

SENNACHERIB'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST JUDAH

The campaign of Sennacherib against Judah is one of the most widely researched subjects in Biblical Studies and Ancient Near East, and one that also poses scholarly challenges. Allusion to the event is found in Isaiah, Kings, and Chronicles, but there is no correlation between the Assyrian and Biblical descriptions of the same event. Dan'el Kahn offers a text-critical analysis of these Biblical passages that allude to the military events. Detecting repetitions, breaks in the narrative, contradictions and inconsistencies in the texts, he traces and reconstructs different and discrete sources. Kahn demonstrates that the Biblical passages are based on earlier sources that were later edited and revised by a third hand. Based on historical events that are found in non-Biblical texts, he also offers new dates for the sources. He claims that the narrative was written for the book of Isaiah, arguing that it predates the version found in Kings.

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Sennacherib's Campaign against Judah

A Source Analysis of Isaiah 36–37

DAN'EL KAHN
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In memory of



Jonathan Kahn z"l, February 6, 2004–April 17, 2012



Gilead Kahn z"l, July 21, 2002–March 1, 2018

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ABBREVIATIONS

ÄAT	Ägypten und altes Testament
ABC	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> . TCS V. Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1975.
ABL	<i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters Belonging to the Kouyunjik Collections of the British Museum</i> . Edited by R. F. Harper. 14 vols. Chicago, 1892–1914.
ACEBT	<i>Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie</i>
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AfOB	Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft
AION	<i>Annali dell' Instituto Orientale di Napoli</i>
AIPHOS	<i>Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves</i>
Ä&L	Ägypten und Levante / Egypt and the Levant
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AoF	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAfO	Beiheft des Archiv für Orientforschung
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907.
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des Antiken Judentums

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BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CAD</i>	The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
<i>DDD</i>	K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and W. van der Horst, eds. <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> . 2d rev. ed. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
<i>EB</i>	<i>Études Bibliques</i>
<i>EgT</i>	<i>Eglise et Théologie</i>
<i>ErIsr</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
ESHM	European Seminar in Historical Methodology
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>GM</i>	<i>Göttinger Miscellen</i>
HBV	The Hebrew Bible and Its Versions
<i>HebAI</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik. Erste Abteilung
<i>HS</i>	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HThK.AT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>(Hervormde) Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies</i>
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>

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IFAO	Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire
<i>JAEI</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections</i>
<i>JANESCU</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt, Cairo</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JEgH</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian History</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JSSEA</i>	<i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i>
LHB.OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series
MÄS	Münchner Ägyptologische Studien
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i>
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin
MIFAO	Mémoires de de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire
<i>MThA</i>	<i>Münsteraner Theologische Abhandlungen</i>
<i>NABU</i>	<i>Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires</i>
NCeBC.OT	New Century Bible Commentary. Old Testament
<i>NEASB</i>	<i>Near East Archaeological Society Bulletin</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBTh	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensa Analecta
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studiën

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PÄ	Probleme der Ägyptologie
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut Historiqueet Archéologique Néerlandais à Stamboul
PNA I	<i>Prosopography of the Neo Assyrian Empire: Using the Electronic Database of The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project and with the Collaboration of Numerous Colleagues</i> . Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998.
RINAP	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
SAA	<i>State Archives of Assyria</i>
SAAB	<i>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</i>
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAK	<i>Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSP	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SHANE	Studies in the History of Ancient Near East
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
StTDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StudOr	Studia orientalia
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TCS	Texts from Cuneiform Sources
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit Forschungen</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

List of Abbreviations

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<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaften</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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PREFACE

I have been studying Sennacherib's campaign against Judah for many years. I first encountered it as a first-year student at the Hebrew University. The Biblical and Assyrian texts were taught extensively in the departments of History of the Jewish Peoples, Biblical Studies, Archaeology, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies. I then taught the Biblical text for many years.

Initially, I accepted the scholarly consensus that the Sennacherib-Hezekiah narrative was first composed for 2 Kings and was later inserted into the Book of Isaiah. During the writing of the book, I cited the verses according to the narrative in 2 Kings 18–19. Only when I reached the final chapters of the book did I realize that the Hezekiah–Sennacherib narrative was first integrated into the book of Isaiah and only then copied into the book of Kings.

At first, I also accepted the division of the narrative in Kings into Source A (2 Kings 18:13–16), and Sources B1 (2 Kings 18:17–19:9a, 36–37) and B2 (2 Kings 19:9b–21a, 35 with later insertions in 21b–31, 32–34) as delineated by Stade, Childs and others. When teaching, I concentrated on Sennacherib's inscriptions, Sources A and B1. I never had the time in class to delve into the compositional problems of Source B2.

In 2012, I went on sabbatical. My initial intent was to write a monograph about texts in the book of Isaiah, which, based on the historical reality in the texts, may have been edited during the seventh century, mainly during the reign of Manasseh. However, in order to include the Sennacherib-Hezekiah narrative, I had to identify the alleged source, and date it correctly, and deal with the question of the parallel accounts in 2 Kings 18–19 and Isaiah 36–37.

The appearance of תרהקה Tirhaka (Kushite Taharqa) as king of Kush, even though he ascended the throne 11 years after Sennacherib's campaign to Judah, and the mentioning of Sennacherib's murder in 681 BCE made it clear that the narrative must have been written

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(or at least updated) after these events. How long after the events? The key to this is the mentioning of Taharqa in the text. He would not be identified as a savior against the Assyrians after he was crushed by the Assyrian forces and Egypt was conquered by them in 667 BCE. Taharqa's memory was erased by the new 26th Dynasty in Egypt, and could not be regarded as a possible savior by the Judeans after his crushing defeat.

I realized that, in order to deal with the editorial layer of the Sennacherib-Hezekiah narrative, I would need to identify the exact boundaries of the layer and the verses that belonged to it.

I started to mark the many repetitions; numerous breaks in the narrative and contradictions in the text.

This was the time to analyze the long neglected by me Source B2. The date of composition of Source B2 was debated. The articles of Na'aman (2003) and Baruchi-Unna (2015) clarified the historical background of Source B2 (basically the list of conquered kingdoms and cities in 2 Kings 19:12–13/Isaiah 37:12–13) during the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

The earliest historical period reflected in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative was Isaiah 36:18–19, which mentioned a list of conquered kingdoms that were subjugated in the days of Sargon II (720 BCE).

I started to write the book in 2012 following the premature death of Jonathan, my youngest son. It will be published in mid-2020. So why did it take so long to publish the manuscript? I began writing just months after the passing of my youngest son, Jonathan z"l at the age of eight years, on holocaust remembrance day. The writing was therapeutic, and helped me to return to normal life. I received the reviews of the lectors during early 2014. I planned to work on the comments during the summer vacation. Afterwards, my middle son Gilead z"l was diagnosed with cancer. Two years he battled with cancer until he passed on March 1, 2018, during the feast of Purim. Only then could I return to the comments of the lectors and finish writing the book.

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