

A List of the Ammonite Kings According to Cultural and Political Interactions

Introduction

The Ammonites were known in antiquity as a Semitic people who established their kingdom in the last decades of the Second Millennium BC, and flourished for most of the First Millennium BC. The first historical mention of them as a 'kingdom' is in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 2:20, 3:23; Nehemia 4:7, 13:1; I Kings 11:1-2; Landes 1962: 108). The Ammonite kingdom lay east of the Jordan River and north of Moab (Hitti 1951: 179; Landes 1962: 110).

Assyrian annals and documents refer to the Ammonites in the more usual form "Beit Ammon" (Pritchard 1950: 287-298) and distinguish them and from all other states to the north west of Mesopotamia. By the term Beit "they meant the form of a state on a specific land where the throne of rule used to be succeeded by the ancestors of the same family" (Mallowan 1966: 239; Bowman 1962: 191).

An Ammonite inscription on a bronze bottle, dating to the seventh century BC, confirms that the Ammonites themselves used the term (Krahmalikov 1976: 55-57; Zayadine and Thompson 1974: 117,129-30). The Semitic origin and name of the Ammonites was related to their presumed ancestor Ben 'Ammi. The term, in Arabic and Semetic means "my cousin" (Albright 1954: 132-36; Landes 1956: 1-68). They were considered as ancestors of Ben 'Ammi, son of Saint Agios Lot, citizen of the biblical city of Sodom.

The Ammonite king Nahash, was the first king mentioned in the Old Testament as being contemporary with Saul, the first king of the Hebrews (Albright 1957: 12, 1954: 132-133; I Samuel 11:1-2, 11). After that the mention of the Ammonite successor kings and their Ammonite capital Rabbath Ammon were repeated, the first as contemporary with David, who reigned from ca. 1010 to 972BC,

and the other as contemporary with king Solomon after him, and others contemporary with other successor Hebrew kings and leaders (Albright 1954: 133, 1946: 130-133; II Samuel 10:1-2).

Ammonite independence was threatened by the Neo-Babylonians and the Persians in the Greek (Hellenistic) period (Abu Dayyeh 1979: 39-44). However, the successors of Alexander the Great (in the second and first centuries BC) did recognize the control of Tobiad Herkanos (of Ammonite ancestry and supported by Ptolemy) over the East of Jordan. A monument, constructed with massive stone blocks, at 'Irāq al-Amīr is attributed to him and testifies to his power and wealth (Abu Dayyeh 1979: 43-44; Zayadine 1975: 8; Nehemia 2:10,19, 4:3,7).

Although the Biblical sources indicate the existence of an Ammonite kingdom at the time of the Exodus? in the last decades of the first millennium BC (Deuteronomy 2:20, 3:23; Nehemia 4:7, 13:1; I Kings 11:1-2; Landes 1962: 108) no other sources can confirm an Ammonite monarch before the story of Shaul, king of Judah, who reigned around 1020BC.

List of the Evidenced Ammonite Kings

Nahash I

Before 10th century)

(Contemporary with Shaul, King of Judah 1020BC).

This king of the Ammonites had a hostile relationship with King Shaul of Judah and fought battles with him around Yabish Gilead (I Samuel: 11; Landes 1956: 152-53; Albright 1946: 222; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 45).

King Nahash II Son of Nahash I

(Contemporary with King David 10th century BC).

According to King David of Judah, this Nahash

II, son of Nahash I, was in good terms with him and showed kindness into him “as his [Hanun] father, Nahash, showed unto me” (II Samuel 10: 2).

Hanun Son of Nahash II
(Beginning of 10th century BC, contemporary with King David).

The Bible tells that when King Nahash of Ammon, the old friend of King David, died his son Hanun inherited his throne. On the death of Nahash II, King David sent delegates to pay condolences to the new king “Then David said, I will show kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash as his father showed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants came into the land of the children of Ammon”. However, King Hanun insulted those delegates: he “shaved off the one half of their beards and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away”. He did this because “the princes of the children of Ammon” suspected the delegates to have been spies who had come “to spy out and to over-view” the Rabbah (city or capital) of the Ammonites. As a result hostile relations commenced with King David (II Samuel: 10-12; Albright 1954: 136; Cross 1973: 13-14).

Shobi
Son of Nahash II and brother of King Hanun
(Second half of 10th century BC, Contemporary with the last days of King David).

He assumed the throne after his brother Hanun (Landes 1956: 145-152; Zayadine 1974: 135; Thompson 1073: 11; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 46). This king was, like his father Nahash II, on good terms with King David. He had offered food and refuge to King David when he was fleeing from his son Abshalum, to the east of the river Jordan, the land of the Ammonite’s (II Samuel: 17; Landes 1956: 152-153).

Ruhubi father of Ba’sa
(Before 853 BC, Contemporary with Shalmaneser III 858-824BC).

Campaigning in the sixth year of his reign against Karkara, North Syria, Shalmaneser III mentioned a coalition of twelve kings who supported Irhulini, king of Hamath, and Hadadezer, king of Damascus, in the battle of Karkara (ca. 853BC). King Ruhubi is mentioned as being the father of King Ba’sa, who joined that coalition and sent a number

of soldiers to Karkara (Pritchard 1969: 278-9; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 47; Dornaman 1970: 71).

Ba’sa, son of Ruhubi
(Contemporary with Shalmaneser III 858-824BC).

King Shalmaneser III “the legitimate king, the king of the world, the king without rival, the Great Dragon, the only power within the four rims (of the earth), overlord of all the princes, who has smashed all his enemies as if (they be) earthenware, the strong man, unsparing, who shows no mercy in battle king of Assyria, son of Tukul-Ninurta, likewise king of the world, etc...” (Pritchard 1969: 276) marched on many campaigns and fought many battles against different countries. One of those campaigns took place in the sixth year of his reign (853BC) (Pritchard 1969: 278-79). He marched against Karkara, one of the towns of Irhulini from Hamath in north Syria. Irhulini was supported with troops, chariots and battle equipment from a coalition composed of 12 different surrounding states in an attempt to stand against the Assyrian campaign. Ba’sa, king of Ammon and son of King Ruhubi of Ammon, supported Irhulini with a number of thousands of soldiers with their weapons. The battle was fought between Karkara and Gilzau, in the region of Hamath in 853BC. According to Shalmaneser the troops of that coalition were defeated by him (Pritchard 1969: 279; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 47).

Sanipu
(Contemporary with Tiglath-Pileser III 744-727BC).

On a clay inscription, preserved in various copies, Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727) mentions that he received tribute from kings of different vassal states, including King Sanipu of Bit-Ammon and other kings who paid loyalty to the Assyrian empire (Pritchard 1969: 282).

Zakir son of Sanipu
(After 733 and before 701BC).

The name of this king was not referred to in the Bible, nor in the Assyrian texts. However, he does appear in an inscription discovered on a base of an Ammonite stone statue as the son of Sanipu, whom the annals of Tiglath-Pileser (745-727BC) mention as one of the kings who showed respect, paid tribute to the Assyrian Great King and put his kingdom under the sovereignty of Assyria around 733BC when he was campaigning against the re-

gion of Syria (Zayadine 1974: 257; Albright 1954: 136; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 48). According to the inscription, the statue belonged to King Yerah Azar, son of Zakir, son of Sanipu (Zayadine 1974: 135; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 49).

Yerah Azar Son of Zakir son of Sanipu
(Before 701 and after 733BC).

The name of this king was inscribed on the base of his small limestone statue. He appears bearded and wearing a garment decorated with beautiful trimmings. That inscription introduces the name of another king, Zakir, whose name was not known before. Moreover, the inscription mentions notes that Yerah Azar is the son of King Sanipu.

Pado'el I

(around 701BC, contemporary with Sennacherib (704-681BC)).

Sennacherib's annals record that during his third campaign he marched against different kingdoms and cities in the northwest of Assyria. Amongst those kingdoms were Hatti, Luli, and the Kingdom of Sidon. The coalition-cities of the Kingdom of Sidon are mentioned by name as Great Sidon, Little Sidon, Bit-Zitti, Zaribu, Mahaliba, Ushu (the mainland of Tyre), Akzib, Akko, and all the fortress cities. Ethba'al (Tuba'lu) "was installed (sustained) upon the throne to be their king" due to the pragmatic behavior of that king towards Assyria, and "tribute was imposed upon him (due) to him as overlord to be paid annually without interruption". From the annals we understand that any kingdom, who did not resist the rise of Assyria in their region remained as semi independent states and their kings were admitted (installed according to the text) by the Assyrian king as long as they paid annual tribute to Assyria¹. Of those states was the Kingdom of Ammon, whose king, Podo'el (Budui-ili from Beth-Ammon). He or two other Bod'els (II and III?), retained his/their independence and his/their throne for a long period. He is mentioned again as the King of Beth Ammon in the annals of Asserhaddon (681-669), and again in the texts of Ashurbanipal (668-636BC) (Landes 1956: 261-62; Pritchard 1969: 287, 291; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 49).

Bod'el II Buduili, (Possibly contemporary to Esarhaddon 681-669BC).

King Bod'el is mentioned by three Assyrian kings: Sennacherib (704-681BC), Esarhaddon

(681-669BC) and Ashurbanipal (668-636BC), who together reigned for a period of 68 years. It therefore seems unlikely that these three references are all to the same Bod'el. It would seem likely that there was more than one king who bore that name, perhaps even three of them. In this case Bod'el II could be placed contemporary with Esarhaddon (Landes 1956: 261-62; Pritchard 1969: 287, 291; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 49).

Amminadab I, first mentioned in 667BC, Contemporary with Ashurbanipal 668-633BC).

On the Rassam Cylinder found in 1878 in the ruins of Kuyunjik, Asshubanipal mentioned that in his first campaign (in 667BC) he marched directly (in the shortest route) against Egypt (Magan) and Ethiopia (Meluhha) because Tirhakka, whom his father, Esarhaddon, had appointed to Egypt, had turned against appointees to other districts of Egypt, because "he (Tirhakka) put his trust on his own power". During his march in that campaign, twenty two kings of vassal states to Assyria, including Amminadab of Beth Ammon, brought him gifts and paid loyalty to him. Moreover, said it is noted that Assurbarnipal made them accompany him in his campaign 'over the land as well as over the sea-route', with their armed forces and their ships (Landes 1956: 294).

A list of these kings, which included the name of Amminadab of Beth Ammon, was preserved on Cylinder C, and composed of various fragments (Pritchard 1968: 294). Differentiation between the two Amminadabs was only possible after the 1972 discovery of a small bronze bottle in 'Amman, which bears an Ammonite inscription which reads "Amminadab son of Hissal El son of Amminadab" (Thompson and Zayadine 1973: 127, 133, 135).

Archaeological discoveries shed more light on the existence of King Amminadab. His name is written on two stamp seals of highly ranked officials, the first one belonging to Adoni Balit, servant of Amminadab, while the other belonged to Adoninur, servant of Amminadab (Torrey 1923: 103-4, no.1; Avigad 1970: 284-5; Harding 1953: 51; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 50-51).

Bod'el III, Buduili (Contemporary with Ashurbanipal But after 688BC and before Hissal El).

Bod'el (Buduili), is mentioned as a king of Beth Ammon in the time of Ashurbanipal, and therefore should be contemporaneous with Ashurbanipal (at

least after the year 668BC and before the reign of Hissal El, since Hissal El, and Amminadab II reigned between 667-600BC) (Landes 1956: 261-62; Pritchard 1969: 287, 291; Abu Dayyeh 1979: 49).

Hissal El (Between 667-600BC, Contemporary with Ashurbanipal).

Discoveries at Tall Sirān (inside the University of Jordan campus) revealed the name of this monarch was introduced. A small bronze bottle was found at the mound during a field training course in 1972. Eight lines of Ammonite inscription covered part of the body of that bottle. The inscription mentioned the works of establishing of a garden and it mentioned names of three Ammonite kings, two of them with the title of Amminadab Part of it read "Amminadab son of Hissal El son of Amminadab". That means that there have been two Amminadabs, the first Amminadab was the contemporary of Assurbarnipal, while the other (the owner of the bottle) would have reigned after the time of Assurbarnipal. This has meant that Hissal El was a son of a king, and he himself succeeded to the throne and then his throne was inherited by his son Amminadab II. It seems that this family was in accord with Assyria, as is known from the annals of Ashurbanipal, who mentioned the gifts of Amminadab I in 667BC when he marched in a campaign against Egypt. This may be why this royal family ruled for such a long period.

Amminadab II (Around 600BC).

The inscription from Tall Sirān revealed the existence of the later Amminadab: "Amminadab son of Hissal El son of Amminadab". The style of the alphabets written on the bottle indicate that which the inscription dates to around 600BC, which provides additional evidence for the date of Amminadab II (Thompson and Zayadine 1973: 127, 133-5).

Hanan El (Sixth century, after 600 and before 582BC).

This Female name was known via the discovery of a stamp seal bearing the inscription which reads "Belonging to Alia the maidservant ('mt) of Hanan-El" in a form parallel to that found on stamps of male servants of kings (Landes 1956: 299, 301, 382, note 160; Harding 1953: 51; Torrey 1923: 103-4, no.1), strong evidence that the lady Hanan El was a monarch.

As with the Arabs, females could rise to high office (even to the throne). Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727BC) mentioned an Arabian queen who "had acted against the oath (sworn) like 'Samsi, the queen of Arabia", and again he mentioned "in the country of Sa[ba'..] in her camp...she became afraid..." (Pritchard 1969: 283). That state stands as a strong evidence that the lady Hanan El was a monarch.

On the other hand, Albright relies on the consonant alphabets of the name Hanan which have strong similarity to the alphabets of the Ammonite king Hanun, son of Nahash II, from the 10th century (Albright 1954: 135; Landes 1956: 382).

The period of this female monarch was after the date of the reign of Amminadab II in 600BC and before the reign of Ba'lis in 582BC according to the Bible (Landes 1956: 317; Jerimiah 40:14).

Ba'alis, Ba'alyasa or *Ba'alyisa* (According to Jerimiah he reigned about 582BC, Contemporary with Nebuchedhneser).

Ba'alis was recognized in the Bible (Jerimiah 40:13-16; Herr: 169) in relation to Nebuchedhneser who campaigned against southern Palestine (Judah) and Jerusalem.

Ba'lis the king of Beni-Ammon urged Samuel, son of Nethaniah, a citizen from Jerusalem, to kill Gedaliah. He was appointed as governor of Jerusalem by Nebuchedhneser after he destroyed that town and is mentioned in the Bible as being the king who had Gedaliah assassinated "Moreover Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields, came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and said to him "Do you certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to murder you?". But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam did not believe them" (Jerimiah 40:13-16). The date of that campaign (582BC) provides a clue to the date of Ba'lis's reign (Albright 1956: 136).

The discovery of a royal seal impression in 1985 by Andrews University at Tall al-'Umayri provided the first extra-biblical reference to Ba'lis The object that included the impression was probably a juglet-stopper, made of fired ceramic ware, shaped by the fingers into a blunt cone. The seal had been impressed into the flat end of the cone (21mm high, 19mm in diameter) (Herr 1985: 169). The name was mentioned on the seal impression in the form of 'Ba'alyasa or Ba'alyisa' and recognized as a king from the royal symbols that accompanied the

Table of the Ammonite Kings.

SERIAL	KING'S NAME	DATE OF REIGN	CONTEMPORANEOUS
Gap	Unknown	From time of Exodus	
1	Nahash I	Before 10th Century	Shaul king of Judah (1020BC)
2	King Nahash II Son of Nahash I	10th Century BC	King David 10th Century BC
3	Hanun, Son of Nahash II	Beginning of 10th century BC	Contemporary with King David
4	Shobi	Second half of 10th century	Contemporary with the last days of King David
GAP			
5	Ruhubi, father of Ba'sa	Before 853BC	Contemporary with Shalmaneser III (858-824BC)
6	Ba'sa, son of Ruhubi	After 853BC	858-824BC
GAP			
7	Sanipu	744-727BC	Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727BC)
8	Zakir, son of Sanipu	After 733 and before 701BC	Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727BC)
9	Yerah Azar	Before 701 and after 733BC	Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727BC)
GAP			
10	Pado'el I	Circa 701BC	Sennacherib (704-681BC)
11	Bod'el II (Buduii)	Possibly 681-669BC	Possibly contemporary with Esarhaddon (681-669BC)
12	Amminadab I	667BC	Contemporary with Assurbanipal (668-633BC)
13	Bod'el III (Buduii)	After 688 and before Hissal El	Ashurbanipal (668-633BC)
14	Hissal El	Between 667-600BC	Contemporary with Ashurbanipal (668-633BC)
15	Amminadab II	Around 600BC	After Ashurbanipal
16	Queen Hanan El	After 600 and before 582BC	After Asurbanipal and before Nebuchedhneser
17	Ba'alis	582BC	Contemporary with Nebuchedhneser The Neo Babylonian
GAP			
18-	Herkanos of the Tobiad Family	Appeared in the second century BC	Ptolemy II of Egypt

name on the middle zone of the impression (170). In a long argument the name of the king mentioned on this impression was recognized as the same king Ba'alīs (Herr 1985: 170-172) who reigned, according to Jeremiah, during an event dated to 582BC. The seal impression thus reads as "Belonging to Milkomor the servant of Ba'alīyasa' or Ba'alīyis'a".

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