HEZEKIAH'S REFORM AND REBELLION

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THE Old Testament abounds in complex problems, whose complexity is best revealed by the study of the many solutions that have been offered. Not seldom the problems have been aggravated by the evidences brought to light by archaeology. For archaeology does not “prove” the truth of the Bible in the way some popular books have suggested. Often it sheds light on the Bible in innumerable ways, though it seldom confirms Biblical historical statements. To select what is convenient and to ignore what is not is not the way of objective scholarship,


2 Its value is more often indirect than direct, and it is beyond question that it has contributed materially to the greater respect for the historical value of the Old Testament than was formerly common, though it must be acknowledged that there are some scholars who do not share it very greatly. Cf. M. Burrows,
and it is wiser to examine Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence with candour in the endeavour to ascertain the course of events. This does not mean that all scholars who so examine the evidence will reach the same conclusions, and in the matter before us here they have certainly not done so. More than thirty years ago the author of an American dissertation on the subject\(^1\) was able to show that not less than six different reconstructions had been put forward, and he reached the conclusion that it is impossible for us to reconstruct the course of events.\(^2\) It may be at once agreed that it is impossible for us to do so with certainty; but where certainty is unattainable, probability may prove to be within our reach, as I think it is in this case. In this lecture it is not my intention to review all of the six hypotheses I have referred to, or to offer a new solution to the problem. It is rather to look at the Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence, and to show why I think the view that in recent years is gaining increasing currency is improbable and another view, which has long been widely accepted, is more likely.

We must first briefly review the Biblical story. In 2 Kings xviii. 1–8 we have a brief account of the reign of Hezekiah, which tells us of the religious reform he carried through, closing down the "high places" and destroying the Brazen Serpent, or Nehushtan, and then briefly adding that he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and finally that he smote the Philistines. The story of the rebellion is taken up again in 2 Kings xviii. 13–xix. 8. This tells how Sennacherib came against Hezekiah and took all the fortified cities of Judah, and how when he was at Lachish Hezekiah made his submission and paid an indemnity of 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold, and how Sennacherib then sent an army against Jerusalem reproaching Hezekiah with his rebellion and demanding the surrender of the city. Sennacherib's officer shouted his appeal from outside the city

What Mean these Stones? 1941, p. 1: "To be sure, archaeological discoveries are not always reassuring. As a matter of fact, they have raised some very perplexing questions. On the whole, however, archaeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the Scripture record."

\(^1\) See L. L. Honor, Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine, 1926.
\(^2\) Ibid. p. xiv: "None of the hypotheses is so strongly substantiated by the facts available in the sources, that it may claim greater credence than the others."
to the people of Jerusalem not to be misled by Hezekiah, but to recognize the might of the king of Assyria against whom no gods had prevailed and against whom their God could have no power. The king then went to the Temple with rent clothes and sent messengers to Isaiah, begging him to pray for divine help. In response Isaiah comforted the king with a promise of deliverance, saying that a rumour would compel Sennacherib to return to his own land. Sennacherib’s officer then returned to his master, who had by now moved from Lachish to Libnah.

Immediately following this we read another account of a summons to Hezekiah to surrender. On hearing that Tirhakah the king of Ethiopia was marching against him, Sennacherib sent a letter to Hezekiah, couched in terms very similar to those his officer had used in shouting to the people, and demanding the surrender of the city. Hezekiah took the letter to the Temple and spread it before the Lord, whereupon Isaiah sent a message of assurance, promising that no army of Sennacherib should come near the city, and that he should return by the way he came, since the Lord would defend the city. That same night, the story continues, the angel of God slew 185,000 in the Assyrian camp, causing the remnant to return to Assyria. It is added that as Sennacherib was worshiping his god, he was assassinated by his two sons.

Much of this narrative stands also in Isaiah xxxvi-xxxvii, and it is generally believed that it was taken by the compiler of the book of Isaiah from the account in Kings. Here there is no mention of Hezekiah’s reform or of his payment of an indemnity. The story begins with Sennacherib’s sending a great army from Lachish to Jerusalem to demand the surrender of the city and continues substantially unchanged to the death of Sennacherib.

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1 2 Kings xix. 9 ff.
2 2 Kings xix. 35.
4 2 Kings xviii. 14-16 are not represented in Isaiah. J. Meinhold (Einführung in das Alte Testament, 3rd edn., 1932, p. 171) thinks 2 Kings xviii. 13-16 may be an excerpt from Temple annals (cf. H. Haag, R.B. lviii (1951), 352). J. A. Montgomery (Commentary on Kings, ed. by H. S. Gehman, 1951, p. 513) thinks
The account in 2 Chronicles is widely different. There we read that Hezekiah began his reform of religion and cleansing of the Temple in the very first month of his reign. There is a long and detailed account of his reform, though without mention of the Brazen Serpent, and the reform is here carried to the northern kingdom, whose "high places" were destroyed no less than those of Judah. Then follows an account of Sennacherib’s campaign against Hezekiah. In 2 Kings and in Isaiah we are told that this campaign took place in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, but here we are not told at what point of his reign this happened. The account is shorter than in 2 Kings. We are told that Sennacherib sent his servants to Hezekiah to demand the surrender of the city, and also that he wrote "letters to throw contempt on the Lord". Thereupon Isaiah and the king prayed to God who sent his angel into the camp of the Assyrians and caused Sennacherib to return with shame to his land. And when he came to the house of his god some of his sons assassinated him.

So far as the story of the rebellion is concerned this looks like a compressed account, based on the account in 2 Kings. There is no mention of any army sent against Jerusalem, and verses 14-16 were omitted as irrelevant to the Isaiah story, or as derogatory to the reputation of the king and the Temple. R. Kittel (Die Bücher der Könige, 1900, p. 280) finds the former reason sufficient. T. K. Cheyne (Introduction to the Book of Isaiah, 1895, p. 213) inclined to the latter, saying that the contents would naturally be painful to Jewish readers. That verses 14-16 come from a separate source from the following verses is widely agreed; cf. B. Stade, Z.A.W. vi (1886), 173. Honor (op. cit. pp. 37 ff.) discusses the relation of verse 13 to verses 14-16. A. Parrot (Ninive et l'Ancien Testament, 1953, p. 40) believes that verses 13-16 contain a résumé of the whole campaign, into which xviii. 17-xix. 37 must be fitted. For a critical comparison of the Kings text and the Isaiah, text cf. A. Kuenen, Historisch-kritische Einleitung, German trans. by C. T. Müller, ii (1892), 74 ff.; H. M. Orlinsky, J.Q.R., N.S. xxx (1939-40), 33 ff.; W. Rudolph, Chronikbücher, 1955, pp. 312 ff.
Isaiah figures once instead of twice in the narrative. In 2 Kings Hezekiah sends to Isaiah when the army appears outside Jerusalem, and when the letter is sent from Sennacherib Isaiah spontaneously sends a message to the king. In neither case does Isaiah come to the king or Temple himself. Here in 2 Chronicles, Isaiah joins the king in the Temple and both resort to prayer. Here Isaiah utters no promise of deliverance, which comes as the answer to prayer. The form of the deliverance agrees with that recorded in 2 Kings, but there is no mention of the numbers of the slain in the Assyrian camp. It may also be observed that neither is there any mention of Tirhakah, the king of Ethiopia.

Before we turn to Sennacherib's account we may note some curious features of the Biblical story. In 2 Kings the campaign of Sennacherib is dated in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. A few verses earlier the fall of Samaria is placed in the sixth year of Hezekiah. It would therefore appear that this campaign took place eight years after the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. As Sennacherib only came to the throne in 705 B.C., this would fall several years before he ascended the throne. The chronological problems of the reign of Hezekiah are well known and very difficult, and we need not turn aside to discuss them for the moment. It may well be that the Chronicler refrained from dating the story because he was aware of the difficulty. In 2 Kings there is mention of the approach of the forces of Tirhakah, the king of Ethiopia. At this time Egypt was under an Ethiopian dynasty, but it is probable that Tirhakah did not become king until after the death of Hezekiah. It is possible that the Chronicler was aware of this fact and so avoided mention of him.

The absence of any mention by the Chronicler of the payment of an indemnity by Hezekiah may well have been dictated by his wish to let the deliverance of Hezekiah, the good king whose reform he describes at such length, appear to have been complete. The account in 2 Kings records how Hezekiah yielded his submission and then immediately proceeds to record

1 2 Kings xviii. 13. 2 2 Kings xviii. 9.
3 It will be seen below (pp. 413 f.) that some scholars have maintained that the name of Sennacherib has been substituted for Sargon's.
4 See below, pp. 409 ff. 5 2 Kings xix. 9. 6 See below, pp. 419 f.
the measures taken against Hezekiah by Sennacherib without offering any explanation. Some scholars have supposed that there is a lack of chronological order here, but that does not seem probable. We shall see later that in the summary account of the reign of Hezekiah chronological order does not seem to have been observed, and the attack on the Philistines did not follow the revolt of Hezekiah and its sequel, but was rather the opening stage of that revolt. But there does not seem to be any place for Hezekiah's submission after the despatch of the Rabshakeh to Jerusalem, if Hezekiah's refusal to submit was followed by complete deliverance.

It does not seem likely that Sennacherib first sent an army with the demand for surrender, and when that failed to achieve its purpose contented himself with sending a letter repeating the demand. It has been noted that the terms of the Rabshakeh's demand and of the letter are very similar, and that in each case Isaiah gave an assuring message to Hezekiah, once at the king's request for guidance and once with no human prompting. It is probable that here we have two variant traditions of a single incident, and we have noted that they are merged into one by


the Chronicler.\(^1\) In the second of these accounts in 2 Kings Isaiah is said to have promised that the Assyrian troops would not invest Jerusalem.\(^2\) This would be surprising if Sennacherib had already sent an army against Jerusalem, and we shall see that his own records make it clear that he did. Probably this promise of Isaiah's helped to induce the Chronicler not to mention the coming of the Assyrian army to Jerusalem, especially as it would reinforce his wish to present the revolt of Hezekiah in terms of unmitigated success.

We may further note that in the first of the two accounts of Sennacherib's demand which stands in 2 Kings, Isaiah is said to have predicted that the Assyrian king would be recalled home by the report of trouble elsewhere.\(^3\) In the second account there is no mention of this, and it leads on to the statement about the disaster in the camp of Sennacherib.\(^4\) Since in neither account is it stated that the retirement of Sennacherib was brought about by the report of trouble elsewhere there is no reason to suppose that Isaiah's prophecy of deliverance by that means was fulfilled;\(^5\) and since it is unlikely that any later hand would ascribe to Isaiah such a prophecy that was not fulfilled, there would seem to be reason to prefer the first account of Sennacherib's demand to the second, and therefore to accept the statement that an army was sent to invest Jerusalem, and that while Isaiah assured the king that the city would be delivered, he wrongly described the means by which it would be effected.\(^6\)

1 J. de Moyne (Mélanges rédigés en l'honneur de André Robert, 1957, pp. 149 ff.) argues that xviii. 17-xix. 7 is composite, and that xviii. 26-34 belong to xix. 8-37. The Chronicler is held to have used only this source, and de Moyne believes he ignored the other source deliberately. On this view there were two embassies and the Chronicler did not fuse them into one.

2 2 Kings xx. 32: "He shall not come to this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a mount against it."

3 2 Kings xix. 7.

4 2 Kings xix. 35.

5 If, as a number of scholars hold, xix. 36 should be joined with xix. 9a, then the withdrawal of Sennacherib would appear to have been due to the approach of Tirhakah in this source. Cheyne (Introduction to Isaiah, p. 234) thinks it was really due to bad news from home that Sennacherib withdrew. So also G. H. Box, The Book of Isaiah, 1916, p. 160.

6 Cf. Isa. x. 16, where Isaiah had prophesied that the Assyrian army would be wasted by disease.
It is now time that we turned to Sennacherib's own description of his campaign. This is recorded in a text of which we have several copies. For our present purpose I shall rely in the main on the text as given by D. D. Luckenbill, in what he describes as the final form of the annals of Sennacherib. Here we find that the third campaign, dealing with the events of the year 701 B.C., brought the Assyrian king to the west. At his approach Lulê, the king of Sidon, fled, and Tuba’lu was installed in his place, while the cities of Phoenicia—with the exception of Tyre, which is unmentioned—and the immediate neighbours of Judah, including Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Ashdod, yielded their submission. Ashkelon resisted, but its king was carried off to Assyria, and another set up in his place, while other Philistine cities had to be reduced. The people of Ekron had dethroned their king Padi, who was loyal to Assyria, and had surrendered him to Hezekiah, who had imprisoned him. But ere Sennacherib could deal with Ekron, the king of Ethiopia sent a combined force of Ethiopians and Egyptians which Sennacherib met in battle at Eltekeh, where he wrought a great victory. He then brought Padi from Jerusalem and restored

1 The Annals of Sennacherib, 1924. 2 Ibid. p. 23.

3 This is the date almost universally assigned to this campaign, but S. Smith (C.A.H. iii (1925), 72) and S. A. Cook (ibid. p. 390, n.) date it in 700 B.C. W. R. R. Jones (J.T.V.I. lx (1928), 218) supposes that Sennacherib was co-regent with Sargon for some years, and so proposes to date it in 711 B.C.


5 Luckenbill (op. cit. p. 10) observes that Tyre seems to have been his real capital.

him to his throne. Next he attacked the kingdom of Hezekiah and captured forty-six walled towns, taking more than 200,000 people captive.¹ This does not mean that this number of people were carried off from the land.² Probably all the population of the occupied regions,³ generously estimated, were counted as "captives". The attack was now turned against Jerusalem and Hezekiah himself. We read: "Himself like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem his royal city. Earthworks I threw up against him... I added to the former tribute and laid upon him the giving (up) of their land, (as well as) imposts—gifts for my majesty."⁴ There follows the list of the treasure taken from Hezekiah. This included 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, objets d'art, the king's daughters and palace attendants, all of whom were taken toNineveh.

It will be observed that this campaign, according to Sennacherib, appears to have been completely successful, and to have terminated in the submission of Hezekiah. There is no hint of any disaster, which caused the Assyrian forces to withdraw.⁵

¹ S. Landersdorfer (Die Bücher der Könige, 1927, p. 208) says the figure is exaggerated, and so A. Ungnad (Z.A.W. lix (1942-4), 199 ff.), who reduces it to 2150 (followed by Heinisch, op. cit. p. 462). Olmstead (History of Assyria, 1923, p. 305) dismisses the figure as absurd, and thinks the authentic figure was 150. Rogers (Studien zur semitischen Philologie und Religionsgeschichte [Wellhausen Festschrift], 1914, p. 321) doubts if there were so many as 200,150 people in the whole of the area outside Jerusalem, or so many walled towns as forty-six. Sennacherib describes in detail how he captured the cities; cf. Luckenbill, op. cit. pp. 32 f.: "by levelling with battering rams (?) and by bringing up siege-engines (?), by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels and breaches (?)." On this cf. R. P. Dougherty, J.B.L. xlix (1930), 160 ff.

² H. R. Hall (The Ancient History of the Near East, 7th edn., 1927, p. 483) observes: "we are not told that they were carried into captivity, as it is sometimes supposed."

³ So H. R. Hall, ibid.

⁴ Luckenbill's translations (op. cit. p. 33).

⁵ W. R. Smith (The Prophets of Israel, new edn., 1912, p. 437) says: "That Sennacherib does not relate the calamity which subsequently befell his host and compelled him to retire is quite what we should expect from the exclusively boastful style of the Assyrian monuments", and notes that the lack of any mention of a peace concluded with the Egyptians and Ethiopians and the fresh rebellion that broke out immediately after in Babylon are clear proofs that his retreat was inglorious. Cf. E. Nagl, Die nachdavidische Königsgeschichte Israels, 1905, pp. 294 ff.
On the other hand it does not state that the siege of Jerusalem was successful, but leaves it to be implied from the tribute which was exacted from Hezekiah. The total impression gained from reading this account is very different from that which is gained from reading the account in 2 Kings, and still more different from that which is gained from the reading of the account of the Chronicler. Formerly every account of the Chronicler's was suspected, and little historical value was placed on anything he recorded, save where it could be confirmed from some other source, such as the books of Kings, on which he often relies. Today he is treated with more respect,¹ and it is recognized that he may often preserve records derived from otherwise lost sources. It is nevertheless certain that he often rewrote what he found in Kings to make it accord more nearly with what he thought to be edifying, and there is little reason to doubt that he did so here. He records no attack on Hezekiah, no surrender, no tribute, no loss of territory, or humiliation of any kind, but by the judicious selection of his material ascribes to Hezekiah a far more complete deliverance than the compiler of the books of Kings had ascribed to him. It is unlikely that the compiler of the books of Kings who lived much nearer to the events described than did the Chronicler, and whose sources must have gone back very much closer to the events, had whittled down the magnitude of Hezekiah's deliverance. We may therefore content ourselves with inquiring how far the account in 2 Kings can be reconciled with the account of Sennacherib.

Some scholars have held that the campaign of Sennacherib was entirely successful, as his own account would suggest, and

¹ Cf. E. Sellin, Introduction to the Old Testament, Eng. trans. by W. Montgomery, 1923, p. 237: "Much of the additional matter which it gives, which was long simply rejected offhand as unhistorical, has now, in virtue of our better knowledge of the ancient east, again come within the realm of historical possibility" (so 7th German edn., 1935, p. 154; 8th German edn., revised by L. Rost, 1950, p. 177); H. Haag, R.B. iviii (1951), 351, n.: "Depuis quelques années, on est revenue à accorder une confiance nouvelle à la fidélité du Chroniqueur vis-à-vis de ses sources." A. Bentzen (Introduction to the Old Testament, 2nd edn., ii (1952), 214) gives more cautious recognition to the historical value of material preserved only by the Chronicler. Cf. also A. Clamer, Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, xi. 2 (1932), 1987 f.; O. Eissfeldt, Einleitung in das Alte Testament, 2nd edn., 1956, pp. 667 f.
that the stories of the embassies to Jerusalem and the disaster sustained by the Assyrian forces are entirely legendary.\(^1\) It seems to me wiser to examine both the Assyrian and the Biblical accounts equally critically, and not to treat the Assyrian account with a ready confidence while dismissing the Biblical with an equally ready scepticism.\(^2\)

For more than a century another view,\(^3\) which has gained greatly in favour in recent years, has been that there were two campaigns of Sennacherib, and that these have been combined in the Biblical story. Distinguished scholars have adopted this view,\(^4\) while equally distinguished scholars have rejected


\(^2\) K. Fullerton (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, lixiii (1906), 578, 582) says the Biblical narrative of Sennacherib’s invasion is unintelligible and self-contradictory, whereas Sennacherib’s record makes an impression of intelligibility and self-consistency!

\(^3\) This was propounded by G. Rawlinson in *The History of Herodotus*, i (1858), 477 ff.; cf. 477 f.; “Such is the account which Sennacherib gives of an expedition briefly touched by Scripture in a few verses (2 Kings xviii. 13-16)—an expedition which is not to be confounded with that second invasion of these countries by the same monarch, which terminated in the destruction of his host, and his own ignominious flight to his capital. This latter expedition is not described in his annals, and it may perhaps belong to a period beyond the time to which they extend.” In a note Rawlinson gives the credit for perceiving this to the compilers of marginal references to the Bible, who had already assumed that there were two expeditions, separated by an interval of three years. Cf. also Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World*, ii (1864), 439, where Sennacherib’s second expedition is placed in 698 B.C., three years after the first. Prasek (*E.T.* xii (1900-1), 225 f. and *Sanheribs Feldzüge gegen Juda, I*, 1903, p. 2) wrongly attributed the first presentation of this view to Sir Henry Rawlinson and so G. A. Smith (*Expositor* 6th series, xii (1905), 230).

it. For the campaign of 701 B.C. the scholars who favour the two campaign theory rely on the account of Sennacherib, and find this to be described in those verses of 2 Kings xviii which record Hezekiah's surrender. There is a disagreement amongst the holders of this view as to where the story of this campaign ends. Some take into it the story of the first embassy to Jerusalem, accompanied by the military force, whereas others transfer both (S.D.B. i (1928), 792), Dougherty (J.B.L. xlix (1930), 164), G. A. Barton (Archaeology and the Bible, 6th edn., 1933, p. 475), W. F. Albright (J.Q.R., N.S. xxiv (1934), 370 ff., F.S.A.C., 1940, p. 240, in L. Finkelstein, The Jews, i (1949), 43, and B.A.S.O.R., No. 130, April 1953, pp. 8 ff., no. 141, February 1956, pp. 25 ff.), L. Speleers (S.D.B. ii (1934), 779), J. Goettsberger (Die Bücher der Chronik, 1939, p. 357), Sir Frederic Kenyon (The Bible and Archaeology, 1940, p. 52), John Bright (History of Israel, 1960, pp. 282 ff., and Hommage à Wilhelm Vischer 1960, pp. 20 ff.), and S. H. Horn (Seventh Day Adventist Bible Dictionary, 1960, pp. 466, 980, 1102).


2 So Winckler (Geschichte Babyloniens und Assyriens, p. 254), Rogers (Cuneiform Parallels, p. 338, and Wellhausen Festschrift, p. 326). On this view the account
of the embassy stories to the later campaign, when the forces of Sen-
nacherib met with some disaster which caused his retirement.¹

On either view I find some difficulty. If Isaiah has assured
Hezekiah that there was no need to be afraid of Sennacherib’s
army, and yet the king had afterwards been compelled by the
investing force to yield a vast indemnity and to strip the Temple
doors to meet the payment, and the Assyrian campaign had
ended in complete triumph, it is curious that there is no hint of
this in the Biblical account. For this would have belied Isaiah’s
confidence so completely that he would have been utterly dis-
credited. Moreover, it would be very curious if, on a second
occasion, some years after the first, Sennacherib had sent an
embassy to Jerusalem, with a message couched in terms so
similar to those used before, and the king had received a similarly
reassuring message from the discredited Isaiah. One might have
supposed that Sennacherib would have remembered his previous
triumph over Jerusalem, and would have recalled not only his
victories over other cities but the humiliation of Jerusalem and
the powerlessness of Yahweh to deliver it on that occasion.
While there are obvious differences between the stories of the
two embassies, there are such close correspondences that it
seems hard to suppose that we have recorded here two un-
connected incidents separated by some years, and easier to relate
them to a single campaign. On the other hand, as I shall say,
there are many difficulties in the way of transferring these two
accounts to a subsequent date.

The major difficulty is that of finding a suitable date to which
the second campaign is to be assigned. Some have supposed
that it happened a year or two after the attack of 701 B.C., perhaps
in 698 B.C.² This runs into the difficulty that there is no room

¹ So Sanda (B.Z. v (1907), 62), Götzl (B.Z. vi (1908), 154), Plessis (loc. cit),
Goettsberger (loc. cit.), and Bright (History of Israel, pp. 282, 286).
² So G. Rawlinson, The Five Great Monarchies ii (1864), 439. E. Hincks
(Journal of Sacred Literature, viii (1858-9), 138 f.) thought there were two in-
vasions by Sennacherib of which the second fell in his fourth or fifth year, i.e.
one or two years after the first.
for this attack in the annals of Sennacherib, which record his annual campaigns for several years and take him into quite other regions. Moreover, this view does not affect the anachronism of the reference to Tirhakah as the king of Ethiopia, and does little to lessen the interval of time between the disaster that befell Sennacherib and his assassination, which took place twenty years after the campaign of 701 B.C. Yet these are frequently stated to be the two major difficulties in the Biblical account which require the two campaign theory.

More popular, therefore, has been the view that the second campaign of Sennacherib took place shortly after Tirhakah had occupied the throne, in 687 or 686 B.C. This has the advantage that it greatly lessens the interval to the assassination of Sennacherib. But is this any real advantage? It still leaves an interval of five or six years. Once the disaster that overtook the Assyrian armies is removed from immediate connection with the assassination of the king, there is no reason to be troubled by few or many years. The Biblical author was not concerned to write the history of Assyria, and it sufficed for him to record that the king who had proudly challenged Israel's God had come to a bad end. But as against the reduction of the interval between the deliverance of Jerusalem and the death of Sennacherib, the theory encounters a heavy increase of difficulties in other directions. The anachronism of the reference to Tirhakah as the king of Ethiopia is eliminated; but a greater anachronism is

1 See the account of the succeeding campaigns in Luckenbill, Annals of Sennacherib, pp. 34 ff. In The History of Herodotus, i (1858), 477 f., Rawlinson suggests that the second Syrian campaign of Sennacherib might perhaps have fallen outside the period of time covered by Sennacherib's annals or alternatively might have been purposely omitted from his annals as not redounding to his credit.


3 So H. R. Hall, C.A.H. iii (1925), 278, and Ancient History of the Near East, 7th edn., pp. 490 f. Winckler assigned the second campaign of Sennacherib to a date after 689 B.C. (Geschichte Babyloniens und Assyrïens, p. 254; cf. Altestamentliche Untersuchungen, loc. cit.), and S. H. Horn (S.D.A. Bible Dictionary, p. 1102) to a date between 690 and 686 (cf. p. 466, where 689 is mentioned), while Speleers (loc. cit.) thought it fell "vers 691". K. Fullerton (Bibliotheca Sacra, liii (1906), 611) placed it after 691, and P. (E.) Dhorme (R.B., N.S. vii (1910), 516 ff.) assigned it to the year 690.
created. For Hezekiah almost certainly died before Tirhakah came to the throne.

Here it is necessary to look at the well known chronological problem about the reign of Hezekiah. His revolt against Sennacherib is placed in the fourteenth year of his reign, and since the campaign of Sennacherib can be dated with security in the year 701 B.C., this would bring Hezekiah’s accession to the year 715 B.C.—if the raising of the standard of revolt and the punitive campaign took place in the same year, as is commonly tacitly assumed. Since we are told in another passage that Hezekiah reigned for twenty-nine years, he would have continued on the throne until 686 B.C., and therefore would have overlapped with Tirhakah. But, as against this, the passage that says he reigned for twenty-nine years says he came to the throne in the third year of Hoshea, the king of Israel, and therefore six years before the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. This is repeated in another form in another passage, which equates the fourth year of Hezekiah with the seventh year of Hoshea and the sixth year of Hezekiah with the ninth year of Hoshea. Yet again we are told elsewhere that Ahaz came to the throne in the seventeenth year of Pekah, king of Israel, who reigned twenty years. If this is true, then the reign of Ahaz, who reigned sixteen years, covered the whole of the reign of Hoshea, who followed Pekah and reigned for nine years, and this would bring the accession of Hezekiah after the fall of Samaria, though earlier than 715 B.C. This is one of the most tangled problems of the chronology of the monarchy, and an extraordinary variety of dates for the reign of Hezekiah will be found amongst scholars.

1 2 Kings xviii. 13 ; Isa. xxxvi. 1.
2 Albright dates the accession of Hezekiah in 715/14 (B.A.S.O.R., No. 130, April 1953, p. 9 ; cf. no. 100, December 1945, p. 22).
3 2 Kings xviii. 1 ; cf. 2 Chron. xxix. 1.
4 So Albright, loc. cit. ; S. H. Horn, S.D.A. Bible Dictionary, p. 1102.
5 2 Kings xviii. 1.
6 Cf. 2 Kings xvii. 6.
7 2 Kings xviii. 9 f.
8 2 Kings xvi. 1.
9 2 Kings xv. 27.
10 2 Kings xvi. 2.
11 2 Kings xvi. 1.
12 The following are some of the dates proposed : 727 (so J. Skinner, Isaiah i-xxxix, pp. lxxvi f. ; M. Theresia Breme, Ezechias und Senacherib, 1906, p. 87 ; H. Hänsler, Biblica, x (1929), 272) ; 726 (so B. Alfrink, Biblica, viii (1927), 415 ; J. Lewy, Die Chronologie der Könige von Israel und Juda, 1927, p. 32 ; V. Coucke, 27
Many regard the statement that Hezekiah revolted in the fourteenth year of his reign as the determinative figure, but accept the statement that he reigned twenty-nine years from the passage which is held to make the incorrect statement that he came to the throne in the third year of Hoshea.¹ I have noted that the synchronism occurs more than once, at different points of the two reigns, so that no assumption of the incorrect transmission of a figure could account for the discrepancy on this

S.D.B. i (1928), 1265 ff.; S. Garofalo, _Il libro dei Re_, 1951, p. 267); 726-25 (so J. Begrich, _Die Chronologie der Könige von Israel und Juda_, 1929, p. 128); 725 (so T. H. Robinson, _History of Israel_, i (1932), 459 f.; Montgomery, op. cit. p. 480; W. A. L. Elmslie, _I.B. iii_ (1954), 520, who gives 720 as an alternative possibility); 721 (so Landersdorfer, _Könige_. p. 206; Goettsberger, _Chronik_, 1939, pp. 339, 365; M. Rehm, _Echter Bibel_, ii (1956), 247); 720 (so Skinner, _Kings_, p. 44, with which cf. his view noted above; R. Kittel, _Geschichte des Volkes Israel_, 7th edn., ii (1925), 372; J. A. Bewer, _The Prophets_, 1955, p. 90); 719 (so K. Dietze, _Ussia_, 1929, p. 6 n.; J. Marty, in Westphal, _Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible_, i (1932), 633); 716 (so E. Dhorme, _La Bible: Ancien Testament_, i (1956), cxxiv; A. van den Born, _Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Bible_, 1960, col. 633); 715 (so E. L. Curtis, _Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Chronicles_, 1910, p. 462; J. Bright, _History of Israel_, 1960, p. 261); 715-14 (so S. Mowinckel, _Acta Orientalia_ x (1932), 215, 271). E. R. Thiele (_The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings_, 1951, pp. 136 ff.) regards 2 Kings xvii. 1 and xviii. 1, 9 f. as the divergent and incongruous additions of a late hand, and holds (p. 283) that Hezekiah ascended the throne in 716/15, and did not overlap with Hoshea. S. H. Horn (S.D.A. _Bible Dictionary_, p. 465) supposes a double co-regency for Hezekiah, and ascribes to him a total reign from 729 to 686, during the first fourteen of which he was co-regent with his father, and during the last ten of which Manasseh was co-regent with him. He supposes that the twenty-nine years ascribed to Hezekiah in 2 Kings xviii. 2 began from the death of his father in 715, but that the fifty-five years attributed to Manasseh in 2 Kings xxi. 1 began from the start of his co-regency in 696 (p. 682). O. C. Whitehouse ( _Isaiah i-xxxix_, p. 23) similarly thought that Ahaz associated Hezekiah with himself on the throne from 727 to 715, while G. W. Wade ( _The Book of Isaiah_, 1911, p. xlii) thinks of a co-regency from 727 to 720. The date 720 is arrived at by totalling the lengths of the reigns from the accession of Hezekiah to the end of Zedekiah's reign and reckoning back from the Fall of Jerusalem, with the subtraction of seven years on the assumption that the year of accession is doubly reckoned, once to the old king and once to the new king (cf. Skinner, _Kings_, pp. 39 ff.). J. Lewy ( _O.L.Z. xxxi_ (1928), 151 n.) says the text of the Babylonian Chronicle published by C. J. Gadd makes it certain that under the later kings of Judah this system was not used.

¹ So Prášek ( _E.T. xiii_ (1901-2), 328b), who places the death of Hezekiah in 686. Albright (loc. cit.) and Bright (loc. cit.) follow this view. On the other hand Mowinckel, who places the accession of Hezekiah in 715-14 (see preceding note), holds that his reign terminated in 697-96 (loc. cit. p. 271).
view. Moreover, on this theory there was no synchronism between these two reigns at all, and therefore the error is not one of a figure or of figures, but a much deeper mistake. On the other hand a very slight error of transmission in 1 Kings xviii. 13, copied into Isaiah xxxvi. 1, would remove the discrepancy. It is only necessary to read אַרְבַּעְתָּה instead of אֶרֶבֶּעָה. This would bring the revolt of Hezekiah to the twenty-fourth year of his reign, some two years before Sennacherib's expedition to suppress it. It is antecedently likely that Hezekiah's revolt and Sennacherib's campaign did not take place in the same year, since some time must have been spent in forcing Ekron to join in the revolt, and at that time Sennacherib's hands were full in other directions. For his first campaign was against Merodach-baladan, of Babylon. It will be recalled that Merodach-baladan had sent an embassy to Hezekiah after his recovery from illness, and Hezekiah had shown the messengers all his stores and equipment. There can be no doubt that the purpose

1 Cf. P. Kleinert, T.S.K. 1 (1877), 167 f.: "Eine so tief in's geschichtliche Gedächtnis geprägte Gleichzeitigkeit kann nicht wohl aus der Luft gegriffen sein."

2 Cf. J. Skinner, Isaiah i-xxxix, p. lxxvi: "it would argue an almost incredible degree of carelessness in a historian to assign so important an event as the fall of Samaria to the wrong reign." Mowinckel (loc. cit. p. 214) finds a discrepancy between 2 Kings xviii. 1 and xviii. 9 f., in that the first verse equates the accession year of Hezekiah with the third year of Hoshea, while the others equate his fourth and sixth years with the seventh and ninth of Hoshea, and notes that Josephus (Antiq. ix. xiii. 1 [260]) alters the accession year of Hezekiah to the fourth year of Hoshea. This does not weaken the evidence for the overlap of the two reigns, and if the two discrepant passages could be ascribed to two different hands, the evidence for the overlap would be strengthened.

3 So C. J. Bredenkamp (Der Prophet Jesaia, 1887, p. 220), Robinson (History of Israel, i, p. 459, n.), Montgomery (op. cit. p. 483), and Snaith (I.B. iii. 292). Rawlinson (The History of Herodotus, i. 479) and G. W. Wade (op. cit. p. 225) read "twenty-seventh", and M. Rehm (op. cit. p. 249) "nineteenth". B. Duhm resorts to surgery and excises the reference to the year altogether (Das Buch Jesaia, 1902, pp. 226 f.). F. Feldmann (Das Buch Isaiah, i (1925), 415) rejects the reading "fourteenth year", and renders (p. 411) "In jenem Tagen (?)"; cf. W. Rudolph, P.J.B. xxv (1929), 69 n. H. Schmidt (Die Schriften des Alten Testaments in Auswahl, 2nd edn., ii. ii (1923), 14 f.) holds that the words "in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah" should precede 2 Kings xx. 1.

4 2 Kings xx. 12 ff., Isa. xxxix. 1 ff. At the time of Hezekiah's illness Isaiah had promised him a further fifteen years of life (2 Kings xx. 6, Isa. xxxix. 5). It is probable that the corruption to "fourteenth" in 2 Kings xviii. 13 and Isa.
of this embassy was to ensure rebellion in the west to synchronize with Merodach-baladan’s revolt in Babylon, and it is unlikely that Hezekiah and his western allies waited until Sennacherib had successfully dealt with the Babylonian threat before they raised the standard of revolt. A revolt at the time when Sennacherib’s hands were full with Babylon would give some opportunity to prepare defences before the Assyrian king could be free to deal with it. There is nothing in the least improbable,

xxxix. 1 is due to an erroneous calculation from the 29 years of Hezekiah’s reign (so J. Meinhold, Die Jesajaerzählungen, 1898, pp. 57 ff.; Skinner, Kings, p. 388; Wade, Isaiah, p. 240; C. Boutflower, The Book of Isaiah, chapters i-xxxix, 1930, p. ix; R. Bach, R.G.G., 3rd edn., iii (1959), 366). But Hezekiah’s illness cannot with any probability be assigned to the year of Sennacherib’s invasion, as it must be by those who place his accession in 715 B.C. and attribute to him fifteen years of life after that invasion—unless they dismiss Isaiah’s promise to the king. For an embassy from Merodach-baladan after Hezekiah’s recovery from a serious illness in that year would have been much too late to concert plans for a revolt which was suppressed in that year. The cutting of the Siloam tunnel, which is probably referred to in 2 Kings xx. 20, was almost certainly part of the preparations for revolt and must have taken a considerable time. Hence the plans for revolt must have been made long before 701 B.C. Moreover, the revolt itself must have begun before that year, since pressure had been put on Ekron and a revolution had been brought about there when Padi was taken to Jerusalem. (This consideration is equally valid against the theory of Horn noted above, p. 410 n.). Merodach-baladan (on whom cf. W. F. Leemans, J.E.O.L., no. 10, 1945-8, pp. 432 ff.) twice revolted against Assyria in Babylon, and there is nothing to indicate whether his embassy to Hezekiah was at the time of the first rebellion or the second. The first rebellion took place in 721, and Merodach-baladan maintained himself in Babylon for several years, until he fled before Sargon, who entered the city in 709 B.C. (cf. Rogers, History of Babylonia and Assyria, 6th edn., ii (1915), 316 ff.). A. H. Sayce (D.B. iii (1900), 347) thought the embassy to Hezekiah preceded the western rising which was suppressed by Sargon in 711 B.C. In that case it could well have fallen in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah’s reign, if it began in 727 B.C. If, as some have supposed, Hezekiah’s reign began circa 720 B.C. (see p. 410 n.), an embassy about the time of Merodach-baladan’s second occupation of Babylon soon after Sennacherib’s accession would have fallen in Hezekiah’s fourteenth year. But in no case could that embassy have fallen fifteen years before Hezekiah’s death and also in the year 701 B.C., and the theory that Hezekiah continued on the throne until 686 B.C. has to throw more than the synchronism with the reign of Hoshea overboard. H. R. Hall (Ancient History of the Near East, 7th edn. p. 485) surprisingly holds that Merodach-baladan’s embassy immediately followed Sennacherib’s campaign of 701 B.C., which he holds to have been completely successful, and not to have ended in disaster. It is quite unthinkable that Hezekiah could have shown the ambassadors his stores of gold and of arms immediately after he had surrendered them to Sennacherib.
therefore, in dating the revolt in 703 b.c., which would be in the twenty-fourth year of Hezekiah's reign, if he ascended the throne six years before the fall of Samaria. Hence, it seems to me to be much easier to alter a single figure in a duplicated passage than to reject the repeated synchronisms. The other discrepancy, attaching to the synchronism between the reigns of Pekah and Ahaz, need not detain us here, but it is hard to credit the length assigned to Pekah's reign. There are far simpler ways of dealing with the problem than the assumption that the compiler of the books of Kings here falsely overlapped the reigns of Hezekiah and Hoshea.

Moreover, if the reign of Hezekiah continued to 686 b.c., new difficulties would be created for the chronology of the seventh century. For Manasseh is said to have reigned fifty-five years, Amon two years, Josiah thirty-one years, and Jehoahaz three months, or a total of eighty-eight years, before the accession of Jehoiakim in 608 b.c. To meet this difficulty it has been supposed that in 697 b.c. Hezekiah elevated Manasseh, then twelve years of age, to share the throne with him. Of this there is no evidence, and there is certainly no suggestion in the Bible that Manasseh shared the throne with Hezekiah at the time of the events with which we are concerned.

It is unnecessary here to deal with even less probable theories, such as the suggestion that the surrender of tribute recorded in 2 Kings xviii. 14–16 was to Sargon and not to Sennacherib,

1 Robinson (History of Israel, i, 461) reduces the reign of Pekah to two years instead of twenty years (and so Begrich, Chronologie, 1929, pp. 103, 112, 129), and the figure of 2 Kings xv. 27 is generally agreed to be erroneous (cf. Skinner, Kings, p. 367). Moreover, whereas we are told in 2 Kings xvi. 2 that Ahaz was twenty years old when he came to the throne and reigned sixteen years; 2 Kings xviii. 2 says that his son Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he succeeded to the throne. It is improbable that Hezekiah was born when his father was ten or eleven years old.

2 2 Kings xxi. 1, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1. 3 2 Kings xxi. 19, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 21. 4 2 Kings xxii. 1, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1. 5 2 Kings xxiii. 31, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 2. 6 The date of Jehoiakim's accession is securely known, since the battle of Carchemish, which took place in 605 b.c., took place in his fourth year (Jer. xlvi. 2). 7 So S. H. Horn, S.D.A. Bible Dictionary, p. 465. 8 So P. Kleinert, T.S.K. 1 (1877), 167 ff.; A. Klostermann, Die Bücher Samuelis und der Könige, 1887, p. 458; C. J. Bredenkamp, Der Prophet Jesaia, 1887, pp. 219 f.; Cheyne, The Prophecies of Isaiah, i, 1889, 204; H. M. Wiener,
despite the close agreement of what is there recorded with Sennacherib's own inscription, or the view that the Assyrian campaign that ended in disaster took place in the year 675 B.C. under Esarhaddon, when Hezekiah and Sennacherib would both have to be dismissed from the story.\(^1\) The Israelite king would then be Manasseh. But there is no reason whatever to suppose that the deliverance of Jerusalem took place in the reign of Manasseh and was then transferred to the reign of Hezekiah, or that Manasseh sought or received the support of Isaiah.

It must further be noted that there is no record from Assyrian sources of a second attack by Sennacherib in Palestine,\(^2\) and it would seem gratuitous to create one that requires so drastic a rewriting of the Biblical account of the supposed second campaign. There is evidence of an Arabian campaign of Sennacherib late in his reign,\(^3\) but it is a far cry from a statement that the queen of Arabia was defeated to the Biblical account of a campaign in the south of Palestine in which the Egyptian forces were involved, and the theory requires a considerable amount of imaginative reconstruction. Moreover, it is hard to see how the admitted anachronism in the Biblical reference to Tirhakah as king of Ethiopia in 701 is dealt with by transferring the incident to a time after he was on the throne, indeed, but to a campaign in which neither he nor his country is mentioned. Only the strongest necessity could dictate such a proceeding. Before resorting to it, it would seem more reasonable to see how far the Biblical and Assyrian accounts can be pieced together into a single self-consistent story. And, as I have said, many scholars of unquestioned critical competence have found no difficulty in so doing.

\(^1\) So Sidney Smith, *C.A.H. iii.* 74; H. R. Hall, ibid. p. 278. This is rejected by Albright, *B.A.S.O.R.,* No. 130, April 1953, p. 9.


It has been already observed that in the Biblical account the payment of a heavy indemnity by Hezekiah preceded the demand for the surrender of the city,\(^1\) and since the city is said to have been delivered and not occupied there is no room for this after the sending of the Rabshakeh. In the Assyrian account the payment of the tribute closes the account, and so follows the despatch of the Assyrian force against Jerusalem.\(^2\) So far as the payment in gold is concerned the Assyrian account agrees with the Biblical statement, but so far as the silver is concerned the Bible mentions 300 talents, while the Assyrian account gives 800. Some scholars have maintained that there is exact agreement here,\(^3\) since the Assyrian silver talent was not the same as the Hebrew talent, whereas the gold talent was the same in both cases. But this is of little moment. The Assyrian could have exaggerated, or the Hebrew tradition could have reduced the figure, or it could have become changed in the course of time.

It is more relevant here to note that we must not assume that the Assyrian account is in strictly chronological order. Indeed, we have the clearest evidence that it is not. For the account of Sennacherib states that he took Padi, the king of Ekron, from Jerusalem before it records any move against Jerusalem or any payment of an indemnity by Hezekiah.\(^4\) The annalist wished

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\(^1\) 2 Kings xviii. 14 ff.


\(^4\) Cf. G. Maspero, *The Passing of the Empires*, Eng. trans. by M. L. McClure, 1900, p. 293, n.; "It seems very unlikely that the King of Judah would have released his prisoner before his treaty with Sennacherib; the Assyrian scribe, wishing to bring together all the facts relating to Ekron, anticipated this event." Cf. also W. Rudolph, *P.J.B.* xxv (1929), 65.
to finish the account of the treatment of Ekron before he turned to Jerusalem, and so here he anticipated. He may equally well have reversed the order of Hezekiah's submission and resistance, so as to give the impression of a completely successful campaign, especially since the reversed order would read more naturally. Yet it has often been observed that he does not state that the city was captured, but merely leaves it for his readers to infer this.

On the Biblical order the conduct of Hezekiah appears quixotic. To yield first and then to resist would seem surprising. There is some reason to think that it is the true order, nevertheless, and that it is not really so quixotic as it may seem.

We have already noted that the Bible tells us that Hezekiah smote the Philistines. Of this we have some confirmation from the annals of Sennacherib, which tell us of the dethronement of Padi and his imprisonment in Jerusalem. Clearly, Hezekiah must have put some pressure on the Philistine cities to come into the alliance against Assyria, and have overcome the resistance of Padi and carried him off to Jerusalem. When Sennacherib moved southwards through the land, he received the submission of all Judah's neighbours, save some of the Philistine cities. Their resistance was doubtless strengthened by the approach of those Egyptian and Ethiopian forces that Sennacherib met at Eltekeh. There is no reason to doubt the victory of Sennacherib in that battle, or the subsequent speedy reduction of the Philistine cities. The headquarters of Sennacherib would appear to have been at Lachish at this time, and thither Hezekiah sent to ask for terms. In his account of the campaign Sennacherib does not mention Lachish, but there is

1 Cf. Wellhausen, Prolegomena, pp. 483 f.: "Sennacherib's inscription speaks only of the first and prosperous stage of the expedition, not of the decisive one which resulted so disastrously for him, as must be clear from the words themselves to every unprejudiced reader."

2 Cf. Meinhold, Einführung, p. 171; Luckenbill, Annals of Sennacherib, p. 12. Montgomery (Kings, p. 492) comments on the abrupt conclusion of the account of the campaign in col. iii. of Sennacherib's inscription.

3 O. Eissfeldt (P.J.B. xxvii (1931), 58 ff.) argued that there is an allusion to this in Ezek. xvi. 26 f.

4 Cf. Luckenbill, op. cit. pp. 31 f.

5 2 Kings xviii. 14.
in the British Museum a relief which depicts Sennacherib at that city.¹ Those who argue for two campaigns emphasize the omission of any reference to Lachish in Sennacherib's account of the campaign of 701 B.C., and suppose that this relief refers to the hypothetical second campaign.² Here two things must be said. First, there is no mention of Lachish in the account of the Arabian campaign either, and hence there is no more reason to connect this relief with that than with the campaign of 701 B.C.; and second, in the Biblical account of Hezekiah's payment of an indemnity to Sennacherib, which these scholars connect with the campaign of 701, it is stated that Sennacherib was at Lachish. It is therefore proposed to delete the reference to Lachish as a false insertion into this account.³ Since Lachish is not mentioned in the account of the second embassy, it would be arbitrary to suppose it had come from there, and most scholars who hold that there were two campaigns assign the first embassy, accompanied by the military force, to the campaign of 701 B.C. There would seem to be no solid reason for doubting that Sennacherib was at this time at Lachish, whose capture and wholesale destruction about this time are archaeologically supported.⁴ At this time Hezekiah was alone against Sennacherib, with much of his own country overrun, and the forces of Egypt had proved a broken reed, as Isaiah had consistently predicted. That Hezekiah, in these circumstances, should ask for terms is entirely understandable.⁵


³ So Plessis, loc. cit., where Lachish in 2 Kings xviii. 14, is held to be an addition suggested by v. 17.


⁵ It is disputed whether the submission of Hezekiah preceded or followed the battle of Eltekeh; cf. Honor, op. cit. pp. 19, 22 f. Haag (*R.B. lvi* (1951), 353 ff.) thinks it was before, and so S. Smith (C.A.H. iii. 73). On the other hand, G. Ricciotti (*History of Israel*, i. 380 f.) and Noth (*History of Israel*, p. 268) think it was after. We really have no means of determining, but much depends on our view of the significance of that battle, on which see below, p. 421 n.
Sennacherib’s terms included the surrender of Padi, together with the handing over of treasure and hostages. We should naturally expect that they would include the surrender of war material, though this is not mentioned in the Biblical account. It is mentioned, however, in another version of the annals of Sennacherib. Luckenbill says that this account was written in the year 700 B.C., and that it became the standard account, save that some lines were omitted from later editions. The omitted lines state that amongst the things surrendered by Hezekiah were “chariots, shields, lances, armour, girdle-daggers of iron, bows and arrows, spears, countless implements of war.” Nevertheless, it is clear that Hezekiah did not surrender at discretion. He was not removed from his throne, as other kings had been, and as we should have expected the man who had removed and imprisoned the pro-Assyrian Padi to be. For some unspecified reason Sennacherib was content with a less severe treatment of Hezekiah than might have been expected. Since the indemnity was actually paid over, as the Biblical account and Sennacherib’s agree, and since it must have taken some little time to collect it—the Bible tells us the king had to strip the gold from the doors of the Temple—it is clear that Sennacherib did not immediately send the Rabshakeh to occupy Jerusalem. The terms of Hezekiah’s surrender did not, therefore, include a provison for the occupation of the city.

Now, however, Sennacherib hears that a powerful Egyptian force was approaching. It has been suggested that the report of this advance was the rumour to which Isaiah referred as the reason that would bring about Sennacherib’s return to his own land. I find it hard to suppose that Isaiah, who set little store by Egyptian promises of help or capacity to help, should have suggested that Egyptian help would now bring relief to Jerusalem.
Nor does it seem likely that it was the fear of Egypt which compelled Sennacherib to withdraw. The Egyptian forces are said to have been under the command of Tirhakah, the king of Ethiopia. That he was not yet king has already been stated. He was the nephew of Shabaka, and did not become king for another decade. Many of the defenders of the view that there was but one campaign of Sennacherib have observed that the proleptic calling of him king would not be serious, and that he might well have been in command of the royal forces, though not yet on the throne. It would have been cumbrous to say: "Tirhakah, who, though not in the direct line of descent from the reigning king of Ethiopia, was destined to become king of Ethiopia." This way of dealing with the difficulty is no longer

1 N. H. Snaith (I.B. iii. 299) thinks the rumour was from Babylonia, and so B. W. Anderson (Understanding the Old Testament, 1957, pp. 285 f.). Honor (op. cit. p. 50) is uncertain whether it was of events in Babylonia or of Egyptian moves.

2 2 Kings xix. 9.

3 Cf. Breasted, History of Egypt, p. 552; J. M. A. Janssen, Biblica, xxxix (1953), 25. Montgomery (Kings, p. 492) says he was the nephew of Shabataka, who was actually his brother.

4 W. Max Müller (E.B. iv. 5099) placed the accession of Tirhakah in 694/3; E. A. Wallis Budge (History of Egypt, vi (1902), 144) between 693 and 691; Winckler (Altestamentliche Untersuchungen, p. 36) in 691, and so Prášek (E.T. xiii (1901-2), 326 b); E. Drioton and J. Vandier (L'Égypte, 2nd edn., 1946, p. 541) and Albright (B.A.S.O.R., no. 130, April 1953, p. 9), followed by Garofalo (Il libro dei Re, p. 261), Bright (Hommage à Wilhelm Vischer, p. 21), and Horn (S.D.A. Bible Dictionary, pp. 1101 f.), placed it in 690; while Rogers (Wellhausen Festschrift, p. 326), W. Rudolph (P.J.B. xxv (1929), 74), J. Ziegler (Echter Bibel, iii., 1958, 122) and Noth (History of Israel, p. 268) placed it in 689, and Breasted (History of Egypt, p. 554; cf. p. 552) placed it in 688, and so J. Fischer (Das Buch Isaias, i (1937), 236) and E. Dhomme (La Bible: l'Ancien Testament, i (1956), 1218). Albright (loc. cit.) thinks Tirhakah was co-regent for six years, and became sole king in 685/4, and so Horn (loc. cit.). On the uncertain chronology of the end of Tirhakah's reign, see G. Goossens (Chronique d'Égypte, xxii 1947), 239 ff.

5 So E. Nagel (Der Zug des Sanherib gegen Jerusalem, 1902, p. 67), Breasted (op. cit. p. 552), Luckenbill (Annals of Sennacherib, pp. 13 f.), F. Feldmann (Das Buch Isaias, i (1925), 426), Landersdorfer (Könige, pp. 213 ff.), Robinson (History of Israel, i. 397), Fischer (op. cit. p. 236), Kissane (Isaiah, i. 398), Médebielle (in Pirot-Clamer, La Sainte Bible, iii. 764 f.), de Vaux (Rois, 1949, p. 200; cf. following note), Montgomery (Kings, p. 517), Bewer (op. cit. p. 92), P. Auvray and J. Steinmann (Isaïe, 2nd edn., 1957, p. 153), Ziegler (op. cit. p. 236).
open to us. For it is now known that Tirhakah was born \textit{circa} 710 B.C.\textsuperscript{1} He would therefore have been about ten years old in 701 B.C., and it is highly improbable that he would have been in charge of the army at that tender age. It must therefore be recognized that the name Tirhakah has been wrongly ascribed to the king of Ethiopia at this time.\textsuperscript{2} As I have already said, we have no record from any other source of any campaign of Sennacherib against Tirhakah, and no record of any other campaign of his against Egypt, whereas in 701 B.C. we know from Sennacherib's own inscriptions that he was engaged against Ethiopians and Egyptians.\textsuperscript{3} Despite the error in the name of Tirhakah, therefore, there is more here to connect the Biblical account with the known campaign of 701 B.C. than with any other campaign of which we have secure knowledge. The force which Sennacherib had so completely overthrown at Eltekeh may have been a relatively small advance force to stiffen the resistance of the

\textsuperscript{1} See M. F. Laming Macadam, \textit{The Temples of Kawa}, 1949, Text, pp. 19 ff., and J. M. A. Janssen, \textit{Biblica}, xxxiv (1953), 23 ff. Cf. also Albright (\textit{B.A.S.O.R.}, No. 130, April 1953, pp. 8 ff.), de Vaux (\textit{Rois}, 2nd edn., p. 212; cf. preceding note), D. J. Wiseman (in D. Winton Thomas, \textit{Documents from Old Testament Times}, p. 65), and John Bright (\textit{History of Israel}, p. 283, and \textit{Hommage à Wilhelm Vischer}, p. 22). It is curious that in \textit{Illustrations from Biblical Archaeology}, 1958, p. 64, Wiseman says that Tirhakah was the ally of Hezekiah, though he recognizes only one campaign of Sennacherib, that of 701 B.C., when, on Wiseman's own view, Tirhakah was over young to be a military leader. It seems better to recognize a Biblical anachronism. E. Dhorme (\textit{La Bible: l'Ancien Testament}, i (1956), 1218) still thinks Tirhakah may have commanded the army in 701 B.C., and so appears not to accept the proposed date for the birth of Tirhakah.

\textsuperscript{2} So Wade (\textit{Isaiah}, p. 232), Whitehouse (\textit{Isaiah}, i. 359), de Vaux (\textit{Rois}, 2nd edn., p. 212), Noth (\textit{History of Israel}, 2nd edn., p. 268). J. Bright (\textit{History of Israel}, p. 283, n., and \textit{Hommage à Wilhelm Vischer}, p. 22, n.) notes that Herodotus places the disaster suffered by the forces of Sennacherib in the reign of Shabaka's successor. Herodotus calls him Sethos, but doubtless refers to Shabataka. It is to be observed that this gives no support to the view that the disaster occurred in the reign of Tirhakah, and the view that Tirhakah's name has been wrongly supplied in 2 Kings xix. 9 is rather supported than countered. It may be added that Drioton and Vandier (\textit{L'Égypte}, 2nd edn., 1946, pp. 523 ff.) say that Shabataka succeeded Shabaka in 701 B.C., and place Sennacherib's campaign in his reign. Cf. E. A. Wallis Budge, \textit{History of Egypt}, vi, 1902, 127, where it is held that Shabaka was probably dead before Sennacherib's campaign of 701 B.C. Sidney Smith, however, puts the accession of Shabataka in the year 700 B.C. (\textit{C.A.H.}, iii., 279).

\textsuperscript{3} See Luckenbill, \textit{Annals of Sennacherib}, pp. 31 ff.
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Philistine cities.¹ If Sennacherib later suffered a major disaster, it would suit him to exaggerate the victory at Eltekeh,² and if that major disaster were not suffered at the hands of the Egyptian forces it would be even more natural for him to record in glowing terms his victory over the Egyptians in the only engagement that took place.

The approach of the major Egyptian force caused Sennacherib some disquiet. It is possible that disease had already broken out in his camp, though this could not yet be known in Jerusalem. But, for whatever reason, the Assyrian king regretted that he had not occupied Jerusalem.³ Even though its war potential had been surrendered, its natural strength meant that it would take some time to reduce it if its gates were closed, and in the unknown hazards of the campaign it might be vital to Sennacherib to hold Jerusalem. Hence he sent a force, probably not a large force, to occupy the city, little suspecting that it would meet with any resistance. But if the terms of Hezekiah's surrender had not included any interference with his sovereignty of the city, or any demand for the military occupation of the city, the alarm of king and people could be understood, and when the

¹ So Noth, History of Israel, p. 268. Cf. Wellhausen, Prolegomena, p. 483, where it is said that the battle of Eltekeh "was not an event of great historical importance". On the other hand K. Fullerton (A.J.S.L. xlii (1925-6), 21) thinks it was a great battle. But if the Egyptian troops had experienced any great disaster at Eltekeh, it is unlikely that a new army would have been rapidly put in the field. A. Parrot (Ninive et l'Ancien Testament, p. 44) thinks Sennacherib defeated at Eltekeh the forces referred to in 2 Kings xix. 9 as led by Tirhakah. This does not seem probable. As Honor observes (op. cit. p. 18), Sennacherib's failure to wreak vengeance on Hezekiah after Eltekeh would in that case not be easy to understand. However, Sennacherib claims Eltekeh as a victory, whereas 2 Kings xix. 9 introduces the story of a disaster he suffered, and if this is connected with the Herodotus story (see below) that incident is located by the Greek historian at Pelusium and not at Eltekeh (Hist. ii. 141). C. Boutflower (The Book of Isaiah, Chapters i-xxxix, pp. 264 f.) thinks the bruised reed of 2 Kings xviii. 9 introduces the story of a disaster he suffered, and if this is connected with the Herodotus story (see below) that incident is located by the Greek historian at Pelusium and not at Eltekeh (Hist. ii. 141). C. Boutflower (The Book of Isaiah, Chapters i-xxxix, pp. 264 f.) thinks the bruised reed of 2 Kings xviii. 9 introduces the story of a disaster he suffered, and if this is connected with the Herodotus story (see below) that incident is located by the Greek historian at Pelusium and not at Eltekeh (Hist. ii. 141). C. 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³ S. R. Driver (Isaiah and his Times, 2nd edn., 1893, pp. 76 f.) says he "may have been begun to feel that he had been guilty of a strategical error in leaving a strong fortress like Jerusalem unreduced in his rear"; cf. W. R. Smith, The Prophets of Israel, new edn., 1912, pp. 349 f., and H. M. Wiener, J.S.O.R., xi (1927), 200, 207.
king closed the gates and appealed to Isaiah for guidance he quickly got it.  

Isaiah had been consistently against the policy of revolt from Assyria, and had predicted a disastrous issue. He had said that Jerusalem should be spared, but the rest of the country devastated, and this had indeed happened. Yet now that Jerusalem had been denuded of treasure, arms and hostages, Isaiah was full of confidence. He had never placed his confidence in military resources or in Egyptian help. Scornfully he had denounced those who put their trust in horses, and had uttered stinging words against Egypt that was so lavish in promises and so wanting in performance. He had believed that Assyria was the rod of Yahweh's anger, to bring judgement upon his people; but a rod to be cast aside when its work was done. It was not the power of Assyria that he feared, and in the prophet's view Jerusalem was as strong now without her resources as she had been weak before with them. The apparently quixotic change of attitude on the part of the prophet arose from a single and consistent point of view. Hezekiah had been in the wrong in

1 Cheyne (Introduction to Isaiah, p. 227) rejects the idea that Sennacherib was guilty of perfidy. But if Isa. xxxiii. belongs to the time of Sennacherib's attack, as is commonly thought, there is a reference to the enemy's perfidy in verses 1 and 8. As Wade observes (Isaiah, p. 209): "If it is assumed that Hezekiah consented to the fine on condition that the surrender of his capital was not required, and that this condition was subsequently disregarded by the Assyrians, several allusions in the present chapter can be accounted for." Cf. Josephus, Antiq. x. i. 1 (3 f.).


3 Cf. Isa. i. 7-9, xxxiii. 20, x. 24-27. On the dating of chapter xxxiii in the Sennacherib period, cf. Fullerton, loc. cit.; on the dating of chapter x in that period, cf. ibid. p. 28 n.; on the dating of i. 4-9 in that period, cf. Irwin, loc cit. p. 412, n. (also W. R. Smith, The Prophets of Israel, p. 437).


5 Cf. Isa. xxx. 7.

6 Cf. Isa. x. 5-19, xxxi. 8 f.

7 W. A. Irwin, J.R. xvi (1922), 406 ff., denies any change in Isaiah's attitude, and suggests (p. 417) that the utterances ascribed to him in Isa. xxxvii may have been composed as late as the time of Judas the Maccabee. Cf. also K. Fullerton, J.B.L., xli (1922), 1 ff., especially p. 35 where it is declared to be unthinkable that Isaiah could promise deliverance. On the other hand, B. W. Anderson
violating his oath to his Assyrian overlord, but now it was Sennacherib who was in the wrong in seeking to impose new terms that were not provided for in the instrument of surrender.\(^1\) Moreover, he was blaspheming against Yahweh and boasting of an invincible power that Yahweh Himself could not challenge. Resistance was now doubly justified, and since there were no human resources on which confidence could rest, Isaiah was sure that Yahweh would manifest his power and no human friends or allies would be able to share with him the glory of the deliverance.

Dramatically the Biblical account says the angel of the Lord visited the Assyrian camp the very night\(^2\) when Isaiah's assurance was given, and killed large numbers of the Assyrian soldiers.\(^3\) We need not suppose that the disaster was quite so swift as this, but if the common view that what is meant is that plague broke out in the Assyrian camp\(^4\) is correct it could well have been swift. In the time of David we read of a plague that followed the taking (Understanding the Old Testament, p. 284), who accepts the Biblical account of the apparent change in Isaiah's attitude, defends him against the charge of inconsistency.

\(^{1}\) Cf. W. R. Smith, The Prophets of Israel, p. 350: "It cost the treacherous Assyrians no difficulty to devise a pretext for cancelling the newly-ratified engagement."

\(^{2}\) H. M. Wiener (J.S.O.R. xi (1927), 296) thinks the reading of LXX, "by night", is to be preferred.

\(^{3}\) 2 Kings xix. 35, Isa. xxxvi. 36, 2 Chron. xxxii. 21. W. Rudolph (P.J.B. xxv (1929), 73 ff.) rejects the story of the miraculous delivery of Jerusalem. So also R. H. Pfeiffer (Introduction to the Old Testament, 1941, p. 429), Haag (R.B. Iviii (1951), 357 f, who thinks Sennacherib's army was decimated by the conflict with Egypt (cf. p. 358, n.)), and Noth (History of Israel, p. 268 n.); while Wade (Isaiah, p. 236) thinks the story is doubtful. On the other hand many accept the story as substantially true, though the numbers may well be exaggerated; so, amongst many others, Breasted (History of Egypt, p. 552), Skinner (Isaiah i-xxxix, pp. 274 f.), Honor (op. cit. p. 55), Landersdorfer (Könige, p. 217), O. Procksch (Jesaja I, 1930, p. 459), de Vaux (S.D.B. iv (1949), 756), Médebielle (in Pirot-Clamer, La Sainte Bible, iii (1949), 772), Bewer (The Prophets, 1955, p. 95), A. van den Born (Koningen, 1958, p. 202). Barnes (II Kings, pp. 110 f.) thinks it not unlikely, and similarly Bright (History of Israel, p. 283).

\(^{4}\) It is to be noted that in an oracle against Assyria preserved in Isa. x. 16 Isaiah had prophesied that the Assyrian hosts would be consumed by disease; cf. also Isa. xxxi. 8 f. W. Rudolph (P.J.B. xxv (1929), 76) thinks the story of the disaster was based on the belief that Isaiah's prophecies in Isa. xxxi. 8 (cf. x. 24 f.) and xvii. 14 must have been fulfilled.
of a census, and there we read that an angel was the instrument of the plague. The reference to the angel here has probably the same significance. It is commonly believed that the plague that ravaged the Assyrian camp was bubonic plague. This is because of a story told by Herodotus, who learned it in Egypt some 250 years after the time of Sennacherib. There it is recorded that the Assyrians were compelled to retire before the Egyptian forces because mice gnawed the bowstrings of the Assyrians and reduced them to impotence. It is well-known that bubonic plague is spread by rats, and Herodotus may not have understood the significance of the reference to rats as the cause of the Assyrian withdrawal, and turned them into mice that gnawed bowstrings. George Adam Smith many years ago noted the liability to outbreaks of plague that marked the south of Palestine.

Here, then, is a self-consistent story which requires only the assumption that the tribute of Hezekiah was recorded by Sennacherib where it would give the impression of a successful end to the story. If he was not humiliated by his foes, there was no need to record humiliation through disease, and a campaign which had been successful in all its encounters with enemies might be expected to be recorded as successful. That Jerusalem, though invested, was not occupied was of little moment, since it had indeed surrendered, and especially if the force sent to occupy it was a small one that did not expect to be resisted. Of the Biblical material all fits into this story, save that the second account of Sennacherib's demand may be a variant of the first.

1 2 Sam. xxiv. 16 f.
2 R. Duncan (J.T.V.I. lx (1928), 216) makes the remarkable suggestion that the death of the Assyrians was caused by carbon monoxide which miraculously filled the air.
4 Cf. Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels, pp. 346 f.; Montgomery, Kings, p. 498. J. M. P. Smith (loc. cit.) says "to make mice symbolic of a plague is to credit the ancient Egyptians with such knowledge of the nature of bubonic plague and its causes as has only been attained by the modern scientific world." See also J. Meinhold, Die Jesaiaerzählungen, 1898, pp. 36 ff. But cf. 1 Sam. vi. 4.
5 See Historical Geography of the Holy Land, 22nd edn., p. 158.
It is true that there is an anachronism in naming the Ethiopian king Tirhakah, but since there has to be an anachronism somewhere, this is no count against the view here presented or in favour of the two-campaign theory.

We may now turn briefly to the reform of Hezekiah. Some scholars have doubted the story altogether.\(^1\) For this there seems little reason, and if no account of any reform had been given we should have been bound to assume that there was one. Its precise nature could not have been guessed; but the fact of a reform would have been inescapable. For the Assyrian kings demanded that kings who were tributary to them should acknowledge that their gods were subordinate to the Assyrian gods. When Ahaz went to Damascus to make his submission to Tiglath-pileser he saw an altar there and ordered that one like it should be prepared for Jerusalem.\(^2\) This new altar displaced the bronze altar of Yahweh in the Temple, though the old altar was placed on one side and reserved for the king’s private use.\(^3\) It is stated that this and other changes which were made in the Temple were made because of the king of Assyria.\(^4\) It is clear therefore that something more is meant than that Ahaz took a fancy to the pattern of altar he saw in Damascus. The significance of the new altar and the displacement of the old Yahweh altar was the recognition of the Assyrian gods and the relegation of Yahweh to a secondary position within the Temple. In such circumstances any king who rebelled against Assyria would repudiate the Assyrian deities, and would restore the altar of Yahweh to its place in the Temple. Hence some reform was inevitable.

It might not necessarily have gone beyond the removal of all traces of Assyrian worship and the restoration of the former position. But when reform starts it is liable to do some further cleaning up. And in the reorganisation of the Temple the

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\(^1\) So, amongst others, J. Wellhausen (Prolegomena, 1885, p. 25), Stade (Geschichte des Volkes Israel, i (1889), 607), Cheyne (E.B. ii (1901), 2058 f.), G. Hölscher (Die Profeten, 1914, pp. 165, 261, and Geschichte der israelitischen und jüdischen Religion, 1922, p. 99), A. Lods (The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism, Eng. trans. by S. H. Hooke, 1937, p. 115). It is commonly allowed that the account of the destruction of the Bronze Serpent is authentic, while the rest is a reading back from the reform of Isaiah to the reign of Hezekiah.

\(^2\) 2 Kings xvi. 10.  \(^3\) 2 Kings xvi. 14.  \(^4\) 2 Kings xvi. 18.
Brazen Serpent was destroyed as well as the traces of Assyrian worship.\(^1\) Though this is not recorded by the Chronicler, there is little reason to doubt its historical character. How the serpent had got into the Temple we are not told. There is in the Pentateuch an aetiological story ascribing its creation to Moses,\(^2\) but of its history from the time of Moses to its destruction by Hezekiah there is no trace. Where it was from the time of Moses until it was brought into Jerusalem—and Jerusalem was not conquered until the time of David—we are not told. Neither are we told when or how it came into Jerusalem. It is probable that the Chronicler did not mention the Brazen Serpent because it did not seem to him edifying to record that something made by Moses had been an object of idolatry and required to be destroyed.

It is the view of some scholars—and some years ago I argued for the view\(^3\)—that the Brazen Serpent was an old Jebusite symbol before the Israelites captured Jerusalem, and that it had been continuously in the city since before the Israelites came there, and therefore we have no story of its being removed there.\(^4\) The connexion of the serpent with healing is widespread, and the story linking this serpent with healing may have been current in Jerusalem in Jebusite times,\(^5\) and then have been transferred to Moses to relate it to Israelite traditions. But however that may be, and wherever the Serpent had come from, there is no reason to doubt that it was in the Temple in the time of Hezekiah and that it was treated as an idol, and that

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1 2 Kings xviii. 4.  
2 Num. xxi. 4-9.  
3 See J.B.L. lviii (1939), 113 ff. This view has been accepted by Montgomery (Kings, p. 481) and Snaith (J.B. iii. 290). Cf. also A. Lods (The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism, p. 114, where the Serpent is held to have represented some Canaanitish god or spirit of healing, adopted by the Hebrews when they first settled in Palestine), and I. Engnell (S.B.U. i (1948), 1229).  
4 It is not definitely stated that it was in the Temple, or in Jerusalem, cf. Robinson (History of Israel, i. 393) and Lods (op. cit. p. 114). All probability suggests that it was, however (see J.B.L. lviii (1939), 134 f.).  
5 There was near Jerusalem a Serpent Stone near En-rogel (1 Kings i. 9) where Adonijah was holding his feast at the time of Solomon's accession. At the time of Absalom's rebellion, Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, was waiting at En-rogel to convey news to David (2 Sam. xvii. 17), and it is possible that the shrine at En-rogel was linked with the Jebusite shrine in Jerusalem, served by Zadok in pre-Davidic days.
he destroyed it. This part of the reform is accepted by many who believe that there are unhistorical elements in the story.

The destruction of the "high places" and the centralization of worship in Jerusalem has excited most suspicion. Nearly a century later Josiah carried through a centralization of the cultus in Jerusalem, but that was on the basis of the law book that was found in the Temple.\(^1\) Sellin at one time supposed that Hezekiah already had the book of Deuteronomy in his hands and based his reform on it.\(^2\) Nothing is said, however, of any law book, and it is gratuitous to assume one. Sellin later withdrew his view and substituted for it the equally unconvincing one that the book of Deuteronomy was written expressly for the reform of Josiah, and the ink was scarcely dry when it was read before him.\(^3\) On every ground it seems more reasonable to me to hold that the book of Deuteronomy was written early in the seventh century B.C., and that it had been genuinely lost and forgotten when it was discovered about half a century later in the Temple.\(^4\) But it is quite unnecessary to suppose that the author of Deuteronomy must have been the first person to think of the suppression of the "high places" and the centralization of worship. There is no necessary reason to doubt that in reviving the national religion and in cleansing the Temple Hezekiah could go on to close the "high places" where the infiltration of ancient Canaanite practice had always been strong. So far back as the time of Gideon we find that the first thing that leader did to revive national feeling and national strength was to break down the local Baal altar.\(^5\) It is true that he built a local Yahweh altar, because there was not yet any idea of a single legitimate sanctuary. To Gideon Yahweh was not Baal. And to Hezekiah

\(^1\) 2 Kings xxii ff.
\(^3\) See Einleitung in das Alte Testament, 6th edn., 1933, pp. 47 ff., 7th edn., 1935, pp. 46 ff. In the 8th edn., revised by L. Rost, 1950, p. 61, for "Kurz vor der Auffindung" there stands the less definite "eine Zeit vor der Auffindung".
\(^5\) Judges vi. 25 ff.
Yahweh may not have been Baal any more than he was to be equated with Assyrian gods or made subservient to them. Hence, I do not find it necessary to doubt that he destroyed the shrines which were so much involved in the old Baal cult.

It is to be noted that while the section of 2 Kings which tells us about the reform is probably from a separate source from those which give us details about the revolt, and the revolt is mentioned in a single sentence only here, in the fuller account of the revolt there is a reference to the reform. The Rabshakeh is said to have asked the people if Yahweh was not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah had removed, requiring the people to worship only in Jerusalem. While we cannot suppose that we have the *ipsissima verba* of the Rabshakeh, this is reasonable evidence that the author of the story of the revolt, no less than the author of the summary account of Hezekiah's reign, credited the king with the centralization of religion.

The Chronicler extends the reform to the north as well as to Judah. This is of more doubtful historicity, since it is not mentioned in the account in 2 Kings, and centralization of worship in Jerusalem was of such fundamental importance to the compiler of the books of Kings. All of the northern kings are condemned because they walked in the way of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin by drawing them away from Jerusalem, and the kings of Judah are all judged by their attitude to the high places. Had

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1 2 Kings xviii. 22. This implies that the reform preceded the invasion of Sennacherib, and this seems on every ground probable. Some have supposed the reform followed the campaign of Sennacherib; so G. A. Smith, *Expositor*, 6th ser., xxi (1905), 233; K. Fullerton, *A.J.Th.* ix (1905), 637. E. W. Todd (*S.J.Th.* ix (1956), 289 ff.) with equal improbability dates the reform before the death of Sargon. See below, p. 430 n.

2 H. R. Hall would seem to think we may have an accurate transmission of the Rabshakeh's words. He says (*Ancient History of the Near East*, 7th edn., 1927, p. 484): "The whole story of the siege in the Book of Kings is as contemporary with it as is Sennacherib's own account, and we cannot doubt the speech of Rab-shakeh is correctly reported: it must have burned itself into the brains of all that heard it."

3 2 Chron. xxxi. 1.

4 Elmslie (*Chronicles*, p. 301) holds that the Chronicler's account of the reign of Hezekiah is largely free composition, and similarly Curtis (*Commentary on Chronicles*, 1910, p. 463) says the whole narrative of the reform is largely, if not entirely, imaginary.
Hezekiah carried his reform to the north we should have expected it to be mentioned here.

At the same time we have to remember that the whole of the west revolted against Sennacherib. In the east Merodach-baladan had raised the standard of revolt and proclaimed himself king of Babylon, and the time seemed propitious for the west to rise and throw off the Assyrian yoke, with Egyptian support. We can hardly suppose that the old northern kingdom of Israel, now reduced to an Assyrian province, was the only part that did not revolt, but remained a loyal pocket. The northern tribes would long for liberation as much as Judah, which had never been brought under direct Assyrian control as had the north. But there was no natural leader for the north, save Hezekiah. During the closing years of the northern kingdom there had been constant changes of dynasty, and there could have been no one living who had any serious hereditary claim to be the leader of the northern tribes.

Throughout the divided monarchy, and even before—as also in the post-exilic age—there was tension between the north and south. Yet the people of both were conscious of the ties binding them together, and not least the religious ties in their common worship of Yahweh. Prophets could pass from the south to the north, as did Amos, and there had been times when the two ruling houses had been allied. If there were hope of liberation from Assyria the northern tribes would share it, and would doubtless be ready to welcome the leadership of Hezekiah in their common cause. And since the revival of the national religion would accompany the revival of national hopes in the north no less than in the south, it cannot be ruled out that Hezekiah's reform was carried into the north. The chief grounds for hesitation are the fact that this is not recorded in 2 Kings, and that where it is recorded by the Chronicler it is in the setting of an account in which the characteristic interests of the Chronicler figure, and where it is impossible to suppose that the whole is strictly historical.

I have already noted that the Chronicler says that Hezekiah began his reform in the first month of his reign, and goes on

1 2 Chron. xxix. 3 ff.
to speak of the revolt as the sequel to the reform. Certain it is that reform and revolt belonged intimately together.\(^1\) It was out of the question to revolt against Assyria without purging the religion of Assyrian elements; on the other hand, it was equally out of the question to do away with those Assyrian elements without revolting against Assyria. Hence, if Hezekiah had begun his reform in the first month of his reign he would have begun his revolt then. We have already seen that there are chronological difficulties about the reign of Hezekiah, and it is disputed whether he began his reign in 727 B.C., 720 B.C., or 715 B.C., though the evidence seems to me to point strongly to 727. In that case, the fall of Samaria fell in the sixth year of his reign, and a reform which began in his first month fell long before the fall of Samaria, when the northern tribes had their own king, and when Hezekiah would not be regarded as their natural leader. Moreover, a revolt against Assyria from the beginning of his reign, whenever the beginning of that reign is dated, would have called down trouble upon him long before 701 B.C. For the Assyrian forces were active in the west not only at the time of the fall of Samaria but subsequently before the campaign of Sennacherib. My hesitation about the extension of Hezekiah's reform to the north, therefore, is dictated rather by the doubtful character of the narrative in which it is embodied than by its inherent improbability.\(^2\)

Of the reliability of the account of the reform, as contained in 2 Kings, and of the substantial reliability of the account of Hezekiah's revolt given there, I am fully persuaded. I find no need to posit two campaigns of Sennacherib, or to suppose

\(^1\) W. R. Smith (The Prophets of Israel, pp. 359 ff.) locates the reform of Hezekiah in the midst of Sennacherib's campaign. This seems on every ground improbable. N. H. Snaith (J.B. iii (1954), 289) dates the reform in 705 B.C. It is safer to date it at the time of the revolt (so Noth, History of Israel, p. 266; and R. Bach, R.G.G., 3rd edn., iii (1959), 367) which must have taken place at some time between 705 and 701 B.C.

\(^2\) E. W. Todd (S.J.Th. ix (1956), 288 ff.) argues for the historicity of the northern reform on the ground that Sargon may have transferred some northern areas to Hezekiah as a reward for not rebelling at the time of the fall of the northern kingdom. But of this there is no solid evidence, and the fact that it is not recorded in 2 Kings, whose compiler might have been expected to record it with particular pleasure, is against it.
that the Biblical order of the events of the revolt is seriously wrong. The deliverance of Jerusalem by no human hand, in the teeth of all probabilities, is not just a tall story, but one which is thoroughly credible. The whole fits well into the message of Isaiah, which consistently promised that revolt would mean disaster for the land as a whole, with Jerusalem as a booth in a vineyard or a lodge in a cucumber field, alone spared in an area of desolation.\footnote{Isa. i. 8.}