

15. SYNCHRONISTIC KING LIST

Sources, Textual Evidence

Ass. 14616c (= Assur 4128, A.117): WEIDNER (1926) 70–71: complete copy made from a photo; WEIDNER (1921) pls. I–IV and (1926) 66–77; SCHROEDER, **KAV 216** (only rev. copied). The state of this tablet has badly deteriorated since its first publication: for details see GRAYSON (1980–1983) 116–117. KAV 216 is badly broken and no reliable copy has yet been made: in 1920/21 Schroeder, KAV 216 and WEIDNER (1921) each published copies which were based on poor photographs taken during the excavation. In 1925 the tablet was identified in the Istanbul museum (A.117) and WEIDNER (1926) 70–71 made a revised copy from a new photograph and cautioned that only a collation of the original could verify his copy. In 1949 Kraus collated the first column with regard to the Kassite names, which was then published by WEIDNER (1959–1960) 138. Brinkman later collated the tablet for his MSKH (p. 416), where he demonstrated how badly the tablet had deteriorated since its excavation. GRAYSON’s transliteration in RIA 6 (1980–1983) is based on Weidner’s copy in *AfO* 3 (1926) and Brinkman’s collation. He pointed out that the readings of the obverse have to be studied with great caution due to the bad state of the text. KAV 216 and the fragments listed below were found in Aššur.

Synchronistic KL fragments A–E: A: VAT 11931 (**KAV 9**), B: VAT 11261 (**KAV 10**), C: VAT 11262 (**KAV 11**) + VAT 11345 (**KAV 13**), D: VAT 11338 (**KAV 12**), E: Ass. 13956 dh (**KAV 182**): WEIDNER (1917a) 3–5 and (1921) 11. See GRAYSON (1969) 111–118, ABC 271 and (1980–1983) 116–125.

General

According to GRAYSON (1980) 181–182 the Assyrian Synchronistic KL belongs to category D of the chronographic texts (→ **Chronicles**).⁹⁵⁴ In this text the Assyrian kings and in its latter part *ummânû*⁹⁵⁵ (“vice chancellors” or “royal secretaries”) are paralleled with their Babylonian contemporaries. The Assyrian kings are usually listed to the right of the Babylonian rulers; only in KAV 216 are Assyrian monarchs listed to the left of their Babylonian contemporaries. For an exact description of the shape, composition and division lines of the Synchronistic KLs see BRINKMAN, PHPKB 27–29.

The list of rulers starts off in the early 2nd millennium BC with Adasi (no. 47) and ends with the Neo-Assyrian ruler Aššurbanipal (668–627 BC) and his Babylonian counterpart Kandalānu (647–627 BC). In its complete state it started with **Ērišum I** (Assyria) and **Sumulael** (Babylonia).⁹⁵⁶ After the enumeration in the colophon it is stated that 82 kings of Aššur ruled from Ērišum I to Aššurbanipal and 98 kings of Akkad from Sumulael to Kandalānu, which agrees comparatively well with the Chors. KL (Ērišum being the 33rd and Aššurbanipal the 113th king of Aššur, the difference between the totals being just one unit: see POEBEL [1943] 79⁹⁵⁷).

The royal names are arranged in parallel columns, two sets of columns on one side (“double columns”). KAV 216, of which only two-thirds is preserved, is divided into sections by horizontal lines usually showing one synchronic pair of rulers. In some cases more than one ruler is listed in one line. The rulers are

⁹⁵⁴ See RÖLLIG (1969) 265–277 for “B”-type KLs, namely parallel listings of Assyrian and Babylonian kings, with various sub-types: B1 (KAV 216), B2 (KAV 12) and B3 (KAV 9). Division of KLs into 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th “Gattung” by WEIDNER (1921): simple entries of rulers; additional listing of reign lengths and sometimes filiations; parallel listing of Assyrian and Babylonian rulers; and Synchronistic KLs which do not list the beginnings of reigns and therefore offer only approximate information on contemporary kings (KAV 10, KAV 11, KAV 13, KAV 182, KAV 216).

⁹⁵⁵ Also mentioned in the AKL fragment KAV 18 (VAT 12058): GRAYSON (1969) 111–112 with drawings in the back (pp.

117–118): KAV 18 preserves the portion of kings before Ērišum II ending with Narām-Sîn. Only one side is legible: it is divided into two columns, of which the left one contains the names of Assyrian *ummânû*. The first column is identical with the AKL but the format is completely different (note also LANDSBERGER [1954] 108 and ROWTON [1959] 221).

⁹⁵⁶ This synchronism is not attested elsewhere and therefore ignored. See RÖLLIG (1965) 247.

⁹⁵⁷ On pp. 79–84 Poebel studied the discrepancies in numbering between the Synchronistic KL, the eponym chronicles, and inscriptions.

titled “king of Assyria” (left side in the case of KAV 216) and “king of Akkad (= Babylonia)” (right side in the case of KAV 216) respectively and are separated by double lines. The other Synchronistic KL, fragments show a different arrangement: there the Assyrian kings are placed to the right of the Babylonian kings (see BRINKMAN, PHPKB 27f. with illustrations of the basic structure of the Synchronistic KL).

Reign lengths are generally missing. KAV 216 was probably written by an *ummānu* or at least under his supervision during the reign of Aššurbanipal or shortly afterwards (GRAYSON [1980–1983] 117). The AKL, BKL A and chronicles or other documents with historical information could have served as source material. Some inaccuracy with regard to synchronisms can be observed. The readings of the reverse have to be used with some caution due to the poor state of the tablet. One lacuna can be found between the first and second column leaving a gap between the kings Aššur-šadûni (no. 64) and Tukulti-Ninurta I (no. 78). Another lacuna is between columns III and IV but involves kings of the 1st millennium BC.⁹⁵⁸

Fragments:⁹⁵⁹

VAT 11931 (**KAV 9**) is a fragment which contains remains of columns III and IV of the rev. of a large tablet (of the Synchronistic KL?).⁹⁶⁰ A comparison with **BKL A** IV, 16–22 reveals that abbreviated names of the Babylonian rulers have been used. The list begins with Erība-Adad I and records reign lengths after the Assyrian kings in the right column: these reign lengths roughly correspond to those of the **AKL**.⁹⁶¹ Unfortunately the corresponding Babylonian rulers on the left side are lost. At the point where the abbreviated names of the Babylonian kings start the corresponding Assyrian kings are lost.

VAT 11261 (**KAV 10**) and VAT 11345 (**KAV 13**) belong together but do not join. Assyrian and Babylonian kings were listed separately in two columns: Assyrian rulers (column I) are preserved from Ninurta-apil-Ekur (1191–1179) to Šamši-Adad IV (1053–1050); and Babylonian rulers (column II, only here divided by horizontal lines) are preserved from Širikti-Šuqamuna (985 BC) to Nabû-šuma-iškun (760?–748; several intervening kings are missing due to the lacuna). No attempts were made to list them synchronously.

Ummânû can be also found in these text-fragments. Thus, this list formally differs from the other synchronistic KLs.

VAT 11363 (**KAV 11**) is formally similar to KAV 216, except for the fact that the names of the Babylonian rulers are entirely missing. It is possible that they had been inscribed on the left side of the original tablet (compare with KAV 12). Since there is more than one ruler in each segment, the list was probably organized by the Babylonian kings. It starts with Enlil-nāšir II (no. 67) and ends with Arik-dēn-ili (no. 75). This part fits into the lacuna of the 2nd column of KAV 216.

VAT 11338 (**KAV 12**) has the same format as KAV 216 (II, 12–18), but with the Babylonian rulers on the left column. In contrast to all the other known versions of the Synchronistic KL (except perhaps for KAV 11), this list is organized by the Babylonian kings. The synchronizations in this list are considered reliable and it is thus regrettable that only 6 lines of it are preserved (Isin II dynasty: Nebuchadnezzar I – Marduk-nādin-aḥḫē).

Ass. 13956dh (**KAV 182**) is a fragment from the lower central part of the reverse of a large tablet, which originally had two columns, each divided into four sub-columns (Assyrian kings and *ummânû* plus Babylonian kings and *ummânû*). The format is quite different from other synchronistic lists. The preserved parts extend from Kaššû-nādin-aḥḫē (1007–1005) to Kandalānu (647–627) and from Aššurnāširpal I (1049–1031) to Aššur-etel-ilāni (627–?). Horizontal lines are at several points in the section of Babylonian kings.

Historical Relevance and Value for Absolute Chronology

The Synchronistic KL was obviously composed for international purposes: a list of parallel reigns in neighboring kingdoms was established to coordinate the histories (royal successions) of Babylonia and Assyria (→ **Synchronistic History** sub **Chronicles**).⁹⁶² Despite the fact that the Synchronistic KL does not contain any reign lengths (except for KAV 9) or filiations, this text is valuable for its information on the numerous contemporary Assyrian and Babylonian rulers and the associated historical events.

⁹⁵⁸ GRAYSON added an elaborate commentary to his transliteration in RIA 6 (1980–1983) 120–121 referring to readings by Weidner and Brinkman.

⁹⁵⁹ For comments on these fragments see GRAYSON (1969) 112–115. They were first published by WEIDNER (1917) along with fragments of the **AKL** (KAV 14 and 15). See also

RÖLLIG (1965) 234–244 (= AssKL B_{1–3} with the main text A and fragments B-D).

⁹⁶⁰ See also WEIDNER (1945–1951) 88.

⁹⁶¹ For Aššur-uballiṭ I 35 instead of 36 years are listed and for Adad-nīrārī I 33 instead of 32 years.

⁹⁶² HALLO (1983) 12–13.

When WEIDNER (1917) first published fragments of the Synchronistic KL the line of Assyrian rulers up to 1500 BC was known. The reign lengths for those kings were reconstructed on the basis of the **BKL A** (especially its totals of 576 years, 9 months and 36 kings for the Kassite dynasty⁹⁶³) and the **AKL (Nass. KL)**. Despite this time span the exact starting point of the Kassite dynasty remains unknown, mainly due to the uncertainties concerning the Early Kassite rulers. The Synchronistic KL is the only source that reports on the Kassite rulers nos. 7–13, but due to its bad state of preservation only the names Ḫarba-x (no. 7) and Burna-Buriaš (I, no. 10) can be reconstructed. Traces of king no. 9 allow the restoration of Agum (II).⁹⁶⁴ The subsequent kings are not preserved in any of the known KLs: BRINKMAN, MSKH 14ff. → **Babylonia**. The Synchronistic KL lists names of the first 13 Kassite rulers, but conflicts with BKL A with respect to the fourth and fifth kings (Abī-Rattaš and Kaštiliašu II).⁹⁶⁵ No convincing explanation for this has been offered so far. The list of eight Kassite kings starting with Agum I is paralleled to Šamši-Adad II (no. 55). The first Kassite king Gandaš (only preserved as ^l*Ga* (?)¹-x-x) is listed parallel to Ērišu III (no. 56).⁹⁶⁶

Puzur-Aššur III is known to have concluded a treaty with Burna-Buriaš I (→ **Synchronistic History**). The AKL implies Puzur-Aššur III ruled around the first quarter of the 15th century. The reigns of his successors Aššur-rabī I (no. 65) and Aššur-nādin-aḫḫē I (no. 66) are not preserved in the **AKL** (→ sub **2.6**). It is assumed that the reign of Aššur-nādin-aḫḫē I was short. The reign of Aššur-rabī I was probably not too short, since four generations later this king was still included in the royal genealogy and is attested to have been involved in building activities. Although so far there is no way to separate their reign lengths, at least two decades must be allowed for both rulers. The Burna-Buriaš mentioned in the Synchronistic History was perhaps (but not necessarily) the same person as Burna-Buriaš, father of Ulam-Buriaš.⁹⁶⁷ The Synchronistic KL names a Burna-Buriaš as tenth Kas-

site ruler and contemporary with Išme-Dagan II (ca. middle of the 16th cent.⁹⁶⁸), who is separated from Puzur-Aššur III by 42 years. It has therefore been suggested that two different rulers with the name Burna-Buriaš existed⁹⁶⁹ and the Synchronistic KL is therefore chronologically imprecise. Indeed, according to SASSMANNSHAUSEN, MDAR 63–64 (following BRINKMAN, MSKH 28) the synchronisms of the Synchronistic KL between Šamši-Adad II and the early Kassite kings are incorrect, because it states that eight of Kassite rulers were contemporary with Šamši-Adad II, who died 58 years before Puzur-Aššur III (ca. middle of the 16th cent.), and ruled for just eight years. This would mean that these early Kassite rulers either had very short reigns or/and were partly contemporary rivals for power. BRINKMAN, MSKH 102¹⁰ thus stressed the “general untrustworthiness of ‘synchronisms’ given in the synchronistic kinglists for precise chronological calculations”.

The **Sealand I dynasty**, ca. 1740–1475 BC according to the MC, is documented in the **Synchronistic KL**, as well as in **BKL A**, **BKL B** and the **Dynastic Chronicle**; BRINKMAN [1993–1997] 7 offered a table of Sealand I rulers based on those texts after collation. At least 16 years have to be allowed for **Damiq-ilišu** of the dynasty (see also GRAYSON). A **IGÍŠ-EN** (**DIŠ+U-EN**), who is mentioned neither in BKL A and nor in BKL B, is inserted in the Synchronistic KL as no. 6a before **Pešgaldaramaš** (no. 7) of the Sealand dynasty. His reign lasted 12 years.⁹⁷⁰

YAMADA (1998) 26–27 pointed out that the Synchronistic KL’s statement that **Aššur-nādin-apli** was the successor of **Tukultī-Ninurta I (no. 79)**, is verified by the latter’s own inscriptions. Poebel and Weidner reconciled this with the seemingly conflicting statement of the **AKL** naming **Aššurnaširpal** the son of Tukultī-Ninurta by suggesting that Aššur-nāšir-apli and Aššur-nādin-apli were brothers, Aššurnaširpal the murderer of Tukultī-Ninurta I and Aššur-nādin-apli Tukultī-Ninurta’s successor. This had been widely accepted. However, as Yamada stressed, only sources

⁹⁶³ → **Distanzangaben** and **BKL**.

⁹⁶⁴ BRINKMAN, MSKH 11–13.

⁹⁶⁵ BRINKMAN, MSKH 11, 174 and 437 (conflicts also occur with the Agum-kakrime inscription. → **Royal Inscriptions**).

⁹⁶⁶ Note that he is usually considered to be a contemporary of Samsuiluna (→ **BKL**) and is thus dated much earlier. For the Assyrian rulers of that time → **AKL** sub **2.2.1**.

⁹⁶⁷ See also BRINKMAN, MSKH 102–105 citing Goetze, *JCS* 17 (1964) 98f. Brinkman postulated one early Burna-Buriaš (the tenth Kassite king) and one (II) dating to the Amarna

period. He notes however that the documentation of the early Kassite period is much too scarce to offer any conclusive evidence.

⁹⁶⁸ SASSMANNSHAUSEN, MDAR 63: Išme-Dagān II ruled during the final years of Samsudīšana, and Burna-Buriaš I is supposed to have lived after Išme-Dagān II.

⁹⁶⁹ SASSMANNSHAUSEN, MDAR 63.

⁹⁷⁰ See BRINKMAN (1977) 347⁸ for the reconstruction of this king’s reign length: 368 years (total of years according to BKL A) minus 356 years (total of the other kings).

of the 8th cent. BC mention Aššurnaširpal (Chronicle P and Chors. as well as SDAS), and Yamada demonstrated that this name was due to scribal confusion and that the murderer as well as the son must have been Aššur-nādin-apli – as was correctly recorded by the scribe of the Nass. KL. This error could have occurred due to the confusion with the kings Tukultī-Ninurta II and his son Aššurnaširpal II who ruled some 300 years later. This pair of names could have influenced the erroneous entries of the AKL, which was edited only about 100 years after Aššur-nāšir-apli II. The last AKL version (SDAS) designates Aššurnaširpal as Tukultī-Ninurta’s I successor, omitting Aššur-nādin-apli completely. As Yamada noted, a number of close affinities can be found between Chors. and SDAS as opposed to Nass. It is probable that the error which occurred in the AKL also infiltrated such Babylonian texts as Chronicle P, (in which incorrect data has been pointed out).⁹⁷¹

BRINKMAN, PHPKB 29 stressed that the presentation of the first three Babylonian dynasties in KAV 216 as consecutive means that the Synchronistic KLs should not to be interpreted literally. Other known synchronisms prove that some of the data of the Synchronistic KLs is incorrect. However, only a few of the synchronisms recorded in these lists (including fragments) are mistaken: specifically, Mutakkil-Nusku and Nebuchadnezzar I, and Ninurta-apil-Ekur and Marduk-nādin-aḥḥē in KAV 12. These mistakes may have been caused by paralleling the AKL with the BKL without considering the overlapping dynasties of the BKL, which are listed in successive order. Brinkman therefore remarked, “it is clear that theses

synchronistic kinglists cannot be used as proof for any synchronism without supporting evidence.” Nevertheless, they are a valuable chronological source for the otherwise poorly documented Babylonian periods and provide synchronistic ties with historical events as seen from an Assyrian point of view. Despite the fact that some of the synchronisms are unreliable, the succession and sequence of rulers agrees with the **AKL** and **ELs**. Since no regnal years or other hints at absolute dates can be found in the Synchronistic KL, this list mainly serves as an important source for relative chronology and synchronisms between Assyrian and Babylonian rulers.

At the end of the text the number of ruling kings is recorded. It is consistent with other KLs. Further evidence on the synchronisms and events that took place in the relevant period has to be drawn from the chronicles (such as the Synchronistic History, Chronicle P) and royal inscriptions. And the synchronisms in this KL must be supported by further evidence before they can be accepted.⁹⁷² Since the Synchronistic KL lists the rulers of the first three Babylonian dynasties consecutively, though parts of these dynasties overlapped, it is not to be interpreted literally. Nevertheless, this list contains valuable historical and chronological information: in particular the kings of the Sealand I and Early Kassite dynasties, which are, with the exception of BKL A, otherwise poorly documented.

Links

AKL, BKL, Babylonia, Chronicles, Historical Epic, Kassite Dynasty, Royal Inscriptions, Sealand I Dynasty, Synchronistic History

⁹⁷¹ See also PEDERSÉN (1999) 369–373, who also did not accept the existence of a second son of Tukultī-Ninurta I. The confusion may be due to misreading of the logogramm PAP (→ **AKL** sub **2.2.1.4.**).

⁹⁷² Examples have been quoted by BRINKMAN, PHPKB 29.