

Before the Christians, who wanted a correct computation of the Easter date, created a common era for the study of chronology, people used regnal years or lists of eponymous magistrates to date events. For example, the Bible mentions that the [Babylonian](#) king Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem 'in his eighteenth year as king', and [Julius Caesar](#) defeated the Helvetians when Lucius Calpurnius Piso and Aulus Gabinius were [consuls](#). Modern scholars, employing the common era, call these years 587/586 and 58 BCE (or BCE).

The astronomer [Ptolemy of Alexandria](#), who lived in the second century CE (or AD, used the system of regnal years and has handed down to us an important list of kings. It is called the *Canon* and has been preserved in several astronomical texts by later authors, which usually continue the list up to their own time. Because they were only interested in dating astronomical phenomena, kings who died during a certain year were usually allowed to give their name to the entire year, and the next ruler is supposed to have ascended to the Babylonian throne on the first day of the new year. (Kings who reigned for less than one year are ignored.)

This brief document, which is based on [astronomical information](#) from ancient [Babylon](#), is still the backbone of the chronology of the ancient Near East. Its essential correctness has been corroborated by the [Uruk King List](#), the [Astronomical Diaries](#), and Egyptian data (like dated papyri). Here are the forty-three first names of Ptolemy's list (different colors indicate the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, [Macedonian](#), and [Ptolemaic](#) kings):

	<b>Name (Ptolemy)</b>	<b>Name (modern)</b>	<b>Regnal years</b>	<b>Dates in our era (simplified)</b>	<b>Dates in our era</b>
1	Nabonassaros	Nabû-Nasir	14	747-734	27 February 747 - 22 February 733
2	Nadios	Nabû-nadin-zer	2	733-732	23 February 733 - 21 February 731

3	Chinzer and Poros	Tiglath-Pileser III	5	731-727	22 February 731 - 20 February 726
4	Iloulaios	Šalmaneser V	5	726-722	21 February 726 - 19 February 721
5	Mardokempados	Marduk-apla-iddina II	12	721-710	20 February 721 - 16 February 709
6	Arkeanos	Sargon II	6	709-704	17 February 709 - 14 February 704
7	Without kings	[1]	2	704-703	15 February 704 - 14 February 702
8	Bilibos	Bêl-ipni	3	702-700	15 February 702 - 13 February 699
9	Aparanadios	Aššur-nadin-šumni	6	699-694	14 February 699 - 12 February 693
10	Rhegebelos	Nergal-ušeziḫ	1	693	13 February 693 - 11 February 692
11	Mesesimordakos	Mušeziḫ-Marduk	4	692-689	12 February 692 - 10 February 688
12	Without kings	[2]	8	688-681	11 February 688 - 8 February 680
13	Asaradinos	Esarhaddon	13	680-668	9 February 680 - 5 February 667
14	Saosdouehinos	Šamaš-šuma-ukin	20	667-648	6 February 667 - 31 January 647
15	Kineladanos	Kandalanu	22	647-626	1 February 647 - 26 January 625
16	Nabopolassaros	<a href="#">Nabopolassar</a>	21	625-605	27 January 625 - 20 January 604
17	Nabokolassaros	<a href="#">Nebuchadnezzar II</a>	43	604-562	21 January 604 - 10 January 561
18	Illoaroudamos	<a href="#">Amel-Marduk</a>	2	561-560	11 January 561 - 9 January 559
19	Nerigasolassaros	<a href="#">Neriglissar</a>	4	559-556	10 January 559 - 8 January 555
20	Nabonadios	<a href="#">Nabonidus</a>	17	555-539	9 January 555 - 4 January 538
21	Kyros	<a href="#">Cyrus the Great</a>	9	538-530	5 January 538 - 2 January 529
22	Kambysos	<a href="#">Cambyses II</a>	8	529-522	3 January 529 - 31 December 522
23	Dareios the First	<a href="#">Darius I the Great</a>	36	521-486	1 January 521 - 22 December 486

24	Xerxes	<a href="#">Xerxes I</a>	21	485-465	23 December 486 - 16 December 465
25	Artaxerxes the First	<a href="#">Artaxerxes I Makrocheir</a>	41	464-424	17 December 465 - 7 December 424
26	Dareios the Second	<a href="#">Darius II Nothus</a>	19	423-405	8 December 424 - 1 December 405
27	Artaxerxes the Second	<a href="#">Artaxerxes II Mnemon</a>	46	404-359	2 December 405 - 20 November 359
28	Ochos	<a href="#">Artaxerxes III Ochus</a>	21	358-338	21 November 359 - 15 November 338
29	Arogos	<a href="#">Artaxerxes IV Arses</a>	2	337-336	16 November 338 - 14 November 336
30	Dareios the Third	<a href="#">Darius III Codomannus</a>	4	335-332	15 November 336 - 13 November 332
31	Alexandros the Macedonian	<a href="#">Alexander the Great</a>	8	331-324	14 November 332 - 11 November 324
32	Philippos [3]	<a href="#">Philip III Arridaeus</a>	7	323-317	12 November 324 - 9 November 317
33	The other Alexandros	Alexander IV	12	316-305	10 November 317 - 6 November 305
34	Ptolemaios, son of Lagos	<a href="#">Ptolemy I Soter</a>	20	304-285	7 November 305 - 1 November 285
35	Philadelphos	<a href="#">Ptolemy II Philadelphus</a>	38	284-247	2 November 285 - 23 October 247
36	Euergetes	<a href="#">Ptolemy III Euergetes</a>	25	246-222	24 October 247 - 17 October 222
37	Philopator	<a href="#">Ptolemy IV Philopator</a>	17	221-205	18 October 222 - 12 October 205
38	Epiphanes	<a href="#">Ptolemy V Epiphanes</a>	24	204-181	13 October 205 - 6 October 180
39	Philometor	<a href="#">Ptolemy VI Philometor</a>	35	180-146	7 October 180 - 28 September 146
40	Euergetes the Second	<a href="#">Ptolemy VIII Euergetes</a>	29	145-117	29 September 146 - 20 September 117
41	Soter	<a href="#">Ptolemy IX Soter</a>	36	116-81	21 September 117 - 11 September 81
42	Dionysos Neos	<a href="#">Ptolemy XII Auletes</a>	29	80-52	12 September 81 - 4 September 52
43	Kleopatra	<a href="#">Cleopatra VII Philopator</a>	22	51-30	5 September 52 - 30 August 30

**Note 1:**  
Marduk-zakir-šumi and Marduk-bêl-iddin were

not recognized by the Babylonians.

**Note 2:**

Sennacherib, who had destroyed Babylon, was not recognized.

**Note 3:**

Ptolemy writes: "the Philip who came after the Alexander who founded Alexandria".