

The Issues of Chronology

*Part VIII of the Sabbath and Jubilee
of 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.*

The last argument advanced to support the two-invasion hypothesis is the charge that the Assyrian records and the Scriptures, as well as the other ancient versions of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, are incompatible, contradicting each other with regard to their chronology. Fullerton, for example, came to the "very serious conclusion" that the Assyrian records and the biblical narrative "are in irreconcilable contradiction."¹ These supposed contradictions are then held up as a basis for disassociating Sennacherib's third campaign of 701 B.C.E. from the ill-fated part of the invasion reported by Scriptures. As a result, it is then claimed that the Scriptures and other non-Assyrian sources are either confused or they deliberately merged two separate invasions into one legendary story.

This charge of inconsistency is simply untrue. It arose chiefly because of the misidentification of the Tirhakah in Scriptures with the Kushite pharaoh of Egypt, Nefertem Tirhakah, and the chronology such an association involves. Now that we have eliminated this problem, it is merely a matter of allowing the internal evidence from the relevant ancient texts to determine their respective chronological arrangement and place. The most reliable course is to admit the basic validity of all our ancient texts: Scriptures, Assyrian, and secondary sources. Laying these sources alongside one another we find that each tells its own part of the drama and that each is clearly interrelated with the others.

To demonstrate the fidelity and harmony of only one invasion, Chart F has been provided at the end of this chapter. This chart places the Assyrian and secondary sources in parallel with the three important versions found in Scriptures. The reader will readily see that the story they tell is complete and uncontradictory, allowing for only one attack on Judah by King Sennacherib. In turn, this evidence will seal our dating of the sabbath and Jubilee years during the reign of King Hezekiah as 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E., Abib reckoning.

Background for the Parallel Stories

To understand the chronology of these parallel stories we must first reiterate several points already established by our research. To begin with, all ancient sources confess to only one invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.² The records also show that this campaign was aimed primarily against Egypt.³ The attack on Judah, the ally of Egypt and Kush, was merely part of that greater war.

¹ BS, 63, p. 587.

² Chap. V.

³ Chap. VI, pp. 67-71, and p. 70, n. 45.

At the same time, each of our sources approach the story from a different perspective. They included only those portions of the history believed by their authors to be necessary. The Assyrians, for example, felt the need to report victories. To accommodate this political and propaganda goal, the Assyrian scribes often left out negative details and readjusted the order of events to create an allusion of success when failure had actually occurred.⁴ What they did report was accurate in its details, but they often circumvented the truth by omission and by interpretation. This method is apparent with the Assyrian records from Sennacherib's third campaign. Not only does the internal data reveal an altered chronology and a hollow claim of victory, but, when we compare its history with that found in Scriptures, one finds the order of events tactfully switched around.⁵ The basic information of each event, though chronologically rearranged, is nevertheless valid.

The Assyrian records of Sennacherib's third campaign also deal with its subject matter based upon geographical considerations: discussing the occurrences in Phoenicia first, Palestia second, and Judah last, regardless of the fact that many of the events reported in the Palestim and Judahite parts of the conflict were parallel.⁶ The battle at Eltekeh and the conquest of Ekron, for instance, followed the payment of tribute by Hezekiah and did not precede it.⁷ Also, Padi was returned to the throne of Ekron after having been freed from his captivity in Jerusalem, not before.⁸

Scriptures, meanwhile, emphasized those aspects of the campaign which encompassed deliverance: the deliverance of the city of Jerusalem (a type of the future deliverance of the city from Gog and Magog)⁹ and the personal deliverance of King Hezekiah (representative of the king messiah).¹⁰ Its author did not see the necessity of dealing with the Phoenician, Palestim, and Egyptian portions of the history. The version found in 2 Chronicles, meanwhile, is an abridgement of those found in Isaiah and 2 Kings. Yet it also provides parts of the history not included by the others.¹¹

Secondary sources had their own agenda. Josephus was more interested in reporting the history of his nation. To help convince his readers, he brought in details from other sources. The later Talmudic writers cared about the prophetic significance of the story as it related to Jewish culture (for example, pointing out the importance of the destruction of the Assyrian army on Passover). The Egyptian version, told by Herodotus, was only concerned with the miraculous deliverance of the Egyptians, while Berosus, the Chaldaean historian, saw the war in historical terms as a great defeat of the Assyrians.

⁴ Chap. VI, pp. 64–67.

⁵ For example, the Assyrians list the payment of Hezekiah's tribute after the blockade of Jerusalem while Scriptures and Josephus both report that Hezekiah paid tribute before Rabsheke was even sent to Jerusalem to begin the blockade (see Chart F, pp. 135–138).

⁶ For example, the battle at Eltekeh occurred during the initial stages of the blockade of Jerusalem, not before that blockade began, as listed in the Assyrian records (cf. Chart F, pp. 138–146).

⁷ Chart F, pp. 137–145.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Cf. the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib and his army with Ezek., 38:1–39:29, and Rev., 20:7–9.

¹⁰ For the personal deliverance of Hezekiah see Chart F, pp. 148–151, 156.

¹¹ I.e. 2 Chron., 32:2–8, 32:11, 32:14f, 32:16–19, 32:22–23.

Some of these accounts give extended quotes while others only quote in part. Some go to great lengths to discuss certain aspects of the war while others avoid those details altogether. But none of these preferences justify discrediting any of our sources. It is merely a matter of laying out every version in parallel, as we have done in Chart F. Then, by simply allowing the sources to define their history for us, the harmony is readily seen. In reality, these ancient accounts, when used in conjunction with one another, agree perfectly. As one reads through these parallel versions, considering all of the evidence heretofore presented, he finds the following complete and well-balanced history:

The Invasion of Western Asia

In the winter of 702/701 B.C.E. (no later than mid-February of 701 B.C.E.), in the 14th year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib made a surprise offensive against western Asia and the Egyptian empire. With an armed force of roughly half a million men,¹² he first attacked the rebel Phoenician city-states led by Luli, king of Sidon.¹³

After securing Phoenicia, many of the rebellious kings of that region, as well as the Trans-Jordan states of Ammon, Moab, and Edom, and the northernmost of the coastal Palestim (Philistine) city-state, Ashdod (which had not survived the earlier revolt of 712 B.C.E. with Judah and the remaining parts of Palestia),¹⁴ met Sennacherib at *Ushû* to submit.¹⁵ King Hezekiah of Judah and the rest of the Palestim states, who were allied with each other and with Egypt, on the other hand, continued to resist. They laid their hope in the promise of assistance from Egypt and its Kushite pharaoh, Shabako.¹⁶

Marching southwards along the coast (Map 1), Sennacherib next struck at some tributary cities belonging to the Palestim city-state of Ashkelon (Joppa, Beth-Dagon, etc.).¹⁷ These cities were located north of Palestia (Philistia) proper. Carrying off their spoils, the Assyrian king then moved south against Ashkelon, the next major city along the coast after Ashdod. He quickly conquered Ashkelon and deported its king and his family to Assyria.¹⁸ Sennacherib's eyes now turned to King Hezekiah, the chief figure a few years earlier in the revolt of the Palestim and Judahite states from the Assyrian empire.¹⁹

There can be little doubt that, while Sennacherib himself was taking the coastal road towards Ashkelon, a great part of his army was simultaneously

¹² Chap. VII, pp. 78–81.

¹³ Chart F, p. 134b.

¹⁴ Ashdod was part of the revolt of 712 B.C.E. against King Sargon of Assyria, along with Israel, Judah, Palestia, and the Trans-Jordan states (ARAB, 2, #29f, 195). Sargon claims only to have retaken Ashdod (ibid.). Therefore, the quick surrender of Ashdod, which had been under Assyrian control until Ashdod's more recent revolt in 702 B.C.E., reflects its different status from the other Palestim states, who were allied with Judah during their successful revolt in 712 B.C.E. (see Chap. IV, pp. 41f, n. 18).

¹⁵ Chart F, pp. 134b. The city of *Ushû* was located on the mainland opposite Tyre.

¹⁶ 2 Kings, 18:19–21; Isa., 36:4–6; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:2. That Shabako was the pharaoh of Egypt at this time see Chap. VIII, p. 95 & n. 86, and Chart C.

¹⁷ Chart F, p. 135b.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Chart F, pp. 135–136. That Hezekiah was the ringleader in the revolt see Chap. IV, p. 43, and ns. 25 & 27; Chap. V, p. 57, n. 37.

marching southwards, most likely upon the road from Joppa,²⁰ to make their initial strike at Judah. As a good portion of the Assyrian army began overwhelming the fortified cities of Judah from the north, Sennacherib himself took his main force, turned eastward from Ashkelon, and began laying siege to the important Judahite fortress-city of Lachish.²¹

Hearing of the initial Assyrian advance against Palestine and Judah, Hezekiah quickly began re-enforcing his fortifications at Jerusalem and making other preparations to resist a siege.²² But when he heard how rapidly his defense cities fell, Hezekiah realized it was fruitless to continue his resistance. He sent to Sennacherib, now besieging Lachish, for conditions of peace.²³

Sennacherib made terms and Hezekiah, in response, sent the required tribute to the Assyrian king at Lachish. He also sent other gifts to Nineveh.²⁴ Hezekiah, as well, brought King Padi of Ekron out of prison and handed him over to Sennacherib.²⁵ He believed that the Assyrian king would now retire from Judah, leaving Hezekiah to peacefully govern his greatly reduced kingdom. But the Assyrian king had no intention of honoring this agreement. It was merely a ruse to financially weaken his Judahite foe. His true purpose was to deport the rebellious people of Judah to another distant land.²⁶ With this in mind, Sennacherib reneged on his treaty and, after Lachish surrendered, he sent a large force of men from Lachish under Rabshakeh to persuade the Judahites to open their capital city to be spoiled and to surrender themselves for deportation.²⁷

Rabshakeh gave Sennacherib's message to Hezekiah's chief men. When Hezekiah received these words from his officials, he tore his garments, put on sackcloth, and entered into the house of Yahweh. He also sent messengers to the prophet Isaiah seeking advice from Yahweh. Isaiah sent back to the king, foretelling him, among other things, that the Assyrian king would hear a report and turn back to his own land.²⁸ Relying upon the instructions from the prophet, Hezekiah sent word to the Assyrian representative that he refused to surrender. The Assyrian response was to shut up Jerusalem, throwing earthworks against the city gates, blockading the city so that no one could either enter or leave.²⁹

²⁰ CIOT, p. 302.

²¹ Chart F, pp. 135–138. Sennacherib, himself, began laying siege to Lachish, as noted in 2 Kings, 18:14.

²² See 2 Chron., 32:2–8. Chart F, pp. 136–137.

²³ Chart F, pp. 137–138.

²⁴ Chart F, pp. 137–138. Also see our discussion above Chap. VII, pp. 77f.

²⁵ Padi had been imprisoned by Hezekiah in Jerusalem prior to the Assyrian attack on that city (Chart F, pp. 145–146; cf. 2 Kings, 18:7f). Yet after the blockade of Jerusalem began, when no one was allowed to enter or leave Jerusalem, Sennacherib was able to place Padi on the throne at Ekron (Chart F, pp. 144–146). Sennacherib states in the Taylor Prism (3:14ff), "Padi, their king, I brought out of Jerusalem. I set him on the royal throne over them (the people of Ekron)." This data proves that Padi was brought out of Jerusalem before the blockade of that city began. Therefore, he was given into the hands of the king of Assyria at the time that Hezekiah paid tribute.

²⁶ This intention is directly stated by Rabshakeh as quoted in 2 Kings, 18:31f; Isa., 36:16f; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:2.

²⁷ Chart F, pp. 138–142.

²⁸ Chart F, pp. 143–144.

²⁹ Chart F, p. 144.

The Egyptian Counterattack

In the next phase of the war the Assyrian king prepared to oppose the Egyptian and Kushite counterattack. A report that an Egyptian and Kushite army was marching to the aid of their Palestim (and Judahite) allies reached Sennacherib while he was still at Lachish. Rabshakeh, for example, while arguing against Hezekiah, speaks of the expected arrival of the forces of the king of Egypt (i.e. the Ethiopian, Pharaoh Shabako) upon whom Hezekiah was relying.³⁰

Josephus, likewise, reports that Sennacherib took the field against an Ethiopian and Egyptian force—an event which he distinguishes from the later arrival of Tirhakah³¹—at the same time that Rabshakeh was sent to spoil Jerusalem.³² A day or two later, when Rabshakeh returned to Lachish, he found that Sennacherib had already moved against Libnah.³³ Libnah was very near the region of Altakû (Eltekeh), the scene of the battle between Sennacherib and the combined Egyptian and Ethiopian forces during Sennacherib's third campaign (see Map 1).³⁴ Libnah was most likely Sennacherib's camp during this conflict with the "countless host" of Egyptians and Kushites. After winning the battle, the Assyrian king seized the cities of Altakû (Eltekeh), Tamnah, and Ekron.³⁵ He also killed the governors and nobles of Ekron who had rebelled and then returned the Assyrian loyalist Padi to that city's throne.³⁶

After reporting the Assyrian victories—i.e. the defeat of the Ethiopian and Egyptian forces, the conquest of Palestia, the overthrow of the walled cities of Judah, and the reception of tribute from King Hezekiah—the Assyrian records break off their discussion of the war. Their silence is a reflection of the disaster that followed.

The Invasion of Egypt

After his great victory over the Egyptian and Ethiopian hosts sent by Shabako, Sennacherib sent a large expeditionary force against the fortress-city of Pelusium, the gateway city on the northeastern border of Egypt. Thus began the ill-fated part of his campaign. About three weeks later, after settling the affairs in Phoenicia and Palestia, the Assyrian king divided his army, leaving part of them at Jerusalem while he marched with the rest to Pelusium.³⁷ By the time of his arrival, the siege-force had already spent a great deal of time raising earthworks to great heights against Pelusium. An army of Egyptians under King Sethos had also arrived on the scene.³⁸

In the night before Sennacherib intended to begin his assault upon the city of Pelusium (i.e. the night of Abib 10),³⁹ his army was afflicted by an outbreak

³⁰ 2 Kings, 18:20–24; Isa., 36:5–10.

³¹ The initial war with the Egyptians and Ethiopians is reported by Josephus in *Antiq.*, 10:1:1(4). The arrival of Tirhakah, after this first battle, is explained in *Jos.*, *Antiq.*, 10:2:1(17).

³² Chart F, p. 138, cf. p. 144.

³³ Chart F, p. 144.

³⁴ Chart F, pp. 145. For the locations of Eltekeh, Libnah and Lachish see Chap. III, p. 30, n. 8.

³⁵ Chart F, p. 145.

³⁶ Chart F, pp. 145–146.

³⁷ See our discussion in Chap. VII, pp. 79f.

³⁸ Chart F, pp. 146–147.

³⁹ For the date Abib 10, see Chart F, p. 147, n. 33.

of plague (apparently brought to them by a great horde of mice).⁴⁰ No sooner had this plague struck when Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah (Tsawi Tirhakah, Snefer-Ra Piankhi), the king of Kush, was coming out of his country to fight against him.⁴¹ The Kushite king was coming to the aid of his Ethiopian and Egyptian allies in Egypt by making a spring offensive against their Assyrian foe.

The outbreak of a plague at Pelusium made it impossible for Sennacherib to meet the superior forces of Tirhakah. Accordingly, the Assyrian king was compelled to quickly retreat and fall back to Jerusalem. There he expected to join up with the rest of his army. Because of these desperate circumstances, a great number of the implements of war were left behind at Pelusium, along with the dead Assyrian soldiers. When the Egyptians later entered what remained of the Assyrian camp, they found mice chewing at the bow strings of these abandoned weapons.⁴²

The Retreat

As Sennacherib began his retreat, he made one last ditch effort to intimidate Hezekiah into submission. He sent Hezekiah letters warning him to surrender, reminding him that it was still the intention of the Assyrians to capture Jerusalem.⁴³ That same day (Abib 10),⁴⁴ Hezekiah became ill and was near death. He prayed to Yahweh to spare his life and to allow him a legitimate successor, since he was without a legal male heir. He was told by the prophet that Yahweh would add fifteen years to his life. As a sign that this was true, it was explained to Hezekiah that, on the third day after, the sun's shadow would move backwards ten steps (hours) on the sundial at the house of Ahaz and, on that same day, he would both recover from his sickness and go up into the Temple.⁴⁵

On Abib 13, both the sun's shadow returned ten steps and the messengers from Sennacherib arrived.⁴⁶ Having recovered from his illness and upon receiving the words sent by the Assyrian king, Hezekiah, as foretold, went to the Temple.⁴⁷ Here he once again pleaded with Yahweh to save Jerusalem and its people. In response, Yahweh informed Hezekiah that the Assyrians would

⁴⁰ Chart F, p. 147. For a discussion of the plague see Chap. III, p. 33, n. 35.

⁴¹ Chart F, pp. 147–148. This report of the coming of Tirhakah is a fulfillment of the prophecy earlier given to Hezekiah that Sennacherib would hear a report and return to his own land (Chart F, pp. 143–144).

⁴² Chart F, 147–148. The explanation of the Egyptians, that the defeat of the Assyrians was as the result of a host of mice eating through the bows and other weapons of the enemy, is readily explained. After coming into contact with these rodents and suffering from the illness they carried, the Assyrians fled the scene leaving many of their weapons behind. The mice, left to despoil the camp, were found by the Egyptians the next day gnawing at these weapons. The explanation of Josephus, that the mice were the instrument of a plague, brings the true cause of the destruction of the Assyrian army at Pelusium into focus. It may well be that the messengers sent regularly by Sennacherib to the troops at Jerusalem carried a pneumonic plague with them, which may account for its subsequent and massive outbreak outside the walls of Jerusalem.

⁴³ Chart F, p. 148.

⁴⁴ That Hezekiah's illness occurred on the same day as the plague at Pelusium see Chart F, p. 147, n. 33.

⁴⁵ Chart F, pp. 148–151.

⁴⁶ Chart F, pp. 151–152.

⁴⁷ Chart F, p. 152; cf. Chap. V, pp. 53–55.

turn back on the road upon which they came. As a sign that the people of Jerusalem would remain in their land, this year they would eat from the field that which grows of itself (a sabbath year), and the next year eat of the same (a Jubilee year), and in the third year they would once again sow and harvest their own land.⁴⁸ Hezekiah was also told by the prophet Isaiah that the Assyrian king would neither take the city, put up siege mounds, nor shoot an arrow against it.⁴⁹

That night, being Passover (Abib 14), 185,000 men in the “camp of the king of Assyria” were, like their associates at Pelusium, destroyed by a plague.⁵⁰ When Sennacherib arrived at the scene a few days later (Abib 20),⁵¹ he found his forces at Jerusalem decimated and those left to him likewise “in danger from a plague.”⁵² With such huge losses, all hopes for a military victory in the West vanished. Thrown into a state of alarm and terrible anxiety, and fearful for what remained of his army, Sennacherib fled home to Nineveh.⁵³ All that the Assyrian king could do was to record on his inscriptions those parts of the campaign that could be construed as a victory. Having fled from the Kushite king and unable to take the city of Jerusalem, the seal of Sennacherib’s campaign now became the fabulous tribute paid earlier by King Hezekiah.⁵⁴

Remaining Questions and Issues

Our attention must now turn to the last vestiges of what are believed to be questions and issues of chronology claimed as impediments to the smoothness and harmony of the one invasion history. A close examination shows that these assumed problems are in reality built upon misconstrued and premanufactured history. They are intended to cast doubt where none should exist. The following are the most important of these challenges and their rebuttal:

- “Why did Hezekiah both surrender and refuse to surrender?”⁵⁵ That is, “Why did Hezekiah surrender and pay tribute, only later to fail to surrender when Sennacherib demanded that the city be open to him?” Because Hezekiah came to terms in one part of the story and refused submission in another, it is believed that these represent two different invasions by Sennacherib.

This question glosses over the entire thrust of the history. In the first instance, Hezekiah believed that if he agreed to pay tribute his throne would be saved and his people would be allowed to retain their land. There was no demand in the first agreement to open the city to the invaders. Yet, when Sennacherib reneged on his treaty, new conditions were drawn up:

⁴⁸ For our discussion of this issue see Chap. III, pp. 30–32.

⁴⁹ Chart F, pp. 152–155.

⁵⁰ Chart F, p. 155.

⁵¹ That Sennacherib would have arrived at Jerusalem on Abib 20 see Chart F, p. 147, n. 33.

⁵² Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:5.

⁵³ Chart F, p. 156.

⁵⁴ See Chap. V, pp. 56–59.

⁵⁵ AUSS, 4, p. 22.

surrender the city and prepare its people for deportation.⁵⁶ Trusting in Yahweh, Hezekiah refused these new and destructive conditions.

- “Would Hezekiah have continued to rely on Egypt after the battle of Eltekeh?”⁵⁷

There is no record that he did. After the Assyrian victory at Eltekeh, Hezekiah relied on Yahweh.⁵⁸ The Egyptian contribution to Judah was moot at this point. Indeed, there was every incentive not to surrender the city. It meant certain death for Hezekiah and his nobles, deportation of the remaining Judahites, and the spoiling of the city and its people. It was already clear that Sennacherib’s word was worthless. Why should they trust him even if the Assyrians guaranteed the safety of Hezekiah and his nobles? If the Judahites resisted, they at least had a chance that Yahweh would deliver them.

- “Why was Hezekiah treated so leniently in spite of the fact that Hezekiah was the leading spirit of the revolt?”⁵⁹

There was no leniency. If Sennacherib could have broke open the city of Jerusalem he certainly would have killed Hezekiah and the Judahite nobles, just as he had done to the nobles of Ekron.⁶⁰ No doubt this is why Hezekiah agreed to pay an enormous tribute in the first place, fearing personal reprisal if he surrendered and opened the city gates to the Assyrians. The allusion of leniency comes in the Assyrian records only because the Assyrian king was unable to conquer Jerusalem and, to save face, made it appear that the reception of tribute was the seal of his campaign.

- “Why was Jerusalem only blockaded and not besieged, captured and destroyed?”⁶¹

It was only blockaded because a major effort would have been required to break open the city (it took a year and a half for Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia to perform the same task). Furthermore, Pelusium had to be taken first because of its strategic location. Once Pelusium was secured and the Assyrian front with Egypt fixed, attention could turn towards a massive attack on and a long siege of Jerusalem.

- “What gave Hezekiah courage to continue resistance, after all his allies had been crushingly defeated?”⁶²

First, Josephus describes Hezekiah as a coward, fearing even to come out to meet with the Assyrian representatives.⁶³ This incident demonstrates that, at the beginning, it may not have been courage that pushed Hezekiah to resist but fear for his life. Second, the walls of Jerusalem were heavily fortified

⁵⁶ 2 Kings, 18:27–32; Isa., 36:12–17; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:2.

⁵⁷ AUSS, 4, p. 22.

⁵⁸ Chart F, pp. 145–155.

⁵⁹ SIP, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Chart F, pp. 145–146.

⁶¹ SIP, p. 18.

⁶² SIP, p. 31, n. 64.

⁶³ Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:2.

and he could have resisted an Assyrian onslaught and siege for several months. Third, and most importantly, he trusted in Yahweh, who promised to deliver him.

- “Why did Rabshakeh tell the Judahites not to trust in Yahweh but also claim that Yahweh had sent him to take the city?”⁶⁴

This question is based upon the belief in some quarters that different parts of Rabshakeh’s speech could represent two different campaigns. This conclusion is far too extreme and unwarranted. The speech was merely Assyrian rhetoric meant to justify the Assyrian attack on Judah and their demand for surrender. Rabshakeh was calling attention to the fact that the previous Judahite king, Ahaz, had pledged loyalty to the Assyrians when he became their vassal.⁶⁵ In effect, the Judahites were obligated by a vassal treaty, a treaty broken by Hezekiah when he revolted.⁶⁶

A unique feature of these vassal and alliance treaties was the fact that they were pledged by an oath in the name of the vassal’s or ally’s own deity.⁶⁷ Because the Judahites rebelled and broke their oath, Yahweh, Rabshakeh argued, was on the side of Assyria in this dispute. On this account Hezekiah should surrender the city.⁶⁸ At the same time, holding that the Assyrian deities were superior to Yahweh, Rabshakeh advised the Judahites not to rely upon either Yahweh or Hezekiah to deliver them out of the hand of the more powerful king of Assyria and the more powerful Assyrian deities.

⁶⁴ This is a summarization of the question posed in IAC, pp. 82f.

⁶⁵ The alliance between Assyria and Judah was formed by King Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, when Ahaz was troubled by the nations of Aram (Syria) and Israel (2 Kings, 16:7–9; 2 Chron., 28:16–21).

⁶⁶ 2 Kings, 18:7.

⁶⁷ JBL, 78, pp. 199–204; BA, 17, p. 60; TC, pp. 29–153. E.g. 2 Chron., 36:11–13. Also see, as examples of these vassal and alliance treaties and the oaths required, ANET, pp. 199–201, a Hatti (Hatti, Khitti, etc.) and Egyptian treaty sworn to by “a thousand gods of the male gods and female gods of them of the land of Hatti, together with a thousand gods of the male gods and of the female gods of them of the land of Egypt”; pp. 203–205, a Hatti and Amurru treaty sworn to by “gods and goddesses of the Hatti land and the gods and goddesses of Amurru land”; pp. 205f, a Hatti and Mitanni treaty sworn to by “the gods of the contracting parties,” followed by a list of Mitanni and Hatti deities; pp. 532, a treaty between Idrimi and Pilya, sworn to by their gods; pp. 532f, a treaty between Assyria and Arpad, sworn to by the deities of each country; pp. 533f, Assyria and Tyre, sworn to by the deities of Assyria and the Baal deities of Phoenicia.

Childs (IAC, pp. 84f) takes an opposing stand based upon two points: First, he believes that it is a debatable question whether the Assyrians did require their vassals to swear by the vassal’s own deities as well as by the Assyrian. He then cites Mendenhall (BA, 17, p. 60) as denying they did (when in fact Mendenhall supports the fact that they did). Neither does Childs offer proof that it is debatable. All evidence heretofore, as the authors and sources cited above demonstrate, proves that the vassals were commonly made to swear by their own deities. Second, Childs holds that Hezekiah’s sin was not in profaning the name of Yahweh and breaking the oath in the treaty but by his removing the altars of Yahweh. This view is definitely incorrect. When Rabshakeh brought up the issue of Hezekiah removing the altars it was as an accusation that Hezekiah was abandoning Yahweh and causing the Judahites to forgo their true worship. Of course, Ahaz had actually adopted pagan Baal worship in the guise of Yahweh worship. Hezekiah had removed these altars built on high places in the name of Yahweh in order to purge the country from these pagan practices (see 2 Kings, 16:3–4, 10–18, cf. 17:7–18; 2 Kings, 18:1–6; 2 Chron., 28:1–4, 20–25; 2 Chron., 29:1–19, 31:1). Rabshakeh was trying to lure the Judahites back into Baal worship, encouraging the old Israelite error of identifying Yahweh with Baal. If he could convince the Judahites of this argument, they would accept the treaty of Ahaz and surrender.

⁶⁸ Chart F, pp. 139–142.

- “Did the expedition of Rabshakeh recounted in 2 Kings, 18:17ff., occur before or after the battle of Altaku recounted in T [the Assyrian text].”⁶⁹ And with it, “When did Hezekiah pay his tribute, before or after the battle of Eltekeh?”⁷⁰

Both the payment of tribute by Hezekiah and Rabshakeh’s expedition happened before the battle of Altaku (Eltekeh). This point is established in three ways. First, according to the accounts in Scriptures and Josephus, Rabshakeh’s arrival at Jerusalem occurred shortly after Hezekiah had paid the tribute and Sennacherib, in turn, reneged on the treaty.⁷¹ Second, Rabshakeh’s words to Hezekiah show an expectation of an impending Egyptian counter-attack.⁷² Third, Josephus notes that, when Sennacherib set out to meet the Egyptian and Kushite army, he had already left behind Rabshakeh with a large army to plunder Jerusalem.⁷³

- “Why did Sennacherib remove from Lachish to Libnah?”⁷⁴ That is, why move northwest and away from Jerusalem to confront Hezekiah?

Libnah lay near the plain of Eltekeh where the Assyrian forces battled the Egyptian and Kushite army. The Egyptians and Kushites came to Ekron on the Palestim road and were moving southeast to oppose the Assyrian king.⁷⁵ The only logical move for the Assyrian king was to march northwest to oppose this threat (Map 1).

- “Why did Sennacherib not take advantage of his victory at Eltekeh and invade Egypt?”⁷⁶

The records prove that he did.⁷⁷

- It is assumed by some that Tirhakah led an Egyptian army against Sennacherib,⁷⁸ presupposing that the reference in Scriptures was to the pharaoh named Nefertem Tirhakah of Egypt.

This view is given despite the fact that there are no ancient sources making such a claim. This unsupported statement has merely added confusion to the issue of chronology by equating the Tirhakah of Scriptures with the Egyptian monarch of that name. As we have demonstrated in our study, it was Tsawi Tirhakah, the king of Kush, who opposed Sennacherib, not Nefertem Tirhakah. Tsawi came out of his own country with a large army to the assistance of his Egyptian allies.⁷⁹ He therefore was at the head of an Ethiopian, not Egyptian, army.

⁶⁹ BS, 63, 594.

⁷⁰ SIP, p. 22.

⁷¹ Chart F, pp. 137–139.

⁷² 2 Kings, 18:19–25; Isa., 36:4–10; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:2(6f).

⁷³ Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:1.

⁷⁴ BS, 63, p. 613.

⁷⁵ See discussion in Chap. VI, pp. 69f.

⁷⁶ SIP, p. 16.

⁷⁷ Chart F, pp. 146–147.

⁷⁸ E.g., AHL, pp. 301, 302.

⁷⁹ Thus the words of Josephus in *Antiq.*, 10:2:1, to the effect that Tirhakah was coming to the aid of his Egyptian allies.

• Some conclude that Sennacherib fought with the Tirhakah mentioned in Scriptures at Eltekeh.⁸⁰ Yet this view presents problems. According to Scriptures, Sennacherib retreated from Tirhakah; yet in the Assyrian inscriptions Sennacherib was victorious over the Egyptian and Kushite forces, going on to overthrow other cities. Because of this contradiction, it is determined that the Scriptures and other sources have been wrong and have confused two different conflicts. Along with this assertion comes a second dispute. Advocates of two invasions charge that the attack route recorded in Sennacherib's records of his third campaign is incompatible with an attack against Egypt and Tirhakah.

The confusion represented by these conclusions and assertions are eliminated once it is admitted that there were two separate incidents: one at Eltekeh and another occurring later at Pelusium. The Assyrian king does mention "the kings of Muzri (Lower Egypt), the bowmen, chariots and horses of the king of Meluhha (Upper Egypt)" and "the Muzri charioteers and princes, together with the charioteers of Meluhha" which he captured at the battle of Eltekeh.⁸¹ But nowhere does he give the name of the monarch of Upper Egypt, nor does he imply that the pharaoh of Meluhha, let alone the king of Kush proper, was anywhere near the scene of the battle. The Tirhakah mentioned in Scriptures, on the other hand, personally led his army.⁸² Therefore, if such a confrontation with Tirhakah had occurred at Eltekeh, a victory over this Kushite king would most definitely have been the object of much boasting in Sennacherib's annals. Tirhakah's name, as a result, would have been prominently mentioned by the Assyrian king.

More importantly, it is evident from the parallel accounts of our ancient sources, as shown in Chart F, that the threat of Tirhakah's advance happened at some point after the Eltekeh conflict. Josephus notes that Sennacherib went out to meet the Egyptian and Ethiopian forces when Rabshakeh was sent against Jerusalem to blockade the city.⁸³ This was an expected battle and, accordingly, points directly to the conflict at Eltekeh. Later, when Sennacherib heard that Tirhakah and his army were coming out to fight, he was surprised and forced to retreat without offering battle.⁸⁴

Next, Josephus and Herodotus point out that Sennacherib retreated from Tirhakah while he was at Pelusium, Egypt.⁸⁵ These authors, we might note, have the only record of Sennacherib's location at the time of his retreat.⁸⁶ Eltekeh, on the other hand, was near Ekron in Palestia.⁸⁷ The victory of Assyria at Eltekeh, therefore, must not be confused with their defeat at Pelusium. It was while Sennacherib besieged Pelusium that word of Tirhakah's advancing army arrived.⁸⁸

⁸⁰ E.g. NOT, p. 60.

⁸¹ Chart F, p. 145.

⁸² 2 Kings, 19:9 and Isa., 37:9, both relate that the report given to Sennacherib stated that "he (Tirhakah) has come out to fight with you." Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4, states that Tirhakah "was coming to the aid of the Egyptians with a large force."

⁸³ Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:1(4).

⁸⁴ Chart F, pp. 147–148.

⁸⁵ Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4(17f); Herodotus, 2:141; and see Chart F, pp. 146–148.

⁸⁶ 2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9; Targ. Jon., 2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9, all tell of the retreat of the Assyrians from Tirhakah but say nothing of Sennacherib's location at the time.

⁸⁷ See Chap. III, p. 30, n. 8.

⁸⁸ Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:2:1.

Finally, ancient accounts testify that Sennacherib retreated and never fought with Tirhakah.⁸⁹ Yet the Assyrian records not only claim a battle at Eltekeh but reveal further military activity by the Assyrians immediately after that battle, at which time they besieged Eltekeh, Tamnah, and Ekron.⁹⁰ Therefore, the battle on the plain of Eltekeh could not have been a conflict with Tirhakah. In fact, as we have already demonstrated, the king of Meluḥḥa who provided troops at Eltekeh and is alluded to in the inscriptions of Sennacherib was Shabako, the first Kushite Pharaoh of Egypt's Dynasty XXV (714/713–700/699 B.C.E.). He was directly allied with the petty Egyptian dynasts during this period.

Conclusion

Our examination of the evidence demonstrates that there are no chronological conflicts between any of our ancient sources. Therefore, with no remaining obstacles, we are compelled to the conclusion that there was only one invasion of Judah by King Sennacherib. This single invasion is represented in the Assyrian records by Sennacherib's third campaign and is said to have started during the 14th year of King Hezekiah of Judah (702/701 B.C.E.). Accordingly, since the Assyrian army at Jerusalem was struck by a plague shortly after the beginning of the next year, on the 14th of Abib, the sabbath and Jubilee years are confirmed as the fifteenth and sixteenth years of King Hezekiah, the years 701/700 and 700/699 B.C.E.

The sabbath year and Jubilee year of the fifteenth and sixteenth years of King Hezekiah, we must add, are not just assured to us by the evidence for Sennacherib's campaign against Judah. As we proceed through our study, it shall be demonstrated time and again that the sabbath cycle represented by these above years are reaffirmed by the evidence for other sabbath years. Together, the information for all the various known sabbath years will prove that the system "A" cycle is unimpeachable.

⁸⁹ 2 Kings, 19:9; Isa., 37:9; Jos., *Antiq.*, 10:1:4.

⁹⁰ Chart F, pp. 144–145.

CHART F

**Sennacherib's Third Campaign:
701 B.C.E. (Parallel Accounts)**

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities*****10:1:4(20b)
[Berosus]**

(20b) But Berosus, who wrote the *History of Chaldaea*, also mentions King Senacheirimos and tells how he ruled over the Assyrians and how he made an expedition against all Asia¹ and Egypt;

¹ By Asia is meant Syria, Phoenicia, Palestia, Judah, the Trans-Jordan and neighbouring countries.

² AS, pp. 29-34, 2:37-3:49; ARAB, 2, #239-240.

³ AS, pp. 68-70, ℓ.18-32; ARAB, 2, #309-312.

⁴ AS, p. 77, ℓ.17-22a; ARAB, 2, #326-327.

**Taylor
Prism²**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription³**

**(F2) Bull
Inscription⁴**

**Nebi Yunis
Inscription⁵**

2:37-49

(37) In my third campaign I went against the Khatti-land.⁶ (38) Luli (Elulæus), king of Sidon,—the terrifying splendor (lit., terrors of the splendors) (39) of my sovereignty overcame him and far off (40) into the midst of the sea he fled. (There) he died. (41) Great Sidon, Little Sidon, (42) Bit-Zitti, Zaribtu, Mahalliba, (43) Ushû, Akzib, Akkû, (44) his strong, walled cities, where there were supplies (lit., fodder and drinking-places) (45) for his garrisons,—the terrors of the weapon of Assur, (46) my lord, overpowered them and they bowed in submission at my feet. (47) Tuba'lu (Ethbaal, Ithobalus) I seated on the royal throne (48) over them, and tribute, gift(s) for my majesty, (49) I imposed upon him for all time, without ceasing.

2:50-60a

(50) From Minhimu (Menahem), the Shamsimuruni, (51) Tuba'lu the Sidoni, (52) Abdi-liti, the Arvadi, (53) Uru-milki, the Gubli, (54) Mitinti, the Ashdodi, (55) Budu-ilu, the Beth-Ammoni, (56) Kammusu-nadbi, the Moabi, (57) Malikkrammu, the Edomi,— (58) kings of Amurru, all of them, numerous presents, (59) as their heavy tribute, (60) they brought before me for the fourth time, and kissed my feet.

ℓ.18-19a

(18) In my third campaign I went against the Khatti-land. Luli, king of Sidon,—my terrifying splendor overcame him, and from Tyre he fled to Iadnana (Cyprus) (19a) in the midst of the sea, and died. Tuba'lu I placed on his royal throne, (and) imposed my king-ly tribute upon him.

ℓ.19b-20a

(19b) The kings of Amurru,⁷ all of them, (20a) brought their heavy tribute before me in the neighborhood of the city of Ushû,⁸

ℓ.17-20a

(17) And Luli, king of Sidon, was afraid to fight me (lit., feared my battle) and fled to Iadnana (Cyprus), (18) which is in the midst of the sea, and (there) sought a refuge. In that land, (19) in terror of the weapons of Assur, my lord, he died. Tuba'lu I placed on (20a) the throne of his kingdom, and imposed upon him my royal tribute.

ℓ.13b-14

(13b) I deprived Luli, king of Sidon, of his kingdom. (14) Tuba'lu I set on his throne and imposed my royal tribute upon him.

⁵ AS, p. 86, ℓ.13b-15; ARAB, 2, #347.

⁶ Khatti-land: the name of the West countries from Khatti in Asia Minor southward to Palestia.

⁷ Amurru represents Syria, Phoenicia, Samaria, Judah, Palestia and the Trans-Jordan states.

⁸ Ushû was located on the Phoenician mainland opposite the island city of Tyre.

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities*****18:13**

(13) And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiyahu, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came against all the fortified cities of Judah, and he captured them.

36:1

(1) And it was, in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiyahu, Sennacherib king of Assyria came against all the fortified cities of Judah, and he captured them.

32:1

(1) After these things and this faithfulness, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came; and he came to Judah and camped against the fortified cities, and commanded to break them open to himself.

10:1:1(1)

[Josephus]

(1) Now Hezekiah, the king of the two tribes, had occupied the throne for fourteen years when the king of Assyria, named Senacheirimos, marched against him with a great armament and took by storm all the cities of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

⁹ The position of these cities, located near the coast between Ushû and Ashkelon, and the statement, "In the course of my campaign" against Ashkelon, prove that this verse belongs chronologically before the mentioning of the overthrow of Ashkelon and the exile of King Sidka.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ In both the Taylor and F1 Bull inscriptions, the details of the war against Judah and King Hezekiah are found in the latter part of Sennacherib's discussion of his third campaign. Nevertheless, the internal data from these records and the words of Josephus reveal that this expedition belongs chronologically between the victory over Ashkelon and the battle of Eltekeh (which was followed by the conquest of Ekron). First, Padi was returned to the throne of Ekron after Sennacherib took that city. Yet Padi had been held by Hezekiah in Jerusalem and was not released until after Hezekiah had submitted to the Assyrian king. Second, the expression "as for Hezekiah," which begins the report of the victory over Judah, reflects that Sennacherib merely wrote of the Palestim region first and then backtracked to the discussion of Judah. Third, the route

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

**(F2) Bull
Inscription**

**Nebi Yunis
Inscription**

2:68b-72⁹

(68b) In the course of my campaign, (69) Beth-Dagon, Joppa, (70) Banaibarka, Asuru, cities (71) of Sidka, who had not speedily bowed in (72) submission at my feet, I conquered, I carried off their spoil.

ℓ.22a¹⁰

(22a) In the course of my campaign I captured his (Sidka's) cities, which had not submitted at my feet, I carried off their spoil.

2:60b-68a

(60b) But Sidka, (61) king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted (62) to my yoke,—the gods of his father's house, himself, his wife, (63) his sons his daughters, his brothers, the seed of his father's house, (64) I tore away and brought to Assyria. (65) Sharru-lu-dâri, son of Rukibtî, their former king, (66) I set over the people of Ashkelon and (67) I imposed upon him the payment of tribute (in the form of) presents to my majesty. (68a) He accepted (lit., bore) my yoke.

ℓ.20b-21

(20b) And Sidka, king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted to my yoke,—the gods of his father's house, himself, together with [his] family, (21) I tore up and carried away to Assyria. Sharru-lu-dâri, son of Rukibtî, their [former] king, I placed [over the people of] Ashkelon, and imposed my royal tribute upon him.

3:18-27a¹¹

(18) As for Hezekiyahu, the Yahudahi (Judahite), (19) who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities, and (20) the small cities in their neighborhood, (21) which were without number,—by leveling with battering-rams (?) (22) and by bringing up siege en-

ℓ.27b-28a¹²

(27b) As for Hezekiyahu, the Yahudahi (Judahite), who did not submit (28a) to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities and the small cities in their neighborhood, which were without number, I besieged, I captured. I plundered, as booty I counted them.

ℓ.20b-21a

(20b) I devastated (21a) the wide province of Judah,

ℓ.15a

(15a) I devastated the wide province of Judah.

of the campaign shows that Sennacherib first attacked the coastal regions, striking at the Phoenicians cities, moving south to the region around Joppa, and then invading the Palestim town of Ashkelon. He next turned inland, invading Judah, making his own camp at the Judahite city of Lachish while other divisions moved against a number of other fortified cities in Judah. After sending troops to Jerusalem to blockade that city, Sennacherib turned north to Libnah (near Eltekeh) in the direction towards Ekron. Here he could take up a well-suited position for meeting the approaching Egyptian and Ethiopian forces who had been summoned by the people of Ekron. (The march of the Egyptian and Ethiopian forces would have been upon the Palestim Road along the coast, turning inland to Ekron and then towards the Assyrian army at Libnah. See Map 1). Fourth, Josephus reports that Sennacherib set out to meet this Egyptian and Ethiopian army at the same time that he sent a large force under Rabshakeh to sack Jerusalem.

¹² Ibid.

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities*****32:2-8**

(2) And Hezekiyahu saw that Sennacherib had come, and his face for battle against Jerusalem; (3) and he took counsel with his leaders and his mighty ones, to stop the waters of the springs that were on the outside of the city; and they helped him. (4) And many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs, and the brook that was rushing through the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water? (5) And he made himself strong and built all the wall that was broken, and raised up on (it) the towers, and outside another wall, and strengthened Millo, the city of David, and made darts in abundance, and shields. (6) And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them to him, to the street of the gate of the city, and spoke to their heart, saying, (7) Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor be cast down before the face of the king of Assyria, and before the face of all the multitude

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

136b

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

**(F2) Bull
Inscription**

**Nebi Yunis
Inscription**

gines (?), by attacking
and storming on foot,
(23) by mines, tunnels
and breaches (?), I be-
sieged and took (those
cities). (24) 200,150
people, great and small,
male and female, (25)
horses, mules, asses,
camels, (26) cattle and
sheep, without number, I
brought away from them
(27) and counted as
spoil.

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities***

that is with him. (8) With him is an arm of flesh, and with us is Yahweh our eloahi to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people were supported by the words of Hezekiyahu the king of Judah.

18:14a

(14a) And Hezekiyah the king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria, **to Lachish**, saying, I have offended, turn back from me; that which you put on me I will bear.

18:14b-16

(14b) And the king of Assyria laid on Hezekiyah the king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold; (15) and Hezekiyah gave **all the silver that was found in the house of Yahweh**,¹³ and in the treasures of the house of the king — (16) at that time Hezekiyah cut off the doors of the temple of Yahweh, and the pillars that Hezekiyah the king of Judah had overlaid, and gave them to the king of Assyria.

10:1:1(2a)

(2a) And he was about to lead his force against Jerusalem also, but, before he could do so, Hezekiah sent envoys to him and promised to submit to him and pay whatever tribute he should impose.

10:1:1(2b-3)

(2b) When Sena-cherimos heard what the envoys had to say, he decided not to continue with the war, but acceded to the request and, on receiving three hundred talents of silver and thirty of gold, agreed to withdraw amicably, and gave sworn pledges to the envoys that he would do him no harm at all but would retire under these terms. (3) So Hezekiah, being persuaded by this offer emptied his treasuries and sent the money in the belief that he would be rid of the war and the struggle for his throne.

¹³ The 300 talents of silver (2 Kings, 18:14b) plus all the silver found in the house of Yahweh (2 Kings, 18:15) represent the 800 talents of silver reported in the parallel Assyrian accounts.

¹⁴ That *urbi* is an Aramaic and Hebrew term for shock troops see AHJP, p. 142.

¹⁵ Ibid.

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

**(F2) Bull
Inscription**

**Nebi Yunis
Inscription**

3:37-41a

(37) As for Hezekiyahu, (38) the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and (39) the *Urbi* (shock troops)¹⁴ and his mercenary (?) troops which he had brought in to strengthen (40) Jerusalem, his royal city, (41a) deserted him (lit., took leave).

ℓ. 30b-31a

(30b) That Hezekiyahu,—the terrifying splendor of my royalty (31a) overcame him, and the *Urbi* (shock troops)¹⁵ and his picked troops whom he had brought into Jerusalem, his royal city, ran away (took leave).

ℓ. 21b-22a

(21b) the strong, proud Hezekiyahia, its king, I brought in submission (22a) to my feet.

**Rassam
Cylinder¹⁶**

3:41b-49

(41b) In addition to 30 talents of gold and (41) 800 talents of silver,¹⁷ (there were) gems, antimony, (43) jewels (?), large *sandu*-stones, couches of ivory, (44) house chairs of ivory, elephant's hide, ivory (lit., elephant's "teeth"), (45) ebony (?), boxwood (?), all kinds of valuable (heavy) treasures, (46) as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female (47) musicians, (which) he had (them) bring after me (48) to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute (49) and to accept (lit., do) servitude, he dispatched his messengers.

ℓ. 31b-32

(31b) With 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver¹⁸ (32) and all kinds of treasure from his palace, he sent his daughters, his palace women, his male and female singers, to Nineveh, and he dispatched his messengers to pay the tribute.

ℓ. 56-60

(56) (in addition to the) 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver,¹⁹ (there were) gems (precious stones), antimony, jewels (?), great *sandu*-stones (carnelian?), ivory beds, house chairs of ivory, elephant's hides, ivory (elephant's tusks, teeth), maple, boxwood, colored (woolen) garments, garments of linen, violet and purple wool, (57) vessels of copper, iron, bronze and lead, iron chariots, shields, lances, armor, girdle daggers of iron, bows and arrows, spears, countless implements of war, (58) together with his daughters, his palace women, his male and female musicians (which)

ℓ. 15b

(15b) On Hezekiyahu, its king, I laid my yoke.

¹⁶ AS, pp. 60-61, ℓ. 56-60; ARAB, 2, #284-284a.

¹⁷ See above n. 13.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities*****18:17a**

(17a) And the king of Assyria sent the tartan (*turtānu*), and the chief of the eunuchs, and Rabshakeh (the chief cup-bearer) FROM LACHISH, to King Hezekiyahu, with a numerous army, to Jerusalem.

36:2a

(2a) And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh FROM LACHISH to Jerusalem to King Hezekiyahu with a numerous army.

32:9a

(9a) After this Sennacherib the king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem— and he was BY LACHISH, and all his power with him— against Hezekiyahu the king of Judah, and against all Judah who were in Jerusalem,

10:1:1(4a)

(4a) But, when the Assyrian received the money, he paid no regard to the agreement he had made;²⁰

10:1:1(4b)

(4b) instead, while he himself took the field against the Egyptians and Ethiopians,²¹ he left behind his general Rapsakēs with a large force, and also two other commanding officers, to sack Jerusalem. The names of these men were Tharata and Aracharis.

²⁰ With this verse, Josephus provides us with the important transition missing in our other texts. Here we easily see that we are not dealing with two invasions but with one. Sennacherib merely found it to his benefit to make Hezekiah believe that the war would be over. After bleeding Hezekiah of his wealth, the Assyrian monarch merely ignored his promise of peace and continued with his original plans: to sack the city of Jerusalem and to deport all of its rebellious inhabitants to another distant country.

²¹ Josephus disregards the victories of Sennacherib at Lachish and Libnah and goes directly to the next and more important historical event, the upcoming battle against the Egyptian and Ethiopian forces which occurred at Eltekeh, located near Libnah. His cursory statement is quite appropriate since it took

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

138b

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

**Rassam
Cylinder**

**Palace
Inscription²²**

he had (them) bring after me to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute and to render servitude, he dispatched his messenger(s). (59) From the booty of those lands which I plundered, 10,000 bows, 10,000 shields I took therefrom and added them to my royal equipment. (60) The rest, the heavy spoil of the enemy (captives), I divided like sheep among my whole camp (army) as well as my governors and the inhabitants of my large cities.

ℓ.1-4

(1) Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, (2) sat upon a *nîmedu*-throne (lit. standing-chair) (3) (while) the booty (taken) from Lachish (*La-ki-su*) (4) passed in review.

only one day for Rabshakeh, sent from Lachish to nearby Jerusalem, to deliver his message to Hezekiah. Yet when he returned to Sennacherib a few days later, the Assyrian king was already fighting against Libnah, obviously to clear the region where he was to take his stand in preparation for his upcoming battle with the Egyptian and Kushite forces. This evidence shows that Sennacherib had already seized Lachish prior to receiving the tribute from Hezekiah. As Sennacherib was finishing with Lachish, he sent Rabshakeh with a large force against Jerusalem to sack the city and exile the population.

²² AS, p. 156, no. xxv, ℓ.1-4; ANET, p. 288 (4).

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
Antiquities****18:17b-18a**

(17b) And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And they went up and came in and he stood by the conduit of the upper pool that was on the highway of the Fuller's field. (18a) And they called to the king

18:18b

(18b) and Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph the recorder, came out to them.

18:19-25²³

(19) And Rabshakeh said to them,

Now say to Hezekiyahu, This says the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this trust which you have trusted? (20) Are you saying only a word of the lips is counsel and valor for war? Now, upon whom have you trusted that you have rebelled against me?

(21) Now, behold, you trust for yourself upon the staff of this broken reed, upon Egypt which, if a man leans upon it, it goes into his palm and pierces it! So is Pharaoh the king of Egypt to all those who trust upon him.

36:2b

(2b) And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway of the Fuller's field.

36:3

(3) and Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph the recorder, came out to him.

36:4-10²⁴

(4) And Rabshakeh said to them,

Now say to Hezekiyahu, This says the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this trust which you have trusted? (5) Are you saying to me only a word of the lips is counsel and valor for war? Now, upon whom have you trusted that you have rebelled against me?

(6) Behold, you trust upon the staff of this broken reed, upon Egypt, which, if a man leans upon it, it goes into his palm and pierces it! So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all those who trust upon him.

10:1:2(5a)

(5a) When they arrived, they encamped before the walls and sent to Hezekiah and asked him to parley with them.

10:1:2(5b-6a)

(5b) He, however, out of cowardice did not himself come out but sent out three of the friends who were closest to him, the steward of the kingdom, named Eliakias, and Sūbanaios and Joachos, who was in charge of the records. (6a) So these three came forward and stood facing the commanders of the Assyrian army;

32:9b-12

(9b) saying,

(10) Thus says Senacherib the king of Assyria, Upon what are you trusting that you sit under siege in Jerusalem?

10:1:2(6b-7b)

(6b) and, when the general Rapsakēs saw them, he told them

(6c) to go back to Hezekiah and say that the great king Senacherimos was inquiring of him on what he so confidently relied that he avoided his master and was unwilling to listen to him and would not admit his army into the city.

(6d) Was it perhaps, he asked, because of the Egyptians, and in the hope that the Assyrian army had been beaten by them? (7a) If this was what he expected, they should, he said, make clear to him that he was very foolish and like a man who leans upon a broken reed and not only falls but also has his hand pierced, and feels the hurt.

²³ The form of delivery in this letter is very near parallel to that of The Nimrud Letter I (Iraq, 17, pp. 23ff, 26ff; IAC, pp. 80-82).

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

139b

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
Antiquities**

(22) And when you say to me, We trust to Yahweh our eloahi, is it not he whose high places and his altars Hezekiyahu has removed, and he has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Before this altar you shall bow down in Jerusalem?

(23) And, now, exchange pledges, I beg, with my sovereign, the king of Assyria, and I will give to you two thousand horses, if you are able to give for yourself riders upon them.

(24) And how will you turn back the face of one governor of the least of the servants of my sovereign, and trust for yourself upon Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Now, without Yahweh have I come upon this place to destroy it? Yahweh said to me, Go upon this land and destroy it.

18:26

(26) And Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, Please speak Aramaic to your servants, for we understand; and do not speak Judahite with us in the ears of the people who are upon the wall.

18:27-32a

(27) And Rabshakeh said to them, Has my sovereign sent me to speak these words to your sovereign

(7) And when you say to me, We trust to Yahweh our eloahi, is it not he whose high places and his altars Hezekiyahu has removed, and he has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Before this altar you shall bow down?

(8) And, now, exchange pledges with my sovereign, the king of Assyria, and I will give to you two thousand horses, if you are able to give for yourself riders upon them.

(9) And how will you turn back the face of one governor of the least of the servants of my sovereign, and trust for yourself upon Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? (10) And now, without Yahweh have I come upon this land to destroy it? Yahweh said to me, Go upon this land and destroy it.

36:11

(11) Then Eliakim and Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, Please speak Aramaic to your servants, for we understand; and do not speak Judahite to us in the ears of the people upon the wall.

36:12-17

(12) And Rabshakeh said, Has my sovereign sent me to speak these words to your sovereign

(11) Is not Hezekiyahu misleading you, to give you up to die by famine, and by thirst, saying, Yahweh our eloahi will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria?

(12) Has not Hezekiyahu himself removed his high places, and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Before one altar you shall bow down, and upon it you shall burn incense?

(7b) They should know, he said, that by the will of the deity, who had granted him to overthrow the kingdom of the Israelites also, he had made this expedition against Hezekiah in order that he might in the same way destroy those ruled by him.

10:1:2(8a)

(8a) As Rapsakēs spoke these words in Hebrew, with which language he was familiar, Eliakias was afraid that the people might overhear them and be thrown into consternation, and so asked him to speak in Syrian (Aramaic).

10:1:2(8b-10)

(8b) But the general, perceiving what was in the back of his mind and the fear that held him, spoke in a very

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

140b

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

2 Kings

Isaiah

2 Chronicles

Josephus,
Antiquities

and to you? Is it not upon the males who sit upon the walls, for (those) eating their own dung and drinking their own urine with you? (28) And Rabshakeh stood and called with a loud Judahite voice, and he spoke and he said, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria.

(29) Thus says the king, Do not let Hezekiyahu deceive you, for he is not able to deliver you out of his hand. (30) And do not let Hezekiyahu put your trust to Yahweh, saying, "Yahweh shall deliver us" and, "This city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."

(31) Do not listen to Hezekiyahu, for thus says the king of Assyria, Make with me a blessing, and come out to me; and the male eat of his vine, and the male of his fig tree, and the male of the waters of his well, (32a) until I come and take you to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive oil, and honey; and live, and do not die.

and to you? Is it not upon the males who sit upon the walls, for (those) eating their own dung and drinking their own urine with you? (13) And Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud Judahite voice, and he said, Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.

(14) Thus says the king, Do not let Hezekiyahu deceive you, for he is not able to deliver you. (15) And do not let Hezekiyahu put your trust to Yahweh, saying, "Yahweh shall deliver us. This city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."

(16) Do not listen to Hezekiyahu, for thus says the king of Assyria, Make with me a blessing, and come out to me; and the male eat of his vine, and the male of his fig tree, and the male of the waters of his well, (17) until I come and take you to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

loud and clear voice and replied that he was speaking to him in Hebrew in order that all may hear the king's commands and choose a course to their advantage by surrendering to us.

(9a) For it is clear that both you and the king are beguiling the people with vain hopes in persuading them to resist.

(9b)²⁵ If, however, you are confident and think you can repulse our force, I am ready to furnish you with two thousand of the horses that are with me, in order that you may mount on them the same number of riders and so show your strength. But you cannot furnish riders whom you do not have.

(10) Why, then, do you hesitate to surrender to those who are stronger than yourselves and will take you whether you like it or not? Nevertheless a voluntary surrender means safety for you, while an involuntary one after your defeat will prove to be dangerous and the cause of misfortunes.

²⁵ Josephus informs us (sect. 9b) that, after refusing to speak to the Judahites in Aramaic, Rabshakeh once again offered the challenge of providing the Judahites with 2,000 horses if they could provide riders

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

141b

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

**Targ. Jon.
*2 Kings***

**Targ. Jon.
*Isaiah***

18:31-32a

(31) Do not accept from Hezekiyah, for thus says the king of Assyria, Make peace with me, and come out to me; and the male eat of the fruits of his vines, and the male the fruits of his fig trees, and the male of the waters of his well, (32a) until I come and take you to a good land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of farms and vineyards, a land whose olive trees make oil, and it makes honey; and live, and do not die.

36:16-17

(16) Do not listen to Hezekiyah, for thus says the king of Assyria, Make peace with me, and come out to me; and eat everyone the fruit of his own vine, and everyone the fruit of his fig trees, and everyone drink the waters of his own well, (17) until I come and lead you to a good land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of fields and vineyards.

for them to do battle with the Assyrian army (cf. 2 Kings, 18:23; Isa., 36:9).

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities*****18:32b-35**

(32b) And do not listen to Hezekiyahu, when he persuades you, saying Yahweh shall deliver us.

(33) Have the eloahi of the nations at all delivered a male his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? (34) Where are the eloahi of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the eloahi of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Auah? When did they deliver Samaria from my hand?

(35) Who among all the eloahi of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?

18:36-37

(36) And the people were quiet and did not answer him a word, for a command of the king it was, saying, Do not answer him.

(37) And came Elia-kim, the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiyahu, having torn (their) garments; and they reported to him the words of Rabshakeh.

36:18-20

(18a) Lest Hezekiyahu persuade you, by saying, Yahweh will deliver us.

(18b) Have the eloahi of the nations delivered a male his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? (19) Where are the eloahi of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the eloahi of Sepharvaim? And, when did they deliver Samaria from my hand?

(20) Who among all the eloahi of these lands has delivered his land from my hand, that Yahweh should keep Jerusalem from my hand?

36:21-22

(21) And they were quiet and did not answer him a word, for a command of the king it was, saying, Do not answer him.

(22) And came Elia-kim, the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiyahu, having torn (their) garments; and they reported to him the words of Rabshakeh.

32:13-15

(13) Do you not know what I have done, my fathers and I, to all the people of the lands? Were the eloahi of the nations of the lands at all able to deliver their land out of my hand?

(14) Who among all the eloahi of these nations who my fathers utterly destroyed has been able to deliver his people out of my hand, that your eloahi will be able to deliver you out of my hand? (15) And now, do not let Hezekiyahu deceive you, nor mislead you like this, nor trust him, for no eloah of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand and the hand of my fathers. Truly, without a doubt, your eloahi shall not deliver you from my hand.

10:1:3(11a-b)

(11a) When the people and the envoys had heard these words of the Assyrian general,

(11b) they reported them to Hezekiah.

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

142b

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities*****19:1**

(1) And it was, when King Hezekiyahu heard, he tore his garments and he covered himself with sackcloth, and he entered the house of Yahweh.

36:1

(1) And it was, when King Hezekiyahu heard, he tore his garments and he covered himself with sackcloth, and he entered the house of Yahweh.

10:1:3(11c)

(11c) And he thereupon took off his royal garments, put on sackcloth and assumed an attitude of humility; then, falling on his face in the manner of his country, he supplicated the deity and entreated him to help one who had no other hope of salvation.

19:2-5

(2) And he sent Eliakim, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covering them with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. (3) And they said to him, Thus says Hezekiyahu, A day of trouble and reproach and contempt is this day! For the sons have come to the pains of childbirth, and there is no strength to bring forth. (4) Perhaps Yahweh your eloahi will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom his sovereign, the king of Assyria, has sent to reproach the living eloahim, and (Yahweh) will rebuke against the words which Yahweh your eloahi has heard, and you shall lift up a prayer for the remnant that is found. (5) And the servants of King Hezekiyahu came to Isaiah.

36:2-5

(2) And he sent Eliakim, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covering them with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. (3) And they said to him, Thus says Hezekiyahu, A day of trouble and reproach and contempt is this day! For the sons have come to the the pains of childbirth, and there is no strength to bring forth. (4) Perhaps Yahweh your eloahi will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom his sovereign, the king of Assyria, has sent to reproach the living eloahim, and (Yahweh) will rebuke against the words which Yahweh your eloahi has heard, and you shall lift up a prayer for the remnant that is found. (5) And the servants of King Hezekiyahu came to Isaiah.

10:1:3(12)

(12) He also sent some of his friends and some of the priests to the prophet Isaiah and asked him to pray to the deity and, when he had offered sacrifices for the common safety, to exhort him (Yahweh) to show his wrath at the hopes of the enemy, but to take pity upon his own people.

18:6-7

(6) And Isaiah said to them, Thus you shall say to your sovereign, Thus says Yahweh, Do not be afraid from the face of the words which you have heard, which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. (7) Behold,

36:6-7

(6) And Isaiah said to them, Thus you shall say to your sovereign, Thus says Yahweh, Do not be afraid from the face of the words which you have heard, which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. (7) Behold,

10:1:3(13-14)

(13) And, when the prophet had done these things and received an oracle from the deity (Yahweh), he encouraged both the king himself and the friends who were with him by foretelling that the enemy would be defeated without a battle

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

143b

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities***

I will put in him a spirit, and (he) shall hear a report and turn back to his land. And I will cause him to fall by the sword in his land.

I will put in him a spirit, and (he) shall hear a report and turn back to his land. And I will cause him to fall by the sword in his land.

and retire ignominiously, with none of the self-confidence which they now showed, (14) for the deity would see to it that they should be destroyed; and he also foretold that Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, would himself fail in his attempt against Egypt and returning to his own land would perish by the sword.²⁶

10:1(4)²⁷

(4) instead, while he (Sennacherib) himself took the field against the Egyptians and Ethiopians, he left behind his general Rapsakēs with a large force, and also two other commanding officers, to sack Jerusalem. The names of these men were Tharata and Aracharis.

19:8

(8) And Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he had set out from Lachish.²⁸

37:8

(8) So Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he had set out from Lachish.²⁹

²⁶ Josephus here testifies once again that the primary objective of Sennacherib was Egypt.

²⁷ We repeat this verse from Josephus to remind our reader that the battle at Eltekeh was imminent and occurred shortly after the forces under Rabshakeh began their blockade of Jerusalem.

²⁸ See above ns. 21 and 27.

²⁹ Ibid.

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

3:27b-36³⁰

(27b) Himself (Hezekiyahu), like a caged bird, (28) in Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut up. (29) Earthworks I threw up against him,—(30) the one coming out of his city gate I turned back to his misery. (31) The cities of his, which I had spoiled, I cut off from his land and (32) to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, (33) Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-bel, (34) king of Gaza, I gave (them). I diminished his land. (35) I added to the former tribute, (36) and laid upon him (var. them) the giving (up) of their land, (as well as) imposts—gifts for my majesty.

ℓ. **28b-30a**³¹

(28b) Himself (Hezekiyahu), like a caged bird, in (29) Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut up. Earthworks I threw up about it. His cities which I plundered, I cut off from his land and gave to (30) the kings of Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron and Gaza; I diminished his land. To the former tribute, I imposed and laid upon him the giving up of his land as a gift.

2:73-3:5

(73) The governors, nobles and people of Amkaruna (Ekron), (74) who had thrown Padi,

ℓ. **22a-25a**

(22a) The governors and people of Amkaruna (Ekron), who had thrown Padi, their king,

³⁰ The Assyrian record at this point confirms the account from 2 Kings, 19:32-34, and Isa., 37:33-35, that the Assyrians never entered the city of Jerusalem, never built any siege mounds against it, nor made any assault upon it. Also see Chap. V, p. 56, n. 32.

³¹ Ibid.

145a

Chart F

2 Kings

Isaiah

2 Chronicles

**Josephus,
*Antiquities***

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

their king, bound by (lit. lord of) oath and curse (i.e. treaty) to Assyria, (75) into fetters of iron and (76-77) had given him over to Hezekiyahu, the Yahudahi (Judahite),—he kept him in confinement like an enemy,—(78) they (lit., their heart) became afraid (79) and appealed (for aid) to the kings of Muzri (Lower Egypt), the bowmen, chariots and horses (80) of the king of Meluhḥa (Upper Egypt), a countless host, and (81) these came to their aid. (82) In the neighborhood of the city of Altakû (Eltekeh), (83) their ranks being drawn up before me, (3:1) they offered battle. (Trusting) in the aid of Assur, (2) my lord, I fought with them and (3) brought about their defeat. The charioteers and Muzri princes, (4) together with the charioteers of the Meluhḥa (Upper Egypt) king, (5) my hands took alive in the midst of the battle.

3:6-7

(6) Altakû (Eltekeh) (and) Tamnah (7) I besieged, I captured and took away their spoil.

3:8-17

(8) I drew near to Amkaruna (Ekron) and slew the governors and nobles (9) who had committed sin (that is, rebelled), and (10) hung their bodies on stakes (or, pillars) around the city. The citizens (11) who had rebelled (sinned) and treated (Assyria) lightly, I counted as spoil. (12) The rest of them, who were not guilty (carriers) of sin

(23) bound by (lit. lord of) oath (i.e. treaty) to Assyria, into fetters of iron, and had given him over to Hezekiyahu, the Yahudahi (Judahite)—he kept him in confinement like an enemy,—they (lit., their heart) became afraid, and appealed (for aid) to the kings of Muzri (Lower Egypt), the bowmen, (24) the chariots and horses of the king of Meluhḥa (Upper Egypt), a countless host. In the plain of Altakû (Eltekeh) I fought with them, I defeated them. The charioteers (25a) and Muzri princes, together with the charioteers of the Meluhḥa (Upper Egypt) king, I captured alive with my (own) hand.

ℓ. 25b-27a

(25b) I drew near to Amkaruna (Ekron). The governors who had rebelled (committed sin) (26) I slew with the sword. The citizens who had rebelled (sinned) I counted as spoil. The rest of them, who were not guilty (carriers) of sin, I pardoned. Padi, their king, (27a) I brought out of Jerusalem and placed on the throne over them. My royal

146a

Chart F

2 Kings

Isaiah

2 Chronicles

**Josephus,
*Antiquities***



10:1:4-5(20b)³²

[Berosus]

(20b) But Berosus, who wrote the *History of Chaldaea*, also mentions King Senacheirimos and tells how he ruled over the Assyrians and how he made an expedition against all Asia and Egypt;

³² We repeat this passage dealing with the history from Berosus to remind our reader that the second

**Taylor
Prism**

**(F1) Bull
Inscription**

(13) and contempt, who were without sin (blame, i.e. for whom there was no punishment),—(14) I spoke their pardon. Padi, their king, (15) I brought out of Jerusalem. (16) I set him on the royal throne over them and (17) imposed upon him my kingly tribute.

tribute I imposed upon him.

THE END OF THE RECORDS OF SENNACHERIB

**Josephus
*Antiquities***

Herodotus

10:1:4(18a)

[Herodotus]

(18a) Concerning this Senacheirimos, Herodotus also tells us, in the second book of his History, that this king came against the king of Egypt, who was a priest of Hephaestus, and besieged Pelusium,

2:141a

(141a) The next king was the priest of Hephaestus, whose name was Sethos. He despised and took no account of the warrior Egyptians, thinking he would never need them; besides otherwise dishonouring them, he took away the chosen lands which had been given to them, twelve fields to each man, in the reign of former kings. So presently came king Sennacherib against Egypt, with a great host of Arabians and Assyrians; and the warrior Egyptians would not march against him.

10:1:4(18b)

(18b) but he abandoned the siege for the following reason. The king of Egypt prayed to the deity, and the deity hearkened to his prayer

2:141b

(141b) The priest, in this quandary, went into the temple shrine and there bewailed to the deity's image the peril which threatened him. In his lamentation he fell asleep, and bidding him take courage, for he should suffer no ill by encountering the host of Arabia: "Myself," said the deity, "will send you champions."

part of Sennacherib's third campaign, his attack upon Egypt, begins now.

2 Kings**Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities***

 EVENTS OF ABIB 10³³
10:1:4(17a)

(17a) A little while after this the king of Assyria failed in his attack upon the Egyptians and returned home without accomplishing anything for the following reason. After he had spent a great deal of time on the siege of Pelusium, and the earthworks which he was raising against the walls on the point of attacking,

19:9a

(9a) And he (Sennacherib) heard about Tirhakah the king of Kush, saying, Behold, he has come out to fight with you,

37:9a

(9a) And he (Sennacherib) heard about Tirhakah the king of Kush, saying, He has come out to fight with you.

10:1:4(17b)

(17b) he heard that Tharsikēn, the king of Ethiopia, was coming to the aid of the Egyptians with a large force and decided to make the journey through the

³³ The plague that struck the Assyrian army at Pelusium during the night was followed by the news that Tirhakah the king of Kush was coming, the abandonment of the siege of Pelusium, and the messengers being sent by Sennacherib to Jerusalem. All these events occurred on Abib 10 of 701 B.C.E. (the same day Hezekiah became ill). We uncover this date when we consider that the messengers sent by Sennacherib arrived at Jerusalem during the daylight hours of Abib 13, the Assyrian army outside of Jerusalem being struck by a plague that night (Abib 14, Passover). The approximately 220-mile trip from

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

Josephus
Antiquities

Herodotus

Targ. Jon.
2 Kings

Targ. Jon.
Isaiah

2:141c

(141c) So he trusted the vision, and encamped at Pelusium with such Egyptians as would follow him, for here is the road into Egypt; and none of the warriors would go with him, but only hucksters and artificers and traders. Their enemies too came here.

EVENTS OF ABIB 10

10:1:4(18c-19a)

(18c) and visited a plague upon the Arab— (19a) at just this point he (Herodotus) is in error, calling him king of the Arabs instead of king of the Assyrians—for, he says, in one night a host of mice ate through the bows and other weapons of the Assyrians,

2:141d

(141d) And one night a multitude of fieldmice swarmed over the Assyrian camp and devoured their quivers and their bows and the handles of their shields likewise,

10:1:4(19b-20a)

(19b) and, as the king on that account had no bows, he withdrew his army from Pelusium. (20a) This, then, is the account which Herodotus gives.

2:141e

(141e) insomuch that they fled the next day unarmed and many fell. And at this day a stone statue of the Egyptian king stands in Hephaestus' temple, with a

19:9a

(9a) And he (Sennacherib) heard about Tirhah (Tirhakah) the king of Kush, saying, Behold, he has come out to wage battle with you,

37:9a

(9a) And he (Sennacherib) heard about Tirhah the king of Kush, saying, He has set out to wage war against you.

Pelusium to Jerusalem for the messengers (riding day and night, pony-express style) would have traveled this route within four days (the 10th through the 13th), averaging about 50–55 miles per day and arriving at Jerusalem in the afternoon of the 13th. Sennacherib's army, on the other hand, would move at a much slower pace, averaging only about 20 miles a day (see Chap. III, pp. 33f, n. 36). They would have packed up and left Pelusium in the daylight hours of Abib 10. Sennacherib would have arrived at Jerusalem sometime during the eleventh day of travel (i.e. on Abib 20), being the last day of Passover.

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities*****19:9b-13**

(9b) and he (Sennacherib) turned back, and he sent messengers to Hezekiyahu, saying, (10) Thus shall you speak to Hezekiyahu the king of Judah, saying, Do not let your eloahi, in whom you trust deceive you, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. (11) Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? (12) Have the eloahi of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed: Gozan and Harran and Rezeph, and the sons of Eden who were in Telassar? (13) Where is the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena and Auah?

20:1

(1) In those days Hezekiyahu was sick towards death,³⁵ and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him, Thus says Yahweh, command your house,

37:9b-13

(9b) And he (Sennacherib) heard,³⁴ and he sent messengers to Hezekiyahu, saying, (10) Thus shall you speak to Hezekiyahu the king of Judah, saying, Do not let your eloahi, in whom you trust, deceive you, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. (11) Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? (12) Have the eloahi of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed: Gozan and Harran and Rezeph, and the sons of Eden who were in Telassar? (13) Where is the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena and Auah?

38:1

(1) In those days Hezekiyahu was sick towards death,³⁶ and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him, Thus says Yahweh, command your house,

32:24a

(24a) In those days Hezekiyahu was sick as far as towards death,³⁷

10:1:4(15)

(15) Now it happened that about this time the king of Assyria had written a letter to Hezekiah, in which he said that he was foolish to suppose that he would escape being made his servant, since he had subdued many great nations, and he threatened to destroy him utterly and completely after capturing him, unless he opened the gates and willingly admitted his army into Jerusalem.

10:2:1(25)

(25) But, though he showed all zeal and devotion in the worship of the deity, he was smitten by a severe illness,³⁸ and all hope for him was given up by the physicians, nor did his friends

desert and fall upon the Assyrians suddenly. And so, being alarmed at this news, King Sennacherimos left Pelusium and withdrew, as I said, without accomplishing anything.

³⁴ The LXX has, “καὶ ἀκούσας ἀπέστρεψε (and hearing, turned aside).” The Qumran Isaiah scroll reads, “and he heard and he turned back” (1QIsa.³). These texts, when used in conjunction with our main sources, reveal that, at the time that Sennacherib heard of the advance of Tirhakah, he turned his army around and abandoned his war against Pelusium and the Egyptians. When he turned back he was still intent upon taking Jerusalem. Accordingly, he sent messengers to Hezekiah ahead of his returning army hoping to intimidate the Jewish king into submission.

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

148b

Josephus
Antiquities

Herodotus

Seder Olam

mouse in his hand, and
an inscription to this ef-
fect: "Look on me, and
fear the deities."

23 (l. 42)

(42) Three days be-
fore Sennacherib's
downfall Hezekiyahu
became ill.

³⁵ It is hard to disassociate the illness of Hezekiah with the plague that struck the Assyrian army outside his city gates. Cf. Chap. III, pp. 34–36, p. 33, n. 35.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities***

for you are dying, and you shall not live.

for you are dying, and you shall not live.

have any expectation of a change for the better in his condition. And the illness was aggravated by the dreadful despair of the king himself when he considered his childlessness and that he was about to die leaving his house and his realm unprovided with a legitimate successor.

20:2-3

(2) And he turned his face to the wall, and he prayed to Yahweh, saying, (3) I beg you Yahweh, remember now that I have walked before you in truth and with a whole heart, and I have done good in your eyes. And Hezekiyahu cried a great crying.

38:2-3

(2) And Hezekiyahu turned his face to the wall and he prayed to Yahweh, and he said, (3) I beg you Yahweh, remember now that I have walked before you in truth and with a whole heart, and I have done good in your eyes. And Hezekiyahu cried a great crying.

32:24b

(24b) and he prayed to Yahweh,

10:2:1(26)

(26) And so, suffering chiefly from this thought and lamenting it, he supplicated the deity to give him a little longer time to live, until he should beget children, and not let him depart this life before becoming a father.

10:2:1(27a)

(27a) Then the deity took pity on him and granted his request, since he bewailed the death of which he had a presentiment, and had prayed to him to give him yet a little while to live, not because he was about to be deprived of the benefits of the kingship, but because he wished sons to be born to him who should succeed to his royal power;

20:4-6

(4) And it came to pass, Isaiah had not gone out of the middle court and the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, (5a) Return and you shall say to Hezekiyahu, the leader of my people, Thus says Yahweh the eloahi of your father David, I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears;

38:4-6

(4) And the word of Yahweh was to Isaiah, saying, (5a) Go and say to Hezekiyahu, Thus says Yahweh the eloahi of your father David, I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears.

32:24b

(24c) and he spoke to him,

10:2:1(27b-d)

(27b) and so he sent the prophet Isaiah

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

149b

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities***

(5b) Behold, I will heal you; On the third day you shall go up to the house of Yahweh.

(6) And I will add to your days fifteen years. And from the hand of the king of Assyria I shall deliver you and the city. And I shall defend over this city for my own sake, and for the sake of David, my servant.

20:7

(7) And Isaiah said, Take a cake of figs; and they took and laid it upon the boil; and he lived.

20:8

(8) And Hezekiyahu said to Isaiah, What is the sign that Yahweh will heal me and that I will go up to the house of Yahweh on the third day?

20:9

(9) And Isaiah said, This is to you the sign from Yahweh, that Yahweh will do the word that he has spoken: Shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or shall it turn back ten steps?

(5b) Behold,

(5c) I will add to your days fifteen years. (6) And from the hand of the king of Assyria I shall deliver you and this the city. And I shall defend over this city.

38:21

(21) And Isaiah said, Let them bear a cake of figs and rub it upon the boil, and he lived.

38:22

(22) And Hezekiyahu said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of Yahweh?

(27c) and told him to inform the king that within the third day after he should be rid of his illness

(27d) and should live another fifteen years, and that sons would be born to him.

10:2:1(28a)

(28a) When the prophet at the deity's command told him these things, he would not believe him because of the severity of his illness and because the news brought to him surpassed belief,

10:2:1(28b)

(28b) and so he asked Isaiah to perform some sign or miracle in order that he might believe in him when he said these things, as in one who came from the deity. For, he said, things that are beyond belief and surpass our hopes are made credible by acts of a like nature.

10:2:1(29a)

(29a) When the prophet inquired what sign he wished to have performed,

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

150b

**Targ. Jon.
*2 Kings***

20:5b-6

(5b) Behold, I will heal you; On the third day you shall go up to the sacred house of Yahweh.

(6) And I will add to your days fifteen years. And from the hand of the king of Assyria I shall deliver you and this city. And I shall protect this city on account of my memra (essence) and on account of David my servant.

20:8

(8) And Hezekiyah said to Isaiah, What is the sign that Yahweh will heal me and that I will go up to the sacred house of Yahweh on the third day?

20:9

(9) And Isaiah said, This is to you the sign from before Yahweh, that Yahweh will do the word that he has spoken: Shall the shadow go forward ten hours, or shall it turn back ten steps?

151a

Chart F

2 Kings

Isaiah

2 Chronicles

**Josephus,
Antiquities**

20:10

(10) And Hezekiyahu said, It would be easy for the shadow to extend ten steps; no, without a doubt, return the shadow back ten steps.

10:2:1(29b)

(29b) he asked him to cause the sun, which in declining had already cast a shadow of ten steps in the house, to return to the same place and again cast one there.

38:7-8a

(7) And this shall be the sign to you from Yahweh that Yahweh will do this word which he has spoken: (8a) Behold I will bring back the shadow of the steps, which has gone down on the steps of Ahaz with the sun, back ten steps.

EVENTS OF ABIB 13

20:11

(11) And Isaiah the prophet cried to Yahweh; and he turned back the shadow on the steps which had gone down on the steps of Ahaz, back ten steps.

38:8b

(8b) And the sun went back ten steps on the steps which it had gone down.

32:24c

(24c) and a sign he gave to him.

10:2:1(29c)

(29c) And, when the prophet exhorted the deity (Yahweh) to show this sign to the king, he saw what he wished and was at once freed from his illness;

32:16-19

(16) And again his (Sennacherib's) servants spoke against Yahweh, the eloahim, and against Hezekiyahu his servant. (17) And he had written letters to reproach Yahweh eloahi of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, As the eloahi of the nations of the lands who have not delivered their people from my hand, so the eloahi of Hezekiyahu shall not deliver his people from my hand. (18) And they called in a great Judahite voice, against

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

151b

Ecclesiasticus

Seder Olam

**Targ. Jon.
2 Kings**

**Targ. Jon.
Isaiah**

20:10

(10) And Hezekiyah said, It would be easy for the shadow to extend ten hours; but a miracle that the shadow should return the shadow on the stone figure of the hours, on which the sun went down on the stairs of Ahaz, back ten hours.

38:7-8a

(7) And this shall be the sign to you from Yahweh that Yahweh will do this word which he has spoken: (8a) Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the stone hours, on the steps of Ahaz, turn back ten hours.

EVENTS OF ABIB 13

48:23

(23) In his (Isaiah's) time the sun went backward, and he (Yahweh) lengthened the king's (Hezekiah's) life.

23 (ℓ. 42-44)

(42) Rabbi Yose says: (43) The third day of Hezekiyahu's illness was (the time of) Sennacherib's downfall. (44) The sun, which had descended for Ahaz his father, stood still for him, as it says, "behold, I will turn back ten steps the shadow."

20:11

(11) And Isaiah the prophet prayed before Yahweh; and he turned back the shadow on the stone figure of the hours, on which the sun went down on the stairs of Ahaz, backward ten hours.

38:8b

(8b) So the sun went back ten hours on the stone hours by the marking of the stone hours where it had declined.

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities***

the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten them and to terrify them, that they might capture the city. (19) And they spoke against the eloahi of Jerusalem as against the eloahi of the peoples of the earth, the work of the hands of man.

19:14-19

(14) And Hezekiyahu received the letters from the hand of the messengers, and he read them, and he went up to the house of Yahweh; and Hezekiyahu spread it before Yahweh. (15) And Hezekiyahu prayed before Yahweh, and he said, Yahweh, the eloahi of Israel, dwelling above the cherubim. You are he. You alone are the eloahim. For all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made the heavens and the earth.

(16) Yahweh, incline your ear and hear. Yahweh, open your eyes and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib who has sent it to reproach the living eloahim. (17) Truly, Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations, and lands; (18) and have given their eloahi into the fire—because they are not eloahim, therefore only the work of men's hands, wood and stone; and they destroy them.

(19) And now, Yahweh our eloahi, deliver us, we beg, from his hand, and all the kingdoms of the earth shall know that you alone are Yahweh eloahim.

19:20-34

(20) And Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to

37:14-20

(14) And Hezekiyahu received the letters from the hand of the messengers, and he read them, and he went up to the house of Yahweh; and Hezekiyahu spread it before Yahweh. (15) And Hezekiyahu prayed to Yahweh, saying, (16) Yahweh of hosts, eloahi of Israel, dwelling above the cherubim, You are he. You alone are the eloahim. For all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made the heavens and the earth.

(17) Yahweh, incline your ear and hear. Yahweh, open your eye and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib who has sent (it) to reproach the living eloahim. (18) Truly, Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the countries and lands, (19) and have given their eloahi into the fire—because they are not eloahim, therefore only the work of men's hands, wood and stone; and they destroy them.

(20) And now, Yahweh our eloahi, deliver us from his hand, and all the kingdoms of the earth shall know that you alone are Yahweh, .

37:21-35

(21) And Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to

32:20

(20) And Hezekiyahu the king, and Isaiah the son of Amoz, the prophet, prayed about this, and he cried to heaven.

10:1:4(16a)

(16a) When Hezekiah read these words, he made light of them because of his confidence inspired by the deity, but he folded up the letter and laid it away within the temple. And, when he offered a second prayer to the deity on behalf of the city and the safety of all,

10:1:4(16b-c)

(16b) the prophet Isaiah told him that he

Sennacherib's Third Campaign: 701 B.C.E.

152b

Josephus,
Antiquities

10:2:1(29d)

(29d) then he went
up to the temple and did
obeisance to the deity
(Yahweh) and offered
prayers to him.

2 Kings**Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities***

Hezekiyahu, saying, Thus says Yahweh, the eloahi of Israel, The prayer which was to me, as to Sennacherib the king of Assyria, I have heard.

(21) This is the word that Yahweh spoke against him: The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and mocked you; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind you. (22) Whom have you reproached and reviled? And against whom have you lifted up a voice? And you have lifted up your eyes on high against the sacred one of Israel!

(23) By the hand of your messengers you have reproached the adonai, and you said, With the multitude of my chariots I will be upon the sides of the spacious mountains of Lebanon, and I will cut down its tall cedars, from the best of its fir trees, and I will enter towards the furthest habitation, its densest forest.

(24) I shall dig and I shall drink foreign waters, and shall dry up with the sole of my feet all the rivers of Egypt.³⁹

(25) Have you not heard from a distance? These are my design from ancient days, and I imagined them. Now I have caused it to come, and you are a crashing storm, waves ruining fortified cities. (26) And their inhabitants were deficient of hand, afraid and ashamed. They were as the herbs of the field and shoots of the new blades of grass. Grass of

Hezekiyahu, saying, Thus says Yahweh the eloahi of Israel, The prayer which was to me, as to Sennacherib the king of Assyria.

(22) This is the word that Yahweh spoke against him: The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and mocked you; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind you. (22) Whom have you reproached and reviled? And against whom have you lifted up a voice? And you have lifted up your eyes on high against the sacred one of Israel!

(24) By the hand of your servants you have reproached the adonai, and you said, With the multitude of my chariots I will be upon the sides of the spacious mountains of Lebanon, and I will cut down its tall cedars, from the best of its fir trees, and I will enter towards the furthest habitation, its densest forest.

(25) I shall dig and I shall drink waters and shall dry up with the sole of my feet all the rivers of Egypt.⁴⁰

(26) Have you not heard from a distance? These are my design from ancient days, and I imagined them. Now I have caused it to come, and you are a crashing storm, waves ruining fortified cities. (27) And their inhabitants were deficient of hand, afraid and ashamed. They were as the herbs of the field and shoots of the new blades of grass. Grass of

(Yahweh) had hearkened to his prayer,

³⁹ Here the verb is pointed to read future tense by the Massoretic text, "I shall dry up," not "I have dried up" (HPM, 2, p. 301). Fullerton thinks that a future reading is against the context (BS, 63, p. 627, n. 62). Yet, there is no sound reason for this conclusion. Yahweh is merely informing Hezekiah of the

attitude of the king of Assyria: he had already conquered many nations and was next intending to overthrow Egypt. This passage demonstrates that the defeat of Egypt was Sennacherib's original and ultimate goal.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

2 Kings**Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities***

the roof tops, and scorched before being a stalk.

(27) And your sitting down and your going out and your coming in I know, and your rage towards me. (28) Paying attention, your rage towards me and your pride have come up in my ears. And I will put my hook in your nose and my bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the road on which you came in.

(29) And this shall be a sign for you: eat this year that which is sown of itself, and in the second year that which grows of the same, and in the third year you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (30) And the escaped of the house of Judah remaining shall accumulate, taking root downward, producing fruit upward. (31) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and the escaped out of Mount Zion. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts shall do this.

(32) Therefore, thus says Yahweh to the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor shall he build up a siege mound against it.⁴¹ (33) On the road which he came on, he shall return, and he shall not come into this

the roof tops, and blighted before being a stalk.

(28) And your sitting down and your going out and your coming in I know, and your rage towards me. (29) Paying attention, your rage towards me and your pride have come up in my ears. And I will put my hook in your nose and my bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the road on which you came in.

(30) And this shall be a sign for you: eat this year that which is sown of itself, and in the second year that which grows of the same, and in the third year you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (31) And the escaped of the house of Judah remaining shall accumulate, taking root downward, producing fruit upward. (32) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and the escaped out of Mount Zion. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts shall do this.

(33) Therefore, thus says Yahweh to the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor shall he build up a siege mound against it.⁴² (34) On the road which he came on, he shall return, and he shall not come into this

(16c) and that at the present time he would not be besieged by the Assyrian, while in the future his subjects, relieved of all apprehension, would till their land in peace and look after their own possessions without fear of anything.

⁴¹ The assault ramparts or siege mounds mentioned here must not be confused with the "earthworks" thrown up against Hezekiah which are reported in Sennacherib's records (see above n. 30). In the Assyrian account, Hezekiah is shut up in Jerusalem like "a caged bird." The earthworks are not thrown against the walls of the city but against the gates so that "the one coming out of the city gate" was "turned back to his misery." The Assyrian account only discusses the blockade and never mentions either assault ramparts or an assault on Jerusalem, which is in full accord with the report from Scriptures.

⁴² Ibid.

Seder Olam

**Targ. Jon.
2 Kings**

**Targ. Jon.
Isaiah**

23 (ℓ. 50-51)

(50) Thus it was said, "And this shall be a sign for you: eat this year that which is sown of itself," because (the Assyrians) came up (51) in the time before Passover, and they were not able to plant,⁴³ and so they ate what grows of itself.

19:29-31

(29) And this shall be a sign for you: eat in one year that which is sown of itself, and in the second year the third crop, and in the third year you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (30) And the escaped of the house of Judah shall continue like a tree that sends forth its roots below and raises up its branch above. (31) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant of the just ones, and the escaped of those upholding the law out of Mount Zion. By the memra (essence) of Yahweh of hosts this shall be done.

37:30-32

(30) And this shall be a sign for you: in this year eat that which is sown of itself, and in the second year that which grows of that sown of itself, and in the third year you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (31) And the escaped of the house of Judah remaining shall continue, and will be left as a tree which sends its roots downward, and raises its top upward. (32) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant of the righteous, and the escaped of those upholding the law out of Mount Zion. By the memra (essence) of Yahweh of hosts this shall be done.

⁴³ Planting time in Judah began at the end of November and continued until mid-January. Late planting occurred in February and March (HBC, pp. 33f). Under ancient Scriptural Law, one was only forbidden to harvest crops during the sabbath year itself. Meanwhile, the Assyrians would have destroyed or taken the early planting while the winter offensive would have prevented the Judahites from having any late planting. Therefore, since the sabbath year had begun, the true sign was established by the fact that the Judahites remained in their land to enjoy the sabbath year, eating directly out of the field from that which grows of itself.

Chart F**2 Kings****Isaiah****2 Chronicles****Josephus,
*Antiquities***

city, declares Yahweh.
(34) For I shall defend
over this city, for its de-
liverance, for my sake
and for the sake of Da-
vid, my servant.

city, declares Yahweh.
(35) For I shall defend
over this city, for its de-
liverance, for my sake
and for the sake of Da-
vid, my servant.

EVENTS OF ABIB 14⁴⁴
19:35a

(35a) And it was in
that night, and the angel
of Yahweh went out and
struck in the camp of
Assyria a hundred and
eighty-five thousand.

37:36a

(36a) And the angel
of Yahweh went out and
struck in the camp of
Assyria a hundred and
eighty-five thousand.

32:21a

(21a) And Yahweh
sent an angel, and cut
off all the mighty ones
of valor, both the leader
and the head, in the
camp of the king of As-
syria.

19:35b

(35b) And they rose
up early in the morning,
and behold, all of them
were dead corpses.

37:36b

(36b) And they rose
up early in the morning,
and behold, all of them
were dead corpses.

EVENTS OF ABIB 20⁴⁵
10:1:4-5(20c-21)**[Berosus]**

(20c) he (Berosus)
writes as follows: (21)
When Senacheirimos re-
turned to Jerusalem
from his war with
Egypt, he found there
the force under Rap-
sakēs in danger from a
plague, for the deity had
visited a pestilential
sickness upon his army,
and on the first night of
the siege one hundred
and eighty-five thousand
men had perished with
their commanders and
officers.

⁴⁴ That the Assyrian army was destroyed on the first night of Passover also see Tosef.-Targum, 2 Kings, 19:35-37; J. Pes., 9:36d.

Mid. Rab.
Exodus

Mid. Rab.
Song

EVENTS OF ABIB 14

18:5a

(5a) Israel and Hezekiyah sat that night and recited the Hallel, for it was Passover, yet were in terror lest at any moment Jerusalem might fall into his (Sennacherib's) hand.

1:12:3

(3) Rabbi Judan said: While Hezekiyah and his followers were still eating their paschal lambs in Jerusalem, eloahim had already wrought (their deliverance) in that night, as it says, And it was in that night, and the angel of Yahweh went out and struck in the camp of Assyria.

18:5b

(5b) When they arose early in the morning to recite the *shema*⁴⁵ and pray, they found their enemies' dead corpses.

⁴⁵ See above n. 33.

Chart F

2 Kings	Isaiah	2 Chronicles	Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">19:36</p> <p>(36) And Sennacherib the king of Assyria set out, and went and returned, and he dwelt in Nineveh.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">37:37</p> <p>(37) And Sennacherib the king of Assyria set out, and went and returned, and he dwelt in Nineveh.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">32:21b</p> <p>(21b) and he returned with shame of face to his land.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">10:1:5(22)</p> <p>(22) By this calamity he was thrown into a state of alarm and terrible anxiety, and, fearing for his entire army, he fled with the rest of his force to his own realm,⁴⁶ called the kingdom of Ninos.</p>

CONCLUSION

<p style="text-align: center;">32:22-23</p> <p>(22) And Yahweh delivered Hezekiyahu and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all; and he guided them on every side.</p> <p>(23) And many brought an offering to Yahweh, to Jerusalem, and precious gifts to Hezekiyahu the king of Judah; and he was exalted for the eyes of all the nations after this.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">10:2:1(24)</p> <p>(24) Having been thus wonderfully delivered from the fate which he feared, King Hezekiah together with all the people offered sacrifices of thanksgiving to the deity, for the destruction of some of the enemy and the removal of the rest from Jerusalem⁴⁷ had had no other cause than the aid given by their ally the deity (Yahweh).</p>
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⁴⁶ This statement shows that the 185,000 destroyed at Jerusalem and the others destroyed at Pelusium were only a portion of the total army, and that the rest returned to Nineveh with Sennacherib.

⁴⁷ Ibid.