

# PTOLEMY'S CANON OF THE KINGS

## Years of the Kings Before the Death of Alexander and the Years of Alexander

### *Of the Assyrians and Medes*

	Years	Totals
Nabonassar	14	14
Nadius	2	16
Chinzer and Porus	5	21
Iloulaius	5	26
Mardokempad	12	38
Arkean	5	43
First Interregnum	2	45
Bilib	3	48
Aparanad	6	54
Regebel	1	55
Mesesimordak	4	59
Second Interregnum	8	67
Asaridin	13	80
Saoudouchin	20	100
Kinelanadan	22	122
Nabopolassar	21	143
Nabokolassar [Nebuchadnezzar]	43	186
Illoaroudam [Evil-Merodach]	2	188
Nerigasolassar [Neriglissar]	4	192
Nabonadius [Nabonidus]	17	209

### *Of the Persian Kings*

Cyrus	9	218
Cambyses	8	226
Darius I	36	262
Xerxes	21	283
Artaxerxes I	41	324
Darius II	19	343
Artaxerxes II	46	389
Ochus	21	410
Arogus	2	412
Darius III	4	416
Alexander of Macedonia	8	424

## Years of the Macedonian Kings After the Death of Alexander the King

### *Of the Macedonian Kings*

	Years	Totals
Philip	7	7
Alexander II	12	19
Ptolemy Lagus	20	39
Philadelphus	38	77
Euergetes I	25	102
Philopator	17	119
Epiphanes	24	143
Philometor	35	178
Euergetes II	29	207
Soter	36	243
Dionysius the Younger	29	272
Cleopatra	22	294

### *Of the Roman Kings*

Augustus	43	337
Tiberius	22	359
Gaius	4	363
Claudius	14	377
Nero	14	391
Vespasian	10	401
Titus	3	404
Domitian	15	419
Nerva	1	420
Trajan	19	439
Hadrian	21	460
Aelius-Antonine [Antoninus Pius]	23	483

### Additional Data:

Yr. 1 of Each Reign  
by Egyptian Calendar

N.E.	YEAR BEGINS
1	Feb. 26, 747 B.C.
15	" 23, 733
17	" 22, 731
22	" 21, 726
27	" 20, 721
39	" 17, 709
44	" 15, 704
46	" 15, 702
49	" 14, 699
55	" 13, 693
56	" 12, 692
60	" 11, 688
68	" 9, 680
81	" 6, 667
101	" 1, 647
123	Jan. 27, 625
144	" 21, 604
187	" 11, 561
189	" 10, 559
193	" 9, 555
210	" 5, 538
219	" 3, 529
227	" 1, 521
263	Dec. 23, 486
284	" 17, 465
325	" 7, 424
344	" 2, 405
390	Nov. 21, 359
411	" 16, 338
413	" 15, 336
417	" 14, 332
425	" 12, 324
432	" 10, 317
444	" 7, 305
464	" 2, 285
502	Oct. 24, 247
527	" 18, 222
544	" 13, 205
568	" 7, 181
603	Sept. 29, 146
632	" 21, 117
668	" 12, 81
697	" 5, 52
719	Aug. 31, 30 B.C.
762	" 20, 14 A.D.
784	" 14, 36
788	" 13, 40
802	" 10, 54
816	" 6, 68
826	" 4, 78
829	" 3, 81
844	July 30, 96
845	" 30, 97
864	" 25, 116
885	" 20, 137

**The Assyrian Limmu List, or Eponym Canon.**—This overlap of the latter part of the Assyrian chronology with Ptolemy's Canon makes possible the assignment of B.C. dates to the series of names by which the Assyrians designated successive years, the limmu list, or the Eponym Canon. The ancient Assyrian practice was to designate each year, not by a number, but by the name of an annual honorary official, called a limmu (Greek, "eponym"). This office was conferred in turn upon the king and certain of his high officers, generally in a prescribed order. Lists of these named years were kept for official or business use in every city. In the year in which Tiglath-pileser III came to the throne, for example, the limmu for that year was Nabû-bêl-ušur; hence all documents were dated "in the year of Nabû-bêl-ušur." The eponym for the next year (the first year of the reign) was Bêl-dân, but in the following year (the second of the reign), the king himself held the title, and so the year was designated as "the year of Tukulti-apil-Esharra" (Tiglath-pileser). The king customarily, though not always, held the office of eponym in the second year of his reign.

The limmu list is not complete for all of Assyrian history. The extant portion, compiled from various tablets, is consecutive only for the period from about 900 to 650 B.C.; the last period (647-612) is not certain. Fortunately it overlaps Ptolemy's Canon, and is thus anchored to the B.C. dating around 700, when some of the kings of Assyria were also kings of Babylon. Since the limmu list is thus aligned with the B.C. dating near its end, every year in the series can be dated if the list as we have it is complete. In the past there have been differences of opinion concerning possible gaps in the list, but present scholarship accepts it as complete; therefore events recorded as occurring in certain eponymies are confidently dated on this basis—for example, the battle of Qarqar, in which Ahab participated, is placed in 853 B.C.

**The King Lists Aligned With the Limmu List.**—Since the Assyrian limmu list is a series of names, without numerals, its scale of years can be used only for a purely relative scheme of chronology; it must be aligned with other known dating before it can be employed to assign B.C. dates to recorded events. But some copies of portions of the list carry a notation of a key event for each year, and some have horizontal lines between reigns. Such information makes it possible to align the limmu list with the extant Assyrian king lists as well as with the early part of Ptolemy's Canon. Several of these scales coincide (see p. 156), thus corroborating Ptolemy's Canon for the period preceding the first eclipse record, and locking the eponym list and king lists in alignment with the canon, hence with established B.C. dating.



**NOTE.**—The first three columns of the tabulation on the opposite page are a translation from the Greek text of Ptolemy's Canon. The heading at the top of column 1, "Of the Assyrians and Medes," refers to kings of Babylon (some of the earlier ones were Assyrian rulers). After the Babylonian kings come "the Persian Kings," whose line ends with Alexander the Great. Then Ptolemy continues with a listing of the Macedonian rulers of the Egyptian division of the defunct empire of Alexander. The list carries on through the Roman emperors, presumably down to the date when Ptolemy lived. The second column gives the length of each reign. The third gives the accumulated total years of the era. Hence the number opposite any king's name represents, in terms of the Nabonassar Era, his last year of reign. Thus, for example, the figure 226 opposite Cambyses represents his 8th, that is his last, year. His year 1 is the year 219 of the canon, the year following the total figure for the preceding king, Cyrus. Accordingly, chronologists have referred to Cambyses' first year as N.E. (Nabonassar Era) 219, and have used this N.E. numbering throughout, but Ptolemy's Canon gives only the cumulative total at the end of each reign, carrying that cumulative total down only to the end of Alexander the Great's reign, and then beginning a new series of totals.

The last two columns, not in Ptolemy's Canon, are added for convenience: the N.E. year for the year 1 of each reign, and the B.C. date of Thoth 1, the beginning of each of these Egyptian years of the canon. Note that Ptolemy uses Egyptian calendar years throughout, and not the years as reckoned by the Babylonian, Persian, and Roman rulers.