

Sennacherib's Prism (Taylor Prism)

Discovered: -1830 in Nineveh (mound at Kuyunjik)
by Colonel Taylor
-1919 was purchased from Baghdad
antiquities dealer (Chicago prism)
-1990 the prism in Jerusalem was
purchased

Resides: Oriental Institute in Chicago, Illinois
(A 2793)
The British Museum in London
(ANE 91032)
Israel Museum in Jerusalem

Dated to: 691 B.C. (London and Jerusalem prism)
or
689 B.C. (Chicago prism)

Description:
38 cm tall by 14 cm wide (with 2.3 cm
hole running through the middle)
baked clay
hexagonal prism
six columns of Akkadian cuneiform
(wedge shaped writing); 500 lines

Contains:
--An account of the invasion of Samaria
in which 46 walled cities were
Destroyed, including Lachish. Includes
Sennacherib knocking on the doors of Jerusalem with his army.
He has Hezekiah "caged like a bird" in Jerusalem.
The attack is called off for no reason on the prism, but we see in Isaiah 37.36
that the Lord's angel killed 185,000 of Sennacherib's men.
--Records 8 military campaigns against various peoples
--From Judah he took 200,150 people as prisoners

Biblical Reference:
2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 36-39
King Hezekiah

Other Reference:
Josephus *Antiquities* 10.1.5
Herodotus



Interesting Facts:

-3 complete Prisms have been found. They reside in Chicago; Israel; and London

The Text:

Taken from Column 3 (lines 18- 49):

18 As for **Hezekiah the Judahite,**

19 who did not submit to my yoke: **forty-six of his strong, walled cities,** as well as
20 the small towns in their area,

21 which were without number, by levelling with battering-rams

22 and by bringing up seige-engines, and by attacking and storming on foot,

23 by mines, tunnels, and breeches, I besieged and took them.

24 200,150 people, great and small, male and female,

25 horses, mules, donkeys, camels,

26 cattle and sheep without number, I brought away from them

27 and counted as spoil. (**Hezekiah**) **himself, like a caged bird**

28 **I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city.**

29 I threw up earthworks against him—

30 the one coming out of the city-gate, I turned back to his misery.

31 His cities, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land, and

32 to Mitinti, king of Ashdod,

33 Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-bêl,

34 king of Gaza, I gave (them). And thus I diminished his land.

35 I added to the former tribute,

36 and I laid upon him the surrender of their land and imposts—gifts for my majesty.

37 As for **Hezekiah,**

38 the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and

39 the Arabs and his mercenary troops which he had brought in to strengthen

40 Jerusalem, his royal city,

41 deserted him. In addition to the thirty talents of gold and

42 eight hundred talents of silver, gems, antimony,

43 jewels, large carnelians, ivory-inlaid couches,

44 ivory-inlaid chairs, elephant hides, elephant tusks,

45 ebony, boxwood, all kinds of valuable treasures,

46 as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female

47 musicians, which he had brought after me

48 to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute

49 and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers