

1. דברי הימים ב פרק לב פסוק לב

ויתר דברי יחזקיהו וחסדיו הנם כתובים בחזון ישעיהו בן אמוץ הנביא על ספר מלכי יהודה וישראל:

2. עיין מלכים ב פרק יח פסוק יד-יח

מבנה הפרק:

עליית סנחריב	לו: א-ג:
נאום הראשון של רבשקה	לו: ד-י
בקשת שרי יהודה מאת רבשקה	לו: יא
מענה רבשקה לשרי יהודה	לו: יב
הנאום השני של רבשקה	לו: ג-כ
השרים מספרים את הדברים לחזקיהו המלך	לו: כא-כב
חזקיהו מתאבל ושולח אל ישעיהו הנביא	לו: א-ב
דברי חזקיהו אל ישעיהו	לו: ג-ה
רבשקה שולח ספרים אל חזקיהו	לו: ח-ג
תפילה הראשונה של חזקיהו	לו: יד-כ
נבואת ישעיהו על תבוסת סנחריב	לו: כא-לה
כליון צבא אשור ומותו של סנחריב	לו: לו-לח

1. ישעיהו לו מול מלכים ב' פרק יח:

A. מה ההבדל העיקרי בתחילת הסיפור?

רלב"ג: כי אחר שנתן חזקה את כל הכסף הנמצא בית ה' ובאוצרות בית המלך למלך אשור, שב למרוד בו ולא נתן לו מדי שנה בשנה זה המס הכבד ששם עליו אברבנל: סנחריב עשה במרמה תחילה קיבל את הכסף ואחרי כן עלה עליו על המרד שמרד בו לפניו שד"ל: הכסף אשר נתן חזקיהו למלך אשור לא הספיק לתשלום הסך אשר פסק עליו, וזו היתה בעיני סנחריב מרידה בו

איזו פירוש נראה לך? למה?

B. מי מס השחקנים מצדו של סנחריב בתיאור במלכים ב'! למה הנביא ישעיהו לא

הזכיר אותם?

2. ישעיהו מול דברי הימים ב' פרק לב

איזה מידע מוסיף הסיפור על המצור? למה זה חשוב?

3. דברי רבשקה הראשונים:

ישעיהו יא	ישעיהו לו
והכה ארץ בשבט פיו וברוח <u>שפתיו</u> ימית רשע ((פסוק ד'))	אמרתי אך דבר <u>שפתים</u>
רוח <u>עצה וגבורה</u> (ב)	<u>עצה וגבורה</u> למלחמה
הנה אל <u>ישועתי</u> אבטח (יב: ב)	<u>עתה על בי בטחת</u> כי מרדת בי
ויצא חוטר מגזע ישי ונצר משרשיו יפרה (א)	הנה בטחת על משענת הקנה הרצוץ הזה על מצרים...
ושאבתם <u>מים</u> בששון ממעיני הישועה (יב: ג)	אני <u>סרתני</u> ושתייתי מים (לו: כה)
	הנני נותן בו רוח ושמע שמועה ושב אל ארצו והפלטיו בחרב בארצו

דברי רבשקה I	דברי רבשקה II	מכתב רבשקה אל חזקיהו
ויאמר אליהם רב שקה אמרו נא אל חזקיהו כה אמר המלך הגדול מלך אשור מה הבטחון הזה אשר בטחת?	(ג) ויעמד רב שקה ויקרא בקול גדול יהודית ויאמר שמעו את דברי המלך הגדול מלך אשור	ישעיהו פרק לו וישלח מלאכים אל חזקיהו
אמרתי אך דבר שפתים עצה וגבורה למלחמה עתה על מי בטחת כי מרדת בי?	כה אמר המלך אל ישא לכם חזקיהו כי לא יוכל להציל אתכם	
הנה בטחת על משענת הקנה הרצוף הזה על מצרים אשר יסמך איש עליו ובא בכפו ונקבה כן פרעה מלך מצרים לכל הבטחים עליו:	ואל יבטח אתכם חזקיהו אל ה' לאמר: "הצל יצילנו ה' לא תנתן העיר הזאת ביד מלך אשור"	
וכי תאמר אלי אל ה' אלקינו בטחנו הלא הוא אשר הסיר חזקיהו את במתיו ואת מזבחתי ויאמר ליהודה ולירושלם לפני המזבח הזה תשתחו	אל תשמעו אל חזקיהו כי כה אמר המלך אשור עשו אתי ברכה וצאו אלי ואכלו איש גפנו ואיש תאנתו ושתו איש מי בור	
ועתה התערב נא את אדני המלך אשור ואתנה לך אלפים סוסים אם תוכל לתת לך רכבים עליהם:	עד באי ולקחתי אתכם אל ארץ כארצכם ארץ דגן ותירוש ארץ לחם וכרמים:	
ואיך תשיב את פני פחת אחד עבדי אדני הקטנים ותבטח לך על מצרים לרכב ולפרשים:		
ועתה המבלעדי ה' עליתי על הארץ הזאת להשחיתה ה' אמר אלי עלה אל הארץ הזאת והשחיתה	כן יסית אתכם חזקיהו לאמר ה' יצילנו ההצילו אלהי הגוים איש את ארצו מיד מלך אשור: איה אלהי חמת וארפד איה אלהי ספרוים וכי הצילו את שמרון מידי: מי בכל אלהי הארצות האלה אשר הצילו את ארצם מידי כי יציל ה' את ירושלם מידי	כה תאמרון אל חזקיהו מלך יהודה לאמר אל ישאך אלהיך אשר אתה בוטח בו לאמר לא תנתן ירושלם ביד מלך אשור הנה אתה שמעת אשר עשו מלכי אשור לכל הארצות להחריםם ואתה תנצל: (יב) ההצילו אותם אלהי הגוים אשר השחיתו אבותי את גוזן ואת חרן ורצף ובני עדן אשר בתלשר: (ג) איה מלך חמת ומלך ארפד ומלך לעיר ספרוים הנע ועוה:
ויאמר אליקים ושבנא ויואח אל רב שקה דבר נא אל עבדיך ארמית כי שמעים אנחנו ואל תדבר אלינו יהודית באזני העם אשר על החומה:	ויחרישו ולא ענו אתו דבר כי מצות המלך היא לאמר לא תענהו:	לאמר ויקח חזקיהו את הספרים מיד המלאכים ויקראהו ויעל בית ה' ויפרשהו חזקיהו לפני ה'
ויאמר רב שקה האל אדניך ואליך שלחני אדני לדבר את הדברים האלה הלא על האנשים הישבים על החומה לאכל את חראיהם צואתם ולשתות את שיניהם מימי רגליהם עמכם		ויתפלל חזקיהו אל ה' לאמר

ישעיהו ל"א: כ"א-ל"ה

נבואת ישעיהו על סנחריב

וישלח ישעיהו בן אמוץ אל חזקיהו לאמר:
כה אמר ה' אלקי ישראל אשר התפללתי אלי אל סנחריב מלך אשור
זה הדבר אשר דבר ה' עליו

כ"ז באה לך לענה לך

בתולת בת ציון

אחריו ראש הנמנה

בת ירושלים

כ"ח את מי חרפת וגדפת

ועל מי הרימות קול

ותשא מרום עיניך אל קדוש ישראל

כ"ט ביד עבדיך חרפת ה'

ותאמר:

ברב רכבי אני עליתי

מרום הרים	ירכתי לבנון
ואכרת קומת ארזיו	מבחר ברושיו
ואבוא מרום קצו	יער כרמילו

אֹתָהּ עֲשִׂיתִי מִימִי קִדְּם ויִצְרֵתִיהָ

נצים	גלים	עלה הביאתיה ותהי להשאוח
ערים	בצרות	

כ"ה אני קרתי ושתייתי מים

ואחריב בכף פעמי כל יאורי מצור

כ"ו ויושביו קצרי יד חתו ובשו

היו עשב שדה וירק דשא

תציר גגות ושדמה לפני קמה

כ"ה ושבתי וצאתי ובואך ידעתי ואת התרגז אלי

כ"ו יען התרגז אלי ושאננך עלה באני

ושמתי חתי באפך ומתגני בשפתך

והשיבותיך בדרך אשר באת בד.

כ"ז הלוא שמעת מרחוק:

(c) From Broken Prisms

According to the broken Prism A

[Aziru, king] of Ashdod (lacuna) on account of [this crime . . .] *from* . . . Ahimiti . . . his younger brother over [them . . .] I made (him) ruler . . . tribute . . . like (those of) the [former] kings, I imposed upon him. [But these] accused [Hittites] conceived [the idea] of not delivering the tribute and [started] a rebellion against their ruler; they expelled him . . . a (*la-ma-ni*) a Greek, comm[on]er without claim to [the throne] to be king over them, they made sit down [on the very throne] of his (former) master and [they . . .] their city of (or: for) the attack] (lacuna of 3 lines) . . . its neighborhood, a moat [they prepared] of a depth of 20 + x cubits . . . it (even) reached the underground water, in order to . . . Then [to] the rulers of Palestine (*Pi-lit-te*), Judah (*la-ú-di*), Ed[om], Moab (and) those who live (on islands) and bring tribute [and] *tāmāru*-gifts to my lord Ashur—[the spread] countless evil lies to alienate (them) from me, and (also) sent bribes to Pir'u, king of Musru—a potentate, incapable to save them—and asked him to be an ally. But I, Sargon, the rightful ruler, devoted to the pronouncements (uttered by) Nebo and Marduk, (carefully) observing the orders of Ashur, led my army over the Tigris and the Euphrates, at the peak of the (ir) flood, the spring flood, as (if it be) dry ground. This Greek, however, their king who had put his trust in his own power and (therefore) did not bow to my (divinely ordained) rulership, heard about the approach of my expedition (while I was still) far away, and the splendor of my lord Ashur overwhelmed him and . . . he fled . . .

Nimrud Inscription. (8)

(Property of Sargon, etc.) the subduer of the country Judah (*la-ú-du*) which is far away, the uprooter of Hamath, the ruler of which—lau bidi—he captured personally.¹

¹ After his victory over Lau-bidi at Gargar, Sargon erected various stelae commemorating this event.

SENNACHERIB (704-681): THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

From the Prism of Sennacherib.

(ii 37—iii 49) ANET, 287-288

In my third campaign I marched against Hatti. Luli, king of Sidon, whom the terror-inspiring glamor of my lordship had overwhelmed, fled far overseas and perished. The awe-inspiring splendor of the "Weapon" of Ashur, my lord, overwhelmed his strong cities (such as) Great Sidon, Little Sidon, Be-Ziti, Zaribu, Mahaliba, Ushu (i.e. the mainland settlement of Tyre), Akzib (and) Akko, (all) his fortress cities, walled (and well) provided with food and water for his garrisons, and they bowed in submission to my feet. I installed Eibba'al (*Tuba'lu*) upon the throne to be their king and imposed upon him tribute (due) to me (as his overlord (to be paid) annually without interruption.

As to all the kings of Amuru—Menahem (*Mi-in-im-mu*) from Samsumuruna, Tuba'lu from Sidon, Abdi'liti from Arvad, Urumilki from Byblos, Mitinti from Ashdod, Buduil from Beth-Ammon, Kammusuradbi from Moab (and) Aiarammu from Edom, they brought sumptuous gifts (*igišá*) and—fourfold—their heavy *tāmāru*-presents to me and kissed my feet. Sidqia, however, king of Ashkelon, who did not bow to my yoke, I deported and sent to Assyria, his family-gods, himself, his wife, his children, his brothers, all the male descendants of his family. I set Sharruladri, son of Rukibtu, their former king, over the inhabitants of Ashkelon and imposed upon him the payment of tribute (and of) *karā*-presents (due) to me (as) overlord—and he (now) pulls the straps (of my yoke)!

In the continuation of my campaign I besieged Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Banai-Barqa, Azuru, cities belonging to Sidqia who did not bow to my feet quickly (enough); I conquered (them) and carried their spoils away. The officials, the patricians and the (common) people of Ekron—who had thrown Padi, their king, into fetters (because he was) loyal to (his) solemn oath (sworn) by the god Ashur, and had handed him over to Hezekiah, the Jew (*Ha-za-gi-(i)á-ú* ^{over} *la-ú-da-ai*)—(and) he (Hezekiah) held him in prison, unlawfully, as if he (Padi) be an enemy—had become afraid and had called (for help) upon the kings of Egypt (*Mu(ú)ur*) (and) the bowmen, the chariot(-corps) and the cavalry of the king of Ethiopia (*Me(ú)u(ú)ha*), an army beyond

counting—and they (actually) had come to their assist-
ance. In the plain of Eltekeh (*Al-ta-ku-ú*), their battle
lines were drawn up against me and they sharpened
their weapons. Upon a trust(-inspiring) oracle (given)
by Ashur, my lord, I fought with them and inflicted
a defeat upon them. In the mêlée of the battle, I person-
ally captured alive the Egyptian charioteers with the (ir-)
princes and (also) the charioteers of the king of
Ethiopia. I besieged Eltekeh (and) Timnah (*Ta-am-
na-ú*), conquered (them) and carried their spoils away.
I assaulted Ekron and killed the officials and patricians
who had committed the crime and hung their bodies
on poles surrounding the city. The (common) citizens
who were guilty of minor crimes, I considered prisoners
of war. The rest of them, those who were not accused
of crimes and misbehavior, I released. I made Padi,
their king, come from Jerusalem (*Ur-sa-li-im-mu*) and
set him as their lord on the throne, imposing upon
him the tribute (due) to me (as) overlord.

As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my
yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts
and to the countless small villages in their vicinity,
and conquered (them) by means of well-stamped
(earth-)ramps, and battering-rams brought (thus) near
(to the walls) (combined with) the attack by foot sol-
diers, (using) mines, breeches as well as sapper work.
I drove out (of them) 200,150 people, young and
old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels,
big and small cattle beyond counting, and considered
(them) booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem,
his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. I surrounded
him with earthwork in order to molest those who were
leaving his city's gate. His towns which I had plundered,
I took away from his country and gave them (over)
to Mitihi, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and
Sillibel, king of Gaza. Thus I reduced his country, but
I still increased the tribute and the *karu*-presents (due)
to me (as his) overlord which I imposed (later) upon
him beyond the former tribute, to be delivered annually.
Hezekiah himself, whom the terror-inspiring splendor
of my lordship had overwhelmed and whose irregular
and elite troops which he had brought into Jerusalem,
his royal residence, in order to strengthen (it), had
deserted him, did send me, later, to Nineveh, my lordly
city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of

II Kings 18:15

silver, precious stones, antimony,¹ large cuts of red
stone, couches (inlaid) with ivory, *nimedu*-chairs (in-
laid) with ivory, elephant-hides, ebony-wood, box-
wood (and) all kinds of valuable treasures, his (own)
daughters, concubines, male and female musicians. In
order to deliver the tribute and to do obeisance as a
slave he sent his (personal) messenger.

¹ This refers probably to stibnite, which might have been used as an
eye paint (beside the cheaper and efficient substitute, burnt shells of al-
mond and soot). Stibnum is easily reduced and the metal is sporadically
attested in Mesopotamia since the Neo-Sumerian period.

Epigraph from a relief showing the conquest of Lachish.

Fig. 121

Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, sat
upon a *nimedu*-throne and passed in review the booty
(taken) from Lachish (*La-ú-tu*).

II Kings 18:14
II Kings 19:8

ESARHADDON (680-669): THE SYRO-PALESTINIAN CAMPAIGN

From the Prism B.

(v 54—vi 1)

I called up the kings of the country Hatti and (of the
region) on the other side of the river (Euphrates) (to
wit): Ba'lu, king of Tyre, Manasseh (*Me-na-sa-i*), king
of Judah (*Ia-u-di*), Qausgabir, king of Edom, Musuri,
king of Moab, Sil-Bel, king of Gaza, Metini, king of
Ashkelon, Ikausu, king of Ekron, Milkiasbapa, king
of Byblos, Matanba'al, king of Arvad, Abiba'al, king of
Samsimuruna, Puduil, king of Beth-Ammon, Ahimilki,
king of Ashdod—12 kings from the seacoast;

II Chron. 33:11

Ekishura, king of Ed'il (Idalion), Pilagura (Py-
thagoras), king of Kitrusi (Chytros), Kisu, king of
Sillu'ua (Soli), Iruandar, king of Pappa (Paphos), Erisu,
king of Sili, Damasu, king of Kuri (Curium), Atmestu,
king of Tamesi, Damusi, king of Qaribadasti (Car-
thage), Unasagusu, king of Lidir (Ledra), Bususu, king
of Nuria,—10 kings from Cyprus (*ladnana*) amidst the
sea,

together 22 kings of Hatti, the seashore and the is-
lands; all these I sent out and made them transport
under terrible difficulties, to Nineveh, the town (where
I exercise) my rulership, as building material for my
palace: big logs, long beams (and) thin boards from
cedar and pine trees, products of the Sirara and Lebanon

ההפטרות לתענית ציבור ויום הכיפורים

רמב"ם הלכות תפילה ונשיאת כפים פרק יג הלכה יא

ביום הכפורים בשחרית קורין אחרי מות ומפטירין כה אמר רס ונשא, במנחה קורין בעריות שבאחרי מות כדי שיזכור ויכלם כל מי שנכשל באחת מהן ויחזור בתשובה, והשלישי קורא בתורה ומפטיר ביונה.

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ב הלכה ו

אע"פ שהתשובה והצעקה יפה לעולם, בעשרה הימים שבין ראש השנה ויום הכפורים היא יפה ביותר ומתקבלת היא מיד שנאמר דרשו ה' בהמצאן, במה דברים אמורים ביחיד אבל צבור כל זמן שעושים תשובה וצועקין בלב שלם הם נענין שנאמר כה' אלהינו בכל קראנו אליו.

ישעיהו נה:ו-ז ח

מבנה:

נה:ו-ז: קריאה לדרוש את ה' ולשוב
נה:ח-יא: דרכי ה' נשבות מהבנת בני האדם, ודברו יקום
נה: יב-יג: ישראל ישוב ברנה לציון ואילנות נאים יצמחו להם
נו: א-ז: ישועת ה' תבוא גם לבני הנכר ננלויס אל ה' וגם לסריסים

סיים במה שפתח:

דרשו ה' בהמצאו קראוהו בהיותו קרוב	עוד אקבץ עליו לנקבציו
וישב אל ה' (נה:ז)	לא ישוב אלי ריקם (נה:יא)
עשה את אשר חפצתי (נה:יא)	ובחרו באשר חפצתי (נו:ד)
והיה לה' לשם, לאות עולם לא יכרת (נה:יג)	שם עולם אתן לו אשר לא יכרת (נו:ח)

מבנה פנימי

ישעיהו פרק נו

כה אמר ה' שמרו משפט ועשו צדקה כי קרובה ישועתי לבוא וצדקתי להגלות:
אשרי אנוש יעשה זאת ובן אדם יחזיק בה שמר שבת מחללו ושמר ידו מעשות כל רע

ואל יאמר	בן הנכר הנלוה אל ה' לאמר	הבדל יבדילני ה' מעל עמו	
ואל יאמר	הסריס	הן אני עץ יבש	
כי כה אמר ה'	לסריסים	אשר ישמרו את שבתותי ובחרו באשר חפצתי ומחזיקים בבריתי	ונתתי להם בביתי ובחומתי יד ושם טוב מבנים ומבנות שם עולם אתן לו אשר לא יכרת
	ובני הנכר הנלויס על ה'	לשרתו ולאהבה את שם ה' להיות לו לעבדים כל שמר שבת מחללו ומחזיקים בבריתי	והביאותים אל הר קדשי ושמחתים בבית תפלתי עולתיהם וזבחייהם לרצון על מזבחי כי ביתי בית תפלה יקרא לכל העמים:

מוטיבם מספרים אחרים בתנך:

1. תגובת הטבע למעשה ה': עיין תהלים פרק צו

דרשו ה' בהמצאו
קראוהו בהיותו קרוב

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה דף ח עמוד ד
רבי אבהו בשם רבי אבהו דרשו את ה' בהמצאו איך הוא מצוי בבתי כניסיות ובבתי מדרשות

רד"ק - אמר לבני הגלות דרשו ה' בהמצאו, הנכון בפירושו מה שפירש אדוני אבי ז"ל דרשוהו בענין שימצא לכם:

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ב הלכה ו
אע"פ שהתשובה והצעקה יפה לעולם, בעשרה הימים שבין ראש השנה ויום הכפורים היא יפה ביותר ומתקבלת היא מיד שנאמר דרשו ה' בהמצאו, במה דברים אמורים ביחיד אבל צבור כל זמן שעושים תשובה וצועקים בלב שלם הם נענין שנאמר כה' אלהינו בכל קראנו אליו.

1. מה ההבדל בין שלשה הפירושים?
2. איזו מהן היא הפשט?

יעזב רשע דרכו
ואיש און מחשבותיו

1. מה ההבדל בין איש און ורשע?

כי לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם
ולא דרכיכם דרכי

רד"ק כי לא - כי אם חטא אדם לחברו ינקם ממנו ולא ימחול לו ואף על פי שימחול לו בגראה ישמור לו בלבבו, והנראה יקרא דרך כמו שפירשנו והנסתר מחשבה, הנה אני מרבה לסלוח לא ככם וכאשר אני מוחל אני מוחל באמת ולא ישאר אצלי מהעון דבר:

פירוש דעת מקרא: חלפה עת הזעם ובאה העת הראויה לגאלה, ורבי סמישרל תמהו על דברי הנביא ואמרו שאין הם רואים את סימני הגאולה כלל, ושיבת ציון שבאה לאחר הכרזת כורש היא ענין פעוט וחסר ערך, והנבואה אומרת להם, אין אתם מבינים את דרכי ההשגחה העליונה ואת תכניותיה, והאמת היא שדווקא העניינים הפעוטים האלה הם הכנה לגאולה.

1. מה ההבדל בין שני הפירושים?

פרקים נזיד-נזיד

גרי"ד סולוביצקי ז"ל (למתוך ימי אכרון): שתי פרשיות בספר ישעיהו המדברות בעניין התשובה נקבעו להפטרות בימי צום: "דרשו ה' בהמצאו" (נהו-נו:ח) לתענית צבור, "ואמר סלו סלו" (נזיד-נזיד) ליום הכיפורים. מפני מה בחרו חכמינו, מסדרי התפילה וקריאת התורה, בפרשת "דרשו ה'" להפטרה בתענית צבור ובפרשת "סלו סלו, פנו דרך" להפטרה ביום הכיפורים*.

חלוקת ההפטרה

_____	נו: יד - טו
_____	נו: טז - כא
_____	נח: א
_____	נח: ב - ד
_____	נח: ה - ז
_____	נח:ח - יב
_____	נח: יג - יד

פסוק יד: ואמר סלו סלו פנו דרך

רש"י: כה אמר הנביא בשמי לעמי, כבשו מסילה סלולה פנו יצר הרע מדרכיכם.

מצודת ציון: סלו מלשון מסילה

שד"ל: הגביהו הגומות שבדרך ותהיה הדרך ישרה... פנו דרך: ואחר שתהיה הדרך סלולה וישרה, פנו אותה מכל דבר שיוכל לעכב ההליכה עליה.

1. כמה פירושים יש כאן למלה סלו
2. באיזה עיקרון רש"י ושד"ל מסכימים?
3. אפשר להביא ראיה לאיזה פירוש מתהילים סח:ה? מישעיהו מ'ג?
4. לאיזה פירוש מסייע סגנון הפסוק?

פסוק טו שוכן עד וקדוש שמו מרום וקדוש אשכון

Who dwells to eternity and His name is Holy: Judaica Press

שד"ל: נראה ל: האל אשר שמו הוא שוכן עד וקדוש, ו"עד" ו"קדוש" תארי המקום אשר הוא שוכן בו ו"עד" כמו "מרום" וכמו שמפרש "מרום וקדוש אשכון".

5. מה ההבדל בין הפירושים?

6. למה, במבט ראשון, האתנחתא לא במקום הנכון?
7. למה, בכל זאת, זה נמצא תחת "אשכון"?

דעת מקרא:

רם ונשא = תיאור במקום
שוכן עד = תיאור בזמן
קדוש שמו = תיאור במהות

- ואת דכא ושפל רוח
להחיות רוח שפלים ולהחיות לב נדכאים
8. באיזה צורה בנוי הפסוק זה? למה זה משמעותי?

ידיעות

הפטרה, סלו סלו, מגילה לא, T IS I, צורה כיאסטי,

* לפי מה שמקובל בקהילת ישראל, ההפטרה מתחילה מפסוק יד. אך הגמרא במסכת מגילה לא. אומר "ביוה"כ קורין 'אחרי מות' ומפטירין 'כי כה אמר ה'" זאת אומרת, שמתחילין מפסוק טו.

פרק נז פסוקים טז - יח

כי רוח מלפני יעטוף ונשמות אני עשיתי

רש"י: כאשר רוח האדם שהוא מלפני, שניתן בו מאתי, יעטוף: יודה ויכנע...אני מבטל ריבי וקצפי מעליו.
רד"ק: מיום היותם לי לעם ועד עתה הייתי במריבה עמהם; הם חוטאים ואני קוצף עליהם. ולא תהיה זאת הקצף לעולם כי אסיר לב האבן מהם ועשיתי אשר בחקי ילכו. "כי רוח מלפני..." הרוח מלפני הוא והוא יעטוף וילבש הגוף ויכבוש אותו וללכת בדרך הטובה וכפל הענין ואמר "ונשמות אני עשיתי"...

רד"ק: שהרי הרוח, העוטף את האדם ומחיה אותו, מלפני (ממני) נשלח אל האדם, ואם כן, רצוני היא בחיי אדם ולא במותו...ואת נשמות רוח חיים שבאפיהם של בני האדם אני ה' עשיתי ואני מרחם על מעשי.

ולפיכך לא לנצח אקצוף.

1. במה חולקים רש"י ורד"ק?

2. האם הדעת מקרא "פוסק" כרש"י או כרד"ק?

פסוק יז: בעון בצעו קצפתי ואכזה הסתר ואקצף

וילך שובב בדרך לבו

רד"ק: שהיה חומד ועושה כי עון החמס גדול ואע"פ שאין בו מיתה ומה שלא חייבה עליו תורה מיתה לפי שאין עון זה נמצא ברוב כי הוא מפסיד סדר הישוב לפיכך מונעים אותו בני אדם אבל כשהעון הזה מתפשט במדינה לא תוכל לעמוד ותחרב מפני החמס.

3. תסביר הרעיון שמסומן בקו

רש"י: תחילה ואכזה הסתר פני תמיד מצרתו ואקצוף ועל כי הלך שובב בדרך לבו וסרס המקרא וכן פירושו: בעון בצעו וילך שובב בדרכי לבו קצפתי ואכזה

שד"ל: כשקצפתי עליו הסתרתי פני ממנו וילך שובב: ועל ידי הסתרת פני ממנו בגלות, באין חזון ואין אותות ומופתים, הוסיף ללכת שובב בדרך לבו...ומקרא לאחר ראייה לפירושי... ורוסמילר וגסניוס פירשו: ואעפ"כ הלך שובב בדרך לבו.

4. מה ראה רש"י לסרס את הפסוק?

5. איך שד"ל דן בבעיה הזו?

6. מה ההבדל בן שד"ל וגסניוס?

7. איך הפסוק הבא ראייה לפירושו של שד"ל?

גרי"ד סולוביצקי: מתוך ימי זכרון עמ' 244 למה נתן הקב"ה את מדינת ישראל לבני דורנו, דור של טמיעה ונישואי תערובת, ולא נתן מתנה יקרה זו לבני דורו של האר"י הקדוש? מפני שבני הדור ההוא יכלו לחיות את חייהם היהודיים בקדושה ובטהרה, ואילו הדור שלנו - דור אושוויץ וטרבלינקה - לא היה לו המשך בלעדי מדינת ישראל; הוא היה מתבולל לחלוטין ונטמא בין הגוים. דורות גדולים, קה - לא היה לו המשך היו מסוגלים לחיות בלי מדינה - דור נמוך ומדוכא, הדור שלנו, לא היה יכול לעמוד ביהדותו בלעדיו. "בעון בצעו קצפתי ואכזה, הסתר ואקצף וילך שובב בדרך לבו. דרכיו ראיתי וארפאהו ואנחהו ואשלם נחמים לו ולאבליו." - אילו המשכתי בדרך של הסתר פנים, רחמנא ליצלן, ונותן לו לילך בדרך לבו - הרי שלא היתה לו תקוה, מפני שהיה שוקע עוד במ"ט שערי טומאה, שהיו חלילה ננעלים עליו לצמיתות וללא מוצא, ולכן ראיתי להחיש לו ניחומים לאבלו.

8. האם הרב קורא את הפסוק כרש"י, כשד"ל או האם הוא נותן אפשרות שלישית?

ידיעות

מקרא מסורס, הסתר פנים, מדינת ישראל לדעת הגרי"ד

פסוק יט: בורא ניב שפטים שלום לרחוק ולקרוב:

ברכות לד: אמר ר' אבהו מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים צדיקים גמורים אינם עומדים שנאמר שלום שלום לרחוק ולקרוב: לרחוק ברישא והדר (ואחר) לקרוב. ור' יוחנן (שחולק על ר' אבהו) אמר לך: מאי רחוק? שהיה רחוק מדבר עבירה מעיקרא (מההתחלה) ומאי קרוב? שהיה קרוב לדבר עבירה ונתרחק ממנו. דעת מקרא: שעור הכתוב: אמר ה' כי אני בורא בניב שפטים שלום שלום לרחוק ולקרוב "ורפאתיו" - וכך בדבור 'שלום שלום' ארפא אותו. שד"ל: ולאבלי בורא (אני) ניב שפתיים. אתן להם פתחון פה כי האבל יושב דומם.

1. מה ההבדל בן פירוש דעת מקרא ושד"ל?
2. האם הגמרא לוקח עמדה ביחס לשאלה הזו?

רד"ק: ואהיה מחדש דבר שפטים שיאמר בפי הכל שלום שלום ולא יאזכר שם מלחמה עוד. 3. במה שונה רד"ק מהמפרשים האחרים?

גרי"ד סולוביצקי: מהו ניב שפתיים? או שהבורא ברא את העולם ב'ניב שפתיים' כלומר במאמרו, או שברא את המאמר עצמו... הדבר החשוב בפסוק הזה הוא שהוא מקשר בין הקב"ה והתשובה: הבורא שב אל החוטאים, ואפילו לאלו שפרשו ממנו והתרחקו מאד מאד, ופותח להם פתח תשובה ב'ניב שפתיים'. במאמר ברכתו: "שלום שלום...". הבטחת הבורא היא: "כי לא לעולם אריב ולא לנצח אקצוף כי רוח מלפני יעטוף ונשמות אני עשיתי" - חסדיו על הכל מפני שהוא הבורא והיוצר של הבריאה כולה, כנאמר: "טוב ה' לכל ורחמיו על כל מעשיו" (תהלים קמה:ט) - היוצר מרחם על יציר כפיו, האב הרחמן ר כפיו, האב הרחמן מעשי ידיו של הקב"ה: "הנשמה לך והגוף פעלך - חוסה על עמלך" - עיקרה בפסוק זה בישעיהו. רוח החוטא מדוכאת, הוא חסר אונים, אבד עולמו. והנה: "אני בראתיו ורחמי על כל מעשי. יורד אני משני מרומי ובא אל החוטא ואומר לו "רצוני לעזור לך, לסלוח לך ולנקותך". "...אמנם כן, 'מרום וקדוש אשכון', אך אל נא תשכח כי יום הכיפורים היום ובו יורד אני אליך משמי מרום, כדי לחיות רוח שפלים ולהחיות לב נדכאים".

4. במה שונה קריאת הפסוק של הרב מהגמרא?

פסוקים כ-כא:

והרשעים כים נגרש... אין שלום אמר ה' לרשעים

גרי"ד סולוביצקי: אף החוטאים הגדולים ביותר הם בתוך תוכם חסרי מנוחה ושמחת חיים, והבורא מבקשם שיחזרו אליו בתשובה ומביא להם שלות נפש. "אין שלום אמר ה' לרשעים" - בסופו של דבר יבינו הרשעים את מצבם וישבו אל ה'.

שד"ל: והרשעים כים נגרש: המפרשים פירשו לשון גירוש... ונראה לי כי גרש הנאמר כאן היא ענין בפני עצמו מלשון "ועלתה היאור כלה ונגרשה ונשקעה היאור מצרים" (עמוס ח:ח)... וטעם כים נגרש: כען שמימיו עכורשון "ועלתה היאור כלה ונגרשה שוקט היו מימיו נעשה צלולים, ועל ידי שהשקט לא יוכל, מימיו עכורין ברפש וטיט; וטעם המשל, כי כמו שאי אפשר למי הים שיהיו צלולים, כן רשעים גמורים אין להם רפואה, וזה כנגד מה שאמר 'ורפאתיו'. "אין שלום": אם כן, מה שאמרתי שלום שלום לרחוק ולקרוב, אין זה מקום ברשעים הגמורים, אך הם יקבלו ענשם.

5. מה ההבדל בן שני הפירושים?

6. התוכל להכריע ביניהם?

* יצחק רבין, ראש ממשלה למדינת ישראל, בירך את כל העולם עם הפסוק הזה, כשדיבר בוועידתו, כשהוא חתם על סדור השלום עם מנכ"ל אש"ף, יסיר עראפת.

SENNACHERIB'S SIEGE OF JER

The Assyrian monarch Sennacherib's military campaign against King Hezekiah of Judah is one of the best-documented and most discussed events in the history of ancient Israel. The late-eighth-century B.C.E. encounter is reported in both Kings (2 Kings 18:13-19:37) and Chronicles (2 Chronicles 32:1-23). It is likely the backdrop for several prophetic teachings (for example, Isaiah 1:4-9, 22:1-14; Micah 1:10-16). In addition, we have a detailed cuneiform account of the campaign in the annals of Sennacherib (his third campaign).¹ We even have a relief from Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh depicting his conquest of Lachish,² a visual account complemented by archaeological finds from the site south of Jerusalem.³

One might think that with this wealth of data, scholars would have arrived at a satisfactory reconstruction of the course of events, the battles and their results. But scholars have not reached a consensus because of the contradictions in the Biblical and Assyrian accounts regarding the outcome of the campaign. According to the Bible, Sennacherib withdrew after his army was decimated by Yahweh's angel (2 Kings 19:35), while Sennacherib's annals claim that Hezekiah surrendered and paid the Assyrian king an extremely large tribute.

For close to a century and a half, scholars have debated these conflicting accounts. Several historians have suggested a novel way to resolve this contradiction: They surmise that the reports relate to two separate campaigns: one in 701 B.C.E., in which Sennacherib emerged as victor and collected a large tribute from Hezekiah as the price for his remaining in office; and a second campaign sometime after 688 B.C.E., in which Sennacherib suffered a major setback in the land of Judah.⁴

In a recent article in *BAR*, William Shea, a scholar of ancient Near Eastern studies, sought to defend this

two-campaign theory.* On closer examination, however, it is indefensible.

Unfortunately, the Assyrian annals from 689 B.C.E. until Sennacherib's assassination in 681 B.C.E. have not survived—or at least they have not yet been found, if indeed any were written. Since Assyrian sources cannot confirm a second campaign in Judah, some scholars, including Shea, have sought support in Egyptian sources. In 2 Kings 19:9 the Egyptian pharaoh Taharqa is said to have engaged the Assyrian army in the Judahite Shephelah.** Since Taharqa did not ascend the throne until 690 B.C.E., the Biblical report, it has been argued, must refer to an Assyrian military campaign in Judah after 690 B.C.E. Supporters of the two-campaign theory contend that this was a military campaign led by Sennacherib sometime before his assassination in 681 B.C.E.—a campaign not specifically mentioned in the Bible.

A recently published fragment of a stela records Taharqa's victory over an enemy whose name is missing. All we

*William H. Shea, "Jerusalem Under Siege," *BAR*, November/December 1999.

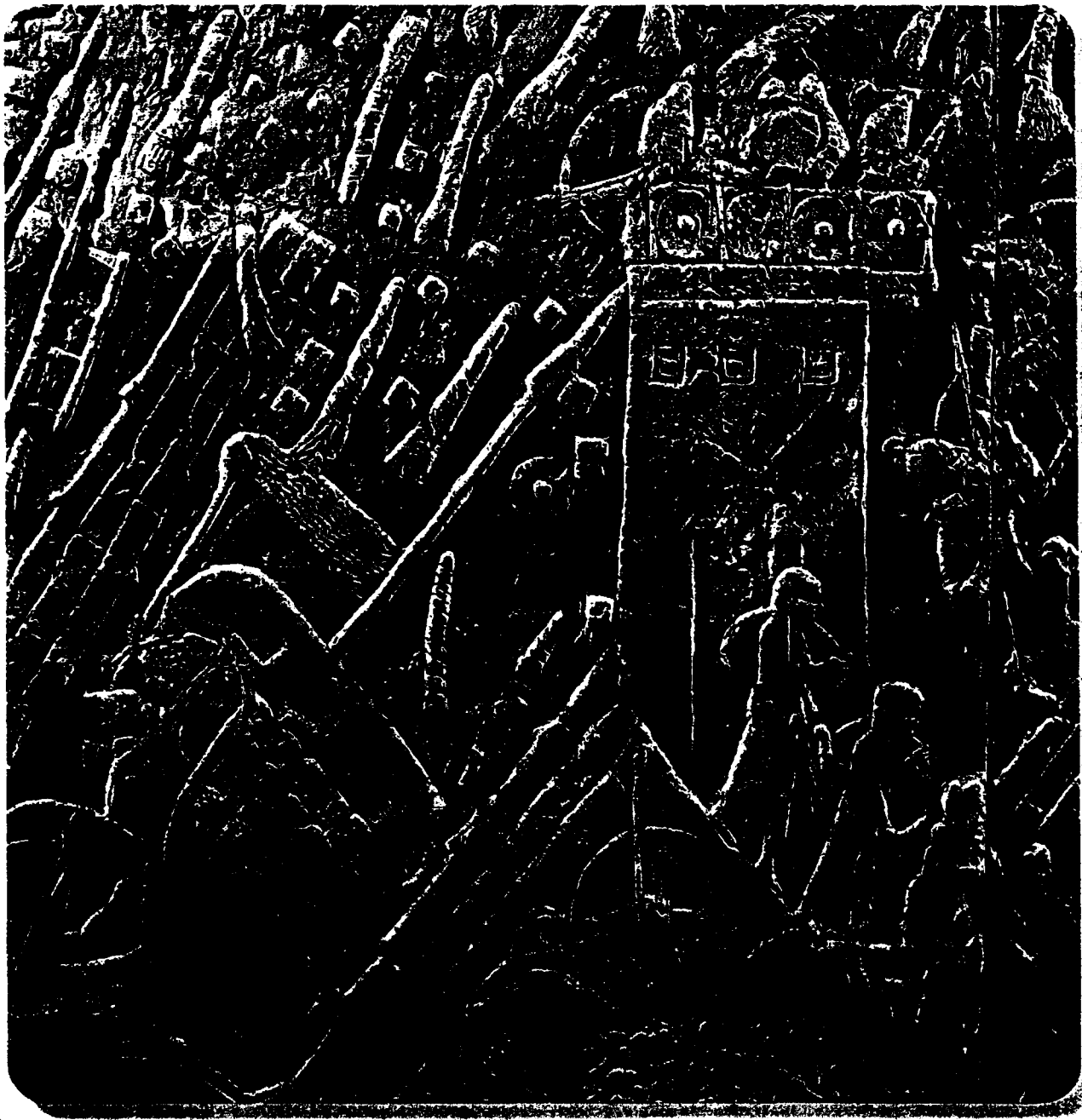
**"Shephelah" is the Hebrew term for the foothills between the coastal plain and the Judean highland. See Harold Brodsky, "The Shephelah—Guardian of Judea," *Bible Review*, Winter 1987.

THE SIEGE OF LACHISH. Assyrian soldiers attack the walled city of Lachish in this seventh-century B.C.E. relief from the walls of Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh. The assault pictured here was not included in the stories of the Judahite battles described in Sennacherib's annals, a cuneiform account of his military campaigns, but the clash against Jerusalem was. The attack described in the annals can be dated to 701 B.C.E. The Bible recounts the Assyrian assault; yet the Biblical text seems to tell two stories, one of Jerusalem's surrender to Assyria and the other of a miraculous deliverance of the city. Some scholars believe this indicates two separate attacks on Judah, in 701 B.C.E. and 688 B.C.E.; Mordechai Cogan, author of the accompanying article, counters that the Biblical accounts were written by different authors at different times. The second story, he claims, was simply an embellishment by a faithful writer who believed that Jerusalem was saved by God's hand.

The Two-Campaign Theory Makes No Sense

MORDECHAI
COGAN

USALEM ONCE OR TWICE?



ERICH LESSING

12

THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT OF SENNACHERIB'S ATTACK

The Biblical text is one key to understanding whether the Assyrians attacked Jerusalem once or twice. In the accompanying article, author Mordechai Cogan suggests that the account in 2 Kings consists of three units. The first is a straightforward account of Assyria's conquest of Judah's fortified cities and of the tribute Judah's King Hezekiah was forced to pay. In the second unit, an Assyrian official, the rabshakeh, tells the people of Jerusalem that resistance will prove fruitless. The third unit, seen by some scholars as describing a later attack, relates that Jerusalem was spared destruction when an angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night. Cogan, however, argues that the third unit refers to the same attack as the first unit but was written by a later author who attributed Jerusalem's survival to God's miraculous intervention.

Unit 1 (2 Kings 18:13-16):

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. King Hezekiah of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will bear." The king of Assyria demanded of King Hezekiah of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasuries of the king's house. At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the doorposts that King Hezekiah of Judah had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Selections from Unit 2

(2 Kings 18:17-19:9a,36-37):

The Rabshakeh said to them: "Say to Hezekiah: Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you base this confidence of yours? Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? On whom do you now rely, that you have rebelled against me? See, you are relying now on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of anyone who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him. But if you say to me, 'We rely on the Lord our God,' is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?' ... Is it without the Lord that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it." ... "Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make your peace with me and come out to me; then every one of you will eat from your own vine and your own fig tree, and drink water from your own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive oil and honey, that you may live and not die. Do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you by saying, The Lord will deliver us.'" ... Isaiah said to them, "Say to your master, 'Thus says the Lord: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me. I myself will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'" ... Then King Sennacherib of Assyria left, went

home, and lived at Nineveh. As he was worshiping in the house of his god Nisroch, his sons Adram-melech and Sharezer killed him with the sword, and they escaped into the land of Ararat. His son Esar-haddon succeeded him.

Selections from Unit 3

(2 Kings 19:9b-35):

[Sennacherib] sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus shall you speak to King Hezekiah of Judah: Do not let your God on whom you rely deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. See, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, destroying them utterly. Shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my predecessors destroyed ... ?" Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; then Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord ... Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I have heard your prayer to me about King Sennacherib of Assyria ... Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city, shoot an arrow there, come before it with a shield, or cast up a siege-ramp against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return; he shall not come into this city, says the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David." That very night the angel of the Lord set out and struck down one hundred eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians; when morning dawned, they were all dead bodies.

know is that the defeated enemy possessed cattle, engaged in the production of honey, and was resettled by the Egyptian pharaoh in villages. In his publication of the text, Egyptologist Donald Redford of Pennsylvania State University compares a number of phrases in the new fragment to passages in other documents from Taharqa's reign and proposes identifying the enemy as "some Libyan group" that, as other texts indicate, was defeated and impressed into the king's service.⁵

In his BAR article, Shea asserts that this new text "provides Egyptian evidence in support of the two-campaign theory." His claim that the defeated enemy was Sennacherib, however, looks like an *a priori* assumption made in search of evidence to support the two-campaign theory rather than an objective effort to interpret the new text. The Taharqa stela tells us that the defeated enemy forces arrived with their families and possessions to be taken captive to Egypt. It is ludicrous to imagine the mighty Assyrian army marching in defeat to the coastal plain of Israel with the soldiers' families and possessions in tow! Whoever Taharqa defeated, it was certainly not the Assyrian army of Sennacherib.

Rather than reaching for straws to resolve the historical quandary, it is best to interpret the Biblical text as recounting a single campaign of Sennacherib waged in 701 B.C.E. A critical evaluation of some elements of the Biblical record shows them to be late and legendary; therefore, this account cannot be accepted as evidence. But the most damning judgment of the two-campaign theory is that it is simply impossible given the widely accepted history of the seventh century B.C.E.

We begin with the Biblical texts.⁶

As is widely acknowledged, the account in Second Kings of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah draws on a number of sources, distinguished by their style and themes.⁷ The Deuteronomistic author* arranged his material so that it might convey a didactic message. This sometimes required that he abandon strict chronological arrangement.⁸

Three literary units are detectable in 2 Kings 18:13-19:37 (see box at left):

Unit 1 (2 Kings 18:13-16): This is a chronicle-like report of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, the capture of Judah's fortified cities, Hezekiah's surrender and the payment of a heavy tribute to Sennacherib. The details of that payment (verse 16) may have been copied from a Temple source.

Unit 2 (2 Kings 18:17-19:9a,36-37): This describes negotiations regarding Hezekiah's possible surrender. The Assyrian *rabshakeh*, the head of a high-level delegation, faces his Judahite counterparts. The *rabshakeh* raises the following points: (a) Egypt, a "splintered reed staff," on whom Hezekiah has been relying, cannot be counted on for serious help, and the weak Judahite army by itself is no match for the superior host of

SENNACHERIB BOASTS OF HIS CONQUESTS IN JUDAH

The Assyrian account of the campaign against Judah agrees in many respects with the version in the Bible. In his royal annals, Sennacherib describes a string of military victories from Phoenicia to Egypt's border, and he boasts of his attacks against 46 fortified cities in Judah. He also lists the riches that he was able to extract from King Hezekiah. Interestingly, though Sennacherib writes that he trapped Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage," he never claims to have defeated him outright.

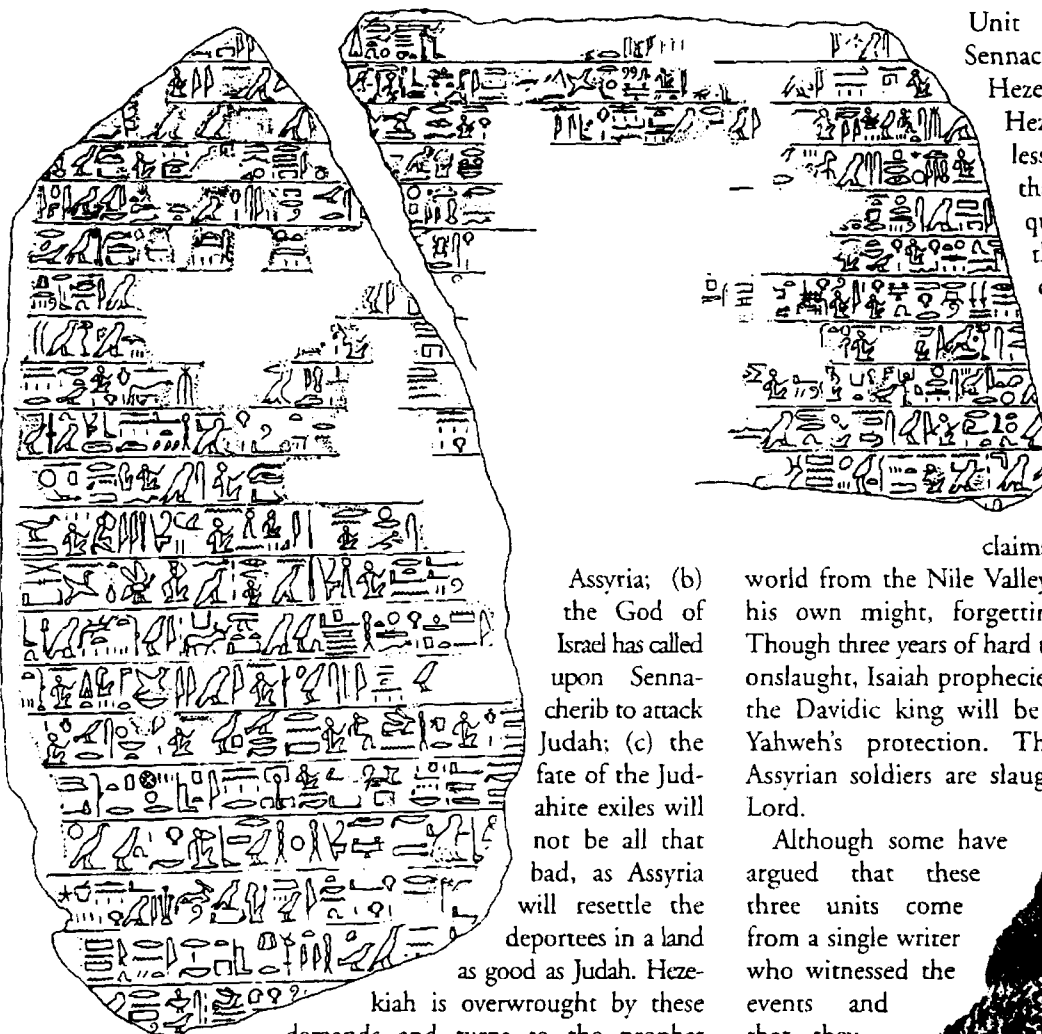
In my third campaign, I marched against Hatti. The awesome splendor of my lordship overwhelmed Lulli, king of Sidon, and he fled overseas and disappeared forever. The terrifying nature of the weapon of (the god) Ashur overwhelmed his strong cities ...

As for Hezekiah, the Judaeon, who had not submitted to my yoke, I besieged forty-six of his fortified walled cities and surrounding small towns, which were without number. Using packed-down ramps and by applying battering rams, infantry attacks by mines, breeches and siege machines, I conquered (them). I took out 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, cattle and sheep, without number, and counted them as spoil. Himself [Hezekiah], I locked him up within Jerusalem, his royal city, like a bird in a cage. I surrounded him with earthworks, and made it unthinkable for him to exit by the city gate. His cities which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron and Šilli-bel, king of Gaza, and thus diminished his land. I imposed upon him in addition to the former tribute, yearly payment of dues and gifts for my lordship.

He, Hezekiah, was overwhelmed by the awesome splendor of my lordship, and he sent me after my departure to Nineveh, my royal city, his elite troops and his best soldiers, which he had brought into Jerusalem as reinforcements, with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, choice antimony ... countless trappings and implements of war, together with his daughters, his palace women, his male and female singers. He (also) dispatched his personal messenger to deliver the tribute and to do obeisance.

—From the annals of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (705-681 B.C.E.), translated from the Rassam Prism, in Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, II Kings, Anchor Bible Series (New York: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 337-339.

*Most scholars believe that one school of authors was responsible for most of Deuteronomy and for Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings.



Assyria; (b) the God of Israel has called upon Sennacherib to attack Judah; (c) the fate of the Judahite exiles will not be all that bad, as Assyria will resettle the deportees in a land as good as Judah. Hezekiah is overwrought by these demands and turns to the prophet Isaiah to intercede with Yahweh on his behalf. Isaiah offers a word of comfort and encouragement: Sennacherib will withdraw and return home, and there he will be felled by divine will. In the end, Sennacherib returns to Nineveh, where he is assassinated by two of his sons.

EGYPTIAN EVIDENCE? Ascending the throne of Egypt in 690 B.C.E., Pharaoh Taharqa (right) is central to the scholarly debate over the number of Assyrian military campaigns against Jerusalem. According to 2 Kings 19:9, Taharqa was pharaoh during the siege. The Egyptian stela fragment above describes a major battle between Taharqa's forces and an enemy whose name is now missing; it has been claimed that the stela refers to a victorious campaign against Assyrian forces in the foothills of Judah. The battle took place after Taharqa rose to power and thus cannot have been part of Sennacherib's 701 B.C.E. campaign. This would prove that the Assyrians attacked Judah a second time, in 688 B.C.E., and lost the fight. But Taharqa's stela describes the unnamed enemy marching in defeat to Egypt with their families, cattle and other possessions; author Cogan writes that it is inconceivable that this refers to Sennacherib's mighty army, which would have never burdened itself in that manner during a military campaign. Indeed, one leading Egyptologist believes Taharqa's enemy was a group from Libya. Taharqa's stela, Cogan concludes, does not support the two-campaign theory.

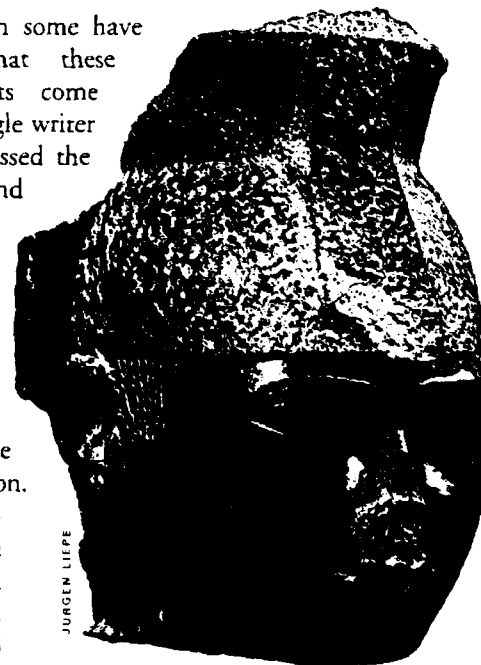
Unit 3 (2 Kings 19:9b-35): Sennacherib sends a message to Hezekiah, saying that Hezekiah's God is as powerless as the gods of the nations that Assyria has already conquered. Hezekiah hurries to the Temple to pray for deliverance, emphasizing Sennacherib's blasphemy against Yahweh. Isaiah appears and, in a lengthy poetic prophecy (2 Kings 19:21-34), scoffs at the arrogance of the Assyrian king, who claims to have conquered the

world from the Nile Valley to the northern forests by his own might, forgetting the true ruler of all. Though three years of hard times will follow the Assyrian onslaught, Isaiah prophesies, in the end Jerusalem and the Davidic king will be saved because they enjoy Yahweh's protection. That very night, 185,000 Assyrian soldiers are slaughtered by an angel of the Lord.

Although some have argued that these three units come from a single writer who witnessed the events and that they should be read as a continuous report, this approach requires considerable interpolation. For example, the gap found between 2 Kings 18:16 and 18:17—between

the surrender of Hezekiah in verse 16 and the appearance before Jerusalem of the *rabshakeh* demanding surrender in verse 17—may be bridged only by assuming that Sennacherib had a change of heart and rejected Hezekiah's offer of tribute and now demanded the city's total surrender, or that he had resumed hostilities for some other reason. To suppose this was originally one continuous narrative also requires dismissing the stylistic differences of each unit of the story.

Before suggesting how the Biblical text can be accounted for, let us return to evaluate the cuneiform



JURGEN LIEPE

inscription of Sennacherib.

The account in Sennacherib's annals was composed about half a year after the end of the campaign—in other words, some time in 700 B.C.E.—as the date in the colophon of the version known as the Rassam cylinder indicates.⁹ The annals describe, in literary, nonchronological sequence, the reconquest of the rebel states in the west, from Phoenicia down to Philistia and along Egypt's border. According to the annals, western rulers either fled before the power of Assyria's army (as did Luli, king of Sidon), surrendered without a fight (like the kings of Transjordan) or suffered humiliating defeat (like the kings of the Philistine cities). The Assyrian army turned back an Egyptian auxiliary force that had come to aid the rebels and took some of its men and equipment as spoils. The annals treat Sennacherib's operations in the kingdom of Judah separately from those in other areas of combat. The Assyrian annal writer devoted a large amount of space to describing these operations, which points to the importance he attached to Judah's position in the western coalition against Assyria. Most likely, Hezekiah was the driving force behind the uprising. And although Hezekiah was not removed from the throne after his submission, as was so often the case with defeated monarchs, the annals clearly state that he was forced to surrender and to pay a vast tribute to Sennacherib. Moreover, territory in the Shephelah was divided among the Philistine city-states loyal to Sennacherib.¹⁰

Can this Assyrian report and the three Biblical traditions refer to a single campaign? Nothing really prevents us from such a conclusion. We need only consider the perspectives of the various accounts in order to appreciate that we are dealing with the testimonies of diverse witnesses.

The Assyrian annals and Unit 1 in the Bible are in basic agreement: Sennacherib brought Hezekiah to his knees; Hezekiah rendered tribute to Sennacherib and thus was permitted to retain his throne.

Unit 2 of the Biblical account centers on one particular episode—the speech made by the head of the Assyrian delegation, the *rabshakeh*, and the impression it made on those who heard his striking rhetoric. This episode reflects the realities of political negotiations that were part of Assyrian foreign policy. But this account cannot have been set down in writing before 680 B.C.E., the year of Sennacherib's assassination, because the con-

SENNACHERIB'S STORY. Dating to 689 B.C.E., this clay prism contains a detailed description of Sennacherib's eight campaigns, including the one conducted against Judah and its neighbors in 701 B.C.E. The cuneiform inscription tells of the siege of Jerusalem and the tribute paid by King Hezekiah of Judah; in this, it matches quite closely the Biblical account in 2 Kings 18:13-16. Scholars who believe Sennacherib attacked Jerusalem twice say other annals, now missing, could include a description of a second siege, but, Cogan notes, the history of the seventh century B.C.E. makes that extremely unlikely. Assyria ruled the Near East for almost the entire century: If Sennacherib had failed in a second attack on Jerusalem, there would have to have been a third campaign to re-establish Assyrian rule in Judah. No such campaign is known.

cluding factual details concern the identity of Sennacherib's murderers and their place of refuge. The reference to Taharqa as "king of Egypt" in this unit is an anachronistic designation employed by a writer after Taharqa's rise to the throne in 690.*

Unit 3 is the latest of the Biblical testimonies. In this prophetic narrative, Hezekiah is portrayed as a pious king who prays to Yahweh in the Temple. He has no need for the intercession of a prophet. Isaiah is Yahweh's messenger; he delivers a promise of punishment for the proud and arrogant Assyrian king. A reference to the Assyrian conquest of Egypt, which occurred nearly three decades after Sennacherib's campaign and which was led by his successor Esarhaddon and, later, by Ashurbanipal, indicates that Isaiah's original prophecy has been embellished by later updating. The legendary ending of the Biblical passage—the decimation of the Assyrian army that brought about the salvation of Jerusalem, Yahweh's city, and of Hezekiah, the scion of David—probably developed in the circle of the faithful who understood that something miraculous had occurred years before. Whereas so many of the major cities in the ancient Near East had been humbled by the might of Assyria, Jerusalem

continues on page 69

*Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen compares this to modern anachronistic reporting that "Queen Elizabeth was born in 1926." See "Late-Egyptian Chronology and the Hebrew Monarchy," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 5 (1973), pp. 225-231.

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King Hezekiah's Seal Revisited

MEIR LUBETSKI

Some two years ago, Harvard professor Frank Moore Cross published an article in *BAR* that described for the first time an extraordinary lump of clay.* Known as a bulla, the clay was impressed with a seal belonging to King Hezekiah, who ruled Judah from c. 727-698 B.C.E. It was Hezekiah who saved Jerusalem from a siege by the Assyrian monarch Sennacherib by fortifying and expanding the city's walls and by building the tunnel that still bears his name to ensure a steady supply of water.** And it was he who instituted a major religious reform in which he sought to centralize worship in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, eliminating the shrines and sacred pillars in outlying areas of the country, by then divided into

the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Indeed, as we shall see, Hezekiah even wanted to reunite the country again, as in the days of David and Solomon.

The inscription on the seal, written in the kind of Hebrew letters used before the Babylonian Exile, reads, according to Cross:

לְחֻזְקִיהוּיָאֲחִיזָא מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה (lḥzqyhwh ḥz mlk/yhdb)
[Belonging] to Hezekiah [son of]
'Ahaz, king of /Judah

The seal, as impressed in the bulla, is extraordinary not only because it belonged to a well-known Judahite king, but also because it is iconic; that is, in addition to the Hebrew inscription, it shows a picture; in this case a carving of a two-winged beetle pushing a ball of mud or dung.

What in the world is a two-winged dung beetle doing on a seal of a Hebrew king? Its appearance, especially on a royal

seal, begs for interpretation. Cross associates it with Phoenician iconography. The importance of the matter is reflected in the title of his article: "King Hezekiah's Seal Bears Phoenician Imagery."

The question is indeed important, as I shall explain, but I believe Cross gave the wrong answer. The image is a direct borrowing from Egyptian iconography and can be understood as an adaptation by the great Judahite king to advance his own national agenda.

Cross recognizes that the iconography of the dung beetle (also called a scarab) originated in Egypt. But it was appropriated by the Phoenicians, along with much other Egyptian art, as is widely accepted. Thus many Phoenician seals are scarab-shaped and we find many Egyptian motifs, including the dung beetle, in Phoenician decorative art. From the ninth century B.C.E. on, Egyptian symbols became widespread in Phoenicia as earlier local traditions receded and were forsaken.¹

*Frank Moore Cross, "King Hezekiah's Seal Bears Phoenician Imagery," *BAR*, March/April 1999.

**See William Shea, "Jerusalem Under Siege," *BAR*, November/December 1999 and Mordecai Cogan, "Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem," *BAR*, January/February 2001.



PHOENICIAN OR EGYPTIAN? The seal of Hezekiah, king of Judah from c. 727 to 698 B.C.E., left its mark in this bulla—a small lump of wet clay used to secure a document. It reads, according to Meir Lubetski, author of the accompanying article, “Judah, Belonging to Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, King!” Hezekiah and Ahaz are the only kings of Judah whose seal impressions have been recovered. At center a two-winged beetle, or scarab, pushes a tiny ball of dung. Why did Hezekiah pick a scarab to represent himself? Two years ago in *BAR*, Frank Moore Cross argued that the Egyptian-style imagery came to Judah by way of Phoenicia. Lubetski believes instead that the imagery came directly from Egypt and that Hezekiah used this beetle in an effort to align himself with the pharaoh.

But this does not answer the question as to whether Hezekiah got it from the Phoenicians or more directly—from the Egyptians. In my view, the fact that the beetle symbol appears in both Phoenicia and Judah does not mean that the latter imitated Phoenicia, but rather that each independently developed its own



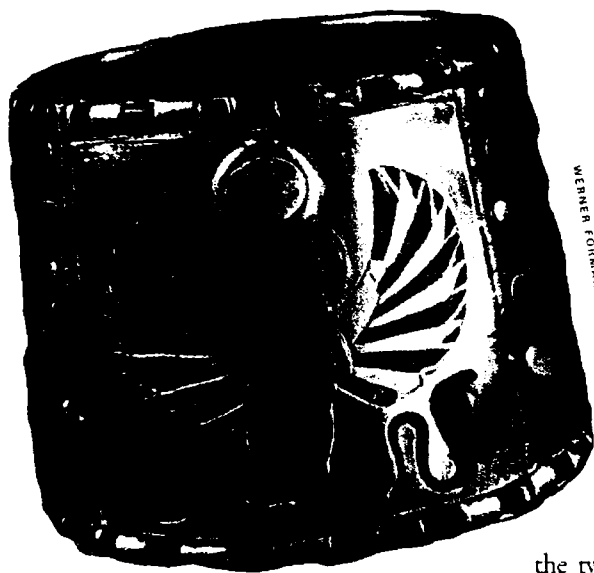
SIR JOHN MANSFIELD COLLECTION LONDON

distinguishing features based on the original source—Egypt. Transient Egyptian craftsmen transmitted their versatile skills in the arts and crafts over wide areas simultaneously in Phoenician and Judahite circles.² Consequently, Hebrew artisans not only emulated Phoenico-Egyptian art, but also copied Egyptian art directly.³

Fortunately, there are enough unique stylistic details to allow us to determine whether the decoration on Hezekiah's seal represents a borrowing from a Phoenician adaptation of an originally Egyptian icon or a direct borrowing from Egyptian prototypes. As one leading Egyptologist has observed, “The style of the artifact determines whether it is Egyptian or perhaps a Phoenician imitation of the [Egyptian] original.”⁴

Beetles were a popular motif in ancient art and were depicted in several ways, including wingless, two-winged and four-winged. In the case of Hezekiah's bulla, the seal cutter fashioned a two-winged scarab, based on the Egyptian prototype.

Small Object Reflects Big Geopolitics



WERNER FORMANN/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.

Egyptian artists produced only two-winged beetles.⁵ Phoenicia, in its adaptation of this Egyptian motif, developed the four-winged variety.⁶ The four-winged beetle of Phoenicia, however, is not comparable to the two-winged beetle of Egypt.⁷

The predecessor of the winged beetle in Egyptian iconography and imagery was the winged sun-disk. Known as the Great Winged Disk, its literal meaning in Egyptian (*py wr*) is the "Great Flier."⁸ It is closely linked to Horus, god of the horizon, who is portrayed as a falcon.

Eminent Egyptologists explain the symbol of the winged sun-disk as an artistic

expression of the Egyptian kingdom united under divine providence; the two wings represent Upper and Lower Egypt.⁹ As early as the Vth dynasty (c. 2498-2345 B.C.E.), the image of the winged sun-disk was accompanied by the phrase *nfr ngr nb t³ wy*, "beautiful deity, ruler of the Two Lands [Egypt]."¹⁰

The winged sun-disk also represented the pharaoh as Horus incarnate, hovering over the two halves of Egypt.¹¹ In some instances, the winged sun-disk is defended by the two *uraei* (snakes), each of which faces a wing and often also wears a crown of either Upper or Lower Egypt.¹² In later Egyptian imagery, Horus is often represented as a winged beetle,¹³ as in this inscription on the Ptolemaic-era Edfu Temple to Horus:

"You are the youth that emerged as the doer of beneficent acts, Who served as the beetle who renews the birth of royal crowns."¹⁴

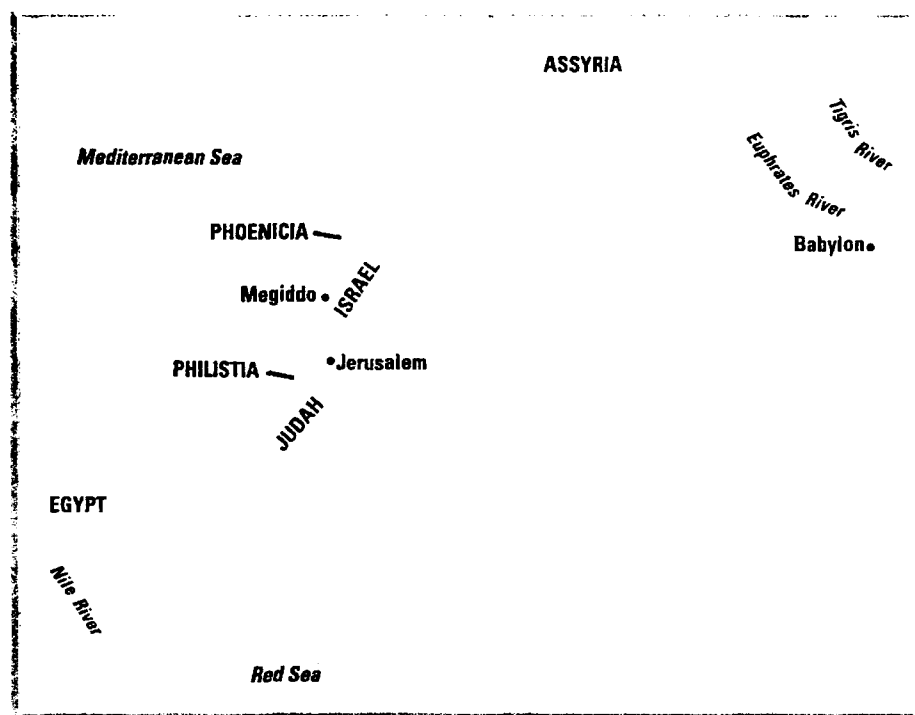
When the beetle, or scarab, as it is often called, replaces the sun-disk, a ball carried by the beetle represents the daily rising solar ball that the sun god rolls

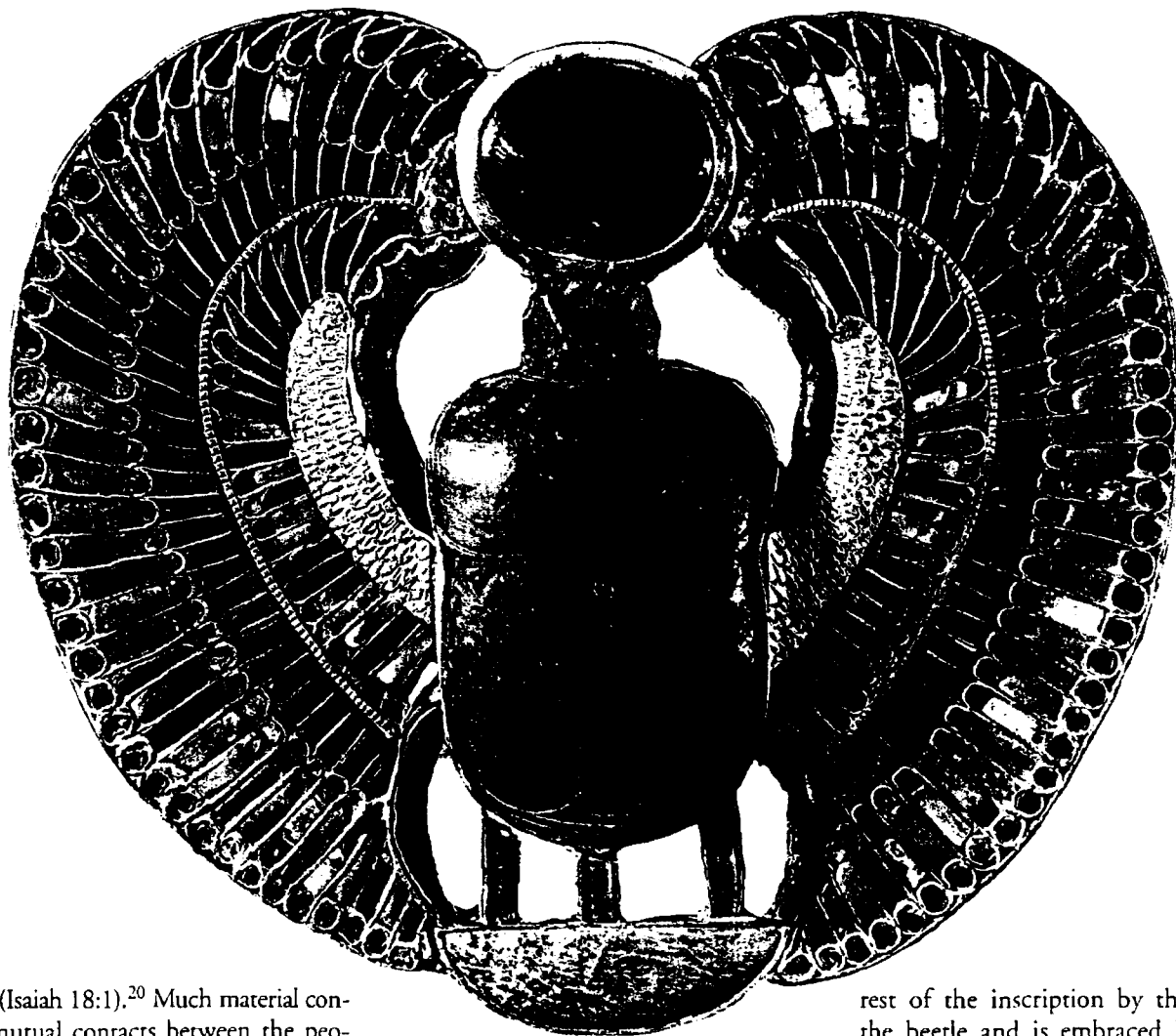
DIVINE BEETLE. Revered throughout Egyptian history, scarabs decorated amulets, jewelry and seals since the Old Kingdom (2686-2181 B.C.E.). Examples include a pectoral (opposite), jewelry often placed on the chest of a mummy, made of lapis lazuli and other semiprecious stones and recovered from the 14th-century B.C.E. tomb of Tutankhamun and a gold anklet (left) from the XXIst dynasty (1069-945 B.C.E.). Scarabs were associated in Egypt with the sun god and with creation because they were believed to push their balls of dung—from which young were thought to emerge without need of a mother—from east to west, as the sun moves.

from east to west. The name Hpr, or Khopri, designates the young sun god in the morning. The deity appears in a beetle guise and his chief attribute is "to become" or "to come into existence."¹⁵ The amalgam fused the sense of the sun's daily renewal with the perception of the scarab's constant rebirth to form the Egyptian concept of life and life after death.¹⁶ The two wings—presumably the falcon Horus's wings—symbolized the pharaoh's dominion over both Upper and Lower Egypt.

What, then, did Hezekiah wish to convey by selecting an Egyptian symbol for his seal? His message becomes evident when seen in the political context of his reign. Shortly after his reign began (c. 727 B.C.E.), the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians (in 721 B.C.E.). The remainder of his reign (until c. 698 B.C.E.) was marked by his unrelenting efforts to entice the remaining Israelites who fled from the north to join forces with him in order to restore the unified kingdom (2 Chronicles 30:1, 6-11, 18, 25; 31:1, 5-6).¹⁷ To a certain extent he succeeded in re-establishing some of the grandeur of King Solomon's time (2 Chronicles 30:26). He earned the respect of his neighbors (2 Chronicles 32:23) and became one of the leading forces in the rebellion against Assyria. His political alliance with the Egyptian Cushite dynasty demonstrated a daring challenge to Assyrian hegemony in the region and also reflected his direct ties with Egypt.¹⁸

Isaiah, prophet and confidante of Hezekiah, often alludes to Egyptian cultural ideology in his oracles.¹⁹ He even refers to Egypt as "land of the beetle with





wings" (Isaiah 18:1).²⁰ Much material confirms mutual contacts between the people of Judah and Egypt.²¹

Against this backdrop, I believe that Hezekiah consciously chose the Egyptian design, laden with symbolic content, to promote his own lofty ambitions. He borrowed the beetle icon from his southwestern neighbor and ally to convey the concept of permanence. The ball the beetle pushes represents the rejuvenation of the kingdom; the set of wings signifies the unification of the north and south of the Land of Israel under a scion of the House of David, just as they characterized the union of Upper and Lower Egypt under the pharaoh.²² The seal, then, expressed the desire for the political renaissance of a united Israel. It harmonized perfectly with Hezekiah's fervent hopes for an eternally united kingdom.

In this way, the scarab was stripped of its Egyptian religious iconography and instead donned the mantle of a national banner. The double-winged beetle symbol unfurled the flag of Judah's official policy and as such it was adopted as a kind of

coat of arms. One scholar has recently characterized the two-winged scarab motif in Judah as "a royal emblem."²³

The idea is reinforced when the seal is read exactly as written. Even though Cross correctly deciphered the ancient Hebrew words, he did not present them in the order they appear on the seal. A perusal of Nahman Avigad's *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* shows that the seal cutters engraved inscriptions in one of three ways: either from top to bottom, usually with dividers between the words, clockwise around the icon or on both sides of the icon. This seal does not follow any of these patterns. Is it flawed or deliberate? Stylistically, it combines two patterns, reading from top to bottom beginning with a single word on the top and continuing on the lower half with a phrase written in semicircle rather than straight across. The single word, *yhdh*, Judah, is separated from the

rest of the inscription by the body of the beetle and is embraced by its two wings. Conceptually it has a unique message. The name of the country is prominently placed, signaling its renewed status. The bottom phrase identifies the owner, "belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king." The last word affirms Hezekiah as ruler. Accordingly, the inscription should be read as follows:

Judah/Belonging to Hezekiah, son of Ahaz. King!

Not only does the bottom part provide patronymic details, but it also proclaims regency. Hezekiah, whose father was a vassal of Assyria, proudly features the name of his strengthened country after he had vanquished the Philistines (2 Kings 18:8) and emphasizes his elevated position as an independent king following the rebellion against Sennacherib, king of Assyria (2 Kings 18:7).

While we are not accustomed to the novel ending "king" on seal impressions, it was not unusual in Egypt. A common titular address of an Egyptian ruler was

pr³ 'nh wd³ snb nb, or, Pharaoh, life, prosperity, health, Lord!²⁴

This meant: Pharaoh, may he live and prosper and enjoy good health, the king!

To return to the question of why a Judahite king would employ Egyptian imagery, we saw that the insignia had

THE FOUR-WINGED SCARAB on this bowl, owned by London-based antiquities collector Shlomo Moussaieff, identifies it as coming from Phoenicia, not Egypt, according to Frank Cross in an earlier BAR article. Phoenicia is the home of the four-winged beetle; almost no two-winged scarabs appear there. And of 61 storage jar handles found in Jerusalem in Hezekiah's era stamped *l'melekh*, "belonging to the king," only one shows a four-winged scarab. To Lubetski this suggests that Hezekiah was far more influenced by Egyptian culture than by Phoenician. Lubetski believes that Hezekiah used Egyptian imagery because he wished to align himself with Egypt in the face of the Assyrian threat from the north. Lubetski further suggests that Hezekiah was drawn to Egyptian imagery because of his political aspirations: Just as the Upper and Lower kingdoms of Egypt were united under one pharaoh, so Hezekiah hoped one day to reunite his southern kingdom of Judah with the northern kingdom of Israel, which had been conquered by Assyria in 721 B.C.E.

political significance. But, besides its Egyptian-inspired symbolism, did it incorporate any Judaic values? Did the seal cutter choose a pattern for the beetle's wings at random or did he deliberately select a particular motif? The beetle's wings could have been portrayed in one of three ways: a horizontal position, tipped down or tipped up. The artist chose neither the hieroglyphic ideogram of the beetle with wings in a horizontal form²⁵ nor the image of the double-winged solar disk with down-turned wingtips²⁶ that he might have seen on the seal of Pharaoh Taharqa, the political contemporary of Hezekiah.²⁷ These two depictions are consonant with the Egyptian view of a divine pharaoh who hovers over the Two Lands. The Egyptian artist, therefore, presents a royal god incarnate in the ruler, sheltering, with his wings, his subjects below him. In contrast, Hezekiah's royal seal cutter chose the third model, a beetle whose double wings are upswep, as in the image of the anthropomorphic sun god Khopri.²⁸ He picked a design that suited his king's religious beliefs: The Judahite king did not view himself as a deity but rather as a

human who gazed aloft to the God in heaven for deliverance.²⁹

Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh. A seal inscribed "[belonging] to Manasseh son of the king" may be Manasseh's seal before he ascended to the throne.³⁰ The seal, like Hezekiah's, also bears a depiction of a two-winged beetle with a ball between its forelegs.³¹ In this way, the message of the icon and its symbolism was passed on to an additional generation.

Manasseh's name itself figures in the case I am building. Hezekiah did not choose a name for his son containing a Judaic theophoric element, like YW (*yo-*) or YH (*-yah*) or YHW (*-yahu*), all signifying the personal name of the Israelite God YHWH, as was so common among the kings of Israel and Judah (examples include Yotham [often spelled Jotham] and even Hezekiah itself [Hizqiyahu and Hizqiyah in Hebrew]). Instead he chose a name that originated on Egyptian soil. Manasseh was the name Joseph gave to his own firstborn—from his "Egyptian wife, daughter of the priest of 'On" (Genesis 41:50-51), hence a grandson to an Egyptian *ḥr*, or priest. Personal names are rarely repeated in the Hebrew Bible, but the king who renewed his interest in Judah's southwestern neighbor chose to revive a name for his only son and heir to the throne that evoked an association with Egypt. Small wonder that the royal insignia of father and son carry an Egyptian beetle emblem rooted in that country's tradition. Even the grandson of King Hezekiah carries an Egyptian name, *ʾAmōn*, which is reminiscent of the Egyptian deity *ʾImn*. For 86 years, then, Judean kings of three generations were influenced by Egypt.

It is worth noting that a number of other Hebrew seals of Hezekiah's era display Egyptian motifs that would hardly have come from Phoenicia. For example, one seal displays a winged sphinx, wearing a kilt and double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. In front of the sphinx is a large ankh.³² Another seal displays a very Egyptian-looking winged sun-disk.³³ Another seal with a Hebrew inscription includes the bust of the Egyptian lion-headed goddess Sekhmet.³⁴ And of course the two-winged beetle appears several times.³⁵



LIONS, SPHINXES AND SCARABS,
OH MY! The surviving half of a seal of
Pharaoh Taharqa, Hezekiah's ally, shows at
top a portion of a winged sun-disk, a *uraeus*
(snake) and, below, the cobra goddess
Wadjet—all symbols of Egyptian royalty. Note
the downward-pointing wing to the right of
the sun-disk, a detail not followed by
Hezekiah on his own seal. Also shown here
are several of the dozens of seals from Judah
with Hebrew inscriptions and Egyptian
motifs: Hezekiah's son Manasseh, named
after the son born to the Biblical Joseph by
his Egyptian wife, carried on his father's
tradition by having a scarab on his seal (top,
right); some scholars, however, have ques-
tioned this seal's authenticity. A seal belonging
to Hanna (middle, left) bears an ankh, the
Egyptian symbol of life, in front of a sphinx
wearing the crown of Egypt, and the seal of
Shebnayahu, servant of King Uzziah of
Judah, Hezekiah's grandfather, displays two
winged sun-disks (middle, right). At bottom,
a seal (left) and its impression (right) feature
the Egyptian lion goddess, Sekhmet, a rare
case where we have the seal itself and not
only its impression.

Egyptian motifs later would fall out of
favor in Judah; Hezekiah's great-grandson
Josiah aligned himself with Babylonia, the
new rising power to the north, and died in
battle trying to block the Egyptian army.

Cross implies that the two-winged
beetle on Hezekiah's seal reflects a reli-
gious view: "There appears to have been
a tendency to solarize Yahweh in Judah
in the eighth century [B.C.E.] and later,"
he tells us. But this would surely not be
true of Hezekiah. His allegiance solely
to the God of Israel was unquestioned:
"He trusted only in the Lord God of
Israel. There was none like him among
all the kings of Judah after him, nor
among those before him" (2 Kings 18:5).
It was Hezekiah who instituted a reli-
gious reform that centralized worship in
Jerusalem, abolishing outlying shrines
and smashing the sacred *masseboth*
(standing stones) (2 Kings 18:4). It is
unthinkable that Hezekiah had Egyptian
theology in mind when he commissioned
this seal.

To interpret Hezekiah's seal Cross
draws on the late fifth- or fourth-century
B.C.E. prophet Malachi to support his
view that the two-winged beetle, like the
winged sun-disk, imparts a religious sig-
nificance. For Cross, the winged sun-disk
is "a symbol of the deity bringing salva-
tion," like the winged scarab pushing a



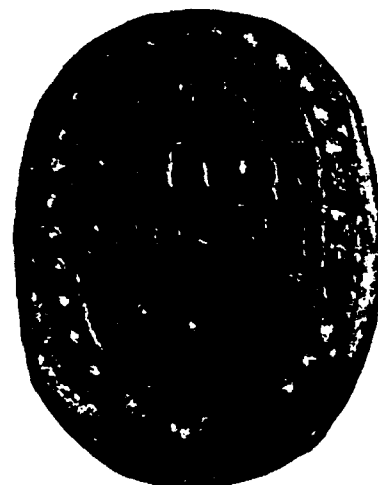
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22

ball of dung, which in his view signifies the ever-renewing movement of the sun. Cross invokes the words of Malachi:

"For you who reverence my Name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings" (Malachi 3:20 in the Hebrew Bible).³⁶

Reliance on Malachi, in my view, is inept, to say the least. In the first place, the wings on Hezekiah's seal are attached to a scarab, not to a sun-disk. Malachi's poetic oracle mentions only the sun in conjunction with wings, not with a beetle. Moreover, a prophet of the fifth-fourth century B.C.E. is an implausible source from which to decode eighth-seventh century B.C.E. iconography. If the analogy suggested by the prophet had been drawn from a source outside ancient Israel, Malachi would have chosen motifs from art and religion of the dominant culture of the time: Persia. Indeed, we do have examples of the Persian deity Ahura Mazda rising from a winged sun-disk.³⁷ Such decorations were widespread during the reign of the Persian kings and even reached Thebes, the cradle of sun worship.³⁸ Surely Malachi's metaphor has no connection to the winged beetle on Hezekiah's seal.

Cross is correct that beetle iconography disappears from Judah relatively early.³⁹ His reasons seem to me inaccurate, however. Cross reasons that the religious reforms of the Judahite king Josiah in the late seventh century B.C.E. were more rigorous and uncompromising in their aniconic (without images) thrust than those of Hezekiah. Indeed, the break with the past during Josiah's reign was uncompromising, but figurative art on seals was not necessarily directly affected by his religious reforms. As one prominent expert on ancient seals has remarked, "It seems impossible to understand the growing tendency of aniconism displayed by late Judean private seals as the result of a direct implementation of the biblical veto on cultic images."⁴⁰ Instead, the waning of the beetle as a royal emblem as well as the decline in use of Egyptian pictorial designs on official (and private) seals was intentional—the result of a shift in Judahite foreign policy. Josiah had a completely different political orientation than Hezekiah. Instead of aligning himself with Egypt, Josiah saw the rising Babylonian empire as the dominating force of the future.⁴¹ He wisely sought to distance himself and his country from Egypt. His foresight was justified, as later events showed. Unfortunately, Josiah was killed in a battle at Megiddo that sought to block the Egyptian army from marching to northern Syria. Once Josiah fell, the dream of a reborn Solomonic kingdom, nurtured by his great-grandfather Hezekiah, was laid to rest. In these circumstances, the Egyptian symbol of a

two-winged beetle was not only unappealing; it was also quite politically incorrect. ■

This article is dedicated to the memory of Cyrus H. Gordon, my teacher, with whom I discussed this bulla. "A [deceased] scholar, in whose name a tradition is reported in this world, his lips move gently in the grave" (Babylonian Talmud, Yebamoth 97a).

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¹Enrico Acquaro, "Scarabs and Amulets" in Sabatino Moscati, ed., *The Phoenicians* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), pp. 394–403. See also Moscati, "Arts and Crafts," *Phoenicians*, pp. 244–247. Without minimizing local influences, the striding sphinx, the woman at the window and the Nimrud bowls show a "preponderance of Egyptian or Egyptianizing motifs." See John E. Curtis and Julian E. Reade, eds., *Art and Empire* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), p. 155. See also Richard D. Barnett, "Layard's Nimrud Bronzes and Their Inscriptions," *Erztz Israel* 8, pp. 1–6. Further, Samarian ivories decorating the Ivory Palace of Ahab (1 Kings 22:39) and his Sidonian Queen Jezebel are closer in spirit to the Egyptian representations that inspired them than other ivories brought from neighboring localities. See Maria Luisa Uberti, "Ivory and Bone Carving," in Moscati, *The Phoenicians*, p. 412.

²Skilled artisans are among the categories of people cited by Homer's *Odyssey* (chapter 17, pp. 382–386), as welcomed the world over. For a detailed discussion, see Cyrus H. Gordon, "Ugaritic Guilds and Homeric *Demiourgoi*," in Saul S. Weinberg, ed., *The Aegean and Near East: Studies Presented to Harry Goldman* (Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1956), pp. 136–143. The mobility of the artisan guilds is also discussed in Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 6, 8.

³John H. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), p. 170, notes 55–59.

⁴This is my translation. Raphael Giveon, *Footsteps of Pharaoh in Canaan* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1984), p. 112 [Hebrew]. For the Phoenician aspect, see Cyrus H. Gordon, "The World of the Phoenicians," *Natural History* 75 (1966), pp. 14–23.

⁵See Ruth Hestrin and Michal Davagi-Mendels, *Seals from First Temple Period: Hebrew, Ammonite, Moabite, Phoenician and Aramaic* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1978), p. 53 [Hebrew].

⁶"We find two-winged beetles in Phoenicia as well, but this is a later development.

⁷The proximity of production dates led Cross, in his BAR article, to compare the icon on the Hezekiah bulla with the four-winged beetle on a Phoenician bowl, also from the Moussaieff collection. Raphael Giveon finds that the four-winged motif originated in the Mitanni Kingdom and was later absorbed into Phoenician art. (Giveon, *Footsteps of Pharaoh*, pp. 140–4 [Hebrew]). Nahman Avigad assumed that the Hebrew artisans adopted the four-winged scarab from the Phoenicians who had used Egyptianizing themes. He admits, however, that the "two-winged scarab and the two-winged uraeus of Egypt [my emphasis] were often depicted as four-winged on Hebrew seals." Nahman Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1997), p. 45.

⁸Both two-winged and four-winged flying beetles with or without a solar disk were found in Jerusalem on jar handles during the period of Hezekiah. Almost

all—60 out of 61—of these *linelekh* ("belonging to the king") seals were of the two-winged variety. Very few of the four-winged type were discovered. A.D. Tushingham, an expert in *linelekh* seals, maintains that the latter was the royal symbol of the Northern Israelite kingdom. Although rarely found on *linelekh* jars, the four-winged beetle was absorbed as a symbol by Judah, which already had the two-winged scarab as its royal symbol, because of King Hezekiah's insistence that he was the legitimate heir to the defunct Northern Kingdom. This iconography was not original, but derived from Phoenicia, with which the Israelite dynasties had close ties. See A. D. Tushingham, "New Evidence Bearing on the Two Winged *Linelekh* Stamp," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 287 (1992), pp. 61–64.

⁹The two-winged icon, either alone or with the solar disk, emerged from a version of the old Egyptian solar disk motif that was prevalent in the entire Levant during the monarchical era. The origin of the two-winged variety of *linelekh* cannot be determined because the prototypes were crude representations with clumsy inscriptions.

¹⁰Raymond Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1986), p. 41. For the story of the winged sun-disk see Alfred Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* (London: H. Greuel, 1897), pp. 69–80. See also Herbert W. Fairman, "The Myth of Horus at Edfu," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 21 (1935), pp. 26–36. See Alan H. Gardiner, "Horus the Behdetite," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 30 (1944), pp. 23–40 and Adolph Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1922), 1:179, no. 22.

¹¹Kurt Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter* (Leipzig: Neudruck, 1930; Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1966) pp. 155ff. See also Gardiner, "Horus," pp. 46–52.

¹²Gardiner and T. Eric Peet, *The Inscriptions of Sinai* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1952), Plate VI, no. 10.

¹³Gardiner, "Horus," p. 49.

¹⁴"Winged Sun-disk," in Wiedemann, p. 75, fig. 14. See also Richard H. Wilkinson, "The Sphinx Stela of Thutmose IV in Giza," in his *Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), pp. 152–153, illus. 106. Usually, the sun god has only one uraeus for his protection. See also Gardiner, "Horus," p. 48, n.2, p. 50, fig. 3.

¹⁵Gardiner, "Horus," p. 53. See also Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch*, 1:178 no. 11 and 10:179 no. 22.

¹⁶The quote is found in Gardiner, "Horus," p. 53.

¹⁷Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p. 584. Also, E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (New York: Dover, 1967), cix–cx, p. 246 n.2. For an explanation of *hpr* the verb, *hpr* the dung beetle, and *Hpr* the divine, see Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary*, pp. 188–189; See also Daphne Ben-Tor, *The Scarab as a Mirror of Ancient Egyptian Culture* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1989), p. 9 [Hebrew]. For the idea of the sun god appearing in more than one aspect in Egyptian religion, see Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 142–145. The various names of the sun god are listed in George Hart, *Egyptian Myths* (Austin: Univ. of Texas, 1990), p. 45.

¹⁸Giveon explains the relationship between the sun god and the dung beetle in *Egyptian Scarabs From Western Asia From the Collections of the British Museum* (Freiburg: University Press, 1985), p. 9.

¹⁹Hezekiah is described as a king with impeccable behavior by the Chronicler. For a discussion of the aim of the Chronicler, see David N. Freedman, "The Chronicler's Purpose," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23 (1961), pp. 436–442 and Isaac Kalimi, *The Book of Chronicles: Historical Writing and Literary Devices* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2000), p. 31 [Hebrew]. For an explanation of the diverging accounts of Kings and Chronicles see M. Breuer, "Torat ha-Tudor shel ba'al Shua'at Aryeh," *Megadim* 2 (1986), pp. 9–22 [Hebrew].

²⁰2 Kings 18:21, 19:9; Isaiah 36:6, 37:9, 17–22. The weakness of the Egyptian ally, however, is demonstrated by his failure to send help to Hezekiah, who was under siege in his capital. See Douglas J. Brenner and Emily

Teeter, *Egypt and the Egyptians* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), p. 50. Compare Antony Spalinger, "The Concept of Monarchy During the Saite Epoch—An Essay of Synthesis," *Orientalia* 47 (1978), p. 24. See also Hayyim Angel, "Differing Portrayals of Hezekiah's Righteousness: Narratives and Prophecies," *Nachalath: Yeshiva Univ. Journal for the Study of Bible* (1999), pp. 1-13. For Egyptian ties, see pp. 5 and 8.

¹⁹Judeans during the time of Hezekiah were aware of Egyptian culture and symbols. See Sarah Israelit-Groll, "The Egyptian Background to Isaiah 19:18," in Meir Lubetski et al., eds., *Boundaries of the Ancient Near Eastern World: A Tribute to Cyrus H. Gordon* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 300-303; Meir Lubetski and Claire Gortleib, "Isaiah 18: The Egyptian Nexus," *Ancient Israelite Religion*, pp. 364-384; Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Late Egyptian Chronology and the Hebrew Monarchy," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 5 (1973), pp. 225-233; Currid, *Ancient Egypt*, pp. 229-246; Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992), p. 351.

²⁰This is my translation, published in Lubetski et al., *Boundaries*. See also Lubetski, "Isaiah 18:1: Egyptian Beelzebub," in *Jewish Studies in a New Europe: Proceedings of the Fifth Congress of Jewish Studies in Copenhagen 1994 under the Auspices of the European Association for Jewish Studies* (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel Publishers and the Royal Library, 1998), pp. 512-520.

²¹Lubetski, *Jewish Studies*, pp. 518-520.

²²A successful struggle for the reunification of Upper and Lower Egypt under one monarch takes place toward the end of the seventh century B.C.E. See the relevant Egyptian sources in James H. Breasted, ed., *Ancient Records of Egypt IV* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1906), pp. 452-454. Neterkara Shabako, the Nubian pharaoh of the XXVth dynasty who unified Upper and Lower Egypt, commemorated his achievements on a scarab; see J. Veyrotes, "Plaidoyer pour l'authenticité de scarabee historique de Shabako," *Biblica* 37.4 (1956), pp. 457-476. Possibly Hezekiah emulated Shabako by symbolizing his attempted unification of Israel and Judah with a scarab seal.

²³Robert Deutsch, *Messages From the Past* (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publications, 1999), p. 51. It is important to mention the cubic bronze weight in the British Museum WA119433 on which a two-winged scarab is portrayed and is thought to be the royal symbol of the Kings of Judah. Curtis and Reade, *Ancient Empire*, p. 195. Yigal Yadin already suggested in 1965 that the symbol of the four-winged beetle served as the royal insignia of the Judean monarchy: "A Note on the Nimrud Bronze Bowls," *Eretz-Israel* 8:6 and n. 1 and 2. He passed away before the information about the two-winged beetles appeared.

²⁴Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, p. 75, n. 10. Further evidence of this style, where an inscription surrounds an icon and the phrase ends with a royal title, can be found as follows: A scarab from the period of the New Kingdom found in Tell el Ajul reads *hpr-nr nfr nfr bk*, or prenomen (the name borne by the king before his ascension to the throne) of Tuthmosis III, "beautiful god, ruler," (i.e., the king). See Giveon, *Egyptian Scarabs from Western Asia*, p. 100, no. 116 L. 976. Similarly, a scarab found in Gezer in the New Kingdom period has the following inscription: *mn-hpr-nr mr Thut nb*, prenomen of Tuthmosis IV "beloved of the god Thot, Lord." Giveon, *Egyptian Scarabs*, p. 124, no. 47, 104909. See also bulla 84527 and 84884 of Shabako, king of the XXVth dynasty, c. 716-695 B.C.E., in Giveon, *Egyptian Scarabs*, p. 166. Likewise, inscriptions on Amun-Re scarabs end with the word, *nb*. Lord; Giveon, *Egyptian Scarabs*, p. 44, no. 65 L. 612; p. 52, no. 90 L. 672 and many more.

²⁵Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch*, p. 179, no. 22.

²⁶Gardiner, "Horus," pp. 23-60, plate VI, nos. 2.3-4.

²⁷See Max E.L. Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains*, vol. 2 (London: Collins, 1966), p. 599, fig. 583. For additional scarab objects belonging to the Egyptian

Saite period see pp. 437-41, 472, and p. 645 n. 96.

²⁸See Wiedemann, *Religion*, p. 31.

²⁹Did the vision of the cherubim's wings that spread upward in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:25, 2 Kings 6:27) play a role in the design of the wings? Note the view of the rabbis in the Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkah* 5b. For illustrations of cherub wings from the ninth century B.C.E. see Elie Borowski, "Cherubim: God's Throne?" *BAR*, July/August 1995, pp. 36-41.

³⁰Some have suggested that the seal is a forgery. As Avigad noted, the problem is that Manasseh ascended the throne when he was just 12 years old. Would he have had a seal before then? He may have had property of his own despite his young age or the seal could have been used by the custodian of his property. See Avigad, "The Contribution of Hebrew Seals to the Understanding of Israelite Reli-

gion and Society," in Patrick D. Miller et al., eds., *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

³¹Miller, *Ancient Israelite Religion*, pp. 200 and 202-203.

³²Avigad, *Corpus*, no. 37.

³³Avigad, *Corpus*, no. 3.

³⁴See Robert Deutsch and Michael Heltzer, *New Epigraphic Evidence from the Biblical Period* (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publication, 1995), p. 59, (no. 63 [8]).

³⁵Deutsch and Heltzer, *New Epigraphic Evidence*, p. 61 (no. 64 [9]) and p. 63 [11].

³⁶The translation is quoted from the article in *BAR*. Cross cites the verse as 4:2, which is based on the

continues on page 59

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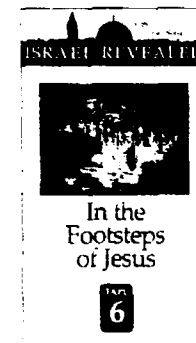
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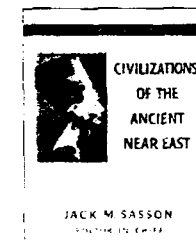


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The Babylonian

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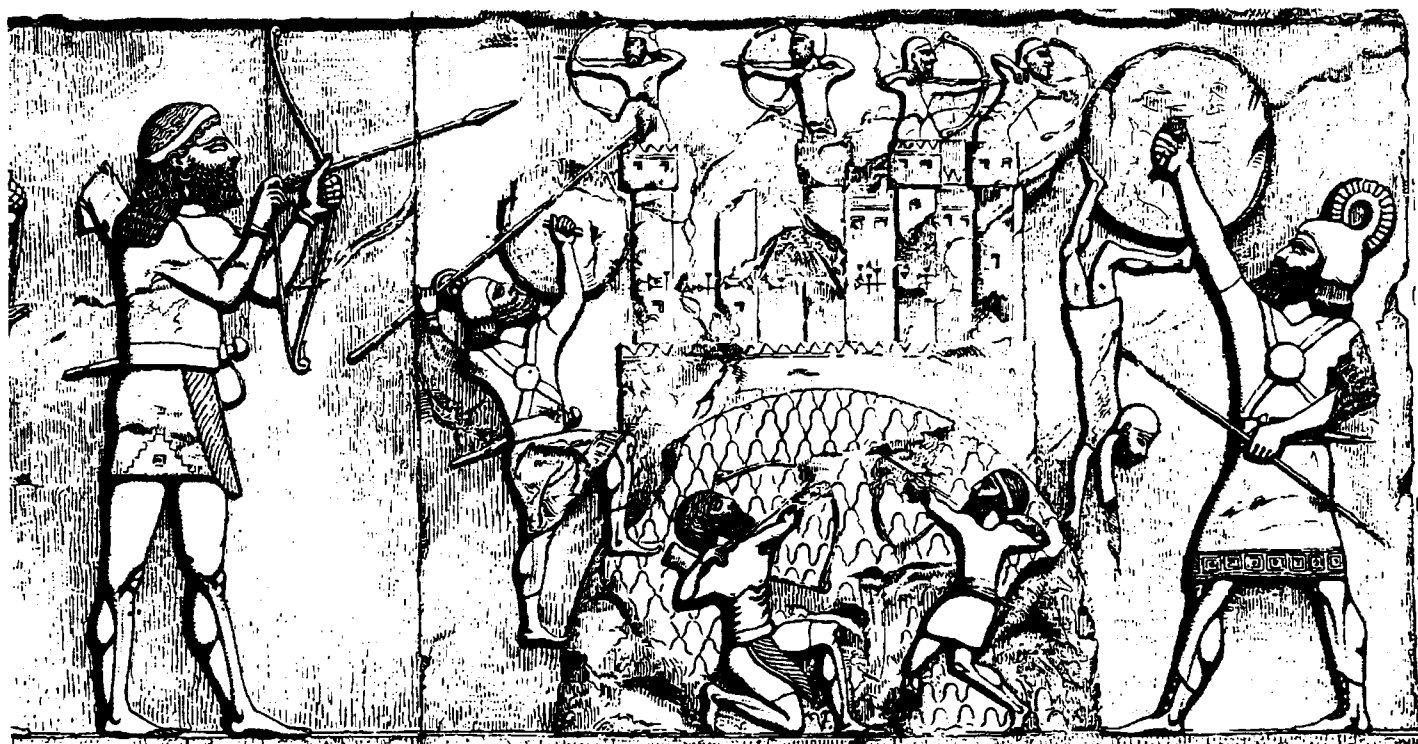
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EPHRAIM STERN

In 721 B.C.E., the Assyrians brought an end to the northern kingdom of Israel. A little more than a century later, the Assyrians themselves suffered defeat at the hands of the Babylonians, who became the world's new superpower. The Babylonians were no less bent on mayhem and destruction than the Assyrians had been: In 586 B.C.E., they burnt Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple, bringing an end to the southern kingdom of Judah and 400 years of Davidic rule.

As destroyers, the Assyrians and Babylonians had much in common. But the periods that followed their conquests could not be less alike.



ASSYRIAN ARCHERS mount an attack on Ekron, one of the cities in the Philistine Pentapolis, in this drawing of a wall relief from the palace of Sargon II, at Khorsabad (ancient Dur-Sharrukin). Sargon II, who ruled Assyria from 721 to 705 B.C.E., captured Ekron in 712 B.C.E., a decade after his predecessor, Shalmaneser V, conquered the city of Samaria—an event that marked the end of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Known for the brutality of their military campaigns, the Assyrians blazed a path of destruction through much of Palestine in the eighth century B.C.E. Many of the cities they conquered, however, the Assyrians later rebuilt. They also established an administrative presence in Palestine that is clearly reflected in the archaeological record.

By contrast, archaeologists have found almost no evidence of a Babylonian occupation of Palestine. Following their own conquest of the region in the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C.E., the Babylonians left much of Palestine in ruins and made little effort either to rebuild or to oversee the cities they had destroyed.

While the Assyrians left a clear imprint of their presence in Palestine, there is a strange gap after the Babylonian destruction. Call it an archaeological gap, if you wish.

The savage Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem is well documented both in the Bible (in the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations) and in the archaeological record. When Nebuchadnezzar first placed the city under siege in 597 B.C.E., the city quickly capitulated, thereby avoiding a general destruction. But in response to a revolt by Judah's King Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar dispatched an army that, after an 18-month siege, captured and destroyed the city in 586 B.C.E. (see box, p. 48). The evidence of this destruction is widely confirmed in Jerusalem excavations.*

On his first swing through Judah, Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed much of Philistia—Ekron, Tel Batash, Tell Jemmeh,

Ruqeish and Tel Sera'. Particularly devastated was Ashkelon, which the Babylonians sacked in 604 B.C.E.**

Similar evidence of Babylonian destruction can be found throughout the Beer-sheba Valley, in the Arava (the valley south of the Dead Sea) and in the Jordan River valley. From south to north, we can trace the effects of Babylonian might—at Tell el-Kheleifeh on the coast of the Red Sea, at Ein Gedi on the shore of the Dead Sea, and further north at Dan, the source of the Jordan River. The same is true in excavations at major northern sites—Hazor; Megiddo, overlooking the Jezreel Valley; and Dor, on the Mediterranean coast—and in central Judah, where, in addition to Jerusalem, we may look at Ramat Rahel and Lachish, among other sites.

But the strange thing is that above the remains left by these destructions, we find no evidence of occupation until the Persian period, which began in about 538 B.C.E. For roughly half a century—from 604 B.C.E. to 538 B.C.E.—there is a complete gap in evidence suggesting

*See Hershel Shanks, "Excavating in the Shadow of the Temple Mount," *BAR*, November/December 1986; Benjamin Mazar, "Excavations Near Temple Mount Reveal Splendors of Herodian Jerusalem," *BAR*, July/August 1980; Suzanne F. Singer, "Found in Jerusalem: Remains of the Babylonian Siege," *BAR*, March 1976; Nitza Rosovsky, "A Thousand Years of History in Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter," *BAR*, May/June 1992.

**See Lawrence E. Stager, "The Fury of Babylon," *BAR*, January/February 1996.

occupation. In all that time, not a single town destroyed by the Babylonians was resettled.¹ This is true even of the old Assyrian fortresses along the Way of the Sea (the Via Maris); they were reoccupied only in the Persian period, as shown by the recently excavated fort at Rishon le-Zion.²

The only indications of a Babylonian presence in Palestine are the massive destruction levels the Babylonians left behind. These are indeed impressive, but there is *nothing* above them that can be attributed to the Babylonian period.

The Babylonian destruction of the major harbor towns along the Palestinian coast also ended the previously intensive import of Greek ceramics into the country. As scholar Saul Weinberg has lamented, "We are left with a gap of almost a century for which we have so little imported Greek pottery that it is of no help just when it is most needed."³

The Babylonian period is characterized by other notable absences as well. From the period between 604 and 538 B.C.E., for example, not a single document connected with the imperial Babylonian administration of Palestine has been found. The Babylonian remains consist only of a few dozen Neo-Babylonian seals and seal impressions, some of which are imports and some of which are locally manufactured imitations. But even a superficial examination of the stratigraphic contexts of these objects shows that some date to the late seventh and very early sixth centuries B.C.E. (essentially before the Babylonian destruction), while the majority date to the Persian period. Very few can be safely attributed to the Babylonian period itself.⁴

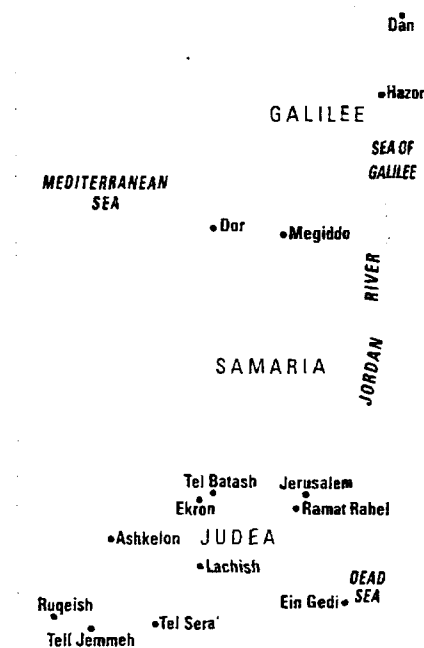
Archaeologists have recovered three Babylonian cuneiform tablets in Palestine. Two of these tablets—one from Mikhmoret on the Sharon coast and the other from Buseirah in Edom—might have provided evidence for the renewal of international trade along two major highways, but they are dated to the Persian period rather than the Babylonian period.⁵ Only the third tablet, a dedicatory inscription from Tell

en-Nasbeh in Benjamin, may perhaps belong to the Babylonian period, but even it comes from a doubtful context. Other evidence of international trade is entirely lacking.

True, a huge inscribed Babylonian rock relief has recently been traced above the Edomite city of Sela, which lies east of the Jordan on the Kings' Highway (the ancient route leading from Mesopotamia to Arabia, Palestine and Egypt). But the text is a memorial inscription attributed to the last Babylonian monarch, Nabunaid. Inscribed during one of his campaigns in this area, it has nothing to do with the Babylonian administration of the country.⁶

Now let us compare this with the situation after the Assyrian conquest. The Assyrian period lasted 75 years—from about 715 B.C.E., when Samaria was occupied in the north, to 640 B.C.E., when the Assyrians retreated from their estates in Palestine. This is only slightly longer than the Babylonian period, which lasted about 65 years.

After their conquest, the Assyrians established several provinces in Palestine. Four stone memorial stelae erected by Assyrian kings have been recovered at Samaria, Ashdod (see photo, below), Ben-Shemen and Kakun,⁷ and Assyrian administrative tablets in cuneiform have



SIGNS OF BABYLONIAN DESTRUCTION have been found at sites ranging from the extreme north to the far south of Palestine (see map, above). On top of these remains, however, excavations have revealed very little that would indicate an ongoing Babylonian presence in the region.

The Assyrians, on the other hand, left much evidence pointing to their occupation of Palestine. The fragment shown here, for example, is from an Assyrian memorial

stela. Inscribed in wedge-shaped cuneiform script, the fragment was recovered from the Philistine city of Ashdod, which the Assyrian king Sargon II conquered in 711 B.C.E.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ISRAELI ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

been found at Sepphoris, Tell Keisan, Samaria, Gezer and Hadid. In addition, archaeologists can study the Lamashtu tablet* that was discovered in the vicinity of Lachish.⁸ Excavations have uncovered Assyrian structures at Ayeleth ha-Shahar, Gezer, Tell Jemmeh, Tel Sera', Tel Haror and elsewhere, and we have already mentioned the line of fortresses that the Assyrians established along the Via Maris. Palestine also witnessed the construction of Assyrian-style gates and fortifications, even as the local four-room house was replaced by the Mesopotamian open-court house (see photo and plan, opposite).⁹ The

*In Mesopotamian mythology, Lamashtu was a female demon who attacked newborn children and caused pregnant women to miscarry. Lamashtu amulets and plaques contained incantations to ward off the demon's evil deeds.

Assyrians also influenced the region's burial customs, as demonstrated by the clay coffins found at sites in all the territories of northern Israel under direct Assyrian control. These sites include Dor, Megiddo, Tell el-Qitaf, Dothan, Samaria, Tell el-Far'ah (north) and, recently, Jezreel.¹⁰

Assyrian palace ware (see photos, p. 51) and its local imitations are common features of excavations in northern Israel, as are Assyrian reliefs, stone vessels,¹¹ metal artifacts and imported seals, some of them inscribed with official titles. Moreover, glyptic art in Palestine, which had previously been based on Phoenician-Israelite archetypes, appears to have been revolutionized by Assyrian glyptic styles.¹²

In short, the archaeological record points to an enormous difference

The Yoke of Nebuchadnezzar

During the reign of Judah's King Jehoiakim (609–598 B.C.E.), Jerusalem found itself in the middle of a power struggle. Egypt, whose pharaoh had raised Jehoiakim to Judah's throne, was seeking to maintain its foothold in Palestine, but in the east the region's new superpower, Babylon, was rapidly building strength. When it appeared that Babylonian forces had gained the upper hand in Palestine, Jehoiakim abandoned his policy of appeasement toward Egypt and, in 604 B.C.E., became the vassal of Babylon's new king, Nebuchadnezzar.

It wasn't long, however, before Jehoiakim sensed the balance of power shifting back to Egypt. Reverting to his earlier, pro-Egyptian stance, he defied Babylon by withholding tribute. This provoked Nebuchadnezzar, who marched on Jerusalem in the winter of 598/597 B.C.E. Since Jehoiakim died before the Babylonians reached the city, it was his 18-year-old son, Jehoiachin, who bore the brunt of Nebuchadnezzar's anger. The Second Book of Kings relates what happened next:

Nebuchadnezzar arrived while his troops were besieging [Jerusalem], and King Jehoiachin of Judah, along with his mother, his courtiers, his officers and his eunuchs, surrendered to the king of Babylon. The king of Babylon, now in the eighth year of his reign, made him a prisoner, and, as the Lord had foretold, he carried off all the treasures of the house of the Lord and of the palace and broke up all the vessels of gold which King Solomon of Israel had made for the temple of the Lord ... He deported Jehoiachin to Babylon; he also took into exile the king's mother and his wives, his eunuchs, and the

foremost men of the land. He took also all the people of substance, seven thousand in number, and a thousand craftsmen and smiths, all of them able-bodied men and skilled armourers. He made Mattaniah, uncle of Jehoiachin, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.

2 Kings 24:11–13, 15–17

Although he owed his position to Nebuchadnezzar, Judah's new king, Zedekiah, seems to have begun conspiring against Babylon almost from the moment he ascended to the throne. Encouraged by Egypt, he openly rebelled in 589 B.C.E.—an act that once more brought Nebuchadnezzar's troops to Jerusalem. This second Babylonian siege ended in reprisals far more savage than those that followed Jehoiachin's surrender. After the Babylonians breached Jerusalem's walls in 586 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar captured Zedekiah and, before putting out his eyes, forced the Judahite king to witness the execution of his sons. The Babylonian leader then ordered his troops to raze the city and its temple. Now captives, the exiled inhabitants of Jerusalem could only bemoan the former beauty and importance of their ruined city—a pathos eloquently expressed in the Book of Lamentations:

How deserted lies the city, once thronging with people! Once great among nations, now become a widow; once queen among provinces, now put to forced labor ... The approaches to Zion mourn, for no pilgrims attend her sacred feasts; all her gates are desolate. Her priests groan, her maidens are made to suffer. How bitter is her fate!

Lamentations 1:1–4

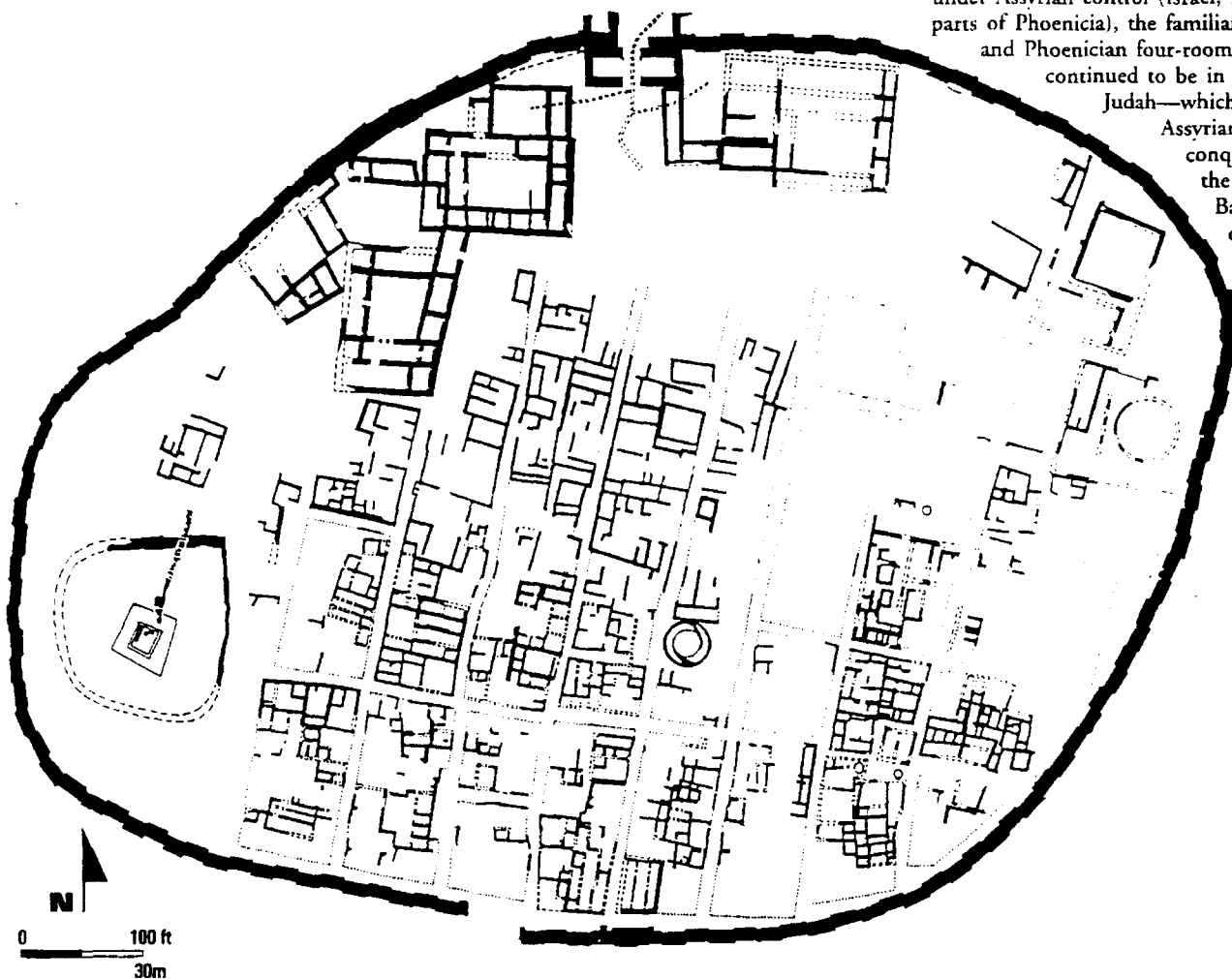


ASSYRIAN INFLUENCE on the culture of Palestine is shown by the remains of buildings with an open-court design (photo at left). As the plan below indicates, open-court buildings had a large central courtyard (highlighted in two of the buildings on the plan), around which several smaller rooms were arranged. This design was common in Mesopotamia long before the Assyrians conquered Israel, but it does not appear in Palestine until the late eighth century B.C.E., when the Assyrians started rebuilding many of the towns they had earlier destroyed. As new construction went forward, the open-court design replaced the four-room building plan that had previously been favored in Israel and Phoenicia.

The remains shown in the photograph are from Hazor, about 10 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, while the drawing below is of Megiddo. After the Assyrians rebuilt Megiddo, they made it the capital of an imperial province comprising Galilee and the Jezreel Valley. Although the open-court structure became common in areas directly under Assyrian control (Israel, Philistia and parts of Phoenicia), the familiar Israelite

and Phoenician four-room design continued to be in use in Judah—which the

Assyrians did not conquer—up to the time of the Babylonian conquest.



COURTESY OF ZEV HENZUG

0 100 ft
30m

between the period following the Babylonian conquest and the period following the Assyrian conquest. But how can we account for this difference? Clearly it is not a result of chance. On the contrary, the difference is attributable to a difference in the policies of the two empires. While the Assyrians at first adopted a policy of destruction and deportation, this policy was soon almost entirely reversed. The Assyrians rebuilt almost every destroyed town, sending in

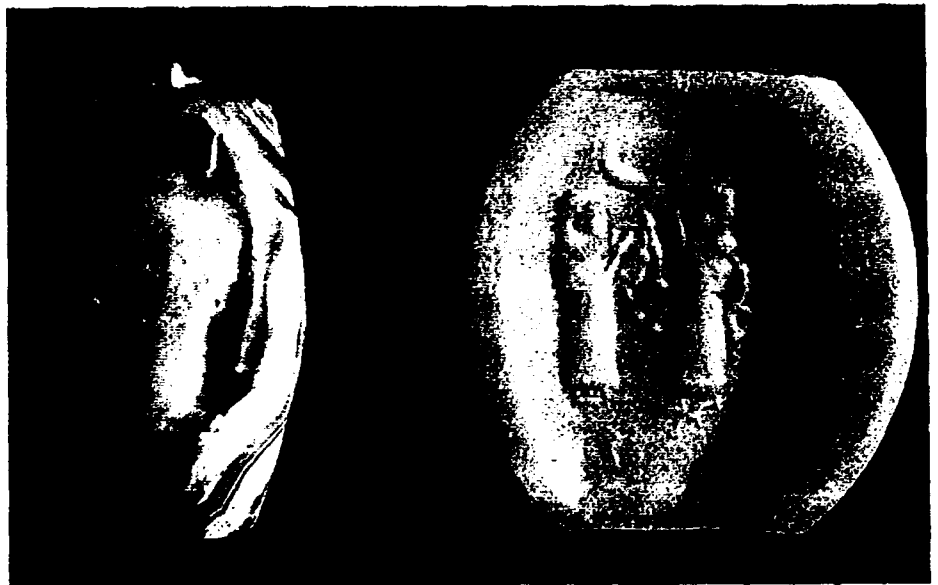
large numbers of new people from other lands, on a scale seldom seen in the long history of Palestine. Indeed, this is a phenomenon still awaiting proper study. The rebuilding of Megiddo, Dor, Dothan and many other towns completely changed the character of the desolated country.

The Babylonians, by contrast, did nothing to reverse the damage inflicted during their initial phase of domination, when, in addition to destroying, burning and looting all the settlements they occupied, they

BENEATH A CRESCENT MOON, an Assyrian king holds up an offering bowl to the radiant figure of the god Assur, who raises both of his hands as a sign of blessing (at right). The image is from an Assyrian stamp seal (at left in the photo), shown here beside a modern impression made by pressing the seal into wet clay.

Archaeologists discovered the seal in a residential section of Dor, an Israelite and Phoenician coastal city located about 12 miles south of modern Haifa. Destroyed by the Assyrians in 733 B.C.E., Dor, like Megiddo, was soon rebuilt. Thereafter, it became the administrative center of an Assyrian province that included the Carmel and Sharon coasts.

The cylinder seal below, also found at Dor and also shown with a modern clay impression, depicts a king doing battle with two horned griffins—a common Assyrian ornamental motif. Palm trees bracket the scene, which also includes two incense altars, one on each side of the king. Like the stamp seal, the cylinder seal may have been used by Assyrian officials in the course of their administrative duties at Dor.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ASSYRIAN MUSEUM, MOSUL, IRAQ





RELICS OF A CONQUEST. These pottery vessels belong to a class of artifacts known as Assyrian palace ware, so named because many such vessels have been recovered from palaces excavated at the ancient Assyrian capitals of Nimrud, Nineveh and Khorsabad. The two pieces shown here were discovered at Dor, in Palestine, but their shapes are typical of pottery found at various Assyrian sites. Undecorated and composed of a whitish, well-levigated (smoothed) clay, Assyrian-style palace ware has been unearthed in numerous excavations in northern Israel. Especially common are bowls like the one shown at right, identifiable by their carination, their distinctive keel-shaped bottom.



also systematically deported those inhabitants of the region whom they did not kill. Unlike their Assyrian counterparts, the Babylonian authorities never built anything. Moreover, their destruction of the country's major harbor towns along the Mediterranean coast ruined international trade relations and left the economic situation of the rest of the country, including the previous Assyrian provinces, in shambles. As a result, the people in the region were reduced to poverty.

It is interesting that in archaeological parlance there is no clearly defined period called "Babylonian." Indeed, the Babylonian gap is implied by the time charts typically found in Bible handbooks: The destruction of Judah is followed by the Persian period, when, following the eclipse of the Babylonians by the comparatively benign Persians, the Jewish exiles were permitted to return to Palestine.

I do not mean to imply that the country was uninhabited during the period between the Babylonian destruction and the Persian period. There were undoubtedly some settlements, but the population was very small. Many towns and villages were either completely or partly destroyed. The rest were barely functioning. International trade virtually ceased. Only two regions appear to have been spared this fate—the northern part of Judah (the region of Benjamin) and probably the land

of Ammon, although the latter region awaits further investigation.¹³

The rest of Palestine was largely barren. ■

¹For an archaeological survey of the period, see Saul S. Weinberg, "Post-Exilic Palestine: An Archaeological Report," *The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Proceedings* 4 (1969), pp. 78-97.

²On the stratigraphy of all these sites, see Ephraim Stern, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land (NEAEHL)*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993); on the Rishon le-Zion fort, see Samuel R. Wolff, "Archaeology in Israel," *American Journal of Archaeology* 100 (1996), p. 744.

³Weinberg, "Post-Exilic Palestine," p. 13.

⁴P.W. Dajani, "A Neo-Babylonian Seal from Amman," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan (ADA)* 6-7 (1962), pp. 124-125; Stern, *The Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period, 538-332 B.C.E.* (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1982), pp. 196-197; "Assyrian and Babylonian Elements in the Material Culture of Palestine in the Persian Period," *Transjordanica* 7 (1994), pp. 51-62; Tallay Ornan, *Observations over the Glyptic Finds in Israel and Jordan: Assyrian, Babylonian and Achaemenian Cylinder-Seals from the First Half of the First Millennium B.C.E.* M.A. thesis (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1990); Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Israel Exploration Society and the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1997).

⁵Stern, *NEAEHL*, vol. 3, p. 1044; Stephanie M. Dalley, "The Cuneiform Tablet from Tawilan," in Crystal M. Bennett and Piotr Bienkowski, *Excavations at Tawilan in Southern Jordan* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 67-68.

⁶Dalley and A. Goguel, "The Sela' Sculpture: A Neo-Babylonian Rock Relief in Southern Jordan," *ADA* 41 (1997), p. 169.

⁷John W. Crowfoot, Grace M. Crowfoot and Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Samaria-Sebastia III: The Objects* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1957), p. 35, pl. 4: 2-3; Zdzisław J. Kapera, "The Ashdod Stele of Sargon II," *Folia Orientalia* 17 (1976), pp. 87-99; Yosef Porath et

endnotes continue on page 76

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(2) According to the broken Prism A published by H. Winckler, *op.cit.*, I, 186-189, II, 44. Translation: Luckenbill, *AR*, II, §§193-195. Fragment D:

[Aziru, king] of Ashdod (lacuna) on account of [this crime . . .] from . . . Ahimiti¹ . . . his younger brother over [them . . .] I made (him) ruler . . . tribute . . . like (those of) the [former] kings, I imposed upon him. [But these] accursed [Hittites] conceived [the idea] of not delivering the tribute and [started] a rebellion against their ruler; they expelled him . . . (la-ma-ni) a Greek, comm[on]er without claim to the throne [to be king over them, they made sit down [on the very throne] of his (former) master and [they . . .] their city of (or: for) the at[tack] (lacuna of 3 lines) . . . its neighborhood, a moat [they prepared] of a depth of 20 + x cubits . . . it (even) reached the underground water, in order to . . . Then [to] the rulers of Palestine (Pi-liš-te), Judah (Ia-ú-di), Ed[om], Moab (and) those who live (on islands) and bring tribute [and] *támartu* -gifts to my lord Ashur—[he spread] countless evil lies to alienate (them) from me, and (also) sent bribes to Pir'u, king of Musru—a potentate, incapable to save them—and asked him to be an ally. But I, Sargon, the rightful ruler, devoted to the pronouncements (uttered by) Nebo and Marduk, (carefully) observing the orders of Ashur, led my army over the Tigris and the Euphrates, at the peak of the(ir) flood, the spring flood, as (if it be) dry ground. This Greek, however, their king who had put his trust in his own power and (therefore) did not bow to my (divinely ordained) rulership, heard about the approach of my expedition (while I was still) far away, and the splendor of my lord Ashur overwhelmed him and . . . he fled. . . .

(3) Nimrud Inscription; published by H. Winckler, *op.cit.*, I, 169-170; Vol. II, Pl. 48. Translation: Luckenbill, *AR*, II, §137.

(8)

(Property of Sargon, etc.) the subduer of the country Judah (Ia-ú-du) which is far away, the uprooter of Hamath, the ruler of which—lau'bidi—he captured personally.¹

8. SENNACHERIB (704-681)

(a) The Siege of Jerusalem¹

(1) From the Oriental Institute Prism of Sennacherib, which contains—as does the so-called Taylor Prism (cf. Rawlinson, Vol.

¹ Instead of Ahimiti, the parallel version has the name Ahimilki.

² After his victory over lau-bidi at Qarqar, Sargon erected various stelae commemorating this event. One, found near Hama on the Orontes, is extant and has been published by F. Thureau-Dangin, *La Stèle d'Acharne*, in *RA*, xxx (1933), 53 ff. The text is badly preserved and of little interest.

³ For the problems involved, cf. the following bibliography: A. Alt, *Palästina Jahrbuch*, xxv (1929), 80-88; G. Bouffler, *Journal of the Transactions, Victoria Institute*, LX, 214-220; P. R. Dougherty, *IBL*, XLIX (1930), 160-171; O. Eissfeldt, *Palästina Jahrbuch*, xxvii (1931), 58-65; S. I. Feigin, *Minirei Heavar* (New York, 1943), pp. 88-117, 202-209 (in Hebrew); K. Fullerton, *ASL*, XLII (1925), 1-25; L. L. Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine, A Critical Source Study* (New York, 1926); J. Lewy, *OLZ*, xxxi (1928), 150-163; Th. Reinach, *Revue des études grecques*, 172, 257-260; R. W. Rogers, *Wellhausen-Festschrift* (Giessen, 1914), p. 322; W. Rudolph, *Palästina Jahrbuch*, xxv (1929), 59-80; A. Ungnad, *Die Zahl der von Sannherib deportierten Judäer*, *ZAW*, LIX, 199-202.

I, Pls. 37-42)—the final edition of the Annals of Sennacherib. Publication: D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (*OIP*, II, Chicago, 1924). Translation: *ibid.*, and Luckenbill, *AR*, II, §§233 ff.

(ii 37—iii 49)

In my third campaign I marched against Hatti. Luli, king of Sidon, whom the terror-inspiring glamor of my lordship had overwhelmed, fled far overseas and perished.² The awe-inspiring splendor of the "Weapon" of Ashur, my lord, overwhelmed his strong cities (such as) Great Sidon, Little Sidon, Bit-Zitti, Zaribtu, Mahal-liba, Ushu (i.e. the mainland settlement of Tyre), Akzib (and) Akko, (all) his fortress cities, walled (and well) provided with feed and water for his garrisons, and they bowed in submission to my feet. I installed Ethba'al (*Tuba'lu*) upon the throne to be their king and imposed upon him tribute (due) to me (as his) overlord (to be paid) annually without interruption.

As to all the kings of Amurru—Menahem (*Mi-in-hi-im-mu*) from Samsimuruna, Tuba'lu from Sidon, Abdili'ti from Arvad, Urumilki from Byblos, Mitinti from Ashdod, Buduili from Beth-Ammon, Kammusunadbi from Moab (and) Aiarammu from Edom, they brought sumptuous gifts (*igisú*) and—fourfold—their heavy *támartu* -presents to me and kissed my feet. Sidqia, however, king of Ashkelon, who did not bow to my yoke, I deported and sent to Assyria, his family-gods, himself, his wife, his children, his brothers, all the male descendants of his family. I set Sharruludari, son of Rukibtu, their former king, over the inhabitants of Ashkelon and imposed upon him the payment of tribute (and of) *katru* -presents (due) to me (as) overlord—and he (now) pulls the straps (of my yoke)!

In the continuation of my campaign I besieged Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Banai-Barqa, Azuru, cities belonging to Sidqia who did not bow to my feet quickly (enough); I conquered (them) and carried their spoils away. The officials, the patricians and the (common) people of Ekron³—who had thrown Padi, their king, into fetters (because he was) loyal to (his) solemn oath (sworn) by the god Ashur, and had handed him over to Hezekiah, the Jew (*Ha-za-qi-(i)a-ú emē Ia-ú-da-ai*)—(and) he (Hezekiah) held him in prison, unlawfully, as if he (Padi) be an enemy—had become afraid and had called (for help) upon the kings of Egypt (*Mus(u)ri*) (and) the bowmen, the chariot(-corps) and the cavalry of the king of Ethiopia (*Meluhha*), an army beyond counting—and they (actually) had come to their assistance. In the plain of Eltekeh (*Al-ta-qu-ú*), their battle lines were drawn up against me and they sharpened their weapons. Upon a trust(-inspiring) oracle (given) by Ashur, my lord, I fought with them and inflicted a defeat upon them. In the mêlée of the battle, I personally captured alive the Egyptian charioteers with the(ir) princes and (also) the charioteers of the king of

² For the enigmatic idiom *jadú'lu emēdu*, cf. lately E. F. Weidner, *A/O*, XIII (1940), 233 f. with the proposed translation "to die an infamous death."

³ Note the social stratification indicated in this passage.

Ethiopia. I besieged Eltekeh (and) Timnah (*Ta-am-na-a*), conquered (them) and carried their spoils away. I assaulted Ekron and killed the officials and patricians who had committed the crime and hung their bodies on poles surrounding the city. The (common) citizens who were guilty of minor crimes, I considered prisoners of war. The rest of them, those who were not accused of crimes and misbehavior, I released. I made Padi, their king, come from Jerusalem (*Ur-sa-li-im-mu*) and set him as their lord on the throne, imposing upon him the tribute (due) to me (as) overlord.

As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) by means of well-stamped (earth-)ramps, and battering-rams brought (thus) near (to the walls) (combined with) the attack by foot soldiers, (using) mines, breeches as well as sapper work. I drove out (of them) 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting, and considered (them) booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city's gate. His towns which I had plundered. I took away from his country and gave them (over) to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Sillibel, king of Gaza. Thus I reduced his country, but I still increased the tribute and the *katru*-presents (due) to me (as his) overlord which I imposed (later) upon him beyond the former tribute, to be delivered annually. Hezekiah himself, whom the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship had overwhelmed and whose irregular⁴ and elite troops which he had brought into Jerusalem, his royal residence, in order to strengthen (it), had deserted him, did send me, later, to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones, antimony,⁵ large cuts of red stone, couches (inlaid) with ivory, *nimedu*-chairs (inlaid) with ivory, elephant-hides, ebony-wood, box-wood (and) all kinds of valuable treasures, his (own) daughters, concubines, male and female musicians. In order to deliver the tribute and to do obeisance as a slave he sent his (personal) messenger.

(2) From the Bull Inscription published by George Smith, *History of Sennacherib* (London, 1873), as Nos. 1, 2, and 3. Translation: cf. Luckenbill, *op.cit.*, pp. 76 f.

(17—21)

And Luli, king of Sidon, was afraid to fight me and fled to the country Cyprus (*Iadnana*) which is (an is-

⁴ For *amelurbu*, cf. H. Winckler, in *OLZ*, ix (1906), 334, and, recently, Th. Bauer, *Assurbanipal*, II, 1.

⁵ This refers probably to stibnite, a native sulphide of antimony (cf. J. R. Partington, *Origin and Development of Applied Chemistry* [London, 1935], p. 256; also R. C. Thompson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology* [Oxford, 1936], p. 49), which might have been used as an eye paint (beside the cheaper and efficient substitute, burnt shells of almond and soot). Stibium is easily reduced and the metal is sporadically attested in Mesopotamia since the Neo-Sumerian period. For the provenience of the stibnite, cf. B. Meissner, *OLZ*, xvii (1915), 52 ff.

land) in the midst of the sea, and sought refuge (there). But even in this land, he met infamous death before the awe-inspiring splendor of the "Weapon" of my lord Ashur. I installed Ethba'al (*Tuba'lu*) upon his royal throne and imposed upon him the tribute (due to) me (as his) overlord. I laid waste the large district of Judah (*Ia-u-di*) and made the overbearing and proud Hezekiah (*Ha-za-qi-a-a-a*), its king, bow in submission.

(3) From the Nebi Yunus Slab, published by Rawlinson. Vol. 1, Pl. 43. Translation: Luckenbill, *op.cit.*, p. 86, and *AR*, II, 5347.

(13—15)

I deprived Luli, king of Sidon, of his kingdom. I installed Ethba'al (*Tuba'lu*) upon his throne and I imposed upon him the tribute (due to) me (as his) overlord. I laid waste the large district of Judah and put the straps (*abiāni*) of my (yoke) upon Hezekiah, its king.

(4) Epigraph from a relief showing the conquest of Lachish. cf. A. Paterson, *Assyrian Sculptures: The Palace of Sennacherib* (The Hague, 1912-13), Pls. 74-76. Translation: Luckenbill, *op.cit.*, p. 156.

Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, sat upon a *nimedu*-throne and passed in review the booty (taken) from Lachish (*La-ki-su*).

(b) The Death of Sennacherib¹

To illustrate the still mysterious circumstances of the death of Sennacherib, a passage of the annals of Ashurbanipal (Rassam Cylinder, published by Rawlinson, v, Pls. 1-10) is translated here. Translation: Luckenbill, *op.cit.*; *AR*, II, 53795, 796.

(iv 65—82)

I tore out the tongues of those whose slanderous mouths had uttered blasphemies against my god Ashur and had plotted against me, his god-fearing prince; I defeated them (completely). The others, I smashed alive with the very same statues of protective deities with which they had smashed my own grandfather Sennacherib—now (finally) as a (belated) burial sacrifice for his soul. I fed their corpses, cut into small pieces, to dogs, pigs, *zibu*-birds, vultures, the birds of the sky and (also) to the fish of the ocean. After I had performed this and (thus) made quiet (again) the hearts of the great gods, my lords, I removed the corpses of those whom the pestilence had felled, whose leftovers (after) the dogs and pigs had fed on them were obstructing the streets, filling the places (of Babylon), (and) of those who had lost their lives through the terrible famine.

¹ For discussions dealing with the mysterious events connected with the death of Sennacherib and the accession of Esarhaddon, cf. H. Hirschberg, *Studien zur Geschichte Esarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (681-669) (Ohlau, 1932), and the pertinent book reviews of J. Schawe, in *AfO*, ix (1933-34), 55-60; Th. Bauer, in *ZA*, xlii (NF viii), 170-184; as well as the remarks of A. Boissier, in *RA*, xxx (1933), 73 ff. cf. also, B. Meissner, *Neue Nachrichten über die Ermordung Sannheribs*, in *Preuss. Ak. d. Wiss. Sitz.-Ber. Phil. Hist. Kl.* (1932), pp. 250 ff.; and *Wo befand sich Asarhaddon zur Zeit der Ermordung Sannheribs?* in *Analecta Orientalia*, xii (1936), 232 ff.

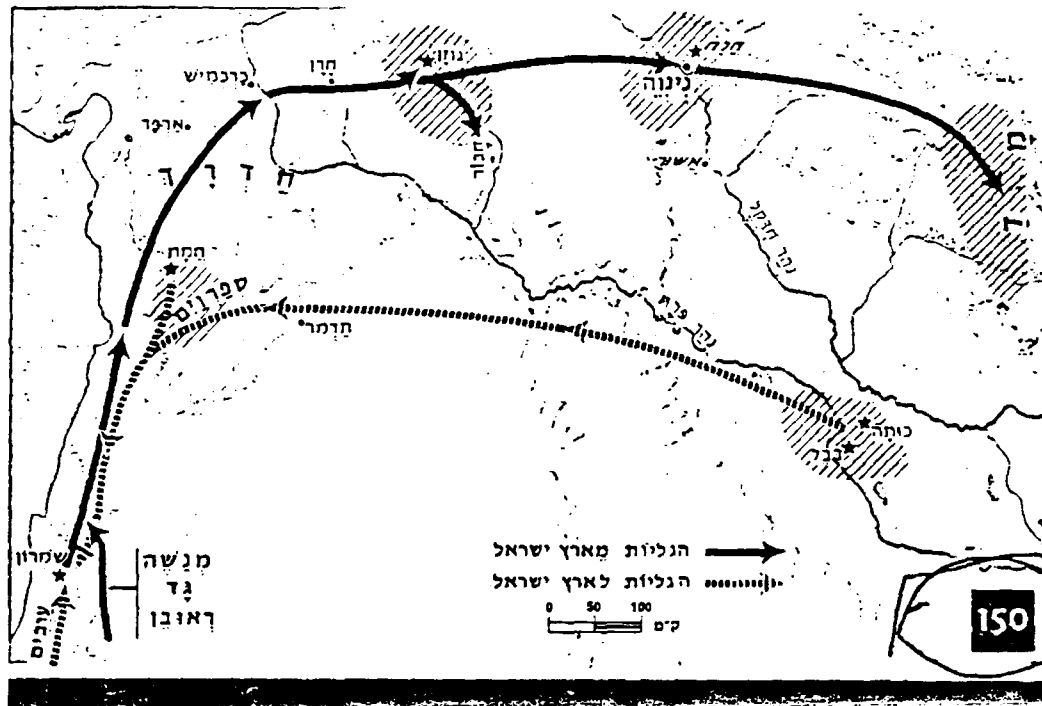
מלכים ב' פרק ט"ו

1. מתי מלך עזריה, כמה שנים, וכן איזה ניל?
2. באיזה דרך הלך?
3. איזה מחלה באה עליו בסוף ימיו?
4. למה נצטער באותה מחלה? (עין רש"י)
5. מי היה הנכד האחרון של יהוא לישיב על כסא המלכות? מה היה אחריהו? מי הכהו?
6. מה קרה לאיש שהכה אותו? מי עשה זה?
7. אלו ערי ישראל השחית מנחם ולמה?
8. איזה מלך בא ונלחם עם ישראל? ואיך דחאהו מנחם מעליו?
9. מי מלך אחרי מנחם ומה קרה לו?
10. איזה מלך בא ונלחם עם ישראל ואיזה חבלים כבש?
11. מי מלך אחרי פקח בן רמליהו?
12. מי מלך אחרי עזריהו וכמה שנים מלך?
13. מי מלך על יהודה אחר כך?
14. איזה מלכים התחילו להלחם עם יהודה בעת ההיא? ומי הסית אותם לכך?

מלכים ב' פרק ט"ו

1. מתי מלך אחז? כמה שנים מלך?
2. באיזה דרך הלך?
3. מי נלחם ביהודה בעת ההיא?
4. איזה עיר נחן אחז לארם? ומי ישב שם?
5. למי פנה אחז לעזרה?
6. מה עשה העוזר כדי לעזור לאחז?
7. מה שלח אחז מדמשק לאוריה הכהן בירושלים?
8. מה עשה אחז עם מזבח הנחושת?
9. מה ציווה אחז את אוריה בענין קרבנות היום?
10. איפה נקבר אחז? מי מלך אחריהו?

1. איך מלך הושע? כמה שנים מלך?
2. איזה מלך עבד?
3. איך מרד הושע? מה קרה לו?
4. מה קרה לעיר שומרון? לכמה שנים?
5. איפה הגלה מלך אשור את תושבי ישראל?
6. מה נרם לגלות ישראל?
7. מאיפה הביא מלך אשור אנשים להושיבם בערי ישראל?
8. מה קרה לאנשים שהוכאו לשבת בערי ישראל?
9. איך ניסה מלך אשור לפתור את הבעיה?
10. איזה שינוי נגרם ע"י זה בעבודת האנשים לאלהיהם?



מלכים ב' פרק י"ח

1. מתי מלך חזקיהו וכמה שנים מלך?
2. באיזה דרך הלך? איזה ד' דברים טובים עשה חזקיהו?
3. איזה אומה כבש?
4. איזה מקרה חדשה קרה בימי חזקיהו?
5. מי בא ונלחם על כל ערי יהודה?
6. איך שכנע חזקיהו למלך אשור להסיר חייליו מיהודה?
7. אלו מלאכים ואיזה שליחות שלח מלך אשור לחזקיהו?
8. מי שלח חזקיהו לקראת המלאכים?
9. כמה האשים רבשקה את חזקיהו?
10. למה, לפי דברי רבשקה, לא יעזור ה' לחזקיהו?
11. באיזה נסיון הלעיג רבשקה למלאכי חזקיהו?
12. מה בקשו מלאכי חזקיהו מרבשקה ומה השיב להם?
13. מה הבטיח רבשקה לאנשי יהודה אם יפסיקו להלחם? לפי רש"י, מה היה יכול להבטיח להם ולמה לא הבטיחם כך?
14. איזה ראייה על אי-יכולת ה' לעזור את יהודה נתן רבשקה לעם?
15. מה ענו מלאכי חזקיהו לרבשקה? מה עשו כאוחה שעה? (עיין רש"י)

מלכים ב' פרק י"ט

1. מה עשה חזקיהו כששמע דברי רבשקה?
2. למי שלח חזקיהו?
3. מה שלח חזקיהו אליו?
4. איזה בשורה קבל חזקיהו ממנו?
5. מה נרם לסנחריב לעלות מעל ירושלים?
6. מה שלח סנחריב לחזקיהו כשהיה עולה מעל ירושלים?
7. מה עשה חזקיהו עם הספרים ששלח אליו סנחריב?
8. איזה אות נתן ה' להוכיח שיציל את יהודה?
9. איזה טעם נתן ה' להפלת סנחריב?
10. מתי קרה המאורע שמוזכר בפסוק ל"ה? (עיין רש"י ורד"ק)
11. מה ארע לחיילי סנחריב?
12. מה קרה לסנחריב?

מלכים ב' פרק כ'

1. מתי קרה פרק כ'? (עיין ברש"י) הבא ראייה לחשובתך מתוך הפרק.
2. מה קרה לחזקיהו? למה? (עיין רש"י)
3. מה ציווה ישעיהו הנביא לחזקיהו?
4. מה עשה חזקיהו?
5. איפה היה ישעיהו באותה שעה?
6. מה הנידר ישעיהו לחזקיהו?
7. איך ציווה ישעיהו לרפאות את חזקיהו?
8. איזה אות נתן ה' לחזקיהו שיעמוד מחליו?
9. מי שלח מלאכים לחזקיהו באותה שעה?
10. מה הראה למלאכים?
11. איזה עונש אמר ישעיהו שיבוא ליהודה מפני שחזקיהו הראה להם מה שהראה?
12. לפי הרד"ק לפסוק י"ב, למה שלח מלך בבל מלאכים לחזקיהו?
13. לפי הרד"ק לפסוק י"ג, מה היה חטאו של חזקיהו?
14. איזה דבר יחידי של נחמה קבל חזקיהו מישעיהו?