

CHAPTER 9

THE FATE OF LACHISH DURING
THE CAMPAIGNS OF SENNACHERIB AND NEBUCHADREZZAR

by Anson F. Rainey

One of the most widely debated issues in recent times among archaeologists of the biblical period is the dating of Stratum III at Lachish. In this present report and already in *Beer-sheba I*: 6 f., Aharoni has assembled archaeological data in favour of its destruction by Sennacherib, together with Beer-sheba II and Tell Beit Mirsim A₂. No archaeological evidence remains, therefore, for the destruction of tels in Judah in the first campaign of Nebuchadrezzar. The aim of this study is to examine the historical sources which deal with these campaigns. We believe that their analysis corroborates the archaeological conclusions.

I. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEBATE

The excavations conducted by the late J. L. Starkey at Lachish revealed two important strata of occupation belonging to the last phases of Judaeen history. The uppermost of these, Stratum II, has been securely dated to the very end of the monarchy by the discovery of several ostraca in a chamber beside the city gate. The information in these written documents obviously reflects the tense situation at Lachish (which is named in one of them) during the time when the Babylonian army of Nebuchadrezzar (= Nebuchadnezzar) was gradually reducing Judaeen resistance in the countryside prior to the final destruction of Jerusalem (587 B.C.E., cf. Jer. 34: 7). No one challenges the dating of Stratum II and thus its pottery and the script of the "Lachish Letters" have become fixed reference points in the typological scales of Palestinian ceramics and palaeography respectively. Further confirmation of the palaeographical dating has been furnished by the Elyashiv archive from Arad as well as the "Ramoth-negeb" letter (Aharoni 1970: 38-42). It is no surprise, therefore, that Aharoni finds the pottery of Arad Stratum VI, in which the Elyashiv letters were found, to match that of Lachish II (Aharoni 1968: 7-9).

On the other hand, there is no consensus regarding

the preceding level at Lachish, Stratum III. The city that existed in Stratum III was heavily fortified by an impressive system of walls; like Stratum II, the gate structure included a massive projecting buttress on the west side of the mound (cf. the artist's conception, Barnett 1958: Pl. 30 B). However, the gate itself, especially the inner one, was much stronger in Level III than in Level II and the city was characterized by a thickly settled business district on both sides of the main street leading to the gate. There was an impressive palace in the centre of the mound. Above all, one must note that Lachish III underwent a terrific destruction; signs of intense burning were everywhere; the brick walls were often seared red clear through. In short, Lachish in Stratum III was a mighty fortress, an important administrative centre, and the city suffered total destruction by fire (*Lachish III*: 55 ff.). There were some evidences here and there that the place had been reoccupied on a more humble scale—these indications suggested to the excavators that there had existed an intermediate level between Strata III and II (*ibid.*: 41).

Back in the 1930's, Starkey (1937a: 175-176; 1937b: 235-236) had formulated an opinion that Lachish III and II were in fact only about 10 years apart in historical time and his view was evidently maintained by some, if not all, of his staff, who had to complete the last season's work after their director was murdered (Inge 1938: 261-256). They held that Stratum II was the city destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar in 587 B.C.E. while Stratum III had suffered at his hands about a decade earlier. The principal reason given by Starkey and Inge was that the pottery of the two levels was identical.

When Miss Tufnell completed the publication of the excavation report, she came to a different conclusion altogether. She insisted that there were some significant differences in the pottery between Strata III and II, enough to warrant the assumption that Lachish III was the city conquered by Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E. (cf. Tufnell 1959: 101-103). Of course, the Lachish ostraca

red the 587 date for the fall of Lachish II. Her
mic evaluation and resultant dating was supported
by the obvious fact that the town of Lachish III looked
like the town depicted in the famous relief from Senna-
cherib's palace (Barnett 1958: 162; Aharoni 1967a:
342).

The publication of Miss Tufnell's views elicited
a wave of criticism from certain circles, notably the late
Albright and his disciples, as well as Miss Kenyon
(*Samaria-Sebaste III*: 206-208). Albright's main objec-
tion was again that of Starkey, viz. that the ceramic
evidence did not warrant such a long span of time
between the two levels (Albright 1953b: 46; 1958: 24).
In this he was followed by Buchanan (1954: 335-336)
and especially Wright (1955b) who made a special
study, assisted by Sinclair, to show that the pottery of
Stratum III did not differ radically from that of Stratum
II (Wright 1955a: 101). These conclusions have become
difficult in the light of Arad.

Several scholars, especially Buchanan (1954: 335-
Lapp (1960: 17), Cross (1969: 20; 1962: 35) and
Wright (1971: 315 ff.), have adduced the royal seal
impressions (bearing the inscription למלך) so abun-
dant in Stratum III at Lachish as evidence in the chro-
nological discussion (for a sample of earlier thinking,
TBM III: 74-75 and Diringier 1949: 76-79). The
general consensus, now expounded in detail by Lance,
in the palaeographical typology of the inscriptions on
the seals requires a date in the 7th century B.C.E.
Albright and his predecessors have assumed that the
chronological arguments of Albright, Buchanan and Wright
adduced above are conclusive in dating Stratum III
to the 7th B.C.E. and, therefore, are in harmony with the
palaeographical interpretation. We do not intend to
enter into the complex and thorny question of the
chronological function of these seals. However, we must
state that their dating will have to be determined first
by the historical considerations bearing on their
epigraphic find spots and secondly by the historical
considerations of their own semantic formulac. In palaeo-
graphy the typologist must seek firm chronological pegs
outside his relative scale of letter forms.¹ If a sound
chronological dating for Lachish Stratum III can be estab-
lished from the written sources, then the chronological
discussion thus reached will have to be determinative
for the palaeographer; the reverse procedure is pre-
sumably unacceptable.

Miss Tufnell has made a very forceful defense of
her position with regard to various types of pottery

vessels in Stratum III and corresponding types at other
sites (1959: 98-100). Aharoni (1967a: 341-342) also
rejects the criticisms of the "Albright school" on the
grounds of ceramic evidence. Until his Arad material is
published, experts will not be able to judge, but he
insists that his Stratum VIII pottery is contemporary
with Lachish Stratum III while his Stratum VI is parallel
to Lachish II. This leaves Arad Stratum VII in between
(cf. provisionally, Aharoni 1967b: 246 n. 27). Since all
three of these strata at Arad are documented by epi-
graphic finds, the testimony of Arad will carry con-
siderable weight in the typological debates of the coming
decade. Meanwhile, Aharoni has also noted the most
important argument put forth by Barnett (1958), viz.
that the city of Lachish Stratum III bears a *striking*
resemblance to the wall relief depicting Sennacherib's
conquest. Though Strata IV and V at Lachish are not
extensively known from the Starkey excavations, it
seems hardly likely that Stratum IV would satisfy the
demands of comparison with Sennacherib's relief as
well as does Stratum III. At least it must be said that
Sennacherib has provided us with the closest thing to
an ancient "photograph" that we can expect (*ANEP*:
nos. 772-773) for any Israelite city. That the city thus
portrayed has all the characteristic features of Lachish
Stratum III is a fact that cannot be dismissed lightly.

Aharoni has now injected a new element into the
discussion. He has recently made a careful analysis of
the Tell Beit Mirsim publication (*TBM III*) and come
up with some startling revelations. It appears that
Albright actually failed to distinguish properly between
the two major occupation phases in the late monarchial
period (*Beer-sheba I*: 6 f.). There seem to have been
two forts with some additional dwellings around them
which were the only real structures during the late
seventh-early sixth centuries B.C.E. Virtually no intact
ceramic vessels were found in these structures since their
floors had been badly eroded. The Eliakim seals, not
found on whole vessels, by the way, obviously belong to
this final occupation level. On the other hand, the city
as a whole with its casemate fortification was a separate
entity that had been destroyed previously. Since the

1 In the past decade the dating of two very important epigraphic
sources has had to be revised upward on the basis of external
facts. One of these is the Samaria Ostraca, which have been
moved back half a century (cf. Cross 1962: 35; Aharoni 1966:
18 n. 30; 1967a: 323; Kaufman 1967). The other is the Aziti-
wadda Inscription (cf. O'Callaghan 1949: 191; Starkey 1958:
137; Albright 1966: 46; Ussishkin 1969: 122-135).

vast majority
from his Str
when the ci
the pottery,
earlier than
now insistin
buildings at
Lachish III
of which he
campaign of
at Tell Beit
Lachish II
Iron Age f
Nebuchadre
(*Beer-sheba*

It is not c
or the strat
least we on
Miss Tufne
features and
II (with the
If he is corr
at Tell Beit
ical (and ps
unwarranted
we shall see

II.

During h
Tell Beit M
his Stratum
587 (1926: 6
of the now
to light in t
that the end
the seal wa
named Elia
time (Albrig
exiled king
Eliakim sea
(Albright 1
appraisal of

(This s
destroyed
and the
There wa
the time
italics mi

vast majority of whole vessels published by Albright from his Stratum A₂ comes from this occupation level, when the city had a real fortification wall around it, the pottery, or nearly all of it, must come from a time earlier than that of the Eliakim seal, etc. Aharoni is now insisting that the casemate wall and its associated buildings at Tell Beit Mirsim were contemporary with Lachish III (and also Arad VIII and Beer-sheba II), all of which he claims were destroyed in Sennacherib's campaign of 701 B.C.E. The final Iron Age occupation at Tell Beit Mirsim, he says, was contemporary with Lachish II (also approximately Arad VI and the late Iron Age fort at En-gedi), and was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar at the end of the Judaeen monarchy (*Beer-sheba I*: 6 f.).

It is not our place to evaluate the ceramic arguments or the stratigraphic critique put forward by Aharoni; at least we on the sidelines can take note that he supports Miss Tufnell by pointing out several distinct ceramic features and/or developments between Lachish III and II (with their respective contemporary strata elsewhere). If he is correct about Albright's error of interpretation at Tell Beit Mirsim, then we may have the archaeological (and psychological) cause for the invention of an unwarranted historical event in 597 B.C.E., which as we shall see has no foundation in the historical sources.

II. THE GROWTH OF A THEORY

During his first and second excavation campaigns at Tell Beit Mirsim, Albright was uncertain as to whether his Stratum A was finally destroyed in 597 B.C.E. or 7 (1926: 6; 1928: 10). When the first of two examples of the now famous *'Elyāqim, nā'ar Yawkin* seals came to light in the second campaign, he became convinced that the end of Stratum A was indeed 587 B.C.E. since the seal was proof that Jehoiachin had had a steward named Eliakim who was active in Judah during that time (Albright 1932a: 91-93) as *epitropos* over the young exiled king's personal estates. The presence of the Eliakim seal, later supplemented by another example (Albright 1930: 9), led Albright to make a forthright appraisal of the known historical situation:

This seal proves that Tell Beit Mirsim was not destroyed until after the invasion of Necho (608), and the first two of Nabuchadnezzar (605, 598). *There was no resistance, so far as we are informed, at the time of Joiachin's deposition* (Albright 1929: 16; italics mine).

Thus, in 1929 Albright still took the historical evidence at its simplest and most obvious face value: there was no Judaeen resistance to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C.E. Subsequently, we shall test this statement against additional source material discovered after Albright had long since changed his original opinion.

By his fourth campaign at Tell Beit Mirsim, Albright was beginning to consolidate his views about his "West Tower" while at the same time he was being influenced by an article of Dougherty (1930: 160 ff.). Though Dougherty admitted that the "subjugation of Judah was widespread" (*ibid.*: 165), he went on to assert that "the destruction of cities was partial" (*ibid.*: 166). He compared the statements by Sennacherib (discussed below) with other expressions in his and other royal Assyrian Annals. Since certain formulistic statements about burning and laying waste the enemy's settlements (discussed below) do not appear in the context of the Judaeen war, he concluded:

They were not "destroyed, torn down, and turned into mounds," neither were their walls "levelled to the ground."

One may infer from this that the cities of Judah were not left in a condition of absolute ruin. Their walls were enormously thick, and it would have required an immense amount of time and energy to raze them completely. It is apparent that this part of the task of rendering the people defenseless was not performed. Recovery on the part of Judah was probably rapid (Dougherty 1930: 166).

It should be noted that Dougherty himself was being influenced in his historical analysis by the archaeological interpretations then being expressed by Albright and Kyle, who did not think that Tell Beit Mirsim was destroyed at all in 701 B.C.E. (Dougherty 1930: 171 n. 30).

Albright then added an argument of his own, viz. that Sennacherib did not take the residents of the towns he conquered in 701 as captives to Assyria but only reckoned them as his subjects (Albright 1932b: 14). The conclusion he wished to draw from this interpretation was that Sennacherib did not actually burn the towns as he took them. At that time, Albright was apparently looking for a solution in the historical record in order to solve his problems at Tell Beit Mirsim. Though stating quite positively that his "West Tower" was built over his Iron Age casemate wall, he felt that only one phase of it was destroyed in 701 B.C.E., while

the rest of the city seemed to him to have remained unharmed (*loc. cit.*). At the same time, Albright began to stress the supposed severity of Judah's suffering from "the disastrous effects of the Chaldaean invasion of 597, described by Jeremiah and Zechariah" (1931: 127, and n. 2). However these two descriptions of Judaeon sufferings (Jer. 13: 18-19; Zech. 7: 7) can hardly be made to support such an explicit interpretation.

Not long afterward, Starkey began his excavations at Tell ed-Duweir = Lachish.² By 1937, Starkey had a fair picture of the later Judaeon stratigraphy, viz. Strata III and II. During lectures given in London (1937a: 176; 1937b: 235-236) he stated his view that Lachish II was obviously destroyed in 587 (because of the Lachish Letters), while Stratum III had to have been destroyed only 10 years earlier. His discussion of the strata as they were revealed by their respective roadways just inside the inner gate is worth citing:

Separating the upper from this lower roadway, at the western end of the sounding, are eight feet of piled brickwork and lime plaster, the burnt remains of great towers, which once flanked the inner gate. . . . This mass is sloping inwards damming the natural drainage passage for storm water through the gate, and accounts for the clean silt that is piled up over and against the slope of this mass. Here, then, we have a unique section, clearly defining the two burnt city levels. We have already suggested that the upper one should be equated with the final Babylonian attack, the horizon to which the Lachish Letters belong, and this lower or earlier burning may equally

all be tentatively assigned to the first threat on Judah's independence, about 597 B.C., of which we read rather confused accounts in the Biblical records. One thing is clear from the evidence of the pottery collected from the houses; the lapse of time between these two catastrophes is so short that it is impossible to differentiate one series from the other on typological grounds, therefore an interval of about ten years would be quite consistent with our present archaeological evidence (1937b: 235-236).

He was followed in this view by Inge (1938: 251-252) who spoke of

... the theory ... which Mr. Starkey formed about three years ago, that the city was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar twice in a period of ten years, that is, at each of the Babylonian invasions in which Jerusalem was captured. . . .

These two dates will be used when referring to the two destructions for which there is such ample evidence. . . . There are, then, two burnt levels in the city and the pottery in them is indistinguishable.

During this time Albright was also keeping abreast of the developments at Lachish and often expressed his approval of Starkey's interpretation. When discussing the newly discovered Lachish Letters he said,

... one is tempted to synchronize the last two destructions of Lachish (gate and citadel) with the last two destructions of the West Gate at Tell Beit Mirsim.

... Following the remarkably close analogy of Lachish, we would be justified in provisionally assigning the partial destruction of the fortifications of both places before the final phase to the capture of the towns by the Chaldaeans in 597 B.C. (Albright 1936: 16).

In response to Starkey's address (1937b: 235-236), Albright had this to say:

Starkey's latest work at Lachish established the correctness of his previous observation that there were two destructions within a very brief period. . . . The writer heartily agrees with his identification of the two destructions with the two Chaldaean invasions in 598/7 and in 589/7 (Albright 1937: 26).

Two years later he reiterated his opinion that the last campaign at Lachish (completed after Starkey's murder):

... yielded a fully adequate picture of the archaeological situation during the last two preëxilic phases of occupation, which came to an end respectively in 598/7 and in 589/7 B.C. (Albright 1939: 16).

By the time he was finishing his report on the Iron Age strata of Tell Beit Mirsim, Albright seems to have crystalized his views even further. However, there are certain inconsistencies in his statements that are difficult to reconcile. Evidently, he had recanted his earlier opinion that there were no real destructions in Sennacherib's day.

It is almost certain, in my judgment, that the town suffered severely during Sennacherib's invasion in the summer of 701. The neighboring town of Lachish,

2 The first to propose the identification of Tell ed-Duweir with biblical Lachish was Albright (1929: 3 n. 2).

which was as well the last ing

Obviously about excavations III. In

For not successful Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the eighth century way n. 11

Nevertheless to

... wide sion tion rem mat Final shell. archaeological

I have to c tion T.B. com Whe Joia dest Gat Mo: (ibia

The Tufnel influen 176) c

which was much more strongly situated and fortified, was stormed by Sennacherib during his campaign, as we know from the explicit concurrent testimony of the Bible, Sennacherib's own reliefs with accompanying text, and Starkey's excavations (*TBM III*: 65).

Obviously, Albright had been doing some serious thinking about the tremendous destruction described by the excavators (Inge 1938: 251-252) in Lachish Stratum III. In a footnote he says:

However, it must be said that the excavators may not have clearly distinguished as yet between the successive destructions under Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar. For example, the tremendous destruction inside the city, which was followed by much thinner occupation, may date from the time of Sennacherib, as strongly suggested by finding eighth-century objects in the debris of this destruction, whereas the penultimate destruction of the gateway may date from the year 598 B.C. (*TBM III*: 67 n. 10).

Nevertheless, Albright had not abandoned his adherence to Dougherty's analysis (cf. above),

... which makes it clear that the destruction, though widespread, was partial...; Dougherty's conclusions have been strikingly confirmed by the excavations of Starkey at Lachish (Starkey's deductions remain in the main unpublished, owing to his premature death) (*ibid.*: 65).

Finally, Albright summarized his opinion in a nutshell. His historical conclusion is based solely on archaeological evidence.

I have already pointed out... that it is difficult not to combine the two final destructions of the fortifications of Lachish with the corresponding phases at T.B.M. In view of subsequent work at Lachish this combination has become almost categorical.... When Nebuchadnezzar's general invaded Judah after Joiakim's rebellion in 599 he stormed T.B.M. and destroyed both the West and (probably) the East Gate, as well as the fortress in the centre of the city. Most of the town escaped demolition at this time (*ibid.*: 67; italics mine).

Therefore, in spite of some very lucid arguments by Tufnell (1959: 96-104), those who are under Albright's influence have failed to be persuaded. Wright (1957: 176) considers the violent destruction of Lachish III

to be the result of a supposed Chaldaean invasion in 598 B.C.E.

... The city stratum in question is that of Level III, the destruction of which Miss Tufnell dates in 701 B.C., though Mr. Starkey, the excavator, dated it in 598. After a detailed study of the published material, this writer feels that the evidence does not substantiate Miss Tufnell's conclusion, but rather points to the views of Mr. Starkey. The technical arguments are presented elsewhere. Suffice it to say that this is also the opinion of Professor Albright. ... (*ibid.*: 176 n. 15; italics mine).

Throughout the course of the four decades since Albright conducted his last campaign at Tell Beit Mirsim, no one has bothered to make a serious comparison of the historical records pertaining to Sennacherib's invasion with those relating to the events from 605 to 586 B.C.E. Nor has anyone questioned the "fact" that there was a serious destruction of Judaeen towns in or around 597. We have before us a typical example of an attitude so prevalent in "Biblical Archaeology", viz. that an *opinion* formed in the field is as objective as the objects discovered in the excavation. With the revision of these archaeological assumptions, expressed in this volume, the written documents involved should also be carefully reviewed.

III. THE HISTORICAL SOURCES

The discovery and publication of an important cuneiform witness to precisely those same years (Wiseman 1956) did nothing to change the "consensus" regarding the historical reconstruction of the political and military events at the end of Jehoiakim's reign. It is astounding that no one thought to demand a re-evaluation in the light of this new text. But first, we must touch briefly on the Sennacherib inscriptions.

The Campaign of Sennacherib. Dougherty directed our attention to some of Sennacherib's minor texts such as the Nebi Yunis Inscription, line 15,

ušālpit rapšu nagû māt Ya'ūdi; Ḥazaqiya'u šarrašu ʿemid abšāni.

I destroyed the wide province, the land of Judah; on Hezeqiah its king I imposed my rope (of the yoke)³ (Luckenbill 1924: 86: 15; Borger 1963 II: 70).

3 For the meaning of *abšānu*, cf. CAD A-1: 65.

A parallel passage from two Bull Inscriptions is even more impressive for the appellatives applied to the king of Judah:

ušalpit rapšu nagû māt Ya'ūdi; šepšu mitru Hazaqiya'u šarrašu šepū'a ušakniš.

I destroyed the wide province, the land of Judah; the powerful(?) and mighty⁴ Hezekiah, its king, I made to bow at my feet (Luckenbill 1924: 77: 20-21; Borger 1963 II: 70).

From these texts, Dougherty rightly deduced that the conquest by Sennacherib was *extensive*. The Assyrian monarch caused the blow to fall on the wide territory of Judah. But Dougherty's assumption that the cities were not thoroughly destroyed must be judged in the light of the following passage:

u Hazaqiya'u Ya'ūdāyu ša lū iknušu ana niriya, 46 ālānišu bīt dannūti ālāni šehrūti ša limētišunu ša niba lā išu ina šukbus arammē u qurrub šupē, mithuṣ zūk šēpē, pūšē, niksē u kalbānāte alme, akšud, 200150 niši šeher rabi, zikar u sinniṣ, sisē, parē, imērē, gammalē, alpē u šeni ša lā nibi ultu qerbuššun ušēšamma šallatiš amnu.

And (as for) Hezekiah the Judaeen who had not bowed to my yoke, 46 of his cities, strong⁵ fortresses and the small towns in their vicinities without number, by packing down ramps, and bringing up⁶ battering rams, the assault of infantry, (by) tunnels, breaches and siege⁷ engines, I surrounded (and) captured. Two hundred thousand, one hundred and fifty⁸ people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, large and small cattle without number, I brought out of them and I counted them as spoil (Luckenbill 1924: 32: 18-33: 27; Borger 1963 II: 68: 18-27).

Here we have the detailed description of Assyrian siege methods; there is no need to underline the great efforts expended by the Assyrian army in the reduction of forty-six Judaeen cities (plus their associated villages). However, we have noted (above) Albright's suggestion that Sennacherib had not taken away the inhabitants but only "counted them as subjects". Besides the absurdity of expecting the Assyrian ruler to exert his forces to the maximum only to cow the local population, we have decisive testimony from Sennacherib himself. The super-scription on the relief depicting Lachish (Luckenbill 1924: 159, no. XXV; Borger 1963 II: 70) makes the

situation perfectly clear:

Sin-aḫḫi-iriba, šar kiššati, šar māt Aššur, ina kussē nēmedi ušibma šallat Lakīsi maḥaršu ētiq.

Sennacherib, king of the world, king of the land of Aššur, sat in a lounge chair and the booty of Lachish passed in review before him⁹.

From the picture there can be no doubt that the people are being led away into captivity (cf. Barnett 1958: 163-164). This assures us that *ultu qerbuššun ušēšamma šallatiš amnu*, means literally what it says, the people were "counted as spoil" after being forced out of their city.

Elsewhere in his annals, Sennacherib vividly describes the actual destruction of enemy settlements, e.g.

gimri mātišu rapašti kīma imbari ašup; Marubišti Akkuddu, ālāni bīt šarrūtišu, adi ālāni šehrūti ša limētišunu alme, akšud, appul, aqqur, ina Gira aqmu.

The whole of his wide land I overwhelmed like a dense fog; Marubušti and Akkuddu, his royal cities, with the small towns in their vicinities, I surrounded, I conquered, I overthrew, I razed, and with fire I burned (Luckenbill 1924: 28: II, 15-19; Borger 1963 II: 65: II, 15-19),

and also,

ālānišu appul, aqqur, ušēmi karmiš.

His towns I overthrew, I razed, I turned into ruins (Luckenbill 1924: 35: III, 69-70; Borger 1963 II: 71: 69-70; CAD K, 218b).

4 Instead of *be-ru*, CAD B, 208a, says to read *mit-ru*; the term *mitru* appears in the *malku* = *šarru* lexical series as a synonym for *dannu* and *dannatu*, cf. Kilmer 1963: 425: 41; 435: 132; also von Soden 1958-1972: 663a.

5 For the word order we have followed here, cf. the textual variants cited by Borger 1963 II: 68: 20.

6 We have adopted the variants which have the transitive D stem infinitive *qurrub* instead of the reflexive Gt *qitrub* (Borger 1963 II: 69, also III, 112; cf. von Soden 1958-1972: 412b; CAD A-2: 428b).

7 The precise definition of *kalbānātu* is still uncertain, CAD K: 67a.

8 Concerning this figure, cf. Borger 1963: 112 *contra* Ungnad 1943.

9 For this rendering, cf. CAD E, 386, rather than that of Oppenheim (ANEP: 293b no. 371; ANET: 288b). The verb, written *e-ti-iq*, is evidently 3rd m. sg. with 3rd f. sg. subject as in Babylonian, but with Assyrian vocalization, *ētiq*, cf. von Soden 1952: 126 par. 97c.

Admitte
regard t
sis in th
employe
sages. F
of Lach
of the t
dents).
of the c
suppose
rific bat
Now
Lachish
ed citie
introdu

מ

Seni
forti
18:

In sho
conqu
six ma
tlemen

The
and S
Chron
first y
had n
record
Starko

confu:
mispla
belon.
texts

the ex
by the
It

from
achin

Af
chadi
strict

(Wise

inc
pā

A

Admittedly, these phrases have been omitted with regard to the Judaean campaign. However, the emphasis in the Judaean section is on the military technology employed, something which is lacking in the other passages. Furthermore, the dramatic portrayal of the siege of Lachish in the relief catches the action at the height of the battle (plus the subsequent captivity of the residents). There was no room in the picture for the burning of the city. Nevertheless, it would be extremely naïve to suppose that Lachish escaped burning after such a terrific battle.

Now the same conclusion derived from the siege of Lachish must also be applied to the other forty-six walled cities. Sennacherib's claim is echoed in the biblical introduction to the account of his invasion:

עלה סנחריב מלך-אשור על כל-ערי יהודה הבצורה
ויתפסם

Sennacherib, king of Aššur, came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them (2 Kgs. 18: 13; Isa. 36: 1; cf. also 2 Chr. 32: 1).

In short, we have clear, unequivocal testimony to the conquest (and obviously the destruction) of up to forty-six major towns in Judah and numberless smaller settlements.

The shadow of Nebuchadrezzar. In behalf of Albright and Starkey, one may argue that the Babylonian Chronicle covering the last years of the seventh and the first years of the sixth centuries B.C.E. (Wiseman 1956) had not yet come to light. But even with the biblical record for this same period, there was no excuse for Starkey's assertion (1937b: 236) that they are "rather confused accounts." The only confusion seems to be the misplacement of 2 Chr. 36: 6b-7, which evidently belongs in verse 10 of the same chapter. Otherwise, the texts seem reasonably clear, especially with regard to the extent and nature of the military action carried out by the Babylonian army.

It behooves us to review briefly the course of events from the fall of Carchemish to the captivity of Jehoiachin as reflected in the Chaldaean and biblical sources.

After his victory at Carchemish in 605 B.C.E., Nebuchadrezzar pursued the Egyptians to the Hamath district and inflicted another resounding defeat on them (Wiseman 1956: 66: 5-68: 7), and

ina ūmišūma Nabû-kudurri-ušur māt Ha[mā]tu ana
pāṭ gimrišu ikšu[d].

At that time, Nebuchadrezzar conquered the whole

area of the land of Hamāth (Wiseman 1956: 68: 18).¹⁰

By contrast, Josephus says that following the victory at Carchemish,

... the Babylonian king crossed the Euphrates and took possession of Syria as far as Pelusium, with the exception of Judaea (Antiq. X, vi 1 [86]).

Now Josephus evidently deduced this from 2 Kgs. 24: 7, but it is clear that the biblical verse has to do with the situation after the clash between the Babylonians and the Egyptians in 601 (cf. below). The supposed parallel between Josephus and the Babylonian Chronicle (Wiseman 1956: 24-25) has been eliminated by the corrected reading of line 8 (cf. n. 10). Nebuchadrezzar could, perhaps, claim *nominal* hegemony over the Levant (Ḫattu, which is Graeco-Roman Syria, also = *eber nāri*, Rainey 1968: 51-52) by virtue of his seizing the important administrative centre at Riblah. Necho had administered the province from there (2 Kgs. 23: 33; 2 Chr. 36: 3) as did Nebuchadrezzar later on (2 Kgs. 25: 6; Jer. 39: 5; 52: 9; Wiseman 1956: 26; Malamat 1956: 249-250); Riblah is not far south of Hamath. But in the ensuing months and years, he still had to do a great deal of campaigning to consolidate his position.

ina rēš šarrūti Nabû-kudurri-ušur ana māt Ḫattu ana
arkīšu itūrma adi araḥ Šabaṭi ina māt Ḫatti šalṭāniš
ittallak, ina araḥ Šabaṭi bilat māt Ḫattu kabittu ana
Bābili ilqā.

In the accession year Nebuchadrezzar returned afterward¹¹ to the land of Ḫattu and until the month of Shebat he marched triumphantly¹² through the land of Ḫattu, in the month of Shebat he took the heavy tribute of the land of Ḫattu back to Babylon (Wiseman 1956: 68: 12-13).

Thus, during the fall and winter of 605-604, he made a persuasive show of force in the Levant and collected a large tribute. He does not say that he had to conquer any cities. Though details are lacking, one would naturally suppose that the Babylonian forces spent this

10 Grayson (1964: 202, 205) and Oded (1965-1966) noted that the proper restoration in Wiseman 1956: 68: 8, must be *mār(KUR) Ḫaṭṭima-a]-iū*; their reading produces a coherent picture of Nebuchadrezzar's step-by-step conquest of the Levant from North to South.

11 I.e., after going to Babylon to take the throne when his father died; for the meaning of *arkīšu*, cf. CAD A-2, 281a.

12 This rendering is to be preferred over Wiseman's "unopposed," cf. Albright 1956: 31; Borger 1956: 104: ii, 1.

first period of "power politics" in the northern and central reaches of Hattu. Several of Jeremiah's oracles, e.g. Chs. 25, 36, 45, 46, may pertain to this inexorable march southward (cf. Vogt 1957: 84-85). Finally the king had to return home for the official coronation ceremony (Wiseman 1956: 68: 14) in Nisan.

That summer, in Sivan, Nebuchadrezzar came back to the Levant with his army. He meant business.

*šattu *išiēt Nabū-kudurri-ušur ina araḥ Simāni um-mānišu idkēma ana māt Hattu illikma adi araḥ Kislimi ina māt Hatti šalāniš ittallak. šarrāni ša māt Hattu kališunu ana pānišu illikūnimma bilassunu kabittu imḥur.*

In the first year Nebuchadrezzar mustered his army in the month of Sivan and went to the land of Hattu; he marched around victoriously in the land of Hattu until the month of Kislev. All of the kings of the land of Hattu came before him and he received their heavy tribute (Wiseman 1956: 68: 15-17).

What we would like to know, of course, is whether Jehoiakim was among those kings of Hattu who paid tribute in that year or not. This possibility has appealed to some commentators on the Babylonian Chronicle (Wiseman 1956: 28; Malamat 1956: 250-251; Tadmor 1956: 229; 1969: 150; Vogt 1957: 90). Their thinking has been influenced by the passage in Jer. 36: 9-32, where we are informed that precisely at this time, in the 9th month, Kislev, of Jehoiakim's fifth year,

... they proclaimed a fast before the Lord in Jerusalem, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who come up from the cities of Judah (Jer. 36: 9).

The Judaeans obviously felt themselves to be facing a crisis, so they called this extraordinary assembly for fasting. The callousness of Jehoiakim in the face of Jeremiah's prophetic warnings is sharply contrasted to that of his subjects.

Albright (1932a: 89-90) and now also Malamat (1968: 141-142) and Pavlovský and Vogt (1964: 345-346), date the Judaeans submission to the following year. The convening of a national day of fasting in precisely the same month as the siege of Ashkelon is certainly not a coincidence (Malamat 1956: 251-252). Seeing that the Judaeans were so afraid, and their sovereign so insolent, it is obvious that Judah had not as yet made final acknowledgment of the Chaldaean hegemony in Hattu land. Now the people were cringing at the thought of Nebuchadrezzar's wrath.

ana āl [Isqi]llūnu illikma ina araḥ Kislimi [erasure] iṣṣabassu. šarrašu iktāšad, ḥubussu iḥtabta, šillassa [ištala]... āla ana tili u karmē uttir. ina araḥ Šabaḥi illikma ana Bāb[ili itūra].

He marched to the city of [Ashkelon] and in the month of Kislev he captured it. He captured its king; its prisoners he took¹³ and its spoil he [carried off ...]; he turned the city into heaps of ruins.¹⁴ In the month of Shebat [he returned] to Bab[ylon] (Wiseman 1956: 68: 18-20).

It would appear that the siege and conquest of Ashkelon was as much as Nebuchadrezzar could have accomplished in one winter. He returned to Babylon without conducting any further operations. This may have encouraged the Judaeans to hope for deliverance from Babylonian conquest by the eventual intervention of Egypt.

The following year, Nebuchadrezzar returned in force. He evidently had some serious objective(s) before him. It is most unfortunate that the text is so badly damaged at this point, since the name of the beleaguered town is now irretrievable. The text as restored by Wiseman, plus some improvements, is as follows:

[šattu] šanitu araḥ Ayyari šar Akkadī ummānšu kabitti ikšurma [ana māt Hattu illikma ina muḥḥi āl Hazzatu] iddi. šapāti rabāti ušbal [kit ... ultu araḥ] Ayyari adi ar[ah ...].

In the second [year] in the month of Iyyar the king of Akkad assembled a vast force, [marched to the land of Hattu and¹⁵ against¹⁶ the city of Gaza(?)¹⁷] he encamped. Great siege towers he brought across [... from the month of] Iyyar to the mon[th of ...]

13 For this idiom, cf. von Soden 1958-1972: 303b.

14 Cf. most recently CAD K: 218a.

15 Because *id-di* in line 22 does not have enclitic *-ma*, it is obviously the final clause of a sequence. This tablet seems to preserve a very logical connection between the clauses, using the connective *-ma* for a series of related actions leading up to a logical climax in a clause without *-ma*.

16 Grayson 1964: 202, recognized the idiomatic use of *ādū* with a GN as complement dependent on *ina muḥḥi* (Wiseman 1956: 66: 20), contra von Soden 1958-1972: 707a.

17 The space broken off of the end of line 21 and the beginning of line 22 can be nicely filled by the following restorations: [*ana*(DİŠ) *māt*(KUR) *Ḥat-tū* illik(DU)-*ma* ina(AŠ) *muḥḥi*(UGU) *āl*(URU)]/[*Ḥa-za-tū*] *id-di*.... This would satisfy the idiom (Grayson 1964: 202; cf. above, n. 16) and at least suggests the possibility that Gaza was the next victim after Ashkelon.

(Wiseman 1956: 70: 21-23).¹⁸

The question at once arises whether this might be the siege of Lachish so confidently postulated by Starkey? One might suggest that the Kingdom of Judah was the object of this campaign on the basis of the problematic reference in 2 Chr. 36: 6b-7. Commentators have long wrestled with this passage and the proposed explanations are numerous.¹⁹ The simplest solution to the textual problem is to assume that this entry has somehow been misplaced from its original context *after* 2 Chr. 36: 10a, where it would make perfect sense as an allusion to the captivity of Jehoiachin. It is clear from the account in 2 Kgs. 24: 1ff. that Jehoiakim was *not* taken to Babylon at all. The explanation that Nebuchadrezzar had bound Jehoiakim in chains and then changed his mind about exiling him is too forced and unrealistic; such a change of heart on the part of the Babylonian ruler would hardly have escaped mention by the biblical historian. Furthermore, one can scarcely imagine a military campaign, especially one in which towers were employed, after which Nebuchadrezzar would decide to leave the captured king in office. That such a conquest by force should occur without being mentioned in the biblical text is also quite unthinkable. At least one must note that the broken part of line 22 does not provide enough space for a restoration comparable to Wiseman, 1956, 72: 12; the name "city of Judah," simply would not fit!

But what about Lachish? The signs [La-ki-su] would suit the space at the beginning of line 22 very well. Could it be that Nebuchadrezzar turned his mighty war machine against this most important city of the Shephelah before Jehoiakim finally submitted to his demands? The broken text might leave this question open and thus provide a smattering of hope for the archaeological conjectures of Albright, Starkey a.o. However, we must again have recourse to the biblical accounts. In spite of their apparent inconsistency (viz. between 2 Kgs. 24: 1 and 2 Chr. 36: 6-7), it is hardly conceivable that a siege operation of any great proportions would have been entirely overlooked by the historians of Judah. After all, Lachish, perhaps the second city of the realm, and certainly the "capital" of the Shephelah at this time, was *the* major conquest of Sennacherib's campaign; his scribes specifically chose it as the subject for the one wall relief from the war. During the final conquest in 587-586, Lachish was also one of the principle strong points in the Judaeans defense (Jer. 34: 7). Is it really plausible that the biblical texts would be ab-

solutely mute if Lachish had undergone an intensive destruction at this time? This is not just an argument from silence; the tenor of 2 Kgs. 24: 1 also assures that the Judaeans cities were *saved* by Jehoiakim's capitulation,

In his days²⁰ Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years. . . .

Furthermore, the same logic applies to a supposed conquest of Lachish as of Jerusalem. Would Nebuchadrezzar have accepted the submission of Jehoiakim *after* having to besiege a mighty city like Lachish? Everything we know about Babylonian policy in Hattu at this time contradicts such a rash proposal.²¹ Nebuchadrezzar was engaged in imposing his hegemony over all the Levant. Through the years 604-601 he advanced steadily southward. The destruction of Ashkelon was a major step in achieving his goal; he had thus annihilated one key seaport town that could have been used by the Egyptians as a landing point in the coming encounter. With his face set steadfastly towards the Egyptian border, Nebuchadrezzar could not have tolerated a hostile state behind his back in the Judaeans Hills, either (Wiseman 1956: 31). So we can hardly expect him to have left Jehoiakim on the throne *if the latter had put up any military resistance whatsoever!*

We are admittedly on uncertain ground when trying to suggest the possible identity of the place conquered in 603. However, the evidence is not inconsiderable for identifying the Adon who sent a frantic message to Pharaoh at about this time²² with the ruler of Gaza (Vogt 1957: 87-89; Malamat 1968: 142-143, and n. 11). Perhaps it was against Gaza that Nebuchadrezzar had

18 Cf. CAD S: 97b.

19 Malamat (1968: 142) takes 2 Chr. 36: 6b-7 at face value and assumes that the broken passage in Wiseman 1956: 70: 23-x, probably gave the same details; cf. also Noth 1958: 146-147 = 1972 I: 123.

20 2 Chr. 36: 6a reads, "Against him . . .," i.e. עָלָיו instead of בִּימֵיו. This variant may be the result of reinterpretation based on the erroneous inserting of 6b-7 at this point, which may have taken place earlier.

21 Note that Sennacherib had also intended to arrest Hezekiah and to exile the population of Jerusalem after the conquest of Lachish and its neighbouring towns, 2 Kgs. 18: 31-32 = Isa. 36: 16-17.

22 The Saqqâra Papyrus Fragment, no. 266 in Donner and Röllig 1962-1964; with bibliography in vol. II, 312. For the most recent linguistic and philological study, cf. Fitzmyer (1965); convenient summaries of current opinion are Vattion (1966), and Horn (1968).

to conduct his siege in that year.²³

Which ever year one prefers for the submission of Judah, Josephus evidently gives an accurate appraisal of the political events in spite of a chronological error (cf. below).

... the Babylonian king marched against the Judaeans with a large force, demanding tribute from Jehoiakim or threatening to make war. So he, being fearful of the threat and purchasing peace by money, brought him the tribute which he had imposed for three years (Antiq. X, vi, 1 [87]).

The Jewish historian is here giving his interpretation of 2 Kgs. 24: 1. His estimate of the situation is surely correct but he has apparently tried to figure the three years back from the end of Jehoiakim's reign because he dates this submission to the fourth year of Nebuchadrezzar which he equates with the eighth year of Jehoiakim. Wiseman (1956: 30-31) accepts Josephus' testimony as suitable to the year 601 (Nebuchadrezzar's fourth year) and associates it with the activity of the Babylonian army in the Levant just prior to the attack on Egypt.

In the light of subsequent events, Josephus' chronological estimate can hardly have been correct. The Babylonian entry for the third year of Nebuchadrezzar is also badly broken; the final lines indicate further activity in the Levant:

[... *šar Akka*]dī *ummānišu idkēma ana māṭ Ḥattu* [illik] [...] *mādūtu ša māṭ Ḥattu ana māṭ Akkadī ulteri*[b...]

[... the king of Akka]d called up his army; [he marched] to the land of Ḥattu [...] the extensive [spoil] of the land Ḥattu he brought back [...] (Wiseman 1956: 70: rev. 3-4).

One begins to understand why the Egyptian diplomatic efforts continued to have a sympathetic reception among the Levantine states. Babylonian pressure was unrelenting, both military and economic. The tribute collected in 602 must surely have included the payment from Jehoiakim. If the first installment was paid in 603, then the second would fall in 602 and the third would have been handed over in 601.

šattu rebūtu šar Akkadī ummānišu idkēma ana māṭ Ḥattu illik; ina māṭ Ḥattu šal[āniš ittallak].

In the fourth year the king of Akkad called up his army and marched to the land of Ḥattu; in the land

of Ḥattu [he marched around] vict[oriously] (Wiseman 1956: 70: rev. 5).

It is here that Josephus (cf. above), followed by Wiseman, would place the submission of Jehoiakim. But it is more likely that Nebuchadrezzar collected the third consecutive Judaeans instalment at this time. In the ensuing two years, Jehoiakim had every good reason *not* to pay up, or so he thought.

After making his show of force among his Levantine subjects, Nebuchadrezzar finally struck out against his arch enemy.

ina araḥ Kislimi pānī ummānišu iṣbatma ana māṭ Mišir illik. šar māṭ Mišir iṣmēma ummānišu idkē[ma] ina tāḥaz šēri irti aḥamiš imḥašūma abiktu aḥamiš mādiš iškunū. šar Akkadī u ummānišu itūramma ana Bābili [itūra].

In the month of Kislev, he took the lead of his army and marched to Egypt. The king of Egypt heard (of it), called out his army, and²⁴ in an open battle they smote each other on the breast and inflicted heavy losses²⁵ on each other. The king of Akkad and his army turned back and returned to Babylon (Wiseman 1956: 70: rev. 6-7).

The attempted invasion of Egypt was repulsed. Apparently, fighting on their own ground, or close to it, the Egyptian forces made an admirable showing against Nebuchadrezzar's troops. This is obvious from the candid report in the chronicle. Of course, the Egyptians also suffered heavy losses and do not seem to have come forth again in support of their Levantine allies for over a decade (2 Kgs. 24: 7). Nevertheless, the fact that

23 It is most precarious, of course, to be dogmatic on this point. The Aramaic Saqqāra Papyrus is only a part of the right half of the epistle. If Malamat's (1968: 143) interpretation of line 5 were correct, it might conflict with our own rendering of Wiseman 1956: 70: 21-22, since Nebuchadrezzar appears to have come directly with his army. However, the missing part of line 3 may have contained a reference to the king of Babylon as well as to his army. The text simply is too fragmentary to decide the issue, but we doubt that Nebuchadrezzar would have launched his attack on Egypt without having taken Gaza first.

24 Wiseman has correctly restored [-ma] at the end of line 6; it is required by the lengthening of the thematic vowel in 'id- 'ke- 'e' (if the traces really represent 'e'); but if the conjectured enclitic be accepted, then the translation must show the sequential relationship between the clauses intended by the scribe.

25 For *abiktu*, cf. CAD A-1, 52b.

(Wise-

y Wise-

. But it

ie third

In the

reason

vantine

inst his

ra mār

lkē[ma]

aḥamiš

na ana

army

rd (of

e they

heavy

d his

eman

Ap-

o it,

ainst

the

gyp-

ave

for

hat

unt.

half

ie 5

of

to

art

on

to

ld

za

is

l.

-

v

:

the Babylonians were forced to withdraw must have raised the hopes of Judah and some of the neighbouring states.

šattu ḥamuštu šar Akkadī ina mātišu narkabāti u sisē mādūtu iktāšar,

In the fifth year the king of Akkad assembled²⁶ in his country many chariots and much cavalry (Wiseman 1956: 70: rev. 8).

The extent of the damage inflicted on the Babylonian army was so great that the king had to spend a whole year reorganizing and re-equipping his forces.

During this fifth year, 600 B.C.E., while Nebuchadrezzar was rebuilding his war machine, Jehoiakim probably failed to pay his customary tribute and thus committed himself to open rebellion (2 Kgs. 24: 1; Jos. Antiq. X, vi 2 [88]). The Babylonian response was conditioned by their need to renew their strength. The biblical historian viewed the ensuing calamities as a divine punishment; in fact one cannot doubt that Jehoiakim's oath of vassal allegiance was taken in the name of Israel's God, and when such sworn oaths were broken, it was expected that the deity would exact punishment.

And the Lord²⁷ sent against him (Jehoiakim) bands of the Chaldaeans and bands of the Aramaeans (or Edomites?) and bands of the Moabites and bands of the Ammonites, and sent them against Judah to destroy it (2 Kgs. 24: 2).

Wiseman (1956: 32) suggested that there might be some link between this passage and the Babylonian record of Nebuchadrezzar's activity in 599 B.C.E.

*šattu *šidultu araḥ Kislimi šar Akkadī ummānišu idkēma ana māt Ḥattu illik. ultu māt Ḥattu ummānišu išpurma madbari irtedūma amēl Arabi mādūtu, bušāšunu, būlišunu u ilānišunu mādīš iḥiabiūnu. ina araḥ Addari šarru ana mātišu itūr.*

In the sixth²⁸ year in the month of Kislev the king of Akkad called up his army and marched to the land of Ḥattu. From the land of Ḥattu he sent out his regiments; they scoured the deserts and as booty they took many Arabs, their possessions, their herds and their deities.²⁹ In the month of Adar the king returned to his land (Wiseman 1956: 70: 9-10).

Vogt (1957: 92) suggested that the expeditions into the desert were to secure the eastern flank in preparation for the coming attack on Judah. Albright (1956: 31)

recognized that there must be some connection with the rich caravan trade. Altogether, Nebuchadrezzar probably achieved several aims in this military action: (1) he gave his newly organized regiments an opportunity to sharpen up their fighting skills against an enemy much less equipped to stand up to them; (2) he brought in a rich store of booty, partly to reward the troops and to whet their appetite, but perhaps mainly to replenish the storehouses of his administrative centres in the Levant —after all, some states had been withholding their tribute ever since the clash with Egypt; and (3) he did establish his hegemony over the eastern trade routes.³⁰ The latter objective also would have given him considerable leverage when dealing with the coastal cities of Philistia and Phoenicia, whose livelihood depended upon keeping open their commercial traffic with the hinterland and S. Arabia.³¹

Wiseman (1956: 32) noted the apparent significance of the fact that the king's personal return to Babylon in Adar is mentioned without reference to the army. It seems most likely that many troops were left in the Levant with specific orders, though again in the seventh year we are told that "the king called up his army and marched to the land of Ḥattu" (Wiseman 1956: 72: 11).

In fact, it was probably during this time that the "detachments" (גדודים) of Chaldaeans, Aramaeans (or Edomites),³² Moabites and Ammonites were sent

26 For *kašaru* in this meaning, cf. *CAD K*, 259b.

27 LXX omits the Divine Name in 2 Kgs. 24: 2 but it has a parallel to this passage in 2 Chr. 36: 5 (unlike MT) and there it reads *Kypios* (vs. 5b). Therefore, we suspect that the Tetragrammaton may be original in MT; cf. Montgomery 1951: 552.

28 The form of the ordinal assumed here is based on the OB *ši-du-uš-tum* cited by von Soden 1969: 14** par. 70b.

29 Cf. *CAD B*, 315a.

30 The seizure of the divine images would tend to assure this.

31 Cf. in general, Ezek. 27; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1968: no. 116; this campaign and related biblical passages are discussed by Eph'al 1971: 125-129; and XVII-XVIII.

32 The emendation to "Edom" in both 2 Kgs. 24: 2 and Jer. 35: 11 is advocated by Ginsberg 1950: 356 n. 31, because "There was no Aram in existence in the reign of Jehoiakim, while Edom is just the nation that is always named along with Moab and the children of Ammon." However, there is no reason why some of the Aramaean provinces in the Levant could not have provided local militia units at this time.

The LXX has *Συρία* and comparison with Jer. 35: 11 also supports the Aramaean reading; the Rechabites answered Jeremiah:

And it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of

step by step, towards a specific goal.³⁷ He mustered his forces and came to Hattu for the explicit purpose of taking Jerusalem. The "softening up" operations of the Chaldeans and allied detachments were preparatory to this major thrust. The captivity of 3,023 Judaeans in the seventh year of Nebuchadrezzar (Jer. 52: 28) evidently comprised residents of towns outside Jerusalem that were rounded up during the siege period prior to the fall of Jerusalem, which took place in Nisan, i.e., at the beginning of Nebuchadrezzar's eighth year (2 Kgs. 24: 12; 2 Chr. 36: 10; Ezek. 40: 1; Malamat 1956: 253, and table on 256; 1968: 154; Finegan 1957: 204). However, the fact remains that *the Babylonian as well as the biblical sources know of no other city being taken by siege at this time.*

The absolute silence of both the Hebrew and the Akkadian sources is more than just silence. The fact that Mesopotamian building inscriptions, etc., from the reign of Nebuchadrezzar (e.g. Langdon 1912: 71-209) do not allude to military conquests is really irrelevant, of course. But when Wright uses this as an excuse for the lack of Neo-Babylonian evidence (1957: 176) he is ignoring the true nature of the Babylonian Chronicles published by Wiseman (which Wright discusses in the same paragraph). Without even glancing at the other tablets in Wiseman's book, we can cite the destruction of Ashkelon in 604 B.C.E. and the evident conquest of some other place in 603, as well as the conquest of Jerusalem itself. If the Babylonian army had conducted a major siege against Lachish during *any* year covered by the Chronicle texts, we would expect that the fact

would be laconically but gruesomely described.

Neither can there be any consolation in the fact that from c. 594 B.C.E. to the fall of Judah under Zedekiah, we still do not have clear testimony about what was going on in the Levant. How could there possibly have been such a destruction of Lachish during the reign of Zedekiah *without the slightest hint* in the biblical records? Again, this is not a mere argument from silence; we do know a great deal about the political turmoil in Judah at this time. In spite of his vacillations under the influence of the pro-Egyptian party, Zedekiah managed somehow to keep his vassal relationship with Babylon intact until the eve of the final debacle. For the devastation of Lachish in 587, we have Stratum II with its Lachish letters.

An additional question that cannot be answered if Lachish III was destroyed in 597 is how the depleted kingdom of Judah under Zedekiah could possibly have accumulated the resources to rebuild such a fortress, even on the less impressive scale of Stratum II? The Egyptians did not give Judah that kind of logistic aid. To anyone familiar with the biblical record of Zedekiah's reign, the possibility that he might have mustered the strength in manpower and supplies for such a project is beyond comprehension.

37 Noth (1958: 135-138 = 1972 I: 113-116) suggested that the main goal of this campaign was the arrest of Jehoiachin and his replacement by a more loyal subject, viz. Zedekiah. However, the synchronisms are not suitable to his proposal and it is more likely that Nebuchadrezzar was coming to punish the rebellious Jehoiakim (Malamat 1968: 144 n. 5).

REFERENCES

- Aharoni, Y. 1966. The Use of Hieratic Numerals in Hebrew Ostraca. *BASOR* 184: 13-19.
- Aharoni, Y. 1967a. *The Land of the Bible*. London and Philadelphia.
- Aharoni, Y. 1967b. Excavations at Tel Arad, Preliminary Report on the Second Season, 1963. *IEJ* 17: 233-249.
- Aharoni, Y. 1968. Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temples. *BA* 31: 2-32.
- Aharoni, Y. 1970. Three Hebrew Ostraca from Arad. *BASOR* 197: 16-42.
- Aharoni, Y. and Avi-Yonah, M. 1968. *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*. New York.
- Albright, W. F. 1926. The Excavations at Tell Beit Mirsim I. *BASOR* 23: 2-6.
- Albright, W. F. 1928. The Second Campaign at Tell Beit Mirsim. *BASOR* 31: 1-11.
- Albright, W. F. 1929. The American Excavations at Tell Beit Mirsim. *ZAWN.F.* 6 = 47: 1-17.
- Albright, W. F. 1930. The Third Campaign at Tell Beit Mirsim. *BASOR* 39: 1-10.
- Albright, W. F. 1931. The Third Campaign at Tell Beit Mirsim and its Historical Results. *JPOS* 11: 105-129.
- Albright, W. F. 1932a. The Seal of Eliakim and the Latest Preëxilic History of Judah, with some Observations on Ezekiel. *JBL* 51: 77-106.
- Albright, W. F. 1932b. The Fourth Joint Campaign of Excavation at Tell Beit Mirsim. *BASOR* 47: 3-17.
- Albright, W. F. 1936. A Supplement to Jeremiah: The Lachish Ostraca. *BASOR* 61: 10-16.
- Albright, W. F. 1937. Further Light on the History of Israel from

- Lachish and Megiddo. *BASOR* 68: 22-26.
- Albright, W. F. 1939. A Reexamination of the Lachish Letters. *BASOR* 73: 16-21.
- Albright, W. F. 1953a. *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*. (3rd ed.) Baltimore.
- Albright, W. F. 1953b. Some Recent Publications. *BASOR* 132: 46-47.
- Albright, W. F. 1956. The Nebuchnezzar and Nergalissar Chronicles. *BASOR* 143: 28-33.
- Albright, W. F. 1958. Recent Progress in Palestinian Archaeology: Samaria-Sebaste III and Hazor I. *BASOR* 150: 21-25.
- Albright, W. F. 1966. Syria, the Philistines, and Phoenicia. *CAH* 51: 24-56.
- Barnett, R. D. 1958. The Siege of Lachish. *IEJ* 8: 161-164.
- Borger, R. 1956. *Die Inschriften Assarhaddons Königs von Assyrien*. (AfO Beiheft 9). Graz.
- Borger, R. 1963. *Babylonisch-Assyrische Lesestücke I-III*. Rome.
- Buchanan, B. W. 1954. Review of Lachish III. *AJA* 58: 335-339.
- Cross, F. M., Jr. 1962. Epigraphic Notes on Hebrew Documents of the Eighth-Sixth Centuries B. C.: II The Murabba'at Papyrus and the Letter near found Yabneh-yam. *BASOR* 165: 34-46.
- Cross, F. M., Jr. 1969. Judean Stamps. *EJ* 9: 20-27. (English).
- Diringer, D. 1949. The Royal Jar-Handle Stamps of Ancient Judah. *BA* 12: 70-86.
- Donner, H. and Röllig, W. 1962-1964. *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften I-III*. Wiesbaden.
- Dougherty, R. P. 1930. Sennacherib and the Walled Cities of Judah. *JBL* 49: 160-171.
- Eph'al, I. 1971. *The Nomads on the Border of Palestine in the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian Periods I-II*. (Ph.D. dissertation). Jerusalem. (Hebrew with English Summary).
- Finegan, J. 1957. Nebuchadnezzar and Jerusalem. *JBR* 25: 203-205.
- Fitzmyer, J. A. 1965. The Aramaic Letter of King Adon to the Egyptian Pharaoh. *Biblica* 46: 41-55.
- Freedman, D. N. 1956. The Babylonian Chronicle. *BA* 19: 50-60.
- Ginsberg, H. L. 1950. Judah and the Transjordan States from 734 to 582 B.C.E. *Apud Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*. New York: 347-368.
- Grayson, A. K. 1964. Cronache dell'impero neo-babilonese (626-556 a.C.). *Bibbia e Oriente* 6: 191-205.
- Horn, S. H. 1968. Where and When was the Aramaic Saqqara Papyrus Written? *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 6: 26-45.
- Hyatt, J. P. 1948. The Date and Background of Zephaniah. *JNES* 7: 25-29.
- Hyatt, J. P. 1956. New Light on Nebuchadnezzar and Judean History. *JBL* 75: 277-284.
- Inge, C. H. 1938. Excavations at Tell ed-Duweir. *PEQ*: 240-256.
- Kaufman, I. T. 1967. New Evidence for Hieratic Numerals on Hebrew Weights. *BASOR* 188: 39-41.
- Kilmer, A. D. 1963. The First Tablet of *malku* = *Jarru* together with its Explicit Version. *JAOS* 83: 421-446.
- Lance, H. D. 1971. The Royal Stamps and the Kingdom of Josiah. *HTR* 64: 315-332.
- Langdon, S. 1912. *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*. (VAB 4). Leipzig.
- Lapp, P. W. 1960. Late Royal Seals from Judah. *BASOR* 22.
- Luckenbill, D. D. 1924. *The Annals of Sennacherib*. Chicago.
- Malamat, A. 1956. A New Record of Nebuchadnezzar's. *IEJ* 6: 246-256.
- Malamat, A. 1968. The Last Kings of Judah and the Jerusalem. *IEJ* 18: 137-156.
- Montgomery, J. A. 1951. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings*. Gehman, H. S. ed. ICC. E.
- Noth, M. 1958. Die Einnahme von Jerusalem im Jah Chr. *ZDPV* 74: 133-157.
- Noth, M. 1972. *Aufsätze zur biblischen Landes- und Altertumsforschung I-II*. Wolff, H. W. ed. Neukirchen-Vluyn.
- O'Callaghan, R. T. 1949. The Great Phoenician Portal In from Karatepe. *Orientalia* n.s. 18: 171-205.
- Oded, B. 1965-1966. When did the Kingdom of Judah Subject to Babylonian Rule? *Tarbiz* 35: 103-107. (with English Summary, p. ii).
- Pavlovský, V. and Vogt, E. 1964. Die Jahre der Könige von Judah und Israel. *Biblica* 45: 321-347.
- Rainey, A. F. 1968. The Satrapy Beyond the River. *AJB* 78.
- von Soden, W. 1952. *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik*. (AnOr 33). Rome.
- von Soden, W. 1957. Review of Wiseman, D. *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings*. *WZKM* 53: 316-321.
- von Soden, W. 1969. *Ergänzungsheft zum Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik*. (AnOr 47). Rome.
- von Soden, W. 1958-1972. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. Wiesbaden.
- Starcky, J. 1958. Remarques épigraphiques. *Apud D. Sommer, A. Les Inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré*. 133-138.
- Starkey, J. L. 1937a. Lachish as Illustrating Bible History. 171-179.
- Starkey, J. L. 1937b. Excavations at Tell ed Duweir. *PEQ*: 241.
- Tadmor, H. 1956. Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah. *JNES* 15: 226-230.
- Tadmor, H. 1969. The First Temple and Post-exilic Period. *Apud Ben-Sasson, H. H. ed. History of the Jewish People*. Tel Aviv: 93-173. (Hebrew).
- Tufnell, O. 1959. Hazor, Samaria and Lachish. *PEQ*: 90-105.
- Ungnad, A. 1943. Die Zahl der von Sanherib deportierten Juden. *ZAW* 59: 199-202.
- Vattioni, F. 1966. Il Papiro di Saqqarah. *Studia Papyrologica* 5: 101-117.
- Vogt, E. 1957. Die neubabylonische Chronik über die Schlacht von Karkemisch und die Einnahme von Jerusalem. (VT Supplement 4). Leiden: 67-96.
- Ussishkin, D. 1969. The Date of the Neo-Hittite Enclosure at Karatepe. *AS* 19: 121-137.
- Wiseman, D. 1956. *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings*. London.
- Wright, G. E. 1955a. Review of Lachish III. *VT* 5: 97-105.
- Wright, G. E. 1955b. Review of Lachish III. *JNES* 14: 188-189.
- Wright, G. E. 1957. *Biblical Archaeology*. Philadelphia.