a better
generation-length fit to his LC. Astour posited 145
years between Muršili I and Šuppululiuma I, but
counted only seven Hittite generations to get an aver-
age generation interval of 21 years. However, the
addition of important rulers, Ḫantili II, Zidanta II
and Ḫuzzia II, results in a wider range of generations
and would have reduced Astour's average generation
length to the uncomfortable level of 16 years. As WIL-
HELM – BOESE (1987) 74–117 demonstrated on the
basis of the text "Deeds of Šuppululiuma I" and the so-
called *daḫamunzu* affair, the reign of Šuppululiuma I[885]
can be shortened by 20 years (1343–1322/18 BC)[886],

which leaves an ever greater gap between the fall of
Babylon and Šuppululiuma I: 188 years. They counted
9 Hittite generations in this period of 188 years for 21
years each. However, both authors warned that the
Anatolian material does not supply conclusive proof
for the LC, but stated that their study does support it
(pp. 108–109). RÖLLIG (1965) 319 (and Otten a few
years later; → above) noticed: "Die hethitische Über-
lieferung kann also – abgesehen von ihrer Unsicher-
heit bezüglich der Fürsten der Übergangszeit – nicht
zur Lösung unserer Frage (*i.e. Dark Age*) beitragen."
The same is true for Alalaḫ and Ḫalab/Iamḫad, whose
rulers and generations have been focused on in past
chronological debates.

MAYER (2001) 14–19 attempted to provide the
missing link between Mesopotamian and Egyptian
chronology of the 2nd millennium by dating the texts
from Ekalte (which span three generations) between
the campaigns by Muršili I and Tudḫalia I against
Ḫalab. According to him, this implies a low chronolo-
gy (LC) for Mesopotamia and its neighbors. Unfortu-
nately, as was pointed out by KLINGER (1995) 246–247,
the time span between those two Hittite rulers
exceeds the duration of the three Ekalte generations.
Furthermore, the dating attested in Ekalte associated
with Tudḫalia's I campaign against Ḫalab, as well as
the association of the destruction of Ekalte with the
8th campaign of Tutmosis III is far from secure.[887]
Ekalte is not even mentioned on the 7th pylon in
Karnak, which lists conquered Syrian sites. Klinger
has shown via numerous synchronisms that, the Hit-
tite ruler Tudḫalia I can be placed shortly after the
middle of the 15th cent. BC.[888] The ten generations
between Ḫattušili I and Tudḫalia I cannot fit within
the one century resulting from the LC's ca. 1560 BC
start of the Old Hittite Kingdom. With WILHELM's
minimum calculation in MDAR, p. 75 we would end
up with 6 generations – still too much for a century.
Because of this difficulty with the presently known
number of generations between Šuppululiuma I and
Muršili I when applying the LC, we have to consider

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[884] "... Wir sehen heute, daß die Ungunst der Überlieferung
hier auch Gelehrte vom unbestreitbaren Range eines B.
LANDSBERGER und A. GOETZE einer Fehleinschätzung
der Tragfähigkeit ihrer historischen Quellen verführt
hat. ..." (p. 117). On p. 118 he writes: "... Keine beweiskräfti-
gen Kriterien lassen sich dagegen im Augenblick von den
hethitischen Quellen für eine Entscheidung hinsichtlich
der kurzen oder mittleren Chronologie beibringen. ..."

[885] See WILHELM, MDAR 73–74 for a short summary of the con-
tents of the "Deeds of Šuppululiuma I", of the *daḫamunzu*

affair (after the death of her husband Nipḫuria, an Egypt-
ian queen asks a son of Šuppululiuma to marry her), of the
identification of the Egyptian pharaoh Nipḫuria
(Smenkhkare?), and of the chronological implications.

[886] This is generally accepted. A few minor variations have
been published by FREU (2002) and SINGER, *BiOr* 57 (2000)
640 (mostly depending on the synchronisms with Egypt).

[887] WILCKE (1992) 124–135, KLINGER (1995) 245[31], SALLABER-
GER, *ZA* 93 (2003) 273–278 and PRUZSINSZKY, MDAR 43–50.

[888] BECKMAN (2000) 19–32.

new solutions, which may not necessarily be tied to the traditional Venus chronologies. Furthermore, as has been pointed out by Rowton and others, the generation count can be safely used only for periods of more than 200 years.

At **Kaniš**, the **Old Assyrian** trading point (*kārum*) in Anatolia, the problem is the gap between Kārum Kaniš levels Ib and II (→ **Eponyms** sub **10.5.**). HECKER (1998) and VEENHOF (1998) summarized the most important comments on the time length of this gap made in the past: Balkan, on the basis of the archaeological evidence and other chronological sources, suggested 30 years or one generation. Garelli proposed 50 years. Özgüç similarly suggested that the gap was at least two generations long, relying on Lewy's suggestion of 80 years. Börker-Klähn, on the basis of art-historical criteria, concluded that in fact there was *no* time interval between the two levels. Veenhof calculated, using the eponyms known as of 1987, that the gap was 30–40 years (earlier on in 1985 he proposed a greater gap). Forlanini estimated the gap at 30–41 years, but anticipated that a reduction of that number is most likely. The aim of Hecker's study, based on G. Kryszat's then unpublished dissertation (Münster 1995) on the chronology of Kaniš,[889] was to interpret the gap between levels II and Ib in terms of the archaeological and textual evidence, and to determine its duration by means of known eponyms and the **MEC**; the study was done before the KEL became known.[890] The level II fire did not destroy the whole town. Some level II documents found in level Ib, were interpreted as "intrusions" by the excavators. There is no occupation layer between levels II and Ib (thus no stratigraphic evidence exists for the length of this gap), though the historical and archaeological evidence implies the time interval between the two levels might be about 50 years – the seal impressions by themselves imply a time lapse of 20 years. Hecker believed that the intrusive tablets show that shortly after the fire many of the town residents returned continued with business as usual: after a debt had been paid, the tablet recording it, which had been written during level II, was, as usual, deliberately broken. Again, VEENHOF (1998) 426–427 pointed out that Kārum Kaniš II is much too short for a statistical evaluation of generation lengths: three generations can be estimated with 60/70 to 90/100 years, which again show a margin of two decades. For another account of the Old Assyrian period based on the eponyms recorded in the KEL and MEC see VEENHOF (2000), 137ff., who proposed an interval of ca. 35 years between levels II and Ib (p. 140, see also id. [2003] 57).[891] The edition of **KEL G** by GÜNBATTI (2008) reveals that the gap between levels Ib and II is much shorter than assumed and lasted ca. 2–3 years only (KEL G 31, year of Šamšī-Adad's accession). In any event, this issue does not have a significant impact on chronological issues since the period in consideration just precedes the Dark Age. According to Günbattı's study of 2008, level II lasted 91 years (ca. 1927–1836 BC according to the MC), the gap 2–3 years (ca. 1835–1833/32) and level Ib 113 years (ca. 1833/32–1719 plus some years after KEL G was written).

Despite the fact that the discussion on generation lengths has been frequently (mis)used for chronological issues, it ought to be continued – especially for the Dark Age, from which we are badly undersupplied with textual material. Even with further evidence on the genealogy of various royal dynasties, generation lengths or average throne tenures will never be able to provide decisive evidence for one of the several chronologies currently being considered: at its best, it will only be a supplemental source for the reconstruction of the chronology of 2nd millennium Mesopotamia.

Links

AKL, BKL, Distanzangaben, Genealogy, GHD, Kassites, KEL, MEC, Old Assyrian Period, Old Babylonian Period

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[889] See now KRYSZAT (2004).

[890] Unfortunately, the publication of texts from the respective levels is uneven: VEENHOF (2003) 63ff.

[891] VEENHOF (1998) 438ff. estimated gap at 30–40 years (→ **Eponyms**).