

Genesis

The Sumerian King List



The above cuneiform inscription is the source of just one of the several versions of the Sumerian King List. Showing in the photo are columns 7-8, and 1-2. (Photo: Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, University of California)

The Sumerian King List (SKL) dates from around 2100 BCE—near the time when Abram was in Ur. Most ANE scholars (following Jacobsen) attribute the original form of the SKL to Utu-hejel, king of Uruk, and his desire to legitimize his reign after his defeat of the Gutians.

Later versions included a reference to the Great Flood and prefaced the list of postdiluvian kings with a relatively short list of what appear to be extremely long-reigning antediluvian kings. One explanation: transcription or translation errors resulting from confusion of the Sumerian base-60 and the Akkadian base-10 systems of numbering. Dividing each antediluvian figure by 60 returns reigns in harmony with Biblical norms (the bracketed figures in the antediluvian portion of the chart).

Final versions of the SKL extended the list to include kings up to the reign of Damiq-ilicu, king of Isin (c. 1816-1794 BCE).

Dates. Competing chronologies for the 2nd millennium BCE are dependent upon the observations of Venus by an astronomer during the eighth year of the Babylonian king Ammisduqa. Astro-historians derive three possible dates for his accession: 1702 (High

or Long Chronology), 1646 (Middle Chronology), or 1582 (Low or Short Chronology). The following chart uses the Middle Chronology.

Text. The SKL text for the following chart was originally in a narrative form and consisted of a composite of several versions (see Black, J.A., Cunningham, G., Fluckiger-Hawker, E, Robson, E., and Zólyomi, G., *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (<http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk/>), Oxford 1998-). The text was modified by the elimination of manuscript references and by the addition of alternative name spellings, clarifying notes, and historical dates (typically in parenthesis or brackets). The narrative was then organized into a chart format to highlight the recurring formal elements: a typical reference to a king's realm originally read, "In Eridug, Alulim became king; he ruled for 28,800 years." Compare this to the first reign in the chart below.

City / Dynasty	King	Length of rule in years
"After the kingship descended from heaven, the kingship was in Eridug."		
Eridug (cf. Eridu) <i>[Postdiluvian cities were probably named after antediluvian cities (e.g., "New York" after "York").]</i>	Alulim	28,800 [/60 = 480]
	Alaljar	36,000 [/60 = 600]
	2 kings	they ruled for 64,800 years [/60 = 1,080]
Bad-Tibira	En-men-lu-ana	43,200 [/60 = 720]
	En-men-gal-ana	28,000 [/60 = 467]
	Dumuzid, the shepherd	36,000 [/60 = 600]
	3 kings	they ruled for 108,000 years [/60 = 1800]
Larag	En-sipad-zid-ana	28,800 [/60 = 480]
	1 king	he ruled for 28,800 years [/60 = 480]
Zimbar	En-men-dur-ana	21,000 [/60 = 350]
	1 king	he ruled for 21,000 years [/60 = 350]
Curuppag (Shuruppak)	Ubara-Tutu	18,600 [/60 = 310]
	1 king	he ruled for 18,600 years [/60 = 310]
5 cities	8 kings	they ruled for 241,200 years [/60 = 4020]
"Then the flood swept over."		
"After the flood had swept over, and the kingship had descended from heaven..."		

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City / Dynasty	King	Length of rule in years
Kic (Kish) <i>The first dynasty of Kish</i> The beginning of the Early Dynastic Period (2900-2334 BCE)	Jucur (Ngushur)	1,200
	Kullassina-bel	960 (900)
	Nanjiclicma (Nangishlishma)	670
	En-tarah-ana	420 years, 3 months, and 3 ½ days
	Babum	300
	Puannum	840 (240)
	Kalibum	960 (900)
	Kalumum	840 (900)
	Zuqaqip	900 (600)
	Atab (Aba)	600
	Macda (Mashda), son of Atab	840 (720)
	Arwium, son of Macda	720
	Etana, the shepherd who ascended to heaven and consolidated all the foreign countries	1,500 (635)
	Balih, son of Etana	400 (410)
	En-me-nuna	660 (621)
	Melem-Kic (Melem-Kish), son of En-me-nuna	900
		(1,560 are the years of the dynasty of En-me-nuna)
	Barsal-nuna, son of En-me-nuna	1,200
	Zamug, son of Barsal-nuna	140
	Tizqar, son of Zamug	305 (1620 + X)
	Ilku	900
	Itasadum	1,200
	En-men-barage-si, who made the lad of Elam submit <i>[earliest name with an independent attestation]</i>	900
Aga, son of En-men-barage-si <i>[contemporary of Gilgamesh of Uruk (below)]</i>	625	
	(1,525 are the years of the dynasty of En-men-barage-si)	
23 kings	24,510 years, 3 months, and 3 ½ days	
“Then Kic was defeated and the kingship was taken to E-ana.”		
E-ana (Uruk) <i>The first dynasty of Erech</i>	Mec-ki-aj-gacer (Mesh-ki-ang-gasher), son of Utu (the Sun God), became lord and king... ... Mec-ki-aj-gacer entered the sea and disappeared	324 (325)
	Enmerkar, son of Mec-ki-aj-gacer, king of Unug, who built Unug (or, “under whom Unug was built”)	420 (900 + X)
		745 are the years of the dynasty of Mec-ki-aj-gacer (or, “he ruled for 5 + X years”)
	Lugalbanda, the shepherd	1,200
	Dumuzid (Dumuzi), the fisherman, whose city was Kuara (“He captured En-me-barage-si single-handed”)	100 (110)
	Gilgamec (Gilgamesh), whose father was a phantom (?), the lord of Kulaba <i>[contemporary of Aga of Kic]</i>	126
	Ur-Nungal, son of Gilgamec	30
	Udul-Kalama, son of Ur-Nungal	15
	La-ba’cum (La-ba’shum)	9
	En-nun-tarah-ana	8
	Mec-he (Mesh-he), the smith	36
	Melem-ana (Til-kug)	6 (900)
	Lugal-kitun	36 (420)
12 kings	they ruled for 2,310 (3588) years	
“Then Unug was defeated and the kingship was taken to Urim”		

City / Dynasty	King	Length of rule in years
Urim (Ur) <i>The first dynasty of Ur</i>	Mec-Ane-pada (Mesh-Ane-pada)	80
	Mec-ki-aj-Nanna (Mesh-ki-ang-Nanna), son of Mec-Ane-pada	36 (30)
	Elulu	25
	Balulu	36
	4 kings	they ruled for 171 years
“Then Urim was defeated and the kingship was taken to Awan”		
Awan <i>The dynasty of Awan</i>

	...	36
	3 kings	they ruled for 356 years
“Then Awan was defeated and the kingship was taken to Kic”		
Kic (Kish) <i>The second dynasty of Kish</i>	Susuda, the fuller	201 + X
	Dadasig	81
	Mamagal, the boatman	360 (420)
	Kalburn, son of Mamagal (Mamgalgal)	195 (132)
	Tuge	360
	Men-nuna (son of Tuge)	180
	... (Enbi-Ishtar)	290
	Lugalju (Lugalngu)	360 (420)
	8 kings	they ruled for 3,195 (3,792) years
“Then Kic was defeated and the kingship was taken to Hamazi.”		
Hamazi <i>The dynasty of Hamazi</i>	Hadanic (Hadanish)	360
	1 king	he ruled for 360 years
“Then Hamazi was defeated and the kingship was taken (or, returned the second time) to Unug.”		
Unug (Uruk) <i>The second dynasty of Erech</i>	En-cakanca-ana (En-shag-kush-ana)	60
	Lugal-ure (Lugal-kinice-dudu)	120
	Argandea	7
	3 kings	they ruled for 187 years
“Then Unug was defeated (destroyed) and the kingship was taken to Urim.”		
Urim (Ur) <i>The second dynasty of Ur</i>	Nani (Nanni)	120 + X (54 + X)
	Mec-ki-aj-Nanna (Mesh-ki-ang-Nanna II), son of Nani	48
	..., son of ...	2
	3 (2) kings	they ruled for 582 (578, 120 + X) years
“Then Urim was defeated (destroyed) and the kingship was taken to Adab.”		
Adab <i>The dynasty of Adab</i>	Lugal-Ane-mundu	90
	1 king	he ruled for 90 years
“Then Adab was defeated (destroyed) and the kingship was taken to Mari.”		
Mari <i>The dynasty of Mari</i>	Anbu	30 (90)
	Anba, son of Anbu	17 (7)
	Bazi, the leatherworker	30
	Zizi, the fuller	20
	Limer, the <i>gudu</i> (<i>gudug</i>) priest	30
	Carrum-iter (Sharrum-iter)	9 (7)
	6 kings	they ruled for 136 (184) years
“Then Mari was defeated (destroyed) and the kingship was taken to Kic.”		

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Kic (Kish) <i>The third dynasty of Kish</i>	Kug-Bau, the woman tavern-keeper, who made firm the foundations of Kic, became king. <i>[the only woman]</i>	100
	1 king	she ruled for 100 years
“Then Kic was defeated (destroyed) and the kingship was taken to Akcak.”		
Akcak (Akshak) <i>The dynasty of Akshak</i>	Unzi	30
	Undalulu	6 (12)
	Urur (“was king” instead of “ruled”)	6
	Puzur-Nirah	20
	Icu-II	24
	Cu-Suen, son of Icu-II	7 (24)
	6 kings	they ruled for 99 (116) years
“Then Akcak was defeated (or, reign of Akcak was abolished) and the kingship was taken to Kic.”		
Kic (Kish) <i>The fourth dynasty of Kish</i> (c. 2,650 BCE)	Puzur-Suen, son of Kug-Bau	25
	Ur-Zababa, son of Puzur-Suen	400 (6)
		(131 are the years of the dynasty of Kug-Bau)
	Zimudar (Ziju-iake)	30 (30 + X)
	Usi-watar, son of Zimudar (Ziju-iake)	7 (6)
	Ectar-muti (Eshtar-muti)	11 (17)
	Icme-Camac (Ishme-Shamash)	11
	(Cu-ilicu)	(15)
	Nanniya, the jeweller (Zimudar)	7 (3)
	7 (8) kings	they ruled for 491 (485, 586) years
“Then Kic was defeated (the reign of Kic was abolished) and the kingship was taken (returned for the third time) to Unug.”		
Unug (Uruk) <i>The third dynasty of Erech</i>	Lugal-zage-si (Lagesh)	25 (34)
	1 king	he ruled for 25 (34) years
“Then Unug was defeated (abolished) and the kingship was taken to Agade.”		
Agade (Akkad) <i>The dynasty of Agade (Akkad)</i> Sargon and the Akkadian Empire (c. 2334-2193 BCE)	Sargon, whose father was a gardener, the cup-bearer of Ur-Zababa, became king, the king of Agade, who built Agade (or, under whom Agade was built) <i>[Sargon’s defeat of Lugal-zage-si of Uruk was the beginning of the Akkadian Empire]</i>	56 (55, 54) (2334-2279 BCE)
	Rimuc (Rimush), son of Sargon	9 (7, 15) (2278-2270 BCE)
	Man-icticcu (Man-ishtishu), the older brother of Rimuc, the son of Sargon	15 (7) (2269-2255 BCE)
	Naram-Suen, son of Man-icticau	56 (2254-2218 BCE)
	Car-kali-carri (Shar-kali-sharri), son of Naram-Suen	25 (24) (2217-2193 BCE)
		157 are the years of the dynasty of Sargon. Then who was king? Who (indeed) was the king?
	Irgigi was King	... and the four of them ruled for only 3 years
	Imi was king	
	Nanum was king	
	Ilulu was king...	
	Dudu	21
Cu-Dural (Shu-Durul), son of Dudu <i>[Akkad falls to the Gutians]</i>	15 (18)	
	11 (12, 9) kings	they ruled for 181 (197, 161, 177) years

City / Dynasty	King	Length of rule in years
“Then Agada was defeated (the reign of Agade was abolished) and the kingship was taken to Unug.”		
Unug (Uruk) <i>The fourth dynasty of Erech</i>	Ur-nigin	7 (3, 15, 30)
	Ur-gigir, son of Ur-nijin	6 (7, 15, 7)
	Kuda	6
	Puzur-ili	5 (20)
	Ur-Utu (or, Lugal-melem) (son of Ur-gigir)	6 (25, 7)
	5 (3) kings	they ruled for 30 (26, 47) years
“Then Unug was defeated (the reign of Unug was abolished) and the kingship was taken to the army (land) of Gutium.”		
In the army (land) of Gutium <i>The dynasty of Gutium</i> The “Guti Period” (beg. c. 2200 BCE)	at first no king was famous; they were their own kings and ruled thus (or, ruled themselves) ... then	3 (5)
	lukicuc (Inkishush)	6 (7)
	Zarlagab	6
	Culme (Shulme) (or, Yarlagac)	6
	Silulumeac (Silulumesh) (or, Silulu)	6 (7)
	Inimabakec (Inimabakesh) (or, Duga)	5 (6)
	Igecanc (Igeshaush) (or, Ilu-an)	6 (3)
	Yarlagab	15 (5)
	Ibate	3
	Yarla (or, Yarlangab)	3
	Kurum	1 (3)
	Apil-kin	3
	La-erabum	2
	Irarum	2
	Ibranium	1
	Hablum	2
	Puzur-Suen, son of Hablum	7
	Yarlaganda	7
	... (Si-um ? Si-u ?)	7
	Tiriga (Tirigan) <i>[Defeated by Utu-henjal of Uruk]</i>	40 days
	21 kings	they ruled for 124 years, 40 days
“Then the army of Gutium was defeated (destroyed) and the kingship was taken to Unug.”		
Unug (Uruk) <i>The fifth dynasty of Erech</i>	Utu-hejal (Utu-hegel, Utu-hengal) <i>[Defeated Tiriga the Gutian; appointed Ur-Nammu as governor of Urim; perhaps responsible for composing the Sumerian King List to legitimize his reign.]</i>	427 years, ... days (or, 26 years, 2 + X months, 15 days) (or, 7 years, 6 months, 5 days)
	1 king	he ruled for 427 years and ... days (or, 26 years, 2 + X months, 15 days) (or, 7 years, 6 months, 5 days)
“Then Unug was defeated and the kingship was taken to Urim.”		
Urim (Ur) <i>The third dynasty of Ur</i> (2112-2004 BCE)	Ur-Nammu (Ur-Namma) <i>[Defeated Nammahani of Lagash]</i>	18
	Culgi (Shulgi), son of Ur-Namma	46 (48, 58)
	Amar-Suena, son of Culgi	9 (25)
	Cu-Suen (Shu-Suen), son of Amar-Suena	9 (7, 20 + X, 16)
	Ibbi-Suen, son of Cu-Suen	24 (25, 15, 23)
	4 (5) kings	they ruled for 108 (117, 120 + X, 123) years
“Then Urim was defeated (the reign of Urim was abolished). The very foundation of Sumer was torn out. The kingship was taken to Isin.”		

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City / Dynasty	King	Length of rule in years
Isin <i>The dynasty of Isin</i>	Icbi-Erra (Ishbi-Erra)	33 (32)
	Cu-ilicu (Shu-ilishu), son of Icbi-Erra	20 (10, 15)
	Iddin-Dagan, son of Cu-ilicu	21 (25)
	Icme-Dagan (Ishme-Dagan), son of Iddin-Dagan	20 (18)
	Lipit-Ectar (Lipit-Eshtar), son of Icme-Dagan (or, Iddin-Dagan) [<i>contemporary of Gungunum of Larsa</i>]	11
	Ur-Ninurta, son of Ickur—may he have years of abundance, a good reign, a sweet life— [<i>contemporary of Abisare of Larsa</i>]	28
	Bur-Suen, son of Ur-Ninurta	21
	Lipit-Enlil, son of Bur-Suen	5
	Erra-Imitti	8 (7)
	(...)	(... 6 months)
	Enlil-bani [<i>contemporary of Sumu-la-El of Babylon</i>]	24
	Zambiya [<i>contemporary of Sin-Iqisham of Larsa</i>]	3
	Iter-pica (Iter-pisha)	4
	Ur-dul-kuga	4
	Suen-magir (Damiq-ilicu, the son of Suen-magir)	11 (23)
	14 kings	they ruled for 203 years (225 years, 6 months)
	Summary: [Some mss. summarize the post-deluvian dynasties...]	
In Kic (Kish) ...4 times	a total of 39 kings	ruled for 14,409 + X years, 3 months, 3 ½ days
In Unug (Uruk) ...5 times	a total of 22 kings	ruled for 2610 + X years, 6 months, 15 days
In Urim (Ur) ...3 times	a total of 12 kings	ruled for 396 years
In Awan ...1 time	a total of 3 kings	ruled for 356 years
In Hamazi ...1 time	a total of 1 king	ruled for 420 years
[mss. have 16 missing lines]	(...)	(...)
In Agade ...1 time	a total of 12 kings	ruled for 197 years
In Army of Gutium ...1 time	a total of 21 (23) kings	ruled for 125 years, 40 days (or, 99 years)
In Isin ...1 time	a total of 11 (16) kings	ruled for 159 (226) years
There are 11 cities, cities in which kingship was exercised	a total of 134 (139) kings	who altogether ruled for 28,876 (3443) + X years