

The Decline and Fall of Assyria – Part 2 and The Saxons . .

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By Joseph F. Dumond

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News Letter 5845-047

17th day of the Ninth month 5845 years after creation

The Ninth Month in the Sabbatical Year

The Second Sabbatical Year of the 119th Jubilee Cycle

December 5, 2009

Shabbat Shalom Brethren,

We continue with another article by Cam Rea and then this is followed by a short one on the names of Israel after the captivity period. Cam Rea has a long standing interest in the subject of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and their early history. He has written two books on the subject the first being “The Assyrian Exile: Israel’s Legacy in Captivity” (2008), and his second titled book “Isaac’s Empire: Ancient Persia’s Forgotten Identity” which was released on September 11, 2009. Cam Rea is currently working on his third book titled, “Parthia: The Rise and Fall of the Arsacid Dynasty”, that is set to be published sometime in 2010.

In addition to his books, Cam Rea has also written a number of articles that deal with this very subject and can be found at www.britam.org

I am very grateful for Cam allowing me to share again this week an excerpt from his two books on Assyria.

You can order them both at [http://www.cdwow.com/search?q="CAM%20REA"](http://www.cdwow.com/search?q=)

Death of an Empire:

The Decline and Fall of Assyria

by Cam Rea

“This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.” T.S. Elliot

The fall of Assyria was a whimper and in no way ended in a bang. Instead it was slow agonizing death process, and in no way was a one day orchestrated event. Ashurbanipal, Assyria’s last great king ascended the throne only to inherit the storm forming on the horizon. From the time Ashurbanipal became king until his death, wars and revolts were common place throughout his Empire. One could easily speculate that Ashurbanipal died from pure exhaustion due to the series of wars that took place one after another in various places all over his fragile Empire, and let’s not forget that his army most likely was stretched to the limit, and thus exhausted and depleted from further continuing on in any military endeavor.[i] Once

the great Ashurbanipal died, his successors were in no way ready for the job and duty to support and defend the Empire. His younger son who was just a boy was chosen over Ashurbanipal's oldest by Sin-shumu-lishir the chief eunuch who is said to have used a private army from his estate in 631 or 627 BC.[iii] Now when Ashur-etil-ilani took power he also took on at least several others (including Sin-shumu-lishir just mentioned) claiming power instead of him. This testifies to the political instability of the region.[iii] But, out of the many claiming the throne one was powerful enough to be mentioned in the ever so obscure Assyrian tablets that are so silent in this time period. His name was Nabu-rihtu-usur and he emerges from obscurity to lay claim to the throne. Nabu-rihtu-usur gained much support from Sin-shar-ibni who was the governor of Te, as well as from many of the Assyrian citizens who threw their lot in with his claim, as did the city of Ashur.[iv] Another example would be King Josiah for it seems that he rebelled around the same time period give or take a few years. Josiah rebelled by throwing out objects considered pagan that had some connection to Assyria (2 Kings 23: 12). He also went on the attack taking back former lands once occupied by Ten Tribes of Israel that had been under Assyrian control (2 Kings 23: 15-20).[v] Now when the wars had subsided Ashur-etil-ilani gave to Sin-shumu-lishir his chief Eunuch who also was the commander-in-chief, property in gratitude for his loyal support and military ability in defeating Ashur-etil-ilani's enemies[vi]. Sinshumu-lishir was also exempted from paying taxes, as were those of his household and anyone else of power who had recognized the young king as the rightful heir on the throne. It now becomes evident that the royal house was under siege by those much stronger and more influential than the royals themselves. This led to a total breakdown in royal authority and influence which not only affected the court but the Empire as well.[vii] Ashur-etil-ilani did not last long on the throne for his trusted eunuch, Sin-shumu-lishir, disposed of him took control but reigned for only a year, if even that. It could be possible that Sin-shumu-lishir did not take over the throne, but instead was given the title of "sub-king" whose task was to act as king when the actual king was gone. The reason for this is that some sources indicate that Ashuretil-ilani and his brother Sin-shar-ishkun were at war with one another over who was the rightful heir, thus leaving behind Sin-shumu-lishir as the acting king until Ashur-etil-ilani returned from his campaign against his brother, and most likely other enemies of Assyria.[viii] We do know that when Sin-shar-ishkun (the brother of the king) took power he did so by deposing Sin-shumu-lishir (the eunuch) from the throne quite easily. It could be suggested that the Assyrian populace had supported Sin-shar-ishkun over his younger brother due to the fact that Sin-shar-ishkun most likely was the rightful heir to the throne of Assyria. It is not entirely clear what happened to his younger brother, Ashur-etil-ilani. It could be speculated that he was either killed by Sin-shumu-lishir, or killed in battle against his older brother. The only other alternative is that he was killed by some other enemy or just captured, put in prison, and totally forgotten. In any case, Sin-shar-ishkun became the new king of a decayed body once known as Assyria. Now when Sin-shar-ishkun became king around 626-625 BC give or take 5 years since most can't fully agree on a closer to precise date on the actual rule or events which is justly understandable. Now once Sin-shar-ishkun took power as the rightful king in Assyria, he also took the Babylonian crown for himself as well, since there was no king in Babylon due to his younger brother possibly having taken the title for himself and deposing of the then vassal king Kandalanu. Thus, Sin-shar-ishkun took the Babylonian title from his

younger brother or from Sin-shumu-lishir for himself. Because of these events, another leader rose up to challenge him for his kingship of Babylon. His name was Nabopolassar.[ix]

Nabopolassar:

The origins of Nabopolassar are not quite known. There are more speculations than facts. It is said that Nabopolassar may have been the son of Bel-ibni who some say was a Chaldean and viceroy of the Sealand by the Persian Gulf. This is quite possible but not probable,[x] since Bel-ibni was appointed governor of Babylon during the early years of Sennacherib's reign around 703-700 BC give or take a few years. Because of the wide gap in years between Belibni and Nabopolassar one could speculate that Bel-ibni may have been his Grandfather or Great Uncle, but that is mere speculation.[xi] The other possibility is that Nabopolassar was the son of or just related to Merodach-baladan, but even that idea holds no ground. Also it's possible that he was an Assyrian general appointed by Ashurbanipal to look after the region but even this idea can sway either way. In any case Nabopolassar had to have some connection to royalty for such support, and at the same time he may have been the William Wallace of his day for he may have had no distinct background in terms of nobility, but represented a growing unrest building up due to the Assyrian occupation that controlled all things Babylonian.[xii]

Nabopolassar gained adherents to his cause, which most likely was the common cause of the people in southern Babylonia which had a history of being anti-Assyrian. This applies especially to the Babylonian tribes of Bit-Yakin and Bit-Amukani. The reason for this is that these two tribes wanted to form an independent Babylonian state. Because of this Assyria would invade their territory time after time to smash their rebellions. This was not to be forgotten or forgiven among the people that occupied the southern portion of Babylonia. Nabopolassar gained kingship in the marshlands of southern Babylonia, and he may have come from the Bit-Yakin tribe.[xiii] Now once Nabopolassar established himself as king, and independent from Assyrian rule he made plans to recover the rest of Babylonia from Assyria. It has been suggested that Nabopolassar had no intention of expanding his borders into Assyria and thus claiming the Assyrian throne for himself. This could be true but none the less once Nabopolassar decided to go to war against Assyria he had to know that the only way to win was to invade, defeat, and take Assyria, on their own land. Nabopolassar would do just that by attacking Assyrian garrisons stationed on Babylonian soil. Once Nabopolassar pushed the remaining Assyrian forces from Babylonia after a back and forth campaign. He then in 616 BC began his invasion of Greater Assyria in hopes of extinguishing their absolute power.

Josiah and Psammetichus:

The next figure on this grand stage was none other than Josiah. Josiah, as most of us know, was the king of Judah. He had been king already for quite some time at the time these events began to take place. One could say that Josiah's first act of rebellion was reestablishing Biblical Law in the land of Judah. In doing so Josiah went on a great campaign to destroy and

rid the land of pagan idolatry as well as groves and child sacrifice to the god Molech (II Kings 23: 1-37). As you can read in the Bible, Josiah rid the land and people in Judah of everything that was pagan, and in doing so this action could suggest that Josiah was throwing off the Assyrian yoke of oppression. His forefathers, especially king Manasseh, had brought evil and paganism to the people. Now Josiah was not to rid the land of idols and fairies and openly revolt till possibly sometime after Ashurbanipal had died. The death of Ashurbanipal was followed by weakening of Assyria due to internal strife. This in turn led to provincial and regional rebellions. Once Josiah rid Judah of paganism, he looked to the north of his land which used to belong to the kingdom of Israel.

This northern region was open for business. Josiah wanted to retake it for it had been given to Israel in God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Assyria most likely withdrew from the region of northern Israel around 640 BC give or take five years. The reason for this withdrawal was due to the wars taking place within and around Greater Assyria. But it has also been suggested that Assyria withdrew from Palestine due to an agreement it had made with Egypt. The reason for this is that Egypt won its independence from Assyria after a show of strength around 649 BC and was now an independent kingdom. Either or both could be plausible. Now Egypt on the other hand was more interested in the coastal region of the Levant. For if Egypt controlled the coast it would have control of the trade routes and trade cities such as those of Phoenicia. These could generate much wealth, and at the same time put the Egyptians in a strategic position due to the location of the region. King Josiah however was in the way and had to be removed, or at least made to subdue. This land had traditionally belonged to Egypt, and in Egyptian eyes had always been the domain of Pharaohs, and no shepherd king was going to keep it from them. Nevertheless King Josiah had something to place in the way. That thing was forts. Lots of forts, and Josiah made sure they were garrisoned with Greek mercenaries. Archaeologist say that during Josiah's reign he hired many Greek mercenaries to guard his southern border particularly the area that bordered Egypt. An example of this Greek presence would be the fort known as Mezad Hashavyahu, which faced towards the Philistine city of Ashdod. These mercenaries and fortifications however did not stop Psammetichus of Egypt from invading. Egypt for the most part would end up dominating the region, especially the coastal parts of Palestine. As for Josiah's forts, they were most likely a nuisance to Psammetichus goal of total conquest of the Philistine Coast or what is today the "Gaza Strip". The city that most troubled Psammetichus was Ashdod. The Greek historian Herodotus says it took Pharaoh Psammetichus 29 years to take the city. If this is true, then without a doubt, the Egyptians goal for complete stability remained unrealized. This could be why a nomadic group of riders payed a visit to the Pharaoh. They were called the Scythians.[xiv]

The Scythians according to Herodotus invaded Palestine and in order to halt their advance, Pharaoh Psammetichus met them, gave them gifts and prayers and sent them on their way. As they left, a few decided to plunder the temple of Aphrodite in the city of Ascalon for which a curse was put upon those of them who had plundered the temple.[xv] But what were the Scythians doing in Palestine anyway, and why did they attempt to attack Egypt? Well there are quite a few ideas behind the Scythian invasion of Palestine. Herodotus says they invaded because they had plans to take Egypt and we all know how that went. George Syncellus a

Byzantine historian says that the Scythians invaded Palestine taking the city of Beth-Shean and naming it Scythopolis. While another historian by the name of Hegesippus in the 4th century AD says that they named the city Scythopolis in dedication to Artemis and it is said that there was a temple once dedicated to her. John Malalas, another historian born around 491 AD and died in 578 AD, has a similar story to that of Hegesippus: In that the city was named in honor of Artemis but with a twist, saying that King Thoas sent a large army of Scythians to search for the statue of Artemis that had been stolen and upon hearing that it was in Palestine invaded Palestine to retrieve their stolen statue, telling them not to turn back unless they recovered the item. Well it turns out that those who stole the statue got away. As for the large army of Scythians that were in pursuit of the thieves they couldn't go back to their King Thoas without a statue, so they decided to settle in the city of Beth-Shean which became Scythopolis. The Historian Syncellus also said they came from the land of Scythia and invaded Palestine which is quite similar to the account of Herodotus. Now on the other hand there are ancient historians who disagree as to when Beth-Shean was renamed Scythopolis. Some have suggested that it wasn't till the 3rd century BC that Beth-Shean became Scythopolis, and it was just Scythian veterans who settled there. In any case there was a Scythian presence in the area during the reign of Josiah. But still the question is asked why did they invade the region? The answer could be Dugdammi.[xvi]

Dugdammi was a great and mighty Scythian/Cimmerian king who may have had an empire that stretched from Anatolia in the west to Hara, in modern day Afghanistan to the east, and just maybe a little more. When Dugdammi was defeated and killed someone had to gain his large empire. The man who may have killed, routed, defeated, and incorporated Dugdammi's forces may have been none other than Madys.

According to the historian Strabo Dugdammi was defeated around 640 BC by Madys, and Madys may have been an ally of Assyria because it's thought that his father was none other than a powerful Scythian chieftain named Bartatua. According to Assyrian sources Bartatua had married into Assyrian royalty by asking for a princess from king Esarhaddon of Assyria. It seems that Esarhaddon had given a princess to Bartatua for marriage, and in doing so made a portion of the Scythians allies to a certain degree. As for Madys, he may have been the son of Bartatua, or maybe a nephew or cousin, but whatever his relationship was he seems to have kept the Umman-manda/Medes under his control, and Assyria free from further invasion from the Scythic hordes at least for a moment. So it becomes quite possible that once Madys defeated Dugdammi and took his land, he may have sent a large army into Palestine for it was free and wide open since Assyria had pulled out of the region sometime after 640 BC. But let us also consider that these Scythians who invaded Palestine may have been a different group, and in no way affiliated with the Scythians under Madys. It could be possible to say that these Scythians were not Scythians, but defeated Cimmerians that once had inhabited the Anatolian region, and were driven out due to the wars with their kin the Scythians, since both groups are one and the same.[xvii] Now as to the time the Scythians/Cimmerians invaded is unknown, but we might have an idea from the reign of Josiah. In the II book of Chronicles there is an interesting passage found in chapter 35 verses 16-19 and it states.

“So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the LORD according to the commandment of king Josiah. And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days.

And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.”

Now as you can notice neither the name Scythian nor Cimmerian appears anywhere or does it? In verse 17 and 18 the name Israel appears. The Israelites that were present must have been the same Scythians/Cimmerians that had been causing Assyria problems for nearly 100 years by this time. Also consider the verses of (II Chronicles 34:9) as further proof of the Scythian identity being Israelite.

Now as to the time when Scythian/Cimmerians showed up in Palestine it could have been the year 622 BC give or take a few years. A portion of Israelites kept Passover with Judah as described during the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah. It has been suggested that Josiah ascended the throne of Judah around 640 BC.[xviii]

To give you a brief background, the name Scythian in Assyria was rendered as “Ishkuza”, and is derived from the Hebrew name Ishak. Ishak means Isaac, and Isaac was the name that represented the tribes to the north in the Kingdom of Israel (Amos 7:9). Also the name Ishkuza was known as Zohak and Sakai in Persian, and Saka in Afghanistan.[xix] Other than the Passover that is mentioned in the verses described above, the Scythians/Israelites that were in the region also may have helped king Josiah clean the region up from idols and paganism in what used to be their homeland. Josiah may have offered them a place to stay as long as they (the Scythians) recognized him as the rightful king of David’s line among many other things. Most Christians or teachers of Christian theology would object to this and point to (Jeremiah chapter 4-6), and say these verses point to the Scythians as the hoard coming out of the north. But the problem with these chapters is not the words and descriptions, but how they are used to imply a Scythian invasion of Palestine using such terms as chariots, siege machines and a great nation coming out of the north. These are all fine and dandy, but the problem is Scythians did not use siege machines nor chariots. Scythians were a nomadic nation of cavalymen and not charioteers, and to imply the Scythians used siege machines is absolutely wrong, as there is no shred of evidence that they ever used siege weapons in conducting combat operations. As for the term “great nation” this would be a totally false perception as well, since the Scythians never were a great nation but more or less a fractured one. It might be wiser to say all of these prophecies are pointed to none other than the Babylonians.

Once the Scythians had settled down in northern Israel Josiah most likely incorporated them into his army, and gave them a mission to scout out and harass the Egyptians on the Palestine coast but not to fully engage them in all-out combat. Josiah maybe wanted to see how strong his enemy was in case he needed to take any full scale action against them. According to Herodotus the Egyptians seem to have been weak. -Pharaoh Psammetichus pays the Scythians off with gifts and prayers. This shows that the Egyptians were weak in terms of military power but were rich in treasure. Because of their riches they were able to bribe the Scythians off from possible conquest. In addition the Egyptians were exposed as vulnerable placing their liberty in jeopardy. This may explain why Egypt needed Greek mercenaries, and the same could be said for Judah as well. Both Judah and Egypt lacked men for military use, but Egypt seems to have been the stronger for they were able to expand their border and reincorporate the Palestine coast using their regular native army. Judah on the other hand had a limited army and a need to keep them stationary for the most part, other than expanding and resettling what used to be known as northern Israel. Judah needed foreign fighters, particularly Greek ones, to garrison the border forts. Both Egypt and Judah had armies that were loyal to them, but at the same time they needed men who were independent agents. The mercenaries for the most part formed the kings private army. As for Josiah, the Scythian/Israelite presence may have been a blessing not only in terms of reuniting the two houses for a brief moment in time, but also to use as a nearby reaction force that could go on the offensive when needed. Thus one could speculate that the Scythian presence in Israel may have made Pharaoh Psammetichus think twice about any attempt to take Judah.[xx] Now while preparations for an open struggle over Palestine were being drawn up in the dirt by Josiah and Psammetichus, another even more stranger figure was rising to power in the east, and his name was Cyaxares.

Cyaxares:

Cyaxares is said to have been the son of Phraortes, according to Herodotus. Cyaxares was also the king of Medes, or better yet as the inscriptions say, "King of the Umman-Manda". Cyaxares ascension to the throne was short lived when a Scythian named Madys invaded and subjugated his empire. The reason for Madys invasion is not clear and we have little to go by other than relying on the Greek historians for the answers. The reason or speculation as to why Madys invaded may be due to Cyaxares invasion of Assyria to avenge the death of his father who had led a rebellion against Assyria. Once in Assyria he advanced to Nineveh and laid siege to the city causing Ashurbanipal or an Assyrian official to send for help due to the Assyrian army being stretched to the limit. Thus King Madyes and his Scythians came to the rescue and lifted the siege of Nineveh, while driving the forces of Cyaxares back into Media. This in turn opened the door for the invasion and conquest of Media by King Madyes. It also seems that King Madyes allowed Cyaxares to live, and allowed him to reign as a puppet type king who most likely payed tribute to Madys. But this is pure speculation, and we don't have a whole lot of information concerning the relationship between Madys and Cyaxares during this period. It is said that Madys ruled Media for 28 years till his death. Once Madys died Cyaxares led a successful revolt, regained his empire, and established himself as the rightful king of the

Umman-Manda. Once Cyaxares stabilized his power he laid silent till a man whom we mentioned earlier revolted against Assyria, and you know him as Nabopolasser [xxi]

The Fall of Assyria:

It has been suggested that Nabopolasser invaded Assyria to put things back in place as they were before, meaning mainly the borders between the two nations. The battles at the border had become so frequent that Assyria started receiving help from the Egyptians and Mannaeans. The strength of arms showing up for the fight most likely caused Nabopolasser to go on the offensive to protect his interests. In doing so he found a favorable ally known as the Umman-manda. Also we should not forget about the nations that Nabopolasser did not know were on their side. Take for instance King Josiah of Judah. Josiah would also prove instrumental even though it may not be recorded. Josiah did in fact cause some kind of collateral damage to the Egyptians who were allied to Assyria.[xxii] These events all began in the year 616 BC, and are recorded in what is known as the “Fall of Nineveh Chronicle”. Not much commentary is need for this tablet, but I’ll provide a bit. The “Fall of Nineveh Chronicle” speaks for itself and quite clearly.

[Note: In the following Chronicle the King of Babylon who is fighting against the Assyrians refers to himself as “King of Akkad”. This could be confusing since the Assyrians also considered themselves successors of Akkad.]

The tenth year of Nabopolassar [616-615 BCE]: In the month Ajaru, Nabopolassar mustered the army of Akkad and marched along the bank of the Euphrates. The Suheans and Hindaneans [people living south of Harran] did not do battle against him but placed their tribute before him.

In the month su the army of Assyria prepared for battle in Gablini and Nabopolassar went up against them. On the twelfth of the month su [24 July 616] he did battle against the army of Assyria and the army of Assyria retreated before him. He inflicted a major defeat upon Assyria and plundered them extensively. He captured the Manneans, who had come to the Assyrians’ aid, and the Assyrian officers. On the same day he captured Gablini.

In the month su the king of Akkad and his army went upstream to Mane, Sahiri and Bali-hu. He plundered them, sacked them extensively and abducted their gods.

In the month Ul’u the king of Akkad and his army returned and on his way he took the people of Hindanu and its gods to Babylon.

In the month Tasrsu the army of Egypt and the army of Assyria went after the king of Akkad as far as Gablini but they did not overtake the king of Babylonia. So they withdrew.

In the month Addaru the army of Assyria and the army of Akkad did battle against one another at Madanu, a suburb of Arraphu [modern Kirkuk], and the army of Assyria retreated before the army of Akkad. The army of Babylonia inflicted a major defeat upon the Assyrian army and drove them back to the Zab river. They captured their chariots and horses and plundered them

extensively. They took many [lacuna] with them across the Tigris and brought them into Babylon.

The eleventh year [615-614]: The king of Akkad mustered his army, marched along the bank of the Tigris, and in the month Ajaru he encamped against Assur. On the [lacuna] day of the month Simanu he did battle against the city but he did not capture it. The king of Assyria mustered his army, pushed the king of Akkad back from Assur and marched after him as far as Takrita'in, a city on the bank of the Tigris. The king of Akkad stationed his army in the fortress of Takrita'in. The king of Assyria and his army encamped against the army of the king of Akkad, which was stationed in Takrita'in, and did battle against them for ten days. But the king of Assyria did not capture the city. Instead, the army of the king of Akkad, which had been stationed in the fortress, inflicted a major defeat upon Assyria. The king of Assyria and his army turned and went home. In the month Arahsamna the Umman-manda went down to Arraphu and [lacuna].

The twelfth year [614-613]: In the month su the Umman-manda, after they had marched against Nineveh [lacuna], hastened and they captured Tarbisu, a city in the district of Nineveh. They went along the Tigris and encamped against Assur. They did battle against the city and destroyed it. They inflicted a terrible defeat upon a great people, plundered and sacked them. The king of Akkad and his army, who had gone to help the Umman-manda, did not reach the battle in time. The city was taken. The king of Akkad and Cyaxares the king of the Umman-manda met one another by the city and together they made an entente cordiale. Later, Cyaxares and his army went home. The king of Akkad and his army went home.

The thirteenth year [613-612]: In the month Ajaru the Suheans rebelled against the king of Akkad and became belligerent. The king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Suhu. On the fourth day of the month Simanu [11 May 613] he did battle against Rahi-ilu, a city which is on an island in the middle of the Euphrates and at that time he captured the city. He built his [lacuna] The men who live on the bank of the Euphrates came down to him. [lacuna] he encamped against Anati and the siege engines he brought over from the western side [lacuna] he brought the siege engines up to the wall. He did battle against the city and captured it. The king of Assyria and his army came down and the king of Akkad and his army went home.

The fourteenth year [612-611]: The king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Assyria. The king of the Umman-manda marched towards the king of Akkad and they met one another at [...]u. The king of Akkad and his army crossed the Tigris; Cyaxares had to cross the Radanu, and they marched along the bank of the Tigris. In the month Simanu, the Nth day, they encamped against Nineveh.

From the month Simanu until the month su -for three months- they subjected the city to a heavy siege. On the Nth day of the month su they inflicted a major defeat upon a great people. At that time Sin-sar-iskun, king of Assyria, died. They carried off the vast booty of the city and the temple and turned the city into a ruin heap The [lacuna] of Assyria escaped from the enemy and, to save his life, seized the feet of the king of Akkad.

On the twentieth day of the month Ulu[14 September 612] Cyaxares and his army went home. After he had gone, the king of Akkad dispatched his army and they marched to Nasibina [Nisibis]. Plunder and exiles [lacuna] and they brought the people of Rusapu to the king of Akkad at Nineveh. On the [lacuna] of the month [lacuna] Assur-uballit [II] ascended to the throne in Harran to rule Assyria. Up until the [lacuna] day of the month [lacuna] the king of Akkad set out and in [lacuna]

The fifteenth year [611-610]: In the month Dussu the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Assyria victoriously. He marched about of [lacuna] and su[lacuna], plundered it and carried off its vast booty.

The sixteenth year [610-609]: In the month Ajaru the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Assyria. From the month Simanu until the month Arahsumna he marched about victoriously in Assyria. In the month Arahsumna the Umman-manda, who had come to the help of the king of Akkad, put their armies together and marched to Harran against Aur-ballit, who had ascended the throne in Assyria. Fear of the enemy overcame Aur-uballit and the army of Egypt that had come to help him, and they abandoned the city, and crossed the Euphrates. The king of Akkad reached Harran, fought a battle, and captured the city. He carried off the vast booty of the city and the temple. In the month Addaru the king of Akkad left his troops and their camp, and went home. The Umman-manda, who had come to help the king of Akkad, withdrew.

The seventeenth year [609-608]: In the month Du'su Assur-uballit, king of Assyria, with a large army from Egypt crossed the river Euphrates and marched against Harran to conquer it. They captured [a town on the road to Harran]. They defeated the garrison which the king of Akkad had stationed inside. When they had defeated it they encamped against Harran. Until the month Ulsu they did battle against the city but achieved nothing. The king of Akkad went to help his army but did not join battle. He went up to Izalla and the numerous cities in the mountains [lacuna] he set fire to their [lacuna] At that time the army of [lacuna] march as far as the district of Urartu. In the land [lacuna] they plundered their [lacuna] The garrison which the king of [lacuna] had stationed in it set out. They went up to [lacuna]. The king of Akkad went home.[xxiii]

It seems that in the seventeenth year of the reign of Nabopolassar is when Josiah king of Judah died. The inscription suggest a large army in a hurry came out of Egypt to assist the Assyrians in hope of re-taking the city of Harran. The Bible gives us a glimpse into the large army the truly was in a hurry to assist the King of Assyria. The scripture is found in (II Chronicles 35:20-21) it states:

“After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him saying, what have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not.”

Necho knew that the best possible route to reach Harran was up the Mediterranean coast and cut across Josiah's newly re-conquered territory (that formerly had belonged to the Ten Tribes of Israel) and then move northward till he reached the city of Carchemish/Charchemish. From Carchemish Necho would then go directly east till he reached Harran. Josiah for the most part disrupted the movement of Necho's forces, for Necho says "for God commanded me to make haste." Josiah's attack on Necho may have saved Harran from being taken over again by the Assyrians with the help of Egypt.

Now even though Josiah made Necho stumble before he got to Harran, an Egyptian archer put Josiah down. Josiah would lose his life for his support of Babylon and the Umman-manda. Necho did say something interesting, and it should be addressed. Necho says before the battle against Josiah. "I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war." Now some may understand this as saying that Necho was addressing the House of Israel. This could be true, but let's take into consideration that the term "house" can mean any royal house and not only Israel. Necho does not directly address the Israelites, nor does he even give a name to which house he is at war with. But, most likely the house Necho is talking about is the house of Babylonia under the rule of Nabopolasser. Now this is not to say that Necho isn't also referring to the Umman-manda/Scythian elements working alongside the Babylonians, but it should be suggested that Necho may very well have been using the term "house" in referring to the Babylonians for they are the main enemy in this war. As for Josiah's defense of the house that Necho wars against, it's safe to say Josiah was doing his best as not only a supporter of an unofficial anti-Assyrian alliance, but also supporting and protecting the Scythian/Israelite kin that warred against Assyria.[xxiv]

Aftermath:

Once Egypt and Assyria were defeated by the forces of Babylonia and the Umman-manda/Scythians at Harran in the 17th year of the reign of Nabopolasser, Assur-uballit -the last Assyrian king- is heard of no more and it is quite possible that he died at the siege of Harran along with the rest of Assyria. As for Necho, he returned back to Egypt defeated. Before he reached Greater Egypt he decided to make a pit stop in the kingdom of Judah to take king Jehoahaz as prisoner back to Egypt where he would die (II Kings 23:31-34; II Chronicles 36: 1-4). Judah for the most part became the vassal of Egypt only to change hands and become the vassal of Babylon later on. The Babylonians would benefit the most out of this campaign taking much of Assyria's former lands, and thus becoming the new Assyria with a different name and a different ruler, a prize they didn't really want but ended up gaining. As for the Umman-manda/Scythians, their whereabouts are known, but their story is very much silent after defeating the Egyptian and Assyrian forces at Harran. But what must be remembered is that in the book of Jonah God did extend his hand out to Nineveh once and they accepted, thus God was merciful to them. But once they backslided and remembered not the message he had sent to them through the prophet Jonah, God decided to visit Nineveh again with a message of destruction through his prophet Nahum, and utterly destroyed Nineveh and the body that surrounded it. In the words of T.S. Elliot.

“This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.”

- [i] Rea, *The Assyrian Exile: Israel's Legacy in Captivity*, p.
- [ii] Boardman, *The Cambridge Ancient History Volume III part II*, p. 172
- [iii] Zawadzki, *The Fall of Assyria*, p. 39-41
- [iv] Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, p. 627
- [v] King James Bible
- [vi] Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, p. 627
- [vii] Boardman, *The Cambridge Ancient History Volume III part II*, p. 172
- [viii] Bright, *A History of Israel*, p. 315
- [ix] Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*, p. 118
- [x] Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, p. 633-634
- [xi] Mieroop, *Cuneiform Text and the Writing of History*, p. 43-47
- [xii] Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*, p. 118
- [xiii] Chavalas, Younger, Jr, *Mesopotamia and the Bible*, p. 339-340
- [xiv] Stern, *Archeology of the land of the Bible Vol II*, P. 107, 223-224, 226, 229
- [xv] Herodotus, *The Histories*, p. 59
- [xvi] Safrai/Stern, *The Jewish People in the First Century*, p. 1065-1067
- [xvii] Rea, *The Assyrian Exile: Israel's Legacy in Captivity*, p.
- [xviii] KJB/Holman, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 954
- [xix] Davidiy, *Origin*, p. 40-43
- [xx] Herodotus, *The Histories*, p. 59/KJB/ Stern, *Archeology of the land of the Bible Vol II*, P. 107, 223-224, 226, 229
- [xxi] Herodotus, *The Histories*, p. 58-59/ Strabo, 1.3..21 xiv.4.8
- [xxii] Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*, p. 118-119
- [xxiii] Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, p. 218-224
- [xxiv] Davidiy, *Origin*, p. 52
- [xxv] Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, p. 225

How Did the Israelites Became Known as Cimmerians, Celts and Saxons?

The Land of the House of Omri

The Assyrians did not call the Israelites by any Hebrew names. They used a different language and hence a different name: "The usual term for the Kingdom of Israel in the Assyrian inscriptions is not this [Israel].... The ordinary designation was rather... 'Land of the House Omri [mat bit-Humri]" (Eberhard Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 177). Recall from chapter one that King Omri of Israel reigned for 12 years. Yet, in that time, he earned quite a name for himself—by moving Israel's capital to Samaria, subduing the Moabites, etc.—enough to perpetuate his name through other dynasties.

James Hastings comments, "Omri seems to have been an able soldier and he subdued Moab to Israel. This is acknowledged by the Moabite King Mehsa in an inscription which has come down to us ["Moabite Stone"].... The Assyrians first became acquainted with Israel in the time of Omri, and they call the country of the Ten Tribes of Israel 'the land of the house of Omri' even after the extinction of his dynasty" ("Omri," *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 1, p. 668).

"Omri [was]... the founder of one of the greatest dynasties of Israel.... Although little is preserved of Omri's history, the fact that the Northern Kingdom long continued to be called by the Assyrians after his name is a significant indication of his great reputation" ("Jews," *Encyclopedia Britannica* 11th ed., vol. 15, p. 377). In fact, the Assyrians continued to call Israel by the term "mat bit-Humri" for over 200 years after his death (c. 874 B.C.).

"In Assyrian inscriptions from the time of the Jehu dynasty and even afterward... not only is Jehu called 'son of Omri' (mar Humri) but even the whole of the N Kingdom of Israel is referred to as 'house of Omri'.... The international reputation of the Omride dynasty is reflected in this development from a dynastic appellation to the name of a country" (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5, p. 19).

But notice the following account from another source: "Payment of tribute by Iaua (Jehu), the son of Khumri (Omri) who brought [to the Assyrian king] silver, gold, lead, and bowls, dishes, cups, and other vessels of gold. The description 'Son of Khumri' is thought merely to show that Jehu was an Israelite, because Israelitish territory was called [by the Assyrians] 'bit-Khumri'" (*Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, vol. 1, p. 46).

The spelling of "Omri," then, varies in its transliteration by scholars into English. So which name is right? Omri, Humri or Khumri? Actually, they all are! In antiquity, and in more recent centuries as well, the reduction of oral language into written text opened the door to a variety of possible spellings for some words (e.g. site or sight, centre or center). Easy access to stylebooks, dictionaries and computerized spell-checking are modern conveniences.

To better understand how "Omri" might have been pronounced anciently, we must learn a few things about Semitic languages like Hebrew. For instance, totally unlike English, ancient

Semitic languages (and modern ones like Arabic) were constructed of “roots” made up of consonants only, with no vowels. If English followed the same system, the word “run” would be spelled “rn,” and the word “love” would become “lv.” Also, Semitic languages shared some “root” words in common and speakers didn’t hesitate to adopt another Semitic language’s word into their vocabulary. Thus the word for “son” (Heb. ben) becomes in Aramaic, bar (Davidy, p. 176).

The root word for “Omri” is composed of the three Hebrew letters ayin, mem and resh, with a final yud indicating the vowel, long e (the “i” in English is pronounced “ee” in Hebrew). Of critical importance is how the first consonant of the Hebrew root for “Omri”—the letter ayin—was pronounced by their Semitic cousins, the Assyrians and the Babylonians. “The name ‘Eri’ [Gen. 46:17] in Hebrew begins with an ‘Ayin’ letter. This letter may be described as a soft guttural and is sometimes transliterated as ‘H’ as in ‘Hebrew’ (Ivri), or some other vowel and at other times as a ‘G’ as in ‘Gaza’ for ‘Aza.’ In the Caucasus area a similar sound receives a harsher emphasis and therefore the likelihood that the ‘Ayin’ was pronounced as a ‘G’ becomes more probable. Also some indications exist that the Assyrians and Persians rendered Semitic words beginning with ‘Ayin’ as if with an initial ‘G’ sound” (p. 156).

“Omri was likewise pronounced in accordance with the older system, before the [Hebrew letter] ghain became ayin. Humri shows that they said at that time Ghomri” (Dr. Pinches, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia*, 3rd ed., 1908, p. 339). The clearest way to prove the initial hard “g” sound is that the Hebrew spelling of the doomed city of “Gomorrhah” begins with the same three root consonants that Omri does. Consequently, it is entirely reasonable to expect the Persians of the time of Darius the Great to take the Hebrew letters in “Omri”—(g)ayin, mem, resh and yud (G, M, R, I)—and pronounce the word “Gimiri”—the very way the name of the Cimmerians appears on the Behistun Rock Inscriptions!

So here we have people from the “land of the house of Omri” (Israel) called Ombri, Ghomri, Khumri, Humri, Gimiri, Gimarra, Kimmerioi, Cimmerians and Cimbri. As we’ve learned, the British people who today inhabit Wales still call themselves the Cymry or Kymry! Appian, we know, linked the Cimmerian people with the Celts. *Etymology in Celtic Names*

The Cimmerians or Celts have also been known as the Keltae, Geltae, Galatae, Galatians, Goidels, Gauls and Gaels. Where did these names come from? The Cimmerians in Armenia were later joined from the southeast by westward-advancing Scythians from Medo-Persia—i.e. Israelites from around Samaria (taken in the second captivity). However, the Cimmerians were first established as those people who had been carried away in Israel’s first Assyrian captivity, known as the “Galilean Captivity,” from the northern and eastern regions of the Northern Kingdom—the lands of GALILEE and GILEAD! (There was a practice of attaching “gilead” as a suffix to places, e.g. Jabesh-gilead and Ramoth-gilead.) In the Trans-Jordan area was also the tribe of GAD.

Just to the east of the Sea of Galilee we still find the GOLAN Heights. The Hebrew Golan means “their captivity” and comes from the word Golah, meaning “captive” or “exile”

(Enhanced Strong's Lexicon). Arthur Spier, Jewish author of A Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, says that "Golah" referred to those Israelite "communities living beyond the confines of Israel" (p. 62). Galilee, Gilead, Gad, Golan and Golah are all possible etymological roots for Galatae, Goidels or Gauls—the Celtic people!

Remember too that in Spain these people were Celtiberians or just Iberians—as the Israelites living just north of Armenia were also called. Iber-ia is "land of Iber." Based on what we now know of these people, we can easily see that "Iber" is almost identical with "Eber" or "Heber"—that is, "Hebrew," which sounds very close to "Ibheriu," the ancient name of Ireland (Heb. Ivri = ancient Gaelic Iveriu). The "Emerald Isle" was also known as Ivernia, Hibernia, Iberon, Ierne, Erin, Eire, Ire-land.

Immediately west of northern Scotland, the Hebrews probably gave their name to the islands called the Hebrides. In northeast Spain, the Ebro River was most likely named after them. It is probable that Israelite mariners brought the name Hebrew to the Iberian Peninsula. And, since the northern Danites dwelling near the Phoenicians lived in the region of Galilee, they may also have brought such Celtic names as Galacia (northwestern Spain) and Portugal ("Port of the Gaels"). These names may also have been brought by the transcontinental Celts. "In Isaac Your Seed Shall Be Called"!

We saw back in chapter one that before Abraham's son, Isaac, was born, God gave this solemn prophecy: "For in Isaac your seed shall be called" (Gen. 21:12)! It is repeated twice in the New Testament (Rom. 9:7; Heb. 11:18). But how would Almighty God fulfill that ancient prophecy? How would Isaac's sons be called after the name of their ancestor?

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel were generally called the "House of Israel" (Heb. beit Yisrael) and, quite frequently, the "House of Jacob" (Heb. beit Ya'akov). However, they were also referred to as the "House of Isaac" (Heb. beit Yitzak, Amos 7:16).

About 751 B.C. (30 years before the Assyrian deportation of the northern tribes to Media) the Prophet Amos said, "The high places [idolatrous shrines] of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel [at Dan and Bethel] shall be laid waste" (v. 9). In that scripture, "Isaac" and "Israel" both refer to the same people—the people of Israel. Amos also stated, "And the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people [the Northern Kingdom of] Israel'" (v. 15). Amos then told Amaziah, king of Judah, "Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD: You [Amaziah] say 'Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not spout against the HOUSE OF ISAAC'" (v. 16).

Notice that the people of the Kingdom of Israel were being called the "House of Isaac" a few decades before the Northern Kingdom was destroyed and its people taken captive. Those Israelites would have told their captors that they were the people of "Beit Yitzak." Since the Assyrian language was a Semitic tongue akin to the Hebrew language, the Assyrians may well have referred to the captives of the House of Israel by not only the name "House of Omri," but also the "House of Isaac"!

Then after Israel's national captivity, what did the large majority of Israelites end up being called by the Persians and others? "Saciae" or "Sakai." Earlier we quoted a passage from

Sharon Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons showing part of Armenia being named "Sacsina" after them—a term parallel with the "Saxons." Let's look again at the relevant sentence here showing the development of the word "Saxon": "Sakai-Suna or the Sons of Sakai [Sakai-sons] abbreviated into Saksun, which is the same sound as Saxon, seems a reasonable etymology of the word 'Saxon'" (p. 87).

Now where did this word Sakai or Sacae come from? "SACCAE was the contemporary Middle Eastern term for Scyth and the name is believed to be a DERIVATIVE OF 'ISAAC'" (Davidy, p. 128). Doesn't it make sense, then, that "SAXONS" is simply a logical linguistic corruption of "ISAAC'S SONS."

In pronouncing the Hebrew word for Isaac, Yitzak, it is easy to see how the first syllable could be dropped over time. In American English, the first "o" in the word "oppossum" is no longer pronounced by many people. Other word corruptions are more dramatic—a "telephone" is now simply a "phone." A "refrigerator" is a "fridge." Instead of sending "facsimiles," we send "faxes." Most nicknames derive from the same shortening of words. For instance, women named Elizabeth are often called "Liz" or "Beth."

But perhaps the most poignant example of this for our purposes is what the Assyrians (whose court language was Semitic) did with the word Israel (Heb. Yisra'el). Notice how they referred to King Ahab of Israel in ancient documents: "A-ha-ab-bu Sir-'i-la-a-a" (cf. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, pp. 277-281). They clearly dropped the Yi from Yisra'el (or the "I" from Israel)! Wouldn't the same be true of Yitzak? Based on all we've seen, more than likely! The Yi would be dropped, leaving Tzak (or the "I" dropped, leaving Saac or the plural Saccae).

The name Saccae occurs in numerous other forms besides Sakai, Sakai-Suna, Sacsina and Saxons. They were also known as Sakki, Sagetae, Massagetae, Getae, Geats, Goths, Sacai, Scyths, Scythians, Scolotoi, Scuths, Scuits and Scots. So not only is Isaac's name to be found in the modern Saxons, it is the "parent" name of all these listed names. Scotland, Skaane and Scandinavia are named after the Scythians—and thus Isaac!