

# “Chronological Framework of Ancient History”: Comments 1

A. J. M. Osgood, Independent Researcher, Bunjurgun, Queensland, Australia

## Abstract

It will be maintained that Griffith and White (2022) are incorrect in identification of Israel's king Ahab in relation to Shalmaneser III and Ben-Hadad II, which eliminates a 40-year gap in their chronology. Furthermore, it will be maintained that in Griffith and White (2023), rather than presenting a valid correlation of the Bible's record with archaeology, these authors have chosen secondary and faulty late chronological records from authors hundreds of years after the events and often ignorant of the previous histories and cultures, rather than arguing their case from primary records unearthed by the archaeologists. The result is a complex, confusing and incoherent presentation of history. It will also be maintained that as a result Griffith and White (2023) have made historical claims that have been developed from ancient myths, and used many names of people that are distortions of their real identities.

**Keywords:** Ahab, Shalmaneser III, Ben-Hadad II, Arab empire, Troy, secular chronology, Semiramis I

## Ahab, Shalmaneser III, and Ben-Hadad II

On perusing the first paper by Griffith and White on the “Chronological Framework of Ancient History” (Griffith and White 2022), I believe they have already revealed a significant crack in their chronological correlation, and in doing so added an extra unjustified assumption to their conclusions. Under the section “Synchronisms” they give what they call a “weak synchronism” of conventional accepted history. They cite the record of the battle of Qarqar during the reign of Shalmaneser III, and in their conclusions claim that Ahab of Israel died “40 years before the accession of Shalmaneser III”.

Not only is this incorrect, but it reveals a serious flaw in their basic Bible chronology. The person mentioned in Luckenbill (1926, 611), who cites the battle of Qarqar, is “Ahab the Israelite” and the Aramaic leader in concert with him, Hadad-ezer, is Ben-Hadad II in the Bible's record, the earlier opponent of Ahab. The latter is clear from Luckenbill (1926, 658–659), where Hadad-ezer is attacked in Shalmaneser's fourteenth year, but his successor Hazael in the Bible's record is Shalmaneser's opponent in his eighteenth year (Luckenbill 1926, 663).

Right from the start this eliminates a claimed 40-year gap between Ahab's death and Shalmaneser's accession, by any mathematical calculation.

Moreover, the authors claim that the Bible does not mention this battle. So what? While the Bible is heavily based on accurate history, it is not a priori an historical textbook, and has in it only that necessary for its spiritual message. Furthermore, Griffith and White (2022) have failed to point out that three years before Ahab died, he entered into a treaty with Ben-

Hadad II (1 Kings 20: 34, 1 Kings 22:1), for which he was severely rebuked by God. This was likely 854 B.C., the battle with Shalmaneser the next year 853 B.C., Ahab dying two to three years later when he and his treaty partner, now opponent again, battled it out at Ramoth Gilead (1 Kings 22) in 850 B.C.

Griffith and White (2022) also claim that the translation of the Assyrian record should not be “Ahab the Israelite,” because the Assyrians called Israel by the name Khumri (that is. the house of Omri). Again, this shows poor research on this particular matter, for the Assyrians referred to Israel by several names—Humri, Samaria (Luckenbill 1926, 772 and 779), and in this case Israel. Again, they have failed to alert the readers that in Shalmaneser's eighteenth year he received tribute from a king of Northern Israel who has been widely claimed to be Jehu, but who McCarter (1974) has, I believe, rightly identified as Joram, last of the Omride Dynasty. But even here, the slight disagreement over which king, does not alter the fact that a 40-year gap between Ahab and Shalmaneser is impossible.

Further, again destroying Griffith and White's (2022) claim is a later interaction between Adad-nirari III (in his 1st year, 804 B.C.) and Joash of Israel (Page 1968), again by biblical figures of the reigns of intervening kings, totally disallowing their claims.

Now the chronology presented by Griffith and White (2022) for this period necessitates the rejection of the chronology of Thiele (1951, 1983), a chronology which has provoked emotional and illogical rejection among many well-meaning revisionists. The reason is that they mistakenly believe that Thiele has downgraded the authority of the Scriptures. I reject that claim, but this is not the place to argue the case,

which I hope to answer in discussion of the life of Hezekiah (Osgood 2024). However, it has divided Bible believing revisionists into two groups, and brings very different conclusions from the two camps. It is my contention that this rejection is a base plate for failure by Griffith and White (2022) in correct correlation of the Bible and archaeology.

### Arab Empire

Griffith and White (2023) began some of their historical outline by using late documents which claim an Arab empire that was ended by a mythical female ruler they call Semiramis II, and identify her with the male Assyrian ruler Tukulti-Ninurta I. In doing so they show an exceeding ignorance of Mesopotamian archaeology, and make unjustified assumptions, downgrading the archaeological record.

Now while the “event” they are referring to can be dated c.1232B.C. (by their dates), but 1235B.C. by my own reckoning, the “event” was *not* the end of an “Arab empire” but an interruption of the reign of the Iranian ethnic group known as the Kassites. The record as recognized archaeologically was an attack by the Assyrian *king* (not queen) Tukulti-Ninurta I against the Kassite king Kashtiliash (III) for control of the Kassite area held by three vassals over seven years, who had experienced two attacks by the Middle Elamite kings. The rule of Tukulti -Ninurta I was then dismantled by the Kassites, replacing Tukulti -Ninurta I on the throne with Kashtiliash’s son Adad-sumi-usur, the latter then reigning as a Kassite ruler for another 30 years. Tukulti-Ninurta I himself was incarcerated by his son and then executed.

The claim of Semiramis II is myth, and pure myth alone, its origin somewhere among later authors, and quite frankly a total mystery to serious historians. But Griffith and White (2023) wish to use this later myth to overrule the Assyrian King List, the Middle Assyrian eponyms, and the well-known and comprehensive Assyrian Annals of Tukulti-Ninurta I.

### Troy

Here we see the confusion produced by this approach to history, for while Griffith and White (2023) rightly hold to the biblical time period coverage of the ancient world, they fall back on the elasticised secular chronology for the date of Troy’ fall (1184B.C.). In so doing they then assumed (whether consciously or in ignorance) the correctness of a 400-year “dark age” of Greece, when everything stopped then resumed again 400 years later. They also assumed a 400-year gap in the Assyrian record, when this meticulously document-orientated people suddenly stopped any notation, then suddenly started again 400 years later. Thus, Griffith and White (2023) then

have to admit a 400-year displacement backwards of the Hittite Kingdom and Empire, dislocating it from its contemporary nations. Additionally, they have to admit a silent 400 years during the middle Elamite period, as well as admit to the mythical “Bronze Age collapse.” All this is done to satisfy a faulty Egyptian chronology, the instrument of this confusion, which is arrogantly held to be the “gold standard” for the chronology of the ancient world.

The date for the fall of Troy is 788B.C., as discussed by Courville (1971, vol.2, 274–275), using witnesses that apparently have eluded Griffith and White (2023).

Moreover, Egyptologist Rohl (1988) has also made the strong case for a later date, but by relying on astronomical dates before the 701B.C. change of the sundial by ten degrees in the time of Hezekiah, and therefore a possible shift in earth’s axis. But Rohl then erroneously conceded another 80 odd years, making his date for Troy’s fall earlier than that of Courville.

Furthermore, Griffith and White (2023) line up the fall of Troy close to the attack of Tukulti-Ninurta I on the Kassites (the proper identification of that event). But they fail to realize that this event was only a few years after the early king of the Hittite *Old Kingdom* Mursilis I had dismantled the Hammurabi Kingdom, and that the fall of Troy by whatever accepted chronology is used was many years later towards the end of the later *Hittite empire* (several hundred years later). Their chronology has thus introduced confusion at this point.

### Semiramis I

Griffith and White (2023) have also brought confusion into the discussion of the person they call Semiramis I.

Let me be specific, this name should never have been applied to this person. Her Sumerian name was Innana. She was the sister of Enmerukar (Nimrod), and wife of Tammuz. Her name translated into Semitic languages is variously Ishtar, Astarte, or Ashtoreth, and is the type model for the Indian Durga, Egyptian Isis, Greek Aphrodite, just as Nimrod himself was the type person for Bel, Ninus, and most probably Bel-Kapkapi (Luckenbill 1926, 743) whom Adad-nirari III proclaimed “whose glory Assur proclaimed of old.” These people were the first source of idolatrous rebellion after the Flood and as such are specifically mentioned in the Bible. But Griffith and White (2023) try to defuse criticisms of their claim by inferring that the archaeological identification is ignorance from the archaeologists, when the opposite is the case.

Griffith and White (2023), however, attempt to place this person (their Semiramis I) as the substitute

for certain male rulers, most specifically Egyptian king Uenephres (Uadji), and his wife Merneith (both of which they claim as the same person), a selection which has no historical basis, and has been clearly “pulled out of the air.” In order to ward off criticism of their imaginative ideas they accuse archaeologists of ignoring these myths and insisting otherwise, while they themselves have based almost all of their early historical claims on later distorted myths. The archaeological record knows of no person called Semiramis I other than the five-year rule for her minority son in Assyria of Samsuramat, palace woman of Shamshi-Adad V and mother of Adad-Neriri III. Semiramis I is an invention of Greek chroniclers, using similar fictional ideas seen in the other Greek myths.

Further discussion of this Griffith and White (2023) paper would be as complicated as the paper itself and be extremely tedious to the reader. I merely present these three points above to show the problem. We all want a good correlation of the archaeological record with the Bible, but this is *not* the way to achieve it. In fact, their paper would have best been placed under the category of “ancient myths” rather than “archaeology”.

## References

- Courville Donovan A. 1971. *The Exodus Problem: A Critical Examination of the Chronological Relationships Between Israel and the Contemporary Peoples of Antiquity*. Loma Linda, California: Challenge Books.
- Griffith, Ken, and Darrell K. White. 2022. “Chronological Framework of Ancient History. 1: Problem, Data, and Methodology.” *Answers Research Journal* 15 (November 16): 377–390. <https://answersresearchjournal.org/ancient-egypt/chronological-framework-ancient-history-1/>.
- Griffith, Ken, and Darrell K. White. 2023. “Chronological Framework of Ancient History. 3: Anchor Points of Ancient History.” *Answers Research Journal* 16 (March 22): 131–154. <https://answersresearchjournal.org/ancient-egypt/chronological-framework-ancient-history-3/>.
- Luckenbill, Daniel D. 1926. *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*. Vol.1. Reprint 1968. New York, New York: Greenwood Press.
- McCarter, P. Kyle. 1974. “Yaw, Son of ‘Omri’: A Philological Note on Israelite Chronology.” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 216 (December): 5–7.
- Osgood, A. John. M. 2024. “Hezekiah and Bible Chronology.” *Answers Research Journal* 17 (in prep.).
- Page, Stephanie. 1968. “A Stela of Adad-Nirari III and Nergal-Ereš from Tell al Rimah.” *IRAQ* 30, no.2 (Autumn): 139–153.
- Rohl, David. 1988. *A Test of Time: The Bible—From Myth to History*. London, United Kingdom: Century Publications.
- Thiele, Edwin R. 1951. *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. 1st ed. New York, New York: Macmillan.
- Thiele, Edwin R. 1983. *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

