



THE WAR OF SENNACHERIB AGAINST EGYPT AS DESCRIBED IN HERODOTUS II 141

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ABSTRACT

In 701 BCE Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BCE), conducted a campaign against the Levant to subdue the kingdoms that had rebelled against Assyria upon the death of his father, Sargon II (721–705 BCE) in battle. Sennacherib's written and pictorial sources describe the subjugation of the Levantine kingdoms voluntarily or after a siege, while a pitched battle against the Egyptian and Kushite forces is presented as a great victory. The Biblical account in 2 Kings 18: 13–16 matches this description, while the Prophetic sources describe the defeat of the Assyrian host by the Angel of the Lord. Herodotus II 141 preserves a different version of the Assyrian defeat, where the Egyptian ruler petitioned his God, Hephaistos (i.e., Ptah), and was unexpectedly delivered by mice, who gnawed the weapons of the Assyrians and caused their hasty retreat. In this article, I intend to reassess the story, clarify some of the passages, and illuminate it from different directions. Finally, I will evaluate the question of relationship of Herodotus II 141 to the Biblical narrative, the Greek influences, and the date of the described event.

THE ASSYRIAN SOURCES

According to the Assyrian sources, Sennacherib marched in his third campaign to the west and conquered the Levant, received homage from the submissive rulers of Phoenicia, Philistia and Transjordan. He subdued the rebelling kingdom of Sidon and replaced its fleeing king, Lulli; he then conquered Ashkelon, and deported its king; he slew the instigating officials and nobles of Ekron and reinstated, Padi, its king; turning from subduing his rebellious subjects he was forced to confront the Egyptian and Kushite army which was mustered and came to the help of the Ekronites. The Assyrians defeated the Egyptian and Kushite forces, who fought a pitched battle against the Assyrians:¹

⁽⁴²⁾(As for) the governors, the nobles, and the people of Ekron... They formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (and) the archers, chariots, (and) horses of the king of the land of Meluḥḥa, forces without number, and they came to their aid. ⁽⁴⁴⁾In the plain of the city of Eltekeh, they sharpened their weapons while drawing up in battleline before me. With the support of (the god) Aššur, my lord, I fought with them and defeated them. ⁽⁴⁵⁾In the thick of battle, I captured alive the Egyptian charioteers (and) princes (DUMU.MEŠ LUGAL.MEŠ KUR *mu-uš-ra-a-a*),² together with the charioteers of the king of the land Meluḥḥa.

The Assyrians described this military encounter as a victory over the Kushite and Egyptian force –in terms of a victory of the forces of light over the forces of chaos, alluding to the victory of Marduk (or the god Assur his Assyrian counterpart) against Tiamat and her cohorts in the Enūma Eliš myth.³

Sennacherib's third campaign was also depicted on reliefs in the royal palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh. Room XXXVI depicted the conquest of Lachish. Scholars regarded these reliefs as an artistic compensation for the failure to conquer Jerusalem. However, as recently suggested by Russell⁴ and followed by Uehlinger, the third campaign was the focus of the decoration of the throne-room,⁵ where at least three episodes of this campaign were recorded: the escape of Luli from Sidon; the possible capitulation of Hezekiah; and immediately adjoining this scene (thus claiming temporary and geographical proximity and continuity of events), the preparations of the Assyrian army for war, followed by a pitched battle –most probably against the Egyptian-Kushite army in the next scene. The outcome of the battle is clear. The Assyrians route the fleeing enemy, which tries to cross a flowing river, possibly hinting at the border of Egypt.⁶ Thus, the Assyrian reliefs depict a pitched battle, probably the battle at Elteqeh, in conjunction with the blockade of Jerusalem (?). It would seem then that only *one* battle was fought between the Assyrians and Egyptians, as described in the ancient sources, and that this battle is related in the Bible, as well as in the Assyrian reliefs with the blockade of Jerusalem. The Assyrian annals were

clearly affected by literary considerations.

The Assyrians claimed victory, and their control in Philistia was regained. The loyal king of Ekron was reinstated and his rebellious subjects were executed; Ashkelon was conquered and its king and entourage deported together with the local gods. Jerusalem surrendered as well and Hezekiah, King of Judah, paid heavy tribute,⁷ and remained on the throne.

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

The Biblical story of Sennacherib's campaign against Jerusalem has been discussed in numerous publications. The story is told in 2 Kings 18:13–19:37, and is paralleled with minor changes in Isaiah 36–37.

2 Kgs 18:14–16

In 2 Kgs there is an addition to this narrative of three verses, namely vv. 14–16, which are not included in the Book of Isaiah. This source is a chronistic record (absent in Isa.), and is labeled "Source A".⁸

¹³In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. ¹⁴King Hezekiah of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will bear." The king of Assyria demanded of King Hezekiah of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. ¹⁵Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. ¹⁶At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the doorposts that King Hezekiah of Judah had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria (2 Kgs 18: 13–16).

This source is considered a reliable source. It is composed from a royal chronicle combined with a priestly chronicle. The chronistic record A seems to be in accordance with the Annals of Sennacherib and is dated to the immediate aftermath of Sennacherib's campaign.⁹ This source, clearly describes the devastation of Judah, the capitulation of Hezekiah, and payment of a vast amount of taxes.

The B Account: Kgs 18:13, 17–19:37/ Isa 36–37

The rest of the Biblical account Kgs 18:17–19:37 comprises of a prophetic story, in which Hezekiah, King of Judah, Sennacherib, King of Assyria, Isaiah the Judean Prophet and Rabshaqeh, the Assyrian officer, play a significant role. In 1886 B. Stade suggested dividing this narrative in two different sources: Kgs 18:17–19:9a and 2 Kgs 19:9b–19:37. These two parallel

sources were labeled by him B1 and B2.¹⁰ The majority of scholars concur with the suggestion of Stade. The two sources hypothesis was further refined in 1967 by Childs,¹¹ who refined the versification of the two accounts in order to have an ending for both versions (2 Kgs 18:17–19:9a, 36–37) and B2 (2 Kgs 19: 9b–35¹²). According to Childs' division of the text B1 ended with the hasty return of Sennacherib from Judah after hearing a rumor that Tirhaqah, King of Kush, was coming, and his murder by his sons, while praying to his god. According to the division of Childs, the B2 version ends with the angel of god decimating 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers. Both these descriptions of an Assyrian disaster and the murder of Sennacherib clearly postdate the year 681 BCE,¹³ and cannot be rendered objective.

EGYPTIAN EVIDENCE

Egyptian Historical texts, royal or private, mentioning historical events, dating to the 25th Kushite dynasty (ca. 750–656 BCE) and the 26th Saitic dynasty (664–525 BCE) are unfortunately scarce. Thus, no historical royal inscription documented the events. Egyptian history needs to be reconstructed from any available source, and any hint is cautiously used in order to fill in the missing information. Looking at these hints, it seems that Shebitku, the Kushite King in 701 BCE (706–690 BCE), did not propagate the outcome of the battle as a defeat. He changed his royal name into "Great of Strength, smiting the Nine Bows; Satisfied by victory; and Great of renown in all lands"; that is, he compared himself with Thutmose III, no less. The adoption of these bellicose names reflected his "alleged (?)" victory over his Assyrian (?) enemies.¹⁴ This sudden change to the Imperial style of the New Kingdom royal name giving deviated from usage of Shebitku's predecessors for over seventy years previously, nor was it continued by his immediate successors.¹⁵ It seems that Shebitku, as well as Sennacherib, claimed victory in 701 BCE. This campaign seems to be remembered in Classical sources as well:

HERODOTUS II 141

In the second volume of his *Histories* §141 Herodotus describes the debacle between the Assyrian King Sennacherib and the Egyptians, which led to the miraculous Assyrian defeat:

The next king was the priest of Hephaestus whose name was Sethos. He despised and had no regard for the warrior Egyptians, thinking he would never need them; besides otherwise dishonoring them, he took away the chosen lands which had been given to them, twelve fields to each man,¹⁶ in the reign of former kings. [2] So when presently king Sennacherib came against Egypt, with a great force of Arabians and Assyrians, the warrior Egyptians would not march against him. [3] The priest, in this quandary, went into the temple shrine and there

before the god's image bitterly lamented over what he expected to suffer. Sleep came on him while he was lamenting, and it seemed to him the god stood over him and told him to take heart, that he would come to no harm encountering the power of Arabia: “I shall send you champions,” said the god. [4] So he trusted the vision, and together with those Egyptians who would follow him camped at Pelusium, where the road comes into Egypt; and none of the warriors would go with him, but only merchants and craftsmen and traders. [5] Their enemies came there, too, and during the night were overrun by a horde of field mice that gnawed quivers and bows and the handles of shields, with the result that many were killed, fleeing unarmed the next day. [6] And to this day a stone statue of the Egyptian king stands in Hephaestus' temple, with a mouse in his hand, and an inscription to this effect: “Look at me, and believe” (Herodotus, *Histories* II 141).

In the following paragraphs, I will try to clarify some of the points of the story.

1. THE IDENTITY OF THE EGYPTIAN KING

Herodotus tells that the Egyptian king was a Priest of Hephaistos (Ptah) by the name of Sethos. A priest named Sethos is not known from Egyptian records, but the name seems at first sight equivalent to the name of the kings from the Nineteenth dynasty—Sety I and II.¹⁷ However, they reigned more than half a millennium before the events of 701 BCE. Another candidate, Ζήτ, mentioned in Manetho as is preserved in Africanus, was allegedly King of the 23rd Dynasty.¹⁸ It is not clear if Ζήτ was a real king, and if he was, when he may have reigned. In order to identify this king Sethos, we must now return to the preceding chapters in Herodotus, which tell the story of the blind king Anysis and his struggle with Sabacon, the Ethiopian (Shabaka, King of Kush ca. 721–706 BCE), who after seeing a dream, returned to his homeland.¹⁹

Thus, Lloyd²⁰ has suggested identifying the Memphite priest with Shabatka, Shabaka's successor. Claiming that the name Sethon (Σεθών) is derived from a hypothetical *Sebithos (Σεβιθός) and based on Manetho's mention of Sebichos (Σεβιχός), corrupting the original Š3-b3-t3-k3. While this suggestion is accepted by Grabbe and Strawn,²¹ I find the philological leap too great to be convincing.²²

2. A PRIEST OF HEPHAISTOS

It seems philologically safer to connect the form Sethon (Σεθών) with the priestly title *sm/stm* (and not a personal name), i.e. High Priest of Ptah, which in demotic is pronounced *Stm*.²³ Thus, the name of the King is not mentioned in the story.

3. THE KUSHITE RULERS AND MEMPHIS

The Kushite rulers were certainly active in Memphis, as can be seen in the archaeological remains from the 25th Dynasty,²⁴ but there is no concrete evidence that from the campaign of Piankhy, when he conquered Memphis (ca. 734 BCE) and returned to Kush,²⁵ the Kushite Pharaohs remained in Egypt. Shabaka had to conduct a campaign in order to conquer Lower Egypt in his second regnal year; Shebitku's Nile Inscription from the quay at Karnak suggests that he arrived at Karnak for the first time in his third regnal year.²⁶ Taharqa claims that he was summoned by Shebitku to Thebes (and not to Memphis) in order that Taharqa might be there with Shebitku;²⁷ The Kushite kings Piankhy and Shebitku were crowned in Thebes, as their epithet *h^c m W3s.t* "appearing in Thebes" conveys.²⁸

It is only at Taharqa's accession, according to his own testimony, that he claims to have remained in Egypt since his arrival (but it is not stated where and in what function), finally to be crowned in Memphis in 690 BCE after the death of his predecessor.²⁹ The first concrete evidence for a Kushite residence in Memphis comes from the Babylonian Chronicle 1, iv, 26 which describes the conquest of Memphis, Taharqa's residence (*āl šarrutu*).³⁰ It seems that the statement, that Memphis was *the permanent* Kushite royal residence is an over simplification based on a dearth of evidence.³¹

4. THE KUSHITE KING AS HIGH PRIEST OF PTAH

There is no evidence as well, that the Kushite Kings officiated as high priests of Ptah,³² or of any god in Egypt, for that matter.³³ Griffith suggested that the priest should be identified with Taharqa, since the nomarch, was generally high-priest in his nome-capital,³⁴ as well as military commander, who could lead his army into battle.³⁵ However, even if the assertion of Griffith that the pharaoh occupied the function of high priest (which theoretically was true), practically a high priest was nominated to the temples, including the temple of Ptah. Furthermore, if the story of Herodotus relates to the events of 701 BCE, Taharqa should be excluded from the list of possible high priests, since he was not yet king.³⁶ The problem of identifying the high priest even increases, since there is a hiatus in our knowledge of High Priests of Ptah during the late Libyan Period and the Kushite Rule over Egypt (eighth-seventh centuries BCE).³⁷ Furthermore, it seems that during the Kushite rule over Egypt, Memphis was not constantly under direct Kushite control.³⁸

Thus, assigning this story to Taharqa (or Shebitku) is possible on historical grounds, but is not founded on the textual evidence. At face value, it contradicts Herodotus' previous paragraph (140), where it is clearly stated that the Ethiopian (i.e. Kushite) King Sabacon left Egypt. In § 147.2, Herodotus claims that after the reign of the priest of Hephaestus the Egyptians were made free, and divided the power between twelve rulers until Psammetichus

became sole ruler. This clearly reflects the end of the Kushite rule in Egypt, which ended with the accession of Psammetichus I to the throne of Egypt (664–610 BCE), pointing to the 670s as the era of the reign of Sethos. Other local Egyptian traditions assign the defeat of the Assyrians to the Egyptians (local ruler or King), and not to the Kushites. Most of the Egyptian heroic stories against the Assyrians take place during the 670s BCE.³⁹

5. THE EGYPTIAN FORCE

Herodotus states that none of the warriors⁴⁰ went with the Egyptian King, but only merchants, craftsmen and traders (*καπηλούς δὲ καὶ χειρώνακτας καὶ ἀγοραίους ἀνθρώπους*). This story is militarily improbable and the reason for its narration in this form should be sought. Lloyd interprets these people as the humbler elements of society, and that their role in the defeat of Sennacherib looks like an example of "the triumph of the weak", a motif which constitutes an important category of the "reversal of fortunes" corpus of folk-motifs.⁴¹ Since *καπηλούς* may bear the derogative connotation "huckster", it may reflect the gist of Herodotus. However, was this the meaning of the original storyteller? I think that another explanation can be suggested. The second element of the Egyptian force, the *χειρώνακτας* (lit. "master of his hands") does not carry a derogative connotation. The God Ptah is the god of the artisans and craftsmen.⁴² The Egyptian title of the High Priest of Memphis is *Wr hrp hmw.wt* "Greatest of the Craftsmen/ Artisans".⁴³ It seems, then, that the artisans are the natural followers of the God Ptah.

An interesting point should be noted, namely that the title "Greatest of the Craftsmen" makes its last appearance with Takeloth H during the reign of Shoshenq V⁴⁴ (ca. 735 BCE). It was suppressed for some reason, unknown to us, during the 25th Dynasty, when the title *stm* gained prominence, and was resumed during the Saite Period (during the reign of Psammetichus I 664–610 BCE).⁴⁵ This seems to be an etiologic story, telling about the "repentance" of Pharaoh, returning the status and responsibilities of the High Priest of Memphis to their former state. In return he is being followed into battle exactly by the people whom the God Ptah and his high priest are supposed to represent. Thus, originally, the list of people who follow Sethon to war is not intended to be derogatory. It is a sign of divine support of the king's patron god.

6. SENNACHERIB'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST EGYPT

According to Herodotus Sennacherib marched against Egypt. However, there is no evidence in Sennacherib's inscriptions, nor in the Biblical sources that Sennacherib tried to invade Egypt. On the other hand, there is evidence that his successors, Esarhaddon⁴⁶ and Assurbanipal tried and eventually succeeded in conquering Egypt.⁴⁷ But it is the name of *Sennacherib* that is remembered by Herodotus' source as the Assyrian opponent.⁴⁸ Until we find evidence that indeed Sennacherib tried to invade Egypt, the only explanation I can find for the naming of him as the King of the

Assyrians instead of his successors, is an analogy of the mention of Sabakon, King of Ethiopia (Kush), who embodies the entire 25th Dynasty.⁴⁹

7. KING OF THE *ARABS* AND THE ASSYRIANS

Sennacherib is described as King of the Arabs and the Assyrians. While the order of Sennacherib's subjects is peculiar (Arabs preceding the Assyrians),⁵⁰ there is information that in his 15th regnal year (690), Sennacherib marched into the north Arabian desert against Te'elḥunu, queen of the Arabs, and Hazael. The city of Adummatu (biblical Dumah, mod. Dūmat al-Jundal in Saudi Arabia) and another city (name not preserved) were besieged and plundered. According to later sources, Te'elḥunu was carried off to Assyria.⁵¹ As for the affairs in Adummatu, Hazael submitted to Esarhaddon in Nineveh and his captured gods were returned to him. On his death, Esarhaddon intervened on the side of Iata' son of Hazael, king of the Arabs, in his struggle with Uabu over leadership of the Arabs.⁵² In 677 BCE Esarhaddon conducted a campaign to the Land of Bazu, probably in the north-western Arabian Desert (probably in the Azraq Oasis in Eastern Jordan),⁵³ and subdued its kings. Some years later, Esarhaddon conducted a campaign to conquer Egypt, in which he heavily relied on Arab contingents and their camels in order to cross the Sinai Desert.⁵⁴ So, the designation "King of the Arabs", could have fitted either Sennacherib, from 690 BCE onwards, or Esarhaddon.

Josephus Flavius, in his *Antiquities of the Jews* X 17–18, objects to Herodotus' designation of Sennacherib as "King of the Arabs", but does not explain why Herodotus uses this term, or why Josephus objects to it. Josephus intended to refer to Berossus' writings on this matter, but he never added his remark. It may be that he did not cite Berossus on Sennacherib, either because it slipped his mind and never checked his source, or as it seems to me, because he discovered, when he checked his source, that the note of Berossus was referring to another Assyrian king, (most probably Sennacherib's immediate successor, Esarhaddon).

8. THE BATTLE AT PELUSIUM

According to Herodotus, Sethon recruited his followers and waited for the Assyrians at Pelusium.⁵⁵ Their enemies came there, too, and during the night were overrun by a horde of field mice. The Assyrian army retreated immediately. The date of the Assyrian defeat in the Babylonian Chronicle also points to a decisive battle that was won on a specific occasion. This is in contrast to the information given by Josephus X 17, 19 that the Assyrians were besieging Pelusium, and when a rumor was heard that King Taharqa and the Kushite army is on its way to the land of the Assyrians they retreated (combining the information from Isa 37: 9, 36/ 2 Kgs 19: 9, 35). Josephus clearly conflated Herodotus' story with the Bible, and thus is not reliable. According to the Assyrian records the Egyptians and Kushite forces were defeated on the plain of Elteqeh, while according to the Biblical account, Sennacherib returned home without

encountering the Egyptian army. While many biblical scholars regard Jerusalem as the place where the disaster occurred to the Assyrian army, this is not explicitly stated in the biblical text.⁵⁶

9. THE NATURE OF THE DISASTER

According to the Biblical narrative, the "Angel of God" smote the Assyrians "at that night".⁵⁷ The angel's action is normally understood as a kind of plague, however this is not necessarily the case, since the Angel of the Lord can also manifest himself in combat. Herodotus tells that *at night* mice came and gnawed the weapons of the Assyrians. There are no other attestations of mice subduing a human enemy in this way in ancient Egyptian literature known to me,⁵⁸ but it is known in other cultures.⁵⁹ The motif does occur in myths of Apollo Smintheus (literally, "mouse"),⁶⁰ which Herodotus must have known. Some scholars tried to rationalize the event as a manifestation of plague as well,⁶¹ claiming that mice were known as carriers of plagues, trying to harmonize the account in Herodotus with the 2 Kings 19:35.⁶² However, Lloyd is certainly right that if the Egyptian priests were interested in connecting the defeat of Sennacherib with decimation by plague, they would have better assigned the miracle to the consort of Ptah at Memphis.⁶³ This is clearly not the case. Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify the true cause of the Assyrian defeat.

10. DREAM VS. ORACLE

Apollo, with whom the story is associated through the mice, is known as an oracular god, having shrines with oracles in Delphi, Delos, Abae in Phocis, Bassae in the Peloponnese, Clarus, on the west coast of Asia Minor; Corinth, Khyrse in Troad, Didyma, on the coast of Anatolia, Patara in Lycia, and in other places as well. However, his messages are conveyed through an oracle by a priestess. In Herodotus II 141, on the other hand, the divine message is delivered through incubation by the Egyptian king in the temple. West, who studied the dreams, which are described in the work of Herodotus, notes that Sethos' dream is the *only* unambiguously reassuring dream in Herodotus' work, while other dreams are deceitful dreams, which were sent to mislead the king receiving them.⁶⁴ On the other hand, incubation dreams by Pharaoh, ending with a reassuring message are attested in Egyptian royal inscriptions. Thus, it would seem that the story fits Egyptian practice.

11. COMMEMORATING THE EVENTS BY A STATUE

According to Herodotus this event was commemorated in the temple of Ptah, where a statue of the King⁶⁵ (who officiated as High Priest of Memphis) held a mouse in his hand as evidence of the great victory.⁶⁶ Spiegelberg noted and claimed that the statue probably was of the High Priest of Horus of Letopolis⁶⁷ who held his sacred animal, the shrew mouse in his hand. The High Priest of Ptah officiated also as High Priest of Horus of Letopolis (a god associated with Apollo).⁶⁸ However, Herodotus explicitly



After Limme, pl. IV—see note 72.

identifies the king as High Priest of Ptah (and *not* of a god). He identifies the god as Hephaistos (Ptah) and not Apollo (Horus of Letopolis [or Chemmis], although the High Priest of Memphis did sometimes officiate as High Priest of Letopolis); the Temple was located in Memphis and not at Letopolis; and the animal, which was in the statue's hand,

was a mouse. It may have been a shrew mouse, but certainly was not an ichneumon, the sacred animal of Horus of Letopolis, as suggested by Lloyd. Furthermore, Spiegelberg, surveying the surviving remains of Egyptian sculpture could produce no parallel to this statue.⁶⁹

I see no reason to deny the basic information forwarded by Herodotus: In the temple of Ptah at Memphis, there stood a statue of a High Priest of Ptah with an inscription,⁷⁰ holding a mouse in his hand. While there is no exact parallel to this description, there are unique statues known of images of the High Priest of Ptah from the reign of Thutmose IV and the Late Period holding a guenon (long-tailed monkey),⁷¹ whose small proportions may associatively resemble a mouse. Thus, Herodotus, on seeing these statues may have connected them to the story of a divine victory over enemy forces. The content of the inscription seems to be Greek in nature, and cannot be found in an Egyptian repertoire.⁷²

12. RELATIONS BETWEEN HERODOTUS II 141 AND THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT

The question of relations between Herodotus and the Biblical account have been raised. Both sources take place during the reign of Sennacherib, King of Assyria. In both cases an Egyptian force is involved (2 Kgs 18:21, 24; 19:9a/ Isa 36:6, 9; 37:9a). Eventually, the Assyrian army is defeated. The cause of defeat is not the Egyptian army, but a supernatural force. While in the biblical narrative it is the Angel of the Lord who kills the Assyrians, in Herodotus, the mice (not to be associated with a plague), which were sent by the Egyptian god, destroyed the Assyrian weapons which caused the havoc followed by the death of many Assyrians. Josephus mentions both stories. First Josephus claimed that the Assyrians abandoned the siege on Pelusium because of the rumor that the Kushite king is coming to the aid of the Egyptians, probably referring to the rumor about the arrival of Tirhaqah in 2 Kgs 19:7, 9 (Josephus X, 17); he then inserted an abridged version of Herodotus and mentioned the intervention of the mice. In order to contradict Herodotus' version, he intended to refer to Berossus' work, which for some reason he eventually did not quote. He then rationalized the death of the Assyrians as a plague of some sort (Josephus X, 21), intending to discard Herodotus' version, not trying to harmonize it with the biblical

one. Thus, most of the details of the two descriptions are different and totally independent.

The next question is when these narratives were composed, and if one could have influenced the other. While the date of composition of the Biblical text is debated, I intend to show in a future study that the stratum describing the Egyptian intervention and the angelic miraculous action were composed during the decade following the murder of Sennacherib.⁷³ Herodotus wrote his second book of the *Histories* in the end of the first half of the fifth century BCE. It seems impossible that he had access to the biblical account, or was influenced by it.⁷⁴

13. WAS THERE A HELLENISTIC INFLUENCE ON THE ACCOUNT?

A further issue is how much of Herodotus' story is dependent on native Egyptian traditions, and part of the narrative is his own, based on Hellenistic sources, and intended for a Hellenistic audience. Herodotus himself states that his source for his *Histories* from §99 until § 141 are chronicles which he heard from the Egyptian priests among them the Priest of Ptah (II 3), adding to it what he himself saw (see: II 99; 142.1).

It seems that the name (or better said, title) of the king is original, so is the notion that the king was a High Priest of Hephaistos (the equivalent of Ptah). As for the donation of lands to loyal subjects, this action is attested throughout Egyptian history and especially from the Third intermediate Period onwards. Redistribution of lands would surely cause disaffection and discontent by the disenfranchised former owners of their land. The relations between the king and his army may be based on real resentment or on power struggles between different nomes, a common feature during the eighth–seventh centuries BCE (cf. Isa 19: 2; Herodotus II 165–166 and the Inaros cycle). The incubation dream of the king is an Egyptian feature as well. The statue of the High Priest with an animal that could have been interpreted as a mouse is known from the temple of Ptah at Memphis.

The Hellenistic elements in this story are few. The miraculous victory caused by mice gnawing the weapons of the enemy is known in the cult of Apollo Smintheus but, so far, not in Egyptian mythology; the statue may have raised the association in the mind of Herodotus. Furthermore, the content of the inscription is of Greek nature, allegedly to commemorate the victory over the Assyrians. In Egypt, historical victories are commemorated on the reliefs of temple walls or in private autobiographic inscriptions in tombs (although the commemoration of historical events by individuals was less common during the Late Period). These seem to be the only adaptations of the story to a Greek audience.

14. REASSESSING THE DATE OF THE EVENTS

a. *A date during the reign of Sennacherib (704–681 BCE)*

1. The Assyrian king is clearly identified as Sennacherib.
2. Sennacherib had limited control over Arab tribes.
3. A debacle between Sennacherib and the Egyptians is known from his own inscriptions and from the Biblical account.
4. The event occurred after the reign of Sabacon (=Shabaka ca. 721–706 BCE).

However, several data may place the events at a later date:

b. *A date during the reign of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria*

1. Sethon rose to power *after* Sabacon the Ethiopian (Shabaka, King of Kush), left Egypt. This must have occurred after ca. 706 BCE.
2. Sethon's successor was Psammetichus I after a period of power struggle between the Libyan local dynasts. Thus, the Assyrian invasion occurred before 664 BCE.
3. Until the reign of Taharqa (690 BCE) there is no concrete evidence that a Kushite king ruled in Memphis, nor is there evidence that a Kushite King, officiated as High Priests of Ptah at any given time.
4. The mention of the artisans as part of the Egyptian force may reflect a return to the former title of the High Priest of Ptah as *Wr hrp hmw.wt* "Greatest of the Craftsmen/Artisans" at the end of the 25th Dynasty.
5. The only known Assyrian failed attempt to conquer Egypt is dated to March 673 BCE, during the reign of Esarhaddon, successor of Sennacherib. The debacle of 701 BCE ended with an Assyrian success.
6. Esarhaddon subjugated Arabian chieftains and was supported by Arabian forces in his campaign to conquer Egypt.
7. The Biblical account, describing the defeat of the Assyrians, has to be dated after the accession of Taharqa to the throne of Egypt and Kush in 690 BCE and the murder of Sennacherib in 681 BCE.

NOTES

- 1 Rassam Cylinder, ll. 42–45. Grayson, A.K. and Novotny J. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 BC), Part 1* (RINAP 3/1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2012), p. 64.
- 2 The report of the outcome of the battle and the capture of the Egyptian princes may even be corroborated by Assyrian administrative documents, where a certain Shoshenq is married into the Assyrian royal family. See: Radner, K., “After Eltekeh: royal hostages from Egypt at the Assyrian court”, in: Baker, H. D. Kaniuth K. and Otto A. (eds.), *Stories of long ago: Festschrift für Michael D. Roaf* (AOAT 397; Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2012), 471–479. For a different scenario for the arrival of a prince Shoshenq in Assyria, see: Bányai, M. “Ein Vorschlag zur Chronologie der 25. Dynastie in Ägypten”, *JEGH* 6 (2013), p. 107. An additional possible Egyptian prince may be Šarru-lu-dari, who was installed as King of Tanis by Esarhaddon in 671 BCE. See: Kahn, D. “A Problem of Pedubasts?”, *Antiquo Oriente* 4 (2006), p. 34, n. 67.
- 3 Gallagher, W.R. *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies*, (SHCANE 18; Boston: Brill, 1999), pp. 120–121; Younger, K. L. “Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant at the End of the Eighth Century B.C.E.”, in: Vaughn, An. G. and Killebrew, A. E. (eds.), *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology. The First Temple Period* (SBLSS 18, Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 255–256. According to Younger's scheme, the Egyptian episode is at the very center of the description of defeating the rebels (his “phase two”), heightening the achievement of the Assyrians. See: Younger, “Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant”, p. 249. Since the climax of the narrative is at the end with Hezekiah's capitulation, I find it hard to believe that the reader would have noted the alleged chiasmic structuring proposed by Younger.
- 4 Russell, J. M. *Sennacherib's Palace without Rival at Nineveh*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 160–164.
- 5 Russell, J. M. *The final sack of Nineveh: The Discovery, Documentation, and Destruction of King Sennacherib's Throne Room at Nineveh, Iraq*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 36–39, 219–227; Uehlinger, C. “Clio in a World of Pictures - Another Look at the Lachish Reliefs from Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh”, in: Grabbe, L. L. (ed.), *'Like a Bird in a Cage'. The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (JSOT.S 363) (ESHM 4; London/ New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), pp. 299–302.
- 6 Cf. Tadmor, H. “Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: Historical and Historiographical Considerations”, in: Cogan, M. (ed.), *“With my Many Chariots I have Gone Up the Heights of Mountains”: Historical and Literary Studies on Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2011), p. 665, n. 23. In Sargon's reliefs, as well, the battle against the Egyptians was depicted adjacent to a flowing river. See: D. Kahn, “The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-I Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25”, *Orientalia* 70 (2001), p. 12.
- 7 2 Kgs 18:14-16; Sennacherib's annals: Grayson, A.K. and Novotny J. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 BC), Part 1* (RINAP 3/1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2012), p. 65.
- 8 2 Kgs 18: 13 opens the narrative in Isaiah 36:1, and seems to be integral to the “B” narrative.
- 9 See: Geyer, J.B. “II Kings 18:14–16 and the Annals of Sennacherib”, *VT* 21 (1971), pp. 604–606; Kim, Yoo-Ki, “In Search of the Narrator's Voice: A Discourse Analysis of 2 Kings 18:13–16”, *JBL* 127/3 (2008), pp. 477–489; However, cf. Seitz, C. R., “Account A and the Annals of Sennacherib: A Reassessment”, *JSOT* 58 (1993), p. 47–57; Laato, A. “Hezekiah and the Assyrian Crisis in 701 B.C.”, *SJOT* 1/2 (1987), pp. 56–57.
- 10 Stade, B. “Miscellen. 16. Anmerkungen zu 2 Ko. 15-21. Zu 18,13-19,37”, *ZAW* 4 (1886), pp. 172–86.
- 11 Childs, B. *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, (London, 1967), pp. 69-103.
- 12 Clements, R.E. *Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem: A Study in the Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecy* (Sheffield, 1980), 58 ascribes v. 35 to a later editor. Cf. Millard, A. “Sennacherib's Attack on Hezekiah”, *Tyndale Bulletin* 36 (1985), 76.
- 13 Glassner, J. –J. *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, (Writings from the ancient world; 19; pp. 199–201.
- 14 A much eroded relief from temple B500 depicting a battle between Kushites and soldiers wearing helmets was interpreted as a scene depicting a battle between Kushites and Assyrians. See: Spalinger, J. A. “Notes on the Military in Egypt during the XXVth Dynasty”, *JSSA* 11 (1981), p. 48–49. See Török, L. *Between Two Worlds: The Frontier Region between Ancient Nubia and Egypt 3700 BC - 500 AD*, (PÄ 29; Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 332 for identifying the opponents as Delta soldiers during the reign of Piankhy.
- 15 Kitchen, K. A. “Egypt, the Levant and Assyria in 701 BC”, in: M. Görg, (ed.) *Fontes atque Pontes, Festschrift Hellmut Brunner*, (ÄUAT 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983), p. 246; *ibid.* *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1986), 2nd edition, p. 383.
- 16 Cf. Herodotus II, 168. For the donation of land plots in the Libyan Period, see: Meeks, D., “Les donations aux temples dans l'Égypte du I^{er} millénaire avant J.-C.”, in: Lipiński, E. (ed.), *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East II*, (OLA 6; Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistik, 1979, 605–687.
- 17 Griffith, F. L. *Stories of the high priests of Memphis; the Sethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1900), p. 7; Sourdille, C. *Herodote et la religion de l'Égypte: Comparaison des données d'Herodote avec les données égyptiennes* (Paris: Leroux, 1910), 253. “The accusative Σεθῶν surely

- corresponds to a nominative Σέθωζ”.
- ¹⁸ Griffith, *Stories of the high priests of Memphis*, p. 8; Cf. Lloyd, A. B. *Herodotus, Book II: Commentary 99–182*, (EPRO 43,3; Leiden: Brill, 1988), p. 100. See: Kahn, D. “A Problem of Pedubasts?”, *Antiquo Oriente* 4 (2006), p. 35, n. 68.
- ¹⁹ See: Kahn, D. “Piankhy’s Conquest of Egypt in Greek Sources: Herodotus II 137-140 Revisited”, *Beiträge zur Sudanforschung* 8 (2003) 50–52; Note, however, that Quack suggests that Anysis is likely to be just a variant of Anosis which is the Greek rendering of the Egyptian Personal Name ḥn.w-ḥy. A person of that name is attested as hero of an *unpublished* demotic tale which is set in the *early 26th dynasty*. See Quack, J. “Quelques Apports récents des études démotiques à la compréhension du livre deux d’Hérodote”, in: L. Coulon, P. Giovannelli-Jouanna, Fl. Kimmel-Clauzet, (Éds.), *Hérodote et l’Égypte. Regards croisés sur le livre II de l’Enquête d’Hérodote* (Lyon, 2013), p. 50.
- ²⁰ Lloyd, A. *Herodotus, Book II: Commentary 99–182*, pp. 99–100.
- ²¹ Grabbe, L. L., “Of Mice and Dead Men: Herodotus 2.141 and Sennacherib’s Campaign in 701 BCE”, in: L. L. Grabbe, (ed.), *‘Like a Bird in a Cage’. The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE (JSOT.S 363, ESHM 4; London/New-York, Sheffield Academic Press, 2003)*, pp. 135; Strawn, B. A. “Herodotus’ *Histories* 2.141 and the Deliverance of Jerusalem: On Parallels, Sources, and Histories of Ancient Israel”, in: Kelle, B. E. and M. Bishop Moore, (eds.), *Israel’s Prophets and Israel’s Past. Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes (LHB.OTS 446; New York / London: T & T Clark, 2006)*, pp. 218–219.
- ²² Furthermore, if one allows for the recent suggestion of Bányai, M. “Ein Vorschlag zur Chronologie der 25. Dynastie in Ägypten”, *Journal of Egyptian History* 6 (2013), pp. 46–129 to change the order of Kushite kings, in which Shabatka rule precedes the rule of Shabaka, then the events, which are described fall in the reign of Taharqa (690 – 664 BCE), however, Bányai himself opts for the conventional date, see: P. 103.
- ²³ Griffith, *Stories of the high priests of Memphis*, p. 8; Moyer I. S. “Herodotus and an Egyptian Mirage: The Genealogies of the Theban Priests”, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 122. (2002), p. 80 even identifies the priest with Khaemwas, the son of Ramesses II, and literary heroic priestly figure of the demotic Setne stories.
- ²⁴ Morkot, R. G., *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt’s Nubian Rulers*, (London: Rubicon Press, 2000), pp. 217–219; Török, L., *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization*, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 138–139, 142; Jurman, C. “From the Libyan Dynasties to the Kushites in Memphis: Historical Problems and Cultural Issues”, in: Brockman, G. P. F., Demarée, R. J., and Kaper, O. E. (eds.), *The Libyan Period in Egypt; historical and cultural studies into the 21st - 24th dynasties; proceedings of a conference at Leiden University, 25 - 27 october 2007*; (Egyptologische uitgeaven 23; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten; 2009), 122–123.
- ²⁵ Piankhy Stela l. 86 ff.
- ²⁶ See: Beckerath, J. von, “Die Nilstandsinschrift vom 3. Jahr Schebitkus am kai von Karnak”, *GM* 136 (1993), pp. 7–9.
- ²⁷ Eide, T. Hägg, T. Pierce R. H. & Török L. *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum. Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region Between the Eighth Century BC and the Sixth Century AD I. From the Eighth to the Mid-Fifth Century BC*, (Bergen, 1994), (Henceforth *FHNI*), p. 139, Kawa IV, ll. 7 – 9.
- ²⁸ Beckerath, J. von, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*. (MÄS 49; Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1999), pp. 207: Piankhy; 209: Shebitku. The epithet is not attested for Shabaka, or other rulers of the dynasty.
- ²⁹ *FHNI*, p. 153: Kawa V, ll. 13 ff.
- ³⁰ Bab. Chron. 1, l. 27; Grayson, A. K. *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, (Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5; Locust Valley, 1975), p. 85; Onasch, H. –U. *Die Assyrischen Eroberungen Ägyptens, Teil I: Kommentare und Anmerkungen*, (ÄAT 27; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), pp. 18–21; p. 104, LET Vers. 24’; p. 96, Prism E IV, 4 is emended.
- ³¹ Cf. Török L., “Ambulatory Kingship and Settlement History. A Study on the Contribution of Archaeology to Meroitic History”, in: Bonnet C. (ed.), *Études nubiennes. Conférence de Genève. Actes du VIIIe Congrès international d’études nubiennes 3–8 septembre 1990 I: Communications principales*. (Genève 1992), 111–126.
- ³² If the Kushite Kings, as residents of Memphis, would have been High Priests of Ptah, one would expect to see a special veneration of Ptah or Memphis, reflected in their royal names. Shebitku is once mentioned in Memphis with the epithet “Beloved of Ptah”. See: von Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, p. 209,5 E3; *FHNI*, p. 127.
- ³³ Kushite kings did participate in religious rituals and feasts in Egyptian temples, but it is not explicitly stated that they are officiating as the high priest. As an example, see: Piankhy stela: New year’s feast and Opet feast, wishing for a Sed Feast, (ll. 25 – 26, 29, 61); sacrificing to the gods of the conquered cities: Hermopolis (ll. 59–60), Mer-Atum and Itjy-Tawy (ll. 83–84), Memphis after its conquest (ll. 85, 97), Heliopolis (ll. 102–103) where a priest conducted a ritual to repulse the king’s enemies, Athribis (l. 109). Grimal, N.-C. *La stèle triomphale de Pi(ankh)y au Musée du Caire: je 48862 et 47086-47089*, (Études sur la propagande royale égyptienne 1; MIFAO 105; Cairo: IFAO, 1981).
- ³⁴ Griffith, *Stories of the high priests of Memphis*, p. 8, 10. Bányai, M. “Ein Vorschlag zur chronologie der 25. Dynastie in Ägypten”, *JEGH* 6 (2013), p. 103, He equates the High Priest of Ptah from Memphis with the Libyan local ruler Tefnakht, contemporary of Piankhy,

- King of Kush, who probably ascended the throne in Tanis, since he dates the campaign of Sennacherib to 711, during the reign of his father, Sargon II.
- ³⁵ Jansen-Winkeln, K., "Die Fremdherrschaften in Ägypten im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.," *Or.* 69 (2000), p.11.
- ³⁶ Taharqa reigned from 690–664 BCE. see: J. Von Beckerath, *Chronologie des Pharaonischen Ägypten*, (MÄS 46; Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1997), 91; Hornung, E., Krauss R. and Warburton, D. A. *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, (Handbuch der Orientalistik 38; Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2006), 256.
- ³⁷ Kitchen, K. A. *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt*, p. 487; Jurman, C. "From the Libyan Dynasties to the Kushites in Memphis", pp. 125–129. In Taharqa's 24th regnal year, Senebef, a *S(t)m* priest buried the Apis Bull, sacred to the God Ptah.
- ³⁸ Tefnakht, ruler of Sais during the reign of Piankhy and probably later, Bocchoris his successor, Jurman, C. "From the Libyan Dynasties to the Kushites in Memphis", pp. 124–125; The rule of Necho I after the Assyrian conquest, see: Onasch, *Die Assyrischen Eroberungen*, p. 118, Prism C I, 90. Cf. the tentative rule of Pedubast II in Memphis, see: Kahn, D. "A Problem of Pedubasts?", *Antiquo Oriente* 4 (2006), pp. 32–34.
- ³⁹ Ryholt, K. "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition", in: J. G. Dercksen (ed.), *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004), pp. 483–510.
- ⁴⁰ The warrior class was mainly of Libyan descent. Herodotus enumerates seven distinct classes. See: Herodotus II 164.
- ⁴¹ Lloyd, *Herodotus, Book II: Commentary 99–182*, p. 102; Strawn, "Herodotus' *Histories* 2.141 and the Deliverance of Jerusalem", p. 229.
- ⁴² See: Wilkinson, R. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), p. 124. Contra Vasojević A. L. "Soziale Gruppen Ägyptens zur Zeit der assyrischen Eroberung", *ZÄS* 117 (1990), pp. 171–178, who takes the words of Herodotus too literally.
- ⁴³ The exact reading and translation is debated. See: De Meulenaere, H. "Les grands-prêtres de Ptah à l'époque saïto-perse", in: Geus F. and Thill F. (eds.), *Mélanges offerts à Jean Vercoutter*, (Paris: Editions Recherches sur les civilisations, 1985), p. 263, n. 1; Devauchelle, D., "Le titre du grand prêtre memphite", *RdE* 43, (1992), pp. 205–207.
- ⁴⁴ Jurman, C. "From the Libyan Dynasties to the Kushites in Memphis", p. 128.
- ⁴⁵ De Meulenaere, "Les grands-prêtres de Ptah", p. 263 ff.
- ⁴⁶ Smith, S. *Babylonian historical texts relating to the capture and downfall of Babylon*, (London: Methuen, 1924), 3–11 has raised the ingenious suggestion that the name of the Assyrian King was switched and that the actual reference was to Esarhaddon's unsuccessful campaign. See also: Cogan M. and Tadmor, H. *II Kings* (AB 11; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 250 – 251. Although I adhere to this suggestion, it is difficult to confirm.
- ⁴⁷ Kahn, D. "The Assyrian Invasions of Egypt (673–663 B.C.) and the Final Expulsion of the Kushites", *SAK* 34, (2006), pp. 251–267.
- ⁴⁸ In Book II he is the only Assyrian King, known to Herodotus. Lloyd, *Herodotus, Book II: Commentary 99–182*, p. 101; However MacQueen J. G. "The Ἀσσύριοι Λόγοι of Herodotus and Their Position in the Histories", *The Classical Quarterly*, N. S. 28,2 (1978), pp. 284–291 claims that Herodotus' account about the Assyrians was lost. Thus, the scriptures of Herodotus may have contained valuable information about the Assyrian Empire.
- ⁴⁹ Lloyd, *Herodotus, Book II: Commentary 99–182*, pp. 91–93. In the demotic literature Sennacherib's name is used as a patronymic (father of Esarhaddon). The Egyptian rendering *wsh-rm.f* ("His name is long") is popular etymology with a vague phonetic resemblance to the original. See: Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt", p. 485. One may raise a question, how Herodotus, who did not elaborate on the Assyrians in his *Histories*, and mentions Sennacherib only here, knew his name. Sennacherib is mentioned in one of the papyri found at Elephantine, on which the proverbs of Ahiqar were written down. See: Porten B. and Yardeni, A. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt, Vol. 3: Literature, Accounts, Lists*, (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1993), index on p. lxiii. The writing of the name Sennacherib is spelled variously: שְנַחֲרִיב, שְנַחֲרִיב, שְנַחֲרִיב, שְנַחֲרִיב.
- ⁵⁰ But note also in the Assyrian text that the Egyptians precede the Kushites, which were the overlords of Egypt in 701 BCE.
- ⁵¹ Eph'al, I. *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th–5th Centuries B. C.*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), pp. 118–123; Frahm E., *Einleitung in die Sanberib-Inschriften*, (Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft 26; Wien: Institut für Orientalistik der Universität Wien, 1997), pp. 16, 132–135; Grayson, A. K. and Novotny J. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1* (RINAP 3/1; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), pp. 15, 232, text 35, Rev. 5"–9".
- ⁵² Leichty, E. *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)*, (RINAP 4; Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2011), p. 19, Nin. A, iv 1-24; pp. 30-31: Nin. B ii 34-62.
- ⁵³ See: Potts, D. T. "Back to Bazu", *NABU* 1999/4 pp. 95–96. Leichty, Nin. A iv 42–68. on the campaign to the land of Bazu see: Nin. B iii 9-14, cf. also an earlier and less developed depiction Nin. A iv 53-56; Nin. C iii 13'-17'.
- ⁵⁴ Eph'al, I. *The Ancient Arabs*, pp. 137–142; Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, pp. 88. Text 34 (Frt. F.); 90, text 36 (Frt G.); 191, text 102: Qaqun Stela (unpublished). See: Eph'al, I. "Esarhaddon, Egypt, and Shubria: Politics and Propaganda", *JCS* 57 (2005),

- p.109, n. 37.
- ⁵⁵ The site is probably mentioned for the first time in the Book of Ezekiel 30: 15–16 as the town of *Sim*, and by the name Pelusium by Herodotus. It seems that *Šinu* in Esarhaddon’s inscriptions does not refer to Pelusium, but to Tanis. See: Verreth, H., “The Egyptian Eastern border Region in Assyrian Sources”, *JAOS* 119 (1999), p. 240. In this case, the town of Pelusium is not mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions, at least by its Egyptian name. According to geological soundings and to archeological surveys, the town was inhabited during the Third Intermediate Period (ca. 600 BCE onwards), and not only in the fifth century BCE as previously thought. See: Stanley J.-D., Bernasconi M. P. and T. F. Jorstad, “Pelusium, an Ancient Port Fortress on Egypt’s Nile Delta Coast: Its Evolving Environmental Setting from Foundation to Demise”, *Journal of Coastal Research* 24,2 (2008), pp. 451–462.
- ⁵⁶ Kooij, A. van der, “Das assyrische Heer vor den Mauern Jerusalems im Jahr 701 v. Chr.”, *ZDPV* 102 (1986), pp. 93–109, contra Cogan M. and Tadmor, H. *II Kings* (AB 11; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988), 251.
- ⁵⁷ 2 Kgs. 19:35; In Isa 37:36 the time of the angel’s action is not mentioned.
- ⁵⁸ Dawson W. R. “The Mouse in Fable and Folklore”, *Folklore* 36, 3 (1925), pp. 227–248. However, in demotic fables the mouse does save the lion from a net in which it was caught, but it is not clear if the Egyptian or the Greek source was the original. For the Satirical Papyrus from Turin depicting mice fighting as humans, see: Flores, D. V. “The Topsy-Turvy World”, in: Knoppers, G. N. and Hirsch, A. (eds.), *Egypt, Israel and the Ancient Mediterranean World; Studies in Honor of Donald B. Redford*, (Probleme der Ägyptologie 20; Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 233–255.
- ⁵⁹ Lang, A. “Apollo Smintheus, Rats, Mice, and Plague”, *The Classical Review* 15,6 (1901), pp. 319–320. Moulton J. H. and A. T. C. Cree, “S??T??S, Pestilence and Mice”, *The Classical Review*, 15, 5 (1901), pp. 284–285 regards it as an Oriental metaphor; West S., “And It Came to Pass That Pharaoh Dreamed: Notes on Herodotus 2.139, 141”, *The Classical Quarterly*, N.S., 37, 2 (1987), pp. 262–271.
- ⁶⁰ Strabo, *Geography* 13.1.48; Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphosen* II, 5685.
- ⁶¹ Cf. Homer, *Iliad*, I 39–50; Powell J. U., “Rodent-Gods in Ancient and Modern Times”, *Folklore*, 40,2 (1929), pp. 173–179; Africa, T. W. “Herodotus and Diodorus on Egypt”, *JNES* 22,4 (1963), pp. 257–258; Bernheim, F. and A. A. Zener, “The Sminthian Apollo and the Epidemic Among the Achaeans at Troy”, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 108 (1978), pp. 11–14; Strawn, “Herodotus’ Histories 2.141 and the Deliverance of Jerusalem”, p. 227.
- ⁶² See Evans, P. S. *The Invasion of Sennacherib in the Book of Kings. A Source-Critical and Rhetorical Study of 2 Kings 18–19* (VT.S 125; Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2009), p. 183, n. 76 who notes that neither Herodotus nor 2 Kgs 19:35 attribute the defeat to a plague, so the critic must be cautious in concluding that a plague was what “actually happened.”
- ⁶³ Grabbe, “Of Mice and Dead Men”, p. 136, who suggests that Herodotus did not intend his story to be understood as a plague and asserts that such an interpretation “in fact looks like a blatant reading of (an interpretation of) 2 Kgs 19.35 into Herodotus.”
- ⁶⁴ Lloyd, Herodotus, Book II: Commentary 99–182, p. 104.3.
- ⁶⁵ West S., “And It Came to Pass That Pharaoh Dreamed: Notes on Herodotus 2.139, 141”, *The Classical Quarterly*, N.S., 37, 2 (1987), p. 267
- ⁶⁶ Strawn, “Herodotus’ Histories 2.141 and the Deliverance of Jerusalem”, p. 216 notes a contradiction between the identity of the statue in Herodotus II 141.3 where the King explicitly cries in front of the statue of the god, while in 141.6 Herodotus is referring to the statue of the king. This contradiction is solved when the reading the text. Herodotus simply refers to two different statues.
- ⁶⁷ According to Strawn, “Herodotus’ Histories 2.141 and the Deliverance of Jerusalem”, p. 218 The Story seems clearly etiological—that is, its purpose seems to be to account for the statue that stands in the temple—more specifically, to address why this statue holds a mouse in its hand.
- ⁶⁸ Spiegelberg, W., “Ägyptologische Randglossen zu Herodot”, *ZÄS* 43 (1906), pp. 91–95. Lloyd, Herodotus, Book II: Commentary 99–182, p. 104.5.
- ⁶⁹ Herodotus, *Histories* II 144, 156; Strawn, “Herodotus’ Histories 2.141 and the Deliverance of Jerusalem”, p. 227.
- ⁷⁰ Spiegelberg, W. *Die Glaubwürdigkeit von Herodots Bericht über Ägypten im Lichte der ägyptischen Denkmäler* (Orient und Antike 3; Heidelberg: Winter, 1926), 26f.
- ⁷¹ Lloyd, Herodotus, Book II: Commentary 99–182, p. 105. An Egyptian inscription most probably existed on the socket of the statue, However, the text as cited by Herodotus, is clearly Greek in nature, and conveys the message that Herodotus wanted to pass to his audience.
- ⁷² See: Bernhauer, E. *Innovationen in der Privatplastik*, (Philippika 27; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010) 290, no. 10.3-74, pl. 43 and Limme, L. “Un nouveau document relatif à une famille memphite de basse Époque”, in: Geus, F. - Thill, F. (eds.), *Mélanges offerts à Jean Vercoutter* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations 1985) 205-216. I thank Dr. Claus Jurman and Dr. Helmut Brandl for these references. Note that the gestures of the animal on the statue of the High Priest of Memphis does not resemble any of the gestures of monkeys depicted on the many drawings and reliefs from Egyptian tombs. Cf. Vandier d’Abadie, J. “Les singes familiers dans l’ancienne Égypte”, *RdE*, 18 (1966), pp. 142–201.
- ⁷³ Lloyd, Herodotus, Book II: Commentary 99–182, p. 105; Grabbe, “Of Mice and Dead Men”, p. 135.
- ⁷⁴ Kahn, forthcoming.

⁷⁵ Contra Strawn, “Herodotus’ Histories 2.141 and the Deliverance of Jerusalem”, pp. 231–236. See: Grabbe, “Of Mice and Dead Men”, pp. 135–137.
